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“Women of Color”: A Fight For Change “Through Literature”

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Women of color have made many contributions to American life in wide-ranging and diverse fields. Many pioneered the way and opened door after door. These were women who took a mighty step across the stage of America.

The 19th and 20th Centuries have brought forth a group of dynamic African American women writers and poets. These writers joined their elders in the struggle for justice and equality to chart strategies and work for change in the conditions of all African Americans. Cultural messages to and for the people expressed black pride, strength, power and beauty, despite oppression along with the call for freedom for all African Americans.

Some would say that black women are some of America’s greatest heroes, and that not enough credit has been given to the blacks who have been oppressed beyond recognition.

In this unit, students will become familiar with such writers as Phillis Wheatley, Alice Walker, Sonia Sanchez, Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Lorraine Hansberry, Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, Maya Angelou and Paule Marshall.

These writers represented one of the strongest literary movements in the history of African creativity. These poets not only helped to shape a contemporary literature but they also helped to recapture and reshape a culture.

As early as the eighteenth century black poet Phillis Wheatley caught a vision that was to remain characteristic of many black writers during the next two centuries. In different tones and in a different manner, she reflected an element of race-consciousness so powerful as to significantly enhance the beauty of African American poetry. As black writers continued to emerge, some regarded themselves simply as writers, while others insisted on being regarded as black writers, or even as members of particular schools of writers. Many, though not all, of these writers have dealt with black themes, some attempting to erase past stereotypes, others not.

It was during the 1920’s that black literature made a sharp change of direction, removing itself once and for all from the polite and strait-laced conventions and grinning, dancing, ingratiating manner of the minstrel show. With the emergence of the “Harlem School” came a sense of racial pride which expressed itself in earthy, realistic terms—the protests of both the black and white establishments notwithstanding.

This unit will be divided into three general areas: one will attempt to have an historical approach, the second, a more personal focus on each author, in the third, students will read, identify, respond to, recite, research, and evaluate poetry and novels by famous individuals.

Famous works will be discussed with a view toward their context and the intent of the poet. Through these writings, we will attempt to focus upon the author's life and works, individual strength, the role each played and the struggle each writer had to overcome. Although this unit will be most responsive to the needs of African American students, all students have something to gain from the content. The message of racial pride, survival, struggle, determination, love and humor that weaves its way through these writings should increase students' personal pride, self-confidence and self-esteem.

This unit will give students an opportunity to gain a more personal understanding and appreciation of women, feelings, heritage and events that mark the course of African American History.

These writers have earned a reputation as gifted story-tellers whose troubled characters seek to find themselves and their cultural riches in a society that wraps or impedes such discovery. The contemporary theme that unites them—the troubling persistence of racism in America—is infused with an urgency that black writers are a part of the history of America and this unit is their combined achievements.

This unit is written for Special Education students in grades 9-12 who are not always easily motivated and whose reading levels are below grade level. In writing this unit, I hope to motivate as well as stimulate students in what they are learning.

This unit will offer students the strength of diversity to flourish, the history and literature that have shaped our country and society. Students will also be provided with "hands-on activities". I will use both cognitive and affective domains to help them internalize the similarities and differences of what poetry is in the eyes of the African Americans writer.

The cognitive component of this unit is designed to increase the students' ability to conceptualize and generalize about ethnically-related events and collect and evaluate data related to race and ethnicity. The affective component is designed to help students analyze and clarify their attitudes and feelings related to racial and ethnic groups and to reduce racial and ethnic prejudices.

A book always comes to life when it has a reader, someone to recreate the author's original meaning and emotion. There are times when we read with such absorption that we forget ourselves and allow the language of the book to take over our minds, transporting us into the world of a novel, story, poem, play, or essay.

When students respond to a book in this way, they actually participate in the creative process. It is the reader who allows the author's words to have a sound, creating a space in which the author's words have a meaning.

The group establishes a list of criteria for evaluating a poem. For example, the experience of a poem should help the reader or listener to understand the literal meaning of the theme, or it may help him or her enjoy the rhythm or the language.

After each poem is experienced, each group member will determine the methods that is most satisfying.

After all of the presentations of the poems are completed, students will compare ratings of the methods among the group members.

I have selected several poems to be included in this unit. Each poem selected for study will present an opportunity for students to listen, read and recite. Poems will be the vehicle for detailed phonics and word attack lessons. I will consider each poem on its own terms to find out what it has to offer as both an experience and as a way to improve students' reading skills.

