



# TAMARIND

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# **TAMARIND**

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## **Submissions**

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# REFLECTIONS



**COLOR THEORY**, Class Project, ART 103

## Music Is My Life

Gerren Bethel

Music is my life and I am every instrument. Percussion is my life flow. Heartbeat like a drum beat from deepest Africa. Heart contracting to the rum pum pum of a tum-tum drum. Rapid fire pulse mimics the syncopated rapping on congos and bongos and goatskin drums. And red cell piccolos and white cell flutes dance a dizzy dance through woodwind veins as the blood rushes and trills and thrills to all 2001 parts. White meat muscle fiber violin strings flex a haunting melody underscored by the deep soul bass line of dark meat muscle cords. Tune up taut tendons so the vibratos and tremolos don't break joint cohesion and cause my bric-a-brac bones to click click clatter on the ground. Even my savage soul is soothing when it is released in the seductive tones of a tenor saxophone. Music is my life and I am every instrument.

## **Pain for Profit**

Gerren Bethel

War is hell. Broken bodies by the wayside piled up like yesterday's garbage; stinking, rotting corpses furnish a four-piece feast for the vultures and vermin that litter the streets. These are the casualties of the war for survival. Genocide is big business. Every cadaver is worth a quarter, worth a dollar, worth some cash. The rat-a-tat-tat of the Gatling gun and machine gun firing like coins hitting the tables of wealthy arms manufacturers. So the blood flows into Swiss bank accounts and not through worthless veins. Children cry cause mommies die and daddies die and each tear drop is a coin dropped into the piggy bank of the bourgeoisie. So we are victimized, scrutinized, brutalized and subjected to genocide all in the name of the Almighty Dollar. Dollar dollar make you scream and holler.

## Freedom

Cherilyn Rahming

Today I listened and I heard a young Rasta arguing about his black ancestry. He adamantly defended his right to be released from the oppression of the white man. Doesn't he know that slavery has ended? How long will we walk with its carcass strapped to our backs making upward mobility virtually impossible? I submit that it is not the white man that oppressed my passionate friend. It is his own thirst to be in a fight, any fight that is slowly killing him. The enemy is not the whites, the government, the denomination nor the system; but the fight itself.

It is the fight that rips at the fiber of our nation that we proclaim to be one under God. We waste our lives fighting a cause and at the end we lie withered and weary, forced to relent to the same enemy- death. I suppose you have heard the saying, "Unless you are willing to die for a cause..." Perhaps. Yet I wonder how many of our advocates would in fact die for the cause for which they fight. And, even further I wonder how many did but wished they hadn't. Though a Christian nation, we reject Paul's admonitions: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal..." Instead of bended knees, we opt for war paint and spears, wearying ourselves in unnecessary battles and ignorant wars.

Today I listened and I heard the bleating of a wounded nation in need of an advocate for itself yet so blinded by a cause that it doesn't hear Him proclaiming its emancipation.



## Religious Leaders are Not the Ones Guilty of Exploitation

Trésor D. Rahming

How backwards has our society become that we laud a drug lord as a community hero, while shunning our own successful “men and women of God?” Isn’t there something wrong with that picture? This is what is happening in our Bahamas today.

Bahamian headlines are saturated with stories of this group or that group calling on the Government to pay them more for the work they have done as public labourers. It seems that no one wants to be exploited, but rather, everyone wants to be paid for their hard work; after all, they have families to provide for. We take on this kind of thinking when it comes to our teachers, our police officers, or any of our other professionals. But our preachers? God forbid! Today, it is not the people that should fear exploitation by their religious leaders, but rather, it is so many of our religious leaders who are suffering the most exploitation, and are either living on the brink of poverty or are having to find other means of income to enable them to support their families and live the kind of life that they desire for themselves.

Do we not see how hypocritical we have become? So many religious leaders find themselves bearing the emotional weight of our sufferings, being our encouragers during our times of weakness, toiling hard to put together programs for our individual and social well being, and answering our midnight calls for comfort. Theirs is a round-the-clock profession. While we are working hard to provide for our families, they are working hard to aid many less fortunate families. While we mourn the passing of our loved ones, they leave their families to come mourn with us and give us words of reassurance. While we sleep, they are studying – awakening to spiritual truths in the Bible that will guide us all in our living.

And what do we give these diligent servants of the Lord for their selfless efforts? The “finger,” of course. If we see a congregation that is truly appreciative of their pastor’s contribution to their lives and seeks to offer him some monetary token of that appreciation, we say that he has somehow brainwashed them and is using them for money. How cynical we have become. Just as our families must eat, so must theirs. If we deserve payment for our fervent efforts, so do they. Again, many Bahamians have a tendency to forget just how involved and far-reaching the duties of a pastor can be. And if it is agreed that the level of one’s pay should be on par with the quality of one’s work, then a logical conclusion should be that most pastors in our small country are “under” paid.

Sad to say, the reality is that not all of our religious leaders fare so well. One cannot forget about the pastors working second jobs as school

teachers, who upon the close of the school day must then sit shoulder to shoulder with those same students on a local jitney on their way home to prepare Sunday's sermon about the blessings of the Lord that lie in wait for the rest of us. There he or she is struggling to get by, but we can all feel so much better about ourselves since we aren't like one of those "mindless," "programmed" church people who let their preachers *use* them. No, not us.

The end result of all of this, in my lowly eyes at least, is what seems to be the satisfaction of the masses with the poor state of the many struggling religious leaders, and the persecution of the few prosperous who have risen above; we're okay so long as they're not doing better than we are. If we did more to help our religious leaders be better off financially than they are though, we may very likely position them to place even more of their focus and efforts on our collective spiritual well being, as opposed to plodding on for their own survival.

Thank God there are a few of our pastors who are rather smart and enterprising people! Because some of them are rich! Their stylish attire, top-of-the-line cars, and dream homes are indeed quite remarkable. And if one didn't know better one would think that their congregations were being made to give them far too much money to support such extravagant lifestyles. What many Bahamians fail to realize, though, is that most of our religious leaders who can be considered wealthy (and truthfully, one must admit that such persons are anomalies in the Bahamian society) have not become so merely as a result of, oftentimes, meager church salaries, but have found for themselves alternative or supplementary means of income. Almost invariably, today's top religious leaders collect royalty cheques for their books and music, involve themselves in investments, operate private businesses, serve on councils and committees, and participate in an assortment of other good and lucrative projects. Even so, the stark reality is that staff salaries, building maintenance, and vigorous community work consume a lot of the money going into a church. Thus, many Bahamian ministers are 'forced' to have alternative or supplementary means of income. Such ministers can hardly be accused of exploiting their members; if anything, lock them up for being such visionary and enterprising individuals.

Is it so difficult for us to see each other get ahead in life that we must continually try to pull down our flourishing ministers of the Gospel when we see that they have improved their standard of living? Can we truly feel justified in our exploitation of these men and women, many of whom have studied just as hard and just as long as any other professional, by not treating them as pay-worthy professionals? Thank God some of our pastors are such smart and otherwise enterprising people! Thank God!

## On Bahamian Dialect

Thea Storr

In her essay “What’s Wrong with Black English?” (*Newsweek*, December 27, 1982), the author Rachel L. Jones discusses the stereotypes that are placed upon black people in the United States of America because of the way they speak, mostly among themselves. When anyone steps out of this stereotype, most classify it as “talking white.” She relates her own experiences of being classed in that stereotype, with her first encounter occurring as a child. Jones observes that educational achievement and proper speaking are what blacks think go hand-in-hand with white people. Articulating words can even be unacceptable among peers and family. The writer uses various famous blacks as examples of people who spoke Standard English and “stayed true” to the race. She states that the way blacks speak makes it harder for them to be successful in the professional world, where their jargon is no longer suitable. She believes that Black English is something that black people can call their own. Jones has made me think that the way black Americans speak, their feelings about who should use proper grammar, and their image of what mold a person should fit into are similar to that of natives of The Bahamas.

The stereotype mentioned in the essay is very familiar among Bahamians. In The Bahamas people often accuse another of selling out by “being white” or “trying to be black.” I find myself making these generalizations too. If a Bahamian enjoys heavy metal or punk rock genres of music, what is said about that person? Or what about a white boy with cornrows, baggy jeans and gold grills? We know that black males have created an image for themselves in which they wear oversized clothing, lots of jewelry and drive “tricked out” cars and anyone who isn’t black wants to be like us. When we say that our people are “trying to be white,” I don’t know if we are keeping them down or reminding them of their roots. I believe that a person should know where he or she came from and should not lose sight of that. But by staying in sight of one’s roots, one might not have nor want to have the ambition to be prepared for the global economy. This stereotype that we have created for ourselves seems to have made us inferior to the other races.

And surely we cannot think that white people are better than we are because they use Standard English. What exactly defines someone as black or white, other than their skin color— grammar? When we see blacks moving away from the stereotypes previously mentioned, it is likely for us to say that they are “switching.” For a public school student to speak the way that another student from Lyford Cay speaks should make “us” proud. To know that we could be trendsetters in the professional community or obtain the

jobs that we have first preference to because our people, the black people, are qualified are some things we should be making steps towards. As it relates to Bahamian Dialect, there is nothing wrong with it because it is native to us, but too many of us don't know where and how to switch that off. This sometimes makes us unqualified for jobs. I think that we know that we can't refer to our bosses as "bey" or "nigga," but when it comes to proper usage of English grammar, some of us simply don't know the rules. We will not make it far if we don't encourage our children, family and friends to learn to speak in the way that will make them/us competent citizens for the business world.

We do encourage our children, family and friends, however, all sorts of out-of-country influences. In The Bahamas, there is a lot of pressure on the people to inherit the cultures of our Caribbean neighbors. That pressure comes especially from Jamaica. We listen to their dancehall and reggae music, dress in the colors of their flag, and emulate and buy DVD's of their dances. But with all this being said, I have never heard a Bahamian say to another that they are trying to be Jamaican. There is, of course, nothing wrong with watching *Passa Passa* and indulging in other things Jamaican. The bigger question here, though, is if we can be influenced by these things and see nothing wrong with it, why can't the same apply to the way we speak proper English?

The way we speak has a lot to do with the way we read and understand; it helps determine our potential in education and it surely does make an impression in the professional community. Jones states, "My goal is . . . to one day see more black people less dependent on a dialect that excludes them from full participation in the world we live in." I wish to see the same, more specifically, for my Bahamian people.

## Another Family Island

Leroy Laing

During the summer months, thousands of Bahamians suffer from a psychological condition that causes intense shopping cravings. These Bahamians that suffer from this condition flock to the U.S., in particular Miami, Florida to relieve their shopping urges. South Florida is in close proximity to The Bahamas with Bimini and Grand Bahama lying about 50 miles away. Bahamians don't care how they get there, as long as they get there. They travel by plane or by boat with their pockets loaded with cash and their reservations already made. Although, Bahamians say they're going for vacation, we know this is not the case. They may stay in a hotel, drive a rental car and technically be tourists but don't let this fool you. They know Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Orlando better than some of the locals. The true purpose of a Bahamian vacation is shopping in Florida and how they go about shopping is anything but boring.

Many Bahamians take the plane to the U.S. but Grand Bahamians crowd the Discovery Cruise line during this time, converting this cruise line from a tourist luxury cruise into a Bahamian cargo vessel. At 4 o'clock p.m. this ship is overflowing with tourists and Bahamians alike ready to sail to Ft. Lauderdale. Bahamians make this ship their own. They bring their big cozy comforters to sleep in the entertainment room while the shows are going on. Only tourists are amused by these performances because the Bahamians know these jokes like they know their name because they have heard them dozens of times. If there is no room in the lounges, they sleep in the hallways instead of cabins just to save that extra dollar for shopping.

