

# GUYANA FOLK

*And Culture*

SHE REAFFIRMED  
THE HERITAGE OF  
THE STRONG  
GUYANESE WOMAN  
AND INSPIRED A  
GENERATION

GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBER

**MURIEL  
GLASGOW**

HUMANITARIAN, DESIGNER, IDEA GENERATOR

## IN THIS ISSUE

- PAGE 3-11: - Tributes to Muriel Glasgow  
 PAGE 12-13:- Cecile Nobrega  
 PAGE 14-15: Harvest Sunday  
 PAGE 16-17: Vibert Cambridge honored  
 PAGE 18-23: The work of Carl Hazlewood  
 PAGE 24-25: "Coolie Woman"  
 PAGE 26-27: Know Thyself  
 PAGE 28-29: Annai Music & Arts Festival  
 PAGE 30-31: Buxton Diwali  
 PAGE 32-33: Kojo Nnamdi  
 PAGE 34-35: A Bouquet for Sparrow

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our comprehensive on-line monthly magazine. It is our hope to continue in our efforts to document, record and circulate important information to our patrons, keeping you abreast with our agenda and a calendar of upcoming events and timely information.

Daylight Saving Time – At 2 a.m. on Sunday, November 3rd most of the United States turned back the clock one hour. For those who didn't get enough sleep, you missed a chance to catch a little extra shut-eye. Technology is so advanced these days that a good percentage of our devices such as our cellular phones, computers and television networks adjust automatically with the exception of our watches, stoves, microwaves and perhaps our cars.

As 2013 slowly ebbs away, the Board members of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York met to decide on the theme for 2014. After some serious collaboration and earnest deliberations with the dire need for unity, it was unanimously agreed that our theme will be "We Bridging." This would be spelt as "We Bridgin" without the last (g), truly representing the Guyanese vernacular. These two simple words, encompass quite a lot and is meant to pointedly convey a message of unity and collaboration, namely :- Bridging the gap of all ethnic groups regardless of race, color, culture or creed, unification of purpose, promoting cross cultural connections, encouraging oneness, mergers, and inclusiveness of purpose, reaffirming the commitment to solidifying and embracing our collective cultural heritage, uniting classes of people, political ideologies and at the same time promoting harmony and togetherness.

There are two special holidays in the month of November, Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving Day. On Veteran's day, we honor members of the United States Armed Forces who served and fought valiantly to protect us, to keep the country safe, and to preserve our way of life, risking their lives and making that ultimate sacrifice. Originally called Armistice Day, it was first celebrated in 1921. In 1954, President Eisenhower changed the name to Veteran's Day, in honor of those who served and died in all wars.

Passionately tucked between two widely recognized US holidays, Halloween and Christmas respectively, Thanksgiving provides another opportunity for family gatherings and sumptuous appetizing meals. It is a day of some significance, particularly in the busy lives of its celebrants. It's also time for us to give thanks to our God, for the things He has bestowed upon us, our dear land of Guyana and upon other nations worldwide.

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated between the Pilgrims and the Indians in 1621. The fall harvest was time for celebration. It was also a time of prayer, thanking God for a good crop. Today, American Thanksgiving traditions revolve around a huge and lavish meal, usually with Turkey as the centerpiece. Most of us enjoy Turkey with "all the trimmings". Complementing the American tradition, are the recipes of our indigenous Caribbean and Guyanese foods equivalent to what we know as "Harvest Celebrations."

This lovely, peaceful thanksgiving day is tremendously unique to so many of us, because it is a time when we share the spirit of togetherness with those for whom we care and love dearly, reflecting on the accomplishments, successes, changes in our lives; as well as the struggles and shortcomings as we sincerely express our gratitude.

Let us pause to remember the families of the Jonestown insane Massacre in the hinterland of Guyana which shocked the world on November 18, 1978, 35 years ago, where over 900 people were murdered, a third of which were children.

Where there is life there is death. Let us also remember our dear board member Muriel Glasgow, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and her Prize motivation: "The non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to fully participate in peace-building work", who recently transitioned. Her life, her accomplishments, her dedication to GCA and the priceless contribution she left behind will be remembered.

For the past years GCA has continuously provided a stage through the arts, folklore, music, dance and literary discourse to entertain, reminisce and articulate possible solutions to social problems and differences. The approach of our cultural organization is not only entertaining, but also interactive and inclusive. In this issue, we present a variety of articles including a solemn tribute to the ailing calypso king of the world The Mighty Sparrow as eloquently expressed by Dave Martins of the Tradewinds' fame: we wish him a speedy recovery. The release of the first section of the White Paper report on the recently concluded GCA Symposium entitled "Who We Are?" The symposium, examined contemporary ideas of the cultural similarities, common experiences, and traditions of solidarity, friendships and disparity that have developed in Guyana, addressing the consequences of ethnic divisions and possible solutions; Rebuilding after hurricane sandy; Harvest Sunday; and many other interesting events.

Congratulations GCA of New York for the marvelous and inspiring team work in sustaining our cultural traditions throughout 2013, and a special thanks to all sponsors, advertisers et al, for their support and enthusiasm which made our season a tremendous success.

Please feel free to visit our website at [www.guyfolkfest.org](http://www.guyfolkfest.org).

Enjoy, Ta Taa



## *Muriel*

*Muriel's sense of style was legendary. And this sense of style and elegance contributed to GCA's ongoing quest to be tasteful in all aspects of work.*

## THE GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC. WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER MURIEL WITH DEEP LOVE AND RESPECT.

*Vibert Cambridge*

**M**uriel Glasgow has always been admired for her confidence, charm, sophistication, style, and intellect. She was inspirational! She was one of those young women in late-colonial British Guiana who demonstrated by academic achievement and visions that nobody or anything was going to keep them down. In so doing, she reaffirmed the heritage of the strong Guyanese woman and inspired a generation.

Muriel's academic life took her to New York University, Columbia University, and Universite de Besancon, France. Her professional life was primarily with the United Nations and this took her around the world. She was a public health expert, specializing in hygiene, water, and sanitation. Her academic and professional life took her close to human suffering and stressed the importance of science and participatory communication. She was committed to giving voice to the voiceless.

For the past 12 years, Muriel shared this body of knowledge and experience with the Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. As a member of the Board she was active in the launching of the symposium series and the promotion of STEM education in GCA's summer camps for Guyanese and other Caribbean children in New York. By her example, as a pioneer in the use of social media, she encouraged GCA to develop and maintain contemporary communication platforms. Muriel's experience in Africa gave her an opportunity to debunk the myriad negative stereotypes associated with the continent and its peoples at home and abroad. She brought this knowledge to GCA and this contributed to our ongoing efforts to preserve, promote, and propagate Guyana's rich, multi-ethnic heritage.

Muriel's sense of style was legendary. And this sense of style and elegance contributed to GCA's ongoing quest to be tasteful in all aspects of work. We in GCA had the good fortune to see Muriel the "ideas generator" at work. She was not a top-down leader—she sought to empower and was committed to sustainability.

The Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. will always remember Muriel with deep love and respect. We will always remember her generosity, sophistication, style, and dedication.

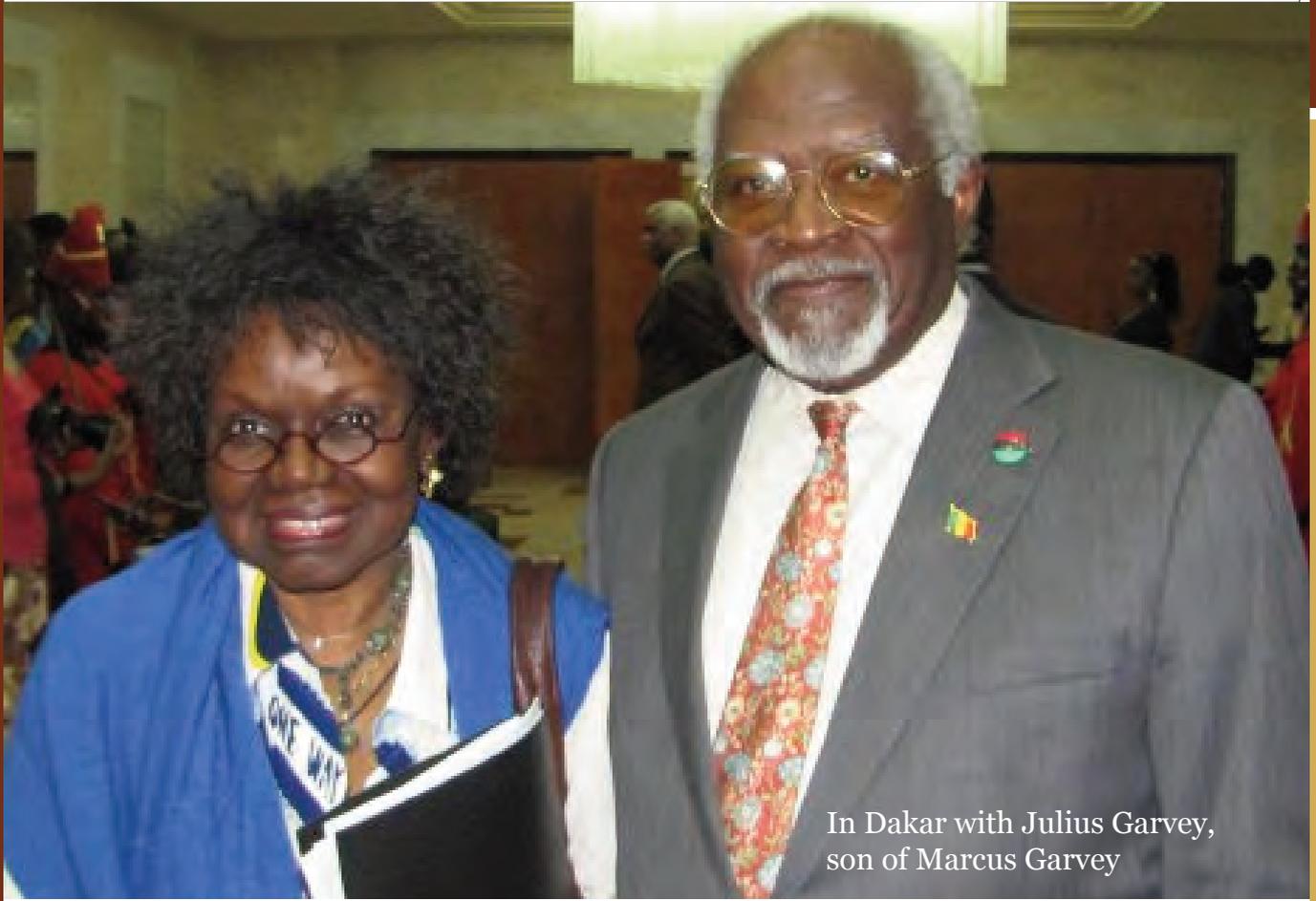
We will always love you, Muriel.

