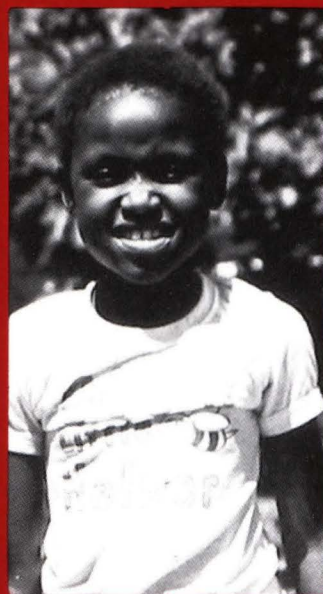


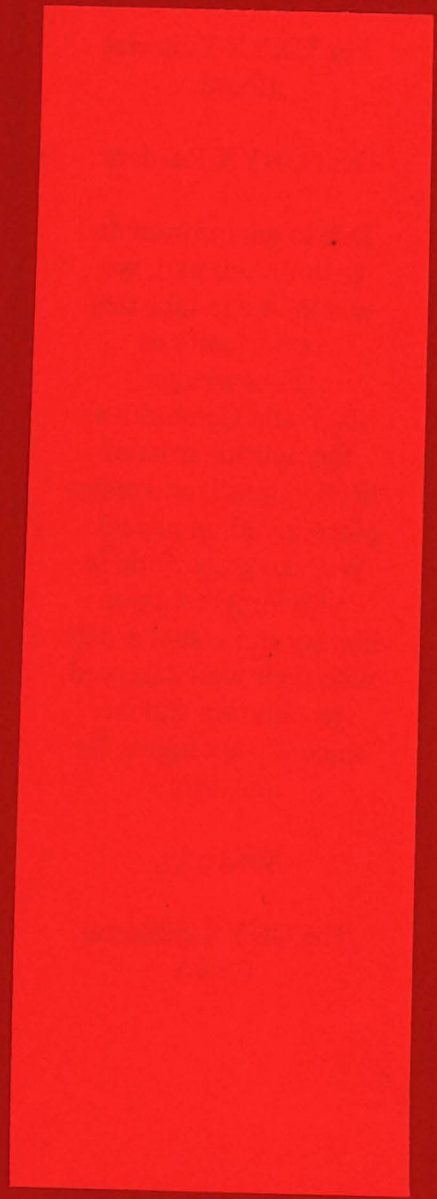
**ONYX
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CLAY CANONS AND EMPTY TRENCHES



**Black Magazine
of
Literary and
Visual Arts**

Spring 2002



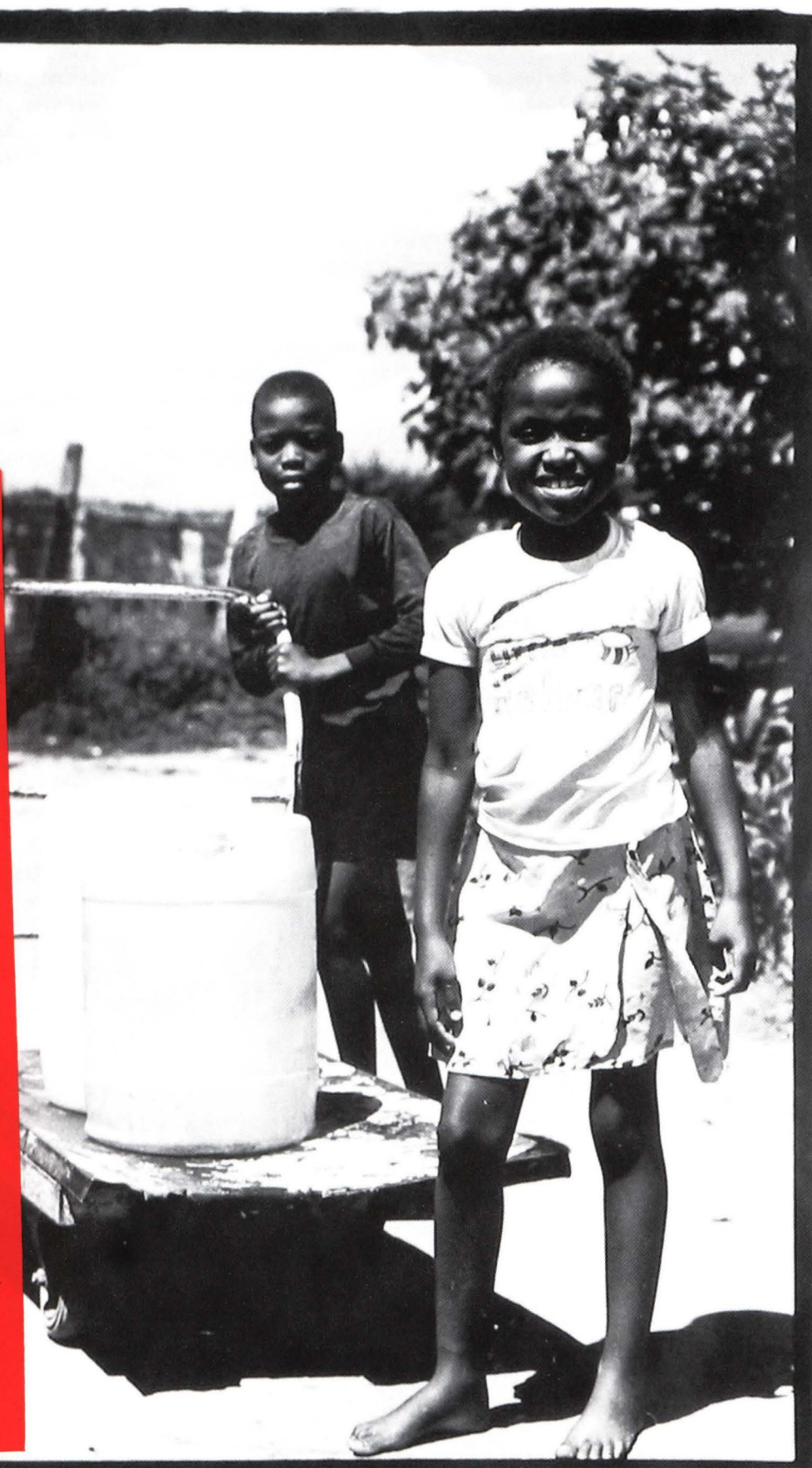
The ONYX Editorial
Board

Dear ONYX Readers:

Due to an unfortunate error on our part, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Ms. Paula Cerqueira as the rightful artist of "Reflections", an artistic piece found on page 31. We take great pride in providing both our literary and visual artists with their well deserved recognition and we sincerely apologize for this error.

