



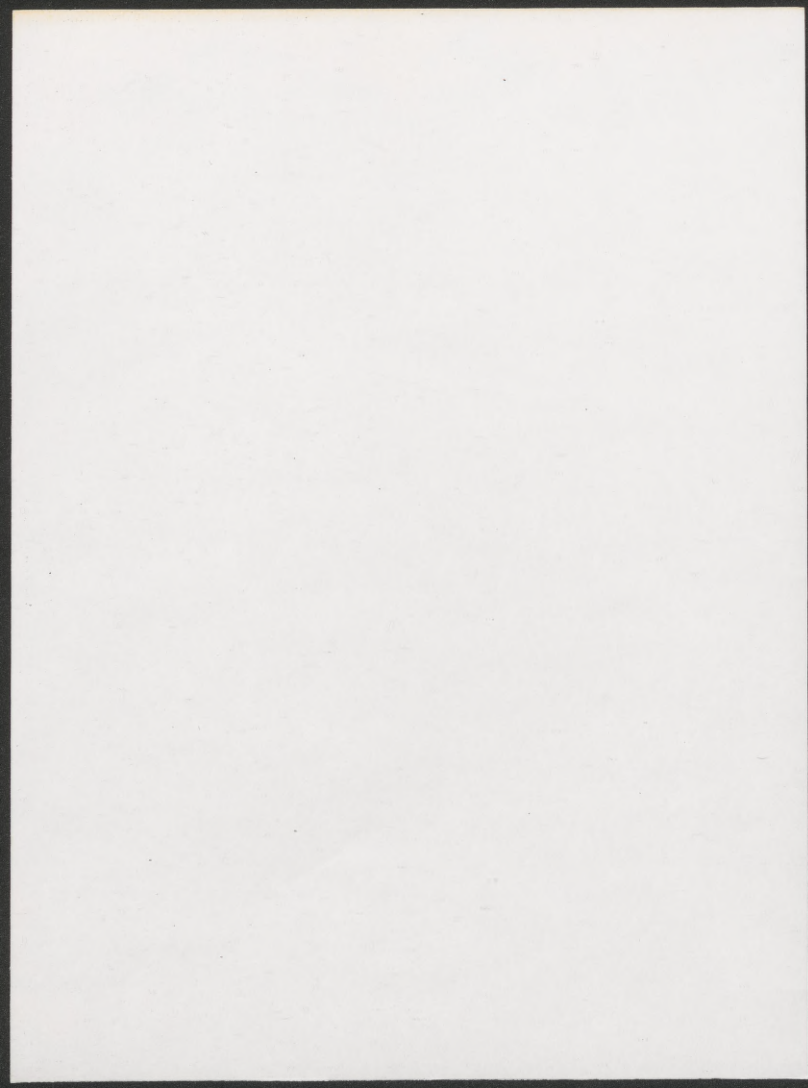
THE DREAM KEEPERS:
BLACK WRITERS
1850-1988



An M. D. Anderson Library Exhibit
In Celebration of Black History Month

FEBRUARY 1 - 24, 1989





INTRODUCTION

In celebration of Black History Month, the University of Houston Libraries are pleased to sponsor an exhibit featuring black authors. The Special Collections Department presents "The Dream Keepers: Black Writers, 1850-1988." This title is inspired by Langston Hughes' The Dream Keeper and Other Poems, a selection of poems for young people published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1932.

Bring me all your dreams,
You dreamers,
Bring me all of your
Heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.

In her introduction to the volume, Effie L. Power states, "Love of beauty, zest for adventure, a sense of humor, pride in his own race, and faith in humanity in general are some of the characteristics which make Langston Hughes a poet whom young people enjoy." Examining the contents of this year's exhibit of black authors' works, love of beauty, zest for adventure, a sense of humor, pride in their own race, and faith in humanity in general are phrases which aptly describe the authors here represented--all of them dream keepers in their own special ways.

The year 1850 marks the earliest publication in this exhibit, entitled Narrative of Sojourner Truth, A Northern Slave, Emancipated from Bodily Servitude by the State of New York in 1828. A very scarce volume, the Narrative is one of the most important biographies in black history, as well as one of the most interesting of all the black biographies published before 1865.

Special thanks go to Artis Bernard, Senior Library Assistant, for researching and writing this catalog. I also wish to thank the Friends of the Libraries for making its production possible.

Pat Bozeman
Head, Special Collections

INTRODUCTION

In celebration of Black History Month, the University of Houston Libraries are pleased to sponsor an exhibit featuring black authors. The Special Collections Department presents "The Black Authors: 1850-1950." This title is inspired by Langston Hughes' "The Dream Keeper and Other Poems," a collection of poems for young people published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1932.

Bring me all your dreams,
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In her introduction to the volume, L. B. Moore states, "Love of beauty, quest for adventure, a sense of humor, pride in his own race, and faith in humanity in general are some of the characteristics which make Langston Hughes a poet whom young people enjoy." Examining the contents of this year's exhibit of black authors' works, love of beauty, quest for adventure, a sense of humor, pride in their own race, and faith in humanity in general are phrases which aptly describe the authors here represented--all of them dream keepers in their own special ways.

The year 1950 marks the earliest publication in this exhibit, entitled *Langston Hughes: Poet, Novelist, and Playwright*, published by the University of Houston Press. The book is a very scarce volume. The University is one of the most important repositories in black history, as well as one of the most interesting of all the black biographies published before 1950.

Special thanks go to Anita Bernard, Senior Library Assistant, for researching and writing this exhibit. I also wish to thank the friends of the library for making its production possible.

The University
Special Collections

ALGER LEROY ADAMS (PHILIP B. KAYE)

Taffy. New York: Avon Publishing Company, 1951.

Philip B. Kaye, as Alger Adams is known in the literary world, is one of the black writers who followed in the footsteps of Richard Wright. His novel, Taffy, is in the American realist tradition of Main Street and Grapes of Wrath, but, like Wright's work, it is about urban blacks.

When the novel was published in 1951, it was recognized by critic Richard Sullivan as a "fierce, jarring, and important piece of work." "The essential matter," he says, "supercedes race; it is simply and rather terrifically human."

In spite of this early recognition, nothing is known about Adam's life, and there is no evidence that he published any work after 1951.

AHMED AKENWALE (LeGRAHAM) ALHAMISI

Black Spiritual Gods. Detroit: Black Arts, 1968.

Holy Ghosts. Detroit: Broadside Press, 1972.

Born in Savannah, Tennessee in 1940, Ahmed Alhamisi considers Oak Ridge, where he attended high school, his home. He studied at Tennessee A. and I. University and received an M.S. degree from Stout State University in Wisconsin in 1963. From 1963-1965, he served in the Army and as an administrative assistant at the Army Education Center in Ansbach, Germany.

Now living in Detroit, Michigan, he is a teacher of applied arts and editor of the journal Black Arts. He served also as corresponding editor for Journal of Black Poetry. Alhamisi's poetic style reveals his rebellion to the "new literary establishment being developed nowadays that is but another move to harness creativity into prefabricated art forms..."

JAMES BALDWIN (1924-1987)

Notes of a Native Son. London: Michael Joseph, 1964.

An Open Letter to My Sister, Miss Angela Davis. New York:

Reprinted from the New York Review of Books by the New York Committee to Free Angela Davis, 1970.

A Rap on Race with Margaret Mead. Philadelphia and New York: J.

B. Lippincott Company, 1971.

Little Man, Little Man. New York: Dial Press, 1976.

Just Above My Head. New York: Dial Press, 1978.

Jimmy's Blues. London: Michael Joseph, 1983.

The Evidence of Things Not Seen. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985.

James Baldwin was born in Harlem of southern migrant parents. His clergyman father dominated the family, establishing a strict, religious atmosphere. In his early teens, Baldwin himself became a Pentecostal preacher, but was drawn by the more subtle form of expression offered by literature. During his high school years, he served as the editor of his school's literary magazine. After graduation from high school, he took a job in a defense plant, where he had his first experiences with violent prejudice. In 1943 he moved to Greenwich Village, working at odd jobs and beginning to write seriously. He had the chance to meet Richard Wright, who read his work and encouraged him to continue. Three years later, he left America for Paris, there finishing his first novel, Go Tell It on the Mountain (1953), a partly autobiographical account of store-front religion in Harlem. Irving Howe describes Baldwin's ambition: "...to compose novels in which the Negro would be dissolved as a social phantom of hatred-and-condescension, and instead a variety of Negroes, in all their particularity and complexity, would be imagined."

Stimulated by the literary atmosphere of Paris and freed from the prejudice of New York, Baldwin produced a volume of essays, Notes of a Native Son (1955), and another novel, Giovanni's Room (1956).

In 1958, Baldwin returned to America and focused his attention on the race problem, publishing two volumes, Nobody Knows My Name (1961) and The Fire Next Time (1964). In 1970, he and the famed anthropologist, Margaret Mead, met to discuss race and society. His final statement in the discussion was: "It's difficult to be born, difficult to learn to walk, difficult to grow old, difficult to die and difficult to live for everybody, everywhere, forever. But no one has a right to put on top of that another burden, another price which nobody can pay, and a burden which really nobody can bear. I know it's universal, Margaret, but the fact that it is universal doesn't mean that I'll accept it."

At the time of his death in Paris in 1987, Baldwin was honored worldwide. One critic has stated, "...whatever deeper comprehension of the race issue Americans now possess has been in some way shaped by him. And this is to have shaped their comprehension of themselves as well."

TONI CADE BAMBARA (1939)

Gorilla, My Love. New York: Random House, 1960.

A native New Yorker and a graduate of Queens College, Toni Cade Bambara worked as a social investigator before entering the University of Florence to study Commedia dell'Arte. While in Italy, she supported herself with freelance writing and by working for the Venice Ministry of Museums. She became a student at Ecole de Mime Etienne Decroux in Paris, then returned to New

York to become director of recreation in the psychiatry department at the Metropolitan Hospital and to begin work toward an M.A. at the City College of the City University of New York. She has taught at Rutgers and Duke Universities and Cardinal Spellman College. In order to devote her attention to writing, she left her teaching position at Rutgers in 1976. In that same year Bambara founded the Pamoja Writers Collective. In 1981, she was awarded the American Book Award for The Salt Eaters. Her other works include: The Black Woman (1970), Tales and Short Stories for Black Folk (1972), and The Seabirds are Still Alive (1982).

IMAMU AMIRI BARAKA (LeROI JONES) (1934)

Yugen. Numbers 1-5, 6-8, 1958-1962.

Dutchman and The Slave. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1964.

Blues People. Negro Music in White America. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1965.

The System of Dante's Hell. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

The Baptism and The Toilet. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Black Fire! An Anthology of Afro-American Writing, with Lawrence P. Neal. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1967.

Tales. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967.

Black Music. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1967.

LeRoi Jones, poet, social critic and dramatist, was born in Newark, New Jersey. His parents, middle class--but not, as Jones says, well off like white middle class--recognized his unusual memory and fertile imagination and saw to it that he was well supplied with books.

Offered several scholarships, he chose to enter Rutgers as a science major but found himself an outsider there and transferred to Howard University, where he discovered "how desperately sick the Negro could be." After Howard, he joined the Air Force (he called it the "error force") where he discovered "the hysterical sickness of the oppressors and the suffering of my own people."

Returning to civilian life, Jones married Hettie Cohen, and together they edited a literary magazine, Yugen. This interracial marriage weighed on him and he left his family to live in Harlem, where he worked with the Black Arts Repertory Theatre and School. Discord between the organizers of the theater and financial supporters brought about its closing, and Jones returned to Newark to set up Spirit House, a theater and community house that was financially self-supporting.

During riots in Newark, Jones was arrested on charges of carrying an illegal weapon and was beaten by police. At the trial his own poetry was used as evidence against him, an action that aroused the anger of the literary community. Although he was convicted and given a sentence of two years and six months and a fine of \$1000, on appeal the conviction was reversed. One

critic states that, "Jones is very guilty. Of something. Of poetry, probably. Of speaking in persuasive tongues to that part of the heart that is better left unaroused." In 1966, influenced by Malcolm X, Jones converted to the Muslim religion, becoming Amiri Baraka.

His work includes a novel, The System of Dante's Hell (1965); poetry, The Dead Lecturer (1964); essays, Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note (1961) and Home: Social Essays (1966); and plays, one of which, Dutchman, won the Obie Award for the Best American Play of the 1963-1964 season. Clive Barnes, New York drama critic, calls Jones a "clumsy, fantastically gifted playwright." He is known among jazz enthusiasts for his study of jazz, The Blues People: Negro Music in White America (1963).

Talking about his writing, he says: "Basically, I want to write plays that will make good people happy and will frighten evil people. In America, it usually turns out to be white and black--through no doing of my own. That's the way it's been shaped in this country."

BOSTON SLAVE RIOT

The Boston Slave Riot, and Trial of Anthony Burns. Boston: William V. Spencer, 1854.

On May 25th, 1854, Anthony Burns, a slave who had left his master in Virginia and gone to work for a clothing dealer in Boston, was arrested under the Fugitive Slave Law. Burns said he had not run away, but the ship he was working on had sailed while he was taking a nap.

The abolition movement had begun in Boston in 1831, and by 1850, when the South passed the Fugitive Slave Law, the movement included people from all levels of Boston society. The abolitionists determined to rescue Burns from prison but were repulsed by armed force. They then raised \$1200 to buy his freedom, but his southern owner refused. For several days the streets of Boston surged with crowds for and against slavery.

On May 29th, Burns was put on trial and when the decision was handed down on the 31st that he should be returned to Virginia, black drapes were hung from windows and a coffin marked "Freedom" was exhibited. At 10 o'clock on that day the U.S. Artillery began "practising loading and firing their field pieces in the square, with a degree of quickness and skill which gave all who witnessed their movements to understand that they were proficient in their business." The show of military force was so powerful that no attempt could be made to rescue Burns as he was taken to the ship that would return him to slavery in Virginia.

JOHN BIGGERS (1924)

Black Art in Houston. The Texas Southern University Experience, with Carroll Simms. College Station and London: Texas A&M University Press, 1978.

