

## The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame

in co-sponsorship with the  
**Poetry Foundation**

presents

# THE FULLER AWARD

FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

to

# Haki Madhubuti

The

**POETRY FOUNDATION**

61 West Superior,

Chicago, Illinois

**November 18, 2015**

Ceremony: 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

Reception to follow

The event is free and open to the public

# ***Heartwork***

*(for Haki R. Madhubuti)*

Years younger and years older will be the same  
when you look back at moments  
in between. Moments sheltered in the center of  
a good book or in the listening of good music at day's end.  
Each day heartwork of what moves  
lifts you to rise for answers—  
healing calls to all who listen.

Listen we must to the urgency of  
what's not going to change unless we do the too  
much left undone.  
Your lived example asks us,  
How many beginnings do we have to have before we get it right?

We see and speak your words  
as ones we wanted to write ourselves.  
The mouths of children find shape around  
the language you've created.  
Their fresh acceptance of world-of-my-own,  
a continuation of your voice and vision.

We are here to hear and give thanks  
for songs in the spaces  
between your stanzas.  
You tell us to breathe  
And we do.

— *Gwendolyn A. Mitchell*

# Haki R. Madhubuti

A leading poet and one of the architects of the Black Arts Movement, Haki R. Madhubuti—publisher, editor and educator—has been a pivotal figure in the development of a strong Black literary tradition. He has published more than 31 books (some under his former name, Don L. Lee) and is one of the world's best-selling authors of poetry and non-fiction. His *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous? The Afrikan American Family in Transition* (1990) has sold more than one million copies. His poetry and essays were published in more than 85 anthologies from 1997 to 2015. Professor Madhubuti's latest book, *Taking Bullets: Black Boys and Men in Twenty-First Century America Fighting Terrorism, Stopping Violence, and Seeking Healing* will be released late this year. Two book-length critical studies on Professor Madhubuti's literary works are *Malcolm X and the Poetics of Haki Madhubuti* by Regina Jennings (2006) and *Art of Work: The Art and Life of Haki R. Madhubuti* by Lita Hooper (2007).

Professor Madhubuti is a proponent of independent Black institutions. He founded Third World Press in 1967. He is a founder of the Institute of Positive Education/New Concept School (1969), and a co-founder of Betty Shabazz International Charter School (1998), Barbara A. Sizemore Middle School (2005), and DuSable Leadership Academy (2005), all of which are in Chicago. Madhubuti was founder and editor of *Black Books Bulletin* (1970-1994), a key journal documenting the literature, scholarship and conversations of African-American voices for over two decades. He was also a founding member of The Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC) Writer's Workshop (1968).



Professor Madhubuti is an award-winning poet and recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships, the American Book Award, an Illinois Arts Council Award, the Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award and others. In 1985, he was the only poet chosen to represent the United States at the International Valmiki World Poetry Festival in New Delhi,

India. In 2006, he was awarded the Literary Legacy Award from the National Black Writers Conference for creating and supporting Black literature and for building Black literary institutions. He was named as a 2007 Chicagoan of the Year by *Chicago Magazine*. In May of 2008, Professor Madhubuti was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from Art Sanctuary of Philadelphia.



In 2009, he was named one of the “Ebony Power 150: Most Influential Blacks in America” for education. In 2010, he was presented with the President’s Pacesetters Award from the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education, and was awarded the Ninth Annual Hurston/Wright Legacy prize in poetry for his book, *Liberation Narratives*. At the 2013 “Bridge Crossing Jubilee,” Professor Madhubuti was inducted into the Hall of Resistance at the Ancient Africa, Enslavement and Civil War Museum in Selma, Alabama; he was honored as the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame 2014 Distinguished Laureate Presenter. In 2014, Professor Madhubuti received the Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award presented by *Poets & Writers Magazine*; and in April of that year, Professor Madhubuti and his wife, Dr. Carol D. Lee, were presented with the DuSable Museum’s Dogon Award at the Night of 100 Stars Celebration. On June 19, 2015, Professor Madhubuti was the first poet to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Juneteenth Book Festival Symposium at the Library of Congress. In August, Madhubuti was honored by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation with the 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award in Fine Arts.

Haki R. Madhubuti earned his MFA from the University of Iowa and he received his third honorary Doctor of Letters from Spelman College in May of 2006. His distinguished teaching career includes faculty positions at Columbia College of Chicago, Cornell University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Howard University, Morgan State University, and the University of Iowa. He is the former University Distinguished Professor and a professor of English at Chicago State University, where he founded and was director-emeritus of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center and director of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program. Professor Madhubuti served as the Ida B. Wells-Barnett University Professor at DePaul University for 2010–11. ✍️

# What is the Fuller Award?

By Valya Dudycz Lupescu

“The Fuller” is awarded by the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame to a Chicago author who has made an outstanding lifetime contribution to literature. The first two Fuller Awards were presented to Gene Wolfe (2012) and Harry Mark Petrakis (2014).

## The Fuller Legacy: A Quick Look at a Literary Pioneer

The award was inspired by the literary contribution of Henry Blake Fuller, one of Chicago’s earliest novelists and author of *The Cliff-Dwellers* and *With the Procession*. Both novels use the rapidly developing city of Chicago as their setting and are considered by many to be the earliest examples of American realism.

Theodore Dreiser called *With the Procession* the first piece of American realism that he had encountered and considered it the best of the school, even during the days of his own prominence.



There are additional layers of meaning to the word “fuller.”

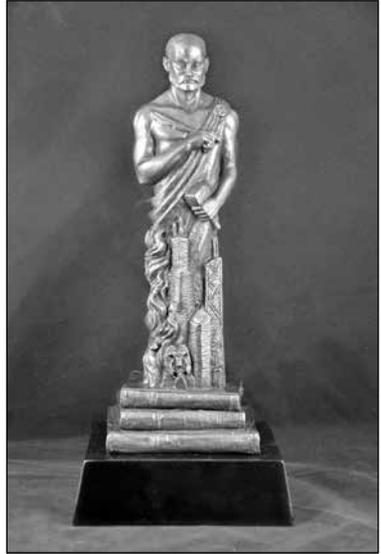
A fuller is also a tool used to form metal when it’s hot, an important part of building and a nice metaphor for Chicago, home to the “First Chicago School” of architecture that rose up from the ashes of the Chicago Fire of 1871. Between 1872 and 1879, more than ten thousand

“When Haki entered my mother’s world I was a teenager. A ‘cultural son’ to her, an honorary brother and new mentor to me. I was fascinated by this soft-spoken man who managed to yell his passion and direction. As Haki says ‘All that is good in the world takes work, everything else is jive.’ He’s right. The proof is in the Madhubuti. His commitment is demonstrated every day, every year, every decade. Go ‘head, World Worker.”

—Nora Brooks Blakely, writer and businesswoman

construction permits were issued. Chicago emerged as a resilient city that took risks and made bold decisions—using iron and steel to frame its buildings, giving rise to the world’s first skyscraper. The fuller was one such tool that made it happen, a symbol of possibility and perseverance.

