

Derek Walcott, Poet and Nobel Laureate of the Caribbean, Dies at 87
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“For every poet, it is always morning in the world,” he said. “History a forgotten, insomniac night; History and elemental awe are always our early beginning, because the fate of poetry is to fall in love with the world, in spite of History.”

By WILLIAM GRIMES for the New York Times, Mar 17, 2017 Derek Walcott, whose intricately metaphorical poetry captured the physical beauty of the Caribbean, the harsh legacy of colonialism and the complexities of living and writing in two cultural worlds, bringing him a Nobel Prize in Literature, died early Friday morning at his home near Gros Islet in St. Lucia. He was 87. His death was confirmed by his publisher, Farrar, Straus and Giroux. No cause was given, but he had been in poor health for some time, the publisher said. Mr. Walcott's expansive universe revolved around a tiny sun, the island of St. Lucia. Its opulent vegetation, blinding white beaches and tangled multicultural heritage inspired, in its most famous literary son, an ambitious body of work that seemingly embraced every poetic form, from the short lyric to the epic. With the publication of the collection “In a Green Night” in 1962, critics and poets, Robert Lowell among them, leapt to recognize a powerful new voice in Caribbean literature and to praise the sheer musicality of Mr. Walcott's verse, the immediacy of its visual images, its profound sense of place. He had first attracted attention on St. Lucia with a book of poems that he published himself as a teenager. Early on, he showed a remarkable ear for the music of English — heard in the poets whose work he absorbed in his Anglocentric education and on the lips of his fellow St. Lucians — and a painter's eye for the particulars of the local landscape: its beaches and clouds; its turtles, crabs and tropical fish; the sparkling expanse of the Caribbean. […]

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