They eventually reach Ft. Lauderdale and endure the stressful conditions of the long uncomfortable ride, poor food choices and long lines. They choose the boat over the plane. Why? The answer is—it's cheaper. After disembarking from the ship Bahamians spread all over Florida like a wildfire. Most live with family or rent a vehicle with a lot of space, not for their party but for the stuff they will buy. Few Bahamians stay in a hotel for the first night, and the others? Well, they hit any Wal-Mart or Super Wal-Mart they can find. Even if they have young children or a baby they will sleep, eat and bathe in Wal-Mart. Basic shopping is done now like shopping for toiletries, underwear, a few food items, school supplies, bedding and other miscellaneous items. Even reunions take place in Wal-Mart among Bahamians from all the Family Islands. This is why "Florida is another Family Island."

On the second day, shortly after midnight, Bahamians now check into hotels so that they can avoid a two-night charge from the hotel. Now

Bahamians start to spread out and do massive shopping. The malls and clothing stores like the common Sawgrass Mills Mall, Broward Mall, the Florida Mall, Lauderhill Mall and the Outlets in Orlando are bombarded by Bahamians. At this stage, these crazed Bahamians' blood pressure is far above normal. They have no appetite and a one track mind and that is for shopping. The big red and white sale posters catch Bahamians' eyes in an instant. In these stores, everyone from the baby to the grandmother is tossing items into the trolley. Large lump sums and filled credit cards are just flipped over to the cashier to pay for a colossal amount of goods. When the cashier sees this, he or she may ask "Are you a Bahamian? You guys are so rich!" Sometimes they may not even have to ask, because they already recognize the name and face from a previous visit.

Long rides on I-95 from Ft. Lauderdale to Miami are all fun. Maps are unnecessary to most Bahamians as they know the streets of Miami like the back of their hands. When they get there mostly fashionable clothes are bought at Fifth Avenue and food items bought from the Bahamian friendly Jetro Wholesale, Costco's and Pen Dutch can last about a year. As vigorous shopping dwindles because of money reductions, Bahamians either try to make it a vacation by attending one or two theme parks at the end or call it quits. It almost seems as if they have been cured from their madness. Their reduction in money also causes their shopping insanity disorder to diminish.

Now it's time to leave; pockets are empty, credit bills are high and there are lots of goods to unload onto the boat or unload to the shipping company for the goods to return home. They have now awakened from their trance and now the adults are a bit depressed because they know that when they reach home, it is time to work very hard to make this money back. Nevertheless, everyone has had a good time and now it's time to leave the honorary Bahamian Family Island to return to the authentic beautiful Bahama Islands where Customs is awaiting to put an even bigger dent in the pockets of these broke Bahamians.

## On Cultural Production

Joshua Ramsey

The article “On Cultural Production” written by Nicolette Bethel addresses the mental mayhem created when there is talk of globalization. Instead of joining the masses that totally object to the thought of globalization, Bethel proposes that we come up with a product like none other, a product unique to The Bahamas. Acknowledging that we do not have the soil for agriculture or the standard of living for the manufacturing of other things, Bethel suggests that we produce and market all aspects of our culture, but she specifically elaborates on Bahamian music. Bethel encourages the Bahamian public to create, package and sell genuine Bahamian music and not mimic the more popular hip hop and reggae genre. She challenges her audience to embrace her dream in offering the world something that they cannot refuse, something unmistakably authentic; something Bahamian.

In this piece, Bethel deals with globalization head on, admonishing Bahamians to market their culture. The idea proposed by Bethel is both wonderful and inspiring, and I believe her idea is crossing the threshold and is becoming reality. The year 2006 was by far the most successful year for Bahamian music according to the general public, Bahamian artists themselves, as well as Bahamian radio stations. The success of Bahamian music can be attributed to the increase in Bahamian airplay on local radio stations, the demand for Bahamian musical performances as or for events, and the debut of some Bahamian music on the Trans-Caribbean music channel, Tempo.

As far as I can remember, 2006 had the greatest number of Bahamian music releases in the past two decades. Our Bahamian artists not only released a larger quantity of songs, but the quality of the releases has caused the songs to receive a generous increase in airplay. Normally, the radio stations would play a mixture of rap, R&B and reggae music because these were their listeners’ favorites, and they would probably play one Bahamian song every two hours just to say that they are supporting Bahamian artists. However, from the beginning of 2006 and especially during the summer one could not and still cannot turn to a radio station and not hear one or even two Bahamian songs playing within the space of ten minutes. Songs like “Ghost Move,” “Mama Don’t Want No Rake ’n Scrape’n in Here” and “I Gat a Hang Over” have been on the Bahamian top ten countdown outranking rap and the other genres for up to ten weeks straight. Along with the radio stations being bombarded by Bahamian music, the popular Bahamian night spots have to include a session in their routine where they play at least five to eight Bahamian songs back to back. There was a time when Bahamian music

would only be popular at the night spots where the older generation hung out, and would either prompt a bathroom break or serve as a conclusion to the gathering if played at the night spots where the younger generation hung out. Nowadays it's different; the younger generations actually request their favorite Bahamian song at the night spots.

Due to the great success of Bahamian music in 2006, an annual event was created named 'Best of the Best' featuring solely Bahamian artists. That year was the first time for the event, and because of this, the planners of the event did not expect a large turnout. On the contrary, the venue for the event did not provide enough space for the actual turnout. The concert attracted triple the number of persons that planners expected. People traveled from other Family Islands just to attend this event and some of the local Nassauvians could not gain access because the concert was sold out. The quality of music that the Bahamian artists are producing is immaculate and is now observed nationally. Due to the popularity gained in 2006, if the regattas hosted at any of the Bahamian islands did not have a special performance by at least one Bahamian artist, the event would have been considered incomplete. Recently I went to the Cat Island Regatta and there was a Bahamian artist who goes by the name, Ancient Man. He sang about seven of his popular songs, one of which was "Call the Fire Engine" and when he performed it, the crowd went 'nuts' cheering for him and dancing in the road; it was an experience to remember. The recent success of Bahamian music comes from the acceptance of the product by the Bahamian people, and so far it has impacted the Bahamian society greatly and its popularity is continually rising.

There is a saying that goes, "Before you tell me that there is something in my eye, you should first take out the scale that is in yours!" I feel that Bahamian artists have done this, and are now ready to introduce Bahamian music to the world. Bahamians are now comfortable with their music, and have taken a step towards commercializing it on an international scale. In life goals require time to be achieved, and entail steps before success is achieved. International recognition for Bahamian music is a big goal to achieve. However, we are right at the doorstep and knocking on globalization's door! Why do I make such a huge statement? Well here is why. Bahamian artists must first be well accepted by their own which is a very difficult task to achieve, but that has already been accomplished. The Bahamas is only a country in the Caribbean, and the Caribbean a portion of the world. Bahamians are well on their way to accomplishing Caribbean-wide recognition. The best of the Caribbean's music is aired on Tempo, which was created to expose the production of various musical genres that are first-class in the Caribbean and beyond. The only step above this



recognition is 'world wide' recognition, and believe it or not, the Bahamian artists have made it on *Tempo*. At least two of the 'top ten' musical releases placed on *Tempo* have achieved 'world wide recognition' status. Like I said earlier, they are at the door.

With all of the above stated, we see that Bethel's dream may not have been just a dream at all; it may have been a vision. By sharing her vision with the Bahamian public, Bethel is playing a very important role in helping Bahamians see how economic assistance in producing our authentic Bahamian music can benefit our country. She also helps us to consider the music industry as a very real option for a lucrative career. I for one agree with her article, and support the vision that she is trying to share. Instead of being copycats, we can be ourselves, and in being ourselves, we can still be successful.

## **Paying for Junkanoo: A Slap in the Face**

Kyle Kerr

In The Bahamas, the sound of goatskin drums, cowbells, and whistles can mean only one thing: Junkanoo. Bahamians of all ages either take part in or are spectators of the biannual parade. Junkanoo is one of the few things that is truly indicative of Bahamian culture. Unfortunately, this aspect of our culture is being commercialized. We as Bahamians shouldn't have to pay for the Boxing Day and New Year's Day Junkanoo parades because by commercializing them, we may be damaging the integrity and atmosphere of the parades.

There are several factors which contribute to the dilemma that this recently implemented ticket system creates. The bleachers and barricades, which have to be set up for the ticket system to work, drastically restrict the number of people that are able to watch the parades firsthand. It also makes the movement of people around the Bay Street area difficult. Anyone who decides to go to one of the more recent parades and doesn't have tickets will know that they would have to own a business on Bay Street with a balcony or know someone who does in order to see the parade. Most of the alleys and side corners that are not barricaded or obscured by the bleachers usually aren't the best places from which to watch the parades. These areas are almost always very crowded because of the volume of people trying to watch the parades. Also, these areas are usually poorly lit, which creates an unsafe atmosphere where crimes are more likely to occur. Other Bahamians who feel the same way that I do about the situation, know that it is quite frustrating to wait for a parade that occurs only twice per year and be unable to watch it. For many Bahamians, the Junkanoo parades are important cultural events and two of the major social gatherings of the year. With all the restrictions the bleachers impose on the parades, they become difficult to enjoy.

Besides its restricting effect on the mobility of people during the parade, another disadvantage to this system is that, to some extent, it creates a socioeconomic barrier. The tickets for bleacher seats with the best views of the parades are actually quite expensive, some exceeding \$100. Most middle and lower-class families do not have the resources to afford these extravagant prices and, due to their economic status, are unable to freely enjoy the parades as they choose. The ticket system reserves the finest places to watch the parades for tourists and the more financially sound in the Bahamian

community. To a certain degree, this system creates a group in Bahamian society that is unintentionally ostracized at these cultural events. One of the goals of the parade organizers should be to encourage the unification of the Bahamian people through an appreciation of their culture. To some extent, whether intentional or not, the ticket system creates a form of discrimination which should not occur, least of all at one of the country's foremost cultural events.

Yet another negative and perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the situation is the Government's exploitation of Junkanoo. This exploitation could lead to a complete loss of the cultural integrity of the parades. The Government's budget isn't significantly affected by the parades, other than the cost of the bleachers, the people that cleanup after the parade and perhaps the added patrols of police officers during the parades. The Government contributes very little, if any funds to the Junkanoo groups' costume expenses, and the members of the groups are volunteers who receive no payment. With such insignificant contributions, the Government shouldn't have any major influence on the way the parades are organized. With the ticket system already in place, it is now easier for the Government to change the format of the parades until it best suits their plans. They may introduce minimum requirements for groups. For example, they may set a minimum number of people required to be in a group before they can perform. Policies like this would prevent smaller groups with fewer resources from performing, creating yet another level of discrimination. Junkanoo is for the people. Every aspect of it should be controlled by the people.

Individuals in favor of this system may say that it provides a secure environment in which to enjoy the parades. Admittedly, to a certain extent, the system provides some level of order and security. This may make the parade more attractive to foreigners and perhaps some of the less sociable Bahamians in society, but to me and perhaps to you, this system is merely a nuisance. This one benefit does not compensate for the negative effects it has on the parades. The bleachers take up a lot of space and prevent a large number of people from seeing the parades. It also unintentionally draws a line that separates the wealthy from the less fortunate. If the primary goal of the ticket system is to create a more secure and orderly atmosphere, this can be accomplished by increasing the police presence in the area during the

parades. The increased police presence can provide that order and security without the restricting effect the bleachers have on the parade.

