Go Down, Moses Study Guide

Go Down, Moses by Anonymous

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Introduction

"Go Down, Moses" is an African-American spiritual, a type of lyric that is also referred to as a Negro folk song. As a folk song, it is thought of as having been created by a community rather than an individual, in this case the community of African-American slaves who lived in the South prior to the Civil War. An early reference to it places it in Maryland in the late eighteenth century. It was a popular slave song and was sung throughout the South by slaves while they worked and during their occasional times of rest and prayer. "Go Down, Moses" is also said to have been sung by abolitionists to signal escape or rebellion. The lyrics use biblical imagery expressing the desire for a release from bondage. The song is marked by its strong tone of determination in the struggle for freedom. To this day, "Go Down, Moses" has remained popular and is performed by gospel singers throughout the world.

Poem Text

Go down, Moses
Way down in Egypt land,
Tell ole Pharaoh,
To let my people go.
When Israel was in Egypt's land;
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.
"Thus spoke the Lord," bold Moses said;
Let my people go,
If not I'll smite your first born dead,
Let my people go.

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Plot Summary

Lines 1-2:

The opening lines tell Moses, leader of the Jews who were held as slaves by the Egyptians, to go deep intoEgypt, the land of the oppressors. In the Old Testament book of *Exodus,* God chooses Moses to lead his people out of slavery. In this song,Egypt may stand for the "slave states" in the American South. This assumption is reinforced by use of the word "down" since slave-holding states were referred to as being "down south." In this interpretation, Moses would be thought of as an abolitionist, one who helps slaves escape from the South, or as a political leader who fights for the abolition of slavery altogether.

Lines 3-4:

The lyrics instruct Moses to speak to the Egyptian Pharaoh, demanding freedom for the Jews. In *Exodus* God commanded Moses to say "Let my people go" to the Pharaoh. God also told Moses to warn the Pharaoh ten times of ten different plagues that were sent by God to force the Egyptians to grant the Jews freedom. Because the Pharaoh failed to release the Jews from slavery after each plague except the last, Moses had to return to him repeatedly with the message, "Let my people go." In this first stanza, the assonance of long *o* and the *o* sounds *ow* and *oo* that occur in the words "go," "Moses," "ole," "Pharaoh," "down," and "to" creates a sustained melodic effect.

Lines 5-8:

Lines five and seven elaborate on the story of Moses by describing the condition of the Jews. "Israel" refers to the Jews who are destined to live in the promised land ofIsrael, but are instead being kept as slaves by the Egyptian Pharaoh. They are oppressed, that is, burdened, to such an extent that they cannot stand, a condition that implies more than literally being on the point of collapse; it may also refer to the inability to stand up for one's rights. Both the physical exhaustion and political subjection of the Jews reflect the conditions of African-American slaves. Forced to work from daybreak to sunset, underfed, and physically brutalized, slaves often found themselves physically unable to stand. If they tried to stand up for their rights, their actions were punished by whipping and sometimes by death. In addition to the description of the condition of the slaves, this stanza contains two repetitions of the chorus "Let my people go," which creates the effect of a determined group of voices united in the struggle for freedom.

Lines 9-10:

Each time he warned the Egyptians that they would suffer at the hands of God, Moses always said that he spoke the words of the Lord as God told him to do. Although Moses

could have easily been put to death by the Pharaoh, he went as God's messenger and identified himself each time as speaking God's will. This took great courage, since he was addressing the Pharaoh, who was not only the most powerful man inEgypt, but who was also considered a god himself. Furthermore, the Egyptians did not include Moses's God among the other deities that they worshipped besides the Pharaoh. Therefore, Moses would be considered extraordinarily rebellious by the Pharaoh. In light of this, the song rightly calls Moses "bold." If the song is taken to be a metaphor for the African Americans quest for freedom, then the reference to a "bold Moses" reminds the listener that African-American slaves also needed great courage to escape from their captivity. If a slave were caught trying to escape or helping others escape, the punishment frequently was death. Line twelve repeats the chorus, creating a further feeling of brave rebellion.

Lines 11-12:

Line eleven refers to the last plague sent by God to free the Jews. After nine attempts to convince the Pharaoh to free the Jewish slaves, God told Moses to warn the Pharaoh that every firstborn child inEgypt would be killed as a sign of God's power and his displeasure that his chosen people were in bondage. When this plague causes the death of every first-born Egyptian child, including the Pharaoh's son, the Pharaoh grants the Jews their freedom. The Pharaoh would not relent until he had suffered drastic punishment. Reference to this extreme measure may be read as a strong threat that slavery inAmerica would not be tolerated forever; with the help of abolitionists, slavery would end, even if bloodshed were necessary to bring about justice. In the concluding chorus, "Let my people go," the forceful demand for freedom again rings out.

Themes

Freedom

"Go Down, Moses," a spiritual with its origins in the slave community of the southernUnited States, adopts the Biblical story of Moses from the book of *Exodus* to express the unquenchable desire for freedom felt by the African Americans held in captivity. Any study of the body of spirituals will reveal that this hunger is the clear and overriding theme of the genre. In his detailed study of the origins and meanings of the African-American spirituals, *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame,* John Lovell, Jr. states that "There is hardly a better way to nail down the Afro-American spiritual than to describe the central passion of it and its creators a thing called freedom."

