



Black Literary Quarterly
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Shooting Star Review

W-A-R

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War Stories

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Constance Fox
Wilmington, NC

Josh realized he wasn't dead when he looked out of the helicopter and saw the napalmed landscape blur past. He felt too much pain to be dead. Its intensity made him lightheaded, and for a moment he thought the medic hovering over him was his brother, Hal. Josh grabbed him by the arm.

"Be still, man." After a closer look, Josh saw that the medic didn't look anything like Hal. His wire frame glasses slipped down his pug nose as he applied pressure to the wound. "I got good news and bad news for you. Good news is your ass is definitely going home with a wound like this. Bad news is you might not make it there."

Josh lay back as the helicopter sped on. He remembered the story Bryan had told him about his

cousin the night before Bryan left. It still wasn't funny.

Josh stood to leave the darkened movie theater.

"Where're you going? It's not over," Hal said. Someone had been sitting a few rows behind them, but had left soon after the movie began. Josh and Hal were the only ones in the theater.

"Outside. I'll wait for you," Josh replied. Hal shrugged and resumed watching. His brother's laughter followed him down the aisle and out the double doors. The lobby was empty, except for a girl behind the counter, flipping through a magazine. He recognized her from his father's church. He decided to sit outside and wait for his brother. Someone was sitting on the curb reading under the streetlight. As he came closer, he saw that it was Bryan Franklin. They'd been best friends, a grade school playground friendship. Josh had not talked to him since Bryan dropped out of school the year before.

"You didn't like the movie either, Josh?"

"No, that's my brother's sort of thing." Lately Hal had been enamored of the steady run of blaxploitation films, the only kind the crumbling Bailey theater seemed to be screening. It was the pointless, violent genre their father made a point to denounce every so often from his pulpit.

Continued on Page 16



Children Without Crime

little black boys
have eyes that sing
with dreams and laughter,
pulse beats of today,
little black boys
are explosions of life
slap hands in double time
somersault over narrow fire escapes
ease across splintered banisters
put robots and electricity
in a rhythmic perspective
as they turn on their heels
and jut out their chins.

little black boys
have eyes that sing
even in midnight shadows.

little black boys
are sometimes kissed while they sleep
blankets tucked around slim shoulders
smelling of soap and mama.

little black boys
sometimes left alone
under darkness' cover wake up
and think how nice it will feel
when mama gets home and
offers breakfast as a celebration
of their ability to survive
one
more
night.

little black boys
nestled in corners with toy guns
and child faith for protection try
to hurry up the sun.

little black boys
are sometimes left alone
by mothers whose hands are swollen
with patches and scales
of leftover memories
mothers who clean floors
with the sweat of unshed tears
wax them with prayers for their children.

little black boys hum lullabies
to themselves as they cradle plastic pistols
to ward off the monsters of their universe.
little black boys
who know that spiderman
won't come and save them,
somehow still hope
as they cry for a daddy
they hardly know.
little black boys
sometimes crouch in corners
not understanding the door
as it splinters towards them
chasing their lives
into sulfur, fire and dust.

little black boys
whose eyes sing laughter
even in midnight shadows
do not understand the blue and silver
that looms in front of them
blasting out ignorance
and gunpowder murdering
them in their innocence.
their eyes wet and edged
with white soft sleep
are frozen in terror
as blood gushes from their mouths
and washes the matted carpet
with death.

little black boys
with eyes that sing laughter
face death in midnight shadows
without shields.
little black boys
warned
but not protected.
little black boys
who have no shields
are warned but not protected.
little black boys
with eyes that sing
know death in midnight's shadow.

devorah major
San Francisco, CA

*We don't have time
not to have
time.*

Gary Burke as published in **Days of Healing Days of Joy, Daily Meditations for Adult Children** compiled by Earne Larsen & Carol Larsen Hegarty





The Black Exhibit

Genaro Key Ly' Smith
Reseda, California

'I he ambu- lance parked close to the door; its red lights flickered in our faces as we gathered behind the yellow police tape which kept us at a distance. B.C. -- a tall, sullen, mahogany tone Tahitian -- was dead: shot six times in the face and chest. He still lay in the doorway of the liquor store covered with a white sheet which gradually turned red. It upset us to see the policemen walking back and forth inside the store, because in doing so they stepped over B.C. as though avoiding dog shit.

Smack threw the Butterfinger wrapper on the ground, tore open the Milky Way bar, and in the process of taking a large bite he saw Dude reach behind his back for his gun and shoot.

They hadn't questioned any of us, not since Mr. Bill told them, "Some

punk ass nigga' shot him. What the fuck do you think happened?" And indeed that was what happened.

A teenager came into the store to buy a bag of Doritos chips. He threw it on the counter, and B.C. said, "Sixty-four cents, dude."

The teenager stepped back and said with disgust, "Dude! Why don't you call me brother?"

"I ain't your brother...or your cuz', your blood, nothing. A black man shot both of my little brothers dead, so who the fuck are you to tell me I should call you brother?"

People in the store stopped what they were doing and watched from their places in the aisles, or peeked over cans of shaving cream, Hormel Chili and boxes of formula milk. Smack, who stood behind the teenager with a Butterfinger and Milky Way in hand, left the store without realizing he hadn't paid for them. He stood outside, over by the pay phones, and began eating the Butterfinger, while keeping an eye on the door.

"You don't have to call me dude. Sounds like I'm some dumbass off the street."

B.C. gave him a look which implied that he was some dumbass off the street.

"Look, dude, this bag of chips costs sixty-four cents, and it don't care if a dude, a brother, blood, 'cuz, aunt,

uncle, or sister buys it, and neither do I. Pay up, or get the fuck outta my sto'!"

Dude gave B.C. a hard stare as he snatched up the bag of chips, crumpled it, and threw it back on the counter.

"There. I don't want your fuckin' chips now. Monkey ass mothafucker working for a bunch of Koreans--"

B.C. grabbed Dude by the shirt, and from under the counter he brought out his billy-club and struck the boy upside the head. Dude was more surprised by B.C.'s quickness than by being struck. Without letting go of him, B.C. clumsily climbed over the counter with billy-club in hand and dragged Dude towards the door. When he struggled, B.C. reached back and dealt him a blow on the arm.

When they got outside, B.C. threw Dude to the ground and stood over him, tapping the club against his pant leg. Smack threw the Butterfinger wrapper on the ground, tore open the Milky Way bar, and in the process of taking a large bite he saw Dude reach behind his back for his gun and shoot. B.C. flew up against the plate glass window where his blood splattered like an abstract artist's choice strokes.

Smack reached inside his pockets for a quarter and remembered he hadn't paid for the candy to make change; but by that time, we had all come out of our apartments in droves to view the work.

for Michael McFashion



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Publisher's Statement

Sandra Gould Ford
Founder & Artistic Director

Shooting Star Review



Ike sequoias, babies, ideas, doesn't everything -- even war -- start small? Consider the battles waged on interior landscapes. Think of injured pride, jealous eyes, heavy hearts and hungry hands, just a few maladies that irritate and sour the spirit. And the cause? Dr. Maxwell Maltz's book *Psycho-Cybernetics* suggests,

"Of all the traps and pitfalls in life, self-disesteem is the deadliest, and the hardest to overcome; for it is a pit designed and dug by our own hands ... "

"The penalty of succumbing to it is heavy -- both for the individual in terms of material rewards lost, and for society in gains and progress unachieved.

"(Yet) ... defeatism has still another aspect, a curious one, which is seldom recognized. ... isn't it on those days when we are most subject to the 'fearful Unbelief,' when we most doubt ourselves and feel inadequate to our task -- isn't it precisely then that we are most difficult to get along with?"

Beginning with a soldier's recollection of his Viet Nam experience, flowing through sexual and emotional abuse, the challenge of retardation, children raising themselves, racism, the increasing casualties on AIDS' battleground and more, this *Shooting Star Review* explores war's many roots and branches. Think of lovers quarrels, gang violence and child abuse. These maladies are mere microcosms, acorns, the minutest manifestations of troubles that find their most grande display in War.

What is the cure? How can wars both inside ourselves and out be prevented? Gertrude Hall's book *The Wagnerian Romances* summarizes the allegory in *Lohengrin*, a story of heroic but failed love, by saying, "Life, the Sphinx, requires upon occasion that one be great." Because with, "Just a little greatness," we could dissolve the doubts plaguing our "shallow mind-surface." We would know. We would instinctively seek, locate and expect the best from ourselves and others.

And if each of us spent more time dishing up our own greatness and polishing it in others, could strife rattle our lives? Could war rip apart our worlds?

In closing, thanks is extended to the writers and artists whose work fills this thought-provoking issue. And a heartfelt thank you goes to Ellen Mark of San Francisco and LaMont Steptoe of Philadelphia, two wonderfully sensitive and creative poets who launched this concept and worked to help realize this issue's potential.

Except where specifically stated, all artwork, photos and graphics in this and any other issues of *Shooting Star Review* are for artistic illustration and are otherwise unrelated to the accompanying text.



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(Sandwarc)



The Spinster In The City

Three decades in the pestilent urban arena
She had traveled, encountered, and cowered.
Never secure, despite dense ramparts
Of barricaded doors
And double-locked windows
And always peering out behind.

Three decades of coping and hoping
To beat the odds, the crime rates per thousand,
The annual police statistics for her town,
With modern defensive technology
And the latest deterrent intelligence
And always leaving the porch light on.

Three decades in the combat-ridden neighborhood
With nothing more personal than the
Blatant rape of an old Dodge battery on Halloween
'Til now, when she confidently
Paraded through her prim, tidy home
And surprised him in his pillage.

Thirty years and the intruder loomed
Frozen by the sudden kitchen glow
Blinking and throbbing and ready
For flight or fight
Secure in his power to terrorize or paralyze
Or, at least, outrun her.