Sincerely,

The ONYX Editorial
Board



God's Little Helper

Alexander Busse

CLAY CANONS AND EMPTY TRENCHES

Letter from the editors:

Walk into any mainstream book store and start browsing the poetry section. You'll have no trouble finding the Dickinson's, Elliot's, and Cummings'. These are all important poets, however, the shelves will be conveniently void of other equally important poets. Where are the Sanchez's, the Jordan's, the Hughes', the Rux's, the Hammad's, the Espada's, the Yamada's? Why are they still without a place on the shelves, why are they still without a place within our American literary canon?

Welcome to the American Canon. Where poets of color are ghettoized and hyphens are as commonplace as last names. In our current society, Black-Poets cannot just be poets. Latino-Poets cannot just be poets. Asian -Poets cannot just be poets. Race must always be distinguished and identified. It appears that this same stamp of identification is that which denies us entry into major literary circles. Spoken word is a term referring primarily to contemporary poets of color. This term works to categorize our poetry as a different genre from the mainstream (the canon). This constant categorization plays a significant role in the devaluing of our work. We pose the questions to you: Why can't our work just be entitled poetry? When will we begin to transform our current steel canon, which denies so many of our poets their deserved recognition, into one of clay which will be continually reshaped and remolded? In the midst of such an important literary battle, there can be no more trenches in which academic scholars may hide, the beauty and power of our prominent poets can no longer be ignored.

Artists of color face many of the same barriers. Because of their skin color, they often have trouble exhibiting their work and being showcased in mainstream art galleries. This issue of Onyx is a testament to the fact that poetry and artwork can be political, can address key social issues, while still setting high standards for aesthetic quality. We invite you to help us break free from the hyphens and reshape the canon.

Sincerely,
Candace J. Gomez
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Sincerely,
Chinua A. Thelwell
Co-Editor-in-Chief

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* A Tribute to Literary Excellence

** Impressions in Art



Renewed

Go back to a time of naiveté
walk the pathway boldly and sweet
cleansed are we the jaded
innocent are we the wise
flawless are we the bruised
blind are we the omniscient

Remember...
remember how it was
 to live
without cause and effect
No precautions or restraints
 Just
 f l o w
flowing with the constant beat
of a heart reborn
 renewed
 new in love
I'm in luvwitchu, I in luvwitchu
Luv wit u, so in love with you

Go back
to a time of naiveté
mmmhmmm...
the taste of that first kiss
sweet with cherry lip gloss
fresh with a stick of winterfresh
we were cool-
 real cool.

Nadia Wright

Free Your African Mind

Free your African mind my brother. Free your African mind my sister
Free yourself from the mental chains that say you don't come from that "dark continent"
When ain't no one on the continent darker than you
Realize you have been brainwashed by wicked White men
But your oppression has also been perpetrated by your own brethren
Yes, the rapes, hangings and castrations were indeed grueling
But the castration of the mind has more longevity than a lynching
You're inching further and further away from your motherland
You let them tell you that your slave-inspired slang was Ebonics and not a rich African language with English words so you were
afraid to speak the word
You believed them when they said your continent was dark, however,
You didn't know it is because they have been trying to steal her sunlight for centuries
From whitening the ancient Egyptian, to whitening Beethoven,
To whitening Michael Jackson you've been brainwashed
From slave codes to Black codes to Jim Crow you've been brainwashed
From K-1 to cum laude you've been brainwashed
You wanna be American though America has decided she no longer needs you
While an entire continent pleads for you to come home, so free your African mind!
Free those naps oppressed under that process!
Free those hips from those tight jeans that only attract negative attention and suffocate your natural Nilotic curves
Free those brown luscious lips from ravishing red lipstick
Free your kidneys from sippin' 40s and sip fresh waters from the Nile basin
Free yourself from thinking you have to step all over your lady and step with me up Mt. Kilimanjaro
Free your mind and stop trying to free willy into your co-partner in our fight for freedom
To deny that you're African is to deny your place on earth as the first
Why claim to be a nigga and kill over street corners when you can claim ancient Nubia?
Why claim a country when you can have a continent?
I speak to all of you in denial
From African Americans to West Indians to Cape Verdeans to even continental Africans
Malcolm and Marcus died trying to free your mind!
Accepting your African blood makes you a worldwide majority and not a national minority
It stretches your history much farther than Mississippi
It explains why you're as beautiful as you are
Why you worship like no other
And why you can never be defeated when standing on the shoulders of God and your ancestors!
All of you rise! You ghetto prisoners who are really Ghanaian princes rise!
You wannabe bitches who are really Burundian princesses rise!
You who think just being born on the continent is enough to make you African rise!
Egocentric Euro-Africans rise! Amnesic Afro-Asians rise!
Dark-skinned Latinos rise! Confused Cape Verdeans rise!
Westernized West Indians rise! Almost annihilated Australian Aborigines rise!
Realize being African is a state of mind and walk with me into that bright African sunrise!
And I guarantee that your mind, body, spirit and nation will rise, rise, rise,
High as the glistening skies. Just free, your almighty, African, mind.

© 2000

Omekongo wa Dibinga





Greg Hunt

Dorchester All-Stars

***The Experience of an Immigrant
(A dedication to my mother)***

She arrived at ground-zero
carrying little more than ambition with her.
She worked...
By day, logging in mundane numbers for corporate kings.
By night, serving French-dubbed dishes to aristocratic travelers.

Wrinkles formed above her brow like scars from battle,
and her hands wore thick with laborious toil.

Her sweat converted into savings,
her blood transformed into hope,
and her feet swelled with prospect.

Until...
She fulfilled the American Dream
(set forth by Ricky & Lucy, Chachi & Jonnie, and Mike & Carol),
by living in a two-story home,
working a nine to five shift,
and bearing the nuclear family-
 two children, a boy and a girl,
 both as American as the fourth of July.

