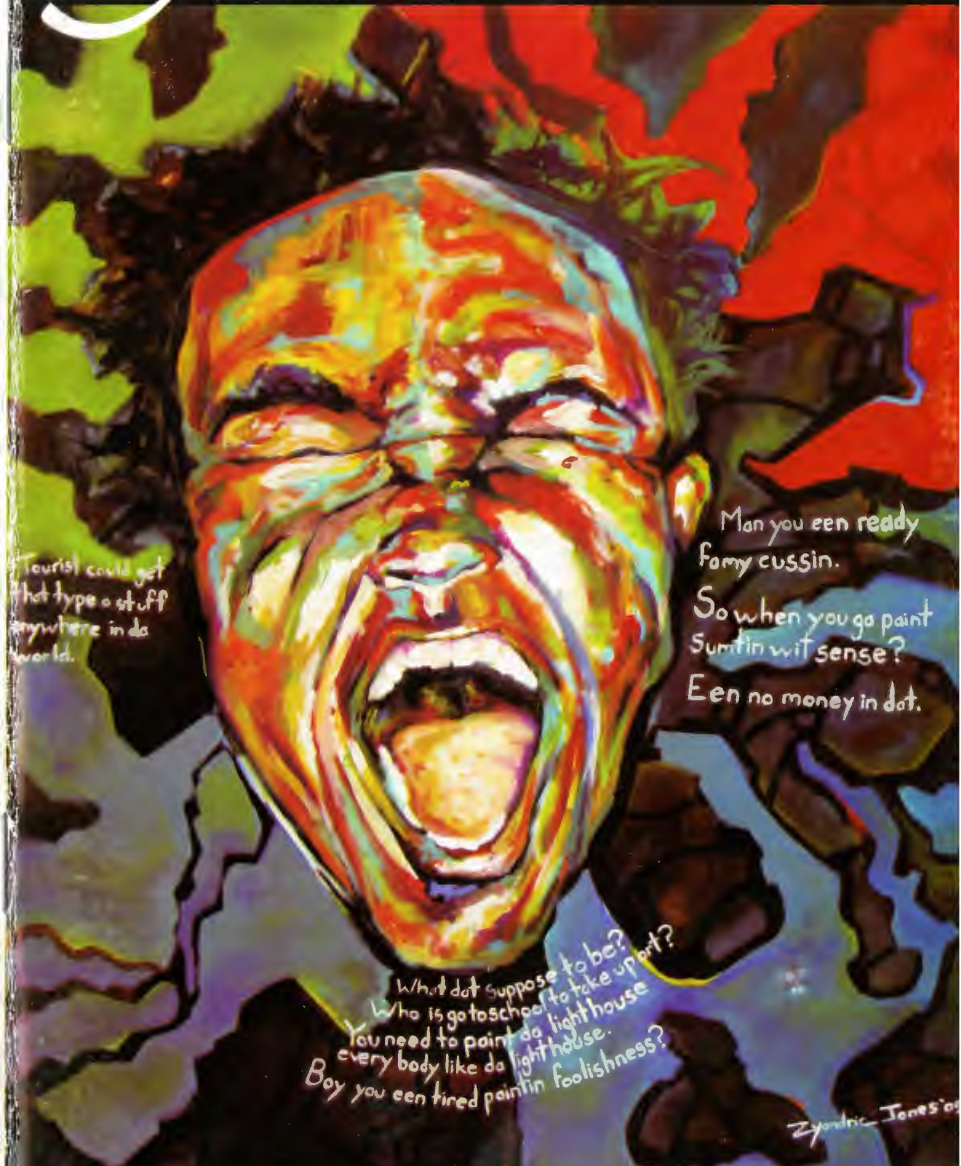


# TAMARIND

A Student Journal

VOL.1 - 2005



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# TAMARIND

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TAMARIND is a publication by the Faculty of the School of English Studies. Any enrolled student at The College of The Bahamas or alumnus of the institution may submit material for TAMARIND. The submission deadline is January 31 for September publication.

Send all submissions in triplicate to

**TAMARIND**  
**c/o The School of English Studies**  
**P. O. Box N-4912**

or deliver them to the English Office, Rm A97 Thompson Boulevard.

Cover Art:

"Screaming Artist" by Zyndaric Jones

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## Editor's Note

by Ian Gregory Strachan

It probably comes as a surprise to very few that know me that I take little pleasure in many of the tasks that are required of the man or woman holding the post of Chairperson in the School of English. I can say quite enthusiastically however that this Note is not one of those unpleasant chores!

We are trying to create a different climate on the College's campus. We want to get students excited about being here. We want to help them create good memories of COB and we want to start a fire in them. We want to pass on the same passion we possess: a passion for learning, for ideas, for books and for artistry.

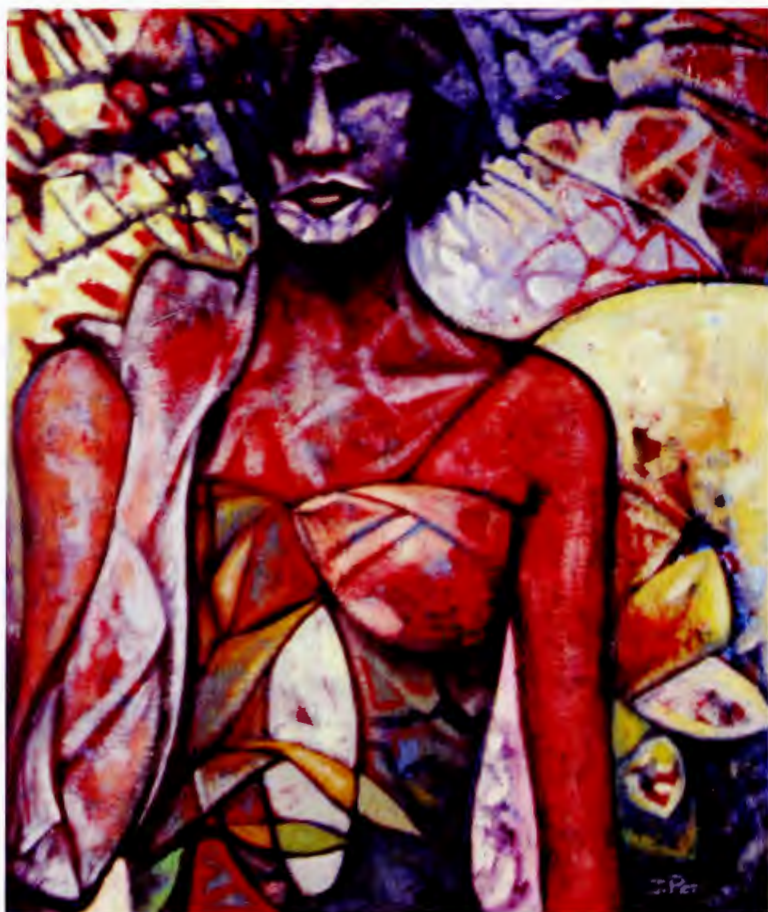
I must congratulate the faculty and students that came together to make this first issue of TAMARIND a success. It was truly a collaborative effort and I fully expect for us to get better with each passing year. In particular though, I thank and congratulate Ivy Higgins and Virginia Purvis-Smith for their enthusiasm, optimism and commitment.

In this volume readers will find quite a lively and refreshing variety of pieces. I hope they will entertain, provoke and inspire. I think the prose pieces are particularly strong. This volume is living proof that there are students on our campus who have a love affair with language and delight in its skillful use. And I hope that once you're done reading this issue you'll pass it on to a friend. I'm certain that we will hear from many of these young writers in the future!