Poised at the sink, the invader bore witness
To the endless futility of perpetual alert.
Neighborhood Watch, warning stickers on windows,
Bond issues for better police communications,
And never opening the door to strangers
Had not prepared her ever to confront

The mouse in the margarine.

Susan Hubler
Redondo Beach, CA

©Sandwave



Jordy's Gift

C. W. Goggins
St. Petersburg, FL



**he news
that Mister
Mack
Magruder
planned to
close his
drugstore,
and retire,
that coming
fall, saddened
nearly
everybody
who knew
him.
Especially
little Jordy
Jackson.**

Right off, the grown ups began talking about how much they'd miss Mister Mack (the owner of the only Mom-and-Pop type pharmacy still in business), and that they should throw him a surprise party on the day of his retirement. Shower him with gifts of fond remembrance.

It was something they owed him, they claimed. Because of the generous way he and his wife (before she died of cancer,

a couple of years back) had extended everyone's credit those years the Sunripe Orange Juice Company cut back for recessions, or when the Union threw up picket lines for higher wages. Indebted to him, they continued, for his always

unknowingly solving Jordy's economic dilemma, Mister Mack hired him to perform small jobs around the store for fifty cents an hour. Employment welcomed by Jordy's mother, since it kept him out of her purse, shabby old thing that it was, usually as empty as a pauper's pocket.

standing by with a helping hand for those in need, and his never having charged a dime's interest for the loans he bigheartedly meted out, or dunned anybody to pay him back.

Although it had been put on the top of his list to get Mister Mack something special, who, after he retired, would Jordy be

able to go visit in the afternoons? Sit and talk to? All the other white merchants in town rarely ever spoke to him and, as they would treat a common criminal, monitored his every move whenever he entered their store.

Suddenly, at the realization that he didn't have a dime to his name to buy Mister Mack anything with--and nowhere to get one from, either--he sprinted to his favorite haunt--Ace Garage--and hid under the bed of an oily-smelling, wrecked pick-up truck. While lying there, sadly staring at a black rolling bug crawling over a rock, he wondered if rolling bugs ever experienced money difficulties, too.

Later, at the drugstore, quietly sipping on a cold can of Coke Mister Mack had given him--still mulling over his financial problem--Jordy was asked by Mister Mack what he wanted to be when he got big.

Caught off guard by the question, Jordy squinted up, then propped an elbow on the black-streaked marble counter they sat at, and leaned the side of his face on the heel of his palm and pondered on it.

"Work at a carnival," he finally said to Mister Mack's gray beard, his thought on the estranged daddy he had never known: a handsome, slick-talking white Cajun--working as a barker for a traveling carnival the night he and Jordy's black mother became one on the floor of a horse-bobbing, musical merry-go-round. In spite of his promise to marry her, he had left her stranded at the altar, funeral-faced and pumpkin-bellied, eight months later, according to gossip among the Negro ladies in



*To be who you are and
become what you are capable of
is the only goal
worth living.*

Alvin Alley as published in *Acts
of Faith, Daily Meditations for
People of Color* compiled by
Iyanla Vanzant

TRANS



Jordy's neighborhood.

"I love the rides," he tacked on, "and that game where you loop them pegs and win a prize." To show Mr. Mack how the game was played, he made a circle with the thumb and first finger of his left hand, and, in a slow arcing motion, eased the opening down the upright rigid middle finger on his right hand. "It's fun."

Mister Mack rose from his stool. And, limping from a wound he had received during his fight against Communism in Korea, he hobbled to a tall rack of caps, unfastened a black one with "Warhawks" embroidered in thick white thread across its front, adjusted the band in the back to its smallest size, and fitted the hat over Jordy's kinky red hair.

All at once, Jordy recalled the time he took a frozen Butterball turkey from the Winn-Dixie grocery store without paying for it, last year-- meat he had figured would go good with his mother's turnip greens, mashed potatoes, butter beans, and hot fluffy cornbread--and had been whisked by the cops to the police station and examined by a doctor.

"I ain't got no money," he confessed, the sound of his mother's tearful warning that if he ever again carried off something he couldn't pay for, the county Judge would take him from her and stick him in the state's home for slow children.

"You go on an' keep it," Mister Mack broke in. "I'll tell her you didn't steal it. That I wanted you to have it. As a gift to remember me by when I retire. Okay?"

Reaching up, little Jordy

stroked the top of the cap as he would the neck of a puppy.

"You mean I can take it?" Mister Mack nodded. The freckles on Jordy's high yellow cheeks bunched with his smile; and, tasting salty tears at the corners of his lips, he hopped off his stool and lovingly hugged Mister Mack's lame leg.

Then, unknowingly solving Jordy's economic dilemma, Mister Mack hired him to perform small jobs around the store for fifty cents an hour. Employment welcomed by Jordy's mother, since it kept him out of her purse, shabby old thing that it was, usually as empty as a pauper's pocket.

That weekend, out browsing for a gift to give Mister Mack, Jordy spotted in Fiegelson's Pawn Shop a three-foot high bronze statue of a Confederate General astride a huge-rumped horse, glinting in the sunlight slanting through the shop's plate glass window.

"I ain't got no money," he confessed, the sound of his mother's tearful warning that if he ever again carried off something he couldn't pay for, the county Judge would take him from her and stick him in the state's home for slow children

God, it was grand, he thought. And what made it even grander was that the General wore a beard similar to Mister Mack's. The perfect present!

Each morning now, after his mother put on her waitress uniform and lipsticked her mouth candy apple red and left for work at the Succulent

Spoon Cafe, Jordy'd race to the pawn shop and admire the General and his horse before heading to the drugstore. And at nights, with his mother sprawled lengthwise on the living room couch, watching the late movie on the black and white television set in her and Jordy's one-bedroom apartment, he dreamed about the statue. Dreamed of running his fingers over the smooth sleek bronze, and Mister Mack's happiness at receiving the gift.

That September, the day before the party, having saved up a dollar bill, five nickels, seven dimes, and nine quarters (stashed in a Prince Albert tobacco can buried beneath the stump of a rotting oak in the patch of forest behind his apartment building), it dawned on Jordy to find out what the statue cost. So that sunny noon, he jacked up his shoulders and strode into the pawn shop, proud as a wildcatter who had just brought in his first well.

Sid Fiegelson frowned at him, as he might at finding a hair in the cream-cheesed bagel he was presently lunching on. Jordy smiled and pointed at the statue.

"What's that go for?"

"You mean Robert E. Lee and Traveler?" Sid grilled above the elevator music playing on an old-timey wooden radio. Jordy made a nod.

"That's an antique, boy. Worth a good four hundred dollars."

Head low, and moving along the outer edge of town like a gloomy shadow, Jordy drifted over to the high school stadium, where the Warhawks played their sporting events, and plunked down on a sun-bleached seat in the empty



Let not what you cannot do tear from your hands what you can.

Ashanti proverb as published in *Acts of Faith, Daily Meditations for People of Color* compiled by Iyanla Vanzant





stands. Heck, he brooded, it'd take him more than a month of Sundays to save up that kind of dough.

All of a sudden, a picture of him chunking a hoop over General Lee and Traveler spread his lips with smile. But the instant the image faded, an icy shiver passed along his spine. Yet, he had to have that prize, he mused, his gaze fierce and narrowed into tiny slits. *And by tomorrow, too!*

Way past sundown--his mother sound asleep on the couch--he stole out the bedroom window, returned to the street where the pawn shop was and, with the acquisition of that bronze beauty burning in his brain like a hot fever, marched up and down the block without becoming sleepy at all.

cardboard box behind the Dollar Store. About one-thirty in the morning, he sneaked to the front of the pawn shop, jiggled the locked doorknob, and scooted back to his hiding place. It was then, sitting on his haunches in the mute blackness, chewing on what he ought to do next, that his hand discovered a brick.

The following morning, at the police station, Jordy observed the Chief pick up the phone receiver on his paper-cluttered desk, shut one eye, and punch in a telephone number with the tip of his index finger.

"Hate to bother you, Mack," he said into the mouthpiece, "But could you drop by my office?" He scratched the rear end of his shiny-seated, black serge

a window out of Fiegelson's last night and stole a statue Sid swore was worth over six hundred bucks. We talked to the lad's mother. Said she couldn't understand it. That he had promised her he'd never steal again. For us to call you. That maybe you could finagle out of him what the skinny is."

Mister Mack's glimpse made a quick tour of the windowless office. "Where's she at, Chief?"

"She was too tore up to come. Got plum sick about it."

Mister Mack screwed up his face. "You shouldn't have done it, Jordy."

Jordy crimped a frown, and rapidly blinked eyes that were as veined as cracked dishes. The Chief chuckled.

"Had the statue not slipped out of his arms and crashed

All at once, Jordy recalled the time he took a frozen Butterball turkey from the Winn-Dixie grocery store without paying for it, last year-- meat he had figured would go good with his mother's turnip greens, mashed potatoes, butter beans, and hot fluffy cornbread--and had been whisked by the cops to the police station and examined by a doctor.

At last the theater across the way closed, and the parked cars and moviegoers gradually disappeared. About half an hour later, a husky Negro cop sauntered up on Jordy's blind side, and barked, "What you up to, boy?"

Nearly jumping out of his jeans, Jordy darted round the corner, down a moon-dappled alley, and ducked into the darkness inside a giant

trousers. "I need to talk to you before your party starts."

Jordy smiled. But at the recollection of his theft of that turkey, his smile dissolved. At Mister Mack's arrival, though, he pushed up the bill of his cap and pressured another grin.

Lines of puzzlement puckered Mister Mack's forehead. "What's the matter, Jordy?" he quizzed.

The Chief said, "He busted

down that knoll by the railroad tracks, knocking the rider off his horse--and the lad staying there, bawling like a baby, trying to stick the thing back together--the patrolman reported he never would've caught him. Said he couldn't believe somebody little as him could carry that much weight as far and as fast as he did."

