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Black Rage I

Denison University

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Dedicated to
The Black Student Union
October 23, 1998
Acknowledgements:

On behalf of the Black Student Union, the contributors of BLACK RAGE would like to give special thanks to Dr. Hamlet for his continued support, dedication, and sincere love for the Black students here at Denison University. Dr. Hamlet, you are the very essence of BLACK love in its most dynamic state. We thank and appreciate you from the bottom of our hearts!
"Life Ev'ry Voice and Sing"

James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.
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Statement of Purpose:

To allow for a creative outlet for members of the Black Student Union.

Introduction

The need for this publication sprang forth when the expressions of a number of Black students were denied from other campus publications without any valid justifications. As history has proven, when faced with limitation, we as Black people then create a means for overcoming that limitation which is significant to our own interests and beliefs. Therefore, we came together as a community in search of resolution and decided on Black Rage as the instrument by which we would let our creative voices ring. This unprecedented publication serves as a refuge for the Black students at Denison University by offering an avenue for our poetry, prose, short stories as well as other unique writings to be read, respected, and held in the utmost regard.
I wrote the following selections of poems during my first semester here at Denison University. This was a very challenging time for me, in that I found myself fighting with the debilitating, emotional restraint of cultural shock. Being from a predominantly Black school, neighborhood, church and for that matter, city, this mostly white, furthermore rich, and seemingly unconcerned with Black affirmation institute of higher learning offered me no familiar features or qualities. My mechanism for coping with this state of alienation was discovered through my expressions written with my Black pen on any piece of white paper that I could get my hands on. My poetry gave voice to those feelings that I believed could not be understood by most “Denisonians”. Therefore, I have chosen to entitle my selection in BLACK RAGE as the simple, Denison-imposed question that I would like each and every reader to ponder on, ...

“Can You Feel ME?”
For America

I don’t expect you to understand my language and to honor its revelation
To speak it with ease and know its interpretation
To look at your brother and call him “nigga” with love and admiration
To say it’s bad when it’s really all good and tight when you got it just right
To call a house a cut and a rumble a fight
To slap hands with an old friend instead of a shake
To reflect on the struggle for ole times sake
To love its rhythm and feel its blues
To embody its meaning and to respect it when others refuse
Saddiday Night

My saddiday night weakness
As tall and black as fridday's midnight
That warm smile that sets my heart on fire
The feeling of those strong arms wrapped around me so tight
And the taste of those sweet lips
Puts a hold on me that I just can't fight

My saddiday night weakness
Sends a jones through my bones
That I ain't never felt before
Something like Ed McMahan knocking at my door
A close contact of him gives me a high
It's like I got wings and floatin' in the sky

My saddiday night weakness
Is all dat and den some
That man fits me like a glove
He knows just what to say
To turn around even my worst day

When things ain't going right
That's when I just delight
In the thought of being me
On a saddiday night
Shipwrecked

Mrs. Shipp and her humongous hips
Big as the ocean is wide
It looks like she’s bringing in the tide
Here she comes again
To bad mouth me, and my “heathen” friends
Another sermon, just like the one before
I have to sit and listen to this old lady call me a whore

I haven’t gotten to the part that makes my head beat
You can actually see the steam rising from my seat,
When she pauses to gather her thoughts
She sucks on her dentures until her tongue gets caught
During all of this flesh crawling commotion
She’s sitting there scratching her titty
Man, I hate that old bitty
Black Captive

Ruler of his country, protector of all
Seized of mighty powers; made silent to his daughter’s cry
Dreams of how he would once again stand tall,
Were the only means, by which he could live and not die

Their faces were hidden behind the muskets they held
His eyes shown bright for he had only courage to fight
But how is it that a stripped captive be unjailed?
The cowards were many, all in sight.

Silent pain and tears of despair, passed through air
Each finger joined hand; a mighty fist upon cheek
Now the tables were turned; courage towards fear, and all made fair
The mountain of freedom was near, even up to the peak

Rage and anger made way
To shock and dismay
Refuge

Stroking his back brings
Laughter to his oppressed mind
Shelter from the storm
Christopher Thomas
"May I Speak Now"

The pieces that I have selected to make up, *May I Speak Now*, attempt to examine relationships from the perspective of a black man. This section includes relationships black men have with black women, relationships black men have with each other, and relationships back men have with mainstream society. My hope is that one might understand these depictions of relationships that both strengthen and weaken us as black men.
Tanahzia

As an early morning ritual
I slap on gobs of Murray’s hair grease
To sport my waves for Tanahzia
I sprinkle drops of K-Mart cologne upon my body
To impress my sweet Tanahzia

The finest cutie pie in Mrs. Melleck’s kindergarten class
She sits at the end of my table
Her bouncy pig tails
Are complemented by little pink bows on the ends
Sophisticated indeed
She can count to 20
Without even using her fingers
She’s a master with Crayolas
She can color without going outside the lines
Dimples appear when she smiles
Deep as Grandma’s cookie jar
Her front teeth ain’t fully grown in yet
But I find it kinda sexy
She’s a Jet Magazine Beauty of the Week in the making
Maybe she’ll blossom to match the fine qualities
And startling physique of the caramel queen that told Sports Illustrated
Victoria’s Secrets

Story time
As we sit Indian style on the rug
The old wrinkled woman
Who took my water gun
Reads Dr. Seuss verses
Green Eggs and Chilens
Or whatever
her words simply go through one ear
And do the Electric Slide out the other
Because the only thing I’m into is Tanahzia

At recess
Most of the kids play on the swings
Or make mud pies
Tanahzia and I dine at the sandbox
Over Kool Aid and cheese crackers

Nap time
As I lay on my cot
She taps me on my shoulder
She leads me to the coatroom
We escape

* Black Rage   11 *
Like bandits in the night
My shoe laces flap like mad bunny ears
I don't know how to tie them yet
So I let them just drag across the marble floor
As we stand in the darkness
Our lips meet
Then we both giggle
Untitled

Excuse me sista’.
I thought that was you.
Your striking beauty
I must admit
Briefly intoxicates my consciousness.
To be blunt as a Philly
Your image lingers on for hours in my mind,
Like the strong scent of alcohol on one’s breath,
Or the distinctive odor of chronic on one’s finger tips after a session.
I ain’t smokin’ I just got a contact.
Your presence is much greater than a pack of Doublemint
or a dash of Cool Water cologne.

