



# DIASPORA

ONYX/FALL 2005

A BLACK LITERARY & VISUAL ARTS MAGAZINE

A TUE TS STUDENT PUBLICATION

# Letter from the Editor

For this publication the Onyx Board chose the theme "diaspora." The diaspora represents the rich diversity of peoples who originated from Africa. In addition, that word has become a symbol of connection between Black people worldwide. We are connected through our trials and tribulations as people with a common ancestral bond. This past year has included many unfortunate events, with the death of many great leaders including August Wilson, John Johnson and Rosa Parks; mediocre media coverage of Africa and the AIDS epidemic, despite a worldwide concert; and the hardships brought by Hurricane Katrina. The New Year has the potential to be great, so let's start out the year in a positive manner. Let's use the days of the calendar to acknowledge days past, present and future. Let's draw on the beautiful literary and visual works in this calendar to remember the strength of the African diaspora that binds, connects, supports us, and never fails to give us hope even when times are bleak. With positive feelings of hope for the New Year, I welcome you to enjoy Onyx's first 14-month calendar.

To a Happy New Year with Peace & Blessings,

Dana Phillips  
Editor

## EDITOR

Dana Phillips

## LAYOUT EDITORS

Elaina M. Mendis  
James W. Wiley III

## ARTS EDITORS

Britney Cuffee  
Ragy Routier

## EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Biodun Kajopaiye  
Leila Rush

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# Black

Different Shades, personalities, auras, nationalities-  
categorized as simply being "black"

Yes, but no-

No because

We are...

Butter pecan, dark chocolate, milk chocolate, white chocolate, honey, gold,  
and so much more.

We are...

Intellectual, intelligent, prominent, dominant, shy, reserved, calm, loving, traumatic.

We are...

Happy, sad, angry, hopeful, forgiving, caring.

We are...

African Americans-

New York, New Jersey, New Orleans, California, and more.

West-Indians-

Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Grenada, and more.

Africans-

Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Botswana, South Africa, and more.

We are all these things,

And yet simplified to just being...

Black.

Orla Thompson

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 B.K.'s B-Day (Editorial Asst)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day	26 Hannukah Begins	27	28	29	30	31





Untitled

Naeema Campbell

# January

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29	30	31			<div>December 2005</div> <table> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr> </table> <div>February 2006</div> <table> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
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## CONSTRUCTS



Construction of culture through  
images of the imagined  
the delusional leads to the  
construction of a new race  
unrecognizable to those who have  
escaped.

From the inside, blinded by the  
lights  
they perform, shuck, jive, and  
prostate.

Over-sexualized, exoticized, de-  
humanized,  
packaged, sorted, and  
commercialized,  
each encore cements the fate of  
the new face  
on this once noble race.

