

THE
LITERALS

Mission

To stitch, with the written word, the seams that unite the many and varied facets of the patchwork quilt that is the Moorhouse Man. In producing this anthology of literature and research by Honors Program members, we relay wholly and without apology the passionate, witty, introspective, flawed, and forward thinking nature of our being. To disclaim or qualify an 'inkling' of the realities contained in the text within would be to contradict the honesty which our examined lives demand of us. So, we present literature to invigorate the spirit, and research to feed the unquenchable appetite of the beast that is the mind; all original, all student produced.

--Khary Jones

In dedication to Dr. Jocelyn Jackson

The famous adage "beside every good man stands a good woman" rings true in so many cases. However, there exists a special case where a group of over 200 black men who stand proud, strong and tall are supported by one woman. She is a woman of wisdom and integrity, who stands beside these men, yielding unto them the strength that they need to forge ahead. That woman is Dr. Jocelyn Jackson.

A native of Wilson, North Carolina, Jocelyn Whitehead Jackson received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Boston University in 1960. After teaching at Claflin College and the United States Naval Intelligence School, she received her Master of Arts from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Georgetown University in 1966. In 1973, Jocelyn Jackson graduated from Emory University's Institute of Liberal Arts with a doctorate of philosophy in comparative literature.

Dr. Jackson's commitment to the advancement of young, gifted blacks is demonstrated by the success of the honors programs at both Clark and Morehouse Colleges. As founder and director of the Clark College Honors Program in 1973 and the director of the Morehouse College Honors Program since 1987, Dr. Jackson has worked tirelessly to ensure that her students are intellectually challenged.

In addition to her efforts in the Atlanta University Center, Dr. Jackson's work to promote honors education spans across the country. In 1984 Dr. Jackson assumed the role of vice-president of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). The following year she became president of the NCHC. Following her presidency, Dr. Jackson, along with honors program directors from other Historically Black Colleges and Universities, saw the need to emphasize honors education at HBCUs. This observation materialized in 1987 when the National Association of African-American Honors Programs (NAAAHP) was founded.

In addition to purely academic pursuits, Jocelyn Jackson has taken on the role of Coach and director of the Honda All-Star Challenge Team. A successful representation of Morehouse College, the Honda All-Star Challenge Team has continually placed in regional competition and has advanced as far as the final round in national competition. Clearly, the leadership of Dr. Jackson will continue to be a harbinger of future success.

Dr. Jocelyn Whitehead Jackson, it is your turn. It is now time for you to sit back and receive the HONORS designation that is long overdue. We give to you commendations for your 36 years of service. We express to you our sincere thanks for the love, support and encouragement that you have shown. And we hope to bestow unto you the power that you need to press on and complete your tasks on this earth. In short, we dedicate to you *THE LITTERATUS*.

--Deon Garner



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ONLY IN THE SPRINGTIME

The beginning.

Only in the springtime do my eyes stray;
Trying to catch a quick glimpse of,
Every aspect of nature.
I wonder if God created the world and the heavens,
in the spring.
It's quite possible.
Oh how I adore witnessing the birth and rebirth
Of new life.
While running at dawn, I inhale the pure air,
Dripping with fresh morning dew.
It's very refreshing!
The dew of life fills my nostrils,
Physically dampening me, as if I were soaking up
Knowledge.
I'm all alone with nature;
Able to acknowledge and appreciate.



The flowers begin to bud,
As trees begin to bear.
The animals seem oblivious to the
Humans coexistence in this world with them,
For the animals are concerned with day to day life.
Sometimes I get like that too;
Wishing that I were all alone.
How great that would be!
The animals seem so carefree.
Just think!

Sometimes I wish that it were spring all year round.
But then, life would have no future,
Nothing to look forward to.
If life were but spring, then how would we grow?
How could we experience and learn.
I wonder if we would ever die?
But why does the spring seem so much better
Than the other seasons?
But would we ever die?

By Trey Adams



All Photos by Philip Harris

synchronized Armegeddons leave the
soul as mangled as roses after
the kiss of the hurricane - what is
love; what is hate?

we live in a world that is
wrenched within a battle between
night and day; those caught
amidst the middle are trivial,
if not insignificant.

sometimes hell is not the
burning purgatory that compels
the evil to randomly dabble in the
exemplary; sometimes it is the innate
fire that compels us all to hate what is
not like us.

when boyz dance wit boyz

*As midnite approaches da boyz do too..
(children of tha rainbow of darkened hue)
Banjees, fems an' b-boyz too..
(off to tha place to do what they do)
So many of them, such a beautiful site...
(wit da soundz of rhythm in tha middle of nite)
Individually, as a couple or even as house...
(runway an' voguin' children workin' it out)
Givin' face, givin' body as they loosen their hips...
(fems fall to the floor in depth defyin' dips)
Fired up an' waitin' on Madonna to call...
(carta servin' niggaz givin' their all)
When itz all said an' done they begin to depart...
(ears ringin' wit rhythm, minds free from thought)
Seems tha whole scene is just so profound...
(da boyz do dance betta when da girlz aren't around)*

so, too, does love hate to love
those who have hated from the
beginning? does hate flourish from
the excess love of oneself in order to
evoke hate from another?
are you a prisoner
in your personal
Armegeddon?

kevin l. bostick

Eze

The Trick

I stop for a while, I pause, I ponder, thinking... what shall I do next?

Conscious music to stimulate my mind to remind me of the efforts others made to save my behind.

No, enough. Football! Yes, always loved its vigor, competition, vitality, passion.

No, my neurons again say. Read, expand the knowledge base, broaden each horizon so that you'll be better equipped to handle all future positions.

Tired, enough of academia and intellectual stimulation. A movie, maybe, or a drive perhaps or visit a friend with whom I could chat, chill, interact; but it all seems to come back to essence, meaning, significance.

What is it? I know not. This undying quest for life's truest meaning seems to continually trap me in a chaotic swing from left to right and then in no specific direction while my head spins with it into oblivion.

Help, I need? No, I disagree. Just an acute sense of consciousness defining an identity that perpetually seeks life's epitome.

Chill, I tell myself, relax from time to time.

I try and I am successful for some time, then my juices flow again, the quest resumes to find out solutions and answers to all that exists now and in the future.

Maybe that requires divine intervention or inspiration from above or influence from the ones we love.

Maybe it is not possible to decipher God's thoughts and the inevitable details that follow.

Maybe life's equation is not meant to be solvable.

I know not at this time if it is, but while I manage my business I'll simultaneously attempt to surpass the highest dimension of thought of philosophers and scientists alike, consumed in assessing the purpose of life.

No answers yet for all, though some seem to have approached the vast periphery of God's entirety.

One thing is for sure, I am concerned with the issues at hand necessary for the survival and well being of our fellow man and woman alike. But, alas, I ought not to stop there, that decision would be poor, yes indeed, it is imperative that I do more.

Yes, in my few years of experience and analysis I do not believe we ought just to create comfort for our family structure or even only aid our extended brother and sister; but beyond these and all else that occupies our thoughts, there lies a vast reservoir of untapped knowledge that many have not sought namely the realm of thinking of the creator and all that is on his/her agenda for us now and in the future.

So as I live, I'll seek to acquire the maturity and understanding, necessary for grasping such thinking, when I reach that plateau of reasoning, maybe then I'll acquire life's truest meaning.

Nicholas Fuller

The Quitter's Tale

**I chose the road lest sought after
I tried to stay at rest
my heart midly weary
from not giving my best
My mind was overwhelmed
at how pathetic I'd become.
I chose the path of a quitter
and my world had become undone.**

**I listened not to the warnings
of my family and my friends
I just plunged deeper and deeper
into the abyss that I'd began.
My heart had skipped a beat
my spirit had also been crushed
for I once was man of valor
had now become as dust.**

**This didn't have to happen
not to one as smart as I
to the world I was a leader
In my eyes I should have died
My legs had become as weak as
a puny stalk of grass
I had chosen the path that was costless
Now I must pay at last.**

**Don't follow my steps if you're weary
for nothing is ever free
the price you pay now is cheaper
than the cost in eternity.
My soul will always tell me
of the things I could have been
had I not taken the path of a quitter
But the one of a champion.**

By Nathaniel Drysdale

As If You've Been Deprived

you howl as if you've been
deprived. . .deprived for so long-
a wolf burning in heat, craving for
a taste of something sweet,
treats throwing away their latex wrappers,
thrusting themselves into the darkness of the
intangible-
touch and go- no,
i don't think so,
the love has melted in the heat-
as if you didn't know.
where does that insatiable sensation arise?
is it in your chest, or is it
between your thighs?
time continues to tick while ignorance
continues to stick potent confusion
into a distorted illusion as the brain-dead
stands erect without the ability to protect
what was created inside with nowhere to hide,
causing posterity to spill without the desire
to fulfill-
love takes a crooked course,
but never the course of ignorance;
the passion of a volcano
is only a candle, yet,
for the slave in heat, it is a burning
he can't handle;
and you still howl as if you've been
deprived-
brothers be living without knowing
they've died.

kevin I. bostick

"The Day I Died"

I'd always wished I could see the future, and, looking at my forecast of events perceive tragedy before it occurred. Then, if I couldn't change anything, I would at least be prepared--in the very least, I could brace myself. However, that just ain't the way life plays its game...Life's black clouds of disaster rain random showers of terror on whomever fate chooses. One can only wonder, "Who will be next?"

Standing here, a striking contrast to my tranquil environment, I think with bitter resentment, "If I had known--if only I had known that today would be the last day of my life, I would have made sure I didn't live to see it."

A tear escapes my clouded eye, slipping quietly down a pallid cheek. From within my pulseless chest, a sigh struggles to emerge. "Why, God?" I whisper. "Too young...just too young to die."

There is no reply. As usual, God has nothing to say. Only the sound of a lonesome wind fills my ears. It brushes my face in passing, leaving me cold and empty like a coffin whose occupant has long rotted away. Decomposed. It doesn't matter, though. I can feel no pain, hurt, or worry. I am dead.

Deals of laughter: "Come on, silly!"

We were in the public park, Aisha and I. I wore blue jeans and a sweater, while she donned a yellow flowered sun dress that hung loosely around her young figure. I can remember how the sun caught her subtle brown eyes like two ebony jewels as she urged me to hurry. I had embraced her instead. She pinched me in a playful attempt to get away, but I held her fast.

