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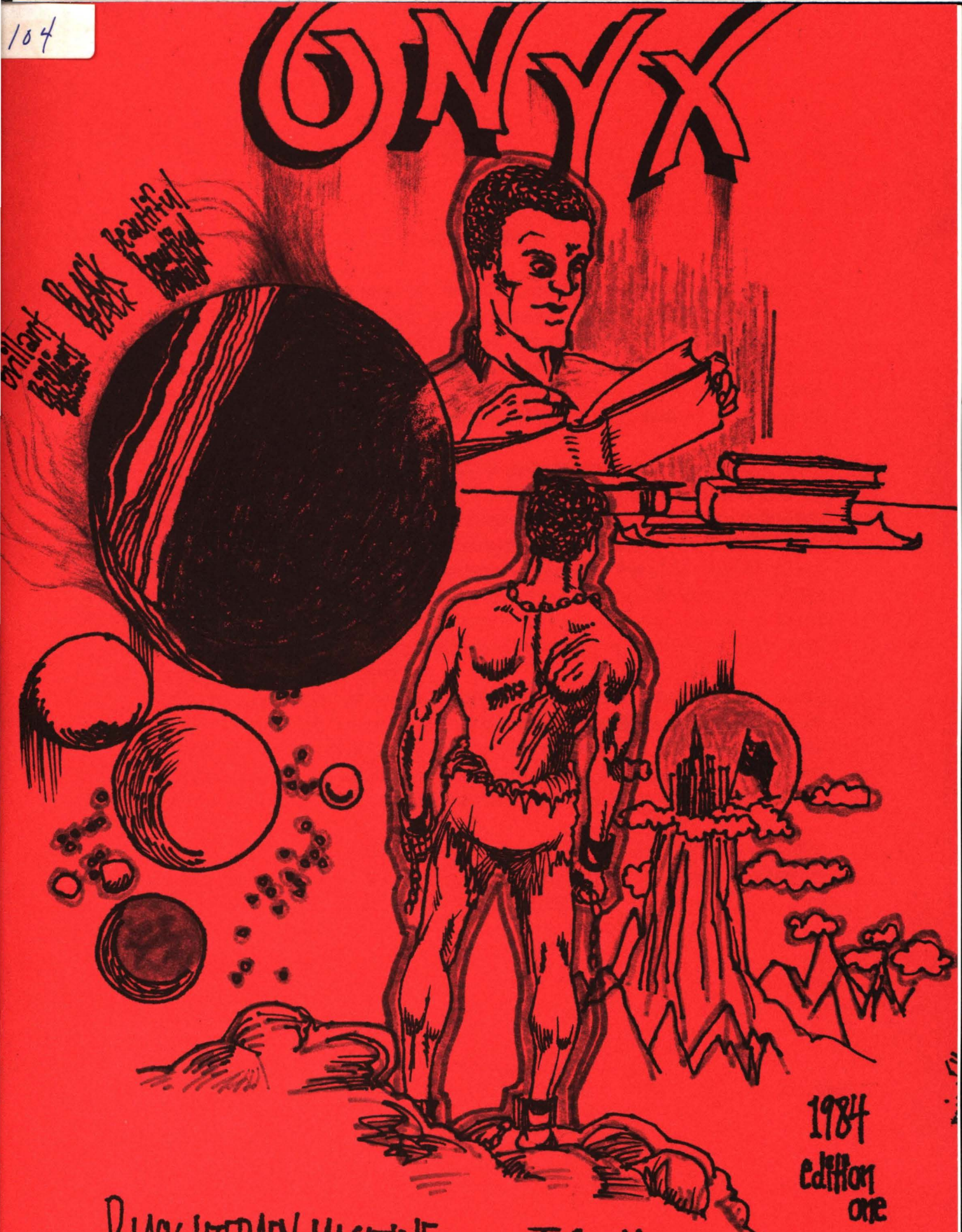
ONYX



1984
edition
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BLACK LITERARY MAGAZINE, Tufts University

Editor's Note

Why *Onyx*? In the process of deciding upon a name for this magazine, I chose *Onyx* because I felt it accurately represented many of the characteristics of the Black race. Onyx is a precious dark stone containing parallel layers of different colors — it is black, strong, solid, brilliant, and beautiful, just like the Black race. The purpose of *Onyx*, the magazine, is to expose the power and the beauty of black expression in its purest literary form.

