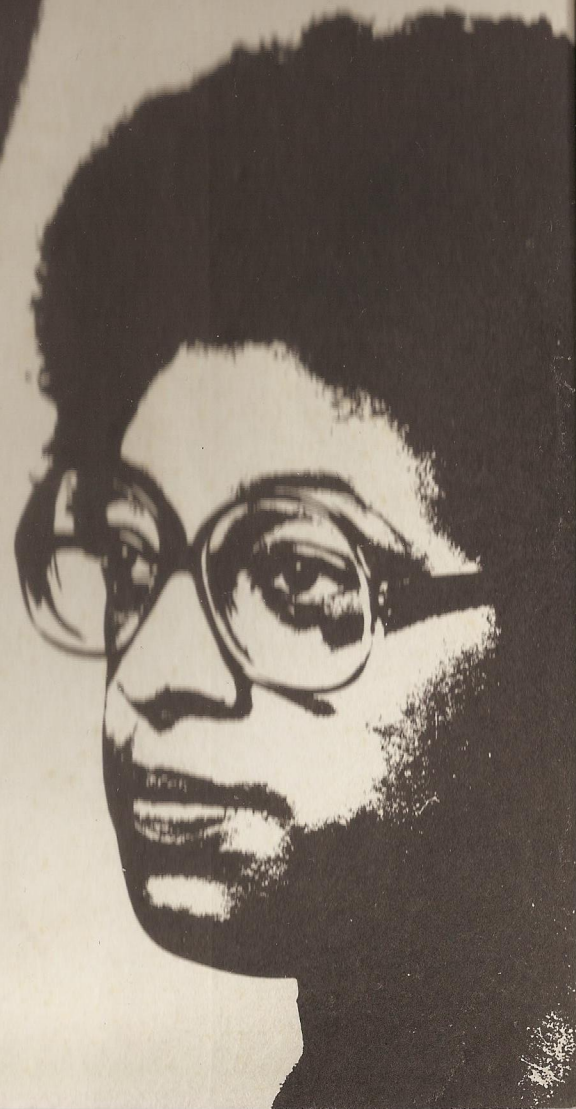


An Anthology of  
Black Women  
Poets of  
Oregon





AN ANTHOLOGY OF  
BLACK WOMEN POETS  
OF OREGON

Edited by  
WILLIAM A. LITTLE

Center for Black Studies  
Portland State University  
Portland, Oregon

This publication is made possible  
by a grant from Maurice Lucas.



## Copyright and Acknowledgement

Lois M. Lewis Berry--for "One Line," "Four Lines," "No Title," "Ephemeral Ecstasy," from the book, LOOKING GLASS THOUGHTS, copyright, 1976 by Lois M. Berry and Lawrence Berry; and for "Education for What," and "Greedy," from the book BLACK RETROSPECT, copyright 1977 by Lois M. Berry and Lawrence Berry; and for "When I Do and Don't," "Spanish Harlem," "Quiet Touch," and "Direction," from the book BOOK-3 POEMS, copyright 1978 by Lois M. Berry. Reprinted by permission of Lois M. Berry and Lawrence Berry.

The Portland Review, Portland State University and J. M. Gates--for "Mirrors of Living (1)," "Mirrors of Living (2)," "The Fisherman's Struggle (1)," and "The Fisherman's Struggle (2)," all copyrights 1974 by J. M. Gates. First published by the Portland Review, Portland State University, Vol. 20, No. 1, April 1974. Reprinted by permission of J. M. Gates and The Portland Review.

Copyright (C) 1980 by Portland State University

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without permission in writing from the original copyright holders.



## Introduction

This anthology was produced for two reasons. The first of which is the need to encourage and develop Black writers in the Northwest, as well as the rest of the country. Secondly, the anthology allows Black women the opportunity to express themselves.

