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## Sleeping with the Dictionary

By Harryette Mullen

University of California Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Sleeping with the Dictionary, Harryette Mullen, Harryette Mullen's fifth poetry collection, "Sleeping with the Dictionary", is the abecedarian offspring of her collaboration with two of the poet's most seductive writing partners, "Roget's Thesaurus" and "The American Heritage Dictionary". In her menage a trois with these faithful companions, the poet is aware that while Roget seems obsessed with categories and hierarchies, the American Heritage, whatever its faults, was compiled with the assistance of a democratic usage panel that included black poets Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, as well as feminist author and editor Gloria Steinem. With its arbitrary yet determinant alphabetical arrangement, its gleeful pursuit of the ludic pleasure of word games (acrostic, anagram, homophone, parody, and pun), as well as its reflections on the politics of language and dialect, Mullen's work is serious play. A number of the poems are inspired or influenced by a technique of the international literary avant-garde group Oulipo, a dictionary game called S+7 or N+7. This method of textual transformation - which is used to compose nonsensical travesties reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's 'Jabberwocky' - also creates a kind of automatic poetic discourse. Mullen's parodies reconceive...



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### Reviews

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