

# New Directions

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Volume 5 | Issue 2

Article 11

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1-1-1978

## Poems

Editorial Staff

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### Recommended Citation

Staff, Editorial (1978) "Poems," *New Directions*: Vol. 5: Iss. 2, Article 11.

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### The Coming Together Of My People

There must be a coming together of my  
people,

not just a holding of hands, but  
a using of hands to build strong  
institutions.

There must be a loving together of my  
people,

not just a physical love where  
we share our bodies, but a spiritual  
love where we lay bare our souls.

There must be a real trusting of one  
another

between my people  
so that we will respect each other  
as sister and brother.

There must be a caring for each other  
by my people,

Where we will be on hand when needed  
and share when there is little in  
the till.

There must be a rebuilding of the  
family among  
my people

Where the home is the first school for  
the lessons of life,

Where Ma is the Queen and Pa is the  
King,

and sisters and brothers look  
out for each other.

Yes, there must be an awareness of the  
past

for my people

Learning all about Africa our native land  
So we'll know who we are and insure  
our own destiny.

There must be a praying together  
of my people

So we'll have strength for the struggle  
and hope in the future.

For when there is that coming together,  
and

that building together and  
the loving each other, trusting,  
caring and praying together  
then we can truly celebrate the  
**FREEDOM OF OUR PEOPLE.**

Annetta Elam Capdeville  
Washington, D. C.

### Contradictions

I'm to the point where I cannot  
stand another contradiction

Be black is in the breeze  
but I speak nice and friendly  
and your stare is cold enough to freeze  
my warm good mornings

I'm to the point where I cannot  
stand another contradiction

Be black is in the air  
but on the bus downtown not one  
brother would stand and share  
his seat with the Black grandmother  
pass her better days

I'm to the point of bitter tears

Be black is in the conversations  
until it really counts  
and today it counts the most  
but too many souls ignore the suffering  
in southern africa

And I'm to the point of bitter tears

Be black blasts through the radio  
but history is made when a listener  
wins a 10,000 dollar car  
history could have been made  
when that jive-ass radio station  
was willing to stand up and be real black  
and give 10,000 dollars to the NAACP

I'm to the point where I cannot  
stand another contradiction

Be black is in the air  
but a brother rationalized his blackness  
under the rug  
and went out and had his hair (brain)  
fried

I'm to the point of bitter tears

Be black is in the air  
but black people are singing  
"you mind your business and  
i'll mind mine."

And when they come to knock down  
your  
door—just don't disturb my peace

I'm to the point where. . . .

Joseph A. Hawkins, Jr.  
Washington, D. C.

**Genesis**

We stand on the threshold  
 Of what was merely an expectation  
 Feeling its oncoming force  
 Fling us into seeming inevitability  
 Long sought  
 Now welcomed  
 Only to find ourselves trembling  
 With thoughts of anxiety.

Marcus G. Wood  
 Baltimore, Md.

**Ebony Father**

Dark deep ridges streaming from the  
     snow  
 Dark deep ridges of past despair,  
 Each with its own tale of struggle  
 Ridges!  
 Carved with years of tears,  
 broken dreams . . . unfulfilled promises!  
 Ridges!  
 All drawn together,  
 Creating a portrait of quiescent strength.  
 Peace will come—closing the ridges for  
     the final journey.

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

**Lineage**

I cannot trace the seed  
 That bore me  
 Nor patch my Grandmother's  
 Words into a  
 Quilt bearing images  
 Of my beginnings  
  
 I only have the eyes  
 The lips  
 The songs  
 Revealing my origins  
  
 My fingers scratch at  
 Memories  
 Pack them deep in the brain  
 Where they'll sleep  
 In the peace of my blood

Sherman Shelton, Jr.  
 Mebane, N.C.

**Her in Affirmation Stay**

the veins of earth  
 lead to her like spines  
  
 and i am straight to the target  
  
 rising and falling you are gravity  
 in the oxygen of my blood  
  
 a newest noise loud as lust  
 spreading ripples of the underwater of  
     this woman  
 so rare psychic powers are language  
     and life  
  
 i praise you black woman  
  
 if you want you could draw  
 all of the sun's energy into you  
  
 you need to inhale  
 and if you do here i come  
  
 our voices stand up  
 a disc  
 rising and swirling and shooting  
 spurts forming a single sun sigh  
  
 and you fill the scent of music  
 and i drink in the glory of your painted  
     toes  
 and seek refuge in the wide-screen of  
     your lips  
  
 you are wiser than the nocturnal owl  
 in the far and near of my tongue  
  
 and if you don't mind  
 i am speaking in your womb  
  
 if you want fish could live in your palms  
 people could see in darkness  
 the internal folds of earth  
 could reveal the morality of clay and  
     water  
  
 and if they asked me if you could do all  
     these things  
 i would say she could show you how  
     a turtle pees  
  
 i praise you black woman  
 in language and in life  
  
 i am affirming in the world  
 the panoramic passing of your resistance  
     and liberation