Overall, the negative aspects of the ticket system outweigh the positive ones. It makes Junkanoo less enjoyable as a social gathering and cultural event. The Bahamian people should be able to enjoy the parades without the restraints employed by individuals in positions of authority. The Government is chosen by the people to be their representatives and to do what is in their best interest. The ticket system is only an introduction to this type of manipulation. If the Government is merely trying to make money and not trying to preserve our culture and unify our people, it will become very difficult for the country to progress. Having to pay for a non-Government funded, public cultural event is a slap in the face. This is an insult to the Bahamian people and an issue that needs to be rectified as soon as possible.

## Journal Response 6

Patrick C. Greenslade

In her lecture “Unwritten: Race, Violence, Sexuality and Jamaican Performance,” Honor Ford-Smith discusses the controversy surrounding the condemnation of gays and lesbians in dancehall music. She talks about an incident that personifies this phenomenon: at a Christmas jamboree in Kingston’s inner city area, the DJ played anti-gay, sexually-suggestive lyrics. When the DJ shouted out to the audience to raise their hands “if you not batty man,” Ford-Smith almost raised her hand even though she is a heterosexual woman! The granting of asylum to gay Jamaicans by countries such as Great Britain is sometimes the only way for these people to survive.

Ford-Smith asserts that what remains unexplored in the discussion of Jamaica as barbaric and Britain as civilized is the analysis of the factors that play a part in this opinion. She then talks about the historical and cultural influences that cause this assumption, and it is against this background that she discusses the importance of performance in the colonies. Performance, in her view, acquired a significant meaning for the enslaved because of their low position in society and lack of reading and writing skills. Marcus Garvey’s organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA), used performance to challenge and caricature the societal boundaries of the colonial powers. For example, in a paradoxical move away from his ideals of “militant masculinity,” Garvey allowed openly gay men to perform in these variety shows. Ford-Smith states that the theatrical cross-dressing in the show challenged militant masculinity and offered alternative identities. These performances, according to Ford-Smith, drew attention to the subordinate status of black men in society, and the anxieties of gender and sexuality in that particular society. They allowed the audience to challenge the race, gender, and sexual boundaries, and reassured them of the normalcy of their genders and sexual relations. Finally, these performances left it up to the audience to decipher what these performances meant, and to form their visions of race, sexual, and gender relations. The rampant discrimination that Ford-Smith talks about at the beginning of her lecture is not limited to Jamaica; The Bahamas is also intolerant towards this segment of the population.

Homosexuality has always been a taboo phenomenon here in The Bahamas. The Bahamian clergy continually condemn gay people, even as they pledge to love the sinner and hate the sin. Many members of the public point and stare at persons suspected of being gay, while engaging in vicious gossip about the person’s personal life. Homophobia just seems to turn the most reasonable Bahamian into a snarling, foaming messenger of hate. During

a discussion about homosexuality in my Grade 12 Religious Studies class, my very good friend jumped up and exclaimed that if any of her family or friends were gay, she would never speak to them again. My mouth dropped open, along with 24 others; the ironies were too great. She was a Christian (in a Religion class no less), and the opinion expressed showed the bigotry in her heart. When cruise ships with predominantly gay passengers pull into Nassau's harbour, protestors automatically chant anti-gay slogans and wave placards; they don't make any effort to talk face-to-face with the tourists, especially in a civilized manner. The most logical reason the protestors head downtown is because of their deep-rooted dislike of the gay lifestyle.

Ironically, the very thing they despise is taking a stronghold in the Bahamian society. For example, recent reports in the daily newspapers allege that lesbianism is becoming more rampant and blatant on some school campuses. It is also alleged that lesbian gangs are being formed, and that they are actively recruiting girls to join their groups; many of them are having sex with older women in return for gifts and material possessions.

Besides being the victims of prejudice, gays and lesbians are often ridiculed in this country as well. A flamboyantly gay teacher was once employed at my school, and many of the students couldn't keep a straight face whenever they saw him. Furthermore, when he took part in interpretive dance, snickers were heard and shoulders heaved in the assembly hall. Some entertainers have satirized homosexuals in their songs. Perhaps the most well-known Bahamian song that pokes fun at this demographic is Ronnie Butler's "Who Put the Pepper in the Vaseline?" which tells the story of two male police officers who have sex.

Persons who do not fit traditional gender stereotypes are also the victims of misguided Bahamian prejudice. The rationale behind this mistreatment is that since these people do not act like typical Bahamian men and women, then they must be gay. They suffer the indignity of having their sexuality scrutinized and questioned. A perfect example of this occurs in an incident chronicled in the February 23, 2006 edition of *The Punch*:

Then the Rev proceeded to imply that any men in the congregation who were wearing earrings must be gay. Referring to the earring-wearing men, the Rev said: "Good morning, man, woman and sissy" (10).

The treatment of gays and lesbians by Bahamians is in danger of further deterioration because of the influx of the dancehall music described by Ford-Smith. The vast majority of listeners are young people, who are the most influential and most easily influenced age group. If they adopt the lyricists' attitudes towards gays and lesbians, then the opportunity to better understand

and treat them with dignity will be lost; this would be a real tragedy in The Bahamas.

Regardless of whether these relations improve, the increased frequency and focus with which these subjects are discussed publically testify to the strides made in gender and sexuality. We have come a long way from previous eras when it was not openly discussed at all or explicitly portrayed in artistic works. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, "All things must change to something new, to something strange." If this quote is indeed true, then this is only the beginning of more comprehensive exploration of this subject. When this happens, then maybe, just maybe, one day Bahamians will not be prejudiced towards gays and lesbians.

## The Great Flashing Machine

A. Philip Armbrister

I went to my boss' office and there she was peering into the great flashing machine. I entered the northern door and watched her sitting at a small side desk facing the rising sun. The horizontal blinds tilted just enough to thwart the direct rays of light.

As I entered I said "Good Morning." And she replied without turning around, "Yes Sir, what can I do for you today?" Her stare into the creature was so intent that I wondered if she were transfixed. . . perhaps hypnotically. Could she be speaking to me? Did she know I was even there?

The flashing machine blinked continually, communicating with her, beseeching her, maybe compelling her and she responded. How interesting that the creature never made a sound, it just winked and blinked and flashed beautiful colours. Then I noticed her hands under the desk, her fingers wiggling rhythmically as if she were a virtuoso at a Saturday night piano concert at Government House.

In my mind, I screamed at the top of my voice, "Ahhhh! We've been invaded by strange beings from afar!" They have captured the boss! She is entranced! I turned and ran, trying to get someone's attention but to no avail. From building to building I went, from office to office I checked, however, I got nothing direct from anyone. They were all dazed. How could this be? How could so many people for so many hours crouch in front of this great flashing machine?!?! Wouldn't they need food, water, relief...? Being scientifically inclined I decided to launch an investigation into the derivation of these peculiar instruments. They all had electrical connections and this electricity was supplied by the power authority. The power authority used oil which came from a foreign country.

Interesting... of this I made a note. From whence did these pretty boxes come? I discovered they were all bought from similar fancy stores. They came to the island via huge ships. I was made to understand later, quite coincidentally, that a special few arrived by air in large flying machines that flash only at night. They are all from foreign! These connections are "mind-boggling!" Perhaps, they are using these great flashing machines to control the entire country.

Have you noticed businesses turn you away sometimes? No transactions are possible when the creature sleeps. There is, however, no pattern to this spontaneous dormant state. Somehow the being has managed to deposit its tentacles in every office, home and even now – coffee shops. How strange, they are now portable. I have seen people traveling with them in tiny, little neat cases.



The CHURCH! No not the Church! The bishops and politicians are making them accessible to the poor, the destitute, the downtrodden and the dispossessed. Is there no end to this madness!?! Am I the only one sensing this cancer slowly but deliberately eating away at our souls ... feeding on our imagination?

## Introspective Insanity

Bradley Worrell

It's amazing, isn't it? When you actually need the voices in your head to speak to you, they all go silent, like the little bastards they are. And you wonder in this world, how can anyone be sane; aren't we all just a little crazy? "Of course not" they'll chant back; "How could we be" all in chorus. "Do we look crazy to you, strapped up in white jackets," all in unison. Move to the beat of the deaf man's drum; all of us do to some extent I think, some more so than others, of course. It's odd, I don't really have strings of coherent thought; my mind moves much too rapidly to stay on one subject longer than it takes to figure it out. And what mystery could consume us now? The universe I figured out long ago—God is no mystery anymore. A flash, a bang, a seizure and oh how the Holy Ghost has found us! Christian now, we'll do no more bad things Lord, you've saved us. No, no mystery there. Women? Hah, I'd need hundreds more years to understand those creatures; it's a wonder they even understand themselves.

What is it I want out of life, don't know; it's a bit like a new ride isn't it? Never quite know where you'll end up. Yet you can still steer the car, just a bit. Tip it in the right direction and zoom, you're off! Or you're dead, smashed into a tree, or some pole. But what do I want, what do I say ... Love? Friends? Health? Happiness? Who knows, can anyone really say what it is they want? Oh we all want to be happy, but what is "happy?" Are we happy when we get exactly what we want? Impossible. Nothing is as it seems, ever. There's always something more, an extra piece to the story that you don't know. There is no eternal happiness, because you'd have to know sorrow before you can know joy and in time sorrow fades as does memory. And what would make us happy, a nice girl to share time with, a good story, green, rain, food? Yes? No? All of the above maybe, but not for long, certainly not forever. No, slip free of this body, this shell that weighs men down, forget the blood shed over the crown and to the depths of the dark hark to that which calls. Explore.

A dusty camera casually chilling on top a stack of dusty CDs. A thin crack running down the wall. I wonder when that got there. A mass of multicoloured cables running to and fro from all corners of the room that I call mine: white, gray, black, brown, beige, blue, tangled, jumbled, knotted cables. May as well be my life. A tall white cup, half-filled with some juice or another; I wonder ... half empty? Or half full ... doesn't matter; it's all empty now.

What am I doing? No time to waste! Time to move on, time to go, things to do, places to go, people to see! Never any time to sit back and

waste it like this in quiet thought, contemplation. Hustle, hustle, hustle ... dollar dollar bills ya'll. Never any time, always something new to do, always someone else who needs something, always more responsibilities, though ... although, I really do wish I could stop and explore that other path ... oh well, maybe someday, HAH, yeah right. Always another day, another damned day.

## The Learning War

Adrian Wildgoose

A melting pot with many different ingredients, each element dressed uniquely by different islands. From potato-like feet to sour faces, the truth of it all is that we are all picked at a particular season by the hands of an intelligent cook. Delicately integrating fruits, sweet to the taste of the eyes, every fiber and atom working together with every blink, every thought, and every recorded voice pattern.

No classroom similar because no subject is exactly the same. The study of the human anatomy gently running its course in the midst of a field of thoughts composing words of uniqueness as I sit in class fondling this pen. The girls being fruits. Finely tuned faces, naturally decorated with dabs of facial masks that hide their field of dreams subconsciously.

Males like vegetables, harsh and necessary with nutrients for international planting. She stands about five feet tall, making an entrance announced by sounds from high heels. Trumpets making a melody and impacting the fertile ground of the elements to prepare for war.

Training sessions. Human anatomy versus psychology. The truth behind Bahamian literature. Fruits finely dressed in shirts like blankets around the body of a patient experiencing 'chills.'

Vegetables loosely dressed with room to swing when ready but only a few soldiers on the field. The rest remain fruits and vegetables refusing to engage in the war between Ignorance and Education.