John. T. Biggers was born in Gastonia, North Carolina, where, he remembers, "The black people lived in their own separate world. It was a warm world, a close world." He enrolled at Hampton Institute in 1941 to study plumbing but came under the influence of Viktor Lowenfeld, an Austrian Jew, who was an artist and psychologist and had been a student of Sigmund Freud. Lowenfeld introduced art classes at Hampton Institute and convinced Biggers to change his major to art. When Lowenfeld moved to Pennsylvania State University, Biggers followed and there received bachelor and master of science degrees in art education and a doctoral degree in education.

In 1949 he was asked, with Carroll Simms, to found the Art Department at Texas Southern University in Houston. Describing the first day of class, he writes: "We stood among our few students in a wilderness of broken promises, in a room meant for anything but art study...and not one sheet of newsprint, not one crayon, one tube of paint, one drawing stand, one easel...and so...we became famous on campus as scavengers, we even competed with garbage men for materials."

Biggers believes that people who have no access to art are cut off from the variety of ways in which they can see the world. A lack of art education is actually a "de-education." His drawings and paintings hang in many permanent collections.

DAVID BRADLEY (1950)

South Street. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1975.

Born in Bedford, Pennsylvania, David Bradley is the son of historians. He received his undergraduate education at the University of Pennsylvania, attended the Institute for United States Studies in London and earned an M.A. at King's College, London. He began his career as a book editor for Lippencott Publishing Company, at the same time writing book reviews for The New York Times and The Philadelphia Inquirer, serving as visiting lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania and working on his first novel, South Street. He has been a visiting professor at San Diego State University and now teaches at Temple University in Philadelphia.

While writing South Street, he became interested in work his mother was doing for her area's 1970 bicentennial. She had discovered the story of thirteen runaway slaves, who, when they were captured near Chaneyville, said they would rather die than be returned to slavery. After she found their graves, Bradley

decided to write an historical novel from their story, The Chaneyville Incident. The novel received the PEN/Faulkner Award in 1982 and was nominated for the American Book Award in 1983.

Of his writing, Bradley says, "If we would write well, we are told, we will be obscure. Obscurity, then, becomes the measure of writing well. I do not believe this. I have faith in the ability of people to respond to a story that treats them with kindness, honesty, dignity, and understanding. I put my faith not in publishers, and certainly not in reviewers and/or critics, but in those who read."

KIP BRANCH (1947)

Gnawing at my Soul. New York: Richard Marek, 1981.

Born in Baltimore, Kip Branch was educated at Morgan State University and received advanced degrees in education from Indiana University and in journalism from Columbia University. He began his career as an editor for McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, then in 1980 became assistant professor of communications at Wilson College in Pennsylvania.

Gnawing at My Soul is a partly autobiographical novel that takes its hero from his home in Newark to the Midwest, where he must confront life's common difficulties, in addition to racial ones, in finding out who he is and what he wants to do with his life. The novel, "...represents years of work: years before the first word was written, years when I was attempting to come to grips with what makes a person want to become a writer, years in which the writer, without knowing, begins to develop the style that will carry him or her through."

J. MASON BREWER (1896-1975)

Negro Legislators of Texas and Their Descendants. A History of the Negro in Texas Politics from Reconstruction to Disfranchisement. Dallas: Mathis Publishing Co., 1935.

The Word on the Brazos. Negro Preacher Tales from the Brazos Bottoms of Texas. Foreword by J. Frank Dobie. Illustrations by Ralph White, Jr. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1953.

Aunt Dicy Tales. Snuff-Dipping Tales of the Texas Negro. Foreword by Roy Bedichek. Illustrations by John T. Biggers. Privately printed, 1956.

Dog Ghosts and Other Texas Negro Folk Tales. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958.

J. Mason Brewer, well-known folklorist, was born in the small Texas town of Goliad, where his father and grandfathers had been drovers and guides. His father settled down to become a grocer and barber but never forgot his days on the cattle trail.

Brewer's mother taught for 50 years in the Texas schools. Brewer received his early education at Wiley College in Texas and became so fluent in Spanish and French that he served as an interpreter with the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I.

Working in the oil fields after the war, he began collecting folklore and was encouraged by J. Frank Dobie. After doing graduate work at Indiana University and Paul Quinn College in Texas, he took on the important task of preserving the fast-vanishing folklore of rural southern blacks. In addition to his own collections of folklore, he contributed to numerous anthologies of folklore, tales and humor and in 1941 he won third place in the Crisis poetry contest.

He taught folklore and anthropology at several colleges and served as lecturer at universities across the country, among them Yale and the University of Toronto. He served on the council of the American Folklore Society, and in 1955 represented the American Negro at the Seventh Annual International Folk Festival in Cleveland. At the time of his death, he was Distinguished Visiting Professor of English at East Texas State University in Commerce, Texas.

GWENDOLYN BROOKS (1917)

Selected Poems. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944.

Annie Allen. Harper & Brothers, 1949.

Maud Martha. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1953.

Bronzeville Boys and Girls. Pictures by Ronni Solbert. New York, London and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956.

Gwendolyn Brooks considers herself a native of Chicago's black ghetto, where her family moved from Topeka, Kansas a month after her birth. Her mother, a composer, her father, a staff member of a music house, and her brother, an artist, all encouraged her early interest in poetry. The Chicago Defender published her first poem when she was 15. After graduation from Wilson Junior College in 1936, Brooks worked on newspapers and magazines, at office jobs, whatever would support her while she wrote poetry.

Her first volume of poetry, A Street in Bronzeville, was published in 1945. The second, Annie Allen (1949), won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, making her the first black writer to receive this recognition. She has taught at colleges across the country and became the Distinguished Professor of the Arts at the City College of the City University of New York in 1971. In 1969, she followed Carl Sandburg as poet laureate of Illinois.

In talking about her poetry, Brooks said, "Although I called my first book A Street in Bronzeville, I hoped that people would recognize instantly that Negroes are just like other people; they have the same hates and loves and fears, the same tragedies and triumphs and deaths, as people of any race or religion or nationality."

CECIL M. BROWN (1943)

Days without Weather. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983.

Cecil Brown says he spent too many of his "early years plowing behind a favorite mule named Big Six" in his hometown of Bolton, North Carolina. By age 15 he was sharecropping his own 5 acres and by age 18 he was glad to quit and head north. Educated at Columbia University and the University of Chicago, he attended writing courses at the University of Washington and the University of California.

In his work, Brown tries to counteract the ways in which the white intellectual culture breaks a man's will: "To understand it, we must go back to the training methods of the German army ... One of the most efficacious was the torture of 'senseless commands': force the soldiers to wake up in the middle of the night and run to empty the water from one cistern into another, using mess tins or cups....Mass-man applies this military device willingly to himself: by dint of carrying out useless mental operations, cramming his mind with superfluous information, he is protected from the emergence of dangerous questions and emotions."

Brown's work includes the novel, The Life and Loves of Mr. Jiveass Nigger (1970), plays, critical essays, and poetry.

FRANK LONDON BROWN (1927-1962)

Trumbull Park. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, Frank London Brown grew up in Chicago where he attended Wilberforce University, Roosevelt University and Chicago Kent College of Law. At the University of Chicago he was a candidate for a doctorate as a Fellow of the University's Committee on Social Thought. His work as a machinist led him to become a union organizer and, at the time of his death, he was the director of the Union Research Center at the University of Chicago.

He was also a jazz singer, and the sound of jazz became an important element in his writing. His work includes poetry, several short stories, and two novels, Trumbull Park and The Myth Makers, published posthumously in 1969.

MARGARET BURROUGHS (1917)

For Malcolm X: Poems on the Life and Death of Malcolm X, with Dudley Randall. Detroit: Broadside Press, 1967.

Margaret Burroughs was born in Chicago, the daughter of a laborer. Her early interest was education and she received her

undergraduate degree from Chicago Teachers College. While teaching at Du Sable High School she enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago, where she received a B.F.A. and an M.F.A.

Her first two books, Jasper, the Drummin' Boy (1947) and Did You Feed My Cow? (1955), are both illustrated by her. She was a founder of the National Conference of Negro Artists and has won art prizes at Atlanta University and Lincoln University. In 1968, she was given an American Forum for International Study travel grant to visit Africa.

Several of her books have been privately printed: Whip Me Whop Me Pudding (1966), What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black? (1968), and Africa, My Africa (1970).

OLIVIA WARD BUSH (1869-?)

Driftwood. Providence, R.I.: Atlantic Printing Co., 1914.

Until recently, nothing was known about the life of Olivia Ward Bush, whose first book of poetry, Original Poems (1899), was praised by Paul Laurence Dunbar as an "inspiration to the women of our race." Research by her great granddaughter, Bernice F. Guillaume, has revealed that she was born at Sag Harbor, Long Island of parents who were both of African and Indian blood, descendants of the Montauk Indian tribe of Long Island. She was only nine months old when her mother died and her father moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where he remarried and left her in the care of her mother's sister, Maria Draper. Her aunt became like a mother, "sacrificing her own life's interest" so the young girl could attend school and prepare for a nursing career.

When her marriage to Frank Bush failed, she returned with her two daughters to live with her aunt. She had by then published her second book of poems, Driftwood, but seems to have put poetry aside in favor of drama, becoming assistant drama director for the Robert Gould Shaw Community House in Boston.

In the 1920s, she married Anthony Banks and together they operated the Bush-Banks School of Expression for dramatic acting in Chicago. During the Depression, she moved to New Rochelle and wrote a cultural arts column for the Westchester Record-Courier, in which she publicized the works of the fledgling Negro Renaissance and provided a forum for such figures as Langston Hughes, Richmond Barthe, and baritone John Greene. She kept a studio in New York City where "reconciliation groups" of mixed ethnicity shared viewpoints, performances and exhibitions."

Her plays, most of them never produced, include Memories of Calvary, an Easter pageant; Indian Trails, based on the Montauks; Shadows which exalts Afro-primitivism; and A Shantytown Scandal, about insensitivity among black women. Other volumes of poetry include Original Poems (1899) and Memories of Calvary: An Easter Sketch (1917). She also published poems in the periodicals, The Voice of the Negro and Colored American Magazine.

Recently a series of her stories was discovered in which a

sharp-witted black woman, Aunt Viney, makes her way successfully through the difficult times of the Depression. Her autobiography, The Lure of the Distance, was never finished.

THOMAS MONROE CAMPBELL (1883-?)

The Movable School Goes to the Negro Farmer. Tuskegee Institute, Alabama: Tuskegee Institute Press, 1936.

Thomas Campbell was born in Elbert County, Georgia, not far from the small town of Bowman. His father was a tenant farmer whose industry made it possible for him to buy a piece of land and move his family into Bowman. Their good fortune didn't last long, for Campbell's mother fell ill, and the medical expenses left the family destitute at her death. The older children were hired out and Campbell and his younger sister spent much of their time in the house alone with little to eat. His father was forced back to tenant farming.

As a young child Campbell had almost no education because his father often took him from school to work in the fields or do other chores that he deemed more important than study. His father was strict and severe with the boy who would often drop his hoe in the cotton field in order to investigate an insect or butterfly, or lie on the banks of the creek to watch the fish.

Campbell's older brother ran away from home and finally made his way to Tuskegee Institute. This became Campbell's dream, and in January 1899, one of the coldest winters recorded in the South, he set off early in the morning on foot. When he arrived at Tuskegee on April 26, his brother wrote to his father: "It is with pleasure that I write to inform you that Thomas is here and if he lives he is going to stay here until he makes a man of himself.... He arrived here last Thursday with eight cents in money and he has not changed clothes...." In an epidemic that broke out at Tuskegee, both brothers were struck and only Thomas survived.

At the end of his study at Tuskegee, Campbell was chosen by Booker T. Washington to serve as the first black Agricultural Extension Agent in the United States and placed in charge of The Movable School. One of Washington's uncommon experiments in education, the Movable School served the pressing needs of the moment, giving not only agricultural instruction but acting as a social stimulant in the rural communities. Electricity, water systems, houses, gardens, orchards, crop rotation, livestock, health, cooking, all became the focus of instruction and action. During his conversations with farmers, Campbell would collect folk traditions and songs.

Campbell's success with the Movable School was so great he was promoted to field agent with the seven lower southern states under his supervision. He pressured the USDA to integrate its staff, and by the time he retired in 1953, 800 blacks had been hired as extension agents in the South. In 1944, he was asked to

tour Africa to study agricultural methods there. The result of his survey, Africa Advancing, was published in 1945.

CHARLES WADDELL CHESNUTT (1858-1932)

The Marrow of Tradition. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1901.

"Post-Bellum-Pre-Harlem," in Breaking into Print, edited by Elmer Adler. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937.

Charles Waddell Chesnutt was born in Cleveland, Ohio, where his father had migrated from his home in Fayetteville, North Carolina, for better job opportunities. After the Civil War, the family returned to Fayetteville to open a small grocery store. Although Reconstruction in the South gave Chesnutt the opportunity for an education, it did not change the intense racial prejudices and injustice under which black people lived. The grandson of a white farmer and slaveholder and a black slave, he felt the hatred of whites and the suspicion of blacks. Throughout his essays and fiction he tried to refute the common assumption that mixed blood was a sign of illegitimacy.

He had the good fortune to have an extraordinary teacher at Howard School in Fayetteville and became a good friend of the local bookseller, who let him browse through the shelves. He worked for his father in the grocery store, earned extra money by selling items door to door, and, at age 16, began teaching school. When he was 25 he left the South, settling in Cleveland, where he became a court reporter.

His first story was published in a North Carolina newspaper when he was 14, but there is no evidence that he wrote continuously from that time. An entry in his diary in 1880 reads, "I think I must write a book. I am almost afraid to undertake a book so early and with so little experience in composition. But it has been my cherished dream, and I feel an influence that I cannot resist calling me to the task." While studying law, he wrote stories, publishing several in local newspapers and The Atlantic Monthly. His first book, The Conjure Woman, a collection of these stories, was published in 1899. In December of that same year, his first novel, The Wife of His Youth, was published. Chesnutt is considered the first significant black American author. He is best known for his novel, The Marrow of Tradition.

ELDRIDGE CLEAVER (1935)

Soul on Ice. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968.

Born in Wabbaseka, Arkansas, and growing up on the streets of Los Angeles, Eldridge Cleaver had little opportunity for education until he entered Folsom Prison for possession of

marijuana at age 19. There he met a convict named Pontifelt, who gathered younger convicts around him, discussing with them the philosophies of Plato and Emerson, and urging them to read. While at San Quentin serving a second term, this time for assault, Cleaver earned his high school diploma.