This anthology is significantly different from other anthologies of Black writers, in that its focus is on the Black Experience of the Pacific Northwest. This region has suffered in the area of developing Black writers and poets.

The center of Black aesthetics in the Pacific Northwest is in Seattle with writers such as Colleen McElroy, Mona Lisa Savoy, and Mary Snow, occupying the forefront of Black female writers in the region. However, there are other individuals aspiring to be writers and poets who reside outside of the metropolitan area of Seattle. The intent of this anthology is to provide those writers with an opportunity to present their work to the public.

This anthology provides three previously unknown writers, Alice Marie Anfield, Katrina Cathcart, and C. Maxey Easterly, an



outlet to present a selection of their works to the public. In addition, two individuals that have published extensively; Lois M. Berry and J. M. Gates contribute representative samples of their work.

The poems speak to you in a way that mirrors the life of these women living in the Portland environment. The poems sing with rugged language, as dogs bark in the night. The outcry has not been heard because the town sleeps. Yet, the pain and hurt still is consumed and endured, and the Black woman's struggle continues. Examples of this are expressed in Alice Marie Anfield's words, "There are many things I wish to attain"; in Lois Berry's words, "Some folks got everything, but dey wants moe"; in Katrina Cathcart's words, "Why do I appear so confused to you"; in C. Maxey Easterly's words, "We can be completely surrounded by people, yet very lonely"; and in J. M. Gates' words, "Seeking searching answers".

All of these poems are asking questions relative to women in a universal sense, and Black women in a specific sense.

William A. Little  
Editor

## Contents

### ALICE MARIE ANFIELD

Mrs. Jones Is Coming to Visit.....	2
Untitled.....	3
To My Poem.....	4
Lisa Ree.....	5
An I Smart, Tree Smart, Conversation.....	6
There Are Times.....	7
I Find Myself.....	8
The Quilt.....	9

### LOIS M. BERRY

Greedy.....	11
When I Do and Don't.....	13
Education For What.....	14
Spanish Harlem.....	15
Untitled.....	16
Four Lines.....	17
Direction.....	18
Untitled.....	19
One Line.....	20
Ephemeral Ecstasy.....	21
Quiet Touch.....	22

### KATRINA R. CATHCART

Woman Writing.....	24
A Walk to the Beach.....	25
Black Section of Town.....	26
Thinkin.....	27
Change.....	28
A Rat.....	29
Three Wishes.....	30
Rags or Riches.....	31



# Alice Marie Anfield

## C. MAXEY EASTERLY

You Spoke To Me.....	33
Somethin' We Did.....	34
Sharing.....	35
What Is It About You.....	36
Changes.....	37
Recall.....	38
Us.....	39
Checking On My Baby.....	40
Times.....	41
Message to My Friend.....	42

## J. M. GATES

Prelude.....	44
The Dilemma of Left-Out.....	45
The Diameter of Disappearing Landmarks....	46
Extensions With An Unintentional Antiphonal Response.....	47
Mirrors of Living (1).....	48
Mirrors of Living (2).....	49
The Fisherman's Struggle (1).....	50
The Fisherman's Struggle (2).....	51

Ms. Anfield is a native Portlander who enjoys the busy life of a mother and student. She is currently beginning her third year of study at Portland State University, working towards a degree in Sociology, Secondary Education, and a Certificate in Black Studies. Her earliest education experience was one in which there was a great emphasis on language arts and music, consequently, she enjoys self-expression through both writing and singing. Particularly through poetry she shares her interpretation of life experiences with others.

This is her first published work.



## Mrs. Jones Is Coming to Visit

This old nosey lady, Mrs. Jones  
Who lived down the street  
Would take a notion to drop in  
When you weren't expecting her,

We used to see her coming  
A block from the house,  
We would scurry home to clean up and dust  
We knew what kind of rumors Mrs. Jones spread.

