

some African cultures poetry is sometimes a mode of instant dialogue or instant debate. Poets compose poems on the spur of the moment to answer each other. The following exchange is between two lovers who relate every beautiful thing in nature with their love.

ODE TO BEAUTY

SHE: When the Big Bang invented Time,
And the universe found its rhyme,
They had you and me in mind.

HE: When Venus radiated at dawn,
And the earth rotated alone,
They had you and me in mind.

SHE: When the peacocks mated at noon,
And the gazelle out-jumped the moon,
They still had you and me in mind.

HE: When every bird recited poetry,
And every violet displayed artistry,
They also had you and me in mind.

SHE: When God created the dove,
And the angels invented love,
They did indeed have you and me in mind.

HE: But when beauty was first born,
It had only you, beloved, in mind.