


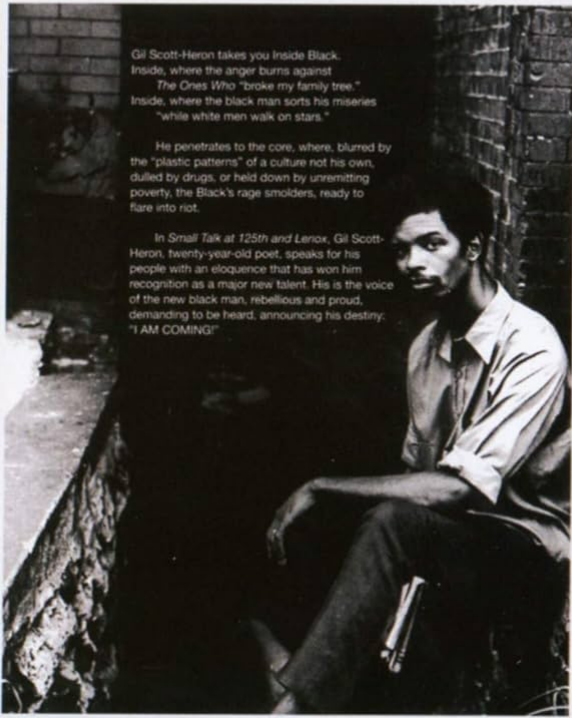
Throwback: Gil Scott-Heron: The Revolution Will Not Be Televised

A New Black Poet
GIL SCOTT-HERON
Small Talk at 125th and Lenox

Gil Scott-Heron takes you Inside Black.
Inside, where the anger burns against
The Ones Who "broke my family tree."
Inside, where the black man sorts his miseries
"while white men walk on stars."

He penetrates to the core, where, blurred by
the "plastic patterns" of a culture not his own,
dulled by drugs, or held down by unremitting
poverty, the Black's rage smolders, ready to
flare into riot.

In *Small Talk at 125th and Lenox*, Gil Scott-
Heron, twenty-year-old poet, speaks for his
people with an eloquence that has won him
recognition as a major new talent. His is the voice
of the new black man, rebellious and proud,
demanding to be heard, announcing his destiny:
"I AM COMING!"





Gil Scott-Heron initially recorded "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" for his 1970 live album, *Small Talk at 125th and Lennox*. Heron performed the poem about the realness of revolution before a studio audience with nothing but congas and bongos. The poem was a response to The Last Poet's "When The Revolution Comes," which talks about seeing revolution on television. Both artists wanted to convey the seriousness and collateral damage of the hardest societal shift and Heron did so with the verve of a jazzman. Heron recorded "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" again for his first proper album, *Pieces of a Man*, released in 1971. This version included drumming legend Bernard Purdie, Hubert Laws on flute, bass giant Ron Carter, Burt Jones on guitar and the beginning of a long collaborative relationship with Brian Jackson on piano. The album did better commercially than *Small Talk* but it did not start to make an impact until 1973, when it entered the Top Jazz Albums chart. Critics mostly ignored it save for

Rolling Stone and Vince Aletti but the music was important because of Heron's political observations and the soulful mixing of blues and jazz, all of which was a harbinger of rap music.

RCA reissued *Pieces of a Man* on compact disc in 1993. "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" has been sampled by Common, N.E.R.D., Black Star, Queen Latifah, Travis Scott, and Big K.R.I.T. Kendrick Lamar referenced the song during his 2025 Super Bowl LIX Halftime show. [Awake NY](#) has collaborated with the Gil Scott-Heron estate for a second time to create a capsule inspired by his image and music. The 10th anniversary edition of Heron's last album, [I'm New Here](#), was released in February 2025.