

# **Bob Kaufman: Life According to the Beat**

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### **Overview:** Teaching Kaufman

Philadelphia's suggested high school English curriculum overlooks the poet and activist Bob Kaufman, but his work would be a popular and useful addition. Maria Damon, a scholar of the Beat Movement, of which Kaufman was a founding member, says, "in my teaching experience, [Bob Kaufman] is always a success in the classroom" (12). Kaufman's appeal is broad. First, his poetry is passionate, often angry, and critical of society and conformity. At the same time it can be quite funny and beautiful. Kaufman's, and students', fascination with music, sex, beauty and alternative experience provide a connection. Also, Kaufman's life intrigues teens. Students are repelled, tempted or intimidated by Kaufman's utter refusal to play by society's rules, and by the social punishments inflicted on him as a consequence. He sacrificed so much to remain true to his beliefs, and his goals were so very far removed from those usually enumerated as the American Dream, that discussion of his life sparks extensive debate in class.

Kaufman's work fits into the curriculum in several ways: on its own as an author study; as part of the yearly poetry unit; with the English 2 unit on non-conformity; with Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* in English 3; because of his anti-war poems, with texts such as Elie Wiesel's *Night* and John Hersey's *Hiroshima*; in English 4 with other 20th century works; as part of Social Studies or English units covering the 1950's and '60's. Kaufman's life and work seem prescient; he played with identity politics by questioning and obscuring his own history, religion, race and sexuality, in a time when such social constructs were much more rigid than they are today. Therefore, Kaufman's poems work as a kind of bellwether for the trends of the last fifty years. Finally, Kaufman is invaluable as part of the ongoing attempt to restore to the historical record, whenever necessary, the contributions of forgotten participants, commonly women, blacks, and homosexuals. Although a seminal member of the Beats, he is not popularly identified as part of the group. Ronna Johnson and Maria Damon write of the marginalization of certain Beat figures. "African American culture provided the Beat generation with a vocabulary and an emphasis on communal artistic expression, flamboyantly creative improvisation, fluid social relations, and an aesthetic of subversion" (1). Despite this reliance, the legacy of African

American Beats has been largely forgotten. Maria Damon calls remedying the neglect of certain figures "reNegrifying, setting unstraight, or queering" and, we could add, 'feminizing' (4).

### **Rationale:** Kaufman's Life and Times

Kaufman's personality and personal life are a source of interest, even mystery, still. He obscured his background, claiming his father was a German Jew and his mother was from Martinique and practiced voodoo and Catholicism. Later, his brothers and sisters denied his stories, describing his mother and father as middle-class black Americans, his mom as a teacher, his father a Pullman Porter. Even the story of Kaufman's Merchant Marine service may be apocryphal. Poets.org says Kaufman left the Merchant Marine in the early 1940's (when he would have been still in his teens) (1), while A. Robert Lee states that Kaufman served for twenty years (43). Many sources repeat that Kaufman was booted from his long-time profession because of his leftist unionizing attempts, but Damon could find no record of Kaufman on the rolls of either the Merchant Marines or the National Maritime Union (13). T.J. Anderson III speculates that Kaufman, when drawing from many traditions, sought to create a kind of non-specific identity that would resist categorization, and surely the tale of the world-traveling seafarer, true or not, contributes to Kaufman's mythic quality. (4) Damon points out that adding Judaism to his African American heritage pushed Kaufman further into his chosen role of outsider (34).

Whatever the truth of Kaufman's early life, the official legend of Bob Kaufman really began after he arrived in New York City in the 1940's and met the other major figures of the Beat movement, Jack Kerouac, Williams Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg. They were hard-drinking, drug-using, hitchhiking, 'ambisexual,' and criminal, some even murderous. The book *This Is the Beat Generation* presents hilarious accounts of Burroughs cutting off his own finger for love, Kerouac faking homosexuality to get out of the Navy, and Ginsburg helping a friend cover up the murder of his lover (Campbell 15-25). Like Kaufman, most of the other Beats spent time in mental hospitals, apparently a common solution for unusual or deviant behavior. Kaufman eventually moved west to San Francisco with Ginsberg and Burroughs. In San Francisco, Kaufman and several others founded an influential weekly magazine, *Beatitude*. Kaufman also became a well-known street performer, prone to reciting poetry in cafes, restaurants and to people stuck in traffic.