Continued on page 21



Freedom is the right to choose; the right to create for yourself the alternatives of choice. Without the exercise of choice, a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing.

Archibald MacLeish as published in *Days of Healing, Days of Joy, Daily Meditations for Adult Children* compiled by Earnie Larsen & Carol Larsen Hegarty

LANDMARK



Fondling

I lived in a small neighborhood
I knew about uncles with slender
hands who sat among us and laughed

above our heads. We were children
on the long couch, waiting for the
tv to warm up, my older sister, so

quiet, and I, the larger one who
even at birth could not wear her
hand-me-downs. He saw no difference

between us and in his probing touch
we lost our voices for years. By
then we slept the night without

waking, and later a third sister
and a fourth, the coarse memory by
now nearly worn away in our family

until one of us cracked and did not
try to keep her bent tongue silent.

Mary Legato Brownell
Jenkintown, PA

Stop Beating On Me, Mama

Stop beating on me, Mama, like you always did.
Not enough for you, Mama, for me to have been

six months gone with a ticking pituitary tumor
in my head and him breeched in my belly
hanging

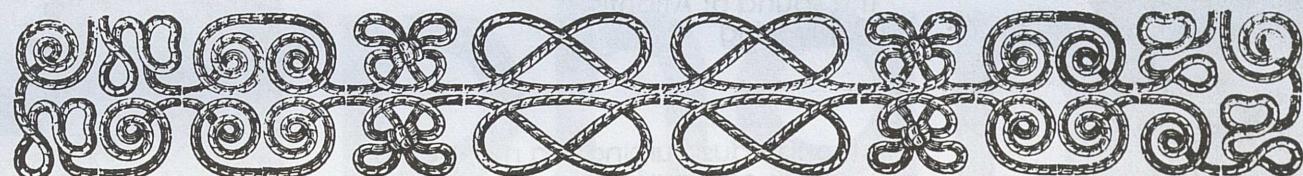
onto fibroid tissue with pale parchment nails.
When those nails could stay caught no more

and my dead son was burst from that bloody
place
to this one, then you accused me of not caring,

of sloughing off that promised sugarbaby
as you beat on me from the mailbox signing

my birthday card not with love from Mama,
but with regards from Odelia Mae.

Susan Terris
San Francisco, CA



*Life is
eternal; and
love is
immortal;
and death is
only a
horizon; and
a horizon is
nothing save
the limit of
our sight.*

Rossiter Worthington
Raymond as
published in Days of
Healing Days of Joy,
Daily Meditations for
Adult Children
compiled by Earnie
Larsen & Carol
Larsen Hegarty

*When you
are kind to
someone in
trouble, you
hope they'll
remember
and be kind
to someone
else. And, it'll
become like a
wildfire.*

Whoopi Goldberg as
published in
Acts of Faith, Daily
Meditations for
People of Color
compiled by Iyanla
Vanzant

*God respects
me when I
work, but He
loves me
when I sing.*

Rabindranath Tagore
as published in Days
of Healing Days of
Joy, Daily
Meditations for Adult
Children compiled
by Earnie Larsen &
Carol Larsen Hegarty



Southern Cross

The Age of Aquarius is dawning
and the world as we have known
it is coming to an end.

1. the night skies over Tennessee
a thicket of briary stars

my lovers have all gone south
lost on the freeways of Alabama
or gathering dewberries in Georgia

rain last night
in Macon and Savannah

off Bimini
the sound of Atlantis
slowly rising

2. through dusk luminous a marmalade
Venus is coming in from the west

in El Paso
air traffic control
thinks she's the evening flight
from Phoenix

radios her
clearance to land

her approach will be
from the south

3. in North Carolina
the flame azaleas are in bloom
through the end of the world is coming

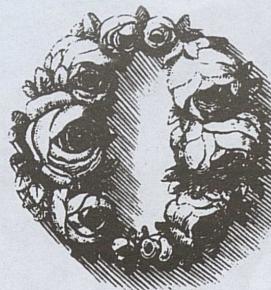
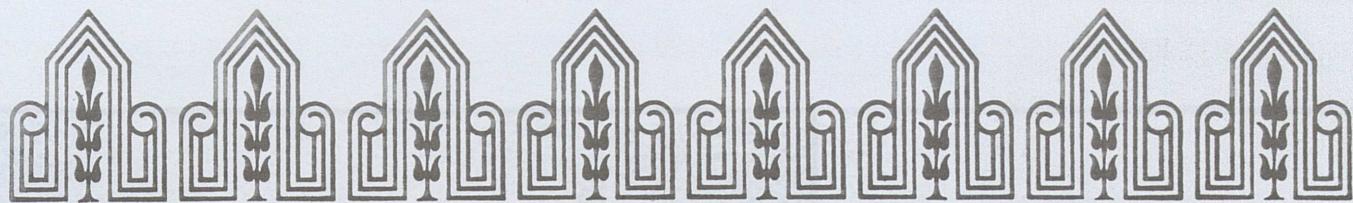
fat buds of roses crowd the trellis
nuzzle each other when night stirs

under the porch swing
a cricket treeps to the wind
in the Great Smokies
the flame azaleas are in bloom

and the viper's bugloss

though the end of the world
is soon.

Jeanne Shannon
Albuquerque, NM



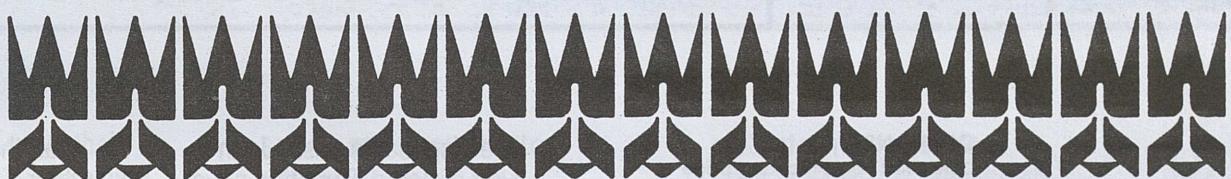
orphans

Orphans

Orphans

Orphans

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Robert Earl Penn, Jr.
New York, NY

In 1985, I had a very unexpected experience brought on by a congenital condition: an irregular heartbeat. My heart started to beat so quickly one day at the gym during a work out with my thunder-thighed trainer that I became dizzy and very angry that the pulse meter was malfunctioning. The trainer took my pulse and made me stop exercising. My regular doctor sent me to see a cardiologist. The specialist gave me stress tests and more tests and transferred me to a well-equipped cardiac care hospital ward. While there, I roomed with Joe, an Orthodox Jew some twenty years my senior. It was one of those years when Easter and

Passover occurred during the same weekend.

In the morning, Joe and I pulled the curtain between our beds so that he could say his Hebrew prayers, and I could sit quietly and wait for the awareness of God's presence to fill me. During meals and throughout much of the daily medical routine, Joe and I talked. He felt pretty confident that the doctors were doing their best, especially John. John was spiritual, too, and while his religious practice was one that neither Joe nor I observed, it worked for him. John would assure us that we were healing ourselves through faith.

I met Marcia, Joe's wife, on Good Friday, 1985, just before Passover. She was hoping against hope that they could be together before that holy day. In their thirty years of Bronx immigrant/holocaust survivor neighborhood friendship, courtship and marriage, they had never observed Passover without each other.

Marcia was very worried. Waiting in near silence for Joe to return from his graduated electrical stimulation, she moaned that she no longer knew what life meant. Her place in life had changed. She felt hopeless; unable to help Joe. She asked me not to tell Joe about her fear.

I didn't need to. Joe had already told me that Marcia was taking his illness more

poorly than he; that she was alone without him, and he wanted her to feel free of the need to care for him.

After I was discharged on a suitable medication with no side effects except depletion of my bank account, I stayed in touch with Joe. First I called him at the hospital. Then, I called him at home. He was not doing well, but he was in good cheer. We both thanked each other for sharing our faiths with each other: I told him about my Quaker silence and he encouraged me to read *Pirke Avot, Ethics of the Fathers*.

When I called a month later, Marcia told me that Joe had died. I sent condolences. I called again, and Marcia asked why I was calling. I told her because I liked Joe very much, he had shared a really difficult time in the hospital with me, he seemed like a really good guy, and that was very important to me, because we might never have met had it not been for the fact that each of us had a similar birth defect. And also, I added, isn't that what it's all about? Life, I mean. Isn't life all about people caring for one another? Marcia tentatively agreed, surprised, I think, by my frankness and the simplicity of my words. She thanked me and added how lonely she felt and how tired and how much she wished she, too, had died. I knew she would never take her life, so I simply listened to her pain, loss and grief.

Continued on next page

*Death is
not the
enemy;
living in
constant
fear of it
is.*

Norman
Cousins as
published in
*The Color of
Light, Daily
Meditations
for All of us
Living with
AIDS*
compiled by
Perry Tilleraas

ORPHANS
Continued from preceding page

Prior to meeting Marcia, I never considered how difficult it is for the people who surround the sick. The sick accept the illness more quickly and seem to deal with it sooner. That's what Joe and I did. That's what some of my friends with AIDS have done. But survivors feel responsible. They are left without partners, parents and children to love.

I have made many new friends as a result of the epidemic: Brothers, Sisters, Fathers, Friends, Lovers, Spouses and, especially, the Mothers of those who were dying, who have died, of AIDS.

On the last Sunday of June, 1991, right after marching in New York's Lesbian and Gay Pride parade, my then lover and I visited John in the hospital. John's mother and one of his sisters were leaving as we were entering.

In the twelve years that John and I were friends, I had often left telephone messages with his mother, since as a craftsman and performer with

little disposable cash, John lived at home. But I had never met her.

