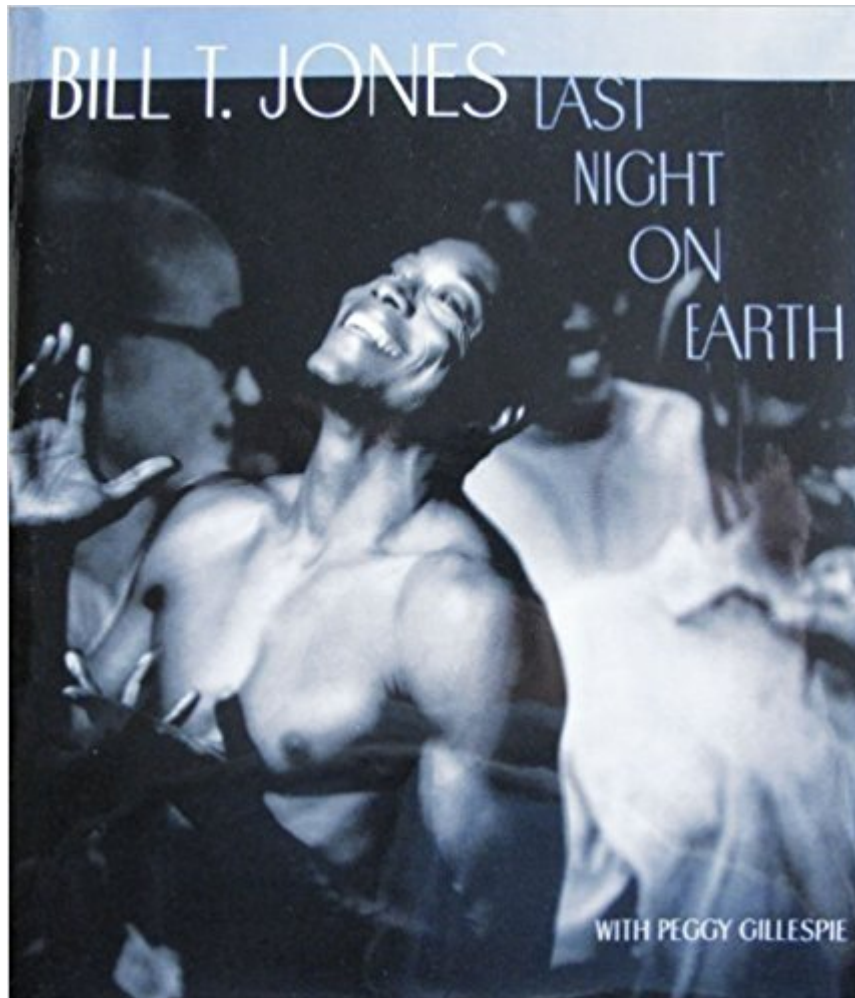




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# **Last Night On Earth**



## Synopsis

The internationally acclaimed dancer and choreographer chronicles his life, the evolution of his terpsichorean art, and his professional and personal collaboration with Arnie Zane, who died of AIDS in 1988. 30,000 first printing. \$30,000 ad/promo. Tour.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

African American choreographer and dancer Jones challenges audiences' expectations about race, sex and politics in provocative avant-garde compositions dealing with racism, homophobia, AIDS, interracial romance?subjects he knows firsthand. In 1988, Jones's longtime lover and collaborator, Arnie Zane, who was white and Jewish, died of AIDS. Jones, diagnosed as HIV-positive in 1985, remains asymptomatic but is driven by a sense of urgency. Writing with freelancer Gillespie, he describes the "survival workshops" he has conducted and videotaped around the country for people coping with life-threatening illnesses; this provided the raw material for his multimedia dance Still/Here. The son of migrant field-workers who left rural Florida in 1955 to settle in a nearly all-white upstate New York town when he was three, Jones writes affectingly of his boyhood, his bohemian years in Amsterdam and San Francisco, his struggle for artistic identity and his creative work in New York City as director of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. This is an eloquent and moving autobiography. Photos. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This autobiography takes its title from a recent work by Jones, an artist Time magazine has called

"the most versatile and inventive of America's black choreographers" (October 10, 1994). More recently, his "Still/Here," an evening-length work consisting of dance, vocals, and video images partially derived from "survival workshops" that Jones conducted with groups of terminally ill people, became the focal point of a critical New Yorker essay about "victim art." None of this acclaim, controversy, and confrontation is new to Jones; many of his works include autobiographical elements, often quite frank. Jones's performing ethos centers around depicting moral issues and social ills as well as a sense of redemption and spiritual growth. This book is like one of those performances: Jones is the focal point, and he writes about the most personal details and experiences. In a recent New York Time Magazine feature, Elizabeth Kaye described "Jones's confrontational attitude toward an audience that he is determined to captivate, educate, agitate, trouble, bond with, and incense" (March 6, 1994). He displays that same attitude toward the reader of his autobiography. Recommended for dance and gay studies collections. (Photos not seen.)?Carolyn M. Mulac, Chicago P.L.Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is a wonderful book. Buy it and read it! I got mine inscribed by both Bill and Peggy Gillespie and would never part with it. this is one you read and reread.

As a fan of Bill T. Jones's work, I purchased this book to gain more insight into his life and his process. Though I'm only part way through, I've enjoyed every chapter. The stories from his youth are written in a way that lets the reader live the funny, terrifying and character-shaping experiences that influence him. A great read. I look forward to viewing his pieces with a new outlook.

One of the best books I own

Although journalist Peggy Gillespie was involved with Bill T. Jones in writing his memoir, from hearing him speak (including reading from the book) I know that the voice in it is his and am fairly confident that he decided what incidents and topics to include. Jones has long been an openly gay dancer and choreographer, and more recently an openly HIV+ one slandered as perpetrating "victim art" (by a critic long hostile to him who condemned while refusing to see "Still/here," his attempt to craft a piece about living with terminal diseases). Jones is acutely aware of his body and the fetishization of the body of the big, black stud. He plays with that objectification on-stage and off without forgetting its cost. "My eroticism, my sensuality is often coupled with wild anger and belligerence," he says. "I know that I can be food for fantasy, but at the same time I am a person

with a history-and that history is in part the history of exploitation." It is what Jones does with his own (and others') bodies on stage, not just his physical appearance, upon which he wants to focus the interest of many: "The performer who takes the stage must believe that he is fascinating, that he or she deserves being the locus of several hundred or thousand points of attention. . . . The performer wants to be one of many, but even more, he wants to command the attention of many." As I already said, Jones's voice comes through on the page. The book is compelling as a narrative of an interesting life in a difficult time (the time of AIDS to which Jones lost his partner on- and off-stage) and as an account of the wellsprings of Jones's art.

Bill T. Jones, one of the most innovative and controversial choreographers of our time, writes his memoir with honesty, insight, and emotion. I would recommend it to any Bill T. Jones fan, dancer, choreographer, or human.

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