The following is a list of poems I have selected to include in this unit: "We Real Cool", by Gwendolyn Brooks, "Trips", by Nikki Giovanni, "Imagination", by Phillis Wheatley, "Good Night, Willie Lee, I'll see You in the Morning", by Alice Walker.

These poems will acquaint students with poetry and the writer. The selection was based on interest, reading level and vocabulary and word study skills.

Poetry gives us knowledge. It is a knowledge of ourselves in relation to the world of experience, and to that world considered, not statistically, but in terms of human purposes and values.

Poetry is many things in the twentieth century that it has never been before. In a time of continuing and catastrophic change, poets have changed the tune of poetry, changed its shape, changed its very nerve of feeling in order to record a new and often numbing reality.

The poet sees and feels a situation in a way that enables him to express it for our better understanding and enjoyment. He helps us to understand the world better by sharpening our senses and by making us more sensitive to life around us. By his vivid imagery he appeals to us through our hearts and feelings. Our imaginations are kindled and we are privileged to store up treasures in memory.

DEFINITIONS OF POETRY:

There are many definitions of poetry, I will list a few from some well known individuals.

Poetry . . . is an art of imitation . . . a speaking picture, with this end—to teach and delight.

Sir Phillip Sidney

Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason.

Samuel Johnson

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.

William Wordsworth

Poetry is the lava of imagination whose eruption prevents earthquake.

Lord Byron

Poetry is the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of the thing, to pass the brute body and search the life and reason which causes it to exist.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I would define . . . the poetry of words as the rhythmical creation of beauty.

Edgar Allan Poe

Poetry is the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language.

Watts-Dunton

Poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth.

Matthew Arnold

These definitions show why a textbook on poetry cannot very well begin with the acceptance of a single definition of poetry. For various reasons, no single definition is likely to be very helpful, at this stage, to the students.

BIOGRAPHIES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN POETS AND WRITERS

Paule Marshall—b. 1929 Novelist, short story writer

Paule Marshall was born in Brooklyn, New York, and graduated from Brooklyn College as a Phi Beta Kappa. In Barbados (the birthplace of her parents) she wrote her first novel, *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), reprinted twice in 1970 and also in 1981, which deals with the dislocation one experiences in moving from the tropics to the cruel reality of a home in Brooklyn.

Marshall is also the author of *Soul Clap Hands and Sing* (1961) which is a collection of four short stories or novellas set in Brazil, Barbados, British Guiana, and Brooklyn. Her big novel, entitled *The Chosen Place , The Timeless People* , was published in 1969. Recently she has written *Merle*, a novella adapted from *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People*. Her fourth book, *Praisesong for the Widow* (1982) is also a novel. Her short stories have been published in many anthologies and magazines, and *Reena and other Stories* (Feminist Press,1984), is a collection of Marshall's short fiction. She has received both the Guggenheim and the Ford foundation fellowships. Marshall also wrote an autobiographical essay in "The Making of a Writer" series in the New York Times Book Review, January 9, 1983.

Phillis Wheatley 1753-1784 Poet

Born in Senegal, Phillis Wheatley was brought to the United States as a slave and received her name from Mrs. Susannah Wheatley, the wife of the Boston tailor who had brought Phillis.

Miss Wheatley received her early education in the household of her master. Her interest in writing stemmed from her reading of the Bible and the classics under the guidance of Wheatleys' daughter, Mary.

In 1770, her first poem was printed under the title *A Poem by Phillis, A Negro Girl on the Death of Reverend*

George Whitefield. Her book *Poems on Various Subjects: Religious and Moral* was published in London in 1773. After a trip to England for health reasons she later returned to the United States, and was married. She published the poem *Liberty and Peace* in 1784, shortly before her death. Most of the old books of her poems, letters, and memoirs about her life were reprinted in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Two books about her are Julian D. Mason Jr's *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley* (1966) ; and William H. Robinson *Phillis Wheatley, A Biography* (1981). Robinson also compiled and published *Phillis Wheatley: A Bio-Bibliography* (1981).

Although George Washington was among her admirers (she had once sent him a tributary poem, which he graciously acknowledged), her poetry is considered important today largely because of its historical role in the growth of American Negro Literature. In its style and thematic preoccupations, Miss Wheatley's poetry reflects Anglo-Saxon models, rather than her African heritage. It is, nevertheless, a typical example of the verse manufactured in a territory—the British colonies—not yet divorced from its maternal origins.

