



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Literary Corner: Introduction to African American Poetry with Eugene Redmond—Part 2 (side b)

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: Now, some people, and you expressed the, the, um the importance of the thirties, forties, and fifties

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as, uh, key decades for African American poets.

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Some people consider that as a kind of calm before the storm, meaning the sixties.

<i>Eugene B. Redmond</i>:

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You had a, you had a interesting kind of gestation period in the, in the fifties, where you had people like Lance Jeffers,

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uh, Percy Johnston, uh, Jay Wright, Henry Dumas, uh, and many many others.

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Uh, Leroy Jonas and Clarence Major. Ted Joans, J-O-A-N-S.

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Uh, you had, uh, Bob Kaufman, the brilliant poet who helped make "the Beat" era.

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He, uh, he wrote from San Francisco primarily, posing, citing a book called "Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness."

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You had Russell Atkins.

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These were the germinating forces. As, as, the decade of the fifties made a turn into the sixties. Right.

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And, then, of course you have the early sixties people. Uh, very important writers,

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who, formed kind of a gestation base for, the later, writers of the later sixties.

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People like Larry Neil and Liberator Magazine, Diana Clark and uh, Freedom Raid Magazine.

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Again, Negro Digest before it became Black Royalty, 1970, with Hart Fuller and Hamilton Bems.

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Julia Fields was writing. Mario Evans was writing.

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So you had this period, um, in the 9th, in the era of the 1960s, uh, where again, the literary expressions reflected the social turbulence of the time.

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So, a lot, a lot of the ponds that were what- civil rights, freedom rides, you know, sit-ins, the march on Washington, jobs and freedom. Okay

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black and white together we shall overcome.

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But then of course, around 1965, with Watts and Newark and Harlem and St. Louis and Dallas.

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Detroit, something else occurred.

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The writers who had been associated with Snake and Corps, and NAACP Youth Council, and so on,

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took to the streets. Literally, to the streets.

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They been in the streets but then they started forming their own organi.....



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