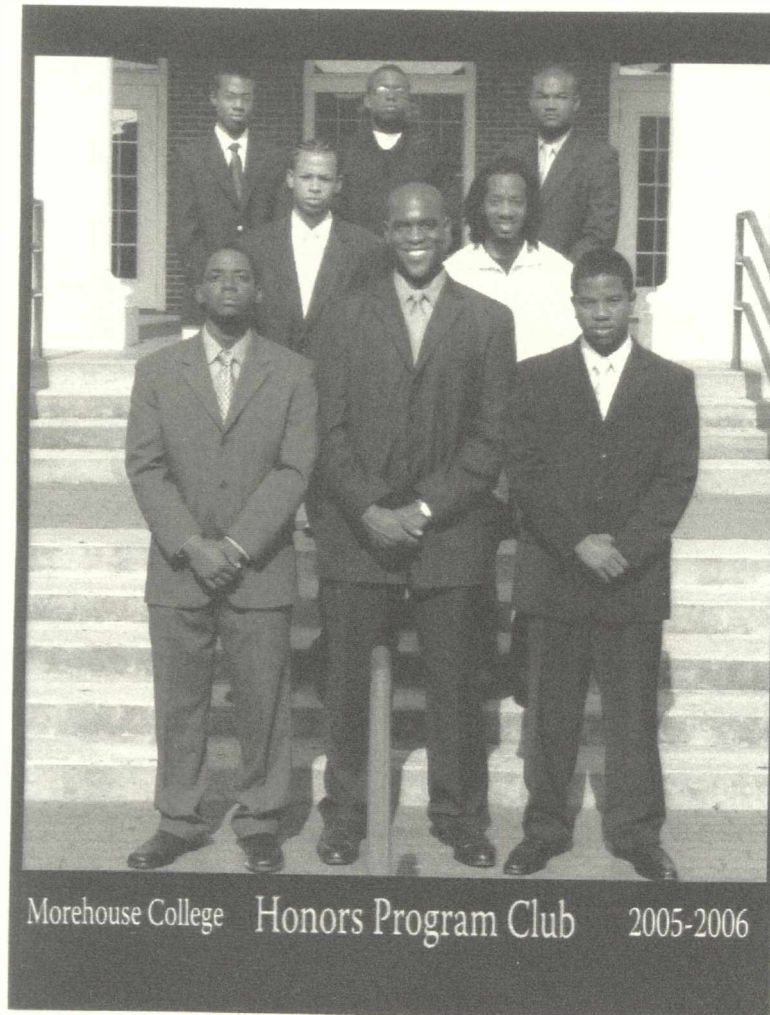


Litterātus

April 2006



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MOREHOUSE
COLLEGE

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I Am Dead and Buried Cold

I, in all the modesty and humility
Which comes directly and sincerely from my position
As a creature of flaw, would only attempt to conjure up the spirit,
Call the Angel; invoke the muse of whatever motivation it is
That revives the wounded soul of a sinning man
With great intensions of changing the world,
One hard-working, well-meaning day at a time,
And would like to offer the promise that for as long
As I can muster an ounce of self discipline to direct
Those energies which are given by this revival,
This drawing of light in my life, I will
With the conviction of a child, honor your warm blessing
For I am dead and buried cold.
In short, can something colorful please come and kiss my grave?

Marcus Edwards

Revival

Rain down on me again because
I'm dirty and tired, wrong and remorseful
Of being too much a youth, too much
A man I think I'll never get it right;
Just to stand takes all the man I have
And you now want me to be human too,
But it's okay, I think I remember what the gold
What the sunshine looks like; I don't know
How I'll make it through dense, dark tomorrow,
But if I could tell the future I would repent
And pledge never to fall apart again...maybe
I *can* profess, and that's why I *haven't* promised
To touch, to reach, to drink perfection but I do ask, humbly
That one more anointed than I, pour out of it revival.

