

Press Release

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NYQ Books™ announces the publication of *The Existentialist Cookbook* by Shawnte Orion



August 8, 2014 - New York, NY - NYQ Books™ is proud to announce the publication of *The Existentialist Cookbook* by Shawnte Orion. In this debut collection Orion sifts through the absurdity of modern living for scraps of philosophy, religion, and mathematics to blend into recipes for elegies and celebrations. From Kurosawa films to "Project Runway," writers to rock stars, influences are embraced and wrestled as Orion magnifies mortality through the prism of chronology and humor.

Denise Duhamel, National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist for *Blowout*

"Reading *The Existentialist Cookbook* is like attending a raucous dinner party of the imagination. Host Shawnte Orion lets you know right away that the usual two off-limit topics—politics and religion—don't apply at this gathering. *The Existentialist Cookbook* is smart, pun-filled; it's full of serious wordplay, pop culture, and inventive persona. This fusion poetry cuisine takes on haiku, haibun, and KFC. *The Existentialist Cookbook* is a delightful concoction. Bon appétite!"

Kelli Russell Agodon, author of *Hourglass Museum*

In *The Existentialist Cookbook*, Shawnte Orion finds poetry everywhere—in onions, oncoming traffic, papercuts, and even Keith Richards. This debut collection offers the unexpected, looking at life in Technicolor and tie-dye with Orion bringing a fresh, engaging, and much-needed voice into the poetic conversation. These poems are smart, funny, and poignant, and the book as a whole satisfies the deliciousness readers hunger for, something we can return again and again to savor.

Matt Mason, author of *The Baby That Ate Cincinnati*

Shawnte Orion's *The Existentialist Cookbook* is a barrel-ride of styles down swirling rapids. His poems switch voices like a chameleon switches shades (then they make fun of the chameleon just as you are thinking that), as he writes poems listed as found poems, as not-yet-written by other poets poems, as poems that come across like a party of different personalities in his head where you get a title like "Kentucky Freud Chicken" mixed with botany lessons mixed with puns mixed with lines so lovely they leave you reading slowly so as not to miss bits like: "The wind looks for sailboats, but finds/each miniscule opening/between the buttons of your/brand new jacket." Get your life jacket or water wings ready. Dive in.

Shawnte Orion attended Paradise Valley Community College for one day, but his poems have appeared in *The Threepenny Review*, *Barrelhouse*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Georgetown Review*, *New York Quarterly* and many other journals. His chapbook *The Infernal Gaze* was published by Red Booth Review and he has been invited to read at bookstores, bars, universities, hair salons, museums, and laundromats. He hosts monthly poetry readings in Arizona.



photo by Rob Fix

NYQ Books™ was established in 2009 as an imprint of The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc. Its mission is to augment the *New York Quarterly* poetry magazine by providing an additional venue for poets who are already published in the magazine.

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