Although Kaufman's street performance added to the draw of the North Beach area, which became a tourist attraction, not everyone found the Beats' antics amusing. Kaufman, especially, was persecuted by the police. His wife, Eileen Kaufman, who is white, thought that the police were offended by their interracial marriage. According to A.D. Winans, one particular police officer, William Bigarani, targeted Kaufman and repeatedly arrested him for vagrancy, disturbing the peace and other minor offenses. When Kaufman was taken in by police, he was beaten and often moved from station to station so friends couldn't find and help him. "His fate was pretty much sealed the day he wrote on the walls of the Bagel Shop, "Adolf Hitler, growing tired of fooling around with Eve Braun, and burning Jews, moved to San Francisco and became a cop" (Winans 7). Other versions of the story say that the graffiti actually named Bigarani, and that Kaufman had also urinated on the police officer's trousers ( Henderson 13). "In 1959 alone, at the height of the 'beatnik' fad, he was arrested by the San Francisco police on disorderly charges 39 times" (Peditto 1). It surely added to Kaufman's alienation that he was persecuted

for racial reasons not only by the police, which would be expected by any member of a counterculture movement, but also by members of the very Beat culture who supposedly shared with Kaufman "an overall artistic and metaphysical ethos" (Damon 4).

Norman Mailer's essay "The White Negro" explains both the attraction of disillusioned whites to black culture, and the problematic nature of their appropriation. Events of the twentieth century had gradually convinced many that society offered the individual either an anonymous death by the atomic bomb, a lingering death in concentration camps of some sort, or a soulless death of conformity to middle-class striving. If life was essentially brutal and meaningless, some reasoned, then why not live for the moment? The "hipsters" saw black Americans as the only ones brave enough to live from day to day and for pleasure alone, an attitude Damon dubs "romantic racism" (2). Romanticizing selected aspects of black life overlooks the fact that black choices were limited; African Americans had little opportunity to create stable, middle-class lives of the type Beats rejected. Jazz, especially, needs to be understood in the context of the pain from which it emerged. However, white admirers of jazz claimed it as their own without fully understanding its import. Mailer says that to this marriage of the "bohemian and the juvenile delinquent" and the Negro, "the Negro ... brought the cultural dowry" (5). That is, whites took on the language, style and particularly the music of black Americans, without acknowledging the source. In the poem "San Francisco Beat," "Kaufman ... assails the 'imitation Negroes' who appropriate an imagined blackness at will, without also having to appropriate (or even acknowledge) the painful historical memory of Africans in America" (Kohli 7).

Although imagining black culture as romantically free and soulful may have been a softer kind of racism, it did not preclude other and more vicious racist attitudes among hipsters, including some of Kaufman's comrades in the Beat Movement. Many still subscribed to the notion that blacks were incapable of intellectualism. The poet Jack Spicer, a member of Kaufman's San Francisco circle, exemplified this when he defaced a copy of Kaufman's "Abomunist Manifesto" with a scribbled "nigger." (Damon 10). Did this especially galling type of racism, from those who were at the same time coasting on borrowed creativity, contribute to Kaufman's troubles? How much did Kaufman's lack of commercial success, his drug and alcohol addictions or his later isolation owe to his particular experience of the dual consciousness of African American life? At least, from both reading his poems and hearing tales of his life, we can be sure that, however Kaufman may have been lionized as a free spirit and symbol of the Beat lifestyle, he fully experienced the usual American "threat of racial violence and racial definition and [their] concurrent dehumanization" (Kohli 9),

