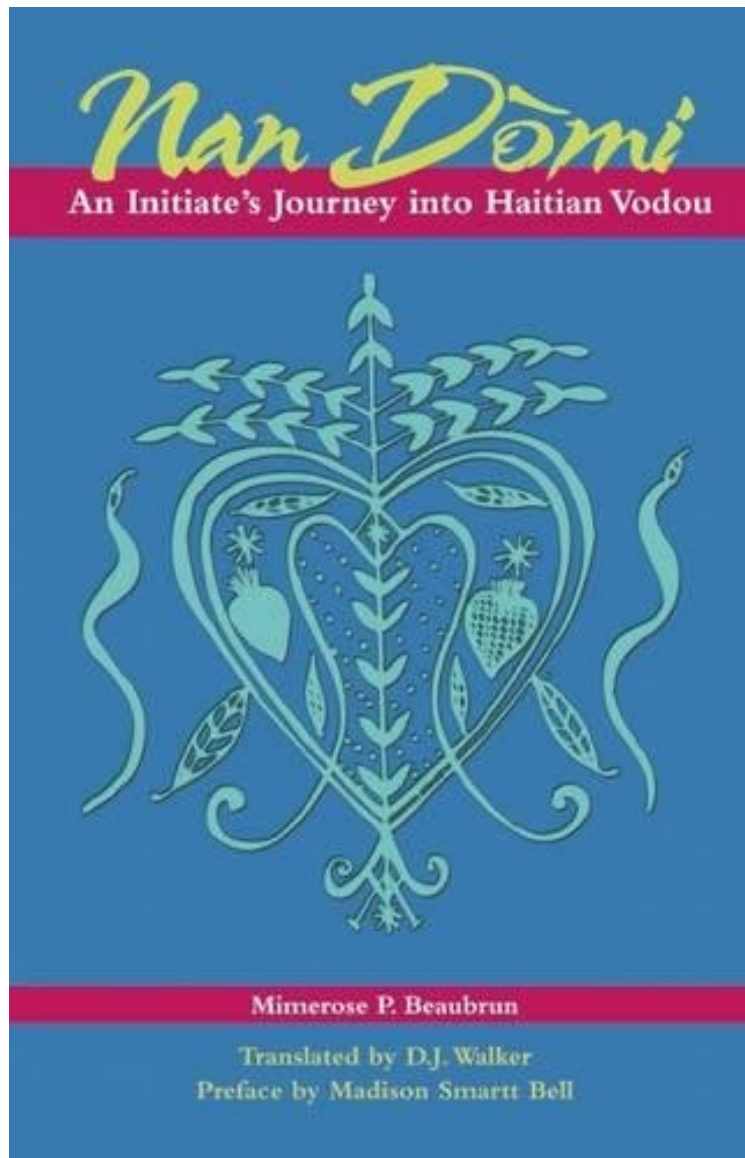


[FREE] Nan Domi: An Initiate's Journey into Haitian Vodou

## Nan Domi: An Initiate's Journey into Haitian Vodou

*Mimerose Beaubrun*

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**Mimerose Beaubrun : Nan Domi: An Initiate's Journey into Haitian Vodou** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nan Domi: An Initiate's Journey into Haitian Vodou:

19 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Mimerose Beaubrun's offers a unique understanding of Haitian Vodou!By Dr. Eoghan C. BallardThere have been a fair number of books written about Vodou over the years, almost all have been written by outsiders, some of whom were good observers. More than a few who have published books on

the Haitian religion have relied more on their imaginations than upon actual experience, often to the detriment of a healthy understanding of and respect for this spiritual tradition. There are a number of titles on the subject which represent solid research and some which may provide inspired insight, by academics, followers of the religion, and sometimes by devotees who are simultaneously academics. Among these latter authors, have been artists, and anthropologists. This author, Mimerose Beaubrun, has been both artist and anthropologist. However, she has other credentials which this book establishes, making this book unique among titles in this literature. Mimerose Beaubrun is unquestionably a visionary mystic. It is arguable that at least one other author, Maya Deren, could lay claim to those credentials. While her classic title, "Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti" provides some beautiful descriptions of Deren's personal mystical experiences, being impressionistic in character, they provide at best, a sense of what such experiences may be like, but little understanding of the mystical processes underlying those experiences. Beaubrun however, attempts to do precisely that which Deren did not. This author possesses the skills and credentials allowing her to offer her readers a better window into the spiritual realities underlying and animating the Vodou religion. As an anthropologist, she has the analytical and communication skills to elicit and interpret the knowledge her teachers and interviewees provide her. Her talents as a musician allows her to present the fruits of her study artfully and with clarity. However, it is her role as an aspiring adept in the mysteries underlying the Vodou religion that makes this book unique among the literature surrounding Haitian faith. The book provides passages reminiscent of Carlos Castaneda's books, but these I would argue, are surface similarities. There are real differences below the surface. While stylistic similarities are perhaps inevitable given the subject matter, Beaubrun does not offer the same problems that Castaneda did, either in her presentation of material or herself. In spite of the opinions of his devotees, it is generally accepted by scholars that Castaneda fabricated much of the material in his books, and in the biographical information he shared with the public. Beaubrun is legitimately a product of Haitian culture. She was born and raised in Haiti, and played a visible role in its contemporary cultural production as an important member of one of that nation's most important modern musical groups, Boukman Eksperyans. As a Haitian artist, cultural figure, and devotee of its religion, Vodou, her credentials are impeccable. This book does not purport, thankfully, to being a guidebook of how to "learn Vodou." It does however succeed in giving us a window into the experiences and more, to the processes of a mystic visionary undergoing training in the spiritual practices of a remarkable and often misunderstood religious traditions with profound depth. It should be a must read for any who seek to gain a more informed appreciation for the religious treasures of the Haitian people.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Awesome Read! By Reicheiru A very informative insight into a part of Haitian Vodou. As a Haitian, it confirms what I knew about the subject but also gave me a glimpse of the unknown.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer THANK you!

