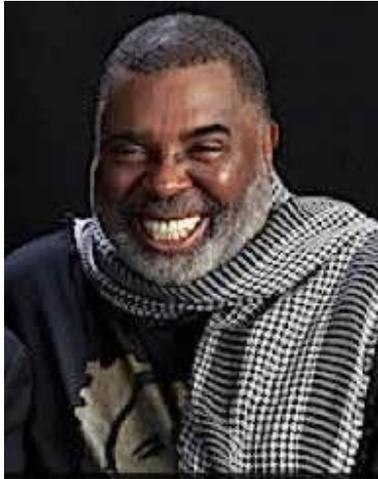


The Poets



We are supremely honored to have the privilege to assemble this collection of poets from throughout Pan Africa and the Afro-Asian-Indigenous world. We are simply elated to present a variety of poetic expressions from North American Africans of every region. We think the reader shall find what Diop called the Cultural Unity of Africa, a kind of basic mythological order in the deep structure of the poems, expressing the eternal unity of a people, no matter their post traumatic slavery stress syndrome. We see the ancestors, the gods, the living and yet unborn are represented widely by poets from Africa, the Caribbean or America, suggesting the long held notion that African survivals are alive and well, not only in the mythology but psycholinguistics as well.

Concerns include the necessity of calling upon the ancestors and gods, the election of Obama, the continued contradictions of the democratic society in America and the emerging democracies in Africa. Ancestor Emmitt Till is called upon by several poets, including Al Young, Opal Palmer Adisa and others. Shaggy Flores mentioned Till and other tragic heroes of our liberation struggle.

Marvin X and Kalamu Ya Salaam mention the sheroe Dessie X. Woods or Rashidah Muhammad, the valiant woman who killed her rapist in the south, emancipated from prison; she went north and lived an activist life until her transition. The people of Oakland honored her with a street naming.

In dedicating this issue to the Journal of Black Poetry, we were conscious of Dingane's effort to make poetry a tool of communication for liberation. The general theme is Pan Africanism, but we wanted to continue his concept letting a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend, in the words of Mao. The reader will see this in the poetry and in the dialogue on the poetic mission, including Haki Madhubuti's statement.

We think the poets represent an inter-generational collection, although we invited hip hop poets and spoken word artists to represent themselves. We certainly didn't want this issue to be a collection of senior citizen poetry. For sure, we think we have gathered together some of the very best writers in America and Pan Africa. The USA regional representation should be balanced enough to see regional and national concerns and rhythms.

We thank Itibari M. Zulu, Senior Editor of the Journal of Pan African Studies for allowing us to edit this issue. It is indeed a labor of love. We also thank all the poets who answered our call. Those who were rejected or who sent poems that may have gotten lost in traffic, please accept our apology but keep on keepin on.

Let us close with acknowledgment of persons who recruited poets for this issue, especially Louis Reyes Rivera, Bruce George, Gwendolyn Mitchell, Eugene Redmond, Muhammida El Muhajir and Tony Medina. Salaam to my associate guest editors, Ramal Lamar and Ptah Allah El. They gave me an oral reading of the material, helped make selections and helped keep me focused on Pan Africanism as the general theme, since they are the next generation of Pan African scholars and poets.

-- Marvin X