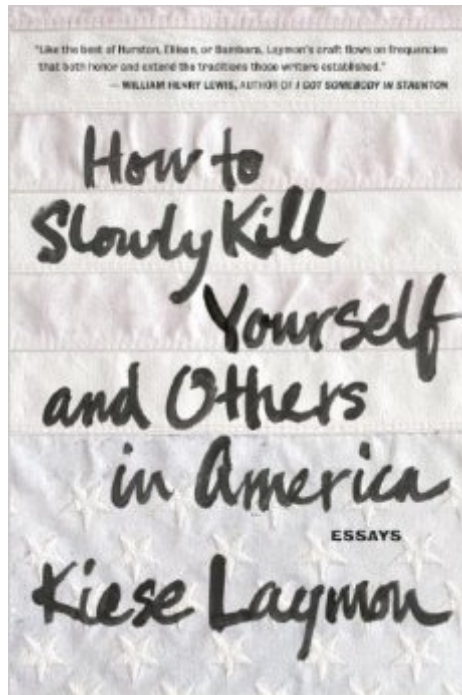


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# How To Slowly Kill Yourself And Others In America



## Synopsis

Author and essayist Kiese Laymon is one of the most unique, stirring, and powerful new voices in American writing. *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America* is a collection of his essays, touching on subjects ranging from family, race, violence, and celebrity to music, writing, and coming of age in Mississippi. In this collection, Laymon deals in depth with his own personal story, which is filled with trials and reflections that illuminate under-appreciated aspects of contemporary American life. New and unexpected in contemporary American writing, Laymon's voice mixes the colloquial with the acerbic, while sharp insights and blast-furnace heat calls to mind a black 21st-century Mark Twain. Much like Twain, Laymon's writing is steeped in controversial issues both private and public. This collection introduces Laymon as a writer who balances volatile concepts on a razor's edge and chops up much-discussed and often-misunderstood topics with his scathing humor and fresh, unexpected takes on the ongoing absurdities, frivolities, and calamities of American life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The publicist describes Kiese Laymon as a "black 21st-century Mark Twain," a curious sort of notion I was eager to test, and now, having read the book, am just as eager to reject. Laymon isn't some reconstituted version of a white man. Did the person who wrote this description even bother to read the book? Or was he just looking to strut some stuff, even stupid stuff, for the sake of a sale? Laymon has a voice all his own. He's just now starting to hit his stride. Where this voice takes him, and us, is a long way from certain. I can say this much with confidence: He has my attention. Some

of the writing is obvious. Young men of color are born on parole. There may no longer be plantations, and Jim Crow is no longer the stated law of the land, but the color line still separates and divides: The white world can swing and miss on the road to maturity; young black men cannot. We still have zero tolerance when it comes to race. Say otherwise, and prove yourself to be a fool. *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America*, is a collection of essays about music, race, rage, self-destruction and the discovery of voice. I liked most of what I read, even when it backed me into a corner white men don't like to face. Tucked away at the end of the fictive debate between presidential candidates Barack Obama and Mitt Romney moderated by Laymon are the following lines, spoken to Romney: "You? You were born rich. You will die rich. Help the country by teaching your people to be just and thoughtful losers.

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