

John Hatcher on: Aunt Jemima of the Ocean Waves

'Aunt Jemima of the Ocean Waves' portrays Hayden's own mythological figure of resilience. . . . Hayden uses the figure of Jemima as an archetypal symbol of the displaced Afro-American identity. The woman's lengthy narrative recounts her adventures from her days as the 'Sepia High Stepper' in Europe, to her present status in a sideshow as a 'fake mammy to God's mistakes'. As he listens to her intriguing narrative of 'High-stepping days', the persona finds in her a beautiful image of survival and strength, in spite of her 'unfinished' or fake identity born from the original displacement of the culture. . . .

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Publication Status:

[Original Criticism](#) [1]

Criticism Target:

[Robert Hayden](#) [2]

Review Process:

Single Review

Poem:

[Aunt Jemima of the Ocean Waves](#) [3]

Tags:

[mythological](#) [4]

[resilience](#) [5]

[symbol](#) [6]

[Afro-American](#) [7]

[identity](#) [8]

[survival](#) [9]

[strength](#) [10]

[fake](#) [11]

[culture](#) [12]

Source URL: <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/criticism/john-hatcher-aunt-jemima-ocean-waves>

Links

[1] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/publication-status/original-criticism>

[2] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/poet/robert-hayden>

[3] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/poem/aunt-jemima-ocean-waves>

[4] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/mythological>

[5] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/resilience>

[6] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/symbol>

[7] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/afro-american>

[8] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/identity>

[9] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/survival>

[10] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/strength>

[11] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/fake>

[12] <http://www.modernamericanpoetry.org/category/tags/culture>