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25 Years Ago in These Pages

“THE VALUE OF Tanure Ojaide’s collection of essays on African poetry, *Poetic Imagination in Black Africa*, lies simply in the sheer ambition of the task he sets himself. It is almost audacious and somewhat foolhardy to embark on a mission of trying to explicate the character and nature of a continent’s poetic output and, in the process, to make sweeping generalizations about the poetry written in that continent. Nevertheless, this is what Ojaide seeks to do. It is to his credit that he manages in all this to produce a book that is certainly helpful to those interested in understanding African poetry, and one that seems almost convincing about its first, fairly significant premise: that there is such a thing as an African esthetic. . . . Ojaide’s excitement about the possibility, vitality, and energy that are driving African poetry is undiminished, and ultimately it assures us that there is a tremendous amount going on in African poetry today which deserves our full attention. Despite its flaws, *Poetic Imagination* remains one of the first full-length books seeking to define important modern African poetry that I regard as important and worth a good read.”—Kwame Dawes, *WLT* 71, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 633, 634

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