

THE
100* BEST
African
AMERICAN POEMS

(*but I cheated)

YOU WON'T FIND JUST 100 POEMS HERE.

READ ON AND FIND OUT WHY.

DEDICATION: THE AUNT • xxi • Track 1

Mari Evans

1. FOR MY PEOPLE • 1 • Track 2

Margaret Walker

2. LEROY • 3

Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)

3. ARS POETICA: NOV. 7, 2008 • 4

L. Lamar Wilson

4. KA'BA • 8

Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)

5. WHEN YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN SUNDAY: THE LOVE STORY • 9 • Track 3

Gwendolyn Brooks

THE SERMON ON THE WARPLAND • 11

Gwendolyn Brooks

6. WE REAL COOL • 12 • Tracks 4 & 5

Gwendolyn Brooks

7. } **JAZZ BABY IS IT IN YOU** • 13

Antoine Harris

7. } **"I FADE INTO THE NIGHT"** • 14

Adam Daniel

8. OLD LEM • 15 • Track 6

Sterling A. Brown

9. I AM ACCUSED OF TENDING TO THE PAST • 17 • Track 7

Lucille Clifton

10. I AM A BLACK WOMAN • 18 • Track 8

Mari Evans

11. WHO CAN BE BORN BLACK? • 20 • Track 9

Mari Evans

12. NIKKI-ROSA • 21 • Track 10

Nikki Giovanni

13. KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE • 23 • Track 11

Nikki Giovanni

14. THE DRY SPELL • 24 • Track 12

Kevin Young

15. THOSE WINTER SUNDAYS • 26 • Tracks 13 & 14

Robert Hayden

16. FREDERICK DOUGLASS • 27

Robert Hayden

17.

THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS • 28 • Track 15

Langston Hughes

18. CHOOSING THE BLUES • 29

Angela Jackson

19. MY FATHER'S LOVE LETTERS • 30
Yusef Komunyakaa

20. THE CREATION • 32 • Track 16
James Weldon Johnson

21. A NEGRO LOVE SONG • 36
Paul Laurence Dunbar

22. LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING • 37
James Weldon Johnson

23. GO DOWN DEATH • 39
James Weldon Johnson

24. BETWEEN OURSELVES • 42
Audre Lorde

25. THE UNION OF TWO • 45
Haki R. Madhubuti

26. BALLAD OF BIRMINGHAM • 46
Dudley Randall

27. A POEM TO COMPLEMENT OTHER POEMS • 48
Haki R. Madhubuti

28. NO IMAGES • 51
Waring Cuney

29. BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME • 52
Richard Wright

30. THEME FOR ENGLISH B • 54
Langston Hughes

Harlem Suite

31.

EASY BOOGIE • 56

Langston Hughes

DREAM BOOGIE • 57

Langston Hughes

DREAM BOOGIE: VARIATION • 58

Langston Hughes

HARLEM • 58

Langston Hughes

GOOD MORNING • 59

Langston Hughes

SAME IN BLUES • 60

Langston Hughes

ISLAND • 61

Langston Hughes

32. **THE BLUE TERRANCE** • 62

Terrance Hayes

THE MOTHER • 64 • Track 17

Gwendolyn Brooks

33.

A BRONZEVILLE MOTHER LOITERS IN MISSISSIPPI.

MEANWHILE, A MISSISSIPPI MOTHER BURNS BACON • 66 • Track 18

Gwendolyn Brooks

THE LAST QUATRAIN OF THE BALLAD OF EMMETT TILL • 72

Gwendolyn Brooks

A SUNSET OF THE CITY • 73 • Track 19

Gwendolyn Brooks

34. THINGS I CARRIED COMING INTO THE WORLD • 75

Remica L. Bingham

35. TOPOGRAPHY • 77

Remica L. Bingham

36. BENEATH ME • 79

Jericho Brown

37. AUTOBIOGRAPHY • 80

Jericho Brown

38.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER • 82

Pamela Sneed

39. HERITAGE • 86

Countee Cullen

40. YET DO I MARVEL • 91 • Track 20

Countee Cullen

41.

