

JPAS: Dedicated to Dingane, Jose Goncalves

We humbly dedicate this poetry issue of the *Journal of Pan African Studies* (JPAS) to the Honorable Jose Goncalves, publisher and editor of the *Journal of Black Poetry* (JBP), the poetic Bible of the 60s Black Liberation/Black Arts Movement. No other journal in the history of American literature published so many poets. No other journal was more eclectic and democratic in its editorial policy. We thank Rudolph Lewis (a virtual reincarnation of Goncalves in his dedication to black literature in the electronic age) for compiling this summary of the work of Dingane and the *Journal of Black Poetry*. One day soon we plan to honor Dingane with a Journal of Black Poetry Festival.

FYI, some years before she made her transition to the ancestors, I gave poet-critic Sherley A. Williams (see her in the photo below) a collection of the *Journal of Black Poetry* and asked her to do an anthology. I did not hear from my childhood friend on the anthology, but Dingane informed me that she completed it and submitted it to him, everything except an introduction, so he is working on publishing Sherley's anthology (peace be upon her).



Finally, we honor Dingane because of his hard work, almost single handedly publishing and editing the JBP. It is the testament of what one person can do to ignite a prairie fire.

Yes, five hundred poets were heard through the journal, but just know one man often struggled alone through the night, sometimes neglecting family to get the word out, to advance the cultural revolution. Let the *JBP* be the model for today's generation of cultural workers. Let our work be democratic, not subject

to culture police who would silence some voices they consider not politically correct. In the tradition of Vudun, let all the gods represent, let us all dance to the rhythms of the drum.

Marvin X, Guest Editor
(Associate Guest Editors, Ramal Lamar, and Ptah Allah El)

The Poets



We are supremely honored to have the privilege to assemble this collection of poets from throughout Pan Africa and the Afro-Asian-Indigenous world. We are simply elated to present a variety of poetic expressions from North American Africans of every region. We think the reader shall find what Diop called the Cultural Unity of Africa, a kind of basic mythological order in the deep structure of the poems, expressing the eternal unity of a people, no matter their post traumatic slavery stress syndrome. We see the ancestors, the gods, the living and yet unborn are represented widely by poets from Africa, the Caribbean or America, suggesting the long held notion that African survivals are alive and well, not only in the mythology but psycholinguistics as well.

Concerns include the necessity of calling upon the ancestors and gods, the election of Obama, the continued contradictions of the democratic society in America and the emerging democracies in Africa. Ancestor Emmitt Till is called upon by several poets, including Al Young, Opal Palmer Adisa and others. Shaggy Flores mentioned Till and other tragic heroes of our liberation struggle.

Marvin X and Kalamu Ya Salaam mention the sheroe Dessie X. Woods or Rashidah Muhammad, the valiant woman who killed her rapist in the south, emancipated from prison; she went north and lived an activist life until her transition. The people of Oakland honored her with a street naming.

In dedicating this issue to the Journal of Black Poetry, we were conscious of Dingane's effort to make poetry a tool of communication for liberation. The general theme is Pan Africanism, but we wanted to continue his concept letting a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend, in the words of Mao. The reader will see this in the poetry and in the dialogue on the poetic mission, including Haki Madhubuti's statement.

We think the poets represent an inter-generational collection, although we invited hip hop poets and spoken word artists to represent themselves. We certainly didn't want this issue to be a collection of senior citizen poetry. For sure, we think we have gathered together some of the very best writers in America and Pan Africa. The USA regional representation should be balanced enough to see regional and national concerns and rhythms.

We thank Itibari M. Zulu, Senior Editor of the Journal of Pan African Studies for allowing us to edit this issue. It is indeed a labor of love. We also thank all the poets who answered our call. Those who were rejected or who sent poems that may have gotten lost in traffic, please accept our apology but keep on keepin on.

Let us close with acknowledgment of persons who recruited poets for this issue, especially Louis Reyes Rivera, Bruce George, Gwendolyn Mitchell, Eugene Redmond, Muhammida El Muhajir and Tony Medina. Salaam to my associate guest editors, Ramal Lamar and Ptah Allah El. They gave me an oral reading of the material, helped make selections and helped keep me focused on Pan Africanism as the general theme, since they are the next generation of Pan African scholars and poets.

