



# Song Yet Sung

By James McBride

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From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Good Lord Bird*, winner of the 2013 National Book Award for Fiction.

In the days before the Civil War, a runaway slave named Liz Spocott breaks free from her captors and escapes into the labyrinthine swamps of Maryland's eastern shore, setting loose a drama of violence and hope among slave catchers, plantation owners, watermen, runaway slaves, and free blacks. Liz is near death, wracked by disturbing visions of the future, and armed with "the Code," a fiercely guarded cryptic means of communication for slaves on the run. Liz's flight and her dreams of tomorrow will thrust all those near her toward a mysterious, redemptive fate.

Filled with rich, true details—much of the story is drawn from historical events—and told in McBride's signature lyrical style, *Song Yet Sung* is a story of tragic triumph, violent decisions, and unexpected kindness.

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## Song Yet Sung By James McBride Bibliography

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- 368 pages

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

*Starred Review.* Escaped slaves, free blacks, slave-catchers and plantation owners weave a tangled web of intrigue and adventure in bestselling memoirist (*The Color of Water*) McBride's intricately constructed and impressive second novel, set in pre-Civil War Maryland. Liz Spocott, a beautiful young runaway slave, suffers a nasty head wound just before being nabbed by a posse of slave catchers. She falls into a coma, and, when she awakes, she can see the future—from the near-future to Martin Luther King to hip-hop—in her dreams. Liz's visions help her and her fellow slaves escape, but soon there are new dangers on her trail: Patty Cannon and her brutal gang of slave catchers, and a competing slave catcher, nicknamed The Gimp, who has a surprising streak of morality. Liz has some friends, including an older woman who teaches her The Code that guides runaways; a handsome young slave; and a wild inhabitant of the woods and swamps. Kidnappings, gunfights and chases ensue as Liz drifts in and out of her visions, which serve as a thoughtful meditation on the nature of freedom and offer sharp social commentary on contemporary America. McBride hasn't lost his touch: he nails the horrors of slavery as well as he does the power of hope and redemption. (Feb.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

After a moving tribute to his Jewish mother (*The Color of Water*, 1996) and a novel about African American soldiers in World War II (*Miracle at St. Anna*, 2003), jazz musician and composer James McBride reaches even further into the past to explore the complexities and unpredictability of human nature against the backdrop of slavery. Based on actual historical figures, including Harriet Tubman, McBride's novel starts slowly but soon develops into a suspenseful, action-packed adventure. Some critics objected to the blatant social criticism in Liz's dreams of modern-day African Americans (described by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* as "frankly offensive imagery and the polemic they clearly represent"), and a few cited flat characters and overly modern idioms. However, throughout this compelling and thought-provoking novel, McBride skillfully weaves his timely message that slavery can persist in many forms.

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## Review

"McBride keeps the suspense high as he raises troubling questions about slavery's legacy, the price of freedom and what it means to be human."—*People*

"McBride...can deliver the cauterizing power of anger without the corrosive effects of bitterness....It just might turn out to be balm for a wound that has so far stubbornly refused to heal."—*The New York Times*

"Gripping, affecting, and beautifully paced, *Song Yet Sung* illuminates, in the most dramatic fashion, a deeply troubled, vastly complicated moment in American history."—*O, The Oprah Magazine*

"Powerful...A complex, ever-tightening, increasingly suspenseful web."—*The Washington Post Book World*

"Engrossing."—*The Seattle Times*

"Let McBride's beautiful language carry you back to his version of Dorchester County, Maryland, in 1850.... Noble and profound."—*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"Prepare yourself for a thrilling ride."—*Essence*

"It's hard to imagine anyone being able to write to the caliber of Toni Morrison and Edward P. Jones, but James McBride does just that in *Song Yet Sung*....McBride's characters stick with you long after the novel is finished."—*The Dallas Morning News*

"A raw and captivating story of a runaway female slave and a slave catcher, both seeking freedom, forgiveness, and love."—*Ebony*

"Deceptively simple, the narrative is clean, spare, and relentless...Beautiful."—*Portland Oregonian*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Jonah Masten:**

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or even read a book allowed Song Yet Sung? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have additional opinion?

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#### **Ira Gonzalez:**

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