

# **GOD'S TROMBONES**



**SEVEN NEGRO SERMONS IN VERSE**

**JAMES WELDON JOHNSON**

# Gods Trombones

**Gordon Myers**



## Gods Trombones:

**God's Trombones** James Weldon Johnson, 2023-04-07 James Weldon Johnson transforms seven inspiring spiritual sermons of African American preachers into poetry and equates the Black oral tradition with the sweeping tonal ranges of the trombone which most closely resembles the human voice

*God's Trombones* James Weldon Johnson, 2023-02-07 A Harlem Renaissance classic seven inspirational poems inspired by the powerful rhetorical traditions of African American sermons and spirituals VINTAGE CLASSICS James Weldon Johnson the co author of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* and author of *The Autobiography of an Ex Colored Man* was a leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance In *God's Trombones* one of his most celebrated works the rich tradition of inspirational sermons by Black preachers are reimagined as poetry reverberating with the musicality and splendid eloquence of the classic spirituals This collection includes *The Creation* *The Prodigal Son* *Go Down Death* *A Funeral Sermon* *Noah Built the Ark* *The Crucifixion* *Let My People Go* and *The Judgment Day* and includes the remarkable original illustrations by artist Aaron Douglas

*God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* James Weldon Johnson, 2023-01-09 *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* is a 1927 book of poems by James Weldon Johnson patterned after traditional African American religious oratory African American scholars Henry Louis Gates and Cornel West have identified the collection as one of Johnson's two most notable works the other being *Autobiography of an Ex Colored Man* Johnson observed an absence of attention in folklore studies to what he called a folk sermon then went on to describe its nature and specific examples from his memory I remember hearing in my boyhood sermons that were current sermons that passed with only slight modifications from preacher to preacher and from locality to locality Such sermons were *The Valley of Dry Bones* which was based on the vision of the prophet in the 37th chapter of Ezekiel the *Train Sermon* in which both God and the devil were pictured as running trains one loaded with saints that pulled up in heaven and the other with sinners that dumped its load in hell the *Heavenly March* which gave in detail the journey of the faithful from earth on up through the pearly gates to the great white throne Then there was a stereotyped sermon which had no definite subject and which was quite generally preached it began with the Creation went on to the fall of man rambled through the trials and tribulations of the Hebrew Children came down to the redemption by Christ and ended with the Judgment Day and a warning and an exhortation to sinners Johnson explains the title's use of the trombone by discussing the vocal and rhetorical qualities of a preacher he had recently heard who he felt exemplified the compelling and persuasive nature of the folk preacher naming the trombone as the instrument possessing above all others the power to express the wide and varied range of emotions encompassed by the human voice and with greater amplitude He also cited a dictionary definition that noted the trombone as being the brass instrument most resembling the range and sound of the human voice The seven poems were composed primarily in 1926 with *Go Down Death* being composed in the space of a single afternoon on Thanksgiving Day 1926 and the remaining five poems during a two week retreat *The Creation* the first poem of the set had been composed about 1919 The

work went on to find acclaim in many circles proving enormously popular among both the black cognoscenti as well of the masses of black Americans and being used widely in oratorical contests poet Owen Dodson wrote Johnson in 1932 to tell him that Dodson and his brother had taken first and second place in a poetry recitation competition with works from that volume Gates and West particularly note that the work attempts a mimetic capturing of the black church sermon without making recourse to the misspellings and orthographic tricks often employed in representing black vernacular speech Dorothy Canfield Fisher in a personal letter to the poet to thank him and offer to help promote the collection praised the work as heart shakingly beautiful and original with the peculiar piercing tenderness and intimacy which seems to me special gifts of the Negro it is a profound satisfaction to find those special qualities so exquisitely expressed The poem The Creation was used in the 1951 film Five serving as the soliloquy for the character Charles played by African American actor Charles Lampkin Lampkin convinced film maker Arch Oboler to include excerpts of the poem in the final script of Five where it would become Lampkin s soliloquy for his character Charles This may be the first time that audiences in the USA Latin America and Europe were exposed to African American poetry albeit not identified as such in the film wikipedia org

**God's Trombones** James Weldon Johnson, 2023-02-21 African American scholars have cited James Weldon Johnson s 1927 book of poems God s Trombones Seven Negro Sermons in Verse as one of the author s most notable works Johnson who is best known for his 1912 work The Autobiography of an Ex Colored Man was an American writer and civil rights activist born in Jacksonville Florida in 1871 As a leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Johnson helped to bring awareness to the problem of black lynching in America during the first part of the 20th century as well as other civil rights issues that people of color faced in America A collection of eight poems God s Trombones draws upon the tradition in the black church of drawing upon black folklore to preach the word of god The title of the work has been described by Johnson as a metaphor for the powerfully persuasive nature of the vocal and rhetorical qualities of the sermons of a folk preacher Immediately upon its publication God s Trombones would go on to achieve great critical acclaim in the black community further helping to establish Johnson as one of the principal figures of the Harlem Renaissance This edition is printed on premium acid free paper