Inspired by the sleek lines and art deco style of Chicago sculptor John Bradley Storrs, whose sculpture Ceres is on top of the Board of Trade building, the award statue for the Fuller was based on Hephaestus, the Greek god of the blacksmith’s fire and patron of all craftsmen. According to legend, Hephaestus was the only god who worked, and he was honored for having taught mankind that work is noble and one should excel at their craft. The patron of artists and craftsmen, he seemed a fitting symbol to capture the spirit of excellence embodied by the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame’s Fuller Award. 



“For over half a century Haki Madhubuti has been on a mission of redemption and repair, an immense, continuing voyage into the country’s murky heart—he’s deployed his vast imagination again and again to illuminate the white lies embedded in the American dream, and he’s created a dazzling body of work that encounters an animated, boisterous humanity longing to live fully and free. Dr. Madubhuti is a singular truth-seeker; he’s also our collective treasure.”

—William Ayers, teacher, activist, author

“Studying under Haki Madhubit provided a front seat to the Black Arts Movement. Each call was a microcosm of what it meant to operate within a Black aesthetic. The single most important thing I took away from this literary giant was the importance of Black tradition and the responsibility of the poet. Each day try to walk in his footsteps.”

—Randall Horton, poet, editor and teacher

# Tonight's Program

- Richard Steele .....Emcee
- Donald G. Evans .....Introducing the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame
- Stephen Young.....Introducing the Poetry Foundation
- Gwendolyn A. Mitchell.....Reading her poem *Heartwork*
- Useni Eugene Perkins ..... Speaking on the Black Arts Movement
- Nora Brooks Blakely.....Reading her poem *I Love Trees*
- Angela Jackson..... Speaking on Haki's Legacy as a Teacher,  
Publisher and Figure in OBAC Writers Workshop
- Regina Taylor.....Reading from *YellowBlack*  
and Speaking on Opening Doors of Silence
- Quraysh Ali Lansana.....Speaking on Haki's Evolution and  
Transformative Powers
- Runako Jahi.....Reading *BUT HE WAS COOL, or:  
he even stopped for green lights*
- Kelly Norman Ellis..... Reading *Camden, Arkansas*
- Obari and Ayinde Cartman .....Reading and Performing  
*You Will Recognize Your Brothers*
- Jackie Taylor.....Reading from Lita Hooper's *Art of Work:  
The Art and life of Haki R. Madhubuti*
- Carol D. Lee (Safisha Madhubuti) .....Presenting the Fuller Award
- Haki Madhubuti.....Accepting the 2015 Fuller Award for  
Lifetime Achievement

“ Haki Madhubuti-an institution and a gentle, power. His work challenges misogyny and calls us to be accountable and loving. I think of these lines: 'do not send your children to be taught by/those who do not love them;/raise strong, loving and saying children and/we will not have to repair broken adults.; Repeat these lines as mantra, the soft blow of a poet who reminds us of responsibility.”

—Tara Betts, author, editor, performer

# Participants



**Nora Brooks Blakely** is a writer and businesswoman, who for 29 years was the producing artistic director and primary playwright for Chocolate Chips Theatre Company in Chicago. She has taught in Chicago Public Schools and spent more than 20 years teaching drama and writing workshops for students and teachers, most recently at the DuSable Leadership Academy, part of the Betty Shabazz International

Charter Schools family. She has served on boards and committees for several youth and arts organizations. She is the daughter of two writers—Henry Blakely and Gwendolyn Brooks—and founded Brooks Permissions, the company that manages her mother's work and promotes its continued relevance.



**Ayinde Cartman** is a multidimensional artist and organizer, whose work serves to heal and empower marginalized communities through visionary thinking and explosive performance. Although based in Chicago, he works to improve living conditions globally on a massive scale by using imaginative creation to expose human capacity for self and collective love.

**Obari Cartman** is a father, son, brother, uncle, thinker, writer, therapist, photographer, and drummer. He conducts workshops for adults and youths focused on maintaining good mental health, critical analysis of hip-hop and media, racial and cultural identity, developing authentic manhood, and healthy relationships. His new book is *Lady's Man: Conversations for Young Black Men about Relationships and Manhood*.



**Kelly Norman Ellis** is an associate professor of English and creative writing at Chicago State University. She is also the director of the MFA in Creative Writing program at CSU and a poet whose work has appeared in the anthologies *Sisterfire: Black Womanist Fiction and Poetry*, *Spirit and Flame*, *Boomer Girls*, and *Fire and Ink: An Anthology of Social Action Writing*, as well as in periodicals such as *Essence*; *Obsidian*; *Calyx*;

*The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South*; *PMS: Poem, Memoir, Story*; *Sou'wester*; and *Crab Orchard Review*. Her first collection of poetry, *Tougaloo Blues*, was published by Third World Press in 2003. She is coeditor with M. L. Hunter of *Spaces Between Us: Poetry, Prose and Art on HIV/AIDS* (Third World Press). Her second collection of poetry, *Offerings of Desire*, was published in 2012.



**Angela Jackson** is a poet, novelist, and playwright. Her most recent volume of poetry is *It Seems Like a Mighty Long Time*. Her other award-winning collections are *And All These Roads Be Luminous* and *Dark Legs and Silk Kisses*. Her novel *Where I Must Go* received an American Book Award. Her plays are *Shango Diaspora* and *Comfort Stew (When the Wind Blows)*. She was a member of the OBAC Writers Workshop for more

than twenty years and her first volume of poetry *Voodoo/Love Magic* was published by Third World Press in 1974.



**Runako Jahi**—playwright, actor, graphic artist, award-winning stage director, and former artistic director of ETA Creative Arts Foundation—has been actively involved in the theater from 1972 to this day. His objective is to interpret the African American experience authentically, with the soulful complexities of life. As a teaching artist, he has inspired and trained many performers and arts practitioners, and coached singer/actor Jennifer

Hudson for her audition for the film *Dreamgirls*. Mr. Jahi is currently working with Court Theatre at the University of Chicago.

**Quraysh Ali Lansana** has published eight poetry books, three textbooks, and a children's book. He is the editor of eight anthologies and coauthor of a book of pedagogy. He is a faculty member of the Creative Writing Program of the School of the Art Institute. Previously, he was on the faculty of the Drama Division of The Juilliard School and a faculty mentor of the Red Earth MFA Creative Writing Program at Oklahoma City University. From 2002–2011, Mr. Lansana was director of the Gwendolyn



Brooks Center for Black Literature and Creative Writing at Chicago State University, where he was also associate professor of English/Creative Writing until 2014. *Our Difficult Sunlight: A Guide to Poetry, Literacy, & Social Justice in Classroom & Community* (with Georgia A. Popoff) was published in 2011 by Teachers & Writers Collaborative and

was a 2012 NAACP Image Award nominee. His most recent books are *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip Hop* with Kevin Coval and Nate Marshall and *The Walmart Republic* with Christopher Stewart.



