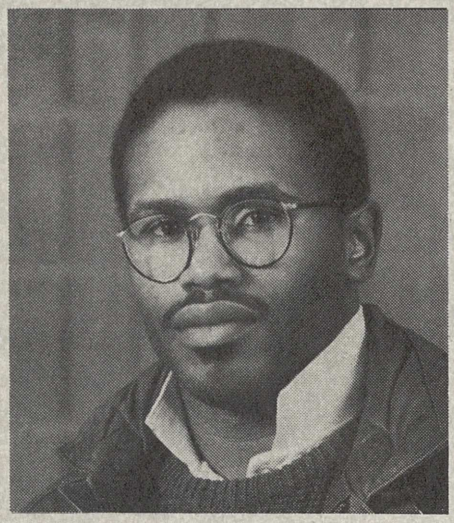
ShootingStar REVIEW

IDENTITIES

SPRING 1987

$2.00

ISSN 0892-1407



Congratulations to **Shooting Star Review's** first "*Featured Artist.*" Hal Ambrose Washington is formerly Director of Photography at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh and has just moved to Columbus, Ohio as a photographer for Associated Press.

Hal has received numerous awards for his photography as well as for his work in teaching black and white techniques to children. He developed new photography programs for the Guild and coordinated gallery exhibitions. In addition, he worked in Public Relations and focused on the enhancement of communication skills.

Shooting Star thanks Hal for the cover photo. His work captures one aspect of this issue's African-American "Identity" theme. The following poem by Hal expresses the feeling of this black woman in white face.

Damn you for the
lengths you make make me
go to.
Are you happy?
Does this satisfy
your needs?

to my sisters who aren't real blondes
Alycee J. Lane

can you imagine
Harriet
urging on the timid slave to freedom
as a blonde/
lock
blows from her eyes
or
Sojourner
bearing bare her breasts
while
blonde/
hair/
dangles/
upon her muscular black shoulders
or Ida B's golden/
mane/
drift entangled as she flees
the golden rope
or
Fanny's sunny/
hair/
drenched in blood
or
Nikki chanting
'nigger can you kill'
her yellow/
pigtail/
moving to an angry rhythm
or Ntozake's colored girls
wiping dry their tears
with lemon/
braids/
or
Billie
sing blues
sing dangerous laughing crying blues
while those damned/
blonde/
strands/
S W I I R R L L L
like a funeral flower to crown her
head...
can you honestly imagine?

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW
ISSN 0892-1407

PUBLISHER
Sandra Gould Ford

EDITORIAL BOARD
Dr. Dennis Brutus
Mrs. Jane Todd Cooper
Mrs. Carla DuPree
Mrs. Toni McKain
Mr. Gilbert Moses
Ms. Linda Watkins

ADVISORY BOARD
Christina Addoh
Marvin Anderson
Anne Louise Backauskas
Robert Brevard
Byrd R. Brown, Esq.
Oliver Byrd
George Campbell
David Feehan
Lenore Gardner
Phyllis Moorman Goode
Connie Kerr
Dr. Edward Kiely
Dr. Vernell Lillie
Dr. Huberta Jackson Lowman
Dr. Ralph Proctor
Ed Pugh
Dr. Barbara Sizemore
Robert Teeter
Joseph Thomas
Eustace Uku, Esq.
Glenn Ward
Chuck Woodson

In producing this first issue, many people must be thanked for their support, understanding and guidance... especially Cassandra and Candace Ford, Gilbert Moses who has encouraged this idea since it was called Perfect Prose, Byrd Brown, Robert Brevard, Lu Conser, Dee Currin, Mellon Bank and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Shooting Star Review promises a sparkle in your eye, riches in your soul and glide in your stride.

In this first issue, each story, essay and poem was especially chosen to explore the theme "Identity." How do black people see themselves, and how do others perceive the African-American experience?

The best part about possessing this first issue is that you will have the wonderful opportunity of feeling **Shooting Star Review** touch your spirit and watching **Shooting Star** grow stronger and more beautiful.

Shooting Star Review is an educational arts magazine that interprets the black experience.

The following words share much of the feeling that each issue will offer:

There is no beauty
in art until it is
shared.
No magic until it is
enjoyed.
No meaning until it
opens up our feeling
for ourselves.
And for our friends.

Welcome. Enjoy.

Sandra

CONTENTS

ESSAYS
First Encounter: Third Mystery
Jane Todd Cooper 6
The Negro and the Racial Mountain
Langston Hughes 4

FEATURED ARTIST
H.A. Washington 2

FICTION
Désirée's Baby
Kate Chopin 8

POETRY
Bad Woman Walk 12
Blondes 2
Godot Colored 12
Temple Time No. 2 12

QUIZ 13

REVIEWS 14

Spring Issue, 1987
Volume 1, Number 1

Shooting Star Review
7123 Race Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
(412) 731-7039
Published quarterly in 1987.
All rights reserved.

