

# Contents

Introduction	xi
WATER	
Janet Kofi-Tsekpo <i>Birthplace</i>	3
Ntozake Shange <i>Oh, I'm 10 Months Pregnant</i>	6
Ramabai Espinet <i>Afterbirth</i>	8
Jamika Ajalon <i>For Jean W.</i>	10
BLOOD	
Candance L Gardner <i>At Age 4</i>	13
Amiti Grech <i>Boat Ride</i>	14
Chitra Banarjee Divakaruni <i>The Nishi</i>	16
Allison Joseph <i>On Sidewalks, On Streetcorners, As Girls</i>	19
Dorothea Smartt <i>forget</i>	21
Chitra Banarjee Divakaruni <i>Learning to Dance</i>	24
Safiya Henderson-Holmes <i>a girl and her doll</i>	28
Bernardine Evaristo <i>An abridged excerpt from Lara</i>	30
SALT	
Alice Walker <i>Never Offer Your Heart to Someone Who Eats Hearts</i>	37
Hope Massiah <i>Experiment</i>	39
Pat Parker <i>My Lady Ain't No Lady</i>	41
Karen McCarthy <i>Fridge Theme</i>	43
Akure Wall <i>merman</i>	44
Ka'frique <i>love in la-la land</i>	45

Laureen Mar <i>Domestic Furniture</i>	47
Shamshad Khan <i>Heart (W)rap</i>	49
Karen McCarthy <i>Timetable</i>	51
Patience Agbabi <i>Sentences</i>	54
Jackie Kay <i>Other Lovers</i>	58

## EARTH

Patience Agbabi <i>Ufo Woman</i>	65
Toi Derricote <i>Excerpt from Elmina Castle: Cape Coast, Ghana</i>	69
Vanessa Richards <i>Post-Caribbean Reds</i>	71
Rosamond S King <i>Eating Dahl Poori Roti</i>	74
Jackie Kay <i>In my country</i>	75
Dionne Brand <i>Land to Light On</i>	76
Parm Kaur <i>Lines of Origin</i>	80
Amiti Grech <i>Two Gardens</i>	82

## FOREST

Rita Dove <i>The Bistro Styx</i>	85
Melvina Hazard <i>Unnamed</i>	89
S Lee Yung <i>Vignettes</i>	92
Karen McCarthy <i>Passport</i>	96
Olive Senior <i>Hurricane Story, 1988</i>	97
Grace Nichols <i>Why Shouldn't She?</i>	99
Jackie Kay <i>Keeping Orchids</i>	100
Janet Kofi-Tsekpo <i>Father</i>	102

## ELECTRICITY

Rita Dove <i>Particulars</i>	107
Melvina Hazard <i>Mal Yeux</i>	108
Malika B <i>Silence is Golden</i>	111
Shamshad Khan <i>a day out</i>	114



Lisa Asagi <i>A Small Film</i>	177
Lorna Goodison <i>Some of My Worst Wounds</i>	179
Ramabai Espinet <i>City Blues</i>	180
Sujata Bhatt <i>Swami Anand</i>	186

## ELEMENTAL

Sujata Bhatt <i>ଉଦୟି (Udaylee)</i>	191
Opal Palmer Adisa <i>Full of Herself</i>	193
Sharan Strange <i>The Stranger</i>	194
Maya Angelou <i>Phenomenal Woman</i>	196
Dorothea Smartt <i>five strands of hair</i>	199
Dana Marrett-Silvera <i>Silent Talking</i>	202
Alice Walker <i>A Woman is Not a Potted Plant</i>	204
Rosamond S King <i>She be</i>	206

## CIRCLE

Rachel Manley <i>Memoryectomy</i>	211
Parm Kaur <i>Wiping the Wall</i>	213
Amy Ling <i>Fragile</i>	215
Kamilah Aisha Moon <i>For Whom the Phone Rings</i>	216
Honor Ford-Smith <i>Dinner at the Apartment in Toronto</i>	219
Janet Kofi-Tsekpo <i>The Garden</i>	222
Olive Senior <i>Plants</i>	224
Raman Mundair <i>Nāāitch</i>	226

Biographical notes	227
Permissions	243
Index of Poets	247
Index of Poems	249
Index of First Lines	253