

UHURU

Freedom of the Mind

"Get up, stand up, stand up for your right!"---Bob Marley

In 1919, Carrie Chapman Catt stated "White Supremacy would be strengthened not weakened by woman suffrage."

In 1995 Iowa State University with full knowledge of this Woman's history, dedicated the old Botany building to her in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Listen to the call of the Drummer

It is time for Harambee--Coming together. You will not sit idly and let this pass. You will join together and voice your concern. You will fight.

It is time for Uhuru--Freedom to express your mind. You will demand to be heard. You will be seen.

Listen to the call of the Drummer

It is time for Revolution. This requires action on our part. Resist the efforts of those above us to ignore us. Our issues are vital. We will make noise.

Black History Month is not simply about watching black movies on HBO or attending a program or two.

It's about actions and change.
You say you don't got time?
Well make time.

"None but ourselves can free our minds"---Marley



Erica Cunningham

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A Statement of the Obvious

"It's been a long time now / and I begin to wonder how / our complacency grips us so. / Hence, it is time for us to grow / in rage against the machine.

—Author Unknown—

The following is a brief discussion of two arguments related to the recent naming of what has now become known as Catt Hall (formerly known as Old Botany Hall), which is located on the Iowa State University (ISU) campus between MacKay and Bessey halls. I have heard a majority of the arguments for changing or keeping the name of this hall. The two positions presented in this piece are alarming to say the least and it is important to discuss them in some public forum. What better place to start than Uhuru.

Argument number one: What is the importance of changing the name of this building, now that the new name has already been established?

Response: It's important to understand that everything any institution does - or does not do - is a direct reflection of the character of that institution. For example, if any industry invested heavily in South Africa, for any reason, during that country's era of government-sanctioned apartheid, then that industry directly or indirectly supported apartheid by continuing to conduct business in this region.

The opposite is also true. If any industry completely withdrew investment in South Africa during apartheid, for any reason, that industry did not support this particular government policy.

If this same example is compared to ISU's name choice for its most recently renovated building, and we take into account that Carrie Chapman Catt - while courting Southern support - made statements that were, and are, perceived as racist, then the conclusion is painfully obvious: if ISU allows the building in question to bear Catt's name, then the university supports having a building on its campus newly named after a historical figure whose actions dangerously impeded the progress of African people and other minorities in North America. Of course, the opposite is also true. If the university chooses to change the name of this hall, that action would demonstrate the current administration's refusal to endorse ignorant and hateful attitudes towards African people in North America and its firm disavowal of historical figures who have acted in such manner.

Renaming the building is not a "non-issue;" on the contrary, it's an issue clearly rooted in the relationship between morality and the illness of racism that has been prevalent in North America since the nation's inception. Allowing Catt's name to remain on this building strongly suggests a disinterested stance when it comes to curbing racist attitudes on the ISU campus.

Argument number two: there is no way to change the name of Catt Hall now that it has been established.

I disagree. It's time for every organization that claims it represents students of African descent to come together (ideally, before Spring Break) and create effective strategies in an attempt to handle this situation. It's true that ISU has chosen, up to this point, to support condescending attitudes towards African people by allowing Catt Hall to be named as such. However, I am not suggesting we wait for the ISU administration to take action to correct this name choice. If we do, we may be waiting for quite some time.

There is only one thing troubling about what has been written in this piece. If no action comes from this call, if none of the student leaders of African descent come together and discuss this issue in an effort to change the situation, then I fear that, through our non-action, we will contribute to the hatred perpetrated against us. I cannot stress this enough: it is up to us to initiate change. I urge all students of African descent to collectively take a stand on this issue.

***This article was written as a response to the naming of Catt Hall and is not meant to serve as a historical piece that highlights the specific actions of the character in question.

--- By Allan Norris Pina Nosworthy ---

Never doubt that a *SMALL* group of *people* can change the world. Indeed it is very often the only thing that does.

-- Margaret Mead --

Just Like Folks At Home

There he was again, pulling the lace off my head-piece as I was trying to sew it on. Damn, I wish he would go away. "Natasha, smack his hands and tell him no!" Catherine said. Now, if he was my own child, I would have done it, but the last time I had heard words like smack his hands, or even correct someone else's child, was when I was a child. While she was going on and on about how she "would rather I smacked his hand than him grow up to break her heart," I kept thinking, "These days folks is so funny acting about they kids you can barely tell they child no without them sayin' somethin' and making you say shut the hell up before I smack you and your bad @\$\$ ugly child." But when he reached for my veil, I tapped his fingers and said "no" while giving him a do-it-again-and I'll-hurt-you look, like the one my mother used to give me. There is something about tapping those fingers and giving that look, it works every time. Chris stepped back and walked away. What a relief.

I was surprised that Catherine had given me permission to discipline her child. Yes, it was true that in less than thirty-six hours we were going to be officially a family but we had not known each other long. This was the big "meet the family" trip. This reminded me of the people back home and how everybody had their own Mama and then some, depending on how big your neighborhood was and how many Aunties you had.

I have been blessed to have some wonderful people in my life who made it their business to make sure us neighborhood kids and Sunday school goin' brats turned out better than okay. There were people like Sis. Suggs giving us nickels to put in Sunday school if we forgot to get some change from our moms. Or Aunt Myrtle, who watched my brother and I while Mama went out and Daddy was at work. There was Mrs. Turner up the street watching out for us kids on the block while she worked in her yard. They were all my family, and I knew that I had Mama and Papa and Auntie Vera and Uncle Willard and Great Uncle Scootie (James) and all my "family" to count on and answer to for my actions.

Being around my husband's family was just like being at home. Here I was six time zones and an ocean away and folks was the same. Now, I'm not just talking about tapping Chris's hand, I'm talking about caring for another and taking care of yours and theirs too. It's about working together for everyone's good and, most important, trusting your family enough to know they are going to do what's right by you. So, what does this mean to students at Iowa State University? Well, like it or not we are family.

Now, this ain't like being at home and chillin' with Moms and Pops. It's like knowing nosey Mrs. Jones—who-ain't-got-no-business-of-her-own- but-she-knows-everybody's is here for ya. You know she's a gossip but she got your back just the same. Or Mr. Mort, who's been cuttin' hair since your daddy was a boy and you know he'll hook you up if your funds are runnin' low.

For me, one of the people in my family here is my former roommate, Kimmi. She would intercept phone calls for me while I stood in the background frantically waving my hands "No, no, no!" There were times she made me laugh when all I wanted to do was cry. Or times we gave each other permission to stay home from class when one of us was feeling low and needed bedrest, hot cocoa and an afternoon of soaps. She's my sister and like a

sister, she let me slack off because she knew the complete story. But she also knew when to light a fire and give me the smoke signal to fluff up and make the right decision.

It's about you and I caring about each other because we know family is more than biology, it's in the heart. For better or worse, we are family by proxy, family by trust, family by friendship and family by campus community. This is what we are and that's that.

-- By N. P. Thomas- Abban --

This above all:
to thine own self be
true
And it must follow,
as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false
to any man.