**Carol D. Lee** (Safisha Madhubuti) is the Edwina S. Tarry Professor of Education in the School of Education and Social Policy and in African-American Studies at Northwestern University. She is the author or coeditor of three books, most recently *Culture, Literacy and Learning: Taking Bloom in the Midst of the Whirlwind*. She is the author of four monographs and more than 62 journal articles and book chapters in the field of

education. Her research addresses cultural supports for learning that include a broad ecological focus, with attention to language and literacy and African-American youth. Over the past 40 years, she has founded four African-centered schools, including three charter schools in the Betty Shabazz International Charter Schools network, where she serves as chair of the board of directors. She is married to Haki R. Madhubuti, poet and publisher of Third World Press, and is the mother of three adult children and two grandchildren.



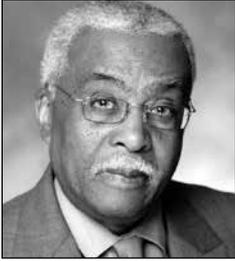
**Gwendolyn A. Mitchell** is former senior editor at Third World Press, where she worked for almost two decades. She is the author of two poetry collections, *House of Women* and *Veins and Rivers*, as well as the book-length poem *Ain't I Black*. She has co-edited two creative writing anthologies with Haki R. Madhubuti.



**Useni Eugene Perkins** is a multifaceted writer who was a prominent voice in the Black Arts Movement, locally and nationally. During the 1960s, he was the publisher of *Black Expression: A Journal of Black Literature* and convened many writers' workshops. His published works include *Home Is a Dirty Street: The Social Oppression of Black Children*, which the sociologist Lerone Bennett Jr. called "one of the most important

books on the sociology of the streets since *Black Metropolis*." Other books by Mr. Perkins on youth include *Harvesting New Generations: The Positive Development of Black Youth*, *Explosion of Chicago's*

*Black Street Gangs*, *The Afro-Centric Self-Inventory Workbook*, and *Black Fairy and Other Children Plays*, all published by Third World Press. An illustrated book of his iconic poem *Hey Black Child* will be published by Little Brown in 2016. Mr. Perkins has taught literature and playwriting at Chicago State University and was inducted in the Gwendolyn Brooks National Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent in 1999. He is a 2003 History Maker recipient.



**Richard Steele** is an award-winning host and correspondent for Chicago Public Media, where he hosts Vocalo's *Barber Shop Show* and contributes to WBEZ's *Morning Shift*, *Afternoon Shift*, *Worldview*, *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, as well as [wbez.org](http://wbez.org), [vocalo.org](http://vocalo.org) and special programming. Mr. Steele is vice president and board member of the local American

Federation of Television and Radio Artists and a board member of the Chicago Association of Black Journalists.



**Jackie Taylor** was born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in the Cabrini Green housing project. She rose from modest roots to become a distinguished director, producer, actress, singer, and playwright. She is the founder of Black Ensemble Theater, now in its 39th year, which is recognized throughout the country for its outstanding original productions and exceptional educational outreach programs. Ms. Taylor has

written and produced more than 100 plays and musical biographies, including *The Marvin Gaye Story*, *The Jackie Wilson Story*, *All In Love Is Fair*, *The Other Cinderella*, *I Am Who I Am (The Story of Teddy Pendergrass)*, *Don't Make Me Over (The Story of Dionne Warwick)*, *Don't Shed A Tear (The Billie Holiday Story)*, *Somebody Say Amen*, *At Last: A Tribute To Etta James*, *Precious Lord Take My Hand*; among a myriad of other acclaimed productions. She has had featured roles in several major films, including *Cooley High*, *Hoodlum*, *Barbershop 2*, *The Father Clements Story*, *Losing Isiah* and *To Sir With Love: Part 2*. The City of Chicago honored her by naming a street after her, Jackie Taylor Street, and Governor Pat Quinn declared March 27, 2009, Jackie Taylor day in Illinois. But her most prized accomplishments are being the mother of Tynea Wright and grandmother of Tayden McGowan.



**Regina Taylor** is a Residency Five playwright at Signature Theatre Company in New York City, where her most recent play, *stop. reset*, about a book publisher clinging to his identity amid technical and social changes premiered in 2013. Extended storytelling beyond the stage moves through diverse communities by way of live events and Internet portals. In 2015, Taylor directed *stop. reset* at the Goodman Theatre, where she is an

artistic associate of twenty years. Taylor is, along with August Wilson, the Goodman's most produced playwright. Taylor's other playwriting credits include *Oo-Bla-Dee*, for which she won the American Theatre Critics/Steinberg New Play Award, and *Drowning Crow*, her adaptation of Chekhov's *The Seagull*, which was produced on Broadway. Taylor's trilogy, *The Trinity River Plays* was the recipient of the 2010 Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award. Taylor's critically acclaimed "Crowns" has been one of the most performed musicals in the country and is the winner of four Helen Hayes Awards including Taylor's win for Best Direction and Best Regional Musical. Ms. Taylor broke into television with the role of Lily Harper in *I'll Fly Away* for which she received a Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a TV Series, three NAACP Image Awards, and two Emmy Award nominations for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series. Among her film credits are *The Negotiator*, *Courage Under Fire*, *A Family Thing*, *The Keeper*, *Clockers*, "Losing Isaiah," and *Lean on Me*. In addition to her film and television work, Taylor holds the honor as being the first Black woman to play Juliet in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* on Broadway. ✍

**Congratulations to Haki Madhubuti  
from the Chicago Book Expo**

**Saturday, Nov. 21  
11am-5pm  
1104 S. Wabash  
Free admission**

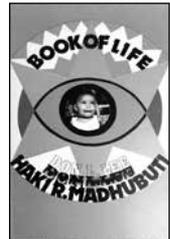
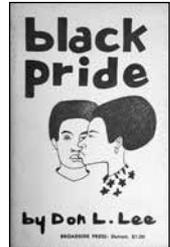
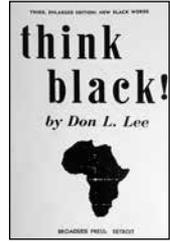
Over 100 exhibitors and 19 programs, including "Voices from the Hall" at 4pm, with top Chicago writers reading the work of Chicago Literary Hall of Fame members.



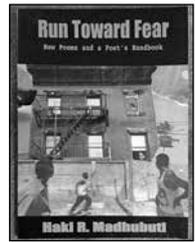
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- *Say That the River Turns: The Impact of Gwendolyn Brooks* (Ed., 1991)
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- *Why L.A. Happened: Implications of the '92 Los Angeles Rebellion* (Ed., 1993)
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- *By Any Means Necessary, Malcolm X: Real, Not Reinvented* (Co-E.d, 2012)
- *Taking Bullets: Black Boys and Men in Twenty-First Century America Fighting Terrorism, Stopping Violence, and Seeking Healing* (2015) ✍️



“ Haki Madhubuti’s distinctive voice has broken down doors and given life to the stories of our ancestors and to the times that we live in. His work as a publisher has given passage to the continuation of history and the stories of generations to come. Madhubuti’s work as an educator has made a way for young minds to see themselves with clarity- to uncover their roots and understand how those roots can usher them forward to make their dreams concrete.”

