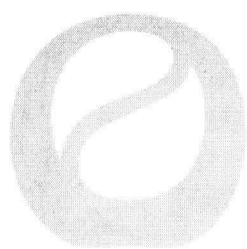


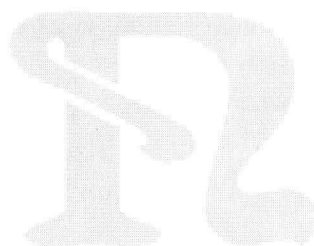
ONYX



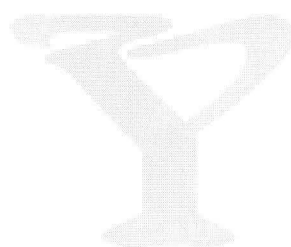
Black Magazine of Visual and Literary Arts



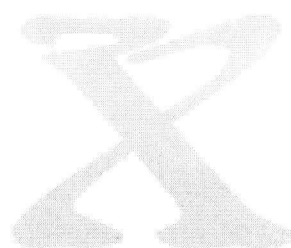
Getting...



Personal...



ONYX  
Fall 2000



## Letter from the Editors

In this issue of *ONYX* we invite you to get personal with us. We ask that you look with an open mind at all the pieces in the magazine. Works for this issue are introspective in nature, thus, giving you the opportunity to take a closer look at us, and in turn, a closer look at your own self. This issue features poets sensibly tapping into issues of love, race, loss, and other existential emotions. We also feature an array of carefully arranged artwork reflecting a variety of artistic disciplines.

This semester's Editor's Choice Award goes to Alwin A. D. Jones, for his poem *Street Lights for Stars*. Alwin's poem was chosen for its unique use of diction and its societal commentary. Like many of the works in the magazine, it forces us to take a closer look at the lives we live. Other notable works include *Francisca's Hands* and *The Piano (Mornings)*. Also, this semester, the Impressions in Art feature is given to Glenda Molina for her *Untitled* piece.

We would like to thank both our art and literary selection committees for offering their time and insight in helping to shape the *ONYX* that you hold in your hands today. At this time we ask you to prepare your eyes, your mind and your soul for *ONYX* Fall 2000.

Sincerely,

Jamila M. Moore  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Sincerely,

Ajahne Santa Anna  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

### Co-Editors-in-Chief

Jamila M. Moore  
Ajahne Santa Anna

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Candice Mosley

### Layout Editors

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Allana T. Forde

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Chinua Thelwell  
Nadia Wright

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Michael Fraser	Jamila M. Moore
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Lucretia Hoffman	Angie Pillier
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	Lena Vanable

ONYX  
 Black Literary and Visual Arts Magazine  
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\* A Tribute to Vision and Tradition

\*\* Impressions in Art

*Impressions in Art*



*Untitled*

*~Glenda Molina~*

## The Emancipation of Jazz

Hey there baby, what would you say  
If I told you I was gonna get...naked  
Right here...right now...  
Yeah luv, I'm talkin about today

See I'm tryin to take it way back to my birthday  
suit  
Untamed, unconformed, just as wild as the fruit  
Of my mama's womb  
You dig me? Cuz I'm about to get naked  
real...real soon

Eh yo baby, why your eyes poppin out so wide?  
Don't get it twisted, I ain't talkin bout skin  
On the real boo, I'm dealin with what's inside

You see, I been peelin off the layers for quite  
some time  
And today I feel I'm ready to wear my feelings  
on the outside  
Ready to hang'em all on the line.

Baby I wish you only knew, how sweet it can be  
To lie ass-naked in the grass  
With every insecurity  
Blowin in the breeze  
For all who care to see

To be real, my dirty laundry basket was gettin  
too damn full  
I couldn't lift it, couldn't pull it, and was  
strugglin to push it

Couldn't carry it no more  
And It wasn't fittin under any more rugs  
Tried to disguise it by makin it look pretty  
But what, may I ask, is the point of  
ironing dirty drawers?