Polonius, Hamlet

the water i swim in is you

i was thinking of how
the good ones slip away.
there are so few of them,
of you.
you are the ones worth waiting for.
you are the ones who want to wait.

for once i pat myself on the back.
i thank my eyes for being able to see
into your own soft brown
curtain drawn
windows.
i thank your hands
palms that touch mine gently
as the rounded tips of your fingers lean
protectively,
affectionately
over my own.
i wonder if i can hold on to you.
good.
sound.
real.

i was thinking of how
the good ones slip away.
you, the water of my wishes,
me too frightened to taste your pure
clean
wetness.
i want to let you run through me.

we you and me
were sitting i remember
never kissing couldn't forget-
to turn your waterfall
into the flesh that ever so innocently
intertwined with mine.
swimming in your arms
i bathe in the prospect of untainted time.

and for once i pat myself on the back.
for raising that half a head-
just enough,
not too much,
needed to wrap my eager arms around your-
oooh dare i say it?
neck.

yes it is terrifically true,
my wrapping my arms around you
finding the groove for me to secretly slide
into that undetermined place.
if i am guilty then we shall warm the cell's bench
together because you
did exactly
the same,
resting your hard chest
onto my own soft one.

i said i was thinking of how the good ones slip away.
there are so few of them,
of you.
you are the ones worth waiting for.
you are the ones that want to wait.

and i,
like the waterfall of our
fleshy fingers,
and fine-drawn faces, too patient to let you-
one of few-
slip secretly away

-- Brittan Nelsia Swanagan --

remote control

nothin ain't change
some-thangs worse
than they ever been
the boob tube
done got-cha
in its clutch
can't turn your
head away
might miss
some-thang good
can't even
let it go
no, no, no
not even for
one day
you believe
everything it spits out
real soon you
begin not even
to produce
authentic thought
flick it on
not off
leave it

all night
change your view
of the wrong
and right
it's a wonder
people scream
"what's happen
to society's
morality?"
it's all about
that t.v. show
you done seen.

-- Ndeo --

The Veil

South Africa. A country whose name was
synonymous with the words: racism and apartheid. It was a
country in which the content of your character was judged by
the color of your skin. It was a country in which there was
little freedom of the press, and little freedom of speech. It
was a country in which the darker population didn't have the
right to protect themselves against their brutal and
sometimes savage oppressors. It was a country in which
neighborhoods were segregated, not by physical barriers but
by mental barriers. It was a country in which the bad guys
carried guns, walked around with dogs, and wore police
uniforms. South Africa was also the country in which I was
born and raised.

Durban, South Africa, 1983.

I am seven years old, dressed in my primary school
uniform: a white short-sleeved shirt, gray shorts that tickle
my knees, gray socks pulled up to my knees, and black
leather shoes shined to perfection. My best friend, Sean,
dressed identically but sporting what looks like a receding
hair line at the age of nine, is short and slightly pigeon-toed.
We are making our way toward Holy Trinity, where we go to
catechism. The four-lane street we walk every Monday
afternoon is characteristically silent and at peace. A street
this big in my neighborhood would be bustling with noise,
prostitutes, liquor stores, confusion and corner markets
owned by Indians. But this one was different. In fact, most
streets in white neighborhoods have this sense of being at
peace. Each side of the street is lined with giant trees which
lay a mattress of purple flowers, trumpet flowers, every
autumn. In the midst of a cloud of purple haze we turn to see a
car approaching as its tires sweep the purple flowers into the
air.

I wonder what it would be like on the other side of
those fences, on the other side of those white walls. The
same thoughts that rush through Sean's imagination rumble
through mine: what would it be like to play in those gardens?
Big and beautiful, the gardens seem to bubble over the fences
with evergreen trees and bushes, elephant ear plants and dense
juicy grass. In every garden there is a tree which seems to
bend and stretch protective arms over the one- or two-story
houses and their inhabitants. Hmmh--their inhabitants are
nowhere to be found, and rarely do we see them, but it feels as
if someone has suddenly crept into our imaginations and is

walking around our heads, crawling, sneaking and peeping around the corners.

"You go back and get them, Sean." In our fear and wild attempt to scramble, we had forgotten our books.

"You're faster, Randall. You go back and get them," Sean pleads, leaning over, hands on knees, trying to catch his breath.

"*Gaan ya bliksons! Ek saal ya doed maak!*" An Afrikaner woman screams, while she sprays the sidewalk with her spit. Roughly translated, she is saying, "Get out of here you little shits! I'll kill you!"

It's five o'clock in the afternoon, catechism is over, and we are making our way back to our neighborhood. As we pass the luxurious houses and their protecting trees, the way home seems long, but as we approach the Afrikaner woman's house I wish my birthday wish to be back in our own neighborhood.

"Should we cross the street?" Sean asks.

"No," I respond. Crossing the street might draw attention to ourselves and she might see us through her window. We decide to walk close to the fence so that she can't see us from her window. 'Shit!' I think, as splinters drive into my arm. We pass several houses before we decide to resume our casual stroll. We reach the final stretch of our journey. We are on top of a hilly street which levels off to a plateau, which then turns into another hill. We descend the first hill, admiring the elegantly designed houses and the dogs that guard them. On the first hill is a little tea room, where we stop to buy some candy. I have ten cents in my pocket; Sean has a twenty cent piece. We walk around the store looking for something affordable.

"Can I help you, boys?" the white clerk from behind the register asks. He has light brown hair, pinkish skin and a nose raised so far up in the air I can see his nose hairs.

"How much is bubble gum?" I ask.

"Ten cents," he says, as if he knows we don't have enough money.

"Oh. Okay," I say halfheartedly. Realizing that he is trying to rob us, we leave the store. I feel the clerk's eyes watching us out and feel like the lowly hyena with his tail in-between his legs. We step out of the store and continue down the hill, which gradually flattens out into a plateau.

Along the plateau, which begins about three meters from the store, runs a long cream wall, in the middle of which is a thick oak door that leads into a garden. Simply lifting a lever will allow us in, but never once have we thought to open it and take a peek into a world which fascinated us so much. We can't see the house from the outside; the white wall is too high and there is a thick hedge on top of the wall. The hedge is decorated with red and orange berries. No one appears to be watching, so Sean and I help ourselves to a few. I slip some into my pockets, for mother and sister.

As the plateau begins its downward flow we stop to look at our neighborhood from above. To the right is the soccer field we play on every Saturday morning. The setting sun turns the dry brown grass of our soccer field into blades of gold. We can see the gigantic "Butchery" sign hanging over a crowd of dark figures standing and jumping around the foosball machine, which is next to the Indian-owned tea room. There is also an eleven-story flat behind them all that

casts a cool shadow on those below. All this is on the two-lane street I live on, Villa Road.

Sean and I descend the steep hill, checking our momentum and admiring the lavishly designed, old-fashioned Dutch houses, their fruit filled gardens and their guardian dogs. We reach the base of the hill and stop at Evergreen Street. A bus with a black body and white top flies by as we turn our heads away from the wind to shield our eyes from rushing sand. Another bus passes, filled with weary people on their way home. I see some of the faces, eyes dull like dusty marbles, dark bags underneath their eyes. Some people are old, but even the young ones' bodies seem slow to move. My young eyes catch the dull eyes of a Coloured man who wears a thick black mustache and dirty blue coveralls. He looks like a mechanic. His skin is dark, his hair is graying. His face is wrinkled and dirty, but, as my grandmother says, "water washes everything."

I watch a rusty white car pass the bus from behind. There are no crossing lights, so Sean and I must wait until a clearing opens in traffic. Although we have done this many times, I am still hesitant to cross the street. "Why don't we wait for the next one?" I ask Sean. Standing on the white line in the middle of the street, our only protection from passing cars, we wait until another clearing allows us to finish our journey. We see two cars, one a metallic gray, the other plain blue, about fifty meters away and approaching fast. Being mindful not to run, we start across the street, but the cars seem intent on not slowing down. I see the jaguar on the hood of the gray car approaching faster and faster, as if to pounce on its prey. "RUN!" I yell as I pull Sean along. As soon as we make it to the other side, the tires of the jaguar sweep sand and dust into our faces. The sand pelts and stings our tender skin, like it does on a windy day at the beach. Walking up yet another hill toward Villa Road, I remember another occasion when crossing Evergreen Street was also very eventful ...

