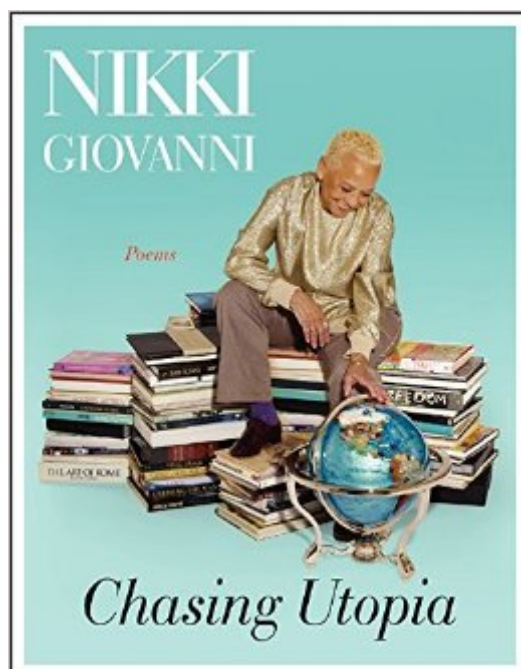


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# Chasing Utopia: A Hybrid



## Synopsis

From one of America's most celebrated poets, Nikki Giovanni, comes this poignant collection of poetry that celebrates the simple pleasures of everyday life and the bonds we share with those closest to us. This slim volume delights on every page. There are stories, imaginings, whimsy, and startling images which prove the poet's power and her command of language . . . Anyone with a love of language will be delighted with this book and the continuing publication of America's treasured poet. "San Francisco Book Review" The poetry of Nikki Giovanni has spurred movements and inspired songs, turned hearts and informed generations. She's been hailed as a healer and as a national treasure. But Giovanni's heart resides in the everyday, where family and lovers gather, friends commune, and those no longer with us are remembered. And at every gathering there is food "food as sustenance, food as aphrodisiac, food as memory. A pot of beans is flavored with her mother's sighs "this sigh part cardamom, that one the essence of clove; a lover requests a banquet as an affirmation of ongoing passion; homage is paid to the most time-honored appetizer: soup. With *Chasing Utopia*, Giovanni demands that the prosaic "flowers, birdsong, winter "be seen as poetic, and reaffirms once again why she is as energetic, "remarkable" (Gwendolyn Brooks), "wonderful" (Marian Wright Edelman), "outspoken, prolific, energetic" (New York Times), and relevant as ever.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: William Morrow; 1st Edition edition (October 29, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0688156975

ISBN-13: 978-0688156978

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (43 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #217,717 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #105 in Books > Literature & Fiction > African American > Poetry #179 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Women Authors #908 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > United States

## Customer Reviews

You know, I had initially rated this book four stars, but then I had to go back and give it five stars. This book of poetry (and essays) is just... it is simply amazing. Giovanni writes beautifully; her pen

aims straight for the heart. Her poems, seemingly about everyday things and occurrences, say so much more than what is actually on the page. These poems celebrate the simplicity of every day living and the complexity of life all at once. The essays are great, too, but my real love affair is with the poems. This book contains poems such as "These Women," "I Wish I Could Live (in a Book)," "I Wish I Could Live (in Music)," and "Spider Waltz." These poems celebrate womanhood and love and heartbreak and family, most of all, family. I recommend this book to everyone -- EVERYONE. I believe that even people who don't enjoy poetry could enjoy this poetry.

My favorite parts of the book were the times she mentioned meeting Toni Morrison and Nina Simone, individually, for the first time. I would have felt the same way. And indeed, that's how I feel about Giovanni, the time(s) I have shaken her hand. She has a homage poem entitled "For Sonia Sanchez", and while many of the writers mentioned in the poem have past, I love that Sonia Sanchez is still alive. I definitely believe in giving people their flowers while they are here. I'm glad that she did not wait for another funeral before publishing this piece. When I read poetry books, one thing that I find interest is poetry placement. I love the way in which poems are ordered. My favorite placement in this book is the fact that "Robert Champion" is followed by "Allowables". The scene described in the Champion poem laid the foundation for understanding the end of "Allowables": "I don't think/ I'm allowed// To kill something/ Because I am/ Frightened" And that poem could be the slogan of now. Those last 5 lines, those last four stanzas made me think about all of these Black men killed by police officers... and the officers say they were so scared of these unarmed Black men! Whew! I can't handle it; I'll move on. There are many things that I love about poetry: I love rhythms, line breaks, one lined stanzas. I love a well placed comma, appositives, a fitting title. But with Giovanni, again and again, I love her endings. I loved the endings of "If a Lemon", "I am at that Point", "I Hate Mondays", "Fear: Eat In or Take Out", "Biscuits", "Poets" and many others. I can't wait to read this book "Chasing Utopia" all over again.

I ordered the sample for my Kindle app on my iPad and it wasn't enough. I had to keep reading so I immediately purchased and downloaded the whole book. And then I kept reading. I just couldn't stop. Luckily it was a cold rainy Saturday :-)

I hadn't plan on checking this book out when I arrived at the library. But I don't regret it at all. I read it in two days and would love to read more. Giovanni's nostalgic moments through poetry and essays are witty, warm-hearted and adventurous - I mean how many people can say that they invited Nina

Simone to hang out with them, and she showed up! Not to mention the bond shared with Toni Morrison. The homage paid to predecessors/current heroes, recollections of familial moments/recipes adds an even more personal touch. The message of history, love and especially family resonates ever so loudly. I will most definitely be adding this book to my collection!

Nikki embraces the meaning of life in her eloquent and descriptive words of food, drinks, and flowers. She makes it easy for the reader to cherish every moment on earth by celebrating the senses with flavors and aromas that involves family. This zest for life continues and includes the appeal of familiar places and tastes. Furthermore, Nikki makes you proud to be an Artist, Writer, and Poet. Also, Nikki pays homage to the people's and her own favorite Artists and Authors such as Nina Simone, Toni Morrison, and Langston Hughes. Basically, it is a good idea to own this book, so you can have a constant reminder of what is really important in this life. More importantly, it is a great way to incorporate reading for the food enthusiasts. Now, just thinking about it, I am so hungry for more.

I hadn't purchased any of her works in quite a while. Read a sample and I am so glad I did! This is a wonderful collection of poems and stories. Anyone who likes Giovanni should get this one and add it to your collection.

It's Nikki G. - whether ego trippin', observing or musing on the everyday, the possibilities or the world Miss G never fails to bring a smile, an Aha or Say What? to my mind. She never fails to deliver.

Nikki Giovanni brings a myriad of prose and poetry to shared memories of family and friends past and present. The reader need not ponder and uncover symbolism. Ms. Giovanni's emotional translations rise to the literal surface so everyone can relate. (You will want to try her recipes!) Will warm your heart!

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