

An Annotated Bibliography on the Works of Sapphire

Compiled by Steven Reigns, February 2007

Contributor notes double indented and printed as they appeared. This is my best attempt at a definitive bibliography on the works of Sapphire. Contributor notes are not printed for the more accessible work.

1978

Sapphire. "New York City Tonight" "Untitled" Azalea: A Magazine by Third World Lesbians 1.2 (Spring 1978) 23-27, 34.

Both stories are uncollected. The untitled story starts with the sentence "She hated the rain." and is dated 1973. The story tells the events of a sex worker ending a night shift early and trying to enter her house, only to get locked out by her pimp because she didn't bring home enough money. The poem "New York City Tonight" is dated April 1977. It is a poem of varying indentions, of a first person narrator who is a dancer and writer trying to find her place in the world. "I can't write warrior poems talkin'/clean up the community cause I would/have to wash myself/away..." This poem also ends with the line "I feel empty/unfinished like/this poem/which has/no appropriate/ end." Sapphire will continue to address the poetry writing process in her later work. In "Ghosts" in Black Wings & Blind Angels "I have no children except this poetry that isn't poetry."

Magazine format does not contain contributor notes.

Sapphire. "Rain", "New York City Tonight" Heresies 6. Women and Violence Issue (Summer 1978) 93, 96-97

"Rain" was previously published and untitled in Azalea. Story is unchanged. "New York City Tonight" is unchanged, however it received a highly stylized presentation. The poem is placed on top of a New York City subway map.

Sapphire, BLK. female spirit from the West moving east.

1980

Sapphire. "angie and ramona 1956" Illustration. Azalea: A Magazine by Third World Lesbians 4.1 (Winter 80-81) 3rd Anniversary Issue. 1

This is not a poem but a drawing. A minimal sketch of two female stick figures with skirts, bows on each side of their head. Both figures, almost identical, are smiling. The title of the drawing is "angie and ramona 1956." The following page has a note "black felt marker on white paper 8 1/2 "x11." It gives a copyright of 1980 to Sapphire. Angie is the name given to the sister character in most poems and more than likely the name of the author's actual sister. 1956 is the same year that is repeatedly mentioned in the 2005 poem "The Best Thing I've Heard All Day." The sister character in that poem is referred to as Angelica.

Magazine format does not contain contributor notes.

Sapphire. "Hi Priestess of Brooklyn" Illustration., "The Refrigerator Story" Azalea: A Magazine by Third World Lesbians 3.3 (Fall 80) Double Issue. 36, 37

"Hi Priestess of Brooklyn" is a pin and ink line drawing. It is an abstract portrait of a woman with wild dreadlocks. It is unclear if the figure has one eye or if her head is turned. It is copyrighted 1980. The Refrigerator Story is not collected in American Dreams. It recounts, in 3rd person, a nameless female protagonist who feels her life isn't worthy of material possessions, energy spent on movement, and eventually shuts herself inside her refrigerator. It is copyrighted 1980. Not all works in these publications gave specific copyrights. It is assumed that the copyright was at the author's urging.

Sapphire "Black lesbian poet-writer, living in NY."

Sapphire. "She hated the rain", "New York City Tonight" Lesbian Poetry: An Anthology. Ed Elly Burkin and Joan Larkin. Watertown: Persephone Press Books, 1980. 225-231

Both writings are uncollected. "She hated the rain" is untitled but is listed under the index by the first sentence in the story. Both works appeared earlier in Azalea: A Magazine by Third World Lesbians. It is unclear if the author made an effort to rework the indentation of lines due to page size or if poem layout was at the graphic design person's discretion.

Sapphire, *b. California*. I am a Black woman writer living in New York.

1983

Sapphire. "Only Us" Illustration. Azalea: A Magazine by Third World Lesbians 5.1 (1983) 13

"Only Us" is a minimal pen and ink drawing of a woman wrapping her arms around herself or her pregnant belly. The magazine cover states it was printed in 1983 and Sapphire's graphic is dated 1983, but the inside magazine cover lists the copyright as 1982. This would be a print error.

Sapphire is a member of the Azalea collective, a writer and a dancer living and working in NYC.

