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WHAT THE JURORS SAID ABOUT *THE POLISHED HOE*

The Commonwealth Writers Prize 2003 for Best Book

"Beautifully drawn, elegantly rendered, a tour-de-force, *The Polished Hoe* is a wide-ranging epic in which the experience of several generations of women is masterfully realized. Beginning in a chilling statement made to a policeman after a murder, a woman's voice, speaking in the shadowy reaches of a plantation house in the 1950s slowly uncovers layers of disturbing history. But Mary-Matilda is more than protagonist, she is a haunting that leaps outside the pages of the novel and indicts empires of colonialism and masculinity; she is the unsettled presence, the un-beheld, the un-held, the fetishised, un-loved. In her singular and final act of self-narration her mind is dangerous, her hand ultimately and inexorably nightmarish. *The Polished Hoe* is a richly crafted novel which eludes, defies categories; it is variously wistful and agonizing, ironic and sensual; a tragic tale, relentlessly wrought."

The 2003 Trillium Book Award

"Austin Clarke has transcended the earlier achievements of his already illustrious career with *The Polished Hoe* by composing a Faulknerian evocation of the Caribbean voice, recounting a somnolent, nocturnal dialogue between a black murderess and a black constable, both of whom confront the racist horror of their own past as they divulge the secrets of both their love and their loss."

The 2002 Giller Prize

"Austin Clarke's *The Polished Hoe* is a symphony of Caribbean life and history that arranges the jangle of race and class, rage and passion into an eloquent composition, part slave narrative, part love ballad, part Shakespearean opera, sung against the backdrop of one woman's life. A master of narrative strategies and orchestrations, Clarke creates in Mary Mathilda an evocative and elegant voice that turns the written word into oral performance and fills our imaginations with the smells and sounds and silences of a world seldom seen and little understood."



THE BUKOWSKI AGENCY

ABOUT *THE ORIGIN OF WAVES*

**WINNER OF THE ROGERS COMMUNICATION WRITERS DEVELOPMENT TRUST PRIZE
FOR FICTION**

"*The Origin of Waves*, Austin Clarke's eighth novel since 1964, ought to provide 'the grand-daddy of African-Canadian literature' with the widespread recognition long overdue him, primarily because Clarke has just happen to write one bejesus good book built to stand the dual tests of tradition and time."

THE TORONTO STAR

"The book contains some of Clarke's best writing ever.... Best of all is the skilful way Clarke can, in a single passage, slip seamlessly from memory to the present and back again."

MACLEAN'S

"Clarke riffs a slow, languorous tale that ultimately becomes a tough, raucous bittersweet peeling away of decorum, infused with ruminations on memory, history and the role of the past."

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, TORONTO

"Austin Clarke not only writes in a voice that is entirely his own, he is also one of the more talented novelists at work in the English language today.... His fiction is unique, surprising, comfortable until the moment when it becomes uncomfortable. Then you realize you have learned something new that you didn't want to know -- and it's essential knowledge. And so on you go, alternately congratulating and cursing Austin Clarke."

NORMAN MAILER



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ABOUT THE WORK OF AUSTIN CLARKE

"Uncommonly talented, Clarke sees deeply, and transmits his visions and perceptions so skillfully that reading him is an adventure."

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

"A beautiful, comic, innovative, spellbinding and tragic novel... Clarke has a matchless ear for dialogue, he is a master of several idioms. He succeeds in making his pages brilliant. In fact, *The Meeting Point* is a treat from beginning to end."

BOSTON GLOBE

"Mr. Clarke is masterful at delineating the oppressive insecurities of Bernice and her friends... Bernice emerges as a large-souled heroine, whose progress one awaits in the next installment of what is planned as a trilogy."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

"A brilliant piece of writing. Clarke is magnificent in transferring to print the music, the poetry, the complete aptness of the West Indian dialogue. It is comic, tragic, it is all shades in between. And as prose it is as near poetry as prose can become."

CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

"*The Meeting Point* is a brilliant novel by a brilliant black writer... full of fine and delicate nuance. I feel inadequate myself to do better by Austin Clarke than to recommend to all who love good literature and entertaining fiction to read and enjoy this exceptional novel."

KING FEATURES

"The West Indians' primitive vitality and humanity in *Storm of Fortune* is rendered in an astonishing patois that produces some of the most delightful dialogue to see print in many a long year... there is enough juice in these characters to make publication of their continuing urban odyssey a thing to be awaited."

LIBRARY JOURNAL