A Saturday morning. The first thing I do, after brushing my teeth and eating my oatmeal, was round up the gang: Bambi, Alaster, Sean, Alan and Bradley. I run out the door, slamming it behind me. It's about 9 'O clock; the air is still brisk and cold. The plan for the day is to go to the public pool at about 12--it costs twenty-five cents to get in. Bambi's mother will not let him go and neither will mine. They believe we should be accompanied by an adult. Alaster, Sean and Bradley all go to the pool.

In light of this obstacle Bambi - a fair-skinned Muslim who always has a skin close haircut - and I make plans to get some guavas. The only problem is, the only guava trees are about 100 meters deep on the other side of Evergreen Street by the white neighborhood. At about 1p.m., after about two hours of planning, procrastinating and daring, Bambi and I decide to follow through on our plans. The guava trees are in a clearing in the midst of a bushy area. The bushy area serves as a sort of buffer between our neighborhood and theirs. It's like a neutral zone, but after my negative experiences in white neighborhoods like the one described above, I feel the nervousness that one feels when trying a strange new food; you block your nose and close your eyes and hope what you taste is good. I just don't like being so close. Images of rottweilers and police dogs are my greatest fear. If we are caught, they'll set the dogs loose and take us away in the police vans that have prison bars for windows. My mother or grandparents never told me not to go into the

white neighborhood, so I guess it will be okay. But we are not just going to walk through the white neighborhood like Sean and I do every Monday; we are going to pick the fruit.

"Nobody owns the land," Bambi says as he notices me lagging behind.

We cross Evergreen, slip into the bushes like commandos on a secret mission, and slowly make our way toward the guava trees. We keep low, hide behind the trees, and stop periodically to make sure nobody has seen us. As we get closer to the trees, we start crawling on our bellies. We pull out our "Pick 'N Save" grocery bags and begin filling them, stopping often to make sure nobody is watching us.

"We got enough. Lets get out of here," I tell Bambi, but he doesn't listen. He stops, but instead of leaving he pulls out a few guavas and starts munching.

"Bambi! Lets go!" I urge him, making sure not to raise my voice.

"Hold on Randall."

"I'm leaving," I tell him.

"Okay, okay. Wait for me," he says. We pull out the same way we came in, slow and cautious. We make it to Evergreen, cross the street without a problem, and climb the little grassy bank that leads to our park.

The things we had to do for some fruit, I think as Sean and I continue to walk the hill toward Villa Road. The right side of the street we are walking on is the side where the soccer field is. The blades of grass are no longer gold, but a worn-out brown. To the left is an alley, a short cut home, but I decide to stick with Sean up to Villa Road, where I will leave him as he walks on to his home, a few streets up. The distance between the alley and Villa Road is about 100 meters uphill. In the middle is a large bushy area that continues about 150 meters in the perpendicular direction. As I make my left on Villa road, I see the mountain of black tractor tires and tubes, which the tall weeds and grass try to hide. When it rains, the tires trap water, creating a haven for annoying mosquitoes and other bugs that bite, but the tires and tubes are important to us, and the bush. My friends and I use the tubes to make slings with which we take down pigeons and cans. The grass in this bush and around the tires is thick and often cuts the skin. If it were not for the mango tree, the tires and bamboo, we would never venture into this bush. The thick bamboo we use to make bows; the thin bamboo we sharpen to make arrows. We use "gut" [fishing line] as the string for the bow.

The bush is also layered with whiskey and brandy bottles, and beer cans left by the drunks who live in the rusty tin shacks scattered throughout the bush. I remember once when my friends and I were chased out of the bush by one of these people. The man didn't say anything. He didn't scream, shout or threaten us, but we still ran as if being chased by a car. The man had a full head of tightly curled gray hair. His skin was dark and his eyes were squinted like Clint Eastwood's in the spaghetti westerns. His wrinkles were dirt-filled, and the few teeth he did have were black and crooked. He had on brandy brown trousers, a shirt so filthy I couldn't tell the color, and worn-out black boots which had no laces. The drunks usually only came out with the bats, which is probably why I didn't see them much.

The bush ends at a crumbling brick wall, which separates "the wilderness" from "civilization." My flat, Villa Heights, is about 60 meters away. On the way on the left is an old blue house with no curtains in the windows and tall

weeds growing next to the wall and slowly creeping onto the porch. Adjacent to it is a vacant garage that smells of urine and sits in front of a semi-vacant hotel. The hotel is five stories high, forty years old, abandoned and used only by some of the drunks. I don't think rent is required. A six-foot cement wall separates the abandoned hotel from my family's flat.

The driveway into the flat is short and wide and used to have a metal gate at the entrance. It was taken down a year ago because it was falling off its hinges, and was more of a problem than a benefit. Bambi and I used to open and close the gate for my grandfather as he pulled his 1978 orange Chevrolet into the parking lot.

I make my way to our apartment, number 22, where I live with my mother, her parents, and my younger sister. As I pass number 20, where Margo, my sister's best friend lives, I can smell my grandmother's cooking. As I pass number 21, where I used to live with my father, mother and sister before my parents divorced, I smell the simmering of finely sliced onions and chopped pieces of beef brewing in my grandmother's stew. As I open the door to number 22, I see the stand of onions, potatoes, and tomatoes to my right, and my grandmother finishing up dinner. She is a tiny woman, fair-skinned, with light brown freckles on her cheeks, and dark woolly hair. Worn-out black slippers cover her feet, and a simple dress decorated with soft red and creamy flowers covers her sturdy fifty-five year old frame.

"Hey Gran," I say as if coming from a long journey, or a hard day's work.

"Hi Randall. How was catechism?" She ask.

"Fine," I respond.

"Wash your hands. Pa will be home soon." We always wait for my grandfather. He is the signal that we may proceed with dinner. I don't ever remember him missing or being late for dinner. It's like clock work, and so is my reaction when I see him. The door lets in a cool breeze, and my grandfather with it.

"Hey Pa. What did you get me?" I ask as I jump into his arms.

"I got you and Joanne some sherbet. You can have it after dinner," he says as he makes his way to the bathroom to wash his hands. His arms are thick, strong and muscular, as are his hands. His face is dark, old, wrinkled, proud and strong. Thick bi-focal glasses cover his eyes. He is about 5 feet 8 inches tall. He is not very dirty, and he is not like the slow moving, dull-eyed people I saw on the bus. He takes his place at the head of the table and says grace. At dinner the TV is off, and no games are played at the table. My grandfather's crocodile shambok hangs on the door behind him, in plain view of everyone. He has never used it on me or my sister, but it is there. Everyone else in the flat is also having dinner, so there are usually no disturbances. All the children in the flat know not to disturb anybody at the dinner hour. Now I feel at home.

-- Randall Duval --

Still Here

beat rodney king
black and blue
beat down in
des moines too

walking around our heads, crawling, sneaking and peeping around the corners.

"You go back and get them, Sean." In our fear and wild attempt to scramble, we had forgotten our books.

"You're faster, Randall. You go back and get them," Sean pleads, leaning over, hands on knees, trying to catch his breath.

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I watch a rusty white car pass the bus from behind. There are no crossing lights, so Sean and I must wait until a clearing opens in traffic. Although we have done this many times, I am still hesitant to cross the street. "Why don't we wait for the next one?" I ask Sean. Standing on the white line in the middle of the street, our only protection from passing cars, we wait until another clearing allows us to finish our journey. We see two cars, one a metallic gray, the other plain blue, about fifty meters away and approaching fast. Being mindful not to run, we start across the street, but the cars seem intent on not slowing down. I see the jaguar on the hood of the gray car approaching faster and faster, as if to pounce on its prey. "RUN!" I yell as I pull Sean along. As soon as we make it to the other side, the tires of the jaguar sweep sand and dust into our faces. The sand pelts and stings our tender skin, like it does on a windy day at the beach. Walking up yet another hill toward Villa Road, I remember another occasion when crossing Evergreen Street was also very eventful ...