I must be trippin’.

For a moment everything around you appeared to be cloudy
And out of focus,
As if nothing else mattered.

I really must be trippin’.

Your soft brown eyes
Appear to possess strong swift hands of steel,
Gripping me tightly
Despite any rebellion stirred by my pride.
Your smooth brown skin
Is inviting as a deep ocean of caramel;
Rich in flavor,
And everlasting sweetness.
The curves of your figure
Keep me in a constant state of dizziness.

I know I’m trippin’ now.

Why shouldn’t I be,
After all we experienced,
Under the moonlight,
The dome light of my car,
The red light of my basement,
Sunlight,
Or no light at all.
We were tight like Life Styles,
Unseparable like comrades.
It’s a low down dirty shame
Things had to change.
A woman
With the skin of sweet Carmel
Deep brown hair twisted in strands of braids
That hung down past her shoulder blades
Laid upon her back.
“Ahhhh!”
She perspired heavily.
Her long soft legs blossomed outward
Like butterfly wings.
Her eyes were bolted shut
Like an iron door
“Push...Push...Push” were the words of a masked man
Who stood before her
Draped in mint green.
“Whhhh. Whhhh. Whhhh.”
A second man
Tall
Dark as coffee
Stood by her side
With his hands in hers.
She squeezed the circulation of his fingers.
“Ah come on baby. Not so tight.”
“Ahhhh!”
“It’s coming. Push...Push.”
Life in its simplest form
Began to break free
Through the gates between the woman’s legs.
“Push.”
“Naaa naaa naaa.”
“It’s a boy.”
The Emperor’s Last Shot

One would think that I have the best seat in the kingdom.
Elevated above the grassy terrain marked with bold
White letters,
And the red sea of roaring voices of cheers,
And raised fists of pride.
My Panasonic Wand gives me sorcery power
To recreate all the events
As they unfold.

As I sit on my throne I watch my loyal subjects do their respected duties.
The zebra-men try to bring order
To the chaotic rumble of the padded soldiers.
The acrobatic team of maidens flip through the air,
Kick,
Swing,
And cry out propaganda slogans
To raise patriotism.
Hands clap,
Like the crackling sound of fireworks.
The royal band entertains me with Celebration by Kool and the Gang.

A flying, buzzing, pest enters my quarters and invades my royal space.
How dare you come into this sacred temple, I say.
His head I demand immediately to be removed.
But nothing is done.
My subjects don’t seem to be as loyal anymore.
I appear to be forgotten
Like the A-Team warrior that wore his crown as a Mohawk
And stood draped in glittering ropes of gold.

The pest continues to irritate me and float around my ear
As if he wants to tell me something.
I swing my hands furiously
Like a true Kung Fu master,
In attempt to end the life of the nettling fool.
However
He escapes with ease and flutters with a smirk.
He hums humorously
At both my pathetic effort at his life
And the vivid deterioration of my importance.

The royal position in which I inherited
Really is far from grand.
My viewfinder deprives me of color,
Leaving me with dull images of grey.
My throne is made of splitting wood,
And is missing a leg.
The sacred temple possesses
A strong scent of ashy,
Cracking,
Fungus infested toes,
Burying all the nerves
And the hairs of my nose.

I cannot leave.
My absence is forbidden.
I must watch the soldiers squabble for position
Until the battle has ended
And a winner has been declared.

I see the water servant
Faithfully attending to everyone's thirst.
Do you think that maybe
The thought of me wanting a cup of water,
or perhaps a cup of Gatorade,
Ever entered his mind?
How about the fact that I may have to use the restroom...

I wonder if the Library is hiring.
The paved streets of Maurice's neighborhood winded like veins of the human anatomy. Ten hours had passed since the sun had reached its highest point of the afternoon. Daylight had been ambushed and taken captive by the dark forces of nightfall. The critically conditioned street lamps, which occasionally flicked on, towered along the sidewalks. The tiny white specks in the sky that watched over the lively habitat remained still like the Buckingham guards of England.

The disappearance of the sun marked the curfew of many of the young people of the community. Teenage couples crept through the bushes playing love games. Maurice's street only consisted of a handful of souls lounging on the corner, laughing loud, drinking cheap wine, and telling vulgar stories about women. An occasional low rider rolled pass blasting the hardcore sounds of the latest hip-hop music. Maurice's house stood four medium sized lots, from an intersection. The architect of the home shared a similar style with many of its surrounding houses. Inside the one story home with the large concrete porch out front Maurice, Terry, and Robert were gathered around the kitchen table playing cards.

Each of the young men wore their hair in well rounded Afros resembling large microphones of major news reporters at a press conference held by the near standing window.

Terry, a lean, brown skinned character slouched in his chair as he gazed at his hand in which he was dealt. His thick round lips raised, exposing his dark gums and large front teeth. He slowly began to develop a mischievous grin. Terry elevated his vision from his cards and his eyes peered across the faces of his silent opponents. Maurice, who sat to Terry's right, suddenly erupted. "Hurry up and play your hand, muthafucka! Damn!

Terry continued to smile as his eyes carefully studied Maurice.

"What you lookin' at, gay ass?! Shit! Lookin' at me like you wanna kiss me or someum. Nigga we ain't got all day. Just play ya Goddamn hand and stop tryin' to undress me with yo eyes and shit."

Terry's long slender legs began to stretch up under the card table. "Nigga hold on. I'm bout to drop."