While Lovell indicates that freedom is the theme of every spiritual, in many songs it is obscured in some way. Too obvious an expression of this longing could frequently be dangerous; therefore, many slave songs utilized a code that was transparent to insiders, but easily overlooked by others. Thus several religious songs, such as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "New Jerusalem," were interpreted by the white listeners as possessing only a theological meaning. Even some twentieth-century scholars felt that the creators of these songs hoped for a better life only in the hereafter, rather than the here and now. This is certainly not the case with "Go Down, Moses." It draws a direct parallel between the situation of the Jews in Egypt and the Africans who had been taken to theAmericas. Both were slaves forced to endure abominable treatment. Families were torn apart. Biblical Hebrews and Africans inAmerica alike were beaten, exploited as labor, killed at the whim of an overseer. Although the song does not specifically mention any of these facts, it effectively sums up all the hardship in the simple phrase, "Oppressed so hard they could not stand."

Moses is the spokesman for the oppressed, both in front of the Pharaoh and in defiance of the American system of slavery. In the song, as in the Bible, the message is clear and direct. It appears both in the verse and the refrain as well: "Let my people go." Over and over it is repeated, giving voice to the longing of a people for freedom. In the introduction to *The Books of American Negro Spirituals,* James Weldon Johnson describes how this song was traditionally performed, using the lead and response style traditional in African music. A chorus opens with the first verse, harmonizing its last line, which states for the first time the phrase, "Let my people go." A leader sings, "Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said." The chorus responds again, "Let my people go." This pattern is followed throughout the song. It is almost impossible to interpret this as anything other than an impassioned cry for freedom. In fact, because of its message, "Go Down, Moses" was outlawed in many communities throughout the South.

Indictment of Slavery

Like many other spirituals, "Go Down, Moses" includes a forceful indictment of the entire system of slavery. The Pharaoh represents the earthly power of the oppressor. He symbolizes the authority that upholds slavery, both in Egypt and theAmericas. Owners, overseers, traders, auctioneers□all function under his protection. Thus, at first, he seems to represent an almost undefeatable enemy for the slave who has neither the law nor weapons on his side.

However, while the Pharaoh may seem invincible because of his physical strength, he is vulnerable on a moral level. The wickedness of the governmental policies he upholds must demand some type of retribution. This is clearly a key theme in the biblical tale of Moses, and it is carried out in the spiritual as well. Every time the Pharaoh denies Moses' request to free his people a new plague is placed upon his people. "Go Down, Moses" only mentions the last and most terrible of the punishments, the killing of the first born sons. Yet the message is clear: God will not allow such evil to go unpunished forever. Moses and the Israelites had the power of a just God to protect them from the Pharaoh and his armies. Spirituals such as "Go Down, Moses" extended that protection to the African Americans in bondage.

Several critics, such as Johnson and Lovell, have compared African religious practices with the Christianity practiced in the southern part of theUnited States during the centuries of slavery. While African religion was an intrinsic part of daily life, many slaves were puzzled by the fact that Christianity seemed to be a Sunday event, whose principles were unrelated to day-to-day existence.

Courage and Community

The southern spirituals that came out of the slave community exhibit an astonishing degree of unity, dignity, and courage. Given the fact that the slaves had been torn from their families and language, were forced to live in often appalling conditions and were given no opportunity to group together in a social environment, the thematic consistency of the spiritual demonstrates the enormous desire for freedom which stretched throughout the entire slave community. "Go Down, Moses" is one of the boldest statements of this longing, and therefore one of the most courageous. It stands as a direct attack on the slave system. It contains an almost mocking view of the Pharaoh. He is always described as "ole Pharaoh," a phrase which holds a subtle connotation of weakness. When this is compared with "bold Moses" who stands up to him and defeats him, the scorn becomes even clearer. "Go Down, Moses" emphasizes the courage and dignity of the oppressed. In "The Negro Spiritual," David Simms discusses the affirmative power of the spirituals that "consistently hold to the view that every human being is a child of God and that all men are therefore brothers ... This is the greatest theme of the Negro Spirituals."

Style

As noted by John Wesley Work in his book *American Negro Songs and Spirituals,* African-American songs often retain forms that originated in African tribal customs. "Go Down, Moses" belongs to the largest group, a class of spirituals that use the African "call-and-response chant form." Mr. Work describes it as "interesting as well as distinctive. Its feature is a melodic fragment sung repeatedly by the chorus as an answer to the challenging lines of the leader which usually change." In this version the chorus, "Let my people go," repeats every second and fourth line in stanzas two and three and as the last line in stanza one. It is meant to be sung by a group in answer to an individual voice that sings the first and third lines of each stanza. This repetition not only provides structure for the song, it also enables the lyrics to be easily remembered. Another aid to memory exists in the rhymes that occur at the end of the first and third lines in stanzas two and three: "land" with "stand," and "said" with "dead." The last two lines of stanza one also end with rhymes: "Pharaoh" and "go."

Historical Context

In many American history books, 1620 is singled out as an important date. That was the year when the Mayflower landed at Plymouth colony, bringing a shipload of Pilgrims who had left their homes and set sail for a new world hoping to find the religious freedom which had been denied them inEurope. Those same books seldom record an equally momentous event which occurred one year earlier: in 1619, a Dutch man-of-war arrived in Jamestown, bringing the first African slaves to the land which would become theUnited States. These two events prefigure a divisive split in our nation's history: between those who settled the land looking for freedom, gain, or adventure and those who were violently ripped from their own country and forced into bondage to suffer for another's dream.