Equally as gratifying is the fact that some of the most memorable submissions to the School of Communication and Creative Arts' annual Colour of Harmony 2005 are included in this journal. COB has long been the training ground for the nation's finest visual artists and the work included in this volume attests to the fact that the over twenty year tradition of mentoring imaginative young artists is still going strong. This student journal wouldn't be the same without their work.

Well, that's enough from me. Enjoy!

# REFLECTIONS



***Organic Me***  
Jackson Petit-Homme



# A Stereotypical Portrait of Bahamians

by Jessica Knowles

Bahamians! What is there to say about them but that they're big fakes? What you see and know about Bahamians is not what they're all about. People say The Bahamas is the friendliest nation, but that's only in front of your face. The minute you turn around Bahamians are talking bad about you behind your back.

They use you for what they can get from you. In The Bahamas, it's who you know, not what you know. When it comes to getting anything done through government, once you know a person in a higher position or even just a local secretary, just slip them a few dollars and you're straight. They're always looking for a bribe, especially when it's time to come from the U.S. That's when the liar characteristic kicks in. They're only allowed three hundred dollars exemption, and they try to put down on the customs paper that ten duffle bags have only three hundred dollars worth of stuff in them. Or even if it's more than they're allowed, they just look for a customs officer they know and get right by without having to pay.

Speaking about paying, bills are the last things on their agenda. They live from paycheck to paycheck. Nothing goes in the bank, and, if they don't work for a few days, they don't have anything to fall back on. They go and buy expensive clothes, new cars, new hairstyles, etc., and when it comes to paying bills they put ten or twenty dollars on them a month, and that's it. They have their priorities wrong; they'd rather have a "fresh car" parked in front of their yard and their house falling down with a DSL dish on the top. "Materialistic" is a good word to describe Bahamians.

Bahamians also like new things. The minute a restaurant opens or some place is giving away free stuff, everyone's there. Everybody goes to that restaurant until they get tired of it and another one opens.

Are they nice or two-faced? Do they have the best or live above what they can afford? Do they look out for one another or just like bribes? Well, our Bahamian people love to criticize others for their wrong, but they need to look at themselves. Bahamians are a "special" type of people.

# Instant Message Fever...

## Exploring the Fervor

by Latasha Sherman-Young

Imagine for a moment a twenty-first century remake of Aesop's Fable "The Tortoise and the Hare." It would start off much like the original--cocky hare leaves tortoise eating his dust--and it would end the same way too, with the humble tortoise as the victor. But what about those crucial moments of bunny downtime? The version we know pictures the hare napping. However, if Aesop penned that fable today, no doubt, the hare would have sprinted home for some instant message chat time as he waited on his lagging opponent. The most frequented hangout for today's youth is no longer the overpriced halls of the local malls, nor is it the bustling thoroughfare that is Bay Street. In fact, this teenage hotspot cannot be pinpointed on any map known to man, for it exists solely in cyberspace. Yes, today's teens look for their kicks online using the oh-so-popular and ever growing instant message service. Have you been living under a rock for a couple of years; or are you just a concerned member of society who hasn't been keeping up with the latest technological advances? Either way, you might find it interesting to know just how widespread this message mania is, exactly what makes it so popular among teens, and how this technological breakthrough affects their daily lives.

Who exactly are the teens that frequent instant messenger services like MSN Instant Messenger? Quite simply, the answer is all of them. From the studious nerds who want to know exactly what they missed in class, to the nefarious thugs who need to plan when they will "link-up" next, they are all using Instant Messenger. Such a wide array of teens are subscribed to MSN Instant Messenger that it is quite common to see buddy lists with buddies running into the hundreds. To gain such a noteworthy list is not as difficult as you might imagine; not does it require you to be friends with (or even know) the legions of people on your list. MSN Messenger is so popular that all you have to do is give one person your e-mail address--or "addy" as we teens call it--and pretty soon everyone on that person's list would have added you as well. Those who simply do not use messenger are considered as the man of health considers the leper. Eyebrows are raised in disbelief and the persons are asked

“Bey, you ain' online???” as though they just confessed some deadly sin. Many a grudge has been cast aside when one's Internet is off and the messenger services of an ex-best friend must be enlisted to catch up on the latest gossip. Far from a local trend, the typical Bahamian teen's buddy list contains contacts from every major continent, as well as their cousin in Pinewood. Indeed, from the care free middle school kids, to the anxiety ridden high school students, the studious scholars, to the young working class, all chat with a fervor so strong that I bet if you stood at the top of Blue Hill Road on any given night, you could hear the tap tap tapping of keyboards well into the wee hours of the morning.

Quickly, count how many teens you know who are avid Messenger users, but don't even know the basics of Microsoft Word. I can think of about five right off the bat. This little experiment goes to show one fundamental reason why teens are so in love with Instant Messenger: It's just so easy to use. You don't have to be a computer whiz to use this wonderful communication outlet; all you need is a computer and an Internet connection and you're on your way. Sure, on your first go you may not know what it means to “enable web com”; heck, you may not even know what an emoticon is. What is so great about messenger services is that the friends you know and trust are right at your fingertips to sort out any quandary you get yourself into.

Simplicity isn't the only reason messenger services are all the rage among teens. Why do teens dye their hair purple and get eyebrow piercing? Not simply because they can, but also as a means of self-expression; so too it is with Instant Messenger. Teenagers are quickly bored, and are always looking for new ways to say things that have been said for generations. It is here, amid the non-judgmental windows of communication that poor grammar, dialect, and just plain bad spelling can frolic without being stifled. When using messenger services, the reins of proper punctuation are cast aside in favour of run on sentences, and only when instant messaging can you write in the colour red without offending anyone. Freedom indeed. If you're feeling blue, your name, text, as well as display picture can be adjusted to fit your mood. Teens love this freedom to express themselves in the manner they want their point to come across, regardless of the standardized rules of language. In a message window, if I find something funny, I'm not going to say, “My, what you just said was extremely funny; in fact, I am laughing out loud.”

Never may that happen! I'll type an "LOL" and you'll know the joke was well received. I'm sure many teens would not think twice before marking the invention of instant messenger services as far greater an achievement than that of the telephone. Knowing teenagers, however, I am sure that the popularity of messenger services will continue only until something newer and more exciting takes its place.

Instant Messenger has a sort of cult following. Day after day, teens flock to their abodes to log in to these services. The trip home becomes somewhat of a blur and the only thing that matters is one's instant message icon showing connection. Frequently, there is nothing special to say to fellow "contacts", yet, just to know we are linked to this global system is comfort enough. The phones have all but become obsolete among teens that prefer to chat online where they can engage in several conversations at once. The results? Teenagers will often attribute their keyboard speediness with the hours they spend chatting away to their companions; however these teens will also admit that they find themselves working slang and "internetisms" into writing outside the confines of Messenger. We no longer wish to write the traditional "the" when "tha" is so much more stylish, "Wuz" has replaced "was" and we prefer "thang" over "thing". Funnily enough, we often attribute our changing Standard English to the fact that the new words are quicker to write; however, "tha", "wuz", and "thang" contain the same number of letters as their original roots. Thus, it seems that we are creating a new language to save time. Subsequently, the phonetics we type when chatting to our friends have become so popular that esteemed dictionaries now contain several of these "netisms" and acronyms. Perhaps one day Phonetics will be a subject taught here at C.O.B. I won't hold my breath, but it could happen. Until that time, however, avid messenger users keep their spell check on at all times knowing how e z it iz 2 slip rite in2 msgnr mode.