In 1960, Kaufman was nominated for the Guinness Poetry Award. Kaufman and his family moved back to New York City. Other honors followed, but Kaufman's drinking and drug use escalated. After several years, on the very day of the family's return to San Francisco, Kaufman was arrested and sent first to jail and then to a mental institution, for walking on the grass in Washington Square Park. He was further discouraged by the death of President Kennedy. At that point, Kaufman retreated into a Buddhist silence, which lasted ten years. During this time, Kaufman was sometimes homeless and his health deteriorated. Although Kaufman eventually talked again, he was by old beyond his years. He lost his teeth and much of his sight and hearing. In a poem entitled "Remembering Bob Kaufman", Winans describes him as "an ancient warrior" walking the streets of San Francisco "[c]arrying decades of heavy sorrow / On his back"

(7-8). However, Kaufman maintained the Beat lifestyle to the end. He lived with a much younger poet named Lynn Wildey in SRO hotels, drinking heavily and sitting up all night chanting mantras and reciting poetry (Henderson 26). Although he was quite famous by this time, he continued to reject materialism or the trappings of fame. In fact, Kaufman has been often identified with the character of Jesus Christ, perhaps for his humility, the disciples he amassed, or his dedication to street preaching about a new way of life. His final poem, "The Trip, Dharma Trip, Sangha Trip," speaks of his life's journey:

IS A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT  
TO REBUILD A LIFE,  
SEEMS TO BE DEMOLISHED  
LIKE AN OLD BUILDING  
NOBODY WANTS TO LIVE IN  
YET STANDS HOPEFULLY... (*Guitar* 185, 1-6).

In the introduction to a collection of later poems, editor Raymond Foye tells of searching for Kaufman. After a year of inquiries, Foye finally met with Kaufman in a bar. Kaufman explained himself: "I don't know how you get involved with uninvolved, but I don't want to be involved. My ambition is to be completely forgotten" (*Ancient Rain* ix). However, as Horace Coleman explains, far from being forgotten, Kaufman opened a door for many later writers.

Kaufman was confirmation that you could write, be black in the way you were and write as life and your mind moved you. I don't know what demons choked him but I can imagine some of them. The spirit of the beat movement flowed in him and his words. freedom, individuality, creativity, political awareness. And speech the way people spoke it. That'll do for an epitaph and a legacy (221).

## Strategies

A good place to begin with Kaufman is theme. Students can investigate Kaufman's Beatish rebellion against policy-makers, the military, newspapers and the rest of America's ruling elite in poems such as "Believe, Believe" (see appendix A). The poem also exemplifies the way Kaufman could both advocate jazz as a lifesaver and use it to shape his poems. Finally, the poem alludes to the dropping of the atomic bomb, which Kaufman returns to again and again. "Believe, Believe" is an excellent introductory Kaufman poem for high school students. It is less difficult to interpret than many of Kaufman's poems and more age-appropriate.

"Believe, Believe" criticizes society, namely the "blue-suited insects," who destroy instead of building. Like many of Kaufman's poems, this one advocates societal change. For more on this theme, look at "Demolition."

They have dismantled  
The Third Street El;  
It's still the same though,  
They haven't removed

Those torn-down men (*Guitar* 41).

"Believe, Believe" also suggests how readers can resist the insects, the destroyers and dismantlers. Instead of obeying the people in charge, or their representatives, characterized here as the editorial pages of newspapers, Kaufman urges the reader to access two fonts of wisdom. The first is jazz, which has the ability to take society apart and put it back together in "cool logical patterns." Kaufman frequently invokes jazz as magical and as an actual distillation of love and life (*Guitar* 93). "Tequila Jazz" speaks of jazz's ability to alter reality:

Unseen wings of jazz,  
Flapping, flapping.  
Carry me off, carry me off (*Guitar* 61).