Write or call for Advertising rates.

Single copy $2.
One year subscription $7.
Institutional rate $12.

Open submission policy for short fiction, essays, reviews and poetry.
Must be typed with SASE.
Send SASE for guidelines.

THE NEGRO ARTIST AND THE RACIAL MOUNTAIN

by Langston Hughes

permission granted by ***The Nation*** *to reprint from their June 23, 1926 issue as found in the Davis and Walden book* ***On Being Black***

One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, "I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet," meaning, I believe, "I want to write like a white poet"; meaning subconsciously, "I would like to be a white poet"; meaning behind that, "I would like to be white." And I was sorry the young man said that, for no great poet has ever been afraid of being himself.

And I doubted then that, with his desire to run away spiritually from his race, this boy would ever be a great poet. But this is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America—this urge within the race toward whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible.

But let us look at the immediate background of this young poet. His family is of what I suppose one would call the Negro middle class: people who are by no means rich yet never uncomfortable nor hungry—smug, contented, respectable folk, members of the Baptist church. The father goes to work every morning. He is a chief steward at a large white club. The mother sometimes does fancy sewing or supervises parties for the rich families of the town. The children go to a mixed school. In the home they read white papers and magazines. And the mother often says "Don't be like niggers" when the children are bad. A frequent phrase from the father is, "Look how well a white man does things." And so the word white comes to be unconsciously a symbol of all the virtues. . . .One sees immediately how difficult it would be for an artist born in such a home to interest himself in interpreting the beauty of his own people. He is never taught to see that beauty. He is taught rather not to see it, or if he does, to be ashamed of it when it is not according to Caucasian patterns.

For racial culture the home of a self-styled "high-class" Negro has nothing better to offer. Instead there will perhaps be more aping of things white than in a less cultured or less wealthy home. The father is perhaps a doctor, lawyer, landowner, or politician. The mother may be a social worker, or a teacher, or she may do nothing and have a maid. Father is often dark but he has usually married the lightest woman he could find. The family attend a fashionable church where few really colored faces are to be found. And they themselves draw a color line. In the North they go to white theaters and white movies. And in the South they have at least

two cars and a house "like white folks." Nordic manners, Nordic faces, Nordic hair, Nordic art (if any), and an Episcopal heaven. A very high mountain indeed for the would-be racial artist to climb in order to discover himself and his people.

But then there are the low-down folks, the so-called common element, and they are the majority —may the Lord be praised! The people who have their nip of gin on Saturday nights and are not too important to themselves or the community, or too well fed, or too learned to watch the lazy world go round. They live on Seventh Street in Washington or State Street in Chicago and they do not particularly care whether they are like white folks or anybody else. Their joy runs, bang! into ecstasy. Their religion soars to a shout. Work maybe a little today, rest a little tomorrow. Play awhile. Sing awhile. O, let's dance! These common people are not afraid of spirituals, as for a long time their more intellectual brethren were, and jazz is their child. They furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardizations. And perhaps these common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be himself. . . .Certainly there is, for the American Negro artist who can escape the restrictions the more advanced among his own group would put upon him, a great field of unused material ready for his art. . . .But let us look again at the mountain.

A prominent Negro clubwoman in Philadelphia paid eleven dollars to hear Raquel Meller sing Andalusian popular songs. But she told me a few weeks before she would not think of going to hear "that woman," Clara Smith, a great black artist, sing Negro folksongs. And many an upper-class Negro church, even now, would not dream of employing a spiritual in its services. The drab melodies in white folks' hymnbooks are much to be preferred. "We want to worship the Lord correctly and quietly. We don't believe in 'shouting.' Let's be dull like the Nordics," they say, in effect.

The road for the serious black artist, then, who would produce a racial art is most certainly rocky and the mountain is high. Until recently he received almost no encouragement for his work from either white or colored people. . .

The Negro artist works against an undertow of sharp criticism and misunderstanding from his own group and unintentional bribes from the whites. "O, be respectable, write about nice people, show how good we are," say the Negroes. "Be stereotyped, don't go too far, don't shatter our illusions about you, don't amuse us too seriously. We will pay you," say the whites. Both would have told Jean Toomer not to write **Cane**. The colored people did not praise it. The white people did not buy it. Most of the colored people who did read **Cane** hate it. They are afraid of it. Although the critics gave it good reviews the public remained indifferent. Yet (excepting the work of DuBois) **Cane** contains the finest prose written by a Negro in America. And like the singing of [Paul] Robeson, it is truly racial.

