

December 2016

## A Performance Analysis of Dorothy Rudd Moore's Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death

Cordelia Elizabeth Anderson  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [American Studies Commons](#), [Music Commons](#), and the [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Anderson, Cordelia Elizabeth, "A Performance Analysis of Dorothy Rudd Moore's Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death" (2016). *UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones*. 2848. <http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/10083122>

This Dissertation is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Dissertation in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Dissertation has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact [digitalscholarship@unlv.edu](mailto:digitalscholarship@unlv.edu).

A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF DOROTHY RUDD MOORE'S SONNETS ON LOVE,  
ROSEBUDS, AND DEATH

By

Cordelia Elizabeth Anderson

Bachelor of Arts  
Alabama State University  
2007

Master of Music  
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale  
2010

A document submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Musical Arts

School of Music  
College of Fine Arts  
The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
December 2016

Copyright by Cordelia E. Anderson 2016

All Rights Reserved



## **Dissertation Approval**

The Graduate College  
The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

October 24, 2016

This dissertation prepared by

Cordelia Elizabeth Anderson

entitled

A Performance Analysis of Dorothy Rudd Moore's Sonnets on Love Rosebuds, and  
Death

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts  
School of Music

Alfonse Anderson, D.M.A.  
*Examination Committee Chair*

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.  
*Graduate College Interim Dean*

Linda Lister, D.M.A.  
*Examination Committee Member*

Tod Fitzpatrick, D.M.A.  
*Examination Committee Member*

Kenneth Hanlon, D.M.A.  
*Examination Committee Member*

Nate Bynum, M.F.A.  
*Graduate College Faculty Representative*

## ABSTRACT

A Performance Analysis of Dorothy Rudd Moore's Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death

by

Cordelia Elizabeth Anderson

Dr. Alfonse Anderson, Advisory Committee Chair

Professor of Music

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The purpose of this document is to evaluate Dorothy Rudd Moore's *Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death* through a performance analysis, and to discuss the significance of the Harlem Renaissance in relation to the song cycle. Moore used seven reputable poets from the Harlem Renaissance to compile this song cycle. The poets are Alice Dunbar Nelson, Clarissa Scott Delany, Gwendolyn Bennett, Langston Hughes, Arna Bontemps, Countee Cullen, and Helene Johnson. A few of them were a part of the core group that spurred this powerful movement. The Harlem Renaissance was a flourishing time in American history when African Americans felt the liberation to express themselves through the cultural arts. This document is comprised of: an historical overview of The Harlem Renaissance, the life and works of the poets, a biographical sketch of the composer, a detailed performance guide of the music, and a conclusion based upon the text in connection to the song cycle.

After World War I, many African Americans who were living in the southern states decided to migrate to the northern states to find a better life. This transition is known as the “Great Migration.” Many African Americans settled in Harlem, New York, where they could find jobs, education, and social advancement. Out of this movement grew the advancement of African- American artists, poets, musicians, playwrights, and dancers. As an African -American female composer, Dorothy Rudd Moore was able to capture the essence of these poets in her music, being only a generation apart from the founders of the movement. The performance aspect of this music can be challenging, yet rewarding in many ways. As a woman of color and a classical singer, I believe it is important to discuss the Harlem Renaissance poetry along with Moore’s compositional style and the advantages and challenges in the performance practice of this song cycle.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge everyone who provided me with the possibilities to complete this document. First, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Alfonse Anderson, for serving as my advisor, as well as for his guidance during my doctoral studies at UNLV. I would also like to thank Dr. Linda Lister, Prof. Nate Bynum, Dr. Tod Fitzpatrick, and Dr. Ken Hanlon for being such a huge support system while serving on my doctoral committee. I appreciate all of their time and assistance with completing this process and this document.

I would like to give a special thanks to my wonderful colleague Carrie Schuster-Wachsberger for all of the countless hours spent studying for comps and writing sessions to get through this process. I am grateful for the genuine friendship and motivation that I have found in Carrie to the bitter end. I am also grateful for Carrie's father, Ken Wachsberger, a fine writer and editor who took his personal time to edit my document. Thank you for your sincerity in assisting me in this effort. I would also like to thank Faustino Solis for taking time out of his busy schedule to assist me in the preparation of the music examples for this document; I am grateful for your sacrifice and diligence. A special thanks to my friend, Minister Sage Barnwell who has prayed countless days and nights and encouraged me to push during the most difficult portion of this process. I am thankful for his many words of wisdom. A heartfelt thanks to my newly found friend, Richard Hodges, it was his many days of encouragement and laughs that allowed me to finish this race with ease. Lastly, my sincere thanks to Dr. Harriet Barlow for being such a huge support system during my time at UNLV. There was nothing that I could ask of her that she would not make it her priority to handle it on my behalf, for that, I am forever grateful.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my best friend, a woman of honor, loyalty, and grace, my mother, Valere' R. Anderson. Along with my father, Allen C. Anderson, they have supported me spiritually, mentally, and most important, financially. This entire journey would not have been possible without their wisdom, knowledge, and strength. Also to my incredible twin brothers, Corvell S. Anderson, and Corval R. Anderson, thanks for always being so supportive of your sister. My family has a bond that is so strong, built upon God, faith, and love; I would not have it any other way. This document would have not been possible without these wonderful people in my life. Above all, thank you for your patience and support through my journey.



## DEDICATION

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am nothing without you and your love, kindness, and grace.

I love you, forever.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER ONE      THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE .....	1
The Beginning of an Era.....	1
Social Contributions.....	4
Economic Impact .....	7
CHAPTER TWO      THE POETS.....	9
Alice Dunbar Nelson.....	9
Clarissa Scott Delany .....	11
Gwendolyn Bennett .....	13
Langston Hughes .....	17
Arna Bontemps .....	20
Countee’ Cullen .....	22
Helene Johnson .....	25
CHAPTER THREE   DOROTHY RUDD MOORE .....	28
Life and Experiences.....	28
Compositional Characteristics .....	33
CHAPTER 4                  PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS SONNETS ON LOVE, ROSEBUDS, AND DEATH .....	35

I Had No Thoughts of Violets of Late .....	36
Joy .....	39
Some Things Are Very Dear to Me .....	41
He Came in Silvern Armor .....	43
Song for a Dark Girl .....	46
Idolatry .....	48
Youth Sings a Song of Rosebuds.....	49
Invocation .....	52
 CHAPTER 5            CONCLUSION.....	 54
 APPENDIX            TERMS USED IN THE POETY/GLOSSARY .....	 57
 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	 60
 CURRICULUM VITA .....	 63

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 .....	37
Table 4.2 .....	40
Table 4.3 .....	42
Table 4.4 .....	44
Table 4.5 .....	46
Table 4.6 .....	48
Table 4.7 .....	50
Table 4.8 .....	52

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 .....	39
Figure 4.2 .....	41
Figure 4.3 .....	43
Figure 4.4 .....	45
Figure 4.5 .....	47
Figure 4.6 .....	49
Figure 4.7 .....	51
Figure 4.8 .....	53

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

#### The Beginning of an Era

After World War I the United States had many unsettling issues with equality began to be more prominently addressed among the African-American race. These issues were happening in the South which caused a huge migration, referred to as “The Great Migration,” to northern cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, and mainly New York City. African-Americans moved with the intention of finding a new way of life. “The heavy migration of blacks from the South during the war years had brought thousands into Harlem, and this population was augmented by a large influx of black people from the West Indies. The war industries had provided Harlemites with good jobs, so people had money to spend.”<sup>1</sup> Now that African-Americans had access to public resources, such as the theaters and jazz clubs, many were ready to venture into the music and arts scene of Harlem.

Race riots through music, poetry, and artistry were more common than not during this time in American history. “In New York, the nation’s business, cultural, and intellectual center—and particularly in Harlem, the undeclared capital of Negro intellectual life---black artists began to rally their forces. Writers, poets, painters, and musicians joined together to protest in their own way against the quality of life for black folk in the United States. Out of this grew a movement that has been called ‘The Harlem Renaissance’ or ‘The Black Renaissance’ or ‘The New Negro Movement.’”<sup>2</sup> In its beginnings, it was a literary movement that was sparked by James Weldon Johnson’s publication of *Fifty Years and Other Poems*, (1917). James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Alain Locke, and Charles S. Johnson served as mentors to the main group of leaders for

---

<sup>1</sup> Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1971), 436-37.

<sup>2</sup> Southern, 413.

this movement: Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Rudolf Fisher, Wallace Thurman, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Nella Larsen, Arna Bontemps, Countee Cullen, and Zora Neale Hurston.

In its beginnings, the Harlem Renaissance acknowledged only the literary works and paintings of these aspiring poets and artists before music was even considered as a part of this movement. “Spanning the 1920s to the mid-1930s, the Harlem Renaissance was a literary, artistic, and intellectual movement that kindled a new black cultural identity. Its essence was summed up by critic and teacher Alain Locke in 1926 when he declared that through art, ‘Negro life is seizing its first chances for group expression and self-determination.’ Harlem became the center of a ‘spiritual coming of age’ in which Locke’s ‘New Negro’ transformed ‘social disillusionment to race pride.’ Chiefly literary, the Renaissance included visual arts but excluded jazz, despite its parallel emergence as a black art form.”<sup>3</sup>

Music played a significant role in this movement as well. “Black musicians participated in the movement by turning to the folk music of the race as a source of materials in composition and performance. To be sure, some black composers had been drawing on such materials for a number of years—particularly those who had been associated with the musical nationalism advocated by Dvořák in 1895—but now they become more race conscious than ever.”<sup>4</sup> Musicians believed collaborating with the poets would bring a strong sense of unity within the Black Renaissance Movement.