—Regina Taylor, playwright, actress

# Of the Man

(an appreciation of the Poet Known as Baba Haki)

I have just a bit to say about Haki Madhubuti. Perhaps some of it is personal, perhaps you would not care to hear beyond prurient curiosity; but I intend this as a paean suited to this occasion of feting a man and his work in verse and thought and Press. As I respect him surely, hold his aforementioned lifework in high regard, much as a novelist does the verse of a lifelong prophet of the poetics, a Booming maestro of a movement. I mentioned Madhubuti in the acknowledgments of my first novel, a dozen years ago, and for good reason. His *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous?* and its genius riff on late-millennial life for those journeying on a “Last, Best Hope” urban landscape in its postmortem throes, touched so many young hued men (in particular) who could have mistaken themselves for menaces otherwise, caught them when their attentions were not only for the taking, but while their eyes were opened wide, searching. Haki Madhubuti shined a light in the space between stanza and tome, made us blink and think, and think again, and blink and think some more.

Were I to stumble upon that collection today, all anew somehow, I don't know that it would catch me as it did then. circa 1991. But neither do I know that there would be a now for me, nor what kind of catching I could manage while stumbling amid growth had such brilliance not shown from the mind of the man so many know as Baba Haki. Most certainly, I do know that Haki Madhubuti's school and press and word are needed now, in this day, more than ever.

He is an icon, you see, his life a working history-in-progress complemented with the map of Black Arts and literary lore and local wars and struggle and pride drawn to stride across his countenance. I am somewhat hesitant to mention his contemporaries, Nikki Giovanni and Sterling Plumpp and Sonia Sanchez and the late Amiri Baraka here, as they are luminaries in their own rights. Hesitant, except to point out that they are of a shared, collective tribe, luminaries radiating truth in verse, infinite lights shining upon a path, and leading droves away from the dim and pointed half-truths of skewed tales. The music of movement is so often mentioned when considering these poets of Haki Madhubuti's generation – jazz and the blues, most often. In this honoree's case, I read and hear and see and blink and think of bop traditions, played from the kindred well-spring of deep American blues, resonating to soundtrack a life of brilliant works.

—*Bayo Ojikutu, author of the novels 47<sup>th</sup> Street Black and Free Burning* 

# Fuller Award Dedication for Haki Madhubuti

*I don't remember the first time that I met him because it seems that his name has always been a part of my vocabulary...*

**H**aki R. Madhubuti's name was proudly syllabled out by every conscious Black teacher and parent that made up my world as a seventies child. To speak his name seemed to be a badge of honor for those who were bold enough to consider the ideas of power, resistance, and freedom. That badge was always engraved with the commentary, "You know he's a poet and a publisher." I later came to understand that very few have mastered the practice of being an artist and a CEO. I first encountered his work as a student at Hyde Park Career Academy, whose halls had been strolled by Herbie Hancock, Minnie Ripperton, Mel Tormé, Donny Hathaway, Amelia Earhart, and of course Gwendolyn Brooks. The way that he wrote taught me the meaning of tone. His words were passionate, cutting, purposeful, urgent, and unapologetic. I appreciated that there was very little subtext in his work. He overtly states what he means in his lines, but as I've matured as a reader and a writer the subtext has become apparent. His verse is always undergirded by intentional empowerment and a mighty love for Black people. Although I'd never seen an image of him before the 1990s, it was clear to me that he must have a straight back. I would later learn that his unwavering message of liberation was an extension of his heart and his commitment as a soldier for the minds of Black people. Years passed, but I would always pay attention whenever I heard his name. For me, as a synesthete his name became synonymous with the color, meaning and feeling of strength. I watched him along with his wife and his team of Madhubuti-ites shape minds, empower people, and build cultural institutions. I am always amazed by the breadth and depth of his reach. In January of 2007, I had the opportunity to study with him. I discovered Black classic works in new ways through his eyes. I even paid closer attention to the chronology of Richard Wright's life, and discovered for the first time that his home was just four houses down from my own. Being raised by my mother and grandmother with a commitment to cultural preservation, I landmarked the home of Richard Wright in 2009, which led to landmark designations for the homes of Lorraine Hansberry and Gwendolyn Brooks. Beyond the classroom he has encouraged me as an example of what I now call a "straight-back Black"; one who possesses personal and cultural integrity, and does not allow the disrespect of

self or community. I cannot think of a time that I have called upon him and he did not respond. I am honored to bear witness to his life and celebrate his legacy.

May your talent, vision, and vigor be matched with resources that will fortify all that you have built for infinite generations...

—Shahari Moore 



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“Haki Madhubuti’s stewardship of Third World Press and the works of its authors, above all Gwendolyn Brooks, but also many other writers, including Sterling Plumpp, and his own accomplishments as a writer, have made him one of the most important figures in the history of African American writing and in the literary culture of Chicago and the nation.”

—Reginald Gibbons, author, literary scholar and teacher

# ***Haki Madhubuti and the Black Arts Movement***

*By Brian G. Gilmore*

*Black art will elevate and enlighten our people and lead them towards an awareness of self i.e. their blackness . . . And will aid in the destruction of anything nasty and detrimental to our advancement as a people.*

**S**o wrote poet Haki Madhubuti (then known by his birth name Don L. Lee) in his introduction to the Broadside Press chapbook *Think Black!*. Haki Madhubuti, his art and vision, are and will always be at the center of the discussion of the Black Arts Movement (BAM). Not only did Haki Madhubuti contribute important literature to the movement and variations on that literature, but he also shaped BAM in the past, present and the future through his powerful and tireless cultural work.

Symbolically, the Black Arts Movement (BAM) is said by some to have commenced when poet Amiri Baraka moved his theater, the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BARTS), uptown to Harlem in New York City in 1965. There were many other events that fueled the movement, but surely the founding of Third World Press of Chicago on August 2, 1967 by Haki Madhubuti is one of the most important. Dedicated to reaching Black readers, showcasing Black writers, and advancing Black thought and culture for the survival and advancement of Black people, the press produced 130 titles in 20 years, many of the offerings written by legends of BAM. Haki Madhubuti was the prime mover and shaper of the press and the vision it has forged since its founding.

The press has retained its relevance despite the political and social changes in Black America in the decades after its founding. The work of the press has endured and advanced. Gwendolyn Brooks' works have found a permanent home at the press, and titles by Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, historian Chancellor Williams, dissident singer-songwriter-poet Gil Scott Heron, hip-hop scholar and writer, Bakari Kitwana, and Tavis Smiley are also part of the press' impressive catalogue that cuts across genres and writing styles.

“We’re talking about our children, a survival of a people,” Madhubuti wrote in his collection of poems *We Walk the Way of the New World* in 1970. This book, along with *Don’t Cry, Scream* and *Think Black!*, are essential texts of BAM not just for content and vision but because the books liberated Black literature. The statement, “We’re



talking about our children, a survival of a people,” represents Haki Madhubuti’s overall visualization and what he continues to do outside his own writing. The founding of the Institute of Positive Education and the New Concept Development Center in 1972, both educational institutions for black children, and the founding of Third World Press, are testaments to that focus.

