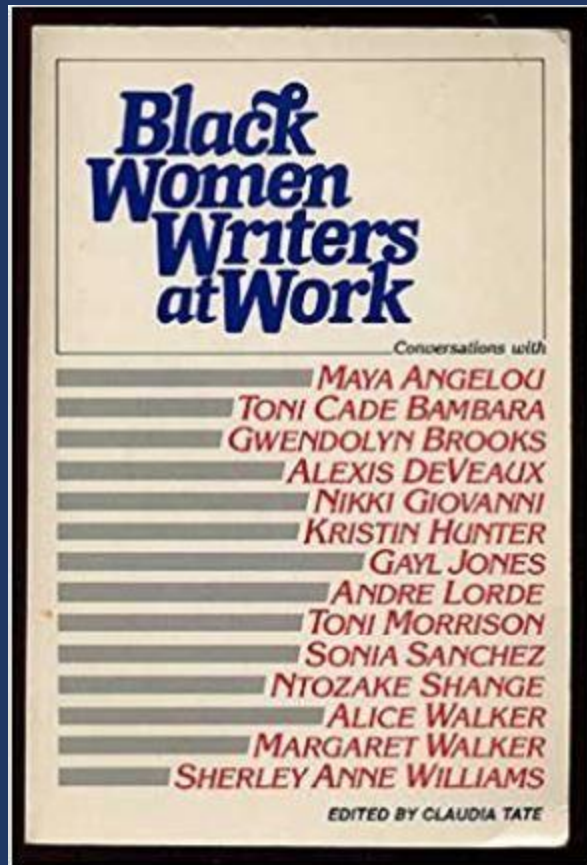


The tone and spirit of this splendid volume of conversations with fourteen Black women writers is eloquently stated in Claudia



Tate's introduction: "With one penetrating glance they cut through layers of institutionalized racism and sexism and uncover a core of social contradictions and intimate dilemmas which plague all of us, regardless of our race or gender." Responding to basic questions on the themes of why and for whom they write, and how they perceive their responsibility to their work, to others, and to society, these well-known playwrights, poets, novelists, and essayists talk about the connections between their lives and their art. Toni

Morrison notes that the longing for commercial success "is a substitute for value in your life." Kristin Hunter is "interested in the enormous and varied adaptations of black people to the distorting, terrifying restrictions of society." Toni Cade Bambara wants readers to understand why women need to keep writing their "anger, dismay, disappointment, or just sheer bewilderment" about the woman-man thing: "Women are not going to shut up. We care too much... about the development of ourselves and our brothers, fathers, lovers, sons to negotiate a bogus peace." Nikki Giovanni speaks of alienation as a force which can produce vigor: "Our strength is that we are not comfortable any place; therefore, we're comfortable every place." In this superb collection, the

answers, asides, and truth-telling are as diverse, dazzling, and large-spirited as the writers themselves.