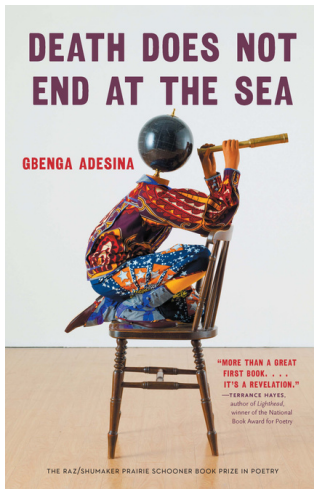


Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards*



Death Does Not End at the Sea

Gbenga Adesina

2026 AWBA Poetry Winner

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Death Does Not End at the Sea* is a choral song of grief in all its complexity. As a contemporary elegy, Gbenga Adesina pushes past the common notion that grief is rooted in only pain and that it's meant to be a period to pass through. Read 'Glory,' 'Praise,' and 'Elegy to Hands.' As you read these poems, how do you notice Adesina using both loss and exhalation in these pieces? How does that challenge your notions of what grief is and what it could be?
2. Throughout the collection, the speaker and his son travel on a spiritual pilgrimage, retracing James Baldwin's steps from the south of France and Paris to Turkey and Senegal. What is the speaker in search of? What does James Baldwin represent to the speaker?
3. In the titular poem, *Death Does Not End at the Sea*, Gbenga Adesina creates a parallel between immigrants in small boats in the Mediterranean and the middle passage. How does the water and the memory it holds show up throughout this collection? What contemporary questions around migration, citizenship, and all that immigrants must leave behind in search of a new beginning arise for you?
4. Anisfield-Wolf Book Award Lifetime Achievement Winner, Yusef Komunyakaa, served as Gbenga Adesina's mentor. In what ways do you see Komunyakaa's influence on Adesina? Pay close attention to Adesina's adept sonic abilities, and his use of fluid turns that string together historical and familial memories.
5. *Death Does Not End at the Sea* is arranged in three sections. As you read the collection, how does each section remain distinct yet also build on the next? By the time you arrive at the last poem, has the speaker evolved from the first page? Consider progression in the poems as you read them.