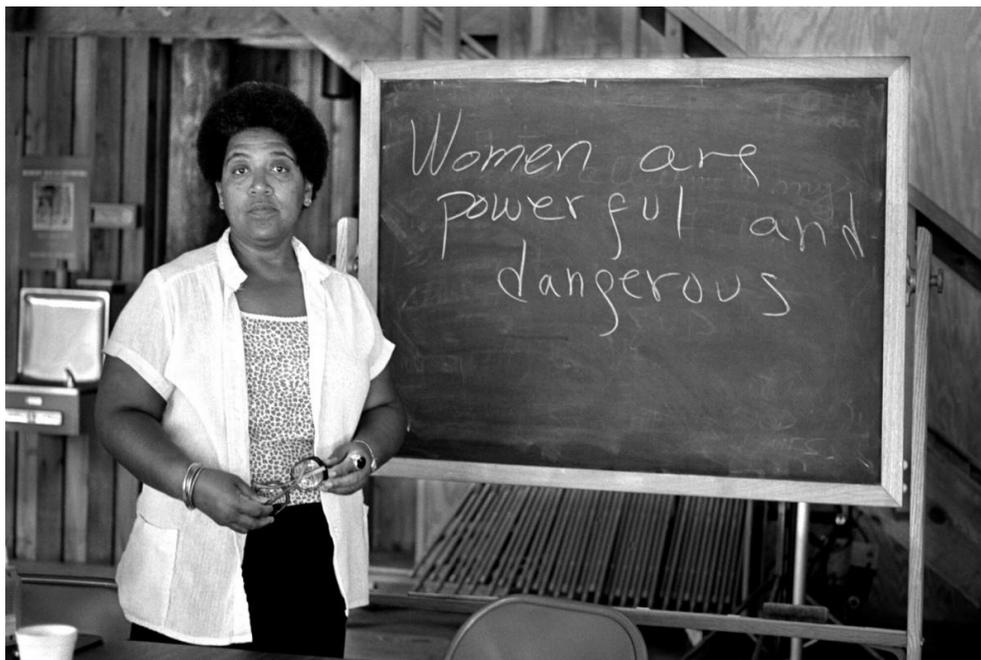


Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 8th



Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde (1934 – 1992) was a daughter of Caribbean immigrants, raised during the Great Depression, and went on to earn a Master's degree in Library Sciences. Audre was nearsighted to the point of legal blindness. She also didn't speak until she was five, having first been inspired to speak by a short story that was read to her by a local librarian. She suffered from occasional stuttering and claimed that poetry was her first language, saying that when she was young she often responded to questions in the form of poetry to avoid reprimands from adults as a result of her stuttering.

Self-described "black, lesbian, mother, feminist, warrior, poet" she was concerned with modern society's tendency to categorize groups of people and fought the marginalization of such categories as "lesbian" and "black woman." Her pedagogy and writings embodied themes of emotions including love, fear, racial and sexual oppression, survival, and urban struggle. Her words became central to many civil rights liberation movements, and made lasting contributions in the fields of feminist theory, critical race studies, and queer theory. *"I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We've been taught that silence would save us, but it won't,"* Lorde once said. In 1980, she sought to create a pathway to publication for other black women writers and co-founded Kitchen Table, the first U.S. publisher for women of color.

Audre was best known for poetry in works like *Coal* and *The Black Unicorn*, her "biography" *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, and her nonfiction work, *The Cancer Journals*, which documented her battle with breast cancer. She died in 1992 of liver cancer.

