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M. Carl Holman

A poet, professor, and civil rights activist, M. Carl Holman (1919–1988) taught at Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia, from 1949 to 1962. He also worked as an editor on the *Atlanta Inquirer* and was on the U.S. Commission for Civil Rights. He served as president of the National Urban Coalition from 1971 until his death in 1988. Throughout his life, he won numerous awards for public service and for his poetry. The following poem, written in 1967, demonstrates his ability to meld his two passions—poetry and civil rights.

Taught early that his mother's skin was the sign of error,
He dressed and spoke the perfect part of honor;
Won scholarships, attended the best schools.
Disclaimed kinship with jazz and spirituals;
Chose prudent, raceless views for each situation.
Or when he could not cleanly skirt dissension
Faced up to the dilemma, firmly seized
Whatever ground was Anglo-Saxonized.