"What do you think, class?"

I wonder if I raise my hand if anyone would look at me and know that I fear rejection.

"I don't want to think; it causes my mind to expand beyond its comfort zone."

"Well can I help you to think by asking you a series of questions?"

Someone say something because you did pay three hundred dollars to the future University of the Bahamas.

"That depends; can I help you to think by asking you a series of questions?" Typical answer but good response.

"Feel free to ask what you will, but I'll just pay my money to sit here and listen."

Missiles fly back and forth, pride shoots and targets humility, while childhood experiences reinforce their existence through reactions that happened the moment the horns sounded.

"We want you to spoon feed us!"

“Not me, I want to know how to feed myself; don’t worry about if I mess, I’ll need your help to clean it up.”

Actively participating in two classrooms simultaneously studying human anatomy and learning about the works of people who would care less if I existed because the only thing of value they left to me was a bunch of words left for me to understand, as if I’m some kind of Scrabble professional.

Breaking down the doors of the classroom.

“It’s not really what it seems”

“Where is God in all of this?”

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him ever since I was born so what does it matter to me?”

Silence hits the bell. The air tightens as I listen and concentrate. It’s amazing what I learn when I’m learning.

# PORTRAITS



**SEA GRAPE**, Bridgette Strachan

## Soda Pop Life Span

Patrick Deveaux

1.

I am a princess.

A songbird of white supremacy.  
We always hear of the risen African queen's fall,  
But how is it,  
A goddess of the Arian race,  
A sultry siren serenading sensual soliloquies,  
Is made to sing no more?  
Once a Greek empress standing atop my throne  
Hearing echoes of my own voice,  
A rendition from intoxicated parishioners.  
I was loved.  
And like the original flavor of bubble gum,  
Enjoyed by the world,  
Then filled to the point of  
POP!

2

Like all those who love the world, and are loved by the world,  
She was persecuted by the world.  
Purity is sought after by the sinful.  
They were drawn to her heavenly regality,  
Wishing in their hedonistic fantasies,  
That she would allow herself to be deflowered by their hands,  
For the pleasuring of their hands.  
With the same hands they use to pleasure themselves, they,  
Without approval from their reluctantly appointed messiah,  
Perhaps on the betrayal of her disciples,  
Constructed a massive rose colored diamond image in her likeness,  
Around which they performed their scented orgies.  
This is a ritual she never accepted.

3

In their lust for corrupting,  
Their flashing lights blinded her,  
And their blackened quills pricked, drawing blood,  
Stealing her virginity.  
When the deed was done, and they fulfilled themselves,

Exhausted her youthfulness,  
They deemed her unworthy by their double-standards,  
Lost their words of love, because she had lost the desire to conform  
To perverse principles of pulchritude.  
Hypocritics!!

4  
She became the wanton whore they all wanted her to be.  
It's her nature to please the crowd,  
But they bought tickets to a show they decided not to enjoy.  
And as the Israelites got manna from heaven and still turned their backs on  
God,  
They stole her best years and gave her her worst.  
Willingly she forfeited her reign to finally be alive.  
Thinking the common ones would enjoy a royal presence.  
Wrong!  
It's a sin for a god to step down from the throne.  
Never can they forgive.  
Because they hate themselves, they hate her even more.  
Jealousy, envy and resentment live,  
And for that, she must die.

5  
I am only human.

Like a new can of soda pop,  
You enjoy my shiny bold new look.  
The flash of my colors, the innovative art design,  
The unique grip-dynamic shape of my can urges you to savor my very exist-  
ence.  
You chill me, never opening, but carry me around, shaking me up,  
Showing me off to everyone you meet. Shaking me up.  
Recommending me to all of your friends.  
Shaking, shaking, shaking me up.  
When you finally open me up, I fizz,  
POP!  
Explode all over and everywhere.  
Wasted away.  
After all your abuse I've gone flat.  
You take a sip, then say,  
"What is this? I don't want this crap."



**Because She Needed Him**  
Cherilyn Rahming

The crowd was angry  
Pushing, prodding,  
Relentlessly chasing,  
Determined  
To see Him, to hear Him  
Most were merely curious,  
For they had seen the miracles  
They had heard Him teach  
Among them were the scholars,  
The carpenters, tax collectors  
The fishermen, the handmaidens  
But she was most desperate.  
She was hidden beneath the mass  
Groveling under slippered feet  
Hands bruised from being trampled  
Lip torn from being kicked  
Yet she traveled through the tangled maze  
Of insults and disappointments  
Of rejection and accusations  
Of low-self esteem, of destructive relationship  
Of church hurt, and broken dreams  
Only because she needed Him.  
She had been to many doctors  
None had the cure  
She tried pledging allegiance  
To the party in power  
But they too abandoned her  
Religion had failed her  
Her status meant nothing  
So she dragged herself through her pain  
Through her disillusionment  
Through her pride  
Until she found his feet  
Not because it was customary  
For it was not  
Not because it was fashionable  
For it was not  
But it was ONLY  
BECAUSE SHE NEEDED HIM.

## New Roads Travelled

Erica Pratt

As I wiped the sweat that formed at my brow, and shaded my eyes from the glaring sun, I started my journey towards freedom. Mr. Edwards was everything but thrilled at the idea that his hired hands were demanded by law to be released, and he did everything in his power to keep this information away from his helpers.

Every day I thanked the Lord for Mavis Rolle, the hired hand for the Kellys. Miss Mavis, a heavysset elderly lady with chalk white hair, which she kept braided in two, and a distinguishable limp in her walk, befriended me almost immediately once I arrived on the Edwards' farm. I would always reflect on her words whenever I felt as though I would never see my brother Jonny again, "Ween gat long, chile. A time a come when we aint gatta put up wit dis. Peter done say the govmen dem soon a make all dese white people let us go bout we business." Months had passed, and then years, but Miss Mavis' words of encouragement always gave me hope. At times I would dream about being reunited with Jonny, his wife and their little one, George.

I had walked for maybe 85 minutes, when I finally saw a man of my colour on a horse headed towards me. This horse was much different from the ones I was used to seeing. Mr. Edwards had twelve on his farm. They stood nearly twice my height and their manes were as shiny as butter. Their muscular limbs could kill any grown man instantly. But the horse headed towards me was half the size of those I had grown to be fond of. Its mane was coarse and a light brown dirty substance matted its coat.

"Ma'am, you goin in town, aye?" the stranger asked me warmly. I responded that I was, and I asked if he knew whether I was headed in the right direction. When I was sold to Mr. Edwards, five years ago, I had been in Nassau for no more than two weeks and was brought there with the intent to be a hired hand. My brother, his family and I are from British Guiana. I had never gone to town alone or by foot. The few times that I did go it was with Mrs. Edwards to retrieve the monthly household supplies from the market. The kind stranger, whose name was James, gave me a ride on his horse for the remainder of the way. He explained to me that he had also been a hired hand, for Mr. Davies, a business man whose residence was in the heart of town. James had been released for nearly a year by law, but was beckoned to stay an additional four months to contribute to the household expenses incurred by his boss' family.

My journey into town that day on James' horse was where I began my new life.

Everything I now viewed as a liberated person seemed promising

and beneficial to me as opposed to when I helped the Edwardses. Every penny I made contributed towards a better life for me. I settled into an area called Grant's Town, which was no more than ten minutes away from the market I reported to daily to sell cotton, beans and yams that I grew in my back yard. I never saw my family again. It was told to me by Jack, a middle-aged man that had known of my brother Jonny, that once the law had passed for all helping hands to be released, Jonny and his family were transported to an island called Exuma where he continues to be the hired hand.

## **Bahamian Habitudes**

Cassandra R. Adderley

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines “mores” as “Customs or conventions regarded as essential or vital to a social group.” Bahamian traditions such as gathering at the Fish Fry, attending wakes and funerals, regattas and homecomings, reinforce and carry on those mores, which make Bahamians unique. Bahamians are a dramatic and emotive people who love an excuse to hold a party. How we gather and what we do when we gather with family, friends and acquaintances is part of our culture. Such mores embody the native and essential characteristics of Bahamians. I believe the word “habitudes,” perfectly describes these Bahamian traditions.

Whenever I drive along Arawak Cay I marvel at this display of Bahamian creativity. Arawak Cay evolved from the Bahamian custom of going to the dock for fresh fish and conch. Who would have thought that we would take our love of fresh fish and conch and turn it into a cultural experience, renowned worldwide, incorporating a facet of the Bahamian heritage? Going to the Fish Fry encompasses the spending of happy hour on a Friday evening with friends, eating different types of Bahamian food, such as fried fish and crab and rice, or conch salad, and drinking different types of beer, such as Kalik or Heineken. Michael Craton and Gail Saunders in *Islanders in the Stream A History of the Bahamian People, Vol. 2* refer to the diet and eating habits of Bahamians as distinctive and related to socio-historical factors. They write, “One American anthropologist, struck by the central role that food plays in social gatherings, has even categorized the Bahamas as a “food culture.” No christening, wedding, or wake, no festival, fete, or fair, is complete or regarded as successful, without a conspicuous display and copious consumption of food and drink” (466). I had never read this before, and although I felt instinctively that there is a reason for our love of food, especially seafood, this passage confirmed my belief that there is a reason for our love of food. The Fish Fry satisfies two intangible emotional desires for Bahamians; their desires for what food they eat and how they spend their leisure time. I have asked many Bahamians why they love going to the Fish Fry and why they love eating fried fish or conch salad, and they have been unable to answer me. This habit of gathering with friends to eat and socialize is truly a habitude that satisfies an unspoken need to be part of a community.

Bahamians also have what I consider to be a unique custom of grieving. Such a custom must follow a set pattern and is ritualistic in nature. When someone dies, family and friends hold a wake on the night before the funeral, during which they reminisce about the life lived by the deceased, thinking, “It could have been me!” At the wake, in order to celebrate the life of the de-

ceased and to temper their sorrow, family and friends eat and drink while passing time. The funeral will usually be held on the morning following the wake. The body is laid out in an open coffin at the front of the church for viewing prior to the church service. On arrival at the church, invariably, one of the mourners will begin wailing at the back of the church, proceeding up the aisle, with the wailing increasing in volume the closer she gets to the coffin. At this juncture the wailing mourner will prostrate herself on the body and will have to be physically removed by one of the funeral home attendants or a caring and concerned relative. After the church service most of the mourners will proceed to the graveyard.

At the graveyard the mourner who prostrated herself on the coffin in the church, will pitch herself headlong on top of the coffin as it is lowered into the grave. Again, she will have to be physically removed by the funeral home attendants or the caring and concerned relative, before the coffin actually reaches the bottom of the grave. After the funeral, most of the mourners will return to the home of the deceased where a reception will be held. During this time, someone will be heard to ask about the mourner mentioned above, "Chile did you see how she almost throw sheself in da grave?" Commenting on such public displays reconfirms our love and respect for the deceased, making us wish we had been brave enough or crazy enough to carry on like the mourner. The wake and funeral also allow family and friends to feel wanted and needed and part of a whole rather than separate and alone. Hoping that when they die someone will care enough about them to grieve for them in such a manner.

A visitor to The Bahamas reading this essay might think I am making all of this up. Let me assure you, I am not! I attended a funeral only the week before last, in which the above scenario occurred. So, you may ask yourself, "Why do Bahamians behave this way?" Wakes and funerals afford Bahamians an opportunity to socialize and rekindle relationships with family, friends and acquaintances they have not seen for a long time. It is a time to discover who might have been born, who might have married whom, or who might have died since the last wake or funeral. Wakes and funerals remind Bahamians of family and kinship and the emotional pull families have.

