# Call for Poetry Anthology Contribution

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Seasonality dictates the character of Canadian life, its tone, texture, and the pulses of its resilience. It tells its history ruthlessly and informs us of the roots of traditions that govern the north and its confluences. To imagine the seasonal life of Canadian is to come into its brutal history of settler colonialism and the brutal environmental appeal that has been used to legitimize and justify the occupation of Indigenous lands. The poet Margaret Atwood reminds us in *Survival* that nature is a monster, and it is true of Canadian poetry as well as its broader literature that "the true and only season here is winter: the others are either preludes to it or mirages concealing it". Here, winter is the protagonist, and its omnipresent shadow shapes the sociology of Afro-Canadian lifeworlds and place-bound realities of the Afro-Canadian diaspora. This, of course, began with poetry as a transitive genre, dedicated to the reflexes of the weather and the blizzard memories of the eighteenth century during the Underground Railroad.

In these multiple valences, Dionne Brand evokes the cold elements in *Winter Epigrams and Epigrams to Ernesto Cardenal in Defense of Claudia*. She writes of the weather dilemma in the Canadian diaspora and asks, "-winter suicide-/shall I do it then…." We are then wedged into the gendered undertones and meteorological witnessing of the Afro-Canadian environment when Claire Harris declares in *The Conception of Winter* that the rain stirs cliché, and even amid the determined joy of Afro-Canadian women, there is a deep sense of fear in "the birth of winter." So far, only a small room has been left for the evocation of winter-induced struggles of the new Afro-Canadian diaspora since the 1960s. Anthology is a bricolage genre, capacious enough to transcend the lapses and pauses in urgency that this literary moment demands. If the Afro-Canadian diaspora is pluriversal, the hope of this anthology, named *Black Psalms of the Shivering Ones*, is to wake us into

a new consciousness of Afro-Canadian life. The affordances of poetry, the promise of its language, the strength of its images, and the precision of its narrative jar us with winter vicissitudes and resistance among Afro-Canadian lifeworlds. Poetry not merely inscribes us in currents of the past, but also the ebbs of the present and the flow of the future – all reordered by the evocative winter life, its harshness, and its vast flush of white beauty.

*Black Psalms of the Shivering Ones* seeks new works and fresh voices on the seasonal life of Black Canada to join the already thriving canon of Afro-Canadian poetry. This includes *AfriCANthology: Perspectives of Black Canadian Poets* (2022) edited by A. Gregory Frankson, *The Great Black North* (2013) edited by Valerie Mason-John and Kevan Anthony Cameron, and *The Black Prairie Archives. An Anthology* edited by Karina Vernon. *Black Psalms of the Shivering Ones* wants to think with Afro-Canadian lifeworlds in terms of winter, seasonal cycles, tundra, rockies, arctic atmosphere, blizzards, snowbirds, auroras, and the magical realities of the solstice. It invites attention to the scene of elegy of the snow, the pain of frostbites, and mourns the sufferings of the newcomers settling into the frigidity. It asks, where are the enduring tropic images of root home and the voltage of diasporic cold? Summer/winter nostalgia? What kind of shivers does the Canadian cold produce for Black subjects: political, economic, social? Afro-Canadian or Black poets are invited to explore themes, forms, and tell the winter-counter stories.

**Guidelines**

- Open to all Afro-Canadian poets or Black poets in contiguous locations, such as the United States, invested in winter imaginaries of Canadian life/Black diaspora.
- All poems must be written in English. Poems in other languages must be translated into English
- Up to 3 original short poems (maximum 50 lines per poem).
- Sonnets, epigrams, duplex, ghazals–all forms are welcome.
- Poems cannot be previously published.
- Include a bio of not more than 70 words.
- **Extended Deadline**: May 31, 2026.
- Submit to: osalawu@torontomu.ca
- Subject: Black Psalms "Last Name"

**N**. All contributors will receive a complimentary copy of the anthology. We are also working to secure honorarium for those who contribute.

The Editor for this collection, Jide Salawu, is the author of *Contraband Bodies* (2025), *Preface for Leaving Homeland* (2019), and the editor of *African Urban Echoes*. Salawu is currently a Black postdoctoral fellow at the Department of English, Toronto Metropolitan University.

This anthology will be published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press.