We extend our condolences to her spouse, her son and his wife Gregory and Shoko, and her relatives.

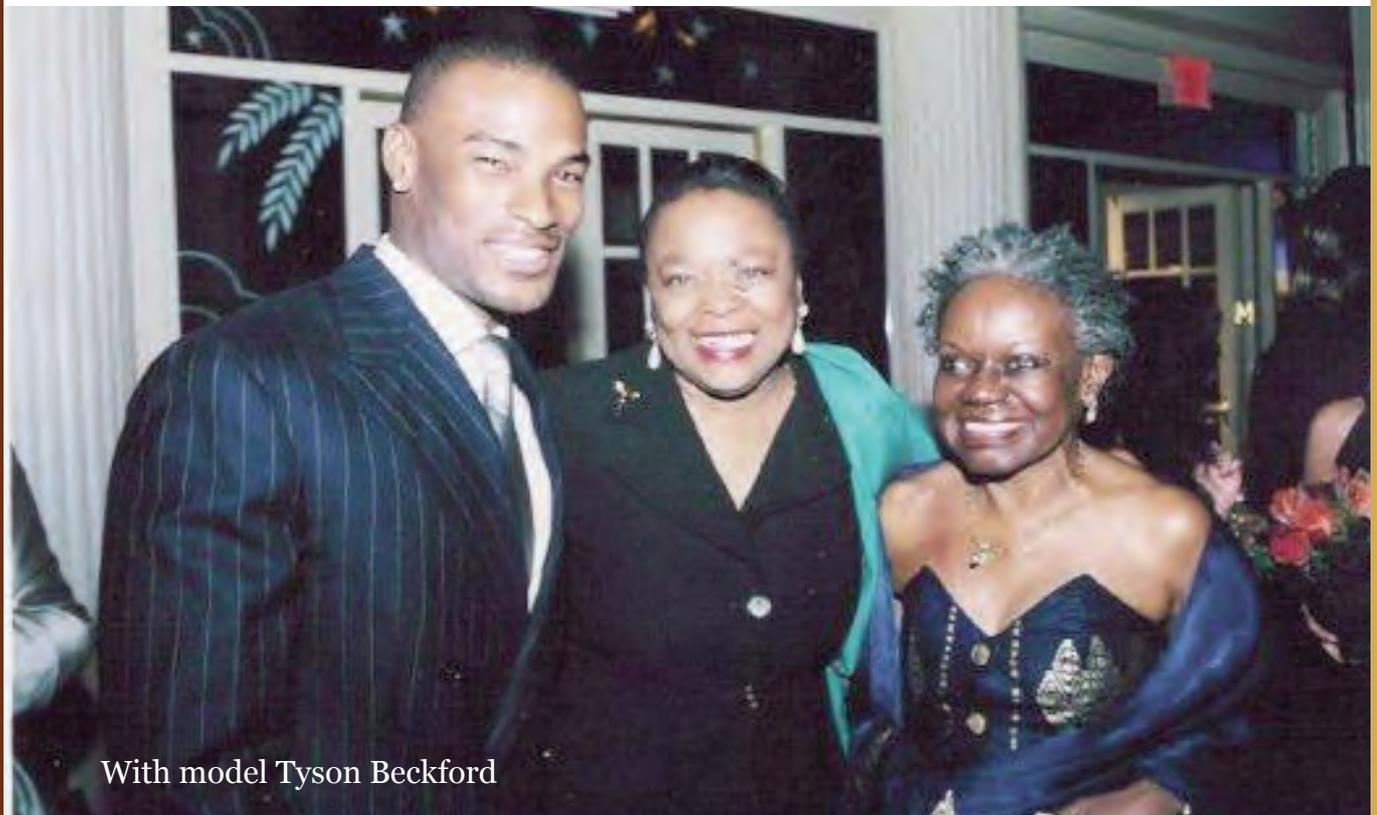


*Muriel*

SHE WAS COMMITTED TO GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS



In Dakar with Julius Garvey, son of Marcus Garvey



With model Tyson Beckford

## MURIEL ENCOURAGED THE DREAMS OF THE YOUNG CAMPERS BY SEEKING OUT AND PROVIDING EACH CHILD THE MAP TO REALIZING THAT DREAM

*Juliet Emanuel*

**M**uriel Glasgow's involvement with the initiative for children and teenagers run by GCA during July and August caught fire in 2011. It was during the Award Ceremony that, captivated by the contributions of the summer participants for that year to the program, she approached me about a program for children six years and under.

Each of the Board Members of GCA has his or her own preferences. Muriel was soon introduced to the interrelated strands of the Summer Program. She discovered quickly that the curriculum provided a solid foundation and an experience since 2008 on which she could build a definitive STEM module. She chose Science. In particular, she concentrated on the environment in its broadest sense. She was so fascinated by the confluence of her own experience in the field of sanitation and varying expressions of human flexibility that, in typical Muriel fashion, she wholeheartedly entered into the discourse on the feasibility of bringing STEM to the camp. This became her preference.

Never one to slight the experience of others, she listened to accounts to what had been done before and researched the best way to bring her ideas to the summer institute. Anyone following the GCA online magazine would have seen, among her other written explorations, her essay on kite flying. The kite is used in the camp to explore aspects of physics, math, basic construction and so on. After one famous lesson in 2012 when the kites did not "raise," serious discussions concerned aerodynamics. So Muriel walked into this lively interrogation of an aspect of science via fun. Of course, wind, rain, tsunamis and other weather patterns underpinned the lessons. Anyone visiting the camp would have seen among other posters the one declaring, "Science Matters." Muriel was ecstatic.



For a year she had worked on the Science module. While other volunteer instructors, such as, Mr. Roy Brummell and Ms. Donna Walcott, finessed the math, the kite, the play dough, the cooking, art using the barks, etc., of trees (all STEM), Muriel arrived at camp ready to introduce the children and teenagers to the possibilities of professions in Science. This short paper cannot recount all that happened that day. Suffice it to say, Ikie Byron is featured in a video on astronauts and little Miss Gabrielle Grannum remains, in Muriel's words, our little meteorologist. As with all instructors, Muriel came several days before her major lesson to "learn" the campers and she later returned for the quiz part. In addition, she visited many times afterwards. On the day of her master lesson she was assisted by Mr. Alexander Betton-Haynes.

## SHE HAD TRIPS PLANNED FOR THE CAMPERS TO VISIT THE UN AND THE PLANETARIUM

In 2013, Muriel much to the delight of the children, teenagers and the camp assistants returned. It had been a struggle for her to get there. Mr. Betton-Haynes taught for her on those times when her vitality forced her to return home. But when she finally appeared, joy filled the camp, Ikie blushed; interns, Kayla Connelly and Jada McCallum, sat so close to her on the bench that one wondered how she was breathing. Junior interns, Liann Henry and Tiffany Herod, huddled with the children and quietly told them to listen as Miss Muriel spoke. JoHannah George, who Muriel called her granddaughter, leaned on her knee. The topic was water. After a while, Mr. Haynes and CIT Anniqwe Walters took over the lesson as Muriel smiled. There was no need for explanations. She was tired but, as Yves Cazou had said at the lunch period, she had caught herself and would continue another day. Yves had been designated her helper for the day. She did not have to speak because they had a lot to tell her. This is a camp pattern: tell your activities, your dreams. She encouraged the dream – but without putting formulaic structure to it and by seeking out and providing each child the map to realizing that dream. Qualifications, earnings, service to humanity and self awareness were part of the package. Her physical strength did not parallel her mental acuity and spiritual determination. Even on what has turned out to be her last day in person at the camp (she called for updates afterwards), she resisted when Mr. Edgar Henry insisted on taking her to the subway. To the subway was all that she allowed. She had a heavy pulley bag with all of her notes, materials and so on.

During the years that Muriel worked in the camp, she brought information about large grants; found gifts related to science and technology and pushed GCA to another level, encouraging a global connection through various aspects of Science. We tried to mount a telescope at the camp site but had to wish for a dark day when we could see the stars. Generally the campers do not know that she is gone; they lost Mr. Braithwaite during camp this year. There have been plans for trips to the U.N, the planetarium; for vigorously pursuing the STEM grant. Her physical time on earth may have run out but her spirit, purpose and goals are still afoot.



**HER PHYSICAL TIME  
ON EARTH MAY  
HAVE RUN OUT BUT  
HER SPIRIT, PURPOSE  
AND GOALS ARE  
STILL AFOOT**

*Juliet Emanuel*

**Sister Muriel was a one-woman humanitarian machine.**

**... she was the beacon of encouragement and an umbrella of influential support.**

*Derrick John Jeffrey*

**I**t is said that she was an inspiration to women in their search for empowerment. I beg to differ. As a recipient of her honest and sound advice and her sense of positive direction, she covered both genders. Following her advice and guidance I was able to reprioritize my life and the projects I am working on. Like a mother and a big sister, she spoke with a soothing smile in her voice and the assurance that she is and will always be supportive, 24/7.

Sister Muriel was a one-woman humanitarian machine. In her never ending strive to simplify and demystify the world of self-empowerment and the advancement of the not so privileged from Bali to Mali and Timbuktu to Katmandu. With light speed and the energy of an atom, she created out of her limited resources, a number of Websites. These sites she used to engage intellectuals across the nation and around the world, bringing to her audience the power of knowledge through information for a better tomorrow.

Her unmeasurable support for projects on an international scale is beyond commendation. From the solar powered lantern for children to study at nights in rural Africa, to the bio-degradable septic system for refugees and the prefab housing units in rural India, she was the beacon of encouragement and an umbrella of influential support.

Forged in the fires of the United Nations and tempered by the associations of well-meaning colleagues at the GCA, Muriel was able to contribute immensely to the development and preservation of that which we hold dearly and that which defines us. In passing, we say farewell to a life well spent and hold dearly the shadow of footprints that will never depart.



*With Bishop Tutu*



*Top: with Susan Taylor. Bottom: with Iman*



Muriel “Babes” Glasgow, woman of our soil, has left this earthly plane (23 November 2013). For a moment, a bright star in this universe was diminished, for in her petite frame dwelt an enormous spirit.

Others will tell of Muriel the humanitarian; the UNICEF Resident Representative; the Bishops’ Girl; the entrepreneur; the promoter of a multitude of interesting issues and people; the creative being; the breast cancer survivor; the GT Girl Extraordinaire. She was all of that and more. I, however, wish to celebrate the amazing sister-girlfriend she was to me and countless others.

