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***Interviewing
the Caribbean**

Vol. 3, No. 2 :: Spring 2018

Caribbean Life + Olympian Feats, pt.2

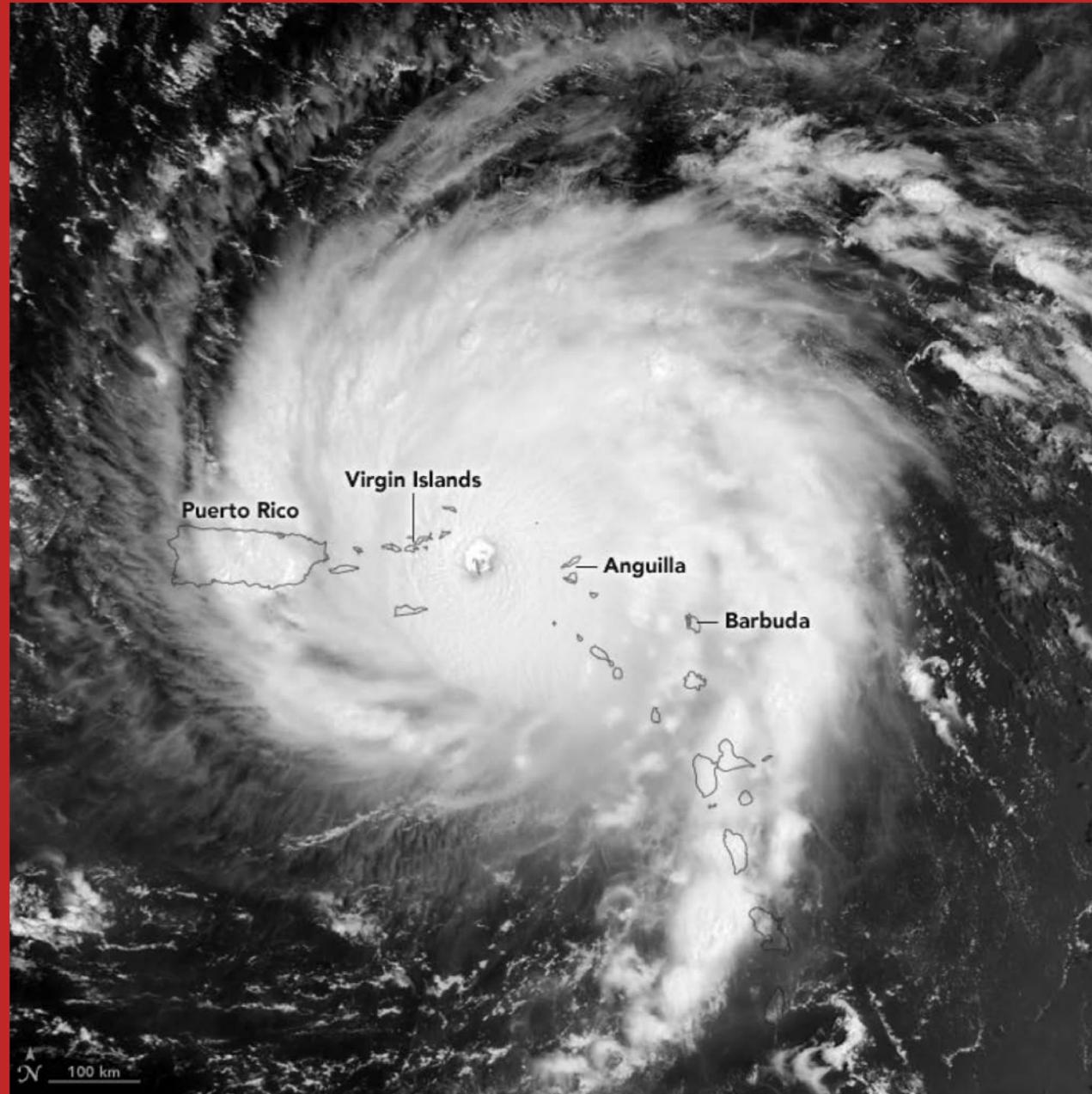
In this issue:

Eintou Pearl Springer

Taitu Heron : Sharon Lake : Bernice L. McFadden : Nancy Ann Miller
Keisha Oliver : Richard Schrader : Keino Senior : Kristine Simelda
Carol Sorhaindo : Celia Sorhaindo : Obediah Michael Smith + more

iC

*Interviewing
the Caribbean



Hurricane Irma in the Eastern Caribbean, September 6, 2017

This issue is dedicated to the people of the Caribbean who have been impacted by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and in particular the people of Dominica and Barbuda. They need our support so help in all ways that you can. Surviving a hurricane and deciding to forge ahead and rebuild is an Olympian feat.



Tamara Natalie Madden - Peacock

This issue is dedicated to

Tamara Natalie Madden

August 16, 1975 - November 4, 2017

A Jamaican-born painter and mixed-media artist
(whose work was featured in **IC** Winter 2015)



Catherine L. James Palmer



Kisémbé Springer

– In Memoriam –

It is with heavy hearts that we bid a sad farewell to two members of the **IC** family: Kisémbé Springer, also known as Ìyánífá Ifáfùnmiláyò Efuntola, and Catherine L. James Palmer. Kisémbé was the daughter of Trinidadian poet, Eintou Pearl Springer, and Miss Catherine was the mother of our editor and founder, Opal Palmer Adisa. No words can describe the loss to Kisémbé's and Miss Catherine's families and communities, so, instead, we honour their legacies of love and dedication. Kisémbé and Miss Catherine, walk good with the ancestors. Ase. Ase. Ase.

CONTENTS

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Editor's Letter

- 15 ***Coalescing Hurricanes Irma and Maria with the Machete-Wielding Mother***
By Opal Palmer Adisa

Contributors

Features

- 18 ***Eintou Pearl Springer: Performance Poet + Cultural Activist***
An Interview with Carole Boyce Davies
- 28 ***Are You Man Enough to Stand up Against Violence?***
By Keino Senior
- 32 ***Diary of a Hurricane***
By Sharon Lake
- 42 ***Porch Conversations***
By Keisha Oliver
- 50 ***Ted Seymour: The First Black Man to Sail Solo Around the World***
An Interview with Opal Palmer Adisa
- 74 ***Richard Schrader: A Poet of Nature***
An Interview with Opal Palmer Adisa
- 96 ***Vladimir Lucien: What I Inherited from Derek Walcott***
An Interview with Opal Palmer Adisa

EDITOR'S LETTER



Damage from Hurricane Maria, Dominica, in the Eastern Caribbean, September 18, 2017

Coalescing Hurricanes Irma + Maria with the Wielding Machete Mother



Very unlikely that any girl child born in the eastern Caribbean will be named Irma or Maria, not for a long time to come. No way! Not after those two hurricanes flattened so many islands in the eastern Caribbean.

What about the Jamaican mother who was recorded beating her girl-child with a machete? She was her own hurricane, doing equally as much damage.

We have heard beware the wrath of a woman, but seldom is the rage contextualized, analyzed through female lens, interpreted as patriarchal aberration, filtered through gender equity and justice.

Global warming is real, and we have been told for years to be mindful, to live with, and on mother earth with more regard for her welfare, what we use, how we use resources, and, more importantly, how we care for her, the homage and respect we pay to her.

Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated much of the eastern Caribbean and the Jamaica mother stripped to only her underpant, slapping her child with the machete, that was recorded and not a single voice of protest was heard from those observing in the tenement compound in which she resides. This silence speaks volumes to how far removed we are from our pain and anguish, how separated we are from nature, how dormant is our intuitive knowing of rightness, and how unflinching and raging we are like Irma and Maria.

While we can see and bemoan the destruction that hurricanes Irma and Maria left behind, all too often we cannot readily see the obliteration and emotional and psychological scar that was that mother before she began beating her daughter, and that is now the daughter's and that the daughter will inevitable pass on to her children, unless she is educated out of her pain, and stops to be reflective and mindful that all violence does is destroy; it never corrects and it certainly does not lead to healing or peaceful resolution.

This issue invites us to look at how gender justice, which is human justice can help to heal all of us, as well as our relationship with the environment, which just might make the future a little safer for all of us.

I ask for collective healing for all of us from hurricanes Irma and Maria, and I ask for healing for that Jamaican mother and daughter and the entire community that was witness to such cruel rage. *Opal*

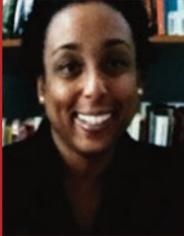
Ase,

Opal Palmer Adisa, Founder/Editor
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The Anguilla Red Cross (Volunteers distributng relief) Government of Anguilla-Emergency Operating Centre - The Valley, Anguilla



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Steve Jones is a graphic designer and artist. He received his MFA in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). His interests focus on African American history and Black icons and their representation in mass media and popular culture; community and public art. He is the Creative Director of plantain studio (Oakland, CA)—and is an Adjunct Instructor at the California College of the Arts.

www.plantainstudio.com

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Eintou Pearl Springer: Performance Poet + Cultural Activist

An Interview with Carole Boyce Davies

Eintou Pearl Springer is a Trinidadian poet, playwright, performer, mother, grandmother, and activist. Ms. Springer is the author of six books: *Out of the Shadows* (1986), *The Caribbean: Their Lands and Their Peoples* (1987), *Focused* (1991), *Moving into the Light* (2001), *Loving the Skin I'm In* (2005), and *Godchild* (2007). She is also the founding member of several organisations: the National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago Writer's Union, Traditional African National Association, and Emancipation Support Committee. The winner of numerous awards in poetry and theatre, including the Hummingbird Silver National Award and being named the Poet Laureate of Port of Spain, Ms. Springer is also the founder of Slade Hopkinson's Theatre Guild and The Idakeda Group Ltd, which seeks to improve Caribbean communities through culture.

In my chapter “Spirit Work: From Brazil to the Caribbean” in my book *Caribbean Spaces* (University of Illinois, 2013), I identified an almost identical representation of the intersection of African spirituality and the creative process in several Afro-Brazilian artists and also in poet/playwright/cultural activist Eintou Pearl Springer. This is how I described her in that work:

With an ability to organize ideas in a range of genres—poetry, fiction, playwriting and dramatic production, essay—Eintou is perhaps the only poet in Trinidad and Tobago who spans the creative arts in this way; a friend and colleague to calypsonians, composers, artists, musicians, drummers, intellectuals, dancers, and orisha adherents. A performance poet, she is conscious of the production of poetry for the people, the text that lives outside of books, the true meaning then of the poet and of poetry as having their genesis in orality. (82)

What follows is an interview with Eintou Pearl Springer, October 2017.

Carole Boyce Davies: Tell me something about what are your most current passions? Creative? Personal? Political?

Eintou Pearl Springer: I am trying to sort all my manuscripts and put all my papers together. I am hoping to have the papers published, Carole. As you know that is a long-term project of mine. I would like to have the manuscripts of Selvon’s *Brighter Sun* and C. L. R.’s *Minty Alley*, both of which I had the honour of turning into plays. Of course, I am very involved in the budding artistic careers of my grandchildren, who are all deeply rooted in the culture of the Caribbean. They are fine drummers, all five of them. My twin grandsons, Ajani and Shomari, are in Liverpool at University. My granddaughter, Shanya Asabi, is in her final year of a theatre arts degree at UWI, and is, as well, an excellent singer and dancer. Kayode has emerged as one of our most recognised young drummers and is also an award winning cuatro player. The youngest at ten, Ire, is also a well-respected drummer in his own right. The question of legacy is one that preoccupies me now. We are losing some of our folk arts, the bongo, the traditional storytelling, the meaning behind our art forms. I am concerned about the revival of our patois that links us in Trinidad to our French Caribbean neighbours and is part of our linguistic heritage. I want to teach all our African youth that they have much to claim and to proclaim. How we see ourselves and how we view the world are, maybe, the most important political questions of the time, for African people—particularly for our youth. For is it not our world view that profoundly affects how we behave politically

What do you define as your most important contributions over the years to Caribbean and international perspectives on the Black Experience?

I believe it is the ability to put our cultural forms and our history in forms that are palatable and easily accessible to all through poetry, plays, and storytelling. I believe in the words of Claudia Jones, that ‘a people’s art, is the genesis of their freedom’. Information that fuels self-knowledge can be ultimately transformative. To me, the best way of fermenting this transformation is through the recognition, visibility, and a clear ideological perspective for our arts and culture. I have experienced this. I have lived this through my experiences in the Black Power Revolution of the 1970s, the Grenada Revolution of the early eighties, and the seminal role I played in bringing that recognition and visibility and ideological repositioning to African spirituality.

You have always recognized the intersection of First People in the Caribbean and particularly in Trinidad. Can you describe how you see that intersection?

The role of the First Peoples in Trinidad is still not given the recognition necessary. My own village, in which I was born, and where my navel string bury, Santa Cruz, was established as one of their settlements as early as 1684. The caves, the mountains of nearby Maraval and Paramin were places of maroonage for my African ancestors. The blood of our First Peoples runs in my veins. It is an anomaly that bemuses me that the most prominent group promoting the rights of these people is called Santa Rosa, giving the history of dehumanisation, brutality, and enslavement in which the Roman Catholic church was complicit; as indeed was all of Christianity in the dehumanisation and enslavement of Africans. I have written two plays on the First Peoples...one on the great Nepuyo warrior Hyarima, of Trinidad, which documents resistance to the Europeans in Trinidad, but also mentions other great warriors across the region.

What kinds of transformations in consciousness have happened in your lifetime in Trinidad? What about the situation of women? How has this been central to your work?

There have been some shifts in consciousness. The Black Power revolution of the seventies that morphed in the Emancipation movement brought pride in African clothes, natural hair; forced changes in employment patterns. Before 1970, Africans were not employed in banks. We forced recognition for African spirituality, insisting that the Ifa/Orisa belief system be included on the Inter Religious Organisation, the Table of Precedence. We were able to get all legislation against the Belief System and all African cultural forms removed from the Statute Books in the year 2000. We have waged and won protest action against schools who object to natural hair styles and the wearing of our ides. There is now also quite a bit of positive literature available on African Spirituality.

...the best way of fermenting this transformation is through the recognition, visibility, and a clear ideological perspective for our arts and culture.

The issue of women has been central to my work. I have had to battle even some of conscious, revolutionary brothers for my own respect and recognition. My first published collection of poetry in 1986, is entitled *Out of the Shadows* and, in part, documents this struggle. As a mother of three Black women and granddaughter of one, I am immensely troubled by the seeming schism between Black men and Black women; by the fact that so many of our talented and beautiful young Black women, who would make excellent mothers, in terms of passing on ideas and ideology to our children, do not have mates. Our men—many of them seem terrified of our strength and our brilliance. I have created a play called *Shades of I/She*, which toured successfully internationally, in the region, and at home. It deals with our pain but also our hopes and triumphs. I feel strongly that, as a people, we must go forward man and woman together. I really wish that our organisations of African and Caribbean women writers would be more active in these matters.

Since you were initially part of the Black Power Movement in Trinidad, have you suffered any repercussions from your political involvement?

Yes. I have been stigmatised as too militant, too Black conscious. During my working days as a librarian in that most conservative of professions, I have been ostracised. Despite my volume of work and the undoubted quality of that work, the opportunities have really not been opened up for me. It has been a real struggle. But, I have never compromised for who I am and have paid the price. I remain materially poor but rich in blessings and the respect of ordinary people. I know my grandchildren will reap the rewards.

You have done a superb job of raising a new generation of creative grandchildren who are all performers in their own right. You have also worked with young people in schools, using storytelling to educate. How do you see the arts as creating social transformation for youth?

I have so many, many examples. I will just share one of a young man who was showing every sign of having very violent tendencies. He stated that he wanted to be an assassin. Was suspended. We asked for him to be allowed to come back to school and involved him with the work we were doing; spoke with his mother, got her support and are now, a mere year after, seeing him fully involved in music, theatre... a happy, beautiful child with the most amazing white teeth in that beautiful Black face. When we do workshops in schools, children are amazed that my grandchildren, their age and younger, are so involved and good at what they do. It is a very humbling experience to continually meet parents and young people who testify to the changes that exposure to the workshops have made. We focus on giving children a positive sense of their history; the fact that our ancestors fought, struggled, survived, and contributed much to the fabric of

Trinidad and Tobago, the region, and everywhere the African family finds itself. We work on positive self-image, pride in hair, in colour, in foods...all through stories, music, poetry, theatre. My grandchildren are a critical part of the work we do. Inside the family unit we have our own musicians, singers, dancers, choreographers, and the story telling is coming. I took Shanya, Kayode, and Dara to a Carnival conference in Leeds in May. Shanya went with Dara and myself to an African history conference in Barbados in July. Both events went very well; Dara and the grand excelled and were highly praised. Another daughter, Atillah, is also an extremely strong writer and facilitator. The school curriculum is not working for African children. The work is hard. It is even more difficult when you do not have the financial resources. But, I am building a legacy that I am confident will be there when I am among my ancestors

It was great having you in Haiti leading one of our workshops at the last CSA. What was that first experience of going there like for you?

It was dream come through, and I am forever grateful to you for the kind invitation and for the support of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, and the Arts. Haiti is at the heart of my consciousness as an African. In the aftermath of the Black Power Movement of the seventies, I sought for answers as to where we may have gone wrong. The answer jumped out at me in C.L.R. James's *Black Jacobins*... "Voodoo was the medium of conspiracy." It became clear to me that what had been absent from our movement was the recognition of African spirituality. That the absorption of the cultural forms and a positive re-rendering of the history was not enough to be able to truly claim an African world view and to begin the mitigation of the deeply psychic trauma of enslavement. It was great to speak to Haitian teachers concerning their responsibility to ignite pride in their students about the greatness of their contribution to freedom from enslavement for all Africans. At first, they were reticent, hesitant. They were amazed and surprised that such strong love for Haiti existed in the region that has so spectacularly failed to support the mother of our freedom. I was able to practice my imperfect Kreyol, learnt in the village where I was born. They were also surprised that Kreyol was spoken in Trinidad. It was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. Thank you. After the conference, I wrote a poem for Boukman and performed it in Jamaica at a storytelling festival, with Jamaica's new Ma Lou, Amina Blackwood Meeks. It was a brave, ground breaking thing for you to take the CSA there. Congratulations it was, indeed, a great success. The reception for Angela Davis brought memories of my Black power days, and to meet Edwidge in her home land of which she writes do passionately. Sorry for going on so long.

The issue of women has been central to my work. I have had to battle even some of conscious, revolutionary brothers for my own respect and recognition.

You have some new publications? Tell me something briefly about these works and about your publication history in general.

