

SNMA Library
May 30, 2021

Black Queer Poetry

Since at least the Harlem Renaissance, LGBTQ African American writers have turned to poetry to express their experiences, politics, and desires. At the SNMA, there are more than 60 works of poetry as well as books about poetry, exploring topics such as feminism, racism, identity, community, sex, motherhood, and HIV/AIDS. Largely dating from the 1970s to the present, these texts include chapbooks, poetry collections, anthologies, memoirs, biographies, and academic studies.

SDiane Bogus, *Woman in the Moon* (Cupertino, CA: Woman in the Moon Pub., 1995 [1971]).
A classic work of Black lesbian poetry.

Jericho Brown, *The New Testament* (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2014).
A meditation on race, sexuality, and contemporary America.

Barbara Burford, et al., eds., *A Dangerous Knowing: Four Black Women Poets* (London: Sheba Feminist Press, 1984).
Poems by Barbara Burford, Gabriela Pearse, Jackie Kay, and Grace Nichols.

Cheryl Clarke, *Experimental Love: Poetry* (Ithaca: Firebrand Books, 1993).
A book of poetry about love and death.

Alexis de Veaux, *Warrior Poet: A Biography of Audre Lorde* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004).
A study of the life and work of the important “Black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet.”

Nikki Giovanni, *Bicycles: Love Poems* (New York: William Morrow, 2009).
Poems about love and loss in a time of crisis, both national and personal.

Thomas Glave, ed., *Our Caribbean: A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Writing from the Antilles* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
A literary anthology of queer writing, including poetry, from across the Antilles.

Essex Hemphill, *Conditions: Poems* (Washington, D.C.: Be Bop Books, 1986).
A chapbook focused on Black gay desire.

Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
A volume that spans five decades and comprises 868 poems by the famous Black poet.

Gloria T. Hull, *Healing Heart: Poems 1973-1988* (Latham, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1989).
A feminist book of delightful, sensuous, and passionate poems.

G. Winston James, *Lyric: Poems Along a Broken Road* (Los Angeles: Grapevine Press, 1999).

A book about exile, empowerment, loneliness, love, loss, and salvation.

Saeed Jones, *When the Only Light Is Fire* (Alexander, AR: Sibling Rivalry Press, 2011).

A debut chapbook of poetry about life on the periphery of the U.S. South.

June Jordan, *Soldier: A Poet's Childhood* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2000).

The pioneering poet's memoir of her childhood and family life.

Audre Lorde, *The Black Unicorn: Poems* (New York: Norton, 1978).

A collection of poetry about motherhood, childhood, empowerment, vulnerability, goddesses, and contemporary America.

Pat Parker, *Pit Stop* (Oakland: Women's Press Collective, 1975).

Poems accompanied by photos and drawings by members of the Women's Press Collective.

Carl Phillips, *From the Devotions: Poems* (Saint Paul: Graywolf Press, 1998).

A collection about faith and the balance between decorum and pain.

Assotto Saint, ed., *The Road Before Us: 100 Gay Black Poets* (New York: Galiens Press, 1991).

An early anthology of poetry about the Black gay experience.

Assotto Saint, *Wishing for Wings: Poems* (New York: Galiens Press, 1994).

The writer's last poetry collection grappling with loss, love, and HIV/AIDS.

Sonia Sanchez, *Does Your House Have Lions?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

An epic poem about kin, death, HIV/AIDS, love, and reconciliation.

Sapphire, *American Dreams* (New York: High Risk Books, 1994).

A collection about sensuality and prophecy that mixes poetry and prose.

A. B. Christa Schwarz, *Gay Voices of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

An academic study about sexually dissident and gay literary voices of the Harlem Renaissance.

Ntozake Shange, *nappy edges* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978).

A collection of poetry and prose about love, loneliness, racism, and sexism.

Christopher Soto, ed., *Nepantla: An Anthology for Queer Poets of Color* (New York: Nightboat Books, 2018).

A first major literary anthology for queer poets of color in the United States.

Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, *Thieving Sugar: Eroticism between Women in Caribbean Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

An academic study of female eroticism in the poetry and prose of Caribbean women writers.

Alice Walker, *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful: Poems* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984).

Poems about family, racism, feminism, friendship, and sadness.