"Do someum."

Terry reached behind to his back pocket to grip his personalized pick with the letter 'T' engraved above the black handle, formed into a fist, to stroke its teeth into his thick mane. He suddenly slapped down his spread onto the glass table. "Now nigga what? Can yall hang?"

The sight of the five clubs laying flat across the glass in numerical order burned like hot coal sitting in Maurice's stomach. He immediately unleashed his anger. "Damn nigga, you tryin' to break my mama's table?!" Maurice hollered out while throwing down his cards.

"Nigga, don't get mad."

"I aint mad. This game don't mean a Goddamn thang. Nigga cause you still gay," Maurice said with humor.

"Yeh, whatever. I aint gay man."

Maurice's mother ran a strict household. She disallowed the use of alcohol and foul language in her home and banned Maurice's gang associates from her property. However she was working the late shift and Maurice felt obligated to take advantage of her absence.

"Where the bitches at nigga?" Terry laughed.

Maurice sparked a gentle smile and his dimples began to appear. "They back in my room waitin' on me to dick'em down smooth. I'm just waitin' on y'all niggas to leave 'cause I don't feel like sharin' no ass."

"Yeh, whatever." Terry then turned to Robert, who was peacefully sleeping in the corner with his thumb in his mouth. "Rob!" he shouted, however, Robert remained motionless.
"Dat nigga sleep," Maurice laughed.
"Rob!" Terry shouted once more. "Nigga wake yo ass up. It's on you," he said as he dug his hands deep into a bag of wavy potato chips and threw one of the crispy treats across the table to hit Robert on the side of his head. "Ay nigga, while you up, pass my forty right behind you." Maurice's eyes widen as he noticed the same chip that Terry had thrown, laying on the green tile. "Don't be leavin' yo shit on my floor."
"I'll pick it man, dag!" said Terry.
Robert slowly woke up from his nap, stretching his limbs outward as he yawned. Still in a state of drowsiness, Robert's dark reddish brown hair lifted from the dandelion yellow wall and slowly passed Terry's forty ounce of malt liquor across the table.
"Just like straight up hoes, always gotta play," Robert said, rolling his somnolent, hazel eyes in Terry's direction. Robert hastily threw out his cards in the middle of the table and the short, slim character attempted to close his eyes so he could continue to sleep.
"Damn man, what's wrong wit you?" Terry laughed as he wrapped his long fingers around the bottle and quickly took a gulp of his brew.
"Is you tired or somethun?" Maurice asked in his casual, deep voice, as he rounded up the hered of cards scattered throughout the table.
"Heeell yeh," Robert answered as he turned to Maurice, the huge staunched seven footer that sat at the head of the table.
"It only 10 o'clock and this nigga tired! Sounding just like a little girl." said Terry.
"A man, call yo mama so she can come over to tuck your ass in, and read you a bedtime story. When you fall asleep, me and T. gonna fuck her." Maurice laughed.
Robert peered evilly toward both Terry and Maurice for a brief moment and cracked a faint grin, allowing his gold teeth to sparkle. "Fuck you man. Don't let me get on yo ugly ass mama. Lookin' like Grape Ape. No wonder you so Goddamn big. Didn't she used to play linebacker for the Saints?"
Maurice's brow began to raise. "You ain't talkin' to me muthafucka."
"Yeh nigga, I'm talkin' bout yo mama," said Robert.
Maurice instantly began to laugh and the vast figure stood from his seat. "Aww damn. I know this nigga ain't talkin' shit bout my mama. You done came in my house, ate up my food, smoked all my weed and shit, and now you talkin' shit bout my mama. Nigga don't make whip yo ass."
"See, I'd knock you out if you wasn't such a big nigga," Robert laughed.
"Nigga shiiid, I'll get on my knees and whip yo ass."
Man sit down goofy, and shuffle them danm cards," Terry exclaimed.
All three of the men exchanged a series of laughs as Maurice finally sat down. "But yo, hear me out," said Robert. "I got in late as hell last night. Then Moms woke me up all early and made me clean ten pounds of chitlens."
"Chitlens?!" Terry asked as his face wrinkled.
"Hell yeh. Pissed me off"
"What yall do?" Maurice asked.
"Shiit, me and Roshawn was out ass huntin' over at Club 8 Ball, right. Nigga, it was staaacked. Just a sea of sweatin black muthafuckas gettin' their drink on and gettin' freaky on the dance floor and shit. We was packed in the muthafucka like Puerto Ricans in a Volkswagen."
"Word?"
"Now nigga, let me tell you about these fly bitches that was up in there. Big ass titties just swinging like TAADING! Fat ass booties shakin' like PIDOW! Pussy just poppin'. Ass
everywhere you looked. Ass to the left of ya, ass to the right. You shoulda been there man."

"So it was like that? Why didn't yall hoes swing by and pick me up," Maurice asked. "Nigga, I called you from the crib. Yo lil brother said you went with yo moms to play Bingo."

"Damn, that's right. Man, she made me go...I won me a curling iron though."

"Nigga, what fuck you gonna do wit a curling iron!?" Robert asked in a confusing manor. Maurice shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know. The shit was free."

"To curl yo sister's nappy ass coochie hairs," Terry laughed.

"Fuck you nigga."

Robert asked in a confusing manor. "But back to my story man. Me and Roshawn was spittin game to these one freaks, seein if they fuckin', right. All of a sudden, them hoe ass Jeri Curl niggas came in and started talkin' some craaazy shit. Disrespectin' me in front of that lil fly ass bitch I was talkin' about, and gettin' Super Soul Shine, Jeri Curl juice all of my muthafuckin' Nikes. I was like, 'heeell nah', cause I had just got them mugs last week. I really didn't feel like gettin' into no shit last night. I had a pocket full of rubbers and I was making sure I was gonna slide up in some ass, but I wasn't gonna let that shit ride. So I grabbed my bottle from the table and swung it into his face. 'Cause the Fros don't be goin' out like no bitches. He fell to the ground, blood started gushin' all down his face and shit. Then, Scooter's lil ass said some shit and kick me and Roshawn out. You know how his punk ass be actin', just because he own the muthafucka. But we didn't sweat it. Know whad I'm sayin'? We just waited till the muthafuckas stepped out and took heat to dem hoes. Shotgun went BOOYA!" Robert explained with enthusiasm. "Left them niggas wide open on the concrete."

