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Sister Circle: Black Women and Work

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Although black women's labor was essential to the development of the United States, studies of these workers have lagged far behind those of working black men and white women. Adding insult to injury, a stream of images in film, television, magazines, and music continues to portray the work of black women in a negative light. Sister Circle offers an innovative approach to representing work in the lives of black women. Contributors from many fields explore an array of lives and activities, allowing us to see for the first time the importance of black women's labor in the aftermath of slavery. A brand new light is shed on black women's roles in the tourism industry, as nineteenth-century social activists, as labor leaders, as working single mothers, as visual artists, as authors and media figures, as church workers, and in many other fields. A unique feature of the book is that each contributor provides an autobiographical statement, connecting her own life history to the subject she surveys. The first group of essays, "Work It Sista!" identifies the sites of black women's paid and unpaid work.
In "Foremothers: The Shoulders on Which We Stand," contributors look to the past for the different kinds of work that black women have performed over the last two centuries. Essays in "Women's Work through the Artist's Eyes" highlight black women's work in literature, drama, and the visual arts. The collection concludes with "Detours on the Road to Work: Blessings in Disguise," writings surveying connections between black women's personal and professional lives.

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