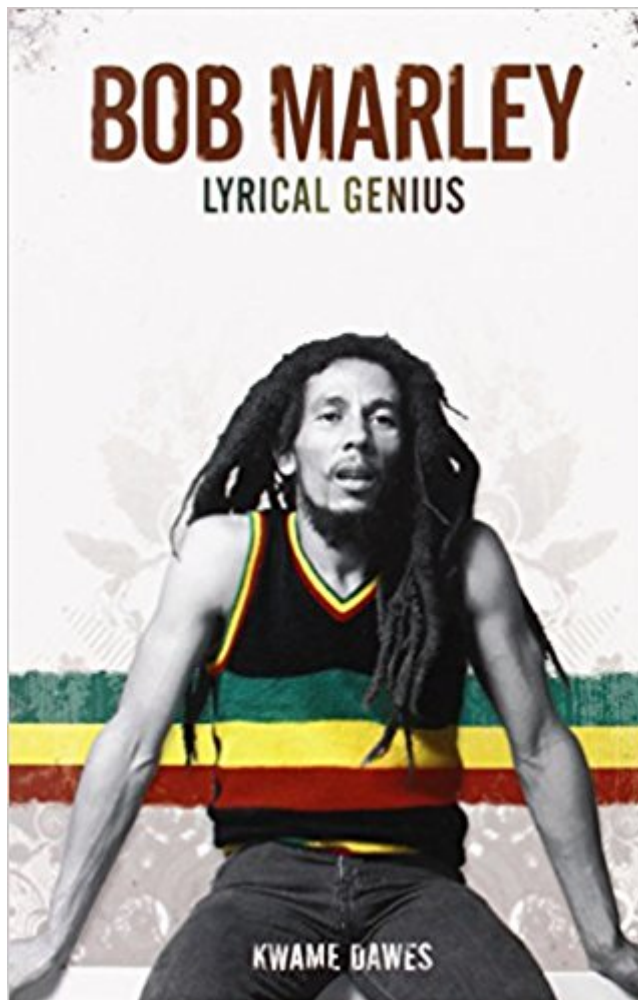


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# Bob Marley



## Synopsis

This in-depth analysis of the reggae superstar's poetry in lyric form delves into the songwriter's intellect and spirituality with scholarly precision usually more associated with Bob Dylan or John Lennon. Thought of as the folk poet of the developing world, Marley influenced generations of musicians and writers throughout the Western hemisphere. He was a performer who held true to his heritage, yet is still awarded the status of world rock star. *Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius* features interviews with key people and musicians who knew the man. It's the perfect companion to Bob Marley's recordings. Previously published by Sanctuary.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bob Marley was clearly a lyrical (not just musical) genius in league with Lennon or Dylan, and it's about time someone did an in-depth analysis and homage to the words of the master. Kwame Dawes is just the man to do it. He's a poet by trade with a very lyrical prose style of his own, making this book a very enjoyable and pleasant read. And unlike Western critics who often miss the point of reggae, Dawes is a native Jamaican who came of age during Marley's most productive era, and even lived in Bob's neighborhood for a time. Dawes uses his homegrown perspective to extremely good effect throughout this book, showing us that Marley's work was not as "exotic" or even "groundbreaking" as Westerners usually thought. Instead, it was based solidly in the long-term cultural, political, and musical traditions familiar to real Jamaicans. Dawes also has an even-handed take on Rastafarianism, explaining that it really is a rather undeveloped belief system (even in the eyes of the Rastas themselves), but it lent great strength and willpower to its devotees, most notably

Bob himself. Ultimately, Dawes is very passionate about his subject matter, especially in terms of the background and influences that shaped Marley's art. But when it comes to analyzing the lyrics, Dawes is often too passionate. Around 80% of this book is dedicated to the lyrics, and the result is an often repetitive and worshipful over-analysis, as Dawes believes that Bob can do absolutely no wrong. On average, songs receive at least four or five pages of line-by-line analysis that is often overkill, maxing out with a very unnecessary sixteen pages for "Concrete Jungle." Dawes often digs deeper into word-by-word coverage, and even syllable-by-syllable in "No Woman No Cry."

This book is remarkable in a few ways. It's one of the few books on Bob Marley that is written by a Jamaican. It's one of the few books on Bob Marley that's written by a black person. And it's one of the few books that actually pushes the envelope of what we thought we knew about Bob Marley. I have a healthy appreciation for a 'home-grown' perspective and I'm grateful to read a black Jamaican's interpretation of Marley's art and life. There are contributing factors in Marley's world that are shared by others in similar conditions and of similar make-up. These 'others' are best equipped to speak on the cause-effect relationship of life to expression. Unfortunately, the myth of "objectivism" lends more credence to a total outsider's perspective to the detriment of a more intimate account. This author lays that to waste. He doesn't shy away from discussing Marley as a black man, as a member of a global black identity, as a Jamaican, as a musician, as a Rasta, etc. Kwame Dawes is an excellent writer and he strikes me as someone I'd enjoy sitting down to talk with. This is dense subject matter and it easily could have turned into an encyclopedia. He condenses a lot of background and tangential relationships into this examination of Marley's poetry, and he does so skillfully. I did feel that the book was a bit rushed near the end, and the last chapter seems to lack some of the polish of previous chapters, but other than that, I have no complaints. I consider myself a fairly good student of The Wailers, and I feel capable of exploring the references and cross-references with others, but I have to submit to Mr. Dawes' superior insight.

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