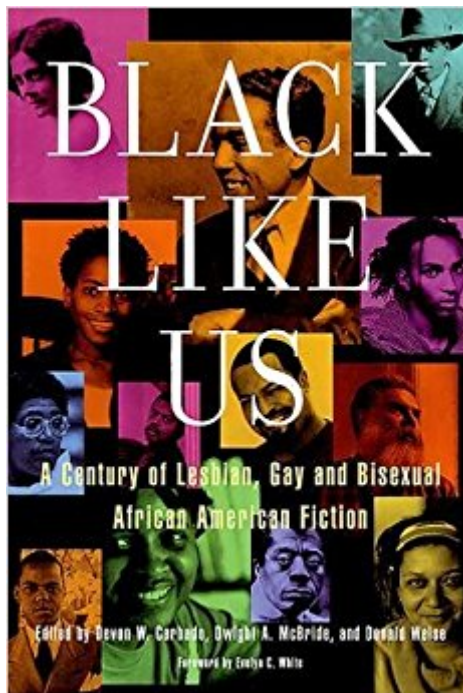


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# Black Like Us: A Century Of Lesbian, Gay, And Bisexual African American Fiction



## Synopsis

Winner of the 2003 Lambda Literary Award for Fiction Anthology Showcasing the work of literary giants like Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, and writers whom readers may be surprised to learn were "in the life," *Black Like Us* is the most comprehensive collection of fiction by African American lesbian, gay, and bisexual writers ever published. From the Harlem Renaissance to the Great Migration of the Depression era, from the postwar civil rights, feminist, and gay liberation movements, to the unabashedly complex sexual explorations of the present day, *Black Like Us* accomplishes a sweeping survey of 20th century literature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One result of the combined American prejudice against both blacks and sexual minorities is that as these voices finally come to light, they seem astonishingly new. The words of Alice Dunbar Nelson or Angelina Welde Grimke, both of whom wrote at the turn of the twentieth century, are as fresh to us as the novels of E. Lynn Harris. This groundbreaking and beautifully crafted anthology--a graduate seminar in a single volume--reveals a hidden tradition, no less powerful for being filtered quietly from writer to writer, sometimes between the lines of published stories or novels. All the writers you would expect are gathered here--Langston Hughes (represented by his incomparable story, "Blessed Assurance," posthumously published in 1963), Countee Cullen, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde--beside scores of lesser-known figures. Many of the contemporary writers included are out of the closet, but not widely read as gay. The unifying factor is the high quality of the work, rare

in a collection such as this. With historical introductions, author profiles, and an extensive bibliography, *Black Like Us* is a sparkling scholarly accomplishment, as well as a fantastic, accessible read. --Regina Marler --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The editors of this fine paperback original Carbado (law and African American studies, UCLA), Dwight A. McBride (English and African American studies, Northwestern Univ.), and Donald Weise (Gore Vidal: Sexually Speaking) here offer an overview of 100 years of African American queer fiction that affirms rather than negates the interconnections among race, gender, and sexuality. All the usual names are here James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, April Sinclair, Alice Walker, etc. but the editors also do a great service in resurrecting lesser-known writers such as Owen Dodson. Whether the 36 authors are represented by a short story or by excerpts from their novels, the selections as a whole show them to be exemplars of "black queer writing." Additionally, each of the three main sections features a lengthy critical overview of queer writing from the eras covered (the Harlem Renaissance, the postwar period, and contemporary gay life), with brief biographical information preceding each piece. Although the editors make no claims for this being a definitive study, most readers will be pleased with the collection's impressive breadth. Highly recommended for all libraries as a complement to Shawn S. Ruff's *Go the Way Your Blood Beats*. Anthony J. Adam, A & M Univ. Lib., Prairie View, TX Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I would recommend to anyone in this community

This book is informative and a excellent history book. I recommend this book for anyone who is interested in learning about the rich black gay history.

I find this book interesting because it revealed the truth about many African American writers. The list of gay authors extends back into the 19th century. Most gay authors kept their sexuality a secret particularly in the early decades of the 20th century because of the prejudices against openly gay people. I do not personally judge writers concerning their sexuality but the content of their material. Gay people should read this book.

*Black Like Us* should be on every bookshelf of people of color. I was born in Harlem and raised in Brooklyn; my affinity for the Harlem Renaissance period is strong even today. Each chapter is

divided from the 1900s to 2000, and they are appropriately named. A small biography is placed before the excerpt and what book it was taken from. Devon W. Carbado sectioned the book into different time periods. During the Protest Era a quote jumped off the pages at me "To be white male in America and realize your gayness and find out your oppressed is a very different thing than being oppressed all your life as a woman of color." In Harlem during the 1920s we witnessed a cultural firecracker with books like never before. I wonder how many of those books were written from Wallace Thurman's boarding house at 136th Street called the Niggerati Manor? There is an American Folk saying; if you want to keep something secret from black folks put it between the covers of a book. Nowadays that is not the case. With titles like *Black Like Us* and *The Greatest Taboo* by Delroy Constantine curiosity is winning. *Black Like Us* makes me feel proud of the many literary giants included in this work, empowering and sending us love. It is the stories and quotes from this book that will keep *Black Like Us* as a reference tool on reader's shelves for years to come. Julie Blackwomon offers an excerpt from *Voyages Out 2* titled "Symbols," a short story that reflects Julie's own life. She makes a very intriguing statement, "coming out of the closet is more than just a 'gay thing'" It is my hope that authors like these in *Black Like Us* help to cease the homophobia in the gay and heterosexual African American community. I thoroughly enjoyed this treasure and how it examines literature.

*Black Like Us* is an anthology that EVERYONE should invest in. The writing within this book is a crucial part of our literary history. Even if you aren't as interested in the history behind this book, you'll still enjoy the exquisite writing! Highly recommend!

Books that are "important," significant historically, academically, and politically, are more often than not, BORING. *BLACK LIKE US* is anything BUT boring. I collect anthologies but rarely have I read one from cover to cover. The collection of work from *Queer Black Writers* is composed in such a way that engages the reader from start to finish. The accompanying essays from Carbado and Weise are insightful and written with great intelligence and love for the work. What are you doing reading this review? Buy this BOOK now! And look, the darn thing is on SALE!

Anthologies are a great way to review various books - fiction and non-fiction - in a specific category. "*Black Like Us*" opened my mind to new authors (such as Richard Bruce Nugent) that I would have never inquired about. I suggest this anthology to anyone who is wants to know more about LGBT African-American novelist. The best thing is that the book is divided into chronological

parts. The introduction to each part - Harlem Renaissance, Contemporary Writers, etc - is a must read. You get a history lesson, excerpts and brief bios of each author and time period. A MUST READ.

In this world of the politically correct parry, it's good to know that the folks at Cleis Press do not suffer from the "me too" school of publishing. With BLU, readers are taken on an omnibus of writers that expand traditional boundaries of race and sexual preference. And it's about time. If you care about expanding your consciousness and folks who seek to shed light where there was none or little, then get a copy of BLU and get on the bus.

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