But in spite of the Nordicized Negro intelligentsia and the desires of some white editors we have an honest American Negro literature already with us. Now I await the rise of the Negro theater. Our folk music, having achieved world-wide fame, offers itself to the genius of the great individual American Negro composer who is to come. And within the next decade I

Continued on Page 15

Essay by Jane Todd Cooper

First Encounter: Third Mystery

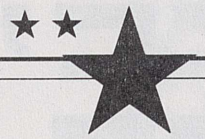
Richard was more than my first encounter with a person who was black. He was the third great mystery of my life.

The first was where dead people go. The second was how Jesus' body could fit into a flat, dry communion wafer. And the third was Richard when he lost his name and became Negro. Negro was used when I first was taught to classify people by skin color. Before that, there had only been the name of the person, usually two names, like everyone, a first name and a last. My first encounter occurred when the word Negro was spoken. **Negro** whose implied meaning was **other**, specifically **not white**, especially **not us**, and, to complete the implication, **by the grace of god, not me**. Nothing was said out loud except **Negro**. And then it seemed as though the person who was **Negro** had lost his name.

It was a fine name, Richard Dellingham. He was my brother's best friend after we moved to Madison, New Jersey. Before that, his best friend had been Johnny Angliss, the son of my mother's best friend. Like my mother, my brother was good at being a friend, a real pal, as Joe DiMaggio would have said back in the early Fifties when all this happened. My brother was used to being second, having followed me. He was shy and sincere, a little kid version of the pal in Van Hefflin movies who loses his girl to the star and still stays best friends. I remember his round face like a zero, blank, when he realized what moving meant, "But Johnny can't come with us." That zero rode in the backseat of the gray Nash with me and my pet bunny Dewy. It suffered the yellow crusts of infectious impetigo for the first week in our new home before it was allowed to go to school. It suffered the first weeks of school and at night in the room we shared. It made the perfect O of nightmare moans. It was the nothing face of a kid who'd been sold out by his parents' desires.

And then his face changed. I half-remember my brother on the blacktop playground grinning arm in arm with Richard behind the basketball backstop. Richard and my brother beating each other uphill ahead of me on the way to our home in the Anthony Wayne Apartments. At dinner, my brother saying: "Richard says, Richard says." Them swinging together in the playground, hogging the low swing I liked because I could kick myself higher. Both wore caps and zippered poplin jackets and corduroys and hightop black sneakers. My brother Peter and his best friend Richard.

I remember Richard until one late spring evening in fifth grade . . . the year we learned in geography class that Africa was the "Dark Continent"



and "The Sleeping Giant." After that, I can't see him any more. He's still there, back in the actual Fifties, paling around with my brother, but he's disappeared from my memory, erased by a new word—Negro.

Maybe it happened in June, which for me, as a kid, had no nights, only long evenings when the sky remained gray after bedtime. Even after late bedtime. Probably it happened at dinner where everything was said first: What my father ate for lunch and where. What we did at school. What my mother sewed that day. All of it laid on the table with the gray plates, meatloaf and white bread. The talk was as much food as the peas and carrots. All of us talking and chewing, backed up by my mother's admonishments: "Don't talk with your mouth full," and "Mabel, Mabel, strong and able, keep your elbows off the table."

The talk must have turned to vacation, that glorious week each summer when my father got off work. We drove to mountains and fir trees and lakes, each year a different place. This year we each could bring a friend. I chose Irene Spath who had endlessly curly hair and a pedigreed collie. She loved paperdolls. My brother chose Richard.

The next night or the night after, father talked with us in the living room before turning on the TV for our after-dinner shows. We knew something was up because mother didn't wash the dishes but came into the living room and sat at the end of the couch near my father's rocker. There was a problem. The cabins where we were to stay wouldn't let Richard stay with us. He wouldn't be allowed on the beach. Restaurants wouldn't serve us food or they wouldn't serve him. Then what would we do? It wouldn't be much of a vacation if Richard came. It wouldn't be fair to Richard because he would know he caused all these problems. So what we were going to do was not invite friends. Not Irene, not Richard. We'd have the same vacation we always had, us together—having fun.

What's wrong with Richard? Nothing. Richard was a nice boy. Well-behaved. A good student. Didn't yell in the house. But he was a Negro, and Negroes couldn't go where we could go. They couldn't swim in the same pools or eat at the same restaurants. Yes, they could go to school with us. Yes, they could play on the same baseball teams, like Jackie Robinson, but that was sports. Even Jackie Robinson couldn't sleep in the same hotel with his team at night. Negroes just weren't allowed where we were. They couldn't help it if god made them Negroes. It was their life. This was ours.

But Richard's my friend, my brother said. He's the same as me. Yes, Richard was the same; my parents agreed. Yes, he ate the same food and sat behind my brother in second grade, and was learning how to field grounders. Yes, he told good jokes and could read silently without moving his lips. He really was the same except he was Negro and couldn't go where we could go.