Jazz was the popular music form of African-Americans during this time in Harlem. Many musicians were forming their own Jazz bands, musicians like Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway,

---

<sup>3</sup> History.com/topics/black-history/harlem-renaissance [accessed February 10, 2016].

<sup>4</sup> Southern, 413.

and Louis Armstrong. These musicians were able to perform in some of the most famous clubs in Harlem that were for white audiences only.

Musicians fared well under the circumstances, particularly entertainers, but also concert artists. As in the larger world, the smaller world of Harlem maintained a color line. Such exclusive night clubs as the Cotton Club on Lenox Avenue and Connie's Inn on 135<sup>th</sup> Street catered to whites, although the performers in the shows were all Negroes, and among the special attractions were the jazz bands of Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway. Most of all the small night clubs that were frequented by both whites and blacks, or blacks only, were concentrated on 133<sup>rd</sup> Street between Lenox and Seventh Avenues and nearby. Edmond's Cellar, where blues singer Ethel Waters obtained her first Harlem club job, was typical of the small clubs patronized by blacks. Its band consisted of a drummer, pianist, and guitarist. The entertainment included singers and dancer-singers, who worked long hours—from nine at night until eight or nine the next morning. Although the entertainers appeared only three or four times during these hours, each appearance lasted for as long as the singer or dancer could keep the attention of the patrons.<sup>5</sup>

During the Jazz era of the Harlem Renaissance, other musicians and composers were creating music that catered to the classical and gospel era through spirituals and folk songs. The text of this music came from some of the works of the literary poets of the Harlem Renaissance. "The composers used poems by black poets in their art songs; they exploited the rhythms of Negro dances and the harmonies and melodies of the blues as well as spirituals. Almost without exception black concert artists began to include on their programs the folk and composed music of Negroes, and some artists staged recitals consisting exclusively of Negro music."<sup>6</sup> This was an exciting time among African-Americans in Harlem. It was an opportunity to express their frustrations with society through the arts.

---

<sup>5</sup> Southern, 437.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 413.



## Social Contributions

Many writers of the Harlem Renaissance belonged to other organizations that helped further the cause for social advancement among African-Americans. Some of these organizations were born during this flourishing time in Harlem. “The various national Negro organizations embarked on more vigorous programs of action to obtain the rights of citizenship for blacks – such groups, for example, as the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, organized 1909), the Urban League (the National League on Urban Conditions, established 1911), the National Race Congress, and the National Baptist Convention.”<sup>7</sup> These organizations held weekly to monthly meetings with the focus on finding new and inventive endeavors to which African-Americans could contribute. It was a great way for people to partner with one another on different strategies that would assist in obtaining a better way of life for people of color. Out of these organizations, many friendships, relationships, and business partnerships were formed.

Not only were there many organizations and groups for businessmen, educators, and literary poets, but there were organizations for African-American musicians as well. These organizations encouraged African-American musicians by acknowledging any achievements accomplished in music. “Various organizations and individuals offered awards and prizes to black musicians who made significant achievements. In 1914 the NAACP instituted the Sprigarn Medal for the Negro who during the period of any one year made the highest achievement in a field of human endeavor. In 1919 the National Association of Negro Musicians was organized “to discover and foster talent, to mold taste, to promote fellowship, and to advocate racial

---

<sup>7</sup> Southern, 412.

expression.”<sup>8</sup> These organizations became a prominent staple in the African American community, expanding their many chapters throughout the United States.

African-American music began to grow during the Harlem Renaissance, even to the genre of Broadway. The combination of theater and contemporary music was popular in New York among the white culture, but had not yet expanded to black America until the Harlem Renaissance. African-American musical comedies on Broadway became a trendy phenomenon. Shows were attended by the blacks and whites.

When *Shuffle Along* opened at the Sixty-third Street Theatre on May 23, 1921, the show made theatrical history. It was the first all-black show to appear on Broadway since the last of famed Walker and Williams shows more than ten years earlier, and it created a vogue for Negro shows that lasted through the depression years. As we have seen, the musical score of the show was written by Eubie Blake, the lyrics by Noble Sissle, and the book by Flournoy Miller and Aubrey Lyles. It was Jim Europe who brought the four men together to collaborate on a musical which would return Negro shows to Broadway. The show was produced with limited funds, which barely allowed the performers to present two-week runs at the Howard Theatre (Negro) in Washington and the Dunbar Theatre (Negro) in Philadelphia before opening up at the old and previously empty Broadway house. *Shuffle Along* was an immediate success. According to James Weldon Johnson in *Black Manhattan*: Within a few weeks *Shuffle Along* made the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street Theater one of the best-known houses in town and made it necessary for the Traffic Department to declare 63<sup>rd</sup> Street a one-way thoroughfare.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to Broadway, the Harlem Renaissance brought classical music to African Americans as well. This movement also experienced a number of notable concerts in New York, while also featuring concert music of black composers or performers. “In 1926, for example, the League of Composers presented a concert at Town Hall that included Jules Bledsoe singing a first performance of the Gruenberg setting of Johnson’s *The Creation*. That same weekend, the International Composers’ Guild included in a concert at Aeolian Hall the premiere of William

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 414.

<sup>9</sup> Southern, 438-39.

Grant Still's symphonic work, *Darker America*. In 1928, a black composer of operas, Lawrence Freeman, produced his opera *Voodoo* at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street Theatre."<sup>10</sup>

Also during this time, the movement was seeing a flourishing of classical singers who were beginning to grace the scene of the concert stage and operas. The first was astounding tenor Roland Hayes whose story embodies the "rags to riches" theme. He began his journey in the church choir and did not realize how talented he was until someone suggested that he should study voice. "Hayes set out for Oberlin with savings of fifty dollars in his pocket. His plan was to give recitals in Negro churches on the way and thereby increase his funds. Instead, he found his funds depleted, for his expenses ate up the compensation he received. Determined to achieve his goal, he applied for admission at nearby Fisk University. He was admitted to the school and he remained there for four years, the last three on scholarship."<sup>11</sup> After a few more years of vocal study, Hayes was asked to join the Fisk Jubilee Singers. While traveling with the group, Hayes was able to audition for a few companies to begin his career in singing on the classical stage.

Another prominent figure in classical music during this era was opera singer Marian Anderson. She as well began singing at a young age in Philadelphia, her birthplace, in a small Baptist church choir. Her parents were very supportive of her pursuing a career as a singer and set up a trust fund so she could travel to Europe to study with Giuseppe Boghetti. She played a significant role in the Harlem Renaissance by breaking racial barriers. "Anderson's career included many notable events, not all of them pleasant. In 1939 the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D.C., refused her permission to sing in Constitution Hall because of her color. Public protest over the incident grew to such proportions that it reached the White House, and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes made arrangements for the great contralto to

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 441.

<sup>11</sup> Southern, 419.

sing in an open-air concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.”<sup>12</sup> After this incident in Washington D.C., she broke another barrier right in the heart of the Harlem Renaissance, in New York’s Metropolitan Opera. In 1955, she became the first Negro to appear with the Metropolitan Opera Company as Ulrica in Verdi’s *Un Ballo in maschera*. These set the tone for many African American opera singers to have successful careers in the classical world of opera.

### Economic Impact

The Harlem Renaissance experienced a number of consecutive years of steady economic growth. An abundance of industrial and factory jobs sought people to work for cheap labor. This need drew many unemployed blacks from the South. Many black-owned businesses were birthed during this era because of this migration.

Business people are a less discussed but key element in the Harlem Renaissance. They started the real estate boom early in the 20th century that produced the concentration of Blacks in one neighborhood (i.e. Harlem). They also put up much of the money for the glamour shown in Harlem. Stores, banks, funeral homes, photographers (such as James Van der Zee), theaters and other commercial establishments (not to speak of nightclubs) made Harlem an exciting and fun-filled place to live, work and visit. Business and professional people were active, entrepreneurs and family businesses flourished. People were often poor but the kind of long term hopeless "culture of poverty" that later became identified with Harlem was not yet in evidence.<sup>13</sup>

The education of blacks is one of the reasons why the Harlem Renaissance saw a tremendous flourish of black-owned businesses. Before the Great Migration, many blacks couldn’t read or write. Outside of the African- American entrepreneurs, education began to spread through the arts, and in particular in music. Many were able to obtain bachelor, master, and even doctoral degrees in music education in order to help educate future African American musicians. “Several of those who published compositions during the 1930s and 40s were more

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 423.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.kurahulanda.com/temporary-harlem-renaissance> [accessed March 1, 2016].

active in the field of music education—as teachers of talented young composers and performers, as leading figures in the organization of musical groups and events, and as representatives and consultants to various national and international music bodies. Oscar Anderson Fuller (b. 1904), singer and composer, was the first Negro to earn a Ph.D. in music in the United States.”<sup>14</sup> This was the beginning of blacks getting the same opportunity as other races.

---

<sup>14</sup> Southern, 452.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE POETS

Alice Dunbar Nelson (1875-1935)

Alice Dunbar Nelson was born in 1875 in New Orleans, Louisiana; a well-known activist and novelist during the Harlem Renaissance. Nelson belonged to the first generation of blacks to be born free in the South after the Civil War. She had an interesting life ranging from her upbringing in Louisiana where her skin color enabled her to pass as a white American, to her rocky relationship with Paul Lawrence Dunbar. Nelson's writings are very unique in nature, and adventurous in form.