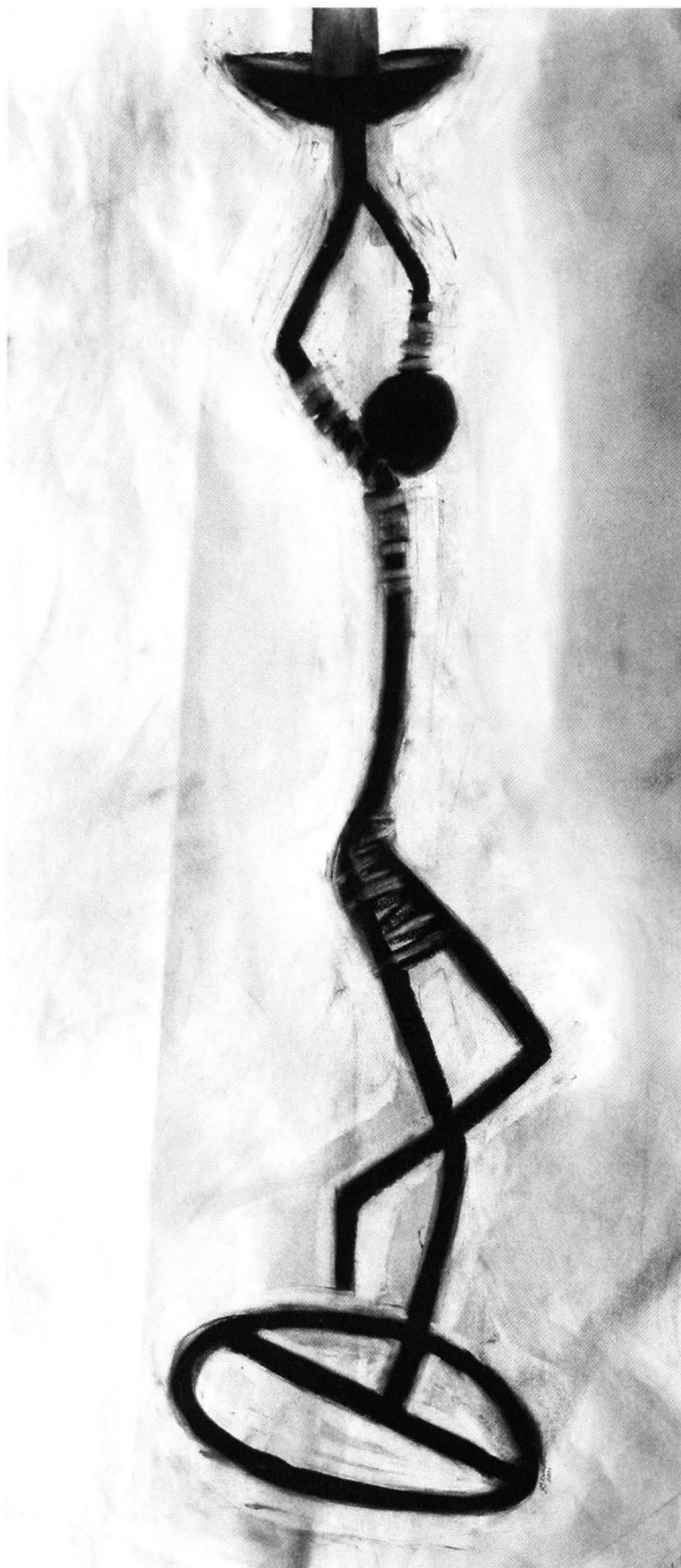
But when she strolls through supermarkets
and appeases pesky mid-dinner solicitors,
she isn't seen as American.

Malay face and sun-kissed hue,
missing pronouns and improper pronunciations,
brand this subscriber of first amendment follies and capitalistic ideals,
as foreign.

She sailed the seas in search of freedom
and a hope of attaining the American Dream.
But a country scared of wetbacks and chinks
smacked her nativistic notions of belonging...
ones that her face and pronunciation
can never fulfill.

Linda Turet





Untitled

Glenda Molina

Hippocratic Oath

During the destruction of humanity
I saw Liberty
Without panties or bras
Cause she'd been stripped searched
By Americas and cops here to serve the rich
Justice was always a bitch quick to snitch
On and snatch the innocent
We still paying rent
Owing visas and mastercards
Covered in shards of shame
What is the name of this game? Life
Not yet lived is owed
Planting seeds for someone else to sow
And send to prison for a profit
Bucking all the prophets
Community Callous-we didn't notice it
We don't care
Bullets are food for and fruits of fear
Our illness treated with placebos
Of what we wear-fashionable
And fashionably always late
God's slowly closing heaven's gate
For all of us who live where
They make malls with food crates

Play-gods pulling triggas
Playing and owning the role of
Niggas without an ID
Card; life's so hard
Speculation and insinuation
Retardation of Education
Lead to years without emancipation
Of self and blackness
The truth of the kiss
Of death is that
It's without love and premature
We both pimps and whores
When it comes to hip-hop
I scream stop Stop STOP dropping it
just cause beats hot
What you poppin it but you forgot
Where and when it all started
Told me NSYNC was on BET
Left me broken-hearted
And I don't believe in bigotry
But we are certainly
Prostitutes of our own creation
In a musical gentrification

I really don't know how I feel

But something don't feel right
Especially when I heard the following
last night, the requirement for beauty:
Hazel eyes, hazel hair, tan skin
Meaning: not too much,
But just the right touch of melanin

Food for brains
Gaudy chains
Horse manes and tales
We like fish out of water
Still donning our scales

 Girl I gotta do my nails

This summer
Clouds are closer
So I got to sit on God's front stoop
As his son drove by in a Lexus coup
In brown skin
Music blarin
He not carin
He's the son of gods
Great men and women
Poisoned by venoms
Of fabled history
And he reads the novel like's mystery
Skipping over where Imotep said:
Hippo crates was always a Hypocrite to me

by Alwin A.D. Jones





Untitled

Helen Fassil

"...fertilizer and filipinos"

I

Circa 1900 dusty sandals
carve the dirt of a Hawaiian sugar plantation.
Me.

The natives are growing restless.
They would rather throw nets into the sea then cut grid gashes in the earth.
They don't sprinkle droplets of blood from chapped fingertips to feed the dirt
or grind their bones with the weight like loyal oxen.
Gluttonous stomachs wailing
"the price is righteous"
time to capitalize.

Capitalize because the world has a sweet tooth called Himalaya
and the soil is brown sugar.
The natives are growing restless.
The oceans are filled with deposits of coal and have become shallow.
And each day the continents inch closer
being pulled by harnesses attached to steam engines.
They complain
 of bruised backs
 of broken toes
 of burnt necks
 of bludgeoned souls

the natives are restless.
As if Karl Marx is dancing on the pulpit of their dreams.
 So where can we find the proletariat?

