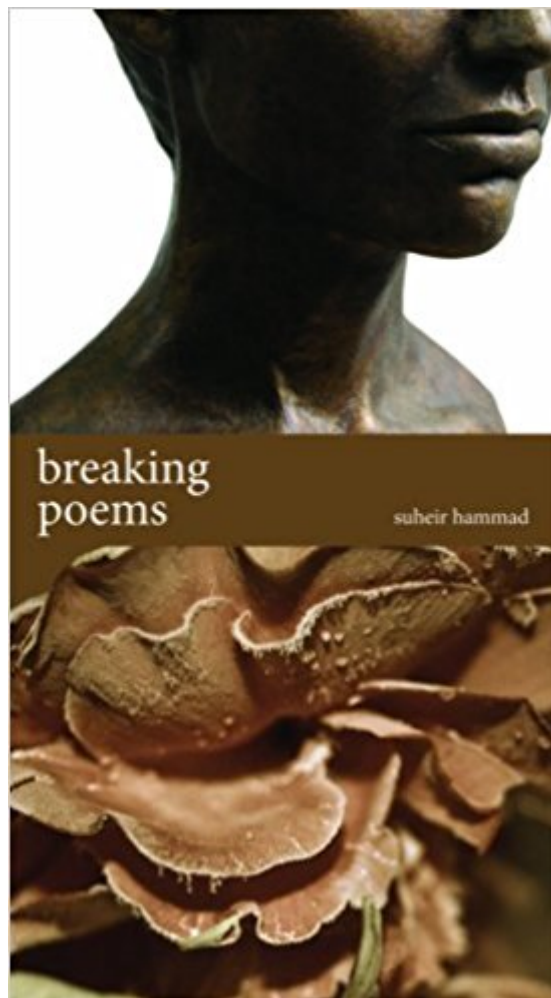


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# Breaking Poems



## Synopsis

Poetry. In **BREAKING POEMS** Suheir Hammad departs from her previous poetry books with a bold and explosive style to do what the best poets have always done: create a new language. Using "break" as a trigger for every poem, Hammad deconstructs, constructs, and reconstructs the English language for us to hear the sound of a breath, a woman's body, a land, a culture, falling apart, broken, and put back together again. "Suheir Hammad's **BREAKING POEMS** introduces English to an Arabic vernacular that startles into being an altogether new language, bridging the archipelago of a Palestine under siege to the diaspora and beyond, breaking through convention, breaking open locks on mind and heart, breaking into a music inspired by the Coltranes, Sun Ra and free jazz, Lee Scratch Perry and Ravi Shankar, a music that is at once a joyous celebration of survival and a poignant *cri de Coeur* that cannot be ignored and that Mahmoud Darwish should have lived to see. This is a poetry written for people who have endured the winds of hurricanes and invasions. What wisdom, energy, joy and poignancy Hammad brings to the page" "for all of this, and for teaching me a new speaking, I give her my thanks" "Carolyn Forché".

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars "See all reviews" (3 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Palestinian-American poet Suheir Hammad is in a class of her own. The first Palestinian on Broadway, she received a Tony Award for her performance in "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry Jam," and won a Peabody Award for the HBO series of the same name. She stars as Soraya in Annemarie Jacir's film "Salt of This Sea," Palestine's entry in this year's Academy Awards Best Foreign Language Film category. Hammad is also an accomplished playwright, as evidenced by "Blood Trinity" (2002) and "ReOrientalism" (2003). Used copies of her debut collection of poems,

Born Palestinian, Born Black, when available, sell for hundreds of dollars. *breaking poems*, her fourth collection, demonstrates Hammad's maturation as a poet and captures the Zeitgeist of this moment in the Palestinians' 60-plus-year Nakba at the hands of Zionism--a relentless attempt to eradicate an entire people which continues to this day. On a technical level, *breaking poems* represents new heights in Hammad's sparse style. As the title suggests, the poems in this collection read like messages from the front lines--heavy, measured, parsed, rationed--boiled down to essential information and elemental emotion forged by the raging fury of a battle for survival. The style suits Hammad because it accomplishes what many spoken-word poets fail to achieve: a seamless transition from the energy and cadence of live performance to the printed page. Her words, carefully considered and organized, transcend two-dimensional black and white print to encompass voice, beat, image and visceral emotion. While her previous collections read like galleries of poetic masterpieces, *breaking poems* is perhaps Hammad's first conceptualized poetic narrative. Her character in this novella is a witness to unfolding physical and psychological terror.

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