So I sat down and cried

Huddling, hiding my dirty laundry in a corner  
Prayin, searchin for a sign  
Which would point to the way I could get over

It took some hurt  
Baby, it took some moanin times  
But though I searched and searched I never saw  
"The Sign"

What I saw was a window  
to a place I'd never thought to go.  
No I never saw "The Sign" but I damn sure saw  
the line hung between two mango trees  
Just as pretty...just as pretty...just as pretty as  
could be.

And now I'm layin here not carin when  
others stare  
Hell, they probably just mad cause they still  
hidin their dirty underwear!  
But not me  
It's hanging out there on that line for all to see  
Every fault...every flaw...every insecurity

And for the first time  
I...feel...fine

Baby, you nod and smile  
But you don't really understand a thing  
Because YOU  
Yeah, I'm talkin bout the real YOU  
Is still covered up, weighed down,  
bottled in and crying out  
For its bursting climactic release

Luv, I know you wanna see  
Just how sweet it can be...  
Baby come on...  
Get naked with me.

~Candace J. Gomez~



Untitled

~Candice Mosley~

## The Piano (Mornings)

Back and forth, up and down they play  
Forever touching ivory, whether it be black or white  
Hands that dart as if sparrows at play on a crisp spring morning day,  
Elongated fingers on small dexterous hands  
kneading and prodding to procure music from stubborn keys  
in much the same way they caress me  
On cool Sunday mornings when cool spring breezes  
Flow through rooms scented of incense and jasmine,  
Essences of candles left burning  
The nights before, in which we lay in each  
Others arms, worshipping each others bodies  
sharing secrets, fears, with divine pleasure

Every touch a sound, with each sound a melody forms  
A vision of places that have been and are yet to be  
The surf crashing on a warm beach of orange sand  
The sun setting over the horizon as we make love  
The two of us growing old together  
A whisper, low and a bit shaky escapes my lips  
“will you marry me?”

she stops playing, the birds stop singing, I stop breathing  
“what do you mean can I carry you?”  
air flows through my lungs once again as I laugh,  
then she stopped breathing and those fingers reached for mine  
before she said the words  
I already knew the piano would play a different hymn

~Alfred Cyrille Cazeau~



## Vulnerable

I can't explain IT  
How can I understand IT  
You describe the pain to me,  
and what you went through.  
This subject so untouchable,  
because one mention of IT, and you shed a tear.  
How could IT hurt so much.  
You seem so strong today  
and tell me that you were so weak yesterday.  
I can't believe that IT could leave such ravage remnants in your mind.  
And my innocence stands before you,  
and I look at  
A tower, with each cement block building you  
into this fortified being that I admire.  
Don't cry. I know IT hurts.  
But I have to question.  
Will I cry like you one day? Will IT effect me too?  
Make me feel sorrow when I look into my child's face, and hold him in my arms.  
Cause I can't imagine IT replacing you, IT following you.  
Explain IT to me please,  
Cause I can't bear to know that IT could conquer you,  
Conquer me,  
could tear down the walls already built  
and construct new ones.  
Always IT defeating, despite your struggling.  
Makes me contemplate...  
IT HURTS, IT MAKES YOU CRY, IT CONQUERS.  
Please mom, explain IT to me.  
IT is begining to hurt me too.  
EXPLAIN.

~Sasha Jalite~

## White Lies

Oppressive abuse should have been a mere ephemeral element of the past,  
However, this little brown boy feels the tear of a stinging lash.  
Motivated by an anger-filled, racist ancestral curse,  
Safi cries every night, vowing that the situation can't get worse.  
Remembering his proud Pop's warnings about violence and avoiding jail,  
Instead of fighting, he imparts to his father the terrible, tragic tale.  
From the news of the endless locker bangings, mama's boys, and black jerks  
Safi's father feels a profound emptiness and decides to confront Pale Face after work.  
All seems fine, lil' Nazi promises in vain to back down and leave Safi alone.  
Thus, Poppy and Safi embark on the long journey home.