"I love you."

"I love you." I did love her--more than any man has ever loved someone. I suppose I will never be able to tell her again. I can never tell anyone again.

She struggled from my arms and ran ahead, beckoning with an 'urgent gesture "Come on!"

I can't even recall where she was taking me, but I never arrived. Suddenly, in a blur of sight and sound, my life came to a screeching halt... Shouts of anger ahead. Curses. Threats...slamming car doors; the high pitched squeal of racing tires; the roar of an approaching engine-- A black vehicle sped toward us, people running after it. Then, four explosions-- one right behind another. Bullets tore through precious flesh, whining as they flew. Fresh blood poured, deep violet, onto the hard ground. Screams of terror filled my ears. Another explosion, and an invisible spear found its mark in the heart. Such pain... It was over, then. Blood covered the ground, forming little pools in the cracks. Only the distant sounds of a racing vehicle and fleeing people are heard. I staggered to where Aisha was standing, her eyes wide, her mouth open, tears streaming...

I caught her before she fell. Her blood poured warmly from her wounds and over my hands. My blue jeans, turned purple, like some gruesome chameleon. Dear God! She was crying without sound. Her hands were clenched into little fists. It was hurting her so much. Oh God, why not me? Why not me instead?

I loved her so much, and as I looked into her dimming eyes, I told her. Her trembling form began to subside. Her eyes clouded over, and staring up at me, she uttered her last word.

"Daddy..."

Mine was the last face she saw.

I died, then. Right in my own arms, I just stopped living. They killed her. She was murdered in the crossfire of their senseless violence, and now I am dead--just a lifeless shell, a walking corpse.

Yes the sun shines, but I cannot see it. I no longer see the butterfly, the green grass, or the colorful flowers that lay before me. Only the cold, indifferent slab of rock they put her under--a slab that tells the span of her life, but nothing of all the joy she brought during it. Nothing... I stand bleakly in this yard. The coolness of an early autumn day pricks my neck. Leaves rustle on undressing trees and flutter like fainting butterflies to the earth. I don't notice. I don't even care. I am deceased--just the ghost of a man standing six feet above the precious life I lost one year ago, today.

--by R. William Johnson

My Life

I stand on a rock, dawn lurks behind me, crabs and scorpions search for their prey whilst the tide rises peacefully. Life is simple and all seems possible. I am the foci of attention of many, such that naive love emanates from within and defines my premature identity.

I stand on a rock and the sun climbs beyond the horizon, the black birds leave hieroglyphic type trails on the sand, upon which the vibrant waters and the sun casts an illuminating pattern. But the brightness is ironic, my stepfather has transcended this dimension, leaving a desperate mother to provide for her daughter and teenage son.

I stand on a rock, the sun radiates normally on the sand, the waters are disturbed by its occupants and the sky is dominated by black birds, herons and swans. The widowed mother stands majestically before her own, instructing, guiding and leaving nothing to be unknown. I grasp her concept, so does my older sibling and so through our innate abilities we strive towards familial improvement.

I stand on a rock, the sun and tide descend from our midst as a cool gentle breeze dries the moisture of anxiety on my lips. My focus is fixed, I know of the obstacles in my way and so via diligence, I achieve specific objectives throughout each day. Alas, my anxiety intensifies as two dear ones depart, my strength seems depleted, should I re-start? No, I tell myself, just continue and maximize the time that exists, for in a finite period, we'll depart from this earthly abyss.

I stand on a rock, but I must leave; the breeze, wind, gale, storm, it has come this way. The water is rough, I ought to go quickly, I have had enough. I have found my niche, I know what I must do, through several means I will accomplish more than just a few. But what is there thereafter, when my time comes? What is this esoteric existence, is there yet another chapter? I am uncertain and so I live and ponder, doing what I must until I am unable any longer.

Nicholas Fuller

Rwanda, Oh Rwanda

1

Your men are dwelling in the hate of their images
slashing at the sons of your soil
with their blind vision.

Their eyes born to death
as their claws sever
the souls of your world.

A cosmos, engulfed in the lava's abyss
and masked by the devil's glory
which commanded this human feast
in the honor of the walking dead
who have thrust upon their hearts and souls
the comfort of your spear.

2

As your women
glide like ghosts
in the stillness of your fetid air
bearing only witness to this human
feast which has devoured their creations
and left their bleeding tears to
wash the souls of the living
in the serpent's venom-
Logic is detached from its conscience realm
left in cruel reality.

3

While your children's
starved hearts
shed their innocence
and offer the devil's angels
their burning souls
that seek solace in
the sorcerer's bosom
and nourishment in the
knowledge of evil,
They have realized nature
in Satan's parentage.

4

RWANDA, OH RWANDA
fear not
for there lies redemption
not for the creators
but for the created.

Kato Mukuru

'Coming Out' from Behind the Mask

"This is my life. / Such a small closet / Too small for me / Too small for anyone / Especially one as phenomenal as I am / Too lonely for me / Too dark for me / Too crappy for me / Too bad for you: I'm coming out / I'm coming out of this closet ... today..."

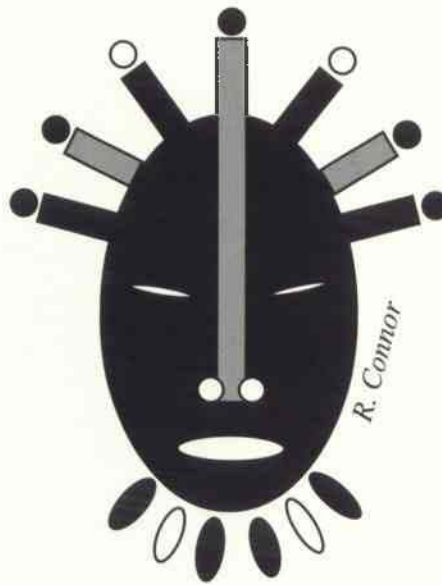
-Antwann Cartwright

The revealing words of a young Morehouse poet and, more importantly, the prevailing story of my life. Quite naturally, coming out signifies a turning point in my life. Indeed, it is on that day I vowed not to lead the often tragic life of the closeted black homosexual/bisexual.

For those who cannot relate to the coming-out process, I can assure you that it is both affirming and precarious all at once. This I already realize even though my own homosexual/bisexual rites of passage have only just begun. I can easily recall the very first day that I promised myself I would come out. But for whatever reason, the time was just never quite right. Well, here I am nearly a half-decade later, and I have run out of excuses.

So naturally, I stand ready to follow in the footsteps of James Baldwin, Essex Hemphill, Marlon Riggs, June Jordan, Audre Lourde, E. Lynn Harris, Me' Shell

NdegeOcello, Elias Farajaje-Jones and all my other proud, uncloseted, black gay/bisexual family. I understand, however, that most of my homosexual brothers of the House will proceed in the footsteps of Langston Hughes and



Countee Cullen, insistent upon 'masking' their sexuality. While I respect their decisions, I have chosen to depart from the rugged road mapped out by Hughes to join a beautiful caravan of black folk on a heavenly highway carved out by Baldwin.

I must confess that the decision to come out was not an easy one. There were so many things to consider. Would my family agree with my decision? How would other students, gay and straight, respond? What would my professors say? Would closeted gay/bisexual students see me as a threat?

Frankly, I have only a limited concern for the type of responses I will receive from heterosexuals. Instead, I view the response and concern of my immediate family and my extended homosexual/bisexual family as much more important. So, if I shock a few of my heterosexual associates in the process, I make no apologies.

If I appear a tad bit bitter, it is because I am. But understand that my bitterness is directed inwardly because it was my decision to wear the homosexual equivalent of Paul Laurence Dunbar's dubious mask for so long. Honestly, words cannot describe what it is like to be in an

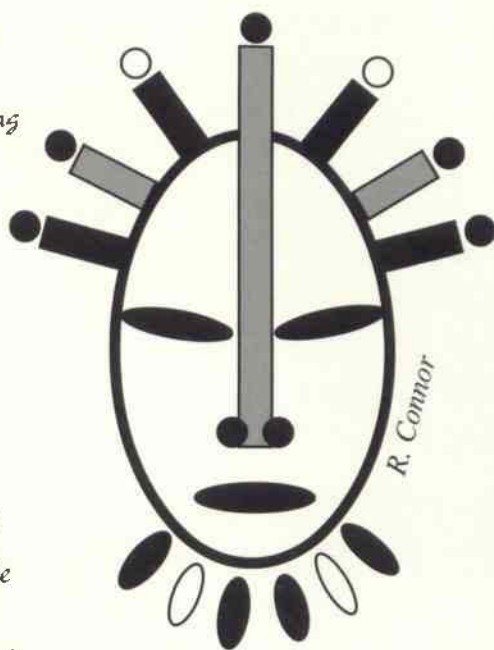
emotional relationship with another beautiful, black man only to be forced to conceal your every action. And now that I am finally out, it has no significance because he now resides many miles away from this place.

Similarly, I cannot begin to tell you what it feels like to sit in silence when homophobic or heterosexist statements are being made, your lips sealed by the fear of being discovered. And while I did speak out against heterosexism and homophobia a lot more than I thought I would, it is clear to me that I didn't always speak when I should have.

I remember one incident all so vividly. In front of a sizable audience gathered to hear the student body election speeches, I suffered humiliation at the hands of an anonymous audience member. Roughly five seconds into my reelection speech is when it all happened. Out of nowhere, the anonymous student bellowed the only five letter word that I would have

preferred not to hear during the elections: "A'DODI," he yelled.

The room filled with an imposing silence much like the silence I spoke of earlier. My initial reaction was to 'read' him in the same fashion that I



would have 'read' an undesired admirer at a club. But instead, I gave the student (whoever and wherever he was) one of my trademark smiles.

Needless to say, I smiled out of fear: the pervasive fear of having my fellow students know

something about me that was so intimate my immediate family had not yet been told. I relate this incident only to say that while the uncloseted homosexual will encounter many new issues that he must grapple with, there are a number of old issues that I fortunately no longer must contend with.

In short, there is an alternative for all of my brothers still crowded in that small, cramped closet. Yes, I am confident that for every closet there is a magical key which can unlock those beautiful, black brothers trapped inside. So, to my gay/bisexual brothers still grappling with the choice that inherently confronts you, I leave you with the simple words of Samuel R. Delany taken from the introduction of *Shade: An Anthology of Fiction by Gay Men of African Descent*. "If coming out is where you are, embrace it; use it. It gives strength and, yes, pleasure."

