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Letter from the Editors

In order to celebrate our 20th Anniversary, the ONYX executive boards began preparing in the fall semester. Last semester, we chose to represent the magazine with the Ghanaian symbol Sankofa, which emphasizes the importance of the past on the future. None of us could have imagined what a momentous task it would be to pay homage to twenty years of Black artistic expression on the Tufts campus.

ONYX is more than a collection of literary and artistic submissions, it is a process and a journey that is often not given the respect that it aptly deserves. For twenty years, this magazine has provided a venue for students to share their outlook on the world. Over the past two decades, ONYX has meant and continues to mean different things to different people. The one thing that remains timeless is the magazine's ability to make tangible the voices of the African Diaspora at Tufts.

In this issue, we attempted to fuse ONYX of 1984 with ONYX of 2004 and all the issues in between, understanding that we are united in our ability and desire to articulate our experiences with a pen, a brush, or a camera lens in order to reflect, to express and hopefully to inspire.

We hope you enjoy this journey through the past and present!

NaKeila Pickrom & Elaina Mends

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For their help with layout and selection

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Table of Contents

Title	Author/Artist	Page
One Rainy Day	Andrea Nelson	4
uncertainty	Dawne Simon	5
Untitled	CLS	5
Rain	Michael Fraser	6
Reign Fall	Vera L.	7
---	Jenelle Walthour	8
Sizzle: Ink, Pastels	Scheherazade Tillet	9
HAIR	Lauren Allen	10
WHO I AM (Poem for Mommy) ☾	Nana Osafo	11
Untitled: Silk Painting☾	Ajua McNeil	12
Onyx Eyes	Natasha Labaze	13
Untitled	Carol Tate	13
The Thickness of Blood	Seth Markle	14
Two Poems by...	Anthony Snowden	15
Mango, Chutney, and Kool-Aid	Natasha Marin	16
Jazz	Tiphonie Yanique Galiber-Gundel	17
Well, does she fit...	Shamik L. Mitchell	18
Reality?	Kahlillah Dotson	19
Little Girls	Jamila Moore	19
Soul Search	Connell Cloyd	20
I Love Milk Chocolate	Ian Smith-Dahl	21
JADI	Eric Todd Rice	22
The Man	Avril	22
Ebony Love	Dorian Young	22
Man Kind	Dorian Young	22
Untitled: Photo	Rebecca Mann	23
For Peter...	Laura Griffin	24
Turnstiles	Eric Walker	24
Exposure	Eshena Davis	25
New Submission from Past* and Present Students		
85 EYE	Angela T. Anderson	26
GQ's Rebuttal	Gerrard James*	27
Black Trinity	Alwin Jones*	28
Upon Arrival	Laura Louis-Fils	29
Vivid.com	James Dormon	30
Cameron at the Zoo	Lory Ivey Alexander*	32
"912"	Bobby Tugbiyele*	33
Drawing☾	Kerice Roberts	34
Mak-A-do-cious	Keila P.	35
A Drive to Langano	Newaye Daniel	36
Untitled	Jasmine Wallace	36
Mindmate☾	Laura Louis-Fils	37
Manual Reflection	Elaina Mercedes Mends	38
The Sprits to Rest	Marie K. Theodore-Pharel*	39
Proceed...	Keila P.	40

☾ Editors' Choice Award

One Rainy Day

...I think
sitting in class (20th century lit.)
I think...
I think of
who I am..a beautiful
sound
black woman

where I am...small
New England
Liberal Arts
predominately
white university

I think of...
my brothers and sisters in the class
or even on campus,
who sit in fear of being
recognized
identified and
thus scrutinized
.....How sad.....

How sad it is to think

to think...
How *just* being here
we are living out the dreams
of so many of our family members

to think...
how much
we must reach out
we must hold on to one another
and keep those from falling down
we must build the bridge
so those who lie on the
border don't fall through
the gaps
the cracks
and through the hole.

we must love one another
appreciate and respect each other
support and admire those others
despite our many differences of color
sex
sexual orientation
family background
economic background
Greek organization
dress
style
look

We must *LOVE* each other
which stems
first
from loving ourselves

*This is a special dedication to the founder
of ONYX and my Soror, Margot Mosley.
With much honor, respect and love.*

Andrea Nelson
From 1990 Issue

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

From 1984 Issue

Untitled

Good Morning Sunshine
and how are you today?
Can we stop and talk
for just a moment?
Why is it that you
who gives the light of life,
the warmth of love an even
the nourishment we need,
can be so understanding,
undemanding
and kind?
You shine down upon
Everyone
without favor or preference
How can you be so universal
when those that you shine on cannot?

CLS

From 1987 Issue

Rain

It is funny to me
Everybody waiting to see
A deliverer appear in the sky
And why
When Son of man said he dwell inside
A strong people don't need a strong leader
Or a leader at all
Yet time stalls
We read that the civil rights era ended in the 70's
And believe it
Satanic plans, you have to perceive it
Reveal it
To yourselves
Earth can be heaven or hell
Your mind an unlimited expanse or a cell
You're the one that chooses where you dwell
Masses are being conditioned like dogs hearing bells
Like Agent Smith said,
Humanity is Starting to smell
Falling Rain, the truth tells

What is ruling your heart?
What is the underlying principles of your decisions?
Do you believe me
when I say we are ruled by value systems?
So what values do you have son?
Externals can be taken away
Hoard knowledge and rich you will always stay
We were the scholars of Timbuktu in ancient days
I watch the world stage
And interpret the play
Earth is the game board, I say
And it has no rules
In the hands of fools that preach fairy tales
While puppets masters balance the scales
Of justice and truth to their own convenience
Pay close attention
to the words in this next sentence

The most important use of words
is to navigate your own conscience
So who created the languages we speak
And what are the goals they seek?
India and China Talk of
Chi and Parna
The internal divinity
Transcending all that is life and humanity
This concept is not found in English
No word means no light switch
To illuminate the thought
And before birth
We're already caught
in a mental limitation
They already censored
Our thoughts and conversations
I shout liberation
On all planes of being
To perceive
Beyond touching, hearing, and seeing
To experience the fullness of be-ing
PEACE!!

Michael Fraser
From Spring 2000 Issue

Reign Fall

White reign falls heavy on his soul
soaked at his feet,
making him bitter cold.

White reign splashes on his face
runs the length of his body-
everyplace.

Whispered, he hears the living desert
calling his name.