As Haki noted years ago in his book *Directionscore*, the shortcoming of the Harlem Renaissance was the fact that no Black institutions were established during the period. All the art of the period, the music, literature, dance, visual art, etc., left no long-lasting legacy that could be carried forward by those who would follow. The Black Arts Movement will not suffer the same fate, specifically because of the groundwork laid by Haki Madhubuti and the Third World Press.

BAM writer and cultural worker Larry Neal once asked in his satirical 1968 essay, “And Shine swam on,” where are Black people to go (“Where will we swim?”) now that America was crumbling and sinking like the Titanic? Neal made a call for a “New Breed,” the generation that James Brown sang about in his proclamation funk tune: “Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud).” One person who had already answered Neal’s call in 1968 and continues to exemplify the “New Breed” in 2015 is poet, writer and educator Haki Madhubuti.

—*Brian G Gilmore is a poet, writer and public interest attorney whose first collection of poetry was published by Third World Press.* 

““ Haki Madhubuti’s distinction in American letters is perhaps reflected in the tripartite excellence of his endeavors: 1. His meteoric rise as a poet in the late 1960s concomitant with the stellar reception of *Don’t Cry Scream*. 2. The canonic significance of his books published at Broadside Press. 3. His remarkable record as an institution builder: most notable his leadership of Third World Press and his cofounding several nationally-recognized African-centered schools. His nearly 60 years of as a creative artist, publisher of outstanding literary text, and effort to provide quality education for children in Chicago is truly distinctive. ””

—Sterling D. Plumpp, blues poet and essayist

““ Haki, like a tapestry of Soulfulness, sings his words above a sea of Black Truths, gently forcing folks to at least THINK! ””

—Runako Jahi, director and playwright

# *A Man of Letters*

By Donald G. Evans

**F**ifty thousand books—books in bookcases; books on nightstands; books on desks; books on tables. Dog-eared paperbacks, staple-bound pamphlets, leather embossed limited editions. Books everywhere. Haki Madhubuti's home, one that he has built with his wife, the distinguished educator Safisha, is more than a library; it is a place in which there is no distinction between literature and life.

Madhubuti tells you that literature saved his life, starting as a young teen with Richard Wright's *Black Boy* in a Detroit library, a book he read on the advice of his mother, a struggling single parent, yes, but also a reader. Madhubuti finished *Black Boy* in a single night and then started in on everything else Wright had ever written—*Uncle Tom's Children*, *12 Million Black Voices*, *Native Son*, and so forth, and then moved onto W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, Ralph Ellison, Margaret Walker, Arna Bontemps. Claude McKay, Frank



Marshall Davis and, well, just about anything he could get his hands on.

“For the first time in my life, I was really, like, attacked with ideas that were not an insult to my own personhood,” says Madhubuti.

Books got into Madhubuti's blood—*learning* got into Madhubuti's blood—and

even in those early years as he finessed his way to adulthood against the backdrop of his father's abandonment and his mother's addiction and eventual death, he read. He read his way through door-to-door sales; he read his way through elevator operating; he read his way through truck loading. He read his way through stints at the post office, railway yard and a mail order house. Eventually he read his way through military service—a book a day, almost, as he did his time in a U.S. Army that, like everything else, discriminated against African Americans.

Madhubuti made himself an expert on Black literature and informed on a range of other topics, but that only tells part of the story of how Haki Madhubuti's gifts to literature and learning came to overwhelm the gifts he had received.

Madhubuti's library includes every major Black writer. It includes an expansive collection of Jewish literature. Women's literature. Concentrations in politics and economics and sociology. Important white writers.

It also includes an incredible number of books Madhubuti created, or helped to create, as a writer, editor or publisher. His own books, of course—31 and counting. Third World Press' catalogue of more than 300 books. Anthologies in which Madhubuti's poems or essays were selected for inclusion (more than 85 in the last two decades alone). Books in which Madhubuti wrote introductions or blurbs.

Madhubuti has read his poetry at a vast number of universities and colleges (thousands!). He has read his poetry in parks, schools, libraries, prisons, coffee shops, bars, community centers, men's groups, theaters and homes. He's read at major poetry festivals and conferences. In fact, Madhubuti has read in just about every conceivable Chicago venue, every continental U.S. state except the Dakotas, and four continents. Often, Madhubuti is not only a reader, but also an organizer, as in 1969 when he was responsible for bringing five hundred artists, free, to the first Pan African Cultural Festival in Algeria.

"Poetry has been essential to my whole life and development," says Madhubuti. "That's the key thing: none of what we've done, none of what we've created, would have happened had I not embraced poetry and literature."

There is no understating his celebrity. The March 1969 *Ebony* magazine featured a David Llorens story entitled "Black Don Lee," which immediately placed Madhubuti on the national stage. Llorens documents "Don Lee" reading and teaching across the country. On one stop he finds Madhubuti and Gwendolyn Brooks in a library in Pittsburgh at a joint reading where she describes him as "a unique and unusual poet."

"Professor Madhubuti is always reading—he always has a book or two or three," says former Third World Press senior editor Gwendolyn Mitchell. "He will give reading lists to whoever wants them. Our staff meetings often started with some of the latest literature, just to keep us current with the conversations of the world, how people are responding to issues. He loves dialogue, but also wants us to be informed in conversation, not that he has it all, but he does have a passion to be sure that information is given in as many ways as it can to enhance the work we're doing but also strengthen us as individuals."

In the end, when all Madhubuti's contributions are tallied, it's going to wreak havoc on the Wiki writers, the obit people, and the anthologists. You can't call him merely a poet, or an educator, or an institution builder, or a publisher, or an editor, or a performer, or a mentor, or an activist, though he's all those things and some others. Madhubuti's accomplishments are so broad and varied, his life such a testament to the arts and the Black struggle, that he defies any simple labels. He's a Man of Letters, to be sure, and the libraries he has built extend far beyond his library at home. ✍️

“Haki Madhubuti has been an inspiring mentor to me and other teaching artists. From OBAC Writers Workshop in the 1970s to Chicago State University in this new millennium, I've been honored to learn, work, and be nurtured by his generous spirit for the past 40 years. He richly deserves this wonderful recognition.”

—Sandra Jackson-Opoku, poet, fiction writer, screenwriter and journalist

“Haki Madubhuti has given so much to Chicago as a poet, educator, publisher, public intellectual, and visionary. His deep insights into Chicago culture past and present infuse his own radiant writings and his unstinting, creative, dynamic, and inspiring support of so many aspiring writers, scholars, and artists.”

—Donna Seaman, author, editor and book reviewer

“I first met Haki Madhubuti at dinner before his reading for the Guild Complex. I knew of his reputation as a leading poet and firebrand activist, and so it surprised me that in this first conversation, he asked many questions about my family. This was not a passing, polite interest, he really wanted to know—as though one's connection to their family tells the truth of the individual. Later he electrified the room as he read from YellowBlack about the immense hardships of his upbringing. Here is someone who, on his own, created a rock-solid set of values against tremendous pressures to do otherwise. And here is someone who has dedicated his life to actions driven by those values—an indomitable sense of justice and service to his larger family.”