Bright, bold, and beautiful, Alice Dunbar-Nelson had a racially ambiguous appearance and well-heeled rearing that allowed her to move easily between various social classes, ethnicities, and races in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century America. Her experiences allowed her a unique perspective on society that she captured with uncanny precision, feeling, insight, and imagination in her writing. At the core of each of her works is a narrator. Whether it is herself, someone she knew, or someone she invented, her narrators lure readers into the lives of Americans whom they otherwise would not have had the inclination or opportunity to know during their real-life experience. To follow Dunbar-Nelson's prose is to embark on a virtual journey into the little-known neighborhoods and homes of her era, witnessing up close the timeless struggles, failings, sorrows, hopes, and valor of ordinary people—black, white, Creole, Cajun, the newly immigrated, or ethnically unspecified.<sup>15</sup>

Nelson wrote countless poems over the years that influenced many writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Her poetry that is relevant to this research is entitled "Sonnet." The actual title of this work describes the type of poetry by which it is categorized. "A sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, in English typically having ten syllables

---

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Alice\\_Dunbar-Nelson.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Alice_Dunbar-Nelson.aspx) [accessed March 2, 2016].

per line.”<sup>16</sup> This work describes what the character knows and understand about love and its effects on a relationship. It is the first poem that is used in Moore’s song cycle.

## SONNET

I had no thought of violets of late,  
The wild, shy kind that spring beneath your feet  
In wistful April days, when lovers mate  
And wander through the fields in raptures sweet.  
The thought of violets meant florists' shops,  
And bows and pins, and perfumed papers fine;  
And garish lights, and mincing little fops  
And cabarets and songs, and deadening wine.  
So far from sweet real things my thoughts had strayed,  
I had forgot wide fields, and clear brown streams;  
The perfect loveliness that God has made,--  
Wild violets shy and Heaven-mounting dreams.  
And now--unwittingly, you've made me dream  
Of violets, and my soul's forgotten gleam.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.google.com/?gws\\_rd=ssl#q=definition+of+a+sonnet](https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=definition+of+a+sonnet) [accessed March 2, 2016].

<sup>17</sup> Dorothy Rudd Moore. “Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death” (American Composers Alliance), 1976.

### Clarissa Scott Delany (1901-1927)

Born in Tuskegee, Alabama, Clarissa Scott Delany was an educator and a social worker that did have an extensive repertoire of poems, because she only lived to be twenty-six years old. During her short life, she was able to find a great deal of success as a writer. She attended Tuskegee Institute, a historically black college, where she gained the knowledge to become a social worker. Delany contributed a great deal to her community by publishing several articles and poetry in *Opportunity*, a popular journal of the Harlem Renaissance. She also had a few opportunities to travel to learn more about her position in this flourishing era. “During her Wellesley years, she attended meetings of the Literary Guild of Boston, where young black people gathered weekly to listen to featured speakers, such as Claude McKay. This was probably her start in political and literary projects, giving shape to her ideas on art and literature; and, as a woman of color, with her particular writing talents, she was at the beginning of her identification with the Harlem Renaissance.”<sup>18</sup>

Delany’s writings were said to have something special and unique about them. “She had a flair for language, good use of metaphors of nature, and she expressed her intensely felt emotions. She had an eye for unique detail, and she undoubtedly would have written more and her work would have matured had she lived longer.”<sup>19</sup> The third of Delany’s four published poems is highlighted as the second poem of Moore’s song cycle, “Joy.” One can describe this piece as the excitement that one feels when they have found new love.

---

<sup>18</sup> <http://029c28c.netsolhost.com/blkren/bios/delanycms.html> [accessed March 2, 2016].

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., [accessed March 2, 2016].



## JOY

Joy shakes me like the wind that lifts a sail,

Like the roistering wind

That laughs through stalwart pines.

It floods me like the sun

On rain-drenched trees

That flash with silver and green,

I abandon myself to joy-

I laugh-I sing.

Too long have I walked a desolate way,

Too long stumbled down a maze

Bewildered.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Moore, 1.

Gwendolyn B. Bennett (1902-1981)

Gwendolyn Bennett is said to be one of the most versatile individuals to participate in the Harlem Renaissance and the Harlem Artist Guild. Bennett was not only a prolific writer, but she was also an illustrator and a graphic artist. She was born in Giddings, Texas, and lived with her father and aunt during her young life. She was the first Negro to join the literary society in her hometown. In 1921, Bennett decided to move to Harlem where she could have more opportunities to grow as a writer. Her poems appeared in *Opportunity*, as well as a few other popular Negro journals, *Crisis*, *Palms*, and *Gypsy*. She had many supporters throughout her career, even while she was an educator in higher learning.

The supportive energy Bennett drew from her contact with her peers helped sustain her whether she was in Harlem or not. She kept her connections alive when she went to teach art at Howard University in 1924. She also maintained contact while studying art in Paris from 1925 to 1926. From France she wrote to Hughes and Cullen giving them the news; each wrote back, giving her news of the opportunities available to Negro artists and urging her to write for publication. Returning to Harlem in 1926, Bennett joined with Hughes, Thurman, Nugent, and a few others to form the editorial board of *Fire!!*, a quarterly journal created to serve the younger African American artists. Bennett's "Wedding Day" first appeared in *Fire!!*. Despite her return to Howard (1927-1928), Bennett relied upon her network contacts as news sources to inform her "Ebony Flute," a literary chitchat and arts news column which she produced for *Opportunity* for almost two years.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, Bennett didn't continue to focus on her writings because of her love for art. "She joined the Harlem Artists Guild; from 1938 to 1941 she directed the Harlem Community Art Center (largest of the Federal Art Projects); she served on the Board of the Negro Playwright's Guild; and she directed the development of the George Washington Carver Community School. In all these capacities Bennett nurtured and fostered the talents of countless

---

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/bennett/life.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/bennett/life.htm) [accessed March 2, 2016].

young African-American artists.”<sup>22</sup> Even though Bennet’s love for poetry soon turned its focus towards art, we can celebrate her words and how they embodied the Black Renaissance movement. Moore decided to use both of Bennet’s sonnets in this song cycle, “He Came in Silvern Armor” and “Some Things Are Very Dear to Me.” Both sonnets deal in metaphoric meaning, each depicting a different view of the world, from the perspective of a white person and a black person. They as well can describe the simple things in life, like finding a new love through fearful and hopeful expectations. In Moore’s song cycle, the sonnets are in reverse order, which creates a more concrete connection to the love story that the song cycle is depicting.

---

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/bennett/life.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/bennett/life.htm) [accessed March 3, 2016].

## SONNETS

### I.

He came in silvern armour, trimmed with black--  
A lover come from legends long ago--  
With silver spurs and silken plumes a-blow,  
And flashing sword caught fast and buckled back  
In a carven sheath of Tamarack.  
He came with footsteps beautifully slow,  
And spoke in voice meticulously low.  
He came and Romance followed in his track . .  
I did not ask his name--I thought him Love;  
I did not care to see his hidden face.  
All life seemed born in my intaken breath;  
All thought seemed flown like some forgotten dove.  
He bent to kiss and raised his visor's lace . . .  
All eager-lipped I kissed the mouth of Death.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Moore, 1.

## II.

Some things are very dear to me—  
Such things as flowers bathed by rain  
Or patterns traced upon the sea  
Or crocuses where snow has lain . . .  
The iridescence of a gem,  
The moon's cool opalescent light,  
Azaleas and the scent of them,  
And honeysuckles in the night.  
And many sounds are also dear—  
Like winds that sing among the trees  
Or crickets calling from the weir  
Or Negroes humming melodies.  
But dearer far than all surmise  
Are sudden tear-drops in your eyes.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Moore, 1.

## Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Langston Hughes was one of the most popular and well known poets of the Black Renaissance. Every writer, artist, musician, and composer was influenced by his works. Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri in 1902. When his parents divorced, his father moved to Mexico so he was mainly raised by his grandmother. At the age of thirteen, he moved to Lincoln, Illinois, to live with his mother and her husband. Later, the family finally settled in Cleveland, Ohio.

Hughes began writing poetry at a young age, and was indeed a bright young student in school.

“It was in Lincoln that Hughes began writing poetry. After graduating from high school, he spent a year in Mexico followed by a year at Columbia University in New York City. During this time, he held odd jobs such as assistant cook, launderer, and busboy. He also traveled to Africa and Europe working as a seaman. In November 1924, he moved to Washington, D. C. Hughes’s first book of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, (Knopf, 1926) was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1926. He finished his college education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania three years later.”<sup>25</sup> Hughes was one of the main writers of the Black Renaissance, publishing numerous poems, short stories, and plays. His writings were based on the true essence of Black America. The critic Donald B.

Gibson noted in the introduction to *Modern Black Poets: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Prentice Hall, 1973)

“Hughes differed from most of his predecessors among black poets . . . in that he addressed his poetry to the people, specifically to black people. During the twenties when most American poets were turning inward, writing obscure and esoteric poetry to an ever decreasing audience of readers, Hughes was turning outward, using language and themes, attitudes and ideas familiar to anyone who had the ability simply to read . . . Until the time of his death, he spread his message humorously—though always seriously—to audiences throughout the country, having read his poetry to more people (possibly) than any other American poet.”<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/langston-hughes> [accessed March 5, 2016].

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. [accessed March 5, 2016].