Alice Walker—b. 1944 Poet, Novelist

Alice Walker was born in Easton, Georgia, has lived in Mississippi, and in 1974 moved to New York City. She was educated at Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia, and at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York.

Her short stories and poem have been published in *Freedomways*, *Essence*, and other magazines and anthologies. She has been writer-in-residence and teacher at Jackson State College and Tougaloo College in Mississippi and is a prolific writer. Her first book was poetry entitled *Once*, published in 1968. Her second book, published in 1970, was a novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. A second book of poetry, *Revolutionary Petunias and Other Poems* was published in 1973. She also wrote *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (1973); *Langston Hughes, America Poet* (1974), for children; *Meridian*, (1976) a novel; *Good Night, Willie Lee, I'll See You in the Morning* (1979).

Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*, placed Walker among the most important contemporary American writers and made her an overnight literary celebrity. *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989), is an ambitious novel recording 500,000 years of human history.

In Search of Our Mothers' Garden: Womanist Prose (1984) and *Living by the Word: Selected Writings*, 1973-1987 (1988) are collections of essays written throughout Walker's career; they focus on such topics as the environment, animal rights and Nuclear War. Walker is also the author of two books for children, *Langston Hughes: American Poet* (1974) and *To Hell With Dying* (1988).

Walker is one of the most prolific black women writers in America. Her work consistently reflects her concern with radical sexual and political issues—particularly with black woman's struggle for spiritual survival.

Toni Morrison—b. 1931 Novelist, Editor

Born in Lorain, Ohio, she received a B.A. degree from Howard University in 1953 and an M.A. from Cornell in 1955. After working as an instructor in English and the humanities at Texas Southern University and Howard University, Morrison eventually became a senior editor at Random House in New York City. Morrison has been responsible for the publication of many books by blacks at Random House: Middleton Harris' *The Black Book*, which she edited, and books by Toni Cade Bambara and others. In 1971-1972, she was also an associate professor at the State University of New York at Purchase. Formerly married, she has two sons. Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. Her second novel, *Sula*, was published in 1974 and won a 1975 Ohioana Book Award. Morrison's third novel, *Song of Solomon* (1977), was a very widely reviewed and received the 1978 award in literature of \$3,000 from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Her fourth novel, *Tar Baby* (1981) was even more widely reviewed. Newsweek magazines front cover story on Morrison's life and writings called her the best of the black writers today. She was elected to the American Institute of Arts and Letters in 1981 and gave the keynote address at the American Writers' congress in New York city in the fall of that year. Barbara Christian's *Black Women Novelists* (1980) has a section on her first three novels; and there is an interview with Morrison in Michael S. Harper and Robert b. Stepto's *Chant of Saints; A Gathering of Afro-American Literature, Art and Scholarship* (1979). She has written the story for the musical *Storyville*, which is about jazz music originating in the brothels of New Orleans.

Morrison was one of the seven artists to receive the New York city Mayor's Award of Honor for Art and Culture in May 1988. Since the Spring of 1989, she has been teaching as a full professor with an endowed chair at Princeton University where her courses encompass creative writing, African studies and women's studies (Lisa W. Foderaro "Big Name on Campus", New York Times Education Life Section 4A, August 7, 1988).

Zora Neale Hurston 1903-1960 Novelist, Folklorist

Once placed in "the front rank of American writers" for her mastery of folklore, Zora Neale Hurston was born and raised in an all-black town in Florida (Eatonville), an experience that left a deep imprint on her later literary efforts.

After traveling north as a maid with a Gilbert and Sullivan company, she acquired her education at Morgan State, Howard, and Columbia. While at Howard, under Alain Locke's influence, she became a figure in the Negro Renaissance, publishing short stories in *Opportunity* and serving with Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman on the editorial board of the magazine *fire* .

In 1934, *Jonah's Gourd Vine* was published after her return to Florida. Her more important novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* appeared three years later and then *Moses: Man of the Mountain* (1939), was followed in 1948 by *Seraph on the Suwanee* . Her other three works are two books of folklore and her autobiography which was reprinted in 1985 with a new introduction and with the several altered or expunged chapters restored.

