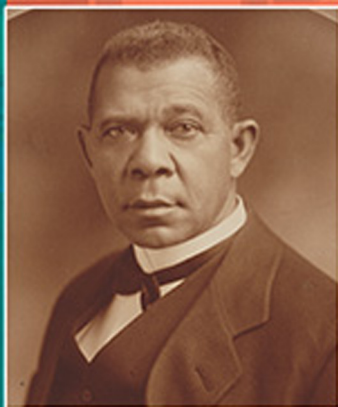
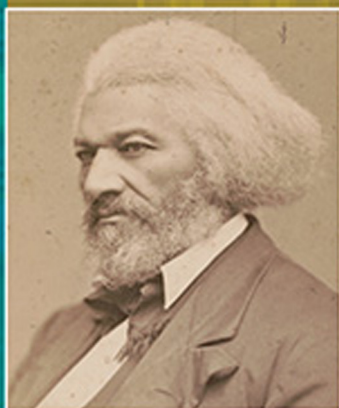
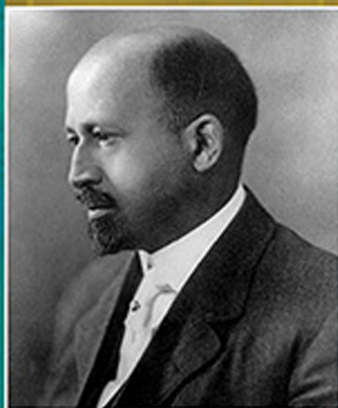


Hans A. Ostrom and J. David Macey, Editors



AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE



AN ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR STUDENTS

African American Literature

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Hans A. Ostrom and J. David Macey, Editors



An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC
Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ostrom, Hans A., editor. | Macey, J. David, editor.

Title: African American literature : an encyclopedia for students / Hans A.

Ostrom and J. David Macey, editors.

Description: Santa Barbara, California : Greenwood, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, [2020] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019029439 (print) | LCCN 2019029440 (ebook) | ISBN 9781440871504 (paperback) | ISBN 9781440871511 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: American literature—African American authors—Encyclopedias.

Classification: LCC PS153.N5 A33644 2020 (print) | LCC PS153.N5 (ebook) | DDC 810.9/896073003—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019029439>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019029440>

ISBN: 978-1-4408-7150-4 (print)

978-1-4408-7151-1 (ebook)

24 23 22 21 20 1 2 3 4 5

This book is also available as an eBook.

Greenwood

An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC

ABC-CLIO, LLC

147 Castilian Drive

Santa Barbara, California 93117

www.abc-clio.com

This book is printed on acid-free paper (∞)

Manufactured in the United States of America

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Introduction

It would be impossible to tell the story of African American literature in a single volume or indeed in multiple volumes. Like the great rivers in Langston Hughes's famous poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1921), "ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins," the rich network of texts, authors, and traditions that comprise African American literature flow from numerous headwaters through multiple intersecting channels. This rich and varied literature reflects the lived experiences of African Americans from the beginning of the colonial period through the present day, and it has enriched and transformed the social, cultural, political, intellectual, and aesthetic landscape of America.

What, then, is "African American literature"? It is writing produced by persons whose identities and heritage are linked to the African diaspora—the spreading out of people from Africa, the influence of cultural practices they brought to the places they went, and the social and political circumstances that have shaped their lives. It is writing produced by persons of the diaspora whose background is chiefly American, as opposed to British or French. That said, many African American writers have been immigrants, and many of these have come from Caribbean islands, so that the

"American" part of African American literature has always been interpreted expansively. By "literature," we mean published writing in a wide variety of forms, including essays, poems, autobiographies, short stories, novels, plays, monologues, folktales, and works for children and young adults. "Literature," understood in this inclusive sense, encompasses writing of every sort, including comic, tragic, satiric, humorous, realistic, surrealistic, absurd, religious, speculative, introspective, and political texts.

African American Literature: An Encyclopedia for Students offers an overview of some of the major writers, genres, issues, and historical events that have defined the course of African American literature over the past three centuries. No single volume can do justice to the richness, variety, and complexity of African American literature; the five-volume *Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Literature* (2005), upon which the present encyclopedia is to a large degree based, was itself only an introduction to and overview of the field. Both encyclopedias might best be understood as points of embarkation—"jumping off" points, if you will—for a lifelong exploration of the expansive network of texts and contexts that define African American literature's vast and varied geography.

This volume is intended as a resource for students, particularly high school students and college and university undergraduates, who are beginning to conduct research on topics in African American literature. In preparing this volume, we have selected crucial entries from the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Literature* that address major writers, genres, and critical and historical contexts, and we have added a handful of new entries on contemporary writers in order to help readers form a solid foundation in African American literary studies.

