Classic & Contemporary Literature by Women:
an exhibit for Black Awareness Month 2006

In this biography, the author takes a penetrating look at a woman who rose from a family of Georgia sharecroppers to an esteemed career in literature. It draws on interviews with Walker, her family, friends, lovers, and colleagues.

American Smooth / Rita Dove PS3554.O884 A77, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
Rita Dove was poet laureate of the United States from 1993 to 1995, and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1987. This new collection of poems, her eighth, embodies the strong and highly-wrought work she is known for.

The Bluest Eye / Toni Morrison PS3563.O8749 B55, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
Toni Morrison's first novel, published in 1970, is the story of eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove who prays for her eyes to turn blue: so that she will be beautiful, so that people will look at her, so that her world will be different. This is the story of the nightmare at the heart of her yearning, and the tragedy of its fulfillment.

Buxton Spice / Oonya Kempadoo PR9320.9.K46 B89 2004, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
Tells the story of Lula, and her coming of age in a rural Caribbean village in the 1970s. Lula's life changes dramatically when her mother's arrest sends the family into political exile.

The Color Purple / Alice Walker PS3573. A425 C6, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
The story of Celie, a poor, barely literate Southern black woman who struggles to escape brutality and degradation. She ultimately frees herself from her situation. This novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1983.

Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography / Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), PS3515 U789 Z5, Stacks, Level Two, Browsing
First published in 1942, this is Zora Neale Hurston's account of her rise from childhood poverty in the rural South to prominence among the leading artists and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance.

Fledgling / Octavia Butler PS3552.U827 F47 2005, Browsing
A new science fiction novel from this highly praised author which tells the story of an apparently young girl who is in fact a genetically modified, 53-year-old vampire. As the novel begins, she has amnesia and is severely hurt. As the novel progresses, she discovers what she can about her former life, who wants to destroy her, and how she can survive.

Freshwater Road / Denise Nicholas PS3614.I337 F74, Stacks, Level Two
The story follows Celeste Tyree, a student in Ann Arbor, South to Mississippi during the Freedom Summer of 1964 to register black Americans to vote.

Getting Mother’s Body / Suzan-Lori Parks, PS3566.A736 G4 2003, Stacks, Level Two
In this novel, Parks, a Pulitzer-winning playwright, gives the reader a collection of outrageous characters. The Beedes of Texas, living in the 1960s, long for better lives. The girl, Billy, 16 years old, is pregnant by a coffin salesman. She takes a roadtrip to Arizona, where she thinks that her mother, Willa Mae, is buried with jewelry expensive enough to get Billy out of trouble.

How Stella Got Her Groove Back / Terry McMillan, PS3563.C3868 H68, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
Stella Payne is a successful 42-year-old investment analyst and divorced mother of an 11-year-old son.
She escapes to Jamaica to break out of her routine, meets a man who is half her age, and rethinksthe path her life has taken…

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings / Maya Angelou, PS3551.N464 Z466, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
Published in 1969, this is the first of five autobiographical works that span seven decades, and is a story of struggle and survival. It reads like fiction, but is the author's coming-of-age story.

The Interruption of Everything / Terry McMillan PS3563.C3868 I58, Stacks, Level Two
McMillan's newest novel tells the story of Marilyn, a middle-age woman who struggles to discover herself after a lifetime of putting everyone else's needs before her own.

Jazz / Toni Morrison PS3563 O8749 J38, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
A novel that opens tragically after Joe Trace has shot his teenage lover, Dorcas. An anonymous narrator draws readers into the rhythm of Harlem and its exciting, but bewitching, jazz.

Joplin's Ghost / Tanarive Due PS3554.U3143 J66 2005, Browsing
Phoenix launches a career as an R & B singer. Her visit to a historical site in St. Louis ignites a series of encounters with a spirit who may be the King of Ragtime, Scott Joplin. In this supernatural novel, Due juxtaposes Joplin's decline in the last years of his life with the main character's ascent.

Kindred / Octavia Butler PS3552.U827 K5, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
Dana is snatched abruptly from her home in California and transported to the antebellum South. As she is forced back and forth through time, she must confront and endure the brutalities of slavery in this provocative science fiction novel.

Let the Lion Eat Straw / Ebele Oseye (Ellease Southerland), PS3569.O765 L48, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
Originally published in 1979, the story is told through the eyes of Adeba from the age of six to adulthood. She endures violence, sickness and a mother who insists on perfection and the right to regularly dispense hurtful criticism. Through Adeba and her relationships, the author explores the various ways in which individuals respond to adversity.

Love / Toni Morrison PS3563.O8749 L68, Browsing
Toni Morrison's elegantly crafted eighth novel tells the story of one man, Bill Cosey, and his influence upon generations living in the seaside community of Up Beach.

Love Poems / Nikki Giovanni PS3557.I55 L68 1997, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
A collection of love poems by a celebrated poet who first emerged during the Civil Rights, Black Power and Black Arts Movements in the 1960s.