Toward the end of her life, Miss Hurston was a drama instructor at the North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham. She died in obscurity and poverty on January 28, 1960. Since then, six of her works have been reprinted with new introductions and Alice Walker edited a *Zora Neale Hurston Reader* . These books plus two about Hurston and her works constitute a Hurston revival. Robert Hemenway's *Zora Neale Hurston: a Literary Biography* (1977) is the most widely known.

Lorraine Hansberry 1930-1965 Dramatist

The artistic reputation of Lorraine Hansberry rests largely on the SUCCESS of her first play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, which was awarded the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for the year 1959. (Miss Hansberry was the first black to win this award, but August Wilson much later won this award three times with his plays.)

Born in Chicago, Miss Hansberry studied art at Chicago Art Institute, the University of Wisconsin, and finally, in Guadalajara Mexico.

She wrote *Raisin* while living in New York's Greenwich Village having conceived it after reacting distastefully to what she called "a whole body of materials about Negroes cardboard characters. Cute dialect bits. Or Hip-swinging musicals from exotic scores." It opened on Broadway on March 11, 1959 at a time when it was generally held that all plays dealing with Negroes were "death" at the box-office. Produced, directed, and

acted by blacks, it was later made into a successful movie starring Sidney Poitier. It was then converted to *Raisin*, a musical which won a Tony award in 1974.

Her second Broadway play, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* dealt with "the Western intellectual poised in hesitation before the flames of involvement." Shortly after its Broadway opening, Miss Hansberry succumbed to cancer on January 12, 1965, in New York City.

Her books, in addition to the two published plays, are *To Be Young, Gifted and Black, the Movement, Documentary of a Struggle for Equality* (text); and *Les Blancs: the collected Last Plays of Lorraine Hansberry* .

Books about her and her work include Anne Cheney's *Lorraine Hansberry*, (1984) Catherine Scheader's *They Found a Way:Lorraine hansberry* (1978) for young people; Margret B. Wilkenson of the University of California, Berkeley is writing a literary biography of Lorraine Hansberry. There are also a special issue of *freedomways* magazine (fourth Quarter, 1979) devoted to Lorraine Hansberry with an extensive bibliography. Her play *Raisin in the Sun* continues to be produced by theater companies and on television. Another doctoral dissertation was completed on her plays in 1986.

Nikki Giovanni 1943—Poet

Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville Tennessee. She studied at Fisk University and at the University of Pennsylvania. Her first book of poetry, *Black Feeling, Black Talk*, published in the mid—1960s, was followed by *Black Judgment* in 1968. These two were combined as *Black Feeling, Black Talk, Black Judgement* in 1970.

In 1974, her poems were found in many black literature anthologies and she had also become a media personality through her TV appearances where she read her poetry. Many of her poems were to soul or gospel music accompaniment. One such recording is *Truth Is On Its Way*.

Giovanni is a prolific author. Her other books are *recreation; Spin a Soft Song; Night Comes Softly: Anthology of Black Female Voices; My House; Gemini: an Extended Autobiographical Statement; Ego Tripping and Other Poems for Young People; A Dialogue (with James Baldwin); and A Poetic Equation: Conversations Between Nikki Giovanni and Margaret Walker* . (There is a second edition of this work (1983) with a new piece by Giovanni putting the book in historical perspective), Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio, gave her an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in 1972 when she was 28 years old. Late books by Giovanni are *The Women and the Men: Poems* (1975); *Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day* (1978); and *Vacation Time, a Collection of Poems for Children* (1980) which was dedicated to her son Tommy. Her last book is *Those Who Ride the Night Winds* (1984).

In 1981, a newspaper reporter noted that Giovanni, one of the premiere black revolutionary poets of the 1960s, appeared to have shed all trace of the angry, bitter radical. Explaining her transformation, Giovanni said, "One winds down. We've touched on every sore that anybody in the world ever had and I think we ought to do some healing. I'm not downgrading anger, but how long can you stay angry?"

Besides writing and lecturing, today Giovanni is also a volunteer in the Cincinnati public schools system where she teaches poetry.

Maya Angelou b. 1928—Writer, Poet, Actress

Born in St Louis, Maya Angelou spent her formative years shuttling between that city, a tiny, totally segregated town in Arkansas, and San Francisco where she realized her ambition of becoming that City's first

Negro streetcar conductor.