I have finally published my collection of plays called *SURVIVOR* (Lexicon, 2017). The collection comprises 13 plays for children and young people, and, well. Represents my life work as a playwright. The collection includes, *Shades of I/she*, *Kambule*, the First People plays, the Anansi plays. *Tyrell Learns a Lesson*, plays specially written for work in schools, like *Baby Doll Meets Midnight Robber*. There is an introduction by Rawle Gibbons and Merle Hodge has done a full and very positive review. I have applied for it to be on the CXC booklist. I am still awaiting a response. Apart from several volumes of poetry, the cumulative one being *Loving the Skin I'm in* (2005). My first publication was *Out of the Shadows* (1986). I wrote a social studies book for McDonald (1987). In 2013, I wrote *African Historical Sites in Trinidad and Tobago*. I have published two collections of stories and poems for children.

Claudia Jones said that "a people's art is the genesis of their freedom." You seem to live that. I know you have good ideas about how to create sectors of art, such as *Behind the Bridge as a cultural site to showcase the developments that came out there*. Why do you recreate the *Canboulay* there precisely and how has it grown over the years?

Ha Ha! I didn't know you had this quote here. I cited it before as one of the maxims by which I live. I get real pressure with that *KAMBULE*. I walked with that script for about two years until then Minister of Culture, Joan Yuille Williams, instructed that it be used. Since then the thing has morphed into what I now call the *KAMBULE MOVEMENT*. It got too big for where it was first performed, outside the All Stars Panyard, near the site of the 1881 riots that the re-enactment commemorated. And is now round the corner on the Piccadilly Greens. The heart of our Carnival traditions lies deep in the East Dry River soil, the place where Africans settled, eking out an existence in that harsh and hilly terrain, in the post emancipation era. The cultural forms of the Yoruba people, and to a lesser extent that of the Rada, survived as acts of cultural resistance, resilience, and as open rebellion, in 1881. The *KAMBULE* has moved way beyond a re-enactment to a full-fledged, much-anticipated street-theatre production that is actually a ritual of remembrance for our warrior ancestors. That is why it has survived and succeeded in spite of pockets of resistance to it. The crowds are huge. There are, however, no proper infrastructural provisions for the ever-growing audience of locals and visitors. Many schools come, and their students take notes. It is the only Carnival event that happens 'behind the bridge'.

You have been part of the Emancipation Support Committee, which has created the first major celebration in Trinidad and now has spread across the Caribbean. Why was this crucial to be created as a cultural festival?

The colonial government did everything possible to stamp out every celebration of emancipation and, by extension, to mute the African memory of enslavement. This culminated in 1920 with August 1st being declared Discovery Day, forcing history to pretend amnesia. We felt it important to reverse this process and to give Africans in Trinidad and Tobago an occasion to have pride in our clothes, our food; to reflect on our history and look at it from our perspective instead of that of the coloniser. We were laughed at and scorned, parading the streets with our clothes and our drums in the early morning. But, we persisted, and, with the memory of the sandaled feet of many thousands of Africans protesting in the streets still fresh in the minds of the government of the day, we were granted the holiday in 1985, and we celebrated it for the first time 1986. It is now the largest Pan-African festival in the world. Many many thousands of Africans parade the streets every year on August 1st. We also established an Emancipation Village where African clothes, food, art, craft, and performances take place over several days. The Emancipation Support Committee, of which I am a founding member, is twenty-five years old this year. I retired from my role from inception as Cultural Director. The organisation honoured me this year with the Henry Sylvester Williams Award.

What are your next projects?

I am trying to sort out my mountain of papers and manuscripts. I have lodged some with the National Archives, and I am organising for the bulk to go to the University of Trinidad and Tobago. I am putting my papers together. I really want them published. I have also been working on a collection of what I call my *Reparation Stories*, comprising my most recent Anansi stories, which show Anansi as strategist rather than trickster. The collection also comprises stories that root our mythology. I have also been working on another collection, taking some of the *patakis* from IFA and turning them into stories told in our unique Caribbean style. I have tried out some of them in one of our *Iles*, with drumming by my grands of course, and they have gone down very well. I am working to bring some of my young people from the schools into the *KAMBULE* performance. I started that this year. More than enough I would say. I turn 73 on Nov 24th. 

The colonial government did everything possible to stamp out every celebration of emancipation and, by extension, to mute the African memory of enslavement.

Ah Woi for Buju

Hush now son
Dry my eyes
As I dry yours.
Oh, I am she, who stifled
Your infant cry, manchild
With loving hand
I have snuffed out
Your breath of life
Sending you back, back
To ancestor land.

It is I
Who has brought you
Over hills, mountains
And valleys too.
Knowing
They don't like you.
I moan for you
In Oya's wrathful winds
Crying, crying for you.

It is I
Who has carried you
On my back, in my belly.
In myriad journeyings
With shackled hands and feet
I have stumbled along
The cruel paths.
Bent low,
I have passed through
The door of no return
The sounds of the roaring sea
Crashing
Against my dreams of home.

Now, in ghetto yards, son son
You chanting, chanting
You Rastaman song
But behaving, like they want you to.
Letting them fool you
In this here time
Knowing, they don't like you.

Ah woi,
For Myrie maroon blood
Polluted by infusion
Of white powder;
Swirling clouds of white dust
Blotting out the clear skies
Of Nanny's hope.

Maybe, my breasts
Have been too soft
And, in between them
You have become, lost.
In this here time
The chains we burst
From our shackled hands
and feet
Now etch cruelly, onto your brain
A never ending, negative
Refrain.

While you soar, in flight
Ascending magic heights
Of your creativity
Your hands clench cold bars
Of iron and steel
Everywhere, everywhere
In the diaspora
Is that what you choose
For your destiny?
From slave ship to ghetto yard
May have simply been
A change of scenery.

Oh, that I could reach out
Take all of you
And, reversing life's journey
With legs spread wide
Push you back, back up into that space
The only place, I know
You will be safe.

It hard, it hard.
I want you come back a you yard
But, Monday morning
You have to face the judge
Another Monday morning
When you must see the judge
Ah woi, ah woi
It hard, it hard, it hard.
I want you come home
A you yard.
It hard.

Poem for Kisémbé

It is time.
My child,
For you to meet
The ancient ones
Your Granny Ida
First, amongst the host
See how ancestral sprits convene
Voices raised in welcome
Ululation.
Praise songs of celebration.
Talking drums, too,
Chant of a daughter coming home
Free now, from the prison
Of pain
In mission of comfort
The whispering wind spirit
Swirls about my face,
Moving deep, deep
Into my being
Finding the crevices where lurks
The dread chill
The numbing pain
Of loss.
Is the world now
Upside down, my child,
When you dare
To precede me
To the realm
Where our ancestors are
At rest?
As you too now,
Will be
Awaiting, your time
Of returning.
Esu opens the path
To a better day.
Silekun!

Carole Boyce-Davies has been the recipient of two major awards in 2017: The Franz Fanon Lifetime Achievement Award from the Caribbean Philosophical Association and the Distinguished Africanist Award from the New York State African Studies Association. She has held distinguished professorships at several universities and is currently a distinguished professor of Africana Studies and English at Cornell University. In addition to over a hundred journal essays, articles, encyclopaedia entries, and several books, Dr. Boyce Davies has also published over twelve critical editions on African, African Diaspora, and Caribbean literature and culture. Her new project is a study of Black women and political leadership in the African Diaspora.



Are You Man Enough to Stand Up Against Violence

By Keino Senior



As I reflect on the theme, “Men Against Violence,” during the recent annual commemoration of International Day of Men, I am compelled to raise a few issues to be interrogated, which, in some spheres, may prove dangerous to one’s existence. For example, when we speak about men against violence, are we discussing it with reference to women and girls or are we also including men and boys? If we are including men and boys, how do we address this cultural ‘non-issue’ of violence against men and boys in a society that promotes the strong unaffected male, or, at the very least, ignores that men and boys can also be abused. I advocate that, in interrogating the theme of men against violence, we must explore the meanings we have assigned to men and their masculinities. We cannot have a rational discussion of men against violence unless we have clarity on what it means to be a man—even more so in the Jamaican context.

Any discussion about men and masculinities in Jamaica must consider the fact that Jamaican society organises around patriarchal norms and ideologies, on one hand, and sexuality, on the other. These patriarchal norms and ideologies are essentially male-dominated; sexuality is used as a sense of control and is central to men enforcing power over women’s bodies. The family, as the primary agent, reinforces patriarchal ideas in which men have control and power over female bodies and their sexuality. Men are expected to exert control, authority, and power over everyone in all situations. Women and girls are objects to be controlled and are expected to support the needs of men. Particularly, men see themselves as benefitting from violence directed at women and girls. This is normally taught to men through gender role socialisation. In some instances, men force women into sex because they believe that women and men are not equal and that they have a right to women’s bodies. This suggests an unequal difference between men and women, whereby men and their masculinities are prized over women and their femininities.

Given these constructs of what it means to be a man, it is no surprise that the discussion around men against violence is problematic. Violence towards women, girls and boys, or even men are sustained in part by rigid gender codes, the policing of manhood, and rigid constructions of a gender binary between masculinities and femininities, men and women, male and female, heterosexual and homosexual, provider and caregiver, and rational and emotional. This present structure is unequal, inequitable, and oppressive, subordinating one group of people while at the same time assigning another group as being superior. Additionally, the sex-gender construct is not a direct two-fold opposition as the line is crossed continually to allow for a rational female or a male caregiver or a masculine homosexual.

For us men who are advocating against violence, we need to ask ourselves some serious questions as we advocate for what I believe is really gender justice. These questions incorporate the paradoxes involved when men who already understand masculinity in a specific way are asked to understand it differently. If a man shows emotion, can that be considered a healthy reaction,

rather than being soft? Can a man stay at home and support his wife as the primary breadwinner and still be the head of his household? Can the upending of gender roles and stereotypes ultimately affect gender-based violence? Because of our perceptions of masculinities in Jamaica, a man would be labelled for staying home to look after his family while his wife goes to work or for crying if, for example, his relationship should end. This goes back to our gender role socialisation where men are taught to be providers, controlling of themselves and family, rational, non-emotional. Any derivation is labelled unacceptable mainly because of the value placed on the prized man and his masculinity.

If we must change men’s gender role socialisation and re-direct the discussion about men against violence, we must include men and various masculinities in the conversation against violence. This, however, is where it can get troublesome and dangerous for one’s existence, depending on the social micro-environment in which the conversation is taking place. How do we change the man’s reaction to violence from the Alpha male who will resort to violence if and when his point of view needs to be enforced, to the Alpha male who will appeal to one’s emotion and sense of fairness, or agree to disagree? If we must follow through on feminist scholar Audre Lorde’s premise that, “the true focus of change is never merely the oppressive situations which we escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted within each of us,” the inclusion of the varying definitions of masculinities in the conversation is something that needs to be considered in facilitating the healing of women, girls, men, and boys who have been oppressed through acts of violence.

I will be bold and opine here that men against violence efforts should affirm and promote men who do not fit dominant codes of masculinity and strive towards breaking down powerful gender binaries. We need to pay careful attention to men and their socialisation along gender lines. This should include men with various sexual orientations. At the same time, interventions targeting general populations of men should not be so determined to challenge existing constructions of gender that they fail to engage the majority of their audience. We need to embrace gender justice where men and women are equal.

I suggest too that it is going to be important that while men are anti-violence against women, girls, boys, and men, that women are educated to change men’s understanding and practice of masculinity. By shifting women’s expectations of partners and intimate relations, interventions may increase the pressures on and incentives for heterosexual men to adopt non-violent practices and identities. Interventions can harness men’s motivations to be accepted and liked by women by encouraging women’s unwillingness to associate with sexist and aggressive men. How do we achieve this change in women, without it being considered a subtle patriarchal male-dominated thrust?

The answer lies in the family as a primary agent of socialisation. Many Jamaican men, like myself, have been socialized by their mothers. The care, emotional and psychological support

coupled with spiritual guidance I received from my own mother are irreplaceable. I value women and see them as equal to men for passing on cultural and social values and norms. An act of violence, whether physical or verbal, against women is unthinkable for me. I am a staunch man against violence and do not conform, for example, to the definition of masculinity that gives me automatic power over a female’s body. Does that make me less than masculine? Certainly not. ʘ

Keino Senior earned a PhD with High Commendation in Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, Mona. Dr. Senior is the Dean of the School of Arts Management and Humanities at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, Jamaica and serves on the College Board of Management as Faculty Representative. He is the co-chair of the Rex Nettleford Arts Conference since its inception in 2011; chairperson and co-editor of the *Jankannu Arts Journal*; and founder and chair of the Annual Gender and Development Lecture and Gender Focal Point at EMCVPA.

Any discussion about men and masculinities in Jamaica must consider the fact that Jamaican society organises around patriarchal norms and ideologies, on one hand, and sexuality, on the other.



Diary of a Hurricane

By Sharon Lake

The Caribbean is an archipelago of approximately 700 islands and islets graced with pristine beaches, turquoise waters, coral landforms, miniature rainforests, and, for the most part, friendly and happy inhabitants. The climate rotates between humid, balmy and hot, and the sun holds sway for the majority of the year except during the rainy season. This peace and tranquility, however, is threatened every year between June 1 to November 31 by Hurricane Season. In recent times, the prevalence of tropical storms and hurricanes have heightened exponentially. These changes have been attributed to what scientists have called the coming of another “ice age,” yet others have alluded to the impact of global warming, the weather phenomenon called El Niño, and damage to the earth’s Ozone Layer.

On August 30, 2017, Hurricane Irma started as a tropical wave near Cape Verde. Warm seas and suitable conditions caused this phenomenon to intensify into a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir Simpson scale on August 31st. By September 6th, Irma had intensified with 185 mph (295 km/h) winds and a minimum pressure of 914 hPa (27.0 inHg), making it a category 5 hurricane. In just a few short days, it made history as the second most intense tropical cyclone with the strongest wind speed. Hurricane Irma had a catastrophic effect on Anguilla, Barbuda, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Martin, Sint Maarten, and the Virgin Islands and was the first recorded Category 5 hurricane to hit the Leeward Islands with more pronounced devastation in the islands of the North-eastern Caribbean. The hurricane was responsible for over 146 deaths, including one in Anguilla; one in Barbados; three in Barbuda; four in the British Virgin Islands; 10 in Cuba; 11 in the French West Indies; one in Haiti; three in Puerto Rico; four on the Dutch side of Sint Maarten; and four in the Virgin Islands.

Irma

As I am writing, almost five months since the passage of Hurricane Irma, I am still trying to come to terms with the devastation not only to the environment, buildings, and livelihood of the people of Anguilla, but also, and more importantly, the psychological trauma which, to a great extent, has not been deemed as important as the relief distribution and rebuilding processes. The catch phrase these days is a “new normal,” but I wonder if

anyone affected by the hurricane could claim to be “normal” ever again. People remark that each time the rain falls for too long or the winds increase they become afraid because many houses still have a strip of tarpaulin on the roofs and the reconstruction process is slow. The island’s main industry is tourism, and many of the major hotels are still undergoing repairs and waiting to be opened. Zemi Beach House Resort and Spa only recently opened in February 2018.

September 5th

The tenants of the apartment complex where I lived, including my daughter and I, were anxiously waiting on our landlord to begin securing the apartments the day before Irma was scheduled to hit. Some tenants, who could not stand the wait, secured plywood and boarded up their own windows and sliding doors. I noted that the landlord secured his own apartment on the third floor, but I did not see or hear from him on that day.

September 6th

The winds started to pick up in the afternoon and so had the activity at the local supermarkets and hardware stores as citizens tried to secure plywood, food, water, and batteries. Late that afternoon, my landlord had still not put in an appearance, and I was getting concerned. There was an old car, old furniture, an old sail boat, and debris still unsecured and uncollected in the yard. My friend Gerda insisted that I pack an overnight bag and spend the night with her. My daughter wanted to stay to protect her shoes and clothes (oh the optimism of the young!), but I insisted that she too pack a bag and go to stay with her father and stepmother. I pushed furniture here and there, leaned the beds against the wall, secured what I could, and went to stay with my friend. Interestingly, the electricity company (ANGLEC) kept the electricity on well into the night, and those of us with FLOW had phone service. Digicel users lost service because the transformer blew down in the high velocity winds. The winds, when they began, sounded like a woman moaning—the groanings and banging as objects bounced against the plywood were frightening and otherworldly. At times, it sounded as if a monster from a sci-fi movie was on a rampage outside.

September 7th

When we were finally able to get outside, the land looked as if a giant scythe ran rampant and a giant foot trampled every light pole. We could not get out of the area by vehicle; the debris and wires strewn around by Irma made the roads impassable. The rainfall was minimal, but, as far as the eye could see, either a vehicle, home, or both were damaged. We had to set out on foot, and I told myself that it looked as if a giant bomb was detonated across the country. So, this was how a war-torn country looked! Hurricane Jose was following closely on the heels of Irma, and I was concerned about the apartment.



September 8th

The first items I saw when I finally got to the complex were my curtains strewn along the entrance pathway. They were filled with sand and glass from the broken doors. The sliding doors had imploded, and glass and water filled the living room, my bedroom, and the bathroom. The dining table, which was set, remained untouched, but the door was hanging from the fridge and the clothes and shoes stored in the kitchen were full of water and dirt. I was livid, standing in the doorway making enough noise to alert the neighbours who lived in my building. There were three floors, I was on the first floor. The landlord was in the next complex looking at the generator and was paying me no mind. I was not sure if he was too embarrassed or decided that this was not the time to approach me considering that he did nothing to secure the apartment prior to the hurricane.

“My possessions are now at the mercy of anyone who passes by!”

“José is expected to hit on the weekend and nothing has been done to secure the hole made by the blown out sliding doors!”

“I really do not understand what is going on here because I

pay my rent every month!”

“This is just not right, I cannot live in this environment and I cannot leave it like this!”

I threatened to call the police, a lawyer, the Chief Minister, and on and on I went. The landlord’s partner, who lived on the opposite side of me, was barbequing on a grill outside of their apartment. She looked down at me railing to the sky as she chewed on what appeared to be a piece of chicken, and I started to speak in Spanish because she was from the Dominican Republic.

She left her apartment and came down towards me to ask if I was speaking to her.

“Ma’am, I do not know who you are and I did not refer to you by name did I?”

“I am only shouting my pain and distress to the sky in the hope that someone will come and secure the apartment before I have to leave.”

She told me that she could hear me speaking in Spanish so came down to see what the noise was about.

“I am trying to speak in every language that I know until something is done because another hurricane is becoming a threat as we speak and the landlord is not paying me any mind.”