INCIDENT • 92 • Track 21

Countee Cullen

42. WE WEAR THE MASK • 93 • Track 22

Paul Laurence Dunbar

43. TRIFLE • 94

Georgia Douglas Johnson

44. THE HEART OF A WOMAN • 95 • Track 23

Georgia Douglas Johnson

45. WOMAN WITH FLOWER • 96

Naomi Long Madgett

46. THE IDEA OF ANCESTRY • 97

Etheridge Knight

47. DON'T SAY GOODBYE TO THE PORKPIE HAT • 99

Larry Neal

48. CLEANING • 105

Camille T. Dungy

49. BOSTON YEAR • 106 • Track 24

Elizabeth Alexander

50. SHE WEARS RED • 107

Jackie Warren-Moore

51. COMMERCIAL BREAK: ROAD-RUNNER, UNEASY • 110

Tim Seibles

52. BEFORE MAKING LOVE • 114

Toi Derricotte

53. BE-BOP • 115

Sterling Plumpp

54. PERSONAL LETTER NO. 3 • 116 • Track 25

Sonia Sanchez

55. POEM AT THIRTY • 117 • Track 26

Sonia Sanchez

56. A POEM FOR STERLING BROWN • 118 • Track 27

Sonia Sanchez

57. MARCHERS HEADED FOR WASHINGTON, BALTIMORE, 1963 • 120

Remica L. Bingham

58. AND YEAH...THIS IS A LOVE POEM • 123

Nikki Giovanni

59. THE CAROUSEL • 126

Gloria C. Oden

60. ONLY EVERYTHING I OWN • 127

Patricia Smith

61. LOT'S DAUGHTER DREAMS OF HER MOTHER • 128 • Track 28
Opal Moore

62. THE GIRLFRIEND'S TRAIN • 131
Nikky Finney

63. BACK FROM THE ARMS OF BIG MAMA • 136
Afaa Michael Weaver

64. MAMA'S PROMISE • 139 • Track 29
Marilyn Nelson

 **65. BOP: A WHISTLING WOMAN** • 142
Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon


66. HOMAGE TO MY HIPS • 144 • Track 30
Lucille Clifton

67. TRAIN RIDE • 145
Kwame Dawes

68. TRAIN RIDES • 148 • Track 31
Nikki Giovanni

69. A GREAT GRANDDADDY SPEAKS • 153
Lamont B. Steptoe

70. EDDIE PRIEST'S BARBERSHOP & NOTARY • 154
Kevin Young

 **71. VIEW OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
FROM PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL** • 156
Thomas Sayers Ellis

72. DRAPERY FACTORY, GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI, 1956 • 159 • Track 32
Natasha Trethewey

73. SOME KIND OF CRAZY • 161

Major Jackson

74. FROM • 163

A. Van Jordan

75. FREEDOM CANDY • 165

E. Ethelbert Miller

76. THE SUPREMES • 167

Cornelius Eady

Jazz Suite

NIKKI SAVE ME • 169

Michele Scott

77.

"NIKKI, IF YOU WERE A SONG..." • 170 • Track 33

Kwame Alexander

HAIKU • 170

DJ Renegade

UNTITLED • 170

Nadir Lasana Bomani

"I WISH I COULD'VE SEEN IT..." • 171

Leodis McCray

78. THAT AND SOME MO' • 174

DJ Renegade

79. SOMETIME IN THE SUMMER THERE'S OCTOBER • 175

Tony Medina

80. DANCING NAKED ON THE FLOOR • 178

Kwame Alexander

81. HARRIET TUBMAN'S EMAIL 2 MASTER • 180

Truth Thomas

82. A RIVER THAT FLOWS FOREVER • 181 • Track 34
Tupac Shakur

83. THE ROSE THAT GREW FROM CONCRETE • 181 • Track 34
Tupac Shakur

84. ROCHELLE • 182
Reuben Jackson

85. ALL THEIR STANZAS LOOK ALIKE • 183
Thomas Sayers Ellis

86. FROM THE CENTER 2 THE EDGE • 185
Asha Bandele

87. THE SUBTLE ART OF BREATHING • 187
Asha Bandele

88. SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, 1962 • 192
Kevin Young

89. POETRY SHOULD RIDE THE BUS • 195
Ruth Forman

90. BLUES FOR SPRING • 197
Colleen J. McElroy

91. THE BICYCLE WIZARD • 198
Sharan Strange

92. BICYCLES • 199
Nikki Giovanni

93. A CLEAN SLATE • 200
Fred D'Aguiar

94. SONG THROUGH THE WALL • 201
Akua Lezli Hope

95. A SEAT SAVED • 203

Shana Yarborough

96. SUNDAY GREENS • 205

Rita Dove

97. THE UNTITLED SUPERHERO POEM • 206

Tonya Maria Matthews

98. MERCY KILLING • 209 • Track 35

Remica L. Bingham

99. IF YOU SAW A NEGRO LADY • 210

June Jordan

100. EGO TRIPPING (THERE MAY BE A REASON WHY) • 212 • Track 36

Nikki Giovanni