Muriel, above all, was a Truth Teller and Encourager of no small magnitude. She could strip you down and build you back up in a five minute telephone conversation. She was not the person you invited to your pity party. However, if you were excited about something, anything at all, she could always add to it the possibility of greatness and service to mankind. To have spent time with Muriel was time spent challenged and encouraged to be a better human-being.

We claimed one another as blood relatives and we went through the usual Guyanese game of “Where was your father born? What was his mother’s maiden name? You related to the so-and-so from such-and-such a place?” She would say to me time and again “You’ve GOT to be my little relative!” I agreed whole-heartedly, and even though we’d found no evidence of such, there was just a mutual “knowing”.

If you did not know the meaning of the word BOLD, you just had to see Muriel in action. She pursued everything that interested her and was always open to learning something new from anyone at any time. A call from Muriel could result in your attending a free Pilates class in mid-town Manhattan, a confidence shared, accompanying her to the Sloan-Kettering hospital, seeing her on TV promoting raw foods, in Harlem attending a “street” fashion show where the models were strutting her creations, a make-up session at Bloomingdale’s, researching the benefits of the moringa plant, etc. You never knew what adventure you were embarking on when you called her, but it was never going to be boring.

I thank the Creator for the countless memories I have of time spent with Muriel. She allowed me to be a part of her life, the challenge and the triumphs. She had a love for young people and surrounded herself..., well THEY surrounded her like bees to nectar. She loved them and they loved her more!

There is painting on the wall in her apartment that I loved and she would say to me every time I commented on it: “When you get your own home, you can have it.” It seemed like an impossible dream to me at the time, but she believed I would and I am happy that she lived to see it become a reality. I do not need a painting to remind me of Muriel.

The brilliant light that she was in this world was not extinguished upon her passing. She lived a life of such joy that her light sparked hundreds, maybe thousands of lights in the souls of those whom she touched so powerfully, while on this plane.

Rest in Peace my beautiful sister-girlfriend of the curious, generous, bold, joyful soul. Aluta continua!

## “ Babes” WAS A TRUTH TELLER AND ENCOURAGER OF NO SMALL MAGNITUDE

*Cheryl E. Noel*



With Johnny Cochran

*"Each of us possesses the Code of our own soul - that is - our guiding light, our character, our fates, our calling, our genius." ... James Hillman*

To say that Muriel was unique is an understatement. She had great joie de vivre, every moment of it.

I have known Muriel for decades, since high school days. In 1966 we lived in the same building in Manhattan and we worked together as clerks for Dunn & Bradstreet. She moved on to UNICEF, and I moved on to Kenyan Mission to the United Nations, both organizations then housed at 866 UN Plaza. Fast forward to three decades later, I happened to be working at UNICEF when Muriel returned from the field; this time we were in the same department. Many days I would share my cooked lunch with her - I am not a sandwich person. We would eat salmon, with Guyanese greens: boulanger, ochro, corilla - the more bitter, the better she would say. If I said that this was really lunch for one person, she would respond: *'then bring lunch for two.'* I allowed her to win many arguments!

On August 10, her last birthday, I planned on taking her a meal. She had ordered oxtail. I usually cook this dish with lima beans. We agreed on a certain timeframe that I would transport the food from Queens. In my zeal I decided to add another dish. Knowing that she liked the "glue" factor inherent in cow foot, I decided to add this dish. We 11 - both FOOT and TAIL arrived late, she was waiting, and she was very hungry. It was then that we had a conversation about possessions that one accumulates. One arrives in this world with nothing and leaves with nothing; a U-haul truck is never seen following a hearse. Recently, I was in hospital and when I returned home, I found one word on my voice mail - "Muriel" - She was checking whether I had got home. That was the last time I heard her voice.

We are celebrating the person that was Muriel - a remarkable life. Rest assured that she has left an indelible memory on lots of people. Her voice may be no more. But she is here with us observing - for spirits hover and commune. 'She has only slipped away into the next room.' I will always laugh at the little jokes we shared together ... and I can conjure up her face: 'Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?'

*The leaf that's green today  
must fall one day to rest  
and may she rest at peace  
in her garden.*

*Valerie Coddett*



*"Why should I be  
out of mind  
because I am  
out of sight?"*

## CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF A SPECIAL SISTER AND A WONDERFUL FRIEND

### **Muriel's enthusiasm will live on.**

Muriel and I go back to our days at Bishops' High School. She was older than yours truly, but that didn't matter! I admired her from afar when she worked at the Ministry of Home Affairs, at which time her means of transportation was the 'red witch' bike.

Her innovative skills seemed unending. After her return from a trip to Togo on the continent of Africa, she appeared to have temporarily honed the skills of a jazz singer. I made my New York modelling debut wearing her Clothing Line. Furthermore, her passion and advocacy regarding environmental health and human rights were unparalleled.

Muriel never lost her GT accent. She would say "bannuh" You should hear her speak French with GT accent!. On my weekly Sunday visits, over a bowl of eddoe soup, she and I would reminisce and even made plans to start an NGO working with the kids in Tiger Bay. We were both troubled after viewing the YouTube video on life in Tiger Bay.

We were also planning to get dressed up and go to the jazz clubs. All this was her positive thinking. I was even convinced that she was going to make it even after my daughter who is an oncology nurse told me "she's dying" My friend had too much vigor and enthusiasm to die, but God knew that she was in too much pain so he called her home.

I'll miss you but you'll meet with the other brothers and sisters who had plans alike.

*Elegant Muriel  
Glasgow at  
Kenkeleba Gallery,  
Guyana Art  
exhibition,  
January 2013.*

*(Photo credit:  
Carl Hazlewood)*

Muriel never lost her GT  
accent " bannuh" ...

She was a jazz singer,  
she was a fashion  
designer ...

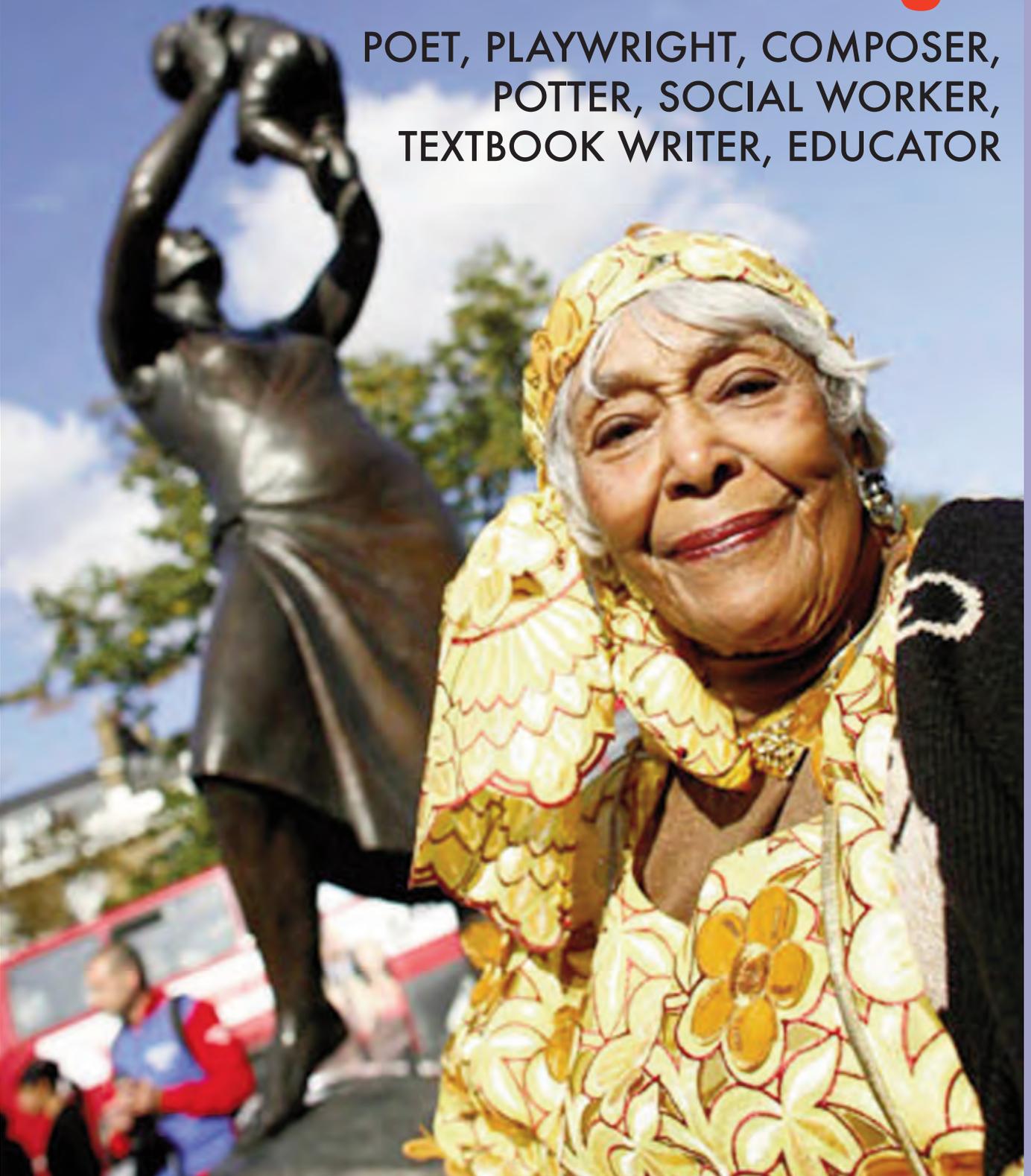
*Barbara Chase*



IN MEMORIAM

# Cecile Nobrega

POET, PLAYWRIGHT, COMPOSER,  
POTTER, SOCIAL WORKER,  
TEXTBOOK WRITER, EDUCATOR



**Cecile Nobrega's poem "Bronze Woman" was the inspiration for a 7-foot statue erected in Stockwell, England, paying tribute to Guyanese and Caribbean men and women who prevailed and continue to achieve against great odds** *Petamber Persaud*

MANY good visions remain in the realm of the imagination and die; some may slip in the sphere of oral literature only to be deconstructed into folklore, others are translated to the printed page (increasingly now, the electronic screen) and eventually a few of them do come to fruition.

The Bronze Woman Monument in Stockwell Memorial Gardens, England, is one such vision that has progressed from mind to matter. Approaching completion, it was birthed many, many years ago, way down in Demerara, in the womb of thought in a Guyanese woman. Then, in 1968, that thought became a poem titled, 'Bronze Woman', written by Cecile Nobrega and published in her first book of verses, SOLILOQUIES. 'Bronze woman', the first poem in the book, is about the 'stalwart woman-man/strength in your heart/and love in your limbs' who prevailed and continues to achieve against great odds.

