

## TEACHING GUIDE

# ROCK | SALT | STONE

by Rosamond S. King

Nightboat Books

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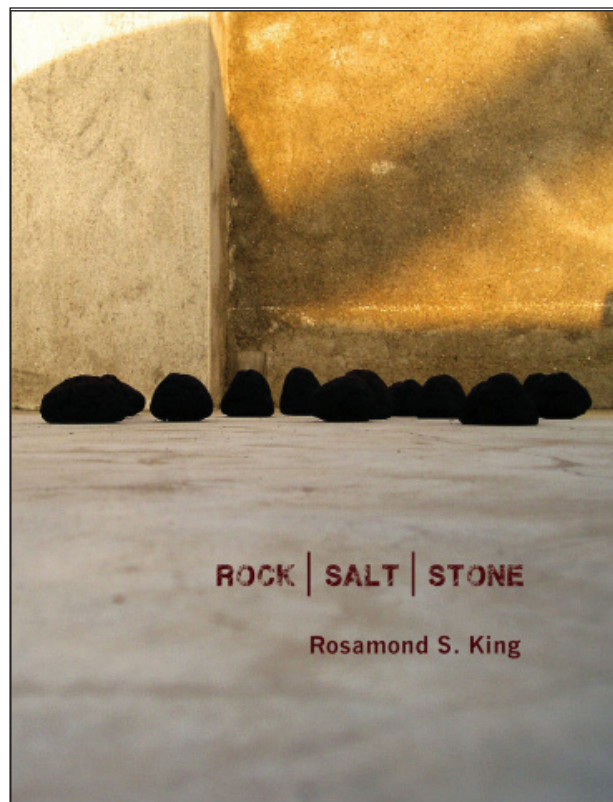
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6.5 x 8.5 in • 120 pages • Poetry

Nation language, language poetry, prose poems, spells, Caribbean nancy stories, queer issues, *Rock | Salt | Stone*, African (Yoruba) belief systems and ancestral memory all find a place in Rosamond S. King's multiplicity of forms. The embodied quality of the poems and King's willingness to confront the inherent difficulty of relationship with the Other, who is always us, grounds the work in a somatic poetics that demands the reader pay attention.

— **M. NourbeSe Philip**



Recommended Classes:

- Creative Writing
- Caribbean Studies
- Feminist Literature
- Gender Studies / Women's Studies
- Queer Studies
- African Studies
- African-American Studies
- Performance Art / Performance Studies
- Immigrant & Diaspora Studies
- Critical Race Theory

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### Invite Rosamond S. King to:

- Skype into classes in which *Rock | Salt | Stone* is being taught
- Read from *Rock | Salt | Stone*
- Teach creative writing workshops that build on the collection's content. Workshops include:
  - “You Don't Say. What Don't You Say?” – exploring writing about uncomfortable topics in literature – all levels
  - “How to Witness Your Own Work: Developing a Reading or Performance Style” – all levels
  - “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” – working with unfinished or abandoned fragments – advanced writers
- Perform work from *Rock | Salt | Stone* in her Verse Cabaret style, combining singing popular song lyrics with a performative reading of her own work
- Give a craft talk
- Give a scholarly talk on some of the issues raised in *Rock | Salt | Stone* or in King's award-winning scholarly book, *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination*
- Any combination of the above: To invite King to your campus, email [info@rosamondking.com](mailto:info@rosamondking.com)

ROSAMOND S. KING is a creative and critical writer, performer, and artist. She is also the author of the critical book *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination*. King is an associate professor of English at Brooklyn College.

# Rock | Salt | Stone Discussion Questions, Creative Writing Exercises & Teaching Tips

Listen to King read and discuss her work in the KPFWfm interview “On the Margin” 6/29/17:

<http://www.kpwwfm.org/radio/programming/archived-shows>

## General discussion questions:

Where do rocks, salt, and stones appear in the book, and what do they symbolize?

*Rock | Salt | Stone* uses different languages, including different types of English. What is your relationship to these languages? What were you taught about formal and other types of English?

King’s poems do not all have left-justified margins; instead, they often “move” on the page. How would the meaning of these poems change if they were all printed in the same size and formatting?

In what poems are music, musicality, or the sound of words important? Try reading – and singing – these poems out loud. How does sound contribute to the poem’s meaning, and is hearing the poem different from reading the poem?

## Questions & exercises related to specific poems:

“Lajabbesse in Oakland”

*Discussion Question:* What female folk characters exist in your culture(s)? How do they model “correct” or “inappropriate” women’s behavior?

*Exercise:* Write a contemporary origin story—or “origin poem”—of a folk character.

“In search of a word”

*Discussion Question:* How do words in another language affect your understanding of the poem? If you looked some of the words up, does understanding their meaning change your reading of the poem? Why or why not?

*Exercise:* Write down all of the words you know in a particular language, including names, foods, and common words such as bodega or savoir-faire, and even words that you don’t know the meaning of. Then write a poem incorporating all of the words you listed, but not necessarily using them in a literal way.

“Spit in a well”

*Exercise:* In three words or less, write one tangible thing you’d really like right now, and (also in three words or less) write one intangible thing – an experience, a feeling, a state of being – you want right now. Write a spell that instructs the reader how to get one of these things.

“Eperimints in Spellchick”

*Exercise:* Identify a poem or work of prose that is 20 lines or less. Replace as many of the words or syllables as possible with homonyms or near-homonyms. Try to create a work that retains some of the original meaning and adds additional layers of meaning.

The Shadow Poems

*Exercise:* (adapted from an exercise by Erica Hunt): Take any poem you have written and rewrite it. The next day, write the “shadow poem” of what you wrote the previous day, however you interpret that phrase. You can either consecutively write different shadows of a single poem, or each poem can be the shadow of the one immediately before it.