The weighted clouds had split apart
burst out

His head, so wet,
drenched by the torrential reign.

It runs off his head onto his lips
but sometimes it slips into his
mouth and he tastes it;
Should he swallow or should he spit?

The reign seeps through his clothes
Is there any protection that anyone knows?
The desert is not nurtured by the downpour;
the sand struggles up and it reigns more.

Not undaunted he covers his body with the oil
of knowledge and common sense
And he watches the beads of reign slip
over his head, past his shoulders and
run off over his toes.

So it flows...
So it falls.

Vera L.
From 1990 Issue



Jenelle Walthour '81

Jenelle Walthour
From 1987 Issue



Sizzle: Ink, Pastels
From Spring 2000 Issue

Scheherazade Tillet

ONYX Spring 2004

HAIR

I have beautiful hair.
But beautiful according to who?
All falling down around my shoulders
and perfuming with coconut oil,
it blow around when the wind hits,
made possible by my monthly perm.
Men say I have good hair that they can
run their fingers through.

I have beautiful hair.
But beautiful according to who?
My hair is short and natural
framing the skin on my dark, chocolate face.
A man says he likes his sister natural.

I have beautiful hair.
But beautiful according to who?
Long African box braids and Senegalese twists
that shine and smell sweet of African Pride
in a bottle.

I have beautiful hair.
Ever changing, never pleasing everyone for one reason
or another.
Too kinky.
Too short.
Too fake.
Too straight.
Not natural.

I have beautiful hair.
But beautiful according to who?
Am I black according to you?

Lauren Allen
From 1996 Issue

"WHO I AM (POEM FOR MOMMY)"

for years
i was proud
of being
true
ghanaian
surrounded by
purple
flying
free
from slavery
colonialism
proud
that i knew
my roots and
not lost
like the millions
infinite
african-americans
whose family
origins
umbilical cords
slowly unraveled
untied and cut
from their mother
land
used for
lynchings in
AMERIKKKA

in my soul,
i reigned
like my mother
queen
nefertiti
queen mother
nana
floating
freedom
from the
systematic rapes
of black women
by white slave owners
and black men alike
my family
was not
enslaved
so i thought

my mother's skin
sweet caramel
is celebrated
in ghana
a preferred color
mommy
you are a stranger
immersed in the tide
of ebony
dark cocoa beans

mother
you were proud
to possess
a whiter complexion
proud
while others
sit in the dark
unable to fly
unilluminated
eaten away
by self-contempt
feelings of
incertitude
because their hair
like wool
is not
straight enough
because their noses
are flat stubs

i thought i could
fly
it is only in
AMERIKKKA
that my brothers
and sisters
defeat me
with colorism
in AFRICA
i assumed
sovereignty
was not based on
shades of skin
maybe not

mommy
when i
when ghana
looks at you
you are forever
an embodiment
of a consciousness
that whiter
is better
that midnight
tar skin
is shame.
a symbol of
truth
that a white man
during africa's colonization
raped
a black woman

he was my great-grandfather

maybe i didn't fly.

Nana Osafo
From Special Issue 1997



Untitled: Silk Painting

Aja McNeil
From Spring 1998 Issue

Onyx Eyes

Cryptocrystalline
Crypt, for the underground vault
my grandmère peacefully lies in
i lived in the womb of the womb she gave life to
Our hands never touched though

“Grandmère, I swear your black eyes
in that photo
in the living room
FOLLOWED
ME !”

As I write this poem,
i realize that i do not
even know your name
letters hidden in your
dark precious Onyx Eyes

Your last name though
was LAGUERRE
Warrior-martyr
you gave away the last breath of life
to your baby
Hard dark onyx eyes that watched over me.

Crystal eyes that must have shed
tears as you expired
knowing that you would never be able to
lay your eyes on your baby.

Natasha Labaze
From 1990 Issue

Untitled

“...not black enough,”
someone said
in soft disgust.
not black enough?

i ask-
always ask
myself,
not too
tart
maybe too sweet
just me
an entity in space
not

green or red
but filled
with all the glorious color
of a golden cathedral,
so that i may be
what i may-
not one
or the other but
plural-

“can anyone understand?”
my eyes silently question
“does anyone want to?”
my soul whispers-
let me
feel blindly without

vision
without
figure or ground-
so as not to judge

so as not to feel
the pangs-
those who chose their color
blindness
are but ignorant-
fools i claim-
fools-

but to hear the well heard-
my mind again
asks my unaccountable soul
what is
not black
enough?

Carol Tate
From 1990 Issue

The Thickness of Blood

Who says blood runs thicker than water?
For starters, my red ever-flowing,
ever shinning blood
Is linked to someone unknown to me.

I don't care.
Liar.

Well, adoption was her option
And she opted to give me up
In hopes of a better life filled with confusion and
animosity.

I hate her
Liar.

She held me.
Held me inside her, warm and safe for nine
months.
The best days of my life.

He watched his wife in pain with either hatred or
elation.
Or maybe he was absent, during this supposedly joyous
occasion.
Probably.
Probably not.

When she conceived me, she instantly relieved me of my
identity.
Insanity crept upon me as I was embraced into a new
family.
Cuddled and kissed in white soft loving arms.

I'll never forgive her.
Liar.

My anonymous Mother giver,
she turned me loose.

Am I suppose to forget about the ropes,
the tight noose,
the beautiful trees stained with blood,
the changing rearranging of God,
to the white man above?
Never!

Do I have any love for her.
Yeah.
Even though my ancestry was taught to me
Through books and bug eyed looks
That tore my flesh.

Where is she? Where was she? Who is she?
Do I wanna know,
Who gave me this beautiful skin and crazy
afro?
Yeah.

I'm gonna stop thinking about Her.
Liar.

She's cemented in my mind hard.
At night my inner thoughts try and
fight the fright
of loving one whom I've never met.

She stole a part of my soul.
Or maybe,
she's holding onto it waiting.

Seth Markle
From Fall 1997 Issue

Still Living and Still Life

Two friends
once close, inseparable
they could magically feel
each other's thoughts.

now

an occasional glance or
"hello"
as they both go in separate directions
don't you see
time was the enemy
they grew up

Anthony Snowden
From 1989 Issue

Boy Next Door

He was different
the hooded eyes
shaded a sadness
only few could see

He ran away
in order to live
he had to
some understood
some wondered aloud
why such a young boy
had to go so far away
to be a
man.