The Bronze Woman Monument, a seven-foot statue of a woman holding a young child aloft, is the physical manifestation of that poem, paying tribute to women of Guyana and the Caribbean who suffered massa-day. The effects of massa-day were still wreaking havoc when Cecile Nobrega was born in 1919 in Georgetown, British Guiana. Born to Imelda and Canon W. G. Burgan, they managed on a 'limited stipend'. Her father used to write articles on life in the countryside for the Argosy newspaper under the pseudonym, Rusticious'. Her mother, who taught her music while attending St. Rose's, was a popular singer of her day and a hit at music festivals. The influence of music on the life of young Cecile goes a generation back to her maternal grandmother, Husbands, who used to import classical gramophone records through Pradasco Bros. in Hinck Street, Georgetown. Cecile remembers one of the records her grandmother brought for her because she was named after the singer - it was 'Autumn' by Cecile Chaminade.

Nobrega went on to write and compose songs, winning a few awards along the way. Her most popular song is 'Twilight' that opens in the following manner: 'I dance upon the brink of day/And try to keep the night away'. Nobrega covered much ground leading to her twilight years, making a name for herself as a poet, playwright, composer, potter, social worker, textbook writer and educator.

She was educated at Bishops' High School, British

Guiana, Hockerill College of Education, UK, the Institute of Education, London University and informally through one of her hobbies which is travelling. As a writer, Cecile Nobrega falls within that first wave of Guyanese women writers which included Sheila King, Syble Douglas, Rajkumari Singh, Celeste Dolphin, B. Zorina Ishmael, Jacqueline DeWeever, Joy Allsopp, Margaret E. Bayley, Edwina Melville, Evadne D'Oliveira and Doris Harper-Wills. Some of those women were active in the very robust Guyana Writers' Group. Many of those women writers were talented in more than one genre of writing but importantly most of them produced children literature and quite a few were playwrights. The Guyana Writers' Group produced VOICES OF GUYANA, a collection of poems edited by Donald Trotman, in commemoration of International Human Rights Year 1968. Nobrega was also featured in the first Guyanese anthology of stories, STORIES FROM GUYANA.

As a member of the Guyana Chapter of International PEN, Nobrega represented this country at the PEN Congress in Oslo, Norway. She was also a good ambassador of Guyana on other occasions including representing the country at the International Children's Theatre Conference held in London, 1964.

As one of the few women playwrights at the time, her play, STABROEK FANTASY, was quite an achievement. It would be useful to bear in mind that theatre was always struggling despite the exploits of the British Guiana Dramatic Society, the Georgetown Dramatic Club, and the feats of N. E. Cameron.

As an educator, she was President of the Kindergarten Section of the Guyana Teachers' Union and editor of YOU magazine for the Parish of St. Sidwell's in Lodge. She also taught Music and Language.

Apart from her first collection published in Guyana, Nobrega has published other books of poetry including, JAPAN, THE BUTTERFLY, an ode to that country with which she fell in love through one of her hobbies which was studying the history of Japan. Nobrega revealed that this was another of her visions: '*in the light of what we know today of Japan, the Ode can be regarded as a prophesy, written, as it was, over 25 years ago!*' Nobrega was a member of the Japan Society, London.

When she migrated to London in 1969, she took with her a solid foundation in various fields of endeavour on which to build. But it wasn't easy, not that she ever had it easy. Her philosophy could be found in her poem, 'Right to Life', where she points out, '*however great the hurricane/the smiling grass/bobs up its head again*'. A life of service in keeping with her poem, 'Gift', written in 1965: '*what can I give to Him that gives so much to me? O let me give a helping hand to those in need*'.

Sources: \* Interview with Agnes Jones, June 2006, Subryanville, Guyana. \* Interview with Sheila King, June 2006, Georgetown, Guyana



# CARIBBEAN HARVEST CELEBRATION

Throughout history mankind has always celebrated the harvest of crops that many have labored all year long. The work involved with plowing, planting and cultivating a crop is really tough work especially in today's standards. Since there are so many conveniently placed grocery markets that provide fresh food for a fair price, it is easy to take the blessing of a fall harvest for granted, which has been cherished for hundreds of years and many generations.

## **WE REMEMBER OUR CARIBBEAN HARVEST SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS & GIVE THANKS FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS WHO ENRICH OUR LIVES**

*"We obligate ourselves to bring first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of all fruit of every tree,  
year by year, to the house of the Lord."*

*- Nehemiah 10:35*

# HARVEST SUNDAY WITH A CARIBBEAN FLAIR

*Anne Dukes*

**W**hen some South Florida United Methodists celebrate this time of year, it's not with turkey and dressing and pumpkin pie, but with "first fruits," vegetables and music reminiscent of Caribbean traditions. They call it Harvest Sunday.

Many churches will pull out all the stops on Nov. 18, the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day. Others choose other Sundays in the month, but all make a colorful, flavorful, musical show of their gratitude for a bountiful harvest.

Dr. Cynthia Weems, pastor at First UMC, Miami, said her congregation has been celebrating Harvest Sunday for 25 years.

***"It's a beautiful Sunday to celebrate the physical bounty of the harvest and to be thankful for the people who make it possible for us to have these fruits and vegetables, as we are in an urban center,"*** she said.

Her church traditionally celebrates the harvest by adorning the chancel area with food. During the service, children enter the sanctuary in procession, carrying corn and coins and singing traditional hymns, such as "Come, Ye Faithful People, Come."

Adults participate as well, some bringing pledges. Weems' parishioners include people from all areas of the Caribbean, including Central America, Belize and Honduras. They are steeped in the tradition of symbolic "first fruits" mentioned in Proverbs, Nehemiah, Romans, Corinthians and other books of the Bible.

At the end of the service, people make a donation and choose something for themselves from the bounty. After worship, the donations and leftover produce go to the senior meals program.

At Miramar UMC, Pastor David Range looks forward to the food and decorations that his flock brings to church for Harvest Sunday.

"They make an archway out of sugarcane and decorate the church with things like banana trees, and it takes two hymns for the children to bring their baskets of non-perishable foods down to the altar," Range said.

Other gifts might include avocados from people's gardens and home-baked goods, like potato pudding and coconut drops.

"We ask a blessing over these things. Then, after the service, the church holds a sale with the proceeds going to local missions. ... It's quite something to see," he said. The mainly Caribbean congregation of about 160 has been doing this for about 15 years.

In addition to the food, the service includes a medley of hymns, such as "We Gather Together" and "For Fruits of This Creation," played on a steel drum and interspersed with personal testimonies of thanksgiving.

Roland Abel, a member since 1999, helps make Harvest Sunday happen, collecting homegrown items for the offering.

"Our members who have gardens will pick the biggest and best of their harvest and save it for the church," he said.

People get together on Saturday evening to decorate the church and spread out the bounty.

Fulford UMC, North Miami Beach, puts a unique spin on Harvest Sunday, a tradition celebrated there for 25 years. Young people use 5-gallon paint buckets as drums to play praise music and traditional songs.

"It's like the 'Stomp' musical," Pastor Marta Burke said.

The congregation also cuts loose with traditional songs accompanied by steel drums and played with island rhythms.

"We sing '*Thank We All Our God*' and '*Lift Every Voice and Sing*' in a different way," Burke said.

Her congregation of 300 encompasses about 25 different nationalities, including many who are familiar with the British Methodist tradition. Donations of goods and money on Harvest Sunday go to Stop Hunger Now.

Pastor Aurilus Desmornes at Norland UMC, Miami, said his church celebrates with both a Harvest Banquet on Saturday and a Harvest Sunday worship.

"It is a major event in the life of Norland, a multicultural activity [mostly Caribbean style] since we have many cultures in our congregation," Desmornes said.

At New Horizon UMC, Southwest Ranches, church members decorate the sanctuary with sugarcane, banana trees, pineapples and other fruits and vegetables. Children form a procession to the altar with food. Canned goods also are donated for the nearby Hallandale Food Pantry.

# Dr. Vibert Cambridge

## HONORED WITH AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT



## CONGRATULATIONS

17



# Dr. Vibert Cambridge has tirelessly given back to both society and his profession.

Remarks made by Dr. David A. Koonce, Chair, Nomination Committee for the IEW Awards for Excellence in Global Engagement on November 15, 2013:

“Emeritus Professor, Dr. Vibert Cambridge first graduated from Ohio University in 1988, with an MA in International Relations. He was the first graduate from the Communication and Development Studies program. Professionally, he spent much of his career working at Ohio University as a faculty member in the Scripps College of Communications and as director or chair of several academic programs.

As a faculty member, Dr. Cambridge participated in numerous international projects, sponsored by UNESCO, USAID and the Academy for Educational Development, spanning the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. He was instrumental in leading a USAID project to upgrade mass communication and journalism in Guyana. His sponsored work in international development and social change totals more than \$1 million.

Beyond implementing change, Dr. Cambridge has shared his knowledge and experiences with his colleagues and peers through extensive publication. With over 100 books, chapters, journal publications, conference papers, presentations and other communications, he has educated, informed and entertained many researchers, students and people across the world.

Dr. Cambridge has engaged, motivated and mentored countless students pursuing degrees in international studies in his faculty career of over 25 years.

His list of professional service is almost as long as his publications list. Serving on boards and committees for organizations as varied as Literature Prizes and Folk Festivals to Academic Journals, Conference Chairs and Academic Programs Reviews. Dr. Cambridge has tirelessly given back to both society and his profession.

Dr. Cambridge has been instrumental in strategically advancing Ohio University’s reputation as a recognized global leader. We are truly lucky that Dr. Cambridge brought his knowledge, experience, drive and passion for international education to Ohio University.”