In the decades immediately following 1619, there was little increase in the slave trade in the English colonies. The small towns and farms did not require intensive labor, and thus did not provide a profitable market for the traders. Work was frequently performed by indentured servants, workers who committed themselves to serve a master for a period of several years, after which they received their freedom. In addition, many settlers hoped to enforce the native Indian population into either indentured servitude or slavery. Thus, the slave trade in the Americas first flourished in the West Indies and theCaribbean where large sugar plantations were established.

Gradually, however, slavery was extended throughoutNorth America. At first, slaves in these English colonies were considered the same as indentured servants. Eleven Angolans who had been brought to work as slave laborers inNew Amsterdam in 1626 were released from their servitude by the governor of the colony in 1644. However, this attitude quickly changed. By the later part of the seventeenth century, codes were established which legalized a system of slavery allowing a slave to be considered as chattel or property. As the large plantations of the southernUnited States developed, so did the increased demand for slaves. Soon a triangular trade route flourished. Ships would leave England loaded with goods and sail toAfrica. There the goods were traded for slaves. Ships then made the infamous Middle Passage to theWest Indies or the colonies. Slaves were exchanged for sugar and other commodities, after which the ships returned toEngland to begin the process again. Such continual trade meant the number of slaves increased by the thousands almost every year. In *Africans in America,* the authors state: "By the mid-1750s, one in every five Americans was a slave nearly 300,000 out of a total population of a million and a half. And five thousand new captives arrived from Africa or theCaribbean each year."

Thus, from 1619 until the slave trade ended, almost 15,000,000 Africans were wrenched from their homes and brought to theNew World under appalling conditions. Many died en route. Those who survived found themselves totally ripped from family and tradition, often without even the presence of someone who spoke the same language. Nevertheless, slaves formed communities with common dreams and goals. They adapted aspects of Christianity which allowed them to retain many African religious overtones. They struggled against their oppressors, mentally and physically. In *The*

Black Spirituals and Black Experience, James Cone proclaims that "Black slaves were not passive, and black history is the record of their resistance against the condition of human bondage."

Many slaves struggled against the harsh conditions. Several stories have been passed down about slaves who threw themselves off the ships if possible, preferring death to life in captivity. During the 230 years when slavery flourished inNorth America, there were many slave rebellions. Over sixty-five have been documented. One of the first occurred in the north, inNew York City in 1711, when a group of runaway African slaves burned several buildings. In 1739, a man named Jeremy, a recent arrival from Angola, led over twenty slaves in a rebellion inStony River, South Carolina. Word of a large-scale slave rebellion in Haiti in 1791 reached theUnited States, inspiring fear in slave owners and hope in many slaves. One man who was encouraged by this example was Gabriel. He hoped to force the white slave-owners ofRichmond Virginia, to negotiate with him. Both poor weather and a traitor in his ranks helped to defeat his troops, but not before his rebellion received national attention, including that of the president-elect, Thomas Jefferson.

However, armed rebellion was not the only method of seeking freedom for slaves. Many fled North, either on their own or aided by the Underground Railroad, a loose connection of individuals who provided guidance and shelter for runaway slaves. One of the best known figures of the system was a former slave, Harriet Tubman. After reaching the relative safety of the northern states, she decided to help others escape. Her role was that of a conductor on the railroad. She ventured into the South, escorting groups of fleeing slaves back North with her. Her passion and success were so overwhelming that she became known as Moses, or at times the Black Moses. Spirituals were a prime means of communication on the Underground Railroad, and she would frequently signal her presence by singing, "Go Down, Moses." Word then spread through the slave cabins that Moses had arrived to make the words of the spiritual a reality. Thus the spirituals held out the hope of freedom, not just in the afterlife, but in the present also.

The importance of such songs in providing hope is vividly demonstrated in *The Music of Black Americans* by Eileen Southern. She describes a meeting of black men held on December 31, 1862, inWashington, D.C. As they waited for the stroke of midnight, when the Emancipation Proclamation would "bring freedom to the slaves in the secessionist states ... the assembled blacks sang over and over again: *"Go Down, Moses ... Let my people go."*

Critical Overview

Discussion about "Go Down, Moses" often centers on the degree to which the song should be considered as a metaphor for the escape from slavery. Some historians believe that "Moses" in the song refers to Harriet Tubman, one of the leaders of the Underground Railroad, a group of abolitionists, both black and white, who formed a network of transportation and safe houses that assisted slaves in their escape from Southern plantations. This interpretation receives full treatment in *Harriet Tub-man, The Moses of Her People* by Sarah Bradford. In this reading,Egypt and the Pharaoh represent the plantation and the slave owner, and of course, the Israelites represent the African-American slaves themselves. Among those who agree with this interpretation are Bernard Katz, John Lovell, Irwin Silber, Russell Ames, and Earl Conrad. Conrad writes, "Negro slaves chanted thinly-disguised songs of protest set to the meter of spirituals [such as] 'Go Down, Moses,' the fighting song of Harriet Tubman who came like Moses to redeem her black kinsman from the 'Egypt-land of the South.'" In *Black Song* Lovell reports that Denmark Vesey, who lead an attempted slave uprising inCharleston in 1822, used this song as a signal for fugitive slaves. Lovell credits "Go Down, Moses" with "filling every listener with a pervasive contempt for oppression and a resounding enthusiasm for freedom." He speaks of the importance of Moses to the slaves: "they lavished great attention upon Moses. He was no legendary figure, he had actually lived. Through him a very bitter slavery had been overthrown. If it could happen once, it could happen again." And he calls "Go Down, Moses" a song "intended to chide Americans, South and North, about permitting slavery and to issue a solemn warning that slavery will not be indefinitely tolerated."