In prison he was impressed with the courage of the Muslim inmates and became a follower of Islam, but broke with Elijah Muhammad's organization to join the new movement founded by Malcolm X. He read widely on economics, looking for answers to the social and economic injustices surrounding him. Influenced by Richard Wright's resignation from the Communist Party, he declined to become a member but developed his own political and economic ideas.

While still in prison, he joined the staff of Ramparts Magazine, where several of his essays and letters had already been published. When Soul On Ice, which was written in prison, appeared, he was granted parole and became a senior editor for Ramparts. Shortly after, his presence at a shoot-out between the Black Panthers, an organization he had just joined, and the Oakland police caused his parole to be revoked. However, the presiding judge termed him a political prisoner and dismissed the charges.

Nominated as the 1968 presidential candidate for the Peace and Freedom Party, he had just enough time to make a nation-wide speaking tour before the court's decision in the Black Panther incident was overturned and he was ordered back to prison. To avoid arrest, he went into exile in Algiers, where he and his wife led a very spare life for several years. During this period he became a Christian and broke with the Black Panthers. In 1975 he returned to the U.S.

CYRUS COLTER (1910)

A Chocolate Soldier. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1988.

Born in Noblesville, Indiana, Cyrus Colter attended Youngstown University and Ohio State University. While in school, he supported himself with jobs at the YMCA. In 1950, he received a law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law and worked for two years as deputy collector of internal revenue before serving in the army. In 1946 he established himself as a lawyer in Chicago and from 1950-1973 served as commissioner for the Illinois Commerce Commission.

His first book of stories, The Beach Umbrella, was published in 1970 by University of Iowa Press. This was quickly followed by two novels, The River of Eros and The Hippodrome, published by Swallow Press in 1972 and 1973. In 1973, he became the Chester D. Tripp Professor of Humanities at Northwestern University, a chair which he held until his retirement in 1978. A fourth novel, Night Studies, was published by Swallow Press in 1979.

WILL MARION COOK (1869-1944)

Evah Dahkey Is King. Excerpt from the musical comedy by Will Marion Cook; words by E.P. Moran and Paul Laurence Dunbar. New York: New York American and Journal, Sunday, October 26, 1902, pp. 5-8.

Will Marion Cook, whom Duke Ellington called "the master of all masters of our people," was born in Washington, D.C. When he was 13, he began the study of the violin, attending Oberlin College, where he was encouraged to study with Joseph Joachim at the Berlin Conservatory. With the help of a scholarship and money he earned from giving concerts, he traveled to Berlin, remaining there nine years and returning to the U.S. a virtuoso.

At the age of 26, he made his solo debut at Carnegie Hall. The reviews called him the "greatest colored violinist in the world." Stung by the implication that he could never be the greatest violinist in the world, he resolved never to play the violin again. He had studied composition under Anton Dvorak at the National Conservatory in New York and decided to follow his exploration of "Negro expression" in American music. He turned to music for black audiences, composing for the famous comedy team (George) Walker and (Bert) Williams, and established his own Syncopated Orchestra, made up of black musicians with impeccable musical training. Cook was a perfectionist and to play in his orchestra was considered an honor.

His operetta, Clorindy--The Origin of the Cakewalk, introduced New York society to the syncopation of ragtime. At its premiere as an extended afterpiece to a series of vaudeville, only 50 people were in the audience when it began. The music drifting down from the Roof Garden attracted the audience getting out of the Casino Theatre below and by the end of the operetta, the Roof Garden was packed. Later his full-length black musical, In Dahomey (1903-1905) was presented on Broadway at the New York Theater. Among the many other musicals he composed are The Sons of Ham (1900), Abyssinia (1906), and Bandana Land (1908).

In 1918-1919 his Syncopated Orchestra made a European tour and gave a Command Performance before King George V. He also organized and conducted several choral groups, among them the remarkable Afro-American Folk Singers and the Negro Choral Society. Like Scott Joplin, he worked to gain for Negro music the recognition it deserved as music.

CLARENCE L. COOPER, JR.

The Farm. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1967.

Although there are readers who believe Clarence Cooper is the "Richard Wright of the revolutionary era," little is known about his life. His novels include Black! Two Short Novels, The

Dark Messenger, The Scene, Weed, and The Syndicate, which was written under the pseudonym, Robert Chestnut. One of his stories appeared in Woodie King's Black Short Story Anthology (1972).

COUNTTEE PORTER CULLEN (1903-1946)

Color. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1925.

Caroling Dusk. An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets. New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1927.

The Ballad of the Brown Girl, An Old Ballad Retold. With illustrations and decorations by Charles Cullen. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1927.

The Black Christ & Other Poems. With decorations by Charles Cullen. New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1929.

One Way to Heaven. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1932.

A native of New York City, Countee Cullen was raised by his grandmother until he was adopted by the Reverend F.A. Cullen, a minister of the Salem African Methodist Episcopal Church in Harlem. He wrote his first poems in high school, where he was editor of the school newspaper and the literary magazine. While a student at New York University, he won second prizes in 1923 and 1924 and first prize in 1925 in the Witter Bynner undergraduate poetry contest sponsored by the Poetry Society of America. In the same year, he won the John Reed Memorial prize awarded by Poetry Magazine and published his first book, Color.

In 1926 he received an M.A. from Harvard and became assistant editor of the journal Opportunity. Two more volumes of poetry, Copper Sun and Ballad of the Brown Girl, were published in 1927 and the following year he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for study in France. When he returned, he began teaching in the public schools in New York City and continued as a teacher until his death.

He was an important figure in the Harlem Renaissance, winning prizes in both the Opportunity and The Crisis poetry contests. However, he didn't take part in the new-wave style, maintaining his connections with the lyric tradition of the previous century. He is best known as a poet, but he also published a satirical novel, One Way to Heaven, works for children and young adults, several plays, and essays on literature and political and social issues.

MARGARET DANNER (1938)

Poem Counterpoem with Dudley Randall. Detroit: Broadside Press, 1969.

Born in Chicago, Margaret Danner attended the YMCA College in Chicago and Roosevelt University. From 1951 to 1955, she

served as editorial assistant on Poetry magazine and as assistant editor from 1956 to 1957. She has been particularly interested in African culture, and with grants received from the African Studies Association and the Women's Auxiliary of Afro-American Interests, she was able to complete her first book of poetry, Impressions of African Art (1961).

She has since published several books of poetry, To Flower: Poems, Counterpoise Series (1963), Iron Lace (1968), The Down of a Thistle: Selected Poems, Prose Poems, and Songs (1976), and has edited two anthologies, Brass Horses (1968) and Regroup (1969). She has been poet-in residence at Wayne State University and Virginia Union University and has served as touring poet for the Baha'i Teaching Committee. She has received numerous awards, among them the Harriet Tubman Award (1956) and Poets in Concert Award (1968).

WILLIAM DEMBY (1922)

Beetlecreek. New York: Rinehart & Company, 1950.

William Demby, the son of a minor oil executive, was born in Pittsburgh and grew up in the black ghettos of that city and nearby Clarksburg, West Virginia, a coal-mining region. His education at West Virginia State College was interrupted by two years in Italy and North Africa during World War II, where he served in the cavalry and as a reporter for Stars and Stripes. He completed his education at Fisk University, where he was active in student publications, both as artist and writer.

Upon graduation, his interest in art took him back to Italy to study at the University of Rome and he remained in Rome with his Italian wife, writing movie scripts for Roberto Rossolini, and working as a translator and journalist. His first novel, Beetlecreek, was written in Rome.

After he returned to America, he published his second novel, The Catacombs, in 1965. His other works include: Love Story Black (1978), Blueboy (1979), and stories published in several anthologies. He now teaches at the College of Staten Island of the City of New York.

Demby believes that, "...everything and everybody, real or invented, characters in books or in newspapers, the 'news' itself, stones and broken bottles do matter, are important, if only they are looked at, if only they are observed, just because they are composed of matter. Because everything and everybody, real or invented, characters in books, even the books themselves, even the book jacket and the colored ink on the cover design, is composed of matter and for this reason matters, must therefore breathe in harmony with a single governing law...."

FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1817-1895)

Life and Times of Frederick Douglass. Hartford, Conn.: Park Publishers, 1882.

Frederick Douglass was born a slave in Talbot County, Maryland. He was taught to read by the wife of his master, who objected that Douglass was being made unfit to be a slave. At age eight he took on the duties of house servant and field hand and later was apprenticed to a caulker. When he was 21 he borrowed the papers of a free black seaman and rode public transportation to freedom.

Through his eloquence he became an agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and, in 1845, published Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Fearing he would be captured under the Fugitive Slave Act, he fled to England, where he lectured on slavery and women's rights, earning enough money to buy his freedom. When he returned in 1847, he established The North Star, later renamed Frederick Douglass's Newspaper, which continued publication until 1963. During the Civil War he took part in the creation of the celebrated 54th and 55th Massachusetts Negro regiments. His speeches and writings were among the powerful forces that brought about the emancipation of slaves and the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. After the war he held several public offices, among them U. S. Minister of Haiti from 1889-1891. In addition to the Narrative and Life and Times, Douglass wrote My Bondage and My Freedom (1855). His speeches have been collected in Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass.

DAVID GRAHAM DuBOIS (1925)

...And Bid Him Sing. Palo Alto, California: Ramparts Press, 1975.

David DuBois was born in Seattle, Washington, but when he was very young, his mother took him to Indiana, where he grew up, moving from one small town to another. His mother later became the wife of W. E. B. DuBois, the famous writer and scholar.

A serious violinist, he entered the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 1942, but his studies were interrupted by service in the U.S. Army during World War II. After the war, he enrolled at Hunter College in New York City to study sociology. While doing graduate work at the New York School of Social Work at Columbia, he worked as a clerk-typist for the First National City Bank of New York.

In 1959, he spent a year in study at Peking University, then accepted a position as editor/reporter for the Arab Observer in Cairo. He remained in Cairo 12 years, lecturing at Cairo University, serving as news editor of The Egyptian Gazette,

announcer and program writer for Radio Cairo, reporter and editor for the Middle East News and Features Agency, and public relations advisor for the Ghanaian government under Kwame Nkrumah. His novel, ...And Bid Him Sing, is set in Egypt.

Upon his return to the U.S., DuBois joined the Black Panther Party and served as the editor-in-chief of the Black Panther Intercommunal News Service. He has lectured at the School of Criminology, U.C. Berkeley, and at various community colleges. He considers himself a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist, "committed to radical change toward liberating the human spirit."

W.E.B. DuBOIS (1868-1963)

Dark Princess. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928.

I Take My Stand for Peace. New York: Masses & Mainstream, Inc., 1951.

W.E.B. DuBois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where, while a high school student, he served as correspondent for newspapers in New York and Springfield. His mother's family had farmed in New England since her grandfather was emancipated for service rendered in the American Revolution. DuBois grew up on his grandfather's farm, his father having abandoned the family. When he reached school age, his mother took on domestic work so he could get a good education. As top student he was awarded a scholarship to Fisk University. White valedictorians were always given scholarships to New England schools, and he was disappointed at being treated differently.

At Fisk he encountered widespread racial prejudice and separation for the first time and, during summer vacations when he taught in rural Tennessee schools, he became aware of the poverty of southern blacks. Following graduation he entered Harvard for advanced study in history, at the same time teaching Latin and Greek at Wilberforce University. His dissertation, The Suppression of the African Slave Trade, was published in 1896. He continued his studies at the University of Berlin, returning to the U.S. to join the faculty at Atlanta University.

DuBois founded the important journal, Crisis, in which many black writers made their first appearance in print. In 1905, he formed the Niagara Movement, which merged with an organization of white liberals to become the N.A.A.C.P. Coming out for Negro autonomy in 1934, he alienated the N.A.A.C.P. leadership and was forced to resign from his position. His outspoken opinions also cost him his professorship at Atlanta University. He returned to the N.A.A.C.P. only to resign again in 1948.

During the 1950s, DuBois was active in the peace movement and in efforts to ban nuclear weapons. As a leader of the American Labor Party, he ran for U.S. Senator from New York in 1950. Rejecting all Negro rights groups, at age 93 he joined the Communist party and accepted an invitation to live in Ghana, where he became a citizen in 1962. He died there the following

year in the midst of work on an Encyclopedia Africana.

DuBois was named a Knight Commander of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption, and was declared Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary by President Calvin Coolidge. Best known as a scholar and a spokesman for the "dark peoples of Africa and the world," he was also a poet and novelist. Two volumes of his poetry were published after his death. Early in his life he published two novels, and in his last years, a trilogy, The Black Flame (1957-1961).

HENRY DUMAS (1958-1987)

Goodbye, Sweetwater. New & Selected Stories. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1988.

Henry Dumas was born in Sweet Home, Arkansas. When he was ten, his family moved to Harlem, where he attended the public schools. After graduating from Commerce High School he enrolled at New York City College, but left college to join the U.S. Air Force. His four years in the service were spent at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio and on the Arabian Peninsula. This introduction to Arabian culture helped generate his interest in language and mythology.

After his discharge he entered Rutgers University to study etymology and sociology. By then he was married and a father and was able to give only two years to full-time study, but for the next seven years he was a part-time student while working as an operator of printing machines for IBM. He was actively involved in the Civil Rights movement and in his more abstract interests in the language and mythology of blacks. He was so fascinated with language that he would often stop people on the street and engage them in conversation in order to hear their speech.

At the same time, he was writing, describing "the world of...surrealism, supernaturalism, gothicism, madness, nightmarism, child-men [girl-women], astrology, death, magic, witchcraft, and science fiction." His admonition was, "Listen." Then, "Man, let's just tell it!"

After serving as a social worker for the State of New York and as Assistant Director for Upward Bound at Hiram College, he was asked to be a teacher-counselor at the Language Workshops at Southern Illinois University's Experiment in Higher Education.

During a visit to Harlem while he was director of the Language Workshops, he was shot to death by a white transit policeman who claimed he thought Dumas was someone else. Before his death, Dumas' work had not appeared in book form. The publication of two volumes of poetry and one of short stories, and his novel, Jonah and the Green Stone, indicate that he was an extraordinarily gifted and original writer. His experiments with language have had an important influence on blacks who are writing today.

An annual poetry contest at Hiram College is held in his

memory and there is a Henry Dumas Memorial Library at Southern Illinois University's Experiment in Higher Education.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR (1872-1906)

The Uncalled. New York: International Association of Newspapers and Authors, 1901.