What did Negro mean? Well, my parents said, it meant his skin was brown, brown forever, not just in the summer like a tan. It meant Richard goes where brown-skinned people go and we'd go where white-skinned people go. I don't remember what my brother said after that, but I do remember him saying, twenty-two years later: "The old man had no guts."

So, Richard and Negro became the third great mystery of my life. And I wondered: What was wrong with brown that it could erase a person and his name?

Continued on Page 16

DÉSIRÉE'S BABY

"My mother, they tell me I am not white. . . .
For God's sake tell them it is not true."

By Kate Chopin

As the day was pleasant, Madame Valmondé drove over to L'Abri to see Désirée and the baby.

It made her laugh to think of Désirée with a baby. Why, it seemed but yesterday that Désirée was little more than a baby herself; when Monsieur in riding through the gateway of Valmondé and found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar.

The little one awoke in his arms and began to cry for "Dada." That was as much as she could do or say. Some people thought she might have strayed there of her own accord, for she was of the toddling age. The prevailing belief was that she had been purposely left by a party of Texans, whose canvas-covered wagon, late in the day, had crossed the ferry that Coton Maïs kept, just below the plantation. In time Madame Valmondé abandoned every speculation but the one that Désirée had been sent to her by a beneficent Providence to be the child of her affection, seeing that she was without child of the flesh. For the girl grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere,—the idol of Valmondé.

It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Aubigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for he had known her since his father brought him home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or like a prairie fire, or like anything that drives headlong over all obstacles.

Monsieur Valmondé grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's obscure origin. Armand looked into her eyes and did not care. He was reminded that she was nameless. What did it matter about a name when he could give her one of the oldest and proudest in Lousiana? He ordered the *corbeille* from Paris, and contained himself with what patience he could until it arrived; then they were married.

Madame Valmondé had not seen Désirée and the baby for four weeks. When she reached L'Abri she shuddered at the first sight of it, as she always did. It was a sad looking place, which for many years had not known the gentle presence of a mistress, old Monsieur Aubigny having married and buried his wife in France, and she having loved her own land too well ever to leave it. The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyoind the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their thick-leaved, far reaching branches shadowed it like a pall. Young Aubigny's rule was a strict one, too, and under it his negroes had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during the old master's easy-going and indulgent lifetime.

The young mother was recovering slowly, and lay full length, in her soft white muslins and laces, upon a couch. The baby was beside her, upon her arm, where he had fallen asleep, at her breast. The yellow nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself.

Madame Valmondé bent her portly figure over Désirée and kissed her, holding

Illustrations by Dee Currin

her an instant tenderly in her arms. Then she turned to the child.

This is not the baby!'' she exclaimed, in startled tones. French was the language spoken at Valmondé in those days.

''I knew you would be astonished,'' laughed Désirée, ''at the way he has grown. The little *cochon de lait*! Look at his legs, mamma, and his hands and fingernails,—real finger-nails. Zandrine had to cut them this morning. Isn't it true, Zandrine?''

The woman bowed her turbaned head majestically, ''Mais si, Madame.''

''And the way he cries,'' went on Désirée, ''is deafening. Armand heard him the other day as far away as LaBlanche's cabin.''

Madame Valmondé had never removed her eyes from the child. She lifted it and walked with it over to the window that was lightest. She scanned the baby narrowly, then looked as searchingly at Zandrine, whose face was turned to gaze across the fields.

''Yes, the child has grown, has changed,'' said Madame Valmondé, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother. ''What does Armand say?''

Désirée's face became suffused with a glow that was happiness itself.

''Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not,—that he would have loved a girl as well. But I know it isn't true. I know he says that to please me. And mamma,'' she added, drawing Madame Valmondé's head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, ''he hasn't punished one of them—not one of them—since baby is born. Even Négrillon, who pretended to have burnt his leg that he might rest from work—he only laughed, and said Négrillon was a great scamp. Oh, mamma, I'm so happy; it frightens me.''

What Désirée said was true. Marriage, and later the birth of his son had softened Armand Aubigny's imperious and exacting nature greatly. This was what made the gentle Désirée so happy, for she loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God. But Armand's dark, handsome face had not often been disfigured by frowns since the day he fell in love with her.

When the baby was about three months old, Désirée awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace. It was at first too subtle to grasp. It had only been a disquieting suggestion; an air of mystery among the

blacks; unexpected visits from far-off neighbors who could hardly account for their coming. Then a strange, an awful change in her husband's manner, which she dared not ask him to explain. When he spoke to her, it was with averted eyes, from which the old love-light seemed to have gone out. He absented himself from home; and when there, avoided her presence and that of her child, without excuse. And the very spirit of Satan seemed suddenly to take hold of him in his dealings with the slaves. Désirée was miserable enough to die.