The Black race is very diversified, it encompasses many people from different areas of the world — Africa, Haiti, Jamaica, and the United States. Even within the continent of Africa there are a variety of black cultures, such as those belonging to the Ethiopians, Egyptians, Moroccans, etc. Since so many of these different people migrate to the U.S., we, as Black Americans, have both the opportunity and the obligation to learn and share these different backgrounds and incorporate them into our culture as Black Americans. We, as a people, have and will continue to make important contributions to this country.

At Tufts, and many other predominately white universities, the black voice is seldom heard because there are so few of us. Communication and unity are very important as a support system but we must also use it to obtain our goals outside of the community. In order for us to bring about change, we must first be heard!*Onyx* is a step in that direction.

I would like to give special thanks to: the African American Society, Marilyn Braithwaite and the African American Center, my staff assistants, and the Department of Communications staff.

—Margot Mosley

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"Friends"

"David, your brother is dead." Ivan said.

The words ripped through me. Chuckie was dead, the victim of a gang attack.

"Yo, don't worry, man, we gonna get them mother fuckers if it's the last thing we do, man" said Rollo.

As I looked in my brother's friend's eyes, I saw no sympathy for his death, no remorse; only the deep hatred that had led to my brother's death.

I, myself was torn between the feelings of rage and vengeance and my sorrow and desire to stop this "war" that had cost me Chuckie. I just walked out of the house.

Charlene was always there. She always understood and the feel of her soft brown skin and straight black hair was something that I would never get tired of touching; I loved her.

"My brother is dead...and I don't know what I'm gonna do."

"Yes, I know. Dave,..I..I should tell you something—"

"He's dead and I don't know if I should cry or not. My own brother and I haven't even cried for him." I felt her heart beating and I realized she was the only thing I had left now. "My mother heard and she just nodded and went into her room. She's still there now looking at the picture of when he was five...my pops went to the police station."

"What are you gonna do?"

"I don't know. I want to go out and find the dudes that killed Chuckie and—"

"Davey, don't! I mean, more violence ain't gonna solve nothin'."

"Yeah."

I left Charlene's and went home to comfort my mother.

"Remember this picture of you and Chuckie, Davey...he looked so nice in his little suit..."

"Yeah, mom, I remember."

"...and this one of the two of you on the see-saw..."

"Mom, you have to cry. We both have to cry and realize he's gone; livin' in the past ain't gonna bring him back!"

"...and remember when Chuckie and Ivan, they were such good friends, I got those boys to help fix up the church. Ivan was such a nice boy—I sure am glad he stopped hanging with those other boys.

"Mom—please don't do this. We got to face it, Chuckie was in a gang. He wasn't Mr. Nice Guy all the time."

"They killed my baby; they killed him. Oh God, why did he have to die?"

I hugged my mother, I felt her trembling and I knew the anguish. I felt her tears.

"Davey, please, please,please, Davey, don't go and get ya self killed, please. If I lost you, I don't know..."

"Mommy, what's daddy doin'?"

"He's just sittin' there in the other room. He ain't sayin' nothin', just sittin' there. Davey, please don't do anything."

Looking there at the pictures of my brother and I when we were kids; flashing back to the times when he'd protect me and 'get' anybody that beat me up. Then—there were the good times...Then pictureing him in the coffin dead. Yet I couldn't cry for my brother.

"Davey, get the door."

It was Rollo, "Yo, Dave, man, we found the dudes, man, we gonna get the mother fuckers, you down, man? It's gonna be some heavy shit, though, man—one of them is a girl."

I looked back at my mother, then to the picture albums.

"yeah, man I'm down."

"Here, man, you gonna need this." Rollo said.

"Naw, man, I'm gonna do this thang with nothing."

I got into the car and we drove to Melrose Place and in the basement of a small abandoned house were my brother's killers.

"They hid up in da basement...let's get 'em. Rollo said.

After a brief struggle I finally faced my enemies.

"Yo why did you— my hear just stopped. You...you...you killed my brother? You killed my brother?"

"Davey, I...I didn't know that the Jade Dragon was your brother Chuckie, until it was too late, Davey, I..I..."

"Why?"

"He and my brother had a fight."