“Do you think that you are the only one who is going through this?” she asked.

This level of insensitivity did not rest well with me at all. I continued to make noise. I was determined that something be done before I had to leave to seek refuge again. I was making enough of a racket on my block that the other tenants who had not left came outside to see what was going on and who was

The first items I saw when I finally got to the complex were my curtains strewn along the entrance pathway.

making the noise because I am usually a quiet person, but something had tripped inside of me.

People who could not get through by the normal route were using the pathway between the apartments as a detour to get to Sachassas, and, as they drove by, they looked at me as if I had lost my mind. Some of the tenants with whom I formed a good relationship came to commiserate with me citing similar concerns.

I was traumatized by everything that was happening around me; the devastation as far as the eye could see, the neglect from the landlord (it was his property after all), and just trying to understand how we were going to move forward with our lives.

there to start assisting with the relief distribution process. This would go on for the next few weeks. I was working with the other volunteers in the mornings, and, in the evenings, when I was not too exhausted, my neighbours and I would clean up the apartments. Giant mosquitoes set up house and made life very difficult, especially at nights. The flies were a real nuisance as well; they were the big bluish-green variety and, for the first few weeks after the hurricane, were everywhere. There was no electricity and no breeze. Eventually, the landlord set up a generator for a few hours at night, which was a welcome relief.



Eventually, the handiman came to nail plywood across the gaping hole left by the missing doors. Then, it was back to North Hill with Gerda; the clean up process would have to wait. Hurricane José was coming.

September 10th

The hurricane did not hit Anguilla as anticipated. Thankfully, aside from some winds, it passed without incident. I had a Lime phone and was in constant contact with my daughter, who, after asking the usual questions about my safety and wellbeing, expressed concern about her room. We shared our Hurricane Irma stories, and I told her that we would see each other in the coming week once the roads were cleared enough for her to return to the apartment.

September 11th

The Anguilla Red Cross lost the roof of its branch office and was now stationed at the Emergency Operating Centre in The Valley. Early that Monday morning, as a member of the ARC, I headed

September 12th

My mother and sister were concerned about us, and we were in constant phone contact. My older daughter, who had left for the UK a few weeks before the passage of Hurricane Irma, also checked in with us to make sure that we were alright. It was a difficult time—not because we had not experienced hurricanes before—but because Hurricane Irma was so large in the magnitude of damage that it was difficult to really understand how we were going to deal with the aftermath.

In the next few weeks, I learned a lot of things. One day, Gerda and I went into the bushes searching for a piece of plywood that was blown out of her storefront window. While we did not find that particular piece, we did find another, which we carried back to the house on our heads. Neighbours who saw us clapped their hands and shouted, “Good job!” while passing up and down the North Hill road, which, by then, had been partially cleared by neighbours and road crews.

Supply planes from the UK and all over the Caribbean came in almost daily, bringing in much-needed relief supplies in the

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House completely demolished by Hurricane Irma - Southern Anguilla

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few weeks following the hurricane. I learned how to do inventory, pack care packages, and complete assessment forms for the persons who came to the Emergency Operation Centre, which was located downstairs from the Office of Disaster Management and opposite the Royal Anguilla Police Station. I spoke with persons who were grateful and relieved and others who were angry and hostile. It was difficult sometimes to keep my composure, but, as a volunteer of the ARC, an important part of our interaction with persons in times of crisis was keeping cool even if we did not feel that way.

My daughter had returned home by then and spearheaded the cleaning of the apartment with my neighbour and good friend Alesia. She worked at Zemi Beach Spa and Resort in guest services, and, since the hotels were closed, she was anxious to establish some level of normalcy in our lives as quickly as possible. Since I was out most of the day at the Red Cross HQ, she decided to work on getting the apartment cleaned up.

Electricity had still not returned, so, by the time the bus took me home, all I could do was to take a bath and head for bed until the next day when the bus returned to take the volunteers back to the EOC. Many of the volunteers lost roofs, doors, windows, and livelihoods, but they still came in and worked tirelessly. When some had to return to work, we rallied around those who remained until the relief supplies were exhausted, and, by this time, electricity was returning to many areas and persons were returning to work.

Schools across the island were opened on October 2, 2017, and a “shift system” was introduced. Many of the school buildings were damaged, and some had to be demolished. In order to acilitate the student population, particularly in the high school, a shift system was introduced where junior students started school at 7:30 a.m. and finished at 11:30 a.m. Senior students came in at noon until around 5 p.m. This change to the system of education was not readily accepted by some education personnel and parents. Their concern was what would happen to the students with all that free time on their hands. In the former system, school started at 8:15 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m. Parents left work at 4 p.m. or 5 p.m., so the time frame was far shorter to collect their charges once school was over. The primary schools followed the regular hours although classes had to be merged due to a shortage of classrooms.

October 19th

I received a telephone call from my sister, Karen, in Kingston to tell me that my mother died early that morning. She was admitted to the University Hospital of the West Indies to run some tests and was there a few days short of a week. My sister was devastated, and it was as if the foundations were ripped from under me. We were both in shock.

I said to myself, “God, really?”

My older daughter Shinika just travelled to the UK in August, and Shauna-Kae just applied for the renewal of her UK passport

in August as well. They would not be able to go with me.

I wondered to myself where was I going to get the strength and forbearance to deal with another traumatic event in my life? I really did not know what the answer would be...

“Why now, how do I get out of Anguilla?”

I would have to travel from Anguilla to St. Martin and from there try to secure a flight on Caribbean Airlines. The Blowing Point Ferry terminal was basically swept into the sea by the hurricane and the ferry service was not yet available. St. Martin was devastated by the hurricane, and I was not sure if I could travel at all. I did not know if I should cry, wait to cry, or cry at all. My head was so crowded already; I felt that adding another distress to my already cluttered mind would make it explode, and I had to be there with my sister, her husband, and my small family to bury our matriarch—my mother. I did not get to travel until October 28, 2017, and my mother’s funeral was on November 1, 2017. I returned to Anguilla on November 4, 2017. My mother’s last request was to be cremated, and her ashes were split between Karen and me. I travelled back with my urn, and it was comforting somehow.

In Retrospect

The general thought, island-wide, is that Irma came to create awareness of how far we have fallen as a nation into the pit of social malaise, corruption, greed, drug and sex trafficking, prostitution, and xenophobia. Many persons felt that Hurricane Irma was a wake-up call for Anguilla and perhaps the Eastern Caribbean. Eventually, the whole island got electricity by December 2017. I began working as a facilitator at the Anguilla Community College on October 9, 2018, teaching Literacy Studies to the Six-Tech students. I also resumed my sessions as a CXC English A tutor and Caribbean Studies and Communication Studies tutor at the Comprehensive Learning Centre. I continue to work with the Red Cross, and my daughter returned to work at Zemi Beach Resort and Spa on February 7, 2018. Little by little, life is reaching the “new normal,” because the old way of life and our perception of the world that existed before Hurricane Irma may in my opinion have been blown away by the 185 mile force winds that whirled around the island on September 6, 2017. *lc*

Sharon E. Lake is an educator, linguist, and human resource professional who speaks English, French, and Spanish fluently. She has been writing poetry and short short stories from childhood. Her stories and poems have been published in *Caribbean Reads* (2014), *Where I See the Sun: Contemporary Poetry in Anguilla* (2015), and *Interviewing the Caribbean* (2016). She won first place in the Malliouhana Poetry Competition (Poetry on the Page) in its inaugural launch in 2007, commemorating the abolition of the Slave Trade and more recently in 2017 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Anguilla Revolution of 1967.

Many persons felt that Hurricane Irma was a wake-up call for Anguilla and perhaps the Eastern Caribbean.



Porch Conversations

Photography and Sound Installation

By Keisha Oliver

In a reality driven by cyberspace, the value of physicality and human interaction is fading. Daily we witness the influence technology has in overpowering humanity in an effort to condition and consume the mind. While digital screens seduce our psyche and isolated fantasies become realities, there is no longer a desire for face-to-face interactions that allow us to genuinely connect with those around us.

The front porch was once seen as a space that offered this type of engagement. Yet, it has often been mistaken as a mere extension of the home. Historically, in the Caribbean the front porch has existed as the heart of the residential community. Providing a path to the street and a bridge to one's neighbor, it was the beloved outdoor gathering place. Be it a time for solace or recreation, moments both personal and communal were birthed. Today the values and sentiments associated with this space as a social and cultural symbol are desperately pale. Rapidly losing a battle to advancements in technology, architecture, and social trends these porches are few and far between in The Bahamas.

In 2014 while on my evening commute home from work, I came across a few men playing dominoes on a front porch of a vacant blue clapboard house in one of New Providence's inner-city ghettos. As an avid street photographer, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to get a few snaps, and the men were happy to oblige. One month later when I passed the property the house had been demolished and the property cleared. I was heartbroken. At that moment, I realised how detached I was from this area. The Englerston community was almost a second home, a place I visited weekly for over 20 years to attend my local church. It bothered me that I had fallen to the brainwashing stigmas associated with its impoverished state.

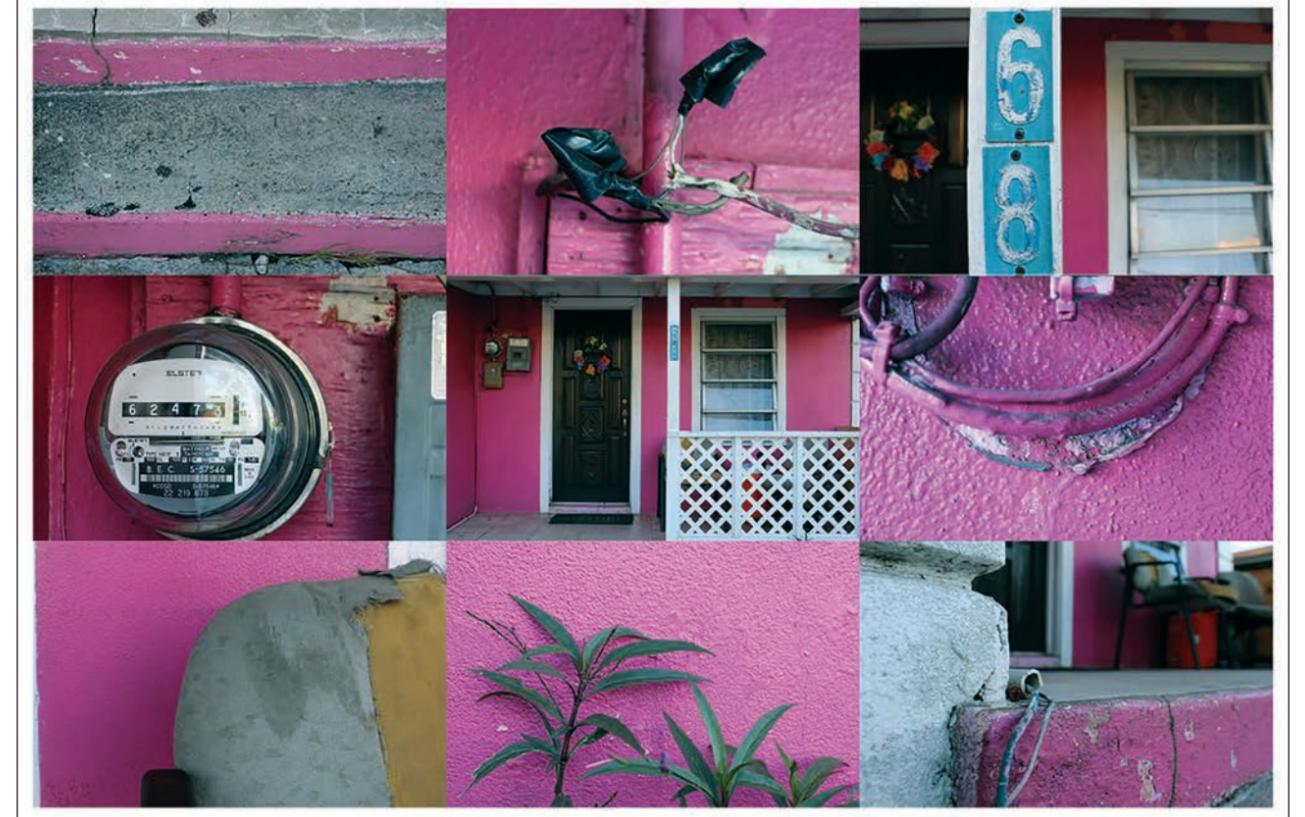
As a way to challenge these social ideals, I embarked on a social experiment in 2016 using photography as a means to document the ghettos of New Providence. I wanted to place myself in unfamiliar and possibly risky situations to experience a sincere feeling of the environment and its people. I roamed the streets with hopes to capture the visual narrative of what remained of these tight-knit communities framed by clusters of brightly-coloured homes and neglected tropical landscapes.

One month into my research, the project evolved into a dialogue series with residents of three inner-city communities: Englerston, The Grove, and Big Pond. I was no longer purely interested in documenting the physical and natural environment but organically conversations with these residents became an equally important part of the project. It was through conversation that I made connections with these people. No longer was I seen as an outsider but was invited on to their front porch to share a moment and their stories. Now concerned with oral history, human interaction, and materiality the work is seen as a way to use street photography as a vehicle to reclaim the art of spontaneous conversation. The work continues to explore my personal porch experiences with an interest in documenting the details and physicality of the porch before they are completely erased from the Bahamian landscape. *©*

Keisha Oliver is a Bahamian visual artist, designer and art educator. She holds a BA in Graphic Design from University for the Creative Arts, and a MA in Graphic Design from University of the Arts London. Her multidisciplinary art practice currently uses discarded objects and the environment to explore themes of social heritage and cultural fragmentation. Her work has been exhibited in the Caribbean, USA, UK, and Asia. Oliver is an Assistant Professor in Visual Arts at the University of The Bahamas with research interests in visual literacy for critical thinking and Bahamian art history. She also works with community and creative organisations as an independent curator, arts writer, and photographer.



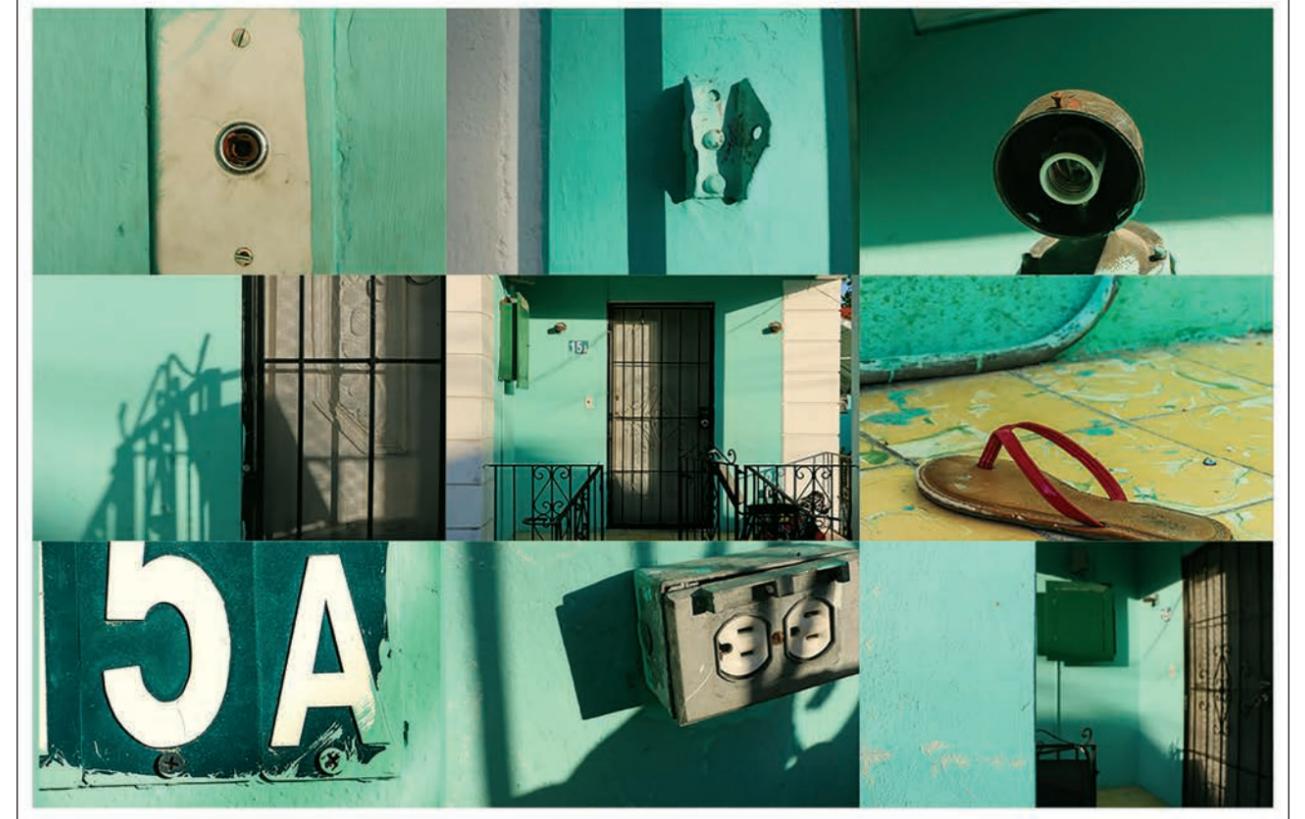
From the series *Porch Conversations*



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Ted Seymour:

The First Black Man to Sail Solo Around the World

An Interview with Opal Palmer Adisa

BILL NO. 19-0230

Nineteenth Legislature of the Virgin Islands of the United States

MARCH 2, 1991

A resolution to honor Ted Seymour for being the first African-American and Virgin Islands resident to sail around the world alone.