A Saturday morning. The first thing I do, after brushing my teeth and eating my oatmeal, was round up the gang: Bambi, Alaster, Sean, Alan and Bradley. I run out the door, slamming it behind me. It's about 9 'O clock; the air is still brisk and cold. The plan for the day is to go to the public pool at about 12--it costs twenty-five cents to get in. Bambi's mother will not let him go and neither will mine. They believe we should be accompanied by an adult. Alaster, Sean and Bradley all go to the pool.

In light of this obstacle, Bambi - a fair-skinned Muslim who always has a skin close haircut - and I make plans to get some guavas. The only problem is, the only guava trees are about 100 meters deep on the other side of Evergreen Street by the white neighborhood. At about 1p.m., after about two hours of planning, procrastinating and daring, Bambi and I decide to follow through on our plans. The guava trees are in a clearing in the midst of a bushy area. The bushy area serves as a sort of buffer between our neighborhood and theirs. It's like a neutral zone, but after my negative experiences in white neighborhoods like the one described above, I feel the nervousness that one feels when trying a strange new food; you block your nose and close your eyes and hope what you taste is good. I just don't like being so close. Images of rottweilers and police dogs are my greatest fear. If we are caught, they'll set the dogs loose and take us away in the police vans that have prison bars for windows. My mother or grandparents never told me not to go into the

brothers
sisters
doin crack
don't bring it in
ask north, reagan, bush
they'll tell
where it's at

country going down
cause the wrong
it done did
can't run hide
God done popped the lid

drug culture
in the air
push back from the
sixties or planned material?
don't you dare!

okay now
to say
"that's enough!"
affirmative action
gettin the royal buff

payin big
money to:
politicians?
athletes?
businessmen?
movie stars?
entertainers?
spacemen?

treatin teachers
like bald-headed
step children

white house on the hill
lookin real white and pretty
biggest contradiction on the earth
tryin justice? for the many

confederate flags
flyin high
flesh
blood
sweat
and tears
go by and buy

poverty
homelessness
acceptable thing
people
policy tryin who

can be a human being?

sooner we realize
death comin to
everybody's door
must all come together
rich and poor

day is coming soon now
I can see it over the
horizon:
desert storm
oil spills
nuclear warfare
bosnia
ethiopia
los angeles
a
merica
you
me
connected
for survival
you better see

still here
ain't going no where
no how
no time soon

-- Ndeo --

our fortunes, edited

There are riches headed your way.

Sweet memories are the paradise of the mind.

Or as Heavy D. rapped, "It must be something ... it feels like I'm losing ... Gotta keep moving ... move on Black ... Ain't nothing changed, it's the same when you're out there in the street ... move on Black ..."

You may have to be patient now --think, listen and heed signs.

I had broken glass in the cellar. I cleaned up the mess and put up a sign to caution the other users. My grandfather saw my sign. He told me, "Most people do not heed signs." Oh.

LATER: The mall changed its traffic signs; the messages were still the same but the shapes were different. Awareness should have risen; however, here were more accidents.

The way to love anything is to realize that it may be lost.
pain.

Your ability for accomplishment will follow with success.

Keep your feet on the ground even though friends flatter you.

Fear creates danger, and courage dispels it.

The military. Specifically, the United States Army.

Its philosophy: BE ALL YOU CAN BE.

Some useful secrets are shared no matter what race or sex. But can you see it? Will you be able

to drop some of the baggage you carried in with you? HYPE IS LOUD.

USEFUL SECRET: be aware of ALL that is going on around you...

Drill Sergeant talked to me. What are you doing with a fiance?

I went up to the Board to be Judged. My uniform was pressed and my low-carring-unit, the belt that carries our drinking bottles and ammunition, was blackened so no gold flickered ... neutral. A friend helped me polish my boots. I couldn't press hard enough for the length of time needed to acquire the shine I wanted. But he helped.

My boots sparkled.

Sex, drugs, and alcohol all were available. What side do you choose? How much baggage are you able to drop? Are you willing to let go of the pain? Of the hype.

I could keep pace with Drill Sergeant during morning physical training. Pushing me, stretching me but keeping me whole. He was right there on my left. A few times I wanted to quit.

Drill Sergeant calmed me. "Relax. Be me ..." All of me must shine through. He didn't exactly say it, but They were there to help. I won that first Board.

Drill Sergeant was pulled from my platoon. Female Drill Sergeant replaced him.

Upcoming: another Board. For the grand prize: Soldier of the Cycle, Winner of all the winners. People were talking of Drill Sergeant ... he had been messing ... supposedly. Hype.

BOARD: I was shaking. FEAR. I regurgitated information. Then they stumped me. FEAR ... judgment ... LIE. But NO. I DID NOT KNOW ...courage... "Sir I do not know sir." fear ... you lost, Private !

I saw Drill Sergeant down the street. He had another platoon to lead. Hype was still hot though. Hype.

I was moved from "just another soldier" status to squad leader.

Results from the Board were in. I won Soldier of the Cycle ...

beginning of the USA story

Your **past** success will be overshadowed by your **FUTURE** success. **ADD present success.**

The will of the *people* is the best law.

It is the **hope and dreams** that we have that makes us great. **PLAN** for their **REALizations**.

THESE WERE SOME OF THE MESSAGES I OPENED WHEN I CELEBRATED THE NEW YEAR: 1996.

-- legere --

C-Notes and Thoughts

On the 16th of October [1996], the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan and many other black leaders saw their efforts begin to bear fruit. I say, "begin" because we must not stop at atonement for our past shortcomings. I can recall hearing my elders tell me that when someone is truly sorry for something they have or haven't done, they will make a conscious effort to rectify the situation.

The first conscious effort that we must make is to seek knowledge. This is totally different from seeking education. When we seek knowledge we are educating ourselves based on the facts and our perceptions of those facts (not someone else's). Many of us don't take time out to realize what our own culture means. This does not apply only to people of color. If whites would recognize that their culture had - and still has - many racist undertones, it would be much easier to deal with bigotry in this nation that was built by the gods of Africa and regulated by criminals and misfits from Europe.

On the same note, if Blacks would realize the patterns of history, we would realize that many of the people locked away in correctional institutions would most likely be the leaders of CHOCOLATE CITY. We would also realize that, instead of turning our backs on one another because of petty differences, we should make attempts to bond together and destroy our true enemies. Contrary to popular belief, this enemy is not white America. Amazingly, it is not even oppressive whites. Our true enemies are supremacist ideologies and their mother, ignorance.

I'm up for now. Dapps to my brothers. Love to my sisters. Mad respect to my ancestors. Remember, we are not kings and queens, we are gods and goddesses of our homes.

--- David A. Wilson ---

THE CHARACTERIZATION OF A TRULY EDUCATED STUDENT:

a truly educated

student

can "read and write and speak intelligently and persuasively,
who has demonstrated

respect

for the truth and some

knowledge

of how to go about finding it,

who uses truth and reason instead of anger and rhetoric

as a way to change opinion,

who is intellectually as well as legally honest,

who is not ashamed or afraid of emotion but

understands

it and is not mastered by it,

who has compassion, a sense of history and a rational

approach to the management of body and

mind." -- Francis Pray

The temperature is HOT; yet we still walk across the ice.
Break new paths and make new roads and drive on.

-- legere --

The Tapping Of The Shaker...

Suburban-made and conservative-bred from elementary to high school, I have never had more than five African-American students in my classes. Pepper in a sea of salt. Unfortunately, there are times when the pepper longs to turn into salt. That's when it's time to start tapping the shaker.