I would always call John when I wanted to laugh. And within minutes of his first robust, or later diminished, hello, I would bellyache between discussions of Africa, sex, spirituality, theater, music, fashion, people we knew.... You name it! We laughed about it.

Since John died on October 1, 1993, I often call his mother when I want to remember how easily I found humor with John. She, too, had laughed very easily with her talented, Afro-centric, African-Caribbean son. Sharing our memories of John brings back the joy he spread. As far as I know, John never officially told his mother that he was gay or that he had AIDS. Even though she and I knew very different facts about John, hearing each other recall his goodness facilitates the grieving and healing from the loss.

We hear about the orphans: children left parentless as a result of their parents' deaths in peace and

war, their parents' addictions, their parents' sexual orientations and choices. We hear about the innocent victims. And we hear that we are all affected by HIV.

Losses due to AIDS are rising by the minute. This invading alien affects humans regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, place of origin and/or residence, socioeconomic status, gender or any other demographic factor. We are all under siege. And we have weapons available to us, risk reduction related to the means of transmission: cleaning injection needles after each use; practicing safer sex each and every time, except when planning to have a child; and when nursing babies, using only breast milk from HIV negative mothers or an uninfected substitute.

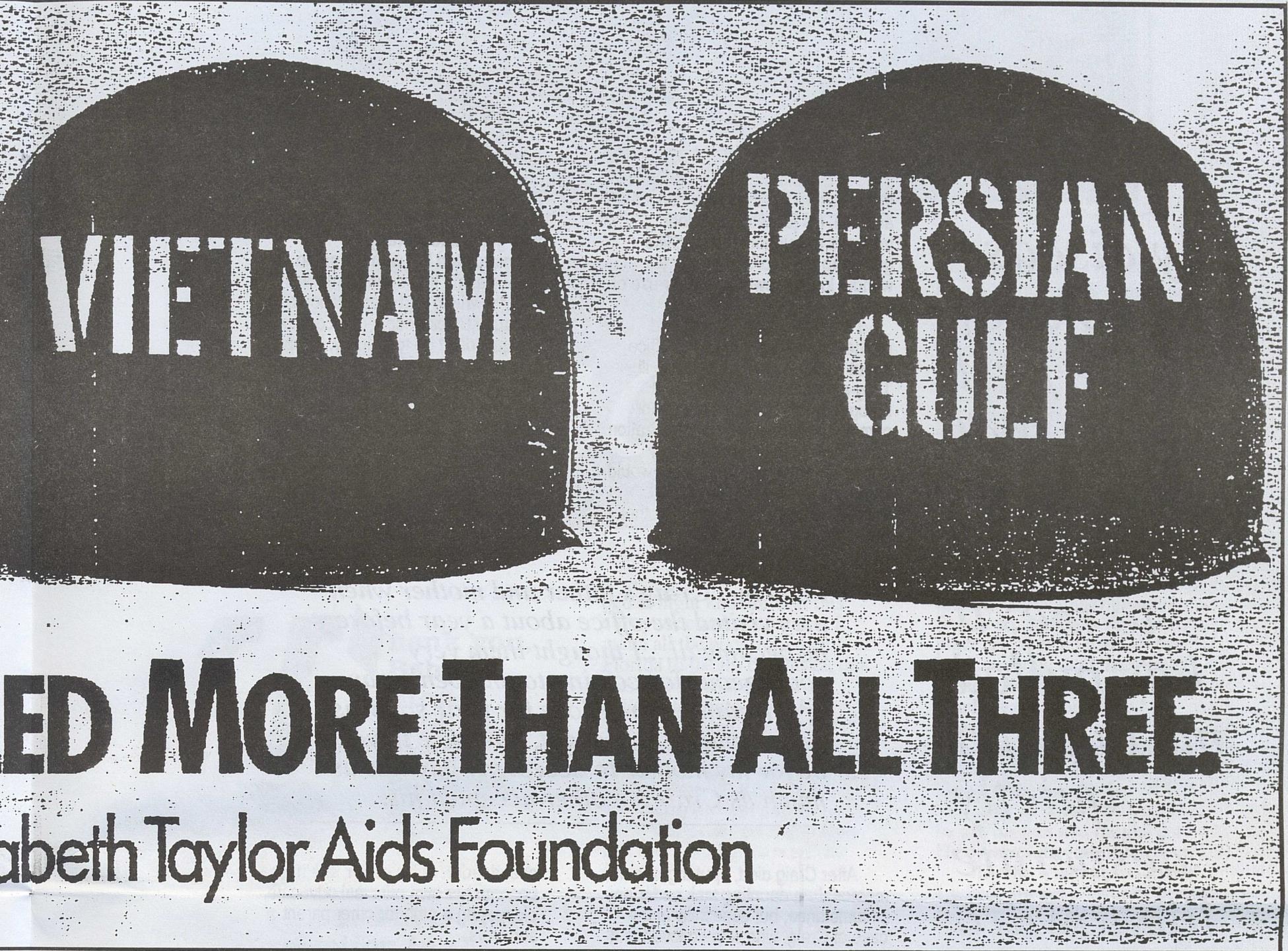
HIV/AIDS ignorance has been replaced by limited knowledge. And yet, I think we still only acknowledge a bit of the impact of this epidemic. Those affected are often described as the care providers, the lovers, the

KOREA

AIDS HAS KILLED

The Elizabeth





partners, the spouses, the children. Sometimes, we hear about the impact of the disease on the economy. There are abundant discussions of its ramifications; projections of the future monetary value of work lost; and the escalating cost of proper medical care. That's a beginning.

But there are other side effects we haven't even begun to recognize: Other people who must deal, in whatever way possible, with post-traumatic stress resulting from the death of someone due to AIDS. There are many survivors. Friends. Partners. Relations. Parents.

Parenting is motivated very often by some desire to be outlived. What happens to the mother when her only son, her favorite daughter, her gay son whom she struggled so hard to love in spite of her inability to accept what she saw as his selfish sexual choice, her daughter who made her feel the conflict between loving her flesh and the inability to condone her drug addiction, her child whose life often brought

sorrow and forced her to expand or stretch her parenting skills, what happens to her when that child dies?

A child dying before a parent is so alien to our thinking that there is no English word for a parent who outlives the child, no term more accurate than "reversed orphan."

motivated many people of color of all sexual orientations, and gay and lesbian people of all colors, to be themselves.

Craig's acceptance of his illness was so great that one day he came into my work cubicle, with its big windows into which workers across the street could easily stare, and pulled up his loose-fitting

I wish that there were a service for those living with the knowledge that I am infected with HIV just as there was post-test counseling for me; just as there is living with HIV group support for me. Just as there will be care-partner support for my lover/companion.

Craig G. Harris, my friend, colleague and mentor, also died in 1991. His enthusiasm for Black expression, gay expression and Black gay expression was great, his self-acceptance the highest, his honesty to himself so vast it

African pants legs to show me the very large kaposi's sarcoma lesion encroaching on his groin. He had accepted his illness and was negotiating terms with his t-cells. His matter-of-factness forced me to accept the reality of his

*Scorpio is
the eternal
question
tearing at
all roots
under
autumnal
skies. Will
it be
death; will
it be
rebirth?*

Dane Rudhyar as published in *The Color of Light, Daily Meditations for All of us Living with AIDS* compiled by Perry Tilleraas



ORPHANS
Continued from preceding page

My disease is one of the best things that has happened to me; it has pulled me out of a quietly desperate life toward one full of love and hope.

Tom O'Connor,
person with ARC as
published in *The Color of Light, Daily
Meditations for All of us Living with AIDS*
compiled by Perry Tilleraas

cancer, his shortness of breath, his tremulous voice of partially concealed anguish, his jubilation at minor triumphs throughout the day, like getting to a doctor's appointment without losing bowel control or use of limbs.

I had met Craig's father and mother when they visited the office about a year before he became ill. They seemed like nice people. I thought them very courageous for coming to an openly gay organization. Their love for their son was very apparent. I thought, how nice it would be for my mother to accept my gayness as much as Craig's mother accepted his.

Mrs. Harris told me more than a year ago, when mourning and grieving had not faded away as she had imagined it might, that she-- a mature woman, a Black woman, a sane woman, a God-fearing woman-- was going into therapy. I congratulated her with the same enthusiasm I had seen shimmer in Craig's writing and presentations, because Black people of a certain age just don't go to therapy. People of some classes traditionally don't go to therapy. A lot of people, period, find the idea of going to a "head shrinker" repulsive. But Craig's mother decided, once again, to be an advocate and supporter of difference even when she couldn't predict the outcome. During his lifetime, Mrs. Harris had been Craig's number one

I had met Craig's father and mother when they visited the office about a year before he became ill....I thought them very courageous for coming to an openly gay organization. Their love for their son was very apparent. I thought, how nice it would be for my mother to accept my gayness as much as Craig's mother accepted his.

After Craig died, I put together his memorial-- a daunting task under any circumstance, but especially in the case of Craig, who was so loved and so accepting of the love offered by so many. With the help of several other members of New York's gay and lesbian communities, I pulled together a commemorative testimonial video, poetry reading and screening of a video based on one of Craig's short stories. The program succeeded. Craig's mother attended, and we became friends after that.

I took to checking in on Mrs. Harris. I discussed Craig's writing with her. I encouraged her to have as much of Craig's work published as possible. I submitted his work to various anthologies. She expressed astonishment that so many anthologies wanted Craig's work entitled, "I'm Going Out Like a Fucking Meteor." She would never say the "f" word and didn't understand why Craig needed to use such a strong term, but trusted that Craig had a reason for his choice.

What has struck me most is her willingness to talk. Craig's mother feels his loss very much just because she loved him and doesn't understand why he died.