"Damn nigga, you tellin' your whole life story or somethun?" Terry laughed. "Don't nobody give a fuck. I don't give a fuck. Ay Reese, you give a fuck?"

"Heell no. Now you know I don't give a fuck."

"Nah, I'm just lettin' y'all niggas know, that I'm crazy. Ask Reese. He knows." Robert said, turning to Maurice. His eye expanded with excitement. "Ay, aint I crazy? Remember when we was up at the record store last week?"

"Yeh man, you crazier than a muthafucka." Maurice answered in a sarcastic manner before chuckling. "But nigga, I'll still whip that ass."

Robert faintly cracked a smile. "So if y'all don't mind, I'ma layback and chill."

"What eva, man," Terry said with laughter. "Look at this grown ass nigga still suckin' his thumb."

"Suck on this, ya lil hoe," Robert slowly replied as he gently grabbed his genitals. Terry slowly shook his head as he looked down at Robert's thin figure, lounging back in the corner with his legs propped on the table. "Listen to this nigga. I got somethun for yo mama to suck on, chitlen boy."

"Muthafucka you aint at home, nigga!! Get your Goddamn legs off my table. Damn!" Maurice screamed. "I don't care what you do over this nigga's crib," he continued as he pointed to Terry. "You can wash yo balls in the kitchen sink, all I care. But when you over here, respect my shit! Lil muthafucka."

Maurice reached over and thrust Robert's legs off the table. "You can't tell no niggas to make themself at home cause they always taking shit too Goddamn far."

"Why y'all always talkin' about my legs? That ain't cool. Always talkin' bout my legs," Robert asked. "I told yall I got bad dry skin. It runs in the family. ...See, it all started with my great Uncle Gus, who was over in Korea."
"Nigga I don't care about your Uncle Gus. I don't care if your Aunt Bernadine got purple nipples," Terry informed. "If you got money to buy them shoes, then take yo lazy behind to store and buy some lotion put on yo ass. Yo shit is dry. Rub your knees together and you can start a fire."

"Now you know lotion aint gonna get it. You need someum stroong, like vasoline, or motor oil. Nigga quick, cause yo shit look like it's about to peal open and bleed all on my Goodamm carpet," said Maurice.

"Fuck yall then," Robert said closing his eyes.
Maurice and Terry continued to play cards.
Daisy Schreiber

The Weapon's In My Hair

Dedicated to my lil'sista, Tiffany Renee, a Diva in the making... I love you Tiffany.
An annotated collection of poems (spoken words) from my work in progress to be entitled "MAGANDA" which means "beautiful" in my mother's native tongue of Tagalog.

A word to the reader,

I have been told that my use of "black english", my employment of "truth" images relating to my experiences, and even my bold vocal delivery on the mic, isolates my audience. They tell me that my language and tone bother white audiences. They tell me my work will not sell. My response is a resounding, indignant, "OH WELL THEN!!"

My responsibility is not to make an audience be "comfortable" with what I have to say. What I care about is that my people hear me. What I care about is that I reach a sista or brothah. What I care about is someone out there feelin' me. My responsibility as a black woman writer is to the black community, the black audience. My duty is to be a voice, a teacher, a pro-activist. This means I must express myself from a BLACK perspective, the WOMAN's experience, using HARD BLACK WORDS, seeing BEAUTIFUL BLACK images of our tears, laughs, blood and guts. If I were to instead use comfortable words, and happy meadow type images that lie about my truth, I would be failing in my duties to my people, and thus letting my Daddy and Mami down. Needless to say...I can't go out like that.

As you read my words I hope you find them manifesting within, I hope you appreciate my truth telling, I hope I manage to move another sista or brothah to pick up a pen, grab a mic, and continue the story...

Write on, write on!
Daisy Juana

PS. I wanna give a shout out to Michelle "Bootleg" Watts for spearheading the publication of this first edition, which is a landmark moment in our Black Student Union history...YOU GO GIRL!!!
The Yellow One

Spewed from the bowels
Of Mt. Pinatubo
She is the ash, which rides
The billows of air that
Touches all in one way or another
Born of the enriched BLACK
Rock and earth, Spanish
Red like flowing lava is she,
And still the silent grace
Of steam when met with
The seas of the Orient

She is born from the sweat
And dreams of a peasant in
Rice patties and carries the
Passion and longing for justice seen in the
Eyes of the ancient Negrito
Like others she once hid behind
Comfort and ignorance
Yet the gleam in her eyes
Roared like the mountain
Cougars in the nights

Shipped to a new world as if
She were an economic commodity
She lived in a department store
Window as a high yella
Plastic mannequin, allowing
Others to dress her in
Their name brands never asking
What fabric most soothed her skin
Fo In Da Morning

Hmm, how I love to hear
Sweet jazz at fo
In da morning
Ain’t nuttin’ as sexy
As a snazzy sax
Slidin’ up into my
Dizzying grooves
Coltraine’ll put ya at
An ease as if his
Intent was solely to please
’n Ellington,
Ellington says thru
His syncopated notes
That he wholly understands
My needs
’n da thump of a bass
Helps my heart find the
Night rhythm to match
Yours, it gives my whole
Anatomy a purpose
A purpose to move with yours.
Hmm, how I love to feel
sweet jazz at fo
in da morning.
Gossip – The Shit We Love to Hear