Elaina Mercedes Mends

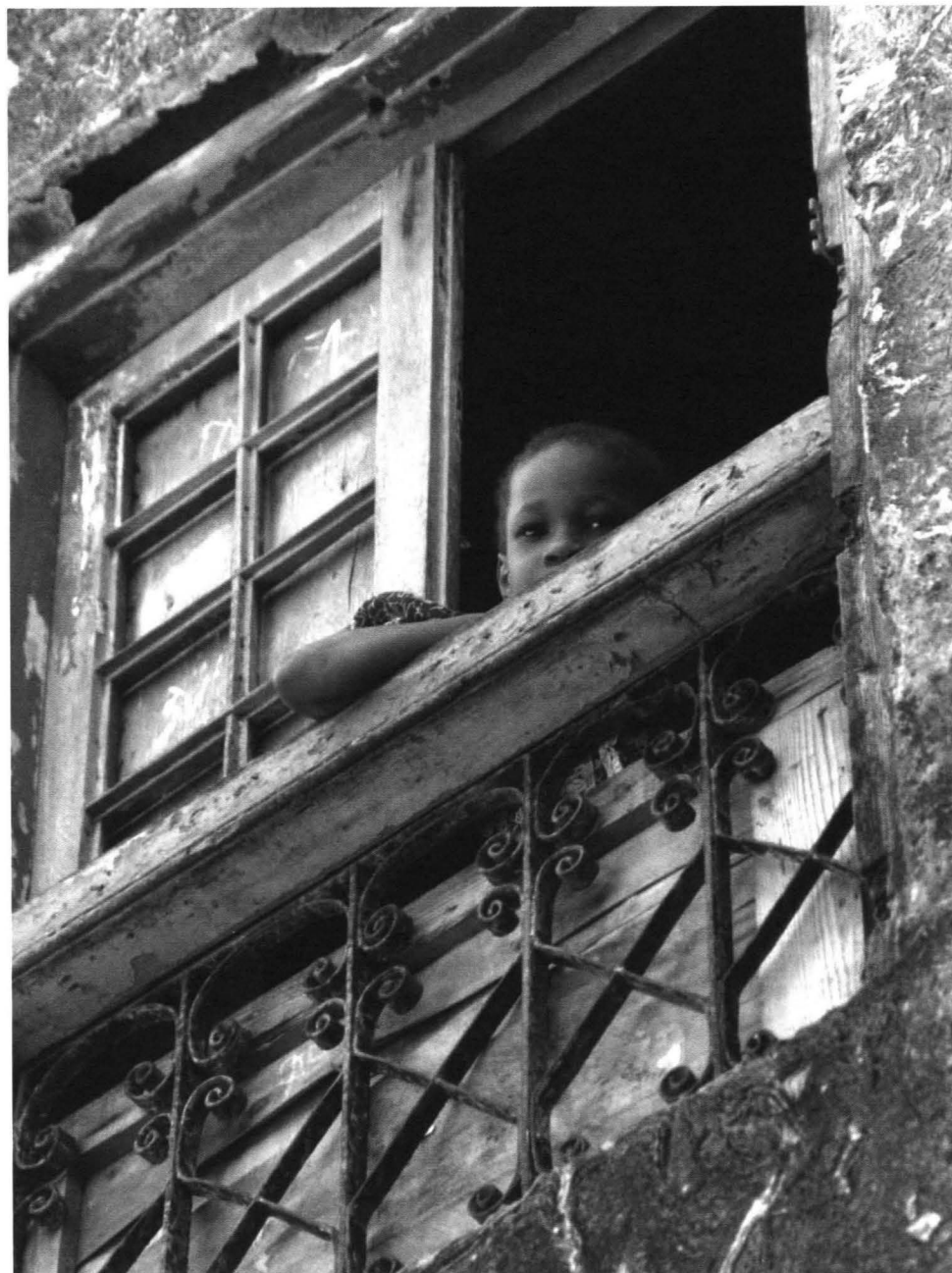


BRITNEY CUFFEE



# February

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Untitled

Julie Furbush

# March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	St. Patrick's Day	25
26	First Day of Spring	28	29	30	31	



# Unspoken

I wish to say the words that were never spoken.  
Keep listening for an unuttered token of grace.  
I bow before the Lord unspoken, but the words of my mind pour out, like a river flowing to a never ending ocean.  
Slow is the transition to what seems so much closer to them.  
I want nothing more than to understand the missing piece in my unending puzzle.  
To be free of pain, not sorrow.  
We grieve to feel a presence no longer with us.

Dreaming only gets us so far, but is it fate that we will arrive at our destination.  
I have searched this earth.

Purging and Feasting  
In the knowledge of ancestor's spirits  
I can only imagine that the faint purple hue of color flowing down my stream would end up in an ocean.

It's funny how the wind blows  
Can turn a storm into sunshine  
Grace the sky with your presence because once you give in  
Temptation and Sin  
You have been defeated.  
He never said it would be easy

And He never said that you would not feel pain  
Hold your head up God's Children  
Now is the time to open the minds of those who have been blinded by devastation

We treat one another like the oppressor to the oppressed  
Should we not stand side by side and Love one another?  
Should we not hear the cry of the people that cry to the sky above?  
Full of self, full of inequity and blasphemy  
Don't you know

They cry with you  
I have come too far to let them take it away  
Falling is not an option

We need to raise our voices, open our eyes, and expend our horizons to what will be a new generation of thinkers

Of artists  
Of life givers  
Of life savers  
Of protectors  
Of Honesty

Calvary  
Yes, he died for us all  
For until I opened my eyes and saw that light you planted in my heart  
I never would have thought that Goodness existed.  
A piece of Heaven given from you is priceless.  
Have mercy  
For we need your grace

Unspoken.

Angela Tierra Anderson

# April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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<b>2</b>  Daylight Savings Time	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>  Palm Sunday	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Passover Begins	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  Good Friday	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>  Easter Sunday	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>  Earth Day
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
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Manual Restraint

Elaina Mercedes Mends

# May

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## SMOOTH

I feel smooth tonight.  
Deep and intelligent.  
I feel like I could say some profound shit to make your head spin  
And wonder how I became  
So smooth.

Unfortunately,  
You won't get the depth of my statements  
You stay on the shallow surface while I drown in the deep end  
Because you won't dive down to give me air  
And make our depth that new surface.

Will anyone come and give me air?  
Save my life by stimulating my mind so my smoothness doesn't go to waste  
Someone please engage me in deeper conversations than the ones about the latest Zane or Dickey novel.  
(not that I didn't enjoy those books - even deep people need a break)

Save me please.  
Talk to me about the direction the black community is going in  
Talk to me about that confusing Toni Morrison novel  
Talk to me about politics, economics,  
Something on my level so I won't drown

Cause drowning would be a waste  
Not only of my mind, my smooth, my depth  
But of your mind too  
Not using all that you have to think, to challenge, to philosophize  
Would make you drown too.  
You can only tread water for so long.

So I'm feeling smooth tonight.  
Deep and intelligent.  
Who is going to swim down to my level so that we survive rather than drown together?