The Men of Brewster Place / Gloria Naylor PS3564.A895 M45, Stacks, Level Two
This novel is a companion volume to The Women of Brewster Place completed fifteen years previously. The vignettes tell the story of Ben, the neighborhood janitor; Brother Jerome, the musical genius; Rev. Moreland T. Woods, who wants a new church; and others.

Mr. Potter / Jamaica Kincaide PR9275.A583 K56383 2002, Stacks, Level Two
Kincaid tells the story of Mr. Potter, an illiterate chauffer on the island of Antigua. He makes his living along the roads that pass the only towns he has ever seen and the graveyard where he will be buried.

Now is the Time to Open Your Heart PS3573.A425 N69 2004, Stacks, Level Two
Kate, a successful author, sets off on a journey of spiritual discovery in this dreamlike novel of the style for which Alice Walker is known.

October Suite / Maxine Clair PS3553.L2225 O29 2001, Stacks, Level Two
October Brown is a young black teacher in Kansas in the 1950s. She becomes involved with a married man, and, pregnant, she is kicked out of her lodging. Returning home to Ohio, she has the baby, but gives him away to her sister and brother-in-law. Although she continues her career, she longs for her son.

On Beauty / Zadie Smith, PR6069.M59 O58 2005, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing
The story of two very different families: the Belseys, a liberal biracial couple; and the Kipps, conservative Anglo-Caribbeans. Smith probes the complications and beauty of life in this much-anticipated novel that was shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

Purple Hibiscus / Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie PR9387.9.A34354 P87 2003, Stacks, Level Two
Fifteen-year-old Kambili and her older brother, Jaja, are the children of a very powerful factory owner in Nigeria. They feel imprisoned by their father's brutal temper. They travel to visit cousins and find a new sense of freedom; however, what will happen when their father comes to take them back home?

A Raisin in the Sun / Lorraine Hansberry (1894-1965) PS3515 .A515 R3 1995, Stacks, Level Two
First produced in 1959, and was awarded the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for that season and hailed as a watershed in American drama. The play is set in southside Chicago. Walter Lee, a black chauffeur, dreams of a better life, hoping to use his father’s life insurance money to do that. But his plans are shattered.

**72 Hour Hold** / Bebe Moore Campbell PS3553 A4395 A613 2005, Stacks, Level Two

A powerful story of a mother coping with her daughter’s bipolar disorder. Keri is hopeful as her daughter Trina celebrates her 18th birthday and begins a new treatment. But as Trina relapses into mania, both of their worlds spiral out of control.

**Shifting Through Neutral** / Bridgett M. Davis PS3604.A9556 S55, Stacks, Level Two

A family drama set in Detroit in the late ’60s and ’70s: Rae Dodson lives in a divided house where her mother lives upstairs; her father, downstairs. When Rae is nine years old, her sister Kimmie comes for the summer and everything changes.

**Small Island** / Andrea Levy PR6062 .E923 S63 2005, Stacks, Level Two

Winner of the Orange Prize and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award, this novel is set mainly in the British Empire of 1948, and is a story of emigration, loss and love. Four characters—two Jamaicans and two Britons—struggle to find peace in postwar England.

**Their Eyes Were Watching God** / Zora Neale Hurston, PS3515.U789 T45, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing

This novel, the best-known of Hurston’s, follows the fortunes of Janie Crawford, a woman living in the 1930s in the black town of Eaton, Florida.

**These Bones are Not My Child** / Toni Cade Bambara PS3552.A473 T47 1999, Stacks Level Two

Bambara lived in Atlanta during the two years in which over 40 children, mostly black boys under 15, were abducted and murdered. Her novel draws on this horrible moment in history through the fictional Spencer family and explores racial and political issues.

**Third Girl From the Left** / Martha Southgate PS3569.O82 T47 2005, Stacks, Level Two

This novel tells of the struggles of three black women from three generations entwined by the power of movies to represent the longings of ordinary people and to fulfill the desire for self-expression.

**Tide Running** / Oonya Kempadoo PR9320.9.K46 T54 2003, Stacks, Level Two

Kempadoo tells the story of Cliff, a confident, but poor, 20-year old islander. In addition to his love for the sea, he is attracted to a wealthy couple new to Tobago. As their three-way relationship deepens, conflict ensues.

**Where the wild grape grows** : selected writings, 1930-1950 /Dorothy West (1907-1998)/ PS3545.E82794 A6 2005, Stacks, Level Two

This book provides a carefully researched profile of West, one of the leading writers of the Harlem Renaissance. It gives an introduction to a well-edited, representative collection of her out-of-print, little-known, or unpublished writings, supplemented by many family photographs.

**White Teeth** / Zadie Smith, PR6069.M59 W47, Stacks, Level Two and Browsing

An acclaimed debut that tells the epic tale of two interconnected families, probing questions of ethnicity, class, belonging, homeland, family, adolescence, and identity.

**The Women of Brewster Place** / Gloria Naylor PS3564.A895 W6, Stacks Level Two and Browsing

Published in 1982 and winner of a National Book Award, this novel chronicles the lives of seven diverse African-American women who live in an urban neighborhood.