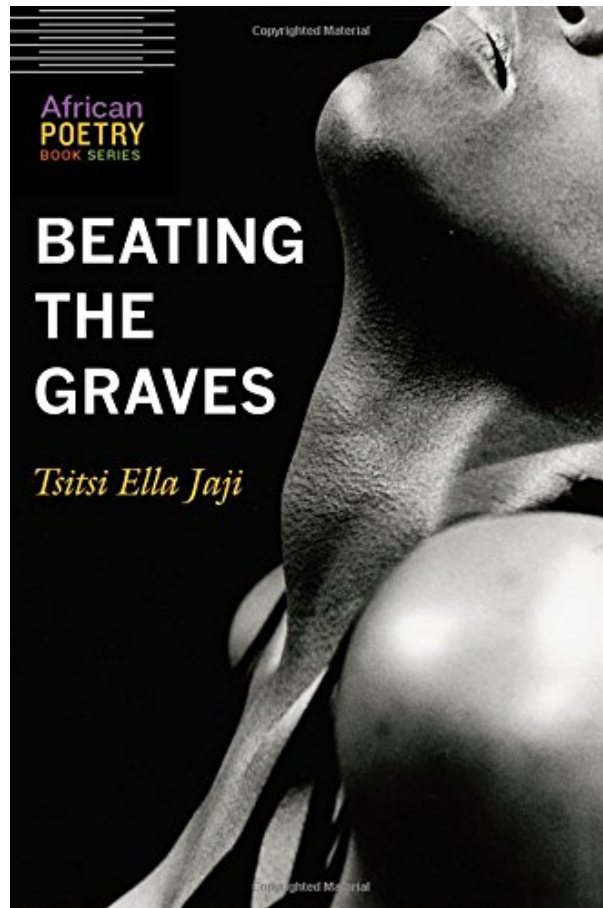
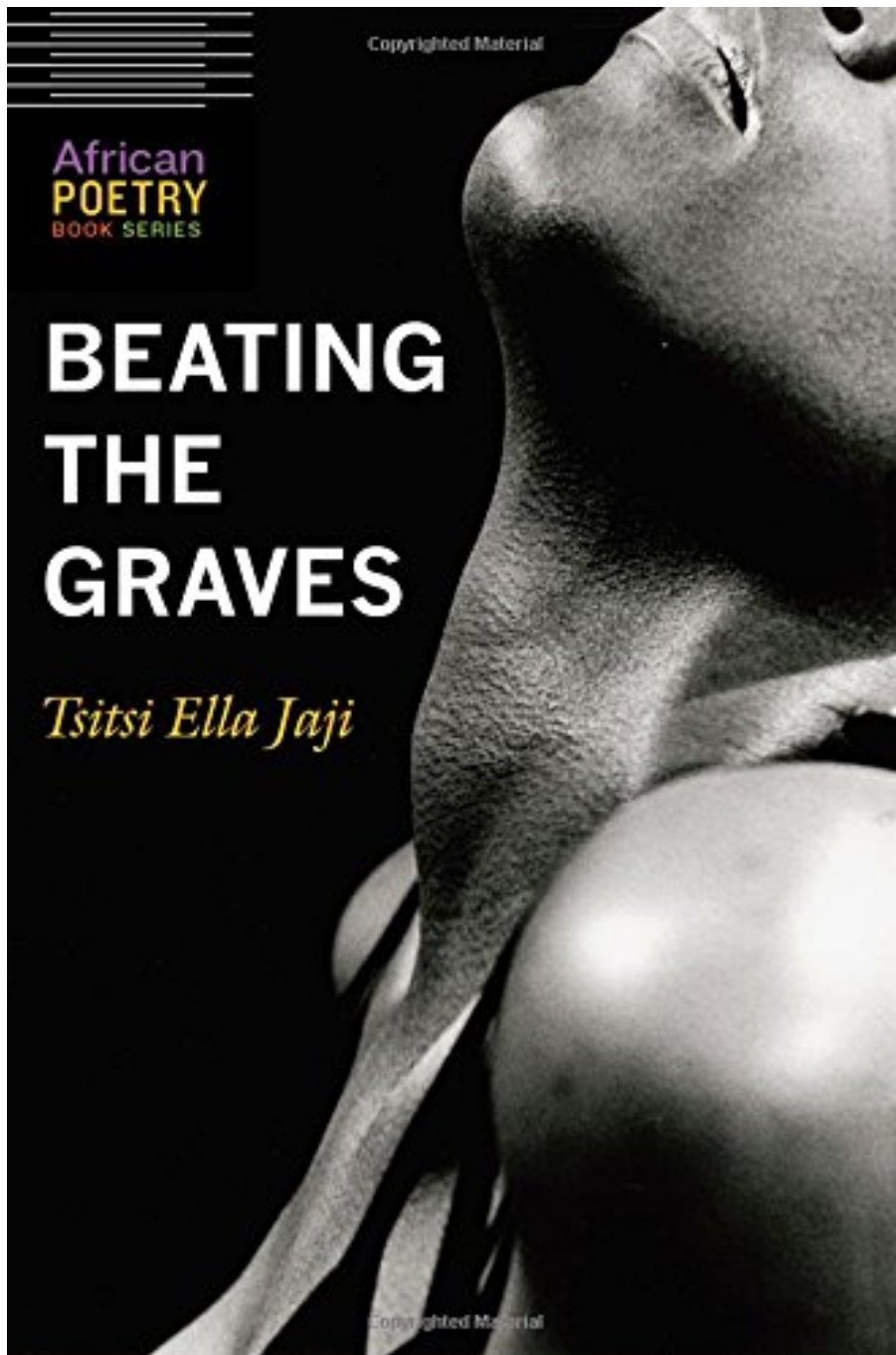


