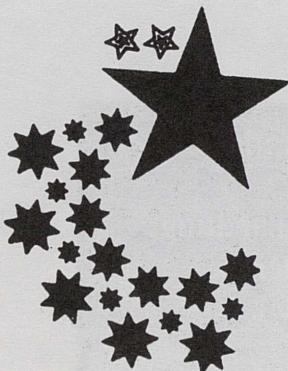


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ISSN 0892-1407

Black Literary Magazine

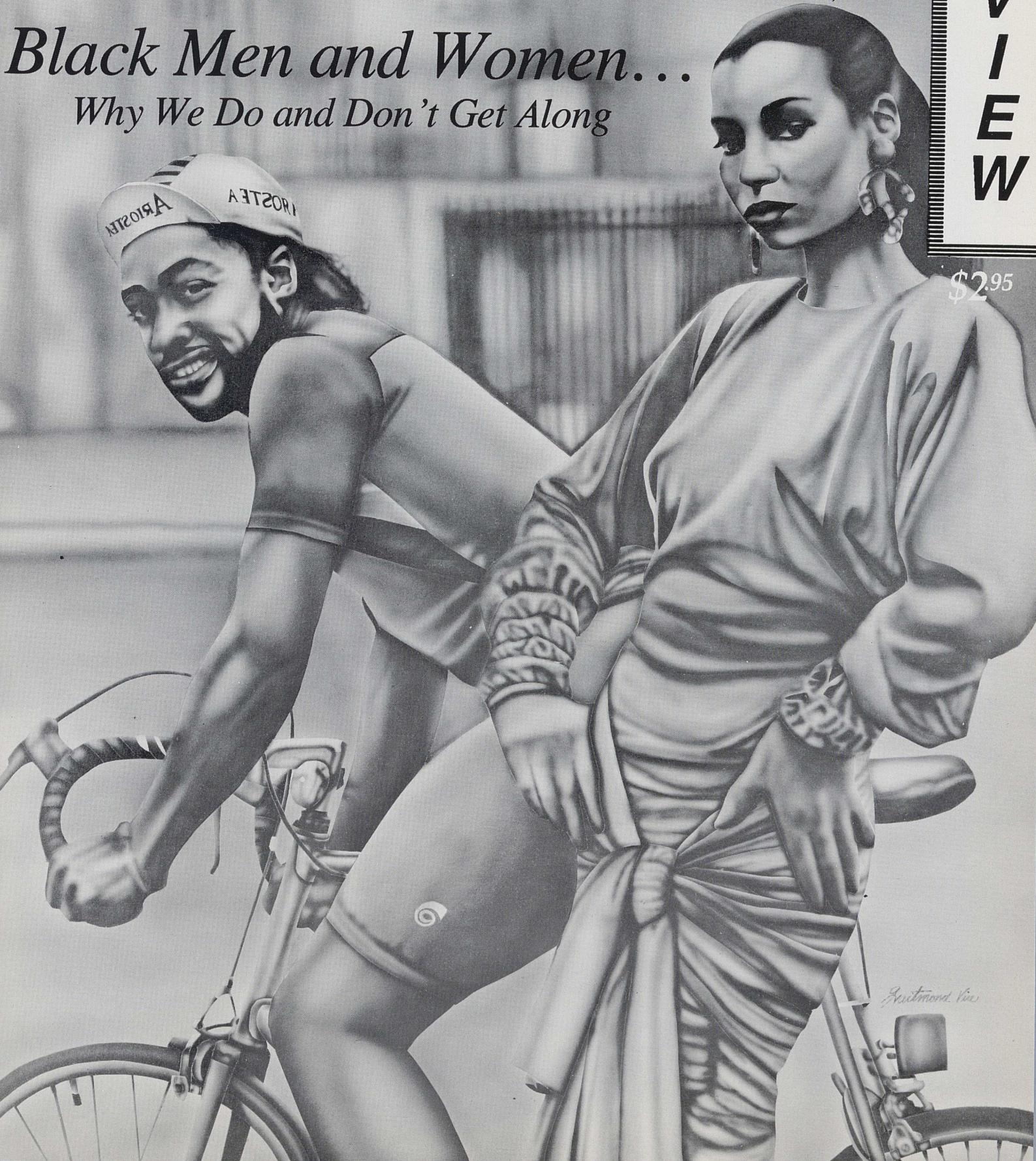
Autumn, 1988

Black Men and Women...

Why We Do and Don't Get Along

R
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E
W

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Frederick W.

Aunt Helen

by *Regina Jennings*

1

On holidays she danced a woman dance
inside our house
we clapped as
her hips shook in heat

The air was perfumed with rolling sweat

2

Where is the afternoon music box, Helen
A melody awaits a blue bird story
behind the Japanese fan and incense
Unveil your voice
let me merry-go-round above
the landscape of whiskey and dope
Wait for me on the concrete step
and open your hands
let me see inside

3

The factory girls are graying now
after
steaming shirts for thirty years
after
pressing, folding, pinning shirts
and slipping some under girdles
and garters

4

I thought I could pack you in my eyes forever
keep your teasing smile and laughter
I wanted sea crabs to always be peppered
and sweet
And whenever the wind whips beer cans
down Annin Street
I wanted Eddie to always come calling
for you.



photo by Gabriel Tait



As yet, I've not written any poems that are purely fictional. My poetry breathes with three main voices. One belongs to me, the other belongs to my family, and the final one belongs to my friends. In other words, my poetry depicts my life.

I am a graduate student at Temple University in the English Department, where Black literature is not taught in any of the required classes. Sometimes, I am the only Black in classes where a deluge of western literature is analyzed and writers such as Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Richard Wright are ignored.

So I comfort myself by playing double-dutch while in college. For every book I'm required to read, on my own, I find a book of the same era written by a Black person to read as well.





Publisher's Statement



Lots is said about how Black men and women do and don't get along. Michele Wallace certainly fanned the fires that consume positive interactions in her book *Black Macho & the Myth of the SuperWoman*. And her thinking parallels quite a few others.

Before *The Color Purple* was mauled because of Alice Walker's portraits of Black men, Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls* was pilloried. I saw this choreopoem in three different productions. The best was directed by Buster Flood, a Black man, in a basement theatre. Instead of the rainbow women expounding on injured psyches and battered bodies, the Homewood Renaissance Players flaunted their innate beauty and strength while chiding their lovers with a sultry but clear message, "We ain't gonna let you mistreat us no more. We love ourselves, and we love you too much." When the curtains closed, women and men stood up, cheered and embraced.

Michele, Ntozake and Alice shouted nationwide that they were fed up. And, in a largely neglected theatre, a Black man answered, "Yeah, baby, I know. But I didn't get this way by myself."

As Earl Braxton, a Pittsburgh-based psychologist says in his article on page 22, many dysfunctions that sprout in intimate relationships grow from unresolved childhood conundrums. Braxton advises that we examine our special partner's relationship with their opposite-sex parent. A man's rapport with his mother is often a crystal vision of how he'll treat the second significant woman in his life.

And Huberta Jackson Lowman, also a Pittsburgh psychologist, states that her husband cooks, willingly shares household duties and has many other qualities that are like her father's, although she was not consciously aware of these similarities when they married. Like it or not, we are products of our parents' relationships, and we use elements of their examples to build our own love nests. Our children will do the same.

This issue creatively explores the historical and current elements that affect our relationships because most of us don't want to not get along. As Sister Boxer said in James Baldwin's play, *The Amen Corner*, "...it ain't so easy to get along single."

I hope you enjoy this issue. As always, your comments are welcome.

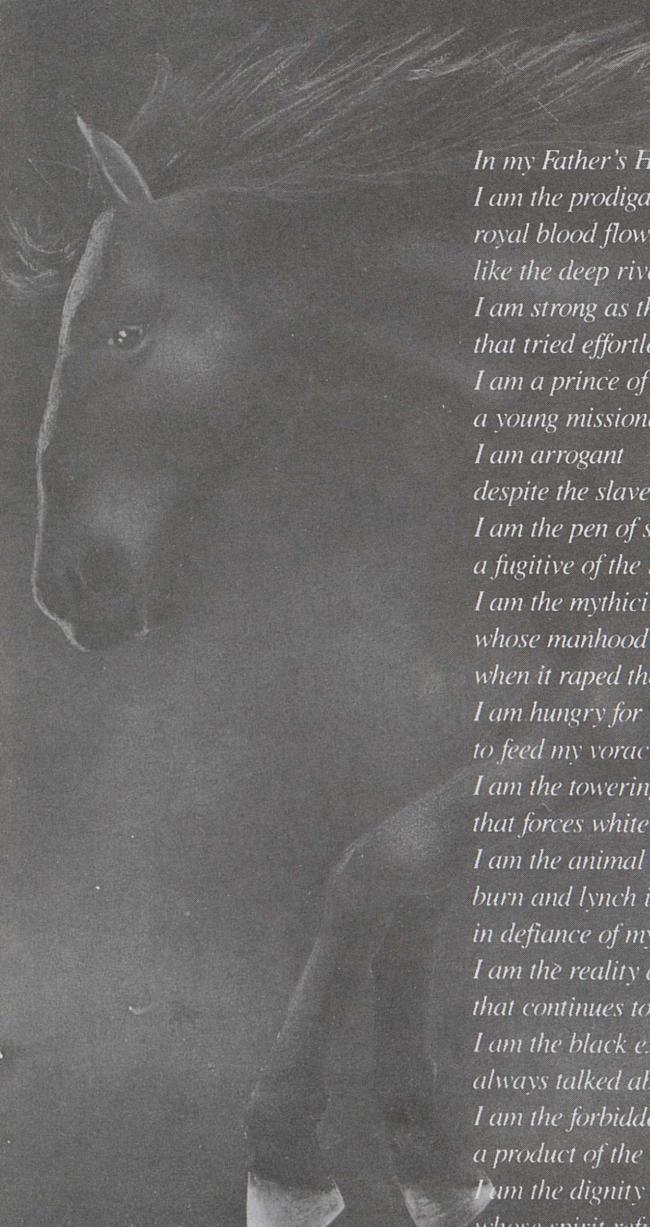
Sandra Gould Ford
Publisher and Founder

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African-American People are not a minority.

In My Father's House There's Room For All

*By Stanley R. Thomas
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.*



In my Father's House
I am the prodigal son of Egyptian hierarchy
royal blood flows through my veins
like the deep rivers of the Congo
I am strong as the ropes of oppression
that tried effortlessly to contain me
I am a prince of goodwill
a young missionary fighting to penetrate the status quo
I am arrogant
despite the slave master's one-hundred lashes to humble me
I am the pen of suppressed anxieties
a fugitive of the times—sustained by years of righteous anger
I am the mythicized black stallion
whose manhood was strangled by the cruel institution called slavery
when it raped the only woman that I've ever loved
I am hungry for work
to feed my voracious appetite
I am the towering dark shadow
that forces white flight from the sidewalks and subways
I am the animal in which men in white sheets and white faces
burn and lynch in effigy
in defiance of my skin color
I am the reality and keeper of "the dream"
that continues to raise the conscious of middle America
I am the black experience
always talked about, but never acknowledged
I am the forbidden fruit in a rotten society
a product of the blighted projects
I am the dignity of incarcerated brothers
whose spirit refuses to bow or be intimidated by a lonely exile
I am a Black man
by mere happenstance
I am by choice
a conscientious objector.

*By Stanley R. Thomas
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.*

Illustration By
Charles Epps



Shooting Star

REVIEW

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW
ISSN 0892-1407

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C O N T E N T S

ESSAYS

African Roots of Egypt's Glory by Charles S. Finch, III	6
Recruiting For The Sporting Life by Sandra Gould Ford	10
Due South of Heaven by Martin J. Terrell	17
Anyway, Some of Us Understand You by Jack Daniel	18
Angry Women, Frightened Men by Dr. Earl Braxton	22
Salute to Black Men by Gay Gunn	34

FEATURED ARTIST

Open Dialogue III	20
-----------------------------	----

FICTION

Victims by Kathryn Webster	26
Memories of Songs by Mondo	30

POETRY

Aunt Helen, by Regina Jennings	2
In My Father's House, by Stanley R. Thomas	4
Faces of Sisters, by Ahmed Ibn Mohammad	12
Marriage, by Elaine Edwards	13
My Song, by Lamont Steptoe	13
In Pursuit of Manhood, by Stanley R. Thomas	14
Dear Veona, by Jeffrey Knuckles	15
Linnette Sparks' Mother	16
I Speak Stars, by Valerie R. Bowe	24
Short Story, by Nzadi Keita	25
Green Beans, by Castella Perry	28
Warfare, by Lamont Steptoe	29
Second Time Around, by Mondo	31
Woman Poem, by Kim Rounds	33
Woman in Black, by Donna Hanks	38

QUIZ	39
----------------	----

REVIEWS

Racehoss: Big Emma's Boy	37
Betsey Brown	38

COVER ART BY WAITMOND VIRE, JR.



Autumn Issue, 1988
Volume 2, Number 3

Shooting Star Review
7123 Race Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
(412) 731-7039

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advertising rates.

Published quarterly.
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Single copy \$2.95.
One year rate \$10.
Institutional rate \$15.

Overseas airmail \$25/yr.
Overseas surface \$17/yr.
Int'l checks must include
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The Black Roots of Egypt's Glory

by Charles S. Finch III

"UNFITTED BY ages of tropical life for any effective intrusion the White Race, the negro and negroid people remained without any influence on the development of civilization."

Those words in 1926 by James Henry Breasted, dean of American Egyptologists, echoed the dominant sentiment of the time: that black Africa had no share in the creation of any of the first civilizations of man. This message was so powerful and so tenacious that as recently as May 31, Dr. Edward Bleiberg, assistant director of the Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology at Memphis State University, stated categorically in the Memphis Commercial Appeal that "Egyptians were considered Caucasians."

This, then, is the crux of a controversy that has flared up repeatedly throughout the 155-year existence of Egyptology. The argument continues today, but in the face of ever-increasing evidence that civilization—like the human race itself—began in Africa, it is clearly doomed.

The controversy was opened in 1791 by France's Count Volney, scholar, world-traveler, confidant of Benjamin Franklin and an aristocrat of pronounced republican sympathies. In Egypt, he had seen age-old monuments and temples lying half-buried in the sand and had pondered the meaning of civilization, its rise and its fall—reflections that he gave free reign in his "Ruins of Empires." How is it, he mused, that "a people, now forgotten, discovered, while others were yet barbarians, the elements of the arts and the sciences. A race of men now rejected from society for their sable skin and frizzled hair, founded on the study of the laws of nature, those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe?"

On this point the Count had not the slightest doubt: the Greeks had unanimously proclaimed Egypt's Africa origins and the stony evidence of the sphinx—whose features were clearly etched in the African mold—confirmed it. Was it not one of the crueler ironies of history that the very people who had given the world civilization were now a race of slaves and outcasts?

In 1799, Napoleon's engineers on his Egyptian campaign discovered the Rosetta Stone. Immediately, it caused a sensation

in the learned circles of Europe, for on it were inscriptions in three languages: Egyptian hieroglyphics, Demotic (a cursive form of hieroglyphics) and Greek. It was evident the three panels represented the same inscription in three languages, so it was possible to proceed with a decipherment of the hieroglyphs and the Demotic by reference to the Greek. In 1822, the genius of Jean-Francois Champollion finally solved the decipherment riddle. With this, the age of Egyptology proper began. A door to the past was opened that many had thought permanently closed.

Astonishment and Vexation

A veritable explosion of interest in things Egyptian occurred. Champollion and others in France, Germany, and England began translating important Egyptian documents. English and German expeditions mounted large-scale digs and collections of Egyptian artifacts, which soon filled museums and private collections all over Europe. Unfolding before the eyes of an astounded world was a material splendor quite beyond the most admiring descriptions of the ancient Greeks.

