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Travels with Tooy: History, Memory, and the African American Imagination

Richard Price

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Thirty-five years into his research among the descendants of rebel slaves living in the South American rain forest, anthropologist Richard Price encountered Tooy, a priest, philosopher, and healer living in a rough shantytown on the outskirts of Cayenne, French Guiana. Tooy is a time traveler who crosses boundaries between centuries, continents, the worlds of the living and the dead, and the visible and invisible. With an innovative blend of storytelling and scholarship, *Travels with Tooy* recounts the mutually enlightening and mind-expanding journeys of these two intellectuals.

Included on the itinerary for this hallucinatory expedition: forays into the eighteenth century to talk with slaves newly arrived from Africa; leaps into the midst of battles against colonial armies; close encounters with double agents and femme fatale forest spirits; and trips underwater to speak to the comely sea gods who control the world's money supply. This enchanting book draws on Price's long-term ethnographic and archival research, but above all on Tooy's teachings, songs, stories, and secret languages to explore how Africans in the Americas have created marvelous new worlds of the imagination.

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