PROPOSED BY: Senator Adelbert M. Bryan and Senator Viridin C. Brown “Rocky” Liburd

WHEREAS, Ted Seymour, from early childhood, had a dream to sail around the world; and WHEREAS, in the mid-1970’s Mr. Seymour, with the help of a \$25,000 bank loan, purchased a 39 foot, 1969 Eriscon sloop, which he named “ Love song” in order to begin preparations to fulfill his long held dream; and whereas, at the age of 45 and after seven years preparation and \$42,000 in preparation cost and with \$6,000 voyage money and prayer, on February 24, 1986, Mr. Seymour began journey from Ham’s bluff in Frederiksted, St Croix; and. Whereas, it took Mr. Seymour 11 days to reach Panama from St. Croix and 43 days to 4,100 miles from Panama TO FRENCH Polynesia visiting Hiva Oa, Tahiti and Bora Bora: and WHEREAS, it took him a total of 4 months to cross 9, 200 miles from Panama to New Guinea; and WHEREAS, Mr. Seymour, even though it would have been an easier route, refused to go around South Africa and decided to go the more difficult route through the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea during an inhospitable winter season; and WHEREAS, on June 19, 1987, Mr. Seymour finally made it home 17 months after his departure and became the first black man to sail solo around the world; and WHEREAS, Ted Seymour has been awarded an honorary life membership in the Johua Slocum Society which recognizes individuals who have sailed around the world solo; and WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that Mr. Seymour, a resident of the Virgin Islands, be recognized for the outstanding accomplishment; NOW, THERREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands: SECTION 1. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands hereby and honors and commends Ted Seymour for being the first African- American to sail around the world alone. SECTION 2, A perma plaque copy of this Resolution shall be prepared and presented to Ted Seymour by the President of the Legislature, or his designee, at an appropriate ceremony held for that purpose.

BR91- 0695/ January 23, 1992/CK

Reviewed by: CYPL.

I had been living in St Croix, the largest of the three US Virgin Islands, about three years before I learned about Ted Seymour. I actually passed him several times while walking on the streets of downtown Christiansted. I was speaking to a friend about the wealth of talent in the island and how I wanted to interview several cultural bearers, when he asked if I knew of Ted Seymour. I did not, so he arranged a meeting. At first, Mr. Seymour was very reluctant; in fact, he said he did not want to be interviewed anymore. I thanked him, and wherever our paths crossed I would greet him. Finally, I approached him in 2017 and told him how important it was to have his story revisited. He sent me to read what I could find on the web. I continued to reach out, and then, on July 10, he agreed for us to meet at the Christiansted library but declined to be photographed.

Ted Seymour is a very unassuming man, soft spoken, who measures each word carefully. He lives a very simple life, prefers to keep under the radar, and almost never does interviews. His love for the sea and his boat still occupy his time in St Croix, which has been home and where he feels at peace. On February 24, 1986, after years of preparation, and with very little money, Seymour began his voyage in Love Boat, his 35-foot (11m) Ericson, MK I, Alberg hull design, full keel, fiberglass boat. Seymour circumnavigated the earth, making 12 stops over an eighteen-month period.

Opal Palmer Adisa: *Good morning Ted, and thanks for agreeing to meet with me. I read your chapter, “No Frills Circumnavigation,” and I want to know when you first had an idea that you wanted to make this voyage? And what in your life had prepared you for such a trip?*

Ted Seymour: When I was a boy, I lived about a block away from the Hudson River in New York where I used to swim and fish. Once I found a raft which I patched up and got swept along all the way to the Bronx and luckily the police picked me up because it was a strong current. But it was wild and exciting, and my interest and love of the water existed from then. I almost drowned five times. My grandparents were from Trinidad, and my grandfather, specifically, told me stories about life as a fisherman. I listened to him and wished I was there; I always wanted to live on a tropical island. But I also grew up around people who were from the South (USA) and many of them grew up near rivers, so they too talked about fishing and catching crabs. These stories fed my imagination and desire as a child.

Then, as a young adult I joined the Marine Corps and was an officer for seven years. When I returned from Vietnam and Camp Pendleton in California, I bought a book on instrumentation, a pamphlet about sailing, and a little boat. I was in the Navy base in San Diego (California), then I got married. But I wanted to sail, so I bought a nineteen-footer and sailed from Newport Beach to Catalina Island. It was a crazy and dangerous thing up to do, and I almost got killed many times over, but I landed safely. Up to this day, I think about how crazy that trip was.

How did you get to St Croix? Did you know anyone there?

I got to St Croix in 1979 to teach. I studied business management and earned a M.A. from Cal State Long Beach. There I met this guy from St Croix by the name of Charles Boone, who currently lives in Catherine’s Rest. Charles Boone and I were running a race and afterwards, Charles told me I could get a job teaching in St Croix. Since I always wanted to teach, I decided that I would go and check out St. Croix. I came here, and I taught Physical Education at an elementary school. I lived and worked doing various trades; it just was a wonderful and easy life that I enjoyed.

When were you first introduced to sailing and by whom?

As I said before, my desire to sail began when I was a boy. However, my deep desire for the sea or for sailing was cemented because I was in the special landing force, the amphibian landing company. We had to do a lot of sailing off the coast of Vietnam, near Japan, which was a beautiful coast. This really fed my desire for sailing and traveling that began in childhood.

I suspect, when you declared your intentions, many different people said a lot of things to you about making this trip. What were some of the negatives and what were some of the positives? What did you do psychologically to keep steadfast and optimistic about your voyage?

As a marine corps and graduate school grad, business planning, and all those skills that I had been trained to do, came together in planning this trip; also, I worked as a night watchman. I researched ships very extensively, learning about how things that are done; I brought books and my boat, which I named *Love Song*, with a loan from the Federal Credit Union. I just began planning and the people in Frederiksted, St Croix gave me tremendous support. Senator Bryan, a retired captain in the Police Force, he was courageous and believed in his people and in the right of his people. He was like a contemporary Budhoe, and he was also a teacher—he was very supportive. Another person who helped me is Clifford Christian, who was the principal at Grove and Charles Emanuel School; also, Mario Moorhead. These were the people who helped me, and we would go out to eat all the time with other sailors I met here who love boating. We would talk about boats and sailing. I was always crazy but full of knowledge and constantly gathering knowledge about sailing and the sea. People were very positive when I told them about what I wanted to do; nobody gave any negative feedback and I think living on a tropical island people really encouraged me. People on tropical islands don’t need anyone from the outside, and I noticed that when I came to the St. Croix. I also noticed that when I sailed to the other islands how self-sufficient people are.

...my
grandfather
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I listened to
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What prepared you emotionally/psychologically for this voyage?

From the time I was a kid, I was hanging out with older guys; they liked me because I would do anything. You could say I was the jackass of the group; I would do anything. They say go up the hill and skate down under the truck, and I would do it, you know, plain stupid. I liked adventure, but also my experience in the US Marine Corps helped to prepare me psychologically. The US Marine Corp Officer's Manual that insisted "Never stops under attack, go forward or backward." It is a great guide about how to maneuver. Another book was the *South Sea Expedition*; both were very helpful in getting me to sail across the ocean. In fact, the only reason I am alive is because I had a safety harness. However, if I had to say one thing that prepared me was my sense of adventure from as a child, and that really propelled me. Also, the more I learned about sailing and what it would take, the more determined I was that I would do whatever it took to make it happen.

You described the first major potential disaster that occurred in Panama. I visited and toured the Panama Canal and learned about how one ship at a time gained entrance, so I can visualize the near miss and what transpired as a result. Go back to the moment and describe your feelings. What went through your head? What was the learning curve that allowed you to continue on the journey?

Well, I did the celestial navigation that I had learned, and I knew the route.

Anyway, I arrived at the canal and was waiting to enter, but it all happened so quickly. It was a surprise, and it threw me off...I wrote about it, and you read it, so I don't want to go over than again. The point is that I survived that near disaster and was determined to push on through. I broke an atelier, which I had to repair using a four by four clutch with a clamp. I learned that from the book like so many other things. I also learned a few tricks from this man and his wife who sailed from Trinidad around the world. All of these stories served to motivated me.

There were many quiet days at sea, watching the birds and being with myself. When I got to the Indian Ocean and the Seychelles Islands, the entire trip was just amazing. The people in the Middle East are gorgeous; when I went to New Guinea they gave me mangoes—the generosity of the people on tropical islands is just wonderful. The people would follow you around and ask you questions and they were often helpful. The beauty of the place kept me going despite the many mishaps and there were many mishaps. But there were also so many places that I wanted to linger, in Greece. In Israel - I was outrageously interested in how they fight off all those people; the wealth in that country is incredible.

It was night when I got to Ethiopia, but it was beautiful. I would like to go back there but not by boat.

There were many adventures on the trip, but primarily it was very positive people were very helpful.

So, after eighteen months, heading back home to St Croix, what were your thoughts? Your friends and supporters in St Croix knew that what you had done was monumental. Did you get the welcome you expected?

Well, I had expected the media, but it didn't work out that way even though some friends had informed the media that I had done the sailing. There were some people who came to congratulate me, and a reporter wrote the story that did made the Associate Press, but there really was no interest. That was somewhat disappointing. But for me sailing is meditation. I have gone to some schools and shared my story, and the children are usually interested. Some even want to know how they can do it. I tell them math is the key, take a course on sailing, begin by going out with other people on a sail boat, just take a chance.

Ted Seymour was presented with the prestigious Golden Circle Award recognition, by the Joshua Slocum Society: Joshua Slocum Society World Solo Circumnavigation Sailing Logbook.

In 1994, the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey, a 150-year-old non-profit maritime agency that promotes the welfare of seafarers, held a special black-tie ceremony to celebrate Teddy's sailing feat, which Seymour attended.

To learn more details about Ted Seymour's voyage you can read his journals here: <http://www.bluemoment.com/teddyseymour/seymourstart.html?http&&www.bluemoment.com/teddyseymour/content.html>



...for me sailing is meditation. I have gone to some schools and shared my story, and the children are usually interested.



{ celia SORHAINDO }

Filling Holes

That day, as before, I tried to shun Death,
not knowing how to live
with her, understand her, make peace with her;
her passing always left me in pieces.

Loss-giddy the world still spun,
never stopping to take stock. Could I not be still—
beside myself with grief—be still with the weight
of this...*missing*—to measure the weight of the missed?

Thin-skinned in church, constrained
in black, I feared the price
of society's shame full last respects
would cost my conscience.

I prayed broken bread
would feed, nourish me; strengthen spine
to carry this dead weight. I prayed
the sermon would comfort, console me.

I bowed—shook my head.
Contemptuous holier-than-thou words
hung grey clouds over all
hope to heal holes—again.

It was sad to hear the lifeless judged.
How deep some dug to bury—quickly dished dirt
over poor soul who couldn't yet turn in grave.
I said silent eulogy and wept.

This earth had swallowed a beloved body whole; left me
a crater I felt forced to fill fast.
The casket was covered, should I not quickly recover,
compose and recompose myself?

How should I mark this moment of farewell?
The cross is not the sum of this life lost;
could never symbolise my world
minus my dear departed.

Should I compost my despair
along with the dead?

In the Air

After the hurricane,
my grandmother,
who had hunkered down
in her basement storeroom
and knelt
her knees raw with prayer
the whole long, long lashing tail of night,
ascended slippery stairs
hoping by holy intervention
her home had been saved.
She stared from ruined room to room,
swaying like a punched drunk spirit,
mouth and eyes wide, black holes of disbelief;
words gone as wounds appeared.
She walked on water,
treading over eighty years of floating debris,
then could do no more than silently thank
her saviour over and over for sparing her life.

After the hurricane,
after Mass,
tales of rampant looting
circled among them like hungry dogs;
after the turned-inside-out
but well clothed congregation,
still silent, had shared signs of peace.
No one appeared to conjure and divide
loaves and fishes between those people;
divided by good and bad luck or circumstance;
divided by ability or will to pad and prepare,
concrete seal, pantry stock,
insure against calamity.
But having enough or not enough saved,
surely meant little then,
after all
none were saved from
that almighty hurricane
that reined in our poor island
and had everyone drowning.

After the hurricane,
came the crazed lines for food...
for any kind of fuel;
came the telltale spoors
of rats and roaches tracking rubbish;
dank despair
threading desperation through the dark.
At night my grandmother floated
in and out of light, nightmare-laden sleep,
waiting for the chain rattle
of locked door;
for the bark signalling predators
had come for what little she had left.
She prayed for enough strength and grace,
to give the strangers what they came to take.

After the hurricane,
she said sometimes it felt
like man-eat-man survival,
every woman for herself.
Who had time, air, breath, breadth enough,
to free-dive deep and long enough,
to understand
then these heads heaped,
backs breaking,
carrying stolen mud-crusteds sofas, sinks, spirits,
through debris to homes
miraculously still standing?
To understand then the tragic
improvised or organised
bacchanal trashing of schools and stores?
Who could explain anything then?
Understand or explain anything now!

When she was able,
my grandmother told me about
after the hurricane.
Months later I flew home
and stood stone still in the ruin of her home,
alone.
I thought fear,
lack of faith had been uncovered,
illuminated, as I watched
a mass of untethered particles
air-floating in the beam
of my head lamp,
from floor all the way above my head
to the star-spotted heavens.

Ankyloglossia

acutely shy accent;
things I shoved into small mouth
to keep myself from talking—delaying
what I need to say

Celia Sorhaindo, born on the Nature Island of Dominica and lived in the UK for many years before returning home in 2005. Ms. Sorhaindo was an organising committee member of the Nature Island Literary Festival and the Dominica Link for Hands Across the Sea. Her poetry has been published in *The Caribbean Writer* and *Moko Magazine*. Recently, Ms. Sorhaindo was a Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop fellow



Bernice L. McFadden: My Caribbean Heritage That I Had to Research

An Interview with Opal Palmer Adisa

Opal Palmer Adisa: *What is your Caribbean heritage and how has it informed what you write or how you write?*

Bernice L. McFadden: My paternal great-grand parents were born in Barbados. They emigrated to the USA in the 1920s. Although my paternal grandmother was born in Brooklyn, she held onto her Bajan roots and passed many of the customs onto my father. It wasn't until my father began sending my brother and I to Barbados for the summers that I realized that my southern family and my Bajan family were more alike than they were different. As I grew older and more curious about the world, particularly Africa, I understood that the similarities between the cultures that comprised my siblings and I had everything to do with our ancestors coming from Africa. As a result, when I write, I often blend my characteristics that are considered culturally specific. For example, in my debut novel, *Sugar*, which takes place in a small, Arkansas town, I describe a meal comprised of sweet potatoes, fried chicken, and macaroni pie. Well, southern people don't say macaroni pie, Caribbean people say macaroni pie. It's my literary gumbo.

I love this quote of yours: "I write to breath life back into memory." Can you expound on this? What memories do you write to bring back to life?

I understand that the history I was taught in school was, at the very least, white-washed and, at its worse, a flat-out lie. I feel that it is my charge to right those wrongs. To excavate and present those historical factoids that were twisted or erased to debase and minimize the contributions and sacrifices of Africans and their descendants. I write to remind the world that our history is so much more than slavery.

Your work explores historical themes and portray characters who are strong, vulnerable and enduring. Are any of your characters drawn from your childhood?

Absolutely. Many of the women that appear in my novels are based on one woman or a blend of the women who helped raise me.

What is your favourite place in the Caribbean and what about the place that inspires you?

Of course, I love Barbados, but Jamaica holds a place in my heart. I've had the opportunity to visit so many of the islands—each one is special to me for different reasons. I am inspired by the intelligence, strength and fortitude of the island people.

Hurricanes are annual realities in the Caribbean region and this year we witnessed the impact of Hurricane Irma and Maria on the eastern Caribbean. What images or thoughts does that devastation bring up in you?

It was heart-breaking—it's still heart-breaking. I live in New Orleans now, and, even though I wasn't living here when Katrina hit, I did witness the devastation broadcast live on my television. I remember feeling horrified and then angry, until I finally just went numb. The destruction left behind by Irma and Maria dragged me right back to 2005, and I found myself raising that age old-question: Why do Black people always seem to be on the frontline of suffering?

What did your Caribbean parent tell you/teach you about the Caribbean?

As a child, I learned more about Caribbean food than anything else. Like I said, my grandmother was secretive and so much of what I know, I learned through research and personal travel. ☺

Bernice L. McFadden is the author of ten critically acclaimed novels including *Sugar*, *Loving Donovan*, *Gathering of Waters* (a New York Times Editors' Choice and one of the 100 Notable Books of 2012), *Glorious*, which was featured in *O, The Oprah Magazine*. *The Book of Harlan* was the winner of a 2017 American Book Award and the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work. She is a four-time Hurston/Wright Legacy Award finalist, as well as the recipient of three awards from the BCALA. McFadden's new novel, *Praise Song for the Butterflies*, will be published in 2018.



{ taitu HERON }

Today I Must Vent at Feminism

Today I must vent at feminism
For with all its rage on gender inequality and the need for women's empowerment
She became an angry car driver on a rainy day...splashing you from head to toe with no care in sight
Today I must vent at feminism
For with its long lament on women's subordination to patriarchal domination
In speaking your own outrageous and truth
She became a patting matronizing hand on the head

Today I must vent at feminism
For with its beatitudes of struggle in the women's movement
who done what who know who to pave the way for upcomers to shine
Claim your shining space and walk your no-nonsense walk
Plough the fields with sleepless hours
She became a matriarching wolf-lady looking for her mojo

Today I must vent at feminism
For with its long march along the spines, streets, lanes and corridors of injustice
A steady dedicated snail sticks out its head on the slippery trail
She became a snake ready to swallow you whole.

Today I vented feminism out and let me in
I can only say "Great Mother I can see your flaws"
Thank you for being such a spiritless divisive politicking bitch
Thank you for letting me see who I will never be
I am burying you Mama feminist
And digging up the Goddess repressed instead
To embrace the reign of the Queen Code

A Message From Olive

Unu tek lang fi kum bak
Unu tek lang fi visit
Unu tek lang fi memba
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross?

Dem pen wi
Dem lik wi
Dem rope wi
Cut off Howard foot mek im cyan run weh
Dem rape mi
Chop off wi han'
Tie wi roun pos' an beat wi
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross

Dem slice wi tongue bruk wi toe mash wi wris' bus wi jaw an latch de yoke Dem sell wi pikni laas cyan fin
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross

Dem slit wi nose
Wring mi son neck an' cut im troat
Fling salt pon him an' lef im fi john crow
Tie mi mout when mi waa bawl
Bus Howard tail wid lik when him waa fight
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross

Dem tie mi wris dem
Strip off mi kloz
Lash mi back wid cowskin
Stretch mi han dem fram eas to wes
Sprawl mi leg dem fram nort to sout'
An blood nuh stop run
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross

Unu tink a likkl lick wi tek
Unu tink a likkl back weh tear
Unu tink a likkle leg get chop off

Unu tink a likkl blow we get
Unu tink a likkl tear wi shed
Unu tink a likkl pray wi pray
Unu tink a likkl fret wi fret
Unu tink a likkl fight wi fight
Unu tink a likkl pizin wi pizin
Unu tink a likkl run wi run
Unu tink a likkl plot wi plot
Unu tink a likkl science wi work
Unu tink a likkl bawl wi bawl
Why unu still tink seh is ongl Jeesaz did deh pon de cross?