Hughes' writings were legendary and unique in style and prose. He left an enormous collection of works that many of our present-day poets still use for inspiration. "In addition to leaving us a large body of poetic work, Hughes also wrote eleven plays and countless works of prose, including the well-known "Simple" books: *Simple Speaks His Mind*, (Simon & Schuster, 1950); *Simple Stakes a Claim*, (Rinehart, 1957); *Simple Takes a Wife*, (Simon & Schuster, 1953); and *Simple's Uncle Sam* (Hill and Wang, 1965). He edited the anthologies *The Poetry of the Negro* and *The Book of Negro Folklore*, wrote an acclaimed autobiography, *The Big Sea* (Knopf, 1940), and co-wrote the play *Mule Bone* (HarperCollins, 1991) with Zora Neale Hurston."<sup>27</sup>

The Hughes sonnet that will be examined for this research is "Song for a Dark Girl." It was published in 1927 during the climax of the Harlem Renaissance movement. Its meaning is quite daunting, from the view of a young girl witnessing the lynching of her lover. Hughes wrote this poem because he was enraged about the killing of innocent black Americans in the South because of Jim Crow laws. He was compassionate towards the people who were experiencing this type of hatred, and he felt this piece would pay homage to their struggle.

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. [accessed March 5, 2016].

Song for a Dark Girl

Way Down South in Dixie

(Break the heart of me)

They hung my black young lover

To a cross roads tree.

Way Down South in Dixie

(Bruised body high in air)

I asked the white Lord Jesus

What was the use of prayer.

Way Down South in Dixie

(Break the heart of me)

Love is a naked shadow

On a gnarled and naked tree.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Moore, 1.



### Arna Bontemps (1902-1973)

Born in Alexandria, Louisiana, Arna Bontemps was mostly well-known for his books with black characters. He comes from a family of mixed racial descent. His father descended from French plantation owners in Haiti, and his mother was of an Indian descent. Both of his parents had interests in the arts, his mother being a school teacher, and his father being a musician. Bontemps was motivated by them in many ways to pursue the arts. “Bontemps grew up in Los Angeles, California, where his family moved when he was 3 years old. While his father pushed for him to follow in his footsteps and become a mason, Bontemps had developed an early love of literature and poetry. In 1920 he enrolled at Pacific Union College (later called UCLA), where he studied English and graduated after just three years.”<sup>29</sup>

After college, Bontemps quickly moved to New York to teach at the Harlem Academy. While living in Harlem he met and became good friends with Langston Hughes. “In 1931 Bontemps published his first novel, *God Sends Sunday*, which tells the story of the rise and fall of a black St. Louis jockey in the 1890s. The book’s tale was inspired by the life of Bontemps’s favorite uncle, Buddy, and it was the first of several novels built around black characters. Five years later he published the historical novel *Black Thunder*.”<sup>30</sup> Later, Bontemps continued as a higher education instructor at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, and librarian at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Moore used Bontemps’ “Idolatry” sonnet to continue the storyline created throughout the cycle. This poem describes a person who is in mourning over the death of her lover, or just love in general. Its mood is reverent and solemn, and perfect for the connection of mood that Moore created in the music.

---

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.biography.com/people/arna-bontemps-39864#synopsis> [accessed March 5, 2016].

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, [accessed March 5, 2016].

## Idolatry

You have been good to me, I give you this:

The arms of lovers empty as our own,

Marble lips sustaining one long kiss

And the hard sound of hammers breaking stone.

For I will build a chapel in the place

Where our love died and I will journey there

To make a sign and kneel before your face

And set an old bell tolling on the air.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Moore, 1.

## Countee Cullen (1903-1946)

Countee Cullen was one of the founding fathers of the literary movement of the Harlem Renaissance. He was born in Louisville in 1903, but credits Harlem as his birthplace because he was raised there by his grandmother until he was fifteen-years old. Shortly after his grandmother's death, he was adopted by Frederick and Carolyn Cullen, pastor and first lady of the Salem Methodist Episcopal Church in Harlem. While in the Cullens' care, Countee was able to experience a wonderful education that sparked his interests in writing poetry.

"Cullen was an outstanding student at DeWitt Clinton High School (1918-1921). He edited the school's newspaper, assisted in editing the literary magazine, *Magpie*, and began to write poetry that achieved notice. While in high school Cullen won his first contest, a citywide competition, with the poem "I Have a Rendezvous with Life," a nonracial poem inspired by Alan Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous with Death." At New York University (1921-1925), he wrote most of the poems for his first three volumes: *Color* (1925), *Copper Sun* (1927), and *The Ballad of the Brown Girl* (1927). If any event signaled the coming of the Harlem Renaissance, it was the precocious success of this rather shy black boy who, more than any other black literary figure of his generation, was being touted and bred to become a major crossover literary figure."<sup>32</sup>

Later, Cullen received a masters' degree in English and French from Harvard University. During this time, it is said that Cullen was the most popular black literary figure in America. As many other Black Renaissance poets, Cullen had poetry published in the *Opportunity* that dealt with the advancement of black people through economics and education. He also won many awards and much recognition for his works. "Cullen won more major literary prizes than any other black writer of the 1920s: first prize in the Witter Bynner Poetry contest in 1925, *Poetry*

---

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/cullen/life.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/cullen/life.htm) [accessed March 12, 2016].

magazine's John Reed Memorial Prize, the Amy Spingarn Award of the *Crisis* magazine, second prize in *Opportunity* magazine's first poetry contest, and second prize in the poetry contest of *Palms*. In addition, he was the second black to win a Guggenheim Fellowship.”<sup>33</sup> Moore uses Cullen’s “Youth Sings a Song of Rosebuds” in that it highlights the title of the cycle as well as begins to signal the ending of the work. Its text describes the state of mind that one is in when they feel they have accepted life and the sorrow it can bring, through the loss of a loved one. The mood of the poem is soft and reassuring in the sense that there is hope for the future.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, [accessed March 12, 2016].

Youth Sings a Song of Rosebuds

Since men grow diffident at last,  
And care no whit at all,  
If spring be come, or the fall be past,  
Or how the cool rains fall,

I come to no flower but I pluck,  
I raise no cup but I sip,  
For a mouth is the best of sweets to suck;  
The oldest wine's on the lip.

If I grow old in a year or two,  
And come to the querulous song  
Of "Alack and aday" and "This was true,  
And that, when I was young,"

I must have sweets to remember by,  
Some blossom saved from the mire,  
Some death-rebellious ember  
I Can fan into a fire.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Moore, 1-2.

## Helene Johnson (1906-1995)

Helen Johnson, better known as Helene Johnson, was born on July 7, 1906, in Boston Massachusetts. She was raised primarily by her grandfather and two aunts in Brookline, Massachusetts. Johnson began her career as a novelist after winning a short story contest sponsored by the *Boston Chronicle*. She won other notable awards that sparked her interests to moving to New York to be part of the Harlem Renaissance. “She was also given an honorable mention in a poetry contest organized by *Opportunity*, the journal of the National Urban League and a leading showcase for the talents of African-American artists. Johnson and her cousin Dorothy West moved to Harlem in the 1920s where she attended Columbia University for a time, although she never graduated from Columbia. She continued to write poetry, and her work was in the first and only issue of *Fire!!*, edited by the novelist Wallace Thurman, poet Langston Hughes, and artist Richard Bruce Nugent, who encouraged Johnson to launch a career as a writer.”<sup>35</sup>

Johnson was once known as one of the best poets of the Harlem Renaissance, but she retreated out of the lime light for a little over fifty years to write poetry for her personal enjoyment. “Her published legacy is a handful of widely anthologized poems that capture the youthful spirit of urgency and discovery that animated jazz-age Harlem in the decade before the Depression. In 1935, Johnson’s last published poems appeared in *Challenge: A Literary Quarterly*.”<sup>36</sup> Later, she married William Hubbell, and from that union was one daughter, Abigail. Johnson’s “Invocation” was used as the closing work in Moore’s *Sonnets* because of its somber nature. The opening line, “Let me be buried in the rain...,” signifies the end of earthly love and the transition to being connected with their love again in the afterlife. “For example,

---

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.aaregistry.org/historic\\_events/view/helen-johnson-poet-harlem-rennaissance](http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/helen-johnson-poet-harlem-rennaissance) [accessed March 30, 2016].

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, [accessed March 30, 2016].

Johnson portrays the life cycle as returning to mother earth enclosed in a rain-drenched wooden casket, its polished wood and the cadaver becoming equals through the leveling process of death, as both gradually return to a more primordial state of nature in an un-mowed plot overrun, “[r]iotous, rampart, wild and free.”<sup>37</sup> Moore was able to convey the essence of this poetry through lush harmonies and vibrant melodies as it speaks of death in comparison to freedom.

---

<sup>37</sup> <http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100022647>.

### Invocation

Let me be buried in the rain  
In a deep, dripping wood,  
Under the warm wet breast of Earth  
Where once a gnarled tree stood.  
And paint a picture on my tomb  
With dirt and piece of bough  
Of a girl and a boy beneath a round pipe moon  
Eating of love with an eager spoon  
And vowing an eager vow.  
And do not keep my plot mowed smooth  
And clean as a spinster's bed,  
But let the weed, the flower, the tree,  
Riotous, rampant, wild, and free,  
Grow high above my head.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Moore, 2.



## CHAPTER THREE

### DOROTHY RUDD MOORE

#### Life and Experiences

“The most gratifying experience of all is the writing itself. Of course, I want my music to be liked, but I must first be true to my own ideas. I want to communicate. I think the best way to do that is to be honest.”<sup>39</sup> These are the words of Dorothy Rudd Moore, African-American female composer born on June 4, 1940 in Wilmington, Delaware. As a young girl, she knew that music would be a part of her life in some shape, form, or fashion because of her upbringing in the Methodist church. During this time, classical music was a part of the worship regimen in the black church, which gave Moore opportunities to follow in her mother’s footsteps as a fine soprano.