Jazz is  
Cool revelations/shrill hopes/beauty speared into greedy ears  
("Walking Parker Home," *Guitar* 102).

More about how jazz can rescue humankind:

What one hundred percent red blooded savage, would waste precious time  
Listening to jazz, with so many important things going on  
But even the fittest murderer must rest  
So they sat down in our blood soaked garments,  
And listened to jazz  
Lost, steeped in all our death dreams  
They were shocked at the sound of life, long gone from our own  
They were indignant at the whistling, thinking, singing, beating, swinging,  
They wept for it, hugged, kissed it, loved it, joined it, we drank it,  
Smoked it, ate with it, slept with it... ( "O-JAZZ-O War Memoir: Jazz, Don't Listen To It At  
Your Own Risk," *Guitar* 94).

The excerpt above suggests that jazz can bring new life even to the ones in charge, who are responsible for so much suffering. Their murderous actions have poisoned them, so that they are in a kind of living death. However, if they stop and listen, they would come to their senses, understand what they had forsaken and they would recover. Generously, Kaufman implies that redemption is possible for even the most depraved. Is Kaufman implicating everyone in the acts of the 'savage'? The confusing pronouns, "our ...garments," "the sound of life, long gone from our own," and "we drank it" seem to blur the distinction between the speaker and the murderer. Perhaps Kaufman is speaking to and for society as a whole.

The second source of wisdom is poetry, "the music of the centuries," which is both past and present and endures through eras; it will "rise above the mushroom time." Here, as in other poems, Kaufman lauds the artist's role in speaking eternal truths, whether popular or not. For instance, in "The Poet" (*Guitar* 129), Kaufman writes:

WHEN THE POET PROTESTS THE  
DEATH HE SEES AROUND  
HIM,  
THE DEAD WANT HIM SILENCED.  
...THE POET SHOCKS THOSE  
AROUND HIM. HE SPEAKS OPENLY  
OF WHAT AUTHORITY HAS DEEMED  
UNSPEAKABLE, HE BECOMES THE  
ENEMY OF AUTHORITY.

Speaking the truth means punishment, whether incarceration, institutionalization, or marginalization, all of which Kaufman suffered. When he writes, “The dead want him silenced,” Kaufman repeats the idea of society being dead, although its members don’t know it.

A third theme of this poem is criticism of the atomic bomb. In “Benediction” (*Guitar* 105), Kaufman writes of “burning Japanese babies” and generals having “mushrooming visions.” In “Plea” (*Guitar* 89), Kaufman urges the wanderer to “Seek and find Hiroshima’s children, / Send them back, send them back.” Here, in “Believe, Believe,” Kaufman characterizes the inventors or users of the bomb as sick insects who infest society. The savages mentioned in “O-Jazz-O,” sitting down to rest from their murderous tasks, could also be identified as the bomb deployers. These poems would enrich the reading of *Hiroshima* or discussion of our current arms talks with Pakistan and North Korea.

## Objectives

This unit seeks to improve the classroom coverage of more recent poets and of African American poets. It asks students to look at how poetry can both comment upon societal issues and offer a philosophy of living. It is intended for students in grades 10, 11 and 12. It requires at least four to five days of daily 45-minute classes.

The unit will:

- introduce the life and work of an accomplished and fascinating poet, who exemplifies a movement in art and a time in history,
- expose students to an influential time in our country,
- ask students to question, research and challenge the way history and the canon are shaped and rewritten to exclude the contributions of certain people,
- allow students to write their own experiment with a new poetry form, ‘mesotics,’
- learn or relearn poetic forms, devices and literary skills,
- listen to jazz and discuss how jazz influenced Kaufman’s work,
- and work in a group to research and present to classmates a poem of Kaufman’s and an appropriate jazz accompaniment.

## Lesson Plans

### *Lesson Plan # 1: Abomunism: Kaufman's Philosophy*

Materials: Chart paper, markers, copies of poem, dictionaries.

