

Niki Johnson

5 YEARS LATER



I am living in hell
but stepping on clouds
where everyman's heaven
is the Kingdom's lower level.

Up here the leaves, tumbling to earth
whisper goodbye in jaded streaks
and Jesus is our brother
calloused and soiled
by the side of the road
where bougainvillea stoop
tending his wound.

This is hell, the red prison pulsing
through my limbs, the years
falling too as everything falls
against the emerald me, still new
still pushing up dirt
with shouldered leaves.

Calabash

A JOURNAL OF CARIBBEAN ARTS AND LETTERS

Volume 4, Number 2 / Spring-Summer 2007

Information about this work:

5 YEARS LATER

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Start Page: 34

URL: <http://www.nyu.edu/calabash/vol4no2/0402034.pdf>

Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters is an international literary journal dedicated to publishing works encompassing, but not limited to, the Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The Journal is especially dedicated to presenting the arts and letters of those communities that have long been under-represented within the creative discourse of the region, among them: Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, Maroon societies, and the Asian and Amerindian societies of the region. Calabash has a strong visual arts component.

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Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters
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