# Carl Hazlewood

ARTIST, CURATOR,  
WRITER, CRITIC,  
PHOTOGRAPHER

Carl E. Hazlewood, at work  
(photo credit:  
Arlington Weithers)

# Carl Hazlewood

## Works reflecting his life at Aljira Art Center

*Dan Bischoff - New Jersey Star-Ledger*

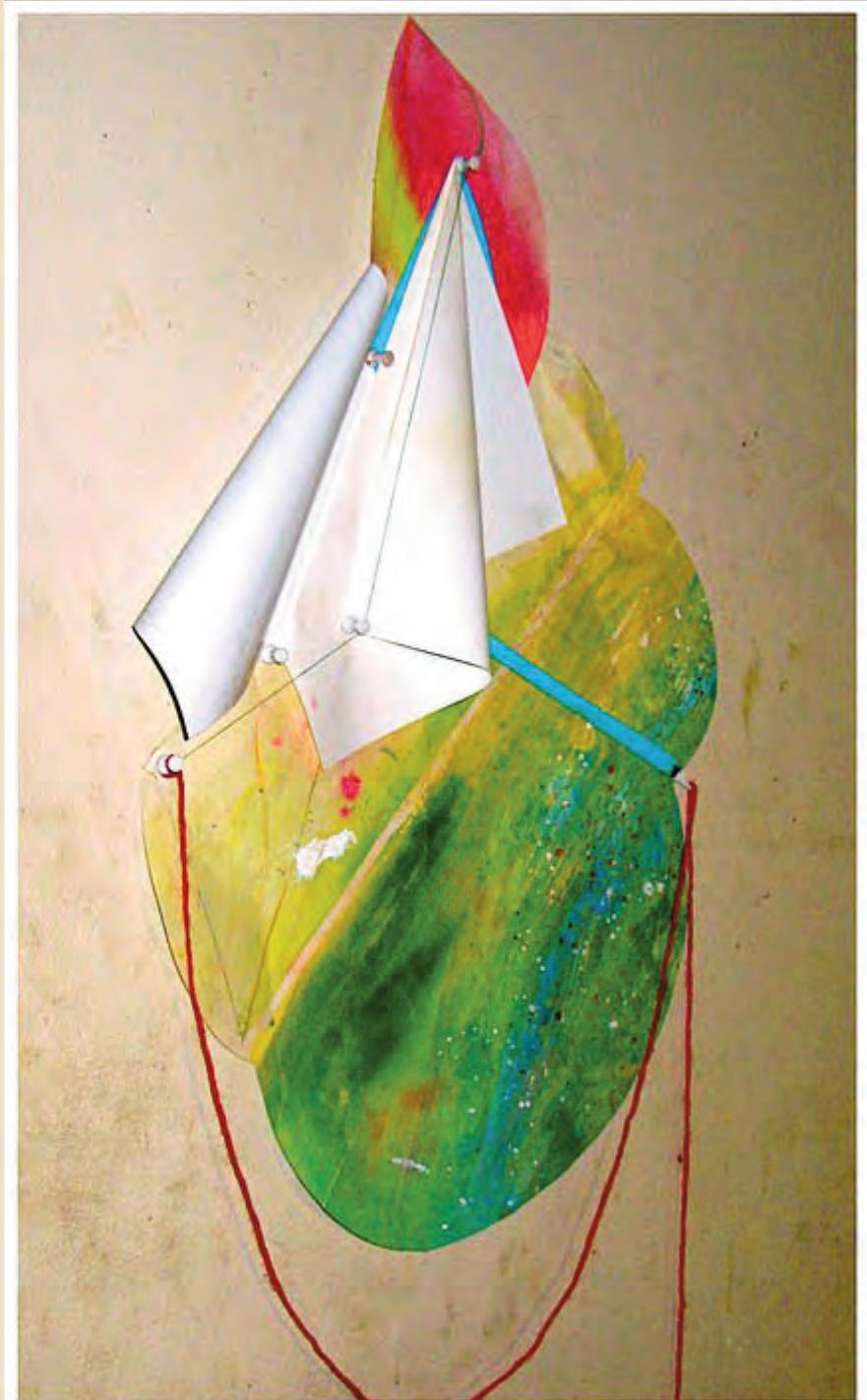
Carl Hazlewood spent three days and nights sleeping on the gallery floor to create "Temporality and Objects," a series of wall constructions punctuated by photographs taken by the artist and mounted on canvas, on exhibit at Aljira: A Center for Contemporary Art in Newark. Most of the constructions involve sheets of paper or swaths of cloth folded, pinned or hung on the wall, with tautly stretched strings or drawn lines framing them.

The photos are about Hazlewood's life — shots of the lot behind his Brooklyn apartment, of the New York skyline across the river, or details of daily life, such as trees blurred because they were shot from a moving car or train in the New Jersey countryside. Those are the spaces between the places, his apartment and the gallery itself, in which Hazlewood makes his art.

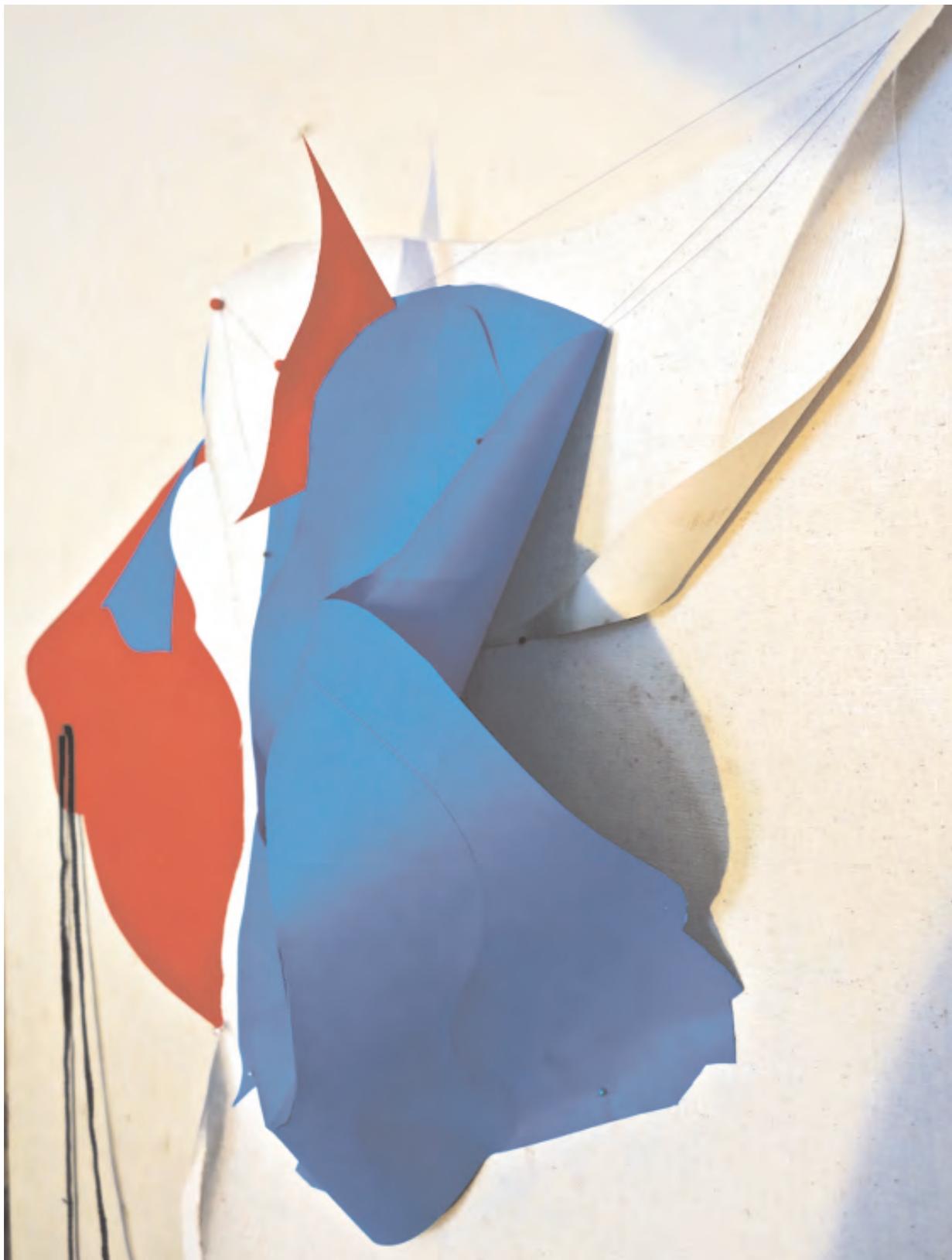
The whole process left him with an oddly gnomic, frequently blissful show — and a case of the flu.

"I've been taking lots of photos, because the built environment is sort of the native genius of the city," Hazlewood said by phone from his apartment, where he's recovering. "I love New York City. And I think it is its own Nature ... The constructions I started because, you know, I only have one wall in my apartment to make art, the only materials I had were lots of good paper, and the string and tape every artist has. I started making them because an artist does what he can with what he has."

Hazlewood would make the pieces, photograph them, then take them apart to make space for a new one. There's almost a kind of aesthetic/ecological bravado in taking the pieces apart; Hazlewood only recently realized the potential that his digital photos gave him, to recombine and realign his work.



*"White Angel Tied"*



*Carl E. Hazlewood, "American Angel - True Blue"*

By mounting the images on Facebook, he's picked up followers, such as poet Patricia Spears Jones, who just wrote an essay about Hazlewood's wall pieces for the latest issue of Bomb magazine. He's also in a new group show, "Unsayable: Wall Works," at FiveMyles in Brooklyn.

"Temporality and Objects" is a homecoming in a way. Thirty years ago, two Guyanese immigrants — Victor Davson and Hazlewood — founded Aljira: A Center for Contemporary Art in downtown Newark. It has since become one of the longest-thriving art spaces in the city, bringing an international elan to downtown contemporary art, but also giving Newark the sort of artistic outpost (in good times and bad) that anchors a city's arts community.

#### IN THE EXHIBIT

This is the first one-man show by Hazlewood in Aljira's history and it's about time.

The foldings and hangings carry can unexpected resonances. Many seem to refer to intimacies, sexual and otherwise. There's a small photo in the show of bed covers folded back; there's another, even smaller, of Hazlewood's bare chest, with the faint trace of scar tissue making tracks over his heart. (Hazlewood underwent a life-saving heart operation when he was a boy.)

The most interesting of the constructions is called "Untitled (Game of Chance)," with what looks like a sheet of black tar paper forming a half-cylinder beneath a sketchy version of a checkerboard. There are strings and drawn lines that fix the composition to the wall. The checkerboard resembles similar checked motifs in painter Max Weber's "Chinese Restaurant" (1913), perhaps the most famous American Cubist picture; Weber just happened to have his first museum show right around the corner at the Newark Museum — in 1913.

The landscapes, with titles such as "NJ Quotidian: Blue Marsh" and "NY Quotidian: Shadow Then," work as portraits of his life between art making and, in return, make art out of the life itself.

Sometimes, they rhyme with painting — Hazlewood began as a painter, long ago working in a highly representational style, and pictures such as "NY Quotidian: My Backyard at 2 a.m." show apartment windows glowing like cottage casements in a pre-Raphaelite landscape. A similar coziness swims immediately to mind, even though the view looks straight down at the concrete floor of a Brooklyn back lot.

#### SELF-PORTRAIT

The most interesting is "NY Quotidian: Shadow Then," a self-portrait with no real likeness. The picture was taken in the Skoto Gallery in Manhattan. Hazlewood, wearing a hoodie, was standing in front of the gallery window, looking out at dusk and noticed that his dark reflection allowed a refracted image of the Frank Gehry building that houses Barry Diller's empire to jump into sharp relief. He snapped a picture.