What?!
Oh no you didn’t
Exxxcuse me?
What’d ya say?
Girl, no she didn’t!
Mmm...hmmm...she did.
You feel me?
You know he did.
Dig this yo!
What’s da dilly yo?!
Oooo girl!
Brotha was finnne!
Aww, peep this shit...
Lemme give a shout out...
He was creepin’...
D’ you see dat?
What up yo!
Are you down?
Can I be down?
Yo, I heard he go down!
Fo’ real?
A huh!
Bet,
Naw bet.
Awww Shiiiit!
Hell ya.
Keep it real yo!
You know?!
Gossip...
The shit you love to hear
Don’t front,
ya know you do.
A Walk through Our Ghetto Kingdom

I wanda if ya rememba
Da lush of my creamy skin
While I’m thinkin a da places
On my body dat yo hands have been

I’m wondarin’ if dats da
Sole reason ya came back ‘round

I wonda if you’re ready
Ta know da woman I’ve become
I rememba da day dat
The luvin’ ‘tween is begun
I’m just hopin’ you’re ready
Ta luv me wit da warmth
Of a settin’ sun

Togetha, we can brave da
Abyss of wonda
Like we did those cold
Dark nights in our ghetto kingdom
Baby, I know ya rememba

Back in da day when
You was my king and I was your queen
And yo massive black shoulders
Were da ones I chose to lean upon

Ponderin’
I rememba when ya walked
Da dunes of our ghetto dessert
And I danced in yo shadows
Not even thinkin’ dat I too
Was allowed ta bask in da light

But when ya disappeared
Over da crest of da dune
Da shine of second hand
Light hit me from da moon
And dat light was love
And I grew in da light of love
Grew into somethin you once knew

You see, Baby,
I am a Black woman
Born anew.
The Weapon's In My Hair

I get walked over like
an oriental rug in your
brownstone apartment
now that you’ve gone and
received your BA, MA, PhD
so now you’re the Big
Money Man’s Golden taken
well whoop-ta-doo for me

I can capture you with my
innocent smile
so you better look out
for me, I’m going that extra mile

You think you can
play me like a skippin 8 track?
better look out for
the whip in my long tresses
slippin your face with
a smack!

He never blessed me
wit my sista’s
kinky krown
I usta cry over
my dangling
auburn brown
ropes
with my knees fallen
to the ground
till he came along and tilted my chin
to his heaven of hopes
that’s when I began
coming around

He tucked the silky brown
cloak which covered
my face behind my ear
To lean in close
and tell me the purpose
in placing my hurting soul here

He revealed to me
stories of brown skinned
queens kidnapped
handicapped

• Black Rage  26 •
and drowned
of their babies
and husbands stolen
from them
while their ankles were bound

He made my heart
cry for mercy with
revelations of my ancestry
being murdered by a
personified white deity

He allowed my brown
watered eyes witness
the annihilation of
a people, my people
their souls being
impaled on the
white Christians’
so-called civilizing
soul saving
church steeple

For a decade now I’ve cried
tears of pain for all oppressed souls
for a decade now I’ve cried
tears of pain for my own soul

The institution has finally dried me of all my H₂O
he stands behind me
as I embark on this
battle of knowledge
Ooo, ya’ll just don’t know...

You’re comin’ up against
a warrior queen
and her Black Student Union keen
never before seen
survival machines

Yea that is right
you thought I was on your side
cuz I look like your sidekick
Makiko Barbie.
But all this time you neva knew
that I was cultivated on the
wise Brotha
DuBois
Garvey X, and Rev. Dr. King too!

I’ve been suckin on black breasts for whole MILK
cuz I don’t care ‘bout watchin’ for calories
shoo – my man loves my thick thighs wrapped around him as we tumble in sheets of SILK

Oh yea get ready to thump your body to my full force of thunda all this time you been questionin’ if I’d be able to overcome, well now you ain’t gotta wonda!

The strategy’s called infiltration for affirmation hear my people softly chant in the air Infiltration for Affirmation is in the air the Lord told me The weapon’s in my hair.
Elizabeth Siwo  
Kilimanjaro

Praise the Lord everybody! God is good...all the time. All the time...God is good. First, giving all honor and glory to Jesus Christ, who is truly the head of my life. He is great and powerful, glorious, splendid, and majestic. He rules everything by His strength and power, and He is able to make anyone great and strong. He is the peace that passes all understanding.

Dedication of first poem: Special Stars and Stripes. You are saluted for shining brighter than others and for being level-minded. Especially with Petua. Wiyi duong, but nonetheless, aheri ahinya. KFC. gi OHK2C.

Dedication of second poem: Waji and Maji. We each are an heiress to a splendid throne.

Teripé Dahn Ni-ya Skipé

Never before has one heard of such a being.
Original in all its essence.
It seemed wild at first, yet inviting to say the least.
It offered a haven, rather a heaven for one desiring those that one desires and needing those that one needs.

This dark chocolate silhouette.
Tempting. Delightful.
Queen of the Nile. Goddess of the flowing rainforest.
Woman of the people.
Strong as the peak of Kilimanjaro.
Peaceful as Lake Victoria.
Powerful, yet graceful. Seductive, yet angelic.
The epitome of that which is beautiful.

Observing this from a distance, thou requested to share thine treasure with the other side. Armed only with the natural.

This caramel figure.
Tantalizing. Appetizing.
King of the Amazon. Prince of the milky snow.
Words as deep as the night.
Potent as Lake Superior.
The conqueror; strong as an ox on a hill.
The plethora of goods combined with the package of desire.
Impatient, prepared, anxious.

Thou danced thy way to the city, only to be stopped at the gate.
Because of the omnipotent one—the one who is no respector of persons—thou was denied entrance.
This to retreat.
Only to walk-
The walk-
of Shame.
Teripé ... Dahn ni-ya skipé.
Desert

To those of the desert...hold on

For your reign is coming

And when it does

You will be glad

That you

Waited
RUT

Only time will bring the rains that will break down the high walls and wash away the mud of the rut I am stuck in. When I am covered in mud I don't realize what it is to be clean - until I get out and only then do I truly appreciate it.

