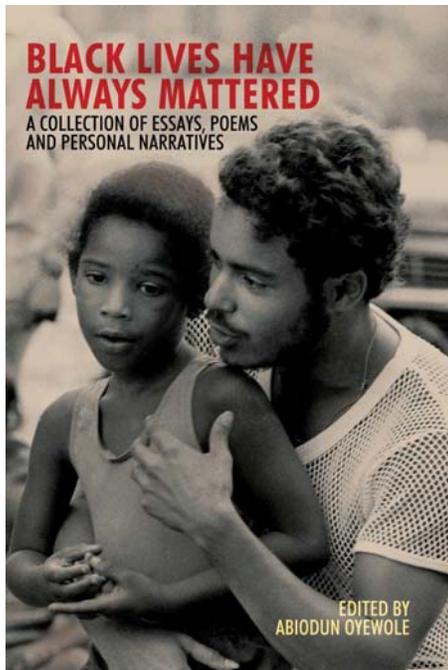


BLACK LIVES HAVE ALWAYS MATTERED

A Collection of Essays, Poems, and Personal Narratives

Edited by Abiodun Oyewole



COVER DESIGN: Vagabond
PHOTO: Ricky Flores.

Abiodun Oyewole

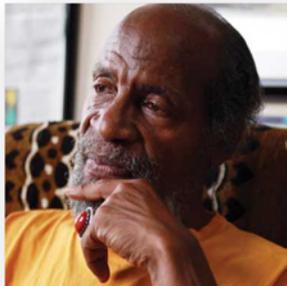


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BLACK LIVES HAVE ALWAYS MATTERED, A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS, POEMS AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES, edited by Abiodun Oyewole, extends beyond the Black Lives Matter movement's primary agenda of police brutality to acknowledge that even when affronted with slavery, segregation and Jim Crow, racial injustice and inequality, *black lives have always mattered*.

This anthology of essays, personal narratives, poetry and prose is organized into five sections: "Mourning Black Lives That Mattered," "Black Skin/White Masks," "Black Spaces/Black Places," "Black Lives Remembered/Reclaimed," and "The Legacy of Black Protest Continues" that addresses a wide range of hot-button issues that disproportionately impact the black community. While written primarily by African American poets, writers, activists and scholars, selections are also from people of the Latino and African diasporas, and white activists. Collectively, these 79 contributors provide a call-to-action that challenges readers to confront long-held values and beliefs about black lives, as well as white privilege and fragility, as it surveys the historical and contemporary ravages of racism and its persistence of structural inequality. More importantly, BLACK LIVES HAVE ALWAYS MATTERED provides a first-hand perspective to a problem known to the African American community long before the Black Lives Matter movement revealed it to the general public that *black lives have always mattered*. Connecting the past to the present, the contributors of BLACK LIVES HAVE ALWAYS MATTERED provide an eye-opening and engaging collection that has the potential to reignite a broader push for black liberation and equality for all.

Find out more about the contributors at www.2leafpress.org.

"In this anthology, we are not only given the opportunity to celebrate those in the struggle, but are given a directive to continue the struggle. BLACK LIVES HAVE ALWAYS MATTERED honors the ancestors, and gives hope for peace and justice for future generations where through policy and a new collective consciousness, all lives will truly matter!"

—Dr. Linda H. Humes, Executive Director of Yaffa Cultural Arts Inc.

"Part of the value of this important new anthology is that it keeps our pursuit of justice in America in historical and political perspective. It reminds us that Black Lives Matter is not a new revelation but a continuation of the Black social gospel proclaimed by Richard Allen, Adam Powell Sr. Garvey, Malcolm, Martin, and the many more."

—Bob Law, National Radio Personality

"No history book, no single Black story, has yanked the rug of comfortable white ignorance from beneath my feet as these readings have. Taken as a whole, this book tells the story of America's silenced racial trauma in a way that will fuel the movement to speak the unspeakable."

—Debby Irving, author of WAKING UP WHITE (2014)

About the Editor

ABIODUN OYEWOLE is a poet, teacher, and founding member of the American music and spoken-word group, The Last Poets (1968), which laid the groundwork for the emergence of hip hop. He performed on the Last Poets' albums, *The Last Poets* (1970), *Holy Terror* (1993), and *The Time Has Come* (1997). He rejoined The Last Poets during its 1990s resurgence, and co-edited with Umar Bin Hassan, *On A Mission: Selected Poems and a History of the Last Poets* (1996). He published his first poetry collection, *Branches of The Tree of Life: The Collected Poems of Abiodun Oyewole 1969-2013* (2014), released the rap CD, *25 Years* (1996), and the song albums, *Gratitude* (2014), and *Love Has No Season* (2014). Oyewole received his BS in biology and BA in communications at Shaw University, an MA in education at Columbia University, and is a Columbia Charles H. Revson Fellow (1989).