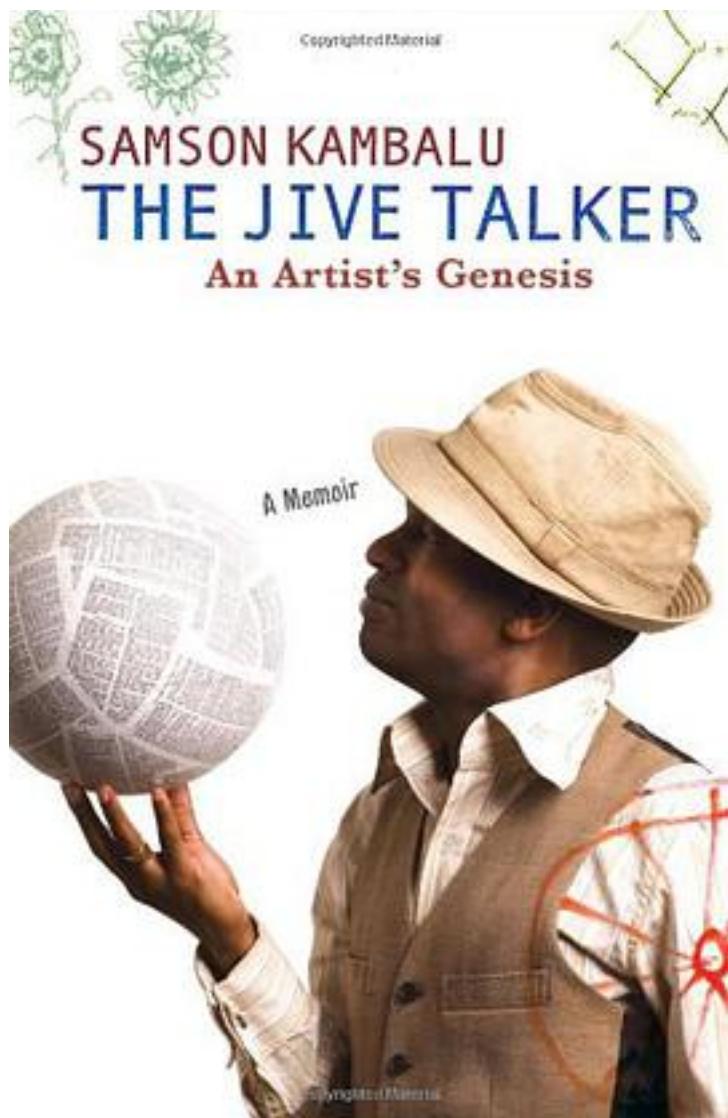


# The Jive Talker



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What do you do when it looks like the odds were stacked against you before you were even born, when you're having trouble feeding a family that just keeps growing, when you've got a little too much of an affection for Carlsberg Brown and when the life president of your country, Malawi, keeps shuffling around the public health system that employs you, forcing you and your family into perpetual nomadism? You catch up on your reading, adding I'm OK, You're OK and Nietzsche to the bathroom library. Holding on to your dignity, you keep dressing up in threadbare three-piece suits you ordered from London back when you could afford them. You raise your head high like a giraffe and call yourself a philosopher, not a civil servant. With a bottle of beer in hand you philosophize before your mystified kids at night -- on anything from football to Shakespeare -- and you look to the future with boundless optimism. In short, and most important, you talk jive. The father of Samson Kambalu is the "Jive Talker" of this vivacious and warm, bristling and hilarious memoir. Kambalu Senior died of AIDS in 1995, bequeathing to his son a passion for words and an imagination that transcended all limitations. Described by The Guardian newspaper as "one of the artists to color the future," Samson Kambalu is one of the most successful young conceptual artists on the contemporary art scene: he has been featured in Bloomberg New Contemporaries and he has won a Decibel Award; he has exhibited around the world, including at the Liverpool Biennial with Yoko Ono and the FIFA World Cup in Germany in 2006. He is currently on a five-year artist residency funded by the Arts Council England. In this utterly original, often subversive book, Samson Kambalu introduces us to his country of birth, Malawi, an impoverished nation in which no dissent is tolerated, where political opponents are "disappeared" and where a portrait of Life President Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda is always guaranteed to be watching. It's also a place in which a little boy obsessed with Michael Jackson, Footloose , Nietzsche, girls, fashion and football can move beyond his station to become a rising star in international pop culture, creating a life-affirming expressionist philosophy, "Holyballism," along the way. Narrated with sass and charisma, The Jive Talker is a love letter to an Africa that is hardly understood, and it's a coming-of-age story that takes its place among the finest work by Tobias Wolff, Mary Karr and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

作者介绍:

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