There are no services in place for orphans like her. She must devise her own system for reconciling the physical absence with the perpetual emotional presence of her beloved second son, Craig.

cheerleader. In his death, she has become her own principal advocate, pioneering a path for other parent survivors.

I wonder how my mother will handle it should I die before her. I wonder how my sister will take it. When I told Mother that I am HIV positive, she responded with fear that she might not be able to endure my dying since she had already gone through the long, painful process of my father's death from emphysema. My sister said, in sincere honesty, that she resented the possibility of my early death because it meant that in ten or twenty years she would have to care for our mother without my help. I wish that I could give them the acceptance of my HIV that I have. But I can't. Just like Joe couldn't give his serenity to his wife, Marcia.

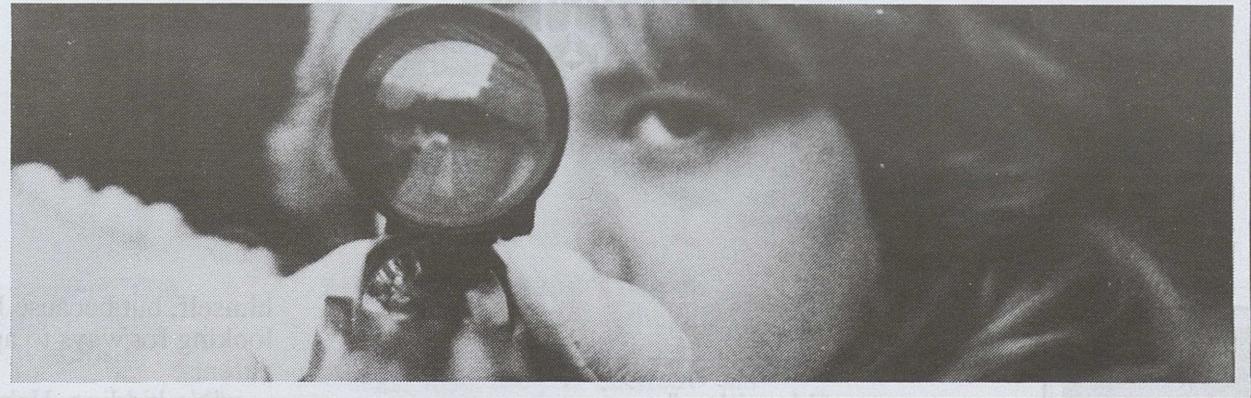
I wish that there were a service for those living with the knowledge that I am infected with HIV, just as there was post-test counseling for me, just as there is living with HIV group support for me. Just as there will be care-partner support for my lover/companion.

We don't have a word for parents who outlive their children and so we haven't yet seriously thought of providing support for those who outlive children who die young.

We should.



WOMADARE



Land

Mykel D. Myles
Warrensville Heights, OH

Hank you, Baby," Stone said, as Lucy emptied his ash tray and wiped away the ashes on the bar. I looked over the selection in the juke box. But, since Lucy's second soap opera was coming on, I decided not to play anything. Instead, I got a bag of chips from the snack machine and returned to my stool next to Stone. "You know," he said, sipping the head off the beer Lucy treated him to. "It must be a helluva thing bein' a Indian."

"What do you mean?" I asked, munching my chips.

"Well," he said, "imagine havin' to wake up every mornin' and spend the whole day and go to

bed at night knowin' that this ain't your country no more. I mean all the way from the tip of Florida to the tip of Alaska, this was theirs. And, now, it all belongs to white folks. How you figure them Indians feel?"

"I don't know."

"Dang right you don't. Me, neither. But, I'll tell you, if I was them, I would put me on some war paint, get my arrows and bows, and go to war," he said.

"They would be wiped out by a few tanks and a company of foot soldiers," I said.

"Well, so what?" he said. "You may as well die if you ain't got no land."

"You don't own any land," I said. "Do you want to die?"

"Man," he said, turning on his stool to face me. "Let me tell you 'bout my grandpappy." He took another sip of his beer. "Now, you know who my grandpappy was." He said it as if I should, of course, know.

"No," I said. "I don't, really."

"Well, that's 'cause you ain't from Alabama. My grandpappy was John 'Marsh' Jones," he said, pulling a long, new cigar from his shirt pocket. "They called him Marsh 'cause he knew all the swamp land in Alabama. Matter a fact, folks used to say Cotton Mouths knew him so well, they would serve as his guides. And 'gators was his guards. Now you know that's a man what knows the swamps!" He lit his cigar and

sipped some beer. "Anyway, he lived on sixty acres dang near smack-dab in the middle of Alabama. This was way back 'fore I was born," he said. "One day, these Ku Kluxers came with their crosses burnin' and all, and they run him off his acres; or, least they thought so. But, you know what my grandpappy did?"

"What?" I said, finishing off my chips and tossing the crumpled bag into the trash can behind the bar.

"He just moved in some, let them have the lower twenty-five or so, and built him another place. He weren't usin' all that land, anyway. And, he weren't greedy, neither. So, he ain't care much, really, you know." He sipped some more beer.

"Anyway, they come back some weeks later. So, he had to pull back a little way further in. But, they kept a comin'. Till, finally, he got his gun and fought 'em." He downed the last of his beer.

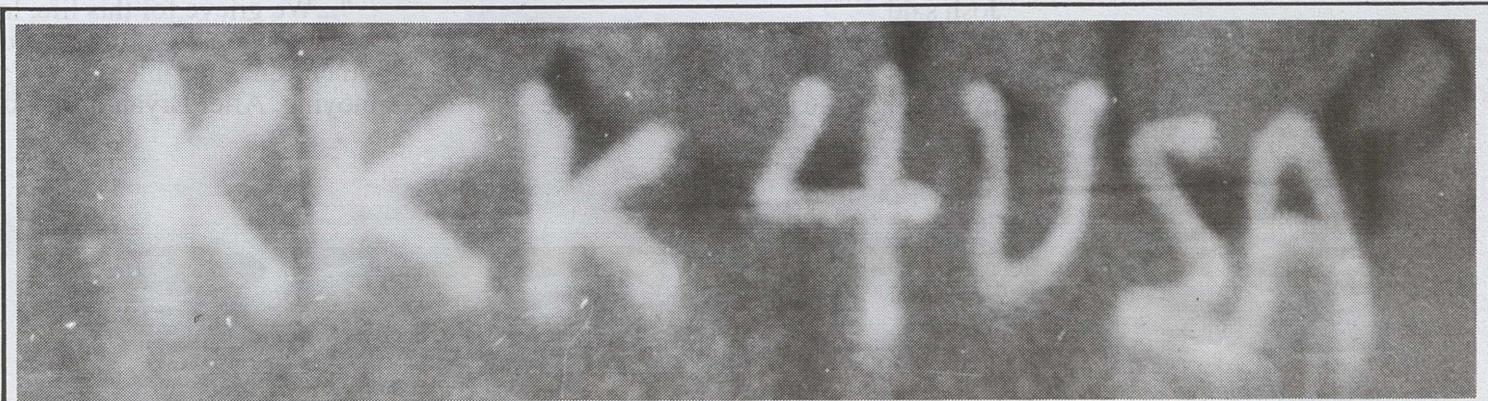
"Did he win his land back?" I asked, always a lover of heroic tales.

Stone flicked the ash from his cigar and looked down his long, empty glass. I motioned to Lucy for refills, downed my last sip, and turned back to Stone for the conclusion. Lucy hurried over with two frosty bottles and lingered a bit to hear the outcome of Stone's story.

He took a long drag on his slow cigar, looked at the two of us, and said, "Naw. They strung 'im and hung 'im--after they tarred 'im and feathered 'im." He sipped the head off of his beer.

"Mr. Stone," Lucy interjected, "you mean after all that, he just died?"

"Oh, naw, Baby," Stone said. "He didn't just die. When he died, he died knowin' he was a man fightin' for his own land!"





WAR STORIES
Continued from page 1



At The War

Bombs fell
And yells were never heard
Nights whiter than days
On the move through thick tropical
Growth
With red pools rising in the rice paddies
And little men appearing out of muddy river
Banks
While gunfire cracked like singing birds
All day all night all day all night

Mykel D. Myles
Warrensville Heights, OH

"Me, either."
"How've you been?"
"In trouble, haven't you heard?"
The gossips in his father's congregation told numerous stories about Bryan Franklin, some true and some exaggerated, but always carefully whispered behind the back of his mother, who attended regularly.

"I hear a lot about you, though. My mother is always asking me why I'm not more like you. I think she goes to your father's church just to find out what you're doing, to have someone to compare me with." Josh's parents never missed a chance to brag on their Howard-bound son to everyone, but especially to Mrs. Franklin, whose own son gave her nothing to brag about. It was their way of being one-up on their flock.

"What's that you're reading?" Josh asked, turning the subject away from himself.

"*Invisible Man*. It was my cousin's. He read all the time. He wanted to go to Howard, too. But he got drafted. His first day of combat he got caught in a booby trap and lost both feet. Used to run track, too. Funny, huh?"

"I guess." The deadpan of Bryan's voice stunned Josh.

"Probably won't be funny to me either when I'm there. I report tomorrow, you know."

"Report? You were drafted?"

"Uh-huh."

"You could go to Canada," Josh said, before he could stop himself. It sounded like something Hal would say.

"A little late to tell me now. It doesn't matter, though, I don't have anything else to do." They sat in strained silence for a long time. "I'll see you sometime." Bryan closed the book, stood up and walked away.

"Take care," Josh called to him as he went off into darkness. He sat on the sidewalk waiting for Hal, dazed from seeing his old friend who was now just someone to exchange tense small talk with.

"Who were you talking to?" Hal asked.

"I thought you were going to watch the rest of it."

"Don't feel like it. Who was that?"

"Bryan."

"No kidding? The Reverend and Mrs. Walker would be disappointed with the company you keep."

"It's those guys he hangs out with, not him. He's going to Viet Nam," Josh said.