The re-opening of this door to the past, however, contained some disquieting implications. The newly-translated inscriptions and documents revealed an intellectual culture that had attained a startlingly advanced level of development. The prototypes of mathematics, medicine, astronomy, metallurgy, philosophy, religion and the arts were, by degrees, coming to light among the vast ruins of this intriguing civilization. For a people accustomed to believing for 15 centuries that all learning, all science, and all art had begun with the Greeks, the evidence of Egypt required a radical restructuring of thinking.

This posed vexing problems indeed. The profound success of modern Europe was built upon the system of colonization and African slavery, and Europe, led by her learned men, had persuaded herself not only that the enslavement of Africans was an historical necessity but that it would benefit Africans themselves by passing to them the light of civilization. Volney's ideas were suddenly downright subversive. Cherished Greece,



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... whenever Egyptian inscriptions refer to Egyptian origins, the land of Punt—present day Somalia and northern Kenya—is pointed to as the ancestral homeland.



not the father but the child? Not the master but the pupil? Of an African race? It just wouldn't do.

As the 19th century wore on, much of the philosophy of ancient Egyptian shifted to Germany, whose scholars applied their meticulous methods of research to the study of ancient Egyptian language. Finding many similarities in words and syntax between Egyptian and the Semitic languages, the Germans unhesitatingly proclaimed Egyptian to belong to this group. As a result, their leading Egyptologists—Eber, Erman and Brugsch—concluded that the impetus for Egyptian civilization itself came from a western Asiatic or Semitic source. Like others, they saw in the human figures on the Egyptian monuments—many colored a reddish-brown—evidence of a non-African “Mediterranean race.” Anthropologically speaking, no such race ever existed, but that did not trouble them overmuch and the term has remained in vogue to this day.

By the early 20th century, paleoanatomists had examined many ancient Egyptian skeletons and, using their own craniometric criteria for racial classification, had proceeded to categorize the Egyptian skull samples. Thompson and MacIver classified 24 percent of pre-dynastic skulls and 25 percent of dynastic skulls in their sample as Negroid. The eminent Arthur Keith challenged their parameters because using them to classify a modern English sample of skulls would place fully 30 percent in the Negroid category! Nothing daunted, Faulkenburger, using his own parameters, classified pre-dynastic skulls as 36 percent Negroid, 33 percent Mediterranean, 11 percent Cro-Magnoids and 20 percent “mixed.”

After Count Volney, there continued to be a few dissenting voices “crying in the wilderness” of learned opinion, and now and then even one of the recognized members of the Egyptological confraternity swam against the tide. The most conspicuous was the prolific E.A.W. Budge. Unusual for an Egyptologist, he had conducted extensive research among the peoples of the Sudan and Ethiopia—encountering cultural practices, religious ideas and languages that showed clear and identifiable linkages to ancient Egypt. It became clear to Budge that everything about ancient Egypt could be understood only by reference to Africa; there was nothing fundamentally Asiatic

about Egyptian culture. In 1920, in his massive and erudite “Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary,” Budge, reversing a 100-year trend and his own earlier opinion, classified Egyptian as an African rather than a Semitic language.

The true reversal of the tide, however, came from outside the circles of European scholarship. From the 20th century’s second decade on, a few obscure black scholars in America began to challenge the de-Africanizing impulse in Egyptian historiography. Among these were the journalist J.A. Rogers, William Leo Hansberry, Willis N. Huggins, John G. Jackson and no less than W.E.B. DuBois. But the man who did more than any other to restore Egypt to her place in African history was from the other side of the Atlantic.

Out of the South

The late Cheikh Anta Diop was a Senegalese scholar who first went to Paris in 1946 to become a physicist. He remained there 15 years, studying physics under Frederick Joliot-Curie, Madame Curie’s son-in-law and ultimately translating parts of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity into his native Wolof. Diop also mastered studies of African history, Egyptology, linguistics, anthropology, economics and sociology as he armed himself for the task of setting the historical record straight. He developed an investigative method that was comparative, eclectic and Afrocentric. Ultimately his arguments in favor of an African or “Negro” origin of Egyptian civilization won widespread international support by virtue of his erudition and brilliance and the logical force of his historiography. The following elucidation of evidence owes much to the work of Cheikh Anta Diop, who died last year.

The first line of evidence in favor of an African origin of Egyptian civilization comes from the Egyptians themselves. They called their land “Kamit,” i.e., “the Black Land,” and their own name for themselves was “Kamiu,” which translates literally as “the Blacks.” Their word for the African lands to the south of them was “Khenti”—“Khentiu” denoting the Sudanic peoples who lived there—and this is also their word for “first, foremost, beginning, origin, chief.”

Furthermore, the Egyptian word for “east” is the same as their word for “left” and their word for “west” the same as their word for “right.” This makes sense only if the Egyptians oriented themselves southward and looked in that direction for the land of their origins. No people coming from north of Egypt would have oriented themselves in this way—particularly since Egypt’s location in the northern hemisphere lends itself more naturally to a northward orientation. Further evidence is found in the Egyptians’ anthropomorphic representations of the passage of the sun across the heavens, in which the boat of the sun begins its morning or eastern ascent on the left side of the sky-goddess Nut—who thus is in a southern heaven despite Egypt’s northern hemispheric location.



Moreover, whenever Egyptian inscriptions refer to Egyptian origins, the land of Punt—present-day Somalia and northern Kenya—is pointed to as the ancestral homeland. One word for inner Africa, “yau,” is the same as their word for “old,” making inner Africa “the old country” of immigration. Inner Africa also was Ta-Neter, “the Land of the Gods.” Everything about the interior of Africa evoked in the Egyptians a sense of awe, reverence and nostalgia.

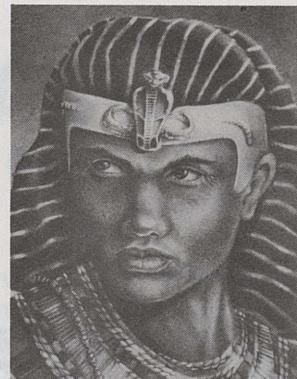
Additional evidence of Egypt’s origins comes from the genealogy of Noah in Genesis. Noah’s three sons are Ham, Shem and Japeth, the ancestors of the three main branches of humankind known to the biblical writers. Ham is indubitably the ancestor of the black race; his name comes from the Egyptian “kam” meaning “black.” His sons are Misraim (Egypt), Cush (Ethiopia), Canaan (Palestine) and Phut (Punt or East Africa). Though allegorical on one level, the Old Testament writers were accurately reflecting known ethnic relationships of antiquity by placing the Egyptians in the black or African branch of humanity.

Finally, unequivocal statements on the subject come from the Greek writers of antiquity. Herodotus—an eyewitness—makes the most definitive statement when he compares the Egyptians, by virtue of their black skin and woolly hair, to the Colchians and Ethiopians. There are nearly a dozen other surviving references in Greek literature to the race and color of the Egyptians, from writers as diverse as Aeschylus, Aristotle and Strabo, and they unanimously confirm the remarks of Herodotus. The fact that the Egyptians were black and African was so completely self-evident to the ancient Greeks that it was a commonplace seldom worthy of special notice.

Cheikh Anta Diop was the first to challenge the older description of ancient Egyptians as a “dark red” or “Mediterranean” race. As Diop pointed out, many peoples throughout Africa have a reddish-brown complexion—including the modern-day Masai of Kenya. Diop was also the first to propose a systematic study of the melanin content of Egyptian mummy skin. His own investigations had shown that mummies contained concentrations of that dark pigment entirely comparable to that of sub-Saharan Africans. As for Falkenburger’s craniometric studies, Diop demonstrated that many skulls from sub-Saharan Africa meet the “Mediterranean” criteria of Falkenburger’s schema—in effect invalidating the whole premise.

The last issue that Diop disposed of, in collaboration with his Congolese linguist colleague, Theophile Obenga, was that of language. At a landmark symposium in Cairo in 1973, Diop and Obenga showed beyond all doubt that Budge had affirmed nearly 50 years earlier: that Egyptian was fundamentally an African language. The Semitic elements in the language come from late borrowings and, as the noted linguist Joseph Greenberg has attested, from the Semitic languages’ own origins in the northeast African group. The Cairo symposium marked the beginning of the end for scholarship that sought to deny Egypt’s African origin.

The fact that the Egyptians were black and African was so completely self-evident to the ancient Greeks that it was a commonplace seldom worthy of special notice.



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An African Renaissance

The Diopian thesis broke like a tidal wave upon the bulwarks of conventional Egyptology. It occasioned two kinds of responses: (1) absolute silence or (2) shrill rebuttal, and this pattern continues to the present. But in 1980 Bruce Williams, of the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute, discovered artifacts—originally recovered in 1962 prior to the opening of the Aswan Dam—from a pharaonic kingship in Nubia (northeast Africa) 300 years before the first Egyptian dynasty. With that discovery, the Afrophobic Egyptology born of the 19th century has become a scholarship in retreat.

For Diop and those who have followed him, the study of Egypt’s place in African history is fundamental to the African renaissance he envisaged, much the way the rediscovery of the values of Greek civilization gave impetus to the European Renaissance of four centuries ago. It demands a wholesale reassessment of African and world history. Already the imaginative scholarship of Ivan Van Sertima of Rutgers University has brought forth important evidence of an Egyptian presence in pre-Columbian America in 800 B.C. and perhaps even earlier. Heretofore unsuspected connections between ancient Africa and other civilizations are emerging. Our vision of the past, which informs our present and guides our future, is undergoing, as it must, a radical revision... The consequences of this can be expected to have a profound impact on succeeding generations.

The Committee on Africa and the Diaspora of St. Augustine Church in Washington assisted in the development of this article.

Dr. Charles Finch is an Assistant Professor at the Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, GA.

This essay is reprinted with permission from the Washington Post Oct. 11, 1987 and is part of the *Journal of African Civilizations* December, 1987 collection, edited by Ivan Van Sertima.

Illustrations accompanying this article were contributed by Jay Allen. For a free, full-color brochure of his work, contact:
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Recruiting for

By Sandra Gould Ford



Illustration by
Brandon Jennings

He was a pimp, a pander, a go-between in intrigues of love. At 55 he was trim, moving effortlessly with the ease only well-toned muscles can accomplish. His eyes were bright, alert... like gauges that have measured well the worth of human beings.

His voice was robust. He talked frankly about coming into manhood. "Like I said, Homestead was a red-light district. I was born down in that section. [Black] women were in the doorways calling the white fellas at that time. They wouldn't have anything to do with Black fellas.

"I used to go to the store for them. I was going to high school. On my way back, one of the ladies would holler, 'Hey sweetie, go to the store and get this or go here and get that.' When you are raised in a town like that, you are right in the midst of it... you learn all the angles and what is going on."

Homestead sits on the Monongahela River's southern bank in Western Pennsylvania's steel valley. Abandoned mills now dominate the river's bank. Beyond them, railroad tracks disrupt the rocky soil. After the tracks, a profusion of houses crunched among warehouses and backstreet shops lead to Eighth Avenue—Homestead's main street. Hills rise abruptly, like the sides of a bowl broken on opposite ends to let the river run through. At night, the rims of those dark mountains are somber shadows. Not long ago, they glowed red alternating white from the mills in the valley and money was abundant.

"So, she started to send me to the store. I was at the time 15 or 16. She was a real nice-looking lady... brown-skinned woman. She was from the South and someone had picked her up and took her to New York. Then he brought her to Homestead because Homestead was a thriving town. You got a woman working Homestead and you were making a lot of money. Homestead was wide open. You could walk down the streets and walk right in... just like walking down Fifth Avenue and going in a store. So that's what this guy did... took her to New York and 'turned her out' — 'Turn her out' is when you take her and introduce her to the (sporting) life. Show her how to make a living, and you are pimping. She's giving you the money.

"Now, this lady took her tricks — turn a 'trick,' that is having a sex relation with a customer — she took them upstairs. She had a room upstairs, you see. Me being a 15-year-old boy, she started

the Sporting Life

talking to me, 'Did I ever want to be a pimp?'

"I said, 'Yeah, I want to be a pimp. You get money, don't ya? This was during the Depression. I ask my old man for a quarter and he'd probably think I was losing my mind. By my going to the store for her, when I would go upstairs, she would be in the nude sometimes . . . she would be in the bathrobe and she would say, 'You come on in.' So, she would start to educate me. When I would go to the store for her, she would give me \$2. And I would go home, and I would have two or three dollars in my pocket, and my mother would say, 'Where did you get that money?'"

"I don't want to tell you, Mom," I'd say. "You won't like where I get it."

"I'm going to tell your dad about it," she threatened.

"My dad was one of those men that believed in discipline all the time. But he was a street guy . . . making moonshine and all that . . . so he understood the (street) 'life.' He said, 'What's happening here? What kind of problems are you giving your mother?' I told him I didn't want to tell Mom how I was making money because I was 'shooting crap.' Dad accepted that and told me to give Mom a few dollars, then he told Mom that I was making some money working for somebody."

"So, the lady began to give me *more* money. Well, at that time, I could gamble . . . perhaps as good as I can now. Kids have a tendency to learn things real fast, and that's what was going on around me so I picked it up real fast. She started buying me little articles, then we went through this sex thing. She was teaching me, you know — What they do. How they do. She explained all this to me.

"Well, I had this uncle. He gets a little wind of it. He tells me, 'Leave that woman alone. She's too old for you.' I'm not thinking about leaving her alone because I'm getting some money. She taught me a lot. She knew the 'business,' you know, the 'life.'

"Then the landlady, because I was hanging around there, she would send me to the store. They had coal stoves back then. I would make the fire for her in the morning. I had some bucks in my pocket! But I got to hiiiiiide it. So I bought a lot of clothes. You know how kids buy a lot of junk stuff. My brother told my sister and my old man, 'He's buying everything! He goes to the show everyday!'

"Yeah, she had a pimp, but he was running from New York to Wilkes-Barre to Scranton, Pennsylvania. He had about four or

five girls. I would listen to how he would talk. I would stand around on the corner there and listen to how the pimps talked. My mother used to say, 'Don't stand on that corner, stand on the other side.' But you know how kids are. If you're around it, you've got to hear it.

"Back then, some of the best pimps in the world came through that one particular area because Homestead had the best houses and the best money. I learned a lot from those pimps. You can learn a lot from somebody who has experience in something. Some (of those men) impressed me like a teacher in school. They

could get something across to you from the gitgo (very clearly, with amazing ease).

"Well, the lady's telling me she wants to take me to New York. I told her I could not do that, I had to go to school. Well, I played around with her until I guess about 17. When I finished school, I started working down at the post office . . . until the holidays came and I did the

'holiday' bit, you know, I went out of there to play some football and didn't go back.

"My dad got me a job in the mill, and I am gambling. Then, this lady, we were tight there for a few years, she went to New York. She had some cousins and wanted to take me there.

"I am working in the mill, and I ran into this guy who was booking the numbers. Well, at that time, working in the mill for 13 days, I was making \$51.40. So, he offered me, he said he would pay me \$65 a week for working the numbers, running adding machines, collecting slips. We had about \$7,000 to \$8,000 worth of numbers a day. Then, he bought me a car and elevated me. I think at that time, cars cost \$900.

"He was an attractive guy. He dressed well and he had a lot of money. Well, first he started playing around with the light skinned [women], the society Negroes. Then, he got a thing for white women and, for some reason, white women took to him. We had a numbers station and an apartment upstairs. Well, he would have so many, and he would have them standing around waiting. So, I would have to look after them. He would never show [up]. He would run to New York and tie up with some broad, and he would call me and say, 'Send me \$4,000,' and I would send him a money order or pay somebody to drive it up or take it up on a plane. He was married and had a wife and family.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



"When she's going through that transitional stage, you keep her away from them wolves out there..."

