



The Sweet Breath of Life: A Poetic Narrative of the African-American Family

Ntozake Shange

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Words and images come together in this inspiring collaboration between renowned poet Ntozake Shange and Kamoinge Inc., a group of acclaimed photographers whose work documents and celebrates the African-American experience. Collaborations between writers and photographers have provided African Americans with important focus for issues of identity and representation - or lack thereof - ever since the first publication of *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* by Langston Hughes and Roy DeCarava in 1955. Frank Stewart, with his fellow photographers in Kamoinge Inc., and Ntozake Shange - a longtime fan of photography - were inspired by this landmark work and committed themselves to continuing the tradition and the artistic conversation into this first decade of this new millennium. In 1963, Roy DeCarava - renowned photographer and first president of the Kamoinge Workshop - set the aesthetic and philosophical tone of the group in response to biased representations of African Americans in the media. As image-makers, the Kamoinge members have sought to shed positive light on their subjects, and to demystify Black life in America. With stunning images from such acclaimed photographers as Anthony Barboza, Adger W. Cowans, Ming Smith Murray, and poems by Ntozake Shange, one of the most accomplished writers of her time, *The Sweet Breath of Life* is a rich and thought-provoking book, destined to become a classic work of American photography and literature.

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