-- Marvin X

Shaggy Flores, New York City



Lucumi

for Freddie Moreno

Moreno
Let your legend
be told
around camp fires
Not through Chains
and Bullwhips
But through Areitos
and Tambor Sessions.
Last of the Bakongo
First of the
Bata Beating
Ashe Healing
Shaka Zulu
Ashanti
Dahomey
Warrior Princes
Moreno
you speak in fire
and move
in Clave rhythms.

El hijo
De Shango
Son of Loiza
Spirit of Boriquen
Afro-Taino
Citizen of the Commonwealth
Of Cubop
Tu memoria
Shall live
in the words
and deeds
of Conga Children.

Moreno
Let your nom de guerre
live beyond the darkness
of your Shadow
Let those who seek the light
find sleep
in between the comfort
of Symphony notes
and Berimbau assassinations.

Moreno
We know
and love you
because you represent
amor y paz
in an age of darkness
when things fall apart
and the world craves
the truth of our existence.

There is no tomorrow
Without the today
Because the Today
Is all some of us really have
So let us remember you,
Moreno

Nuestro Hermano
Nuestro Reflection
Nuestro destino
Nuestro amigo
Lo mejor
De Nuestro
Pueblo Latino
Pa'lante
Siempre, Pa'lante!
Moreno.

--_Shaggy Flores

Letter for Bobo

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Asked him
If he remembers
That the ghost of Chicago Bobo
Still swims
in the shallows
Of the Tallahatchie River
Not far
From the town of Money
Where the only Green
That exists
Is the Evil
That Men Do
On Delta Summer
Back Roads

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Marked it urgent
So that Dixiecrat Hands
Could make
Prompt response
To the actions
Of August 28, 1955
When Wolf Whistles
Sold more than Tickets
And Bryant's Grocery Market
Began to sell
2-cent Gum
Wrapped
With Grim Reaper
Death Cards

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Questioning
The hospitality of Sumner County
And its motto of prosperity
"A Good Place to Raise A Child"
Land
Of Strom Thurmond

Land
Of Sheriff Clarence Strider
Land
Of Jim Crow
Land
Of the Rope and Mob
Land
Of the Midnight Rides
And Southern
Pecan Tree Picnics

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Attached a copy
Of LOOK Magazine
And a picture
Of a 14 Year Old Corpse
In an open casket
Three Days
For the World to Witness
How a Swamp
Treats the mangled remains
Of Black youth
Wondered
If the names of Demons
Called Bryant and Milam
Still Haunt the Governor
And residents of Mississippi
In their sleep

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Gave him a list
Of his constituents
Told him that the following:
Will Moore
Reverend George Lee
Lamar Smith
Medgar Evers
And Raynard Johnson
Could no longer vote
Because they played
Poker with the Devil
And Drew Jokers
Dressed
As Separate but Equal
Executioners

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Requesting justice
For the family
Of Mamie Till Mobley
And Moses Wright
Provided an account
Of how a child
Carried his father's ring
To the grave
While a panel
Of Conservative Council Citizens
Took less
Then 67 seconds
To honor
Anglo-Saxon Pride
made it Possible
For two southern boys
To receive \$4000 payments

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Inserted a piece of Barb-Wire
And a Blade
from a Progressive Ginning Company Fan
Same as the one
That held Little Emmet
Down in the bowls
Of the Mighty Tallahatchie
Spoke of
Plessy V. Ferguson
And of Black Mondays
Imagined
That Poor Whites
Posing as Hunters
Rolled over in their graves
When Brown v. the Board of Education
Gave Negroes the right
To exist,
To breathe,
To live
In WHITE ONLY spaces

Sent a letter
To the governor of Mississippi today
Waited
67 Nights
For a response
That never came
Cried for 3 days
Prayed for the living
And honored the Dead
Wrote a poem
Ended with the words
When ALL is Quiet
When ALL is Still
In Mississippi
They still hear the screams
Of little
Emmet Till,
Rest in Peace
Emmet Till.

Negritude

For Pedro Pietri, Tato Laviera, Jesus Papoleto Melendez and Trinidad Sanchez Jr.

