

## CROSS-OVER AMERICA'S LYRICAL SONNETS (5 poems)

### FROM THE ROOMS OF BROKEN CHILDREN

Room after room, broken children,  
Wall after wall, silencing stones,  
Rooms overflowing, our broken voices,  
Broken spirits, breaking bones.  
Cornering closets, killing classrooms,  
Crazy-making cabins, dorms, salons,  
Condemning offices, cramping courtrooms,  
Prison cell confinements, corralled alone.  
Unvoiced questions echoed off the walled rooms:  
What made mothers mad enough to murder?  
What made fathers screw into us,  
Boring deep and then some more?  
Would we be dead if we had squealed  
To trusted others that they'd crushed us in our cores?  
We nothing then?  
We nothing now?  
We nothing more,  
We nothing but  
worthless shits and  
worthless whores?  
Kindred unvoiced questions  
bounced off bathroom walls in schools,  
Where we, silent, defiant, vigilant,  
holding ourselves hostages like fools,  
keeping ourselves alone, mental miles apart  
from others, sat down carefully in stalls,  
ever ready for unspeakables,  
and read, wincing, from the taunting walls:  
"Spics, niggers, whores, and scummy slime,  
you know'll do IT anytime, for a nickel or a dime,  
or a quarter overtime."  
We asked ourselves,  
what if, God forbid, we'd done the awful IT  
for nothin', unawares?  
Were we damned to descend to hells much worse  
than those already known, down darker stairs?  
We dared not ask. We exited, one by one (no room  
for two-by-twos), one room, one step at a time,  
away from garaged suicides, closeted mutilations,  
no time for hesitating in our well-torn running shoes  
as we escaped to safe, under-worded spaces  
of un-walled streets and outside places.

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**PORTRAIT OF A TIMELESS QUEEN: WWMY**

**God-signed,  
ebony-etched,  
sun-bronzed,  
more-delightful-than-New-Testament wine,  
deeper than dark,  
King Solomon lover,  
profiled, painted, priest-penned,  
paged portrayal passed through centuries;**

**Statured style,  
grace-filled class,  
Sharon's flower - brazened lily -  
curved, petaled,  
long, strong elegance  
among scorched valley thorns;**

**Joy-lined,  
faith-defined,  
dance-lit, wit-laced eyes, un-shuttered,  
unpeeled downward,  
unpronounced  
by wailing, failing haters' voices;**

**Illuminating  
sachet of myrrh,  
cluster of henna,  
woods-rooted, mountain-framed apple tree,  
light-footed gazelle,  
out of reach of serpents' tongues,  
dancing forever away  
from beauty-blotting, blight-bitten trees.**

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### TIMELY LINE DANCING SONNET (for Harryette Mullen)

#### \*\*\* PROLOGUE \*\*\*

She had time to read *Time to Dance Times*;  
no longer too late, time not yet past,  
different than the time when she was three,  
eyes deafened by dying knees  
dancing with partnering trees,  
a rotten non-morning time  
eyes, and bodies, waiting for laying down  
to the end of time.  
End time never came, nor throwing-down time,  
nor take-off time. No. The time to fly flew.  
In its place, morning-extended-to-nighttime time,  
un-noosed-life-giving-light time, bleeding bird heart time,  
timely-flying-feet-performing real-time-whole-soul-dance time,  
honor-passing-of-wounded-knees time.

#### \*\*\* STORY \*\*\*

She: 4-D timed Cuban-heeled poetry in motion  
in 3-D space: an alternatively committed leg  
partnering a 4/4 timed, rueda-timed,  
Latinx-footing-timed percussive leg.  
Poetry filling labyrinthian places:  
Her "he" time-starting on-their-mark,  
get-ready moments of glow and go.  
Poetry swinging pendulums, settling,  
line-drawing-in-non-white-spaces hips  
culture-fying four-cornered places.  
Poet music, voice, lines rising, following  
keyed hearts, seizing, subsiding, defying  
end time back-throwing her to a colorless  
canvas. She: remaining 3-D centered, fully framed.

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### PROTEST PICNIC

Flat, compromising jingles picnic,  
Decry racism, sexism, homophobia,  
Nuclear weapons, petro pipelines, gun violence.  
Orange prevails, slights no one,  
Guides every-day folks around muddy holes,  
Away from divisive edges, adorns a pyramid  
Of people topped by guarded flat-voiced speakers.

Old school justice-whisperers taking to the streets  
50-years-ago, the America-the-opposite-of-great, streets,  
when two, or a few, days not enough to get even  
one point across, matching t-shirts, lightly fiddled songs  
a future privilege, non-casual knee and back-breaking,  
black-and-blue making, life-taking commitment to causes  
linked arms together, are spoken of and then forgotten.

Tees half-heartedly, 5<sup>th</sup>-handedly do recall  
"Takin' it to the streets" freedom proclamations,  
in white-speak of all colored sizes, provided  
by biased dollar-driven venders urging us to buy.

Streets are blocked off. That has not changed. But drums,  
trumpet songs, pointed calls to battle are missing among  
mingling marchers unafraid to bring their babies  
to this live-streamed en masse mass movement,  
this black-brown-bland-white photo-shopped image  
un-bordered by uniforms prepared to crush commitments.  
In the place of deadly purpose are parading troops of selfies  
stretching from Monument to Memorial. The missing anger-fired,  
don't-play, deadly-purposed bodies bodes ill for us,  
doomed to dust-covered, future-forgotten sound bites.

## **CROSS-OVER AMERICA'S LYRICAL SONNETS (5 poems)**

### **CONFESSIONAL POET'S SUMMERTIME SONNET**

At the beginning of one summer meant for writing

I testified: to be born a poet

was to be destined to rainbow-washing of words

over inner war-torn landscapes,

To tunnelling into echo-filled caverns

Lining deep river gulleys

Where Danu and Donnu used to walk,

Where the ground often trembled,

And landslides covered the terror of being

And of being alone in the storms.

At summer's end I testified again: To be born a poet

was to be reborn and rewritten, again, and again,

as my poet's ink dried on the pages after the storms,

And I'd birthed sundrop-shaped pearls perfectly formed.