



## Books by African American authors and/or with African American characters

### **Black Out Loud: An Anthology of Modern Poems by Black Americans**

*edited by Arnold Adoff*

811.08 B5614

A collection of poetry by twentieth-century Black Americans expressing what it is like to be Black in the United States. Includes capsule biographies of the poets.

### **I Am the Darker Brother: An Anthology of Modern Poems by African Americans**

*edited by Arnold Adoff*

811.08 Ad7I 1997

Poems on race or racial problems by well-known African American poets, including Countee Cullen, Richard Wright, Leroi Jones, Langston Hughes, and James Weldon Johnson.

### **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**

*Angelou, Maya*

B. A5846a11993

Maya Angelou's autobiography depicting her precarious existence in racist, Depression-era Arkansas. There she is shunted between her grandmother's house and her mother's – where she is raped – and withdraws into total silence. She endures to share her realization in her valedictory address: "In order to lift your voice, you have to lift your head."

### **The Fire Next Time**

*Baldwin, James*

301.451 B19f 1993

Baldwin's autobiography forcefully and emotionally describes Black anger and disillusionment and pleads for a solution to race problems.

### **Go Tell it on the Mountain**

*Baldwin, James*

Fiction B1932G1977

What it means to be Black in America. To seek both salvation and understanding in the journey of a family from the rural South to "big city" Harlem. To be a young boy struggling, to earn the approval of a self-righteous and often unloving stepfather.

### **If Beale Street Could Talk**

*Baldwin, James*

Fiction B1932i

When Tish's boyfriend is jailed for rape, her family and his family unite to prove the charge false.

### **Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Freedom**

*edited by Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller*

306.36209 R282

Includes live recordings of interviews with former slaves and dramatic readings from written interviews.

**Maud Martha**

*Brooks, Gwendolyn*

Fiction B 7912m1993

One Black woman's quest and love for life despite its difficulties in a novella of 34 vignettes.

**Upstate**

*Buckhanon, Kalisha*

Fiction B8559u

After being charged with his father's murder, seventeen-year-old Antonio finds his love with sixteen-year-old Natasha tested and engages in a ten-year correspondence with her from behind bars.

**Selected Poems**

*Dove, Rita*

811 D751s

Partial contents: *The Yellow House on the Corner; Museum; The Hill Has Something to Say; In the Bulrush; My Father's Telescope; Primer for the Nuclear Age; Thomas and Beulah; Mandolin; Canary in Bloom*

**The Battle of Jericho**

*Draper, Sharon M.*

Fiction D7918b

A high school junior and his cousin suffer the ramifications of joining what seems to be a reputable school club.

**Tears of a Tiger**

*Draper, Sharon M.*

Fiction D7918t

The death of Rob Washington, a high school basketball star, in an automobile accident affects the lives of his close friend, Andy, who was driving the car, and many others in the school.

**Breath, Eyes, Memory**

*Edwidge, Danticat*

Fiction D2363b1995

Twelve-year-old Sophie Caco is removed from her impoverished village and sent to live in New York with her mother, a woman she barely knows. There she learns about a terrible truth that shadows her family.

**Invisible Man**

*Ellison, Ralph*

Fiction EL594i1952

The narrator traces his life from college and into Harlem where he becomes invisible like other African Americans.

**A Lesson Before Dying**

*Gaines, Ernest J.*

G142 L1994

Teacher, Grant Wiggins, is recruited to bring lessons in manhood, dignity, and dying to an innocent, terrified young Black man condemned for the murder of a white man in the Jim Crow South

**The Selected Poems of Nikki Giovanni**

*Giovanni, Nikki*

811 G438S

Partial contents: *Black Feeling Black Talk/Black Judgment; Re: Creation; Broadside: Poem of Angela Yvonne Davis; My house; The Women and the Men; Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day; Those Who Ride the Night Winds; Occasional Poem: A Poem for Langston Hughes; Occasional Poem: But Since You Finally Asked.*

**The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader**

*edited David Levering Lewis*

810.8 P832

Collection of works by forty-five Renaissance figures. Includes short fiction and novel excerpts by Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen, Wallace Thurman, and Jean Toomer; poems by Gwendolyn Bennett, Countee Cullen, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Langston Hughes, and Claude McKay; as well as essays, manifestos, speeches, and nostalgic reminiscences from a number of writers.

**Calling the Wind: Twentieth Century African-American Short Stories**

*edited by Clarence Major*

813.08 C133One school.

Compilation of short stories by African-American writers, including, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Charles Chesnutt, Ralph Ellison, Claude McKay, Dorothy West, Alice Walker, Ernest J. Gaines, John McCluskey Jr., Henry Dumas, LeRoi Jones (Amiri Barak), and Ann Allen Shockley.

**Beloved**

*Morrison, Toni*

Fiction M8345B1988

Sethe, an escaped slave living in post-Civil War Ohio, risked death in order to wrench herself from a living death. She has lost a husband and buried a child, borne the unthinkable and not gone mad. Sethe lives in a small house on the edge of town with her daughter, Denver, her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, and a disturbing, mesmerizing intruder who calls herself Beloved.

**The Bluest Eye**

*Morrison, Toni*

Fiction M8345bl

Eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove, an African American girl in an America whose love for blonde, blue-eyed children can devastate all others, prays for her eyes to turn blue, so that she will be beautiful, people will notice her, and her world will be different.

**Jazz**

*Morrison, Toni*

Fiction M8345j

In Harlem, 1926, Joe Trace, a door-to-door salesman in his fifties, kills his teenage lover. A profound love story which depicts the sights and sounds of Black urban life during the Jazz Age.