God's Trombones James Weldon Johnson, 2008-06-01 James Weldon Johnson was a leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance and one of the most revered African Americans of all time whose life demonstrated the full spectrum of struggle and success In Godas Trombones one of his most celebrated works inspirational sermons of African American preachers are reimagined as poetry reverberating with the musicality and splendid eloquence of the spirituals This classic collection includes a Listen Lord a Prayer a The Creation a The Prodigal Son a Go Down Death a Funeral Sermon a Noah Built the Ark a The Crucifixion a Let My People Go a and The Judgment Day a

**God's Trombones** James Weldon Johnson, 1976 **God's Trombones** Willie Calhoun, 1973 God's Trombones James Weldon Johnson, 1927 The inspirational sermons of the old Negro preachers are set down as poetry in this collection a classic for

more than forty years frequently dramatized recorded and anthologized Mr Johnson tells in his preface of hearing these same themes treated by famous preachers in his youth some of the sermons are still current and like the spirituals they have taken a significant place in black folk art In transmuting their essence into original and moving poetry the author has also ensured the survival of a great oral tradition Book jacket **God's Trombones** James. Weldon Johnson,1953 **God's Trombones** James Weldon Johnson,1955 *God's Trombones* James Weldon Johnson,1963 *God's Trombones* Woodie King (Jr.),Don Corey Washington,Trazana Beverley,Clebert Ford,Debbi Blackwell-Cook,Cliff Frazier,Ernest Witherspoon,Sabrynaah Pope,Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,National Black Touring Circuit, Inc,2002 Image, Text, Sound Renee Deanne Ater,1993 *God's Trombones* Gordon Myers,1973 Trombones: a Sonnet Crown Raymond Maxwell,2016-07-26 This collection contains a sonnet crown a remix of James Weldon Johnson s God s Trombones using descriptions from Aaron Douglas illustrations **Black Poets of the United States** Jean Wagner,1973 Traces the evolution of Afro American poetry highlighting individual poets up to the time of the Harlem Renaissance African Americans and the Bible Vincent L. Wimbush,2012-09-01 Perhaps no other group of people has been as much formed by biblical texts and tropes as African Americans From literature and the arts to popular culture and everyday life the Bible courses through black society and culture like blood through veins Despite the enormous recent interest in African American religion relatively little attention has been paid to the diversity of ways in which African Americans have utilized the Bible African Americans and the Bible is the fruit of a four year collaborative research project directed by Vincent L Wimbush and funded by the Lilly Endowment It brings together scholars and experts sixty eight in all from a wide range of academic and artistic fields and disciplines including ethnography cultural history and biblical studies as well as art music film dance drama and literature The focus is on the interaction between the people known as African Americans and that complex of visions rhetorics and ideologies known as the Bible As such the book is less about the meaning s of the Bible than about the Bible and meaning s less about the world s of the Bible than about how worlds and the Bible interact in short about how a text constructs a people and a people constructs a text It is about a particular sociocultural formation but also about the dynamics that obtain in the interrelation between any group of people and sacred texts in general Thus African Americans and the Bible provides an exemplum of sociocultural formation and a critical lens through which the process of sociocultural formation can be viewed Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance: A-J Cary D. Wintz,Paul Finkelman,2004 From the music of Louis Armstrong to the portraits by Beauford Delaney the writings of Langston Hughes to the debut of the musical Show Boat the Harlem Renaissance is one of the most significant developments in African American history in the twentieth century The Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance in two volumes and over 635 entries is the first comprehensive compilation of information on all aspects of this creative dynamic period For a full list of entries contributors and more visit the Encyclopedia of Harlem Renaissance website God's Trombones James Weldon Johnson,1927 The Negro's God

Benjamin E. Mays, 2010-10-01 The ideas of God in Negro literature are developed along three principal lines 1 Ideas of God that are used to support or give adherence to traditional compensatory patterns 2 Ideas whether traditional or otherwise that are developed and interpreted to support a growing consciousness of social and psychological adjustment needed 3 Ideas of God that show a tendency or threat to abandon the idea of God as a useful instrument in perfecting social change From Chapter IX Summation

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