Any principle of selection will be, to some degree, both partial and inadequate. We have had to exclude writers whose achievements have been extraordinary, but we have deferred to broad scholarly consensus regarding the importance of figures and movements in selecting entries for this volume. No encyclopedia of African American literature could reasonably exclude such writers as James Baldwin, Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Harriet Jacobs, Toni Morrison, or Phillis Wheatley. The same is true of the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement. So, too, the lasting and still controversial impact of public intellectuals, including W.E.B. Du Bois and Cornel West, made their inclusion in this volume critical. Many other writers, movements, and events might have been included in this volume, and it is our hope that the resources provided in this encyclopedia will encourage readers to conduct further research and to learn more about other topics in African American literature.

African American Literature: An Encyclopedia for Students offers several different points of embarkation for students of African American literature. While the largest number of entries focus on individual

writers, other entries provide introductions to groups of authors who formed a particular movement in literature and culture such as the Chicago Renaissance or the Black Atlantic Movement. Some entries provide a window into a genre such as the slave narrative, the novel, or drama. Still other entries explore links between literature and historical events such as the Civil War or the Civil Rights Movement, literary tropes or movements such as feminism and Black feminism or the trickster, or important centers of literary and social activity such as Chicago, Illinois, or New Orleans, Louisiana.

By providing up-to-date bibliographies for each entry, a general bibliography, and a detailed timeline of African American literary history, we hope to offer readers the resources they will need to identify and refine research topics; recognize connections among authors, genres, periods, and social, cultural, and political movements; and formulate and support critical arguments about African American literature. These bibliographies, together with the chronology, will help readers find additional sources to enlarge their understanding of a particular writer, work, genre, group, critical vantage point, or era. When an entry only briefly mentions related writers, contexts, or critical approaches, the bibliography will provide a roadmap for further investigation.

We hope that *African American Literature: An Encyclopedia for Students* will open up for readers a range of new resources, approaches, and contexts for studying African American literature and for pursuing an exciting voyage of discovery—or rediscovery—of the richness, variety, and profound power of the African American literary tradition.

Hans A. Ostrom, Tacoma, Washington
J. David Macey, Edmond, Oklahoma

Chronology

ca. 35,000 BCE

The Lemombo bone, one of the earliest known mathematical instruments, is in use in what is now known as Swaziland in Africa. In this same period, the Egyptians and Sumerians invent writing, using clay tablets.

8th Century BCE

Nubians become pharaohs in Egypt's 25th dynasty. They were instrumental in the trading that went on between sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt and the Mediterranean. By this time, the Yoruba civilization was well established in West Africa, where the nations of Benin and Nigeria are now situated. The Yoruba developed an advanced agricultural society and also practiced sophisticated blacksmithing, leather-working, glass-making, and bronze casting.

8th Century BCE–6th Century CE

The Ancient Greek culture flourishes.

ca. 600–500 BCE

Genesis and *Exodus*, the first books of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), are thought to have been written in this period.

ca. 558–ca. 491 BCE, or ca. 400 BCE

Gautama Buddha, on whose teaching Buddhism is founded, is believed to have lived in what is now called India.

550 BCE

Cyrus the Great establishes the first Persian dynasty.

ca. 380 BCE

Plato writes his work, the *Republic*.

ca. 335 BCE

Aristotle writes his work of literary criticism, the *Poetics*. His material on rhetoric dates from this period as well.

100 BCE

Julius Caesar is born in Rome. He is assassinated there in 44 BCE.

ca. 4 BCE–30 CE

Jesus of Nazareth lives at this time.

ca. 66–70 CE

The Gospel of Mark, the earliest gospel of the New Testament, is written.

80

Construction of the Roman Colosseum is completed.

325

The Nicene Creed, a foundational Christian text, is published in Nicea, which is now known as Iznik, Turkey.

450

Attila the Hun invades Western Europe.

609–632

The Quran, the central text of Islam, is revealed to Prophet Muhammad.

711

The Moors, a Muslim people of western North Africa, conquer southern Spain and rule there into the late 1400s.

ca. 1162

Genghis Khan, founder of the Mongol Empire, is born.

ca. 1450

In Mainz, Germany, Johannes Gutenberg develops and uses the first printing press.

1517

Slave trade to the New World (Western Hemisphere) begins.

1526

Spanish ships bring slaves to North America.

1543

On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres, by Copernicus, is published, establishing that Earth orbits the sun.

1564

William Shakespeare is born. Galileo Galilei is born.

ca. 1602

William Shakespeare writes *Hamlet*.

1605

Don Quixote, by Miguel de Cervantes, is published.

1616

William Shakespeare dies.

1619

A Dutch ship brings the first Africans to Jamestown, Virginia.

1620

The *Mayflower* docks at Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

1641

The Colony of Massachusetts legally recognizes slavery. *Discourse on Method*, by René Descartes, is published.

1652

Rhode Island adopts a law prohibiting slavery.

1667

Paradise Lost, by John Milton, is published.

1689

The Japanese poet Basho writes *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.