Dorothy began singing at an early age, and she received her first piano lessons from her mother. At age 10 she began piano lessons with Naomi Roberts, a local music teacher. She would often practice in the Mt. Salem Church, next door to her grandparents’ house, and liked to amuse herself by making up tunes to children’s poems. While growing up, she was frequently taken to performances of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy, and recalls assuming that all orchestras must sound as polished as they did.<sup>40</sup>

Her parents, both being hard workers and well-educated people, wanted Moore to have the same opportunities in education as they had. Moore was surrounded by immediate family who were motivated in their respective careers. Her younger sister studied voice and flute and performed in a few choirs; her favorite uncle was an educator in Humanities at Morgan State College. Dorothy was indeed no stranger to hard work and perseverance because of the positive influence of her family. “At age 16 she wrote her first serious piece of music for solo piano, called *Flight*. It was inspired by Duke Ellington, who, along with Bach, was (and still is) her

---

<sup>39</sup> Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African American Women Composers and Their Music* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 219.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 221 .

favorite composer.”<sup>41</sup> A few years later, Moore was lucky enough to meet Ellington in Pennsylvania after his performance at the Brandywine Music Box. She spoke with him after the performance, and was intrigued by the idea of becoming a composer. Moore relocated to New York later in life and reconnected with Ellington. Moore was indeed a well-rounded individual with many experiences in her young life.

A particularly important experience for her during her high school years was her membership in the Civil Air Patrol, an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, which she joined because she loved airplanes and wanted to fly. The cadets attained rank (Dorothy became a lieutenant), marched in Memorial Day parades, and were flown to other northeastern Air Force bases for encampments with their counterparts in other states. With her identification card, Dorothy could go to the Du Pont air base and request airplane rides on the “two seaters,” a privilege which must have greatly impressed her schoolmates. She was particularly proud to be one of two female cadets chosen from Delaware to attend an all-girl national encampment at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, where she jumped from the parachute tower and went through regular airmen’s training.<sup>42</sup>

Upon graduating high school, Moore was accepted to Boston Conservatory but was encouraged by her uncle to attend his alma mater, Howard University in Washington, D.C. She decided to become a music education major, but realized her love for composing music and quickly changed her major to composition. Moore was supported in her decision by her teachers and the dean of the fine arts department. “She minored in piano, studying with Thomas Kerr, and took voice lessons from Louise Burge. She soon produced music of high quality and sophistication, winning competitions and receiving public performances of her work. In her senior year she wrote the libretto and music for a musical, *Race for Space*, and starred in the production at Howard University’s Crampton Auditorium.”<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Walker-Hill, 221.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 222.

Moore's many memorable experiences at Howard University expanded her knowledge in many areas in addition to music. Her participation in a three-month tour with the Howard University Choir exposed her to a lot of places and people. "Her appetite was so whetted for travel abroad. In 1963 she graduated magna cum laude and received a Lucy Moten Fellowship for study at the American Conservatory at Fountainebleau, France. She left for France planning to stay indefinitely, and even asked her parents to ship all her belongings to her."<sup>44</sup> She became homesick shortly and decided that it would be best to return back to New York to be closer to her parents.

While in France at Fountainebleau, she met several people including pianist Philip Morehand, who later performed several of her works in the United States. "She studied composition privately with Nadia Boulanger, sang in her madrigal choir, and took her class in form and analysis. While still a student at Howard, Moore had heard Boulanger speak at the U.S. State Department and was already in awe of her. At Fountainebleau, Boulanger was won over by Moore's playing of the Bach *B Minor Prelude* from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*."<sup>45</sup> Moore gained a great deal of guidance and knowledge while studying under Boulanger. As Moore continued her intense music studies as an accomplished composer, she also wanted to focus more on the aspects of the singing voice. "Moore also studied voice with Lola Hayes. She mentioned that after she got married her mother would come for a weekly one-hour lesson with Ms. Hayes, and it was after her mother discontinued her lessons that Moore took her mother's lesson time."<sup>46</sup> Moore was dedicated to learn the many facets of music through composition, the piano, and the

---

<sup>44</sup> Walker-Hill, 222.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 222.

<sup>46</sup> Gloria Harrison Quinlan. "A contextual Analysis of Dorothy Rudd Moore's song cycle "Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death"". D.M.A. diss., The University of Texas Austin, 1996. In Dissertations & Theses: Full Text [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> [accessed January 22, 2016].

voice. After her second grade teacher encouraged her to read books and poetry, she became interested in writing poetry as well.

She had long written poetry as a way to respond to personal and world events, but never set these poems to music because she felt they were too complete as entities. (Her husband Kermit, however, did set five of them in *Five Songs for D.R.M.*) The titles and words of her poems are indicative of her concerns: “To My Brothers” (about the black Americans serving Vietnam); “The Uninvited” (about the absence of black guests at the White House receptions); and “Night Wanderer” (The heavy fabric of quiet late in woven with threads of deeds undone). Many of her poems reveal her despair and rage at the human condition. She feels that she is “condemned to always see the glass as half empty.”<sup>47</sup>

As Moore was building her career as an accomplished musician, she also spent a great deal of her life as an educator in New York. “From 1965-1966 she took a position at the Harlem School of the Arts, teaching theory and piano. She later taught music history and music appreciation at New York University in 1969 and at the Bronx Community College in 1971.”<sup>48</sup> Along with serving on the faculties of these schools, Moore also taught private voice lessons from her home. Moore was a part of many organizations as an accomplished artist and a music educator. Through the Society of Black Composers, she met her husband, Kermit Moore. “The Society of Black Composers was a group of musicians who provided a forum of encouragement and support for one another. They published a newsletter, had an information center, performed first readings of each other’s music, and provided public concerts at Brooklyn Academy of Music, Harlem School of Arts, and other surrounding institutions. Through this group, Moore and her husband met and gained the support of fellow musicians, and it opened many more performing opportunities throughout New York.”<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Walker-Hill, 224.

<sup>48</sup> Carren Moham. “The Contributions of four African-American women composers to American art song.” D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 1997. In Dissertations & Theses: Full Text [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> [accessed January 22, 2016].

<sup>49</sup> Latoya Lain, “An Examination of the Compositional Style of Dorothy Rudd Moore and Its Relationship to the Literary Influence of Langston Hughes.” D.M.A. diss., The University of Nevada Las Vegas, 2012. In Dissertation

As time progressed, Moore's musical efforts were recognized by many in the Harlem and Bronx community. Music was another way for her to respond to the world and the social issues it was facing at the time. Many of her instrumental and vocal compositions were written during one of the most sensitive times of society, the late 1960s and 1970s. "During the mid-1970s Moore was preparing to compose an opera, a setting of Greek myth of the unhappy and treacherous Phaedra, portrayed as a young mulatto girl in nineteenth-century New Orleans. But when she received a commission from Opera Ebony in 1978, she abandoned that opera and began historical research for an even larger more ambitious project, an opera on the life of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass."<sup>50</sup> Moore has always been fascinated with Frederick Douglass. His life and legacy were what gave her the opportunity to write such liberating pieces of work. The opera was written in eight years, which is a much longer time span than most operas, but Moore wrote the libretto as well during that time; producing such a moving opera.

Frederick Douglass was premiered on June 28, 1985 by Opera Ebony in New York City and was met with rave reviews in the New York press. Gary Schmidgall reported on the premier in the October, 1985 issue of Opera News, "Moore displays rare ability to wed musical and dramatic motion, graceful lyric inventiveness and full command of the orchestral palate...It would not be surprising to see it (Frederick Douglass) take a place beside Lizzie Borden, The Ballad of Baby Doe and Thomson's Mother of Us All. In one respect – its inspiring theme – it outclasses them all."<sup>51</sup>

Moore has always been moved to poetic and musical expression by the political and social issues that faced our society. "When Moore was asked how she felt about being categorized as an African-American woman composer, she responded, "That's what I am. I am a composer who is female and who is African-American. Others [composers] are identified by

---

& Theses: Full Text [database on-line]; available from <http://www.digitalscholarship/unlv.edu> [accessed January 22, 2016].

<sup>50</sup> Walker-Hill, 224.

<sup>51</sup> Moham, 56.

ethnicity, geography, and even religious affiliation. Bach was a German Lutheran."<sup>52</sup> Moore has very strong opinions concerning racism and other social issues, which she was not afraid to express during the civil rights uprising in the 1960s, and the Black Panther movement. This was indeed a sensitive time in America when people turned to violence and irrationality.

For Moore, music is another way to respond to the world, and with transforming power and energy. She grew up during a time when black people were not considered as equals in this country. She was very verbal in her efforts to contribute to the struggle for civil rights and equal liberties. As seen through the literature she chose to set to music, she had a powerful message and her compositions were the way she communicated it. To highlight thematic ideas of racial conflict, she makes frequent use of dissonant sonorities. These elements of antagonism continue between all instruments to demonstrate an expression of injustice.<sup>53</sup>

### Compositional Characteristics

Dorothy Rudd Moore's works span over various types, from vocal music to orchestral music. She has been able to produce music of high standard and of high quality. "Her body of work consists of less than 35 compositions, (besides her popular songs and her arrangements for voice of works by Purcell, Brahms, and other composers, made in response to requests). Fifteen of her serious compositions are substantial--- either extended or multimovement works."<sup>54</sup> Her music is said to be highly individual and contemporary with hardly any characteristics of African-American idioms.

Even though her settings of poetry embody the heart of the African-American heritage, the treatment of the melodies is not a representation of black idiomatic characteristics. She has a dislike of labels, and elaborated on this subject in an interview with Wallace Cheatham: "We are all different...no composer that I know of would permit 'typecasting'...It is important that black

---

<sup>52</sup> Walker-Hill, 225.

