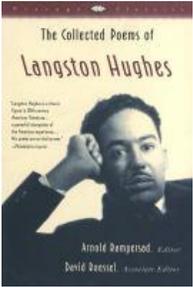


Black History Month - 2021

Poetry Booklist



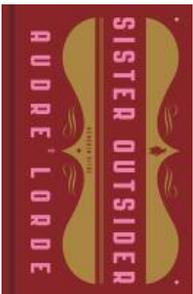
[The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes](#)

by Langston Hughes [811 Hug]

Here, for the first time, are all the poems that Langston Hughes published during his lifetime, arranged in the general order in which he wrote

them. Lyrical and pungent, passionate and polemical, the result is a treasure of a book, the essential collection of a poet whose words have entered our common language.

The collection spans five decades, and is comprised of 868 poems (nearly 300 of which never before appeared in book form) with annotations by Arnold Rampersad and David Roessel. Alongside such famous works as "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" and Montage of a Dream Deferred, *The Collected Poems* includes Hughes's lesser-known verse for children; topical poems distributed through the Associated Negro Press; and poems such as "Goodbye Christ" that were once suppressed.



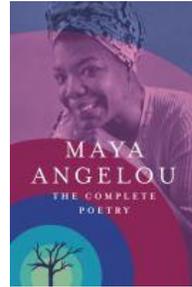
[Sister Outsider](#)

by Audre Lord [814 Lor]

In this charged collection of fifteen essays and speeches, Lorde takes on sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and class, and propounds social difference as a vehicle for action and

change. Her prose is incisive, unflinching, and lyrical, reflecting struggle but ultimately offering messages of hope.

The groundbreaking feminist's timely collection of nonfiction writings on race, gender, and LGBTQ issues is now for the first time in Penguin Classics as part of the Penguin Vitae series, with a foreword by poet Mahogany L. Browne.



[The Complete Poetry](#)

by Maya Angelou [811 Ang]

Throughout her illustrious career in letters, Maya Angelou gifted, healed, and inspired the world with her words. Now the beauty and spirit of those words live on in this new and complete

collection of poetry that reflects and honors the writer's remarkable life.

Every poetic phrase, every poignant verse can be found within the pages of this sure-to-be-treasured volume--from her reflections on African American life and hardship in the compilation *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diie* ("Though there's one thing that I cry for / I believe enough to die for / That is every man's responsibility to man") to her revolutionary celebrations of womanhood in the poem "Still I Rise" ("Out of the huts of history's shame / I rise / Up from a past that's rooted in pain / I rise") to her "On the Pulse of Morning" tribute at President William Jefferson Clinton's inauguration ("Lift up your eyes upon / The day breaking for you. / Give birth again / To the dream.").

Maya Angelou: The Complete Poetry also features her final long-form poems, including "A Brave and Startling Truth," "Amazing Peace," "His Day Is Done," and the never-before-published poem "Amazement Awaits," commissioned for the 2008 Olympic Games. Timeless and prescient, this definitive compendium will warm the hearts of Maya Angelou's most ardent admirers as it introduces new readers to the legendary poet, activist, and teacher--a phenomenal woman for the ages.

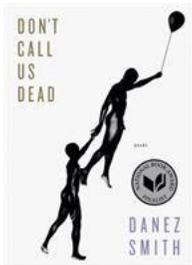
[Citizen: An American Lyric](#)

by Claudia Rankine [305.8 Ran]



A provocative meditation on race, Claudia Rankine's long-awaited follow up to her groundbreaking book *Don't Let Me Be Lonely: An American Lyric*.

Claudia Rankine's bold new book recounts mounting racial aggressions in ongoing encounters in twenty-first-century daily life and in the media. Some of these encounters are slights, seeming slips of the tongue, and some are intentional offensives in the classroom, at the supermarket, at home, on the tennis court with Serena Williams and the soccer field with Zinedine Zidane, online, on TV-everywhere, all the time. The accumulative stresses come to bear on a person's ability to speak, perform, and stay alive. Our addressability is tied to the state of our belonging, Rankine argues, as are our assumptions and expectations of citizenship. In essay, image, and poetry, *Citizen* is a powerful testament to the individual and collective effects of racism in our contemporary, often named "post-race" society.