Anthony Snowden
From 1998 Issue

Mango Chutney and Kool-Aid

Thank God for white boys and boy bands.
That kind of vapid happiness cannot be taught.
Guys named Brandon and Kyle sing about those things
that white girls expect and black girls want but never get.

I confess,
I almost bought Kool-Aid the other day.
I picked up something red and "juicy" but,
the package was too slick for my touch and I slowly
put it back, snug between two others-
purposefully separating myself from any and all traces of
"Ghetto-fabulousness."

I'd like to think my tastes are more refined.
Cranberry juice, chilled in a wine glass with a squeeze of lime
or a drop of vodka, anything with a recognizable label.
But, when I am around them,
yes them...
I try so hard to appear non-threatening, putting off all the
"Ethnic" vibes I can muster.

(Laughing to myself)
I sing along to the latest blanched anthem,
saying:
Bye bye bye
to all the pretenses...
to the absolutes and the extremes
that could never describe me.

I am, without a doubt, as black as they come,
And just how black is that?
Black enough to know that I exist outside of a box
wallpapered in lies and images that are
too big-lipped, and wide-nosed to be anything but animal?

Well, here is my Statement of Purpose:
I can't sing
so I write.

Thank God for white boy bands, who sing what I can
only drop one by one on the page. I am my mother
grandmother great-grandmother great great-grandmother.
I am 1\16 Carib. I am 1\16 white. Colonized and colonizer
together in my blood. First Nations victim escaping my
red blood but filled to the brim with black white and ochre.
I am island and mainland and dirt, sinking beneath my
own indigenous feet. I am a memory - a history of struggle
that will live like a genie on velvet couches in the forefront
of your mind and my legs are still chained and my toes are so cold
coaled
kohled

Natasha Marin
From Spring 2001 Issue

Jazz

I never really appreciated jazz until he played it on me
I would just stare at sheets of music—cryptic
I never knew the rhythm's lucidity or its potency
I never imagined that the music becomes like liquid
I never dreamed I would long for virginity
just so I could give it up agin and again
and again.

And now when he plays the jazz
he holds my hand, pressing those keys and reaching those cords
I've torn up my music sheets
now I play by ear
and he gives me the music again and again
and again.

Tiphanié Yanique Galiber-Gundel
From Spring 1999 Issue

Well, does she fit the description?

Full, alluring lips
Telling the explicit exploits of
Sexy, smooth Hershey skin
Banging body
Properly pronouncing every curve and muscle.
Chiseled to most men's satisfaction.
She must run track with those legs?

Store bought eyes
shielding her soul but fondling my imagination.
What's behind that stained glass?
What does she want to hide?
Nothing her tightly woven hair doesn't suggest.
Nothing her proportions don't already tell.

Black Woman.
Undeniably, and unmistakably *fine*
Seductive wittiness
Machismo taming,
ATTITUDE.
Making my mission to please you
tease me wit your sensuality and sensitivity.
Self-reliant, arrogant
Loving, and compassionate
Certainly not flawless, but perfect.

You've got my attention.
And you can have my affection...if you want it?

Shamik L. Mitchell
From Special Issue 1997

Reality?

black duderags, pink curlers, outside house shoes,
worn out robes
Cussing, Hoeing,
No pride. No self esteem
Bitches with Attitude
Babies having babies
Cops and robbers - everyone wants to be the
robber
Shots and screams violent dreams.
Boyz will be Boyz...

In Da Hood,
success is unknown
fear is power
There are no hopes, just Hoop Dreams
No strivers for success - They're just striving to
survive
Menaces to a society that does not want or care
for them
Where are the idols?
Who are the Joe Clarks?

They say that there are many roads to choose
from...
Only one is accessible to those Strapped and
trapped.
Or so it seems.
If the other road exists, how come we can't see the
light?

Kahlillah Dotson

From Special Issue 1997

Little Girls

When I was asked to define reality
as part of my urban therapy
I only said what was real to me.

Reality is little black girls with lopsided ponytails
fastened with gigantic pink elastic balls.

Reality is these little girls who smack their gum too
loudly
and speak too soon, who begin to trade in their white
plastic ken dolls for chocolate ones of more life-sized
proportions.

Reality is these little girls who think education ends in
tenth grade,
who memorize every song that epitomizes them as easy
hoes,
and who speak with dees and dems, instead of these and
those.

Reality is these girls who get turned out, put out, or
locked out of society.

Reality is these little girls who don't care where their
baby's daddy be.
And the saddest reality of all, is that this is the *only*
reality these little girls see.

Jamila Moore

From Spring 2000 Issue

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 the
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
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

I Love Milk Chocolate

I like Milk Chocolate,

much more as a concept
than as a candy or a precept
(though I'd like to have
my cake and eat it, too).

but Milk Chocolate, it's like
a real dream, man.

The child of Skim and Chocolate
Milk and Cocoa.
It makes no apology for being sweet
and creamy
Not forced to decide between
It's being one or the other
Creamy or Sticky sweet
Milky or Chocolately, as it were.

You see, it's just what it be
people don't judge
or point
or sneer
saying only,
"You're not really Milk"
or, "You're not really Chocolate"
and both "Because
You're not like me (or them)"

I like Milk Chocolate, yes
but also
I am like Milk Chocolate

Ian Smith-Dahl

From Spring 1998

The Man

Who is that man?
 he can make
 me cry, sometimes
Who is he
 who can pull my
 smile from under
 the frown?
What is he to me
 that he can understand
 where others have failed?
Is he part of me
 when at times
 our thoughts mesh?
A stranger
 when we can't seem
 to figure each other out
he is just the man
in love with me.

Avril

From 1989 Issue

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 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

From 1984 Issue

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!

Dorian Young

From 1984 Issue

JADI

Coolin'

Taking things as they come
Just having fun
Supplying each other with strength
And courage
 don't worry man,
 I got your back
Laughing, Teasing, Swearing
But, never crying
Boys for life
Immersed in the grave topics of our era
Females, hoop, brotherhood
Free of any worldly concerns
So we pretend

Eric Todd Rice

From 1987 Issue



Untitled: Photo

Rebecca Mann
From Spring 1999 Issue

For Peter, the beautiful bird that flew away

Love is a memory which I cannot recall. I had tasted a drop that was sweeter than wine, and a thousand times more intoxicating to my soul.

The night we shared was beautiful, but I wish he could have lasted to lead me to the sunrise, but as the peak of dusk, he flew into the sky.

His scent stays with me still, as his words rest on my mind, but His presence will ever be missed, and his thoughts ever divine.

