

In Celebration of Black History Month
Poetry Illustration Showcase
Linking Libraries, Communities, and Cultures

Illustrate one of three selected poems in your age category by African American Poets, and receive a personal journal.
Entries will be on display through February, 2010.

Entries accepted January 9, 2010 through February 13, 2010

Complete this form, attach your entry, and bring it to any Henrico County Public Library.

Contest rules:

1. Only one entry per person
2. Three age groups: Child (Grades K-5), Teen (Grades 6-12) , Adult (18 and up)
3. Illustrations may not be larger than 9" x 12"
4. Illustrations may be in any style or medium (pen, chalk, paint, collage, photography). Graphic formats only, no sculptures or 3 dimensional works will be accepted.
5. Entries must illustrate a poem selected by the library. Poems are accessible online at www.henricolibrary.org and on the following pages.
6. No entries accepted after 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, February, 13, 2010.
7. No tracing or copying of others' work - only original art will be accepted
8. All illustrations become the property of the Henrico County Public Library

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Alternate phone

Email address

By entering, I agree to read and abide by all of the poetry illustration showcase rules. I further agree to release Henrico County Public Libraries from any and all liability for loss, damage, or injury.

Youth signature

Parent or legal guardian signature

Release and permission statement:

I hereby authorize print and/or broadcast media to reproduce this illustration for use in county publications, programs, exhibitions, showings or displays, and the promotion thereof in all media. The Henrico County Public Library may edit such items as desired. I will not hold Henrico County or the Henrico County Public Library responsible for its use.

I hereby represent and certify that I have read the foregoing a statement of release and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof and by my signature have given my consent for such use.

I certify that this illustration is the work of the person entered in this showcase.

Youth signature

Date

Parent or legal guardian signature

Date

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www.henricolibrary.org



Pick one of the three poems in your age category to illustrate:

Children, Grades K-5

Dream Variations

By Langston Hughes

To fling my arms wide
In some place of the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
Dark like me--
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening . . .
A tall, slim tree . . .
Night coming tenderly
Black like me.

Libraries

By Tony Medina

Libraries
are a special place
for me

with their long tables
all smooth and shiny
and bookcases spilling

over

with books filled with
wonderful worlds

Libraries
are a special place
for me

to sit and to stay
with books and books
and books of endless

beautiful words

keeping me company
taking my loneliness
and blues

away

Time to Play

By Nikki Grimes

Mama says to play outside.
I wish I had a bike to ride.
I'll fly to the moon instead.
Steer the rocket in my head.
I'll pretend to find a star
no one else has seen so far.
Then I'll name it after me -
Africa Lewanda Lee!
But for now I'll grab some chalk,
play hopscotch out on the walk

Teens, Grades 6-12

Slam, Dunk, & Hook

by Yusef Komunyakaa

Fast breaks. Lay ups. With Mercury's
Insignia on our sneakers,
We outmaneuvered to footwork
Of bad angels. Nothing but a hot
Swish of strings like silk
Ten feet out. In the roundhouse
Labyrinth our bodies
Created, we could almost
Last forever, poised in midair
Like storybook sea monsters.
A high note hung there
A long second. Off
The rim. We'd corkscrew
Up & dunk balls that exploded
The skullcap of hope & good
Intention. Lanky, all hands
& feet...sprung rhythm.
We were metaphysical when girls
Cheered on the sidelines.
Tangled up in a falling,
Muscles were a bright motor
Double-flashing to the metal hoop
Nailed to our oak.
When Sonny Boy's mama died
He played nonstop all day, so hard
Our backboard splintered.
Glistening with sweat,
We rolled the ball off
Our fingertips. Trouble

Was there slapping a blackjack
Against an open palm.
Dribble, drive to the inside,
& glide like a sparrow hawk.
Lay ups. Fast breaks.
we had moves we didn't know
We had. Our bodies spun
On swivels of bone & faith,
Through a lyric slipknot
Of joy, & we knew we were
Beautiful & dangerous.

Mother to Son

By Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor--
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps.
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now--
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Urban Renewal XVIII

By Major Jackson

How untouchable the girls arm-locked
strutting
up the main hall of Central High
unopposed
for decades looked. I flattened myself
against
the wall, unnerved by their cloudsea of
élan,
which pounced upon any timid girl
regrettably
in their way, their high-wattage lifting slow
motion
like curls of light strands of honey. The
swagger
behind their blue-tinted sunglasses and
low-rider
jeans hurt boys like me, so vast the worlds
between us, even the slightest whiff of
recognition,
an accidental side glance, an unintended
tongue-piercing
display of Juicy Fruit chew, was intoxicating
and could wildly cast a chess-playing geek
into
a week-long surmise of inner doubts,
likelihoods,
and depressions. You might say my whole
life led
to celebrating youth and how it snubs and
rebuffs.
Back then I learned to avoid what I feared
and to place my third-string hopes on a
game-winning
basketball shot, sure it would slow them to
a stop,
pan their lip-glossed smiles, blessing me
with their cool.

[continued next column]

Adults, Ages 18+

Beautiful Brown Hope

By John Swails

I am that which blends
the best the heavens have to offer
with the most earthly of thoughts.
Wisdom, passed down from the best
of what my ancestor's taught,
in constant negotiation with self.

My identity, as unimportant
as it is complex, yet
nothing is left
without my name upon it;
sharing its place with
so many names and faces before me.

I am the sum of many minds
and lives and tribes
and I find myself in constant struggle
for my steps to honor those
who walked before me.
I hear my great ancestors call me
from distant pasts
through vague and unsure futures.

I am not the vision
but the provision
for those who will do
much greater things.
My tongue and foot clear paths
for great grandchildren
not yet born;
of visions,
not yet formed.

These are the minds and
responsibilities I strive
to honor with every mark of pen and
thought,
bought by the blood and sweat
of beautiful brown hope.

Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors
gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the
slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Knoxville Tennessee

By Nikki Giovanni

I always like summer
best
you can eat fresh corn
from daddy's garden
and okra
and greens
and cabbage
and lots of
barbecue
and buttermilk
and homemade ice-cream
at the church picnic
and listen to
gospel music
outside
at the church
homecoming
and go to the mountains with
your grandmother
and go barefooted
and be warm
all the time
not only when you go to bed
and sleep