Vocab Preview: Before reading the poem, ask students to think about the meaning of the suffix 'ism.' Students should brainstorm words that end with 'ism' and discuss what the words mean and what they have in common. Review, if necessary, vocabulary like 'manifesto,' 'outmoded,' 'ascertain,' 'bigotry,' the slang word 'square' and 'peril.'

Reviewing manifesto: Read another manifesto, such as Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein's, below, against the use of nuclear weapons. Students should decide what a manifesto does or what its purpose is.

#### *Resolution:*

*We invite this Congress, and through it the scientists of the world and the general public, to subscribe to the following resolution:*

*"In view of the fact that in any future world war nuclear weapons will certainly be employed, and that such weapons threaten the continued existence of mankind, we urge the governments of the world to realize, and to acknowledge publicly, that their purpose cannot be furthered by a world war, and we urge them, consequently, to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them."*

The full text can be found at <http://www.pugwash.org/about/manifesto.htm>

Quick-Write: Ask students to write a half-page about what they believe most passionately. To frame it, I would ask students to think about what rules are needed for an ideal society, what lessons they would like to leave for their great-grandchildren, or what is most important in any list of rules they know, such as the US Constitution, or a religious teaching. As students volunteer to share their reactions, record some answers on chart paper.

The Poem: Students should read this aloud several times, in different ways. If the use of all capitals suggests stentorian delivery, ask someone to recite it that way. Next, I would ask students to paraphrase, right on their papers, each rule of "Abomunism." They should feel free to let their interpretations range widely and freely. Together, the class should work through what Kaufman meant by each. Students can compare his rules to their own (on chart paper - in journals) and reflect on how these rules relate to Kaufman's life and philosophy.

Extension: Students should write their own manifesto. I would ask the students to imitate Kaufman's style, name their 'ism,' and be ready to defend their beliefs. If time permitted, it might be interesting to have students compare and debate their manifestos.

### *Lesson Plan # 2: Inspiring Others: Poets Write about Kaufman*

Kaufman is known as a poet's poet and many poets have written works in his honor. The obvious objectives of this lesson are to, first, convince students of Kaufman's lasting influence among poets, and therefore, his relevance. The second is to ask them to synthesize their knowledge of Kaufman and his work to create a work of their own. But as an underlying objective, I hope to interest students in a discussion about influence. Where do artists get their inspiration? Is it cheating to emulate the work of others?

I would like them to see that much art builds upon what has been done before, either as a reaction, a rethinking, an extension or a refutation. In our ongoing attempt to show students that they are, themselves, creators, I hope to lead them to the conclusion that it is acceptable, even desirable, to use existing works to inspire their own.

**Introductory Quickwrite:** Ask students to listen to two versions of the song "My Favorite Things," Julie Andrews and John Coltrane (both available on YouTube), and then do a quick-write. Write a paragraph on how each artist made the song her own. What mood and message do you get from each version? If the feeling changed, how did it happen? Can you provide other examples of artists who show dramatic influence?

This lesson plan asks students to read several poems about Kaufman and analyze each. After reading, the class will come to some conclusion about how other poets see Kaufman, what they appreciate about him, and how Kaufman has influenced them. Were their poems reminiscent of Kaufman in content, style, or both? Finally, students will create their own poem that reflects on Kaufman. To differentiate this assessment, I will provide various options.

Teachers can find a selection of poems written about Kaufman by searching online, or in the issue of Callaloo that was devoted largely to Kaufman (see reference). I plan to use Will Alexander's "The Poet in Post-Endurance" and Everett Hoagland's "Bob Kaufman?" (see Appendix A). This amazing, lyrical meditation on Kaufman's life tries to answer some of the questions and concerns students are likely to present about Kaufman's art and life.

