



★ **Embodied: An Intersectional Comics Poetry Anthology**

Wendy Chin-Tanner, Editor

Tyler Chin-Tanner, Editor

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Verse and visuals meet, with spectacular results, in the graphic anthology *Embodied*.

Poetry is a visual medium, not just an oral one: the placements of words and blank spaces are often intended to appeal to the eye, and they affect the interpretation and enjoyment of a poem. This book makes full use of the opportunities for color and page design that are inherent to comic books—here, used to maintain or enhance the impact of poems.

The poems and their graphic interpretations come from a lineup of award-winning women, trans, and nonbinary creators. After each artist's adaptation, the original text-only version of the poem is included, allowing for interesting comparisons. Some adaptations preserve the original appearance of the text, while others take a different tack, splitting or combining lines for a particular effect.

The art is attractive and imaginative. In “Bassam,” a metaphor is depicted as something more than just a figurative truth: “Each morning my heart is / a vulture beating its wings for scraps,” it says. The words are accompanied by images of a scavenger alighting on a shoulder. Images from the poems are given form and shape, sometimes with daring, unexpected approaches, and always in ways that are complementary. The variation among the art and writing styles keeps every segment fresh and exciting.

A study guide forwards two stimulating questions about each poem, regarding their subjects, techniques, and interpretations—enough discussion material to fill a university-level course. Also included are rough sketches from the various adaptations—a fascinating glimpse into artistic processes.

This book bridges the gap between comics and poetry, combining the best of both worlds. With a portion of the proceeds benefiting the International Women's Health Coalition, *Embodied* is a wonderful book that's well worth engaging.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2021)

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