Anna Spain
RUINS, but not for me

You built a great castle for me

But I refuse to live in the ruins

However small, I choose to live in a new house

Than to remain in misery among shambles of luxury

Anna Spain
Ancestral Winds

They have spoken I hear them
They have called my name
My path they have set before me
It is through me that they make their fame

They ride on the wind
Coming going with ease
Time is their only enemy
Everything else they please

I am the prodigal one
Called and created by name
To be their prophet their vessel
It is my soul they claim

And though the past has tired me
And the future brings me fear
Leaving my vision blurry
My purpose very unclear

I have faith and hope
Because I feel them near
I touch them through the wind
And they tell me my place is here

And so I tell to you
The vision that unfolded to me
Fear inside the wind
For the ones to set you free

Anna Spain
Untitled

Around it is
Darkness, light, emotion, void
Sound it is
Vibration, rhythm, cycle, life
Found it is
Vessel of every heart
Mound it is
Rising falling with the tide
Hound it is
Searching, smelling for fear
Bound it is
To capture and free escape one does not dare
Ground it is
The connection to every thing
Wound it is
To all ifs in life
Around it is
If is time

Anna Spain
Untitled

As you walk alone
In your world of solitude
With your thoughts and
Your solid leather case
Filled with notes and gum wrappers
Do you recognize that I am not
The blunt and opinionated child
Who contradicts her intellect with her passion
And hiccups loudly in your class.
Just the concupiscent woman whose
Skin lies moist, open and tight,
Smelling of nivea and every ambrosiatic
Dream you never wanted to wake up from.

Briana McNeil
Space

for Carmelo

I kissed Carmelo today full on the lips
A Latino can invade your space.
Unlike the musty man
with baloney breath and brute
on airplanes;
Carmelo is not oppressive, American

We talk Carmelo and I
Inches away from each other
I see his pores breathing
We are alive
Our Caribbean vibes are
Dancing a wild merengue

I love Latino ways

Briana McNeil
Don't

If your eyes look into mine
And you see something that scares you
Don't look away.
Don't condemn my eyes
If they choose to show you blues,
My clenched hands, gritting teeth and salty attitude.
Don't disapprove my smacking lips.
My ugly words you cannot use
Don't cast me off as one of you
I'm not your kind, I cannot loose.

Briana McNeil
Abuelo Rolando

again i wake up with sounds of
ambulances, car alarms, feet running
from gun shots, yells of frustration
and whisper of despair
but today will be different, today

abuelo Rolando will comfort me

on the streets i hear happy music
coming from apartment windows and
horns of the taxis combine to make
a harmony named chaos
a melody that flows through the air
putting everything in motion

abuelo rolando will sing to me

the men of the corners
yearning for respect and love
say to me, “oye mi niña...”
i answer “i ain’t your baby,” with rolling
eyes, denying them what they need

abuelo rolando will care for me

soon i get away far away
from the sounds,
music and voices
i reach the smell of sweet tobacco
and the atmosphere of wisdom
and antiques that tickle my nose

abuelo rolando invites me

he looks at my tired eyes
and knows the emotions that run
through me
“are the skies sweet today?”
he asks with a debonair tone
i answer
“they are as bitter as
they have been everyday”
angrily wanting an instant
relief from my worries
abuelo rolando makes it better
his remedy isn’t ill tasting or

Black Rage
painful but entails a story of strength hope and faith
a story not of my day or hour
but a story of old that i don’t understand when i leave but
while i walk the streets of frustration and music
and whispers of despair

abuelo rolando will help me see

even after he left me alone with my own contemplation about my barrio i didn’t understand until i woke up with sounds of laughter over frustration open fire hydrants with wet feet smell of sweet tobacco and sight of sweet skies

abuelo rolando is still with me

Naima Cozier
Rene's Resistance: a ghetto poem

hey you
yeah you
mr. smooth talking wannabe pimp trick
yeah you
the one who says i'm your only
who you trying to fool
trying to add your lists slowly
yeah you
the one who's intentions as sweet as a lime
then you try to act sincere
as you play with my emotions and mind
yeah you
the brother who thinks he has the best look
believing you're better than the rest
baby do yourself a favor pick up a book
yeah you
the one who tries to get me in bed with a simple please
i know your kind
when i say no you call me a bitch and a tease
yeah you
the one who thinks he can get my attention
with your fancy car and fly gold
your one year old daughter was never mentioned
yeah you
the one who says with cunning words
i'm lonely and in need
but that's not what i've heard
look here
mr. sweet talking wannabe mack skeeser
i'm no...
what? ... what's that you say...
you want my number... oh word
by the way my name is rene

Naima Cozier
I Look Upon the World

If I look upon the world only with my eyes,
I see nothing.
If I look solely with my heart,
I see only what I want to see.
But if I look upon the world with both
My heart and my eyes as one
I can see things as they really are
And how I believe they should be.

If I look upon the world solely with my eyes,
I see concrete, the obvious
But lack substance.
If I look only with my heart,
I see purpose and meaning
But nothing tangible.
Yet, if I look upon the world with both
My eyes and my heart as one
I see what is real
I seek the truth
I can visualize the possibilities.

Gia Hamilton
Ebony

Those Ebony eyes can tell you sweet lies
those curves, those hips, those sexy lips,
she's strong, she's solid as a rock
raped and beaten
spit at and mocked
stands by her man with caring eyes
mourning for him when her man dies
don't want no blond hair
or
blue or green eyes
just give me those sweet Ebony eyes
raises her children with love and pride
teaches them to have something deep inside
she's a teacher, a preacher, a lover, a wife
she sets examples within her own life
great Ebony woman I cherish and praise
intelligent in her thinking,
graceful in her ways
she's good for more than lying on her back
she's an all around woman
not a thing she lacks
she's a very fine woman as you can see
She's Black
She's Proud
She's Ebony.