"I got a girl out of that group. A girl, she wanted to go into the 'life' . . . It was not because a lot of black women wanted to be in the 'life.' It was the only way they had of getting any money. They could not work and get any money, so they got into the 'life.'

"She came from a nice family. She wound up being a good worker. But she had a lot of hangups. You had to constantly tell her that she was beautiful, and I got aggravated. I was making money in the numbers and I did not need that aggravation.

"So I said, 'Look, you go your way and I'll go mine. With what I am making in the numbers and what I am making with you, I don't need this. She gets some other dude. He's no pimp, but he wants to be one and he's telling her she's beautiful and him and her start snorting cocaine. She's using up all the money every night. The dude's not getting no money because she's snorting it every morning. The guy that had the bag [cocaine] was getting the money because he would meet her every morning and take and sell her some. If she made \$100, he would sell her maybe \$75 worth of coke.'

"See, one thing about me and a whole lot of other pimps, if a woman was not giving me any money, I would let it be known that I was not getting any money, because pimps would get away from her. If you are going to pimp, you have got to get the money.

FACES OF SISTERS

*You got all dem faces up there
looking at you.*

*Don't you know the eyes is the windows
of the Spirit?*

Looking out from ya Soul?

*You got them pictures of Sisters,
all on your bulletin board.
They lookin at you and you,
lookin back at them.*

*Those faces of Sisters,
Queens, Mothers, Princesses, Goddesses,
lookin with Brown Eyes, Brown Lips,
Brown, Black, Banana, Coffee Skin.*

*One smiles, another frowns, this one looks up,
this one looks down.*

*You got all them faces up there lookin at you
wondering Black Man, wondering, what
you gonna do.*

Ahmed Ibn Mohammad
Pennsylvania 1987

There's no question about it.

"A white man goes in, like those bankers out there. They are not satisfied at home. Rather than go through those changes pestering their wives . . . she's got a headache and all that . . . he goes to a whorehouse, turns a trick and it's all over with. That's the reason they visit it. And, if he sees you on the street, he's going to turn his head. He don't want you to know him.

"Another reason is, a lot of pimps, they figure they would lose their woman [to another black guy]. But any time you are in fear of losing your woman, you haven't really got her tight." He laughed good naturedly at the thought of being a better than average lover and said, "I'd better be. You got a woman, you have to have her real tight, and that's in the 'process' of when you turn a woman out. If you turn her out right, you have got a good woman.

"Now, there was one girl that I would let turn some black trics. She looked like a little Italian girl, but she was black. This girl went to a finishing school, she was real polished, but she was a screwball. She already was turned out when I got her. Some older fella had turned her out, but she was wild. She had the wildness in her and he should have got that wildness out of her before he turned her out, but he did not. She was a problem, but she had that appearance and she loved to make money.

"I took her out to Las Vegas. At that time, they did not even allow blacks in there, but she would go in there and work. So, if there was a Negro who was trying to be slick and get over, she would get the money. She knew how to get the money, and she knew how to get the money out of a lot of niggers."

His eyes twinkle. His personality fills the room like an intriguing cologne that attracts those around him, but of which he seems unaware. Although not quite cavalier and not quite chivalrous, he is polite and he is attentive.

He continues, "When you first meet her, you take her out. She has no idea that this is what's going to transpire later on. You take her to the best joints. Maybe go to New York. If your money is long, maybe take her to one of the islands. You banquet her over there for a week. You dress her up, and she's getting a lot of things that she never had. Especially someone coming out of one of those poverty homes. Or it could be someone coming out of one of those well-to-do homes. When she's with someone for three weeks or so, she sort of gets attached to him. Then, I keep telling her about the 'life' — what I do.

"There was one girl, I had to spend \$1,300 to fix her teeth up at that time. They were all raggedy and everything. I got all involved in her teeth. Had \$1,300 invested in her teeth and she

"A white man is like this (he pats his leg three times quickly), and he's finished. That's the reason they preferred white men. And, white men had the money."



ain't made [me] a dime.

That was a gamble. Back then, \$1,300 was a lot of money. You could buy a house for \$5,000. Her mouth was so bad . . . I guess it was nutrition, or whatever caused it, anyway, when that dentist got through with her, it was \$1,300 and I had to stay on her case until I got at least that \$1,300 back.

"Yeah, I tell her, 'You're my woman, baby. There's nobody but you.'" But, with a shrug he admitted. "Some women don't want to hear that shit. They say, 'I'm going to be a prostitute, and you're going to get my money so let's just go on with it.' You get those types of people, too.

"There are some that you have to romance, and they actually like the guy. They are actually in love with the guy. You see, there has to be a certain amount of feeling. You have to feel for somebody to give them your money."

After she agrees to try prostitution, he says, "My next job is I have to polish her up and teach her how to turn a trick. And I teach her how to examine a man to make sure he don't have any problems. It's one of those spur of the moment things when they're making love [before she becomes a prostitute]. There's no reason to practice. But [for a prostitute], you have to teach her.

"She gets the money up front. She will tell him, 'Lay down, honey. Lay down on the bed.' She gets the money first, before he lays down, 'How much do you want to spend?' she asks.

"There are different prices for different things. If you want a French job, that's one price. Or a trip around the world. A trip around the world? She takes her tongue and she runs his legs [she don't go down the legs but between the legs]. It's oral sex is what it is, and you've got some out there that's very good and proficient at it. Besides, a lot of guys, they don't want anything else but that. If she learns that well, she don't have to do so much fucking.

"She has to learn that well. That's number one. Some girls did not like to do it, but they found out after all it saved their body, you know. When you're tired, you just don't feel good.

"I teach her. I have to teach her . . . unless I and another woman are tight, and I can get that woman to teach the new one. That's the easy way. Some women, if they're real funny, they won't do it. If they are alright with me, they'll do it.

"Then, some of them will do it, but then the woman will arson the new one up and then the woman has her under control. The woman will tell the new one, 'Girl, don't mess with him. He's no good. After he gets you out there, he'll do you like he did me.' A woman can arson another woman up. It's best for you to handle your own business," he says with an exasperated wave of his hand, "then you'll know what you've got.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MY SONG

*My song
got broken glass
in it
and a lot
of unpaid bills
and footprints
of rodents
and the stench
of piss
and the echoes
of gunshots
and the snap
of broken necks
and the screams
of the terrified.*

*My song
cuts my throat
with razor-edged*

*pain
of journeys
taken in marriage
of ships.*

*My song
is filled
with the flames
of many fires
and the ashes
of many bones.*

*My song
is thrown spears
and speeding bullets
on missions
of glory.*

*Lamont B. Steptoe
Philadelphia, PA*

marriage

*WHAT'S UP
with
that marriage stuff
ain't you heard
us BLACKS
can't get into that*

*we got them: man shortages
: sky high divorce rates
and
now
to top it all off
: women trying to work*

*honey
don't no body wanna tie the knot
and
make babies no mo
that marriage junk is played*

*Elaine Marie Edwards
East Lansing, MI*



"People wonder, well how can a woman take and do 20 tricks in a night? Actually, she ain't had 20 times."

In Pursuit of Manhood

*excessive unemployment is a dead-end
that leads to
humiliating welfare lines
followed by loitering
ghetto street corners
supported by hallucinations of grandeur
trying to escape
dark
overcrowded jail cells
that reek of urination
make frustration suicidal
committed involuntarily to a mental ward
for peace of mind
the man of color
marked at birth
lives a dangerous lie
hunted by crippling statistics
that rape old white women
and prostitute manhood.*

*By Stanley R. Thomas
Ft. Lauderdale, FL*



Photo by Darnell Farrow

"Then, I ran into this girl. I will call her Evaline. I met her at a party. One of those Saturday night fish fries. The body, her face and everything, she looked like good material. I thought maybe she could do something. She was built nice.

"Most tricks like a woman that is slender. They don't like a lot of fat. The worst thing you can do is get a woman with a lot of fat. They like a person that is a little slender. She's got to have some type of figure and maybe some legs. Personality plays a big part of it, too. If she's got a charming personality.

"I met her at this party and we started to rapping to each other. We started going out on dates. We went to the usual drinking spots. I cracked on her about it. She asked me what I do and I told her about it and she said, 'Oh, no. I could never do anything like that.'

"So I said to her, 'How do you know? You've never tried it.'

"She said, 'I don't want to know. I am not going to do that. I hate white men . . .'

He paused. With a reflective look, he continued, "I will tell you why they did not turn Negro tricks. A Negro comes into a house, he tries to make himself at home. Naturally, he thinks he's a lover." He laughs now. "If he's in there, he's with you all day. He's never satisfied. He be ego-tripping.

"A white man is like this (he pats his leg three times quickly), and he's finished. That's the reason they preferred white men. And, white men had the money. A Negro liable to give you \$20 and meet you in the street with your husband and knock you down saying, 'Woman I gave you my money. You're my woman,' and all that.

"You teach her," he explained. "You teach her how to brace a man when he's on top of her. You see, a lot of men have a lot of weight, and if the man is *big*, he really doesn't get it all in anyway. He's right there, maybe this much (he indicates about 1 to 2 inches) of the 'head' is in her.

"The girls use some kind of salve or vaseline or petroleum jelly because—it's not really like a love affair where she gets all lubricated. So, she has to use that vaseline. A lot of times, you know, a girl can put her legs together and he actually be going down between her thighs. A lot of guys swear, but she put some vaseline down there and he slide on down there and swear he got some.

"People wonder, well how can a woman take and do 20 tricks in a night? Actually, she ain't had 20 times. That much [again he shows with his fingers about an inch] is in her. Only the head. Most of the head. It [prostitution] is an art.

"You teach her the function of the body...the body

SPORTING LIFE continued

"Yeah, I tell her, 'You're my woman, baby. There's nobody but you.' But, with a shrug he admitted, "Some women don't want to hear that shit."



"When she's going through that transitional stage, you keep her away from them wolves out there—other pimps and other women. You take her off, say if you're in Pittsburgh, you take her to someplace in Minnesota and leave her there on a trial basis. You get a good landlady and tell the landlady, 'I'm turning her out here. I want her to be a First Class broad.' And the landlady will help you.

"After I've told her that a certain length of time, I'll say, 'Well, I got to go back and take care of my business now.' She's all wrapped up in me, and will probably say, 'Oh, why don't you get a job. I'll get a job.' She'll ask, 'What's going to happen with us?'

"Nothing's gonna happen with us," I'll answer her, 'I got two or three other girls. What are they gonna say if I'm running around partying with you on their money. Why don't you just try it and see if you like it. If you don't like it, then forget about it.' Then I stay away for a while. I don't make no contact. Next thing, she's calling,

and calling,
then she
gives in."



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DEAR VEONA, DEAR BLACK WOMAN

*Dear Veona, dear Black woman
Look, I don't wanna fight
So What?
I stayed out all night
What'chu mean, you can tell?
Talkin 'bout you can smell...it
Whose clothes' ya packin'?
Woman, you gonna get a smackin'
Say what?... how you figure?
I'm a no-good nigger
Go on! I ain't gonna miss'ya
...that's for sure
Don't care nothin'bout you
Walkin' out the door
Dear Veona, dear Black woman
Ya'been gone a long time, and I
'Spouse ya'ain't comin' back
Seems to me, now, lost Blackness...
Is what I lack...
Your love, dark warmth, and
Comfortin' heart of Africa-beat
Never thought I'd miss that...
Ebony treat
Dear Veona, dear Black woman*

Jeffrey Knuckles

Linnett Sparks' Mother Dies in Childbirth Colorado, 1881

*Terrible of me to wish it, but I prayed for Mamma
to die that night, her screams ripped from her
with that birth trying to claw its way
into the world it would never see; and if it did,
I would've smashed it, for killing Mamma.
How I wanted her to be still, her shrieks fading
into moans, her hands on her belly, trying
to squash that unborn thing and save her own life.*

*And through it all, Father slept, a man
with a gift for relaxation in the face
of anyone else's suffering. I wanted
to shake him, make him watch and hold her hand.
I could still feel Mamma's wet fingers
going weak in mine when Father remarried,
a Southern lady with as much business
in a mining camp as a mule's haunches
on the love seat she talked about
in her mother's parlor: its claw feet
and plush silk covers, the carpet
it stood on imported from Belgium:
fairy land, for all we knew in the camps.*

*He stood over Mamma's grave and wept,
but never once woke, until after her hand
had slid from mine, her moans had died
into a silence that made me bury my face
on her belly, that lump pushing me away.*

*When Father married his Georgia woman
I knew he'd be traveling before long.
He apologized for leaving, shrugged
as if to say, "You know how it is,"
me, a girl of twelve. What did I know,
except that Mamma was dead, Father a man
you could no more pin down than gold dust
in a pouch fallen from a pack mule,
the canvas slashed open by shuffling hooves,
its siftings scattered to the winds
like the howls of wolves and Arapahoes.*

**Robert Cooperman
Baltimore, MD**



Due South Of Heaven

He's a P.T. Barnum with a dash of Daddy Grace. Strutting across the pulpit, he preens like a peacock in his custom tailored suit. His gaze alone jerks women to their feet in exultation, and feet drum the floor like thunder when he bursts into song. He's superstar of the sanctified...a disco dandy with a pulpit show.

Many call him a Sunday dinner pimp and cornbread-and-collards chump, but without his leadership the church would fold. Whether Baptist, Pentecostal, Holiness, or Church of God, this preacher's stomp-down performance is as compelling as anything due south of Heaven or north of Hell.

His shoes are fine leather, his coat virgin wool. His smile rebukes the sun. His hair is always freshly cropped, and even in winter he seldom dons a hat. Women who shop all over town just to save a dollar, compete like teenage romantics to anoint him with two-hundred dollar "love offerings" and three-hundred dollar suits.

He steps into the pulpit wearing a floor-length velvet cape. The crowd gasps as he slips free of his purple mantle and stands denuded in a suit of sinless white. Just as their daughters may have done at a Prince concert the night before, mothers wriggle, excited by his slightest move.

Though costumes are his most effective props, dance is the lifeblood of his act. His powerful pulsation stills from the pulpit and fingers its way up aroused thighs. Synchronizing to the organ's throbbing beat, the righteousness spurts from his every pore.

Breaking strategically into a shout, he fondles and plays with the crowd. Humming contentedly in their seats, the good sisters cross their legs in an unconscious response to a familiar heat warming their loins.

Though a master artist, not even this superstar can run the show alone. "Something for everyone" are his words to live by. The moment a male follower crosses the threshold, sensuality takes him by the hand.

Clad in transparent white, the sanctified usher can turn an iceberg into steam. Her voluptuous behind is worth going blind to see. Her panties carve an erogenous profile into those squeezable cheeks. Trundling trancelike behind her as she guides them to their seats, some men make a show of averting their eyes to keep their piety intact, but captivated by the striding treat before them, their eyes are quickly wrenched back to her rump. Like a live animal panting beneath her skirt, her buttocks tighten with every stride. Relaxing, the swelling against the fabric, the undulating rhythm of her backside pipes them drunkenly to their seats.

A sanctified bosom can parch a camel's throat. Accented by bullseye nipples her breasts jut against the milky fabric like overripe muskmelons. By the time any man is seated, visions of brown breasts tumbling free of their nylon restraints dance like fireworks through his head.

A clammy, unrelenting heat rolls through the church in tides—and when the preaching begins, the faithful are stoked to a concentrated passion. He outlines his message casually. Then, dressing his

thought in scripture, he closes his Bible. Pounding the pulpit as if it were sin, he glides into measured softness only to explode again at machinegun speed. Lapsing into silence, he pauses, slaps the Bible for support, and careens into his message again.

