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Brotherman: The Odyssey of Black Men in America -- An Anthology

Herb Boyd

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"[AN] OUTSTANDING COLLECTION...The powerful opening excerpt by Frederick Douglass evokes his boyhood as a slave, and the collection closes with an eloquent discussion of the race problem today by Cornel West. A distinguished addition to black studies."--Publishers Weekly (starred review) The purpose of this extraordinary anthology is made abundantly clear by the editors' stated intention: "to create a living mosaic of essays and stories in which Black men can view themselves, and be viewed without distortion." In this, they have succeeded brilliantly.

Brotherman contains more than one hundred and fifty selections, some never before published--from slave narratives, memoirs, social histories, novels, poems, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, position papers, and essays. Brotherman books us passage to the world that Black men experience as adolescents, lovers, husbands, fathers, workers, warriors, and elders. On this journey they encounter pain, confusion, anger, and love while confronting the life-threatening issues of race, sex, and politics--often as strangers in a strange land. The first collection of its kind, Brotherman gathers together a multitude of voices that add a new, unforgettable chapter to American cultural identity. From the Trade Paperback edition.

From Publishers Weekly This outstanding collection of writings by African-American males has been edited by Boyd (Down the Glory Road) and Allen (The Port Chicago Mutiny) with a commitment to inclusion and diversity. More than 100 pieces are organized by subjects such as forefathers, relationships, racism, sports, music and other themes that define the black man's experience. There are contributions from notables James Baldwin, Countee Cullen, Ralph Ellison, Jackie Robinson, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., but the editors also include material from emerging creative writers and political thinkers. The powerful opening excerpt by Frederick Douglass evokes his boyhood as a slave, and the collection closes with an eloquent discussion of the race problem today by Cornel West. A distinguished addition to black studies. Illustrations not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The editors' attempt to gather essays, poems, and segments of larger works as well as short stories covering every aspect of the black man in America?past, present, and future?explains this book's thickness. Their scope is truly comprehensive; selections range from some of the great names of literature and history to figures who are currently in vogue. But if you already have a reasonable collection of works by and about African Americans, you may find this offering to be somewhat redundant. Readers would have been better served by a smaller book of new essays to represent each theme and a bibliography referring to the theme's seminal works. Recommended for libraries that do not have much to offer in their coverage of black studies; otherwise, an optional purchase.?Anita L. Cole, Miami-Dade P.L. System, Fla. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The editors have swept widely but sensitively through African American literature, producing not only a forceful anthology but the first one devoted exclusively to male writings. More than 100 entries appear, some in full text, others in excerpted form (and some never previously published). Fiction is matched in eloquence and effect by nonfiction pieces, including slave narratives, autobiographies and biographies, and essays and poems. New voices stand strongly next to those of the past; famous individuals don't overshadow those who are less so. One minute, readers will believe they have read the most vigorous selection--Paul Laurence Dunbar's short story, "The Lynching of Jube Benson," for example--but then readers will turn to another page to find something that sends their mind reeling even further--for instance, the excerpt from Wallace Terry's book Bloods, an oral history of black veterans in the Vietnam War. For all literature collections. Brad Hooper