



Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop

By Adam Bradley

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If asked to list the greatest innovators of modern American poetry, few of us would think to include Jay-Z or Eminem in their number. And yet hip hop is the source of some of the most exciting developments in verse today. The media uproar in response to its controversial lyrical content has obscured hip hop's revolution of poetic craft and experience: Only in rap music can the beat of a song render poetic meter audible, allowing an MC's wordplay to move a club-full of eager listeners.

Examining rap history's most memorable lyricists and their inimitable techniques, literary scholar Adam Bradley argues that we must understand rap as poetry or miss the vanguard of poetry today. *Book of Rhymes* explores America's least understood poets, unpacking their surprisingly complex craft, and according rap poetry the respect it deserves.

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Editorial Review

Review

Boston Globe

"[Bradley] lays out a nuanced, academically rigorous argument that the best hip-hop deserves attention as genuine artistry.... He traces the word rhythm from the Greek rheo, or flow. Biggie had flow; Jay-Z has flow. For an English professor, Adam Bradley got some flow of his own."

Dallas Morning News

"Excellent.... Where so many hip-hop studies lean heavily on politics and sociology, Book of Rhymes is a welcome and thorough exploration of rap aesthetics that isn't afraid to be learned."

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

"As comfortable in the company of Jay-Z as he is with John Donne, Adam Bradley is a visionary critic, skillful and wise. His *Book of Rhymes* is a tour de force, brilliantly renovating hip hop criticism as he rescues the forgotten vanguard of American poetry."

Cornel West

"Adam Bradley's *Book of Rhymes* is a marvelous exploration into the poetic genius of rap and the cultural gravity of Hip Hop. His analysis is subtle, sophisticated, and soulful!"

About the Author

Adam Bradley is a professor of English at the University of Colorado Boulder where he directs the Laboratory for Race & Popular Culture (RAP Lab). His commentary has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and many other publications. He is the author or editor of six books, including *The Anthology of Rap*, *The Poetry of Pop*, and the *New York Times* bestseller *One Day It'll All Make Sense*. Bradley lives in Boulder, Colorado.

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