II

Asia speaks:
I know of words like "expansionism" and "colonization".
These words sprinkle flames on my shorelines and make the sun set in the Eastern sky.
We saw war ships of commodores and cannons in the distance.
We gave them fireworks,
they fuelled their guns with the powder.

"This is how countries agree":
They ran blades along our fingertips, we signed our letters on the page.
They brought piles of bibles and isles of opium
And we can all ride the Pacific winds in search of Gold Mountain
because brown hands feed famished fields better than white ones.
So, long live this imperial womb giving birth to litters of coolies.
Long live this tar-stained organ of fire and steam.
Long live Britania the father of your ideology.
Commodore Perry buried seeds of shrapnel
that would grow into plants and blossom with Pearls
Harboring distilled mushroom clouds (in their transparence).
Asia never sent warships to conquer and colonize America
That's America's claim to Asia.

We didn't land on Angel Island
Angel Island landed on us.



Paranoia is the pill taken by tyrants seeking asylum.
And this is that subconscious thought
Those souvenirs from the centuries locked in a dusty trunk in the corner of your mind.
Those egalitarian perpetuations.
Those battering rams molded in truth
raising your barbed wire fences and guard towers.
I can see the cold sweat saturating your skin
as the frost bitten fallacies burn into smoke clouds echoing oblivion,
never to live again.

Shall we dispel the national myths and recite the contradictions now:
There are no, hoards of foreign legions encamped off the coast of your precious empire.
There are no, cloaked men borrowed under your army bases
living on rations of rice and roundhouse kicks.
There are no, armies of yellow vampires alongside your boarders
waiting to suck the life blood of your economy.
You brought us here.

III

We change voices like shedding skin.
Circa 1900 dusty sandals carve the dirt of a Hawaiian sugar plantation.
Me.
The natives are restless.
They would rather throw nets into the sea then cut grid gashes in the earth.
They don't sprinkle droplets of blood from chapped fingertips to feed the dirt
or grind their bones with the weight like loyal oxen.
Gluttonous stomachs wailing
"the price is righteous"
Time to capitalize capitalize.
Can you say commodify?
Can you say commodify?
Can you say commodify?

Because my fields are thirsty
and the sky never rains blood.

Henceforth this is our itemized order in alphabetical arrangement:
We need alfalfa,
We need axles,
We need bandages,
We need barbwire
We need bonemeal,
canvas, cattle, cogniac, cutlery, dogcarts, ether, fabric, fertilizer, filipinos...

-Chinua Thelwell

invisible man

I held him a moment in love, gaze
winding between petticoats and designer scarves,
around pretty, completed couples
coupling heterosexual ideals, reinforcing what sells,
what procreates what confiscates
self-appreciation, inner peace,
favors brightly assorted fruit-flavors over
milk duds in mild-carton containers.
red, yellow, blue green, youth trapped in
conveyor-belt machines-melted down and molded,
by-product frustrations bottled up and sold
black-market style, down subconscious dark
alleys of self-doubt, self-deprivation
in a society addicted to rejection in quest of
an elusive perfection-
I see him and smile-I love him
if just for a brief while. he stands

not so slim, not so clear-skinned
unkempt hair, a stone among these gems
these shiny pennies working for the almighty dollar-
the cloth that shines them from birth
display-cases their falsely manifested worth-
and I wonder do they see him
shrouded in his heather gray hoodie or
does he stand
invisible,
aesthetically deficient, illegitimate
a walk-on, a stand-in, an extra in
a silent, untitled, foreign film?

if so, how did I get invited in?
am I the director, an actress, the writer
of this passage in anonymous history
or do I
simply
watch, look, see
what's right there in front of me
and imagine who is he
that instills love in me?

~ *Brooke Schubert*



Lost sister

Smoke streams out my nostrils
Through red I watch it all
Sitting herbed on this curb i've seen princes rise and fall
Princess gain than lose it all
My eyes crawl across the scene and scope the concrete jungle
I see situations
Feel manifestations of my calloused community

I hear a baritone holler
And then a response by a familiar feminine voice
I tilt my head towards the sound and found familiarity
Yet my clarity was clouded
Mumbled words stumble out my choked vocals
U spin, hesitate then grin looking hopeful
We exchange eyes
In surprise we stare
looks lock, we both stop and then turn away
Away u walk
Slithering into his car
One last glance is enough to convince
I haven't seen u since.....

Our first hi
I was high in the club
Dancin without system to a rhythm that rocked my body
My hair notty and pants low mad most girls say no when I approached for a dance
But when the sea of people parted and I saw you
I took a chance to talk
I walked towards and saw there were hordes of men
Circlin you like vultures
I approached and whispered sweetly a melody
And you danced with me
Slow hypnotick thumps pumped our bodys into vibration
Was it just my imagination
Or was I in the mists of a grind with a dime
Who eyes shined like diamonds freshly cut from African mines
I would right a rhyme to u but a line would understate you
Boo ma wifey baby lady no maybe I'll just call you
By your name

Song after song was the same
And we continued to groove more in a fashion filled with passion
Be4 I knew it the night was over and the last song played
I was now sober and in my arms u stayed
I asked for the seven you asked for mine then stalled
I gave it anyway knowing you wouldn't call

Two days later the phone rang
The caller id I eyed it, the line said private
But I decided to answer
A voice filled with rainbows said hello and I froze
I really didn't know what to say, what to talk about
So we made small talk, but soon I was out of ideas
So I asked for a date and you said when, where
I said anywhere and you laughed
You said you lived close, I did that math
Said I would see you on Friday

Our first time together was like bein two feathers
On the same bird
My word after the first kiss I was cursed with bliss
and had to see you often
so we
chilled on Saturdays
rainy Sundays
Mondays before school and after
All time spent drenched in laughter
We became closer than siblings twins
My fiend from the end to the beginning
And Back again.....