Halfway into the sermon, he slides free of his jacket. Without altering the rhythm of his delivery, he places the jacket into his deacon's outstretched arms. Sponging his brow with monogrammed linen, his shielded vision is sustained by a comely front row sister. After examining each calf with a tactile glance, he returns to the work of the moment. He leans atop the rostrum and bursts into song. Before the song is ended he "spontaneously" begins to shout. Leaping like fire, waving the linen like a wand, and spouting gibberish his church becomes a slum-based heaven, and the preacher a deity. His flock spreads its wings to fly.

Responding to the preacher, the organist assaults his keys. Prodded by the urgent rhythm, women bolt from their seats, unsettling wigs and ruining hose. Skirt hems skew carelessly upward in the wake of their churning leaps. Sisters standing in a corner conduct a moaning communion. Some hips grind in a spiritual coupling while others squirm in their seats puncturing the uproar with shrill and gleeful shrieks. The host, moist air has a pubic scent.

Now, the heat is stifling.

His sodden clothes cling to his body. He spins with a dancer's precision then thrusts both arms toward the ceiling and stops. His sweat-soaked body appears baptised. With his legs wide apart, he shakes his hips, screams and soars out into the center aisle. Pandemonium erupts.

The organist presses forearms and elbows on all keys at once. The organ gushes with an orgasmic frenzy. Purses are upended, chairs upset, infants wail. Everywhere there is motion. Everywhere there is noise. Everywhere people shout.

Prancing the length of the aisle and back, singing, shouting, and speaking in tongue, the preacher pushes his throng to a climactic peak. The air is electric and the poles have fused. Sex and spirit zap each sanctified reveler. Sated, the crowd rights the scattered chairs and settles into its seats.

The preacher springs adroitly behind the rostrum. Placing both hands heavily on the Bible, he prays.

The final offering is gathered. Whatever the tally, the preacher will have earned it. Only he knows what a job it was to make his show a hit. And his fans? They will hurry home; goaded by an irrepressible need to make love on Sunday in midafternoon.



by Martin J. Terrell
Athens, Ohio

ANYWAY, SOME OF US UNDERSTAND YOU

By Jack L. Daniel

In a world characterized as being in the midst of a knowledge explosion, it is ironic that mutual understanding is seldom achieved. Among Black American men and women, discussions regarding our relationships often descend to futile bickering about who understands whom the least. It is crystal clear to me that many Black women understand some Black men better than the men understand themselves, and that some Black men understand very well difficulties faced by some Black women.

This short essay is not written to, about, or for all Black women. An attempt to do so, at best, would be a bold initiative, and in all probability it would be a foolish undertaking. The Black women who form the basis for what is presented here are those who have helped form the bedrock and soul of the Black community. They are the ones who have given so much, received so little, and yet they have continued to give.

For several years, indeed most of my adult life, I have been painfully aware of a dilemma faced by so many beautiful—in every sense of the word—high achieving Black women. The more that these Black women achieve, and the more that they are capable of contributing, the more difficult their lives become. Success, for them, carries a penalty.

The Black women about whom I write, are progressive, educated (in the broadest sense of the term), and quite often, multi-talented. Regardless of the unending problems that they face and conquer, they keep growing, giving, caring, understanding, nurturing and achieving. Every applicable idiom that Black men use to describe a truly great and beautiful Black woman comes to mind when I think of them.

No mere exaggeration is being engaged in here. The Black women referenced in this essay are, for the most part, people I have met, and I have every reason to believe that my acquaintances represent a significant population. These Black women come equipped with doctoral degrees as well as sensuality. Some have no degrees, but they are everything that is meant, by wise. One who provided part of the motivation for this article is in the early stages of her life. Not yet nineteen, she plays a saxophone, competes successfully in track, writes poems and essays for fun, maintains her status in academic honor societies, has a desire to learn more about behavioral neuroscience, and she would be a winner in anyone's beauty

contest. Many of these Black women, who some have called saints, quite often raise our children by themselves, go to church by themselves, and in general, live by themselves. While the often referenced "sisterhood" helps to fill some of the void, while personal achievements are rewarding, and while friends wait across the color line, the lonely pit endures.

Make no mistake about it! These are not Black women who are to be pitied. All is not lost in a funky blanket of depression. These are not women who have no sense of fulfillment because they have no man. These Black women have run big and small businesses. They have administered universities, and reached the pinnacles of success in most professions. They have made ways out of no ways while living deep inside of the inner northeastern cities, the deep south, and the far west. They are cosmopolitan, award-winning people. While they have "done it all," many would rather do these things and more with their Black man, and their lies the difficulty.

Black boys often die before becoming men. Black gangs administer more death to Blacks than the Klan. Crack, the pale horse of death, rides rampant among Black males. Jails often become the domiciles of Black men. By the time the military grabs its share, homosexuality claims its victims, the street life takes its tolls, and slavery's remnants in the form of unemployment settles in, those high-achieving Black women who wish to share with a Black man, face a severe shortage. Indeed, the more that these Black women continue to achieve, the less available appropriate Black mates become.

Some opt for the sharing game, but informal polygamy does not work in this American societal context. Escapist trips are taken to Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean. Some knowingly marry less than what they need, and then suffer through unbalanced, unsuccessful, compromised relationships. A host of other inadequate adjustments are tried. Singles bars, acquaintances, and "buppies" don't suffice. Some elect not to cross the color line. What then are these Black women to do when a compatible Black male is desired but is not available?

It would be presumptuous to believe that one could tell the Black women in question what to do. Yet, in the spirit of caring, based hopefully on insight, I do offer the following comments. I trust that they will make a small contribution to resolving the dilemma which we as a people face.



Consider the following

and make of them what you will.

I. Prince Charming is probably not coming over the hill, and if he does come, he will be walking. Walk with him!

II. Stoop to conquer, but never bend so low as to compromise the highest and inner most aspects of yourself.

III. Anything is not better than nothing. Be all that you can be, and if he elects to be less than a man, let him be that by himself.

IV. Walk with and by, but never behind. If he faults you for your success, he will despise you even more when he perceives himself as being patronized by you.

V. Television and Hollywood couples reside in fantasy land. Look not to them for clues.

VI. A rough, uncut diamond is covered with dirt. Nevertheless, it is a diamond. If the diamond was already cleaned, cut and polished, then it would already have been claimed. Take the diamond in the rough and share it bringing forth its beauty. Just make sure that it is a diamond in the rough as opposed to mere dirt.

VII. Be careful with decorating the lips, the face and your body in general. Notice that the bee visits the beautifully colored flowers to obtain the pollen, and once he consumes the pollen, he leaves immediately in pursuit of the next lovely petals.

VIII. Develop and maintain your internal anchor, which consists of those invisible things of the mind, spirit and the soul. Without them you will blow in the winds of life.

IX. Do not be shackled by the popular but inadequate prescriptions for living. For example, cooking, changing diapers, staying home with the sick kids, and earning an income are things to be shared by partners rather than artificially prescribed as duties for husbands and wives.

X. Continue to become. Without the fulfillment of the self that you control, you truly have nothing.

Unfortunately, the above ten points provide no panacea, no secret remedy. However, they do contain the message that some Black men do know who and where you are, and they do care. Above all, we treasure what you have done

for yourself and all of us.

I know how willing you are to help if he would only permit you to help. I know how much you are willing to ignore, and yet that is the thing that he believes you view as an inadequacy of his. I know how much you want to see him do certain things for himself, how much you are willing to help him do for himself, and yet you must put yourself in check for fear of hurting an already too bruised ego. I know how much you wish that he would disclose of himself as you are so willing to disclose of yourself.

I know how much you want to give of your most important stuff, but also how you don't want anyone to walk all over your most important stuff again. I know how much you hope for, wish for, and pray for your Black men to be what they can be. Yet, my understanding of you is such that I hope that you will not let what we *don't do* stop you from doing all that you *can do*. In the doing for yourself, you continue to do for all of us. And knowing you as I think I know you, and as the popular songs indicate, "no matter how high up we [men] get, we will always be looking for you," our Black Butterflies.

Jack L. Daniel is Associate Provost of Undergraduate Programs and Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Pittsburgh.

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EAB

Open Dialogue III

Zero Sum Gain

Dr. Raymund Paredes, a nationally respected writer and scholar, wants America's schools to teach about art created by people whose traditions and values are different from those of Western and European origin. During his keynote address to the hundreds assembled in the House Ways and Means Committee room during Open Dialogue III, Paredes revealed two factors that undermine the availability and appreciation of America's cultural diversity, especially in education.

Paredes explained that "Zero Sum Gain" is a concept where, to add materials of ethnic value into a curriculum, a traditionally-valued white artforms must be removed. For example, to add Toni Morrison or Carlos Borges or Langston Hughes to the literary canon, Zero Sum Gain means that a William Faulkner or Nathaniel Hawthorne or Henry James must be removed.

Paredes' second concern was the tendency for multi-cultural populations, especially African-Americans, to be "observed, measured and evaluated," by non-Black people. He pointed out that, "There are many studies of Afro-Americans but few by Afro-Americans themselves." Paredes believes that this process places the people being studied at risk because it makes those studied "objects" rather than "subjects." When people who are not born into a culture study another culture, Paredes finds that a "pattern of domination [results] that is very destructive."



Shooting Star's Publisher and Carla DuPree, a Fiction Editor, promote the magazine at Open Dialogue's Marketplace.

Will we conform or will we transform American culture? In answering this question, Open Dialogue III renewed the appreciation of America's culturally diverse arts community and advanced the importance of this country's diverse ethnic art. Most important, ODIII encouraged the nation's arts organizations to recognize and harmoniously overcome the insensitivity and devaluation of America's Black, Native American, Asiatic and Latino cultures.

The Open Dialogue III Symposium held in Washington, D.C. is being honored here as a collective "Featured Artist" because the institutions that preserve and promote our distinctive artforms must also be supported.

As one speaker pointed out, when elements of one population desire to overpower or destroy another population, the aggressor must first rally people to that purpose, and its been easiest to accomplish the destruction of one culture by another when the aggressor can convince others that the population they seek to destroy is subhuman and lacking in comparable worth and values. This is why The Association of American Cultures and the Open Dialogues that they create are important.

In countering the neglect, undervaluation and inadequate financial support of our artforms, the theme for ODIII was stated over and over during testimony read into the congressional record... "We are one," and "we must work to deepen the appreciation of what makes America...America."

The Association of American Cultures is an organization that, "has attracted members from the ranks of culturally diverse artists, organizations, arts councils and other support groups. The Association of American Cultures serves to encourage and assist in the celebration of cultural diversity and to promote a larger and broader understanding among all Americans."

ODIII's Chair was Jane Delgado, Executive Director of Association of Hispanic Arts in New York. The Keynote address by Raymund Paredes, Editor of *Aztlan*, the leading journal for Chicano studies and Associate Dean of the Graduate Division of UCLA.

Dr. Paredes reminded hundreds of participants that much of the education offered in mainstream universities is downright hostile to the notion of cultural, ethnic art. He stresses that ethnic art must be grounded in the communities that gave them life.

Using jazz as an example, Paredes reminded that most Black musicians must play for predominantly white audiences and, if this continues, jazz will eventually, "lose much of its Afro-American culture." He advised that the first line of defense for cultural art forms must be in the schools.

ODIII's "Celebrate the Marketplace" blossomed on a wide Pennsylvania Avenue plaza under bright blue skies. The event began with a flamboyant Procession that included African-garbed stilts walkers and drummers. The venerable Agnes Copes of Hawaii's Wainanae Coast Cultural and Arts Center was Grand Marshall. The afternoon was filled singers [from a-capella vocal instrumentals to Bo-Diddley-style rock 'n' roll], dancers [including traditional African and even a blind, children's troupe], and musicians entertaining at both ends of the Plaza.

Merchants offered shell jewelry, Native American silver and turquoise crafts and jewelry, African carvings, hand-crafted wood ornaments and exotic fabrics were available. A fabulous variety of culturally meaningful goods from paintings and prints by Willie Nash to Kimberly Camp's dolls [she was also Mistress of Ceremonies] and from Stephens Carters' hand-painted tee-shirts to books from Philadelphia's My Solitude.

ODIII was hosted by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and The District of Columbia Government. In addition, this carefully planned and skillfully executed event was sponsored by such organizations as C&P Telephone, Illinois Arts Council, The Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Office of Mayor Barry, the Ohio Arts Council and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Board Chair for The Association of American Cultures is John Paul Bataiste. He is also Executive Director of the Texas Commission on the Arts.

The Association of American Cultures is located at the Stables Art Center, 410 8th Street NW, Suite 605, Washington, DC 20004, (202) 727-4083.

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Open Dialogue III's "Celebrate the Marketplace" blossomed on a wide Pennsylvania Avenue plaza under bright blue skies. The event began with a flamboyant Procession that included African-garbed stilts walkers and drummers.



Angry Women . . .

by Dr. Earl T. Braxton

The Training & Development Institute

When we think of anger between the sexes in this culture, our image is often that of angry or explosive men and passive or victimized women. It is true that the tendency is for women to have less self authorization to express their anger. Most girls are trained early not to be aggressive. Although aggressive women are often seen as too masculine and "pushy" or "bitchy," this reflects a double standard in which the same behavior by men is expected and encouraged. Thus women are taught to be more passive, less aggressive and particularly in relationship to a man to behave in ways that do not challenge his authority, rights, and privileges.

Men, on the other hand, have been encouraged to compete, to respect power, assert themselves and to challenge other men. Men are more preoccupied with demonstrating their independence and separateness than their intimacy and/or nurturing qualities. Being in control is often very important in their definition of manhood. This paradoxical development of men and women leads to a serious distortion in our relationships and is the source of much marital disharmony, interpersonal dissatisfaction, and unresolved conflict. The major discrepancy created by this somewhat unbalanced socialization that men and women receive, is that we create a large population of angry women with no place to put it and no sense of permission to express it. Their counterparts are anxious, uncomfortable and frightened men who have very little experience in what to do with women's anger and are basically intimidated by the rage boiling just below the surface in most women. Men don't want women's anger because they feel powerless and often helpless in the face of it. They have few healthy role models for how to work with women's

anger. Most of what they see are men who handle women's anger by:

- a.) Cutting them off and refusing to listen; usually accusing the women of being bossy or crazy and out of control
- b.) Bullying them by threats, physical abuse, or mental cruelty
- c.) Withdrawing by either silence, leaving the house or ignoring the woman, and
- d.) Punishing them by acting out (i.e. relating to another woman, or spending more time with the boys)

These are a few of the tactics that represent men's fear of women's anger. The tactics aim to discourage or silence protest on women's part because of the real fear that a man will lose in a straight encounter.

Part of men's fears are based on our early experiences with mothers or maternal caretakers. Mothers are formidable and powerful people for men. The early dependence on the mother figure makes most men feel very vulnerable to the power of women. We know deep down inside that there is a certain amount of dependency on women; in fact, more than most men would like to admit. As men, we are often frightened by the vulnerability connected with that dependency. If we felt violated, abused or weakened by the experience, it is easy enough to go through life making other women pay for our unresolved maternal conflicts.

Unresolved dependency on the mother is often a major contributor of negative male attitudes toward females. Feelings of vulnerability are often accompanied by rage at feeling helpless, and contempt for one's own dependency.

If he was well nurtured there is a healthy gratification. Yet, if the maternal dependency relationship remains unresolved, he expects similar

gratification from later female love objects. If he experienced poor maternal care there will be hidden anger and deep longing for fulfillment. If the maternal dependency remains unresolved into adulthood, he will transfer those feelings to a female love object and make intense demands upon her. These inner pulls are often experienced by women as powerful and sometimes unreasonable expectations that are accompanied by threats of abandonment or violence for her non-compliance. Some men go to the other extreme. They become counter dependent and act like they don't need anyone. They won't take any advice OR input from a woman and they usually attract a partner with whom he can behave like a parent, and treat her like a little girl. It is an angry, yet vulnerable statement he makes in that it says he cannot tolerate the woman as an equal or a partner. It further signals a need to stay in control in order to risk being close.