Of course, if there is no funeral, there must be a regatta or homecoming on one Family Island or another, for every three-day holiday weekend in The Bahamas. This tradition of "going home" to the island has been recorded in the lyrics of a song entitled "Back to the Island," sung by the Grammy winning Bahamian group called Baha Men, in which one verse says, "Wake up early one morning kiss my mama goodbye goin' back to the island, I'll see ya, don't worry mama, don't cry." On one of these three-day weekends, if a visitor to The Bahamas, while driving over the Paradise Island Bridge happened to glance to his or her left or right and then down at Potter's Cay Dock,

he or she might wonder why there is such a large gathering of people. The answer is that the Bahamians are gathered at Potter's Cay Dock to catch a mail boat for an excursion to one of the Family Islands to attend a regatta or homecoming. Also in the song "Back to the Island," Baha Men ask, "Are you ready? How ya goin' get there? By mail boat!" There is a sentimental and historical attachment to going to the island on a boat, whether mail boat, ferry boat, or speedboat as long as it is a boat going home to the island. Prior to the introduction of airplane travel in The Bahamas, the only way to travel between the islands of The Bahamas was by boat. Therefore, part of the allure of going back to the island is the joy felt travelling by boat.

Bahamians do not attend regattas to watch the sailing sloops sail. They attend regattas to socialize. The majority of Bahamians, after attending a regatta will be unable to tell you who won which race. If they can tell you who won, they must have read such pertinent information in one of the local newspapers. Regatta is a fancy name for a homecoming, when Bahamians gather once a year at one of the Family Islands; in Salt Pond, Long Island to pretend to watch a boat race, in Thompson's Bay to dance, in Cape Santa Maria to eat, and in Glinton's to meet with their friends, who also travelled from Nassau. Instead of getting the news from the relative who came to Nassau for the funeral, they can now sit on a grandmother or grandfather or aunt's porch to catch the news first hand, maybe even seeing the news happening right in front of their eyes. What news? Why, seeing who brought whom to the regatta, of course, or who "hook-up" with whom at the regatta. Regattas and homecomings are opportunities to reminisce about when they used to live on the island with a grandmother or grandfather or aunty. If there happens to be a stranger among those attending the regatta or homecoming, invariably that grandmother or grandfather or aunty will ask of that stranger, who they are or in the Bahamian vernacular, "Who your people?" This question and the answer provided serve to identify the stranger to that grandmother or grandfather or aunty, and of course, with enough remembered history, might even identify the stranger as a long lost cousin on a "sister's husband's brother's wife's cousin's side." Going to a regatta or homecoming reinforces Bahamians' emotional connections to family and their island home.

Bahamians have inherited intrinsically Bahamian cultural values, which I have described as habitudes. These intrinsic habitudes have been carried forward from generation to generation and form part of our culture. Although, we are unable to say why, we do enjoy and love our traditions of going to the Fish Fry, attending wakes and funerals, regattas and homecomings. Such traditions epitomize our shared heritage, a heritage that defines The Bahamas and Bahamians.

**Me and My Natty Knots Gone**  
Daria Delancey

Mr. Man, snap your lens my way.  
Mr. Man I done fix my hair,  
I done iron my clothes,  
My jeans done crease,  
My makeup done set.  
Mr. Man, snap your lens my way;  
I waitin' for my debut.  
Man, I ain't neva look dis good.  
Don't waste your film on da birds and trees,  
Capture this creature,  
Try to find the soul within.  
I can sway in da breeze just like them.  
My skirt creatin' a mirage of da sunlight.  
Dat flower ain't gat no moves on me;  
Mr. Man, I waitin' to hear you snap at me!  
Okay, okay,  
I aint gat da weave,  
Nothing ta press or curl.  
Ain't gat on no Tiffany or Versace;  
Just shells and straw.  
One singlet and wrap skirt over my jeans.  
Mr. Man, how you cud tell me, I ain't ready for you!  
Now look, I doin' you a favour;  
Da opportunity to immortalize dis beauty.  
Dat's alright, Mr. Man.  
I don't need your lens.  
The imprint of my soul done press on da hearts of  
many.  
You thought a picture lasts longer,  
Ha!  
Get it correct!  
Those alive and to come will know me,  
After your paper done crumble,  
Me and my natty knots gone.

## Wraith

Patrick Deveaux

Like thousands of minute raindrops falling from the stippled ceiling, the dust particles settled on the surface of his drowsy reflection. He yawned at himself holding his fist right onto his lips, so much so that it hurt slightly. As he squinted, his eyes drew closer to his over-gapped open mouth. The off-white shade of the sun-stained dresser melded with the dry dusty color of mid-dawn that seeped through the mint green curtains directly behind the mirror. It created a spectrum of color within the wet glassy surfaces of his vision. Still staring at the drained and slightly discolored image of himself, he lazily dragged the long-sleeved, size 18 blue pinstripe uniform shirt off of the dresser and threw it over his thin, yet defined arms. His broken ID card laid face up on the dresser. It didn't even have his picture on it. That half of it had probably already made its way out to the trash bins of downtown Nassau and onto the putrid dump heap out on Gladstone Road. It read: Manes, his last name. It's been broken so long, that sometimes he'd forget his first name. Sometimes he forgot his name for hours on end. He even forgot the reason why he just didn't put in for a new ID card at work. Lately his memory had been getting worse. The days began to meld into each other. From when one day ends to when another begins, all the lines had been blurred. It was hard to tell yesterday apart from tomorrow. Even the details of what he did every day at work escaped him. He picked up his I.D. card and snapped it to his shirt pocket, then adjusted his collar.

Taking one last stare at himself he sat on the edge of the *Cozy-Top AeroBed* (the most expensive thing in the room), reducing his reflection to a mere bust. Just as his hips brushed the sheets, Melissa's wandering foot kicked him. Although she'd definitely made contact, he hardly felt it at all. She was so close, but still the distance between them measured for an eternity. He and Melissa were dating since before he decided to move from Freeport to Nassau for work, so for a while they were juggling a long distance relationship. However, exactly how long it was, he forgot. Just recently she had moved to New Providence and when she did, he left his apartment and moved in with her. After having a bad run-in with her father, he forced her to move out saying "she was legally no longer his responsibility." Instead of just moving out, Melissa opted to move to an entirely different island. One night she came home drunk after a party barely able to stand and while



bleating out through all the swear words, explained that she'd run over some early morning joggers just about three feet away from the driveway. Due to her father's connections she got off from the court house, yet she didn't get off in his house. Manes leaned back on his elbows smiling at his view of Melissa's glowing quiescent expression, now just a foot away. Melissa was his roommate for a month now. He'd never had a roommate before so there was nothing to compare her to, but since he'd moved in, he and Melissa had never once had a "real" conversation. The sun would rise, and then she would awake. She conducted every morning just like the one before, always pretending that he was not even there. Then, Manes would leave and find his way alongside her in the bed the next morning to repeat the cycle. He knew that she was going through a frivolous period in her life. It was that teenage growth period between the status of child and adult, when the instincts to experience what you deem as the joys of life are the highest – even if you're nearly killed in the process. All he wanted to do was to be there for her, but how could he do that when he was having trouble remembering his own name?

Awaking in a flash, Melissa's red eyes peeled open in plain view of Manes's which were still drunk with semiconsciousness. Like yesterday and the day before, she lifted herself up off the best inflatable bed one could find on Ebay. It was stationed in the middle of the apartment floor, and when she got up, she threw the daisy flower printed sheets aside and stumbled her way to the bathroom. Disappointed, but not surprised, Manes left. As he walked towards the apartment at the opposite end of the hall, the unfastened buckles on his shoes jingled. He went right in.

"Good morning, Jacques." Manes stood in front of a guy that looked around nineteen, twenty, about the same age as him.

"Good Mornin' Manes."

Jacques eyed him. He was taking a screwdriver to what looked like a broken ouija board. Strangely, the brightest room in the apartment building just so happened to be the only room with just one window. Key lime green synthetic lawn grass was used for carpet and metallic pomegranate gift-wrapping served as wallpaper. The room was lit with a single streak of light that spanned from one end of the room moving right into the room's threshold, yet everything seemed illuminated, the room flushed with dazzling color. Manes stood in the entrance looking like a lost child in a strange place diligently looking for his mother.

“So when you goin’ home?” Jacques asked after quite some time.

Manes shoved his hands down into the pocket of his navy blue Dickies.

“I’m just not ready to go home yet.”

Jacques let out a loud grunt, letting the screwdriver slip off the surface of the board, creating yet another hole in his ancient dirt brown futon.

“So you just gonna stay in the apartment?” Jacques wiped his tool-hardened hand across his soggy eyebrows. He was the only guy Manes knew that could be drenched in sweat at 7:30 in the morning. “What about your parents, do you think they miss you?”

Manes didn’t respond. Well, the sudden high pitched howling didn’t give him a chance.

Jacques pitched up, and then flung the board to the side. “I’ll be back man! Gotta have my tea in the mornin’ ya know.” He ran around the couch, to the back of the room and disappeared through the Dutch door that more than likely led to the kitchen.

“Okay then, I’m gone then.” Manes shouted behind him. He wasn’t sure whether Jacques heard him or not but he left anyway.

The stairs always seemed to go on forever. Going down, down, down. The thought of actually knowing where he was going to end up now drifted away from him. His actions became mechanical. The main reason he was now going down was because that was the direction the stairs led. The three flights of stairs felt for that period of time like they’d become escalators and now that he was already on the ground floor, he couldn’t recall making one step, yet there he was.

He walked out of the building, and stepped onto the water-damaged wooden patio right in front of the entrance door. He stared out. What looked like a broken tombstone with no name stuck up out of the front lawn, if it could be called a lawn. Cracked right across the middle, yellow, sun-deprived chickweed surrounded its base. Suddenly, in the corner of his eye something dashed for the side of the building. Without thinking about it his eyes followed trying to keep up, but he couldn’t get a focus on what it actually was. Then “meow”. The image of a Chihuahua-sized black, white and gray tomcat slowly shifted into focus. His memory of the cute little thing began to blossom. It sat at about midway in the four-foot long stone path that led to the patio. The cat’s tongue energetically slapped over and over again onto its fat paw that could probably be entirely covered by an American silver dollar. He

knew that cat. That was the cat he played with every morning, and Melissa fed every morning. As if somehow thinking of Melissa summoned her, she pushed out through the front door. Funny thing is that he didn't notice anyone coming down the stairs behind him. All he heard was one set of footsteps while making his way down. Melissa crouched, resting down a pint-sized ice cream container, then scratched behind the cat's ear.

"Good Morning Melissa." Manes said just out of habit. He had walked out this morning without saying anything.

"Good morning, Manes." Melissa murmured ruffling the cat's head. Manes looked up.

"Melissa," he paused, and then decided to come straight out with it. "How come we hardly ever talk anymore?"

Melissa swung her head in an instant towards his direction, piercing through him with an awkward glare. Still, the look she gave him had a sick happiness and there was blissful desperation in her eyes. Eventually her mouth bent into a refreshing smile. She patted the cat on the head. It closed its eyes. Both times the pressure of her grooming gesture bobbing its little head downward. "I'll get you some breakfast, Manes." She stood up.

"Tha..." Before he could finish, footsteps on the hallow wood sent vibrations up through his spine. "...thanks." That girl was hard to understand, it had already been a month with her and he was still clueless. Though he was never really close to her, he kept feeling like he was getting there and slowly she was trying to push him away. However, it was hard for him to remember what she was like before a month ago.

