

New Directions

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Poems

Editorial Staff

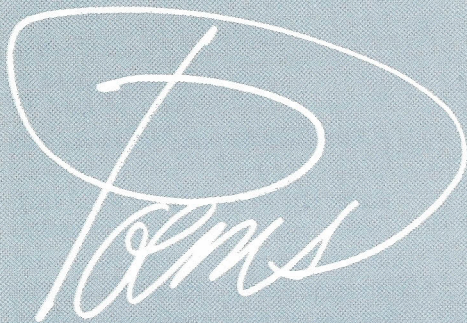
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I Am Black: Poems

I was born Black
raised Black
schooled Black
ruled Black

Squeeze me I'm Black
Kill me I'm Black
Love me I'm Black
Turn me I'm Black

I am Black everywhere
in Africa
in Paris
in London
in Australia
in Cuba
in Vietnam

And I am Black in Chicago
I Am Universally Black.

Betty Taylor Ashe
New Carrollton, Md.

Ain't That A Shame?

When you're walking through the street
All alone at night
And there's trash about your feet
And on a corner there's a fight—
Ain't that a shame?

When you look out the window
To get some fresh air
And you start to cough
From pollution everywhere—
Ain't that a shame?

Did you ever want to go to the store
Just to get a loaf of bread
But were too afraid to open the door
For fear of being found dead—
Ain't that a shame?

Jacquelyn Conner
Washington, D. C.

Pilgrimage

Wounded hearts
still carry the banner.
Rhodesia—Rhode Island,
New York—London,
South Africa to South Carolina.
Oh! What an inquisitive crowd!
Contrary to our rally,
Hell-bent that we don't get our honor.
The epitome of naturalness
contrasted with the foul,
What ugliness tends to exist with
us now.
The heinous establishment
reeks with feigned pity.
A rancid sympathy,
with exiguous aid,
We must deal with to survive.

Toni Sullivan
Bryn Mawr, 1977

I wept yesterday, let somebody else weep today

i wept yesterday when
we shared black nothingness

through the filth and stench
of the slums that are
still there

through the lynching of the
mobs who tote guns now
instead of rope

through the marching and
the chanting
and the singing
and the praying and the
changing

that worked for a time

I'm all used up now
i want the peace of oblivion

After all . . .

i wept yesterday
when we needed weeping
let somebody else weep today

Edelin Coleman Fields
Hyattsville, Md.

You Think Ants Have No Souls

When I was an ant
I wanted to be the
Eagle
Circling forests
as high up as the
clouds
even above the rain.
I wanted to taste
air on my beak
instead of hard grit
on my million eyes
and antennae
I was so tired
of plodding like a
robot on insignificant hills.
Up and down and up and down
and down and up.
Remote control
no. control.
A mumified worker on a grain of sand
Accept.
for my aspire, accept.
for my hallucinations
I was dull like the rest
You think ants have no souls
But I do
Becoming a bird is not
so far away.
I wish so hard—it will be.
Deep down I am destined
to master the air.
I will.

Tracy Connley
Howard University

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