A Cabin Tale. Illustrated by Metego. San Francisco: Julian Richardson Associates, 1969.

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in Dayton, Ohio, where his mother had moved after being freed from slavery by the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. His father had escaped to Canada, then returned to the U.S. to serve in the 55th Massachusetts Regiment. At the end of the Civil War, he joined his wife in Dayton, where the family lived in very poor circumstances. Although they lacked formal schooling, both parents taught themselves to read and encouraged young Paul, who began writing poetry at age 6. As a student at Dayton's only high school, he was editor of the student newspaper and president of the school literary society. Unable to afford college, Dunbar tried to get a job as a journalist but was turned down because of his race. The job he was forced to accept was that of elevator man.

When he was 20, his first volume of verse, Oak and Ivy, was published with the help of an advance from a sympathetic businessman. In 1896, he published Majors and Minors, which was reviewed by William Dean Howells in Harper's Weekly and became an instant success. Later that same year he published Lyrics of Lowly Life, a reprinting of some of the best poems from the previous volumes, including an introduction by Howells.

Following a tour of England he took a job in the reading room of the Library of Congress and married Alice Ruth Moore, a promising black writer from New Orleans. After their separation in 1902, his struggle with tuberculosis became more and more desperate and he was often unable to keep speaking engagements. Dunbar had published four collections of short stories and four novels, as well as several other volumes of verse, before his death at the age of 34.

His use of dialect indicated a new black awareness with its interests in the roots of black experience in the rural South and in northern ghettos. Those poems in standard English are noted for their lyric quality.

EBON (TOM DOOLEY) (1942)

Revolution: A Poem. Chicago: Third World Press, 1968.

Ebon is the name Tom Dooley assumed when he gave up his career in law to become a "poet/mover." The critic Donald Lee

has said, "Anyone who has heard Ebon read can hear the deep voice bouncing out like a Black barker at a secret blood rite, as in "Legacy: In Memory of Trane," [the jazz musician John Coltrane], which is "...jubilant with flowing lines and images of Africa, precious but hidden."

In addition to Revolution: A Poem, his work has appeared in several anthologies: The Poetry of Black America, A Broadside Treasury, Understanding the New Black Poetry, and Black Poetry: A Supplement. He is associated with the Atlanta Center for Black Art in Atlanta, Georgia, where he owns a "best-of-its-kind" bookstore, Timbuktu.

RALPH ELLISON (1914)

Invisible Man. New York: Random House, 1952.

Ralph Ellison was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. His father, a construction worker and tradesman who wanted his son to become a poet, died when Ellison was 3 years old. His mother supported the family by doing domestic work. She often canvassed for the Socialist Party and was put in jail several times for violating state segregation orders. Aware of her son's talents, she brought home discarded records and magazines from the houses where she worked. As a high school student, Ellison dreamed of becoming a symphonic composer and, from 1933 to 1936, studied music at Tuskegee Institute.

In 1936, he traveled to New York to study sculpture and music, but became involved in the WPA Federal Writers Project, through which he met two great black writers, Langston Hughes and Richard Wright. Wright encouraged him to be a writer, stimulating his interest in Conrad, James, and Dostoevski.

In 1939, Ellison launched his writing career, publishing short stories, essays, and reviews in such journals as New Masses, Antioch Review, New Challenge, and The Negro Quarterly. During World War II, he served in the Merchant Marine. At the end of the war he received a Rosenwald Fellowship, enabling him to concentrate on writing his novel, Invisible Man. Published in 1951, this novel had a powerful impact and, in 1953, became the first novel by a black writer to receive the National Book Award for fiction. Partly autobiographical, the novel describes the humiliation and frustration a young black idealist experiences at the hands of racists, northern and southern. In describing the novel, one critic said, "It is as if Ellison had taken an everyday twelve-bar blues tune (by a man from down South sitting in a manhole up North in New York singing and signifying about how he got there) and scored it for full orchestra." In 1964, Ellison published a collection of essays, Shadow and Act.

He has received numerous awards, including the Medal of Freedom Award from President Lyndon B. Johnson and the French Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres. He has served as lecturer and visiting scholar at colleges and universities

worldwide.

In a 1965 poll taken by the New York Herald-Tribune book section, Invisible Man was cited by American writers as the most significant novel written in America in the twenty years following the end of World War II.

ERNEST J. GAINES (1933)

Bloodline. New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1968.

In My Father's House. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978.

A Gathering of Old Men. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

Born on a plantation in rural Point Coupes Parish in Louisiana, Ernest Gaines was strongly influenced by his aunt, Augustus Jefferson, a proud and powerful woman who had no legs. He worked in the fields until he was 15, when his family moved to Vallejo, California. He began to read widely and discovered that the people he had known in the rural South were not represented in literature. "Some of the blacks I knew as a child were proud as they could be--poor as hell, but proud people. They were proud of being persons, of surviving, being able to get something out of the land."

He attended Vallejo Junior College for a short period before being drafted into the army. When he returned from service, he resumed his studies at San Francisco State College and began writing, publishing his first short stories in Transfer in 1956. Upon graduation in 1957, he received the Wallace Stegner Creative Writing Fellowship to Stanford University.

His first novel, Catherine Carmier, was published in 1964, followed by Of Love and Dust (1967), and a volume of short stories, Bloodline. When his novel, The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman (1971), was made into a movie, it gained immediate national acclaim. He believes that, "The artist is the only free man left. He owes nobody nothing--not even himself. He should write what he wants, when he wants, and to whomever he wants. If he is true, he will use that material which is closest to him."

ADDISON GAYLE (1932)

The Way of the New World. The Black Novel in America. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1975.

Born in New York City, Addison Gayle spent his childhood in Newport News, Virginia, where his father, a lawyer, ran for Congress on the Communist ticket. His parents were separated and Gayle lived in near poverty with his mother, having uneasy weekly visits with his father. Reading and writing became first a means of escape from his unhappy life and then a means of dealing with it.

After high school, he spent six months in the army before

being discharged because of a heart condition. He had been submitting stories to magazines and, after his discharge, he began writing with "an abandon and nervous energy." After his father's death he left Newport News, spent three years in Newark, then moved to New York, where he worked as an orderly in hospitals and as a porter at an army base until the age of 28, when he enrolled at City College. Encouraged to major in English, he went on to graduate school at the University of California at Los Angeles.

He returned to New York to teach at City College and at Bernard M. Baruch College of the City University of New York. An influential critic and editor, he has been instrumental in introducing and preserving the work of black authors. His first book, Black Expression: Essays By and About Black Americans in the Creative Arts, was published in 1969. The following year he published Bondage, Freedom and Beyond: The Prose of Black America, and a book of his own essays, The Black Situation. In 1971, he edited The Black Aesthetic, and published Oak and Ivy: A Biography of Paul Lawrence Dunbar. He has also written biographies entitled Claude McKay: The Black Poet at War (1972) and Richard Wright: Ordeal of a Native Son (1980). His autobiography, Wayward Child: A Personal Odyssey, appeared in 1977.

NIKKI GIOVANNI (1943)

Night Comes Softly. An Anthology of Black Female Voices.
Privately printed, 1970.

Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, where her father was a probation officer and her mother a social worker. At Fisk University, where she spent her undergraduate years, she was a student activist, leading a successful fight for the right of a chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to exist on campus.

After graduation, she entered the University of Pennsylvania Social Work School, thinking she would follow the profession of her parents. However, courses at Columbia University's School of the Arts proved her writing ability, and she turned her attention to writing, editing collections of poetry, making recordings and giving readings of her own poetry, founding a publishing firm, Niktom Ltd., writing a column for The New York Times, "One Woman's Voice," and becoming the major figure in the black oral poetry movement. She taught Black Studies at Queens College of the City University of New York and joined the Rutgers University faculty as an associate professor of English in 1968.

Her other books include: Black Feeling, Black Talk (1968), Black Judgement (1968), Re: Creation (1970), Night Comes Softly (editor, 1970), and Gemini: Extended Autobiographical Statement on My Twenty-seven Years of Being a Black Poet (1971).

SUTTON ELBERT GRIGGS (1872-1930)

The Hindered Hand: or, the Reign of the Repressionist. Nashville: The Orion Publishing Company, 1905.

Sutton Griggs was born in Chatfield, Texas, a small, cotton-growing community. He attended Bishop College, a school in Marshall, Texas, which is owned and operated by the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York City. After being ordained at the Richmond Theological Seminary in Virginia in 1893, he served as pastor in several communities, becoming well known not only for his sermons, but for his lectures on the race problem.

He wrote innumerable books on race, among them According to Law (1916), Guide to Racial Greatness, or, The Science of Collective Efficiency (1923), and Paths of Progress: or, Cooperation between the Races (1925). As a member of the black intellectual movement reacting to post-Reconstruction repression he believed, "The poem, the novel, the drama must be pressed into service. . . . The bird that would live must thrill the hunter with its song." Between 1899 and 1908 he wrote 5 novels, all of them tracts that develop his ideas on solutions to the race problem.

Although known as a supporter of a separate Negro nation or a return to Africa, the last of the "Notes for the Serious" at the end of The Hindered Hand states: "The overwhelmingly predominant sentiment of the American Negroes is to fight out their battles on these shores. The assigning of the thoughts of the race to the uplift of Africa, as affecting the situation in America, must be taken more as the dream of the author rather than as representing any considerable responsible sentiment within the race, which, as has been stated, seems at present thoroughly and unqualifiedly American, a fact that must never be overlooked by those seeking to deal with this grave question in a practical manner." Griggs' books were so popular that he organized his own publishing company in Nashville to promote their distribution.

LORRAINE HANSBERRY (1930-1965)

The Movement. Documentary of a Struggle for Equality. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964.

Lorraine Hansberry was born in Chicago, where her father was a prominent real estate investor and banker. When she was a young girl, her family deliberately moved into a restricted white neighborhood to provide a test case for the courts. In spite of rock-throwing and threats from neighbors, the family remained in the neighborhood as the case made its way to the Supreme Court, where it was decided in favor of the Hansberrys. "Both of my

parents were strong-minded, civic-minded, exceptionally race-minded people who made enormous sacrifices in behalf of the struggle for civil rights throughout their lifetimes."

Although Hansberry's early interest was painting, while she was a student at Roosevelt College and the University of Wisconsin, she found herself "sort of hanging around little acting groups and developing the feeling that the theatre embraces everything I liked all at one time." After studying painting at the Chicago Art Institute and the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, she gave up that dream and moved to New York in 1950. She worked at odd jobs, including writing for Paul Robeson's left-wing Harlem journal, Freedom, while studying at the New School.

In New York, Hansberry met Robert Nemiroff, a young white writer. After their marriage, Nemiroff encouraged her playwrighting, even retrieving scraps from the wastebasket. With the help of friends, he and Hansberry financed the first production of A Raisin in the Sun, which opened in New York after successful runs in Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago. It won the Critics Circle Award for that year over plays by Archibald MacLeish (J.B.), Tennessee Williams (Sweet Bird of Youth), and Eugene O'Neill (A Touch of the Poet). Hansberry was the first black woman to have a play produced on Broadway.

Her second play, The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window, was produced in 1964. In response to criticism, she replied, "Some persons ask how it is that I have, 'left behind the Negro question' in the writing of this latest play. I hardly know how to answer as it seems to me that I have never written about 'the Negro question.' A Raisin in the Sun, for instance, was a play about an American family's conflict with certain of the mercenary values of its society, and its characters were Negroes... I write plays about various matters which have both Negro and White characters in them and there is really nothing else that I can think to say about the matter."

After her death in 1965, three unfinished plays were edited by Nemiroff and subsequently produced: Les Blancs, The Drinking Gourd, and What Use Are Flowers?.

ANNA ARNOLD HEDGEMAN

The Trumpet Sounds. A Memoir of Negro Leadership. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Born in Iowa and brought up in Anoka, Minnesota, Anna Arnold Hedgeman knew no racism as a child, for her family was the only black family in town and she was accepted as an equal. She was the first Negro student to enter Hamline College. However, her father found a room for her off campus and, years later, she wondered if she had been barred from living on campus. When it came time for her to do her practice teaching, she was given a freshman class at the college and didn't learn until much later

that the St. Paul high schools wouldn't accept her because she was black. She didn't realize either that she would be able to find teaching jobs only in the South. Fortunately, that is where she wanted to go, because her father had always praised the formal culture of the South.

On the train ride to her job at Rust College in Mississippi, she was told that she would have to change to the "colored" car at Cairo, Illinois. When she reached her destination, she was told by a taxi driver, "I don't ride niggers. You must be from up North." From then on, her life was dedicated to fighting racial segregation.

After a year at Rust College, she returned to the North, believing that change could not originate in the South. Taking a job with the Springfield, Ohio YWCA, she met the "sugar-coated segregated pattern of social work and housing" in the North. She worked for the YWCA in Jersey City, Harlem, Philadelphia and Brooklyn and, during the Depression, she set up referral services to the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration.

Starting in 1944, she served in many administrative capacities: executive director of the National Council for the Fair Employment Practices Commission; assistant to the administrator at the Federal Security Agency in the Truman administration; a member of New York mayor Robert F. Wagner's cabinet; and associate director of the New York Department of Social Justice. In 1977, she published The Gift of Chaos: Decades of American Discontent.

MATTHEW A. HENSON (1866-1955)

A Negro Explorer at the North Pole. New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1912.

Born on the Potomac River in Charles County, Maryland, about 44 miles south of Washington, D.C., Matthew Henson moved with his parents into the city with he was very young. A few years later, when he was 7, his mother died, and he was put in the charge of an uncle, who sent him to the N Street School. School managed to hold his attention only until he was 13, when he shipped as cabin boy on board a vessel bound for China.

This first adventure took him to China, Japan, Manilla, North Africa, Spain, France, and through the Black Sea to Southern Russia. When he was 22, he met Robert E. Peary, who was then a lieutenant in the United States Navy. Henson became his body-servant, but Peary quickly realized Henson's extraordinary skills and made him his assistant on his second expedition to the Arctic regions in 1891. Henson served as assistant on every subsequent trip made by Peary.