Instant Messenger is here, and it is definitely bent on staying. As with any other trend, the teenage generation has grabbed it up and claimed it as their own. Instant Messenger is not simply a means of communication for these teens, however; it is a means of expression, and often becomes an integral part of life. With teens riding like there's no tomorrow on the coat tails of this universal trend, I wonder, why is it that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century version of Aesop's fable the tortoise finished the race without the urge to instant message in between? I suppose he just didn't pay his Internet bill.

# Bad Driving

by Bennique Brown

Why do people drive so bad?  
Cutting off people and rowin' hard

Dey in the wrong, you in da right  
But still dey fightin' ta get in fronta  
You wit all der might

Why do people drive so bad?  
Overtakin' like dey mad

You goin' da speed limit but still  
Dey wan go fasta, I tell you, my experience  
Has been a total disaster

Bahamian people always speedin'  
Ya know, to new drivers this can be misleadin'  
When dey on da road, dey ack like dey  
In a race, an een no police never der ta  
Put dem in dey place

Traffic lights... HA! What dey for?  
Dees miscreants don't obey da law

I wouldn't even talk bout dose jitney drivers  
Cause dats a whole nother show.  
I can write a book big as my head to my toe.  
But honestly, people is drive bad  
Whats worse is dey don't even realize it, and dats so sad

So if you ever get your driver's license, do what I do.  
Wheneva you go on the road, pray for dose reckless  
Drivers, and fa yasef too

Don't forget ta do it nah, just as you get behind da wheel.  
Say a lil'  
Prayer ta God, and see how safe you would den feel.

# Junglass vs. Hoe

by Carla Cartwright

The junglass and the hoe are two types of women that are abundant in The Bahamas. There are even junglasses and hoes walking around not aware of the fact that they are junglasses and hoes. Most females would be offended if they were classified as being one of these types of women. This essay distinguishes between the two types and determines which one a female would prefer to be.

A junglass can be defined as a female who is extremely wild and has a "don't care" attitude about how society may view her. It is not hard to spot a junglass when you see one. She'll be the female walking around with wild and crazy hairstyles--like making a ponytail stand vertically on top of her head, or lots of weaves improperly fixed on her head. Her clothing will contain lots of fluorescent colors or a nasty looking brown color. A large amount of powder can be found under her neck. In her eyes, you will most likely see contact lenses the colors that you know could definitely not be her eye color. For example, she may be very dark and have light green, blue, or grey contacts. Before you even get the chance to spot a junglass you will most likely hear her mouth. She will be walking around having a loud conversation with a friend who may be standing right next to her or laughing loudly as if she's looking for attention. A junglass will also scream anyone's name out in public no matter how far away they may be; and she could care less who looks at her thinking she is wild. If a young man were to do the same thing, society would not label him as being wild; he would just be viewed as being a normal young man.

A hoe, on the other hand, can be defined as a female who sleeps around. Unlike a prostitute, she gives "it" up for free. Unfortunately there are girls out there who are not aware that they are hoes. Some hoes can be spotted easily, but there are some that keep their lifestyle on the "down low." Some people think they you can spot hoes by the way they dress. For example

They think women that dress in skimpy clothing are most likely hoes. This is not necessarily so. People also think that females who may hang out with men, and are not tomboys, are also hoes. Again, this is not necessarily so. A hoe is the female who is extra friendly with the men she may be spotted with. In other words, if she isn't allowing men to touch and "rub up on her," she will be touching or "rubbing up on them." This action will make men automatically think she is slack and they will want to have their way with her sexually. Most likely she will allow them to.

Keep in mind that was only the description of the hoe that can be spotted easily. Hoes who keep their lifestyle on the "down low" do their "hoeing" in a totally different way than an open hoe. For instance, instead of being with multiple men at one time in public, she will pick up her men one by one on different occasions. She will most likely make it a point not to get into a monogamous relationship. If she allows a man to sleep with her after knowing him for only a short period of time, she will be labeled as being "easy," which is a nicer way of saying hoe. The "down low" hoe is the type of hoe that may not even be aware that she is a hoe until after a long period of time. The many men whom she sleeps with will most likely end up letting her know before she figures it out on her own. Men can go out and do the same actions as hoes do, but they are viewed as being "hard" or "lovers" for the fact that they are men. This makes them "big shots" in society.

So then, if a female had to choose between being a junglass or a hoe, she probably would choose to be a junglass. This is because you can be a junglass without being a hoe. A junglass may be loud and need some serious fashion tips, but she can still have a certain amount of respect for herself. A lot of junglasses are even proud of the fact. She may be considered wild because of her actions but not because she sleeps around. A hoe is usually ashamed of her "hoe activities" even though there are some hoes out there that claim they are proud to be one. Usually that's a lie. They put on a front to make society think that they don't care they are being called hoes. For some strange reason it makes them feel better about the slack lifestyle they live. The simple fact is that a junglass can always hold her head high, but a hoe cannot necessarily do the same thing. Therefore, it is better to be a junglass than a hoe.

# From Eden to Gethsemane

by Mycquel Ginton

We are enslaved by our economy  
Defined by the sun, the sand and the seas  
And bare the scars of an industry  
That keeps shackles on our feet.

Lost at sea is identity  
Drifting towards the American shores  
Our culture won't survive the changing tides  
When our people cannot rise above sea floor.

Salt water flowing through our veins  
As if it is our only way of life  
We've put our country up for sale  
At a cost too great a price.

Paradise was lost from Adam and Eve  
Creation corrupted and man deceived  
Building a nation on the sands of a beach  
We relive the story to recreate the fantasy.

The fruits of our labour  
Can never grow under palm leaves  
Can never sprout from trees  
Where we never planted the seeds  
But only toiled in the soil  
For green of monetary means.

The rising of the sun will bring a new day  
Beyond the images of the brochure page  
Our beauty is Gethsemane Eden . . . a cliché  
A moment of redemption  
It is the hour of change.



# Working in the Mall: The Denial of Most Bahamian Women

by Daryl King

So often you would hear "I ain have no money;" or "I broke" from the mouths of many Bahamian women. It's amazing that for people that claim to be "broke, busted, and can't be trusted" they often seem to flood the shops in the mall, in particular the shop where I have worked this past weekend, Body Beautiful. Body Beautiful is the most popular female clothing shop located in the new wing of the Mall at Marathon. It has excellent prices, with sizes that can fit almost every Bahamian woman that may enter its doors. As a sales clerk I have seen women who fall deep in the plus size category try to fit into clothing that is best suited for the average preteen. They are in denial about their size and never fail to blame the make or design of the clothing or shoes.

"Miss I don't think that this size can fit you": my national anthem when assisting a Bahamian customer. "Look at me. Look at these jeans. I small, these could fit;" exclaims the confident young lady before actually fitting the piece of clothing. Seconds after escorting them to the fitting room, their hands peek out of the door with a little voice crying out, " Miss, I can't fit in these; I need a bigger size." After attempting about three sizes more, they eventually give up and with pride say, "Well, I ain really like how they look on; what else you all gat?"

As a Bahamian woman, I know and I am comfortable with the fact that I have a little "junk in my trunk". When I enter a clothing store, it 's a must that I ask for directions to where I can find clothing that can fit me. I can admit, when you see the tags of clothing with the sizes in the double digits, your heart begins to race, and then in comes that pinch of denial. I often say to myself, "Girl Daryl, this too big, this can't fit you. You see how big these jeans is compared to you?" Then I remember my experiences as a sales clerk, and know that their advice is often genuine. I now make it a practice to try on every pair of pants before I purchase it.

However, I am guilty of colouring or marking over the size tag. If that doesn't work, I resort to cutting the tag completely out.