<sup>53</sup> Lain, 6-7.

<sup>54</sup> Walker-Hill, 228.

composers not be ghettoized. Unfortunately certain forces are intent on polarizing our society...There are many black artists in all disciplines and each is an individual with his or her unique experiences."<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 225.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Dorothy Rudd Moore's *Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds and Death* is an eight piece song cycle for high voice with piano and violin, which tells a story of an older woman who is experiencing love once again in her life. Even though the composer scored the cycle for high voice, the story line does determine whether it should be performed by a soprano or a tenor. Although a recording of song three by a tenor exists, Moore preferred the cycle to be performed by a soprano. When asked about the nature and tone quality of the singer in the cycle, Moore replied, "Well it has to be the right soprano voice. She must have the ability to grasp and convey the poetic ideas—I don't believe this cycle is for a very young woman. She should have a wide vocal range, and her diction and ear should be exceptional."<sup>56</sup> Moore chose to use different poets from the Harlem Renaissance era to tell this story. Along with the nature of the poetry, there were many approaches that were taken to learn this cycle through the structure of its harmonies and melodies relating to the soprano voice. This chapter will cover these elements, as well as thoughts on the text in connection with the music.

#### The Significance of the Violin

There was no significance as to why Moore used the violin in *Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death* other than the request of the person whom commissioned the work. "The Sonnets were commissioned by a wonderful violinist, Sanford Allen, for a soprano named Miriam Burton. They were a gift for her birthday. Since Sanford is a violinist, and he commissioned the songs, naturally using the violin in the ensemble was at the forefront of my

---

<sup>56</sup> Carren Moham. Interview with Dorothy Rudd Moore. Personal interview. Columbus, July 24, 1996.



mind when I began the process of writing the songs.”<sup>57</sup> Granted Moore’s husband was an accomplished cellist, but there is another reason as to why she chose the violin over the cello. “I do like the violin and the way it sounds in the songs. I like the quality of how the violin speaks and how it sounds with the soprano voice.”<sup>58</sup>

In agreeance with Moore, the violin does add a nice timbre along with the soprano voice. Performing these songs with violin creates such a euphoric atmosphere for the singer and the audience. One can approach each song with such grace and grandeur because of the musical marriage of the violin and the soprano voice. The violin also adds a distinct color of sound that blends exceptionally well with the soprano voice.

#### I Had No Thoughts of Violets of Late

In the first few measures, a duet is between the piano and the violin, and then the voice joins in. This moment sets the atmosphere for the entire cycle with its lush, chordal harmonies that describes the woman remembering what it was once like to be in love. This piece can be a challenge due to its complex rhythms. There was reminiscence of a few jazz scales in this piece that can create an issue for a singer who might not have much experience with jazz music. One could relate the scales to a few scales that are learned as a student of classical music, like the natural harmonic scale and the melodic minor scale. The melody of this piece was different every few measures, so the best way to learn them was to practice matching the melody with the piano accompaniment. Moore graciously tagged the piano accompaniment with the vocal line at various times in the piece. This idea was quite helpful in learning the piece effectively.

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

In a few sections of this song, the violin part was written as a counter melody, or opposite of the voice or piano. Moore also composed this piece in a way the soprano can use the extent of the vocal range. Throughout the piece, the vocal line is written from B3 to G5 which covers the lower to mid upper register for the soprano voice. There were many times as to where one would have to effectively sing through the *passaggio*, in this piece which will tend to create a great deal of work for any singer. To sing through the *passaggio* in this piece, one would have to have a more effective use of air through the proper breathing techniques that singers learn and continue to master in classical music.

Table 4.1 Summary of “I Had No Thoughts of Violets of Late”

Full Vocal Range	B3-G5
Tessitura	B4
Poetic Idea	Romantic love in conjunction with nature.
Vocal Challenges	Lies in the <i>passaggio</i> frequently
Accompaniment	Melismatic
Meter	3/4 & 4/4
Tempo	Moderato
Musical Form	Binary (AB)
Song Duration	2 minutes

The interpretation of this music is another aspect of this piece that singers might find difficult to convey. The poetry gives sense to the beginning of a new found love with its elaborations on what love could be through the imagination of others. In performance for interpretation purposes, one could channel what they have experienced with the feeling of being in love once again. It can be beautiful and scary at the same time, especially when a past experience has left you with a broken heart. Singing from this emotion allows the audience to go on a journey with you which will engulf them into the beginning of this beautiful story.

Lastly, tempo markings are important in this piece. There are a few longer melodic lines than others that will cause the singer to lose air if they are not following the tempo markings precisely. In figure 4.1 measure sixteen through eighteen shows how the singer could find it difficult to sing the phrase if it is under tempo. This could also interrupt the connection of one thought to the next in the work. Overall, this piece was interesting to learn with its subtle elements of jazz melodies and chords infused with classical techniques of music and the demands of interpretation of the poetry through performance.

Figure 4.1 “I Had No Thoughts of Violets of Late,” mm. 13-20

13 *mf rubato* *a tempo*  
I had no thought of vi-o-lets of late, The wild, shy kind that

17 *f* *mf*  
spring be-neath your feet in wist-ful A-pril days, when lov-ers mate And wan-der through the

*mf legato*

© Copyright 1976 by Dorothy Rudd Moore; transcribed 2016 by Faustino Solis

## Joy

This piece begins with beautiful arpeggios in the piano accompaniment while the violin uses pizzicato (plucking of the strings) technique. The opening creates a mood for the listener to be moved by the excitement that is conveyed in the opening lines of the poetry. The melodic line is harmonically based, which can create an issue with the singer staying within the key center. Moore rectifies this issue by allowing the piano accompaniment to double the vocal line except for in the opening of the piece.

Table 4.2 Summary of “Joy”

Full Vocal Range	D4-A5
Tessitura	B4
Poetic Idea	The release of happiness after many years of sorrow.
Vocal Challenges	Articulation of text in passaggio
Accompaniment	Many arpeggios
Meter	2/4,4/4,3/4
Tempo	Allegretto
Musical Form	Ternary (ABA)
Song Duration	1 minute

The expression of happiness is evident in this piece, in which the emotions are displayed through the rapid speed of the text. In figure 4.2, measure nine through ten, the articulation of the poetry becomes difficult for the singer due to the value of each note. Mrs. Moore used sixteenth notes to express this excitement that is in the poetry. The singer would enjoy singing this song, because of the energy that the music and the poetry exude.

Figure 4.2 “Joy,” mm. 9-10 (Articulation of Poetry)

Figure 4.2 "Joy," mm. 9-10 (Articulation of Poetry)

mf f

mf f

pines. It floods me like the sun on rain - drenched trees. That

mf f

3 3

© Copyright 1976 by Dorothy Rudd Moore; transcribed 2016 by Faustino Solis

### Some Things Are Very Dear to Me

As the piano accompaniment and violin begin in this piece, one can express that the harmonies give a mystical mood. Mrs. Moore created this piece with the underlining tone of a chromatic scale, and this is portrayed throughout this song. The poetry is an indication of why the composer decided to build this piece based on that scale. The text describes the simplistic attributes of life, with a cross reference of nature.

There are a lot of different things to consider while in preparation for this piece. One of the first things to take into account is the time signature, especially in the opening melodic line. The singer must be aware to begin singing on the upbeat of the tempo, rather than the downbeat like in most songs. If this is not carefully examined, the singer will find it difficult to stay in sync with the piano accompaniment and the violin. Also, the singer must think half steps throughout the piece because of its chromaticism; if not careful the singer can stray and begin to sing fragments of a minor scale. A vocal challenge for the singer could be the difficulty of singing

back vowels in the passaggio. The chart in Table 4.3 describes the structure of the entire piece and what the singer should be aware of when preparing for performance.

Table 4.3 Summary of “Some Things Are Very Dear to Me”

Full Vocal Range	D4-F#5
Tessitura	D5
Poetic Idea	The simplicity of life
Vocal Challenges	Singing “back” vowels in the passaggio
Accompaniment	Chromatic Scales
Meter	6/8
Tempo	Andante
Musical Form	Through-Composed
Song Duration	2 minutes

Figure 4.3 is a musical example of the elements of the song, and highlights the chromaticism that is found in the vocal line. The singer should be prepared for these measures because of the frequent succession of the chromatic scales. Overall, this song adds beauty and mystery to the storyline of this song cycle through its lush harmonies which creates the mysterious mood of the cycle before the lover is introduced.

Figure 4.3 “Some Things Are Very Dear to Me,” mm. 13-20 (Chromaticism in the vocal line)

13 *poco rit.* *A tempo*  
*pp*  
*p* *poco rit.* *A tempo*  
The ir - i - des-cence of a gem, The moon's cool op - a -  
*p* *poco rit.* *A tempo*  
17 *p* *mp* *mp* *crescendo* *mf* *molto rit.*  
les - cent light, A - zal - eas and the scent of them, And hon - ey suck-les in the night  
*molto rit.* *mf*

© Copyright 1976 by Dorothy Rudd Moore; transcribed 2016 by Faustino Solis

### He Came in Silvern Armour

This song begins with an active left hand in the piano accompaniment that paints the picture of a handsome knight riding on his horse. The first few measures prepare the singer to tell the story of how the lover appears in her life as in he is coming to save her from loneliness. It is exciting because this will be the first time in many years that the woman has now been caught by love, and ready to experience all that comes with being in a loving and committed relationship.



