

New Directions

Volume 4 | Issue 3

Article 14

4-1-1977

Poems

Editorial Staff

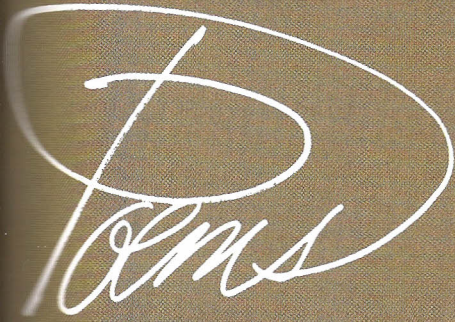
Follow this and additional works at: <https://dh.howard.edu/newdirections>

Recommended Citation

Staff, Editorial (1977) "Poems," *New Directions*: Vol. 4: Iss. 3, Article 14.

Available at: <https://dh.howard.edu/newdirections/vol4/iss3/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Howard @ Howard University. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Directions by an authorized editor of Digital Howard @ Howard University. For more information, please contact digitalservices@howard.edu.



Silence

i love the silence
 this morning
 i can touch it with
 my hand
 and wrap it around
 my fingers
 i can take it in
 my arms
 clasp it to
 my breast
 fold my soul up in it
 and put it away
 for safekeeping

Edelin Coleman Fields
 Hyattsville, Md.

A Gift of Beauty

I just found out yesterday that
 the world is ugly.

I just found out that the only
 beauty there will be is that
 which we bring.

Let this poem be a gift of beauty.
 We must make our world a thing of
 beauty.

So let our artists continue to sing,
 paint, write and create a world of
 beauty.

Let us wipe away from our minds
 this world of ugliness.

Let us sing and think together
 towards beauty and happiness.

Try to remember that day before
 yesterday when the world held
 some beauty.

Try to remember when we were
 young and warm in our mother's
 womb.

Let's create together and paint
 a wall of flowers.

Let's think towards peace and
 try to ease the tension.

For the world can be beautiful,
 just listen to Stevie and he
 will paint a picture.

Read this poem and think of your
 joys and you will find too that
 we must create our beauty.

Evelyn Gunn
 Howard University

**For A Black Dancer
 (To Judith Jamison)**

Swirl
 Prance
 Across your stage
 Stirring up souls
 Ancient and new

Like an African dream
 An American Queen
 Rising from the ashes of your people
 As the fiery bird
 Dying many times
 Stir up our dreams again

Dancer
 Queen.

Betty Taylor Ashe
 New Carrollton, Md.

Lionel Hampton

Ten million devils,
 Trembling in terror . . .
 Screams of a whip
 Hurling its message
 With primitive wailing!

Throb of a heart-beat . . .
 Strong as all rhythm,
 King of jump tempo . . .
 Open-mouthed joy!
 Mad baton waver . . .
 Beater of drum sticks!
 Vibraphone master . . .
 Pagan adorers
 Rocking with him!

Echoes of Africa . . .
 Throb of the tom-tom!
 Melody cocktail

52 With plenty of bitters . . .
 Created by genius—
 Born of frustration . . .
 Toast of the jitters!
 Tension-filled laughter—
 Savage and throaty . . .
 Eyes gleaming wildly . . .
 Mallets pound-frantic!
 Ecstatic down-beat . . .
 Dripping with meaning!

Vibraphone player . . .
 Past midnight's idol—
 Baring his teeth
 In grinning good humor. . . .
 Each thrilling chord
 A rose rhapsody gem
 Of synchronized thunder,
 With flares of tone lightning!
 Atomic note-smasher!

Pound of the cymbal!
 Roar of ten lions
 Torn from a soul . . .
 Frenzied percussion!
 End of discussion. . . .

Lionel Hampton!

Valerie Parks Brown
 Washington, D. C.

No White Yardstick

I went to the University high on the hill
 Where poems for Black people from the
 lips of Ossie and Ruby did spill.
 I turned—briefly drinking in enraptured
 faces—
 Black faces full of understanding and
 pride,
 Black spirit running free of white laces.

Black folks held that moment in time,
 Listening to Black reason and Black
 rhyme.
 I was glad I had lived to see it; the
 tear on my face became a stream.
 And there was no white yardstick
 measuring the realization of a
 Black dream.

Wilma D. Perry
 Silver Spring, Md.

Distant Liberty

The train whistle blows in the distance
 heading North.
 Under the southern sun, momma is
 washing in the yard.

“Lord will I ever, will there ever be
 a way,
 to board that train?”

Born in a shack in the Delta
 Deep in the South
 Eking our existence
 Living day by day

The bus wheels cry on the road
 heading North.
 Momma is nursing the baby.

“Lord will I ever, will there ever be
 a way,
 to catch that bus?”

Born by chance in this place
 Suffering the pains
 Of Living
 Knowing a strange hunger

The airplane roars in the sky
 heading North.
 Momma is cooking dinner, a soul food
 fare.

“Lord will I ever, will there ever be a
 way,
 to board that plane?”

In the fields working for the man
 Walking the furrow behind the
 plow
 The only break
 Is wiping the sweat away

Lord will I ever, will there ever be a way
 to make a new life
 to assure my child's new day?
 Will the winds blow with me,
 to bring hope and release?
 Will the sun melt this grief?
 Point me oh Lord, the path and the way,
 to give my child some token that
 promises!

c. m. j., sr.
 Washington, D. C.

Africa

What mask are you carving Mother
 Africa?

The ebullient ebony of your beauty
 Or the contorted map of your plight
 Its contours nakedly marked
 Showing a sprinkle of micro-states
 Frail cohesion and weak unity
 In tune of partition
 Stale designs yet acridly colonial
 Like the first scramble of Africa
 History repeats itself in our century.

What mask are you carving Mother
 Africa?

The enchanted wood of the Oracle
 Or the tortoise-skin drums bead-
 braided
 Echoing timeless ripples of River Nile
 And men awakened of a long slumber
 By the limbo of youth-dance
 The forest night always star-lit
 And the rhythm of dance quiet and soft
 Like the memory of ancestors
 benignly atavistic

But the sound of footfalls evenly brisk
 Scaring a lampoon grave ghost
 Like a void charmer journeying
 Searching far-away feasts
 In the moonlit forest of Guinea.

What mask are you carving Mother
 Africa?

The Christmas lollipop of Santa Claus
 And soon your son became malleable
 Like a trained dolphin
 Snatching air crumbs avidly
 A feeble peon for the whiteman
 Given a glasshouse and a Benz-Club
 Card

Right in the bush lawns of tropics
 Looking down his own people
 Calling their homesteads ‘the native
 quarters’

A budding ground for nemesis indeed
 Seething with true sons of Africa
 On the verge of class revolt
 Though spontaneous yet unsparing
 Blood price for betraying one's nation
 Blood price for a Black accomplice.

Mohamed Khalief Salad
 Mogadiscio, Somalia

NEW DIRECTIONS

Department of University Relations
And Publications
Howard University
Washington, D. C. 20059