

Contents

	Introduction	19
<i>place of origin</i>		
North Carolina	<i>George Moses Horton, 1797-1883</i>	
	On liberty and slavery	24
	The poet's feeble petition	26
Massachusetts	<i>William Edward Burghardt DuBois, 1868-1963</i>	
	The song of the smoke	29
Florida	<i>James Weldon Johnson, 1871-1938</i>	
	The white witch	33
Ohio	<i>Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1872-1906</i>	
	An ante-bellum sermon	37
	The haunted oak	40
	We wear the mask	43
	<i>Bruce Grit</i>	
	The black man's burden	44
Alabama	<i>James Edward McCall, 1880-1963</i>	
	The new Negro	46
Ohio	<i>Raymond Garfield Dandridge, 1882-1930</i>	
	Time to die	48
Illinois	<i>Fenton Johnson, 1888-1958</i>	
	Tired	50
Jamaica	<i>Claude McKay, 1889-1948</i>	
	The tropics in New York	53
	The Harlem dancer	54
	Outcast	54
D. of Columbia	<i>Jean Toomer, 1894-1967</i>	
	Reapers	56
	November cotton flower	57
Missouri	<i>Melvin Beaunorus Tolson, 1898-1966</i>	
	Mu (from Harlem gallery)	59

8 Contents

D. of Columbia	<i>Sterling Brown, 1901</i> Old Lem 66 An old woman remembers 68 Long gone 70
Missouri	<i>Langston Hughes, 1902-67</i> My people 75 The Negro speaks of rivers 76 Red silk stockings 76 Lennox Avenue mural 77 Junior addict 81
Louisiana	<i>Arna Bontemps, 1902</i> Southern mansion 84 A black man talks of reaping 85
Jamaica	<i>Philip M. Sherlock, 1902</i> Jamaican fisherman 87
New York	<i>Countee Cullen, 1903-46</i> Heritage 90 Caprice 94
Jamaica	<i>Roger Mais, 1905-55</i> Men of ideas 96
D. of Columbia	<i>Waring Cuney, 1906</i> No images 100 Hard time blues 100
Kentucky	<i>Margaret Danner</i> The slave and the iron lace 103
Jamaica	<i>Vera Bell</i> Ancestor on the auction block 104
Mississippi	<i>Richard Wright, 1908-60</i> Between the world and me 109 In the falling snow 111
Barbados	<i>Peter Blackman, 1909</i> My song is for all men 112
Tobago	<i>Harold M. Telemaque, 1910</i> In our land 114

9 Contents

Nigeria	<i>Dennis C. Osadebay</i> , 1911 Who buys my thoughts 117 Young Africa's plea 118
Ghana	<i>Israel Kafu Hoh</i> , 1912 Baby 119
Michigan	<i>Robert Hayden</i> , 1913 Locus 123 A ballad of remembrance 124 Middle Passage 126 The ballad of Nat Turner 132 Frederick Douglass 135
Ghana	<i>R. E. G. Armattoo</i> , 1913-53 Deep down the blackman's mind 137
Guyana	<i>A. J. Seymour</i> , 1914 First of August 139
D. of Columbia	<i>Dudley Randall</i> , 1914 The southern road 143
New York	<i>Owen Dodson</i> , 1914 For Edwin R. Embree 145
Washington	<i>Ray Durem</i> , 1915-63 To all the nice white people 149 The saddest tears . . . 150 Broadminded 151
Alabama	<i>Margaret Walker</i> , 1915 For my people 153 For Mary McLeod Bethune 155
Tobago	<i>E. M. Roach</i> , 1915 I am the archipelago 156
Ohio	<i>Samuel W. Allen</i> , 1917 The staircase 160 Divestment 161
Kansas	<i>Gwendolyn Brooks</i> , 1917 Jessie Mitchell's mother 164 Malcolm X 165