"Your brother is 'Cat Eyes'?"

"Yes, they fought and Reggie ended up in the hospital, attached to all those gadgets; I thought for sure he'd die. He made me promise to get the Jade Dragon."

"And you killed him? You shot and killed my brother?"

"Say, man, I don't care if she is a girl, the Jade Dragon is dead and they killed him, now they gotta pay"— Rollo said, anxiously.

"Davey, please, please, if I had known, I wouldn't have done it"— she asaid.

"Who helped her? Where is the other one? Oh my God, not you too?

"Yes, Dave, me too. It was my job. I was never you friend. The Stones asked me to plant myself with the Dragons in case the two ever fought."

"But you were supposed to be our friend.."

"Yes and getting to know the both of you very well...and I know that you ain't gonna let these dudes kill us."

''What makes you so sure that I won't?''

''Dave, Dave, it's me remember? I used to practically take care of you.''

''Rollo, grab Charlene and take her to the cops.''

''Yo, man, they killed your brother-'' Rollo stormed.

''Rollo, man, please for me, get her the hell out of here, the cops will make sure she goes to jail.''

''And whgat about him?''

''He's mine.''

After Rollo and Charlene went outside, I turned to face the other killer.

''Come on now, Dave, you ain't gonna kill me. Why don't you just let me go with them to the cops?''

''no.''

''Dave, look, you can't kill me. You knwo your brother wasn't the most innocent person, he got lots of people beaten up bad.''

''Yeah, but not killed'' I turned to look out of the basement window, the church that Chuckie and his friend help rebuild was two blocks away, I could see it from where Iwas standing. It brought back a lot of memories.

''The dragons were getting too big. The Stones had to stop them and your brother was in the way. Dave, you know I'm right. I'll just go to the cops. You ain't gonna kill me so why don't you just let me go to jail.''

Still, only silence.

''I'm going now Dave. I'll think of you in jail. Heh! Have a good life.''

I turned, ''Ivan, did you pass by the Church that you and Chuckie help fix, today?''

''Yes, why?''

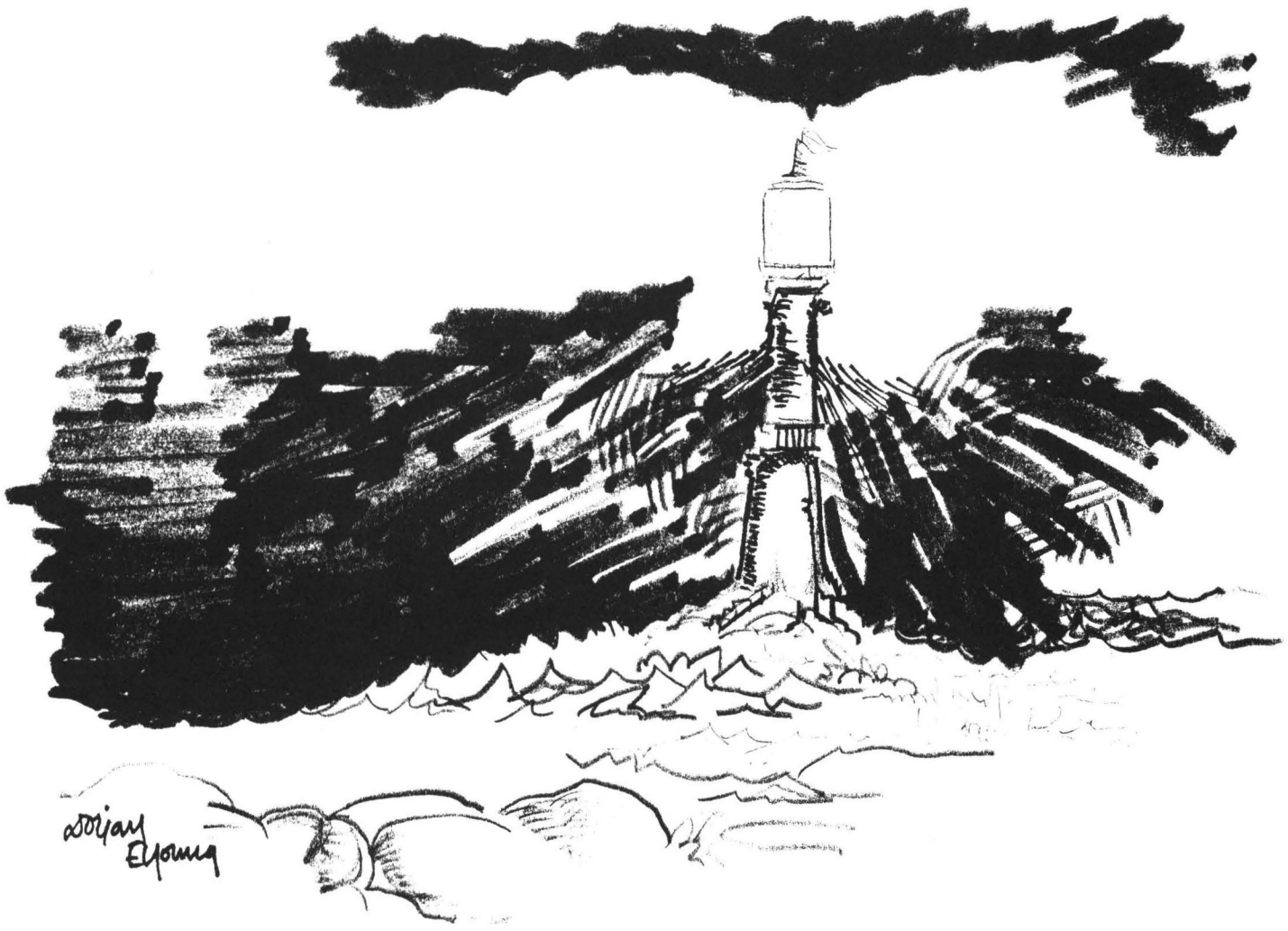
As I pulled the trigger, I felt a drop of moisture leave my eyes and run down my cheek. I cried for my brother.