BEATING THE GRAVES (AFRICAN POETRY BOOK) BY TSITSI ELLA JAJI



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“An outstanding offering. Forceful. Fresh. And not afraid. This offering shows Tsitsi Jaji to be an explorer of the textures of lived experience with admirable clarity of vision and expression, in short, a poet deep to the marrow of her sensibility.”—Keorapetse Kgotsitsile, South Africa’s poet laureate
(Keorapetse Kgotsitsile 2016-09-08)

“The gravel and gravitas of *Beating the Graves* lies in its ferociously polyglot density. Peep that diction, peeps! As this moving book reminds us in its deep listening to our noisy dead (diaspora), any border can be crossed by sound.”—Christian Campbell, author of *Running the Dusk*
(Christian Campbell 2016-09-08)

“Packed with a stunning, virtuosic range of occasion and disposition (praise, imprecation, prayer, play, to name only a few), *Beating the Graves* is an auspicious debut volume by a formidable poet-musician-scholar.”—Nathaniel Mackey, author of *Blue Fasa* ? (Nathaniel Mackey 2016-09-08)

About the Author

Tsitsi Ella Jaji is an associate professor of African and African American studies at Duke University. She is the author of *Africa in Stereo: Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity*.

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The poems in Tsitsi Ella Jaji's *Beating the Graves* meditate on the meaning of living in diaspora, an experience increasingly common among contemporary Zimbabweans. Vivid evocations of the landscape of Zimbabwe filter critiques of contemporary political conditions and ecological challenges, veiled in the multiple meanings of poetic metaphor. Many poems explore the genre of praise poetry, which in Shona culture is a form of social currency for greeting elders and peers with a recitation of the characteristics of one's clan. Others reflect on how diasporic life shapes family relations.

The praise songs in this volume pay particular homage to the powerful women and gender-queer ancestors of the poet's lineage and thought. Honoring influences ranging from Caribbean literature to classical music and engaging metaphors from rural Zimbabwe to the post-steel economy of Youngstown, Ohio, Jaji articulates her own *ars poetica*. These words revel in the utter ordinariness of living globally, of writing in the presence of all the languages of the world, at home everywhere, and never at rest.

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