Another interpretation of the song casts it as a tribute to Bishop Francis Asbury, who in the 1790s as leader of the Methodist church spoke out strongly against slavery. Miles Mark Fisher describes the love and gratitude that the slaves felt for this white religious leader and suggests that they "immortalized him in a great spiritual. He was their Moses."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Mahony is an English instructor at Wayne County Community College inDetroit, Michigan. In this essay, Mahony discusses West African influences and multiple levels of meaning in African-American spirituals.

Folk song is the voice of a people, of a community. It tells of the sorrows, triumphs, and yearnings□not of the individual but of the collective. Folk songs are attributed not to a single composer or poet, but to a nation, a tribe or a race. This helps to explain the power and the beauty, as well as the miracle, of the African-American spiritual. In the introduction to *The Books of American Negro Spirituals,* the poet James Weldon Johnson marvels at the creation of this powerful music: "These people came from various localities inAfrica. They did not speak the same language. Here they were, cut off from the moorings of their native culture, scattered without regard to their old tribal relations, having to adjust themselves to a completely alien civilization, having to learn a strange language, and moreover, held under an increasingly harsh system of slavery; yet it was from these people this mass of noble music sprang; this music that is America's only folk music and, up to this time, the finest distinctive artistic contribution she has to offer the world. It is strange!"

Because of the amazing difficulties that the slaves faced, some early evaluators of the spiritual, such as E. Franklin Frazier and George Pullen Jackson, decided that it would have been impossible for slaves to have originated such works. Frazier argued that the African roots of the slaves had been almost completely eradicated so that any music they composed had to come from their contacts inAmerica.Jackson began to trace the development of the white spiritual, comparing these songs to the black spirituals. He then theorized that the white spiritual had come first. Therefore, Frazier and Jackson concluded that songs like "Go Down, Moses" were simply born of the slaves' introduction to the Christian religion, and were merely primitive adaptations of stories or music they had heard.

These theories were soon challenged by many critics who conducted research into the African origins and background of the songs. One of the most extensive works, *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame: The Story of How the Afro-American Spiritual Was Hammered Out* by John Lovell, Jr., evaluated the spiritual as both song and folklore, first considering the musicality and then the subjects or themes of the spirituals. After an examination of over 3,000 references, he concluded that "It was and is an independent folk song, born of the union of African tradition and American socio-religious elements."

To understand the influence of West African tradition and music on the spiritual, it is necessary to understand the role of music in that culture. In most West African tribal societies, music played an intrinsic role in the day-to-day lives of the people. Almost every occasion was accompanied by song. This included not only special events like weddings, births, or funerals, but many of the daily rituals were also celebrated in music and dance. Doing chores, hunting and fishing, building structures□all were frequently

performed to music. Thus, drama, music, and dance became a way of communicating what happened in the lives of individuals and the tribe.

These musical performances were centered around the community rather than the individual. Therefore, when everyday or even special events like these were reenacted, they took place in group performances. The main singer or drummer might hold a role as song leader, but usually the entire community would participate. In *Black American Music,* Hal Roach notes that the community would create a performance, for example of a typical hunting or harvesting experience. These occasions were based on real events; thus, the words and actions would change, depending on what had actually taken place. Initially, the master drummer would begin, setting the theme and mood. His music would spur onlookers to join in, creating songs and performing dances reflecting their own and the communal experiences. The theme of the performance was set, but the community itself developed the individual content.

Another important West African musical technique that inspired community involvement was the "call and response." The leader would state a theme that would be taken up by a chorus. Many spirituals, including "Go Down, Moses" use this form. Because of these elements, music became a vital, fluid changeable part of community life, which both celebrated and recorded community history.

These same characteristics are true of African-American spirituals where the songs reflect the lives and longings of the people. The participatory style of West African music was a central ingredient of spirituals before the Civil War. Roach demonstrates this with a quotation from E. A. McIlhenny, who had frequently listened to slave songs when he was a child. "It is impossible to get the exact wording of spirituals for even the same singer never sings one twice the same ... Stanzas never occur twice in the same order, but are sung as they come to the mind of the singer, and as the singer will improvise ... the number of stanzas ... is unlimited."

Another important role of music in African life was to convey history and tradition. These were not written down in books, but passed on to successive generations in music and stories. Griots, who were expert musicians and tale-tellers, traveled from place to place serving as a sort of portable library, dispensing the chronicles and the wisdom of the tribe. However, griots were not the only communicators of tribal wisdom. Every community established its own rituals for conveying community history to subsequent generations. Frequently, this information was passed on in secret meetings, a sort of initiation ritual where the men of the tribe used song and dance to prepare the youth for the day when they would accept the mantle of adulthood and leadership. A similar ceremony was held for girls approaching womanhood. Such secret ceremonies were an intrinsic part of tribal culture.