1712

Pennsylvania adopts a law against slavery. A slave revolt occurs in New York City.

1726

Gulliver's Travels, by Jonathan Swift, is published.

ca. 1730

Lucy Terry [Prince] is born in Africa.

1732

George Washington is born.

1734

Daniel Boone is born.

1743

Thomas Jefferson is born.

1744

Lucy Terry writes the poem “Bars Fight,” considered to be the first written African American poem.

ca. 1753

Phillis Wheatley is born.

1755

Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* is published in England.

1769

Napoleon Bonaparte is born.

1770

Crispus Attucks, an African American, is killed in the Boston Massacre.

1773

Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral, by Phillis Wheatley, is published. Sally Hemings is born.

1775–1783

The Revolutionary War.

1776

The Declaration of Independence is written.

1779

Articles of Confederation are ratified.

1789

George Washington is elected president. The French Revolution begins. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano; or, Gustavus Vassa, the African*, by Olaudah Equiano, is published.

1791

The Private Life of the Late Benjamin Franklin (later known as the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*) is published. *The Rights of Man*, by Thomas Paine, is published.

1793

The first Fugitive Slave Act is passed into law. It makes harboring an escaped slave a crime in the United States.

1797

Sojourner Truth is born.

1798

Lyrical Ballads, by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is published.

1799

In France, Napoleon’s coup d’état succeeds.

1803

Louisiana Territory is purchased from France by the United States; the land mass of the United States thereby doubles.

1812

Charles Dickens is born. Napoleon invades Russia. The War of 1812, in which both slaves and free Blacks fight, begins.

1815

Napoleon’s army is defeated at the Battle of Waterloo.

1818

Frederick Douglass is born.

1819

Queen Victoria and Walt Whitman are born.

1820

George III, king of England, dies.

1822

Denmark Vesey organizes a slave revolt in Charleston, South Carolina, but he is betrayed, and the revolt fails.

1826

Thomas Jefferson dies.

1827

Tamerlane and Other Poems, by Edgar Allan Poe, is published.

1829

Published this year: *The Hope of Liberty*, a collection of poems by George Moses Horton; and *An Appeal to the Colored Peoples of the World* by David Walker. Native American tribes are driven from their homelands to “Indian Territories,” including what is now Oklahoma.

1831

Nat Turner leads a slave rebellion in Virginia. He is subsequently captured and executed.

1835

Sally Hemings, Thomas Jefferson’s mistress, dies.

1845

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself, is published.

1849

David Copperfield, by Charles Dickens, is published.

1851

“Ain’t I a Woman?,” a speech by Sojourner Truth, is delivered in Akron, Ohio.

1853

Clotel; Or, the President’s Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States, a novel by William Wells Brown, is published.

1854

Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects, by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, is published.

1855

Leaves of Grass, by Walt Whitman, is published.

1857

The U.S. Supreme Court reaches its decision in the infamous *Dred Scott* case. *Madame Bovary*, by Gustave Flaubert, is published.

1859

On the Origin of Species, by Charles Darwin, is published. John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry occurs.

1860

The total population of African American slaves is roughly four million. South Carolina secedes from the United States; it is the first state to do so.

1861

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, by Harriet Ann Jacobs, is published.

1861–1865

The American Civil War takes place.

1863

The Emancipation Proclamation is issued by President Abraham Lincoln; it declares slaves to be free, except for those in the Border States: Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky,

West Virginia, Missouri, Tennessee, the “Indian Territory,” and Kansas.

1864

The Fugitive Slave Laws are repealed.

1865

April 9: General Robert E. Lee surrenders to General Ulysses S. Grant. The Civil War ends.

April 15: Abraham Lincoln dies from gunshot wounds suffered the night before at Ford’s Theatre in Washington, DC.

1867

The period of Reconstruction begins in the South.

1868

The U.S. Congress passes the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting African Americans equal citizenship and civil rights. The Meiji Restoration begins in Japan. W.E.B. Du Bois is born.

1869

The National Woman Suffrage Association is established. *War and Peace*, by Leo Tolstoy, is published.

1872

Paul Laurence Dunbar is born.

1874

Robert Frost is born.

1876

Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.

1877

The U.S. military withdraws from the South, and Reconstruction ends.

1881

The Tuskegee Institute is founded, under the leadership of Booker T. Washington.

1884

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain, is published.

1892

The *Baltimore Afro-American* is established. Walt Whitman dies. *A Voice from the South*, by Anna Julia Cooper, is published.

1893

Oak and Ivy, by Paul Laurence Dunbar, is published.

1894

Jean Toomer is born.

1895

Frederick Douglass dies in Washington, DC. Booker T. Washington speaks at the Atlanta Exposition. *Violets and Other Tales*, by Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, is published.

1896

The U.S. Supreme Court issues its infamous decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, reaffirming the concept of “separate but equal” public accommodations for African Americans.

1897

William Faulkner is born.