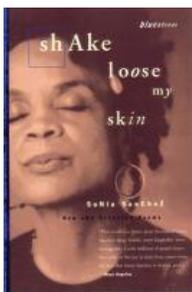


[Don't Call Us Dead: Poems](#)

by Danez Smith [811 Smi]

Award-winning poet Danez Smith is a groundbreaking force, celebrated for deft lyrics, urgent subjects, and performative power. *Don't Call Us Dead*

opens with a heartrending sequence that imagines an afterlife for black men shot by police, a place where suspicion, violence, and grief are forgotten and replaced with the safety, love, and longevity they deserved here on earth. Smith turns then to desire, mortality--the dangers experienced in skin and body and blood--and a diagnosis of HIV positive. "Some of us are killed / in pieces," Smith writes, "some of us all at once." *Don't Call Us Dead* is an astonishing and ambitious collection, one that confronts, praises, and rebukes America--"Dear White America"--where every day is too often a funeral and not often enough a miracle.

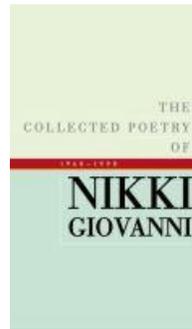


[Shake Loose My Skin: New and Selected Poems](#)

by Sonia Sanchez [811 San]

Covering over thirty years of work, *Shake Loose My Skin* is a stunning testament to the literary, sensual, and political powers of the award-winning

Sonia Sanchez. "This world is a better place because of Sonia Sanchez: more livable, more laughable, more manageable. I wish millions of people knew that some of the joy in their lives comes from the fact that Sonia Sanchez is writing poetry." -Maya Angelou



[The Selected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni](#)

by Nikki Giovanni [811 Gio]

For the first time ever, the complete poetry collection spanning three decades from Nikki Giovanni, renowned poet and one of America's national treasures.

When her poems first emerged during the Black Arts Movement in the 1960s, Nikki Giovanni immediately took her place among the most celebrated, controversial, and influential poets of the era. Now, more than thirty years later, Giovanni still stands as one of the most commanding, luminous voices to grace America's political and poetic landscape.

The first of its kind, this omnibus collection covers Nikki Giovanni's complete work of poetry from three decades, 1968-1998. The *Collected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni* contains Giovanni's first seven volumes of poetry: *Black Feeling Black Talk*, *Black Judgement*, *Re: Creation*, *My House*, *The Women and the Men*, *Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day*, and *Those Who Ride the Night Winds*. Arranged chronologically with a biographical timeline and introduction, a new afterword from the author, title and first-line indexes, and extensive notes to the poems, this collection is the testimony of a life's work -- from one of America's most beloved daughters and powerful poets.

Known for their iconic revolutionary phrases, *Black Feeling Black Talk* (1968), *Black Judgement* (1968), and *Re: Creation* (1970) are heralded as being among the most important volumes of contemporary poetry. *My House* (1972) marks a new dimension in tone and philosophy -- it signifies a new self-confidence and maturity as Giovanni artfully connects the private and the public, the personal and the political. In *The Women and the Men* (1975), Giovanni displays her compassion for the people, things, and places she has encountered -- she reverses the ordinary and is in search of the extraordinary. *Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day* (1978) is one of the most poignant and introspective. These poems chronicle the drastic change that took place during the 1970s -- in both the consciousness of the nation and in the soul of the poet -- when the dreams of the Civil Rights era seemed to have evaporated. *Those Who Ride the Night Winds* (1983) is devoted to "the day trippers and midnight cowboys," the ones who have devoted their lives to pushing the limits of the human condition and shattering the constraints of the status quo.