Laura Griffin

From 1990 Issue

Turnstiles

I've got a turnstile in my bedroom.
"Single file..., One at a time please!"
Say my blue clad workers.

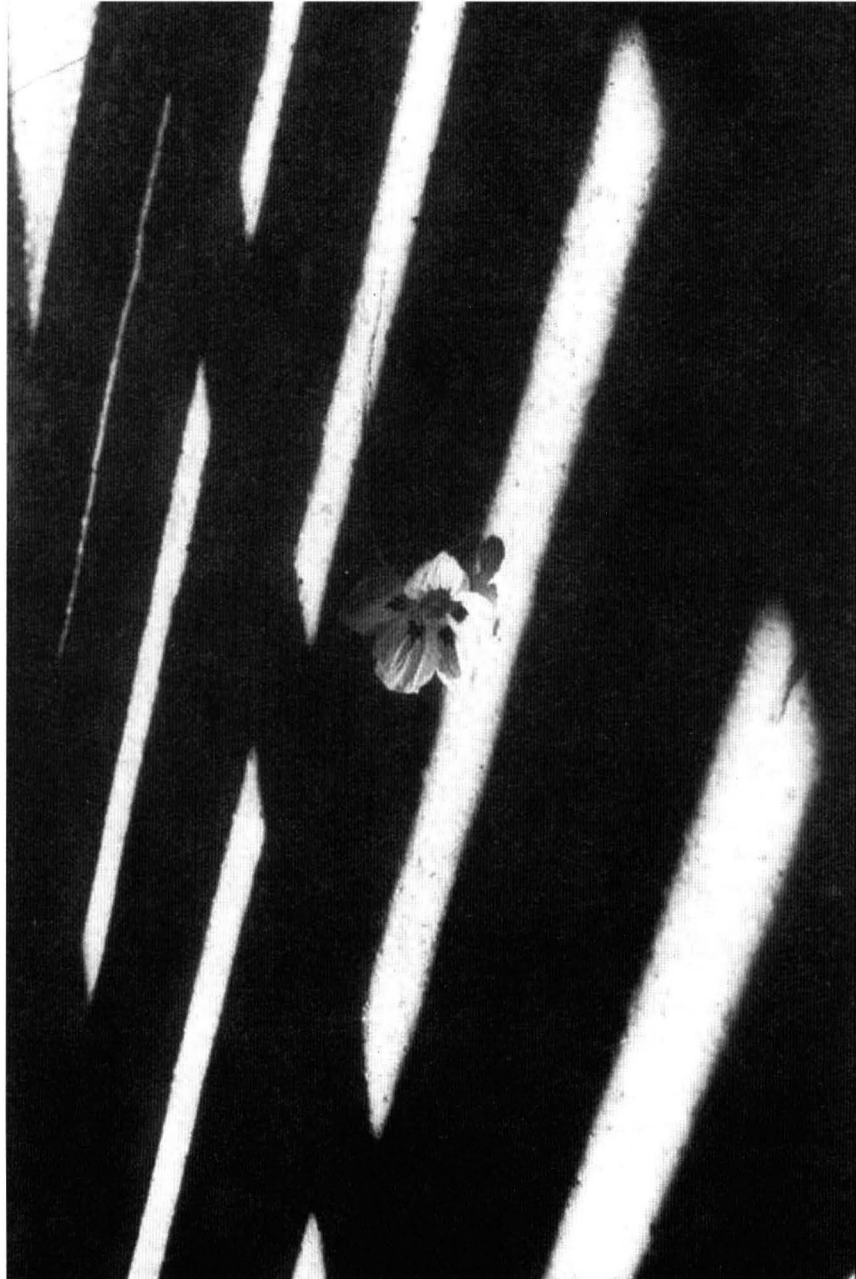
I've got a turnstile in my bedroom.
Because of all the traffic and volume.
It is protection against the darkness and the gloom.
In case a false love attempts to bloom.
Or warm touch makes me swoon.
My conductor will croon,
"Move along..., Keep moving please."

I've got a turnstile in my bedroom.
Run your card.
Or drop a token.
Barely a word need be spoken.
The ticket taker makes small talk while jokin'
But he's here to insure my heart don't get broken.

I've got a turnstile in my bedroom.
You could be a home wrecker.
That's why I've got a metal detector.
My blue clad minions will act as protectors.

Eric Walker

From 1997 Issue



Exposure

Eshena Davis
From Spring 2001 Issue

85 EYE

There are very few with the hunger I have.

There are very few with the skills I have.

There are very few with the thirst I have.

There are very few with the stamina I have.

The will I have

The drive I have

There are very few with the agility I have to take it down low and keep it up top without breaking my soul.

The feeling, the taste in my mouth

I want to keep riding this ride until it won't go out

I thought it was about talent and the game I could bring.

Too many people think they run this thang.

Changing face while sacrificing all they know.

I would rather die than give up my soul

Cause they don't have the strength I have to keep it real when it should be real

You.... You struggle to have

I struggle to overcome

You give up in the battle

I keep fighting til I've won

This is not some invention, some plan I have designed

This is the way it should be...

We live in a world where children are dying and yet million dollar contracts are still rising.
Have we forgotten about AIDS and poverty and hope?

Tearing down one another's dreams, yet hoping for something better

Can there be anything better when nothing has changed?

The questions are out there, yet the answers remain hidden.

Must we live for the unknown?

Can we rise above racism and sexism and power?

The dream is out there
Waiting to be uncovered
Open your eyes to the sky
If it is not you
Than it will be me

GQ's Rebuttal

I acquired this ability to rhyme/ but this ambition that I have in my heart and my mind/ didn't take time for me to develop it/ it was innate/ for I inherited it/ from two strong parents who's conviction in me/ was that I would not fail/ which made my mission to be/ that I would excel/ inhale and exhale/ the positive in detail/ and never get derailed/ I'm always on track/ this is not a misconception it is purely a fact/ and my perception/ of your elusive expressions/ is that you're trying to confuse me then surround me in your depression/ and if that is your weapon/ I hope you get the impression/ that my conception in my abilities/ is beyond the hostility/ that you could ever do to me mentally/

But if you do hurt me mentally/ it will only be transitory/ for it is mandatory/ that I continue to persist/ because my persistence will always exist/ it is inveterate/ I am more eloquent/ and you're even worth the words used to diss your intelligence/ so please/ I'm going to win, it's a mental disease/ not transient/ its here to stay, never to leave/ so please believe/ that I will succeed/ whether you claim that you're omnipotent or that you're better than me/

So emigrate/ to another country or to another state/, but whatever you do/ realize that the mind of GQ/ is off limits to you/ and whether it's your point of view/ or your perception/ that I'm supposed to be under you/ because that's what your expectin'/ well you need to check it...Because you are definitely dogmatic/ and I've definitely about had it/ and I'm sorry if you don't have the habit/ of refusing to be average/, but if you choose to be average/ then it is my intuition/ that you choose to lose at life, because you refuse to listen/ and if you could just pay attention/ then I would try to mention/ that the proximity between your thoughts and actions are definitely missing/ So I'm sorry if I shocked you, or if I blew your cover/ I just had to let you know that your diss went in one ear and out the other.

