

LOVE

LOVE

THE

STARS

It's more comfortable up here  
in the stars. My feet don't  
ache mashing against  
the concrete.

Liars don't lie in jelly pools  
or commercial skirts trying  
to sell me things  
I don't need.

Propositions don't pass my  
rights away and rights don't  
pass me by.

I can be me in the stars—  
better than an empty two-bedroom  
apartment with walls  
and appliances staring me down  
to my core

gravity's pushing me more more,  
way way up here in the stars.

JAMES B. GOLDEN



James B. Golden is the inaugural Poet Laureate of Salinas, CA. He is the author of three books: *Sweet Potato Pie Underneath The Sun's Broiler* (2009), *Afro Clouds & Nappy Rain* (2011), and *The Inside Of An Orange* (2012). The latter, his most recent, is a refreshing nod to popular musicians and contemporary issues. Golden won the 2012 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work – Poetry, for *Afro Clouds & Nappy Rain*. He was awarded with the Salinas City of Champions Award in 2012 for outstanding service to the community and for success as an author, poet, and journalist. His writing has been recognized by the National Steinbeck Center as a "phenomenal work of art". Critic Robert Walch declared his poems are "frank, explicit, and poignant". Golden was invited to serve as the artist in residence at the National Steinbeck Center in 2011. He has appeared on radio and television shows including, *The Young Turks* and *Find Your Purpose*. Golden earned an M.P.A. and a B.A. in English-Creative Writing, and Pan African Studies Arts & Literature from California State University, Northridge. He has worked within the music community as a journalist for the past 10 years, writing articles for many publications including *VIBE*, *The Root Magazine*, *Los Angeles Our Weekly*, *Clutch Magazine*, and *Jazz Times Magazine*. He has also been active in the academy, editing several academic journals including *Kapu-Sens Literary Journal* and the *National Hip Hop Think Tank*. Golden has been invited around the nation to speak at various conferences on Hip Hop, Gender Relations, Black-Male-Feminism, and Cultural Medias. He's been an active participant and speaker at the National Hip Hop Political Convention, Hip Hop Think Tank Academic Conference, and The National Council for Black Studies Conference. Golden's books are being used on high school and college campuses around the country as hard-hitting, provocative literature. Johnnie Scott, co-founder of the historic Watts Writers Workshop declared, "his is an exciting voice, filled with creativity but seasoned, as well, with a potpourri of experiences adding flavor to the richness of the work he is bringing to the table." Golden is currently producing a spoken word album, and completing his next book, an academic text on the legendary Hip Hop Soul Era.