1898

The Spanish–American War takes place. Melvin B. Tolson is born.

1899

The Conjure Woman, by Charles Waddell Chesnutt, is published. Ernest Hemingway

is born. Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington is born.

1901

Queen Victoria dies. *Up from Slavery*, by Booker T. Washington, is published. Langston Hughes is born.

1902

Arna Bontemps is born.

1903

The Souls of Black Folk, by W.E.B. Du Bois, is published.

1904

Lyrics of Life and Love, by William Stanley Braithwaite, is published.

1905

The *Chicago Defender* is founded.

1906

Paul Laurence Dunbar dies.

1908

Richard Wright is born.

1909

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded, led by W.E.B. Du Bois.

1910

Mark Twain dies. *The Crisis* is established.

1912

James Weldon Johnson’s novel, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* is published.

1913

The First International Exhibit of Modern Art, also known as the Armory Show, takes

place in New York City. *Complete Poems*, by Paul Laurence Dunbar, is published.

1914

World War I begins. Ralph Ellison is born.

1915

Booker T. Washington dies.

1916

Rachel, a play by Angelina Weld Grimké, is performed. Frank Yerby is born. *The General Theory of Relativity*, by Albert Einstein, is published.

1917

The United States enters the Great War, later known as World War I. Over 365,000 African Americans are drafted into the military during this war, serving in segregated divisions. The Russian Revolution begins.

1918

World War I ends. *The Heart of a Woman*, by Georgia Douglas Johnson, is published.

1919

The Volstead Act is passed, beginning the era of Prohibition. John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook the World*, concerning the Bolshevik Revolution, is published.

1920

The beginning of the Harlem Renaissance is often dated to this year.

1922

Published this year: *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, edited by James Weldon Johnson; *Harlem Shadows* by Claude McKay; and *The Waste Land*, by T. S. Eliot.

1923

Cane, by Jean Toomer, is published.

1924

James Baldwin is born. *The Fire in the Flint*, by Walter White, is published. The *Opportunity* magazine awards banquet is held in Manhattan, celebrating Black writers, so that this year is also often counted as the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance.

1925

Published this year: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald; and *The New Negro*, an anthology edited by Alain Locke.

1926

Published this year: *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway; *The Weary Blues* by Langston Hughes; and the single issue of the magazine *Fire!!*, edited by Wallace Thurman.

1927

Published this year: *Caroling at Dusk*, edited by Countee Cullen, and *Ebony and Topaz*, edited by Charles Spurgeon Johnson.

1928

Maya Angelou is born.

1929

Published this year: *The Sound and the Fury*, by William Faulkner; Walter White's *Rope & Faggot*, a landmark study of lynching; and *Plum Bun*, by Jessie Redmon Fauset. The U.S. stock market crashes. The Great Depression begins. Martin Luther King Jr. is born.

1930

Not Without Laughter, a novel by Langston Hughes, is published. The Nation of Islam is established.

1931

The case of the Scottsboro Boys begins in Alabama. *Black No More*, by George

Samuel Schuyler, is published. Toni Morrison is born.

1932

Published this year: *The Southern Road*, by Sterling A. Brown, and *The Conjure-Man Dies*, by Rudolph Fisher.

1933

Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor in Germany. National Prohibition ends in the United States. President Franklin Roosevelt institutes New Deal policies.

1934

The Ways of White Folks, by Langston Hughes, is published. Rudolph Fisher dies.

1935

Mulatto, a play by Langston Hughes, is produced in New York.

1936

Black Thunder by Arna Bontemps, an historical novel based on an actual slave uprising, is published.

1937

The College Language Association is established. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston, is published. In Spain, Langston Hughes writes articles about the Spanish Civil War for *The Baltimore Afro-American*.

1939

World War II begins. *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck, is published.

1940

The Big Sea, by Langston Hughes, and *Native Son*, by Richard Wright, are published.

1941

The Japanese air force attacks Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December. The United States enters World War II. The first commercial television broadcast occurs. Approximately one million African American soldiers serve, as draftees or volunteers, in the war. As in World War I, the troops are segregated based on race.

1942

Published this year: *Dust Tracks on a Road*, by Zora Neale Hurston, and *For My People*, by Margaret Walker.

1943

Langston Hughes begins writing columns for the *Chicago Defender* newspaper. Many of these columns feature brief comic short stories featuring Jesse B. Simple.

1944

Published this year: *Rendezvous with America*, by Melvin B. Tolson, and the short story “King of the Bingo Game,” by Ralph Ellison.

1945

Published this year: *Black Boy*, by Richard Wright; *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, by Chester Himes; and *A Street in Bronzeville*, by Gwendolyn Brooks. The United States drops two atomic bombs on Japan. World War II ends. The United Nations is established.

1946

The Street, by Ann Petry, is published. Countee Cullen dies. *The Foxes of Harrow*, by Frank Yerby, is published.