"See son-remember-that nonviolence and communication are the key...Pop begins to say  
Just as seven strong, cocked cops bang and knock him in a frightening way.  
Down goes Pop with a painful drop onto the solid cement block.  
After being battered by the tainted clubs of the angry red-faced flock.  
Poor Pop, having no lawyer but a public pretender and no dough,  
Reluctantly accepts the community service instead of prison with parole.  
Being badly bruised, stigmatized, scarred, and castigated with no clear cause,  
Pop's misfortune has no bearing on the fate of the seven 5-O's...

Is that not a crime in the eyes of State Laws?

With God by his side, Pop survives and is certain some day the truth will arrive.  
But not the truth that unfolds when Pop receives employment at *Live*.  
The background check returns labeling Pop as the child abuser/convict he is not.  
He immediately is forced from work and for the remainder of his life is bitterly blocked.  
Pop warned Safi: "Son, don't trust in the system that belittles strong, black men.  
Because in this so-called land of milk and honey, justice isn't your friend.  
Son, I love you and I am sorry I didn't always have the ends  
to take you to the ball games and buy you those high top, tan Timbs.  
Safi I also apologize for teaching you a peaceful strategy,  
For it may not work for you as it has not worked for me."

~Monique Martin~

## A Memory

You come to me now in my dreams  
Singing, dancing, laughing  
I remember you that way  
I smell the aroma of roti and freshly baked cross  
buns  
Oh how I would give anything to see you again,  
to touch you one more time  
If having one more moment with you means  
dreaming forever, I will sleep for eternity  
But I never do stay asleep  
I wake up each morning hoping that  
I'll see you again  
I never do

Now you only come to me in my dreams  
You aren't singing, dancing and laughing this  
time  
"When Jesus is my portion. A constant friend is  
He..."  
Your lips are too frail to sing your favorite hymn  
Your body looks too worn to dance  
You look so different to me  
As I stand over your cold body, your eyes and  
mouth are tightly closed  
I still remember you but you no longer  
remember me  
I stretch out my hands to you and scream your  
name  
You open your eyes for a brief moment only to  
look at me and turn away  
If I were to embrace your delicate body,  
Would you then speak to me?  
It's me grandma! Don't you remember me?  
It's me! It's me! It's me! It's me!

I awake to find myself reaching for someone or  
something that is not there  
Why did you have to go so soon?  
I never had the chance to really get to know you  
Maybe I took the times we spent together for  
granted  
Oh the next day I'll see you  
Oh the next day I'll call  
The next day never came because you were gone  
I left it for tomorrow  
But how was I to know that there would be no  
tomorrow  
So many questions I want to ask you, but you are  
not here  
So many things I want to tell you, but you are not  
here  
You left without saying goodbye  
Why didn't you tell me that you were leaving?  
I would have understood  
I have regrets now but what good can that do  
You're gone and it's too late  
Now you come to me in my dreams

~Allana J. Forde~



Untitled

~Yasmine Iliya~

## *Latina Dulce*

I missed her before  
We met  
Somethin was off  
My clock a minute slow  
Living a few degrees from perfection  
Like listening to the song of life  
With only one  
Workin earphone

In my version  
I met you in a nuyorican cafe  
You sat drinkin morisonando  
My eyes radar-locked upon you  
I took a chair, then asked  
My ears twitched, waiting  
I placed my name in the silence  
Called, you floated towards the stage  
Without pad you preformed delicacies  
Bombarding the crowd  
Bachatta ballads  
Salsa sonnets y  
Metaphoric merengues

You swear you are a poet  
But that you really aren't

Pero, I disagree  
Your heart clicks to the clave  
Legs swan to a beat foreign  
To my hips  
Mouth romances syllables  
That try to describe you  
But these words pale  
Lessen, fail to articulate  
The rhythm  
Pulsating  
Commanding your soul to ocean flow  
Rapidly  
The song changes  
As the rhythm stays the same  
Your feet continue  
Song changes  
Rhythm stays  
Feet continue

Song rhythm feet  
Feet song rhythm  
Rhythm feet song  
Rhythm  
Rhythm  
Rhythm  
Sweat beads upon flesh  
Starlit skin  
Sparkles, twinkles  
Una angela

The next time someone is high  
upon a mountain top having a talk with God  
Tell him an angel is missing  
Visiting earth  
A cinammon muse  
Flavoring lives  
With pearly melodies