Partly because of these centuries-old traditions, Africans who were sold into slavery managed to retain many elements of their past. The role of music as a central focus of their lives and history was ingrained into their thought and behavior, so that despite the fact that an individual had been ripped from his old community, he or she retained many basic beliefs. Even when faced with linguistic differences, the language of music

remained a common medium, and this tradition helped in the formation of new slave communities, composed of peoples from different tribes or areas. Many of the first slave songs inAmerica were simple calls, cries, hollers or shouts. Later, they developed into the more complex musicality of the spirituals.

As these spirituals developed, many retained West African patterns. The use of call and response between the leader and the chorus helped to create a new sense of community. The same was true for the dramatic or performance aspect of song. When drums or other musical instruments were unavailable or forbidden, the human body served as an instrument, preserving many of the rhythms of African music. Since African culture, music, religion, and history were all interwoven, the songs had an intensely personal quality reflecting identity and heritage. This quality was also transferred to the spirituals where the use of personal pronoun was common. One of the most evident transferences, however, is the use of song to convey wisdom, information, and history. Ironically, the fact that much of this type of information was originally shared in secret meetings inAfrica became essential to survival in this new environment. The fear of rebellion and insurrection permeated much of the South. Therefore, most states enacted laws forbidding slaves to gather together. Slave owners hired men to patrol the countryside making sure no gatherings took place. However, slaves were still allowed to communicate freely through the use of religion and religious songs.

Thus both the themes and frequently individual phrases in spirituals such as "Go Down, Moses" were crafted to convey a variety of meanings. In theUnited States, several spirituals operated on numerous different levels of communication. The first level, designed for the ears of the slave owner, held a simple religious message. In "Go Down, Moses," it was the retelling of Exodus. In "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Steal Away to Jesus," the surface message discussed the longing for heaven. The secondary meaning dealt with themes such as the longing for freedom. Here words contained a double meaning. Bondage referred to slavery. The suffering of the Hebrew people was equated with the sufferings of the slaves. Moses was a liberator. However, several songs had a third level that dealt with specific practical advice for attaining that freedom. Code words and phrases permeated these songs. Moses was the name for Harriet Tubman, who frequently used the song, "Go Down, Moses" to announce her presence in an area. Slaves who had been waiting for her would gather their bundles to set out on the journey north when she signaled her presence. Many other songs, too, used codes. Canaan and Heaven both were frequently synonymous withCanada. The song "Follow the Drinking Gourd" contained directions for traveling north. "Wade in the Water," which slave owners thought spoke of baptism, made a very pragmatic suggestion. Don't directly cross a stream; instead you must walk a distance in the water so as not to leave a trail for slave catchers to follow.

Johnson has called the spiritualsAmerica's only true folk music. Certainly, they are one of the most permanent types of folk music in this country. The spiritual has never fallen into disuse. It remains alive today in churches and in gospel choirs. Songs like "Go Down, Moses" are performed by orchestras and choruses across the world. Along with many other spirituals, "Go Down, Moses" remains viable on its many levels. It is still a dramatic and powerful folk version of the story of Moses and the Israelites. It is still a

poignant plea for freedom. And finally, it still recreates the history of the slave community in both its struggles and its triumphs.

Source: Mary Mahony, in an essay for *Poetry for Students,* Gale Group, 2001.

Critical Essay #2

Drohan is a professional editor and writer who specializes in classic and contemporary literature. In the following essay, she explores the history of "Go Down, Moses" and the connection the poem makes between the struggle of the enslaved Jews escaping Egypt and the struggles of African-American slaves in pre-Civil WarAmerica.

"Go Down, Moses" is an old African-American spiritual, or folk song, that has remained popular for hundreds of years. Many historians believe it originated in the late eighteenth century among the slaves in the southern states. Prior to the civil war, African Americans were held captive as slaves on southern plantations, forced to work long hours and to endure tremendous physical and emotional brutality. Because plantation owners feared an uprising of the slaves, any sign of rebellion was met with severe punishment, such as whipping, branding, dismembering, or castrating. In fact, it was completely legal to kill a slave who had tried to escape. It also became illegal for the slaves to assemble or learn how to read or write. This left the slaves with little privacy or ability to communicate. To protect themselves and communicate with one another without fear of punishment, the slaves often sang while working in the fields.

According to musicologist Horace Clarence Boyer, the Negro spiritual was created for a specific purpose or need. As a result, the song was only used when it was needed. In addition, there are two types of spirituals□liberation and sorrow.

Boyer identifies "Go Down, Moses" as a song of sorrow. Thus, it gave the slaves an outlet for their suffering. However, because the song discussed Moses and the Jews, it let the slaves disguise their desire for freedom without the threat of punishment.

The first four lines of the song, "Go down, Moses / Way down in Egypt land, / Tell ole Pharaoh / To let my people go," introduce the concept of slaves inEgypt. As related in the Old Testament, Moses was chosen by God to free the Jews from slavery. The Pharaoh had enslaved the Jews living in Egypt because he and the people ofEgypt feared and resented them□a testament that easily translates to the plight of the African-American slaves. Moses was instructed by God to go "way down inEgypt land," and speak to the Pharaoh, who was holding the slaves captive. The idea that Moses should go "down" refers to the fact that slavery was rampant in the southern colonial states of America, andEgypt represents those slave states. The song then becomes a call to abolitionists to take up the slaves' cause and go south to help end slavery.

