



NEWS

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN POET TOUCHES HEARTS ON METRO BUSES DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

"this poem waits for you to cross over
to cross over the heartbeat touch of your healing
hands, touching hands, touching hearts
this poem waits for you to cross over
to cross over love, this poem waits for you
to cross over, to cross over love
this poem waits for you to crossover
too crossover, too, love"

— from "Avalanche" by Quincy Troupe

These words from celebrated Southland African-American poet Quincy Troupe will grace the interior of all Metro buses during February, Black History Month. Troupe is one of two dozen poets whose works will be mounted inside Metro buses as part of Poetry in Motion/LA™, a year-long program which was inaugurated in Los Angeles last October, and which is the most recent addition to a celebrated national program conceived by the Poetry Society of America.

In addition to Troupe, the works of three other African-American poets have been included in the program. They include: "False Spring," by Wanda Coleman (January 1999); "Wipe That Smile Off Your Aphasia," by Harryette Mullen (June 1999); and "Luck," by Langston Hughes (August 1999). Poets Coleman and Mullen also live in Southern California.

"It is appropriate that the work of one of our finest African-American poets be selected for this fine program during Black History Month," said Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board 1st Vice Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. "Ultimately, the words of the poets represented in this program speak to the experiences of all of us, no matter our race, religion or national origin."

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Quincy Troupe is the author of 10 books, five of which are collections of poetry including "Weather Reports: New and Selected Poems" and "Avalanche." Troupe's forthcoming book "Choruses" will be published this fall. He is Professor of Creative Writing and American and Caribbean Literature at the University of California at San Diego.

Wanda Coleman is a native of Los Angeles who currently has seven books in print including a new collection of poems entitled "Bathwater Wine." Coleman is a recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation and the California Arts Council.

Harryette Mullen lives and works in Santa Monica and has authored four collections of poetry including her most recent volume "Muse and Drudge." Mullen is a professor of African-American Literature, Poetry and Women's Studies and currently teaches at UCLA.

Poetry in Motion/LA™ is a collaboration of the Poetry Society of America, the Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, the Santa Monica Big Blue Bus and the MTA.

Two poems printed on separate colorful placards are mounted each month in each of MTA's 2,200 Metro buses. The two dozen poems were selected by the Poetry Society of America which looked for works that were relatively short, upbeat and representative of the demographic diversity of the Los Angeles area. Several of the poems are in Spanish.

Some of the participating poets will conduct readings at selected Metro Bus stops in April, National Poetry Month.

The Poetry Society of America has worked with transportation agencies and cultural institutions in New York City, Chicago, Portland, Atlanta and Baltimore to bring Poetry in Motion™ to over 8 million daily public transit users.

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Editors Note: Photographs of Quincy Troupe, Wanda Coleman and Harryette Mullen mounting their poetry placards on a Metro Bus are available upon request.