



A DuBose Heyward Reader

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DuBose Heyward (1885-1940) was a central figure in both the Charleston and the Southern Renaissance. His influence extended to the Harlem Renaissance as well. However, Heyward is often remembered simply as the author of *Porgy*, the 1925 novel about the poorest black residents of Charleston, South Carolina.

Porgy?the novel and its stage versions?has probably done more to shape views worldwide of African American life in the South than any twentieth-century work besides *Gone with the Wind*. This volume acquaints readers with writings by Heyward that have been overshadowed by *Porgy*, and it also plumbs the complex sensibilities of the man behind that popular and enduring creation.

James M. Hutchisson's introduction relates aspects of Heyward's life to his creative growth and his gradual shift from staunch social conservatism to a liberal (though never revolutionary) advocacy of black rights. The reader collects ten essays by Heyward on topics ranging from an aesthetics of African American art to the history of Charleston. Heyward's poetry is represented by eighteen pieces from the collections *Carolina Chansons*, *Skylines and Horizons*, and *Jasbo Brown and Selected Poems*. Also included are three song lyrics Heyward wrote for the opera *Porgy and Bess*. The sampling of Heyward's fiction includes the stories "The Brute" and *The Half Pint Flask* and excerpts from the novels *Porgy*, *Mamba's Daughters*, and *Peter Ashley*.

Here is an ideal introduction to a figure whose inner conflicts were closely tied to those of his beloved South: struggles between privilege and poverty, black and white, and art for the few versus art for the masses.

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