She sat in her room, one hot afternoon, in her *peignoir*, listlessly drawing through her fingers the strands of her long, silky brown hair that hung about her shoulders. The baby, half naked, lay asleep upon her own great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne, with its satin-lined half-canopy. One of La Blanche's little quadroon boys—half naked too—stood fanning the child slowly with a fan of peacock feathers. Désirée's eyes had been fixed absently and sadly upon the baby, while she was striving to penetrate the threatening mist that she felt closing about her. She looked from her child to the boy who stood beside him, and back again; over and over. "Ah!" It was a cry that she could not help; which she was not conscious of having uttered. The blood turned like ice in her veins, and a clammy moisture gathered upon her face.

She tried to speak to the little quadroon boy; but no sound would come, at first. When he heard his name uttered, he looked up, and his mistress was pointing to the door. He laid aside the great, soft fan, and obediently stole away, over the polished floor, on his bare tiptoes.

She stayed motionless, with gaze riveted upon her child, and her face the picture of fright.

Presently her husband entered the room, and without noticing her, went to a table and began to search among some papers which covered it.

"Armand," she called to him, in a voice which must have stabbed him, if he was human. But he did not notice. "Armand," she said again. Then she rose and tottered towards him. "Armand," she panted once more, clutching his arm, "look at our child. What does it mean? tell me."

He coldly but gently loosened her fingers from about his arm and thrust the hand away from him. "Tell me what it means!" she cried despairingly.

"It means," he answered lightly, "that the child is not white; it means that you are not white."

A quick conception of all that this accusation meant for her nerved her with unwonted courage to deny it. "It is a lie; it is not true. I am white! Look at my hair, it is brown; and my eyes are gray, Armand, you know they are gray. And my skin is fair," seizing his wrist. "Look at my hand; whiter than yours, Armand," she laughed hysterically.

"As white as La Blanche's," he returned cruelly; and went away leaving her alone with their child.

When she could hold a pen

in her hand, she sent a despairing letter to Madame Valmondé.

"My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God's sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die. I cannot be so unhappy, and live."

The answer that came was brief:

"My own Désirée: Come home to Valmondé; back to your mother who loves you. Come with your child."

When the letter reached Désirée she went with it to her husband's study, and laid it open upon the desk before which he sat. She was like a stone image: silent, white, motionless after she placed it there.

In silence he ran his cold eyes over the written words. He said nothing. "Shall I go, Armand?" she asked in tones sharp with agonized suspense.

"Yes, go."

"Do you want me to go?"

"Yes, I want you to go."

He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife's soul. Moreover he no longer loved her, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name.

She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door, hoping he would call her back.

"Good-by, Armand," she moaned.

He did not answer her. That was his last blow at fate.

Désirée went in search of her child. Zandrine was pacing the sombre gallery with it. She took the little one from the nurse's arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the live-oak branches.

It was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking. Out in the still fields the negroes were picking cotton.

Désirée had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun's rays brought a golden gleam from its brown meshes. She did not take the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of Valmondé. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds.

She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again.

Some weeks later there was a curious scene enacted at L'Abri. In the centre of the smoothly swept back yard was a great bonfire. Armand Aubigny sat in the wide hallway that commanded a view of the spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen negroes the material which kept this fire ablaze.

A graceful cradle of willow, with all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre, which had already been fed with the richness of a priceless *layette*. Then there were silk gowns, and velvet and satin ones added to these; laces, too, and embroideries; bonnets and gloves; for the *corbeille* had been of rare quality.

Continued on Page 16

G OT COLORED

Maurice Hundley

I remember being a revolutionary. . . once. . .
the top of an iceberg sunday's dawn
upon a night time hidden depth suave
oppression bottom day and current
overthrow by any means that would
justify the end. . . waiting. . .

Wearing Brook Brother's threads, Cadillac
parked on a empty deserted street
mushroom's fantasy dreams rings around
psychedelic's Custard last stand of,
"Some of my best are colored," . . .doesn't
reason why. . . waiting. . .

110th, Central Park West
Brink of reservation

Serving the red light; to flicker history green
lest we forget about being black while
. . . waiting. . .

