

OBUROH ROLI HAZEL

For Her

A COMPILATION OF POETRY

BY DIFFERENT POETS

The Black Unicorn: Poems by Audre Lorde A Woman Speaks

Moon marked and touched by sun

my magic is unwritten

but when the sea turns back

it will leave my shape behind.

I seek no favor

untouched by blood

unrelenting as the curse of love

permanent as my errors

or my pride

I do not mix

love with pity

nor hate with scorn

and if you would know me

where the restless oceans pound.

I do not dwell

within my birth nor my divinities

who am ageless and half-grown

and still seeking

my sisters

witches in Dahomey

wear me inside their coiled cloths

as our mother did
mourning.

I have been woman
for a long time
beware my smile
I am treacherous with old magic
and the noon's new fury
with all your wide futures
promised
I am
woman
and not white.

Book: The Black Unicorn: Poems by Audre Lorde

Phenomenal Woman

BY MAYA ANGELOU

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.

I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,

They think I'm telling lies.

I say,

It's in the reach of my arms,

The span of my hips, The stride of my step, The curl of my lips.

I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman, That's me.

I walk into a room

Just as cool as you please, And to a man,

The fellows stand or

Fall down on their knees.

Then they swarm around me,

A hive of honey bees.

I say,

It's the fire in my eyes, And the flash of my teeth, The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.

I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered What they see in me.

They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.

When I try to show them, They say they still can't see.

I say,

It's in the arch of my back, The sun of my smile,

The ride of my breasts,

The grace of my style.

I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,

That's me.

Now you understand

Just why my head's not bowed.

I don't shout or jump about

Or have to talk real loud.

When you see me passing,

It ought to make you proud.

I say,

It's in the click of my heels, The bend of my hair, the palm of my hand, The
need for my care.

'Cause I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,

That's me.

Still I Rise

Maya Angelou - 1928-2014

You may write me down in history

With your bitter, twisted lies,

You may trod me in the very dirt

But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?

Why are you beset with gloom?

'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,

With the certainty of tides,

Just like hopes springing high,

Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?

Bowed head and lowered eyes?

Shoulders falling down like teardrops, Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?

Don't you take it awful hard

'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,

You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness, But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come as a surprise

That I dance like I've got diamonds At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide, Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.

[6/18, 2:52 PM] ❤️: 've got the children to tend The clothes to mend

The floor to mop

The food to shop

Then the chicken to fry

The baby to dry

I got company to feed

The garden to weed

I've got shirts to press

The tots to dress

The can to be cut

I gotta clean up this hut

Then see about the sick

And the cotton to pick.

Shine on me, sunshine

Rain on me, rain

Fall softly, dewdrops

And cool my brow again.

Storm, blow me from here

With your fiercest wind

Let me float across the sky

'Til I can rest again.

Fall gently, snowflakes

Cover me with white

Cold icy kisses and

Let me rest tonight.

Sun, rain, curving sky

Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone

Star shine, moon glow

You're all that I can call my own.

Power by Audrey Lorde

is being ready to kill

yourself

instead of your children.

I am trapped on a desert of raw gunshot wounds and a dead child dragging
his shattered black face off the edge of my sleep

blood from his punctured cheeks and shoulders is the only liquid for miles

and my stomach

churns at the imagined taste while

my mouth splits into dry lips

without loyalty or reason

thirsting for the wetness of his blood as it sinks into the whiteness

of the desert where I am lost

without imagery or magic

trying to make power out of hatred and destruction trying to heal my dying son with kisses only the sun will bleach his bones quicker.

A policeman who shot down a ten year old in Queens stood over the boy with his cop shoes in childish blood and a voice said "Die you little motherfucker" and there are tapes to prove it. At his trial this policeman said in his own defense "I didn't notice the size nor nothing else only the color". And

there are tapes to prove that, too.

Today that 37 year old white man

with 13 years of police forcing

was set free

by eleven white men who said they were satisfied justice had been done

and one Black Woman who said

"They convinced me" meaning

they had dragged her 4'10" black Woman's frame over the hot coals

of four centuries of white male approval until she let go

the first real power she ever had

and lined her own womb with cement

to make a graveyard for our children.

I have not been able to touch the destruction within me.

But unless I learn to use

the difference between poetry and rhetoric my power too will run corrupt
as poisonous mold or lie limp and useless as an unconnected wire and one
day I will take my teenaged plug and connect it to the nearest socket raping
an 85 year old white woman

who is somebody's mother

and as I beat her senseless and set a torch to her bed a greek chorus will
be singing in 3/4 time "Poor thing. She never hurt a soul. What beasts they
are."

BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS

Blackness

is a title,

is a preoccupation,

is a commitment Blacks
are to comprehend—
and in which you are
to perceive your Glory.

The conscious shout
of all that is white is
“It’s Great to be white.”

The conscious shout
of the slack in Black is
"It's Great to be white."

Thus all that is white
has white strength and yours.

The word Black
has geographic power,
pulls everybody in:
Blacks here—
Blacks there—
Blacks wherever they may be.

And remember, you Blacks, what they told you— remember your
Education:

“one Drop—one Drop
maketh a brand new Black.”

Oh mighty Drop.

_____And because they have given us kindly so many more of our people

Blackness

stretches over the land.

Blackness—

the Black of it,

the rust-red of it,

the milk and cream of it,

the tan and yellow-tan of it,

the deep-brown middle-brown high-brown of it, the “olive” and ochre of it
— Blackness

marches on.

The huge, the pungent object of our prime out-ride is to Comprehend,
to salute and to Love the fact that we are Black, which is our “ultimate
Reality,”

which is the lone ground

from which our meaningful metamorphosis, from which our prosperous
staccato, group or individual, can rise.

Self-shriveled Blacks.

Begin with gaunt and marvelous concession: YOU are our costume and our
fundamental bone.

All of you— you COLORED ones, you NEGRO ones, those of you who proudly cry

“I’m half INDIan”— those of you who proudly screech “I’VE got the blood of George WASHington in MY veins”

ALL of you— you proper Blacks, you half-Blacks, you wish-I-weren’t Blacks, Niggeroes and Niggerenes.

My grandmothers were strong.

They followed plows and bent to toil.

They moved through fields sowing seed.

The touched earth and grain grew.

They were full of sturdiness and singing.

My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers are full of memories Smelling of soap and onions and wet clay With veins rolling roughly over quick hands They have many clean words to day.

My grandmothers were strong.

Why am I not like they???

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.

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