Gerrard James

BLACK TRINITY

They came to me wishing, three black fairies
Their young whipped into their shoulders like scriptures
Of black as sin and pure as snow Lord make me, I pray
Three they came with holes, one nail thick in their palms
One nail thick in through their dusty feet

The Three sipping the blood of those who die for everything
Always with a head stone "Rest in...Always the same

All three dressed in black, the Second with tears crawling
On her coal colored, dusty cheek – tears streaking, writing

Always the Same for black fairies with holes in their feet
Always the same Jesus, with eyes of blue and hair that ones
With the wind; never with locks, never feet of bronze—
Maybe it rubbed off somewhere, the Third said,
Maybe it rubbed off but never tainted, maybe

It would come back hiding under the brim of a crown
Maybe to proclaim: I am King, I am Freedom, I am

A shadow that hides from its seeker, gets lost in the night
Black shadow of a black man, son of black fairies, now old

The son of a young black fairy, now old and wand-less,
Without fairy dust,
Maybe, my mothers sprinkled it in fairy land so that I can
See redder sunsets
Maybe her wand flashes lights of red and blue and red
Streaking with sirened sounds day and night to let me know
She's there
They'll never get lost, give them stories of north and
Streetlights for stars

To lead them north to freedom north guiding their way,
Maybe,
Streetlights bring reachable white moons; black daughters standing
Under,

The First said, a streetlight so that fingers of her shadow
Might touch his black shadow as he passes to go north

Alwin A.D. Jones



Upon Arrival

Laura Louis-Fils

Vivid.com

The clock in room S4 of the science wing always toyed with me. It would move close to 8:45 then back to 8:43. It didn't help that it was a smiley face clock either. Biology was one of my more boring classes. Miss Lewis went on and on about Darwin's nature versus nurture and survival of the fittest, whichever the right one was who knew. She kept going on about how one's environment influences them. Finally, the clock hit quarter past and class was over.

Tabor Academy was in the middle of nowhere Marion, Massachusetts. The school was right on the beach front and the way that the nicely cut grass and the water complimented the school was priceless. It was one of those stuck-up schools where there was a strict dress code and rules about when one sleeps.

I went to breakfast and upon entering the cafeteria I caught sharp screaming from Jane Ohrenberger, who was yelling, "Brooke stop it! It's not funny put it away!"

Apparently, Brooke had put Jane's donut around his penis and was chasing her around the cafeteria. I thought it was amusing but Jane was not amused at all. Brooke was a skinny red-headed kid from Martha's Vineyard. I didn't know if we were friends because I was black and he hadn't known that many black people or if we were just friends. Brooke had also grown up with four brothers who had gone through Tabor Academy and he was the last-born. This might have made him a little more physical than usual. I got a bagel and some OJ and Brooke and I started walking up to the Chapel.

"You still applying for proctorship, homey?" He asked as we walked up.

"Yeah, I think I might do it. It's good for college applications you know," I replied, trying to make it seem unimportant.

Most of the sophomore boys lived in West dorm, our dorm parents were Billy and Nanny Clough who had three kids. Mr. Clough was my English teacher and his wife Nanny taught a creative writing class. I roomed with Davey Yeh an Asian kid from Taiwan who unlike Brooke Douglas was clean and didn't try really hard to hide his money.

I got back to the dorm and started on my proctorship paper. It was Mrs. Clough's idea that I apply. She told me I had a good chance of becoming one. The idea of having my own room with a fridge and a television were more pleasing to me than babysitting

some freshmen kids, but if the two came together, then so be it.

I had finished my essay and went to drop it off in the Academic Center. When I entered the computer room I caught a devious smile on Brooke's face. He was on the computer looking at something, something that was holding his attention. I went to check it out.

"What up homey, look what I got," he said to me but, never looking at me. I looked at it but it was only a package from some website called Vivid.com. At Tabor, we were notified if we got packages through the e-mail system and so students checked their e-mails numerous times a day.

"What's so special?" Why was he so happy?

"I'll show you tonight!" he yelled as he ran away, I think to pick up his package from the mailroom.

My interview for proctorship was scheduled for seven o'clock that night with Mrs. Hazlewood. She didn't know me that well so I was a little nervous. Mrs. Hazlewood was in her early thirties with two kids and one on the way. The interview went smoothly; I was impressed with myself.

The Cloughs were on duty, well, Nanny Clough, who was rather strict when she was on duty a contrast to her bubbling personality, but she was pregnant and each month we were reminded by the size of her stomach.

"How was your interview?" She asked, genuinely interested.

"It was ok it went alright, I think she liked me."

"That's good and you know all I have is good things to say about you," she said cheerfully.

"Thanks Mrs. Clough, I appreciate it."

"All right, boys lights out in fifteen minutes."

She yelled out as she patrolled the rest of the hall. Nanny Clough always patrolled the hall twice, once when she made the fifteen minute announcement and the second time to make sure all the lights were out.

Now it is a quarter to eleven and lights out was at ten thirty. I snuck into Brooke's room to borrow his laptop because he writes his Biology notes on his lap top computer. As I entered the room Brooke told me to quickly come on in. He was sitting on his couch watching some thing on his computer.

"What you watching?" I asked all excited, because of the secrecy.

"It's the Vivid DVD I got in the package today remember." He whispered, as he motioned me over to have a seat on the couch next to him.

"Is this the package from Vivid.com?"

"Yeah, watch this!" he said with a smile on face.

The DVD was a very graphic porno movie. I had seen naked pictures on the internet but, never anything like this. Brooke stared at this screen intensely, without flinching.

