

Derek Walcott

The recipient of the 1992 Nobel Prize in Literature, Derek Walcott was born in Castries, Saint Lucia, the West Indies, on January 23, 1930. His first published poem, "1944" appeared in *The Voice of St. Lucia* when he was fourteen years old, and consisted of 44 lines of blank verse. By the age of nineteen, Walcott had self-published two volumes, *25 Poems* (1948) and *Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos* (1949), exhibiting a wide range of influences, including William Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound.

He later attended the University of the West Indies, having received a Colonial Development and Welfare scholarship, and in 1951 published the volume *Poems*.

In 1957, he was awarded a fellowship by the Rockefeller Foundation to study the American theater. Since then, he has published numerous collections of poetry, most recently *Selected Poems* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007), *The Prodigal: A Poem* (2004), and *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000).

The founder of the Trinidad Theater Workshop, Walcott has also written several plays produced throughout the United States, *The Odyssey: A Stage Version* (1992); *The Isle is Full of Noises* (1982); *Remembrance and Pantomime* (1980); *The Joker of Seville and O Babylon!* (1978); *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays* (1970); *Three Plays: The Last Carnival; Beef, No Chicken; and A Branch of the Blue Nile* (1969). His play *Dream on Monkey Mountain* won the Obie Award for distinguished foreign play of 1971. He founded Boston Playwrights' Theatre at Boston University in 1981.

His first collection of essays, *What the Twilight Says* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), was published in 1998.

About his work, the poet Joseph Brodsky said, "For almost forty years his throbbing and relentless lines kept arriving in the English language like tidal waves, coagulating into an archipelago of poems without which the map of modern literature would effectively match wallpaper. He gives us more than himself or 'a world'; he gives us a sense of infinity embodied in the language."

Walcott's honors include a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award, a Royal Society of Literature Award, and, in 1988, the Queen's Medal for Poetry.

He is an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Poetry collections:

- * 1948 *25 Poems*
- * 1949 *Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos*
- * 1951 *Poems*
- * 1962 *In a Green Night: Poems 1948—60*
- * 1964 *Selected Poems*

- * 1965 The Castaway and Other Poems
- * 1969 The Gulf and Other Poems
- * 1973 Another Life
- * 1976 Sea Grapes
- * 1979 The Star-Apple Kingdom
- * 1981 Selected Poetry
- * 1981 The Fortunate Traveller
- * 1983 The Caribbean Poetry of Derek Walcott and the Art of Romare Bearden
- * 1984 Midsummer
- * 1986 Collected Poems, 1948-1984
- * 1987 The Arkansas Testament
- * 1990 Omeros
- * 1997 The Bounty
- * 2000 Tiepolo's Hound
- * 2004 The Prodigal
- * 2007 Selected Poems (Edited, selected, and with an introduction by Edward Baugh)
- * Forthcoming "White Egrets"

Plays

- * (1950) Henri Christophe: A Chronicle in Seven Scenes
- * (1951) Harry Dernier: A Play for Radio Production
- * (1953) Wine of the Country
- * (1954) The Sea at Dauphin: A Play in One Act
- * (1957) Ione
- * (1958) Drums and Colours: An Epic Drama
- * (1958) Ti-Jean and His Brothers
- * (1966) Malcochon: or, Six in the Rain
- * (1967) Dream on Monkey Mountain
- * (1970) In a Fine Castle
- * (1974) The Joker of Seville
- * (1974) The Charlatan
- * (1976) O Babylon!
- * (1977) Remembrance
- * (1978) Pantomime
- * (1980) The Joker of Seville and O Babylon!: Two Plays
- * (1982) The Isle Is Full of Noises
- * (1986) Three Plays (The Last Carnival, Beef, No Chicken, and A Branch of the Blue Nile)
- * (1991) Steel
- * (1993) Odyssey: A Stage Version
- * (1997) The Capeman (lyrics, in collaboration with Paul Simon)
- * (2002) Walker and The Ghost Dance