

African American Civil War Poetry

One of the myths still prominent among many literary critics and historians is that Black poets during the Civil War did not write (or did not write much) about Black wartime experiences outside of slavery. As *Black Print Unbound* demonstrates, in addition to powerful anti-slavery poems, the *Recorder* published a notable range of Black Civil War poetry.

Here's one, headed simply "Obituary," and it carries an introductory note that says, "Died, at Fort Pickens, Florida, Sergeant JAMES W. DAVIS, son of Rev. Henderson Davis, on July 19, 1864. Sergeant Davis was 26 years old, and was a member of Co. B, 25th Regiment U.S.C.T."

The loved of many hearts is gone,
The light of many eyes;
His race on earth at last is run--
His home's beyond the skies.

No wife was near him when he died,
No friendly voice to cheer;
He fell the country's greatest pride--
A noble volunteer.

'Twas hard for one so young and good;
But God had willed it so:
He fell, as every soldier should--
His face turned to the foe.

Short, truly, was his suffering-time;
How wondrous his reward!
His soul has gone to dwell above,
To stand before the Lord.

MRS. E. MORRIS.
Frankford, Sept. 26, 1864.