Gia Hamilton
What gets you up? — in the morning.
What makes you tick?
I know it ain’t no alarm clock
or even the job or school you got to go to
it especially ain’t the glares you receive when you
walk down the streets as women clutch their purses.
Is it the glorious birds or the flowers
or all that shit Robert Burns gets out of bed for?

What lays your head on that pillow at night?
What makes you lie fast asleep on that hard mattress?
What makes you dream?
Or do you even do that anymore?
I know it ain’t the satisfaction of a good steady job
or even an interested teacher who cares.
It ain’t even watching the TV
and hearing how another brother took the law into his
hands.
It can’t be the isolation of being here
but not really
no, not really being acknowledged
as a man, as a person, as an American
you don’t have to tell me nothing
I know it ain’t America the Great.

I tell ya one thing.
the only thing that gets me out of bed each day is
because God wants me to.
I don’t know why but He gives me motivation to live.

But ya know, I understand you
I know it’s easier to get up by being defeated by your day already
Don’t you think I understand that?
Don’t you think I go through that?
I know it’s easier not to care
than it is to give a damn
I know it’s so much easier to be resentful and hateful
than it is to be a problem solver.

But I have greatness
because of my very being,
A power, passed to me from God through my ancestors,
a power so beautiful that even when I am raped, beaten and
mocked both physically and today mentally, my beauty
shines ever through.
So when I am raped, my Black dominance shows
through.
when I am mocked my courage and pride is admired by
Him.
And when I am beaten mentally like Christ,
my pain is endured by
the Creator.
So I ask you my Black brother,
Who not what
gets you up in the morning
and gives you peace to rest at night?
Because it's not the What, the material things of this world
that may seem significant
but
the Who that will always uplift you.
Take note My brother:
The Who will always uplift you.

Gia Hamilton
The Black Unicorn

The black unicorn is greedy.
The black unicorn is impatient.
The black unicorn was mistaken
for a shadow
or symbol
and taken
through a cold country
where mist painted mockeries
of my fury.
It is not on her lap the horn rests
but deep in her moonpit
growing.

The black unicorn is restless
the black unicorn is unrelenting
the black unicorn is not free.

Audre Lorde
Expert?

after a lecture

Exaggerated fluctuations of arpeggios
escape the voice box of the long-haired
white man
standing before us
who claimed to be an authority
on the origins of
Black music

taking us back to Africa,
religion, he professed,
dictated music, chants,
episodes of possession,
and speaking in tongues
it heighted musical intensity
and was the goal of
all Africans

these same practices
still seen today in
southern Baptist churches
puzzled, but somehow amused
he shared a story of how
"some old lady in his church
was actually kooky enough to
engage in such routines"
Confessional

I stand outside
the bathroom door
peeking through the keyhole
legs squeezed tight, one
crossed over the other
until you let me in.

On the toilet,
elbows propped on knees,
you concentrated on your
bowel movement as
we talk of boys, coloring books,
and how on that night
we would sneak cookies and sandwiches
in our panties to our room
when grandmom was half-asleep.

The next morning
we woke to Mahalia Jackson,
the smell of scrapple,
and a house full of family members
hurrying to be on time
for our uncle’s funeral.
Elkins Park

I sat between my mother’s legs propped up by two cushions from the couch, arms dangling over ashy knees as she tightly cornrowed my hair.

My sister stood facing us at the end table melting gov’tment cheese onto stale bread with the iron for that night’s dinner.

We jumped when my drunken father stumbled through the front door. His denim shirt soaked in burgundy wine.
Gone

"Roberta, Roberta? Are you listenin' to me?" a raspy voice pierced the silence of the room.

"Yes, Nannah?"

"Bring me mah shampoo, fo I shrivel up in this tub?"

Roberta got up from the toilet seat, where she had been watchin' her grandmother bathe. At the sink, she reached for the shampoo on top of the medicine cabinet where her grandmother kept the soap, conditioner, and pill bottles. There were kidney pills, diabetes pills, diet pills, and of course, water pills. She never took them when she was supposed to. She was having a good day when she took them at all.

"Hurry now, your great Aunt Dot and your cousin Dap arc comin ova fa dinner. I don need mah own sista tellin me how dirty mah house is." Robert's grandmother, Nannah, was always trying to impress her distant family members. Last Christmas, when her brother Carl came from California, she made Roberta scrub all the floors of their small apartment. "Wash mah back, chile," she said.

Roberta handed the Strawberry Essence shampoo to her wrinkled grandmother and grabbed the rag from the side of the antique porcelain tub. Every morning at 6 o'clock she had to get up with her grandmother and help bathe her. Ever since Roberta's mother died, Nannah's health had slowly deteriorated.

"Your pappa's gonna be here soon. When I get out this tub I want you to clean your room." Nannah looked at Roberta, "You hear me, chile?"

"Yes, Nannah."

"You finished yet?" Nannah took a tissue from the bathtub try that covered the front part of the tub and coughed. Roberta could hear the mucus gurgling in her throat. "Not so hard, you tryin' to wash mah skin off?"

Roberta snickered, trying not to let out her impending laugh.

"Help me out this thing." She gripped the sides of the bathtub and lifted herself out of the tub. The veins in her hands had swelled up and risen to the surface of her skin. The two left the bathroom and headed to the bedroom.

Every time Roberta walked down the hall from the bathroom to her grandmother's room she looked at the picture with the two figures mounted on the poorly painted white wall. She could never tell who the figures were.

"Hurry, chile, you workin' mah nerve," Nannah said as she reached behind Roberta and pulled her along with her arm.

"Nannah?"

"Huh, chile?"

"Who dat in that pictcha there?" Roberta pointed to the picture on the wall.

"Oh, that's you and your mamma, when you was wee lil thing. Your pappa took it."