-By Obinna Eze Lewis

"This is my life. / Such a small closet / Too small for me / Too small for anyone / Especially one as phenomenal as I am / Too lonely for me / Too dark for me / Too crappy for me / Too bad for you: I'm coming out / I'm coming out of this closet ... today..."

-Antwonn Cartwright

'Coming Out' from Behind the Mask

I Often Wonder

I often wonder why he comes to take
My loves away. Is it to cause me pain
And sadness beyond tears? I always wake
From sleep in dreams of storms and pouring rain;
Attempts to water down the misery
Caused by a madman who snacks on my soul.
Yet, there is some peculiarity,
Since he is one half that makes our lives whole.
This predator, who preys on all that live,
Can put fear into the bravest of men.
Because he takes and takes and does not give,
And then waits for the living til the end.
He will follow us all through time and space,
There is nowhere to run: death we must face.

--by Jelani Mahiri

Paint Ya'self

Paint Ya'self

1970

MANIPULATED PICTURES

To see the world in its fullest view

It's not very hard

It simply requires

A LITTLE WORK

Observation

Imagination &

COURAGE

To face the entire scene

07

THE PICTURE

YOU JUST LEFT

Accepting- ugliness or beauty

Appreciating- texture and initiative

Altering- each new painting- - To

improve- Improve- IMPROVE

And Force

Ya'self into as many different frames

As possible- - - - cuz ya' know. . .

It's hard to see the whole picture if
you're inside the painting

Paint Ya'self:

Darick Morton

Sounds of My Life

*Hustle, Bustle, Pass me by...
I listen to the hum of my mind
It's a machine purring quietly, tending its business
The machine's purr is music.
It patterns after a bustling rhythm
Began eras ago in far away lands
It is a state of soul
Hungry, lively, quick, pulsating
Palpitation*

Idle

*The silence of complacency
Deafening noise
Placating silence
Oft sought
Cleansing silence
Purgatory
The trivial noise that is life
buzzes continuously to the side of this machine
Spitting out different voices
Some encourage the machine
Others improve, discourage, stall

It all comes out in shades of gray
Some lighter, some darker, still gray.*

Michael Hickson

true love

sometimes, the tremors of love
can tear my soul apart as intensely
as the streaks of lightning divide
the night into shadows of the devil's
darkness; when what was meant to be
never was, and what was thought to be
never evolved, and i am left to meander as
a nomad in solitude and despondency.

'tis a simplicity of life, i suppose-
for some; yet for me, a complexity.
love projects are only futile endeavors
to find peace within oneself at the
mercy of another soul.
to me, it is all a question of sincerity,
honesty, and commitment.
Synthetic love affairs simply fade away as
white snow in springtime amidst the birth
of things more tangible - true love.

kevin l. bostick

"I can't feel you.

Don't look at me, here,

So close...so close...near

To you, but, the dark, you can't see through.

You can't see me in this

Dark light between us;

My mind is only concerned with the measure of each thrust,

There being no need for your kiss.

Those lips don't interest me

And neither do you.

I'm looking, pushing, through you

And pain is as ambivalent as pleasure.

I'm alone in this pursuit.

You could very well be deaf and dumb;

Even numb.

The only thing I ask is for you not to be mute.

I want to hear you

Making it better for me.

Don't stop until I tell you to

And, remember,

I don't feel you."

-on thoughts of Olds

Lance McBride

Perfection

"Words"

The poem is eloquent,
with big, beautiful-sounding words.
It tells me a tale of
butterflies and daffodils,
children's innocence and misty memories,
and all-powerful love.
I am immersed in the beauty of the poem
until I remember that I must go out into
the real world

I must watch my back.

I must be wary of the
bullet with my name on it,
of the alley that spells my doom,
of the myriad of people
who want what I have,
regardless of the cost.
I can't dress nicely
or carry change,
for that attracts criminals.
I can't make eye contact,
that may bring trouble also.
Just to survive I must
sacrifice my pride in
a million ways everyday.
In this world I live in,
death is too easy to find
and life too hard to preserve.
But then I wonder,
what happened to the words?
What happened to the butterflies
and daffodils and misty memories?
Why is there all-consuming hate
instead of all-powerful love?

I become angry with
the poem and the poet.

How can this man be
such a liar? How can
he write about love when all
I see is hate? But I realize
it is not his fault. He tells of
an ideal world, and I live in
the real world. Oh,
if only his words described the real world.

Aman Nadhiri

It's driving me mad,
this quest
to be nothing
less.
"to err is human"
as the old proverb says.
So I struggle,
and learn,
and fight,
but lest I make a mistake,
the noose will surely be tied
tight.

Will I ever be righteous?
What can I do?
An answer arrives
From the great Pharcyde
"I guess we're all jigaboos."

Arthur Conquest

This is an excerpt from a forthcoming, yet untitled, novel. The author is Edwards Jackson, a Senior Drama/English double major.

James Pritchard struggled out of his candy red Toyota MR2 with one armful of groceries and the other clutching a dozen roses. At twenty-nine, he was still in that enamored stage with his young wife of only five years that he had met at NYU and had courted for three years. Both touting degrees from the university, his in criminology and hers in drama, the two made a tidy little income of over \$140,000, as a rising police detective and a head of a drama department at a private school in suburban San Francisco, respectively. The couple themselves lived in suburban San Francisco, far removed from the jungles of urban New York where the two had lived, met, and vowed never to return. Between the criminals, the cabbies, the traffic, smog, and general "inhospitality" of the people, the Pritchards were ecstatic about their two story, red roofed, ranch style home in a quiet suburb of San Francisco.

The groceries were anticipated, the roses a surprise. It wasn't their anniversary, nor her birthday (unless he forgot again and got lucky this time!), nor news about promotion to Chief Detective. Captivated by his beautiful, blond wife, who seemed to become more and more beautiful each day, the roses were simply a love token. With her willowy form and crystal blue eyes, Pritchard's wife had been a sure-fire success when the two had moved out to California to pursue her acting career. The industry absorbed her for three years on TV sitcoms before she had wanted out and grabbed the vacant drama head at the local Catholic high school. Her success matched her husband's, whose star was rising with the San Francisco Police Department. After thousands of dollars and years of eyeburning study invested in higher education, the couple was finally reaping the benefits. It was the life they had always dreamed of.

Pritchard somehow managed to finagle the doorknob to twist with the hand filled with roses, and gently kicked the door open. He turned, once inside, to nudge the door back closed, and turned back around with a grin of satisfaction at his romantic ingenuity.

Honey, I'm home.

Pritchard's jaw dropped open, his knees locked, and his eyes stuck on the floor, where his wife's head was obscured by a mess of frazzled blond hair covering a pool of blood. The roses and groceries cascaded clumsily to the floor as a direct result of what he saw sitting in the chair next to this dead wife. A white man, about the same shade as Pritchard, dressed in some sort of blue work overalls, sat calmly with an almost used up cigarette in one hand and a .45 fitted with a silencer in the other. Honey, you're late.

Then everything went into slow motion. The strange man took a drag from the cigarette as he nonchalantly fired three bullets into Pritchard's chest. First, the knees buckled and the shoulders collapsed, as every ounce of humanity fled out of the entrance wounds of the bullets. Once the knees hit the ground, the man in overalls turned his head as Pritchard's torso unceremoniously hit the beige living room carpet with a thud. The man exhaled his

smoke, walked over to the kitchen, and emptied the cigarette down the garbage disposal. He turned it on and off before walking out of the front door, stepping over the dead bodies of who were the Pritchards, living the life they had always dreamed of.

The man peeled off the giant US West sticker off the side of the white minivan parked a door down from the Pritchard's, careful to see that no one had noticed, before entering the driver's side and pulling away. He headed south, towards the Golden Gate Bridge, to return the van at the rental agency he had found two days ago in downtown San Francisco. After depositing the minivan and paying his seventy-eight dollars, he walked over to the bus stop outside the agency, waiting for anything to take him to the BART station. He needed to get back to Oakland to his hotel room. Nonchalantly, he disposed of a pair of surgical gloves in the trash can next to the station just as the bus pulled up. Pritchard, in his shock, had failed to notice the thin flesh colored surgical gloves the man was wearing to drive the police crazy. The man was no fool.

Actually, the man was a professional killer, Terry Newland. Or was it Neil Biesecker today? Sometimes the man forgot, he carried so many fake identifications around, one for thirty five of the fifty states. Born Felix Manning in a tiny town in South Dakota, Manning was an enigma to almost all who knew him, or thought they knew him. No one had known him, personally, for over six years, and the last person who had, Manning had had the unfortunate task of eliminating her. Ever since then, Manning never let anyone get too close, choosing his jobs selectively, and eliminating his targets. He had no friends because when one killed, especially in the machinelike fashion Manning did, no one would dare want to be on a personal level with him. Outsiders assumed that killing was a game to him, which it was, but a game that he took very, very seriously.

Manning wasn't the best, but he was the best for the price. This hit was for only \$10,000, a bargain considering how professional it was. No noise, no fingerprints, and no complications. It would go down in the police books as unsolved. Real customers paid extra for that kind of cleanliness.

Now he would have to go out of the country for a little while. It never made sense to put himself on the other side of the earth because it would look too much like an alibi. Maybe the Bahamas this time. Yeah, that did sound good. Felix smiled as the bus bounced and jolted up another one of those damn hills paved with cobblestone. He wasn't one of those fools who left any traces, or ran around bragging that they were wanted in sixteen countries or whatever. Felix had not gotten so much as a traffic ticket in the last three years, and his most heinous legal offense was not paying his taxes for the last ten years. If the government could never find him, they could not tax him. How did one categorize his line of work? Taking out the trash, a sanitation engineer?

Felix never had respect for his targets, especially Pritchard. Just another piece of yuppie pond scum wiped off the face of the earth. What was sad was eliminating the wife, though. Pretty little thing, with her blond self would've been a nice lay, if Felix still did that sort of thing. It was a sort of service to Hollywood anyway; Pritchard's wife was a crappy actress made for TV sitcoms. Anyway, Pritchard should have known not to have run on the mafia.