Josh knew Hal was curious about older boys who were always in trouble, not because he liked trouble

himself, but because Hal was always looking for ways to appall their parents.

"No kidding. He's not as smart as I thought he was," Josh said, not wanting to hear Hal launch into his "the-Viet-Cong-never-called-me-a-nigger" speech. Josh started walking faster down the empty sidewalk, widening the distance between himself and his brother. If they lived in a bigger town, Hal would have definitely tried his hand at being a radical, not only for the shock value on their conservative parents, but also because he believed in radical causes. Fortunately for Hal and everyone else he tried to indoctrinate, there were no Black Panther branches or Nation of Islam chapters in the vicinity. "... hell, if it were me," Josh heard his brother continuing a few yards back.

There was a dull ache where the I.V. needle entered Josh's arm, but it was nothing compared to the steady, radiating pain in his chest. Someone was taking his pulse. He opened his eyes to see a pixie of a nurse smiling faintly and nodding her head at him. She placed a thermometer in his numb mouth.

"Everything's fine...Joshua." She paused to look at his dog tags and smiled, but didn't sound convinced. She put his arm back under the blanket. The baggy blue-green scrubs she wore rustled as she walked past the air conditioning unit between post-op beds to check on another patient.

The early August heat was unbearable in the tiny church. Cardboard handfans, with Mahalia Jackson on the front and McCrae-Jones Funeral Home on the back, flapped furiously. Josh and Hal sat in the second to the last pew on the left. Their mother was sitting in the very first one on the right, as usual. Today she was comforting Mrs. Franklin, simultaneously fanning her with Mahalia and whispering something encouraging to her. The reverend was at the front conducting Bryan's funeral. Little less than four months had passed since that night Josh last saw Bryan. He had received one post card from him. It had come early on, while Bryan was still in boot camp. The letter was short and impersonal, as tense and awkward as their conversation on that night. But it was something. When Mrs. Franklin stood up in church last Sunday and read the letter she received informing her about her son, Josh remembered that Hal had whispered to him, "Didn't take long for him to die, did it?"

"...We grieve for this life, lost too soon." His father's hollow words and mother's questionable concern were annoying. After Bryan dropped out





and got into trouble he became "that Franklin boy" in the Walker house, despite all the years he was Josh's friend.

"Why is the casket closed?" asked a little boy sitting behind them.

"Shh!" said a woman sitting across the aisle who never missed a funeral, whether she knew the person or not. The boy made a face when she turned back around.

"My Grandpa said they can't show the body," another boy said.

"Shut up," Hal turned and said, not as interested in their bad manners as exhibiting power over kids not too much younger than he was. The two made a face at Hal, when he turned around, and resumed their conversation.

"Why?"

"Cause he got blown up, boom!" the second boy exclaimed, making a gesture in the air.

The woman and Hal both went "Shh," this time. The boys stuck their tongues out at the woman and put little pieces of a fan they had torn into Hal's hair.

"You mean he really got blown up?" the first boy asked.

"He really did. I'm gonna get a look when nobody's around."

"Me, too," the other boy replied.

Josh stood up and left the stifling church.

"I know he used to be your friend, Josh, but did you have to leave like that? It was embarrassing," his mother said as they got out of the car and walked up their driveway.

"And distracting," his father added.

"Did you tell George to get ready for dinner, Hal?" she asked him as he ran up to them from the backyard.

"Wasn't there, he must be inside."

"Maybe he ran away," she muttered.

"You'd like that, wouldn't you?" Hal replied.

"Don't take that voice with your Mother, Harold."

Uncle George was setting the table when they came in. "Just in time," he said.

"Good to see you making yourself useful, George."

"Don't start, Carol," the reverend said. "Let's have a peaceful dinner for a change."

"I ain't stoppin' you. Hell, if it wasn't for me, there wouldn't be dinner. I wasn't out all afternoon pretendin' to feel sorry for people I don't even like."

"We don't--," their mother began.

"I said, let's have a peaceful dinner."

They sat down. It was quiet for a while, then Hal and Uncle George began talking and giggling at one end

of the table, and Josh's parents discussed the funeral at the other end.

"School will be starting in a few weeks, Josh, are you excited?" his father asked.

"Of course he is," his mother answered for him.

"Well, I--,"

"Oh, that's just nerves," she said. "I don't think I'll be going."

"What?"

"I mean I might enlist and go to Viet Nam."

"That's what you think, Josh Walker," the reverend interjected.

"I've already decided."

"The only thing you have to do is forget this Viet Nam nonsense," his mother added. "You get a chance to get an education, and you want to throw it away?"

"What makes you think you're cut out for combat?"

"I have to agree with your father, Josh," Uncle George said. "Combat is nothing to jump into. I was in a war that's still with me every day, and that was over twenty-five years ago. I still can't sleep through the night without thinking about all the things I saw..."

"Is this something you're doing for that Franklin boy? You don't owe him one thing," his mother said.

"Not one thing," his father echoed.

"Goddamn Nazis," Uncle George mumbled from somewhere in the past.

You will not take the Lord's name in vain in this house!" Josh's father snapped.

"Okay, fucking Nazis. That better?" George replied. Hal laughed. Uncle George and his parents then had one of their usual discussions about his language. Josh left and went up to his room.

He stood at the window. The two little boys from the funeral were playing marbles across the street. Marbles was one of the games he and Bryan played when they were small. On rainy days they played at one or the other's house with shoe boxes full of matchbox cars, stamps, baseball cards, jacks, and toy soldiers they shared and traded. Josh always gave away his soldiers because they reminded him of Uncle George and his stories and nightmares about the war. But Bryan loved them because they reminded him of his father, Aaron, who had died in Korea before Bryan was born. Josh remembered once hearing his Uncle George mumble to himself in his garden that Aaron Franklin was a lucky man.

Josh had no reaction when he saw the long scar.

"Bullet didn't do that," the boy in the wheel chair next to him boasted. His blond hair was growing back in



War Lost Boys

They travel among friends in a parade. Bony fingers - twigs - reach for wild green mangoes to boil for an empty

They flee the murahaliin who take their land and kill their families for the chuei crosses they wear around their coal necks.

Behind thick trees, he watches them kill Sarigo, "Fire! Fire!" echoes through the hollow drums. Their huts are aflame

like their sun-burned eyes. They run away. A community of young African men - rats and beans for supper.

They watch their friends die on burlap eaten by soulless crocodiles and hollow hyenas. They are surrogate parents for those too young to understand. They

want knowledge -scratching arithmetic on sheets of yellow earth. They walk together -voiceless shadows on the Sudanese landscape.

Myron Hardy
Ann Arbor, MI

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW



WAR STORIES

Continued from page 17

*... as long
as we
identify
with our
ego or
body/
personality-
self and
believe we
are limited
by what we
perceive in
the
physical
world, we
cannot
experience
our true
reality --
our
spiritual
self.*

Gerald Jampolsky as published in *The Color of Light*, Daily Meditations for All of us Living with AIDS compiled by Perry Tilleraas

bristles around the bandage on the side of his head. They sat just outside the swinging doors of the hospital, in the sun where the nurses had left them. "My head wound was shrapnel, but this was something else altogether," he said, running his fingers along the scar he opened his robe to expose.

"What was it?"

"A guy ahead of me stepped on a mine. A bone in his leg did it." He fingered the scar like a medal.

Josh wished one of the nurses would come back and take him in.

"Are you crazy?" Hal closed their bedroom door behind him.

"You'd actually throw away a deferment for Bryan Franklin's sake? Not that many brothers get a student deferment, you know." Hal had begun to refer to every black person as a brother or a sister. From someone else it might have been sincere, but from Hal's mouth it was an affectation, one more way to irritate their parents.

"Who said I was doing anything for him?" I could be doing it because I want to."

"You're their life, you know. They live through you. If something happens to you, I'm pretty much finished around here. You know, you can always go to Canada if you enlist and change your mind."

"That's what I told him."

"I know you two were friends once, but you can't die for him. You didn't know him that well."

"I knew him well enough."

"You don't know me well enough to die for me, and I'm your brother!" Hal said, walking back out. Josh decided to go outside. He went around back and sat against a plum tree. Uncle George was weeding his garden. That patch of ground was all he had. He would work it every day, confiding to it, conspiring with it, telling it his war stories. Glancing back, he saw Josh and stopped his work to sit by him.

"Wanna see something?" He pulled a folded picture from his back pocket. It was him and another soldier. They were standing beside some shells and artillery pieces. George was holding one of the shells. "Happy Easter, Adolph" was whitewashed on it. "We did stuff like that to keep from going crazy, but a lot of people would say it didn't help."

Josh laughed. "Were you two friends?"

"Yeah, but he got killed a few days after that was taken. A lot of friends I had died. I never got a scratch on me. Got beat to a pulp in a bus station for drinking from the

wrong water fountain when I got home, though. Spent a month in a hospital feeling like one of my friends should have at least had the chance to get beat up instead of me."

"I saw Bryan the night before he left. Now I think I could have stopped him somehow."

"You gettin' killed too won't fix anything."

"I know...but I have to go."

"I'm not gonna tell you not to, because I understand what you mean. There are still times I think I could have done more to save my friend, but I couldn't. And there's nothing you can do, either. All I can say is, just be careful and pray you get a desk job."

The engines of the transport vibrated the gurney Josh was on. The glass I.V. bottle of the man behind him jiggled against its metal pole. Josh began feeling nauseous as the plane prepared for takeoff.

"You not gonna turn a shade of green on me are you, little brother?" Another passenger in the gurney across from him asked. He puffed on the nub of a cigarette. The left arm of his pajamas and robe were empty and swung from the side. "I like the flying--the plane over here, the choppers. It's when I hit the ground that I can't stand it." Josh nodded. He didn't feel like talking. Yet he was trapped with him and his one arm, a cigarette, and sponge of black, unkempt hair. "I'll miss all the flying." He continued talking off and on for the next several hours.