As a student at Virginia State University, a historically and predominately black college in Petersburg, Virginia, the vibrating began. I made a conscious decision to attend a historically black college or university (HBCU). I had no desire to attend a majority institution. It was time for the pepper to see how other peppers lived, loved, laughed and longed.

Historically and predominately black universities and colleges are not for everyone. Virginia State was intended for me. Many say traditional colleges and universities offer a more realistic perspective of American society. They believe it prepares you to be that one-out-of-a-hundred Black person hired by a Fortune 500 company. Why not start early establishing relations with those who differ from us ethnically in college? I understand the reasoning.

However, I am an advocate of students - especially prospective African-American freshmen - attending a place of higher learning - black, white, big, or

small - where they feel the most academic and personal growth is possible. For me, Virginia was the place where I would develop my cultural identity and respect ALL African-American and African people.

Black colleges are often stereotyped as institutions that provide a third-class education. Instead of being an oasis of young black scholars, HBCUs are considered the thirteenth through sixteenth grades, a haven where African-American "dummies" flock to hang out and party.

Admittedly, there were Pretenders at Virginia just as there are at any university in the world. Pretenders are students whose major is "Nothingness". They came in with nothing, they will attempt to do and learn nothing, they will leave with nothing. Amidst the Pretenders, there were thousands of students with one single goal in mind - Graduation Day. It might take them seven or eight years, but eventually they would stand on the grounds of Hughes Stadium bellowing, "Fair Virginia State," of their soon-to-be alma mater and waving their caps.

Our resources were, and still are, third-rate. It is Jim Crow revisited when comparing the facilities to other state-supported institutions. Until recently, Virginia State has been short changed, leaving students to settle for a useless library, antiquated registration procedures and half of a student union building. In the tradition of the one-room school, we made do with what we had - learning despite the obstacles.

For me, there was so much more than "book" learning. I learned about relationships, how I related to the Black community. I learned about the relationships that exist among our people.

For the most part, people at Virginia State had similar perspectives about life, but I began to find other African-American people who had differing perspectives. I listened and observed, sometimes I talked. You would not believe some of the things I heard. I realized that African-American culture is not monolithic. My interpersonal experiences with "us" had been limited until I went to this historically and predominately black university. My view of being Black was what I saw on television. I realize now this was disgraceful.

I have been re-educated. I now realize that my original perception of what it means to be Black in America was truly wrong. Instead, we are quite diverse. When I came to this understanding, I was able to appreciate my diversity as an African-American and relish that diversity. Suburbanites such as myself are just as black as those in the 'hood. I also learned a little more about the 'hood! My experience at Virginia State allowed me to see that subcultures exist within Blackness. Black is a culture that combines.

College experience is definitely an individual experience. As a recent graduate, I often say, "I miss the place, but I would never want to go back." My heart belongs to Virginia State. A place where this pepper became pepper. As pepper, I appreciate salt but enjoy being pepper.

--- Natasha Banko'le ---

**Kick Katt to the Kurb by SoulClone
(Ronald Clark)**

QUESTION: What are the coloreds angry about now?

Answer:

Fact: ISU has put millions of dollars into the remodeling, refurbishing and rededication of one of the oldest buildings on campus.

Fact: ISU has renamed the edifice after political opportunist (and some time suffragette) Carrie Chapman Catt.
(Hmm CCC, a literate version of KKK perchance?)

Fact: The minority within a minority i.e. the 20-30 percent (and I'm being mad generous with this figure) of students of color that really be caring about what happens on this campus have objected to this action by the university and want the name changed.

Fact: With all due respect to this minority within a minority and all of it's valiant efforts, my opinion is this:
Considering that the university put \$5 million into the project, there ain't a snowballs chance in your drawers that the university will change anything to appease us.
(Three words to those who are fighting though. Agitate, agitate, and...uh...agitate).

So: I figure that black folks should make the most of Catt Hall and it's facilities. I have this suggestion of how.

Utilize Catt Hall's Most Prominent Feature: The Stoop

Note: If you're considering urinating on the stoop, you have the wrong idea. Besides that'd be too easy.

The stoop resembles those found at the entrances to many inner city townhouses so I figure y'all should make yourselves at home with these 7 easy steps.

1. Ask for a bag of sunflower seeds, a carton of Newports and a 40 of your favorite beverage in your next CARE package from the crib.
2. Take these items to the stoop with your Lasonic™ ghetto blaster.
3. Sit.
4. Gossip.
5. B.S.
6. Enjoy.
7. Repeat.

The next thing you know, heads at Beardshear will take note of the diversity thang that is going on and restructure the entire campus to appease us. I consulted my psychic friend Philip Michael Thomas and together, we formulated this:

The SoulClone prediction for the year 2005

- MacKay Hall will be restructured and renamed "Roy's Check Cashing".
- LeBaron will be converted into a laundramat.

- Horticulture will be rededicated as "Original Styling Beauty Salon".

Of course I'm dreaming at this point but then again so are the heads
at Beardshear if they think the minority within the minority is
"finna" back down on this Catt issue.

Power

What is power?
The world says power is many things.

Is power Macintosh
is it money
is it houses
or maybe cars?

Is power politics
is it fame
is it strength
or maybe brains?

Is power beating someone up
is it karate skills
is it in sticks
or maybe stones?

Power...
is in understanding
from knowing that words
can heal or harm
can ease the pain or cause despair
can bring forth life or take it away
from knowing that the Word
can pierce our souls
can guide our hearts
can feed our spirits

Power knows that sticks and stones may break your bones
but words can also hurt you.

POWER is Word
POWER is Knowledge
POWER is Understanding
POWER IS.

--- 'Nkosi-Akil Poole ---

The Cloud Room

Laying amongst the green,
he misses the purpose of it all.
The angry smiles of unrealized dreams
do not shatter his soul.
He watches them shed at night
as he too releases his crocodile tears.
Slowly he loses grasp of his spirit
and the dwindling light of his hope disappears.
From her they came into this garden, nourished and
molded, yet cries that go unheeded in the night would one
day murmur the lessons unlearned.
This grass, these papers, these greens give him
pleasures unspoken, desires awaken

Misplaced hearts roam the earth in search of picket fences, like lost children.
 The crazed come in search of justice yet the sight of ghost souls drifting, pass him by...
 as he sinks in his tainted treasures of lost cities.
 The rattling chains fly by and in his drowning state of utopia, he loses the keys.
 We left her weary of broken promises like sand castles by the bloody sea. We leave her now shaking with anger at the lies, lies, lies....

---Feavén---

These Dates in Black History

- February 26----Singer Antoine "Fats" Domino was born 1928.
- February 27---- The first Black lawyer, Charlotte Ray, graduates from Harvard University in 1872, Independence Day in the Dominican Republic
- March 1----The Abyssinians defeat the Italians at Adowa, 1896
 Ralph Ellison, author of Invisible Man born 1914
- March 2---- Freedman's Bureau founded for Black Education, 1865
- March 3 ----Garett Morgan, inventor born 1877-1963
 Thomas Jennings becomes the first Black American to receive a patent, 1821
- March 4----J. Ernest Wilkins is named undersecretary of Labor by President Dwight Eisenhower
- March 6--- The U.S. Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision-- declaring that Blacks "have no rights that a white man is bound to respect" was handed down, 1857.
 Independence Day, Uganda.
- March 11----Lorraine Hansberry's "Raisin in the Sun" opens at Barrymore theater in New York, 1959
- March 12----Benjamin Bannaker, with Charles L' Enfant, is commissioned to lay out Washington in the District of Colombia, 1791.
- March 13---Eli Whitney patented the cotton gin, based on the ideas and plans of a slave, 1794
 Fannie Lou Hamer, freedom fighter, dies 1977
- March 16--- Freedom Journal, first black newspaper, published by John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, founded 1827

-----Researched and Compiled by Aranthan Steve JonesII and Meron Wondwosen. (Through the W.W.W.)-----

Dreaming

For your dreams are not dreams
 But reality
 Positive thoughts should not be
 Turned into negative fears
 Because you have not tried
 Hold your dreams to your side
 Because if your dreams are gone,
 Your hopes gone too...
 For your actions will bring you
 SUCCESS in the close future---

--- Charles Wright ---



Engaging in the struggle

Hello, and welcome back Black students for yet another semester. Yes, indeed this will be an eventful semester with programs such as: The Big 8 leadership conference, important exchanges of dialogue between notable Black speakers, Black History month and the pledging of new members in our Black Greek systems.