—Henry Powell

Lighthouse

Lighthouse, leads the ships
In a direction of unyiedling substance
Grasping on not only to what the present has, but
Honestly searching for what the future may hold.
The voyagers don't only share a destination, but they
Have a great deal more in common.
Only if they knew that without the
Use of the house with the light. The light that
Shines a star of eternity and
Everlasting space, their journey would be unfeasible.

—Dawne Simon



EBONY LOVE

I'm drowning in the sea of uncertainty.
I can't figure out what I want to do.
What could be happening to me?
I want to be free!
Teach me to swim, Baby, because
I love you!

The Sun beats down and dries my eyes
I can't take this joke- please hear my cries!
The heavens will open up to no one who can't
Accept it Baby, because
I love you!

—Dorian Young

BROTHER?

Put it back- Don't go!
We live in a world of "inexorable laws,"
But you can't stop shouting,
Can't give up!
What's wrong with you?
Put it back- Don't go!
You're my brother!?

—Dorian Young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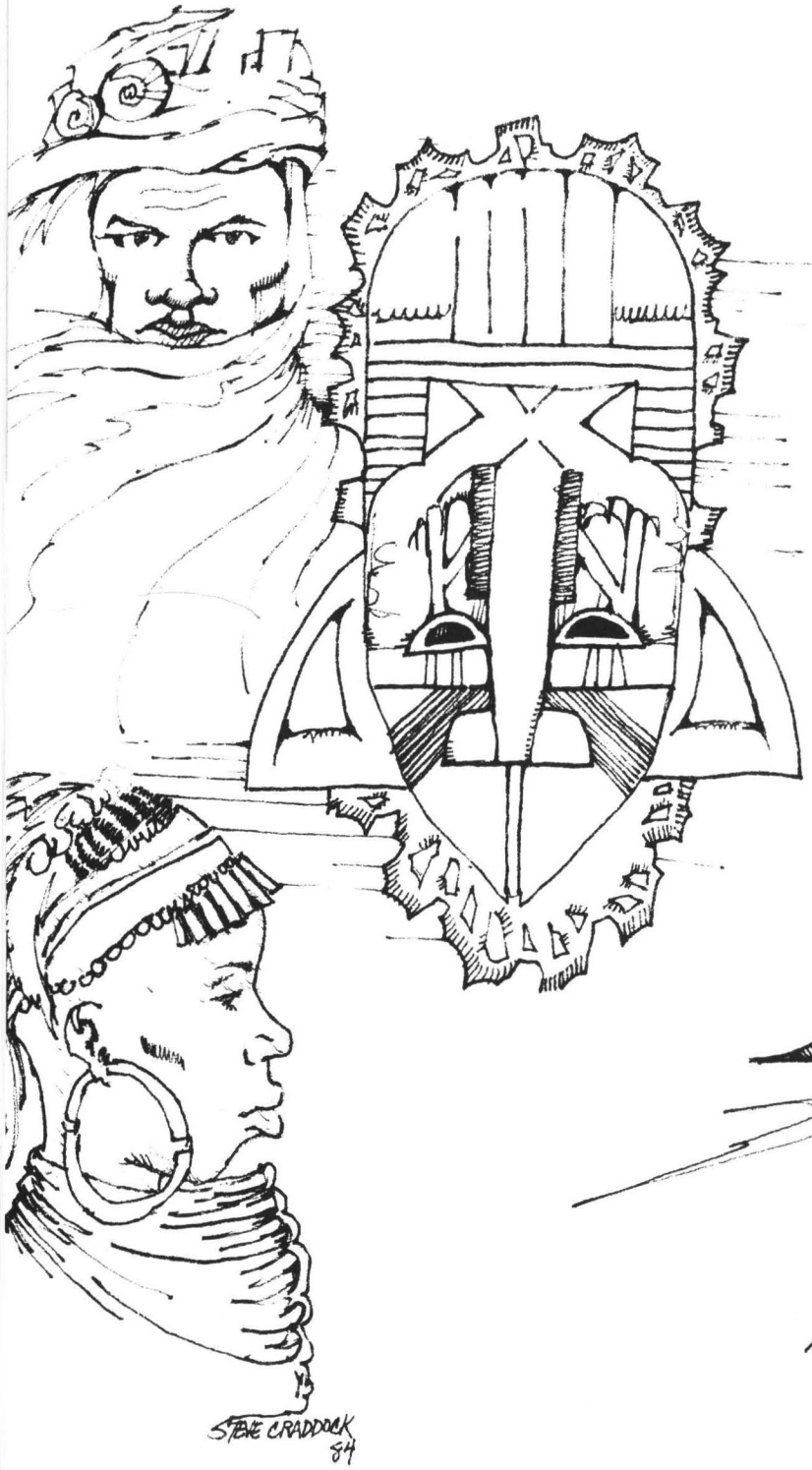
Seven Principles



UMOJA*(UNITY)*—to work and learn together in an atmosphere of love and respect for self and others.

KUJICHAGULIA*(SELF-DETERMINATION)*—to help build minds geared for positive movement and for making dreams come true.

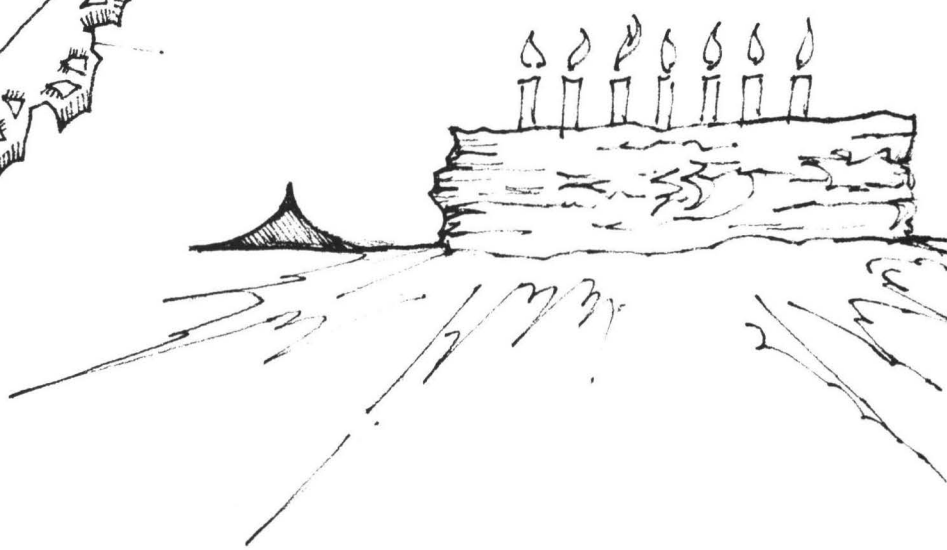
UJIMA*(COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY)*—to struggle together to reach the goals we have set for ourselves and to master all obstacles.

