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Dancing on the Precipice

poems

Mary Moore Easter

Mary Moore Easter introduces this new collection, her fifth, with a vivid rendering of her open-heart surgery and the removal of a life-threatening aneurism. She recounts the vicisitudes of more than a year of healing and gradual recovery, during which time she was motivated and inspired by many sources inside and outside her culture, including her connection to ancestral West Africa. Making use of modern technology, several poems are accompanied by QR codes through which readers can listen to Easter sing her songs, reveling in the link between her spoken ancestry and the legacy alive in her children and grandchildren. In the midst of widespread political turmoil, Easter's new collection celebrates the renewal of life that surgery has made possible and the ardor that accompanies it. These poems sing, dance, and love, on the edge of the mysterious precipice that shapes our lifespan.

About the Author

Mary Moore Easter is the author of four books of poetry: *From the Flutes of Our Bones*, *The Body of the World*, *Walking from Origins,* and *Free Papers*. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Christian Century*, *Water~Stone*, *SoFloPoJo*, and other publications, She was Poet-in-Residence for the 2022 Source Song Festival.

Born during segregation in Petersburg, Virginia, to parents on the faculty of Virginia State College (now University), Easter was as immersed in their artistic and intellectual interests. Her adult career as an independent dancer/choreographer and founder and director of Carleton College's dance program overlapped with writing as a Cave Canem Fellow at the foundation for African American poetry. Her awards include Pushcart Prize-nominations, a Bush Artist Fellowship in Choreography, multiple McKnight Awards in Interdisciplinary Arts, and The Loft Literary Center's Creative Non-Fiction Award. In 2022, Carleton College named the new studios in the Weitz Center for Creativity to honor her legacy: the Mary Easter Dance Studios.

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