His duties were many, but to Peary, his skill in navigation, his ease in picking up languages, his empathy with different cultures, his physical stamina, his versatile intelligence and

his determination were invaluable. On the trip to the North Pole, Henson was more a partner than an assistant, his unusual accuracy in judging distances allowing them to move forward without time-consuming solar observations. When the flag was planted at the North Pole, it was Henson, Peary, and their three Eskimo guides whose "heartly cheers rang out on the still, frosty air."

Shortly before the final trip to the Pole began, Henson described in his journal a clear, windless day, with the temperature at 57 degrees below zero: "I climbed to the highest pinnacle of the cape and in the gathering daylight gazed out over the ice-covered ocean to get an idea of its condition. At my back lay the land of sadness, just below me the little village of snow-houses, the northern most city on the earth, and, stretching wide and far to the northward, the irresistible influence that beckoned us on; broken ice, a sinister chaos, through which we would have to work our way. Dark and heavy clouds along the horizon gave indication of open water, and it was easy to see that the rough and heavy shore-ice would make no jokes for us to appreciate."

He ends his account of his journeys with a wish: "I yearn to be with those who reach the South Pole, the lure of the Arctic is tugging at my heart, to me the trail is calling!"

CHESTER HIMES (1909-1984)

Lonely Crusade. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.

Cast the First Stone. New York: Coward McCann, Inc., 1952.

The Heat's On. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966.

If He Hollers Let Him Go. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1986.

Chester Himes was born in Jefferson City, Missouri, where his father taught blacksmithing and wheelwrighting at the Lincoln Institute. He was suspended from Ohio State University for introducing some fellow students to a brothel, then, with a childhood friend, got involved in an armed robbery and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. There he began to write, selling his first story to Esquire Magazine in 1934. After serving seven years, he was released, but was unable to find work. He joined a WPA writers' project, completing a history of the city of Cleveland that was never published. He worked for a while for the Cleveland Public Library and spent some time at Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm. Dividing his time between New York and the West Coast, working in shipyards and for aircraft companies, he led a bizarre life trying to support himself and his wife.

With the help of a Julius Rosenwald fellowship in creative writing, he published his first novel, If He Hollers Let Him Go, in 1945. Two years later, he published Lonely Crusade, a book that criticized every racial, political, and religious viewpoint, and brought such wrath upon him that he decided to leave the U.S.

He spent several years in England and France, where he published his autobiography, The Quality of Hurt (1971).

In France Himes became famous for his detective novels with their black detectives, Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones, who "manage to make James Bond look an especially sissy amateur." France awarded him the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière for these novels. At the time of his death in 1984, he lived in Spain.

VANESSA HOWARD (1955)

A Screaming Whisper. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1972.

Vanessa Howard was born in Brooklyn, New York. She began writing seriously at the age of 12, when she joined the Voice of the Children, a creative-writing workshop. Several of her poems received high critical praise when they were published in the anthology, The Voice of the Children.

Of A Screaming Whisper, Miss Howard says, "I have written this book mainly because of the need for these things to be known and the need for all to listen and hear, but mostly to understand."

LANGSTON HUGHES (1902-1967)

The Dream Keeper and Other Poems. With illustrations by Helen Sewell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932.

Jim Crow's Last Stand. Race and Culture Series No. 2. Negro Publication Society of America, 1943.

Simple Stakes a Claim. New York, Toronto: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1953.

The First Book of Jazz. Pictures by Cliff Roberts. Music selected by David Martin. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1955.

5 Plays by Langston Hughes. Edited by Webster Smalley. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1963.

Don't You Turn Back. Woodcuts by Ann Grifalconi. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.

The Big Sea. An Autobiography. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1986.

I Wonder as I Wander. An Autobiographical Journey. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1986.

Born in Joplin, Missouri, Langston Hughes spent his childhood with his grandmother in Lawrence, Kansas and, after her death, with a friend, Auntie Reed. His grandmother's first husband, Sheridan Leary, fought and died beside John Brown at Harper's Ferry. His father lived in Mexico, where he believed he could escape racism and make money faster. His mother lived in Cleveland, struggling against poverty, and it is was with her

that Hughes spent his high school years. He became an avid reader and wrote his first poem after his white classmates elected him class poet.

His "thoroughly unlikeable" father agreed to pay for his studies at Columbia University, but the classes didn't hold Hughes' interest and he quit, working at odd jobs in New York before shipping off to sea as a mess boy. Before sailing, he threw into the sea the books he had accumulated: "It was like throwing a million bricks out of my heart--for it was not only the books that I wanted to throw away, but everything unpleasant and miserable out of my past....I wanted to be a man on my own, control my own life, and go my own way."

He visited Africa, became a cook in a Montmartre night club in Paris, lived as a beachcomber on the Genoa waterfront and, when he returned to the U.S., became a busboy in the Wardman Park Hotel in Washington. There he met the poet Vachel Lindsay, who introduced him to the public by arranging a poetry reading in the Little Theater of the hotel.

Hughes' first published poem--and his most famous--was "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," which appeared in the Crisis in 1921. He became one of the major figures of the Harlem ("the greatest Negro city of the world") Renaissance, winning first prize for poetry in the magazine Opportunity in 1922 for "The Weary Blues," which gave its title to his first book of poems, published in the following year. Offered a scholarship by Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, Hughes was able to finish his education, receiving his B.A. in 1929.

In a newspaper column that he wrote for the Chicago Defender, he created the character Jesse B. Simple, who became loved by readers nationwide. Besides his novel, Simple Stakes a Claim, and his volumes of poetry, Hughes wrote short stories, essays and plays, as well as gospel song plays, a new art form he developed and popularized in the community theaters he founded in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Harlem. Hughes is considered one of America's finest poets.

KRISTIN HUNTER (1931)

The Landlord. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968.

Kristin Hunter was born in Philadelphia but grew up in the nearby town of Magnolia, New Jersey. Her parents were both teachers who were often too busy to listen to her, so she turned to reading and fantasy for companionship. During her high school and college years, she wrote a column for teenagers in the Philadelphia edition of the Pittsburgh Courier. She earned her B.S. degree and teaching certificate at the University of Pennsylvania.

Wanting to prove that she could earn her living in some

field other than teaching, she became a copy writer for advertising companies in Philadelphia. She published poetry and short stories in little magazines, but her first major success came in 1955, when she won the Fund for the Republic Prize for a documentary film script entitled Minority of One, which was produced the following year. A John Hay Whitney Fellowship in 1959-60 allowed her to work on her novel, God Bless the Child, published in 1964. She has continued to hold jobs between books, quitting the job when the writing of the next book begins to absorb her whole attention, and going back to work after its publication. She has served as writer-in-residence at Emory University and lecturer in English at the University of Pennsylvania.

Talking about The Soul Brother and Sister Lou, she says she tries to "... show some of the positive values existing in the so-called ghetto--the closeness and warmth of family life, the willingness to extend help to strangers in trouble,... the natural acceptance of life's problems and joys--and there is a great deal of joy in the ghetto--and the strong tradition of religious faith. All of these attitudes have combined to create the quality called 'soul,' which is the central theme of the book."

ZORA NEALE HURSTON (1903-1960)

Tell My Horse. Philadelphia, New York, London, Toronto: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1938.

Moses. Man of the Mountain. Philadelphia, New York, London, Toronto: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1939.

Zora Neale Hurston was born in the all-Negro town of Eatonville, Florida, where her father was a tenant farmer and jackleg preacher. When she was offered the chance to join a traveling Gilbert and Sullivan company as a maid, she eagerly accepted. However, her childhood habit of reading would not be quelled, and by working as a maid and a manicurist, she managed to put herself through Morgan Academy in Baltimore. She then enrolled at Howard University but didn't hesitate when a scholarship allowed her to transfer to Barnard College in New York. Upon graduation, she became secretary to novelist Fanny Hurst.

A private grant from Mrs. R. Osgood Mason and a fellowship from the Rosenwald Foundation supported her study of anthropology and folklore at Columbia University under Franz Boas. New York and Harlem were her kind of city, and she became a central figure of the Harlem Renaissance, publishing several stories in Opportunity and working with Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman on the editorial board of Fire. After reading her story, "The Gilded Six-Bits," in Story magazine, the editors of J.B. Lippincott Publishing Company commissioned a novel, which was published as Jonah's Gourd Vine in 1934.

From 1936 to 1938, she studied the folklore of Haiti and British West Indies on a Guggenheim Fellowship. While living in Haiti, she published a novel, Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937), and a study of Voodoo gods, Tell My Horse (1938). A gifted folklorist whose motto was, "Let the people sing," she became known for her studies of voodoo in Haiti and Louisiana and the folk customs of black Americans throughout the South. Her other major publications are Mules and Men (1935), Moses, Man of the Mountain (1939), Dust Tracks on a Road (1942), and Seraph on the Suwanee (1948).

FEMI FUNMI IFETAYO (REGINA MICOU) (1954)

We the Black Woman. Detroit: Black Arts Publications, 1970.

Born in Detroit, Femi Funmi Ifetayo began writing when she was introduced to stories and poetry in a creative writing class in her elementary school. Her poems have appeared in Kweli, a weekly newsletter, and in Black Student Voice.

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON (1871-1938)

God's Trombones; Seven Negro Sermons in Verse. Drawings by Aaron Douglas. New York: The Viking Press, 1927.

James Weldon Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida, where he was protected from prejudice by the high respect the community had for his family. His first contact with Jim Crow laws was on a train, when the conductor asked him and a Cuban friend who lived with his family to move to the "colored car." The two boys discussed the question with one another in Spanish, and the conductor, thinking they were foreigners, let them sit where they were. Johnson concluded that in America it was all right to be Negro, but not to be an American Negro.

During his undergraduate years at Atlanta University, he worked as a summer teacher in the backwoods of Georgia. At age 25 he became the principal of his old school in Jacksonville and began the study of law, becoming the first black appointed to the Florida bar since the end of the Civil War.

His brother, a Boston-trained musician, lured him to New York, where he discovered that he was "born to be a New Yorker." With Bob Cole, the brothers produced such songs as "Under the Bamboo Tree," "My Castle on the Nile," "Nobody's Lookin' but the Owl and the Moon," and "Congo Love Song." They became Broadway celebrities, although Johnson was never at ease with the glitter.

He took advanced courses in drama at Columbia University, where his teacher, Brander Matthews, encouraged him to write his first novel, The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, published anonymously in 1912. When asked to accept the post of United States Consul in Venezuela, he withdrew from the musical

partnership with his brother. In 1909 he was transferred to Nicaragua, but resigned from the diplomatic service when it became clear that his race would stand in the way of advancement.

Johnson became field secretary for the NAACP and led successful membership campaigns, even in the South, where blacks felt it was dangerous to organize. During this period he published his important poetic work, God's Trombones, Seven Negro Sermons in Verse, and several books on race relations, including Lynching, America's National Disgrace (1924) and Saint Peter Relates an Incident of the Resurrection Day (1930).

In 1930 he was appointed to the Adam K. Spense chair of Creative Literature at Fisk University. His autobiography, Along This Way (1933), was written a few years before he was killed in an automobile accident while vacationing in Maine. He will be remembered as the author of the song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

EARL JONES

Change of Heart. Glendale, Calif.: Great Western Publishing Company, 1981.

Earl Jones was born in Missouri but grew up in Illinois, where he and his childhood friends were known for the pranks they played on neighbors and even on the local police and fire department. A precocious child, he put together his own telephone system when he was ten, and by the time he was 12, he had studied enough magic to be proficient in both white and black tricks.

After he graduated from college, he joined the Navy. Based on that experience, his novel, Change of Heart, tells the story of a detachment of Navy and Marine personnel sent on a special demolition mission during the Korean War. The hero, a black man reared to behave like a white man, must face not only the dangers of the situation but prejudice from both black and white fellow soldiers.

After his discharge from the Navy, Jones worked in the aircraft industry for ten years. He is now a registered nurse, specializing in emergency care administration.

EDWARD SMYTH JONES (1881-?)

The Sylvan Cabin. A Centenary Ode on the Birth of Lincoln and Other Verse. Boston: Sherman, French & Company, 1911.

From the poem in this volume titled, "O God, Wilt Thou Help Me in School?," we can assume that Edward Smyth Jones was born in Mississippi and grew up on his father's farm. It was to his father he wrote requesting \$13 in order to register at a school in Alcorn College in Lorman, Miss. The night the reply arrived was a "dark, rainy one" and the envelope did not contain the

money he needed. Although it's not clear when he left Mississippi, we know that he walked to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the hopes of being accepted as a student at Harvard and that he was jailed there:

"Now sir, you take this forlorn tramp
With all his shabby ware,
And guide him safely off the 'Camp'
Of dear old Harvard Square."

His poem, "Harvard Square," was signed "Cell No. 40, East Cambridge Jail, Cambridge, Mass., July 26, 1910."

JUNE JORDAN (1936)

Living Room. New Poems by June Jordan. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1985.

Who Look at Me. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969.

Born in Harlem, June Jordan grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. She attended Barnard College and the University of Chicago, alternating her studies in Chicago with her work as the assistant to the producer for the film, "The Cool World." In 1965, she became writer and research associate for the Technical Housing Department of Mobilization for Youth.

The following year she accepted an appointment as instructor in English and literature at the City College of the City University of New York. Since then, she has taught at Connecticut College, Sarah Lawrence College, Yale University, and the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Active in political and social causes, she is founder and co-director of the Voice of the Children, Inc., co-founder of Afro-Americans Against the Famine, a member of the board of directors of the Teachers and Writers Collaborative, Inc., and the organizer of a creative writing workshop for black and Puerto Rican teenagers.

Her own work includes poetry and fiction, as well as design and movies. She is the recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in creative writing and the Prix de Rome in environmental design for 1970-71, awarded by the American Academy in Rome. Besides her own volumes of poetry and her novels, she has edited two anthologies of Afro-American poetry.

JOURNAL OF BLACK POETRY (KITABU CHA JUA)

Journal of Black Poetry, edited by Joe Goncalves. Summer 1968, Summer-Fall 1969, Special Issue 1970-71, Fall-Winter 1971, Summer 1972, Summer 1973, Summer 1974.

Under the editorship of Joe Goncalves, the Journal of Black

Poetry has provided a forum for black poetry and political and historical essays. Several well-known black authors have been contributing and corresponding editors: Imamu Amiri Baraka, Marvin X, Larry Neal, Ernie Mkalimoto, Ahmed Alhamisi, Ed Spriggs, Ed Bullins, and Askia Muhammad Toure.