There are so many opportunities to thrust yourself forward into the lime-light of the Black Freedom struggle. A struggle that has been ongoing since Jesus walked the earth and gave revelation to the Jews and Gentiles. A struggle filled with rich knowledge and information that can be applied to anybody, anytime, anyplace; information filled with heart-felt testimonies, the prosperity of hard work and ailments of our many distinct cultures.

When I speak of the Black Freedom struggle I'm speaking of strong and weak, pure and tainted, unique yet alike, young and old, glorious yet ashamed, qualified and unqualified, aggressive yet subtle Black brothers and sisters. In dealing with the Black Freedom struggle one must weigh and dissect the good and bad of the individual people involved. The reason why is simply because the majority of the people who partook in this

magnificent struggle were of a plural society. The plural society coexisting with many different social groups and where mainstream success and prestige was based on the economic success of the everyday people who are available to you and I. They are the kind who will partake in the events previously listed.

These people were everyday people until something so challenging, so controversial and so pronounced permeated their spirits, souls and environments made them fall into a helpless abyss of racial obedience. Racial obedience is projected when an individual of a particular race would be asked to make a judgment or decision where the result would always favor the people whom he/she had to deal with on a day-to-day basis. This call for commitment and insistence triggered the struggle for Black freedom. The magnitude of this call was so intense that when recognized, it became a call of inescapable submission --to the point of redefinition -- much like the submission and redefinition of the Biblical character Jacob/Israel and his fight with God.

All of the people involved with the Black Freedom struggle could no longer live ordinary, everyday lives. Their names were names that demanded affirmation -- for they became people of visible splendor. This type of visible splendor was displayed on October 16, 1995, when a million-plus men marched to the steps of the nation's capital demanding that African-American men stop the wrongs which they have committed against each other. What brought this magnitude of men to protest and demand justice...the struggle for Black Freedom.

Malcolm X knew of this and did in-depth research on those who were extracted from the Black Freedom Struggle. He discussed some of them in a 1963 interview with Alex Haley where he stated:

"....Christ wasn't white . Christ was a Black man. When Pope Pius XII died, LIFE magazine carried a picture of him in his private study kneeling before a black Christ.

All white people who have studied history and geography know that Christ was a black man. Only the poor, brainwashed American Negro has been made to believe that Christ was white , to maneuver him into worshipping the white man.

I have found out that the history-whitening process either had left out great things that black men had done, or some of the great Black men had gotten whitened. Hannibal, for instance was the most successful general that ever lived, was a Black man. So was Beethoven; Beethoven's father was one of the black moors that hired themselves out in Europe as professional soldiers. Haydn, Beethoven's teacher, was of African descent. Columbus, "the discoverer" of America, was a half-Black man. Whole black empires, like the Moorish, have been whitened to hide the fact that a great black empire had conquered a white empire even before America was discovered. The word "Moor" means "black," by the way. Egyptian civilization is a classic example of how the white man stole great African cultures and makes them appear today as white European."

Now, the question is, what raised Malcom X to dedicate his life to yield information like this to his people?...The Black Freedom struggle. The Black Freedom struggle is what has brought me to write this article, commit my time, efforts, and life to this rich tradition. When referring to committing my time and efforts I am speaking about finding, reading and passing along all the information concerning our Black History and becoming a Black Scholar. This is an ongoing process that will take more than my lifetime to complete but can be advanced during my lifetime.

The time has come for all of us as Black students to become Black

Scholars, to partake in true Scholarship and to exchange important dialogue that can efficiently confront the deep problems of this nation. The dialogue on this campus must remove itself from worthless and useless conversations and focus on how to become victorious within the struggle for Black Freedom. Smoking weed, sexual relations, video games and meaningless gossiping should cease to be the focus of dialogue between Black students on this campus.

This semester and especially this Black History month, should be a call to all the Black organizations on campus to start this exchange of dialogue and stop illusioning Black minds by constantly flooding them with things such as movies and parties. The average Black student in college today is tired of being shown movies to expand upon and understand the riches of their history. It is time for some Black organizations to let go of their obsession that they are for Black people only. There were many Latino, Jewish, Asian and white people who have heard the call delivered by the Black Freedom struggle. White people like: Lynette Marie-Childs, Elijah Love-Joy and John Brown contributed greatly to the struggle. Latinos, Asians, and Jewish people like: Jose Martin, Ceasar Chavez, Grace Ball and Rabbi Abraham Josh -Hessoul also devoted their lives to the Black Freedom struggle. For this reason alone we must be willing to speak to people outside our race for they will also be affected by the Black Freedom struggle.

As you digest the many suggestions presented concerning our race I ask that you remember two things. First, is the pain and suffering endured by our brothers and sisters. The stories of Black male slaves being castrated and having nails driven through their penises and black female slaves being viciously raped and having their breast lacerated as a means of control by their slave masters are

true! These stories were not meant to be used as folk-tales or bedtime stories --they were meant to remind us of the cruel acts afflicted on the Black race by the Euro-American race. Second, remember America is the richest nation in the world but also the laziest. Ultimately, America's lack of visible support in dealing with race relations shows their nonchalant attitudes and laziness towards this nation's oldest problem. America has confronted and battled every other issue inside and outside its boundaries except the issue at hand...race. It's sensible to say that America's primary interest never was humanism. This country resistance to involve itself with the problem of racism must in some form or fashion be based on obtaining some type of capital for themselves. I speak of humanism as the worth of a person, regardless of his/her financial success; whereas, capitalism erases the humanistic worth of him/her and weighs the value of the doctor over the bum, the rich white against the poor Black. **My dear Black brothers and sisters, how long can we afford to let this go on! We must begin to talk amongst ourselves and discuss strategies to rid America of this ugly burden or we risk taking the chances of this mighty nation having two heads one white and one Black.**

Until next time brothers and sisters!!!
Peace,
ASJ --Quick1



Priorities

*You have a MASS, MAIN, MCAG, BSA, AFSA, LGBA meeting to attend.

Renaissance

Volume 1 Issue 1

February 1996

AFRICAN-AMERICAN POETS

Renaissance: a renewal of life, vigor, interest, etc.; rebirth; revival. I chose this name for this publication because its intended purpose is to stir up an interest in the culture and history of African-Americans. As a people, we should learn about our history, whether it be that of our role in "America" or be it that of our African ancestors. At the Big Eight Conference, which was held at Kansas State University, several students from Iowa State were challenged to read as many books about African-American history as we were able to. I would hope that other students also take this challenge and learn more about our proud heritage aside from what little we learn from our schoolbooks.

This edition of the *Renaissance* is dedicated to those African-American poets who have made a contribution to the cause of raising Black consciousness within our communities. Below are biographies of several African-American poets from different eras in American history, such as slavery, the Harlem Renaissance (from which this publication's title was produced), and the civil rights era.

