



## Deep Sightings and Rescue Missions

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After her death from cancer in December, 1995, Toni Cade Bambara's friend and editor, Toni Morrison, pledged to collect Bambara's previously unpublished work. The result of that pledge, DEEP SIGHTINGS AND RESCUE MISSIONS: FICTION, ESSAYS, AND CONVERSATIONS, edited and prefaced by Morrison, is Bambara's first book since the early 1980's.

The anthology includes many selections which have never before appeared in print. The compilation of six stories, five essays, and an interview with the author showcases Bambara's extraordinary range as a writer, film critic, activist, and cultural worker.

Bambara's fiction is incisive and satisfying. "Going Critical" examines the relationship between Clara, a woman dying from radiation poisoning and Honey, her spiritually gifted daughter whom Clara hopes will carry on her mission as a community advocate. All of the stories in the collection are about relationships, responsibility, and community.

Bambara's expertise and passion for filmmaking is evident throughout the book but especially in two essays. In "Reading the Signs, Empowering the Eye" Bambara explores the black independent film movement with a meticulous analysis of Julie Dash's 1992 lyric masterpiece, DAUGHTERS OF THE DUST. "School Daze" is an insightful appraisal of the complex themes, meanings, and implications of Spike Lee's film about class, caste, culture, and intracommunity dynamics at a southern black college.

In the essay, "Deep Sight and Rescue Missions," Bambara takes the reader on a journey through downtown Philadelphia. Along the way, she examines the independent media movement as well as issues vital to people of color, including assimilation, accommodation, opportunism, and resistance.

"How She Came by Her Name," an interview by Louis Massiah, offers insights into Bambara's battle with cancer and into her development as a writer and activist.

In DEEP SIGHTINGS AND RESCUE MISSIONS, Bambara's prose is poetic and often confrontational, reflecting her honesty, passion, and commitment to issues of race, gender, and community.

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