Este palabras son para ti  
Mi corazon es tuyo  
Yo soy tuyo  
Completamente para ti

A third eye opens awaken by the dream  
It looks like us  
Me and you as intended  
Baggy pants droop  
I clutch your waist  
You spin, drees waving in the garden  
I follow your steps, learn then lead  
The universe smiles while we become one  
motion  
Tu y yo  
Tu y yo estamos  
Tu y yo estamos bailando

Quiero bailar en la lluvia  
Splashing in puddles  
Washing away todays troubles  
With the hope of our tears

Will you remember what will happen  
If I forget  
I want it to be a surprise the first time we  
exchange lips

I'll stop you in mid sentence  
Electrifyin your essence  
With a gift  
Souls sparkin igniting the-ripple  
I pull away  
Ashamed  
Guilty of kidnapping an angel from the heavens  
Or was I brought amongst the stars  
To transverse the galaxies  
Side by side  
Clouds as pillows  
Your body my bed  
Sustenance, each other  
Drifting dimensions in  
A state of blissful utopia  
Frequently in frequency  
With the natural rhythm of love

Pure  
Innocent  
Caressing space with a hint of perfection  
  
Te quiero

~Infiniti~  
Aka- Ajahne Santa Anna



Untitled

~Candice Mosley~

## Pulse

I am poised on the brink of morning-back arched into a smile,  
hands outstretched above me, heart dancing all the while.

I am laid out in a pattern of complicated art,  
beads meeting at my temples, lines ending with no places to start.

I am dancing on a single note, arms following my feet,  
Body aching for movement, with each Native American beat.

I am singing spirituals in the front pew, voice cracking and bending with time,  
Words stumbling over tongue, reality lost in a vine.

I am soaring on womanhood, peace of mind and love thy self.

I am a dancing African princess, poised and laden with art.  
I am singing my own praises while emerging from the dark.

In the nakedness of my own body, I find truth in where I've been.  
I am alive on the brink of morning, like a thousand other women.

*~Jamilia M. Moore~*

## French Fried Yams with Soy Sauce

I'm that kid with that mean bubble jacket  
I rock a baseball cap to the back the bill is brimmed to perfection  
I got some big black stomping boots that distort my foot size on first inspection  
My jeans can fit three  
Ralph Laurens tag up on my chest like branding irons and slavery  
The shackles have been replaced with Rolex watches gold chains and iced down medallions

I'm that kid with the proud Dashiki  
My medallion is a reminder of the golden coffins that the pharaohs rest in  
Kente Cloth wrapped around my neck and hangs down like two useless limbs  
The golden sun gives me a natural golden brown glow  
I'm sorry but melanin can't be manufactured in tanning salons

My formal Kimono feels casual comfortable  
When enraged Wasabi inflames my mucous membranes  
Tabis and Getas pad my feet from the ground  
Ever since Hiroshima I've suspected the earth was tainted  
My eyes shine wide with the pride of Samurais  
I sit facing the east in my Yukata bathrobe to watch the sun rise  
Then I look within my world push out the yellow peril to see **this** sun rise

Now I'm that kid with the Getas to pad my feet, kente cloth around my neck and that  
mean bubble jacket  
Don't nobody match like me  
The way the, soul dances on the borderlines of two ancient worlds  
Don't nobody match like me  
The way I, mix and match match and mix two cultures intertwined in one being  
Don't nobody match like me  
The way my, parent civilizations followed me here incognito, I found them both in Hip-Hop  
Don't nobody match like me  
The way I, mix the clothes of foreign no name designers mix the cultures passed down centuries  
who would believe they match so well  
Yeah, I'm that kid with the Getas to pad my feet, Kente cloth around my neck and that  
mean bubble jacket  
Walking down the street what a spectacle  
Confused, never  
Naw man my head is clear thoughts sober  
So sober that on a clear day I can see both homelands on the horizon

"Hey sis, lets play dress up"