Why unu nuh tek wi down
Why unu nuh send waa Magdalene fi cry wid wi
Why unu nuh baayd wi wound dem
Why unu nuh bawl wid wi
Why unu nuh gi wi likkl wata fi drink from pretty cup
Why unu nuh bring new kloz fi cova wi
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross?

Why unu figet wi so
Why unu nuh waa memba
An wi still deh yah tie up pon tree, stretch out ina yoke, an nail up pon pole
Ah wait fi unu fi memba wi
An unu dung deh a bawl fi Jeesaz like seh is im one get heng pon cross
Unu nuh tink seh wi waah come dung fi guh bak up fi meet wi God
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross?
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross? Eeeh
Why unu tink seh is ongl Jeezas did deh pon de cross?

Taitu Heron is a gender and development specialist, and human rights advocate and performance poet. Both her poetry and activist politics encompass issues of gender relations and identity, the quality of citizenship, human dignity, African-centred spirituality and post-colonial politics in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. She is currently Gender and Development consultant with UNDP Jamaica; and is also Co-founder of the Tambourine Army and a technical advisor to Women for Empowerment and Change (WE-Change) in Jamaica.



{ kristine SIMELDA }

GO-GO

Coach Wilson slams his ball cap down on the ground. “Wha happen to you, Milo?” he screams, red faced. “Why you can’t keep up with the ball? Maybe I should send you over to the girls’ club, cuz you playin like you wearin a skirt!”

The afternoon sun reflects off his baldhead like a mirror. Sweat drips off the end of his flat nose. “And cut off of those stinkin dreadlocks,” he bellows, “fore you end up looking *paro* like your father!”

Milo hangs his head and limps off the field. His back injury isn’t completely healed, yet Wilson expects him to keep on practicing. There ought to be a law against bullies like him making kids’ lives miserable. But what choice does he have? He knows firsthand what becomes of young men who drop out of sports. His father, Benton, a star forward for the national team, was banned from football for ten years for doping, and the shame still follows Milo like a curse.

Ever since he was small, Milo had believed that his entire future hinged on his ability to play football. He attended his first game in his mother’s belly. Even before he started pre-school, he and his dad kicked a soccer ball up and down the dusty neighborhood field until it was too dark to see. Football was the ticket out, his father insisted, and Milo bought into the dream. They followed the big league on radio and TV. Posters of Messi, Ronaldo, and Neymar adorned the walls of Milo’s room. Yeah, man. Someday, it would be his name echoing throughout the stadium when the crowd roared. But when Benton got caught tampering with the rules, Milo was left to dream alone.

While his father relived his glory days in rum shops, Milo’s mother worked two jobs to keep food on the table and pay the rent. “Why you think they call it dope?” she ranted each time Benton failed to show up for supper.

Milo remembered the day he went out for the mini-youth league. He had imagined his father was watching from somewhere undercover while he and his mother sat on the bleachers and Coach Etienne, a big-hearted volunteer from down the block, welcomed the children and their parents. When he raced out onto the field to get his team T-shirt, he was wearing borrowed shoes that were a couple of sizes too big and tripped. Embarrassed, Milo managed to regain his composure, wave bravely to his mom, and line up.

“Make me proud, son,” she hollered.

Under the patient guidance of Coach Green, Milo played his heart out in primary school. His nickname was Go-Go, and everybody—schoolmates, teachers, and parents alike—loved him. The playing field was poorly maintained and the equipment shoddy, but by then he was used to disadvantages. Cheered on by his family and friends, Milo ate up the adulation like a boy was starving for attention, which, in reality, he was. When he was about to graduate to secondary school, the principal called an assembly to inform students that a plan was put in motion

to assist outstanding footballers. Milo listened attentively as the principal addressed the crowd of excited boys and girls.

“Today marks the beginning of a new and broadened relationship between you youngsters and the executive committee of the National Football Association. Because we believe that sports and academics go hand in hand, scholarships will be awarded to exceptional athletes in the 15-and-under league so they can better meet the financial challenges of furthering their education. Our nation’s future depends on your commitment, and we trust that you will make us proud.”

Proud. There was that word again. But Milo didn’t have to be coaxed to do his best. A good student and an outstanding player, he was respected on and off the field. Still, it was a small island. People had excellent memories and were sometimes slow to forgive. Milo hoped Benton’s foolish mistake wouldn’t affect his chances of winning a scholarship. His mother was on welfare now, and, unless he received financial assistance, his sports career and education would soon come to a full stop. Luckily, Coach Green was aware of his situation. He took him under his wing like a surrogate father and gave him the guidance he needed to succeed. But when Milo graduated to the 16-18-year-old league, his troubles began to multiply instead of dwindle.

Coach Wilson didn’t have the patience of Coach Etienne or the bonhomie of Coach Green. He picked on Milo constantly as if he had some sort of instinctual grudge against him.

“Damn it, Milo! Get the lead out!” Wilson shouted during practice.

Milo pulled up short. “It’s not my fault Simeon is so slow. He’s the one who needs to hustle.”

Simeon was a rich kid who played the other forward position. His father, once on the national team with Milo’s dad, was perpetually on the sidelines reliving his athletic fantasies through his son. Simeon’s parents were major patrons of the league, and Coach Wilson knew who signed his paycheck. When Milo slipped and missed what should have been an easy goal, Wilson didn’t waste time demonstrating his allegiance.

“I don’t need no sass from a rude boy like you,” he yelled. Then, while Milo was still down, he rushed across the field and kicked him in the back like he was a disobedient dog.

Simeon shot Coach Wilson an evil glance and walked over to help Milo up. “Wilson’s an asshole,” he whispered under his breath.

Although the whole team had witnessed what happened, Simeon was the only one to act. Rumor had it that in addition to torturing Milo, Wilson was also tormenting Simeon. Unfortunately, child abuse in sports was something most players had encountered at one time or another, but few were willing to deliberate in public.

When the National Olympic Committee scouted the team later that month, Milo was playing even though he was hurt. He made a poor showing, so they chatted up Simeon instead. Night after night, Milo lay in bed and worrying what would become of him. If he didn't suck up to Coach Wilson, his football career would be finished . . . and then what did he have to look forward to? His lifestyle choices would be limited to the kind of existence that his class and social status dictated: drug dealer, pimp, thief, or eventual outcast like his father.

Milo knew he had to do something, but he felt as if he had nowhere to turn. He thought of talking his problem out with his mother, but she had enough burdens. If only his dad had resisted temptation, things might have worked out differently. Milo went to the fridge for a snack, but it was empty. His stomach rumbled constantly as he walked to the corner shop to try to get something to eat on credit. Bass music pounded down the road, and Simeon pulled up in his father's new SUV just as he reached the door.

"Yo, Go-Go! Hop in! Just cruisin your neighborhood and thought I'd give you a check."

Although their monetary circumstances were vastly different, Milo and Simeon were friends as well as teammates. "Man, this is an awesome set of wheels," Milo said as he climbed aboard.

Simeon gave him a high five and a fist knock. "What's up, bro?"

Milo shrugged. "Not much. Bottom line is I'm feeling dread and hungry. I need someone to talk to and to find something to eat."

"No problem," Simeon said. "Let's roll by KFC and then head down to the beach."

They parked on a deserted lane and opened the bucket of chicken. "I always envied you because your family had money," Milo said, picking up a drumstick and staring out to sea.

"And I was always jealous of you because you inherited so much talent. My father says Benton was the best player ever to come from this island."

Milo sighed. "Sometimes I get the feeling he's still watching over me, even though he hasn't been around for a long time."

"Let's hope so," Simeon said. "We need all the protection we can get from the kind of nastiness that buller-man Wilson is peddling."

So that confirmed it. Wilson had been messing with Simeon too. What kind of coach would harass his star players, or, for that matter, any of his players? But unless they were willing to speak up, nothing would ever come of it.

"It would be a shame to let a character like Wilson screw up our future," Milo said.

Simeon pulled a plastic bag that contained two spliffs of marijuana from under the seat. "I've got a little something that might ease you up."

Milo was tempted. He was tired of moping around and feeling depressed. But then he reconsidered. So far, he had managed to avoid the pitfalls of drugs and alcohol that crippled other kids, not to mention his father. He had his whole life ahead of him, and Coach Wilson was just a minor stumbling block in the

road. "No thanks. I want to stay clean and sober so that I can whip your butt on the field once my back is healed."

Simeon laughed. "As usual."

Milo took another piece of chicken while Simeon lit up. "I've been thinking. What if we ask Coach Green for help with Wilson? He was always there when we needed him."

Simeon exhaled. "You go. Playing pro football was my father's dream, not mine. But whatever happens, I'm behind you."

Mrs. Green answered the door when Milo rang the bell. She remembered him from his primary school days. "Hello, Go-Go," she said, smiling.

Coach Green extracted himself from a recliner that was parked in front of the TV. Naturally, he was tuned into the FIFA World Cup. He shook Milo's hand and motioned for him to sit down. When Milo eased himself into a chair, he noticed his discomfort. "Something bothering your back, son?"

"That's what I came to talk to you about," Milo said. He took a deep breath and explained what had been going on with Coach Wilson.

Coach Green grimaced. "Sorry to hear that, son. From what you say, Wilson has definitely overstepped the boundaries of ethical behavior. Coaches have a serious responsibility when it comes to the wellbeing of their players, and he's abused his position. But the situation isn't hopeless."

"How you mean?" Milo asked.

"I know you think you're a big man already, but in the eyes of the law you're still a child," he said. "As luck would have it, I just sat through a training session sponsored by the OECS and UNICEF that targeted athletes aged 10-18 who need assistance from parents, teachers, and coaches in identifying and addressing incidents of abuse." He handed Milo a couple of brochures. "The campaign seeks to stamp out child abuse in sports in the Eastern Caribbean, simple as that. But they're going to need help from kids like you to do it."

"Okay," Milo said tentatively.

Coach Green took Milo to a doctor who examined his back and wrote out a prescription for pain medication along with a note that excused him from playing football for thirty days. Then he walked him down the street to explain the situation to his lawyer friend Mr. Dreyfus.

"Milo has suffered abuse at the hands of a certain football coach, and he wants to file a complaint." He wrote Wilson's name on a piece of paper and passed it across the desk.

Dreyfus nodded. "There has been other grumbling, but up till now nobody has followed through." He turned to Milo. "Bullying can take many forms, son. Abuse can be verbal, physical, racial, or sexual. Even cyber-bullying is recognized. And not only are all forms immoral, they're illegal. I'll put you in touch with the court's child protection officer, but it would be best if the rest of your team would come forward as well."

I know you think you're a big man already, but in the eyes of the law you're still a child.

Milo gulped. "Simeon says he's on board, but I don't know about the others." Why had he put himself in such an awkward position? What if nobody else was actually willing to talk?

Mr. Dreyfus rested a hand on his shoulder. "Someone has to start the ball rolling, and it might as well be you."

"Milo's always been good at keeping the ball rolling," Coach Green said, chuckling.

Milo stared at his sneakers. "Um. I'll have to consult my teammates and get back to you, sir."

When Milo gave Coach Wilson the doctor's note that temporarily excused him from football, he waved it in his face and spat on the ground. "I should have known a lazy bastard like you would come up with a lame excuse. Looks like you're gonna end up just like your useless ole man."

Milo flipped back the tidy locks he had grown in homage to Benton's own. "You're way out of line," he said, balling up his fists. "You have no right to disrespect me or pass judgement on my father!"

"I have every right! I'm the coach, damn it!"

"Hello. That's no kind of language to use in front of children," Coach Green said flatly.

"Children!" Wilson jeered. "You call these boys children? Trust me; they're more corrupt than you could ever imagine."

"You should know," Coach Green said. "It's you who set the example. But your time as coach is about to finish."

Wilson laughed like a jumbie. "You must be joking. The league championship is coming up, and without me at the helm this team doesn't have a chance in hell."

"We'll see about that." The other players and their parents gathered around as Coach Green presented Wilson with a legal envelope. "This document, which has been filed with the child protection officer, is an injunction that prevents you from approaching any of these team members before your day in court."

Wilson uttered every obscenity that sprang into his twisted mind. Then he tore up the letter and deliberately stomped on it before he brushed past the angry crowd. The booing that followed him into the parking lot was replaced by a cheer as he sped away.

Now what are we going to do?" Milo asked once everybody had settled down.

Coach Green answered for them. "Your parents are going to be extra vigilant while you boys get back to practicing the game of football as it was meant to be played. I'll help out until we can find a substitute coach."

"But who can we get on such short notice?" Milo wondered.

Simeon's father's hand shot up, but Simeon shook his head.

Just then a tall, dreadlocked figure stepped out from the shadows of the grove of casuarina trees bordering the field. Milo did a double take. "Benton? Is that really you, Dad?"

Kristine Simelda, born in the US, has been a citizen of Dominica for the past 25 years. During that time, she wrote three adult novels, two novels, a collection of stories for young adults, and numerous works of short fiction. She currently lives on the edge of the rain-forest where she writes, farms, and feeds large dogs. Her website is www.kristinesimelda.com.

Bullying can take many forms... Abuse can be verbal, physical, racial, or sexual.



{ cynthia WILSON }

Say Nothing

He always took my face between his hands
Gentle, finding time to play with me
Teach me my numbers and the a b c's
Then simple reading from a bright red book
“the cat sat on the mat,” “Dan is the man in the van”
West Indian reader, my first book

A night of rain, of lightning and strong thunder

Into my bed for comfort and for warmth
(that's what I thought, he was my favourite friend)
and then the thrust, the pain, the blood, the guilt –
it was my fault, it was always my fault, yes, everything
“you must tell no one, no one at all
or you'll be in lots of trouble for what you've done”
the sheet was messy, but what had I done?
it must be something bad if he said so
he was my grown-up friend, so he knew best so I said nothing,
told no one
not even my brother whom I told everything
I did not tell my mother, my two grandmothers, my great
grandmother, my aunts, my cousins . . .
all my life long I did not speak of it
I told no one
I did not even
tell
myself.

The Last Stand

No sonorous iambic pentameters
engrave on history's face
your act of desperate valor
no marble plaques or monuments
freedom or death
that was your choice
you chose
the large freedom of death
gathering your tattered faces
armed only with firmness of purpose
and the need
to live your lives
free of the yoke
you volunteered for massacre
when are the birds to sing the song
of
celebration of your deed
doughty ancestors
Bussa, Jackey, King Wiltshire
Dick Bailey, Johnny the standard bearer
martyrs and heroes all
creating a space for us to be
to grow fulfill our
fashion a nation of our own
albeit neglectful
that does not teach the children our story
and are not mindful of
The Last Stand at Baileys, eighteen sixteen
Much ink has flowed for
Agincourt, for Crispin Crispian, the Battle of Lake Regillus
for Custer's Last Stand/ but we ignore our own
It is time
past time
for us to raise our voice
time for us to sing
of
eighteen sixteen
of the martyrs
of resolve, audacity of nettle
the gallantry of Bussa's Last Stand.
My humble pen
throws one small stone
in the unbounded maw
of heedlessness
may others follow
til it is filled up
forming a solid pathway
where we tread
in full knowledge and gratitude



Richard Schrader: A Poet of Nature

An Interview with Opal Palmer Adisa

I write what I feel, and it began from hearing the sounds of my father's cart wheel... Poetry was my first love, but I was hot like soup. However, as I began writing, the bitterness came out of me.

The son of sugarcane workers, Richard Augustus Schrader was born in St. Croix. Raised in Estate Fredenborg in the 1930s and '40s, young Richard helped his mother carry water and his father plow the soil. Determined to serve in the military, Richard left St. Mary's High School at sixteen and volunteered for the army during the Korean War. He was the first Black soldier to serve with Company "G" 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division in Germany. He did two military tours, received his GED in Germany, and was honorably discharged in 1957.

After brief employment with the U.S. Postal Service at Morgan Station in Manhattan, he entered the New York City Department of Corrections Training Academy at Riker's Island and was assigned to the Hart's Island prison facility in the Bronx. While serving as a correctional officer, he attended Brooklyn College part time.

Upon moving back to St. Croix, he was appointed Assistant Prison Warden at Richmond Penitentiary in 1965. Attending school at night, he received an Associate Degree in Police Science and Administration in 1969 from the College of the Virgin Islands. Later, he headed back to New York and received a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 1971. He then returned to St. Croix to continue serving as Assistant Prison Warden at Richmond Penitentiary.

While working at the Golden Grove Correctional Facility as Acting Warden and Warden, he received a Masters of Arts in Education from the College of the Virgin Islands in 1981. After serving for over twenty years in the field of law enforcement, he retired in 1985.

Leaving the prison system behind, Schrader picked up a pen after an inspired weekend spent on Blue Mountain as a national guardsman. Surveying the entire island from that vantage point, Schrader decided to capture, in what has become known as his seminal poem, "St. Croix by Night." St. Croix, her people, and culture became his muse, which resulted in his first book Home Sweet Home (1986). Over the next thirty years, Schrader has vividly depicted Virgin Islands' traditions and folklore in twenty-eight books. His works document the glorious past of Virgin Islanders and personal reflections of the men and women who people the island.

Schrader is the recipient of several awards, including the Virgin Islands' Humanities Council 1994 "Humanist of the Year" award. In 2003, when Charles Wesley Turnbull was appointed governor, Schrader penned the inaugural poem, "The Madras that Bind All Ahwe." Richard Schrader is married to Claudette Davis, and they have four children.

Opal Palmer Adisa: When did you realize that you were a writer?

Richard Schrader: Well, I always remember having good thoughts about nature and things, but for a long time I never put my ideas down. Until...In 1984 I was prison warden at Golden Grove Correctional Facility and a part-time soldier with the National Guard. Simultaneously, I was working on my second master's degree. I lived near the prison, so I usually studied there. One day while I was upstairs studying, Marty, who taught two of my children at school, was reading poetry. When I came down he said to me, "Rich what are you going to do after you finish studying?" I said, "Marty I had a rough time in prison today, and I'm going home." Then he said to me, "Why don't you come with me downstairs when you're finished, and listen to some poetry." I told him I was not into poetry. But he persisted and said, "Come in man you would like it." I replied, "No man I'm going home." So, I got my stuff and headed downstairs with my briefcase in my hand. While I was walking pass the room, something said to me go check them out. I went and sat in the theatre where everyone was reciting their poems. Afterwards, I said to Marty that I liked what I heard. From there and then, whenever I was at a quiet place, I'd put down something. So, one evening—I think it was about March of the same year—we camped out in Blue Mountain; our job was to establish communication between Blue Mountain and National Guard Army units. Anyway, the stars were out and that first night I looked across, and said wow! By that time, I was keeping a notebook, so I jotted down what I saw by flashlight. That, I believe, was my first poem, written at Blue Mountain called "Stars." Then I did another entitled, "Gray by Night," which goes this way: "In the light of day/we are often told what a/ beautiful Island we are on/but it took the grace of night/to make me realize the paradise we call home."