In the 1950s, she studied dancing with Pearl Primus in New York, later appearing as a nightclub singer in New York and San Francisco. She worked as an editor for the *Arab Observer*, an English -language weekly published in Cairo; lived in Accra, Ghana, where under the black nationalist regime of Kwame Nkrumah she taught music and drama; and studied cinematography in Sweden. She became a national celebrity in 1970 with the publication of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* , the first volume of her autobiography, which detailed her encounters with Southern racism and a pre-pubescent rape by her mother's lover.

In 1971, she produced *Just Give me a Cool Drink of Water Fore I Die: The Poetry of Maya Angelou* ; in 1975, *Oh Pray My Wings are Gonna Fit Me Well* (poetry); in 1979, *And Still I Rise* (poetry); and in 1983, *Shaker Why Don't you Sing?* (poetry). In 1977, she was nominated for an Emmy award for her portrayal of Nyo Boto in the television adaptation of the best selling novel *Roots*.

Three more volumes of her autobiography have been published: *Gather Together in My Name* (1974); *Singin and Swingin' and Getting Merry Like Christmas* (1976); and *The Heart of a Women* (1981). In 1986, (paperback in 1987) *Alls God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* was published. She is now co-authoring with Dorothy I. Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women, Height's autobiography to be published by Warner Books early in 1990.

The extravagantly tall multi-talented Angelou lives in Winston Salem, North Carolina with her husband Paul Defeu.

Gwendolyn Brooks—b. 1917 Poet for the people

Gwendolyn Brooks is one of many blacks to win Pulitzer Prizes in various fields. (Duke Ellington was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in music in 1965 but was turned down amid controversy and resignation of judges.) Miss Brooks received this prestigious award in 1950 for *Annie Allen* , a volume of her poetry which had been published a year earlier.

Miss Brooks was born in Topeka, Kansas, moved to Chicago at an early age, and was educated there, graduating from Wilson Junior College in 1936.

She had her first state of Ghetto life during her first job as Secretary to a "Spiritual advisor" who sold "love drops." Although unfamiliar with these conditions for native environment, she was nonetheless alert enough to realize that they could offer her much in the way of unique material for her writing.

In 1945, she completed a book of poems, *A Street in Bronzeville* , and was selected by *Mademoiselle* as one of the year's 10 most outstanding American women. She was made a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1946, and received Guggenheim Fellowships for 1946 and 1947.

In 1949, she won the Eunice Tietjen prize for poetry in the annual competition sponsored by poetry magazine.

In the late 1960's, she opened her home to young people interested in poetry and discussions about art and politics. Once, she saw a theater performance of *Opportunity, Please Knock*, in which the actors were members of a Chicago Street gang, the Blackstone Rangers. She was so impressed by their talent that she started a writing workshop for the group.

In 1969, Brooks was named Poet Laureate of Illinois. This title means that the State considered her to be one

of its finest poets.

Brooks has also taught at many colleges and universities. They have included City College of the City University of New York, Columbia College, Northeastern Illinois University, and the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Even while teaching, Brooks never stopped writing. Her first autobiography, *Report from Part one*, was published in 1972.

In 1985, Gwendolyn Brooks was named Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress. She was the first black woman to hold this post.

When considering the creative output of Gwendolyn Brooks, it is easy to forget that she wrote in context of a full active personal life. Today she continues to write from her Chicago home. She is presently at work on her second autobiography.

Lesson Plans

ACTIVITY #1

Students will select one author of interest to research their life and works.

Each student will find out as much as possible.

SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH:

The biographical sketch and the selection by the author.

An encyclopedia can provide basic facts.

One or two books that include criticism of the author can probably be found in the library.

Readings about the historical period in which the author lived may also help.

The group may divide responsibilities for conducting research on the author, assigning certain members to read specific books. Then the group as a whole will discuss what each person found their individual research.

ACTIVITY #2

Students will play various roles in a press conference.

- 1) We will choose as the author a student who is very knowledgeable about the author and who is a good speaker.
- 2) Choose as the moderator a student who is a good administrator.
- 3) Divide the remaining students into two groups-“journalists”, and the assistant, Who will try to prepare the author for questions.
- 4) Formulate questions: Those who will play journalists must plan their questions. The questions may relate to the literary works and to the author’s life as well as to current events. Students will

ask questions that they think their audience will want to know the answers.