~ Chinua Thelwell ~



## Streetlights for Stars

as pulled window curtains  
muffle fluorescent candles,  
streetlights welcome  
labored legs of lost man  
trudging  
down  
vacated  
streets of crowded city,  
that never sleeps  
but hides from and hides  
"the likes of him"--  
puffy coat, baggy jeans,  
weary-sounding winter boots,  
condom-fitting scully, black...

unseen is Malcolm  
hidden in history and pockets  
of princely robes of spit  
of stares of silence  
of stereotypes of sirens  
chase lost man out of "his own"  
sleep. night and day  
daysed by right  
that seem left  
behind...

choked by un-cobalt, not-blue skies  
of stars that spies---  
not soothes,  
but sends images of him  
clothed in velvet garments  
of newspaper clippings  
with a message, a state-meant,  
"is this your savior, is this your king?  
here is your almighty savior, nubia!"  
mocked, pontius pirate, the mayor,  
washing *uncle sam's* hands  
in the blood of Hueys,  
in the blood of Freds,  
and now,  
the blood of Amadous...

lost man carrying  
coal-colored cross  
hanging like dead  
flesh and heads  
of beaten pit bulls.

crosses causing  
black back  
pains, slouches  
in *heaven's gait*  
*is closed*—  
*peter went home early*  
*peter went home early*  
*peter went home early...*

lost  
man  
laboring  
down  
streets,  
sardine-like in the dazetime:  
familiar looks,  
unfamiliar faces,  
shackling smiles  
in prison walls  
of high-fenced cheek bones.  
the unfamiliar are family—  
children of circumstance...

pristine vultures hover,  
anxious to feed  
off honey that festers  
carefully, deeply,  
secretly in the live carcass  
of lost man's world.  
honey—the sweet  
in the ribs of brown bricks  
held together by muscles,  
protected by flesh  
of grey cement.  
*honey gets sold*  
*only when its*  
*rocked and rolled...*

young lost man  
labors yet smiles,  
sometimes,  
in fantasies of:  
columbus dressed in holy basket,  
wielding paper swords  
at an angry casket named  
*My-Name-Is-Not-West-Indies;*

## A Tribute to Vision and Tradition

or of thanks? giving turkeys  
who turned *un-great* to the *fullest*;  
or of every body in full body  
bullet proof vests  
so

"one!  
two! three! four! five!  
six! seven! eight! nine!  
ten!  
eleven! twelve! thirteen!  
fourteen! fifteen! sixteen!  
seventeen! eighteen! nineteen!  
twenty!  
twenty-one! twenty-two! twenty-three!  
twenty-four! twenty-five! twenty-six!  
twenty-seven! twenty-eight! twenty-nine!  
thirty!  
thirty-one! thirty-two! thirty-three!  
thirty-four! thirty-five! thirty-six!  
thirty-seven! thirty-eight! thirty-nine!  
forty!  
forty-one! forty-one! forty-one!"

forty-one shots  
cannot penetrate bodies and chests  
*vests, so shots cannot penetrate chests*  
*vests, so shots cannot penetrate chests*  
[ R.I.P Amadou, I'm sorry ] ...

toy cars are pets  
of little children  
prisoned by what they  
own homes and curfews  
of "come in before its too dark!"  
owls never coo, crickets never nag,  
angels never hark; dogs that bite-bark  
look like "the likes of him"---  
slim, but un-shady because  
*sun never sh!*  
*suns never sh!*  
*sons never sh!*  
sons never shine right  
except on rikers.  
so he, lost man, never sees them...

frequently,  
stars close thier eyes,  
dying,  
unloved by him,  
lost man.  
bitter are battles  
where he's pawn and game board--  
streetlights won wars with stars  
for his affection...

lost man, an infection:  
they stay away  
or clutch purses  
*becauze dizeazez*  
*carriez homez thiz wayz.*  
stars turn their b(l)ack;  
he effortlessly not-notices  
the images  
of stares of silence  
of stupidity of sirens...

goat skin drums never beat  
or always a broken rhythm  
for lost man's laboring feet  
or they just don't ring,  
uh? play, for his ears.  
griots are in graves  
or they just don't sing  
away lost man's fears...