## B. Mesotics

These poems by Giovanni Singleton are examples of mesotics. The structure is like a name or initial poem, but in mesotics, the letter that helps spell the important word may be anywhere in the word, thus creating a more jagged appearance on the page. Also, mesotics can be assigned as found poems, if you ask students to take words or phrases out of another poem or writing. The idea or at least the name 'mesotic' was the creation of the musician John Cage.

invisiBly  
crOwded  
Bob

shaKes up  
improv jAzz  
solitUde  
sidewinds aFter  
ghostly Minds convulse  
on brooding sidewAlks

over Northbeach

freckLes  
Of  
maliNgering  
cigarEttes  
purpLe  
pyramId  
souNds  
echoEs of  
coSmic  
diSembowelment

Students, as they read poems written about Kaufman, will collect information; restatements of lines from the poems, or important words, phrases, lines. Students should record their findings in a double entry journal listing lines on one side and thoughts, questions or paraphrases on the other. For example, Hoagland references artists Miles Davis and T.S. Eliot; Kaufman's poems frequently mention other artists, and he was known to quote Eliot. Both Hoagland and Singleton allude to jazz, which students will already know is an influence on Kaufman. Students might also notice how jazzy the mesotics look on the page, with their jagged lines and individuality. From this information, students can summarize their findings in a constructed response.

### *Lesson Plan #3: Kaufman Café*

As a final assessment, students will examine the relationship of Kaufman's poems to jazz. I suggest that the poems can be jazz-like in several ways; by using nonsense syllables that form a scat-like impression of rhythm and tonality without literal meaning ("Crootey Songo"); by creating sound with traditional poetic sound devices like syllabication, assonance and consonance, etc. ("Unanimity Has Been Achieved..."); and by echoing mood with words, phrases and meaning, and in this case, often directly referencing jazz ("Round Midnight" or "His Horn"). I have provided examples for each of these ideas, and will model them for students, then ask them, in groups, to do the same.

T.J. Anderson comments on the creation of scat singing, in which the voice, with just sounds rather than recognizable words, becomes an instrument. Anderson notes that, "Several poets from Langston Hughes to Amiri Baraka have made use of scat singing by placing runs of nonsensical syllables at crucial junctures within the text when language seems to collapse (2) The syllables of Kaufman's poem "Crootey Songo" make no sense as language, but what about as sound? The first stanza, below, shows how Kaufman played with sounds. We can invite students to experiment with how it should be read and why.

Students should be asked, both when listening to the song-and-poem examples, and when planning their own presentation, to focus on three areas.

- a. Feeling: What is the MOOD or feeling of the song? What is the level of energy? What emotions does it raise in you? When and where would you want to hear this song? Which instruments are used, and what is the feeling of each?
- b. Words or sounds: What does the poem mean? Pick out important words and phrases, even if they don't literally mean anything. Paraphrase the message in one sentence. What emotions is the poet displaying? How could the song relate to the poem's tone and message?
- c. Rhythm: Find a rhythm in the poem. See if you can find one or two passages in the song that seem to echo the rhythm of the poem. Explain their relationship.

### Poem - Song Matches

'Crootey Songo'	'One Note Samba,' Ella Fitzgerald
'Round Midnight'	'Round Midnight' (scat version), Bobby McFerrin 'Round Midnight,' Thelonious Monk
'His Horn'	'Back to the Land,' Lester Young Trio
'Morning Joy'	'Naima,' John Coltrane

### Annotated Bibliography

Anderson III, T.J.. "Body and Soul: Bob Kaufman's Golden Sardine." *African American Review* Summer 2000: 329-346.

This long article provides a number of ideas for relating poetry to jazz.

Campbell, James. *This Is the Beat Generation: New York -San Francisco -Paris*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1999.

A very readable and thorough layperson's account of the Beats.

Damon, Maria. "Triangulated Desire and Tactical Silences in the Beat Hipscape: Bob Kaufman and Others." *College Literature* (27:1) 2000, 139-57.