Musically, this song can be challenging in many ways for the singer. The articulation of the text within the structure of the tempo creates barriers and limits liberties the singer can take. There is room for expressive singing with the language, but the singer must be mindful of the tempo and how important it is to articulate the text well. The chart (Table 4.4), displays what the singer must be mindful of when learning as well as performing this song.

Table 4.4 Summary of “He Came in Silvern Armour”

Full Vocal Range	C4-E5
Tessitura	B4
Poetic Idea	The coming of a knight and shining armor
Vocal Challenges	Articulation of poetry
Accompaniment	Robust; with much energy
Meter	4/4
Tempo	Allegro/Agitato
Musical Form	Binary (AB)
Song Duration	3 minutes

This song is very adventurous in nature. The singer should be able to create an atmosphere of suspense in anticipation of the lover’s arrival, in that true love has finally come. In Figure 4.4, these few measures highlight a description of how the singer views the lover in his attire. It can be determined that Moore uses eighth notes in the description of the lover to portray the excitement that the woman is experiencing, but should not be performed with too much excitement that the text cannot be sung well for the listeners to understand. Mrs. Moore did write

the melody for these particular measures in the speaking range of the voice, so that the singer can use the technique of speech singing to perform the song.

Figure 4.4 “He Came in Silvern Armour,” mm. 9-14 (Articulation in tempo)

8

*mf legato*

He came in sil-vern ar-mour trimmed with black. A

*mp*

*mf legato*

*sfz*

*mf*

12

lo-ver come from le-gends long a-go With sil-ver spurs and silk-en plumes a-

© Copyright 1976 by Dorothy Rudd Moore; transcribed 2016 by Faustino Solis

## Song for a Dark Girl

*Song for a Dark Girl* is the most moving and emotional piece of the entire cycle. The opening few measures gives the sense of urgency that tragedy has occurred. The text urges the singer to express frantically that her lover has been brutally murdered. The singer should be able to sing with emotion initially in this song. The opening measures centers on a sequence that is played by the violin; the sequence places one in the mind of a southern “Hoe-down” melody. This song is also reminiscent of a lament, a sorrowful song full of pain as well as anger. Below, table 4.5 clearly outlines what the singer should expect while preparing for the performance of this piece.

Table 4.5 Summary of “Song for a Dark Girl”

Full Vocal Range	D4-F#5
Tessitura	C#4
Poetic Idea	Love has been brutally murdered
Vocal Challenges	Articulation of text in the passaggio
Accompaniment	Aggressive; chordal
Meter	2/4
Tempo	Allegro
Musical Form	Ternary (ABA)
Song Duration	2 minutes

It is clear that in this song, Moore geared the melody toward the text, which is the most intense aspect of this piece. The poetry is what drives the song in an emotional state that conveys the seriousness of the song. Moore also adds nonsense syllables to the text to give more of the

emotion that the song embodies. She uses syllables like “huhn” and “eh” to signify a moan or a cry out for desperation because of the grief that the woman is feeling after losing her lover in such a horrific way. Figure 4.5 shows where these non-sense syllables take place in the music. Overall, it is important to sing this song with much grief and sorrow and less focus on the music but more on the poetry.

Figure 4.5 “Song for a Dark Girl,” mm. 7-16 (Slight deviation in Poetry)

The musical score for measures 7-16 of "Song for a Dark Girl" is presented in 2/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the following lyrics: "Way Down South in Dix - ie - eh huhn", "(Break the heart of me - ah) huhn They", and "huhn". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex, syncopated pattern in the left hand. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and breath marks.

© Copyright 1976 by Dorothy Rudd Moore; transcribed 2016 by Faustino Solis

## Idolatry

*Idolatry* takes on a sense of solitude in the beginning of the song. The accompaniment represents the grief that the woman is feeling after the murder of her lover. The singer has to be expressive with the text in this piece as well. The poetry describes the fond memories of her lover and the wonderful times that was shared with one another. It is reflective of the love that their shared and how it will remain in her heart forever. The music in this song is not as difficult as the others within this cycle; the singer should approach the music with regards of the poetry.

Table 4.6 Summary of “Idolatry”

Full Vocal Range	D4-F5
Tessitura	D5
Poetic Idea	A memorial to the love that was lost
Vocal Challenges	Sustaining the phrases
Accompaniment	Chordal
Meter	2/2
Tempo	Adagio
Musical Form	Through-Composed
Song Duration	2 minutes

The singer might consider this piece to be difficult in that the melodic lines have rather long phrases which will alert them to be mindful of the breath that is being used to perform this piece. It will be wise of the singer to follow the dynamic markings in the measures that have the long phrases to ensure that they can sing them. Figure 4.6 shows where these long phrases occur

and how the singer can use the text to justify a dramatic breath if unable to make it through the phrases. This song was written in a way to show the beauty of the voice as well as give a dramatic intent of what the poetry expresses.

Figure 4.6 “Idolatry,” mm. 16-15 (Long Phrases)

The image displays two systems of a musical score for the song "Idolatry". Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The first system covers measures 16-15. The vocal line has lyrics: "I give you this: The arms of lov - ers emp - ty as our own,\_\_\_\_\_". The piano accompaniment features a complex harmonic structure with many accidentals. The second system starts at measure 23. The vocal line has lyrics: "Mar - ble lips sus - tain - ing one long kiss\_\_\_\_\_ And the hard sound of". The piano accompaniment continues with similar complexity. Dynamic markings include *cresc.* and *mf*.

© Copyright 1976 by Dorothy Rudd Moore; transcribed 2016 by Faustino Solis

### Youth Sings a Song of Rosebuds

This piece is by far the liveliest song of the cycle. Its bouncy tempo reveals the nature of the text. The poetry describes the happy times that the lovers experience with one another even though tragedy has now drawn them apart. It speaks of the times when both were young, free, and open to fall in love. Musically, the song can be challenging at times with awkward leaps in the melody, as well as quick meter changes. Table 4.7 provides an outline on how to perform this song, and what the singer should be aware of while learning the piece. The accompaniment

mirrors the melodic line in this song, which might confuse the singer in one measure, but on the other hand, will assist the singer in other measures.

Table 4.7 Summary of “Youth Sings a Song of Rosebuds”

Full Vocal Range	Db4-F5
Tessitura	D5
Poetic Idea	A memory of when love was young and new.
Vocal Challenges	Awkward leaps in the melody
Accompaniment	Chordal; light and bouncy
Meter	4/4, 3/8
Tempo	Andante Moderato
Musical Form	Binary (AB)
Song Duration	3 minutes

Moore simply writes to display the joy and the mystery of the poetry. There is a sense of the idea of what if the lover lived, if life would be different for the grieving woman. This song creates that mystery and thought for the listeners, as the singer performs this piece. Also, there are a few harmonic changes within the melody that the singer can find challenging. Figure 4.7 shows what those changes are, and how the singer can be mindful of them while preparing the piece for performance. Lastly, this song signifies hope for the woman to find solace in knowing that she can continue to live on until she is reunited with her lover.

Figure 4.7 “Youth Sings a Song of Rosebuds,” mm. 31-42 (Harmonic Changes in the melody)

31 arco

raise no cup but I sip. For a mouth is the

36

best of sweets to suck; The old - est wine's on the

41

lip.

mf

mf

mp

mp



## Invocation

*Invocation* is the consummation of the entire song cycle. The introduction with piano and violin gives the listener the indication that we have reached the ending of the song cycle. The poetry describes a reassurance that the woman has lived a life knowing that love is more than just a physical attribute, but that love is also eternal. The singer must be able to display emotionally that the woman has now come to a time in her life of being content with the outcomes of her life, and that she is now ready to join her lover in the afterlife. Musically, this song has its few challenges with difficult melodic lines within the song, which does not happen as frequent in this piece as with the others. The chart below, table 4.8 instructs the singer on how to approach this song in preparing it for performance.

Table 4.8 Summary of “Invocation”

Full Vocal Range	Db4-A5
Tessitura	B4
Poetic Idea	Love has become one with death.
Vocal Challenges	Awkward leaps in passaggio
Accompaniment	Arpeggios and Chords
Meter	4/4
Tempo	Moderato
Musical Form	Binary (AB)
Song Duration	3 minutes

The music embodies such beauty; the piano, violin, and voice combined creates such a beautiful euphoric feeling within the piece. The melodic line also has a few harmonic changes as well that the singer should be aware of in learning the song. Figure 4.8 highlights one of the places in the music where the harmonic changes take place. In order to perform this song, as well as the other songs in this cycle, the singer must be confident in their aural skills of figuring out how the melody fits with the accompaniment. Moore explains this in her previous statements of what the performer should be able to do when performing this cycle, and this song is a clear example of that statement. Overall, this piece brings a unique yet stern close to the entire song cycle.

Figure 4.8 “Invocation,” mm. 31-36 (Harmonic changes in melody)

The musical score for "Invocation" (mm. 31-36) is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 31-33) features a vocal melody in the upper staff, piano accompaniment in the lower staff, and lyrics in the middle. The second system (mm. 34-36) continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment, with lyrics in the middle. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *cresc.* (crescendo), as well as articulation marks like slurs and accents. The piano accompaniment includes triplets in the final measure (m. 36).

