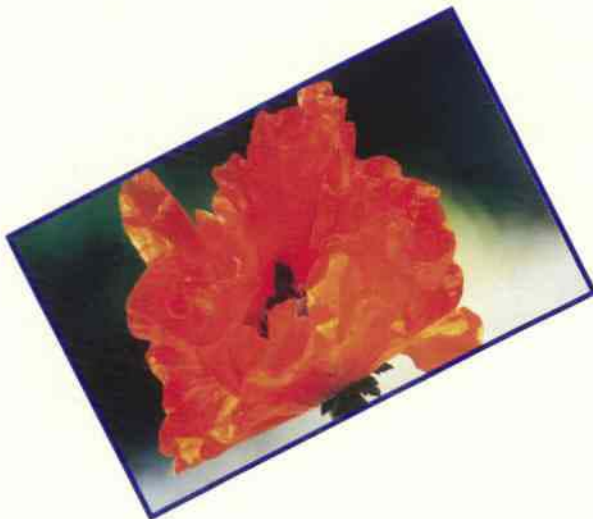


ONLY IN THE SPRINGTIME

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 gitz 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

Σεε

The Trek

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 l. 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..."

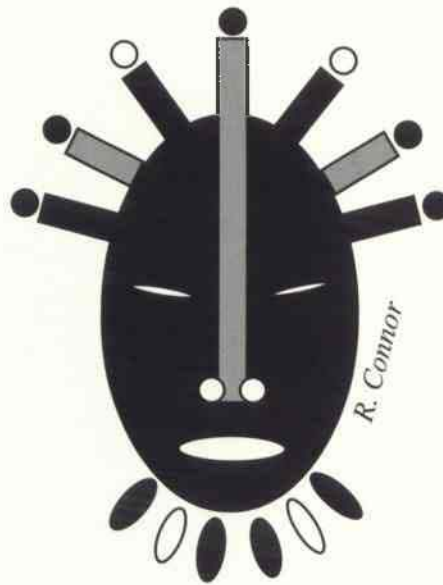
-Antwann Cartwright

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, S. 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

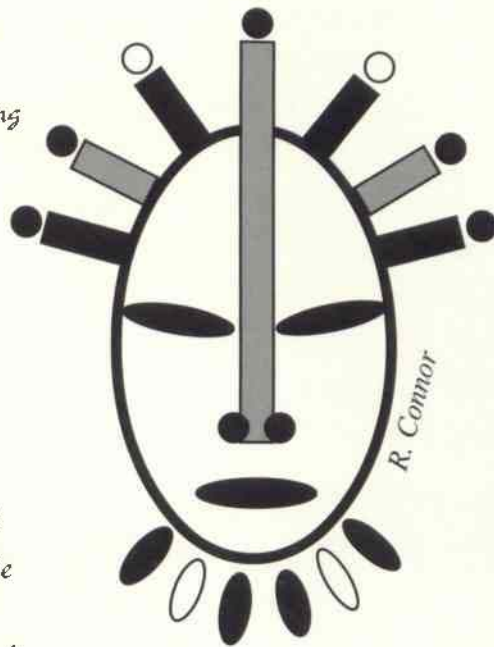
emotional relationship with another beautiful, black man only to be forced to conceal your every action. And now that I am finally out, it has no significance because he now resides many miles away from this place.

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'DO'DI," 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..."

-Antwann 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

1770

MANDIFFERENTPICTURES

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 MUST 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.

-on thoughts of Olds

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."

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.

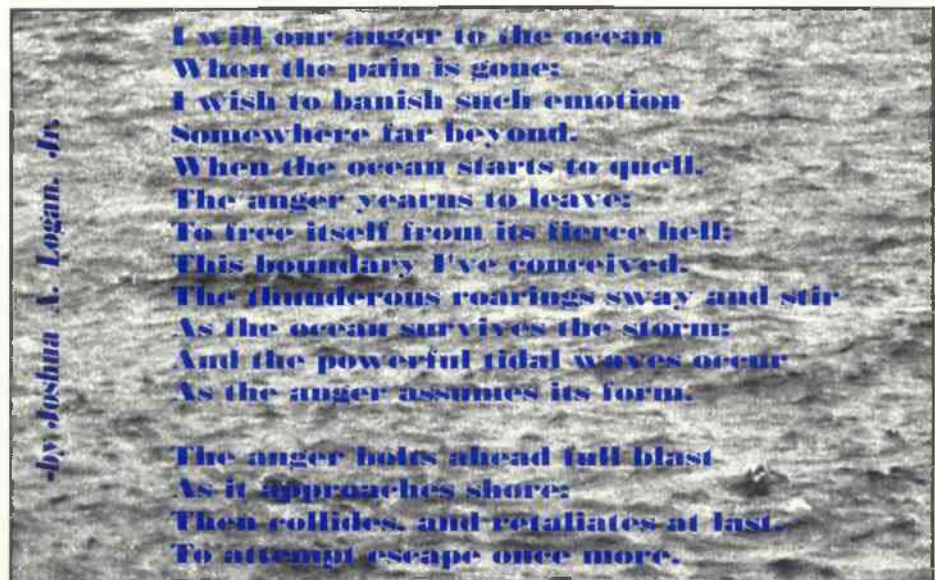
Nothing ever tugged at our lines. And after a while we cast our twigs out into the water. We were away from the competing imitations of the big city's skyscrapers, and so the night sky appeared as the night sky should. We talked, but our dialogue too has been lost to the subconscious wasteland of my 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, "Vive 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 Ekwuekwe, 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

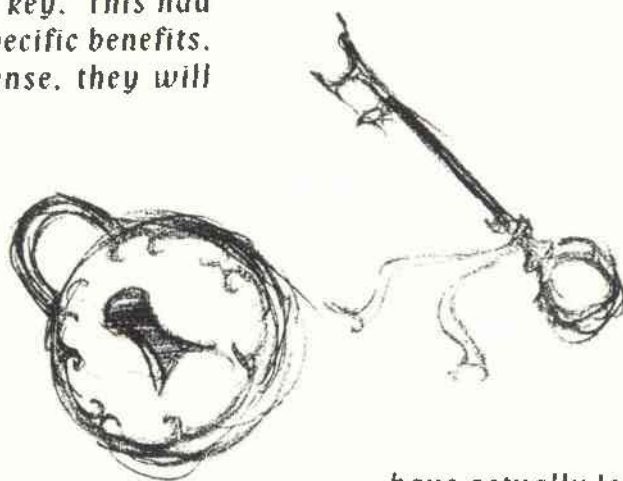
do we go from here?" Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of Morehouse's most notable alumni, asked this question as a title of one of his books. He also offered two possible solutions: Chaos or Community. This is a serious question that Blacks need to ponder. Many look at the generation to which almost 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