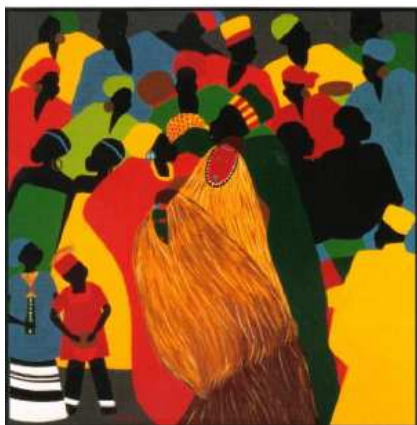


AFRICAN AMERICAN NOVELS



Celebration, by Synthia Saint James

**Find these titles and many more
at the Fred. C. Fischer Library:**

Beatty, Paul.

White Boy Shuffle, 1996.

A novel about Gunnar Kaufman, an awkward black surfer bum, who is moved by his mother from Santa Monica to urban West Los Angeles.

Briscoe, Connie.

Big Girls Don't Cry, 1996.

Born into a comfortable Washington, D.C., home, Naomi leads a life that is only occasionally marred by racism. But all that changes when her older brother, Joshua is killed in a tragic car accident on his way to a civil rights demonstration.

Burton, Rainelle. *The Root Worker*, 2001.

Ellen, an 11-year-old African-American girl growing up in Detroit in the 1960s, is afraid of her teachers, the nuns at the Catholic school she attends. She is afraid of her mother, who holds her responsible for her family's ills. But more than anything, she fears the Root Worker, a voodoo priestess who has Ellen's mother under her sway.

Butler, Octavia. *Parable of the Sower*, 1993.

In a futuristic America, where the gap between the haves and have-nots spawns anarchy, an empath crippled by the pain she feels in others, becomes the leader of a band of seekers after her world is shattered by random violence.

Campbell, Bebe Moore. *Singing in the Comeback Choir*, 1998.

Maxine McCoy has come a long way from the working-class neighborhood where she grew up--a neighborhood she must revisit when she receives a call of concern about her grandmother.

Campbell, Bebe Moore. *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*, 1992.

In the South for the summer, Chicago-born teen Armstrong Todd utters a few innocent words to a white woman and must pay with his life.

Clarke, Breena. *River, Cross My Heart*, 1997.

Eight-year-old Clara Bynum is dead, drowned in the Potomac River in the shadow of an apparently haunted rock outcropping known locally as the Three Sisters.

Cleage, Pearl. *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*, 1997.

This novel focuses on an HIV-positive woman who seeks solace and refuge for the summer in her hometown with her widowed sister.

Danticat, Edwidge. *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, 1994.

The story begins in Haiti, when young Sophie discovers that she is about to leave the only home she has ever known to go live with her mother in New York City.

Dickey, Eric Jerome. *Liar's Game*, 2000.

Dana Ann Smith leaves her husband in New York and finds new love in Los Angeles, only to learn that her new beau has a rocky romantic past . . . and his ex is coming to L.A. So, for that matter, is Dana's ex-husband.

Dickey, Eric Jerome. *Milk in My Coffee*, 1998.

When Jordan Greene shares a ride with a vivacious young white girl, a romance grows between the unlikely pair, much to the chagrin of Jordan's friends and family.

Elam, Patricia. *Breathing Room*, 2001.

A novel about the lives of two completely different women whose friendship has helped them weather just about everything. But now they're at a crossroads where understanding may not be enough.

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*, 1952.

An African-American man's search for success and the American dream leads him out of college to Harlem and a growing sense of personal rejection and social invisibility.

Gaines, Ernest. *A Lesson Before Dying*, 1993.

A young man who returns to 1940s Cajun country to teach visits a black youth on death row for a crime he didn't commit. Together they come to understand the heroism of resisting.

Harris, E. Lynn. *And This Too Shall Pass*, 1996.

Zurich Robinson is a young black starting quarterback for an NFL expansion team who, after refusing the sexual advances of a local sportscaster, finds himself accused of her rape. Readers know he didn't do it, because he's staying celibate while he figures out his sexual identity.

Harris, E. Lynn. *If This World Were Mine*, 1997.

Four friends, all graduates of Hampton Institute, keep a collective journal they call "If This World Were Mine," and share their personal diaries each month at a gathering filled with humor, gossip, and affirmation.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 1937.

Fair and long-legged, independent and articulate, Janie Crawford sets out to be her own person -- no mean feat for a black woman in the 1930s. Janie's quest for identity takes her through three marriages and into a journey back to her roots.

Jackson, Sheneka. *Lil' Mama's Rules*, 1997.

Madison, nicknamed Li'l Mama, was raised in the projects, the daughter of a man and woman who never married. Madison rarely saw her father, and she is wounded by it. She maintains a list of dating don'ts that grows with each male encounter.

Jackson, Sheneka. *Blessings*, 1998.

At the center of the novel are four vibrant women who are searching for happiness as they grapple with such difficult issues as female bonding, infertility, adoption, abortion, and child discipline.

Jenkins, Beverly. *Night Song*, 1994.

Far from loving a man in uniform, soldiers remind young schoolteacher Cora Lee Henson of the time Union soldiers lynched her grandfather, until she meets the dashing Sergeant Chase Jefferson of the Tenth Colored Cavalry.