"Falling Stars (Burlington, Ontario, Canada: August '93)"

We sat on something; perched, looking out over Lake Ontario like roosters carving their silhouettes out of the dawn's horizon. But we were in the dark. Draped in the pitch black, celestial, quilt of an August night: me, Derrick, and the son of our host, Mr. Brejnick, rested. I've since forgotten the kid's name as I have the specifics of the object on which we sat, but he was cool. And maybe what we were sitting on isn't so important. Because that night on the outskirts of Toronto while we twig fished, I think all of us saw ourselves; not in the sense of physically seeing our reflection in a mirror for on that night seeing our reflections was impossible. In the darkness, we were not luminous. The moon, full, and at the height of its vanity hovered above us, sizing itself up in the light reflective pool of Lake Ontario; perhaps reassuring itself that it was the Lord of the Night. But as this occurred I thought to myself, how can it be when we rely on the sun's light to see the moon in the night? I will let the moon continue to believe in its superiority.

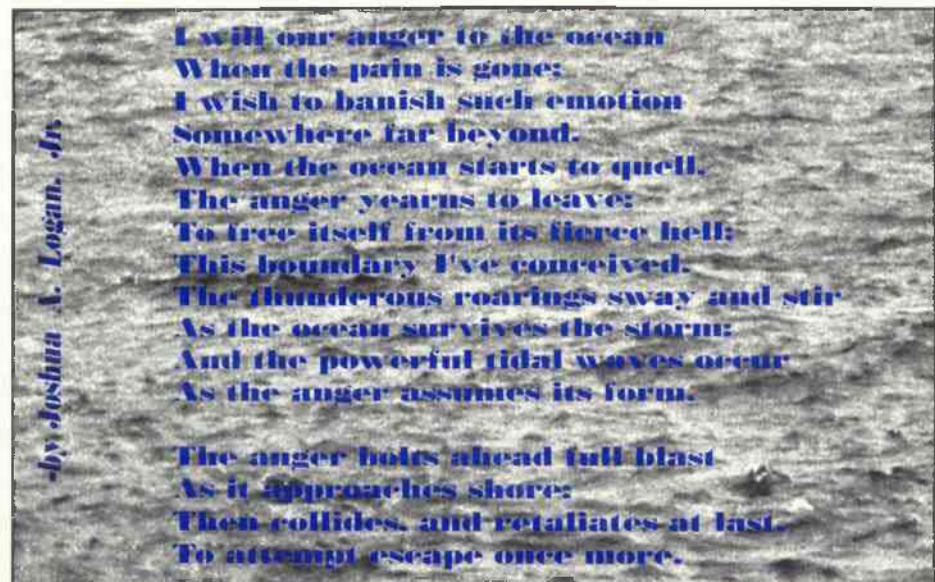
Nothing ever tugged at our lines. And after a while we cast our twigs out into the water. We were away from the competing imitations of the big city's skyscrapers, and so the night sky appeared as the night sky should. We talked, but our dialogue too has been lost to the subconscious wasteland of my mind. And still there is the possibility that no words were exchanged: just thoughts, just truths, just meanings that were understood because, away from the heart of the Madness, there was no interference to scramble what we all knew inside of us. However, I believe that most of us don't have it anymore, let alone know what it is. The

Madness does this to us. It demagnetizes us all. You can see this change as we progress in age from infancy to adolescence. Babies don't need to speak because they already understand. But time and the world huddles them into nonexclusive stables where they mount flat-faced, and saddle-less ponies that ride them off into adulthood. I suppose.

Maybe we weren't sitting. Perhaps at first, but after a while certainly not. I mean, how can you be of the stars and remain anchored to the earth? It's impossible. And we were up there in the stars for sure! I remember. That black and infinite, void, nothingness was velvety. Each fiber of it caressed a distinct and detectable patch of our bodies, incorporating us into the universal whole. Like a deep, expansive bean-bag that supports you, yet perpetually gives until home training alerts you that something is all too comforting about what you are feeling—dream-like almost. At that moment the velvety net snaps, hurling you back to the surface and to that same stationary log from which you launched only seconds before.

Oh, that's what it was...a log. We saw a lot of falling stars that night.

Khary Jones



Observing the world of urban life,
where inner-city inhabitants are called the "under-class"
because they are minorities,
not whites.

The corner store is stocked
with alcohol, cigarettes, and pork,
and anything else
that will cause physical strife
and make your life span short.

Prostitutes procure clients on the street,
but the oldest profession will stop
with the sound of escaping feet,
when the cops drive around the 'hood
on a routine sweep.

Bullets evicted,
the fireworks of a spent round,
parents rush their kids in the house
while victims perish on the ground.
Sirens sound in the night,
as an ambulance picks up a young Black male,
the latest casualty of a gun fight.

Youth openly disrespect
while elders keep their mouths shut,
quiet is kept.

The concrete is cracked,
the grass is dead,
people walk the streets
never raising their heads,
for fear that a wayward glance
will result in senseless violence,
greetings and salutations fall silent.



"Andy's Playground"

William Anderson, The Collection of Amistad Gallery, 1992

Sights Through the Eyes on a Shetto Ride



The homeless are desperate,
but no one seems to care.
Spare change is dispersed on the rare
occasion that someone feels compassion in their heart,
but that will change
the next time they encounter
a needy soul pushing a shopping cart.

Filthy rats crawl on the ground.
Urban areas and sewers
are where vermin are found.
Stray dogs and alley cats roam the streets,
on alert for animal control vans
as they search for something to eat.
Road kill is vehicular homicide,
the result is a hit cat or dog
left to die.

Hustlers put their product on the market,
whether its blunts to spark
or condoms out the carton.

Trash litters the street.
It is often dropped,
seldom picked up,
so it remains below the feet.

But what about the garbage that jack the weak,
the crooks,
the criminals.
Are they evil
or just following the code of the streets?

-Joseph Mays Jr.

Theft

When the day began, it was a beautiful hot summer day. My brother, Ikemefuna, and I decided to dress alike in our favorite outfits: our plain red t-shirts, black hi-top sneakers, dark green shorts with pockets, and gold-toned belts. Looking our sharpest, we went into the living room and then out of the front door. We patiently waited in line behind five others at the bus stop where ten minutes later we caught a bus to the mall.

As soon as we got inside the crowded mall, a man wearing white shoes, white pants, and a white t-shirt that had a map of Portugal on it, ran up to us smiling saying, "Hello and how are you?"

We thought that this guy was a weirdo, but we were polite and I responded, "Oh, just fine, and how are you?"

He said he was OK and introduced himself as a salesman. He reached into his back pocket and pulled out a small, white Bible and offered to sell it to us. We refused. He persistently tried again and again and again. The more we refused, the more he insisted. Fed up and frustrated, Ikemefuna and I simultaneously gave him a resounding "NO!" and he grew angry and cursed at us. We could tell he was afraid to fight, though, because he knew that Ikemefuna and I would have surely won. Even angrier, he threw the Bible on the ground at our feet and quickly walked away--still cursing. I said, "Hey! A free book! Let's keep it!" and I put it in my pocket.

We started walking around, looking for something to eat, because we had forgotten to eat breakfast. As we walked and talked, a man wearing dark blue shorts and a red T-shirt that had on it written in white, "Oive le Blanc," which we did not understand, was eagerly staring at us and decided to approach us.

He asked us with a strange, heavy accent, "May I buy this place from you?"

We were dumbfounded and after a pause, Ikemefuna said, "This place is for everyone. No one OWNS the mall!"

"Well good," he said with excitement, "then it belongs to me!"

I paused and whispered to Ikemefuna. "This guy must be crazy!" As I was whispering, the man joyfully looked around. As I finished, he extended his left hand to shake ours and we reciprocated. He walked away, headed towards the gun shop.

We paid him no attention as we continued to search for food. We stopped at a restaurant called THE GREEN PALACE and decided to eat there. Pretty large-leafed dark green plants were all over the spacious restaurant. We noticed that it was weird that there was no line, but we just went to the counter, bought our chicken sandwiches, sat down and commenced to eat.

As we ate, we talked about different things, from schoolwork to parties, and occasionally glanced into the main part of the mall and saw that the once crowded mall was not quite as populated as it was earlier. Ikemefuna mentioned, "Well, maybe it's closing early today." We finished our sandwiches and left the restaurant.

As we walked out, we saw to our left the two guys who had individually spoken to us before and two other guys who were dressed similarly to us. They were talking and they looked very angry. As soon as they saw us, they slowly headed in our direction. We stood there wondering what they wanted. Gradually their pace quickened to running speed and I yelled, "Yo, Ikemefuna, let's break!"

The four guys chased us wildly, and were gaining on us. The man with the red shirt and white lettering pulled out a gun and yelled, "STOP OR I'LL SHOOT!"

We did not, but instead increased our pace. We were flying, but they were still catching up, especially the two guys who were dressed like us. To slow them down, I reached into my pocket and pulled out the small white Bible and threw it at them, but it did no good.

We flew out of the mall doors breathing hard. We were still running, but a few seconds later, we were stopped by a wall of men who were, like the first man we met, wearing all white. The four guys caught up, and the one with the gun said to us, "You're under arrest!"

"What for?" Ikemefuna asked. "We didn't do anything!"

"Shut up!" the man said as he waved the short black handgun in Ikemefuna's face. He mumbled something to one of the men in white, and they marched us to a parking lot full of small red and blue patty-wagons, each with new white-walled tires.

They opened the large back doors of one and literally threw Ikemefuna and me inside, locking the door. There were no windows and no light, so we could not see anything, and I knew that Ikemefuna and I were definitely not alone, but with lots of other people—so many that I could not move! Some people were praying aloud asking God "to deliver" them. Fear overtook my body. The fetid stench of urine and feces filled the seemingly airtight box we were randomly packed in. I called Ikemefuna's name and he replied that he was alright. I began to ask myself, "What did we do?" I felt like crying. I could already hear other people crying.

The patty-wagon began to move, and we certainly did not know where we were going. After three urinations, a defecation, and what seemed like an eternity, the vehicle stopped. We were dragged out one by one, and discovered that we were at some sort of isolated prison camp.

Dirty and foul smelling, Ikemefuna and I, among many others who were also dressed similarly to us, including the two who were with the men in white, were each brought before a judge-like figure who said, "You are hereby sentenced to life imprisonment."

Nnaemeka Egwuekwe, Jr.