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 9th



Cathay Williams

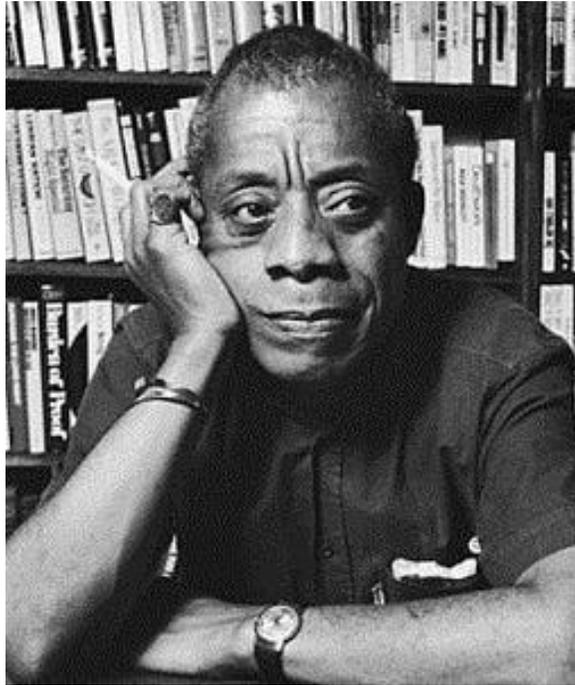
Cathay Williams was born to an enslaved mother and a free father in Independence, Missouri in 1844. As an adolescent, she worked as a house slave on the Johnson plantation on the outskirts of Jefferson City, Missouri. During the early stages of the Civil War, captured slaves were officially designated as "contraband" (i.e., illegal goods. A stolen thing. Property that is in a place it should not be) and were forced to serve in military support roles such as cooks, laundresses, or nurses. Williams was thus forced to serve as an army cook and a washerwoman and, in this role, she accompanied the infantry all over the country.

Post-war job opportunities for newly freed slaves – and for African Americans in general – were nonexistent. Inequality and lack of access bore down on African Americans to a smothering degree, particularly in the southern states. Many had no choice but to turn to military service to afford themselves not only employment stability, but newfound access to health care, education, and post-war benefits by way of a pension. As a result, Cathay chose to voluntarily enlist in the army. "*I wanted to make my own living and not be dependent on relations or friends,*" Cathay shared with the St. Louis Daily Times in 1876. Because women were prohibited from serving in the military, Cathay Williams adopted a pseudo identity "William Cathay," and enlisted as a man.

Though over 400 women served in the Civil War posing as male soldiers, Williams was the first African American woman to enlist and the only documented woman to serve in the United States Army, while disguised as a man, during the Indian Wars. She is also the only known female Buffalo soldier.

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 10th



James Baldwin

James Arthur Baldwin was born in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City in 1924. He was the oldest of nine children and grew up in poverty. Baldwin was impacted by a strained relationship with his religious stepfather. Despite the conflict, Baldwin followed in his stepfather's footsteps and became a youth minister in a small revivalist church between the ages of 14 and 16. During these years, he spent much of his time in libraries and found his passion for writing. He wrote his first novel, semi-autographical book entitled, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), based on his adolescent experiences with his family and church.

Baldwin published his second novel, *Giovanni's Room*, in 1956, a story about an American man living in Paris and torn between his love for a woman and his love for a man. This book was groundbreaking as depictions of same-sex love were then considered taboo. His book of essays, *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961) and novel *Another Country* (1952) examine race relations in the United States as well as sexual identity issues in the latter. Baldwin wrote a New Yorker article detailing the Black Muslim separatist movement and other aspects of the civil rights struggle, which later became a best seller in its book form *The Fire Next Time* (1963). Baldwin also wrote a play about racial oppression, *Blues for Mister Charlie*, which played on Broadway in 1964 to mixed reviews.

Baldwin never wanted to be a spokesperson or leader but rather considered his personal mission as "bearing witness to the truth." He continued to write literature on racial tensions until his death in 1987.

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 11th



Lois Curtis

Lois Curtis is one of the plaintiffs in the landmark [Supreme Court case *Olmstead v. L.C. \(1999\)*](#) which established the right of individuals with disabilities to live in the least restrictive settings possible.

