

Afro-American



Fiction

Baldwin, James

Giovanni's Room

Considered daring, this novel recreates Baldwin's experiences as a gay African-American expatriate in post-World War II Paris.

Butler, Octavia

Parable of the Sower: A Novel

In this science fiction classic, Lauren Olamina, a teen girl living in a future, decaying United States, starts her own religion, "Earthseed," and becomes a messiah to thousands who believe her message: God is change.

Ellison, Ralph

Invisible Man

Ellison's famous tale of righteous outrage and the search for identity remains a defining statement about racial inequity in the United States.

Gaines, Ernest J.

A Lesson Before Dying

When the grandmother of a falsely accused murderer on death row asks the local schoolteacher, Grant, to teach her grandson a final lesson – how to die like a man – Grant finds himself becoming both the teacher and the pupil.

Greer, Robert

The Devil's Hatband

Meet C.J. Floyd, an African-American bail bondsman and occasional bounty hunter in Denver. First in a series.

Himes, Chester B.

Yesterday Will Make You Cry

Crime, prison life and homosexuality are covered in this autobiographical masterpiece by one of our nation's unique voices.

Hurston, Zora Neale

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Janie Crawford is a strong woman in Eaton, FL. Married three times and accused of murdering one of her husbands, she eventually takes up with a dashing man named Teacake and comes face-to-face with nature's most powerful fury.

Jones, Edward P.

The Known World

Winner of the 2004 Pulitzer, Jones' first novel is the story of a slave who buys his freedom and goes on to become a slave owner himself. A powerful study in hypocrisy, human failing and emotional complexity.

Morrison, Toni

Beloved: A Novel

This complex story about many different kinds of ghosts and hauntings propelled Morrison to the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Mosley, Walter

The Man in my Basement

The creator of the Easy Rawlins mystery series writes an unsettling story of power and enslavement. The life of a young Black man named Charles Blakey seems to be falling apart because of unemployment and a large mortgage payment. Things change, however, when a rich white man suddenly offers him \$50,000 with a catch: he wants to be confined in Blakey's basement.

Reed, Ishmael

Flight to Canada

The 1860s have all the technology of today and runaway slaves literally hop on the next airplane in their flight to Canada and freedom in this satirical novel of slavery, corporate consumerism and literary ambition.

Toomer, Jean

Cane

Part poem, part short story and part drama, this experimental masterpiece from the Harlem Renaissance presents a haunting montage of image and narrative that moves between North and South, urban and rural and Black and White.

Walker, Alice

The Color Purple

The lives of two sisters are told through a series of letters in which both come to realize that purple is the color of bruises and of royalty.

Whitehead, Colson

The Intuitionist

Lila Mae Watson is the first Black female elevator inspector in a futuristic metropolis. When an elevator she inspected fails, she becomes a fugitive scapegoat in a strange story that is part science fiction, part political satire and entirely enjoyable.

Wideman, John Edgar

Philadelphia Fire: A Novel

Ten years after police firebombed the headquarters of an Afrocentric cult, a writer named Cudjoe writes of the event against the backdrop of his personal failures.



Poetry

Angelou, Maya.

The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou 811.54 Angelou

Maya Angelou proves why she has long enjoyed a significant popularity in the United States with this edition of her collected poems, which includes "On the Pulse of Morning," her poem delivered at President Clinton's first inauguration.

Baraka, Amiri

Transbluesency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka 811.54 Baraka

Significant changes in Baraka's voice and political stances over thirty years are represented. Baraka's poetry has been labeled obscene, militant and racist. Read this book and judge for yourself.

Brooks, Gwendolyn

In Montgomery and Other Poems 811.54 Brooks

Brooks' early lyrical mastery earned her a Pulitzer Prize in 1950, the first ever awarded to an African-American writer. The poems represented here cover the last 25 years of her life and show her becoming more political and edgy during the Civil Rights movement.

Dove, Rita

On the Bus with Rosa Parks: Poems 811.54 Dove

The seventh (and youngest) Poet Laureate of the United States and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1987, Dove forcefully believes poets should be people working "with their sleeves rolled up." This collection shows how well she is able to engage her audience.

Gilyard, Keith

Spirit & Flame: An Anthology of Contemporary African-American Poetry 811.54080896073 Spirit

More than 200 works demonstrate the diversity of African-American voices on politics, artistic style and spiritual beliefs. Focus on the 1990s is an important balance to anthologies stressing earlier literary achievements.

Lorde, Audre

Collected Poems 811.54 Lorde

Being African-American, female and lesbian, Audre Lorde considered herself invisible three times over. Her collected poems reveal the true strength of her presence, which ended too soon when cancer took her life in 1992.

Essays, Anthologies & Biographies

Gable, Craig

Ebony Rising: Short Fiction of the Greater Harlem Renaissance Era 813.0108896073 Ebony

A collection of noteworthy stories from one of Black culture's most fertile periods.

Gates, Henry Louis

Colored People: a Memoir B Gates

The chairman of Harvard's Afro-American Studies department, one of the nation's most respected and controversial professors, recounts his adolescence in Piedmont, WV.

Griffin, John Howard

Black Like Me 301.451 Griffin

A White journalist disguises himself as a Black man in 1950s New Orleans and receives a grim eye-opening experience.

Hooks, Bell

Black Looks: Race and Representation 305.48896 Hooks

Hooks looks at the image of African-Americans in the age of advertising as style becomes increasingly triumphant over substance. Do African-Americans possess a culturally hip image that is being stolen by a mainstream culture that in turn rejects them? An academic but highly readable analysis.

Larson, Charles

Under African Skies: Modern African Stories 808.8310896 Under

African authors showcase the hardships and exultations experienced on the second largest continent in this important collection of short stories.

McMillan, Terry

Breaking Ice: An Anthology of Contemporary African-American Fiction 813.50808 McMillan

Readers interested in today's up-and-coming Black writers will find McMillan's anthology a great place to start.

Weisenburger, Steven

Modern Medea: a Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South 306.362092 Weisenburger

Learn the story of Margaret Garner, the slave whose life helped inspire Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*.