I sit on my curb herbed with red tinged eyes
And watch time decay good to bad
What we had destroyed with a single conversation
And I realized your incarceration
Learned of your burned youth
Young but u looked old enough to pass
Body beyond mind, but to the wolves, prey does not matter
They tuned you out, men with clout based on
Salary, street mentality, creating the fallacy that money is the reason for livin
U were givin jewels by fools
Corrupted by men that society had already tainted
I almost fainted when I discovered that u had more than a few lovers
Bamboozled by brothers who disrespected you
Yet they say they love their mothers

I remembered when I layed under your covers
Now I lay undercover on night and watch
Homicide blue and red sirens scream like a banshee
With the increase of frequency that soon flew passed me
And screeched down the street where they found you face down
Muddy
Broken
Once rolled over, your eyes stared towards the sky accusing the heavens of deception
You were wrapped up in tattered clothes, soon switched for soft white robes
Brown mahogany was chose
As u stared blanked faced, froze with cold paleness with
White powdered cake up to make up for the scars that pimped your face
But these could not replace the bubbled tracks that trained down your arms
My heroin haggard heroine

Now I see your face in every 12 year old girl
Every ad, magazine cover, every movie, sitcom, talk show, every commercial
Like this is a rehearsal for getting naked and giving up everything sacred
See your image on television, tell the women, I had a vision of videos of greasy black
Cholesterol thighs in high white shorts
Pumping against guys sinning
With jizm impregnation of venom in all who listen
So I shut my ears, cut out my eyes and think good thoughts
But your face still hovers near the edge of my vision
But overtime I turn your not there
My sister, I miss her

~Infiniti





Jackie Fields

Untitled

Soul Search

Oh beautiful for spacious skies,
Same skies that dark faces couldn't look upon for picking out the
Amber waves of grain.
On purple mountains majesty
Above the blood filled planes.
That was then and this is now.
Now we still a pickin, still a pickin, still a pick-e-ting.
The only difference is attire that we are allowed to wear in the field.
One little, two little, three little, Negroes, four little,
Wait! Let's start again.
One little, four little, one little, four little, four back to one, four to one, four to one,
Forty-one!
What if one shot bounced back?
Inspector say well lets check the source and see what the one Negro was reaching for.
On-looking Negroes say your source ain't primary, bitch.
Your source ain't primary.
What if one shot bounced back?
My country tears of thee, ones who couldn't say shit cause their voices were strangled by
the vines of trees in
Sweet land of liberty.
O thee I sing!
Only I see,
Modern minds still swinging, still hanging their pants, their chains, their hands, their
Pain.
Land where my fathers died,
ENOUGH SAID.
From every mountain side,
ENOUGH SAID.
Let freedom ring.
ENOUGH SAID.
See it's funny how they wont let us be number 1, no matter what it is
Went from Public Enemy # 1,
Slide down to 2 and
Introducing the new candidate for Number 1
Osama, Osama,
(I say my) own black smiles collapse like WTC

A Tribute to Literary Excellence

Bin Laden, Bin Laden,
(Been letting) this shit happen for too long.
Dream I had last night,
M.L.K., G.O.D, and MPC sat down and we discussed lyrical content.
M.L.K said "write those lyrics of peace"
G.O.D. said "write those lyrics of faith"
MPC said I'm confused.
How can I write about what isn't there or what is lackluster?
MPC asked to be excused, and called Infiniti and told him the content is wrong.
We ain't writing what we know,
We ain't writing what we show,
Den what the hell we writing fo!
What the hell we fighting fo!
MPC left the Last Supper and brother Malcolm over heard from outside and said "write
lyrics for revolution."
TV cameras caught view and then the revolution was destined to be televised.
But on that day BET had technical difficulty,
Technicolor difficulty,
When N Sync made the countdown.
Pissed me off so I turned the channel back to Soul Train.
Broke down and cried when the Soul Train derailed, Video Soul got canceled and The
Box sold out to MTV.
Why don't we have a vote?
Who vote to get back black music or a black president and if you are from Florida we have to
throw your old, scratchy voices out since you did it to us.
ENOUGH SAID.
MPC said for me to tell you a little lesson he learned.
Infiltration only happened when one of our own sold out,
Soul fell out of the videos,
Souls fell of the train when it derailed.
We search the bodies for survivors and 41 passengers were still dancing, pointing at one man
reaching for his life.
Mind elevation will be letting off on the seven floor of Dowling.
Where do we go from here? And where do we go.....blackout!!!!!!

Connell Cloyd

Mapping Out The Veins

We meet in small smoke filled rooms and
Hot, crowded New York subway cars

We meet along the banks of southern rivers
Down, down, down... follow it south to
The mouth
Of the Nile

Swimming up, up to Venezuela where Abuelo Ecedro climbs trees
Up Up Up
To the sky
Up Up Up
To Dios Mio... Dios Mio
As I follow

My eyes fixed upon his rough brown feet more comfortable
On the bark than the land
As I follow
He teaches me to climb upwards, always upwards
Eyes blink-he disappears-Voice echoes
"Juliana, I go where you can't follow. Todo a su tiempo."

Until that day, I climb across the mango trees to Barataria, Trinidad
And allow the sounds to carry me
Over and across, across to the savanna
Where we learned how to wok up we waist, and mash down de place, wok up we...

Tonight.... But in the Morning we will rise early
When the sun gently rubs the sleep from our eyes
And meet beneath the green banana trees
Uncle Noel, Noel born on Christmas day....the forgotten messiah
Gathers the ghosts unseen....and we are
Using our third eye to watch for infiltrators
Using the little hairs on the back of our necks to feel the creeping of perpetrators.

As they cautiously pass me
Small, bundled packages of history
And whisper to me

"NOW RUN!"

I am running through hallways and
Campus paths with their beating hearts
In my back pocket... I run faster... Bum
Sound becomes louder.... Ba Bum... Faster... Ba Bum... Ba Bum...
LOUDER

Grandma Africa's voicebox is hidden up my sleeve
And she is singing with a force that splits the sky
Spilling out the names of those forgotten



OH YES, I've got their souls stuffed into my bookbag
Stuffed and Packed, Overflowing, Falling Out
As I run and their songs cry
"I live on! I didn't die in that overcrowded boat from Africa.
I didn't perish in those southern trees. I didn't vanish behind those bars,
Or get lost in the abyss of cracks within our system.
I Live On!"

As they sing and I run... ah hah...ah ahah... panting...ah hah
Ancestors souls cover my tracks...ah hah...don't know how much longer...ah
Can't go any further... aaah aaah
And I stop

Close my eyes...catch my breath...open my eyes, look around
This doesn't make sense-I don't understand
I'm standing still, but the running hasn't stopped
All around me,
Running Hasn't Stopped
All around I see your hands reaching out
As you yell, "Pass the Baton!"
We've still got miles to go and plenty ground to cover before dawn
"Pass the Baton!"

