

When Your Way Gets Dark

A Rhetoric of the Blues

Jeffrey Carroll

© 2005 by Parlor Press 204 pages, with bibliography and index
ISBN 1-932559-38-8 (Paper; \$27.00)
ISBN 1-932559-39-6 (Cloth; \$54.00)
ISBN 1-932559-40-X (Adobe eBook; \$12.00)

In *When Your Way Gets Dark: A Rhetoric of the Blues*, Jeffrey Carroll presents a cluster of rhetorical and literary theories that illuminate the blues' place in our social, political, and cultural traditions. Drawing from his 35 years of blues encounters, Carroll also analyzes performers and nine historic blues performances—including the blues of Charlie Patton, Skip James, Memphis Minnie, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and others—as well as their own accounts of performances, to understand, paraphrasing Dylan Thomas, the force through which the blue fuse drives the music. *When Your Way Gets Dark* uncovers the rhetorical positions of the most significant writing and writers on the blues—Samuel Charters, Paul Oliver, Robert Palmer, William Ferris, David Evans, LeRoi Jones, Ralph Ellison, Larry Neal, Albert Murray—and seeks to find rhetorics there that may resolve or exacerbate the question of race, the blues, and audience. In *When Your Way Gets Dark*, Carroll also shows how teachers and students can—by reinventing its contexts, sound, and effects—recover the rhetorical power of the blues.

“Carroll writes about the blues with grace, style, and insight.”

— Thomas Rickert, Purdue University

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