Clothing isn 't the only thing that triggers off the denial button in Bahamian females; shoes can also have the same effect. I have seen many feet make a "hill shape" when stuffed

into a pair of shoes. For many others, you can find that the ten toes are hanging from the mouth of the slippers, holding and gripping on the sandal for their dear lives. There are also the ones that have their entire heels scraping the pavement each time that they walk. How can they feel comfortable? Are they comfortable?

Bahamian women, like all women, are often in denial when it comes to their sizes. How often do you see a "big belly gal" walking down the street with everything just hanging out, including her heel? Like other women, Bahamian women protect, shelter, and defend their pride, especially when purchasing clothing. They believe that no one knows as much about them as they do, and often get three sizes less than the ideal size. They simply ignore the advice of the sales clerk, and are often offended when the clothing can't fit. My advice to all women, including myself, is to buy your size.

# FAITH, DEATH & LOSS



***TWIRLING***  
Damaso Gray

# Christianity: The New Junkanoo

by Sania Johnson

I am quite sure that if you are Bahamian, at one time or another you have experienced the cultural festivity that has become a part of Bahamian Sunday. Each Sunday, Bahamian Christians adorned in their absolute best, pile up into their newly washed cars and head down to their respective churches. Whether they are Baptist, Pentecostal, Catholic or Anglican, it's all the same. Flocks of people of all ages crowd the pews of their preferred churches and prepare themselves to indulge in the Word of the Lord, bestowed upon them by their most admired and beloved pastor. However, as honorable and morally acceptable as that sounds, it seems as if Christianity in the Bahamas has become nothing more than a big Junkanoo parade every Sunday. The shameless church members are Junkanoo group participants and the countless, pointless deacons and ministers are the numerous group marshals making corrections to ensure that their "church" group pleases the judge.

You may ask yourself, "Who is the judge of this all?" If you think it's God, sadly you're quite wrong. These "judges" are none other than the preachers and so called leaders of these churches. Don't get me wrong, I am no heathen or atheist, nor am I a pernickety Bahamian who sees anything religious as cult like behaviour. I love Bahamian churches and find them to be full of life. I have just recently been observing the acts that have become acceptable in some Bahamian churches and find them troubling. It also seems that what should be the most sacred time of any nation, the time between God and his people, has become a show of shameful behavior on the part of the congregation, all led by pastors who exert the bit of power they have as leaders of the church. In their own indirect way they allow this behavior and even encourage it as it is what the pastor feels is right in his own eyes --not the eyes of the Father.

Every Junkanoo Sunday, I am absolutely amazed by the intense competition of fashion and fauna that decorate the streets particularly from the women. The real Junkanoo headpieces are no match for the Christian women who compete

in the “biggest hat competition.” These women, for whom I would feel sorry for if a wind was to pick up, make their way into church with the boldest hats (and outfits to correspond), sit, fan, and shout amen's and hallelujahs with the best of them. I am in no way against sophisticated and sovereign women dressing in ways that make them feel good about themselves. However, it is not right to sit and gaze at the outfits of others, making judgments and snubbing those who do not put on a show, which is what goes on in some churches. You may ask, “How is this behavior reflective of the pastor?” There is nothing wrong with being well dressed in church but when pastors begin to deny someone's entrance into God's house simply because he or she is not dressed in a manner satisfactory to the judge, then the situation has become out of control. I know of a particular Baptist pastor that refuses to let a woman come up to the pulpit to preach, sing or even give a testimony unless she is wearing a hat. Should a woman filled with the Word and good hope be shunned from ministering her words simply because she lacks a hat? Yet we still wonder why women take their Sunday outfits to the extreme? You can dress up the biggest sinner and put him or her in the church but that does not change his or her soul. One may argue that the pastor has the right to turn away anyone who enters his church if not presented the way he likes and that is completely right for it is his church and he is a man acting of God. Yet isn't it the house of God and not the house of bishop so and so? This all leads to the act of the congregation acting as if they are on Bay Street and think that they will receive “brownie points” from their pastor and earn respect among the community if they have the best “costumes.” If a person feels comfortable in jeans and a shirt or simply a casual skirt and top, there should be no reason to turn them away. The point is that they are coming to church to worship God and that should be the most important thing.

Anyone who follows Junkanoo knows that the size of the group has no effect whatsoever on the spirit and performance of the group. This is the one thing that differs in Sunday Junkanoo. It seems as if for pastors it matters more that the pews in his church are full than if the pews are full of people thirsty for the Word. Once a pastor can boast that he had to extend his building to add more pews to fit members, he feels as if he has accomplished his mission. In this beautiful country of ours, our churches are packed but the souls are becoming more and more empty. Probably the thing that has contributed most to the lack of the Christian spirit in the church is the lack of the Christian spirit in the pastor.

It can be argued that the pastor himself is still firstly human and he too sins and is forgiven by God. I agree wholeheartedly with this fact, as we are all human and we all sin. However, sadly I must say that from what I have observed, Christianity in this nation is becoming a rally of hypocrisy and bigotry among the ministers. There is almost always a new story about a pastor or minister in the church. Stories of pastors raping young boys and getting young girls pregnant fill the office lunchrooms and evening "get togethers." Why is it that some pastors can demand gifts and rent helicopters to celebrate Pastor's Appreciation Day while there are financially hurting members of the church desperately seeking help? There are pastors who demean and ban members of their church from positions such as choir director because of some infidelity, yet the pastor himself has a sweetheart in the church that everyone secretly knows about and tries to keep from his long-suffering wife. Even more shocking is the practice that some pastors have of preaching to persuade their congregation to accept their views on what political party to support, but not a word they speak comes from the Bible--which some pastors don't even study. How can a pastor stand on a pulpit with little or no knowledge of the complete meaning of the Bible and deliver messages to people who need to know the Lord better? If the Bahamian pastor is the shepherd sent to guide his sheep into the safety and comfort of the Father, then the flock of Christian sheep are headed down the wrong path.

Probably the most shocking thing that I have witnessed about some Bahamian pastors is the way they cast stones at other pastors who have different religious beliefs. It shocked many Seventh-Day Adventists when a fellow Bahamian pastor, not of the Adventist faith, called the Adventist faith nothing more than a cult. I have no recollection of God giving up his powers and handing over his title to this minister, so what gives him the right to insult another denomination that worships the same God and respects his son? Even as a non-Adventist I too understand how upsetting it is to have something you hold sacred insulted. Many pastors take their respective denomination as the 'only' form of Christianity that is acceptable. While one can never be sure which form is completely accurate in following God's commandments, if a pastor is a proclaimed practicing Christian, then that pastor should not judge others. Yet once again, the Bahamian pastor, acting just as a Junkanoo judge, passes harsh judgment others simply because they does not live up to his preferred standards.

Yet as in Junkanoo, there are those few unique scrap groups who come out simply for the spirit and heart of it all. Turning away from the hype of pompous costumes and the best music and instruments, they open their arms to anyone who simply wants to participate because they simply love to rush. Similarly, there are those few pastors who exist merely because they love the Lord and their sole purpose is to spread the Good News to anyone they can. Those pastors who offer their pews to anyone despite outfits; those pastors who offer their positions, such as choir directors, to anyone who has the God-given talent and not because the person is a friend or relative; those pastors who leave the judgment to God and focus on making sure that they do their part to ensure the word of God touches lives. There are those few pastors who sit with their congregation during praise and worship, who eat with their members during church functions and who share the pain and do their best to counsel their members. Sadly these pastors and their churches are rare and unique and if one should find such a church, then hopefully one's transition into Christianity is pleasing unto the Lord.

# Phoenix

by Hadassah Hall

I SHALL rise from the ashes  
Though wounded I may be  
The sun will shine once again  
The rose buds I SHALL see.