Unless men genuinely separate from their mothers, they continue to carry around an invisible woman who determines what any close relationship with a woman will be like.

True independence, or separation allows for the relationship between mother and son to move onto an adult level whereby both take full responsibility for their own experiences. Only when a male child takes his mother off the pedestal and sees her for who she is—strengths and weaknesses—and loves her just the same, can the man emerge to have a healthy relationship with another woman. So many men keep their mothers on the pedestal and consequently are intimidated by the omnipotence they have projected into her. They then cover up their fears by greater acts of aggression against women in order to control the power they see there.

... Frightened Men

Mothers are formidable and powerful people for men. The early dependence on the mother figure makes most men feel very vulnerable to the power of women.

The power of the symbolic mother, and the vulnerability men feel when they give into the nurturing that women provide so well, becomes an integral part of the unspoken conflict between men and women. There is little or no role modeling for men about how to be both strong and vulnerable at the same time. Very few men seem to know how to express for themselves, from a position of strength and integrity, the neediness and longing they feel for a deep connection to a woman while simultaneously experiencing the terror and the fear of being overwhelmed or losing oneself in that same connection. This dilemma is exacerbated by the dependency experienced by both men and women, and intensified by the difficulty men have of allowing any such nurturing to come from another man.

Fathers usually do not maintain nurturing ties with their sons. They push them toward the myth of strength through rugged independence as if one could not be independent, strong and nurturing at the same time.

Because it is only as a little boy that most males get their full dose of nurturing, they act out a public facade about how to be a "real man" while saving the vulnerable little boy in them for private showings to their mothers and their wives.

Women on the other hand, having been taught to stifle their power so that men won't leave or abuse them, build up resentment that then gets expressed indirectly (i.e. sexually refusing a man if he has mistreated her in other areas of her life). Women find creative ways to withhold things that men need from

them, which means they exploit his dependency.

One man I knew who traveled a lot, was very dependent on his wife packing for him since he had problems matching colors, and remembering what he needed for a trip. When they argued (which was frequent) he implied that she did not know what she was talking about in most matters. She in turn would get hurt but refused to confront him about his treatment of her. However, on the next trip he would inevitably find something vital missing from his suitcase after he arrived. He never caught it before because he had become totally dependent on her to do all of his packing, and still had not really made the connection when I spoke with him. He did not want to see it. I have heard men talk about all the ways the women in their lives pay them back for their mistreatment of them. Mates that usually lay out tie and shirt combinations, who are not available on a day the man has an important meeting.

Women who usually cook every day conveniently don't cook or forget to get groceries right after some infraction that the men may or may not know they're committed e.g., he may forget to put the toilet seat back down, or he speaks irreverently about her mother, or he may come home very late and choose not to explain his whereabouts. In many cases men talk about these incidences as if the women are just into one of their "bitchy" moods and it will pass soon.

The men deny the dependency and women take advantage of this blind spot. This warfare in which neither side is fighting fairly perpetuates the

problem of mutual dependency. Neither side gains much from the interchanges, and there is no growth.

Women clearly need inner permission to express their wants and needs, and to reach out for themselves. They have as much right as men to express anger, but neither side has the right to use anger to punish, control, coerce or in any way mistreat another person. The distortion created by men exercising poor constraints on themselves, being out of touch with their feelings, and taking no responsibility for how they treat other human beings is seen by the fact that more men kill each other than women. Women kill themselves by turning the anger inward (depression, suicide, etc.).

The dependency on women has led to an inability to take care of themselves, so single men die sooner, are institutionalized more often, get sick more frequently and languish longer than married men. And the denial that men need women makes it very difficult to risk women's rage while the fear that a man will leave if a woman expresses powerful emotions keeps women holding back.

Healthy relationships require a lot of work from both partners. Since the socialization of men and women have contributed to the roles they get caught up in with each other, having a workable caring relationship can not be taken for granted.

Anger usually covers over pain, vulnerability and fear. The timely expression of anger, that is, putting it out as close as possible to the

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ANGRY continued from page 23

Although aggressive women are often seen as too masculine and "pushy" or "bitchy," this reflects a double standard in which the same behavior by men is expected and encouraged.

time it was experienced is very important. It keeps the person from accumulating resentful and persecutory feelings, and allows for the anger to be directed at the source. In the case of women there is a sense of powerlessness that builds up whenever they withdraw from or avoid a potentially confrontative situation.

When they build relationships from such passive positions they set themselves up as victims. The fear that men will either leave or hurt them (physically or emotionally) can become the rationale for taking no action and not expressing legitimate feelings. The reality is that when there is genuine caring on the part of the man, and when the woman's anger is not aimed at punishing and/or destroying, the problem can be worked out and become the basis of a stronger relationship. Relationships built on roles that require either party to function at less than their full capability, are crippling and disabling, and both parties pay an enormous price.

Men are faced with an equally difficult internal task to move beyond their need to silence, avoid or cut off a woman's anger. Men must take responsibility for their own feelings of powerlessness, weakness, and neediness. Since this is totally incompatible with their perception of their roles as men, many do whatever

is necessary to mask such feelings. Since men are taught to use aggression and anger openly to maintain their autonomy and separateness, that is what they often use to threaten women. If a direct assault does not silence her, an indirect assault such as passive aggressive withholding serves equally well. Men need to get in touch with their vulnerable parts and take responsibility for their own fears, hurts and feelings of inadequacy or insecurity. It is only in the ownership of such feelings that one finds the real strength to overcome them. A frightened man or woman is a dangerous person. Fear leads to acts that are out of proportion to the situation. When men define the situation as "win or lose," survival is their only concern, and their behavior can range from disappearing behind a newspaper, or turning on the television and ignoring her to threatening to whip her into submission.

Men need to bring the soft, loving, connecting parts of themselves to their struggles with women. When they learn how to genuinely take care of themselves at the emotional level they will not feel so vulnerable to either the woman's assault or her own expression of pain. Many men cannot stand to have a woman cry and will capitulate and abandon their own position because they cannot stand the woman's pain. That is because many men cannot

tolerate or express their own pain, so they have no defense against the woman's. When men are brought up with the mistaken belief that women are the weaker sex, men must act as if they have it all together . . . even when they don't. These men can only experience their weak moments in private.

Strong relationships are built on mutual respect, honesty and interdependence. There are times when men want to lean on their partners and would like to know that a woman can stand on her own two feet. If she can't stand up to him, he will never trust that she can take care of herself with others.

Women, on the other hand, may become preoccupied with holding onto the man because she hasn't resolved her own sense of powerlessness. She then behaves as if the man is out of control and unable to assume responsibility for his own behavior. If she doesn't feel self-confident, capable of standing up to him, and holding him accountable in a loving way, she will more than likely treat him like the little boy she thinks he is. She will avoid confrontation and do what she wants done herself, or agonize over his behavior as resentment builds up.

The resentment results in punishing him covertly, controlling him in arenas where she is clearly in control, or periodic explosions which leave them both more upset and resolve very little.

Men and women must bring their own personal power, authority, softness, vulnerability and capacity to love to their relationships. It is difficult for many women to be openly angry and up front with their feelings with men that abandon them or attempt to suppress them. Men and women need each other. We are different but our differences can be complementary. When men own their fears, and women own their anger then loving becomes a real possibility.



*I speak stars.
I laugh light.
I dance visions
In the night.*

Valerie R. Bowe
Atwater, CA



short story

*a fine old gentleman closes the shop,
and its dull face dares the empty street.
Out back, the slight smiles
through the eyes of the door
as men wait for its arm to open.*

*Black men in the black air,
waiting for cuts and shaves.*

*Loud boots from the sawmill
claim the floor
and flush the smell of
the sheriff's baggy flanks;*

*Then the old gent dances the broom;
Then they laugh till they lean way over.
Laugh,
and touch like brothers,
hunched backslapping hard together.*

Nzadi Zimele Keita
Philadelphia, PA

*Yellow tears
ride down with laughter
in the fringe
of falling beards.*

*The shop is open now for closed men,
so tides of rage
can stagger the dead parts of them.*

The line-standing blues.

*The scarred remains of
colored regiments still at war.*

*The shop is open now
for closed men
so they can hold their fire
with mortar and spit,
mixed in the way
*It Should Have Been.**

*Then they laugh
till they lean way over.*

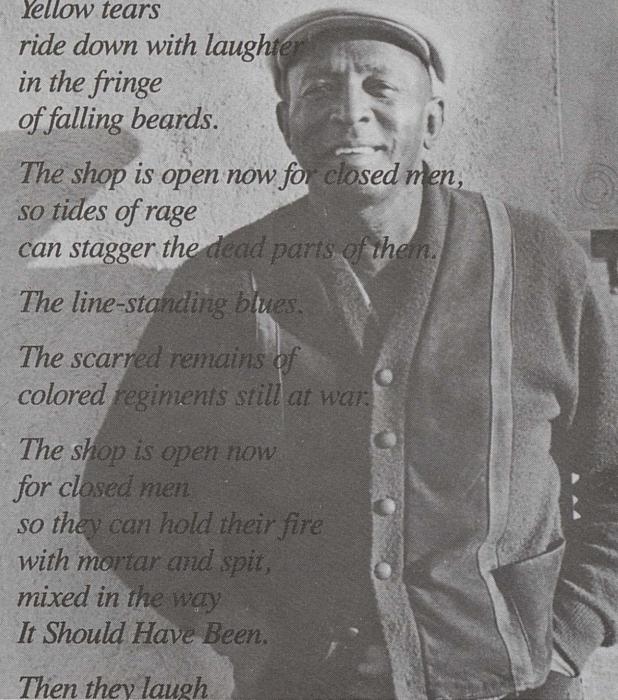


Photo by Eric Jones

GREAT
Performance

PRIDE IN PERFORMANCE

PITTSBURGH NATIONAL BANK

An affiliate of PNC FINANCIAL CORP

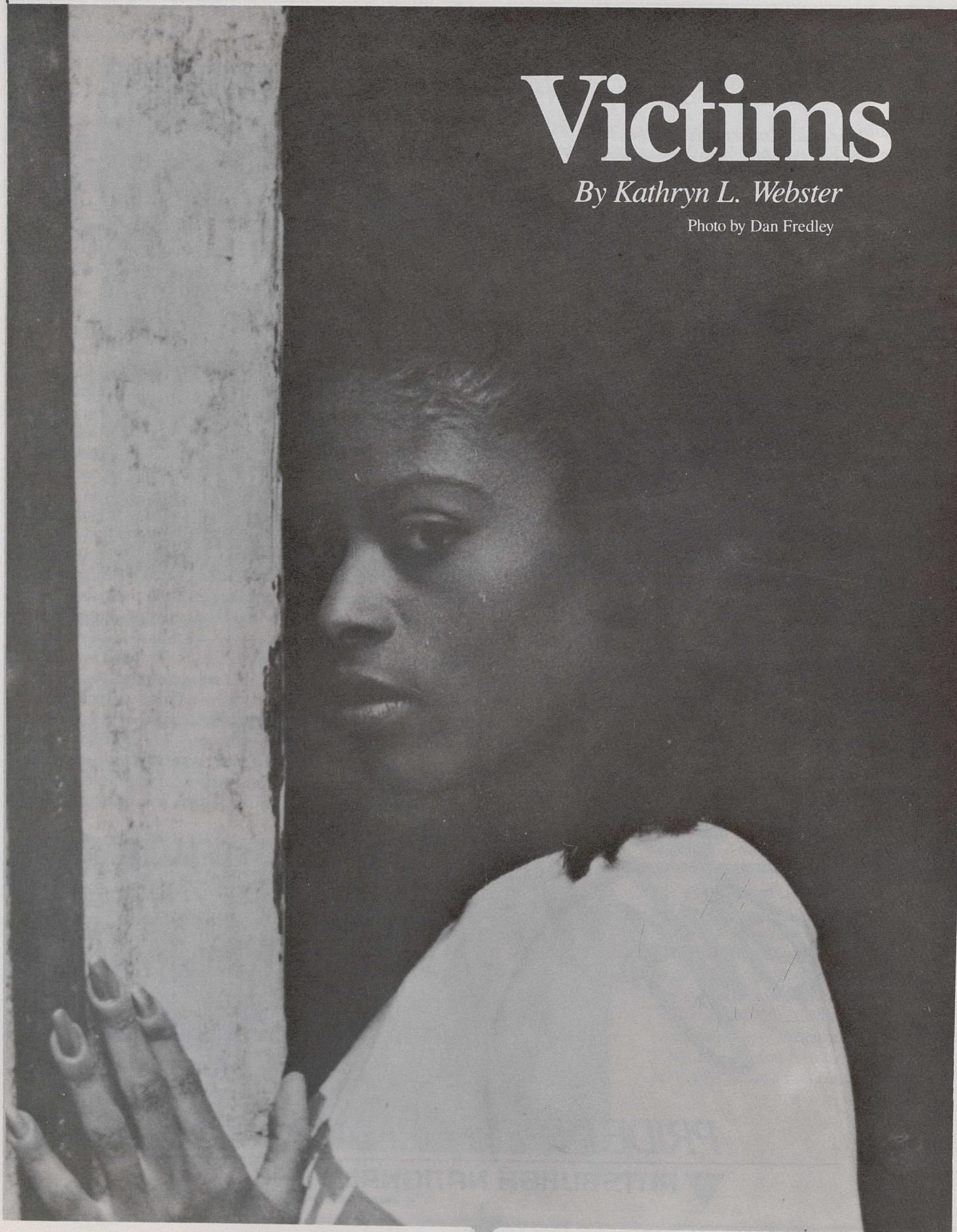
Autumn, 1988—Page 25

Fiction

Victims

By Kathryn L. Webster

Photo by Dan Fredley



*"I do things for me," she said.
"Yeah, like nursin' your black eyes."*

For five days, the August heat burned the land, scorched scattered grass, and singed leaves to a brittle brown. Benny Cox wiped his brow. At midnight, he and Martha lay in bed unable to sleep. A neighbor's stereo still echoed loudly through the apartment complex and bounced its vibrating beats around the close walls of their bedroom. Benny let out a heavy sigh and turned away from Martha, his lean six-foot frame gleamed like a shotgun.

"Damn! I can't take this no more!" He took a swig from a tall green bottle by his bed, and with two long strides was at the sheet-tacked window. "Turn that damn box off, muthafuckah! Or, I'll come down there and do it maself!" The music disappeared, and Benny settled back into his sweaty bed.

Two a.m. The green numbers glowed on the metallic alarm clock. The temperature had dropped and, except for the clock's ticking and Benny's occasional snore, the silence was like Valium. Martha turned to her side and glared at his face. Benny was on his back now. His thick lips were wide open like the mouth of a dark well. She imagined dripping some of his favorite Tabasco down his throat. Instead, she waited for the stiff chill bumps to spread over his satiny skin like a grater's rough, tiny protrusions, signaling another nightmarish run through an enemy-infiltrated jungle. Or maybe he would scream out as he had in the past, scaring Martha out of her sleep. But for the time, he appeared void of any internal stimuli, and soon Martha closed her eyes to rest.

Benny was up at 7:00 a.m. digging through their closet, tossing clothing to the floor.

"Whatcha doin', Benny?" Martha groaned. "Why you up so early?"

He didn't answer.

She peeped at him again through her sleepy eyes and asked, "Benny, whatcha doin'? Where you going?"

"I'm lookin' for' ma blue shirt Momma gave me last Christmas. If you hang ma stuff where I told ya, I wouldn't need to go through these changes." More clothes tumbled to the floor.

"It's still in the box, Benny. You told me to leave it in the box till you were ready to wear it. Remember?"