—Mike Puican, poet

# Community

By Donald G. Evans

Englewood might have given birth to Third World Press, but Chatham raised it.

When you roll down the relatively quiet one-way Dobson Avenue, the curbs uncluttered, almost reflective, you notice a mature neighborhood, not necessarily prosperous or poor, but settled. Industry come and gone fiddles its way between life come and gone. The railroad tracks lead this way and that, but you don't feel the throb of any trains.

At one time, Chatham was 99 percent white, but the area transitioned rapidly, beginning in the 1950s, and for a long time now is 99 percent black. This is Third World Press' neighborhood, its people, and when you cut the engine at the former church rectory it's more like visiting friends than a prestigious and well-established business.

"The publishing company looks like a museum," says Useni Eugene Perkins, who's published eight books with Third World Press. "It's more than Haki and his writing, it's his involvement with the community, his mentoring. People meet there."

Read Haki R. Madhubuti's manifestos on Black life and you'll find, over and over, the call to community. Blacks helping Blacks, Blacks

supporting Blacks, Blacks policing Blacks, Blacks in harmony. The conventional wisdom that most businesses buy into is: downtown. Prestige, convenience, curb appeal, foot traffic, all of that: be where the people are.



But Michigan and Randolph, with its views of Millennium Park,

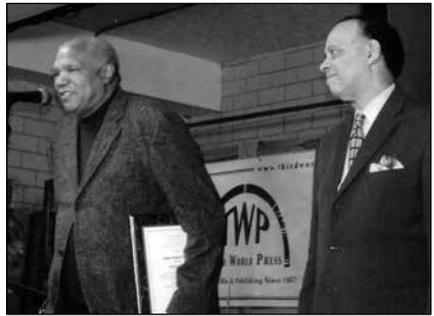
or State and Adams, looking down at the old stately department stores and the Chicago Theatre, are not where Madhubuti's people are. They're here, in Chatham.

"Haki never left and came back home; he's always been home," says author Angela Jackson. "Even when he was away at Cornell or Howard, he still had Third World Press up and running, and then the Institute of Positive Education, and the independent schools...He's always been working inside the community."

Chatham has its share of problems—as Angela, who lives about a half-mile from Third World Press, says, “People get shot here.” But Madhubuti and Third World Press remain committed to the neighborhood, committed to being a force of positive influence.

“I think it’s very important that the press is in Chatham, and in a neighborhood certainly middle working class to poor, predominately if not exclusively African American,” says poet Quraysh Ali Lansana, who has been involved with Third World Press for a dozen years as an author and editor. “It’s important to the press’ work, important to the neighborhood. Like the flower shop on the dead end street, that the press is there represents hope and possibility.”

Through the years, Madhubuti has created any number of institutions in the immediate vicinity. The TWP building at 7525 S. Cottage Grove—the headquarters that preceded its move to the current location—anchored the neighborhood. The African-American Book Center’s flagship store was there (the other outlets were in South Shore and Hazelwood). A printing press called Hieroglyphic, Inc.. The Black Books Bulletin was produced there. There were co-ops, classes for men, classes for women, readings, music. Madhubuti brought in poets, political scientists, historians, and musicians.



*Haki with Sterling Plump*

“We had everything going,” says Madhubuti. “People from all over the community would come. In many ways, it was an ideal time for us. It was a community. We knew all the police officers, Gwendolyn Brooks lived a block away...We were trying to develop institutional structures.”

That era gave way to another in which Madhubuti and his wife Safisha founded three charter schools and an independent school, most under the umbrella of their Institute for Positive Education. The Barbara Ann Sizemore Academy is in Englewood, the DuSable Leadership Academy is on South Wabash near 50th Street, and the Betty Shabazz International School and New Concept School (on the 7800 block of Ellis Ave. recently renamed the Institute of Positive Education Way) are located right behind Third World Press. The schools serve more than a thousand students a day, from seven a.m. to seven p.m., from pre-kindergarten through high school graduation.

Under the direction of its current board, the IPE along with TWP

Foundation, have recently reintroduced educational programs and teaching forums back into the community.

“That’s the community building we do now,” says Madhubuti.

But Third World Press, the schools and everything else are just the home base. Madhubuti’s message of community is heard far and wide—he takes it here and there, and it comes to him.

In his memoir *YellowBlack*, Madhubuti writes, “Fundamentally, I learned that a person’s contribution to society is closely related to his or her understanding and perception of himself or herself in relation to the culture in which he or she functions and lives. Such a culture can be one that either enslaves and shortens life or one that liberates and gives life. The best protection for any people can be found in culture that is intellectually and psychologically liberating.”



Creating institutions with a long-lasting impact on community also led Madhubuti to expand the reach of Chicago State University, where he served for twenty-six years. During his tenure, Distinguished University Professor Madhubuti helped win an endowed chair for Gwendolyn Brooks; he started the Gwendolyn Brooks Center; founded the Gwendolyn Brooks Writers’ Conference on Black Literature and Creative Writing; created The International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent; and built a creative writing

program. Through these efforts, Chicago State became the hub for Black writers—Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, August Wilson, and so forth and so on, visited at one time or another.



“For the entirety of the Brooks Conferences, twenty years, these were friends and colleagues of Haki’s and Ms. Brooks’ who came to participate in panels,

readings workshops, for much less money than they’d receive from other institutions,” says Quraysh, who directed the conference for nine years. “They came because of Ms. Brooks and Haki, because of what he was building in the ‘hood, at an underfunded institution on the South Side. It speaks to the power of his relationships. Baba Haki is an institution builder.”

Madhubuti left behind other important community-building programs

at his many academic stops, and all the while built or supported dozens of other festivals, conferences, workshops and programs. The common thread in all those endeavors was putting people in touch with people, spreading the wealth of Black Arts, respecting the older generation while breathing life into the new. Madhubuti's home is in Chatham, but he's left footprints all around the world.

"Don just writes nice poetry," says poet Nikki Giovanni. "We're looking at, in the beginning, a young man who has questions--about his father, himself, and the country in which he lives. But it was warm. I think love gets understated in America. Don would come over from Chicago, we would go over to his bookstore in Chicago...we liked being around each other. It was always a pleasure. I think that's incredibly important. We trained a lot of people to learn they should like each other." ✍️

**CHICAGO**  
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**MARGARET TAYLOR BURGESS**  
**FLOYD DELL**  
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The poster features a large illustration of the Statue of Liberty's head and crown, with the words "I WILL" on the crown. The background shows the Chicago skyline with the Willis Tower. On the left, there is a vertical column of six small portraits of the inductees, each with their name below it.

# ***Third World Press***

*By Donald G. Evans*

**H**e was a long, light-skinned, dark-bearded young man, serious and sly-witted even back then, always serious, with a gripping determination to give life to books, and not just any books, but Black books, books that would define a people.