Marcus Edwards



Don't Wake up Before the Dream is Finished

Oops, we did it again. The Saturday before last, the 15th, would have been Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 76th birthday. And we Men of Morehouse and America in general put much of his life's work to shame, as we do every year, to honor him. Here, the Morehouse community, the self-styled keepers of at least part of his legacy, had our parades, speeches and speechifying; yet, as we usually do, we failed to talk about the broader vision that King had toward the end of his life. Once again, the class deans and administrators, etc. wore out his name, and skipped over that whole love of and devotion to humanity thing.

America also did its part. As always, on the national holiday dedicated to him, the nation re-attached a special faux-significance; last year, even President Bush, who had never visited the King Memorial, saw fit to make an appearance that would not be soon forgotten, if only because a number of people's lives were interrupted in the process by federal agents. And of course, everyone all sat down for a moment and remembered Dr. King's call for peace and nonviolence, although many might have forgotten why these things are so important. What we often do – both blacks and Americans in general – with King: solely examine the earlier, less developed ideas.

We all know that Dr. King preached civil rights for blacks and turning the other cheek. But he didn't stop there. At the core of his values (which originated in the idea of a just and loving God) was the belief in the intrinsic worth of every human being; enduring in the faith in the capacity of man to do and be good; and the fundamental right of every person to live a dignified life. Jim Crow was clearly designed to humiliate blacks at all levels; thus, it had to be abolished.

The classic story of Dr. King (in the yearly news reminders, basic history textbooks, etc.) usually stops when Jim Crow is legally dismantled, between 1964-65. But he didn't drop off the face of the earth from then until April 4, 1968. His worldview, like Malcolm's about the same time, was undergoing a profound evolution. It became clear that getting a job or going to school wherever you were qualified was nice, but what were you working toward and what were you being taught?

To King, it was clear that while we as a people needed to be a full part of the social fabric of the nation, it would do no good if we entered a sick society. If a lawyer or businessmen knowingly swindles or otherwise cheats his clients, is he different from a street hustler? When the doctor prescribes patients more expensive drugs of suspect quality, is there a difference between that and a drug dealer? The answer, in King's mind, was no. To him, our society put a greater value on things than people (example: A-Rod's 10-year contract could fund my 2,000-student suburban school district for roughly the same amount of time) was amoral, and therefore perverse. By the mid-60's he had reached the conclusion that the only way for people to truly be treated as God's children would be to fundamentally transform the socioeconomic and political order, so that the highest value was not material profit but the uplift of man (something that our free-market capitalism doesn't really care about).

If we truly want to honor Dr. King and help translate his dream into reality, we must ask ourselves a vital question: is the purpose of our lives – becoming doctors, lawyers, businessmen, teachers, artists, etc., to make money, or to do good? If the answer is the former, then all I want on the 3rd Monday in January is to have a day off, not a day on, and for people to shut up and stop wasting my time.

- Anthony Smith

Darkness Drops Again

As time creeps along its slow, steady track,
Darkness drops and Light no longer shines through the cracks.
Each time the Light finds a way to push it back,
Overcoming all of this Dark's persistent attacks.
But what if this dark cloud gets too thick?
What if the Light's faith ceases to stick?
A huge mystery lies behind this dark cloud,
With motives never to be revealed out loud.
Will eyes ever lie upon this Dark perpetrator?
Or are these all questions with no bookshelf answer?
Eyes looking for someone to blame don't turn in on themselves,
So the answer will never be pulled off their shelves.
The Darkness enters souls and influences people to kill,
Such a power which completely smothers all good will.
Darkness covers the world,
Bringing soldiers and civilians on their knees.
Which is just what is needed to keep the Darkness pleased.
For now, the Light has overcome the Darkness, and continues to shine,
But what if sometimes the Light is no longer visible through the Darkness' grime,
It will no longer be all right to say that everything is fine,
The Darkness will drop again, and this will be the final time.
The Light will decline,
As the Darkness grins over its most recent crime.
When the Darkness passes, and the final state of the world is clear to see,
The remaining few will be left in a state of anarchy.