"Okay," he sneered, facing her. "Where's the box?"

"In that big box on the floor where we keep our personal stuff." Martha watched him pull the large cardboard box out of the closet's corner.

"Here it is," he said, pulling out a red gift box.

"Whatcha think?" He pressed the shirt against his chest.

"It looks nice, Benny."

"Good. Iron it." He threw the shirt on the bed and turned away.

"Where you going?"

"Ta see 'bout a job. Now hurry and iron ma shirt."

After Benny left, Martha picked up the torn gift box and other discarded items. Then she saw his old photo album. Inside were the pictures of his Marine Corps buddies. Some stood around choppers and sat in jeeps. They waved the peace sign with one hand and a bottle of Jim Beam in the other. They posed in their racks, sometimes placidly, other times playfully, but always waiting for their time to get short. There were photos of Benny's jungle boots, standing stiff and isolated near his rack, covered with thick mud from jungles outside DaNang. The seizures of Vietcong or "gooks," their tiny arms folded behind their heads while Benny and his buddies towered over them, pressing their M-16's against the enemy's temples, were also captured by someone's camera. Then Martha shivered. She remembered the lumpy splatters of blood covering piles of green and beige refuse. The sharp bone pieces sticking from the larger masses of confusion. The shrubs surrounding, almost camouflaging, it all.

"I blew that mutha away," Benny had explained. "He was hidin' in some bushes and fired some shots at us. That's when I nailed him with ma machine gun. See, there's one of his legs and all this shit was his..."

She stared at the unopened book.

In the beginning, his letters were descriptions of the DaNang countryside: its squalor and the rats—some big as bulldogs. He also wrote about the never-ending monsoons, the lack of good food and entertainment, the "Dear John" letters some of his friends had received. But finally, after awhile, words like "pigs" and "gooks," "hell hole" and "rat trap" filled the pages. He constantly told her of his desire to be with her, "away from this hell" and to keep the mail coming because without it he'd have nothing to live for.

When she heard someone knocking, Martha put the book and other things away.

"Here, girl." Her neighbor Dotty pushed a big bag into Martha's chest. "My Aunt Minnie grows the best collard greens in her back yard. Think I'll cook some of mine and freeze the rest."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

VICTIMS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

"You must a'been readin' ma mind," Martha said. "I've been havin' a taste for some good greens." She shook the greens from the bag into the sink as it filled slowly with water.

"Not suppose to be as hot today as the last few days," Dotty said. "Sure glad 'bout that."

"Yeah." Martha said, washing the greens and watching the water turn gray. "You workin' tonight?"

"Nope. I traded shifts with James, so him and Raymond will be there tonight." Dotty was a security guard for Tucker's Bones N Things, a 24-hour coffee shop. She was a full woman, medium height, who owned a formidable weapon—her sharp tongue. Capable of verbal lashings that sliced four-letter words to shreds, she was neither ashamed nor proud of her unabridged profanity. "I don't mess with folks if they don't mess with me," she explained. "But if they do, I sho' know how to handle them."

"Did Benny leave already?" Dotty asked, squeezing into the narrow kitchen to heat the tea kettle.

"Yeah. He left around 7:30. Said he was going ta see 'bout a job."

"What kinda job?"

"He didn't say. Hope whatever it is, he gets it though."

"Well, ain't too many jobs 'round here to be had," Dotty said. "But whatever he's after, hell, I hope he gets it too."

Martha stood quietly wiping her hands on a dish towel and eyeing the soaking greens. She envied Dotty. Although neither one of them was better off than the other economically, at least Dotty fended for herself. She paid her own rent, bought her own food and clothes, and only occasionally had a man up to her apartment.

Martha filled two mugs with tea bags and steaming water and handed her neighbor a drink.

"Any sugar?" Dotty asked.

Martha got a small box with a pour spout and sat down. "Want some lemon too?"

"Don't need no bitterness in my life." Dotty stirred in the sugar. "Whatcha gonna fix with those greens?"

"I have some perch in the refrigerator. Guess I'll fry that."

GREEN BEANS

Four raisin-colored hands snapping green beans into a silver bowl on burnt orange painted outdoor wooden steps.

Sisterly-girlfriend-giggling, gossiping, bean snapping.

Pulling purposefully at the bonding strings.

Castella Perry
Cleveland, Ohio

"Benny oughta like that."

"You know he will."

"You always tryin' to please that man, ain't you? He beats the livin' hell outta you and you still tries to please him. Shit. When you gonna do somethin' fo' you?"

Martha thought of the receptionist job she lost when Benny started beating her, and how he forbade her to look for another job until he had one first. She thought of the night he threw their color television set over the railing, crashing it to the ground less than a yard from where she had been standing. No one called the police, and she left, only to return three days later. He'd beat her, she'd leave, then a few days later, she'd be back washing his clothes, mending his socks, and frying his fish.

"I do things for me," she said.

"Yeah, like nursin' your black eyes. Shit."

Martha peered into her mug then took a long, thoughtful swallow. She hoped Dotty would be gone before Benny returned.

Eleven o'clock. The rattling of his keys and his sluggish steps alerted Martha. Then the heavy metal crash against the courtyard's steel gate startled her. Benny cursed the night and the child who left her tricycle in the walk. Martha stood over the pot of greens, focusing on the simmering leaves. When the door closed behind him, she froze.

"Where you at, bitch?" Benny's voice tore through the apartment. Martha reached for a plate from the cupboard and began scooping greens onto it. When he heard her, he moved toward the kitchen and clutched the rim of a dinette chair.

"You think you somethin', don't you?" Cheap wine permeated the room. As Martha searched for a way to get around him, he stepped in front of her. She slid by him, but he grabbed her hair, jerking her back. She dropped the plate to the floor.

"Where you think ya goin'?" A smile curved across his face.

"Let me go, Benny." Martha's neck was straining from his tight grasp.

"Ya want me to let you go?" he sneered, pressing his wet lips against her ear.

"Please, Benny."

"I got your *please*, baby," he cooed. Then he pushed her across the room where her head landed on the blunt end of the coffee table. Martha crawled to the door, but as she reached for the knob, the crimson fluid from her head wound trickled into her right eye. She hesitated. Benny swayed over her, his eyes tight and red.

"Get out, you stinkin' gook," he hissed. "Get out b'fore

I blow your yella ass away." Suddenly, standing in sober erectness, he feigned firing a machine gun, the sound of rapid gunfire spewing effortlessly from his mouth. Martha opened the door and inched halfway out.

"That's right! Crawl, you slimy gook!" He raised his foot, thrust her into the dark hallway, and slammed the door.

Dotty looked at the sidewalk glistening from the early morning rain. Small muddy blotches from the dirt bed near the curb stained the walk in places, yet there was a freshness about the littered streets that she enjoyed. She zipped up her jacket, inhaled deeply, and noticed Benny coming toward her carrying a clay pot of poinsettias in his arm.

"You out early," she said. He stopped and peered at the sun breaking through the clouds.

"I hate rain. Don't do nothin' but mess things up."

"Yeah?" Dotty pointed to the poinsettias. "Made them flowers grow, though."

His eyes dropped to the poinsettias and he smiled.

"These are for Martha."

In silence, Dotty watched him stroke each blade with a tenderness that made her uneasy. She walked over to the curb and kicked a dirty syringe and broken wine bottle into the street.

"You heard from Martha?" she asked, facing him.

"She gonna come in a few weeks. For Christmas."

"Sho' nuf?"

"Didn't you say she was comin' last month? And then the month 'fo that? And the one 'fo that too?"

An old blue Chevrolet pulled up in front of them and Dotty waved to the driver.

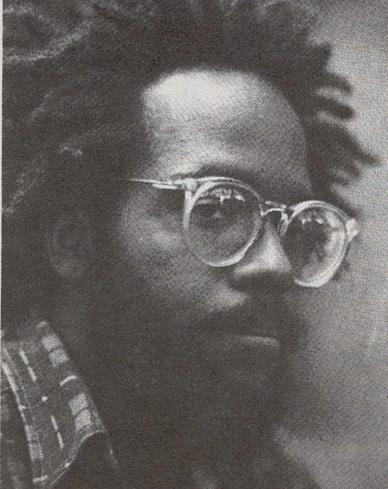
"There's my ride to work." She got into the car, and as they pulled away, she noticed Benny turning into the courtyard, his steps slow and careful, his face buried in the flowers' red petals.



Kathryn Webster, West Covina, CA

QUIZ ANSWERS (FROM PAGE 39)

1. Mary McLeod Bethune
2. William Pickens
3. Booker Taliaferro Washington
4. Henry McNeal Turner
5. Billie Holliday
6. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois
7. James Baldwin
8. Alice Childress
9. Alex Haley
10. Pearl Bailey
11. Fannie Lou Hamer
12. Frank Yerby
13. Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington
14. Elijah Muhammad
15. Jackie "Moms" Mabley



Lamont B. Steptoe is a self-proclaimed poet. As he defines it, someone who takes the work from the written page and shares it orally with a living audience. Born and reared in Pittsburgh, Steptoe began writing at 10. He received a degree in Radio, Television, and Film from Temple University.

He is the author of three books of poetry, CRIMSON RIVER, 1984, AMERICAN MORNING/MOURNING, 1985 and SMALL STEPS AND TOES, 1987 with Bob Small. Recently, he published a Broadside, Refugee issued on his own press, WHIRLWIND PRESS.

WARFARE
*There is a warfare
of the heart
that has everything to do
with jungles
hand to hand combat
and the holding
of territory*

©1986 Lamont B. Steptoe

Memories of Songs

by Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa

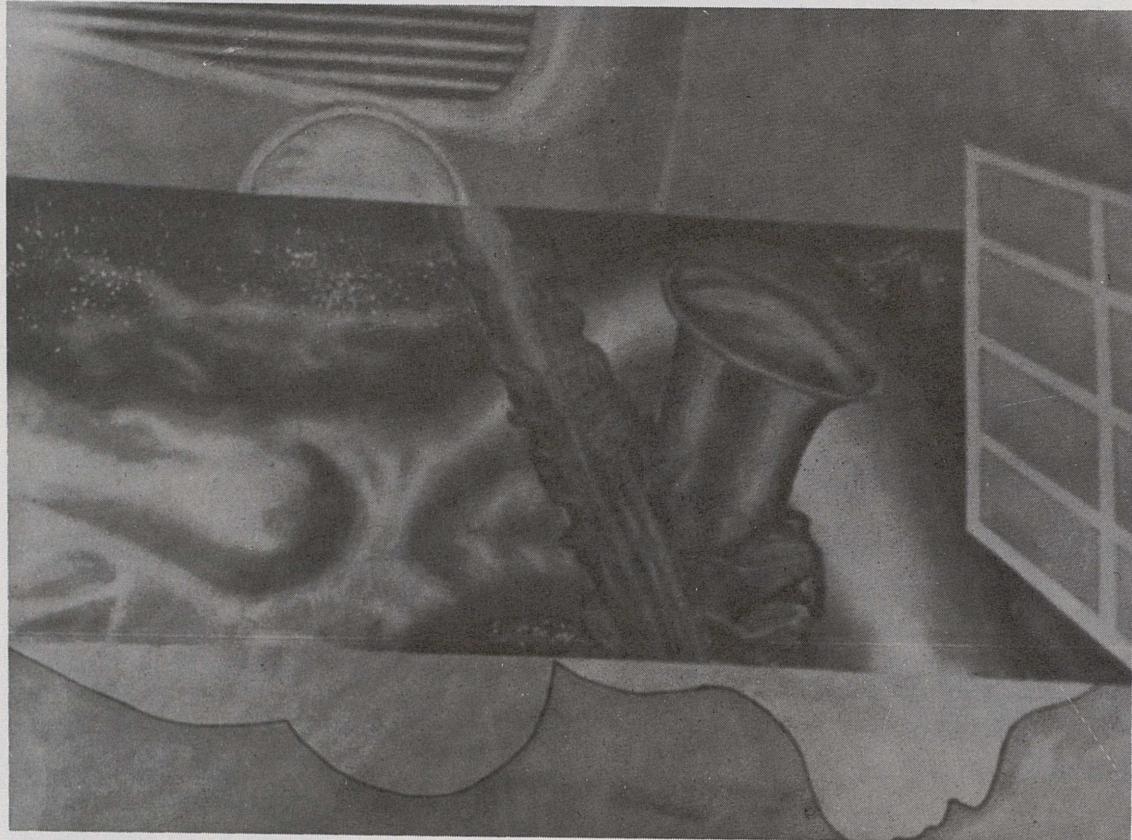


Illustration
by
John Nichols

It was five in the morning. Roy woke up again, for about the Lord knows how manyeth time. It was hot in his stiflingly small apartment. His brother in Houston had sent him some money weeks ago. He could have used some of it to buy an air-conditioner or, at least, a fan. It wasn't that he liked heat but just that he had developed the same fatalistic attitude about heat as he had about practically every other thing over the past several months. He had come to the very simple conclusion, "It's summer. I'm gonna cook. That's the way it is." Roy had taken some of the money to the pawn shop up the street from the apartment building and bought a used, though good-looking, saxophone. He pulled a can of malt liquor from the refrigerator and returned to the bedroom, dragging the saxophone case out from under the bed.

His fingers worked, seemingly without purpose,

opening the latches on the case. They clutched the shiny horn in the same perfunctory fashion. Roy's eyes suggested something somewhere between apathy and bland curiosity. He drew the instrument from the case, removed the cap from the mouthpiece, and put the horn to his mouth. He had learned two weeks before, after three days of unsuccessful and half-hearted attempts, to mouth the reed properly to get sound without much trouble. But he knew nothing whatever about music, except that he liked the way the giants—Coltrane, Bird, Archie Shepp, and so forth—played the saxophone. He had grown up hearing this music. But he had no albums or tapes in his apartment and nothing to play them on if he'd had them. Roy just remembered—not too many specific songs, just a recollection of nice sounds. So he blew into the horn and selected the keys to push by nothing other than limp impulse. As he blew, he

wasn't seeking to play any particular song, not even a scale. He didn't know how and didn't seem to care. As he blew, sometimes in short puffs, sometimes in comparatively long ones, he would lazily imagine he was playing an old favorite of his. But of course he wasn't. He was only blowing air into an instrument that turned his breath into sounds, fragments of what could become music, but wouldn't.

Roy sat there blowing into the saxophone and pushing on keys for an hour or so, not noticing, until the sun was plainly visible, that the darkness was steadily losing its grip on the bedroom window. He accepted the onset of morning as he did the heat, with resignation, and put the horn back into its case, sliding it under the bed. He sat on the edge of the bed with his hands on his knees and his face aimed at the floor like a misfired bullet. Would he go to the damned employment office on this day? He'd gone there each day for the past four, filling out job applications much in the same spirit as one cutting down a corn on his toe. It had become, for Roy, a meaningless ritual.

He took off his clothes and moved himself into what he thought of as a kind of silo, the shower. It wasn't a matter of cleansing or even refreshment. It was simply something to do to get a few minutes worth of time off his back. Afterward, he put on a T-shirt and a pair of corduroy jeans,

wrinkled but clean, and left the apartment. As Roy got to the sidewalk, a limping German Shepherd turned toward him and snarled threateningly, then limped off across the street. Roy spat at the dog, but the saliva fell far short of the mark, slipping down over Roy's lip and catching his chin. He wiped at the spit with the back of his hand. He rubbed the back of his hand across the sole of his shoe and then brushed it against his pant leg to remove the dirt.

A half-block from the employment office, Roy felt this big, heavy-bodied "no" come up from his gut and lodge in his throat. He didn't fight it. He just sat down on the bus-stop bench. He could not see himself in a damned line on this day, couldn't see himself pencil in the same crap over and over, couldn't see himself staring blankly into the face of somebody staring blankly into his face and asking questions of him that would be purely academic and rhetorical.