My son Richie at that time was writing poetry too; he was in high school, so paper was all over the place. When I started writing, I had seven pages, and I decided to put them together. I went to a press and this was my first little chap book—I shared my thoughts. Then I took off. I sat down in my rocking chair, and the thoughts of "loving care" just came and rested on me like a brainstorm. Marty and I started a sentence with: M is for the most beautiful heart I've ever known, O is for a river overflowing with love and tender care, T is for the tender care and teaching time, H is for the homely and humble life she lived, E is for the encouraging spirit she possesses, and R is for a rose so radiant and rare. These words describe my mother; a woman who's beyond compare. Later, I wrote other poems like "Home Sweet Home" and "Happy Birthday" for my wife's birthday after I went searching for a card but found nothing I liked. When my mother passed away in 1955, and my father in 1962, I dedicated a book to them both.

I always remember having good thoughts about nature and things, but for a long time I never put my ideas down.

What was the process of finding your poetic voice?

In 1984, I went to Egypt with Dr. Ben, [Yosef Ben-Jochannan, African American writer/historian]. I had gone a couple of years before. He had been to Egypt before; he was living in New York and we connected. I met him, and then we went to Egypt, all over. While I was in the hotel room, I started to take pictures. I had two phones at the time. Seeing all that I saw there, I wrote “Ride Man, Ride Your Donkey and “Egypt Great Daughter of Africa.” I went to Philadelphia that summer, and, by the time I arrived, I had another poem I called “Brotherly Love.” It was in Philadelphia, where I went to the library and learned so much. I had heard of Black poets before—Black poets such as Countee Collen, Langston Hughes, and Claude McKay, who were my favorite.

You mentioned some local writers who inspired you?

Yes, they are Marty Campbell, Dr. Hendrickson, and others.

How did the collection, I Cool, come about?

In 1984 I started to blossom into a poet; I wrote 30 poems and published my book. I wrote *I Cool* based off of my experiences. I studied the Japanese master and started writing haikus. My first book is like a flower blooming. I wrote haikus such as: cherry blossom, the smile on a baby’s face—lots of haikus.

You also mentioned that there were other Caribbean and African American poets you admired.

Well, I love Claude McKay, Pablo Neruda, James Weldon Johnson, and some more. Speaking about *I Cool*, I remembered in this old sugar cane village, before I went into the Army, I could hear my father’s horse cart from 1/2 mile away. Every horse cart has a different sound, and a different music. Many years later I still could hear that sound coming, and I wrote *I Cool* about it.

How would you describe your poetry and what you do as a poet?

I don’t study much; I just write how I feel. For example, ten years ago I wrote a poem entitled, “We’ve come Too Far.” Clinton and Mark [people in the community] were hacked and stabbed to death right on their own soil, which inspired me to write that poem.

Do you share your poems with children to get a sense of how your work inspires the younger generation? Have you gone into any of the schools?

Yes, I go to schools; I especially like the younger ones—5th graders. I went to St Patrick School.

What have Caribbean people given the world that we got no credit for?

We got guts; we got strength. We have worked hard and done a lot. We don’t get credit for that. About ten years ago, there were several stories in the local press about the Indians Columbus found here in 1493 and their contributions to the islands. Nothing was said about the Africans brought here against their will and their contributions to the development of the islands. I felt compelled to stand up for our ancestors. As a result, “Get it Straight” was born—a poem, which I read one evening at a Tea Meeting at Budhoe Park in Frederiksted.

What is your normal the process for writing a poem?

I just write what I feel. It’s usually something that flashes across my mind. I will get up out of my sleep and write my poems as thoughts flash through my head. I wrote a poem that goes like this: “the distance between/ a township and a town house/is opportunity.” I went to Robin Island [South Africa where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned], and I wrote something about Robin Island and 27 years, which is how long I think Mandela was there.

What are some of the things that you’re most proud of?

These days, being a father, husband, grandfather, army veteran, poet, and author continues to enrich my life and I in turn write about the culture, history, and the people of my home, sweet home, St. Croix.

I’m proud that I have visited the following countries: Germany, France, England, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Italy, Greece, China, India, Hong Kong, South Africa, Egypt, Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific, Tahiti, Bora Bora, Spain, Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Mexico, Israel, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Aruba. In 2004 when I went to Chili and visited Pablo’s [Neruda] house; I also got his book. Pablo Neruda stated that “poem is his bread and it must be shared.”

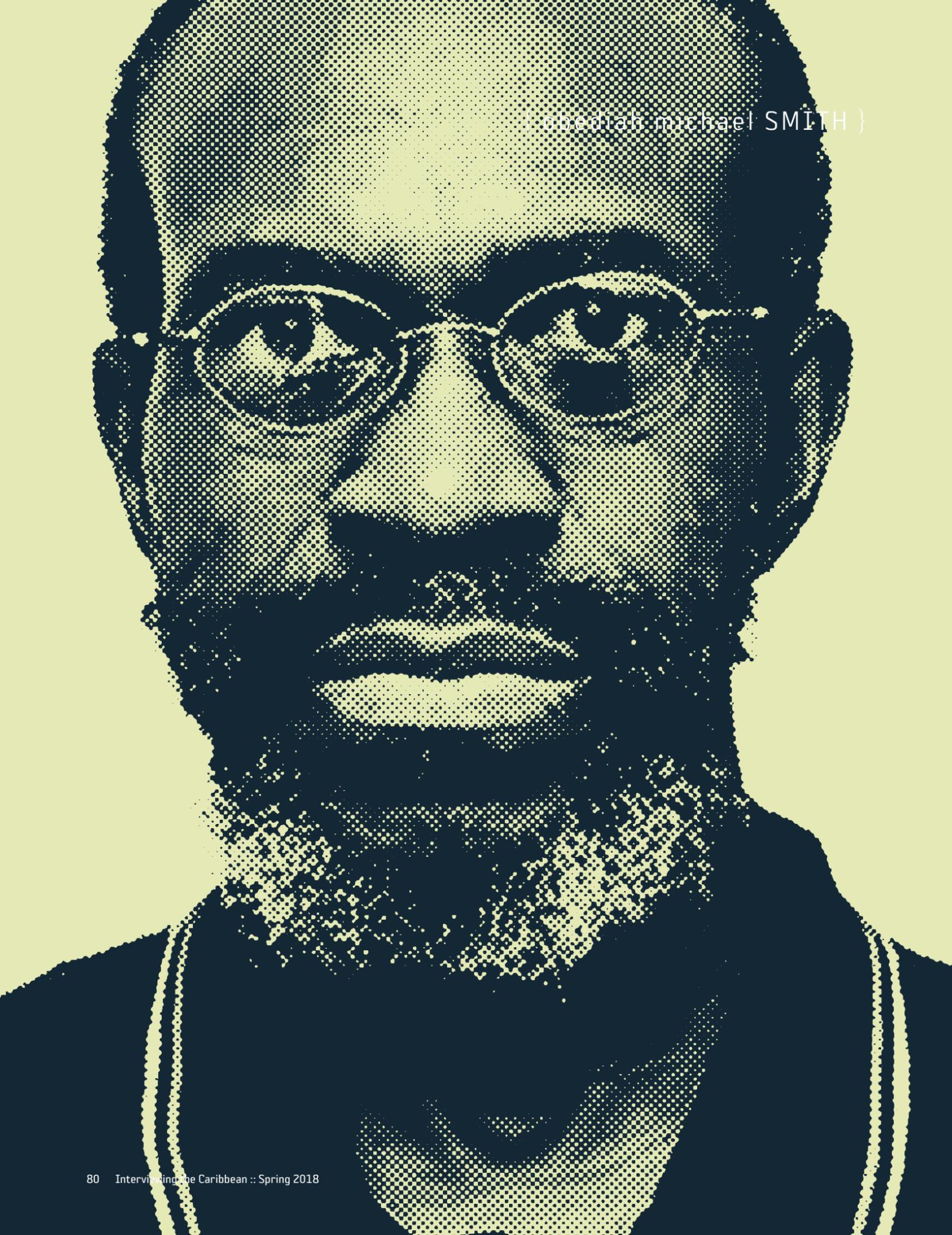
Star Poems

On wings of morning
through the door of my heart
the song of a dove

To the blue skies
add a touch of red
flamboyant blossoms

Babies like flowers
all different
all lovely

Gardens of flowers
labor of love
no sun can compensate



Obediah Michael SMITH }

Deep Ink-Blue Sea

am able to deliver/unable to deliver
am able to love her/unable to love her

if she did rely upon me to bear her up,
could I

if she did rest her weight upon me
what would I do with it, do with her

would it result in Milan Kundera's
Unbearable Lightness of Being
or some other quality of weightlessness

Andros or Long Island lightness
or lightness of these two islands combined
or a weight as great as the great barrier reef,

The Tongue of the Ocean,
off the east coast of Andros

how salt will she be, I wonder,
or how seasoned or how sweet

my tongue eventually, inevitably
in between her thighs, inserted in her

honey bees or salt sea or hairs in my teeth
or tea with honey or sugar or cream or lemon

just want to go, just want to get
from just outside her, to just inside her

how many pounds has she put on
since we met that Monday,
June 29, 2009

she certainly has grown,
she has certainly grown up

immature as ever still
unable to accommodate
the complexity of all I feel

what I feel for her like
nothing I have ever entered
or that has ever entered me

how stunned she'd seem
how stunned she seems in response

to my being in love with her
to my being so public about it
so demonstrative about it
and I am no less stunned

no noon, no moon like this
since I met Maya in Memphis
that afternoon in January 1976

how my life changed then
how my life changes yet again

who I was when we met, I am not now

she is not the same woman/girl
or girl/woman either

we have altered each other
my pen without end inside her

inserted in her, dripping ink,
singing songs
so very many songs to sing

Cellophane Suit

oh, what must my soul pay
for the apartment that my body is
per week, per month or for each year

or is a charge levied each second
or for each thought, each step, each breath

or do we pay only for the mistakes we make,

the missteps,
the sins committed inadvertently or deliberately

oh, those whom we have sinned against
those who have sinned against us

some imagining that there is
or that there will be no penalty at all

for all the wrong they do others
sins committed coupled with, sins of omission

scores to settle, scales to balance,
penalties to pay

rewards received and to be received

what does the soul pay
for the apartment that the body is

used and after use, exited,

at times quietly, respectfully,
at times, discarded, flung aside.

Obediah Michael Smith, born in The Bahamas, has published twenty books of poetry—has lived in Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica, Paris, and he has spent the last three years in ten countries in Africa. He attended Memphis State University and Fisk University. He has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech and Drama. At University of Miami and at UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados, he attended writers' workshops conducted by Lorna Goodison, Earl Lovelace, Grace Nichols, Merle Collins and Mervyn Morris.



{ nancy ann MILLER }

Coral Gardening

The divers are angels
as they descend, air bubbles
the silent speech blurbs the sea
demands, are filled with blank awe.

Reefs have made them wordless,
afloat in a buoyant sky. These
undersea gardeners bring trays
of young coral like chicks, attach

them to tent structures, homes
for ocean refugees. A temporary house
to grow long fingers, to stroke,
sift the blue for the sun's gold.

Too many dying from heat
the bright fans of angelfish can't cool.
Burns them into a nuclear fallout,
left in heaps, bleached skulls, helmets

in an underwater post war site.
Where schools of Jacks ban together,
move like group torpedoes shot
at a target un-seeable in blinding light.

Fire on Front Street

The three-story buildings are
the only sense of a mountain
we have, smoke billows as if
from a volcano like our first

breath of life as the isle was birthed
into the sea. Clouds, like parachutes,
an air bag released in an accident
floats up, away from the city line.

It is all snakes and ladders on Ber-News
periscope footage. The ladders tilt
to windows, the hoses, serpents.
People rub their eyes to see better

or to wake up in Bermuda's early hours.
The fire men spray water like flashlights,
the blaze jumps in, out of the luminous
path, Gombey's dancing on Front Street.

I hear peeping frogs on the video:
a charm or a talisman rattled for
clouds to bring rain. Bermudian
voices calm, not excited, soothe,

occasionally laugh in front of disaster:
Quo fata ferunt! deep in our soul. Palm
trees arc taller, spread fronds, Corinthian
arches to hold up our morning sky.



{Carol SORHAINDO}

A Place in the Root of My Heart

You have no place in my heart
Waitaikubuli woman
You with your rugged curves,
untamed, clinging hair.
Your wild winds and watery fury.
For I was born on British soil.
A land paved with streets of gold,
where no man shall be slave.
Land of Yorkshire Dales,
Brontë and Ilkley Moor Ba'tat.
You weaned me on your herbal juices,
sweat nectar fruits.
Your fertile body filled with thousand shades of greenness.
You Waitaikubuli woman.
Instilled in me a sense of pride.
Knowledge of Ancestral Roots and fighting warrior spirits.
You filled my dreams and every waking moment.
Teased me from afar.
Beckoned me to come back to your bosom.
You assured me of your never-ending love.
Promised you'd hold me close and nurture me forever.
You Waitaikubuli woman.
I, a tortured soul between two lands.
Lands poles apart, yet linked through blood and botanical roots.

Bat Winged Insecurity

Bat Winged Insecurity

Drip drip dripping sounds fill crevices in my head, whilst,
cans draining resonate alongside

Flap flap flapping of the loose and leaky tarpaulines,
more disturbing sound of bat winged insecurity.

Today I wrung absorbent towel necks on caged metal bars
white with innocence.

Towel necks of spotted pink and blue.

stained with memories and strong Maria scents.

Water seeps from pools and streams through doorways,
wood and open pores.

Heady drips send trickles down my sweaty face and spine,
and silent fears of something named Maria.

Strange how Mopping water is somewhat therapeutic.

Bucket brains and tin

A somewhat

Ripped to shreds by island winds.

Caged bars painted

Towel necks of white, now forever

Seeps through concrete,

Merging with the inner tears

Industrial Giants

You stride in uninvited

And plant...

Yourself in my tranquil beauty

Destroying my natural softness

Crushing underfoot

Extracting tears of juicy greenness

Which flow to mix with

Rivers of thick, red, human blood

Human suffering, death, and exploitation

YOU

With your cold industrial hardness

Leaving painful legacies

And steely footprints

For your own material greed and personal gain

200 years gone by and many more thousands

If only trees could talk

They speak with tears of juicy greenness

Our gnarled and twisted roots

like wisened fingers

caress, enfold

hugging pain away

green engulfs you

strangles your steely essence

Tender shoots of hope and renewal

Attempting to eradicate history's brutal memories

Caressing, enfolding

Then squeezing, crushing, sucking your steely breath away

Slowly you succumb, crumble, decay...

Return to dust where you belong

Where you once began

Before man's ruthless intervention

Leaving just a steely token as a cornerstone of memory

Carol Sorhaindo is a freelance artist with an MA in Creative Practice. She works primarily within visual and therapeutic arts, and her nature-inspired creations draw on her transnational Dominican and British experience. In addition, Sorhaindo uses creative writing to complement drawing, painting, and site-specific textile installations. Her website address is <http://www.carolsorhaindoartist.com>.



{ kristine SIMELDA }

Restoring Eden—Week 1

On the evening of Monday September 18, 2017, one of the last island-based rainforests in the world, on the Eastern Caribbean island of Dominica, was reduced to rubble by Hurricane Maria. Three hundred square miles of lush mountain terrain, crystal-clear rivers, and verdant valleys were savagely ripped apart. “Eden is broken,” Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerritt proclaimed upon viewing the devastation. The land and seascape, however, weren’t the only aspects of the Nature Island to suffer. Homes, businesses, and scores of lives were also tragically lost.

We have a jingle on the radio during hurricane season: *You’d better beware. You’d better prepare. Disaster can happen anytime, anywhere.* But Maria was a rogue. She escalated from an unnamed storm to a Category 5 hurricane in less than 48 hours, giving the people of Dominica little time to secure their property or themselves.

I first heard about an approaching bad weather at a Waitukubuli Writers meeting in Roseau on Saturday afternoon—we were trying to figure out how, when, and where to hold the 10th Annual Nature Island Literary Festival. At that point Maria was nameless, and I wasn’t especially concerned, so I passed the grocery store straight in my rush to get home before dark. Although my heart went out to other islanders whose lives were affected by Hurricane Irma a week previously, I took my usual fatalistic approach to natural disaster: let’s wait and see.

I haven’t had a TV in 25 years, and the Internet wasn’t working on Sunday, so I couldn’t check the storm’s coordinates. Truth be told, I was busy with the weekly blog on my website and the report for the Lit Fest and didn’t think to shop for groceries. It wasn’t until Monday morning that I realized Maria had escalated to a Category 2 hurricane and was a definite threat to Dominica. By then it was too late to risk dashing out for supplies. Glued to the radio, my partner John and I secured our home and belongings the best we could while various disaster management personnel advised the public of the dire situation. A long list of hurricane shelters was announced repeatedly, but for me there is really no other place to go, especially with all my dogs.

By afternoon Maria was a Category 3, and Prime Minister Skerritt was on the air begging people to forget about stocking up on food and get to shelter immediately. John and I hurried to complete preparations—by 6 PM the outside shutters were nailed shut, breakables and electronic equipment were stashed away, and important documents were in a safe place. Maria, now a Category 4 hurricane, was likely to make a direct hit on Dominica, we were told. As she stalked steadily forward, people and dogs congregated in the cast concrete garage under the house and waited to take our blows.

We continued to listen to the radio as Maria escalated to a Category 5. It was predicted to arrive around 8 PM with sustained winds of 175 MPH; I later learned that there were gusts up to 255 MPH. When the antenna blew off the DBS radio station, it

went off the air, but we probably couldn’t have heard anything anyway. For the next three hours, wind shrieked like a banshee, growled like an enraged bear, and howled like a dying dog. Sequestered in the transport in the dark, we could only imagine what was going on outside. At one point the garage door blew off, and stinging white rain drove inside in horizontal sheets. Thunder boomed and lightning flashed while I held onto the steering wheel for dear life. I may have even uttered a prayer as Maria attempted to suck the jeep backwards into her churning vortex.

When the eye of the storm arrived about 10:30pm, I ventured outside with my flashlight. Hopefulness morphed into a sense of helplessness at first glance. Most of the upstairs hurricane shutters were ripped off, and the veranda roof and railing were gone. Crawling up the steps, I soon realized that the main roof of the house was also partially missing; stars shone through the rafters, and the place was flooded. A couple of solar panels had fallen inside, and artwork and books were strewn everywhere. I could see a light blinking far across the valley. John said it was probably a soukouyan looking for somebody’s blood to suck, but I figured it was just another bewildered soul trying to make sense of what had just passed.