"Why pappa neva home?"

"You know he works, chile. He'll be home lata, you can ask him then."

"You always say that Nannah, but he neva comes home," Roberta mumbled. As the two entered into the bedroom, Roberta walked to the bed and sat down on the edge of it. Nannah hobbled across the wooden floor to the phonograph, slipped a record from its cover, and placed the needle on the first song.

"Is that Billie, Nannah?"

"Mamma may have, ya pappa may have, God bless tha chile that's got his own," Nannah sang along with the scratchy record. "Yes, 'Berta, that's Ms. Holiday awright." Nannah walked
over to her vanity and sat down facing the mirror. "Chile, come ova heah and brush mah hair for me," she ordered.

"Yes, Nannah." Roberta slid off the edge of the bed and slowly walked over to her grandmother.

"Here," Nannah handed her the brush. "Ooh, chile, your hair is getting long. You been usin that grease I bought you?" she said looking at Roberta through the mirror.

"Yea," Roberta replied with a big smile on her face. As she ran the brush through Nannah's thick hair, she was puzzled by the big clumps of it that collected in the bristles.

"It's yes, chile," Nannah sighed.

"Yes," Roberta whispered.

Nannah leaned forward and started coughing hard, "Berta, run ova there and get me a Kleenex."

Roberta walked over to the nightstand next to the bed and grabbed a tissue from the almost empty Kleenex box that rested on top of the lace tablecloth. "Here, Nannah," she said placing the tissue in her grandmother's trembling hand. "Nannah, you awright?"

"I'm fine, chile. Jes a lil cold is all." Nannah wadded the bloody tissue up and put it on the pile of other blood-stained tissues that sat next to the jewelry box.

"When's pappa comin home?"

"Soon, 'Berta, soon."
For Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Sisters of the Vernacular

wat wes gon’ do wid a Madhibuti mind set?
wat wes gon’ do wid a mind?
wat wes gon’ do wid a mind
set,
it ata be dat paradim’ ov dat good lookin bitch from crooklyn beta hav’ m’pot
cookin’,
just good fo nukin’ cuz
bes place to hid somein from me is ina bookn.
which leads to set minds ov
us who let white supremacy be immortalities,
wes bes gon’ read willie lynch cuz
imagery wes internalize wes utilize and da negativity wes memorize,
leads to a mind set ov set minds ov
if yous white yous ata sight
if yous a (blk/wht) man hat damn
    hot damn my man!
if yous a blk woman yous bes’ git bookin’, no need to be lookin’, all jobs
is tookin cuz,
yous just good fo nukin’.

Babila Lima
Not A Complaint

I made love to you in my mind
Last night,
And I didn’t want to think about
The reality in the middle.

I cannot escape these
Dream-forged memories,
I’m forced to walk straight
Down a crooked line path.
The distorted glass of my mind’s eye
Would rather serve selfishness
Than be my moral guide

Overcome by the sounds of its own making,
I create symmetry with myself.

Tomar Brown
Listen Up!

Excuse me, but we are tired of being overlooked, mistreated, misrepresented and misunderstood!
Pardon me, but for your information, we are human.
God created us also, but with a little more spice.

Let me tell you something and feel free to pass it on.
We are women and men, let me make it plain, you seem perplexed.
Women like myself have bodies of all shapes and sizes and our skin is silky soft to the touch.
Our men, when afforded the chance, are the best dads, providers, and protectors a woman could ask for.
Their bodies are to die for, and even your kind desire them.
Our smile can brighten the darkest day!

We too have feelings.
The capacity to love & the need to be loved is not rare to us.
When we hurt, we sometimes cry! When afraid, we usually attack.
The knowledge we possess about our heritage will be passed onto future generations.

You must understand if we were cut, our blood, much to your disbelief, is neither green nor purple, but the same color as yours.
Excuse me, but you seem to forget that we are survivors.
Pardon me, but when we join together, free from your plots, to confuse and divide us, we will be a force to be reckoned with.

Your efforts are failing.
We are here for the duration.
So, I suggest you deal with it!

Anonymous
Destiny

Who is to say what we can and can’t be
whose lives we will touch, what dreams we can see
if we all are to achieve or reach for the sky
we can’t just sit idle or let our lives pass us by
we must stand up tall and out of our mouths confess
what destinies we are to possess.

Now is the time we can waste no more
or dwell on our failures as we once did before
Each day is a blessing that we won’t see again
where human lives fade out, like fashion or trend
not one of us has an answer nor an educated guess
of why people don’t care to see their destinies manifest.

There are many aspects of life that we won’t understand
we just try to ignore them; put our heads in the sand.
But each one will replay like an unforgettable band
the tunes that remind us of the Purpose of Man.
There is a word out there that is our common bond
we must grasp it now before it is gone:

DESTINY

Yaida Ford
Contributors

Ceara Flake  Sophomore from Memphis, Tennessee
  English/Black Studies double major
  Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated
  Honors Department, co-editor of *Black Rage*

Chris Thomas  Sophomore from Columbus, Ohio
  English major, Cinema minor

Daisy Schrieber  Junior from Columbus, Ohio
  Black Studies major, Studio Art minor
  Member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Incorporated
  Black Student Union Minister of Affairs

Elizabeth Siwo  Sophomore from Kendu Bay, Kenya, moved to Wilberforce, Ohio
  Chemistry/Pre-Medicine double major

Anna Spain  Senior from Granville, Ohio

Briana McNeil  Senior from Aurora, Colorado

Naima Cozier  Former Denison University student (transferred in 1996)

Gia Hamilton  Former Denison University student (transferred in 1996)

Michelle Watts  Senior from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
  English Writing major
  Black Student Union Historian
  Editor and founder of *Black Rage*

Babila Lima  Freshman from Baltimore, Maryland

Tomar Brown  Sophomore from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Yaida Ford  Freshman from Vancouver, Washington