



Definitions of “Crown of Sonnets” and “Heroic Crown of Sonnets”

A Crown of Sonnets

A crown of sonnets is a sequence of seven sonnets, usually addressed to some one person, and concerned with a single theme.

Each of the sonnets explores one aspect of the theme, and is linked to the preceding and succeeding sonnets by repeating the final line of the preceding sonnet as its first line, and by having its final line be the first line of the succeeding sonnet. The first line of the first sonnet is repeated as the final line of the final sonnet, thereby bringing the sequence to a close.

OneLang.com, Reference and Education Services. 14 Mar. 2005.
http://onelang.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Crown_of_sonnets

A Heroic Crown of Sonnets

Marilyn Nelson defines both a Crown of Sonnets and a Heroic Crown of Sonnets:

I should probably first explain what a sonnet is. A sonnet is a poem, 14 lines of rhymed, usually iambic pentameter. And a crown of sonnets is a sequence of 7 interlinked sonnets in which the first line of the first sonnet becomes the last line of the last sonnet, and the last line of each sonnet is the first line of the following sonnet. That's a crown of sonnets.

A heroic crown of sonnets is a sequence of 15 sonnets, which are interlinked like the normal crown of sonnets, except that in the heroic crown the last sonnet is made up of the first lines of the previous 14 sonnets. So that's a heroic crown of sonnets. My crown is slightly different because the last sonnet is also an acrostic. So the first letters of each line, if you read down, spell out the phrase, “RIP Emmett L. Till.”

“Marilyn Nelson Authors Up-close Program.” TeachingBooks.net. (n.d.).
TeachingBooks.net LLC. 17 Mar. 2005 <http://www.TeachingBooks.net>.

Note: This excerpt is from an interview with Marilyn Nelson by Houghton Mifflin Publisher Andrea Davis Pinkney. The entire interview can be read and heard in an online program featuring award-winning poet Marilyn Nelson and her book, *A Wreath for Emmett Till* (Houghton Mifflin, 2005) on <http://www.TeachingBooks.net>