of streetlights for stars

*streetlights for stars.*  
*streetlights for stars*  
*streetlights for stars*

*streetlights.*  
*stars.*

Sincerely,  
Free Prisoner (# 310-80-1666)  
(as witnessed by Alwin A. D. Jones)



San Francisco Bound

~Ariana Wohl~

## Francisca's Hands

You were the hands with clawed definition  
Hands washed in this river on the other side of the sunset  
Carrying soil from an earth I cannot remember  
And they were tiny hands once, weren't they  
With tiny knuckles scrubbing cloth against the stone  
Hands born to mother before my mother was born  
Five tendons growing stronger through the years  
You were the one with the geographic hands, Ancient  
Wrapped in blue blood rising high

Those were the veins that would not let a soul forget  
And if I heard your voice right now it would not be gentle like a whisper  
in my ear  
I do believe my body would dart up right in my sleep.  
"This is how my skin has bled for you to eat that which you sometimes  
refuse to eat  
For you to walk with those fine shoes on that fine cement."

You were like Mother, Father, Rosie the Riveter with an accent  
You were the hands with the grip of a jaw  
Soft, supple and perfumed in your old age  
Gentle over my forehead when I broke out into a cold sweat  
Firm inside of my hand when I needed a pole, a rope a bone hard fist to  
grab on to

And it was good to know that you would fall first if I needed your  
cushion  
And it was good to know that you would never fall

~Kristin Morales~



Common Ground

~Lori Ivey Alexander~

## Danifest Mestiny

The fourth rock is dangerous, with almost no oxygen.

The gravity is weak and the surface red like rust.

On it you would die of radiation or hypothermia,  
or low pressure that will make your lungs bust.

With bounds of potential and raw materials for homes,  
we will send up a peace corp of robots and cranes.

There they will build us cities of biosphere domes.  
Or else they will have their fuel cells drained.

With contraptions that produce oxygen and green house gases,  
the rock will become warmer and friendly to plants.

Then our neighbor will be green like grass,  
and in time will welcome us to the dance.

This may take a while, but we can make it better.

We'll send nukes to Europa, an orb full of water and fun.

These long range transporters will bring them together.

Then our new home will be blue just like our first one.

~Jeremy Warren~



Untitled

~Glenda Molina~

# TOO BLACK

They take my kindness for weakness  
They take my silence for speechless.

They consider my uniqueness strange  
They call my language slang.

They see my confidence as conceit  
They see my mistakes as defeat.

They consider my success accidental  
They minimize my intelligence to “potential”

My questions mean I’m unaware  
My advancement is somehow unfair.

Any praise is preferential treatment  
To voice my concern is discontentment.

If I stand up for myself, I’m too defensive  
If I don’t trust them, I’m too apprehensive.

I’m deviant if I separate  
I’m fake if I assimilate.

My character is constantly under attack  
Pride for my race makes me “TOO BLACK” !

~Anonymous~



## Rose Without Petals

Rose, you come to me  
With hands clenched open  
Mouth wide shut  
And heart wide empty

You rest in my helplessness  
and twist the knife by pleading  
for that which I long to give, want to,  
try to, fight to, CAN NOT give.

Rose, you come to me  
With brown skin and golden tresses  
Hair, it cost you too much  
to have, without owning, to get, to be  
Here  
With that hair, and those gray cataract contacts  
Which make your vision blurry as  
you continue to stumble backwards  
Upon the tracks moon after moon after moon.

Rose, you come to me  
With tales of the black, brown, yellow, and peach  
Trains which enter your loving cavern  
And erode your treasured chapel  
As I stand at the window-pain-  
And hold you from the outside looking in  
As your insides spill out looking for a  
quiet place in me away from the never-ending hungry moans  
and screams.

Rose, you come to me  
With the heavy heart cross you will always bear  
And a cracked smile escapes beneath your thorny crown of  
Falsely colored honeyed hair  
You come to me with Pilate's robe of royal  
Thrown rakishly upon your shoulders  
and I cry.  
With eyes that are beautiful because they are brown  
beautiful because they are my...own.  
As they watch you kneel upon the path of another oncoming train.