Sapphire. "Nile Blues" Common Lives/Lesbian Lives: A lesbian quarterly 8 (Summer 1983) 52-55

Though the words are interposed, Blue Nile is a river responsible for the annual floods that contributed to the fertility of the Nile Valley and the subsequent rise of ancient Egyptian civilization and mythology. Though there are no direct references to Egypt, the river is probably used to assist with the poem themes of rebirth, baptism, and reclaiming of one's life. Referenced in the poem directly is clitoral circumcision. NileBlue quotes three different sections of Corinthians and is divided into three sections by Roman numerals. Section III is divided into two numeric sections. A sister, Angie, is mentioned because she "jumped out/a two story apartment once/rather than be raped." The narrator's name is Ramona and she lists her hometown as L.A. where "it's rumored among those/who knew me but not well/Ramona likes women" At the end of the poem there is a note about "Pharaonic

circumcision” from Ben R. Huelsman’s An Anthropological View of Clitoral and Other Female Genital Mutilations.

Sapphire: i am a 32 year old Blk lesbian born in California living in New York. i am a dancer and writer interested in hooking up with other lesbians of color who want to combine their art and politics and perform. Write me: P.O. Box 975, NYC, NY 10027, Manhattanville Station.

1984

Sapphire. “i guess if i was a sound or if i was your woman” “NileBlues” IKON: Creativity and Change, Second Series, #3 (Spring/Summer 1984) 50-52

Both poems are uncollected. “i guess if i was a sound or if i was your woman” is a charming love poem. “i would be warm things/ and wash your feet/i would be a communion/a union of love need/green things growing/in your mind.” The poem is sweet but not overly romantic. It ends with a quote that might be song lyrics. In “NileBlue” a later part of the poem seems to be a personal reclaiming and a renaming. It ends in capital letters “IN THE NAME OF/THE MOTHER/THE DAUGHTER/AND A WHOLE BUNCH OF SHIT/I BAPTIZE THEE/ SAPPHIRE” The last line is double spaced and double indented. It is unclear if this is the last line in the poem or simply the author claiming the work. Other writers in the collection do not do this and I’m assuming it is part of the poem. A year before, in Common Lives/Lesbian Lives this last line was not included.

I named myself SAPPHIRE. I am a novelist, poet, performer, and dancer. I am Black. I am a lesbian. I live and work in New York City.

Sapphire. “THE ADVENTURES OF THE LITTLE PIG AND UXMAL YAXCHILAN OCHUMARE.” 13th Moon Double Issue. Vol. VII, Nos. 1&2. (1984) 167-173

This story is uncollected. The front of the journal lists the copyright of the story to Sapphire in 1981. There is only one other author with a copyright. This might have been at the author’s suggestion given 48 other authors works are in the journal. The story is about a black lesbian couple grappling with poverty, self-identity, and relationship issues. This 3rd person story uses alternative spellings even outside of dialogue.

Sapphire is a writer, dancer, dollmaker, and founding member of the Zami Queen Express, a Black lesbian dance-theater collective.

1985

Sapphire. “the last day of winter/first day of spring” Conditions: a feminist magazine of writing by women with an emphasis on writing by lesbians 11/12 The Double Issue (1985) 24-25

The story is prefaced in capital letters “AN EXCEPT FROM A NOVEL IN PROGRESS.” The piece is also given a copyright of 1985. Most of the story is a physical description of a homeless woman. Her shoes, “thin-soled blk chinese slippers” she acquired by stealing from a store bin. Sapphire ends with the main character singing the song “Stay in My Corner” by the Dell. This is the same song

that was playing while the shoes were pilfered. This story was not collected nor was the novel ever published.

Sapphire, b. 8/04/50, Ft. Ord, California. I appreciate the Conditions editors' decision to publish "The Last Day of Winter. I am angered and saddened by their decision not to publish material I sent concerning gentrification, Zionism and imperialism in the lesbian, gay and world community.

Sapphire. "the way the balls bounce" Common Lives/Lesbian Lives: A lesbian quarterly 15/16 (Summer 1985) 189-192

This uncollected story recounts an evening with a black lesbian couple. One partner, "blink" is femme in "pink velour hot pants." The other, "bingo" prides herself on her butchness "she thot except for the curves around her jaw and hip you almost couldnt tell she was a woman." The story is brief and maintains a foreboding that violence will be enacted upon the characters. At the end of the story, both women are accosted by a group of guys with a switchblade. The story stops before the specifics of the encounter are given. We are given the lead-up "unzipped her pants, rubbing his hand in a circular motion on her belly till he reached her hair, balling his fist getting a good grip in her public hair he yanked her to him..." Sapphire's later work brings the reader into the violent action directly such as "Mickey Mouse was a Scorpio" and "Gorilla in the Midst."