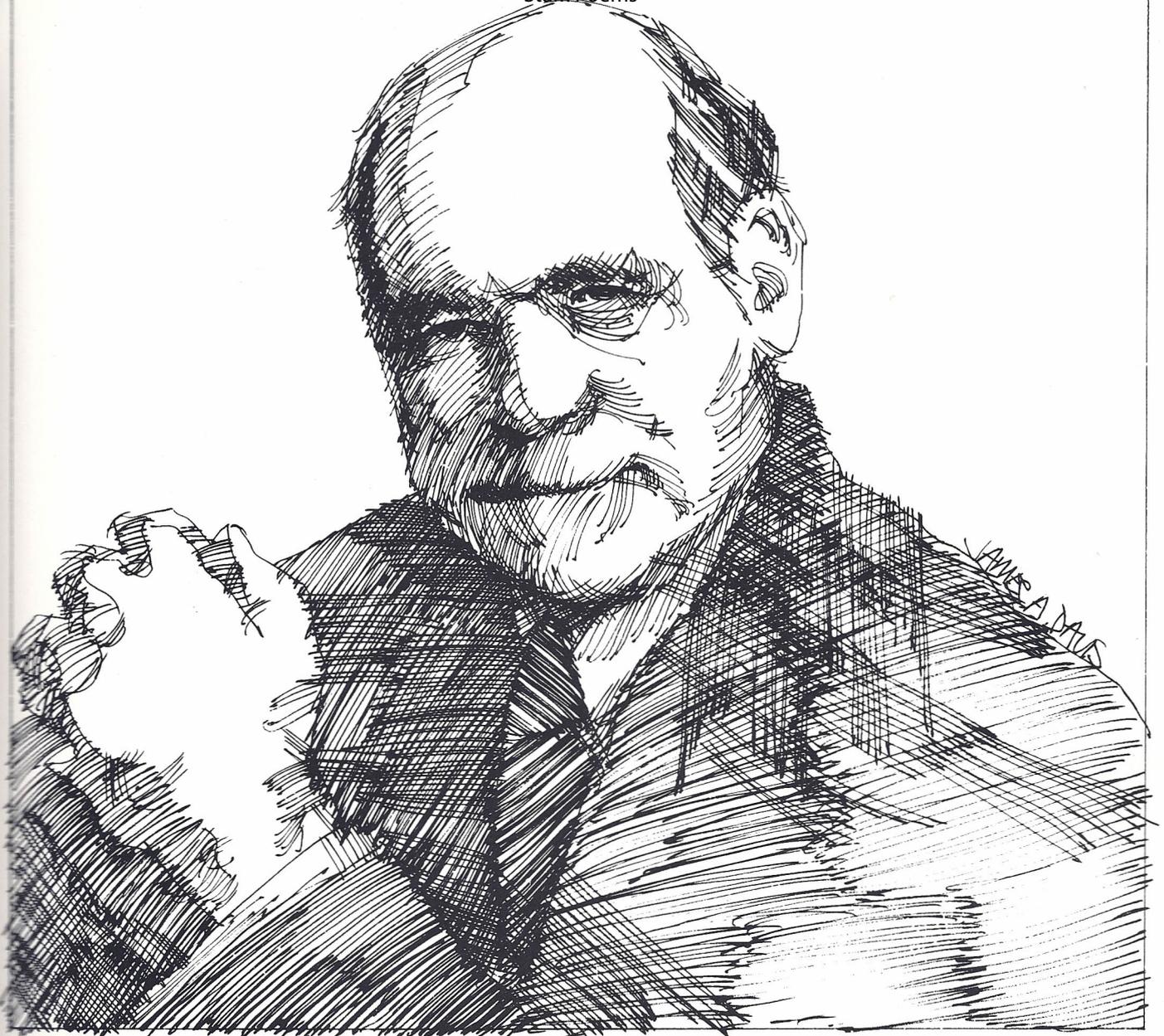
the sistrums of your bosoms giggling  
     loud in my ears  
 the figure of Isis naked outlined by  
     the window  
 golden black sprayed by a peeking moon  
  
 the fortress of your thighs  
 closes this poem in language and life  
  
 i am enclosed in the air  
 of praise and stay.  
 Rob Penny

**Til We Are Free**

Black Man,  
 I am lesson  
     learn me  
  
 I am dream  
     grow inside me  
  
 I am fulfillment  
     drink of me  
  
 till we are one  
 till we are free      eternally  
  
 Take my hand      understand  
 Drink of me  
     till we are free  
     till we are free

Nora Agnes Martin

*Editor's note:* The last two poems were reprinted, by permission, from two volumes of anthology of poetry and prose edited by Frances J. Barnes—“LOVE—from Black Men to Black Women” (1976), and “LOVE—From Black Women to Black men” (1977), with introduction by Ruby Dee. Both books were published by the Exposition Press, Inc., 900 South Oyster Bay Road, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801.



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The Mordecai Wyatt Johnson Memorial Fund was established by Howard University in recognition of the significant contributions made by the late Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson to the development of the university during his long tenure as president— from 1926 to 1960.

The Fund's main objectives are:

- To serve as a lasting manifestation of the deep appreciation in which the Mordecai Wyatt Johnson legacy at Howard University is held.
- To provide an unrestricted source of scholarship aid to Mordecai Wyatt Johnson Scholars.

- To provide at least one scholarship in each school or college at Howard University.
- To provide an unrestricted fund to support an annual Mordecai Wyatt Johnson lecture program.
- To raise at least \$1 million.

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Office of the Vice President for Development  
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Howard University, Washington, D. C. 20059

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