-Kyle Faircloth

Man versus Nature

Blue, red, green,
Yellow, black, white,
These colors can be seen,
Whether its day or night.
It always remains clean,
There are never any fights.
It provides for all, whether it be shelter, or life.
But we are nothing like this, and we know it's not right.
We may extend a helping hand, but the other holds a knife.
This is the reason that Nature is so far ahead,
We aren't even willing to give someone a slice of bread.
Instead of living with kindness, we dwell on anger,
And due to this we walk around with a constant sense of danger.
In the words of the man who touched lives wide and far,
"Returning hate for hate multiplies hate,
Adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars"
People could learn a lot from Nature's ways,
And possibly evolve out of these hate filled days.
But Man and Nature will stay opposites until these times cease,
While Man represents War, Nature represents Peace.

-Kyle Faircloth

You Bother Me

Sometimes I think about what bothers me most,
I realize it's you, you're always to close
You're always giving me your two cents
You're always telling me to use common sense
You're always telling me how to dress and to think,
And what's wrong, and what's right
And what's out of my sights, and when I've gone too far
And DAMN! I need a car
And how you would do it this way
And how I should do it their way
You tell me to calm myself down, and.....why the hell do I keep you around?
You annoy me, you destroy me, and you've become such a detriment
You chide, and inform, and ridicule and judge
You cause me to become so much less content
What kind of drug was I on, oh what a trip it must have been
How did I ever work up the nerve to call you friend?
And how sad it makes me to say such things
I'd like to embrace the suggestions you bring
But I can't, God knows I can't their all based in hatred
And judgment, and spite, and nothing that's sacred
Did anybody ever explain the word "constructive" to you?
Obviously not because all you do is stand on your pew
And ride your high horse, and look down on others
And.....And.....Damn! I don't like you!
And I hope you don't because neither do I
From now on don't even think about giving me advice
Just give me 50 feet and I'll be satisfied
I kinda wish I could erect a fence that was satisfied
It could keep out you and your kind, the playa' hata' species
Sometimes I think you need a shot of about 1100 CC's
Of something like pimp juice or crunk juice or style or taste
Something that will give me a break
DAMN, YOU BOTHER ME

-Marcus W. Hunter, Jr.





A Love Too Great

A heartbeat quickens as the vast beauty of a rose blooms,
Releasing the joys and fears of a once calm, yet harmful hurricane
To the naked gardener's eye, only total perfection is seen,
But too great a sight for a rose to comprehend.
Indecision to have the imagery as close as lips during a kiss
Makes his eyes reveal complete satisfaction and desire.
For the pedestals sing like Heaven's choir and attract the souls of the harvest fields.
A silk cover opens as the pupils hesitate to blink as to not miss a view
Nor misinterpret the inspiring language spleen about truth and ethereal concepts
A bright smile eliminates its thorns,
Proving its true emotions and making it sensual
As the dew glistens from the center of it's life,
The gray sky harkens the tear drops of God.
Even more intense then before, such beauty was overwhelmed by contained rage.
Alas, it couldn't withstand the weather of love,
And it vanished among the blades of grass to never show it's face.
Yet,
The only effect my heart experiences is a thirst,
Thirst for that familiar aroma and a thirst to kiss that rose

-Stephen D. Alkins

The Truth

You are the essence of me and one in all we are.
Spirit filled notions of us and who we want to be.
Severance is impossible for one being is it not.
Yet like splinters we part abiding the laws of life.
A known voice verbalizes valuable valor and courage.
But one still speaks not a word of real veracity.
Be true, yes true, and observe the expressive flow.
Conceal the truth and watch as I leaver, I go.
Effervescent eyes emancipate their stare form one's heart
And moves to the intricate place where thoughts form.
What are you thinking? Tell me the truth...
Why masquerade behind a web of needless worries?
"One in all we are," I repeat in spirit and truth,
For when my eyes impede upon yours I see
What your heart and your head could not reveal.
Eyes expose the source that the soul stands to unveil.