"Oh my god! Homey this is insane, look how she takes that in her mouth!" he said without losing his focus on the screen. I realized Nanny Clough hadn't made her second round trip. I didn't want to get caught.

"Brooke, when your done let me borrow the Bio notes?" I asked without also loosing focus from the screen.

"Homey, relax. I'm done you can have it. I'm going to bed. The notes are in my documents, Bio notes. Last thing though, hand me that lotion before you leave." he had a devious smile on his face.

"Yeah, no problem, Thanks Brooky!" I said trying to hurry with the laptop, which had the porno still playing.

After I gave him his intensive care lotion, I went for the door while simultaneously I searched for the volume button with out any luck. When the door cracked opened, a five month pregnant Nanny Clough was standing in the door way looking very unhappy. We stood there for about five seconds in silence, I was scared and she was getting more peeved by the moment. The only sounds you could here came from the computer. "Fuck me, harder, oh yeah, oh yeah!" Those words plus the ass slapping were the only sounds audible in our five second silence.

I stood there nervous as hell desperately searching for the volume button. All I could do was to close the laptop which some how made the volume louder.

"Give me the computer?" She commanded turning all shades of red by the second.

"What computer?" I replied dumb-founded, as if she had not noticed the laptop in my hand.

"The one in your hand!" She replied. I gave her the computer and went straight to bed.

Two days later, walking to the cafeteria I saw Mrs. Clough standing next to the doorway chatting to a student who might have been her baby-sitter. As I

passed, her bottom jaw dropped in amazement. She shook her head in silence as I walked by, confusing the baby-sitter.

"Yo, homey!" called Brooke from the other side of the cafeteria.

"What's up?" I replied as I walked over there.

"Don't worry about the computer, I'll get it back. There was a pop quiz in bio today though." He warned me, as if the quiz was harder then usual. I got something to eat and went to check my mail in the academic center. There was a letter addressed to me from Tabor Academy so it had to be about the proctorship. I knew I had not received it because Nanny Clough was supposed to speak on my behalf and after the incident two nights ago, I do not think she had many nice things to say about me. The rejection letter read:

Dear Shawn Hudson,

We are sorry to.....

That was it; I did not need to read anymore. It was not a big disappointment because I knew I was not going to get it. In Biology, everyone came in reviewing their notes, and I just sat in the back, tired from this afternoon and the past two days.

"Clear your desk," said Miss Lewis as she started handing out the quizzes. "Ok, you may begin"

The quiz was multiple choice, which I did not mind so much, because as Brooke said, "The answer is already there, homey."

The first question was: If all humans are equally predisposed to aggression and that degree of aggression individuals' display arises in response to features of the environment to which they were raised, this is

- A) Natural Selection
- B) Evolution
- C) Nurture
- D) Heredity

James Dormon



Cameron At the Zoo ©

Lory Ivey Alexander

"912"

It sure did hurt
Hurt like crashing towers of reality
Falling upon the throne of dominating ignorance
Kings now jesters in the international scene
Queens heard rumbles of the island's ring
Muthafucka, it hurt

More than the master's whip, but his dick
In my great, greater moms
Fertilized egg gives rise to confused progeny
Hurt like biracial in classes of homogenous students
Hurt like "is that your real hair?"
Hurt like "what are you?"
Hurt more than aunt jemima and uncle ben
Mah breakfast, lunch, and dinner still owned by the
corporate media masta

Do you know of hurt?
Do you understand the pain I get seein my sistas deny
their godly complexion?
Asshole, Barbie is not perfection.
Hurt like the word "nigger."
Hurt so much when we use "nigga."
Pass the dollar cause the time I spend on this betta
make a change

Alter the psyche of corrupt political apaches
Swinging on the vines of a bureaucratic trapeze
Concocting plots to trap me
This aint no dream,
Muhfucka don't slap me

Hurt like 666 embracing your cru-ci-fix
And MLK restin by lynched bodies by sticks
That shit hurt more than Jefferson celebrated with
fame
Chop his dick off before in Sally Hemming's, he came
An American Controversy
An American Controversy
An Ameri-kkk Controversy

Shit was real, don't believe the hype
Hurt like ya mom's od'ed on china white
Kitchen table, snot of floor containing ills of
yesterday's sorrow
Hurt cause Europeans stole our knowledge, fucka
borrow

May day!!!! May day!!!!
"912" "912"
May Day!!!! May day!!!!
"nine one two" "nine one two"

Hurt like the only thing you wanna do is play basketball
Hurt like the only thing you think we can do is play
basketball
Sphinx, the Egyptians- black mathematics
The world without our inventions, highly static

Hurt like stars and stripes in bay of pigs
Hurt more than amadu shot by a bay of pigs
That bullshit hurt like
1492
1896
1945
1968

1940, the year of Bigger Thomas
hurt cause Richard Wright aint wrong
black stereotype pervade cause BET still on

hurt more than eugenics and the bell curve
hurt cause sistas don't appreciate their curves
MTV
Demonic mechanism, molding mental schisms to low self
esteem

America.....