In this unit, students will learn ways of experiencing poetry. The purpose of this activity is to make judgements about three methods of experiencing poems. Students will work in three groups.

- 1) each member of the group selects a poem. Each person must select a different poem.
- 2) Each poem will be experienced in three ways:
 - a) Each student will read it silently;
 - b) the selector will read it orally; and
 - c) the group will read it aloud in unison.
- 3) What emotional response does the poem seem to call up in the student?

After the student's immediate emotional response to the poem, the student will share what the poem caused him or her to reflect.

Students will prepare a chart on which to record their statement of the meaning of the poem and their observation about the techniques of the poem.

The following poem will be used for this activity:

We Real Cool by Gwendolyn Brooks

We real cool. We
left school. We
lurk late. We
strike straight. We
sing sin. We thin gin.
We Jazz June. We die soon.

ACTIVITY #3

When the student becomes part of the book in this way, the book becomes part of them.

We read stories for a number of reasons. We read for the pleasure of recognizing familiar experiences and feelings. We read stories to escape into familiar places and times. Most of all, we read because stories stimulate our imagination.

The novels students will read in this unit will inspire, and stimulate them. Students will examine each of the elements that make up a story: plot, character, setting, point of view, theme, symbol and irony. Students will end this activity by looking at how these elements come together in each work to produce a total effect.

As students read novels in this unit, the following guide will help them appreciate how a novelist creates plot, character, and setting. Students will be given a selection of novels to choose from:

- 1) If the novel follows the traditional plot structure, students will identify its Narrative hook, rising action climax, falling action, and resolution.
- 2) What kinds of conflict does the novel present?
- 3) Who are the major characters?
- 4) When and where does the novel take place?
Which settings does the novel include?
- 5) Students will try to identify the novel's major theme or themes.

ACTIVITY #4

The pleasure experienced in listening to or reading poetry comes from the literary technique that the poet uses to present the sense, or meaning, of the poem: Choice of speaker, sound, tone, imagery, and Figurative language.

Students will select a poem that they read. What is the meaning of the poem?

What techniques does the poet use to reveal this meaning?

Pre-writing Activity

Students will use the following questions to help them determine the meaning of the poem.

- a) Does the poem focus on the actions of a character?
- b) Does the poem describe a person, place, or thing?
- c) Does the poem focus on an idea? A feeling?
- d) What emotional response does the poem cause you to reflect?

Student Bibliography

Angelou, Maya . *Maya Angelou: Poems* . New York: Bantam Books, 1986.

A complete collection of all of Angelou's poems for students to become familiar with. These poems can be used for inspiration and modeling, and to help students unlock their feelings.

Davis, Lenwood G. *Black Women in the Cities* . 1872-1972: A bibliography of published works on the life and achievements of black women.

Larrick, Nancy. *I heard a Scream in the Street* . New York: M. Evans and Co., 1970.

City poems for young people from twenty-three Americans cities.

Randall, Dudley. *The Black Poet* . New York: Bantam Books, 1971.

Poems from folk poetry to 1960's. Covers time span well.

Siler, Deborah. *Make a Joyful Noise* . New York: Checker Bound Press, 1991.

Poems for children by African American poets. Colorful illustrations. Biographical notes on poets.

Walker, Alice. *Good Night, Willie Lee, I'll See You In the Morning* . New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.

A book of poetry by the Pulitzer Prize winning author, for students to use for modeling inspiration.

Wallace, Robert. *Writing Poems* . Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2nd Edition, 1987.

This book contains some stimulating techniques to help students write poetry.

Teacher Bibliography

Dunning, Stephen. *Teaching Literature to Adolescent* . Glenview, Illinois; Scott, Foreman and Co., 1966.

This book is very valuable in discussing poetic techniques and commenting on various poems.

Hudson, Wade. *Pass It On African American Poetry for Children* . New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1993.

Wide variety of Poets. Information on authors.

Scholes, Robert. *Elements of Poetry* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.

A valuable book for discussing poetic techniques and commenting on various poems.

Siler, Deborah. *Make a Joyful Noise* , New York: Checkerbound Press, 1991.

Poems for children by African American poets. Colorful illustrations. Biographical notes on poets.

For further information see:

Authors and Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 1;
Black Writers; Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography, 1968-1987.
Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography, 1968-1988;
Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 9, 27.
Contemporary of Literary Biography, Vols. 5-31.
Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vols. 6-33
Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook, 1981.

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