

Questions for Class #2, Jan. 18, 2022

Session #1: Theme: What's African American about African American Poetry?

1. Before reading the poems in Chapt. #1, how would *you* answer the question: "What's African-American about African-American Poetry?"
2. What personas and voices do you hear in these poems?
3. What issues do these poets raise?
4. What poetic styles and devices do you see in these poems?
5. What surprises you in these poems?
6. How do these poems answer these questions: What's African American about African-American Poetry? And, what makes a poet Black?

Session #2: Karen's questions for "Yet do I Marvel" by Countée Cullen

1. Who are Tantalus and Sisyphus? What are their stories? Why are they in this poem? And why a mole?
2. What are some of the poetic devices in this sonnet?
3. What is the tone of the poem?
4. What issue(s) does Cullen address here?
5. Rampersad did not include this poem in the Oxford anthology. Would you include it if you were compiling an African American poetry collection? Why?

Session #3: Chris's questions for "Blah Blah" by Harriet Mullen. Pg. 13

1. At first, this poem seems to be a long list of nonsense words and nonsense syllabus. But is there any order or structure to it?
2. When reading this poem aloud, it is hard to get through it without laughing. Why is this? Is this an "inability" one of the points of the poem? What words in the poem make you laugh as you say them? Are these funny words all in one category or type of word? Are there word pairs that evoke a different emotion?
3. Even though the poem appears to be a long list of nonsense words, are there some words or word pairs that jump out at you as having special meaning or a bigger impact on you than the other words? What kinds of words are these?
4. Is there any word or word pair in this poem that is not used by someone? If every word or word pair is used by someone, is this really a nonsense poem?
5. What is African American about this poem? Would you include it if you were compiling an African American poetry collection? Why or why not?