~Candace J. Gomez~

## I Come To You

With knees bent and hands clenched together I come to you for a cure to this disease that will eventually consume my body and soul. The disease has gotten worse now. It is invading my mind and will slowly control every part of me. I look in the mirror and I am shocked by what I see. The disease has turned me into someone that I no longer recognize. I see someone that has an explosive temper. Like a dog gone mad, without thought I will attack if threatened. It has possessed me. When life becomes too hard to bear I come to you because you are the only one that I can turn to. The rage and hate that has taken over my mind and body has turned me into a cold-hearted and vengeful person. I want to be the cause of that suffering. I want them to pay for what they have done to me. There are no longer any feelings when it comes to hurting those who have hurt me. When hurt too many times, there is no room for compassion. If these people are included in a plan to test my faith and my strength, I am sad to say that I have failed. I have failed you! I don't want to be this way. I come to you for help. Looking up from the sixth pew with tears in my eyes I search for an explanation. I always found the answers I needed when I came to you but you have no answers this time. I need you to please help me to find a cure for this disease. I come to you Lord everyday for that little bit of hope and guidance. I will continue to pray for strength and come to you.

~Allana J. Forde~

## Confused Love

Everyday, it seems i sit and ponder our coexistence...or so-called relationship.  
After a brief glimpse at seemingly eternal bliss,  
My mind wanders back to my bleak reality.  
Regretfully, i am forced to contemplate my sorrowful solitude  
And the unfortunate, yet constant absence of *true* happiness.

Perhaps, the only explanation, justification for my pitiful state  
Is my status as the chosen...rather cursed exploit of the GAME.  
Yet, after many nights of total submersion in my tears,  
And feelings of unbearable heartache, loneliness, and isolation.  
i fail to comprehend the Why? behind my fate.

What have i done to be so unloved and mistreated?  
Have i not loved unconditionally despite your flaws?  
Am i truly deserving of the lies, betrayal, and insensitivity?  
Do you think i am mentally and emotionally satisfied with material things?  
Or is this simply your often promised, yet occasionally fulfilled "*good luvin*"?

After much needed self-reflection my eyes have been opened.  
Why settle for your unfulfilling *I love you's* and inconsistent affection?  
I will *not* be blinded by my self-perceptions and naivete any longer.  
I am ready to move on and piece my heart back together,  
But this time with a different kind of "love" one from within—apart from you.

Every so often I lose consciousness and entertain thoughts of us together.  
After a brief glimpse at inevitable heartache and pain  
I regain consciousness, my sanity, and return to my new reality  
I can't help but smile at my true happiness.

~Rebekah King~

# Sleep

Square illumination  
Sporadically painted on tall blackness  
Pulsing like yellow beacons  
Escaping the clutches of nothingness  
Gives me hope  
But these lights, not of day  
admit to the false sense of life  
no one is up

no one is up but me  
the nocturnal dweller  
hall to hall street to street  
empty  
desolate  
is this what its like to be the last man on Earth?

the deafening silence echoes in my ear  
as I blink teary eyed  
my blurry vision dissolves into focus  
and I feel that you are asleep

fire begins to creep across the heavens  
burning through the nothingness  
and dwarfing the competition  
i stifle a yawn

There is no need to sleep  
(my 3 year old counterpart whines)  
tired is a state of mind, a backlash from the day  
we have forever to lay  
so today I stay  
awake

fearful of that  
slow  
deep  
last breath  
please open your eyes  
I will tell you what I know  
Sleep shakes hands with death

~Infiniti~  
Aka- Ajahne Santa Anna

## Lion's Song

Backhand

The back of his hand  
The back of his hand pushes the air aside  
The words aside  
My face aside  
My face cracks  
My face cracks like a vase  
And I am spilling, falling, falling  
Splintering  
Into a million shards  
Sharp bloody shards

He is scooping up my blood and flesh  
Fragments  
And tossing them out of the window  
Out of the window four floors up  
Onto the street  
Cement street always damp and cold.

He could've broken four of my fingers  
My skin and knuckles cracking  
Turning white  
Blood running away in shock  
Feet frozen squarely to the ground  
He held me afterward and told me that he  
loved me  
He never said sorry.