Each volume reflects the changes Giovanni has endured as a Black woman, lover, mother, teacher, and poet. A timeless classic, *The Collected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni* is the evocation of a nation's past and present -- intensely personal and fiercely political -- from one of our most compassionate, vibrant observers.

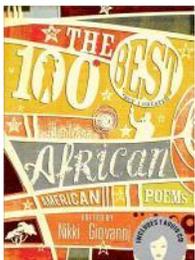


[Selected Poems](#)

by Gwendolyn Brooks [811 Bro]

The classic volume by the distinguished modern poet and winner of the 1950 Pulitzer Prize that represents her technical mastery, her compassionate and illuminating response to a world

that is both special and universal, and her warm humanity.



[100 Best African American Poems \(*But I Cheated\)](#)

by Nikki Giovanni [811.08 Gio w/ CD]

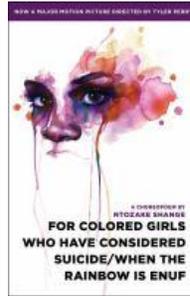
Celebrate Black poets--a collection of classic and contemporary Black authors selected by New York Times bestselling

author Nikki Giovanni

Award-winning poet and writer Nikki Giovanni takes on the impossible task of selecting the 100 best African American works from classic and contemporary poets.

A startlingly vibrant collection that spans from historic to modern, from structured to freeform, and reflects the rich roots and visionary future of African American verse. Lift up Black voices with these magnetic poems, an exciting mix of most-loved classics and daring new writing. From Gwendolyn Brooks and Langston Hughes to Tupac Shakur, Natasha Trethewey, and many others, the voice of a culture comes through in this collection, one that is as talented, diverse, and varied as its people.

The perfect poetry book for anyone looking to expand their collection of books by Black authors and celebrate the poets who have changed the world of classic and contemporary poetry forever.



[For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, When the Rainbow is Enuf: A Choreopoem](#)

by Ntozake Shange [812 Sha]

From its inception in California in 1974 to its highly acclaimed critical success at Joseph Papp's Public Theater and on

Broadway, the Obie Award-winning *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* has excited, inspired, and transformed audiences all over the country. Passionate and fearless, Shange's words reveal what it meant to be of color and female in the twentieth century. First published in 1975, when it was praised by *The New Yorker* for "encompassing . . . every feeling and experience a woman has ever had," *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* will be read and performed for generations to come. Here is the complete text, with stage directions, of a groundbreaking dramatic prose poem written in vivid and powerful language that resonates with unusual beauty in its fierce message to the world.

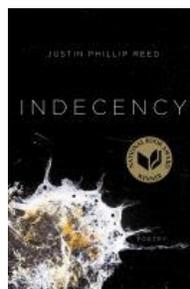


[Bum Rush the Page: A Def Poetry Jam](#)

by Tony Medina [811.08 Med]

Bum Rush the Page is a groundbreaking collection, capturing the best new work from the poets who have brought fresh energy, life, and relevance to American poetry.

"Here is a democratic orchestration of voices and visions, poets of all ages, ethnicities, and geographic locations coming together to create a dialogue and to jam—not slam. This is our mouth on paper, our hearts on our sleeves, our refusal to shut up and swallow our silence. These poems are tough, honest, astute, perceptive, lyrical, blunt, sad, funny, heartbreaking, and true. They shout, they curse, they whisper, and sing. But most of all, they tell it like it is."

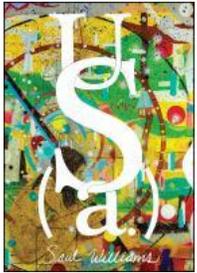


[Indecency](#)

by Justin Phillip Reed [811 Ree]

Indecency is boldly and carefully executed and perfectly ragged. In these poems, Justin Phillip Reed experiments with language to explore inequity and

injustice and to critique and lament the culture of white supremacy and the dominant social order. Political and personal, tender, daring, and insightful--the author unpacks his intimacies, weaponizing poetry to take on masculinity, sexuality, exploitation, and the prison industrial complex and unmask all the failures of the structures into which society sorts us.



