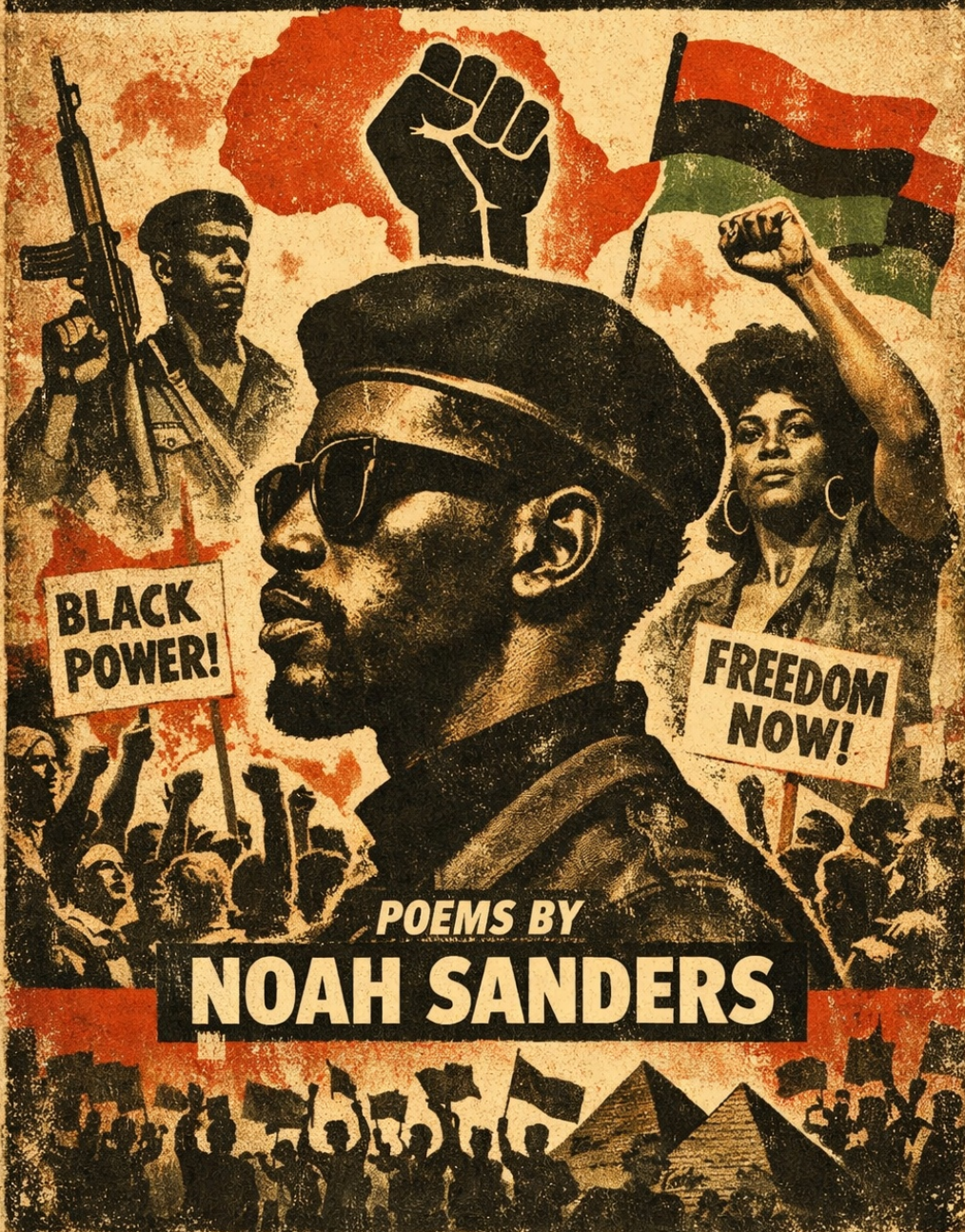


THE NIGGA

YOU WANT ME TO BE



Introduction: “Where Our Voices Begin”

This book was born from the places where silence used to live.

From the corners of our history that were whispered about,

from the wounds we carried quietly,

from the joy we were told to dim,

from the names we had to reclaim to feel whole again.

Every poem in these pages is a doorway —

a return to the drum,

a return to the ancestors,

a return to the truth we were never meant to forget.

These poems speak of love that survives storms,

of fathers who lift the next generation higher than themselves,

of communities that rise together when the world grows heavy,

of spirits awakening after long sleep,

of identities pieced back together with courage and memory.

They are not just words;

they are testimonies.

They are declarations.

They are mirrors held up to the soul of a people

who have endured, resisted, rebuilt, and celebrated

in ways the world still struggles to understand.

This collection is a journey —

from the ache of struggle

to the healing that follows,

from the weight of history

to the joy that refuses to die,

from the shadows of forgetting

to the brilliance of remembering.