When Josh wasn't pretending to pay attention, he looked out of the small window. The letter Mrs. Franklin had sent him was in the pocket of his robe, balled up. She said she had gathered up all of Bryan's things and would give them to him when he got home. Bryan wouldn't have cared who had his things. Josh didn't want them, but he wouldn't tell her that. He would thank her and take them anyway, probably putting them in the attic so he wouldn't have to look at them, wouldn't have to think of Bryan.

The man with one arm continued to talk, as Josh fingered the scar on his chest and concentrated on the hum of the engines. He wondered how he could miss someone he didn't really know.



Lost and Found

I remember the day my father lost two fingers,
The middle two, snipped cleanly at the second joint,
Caught in the chain conveyor used to elevate
Corn to the crib.

He leaped inside the crib
To undo what Fate had done; my uncle's laughter
Lengthened out, he yelled that a farmer without
Fingers missing just ain't serious about work.

In later years, father drank too much; he'd
Stick those stubby fingers underneath his nose,
Wagging the index and the pinky.

My uncle's
Laughter lengthened at the illusion of fingers
Disappearing.

I remember my uncle's pant-leg
Snagging the tractor's power take-off, he
Twirled puppet-like, twisting off above the knee.

I remember father saying that farming's damned,
It makes dead men out of anyone who has
Twenty, thirty more years to live.

I remember
Them both now underneath their stones.
I dream of two men dancing to an un-nameable jig
Of a mad musician, feel my fingers lengthening
To pick dead leaves fallen from trees, hoping
The earth heals, kind to those who work and die.

Daniel James Sundahl
Hillsdale, MI

Except where specifically stated, all artwork, photos and graphics in this and any other issues of *Shooting Star Review* are for artistic illustration and are otherwise unrelated to the accompanying text.

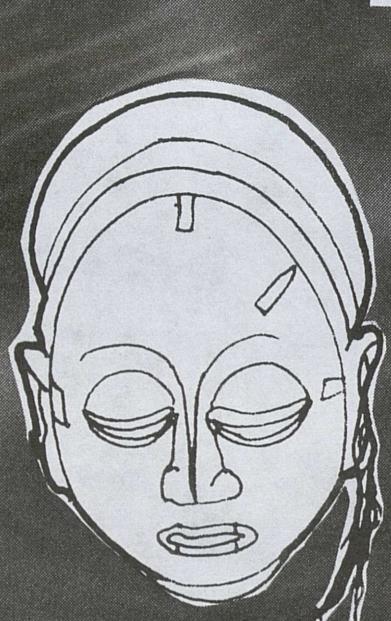


Zambian Power Mask

Zambian power mask:
Determination;
Permanence.
Rusty-bronze hardwood face.
Treasure of the Mbunda chief.
Eyes like black volcano tops
With fire-colored slopes.
Like two black clouds
On a tangerine sun
At dusk.

Zambian power mask:
Soul shield;
Force field.
Explosion of Zambezi redwood
Carved by the black Mulungushi Rock.
African-art-deco cheekbones
Cast orange-copper shade.
Stiff, wooden teeth hang
In a hard, square mouth
Carved open
To thunder
Harm
Away?

Dakari Hru
New York, New York





JORDY'S GIFT
Continued from Page 8

"You think you could let me take him, Chief?"

"It's not up to me, Mack, but the Judge. You know how the lad is--" The Chief tapped a finger against his temple. "--in here."

"I know, but--"

Association feel that the lad needs to be off the streets before he reaches his teens, starts messing with girls." He waggled his chin. "It'd really be tough on him, we ever catch him doing that, what with this three strikes and you're out

"No, it's not," Mister Mack said dimly. "We're talking about a boy's life." He went to limping for the door, the Chief trailing him. "I'll go talk to the Judge." The door closed behind them. "See if I can--" he added, his voice vanishing from

"Had the statue not slipped out of his arms and crashed down that knoll by the railroad tracks, knocking the rider off his horse--and the lad staying there, bawling like a baby, trying to stick the thing back together--the patrolman reported he never would've caught him. Said he couldn't believe somebody little as him could carry that much weight as far and as fast as he did."

"We had him examined again 'while ago, and, based on the doctor's opinion, the Judge thinks we ought to put him away this time, now that he's facing a felony charge."

Mister Mack wrung his fingers. "You reckon Sid'd allow me to straighten things out, let the boy off the hook?"

"The Judge has already told me to take him to the Home, Mack," the Chief undertoned to the shiny, white tile square beneath the rubber heels of his polished black boots.

Mister Mack corralled the Chief's view. "I'll talk to his mother. Have her appeal the--"

"It's too late, Mack. She hated to do it worse than anything I've ever seen, but she's consented to the Judge's order." The chief clicked his tongue. "Afraid not to, I guess." He left a pause, "And then, too, the members of the Merchants

business in effect."

The gleam that had been in Jordy's pupils dimmed. Mister Mack seemed desperate.

"Just give him to me, Chief," he pleaded, "I'll--"

"I would if I could, Mack," the Chief cut him off. "But I can't disobey the Judge's verdict. Besides, you know that lad's going to get into trouble again."

"He might not. Maybe he had a reason for doing what he did." Mister Mack looked at Jordy. "Why'd you do it, son?"

Jordy stared at him for a long time. Then he said, "I love you."

As though in pain, Mister Mack turned to the side and leaned over a little. The Chief patted him on the back.

"I know it's awful on you, Mack. But putting him away is for his own good. A gift from us, the truth be known."

Jordy's earshot, "--get him to..."

All alone once more, his tearducts stinging, lips quivery, one foot slowly sliding back and forth--as if trying to erase away what he saw there--Jordy scraped the toe of his tennis shoe across a black mark blemishing the room's sparkling white floor.



*There are three kinds of people in the world:
those who make things happen,
those who watch things happen,
those who wonder what happened.*

Source Unknown
as published in
*Acts of Faith, Daily Meditations
for People of Color* compiled
by Iyanla Vanzant

GRANDSTORY

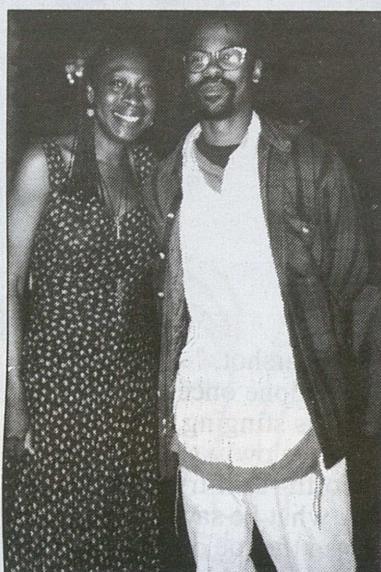


As part of Shooting Star Productions' mission of employing the arts to build awareness and appreciation for the Black experience, the

2nd Middle Passage Commemoration Ceremony



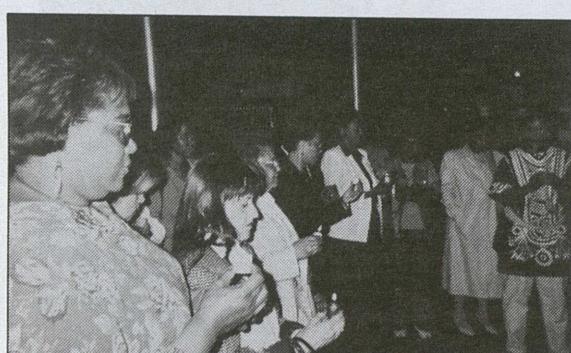
Drummers summoning participants to the Middle Passage Commemoration Ceremony



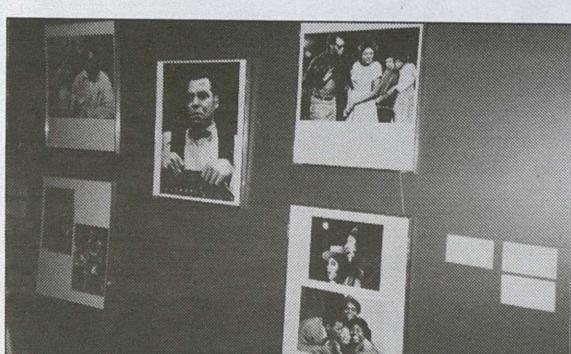
Two *I Dream A World* actors.



Sandra Ford, Huberta Jackson-Lowman and Bisi Hightower during candle lighting ceremony.



Prayerful moment during ceremony.



Sampling of 50 of Bert Andrew's breathtaking photographs from the National Black Touring Circuit's "Twenty Years of Blacks in American Theatre" exhibit.

was recently held at Pittsburgh's City Theatre. The theatre's current production was *Mississippi Delta*, and the ceremonial environment included the National Black Touring Circuit, Inc.'s beautiful photography exhibit "Twenty Years of Blacks in American Theatre" featuring Bert Andrews' magnificent photography. Over two thousand people saw the exhibition and 250 participated in the Ceremony which included African drumming and enactment of Linda Watkin's poem "Middle Passage" by the performance poetry group *I Dream A World*.

The Middle Passage represents the four centuries of the African slave trade and the resulting destruction of human life and cultural awareness. The idea for this Middle Passage Commemoration originated with Sandra Gould Ford and was developed with Dr. Huberta Jackson-Lowman and Bisi Hightower. In the Autumn '90 issue of *Shooting Star Review*, the Middle Passage Commemoration concept was introduced in hopes that readers would join in:

- ★ acknowledging and documenting the social and psychological impact of the Middle Passage
- ★ creating a better future based on understanding this history, and
- ★ further developing and promoting ceremonies, traditions and events that build awareness and appreciation for the Black experience.