In order to emphasize that the journal is "published for all Black People everywhere," its name was changed to Kitabu Cha Jua. Guest editors have included Dudley Randall, Margaret Burroughs, Don Lee, Larry Neal and Clarence Major. A special Pan African issue was published in 1970 and a special West Indian issue in 1973.

JOHN OLIVER KILLENS (1916-1987)

Great Gittin' Up Morning. A Biography of Denmark Vesey. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972.
'Sippi. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1988.

John Oliver Killens was born in Macon, Georgia, where Langston Hughes "...was the first Black writer who reached me way down yonder by myself in the wilderness of Georgia." As a young man, Killens was interested in law and studied at night while working on the staff of the National Labor Relations Board.

He was sent to the South Pacific during World War II and began writing: "By then I knew that writing was the thing for me. It would be my *raison d'être*, and nothing else would matter...I found out of course that writing was the damndest, hardest, loneliest buck a man could make, especially if that man was Black." In 1952, he and several other black writers founded the Harlem Writers Guild, a group that had an important influence on black literature. He was elected the first chairman.

His first novel, Youngblood, was published in 1954. The second, And Then We Heard the Thunder (1962), addressed the "hideous irony of asking the Negro to fight (in segregated units) and die in order to preserve the very freedoms he could not enjoy at home." His work includes several other novels, a volume of essays, short stories, and stage and screenplays.

Killens taught creative writing at Howard, New School for Social Research, Fisk, Columbia, Southern, Cornell, Rutgers, Brandeis, Western Michigan and Savannah State College. Talking about himself, Killens said, "I think I'm a man who has made a helluva lot of mistakes in my life, but I have always been in there pitching. I have always worked for Black liberation, but I've changed my mind a million times about how...to achieve it."

At the time of his death, he was trying to find a publisher for a biography of Pushkin on which he had started work in 1965: Great Black Russian: The Life and Times of Alexander Pushkin.

MARTIN LUTHER KING (1929-1968)

Stride Toward Freedom. The Montgomery Story. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Martin Luther King was protected from racial prejudice in his childhood by the influence of his father, who was a Baptist minister. His first confrontation with racism came at age 14, when he was returning from an oratory contest he had won. He and the teacher he was with were forced to give their bus seats to white passengers and to stand up during the 90-mile trip home.

He received his education at Morehouse College and Crozer Theological Seminary, and, while still a college student, was ordained a Baptist minister in his father's church in Atlanta. He then continued advanced study at Boston University, where he received a Ph.D. in 1955. In December of that same year, he called a city-wide Negro boycott of the Montgomery, Alabama bus system. The boycott lasted 381 days and established a successful means of confronting the unjust laws under which southern blacks lived.

King became the acknowledged leader of the Civil Rights movement, organizing nonviolent resistance throughout the South. The reaction to his efforts put his life in constant danger. His home was bombed three times, he was stabbed once in the chest and he was jailed at least 14 times. He understood clearly the power of nonviolence: "We will meet your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. We will not hate you, but we cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws. We will soon wear you down by our capacity to suffer. And in winning our freedom, we will so appeal to your heart and your conscience that we will win you in the process."

In 1957, while working for a Doctor of Divinity degree at Chicago Theological Seminary, King organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and became its first director. This organization was a powerful force in the successful effort to pass the Civil Rights Bill of 1963. In that same year, King was honored with the Nobel Prize for Peace.

From 1960 until his death in 1968, he served as co-pastor with his father at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta. He became known across the country for such eloquent speeches as "I Have a Dream" and "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution." In 1965 he led marches in the slums of Chicago to draw attention to the de facto segregation that exists in the North.

In addition to his account of the Montgomery boycott, his writings include The Measure of a Man (1959), Letter from Birmingham City Jail (1963), Why We Can't Wait (1964), Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Opportunity? (1967), The Trumpet of Conscience (1968) and Three Lives for Mississippi (1968).

King was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to lead a strike by city garbage workers.

THEODORE LOCKHART

In Search of Roots. Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1970.

Theodore Lockhart was born in St. Petersburg, Florida. After four years of service in the U.S. Air Force, he enrolled at Gibbs Junior College, where he was active in the Civil Rights movement and worked as the school reporter for the St. Petersburg Times. He continued his studies in philosophy and religion at Boston University and its School of Theology.

He is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and is now co-minister at the Greenwood Memorial United Methodist Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts and a visiting lecturer at Andover-Newton Theological School in Newton, Massachusetts.

FREDERICK J. LOUDIN

The Story of the Jubilee Singers. Including Their Songs, with J.B.T. Marsh. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898.

The Jubilee Singers were ex-slaves who were students at the newly formed Fisk University. Because the university was badly in need of funds, the treasurer, George L. White, who had a good voice and was training a choir at the school, had the idea that "a student choir...could travel through the North and sing out of the people's pocket the money that must soon be obtained in some way for the University."

The traditional Negro songs of the Jubilee Singers enchanted audiences wherever the choir went. In 1871, they traveled to Europe, earning a considerable amount of money for Fisk and introducing European audiences to black spirituals. After the choir was disbanded in 1878, Frederick J. Loudin, one of the singers, decided to reorganize it in 1882. Although faced by opposition from those who didn't think a black man could manage the company, he led a successful tour of England, Australia, India, China and Japan that lasted for six years.

This volume, first published in 1885, was edited by J.B.T. Marsh, about whom nothing is known. A supplement by Loudin was added in the 1898 edition.

CLAUDE MCKAY (1890-1948)

Selected Poems of Claude McKay. New York: Bookman Associates, 1953.

Born in Sunny Ville, Jamaica, West Indies, the youngest of 11 children, Claude McKay was apprenticed as a youth to a cabinet maker to help support the family. One of his older brothers was an agnostic school teacher who provided him with a constant flow of books. He also had an English friend, a collector of

folklore, who encouraged his avid reading. At age 17 he joined the Kingston native constabulary and began writing verses that gained him the status of unofficial poet laureate of Kingston.

After the publication of two books of poems, he was awarded the medal of the Institute of Arts and Sciences, a prize never before given to a black person. He used the prize money to enter Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in the United States, planning to become a teacher of agricultural methods. It soon became clear that he had no talent for agriculture, and he spent the remainder of his scholarship in New York. Working as a waiter in summer hotels and dining cars, trying to run his own restaurant, he began writing poetry again, publishing his first work in the Seven Arts under the name of "Eli Edwards."

He spent some time in London, working on Sylvia Pankhurst's radical pacifist paper, The Worker's Dreadnaught, and publishing his third volume of poetry, Spring in New Hampshire (1920). When he returned to New York, he became an associate editor of The Liberator and published his most widely known book, Harlem Shadows (1922), which earned him recognition as one of the most important writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

After serving as an observer at the Fourth Congress of the International in Russia, he traveled in Europe, where he lived for ten years. During this time he published his first novel, Home to Harlem (1928), and several other works of prose. His literary realism offended some critics, but he replied, "...[I] knew the unskilled Negro worker of the city by working with him as a porter and longshoreman and as waiter on the railroad So when I came to write about the low-down Negro, I did not have to compose him from an outside view."

When he returned to the U.S., he became involved with Friendship House in Harlem and wrote his autobiography, A Long Way from Home (1937), and a book of essays, Harlem: Negro Metropolis (1940). In the early 1940s he moved to Chicago to work as a teacher for a Catholic organization. After several serious illnesses, he died there in 1948.

His poem, "If We Must Die," is famous worldwide. Winston Churchill read it to the House of Commons during World War II and a copy of it was found in the pocket of a dead soldier on the battlefield.

WILLARD FRANCIS MOTLEY (1912-1965)

We Fished All Night. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951.

Let No Man Write My Epitaph. New York: Random House, 1958.

Let Noon Be Fair. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966.

Born into a middle-class family in Chicago and a graduate of the Chicago public schools, Willard Motley left that security to travel back and forth across the country, sometimes by bicycle or jalopy, sometimes hitchhiking. He found work as a migratory

laborer, ranch hand, cook, shipping clerk, photographer, and radio script writer, and spent time in jail for vagrancy.

He settled in Chicago in West Madison Street's skid row, where he found what he wanted to write about. His first book, Knock on Any Door (1947), the story of a ghetto boy's degeneration from church helper to hardened killer, earned him praise as an "extraordinary and powerful new naturalistic talent." One critic wrote, "Willard Motley's Nick, though an Italian Catholic, is really the blood brother of Richard Wright's Bigger, and his disorganization is handled with as much sympathy as if he were a lower class Negro. He takes on the status of any and all mishandled children of the slums." A film version of the novel was produced by Humphrey Bogart, who also acted in it. Motley supported his writing with work as an interviewer for the Chicago Housing Authority, and as a writer for the Office of Civil Defense. After publication of We Fished All Night, which received poor reviews, he moved to Mexico.

Let No Man Write My Epitaph, the story of Nick's son, was published in 1958. At the time of his death in 1965, Motley was working on a novel, Let Noon Be Fair, which was published in 1966. After his death, the diaries he had started when he was 16 and kept until he was 31 were published. They reveal Motley's reasons for refusing to write specifically about blacks: "My race is the human race."

ALBERT MURRAY (1916)

Stomping the Blues. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1976.

Albert Murray was born in Nokomis, Alabama. He attended Tuskegee Institute and taught there until he entered New York University, where he received his M.A. in 1948. He served 19 years in the U.S. Air Force, retiring with the rank of major. Since then he has taught at Columbia University, Colgate University, the University of Massachusetts at Boston, the University of Missouri, New School, and Brandeis University.

His other works include The Omni-Americans. New Perspectives on Black Experience and American Culture (1970), South to a Very Old Place (1972), The Hero and the Blues, a collection of essays he delivered as the Paul Anthony Buck lecturer at the University of Missouri (1973), and The Trainwhistle Guitar, a novel (1974).

LAWRENCE P. NEAL (1937)

Black Fire! An Anthology of Afro-American Writing, with LeRoi Jones. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1967.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Larry Neal moved with his family to Philadelphia when he was very young. He attended Lincoln

University in Pennsylvania and received his M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania.

A poet, critic and playwright, he was a major figure in the black arts movement of the 1960s, working with LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) to establish the Black Arts Theatre in New York. He was the arts editor of Liberator, editor of Pride and co-editor of Cricket. Believing that "we are living in the most beautiful and the most dangerous of times," he urged black writers to "listen first to Black people, all kinds, all classes," in order to protect the black culture. He was an instructor at City College of the City University of New York, writer-in-residence at Wesleyan University, and was named a Yale University fellow.

In the year after Black Fire came out, he published Black Boogaloo: Notes on Black Liberation (1969). In that same year, another volume edited by him, Baraka and A.B. Spellman was published: Trippin': A Need for Change. His poetry has appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies. His other work includes Hoodoo Hollerin' Bebop Ghosts (1974) and Analytical Study of Afro-American Culture (1977).

KATHRYN JOHNSTON NOYES (1930)

Jacob's Ladder. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965.

Kathryn Johnston Noyes was born in Boston, where her father was an engineer. Her early interest was drama, which she studied at Boston Conservatory.

In the same year in which Jacob's Ladder was published, she published The South, The Law, and Me. She is now editorial director for the Learning Institute of North Carolina and serves as literary and drama critic for several North Carolina newspapers.

MARGE PIERCY (1936)

Braided Lives. New York: Summit Books, 1982.

Marge Piercy was born in Detroit, Michigan. She graduated from the University of Michigan in 1957 and the following year received her M.A. from Northwestern University. She lives now in New York City where she is an active feminist writer.

Of her work she says, "I make poems for people as people bake bread for people and people grow corn for people and people make furniture for people. This novel [Dance the Eagle to Sleep], like my poems and other writing, is intended to be useful: I live in a situation of feedback. I articulate what I perceive needs to be articulated out of me, out of those around me, out of those I work with, out of those who push on me, out of those who are trying to kill me."

Her volumes of poetry include Breaking Camp (1968), Hard Loving (1969), 4-Telling (1971), To Be of Use (1973), and Living in the Open (1976). In addition to Braided Lives, she has written four novels: Going Down Fast (1969), Dance the Eagle to Sleep (1971), Small Changes (1973), and Woman of the Edge of Time (1976).

MERLINE PITRE (1943)

Through Many Dangers, Toils and Snares. Black Leadership in Texas 1868-1900. Austin: Eakin Press, 1985.

Merline Pitre was born in the Plaisance community of Opelousas, Louisiana. Her early interest was French, which she studied at Southern University and at Atlanta University, where she earned an M.A. Later, she entered Temple University in Philadelphia, where she received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history.

In 1981, she received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a travel grant from the American Forum, which enabled her to travel to Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Egypt. As a group leader of the Texas Consortium of Black Colleges and Universities, she attended a six-week study program in Haiti sponsored by the Fulbright Commission.

Her work has been published in numerous scholarly journals. Currently she is a professor in the history department at Texas Southern University in Houston.

STANLEY PLUMPP (1940)

The Mojo Hands Call, I Must Go. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1982.

Somehow We Survive. An Anthology of South African Writing. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1982.

Stanley Plummpp was born in Clinton, Mississippi, the son of a laborer. After two years at St. Benedict's College, he became a distribution clerk at the Main Post Office in Chicago. In 1966, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a military policeman. After his discharge, he returned to his position at the post office while working on his undergraduate degree at Roosevelt University.

He began graduate study at Roosevelt in 1969, working as a counselor at North Park College. In the same year he published his first book, Portable Soul, which was quickly followed by Half Black, Half Blacker (1970), Muslim Men (1972), Black Rituals (1972), and Steps to Break the Circle (1974).

Plummpp has served as editor for Third World Press and is a frequent contributor to Black World and Journal of Black Poetry. In 1971, he joined the faculty of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, where he teaches Black Studies.

CARLENE HATCHER POLITE (1932)

The Flagellants. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967.

Carlene Hatcher Polite was born in Detroit, where her parents were both international representatives of the UAW-CIO. When she was 9, her father was dismayed at the number of books she brought home from the library, all subject to potential overdue fines. When she was 12, she took a French pen name and wrote poetry by candlelight to make it more romantic. Enrolled at Sarah Lawrence on a scholarship, she was lured to New York City and its theater district, where she did bit parts in operas and Broadway shows while studying dance with Martha Graham.

