Additional Poems By Arna Bontemps Essay, Research Paper

God Give to Men

God give the yellow man

an easy breeze at blossom time.

Grant his eager, slanting eyes to cover

every land and dream

of afterwhile.

Give blue-eyed men their swivel chairs

to whirl in tall buildings.

Allow them many ships at sea,

and on land, soldiers

and policemen.

For black man, God,

no need to bother more

but only fill afresh his meed

of laughter,

his cup of tears.

God suffer little men

the taste of soul’s desire.

Nocturne of the Wharves

All night they whine upon their ropes and boom

against the dock with helpless prows:

these little ships that are too worn for sailing

front the wharf but do not rest at all.

Tugging at the dim gray wharf they think

no doubt of China and of bright Bombay,

and they remember islands of the East,

Formosa and the mountains of Japan.

They think of cities ruined by the sea

and they are restless, sleeping at the wharf.

Tugging at the dim gray wharf they think

no less of Africa. An east wind blows

and salt spray sweeps the unattended decks.

Shouts of dead men break upon the night.

The captain calls his crew and they respond–

the little ships are dreaming–land is near.

But mist comes up to dim the copper coast,

mist dissembles images of the trees.

The captain and his men alike are lost

and their shouts go down in the rising sound of waves.

Ah little ships, I know your weariness!

I know the sea-green shadows of your dream.

For I have loved the cities of the sea,

and desolations of the old days I

have loved: I was a wanderer like you

and I have broken down before the wind.Reconnaissance

After the cloud embankments,

the lamentation of wind

and the starry descent into time,

we came to the flashing waters and shaded our eyes

from the glare.

Alone with the shore and the harbor,

the stems of the cocoanut trees,

the fronds of silence and hushed music,

we cried for the new revelation

and waited for miracles to rise.

Where elements touch and merge,

where shadows swoon like outcasts on the sand

and the tried moment waits, its courage gone–

there were we

in latitudes where storms are born.