-Chris Taylor

The following is an excerpt from Chapter 17 of the unpublished novel Breaking News, about an American journalist who encounters dangerous opposition when he decides to investigate the suspicious death of a Middle Eastern political activist.

I SPEED ONTO THE NORTHBOUND FREEWAY AND start merging toward the carpool lane. Traffic is moderately heavy, but still easily navigable. I flick on my left blinker, let a blue pick-up truck pass me, and veer over.

In the passenger seat, Omar Abdullah tenses up. "You're a very bad driver, Mr. Conrad."

At the crack of his mouth, I see the slightest hint of a smile. "Think so?"

Abdullah laughs nervously. "Yes. Only my daughter is worse than you."

I smile. The edgy Al-Jazeera reporter is finally lightening up. "Okay, Mr. Abdullah, here's the deal: if my boss grows a spine, and comes through for us, we'll have you on the air by tomorrow night." Remembering his paranoia, I add, "Then you can head back to London and stop worrying about some right-wing bigot trying to hurt you."

Abdullah nods. "Do you know who is pressuring your network to stop me from appearing?"

"The only name I've heard floated around is Jason Stephens, our vice president for public relations. He's spent months calling Al-Jazeera a propaganda outlet for terrorists."

The Middle Eastern reporter scoffs. "If Al-Jazeera airs propaganda for terrorists, what would you call Fox News?"

I chuckle, but ignore his politically charged comment. "The point is, you're going on the air tomorrow, and then you'll leave the U.S....safely. I promise: no one will notice your Arab heritage and try to hurt you. I mean, we're not animals." I pause, then add, "We're Americans."

Just one car now sits between my Lincoln and the inviting carpool lane. I tap the brakes, slowing to let the other car pass me, then I grip the wheel and rotate it left.

Nothing happens.

I jerk the wheel harder, but it doesn't budge. I try turning right, but the wheel won't move that way, either.

"Oh, no," I mumble.

"What's wrong?" Abdullah asks, alarmed.

Ignoring him, I check the dashboard controls. Everything seems to be working properly. The car is in drive, cruise control isn't on...*so what's happening here?*

I glance around the car's interior, searching for an answer. At the same time, I slow down. Traffic is picking up around me.

Omar Abdullah begins babbling frantically in Arabic.

Right then, my eyes go wide. On the floor, near the gas pedal, I spot two gray footprints. *Someone has been in my car.*

I curse aloud, and again, Abdullah asks, "What's wrong?" Horrified, I'm staring out the windshield. About a quarter mile ahead of us is a curve—a very, very sharp curve.

* * * * *

Three cars back, David McNally is watching my disabled Lincoln as it hurtles downhill at 80 miles an hour. By now, he knows, the wheel must have locked up, which means that it won't be long before the car battery fails.

Twice before, McNally has used this method to permanently silence an outspoken man. It always works, and no one is ever the wiser of what really happened to the dead men who dared to speak out.

* * * * *

I press down on the brakes and get another surprise. The car engine lets out an electronic whine, sputters, rumbles, and dies. "No, no, no!" I hit the brakes, but the car doesn't slow. And suddenly, the situation becomes very clear to me.

Abdullah and I are trapped in a dead car that won't turn or stop, shooting like a bullet straight towards a concrete divider.

I try not to panic. *Stay focused. Stop the car. Stop the car. Find a way to stop the car.*

I turn my keys in the ignition.

Nothing.

The curve is close now. I grip the emergency brake, clench my teeth and yank upwards.

The wheels screech loudly and the car starts to slow, but not fast enough. The divider is rushing quickly towards us. Only a few seconds left. My head jerks forward as a tailgater rams our bumper. We spin to the left and another car strikes our rear.