Returning to Detroit, she became a guest instructor of modern dance at Wayne State University and served as business manager and dancer/actress at the Equity Theater. Involved politically like her parents, she was elected to the Michigan State Central Committee of the Democratic Party. As a member of the Detroit Council for Human Rights, she helped organize the Michigan Walk to Freedom protesting the Birmingham bombings and the killing of Medgar Evers. In 1963, she was responsible for the complete organization of the Northern Negro Leadership Conference. She continued to write poetry and make notes about her experiences: "In Detroit I had sometimes been taken for a policewoman because I would sit in a bar writing away in a little notebook."

When the Detroit Council closed down, she worked in night clubs to earn enough money to travel to Paris, where a letter she had written to a friend was read by a French publisher. Encouraged by his interest in her writing, she wrote her first novel, The Flagellants, a semi-autobiographical account. The male protagonist, she says, "C'est moi."

In 1971, she returned to America and now teaches creative writing and Afro-American literature at the State University of New York in Buffalo. A second novel, Sister X and the Victims of Foul Play, was published in 1975.

DUDLEY RANDALL (1914)

Poem Counterpoem, with Margaret Danner. Detroit: Broadside Press, 1966.

For Malcolm X; Poems on the Life and Death of Malcolm X, with Margaret Burroughs. Detroit: Broadside Press, 1967.

Cities Burning. Detroit: Broadside Press, 1968.

Born in Washington, D.C., Dudley Randall's early education was interrupted by moves from Washington to East St. Louis and from there to Detroit. After graduating from high school, he worked as a foundry worker in an automobile factory, a letter carrier, and a post office clerk. When he joined the armed services during World War II, he was assigned to the Signal Corps

in the South Pacific.

Taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, he attended Wayne State University, where he was a member of the Miles Modern Poetry Group. After receiving a masters in library science from the University of Michigan, he served as librarian at Lincoln University of Missouri, Morgan State College, and the Wayne County (Michigan) Federated Library System.

In 1965 Randall started the Broadside Press, which publishes broadsides of contemporary black poetry and has been instrumental in giving black poets a wider audience. For Malcolm X is the first book published by the press.

Well known as a poet and short story writer, Randall is poet-in-residence at the University of Detroit and also serves as a visiting lecturer in Afro-American Literature at the University of Michigan. His other work includes Love You (1970), More to Remember (1970) and two anthologies of black poetry, Black Poetry (1969) and The Black Poets (1971).

ISHMAEL REED (1938)

The Free-Lance Pallbearers. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967.

Yellow Back Radio Broke Down. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969.

Cab Calloway Stands in for the Moon. Flint, Michigan: Bamberger Books, 1970.

Ishmael Reed was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where his father, Henry Lenoir, was a fundraiser for the YMCA. His mother later married Stephen Reed, an autoworker, and they moved to Buffalo, N.Y. in 1942. While working as a clerk at Buffalo Public Library, Reed entered the University of Buffalo, Night School Division, but was encouraged by professors who read his writing to become a full-time student. He dropped out of the university to live in the Buffalo ghetto and there learned how little control blacks have over their lives. He began writing for the Empire Star Weekly, co-hosted a radio talk program and acted in plays.

Moving to New York City, he served as editor of Advance, a Newark, New Jersey newspaper and of East Village Other, which he and a friend founded. Through his first novel, The Free-Lance Pallbearers, he became known for what he calls his "spine-tingling melodrammers -- the sounds of coffin lids opening and the lone black cat down the hall who hasn't been fed for days."

After the publication of his first novel, he moved to California to teach at the University of California, Berkeley. He established Yardbird Publishing Company in 1971 and helped found Reed, Cannon & Johnson Communications Company two years later. Through these two companies and his recently established venture, I Reed Books, he has had an important influence on American literature.

In 1973, his volume of poetry, Chattanooga, was nominated

for the Pulitzer Prize in poetry. In 1974, his novel, The Last Days of Louisiana Red, won the National Institute of Arts and Letters award for the best non-commercial novel. He has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Among his other works are Where is Vietnam?: American Poets Respond (1967), 19 Necromancers from Now (1970), Mumbo Jumbo (1972), Conjure (1972), Secretary to the Spirits, (1975), and Flight to Canada (1976). He believes that Afro-American culture doesn't need to turn to Africa for subject matter, just as whites don't need to turn to Europe: "Living in an American City is an art form. They should take Cazenovia, New York, dismantle it, and put it in the Whitney Museum. It would put Warhol out of business. Just living in America is like being into a new thing that noone's ever been into before."

W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS (1886-1962)

Brave Mardi Gras, a New Orleans Novel of the '60s. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946.

W. Adolphe Roberts was born in Kingston, Jamaica and grew up in the town of Mandeville. At the age of 16, he became a reporter on The Daily Gleaner. Two years later he arrived in the United States and continued a journalistic career that included work on newspapers and magazines from New York to San Francisco.

When World War I broke out, Roberts was sent to France as a war correspondent by the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. Between 1918 and 1921, he served as editor of Ainslee's Magazine. Other editorships followed. His books include novels, biographies, and such vivid historical works as The Caribbean (1940) and The French in the West Indies (1942). His books of verse are Pierrot Wounded and Other Poems (1919) and Pan and Peacocks (1928).

ESLANDA CARDOZO GOODE ROBESON (1896-1965)

What Do the People of Africa Want? New York: Council on African Affairs, Inc., 1945.

Born in Washington, D.C., Eslanda Robeson moved with her mother to New York at her father's death when she was 6. Her father was a well-known educator and her grandfather the first black secretary of state in South Carolina.

In Mrs. Robeson's first career as a laboratory technician, she became the first black analytical chemist at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. When she married Paul Robeson in 1921, she also became his agent, handling his contracts and correspondence and making travel arrangements. In 1930, she published a biography of her husband, Paul Robeson, Negro.

While living in London during his appearance in Showboat, she studied anthropology at the University of London and the London School of Economics. In 1936, she traveled to Africa with her young son and later published a record of their experiences, African Journey (1945). With her husband, she traveled to the Soviet Union and to Spain at the height of the Civil War.

Back in the United States, she pursued her interest in anthropology, earning a doctorate in anthropology at the Hartford Seminary Foundation. She became friends with Pearl Buck, with whom she co-authored a book on the role of women in society, American Argument.

When she was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1953 to testify in televised hearings, she criticized the committee for its racism and stood her ground in defense of her husband. She had always been involved in his political activities and had many of her own, serving as a correspondent at the UN and as an observer to the historic Pan-African Conference.

PAUL ROBESON (1898-1976)

For Freedom and Peace. Address at Welcome Home Rally, New York, June 1949. New York: Council on African Affairs, 1949.

Paul Robeson was born in Princeton, N.J., where his father was a clergyman and his mother a schoolteacher. An exceptionally talented young man, he entered Rutgers College as the third black student ever admitted. He was not only a member of Phi Beta Kappa, but also an all-American football player.

After earning a law degree from Columbia University, he worked for a law firm in New York until he realized how limited were the opportunities available to black lawyers. He began appearing in plays with no intention of becoming a professional actor, but his success led him to join the Provincetown Players, associated with playwright Eugene O'Neill. His portrayal of the lead roles in "The Emperor Jones" and "All God's Chillun Got Wings" established his fame. By the 1930s, he was an international star.

During a European tour in 1934, he was harassed by Nazi officials in Germany, but welcomed by the Communist Soviet Union. This experience, combined with his conversations with George Bernard Shaw and other members of Britain's socialist movement, convinced him that communism could conquer racism. With African nationalists Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah he founded the anti-colonial Council on African Affairs.

When relations between the Soviet Union and the United States deteriorated after World War II, Robeson's enthusiasm for leftist policies were seen as anti-American. A statement from his address, For Freedom and Peace, made in 1949 after his return from his triumphant European tour--that Negroes would refuse to join in a war on behalf of the oppressors of colonial and subject

people and against the friends and allies of the Negro people-- was used as evidence of his disloyalty. His flourishing singing and acting career fell apart as theaters refused him the chance to perform. Because he refused to sign an anti-communist loyalty oath, he was denied the right to travel abroad. During this period he wrote his autobiography, Here I Stand, addressed to ordinary black people and explaining the development of his political views.

A Supreme Court decision in 1958 denied the government the right to restrict a citizen's travel because of his political views. However, Robeson was too ill to travel and spent the rest of his life in the United States in seclusion. When he did not appear at a celebration organized in honor of his 75th birthday, Coretta Scott King told the gathering that he had been "buried alive" because "he had tapped the same wells of latent militancy among blacks" as her husband, only he had done it much earlier.

SONIA SANCHEZ (1934)

Homegirls & Handgrenades. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1984.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Sonia Sanchez is known as a protest poet and militant playwright. After graduating from Hunter College in New York City, she became an instructor at the Downtown Community School in San Francisco. She has also taught at the University of Pittsburgh, Rutgers University, the Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York, City College of the City University of New York and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She is now on the faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Her first book of poetry, Homecoming (1969), deals with the return to black identity or "home-coming" from the white world. A prolific writer, she published several books between 1970 and 1974: We a BaddDDD People (1970), It's a New Day: Poems for Young Brothas and Sistus (1971), Three Hundred and Sixty Degrees of Blackness Comin' at You (1971), Love Poems (1972), A Blues Book for Blue Magical Women (1973), and a book for children, The Adventures of Fat Head and Square Head (1973), with its sequel, The Afternoon of Small Head, Fat Head and Square Head (1974). One critic has described her poetry as "raps, good ones, aimed like guns at whatever obstacles she detects standing in the way of Black progress."

HERBERT ALFRED SIMMONS (1930)

Man Walking on Eggshells. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962.

A native of St. Louis, Herbert Simmons has focused his novels on the life in the black ghetto of that city. He enrolled

at Lincoln University to study journalism, working on the school newspaper and writing a column, "Seymour the Poet." Dissatisfied with his work at Lincoln, he transferred to Washington University in St. Louis but was drafted into the army before he could graduate.

Serving as a clerk typist, he had his first chance to concentrate on writing, and when he returned to Washington University on a general scholarship, he began work on Corner Boy. This novel, published in 1957, won him the Fannie Cook Scholarship for art from the People's Art Center of St. Louis and also a Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship.

In talking about the novel, he says, "The spreading ripple of a man's actions is fantastic. A man is important, not because of what he does to make himself famous, but simply because he is a man."

His second novel, Man Walking on Eggshells, records the life of a jazz trumpeter and is a portrait of city life that is "both a celebration of and a dirge for the black urban experience."

CARROLL SIMMS (1924)

Black Art in Houston. The Texas Southern University Experience, with John Biggers. College Station and London: Texas A&M University Press, 1978.

Carroll Simms grew up in the rural cotton-belt community of Bald Knob, Arkansas, where he lived with his maternal grandparents. "We were taught that if we got an education, we should stay in the South afterward and strive to better the condition of other Negroes by teaching them." He was fascinated by the art that surrounded him, the quilts that were always in the process of being made, the embroidery of pillowcases, his grandfather's supple movements when patching a roof, the way he handled an ax to split shingles.

At Hampton Institute, Simms met John Biggers and became a student of Joe Gilliard, a talented ceramics instructor. From Hampton, Simms went on to study at the Academy of Art and at Wayne State University. In 1950, he was asked to join John Biggers in founding the art department at Texas Southern University. He is one of the important sculptors working in the U.S. today.

DANIEL SMITH

A Walk in the City. New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1971.

In his native Boston, Daniel Smith worked at various jobs, construction laborer, truck driver, carpenter, camp counselor and dispatcher for an automobile club before a football scholarship

enabled him to study in Mexico.

Entering Boston University to study physical education, he was awarded a teaching fellowship that allowed him to earn his master's degree in social foundations and philosophy. He served for three years as a physical education teacher and coach in a suburb of Boston and now teaches Black Studies. He is director of the local Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity.

ELLEASE SOUTHERLAND (1948)

The Magic Sun Spins. London: Paul Berman Limited, 1975.

Ellease Southerland was born in Brooklyn, the third child in a family of fifteen. Her father's church was the center of family activities, from music--she played the trumpet and piano--to regular sessions of physical exercise and poetry readings that were established by Southerland. She became interested in poetry in elementary school and was the poetry editor for her elementary school newspaper and editor of her high school's magazine. When she continued her education at Queens College she was on the staff of the literary magazine, receiving the John Golden Award for Fiction.

Shortly after Southerland's graduation from Queens College, her mother died, and Southerland became a caseworker for the city of New York to supplement her family's income. In 1971, she received the Gwendolyn Brooks Award for Poetry for her poem, "Warlock." The following year, she entered Columbia's School of the Arts as an official announcement to her family that she was serious about writing. Since then she has taught in the Columbia Community Education Exchange Program, at Manhattan Community College and at Pace University. She has continued to publish poetry and fiction in literary magazines, and her study of Zora Neale Hurston appeared in Sturdy Black Bridges (1979). The Magic Sun Spins is her first volume of poetry. Let the Lion Eat Straw, a novel based on the lives of her parents, was voted a "Best Book for Young Adults, 1979" by the American Library Association.

Southerland entered the literary world unknown even to other black writers: "We did not know her. We knew no one who knew her. There she was...writing the way we thought the 'new Black writers' should be writing, and there was no one, no group, no institution, to encourage her,...to sustain her" (Hoyt Fuller, poet, critic, and executive editor, Black World).

CHARLES SUMNER STONE, JR. (CHUCK STONE) (1924)

King Strut. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970.

Chuck Stone was born in St. Louis. After finishing high school he entered the Air Force and served as a navigator during the last years of World War II. He received his B.A. from

Wesleyan University and his M.A. from the University of Chicago. As a regional field representative for World Politics and American Foreign Policy, he spent a year leading adult discussion groups in the Chicago area. The following year he was in Egypt, Gaza and India, serving as overseas representative for the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE).

His political interests led him to journalism and editorial work on New York Age, Washington Afro-American, and Chicago Daily Defender. He became special assistant to U.S. Congressman Adam Clayton Powell and editorial research specialist for U.S. Congressman Robert N.D. Nix. From his experiences in Washington he wrote the novel, King Strut, which one critic said, "...could be a serious book, if it were not so funny, [and]... a funny book if it were not so serious."

In Washington he served as executive assistant to the Committee of Education and Labor of the United States Congress, public information director and vice-chairman of the National Conference on Black Power, executive director of the Washington Committee for Black Power, and a member of the steering committee of the Black United Front.