1947

Jackie Robinson breaks the color line in professional baseball, playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

1948

Claude McKay dies. *The Living Is Easy*, by Dorothy West, is published. *Death of a Salesman*, by Arthur Miller, is produced.

1949

The Chinese Revolution occurs.

1950

Gwendolyn Brooks wins the Pulitzer Prize for her book of poetry, *Annie Allen*, published in 1949.

1950–1953

The Korean War takes place.

1951

Montage of a Dream Deferred, by Langston Hughes, is published.

1952

Published this year: *The Old Man and the Sea*, by Ernest Hemingway, and *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison. Dwight Eisenhower is elected president.

1953

Go Tell It on the Mountain, by James Baldwin, is published. Langston Hughes is called to testify before Senator Joseph McCarthy’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

1954

The U.S. Supreme Court issues its landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*.

1955

Notes of a Native Son, by James Baldwin, is published. Walter White dies.

1957

On the Road, by Jack Kerouac, and *Black Bourgeoisie*, by E. Franklin Frazier, are published.

1957–1958

The desegregation of public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, occurs.

1958

The Book of Negro Folklore, edited by Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, is published.

1959

A Raisin in the Sun, by Lorraine Hansberry, is produced on Broadway. *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, by Paule Marshall, is published.

1960

Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright die. Students in North Carolina stage sit-ins at lunch counters to protest Jim Crow Laws (“separate but equal” accommodations).

1961

Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note and *Dutchman*, both by LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), are published. Ernest Hemingway dies.

1962

Ballad of Remembrance, by Robert Hayden, is published. James Meredith becomes the first African American to enroll at the University of Mississippi. William Faulkner dies.

1963

Martin Luther King Jr. writes “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” *The Fire Next Time*, by James Baldwin, and Amiri Baraka’s *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* are published. John F. Kennedy is assassinated. W.E.B. Du Bois dies. Medgar Evers is assassinated. Robert Frost dies.

1964

Martin Luther King Jr. wins the Nobel Peace Prize. The Free Speech Movement begins at the University of California, Berkeley. *The Dead Lecturer*, by Amiri Baraka, is published.

1965

Harlem Gallery, by Melvin B. Tolson, is published. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which Alex Haley helps write, is published. The Vietnam War begins. Malcolm X is assassinated. Winston Churchill dies. Lorraine Hansberry dies. The Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, protest marches take place. Dudley Randall establishes the Broadside Press in Detroit.

1966

The Black Panther Party is established. *Jubilee*, by Margaret Walker, and *The Book of Negro Humor*, edited by Langston Hughes, are published. Melvin B. Tolson dies.

1967

Thurgood Marshall becomes a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. *The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers*, edited by Langston Hughes, is published. Langston Hughes dies. *Think Black*, by Haki R. Madhubuti, is published. Jean Toomer dies. *Soul on Ice*, by Eldridge Cleaver, is published.

1968

Poems from Prison, by Etheridge Knight, and *The First Cities*, by Audre Lorde, are published. Richard M. Nixon is elected president. Martin Luther King Jr. gives his renowned “I Have Been to the Mountaintop” speech. He is assassinated the next day in Memphis. Robert F. Kennedy is assassinated in June. Shirley Chisholm is elected to Congress.

1969

The first Black Studies program at a four-year university is established at San Francisco State College. *home coming*, by Sonia Sanchez, and *Black Pow-Wow: Jazz Poems*, by Ted Joans, are published. The U.S. agency NASA lands a man on the moon. A riot breaks out after the Stonewall Inn is raided by police in Manhattan; the event is associated with the beginning of the Gay Pride movement. *Black Boogaloo: Notes on Black Liberation*, by Larry Neal, is published.

1970

Published this year: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, by Maya Angelou; *Dear John, Dear Coltrane*, by Michael S. Harper; *I Am a Black Woman*, by Mari Evans; and *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison.

1971

Published this year: *The Black Aesthetic*, by Addison Gayle; *The Black Poets*, edited by Dudley Randall; and *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, by Ernest James Gaines.

1972

Published this year: *Mumbo Jumbo*, by Ishmael Reed, and *Gorilla, My Love*, by Toni Cade Bambara.

1973

A treaty between the United States and North Vietnam is signed in Paris, France, ending the Vietnam War. *The Lynchers*, by John Edgar Wideman, and *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women*, by Alice Walker, are published. Arna Bontemps dies.

1974

President Nixon resigns because of the Watergate scandal. Duke Ellington dies. *Ark of Bones and Other Stories*, by Henry Dumas, is published.

1975

for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf, by Ntozake Shange, is produced in New York City. *Corregidora*, by Gayl Jones, is published.

1976

Roots, by Alex Haley, is published. It is turned into a television miniseries in 1977. Black History Month (February) is established in the United States, based on Black History Week, founded by Carter Woodson in 1926. Gil Scott Heron writes and records the poem "Bicentennial Blues."