The image looks like a city inside a man's torso. Given the Gehry building's twisted walls and big, curtainless windows, as well as its iconic status near the High Line, it can stand in for today's Manhattan. And it can read as a protest. A black man in a hoodie encompassing all of New York City — "Shadow Then" trembles with the quivering edges of change.

Hazlewood chuckles when presented with the simile. "We can't ever seem to escape race, can we?" he asks.

***Temporality and Objects: Installation and photographs by Carl Hazlewood Where: Aljira, A Center For Contemporary Art, 591 Broad St., Newark When: Through Dec. 21. Regular hours are Wednesdays through Fridays from noon to 6 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. How much: Free. For more information, call (973) 622-1600 or visit [aljira.org](http://aljira.org)***



*Portrait of Carl by Grace Graupe Pillard*

## Carl E. Hazlewood

© POST ROAD Magazine, Inc. and Boston College  
Department of English

For a culturally complex "black" person from the Caribbean, there were, inevitably, demanding questions concerning painting's relevance as a strictly formal discipline. I began working seriously as a teenager in the late 1960s. In America, in the aftermath of the civil rights struggles, the influence of the Black Arts Movement—which stressed political and social engagement—was still prevalent. One mistrusted mainstream art, particularly the ideological "purity" or perhaps, neutrality, inherent in high abstraction. The various arguments interested me but I balked at any idea that would limit me to an art that functioned narrowly as a tool for social criticism or protest. Working as a curator and as someone interested in theoretical aspects of art, it seemed necessary to take all these polemical ideas into consideration. But since my return to focused artistic production after many years being a curator, writer, and critic, I am open to all possibilities—from painting to photography and multimedia installations. My interest lies in paring down complexities to essential practical ideas—particularly those basic ones concerning the visual and establishing an assertive abstract image.

To make art, for me, is a basic urge. And after more than twenty years of supporting other artists, I came to a place where I needed to re-focus on my own work. I also needed to find a new way—a fresh direction. Finally, without a studio and desperate to get going again, I made myself a few simple rules. Use what I have where I can, in the space that is available to me. That space right now is my chaotic apartment and one living room wall that can function as support for this type of art making. Another of my self-made rules is to use the materials that are available to me. What I had lying around the most were various good quality papers. Should I draw or paint on them? No, I needed to do something that was a little more radical. I pinned a plain sheet of heavyweight paper to the wall and made myself yet another rule. . . an old one: keep it simple. And direct. Just do something: fold, cut, bend, pin. Thus my new constructions made mostly of paper, twine, and canvas, are assembled directly on the wall using only pushpins and map pins. All were made in the last two years and share the title "Angel." Occasionally other material such as wire, industrial plastic mesh, or tarpaper is used. Unframed, the bounding edges are unrestricted, left free to respond to the visual "pressures" of what happens within the piece. They remain discrete objects, but respond to the particular space in which they are made. I frankly look for a

kind of buoyancy, tough beauty, and strong form that could sustain them for their evanescent life while up on the wall. Like those other angels, these forms appear and disappear rather quickly, for they are taken apart immediately after being exhibited and documented.

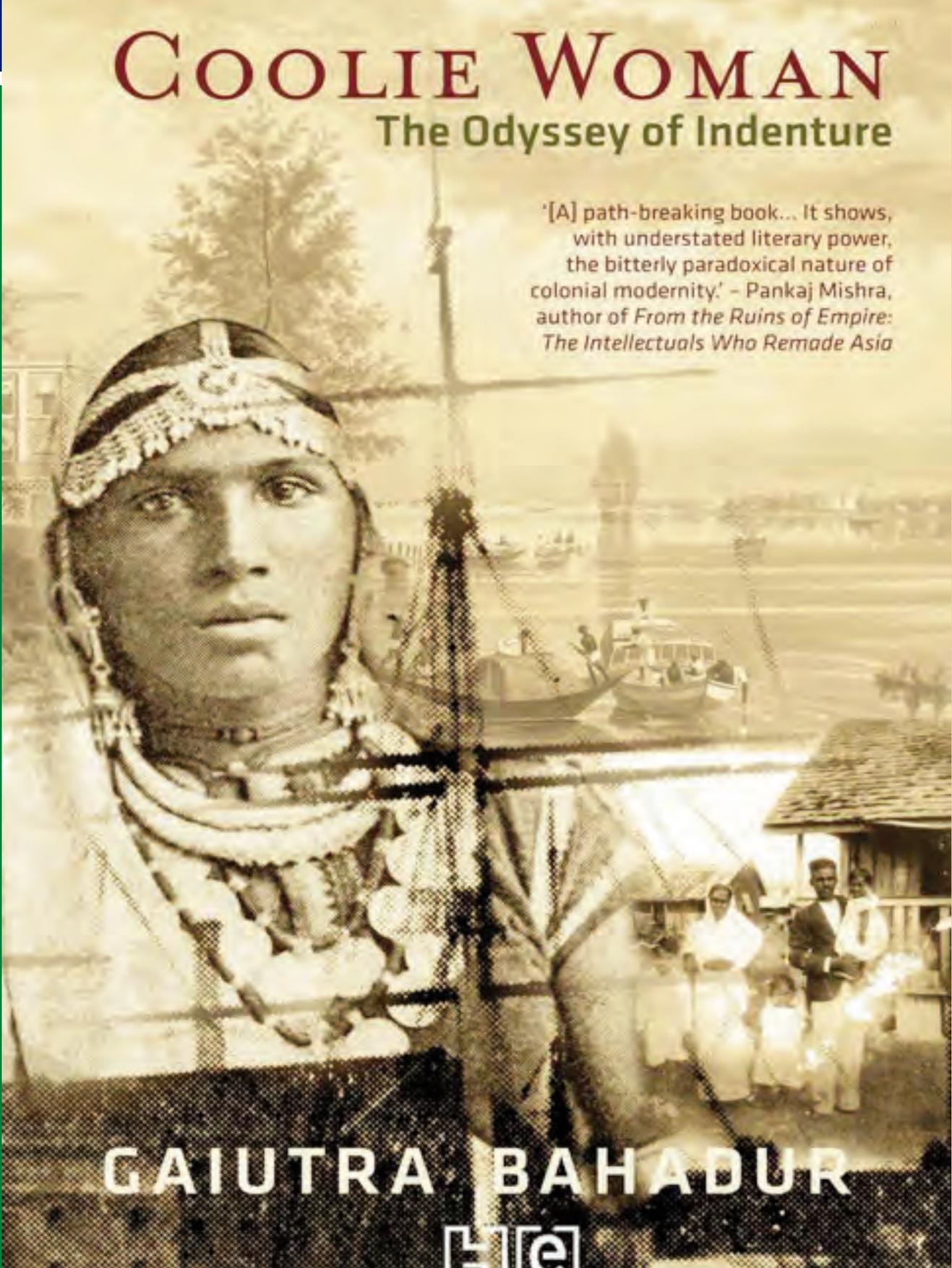
I find it interesting and useful to reduce things to basics—essentials; doing so allows me to see more clearly. I also have a renewed appreciation for the complexity of formal effect (visual affect) that can result from this kind of simplification. Matisse is a great model, as is Picasso in his cardboard guitar phase. Calling these constructions "angels," rather than kites or some other designation, is mostly an acknowledgment that there is a general consensus by practically all people—regardless of religion—about what such a creature might be like. For me it's not about the particular belief system, as I could just as well have called them "butterflies" (that would be, perhaps, a bit too fey or limiting an image for my taste). What I desire is the suggestion of rightness, strength, or delicacy, and the notion communicated about a possible artistic beauty, rough or refined—controversial though the concept may be. Beauty for me is found in the search for that formal "rightness"—a "there-ness" that isn't necessarily perfection; perhaps it is simply the ongoing search for that quality. We understand that angels communicate in all sorts of subtle ways. . . I would be pleased to know that my structures, which are temporary, manage to communicate something enduring despite their brief lives on the wall, and that they've left a positive and useful residue as a presence within my photographs. . . as evidence that they were here for a while.



# COOLIE WOMAN

## The Odyssey of Indenture

'[A] path-breaking book... It shows, with understated literary power, the bitterly paradoxical nature of colonial modernity.' - Pankaj Mishra, author of *From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals Who Remade Asia*



GAIUTRA BAHADUR



# Coolie Woman

## The Odyssey of Indenture

First published in the United Kingdom in 2013 by C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.

ISBN: 978-1-84904-277-2

Hardcover: \$27.78

Amazon

*“An astonishing document—both a historical rescue mission and a profound meditation on family and womanhood, Gaiutra Bahadur’s Coolie Woman spans continents and centuries, the private and the national, to bring to light the extraordinary lives of the author’s great-grandmother and the other quarter of a million coolie women that came to the New World as indentured laborers. Bahadur’s meticulous research and tireless perseverance have restored an important chapter in our histories—outstanding work.”*

– Junot Díaz, author of *This Is How You Lose Her*

In 1903, a young woman sailed from India to Guiana as a “coolie”—the British name for indentured laborers who replaced the newly emancipated slaves on sugar plantations all around the world. Pregnant and traveling alone, this woman, like so many coolies, disappeared into history. Now, in *Coolie Woman*, her great-granddaughter Gaiutra Bahadur embarks on a journey into the past to find her. Traversing three continents and trawling through countless colonial archives, Bahadur excavates not only her great-grandmother’s story but also the repressed history of some quarter of a million other coolie women, shining a light on their complex lives.