KNOWLEDGE IS KEY

Q-Tip, the rap artist of the group *A Tribe Called Quest* made a profound statement in the song, "Check the Rhime." This request was bold and had relevance to the Black community. His quote, "If knowledge is the key then just show me the lock," stirs up a great deal of wonder in my mind, and many questions are raised.

What does the statement "Knowledge is Key" really mean? As a high school football player, I remember Coach Norwood saying that DEFENSE was key. This had an obvious meaning and specific benefits. If a team plays good defense, they will beat the other team. Well if the former statement can be applied to this one, I have more questions. "Who are we playing against?", and "What are the rules?" Also, "How do we win?"

At Morehouse we have many fine scholars. Professors as well as students possess a wealth of knowledge that can be matched by very few. Morehouse has produced some of the most knowledgeable Men in the world, and will continue to do so in years to come. Men come out of Morehouse as powerful, intelligent, articulate Men with the ability and energy to change the world. Morehouse prides herself with the knowledge that is contained in the brains (and hearts!!) of these great Men.

Why is it that we have so much knowledge, but find it so difficult to put it to use. Granted, many of our alumni become prominent doctors, lawyers, businessmen and educators. Many others go on to excel in a variety of different areas but no one has found "The Lock." Where is this ever-hidden "lock" and what's behind the door it's holding shut? I want to know: "Where

do we go from here?" Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of Morehouse's most notable alumni, asked this question as a title of one of his books. He also offered two possible solutions: Chaos or Community. This is a serious question that Blacks need to ponder. Many look at the generation to which almost all present *Men of Morehouse* belong as the pothole in the road to success. DuBois had a theory that the first seven generations after slavery would

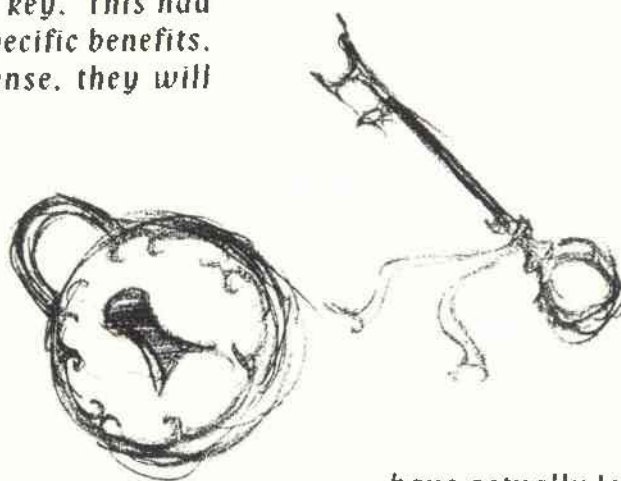
suffer but progress, to make living comfortable for the eighth generation and beyond. We are the seventh, and the only one that has not progressed from the status of our parents. Many feel we

have actually lost ground in the last 20 years. Despite the advancements


of scholars like Nima Warfield, (who was recently named a Rhodes Scholar), black on black crime is higher than it ever was and the judicial system is eating up our supply of Black men.

Is their hope for the black race? Perhaps, if we find this lock, we'll know exactly which knowledge to gain. Only one key can open "THE LOCK." In other words, there may be a certain area of "knowledge" that is required to open the door to ??????????. We must realize that our future and the future of our children is at stake. In the immortal words of Howard Thurman, "We are not here to play, to dream to drift; we have hard work to do, and loads to lift, shun not the struggle! 'Tis God's gift! Be strong."

--J. Todd Phillips



A Tribute to the Black Woman



"Be not discouraged, Black women of the world, but push forward, regardless of the lack of appreciation shown you."

--Amy Jacques Garvey

Infatuation with a darkie

Excuse me miss darkskin
darkie
your strength and beauty I know
but not you

fingers would love to laugh
with your long
neck
and learn about ease
from your hips
kiss your cheeks
and wait

for
the weight
of your

full
Afrikan
lips to fall
(on
me)
relaxed/

like satisfaction

fingers would love to feed
you
freedom/
love/respect

and splash in the sunlight that spills/
falls from
your mouth
over those lips
I love

Could you imagine a poem
between your thighs
about a brother who tries
and sometimes succeeds
In loving you
the right way (?)

A poem in your mouth
about a kiss
or a song/
(some perfect notes performing/
on a pink stage/
behind solid curtains of white/
soft ones of brown)

A poem between your thighs
about the scent of satisfaction
and home
(a world of people born from there)

A poem on your back
about arch

on/under/in between your breasts
about sex and sleep
and silence

a poem on my pen
like you're on my mind
(I Love You)

Can you image a poem
between your thighs?

(How about a poet?)

By Umi Vaughn

As You Strut

Walk right on by!
Just walk by - with your head held.
AS IF IT HOLDS up the sky

As you strut the world still turns -
Before you "strat" it did the same,
After you are **GONE** the same ol' game

And though you move - Foot pressed against shores
You are Poseidon!? **RIGHT!**
Beware of those with **PURPOSE**
CONTENT
SUBSTANCE
AND

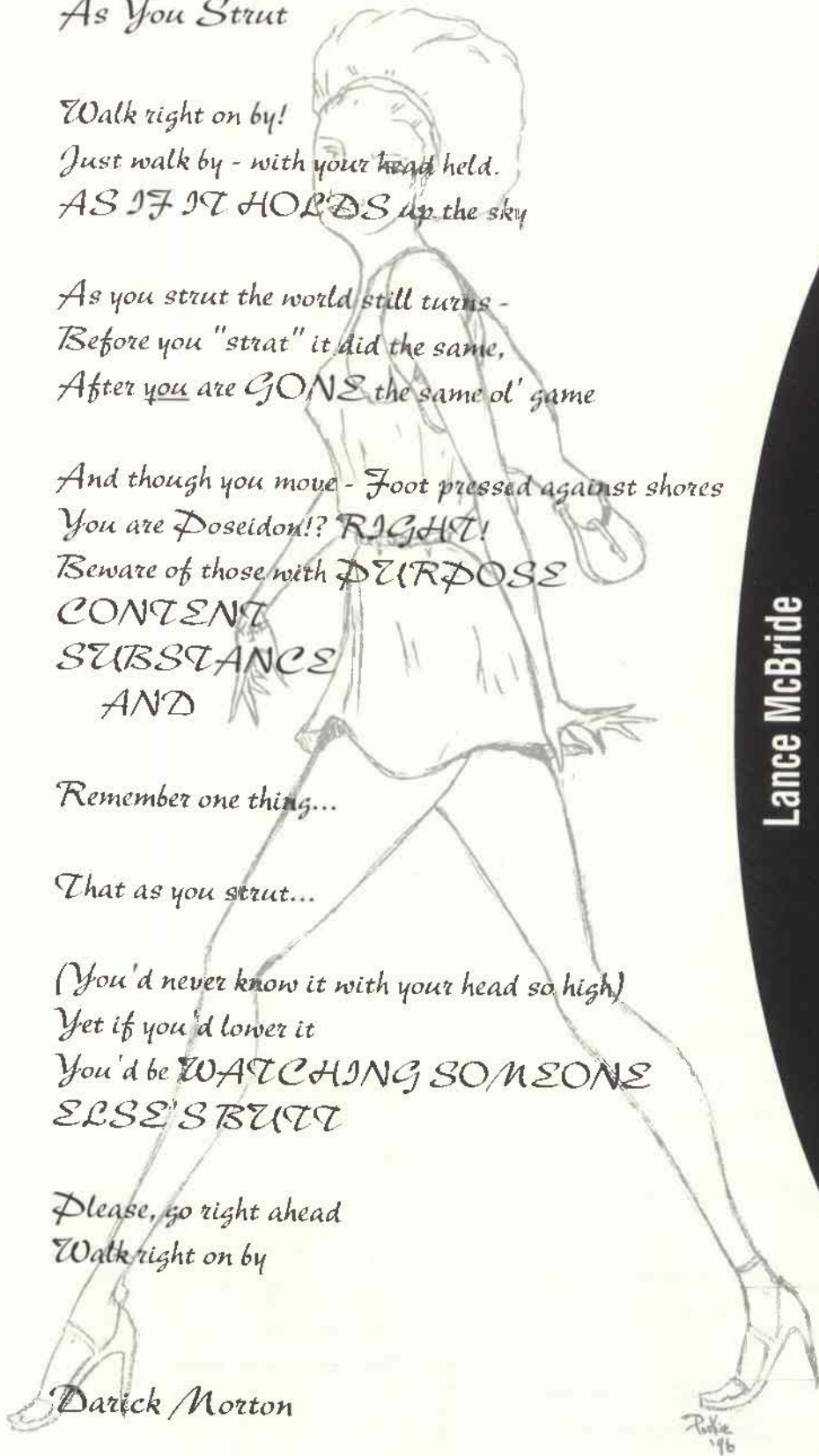
Remember one thing...

That as you strut...

(You'd never know it with your head so high)
Yet if you'd lower it
You'd be **WATCHING SOMEONE**
ELSE'S BUTT

Please, go right ahead
Walk right on by

Darick Morton



Lance McBride

I'm running on empty
but it's a different kind
of empty than you and
I know because I'm still
going with ease no sputtering
or jerking and no panic
or sweat I'm running
just fine and I swear
I just passed ugly about
Five miles back but here
She is again with her
Thumb out a smile on her
Face and attempting to
Show a little leg makes
Me wonder why you
Never see beauty hitchhikin'
Or showing a little leg
But I guess she doesn't
Have to because she's always
There at that place where
We all want to be
Ugly just seems to drift from
Place to place people
picking her up only to realize
She's an inconsiderate passenger
And dropping her off
At the next stop.

Dominique.