Sapphire: my mother named me ramona lofton. i gave the lesbian feminist lawyer \$300 to change my name, she changed her address and phone number but not my name. it was a good experience in that it taught me, i am who i say i am, not what some piece of paper says i am. i am SAPPHIRE.

Sapphire. "Some Things about the Politics of Size" Common Lives/Lesbian Lives: A lesbian quarterly 17 (Fall 1985) 100-104

"Some Things About the Politics of Size" is a seven-part poem about the struggle of larger size women. Towards the poem's end is a quote from the book A Woman's Conflict: A Special Relationship between Women and Food, by Jane Rachel Kaplan. The book's copyright is 1980. Section two of the poem talks about the narrator walking down the street eating and getting cat called. This same incident happened to Precious in Push. An article once listed a chapbook by Sapphire entitled Some Things About the Politics of Size. No other information can be found on the validity of that claim.

Sapphire: Our lives are almost always shorter than they should be. So much time gets wasted on this 'how you look shit.'

1986

Sapphire. "A New Day for Willa Mae", "New Year's Morning, Jan. 1, 1986" Conditions: a feminist magazine of writing by women with an emphasis on writing by lesbians 13 International Issue (1986) 49-58, 81

"New Year's Morning, Jan. 1, 1986" Sapphire dedicates to "The prostitutes and lesbians of Mozambique who were sent to re-education camps after the revolution." This poem is not included in American Dreams. This seems to be the first published

poem written exclusively about a political subject. Sapphire would do this repeatedly in her poem collections. "A New Day for Willa Mae" changed in the final draft in American Dreams. It has more details about the grocery items and the layout of the apartment. The set up of the relationship and the actions between Jadine and Mr. Henry are considerably different. The dialogue is a bit tighter as well. The price is mentioned on Willa Mae's new shoes. Tennis shoes as a source of pride are also used in Strange Juice (or the murder of Latasha Harlins).

Sapphire b. 8/4/50, Ft. Ord. Ca. i don't teach at college/or get grants/ i am on my knees/cleaning your mother's house/sucking your daddy's dick/i am enslaved but free/its getting late/ stop bullshitting/listen to me/learn./i am a 35 year old ex-whore / currently working as a domestic worker. i am black. i am a lesbian. i am a writer.

1987

Sapphire. "The Refrigerator Story" Sinister Wisdom 31 (Winter 1987) 96

Story is unchanged. See Azalea: A Magazine by Third World Lesbians in 1980

My name is Sapphire, it is deep blue and reduces to the #2, the # of the moon and High Priestess. I am a Black Lesbian. I need to say that: I am a BLK lesbian. I am still learning what those words mean. Sorting thru the shame and fear finding the power.

Sapphire. Meditations on the Rainbow. New York: Crystal Bananas Press 1987

There are seven poems in this 71 page book: yellow, red, black, lavender, white, green, blue. The poem has short lines. Most of the lines are one word. The poem "blue" uses numerous song lyrics. It was printed at The Print Center, Inc. in New York and has been cited in articles and contributor notes as a self-published book. The address, a PO Box, given for Crystal Bananas Press is the same Sapphire listed as her own in publications (see Common Lives 1982). Song lyrics are used in some of the poems.

It is unclear if the following is meant to be a biography or simply an excerpt from the poem "blue" in the book. It is placed under a photo of the author. "i only been in a cotton field once/& that was when i was 19 & ran away/from Synanon with this spozed to be bad/bitch from Detroit who turned out to not wanna/steal or hoe & suggested we work for whatever cash / we needed & we ended up in Fresno chopping cotton/under the hot sun./i never did that again, the old folks say you don't know what/ you comin to 'fore you die/but i know i aint goin' back to that!"

Sapphire. "SOME THINGS ABOUT THE POLITICS OF SIZE" Heresies Food is a Feminist Issue. Vol. 6 1.21(1987)

See Common Lives/Lesbian Lives 1985 This poem is accompanied by two images by visual artist Carrie Cooperider.

Sapphire is a writer, black, poet, lesbian.

