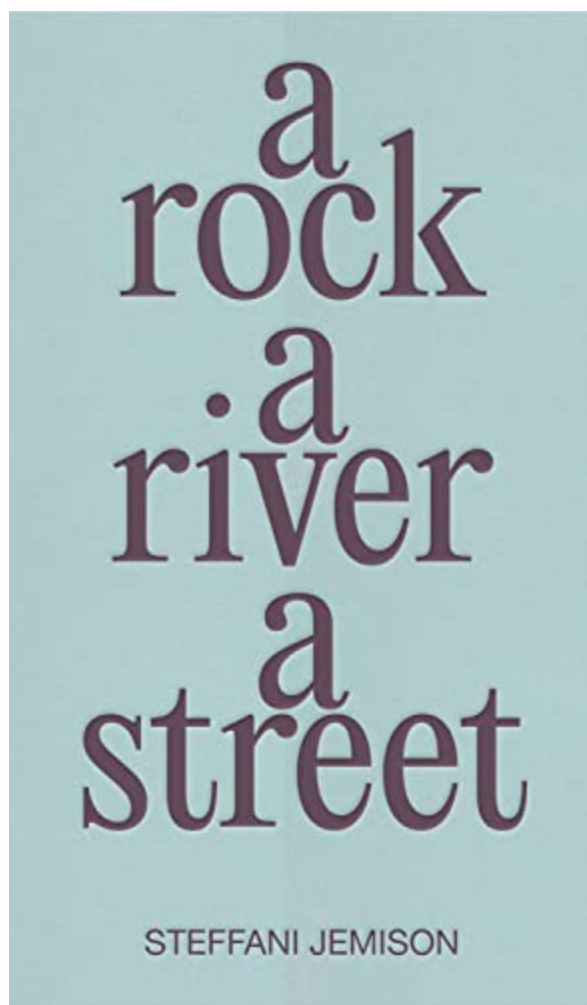


A Rock, a River, a Street

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Steffani Jemison. Primary Information, \$16 trade paper (154p) ISBN 978-1-73653-466-3

Artist and writer Jemison, whose multidisciplinary work includes *The Intuitionists*, a collaborative installation and book adapted from Colson Whitehead’s novel of the same title, makes her debut solo outing with an immersive portrait of a Black woman in Brooklyn. The reader first meets the unnamed narrator while she’s out for a walk in her East New York neighborhood, wandering aimlessly to clear her head and keep herself occupied while recovering from stress fractures caused by running. Stories blossom throughout the discursive text—the narrator encounters a new mural memorializing a man named Antwaun from the neighborhood who was killed, and talks with folks who remember him—and she keeps her eye out for a woman credited in the local paper for her social work, whose photo reminds her of the Black astronaut Bessie Jemison. In college, the narrator briefly studied dance, which Jemison describes beautifully in flashbacks, the narrator’s memories of

movement speaking to her ache to run again: “the inevitability of our desire—it felt like a spiral, like a helix from my core right into the universe.” A serendipitous dip into a Zumba class at the YMCA offers her a glimpse of new beginnings (“They were *getting down* in a way that, for me, required a few drinks and the cover of darkness”), and makes palpable the narrator’s yearning to express herself. It’s compulsively readable. (*Nov.*)