



Nodin Press

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The Promised Land

Poems

Philip S. Bryant

In Philip Bryant's new collection the urban hum of Chicago's South Side meets the pastoral beauty of small-town Minnesota life—and also its long, lonely winters. Sounds and smells from the Deep South permeate the snowbanks, and the dazzling riffs of Coltrane and Bird brighten the gray November skies. Bryant describes the dark exhilaration of receiving, as an untested youth, his first switch-blade knife, and praises an ex-girlfriend who, in trashing his work with savage honesty, reminds him that what a poem *says* actually matters. Some poems have a repetitive, incantatory power reminiscent of Langston Hughes, and one lengthy sequence called “Ellingtonia” weaves the song titles of that master composer into the dark fabric of America's racial history.

The rhythms are always musical, and the playful street talk cannot disguise the fact that we're in the presence of an sober-eyed romantic who uses the cadences of the blues to summon the beauty at the core of this often harsh world we live in. ‘

Alexs Pate calls *The Promised Land* a book of “stunning vision,” and Matt Rasmussen observes that “Bryant's poetic eye and ear are ever ready, discovering and re-imagining the moments others might turn away from, or never notice at all.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Philip S. Bryant, a native of Chicago, is the author of three previous collections of poetry—*Blue Island*, *Sermon on a Perfect Spring Day*, and *Stompin' at the Grand Terrace: a jazz memoir in verse*, with music by Carolyn Wilkins. His work has appeared in *Blues Vision: African American Writing from Minnesota*; *Good Poems, American Places*, selected and introduced by Garrison Keillor; and *Where One Voice Ends Another Begins: 150 Years of Minnesota Poetry*. Selections from *Stompin' at the Grand Terrace* were chosen by Los Angeles Times Music Critic Ann Powers to appear in *Best Music Writing, 2010*. He was a fellow of the Minnesota State Arts Board in 1992 and 1998, and has served on the governing board of the Loft, the premier literary arts center in the Twin Cities. He has worked with the Givens Foundation as a mentor for emerging Minnesota African American writers. He was a radio-essayist for Minnesota Public Radio and is currently professor of English at Gustavus Adolphus College. He lives with his wife, Renée, in St Peter, Minnesota.

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