Shunned by society, and sometimes in mortal danger, many coolie women were either runaways, widows, or outcasts. Many of them left husbands and families behind to migrate alone in epic sea voyages—traumatic “middle passages”—only to face a life of hard labor, dismal living conditions, and, especially, sexual exploitation. Examining this and many other facets of these remarkable women’s lives, *Coolie Woman* is a meditation on survival, a gripping story of a double diaspora—from India to the West Indies in one century, Guyana to the United States in the next—that is at once a search for one’s roots and an exploration of

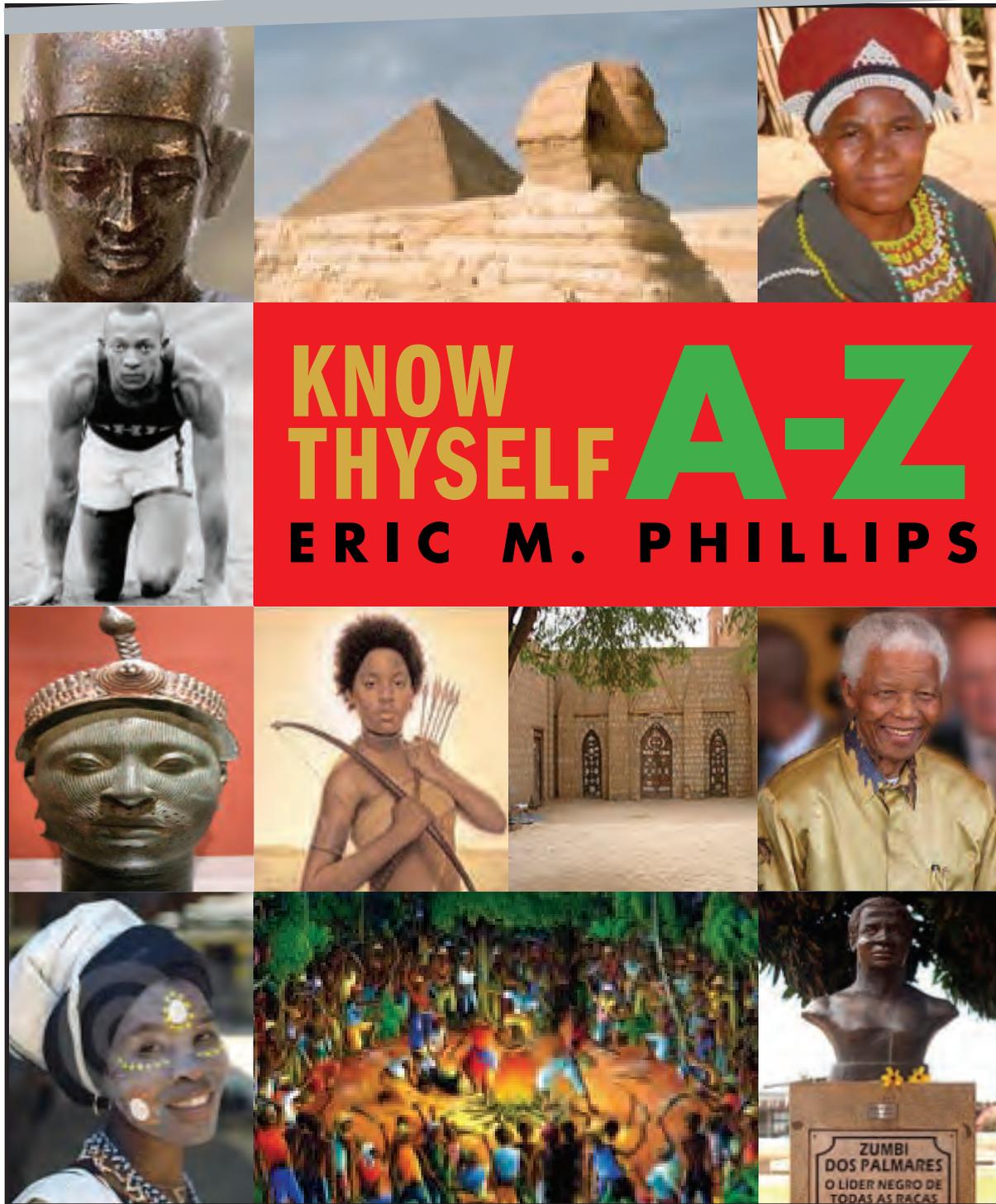
gender and power, peril and opportunity.

### About Gaiutra Bahadur

*Gaiutra Bahadur is an American journalist and book critic who writes frequently about the culture and politics of global migration. Her reporting, criticism and essays have appeared in The New York Times Book Review, Washington Post Book World, The Nation, The Virginia Quarterly Review, The (London) Observer and Ms., among other publications.*

*Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture is her first full-length book. A former daily newspaper staff writer, Gaiutra has covered schools, police and local government in New Jersey, politics in Texas, hate crimes and profiling directed at South Asian and Middle Eastern communities after Sept. 11, demographics and the national debate on illegal immigration. She has told the stories of asylum seekers and immigrants in Philadelphia and its suburbs and reported from Baghdad, Iraqi refugee outposts in Syria and Jordan, and the U.S.-Mexico border. Born in Guyana, Gaiutra immigrated to the United States with her family at the age of six. She grew up in Jersey City, directly across the Hudson from Lower Manhattan. Her first job in journalism was at her hometown newspaper, The Jersey Journal, where she wrote the “Dear FIXIT” consumer advocacy column.*

*Gaiutra studied literature at Yale and journalism at Columbia and was a 2007-2008 Nieman Fellow at Harvard. In 2013, she won awards from New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, the national feminist arts organization, both on the merits of the manuscript for Coolie Woman. Gaiutra has also written a children’s book about the homeland journeys of President Obama and the writer Amy Tan; “Family Ties” (2012) is part of Scholastic’s “On the Record” nonfiction series for middle-school students.*



The Great Books have all said it.  
Wise men and women likewise.

## KNOW THYSELF A-Z

Marcus Garvey said it best. *"A people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots"* Marcus Garvey

by Eric M. Phillips

Publishers: Franklin & Franklin Publishers

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**This and 25 other knowledge bits are in this first of four KNOW THYSELF books.**

**Will be in Guyana book stores from December 1, 2013**

**Contact Eric Phillips at: empowerment2all@gmail.com for your copy**

Africans throughout the World are constantly searching for "self". For their "roots". It is a primordial quest of every human being for *"when the past no longer illuminates the future, the spirit walks in darkness."*

Africans are and were the "first" human beings on Earth. Yet our history is the most distorted, most hidden, most unshared and most conveniently forgotten. There is a grand "indifference" to things "African". Hippocrates is called the "Father of Medicine" and we have the Hippocratic Oath taken by Doctors . Yet Imhotep, a Black Egyptian, who was born over 3000 years before Hippocrates , is the true "Father of Medicine" but is never given the credit and honour he deserves.

This book is dedicated to that journey of self-knowledge and self-healing. It is about seeking truth. Seeking understanding. Seeking an understanding of the past. Seeking justice. It is about a journey of self love . It is about rekindling the spirits of our Ancestors, both

known and unknown. It is about Sankofa.

The Sankofa symbol is based on the mythical bird that flies forward with its head looking back. This reflects the AKAN belief that the past serves as a guide for planning the future or the wisdom of learning from the past in building the future. It is about remembrance.

I hope this first of four books entitled "Know Thyself" bring light to the reader. I hope it will assist in the search of self, identity and seek a better understanding of African culture which is about shared patterns of identity, symbolic meaning, aspiration, and about the relationships between individuals and groups.

It is written that " the truth will set you free" . I wish you Freedom.

### The Author:

Eric McLaren Phillips is a Guyanese born American citizen and a 1990-91 White House Fellow. He has lived seven plus years in South Africa and has visited more than 40 African countries over the last 20 years. This has fuelled his quest for understanding and sharing Africa's hidden truths, legacies and marvels. His yearning for self-identity has resulted in this book "Know Thyself" , a quest nurtured by his very African oriented grandmother Agnes Coates and later by his mother Zereda Phillips. From High School days at Queens College in Guyana to today, Eric has been an ardent student of African history and culture. This book is the first of many books in a Sankofa series designed to build self-esteem, self-knowledge and self-respect among Africans in the Diaspora and on the Continent itself.

Eric has also been strongly influenced by three well celebrated Guyanese born authors: George G. M James who wrote *Stolen Legacy*, Ivan van Sertima who wrote *"They came before Columbus"* and Walter Rodney who wrote *"How Europe underdeveloped Africa"* . Although 'Know Thyself' is Eric's first published book, poetry has always been Eric's favourite medium of communication. An author of over 200 poems, Eric will publish 2 poetry books: *ISIS* and *Infinty* in the near future. His poetry has been influenced by Nikki Giovanni , Fela Kuti, Ben Okri, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Lao Tsu and Guyanese Martin Carter.

Eric is a writer, poet and civil rights activist based in Guyana where he spends most of his time. He has been the Executive Director of the Caribbean Theatre of performing Arts in New York which showcased the play by Barbadian Paul Webster *"Sea Rock Children"* at the Henry Street Settlement. Eric has also founded six NGOs including Dance Alive, an HIV organization that uses "the love of dance , poetry and inspirational messages "to "entertain", "educate" and "motivate" young people to live healthy lives.

AMERINDIAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL

**FEBRUARY 14 - 16, 2014**

# **RUPUNUNI MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL AT ANNAI IN 2014**

**KEITH WAITHE(UK), APACHE INDIAN (UK),  
DIABEL CISSOKHO (SENEGAL), AFRICAN &  
TASSA DRUMMERS (GUY.), FRANCIS BAILEY  
(BRAZIL) AND OTHER PERFORMERS FROM  
BRAZIL, CANADA & THE CARIBBEAN  
EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE**





## The Rupununi Music & Arts Festival A FESTIVAL OF IN-TENT "CAMPING STYLE"

### A NEW MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

**T**he Rupununi Music & Arts Festival will take place over the Valentine's weekend, 2014 in the Rupununi, on the grounds of Rock View Lodge, Annai in Guyana. Tucked away in the peaceful grasslands, the location is ideal for the visitor wishing to get an insight into the culture of the Amerindian people whilst enjoying a wide range of music from the around the globe. The festival will be launched in typical Amerindian style. You will hear rich local stories, sample Amerindian cuisine, absorb local hospitality and enjoy traditional Amerindian music and dance and other forms of world music - blues, jazz and folk, plus participating in activities specific to Amerindian culture.

Accommodation will be "camping style" at Rock View Lodge, nestled between the Amerindian Village of Annai and Rupertee

where the Pakaraima foothills meet the tropical rainforest. Although the music content will be over three days, there will be a special 5-day package (Thursday - Monday), including accommodation, meals and entrance fee.

The Guyanese nationals who have agreed to support this initiative as patrons are Baroness Valerie Amos, Professor David Dabydeen, Diane McTurk, Sir Shridath Ramphal and George Simon, renowned Arawak artist and archaeologist.

# BUXTON DIWALI CELEBRATIONS

I was surprised at the attendance. Most of the people there were mainly African Guyanese. They were dressed in Indian attire, they cooked the SEVEN CURRIES, played Bajans, there was drumming and singing, and most important was the spiritual connection on lighting of the Dias while the "Gaitree Mantra" was sung in beautiful harmony. This I have never seen before.

*Deo Persaud*



## BUXTON DIWALI

THE MEANING OF DIWALI AS  
A CONDUIT FOR PEACE  
AND HARMONY WAS MUCH  
IN ATTENDANCE

*Deo Persaud*

**D**iwali is an ancient Hindu Festival of lights which is celebrated on the darkest night in the months of October/ November.

The lights are symbolic as to the conquest of darkness over evil and ignorance, illuminating the world away from these human frailties.

Diwali was brought here in Guyana by our Indian ancestors and today it is celebrated and enjoyed by most Guyanese of most social and religious backgrounds.

Today, Diwali is becoming more popular in various countries in the world, and, as in Guyana, the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Guyanese nation has greatly accepted this religious function and it has now become a major part of our National cultural agenda.