1989

Sapphire. "New Orleans" On Our Backs: Entertainment for the Adventurous Lesbian May-June, 1989. 33, 39, 40

This story was later renamed "Eat" and published numerous times. The story is a bit tighter in American Dreams. Many lines were shortened like "You want cough Syrup?" was altered to "Cough syrup?" The main character's name, Fontaine, is introduced later on in the story. The later version has a kinder narrator. Lines like "I had just dropped by to see if she was still alive" were edited and lines like "Oh, excuse me.' I said apologetically." were added. Other words might have been changed for gentler connotations as well "when I left six years ago" to "the six years I had been away." Other details were probably added for specificity or tone. The description of the quilt is more elaborate, and some verb tenses change. The story does not have any direct New Orleans references and the later title of "Eat" seems more appropriate given it is the last line in the story. Sapphire uses Dylan song lyrics to create a mood and weaves it through out the story. She does this continually throughout her work. Later versions printed in Women on Women, More Serious Pleasure, Common Lives/Lesbian Lives and American Dreams are more similar to each other than this earlier version.

Sapphire is a writer and performing artist currently living in New York City. She is the author of Meditations on the Rainbow, a book of poetry available from Crystal Bananas Press

Sapphire. "SOME THINGS ABOUT THE POLITICS OF SIZE", "I GUESS IF I WAS A SOUND OR IF I WAS Y OUR WOMAN" Naming the Waves: Contemporary Lesbian Poetry Ed. Christian McEwen. Freedom: The Crossing Press, 1989. 180-186

Both poems are uncollected. (See Common Lives/Lesbian Lives: A lesbian quarterly 1985.) No other lines are altered.

Sapphire: 'I am a Blk lesbian novelist, short-story writer and poet. I live in New York where I have performed dramatic presentations of my work, and am working on my second novel, *The Last Day of Winter/First Day of Spring*. I have worked as a prostitute, dancer, telephone operator and domestic. Currently I am healthy, happy and inspired. For those of you on that wavelength, I am a Leo with a Taurus moon and Sagittarius rising.'

Sapphire. "Winter Solstice", "Violet '86" Common Lives/Lesbian Lives: A lesbian quarterly 29. (Winter 1989) 23-24, 79-82

"Winter Solstice" is not collected. It is dated December 21, 1985. The poem starts off "I am like my mother/I never wanted children." it goes on "No babies. I nourish my/hungry self." Later in the poem, "I want no sons./I am a witch. A witch haggard/ & full, fat & crazy." Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year is generally know as a time or rebirth. In both collected poetry books, there are references to a mother not wanting children.(American Dreams: "in my father's house", "Breaking Karma #4." Black Wings & Blind Angels: "Breaking Karma #5")

Sapphire: I am a Black working-class lesbian.

Sapphire. "Eat" Common Lives/Lesbian Lives: A lesbian quarterly 32 (Spring 1989) 91-93
This version is edited from the previous version printed in On Our Backs and resembles the version printed in American Dreams.
Sapphire: I am a Black working class lesbian

1990

Sapphire. "American Dreams", "The Refrigerator Story". Seems 26&27 (1990) 7-13
Karl Elder, magazine editor said major revisions were made, with Sapphire's approval, from the submission before "American Dreams" was printed in Seems. "American Dreams" became the title poem of Sapphire's book of poetry. There are several changes: line breaks, this version has the line "I wade through the city", an image of homeless people, has repetitive lines, and even includes a possible directive to the reader. "ha! ha! ha!/*you're never safe*" Most of the changes to the final draft are minor. This poem also has the line "I don't quite know how to get free/ of the karma I've created/but I can see clearly now/that I have created my life." This could be the inspiration for the Breaking Karma series of poems featured in American Dreams and Black Wings & Blind Angels.

SAPPHIRE is a novelist, short story writer and poet who lives in New York City. Her work has appeared in such journals as *Heresies*, *Conditions*, *13th Moon*, and *IKON*. When not writing or performing her writing, she works as a teacher in the South Bronx.

Sapphire. "Eat" Women on Women: An Anthology of American Lesbian Short Fiction Ed. Joan Nestle and Naomi Holock. New York: Plume—Penguin Group, 1990. 43-46
Printed in numerous times before, the slightest change of the word "scuze" to "excuse." before publishing in American Dreams.

Sapphire is the author of *Meditations on the Rainbow*, a book of poetry. She is also a novelist and short story writer and her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and journals.

Sapphire. "MICKEY MOUSE WAS A SCORPIO" Conditions: a feminist magazine of writing by women with an emphasis on writing by lesbians 17 (1990) 126-127

Poem has the line "wild ignorant farm boy" and "to the pigs" that were omitted in American Dreams. Most of the poem remains intact in the collected version. The minor change, effecting nothing of the poems content or flow, "my mother comes in when it's over to wash me/glad not to be the one" to "my mother, glad not to be the one,/comes in when it's over to wash me."

