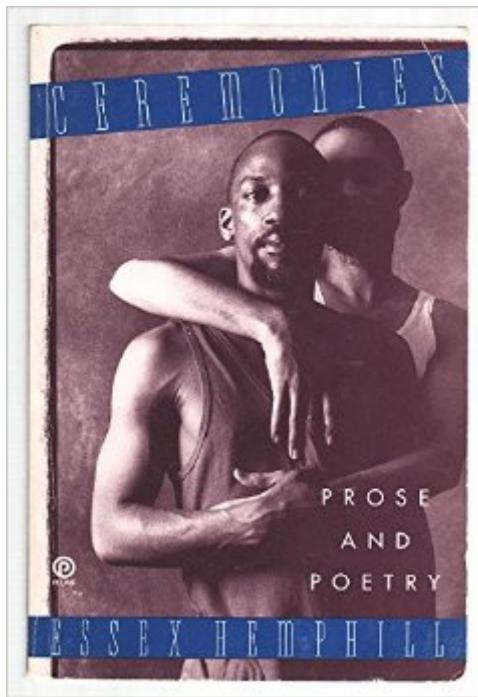


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# Ceremonies : Prose And Poetry



## **Synopsis**

Ceremonies offers provocative commentary on highly charged topics such as Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs of African-American men, feminism among men, and AIDS in the black community. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 192 pages

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Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,088,910 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 inÂ  Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Gay #3262 inÂ  Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Themes & Styles #5195 inÂ  Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > United States

## **Customer Reviews**

"I have nothing to lose tonight" -- the line that starts it all. "Ceremonies" by the late Essex Hemphill is a collection of the poet/essayist/activist's remarkable prose and poetry culled over his many years of writing. A DC native, Hemphill includes many of his experiences coming-of-age and living in the nation's capital all of which are detailed and brought to life through his rich and deeply-profound poetry. My favorites include "Heavy Breathing" -- which addresses the need we have for love and the misguided steps we sometimes take along the way. In the poem, he talks about his experiences roaming the halls of bathhouses "in search of Giovanni's Room" and the fatal killing of a middle-aged woman in a public park. In addition, I was struck by "In the Life." The poem, with its calming yet reassuring tone, is a gay man speaking to his mother about his lifestyle -- "Mother, do you know I roam alone at night? / I wear colognes, tight pants, and chains of gold, as I search for men willing to come back to candlelight / I'm not scared of these men though some are killers of sons like me. / I learned there is no mercy for men of color, for sons who love men like me." His poetry is rich with detail and his experiences are ones you can feel even if you've never experienced them for yourself. It's an adventure uninhibited by structure or convention. Like many SGL brothers, I was introduced to Essex Hemphill when he appeared in Marlon Riggs

groundbreaking PBS documentary "Tongues Untied." Many of the poems found in Ceremonies appear in the documentary including his famous poem "Homocide" -- "Grief is not apparel. Not like a dress, a wig or my sister's high-heeled shoes. It is darker than the man I love who in my fantasies comes for me in a silver, six-cylinder chariot.

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