Your body, so light, so tender, so
What to say, but to caress your soft skin
For you to sing my name
As we become one

I give you my hand
If you take it
Happiness, all that your heart
And hand can hold
-- Will Be Yours

Only to love you
To hold you
To feel you
To see your body move so gracefully
-- As I give you my love

I laugh -- Dominique
I cry -- Dominique
Love me . . . make my life complete

Say yes
Say yes to my heart
I want your love
Your love is my life
Joy

Ecstasy fills the air
As we began to share
All of the love
mine --
yours --
ours --
-- one

The stars . . . jealous
The tides roar and crash
In symphony
To our thunderous love

Time is no factor
Love knows no time
Love is time
We love . . . time stops

God has a woman for every
man
I am Adam
you are my rib
you are me
I you

Joy overwhelms my face
Love . . . my heart
Passion . . . my loins
Tears . . . my eyes
Dominique . . . my world

My world . . . Dominique
The body knows not love
Only the heart and soul
Your left hand . . . open
My heart

Your right . . . my soul
Sing my soul to sleep
With your lark voice

Dear Brother Marcens
Thank you angel .
You give hope to
Dominique . . . born

My spirit . . . my Isis . . . born
Born . . . my Isis . . . born

Love your Osirus
Egyptian goddess
Rule Cleopatra . . . Capture
the hearts and souls of men

Compare their love to mine
. . . None . . .
It is me
I love you

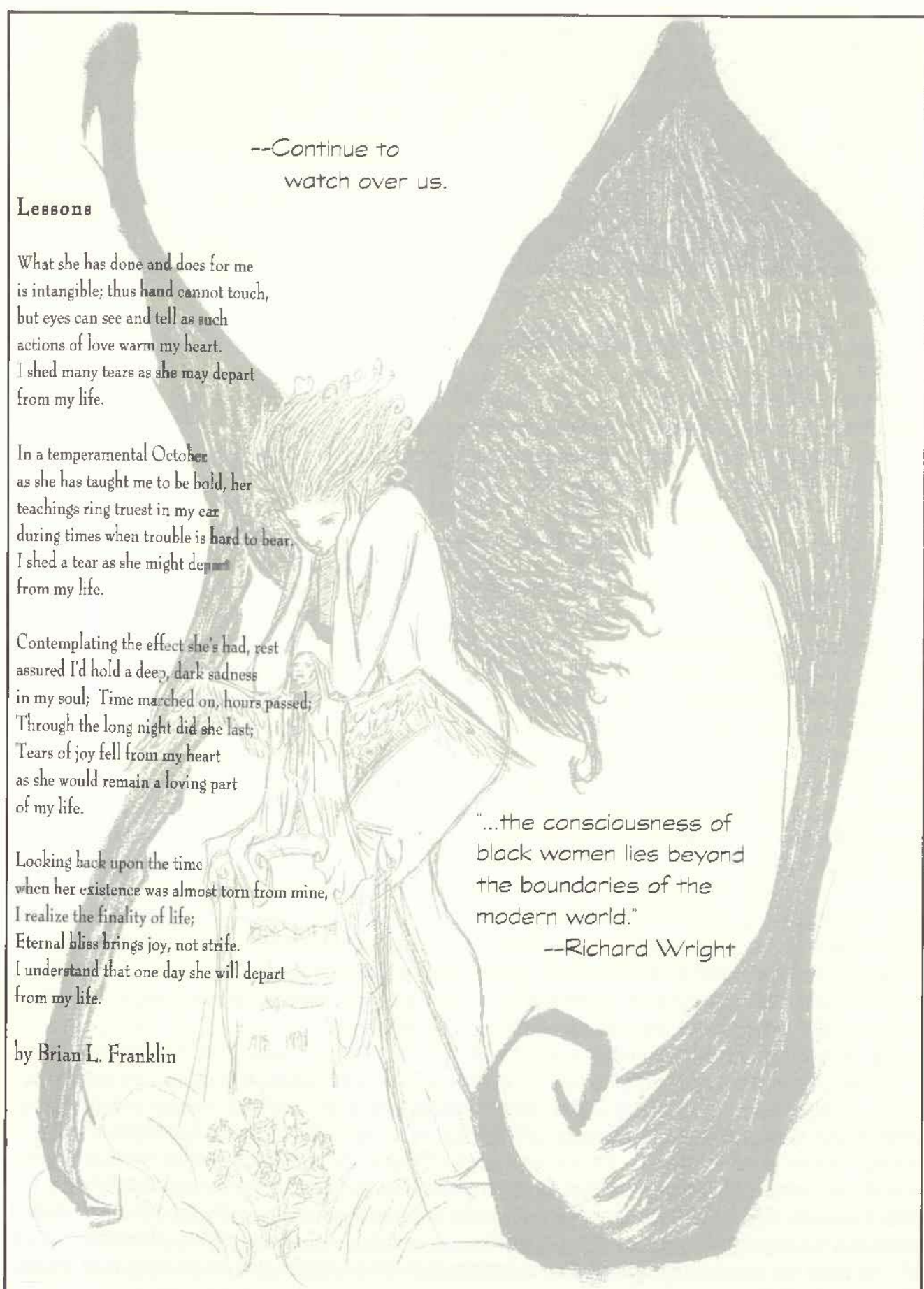
Build the tower that
Reaches to heaven
To my heart
To God

The soaring Birds
Fly to your love
Dominique fly . . .
Your love awaits

Me
You
Isis . . . your love is
Required to squelch
The eternal fire
That Burns in my heart

Pookie
'96

by Deon Monté Garner



--Continue to
watch over us.

Lessons

What she has done and does for me
is intangible; thus hand cannot touch,
but eyes can see and tell as such
actions of love warm my heart.
I shed many tears as she may depart
from my life.

In a temperamental October
as she has taught me to be bold, her
teachings ring truest in my ear
during times when trouble is hard to bear.
I shed a tear as she might depart
from my life.

Contemplating the effect she's had, rest
assured I'd hold a deep, dark sadness
in my soul; Time marched on, hours passed;
Through the long night did she last;
Tears of joy fell from my heart
as she would remain a loving part
of my life.

Looking back upon the time
when her existence was almost torn from mine,
I realize the finality of life;
Eternal bliss brings joy, not strife.
I understand that one day she will depart
from my life.

by Brian L. Franklin

"...the consciousness of
black women lies beyond
the boundaries of the
modern world."

--Richard Wright

The Research Imperative

"Research is more than an impulse of the intellectually astute; it is a path that must be followed on the endless journey towards truth."

--Obinna Eze Lewis

Paul Laurence Dunbar: His Poetry, His Vindication

With his 1896 release of the book *Lyrics of a Lowly Life*, Paul Laurence Dunbar arrives upon the scene as the first black poet of national reputation. Numerous critics would maintain, however, that Dunbar paid an enormous price for such fame. The price, in their minds, comes in the form of a collaborative effort with whites to degrade his people in an attempt at personal success. Yet, with a more comprehensive look at both the poet's intentions and the socio-historical context that existed during his lifetime, it becomes evident that Paul Laurence Dunbar survives ultimately as a credit to his race, his poetry providing the ultimate means for his vindication.

Before approaching the poetry of Dunbar, a close examination of the times is necessary. The historical context that exists during Dunbar's lifetime is one characterized by racial intolerance along with a burgeoning white backlash in both the Southern and Northern regions of the country. Dunbar, contends Houston A. Baker, "remains an artist rooted in time and incomprehensible without a thorough understanding of [the] age that provided the symbols for his art" (Baker 39). Clearly, Dunbar's desire to succeed as a poet cannot be interpreted outside of the historical context which includes an unjustifiable intent, on the part of whites, to put blacks into their place. If a black is to succeed at the end of the nineteenth century, it is a direct result of the level of permission given by the white establishment, literary or otherwise. Literary critic, Houston A. Baker reinforces this point when he explains, "Just as the education that Booker T. Washington recommended for black Americans at the turn of the century had to be of a very special type, so the literature of the black American had to be of a very special type if it was to be approved by white America" (Baker 29). Dunbar understands this fact very well, and he proceeds to create poetry within these confines.

The socio-historical context surely accounts for what is often labeled as Dunbar's "cultural" and "psychological dualism" (Redding 1). For Dunbar, he works to reconcile his own desires to succeed in a racist America while at the same time serving as a worthwhile spokesman for his race. The demands of his people coupled with the demands of a white dominated publishing world require Dunbar to perform a unique balancing act. Jay Martin explains, Dunbar must possess a dual commitment: "in one group, to the aesthetic values residing in works of art; and in the other to the racial values residing in his community" (Martin 13).

Such an existence was Dunbar's reality, and that reality is the basis for both his work and his subsequent vindication. Many have dismissed Dunbar as an "accommodationist" who chooses personal success over the larger success of his people. However, Dunbar must be redefined and given a label that does justice to his legacy. When scholar Maceo Dailey speaks of Booker T. Washington, he avoids the term "accommodationist," choosing instead, the term "constructionalist." The label also appears fitting for Dunbar. Dunbar saw the need to avoid an over reliance on overt racial protest. Instead, he demonstrated through art and experience the innate humanity of black Americans. This for Washington and Dunbar was the surest way to overcome white racism. John Wakefield agrees that it is important to understand how Dunbar "maneuvered within the narrow confines of decorum" (Bruck 42). He chose this route as a result of his uncompromising faith in the American ideal and its ability to ensure the ultimate uplift of his race.

The Research Imperative

Much of the reasoning for Dunbar's vindication extends directly from his poetry. Hence, a close examination of Dunbar's poetry, both in standard English and dialect, is necessary. Clearly, Dunbar uses the two different forms to achieve distinct outcomes. His wife, Alice Dunbar, explains this distinction when she confirms that Dunbar uses the standard English poems to express himself and the dialect poems to express varying sentiments of his race (Wagner 108). An analysis of racial themes in both of the forms will demonstrate Dunbar's status as nothing less than a credit to his race.

It seems only logical to start with the poetry that Dunbar uses to express his own views: his poetry in standard English. In Dunbar's first collection of poetry, the poem placed first in the collection is "Ode to Ethiopia." Clearly,

"Many have dismissed Dunbar as an 'accommodationist' who chooses personal success over the larger success of his people. However, Dunbar must be redefined and given a label that does justice to his legacy."

this poem is the epitome of racial pride with such powerful lines as "Be proud, my Race, in mind and soul;/Thy name is writ on Glory's scroll/In characters of fire" (Dunbar, Oak & Ivory, 1). Such bold statements as the ones found in "Ode to Ethiopia" are indicative of Dunbar's "constructionalist" mind set. The message of the poem is effective because it is a statement of racial pride, but stops short of being an overt expression of racial protest.

Other standard English poems such as "The Unsung Heroes" and "The Colored Soldiers" describe Dunbar's respect for the heroism of black troops. The essential point of both poems is that the black regiments of the Union Army "were foremost in the fight" as both "citizens and soldiers," (Barksdale & Kinnamon 353) and they merit full respect and citizenship in times of peace. Clearly, the basic intent of the aforementioned poems in standard English is not one of direct protest, but of establishing in the mind of the reader, black or white, the belief that the black citizen has a deserved and meritorious place in the life of the nation.