In this article, Damon claims to be proving that Kaufman was a reluctant object of desire in a gay threesome; instead, she has convinced this reader that Kaufman's sexuality was fluid. However, the article excels in its discussion of racism within the Beat community.

Hoagland, Everett. "Bob Kaufman? (Poem)." *American Poetry Review* May/June 2000: 21.  
Hoagland's poem honors Kaufman and echoes his concerns.

Jackson, Murray. "Fugueing Bob Kaufman (Poem)." *Black Scholar*. Summer 2002: 50.  
A suggested poem for exploring Kaufman's influence.

Johnson, Ronna C., Damon, Maria. "Recapturing the Skipped Beats." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 1 October 1999: B4. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. University of

Pennsylvania. April 12, 2009 <<http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2158/article/Recapturing-the-Skipped-Bea/6800/>>.

Johnson and Damon attempt to reposition black, female and gay poets among the better recognized figures of the Beat Generation.

Henderson, David. "Introduction." *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems by Bob Kaufman*. Ed. Gerald Nicosia. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996. 7-28.

David Henderson quotes Kaufman's friends, family and lovers to create an authentic account of his life.

Kaufman, Bob. *The Ancient Rain: Poems 1956-1978*. New York: New Directions, 1981. Previously uncollected poems, gathered toward the end of Kaufman's life by editor Raymond Foye.

Kaufman, Bob. *Cranial Guitar*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996.

Kaufman, Bob. *Golden Sardine*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1967.

"Bob Kaufman: The Enigmatic Beat Poet" at Poets.org. 2009 The Academy of American Poets. February 21, 2009 <<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5810>>. A short biographical piece, suitable for students.

Lindberg, Kathryne V.. "About Bob Kaufman." *Modern American Poetry*. 2000. University of Illinois. May 19, 2009 <[http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g\\_l/kaufman/about.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/kaufman/about.htm)>. Another introductory article, easily accessed, suitable for students.

Kohli, Amor. "Saxophones and Smothered Rage: Bob Kaufman, Jazz and the Quest for Redemption." *Callaloo* Winter 2002: 165-182. This scholarly article provides a discussion of Kaufman's jazz poetics.

Mailer, Norman. "The White Negro." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 19 Aug. 2009 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1434703/The-White-Negro>>.

Especially helpful when discussing the appropriation of black culture, then and now, by white people.

Peditto, C. Natale. *Bob Kaufman at Kerouac Alley*. 2008 *Jack Kerouac Alley: The Beat Generation*. April 12, 2009 <<http://kerouacalley.com/kaufman.html>>. Just one of the resources at this excellent site.

Winans, A.D.. "Bob Kaufman (A Portrait of the Beat Poet)." *American Poetry Review* May/June 2000: 19-20.

Winans, A.D.. "Remembering Bob Kaufman (Poem)." *Literary Review* Issue 36 2008: 188. Winans, a friend of Kaufman's, gives an authentic picture of the Beat era.

## Resources

Carney, Ray. The Beat Movement on Film: A Comprehensive Screening List. 1996 Media Resource Center, UC Berkeley. April 12, 2009 <<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/CarneyFilms.html>>.

Includes many suggestions that may help students visualize the time, the atmosphere, the excitement; includes the film Kaufman himself starred in,

Coleman, Horace. "A Context for Understanding Inland Beatness and Bob Kaufman." Callaloo Winter 2002: 220-221.

Damon, Maria. "The Dark End of the Street: Margins in American Vanguard Poetry." Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1993. pp. xxi, 305.

A broader discussion of poetry during Kaufman's time.

Kerouac, Jack. "About the Beat Generation." Esquire March 1958: C-Span in the Classroom: The Beat Generation. 2002: May 19,

2009 <[http://www.americanwriters.org/classroom/videolesson/vlp35\\_kerouac.asp](http://www.americanwriters.org/classroom/videolesson/vlp35_kerouac.asp)>.