Dana Phillips

# June

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18 Father's Day	19	20	21 First Day of Summer	22	23	24																																																																																											
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## Caught up

In the clever scent of Indian summer I get caught up in the wine like fragrance  
of your shadow, only to pity myself because the weather is not really set for romance,  
but I stay tuned, waiting.  
I maintain my guard against the nature of your eyes,  
for I do not desire to get caught up like fur in a vacuum cleaner.  
Yet thinking of your hips  
as they seductively move, my eyes ache,  
making me feel lost, like a house cat in the forest.  
That's why I do not move.  
Fumbling over the mysteriousness of your lips,  
I watch as they give birth to flowers in the spring.  
I genetically become albino in the way I lather my skin  
so that when you touch me, I suffer no splinters.  
As you ease into laughter I smile to obey the situation  
the same way that darkness obeys the presence of a lamp.  
Refusing to deny myself,  
I desire to fall asleep in your eyes and float down the river that leads to your shadow  
as it eases into the fall,  
isolating the causality of my existence.

Biodun Kajopaiye aka BK



# July

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Independence Day

## All I'll Really Remember

Amongst cattle at the parlor  
after mealtime Tabasco

Coltrane at IRIDIUM was backwoods enough  
for this wanton brother to score some lilacs.

I'm reminded now by that bee  
fluttering still by your wine flute.

Her skirt matched the tablecloth.  
The cloudy hips of a delta.

We wondered aloud  
who had seen life best:

That skillful bastard from Bakersfield,  
his childlike laugh.

That time the native flower  
Cheerfully keeled over.

I never told you, I saw  
through the veil during the sandstorm.

Saw it all, babe.

That day we sweat so hard,

the lamp and the wastebasket in pieces,  
the whole holy world so precariously close

to spontaneously deliquescing,  
that the harbinger of Fall boomed tensile

in our late-summer narcissism.

Percolating memories backwards through those plush backwoods.

As hedonistic and savant  
as a kitten with a jackhammer,

and all I really remember of that bathtub of Virginia night.

James W. Wiley III

# August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<small>July 2006</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small>  <small>1</small> <small>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</small> <small>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</small> <small>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</small> <small>23 24 25 26 27 28 29</small> <small>30 31</small>	<small>September 2006</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small>  <small>1 2</small> <small>3 4 5 6 7 8 9</small> <small>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</small> <small>17 18 19 20 21 22 23</small> <small>24 25 26 27 28 29 30</small>	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 <i>Lella B-Day (Editorial Asst.)</i>
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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27	28	29	30	31		





Playtime

Joshua Clark

# September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<small>August 2006</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small>  <small>1 2 3 4 5</small> <small>6 7 8 9 10 11 12</small> <small>13 14 15 16 17 18 19</small> <small>20 21 22 23 24 25 26</small> <small>27 28 29 30 31</small>	<small>October 2006</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small> <small>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</small> <small>8 9 10 11 12 13 14</small> <small>15 16 17 18 19 20 21</small> <small>22 23 24 25 26 27 28</small> <small>29 30 31</small>				1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6	7	8	9
10 Grandparents Day	11 Patriot Day	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 Rosh Hashanah	23 First Day of Fall
24	25	26	27	28	29	30





Untitled

Laura Berger

# October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  Yom Kippur	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9  Columbus Day Observed	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29  Daylight Savings Time Ends	30	31  Halloween			September 2006 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	November 2006 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

# Blanketface

Who knows the huddled masses, blankets  
piled on passed-by asphalt cardboard, retching for  
fresh air wishing, and wishing and  
always wishing.

Were you a cartwheeler?  
Dealt a circular walk under  
the auspices of road, leading  
to somewhere, to here and to  
nowhere but.

How about a songster?  
Seven times amazed and ranting life  
as though an exuberant funk bonanza  
to be pounded on exotic ceilings  
sans gravitas.

Maybe a youngster?  
At play with the very strangeness,  
the estrangement from life, with  
Leggos and irony and girl's  
short skirts.

A barkeeper, perhaps?  
Doling out shots of affirmation,  
instants of yes that  
lick lips and stick life  
to the living.

Or a fountainer?  
Joyous at the, excited at the very,  
and so elated in the celebration  
of each florid moment and to the sky spitting  
grape seeds.

Who sees the  
nursed by life, the mucky and prime numbered  
in the streets of Philadelphia? The whole empty  
spectrum of Wow fervent in each of the lopsided, accidental days  
they live.

# November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																											
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# December

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31 New Year's Eve																																																																																										

## Verbal Connections

Night time falls  
Evening slowly envelopes the Earth  
I sit alone

Alone to think of my past  
It scares to look backwards  
I wish I could change so many things

Things that hurt  
Memories that cause mental anguish  
I can't change the past

Past the anger  
Past the hurt  
I will rise

Rise above all

All those who doubted

Doubted my ability

Ability

To

Succeed

Ashley Mitchell

2007

## I Think I found God

The gift of life  
Never to be mistaken  
With destiny or fate  
It was by choice  
That I be put here  
Despite the 5% chance  
Numbers meant nothing  
My heart was 20 times greater  
In the pictures that I saw  
Worth more than 1000 words  
In fact they were speechless  
The thought that I could  
Never be  
Never love  
Never live  
Has led me to believe  
That I am special  
One of a kind  
No one can take that away from me  
And no one ever will  
Mark this day, mark my words  
Because today I can honestly say  
That I think I found God.

Leila Rush

# January 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 New Year's Day	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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