I had returned to Guyana in 2006 after spending 39 years in the U.K.

On meeting Marlon (Chuky) Adams a drummer from Buxton, he introduced me to his mother (Desiree Adams) who is a High Priestess of a spiritual church, The Saint Mattias Church based in Middle Walk, Buxton.

At this time the village was entrenched with violence that enveloped the whole community.

Buxton is a predominantly African Village on the East Coast of Demerara, the villagers being direct descendants of African slaves who bought the village post Emancipation. The village has a long history of struggle, and the people there are proud of their African

ancestry to which they have preserved up to this day.

During the turmoil in the Village, I got to meet most of the drummers and a school of music was formed to bring some relief to the children who were caught up in the ensuing violence.

In 2007, I was invited to partake in a Diwali celebration at the church.

I was surprised at the attendance. Most of the people there were mainly African Guyanese. They were dressed in Indian attire, they cooked the SEVEN CURRIES, played Bajans, there was drumming and singing, and most important was the spiritual connection on lighting of the Dias while the "Gaitree Mantra" was sung in beautiful harmony. This I have never seen before.

What was fascinating was not only the lighting of the Dias or the celebrations, it was a total spiritual connection. Participants were evidently engrossed in the celebration.

The violence which abated around 2008, the attendance grew much larger, the meaning of Diwali as a conduit for peace and harmony was much in attendance.

I understand a group of Indians from the Corentyne, after hearing about this will be coming to celebrate next year.

# D.C. MAYOR PROCLAIMS NOVEMBER 1, 2013 AS KOJO NNAMDI DAY



Host of

## The Joko Nnamdi Show

& Politics Hour

WHUT-TV, Washington, DC

**D**.C. Mayor Vincent Gray issued a proclamation declaring Nov. 1, 2013, as Kojo Nnamdi Day in the District of Columbia. The announcement celebrates Kojo's 15 years broadcasting on WAMU 88.5.

Kojo Nnamdi was born Rex Orville Montague Paul on January 8, 1945 in Guyana, is an American radio journalist. He is the host of *The Kojo Nnamdi Show*, and *The Politics Hour* on WAMU, and the *Evening Exchange* broadcast on WHUT-TV in the Washington DC Metropolitan area.

Gray hailed Kojo, "on behalf of 632,000 people in the District of Columbia, many, many of whom -- and I mean this quite seriously -- admire you great-

ly and appreciate what you do and have done for so many years."

The proclamation states: "Kojo Nnamdi has been a fixture on radio and television in the District of Columbia for four decades and has set a standard for conversations about important political and economic issues in this city."

Kojo has been a major influence on the D.C. community, with insightful and provocative dialogue. For 15 years, he has been bringing the world to Washington through his own unique perspective on *The Kojo Nnamdi Show* and *The Politics Hour*.

## CONGRATULATIONS

33

**K**ojo Nnamdi is host of The Kojo Nnamdi Show, a live talk show produced by WAMU 88.5 that airs weekdays at noon. On Fridays at noon, Nnamdi hosts The Politics Hour on WAMU 88.5.

"Maybe the best radio interviewer in town" according to The Washington Post, Nnamdi welcomes a lineup of interesting and provocative guests who offer new perspectives about current events, political issues, social policy, art, science and other topics. The show encourages listener calls, creating a dynamic dialogue about issues that are important or interesting to the Washington, D.C., region.

Nnamdi is a native of Guyana who immigrated to the United States in 1968 to attend college and explore the civil rights movement. From 1985 to 2011, he hosted Evening Exchange, a public affairs television program broadcast by WHUT-TV at Howard University. From 1973 to 1985, Nnamdi worked at WHUR-FM, where he served as news editor and then news director, producing the award-winning local news program The Daily Drum.

# Kojo Nnamdi

In 2003, the Library of Congress selected Nnamdi as the keynote speaker for African American History Month, and in 2001, he was honored as a civil rights hero by the National Council for Community Justice.

In 2005, he was named a "Washingtonian of the Year" by Washingtonian magazine, saying, "Radio is more fun, more intimate than TV. I always want to make sure people are listening to something that helps them make intelligent decisions about their lives." DCist, "a website about the Washington, D.C. area and everything that happens there," named Nnamdi one of "DC's Most Influential People" in 2007. Also in 2007, Washingtonian named Nnamdi one of the "150 Most Influential People in Washington."

In addition to his hosting duties, Nnamdi has chaired the board of the Public Access Corporation of Washington, D.C., since 1997. He is also active in Guyaid, an organization devoted to the welfare of children in Guyana.

Nnamdi served on the Board of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center from 2003-2008. A proud nationalized American citizen for more than 20 years, his passions include cricket, Caribbean Carnival, poetry, jazz and jogging.

# MAY BE THE BEST RADIO INTERVIEWER IN TOWN...

*Washington Post*



# A BOUQUET FOR THE MIGHTY SPARROW

There should be a row of statues in Trinidad to people such as Spree Simon and Eli Manette and The Mighty Spoiler and Gypsy and Lord Kitchener, definitely, but at the very front of the row we should be looking at a remembrance of what Sparrow did for Caribbean culture. If you measure a person by the impact that he/she has had on the human canvas, Sparrow is a giant. While we wait on the statue, we should be sending him a verbal bouquet.

*Dave Martins,  
Tradewinds*

We're taking our time in the Caribbean writing our musical history. Jamaica, as usual in front in such matters, has become involved, but in the Eastern Caribbean, apart from the work of Gordon Roehler, and two books by George Maharaj, we have been rather silent. Part of this neglect, of course, is our tendency to be cavalier about those who have contributed to our rise (a separate sociological treatise awaits there).

I wrote a song called Where Are Your Heroes, Caribbea on this point many years ago, and while some radio stations still play the song the malaise remains. Today, as he battles with health problems, it is pertinent then to raise a mighty shout for The Mighty Sparrow whom history will have to record as being the most important single contributor to the development of calypso music, hands down.



Sparrow is known for having produced an amazing collection of several hundred songs, many of them part of the Caribbean cultural fabric, as well as for his dynamic performances and his singular vocal talent. But the contribution only begins there. Sparrow's most telling legacy will be in the areas of musical composition and in the equally important area of the business environment for calypso.

Whether he had help creating them or not, Sparrow, as a producer of songs, widened the horizons for calypso more dramatically than any other individual. In that, he was pivotal.

The tradition of early calypso generally was one of a folk-based music, built around topical or societal subjects of the day. While the lyrical contents of the songs varied, the musical constructions were limited. As David Rudder reminded us in a recent interview, many early calypsonians operated with a handful of melodic approaches; purely as music, the form was limited. While the late Lord Kitchener, himself a very accomplished bassist, contributed somewhat to the widening of this form while living in England, the strictures generally remained.

Sparrow came to the arena and simply broke the barriers. He moved away from the repetitious folk tunes and wove in American pop music influences in calypso.

While maintaining the sensual rhythmic attack of the music, he put sweeping melodies into the genre and showed us calypso in a more expansive form. Early evidence of the coming change is there in his classic Jean and Dinah where he combined the standard tight calypso verse with an almost ballad-like chorus.

From his annual Carnival base, Sparrow threw the doors of the music open and let in a host of influences - Latin; Indian; American - that essentially provided the widened landscape on which a host of other talented writers could parade. He even influenced Kitchener - you can hear it in Kitch's big hit Sugar Bum

Bum - and singers the likes of Lord Shorty, Baron, the Mighty Duke, Shadow, Gypsy, and even latterly David Rudder, were possible because of Sparrow - he opened the window and showed them the view.

The effect on musicians and writers was dramatic. I distinctly recall the delight in listening to Sparrow songs in 1960s where the melodic surge was in full flower in a series of songs where the tune almost made you overlook the lyrics - a complete turnaround for calypso. Sparrow took the music in a new direction, and the traditional voices raised in protest ("Rose is not a calypso, padna.") were soon won over.

For me, a young song-writer in Toronto, planning to form Tradewinds, Sparrow was simply an inspiration; there's no other way to put it. I had been in a kind of a creative suspension, drawn to the calypso form I loved, but also hearing other influences in my head (mainstream ballads; rhythm and blues; classical; folk).

Sparrow came out with this startling new calypso form where melody was all over the place, chord progressions from jazz were in use, and counterpoint was com-

mon. From his band, anchored by piano boss Bertram Innis, I saw that I could use my love of classical music in the completely contrasting intros I wrote for those Tradewinds songs. It was only later that I saw what had happened - Sparrow had freed me up.

I've acknowledged the influence to him before, and I repeat it now. Ironically, the very song Where Are Your Heroes, Caribbean, that I had written bemoaning our failure to honour stalwarts such as Sparrow, was itself an example of his influence on my song-writing structures. Musically, it is the kind of ballad construction that Sparrow would regularly use in his music; the melody in the opening verse of that song -

"Every country it seems, without exception, they have memorials and statues to blow your mind" - is pure Sparrow. The influence, subconscious as it was, is unmistakable.

Off the stage, in the "business" of the music business, Sparrow was pivotal as well as he almost single-handedly revolutionized things. He had come into a calypso arena where calypsonians were subject to shameful treatment by promoters - in the early days they would often be paid with a bottle of rum or a bag of oranges - and even by Sparrow's time, the Trinidad Carnival Calypso King was paid a virtual pittance. With the leverage of the popularity he then achieved, Sparrow took all that by the scruff of the neck and shook it. He threatened to withdraw from the Carnival competition, was calmly firm about it, and other calypsonians followed.

Change followed change. In time, instead of being simply part of the Calypso Tent shows, calypsonians such as Sparrow and Kitchener were the bosses of the tents. In retrospect, the change in Eastern Caribbean music from a frolic to an industry began with the transformation that Sparrow triggered on the business side.

Calypsonians, song-writers and bands saw the shift, took advantage of it, and moved to positions of power in the music. When soca came along, and the Sparrow type of calypso took a back seat, few seemed to notice that the very Lord Shorty who was the pivotal force in early soca, had come from that widening process that Sparrow had begun years before.

I recall a conversation with Sparrow in Toronto when the soca revolution was building. With that gurgling Sparrow chuckle, he said, "Dave, this new music here is not for me and you, you know; we have too much words." I was on the point of telling him, "Wha you talking 'bout? Is you start this s-t." Maybe I should send him a note to remind him about that conversation. There should be a row of statues in Trinidad to people such as Spree Simon and Eli Manette and The Mighty Spoiler and Gypsy and Lord Kitchener, definitely, but at the very front of the row we should be looking at a remembrance of what Sparrow did for Caribbean culture. If you measure a person by the impact that he/she has had on the human canvas, Sparrow is a giant. While we wait on the statue, we should be sending him a verbal bouquet. Here is mine.