ADVANCEDPLACEMENT*ENGLISH*

*Heart of Darkness*

POEMS

MAYA ANGELOU

*Africa* (1975)

|  |  |
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|  | Thus she had lain |
|  | sugar cane sweet |
|  | deserts her hair |
|  | golden her feet |
| 5 | mountains her breasts |
|  | two Niles her tears |
|  | Thus she has lain |
|  | Black through the years. |
|  | Over the white seas |
| 10 | rime white and cold |
|  | brigands ungentled |
|  | icicle bold |
|  | took her young daughters |
|  | sold her strong sons |
| 15 | churched her with Jesus |
|  | bled her with guns. |
|  | Thus she has lain. |
|  | Now she is rising |
|  | remember her pain |
| 20 | remember the losses |
|  | her screams loud and vain |
|  | remember her riches |
|  | her history slain |
|  | now she is striding |
| 28 | although she had lain. |

DEREK WALCOTT

*A Far Cry from Africa* (1962)

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|  | A wind is ruffling the tawny pelt |
|  | Of Africa. Kikuyu,” quick as flies, |
|  | Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt. |
|  | Corpses are scattered through a paradise. |
| 5 | Only the worm, colonel of carrion, cries: |
|  | Waste no compassion on these separate dead!” |
|  | Statistics justify and scholars seize |
|  | The salients of colonial policy. |
|  | What is that to the white child hacked in bed? |
| 10 | To savages, expendable as Jews? |
|  | Threshed out by beaters, 1 the long rushes break |
|  | In a white dust of ibises whose cries |
|  | Have wheeled since civilization’s dawn |
|  | From the parched river or beast-teeming plain. |
| 15 | The violence of beast on beast is read |
|  | As natural law, but upright man |
|  | Seeks his divinity by inflicting pain. |
|  | Delirious as these worried beasts, his wars |
|  | Dance to the tightened carcass of a drum, |
| 20 | While he calls courage still that native dread |
|  | Of the white peace contracted by the dead. |
|  | Again brutish necessity wipes its hands |
|  | Upon the napkin of a dirty cause, again |
|  | A waste of our compassion, as with Spain, |
| 28 | The gorilla wrestles with the superman. |
|  | I who am poisoned with the blood of both, |
|  | Where shall I turn, divided to the vein? |
|  | I who have cursed |
|  | The drunken officer of British rule, how choose |
| 30 | Between this Africa and the English tongue I love? |
|  | Betray them both, or give back what they give? |
|  | How can I face such slaughter and be cool? |
|  | How can I turn from Africa and live? |

PHYLLIS WHEATLEY

On Being Brought from Africa to America

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|  | ‘Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land, |
|  | Taught my benighted soul to understand |
|  | That there’s a God, that there’s a Saviour too: |
|  | Once I redemption neither sought nor knew. |
| 5 | Some view our sable race with scornful eye, |
|  | “Their colour is a diabolic die.” |
|  | Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,? |
|  | May be refin’d, and join th’ angelic train. |

JUNE JORDAN

Something Like a Sonnet for Phillis Miracle Wheatley

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|  | Girl from the realm of birds florid and fleet |
|  | flying full feather in far or near weather |
|  | Who fell to a dollar lust coffled like meat |
|  | Captured by avarice and hate spit together |
| 5 | Trembling asthmatic alone on the slave block |
|  | built by a savagery travelling by carriage |
|  | viewed like a species of flaw in the livestock |
|  | A child without safety of mother or marriage |
|  | Chosen by whimsy but born to surprise |
| 10 | They taught you to read but you learned how to write |
|  | Begging the universe into your eyes: |
|  | They dressed you in light but you dreamed with the night. |
|  | From Africa singing of justice and grace, |
|  | Your early verse sweetens the fame of our Race. |

LANGSTON HUGHES

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

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|  | I’ve known rivers: |
|  | I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins. |
|  | My soul has grown deep like the rivers. |
|  | I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young. |
| 5 | I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep. |
|  | I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it. |
|  | I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset. |
|  | I’ve known rivers: Ancient, dusky rivers. |
|  | My soul has grown deep like the rivers. |