It was an outlandishly ambitious project, but Haki R. Madhubuti's force of will was one with which to be reckoned, and when you combined that will with his intelligence, sensitivity, savvy and compassion you had the groundwork for a revolutionary change in the publishing world.

Madhubuti's inspiration to start his own independent Black press was put in motion, in part, through experiences in the mid-1960s that brought him in contact with a series of do-it-yourself writers and business people. He apprenticed four years at the DuSable Museum (then the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art), which was situated on the ground floor of Margaret and Charles Burroughs' house on South Michigan Ave. All manner of important people visited the museum, including writers the stature of Alex Haley, while Margaret and Charlie toggled between their personal and business routines. It was there Madhubuti met Dudley Randall, and he soon found himself in Broadside Press' Detroit office, which, as it happened, was also where Dudley lived.

Around this time, Madhubuti helped found the Organization of Black American Culture Writers Workshop, and through that formed close relationships with talented young writers like Sam Greenlee, Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni and Angela Jackson.

"I started developing ideas about developing institutions," says Madhubuti.

Third World Press was born in 1967 with the publication of Carolyn Rodgers' *Paper Soul* and Johari Amini's *Black Essence*. Like the Burroughses, and like Dudley Randall, Madhubuti made his home his business and his business his home, setting up shop in his Englewood basement apartment at 6220 S. Ada. His printing press was a mimeograph machine.

"Third World Press takes risks," says Angela Jackson, the now well-decorated author who got her start when Third World Press published her first poetry collection, *Voodoo/Love Magic*, as part of its First Poets Series in 1974. "It publishes voices that are considered too daring to be published by anybody else. Their commitment is not just

to what's marketable, but for what *should* be marketable. They create their own market. That's very risky but they manage to do it."

Madhubuti funded that initial effort with a four-hundred dollar honorarium he received for a poetry reading. His hustle to sell books had started with Broadside's publication of his first book, *Think Black!* earlier that year, a hustle that saw him hawking copies under the El tracks at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Cottage Grove.

This would set a precedent that continues nearly five decades later: Madhubuti does not take a penny from his book sales, but rather puts all the profits back into the press. The gargantuan success—a million books sold—of his *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous? The Afrikan American Family in Transition* in 1990 enabled Third World Press to purchase the Catholic campus in which it houses its offices today.

Nor does Madhubuti accept a salary for his work as Third World Press' president. That generosity, that instinct toward service, extends to the whole Third World Press operation. Rose Perkins, who for 21 years has been Third World's office manager and Madhubuti's assistant, remembers her first year with the press. Rose's mother had died. Rose had not been there long enough to form a personal connection with her colleagues, and yet there Madhubuti was. He pressed pause on his busy schedule of travel, teaching and writing to visit and talk to Rose, to offer his condolences. "He understood, and I'll always remember that," Rose says.

That combination of passion and compassion drove Madhubuti's mission.

"He was very serious and very focused," says Useni Eugene Perkins, whose book *Home Is A Dirty Street* Third World Press published in 1975. "He was and is very committed to Black people. He saw that we were in a struggle, and even today sees it that way."

Useni is one of the few writers whose career spans from the tail end of the Chicago Renaissance through the Black Arts Movement and into today. He says that, "Haki became the spokesperson for the literature."

The first books were thin, attractive volumes—vivid though done in black and white; a feel of the ancient though the style was quite contemporary; bursting with importance and life. More titles rolled off the Third World Presses: *Half Black, Half Blacker, Let's Go Some Where, To The Bitter End, Jello, Blackness and the Adventure of Western Culture, Tiger Who Wore White Gloves, Blues For An African Princess, I Am that We May Be, Juju (Magic Songs for the Black Nation), The Blue Narrator.*

“Haki started publishing books that probably would not have been published by predominately white publishing companies,” Useni says. “It gave many of us an opportunity to get our works distributed in the movement. That’s what we were concerned about—Black issues. Political issues. Economic issues. Cultural issues. Issues that would hopefully inform the Black community about the struggle we were engaged in.”

The mainstream white literary establishment, even here in Chicago, has rarely reviewed Third World Press titles. Big box bookstore chains, and even most independent white stores, do not carry Third World Press titles. But Madhubuti’s vision, his integrity, never faltered, and Third World Press books did anywhere from just fine to WOW. Madhubuti’s own books, of course, have sold in big numbers, not only upon release but steadily through the backlist. Gwendolyn Brooks’ titles have sold and sold and sold, in particular *In Montgomery*, *Maud Martha* and *Blacks*. Chancellor Williams’ *Destruction of Black Civilization* was a huge seller. In 2006, Third World became the first African-American press ever to reach No. 1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list, with *The Covenant with Black America*.

Third World Press titles sell well at independent Black bookstores, Black universities and colleges, Black conferences and festivals, even independent businesses like gift shops. Free-lancers go to the major Black literary events and move Third World Press books, sometimes out of their cars. “Wherever Black people congregate, we’re able to sell books,” says Madhubuti.

In addition to the sales, there are the TWP donations—whole libraries in some cases—to prisons, schools and other institutions.

“My whole modus operandi has been one of service,” says Madhubuti.

All the while, the honor roll of TWP authors has grown in stature. Sonia Sanchez. Mari Evans. Hoyt W. Fuller. Amiri Baraka. Margaret Walker. Sterling Plumpp. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. Woody King, Jr. Fred Hord. Gwendolyn Brooks. And on and on.

While other Black publishing houses have crumbled, Third World Press has risen up. The TWP headquarters upgraded from Madhubuti’s basement, to two storefronts at 79th and Ellis, to its own building at Cottage Grove and 75th, to, finally, its current lush setup at 79th and Dobson. TWP purchased the former church rectory for around eight hundred thousand dollars in 1992 and has spent the ensuing decades making it a museum-quality space with art and memorabilia and books reflecting Madhubuti’s roots and experience.

“Third World Press is and has been for quite some time an almost singular voice,” says Quraysh Ali Lansana, who served on Chicago State’s faculty alongside Madhubuti for a dozen years, published poetry collections at TWP, and also served as an editor there. “Baba Haki has been committed for so many years to publishing books for, by, and about Black people. Very few people are publishing books that are critical to Black American history—in poetry, non-fiction, fiction, children’s books.” ✍

## Our Host: The Poetry Foundation

P O E T R Y



F O U N D A T I O N

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience.

The Poetry Foundation works to raise poetry to a more visible and influential position in American culture. Rather than celebrating the status quo, the Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry. In the long term, the Foundation aspires to alter the perception that poetry is a marginal art, and to make it directly relevant to the American public.

Established in 2003 upon receipt of a major gift from philanthropist Ruth Lilly, the Poetry Foundation evolved from the Modern Poetry Association, which was founded in 1941 to support the publication of Poetry magazine. The gift from Ruth Lilly has allowed the Poetry Foundation to expand and enhance the presence of poetry in America and has established an endowment that will fund Poetry magazine in perpetuity. ✍



# ***Our Detroit Conference***

(for Don L. Lee)

We met in  
The Digest  
Though I had  
Never Known You

Tall and Black  
But Mostly in  
The Viet Cong  
Image

You didn't smile

Until we had traded  
Green stamps  
For Brownie Points

—Nikki Giovanni, from *Black Feeling Black Talk* @1968

## ***For Haki Madhubuti***

**W**ords are the lifeblood of writers. Though I must admit I don't know if we dream in words or if we word our dreams.

Words are like quilts. You have to put a bunch together to make something warm and comforting or patch together something that will prick and scratch the spirit. No matter how we weave this experience, we sculpt an idea and shape a phrase.

