



# Summer Snow: Reflections from a Black Daughter of the South

*Trudier Harris*

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## **Summer Snow: Reflections from a Black Daughter of the South** Trudier Harris

A wide-ranging, spirited collection of personal essays about growing up black and Southern

Like Maya Angelou and bell hooks before her, Trudier Harris explores her complicated identity as a black woman in the American South. By turns amusing and probing, *Summer Snow* lays out in a series of linked essays the formative experiences that shaped Harris into the writer and intellectual she has become.

With passion and eloquence, Harris writes about the creation of her unique first name, how porch-sitting is in fact a creative Southern tradition, and how insecurities over her black hair ("the ubiquitous hair") factored into her self-image. She writes about being a "black nerd" as a child, and how the black church influenced her in her early years. But she also writes about more troubling topics, such as the price blacks have paid for integration, and the "staying power of racism." In one moving piece, Harris remembers a white teenager propositioning her for sex in exchange for five dollars. Unflinching in her assessment of white Southern culture, yet deeply attached to a South many black intellectuals have abandoned, Harris in *Summer Snow* takes readers on a surprising tour of one woman's life, loves, and lessons.

Trudier Harris is the author of numerous books, including *Saints, Sinners, Saviors: Strong Black Women in African American Literature and Fiction* and *Folklore: The Novels of Toni Morrison*. She is currently a professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Praise for *Summer Snow*:

"Stimulating and provocative, *SUMMER SNOW* resonates with folkloric energy and vividly evocative prose. Trudier Harris's presence and voice vibrate through this journey, guiding her reader with the sheer force of her rigor, grace, and intelligence as well as a goodly amount of wry humor and wit. A reader's dream-book, reminding us all of the resonant claim of southern spaces."

-- Karla Holloway, William Kenan Professor of English at Duke University, author of numerous books, including *Passed On*.

"Trudier Harris speaks of the 'cotton-pickin' authority' of those in her childhood who earned respect because of their life-long backbreaking labors in the fields. Harris has translated that authority into one of her own, the authority of her words. Because of this author, we see, feel, understand and celebrate our people, who created--through sheer wit and will--a culture that defeated the dehumanization of slavery by keeping us, body and soul alive. A wonderful book you have to read to believe."

--Toi Derricotte, author of *The Black Notebooks*.

"Noon can be as blinding as midnight; snow no less than sun can cause a vision distortion. Like Zora Neale Hurston, another great daughter of the South, Harris lets her vision be tempered by her love. And make no mistake, the South of Black Americans, is a love story. *SUMMER SNOW* reminds us of that... causes us to remember that... lets us celebrate

that."

--Nikki Giovanni

"SUMMER SNOW is the classic we have been waiting for--the classic that only a "Black daughter of the South" could have written. It has dance and song, color and texture, pathos and humor, analysis and introspection, and a gallery of fascinating women and men we can never forget."

--Gloria Wade Gayles, author of PUSHED BACK TO STRENGTH

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