He told me that he didn't hit my face when he  
pushed me down.  
I shouldn't have fought back—  
I should've given in  
Becoming a soft cushion for his booted feet.

But I learned that ribs don't give like stomachs  
do  
Though I'm sure he would've stopped  
At the sight of  
Blood.

I haven't been able to listen to the song  
The roar bubbling up inside  
The rushing water roar between my ears  
The bursting of creases that cracks me apart  
Like the back of his hand, the floor, the lies, the  
love?

This is what I remember.  
The tune is so quiet you don't even know it's  
playing  
Until you feel the tears  
Tears itching as they dry on my cheeks  
Leaving a taut slime trail to mark their descent

I remember the quietness  
My heart beating and the sound  
Of torrents of semen flowing out  
Flowing  
Flowing out of me  
And into the toilet.  
The emptiness and the quiet

That's what I remember from the song.

~Natasha M. Marin~



Untitled

~Yasmine Iliya~

## For Mother's who Talk to their Daughters

Who was I to lust after a man?

Whether tall, thin, or tan, my mother always taught me better.

Proper young ladies keep their legs closed,

shut air tight-thighs compressed, oppressed, so when he come, they dare best not open.

He give you sweet talk to get to your sugar

Knowing its pure granulated, barely graduated, but he's skilled in his craft.

So skilled was he that I wanted to apprentice- taught me to explore my own body

No mama, it wasn't degradation, only appreciation-he said I was art.

And yet, who was I to lust after a man-for only loose girls do, and good girls don't, but this man saw me whole, saw me full- saw me as wo-man.

Decorating my body with his kisses, tainting my purity

Yes mama I gave him all of me. Breast, buttocks, thighs and lips...I even gave him my hips.

Broken in like mule you said, as I laid in the bed air tight thighs open wide with expectation,  
and when I crowned you turned away disgraced-for my baby had his face.

Wanton woman, branded by her shame, should have learned the rules to this game. Only bad girls do-and good girls don't, but a woman unfulfilled is a woman who'll want.

~Jamilia M. Moore~

## Loyalty Fades Despite the Color

I thought black defined a man for me,  
but I've found sanctuary in a white man's arms.  
And for some reason,  
when he plays me, it doesn't hurt as much.  
Slavery made me submissive to him before,  
but now, as he feels my body,  
he shows me  
the love you've denied.  
You yell at me for selling out,  
but you weren't worried about that  
when you were between her frosted thighs,  
were you?  
Educated, head-strong, dominant dark man  
you call yourself.  
You ain't shit to me...  
And 'no' I'm not so angry,  
Just disappointed  
That you have the audacity to judge me as though  
God has placed you on a pedestal.  
Don't worry about what I'm doing,  
I can watch out for myself.  
I feel free now, more than when I was with you,  
and those words of how you'd be the only one there for me  
was just your way to control my mind..  
as you are doing now..  
You call me his mistress,  
well I call you her bitch.  
So don't you dare look down upon me,  
I am an educated, head-strong,  
dominant black woman,  
who knows herself  
and what she doesn't want,  
who knows most importantly,  
not to be with someone who suppresses the mind,  
no matter what color he may be,  
my black brother.

~Sasha Jalite~



## Internalized

Mathematical personalities are found in class on sunny afternoons  
Absorbing chalkboard fairytales of real life situations that never seem to show  
Mathematical personalities weren't for my people I've been told  
Over time my brain was bell-curved and accepted the expected  
I've got answers and he's got answers but I don't dare expose myself like a spy deep in enemy territory  
HE DARES  
His head nods, eyes shine wide with pride and hand creeps up  
What is this crab doing?  
Raising his hand on the uppity  
I attack with my claws and shoot a look across the room  
Eyes meet  
And hand goes down  
Damn  
In my school daze I didn't notice the ramifications  
I was doing their work for them  
Reassuringly I say to myself  
"It wasn't me"  
"400"  
"years"  
"weighed"  
"that"  
"hand"  
"DOWN"  
Right ?

~Chinua Thekwell~



Untitled

~Alex Ramirez~

TUFTS