Dunbar's standard English poetry also gives insight into his attitude towards his own work as a black American poet. Above all else these poems demonstrate the frustrations of a black man attempting to succeed against the odds. "The Poet and His Song" is an early, optimistic outlook that Dunbar expresses. In contrast to this earlier sentiment, "The Poet" reflects Dunbar's augmented bitterness at what he saw as the mistaken preference of readers, publishers, and critics for the dialect poetry rather than his poems in standard English. In "The Poet" he explains, despite the fact that "He sang of life" and "love," everyone seemed to have "turned to praise/A jingle in a broken tongue" (Barksdale & Kinnamon 360). "Compensation" written not long before his death expresses Dunbar's anger at what he felt to be a misuse and misunderstanding of his poetry. The bitterness is clear when he exclaims, "Because I have loved so vainly/And sung with such faltering breath, The Master in infinite mercy/Offers the boon of death" (Barksdale & Kinnamon 361).

Dunbar is often criticized for his lack of militancy. Many critics wield the complaint of Richard Barksdale and Kenneth Kinnamon: none of Dunbar's poems "deal with the depressing economics of Southern rural living, and no poems deal with brutal night riders who burn, pillage, and kill" (Barksdale & Kinnamon 350). However, Dunbar writes numerous poems of protest, including "The Real Question," "Philosophy," "To the South: On Its New Slavery," and "We Wear the Mask." These poems are clearly poems of protest, but in a moderated, formal style.

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In "To the South: On Its New Slavery," Dunbar addresses the new South as a black man who speaks for a larger collective of blacks who have devoted immeasurable time, energy, and suffering to the South of old. His appeal is clearly to the white South, asking that they abandon their "newer bondage," or the bondage created by ongoing commercial exploitation disguised as sharecropping. In "We Wear the Mask," Dunbar, in a somewhat subtle way, lashes out at America for forcing its black citizens into such a precarious situation. Blacks are forced to "wear the mask that grins and lies" to hide "all our tears and sighs" (Barksdale and Kinnamon 352). Dunbar detests the enormous level of sacrifice that blacks endure, only to have a voice in late nineteenth century/early twentieth century America.

Other poems continue this cord of protest, but on an individual level. For Dunbar, his life as a black man was one of many victories, but one of ongoing struggle against a racist, white America. In "The Debt," "Ere Sleep Comes Down to Soothe the Weary Eyes," and "Sympathy," Dunbar poetically illustrates the enormous task confronting the black man who wishes only to actualize the American creed. The cost of true freedom according to Dunbar includes "Years of regret and grief,/Sorrow without relief" (Katz 312), as he explains in "The Debt." Life for Dunbar, or any black man at the turn of the century, is like that of the caged bird. It is a torturous life that the black man lives until "sleep comes down to seal the weary eyes" (Barksdale and Kinnamon 354). Yet, what distinguishes Dunbar from so many others is his desire to keep striving towards the American dream as expressed in his "Keep A-Pluggin' Away." Dunbar explains his "humble little motto" as "Keep a-pluggin' away./Perseverance still is king;/Time its sure reward will bring;/Work and wait unwearied,-/Keep a-pluggin' away" (Whitlow 59).

Dunbar's poems of tribute in standard English also present him as a credit to the race. It is important to concede that some of these poems contain elements that are rather shallow. However, they serve to underscore the greatness of those, both black and white, who have contributed to the black cause. While poems like "Harriet Beecher Stowe" and "Robert Gould Shaw," may be dealings in hyperbole, they rightly credit the bravery of those

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whites who aided the black cause. Yet, it is with tributary poems like "Frederick Douglass," "Alexander Crummell - Dead," "To Miss Mary Britton," and "Booker T. Washington" that Dunbar does his greatest service to the race. He distinguishes Douglass as the "noblest born" of Ethiopia, Washington as "a master spirit for the nation's needs," Crummell as the religious leader who "Camest thou, holily, bearing thy light," and Britton as the courageous black woman who challenges God to "arise/And let thy pow'r prevail" against the beginnings of Jim Crowism. Dunbar once again uses his standard English poems as vehicles through which the innate humanity of black people can be demonstrated.

Over time, an increasing number of readers have come to accept the myriad statements of racial pride found in Dunbar's standard English poetry. However, some of the same readers find Dunbar's dialect poetry both offensive and demeaning to blacks as a result of its presumed imitation of minstrel forms. Critics, such as Robert Bone, insist that "protective mimicry is the key to Dunbar and his age" (Bone 42). Yet, Bone and critics who agree with

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his argument miss the basic point of Dunbar's dialect poetry. While he may be embracing a "white" written art form with the dialect speech patterns, Dunbar reinvents the medium, making it one through which uniquely black sentiments are expressed. Dunbar reaffirms his own intentions when he explains, "I am sorry to find among intelligent people those who are unable to differentiate dialect as a philosophical branch from Negro minstrelsy" (Hudson 240). Dunbar's dialect poetry proves that the black Southerner still has worth, pride, humor, and communality in spite of slavery's brutality and continued exploitation on the part of the white South. These poems depict a holistic view of the black South, and as Baker contends, serve as a corrective to the "false ante-bellum sentimentalism that infused the age in which they were written" (Baker 41). Baker's assertion is rather insightful and serves as a clear basis for interpretation of Dunbar's dialect poetry.

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The depiction of the 'loyal slave' in Dunbar's dialect pieces seems to draw the most critical attention, so it appears only fitting to begin with this particular depiction of the black Southern. It is important to understand, however, that the depiction of the 'loyal slave' who longs for the return of slavery is only one depiction of the black southern found in Dunbar's work. In "The Deserted Plantation," a disgruntled, black southerner laments over the fact that everyone has "lef' de ol' plantation to de swallars" (Dunbar, POEMS of CABIN and FIELD, 27). He goes as far as to agree to stay and watch over the plantation in the same manner that he did during slavery. Similarly, in "Christmus on The Plantation," Dunbar paints the picture of a former slave who vehemently wants to "tell Mistah Lincum fu' to tek his freedom back" (Dunbar, The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar, 220). While the above depictions are often criticized for being overdrawn, they capture one distinct face of the black Southern. The characters reflect the views of real black folk in the years after the civil war who had become accustomed to bondage and stood in fear of freedom. Dunbar is worthy of extensive negative criticism only if this depiction appears in a disproportionate number of his works. However, Fred L. Hord correctly asserts that most of Dunbar's dialect work does not reflect "slave identification with the slavemaster" (Hord 52).

In fact, many of Dunbar's dialect pieces paint an accurate picture of black oppression during the time after the civil war. The black man in "The Old Cabin" recalls "de days w'en slavery helt me/In my misery - ha'd an' fas" (Dunbar, The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar, 429). Similarly, the "weary slave" in "A Banjo Song" explains that "de pleasures/O' dis life is few enough" (Dunbar, POEMS of CABIN and FIELD, 123). These are the testimonies of blacks who know first-hand the oppression that they face on an almost daily basis. The speaker in "Philosophy" captures the sentiment best, "you don't ketch folk a-grinnin' wid a misery in de back/An' you don't fin dem a-smilin' w'en dey's hongry ez kin be" (Dunbar, The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar, 346). The dialect poems also employ a more subtle confirmation of black oppression. The fact that a high percentage of the dialect pieces emphasize the black Southerner's nostalgia over the holiday season is a less obvious testimony to the

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harsh realities of black oppression. The holidays, for the black Southerner, are times to escape the hard, everyday realities of black oppression. Clearly, it would be a stretch to conclude that the characters in Dunbar's dialect poems have forgotten the harsh realities of their own existence.

Although far from harsh, a sure reality of the civil war South is a propensity for communalism on the part of its black citizens. Naturally, this element of black culture comes through vividly in Dunbar's dialect poems. Even in a poem like "The Deserted Plantation" where the speaker is left alone on the plantation, longing for everyone's return, the speaker manages to paint the picture of a loving, caring black community. He asks, "Whah's de da'kies, dem dat used to be a-dancin' / Ev'ry night befo' de ol' cabin do'? / Whah's de chillun, dem dat used to be a-prancin' / Er a-rollin' in de san' er on de flo' / Whah's ol' Uncle Mordecai an' Uncle Aaron? / Whah's Aunt Doshy, Sam, an' Kit, an' all de res'? / Whah's ol' Tom de da'ky fiddlah, how's he farin'? / Whah's de gals dat used to sing an' dance de bes' / Gone!" (Dunbar, POEMS of CABIN and FIELD, 21-23). Clearly, the speaker misses all of the 'folk' who provided a true sense of community for the average rural, black Southerner. The dialect pieces also show a particular love for the black children of the post-civil war South. The speaker in "The Old Cabin" even asserts that "Ol' Mas' Bob an' Missis/In dey house up daih/Got no chile lak dis" (Dunbar, POEMS of CABIN and FIELD, 63). So many of Dunbar's dialect pieces go out of their way to show the level of pride taken with regard to the black family and the larger black community.

A final theme skillfully depicted in Dunbar's dialect poems is a love of Blackness. Numerous words of praise for black beauty are found in these pieces. In "Dely," the words of true love become an expression of race pride. The speaker explains that the reason why he loves Dely extends from the fact that "Dely brown ez brown kin be" (Dunbar, *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, 358). The dialect poems continue on the theme of black beauty in "A Plantation Portrait." When describing Mandy Lou, the speaker asserts, "Huh haih a wolly skein,/Black an' plain./Hol's you wid a natchul twis'/Close to bliss." These testimonies to black beauty surely are not the work of anything less than someone who is proud of his race. Nevertheless, Dunbar goes even further in his celebration of blackness. In poems like "When Malindy Sings" and "The Colored Band," Dunbar reaches the climax of racial pride. These poems pay tribute to the natural talent of black folk. They fall carefully in line with Dunbar's theme of depicting black ability in its myriad manifestations, and allowing the depictions to defeat the myth of white superiority. In fact, the speaker in "When Malindy Sings" contends that Malindy is so good that if you "nevah heard Malindy?/Blessed soul, tek up de cross!" (Dunbar, *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, 131). Similarly, the band in "The Colored Band" deserves to be honored in a poem, "Fu' de music dat dey mekin' can't be beat" (Dunbar, *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, 286). The slaves and former slaves in Dunbar's dialect pieces express themes of black pride right up to their own deaths. In "A Death Song," the speaker's final request is to be buried "mong de t'ings I's allus knowed" (Barksdale and Kinnamon 360). The sheer level of commitment to portraying a true definition of blackness should alone establish Dunbar as a credit to his race.

