

Afaa Michael Weaver was born Michael S. Weaver in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1951. The son of working class parents, he attended public schools and graduated as a National Merit finalist at the age of sixteen. After two years at the University of Maryland, he took a factory job alongside his father and uncles and remained a factory worker for fifteen years. During this period, he wrote and published poetry, short fiction, and freelance journalism; he also founded 7th Son Press and *Blind Alleys*, a literary journal.

Weaver's first book of poetry, *Water Song*, was published in 1985. Six months later, he received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and left the factory to attend Brown University's graduate writing program on a full university fellowship. He received an MA in theater and playwriting at Brown, while simultaneously completing a BA in literature at Excelsior College.

Since *Water Song*, Weaver has published several additional collections of poetry, including *Spirit Boxing* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017); *City of Eternal Spring* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014); *The Government of Nature* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), for which he received the Kingsley Tufts Award; and *The Ten Lights of God* (Bucknell University Press, 2000). His full-length play *Rosa* was produced in 1993 at Venture Theater in Philadelphia. His short fiction appears in multiple anthologies, including *Children of the Night: The Best Short Stories by Black Writers, 1967 to the Present* (Little, Brown, 1997), edited by Gloria Naylor.

Weaver took the name Afaa in 1997, after the death of his first child; the name, given to him by the Nigerian playwright Tess Onwueme, is an Ibo word meaning "oracle."

Weaver has received numerous fellowships and awards, including a 1995 fellowship from the Pennsylvania State Arts Council, a 1998 Pew Fellowship, and a 2002 Fulbright Scholar appointment to Taiwan, where he taught at the National Taiwan University and Taipei National University of the Arts. Weaver retired from Simmons College, where he held the Alumnae Endowed Chair for twenty years, and is a member of the core faculty in the Drew MFA program in Poetry and Poetry in Translation. He lives in Connecticut.

Source: poets.org - Academy of American Poets