



# Adrienne Kennedy Reader

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**Adrienne Kennedy Reader** Adrienne Kennedy

Introduction by Werner Sollors

Adrienne Kennedy has been a force in American theatre since the early 1960s, influencing generations of playwrights with her hauntingly fragmentary lyrical dramas. Exploring the violence racism visits upon people's lives, Kennedy's plays express poetic alienation, transcending the particulars of character and plot through ritualistic repetition and radical structural experimentation. Frequently produced, read, and taught, they continue to hold a significant place among the most exciting dramas of the past fifty years.

This first comprehensive collection of her most important works traces the development of Kennedy's unique theatrical oeuvre from her Obie-winning *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964) through significant later works such as *A Movie Star Has to Star in Black and White* (1976), *Ohio State Murders* (1992), and *June and Jean in Concert*, for which she won an Obie in 1996. The entire contents of Kennedy's groundbreaking collections *In One Act* and *The Alexander Plays* are included, as is her earliest work "Because of the King of France" and the play *An Evening with Dead Essex* (1972). More recent prose writings "Secret Paragraphs about My Brother," "A Letter to Flowers," and "Sisters Etta and Ella" are fascinating refractions of the themes and motifs of her dramatic works, even while they explore new material on teaching and writing. An introduction by Werner Sollors provides a valuable overview of Kennedy's career and the trajectory of her literary development.

Adrienne Kennedy (b. 1931) is a three-time Obie-award winning playwright whose works have been widely performed and anthologized. Among her many honors are the American Academy of Arts and Letters award and the Guggenheim fellowship. In 1995-6, the Signature Theatre Company dedicated its entire season to presenting her work. She has been commissioned to write works for the Public Theater, Jerome Robbins, the Royal Court Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, and Juilliard, and she has been a visiting professor at Yale, Princeton, Brown, the University of California at Berkeley, and Harvard. She lives in New York City.

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