1977

Published this year: *Elbow Room*, by James Alan McPherson; *Dhalgren*, by Samuel R. Delany; and *Song of Solomon*, by Toni Morrison.

1978

James Alan McPherson wins the Pulitzer Prize for *Elbow Room*.

1979

Kindred, by Octavia E. Butler, is published.

1980

The Salt Eaters, by Toni Cade Bambara, is published. Ronald Reagan is elected president.

1981

Published this year: *The Chaneyville Incident*, by David Bradley; *A Soldier's Play*, by Charles Fuller; *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, by bell hooks; and *Women, Race, and Class*, by Angela Davis.

1982

Published this year: *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker, and *The Women of Brewster*

Place, by Gloria Naylor. Charles Fuller wins the Pulitzer Prize for *A Soldier's Play*. *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, by August Wilson, is produced.

1983

Alice Walker wins the Pulitzer Prize for *The Color Purple*.

1984

Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches, by Audre Lorde, is published. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is identified as the cause of AIDS.

1985

Published this year: *Linden Hills*, by Gloria Naylor; *Afro-American Folktales: Stories from Black Traditions*, edited by Roger D. Abrahams; and *Annie John*, by Jamaica Kincaid.

1986

Published this year: *Thomas and Beulah*, by Rita Dove; *Our Dead Behind Us*, by Audre Lorde; and *In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology*, edited by Joseph Beam. *The Oprah Winfrey Show* debuts on television.

1987

Rita Dove wins the Pulitzer Prize. James Baldwin dies. *Heavy Daughter Blues*, by Wanda Coleman, and *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison, are published.

1988

The Signifying Monkey, by Henry Louis Gates Jr. is published.

1989

The Berlin Wall is torn down, signaling the dissolution of Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

1990

August Wilson wins the Pulitzer Prize for the play *The Piano Lesson*. Charles R. Johnson wins the National Book Award for the novel *Middle Passage*. *Devil in a Blue Dress*, by Walter Mosley, is published.

1991

Frank Yerby dies.

1992

William Jefferson Clinton is elected president. Published this year: *Technical Difficulties*, by June Jordan; *Waiting to Exhale*, by Terry McMillan; *Jazz*, by Toni Morrison; and *Through the Ivory Gate*, by Rita Dove.

1993

Toni Morrison wins the Nobel Prize for Literature. Rita Dove is named Poet Laureate of the United States.

1994

Race Matters, by Cornel West; *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, edited by David Levering Lewis; and *Juba to Jive: A Dictionary of African American Slang*, by Clarence Major, are published. Ralph Ellison dies. Yusef Komunyakaa wins the Pulitzer Prize for his book of poems, *Neon Vernacular*.

1997

The first edition of *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay, is published.

1998

Margaret Walker and Dorothy West die.

1999

The Intuitionist, by Colson Whitehead, is published.

2000

Step into a World: A Global Anthology of the New Black Literature, edited by Kevin Powell, is published. Gwendolyn Brooks dies. *In the Blood*, by Suzan-Lori Parks, is published.

2001

Giant Steps: The New Generation of African American Writers, edited by Kevin Young, is published. The University of Missouri Press begins to publish *The Complete Works of Langston Hughes* in 16 volumes.

September 11: Terrorists from the group al-Qaeda hijack airplanes, two of which destroy the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City.

October 7: In response to the attacks, the United States begins its invasion of Afghanistan.

2002

Quincy Troupe's *Transcircularities: New and Selected Poems* is published this year, as is *Black Like Us: A Century of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual African American Fiction*, edited by Devon W. Carbado, Dwight A. McBride, and Donald Weise. Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (ca. 1853–1861) is published for the first time. Carl Phillips receives the 2002 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award for *The Tether*.

2003

Love, by Toni Morrison, and *The Other Woman*, by Eric Jerome Dickey, are published. On March 20, the United States begins its invasion of Iraq. Edward Jones receives the 2003 National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction for *The Known World*, which also receives the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. Lynn Nottage's play *Intimate Apparel* premieres at Baltimore's Center Stage.

2004

American Smooth, by Rita Dove; *Don't Let Me Be Lonely: An American Lyric*, by Claudia Rankine; and Carl Phillips's *The Rest of Love* are published. Henry Louis Gates Jr. receives the 2004 Carl Sandburg Literary Award. Yusef Komunyakaa receives the Poetry Society of America's 2004 Shelley Memorial Award, and Anthony Butts receives the Poetry Society of America's 2004 William Carlos Williams Award.

2005

African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame, by Anne C. Bailey; the short-story collection *God's Gym*, by John Edgar Wideman; Tananarive Due's *Joplin's Ghost*; and Samuel R. Delany's *About Writing: Seven Essays, Four Letters, & Five Interviews* are published. August Wilson dies.