Items Needed:

Bowl or pan with (sea) salt walter (representing the Atlantic Ocean)

Small (to fit in bowl) boat or floating vessel

Silver (representing the sale of our ancestors into slavery)

Chains baked from rolled cookie dough (chains that bound us into slavery)

Rocks, grass and dirt (spiritual repositories)

Matches (for fire to convey awareness and vitality)

These items should be displayed in a specially prepared space, and battery-operated candles can be substituted

Participants should bring:

Items that can build an artwork (paper, fabric, paints, trinkets, seeds, beans, buttons, glue, etc.)

A white candle (for bones of the millions who perished),

Covered dish representing food enjoyed by a forebear (a sampling of each item to be placed on special platter honoring the ancestors).

Ceremony

- 1) Gather around the salted water and offer libation (toast) to the ancestors;
- 2) Light all candles, then offer prayers for the ancestors and to our forebears seeking their guidance;
- 3) "Sail" a "vessel" across the water to remember the free exploration of this hemisphere by the Africans who made Columbus' trip possible.
- 4) "Sail" again to memorialize the centuries of African slave traffic. Blow out all but one candle (for physical, cultural and spiritual losses), then the lit candle begins the relighting of candles.
- 5) Say prayers to guide and protect the young and unborn who follow us.
- 6) The "chains" are broken and consumed and there is the making of a joyful noise (songs or other joyous expressions as suit the occasion).
- 7) Rejoining activity (beginning or completing a quilt or collage or other artworks built by contributions from each participant).

The Middle Passage merits commemoration throughout the year, but is traditionally observed during the "Thanksgiving" weekend.



Among the many who must be thanked for the success of this exhibition and ceremony are Jeffrey Richards and Thelma Morris who helped with photography, the staff of City Theatre and Al Pulice, manager of the South Side Giant Eagle Supermarket whose bakery and deli staffs prepared such beautiful and delicious trays.



BACK ISSUES

Shooting Star Review

Catch Up On All That You've Missed!

How to Order:

1. Prices include cost of shipping and handling.
2. Volume One (the first four issues) is \$25.
3. Volumes 3 through 7 are \$20 each (four issues in each volume).
4. Single issues:
Spring'87 is \$15 (1st issue)
All other single issues are \$5.
5. Make check or money order payable to **Shooting Star Productions**. Payment must accompany order. No invoices will be sent.
6. Order from:
Back Issues
Shooting Star Review
7123 Race Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
7. Large orders may be sent by UPS. Please provide street address. Allow six weeks for delivery.

NOTE: Issues (see *) are selling out.
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Issue Numbers & Themes:

- Vol 1 No 1 (#1) *Identities*
2 (#2) *Jazz!Jazz!Jazz!*
3 (#3) *Magical & Spooky Things*
4 (#4) *Kwanzaa**
- Vol 2 No 1 (#5) *African Literature**
2 (#6) *Doing Ourselves Justice**
3 (#7) *Men & Women...Getting Along*
4 (#8) *Romance**
- Vol 3 No 1 (#9) *Our Children ... Ourselves*
2 (#10) *Justice*
3 (#11) *Salute to Black Women Writers*
4 (#12) *Resolutions & New Beginnings*
- Vol 4 No 1 (#13) " " "
2 (#14) *Our Voice, Our Song*
3 (#15) *Behind Bars*
4 (#16) *Marching to a Different Beat*
- Vol 5 No 1 (#17) *Salute to Black Male Writers*
2 (#18) *Mother & Daughter*
3 (#19) *Home & Community*
4 (#20) *Star Child*
- Vol 6 No 1 (#21) *Heritage & Inheritance*
2 (#22) *Jubilee*
3 (#23) *Middle Passage*
4 (#24) *Liberating Harvest*
- Vol 7 No 1 (#25) *Caribbean Literature*
2 (#26) *Black Stage & Screen*
3 (#27) *Male/Female Relationships*
4 (#28) *War!*



Shooting Star Review

Shooting Star Review is an award-winning, international literary/cultural quarterly that has published consistently since 1987. This publication explores the Black experience through visuals, graphics, photography, short fiction, poetry and narrative essays from established and newly emerging talent from all over the world. *Shooting Star Review* provides opportunities for greater appreciation of the Black experience through knowledge and understanding of the challenges endured and the significant contributions created by people of African descent.

Time to Sign Up & Renew

For just \$12 (\$15 businesses & institutions), receive a new year, four issues that are:

- ★ Beautiful & Dramatic
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Shooting Star Review Advertising

Shooting Star Review distributes in 30 states, Canada, Japan and Switzerland.

Classified Text

Basic rate: \$1 per word [15-word (or \$15) minimum].

Frequency discounts for consecutive insertions:

2 runs = \$.95/word
3 runs = \$.85/word
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NOTE: Classified ads must be typed. Your address = 3 words. Your phone = 1 word. Half-price ads are available for the following services for which artists and writers are not charged: Requests for artwork and/or manuscripts for publication; Opportunities for artists & writers (job listings, readings, shows, etc.); Announcements of Fairs and Festivals. Contests which charge fees are not eligible for half-price ads.

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All classified text and classified display ads must be PREPAID. Make checks or money orders (U.S. Dollars drawn on a U.S. Bank) out to: Shooting Star Review, 7123 Race Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208. Phone (412) 731-7464 for next deadlines.

3rd Shooting Star Writers Conference April, 1995

For details, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to 3rd SSWC, Shooting Star Productions, 7123 Race St., Pittsburgh, PA 15208-1424.

Presenters Wanted

Presenters sought for 3rd Shooting Star Writers Conference for Mini-Lectures on aspects of writing, including fiction, poetry, journalism, essays, non-fiction, stage, screen, youth, literary history, criticism, agents & genres including science fiction, mystery, romance, etc.

For consideration and information, send resume, including previous teaching and/or presenting experience and brief (up to 100-word) description of a 30-minute presentation before September 30, 1994.

Published Writers Only. No phone inquiries accepted.

Write: Ms. Sheri Johnson, Artistic Coordinator 3rd SSWC, 7123 Race St., Pittsburgh, PA 15208-1424

Middle Passage Commemoration Ceremony

A healing, family event that therapeutically re-examines the trauma of the African Slave Trade and which offers positive methods for dealing with this inadequately acknowledged holocaust.

For FREE information, send a self-addressed, business-size envelope to: Middle Passage Ceremony, Shooting Star Productions, Inc. 7123 Race Street Pittsburgh, PA 15208-1424



Shooting Star Productions, Inc. exists to build awareness and appreciation for the Black experience via arts and cultural activities.

Shooting Star Productions, Inc. provides its services to all racial, ethnic, religious, age and economic populations, with its most specific and immediate work geared toward African-American youth and adults.

Shooting Star Productions, Inc.'s services include:

Promoting the arts and artists (literary, visual and performing) whose works explore the Black experience; and

Generating programs consistent with the Mission Statement that develop artistic capacity and cultural breadth. These programs can include production of a literary/cultural magazine, a system of Ceremonies, Commemorations and Conferences (such as Writers Conferences, Middle Passage Commemorations, Jubilee and Kwanzaa Celebrations and Literary Readings), and other arts activities and cultural events as opportunities arise.

Shooting Star Productions, Inc.'s Mission and services are provided so that opportunities exist for greater appreciation of the Black experience through knowledge and understanding of the challenges endured and the significant contributions created by people of African descent. **Shooting Star Productions** seeks to generate self-understanding and a sense of pride and accomplishment in Black people of all ages and circumstances while providing information and resources that could reduce racial and ethnic intolerance and allow the creative potential of all Americans to be better realized. Further, **Shooting Star Productions** will expand general interest in and access to the diverse expressions of Black culture.

Shooting Star Review ARTIST GUIDELINES

Upcoming Themes -- Regional Issues: Writers from the South (send by August'94); Writers from the Midwest (send by October'94).

Shooting Star Review is copyrighted and provides fine writing and art about the Black experience. This award-winning magazine publishes established writers and new talent. Work by non-Black writers on the Black experience is welcome. Sandra Gould Ford began *Shooting Star Review* in 1987 with the founding belief that art provides enduring truths and deeply meaningful, human understanding.

Rigorously juried, *Shooting Star Review*'s acceptance rate is about one in twenty. All visuals, graphics, photography, short fiction, poetry and narrative essays are provided by free lance talent from all over the world. Writers with the best chance of publishing in *Shooting Star Review* demonstrate these characteristics:

- ★ Well read, especially within their artform
- ★ Active voice with minimal passive verbs and prepositions
- ★ Honest and authentic voice(s)
- ★ Succinct with inviting & compelling openings

IMPORTANT

Include cover letter with name address and phone on every page. All text must be complete & clearly copied or printed (double space) on one side of plain, white paper. Multiple submissions OK. Return envelopes with proper postage required.

FICTION: Up to 3,500 words. Fiction under 1,000 words encouraged. Up to three stories per quarter.

ESSAYS: Up to 2,500 words. Conversational voice preferred. Bibliographies accepted but no footnoting.

POETRY: Max. 70 lines per poem. Up to six poems per quarter. One poem per page.

PAYMENT upon publication for 1st N.Amer. serial rights and as funds permit. Fiction and Essays: \$10 to 1,000 words, \$20+ up to 3,500 words. Poetry: \$5+. Reprints are a third of standard rate. Artists also get 2 magazines (extras available at 40% discount). Visuals \$8+.

Sample copies of *Shooting Star Review* are \$3 with SASE. One-year subscription is \$10.

INTERNATIONAL: Subscriptions are \$23/year airmail and \$15/year surface in U.S. Dollars.

RESPONSE TIME & RIGHTS: Queries response in 3 weeks; 4 months on mss. Themes determine time to publication. All rights revert to author upon publication. Galleys are sent if time permits.

Send submissions to 7123 Race Street, Pgh, PA 15208-1424.

CENSUS