

Chloe Shaar, "Precious Okoyomon Is Alive in Her New Book of Poetry," *Black Book*,  
September 13, 2024



Stories / Arts & Culture

# PRECIOUS OKOYOMON IS ALIVE IN HER NEW BOOK OF POETRY

In 'But Did You Die?' the artist explores the philosophical belief that humanity, the universe, and nature are all interconnected.

SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

CHLOE SHAAR



Image courtesy Serpentine.

Precious Okoyomon recently released their latest collection of poems, *But Did You Die* with a celebration at The Warburg Institute in London. Produced by Serpentine and Wonder, the collection is a tender expression of the naturalistic and intimate relationship we share with ourselves and the world, through poetry, and various writings and drawings.

The delicate book explores a range of topics from light hearted commentary on everyday life, like lesbian witches and 'shitty martinis,' while also diving deeper into topics like grappling with our inner ego, indescribable feelings of loneliness within the human existence and the existential but inescapable dread of getting older. While Okoyomon seems to be speaking from personal experiences, their words also feel like commentary on spaces they and their community tend to occupy.

Throughout *But Did You Die*, drawings of flowers and woodland creatures are embedded into the pages or side by side with the poetry, complementing the work and providing a palette cleanser to the thought provoking words they live next to. Okoyomon is able to metaphorically explore the role nature has played in racialization throughout human history and within modern society. Their writing style features a certain millennial tone, as internet style abbreviations are used while also creating a serious tone around heavier topics.



Precious Okoyomon: *But Did You Die?* © Serpentine and Precious Okoyomon

Okoyomon is a Nigerian-American poet and artist, whose past work has explored topics of international migration, and the ways in which the natural world is tied into these indisputably atrocious human histories. Their work explores the beauty of the natural world, and the ways that human experience is naturally connected to it. Nature is the backdrop for colonialism, racism, and migration, as new areas of the world were discovered and new elements used for economic gain.

*But Did You Die* explores the philosophical belief that the universe, nature, and reality are all interconnected, with the title itself exposing the question of what it really means to be alive. All living things hold individualistic experiences that differentiate them from the things around them, yet are connected because they occupy the same settings.

In *But Did You Die*, Precious Okoyomon explores the idea of the inner self and how that relates to overall human existence while also questioning the lifeline of people and things.

*But Did You Die* is a book of poems written by Precious Okoyomon, and produced by Serpentine and Wonder.