



The Freedom Business: Including a Narrative of the Life & Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa

Marilyn Nelson

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The true narrative of a slave from Africa, crafted in verse by Marilyn Nelson. Born an African prince, Broteer Furro was captured by slave traders at age six. As he stepped onto a cargo ship, the vessel's steward purchased the boy and gave him a new name: Venture. He landed in Rhode Island and worked through a lifetime of slavery to buy not only his own freedom but the freedom of his wife and children. Remarkable in his own time for his ambition and physical stature, Venture Smith became history's first man to document both his capture from Africa and life as an American slave. In this breathtaking volume, Marilyn Nelson's poems sit opposite the text of Smith's own narrative. Nelson's controlled verse layers this edition with insight into Smith's stoic eighteenth-century prose. Deborah Dancy's stark watercolor collages highlight the tension between the economical language of the narrative and the turbulent emotion within the poems.

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