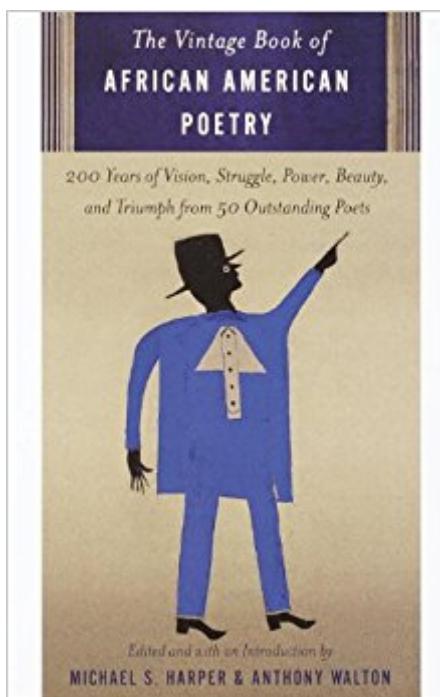


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The Vintage Book Of African American Poetry: 200 Years Of Vision, Struggle, Power, Beauty, And Triumph From 50 Outstanding Poets



Synopsis

In The Vintage Book of African American Poetry, editors Michael S. Harper and Anthony Walton present the definitive collection of black verse in the United States--200 years of vision, struggle, power, beauty, and triumph from 52 outstanding poets. From the neoclassical stylings of slave-born Phillis Wheatley to the wistful lyricism of Paul Lawrence Dunbar . . . the rigorous wisdom of Gwendolyn Brooks...the chiseled modernism of Robert Hayden...the extraordinary prosody of Sterling A. Brown...the breathtaking, expansive narratives of Rita Dove...the plaintive rhapsodies of an imprisoned Elderidge Knight . . . The postmodern artistry of Yusef Komunyaka.Â Here, too, is a landmark exploration of lesser-known artists whose efforts birthed the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts movements--and changed forever our national literature and the course of America itself. Meticulously researched, thoughtfully structured, The Vintage Book of African-American Poetry is a collection of inestimable value to students, educators, and all those interested in the ever-evolving tradition that is American poetry.

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Customer Reviews

The Vintage Book of African American Poetry, edited by Michael S. Harper and Anthony Walton, is reminiscent of a somewhat earlier anthology EVERY SHUT EYE AIN'T ASLEEP (also edited by Mr Harper and Mr Walton). The poems in the Vintage Book span three centuries, from Jupitor Hammon and Phillis Wheatley, to Carl Phillips and Reginald Shepherd; the 20th century, as one might expect, is most generously and gloriously represented. This reviewer has always prized the work of

Countee Cullen and of Robert Hayden; and is grateful to make the acquaintance of Sterling A. Brown and Gwendolyn Bennett (her poem "To A Dark Girl," written early in the last century, is an irreducible greatness); Langston Hughes is shown to advantage in the selection of his work, many of the chosen poems being new to this reader. It shames us that hitherto we had not been familiar with the work of Boston-born William Stanley Braithwaite. Claude McKay and Jean Toomer appear in these pages, McKay's finely wrought sonnets being familiar from other anthologies. New to us, and a gift for which the reader is grateful, is Margaret Walker's "October Journey," of Keatsian loveliness. Stylistic diversity exists here, and surfaces in a salient fashion as we reach the middle of the twentieth century: Gwendolyn Brooks (both formal and colloquial); Bob Kaufman (can we cavil at the omission of his fine eulogistic poem "Afterwards, They Shall Dance"?); Etheridge Knight (whose diamond-like haiku enliven our sense of the possibilities of the form); and the Nobel laureate Derek Walcott, whose "Bounty" is indeed a marvel.

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