Jenkins, Beverly. *Vivid*, 1995.

Struggling to find work as an African-American woman in 1876, dedicated doctor Vivid Lancaster is determined to make her new practice a success, but she is thwarted by Mayor Nate Grayson, who had thought he hired a man.

Lee, Helen Elaine. *Serpent's Gift*, 1994.

A multigenerational epic about two African-American families offers an intensely detailed look at the Smalls and Staples families, the matriarchs that hold the families together, and the intertwining of their lives.

Little, Benilde. *Good Hair*, 1996.

Alice Andrews, a reporter in Newark, falls in love with handsome, Harvard-educated surgeon Jack Russworm, but class differences--especially his upper-crust African-American background--threaten their romance.

McMillan, Terry. *Disappearing Acts*, 1989.

As their relationship progresses, Franklin Swift and Zora Banks learn about respect, the burdens of the past, the powers of love, and the mystery of desire.

McMillan, Terry. *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*, 1996.

A humorous, lively novel about a woman who unexpectedly finds love but who just might be losing her mind.

McMillan, Terry. *Waiting to Exhale*, 1992.

Four African-American women console and support one another in a complex friendship that helps each of them face the middle of their lives as single women.

Monroe, Mary. *God Don't Like Ugly*, 2000.

The bond between two girls from opposite sides of the track leads to shattering events that change their lives forever.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*, 1987.

In the troubled years following the Civil War, the spirit of a murdered child haunts the Ohio home of a former slave.

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*, 1970.

The tragic story of a black adolescent girl's struggle to achieve white ideals of beauty and her consequent descent into madness.

Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*, 1977.

Each member of Macon Dead's family was haunted by a wild obsession – his father's desire for money, his mother's need for love, his sister's silence, and his aunt's madness.

Morrison, Toni. *Sula*, 1973.

Sula traces the lives of two black heroines--from their growing up together in a small Ohio town, through their sharply divergent paths of womanhood, to their ultimate confrontation and reconciliation.

Mosley, Walter. *Devil in a Blue Dress*, 1990.

Private detective Easy Rawlins has been caught on the wrong side of the most dangerous secret in town when he is hired to find a woman and gets mixed up in a murderous political scandal.

Mosley, Walter. *White Butterfly*, 1992.

When a white co-ed is murdered in the same way that a series of black women were murdered recently, L.A. police coerce detective Easy Rawlins to become involved in the case.

Naylor, Gloria. *Mama Day*, 1988.

On the island of Willow Springs, off the Georgia coast, the powers of healer Mama Day are tested by her great niece, Cocoa, a stubbornly emancipated woman endangered by the island's darker forces.

Neely, Barbara.

Blanche Passes Go, 2000.

Blanche White, Barbara Neely's smart, queen-sized, middle-aged African American sleuth, is a no-nonsense dame who's carrying some old baggage when she takes the summer off from cleaning houses for rich Boston matrons and returns to her North Carolina hometown.

Roy, Lucinda.

The Hotel Alleluia, 2000.

The story of two half sisters, one white and one black, who share the same mother. Separated at a young age, they grow up continents apart. Joan becomes an independent, successful businesswoman in North Carolina. Ursuline is left behind as an orphan in Africa, where she teaches art and English at a convent school.

Roy, Lucinda.

Lady Moses, 1998.

A novel about a young bi-racial woman and her impassioned struggle to overcome adversity and forge her own identity.

Sapphire.

Push, 1996.

A courageous and determined young teacher opens up a new world of hope and redemption for sixteen-year-old Precious Jones, an abused young African-American girl living in Harlem, who was raped and left pregnant by her father.

Smith, Mary Burnett.

Miss Ophelia, 1997.

Belly Anderson, now in the autumn of her life, reminisces about the last summer of her childhood, a time when she learns a terrible secret about a close friend--a secret that forces Belly to grow up and learn what it really means to be an adult.

Straight, Susan.

I Been in Sorrow' Kitchen and Licked Out All the Pots, 1992.

A rich, passionate first novel featuring a strong and determined African American woman living in contemporary South Carolina.

Walker, Alice.

By the Light of My Father's Smile, 1998.

Susannah and Magdalene are sisters estranged from each other and their parents since adolescence. As each woman expresses her loneliness and anger, they are observed by their father's ghost, who seeks a reconciliation with them that comes only after their deaths.

Walker, Alice.

The Color Purple, 1982.

Two African American sisters, one a missionary in Africa and the other a child-wife living in the South, support each other through their correspondence, beginning in the 1920s.

Walker, Alice.

Possessing the Secret of Joy, 1992.

Prompted by misguided loyalty to the customs of her people, Tashi Johnson, a tribal African woman living in North America, endures a severely traumatizing tribal initiation rite of passage, an experience that affects her sense of identity.

Walker, Alice.

The Temple of My Familiar, 1989.

In a story spanning 500,000 years and moving through England, Africa, and America, men, women, and animals share a spiritual world and come to understand the intricacies of their connecting lives.

Whitehead, Colson.

The Intuitionist, 1999.

It is a time of calamity in a major metropolitan city's Department of Elevator Inspectors, and Lila Mae Watson, the department's first black female inspector, is at the center of it.