Manes's eyes caught a glimpse of the cat pawing away at a playing card. The back pattern was identical to the tarot cards Jacques always kept on his coffee table. Jacques was into those types of things. His attention span once again steered him towards the broken slab of stone on the lawn. This time it definitely looked like some type of tombstone. Now he could vaguely make out that all that was left on it was a first name, which he couldn't make out, and the dates. No matter what, every morning he'd see that stone and yet forget that it was ever there, so that every morning it always caught him by surprise. Immediately, he noticed the second date on it was the present year. What he didn't notice was Melissa towering over behind him with a gaze parallel to his. It wasn't until she let the entrance door shut to finally make her way upstairs that he looked around.

...

Melissa sluggishly made her way up the winding wooden staircase. On her way up she could hear Jacques shuffling with his keys, perhaps locking his apartment door before heading out on his daily routine. At the moment she'd reach the top stair, Jacques greeted her in almost a mirror image of her stance except for the fact that he was carrying a stack of papers in the opposite direction. Jacques stared blankly as she did, giving a crooked yet courteous smile.

"Good morning." He said.

"Yeah?" Melissa asked, trying to figure out what he wanted. It was only when he needed something like sugar, or cream or rent money that he'd talk to her. She wasn't very fond of Jacques and she had her reasons.

"He's goin' to stay with you, you know," Jacques muttered. Melissa continued to look blank. "I talk to him again today." Melissa hesitated for a moment, then just as if she never stopped, continued on to her room door that was the first one from the staircase. She bumped into Jacques, bluntly excusing herself from his presence. When she did, the papers from his hand fell like bricks on concrete, and down the stairs. There wasn't even an "I'm sorry" or a look back on Melissa's part. Jacques stood with unconcern, letting his eyes follow Melissa's movement. He simply smirked then took his time retrieving what had fallen from his hands. "Maybe if you put out some of his stuff..." he shouted after her, while crouching to collect the scattered almost beige folder sheets into a tattered manila folder.

Melissa barely heard what Jacques shouted, opening the door and closing it behind her before he even got his sentence out. Sighing deeply, she dragged her slender frame across the room collapsing upon the bed. Thoughts jolted through her mind too rapidly to hold on to any of them and her body was sending mixed messages. In her sulk, she felt exhausted yet restlessly drenched with energy. Quickly she shot up and walked over to the dresser. Melissa squatted then pulled open the bottom drawer. Her eyes, fixed on what was inside, became glassy. As familiar scents arose so did familiar memories. It was those familiar aromas that arose every time she visited that old keepsake. It wasn't much but it was all she had, and memories were memories no matter how little of them she managed to retain. All she did was crouch and stare at the perfectly folded long sleeved size 18 blue pinstripe uniform shirt neatly resting on top of folded navy blue work pants. Next to them was a pair of black buckle-strapped work shoes and resting at the very top a broken photo ID card. She reached her shaking hand into the drawer, resting her fingers gently onto the broken plastic badge.

“I’ll always miss you, Danny,” she whispered, solemnly genuflecting as she closed the drawer and dabbed at the beaded tear at the corner of her eye. Her gliding saunter led her into the kitchen, over the old fashioned gas-lit stove and into the cabinet above it. Out of it she pulled a large Ziploc bag labeled *Breakfast*, filled with what looked like chocolate mothballs. She poured some out into the cat’s bowl, zipped it back up and returned it to the cabinet. Reopening the front door to the dusty gold-tinted apartment, Melissa went out with a bowl in her hand, calling the cat with that patterned catcall that places the teeth together and flaps the lips periodically only letting a concentrated and constantly fluctuating stream of air seep through, creating that loud but hollow hissing sound.

Manes thought to himself a while, then smiled through a sleepy smirk. He slapped both palms on his thigh at the same time.

“Here kitty, kitty. Here kitty, kitty!” The tomcat’s ears shot up and his deep green feline eyes immediately followed. Manes voiced a catcall though his clenched teeth; it came clumsily running towards him meowing with every mischievous pounce.

## High Yellow Nigger

Stephen Hanna

high yellow nigger,

like hot lemonade,

or

a flat, bitter, old, cider,

or

like piss on a summer sidewalk,

with its cutting, sickening, rancid vapor, choking

everyone around,

yeah,

high yellow nigger,

keep your nose in the air,

i can't stand your stench either.

# PASSION AND PAIN



**WITHDRAWN**, Alfred Williams

**Deanna**  
Zemi Holland

Dark night.  
Death is lurking.  
Death is hiding.  
Disguise.  
Demise.  
Deceit.

Knocks at the door.  
Asthma's here.  
Constricting.  
Clogging.  
Stopping.  
Killing.

She can't breathe.

Her friends try.  
Wrong medicine.  
Wrong doctor.  
Wrong night.  
Wrong age.  
Wrong person.  
Wrong mother.

Wrong.

Early morning.  
I hold her hand.  
"Lord, help me!"  
She can't take the pain.  
She's hurting.  
Should I let her go?  
Don't make me choose.  
I want her here.  
More begging.  
She and I.



She wins.

He wins.  
Unconsciousness.  
Wake up.  
Don't go.

Stay!

Shani, Zane, Zemi:  
Crying.  
Sobbing.  
Wishing.  
Hoping.  
Praying.  
Please?

No.

She couldn't take it.  
She's worked too hard.  
Worked too long.  
She's tired.

Nurse Holland's gone.

"No more mummy baby, no more."  
That's what they told me.  
That's what killed me.  
Killed me.  
Killed her.

She's dead.

Lifeless.  
Smiling.  
Free.  
Without me.  
Sky blue.  
Heart dark.

Silence.

Donovan:  
Lead her home.  
To her father.  
To mama and papa.  
To you . . . her son.

Left to mourn:  
The kids.  
The husband.  
The mother.  
The brothers.  
The family.  
The friends.  
The patients.  
The neighborhood.

She was loved.

Late afternoon.  
Walking weeping willows.  
Handkerchiefs trailing behind.  
Onward to the church.  
Onward to the graveyard.

Stop.

Tomb stones.  
Black.  
White.  
All black.  
Tissue.  
Tears.

Pain.

Empty hole.  
Inside:  
Her coffin.  
Her body.

My heart.  
Gone forever.  
Gone.

Forever.

Couldn't touch her.  
Couldn't see her.  
Wanted:  
Her laugh.  
Soft touch.  
Soft curls.  
Her hugs.  
Her love.

Lost.

Tears burn.  
Eyes red.  
Heart aching.  
No eating.  
Thin.  
Thin.  
Thin.  
Sleeping?  
Can't remember.

I died with her.

Flowers.  
Food.  
People.  
Doors open.  
Doors close.  
Night.  
Day.  
What's the difference?  
Last week I had a mother.  
Last year she was here.  
Today . . .

Nothing.

Fatal Nostalgia.  
Early evening.  
At the beach.  
Floating in salt water.  
Staring up at the sky.

Thinking.

She was my favorite.  
Sorry Daddy.

Shooting stars  
Pierce my heart.  
No hope.  
Fragments of a wounded being.  
Find me in the cracks of life.  
I'm buried in her coffin.  
I'm etched into her bones.  
I'm dead . . . even today.

Seconds.  
Minutes.  
Hours.  
Days.  
Weeks.  
Months.  
Years.

All have passed without her.

Today.  
Yesterday.  
Forever . . .  
I want no one.  
I want no thing.  
I want nothing.  
Only her.

Only Deanna.

**Afrocreols**  
Lucien Emmanuel

Bus a Bay Street  
For a live session  
Mumbling in seat  
Rehearsing a speech  
Address to Mr. PC  
And Mother P  
About ghetto we  
Barefoot and naked  
No food to eat  
But chain at knees  
Modern day pain  
Adorn us everyday  
Yeah a long sheet  
With our ID.  
Employers refuse it  
Embassy rejects this  
What misery  
Afrocreols in a country free  
We are en route to parliament building  
Mentally confuse  
Spiritually abuse  
Refusing  
To hear this  
We grumble all day  
Cause we naked and bare foot.

## Haitian, A Curse?

Lucien Emmanuel

Haitian phobia  
Get us in magnolia  
No more Gloria  
For her poor kids  
How could we take over!  
Weeding your yard  
We nanny your kids  
Aren't we God's children?  
What a change scenario  
Of a pearl lost in space  
Ridiculed and held in contempt  
Diaspora all day for her grand-kids  
What a granola without a fiber

## My Dad's Name is AIDS

Nacoya J. Ingraham

It's about you and it's about me  
Unity is what we need for victory,  
Dreadful or not, this disease must go  
Stigma and discrimination we must not show.  
Every family feels the pain  
When a loved one goes down the drain,  
AIDS touches me and it touches you  
Whether we ignore it or not, it is true.

Let's come up with a plan immediately  
To get rid of stigma and discrimination finally,  
Public and private sectors play your part  
Of leading the way by making a start.  
To eliminate ignorance of this disease  
Bahamians must be educated appropriately.  
People with AIDS are humans too  
And should be loved and respected by you and me.

Hire the boy, don't fire he  
He has AIDS and deserves our sympathy,  
People with AIDS are still a part of our society  
And should be treated decently.  
Shake his hand, let him know you care  
A hug, a smile I'm sure you can spare,  
These little gestures can go a long way  
Of brightening someone's gloomy day.

If Stigma and Discrimination of AIDS must go,  
Then understanding and empathy we all must show,  
So to maintain the image of this great Bahamaland  
Don't point a finger, lend a hand.

**Boy Shot Dead**  
O'Neil J. E. Bain

His life begins  
Born to a mother too young  
Only fifteen years old,  
A baby herself  
Like a doll snatched from the shelf,  
Her innocence was taken  
Could be Tony or John,  
The father of this child she has borne

Forced to manhood a bit too quickly  
The streets of the ghetto were his only home  
And it's  
Irresponsible,  
Negative  
Occupants  
His only friends

Didn't get much from school  
Said the teachers were fools  
Ironic, huh?  
It was easier to  
Rob a store,  
Stab someone's son,  
Have sex with that girl down the street,  
Because for these actions  
He received praise  
You must be amazed  
Believe me it's just a phase  
That's what everyone says  
But then pass many days  
And we keep our lackadaisical attitude  
And our youth perish, for it

As we drive our fancy cars through the inner city areas  
We pass him  
He sits on any wall available  
The thoughts in his mind are unstable  
The causes of this dire state are  
Illiteracy



The need for power  
And, Poverty  
If only they hadn't called him dumb,  
At the age of five  
As we drive our fancy cars through the inner city areas  
We pass him  
He sits on any wall available  
The thoughts in his mind are unstable  
The causes of this dire state are  
Illiteracy  
The need for power  
And, Poverty  
If only they hadn't called him dumb,  
At the age of five

If only they hadn't physically abused him,  
Daily  
If only he wasn't dirt poor  
Anymore

Out one night drinking with friends again  
Some boy steps on his shoe  
Don't pretend this scene is new  
To you  
"Are you going to let him get away with that?"  
Definitely not  
He'd rather sacrifice the rest of his life  
To take away that of another  
And still we wonder  
Why bother?  
We must take our love for each other  
And like a mother or father  
Let us gather  
And not sweep this under a rug  
But rather  
Face it  
And save our country's youth  
Before tomorrow  
We awake to another  
Boy shot dead

**Apologize**  
Ana Alicia Burrows

“I confess to Almighty God, that I have sinned in what I have  
done  
And what I’ve failed to do. I no longer fail to say ‘I’m sorry’.”

