



Words in Your Face: A Guided Tour Through Twenty Years of the New York City Poetry Slam

Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz

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Words in Your Face traces the rich history of slam poetry through the lens of the New York City scene that pioneered it. Author Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz situates New York slam poetry in the history of oral tradition in poetry throughout history and around the world, with particular attention to the three major 20th century arts movements that helped set the stage for it: the Harlem Renaissance, the Beats, and hip hop. Aptowicz explores the birth of slam at the Nuyorican Poets' Café and the genre's explosive growth as the media responded with events like Lollapalooza and MTV's Unplugged. The book expands the canvas by examining the connections between academia and slammers, especially the poets of color, the youth slammers, and the burgeoning hip hop poetry scene. Interviews with key players like Chicago's Marc Smith and San Francisco's Gary Mex Glazner help tell this fascinating story from the inside.

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