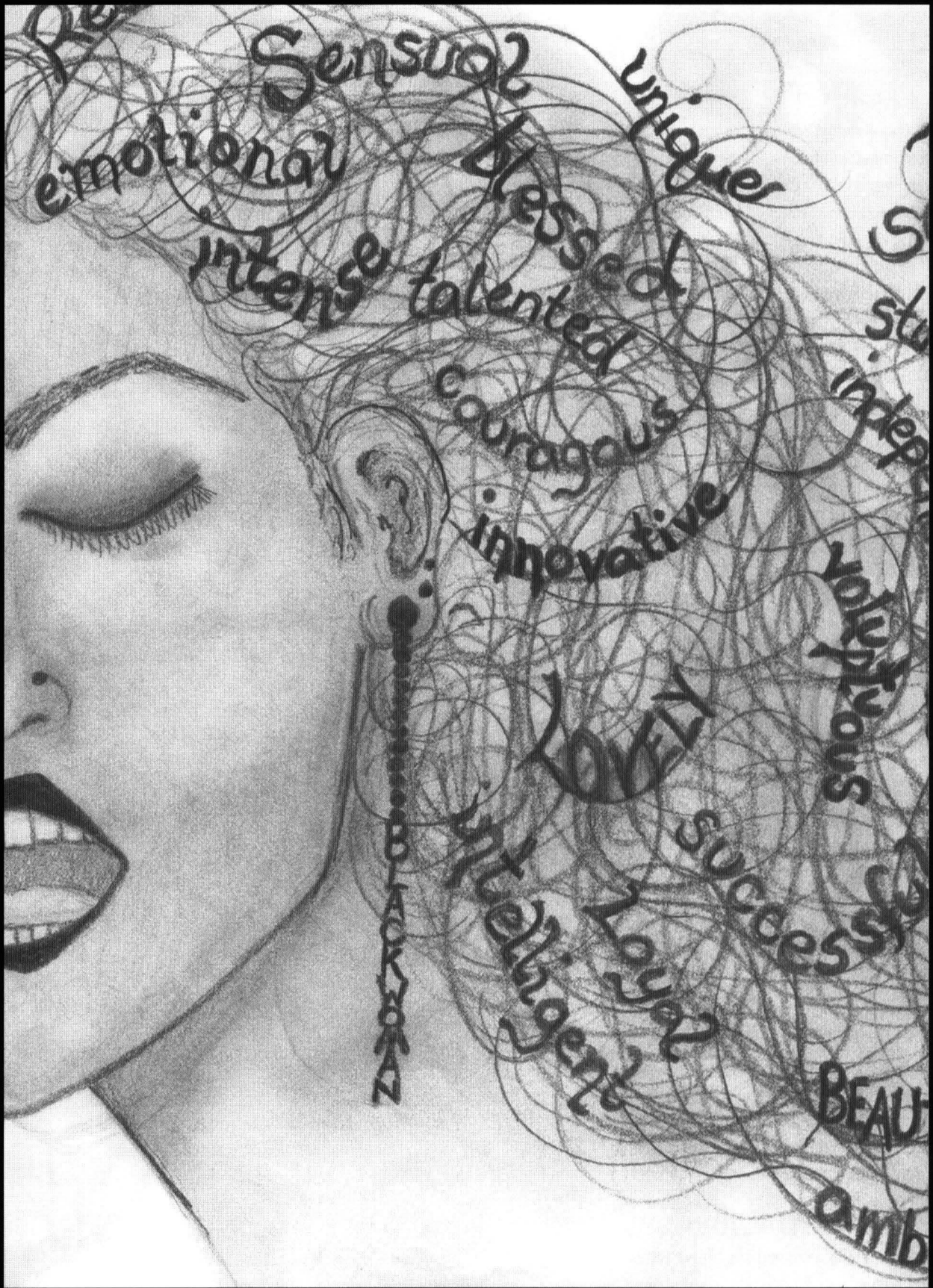
Westernization brings forth damnation
Modernizing industrialization built on the backs of the
slave nation
From this land I need a mental vacation
To the
Manhattan Project

Exploooooode like bullets in projects
Exploooooode like planes and cockpits
In capitalistic buildings thriving of 3/5th stock chips

Crashing like towers to hurt our reality
While the throne of dominating ignorance cause
American fatality

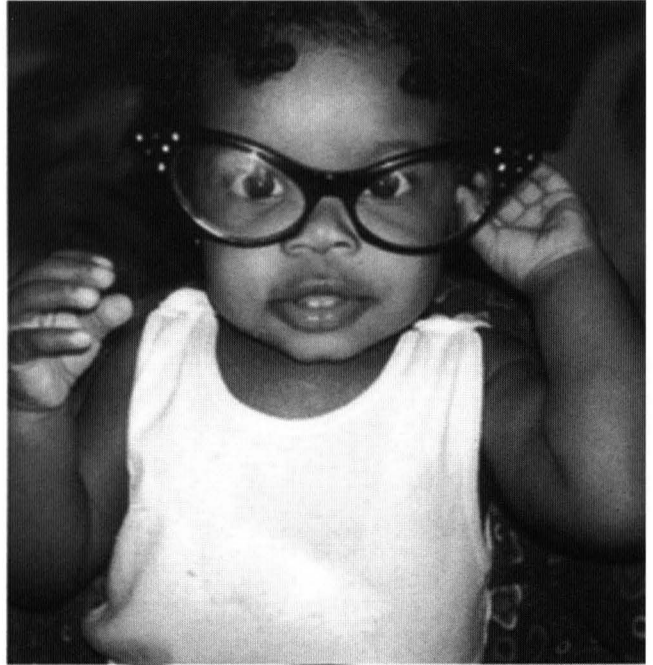
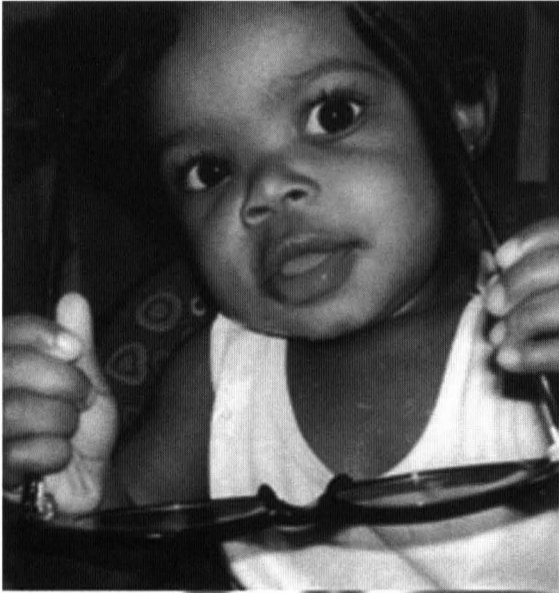
Holla!!!

Bobby
Tugbiyele



Untitled: Drawing

Kerice Roberts



Mak-A-do-cious

Keila P.

A Drive to Lake Langano

Wistful winds of high velocity,
ah yes, what a feeling.
Ruskin's passion for mountains have I
and those promontories of lavish light blue,
favor realizations: I am but a passerby.

And such a zenith of that vermilion sun,
the clever cloud, my love; scarlet in the wind.

Did I mention hillocks of the purest green?
So plain and light, the slightest glimpse; a gleam.
A craven am I for questioning life.

Behold eyes, that which is grandeur.
If on the morrow, I die of sorrow;
remember Langano, and all its many splendors.