☆

TEMPLE TIME #2

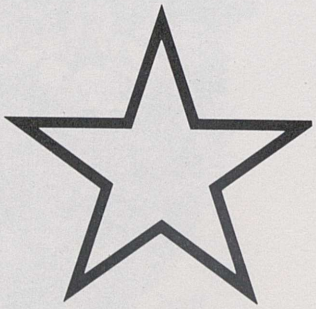
I walked into a room of faces
white and hard as a hanging
in December

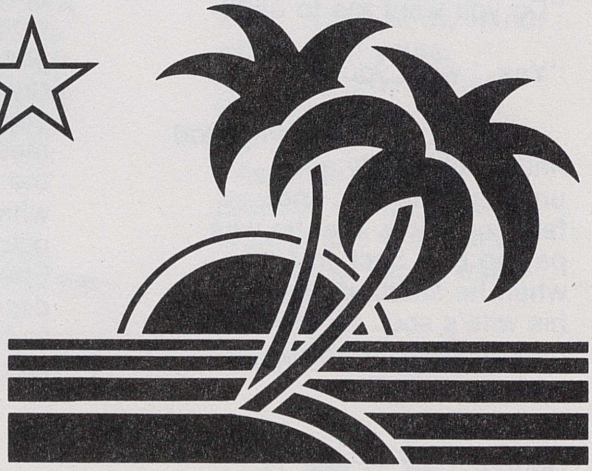
I wanted to run into a tropical morning
mix with people so ripe with sun
they hurt the eye.

Regina Jennings

my bad woman walk was all over me.
dreads bounced rebelliously upon my shoulders
eyes cruised behind blackened lenses
some dared say
hey girl
can i go witcha
but swallowed their words and stepped aside
yeah.
i was too smooth.
this young boy though
small enough for me to beat his little ass
thought he was it
called me Medusa and laughed to himself
stopped cold my bad woman walk.
Medusa?
i took a step
wanted to be mad
to yell loudly bout his mama who probably
picks up dirty cigarettes and
smokes
them. . .
took another step.
Medusa?
shit i started to laugh my raunchy
bad woman laugh cause Medusa
she had snakes that dreaded down her back
and with one look
turned would be hey mamas into stone
uh huh.
you know it came back all over me
my bad woman walk.
and folks
they just stepped aside.

Alycee Lane





Famous Beginnings Quiz

In honor of our first issue, here are "Famous Beginnings" for ten books about the black experience. Do you know the titles and authors? Less than five right means it's time to visit the library and bookstore.

1. When my mother was pregnant with me, she told me later, a party of hooded Ku Klux Klan riders galloped up to our home in Omaha, Nebraska, one night. Surrounding the house, brandishing their shotguns and rifles, they shouted for my father to come out.

2. Brrrrrrrriiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinng!

3. Dear God, I am fourteen years old. ~~I am~~ I have always been a good girl.

4. Late in the afternoon of a chilly day in February, two gentlemen were setting alone over their wine, in a well-furnished dining parlor, in the town of P—, in Kentucky. There were no servants present . . .

5. For thousands of years, the people who did not have the knowledge of the person, or reality, of God worshipped their own ideas of God. He has been made like many things other than what He really is. The Christians refer to God as a "Mystery" and a "Spirit" and divide Him into thirds.

6. It goes a long way back, some twenty years. All my life I had been looking for something, and everywhere I turned someone tried to tell me what it was. I accepted their answers too, though they were often in contradiction and even self-contradictory. I was naive.

7. dark phrases of
womanhood
of never havin been a girl
half-notes scattered
without rhythm/no tune
distraught laughter fallin
over a black girl's
shoulder
it's funny/ it's
hysterical
the melody-less-ness of
her dance

8. Folsom Prison
June 25, 1965
Nineteen fifty-four, when I was eighteen years old, is held to be a crucial turning point in the history of the Afro-American—for the U.S.A. as a whole—the year segregation was outlawed by the U.S. Supreme Court.

9. The end of the world, as it turned out, was nothing more than a collection of magnificent winter houses on Isle des Chevaliers. When laborers imported from Haiti came to clear the land, clouds and fish were convinced that the world was over, that the sea-green green of the sea and the sky-blue sky of the sky were no longer permanent.

10. He was facing Seventh Avenue, at Times Square. It was past midnight and he had been sitting in the movies, in the top row of the balcony, since two o'clock in the afternoon. Twice he had been awakened by the violent accents of the Italian film, once the usher had awakened him, and twice he had been awakened by caterpillar fingers between his thighs.

(Answers on Page 14)

REVIEW

When J.A. Rogers published *100 Amazing Facts About the Negro*, America endorsed the belief:

> When we classify Mankind by color the only one of the primary races . . . which has not made a creative contribution to any of our 21 civilizations is the Black Race.

These words are from Volume 1 of Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Toynbee's research was published between 1934 and 1939.

During that infamous Jim Crow era, Rogers provided little known information, such as:

> African people contributed to American Indian culture long before Columbus discovered these continents.
>
> Napoleon had twelve black generals.
>
> The Rock of Gibraltar means "Gebal-Tarik," or "The Mountain of Tarik." Tarik was a Moor who captured the Rock in 711 A.D.
>
> The fastest bicyclist the world has ever known was Marshall W. Taylor.
>
> Bernadotte, founder of Sweden's royal family, was a man of color.

