



Collected Poems

By Robert Hayden

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An exquisite body of work celebrating the centennial of one of the most important African-American poets of the twentieth century.

Robert Hayden was one of the most important American poets of the twentieth century. He left behind an exquisite body of work, collected in this definitive edition, including *A Ballad of Remembrance*, *Words in the Mourning Time*, *The Night-Blooming Cereus*, *Angle of Ascent*, and *American Journal*, which was nominated for a National Book Award. Also included is an introduction by American poet Reginald Dwayne Betts, as well as an afterword by Arnold Rampersad that provides a critical and historical context. In Hayden's work the actualities of history and culture became the launching places for flights of imagination and intelligence. His voice—characterized by musical diction and an exquisite feeling for the formality of pattern—is a seminal one in American life and literature.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Published in honor of the centenary of Hayden's birth, this luminescent volume reaffirms the beauty and power of his poetry, from his 1962 collection, *A Ballad of Remembrance*, to *American Journal*, the last volume published before his death in 1980. As esteemed critic and biographer Arnold Rampersad (Ralph Ellison, 2007) writes in his afterword, Hayden gravitated to books as a poor foster child in Detroit, hampered by and bullied for his severe myopia. Initially inspired by Countee Cullen, he studied with Auden, and those two mentors represent the primary forces in Hayden's work: his profound soundings of African American history, his passion for the English language, and what Rampersad describes as his "transracial philosophy." Hayden addresses slavery with ringing empathy and protest in "Middle Passage" and "Runagate, Runagate," examines black stereotypes with poignant sharpness in "Aunt Jemima of the Ocean Waves," and pays tribute to Malcolm X. Hayden also writes flashing, sinuous, and spiritual lyrics about nature and views Americans from an extraterrestrial's investigative perspective. An enlightening and exciting reclamation of an essential American poet of suffering and radiance. --Donna Seaman

Review

"This may be the most addictive journalism book ever: dozens of glittering columns on topics Olympic and ordinary, most produced on deadline by a pantheon of outstanding writers, a collection that should squash any doubts that journalism should be literature. This luminescent volume reaffirms the beauty and power of his poetry... An enlightening and exciting reclamation of an essential American poet of suffering and radiance."

- **Booklist**

"When I read his poetry I know that I am in the presence of a man who honors language. His images give the reader a new experience of the world."

- **Julius Lester, *New York Times Book Review***

"Hayden was a remembrancer, a poet of faith and superb execution, and one of the best teachers by example one can find in the poetry of the twentieth century, or in any age. His words enhance and engage us as awakened selves, a nation in process, an abiding transcendent world voice."

- **Michael S. Harper**

About the Author

Robert Hayden received numerous awards including a Hopwood Award, the Grand Prize for Poetry at the First World Festival of Negro Arts, and the Russell Loines Award for distinguished poetic achievement from the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Frederick Glaysher studied writing under a private tutorial with Robert Hayden at the University of Michigan, from which he holds a bachelor's and a master's degree, the latter in English. The author and editor of several works, he edited Hayden's *Collected Prose* as well as the *Collected Poems*. Robert Hayden is a character in Glaysher's recently published epic poem, *The Parliament of Poets*, partly set on the moon, at the landing site of Apollo 11.

Reginald Dwayne Betts is a husband and father of two sons. As a poet, essayist and national spokesperson for the Campaign for Youth Justice, Betts writes and lectures about the impact of mass incarceration on American society. In 2011 Betts was awarded a Radcliffe Fellowship to Harvard University's Radcliffe

Institute of Advanced Studies. The author of the memoir, *A Question of Freedom* (Avery/Penguin 2009) and the collection of poetry, *Shahid Reads His Own Palm* (Alice James Books, 2010), Betts' work possesses a careful, complicated and often difficult-to-confront intimacy that challenges conventional ideas about crime, masculinity and redemption. In 2010 he was awarded an NAACP Image Award for *A Question of Freedom*, and a Soros Justice Fellowship to complete *The Circumference of a Prison*, a work of nonfiction exploring the criminal justice system's role in the every day lives of Americans who have not committed crimes.

Arnold Rampersad (Ph.D. Harvard) is the Sara Hart Kimball Professor in the Humanities, Emeritus, at Stanford University. He is co-editor (with Deborah E. McDowell) of *Slavery and the Literary Imagination*, and editor of the definitive *Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. He is the author of the two-volume biography *The Life of Langston Hughes*, *Jackie Robinson: A Biography*, and co-author (with Arthur Ashe) of *Days of Grace: A Memoir*. He is also editor of "The Harlem Renaissance."

Users Review

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