I SHALL rise from the ashes  
Though dark and dismal it may seem  
These beautiful wings SHALL take flight again  
Once I call upon Jesus' name.

I SHALL rise from the ashes  
Though the pain is so immense  
Never to give up because of hurt  
And instead, emerge with confidence.

I SHALL rise from the ashes  
This trial I SHALL win  
Philippians 4 verse 13  
Tells me Christ gives me strength from within.

I SHALL rise from the ashes  
With head and hands held high  
Spring flowers will peek, then bloom again  
I know because my God is nigh.



Have you ever been buried among the ashes?  
Do you fathom what I mean?  
Can you relate to what it encapsulates?  
This cruel and profound pain.

So like me, all wounded soldiers  
Whose season this may be  
SHALL rise in due time  
If for now, we get on our knees.

Yes that is the answer!  
Prayer and praise is the key  
Leaning on the everlasting arms  
Of the One who died for you and me.

I won't allow the smoky present  
And the hurts of the past  
To cause me to reel in these ashes  
No I must rise to the task.

Praise Jehovah God Almighty  
Whose throne is above the skies  
It is by His grace, power and divine presence  
That I too, SHALL RISE.

# Sunflower Seed

by Natasha Rufin

The mangled, grayish brown of the bark of the old rubber tree seemed stark against the dark tumultuous gray of the sky. As the chilly wind whipped her coat close around her, Arian thought wryly of how her surroundings were as dark as her mood. She had finally realized that it was over, which had at first stunned and hurt her. It was time she realized that she could never go home again.

Home was where the heart was; her heart lay with the one person who was no longer around. That person now laid buried deep within the recesses of the earth. The very person she missed now more than ever before. He was the one she looked forward to hearing when she answered the telephone; the person who picked her up each Thursday for lunch; the very one who told her not to worry whenever her nightmares and insecurities got the best of her; the one who taught her that she was imperfect, yet perfect nonetheless.

"Arian, are you okay?," a coworker enquired, coming over to her concerned.

"Yes, I am! Thanks! I'll be okay," she responded, smiling as she caught herself drifting off again. As she turned back to her coworker, she saw the look of sympathy and it angered her. She'd had enough of it all. "Excuse me uh... Sharon, is Sharon isn't it?"

"Yes. It's Sharon Bowles."

"Well Sharon, I really must be leaving now so I shall be seeing you later. Good day!" Arian turned to hurry off. She hated all the looks, the questions and the concern. She wanted to deal with it all on her own.

As she pulled into her driveway the sight of his silver Sentra almost killed her again. There it was--in her driveway, just waiting for him to come and get it. Yet, she knew he never would. She thought to herself, if only he hadn't gone that morning on his business trip. "Stop it! He won't return with you replaying the events of his passing."

Getting out of her red Miata--a gift from him on their wedding day--she ferreted her way through the overgrown grass to her front step. Her yard it was a testament of the loss she'd encountered. He'd been the one to love gardening and had done it well; her forte had been housekeeping. Retrieving her keys from her shoulder bag, she unlocked the door and went inside.

The house was kept in the condition it had been when he'd left-- his jacket hanging on their staircase banister; his bible on the dresser. She only dusted around it all.

"Ring!" her telephone rang jolting her from her trip down memory lane. Rushing over to the end table, she answered it a bit out of breath, so much hope in her voice. "Hello."

"Arian, it's George Hanna here," the voice on the other end greeted.

"Hi George," she responded as her heart ached a little again. It hurt her because as usual she'd been wishing she'd have heard his voice on the other line.

"Ann? Are you okay?" George asked picking up the change in her voice.

"Yeah. Just was wishing again that it was Nicholas." She sighed.

"I figured," George responded. "Well I have great news for you."

"Really? What is it?"

"My editor read your piece on coping with grief and he wants to print it in this month's issue."

"That sounds nice," she said, trying to sound enthused about the prospect.

"He also wants you to add a memorial or tribute for Nick to lengthen the piece," George added excitedly.

"Okay well I'll get right on it."

"Don't you see kiddo? This could be your big break," he said trying to pass onto her a bit of his enthusiasm. "Life may hand you lemons, but it's how you make the lemonade that counts."

"Thanks!" Ann responded, starting to smile. "I'll call you when I'm done."

"Sure. You know where I am. We go link then."

"Yeah, later," she sighed as she returned the receiver to its cradle. "I guess it's time to make the lemonade then."

"Hey Missy," she cooed to her cat as she made her way into her office. "You miss mommy? Mommy missed you too!"

"Meow!" Missy responded as she purred and rubbed her white body against Arian's leg. Arian slipped off her pumps, walked over to the kitchen and went rummaging through her fridge. Her kitchen was one of her best places to be. No matter the situation, here was a place that made her smile. It was no wonder she had adjoined her home office to it.

Both rooms were decorated in a vibrant sunflower yellow with beautiful flora and fauna displayed around the rooms. Her two favorite subjects were butterflies and sunflowers. They were everywhere. From the plates, to the curtains, to the books on display: her creatures were everywhere. "Well baby its time for you to boot up. We have a story to tell and a world to tell it to," she whispered to her computer as she slid into the chair behind her desk; a habit she'd developed that Nick had always found endearing.

As the machine whirred to life, she looked over at the framed photograph of her late husband. Nicholas Mark Jeffers, native of Trinidad, the man she'd met at college and who had brought sunshine into her life. It hadn't been his looks that had attracted her to him; it was his smile: sincere, open, and warm. His eyes and smile had told her she could trust him. And she'd had no reason to ever doubt it.

Skimming through the document upon coping with grief, she sighed as she added her tribute to him. After she finished she reviewed her piece, then sat back and cried. She'd never been able to express her emotions before without him. He'd been her all. He still had her heart and always would. Silently she read her piece to herself:

In everyone's lives, both great and small, there comes a time when we must cope with the same burden. That is the burden of losing one close to us. It is in this period that we are asked the questions, by numerous others who haven't had to deal with such a loss yet: How do you cope; how do you cope with your grief?

My sisters, my brothers, I know how it feels. Recently I had to handle that question when my husband died in a horrible car crash on his way to his hotel from the airport in Washington D.C. For me the toughest time was coming to terms with his death, for he was everything to me. He brought smiles to each day we had together. Things may not have been a bed of roses or a picnic but they weren't all that bad either.

It was hard coming to terms with the fact that when the telephone rings there is no likelihood it will be him calling just to say I love you. You have to realize that he won't ever be your voice of reason, or cheering team; he's gone for good. No more smiles or hugs or kisses. Yet his love is like the air you breathe. It may not be seen, yet you know that it is there with you wherever you go.

That is how one copes with grief: realizing that no matter what, your loved one is there with you forever. They will live on in your memories; in all the love you shared; all that is stored within your heart.

My Nicholas was not a saint. He had his faults and traits that I couldn't stand. Yet it was the way he smiled, the way he laughed, the way he called me his Butterfly Babe that holds my heart. Nick was in all senses the embodiment of a sunflower. He could see the sunlight in everything and no matter how minimal, he was attracted to it like a sunflower. Nick never saw the negative in a person; always the positive. He charged me to do likewise.

Home is where the heart is, and I now realize that in coping with my loss I must reclaim my heart from where I had placed it and live. My sunflower is gone now, yet his memory lives on. I have come home now, to a place filled with sunflowers and the memory of a love that will always be in my heart.

I hope that this story does more than entertain; that it aids in helping you in your search for relief. Coping with the death of a loved one is painful. Yet when we realize that they live on within our hearts, it's easier to cope with grief. May your sunflower live on in your heart.