In the same way that Moses was chosen by God, the slaves hoped for a "chosen" leader who could lead them from bondage. Moses was not a mythical figure. Rather, he was a real person who lived and succeeded in freeing his people. Because Moses is firmly grounded in reality, some historians, such as Sarah Bradford, Bernard Katz, John Lovell, and Russell Ames, agree that Moses was symbolic of Harriet Tubman, who ran the Underground Railroad and, with her network of abolitionists, helped to free thousands of slaves. However, there is another interpretation that connects Moses with Bishop Francis Asbury, a church leader who outwardly expressed his opinions against

slavery. Still most agree with the Harriet Tubman theory, some going so far as to name her Harriet "Moses" Tubman.

The lines in the second stanza of the song, "When Israel was in Egypt's land; / Let my people go, / Oppressed so hard they could not stand, / Let my people go," further connect the slaves ofEgypt with the African-American slaves. Just as the Jews were severely oppressed by the Pharaoh, so did the plantation owners oppress the African-American slaves. The oppression in both cases was crippling, and the backbreaking work they both did was so harsh, the slaves were physically exhausted to the point "they could not stand." That last line has a deeper meaning, however, meaning that the slaves could not stand up for their rights for fear of punishment. Again, any sign of uprising usually resulted in a severe beating or death.

In the Old Testament, God told Moses not only to implore the Pharaoh to let his people go, but also to warn the Pharaoh, because, if the Pharaoh did not heed God's warning, he would set a plague upon the people of Egypt. The line "Let my people go" is repeated at the end of the second stanza. This repetition refers to the fact that Moses warned the Pharaoh several times to heed God's wishes. God inflicted a series of ten different plagues upon the people ofEgypt, but nothing happened and the slaves were not freed. Each time Moses said, "Let my people go," the Pharaoh ignored him, refusing to let the Jews return to theland of Israel. The repetition also serves to shed light on the construction of African-American spirituals. Because the songs were used to communicate, the slaves traded lines back and forth, which is referred to as "call-and-response chant form." The slaves repeated verses to feel united and to acknowledge the determination they all felt in their struggle. However, because "Go Down, Moses" is considered a song of sorrow, the repetition also indicates a feeling of resignation. This feeling is perhaps in part because the slaves themselves could not fight for their freedom, but rather depended on another to fight for them.

The last stanza of the song indicates just how brave a freedom fighter would have to be to secure the slaves' freedom. The line, "Thus spoke the Lord, bold Moses said," indicates that Moses could have easily been killed for his rebellion. He was "bold" and stood up against the most powerful man inEgypt, the Pharaoh, who may have only spared Moses' life because he claimed to speak God's will. However, the God of Moses was not even acknowledged in theland of Egypt, which made his actions much more courageous. By acknowledging Moses' bravado, "Go Down, Moses" seems to say that anyone willing to secure the freedom of the African-American slaves would have to find the same kind of courage.

It is common knowledge that Harriet Tubman took enormous risk in travelling to the South to transport over 100,000 slaves to safety in the North. In addition, the slaves who took that journey to freedom risked being caught and killed if discovered. They often traveled great distances in difficult and often hazardous conditions to make their way to freedom. If Harriet Tubman or anyone else aiding a slave to freedom had been caught, they would have been immediately executed for their so-called crimes. In addition, the fact that the song says Moses spoke God's will seems to be saying that the

African-American slaves need to fight their cause using a higher law. Since slavery was legal, the only way to argue the injustice of the times was to argue God's law.

The eleventh line of the song speaks to the lengths that God would go to free his people. Through Moses, he said, "Let my people go, / If not I'll smite your first born dead." It was the tenth, and final, plague that God sent upon the people ofEgypt that finally convinced the Pharaoh to let the Jews go. God decided that the first-born son of every Egyptian would be slain, including the Pharaoh's child. Moses protected the Jews from the plague by painting their doors red to indicate they were not to be harmed. When the Pharaoh discovered his dead son, he was so devastated by his loss that he finally agreed to let Moses' people go.

This drastic measure indicates how far the slaves needed to go to secure their freedom. Even if it meant bloodshed, slavery could no longer be tolerated. As the chosen one for her people, Harriet Tubman carried a gun with her on her missions to protect herself and the people she was transporting. She was willing to achieve her goals by any means necessary. Even though the Civil War had yet to occur, this idea of necessary bloodshed can be applied to the war. Abolitionists, like Moses, tried to secure the slaves' freedom through other means, but it wasn't until real bloodshed and a war that tore the country apart emerged that the African Americans became free.

Finally, the song ends with the line, "Let my people go." Again, this closes the call-and-response chant form. This line is repeated five times throughout the short song, in the last line of the first stanza, and the second and fourth lines of the last two stanzas. An individual would usually sing the other lines so that a group could respond with "Let my people go." By ending the song with this line, which is sung by the group, it becomes a powerful, united cry for freedom that resonates with the plight of many enslaved Africans throughout the American South.

Source: Michele Drohan, in an essay for *Poetry for Students,* Gale Group, 2001.

Critical Essay #3

Erica Smith is a writer and editor. In this essay she discusses the history, imagery, and cultural impact of the spiritual "Go Down, Moses."

"Go Down, Moses" is a spiritual, a kind of African-American religious folk song. Spirituals were first sung in earlyAmerica by African-American slaves. These songs were related to Christian hymns□songs based on the Bible and sung in the churches of white Americans. But spirituals also had the unique features of African music, including call-and-response singing (in which one person sings a phrase and others respond) and improvisation (in which verses are made up on the spot, often commenting on an issue or conflict of the present moment).

