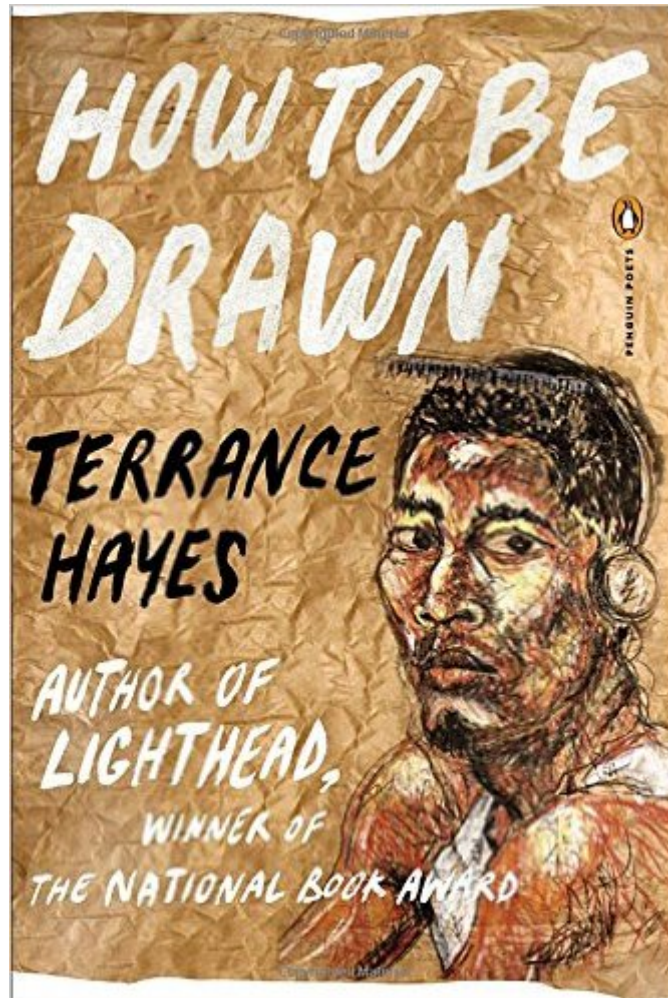


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# How To Be Drawn (Penguin Poets)



## Synopsis

A finalist for the 2015 National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award A dazzling new collection of poetry by Terrance Hayes, the National Book Award-winning author of *Lighthouse* In *How to Be Drawn*, his daring fifth collection, Terrance Hayes explores how we see and are seen. While many of these poems bear the clearest imprint yet of Hayes's background as a visual artist, they do not strive to describe art so much as inhabit it. Thus, one poem contemplates the principle of blind contour drawing while others are inspired by maps, graphs, and assorted artists. The formal and emotional versatilities that distinguish Hayes's award-winning poetry are unified by existential focus. Simultaneously complex and transparent, urgent and composed, *How to Be Drawn* is a mesmerizing achievement.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hayes's virtuosity and inventiveness remind us that the best poets go their own way, remaking form and refashioning language to do their bidding. These poems about race and cultures and life and death and God-knows-what-else gather momentum driven on by an impeccable ear for rhythm and images bursting into bloom like rare flowers. Hayes references Whitman and Emerson, but also MLK and hip-hop, Malcolm X and Mayakovsky. One poem here is in the style of a crime report, while "Instructions for a Seance with Vladimirs" is unlike any poem you've seen or heard. For all Hayes's originality, I think the poems that stick to a more traditional structure here are the strongest. "How to Draw an Invisible Man" is a

single beautifully-cadenced sentence that goes on for forty-one lines and gradually gains in power, and "Barberism" is just brilliant. This is a poet at the top of his game. (jjawilson.wordpress.com)

Terrance Hayes is one of our best poets. His readings are electric. There are some truly great poems in *How To Be Drawn*, but not all in the book are home runs. Some poems are a bit non-linear and harder to follow. But, throughout the book, a sense of urgency and vitality is maintained very well. After reading a few of the really great poems though, the reader expects them all to be great, but I guess it is a little too much to ask of any writer.

Hayes is often connected to music as influence but these poems create visual mind/body images that change the way you think about the world. Masterful work.

To be drawn is to be perceived and depicted by another. But it is also, as Terrance Hayes exemplifies in his rich, hypnotic verse, to be drawn into something, to forge an intimacy with subject matter. In his case, the subject is often artists and the art of other people, so he is both drawing and being drawn, circling around or diving in, tracing contour or visualizing from the inside out. If he uses puns, it is not to be clever, but to break open language and find what is being said inside what is being said. Poignant, clear, and deep, these poems stand up to multiple readings, full of lines to jot in the notebook to taste later. Such as: "It takes work to imagine / The ineffable, which I think is the word for something that can't be / Effed up..." His experimentation with form is amazing. I won't ruin it by describing it, except to say even a police report can have a beautiful shape. I am so grateful for this book, these poems, and for the references he so kindly offers as well, referencing his muses: Leonard Cohen, Outkast, Einstein, etc., in an included web link.

Terrance Hayes' poetry is so admirably crafted and effortless.

There is a great deal to be learned about modern poetry from this writer. Rebecca Newth

great.

yes

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