This site offers a multitude of excellent resources about Kaufman, including a clip (also on YouTube) of poet Harryette Mullen speaking about and reading a poem written by Kaufman.

## Appendix A

Believe, Believe

Bob Kaufman

Believe in this. Young apple seeds,  
In blue skies, radiating young breast,  
Not in blue-suited insects,  
Infesting society's garments.

Believe in the swinging sounds of jazz,  
Tearing the night into intricate shreds,  
Putting it back together again,  
In cool logical patterns,  
Not in the sick controllers,  
Who created only the Bomb.

Let the voices of dead poets  
Ring louder in your ears  
Than the screechings mouthed  
In mildewed editorials.  
Listen to the music of centuries,  
Rising above the mushroom time.

Crootey Songo  
Bob Kaufman

DERRAT SLEGELATIONS, FLO GOOF BABER,  
SCRASH SHO DUBIES, WAGO WALLO WAILO.  
GEED BOP NAVA GLIED, NAVA GLIED NAVA,  
SPLEERIEDER, HEYEDIST, HEDACAZ, AX-, O, O.

Unanimity Has Been Achieved, Not a Dot Less for Its Accidentalness  
Bob Kaufman

Raga of the drum, the drum the drum the drum the drum, the heartbeat  
Raga of hold, raga of fold, raga of root, raga of crest, raga before coming,  
Raga of lip, raga of brass, raga of ultimate come with yestersday, raga of a parched tongue-  
walked lip, raga of yellow, raga of mellow raga of new, raga of old, raga of blue, raga of gold,  
raga of air spinning into itself,  
I ring against slate and shell and wood and stone and leaf and bone  
And towered holes and floors and eyes - against lone is lorn & rock & dust & flattened ball &  
solitudes of air & breath & hair & skin fed halves & wholes & bulls & calves & mad & soul &  
new & old & silence & saves & fall wall & water falling & fling my eye to sky & tingle &  
gtangle. (AR 16)

Morning Joy  
Bob Kaufman

Piano buttons, stitched on morning lights.  
Jazz wakes with the day,  
As I awaken with jazz, love lit the night.  
Eyes appear and disappear,  
To lead me once more, to a green moon.  
Streets paved with opal sadness,  
Lead me counterclockwise, to pockets of joy,  
And jazz.

Bob Kaufman?  
Everett Hoagland

Perhaps he was like Miles: self-absorbed  
yet kinder to, more loving  
of his art form, and, because of that,  
more giving of good to all of us than to himself  
or those in his life who loved him? He knew

back then that any one of his poems  
was more realized in our lives than

The Declaration or The Daily News.  
He knew and wrote American was a Murder  
In The Cathedral, a rape  
in a museum school with moans among  
the masks and bones and screams. Silence

he knew, too, was necessary if a jam was to be  
heard over the kind of institutional lies from  
lecterns about : color, lack of color, "race," sex,  
gender, power, money, truth, justice and The American Way.

Bob Kaufman  
Giovanni Singleton

invisiBly  
crOwded  
Bob

shaKes up  
improv jAzz  
solitUde  
sidewinds aFter  
ghostly Minds convulse  
on brooding sidewAlks  
over Northbeach

Loneliness  
Giovanni Singleton

freckLes  
Of  
maliNgering  
cigarEttes  
purpLe  
pyramId  
souNds  
echoEs of  
coSmic  
diSembowelment

## **Appendix B**

Pennsylvania State Standards addressed by this unit include the following:

- 1.1.11.D. Identify, describe, evaluate and synthesize the essential ideas in text.
- 1.1.11.F. Understand the meaning of and apply vocabulary across various subject areas.
- 1.1.11.G. Demonstrate understanding and interpretation of text.
- 1.3.11.D. Analyze and evaluate in poetry diction and figurative language.
- 1.3.11.F. Read and respond to nonfiction and fiction including poetry and drama.
- 1.1.11.H. Demonstrate fluency and comprehension in reading.