2006

Nathaniel Mackey receives the 2006 National Book Award in Poetry for *Splay Anthem* (2006). Barack Obama publishes *The Audacity of Hope*. Ishmael Reed's *New and Collected Poems, 1964–2006* is published. Octavia E. Butler and Nellie Y. McKay die.

2007

Brother, I'm Dying, by Edwidge Danticat, is published and receives the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography; Harriet Washington's *Medical Apartheid* receives the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction. Natasha Trethewey receives the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for *Native Guard*, and Nikki Giovanni receives the 2007 Carl Sandburg Literary Award.

2008

Maya Angelou's *Letter to My Daughter*, Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*, and Patricia

Smith's *Blood Dazzler* are published. U.S. Senator Barack Obama becomes the first African American to be elected president of the United States. Michael S. Harper receives the Poetry Society of America's Frost Medal, and Annette Gordon-Reed receives the National Book Award for Non-fiction for *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*, which also receives the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in History.

2009

Rita Dove's *Sonata Mulattica* is published. Anna Deavere Smith's solo show *Let Me Down Easy* premieres. President Barack Hussein Obama receives the Nobel Peace Prize. Lynn Nottage receives the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Ruined*, which also receives the Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Play and the 2009 Obie Award for the Best New American Play; E. Lynn Harris dies.

2010

Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: The Warmth of Other Suns*, a new history of African Americans' Great Migration to the North by Isabel Wilkerson, and *Wench*, by Dolen Perkins-Valdez, are published. Terrance Hayes's *Lighthouse* receives the National Book Award in Poetry, and Lucille Clifton, who dies in 2010, receives the Poetry Society of America's Frost Medal.

2011

Jesmyn Ward receives the National Book Award for Fiction for *Salvage the Bones*. Nikky Finney receives the National Book Award for Poetry for *Head Off & Split*.

2012

Barack Obama is elected to a second term as president of the United States. Toni Morrison's *Home* and *The Collected Poems of*

Lucille Clifton 1965–2010 are published. Tracy K. Smith receives the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for *Life on Mars*, and Toi Derricotte receives the PEN/Voelcker Award for Poetry. Natasha Trethewey is named Poet Laureate of the United States.

2013

The House Girl, by Tara Conklin; *Chasing Utopia: A Hybrid*, by Nikki Giovanni; and *Who Asked You?*, by Terry McMillan, are published. The activist group Black Lives Matter is established.

2014

Black Girl Dreaming, by Jacqueline Woodson, and *Citizen: An American Lyric*, by Claudia Rankine, are published. Rankine receives the Jackson Poetry Prize, and *Citizen: An American Lyric* receives National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry, the NAACP Image Award, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, and the PEN Open Book Award. Maya Angelou and Amiri Baraka die.

2015

Between the World and Me, by Ta-Nehisi Coates; *God Help the Child*, by Toni Morrison; *The Sellout*, by Paul Beatty; and *How to Be Drawn*, by Terrance Hayes, are published.

2016

Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*, Jacqueline Woodson's *Another Brooklyn*, and Rita Dove's *Collected Poems 1974–2004* are published. Margo Jefferson receives the National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography for *Negroland*.

2017

Loving Day, a satirical novel by Mat Johnson; *Difficult Women*, a collection of stories

by Roxane Gay; and *The Fire This Time*, by Jesmyn Ward, are published. Colson Whitehead receives the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction for *The Underground Railroad*, and Jesmyn Ward receives the National Book Award for Fiction for *Sing, Unburied, Sing*. Tracy K. Smith named Poet Laureate of the United States.

2018

An American Marriage, by Tayari Jones, is published, as is *Barracoon: The Story of the*

Last “Black Cargo,” a previously unpublished book by Zora Neale Hurston. Former first lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, publishes *Becoming*.

2019

Monument: Poems New and Selected, by Natasha Trethewey; *John Woman*, by Walter Mosley; *Bivouac*, by Kwame Dawes; and *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*, by Henry Louis Gates Jr., are published.

Dawn (1940); columns for the *Chicago Defender* (1945–1948); *Encyclopedia of the Negro and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (1945); *The World and Africa* (1947); *The Ordeal of the Mansart* (1957); and *Black Flame* (1957). He began work on the *Encyclopedia Africana* project in 1961.

David Levering Lewis published a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Du Bois in 2009 (Lewis).

Imelda Hunt

See also: Harlem Renaissance; Protest Literature; Spirituals.

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and the Ambivalence of Assimilation (New York: Allen Lane, 1993); Robert Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Gerald Horne and Mary Young, *W.E.B. Du Bois: An Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001); Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: a Biography 1868–1963* (New York: Holt, 2009); Dale Peterson, “Notes from the Underworld: Dostoyevsky, Du Bois, and the Discovery of Ethnic Soul,” *Massachusetts Review* 35 (Summer 1994), 225–247; John P. Pittman, “Double Consciousness,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [digital], March 21, 2016: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/double-consciousness/> (accessed 2019); Arnold Rampersad, *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: Schocken, 1990).

