

Mermaids

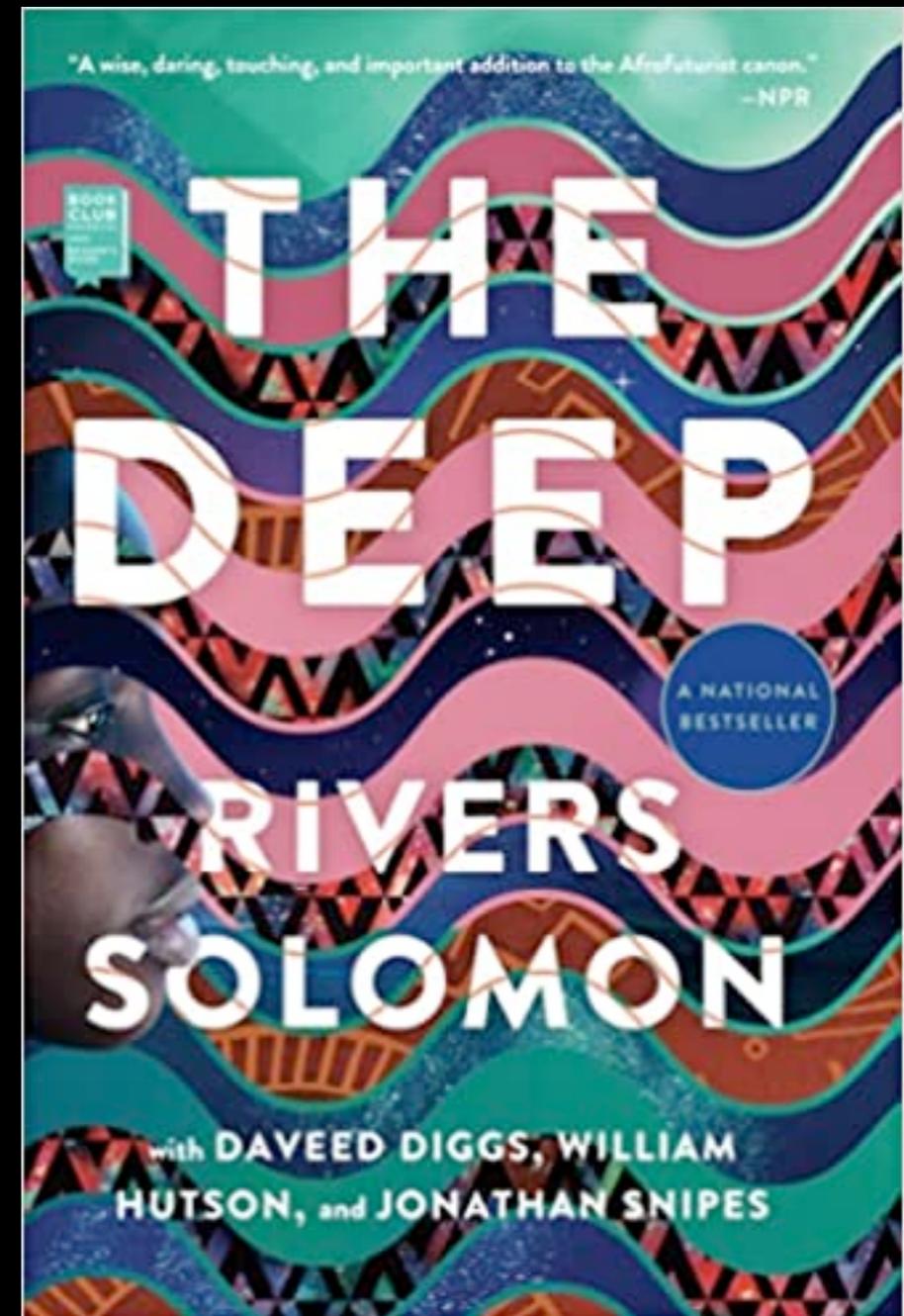
ECL 305: Literature and the Environment
Fall 2025. Professor Pressman

Day 25: Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*

The Deep (2019)

Rivers Solomon, with
William Hutson, Jonathan
Snipes, Daveed Diggs

**Lambda Literary Award winner



Discussion

- Passages to discuss?

“Afterword”

“The Deep” song by The Clipping (2017)

LYRICS

Our mothers were pregnant African women thrown overboard while crossing the Atlantic Ocean on slave ships. We were born breathing water as we did in the womb. We built our home on the sea floor, unaware of the two-legged surface dwellers until their world came to destroy ours.

Tonight, we remember.

Y'all remember how deep it go
Started from the bottom

Y'all remember how deep it go
'Fore y'all had to come back, deep
Y'all remember when it used to be deep
So deep, so, so deep, ayy
When y'all swim up out yo' mama while y'all mama was asleep
So deep, so, so deep, ayy
And y'all remember when y'all had the dance floor lit, dark
No two-step, deep, y'all don't even sweat, deep

As deep as it gets

Dreaming dead asleep and keeping time

Y'all heartbeat, deep, y'all heartbeat, deep
And all the fishes had they eyes bugged out
Cause y'all dancing underwater and y'all don't get wet

And the dark smelled sweet and y'all tails touch reef
Y'all feed off the bottom, but now y'all remember

[Chorus: Daveed Diggs]

Y'all remember
Y'all remember

Drexciya, *The Quest* (1997)

- “During the greatest holocaust the world has ever known, pregnant America-bound African slaves were thrown overboard by the thousands during labour for being sick and disruptive cargo. Is it possible that they could have given birth at sea to babies that never needed air?”
- Recent experiments have shown mice able to breathe liquid oxygen. Even more shocking and conclusive was a recent instance of a premature infant saved from certain death by breathing liquid oxygen through its undeveloped lungs. These facts combined with reported sightings of Gillmen and swamp monsters in the coastal swamps of the South-Eastern United States make the slave trade theory startlingly feasible.
- Are Drexciyans water breathing, aquatically mutated descendants of those unfortunate victims of human greed? have they been spared by God to teach us or terrorise us? Did they migrate from the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi river basin and on to the great lakes of Michigan?
- Do they walk among us? Are they more advanced than us and why do they make their strange music?
- What is their Quest?
- These are many of the questions that you don't know and never will.
- The end of one thing...and the beginning of another.”
- —<https://www.discogs.com/release/12117-Drexciya-The-Quest>

Listen

- The Deep by clippng.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yybfqEfuxPc>
-

Drexiyca

- <https://www.discogs.com/release/12117-Drexciya-The-Quest>

Take-aways?