It is virtually impossible to examine all of Dunbar's work, both in dialect and standard English. However, several conclusions can be drawn from the pieces that have been examined. First, it should become obvious to the reader that the poems examined here in this work clearly preclude Paul Laurence Dunbar from being labeled a discredit to his race. In fact, his poetry demonstrates that just the opposite is true. Naturally, as illustrated through the racial themes expressed in both his poetry in literary English and his dialect poems, Dunbar survives as nothing less than a credit to the race.

By Obinna Sze Lewis

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PRESIDENTIAL STRUCTURING OF THE SUPREME COURT

The United States Supreme Court is a distinct branch of the federal government. It is composed of nine Justices, each appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Many Presidents have attempted to shape the Supreme Court so that their legislation would not be obstructed. This topic carries with it a wide array of issues. Clearly, there is a lot to be learned from Presidents and their appointments. For this study, the researcher intends to look at President Eisenhower and Bush for some perspective on their motives. Chief Justice Earl Warren, Justice David Souter and Justice Clarence Thomas will be looked at in comparison to the Presidents who appointed them. The previously mentioned topics will be used in support of the researcher's thesis- that the presidential power of appointment of Justices to the Supreme Court allows the president to structure the court in favor of his own policies.

In order to explore the thesis, there are various questions that must be answered. What are the political views of appointed Justices to the Supreme Court? This question is asked because of the need for comparison between the views of the appointee and the President. Obviously, the second question would be what are the political views of the Presidents who appointed them? How do these judicial appointments shape the Supreme Court? Is the court structured according to the President's policy, or do Justices act on their own beliefs? One other question which warrants minor discussion is whether or not Presidents, over time, have actively tried to structure the Supreme Court according to their policy preferences. The last

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question will be discussed on its own while the others will be answered with regard to each Justice that the researcher has chosen to examine: David Souter, Clarence Thomas, and Earl Warren. After looking at these Justices and the Presidents who appointed them, the reader will have a better understanding of how big an impact the policy and ideology of the President has on his Supreme Court nominee's action while on the bench.

The President of the United States has always sought support for his agenda. It is reflected in most of his action- including the choice of Justices to serve on the Supreme Court. One possible reason for this is the Court's policy of judicial Review. *Marbury vs. Madison* set the stage for judicial review- the authority of the Supreme Court to declare a law unconstitutional. Therefore, a President seeks to 'pack' the court. To 'pack' the court means to choose or arrange (a jury, committee, etc.) in such a way as to secure some advantage, or favor some particular side or interest. Therefore, the President who wants to 'pack' the court is trying to find people who are sympathetic to his political or philosophical principles. There have, in fact, been studies done that show a definite link between the party ideology and the behavior of the Justices. This is not always the case because judges must decide cases based on law, prior rulings, and the evidence presented. In order to 'pack' the Court, the President must have motive and opportunity. Former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had motive and sought to create his own opportunity to put his influence on the Supreme Court.

One strong example of a President's attempt to structure the court according to his policy was Roosevelt's court-packing proposal of 1936. The Great Depression played a major role in politics in the early 1930's, especially with the New Deal legislation being passed by Congress. The Supreme Court ruled against some of this legislation, for example, the 1936 Agriculture Act. None of the Supreme Court Justices retired during Roosevelt's first term, and at the beginning of his second

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term in office, he told the country that he was not going to wait for vacancies on the Supreme Court to occur before he sought to remold it into his own image. Roosevelt felt that the older Justices were too old to carry out their full share of the court's workload. Therefore, he made a proposal that would allow him to appoint a new justice for every one over 70 who refused to retire. At the time, there were six justices over 70 and Roosevelt sought to make six new appointments. This plan would allow for a majority of justices that would approve Roosevelt's New Deal Legislation. The plan was eventually rejected, but soon afterwards, several justices retired and left Roosevelt the opportunity to appoint a total of nine new justices during his total time in the Office of President. This is merely one grand example of a President structuring the Supreme Court in accordance with his policy.

Although not as blatant, George Bush has also sought to appoint justices to the Supreme Court who would agree with him on different issues. Bush is a member of the Conservative Republican Party and has even served as the National chairman of the Party. This group typically favors the value of precedent over change. Bush was against Civil Rights Legislation and the Equal Rights Amendment because of his strong dislike of quotas and affirmative action programs. Bush also favors allegiance and voluntary prayer in school, the death penalty, and the right to bear arms in the home. He is opposed to prison furloughs, abortion, and tax increases. These are just a few characteristics that describe Bush's conservatism and his appointees reflect a few of those same conservative values. David Souter, a Federal Appeals judge from New Hampshire, was nominated to the Supreme Court on July 23, 1990 to replace William Brennan. Bush was very careful in choosing a nominee that would not cause a harsh confirmation battle like Robert Bork's nomination. He felt that liberal coalitions would not attack

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Souter because he wrote no major opinions on constitutional issues. After the nomination, the White House worried if Souter was, in fact, a conservative. But Bush had specific questions on different policy issues designed to give the President an idea of where Souter stands. Bush concluded that Souter was a conservative that could get past the nomination process without much trouble because he was not on the extreme right and unknown enough to keep liberals from causing a long confirmation battle.

Souter represents a kind of judicial conservatism that relies on rules of the past for future direction. He describes himself as an 'originalist'- one who studies the original means or understanding. This includes, but is not limited to, the minds of the Framers of constitution. Souter contends that the stability of the past is crucial for individual and company planning for the future. He is a strong supporter of the 14th amendment's guarantee of the right to privacy. In his judicial opinions, Souter avoids broad statements regarding principle, but is rather direct and specific. Abortion was a major topic during Souter's nomination and he declined to answer any questions that he may later have to rule on. Although many had questions about Souter's stand on societal issues like abortion, no one could doubt that he was a conservative jurist. "Bush seems to have found a guaranteed conservative nominee with a near biological and certainly geographical loyalties to traditional values." These conservative ideals can definitely be seen and compared to George Bush's conservatism.

Clarence Thomas became a nominee to the Supreme Court in the Summer of 1991. Thomas was Bush's perfect choice because his position in the Reagan administration as chair to the Equal Opportunity Commission. Clarence Thomas was one of the Reagan administration's most zealous activists. Bush's stance on quotas does correlate well to Thomas' opinion on quotas and affirmative action. Thomas is strongly against racial quotas and affirmative action programs and feels that African

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Americans should take responsibility for the conditions they are living in because racism does not hold a person back, but helps to build character and achievement. According to Thomas, blacks should pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and should not rely on whites or the government to overcome adversity. Thomas is also a strong supporter of natural law. Natural law is the belief in the existence of moral norms derived from "nature and nature's God" that can be used to critique and even invalidate civil laws. Beside natural law, Thomas is a defender of judicial restraint. All of these beliefs can clearly be labeled as conservative and in accordance to the policies of George Bush.

Opinions given by Thomas, after his first year on the court, reflect his true conservative nature. After only one year, Thomas has linked up with the hard-line conservatives on the Court (Justices Rehnquist and Scalia). Thomas' record on the Court does take a conservative bend, and he tends to take on the narrow views of the constitution much like Associate Justice Scalia. Thomas' ruling in *Hudson vs. McMillan*, involving a black convict severely beaten by guards in a Louisiana prison, angered black leaders because he voted with the majority ruling on the situation as cruel and unusual punishment. It must be noted that Thomas' limited contact comes from his law clerks which are considered the most conservative in the Court. Both of Bush's nominees to the Supreme Court share his conservative views and one has, in fact, been sympathetic to the conservative position in his rulings.

Justices do not always make rulings within the same political ideology as the President. "Justices such as Bryon Whits and Harry Blackman eventually developed philosophies far different from those Presidents who appointed them." Presidents often make the mistake of thinking they know how their appointee will behave, only to be surprised by the facts. "Many Presidents have been surprised by their appointees to the Supreme Court; one can hardly expect a man given the freedom and responsibility of that position to act altogether predictably." This was the case for President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Earl Warren (the chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1953-1968). Warren was regarded as a Republican his entire life. This lead Eisenhower to nominate Warren in addition to his honesty, integrity, and middle-of-the road philosophy. Warren even described himself as a progressive Republican because it was politically expedient. But Republicans who expected Warren to balance out the Court, were surprised when Warren ended up taking a position on the extreme left.

The Republican party platform that Eisenhower supported during his Presidency was an extremely right-wing document. He favored "progressive policies, drawn from our finest Republican tradition." Eisenhower was conservative in nature. The values of conservatism in Eisenhower's days are basically the same as Bush's - slow to change, favored strong religious base, etc. He knew Warren well and labeled him a liberal conservative. It is doubtful that he had any idea that Warren would move so far to the left.

The Court, under Warren, became increasing liberal. It outlawed discrimination, restructured criminal justice, broadened citizens' freedom to criticize the government, and allowed different artists to express themselves. Warren's decision in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case restructured the United States' public education by declaring that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." Warren exercised great influence in order to get the court's unanimous decision in the *Brown* case. Warren's court existed during one of the most politically controversial periods in United States history. Warren emerged as a hero of the liberal cause which reached its climax during the Kennedy administration. He felt that the main function of his court was to advance minority rights if the executive and legislative branches failed to do so. "Warren's opinions as Chief Justice and his speeches off the bench reflected a total rejection of his earlier conservatism and an unqualified acceptance of utopian myths of modern liberalism- that all men are created equal, that freedom and equality are compatible, that human problems can be solved by government action, that virtue can be legislated or attained by court decree."

Through the research given, it can be concluded that the President does, in fact, make an attempt to structure the Supreme Court according to his policy through the power of appointment. In some cases, the Justices go along with the President's ideology and, in others, they do not. The thesis given is not entirely true because Justices tend to develop their own ways of thinking, but President's do, in fact, attempt to structure the Supreme Court according to their policy.

By Eric F. Walker



"Ever Forward"
by Umi A. Vaughn