Resource: African American Poetry: A Digital Anthology

URL: https://scalar.lehigh.edu/african-american-poetry-a-digital-anthology/index
(shortcut link: aapada.net)

Keywords: African American poetry, poetry, Harlem Renaissance, digital anthology

Resource created by: Dr. Amardeep Singh, Lehigh University

Introduction by: Tracy Fernandez Rysavy, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

About *African American Poetry: A Digital Anthology*:

African American Poetry: a Digital Anthology aims to provide access to a comprehensive collection of Black American poetry from the 1870 through the early Harlem Renaissance. The anthology contains poetry by celebrated Black poets like Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Jessie Fauset, as well as works by lesser-known writers, including Eloise Bibb and Sarah Collins Fernandis. The site also includes periodical poetry from foundational 20th-century African American magazines like *The Crisis, Opportunity, The Messenger,* and *Negro World*.

All of the works included on the site are in the public domain, organized chronologically and into helpful thematic tags, from works by LGBTQ+ writers to tribute poems for Frederick Douglass to poems focusing on motherhood and labor concerns. Project creator Dr. Amardeep Singh and

student collaborators from his digital-humanities classes have added helpful short essays and introductions where appropriate, as well as biographical author pages for each poet.

This robust, beautifully organized, and pedagogically useful site has been peer reviewed by the [Modnets group](#).

Background:

Dr. Amardeep Singh was inspired to start creating open-access, digital editions of works by early African American authors after he wanted to assign Claude McKay's *Harlem Shadows* to students in a transatlantic modernism course. He was dismayed to find that "there was no good digital edition of it available"—so he put his digital humanities students to work creating one. But the McKay problem was one he ran into repeatedly when it came to poetry by early Black American writers. While sites like Project Gutenberg and Hathi Trust hosted many other works by many of these poets, they were difficult to find and not categorized as he would have liked for his classes. That significant gap led him to create *African American Poetry: a Digital Anthology,* again with assistance from student collaborators.

The site maintains a focus on accessibility, pedagogical usefulness, and public/community access, and "is essentially an open access textbook, with a much more extensive selection, including many selections by poets who are fairly obscure."

Dr. Singh hopes that "by putting all of these materials together on a single site—a project somewhere between an 'anthology,' an 'archive' and a textual corpus—we [will] give readers new angles of approach to an important literary movement."