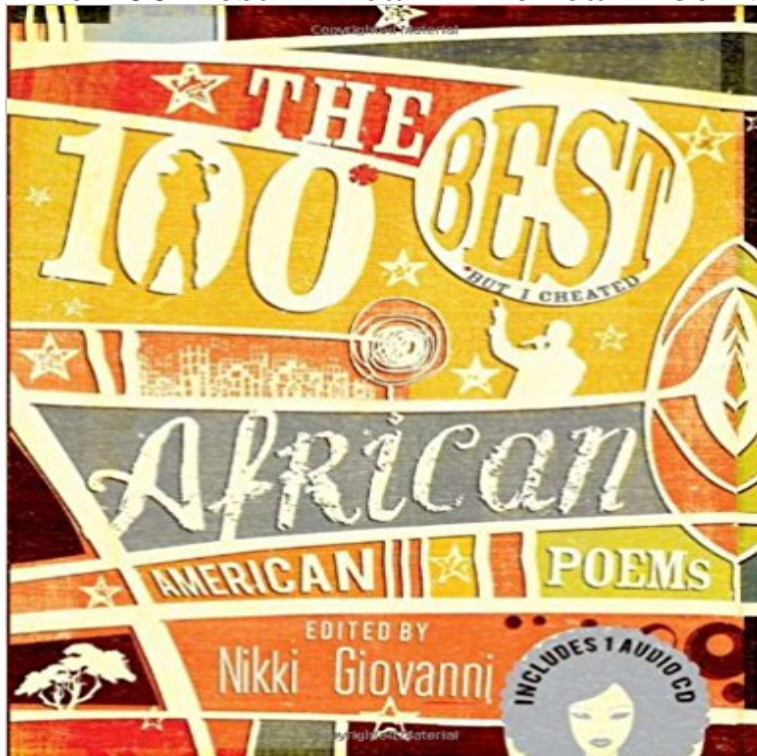


The 100 Best African American Poems



Hear voices contemporary and classic as 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. Out of necessity, Giovanni admits she cheats a little, selecting a larger, less round number. The result is this 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. These magnetic poems are 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. African American poems are like all other poems: beautiful, loving, provocative, thoughtful, and all those other adjectives I can think of. Poems know no boundaries. They, like all Earth citizens, were born in some country, grew up on some culture, then in their blooming became citizens of the Universe. Poems fly from heart to heart, head to head, to whisper a dream, to share a condolence, to congratulate, and to vow forever. The poems are true. They are translated and they are celebrated. They are sung, they are recited, they are delightful. They are neglected. They are forgotten. They are put away. Even in their fallow periods they sprout images. And fight to be revived. And spring back to life with a bit of sunshine and caring. -Nikki Giovanni

Read Gwendolyn Brooks Kwame Alexander Tupac Shakur Langston Hughes Mari Evans Kevin Young Asha Bandele Amiri Baraka Hear Ruby Dee Novella Nelson Nikki Giovanni Elizabeth Alexander Marilyn Nelson Sonia Sanchez And many, many, more Nikki Giovanni is an award-winning poet, writer, and activist.

She is the author of more than two dozen books for adults and children, including *Bicycles*, *Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea*, *Racism 101*, *Blues: For All the Changes*, and *Love Poems*. Her children's book-plus-audio compilation *Hip Hop Speaks to Children* was awarded the NAACP Image Award. Her children's book *Rosa*, a picture-book retelling of the Rosa Parks story, was a Caldecott Honor Book and winner of the Coretta Scott King Award. Both books were New York Times bestsellers. Nikki is a Grammy nominee for her spoken-word album *The Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection* and has been nominated for the National Book Award. She has been voted Woman of the Year by *Essence*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Ladies Home Journal*. She is a University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech, where she teaches writing and literature.

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