Arian smiled as she printed out the piece, realizing that the death of Nick would aid someone else in dealing with a tough time. Her sunflower had in his usual way shown her the sun, and what a glorious sunshine it was, there in her office in her sunflower field.

# Cruelty

by Regina Smith

There we sat out on the front porch. For weeks now we'd been anticipating this moment. We were indecisive. Should we do it in the car, in the garage, in the tub with water, or in the bed? We sat in silence, contemplating. She glanced at me; I looked at her. Then she reached out for my hand and said, "I'm ready to go".

We proceeded up to the room. For weeks, months now, she'd been telling me she'd been longing to do this. We'd been concocting and assessing for a while now how we would carry out her suicide. I gave her a choice of methods. You see, at the time, I was under the misconception that by helping her commit suicide I was doing her a favor. She wanted to die, so I'd assist her.

We had two options. The first one was she'd slit both her wrists and her neck. Then we'd fill the tub with warm water, and she'd either bleed to death or die drowning. The other option was we would handcuff her ankles and wrists to the bed and cover her head with a plastic bag and seal it with heavy-duty tape so she'd suffocate. Either way, she wanted me there for reinforcement and moral support. Whatever we were going to do, we had to be quick and meticulous.

I went and got the box cutter. I watched her slit her wrists. As she began, I watched the metal slice into her flesh at the same time her blood oozed out. Grinding her teeth with tears flowing out of her eyes, she tried her best to smile; she sliced the other one. I asked her how she felt. She responded, "I'm afraid, but I'm ready". I helped her take off her clothes. She began to look weak, so I figured I'd rest her in the tub, to avoid her fainting on the floor. We passed up slitting her neck because we were running out of time. Plus, she was already going in and out of consciousness. I was excited and ready. Deep down inside, I'm sure there was a bit of anxiety, but I wasn't concerned. She wanted my help with this, and she was going to get it.

As she lay there in the tub, the water was a dainty red. She was hesitant about putting her head under the water. I snapped at her and asked her what she was waiting for. She looked up at me and told me that she was in pain and asked if I could hurry the process along by forcing her head down into the water.

I couldn't let her down, so I did as she asked. She began to move. I could feel her natural reflexes kick in. The water went from dainty red, to tinted red, to crimson red. Her body began to jerk as if she was going into shock. I thought she was minutes away from getting what she always wanted, so I pressed down harder and harder. I applied even more pressure. With all the strength she had left in her body, she lifted her arms and clasped her hands around my hands; I pulled her out of the water.

I dragged her frail body out of the pool of blood. I tied the nearest clothes I could find around her bleeding wrists.

What made the act so cruel? That I could think of such a callous, brutal act to suggest to someone. How could I help someone do something as appalling as this? Why did I commit the act? I was helping someone do something that they'd wanted to do. Just as if I helped a child learn how to ride a bicycle. As twisted as it seems, the same way a child longs to learn how to ride a bicycle, some people wait a lifetime to taste death. Call it sadistic, but it's true. Do I feel any remorse? Yes I do. It wasn't right in any shape or form. Now that I'm older, I realize that cruelty is the most selfish act any person could commit. I feel remorse every day that I wake and look in the mirror.

# RELATIONSHIPS



***MOTHER AND CHILD***

Matthew Wildgoose



# In Retrospect

by Regina Beth-Brennen

Well darlin I don tink it such a bad ting especially if you have chirren dem an I hab tree girl child an and one boy child Ya cayn listen erryone ya know especially ole folk like ya grammie and ya mudda dem deys a differen generation altogedda Dey does tell ya deal wid it fo da chirren dem sake but I belie ya should na deal wid it cause a da chirren No chile it aint wort it... Ah?...God?!? Chile you tink dat was how God intend for it ta be? No sah! Not da Lord I servin No darling dat ain Christian view das da church dem view Dey is two different ting an ma pastor say deal wid it too but I'se ma own person an I hadde make ma own decision... Well when I tink a da tings I gern trew wid dat one I hadde wonda bout it lil bit an it plague me plenty-plenty an afta a year an den two den tree den den seben reach an I know I couldna take it no mo "Dis ain wa I sigh up fo" I tell maself "I ain perfect but ain no decent folk need ge treat like dis" so I gern a talking an askin roun cuase a hadde know know if it was just me tink it wrong so I gern to dey mudda an she say I'se a ass for getting in dat situation anyway so deal wid it an guess wha? dey own jus like dat an dey dealin wid it so I ask dey sista an she say "You is maid an mattress" an say I need go so I ask dey pa an e say "No dis fo life" an I star talking an askin mo an mo folk an dey say data in right so I hadde look in masef an realize I'se a decent nuff person I ain perfect but good nuff an I deserve betta dan dem so I pack up ma chirren dem an gone home to ma Ma dem an tell she wa happem an I tell her say us just need roof ova we head till I ge masef straight tell she I be outta she house in two year an she hassle me good while I dere but I ain min cause ma chirren was okay I make good on wha I say it was hard but a do it an I ain look back wid regret since den... Yeah dey try ge ma back but I know dey type good-good dem type does treat ya good lil while an dey evil does come right back I ain fool by no sporadic bout a nice in between evil flow Das how dem type does hook an keep da decent set Dey does get fool by the spurt a nice It does ge dem hope An dey does hol on to dat an tell deyself da one day dey ga change dey ga change but dey don nebba change Dey gimme headache plenty time especially when it come to some legal matta but my fait hol on da Lord ge me trew praise Him I ge trew.. I did tink bout it ya know an I realize I did na love masef ya understand I taut I did need nex haf when wha I did need was to be ma own hol I taut I did need dem ta lif ma up but I did need ta already bin up ya see I was in it fo da wrong ting an I stay fo da wrong ting but I get it strait naw an I make it trew so... You still wan know if I tink it fail If I tink it Fail? If it fail? Hmmmm If I tink it fail? Well yinna love me an it bring me here so I should tink it strait if I tink it fail Do you?

# Enigma

by Davia Ambrose

Unfeeling is the way of my existence  
So out of touch with the world  
Devoid of the life I once lived  
Emotional to the point of no return  
All emotions spent; what to do next?

Like an unread chapter or a hidden page  
The reader has lost interest in the riveting pages  
Once soaked with life  
A sea of truth that seeps out from the very core  
Drowned within the waves of this soul  
Finally knowing what it is like to feel  
Yet numb and withdrawn  
From the only thing important in life.  
TRUE LOVE.

# Look at me

by Crystal Alexander

The words that I speak through my eyes  
Are the most precious thoughts you can ever hear.  
Maybe you can see me, but the question is  
Can you read me?  
Can you enter my thoughts my dreams my  
imagination?  
Can you see beyond my pupil and probe into my  
soul?  
Can you unlock my heart by finding the key  
That holds all my fears, aspiration, secrets and  
emotions?

# Task Master

by Ada Lee Jones

Please taskmaster hit me again  
If you don't, here my task ends.  
I will gladly put down my load,  
And recline into my years of gold.

Please taskmaster, don't let me remove my yolk,  
Because that will be the last thing I do until I croak!

# It's Over!

by Elvardo Wilson

Hey Lady, we need to talk. There are things going through my head, falling like rocks.

I need to be open. I need to get things in the clear, because between me and you, our relationship aint going nowhere. So, here is the tear I dropped from my eyes, to end our relationship for all times.

You probably want to know why--why am I doing this; what is so wrong that we can't get through this? See, the thing is, I gave you all of my heart. I gave you every piece--the piece for my mother, father and my niece. But that was not good enough for you. That couldn't last. But don't worry, that's all in the past.

