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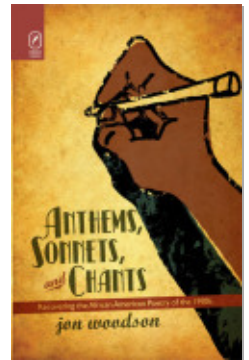
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“Jon Woodson’s *Anthem, Sonnets, and Chants* is a thoroughly engaging work. He makes a convincing case for not only reading a wide range of neglected poetry from the period, but for reading it through the rich interpretive lens he provides. This is a major work of scholarship which genuinely breaks new ground in the field.”

—James A. Miller, professor of English and American studies,
The George Washington University

In the 1930s African Americans faced three distinct historical crises that impacted the lives of African Americans directly: the Great Depression, the existential identity crisis, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, with its threat of a race war. A sizeable body of black poetry was produced in this decade, which captured the new modes of autonomy through which black Americans resisted these social calamities. Much of it, however, including the most influential protest poems, was dismissed as “romantic” by major, leftist critics and anthologists.

Anthem, Sonnets, and Chants: Recovering the African American Poetry of the 1930s, by Jon Woodson, uses social philology to unweave social discourse, self-fashioning, and debate in genres performed from anthologies, magazines, newspapers, and individual collections. The first chapter examines three long poems, finding encroaching paranoiac discourse that inaugurated a militant, politically aware agent. Chapter two examines self-fashioning in the numerous sonnets that responded to the new media of radio, newsmag, movies, and photo-magazines. The third chapter shows how new subjectivities were generated by poetry addressed to the threat of race war in which the white race was sacrosanct.

The black intellectuals who dominated the interpretive discourse of the 1930s favored essentiality, while black culture as a whole plunged into incoherence. *Anthem, Sonnets, and Chants* delineates the struggle between these inner and outer worlds, a study made difficult by a contemporary intellectual culture which trends from a belief in a consistent, integrated self.

JON WOODSON is professor of English at Howard University.

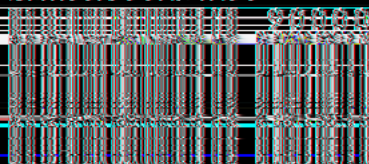
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