Newaye Daniel

Didn't Know

I humble myself when I talk to you
I didn't see it before, but now it's clear
You loved me and I didn't know
I was the world to you
A diamond in your bag of rocks
Your right hand, I didn't realize it
Too young to understand
A victim of circumstance
Didn't know how to proceed
I see it now, it's so clear
So now
I humble myself when I talk to you

Jasmine Wallace

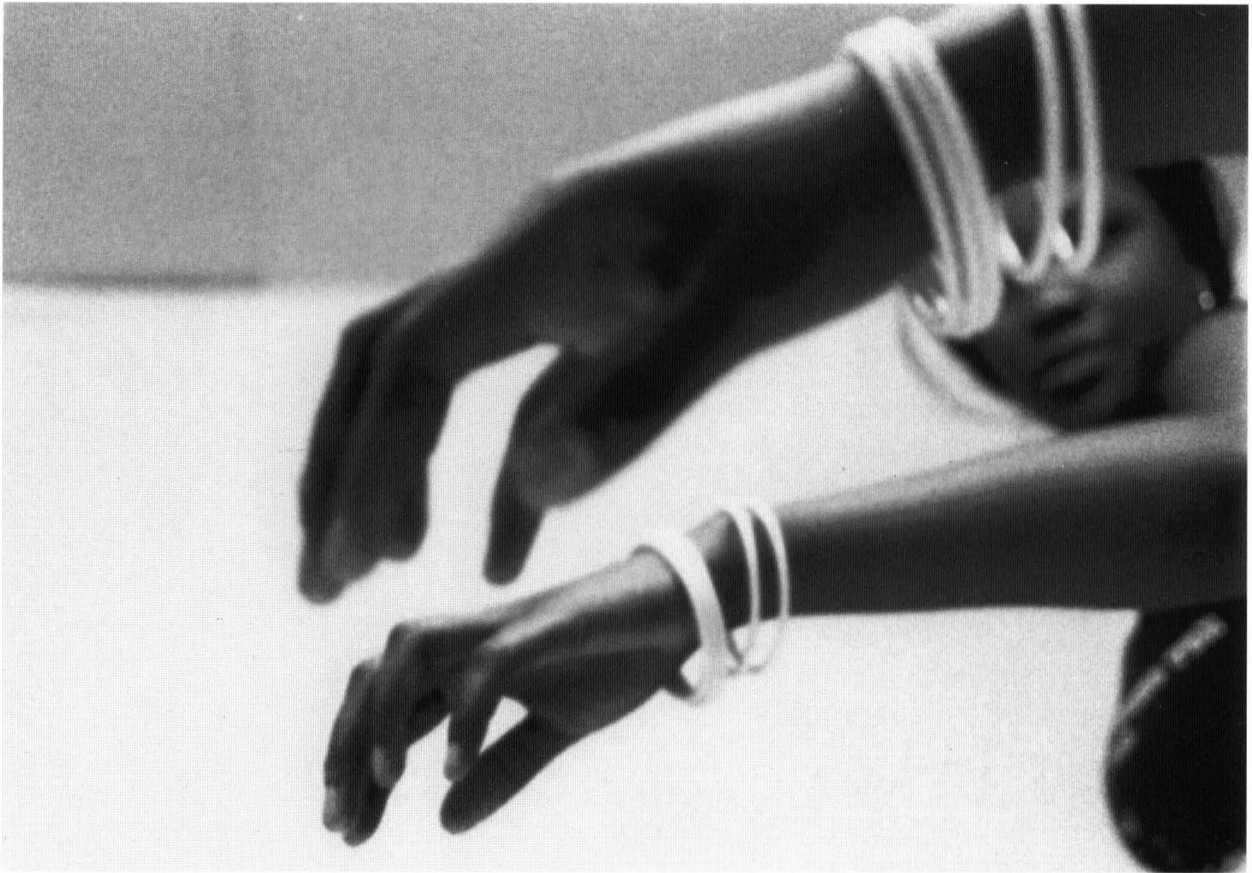
Mindmate

May I make love to your mind
Stimulate your mind until I drive you insane with passion
Make you crave for my words of intellect
With words of deep thoughts massaging and penetrating your brain
May I touch your intellect, caress your self-respect
And give you security to all your thoughts of neglect
Passionately I look into your spirituality which in totality
Contains sensuality, that being the essence of your personality
I have yet to discover another such as you
What you possess is like no other

I allow you to become my mental and physical lover
Let's pulsate to the rhythm of knowledge
Our brain waves merging together
Into our quiet understanding
Let's open ourselves to love and the thrill of knowledge
Let passion's neverending thrust fill us with the mixture of love
While pounding it's way through the pores
Of our being as we climax-As One
Discovering an unknown feeling greater than this
More powerful to the mind than the most intimate kiss
Gently let your tongue create a tender tone
And your words of royalty will sit upon my throne
Ultimately, I surrender without reluctance or fear

For in my heart I know I have found a man of pure and entire beauty
Gently I place your soul next to mine
So the two can intertwine over time
Creating a union which is absolute and divine
When you experience me physically, I know it will be genuine
For when I make love to your body, I will know I first made love to your mind

Laura Louis-Fils



Manual Reflection

Elaina M. Mends

The Spirits to Rest

Holding you as they have been
since Africa that is.
Coming out of the water
out of their disposed bodies
thrown overboard.

our flesh became fish
our natural heat risen
until finding its living flesh
in the form of me,
you shackled,
our skins marred,
art of warped minds.

It was *tít soeur* who found out
that the spirits want to rest.
She was dropped.
Dropped when a certain Bonaparte
Pastor by day, *eínglendo* by night
of her one-room-house.
He was not the first to have come.

At 12, Christophe had come.
He left behind the little boy
lying in his vomit – hiding it
from the rats, calling it breakfast
lunch and dinner.
The spirits had been there
they had fought, but oh,
they were defeated.
It might have been the sound of
Manzél Tít soeur's mother, now only a spirit
watching was wondering to herself:
of her daughter
being delivered by a certain Bonaparte?

Marie K. Theodore-Pharel

Proceed

(My rap verse with the UndaGodz)

Through all the lies of sugar coated crack pipes
Hoop dreams and lost reality of the green,
I stay on my hustle, but this time with no grind.
Still try'na get a piece of that apple pie.
American Dream?
Forget that scheme, a melting pot of abortions, teen
pregnancies, and death penalties
To prove ya sanity.
Guilty or not somebody got shot,
No notice in the paper unless a cop gets popped.
While mothers out here try'na school their daughters
The media has it backwards, "...shake ya booties for
dollars".
Getting high in a room full of smoke,
Contemplating if I wanna take one last toke.
But hold, and slow ya roll for a minute,
Just sit back relax ya mind while my words are all up in it.
So from a woman's state of mind, who's constant on the
rhyme,
I'm making a change cause I gots to keep my daughter in
mind.

Keila P.