"Go Down, Moses" recounts the incident in the Old Testament of the Bible in which Moses led the Jews out ofEgypt. Because these Jews had been slaves, African-American slaves felt a strong connection with their plight. They too yearned for freedom, and with the commencement of the Civil War (1861-65), many of them believed that it was coming. The chorus of the song is both direct and elegant: "O go down, Moses / Away down toEgypt's land, / And tell King Pharaoh / To let my people go!" In this case, "Pharaoh" was thought of as the slaves' overseer. The Moses figure ultimately came to be affiliated with Abraham Lincoln, who was president during the Civil War. (In 1863 Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation which did, in fact, free the slaves in the rebellious Southern states.)

As scholar John Lovell, Jr., notes in *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame,* part of the song's appeal is that it is powerful and clear:

"Go Down, Moses" is a direct statement all the way. It does not employ ... undercurrent symbolism.... It says flatly that Moses freed these Egyptian slaves boldly and justly because slavery is wrong. It clearly projects the principles of this experience to all the world: Wherever men are held in bondage, they shall be freed.

The "Let my people go!" refrain is thunderous. It does not argue economic, sociological, historical, and racial points. It does not concern itself with what the Pharaohs shall do for substitute labor. It is one of the great freedom declarations of literature and history.

Although sung for years by plantation slaves, spirituals did not gain widespread notoriety in American culture until the outbreak of the Civil War. The war brought plantation slaves into contact with Northerners who, hearing these songs for the first time, were deeply affected by them. Soldiers commented on these stirring songs in their letters home, and newspaper reporters began to write about them. Of these spirituals, "Go Down, Moses" was the first to gain distinction.

It is unclear exactly how long this song had been in existence prior to these accounts. In his assessment of "Go Down, Moses" Lovell draws attention to the description given by Russell Ames and others□that this spiritual had been sung by Harriet Tubman to

summon those whom she was helping travel to freedom. (She used the song "Wade in the Water" for a similar purpose: instructing runaway slaves how to throw bloodhounds off the trail of their scent.) The first white people to make a written record of the song claimed that it had been in existence nine or ten years, but due to the slow and evolving nature of the oral tradition, the song is likely older than that.

In *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* scholar Dena J. Epstein recounts the pivotal episode in bringing slave music into contact with white Northerners. It was also the incident that set in motion the Civil War: the surrender ofFort Sumter to the Confederacy on April 14, 1861. After the surrender, refugee slaves entered Fortress Monroe in Virginia. General Benjamin Butler of the Union forces refused to return the slaves to their masters, instead, citing them as "contraband of war." (This phrase, or simply "contraband," became a popular synonym for slave, and "Go Down, Moses" was called a "song of the contrabands" in its earliest versions.)

Reverend Louis C. Lockwood, an employee of the YMCA, was sent to Fortress Monroe as a missionary to aid the refugees. According to the chaplain of the First Regiment of New York State Volunteers, the contrabands were "destitute and desolate," deeply in need of clothing, shelter, and social services. While helping out at Fortress Monroe, Lockwood heard slave music for the first time. He was so deeply moved that he wrote of his experiences in the October 12, 1861, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*□the first accounts of "Go Down, Moses" to appear in print:

I overheard music__ I found a number of colored people assembled for a prayer-meeting. The brother who led in the concluding prayer had a sing-song manner, but his sentiments were very scriptural and impressive. He prayed that He who brought Israel out ofEgypt, Jonah out of the mouth of the whale, and Daniel out of the den of lions, might bring them out into full deliverance, spiritually and temporally.

I told my mission in few words.... They assured me that this is what they had been praying for; and now that "the good Lord" had answered their prayers, they felt assured that some great thing was in store for them and their people. There are some peculiarities in their prayer-meetings. Their responses are not boisterous; but in the gentle, chanted style ... The themes are generally devotional ...: "Go down toEgypt□Tell Pharaoh / Thus saith my servant, Moses□Let my people go."

According to Epstein, newspaper accounts of contrabands and their music became common during the Civil War, interspersed with military reports and descriptions of camp life.

The publication of sheet music for "Go Down, Moses" was announced in December, 1861. It was the first spiritual to be published with its music, and publication occurred not even two weeks after the text of the song was sent to the *New York Tribune.* The song did not gain a great deal of popularity as a direct result of its publication, for the arrangement (for piano and harp, by Thomas Baker) was weak and did not reflect the original song's power. However, the original version, as sung by African Americans, did prevail through the years.

The song unfolds as a vivid and poetic story. The stanzas are structured so that the first and third lines comprise the narrative, and the second and fourth lines deliver the refrain "[O] Let my people go!" The first stanza, for example, begins—"When Israel was inEgypt's land, / Let my people go! / Oppressed so hard they could not stand, / Let my people go!"—and each stanza is followed by a chorus. The song was sung by a group, with a song leader delivering the first and third lines, a group singing the refrain, and a collaboration of all singers coming in at the chorus. This powerful delivery of the song dramatizes the events within it.

The singers could deeply identify with the feeling of oppression related in the first stanza.

The scene is further described as a "dark and dismal night"—this can be read literally as well as figuratively, as a dark night of sorrow and fear within the soul. Some of the stanzas that follow convey direct action ("The Lord told Moses what to do / to lead the children ofIsrael through") while others convey poignant images ("O Moses, the cloud shall cleave the way / A fire by night, a shade by day") and philosophy ("We need not always weep and mourn / And wear these Slavery chains forlorn.")

