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Travels with Tooy: History, Memory, and the African American Imagination

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New Book

By Richard Price

Description from the publisher and reviewers:

Thirty-five years into his research among the descendants of rebel slaves in the South American rain forest, anthropologist Richard Price encountered Tooy, a priest/philosopher/healer who crosses boundaries between centuries, continents, the visible and invisible, and the worlds of the living and the dead. Travels with Tooy brings together Price's ethnographic and archival research and Tooy's teachings, songs, stories, and secret languages to explore how Africans in the Americas have created marvelous new worlds of the imagination.

"Richard Price has had a long and torrential romance with the Saramaka Maroons of Suriname, exploring them and himself through a harvest of mythologies which dissolve all boundaries of time and geographical location. With Tooy as guide and mentor, across three centuries of African exile and resettlement in the Americas, we revisit the recent or forgotten spaces of Price's near forty years of patient, scholarly research. It is an astonishing performance, rendering these treasures of anthropological materials in a narrative style as lucid and cordial as the best contemporary fiction." -- George Lamming, author of The Pleasures of Exile.


"A fascinating meeting of minds between curer and scholar and a must-read for all Afro-Americanists." -- Philip D. Morgan, Johns Hopkins University, author of Slave Counterpoint.

"A tour de force. A tightly argued, incisive contribution to the newly rekindled debate about the role of Africa in the history and social imaginary of African American societies. A major achievement." -- Stephan Palmié, University of Chicago, author of Wizards and Scientists.

"True ethnographic magic. Beautifully written and theoretically sophisticated, it is a model of politically engaged historical ethnography and sustained transcultural dialogue." -- John Collins, Queens College, CUNY.

"The ethnography is incredibly rich and nuanced; the historical narratives are
precise and eye-opening; and the portrait of Tooy is fine-grained and moving. This is scholarship at its very best." -- Paul Stoller, author of *Money Has No Smell.*