We be those Negroes
Born to Slave Hands
Resurrecting forgotten African Gods
When Transplanted to New Lands
Mixing Ebonics
With Splanglish Slang
We be those Negroes
Children of Yoruba y Ibo
Bilingual and Indio
Afro-Caribes
Masters of plantation work
Race mixing
And Orisha Spirit raising

We be those Negroes
Creating Jazz with cats
Named Bird, Dizzy, Duke, and Armstrong
Cubop Bugalu Sal-Soul Searching Journey men
Mongo-Santamaria/Chano Pozo Drum Gods
And Celia Cruz
AZUCAS!
Legends leaving our cultural footprints
On the muddy minds
of the mentally dead

We be those Negroes
Creating Schomburg museums
of Black Studies
In Nuyorican Harlem streets
Where we once dance
during zoot suits riots
to Conga
Maraca
Bata
Break beats
and Palladium Massacres

We be those Negroes
Drawn as Sambos and Jigaboos
By political cartoonist

Who couldn't erase
The taste of
Africa
From Antillean Culinary
Magicians
Creating miracles
with Curries call SoFritos

We be those Negroes
Younglords
Island Nationalist
Black Panthers
Vieques Activist
Santeros
And Guerreros
Brothers of Garvey
Children of Malcolm
Black Spades
Savage Skulls
Chingalings
And Latin Kings

We be those Negroes
Like Harvard Educated Lawyer
Don Pedro Albizu Campos
Stationed
In all Black regiments
Learning the reality
Of Jim Crow Society
And their gringolandia
Government Race public policies
Calling Bilingual Niggers
Spics

We be those Negroes
Before Sosa
Before Clemente
Before Jackie
Giving Negro league
Baseball legends
A place
Under the sun
to call home
When no one else
Would have them

We be those Negroes
Dancing
Moving
Breaking
Egyptian
Electric Boogalooing
Locking
On concrete jungles
To Cool Herc
Jamaican
Sound Boy Systems
And aerosol
symphony backgrounds

We be those Negroes
Charlie Chasing
Rock Steadying
A dream call Hip-Hop
In Bronx Backyard Boulevards
Between
Casitas and Tenements
With Roaches for Landlords

We be those Negroes
Writing Epics
Like Willie Perdomo testaments
Called “Nigger-Recan Blues”
And Victor Hernandez Cruz
Odes to “African Things”
Hiding our dark skinned
Literary Abuelitas
With Bombas Colora
In places where the Whiteness police
could never find them

We be those Negroes
Denied access to Black Nationalist run
Karenga Kwanza Poetry readings
Because we remind the ignorant
Of the complexity that is their culture
Neither Here nor There
Not quite Brown
Not quite White
We navigate uncharted
Waters
Of Black Identity Boxes

We be those Negroes
Mulatto
We be those Negroes
Criollo
We be those Negroes
Moreno
We be those Negroes
Trigueños
We be those Negroes
Octoroons and Quadroons
We be those Negroes
Cimarrones and Nanny of the Maroons
We be those Negroes
Cienfuegos y Fidel
We be those Negroes
Luis Pales Matos and Aime Cesaire
We be those Negroes
Puentes,
Mirandas,
Riveras,
Colons,
Felicianos,
Lavoés and
Palmieris
We be those Negroes
Judíos
Y a veces
Jodios
We be those Negroes
Dominicanos y Cubanos
We be those Negroes
Jaimiquinos y Haitianos
We be those Negroes
Panameños y Borinqueños

We be those Negroes
Seeking freedom from
Irrationality
In an age of Nuclear
Goya Families
And Television
Carbon Copy Clone
Univision/BET/MTV
Slave Children

We be those Negroes
Known by many names
And many deeds
Spoken of in Secret
By African-American
Scholars
In envy during their nightly
Salsa
Dance classes
As they try
To pick up White Girls

We be those Negroes
Caribbean
Negritude
Heroes
Sometimes negating our destiny
But always finding
Peace
In the Darkness
Of Sleep

We be those Negroes
Negroes
We
Be

--Shaggy Flores
Nuyorican Massarican Poeta