Maya Angelou (1928)

The St. Louis, MO, -born Maya Angelou has written three novels and five collections of poetry, including *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and *And Still I Rise*, and has also written several plays. She served as the northern coor-



Langston Hughes

dinator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference between 1959 and 1960. Angelou has earned honorary doctorates from such schools as Atlanta University, the University of Arkansas, and Wake Forest University. She was named Woman of the Year by the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1976. She read her poem *On the Pulse of Morning* at President Clinton's 1993 inauguration.

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917)

Gwendolyn Brooks was born in Topeka, KS, in 1917. She has received several accolades during her writing career, including becoming the first African-

American poet to win the Pulitzer Prize (*Annie Allen*, 1950) and being designated as the poet laureate of Illinois (1968), in which she has resided for a number of years. In 1985, Brooks was appointed Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress.

Countee Cullen (1903-1946)

Countee Cullen, one of the most prominent writers of the Harlem Renaissance, was born in New York City, NY, in 1903. He earned a B.A. at New York University and a M.A. at Harvard University. He published his first collection of poems, *Color*, in 1925 while still an undergrad. In the same year, Cullen was heralded as the most famous Black writer of all time. Although he is regarded as the most prolific writer of the

Harlem Renaissance, he sought for recognition as a poet and did not want to be labeled simply as a Black poet.

W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963)

W.E.B. DuBois, poet, editor, scholar, educator, historian, and sociologist, was born in Great Barrington, MA, in 1868. He graduated from Fisk University in 1888 and received four years of graduate study at Harvard University. He then served as a professor at Atlanta University from 1896 to 1910. During this tenure, DuBois founded the Niagara Movement (1905) as a protest against racial discrimination and segregation and co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1908). Known as the father of Black scholarship, militancy, self-consciousness, and cultural development, DuBois wrote numerous scholarly studies, essays, works of fiction, and poetry.

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

In 1872, Paul Laurence Dunbar was born to two former slaves in Dayton, OH. He published his first volume of poetry, *Oak and Ivy*, one year after his 1891 high school graduation and became famous after publishing his third volume of poetry, *Lyrics of Lowly Life*, in 1896. Dunbar became famous for the Southern dialect in his poetry, although he wanted to be known for his literary English. He wrote over 400 poems and had an influence on the Harlem Renaissance.

Nikki Giovanni (1943)

Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville, TN. She graduated from Fisk University and also studied as a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania in 1967, attended the Columbia School of Fine Arts in 1968, and received an L.H.D. from Wilberforce University in 1972. She has received such awards as the *Mademoiselle* Woman of the Year (1971) and the *Ladies' Home Journal* Woman of the Year-Youth Leadership Award (1972).

Renaissance

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1824-1911)

Born free in Baltimore, MD, during the era of American slavery, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper became the first African-American woman to publish a short story and the second to publish a novel. Harper's works reflected her devotion to abolitionism, race advancement and equality, women's and children's rights, and Christian morality. She collaborated 120 of her poems into 11 volumes.

George Moses Horton (1797?-1883)

Born in slavery in Northampton, NC, George Moses Horton taught himself to read. Although he could not write until 1832, he began dictating poetry sometime around 1817.

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Langston Hughes, possibly the most famous African-American writer of all time, was born in Joplin, MO, but spent most of his childhood in Lawrence, KS, with his grandmother, whose first husband died during John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. At the age of 14, two years after his grandmother's death, Langston went to live with his mother in Lincoln, IL, where he published his first poem in grade school and was elected class poet (1915). In 1916, Hughes and his mother moved to Cleveland, OH, where he had his first poems published in the Central High School newspaper. After graduating in 1920 and living with his father in Mexico for a year, Hughes studied one year at Columbia University before dropping out and taking numerous odd jobs to support himself, during which time he published several poems in the NAACP's publication the *Crisis*. In 1926, as an undergraduate at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania (B.A., 1929), Hughes published his first volume of poetry (*The Weary Blues*) and also began work on his first novel, *Not without Laughter*, which was published in 1930 and which won him the Harmon Foundation

Gold Award for Literature. In 1931, Hughes sailed to Cuba and Haiti, a journey which was highlighted by his transformation from a blues lyricist to a dramatist. Hughes, one of the major contributors to the Harlem Renaissance, was awarded the NAACP's Spingarn Medal (which is annually awarded to an outstanding African-American) in 1960. Among his many works, Langston Hughes may be most noted for his "Simple" tales, in which he used the voice of a plain yet sensible African-American man to convey the sentiments of the entire race.

James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)

Known for his song "Lift Every Voice and Sing," James Weldon Johnson was born in 1871 in Jacksonville, FL. Hailed as the leader of the Negro Awakening, Johnson graduated from Atlanta University with an A.B. in 1894 and received an A.M. ten years later. In 1897, Johnson became the first African-American since the Reconstruction Era to be admitted to the Florida bar association. In addition to being a public-school principal, lawyer, diplomat, novelist, and essayist, Johnson served as the executive secretary of the NAACP and as the Professor of Creative Literature at Fisk University.

Toni Morrison (1931)

Toni Morrison, the Poet Laureate of the United States, was born in 1931 in Lorain, OH. She received her B.A. from Howard University and her M.A. from Cornell University. Morrison won the National Book Critics' Circle Award for her third novel, Song of Solomon, in 1978, and the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for her fifth novel, Beloved.

Charles Lewis Reason (1818-1898)

Charles Lewis Reason, the son of two Haitian immigrants, was born in New York, NY, in 1818. He was educated in New York in the African Free School and McGrawville College. Active in

Renaissance

the struggle for abolitionism, civil rights, suffrage, and education, Reason served as the secretary of the Political Improvement Association (1837), the New York State Convention for Negro Suffrage (1840), the National Negro Convention (1853), and New York's Citizens Civil Rights Committee. In addition to being a reformer, Reason was an educator, essayist, and poet.

Lucy Terry (1730-1821)

Stolen from Africa as a child, Lucy Terry was purchased as a servant in Rhode Island. She married a free African-American landowner in 1756. Terry is regarded as the first African-American poet, although her only known poem was composed in 1746 and was not published until 1893, almost one-hundred and fifty years later.

Alice Walker (1944)

Born in Eatonville, GA, Alice Walker was shot in 1952 with a BB gun and blinded in one eye; yet, her handicap did not prevent her from becoming active in the civil rights movement in while attending Spelman College between 1961 and 1963. In 1964, she traveled to Africa, where she began writing poems which be included in her first publication, Once (1968). After returning to America and earning her B.A. at Sarah Lawrence College in New York in 1965, Walker became deeply involved in the civil rights movement. She published her first novel, The Third Life of George Copeland, in 1970, but did not gain national acclaim until after her 1982 publication of The Color Purple, which won her the American Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In addition to writing poetry, Alice Walker has written five novels and several essays.

Margaret Walker (1915)

Born in Birmingham, AL, Margaret Walker has been writing since she was 13. Her poetry was first published by W.E.B. DuBois in the Crisis when she was eighteen. She graduated from Northwestern University in 1935, earned an M.A. (1940) and a Ph.D. (1965) at the University

of Iowa, a D.F.A. at Denison University (1974), and a D.H.L. at Morgan State University (1976).

Phyllis Wheatley (1753?-1784)

Born near Senegal in Africa, Phyllis Wheatley was captured and brought to America in 1761, where she was purchased in Boston by John Wheatley. Within sixteen months of her arrival in this country, Phyllis knew English so well that she was able to read the most difficult parts of the Bible. In 1767, at about 13 or 14, "On Messrs. Hussey and Coffin" became Phyllis's first printed poem. One year later, Phyllis wrote her first draft of "On Being Brought from Africa to America," which was first published in *Poems* (1773) and would become her most famous poem. Upon being freed in 1773, Wheatley sailed to Europe as a treatment for an illness she had, and during the same year published *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* in London. She returned to America in 1774. After John Wheatley's death in 1778, Phyllis married John Peters, whose abuse may have caused her premature death in 1784.