UJAMAA*(COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS)*—to pull together all of our resources to build a strong, beautiful school both tangibly and ideologically.

NIA*(PURPOSE)*—to develop and to substantiate a positive direction in which to guide and lead our children.

KUUMBA*(CREATIVITY)*—to expand and to develop the creative potential inherent in all children.

IMANI*(FAITH)*—to believe and have confidence in ourselves and our progress; to know that we can build strong minds for a brighter tomorrow.



Come sail with me and I'll wash your face with golden speckles of sunlight,

cool you down with a gentle breeze,

warm you up when my body joins yours in love.

And then, lady, we'll watch our children grow and I'll forever love you, sailing across my calm, beautiful, ocean of dreams.

—to S.G. from E.A.

ONE NIGHT STAND

Why do you weep?

In my heart I will keep

a special place for you, dear.

One night while you sleep

I'll kiss you on the cheek,

you'll wake up and I'll disappear.

—E.A.

HAIKUS

Snowfall, how content
We visualize it's beauty.
But feel it's torture.

Leaves of autumn run
Briskly down streets and chase all
Past stories of winter.

Summer of love.
What delight once avoided
Rain gave my body.

**A Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry which usually deals with the topic of man or nature. It has a specific syllabic structure (5,7,5), that must always be taken into consideration when viewing and reading them.*

—Dawne Simon

What do *You* See?

—APPRECIATION—

Do you appreciate your
Black brothers and sisters?

No?

If you were; Irish, or Italian, Jewish, Anglo
—Saxon Protestant, Polish, French, Russian,
German, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican
Hispanic, or even..Native African this
dissertation would not strike home.

what am I getting at?

Those ethnic groups mentioned and others
have entire nations to claim as their own,
to assimilate into without losing culture,
and to feel safe in independent of their
'color'.

The Black, Lower-class, well-to-do, wealthy, mostly African but not really_
Americans
don't.

Yes, we can go to Africa and claim it as a land
of people of our own color, but how well would
you be able to enter African culture and function
normally in his point in history?

Therefore,
The nation closest to a 'Black-American' is America.
So many slaves, so many leaders, so many people have died
to bring us to where we are now(not just Black-Americans but those with
black skin. Because when it comes to racism, Black is black skin
with no concern of cultural background.

isn't it only 'appropriate' that we acknowledge
others(past or present) of our achromacity?

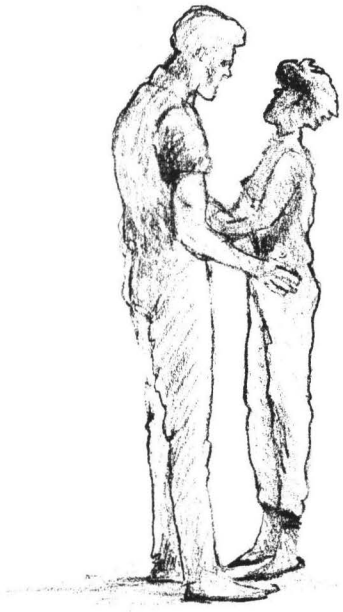
Do you appreciate...?

—A.M.K.

THE COIN

Reaching out
Arms apart
Two Lovers
Love they lost;
Anger Won
Now there's one
Alone
Without a doubt

Reaching out
Arms entwined
Two Lovers
Love they find;
Forever joined
Forever One
Each for the other
Each,
Without a doubt



—by The Two as One(Derek and Stephanie)

The night is still.

The boys are not hanging out on the corner, shooting the breeze, or

smoking reefer.

There are no gunshots, sirens, boxes blaring, or any noise whatsoever.

The night is very still.

The moon is not shining, it's tucked away behind a mass of gray, dark

clouds.

Soon the rain will fall, followed by thunder, and bitter, cold drops will plunge endlessly to the ground.

This will be the only sound in the night, at least in the black community;

Ronald Reagan has won again.

The night is very still.

—E.A.