100 Amazing Facts About the Negro With Complete Proof ($1.95) offers valuable, documented perspective. This book, and other intriguing work by J.A. Rogers, can be ordered through book stores or from Helga M. Rogers, 3806 48th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33711.

REVIEW

The introduction says that *The Official Buppie Handbook* "is a tongue-in-cheek look at black people who have managed to get . . . and hold on to, a piece of the American Dream." For those whose identity is linked to conspicuous consumption, Thayer William Staples, IV and Katherine McMillan Staples (authentic pseudonyms) concocted a delightful guide to the Black Urban Professional . . . Buppies!

The Official Buppie Handbook ($4.95) serves up Buppie Careers, Home and "Look" (You own at least two designer jogging suits, one in Gore-tex). The Staples provide Buppie Singles, Finances, Entertainment, Diet and "Ride" (A Cadillac is "très gauche").

For dessert, the Staples present THE BAAAD BUPPIE. Baaad Buppies prefer clothes shopping in Europe, ride corporate aircraft and ask for the sommelier in a fine restaurant.

This book is a generous plate (Bernardoud, Mottahedeh, preferably Puforcat) of haute black bottom pie and is available from Pyramid Designs Press, 1017 Investment Building, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*
2. Richard Wright *Native Son*
3. Alice Walker *The Color Purple*
4. Harriet Beecher Stowe *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
5. Elijah Muhammad *Message To The Blackman in America*
6. Ralph Ellison *Invisible Man*
7. Ntozake Shange *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*
8. Eldridge Cleaver *Soul on Ice*
9. Toni Morrison *Tar Baby*
10. James Baldwin *Another Country*

ShootingStar

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW glows with:

★ Illuminating poetry
★ Timeless essays
★ Stimulating fiction
★ Challenging quizzes

FEATURING:

Amiri Baraka
Dennis Brutus
Regina Jennings
Jane Todd Cooper
Arna Bontemps
Langston Hughes
Chris Gilbert
Etheridge Knight
Gilbert Moses
Linda Watkins

EACH issue of this educational arts magazine dazzles with:

★ Beautiful illustrations
★ Thoughtful reviews
★ An insightful "Forum for White Thought on the Black Experience"
★ Featured artists.
★ And more.

If you hurry, you'll join our special group of CHARTER SUBSCRIBERS and receive the limited edition first issue. . .sure to become a collector's item.

FILL IN THIS CARD & MAIL TODAY

ENRICHING!
ENLIGHTENING!
ESSENTIAL!
EXCELLENT!

EXUBERANT !
EXCEPTIONAL!
EXTRAORDINARY!
ESSENTIAL!

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW unites sparkling, new talent and today's respected writers with classic literature to embrace our joy and explore the dilemmas, drama, failings and triumphs within the African-American experience.

Subscribe now.

As Benjamin Lee Whorf (Language, Thought and Reality), and Stuart Chase found, "There is no one metaphysical pool of universal thought. Thinking is relative to the language learned."

JOIN THE ADVENTURE

Building on this premise, Broadway and Emmy-nominated director Gilbert Moses says,

"Ignorances, unfounded myths and unchallenged assumptions about the African-American are hidden in the language of the American people.

"Left to us is the enormous task of changing and enriching the American language; of filtering out the myths grounded in shoddy, and yes, perhaps even perverse, intellectualism; and the exhilaration of creating myths of our own."

CLIP AND MAIL THIS CARD TODAY!!

★ ★ ★

YES! SEND ME THE FIRST YEAR OF *SHOOTING STAR REVIEW*
In 1987, *SHOOTING STAR REVIEW* is published quarterly.

[ ] Enclosed is my check for $7 for each subscription
[ ] Charge my Master Card or Visa $7
[ ] Bill me for $8
[ ] Business, Institutional and Library rate is $12

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City & State: _____ Zipcode _____

Master Charge or

Visa Account No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Authorization Signature _____

There is no beauty in art until it is shared.
No magic until it is enjoyed.
No meaning until it opens up our feeling for ourselves and for our friends.

WELCOME TO SHOOTING STAR REVIEW.

This project is supported by Mellon Bank and a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 15637 PGH., PA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW
7123 RACE STREET
PGH., PA 15208-9990

Over half of Shooting Star Review's current subscribers are executive directors, managers and administrators within their internationally, nationally and regionally respected businesses and organizations.

The EDUCATIONAL audience that Shooting Star Review is developing includes language arts professionals who "take a cross-curricular approach to building language skills."

SHOOTING STAR *Review*

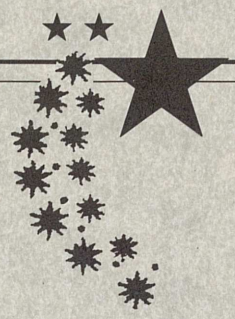
(ISSN 0892-1407)

ENRICHING!
ENLIGHTENING!
ESSENTIAL!
EXCELLENT!