"Oh, Jesus" are my last clear words.

I hear Abdullah screaming at the top of his lungs. He screams as if the mere intensity of his noise-making will somehow save us. A crazed, desperate scream.

Silent, I am looking past him, at the incoming divider.

Right before the collision, a news headline passes through my mind.

Renowned Journalist Killed in Freak Car Crash.

The car seems to instantly shrink around me. Metal crushes, wends and screeches. Glass shatters. Abdullah disappears in a burst of red blood that reminds me of a blooming flower. A moment later, the roof caves in and warm sunlight shines on me just before darkness envelopes my consciousness.

- Edward Mitchell, III



A Pair of Glasses

Glasses, a pair of glasses
A transparent object made to improve vision
And to improve the sight of truth, mission,
The mission to guide the reality impaired
With the power of reality

Look through the pair of frames worn by a little boy
Who continues to wait for his birthday toy
You know the toy pops was suppose to get
But it's been a long time, still no sign,
And momma's tired of telling the baby Daddy's doing fine
After the kid wonders when daddy returns
Look and feel his internal scars and burns

Put on bifocals and observe a young man in the game
Pedaling not the stones of victory but the stones of shame
Thinking that it's the only way out of the projects
And into the palaces; what do you call progress
When it's all good until the man from the PD
Slaps sterling silver shackles on his Nubian wrists
Or a spouse of a revolver is introduced to his Nubian chest
If you're still wearing the extra pair of eyes
Then you see that this young brother's life is on the line

Adjust the lenses and date back, way back
Before the fellow man hustled to push a couple of Benzes
The time when our ancestors wore nothing but their skinses
Living the good life, until a little something called the
Middle Passage screwed them over completely
Shipped away from the promise land and taking a beating
And breaking families up to the worlds old and new
The population was 10 to 15 million dropping down to a few
Years, decades, scores, and centuries go by
When the oppressors made the oppressed shed infinite tears from and eye
Gallons and gallons of water were wasted
To hose my people down from their feet to their faces
To fade our color looking like the dominant race is
Farfetched when we used to sit in the back to go to different places...

Through my prince-nez do you know what I see?
A 500 year-old obstacle from point A to point B
From up to down to back up like an elevator
Redeeming God's children making lives ever greater
This ain't no ordinary demonstration, no, far from that
This is an alternative to waiting for reparation
We all have various perspectives and point or views
Of looking at a glass either half empty or half full
But what you have just heard was spoken word
And what you have just seen was that half empty cup
Struggling to fill to the top
What you have seen was what I see
Through my pair of glasses
What you have seen was what I see
Through my pair of glasses
What you have seen was what I see
Through my pair of glasses

-Marty Henry

The Life of Love

The Life of Love-Sonnet #3

Good riddance to the world and all therein
This threat comes from me, a bitter, old man.
All that I ask is help me understand
One minute love's here, then gone like the wind.
It's hard to explain how I feel within
He gave me my love, then snatched her again
And now all I feel is the endless pain
A brand new life; I now wish to begin.
Like a pawn I've been played, all my moves made.
So please hurry now, bring this to an end
My time here is through; it's time for heaven
There's nothing to live for from day-to-day.
My angel is gone; to heaven she's flown.
Now take me too, don't leave me here alone.

- Joshua Daniel Ward

Self/Abstract/Mixed Media

Ideas, thoughts, and emotions
Actions, movements, physicality
Inadequate, insufficient, lacking
The unstable stream of consciousness felt and dealt with everyday
Leading to inaudible doubts and questioning myself
My self-worth, true value, and existence
I can't say I have positive answers to all of them if any
A spiral staircase of esteem and wavering self-pride
Trying to climb and not fall, downward
Into a whirlpool of self-pity drowning in my shallow sickness of inadequacies
Until then I continue to drift in this endless void of nothingness and confusion
Knowing my self's paradoxical problems and without solutions

