



Alabama

Poems

RODNEY JONES

Alabama focuses on a boy from a rural, fundamentalist community who becomes a pacifist, feminist, and existentialist poet. Labyrinth, meditation, fable, and peasant poem, formed from interleaved strands of prose vignettes and lineated poetry, this collection is at once a tale of cultural exile and familial loyalty, and an unflinching look at regional shame that doubles as a love story, all expressed with the intimate voice and vision of Rodney Jones.

One of the most honored poets of his generation, **RODNEY JONES** has been praised for his narrative and lyrical skills, as well as the empathy, intelligence, accessibility, and original humor of his work. He is the author of eleven poetry books, including *Salvation Blues*, winner of the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, and *Elegy for the Southern Drawl*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. In 2016, he became the second poet to be inducted into the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame.

PRAISE FOR ALABAMA

“If there is a way to hold on, to recover some part of what’s lost, and grasp—for even a fleeting moment—the ineffable, this marvelous book is it.”—*Natasha Trethewey*

“Rodney Jones is perhaps the supreme example we have of the southern human person speaking in American poetry.”—*Kate Daniels*

“Jones has found an inevitable, pared-down, utterly original way of telling his story in the context of the culture he comes from. This is a lovely book, for its humor as well as its compassion.”—*Alan Williamson*

“No one can match Jones for the range of unflinching sensibility or the miraculous capacity to wrench blessing out of dailiness and degradation and active harm.”—*Linda Gregerson*

“Jones is a trustworthy storyteller precisely because he can’t help but stay emotionally attached to what he often intellectually disbelieves. *Alabama* is a great book by a great poet.”—*Alan Shapiro*

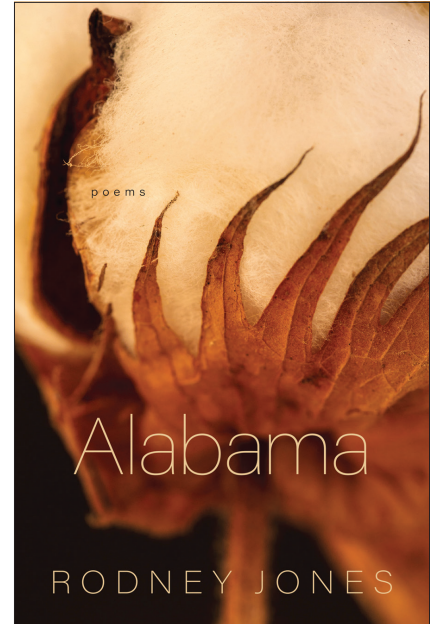
How Much I Loved This Life

I lay in the dark afraid of the dark,
Once, in Alabama, in 1954,
The year before electricity,
And prayed and could not pray

One lamp for all the world
And, listening, heard the L&N
Screech at Lacon, and then
The unmuted spirit breathing of the house.

I lay in the dark afraid of the dark
And thought of the word eternity
And of the hydrogen bomb.
Sometimes now in sleep I ululate.

When Katy shakes me, asking why,
I mean to keep things light. I say,
“That is the noise I always make
When I am being devoured.”



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Poetry

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