Dunbar, Paul Laurence (1872–1906)

Poet, essayist, fiction writer, playwright, and songwriter. Paul Laurence Dunbar was the first African American poet to gain national acclaim before the Harlem Renaissance. He was born in Dayton, Ohio, to former Kentucky slaves, Matilda and Joshua Dunbar. His father escaped slavery by fleeing to freedom in Canada, then returned to the United States and joined the Massachusetts 55th Regiment and the 5th Massachusetts Colored Cavalry during the Civil War. Matilda, a widow with two sons, was freed after the Civil War. During Dunbar’s childhood years, his father told him plantation stories, and his mother recited poetry to him. Although Dunbar himself had not been enslaved, he interacted with the last generation of African Americans who were slaves. This early influence shaped his renowned Southern plantation Negro dialect poems. At age six he composed his first

poem (Cunningham, 10). In developing his own poetic voice, Dunbar read the works of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Keats, and Alfred Lord Tennyson. His mother supported Dunbar throughout his writing career and ensured that he received his education, despite the family's poverty. The only African American student at Dayton Central High, Dunbar excelled in academics and extracurricular activities. He served as editor of the school's newspaper, was president of the Literary Society, and was a member of the debating team. He and a classmate, Orville Wright, edited a short-lived community Black newspaper, the *Dayton Tattler*.

After he graduated from high school in 1891, racial discrimination prevented Dunbar from attending college. He took a job in Dayton's Callahan Building as an elevator operator. When he wasn't running the elevator, he wrote poetry. He also published essays in local newspapers and magazines. Dunbar became locally known after James Newton Mathews invited him to recite his poetry at the Western Association of Writers yearly meeting in Dayton. Financial backing from Mathews allowed Dunbar to publish his first book of poetry, *Oak and Ivy*, in 1893. Also that year, he attended the World's Columbian Exposition, worked as a clerk for the Haitian Pavilion, and met Frederick Douglass. Douglass referred to Dunbar as "one of the sweetest songsters his race has produced of whom I hope great things" (Cunningham, 105).

In 1895, Dunbar moved to Toledo, Ohio, with the help of a psychiatrist, Dr. H. A. Tobey, and a lawyer, Charles Thatcher, both fans of his work. They arranged opportunities for Dunbar to recite his poems publicly, and they financially backed his second book, *Majors and Minors* (1896). The "majors" were Dunbar's poems written in

Standard English verse, while his "minors" were poems written in Southern plantation Negro dialect. "*Majors and Minors* [became] the most notable collection of poems ever issued by a Negro in the United States" (Brawley, 40). During this time, Dunbar began corresponding with Alice Ruth Moore, a light-skinned teacher and writer from New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1897, he traveled to London on a poetry recitation tour. Upon returning to the United States, he married Alice and worked as a reading room assistant in the Library of Congress until 1898. However, Dunbar's health declined, possibly because of exposure to dust while working in the library. He developed tuberculosis and drank alcohol to try to cure it. From 1898 to 1900, he collaborated with Will Cook on Black musical plays. He separated from Alice in 1902 and continued to write until his death in 1906.

A versatile writer, Dunbar published short stories, novels, theatrical contributions, song lyrics, and articles. His novels include *Folks from Dixie* (1898), *Sport of the Gods* (1902), *The Strength of Gideon & Other Stories* (1900), and *The Fanatics* (1901). His theatrical contributions include *Clorindy, or the Origin of the Cakewalk* (1898) and *In Dahomey: A Negro Musical Comedy* (1902). An edition of his *Complete Stories* was published in 2005.

Dunbar wrote two kinds of poetry. In one he replicated African American vernacular or Black dialect; these poems, many of them comic, were especially popular with White readers (see Harrell and Nurhussein in Resources at the end of this entry). In the other he wrote in Standard English; many of these poems have joined the canon of lyric poetry in English. "We Wear the Mask," perhaps his most famous poem, is widely reprinted in anthologies and

concerns African Americans' need to present a "mask" to the dominant White culture so as to survive. "The Haunted Oak" is a powerful poem about lynching.

It was rare during this time for a Black writer to achieve notoriety in such mainstream magazines as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*. Dunbar marked a place in African American history by being the first Black author to be read by Blacks and Whites before the Harlem Renaissance. Prominent White author and literary critic William Dean Howells praised *Majors and Minors* in an 1896 book review in *Harper's Weekly*. Although this review propelled Dunbar into national recognition, his work, specifically the dialect pieces, garnered both acclaim and criticism. Blacks accused him of conceding to racist ideals in his dialect pieces (Harrell, Nurhussein). He often struggled between being a martyr for the African American plight and being accepted by White audiences. His reputation as a writer in the tradition of lyric poetry in English, however, has overtaken his reputation as a dialect poet.

Shawntaye M. Scott

See also: Dialect Poetry; Lyric Poetry; Vernacular.

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