

**Thursday 2/1/18**

**Harlem**

Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore –  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over –  
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*

**Friday 2/2/18**

**We Real Cool**

Gwendolyn Brooks

THE POOL PLAYERS.

SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

We real cool. We

Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.

**Monday 2/5/18**

**my dream about time**

Lucille Clifton

a woman unlike myself is running  
down the long hall of a lifeless house  
with too many windows which open on  
a world she has no language for,  
running and running until she reaches  
at last the one and only door  
which she pulls open to find each wall  
is faced with clocks and as she watches  
all of the clocks strike

NO

**Tuesday 2/6/18**

**Advice**

Langston Hughes

Folks, I'm telling you,  
birthing is hard  
and dying is mean –  
so get yourself  
a little loving  
in between.

**Wednesday 2/7/18**

**Dawn Revisited**

Rita Dove

Imagine you wake up  
with a second chance: The blue jay  
hawks his pretty wares  
and the oak still stands, spreading  
glorious shade. If you don't look back,

the future never happens.

How good to rise in sunlight,  
in the prodigal smell of biscuits –  
eggs and sausage on the grill.

The whole sky is yours

to write on, blown open  
to a blank page. Come on,  
shake a leg! You'll never know  
who's down there, frying those eggs,  
if you don't get up and see.

**Thursday 2/8/18**

**The Fist**

Derek Walcott

The fist clenched round my heart  
loosens a little, and I gasp  
brightness; but it tightens  
again. When have I ever not loved  
the pain of love? But this has moved

past love to mania. This has the strong  
clench of the madman, this is  
gripping the ledge of unreason, before  
plunging howling into the abyss.

Hold hard then, heart. This way at least you live.

**Friday 2/9/18**

**After the Winter**

Claude McKay

Some day, when the trees have shed their leaves

    And against the morning's white

The shivering birds beneath the eaves

    Have sheltered for the night,

We'll turn our faces southward, love,

    Toward the summer isle

Where bamboos spire the shafted grove

    And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill

    Where towers the cotton tree,

And leaps the laughing crystal rill,

    And works the droning bee.

And we will build a cottage there

    Beside an open glade,

With black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near,

    And ferns that never fade.

**Monday 2/12/18**

**The Debt**

Paul Laurence Dunbar

This is the debt I pay  
Just for one riotous day,  
Years of regret and grief,  
Sorrow without relief.

Pay it I will to the end –  
Until the grave, my friend,  
Gives me a true release –  
Gives me the clasp of peace.

Slight was the thing I bought,  
Small was the debt I thought,  
Poor was the loan at best –  
God! but the interest!

**Tuesday 2/13/18**

**The Wise**

Countee Cullen

Dead men are wisest, for they know  
How far the roots of flowers go,  
How long a seed must rot to grow.

Dead men alone bear frost and rain  
On throbless heart and heatless brain,  
And feel no stir of joy or pain.

Dead men alone are satiate;  
They sleep and dream and have no weight,  
To curb their rest, of love or hate.

Strange, men should flee their company,  
Or think me strange who long to be  
Wrapped in their cool immunity.

**Wednesday 2/14/18**

**Poem for My Love**

June Jordan

How do we come to be here next to each other  
in the night

Where are the stars that show us to our love  
inevitable

Outside the leaves flame usual in darkness  
and the rain

falls cool and blessed on the holy flesh  
the black men waiting on the corner for  
a womanly mirage

I am amazed by peace

It is this possibility of you  
asleep

and breathing in the quiet air

**Thursday 2/15/18**

**Snake**

Langston Hughes

He glides so swiftly  
Back into the grass –  
Gives me the courtesy of road  
To let me pass,  
That I am half ashamed  
To seek a stone  
To kill him.

**Friday 2/16/18**

**The Dream Keeper**

Langston Hughes

Bring me all of your dreams,  
You dreamer,  
Bring me all your  
Heart melodies  
That I may wrap them  
In a blue cloud-cloth  
Away from the too-rough fingers  
Of the world.

**Tuesday 2/20/18**

**BLK History Month**

Nikki Giovanni

If Black History Month is not  
viable then wind does not  
carry the seeds and drop them  
on fertile ground  
rain does not  
dampen the land  
and encourage the seeds  
to root  
sun does not  
warm the earth  
and kiss the seedlings  
and tell them plain:  
You're As Good As Anybody Else  
You've Got A Place Here, Too

**Wednesday 2/21/18**

**Insomniac**

Maya Angelou

There are some nights when  
sleep plays coy,  
aloof and disdainful.  
And all the wiles  
that I employ to win  
its service to my side  
are useless as wounded pride,  
and much more painful.

**Thursday 2/22/18**

**Hanging Fire**

Audre Lorde

I am fourteen  
and my skin has betrayed me  
the boy I cannot live without  
still sucks his thumb  
in secret  
how come my knees  
always so ashy  
what if I die  
before morning  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

I have to learn how to dance  
in time for the next party  
my room is too small for me  
suppose I die before graduation  
they will sing sad melodies  
but finally  
tell the truth about me  
There is nothing I want to do  
and too much  
that has to be done  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

Nobody even stops to think  
about my side of it  
I should have been on Math Team  
my marks were better than his  
why do I have to be  
the one  
wearing braces  
I have nothing to wear tomorrow  
will I live long enough  
to grow up  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

**Friday 2/23/18**

**Storm Ending**

Jean Toomer

Thunder blossoms gorgeously above our heads,  
Great, hollow, bell-like flowers,  
Rumbling in the wind,  
Stretching clappers to strike our ears . . .  
Full-lipped flowers  
Bitten by the sun  
Bleeding rain  
Dripping rain like golden honey –  
And the sweet earth flying from the thunder.

**Monday 2/26/18**

**won't you celebrate with me**

Lucille Clifton

won't you celebrate with me  
what I have shaped into  
a kind of life? i had no model.  
born in babylon  
both nonwhite and woman  
what did i see to be except myself?  
i made it up  
here on this bridge between  
starshine and clay,  
my one hand holding tight  
my other hand; come celebrate  
with me that everyday  
something has tried to kill me  
and has failed.

**Tuesday 2/27/18**

**To America**

James Weldon Johnson

How would you have us, as we are?

Or sinking 'neath the load we bear?

Our eyes fixed forward on a star?

Or gazing empty at despair?

Rising or falling? Men or things?

With dragging pace or footsteps fleet?

Strong, willing sinews in your wings?

Or tightening chains about your feet?

**Wednesday 2/28/18**

**Three Modes of History and Culture**

Amiri Baraka

...

I think about a time when I will be relaxed.  
When flames and non-specific passion wear themselves  
away. And my eyes and hands and mind can turn  
and soften, and my songs will be softer  
and lightly weight the air.