"No." Roy looked up toward the sun, thinking what it must be like to be ninety-two—or was it ninety-three—miles from anything. It seemed strange, just plain unimaginable. His eyes began to sting. He closed them, then gave haphazard glances toward things on his end of all those millions of miles.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

A Second Time Around

*she hurts she explains
she aches from the pain
of the festering itchy remains
of times with a man
bleeding
leaving a trail of caked-up
red-turned-to-brown
goodbye-but-i'll-be-backs
infested blues of oh so how many
i-didn't-mean-tos
and the final angry banging of the door
on a night that fell
like a butcher knife
on froze fetid meat
thawed too long
in the heat of a day
that sat like a fat man's buttocks
on a butterfly*

*she had tried to wing it
to play it by ear or eye
to flit or flap away from truth
she held inside herself
a wasp with stinger cocked to prick a skin
to puncture
which it did
letting the inescapable conclusion out
to soar to her face
she screamed
leaving its haunting ghosts
still to hang in the corners of her mouth
you see them clinging
and fear
to speak of love.*

Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa

MEMORIES CONTINUED

The bus stopped. Its front door opened. The driver looked politely at Roy. But the politeness turned almost immediately to irritation as the driver realized that this man on the bench was not going to be putting a fare into the box. The door slammed. Roy didn't notice that a passenger had gotten off the bus until he felt the slight tremor in the wood slats beneath him. He just barely saw the attractive profile of her face. He thought of himself as slouching even though he wasn't. And the effort he put into straightening himself felt wasted and silly when he finally determined that he hadn't been slouching after all. He felt a bland embarrassment. He shifted the position of his feet and tried to be inconspicuous as he felt his stubbled chin for signs of spit. There were none.

Roy wanted to get a good look at the woman but didn't want to tell off on himself. He leaned forward and looking to his right, as if to be searching for someone or something, and then looked to his left. "Hmm. She's pretty fine," he thought. As he was returning his face back to what he hoped appeared to be a neutral position, the woman's eyes caught on him like hooks snagging a carp, or so it seemed to him. Now he could not pretend any further that he hadn't noticed her. His mouth cracked into a nervous smile. "Hewwa you doin'?" He had tried, unfortunately at the same time, to say, "Hello" and "How are you doin'." "Okay, I guess," the woman responded in a voice that seemed addressed to a crowd.

The woman started to ask Roy if he was waiting for the bus but figured the question to be too stupid, inasmuch as they were both sitting there at the bus stop. She coughed instead. But the cough echoed inside her head as too dainty, too pretentious. She coughed again to correct the first one. Roy asked her if she was waiting for another bus, to transfer. She nodded her head "yes" and smoothed a fold in her skirt. Roy watched her fingers, thinking how much they resembled the long, slender chocolate cigarettes he would buy when he was a kid. He wanted to touch her fingers, to feel them against his face. The thought made him angry, reminded him why he had lost Irene, because he had nothing, didn't account for a damned thing. The anger surprised him. It was, after all, the first real feeling he'd had in months. It frightened him some.

"Look. I don't have a fuckin' job." He hadn't meant to let the thought degenerate into words. He pretty much shouted

them. The woman at first felt a little put off by his blurting out but quickly slipped into a kind of softness inside herself, a softness that had no apparent reason to be. "Excuse me. I didn't mean . . . Shit." Roy was looking for other words. They were hiding from him, just like his songs hid from him, locked away inside the saxophone he could not play.

Roy didn't think of himself as a lady's man but it was a fact that he had the capacity "to catch," as folks say. He was good-looking and spoke in a kind of soft, poetic rhythm that women found fascinating. But lately he hadn't felt much interest in women, or much else. Yet, on this day, at this bus stop, he could sense something, something that made him fidget inside. Yes, the woman was pretty. And had she just been pretty, Roy could have simply let her be there while he kept company with himself and his reliable numbness.

And the woman, she thought to herself, wondered about the why of this chance meeting, why she had taken this day to spend some sick-leave time moving from corner to corner of the city, as if to search for a thing that she could not identify. She'd been doing fine. Who was this man to disturb her just by the fact of proximity? She was confident, self-assured. She was, or thought she'd been, content. How the hell did he think he was so special, she thought; but then realized that she was the one who felt him special or sensed that there was something special inside him.

Roy couldn't stop the images, like John Coltrane riffs piled on top of each other, from coming; images of other times, of happy childhood times transported somehow into tomorrows. It had become so easy for him to accept the sucking of quicksand, so easy for him to have no song. He wasn't looking for a woman.

It had become so easy for the both of them, in their own ways and under their own circumstances, to play safe. Nothing ventured, nothing risked. But, as they sat there feeling what neither could understand, safety seemed to become less and less worth holding on to. The next bus would be coming soon.



Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa
(a/k/a David Rice) is a writer
living in Lincoln, Nebraska.

WOMAN POEM

*I
am the mother of the Universe.
I wear the stars as diamonds for my ears;
and my whirling locks form galaxies
to frame the velvet blackness of my face.*

*I
am the mother of generations.
I have born kings and priests,
prophets, warriors and lovers.
And the pains of their deliveries
cast the jagged contours of mountains.
My tears flow as rivers.*

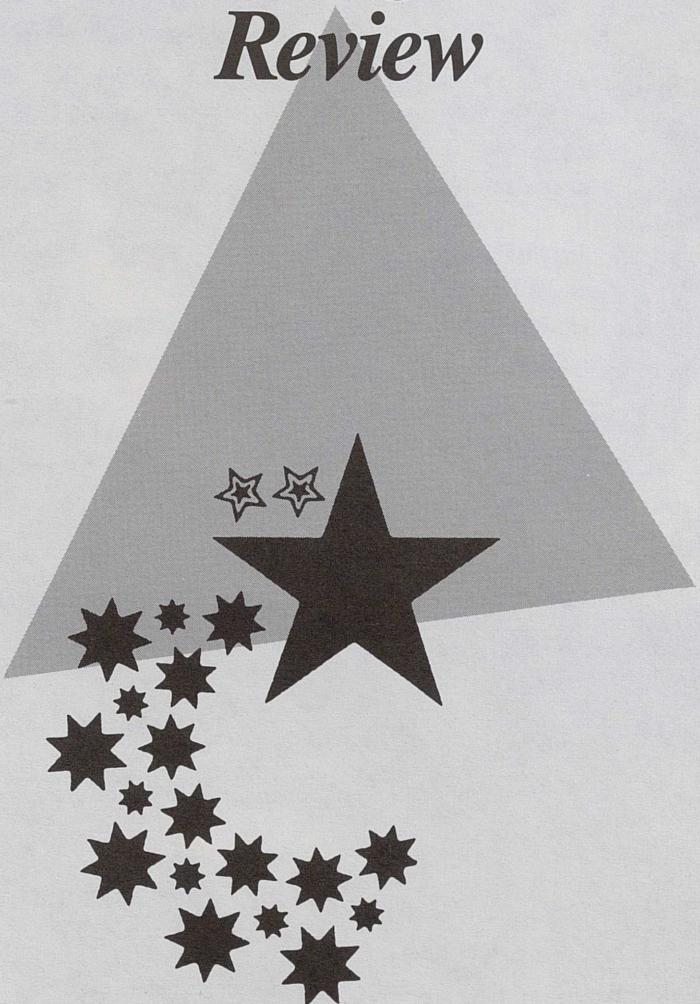
*I
am the mother of dreams.
For lullabies, I sing songs of love
and recount tales of peace.
The reflections in my eyes
shine forth as visions.
My sighs breathe worlds
into existence.*

*I
am the mother of eternity.
From my sapphire thighs
burst forth all life;
and the seeds of my sons
bear all mankind
and every hope for tomorrow.*

*I
am the mother of
the earth and all that is
and was
and ever will be.
Know that I am
Woman.*

*by Kim Rounds Foster
Wichita, Kansas*

Duquesne Light salutes *Shooting Star Review*



Duquesne Light Company

A Salute to

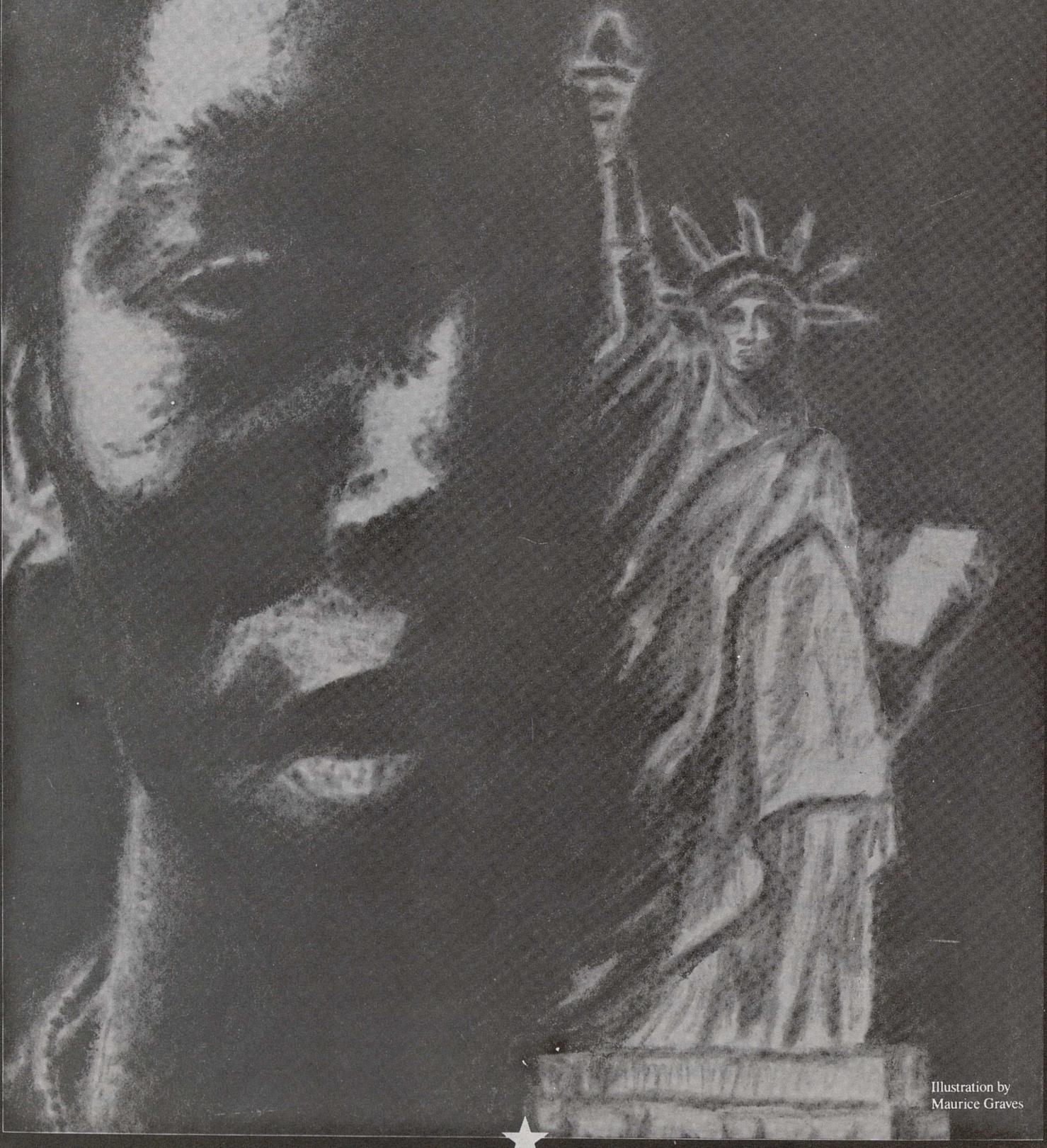


Illustration by
Maurice Graves

Black Men

There are two positive entities in our race that are ignored or repeatedly maligned in the literary world. When either is presented it is usually in a less than favorable light. I am speaking of the Black male and the black middle class. The latter is "another story," but the former is of prime concern. I've always had an affection for the Black male and it saddens me that so little is written of a positive nature, and so much is readily available about his perceived shortcomings.

The Black male is the most brutalized and oppressed human being in print and visual media. Historically stripped of his role as protector and provider, he was denied humanity, which undermined any lasting sense of racial or familial cohesion. Post Civil War "freedom" left him with no means to support, provide for or defend himself and his family. He and his were no longer protected by the plantation system and it is well documented that inhumane treatment-lynchings and castrations escalated during the Reconstruction period. From this milieu an economic structure that promoted the dominance of the white male/black female was born, thus driving a wedge between black male and female relationships, leaving the man feeling further humiliated and powerless.

Recognizing these origins, it is an indescribable source of pride for me to see the Black man of today—respected, proud, erect, independent and articulate. How far they've journeyed; from barefoot poverty to Armani suits; from second-hand wagons to Jaguars. It was not an easy climb for our brothers, and I'm always weary of and distressed by the need for black female writers to chronicle the struggle without the triumphs. To reinforce the stereotypical behavior—the woman beater, the married Casanova, the pimp, the hustler, the addict, child molester, gambler, abandoner and the user—is perpetuating verbal castration and literary lynchings. The baser qualities of a few Black males are magnified, romanticized, dramatized and disguised as "reality" for the masses. *Colored Girls* and *The Color Purple* began as printed words that expanded to stage and screen; both highly acclaimed commercial successes at the expense of our Black men. To give only criticism and never credit is more the neurosis or unresolved conflicts on the part of the writer than a

reflection of the Black male himself. This lack of diversity in literature is like illuminating the sickness and not the health; speaking only of the thorns and never the rose or its fragrance. It is a sacrilege and our men deserve better.

Even those of us who were not fortunate enough to be raised by a positive Black male were privy to the constructive influences of brothers, uncles, neighbors, coaches, teachers and friends. Pound for pound, inch for inch there are more positive Black male images than negative, though the latter tend to receive the misplaced notoriety. I suppose some writers feel it too mundane or boring to acknowledge the faithful husband, dutiful father, aspiring professional, successful businessman and good provider.

As usual the media plays an all too important role in how we perceive ourselves and the world around us. Because I have two sons I am sensitive to Black male imagery in the media, and have been annoyed, angered and embarrassed by the depictions. Television dramas tell us we cannot exist or have no credibility without a white sidekick from as early as Cosby and Culp ("I Spy") right through Hill and Renko ("Hill Street Blues") and Tubbs and Crockett ("Miami Vice"). In the 1970's we had an excellent show, "Harris and Company," in which Bernie Casey played a widowed blue collar worker raising his five children. Letter-writing campaigns protesting the show's cancellation couldn't save this dramatic portrayal of this black family's love, strength, and unity. America readily accepts black men in non-serious, less threatening comedies; the irreverant father/son relationship on "Sanford and Son"; the buffoonery of Jimmy Walker on "Good Times"; and a George Jefferson existed only because his white counterpart, Archie Bunker, preceeded him.

There has been a slow media evolution, which lags far behind the day-to-day reality. It was Billy Dee Williams' portrayal of Louis McKay in "Lady Sings The Blues" that zapped the "superfly" image from the silver screen. Williams was a likeable scoundrel who treated his lady with love, respect, compassion and understanding without messing one macho hair in his mustache. We've cried with the handsome Mike "Bobby Hill" Warren—continually moved by his tenderness, quiet strength and human

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SALUTE TO BLACK MEN *continued from page 35*

frailties. Pretty boy Phillip Michael Thomas, a.k.a. Rico Tubbs, is similarly less macho and more sensitive but neither he nor his partner's morals are any I'd want my sons to emulate. Easy on the eye Denzel Washington, the gifted doctor on the now defunct "St. Elsewhere" between operations struggled with being both Black and middle class. It is in the area of comedy once again, that we've hit gold in the form of Bill Cosby as Dr. Heathcliff Huxtable, the epitome of being black and middle class as well as a loving husband and father who relates to his children "the best he can," with a mixture of authority and love. For the first time in TV history, we celebrate Black male imagery in a number one show with an all black cast portraying middle class city dwellers. Talk about challenging and smashing stereotypes to smithereens!