Bones have healed, scars have faded and tears have long been  
dried  
Yet you feel that this is the perfect time for you to apologize?

Where were those words when you walked into my room  
Closed the door and trapped me into a world void of virtue?

Where was this thinking when your hand tightened around my  
throat,  
Forcing even my breath to struggle for freedom?

Where was the apology when my clothes were ripped,  
My arms bruised from the pressure of your clutch  
And my entire body flung like a rag doll upon the sheets?

You didn’t see it fit to say that you were sorry  
When my hair was yanked almost from my scalp  
And my head collided with the wall.

You couldn’t see the wrong in your actions then,  
When my legs were grabbed and wrenched apart;  
When my screams were muffled by force of a poisoned kiss;  
When my tears were stopped by the blow of a powerful fist.

You smiled instead of showing signs of remorse,  
When I yelled and cried for you to stop  
Before you pushed against my weakened body  
And gnawed at the flesh of my neck and chest.

You didn’t seem to have an ounce of regret  
When you penetrated deeply and painfully,  
Invading and destroying my virgin flesh.

You never once looked ready to stop  
When the blood escaped down my thighs  
And my body trembled in response to the pain.

You walked away without a degree of guilt,  
Satisfied by your fulfillment of sick pleasure

I was left for dead in the now defiled room,  
Among the darkened lights and shadowed walls  
In the stench of tarnish and violation

Should it not have been your apology then?  
Shouldn't you have repented to Almighty God  
then?

Or shouldn't you have left innocence where it  
stood?

**Inferior Black**  
Collette Pickstock

Black is who I am  
Black is sometimes who I don't want to be.  
Black me  
Black me  
Set in a category NOT FREE!

Trapped inside this mental slavery of being black  
Opening this valve only makes it harder for me to attack  
Attack me  
Attack my black  
Attack everything that makes me black.

*"Blacker the berry sweeter the juice"*

But in this life it does not matter because black seems to be no use.  
Good for one thing bad for another but would black ever climb this social  
ladder?

Inferior black. Inferior black  
In fear of being black.  
Been black come with a price  
Its depth is so crucial it's like being crucified like Christ

Nappy root, coarse hair these are the things black women despise  
Long and perm only waiting to earn what's not theirs.  
Your peers and you despise your root, despise your nap, not realizing  
that's what makes you black.

**Killer Dad**  
LaShondra Curry

My dad's name is AIDS  
And he killed my mom.  
But when my friends see him,  
They say he looks the bomb.

He has light brown eyes,  
With a very cute smile.  
And a rich brown complexion,  
Almost kind of like mine.

He approaches you with a  
Deep, heavy, sexy voice  
Just waiting for you  
To say, "Oh, be my first!"

And when you do,  
He'll gladly be;  
For he doesn't care  
If he creates another me.

So now you're next,  
My step mom, just a teenager,  
Leaving my sibling and me behind to find out  
Our dad is nothing but a Killer.

Carelessly parading around,  
Just murdering young girls.  
Oh dad, why are you so  
Cold, Heartless and Bold?

My dad just won't stop  
For he's at the end of his stage.  
He just doesn't care  
For fools who give him the time of day.

He knows there is no turning back,  
So all you can do is pray.  
For you made the decision,  
And decided to let him play.

So now you're stuck,  
If not dead.

## Beautiful Butterfly: Ode to Vanessa

Rokell Machelles Major

Beautiful butterfly:  
Born into a hateful place,  
Where they pulled your wings  
And condemned your color.

They hated you  
Without knowing why,  
Resented your spirit,  
That spirit  
That made you want to fly.  
And the more they pulled  
The longer your wings got  
And the stronger the breeze they created.

Beautiful butterfly:  
Abused by the people  
Meant to love you,  
To protect you,  
To uplift you.

Beautiful butterfly:  
Scared to move out  
Of the dark recesses of your mind,  
And the corners which once  
Offered you safety and protection  
Now hold you prisoner,  
Holding you there  
Even though you want to fly.

Beautiful butterfly:  
With eyes that have never seen the sun,  
Arms that are muscled  
But never bore you up,  
Legs which are powerful  
But have never been straight,  
And a voice  
Smooth and strong

But silent, void of song.

Beautiful butterfly  
Today you spoke!  
And the sound of your voice  
Repelled the darkness.  
With each syllable  
Your joints are strengthened  
Your feet find their place on the floor  
And your wings ...  
Beautiful and elegant  
Begin to move.  
The slow,  
Deliberate,  
Cautious movement  
Shakes off the dust  
That has weighed them down.  
And you realize  
That the freedom you longed for,  
Desired,  
Cried for  
Prayed for  
From the depths of your soul  
Has come.

And suddenly you are aware  
Of the Divine presence  
That has given you  
The wherewithal to live  
Not survive  
Not exist  
But live  
Live  
Live  
Live

# RELATIONSHIPS



IN HER GLORY, Jackson Petit-Homme



## God's Heartbreak

Anwar Tynes

I had a vision that I was looking down on the universe, and there was just a stone's throw away, a being, staring into the beyond. As I approached this being, he had tears running down his face, and I asked, "Oh great being, why do you cry?" And he responded, "I don't understand what went wrong. I gave them life: they brought death. I gave them creation: they brought destruction; I showed them brotherhood; they made enemies: I presented to them different races and variety and they made segregation. I showed the concept of Holy Matrimony: they committed adultery. When I brought them out of slavery, they praised other gods. I sent them prophets: they killed and stoned them. I sent them prophets with signs of salvation: they laughed. I taught them peace and love, yet they still practiced hate and war. I gave them land to share: they killed for it. They witnessed miracles and they called them mere magic tricks. And then as a last effort of love, I sent them my only son, and they brought me his blood. I put these stories and tears in a book called the "Holy Bible" and they called it a "Fairy Tale." So I asked if this saddened him and he answered, "Yes". He simply said, "One day, my presence will shatter the sky and will destroy what I gave so much to save."

**Potcake**  
Crystal Alexander

The common breed, we often see  
They protect the yard, but not for free  
Call them and feed them on time,  
They don't care if it's hot or cold  
Served on a plate or thrown to the ground  
Their bark is louder than their bite  
And for the most part they only want a place that they can call home.

However, when they are no longer cute and run when we call  
We put them outside, for the rain to wet and the sun to dry  
Sometimes they realize that they should be treated better  
So they roam from yard to yard looking for that perfect home.  
And then there are those dogs that keep coming back even though you  
throw stones at them.

Well, do you have a potcake?  
And don't want him to leave  
Then tell him he is doing a good job  
That he is the best dog you ever had  
Pet him and stroke him  
Bathe that dog and keep him smelling nice  
Make sure he is fed  
Play with him and also **TRAIN HIM RIGHT**  
So when you walk together  
Everyone would want a dog like yours.

## I Gern on a Ghost Move

Calivia Cooper

In The Bahamas, it is common for married couples or individuals in committed relationships to go on “ghost moves.” A ghost move can be described as an act of infidelity, which should be done as discretely as possible. The reason the name “ghost move” was given to this act is ghosts are presumed to be invisible, and this is the general idea behind the act: to be as undetectable as possible; not allowing public eyes to catch a glimpse. Bahamians have a hard time when it comes keeping their noses out of other people’s affairs and so they suffer from a sudden sickness over which they have no control. This common airborne disease that they are plagued with is one that is so contagious that it spreads like wildfire. It is called “Can’t leave peoples business alone”. There are a number of reasons why Bahamians choose a ghost move as the best route of action. However, the most common reason is the thrill and excitement experienced when attempting to live a double life. However, when a person is caught red handed on a ghost move, the common Bahamian expression associated with it is “Roach on my bread.”

Going on ghost moves has become a norm in The Bahamas. Ministers of the gospel and government officials all participate in this act of unfaithfulness. Unfortunately “What happens in the dark, will always find its way to the light.” Recently, The Bahamas was in awe as the headlines of an esteemed newspaper stated “Minister of Immigration and Play Boy Star Get it on”. This was an unfortunate incident illustrating a “ghost move gone bad.” Ghost moves are acts that should be thought out and well planned in order for them to be a successful. Bahamian men go to the extent to rent unmarked cars and find cheap motels that are well tucked away from direct public view; hotels such as the Colony Club and the Sun Fun Resort are the most common spots for these acts of promiscuity.

It is more common for men to initiate and participate in these devious acts. Many of these deceitful individuals feel that they love their partners sincerely, and in many cases they want their marriages to work, except they feel as though their partners lack the sexual needs and desires that they may have. A harmless ghost move can be associated with many negative attributes. They have been known to destroy happy homes, and harm the family structure. However, this seems to be that last thing on the minds of the perpetrators.

In the event that an individual is caught red handed while in the act of a ghost move, noseey neighbors would discuss amongst themselves that

the injured party has "roach on his bread." Bahamians have a fetish for talking about other people's personal affairs publicly, and seem to have no self control. Roach on my bread is a saying that is extremely hurtful, especially to the victim; because it implies that the unfaithful companion was being intimate with other persons while he was presumed to be committed entirely to his partner. This saying exposes the culprit for the true disloyal, deceitful, heartless person that he is.

Infidelity exists in many other countries; however it seems that Bahamians go to greater lengths. It seems that if more consideration were placed on making relationships stronger there would be fewer acts of disloyalty and betrayal as a result. The lack of communication seems to be a key factor for pushing individuals to find satisfaction and fulfillment in other persons. "I gern on a ghost move" should be altered, and replaced with the saying, "I gern try make it work with my partner". Ghost moves just seem to be the easy way out of a bad situation; however, all they really do is make a situation worse. The fact remains that Bahamian men are "scummy dogs", and are disloyal by nature. Many of them believe that cheating is an involuntary act, and simply cannot be prevented. This is why "roach" will always be on someone's bread. And it seems that the ring situated on the wedding finger is a turn on to many. Sexual relationships with no strings attached seem to be a Bahamian norm. With the combination of Bahamians who can't leave people's business alone, the unfaithful majority that decide that "I gern on a ghost move," and the unfortunate event of "roach on my bread," the vicious cycle will continue for generations to come. It seems that Bahamians just can't get enough.

## Robbing the Cradle: Under the Age Limit

Petra Pratt

Do you recall a time when you noticed a much older woman holding hands with her obviously blind teenage son or the school girl giving her oxygen-deprived grandfather mouth to mouth? Well, if you do, you were probably watching the RTC crew in action. What is the RTC crew, you ask? Well, short for “Robbing the Cradle,” it is older people who have much younger spouses. You may say, “Age ain’t nothing but a number” but... there is an obvious limit. When are you in danger of breaching that limit? If you know your spouse’s parents from your high school reunion or your other half has a curfew and you are dishing out punishments for breaking it, you can consider yourself over the limit. Help is here. Respect these warning signs to stay within the age limit.

“BEWARE!” If your younger partner exhibits any of the following symptoms, then take heed. Your partner has a bedroom decked out in posters of young celebrities you can neither recognize nor recall. The only topics up for discussion are on the latest fashion trends or coolest sneakers. A fun night out on the town is a trip to the mall or local movie theatre. Your only means of contact is through texting or online instant messaging. Beware of these signs for they are all associated with the “teenage bug.” This “teenage bug” is experienced by all at one point in their lifetime and if you think your partner is experiencing it, a good recommendation would be to see a doctor.

“YIELD!” Give way to the younger partner who likes to have the best in everything but cannot hold down a job for longer than a month. When you both go out you become the bank from which all withdrawals are made. Chauffeuring is now your second job. Life has become a merry-go-round which their mood controls. Experiences of these types are never a good sign. They foreshadow a bigger problem at hand and that is responsibility issues, where you take on the role of parent. They are not old enough to take care of themselves but you have to.