Illinois	<i>Myron O'Higgins, 1918</i> Vaticide 167
South Africa	<i>Peter Abrahams, 1919</i> Fancies idle (iii) 170
South Africa	<i>Ezekiel Mphahlele, 1919</i> Death 172
Nebraska	<i>Lance Jeffers, 1919</i> Myself 178 That woman rebuked and scorned 178
Nebraska	<i>James A. Emanuel, 1921</i> Black humor 181
Nigeria	<i>Gabriel Okara, 1921</i> You laughed and laughed and laughed 182 The mystic drum 184
Jamaica	<i>Basil C. McFarlane, 1922</i> Poem for my country 186
Guyana	<i>Jan Carew, 1922</i> Africa - Guyana 189
Sierra Leone	<i>Abioseh Nicol, 1924</i> The meaning of Africa 192
Rhodesia	<i>Dennis Brutus, 1924</i> Somehow we survive 196 The sounds begin again 196
Louisiana	<i>Bob Kaufman, 1925</i> Heavy water blues 199 Unhistorical events 201
Mississippi	<i>John A. Williams, 1925</i> Safari west 204
Ohio	<i>Russell Atkins, 1927</i> Narrative 207 Christophe 208
St Vincent	<i>Ellsworth McG. Keane, 1927</i> Fragments and patterns 209

II Contents

Guyana	<i>Martin Carter</i> , 1927 Death of a slave 215 Ancestor Accabreh 216
Ghana	<i>Ellis Ayitey Komey</i> , 1927 The damage you have done 221
Trinidad	<i>John La Rose</i> , 1927 Not from here 224
Ghana	<i>Kwesi Brew</i> , 1928 A plea for mercy 226 Ancestral faces 226
Illinois	<i>Ted Joans</i> , 1928 Je suis un homme 229
Ohio	<i>Bobb Hamilton</i> , 1928 Brother Harlem Bedford Watts 233
St Lucia	<i>Derek Walcott</i> , 1930 The glory trumpeter 240 The royal palms 241 Tales of the islands (v & vi) 243
Barbados	<i>Edward Brathwaite</i> , 1930 The making of the drum 246 Jou'vert (i) 250 Folkways (i) 252 Tom 255
Malawi	<i>David Rubadiri</i> , 1930 Thoughts after work 258
South Africa	<i>Mazisi Kunene</i> , 1930 Avenge 260 Elegy 261
Nigeria	<i>Chinua Achebe</i> , 1930 Mango seedling 264 <i>Sun-Ra</i> The visitation 266
Massachusetts	<i>Lloyd Addison</i> , 1931 After MLK 268

Tennessee	<i>Calvin C. Hernton, 1932</i> An unexpurgated communiqué 272 The coming of Chronos (ii, iii & iv) 274
Ghana	<i>Frank Kobina Parkes, 1932</i> African heaven 282 A thought 286
Nigeria	<i>Christopher Okigbo, 1932-67</i> Limits (i-iii, vi, viii, x & xi) 287 Elegy for slit-drum 294
Gambia	<i>Lenrie Peters, 1932</i> We have come home 297
Illinois	<i>Eugene Perkins, 1932</i> Diary of a Bronzeville boy 300
South Africa	<i>Dollar Brand</i> Africa: music (iii-vi) 303
Mississippi	<i>Etheridge Knight, 1933</i> The idea of ancestry 306 He sees through stone 307 For black poets who think of suicide 309
New Jersey	<i>Conrad Kent Rivers, 1933-68</i> The still voice of Harlem 311 Watts 311 For Richard Wright 312
New York	<i>Audre Lorde, 1934</i> Coal 313
Nigeria	<i>'Wole Soyinka, 1934</i> Abiku 316 The immigrant 317
Arkansas	<i>Henry Dumas, 1934-68</i> Knock on wood 320
North Carolina	<i>A. B. Spellman, 1934</i> Untitled 324

13 Contents

New Jersey	<i>Ameer Baraka</i> , 1934 Notes for a speech 328 A poem some people will have to understand 330 I substitute for the dead lecturer 331 Beautiful black women 332 For Tom Postell, dead black poet 333
Ohio	<i>Ed Spriggs</i> , 1934 For black Newark 336 Pending solemnization 337
Pennsylvania	<i>Ed Bullins</i> , 1935 When slavery seems sweet 340
Ghana	<i>Kofi Awoonor</i> , 1935 My god of songs was ill 342 I heard a bird cry 343
New Mexico	<i>Jay Wright</i> , 1935 An invitation to Madison County 346
Nigeria	<i>John Pepper Clark</i> , 1935 Ivbie (i, ii, iv & v) 353 Abiku 359
Nigeria	<i>Frank Aig-Imoukhuede</i> , 1935 One wife for one man 362
Alabama	<i>Sonia Sanchez</i> , 1935 Indianapolis / summer / 1969 / poem 365 TCB 367 Right on: white America 368
Michigan	<i>James Washington Thompson</i> , 1935 You are alms 370
Cameroun	<i>Mbella Sonne Dipoko</i> , 1936 Our destiny 372 Exile 377
Nigeria	<i>Okogbule Wonodi</i> , 1936 Laments for 'Shola 378

