

POETRY

EDITED BY CAROL BAILEY AND STEPHANIE MCKENZIE
WITH AN AFTERWORD BY TANYA SHIRLEY

“What to say of Pamela Mordecai’s poetry? Juicy. The salt juice of living blood. The sweet, liquid whispers of desire dripping from full lips. The acid venom of righteousness spat in the eye of the wicked.” —Nalo Hopkinson, author of *Brown Girl in the Ring*

“Pamela Mordecai’s facility with language, her striking rhythms and wordplay, and above all her wicked humor, lift her poetry from the pull of madness to the divine.”
—Olive Senior, poet laureate of Jamaica

“Mordecai’s work gives us courage and reminds us to live fully, both in language and in the world. It is also specifically a witness to Caribbean history, Jamaican realities, and personal love and grief. It is, in short, brilliantly gifted, blessed, and true.”
—Elaine Savory, author of *Jean Rhys*

A Fierce Green Place: New and Selected Poems brings together, across the span of thirty-plus years, the rebellious, innovative work of the Jamaican-born Canadian writer Pamela Mordecai. From her acclaimed first collection, *Journey Poem*, to the moving elegy for her murdered brother in *The True Blue of Islands*, to the stories of freed slaves told in *Subversive Sonnets*, and on to her dazzling reimaginings of biblical stories, this collection—Mordecai’s first book published in the US—highlights the astounding range and depths of a poet whose poetry has been described by Kamau Brathwaite as “brilliant,” by Kwame Dawes as “deeply felt and immaculately crafted,” and by Edward Baugh as “heady, sensuous, intoxicating, dangerous, and painful.”

Mixing Jamaican Creole with standard English, profanity and reverence with Patwa and blues, Mordecai’s words, written out of a “womb-space” of sound and power, shine through neocolonial violence and patriarchy. As the poet Tanya Shirley writes in the afterword to this edition, Mordecai’s poetry “represents the people, culture, and topography of the Caribbean in multidimensional, complex ways.”

PAMELA MORDECAI, born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1942, is the author of several collections of poetry, children’s books, and language-arts textbooks for the Caribbean, a collection of short fiction, and a novel. She is also the coauthor of a historical-cultural study of Jamaica. She lives in Toronto.

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PAMELA MORDECAI



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