No Ashes in the Fire.

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This coming-of-age memoir cum meditation is the introspective story of a man in search of self. Each of its chapters is what the author calls "snapshots of my life and an attempt at traversing time in search of the lessons I now know were present." If this sounds didactic, it is not. Instead, it is a cultural and political history that examines and defies the stereotypes of black life in America. Universal truths are expressed in an individual life that begins in Camden, New Jersey, where the author came from an extended, loving family of 11, realizing at an early age that he was gay and understanding that black queer life is one of solitary confinement and that his power lies in his dreams. But dreams die, Moore says, if they are consigned to the imagination only. They are seeds that must be planted for survival. And Moore is a survivor, gradually coming to terms with his homosexuality and finally finding himself in selfless service to others. His story is an inspiration.

Journalist Moore opens this courageous yet emotional debut memoir by sharing sacred recollections about his beloved family; he reflects on dance battles, barbecues, and family secrets. An honest and brave storyteller, Moore weaves a narrative reminiscent of Ta-Nehisi Coates's Between the World and Me, offering details about his relationship with an abusive father and his feelings of helplessness after finding out that his great-grandmother Elperia lost her home. An insightful portrayal of inner-city Camden, NJ, during the 1970s and 1980s is evident throughout this coming-of-age story, in which readers are able to follow the author's journey, from being harassed by neighborhood boys to enduring a stroke at age 19 and coming to terms with his sexuality. After overcoming many obstacles, Moore later focused on becoming a champion for social justice and organizing the Black Lives Matter movement.

Moore's commentary on racism, sexual orientation, and inequality makes this a must-read for our current social climate. Memoir and biography fans will eagerly consume this complex and varied account.

Moore, an editor-at-large at the content distributor Urban One and a columnist at Logo, describes his bold and candid memoir as "snapshots of my life," molded by forces of "brutality, poverty, and self-hatred." During the 1980s, he is one of a family of 11 in a three-bedroom home in Camden, N.J.; he shares memories of barbecues, dance contests, hip-hop music, and dark family secrets. One grim secret is his abusive father, a regular resident of jails in the 1970s and '80s, who routinely abused his wife. Moore's most eye-opening event occurred when neighborhood boys yelled gay slurs at the 14-year-old Moore and tried to set him on fire before an aunt came to the rescue. At age 19, Moore suffered a near-fatal heart attack, which quickened his resolve to succeed at Seton Hall University even while dealing with the stigma of being gay. Moore offers insightful comments on racism and sexual identity throughout ("The consequences of black queer desire seemed more lethal than poetic. And I did everything in my power to resist becoming what I sensed society hated"); eventually, he moved past self-hatred to a firm commitment to service and activism as a leader in the Black Lives Matter movement. Moore's well-crafted book is a stunning tribute to affirmation, forgiveness, and healing—and serves as an invigorating emotional tonic.

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CASSIUS editor-at-large Darnell Moore spoke with panelists about his memoir, No Ashes in the Fire: Coming of Age Black and Free in America, in which he detailed his life and journey to becoming an activist. Report Video Issue. Go to Live Event. Thank you all for joining us tonight, because IT's a special event. Darnell moore in conversation with michael peterson and denzel smith. Who hand pick the authors we feature in our discover great new writers program, and they'LL Tell you the truth about darnell moore's beautiful memoir, "No ashes in the fire." IT Made us cry, they'LL say. And more than one on public transportation. Yeah, really. I cannot wait for the world to read No Ashes in the Fire.”—Janet Mock, author of Redefining Realness and Surpassing Certainty. "No Ashes in the Fire is part memoir, part social commentary. Darnell honestly tells his story with an intensity and passion that offers readers a deep understanding of a gay black male coming of age who open-heartedly claims his identity, and who embraces redemptive suffering. Ultimately, he reaches out to everyone with an inclusive love.”—bell hooks. It is the captivating story of a man, a family, a community, and an age in the life of Black America in which old wounds and new possibilities meet at an earth-shaking crossroads. Moore is a reflective, contemplative, and instructive scribe. In a word, Darnell L. Moore's compelling memoir No Ashes in the Fire is vulnerable. An activist and journalist, Moore takes readers through the glorious and traumatic experiences of his self-discovery as a young queer man growing up in Camden and Philadelphia. "I wanted to write a book that would be in the hands of a young person," Moore, 42, says, "a younger version of me, someone who needs the words now that I needed when I was growing up and didn't have access to." He brings his book to Philadelphia this week with three
appearances: 7 p.m. Thursday, June 7, at