

# Biography



Umar bin Hassan (Left), Abiodun Oyewole (Center)  
Babatunde - Drummer (Right)

## LAST

*"When the moment hatches in time's womb  
there will be no art talk . . . The only poem you will  
hear will be the spear-point pivoted in the punctured  
marrow of the villain . . . Therefore we are the last  
Poets of the world."*

- Little Willie Kghostile



The Last Poets (First Album,  
Douglas, 1970)

Before RAP knew its name, there was a group of ambitious young men who reflected the harsh spirit of their times and whose work remains prophetic and inspirational today. The Last Poets started out in the late sixties, speaking out as few other musical groups had, or have since, about racism, poverty and other African American and societal concerns. RAPPERS of the civil rights era, The Last Poets' charge has been taken up by many contemporary artists who have felt the legendary group's influence.

**Abiodun Oyewole**, David Nelson and Gylan Kain were born as The Last Poets on May 19, 1968 (the anniversary of Malcolm X's birthday) in Mount Morris Park in Harlem, New York. They evolved from three poets and a drummer to seven

young black and Hispanic artists: **Umar bin Hassan**, **Abiodun Oyewole**, David Nelson, Gylan Kain, Felipe Luciano, Jalal Nurridin and Suliaman El Hadi. The Last Poets' name derives from the work of South African Poet Little Willie Kghostile, who declared his era to be the last age of poets before the complete takeover of guns.

The group was signed by jazz producer Alan Douglas, who helmed their eye-opening debut LP in 1970. Their classic poems "Niggers are Scared of Revolution," "This is Madness," "When the Revolution Comes," and "Gashman" were released on their two albums, The Last Poets (1970) and This Is Madness (1971). The Last Poets' spoken word albums preceded politically laced R&B projects, such as Marvin Gaye What's Going On, and foreshadowed the work of hard-hitting rap groups like Public Enemy and Dead Prez.

Over the course of The Last Poets' more than thirty-year history, the members of the group have collaborated in various combinations to produce more than a dozen albums and several books. They performed in the inaugural season of HBO's "Def Poetry Jam", were cast in the movie "Poetic Justice" (1993), toured with Lollapalooza (1994) and performed in venues around the world.

**Umar bin Hassan** and **Abiodun Oyewole** continue to carry The Last Poets' Torch.

*"We're no more 'godfathers of spoken word' than the man in the moon; it comes in a package from the motherland. But we accept there is work out there that we can do. People need to see a focal point, a beacon, and we don't have no problem with shining."*

- Abiodun Oyewole