Sapphire is the author of a book of poetry, *Meditations on the Rainbow* (distributed by Inland Book Company, P.O. Box 120261, East Haven, CT 06512).

Sapphire. "American Dreams" Sinister Wisdom 42 (winter 90/91)

There are some additional lines that were not in the version published in Seems or in American Dreams. “Not being alive from the waist down.” It has the line “ha! ha! ha! *you’re never safe*” which was not in Seems but was in American Dreams.

Sapphire is a poet, short story writer and novelist who lives and works in New York City. She is author of *Meditations on the Rainbow*, a book of poetry.

Sapphire. “Eat” More Serious Pleasure: Lesbian Erotic Stories & Poetry ed The Sheba Collective. San Francisco: Cleis, 1990 54-57

This version is almost identical to the draft published in Women on Women and later in American Dreams. It has been altered since its printing in On Our Backs. The copyright states it was initially published in Women on Women.

Sapphire is the author of *Meditations on the Rainbow*. Her work has appeared in several anthologies including Naming the Waves, ed. Christian McEwan and Women on Women, eds. Joan Nestle and Naomi Holoch. A frequent contributor to lesbian and feminist publications in the U.S., Sapphire is currently working on an audio tape of her poetry, a novel and a collection of poetry and short fiction.

Sapphire. “poem for jennifer, marla, tawana & me” Celebrating Diversity, Men of All Colors Together ed. Tony Glover New York: Men of All Colors Together Press. 1990 74-77

The poem does not differ from the collected version. Both have the line “there is nothing you did/it is not your karma.” The reference to karma and a victim’s karma is reminiscent of American Dreams and Black Wings & Blind Angels’ the “Breaking Karma” series.

Magazine format does not contain contributor notes.

1991

Sapphire. “Crooked Man” Loving in Fear: An Anthology of Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse. Ed. Queer Press Collective. Ontario: Queer Press Non-Profit Community Publishing of Toronto, 1991. 52-54

The poem is given the date of 1989. It is accompanied by the note: “This poem was first published in Conditions 17 (1990) under the title “Mickey Mouse was a Scorpio”. The poem is without the lines “wild ignorant farm boy” and “to the pigs” that were printed in Angry Women and Conditions but were not used in American Dreams. There are other minor changes that do not effect the feel of the poem, line breaks, and replacement of words “howl” instead of “says”, “baby” instead of “little girl.”

Sapphire is a Black American poet, novelist, short story writer and performance artist. Her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and journals in the United States and England. The author of a self-published book of poetry, *Meditations on the Rainbow*, she is currently compiling a collection of prose and poetry.

Sapphire. “STEP, STEP, *LEAP*”, “Sister” Our Lives: lesbian personal writings ed. Frances Rooney Ontario: Second Story Press, 1991. 215-228

“STEP, STEP, *LEAP*” was published in American Dreams under the title “Arisa.” Some of the quick short sentence and sentence fragments are altered to complex sentences of longer length in American Dreams. This change does not interrupt the cadence or pace of the poem. This version uses the character’s full name Arisa Reed, the final version does not. The lines “I’m nobody’s child/but my own” and “the upper west side/is an ugly disease, genteel gold rush/stomp stomp/chicken liver/green greed.” are omitted. Some line breaks are changed. The character “C.” is changed to “J.” This poem recounts the complex relationship between the narrator and a dancer acquaintance who committed suicide. It is powerful in its complexity of anger, admiration, and loss. “Step, Step, Leap” are not lines in the poem but a basic beginning dance term. Retitling the poem seems appropriate as it redirects the focus onto the character and not the action itself. “Sister” is uncollected and is comprised of a first person narrative. The narrative is broken up by date, time, and even dictionary definitions. It is unclear if this is an actual journal entry or if it is used as a literary device. The story recounts a letter received by a sister who says homosexuality is sick. The narrator recounts what was said in the letter “One of the best things that happened to her in the 1970s was my trek to the Big Apple. She didn’t need my influence in her life then and she will not tolerate it now. She feels free of the sick Loftons and Hafners for the first time in her life and she intends to keep it that way...” The rest of the story is the sister narrator trying to recover and understand the hurt of such an attacking letter. The main character sent the sister a copy of The Color Purple by Alice Walker. This book is referenced again in Push. The narrator also talks about “not to go to CD’s house. Not to give her daughter the doll, Future; decided that I needed that doll for myself. CD believes homosexuals are sick.” The sister character is named in the story as Angie, ‘I knew Angie felt that way after she said, “I can’t accept your being a homosexual.”’ The end of the story is a reclaiming. “I begin anew. I set my clock right. I get my business in order...I feel good about myself. It’s a good time to be alive. It’s a frightening time to be alive. It’s a challenging time to be alive. I’m going on. Full circle.”

