



Praise Poetry: In Honour of Black History Month



African Roots and Purpose

- A celebration poem that uses strong imagery and comparisons.
- Comes from African traditions and honours people, places, objects, or qualities.
- In Zulu (a South African language and ethnic group): A praise poem is called *izibongo*, it defines and names individuals.
- You can praise yourself, someone you admire, or an object/activity.



New Wings

by Glenis Redmond

*I am a daughter of the dust.
I am a true sister of the yam.
I come from a long line of serious brown women
that don't take no mess or apologize for living.
I am birth from the morning earth
deep, rich and free.
My middle name Gale
describes how I move in this world
sometimes gracefully other times stormy.
Glenis, welsh for valley.
I have dwelt there far too long.
I am a raven
I am a crow.
I am a nappy bat.
I am a mosquito.
Call me anything black
that has wings
and
flies*



Praise Him, Nelson Mandela by Charles Jagongo

*Praise him, this son of Africa
He withstood mudsling's of apartheid,
From Roben Island, to lead a nation, to
set a pace.*

*Count him not, with other comrades,
Who cling on, un-ashamedly,
Till they are pulled, no sympathy
For subjects, heads had rolled,
Praise him, Nelson Mandela, in peace
He knew prosperity and peace
Who all he did for peace!*

Zolani Mkiva
speaks on
Praise Poetry
as an
“essential
part of
African DNA”



Your Task:

Write a praise poem using **at least 3** of these elements:

You can choose your topic:

- **Yourself**
- **Someone** you admire
- An **object** you cherish
- An **activity** or hobby you love



1. **Heritage/Origin** *“I come from...” or “They come from...”*



2. **Strength/Power** *“It is as strong as...”*



3. **Colour or Mood** *“It is the colour of...”*



4. **Animal Comparison** *“It is like a...”*



5. **Nature Comparison** *“It moves like...”*



6. **How it Lives in the World** *“It walks/acts like...”*



7. **Purpose or Job** *“Its purpose is...”*

About an object or activity...

Praise the skateboard

born from the street.

It is the colour of asphalt and after-school freedom.

It glides like wind over pavement,

speaks in rattles and scrapes,

and its job is to carry me away from everything.

About yourself...

I am the pencil smudge on my hand,
the quiet line becoming something more.

I come from doodles in the margins
and colours that know what I'm feeling before I do.

I move like paint water swirling,
slow, patient, finding shape.

I am the person who sees the small things,
who turns them into something worth looking at.

Sample Poems

About someone you admire...

I praise my grandmother's hands,
small but fierce,

the colour of worn cedar.

They move like river water over stones,
soft, patient, unstoppable.

They come from stories older than my house,
and their purpose is to keep our family
standing.