It isn't necessary to look to the media for Black male role-models. There are heroes all around us. The Black male today is a wondrous specimen. Unlike their fathers and because of modern technology and advanced education, the Black man of the 80s has more leisure time to enjoy and get to know himself. Their fathers were often physically and mentally exhausted by just providing food and shelter for their families. More Black men of today use their minds in their jobs, exercising their bodies on the tennis courts and in health spas. Their mental time is spent communicating with family and friends and reading. Today's Black man is more open in discussing feelings, more introspective, more giving and sensitive, secure enough in himself to share failures as well as successes without the fear of diminishing his masculinity. He is more concerned for himself, his family, his neighborhood, his community, his country and beyond; he is economically stable and politically astute.

Black men—I love 'em! Always have. Always will. Love them so much I married one, and had two. Never conceived of dating, loving or marrying otherwise. No other race of men can spark such intense, button-bursting pride. I herald their stamina and drive. I admire those who are disciplined, directed and determined to distinguish themselves in a profession, business or career. Kudos to those who devote their weekends to family activities—their daughters' recitals, their sons' games. I applaud those who surprise their wives with flowers and their mothers with out-of-town visits. To those who drive station wagons full of kids instead of sporty two-seaters, and to those whose masculinity is not challenged by cooking meals or washing a dish, you have my seal of approval. To those who send a

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child to college, and who care enough about themselves (and their families) to keep physically fit and mentally alert, compliments are in order. To those who believe in quality relationships not quantity and to those who live without the excuse of white dominance, without the crutch of physically or verbally demeaning women, without drugs, without succumbing to the weaknesses of offered flesh to make him "feel like a man," you are my heroes. You know who you are and have nothing to prove by beating on, cheating on, or escaping from the Black. You Black men are our real superstars, the "ordinary," mortal, everyday champions of our race who should be represented in art, literature, stage and screen.

Even in my youth I never cared for the loud, boisterous showy dude. Those who yelled from car windows or whistled at you as you passed a street corner. Among those who caught my eye was a man grabbing his daughter's hand as they scurried across the street and disappeared into a frozen custard shop. A father shooting baskets with his son at a backyard hoop. A man sitting on a bus with a bouquet of flowers in his lap. A couple strolling hand in hand window shopping downtown.

I've had the good fortune of being surrounded by intelligent, caring, considerate, morally upstanding, sensitive Black men. I believe them to be a precious gift, possessing an innate strength and boldness. We are family, we share a heritage and a history. I understand where you've been, appreciate and delight in where you are, and am with you where you have yet to go. These positive Black males are my paladins and I salute you all. Black men have not merely survived but prevailed. As a daughter, sister, friend, wife and mother, I am so proud!

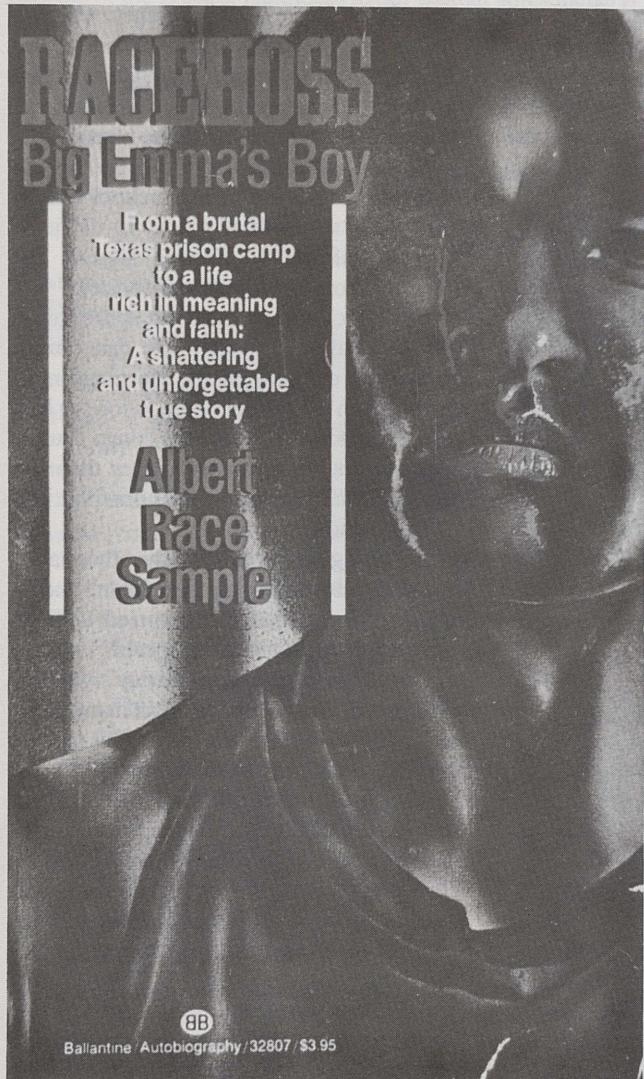


Gay G. Gunn of Silver Springs, Maryland has written for Washington Living Magazine and is the author of Dotted Swiss and Gingham.



RACEHOSS

BIG EMMA'S BOY



Michael Whitely is a news reporter for SBN, the Sheridan Broadcasting Network and a freelance writer.

Racehoss: Big Emma's Boy, by Albert Race Sample, is powerful. It is the real story of his troubled youth, prison nightmare and finally, salvation and a new life. It is also an intimate look at country-poor Black family life in the South; lovingly told, with brutal honesty, by a man who lived it.

Sample sets the tone for his story by gently taking us back to "Sunday morning . . . 1909. Somewhere in Western Louisiana," as his grandfather kills his grandmother while Sample's mother, Emma, and her three sisters watch.

The girls are sent to live with cruel "Grandmother Ducks" in Texas. After years of abuse, Emma escapes to Longview, Texas where she quickly learns how to make money with her beauty.

By the time Albert Sample was born, (an interracial surprise from a white customer), Emma had expanded her services to include dice gambling, bootleg liquor, and food. As soon as he was big enough, Sample was keeping an eye on dice games, selling half-pints and watching for police while Emma was behind the curtain with customers.

In his early teens, Sample rode the rails, worked with a circus, lived off of women, and tried petty crime. In 1952, barely out of the Army six months, he was sentenced to two years in the Texas State Penitentiary for burglary. A parole violation sent him back inside. Then the big one: 30 years for robbery and assault. He was sent to the Retrievie, a year-round work farm, where the "worst, most incorrigible black cons" slaved six and a half days a week. The bosses had names like "Big Devil Warden," or "Boss Deadeye." The cons had names like "Fleabrain," "ToeSucker," "Shotman" and Samples' prison name, "Racehoss," or "Race."

Racehoss adapted to prison life quickly. During his years there he went from miserable new con fighting for his manhood to a work-crew leader and best corn and cotton picker, (which earned him the name, Racehoss), to trustee working in the office. But his climb to the top of the prison ladder slipped when he was thrown into solitary confinement after he was duped into forging a name on a prison evaluation form.

As a seasoned con, Racehoss had been in solitary before but this time was different. He felt trapped and desperately called out to God. Sample writes that a Presence appeared in the tiny concrete box and, "After that, God was real. He found me in the abyss of the burning hell, uplifted my soul and breathed new life into my nostrils."

In 1972 . . . approaching his 42nd birthday, Racehoss was paroled. He eventually got a job with a program for offenders. That led to what he calls a miracle job; he was chosen to head a state-wide prison release program from the Texas governors' office. Mr. Sample is now widely recognized for his crime prevention efforts. He received a full pardon and lives with his wife and daughter.

Racehoss: Big Emma's Boy is a classic and Sample is a compelling storyteller. In painstaking detail, he captures the world he lived in. He recreates the southern voices with their music and color, and their crude earthiness. In this story of three generations and a brutal farm prison system, Sample gives us a personal history from a Black perspective that never made it into the history books.

While the book's power and gripping stories are outstanding, Racehoss lacks critical understanding. While Sample generously shares his experiences, his insight from either a social or a spiritual perspective is absent.

It may be that Sample (or his publisher) decided to tell the story with nothing in the way to slow the action or dull the dramatic edge. It may be that a look at why these men and women mistreated each other and how they were able to love and forgive will be the subject of a future book. I hope so. I'd like to read more from Albert Race Sample.



Betsey Brown

By Ntozake Shange

To get straight to the point, Ntozake Shange's *Betsey Brown* is a sweet surprise.

It is sweet because it allows a 13-year-old girl experiencing her first romance to tell the story of the unrest created by desegregation's beginnings. *Betsey* is a surprise because Shange avoids the bitter edge found in many other books about racial injustice.

Betsey Brown shares the frustration of middle-class black people who not only believe they deserve better but who also have the financial means to live better.

Through the Browns, Shange gives a breadth and depth to the black experience not often examined. Those readers who saw Spike Lee's *School Daze* will be reminded in this book of the divisions that existed

between the light-skinned "wannabees" and the dark-skinned "Jigaboos".

Betsey Brown is the oldest of four growing up in St. Louis in 1959. She lives in a three-story brick house with her father, who is a doctor; her mother, a social worker, her Grandma and a teenage cousin, Charlie. The home also includes a variety of housekeepers who add their own color to the household.

Betsey's struggle to grow up, which involves her crush on a high-school basketball player. Self-definition is difficult because of the conflicting signals she receives from her family and society.

Her father tries to instill an appreciation for black culture through music, dance and a knowledge of black history. Mornings in his home begin with the children following him to the kitchen as he plays the congo drums. Once in the kitchen, he quizzes them on famous black people and black contributions to music and literature.

Betsey's grandmother, on the other hand, is proud of her light-skin. She doesn't understand why her daughter married a dark-skinned man with such "niggerish" ways.

Caught in the middle is Betsey's mother, who appreciates her husband but many times shares her mother's weariness of his taste in music and his black consciousness.

Bringing this family tension to a climax, is the Brown children's participation in St. Louis' schools first effort to desegregate.

Betsey's parents are divided over whether desegregation is an important way to help black people advance or a threat to the children.

The book does not resolve any of the differences between the Black men and women here—a realistic touch—but Betsey does mature significantly and is wiser at the end.



Review by Carmen Lee,
a Pittsburgh-based journalist.

WOMAN IN BLACK

The sentence:

*You will spend the rest of your useless life
as a Black Woman.*

The funniest joke:

A Third World Woman

Who wants to be president.

*The most de-humanizing
experience:*

*A Black Bitch/Lady
tried for rape.*

The most damning portrait:

*Sisters fleeing
in opposite directions
cause of somebody else's
leroy.*

The saddest song:

*Black Woman Goddess-arms
left
grabbing polluted air
due to the biggest irony:
We too assertive.*

Donna Hanks
Houston, TX

QUIZ

In honoring the theme of this "Black Men and Women" issue, below are statements from Black Americans as well as short biographies. Can you name the speaker?

1. . . I am my mother's daughter, and the drums of Africa beat in my heart. They will not let me rest while there is a single Negro boy or girl without a chance to prove his worth.
This daughter of former slaves was born in Mayesville, South Carolina. These words are from her work titled *Faith That Moved a Dump Heap*. A college that now bears her name started as the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls.
2. One of the greatest handicaps to our mutual adjustments is the American white man's general ignorance of the Negro race.
These words are from *The Ultimate Effects of Segregation* written in 1914 by former teacher at Talladega and dean at Morgan State College.
3. The world cares very little about what a man or woman knows; it is what the man or woman is able to do.
This statement was from a controversial statesman who was an educator and internationally acclaimed lecturer. He helped to organize the National Negro Business League and founded Tuskegee Institute.
4. In some places in America, black is supposed to symbolize the devil and white symbolize God. But this is partially wrong, for the devil is white and never was black.
These words are from an interview that appeared in the May 16, 1884 *The Baltimore Afro-American*, and the words were spoken by an editor, author and AME Church bishop.
5. Mama may have
Papa may have
But God bless the child that's got his own
Best known as a singer, this lyricist was born in Baltimore, Maryland and performed with Benny Goodman, Count Basie and Artie Shaw.
6. If there is anybody in this land who thoroughly believes that the meek shall inherit the earth, they have not often let their presence be known.
These words are from *The Gift of Black Folk*, published in 1924 by a historian, scholar, educator and sociologist who was the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University.
7. Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can go.
These words are from an essay, *The Fire Next Time*, that established a major American writer in 1962 whose prolific talent also produced plays, novels and numerous magazine articles.
8. I believe racism has killed more people than speed, heroin, or cancer, and will continue to kill until it is no more.
This actress, novelist and director won an Obie for her play *Trouble in Mind*.
9. History is written by the winners.
This best selling writer developed his literary talent in the United States Coast Guard. The adaptation of his genealogical book into a television series was one of the first and most widely watched mini-series in television history.
10. People see God every day, they just don't recognize him.
This actress has appeared on Broadway and in television and films. She has published several books, including an autobiography called *Talking to Myself*. This statement is from a 1967 *The New York Times* interview.
11. . . . it really tickles me when you talk about integration. Because I'm very black, but I remember some of my aunts were as white as anybody here—and blue-eyed and some green-eyed—and my grandfather didn't do it, you know.
These words are from her address to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund Institute titled "The Special Plight of the Black Woman." This woman ran for Congress, organized economic cooperatives, founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and led in the grass-roots civil rights efforts.
12. . . . an American Negro isn't a man—he's a walking defense mechanism.
This prolific novelist was born in Augusta, Georgia and produced such thrilling entertainments as *The Foxes of Harrow*, *Captain Blood* and *Pride's Castle*. Some of his books became movies. He has lived in Spain since the mid 1950s.
13. You can't jive with the Almighty.
This composer and band leader was born in Washington, DC. Radio broadcasts of his performances at the Cotton Club in New York City brought his earliest national attention. In 1950, he was commissioned by Arturo Toscanini to write *Harlem* for the NBC Symphony Orchestra and he produced incidental music for motion pictures and stage productions. He was elected to the Songwriters' Hall of Fame in 1971.
14. The slave master will not teach you the knowledge of self, as there would not be a master-slave relationship any longer.
This nationalist leader was born with the last name Poole near Sandersville, Georgia. These remarks are from his collection of essays titled *Message to the Black Man in America*.
15. Damn the (traffic) lights. Watch the cars. The lights ain't never killed nobody.
This saucy vaudeville comedienne performed for more than 50 years and gained national fame during the 1960s through recordings and television appearances.

Quiz answers on page 29.



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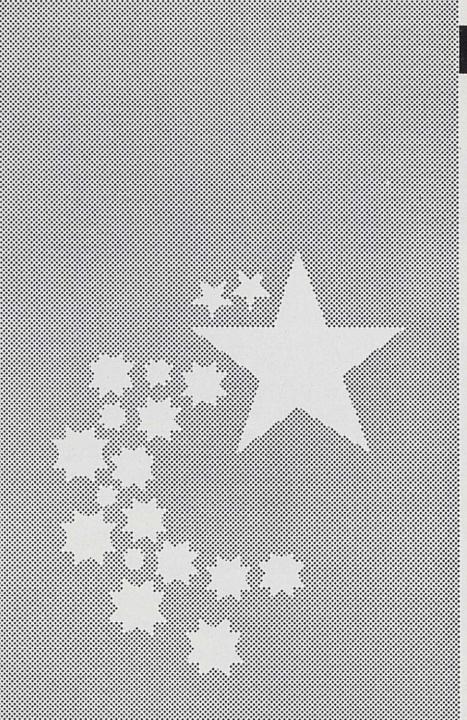
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