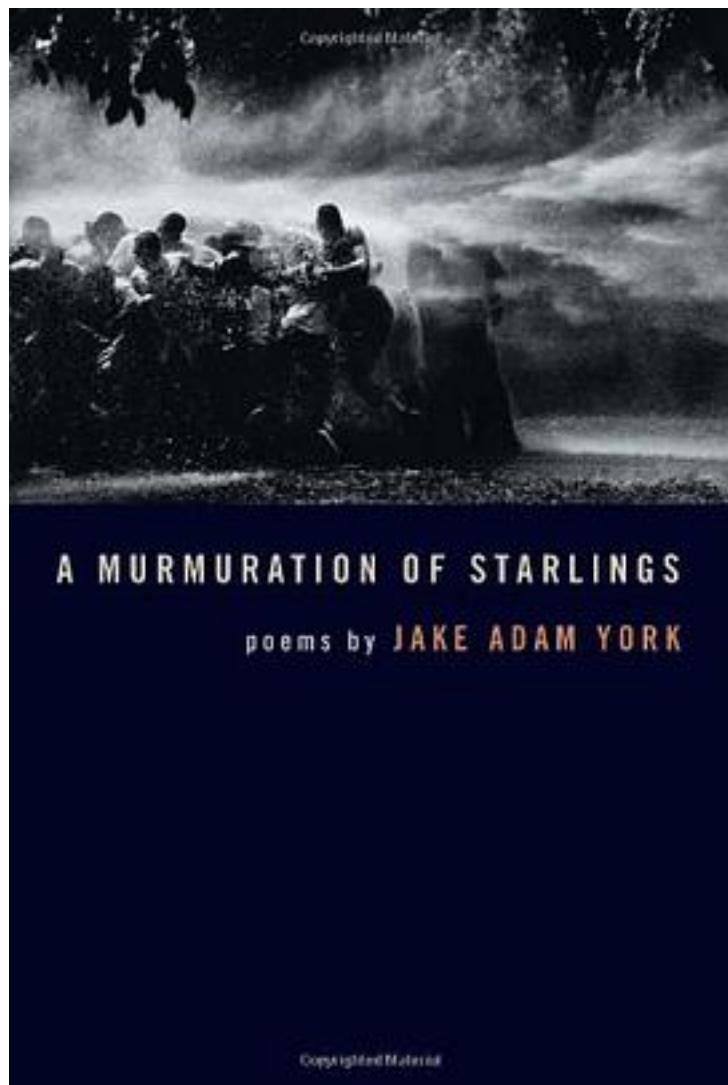


A Murmuration of Starlings



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"A Murmuration of Starlings" elegizes the martyrs of the civil rights movement, whose names are inscribed on the stone table of the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. Individually, Jake Adam York's poems are elegies for individuals; collectively, they consider the violence of a racist culture and the determination to resist that racism. York follows Sun Ra, a Birmingham jazz musician whose response to racial violence was to secede from planet Earth, considers the testimony in the trial of J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant for the murder of Emmet Till in 1955, and recreates events of Selma, Alabama, in 1965. Throughout the collection, an invasion of starlings images the racial hatred and bloodshed. While the 1950s spawned violence, the movement in the early 1960s transformed the language of brutality and turned the violence against the violent, says York. So, the starlings, first produced by violence, become instruments of resistance. York's collection responds to and participates in recent movements to find and punish the perpetrators of the crimes that defined the civil rights movement. "A Murmuration of Starlings" participates in the search for justice, satisfaction, and closure.

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