Other Notable African-American Poets

Lerone Bennett, Jr. (1928): Served as Senior Editor of *Ebony* magazine.

Arna Bontemps (1902-1973): Moved to Harlem at the beginning of the Renaissance and went on to become one of its best known writers.

Frank Marshall Davis (1905): Helped found the *Atlanta Daily World*.

Mari Evans (1923): Recipient of numerous accolades (Black Arts Celebration Poetry Award, 1981; the National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Award, 1981).

Robert Hayden (1912-1980): Won the first World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal (1965), for his novel *A Ballad of Remembrance*.

Renaissance

Leroi Jones [Amiri Baraka] (1934): Held as a political prisoner during the late 1960's.

Claude McKay (1889-1948): A native Jamaican, McKay became the first Black to win the medal of Jamaica's Institute of Arts and Sciences. Was a prominent figure of the Harlem Renaissance.

Naomi Long Madgett (1923): First published at age 17.

Adah Isaacs Menken (1839?-1868): At one time the world's highest-paid actress, began publishing poems at age 15.

Dudley Randall (1914): Founded Broadside Press in order to publish other African-Americans' materials.

Jean Toomer (1894-1967): Forerunner of the Harlem Renaissance.

Richard Wright (1908-1960): Author of *Native Son*.

The Harlem Renaissance

The civil rights era of the '50s, 60s, and 70s was not the first period during which there existed a heightened level of African-American consciousness. The Harlem Renaissance (1920-1930), one of the most celebrated periods in African-American history, was a time of literary and socioeconomic greatness. Many Renaissance writers, such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Wallace Thurman, effectively convey the feelings of Black pride during this period in their works. African-American musical arts such as blues and jazz reached new heights during the Renaissance. The Renaissance also saw the rise of the African-American bourgeoisie, whose wealth was comparable to that of their Caucasian counterparts. Unfortunately, the Renaissance met an untimely death when the Depression of the 1930s began.

Suggested Readings

Below are listed the sources from which I obtained the information which is contained in this pamphlet. These books, and many others, are available in Iowa State's library. To search for these books, you can search under "k Blacks and poetry", "k Harlem Renaissance", "k Blacks (women and poetry)", or "s African-American poetry". You can also search for works by and about a particular writer by using the author search.

African American Writers, ed. by Valerie Smith, Lea Baechler, and A. Walton Litz, 1991, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY, 544 pgs.

Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present, ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and K.A. Appiah, 1993, Amistad, New York, NY, 368 pgs.

Black Poets of the United States, by Jean Wagner, 1973, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, IL, 561 pgs.

Black Voices, by Abraham Chapman, 1968, Mentor Books, New York, NY, 718 pgs.

Black Women Writers (1950-1980), ed. by Mari Evans, 1983, Anchor Press/Doubleday, New York, NY, 543 pgs.

The Collected Poems of Jean Toomer, ed. by Robert B. Jones and Margery Toomer Latimer, 1988, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 111 pgs.

The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou, by Maya Angelou, 1994, Random House, New York, NY, 273 pgs.

Early Black American Poets, by William Robinson, Jr., 1973, William C. Brown Company Publishers, Dubuque, IA, 271 pgs.

The Harlem Renaissance: A Historical Dictionary for the Era, ed. by Bruce Kellner, 1984, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 476 pgs.

Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance: Hub of African-American Culture, 1920-1930, by Steven Watson, 1995, Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 224 pgs.

The Harlem Renaissance Remembered, by Arna Bontemps, 1972, Dodd, Mead, & Company, New York, NY, 310 pgs.

A Life Distilled: Gwendolyn Brooks, Her Poetry and Fiction, ed. by Maria K. Mootry and Gary Smith, 1987, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, IL, 286 pgs.

My Soul's High Song: The Collected Writings of Countee Cullen, Voice of the Harlem Renaissance, ed. by Gerald Early, 1991 Doubleday, New York, NY, 618 pgs.

The Passion of Claude McKay, ed. by Wayne F. Cooper, 1973, Schocken Books, New York, NY, 363 pgs.

This Is My Century, by Margaret Walker, 1989, University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 209 pgs.

This Road Since Freedom, by C. Eric Lincoln, 1990, Carolina Wren Press, Durham, NC, 93 pgs.

The Work of the Afro-American Woman, by Mrs. N.F. Mossell, 1988, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 178 pgs.

The Last Word

C. Eric Lincoln wrote a poem named Lacerations which addresses the fact that very little information is taught in the educational system about African-American history (or, for that matter, the history of any "minority"). I have included this selection below.

*The great Minds in the Universities
writing new books
cryptic.*

*And the egg-headed students
trying to understand the old,
the Great Conversation.*

*You
Doctors of Philosophy
Doctors of Psychology
Doctors of Theology
Can you point us to a little love,
a little appreciation
of what we are
or even what we hope to be?*

(from C. Eric Lincoln's This Road Since Freedom, pg. 32)

Do not wait for someone who cannot fully appreciate your history to "educate" you about your history. Learn about it for yourself. The opportunity is here; all you have to do is take it. Black history is not a month-long subject, either; it is a life-long experience.

Any comments or suggestions may be submitted to the editor, Edwin Grider. I would appreciate any opinions that you may have about this publication. My e-mail address is egrider@iastate.edu.

A Black Student Alliance Production, 1996

Remember , in the words of the great SoulClone "Agitate, agitate and...uh...agitate."

WE DID IT

Black Inventors and inventions

FOUNTAIN PEN W.B. Purvis BISCUIT CUTTER A.P. Ashbourn GOLF TEE G.F. Grant MOTOR J.Gregory
HORSESHOE O.E. Brown LOCOMOTIVE SMOKE STACK L. Bell RAILWAY SIGNAL A.B. Blackburn
UMBRELLA STAND W.C. Carter FOLDING BED L.C. Bailey
AUTOMATIC FISHING DEVICE G.Cook LETTER BOX G.E. Becket
STREET-SWEEPERS C.B.Brooks IRONING BOARD
Sarah Boone FIRE EXTINGUISHER T.J. Marshal LUGGAGE CARRIER J.W. Butts
CARPET BEATING MACHINE T. Church CORN PLANTER & COTTON PLANTER Henry Blair
ELEVATOR DEVICE J.Cooper AUTOMATIC REFRIDGERATION SYSTEM F .M. Jones
GONG & SIGNAL CHAIRS FOR HOTELS M.E. Benjamin
STREET SPRINKLING APPARATUS M.W. Binga DRAFT REGULATOR P.W. Cornwall
ICE-CREAM MOLD A.L. Cralle AIR-SHIP W.B. Purvis
LIBRARY TABLE W.R. Davis Jr. PHOTO EMBOSING
MACHINE C.J. Dorticus ----degined by legere----
REFRIGERATING APPARATUS T.Elkins STEAM ENGINE LUBRICATOR
Elijah McCoy FOOT POWER HAMMER M.Head COTTON CULTIVATOR E.H. Sutton
LAWN MOWER J.A. Burr SUGAR REFINMENT F.Flemings Jr.
GAS BURNER B.F. Jackson N. Rillieux GUITAR
OCCUSTAT C.L. Elder PENCIL SHARPENER J.L. Love
ELECTROMOTIVE RAILWAY SYSTEMS ELECTRIC LAMP Latimer & Nichols
ELECTROMECHANICAL BRAKE RAILWAY GRAPH -- compiled by Jean and ASJ--
OVERHEAD CONDUCTING FOR ELECTRIC RAILWAY INDUCTION TELEGRAPH SYSTEM G.T. Woods

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Editor in Chief
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*Special insert in this month's UHURU: **Renaissance**

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