Searching for ends to clarify the means
Prospectively my third eyes needs to be cleaned or I need a new lens
Because my self-picture is blurry
Contrast and brightness fuzzy
Spots and scratches covering
Edges kinda dirty
From what I see, is my own image of me
Not what my friends think and see
Not what my momma, daddy, sisters, brother see in me
But my own self-portrait, and the artist is me
Anatomically correct and mentally misconstrued
Call it ABSTRACT
My medium, water colored doubts and fears
And pastel verbal melt downs throughout the years
So I guess it mixed media
Finished with a coat of lacquer to make it shine on the outside
And keep the vibrant water-colored, pastel details inside
And permanent...
A masterpiece, truly a piece of art
Open to interpretation and dismal at heart
Presented to the world for all to see, in its prime and glory
Yet silently hidden under remnants of what I want to see as me
But can't...
My focus won't allow me
And it makes no difference
You can't make changes to an already finished picture
You have to begin again from scratch, a blank canvas
I don't know if I have the strength to raise a somewhat solid foundation
True it's filled with insufficiency and self-doubts
Things my picture could do without
And yeah it may bring some solutions to my nothingness void of confusion
Then where will I be drifting

Ok it might steady the pace as I traverse my mental spiral staircase of self-esteem
and pride
That leaves self-pity without me to drown and subside

Possibly my third eye may be cleaned allowing me to see clearly a vivid landscape of me
My self-picture clear as day
Lighting and focus perfect
Dings and scratches abolished
Edges untarnished
Now what I can see as my own image of me
Is what my friends think and see
Is what my momma, sisters, and brother see in me
Built and constructed by my talents, principals, and creativity
By the architect that just happens to be me
Constructed because this work of art will be sculpted to me
My medium cement-made confidence and stainless steel positivism
No lacquer to finish because I'm always working on my self's image of me
That those remnants are no longer shards, but pieces that are part of my visual inclusively
Allowing the world to see the new me
Presented in its prime and striking glory
Finally, a piece I can be proud to keep

-Bryan Wallace



The Mission

Thoughts of doubt cloud my mind with unease
My mission; cocked and activated
My lack of experience is my excuse,
A convenience I use as a means of safety
Overzealous maybe; petrified slightly
A new situation with new circumstances
Hoping and praying that it helps in my mental and spiritual advancement
Like weeds in the grass that grow long in the summer
My success is dependent of conditions and others
For if my surroundings are conducive to positive impressions
Then I leave marks on you of God's reflection

Accepting nothing less than a best foot forward
I expect perfect but settle for average
Knowing my life's purposes is to serve his will
I'm continually striving to reach the apex of my potential's hill
That I may travel my kinetic journey
Enacting a spiritual whirlwind of consequences
Affecting all those I come in contact
Consider it a Jesus vac-cine
Used to treat worldly infection
I plan to be the catalyst for those to share and hear about his resurrection
A third day savior born again to save the lives of those with infinity sins
A brighter day remains to be seen
While the adolescence is forced into separation from the father
The trinity unheard but instead replaced with visuals and sensations
Including troubled families and bad situations
Which become normality, nothing preceding
There is no "before this"

For these seedlings, budding has become the "other" check box
On a standardized test that's rarely marked and not expected to be
They fit into a category of generation lost
In a game hiding where no one seeking
Envelop in darkness desensitized by ostracizing lies
Of the electric manifestation
It aches at my heart to see my brothers apathetic
And a younger generation complacent
Contented in an unending cesspool of ignorance and loving it
Believing there's nothing better than ones and tall trees
And searching for the non-intrinsic of the big face Franklin
It's sick to be complacent
So as I fill these pages with this hope that enrages my hatred
For the sta-tus of status quo
I blend mental pictures of revolution and torture asking myself in the future
Where do grass roots grow?
Where do the seeds of an intelligent revolution lie?
Look inside...

-Brandon Wallace