**System 1 (mm. 31-33):**

- Vocal Melody (m. 31):** Starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. A slur covers the next two measures.
- Piano Accompaniment (m. 31):** Starts with a half note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, and a half note C4. A slur covers the next two measures.
- Lyrics (m. 31):** "And do not keep my plot mowed smooth and"

**System 2 (mm. 34-36):**

- Vocal Melody (m. 34):** Starts with a half note D5, followed by a quarter note E5, a quarter note F5, and a half note G5. A slur covers the next two measures.
- Piano Accompaniment (m. 34):** Starts with a half note D4, followed by a quarter note E4, a quarter note F4, and a half note G4. A slur covers the next two measures.
- Lyrics (m. 34):** "clean as a spinster's bed, But"

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

Dorothy Rudd Moore's style of writing in *Sonnets of Love, Rosebuds, and Death* embodies the Harlem Renaissance in many ways. It captivates the heart and soul of the era through its beautiful melodies and lush harmonies. The Harlem Renaissance was an important time in history for black Americans to have a sense of inclusion as Americans. Many were afforded the highest level of education and opportunities to become entrepreneurs in various fields. Moore was able to capture the essence of this change of culture through her music in conjunction with the poetry of some of the era's literary giants.

Sonnets are a unique form of poetry that translate well into song lyrics due to its structure of rhyme scheme. It was this form that allowed Moore the freedom in composing this song cycle. In this cycle a whole tone scale (C, D, E, F#, G#, A#, C) is used repeatedly to create the mystical sounds that are described in a few of the poems. This scale was first discovered by Claude Debussy during the impressionist movement, a popular era of music. Moore found it to be useful in composing a few of the pieces in this cycle. While studying at the Fountainebleu, she took a liking to the French writing style and incorporated it into her own compositions.

During the Harlem Renaissance music, dance, art, poetry, and theater were the focus of black artistic life throughout many major northern cities, with the center of this movement being in Harlem, New York. The Harlem Renaissance played an important role in Moore's childhood; it was this era that challenged and inspired her to strive for excellence in her studies as a student of poetry and music. The literary movement of this time motivated Moore in more ways than the music. The writers of the Harlem Renaissance used poignant words and descriptions that Moore was able to bring to life through complex melodies and challenging harmonic structures, making

this cycle deeply important for African American heritage. Poetry was another passion of hers in that she was able to marry the two art forms to create a beautiful masterpiece. Moore's cycle reflects on the history of the black Americans and how they overcame the obstacles of segregation and discrimination. It speaks on the difficult time in history when African-Americans were to be perceived as cheap labor and not educated in music or literature.

The music of African Americans is important in the educational development of music students, due to its strong foundation in the main elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and texture. The performance analysis of this song cycle is a helpful guide to a singer preparing this repertoire because it illuminates other aspects of music including; timbre, stylistic value, and interpretation. Moore exudes these elements throughout the song cycle creating the sounds of the era: revival, racial pride, and social consciousness. The analysis of this song cycle brings growth and knowledge to the realm of music of African -American composers.

Musically, the cycle is written similarly to other song cycles written in the earlier eras of music. There is a unifying idea that is expressed through the harmonies and melodies of this work. Focusing on the relationship of the poetry with the music is an important factor in this research, and how the composer wanted the singer to give more attention to the text rather than the music. Each piece plays a significant role in creating a storyline that captures the audience through how well the music is composed.

Dorothy Rudd Moore's *Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death* is an example of how music by African American composers is sometimes overlooked due to the lack of pertinent information on its importance. It is my hope that I provided a careful study of a performance analysis of this cycle that will contribute to the expansion of knowledge for this style of music, bringing clarity and an appreciation to this field of study. The music of African-Americans has

been discussed, but not in this manner. This study is designed to bring awareness to this scope African-American music for future students and performers.

## APPENDIX

### GLOSSARY

azalea (n.) - a deciduous flowering shrub of the heath family with clusters of brightly colored, sometimes fragrant flowers. Technically classified as rhododendrons, azaleas are characteristically smaller than most other rhododendrons.

bewildered (v.) – to be perplexed and confused.

bough (n.) - a main branch of a tree.

carven (v.) – (past tense) carved

chapel (n.) - a small building for Christian worship, typically one attached to an institution or private house.

crocus (n.) – a small, spring-flowering plant of the iris family, which grows from a corm and bears bright yellow, purple, or white flowers.

crossroads (n.) - an intersection of two or more roads.

desolate (adj.) – (of a place) deserted of people and in a state of bleak and dismal emptiness.

diffident (adj.) - modest or shy because of a lack of self-confidence.

dixie (n.) – nickname for the South.

fop (n.) – a man who is concerned with his clothes and appearance in an affected and excessive way; dandy.

garish (adj.) – obtrusively bright and showy; lurid.

gleam (v.) – to shine brightly, especially with reflected light.

gnarled (adj.) - knobbly, rough, and twisted, especially with age.

honeysuckle (n.) - a widely distributed climbing shrub with tubular flowers that are typically fragrant and of two colors or shades, opening in the evening for pollination by moths.

iridescence (adj.) - a lustrous rainbowlike play of color caused by differential refraction of light waves (as from an oil slick, soap bubble, or fish scales) that tends to change as the angle of view changes.

legend (n.) - a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but unauthenticated.

meticulous (adj.) - showing great attention to detail; very careful and precise.

mincing (adj.) – (of a man) affectedly dainty in manner or gait.

mire (n.) - a stretch of swampy or boggy ground.

negro (n.) - a member of a dark-skinned group of peoples originally native to Africa south of the Sahara. From the 18th century to the late 1960s, *negro* (later capitalized) was considered to be the proper English-language term for people of black African origin.

opalescent (adj.) - showing varying colors as an opal does.

plume ( n.) - a long, soft feather or arrangement of feathers used by a bird for display or worn by a person for ornament.

querulous (adj.) - complaining in a petulant or whining manner.

rampant (adj.) - (especially of something unwelcome or unpleasant) flourishing or spreading unchecked.

riotous (adj.) - marked by or involving public disorder.

roistering (adv.) – to celebrate in a noisy or boisterous way.

sheath (n.) - a close-fitting cover for something, especially something that is elongated in shape, in particular.

spinster (n.) - an unmarried woman, typically an older woman beyond the usual age for marriage.

spur ( n.) - a device with a small spike or a spiked wheel that is worn on a rider's heel and used for urging a horse forward.

stalwart (adj.) – loyal, reliable, and hardworking.

surmise (n.) - a supposition that something may be true, even though there is no evidence to confirm it.

tamarack (n.) – a tree in the pine family.

unwittingly (adj.) – not knowing; unaware.

visor lace (n.) – String or piece of leather to hold the visor in place.

weir (n.) - a low dam built across a river to raise the level of water upstream or regulate its flow.

whit (n.) - a very small part or amount.

whole tone scale (n.) - a scale in which each note is separated from its neighbors by the interval of a whole step.

wistful (adj.) - having or showing a feeling of vague or regretful longing.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.miriam-webster.com/dictionary> [Accessed February 5, 2016]



## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aldrich, Ian. "Arna Bontemps." 2004.

<http://www.biography.com/people/arna-bontemps-39864#synopsis>

Accessed March 5, 2016.

Altman, Susan. "The Encyclopedia of African American Heritage: Helene Johnson."

1997. [http://www.aaregistry.org/historic\\_events/view/helen-johnson-poet-harlem-renaissance](http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/helen-johnson-poet-harlem-renaissance)

Accessed March 30, 2016.

Early, Gerald. "Countee Cullen's Life and Career." New York: Oxford University Press,

1997. [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/cullen/life.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/cullen/life.htm)

Accessed March 12, 2016.

Govan, Sandra Y. "Gwendolyn Bennet's Life and Career." New York: Oxford University Press,

1997. [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/bennett/life.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/bennett/life.htm).

Accessed March 2, 2016.

Lain, Latoya. "An Examination of the Compositional Style of Dorothy Rudd Moore and Its

Relationship to the Literary Influence of Langston Hughes". D.M.A. diss., The

University of Nevada Las Vegas, 2012. In Dissertations & Theses: Full Text

[database on-line]; available from <http://www.digitalscholarship/unlv.edu>

[accessed April 21, 2014].

Miriam-Webster Online. <http://www.miriam-webster.com/dictionary>

Accessed February 5, 2016.

Moham, Carren. Interview with Dorothy Rudd Moore. Personal interview. Columbus, July 24, 1996.

Moham, Carren Denise. "The Contributions of four African-American women composers to American art song". D.M.A. diss., Ohio State University, 1997.  
In Dissertations & Theses: Full Text [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> [accessed March 26, 2014]

Moore, Dorothy Rudd. "*Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death*," score; American Composers Alliance, 1976.

Poets.org "Langston Hughes." 2000. [www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/langston-hughes](http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/langston-hughes)  
Accessed March 5, 2016.

Quinlan, Gloria Harrison. "A contextual analysis of Dorothy Rudd Moore's song cycle "*Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death*""". D.M.A. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1996.  
In Dissertations & Theses: Full Text [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> [accessed March 26, 2014]

Southern, Eileen. *The Music of Black Americans*. New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1971.

The Black Renaissance in Washington. "Clarissa Scott Delany." 2003.  
<http://029c28c.netsolhost.com/blkren/bios/delanycms.html> .  
Accessed March 2, 2016.

Walker-Hill, Helen. *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African American Women Composers and Their Music* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 219.

Walsh, Melissa. "Contemporary Black Biography: Alice Dunbar-Nelson." Encyclopedia.com

2004. [http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Alice\\_Dunbar-Nelson.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Alice_Dunbar-Nelson.aspx)

Accessed March 2, 2016.

## CURRICULUM VITA

Cordelia E. Anderson  
4655 Gold Dust Ave Unit 128 Las, Nevada 89120  
ander103@unlv.nevada.edu

### EDUCATION

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Doctor of Musical Arts	2016
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Master of Music	2010
Alabama State University, Montgomery, Al, Bachelor of Arts	2007