



# Buck Studies

*Douglas Kearney*

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## **Buck Studies** Douglas Kearney

"[Douglas Kearney] is at the other end of the century, using a multicultural voice inflected with the concerns of what it means to be a young black man at this time and at this place."—*The Los Angeles Times*

Dynamic poet, performer, librettist, and professor Douglas Kearney's works speak to those who are listening to what our living, material language has to say about race and history. At the hub of *Buck Studies* is a long mash-up of the stories of Herakles, the Greek bad-man, and that of Stagger Lee, the black bad-man. "Stagger Put Work In" examines the Twelve Labors Herakles performed to atone for murdering his family through Stagger Lee's murder of black man Billy Lyons. What is enacted by this appropriation is an exhaustion of forms—gangsta rap and its antecedent, the murder ballad.

*only good one dead one we scold our mirror. should've been dead  
before Stagger wrassled it bull-headed red-blind muscle-a-muscle.  
bully and bull stagger the city levee round round round.*

**Douglas Kearney** resides in Altadena, California, and teaches at California College for the Arts. His degrees are from Howard University and California Institute of the Arts. He is the author of three previous poetry collections; his work appears in many anthologies including *Role Call: A Generational Anthology of Social and Political Black Art & Literature*. His honors include a Cave Canem fellowship, a Whiting Writers Award, and commissions from Minneapolis's Weisman Art Museum and New York's Studio Museum.

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