Vessel: Poems

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The imagination of a girl, the retelling of family stories, and the unfolding of a rich and often painful history: Parneshia Jones' debut collection explores the intersections of these elements of experience with refreshing candor and metaphorical purpose. A child of the South speaking in the rhythms of Chicago, Jones knits "a human quilt" with herself at the center. She relates everything from the awkward trip to Marshall Fields with her mother to buy her first bra to the late whiskey-infused nights of her father's world. In the South, "lard sizzles a sermon from the stove"; in Chicago, we feast on an "opera of peppers and pimento." Jones intertwines the stories of her own family with those of historical Black figures, including Marvin Gaye and Josephine Baker. Affectionate, dynamic, and uncommonly observant, these poems mine the richness of history to create a map of identity and influence.

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