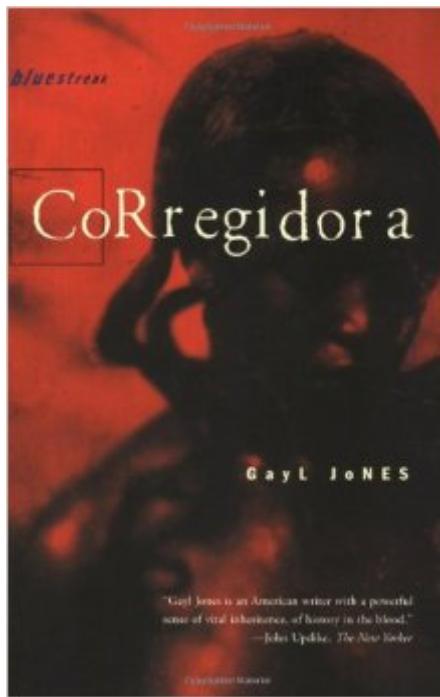


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Corregidora



Synopsis

Here is Gayl Jones's classic novel, the tale of blues singer Ursa, consumed by her hatred of the nineteenth-century slave master who fathered both her grandmother and mother.

Book Information

Series: Bluestreak

Paperback: 192 pages

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (34 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

From the time that Ursa Corregidora is able to listen, she is told by her great-grandmother that she must retain "the evidence" in order to pass it on to her children. Initially, one would think this is a harmless request. However, "the evidence" is an oral history of how her great-grandmother was raped and then used as a whore by her white slave owner, Corregidora, as was her daughter (Ursa's grandmother) after her. Corregidora then impregnates Ursa's grandmother (his biological daughter) to produce Ursa's mother. Not only is this a disturbing history for a child to commit to memory, but her great-grandmother's resentment and distrust of men were also passed onto a young Ursa. Although Ursa had a black father, she resembles the Portuguese Corregidora. Her light skin and fine hair causes her to be ostracized by black women and desired by black men. She expresses her lifelong frustrations in the form of song and has moderate success as a blues singer in the small local club circuit. Ursa finds herself suffering emotionally, verbally, and physically at the whim of her husband, Mutt, who begins to exhibit the same jealousy, possessiveness, and envy that her great-grandmother shared regarding her relationship with Corregidora. Through flashbacks and internal memories, we understand Ursa's mental anguish when trying to discern between the painful slave legacy and her present day household situation. True to the mindset of the time, a woman's

childbearing ability is looked upon as her only source of power and we see Ursula's torment further exacerbated when her ability to pass "the evidence" to her children is jeopardized. This book addresses racism, slavery, and sexism on several different levels.

A review by Dr. Joseph Suglia

When I first heard the title of this book -- CORREGIDORA (1975) -- I thought it was "corrigenda." Corrigenda: a list of errors in a published manuscript. * * * * * When a literary artist belongs to a community that is denied cultural, economic, and political authority, she is often expected to write in the name of that community. All of her work, it is assumed, deals with the common experience of "her race" -- and has no other significance besides. She becomes the spokeswoman of "her people," a substitute voice for the members of her oppressed group, who have the same problems as her. Since racism is based on the assumption of an identification between race and personhood, it should hardly be surprising that literary artists who belong to minority cultures are regarded as the surrogates of these cultures, as representatives who are predetermined to write about "their culture's" marginal status. The writing of Gayl Jones has been traditionally received in this way. Like Toni Morrison, Jones is customarily referred to as an "African-American novelist," as if the totality of her literary output were reducible to the problems of "her community," as if the communal experience of racialization were imprinted on every page that she has ever produced. The significance of Jones's Corregidora (1975), however, is not reducible to the race of its authoress. At the novel's opening, lounge singer Ursula Corregidora is shoved down a staircase by her husband, Mutt -- a catastrophic blow that results in her infertility. After she renounces her husband, Ursula enters into a relationship with Tadpole, the owner of the Happy CafÃ©, the bar at which she performs.

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