[US \(a.\)](#)

by Saul Williams [811 Wil]

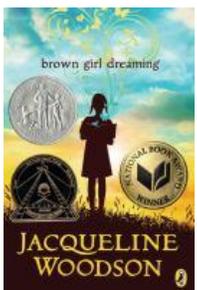
After four years abroad, Williams returned to the United States and found his head twirling with thoughts on race, class, gender, finance, freedom, guns, cooking shows, dog shows, superheroes, not-so-super politicians--everything that makes up our country. *US(a.)* is a collection of poems that embodies the spirit of a culture that questions sentiments and realities, embracing a cross-section of pop culture, hip-hop, and the greater world politic of the moment. Williams explores what social media may only hint at--times and realities have changed; there is a connect and a disconnect. We are wirelessly connected to a past and path to which we are chained. Saul Williams stops and frisks the moment, makes it empty its pockets, and chronicles what's inside. Here is an extraordinary book that will find its place in the hands and minds of a new generation.



[Hum](#)

by Jamaal May [811 May]

In May's debut collection, the human body is machine, manufactured in the motor city, alive with the urban sounds and beats. Poems buzz and purr like well-oiled chassis. Grit and trial and song thrum through each line. Tight syntax, finely tuned internal rhyme, and punchy consonants percuss each poem's beat like an unfailing 808 drum.



[Brown Girl Dreaming](#)

by Jacqueline Woodson [j818 Woo]

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living

with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.



[Olio](#)

by Tyhimba Jess [811 Jes]

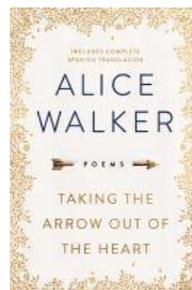
Part fact, part fiction, Tyhimba Jess's much anticipated second book weaves sonnet, song, and narrative to examine the lives of mostly unrecorded African American performers directly before and after the Civil War up to World War I. *Olio* is an effort to understand how they met, resisted, complicated, co-opted, and sometimes defeated attempts to minstrelize them.



[Cannibal](#)

by Safiya Sinclair [811 Sin]

Colliding with and confronting The Tempest and postcolonial identity, the poems in Safiya Sinclair's *Cannibal* explore Jamaican childhood and history, race relations in America, womanhood, otherness, and exile. She evokes a home no longer accessible and a body at times uninhabitable, often mirrored by a hybrid Eve/Caliban figure. Blooming with intense lyricism and fertile imagery, these full-blooded poems are elegant, mythic, and intricately woven. Here the female body is a dark landscape; the female body is cannibal. Sinclair shocks and delights her readers with her willingness to disorient and provoke, creating a mult textured collage of beautiful and explosive poems.



[Taking the Arrow Out of the Heart: Poems](#)

by Alice Walker [811 Wal]

Alice Walker, author of the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Color Purple*--"an American novel of permanent importance" (San Francisco

Chronicle) -- crafts a bilingual collection that is both playfully imaginative and intensely moving. Presented in both English and Spanish, Alice Walker shares a timely collection of nearly seventy works of passionate and powerful poetry that bears witness to our troubled times, while also chronicling a life well-lived. From poems of painful self-inquiry, to celebrating the simple beauty of baking frittatas, Walker offers us a window into her magical, at times difficult, and liberating world of activism, love, hope and, above all, gratitude. Whether she's urging us to preserve an urban paradise or behold the delicate necessity of beauty to the spirit, Walker encourages us to honor the divine that lives inside all of us and brings her legendary free verse to the page once again, demonstrating that she remains a revolutionary poet and an inspiration to generations of fans.

**This booklist created for
*Black History Month – February 2021***



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