MAN KIND

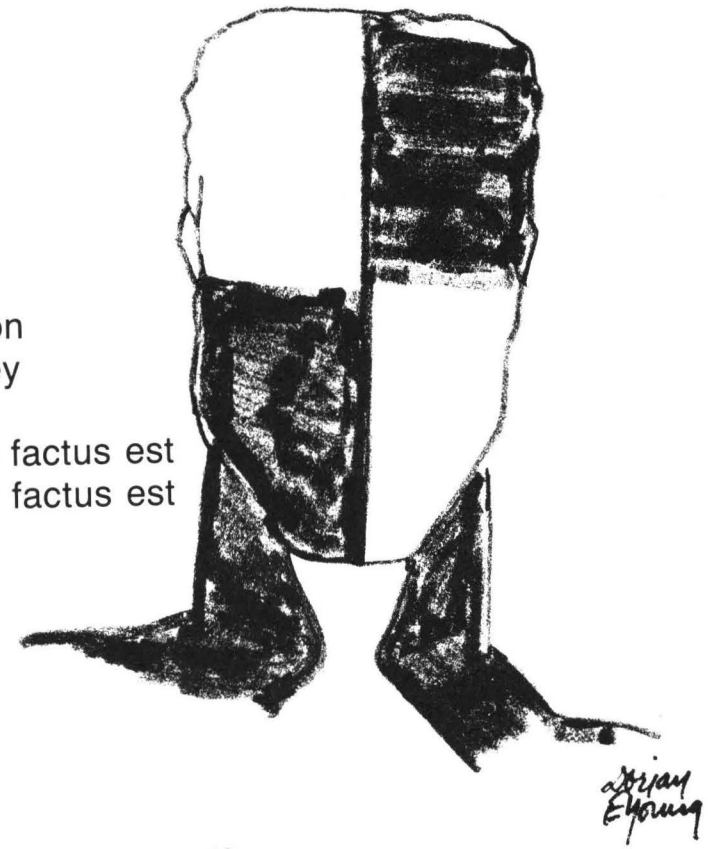
First and Third there is no cure!
You're as crazy as the first time that you set foot on this planet.
Why don't we find a place, where we can rest
And put to the test
This crude thing you call love and I call hate.
Can you relate?
Dig this- You're a fountain of joy
But I'm no toy, don't call me that!
Why roll your eyes at the skies that conceived you
That convinced me that there's no hope on earth
for *all man kind.*

—Dorian Young

LAMENT OF THE HUMAN ECLIPSE

I am the Sun
I am the Moon
I am a honkey
I am a coon
Verbum caro factus est
Verbum caro factus est

—Dorian Young



uncertainty

BREATHING, PAUSING, AND BREATHING AGAIN, SMELLING THE AIR THAT'S BEEN SOILED BY THE DERELICT'S PRESENCE. MARKING TIME LETTING GO, HAVING NO CONTROL OVER WHAT'S BEEN SAID OR DONE. FEELING LOST, FEELING BLUE, ALL THAT'S GONE IS ONE'S SANITY, TOO. NOT ALIVE IN ONE'S OWN MIND FOR THE PAST HAS LEFT YOU ALL ALONE. REMEMBERING, RELIVING AND LOVING LIFE, FOR THE PRESENT HAS BROUGHT A MUCH BRIGHTER LIGHT. THE RAIN COMES DOWN CLEANSING MY HEART, CAUSING ME TO WEEP AS THE SKY ONCE DID. NOT KNOWING WHY I SHED THESE, NOT KNOWING WHY FOR SO MANY YEARS. LOOKING, LAUGHING AND FEELING GOOD ABOUT THE YEARS THAT HAVE BEEN SPENT WITH THE SUMMER'S BREEZE AND THE AUTUMN'S LEAVES. THERE SHOULD BE A UTOPIA TODAY, SOME DAY, ANY DAY WE MUST WAIT AND ALWAYS PRAY. HOW CAN WE WISH WHEN WISHES ARE EXTINCT AND TIME NONEXISTENT. WE ARE LOSING ALL WE'VE LIVED FOR, ALL WE'VE GATHERED AND SO MUCH MORE. FOR MAN CANNOT BE AT PEACE, THERE MUST ALWAYS BE WAR AND WHAT WILL REMAIN; AN UNHEARD CRY, A SIGH AND SO MUCH MORE.

—Dawne Simon