Why don't relationships work? Why don't they last? I think it's when we start to take each other for granted. That's what happened to us, and as a result, we acting all frantic! And it was not that I wasn't romantic! See, people forget the little details, the things that are most important, even though they seem pale. When was the last time you bought me a rose? . . . Yes, a rose. What? Men shouldn't get roses? That's the same thing, you never think outside of the box. All you think about is what I can do for you, and that's gat me hot!

See, the thing is, with relationships its 50-50. You do your part, I do mine, and we'll make this all pretty-pretty. But I'm not witty-witty. As a matter of fact I feel shitty-shitty! O.K., I'll stop with the silly rhyming. But seriously, relationships are meant to be two-way; in one way, out the other. Like a hose with water passing through it, that's the cutter.

And when it come to feelings it's important to learn how to express them. How am I to know what you are feeling or thinking? All this stress gat me in the bar drinking. You need to stop being so emotional, and start being more sociable, cause the way you acting aint at all notable!

And don't start crying, unless you ready to cry me a river. You won't produce in me even a shiver! You done poison my heart like I aint gat no liver. Now my heart is hardened. Aint no turning back. You better go get your chisel. See if this wall you can crack. So I'll say it again- it's over. Next time I see you... I won't even know ya.

# Men are better than women...mostly

by Stephen Hanna

Once you get past the intellectual gobble and look at life in its rudimentary form, one can understand that when it comes to survival men are superior. It is not because of some supernatural energy bestowed to men or because women are weaker. No. What puts men ahead in the survival arena is, we are simple.

Everything about men is basic ... basic. It would seem that when God created Man, it was Windows 3.1; then God took out a rib and created Windows XP, or in laymen's terms, Women.

Sure, Windows XP is faster and has more programs, but it's so complicated. It needs a monitor that can handle at least six million colors; and while faster, because it can run so many programs, it is more prone to 'crashes'. Windows 3.1, although slow, got the job done. It didn't need any fancy monitor, just two colors would do. Crashing was not an option; there was no time to crash as the computer was too busy doing one task to think about crashing.

One may say, "Come on, that's computers; it's totally different with humans." Is it? Studies show that women are more prone to breakdowns than men, the primary cause being too many responsibilities, too many tasks. Cosmetically, men and women's lives parallel that of the monitors. A good functioning woman, by society's standards, needs her two million shades of gray; she needs to look good. With men, the monotone apparel of one black suit and one gray suit works fine.

From early times men went to hunt while women did things that were challenging: creating clothing, making twine from flax, dyes from berries, creating water-tight baskets. Even though they might not be considered intellectual activities, certainly, they are more complex than a group of men surrounding a wounded animal and stoning it to death. Yet where it came to survival, women held lower life expectancies than men.

Yes, today women have a greater life expectancy than men, but only in the western world--an exception from the norm. In the Western world the responsibilities that add stress have been lessened if not all together removed. Women were expected to take care of the children from infancy until they left the home, but with the advent of schools and day care, this burden was lightened.

Domestic chores, once complicated and challenging, are now simple and mechanized. How many can wash clothes without a washing machine and a dryer... honestly, the homes take pretty good care of themselves when compared to the frontier days.

Of course, the simplicity of men still aids in our survival. Built to be more flexible, stronger, and with a higher threshold of pain, women already have advantages and yet are only just catching up to our level of survival.

We can't incubate our own kind, we can't nurse our young...the male body (no matter how pudgy) is the same streamline design. There are those who say that the male body is built stronger. Ha! The day a man passes anything the size of a watermelon 'naturally' through any of his orifices and lives, then I'll believe it.

Then there are those that want to believe that men have some superiority to women mentally. To refute this belief one has only to look at the comparison between brain sizes and intelligence. In English to call someone a Neanderthal, is to call him or her stupid and primitive, but women's brains were heavier and larger than that of the average male's brain even then. Using this to devise a theory, one can deduce that smaller is smarter and higher up in the evolutionary chain. A woman's brain is four oz less than that of the average male's. Coupled with the fact that women utilize more of their brain than men on average, the theory that men are in some way more intellectually endowed is crushed.

So... if we are simpler physically and mentally, but have somehow managed on average worldwide to outlive women one can only be led to believe that it is being simple that has resulted in men's survival skills'. Or maybe it's the complexity of women that kills them. But what do I know? I'm but a simple-minded man.

# Ten Thousand Promises

by Natasha Rufin

"Don't go!" she whispered to nothing but the wind as her tears fell silently to the ground. She stood there in the driveway, frozen from the shock of the moment. The girl known to be usually pragmatic to a fault stood there in childlike innocence, not fully grasping what had happened.

"Daddy, please come back. I'll be good this time, I promise." She cried softly. Her mother heard her, and it broke her heart. She realized that her daughter blamed herself when there was nothing about the eight-year-old child born to her and her soon-to-be-ex-husband's union that could have driven one away. The little girl who saw the best of everything in this world, no matter what it was, the one who'd only always bought joy to their lives, was just too special.

"Leanna, honey, let's go inside; it's about to rain," her mother whispered, pulling the little girl indoors and away from prying neighbors and the spot where her father had gotten into his car and driven away. Reluctantly, Leanna followed her mother indoors. Yet she still couldn't believe that her dad had left them.

Leanna sat at the bay windows with her chubby face smeared against the panes, looking out for signs that her father had changed his mind. Since he'd left, her cheery disposition had gone away. She no longer saw the lovely sweetness of the spring flowers or even the angels crying tears as it rained; the sun no longer pierced her heart with its rays all because she felt so much pain. Her life felt lonely without her father. It had been almost a week since he'd been gone, and she still convinced herself that he would return. He just had to; she'd reasoned that if he loved her as much as he claimed to he would return.

"No, Mom, we have to wait on Daddy. It's Tuesday. That's our family night," she responded stubbornly.

"Leanna ..." her mother began. "Your father lives with Yvette now. He loves you honey, he really does, but he's not coming home."

"No, Mommy! Daddy loves us, and he's always home on Tuesdays," Leanna stated boldly and with conviction. "Yvette is his secretary. He doesn't love her. She just works for him."

"He loves her honey, more than he ever loved me, yet that doesn't change how much he loves you, darling. He'll always be around for you; that's what he promised, didn't he?"



“Yes, but ...” she began as her mother cut her off.

“No buts!” she responded firmly.

“Well, he promised that he’d always love us, that he’d never ever make us cry. He promised me that just last week, Mommy! Daddy said that he’d never say goodbye.” Leanna cried hysterically.

Trying to calm her daughter, Leanne felt a pain unlike any other. As she looked around at her home, the one built by her baby’s daddy, she felt cheated. She’d taken a vow to stay with him for always, to love, honor and cherish him. She’d cooked his meals, planned his dinner parties, had been his nursemaid in trying times, yet he still left with the first woman he could. The high and mighty Dr. Samuel Roberts, surgeon extraordinaire, had tired of his housewife and her Diploma in Primary Education. He’d fallen for the lady with the Associate’s in Computer Information Systems, fifteen years his junior and always seeming to try to climb the success ladder. She was different, he’d claimed. Reminded him of Leanne when they’d first met. What he’d really meant was young, vibrant and adventurous. Yet Leanne was a mother, and she’d had to realize that at a certain time in one’s life one had to grow up. Would he?

“Shh ..., Baby, it’s okay! Daddy still loves you. He’ll never leave you, Baby. He’s always a phone call way,” she responded, crying herself, as she tried frantically to aid an eight-year-old to grasp the concept of her parents’ spilt being final.

“But he’s my daddy; he should be here with me. Shouldn’t he? Will he ever be back?” she asked her mother with imploring eyes that begged to hear a “yes” answer.