“STOP!” Your younger partner has to sneak out to meet you. Tantrums are a common occurrence when your partner is denied something. Performing household chores still gets rewarded with allowance. Your child and your spouse are getting the same type of homework. In public, your younger partner is forbidden to acknowledge you. You constantly find yourself in the position of parent. In this type of relationship the equal partnership of spouse-to-spouse has now changed to parent-to-child. If you are acting as a parent and you are more than old enough to be your partner’s parent, then you can consider yourself an RTC member.

Undercover or out in the open, the RTC crew is not a group to become affiliated with. They have to deal with the trials and tribulations of being with a younger person – including jail time if the situation calls for it. These trials also include dealing with the “teenage bug” and basically raising another person’s child. If you think you are up to the challenge of being with a younger person, just remember these three words: yield, beware and stop. Don’t join the RTC crew. We are watching!

**My Night**  
Kelly Armstrong

Look at the moon

My love for you can be compared to it in a lot of ways

Look at it,  
All alone in the big empty sky,  
And imagine me standing alone  
Because I know I love you like no one else does.

Imagine  
The natural high I get  
Every time I hear your name  
Or see your beautiful face.

The fullness of it  
Expresses the certainty of my love  
With growing boldness;  
The luminescence  
Signifies how pure my love is.

Now,  
Das a 'wibe' or what?

## **What it Was, What it Wasn't**

Davia Ambrose

**What it was:** You telling me something with your lips, then another with your eyes.

**What it wasn't:** You coming up to me like a man without compromise.

**What it was:** A person forgetting to remember the only one in his life.

**What it wasn't:** You remembering you stood in the sight of God with a wife.

**What it was:** Me going to the lawyers with a sorry excuse from you.

**What it wasn't:** You getting down on your knees to fight for what God gave you.

**What it was:** Yet another misunderstanding where you still thought you were single.

**What it wasn't:** A mistake where you were taken for everything you had.

**Now what?**



## The Fall of James Bryant

Derreck Johnson

James Bryant read before that love can kill a man, but he never understood it until now. He arrived home from a long, arduous day at work as a police officer, ready to explode. He sat in his car outside his modest house feeling the weight of his decisions. He asked himself why he came back home but he already knew the answer.

James slowly opened the door to his house to find his wife Mona washing the dishes. Mona...the only reason he came home. She was the light in the misty fog that was his life, but now her light was consumed by darkness. He stood in the doorway looking at his beautiful wife. She was washing the dishes as usual when he came home, but tonight, it looked as if she was paying special attention to a plate. She was violently scrubbing at a stain he could not see. She was scrubbing so hard, she didn't even notice when he came inside.

Mona looked up, saw James and smiled. She was happy to see him, but James felt the opposite. Mona approached James and softly kissed him on the cheek. Mona said to him "I missed you." But James wondered if she really meant it. She went back to washing the dishes as James decided took a seat at the small table located inside the kitchen. He was tired, but too tired to ask Mona,

"Is there something you want to tell me?"

Mona paused for half a second, gave him a cautious look and simply told him "No" but James asked her another question.

"Would you mind telling me about Brian?"

Mona froze and lost all feeling. She felt like she was ready to fall to the ground, but the plate she was holding fell instead and shattered to the ground. She turned around to look at James and saw the utter seriousness in his face. She could lie to him again. She could deny everything, but what difference would that make? Lying again would only make him even more furious. Was she proud of what she did? No. Was she happy that she did it? Yes. She sat in the chair at the opposite end of the table.

"How did you know?" Mona asked.

James told her how he found out about Brian Troy. James thought he was just being paranoid when he called home for Mona during the day, and she never seemed to pick up. She always had a good excuse such as she

was "taking a nap after cleaning the house" or "she was at the store picking up groceries for the dinner tonight." James gave in to his nagging suspicions and hired a detective who worked in his division at the police station. The detective was his best friend, Adam, so he knew that he could be assured discretion. Plus, he had been hospitalized for several months after taking a bullet for Adam during a robbery. He figured Adam owed him one and Adam agreed. Adam followed Mona and took several photos over a period of three months. After he assembled a final report for James, he took him to their favorite bar, "Happy Hour" and showed his findings to James, who could hardly contain his shock and embarrassment. As James looked through the pictures one by one, he could feel every layer of his heart shedding like an onion. By the time, he reached the end of the pictures, there was almost nothing of his heart left. He cried out in such a horrible anguish, everyone in the bar stopped what they were doing and looked at him with complete alarm and shock. Adam was no exception. He couldn't even remember if he ever heard such a heartbreaking sound come from a man. He was so overcome with sympathy for James, that he forgot about any social taboo or restriction, and held James strongly in his arms.

James tossed the pictures to Mona. She looked through them and saw Brian and herself holding hands at the park, going up to his clearly expensive apartment and also, a picture of them kissing passionately at a restaurant .... their restaurant. It was where they first met. She was a newly divorced woman seeking solace in her favorite dessert, the "Chocolate Nightmare," and he was her waiter. He wondered why such a striking woman was so sad. As she ordered her dessert, she didn't even look up. She had her head pointed at the floor in utter defeat. Once he brought her order, he felt sorry for her, he decided to give it to her free of charge, (even though he knew that he couldn't afford it on his salary) and she finally looked up at him. He looked into her lovely grateful brown eyes, and saw nothing but himself. He believed that this was his future ... to be the only man in her eyes. James took some initiative and sat down in the chair opposite her, and introduced himself, and she smiled and did the same. From there, she was his dream and his obsession. This led to another strange feeling inside James' heart. It beat faster with every thought about her, until it reached the point where he could hardly breathe in her presence. He felt like he could die.

This feeling of death didn't change as he faced his cheating wife. Instead of dying from his overflow of love, he felt like he could die from the heartbreak.

"The detective told me that you would go to Brian's apartment frequently and you would spend hours there." James pitifully told Mona. He shuddered to think about the things they did up in the apartment.

Tears poured slowly from Mona's eyes and then there was a complete silence. James interrupted the silence and simply asked Mona "Why?" She responded in pure fury.

Mona told James about the constant loneliness she faced everyday at home. Everyday she woke up to an empty bed, because James had gone to see his mistress, the police station. James knew he worked long hours at the police station, but he needed to pay off the mortgage for this house that he had built for her. He spent lots of time at work and always left her alone by herself for hours which always scraped like a hook in his stomach. Deep down inside James' heart, he knew what she was saying was true but he refused to believe it. Mona did this to him because she hated him.

She went on about how Brian made her feel wanted and beautiful. James let this information sink into his head and he thought it was the right moment to unleash the news he had hinted at earlier. James just smiled maniacally,

"Brian's dead, Mona."

"Whh-att?" was the only word that Mona could manage to say. James must've been lying to her. He was just saying this to make her feel guilty for cheating on him. It couldn't be true. Could it?

James simply confirmed her fears by saying "I killed him, Mona." She began to lose breath, and she felt this strange sensation that her heart was bleeding.

James went to Brian's apartment after he found his address inside Adam's report and knocked on the door. Brian opened the door and to his surprise found a man holding a gun. James was now face-to-face with Brian and his head was throbbing. The anger was surging through his veins and his mind was searing with hate. Brian could barely ask the identity of the mystery man as he was shot twice in the chest. Brian staggered back and looked at the two precise holes in his body. He tried to scream but James grabbed his neck and began to choke him. He felt pleasure as he choked him harder and harder. It only seemed fitting to end the future of the man who

ended his. James held on to Brian's neck for a little while longer and looked directly in Brian's eyes as he watched the life slowly drain out of them. He saw a reflection of himself that he didn't even recognize.

Who was this man? James let go because he couldn't bear to see himself any longer, and Brian's limp body crashed to the floor. He decided to exit the apartment before he could do any more damage.

He walked outside and then he saw something peculiar. He looked and saw a terrified man running for the fire escape. James was caught in the act. James could've shot the man too, but what was the point? He was already ruined as a policeman, and his life was over as he knew it. So, he let the man escape. The only thing he had left to do was go back home and confront Mona before the police got to him. He picked up his gun and went on his way.

James told Mona that the police were probably already on their way. He found it strangely comical how he spent years of life catching criminals and arresting them for the greater good and now he was no better than any of them. Now, he realized that he was on the same page as Mona. In one brief moment where he gave in to his desires, he lost all of his honor, and created a situation where he could never turn back. He informed Mona that he planned on running away from the law. James was going to leave everything behind but before he could accomplish this, he had to do one last thing. He had to ask Mona one last question.

"Will you come with me?"

James could run as far as the end and the reaches of the earth, but he could never leave Mona behind. She was the one. She was the reason he came back home instead of running right after the murder. She was the reason he did anything.

Mona looked at James, the man she married, the man she planned to spend eternity with. When she spoke her vow of death do us part, she didn't agree. She wanted to spend her life beyond the veil completely with him. It was her dream. She tearfully replied,

"I never want to see you again."

That dream had changed. It didn't turn into a nightmare but a living hell. The man she knew had changed. She had changed.

James got up from his seat and headed for the door. As he made his exit, he looked back at Mona and realized that he had lost her... forever. He stepped outside and noticed it was raining. He walked into the rain hoping it

would wash away all of his sins but nothing could. His hands were stained with blood and the remnants of his heart were smeared with regret and longing that could never be washed away. He was now a fugitive who just lost the only ray of light in his life. Love led James to come back for Mona, but love also led to the fall of James Bryant.

## From the Mind of a Man

Herman Armbrister

I was feeling in real good mood  
On da 'Fry', and I acting rude  
Drinking stichie, I was fresh up that night  
Trying to win the hand of every pretty girl in sight  
Cuz, he own da bar so rum can't end  
Mudda sick! Dat gal look good!  
I'll try my hand again  
Girl I could see you don't starve  
You must be Misses "Gat ta have"  
With that sexy outfit, nails, and hairdo  
You don't have a man?  
I must look like a fool  
Let me tell you how this night will end:  
You ga be my new "ghost move friend."

Now let me tell you about this and that  
I won't be taking anything back  
Doc don't let me die from a heart attack  
I trying to keep myself relaxed  
My wife is at home just stressin me  
Why does she need to know where I've been?  
From time to time I wonder why  
I always seem to make her cry?  
Why do I lie, and make her cry?

I got home at a quarter past three  
Fast asleep is where I assume she would be  
To my surprise, when I swing the door open wide  
She was up watchin "Lifetime"  
She had a cutlass and a baseball bat  
She shouted she was tired of this and that  
"Who da hell you think you is?  
Mister I already had your eleven kids  
Where da phone I bought for you?  
I keep callin but I couldn't get through."  
She knew the code, even though I change it again  
This my friends is where my story must end  
The text come through

Right in her hand  
"Love you baby, leave my shoes in the van"

Now let me tell you about this and that  
I won't be taking anything back  
Doc don't let me die from a heart attack  
I tryin to keep myself relaxed  
My wife is at home just stressin' me  
Why does she need to know where I've been?  
From time to time I wonder why  
I always seem to make her cry?  
Why do I lie, and make her cry?

I started running  
She kept on coming  
I saw my life flashing  
Lord I will see you soon  
Cuz she right over my shoulder.

**Hungry Dogs**  
Latoya Moncur

Hungry dogs with itching furs  
Idly walk our busy streets  
In desperate search of a piece of meat,  
Moist tongues hang low.  
They bark at every piece,  
Carelessly they stain the grass  
Leaving behind one big mess.



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