



## **Best Black Plays: The Theodore Ward Prize for African American Playwriting**

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Within the relatively recent development of a tradition of African American playwriting, the Theodore Ward Prize has, over its twenty-year history, offered a rich reflection of the accomplishments of emerging and established black playwrights and their growing importance in shaping contemporary theater. This volume showcases three winners of the Theodore Ward Prize - plays that, in their quality and subject matter, aptly represent what is being written and produced by African American playwrights and theaters today. Carefully selected by a director and educator who has been affiliated with the contest for eighteen of its twenty years, these three works have themes that range from the sordid shenanigans of a Depression-era "South Side Burial Society" (Leslie Lee's "Sundown Names and Night-Gone Things") to a single mother's heartbreaking battle to save her children's souls (Mark Clayton Southers' "Ma Noah") to a poignant and achingly funny reunion of three sisters after their parents' death (Kim Euell's "The Diva Daughters DuPree"). Their publication answers a growing demand for the work of African American playwrights even as it affords deep and varied insights into African American culture in our era.

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