If you read these poems slowly,

you will hear the ancestors humming.

If you read them boldly,

you will feel the pulse of revolution.

And if you read them with an open heart,
you will find yourself somewhere inside them —
rising, reclaiming, becoming.

This is our story.

This is our celebration.

This is our voice, unbroken.

Chapter 1: “The Drum Inside My Name”

I was born from the hum of a drum,
A rhythm older than chains, older than ships, older than pain.
My name was carved in the wind before the whip ever cracked,
Before borders were drawn, before tongues were split.
They tried to rename me —
Turn my melody into silence, my skin into shadow.
But the drum kept beating inside my bones,
Calling me back to the continent of memory.
I walk with the ghosts of griots and warriors,
Their stories stitched into my heartbeat.
Every step I take is a rebellion against forgetting,
Every breath a hymn to the ones who refused to bow.
I am not your caricature, not your fear, not your fantasy.
I am the echo of kingdoms buried under cotton fields,
The son of queens who ruled before crowns were stolen.
My laughter is resistance, my tears are testimony.
When I speak, the ancestors rise —
They dance in the syllables, they shout through my silence.
I am the drum inside my name,
And I will never stop beating.

Chapter 2: “Where Our Hearts Learn to Rise”

Love like ours was never meant to be quiet.

It was forged in the noise of a world that tried to break us,
shaped in the tremble of hands that held on
even when the storm said let go.

You are the warmth that survived winter,
the softness that refused to die in hard soil.

When you walk, I hear the ancestors humming,
lifting your name like a lantern in the dark.

We learned to love in a place that feared our joy,
yet still your smile blooms like rebellion.

Still my arms become a shelter around your trembling days,
still your voice becomes medicine for my wounded nights.

We do not love in whispers —
we love in the thunder of drums,

in the rising of fists,

in the quiet healing of two souls choosing each other
despite the weight of history pressing on our backs.

Your heart is a sanctuary where my spirit rests,
and mine is a shield when the world grows sharp.

Together we are a story that refuses erasure,
a promise carved into the bones of tomorrow.

When the world tries to bend us,
we bend toward each other instead.

And in that small miracle,
we rise — again, and again, and again.

Chapter 3: “The Ancestors Speak in My Shadow”

They whisper to me in the quiet hours,
when the world finally stops pretending it cannot hear them.
Their voices rise like incense from the soil,
curling around my spirit, reminding me I am never alone.
I feel them in the tremble of candlelight,
in the sway of trees that bend like elders in prayer.
They walk beside me, barefoot and unbroken,
carrying stories that survived fire, ocean, and forgetting.
Some nights, I dream in languages I've never learned,
yet somehow understand —
tongues braided with memory,
syllables soaked in the breath of the first dawn.
They place their hands on my shoulders
and suddenly my spine becomes a drum,
my heartbeat becomes a ritual,
my breath becomes a hymn carved from centuries.
I am the continuation of their unfinished sentences,
the living echo of their courage,
the child of their hope stitched into time.
Every step I take is a prayer they started.
When I raise my head, they rise with me.
When I speak truth, they thunder.
When I refuse to bow, they smile —
because I am the proof that they endured.
And when I finally return to the silence
from which all souls come and go,
I know they will greet me not as a stranger,
but as a story they have always known.

Chapter 4: “The Weight I Lift When I Lift You”

I carry you the way my father carried me—
not in his arms, but in the lessons he left behind,
in the quiet strength he planted in my spirit
like a seed that refused to die.
You walk beside me, small but mighty,
your questions sharp as sunrise,
your dreams loud enough to shake the dust
off every forgotten ancestor watching us.
I teach you how to stand without trembling,
how to speak without shrinking,
how to walk into a room like you belong there
because you do, and you always will.
Some days you borrow my courage,
other days you lend me yours.
That is the secret of fatherhood—
the child becomes the teacher
just as the teacher becomes the shield.
I show you how to rise after falling,
how to breathe through storms,
how to hold your heart open
even when the world tries to close it.
You are not just my responsibility—
you are my revolution,
my proof that love can rebuild
what history tried to break.
And when you grow into your own power,
when your voice becomes thunder
and your steps become legacy,

I will smile knowing the weight I carried
was never a burden—
it was a blessing passed forward.

Chapter 5: “The Way My Spirit Learns to Mend”

Healing didn't come to me like sunlight.

It came slow, like a drumbeat learning its rhythm again
after years of being drowned out by storms.

Some days it whispered; other days it crawled.

But it came.

I learned to gather the broken pieces of myself
without shame, without apology,
as if each fragment carried a story
the ancestors refused to let me throw away.

Pain taught me how to listen.

Silence taught me how to breathe.

And somewhere between the two,

I found a version of myself
that still believed in tomorrow.

I stopped asking why the world was heavy
and started asking how I could carry it
without losing the softness in my chest.

