



A Choice of Weapons

Gordon Parks

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Gordon Parks (1912–2006)—the groundbreaking photographer, writer, composer, activist, and filmmaker—was only sixteen in 1928 when he moved from Kansas to St. Paul, Minnesota, after his mother’s death. There, homeless and hungry, he began his fight to survive, to educate himself, and to fulfill his potential dream. This compelling autobiography, first published in 1966, now back in print by popular demand and with a new foreword by Wing Young Huie, tells how Parks managed to escape the poverty and bigotry around him and to launch his distinguished career by choosing the weapons given him by “a mother who placed love, dignity, and hard work over hatred.” Parks, the first African American to work at *Life* magazine and the first to write, direct, and score a Hollywood film, told an interviewer in 1999, “I saw that the camera could be a weapon against poverty, against racism, against all sorts of social wrongs. I knew at that point I had to have a camera.”

“A perceptive narrative of one man’s struggle to realize the values (defined as democratic and especially American) he has been taught to respect.” —*New York Times Book Review*

“A lean, well-written memoir.” —*Time*

Gordon Parks (1912–2006) was a groundbreaking photographer, writer, composer, activist, and film director. He may be best known for his photo essays for *Life* magazine and as the director of the 1971 film *Shaft*. Wing Young Huie is an acclaimed photographer and the author of several books including *Frogtown* and *Looking for Asian America*.

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