I am the author of Meditations on the Rainbow, a book of poetry. I live in New York City where I am working on a novel.

Sapphires. “Wild Thing” Portable Lower East Side: Queer City 8.2 (1991)

Information Unknown. First printing of the poem that caused an NEA controversy.

Sapphires. “Mickey Mouse was a Scorpio”, “Excerpt from American Dreams” Angry Women V. Vale and Andrea Juno. San Francisco: ReSearch Publications, 1991.

“Mickey Mouse was a Scorpio” poem has addition lines not used the book American Dreams. “wild ignorant farm boy” and “to the pigs” are omitted in the final version. Both lines reference rural living and take away from the poem rooted in suburbia “we have a nice house, California/ranch style.” In Black Wings & Blind Angels the father character that “quit that sun up to sun down job that you ran, barefoot on a dirt road, away from when you were fourteen years...” This rural reference might create the same “farm boy” father character.

No contributor note, poem printed alongside an extensive interview

1992

Sapphire. "Violet '86" Loss of the Ground-Notes: women writing about the loss of their mothers. Ed Helen Vozenilek. Los Angeles: Clothespin Fever Press, 1992. 31-34

In part of the story, the narrator is placed at the bedside of an ailing relative, her mother. Sapphire creates a similar dynamic in the recent and uncollected poem "The Best Thing I Heard All Day." (see 2005) The collected version of "Violet '86" is broken up into numeric sections. The narrator is a doll maker. Later in a contributor note, Sapphire calls herself a doll maker. (see 1984) Violet is also the name of the mother character in "Breaking Karma #8" in Black Wings & Blind Angels. The title comes from the engraving on the bottom of a handmade clay pot. '86 is not used as a term for termination but for the year. Music plays a part in the story as the narrator listens to Aretha Franklin. The story action right after the mother dies, the poems in Black Wings & Blind Angels focus more on the emotional aftermath of a mother's death and making sense of the interaction.

Sapphire is a poet, novelist and performance artist. She has self-published a book of poetry entitled *Meditations on the Rainbow*.

Sapphire. "strange juice (or the murder of Latasha Harlins)" Colorlife: The lesbian, gay, two-spirit, & bisexual, people of color magazine. Premier Issue, June 28, 1992. 30

This is listed as "A Work In Progress By Sapphire." Though the young, black, female narrator has a stronger command of language and expression than Precious, the Latasha character has a narrative feel similar to Precious in Push. It is a unique poem in content but also in format. It starts off as prose and moves into Sapphire's signature quick, short lines full of images and emotion. Though the heading states it is a "work in progress", very little changed in later versions except numeric sections added, a preface note, and later an end note. Such a note might not have been necessary given the publication date. Harlins was slain on March 16, 1991, only 15 months before the publication.

Magazine format does not contain contributor notes.

Sapphire. "poem for jennifer, marla, tawana & me" Sinister Wisdom 47 (Summer/Fall 1992)

See 1990, Celebrating Diversity, Men of All Colors Together

Sapphire is an African-American poet, short story writer and novelist. She is the author of a self-published book of poetry, Meditations on the Rainbow, available from the Inland Book Company, P.O. B. 120261, East Haven, CT 06512.

Sapphire. "American Dreams" War After War: City Lights Review ed. Nancy Peters San Francisco: City Lights, 1992

Information Unknown.

1993

Sapphire. "Strange Juice (or the murder of Latasha Harlins)", "In My Father's House" "Wild Thing", "Human Torso Gives Birth", "One Day" Critical Condition: women on the edge of violence. Ed Amy Scholder. San Francisco, City Lights Books. 1993 136-158

"Strange Juice" is prefaced by a quote from "Some People Don't Count" an article by Mark Cooper and Greg Golden from the Village Voice. It is the quote of a Los Angeles resident stating his feelings about the Harlins situation and Rodney King. This poem preface is later replaced by a historical note in the back of American Dreams.