As we slip quietly through the back doors of universities and corporate America
Smuggling our Technicolor dreams across black & white borders
Defying custom's official rules, breaking custom's rules
Changing customary rules
We smuggle Technicolor dreams across black & white borders

"Pass the baton! Pass the baton!"
Oh yes, I've seen brothers run with big lead boots
And broken backbones

I said I've seen sisters run with whole families
Strapped to their backs
Overhydrated...Drowning...
In the gallons of tears that superwomen are never supposed to shed

As I run alongside
With notebook in hand that doubles as a bucket
Gathering the tears and
Cooking up alphabet soups that read
"Dios Mio, My God may you always guide our paths
Though we run through the valley of the shadows of dreams deferred."
As I cook up alphabet soups for you to eat
And grow stronger
With messages that read
"Grab the baton! Grab the baton!"
NOW RUN!

By Candace J. Gomez



Untitled

Alexander Busse



Alpha Omega

Our ancestor squeezed water from Plymouth Rock
With my heart's fire, I will melt that Glock
To get you all focused on the TICK TOCK
'Cause time is running out
Bling-bling, ching-ching
What the fuck are you talking about?
Do you think that's heaven's route
Me and your inner demons are gonna have it out
Gonna be publicized, all up in lights
Like Rumble in the Jungle
Thrilla in Manila
Like some Wrestle-fuckin-mania
My man, take a seat, take a breath
'Cause my words are obviously painin ya
This shit is gonna be booked in Kingston, Miami
In Havana, Atlantic City, even Las Vegas
Hell why not?
This battle has fought across history's pages
And in the minds of the sages
Who we call LEGENDS
Don't you think Assata thought about sellin out
Not to the white man, 'cause it goes way beyond that
Consider this fact
It is a predominantly white system, that is true
But that system be screwin white people over too
The system, is one of rhetoric and prattle
Wanting to keep us docile, verified mental cattle
Don't you think Fannie Lou Hamer struggled
Struggled to keep herself while struggling
For that simple thing that is justice
Don't you think Kwame Ture almost lost that spark
That allowed him to carry freedom's Ark
Don't you think Malcolm doubted
While he called for revolution
Don't you think Martin faltered
While he tried to end moral destitution
Getting others to walk a higher path
Half of these LEGENDS are dead now
You do the math
Struck down by the assassin's bullet
Cuz they refused to do the Man's degrading song and dance
But I digress, this topic is one of much stress
The present is at hand, that's our test
The limitations imposed by the system
Have a manifested a great schism
Between our dreams and our reality

Trying to keep us stuck in neutrality
Working us into their normality
Givin us trains, planes, international principalities
I'm sick of being REACTIVE
It's too late for PROACTIVE
It's time for alpha and omega action
Not just startin shit
But havin the will to finish it
Let's start with the reformation of the hierarchy
Not the formation of chaos and anarchy
No more tolerance of the hypocritic autocracy
We need to start a hip-hoprisy
Then down to the corporations
With their COOs
With their CFOs
And their CEOs
I propose a new position
The CPO
Chief Poetic Officer
Responsible for junkin the stocks and bonds
For increasing the signals shot from axons
Heightening interaction between human neurons
'Cause so many believe all there is for them
Is the position of waiter or porter
So many people by greed consumed
So much money, practically pissin quarters
And that brings us to the most important part
The infiltration of cash into the human heart
The alpha of the solution is the reformation of our arts
I'ma go to Shaolin, get with Wu-Tang
And we gonna record a new version of 'cream'
C-R-E-E-M
CASH RULES EVERYTHING EXCEPT ME
The omega of this solution is after ourselves
Settin everything else free