For the duration of the song Moses is, by turns, reassured, praised, and shouted onward. The singers cajole him to "come along, Moses, you'll not get lost" and later implore him to hold a lighted candle so as not to lose his way in the wilderness. Knowing the triumph to come at the end of the song, the singers can adopt an attitude of wisdom, encouraging him to be brave. In this way, the song is helping the singers to muster their own bravery and faith. As the story unfolds, the waters of theRed Sea are parted for Moses and the freed slaves to pass safely through, but converge again to drown the Pharaoh and his army. The jubilant singers declare to Moses: "Your foe shall not before you stand / And you'll possess fairCanaan's land."

This assuredness of the singers also mingles with a sorrowful insight: the world is described as a "wilderness of woe," but the singers still vow to press onward toCanaan and put their faith in Christ. At the end of the song, the singers declare "what a beautiful morning that will be! / When time breaks up in eternity!" They have found their deliverance, and it is eternal.

"Go Down, Moses" has survived and flourished. After the end of the Civil War, the song continued to find new listeners. It was sung by the popular Fisk Jubilee Singers, a singing group of African-American singers from Fisk University who toured the United States andEurope, as well as the Tuskegee Choir; popular twentieth-century singers such as Paul Robeson and Harry Belafonte adapted the song; and Antonin Dvorak was influenced by it while composing his *American Symphony.* In other forms of media, the song is alluded to in the movie *Gone with the Wind* and inspired William Faulkner's novel *Go Down, Moses.*

"Go Down, Moses" is a spiritual of roaring power and tender feeling, unforgettable for its historical meaning as well as its enduring poetry.

Source: Erica Smith, in an essay for *Poetry for Students,* Gale Group, 2001.

Adaptations

The 1998 PBS series *Africans in America* traces the history of Africans from the early 1600s to the period just before the Civil War.

Roots, the saga of an African-American family based on the best selling novel by Alex Haley, was re-released by Warner Home Video in 1992.

A 1997 production by Films for the Humanities, *Too Close to Heaven, Part I,* discusses spirituals and their origins, including the early performances by the Fiske Jubilee Singers.

"Go Down, Moses" is included on a CD released by Pavilion Records in 1995 entitled *Marian Anderson Sings Spirituals.*

Flight to Freedom: The Underground Railroad, a 1995 release by Films for the Humanities, discusses how spirituals were used as a code on the Underground Railroad.

Topics for Further Study

Investigate the history of the Underground Railroad, focusing on the role that spirituals played in communicating messages.

There are a number of connections between spirituals and the protest songs of the Civil Rights movement. Compare and contrast some of these songs.

Write a report on the role of the griot or storyteller in African tribal culture.

Choose a famous tale from history, the Bible, folk or fairy tales, even current events. Retell it in song or poetry.

Spirituals connect the Hebrews of the Old Testament with the slaves in theUnited States. Over the past several decades, however, prominent African-American leaders such as Louis Farrakhan have been accused of anti-Semitism. Investigate these charges and write a report on your findings.

What Do I Read Next?

The biblical story of Moses is joined with black folklore in Zora Neale Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain,* which was reprinted in 1999 by Econo-Clad Books.

The Souls of Black Folk by W. E. B. DuBois contains the essay "Of the Sorrow Songs," one of the earliest and most insightful discussions of the role of the spiritual in portraying the sufferings and hopes of slaves.

Slavery is graphically portrayed, including the role of the spiritual, in the first person narrative *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.*

William Faulkner's novel, *Go Down, Moses,* deals with racism and the lingering effects of slavery in the South.

The Shaping of Black America by Lerone Bennett provides a gripping historical account of realities of life for African Americans in theUnited States.

Toni Morrison's 1998 novel *Beloved* is a powerful and tragic story of the far-reaching effects of slavery.

Further Study

Ajayi, J. F. A. and Michael Crowder, eds., *The History of West Africa,* Columbia University Press, 1972.

This collection of scholarly essays provides a West African view on the history of the area, including an article on the slave trade.

Allen, William Francis, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison, *Slave Songs in theUnited States,* Peter Smith Publications, 1951.

This volume, which was originally copyrighted in 1867, is one of the oldest collections of spirituals. The introductory commentary provides insight into the attitudes towards spirituals at that time.

Lawrence-McIntyre, Charshee Charlotte, "The Double Meaning of the Spirituals," in *Journal of Black Studies,* June, 1987, pp. 379^01.

A fascinating article which points out many of the double and triple meanings in spirituals.

Peters, Erskine, "The Poetics of the Afro-American Spiritual," in *Black American Literature Forum,* Fall, 1989, pp. 559-578.

Peters discusses the categories and characteristics of spirituals, focusing on rhetorical devices and use of language.

Petry, Ann, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad,* Archway, 1955.

This clearly written story provides a good introduction for both adult and young adult readers to the amazing accomplishments of Harriet Tubman.

Spencer, John Michael, *Protest and Praise: Sacred Music*

of Black Religion, Fortress Press, 1990.

Spencer includes an extensive analysis of the story of Moses as it is retold through spirituals.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of classic novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members educational professionals helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

Night. Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the Criticism subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on Winesburg, Ohio. Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition, Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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Adams, Timothy Dow. Richard Wright: Wearing the Mask, in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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