Sapphire is a poet, fiction writer, and performance artist. Her book, American Dreams, is forthcoming in January, 1994. Her work has been published in Woman on Women, High Risk 2, Queer City: The Portable Lower East Side, and City Lights Review. She lives in New York.

1994

Sapphire. "Reflections of Breaking Glass" Life Notes: Personal Writings by Contemporary Black Women Ed. Patricia Bell-Scott. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994. 241-243

Fitting with the format of the anthology, the story has an introduction written by Sapphire. She states that she was writing in her journal "at five o'clock in the morning, December 14, 1988" a stream of consciousness poem. "...why does everything come back/to the lies of childhood/the first betrayal of trust/my uncle's fingers in my/pants..." She states later she left a classroom she was teaching in to leave herself a voicemail message on her home machine, insuring she wouldn't forget the memory. A similar image can be found in the first poem in American Dreams "Are You Ready to Rock?" The narrator talks about when one might remember past abuse "you remember in a dream/or a in a classroom full of kids/teaching the difference between/ a noun & pronoun." In the introduction to "Reflections of Breaking Glass" Sapphire states it "was the beginning of a long journey backward and forward simultaneously. My journal became the means, vehicle, by which I traveled to the past. By May of 1989, I realized my father is part of the story. In June of 1989, I write: I feel blessed to be alive. I am a survivor. And a survivor's job is to tell—tell her story for the generations to come, in hope that we will have generations to come..." The story is unaltered when it is published in American Dreams but lacks the introduction.

Sapphire is a poet, writer, and performance artist. Her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and journals including *Women on Women*, *Naming the Waves: Contemporary Lesbian Poetry*, *More serious Pleasure*, *Queer City the Portable Lower Eastside*, *City Lights*, *Rights Review*, and *Conditions*. A collection of her prose and poetry is to be published in late 1995.

Sapphire. "STRANGE JUICE (OR THE MURDER OF LATASHA HARLINS)" High Risk 2 ed. Amy Scholder and Ira Silverberg New York: Plume 1994

No preface or endnote given. See Colorlife: The lesbian, gay, two-spirit, & bisexual, people of color magazine. 1994

Sapphire is the author of *American Dreams*. Her writing has appeared in *Women on Women*, *Critical Conditions: Women on the Edge of Violence*, *War After War*, and *Queer City: The Portable Lower East Side*. She lives in New York City.

Sapphire. *American Dreams* New York: High Risk Books/Serpent's Tail, 1994.

Sapphire. work unknown, *Sister Fire: Black Womanist Fiction and Poetry* ed. Charlotte Watson Sherman New York: Perennial/Harper Collins, 1994
Information unknown

1995

Sapphire. "American Dreams" *Afrekete: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Writings* ed. Catherine E. McKinley Anchor: 1st Anchor Books, 1995
Information unknown.

1996

Sapphire. "An excerpt from Trilogy" *Surface Tension: Love, Sex and Politics Between Lesbians and Straight Women* ed. Meg Daly. New York: Touchstone, 1996
Minor changes made. Parentheses added instead of commas and new paragraph breaks.

Sapphire is the author of *American Dreams*. Her work has been included in many publications, including *Women on Women*, *HIGH RISK 2*, *Critical Conditions: Women on the Edge of Violence*, *Queer City: The Portable Lower East Side*, and *War after War*. She lives in New York City.

Sapphire. "Neverland", "Humpty Dumpty Heart" *The New Fuck You: Adventures in Lesbian Reading*. Eileen Myles & Liz Kotz. San Francisco: Semiotext(e). 1996
Information unknown

Sapphire. "There's a Window" *Women on Women 3: A New Anthology of American Lesbian Fiction* ed. Joan Nestle, Naomi Holoch New York: Plume 1996
Information Unknown

Sapphire. "Excerpt from Push" *The New Yorker* 72.10 (April 29, 1996) 144

Sapphire, *Push*, New York: Knopf 1996
Hardcover

Sapphire. *Push*, audio. New York: Random House Audio. 1996
Audio cassette, stated "an abridgement of *Push*"

Sapphire. *Push*. Unknown: Secker & Warburg, 1996

UK edition, paperback

Sapphire. Push Trans. Jean-Pierre Carasso. France: Editions de l'olivier/Le Seuil
French edition. paperback

1997

Sapphire. Push, New York: Vintage/reprint edition, 1997
Soft cover

1998

Sapphire. Introduction. Pimp-the Story of My Life. by Iceberg Slim Edinburgh, Canongate Books, Ltd. 1998

Quote taken from introduction: "What shines through is one man's desperate attempt to be something, no matter how sad that something appears to us. We don't need to idolise him but we do need to respect him as a writer who told what he knew of the truth."