Recognized as an outstanding journalist, Stone has served also as lecturer on government, sociology, and journalism at universities, as the politician-in-residence at Morgan State College Institute of Political Education and as a commentator on the "Today" show. For two years he worked with the Educational Testing Service as director of minority affairs.

His other writing includes Tell It Like It Is (1970), a collection of essays, and Black Political Power in America (1970), a "microscopic scrutiny" of party politics. His essays have appeared in such anthologies as Contemporary Black Thought: The Best of the Black Scholar. Presently he is a syndicated columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News.

SOJOURNER TRUTH (ISABELLA BAUMFREE) (ca. 1797-1883)

Narrative of Sojourner Truth, A Northern Slave, Emancipated from Bodily Servitude by the State of New York in 1828. Boston: Printed for the Author, 1850.

Born a slave in upstate New York, Isabella Baumfree did not gain her freedom until the passage of the New York State Emancipation Act in 1827. She had been accused and then acquitted of the murder of a prophet from the Kingdom of God on Zion Hill and left New York City, freed, she felt, not only from slavery but from the corruption of the city as well.

In 1843, she had a vision in which God called her to tell the truth about slavery. From that moment she became Sojourner Truth, an itinerant preacher, a big-boned, six-foot tall, bass-voiced woman, who traveled the country giving anti-slavery speeches that were dramatic, sincere and powerfully intelligent. Her success was not always welcome and she was often pelted with

stones and beaten with sticks. One injury to her leg was so severe that it never healed properly.

Her most famous appearance was at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, where the organizers had sworn they would not let her appear on the platform because they didn't want the issue of women's rights to be "associated with abolition and niggers." When women's rights opponents in the audience began harassing the meeting with comments that women were weak and helpless, that women had nothing to do with Christ, that if God had meant women to be equal, he would have given some evidence, Truth made her way to the podium. No one stopped her. In her powerful voice she asked: "Whar did Christ come from?" In the silence she continued: "From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with him!" As to helplessness, she commanded, "Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me--and aren't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as any man--when I could get it--and bear the lash as well! And aren't I a woman? I have born thirteen children and seen most of 'em sold in slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me--and aren't I a woman?" The meeting was wild with admiration. Truth had defeated the theological justification for disenfranchising women, redefined what it meant to be a woman, and "articulated the political relationship between the black and women's movements."

When she died in 1883, she was buried with a simple headstone on which were carved the words, "Is God Dead?," the famous question she asked of Frederick Douglass.

DEREK WALCOTT (1930)

The Fortunate Traveler. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981.

Derek Walcott and his twin brother, Roderick, were born at Castries on Santa Lucia Island in the West Indies. Their parents were both schoolteachers. Their father died when they were one year of age and the boys "grew up with a terrific mother and a house full of books." Walcott attended St. Mary's College on Santa Lucia and graduated from the University College of the West Indies in Jamaica. Following graduation, he worked as a journalist, traveling widely in Europe. In 1957, he was given a Rockefeller grant to study the American theater. The following year he founded the Trinidad Theatre Workshop, which became the first touring ensemble of the West Indies.

Walcott's early interest was poetry--25 Poems (1948), Epitaph for the Young (1949), and Poems (1951)--and he continued to publish poems in small press magazines while working on such plays as Henri Cristophe, produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1950, and Henri Dernier, produced in 1951. He won several prizes from the "white poetry syndicate," but also won a respected second place at the Dakar Festival of Negro Arts in

1966. Robert Graves once said that Walcott handled English with a "greater understanding of its inner magic than most of his English-born contemporaries."

Several of his plays have been produced in London and Off-Broadway in New York. His many volumes of verse include Sea Grapes (1976) and The Star Apple Kingdom (1979).

ALICE WALKER (1944)

You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down. New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.

Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful. New York, London, San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984.

Good Night, Willie Lee, I'll See You in the Morning. London: The Good Women's Press, 1987.

The daughter of sharecroppers, Alice Walker was born in Eatonton, Georgia at a time when the lives of blacks were strictly controlled by whites. As a child of 8, she was blinded in one eye by a bb gun shot by one of her brothers. Her eye was covered by a scar that was finally removed by an operation when she was 14, but she had already come to think of herself as ugly.

Granted a rehabilitation scholarship by the state of Georgia, she attended Spelman College for two years, taking an active part in Civil Rights demonstrations. She transferred to Sarah Lawrence College, where she struggled against thoughts of suicide. With the support of Muriel Rukeyser, she published her first book of poems, Once, in 1968.

Her thoughts of suicide made her think seriously about her family and she realized that her mother and aunt were the most independent people she knew. She says the stories she now tells are her mother's stories--they are what her mother and others like her might have written if they were not the "mules of the world."

After graduation she worked for a short time for the New York City Welfare Department, then returned to the South to work for voter registration in Georgia and for welfare rights and Head Start in Mississippi. In 1967, she became Consultant in Black History for Friends of the Children of Mississippi. It was in that year that Walker's essay on the impact of the Civil-Rights movement won first prize in a contest sponsored by The American Scholar.

Since then she has published three novels, various collections of short stories, three books of poetry, and a book of essays. The Color Purple was made into a movie released in 1986. Her interest in the ordinary lives of people has led her to live with families and groups in Kenya, Uganda, and the Soviet Union.

As a writer-in-residence and lecturer, she has taught at Tougaloo College, Wellesley College, and the University of Massachusetts.

MARGARET WALKER (1915)

"The Ballad of the Free." Broadside Press Broadside Series.
Detroit, Mich.: Broadside Press, 1952.
Jubilee. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.

Margaret Walker, born in Birmingham, Alabama, is the daughter of university graduates, her father a Methodist minister and her mother a musicologist. She began writing poetry at the age of twelve. After graduation from Gilbert Academy, she entered Northwestern University, earning her B.A. degree in 1935.

She remained in Chicago, working as a social worker while writing for the Federal Government's Writers' Project and serving as a newspaper and magazine editor. After receiving an M.A. in English at the University of Iowa in 1940, she began teaching at West Virginia State College Institute.

In 1942, she published her first book of poetry, For My People, which was awarded the Yale Younger Poets Award. Since 1949, she has taught at Jackson State College in Mississippi, but took time off from her duties to earn her Ph.D. in English at the University of Iowa in 1965. She is director of the Institute for the Study of the History, Life, and Culture of Black Peoples.

Her novel, Jubilee (1966), presents the life of black slaves during the Civil War. Through extensive research, she made the novel as historically accurate as possible, recording even the patterns and rhythms of speech. For this novel, she was awarded a Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship. Recognized as one of the most important of the black women writers, she has been awarded honorary degrees by several universities.

Her other works include Prophet for a New Day (1970), October Journey (1973), How I Wrote Jubilee (1972), and A Poetic Equation: Conversations with Nikki Giovanni (1974).

BOOKER TALIAFERRO WASHINGTON (1858?-1915)

Sowing and Reaping. Boston: L.C. Page & Company, 1900.

Born a slave in Hale's Ford, Virginia, Booker Taliaferro took the name Washington when he had to give his name at roll call on his first day of school. Not knowing the name of his white father, he took the name that seemed most appropriate. As a child he worked in the salt furnaces and coal mines and remembers having skimpy portions of fat pork and cornbread as his only diet.

School seemed a paradise to him, and he hiked to Hampton Normal & Agricultural Institute 500 miles away in order to attend classes there. After graduation he returned to his home town and taught day and night school before being asked to be the director of the normal school for Negroes to be opened at Tuskegee. He gave all his energy to this task, believing that the Negro could free himself through education, specifically education in those

fields that wouldn't threaten whites, such as farming, carpentry, dressmaking, bricklaying, and domestic service. He claimed that "few things are more satisfactory to me than a high-grade Berkshire or Poland China pig."

His success at Tuskegee Institute was extraordinary and the school became a showcase, visited even by presidents. But his compromising attitude wasn't welcomed by such leaders as W.E.B. DuBois. At the Atlantic Exposition in 1895, the first black to "sit on the same platform with white Southern men and women on any important National occasion," he gave a speech in which he said to blacks: "It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities." And to whites: "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremist folly..." DuBois called his speech, "the Atlanta compromise."

Washington would not budge from his belief in persistence, industry, good humor, helpfulness, and modesty. His work at Tuskegee Institute was admired worldwide and he could rightly feel that he had successfully proven his often stated principle: "Merits will eventually be recognized and rewarded."

He served as advisor on racial matters to Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft. Among his many books are The Future of the American Negro (1899), A New Negro for a New Century (1900), and The Story of Slavery (1913).

JOHN A. WILLIAMS (1925)

The Man Who Cried I Am. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1985.

Click Song. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1987.

Jacob's Ladder. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1987.

Born in Jackson, Mississippi and raised in Syracuse, New York, John A. Williams interrupted his high school education to join the Navy in the Second World War. In the Pacific, where he was stationed, the segregation of America's armed forces led to race riots. He had only scorn for the Navy's racial protocols and was confined once to the brig for his refusal to follow them.

After the war, he finished high school and received his undergraduate degree in journalism from Syracuse University. While working at jobs in public relations and TV, he began writing and traveled throughout Europe and Africa as a correspondent for Ebony, Jet, Holiday, and Newsweek. One of his early novels remains unpublished, but the second, The Angry Ones (1960), is his first published work. His novels treat social and political issues, but in all, he is "faithful to his committed task--to bridge the racial gap by telling the truth about both sides."

After the publication of Night Song in 1961, the American Academy of Arts and Letters informed him he had received the Prix de Rome, then told him the award had been disapproved. Williams

believed his forthcoming marriage to a white woman had been the cause of the reversal.

A prolific writer, William's list of publications includes criticism, a drama about Ethiopian Jews, nine novels--of which Click Song and The Man Who Cried I Am are considered masterpieces, short stories, poetry, and biographies of Martin Luther King and Richard Wright. He has also edited numerous anthologies. One of his major nonfiction works is Africa, Her History, Lands and People (1963).

SHERLEY ANNE WILLIAMS (1944)

Dessa Rose. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986.

Sherley Anne Williams was born and raised in the Central Valley of California. She attended schools in Fresno, California, receiving a B.A. in history from California State University, Fresno. After graduation, she began writing seriously and enrolled at Fisk University, where she studied with poet Robert Hayden and worked in the library where Arna Bontemps, poet and anthologist, was then head librarian. Her first book, Give Birth to Brightness, was finished before she transferred to Brown University to continue her graduate studies. This book, a critical study of several black writers, was published in 1972, when she was teaching at California State University in Fresno.

In her poetry, she "...wanted specifically to write about lower-income black women...whose courage and humor helped each other and me thru some very difficult years." She is part of the new black poetry movement that differs from the Harlem Renaissance in that it is "not protest art, but an art of liberating vision, growing out of a black aesthetic."

Her first book of poetry, The Peacock Poems, was published in 1975 and nominated for a National Book Award in 1976. Her stories, poems, and critical essays have appeared in many small press magazines. Letters from a New England Negro, her first play, was premiered at Brown University in 1982.

RICHARD WRIGHT (1908-1960)

12 Million Black Voices. Photo direction by Edwin Rosskam. New York: The Viking Press, 1941.

Eight Men. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1987.

Richard Wright was born near Natchez, Mississippi, but his family moved from town to town and he came to know half a dozen Mississippi towns. After his father deserted the family, young Wright and his mother lived with various relatives. When his mother was no longer able to take care of him, he was placed in an orphanage.

His first short story, published in a black newspaper when

he was in the eighth grade, described the vigilante murder of a classmate's brother. At his graduation he was named valedictorian of his class but was warned to make his speech appropriate for the whites who would be at the commencement. His education ended at age 15, but he read widely, borrowing books from the whites-only library by forging a note: "Dear Madam: Will you please let this nigger boy have some books by H.L. Mencken?"

In 1927, he moved to Chicago, looking for improvement in living conditions, only to discover the same sort of prejudice he had known in the South, as well as a new kind of urban poverty. In rebellion he joined the Communist Party and became a reporter for The Daily Worker. Disturbed by the narrow vision of the party members, he resigned in 1944.

As a participant in the Federal Writers' Project, he entered his manuscript Uncle Tom's Children in a contest sponsored by Story magazine. The collection of four long stories dealing with the violence between whites and blacks won first prize. Angry at the easy catharsis his stories provided "even [to] bankers' daughters," he resolved that his next book would be "so hard and deep that they would have to face it without the consolation of tears." This book was Native Son (1940), "the most powerful and celebrated statement we have yet had of what it means to be a Negro in America" (James Baldwin). The book established a new direction for black writers, a new urban realism with far-reaching influence.

Black Boy (1945), Wright's autobiography, was published five years later. It tells of his early life in Mississippi and "like a blues sung by such an artist as Bessie Smith, its lyrical prose evokes the paradoxical, almost surreal image of a black boy singing lustily as he probes his own grievous wound...." (Ralph Ellison). At the invitation of the French government, Wright visited Paris and then returned to settle there in 1947. He became acquainted with such existentialist philosophers as Jean-Paul Sartre, whose philosophy appealed to his own sense of alienation and was not unlike ideas he had already expressed in his own work. His first novel written in Paris, The Outsider (1953), is the only existential novel written by an American. His other work includes such nonfiction as Black Power (1954), which argues for an African future under black rule.

FRANK YERBY (1916)

The Serpent and the Staff. New York: The Dial Press, 1958.

Frank Yerby was born in Augusta, Georgia. With an M.A. from Fisk University, he began his career as a teacher at Florida A&M College. During World War II, he worked as a laboratory technician for Ford Motor Company and then as a chief inspector for Ranger (Fairchild) Aircraft.

Yerby began writing verse at age 17 for the little magazines. His short story, "Health Card," appeared in Harper's

Magazine and won the O. Henry Memorial Award for best first short story in 1944. His first novel, The Foxes of Harrow, published in 1946, was an instant success and since its appearance, Yerby has lived by his pen, writing more than 23 novels.

Called the modern Dumas by critics, he is probably America's most widely-read novelist. His carefully researched novels have been major book club selections and are often leading best sellers. In England and other European countries, his books have been extremely popular. At one time in France, he, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway were the most widely read American authors.

When criticized for not dealing with racial issues in his writing, Yerby replies, "My mother was Scotch-Irish, a grandparent was an Indian; I've far more Irish blood than Negro. I simply insist on remaining a member of the human race. I don't think a writer's output should be dictated by a biological accident. It happens there are many things I know far better than the race problem."

