

Cuyahoga  
County  
**Public  
Library**

By Debbie Allen

WHEN NOW CAN'T GO ON POETS MUST

When the din of despair cacophonates  
from those near giving up and those never  
giving up are brink-close to disaster  
and regression from oppression moves  
backward toward mean because  
what passes for powerless is anything but, then  
poets must  
rise up. Poets must rise up to sing-haunt  
the record straight. Word whip  
politicians til their wingtips  
slosh with something like the blood  
left behind by vigil ante uppers smug in their  
protective states. Poets choose and use  
their means. Scribe the skeletal clutch of those  
vowing not to lose the privilege they refuse  
to say is theirs but use and enjamb the illogical  
allegations that Aunt Jemima and "Geronimo!" are beloved  
while slant-eyes deserve to die. In the street.  
With repetition, petition those engaged in anaphoral  
school board scream-offs about wrong bathrooms and right  
history, banning all hope of imparting empathy

to our nexts. When now can't go on. Poets must  
rise up. Poets rise  
up. Poets, rise up!