The roaring started up again around midnight. Since there was obviously nothing I could do about it, I scurried back to what I trusted was safe. To my mind, the second half of the hurricane was worse than the first. What was damaged by phase 1 would surely be demolished by phase 2. After Maria finished with Dominica around 2 AM, the agonizing four hours that remained before daylight felt like four years.

Hoping for the best but fearing the worst, I waited for the dawn. In the interim, my mind spiraled back to other disasters I’d suffered through since moving to the Caribbean. Besides my brief, ruinous marriage to my Dominican husband, there were Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn in 1995. Hurricane Lenny arrived from the west by sea in 1999 after I had moved to the mountains, so I wasn’t really affected. Élas. Fate wasn’t finished with me yet. My dream house burned to the ground in 2000. We rebuilt soundly, and, when Hurricane Dean passed in 2007, mashing up crops and roads, there was no structural harm to my residence. Then, in 2015, Tropical Storm Erika did massive damage to the infrastructure of the island; thirty people were killed by flood and mudslide. The road to my home at River Ridge was blocked by landslide for over a month, but the house stood strong. But this monster called Maria, this bitch, was something else altogether.

Tuesday

When dawn finally arrives, eerily silent after the cacophony that raged overnight, I emerge into the unknown like a butterfly from a cocoon. You think you are prepared for anything, and

then your entire world falls apart. The paradise that was supposedly created by the Lord God in six days appears to have been totally destroyed in six hours, and my previous sense of helplessness sinks into a sense of hopelessness with no sign of relief in sight.

There is an expression for daybreak in certain parts of the Caribbean: “dayclean.” When I venture outside in the early morning hours after Maria that is exactly how the world strikes me. It’s as if the abundance of the tropics has been power washed away and a forsaken, mist-covered moonscape has taken its place. The dogs are similarly disoriented as they sniff for familiar scents and attempt to mark this alien territory as their own. A disorganized colony of bats flits back and forth, still looking for shelter even though the sun has risen. The limited birds that greet the dawn are also confused. A lone hawk floats overhead while flocks of unsettled parrots survey the drastically altered scene. A couple of bullfinches, banana quits, and one kingbird chirp uncertainly while a desperate hummingbird tries to suck juice from carambola fruit that lies rotting on the ground.

When I lift my eyes to the hills, I can see for miles across the ravaged countryside. I feel as if I could reach out and touch houses and landmarks that used to be invisible. My magnificent mountain view has virtually disappeared. Lofty Morne Diablotin, Dominica’s tallest mountain, once cloaked in luxurious green, now stands stark and naked in the distance, stripped clean of vegetation. Morne Couronne, the double mountain across the Neiba River from my home, more resembles an eroded ski slope than a pristine tropical forest. A landslide accompanied by a brand new waterfall has occurred at the top, and the angry and log-jammed river at its base is running murky brown instead of crystal clear. A few battered tree trunks, completely defoliated and uniformly broken off at a height of about 50 feet, remain standing. Their fallen companions are strewn across the ridges and ravines like insignificant matchsticks. But where are the old giants, the ancient hardwoods of the true rainforest? My heart sinks when I realize that none of them survived. Huge balls of matted earth, broken stone, and severed roots lay bolt upright and perpendicular to the ground to mark their final resting place.

A more technical aspect of the disaster dawns on me when I shift my attention to the ruins of my former home. With no roof in place, rainwater cascades through the wooden floor from upstairs to downstairs; unless I act fast, there won’t be any chance of saving what is below either. To make matters worse, bat guano is pouring down the walls like stinking manna from heaven. And so I start shifting and mopping. I realize it’s useless—water is coming in much faster than I can soak it up—but at least it’s *something* to do.

At dusk, dogs and people line up for supper. Because I neglected to pack in extra supplies, including dogfood, we dine on fallen avocados and Crix crackers. Because the mattresses are wet, we sleep in the transport again tonight. But of course no one but the dogs rests very well.

Wednesday

John cleans out the garage for a place to cook, eat, and sleep. He installs the semi-dry mattress from the guesthouse while I literally wade through the upstairs to try to save books, artwork, and electronic equipment. The report from the road, when it finally arrives, is as expected: We are blocked inside by landslide on both the main and the feeder road, so there is no hope of obtaining emergency rations. I let the chickens go maroon before we settle down, exhausted, to a supper of rice, baked beans, and grapefruit juice spiked with the last of the rum. We have no means of communication or transportation, no lights, and no help, but I have the distinct feeling plenty of hard work is ahead.

Thursday

Parrots continue to search for food while helicopters hover overhead, presumably to take pictures of Maria’s destruction. And believe me, there are plenty of photo opportunities. Adjacent to the skeleton of my house, a huge African tulip tree has compromised the bridge. Beyond that, other fallen trees, broken phone poles, and scraps of disfigured galvanized roofing litter the driveway up to the feeder road. From there it’s anybody’s guess. Even if the road is clear past the landslide to the village of Layou Park, then what? The Chinese bridge to the west coast has never been opened, and the other direction is blocked by a fresh landslide covering the one that was never properly addressed since TS Erika. Even if we could get out, I’m sure there’s no possibility of sourcing groceries or building materials anywhere on the island.

Around 10 AM, Max, a young man from the village who sometimes works with us, arrives on foot to help John try to repair the roof on the guesthouse so there will be somewhere decent to put ourselves and the things we manage to salvage. But progress is minimal. Many of the galvanized sheets that have blown off the roof are in the river or damaged beyond hope, nails are in short supply, and there’s no roof putty. In the meantime, I continue to mop and sweep and sort. It’s a bright, clear day, good for getting clothes and books dried out but bad for sunburn and dehydration. Gazing out from the upstairs veranda, I assess Maria’s work. Most of the citrus and coconut trees on my property have been flattened, breadfruit and breadnut trees are gone, and the vegetable garden is nonexistent. Eden is indeed broken. More disturbingly, trash from John’s shack at the end of the driveway, as well debris from those of my nearest neighbors, litters the pathetic landscape like a filthy manmade blight.

Friday

Helicopters continue to pass over on a regular basis, but we have no idea why. I find out later they are looking for me! Max says the homeless villagers in Layou Park have moved to the hotel on the corner, but there is no electricity, no water, and the shops are completely empty of food. Fortunately, here at River Ridge, the propane fridge is functional and so are a couple of



gas lamps. The pump has stopped working, but the swimming pool is fine for sponge bathing, laundry, washing dishes, and flushing the toilet, and so far the river water is okay to drink. I have picked up baskets of grapefruits, oranges, and avocados, and we have provisions like dasheen and tania in the ground. The dogs are learning to eat green bananas and dry coconut mixed with some rice and a bit of their regular kibble. A parcel of chicken breasts stolen from the abattoir is a welcome gift from a Rasta neighbor, but I'm already dying for a fresh green salad.

Saturday

The river keeps changing its course as if it too is looking for a way to escape. As rain starts to fall, I realize that most of my hard work has been in vain. Books that I thought were safely stored in the office are soaked through as water drips relentlessly through the cracks in the ceiling. Clothes in the closet, mattresses, and bedding, all of which I thought were well dry, get wet again. The garage is jam-packed, and the guesthouse roof isn't totally repaired, so there's really no place else to put things. When I have no more strength to carry belongings hither and fro, I break down and cry for the first time in a week.

Sunday

We christen today as one of well-deserved rest. John makes a nice soup with chicken and some packaged egg noodles for lunch. Afterwards, I figure out how to plug the radio into the cigarette lighter of the jeep only to hear evangelists calling Hurricane Maria the devil's work on the air. Why? There is no portable water in town, 45 people are missing or confirmed dead, there is looting in and around Roseau, and there have been 40 arrests for violating the curfew. In other words, Dominican people are desperate and hungry.

Suddenly my sense of isolation turns into a sense of freedom. I have water in the river and food in the ground, and no one is trying to rob me. Furthermore, I believe, given a chance, the earth knows how to heal itself. Imagine: I'm already beginning to see signs of natural rejuvenation, and luckily I, too, am still alive. For me, then, Hurricane Maria represents a wakeup call—a chance to stand back, get my priorities straight, and make adjustments where necessary—one day, week, month, or, God spare, one year at a time.

To Be Continued... ʘ

The pump has stopped working, but the swimming pool is fine for sponge bathing, laundry, washing dishes, and flushing the toilet, and so far the river water is okay to drink.



Vladimir Lucien:

What I Inherited from Derek Walcott

An Interview with Opal Palmer Adisa

Opal Palmer Adisa: *How has your poetry been influenced by Derek Walcott?*

Vladimir Lucien: Hmm. I suppose the influence may be more than I account for, but it was substantial enough for me to have written one never-to-be-seen-again full collection of poetry before *Sounding Ground* where one of the criticisms levelled at it, by those who saw it, was the overweening influence of Walcott. But I think his influence can be easily located in my rapacious appetite for good imagery, for good metaphors—both good imagistic—and in how one phrases them in the poem. In many cases these form the kernel, the seed of many of my poems. I think I was also early on influenced by his taste in poets. I have a great love, for instance, for Phillip Larkin, which I am almost sure I inherited from Derek after reading his essay on Larkin in *What the Twilight Says*. Same goes for Robert Lowell. (I am re-reading Larkin right now).

Did you ever meet Derek and what were your thoughts of the man, his poetry?

I've met Derek on many occasions though I'm sure his count would be way less than mine! The first time I ever met Derek was in January of the year 2000 when I was acting in a minor role in a play of his directed by my high school drama teacher, *Malcochon* or *Six in the Rain*. Evidently, I had delivered a great performance to his liking, as, at the end of the play, I was the only member of cast he summoned and was made to take pictures with him outside. His partner, Sigrid Nama, took the pictures. Days later, I called his house asking whether I could get a copy, goaded by my father, and he was kind of grumpy and may have hung up on me. (I may have called too early!?) So I don't have the hard evidence of that meeting. Before that I may have sneaked up behind him, temporarily mystified when he was painting in a pasture across the street from the Catholic Church I attended. In his later years, literally the last few years of his life, I was invited a couple times to informal readings he hosted with visiting writer-friends and a few other gatherings. Anyway, my thoughts on Derek? I think he is one of the world's unimpeachably great poets and, believe

it or not, there is still some profound astonishment in being able to say that and then thinking of the small roads on St. Lucia, the corrugated iron roofs of old Castries, the bare-backed life of the fisherfolk, the anonymous bush around my house. And it is not that he is *better* than all that. It's just that the fact that he is referred to, and has been accepted as a great poet, is really a bridge over at least one of the ways it has meant to be Caribbean-in-the-world: all the tortured stories one has heard of having to read about places, flowers, legends, and heroes strictly from far away is literally no more. I mean it's there, but some kid in England is reading Derek Walcott, is doing his work for Cambridge A level examinations or something no matter what bigoted ideas they may have about our small, unimportantly beautiful island. That is a hell of a thing.

As for the man—I think there is a crude way of speaking about people nowadays, when our main concern tends to be 'causes,' 'issues'. More and more you can tell that as far as people... as far as human life is concerned, the nature of life of Earth—we are becoming more ignorant, even as we become more erudite and titillated by our respective causes. That's my preface. I can only speak of Derek from what my own deep looking, my own stolen gawking at him, unearthed. A man full of passion for what he devoted his life to, a man easily overcome by the beauty of the world-in-the-raw, and the refined world of art. Another thing, and this may be my own mythmaking but I stand by it: There is this local conception of Shabin-people in St. Lucia, people with a certain kind of mixture of white and black (and I mean a really particular kind acknowledged by local people in the way the idea of an octoroon is particular). The notion is there in Chamoiseau's *Texaco* too. I won't go into the more prurient aspects of the understanding of Shabin, but I have taken it in its broader sense to refer to a great intensity, a great fervidity, lambent just beneath the skin. Somehow when I looked at Derek, this is what I saw. And that intensity is the intensity of an elemental force, which can be monumentally creative, can be the cause at times of one's undoing, or the undoing of others. I've also had the strong sense that you simply, in some cases, have to accept that you don't get one without the other. Fire both cooks your food and burns your house down. Kamau says as much in the prelude to *Arrivants*. If my point is somewhat obscure here, it is better left that way.

What drives your poetry?

That is a really interesting question. What I can say is I would've answered that question quite differently before *Sounding Ground*. Some time after *SG* was published—I had just come back from Jamaica actually where I was writer-in-residence at UWI—I sat with an elder poet at one of my favourite parts of the island, which is the causeway at Pigeon Island. It was a weird conversation because we had met there without clearly saying to each other what we were supposed to be talking about or meeting for. Somehow the meeting was implicitly a completion of an earlier conversation but we had not made this clear on the phone when making arrangements. At some point in the conversation, I pointed to a lonely outcrop out in the sea and said to him “What if poetry was that outcrop, what then would it be?” Immediately after asking the question, I wondered what the heck did I mean? It was almost like—not to be unduly mystical about it but—it was almost like I had not uttered it. But my question was not concerning poetry's utility in the hidebound leftist way in which that question is often asked nor what's its 'worth'. I was thinking of this rock not in the context of social or environmental affairs or geographical. I was thinking of it within the entire universe when I said that. This conversation sent me feverishly into a lot of studies surrounding creativity, craft, and spirituality that has me moving further and further away from a decidedly 'social' vision of poetry's existence or utility, though I believe it is 'social' as well, but social operating within a wider category. These studies into what I had been doing, what this thing indeed *is*, led me into a space of great certainty of the necessity of its existence and its relationship to our experience of this world. I certainly know, when I come to write, am animated by a deeply personal sense of poetry's place in the world, and am left without the pressure I think that is there now in the world, and has always hung around us in the Caribbean, of having to quantify the change that such things are making, or to trace the contours of its impact, or justify it in this way. It is as legitimate a child of this world, of the universe, to me, as that outcrop. As the most beautiful, or the most criminal aspects of *nature*. So there is a sense of deep personal satisfaction and at-homeness in poetry that was not there before. It reminds me of a line by Baudelaire, this feeling I have. Paraphrasing here:

Let us be two little girls, / in love with nothing and awed by everything, / not knowing we've been forgiven everything.

Given the recent destruction that hurricanes Irma and Maria caused in the eastern Caribbean, the vulnerability of the Caribbean has been fully revealed. As a poet, do you examine climate change and other ecology issues?

Well, no, I don't examine climate change as a poet. As a citizen of the Caribbean, as someone currently living here, I find it absolutely frightening. I am teaching Octavia Butler's *Parable of*

the Sower now, and I keep telling my students that literally this kind of desperation, this kind of dystopia can be created overnight. And it is the hurricane/*hurucan* I have on my mind mostly when thinking about that. Or earthquakes. But no, I've written no poems about it and I don't expect any soon. But who knows? I'd say two things though. One—two years ago, in Jamaica, I was in St. Mary, at a session on Asante religion and we were discussing the cosmos. And there was a manifestation, and in discussing calamity and so on, someone asked about global warming and the explanation for that and how it reconciled with the vision of the universe, the trajectory we had been discussing. The manifestation, the God manifesting in one of the persons around us had said, “Because it is time.” That could either be a cop out, or it could simply be true. In the spiritual tradition I'm affiliated with, chaos, destruction walks abreast with human growth and the green earth, so it is at some level and isn't at another, a matter of blame and finger pointing at bad capitalists etc. As if in our daily, maybe more private, life we don't exhibit the impulse we see on a grander scale with bad-minded capitalists! We sometimes facilely seem to need a Satan. What was chastening about the response though is that it removed human beings from the centre of the narrative of Earth, or at least integrated us so fully that we failed to be important, failed to be special. Secondly, I think a paradox that personally exists for me regarding the environment is, even within my nature-relishing heart, one of my 'spiritual homes', one of my nodal points in the landscape of St. Lucia, is the Pigeon Island Causeway, which from some accounts was a disaster on many levels. It was built by a Jamaican (that is in no way meant to logically connect to the disaster!) named Matalon. It interrupted the life of Gros Islet, where my family is from—the life of the fishermen and women whose children eventually became dependent on menial tourism work due in part to this interruption. People died building it, I believe. I care deeply about human life. Social issues, social injustice rankles me. Gros Islet is in great decline, turning into a veritable ghetto. At one point, I wanted to tear the sign: “Moses Matalon Causeway” down. I am always deeply, emotionally moved by and grateful for the healthy Earth—in a palpable way! BUT!

But yet it is a place where I find myself spiritually, imaginatively, and intuitively liberated—the Causeway. And I love sitting on the rocks, looking out at Martinique, and feeling the sea spray on my face. This is an infinitesimal account of the amount of such paradoxical overlap there is in the riddle of human life, in all our lives. This is where I feel all *isms* fall secretly prostrate before Life, even while they go off, fatuously proclaiming the rightness and symmetry of their theories, which are only sound if they pretend that the ever-increasing amount and naturalness of entropy that exists in the world is non-existent. They themselves are deniers! So, if I were to tackle 'the environment' as an isolated issue, as a

I am
always deeply,
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the healthy
Earth...

poet, it would have to reflect such dynamic interweaving. I'd definitely see my job as a poet as separate from—though no more essential than—any programme or movement to help save our environment.

The Caribbean has produced a great many acclaimed poets given its limited resources, what factors do you think contribute to this outpouring?

Well, my own constant engagement with nature generally, just my own intense observation of things around me, has always affirmed for me the truth that absolutely everything possesses *positive* and *negative* force (not “good” and “bad”). In a recent Netflix special called *Tamborine* I think, Chris Rock, joked about the new ways being rich has changed him. He was enrolling his daughter in some prestigious school and was assured by the teacher that the school has no bullies. At that point, he wanted to get her out of the school, he says. The point he was making was that bullies, apart from themselves as whole persons, are positioned to be necessary adversities against which human pluck is honed. I'm not championing bullying, but I can't subscribe to such a narrow idea of *dynamic* human life that believes in arrantly expunging adversity, especially what presents itself quite clearly as *manageable* adversity. I've lately been able to find and thus marry that philosophy of mine to a spiritual tradition in which, interestingly, the figure that represents such adversity, such confounding of human situations, had been characterised by Western and Western-minded persons as the Devil, as that tradition's equivalent of Satan. So there you go. These two philosophies produce two different visions of the world. One that is able to balance in their minds the inter-workings of positive and negative and one that thinks the two must fight and one emerge victorious, the other obliterated. It's amazing how much the latter has taken root amongst the Caribbean and black people, even though it is so pungently redolent of colonialism. Anyway, the Caribbean has and will continue to produce great poets particularly because of palpable limitation, of the need to show a dexterity in dealing with tumultuous, dynamic life. St. Lucia for example reminds us of how small we are, with how massive and indifferent its mountains, its landscape is. That immediately sends one to poetry, into an activity that is devoted to human expansion and celebration. Limitation comes in many forms, so in no way does visible deprivation or desperation or smallness *necessarily* give way to great poets. The question is also about that poet's attitude, that person's attitude, toward necessary adversity.