14 Contents

Illinois	<i>Gerald Jackson</i> , 1936 The song 381
Georgia	<i>Clarence Major</i> , 1936 For her, the design 385 Author of an attitude 388
Jamaica	<i>Lebert Bethune</i> , 1937 A juju of my own 389 To strike for night 390
Georgia	<i>Larry Neal</i> , 1937 The summer after Malcolm 393 Malcolm X - an autobiography 394
Alabama	<i>Julia Fields</i> , 1938 For Malcolm X 398
Tennessee	<i>Ishmael Reed</i> , 1938 Catechism of d neo-american hoodoo church (iii-vi) 401
West Virginia	<i>Norman Jordan</i> , 1938 The second plane 403 Black warrior 404
South Africa	<i>Keorapetse Kgositsile</i> , 1938 Like the tide: cloudward 406 My people no longer sing 407
Maryland	<i>Sam Cornish</i> , 1938 Harriet Tubman 409 Lord while I sow earth 409
Kenya	<i>Joseph Waiguru</i> , 1939 The round mud hut 411
Mississippi	<i>Al Young</i> , 1939 Birthday poem 414
Arkansas	<i>Julius Lester</i> , 1939 On the birth of my son, Malcolm Coltrane 417
New York	<i>N. H. Pritchard</i> , 1939 O 419

15 Contents

Jamaica	<i>Dennis Scott, 1939</i> Epitaph 422
Tennessee	<i>Ahmed Alhamisi, 1940</i> Look for me dear mother 425
North Carolina	<i>Carl Wendell Hines, 1940</i> Now that he is safely dead 431 <i>Fred Bradford</i> Death of a nigger 433 <i>Alice H. Jones</i> For Sapphire, my sister 435 <i>Barbara Malcom</i> Bedtime story 437 The men are all away 438
Nigeria	<i>Yetunde Esan</i> Ololu - an Egungun 440
Jamaica	<i>Eseoghene Barrett, 1941</i> In my eye and heart and all about the same blood 443
Trinidad	<i>Frank John, 1941</i> Down 447
Arkansas	<i>Don L. Lee, 1942</i> Nigerian unity 451 To be quicker 456 Big momma 457
Pennsylvania	<i>F. J. Bryant jnr, 1942</i> Patience of a people 460
New York	<i>David Henderson, 1942</i> Pentecostal Sunday 463 Among the whites 466
South Africa	<i>Arthur K. Nortje, 1942</i> Autopsy 468
Ghana	<i>Christina Ama Ata Aidoo, 1942</i> Poem 472

16 Contents

Tennessee	<i>Nikki Giovanni, 1943</i> Nikki-Rosa 475 My poem 476 The geni in the jar 478
Illinois	<i>Carolyn M. Rodgers</i> Jesus was crucified 481 It is deep 483
Sierra Leone	<i>Mukhtarr Mustapha, 1943</i> Dalabani 487 Gbassay - 'blades in regiment' 491
Pennsylvania	<i>Ron Welburn, 1944</i> Wayman, as a driven star 493
California	<i>Marvin X, 1944</i> A soul on ice 497 The origin of blackness 498 <i>Charles Cobb, 1944</i> L.A.: the order of things (iv) 500 Mekonsippi 502
Indiana	<i>D. L. Graham, 1944</i> A portrait of Johnny Doller 503 Tony get the boys 505
California	<i>Stanley Crouch, 1945</i> Up on the spoon 507
California	<i>Leumas Sirrah, 1947</i> Me - I'm black 510 Day off the street 511
Wyoming	<i>Johnie Scott, 1948</i> Chaos in a ghetto alley 513
D. of Columbia	<i>D. T. Ogilvie</i> Black thoughts 515
Puerto Rico	<i>Victor Hernandez Cruz, 1949</i> Two way 516

17 *Contents*

Tennessee	<i>Musu Ber</i> , 1950	
	Peaches	519
	Alphabetical Index	529
	Geographical Index	535
	Acknowledgements	541