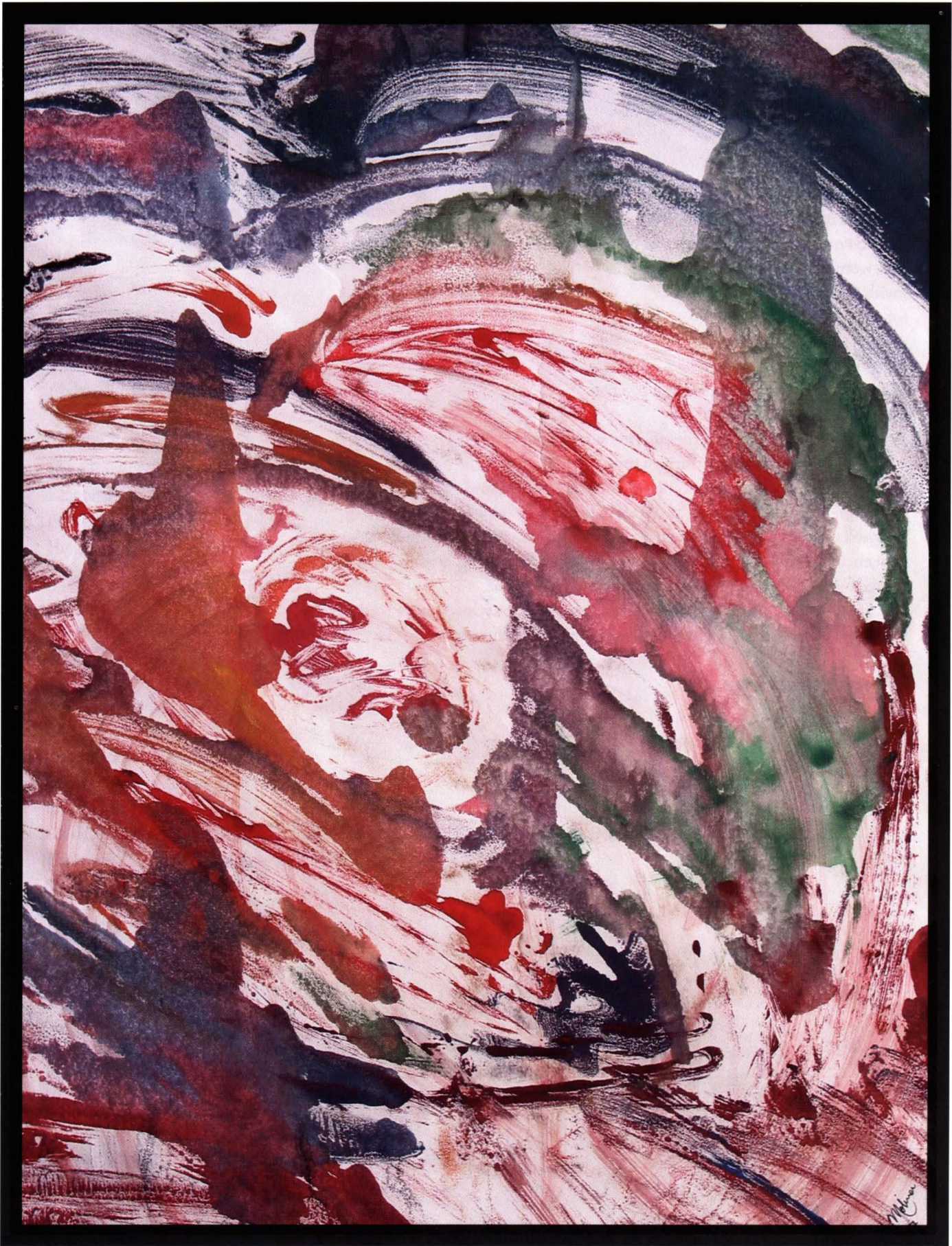
by Chike Aguh



One

Spare me the many ways,
meticulous methods,
insightful wishes,
I am a man of simplicity,
surround me with a singular thought,
dare to tempt me with abundance of necessity,
cars, women, jewels, the bait of envy,
I wish to have not,
for all I need is One,
of sky, of birds, of breath
more or less, one life to the fullest,
although the current picture stands against,
a realization of fulfillment,
a soul catches the ungodly caress, of a known purity
bold in its beauty, cascading through time,
as one of few, who with opportunity refine new meaning and dignity,
bringing spirituality to healing and state of being to a divine feeling,
To speak upon this, with hardened tongue and ruffled cheek, I'm moved to glorify
each encounter bound to my meek story of long endless nights amongst thought,
moved by the pleasures of living, breathing, and being One
One life, One love, once begun by a singular sensation, traveling upon a road
forgotten, One of few, Born from one seed, one to cherish forever

~Reginald Stovell



Glenda Molina

Untitled



How many brushes

I was in a trance, eyes partially shut
My soul open

See, when the soul is laid out on the rug and the painter's brushes are thrown aside he creates colors with his fingers. The sugar canvas is blank. When he strokes it he crafts pinks, peaches and reds, lines in hues only seen in the sunrise and set, only in the dawn and the twilight.

He swirls and slips. Curved lines reproduced only in nature. It starts, a far-away blue, streaks here and there, light then darker. Suddenly a streak of peach and orange waves its way diagonally across the canvas. Like the branch of a tree reaching out into spaces without color. More colors amass themselves on the false canvas, soft greens and rich reds now. Closer now, blues with violets quickly streak themselves across the corners. Slowly, they blend as a wind passes over the painter's hands extend to a mouth. Now his lips are two more brushes painting on the canvas of sugar from the colorless air. The fingers are lengthened to legs, next a torso, a back, until there are one-hundred fingers tracing over the sheet of sugar stretched out on the rug. The sheet folds and takes shape enclosing herself around fingers that swim through her; brushes endlessly swirling and blending colors creating a full rich brown. So full; the air is swirling, fingers blending, massaging and retracing lines filling in blanks with the palms of his body. It dissolves, the sugar, creating a white glow hotter and brighter, comparable to the sun is pure and clear.

Then, it's over.

Slowly, it turns back through phases of rich browns, greens, reds, violets unraveling colors unwinding from fingers. The wind comes back down restoring the sugar. The colors seep back into the canvas, disappearing until the canvas is blank. As I sit up he lifts me off the ground. Now, there are only two pairs of hands holding each other and two pairs of lips kissing each other, reminding the other of colors and rainbows. Of ebony swirling in air, dabbing in paint, standing in the middle of the room blinded from the light of what could have been the sun. Standing in the dark contented with each others warmth from smiles painted by brushes.

Jennifer Turnbull

Hell

You know its been said that we are living in the greatest country on earth
That we are experiencing an economic prosperity never known to mankind
Most homes have TVs and PCs, and many still believe that there is a pot of gold at the end of the American rainbow
But are we really living in the best of times or the worst of times?
Because through time it has become quite evident that we have never lived in a paradise of heaven-sent proportions
For if you take portions of everyone's respective lives to form one collective memory,
You would soon see that we are all living in hell
For what does economic affluence mean to the man who lost his family because he fell in love with Wall Street?
What do millions of dollars in reparations mean to that Holocaust survivor
Who would spend her last dime to see her family just one last time?
What about that African American soldier who was slain in that World War II at the hands of a Nazi
But whose family will not see his name in any history books?
And where is heaven for the slave descendant
Who hasn't seen his first dime after 350 years of unpaid labor?
I mean, what does the chance at a great education mean though to that Latino,
Who voluntarily loses his language, culture and history in a vain attempt at assimilation?
Or what about that Native American who, in his own nation
Is refused his piece of the American pie because he arrived at the table without his reservation?
What about that Korean employee working at McD's who can't even be proud of a war her people could have won
Because she lost her unarmed son at No-gun-ri?
And what about Brothers given the death penalty
After already being sentenced to life in hell as Black men in America?
Really, is there heaven on earth for the immigrant-hired help putting in maximum effort for less than minimum wage?
Or that college bound Brother whose blood was smothered in a case of road rage?
How can you sit there so happily in peace while little babies are crying and dying trapped in the
Middle East meets West in a clash of civilizations, while certain developing nations face starvation!
Children walking around with bloated stomachs and emaciated bodies
While we walk proudly with bloated pockets and emaciated minds!
Wearing our \$200 sweat suits from a sweatshop run in Thailand by Reebok
We're too busy watching DVDs on our laptops that we can't hear the gats pop- pop POP that killed Amadou
Which ironically stopped just before they reached 42,
Which in the time of Horus or Heru meant divine judgment.
You see it's coming!
Think of the collective human experience and you will see that heaven on earth was never meant to be
So can you emerge from your matrix long enough to see that
There can be no rich without poor and no peace without war?
That there is only a need for Ivy Leagues as long as community colleges strive to be respected by the mainstream?
That there can only be developing nations at the bottom as long as developed nations live lavishly at the top?
And that there would be no billionaire record execs without negative lyrics in hip-hop?
Can't you see that capitalism can't survive unless the impoverished masses strive to stay alive?
The next time you look in the mirror, stare deeply into your eyes and realize
That there can never be heaven for you on earth without someone else living in hell
So the good life is nothing but a gigantic wishing well
So let those of us who have experienced success bless the world with our knowledge
And not rest comfortably on the edge of selfishness
For if you spend your entire life dwelling on your material wealth
While blissfully drinking and smoking yourself into declining health
If you can't take the time out to serve those not as fortunate as we
Then hell might be arriving at your door faster than you can blink and sooner than you think!

