When you consider your own “tradition,” do you think of American poets, non-American poets? Which historic poets do you consider most responsible for generating distinctly American poetics?

As you must understand by now that I don’t believe there is any one version of distinctly American poetry, you may understand my difficulty responding to this question. There are poets I place in my personal pantheon. My tastes, in this sense, are quite ecumenical, not at all solely American, nor limited to any one century, nor even millennium. There are poets I deeply revere who have made it into our general canon. Aren’t two of the standard answers to this question Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson? That is as it should be. From their pens emerged new ways of organizing language whose influences still resonate today. There are also plenty of non-American poets who have radically influenced American poetics, my own included, (Basho, Senghor, Rilke, Lorca, Sappho, Li Po). Finally, there are poets whose work I believe is currently overlooked and under-appreciated. Paul Laurence Dunbar springs immediately to mind, but I just released Black Nature (UGA, 2009), an anthology that radically reexamines the position of African Americans in the nation’s nature poetry canon, so I could name over 90 other writers whose work I believe has or should be influential to American poetics. My job as a teacher, writer, editor, reader, is to think beyond what I receive as given knowledge and to help extend the realm of what and who and how we know.

From Poetry Society of America, read more here. poetrysociety.org
“What to Eat, What to Drink, Where to Go Next: An Interview with Camille Dungy by Sean Hill”
*Boxcar Poetry Review*

“A Guidebook to Relative Strangers: Camille Dungy Talks to Desiree Cooper about ‘Mothering While Art-ing’”
*Mutha Magazine*

“Attending to Our Nature: How We Write Place and How Place Writes Us”
*Poecology*

“Split This Rock Interview with Camille Dungy”
*Split This Rock*

“Poetic Justice: Camille Dungy on Racism, Writing, and Radical Empathy”
*The Sun Magazine*

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**Critical Reviews**

*Trophic Cascade*

“June Micro-Reviews”
*Kenyon Review*

“Trophic Cascade”
*Harvard Review Online*

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