As an adolescent living in Georgia, Curtis enjoyed learning and creating but struggled at home and at school. She experienced significant cognitive and behavioral issues which inhibited her family's ability to care for her. From the time she was 11 years old, Curtis was frequently in and out of Georgia Regional Hospital, where she was treated as a psychiatric patient rather than an individual with developmental disabilities. By the age of 19, Lois longed to live in the community and outside of institutions. She was placed in a personal care home in the early 1990s; however, the home did not have necessary resources or trained staff to provide adequate care. The state was unable to secure adequate support services and she returned to Georgia Regional Hospital.

Lois and another plaintiff, Elaine Wilson, sued the state of Georgia under a claim with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). They won their case and each appeal all the way up to the Supreme Court, who ruled "unnecessary institutionalization" was equivocal to discrimination and unjustified segregation, thereby violating Curtis' rights.

After the *Olmstead* decision, Curtis began living in group and host homes in the community, and continued to experience difficulty finding an adequate fit. The effort to create more community support systems continues as an alternative to institutionalization largely due to Curtis' Supreme Court case. She currently lives in an apartment and works as a visual artist and speaker. She is best known for her portraits and serves as a public speaker, telling audiences about her life and work as well as selling her art.

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 12th



Milan Nicole Sherry

In 2013, #BlackLivesMatter was gaining momentum following the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. In the same year, Islan Nettles, a 21-year-old Black transwoman was brutally beaten by a man in the streets of Harlem. In response to this killing, Milan created [#BlackTransLivesMatter](#) to mobilize people around violent murders of Black trans women that often go underreported.

Milan was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and began her transition around 13 or 14 years old. She has described that her father did not have the necessary knowledge to support her transition at that time. She notes her mother's unconditional love and support helped her throughout adolescence. Milan left home in 2009 due to increased tensions with her father. She found refuge with other trans women living in New Orleans and quickly became involved in the LGBTQ+ organizing space.

Milan is currently the co-director of House of Tulip, an organization focused on creating housing solutions and providing gender affirming clothing for TGNCI (Transgender, Gender non-conforming, and Intersex) individuals throughout Louisiana, and BreakOUT! a mobilizing community which provides workshops and individual leadership development plans to youth leaders in creating sustainable movements. Milan is also an organizer of the Trans March of Resilience (TMOR), a rally and demonstration open to people of all gender identities.

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 13th



Tricia Hersey

Tricia Hersey was born in the south side of Chicago. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from Eastern Illinois University and a Master of Divinity from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Hersey experienced stress due to the graduate programming, deaths in the family, and being robbed while with her young son. She began taking naps more often and noticed the additional rest made her healthier and more energized. She incorporated these experiences into her research topics of liberation theology, somatics, and cultural trauma. Hersey believes that sleep deprivation is a racial and social justice issue tied to American slavery and the “grind culture.” She calls for rest as resistance to white supremacy and capitalism and is key to Black liberation as it allows space for healing and invention. She has related Black exhaustion to continued experiences of oppression. [Hersey’s organization, The Nap Ministry, aims to de-stigmatize self-care and sleep.](#) It hosts nap collective experiences where people nap together for 30-40 minutes and has a large following on social media.

Hersey refers to herself as the **Nap Bishop** and believes that rest is resistance.

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 14th



Stephanie Thomas: Disability Inclusive fashion activist

Stephanie Thomas was born missing digits on her hands and feet. These congenital amputations made mainstream fashion choices difficult for Thomas, especially footwear, buttons, and clasps. Through her own lived experience, Thomas has made it her goal to both eradicate negative perceptions of people with disabilities through styling and to normalize adaptive technology. Thomas has considered herself a "disability fashion stylist all her life." She gave a Ted Talk ([Fashion Styling for People with Disabilities](#)) which was highlighted by TED as one of seven talked by people with disabilities breaking barriers for people with disabilities.

Thomas developed the Disability Fashion Styling System, which is based on three pillars: Accessibility (easy to put on and remove), Smart for your health (medically safe), and Fashionable (loved by individuals, good looking, and fits wearers lifestyles and body types). This system is foundational to a growing movement within fashion to deconstruct ableist tones throughout the industry. It is Thomas' goal to make adaptive clothing a priority, rather than an afterthought.