You wear many hats: writer, critic, and actor, and your first collection of poetry, *Sounding Ground*, won the Caribbean region's major literary prize for anglophone literature, the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, making you the youngest ever winner of the prize. How has this award changed your life and your approach to poetry?

Well, since winning the prize, I've travelled quite a bit. Yet, some of the places I've been invited to, the persons hadn't known about me winning the prize, or of the prize, until I sent my bio in which it was mentioned. The prize has done a lot for me and was tremendously affirming. At this point, however, I can't say that is on my mind. If anything, I am trying to get past it. Since the publication of *Sounding Ground*, and its winning the prize, and in between travelling and festivals, I feel like I've been internally and spiritually underground, or working with some very basic implement, like a hoe or something. What I mean is that I feel like I've started all over again—though of course I haven't—but yes. And it's always been this way with me. I'm always challenging myself to get deeper into what I'm doing, or I feel really antsy. I hate being staid, being stationary, or mediocre for that matter and am an extremely harsh and excoriating critic of myself as a person, as a poet or whatever else. So I've probably written *Sounding Ground's* most scathing critique somewhere in my head, Bocas prize or not! I guess that will allow me to face what anyone else may unflatteringly have to say about it! I also secretly compete fervidly with great poets both contemporary and canonical. A race that I may never win, but the process is what counts.

What are you working on now?

Still somewhat underground. I am speaking of a feeling here. I've been writing quite a bit of criticism, a lot of which has been appearing online, and I've been enjoying that. I've been enjoying some down time in which I feel like there is little pressure to produce anything, so I've been reading and reading and relishing so much beauty. But what has been a major development for me is (finally) a routine. Part writing routine, part reading routine and I suppose part 'thinking' routine. I go to bed quite early, like 8:30 for the latest, and wake up at 3:30 every morning and sometimes write (everything from fiction to poetry to criticism or creative non-fiction or even just thoughts, aphorisms), sometimes read for pleasure, sometimes go out on the verandah and lay in the hammock and just observe the night and the sunrise. I don't know what to tell you I'm working on, but I'm in a good place.

I'm always challenging myself to get deeper into what I'm doing, or I feel really antsy.

Do you remember the first poem you wrote? When did you know or decide that you were a poet?

I don't remember, you know. What I do remember is the first time my father read one of the many things I wrote after A levels and finally commented on one of them. He wrote, and in my mind, is a gifted poet. He had a trophy from one of the better local poetry competitions and I grew up telling friends when they asked, "What does your dad do?" I'd say, "He works for Cable and Wireless and is a poet!" I didn't know what it meant. I associate it with a man we used to see near our home, very quiet man named Reinville, who my mother once told me was "an artist fella." And that mystified me, left me with a kind of awe. He attained the status of something taboo, something set aside, mysterious, but somehow powerful. I now know that Reinville is also, maybe less romantically, a graphic designer with a local printing company. Anyway, when my Dad picked up a poem I had written—and I wrote it on the Causeway—when he picked it up and said, "I read your poem *The Tide*. Good work." Something like that—I think that was all the permission I needed and from just the person I needed it from. *ℓ*

Vladimir Lucien is an actor, writer, and critic from St. Lucia. His work has been published in several regional and international journals such as *Wasafiri*, *PN Review*, *Washington Square Review*, *The Caribbean Review of Books*, and, most recently, *VOGUE Magazine's* first poetry anthology. *Sounding Ground*, his first collection of poetry, won the 2015 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. Lucien is one of the editors of *Sent Lisi: Poems and Art from St. Lucia* (2016) and screenwriter of the documentary *The Merikins* (2016).

For The Sweet Soul of Scarlettte

for Scarlettte Beharie

"Let death not find us thinking that we die." - Martin Carter

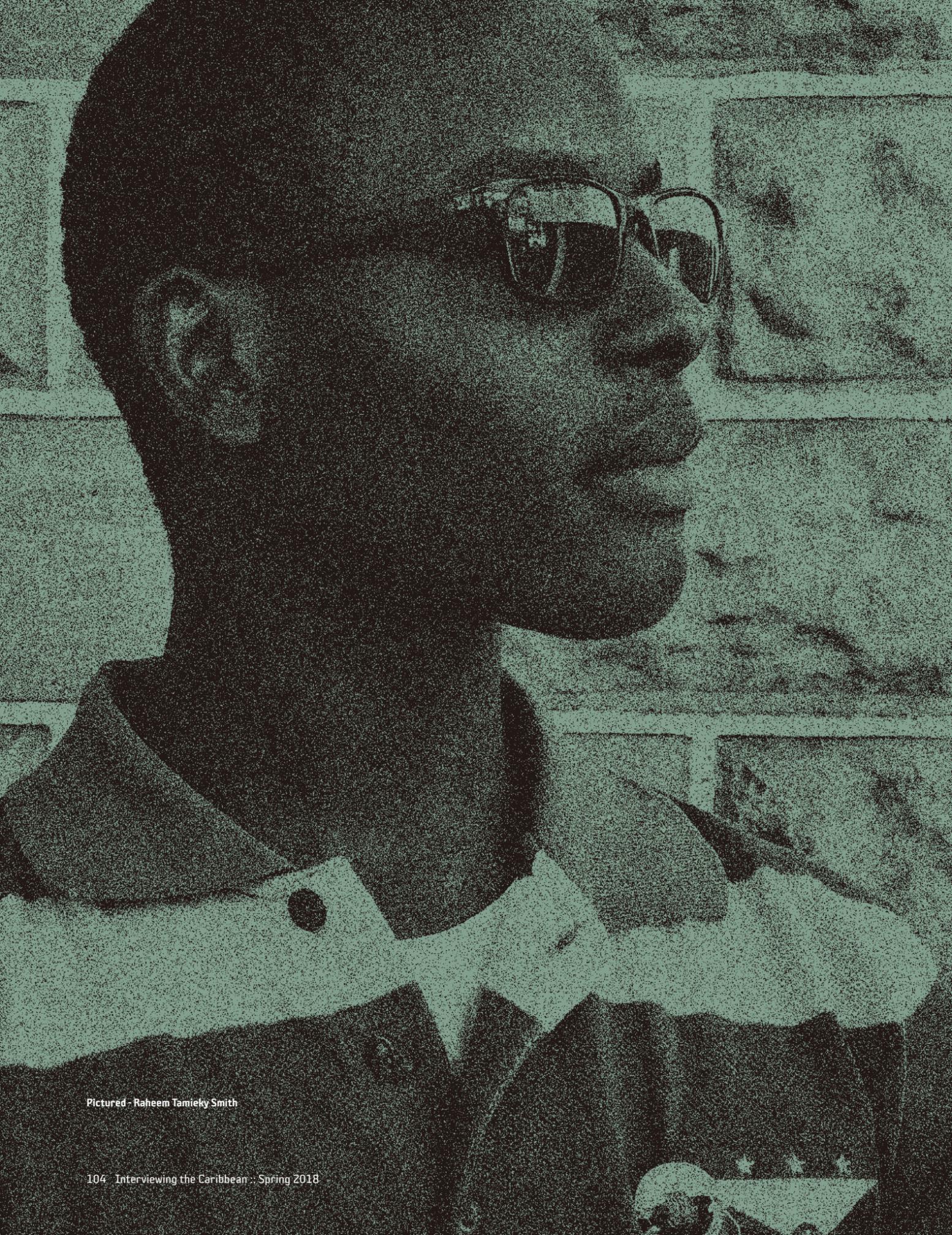
I met you, sweet girl, walking down that sullen hill.
I met you with the evening already entering your hair,
with cancer like a thousand crickets crouched
in your blood announcing the poisoned night.
But your heart, still broad and busy as Hope road,
your laughter like a hummingbird rising out some flower
too beautiful to worry over the time or the hour.

Come again to us, sweet soul, like that laughter
awakening something inside us, smearing itself upon us like sequins;
Come to us like those butterflies softening Kingston's hard stares of Zinc
Come Scarlettte, round some bend, through some UWI doorway,
from the circular rising of Edna's amphitheater, your laughter
preceding you as usual, making us happy long before we see you.
Again.

Here, after

after D.W. 1930- 2017

I look sometimes to a thing, knowing
that you've loved or praised it and try
to find you—the contours of your praise—
in it. A light-acknowledged leaf, your vain sea
name-dropping you in the salt of your absence.
The whole hot island crowding you like your adorers:
glib mist hanging over Grande
Riviere, rutted laughter of a dirt
road in Cas-en-Bas, some wry,
Dennerly hillside in dry-season.
And here, after you, when my own words
come, eager like a mongoose to scurry across
the page, I too rummage the air
for approval, praise. Some
of Earth's things may nod, some tree
may burst into brief bird-applause.
In its own silence, the line pauses,
searches for the thermal, perches
on some rough-barked doubt
and—knowing you are neither here
nor there—takes off into wholly inattentive air.



Emerging Poets Featuring our Youth

Celebrating Caribbean Culture and Life

By Raheem Tamiiky Smith

The Caribbean region has a lot to tell, its historic culture dates back
Since wen my great, great-Grandma was ten.
From leeward to windward,
greater to lesser.
Each island is special
with its own unique culture.

For instance, look at Grenada
their national dish called oil down
With bread fruit and a range
of local ingredients, including dumpling,
with a glass of lime juice to enjoy
or the folklore stories and songs
told to the young ones bout brada agouti and Anansi
or the spirits dat lived in the forest
like de Lajabless and papa bois.
And wah bout the men and women
with their tattered foot
starting the process as they dance
in de cocoa pot row by row?
To make chocolate and cocoa ball?
That, my friends, is some very unique history.

The Caribbean region has a lot to show,
the early native Amerindians inhabited this region
and have been very influential.
Why, look at us today.
We are who we are because these
native colonizers.
We barbeque, we wear ornaments and we play football too,
but let us not forget our African ancestors
who took the lash for our black backs.
Working in the cane fields
they served the white planters,
paving the way for the future and for
Their freedom.

Celebrating for joy with our big drum festivals
and our regattas taking to the sea
For as Caribbeans
we are free
to express our identity.

Our carnival is a story for itself
throughout the region each country
take to the streets
with beautiful bright colours of masqueraders
and jabjab dancing to the funky beat
of calypso and soca.
Pledging allegiance to our flags and countries
as we strive and work together
to help one another
as a Caribbean Community
and a Caribbean Family.

Pictured - Raheem Tamiiky Smith

This Is Who We Are

(Pollution in the Caribbean)

By Raheem Tamiesty Smith

This is who we are,
a people, a nation, the Caribbean region.
United together as one
we are the gems of the Caribbean.
All struggling to fight one situation: 'pollution'.
Wait, gems of the Caribbean?
How can we be the gems of the Caribbean
When our islands are used as garbage bins,
and our own oceans are used as landfills?
Listen my people.
Listen my friends.
Give me a listening ear, and
do not be surprised by what you are about to hear.
We go to the beach.
We relax on the sand,
but, at the end of the day,
the beach transforms into a plastic wasteland.
We fish for a living, yes, that is true
but my people, who destroyed the fish habitat, not you?
Look at Barbados, the island of the flying fish,
Flag flaunting blue enveloping gold
for the Seraph Sea and sandy beaches
But the water can be chemically discolored and smelly.
Look at Jamaica (rastafari)
but if you think Jamaica is out of the pie
that is a big lie.

Fish and fringing reef are dying
from waters poisoned by mining bauxite.
Look Grenada in the south,
the isle of spice
where everything is pure and nice,
but how can everything be so nice
with pollution in paradise.
The streets are filled with garbage
to the left and right.
Surely, this cannot be a tourism sight.
If we go on like this,
the future is in trouble.
If we continue to pollute papa god saltwater
and ochro land,
what is going on the dinner table?
What good is it calling ourselves
Caribbean people
when we destroy our home?
Keeping our oceans clean,
caring for the beaches and land
is all part of who we are.
We have to take pride in ourselves.
We have to act.
Now, let us rally, rethink,
and respond to this situation.
Take a stand for our ocean,
take a stand for our land,
take a stand to our health,
and take a stand for the Caribbean.
We depend on the ocean and land to survive,
and for the quality of our lives.
Let me ask you ask you a question:
Can the ocean and land depend on us?

Books

By Raheem Tamiesty Smith

Filled with fun and adventure,
you create excitement in every
chapter. You fill my appetite
with your delicious words
and make me crave more.
Why, then, do we not like to read?
You, books, set the stage to succeed.
Your musty smell makes me happy.
I have tasted none better,
and I read, knowing some day you will tell my story.

Raheem Tamiesty Smith lives on the beautiful island of Grenada, has a passion for poetry, and loves to serve the Lord. Raheem, 16 years old, attends the Grenada Boys Secondary School. His future endeavor is to be a leading Caribbean poet and to be the Secretary General for the United Nations.

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The Daily News, Tuesday, June 21, 1994



Photo by ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ted Seymour of St. Croix smiles outside historic South Street Seaport in New York City, where he was honored Monday for being the first African-American to sail around the world alone.

St. Croix resident Seymour honored in N.Y. for sailing around world solo

WINNER OF PRIZES:

Catherine James Poetry Prize Judge, *IC* Editorial Team

Juleus Ghunta

Ghunta's *Wounds* and *Leaving* have a sharp honesty, yet searing; both the language and the content are real, riveting, demanding the reader's attention. He takes us to the abuse and forces to ask ourselves: what are we going to do about it.

Orlando M. Palmer Prose Prize Judge, *IC* Editorial Team

Malica S. Willie

A good writer does not insert judgment into her work, but rather presents scenarios, which if presented with dexterity, will force the reader to reflect and ask him or herself what is my part in this? Am I complicit? Malica S. Willie's *Swinging in the Wind* does just that and more.

Lloyd Walcott Visual Art Prize Judge, Dwayne Shaw

Robin Clare

Clare's work feels today. Much of the art I see from the diaspora feels rooted in history, both visually and theoretically. This feels new somehow.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

André Alexis and Erna Brodber - Winners of the 2017 Windham-Campbell Prizes (Fiction) offered by Yale University

Lorna Goodison - Winner of the 2018 Windham-Campbell Prizes (Poetry) offered by Yale University

Kei Miller - Winner of the 2017 French Price Carbet, for his novel *By the rivers of Babylon* (Zulma)

Congratulations to Kwame Dawes, one of three new Chancellors at the Academy of American Poets—an honorary position that has been held by some of the most distinguished poets in the United States

THE 2017 OCM BOCAS PRIZE FOR CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

Poetry: *Cannibal*, by Safiya Sinclair (University of Nebraska Press)

Fiction: *Augustown*, by Kei Miller (Weidenfeld and Nicolson)

Non-Fiction: *Virtual Glimpses into the Past/A Walk Back in Time: Snapshots of the History of Trinidad and Tobago*, by Angelo Bissessarsingh (Queen Bishop Publishing)

Esther Phillips - Named Poet Laureate of Barbados

Kamau Brathwaite - Named one of the 2018 Pen American Lifetime Honorees

Anthony Kellman - Awarded the 2018 Casa de la Américas Literary Award in the Category of Anglophone Caribbean Literature for his novel *Tracing JaJa* (Peepal Tree Press, 2016)

Ebony G. Patterson - Selected as one of the 2018 United States Artists

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Interviewing the Caribbean (IC)—seeks poems, stories, creative non-fiction, and visual art in all media that celebrate Caribbean life. Caribbean artists at home and in the Diaspora are invited to participate.

NEXT ISSUE—Winter 2018:

Caribbean Femininity and Masculinity: Gender Justice

Fifty odd years after independence how have Caribbean societies evolved, how has roles changed or remain the same. What is the general attitude about gender roles – womanhood and manhood? With what gender justice issues are Caribbean society grappling? Where do LGTB figure? How are these attitudes hampering or accelerating our development? Seeking work that offers portrayal/ interpretation/analysis of womanhood and manhood and other gender related issues and topics in Caribbean society.

Send work as an MS Word document or images as a TIF, 300 dpi (or higher) resolution to: interviewingthecaribbean@gmail.com

Works are accepted June-September 17, 2018.

Please include a 5-line bio (NO MORE), and a photo of contributor(TIF/300 resolution).

Poetry, Fiction, Articles

All writing for *IC* should be double-spaced with one-inch margins in a Word (.doc) file. For poetry, submit 3-5 poems in a single document. For all other writing you may submit up to 2,500 words.

Visual Art (including photography)

All images for *IC* should be submitted in TIF format (300 dpi or higher). You may submit 3-6 TIFs.

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Hard copies of *Interviewing the Caribbean* can be purchased for \$40 US at www.magcloud.com

"I was always crazy but full of knowledge and constantly gathering knowledge about sailing and the sea... People on tropical islands don't need anyone from the outside, and I noticed that when I came to the St. Croix. I also noticed that when I sailed to the other islands how self-sufficient people are."

– Ted Seymour –

"The work continues to explore my personal porch experiences with an interest in documenting the details and physicality of the porch before they are completely erased from the Bahamian landscape."

– Keisha Oliver –

"...When I come to write, am animated by a deeply personal sense of poetry's place in the world, and am left without a pressure I think that is there now in the world, and has always hung around us in the Caribbean, of having to quantify the change that such things are making, or to trace the contours of its impact, or justify it in this way."

– Vladimir Lucien –

"I just write what I feel. It's usually something that flashes across my mind. I will get up out of my sleep and write my poems as thoughts flash through my head."

– Richard Schrader –

"For us men who are advocating against violence, we need to ask ourselves some serious questions as we advocate for what I believe is really gender justice. These questions incorporate the paradoxes involved when men who already understand masculinity in a specific way are asked to understand it differently."

– Kenio Senior –

"Almost five months since the passage of Hurricane Irma, I am still trying to come to terms with the devastation not only to the environment, buildings, and livelihood of the people of Anguilla, but also, and more importantly, the psychological trauma which, to a great extent, has not been deemed as important as the relief distribution and rebuilding processes."

– Sharon Lake –

"The issue of women has been central to my work. I have had to battle even some of conscious, revolutionary brothers for my own respect and recognition. My collection of poetry, Out of the Shadows, in part, documents this struggle."

– Eintou Pearl Springer –