Omiekongo wa Dibinga





Glenda Molina

Untitled

Impressions In Art



David Hazlewood

Untitled

Canada Lee

Canada Lee, Oh Brother, How could they let you die like that
Heartbroken, by claims that you were red, because you fought for black.
How could they shrink you and degrade you, emasculate you, leave you to the history
books, who will never print about you? Oh Canada Lee, my Brother, how they betrayed
you.

Brother with the side burns did you hear what they did to Lee?
I said brother with the side burns, hip suit, and polished shoes, did you see what they did
to brother Lee? They put his name on lists, spoke about him behind closed doors, made
friend-enemy, envy was their gall.

Am I not my brother's keeper, should I not tell his story to his son's? If he is broken
shall I not piece him back together, bathe his wounds in my salty tears, should I not cry
for my brother?

Before they got to Malcolm, and Martin, and Huey, and little Bobby Hutton, they got to
Lee. Before he could properly warn you all of their sins, and cry mutiny-they cut his
tenor note short, stopped his breath, and silenced his soul.

You say you never heard of the brother? Never knew that he made your way a little
smoother. Never knew that there were others like him-I bet they skipped the "Black list"
in A.P. History. And why shouldn't they, who needs to count the number of black bodies
jumping off of buildings, taking pills, shining shoes on avenues, playing buffoons in half-
hour comedies. Who would let you know that you are the true leading man, when it is so
much easier to call you "Boy."

I am sorry you found out so late, my young brother. I am sorry that you were denied this
history, but understand that your time has now come. Stand up, embrace your sister for
her truths and become enraged black youth. Show them that your pride is stronger than
their prejudice, your heart more durable than steel bars, and prison walls. Show them that
your hunger for life exceeds your craving for destruction, and that your skills are both
poetic and athletic. Brother with the side burns, hip suit and polished shoes, tell your
sisters that you will no longer flee from their embrace, instead, be drawn back to your
keepers place.

Brothers these words are strong, but please do not leave, right the wrongs done to your
fathers, restore their memories, be stand up brothers, like Canada Lee.

Jamila Moore

Structural Ruptures

I don't have much to say
Although I feel much still needs to be said
And that which has been said repeated, Like a heart
beat
In order to keep the message fallin' on fresh ears
and old ones that may have forgotten

Now, I find my role in work
Watching events tickle the under belly of the universe
It laughs...almost innocent
Rippling events into our reality
A blessing or a curse

I have learned much from watching
Significance is always present
The analysis of cause and effect can bring any mind to
vertigo

Every characteristic of our world
is a reflection of the whole structure

And it is stressful swimming in
...In this
and we must escape manage our stress
but the structure is consistent
and most of the stress management mechanisms we are
offered
(especially the instant gratification ones)
perpetuate the same circumstances
we are trying to escape or perhaps even change

What eva happened to crying...laughing

if this whole shit's--stem was run by
One man, one life
End the story
No need for glory
Rebuild with the children and create healthy societies

But this shit is thick
Like century old septic tanks
In which we all participate
Every life significant and insignificant
A paradox learned from
FORD assembly lines and NAZI war camps

I just
push the button
I just
screw the wheel
I just
stoke the flames

I just
copy the names

I just
teach the class

I just
never asked

I just I just I just
DO MY JOB

Organization is power
And the first unit of power is family

Manipulation in control
And the first unit of control is values

Values are gained from experiences
vicarious of your own

Values too often transmitted, projected
over the sums of
zeros and ones...zeros and ones
whether giving color to pixels
tone to sounds
or are exchange over bank tellers hands

And violence...violence is present
whether near or
hiding behind the false worlds
or your bubbles

For, if I could I would
If I could I would
If I could I would take a BATTLE AX to this whole
structure

But it TOWERS about me
In geometric shapes of LIVING STEEL
Feeding off my MOTHER EARTH
EMENSE AND BREATHING
IT SHIELDS ITSELF
WITH THE INNOCENT...with the innocent

My only recourse is to move like a virus
Co-opting structures, projecting values
And rupturing the shell

-Michael Fraser





Paula Cerqueira

Reflections

Untitled

*red like petals
fields of poppies, poisonously
beautiful
was She*

She came with *A Love Supreme* and more
never ceasing beats She was Always
tapping her feet to slow rhythms of my voice and waist
where did she take me with that smile back into her scented and dusted, powdery
truths of her past, mild where she discarded cliché statements of it would last For
ForEver and she added n
Making it n-evergreen always red like poppies and dark And she asked me Did you hear
What I said And I said no I was lost in your words and thoughts of the sound of your
words, they wrapped me like coats of fear
Of heights and cold nights in the marshes of plateaus of the Alps under worn sheets
And she still continued, Paris, I've been there before You must visit the Louvre
And I smiled cause she spoke in rhythms of a Love
Supreme like Coltrane and full of pain and all I thought of was the sound of her voice
And that intensity of my thoughts rose like Prayers to God left in Catholic Chapels with a
Candle and a saint

Thank you God for giving
Me
God will I

And I prayed selfishly to be consoled more in her words
Did God read these
Where was I and why was I lost on signed paths to caves of dead monks, persecuted
during the Inquisition Was she mumbling and carrying me slowly to Christ's
resurrection for a second time
But I only had one dime
And what was the cost of this ride
My soul already lost searching for hers
With the smiles, gentle calling me
In her eyes, which said that roads to strange lands and new places always seem as if they
lead to nowhere but you just have to take them despite what you been told and maybe
your Cinderella will be there or she might still be sleeping in thoughts of Prince
Charming and thoughts of marrying the right man just about college age
But she forgot to turn the page which added the disclaimer
Do not bury your heard under sand because it willalways sink move or rise
Never in the same place or it will not beat again
and she lost her beat and I was still lost this time in her silence dominating me to say
chut! chut! taisez-vous! To my own thoughts I thought my thoughts were naught
but will my silence was a distraction to her silence
chut! chut! taisez-vous!
I saw her eyes ask will you take me to Paris with you
but first will you help me find my past I buried under the sand.

Alwin AD Jones



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