"This new and valuable book delves into the 'interior' experience of voodoo, as opposed to the usual outsider focus on ritual and cosmology. In telling the story of her own initiation and painstaking education in voodoo, Beaubrun takes us into the mystical dimensions of this ancient religion." *The Guardian UK* Like all the great religions Vodou has an external, public practice of rituals and ceremonies and also an internal, mystical dimension. Before Nan Dmi, works about Vodou have concentrated on the spectacular outward manifestations of Vodou observance: hypnotic drumming and chanting, frenetic dancing, fits of spirit possession. But practically all reports on Vodou are outsider accounts, which means that they are stopped at the threshold. Mimerose Beaubrun, educated as an anthropologist, set out to write another such work, but in the process she met the woman who would become her ultimate teacher and guide to the religion's internal mysteries: Tante Tansia, whose knowledge, wisdom and spiritual power govern the text of Nan Dmi. Nan Dmi is the only account of Vodou's private, mystical, interior practice that has been offered to the public so far. Its content stands in the same relation to ceremonial Vodou as Zen to conventional Buddhism, Sufism to conventional Islam, the practice of the desert saints to conventional Christianity. Mimerose Beaubrun has been a student of Vodou for half of her life, but she is also an adept, and in this uniquely valuable work, she divests herself of all scholarly apparatus to speak from Vodou's purest heart. This English edition includes a fascinating introduction by Madison Smartt Bell, placing the religion and Beaubrun's memoir in historical context. Praise for Nan Dmi: "Mimerose Beaubrun's book *Nan Dmi: An Initiate's Journey into Haitian Vodou* the first part of the title refers to a spiritual state is a welcome addition to the canon of vodou scholarship, a deeply felt inside account of a faith of often daunting complexity." *The Miami Herald* "Nan Dmi is a fascinating look inside the Haitian Vodou religion. Mimerose Beaubrun provides a valuable contribution taking us along into the world of Nan Dmi, a dream state and stage in the initiate's journey to mastery. In the process the reader is introduced into a world that is far more than a religious tradition. Haitian Vodou is also a way of speaking about Haiti, as Beaubrun explains, 'its language, culture, even its way of walking, of preparing food, of dressing, of making love, of communicating with unknown worlds.' The book casts its spell on the reader who persists in the journey under the tutelage of Beaubrun and her teachers. Madison Smartt Bell's excellent introduction places the religion and Beaubrun's memoir in historical context." *Julia Alvarez* "Vodou is one of the most valuable--and misunderstood--of all New World cultural creations. Mimerose Beaubrun's remarkable work opens up for the first time the internal world of Vodou, and what emerges is a singular engagement with a system of belief that cannot fail to impress any reader with its sheer sophistication and complexity. Gradually, the author

recounts the ways in which she came to know the timeless wisdom of Vodou. Absolutely essential reading for anyone interested in Haiti, or in religion and society more broadly." Martin Munro, author and editor of *Haiti Rising: Haitian History, Culture and the Earthquake of 2010*

"So Haiti, known for its natural and sociopolitical calamities, offers us a book about the immaterial, trans-rational spirituality of its Vodou, about the world beyond time and space. Most works about Vodou until now were, according to Madison Smartt Bell's superlative preface, about its external elements. Thus, Beaubrun's personalized account of her spiritual itinerary is even more valuable. Such observations illustrate the fascination of this book, which enlightens us about Haitian spirituality and provides invaluable insights into Haitian culture. Robert H. McCormick Jr., *World Literature Today*" For those looking for a first-person guide; and importantly, a Haitian guide into the ways of Vodou, Mimerose Beaubrun's *Nan Dmi* is a unique, indispensable, and mysterious primer." Amy Wilentz,