

Maria Sticco, Publicist
e-mail: mes5@pitt.edu
tel: (412) 383-2493 fax: (412) 383-2466

3400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260
tel: (412) 383-2456 fax: (412) 383-2466
www.upress.pitt.edu

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Derricotte's new poetry collection is intimate, intense and visionary

PITTSBURGH—"Toi Derricotte's *The Undertaker's Daughter* reveals a chiaroscuro of hue and emotion; each lyrical gesture is grounded in earth veined by blood—a living and dreaming America," said Yusef Komunyakaa. "These plainly spoken observations, small and monumental, are held up to a lit certainty. *The Undertaker's Daughter* is shaped through a painful authority, and the reader can't help but see and feel the full force of this probing voice that bends time."

Derricotte divides the volume into three sections. In Part I, which bears the name of the book, the poet paints vivid, extraordinary pictures of her mother and father. Part II, "A Memory of the Future," explores the deaths of her parents and her fascinating relationship with her fish, Telly, among other amazing stories. In Part III, "The Undertaking," the poet comes to grips with her childhood experiences and assures the reader that she is moving beyond them.

"As in the music of Billie Holiday, the work of Toi Derricotte is lit by a fusion of intimacy and intensity. She has long sounded the depths of History, Family and Self with an unflinching openness that moves beyond candor into visionary wisdom," stated Terrance Hayes. "In this astonishing new book, she moves beyond demarcations of prose and poetry and places us in that transformative space between memory and song. No one writes with the acuity and grace of Toi Derricotte. *The Undertaker's Daughter* is her most stirring, innovative work yet."

Derricotte is the author of four previous poetry collections: *The Empress of the Death House*; *Natural Birth*; *Captivity*; and *Tender*, winner of the Paterson Poetry Prize. She is the recipient of two Pushcart Prizes and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation, among other honors.

Cofounder of Cave Canem—a writer's center with a focus on African American authors—Derricotte is professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh.

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