That was the moment healing began—
not in perfection, but in permission.

I let my scars speak their truth
and discovered they were not wounds anymore,
but maps showing me where I had risen.

Every tear became a cleansing,
every breath a small revolution.

Now when I look at my reflection,
I see someone who survived the fire
and learned to glow anyway.

Someone who rebuilt themselves

with patience, prayer, and quiet courage.
Healing is not a finish line—
it is a journey back to myself,
and I walk it with steady feet,
knowing the ancestors walk beside me
with every step I take.

Chapter 6: “We Hold Each Other Up”

We are strongest when we move as one—
not as scattered voices,
not as lonely shadows searching for warmth,
but as a people who remember
that survival was never meant to be solitary.
I have seen whole neighborhoods rise
from the ashes of neglect
because one person decided to care,
and another followed,
and then another,
until the street itself began to breathe again.
We are the hands that lift the fallen,
the arms that shield the weary,
the voices that echo truth
even when the world tries to drown us out.
Unity is our inheritance—
passed down from ancestors
who survived by leaning on each other
when the night grew too heavy.
When we gather, the air changes.
The drums sound different.
The children laugh louder.
The elders smile like they’ve seen this miracle before.
Because they have—
every time we choose each other
over silence, over fear, over division.
We are a village disguised as a city,
a family disguised as strangers,
a revolution disguised as everyday people
doing everyday acts of love

that shake the ground beneath injustice.
And when one of us rises,
all of us rise—
because the strength of our community
is the strength of our future,
and we hold each other up
so none of us ever fall alone.

Chapter 7: “When My Spirit Finally Opened Its Eyes”

Awakening didn't strike me like lightning—
it arrived like a slow sunrise,
soft at first, almost shy,
touching the edges of my spirit
before daring to step fully into the room.
I felt it in the way my breath changed,
how the air tasted different,
how silence stopped feeling empty
and started feeling holy.
There were days I thought I was breaking,
but really, I was shedding—
old fears falling off me like dead leaves,
old wounds loosening their grip
as if they finally understood
I no longer needed them to remember.
The ancestors began speaking louder,
not in words, but in knowing—
a warmth in my chest,
a tug in my intuition,
a whisper that said,
“Walk forward. We are here.”
I learned that awakening is not a moment—
it is a returning.
A remembering of who I was
before the world taught me who to fear.
A reclaiming of the light
I once thought was too small to matter.
Now I move with a different kind of certainty,

not loud, not boastful—
but rooted, grounded, ancient.
My spirit walks ahead of me,
my body follows,
and together we rise
into the truth that was waiting
for me to finally open my eyes.

Chapter 8: “I Took My Name Back From the World”

There came a day when I refused to answer
to anything that dimmed my light.
A day when I stood in front of my own reflection
and asked it who it truly was—
not who the world trained it to be.
I peeled off every label they tried to glue to my skin,
every shadow they tried to stretch over my spirit,
every lie that whispered I was smaller
than the kingdoms humming in my blood.
Reclaiming myself felt like walking barefoot
across the memories of my ancestors—
each step a reminder,
each breath a resurrection.
I learned that identity is not given;
it is remembered.
It is carved from truth,
shaped by courage,
and guarded by the ones who came before me
with fire in their eyes and freedom in their bones.
I stopped shrinking my voice
to fit into rooms built without me in mind.
I stopped dimming my brilliance
to make others comfortable in their forgetting.
I rose into the fullness of my name,
the weight of my history,
the beauty of my becoming.
Now when I walk, I walk whole.
Not borrowed, not broken,

not edited for someone else's comfort—
but entirely myself,
rooted in the soil of my own truth.
Reclaiming my identity was not an act of rebellion—
it was an act of remembering
that I was never lost
to begin with.

Chapter 9: “Joy Is the Revolution We Carry”

Joy moves through us like a drumline,
loud, unapologetic, refusing to shrink
even when the world tries to dim its shine.
It rises in our laughter,
in the way we dance without permission,
in the way our smiles stretch wide enough
to hold the whole neighborhood inside them.
There is a magic in our celebration—
a rhythm older than sorrow,
a melody stitched from survival and sunlight.
We gather on porches, in parks, in kitchens,
turning ordinary moments into festivals,
turning pain into punchlines,
turning struggle into stories
that end with us still standing.
Our joy is not fragile;
it is a fortress built from soul and memory.
It is the way children jump double-dutch
like they’re skipping over centuries,
the way elders clap their hands
as if each clap is a blessing,
the way music wraps around us
like a warm ancestral embrace.
We celebrate because we can.
We celebrate because we must.
We celebrate because joy is a rebellion
against every force that ever tried
to silence our brilliance.

And when we rise together—
laughing, dancing, loving, living—
the world feels our thunder,
and the ancestors smile,
knowing their light still lives in us.

