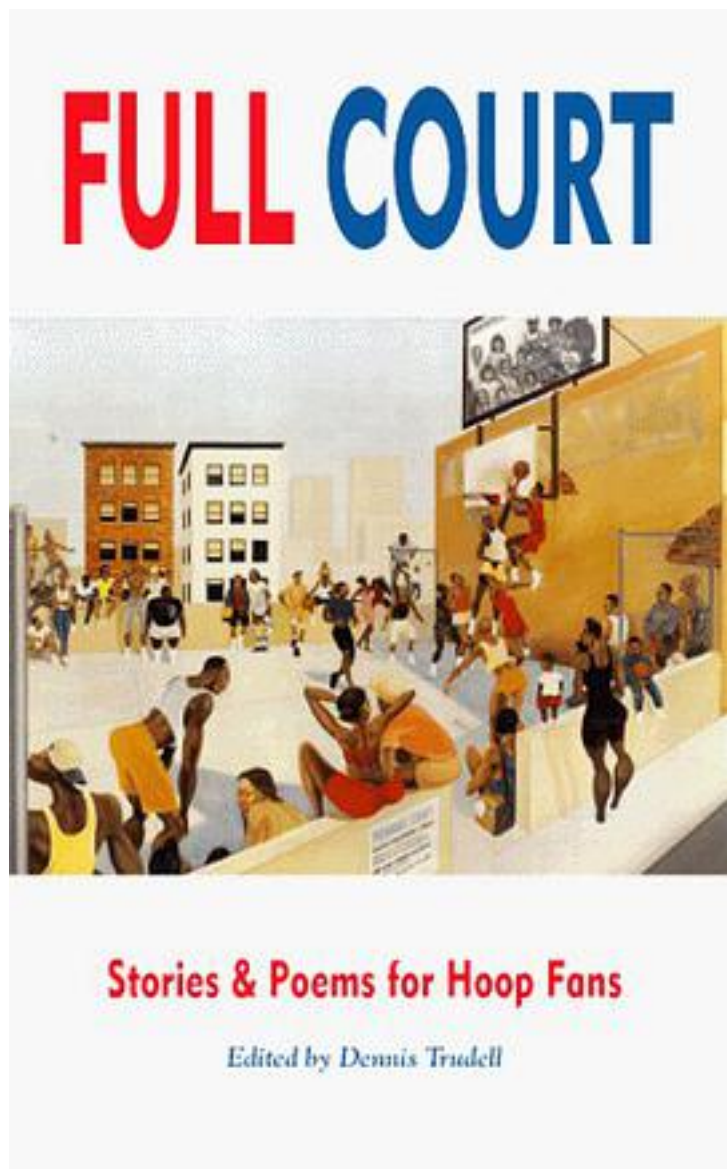


Full Court



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IntroductionDennis TrudellI wanted this book to exist because I love to read and I love basketball. And there was no gathering of strictly "creative" writing about what is surely one of our most spontaneous, creative sports. While many literary baseball anthologies were available, fans of basketball and writing had only collections of journalism, or journalism mixed with an occasional story and novel fragment. Yet basketball is now our nation's most popular sport (fifty-four percent to forty-six percent over baseball, I read in the newspaper-though we're talking about passion, and how does one measure?). Further, it is a sport that our genders and races and classes play, bumping and rubbing in confined spaces, during all seasons throughout the U. S.: from farmyards and suburban driveways to housing-project courts and packed dirt churchyards. From suction-cup hoops in college dorms to milk crates nailed on phone poles. As I write this, a boy somewhere tosses underwear at a basketball laundry hamper; a girl in pigtails shoots alone in a haybarn; a seventeen-year-old slams an imaginary ball through a netless rim above smashed crack vials. I once scored sixteen points in a grade-school intramural game to lead "Yale" to a championship over "Army." That is not very interesting to anyone else, but is of lasting importance to me. I had only scored six other points all season; and whatever else happened that day in Morris Peabody's gym-he who in 1950 insisted we shoot underhand free throws-I left there in love with a hole ten feet in the air. With a love song and story, I could never quite tell enough. One that later years on other courts, in driveways and parks and schools (on auditorium stages or gyms trespassed on weekends), would broaden and deepen. I learned the joy of jump shooting while learning the one of reading-during those indelible, crazed teenage years of learning to hide erections after glimpsing bras across school aisles. Basketball and stories, basketball and desire. . . . The pairing occurred before I knew enough of this world to count my change. Before I knew enough of language to read or write any truth. The pairing has occurred, and occurs, inside countless others. How could at lea

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目录:

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