A phrase. Usually we find phrases to describe whatever it is. No word is sufficient to stand alone. Not even strong words like FREEDOM or soft words like LOVE. They all are better when added to...for example FOR ALL...or *Je t'aime*. Love phrases work in all languages.

The human experiment has turned on many important phrases WE THE PEOPLE, **taxation without representation** and even things like REMEMBER THE MAINE. There are other political phrases like LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ. I especially like WE SHALL OVERCOME. There are personal phrases like **Yes**. Which may be the only one-word phrase we ever use. **No** requires a bit more. There are personal phrases such as **You Look Beautiful** and **I am so proud of you** but maybe that's a sentence not a phrase.

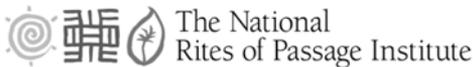
The human imagination is the engine that has carried us from caves in Europe, from the rain forests of South America, from the lush and mineral-rich lands of Africa, from the beautiful amber waves of North America, from the roaring seas and the frozen tundra to this meeting with these artists here at Virginia Tech and, in fact, to wherever humans gather.

There are philosophical phrases, theological phrases, scientific phrases, economic phrases, political phrases, phrases to explain and express. BUT

there is one phrase that, if a phrase could be said to jump-start the human heart, we all know and love. Writers took up this phrase from the griots and soothsayers of old. As we began this journey with words, which is yet ever expanding our emotional and physical universe, we still find in our darkest hours and our most joyful moments the need to gather 'round the fire, or circle the wagons, or tuck into bed the young and the old with the enchantment of that magical phrase "Once Upon A Time..." We know the storyteller has arrived. We comfort our spirits to think and dream. We know those other magical words will follow: In A Land Far Away...and our imagination can soar safe within the hopes and sometimes the prayers.

—Nikki Giovanni, From *Chasing Utopia* ©2013 

# **BLACK CHILD JOURNAL**



***PROUDLY CONGRATULATES  
DR. HAKI R. MADHUBUTI  
FOR BEING AWARDED THE  
CHICAGO LITERARY HALL OF FAME  
2015 FULLER AWARD***

**USENI EUGENE PERKINS**

**PUBLISHER**

**PAUL HILL JR.**

**CO - PUBLISHER**

**DR. MICHAEL EDWARDS**

**EDITOR**

## *big mama wud call him a book-monger*

alway(s) arm(d)  
wif Us walk & talk  
& care-ree-in on(s)

big mama wud call him Red

a (u)dig-  
nee-terry

wud say hey ol' man  
dat be how u wear Us  
in a suit  
blk!

but i call him  
Us Gatekeeper

Baba Hot Blk!

so tight & together  
got him in my bookshelf  
wif two name(s)

& dat be mo den cool  
big mama I dat be rite on!

—*avery r. young* 

““ Haki Madhubuti, beginning as Don L. Lee, in the late 60s and 70s inspired a generation of Black college students. His poetry gave cause to a generation of young Black poets full of revolutionary passion and purpose. He was a founding member of the OBAC (Organization of Black American Culture) Writers Workshop and one of its chief guides and leading lights. He co-founded Third World Press and he maintained that dream of an independent and soul-inspired Black and progressive publishing house. His has been a lifetime of greatness and there is more to come ””

—Angela Jackson, poet, novelist and playwright

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“ I see him as a quiet, humble person. He has never tooted his own horn. If you know him as a great author, or a great businessman, or a great teacher, you know it because you saw it, not because he told you. He’s a unique human being. ”

—Rose L. Perkins, office manager and assistant

“ Haki Madhubuti has provided a powerful role model for Black artists through his writings, social activism and uncompromising, decades-long leadership of Third World Press. ”

—Sandra Seaton, playwright

**Special Thanks:** To Bob Boone for a generous donation to make this event possible. Sandra Seaton for donating the wine and audio reel of Haki's 1970s poetry performance. To Rana Segal for videotaping the event. To Soul Vegetarian for their food. To behind-the-scene toilers Lisa Wagner, Gwendolyn Mitchell, Bayo Ojikutu, Shahari Moore, Valya Lupescu, Richard Reeder, Randy Richardson. Rose Perkins, Ken Warren, Denise Billups, Carol Saper, Jill Zylke, Charles Osgood and Robin Metz; to every participant in tonight's program; to all the supporters who wrote tributes; and to all the others who've helped out with time and expertise. ✍️

“ Baba Haki is our cultural gatekeeper blk! Our talk, walk and vulnerability. Our screams, cries, concerns and consciousness are within his grip. Often I hear his voice echoing, 'Go into a person's house and see what's on their walls and inside their bookshelves, and you can tell who they are and what they are all about.' Every time I add to my walls and my bookshelves. Especially, my bookshelves where this man's name come up in two kinds, I am honored to say our gatekeeper is tangible - a grip away. His work and walk as a man, greatly informs any and everything, I call myself creating. I too, am all about the gatekeeping and Baba Haki makes me understand that this gatekeeping should be evident within my penmanship.

Power be a people. ”

—avery r. young, writer, performer and educator

“ One of the things I've always appreciated about Haki is that he does not raise his voice. His intensity and commitment and incisive critique of things as they are never flag but he has the unique capacity to deliver them all without resort to theatrics or stridency. I'm not sure others could pull that off. Whether it's an inner calm that allows him to catch flies with honey instead of vinegar I don't know but however he achieves it, I think that smooth, reasonable voice has allowed him to be heard when others wear us out with their unmodulated noise. ”

—Rosellen Brown, writer and teacher



# *Congratulations*

to a poet  
I've known  
and admired  
for two decades.

*—Bob Boone*

## **The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame**

The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's mission is to honor and preserve Chicago's great literary heritage. We do this through educational programming, awards, exhibits and other special events, particularly our annual Fuller Award (tonight) and our annual induction ceremony (Dec. 5 at Roosevelt University's Ganz Hall). We are also in the process of creating a repository of detailed information about Chicago's past, present and future literary life, through such projects as the Chicago Literary Map, the Chicago Book of the Day, and the Chicago Literary Calendar.

In the first half of next year alone, the CLHOF will celebrate the lives and careers of Rane Aroyo, Margaret T. Burroughs, Floyd Dell, Alice Judson Hayes, Upton Sinclair and Theodore Ward. It will also present an exhibition on literary spies and participate in numerous literary festivals and conferences.

The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that relies on small individual contributions to sustain our mission. Please consider a modest donation to help us fund our operations and programming—give us a little and we'll do a lot. Tax deductible donations can be made through our website (<http://www.chicagoliteraryhof.org/>) or by sending a check to:

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