

New Directions

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Poems

Editorial Staff

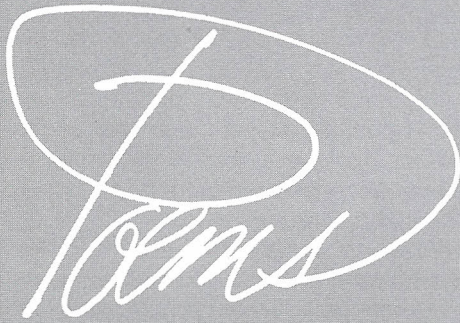
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Do Not Slay My Soul!

Do not poison my well
That springs forth through the earth
It gives me my true essence
And like you it too quenches my thirst.

Do not drown my dreams
That keep my hope alive
For what can I be without dreams
But like you a bee without a hive.

Do not strangle my spirit
That gives me vitality and a soul
For what am I without that force within
all beings
That gives you courage and makes you
whole.

Do not murder my mind
The memory of my consciousness keeps
me sane
For what am I without my universal
recollection
But like you a cripple in agony and pain.

Do not singe my seed
That contains the embryo of my worth
My ancestry lives forever through my
offspring
For like you I too want eternal birth.

Do not destroy my destiny
My inevitable course of fate
For what am I without a future
But like you a creature of violence and
hate.

Do not violate my vision
That gives me extraordinary beauty
For what am I without my imagination
But like you a drone, a slave to duty.

Do not brutalize my body
Or let scavengers reduce my numbers to
few
My physical being affirms my existence
And cries out, "I am human too just
like you!"

Do not slay my soul!
And deprive my melody of what is me
For I sing the lyric poem of many
generations
Of Black folk who like you want to be
free.

Janet R. Griffin
Howard University
(Dedicated to the
slain children of
Atlanta, Georgia)

32 **Standing Still**

I took
days without ends
and nights, too.
Kicked anger in the ass
and trampled on jealousy,
olive and branches
of oak made the difference.
Paying the dues
the mongoose paid
pursuing the illusions,
traversing rubicons
that never were there
in the first place.
Silent drums
beating in my brain
thunderous notes
of discordant harmony
like palm leaves
thrashing about in a storm.

Asante, M.K.
Williamsville, N.Y.

**So, YOU Want To Be My Anchorman,
My Brother?**

Ah, my Brother
You've been pampered and fed
On a diet of hatred until
It's you I now dread.
As cattle you've been prodded
Not forward, but backward instead.

So, you say to me
Sister, step back and wait
Wait
Until you get yourself straight
Too late?
For some of us, your Sisters
Have opened the gate
How can we step back and wait?
To forge ahead has been our fate.

Catch up, we say
Is the only way
To make tomorrow
A brighter day.
Come, join our fight
For this land to be
Safe and free for you and me.
To give our children
A chance to see
What God intended His world to be.

Again, my Sister, I say to you
Step back.
Step back and wait
Give me the chance
To take the rein
Give me the chance
To loose the chain
That binds my spirit
And dulls my brain
That anchors my hopes
In yesterday's dreams
Holding me fast
In failure's streams
I want to be free
A giant in your eyes
Not to compete
For most cunning and wise
Just a chance, my Sister, to be
All you would hope to find in me.

Minnie B. Chapman
Landover, Md.

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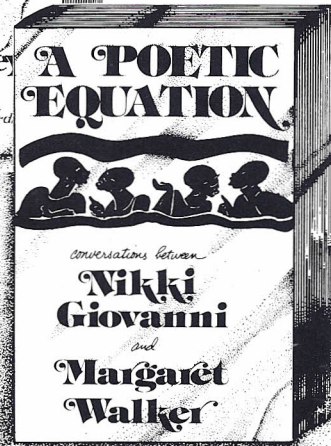
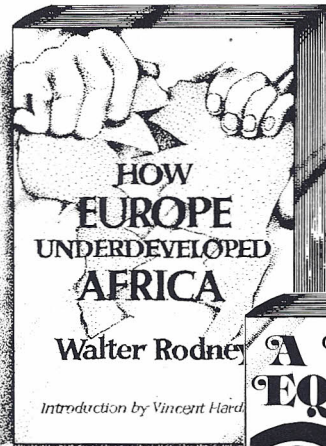
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