The sound of her foot steps on the porch  
Could be heard throughout the house  
Her identifying smell accompanied her too,  
The smell of those onion sandwiches  
she always ate  
Made us kids throw up

She'd come in and sit down  
In Dad's favorite chair  
Like Queen Victoria  
And talk to us like she was a long, lost relative.

I "fixed" her good one day,  
When I saw her coming  
I picked out a sharp pine cone from the yard  
And put it in Dad's favorite chair,  
She sat on it, screamed and cursed  
And stomped out of the house.

She spread the worst rumors about us  
That you ever heard.  
One neighbor had heard that we had tried  
to kill Mrs. Jones.

She never came back.

Cleverly, I would stand innocently by Dad's chair  
And ask,  
"Why doesn't Mrs. Jones come to visit anymore?"

If anyone knew  
How much strength  
It took me  
Just to open my eyes  
They wouldn't believe it.

The pain I felt  
Caused my mind  
To play tricks on me  
But I knew what was real

I felt like I was dying  
So I sat up in bed,  
Smearred on some rouge,  
And put on some lipstick  
Because I didn't want to look like I was.

I smiled and pretended  
On the outside  
But inside I felt I was fading  
Like leftover flowers in the vase  
Near the empty hospital bed.



## To My Poem

Poem, I beg you to move with me now

Help me please, to get back

All that time has made me lack

All the space that's been left void

Help me fill, and leave me joyed

With lines, and rhymes

That move the stillest

Hearts and minds.

You, my poem, move with me now.

## Lisa Ree

Lisa Ree is a genuine genius.  
Testing things in this strange world  
By her own methods;  
Conceptualizing, logically conducting--  
A real Aristotle type.

She is a great discoverer.  
Traveling about as if a king  
Had commissioned her to find new lands.  
She opens passages, clears trails,  
She knows how to make her way.

She is a builder of empires  
Creating and mining resources  
And with expert skill, Lisa Ree  
Makes her cities rise, and fall  
And rise again.

Lisa Ree is the totality of beauty,  
With a magic that dances  
To a rhythm that only she knows.  
She grows as if time gave her his hands  
To run with.

Lisa Ree is pleasantly startling.  
I am amazed when I recall,  
I am in awe, as I watch this one--  
Who began her life--not long ago--  
Inside of me.



## An I Smart, Tree Smart, Conversation

I sey, "Mornin' tall tree."

Tree waves, "Mornin' short person."

I wondered, "What's it like to be so tall?"

Tree flaunts, "It's pretty nice."

I smart, "If I was as tall as you,  
I could be a tree."

Tree smarts,

Brushes hard,

and waves, "No, no, you could never be a  
tree, you could only be a  
tall person..."

## There Are Times

There are times when I don't

Want to live or die

So I turn inward

And cry myself to sleep

Which is the closest thing

to death without dying

And the closest thing

to life without living.



## I Find Myself

Sometimes I find myself  
Struggling so hard  
to attain something.

There are many things  
I wish to attain

But I've learned  
That it is not always  
Within the struggling  
That I attain them

It is during the calm  
and  
The Peace  
When I am at rest  
I realize  
I have already attained--  
Something.

## The Quilt

On cold, dreary nights  
I wrap myself in a quilt  
(Brought up north in a trunk)  
And feel the warmth  
That was stitched together  
By three generations  
Of beautifully worn hands.

I feel the love  
With which each piece of cloth  
Was chosen  
And patterned  
To show, a kind of,  
Even flow to life.

My eyes follow that flow,  
Through a spectrum of colors  
From sunlight to the darkest night,  
From red as blood to white as satin,  
Colors, revealing the experiences  
Of a different lifetime.

My eyes move on,  
Until they are caught  
On some strong-loose threads  
Left hanging--by the hope  
Of what was to be finished  
By the hands of those  
In future generations

Generations of those  
Who seek, and find a purpose  
Purpose in cold, dreary nights-  
Purpose even in a quilt-  
(Brought up north in a trunk)