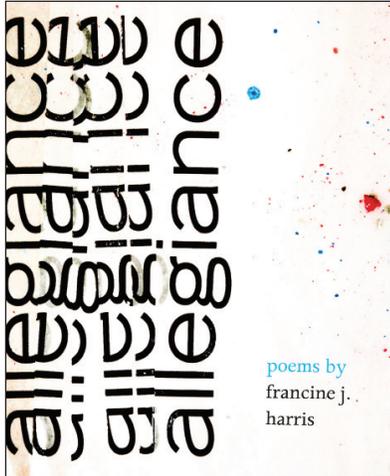




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Made in Michigan Writers Series

First collection from Detroit poet francine j. harris

Part of Wayne State University Press's Made in Michigan Writers Series

The full-length debut from francine j. harris, *allegiance*, is about Detroit, sort of. Although many of the poems are inspired by and dwell in the spaces of the city, this collection does not revel in any of the cliché cultural tropes normally associated with Detroit. Instead, these poems artfully explore life in a city where order coexists with chaos and much is lost in social and physical breakdown. Narrative poems on the hazards, betrayals, and annoyances of city life mix with impressionistic poems that evoke the natural world, as harris grapples with issues of beauty and horror, loyalty and individuality, and memory and loss on Detroit's complicated canvas.

In twelve sections, harris introduces readers to loungers and bystanders, prisoners' wives, poets pictured on book jackets, Caravaggio's Jesus, and city priests. She leads readers past the lone house on the block that cannot be walked down, through layers of discarded objects in the high school yard, and into various classrooms, bars, and living rooms. Shorter poems highlight the persistence of nature—in water, weeds, orchids, begonias, insects, pigeons, and pheasants. Some poems convey a sense of the underbelly, desire, and disgust while others treat issues of religion, both in institutional settings and personal prayers. In her honest but unsentimental voice, harris layers personal history and rich details to explore how our surroundings shape our selves and what allegiance we owe them when they have turned almost everything to ashes.

Throughout *allegiance*, harris presents herself as an extraordinarily perceptive poet with a compelling and original voice. Poetry lovers will appreciate this exciting debut collection.

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The **Made in Michigan Writers Series** is devoted to highlighting the works of distinguished statewide writers to showcase Michigan's diverse voices. Featuring the 2009 National Book Award Finalist *American Salvage*, by Bonnie Jo Campbell!