1999

Sapphire. Push Trans. Jesus Zulaika Anagrama
Spanish edition. Unable to translate location. Publisher can be found on the web at <http://www.anagrama-ed.es/novedades>

Sapphire. "A Window Opens", "The Feminist Photographer (or Camera Obscura)" The Black Scholar 29.2/3(Spring/Summer 1999) 31

"The Feminist Photographer (or Camera Obscura)" is unaltered and collected in Black Wings & Blind Angels.

Sapphire. Black Wings & Blind Angels New York: Knoff 1999
Hard Cover

Sapphire. "Wild Thing", "Rabbit Man", "cont 1989/Gorilla in the Midst #6" Outlaw Bible of American Poetry, ed. Alana Kaufman New York: Thundermouth Press, 1999. 12-22

Information unknown

Sapphire's books include Push and American Dreams.

2000

Sapphire. Black Wings & Blind Angels New York: Knoff/First Vintage Contemporary Edition. 1999
Soft Cover

Sapphire. "Fairy Tale #1", "Found Poem", "Gorilla in the Midst #9" Heart Quarterly 3.3 (Winter 2000)

Poems reprinted from Black Wings & Blind Angels

Sapphire is the author of *American Dreams*, a collection of poems. Her novel, *Push*, won the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's First Novelist Award for 1997 and the Book-of-the-Month Club Stephen Crane Award for First Fiction. She lives in New York City.

Sapphire. Push Germany: Rowohlt Tb. 2000
German edition

2001

Sapphire. Black Wings & Blind Angels Edinburgh, Canongate Books, Ltd. 2001
UK edition

2004

Sapphire. "Villette" Brooklyn Review 22. 91-92 (2004 or 2005)

Villette is the fictional town and title of Charlotte Bronte's last novel, one of the first stories in Victorian literature by a woman where the female protagonist excels by having a job and doesn't have a man. The poem has the dedication "For S.F. Schaeffer." The poem also uses a 4 line passage from Bronte and the line "*I luvs you Porgy, if you can keep me I want to stay here...*" from "Porgy and Bess" by Dubose Heyward and Dorothy K. Heyward. It is unclear at the end of the poem if it is a love poem to a person or to Bronte's pages/words. "I love you with all that is in me I have held you close as a skin...I am lost without your pages worlds gone to the grave."

Sapphire graduated from the MFA program at Brooklyn College in 1995. She is the author of two books of poetry, American Dreams, Black Wings & Blind Angeles, and a novel.

Sapphire. "Excerpt from Push" Outlaw Bible of American Literature, ed. Alana Kaufman, Barney Rossett, Neil Ottenberg. New York: Thundermouth Press, 2004. 275-280
Information unknown

2005

Sapphire. "Intercourse of Birds" Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire 6.2 (Spring 2005) 91
This villanelle does not have the straight forward narrative of Sapphire's earlier work. This is a break from the villanelle "Today" in Black Wings & Blind Angels The same collection has a poem entitled "Villanelle" but it does not follow the form.

Sapphire. "The Best Thing I've Heard All Day" Video. Atlantic Center for the Arts Open Mic Night, private video

This unreleased video shows Sapphire reading *The Best Thing I've Heard All Day*.

Note:

Please note that there are several works by authors sharing the name Sapphire.

Diane Eiker & Sapphire, ed. Keep Simple Ceremonies Sebastopol: Emerald Earth Publishing, unknown date

A jacket photo of the author Sapphire, makes it clear that this is not the same author of Meditations on the Rainbow, American Dreams, Push, and Black Wings & Blind Angels.

Sapphire. "3-22-77", "self-crowned she-god", "Letter to Readers" Leaping Lesbians 1:5:19 (June, 1977)

These poems, published in a Michigan journal are signed "Sapphire, Ohio." They have a different feel than the other work. Confirmed with Sapphire, author of Push, that these are not her poems or letter to readers.

Several periodicals are listed as printing works by Sapphire but could not be located for this bibliography: *Black Scholar* published before 1994, *Rights Review*, *And Then*, *Eyeball*, *Day of Hope*, *Outweek*, *Central Park*, *Caprice*, *Brooklyn Review* before 1994, *Knitting Factory Knotes*, *Amaranth Review*, *Bombay Gin*, *Nobodaddies*, and *JeJune*.

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