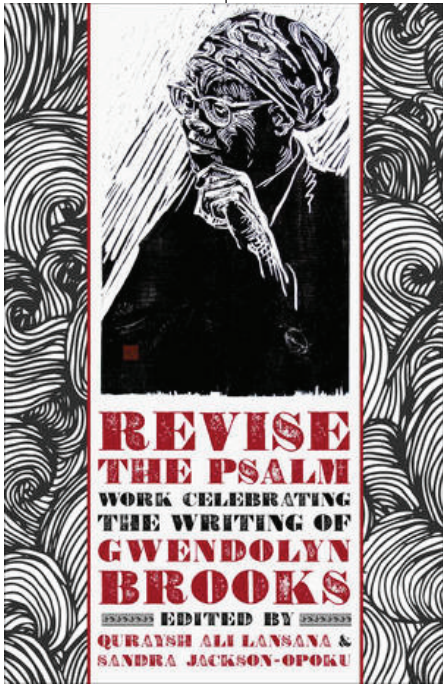


REVISE THE PSALM: WORK CELEBRATING THE WRITING OF GWENDOLYN BROOKS

edited by QURAYSH ALI LANSANA and SANDRA JACKSON-OPOKU



The year 2017 marks the 100th birthday of the late poet and cultural icon Gwendolyn Brooks. Brooks' depictions of poor and working-class African Americans provides insight into the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and her lens on the Great Migration, the era of Black codes, and the Black Power movement interprets and contextualizes current racial inequities and tensions. This collection of poetry, essays, and art inspired by the work of Miss Brooks celebrates her life, writing, and activism.

Read Gwendolyn Brooks' iconic poems, "To Black Women" and "The Mother."

1. In what ways do the messages in "To Black Women" speak specifically to the plight of African American women? In what ways do they refer to the plight of all women? What does Brooks mean by the line, "prevail across the editors of the world"?
2. How does Joyce Owen's image "More than Cool" speak to the poem, "To Black Women"?
3. In their introduction, the editors describe artistic and literary revision as "the process of 'talking back' to works that inspire, teach, challenge, and engage. Pick a piece from Part 1 and compare themes and issues explored in Brooks' "The Mother." What are some of the similarities? What are the distinctions?
4. A parody is a work in the style of another work. How does Angela Jackson's "The UnMother" function as a parody of Gwendolyn Brooks' "The Mother"?

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edited by Quraysh Ali
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ISBN: 9781940430867
release: January 2017
price: \$24.95
format: paperback
trim: 5.5 x 8.5
pages: 424

CURBSIDE SPLENDOR:

Curbside Splendor was conceived as a punk rock band in the early 90s. The band never really went anywhere, but Curbside was re-founded as an independent press in 2009. We publish fiction, non-fiction, and poetry from extraordinary voices, and seek work that explores hybrid forms and examines contemporary culture. In August 2016, we opened the Midwest's first indie-only bookstore, Curbside Books & Records, located in Chicago's South Loop.

Read Gwendolyn Brooks' poem, "To the Diaspora."

1. What is meant by the term diaspora? To what specific diaspora does Brooks refer?
2. To whom does the poem seem to be addressed? Where does Brooks urge this person(s) to search for the diaspora? What is the source of this person(s)' doubt?
3. How does Diane Glancy problematize the idea of home and journeys in her poem, "First Journeys"?
4. How does Glancy use the tricycle and the road as metaphors?
5. Analyze Adjoa Jackson Burrowes' image that was the cover art for "To Disembark (Revisited)." How does it speak to the themes of diaspora?

Read Brooks' poem "To an Old Black Woman, Homeless and Indistinct."

1. How does that work treat the subjects of women, old age, poverty and homelessness?
2. How do works like Kimberly A. Collins' "Washer Woman," Akua Lezli Hope's "Tax Deadline," Marilyn Nelson's "A Deaf Old Lady" and Devorah Major's "Street Woman" treat similar issues?

Read Brooks' poem, "The Life of Lincoln West." You could also choose selected chapters from the novella *Maud Martha*: "low yellow" and "if you're light and have long hair."

1. How do these works speak to assumptions about race, representations of the black body, and beauty? How do they treat colorism, i.e. light skinned privilege within the black community?
2. Why does Lincoln West feel comforted to think of himself as the real thing?
3. How do works like Natasha Ria El-Scari's "Horse and Carriage on a Plaza," Crystal Simone Smith's "A Slip in History," Aries Hines' "My Face," Avery R. Young's "blk(s)" and Kimberly A. Collins' "A burning lesson" treat similar issues of race, representations of the black body, colorism and beauty?