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW
7123 RACE ST.
PGH., PA 15208

BULK RATE PERMIT NO. 1597

DISCOVER... SHOOTING STAR REVIEW



Racial Mountain (from 5)

expect to see the work of a growing school of colored artists who paint and model the beauty of dark faces and create with new technique the expressions of their own soul-world. And the Negro dancers who will dance like flame and the singers who will continue to carry our songs to all who listen—they will be with us in even greater numbers tomorrow.

Most of my own poems are racial in theme and treatment, derived from the life I know. In many of them I try to grasp and hold some of the meanings and rhythms of jazz. I am sincere as I know how to be in these poems and yet after every reading I answer questions like these from my own people: Do you think Negroes should always write about Negroes? I wish you wouldn't read some of your poems to white folks. How do you find anything interesting in a place like a cabaret? Why do you write about black people? You aren't black. What makes you do so many jazz poems?

But jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America: the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul—the tom-tom of revolt againt weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains, and work, work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile. Yet the Philadelphia clubwoman is ashamed to say that her race created it and she does not like me to write about it. The old subconscious "white is best" runs through her mind. Years of study under white teachers, a lifetime of white books, pictures, and papers, and white manners, morals, and Puritan standards made her dislike the spirituals. And now she turns up her nose at jazz and all its manifestations—likewise almost everything else distinctly racial. She doesn't care for the Winold Reiss portraits of Negroes because they are "too Negro." She does not want a true picture of herself from anybody. She wants the artist to flatter her, to make the white world believe that all Negroes are as smug and as near white in soul as she wants to be. But, to my mind, it is the duty of the younger Negro artist, if he accepts any duties at all from outsiders, to change through the force of his art that old whispering "I want to be white," hidden in the aspirations of his people to "Why should I want to be white? I am a Negro—and beautiful!"

So I am ashamed for the black poet who says, "I want to be a poet, not a Negro poet," as though his own racial world were not as interesting as any other world. I am ashamed, too, for the colored artist who runs from the painting of Negro faces to the painting of sunsets after the manner of the academicians because he fears the strange un-whiteness of his own features. An artist must be free to choose what he does, certainly, but he must also never be afraid to do what he might choose.

Let the blare of Negro jazz bands and the bellowing voice of Bessie Smith singing Blues penetrate the closed ears of the colored near-intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand. Let Paul Robeson singing Water Boy, and Rudolph Fisher writing about the streets of Harlem, and Jean Toomer holding the heart of Georgia in his hands, and Aaron Douglas drawing strange black fantasies cause the smug Negro middle class to turn from their white, respectable, ordinary book and papers to catch a glimmer of their own beauty. We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom

Continued on Page 16

Racial Mountain (from 15)

laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.

Désirée (from Page 11)

The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribblings that Désirée had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was the remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them. But it was not Désirée's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it. She was thanking God for the blessing of her husband's love: —

"But above all," she wrote, "night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery."

Third Mystery (from 7)

My brother was right. Richard is the same. Gladys is the same. Gladys helped my mother take care of me and our home after my brother was born. She gave me the gift of independence when I was two. She taught me to bump down stairs. And, when I taught my daughter to bump down stairs, I felt Gladys beside me saying: And then you slide your bo-bo over the edge, and boom!

I remember the three of us whom she had helped to raise, my cousin, my brother and I, crammed onto her lap listening to her read Babar which we had loved when we were little. The hand she held the book with was brown. I thought, she must be Negro, her hand is brown. But Gladys transcended and erased Negro because I had loved her long before Negro entered my life. She was me, part of my life, just like my mother and father and little brother. Nothing, not even brown, could separate that perfect whole. My brother was too young to love Gladys like this, but he did love Richard, who was his best friend—his other self. When Richard was erased by Negro, my brother lost part of himself, both the part that was Richard and some of the part that was the father who taught him Negro.

Even now, over thirty years later, after countless sociology, psychology, political science courses and books, I have not resolved this confusion. It makes no sense.

Richard, if you read this, remember Peter, your best friend. He has an eighteen year old son now, whom a Brazilian girl once described as "too pale." Peter remembers you and the boy he was when you two were part of each other and his father was more a part of him; he remembers with anger and love.

THANK YOU
for joining the **Shooting Star Review** experience!

Themes for upcoming issues include:

Summer, 1987—
Jazz! Jazz! Jazz!
Fall, 1987—Wondrous,
Magical & Spooky Things!
Winter, 1987—Kwanzaa!
Celebrating the Fruits of our Labor.

Subscribe Today.
7123 Race Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
(412) 731-7039