“Maybe, Sweetheart, maybe,” her mother responded, yet Leanna knew instinctively that maybe was just a kind way of saying no. Her father had left them, breaking her heart and her spirit.

As the weeks turned into months and the months into years since her father had taken leave of her and her mother’s day-to-day lives, he was hardly seen again, unless it was with Yvette on some excursion or another. After awhile, her father and Yvette started a family, and soon he had a new princess to play with; he had no need of Leanna. All Leanna received were empty, broken, shallow promises.

Leanna grew up, as all kids must someday, her mother grew older; yet her father never tried to mend the hearts that he’d broken. Leanna grew into a woman filled with purpose and kindness; she went on to become a child psychiatrist helping those with wounds as profound as hers. Deep within, Leanna had laid an emotional scar that was so ugly that only the perpetrator could heal it. Only her father, the man of ten thousand broken promises, could. And from the looks of it, he never would.

# Scarlet A

by Regina-Beth Brennen

How would he feel if he knew another had violated  
Her body  
How would he react if he knew how fully the other had  
permeated her soul  
Would he still love her, want her  
If he knew?  
Would he still be easy if he ever guessed  
That the pillows on which he now rests  
Were by another suckled and caressed?  
To know another had savoured her flavour  
Another, her juices, had drunk  
To know she intentionally fled his utopia  
In favour of lesser fields  
To know another had luxuriated in her ocean  
That the wrong prince had parted her sea  
To know she had drunk from another fountain  
Gluttonized on another's love  
What would he do?  
What would he say  
If her centre  
Bearing another's seed  
Were to sprout and talk someday?

# PASSION AND PAIN



**UNTITLED**  
Damaso Gray

# Spirit Rhythm

by Regina-Beth Brennen

## Prelude

Sperrit possess she  
Apple Bottom vine  
Grin'  
Stiletto stomp  
To de riddum  
Darkness blinds  
But strode  
Define  
The movement  
In da riddum  
Chocolate gal flys while slave shine  
Iridescent sparkles  
Punctuate eyes  
Throat expose  
While yaki cascades  
And sways  
against nothing  
while she  
throbs  
to the rhythm  
pulsates to the rhythm  
desires  
teased pleased increezed  
by da riddum  
da notes delegate  
an settle on each peak  
in each cavernous place  
while she pulsates gyrates  
to the rhythm  
the rhythm  
rhythm  
thum  
thum  
thum

## Postlude

Arm take flight  
As music transcends  
With head thrown back  
Lauder streaks  
as she  
moves grooves looves  
the riddum  
prays pays  
homage with riddum  
as the spirit flows  
and fills each hollow  
space with empty  
place she tries cries  
while she sway praise  
she is raised  
by the rhythm rhythm rhythm  
she is raised  
by the rhythm rhythm rhythm  
while she pays  
praise  
she soars  
on the rhythm  
the rhythm  
the rhythm  
she cries flys  
on the rhythm  
rhythm  
rhythm  
rhythm  
she cries  
flys  
on the rhythm

# Bag of Bones

by Nishan Patton

There's something within us all that never seems complete  
Something that renders a teacher not content to teach  
A preacher not content to preach  
God alone is not satisfied with creation  
For there are nations  
And within those nations lies the dust  
For more seeds to be planted  
To thrive, to thrust  
What is this feeling of emptiness  
Conceived in the depth of our souls  
To render our hearts to stop their beats?  
The snow alone has no soul but ever still creates his fleet  
Many men now wander on a quest for what to be  
Aimlessly searching for conclusions to questions not conceived  
Keep searching, for this world is but a prelude  
There's more beyond a world where everything but nothing lies  
And all that you will or wont find here hidden in your eyes  
Will be trapped in a time when flesh succumbs to flies  
In the event of your demise.

# Paradise Imprisonment

by Barry Williams

To be a Bahamian  
What does it mean?  
The symbolic culture  
Is well enough  
But there's more to it

Or so it would seem.

The Black of the flag  
Strains the journey to  
individuality.

The yellow of the flag  
Infuses my soul  
Yet it blinds me to  
Self discovery

The blue of the flag is refreshing too  
But it encircles- entraps-  
Shrouding me  
From the  
Larger world's hue

Paradise is sometimes a

Jail sentence to pay  
That deadens

Or so it would seem.

# Tailor of Poems (or a Tailor's Inspiration)

by Barry Williams

I met a man that  
Inspired me to weave  
Into existence those experiences  
To which my heavy heart clings.

A fire inspired to sew  
Together parts of me  
That need to be told if only in  
Haphazard stitches  
Baring portions of my soul.

In amazement I see  
His creations so craftily  
Designed; his tailoring  
Of those experiences  
clothing the body, soul and mind.

I'm experimenting with  
Some patterns that will  
Someday be my garments  
Hanging on the shelf,  
Nametags of myself.

Ten needles piercing  
The MS Word pattern designing the  
Maiden revelation,  
To the Tailor of hundreds of poems  
Testament of my heartfelt inspiration.

## 28 days

by Bennique Brown

A burning sensation roars continuously as I rock back and forth  
Just as thunder comes through rain I prepare for a storm that  
is sure to bring pain

Sometimes without warning it tells me hi  
Oh not again! How can I say goodbye?

This is one friend whose greeting lasts a whole week  
Forget about the flowers, it's a slap on the cheek

I don't care anymore, who needs such a friend  
With wings weeping weapons, named Always?

The hell with pregnancy, the hell with it all  
Can someone please tell me why rain has to fall?



# ALUMNUS



***I'M AN AMERICAN***  
Jonathan Murray

# Snow

by Ward Minnis

Snow must be like my Grand Pappy head  
white and nappy on top  
black beneath.

On TV it does look pretty  
and harmless.  
I never touch it though.  
But I soon will.  
Grand Pappy tell me say you can eat it,  
like ice cream.  
He say that soon I'll hate it,  
like the white people there.  
Cold as freezer,  
suffocating like asbestos blanket.  
They does stamp out we fire  
with they big steel-toe boots,  
always ready to kick  
and keep we down;  
stop we from seeing sun.

I want to see snow still.  
see what the fuss is about.

Grand Pappy, when is spring  
for black folk?  
Been winter way too long.

# Essay on the joy of planting banana suckers in your own land

by Ward Minnis

I have a new spade,  
a new brand spade  
that yearn to plant banana.  
All I need now is land.

The spade: him too clean.  
Him want dig bad though,  
right in that fertile place  
between the branches,  
the sacred spot  
where the roots does hide.  
I wish virgin earth for me novice;  
earth that cannot compare him to tractor.  
Land that ain't been squatted on,  
slashed and burnt,  
or worse yet,  
claimed by some foreigner.  
But I not picky.

So few prime plots these days  
good, pure native earth so hard to find.  
Earth that is solid,  
land that is worth the time.  
A spot no real estate agent can show you.  
This a real sellers market.

I only want me own garden  
a little patch where I can dig till I silly.  
Plant banana morning, noon and night,  
Open the hole and put in me fertilize,  
fill it with sap  
from nighttime ritual and early morning dance.

I only want me own garden.  
A place to return.  
A place I belong.  
I want to wake up and hear the soil singing,  
telling me I do me job well.

I have to choose me plot with care.  
You never rush with land.

Me new brand spade restless.  
See, him want work!  
See, him want dig!  
Him want plant this banana sucker deep,  
as far as it can go.  
Plant it like flag pole.

Look here man!  
Give me land where I can climb the hills  
and feel them real good.  
I want smell the air man,  
lick the dew right off the leaves in the morning time  
while the banana them ripening.

This what I will do with the land,  
that earth that would receive me,  
I will treat it well fine  
trust me it ain't go ever complain.

But remember,  
I not too picky.