**Paradise**

*Morrison, Toni*

Fiction M8345p

Tells the story of Ruby, Oklahoma, an all-Black town settled by a dozen families in the 1890s when they were turned away from other communities. Now it's the 1970s and the men of the town blame the women and the women's shelter for changes in their community's character.

**Remember: The Journey to School Integration**

*Morrison, Toni*

379.2630222 M834r

Archival photographs paired with fictional text depicting thoughts and emotions of students who lived through school desegregation capture the spirit, sadness, and struggle of the time.

**Sula**

*Morrison, Toni*

Fiction M8345s1982

Traces the lives of Nel and Sula, two black heroines who grow up together in a small Ohio town and then take divergent paths. Nel chooses to stay in the place of her birth and become a pillar of the tightly knit black community, while Sula escapes to college and city life. Their stories create a rendering of what it means and costs to exist and survive as a black woman in America.

**Tar Baby**

*Morrison, Toni*

Fiction M8345t1982

On a tropical island paradise, six people interact with each other in all the tender or hateful ways of which humans are capable. Rich and poor, black and white, young and old, male and female – each has something to teach the others and each has something to learn.

**47**

*Mosley, Walter*

Fiction M853f

Number 47, a fourteen-year-old slave boy growing up under the watchful eye of a brutal master in 1832, meets the mysterious Tall John, who introduces him to a magical science and also teaches him the meaning of freedom.

**Way Past Cool**

*Mowry, Jess*

Fiction M8725wa1993

Living by a strict code of honor, two rival gangs of boys on Oakland's tough streets – the Friends and the Crew – find a common enemy in Deek, the sixteen-year-old drug dealer who cruises their neighborhood, controlling by intimidation.

**The Spyglass Tree**

*Murray, Albert*

Fiction M9612sp1992

In the 1930s, Scooter leaves his Mobile, Alabama home to attend college on a scholarship. At the university, he reflects on his charmed past. An energetic portrait of Southern black culture.

**Autobiography of My Dead Brother**

*Myers, Walter Dean*

Fiction M992a

As Jesse fills his sketchbook with drawings and portraits of Rise, he tries to make sense of the complexities of friendship, loyalty, and loss in a neighborhood plagued by drive-bys, vicious gangs, and abusive cops.

**The Beast**

*Myers, Walter Dean*

Fiction M992b

A visit to his Harlem neighborhood and the discovery that the girl he loves is using drugs give sixteen-year-old Anthony Witherspoon a new perspective both on his home and on his life at a Connecticut prep school.

**Fallen Angels**

*Myers, Walter Dean*

Fiction M9924f1988

Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry, just out of his Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.

**Monster**

*Myers, Walter Dean*

Fiction M992mon2001

While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken.

**145<sup>th</sup> Street Short Stories**

*Myers, Walter Dean*

Fiction M992o

Ten stories portray life on a block in Harlem.

**Scorpions**

*Myers, Walter Dean*

Fiction M922s

After reluctantly taking on the leadership of the Harlem gang, the Scorpions, Jamal finds that his enemies treat him with respect when he acquires a gun until a tragedy occurs.

**Imani All Mine**

*Poter, Connie*

Fiction P8334i

Relates the story of Tasha, an unwed fifteen-year-old mother who survives in the ghettos of Buffalo, New York and lives her life with fierce determination

**The Oxford Anthology of African-American Poetry**

*edited by Arnold Rampersad*

811.08 Ox212

**Billie Holiday**

Munoz, Jose and Sampaya, Carlos

GN M926b

This graphic novel weaves together episodes from Billie Holiday's life, the calculating commentary of a cynical, burned-out newspaper reporter, and the memories of Alack Sinner, a former police officer whose life intersected with Holiday's briefly but significantly.

**Push**

*Sapphire*

Fiction Sa 692pu1996

A courageous and determined young teacher opens up a new world of hope and redemption for sixteen-year-old Precious Jones, an abused young African American girl living in Harlem who was raped and left pregnant by her father

**Caucasia**

*Senn, Danzy*

Se58c1999

In the 1960s, Birdie and her sister Cole try to support each other when their Black father and White mother finally separate. When Cole goes with her father to Brazil, Birdie has to face a federal investigation of her mother's political activities.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn**

*Smith, Betty*

Fiction Sm54t1947

A young Black girl in a shabby neighborhood lives with dreams in an innocent time before World War I.

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**

*Taylor, Mildred D.*

Fiction T2162r

A Black family living in the South during the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which their children don't understand.

**Let the Circle Be Unbroken**

*Taylor, Mildred D.*

Fiction T2162L

Four Black children growing up in rural Mississippi during the Depression experience racial antagonisms and hard times, but learn from their parents the pride and self-respect they need to survive.

**When Kambia Elaine Flew in From Neptune**

*Williams, Lori Aurelia*

Fiction W673w2004

Shayla, an aspiring writer growing up in a poor section of Houston, can't figure out the new girl next door, Kambia Elaine, who tells fantastic stories. She slowly realizes that Kambia Elaine needs help, but Shayla doesn't know where to find it.

**If You Come Softly**

*Woodson, Jacqueline*

Fiction W868i

After meeting at their private school in New York, fifteen-year-old Jeremiah, who is Black and whose parents are separated, and Ellie, who is White and whose mother has twice abandoned her, fall in love and then try to cope with people's reactions.

**Miracle's Boys**

*Woodson, Jacqueline*

Fiction W868mi2001

Twelve-year-old Lafayette's close relationship with his older brother Charlie changes after Charlie is released from a detention home and blames Lafayette for the death of their mother.

**Autobiography of Malcolm X**

*X, Malcolm*

B.L7784 L11965

Malcolm X's life story, from petty criminal to defiant race rights fighter to leader of the Black Muslim movement.