

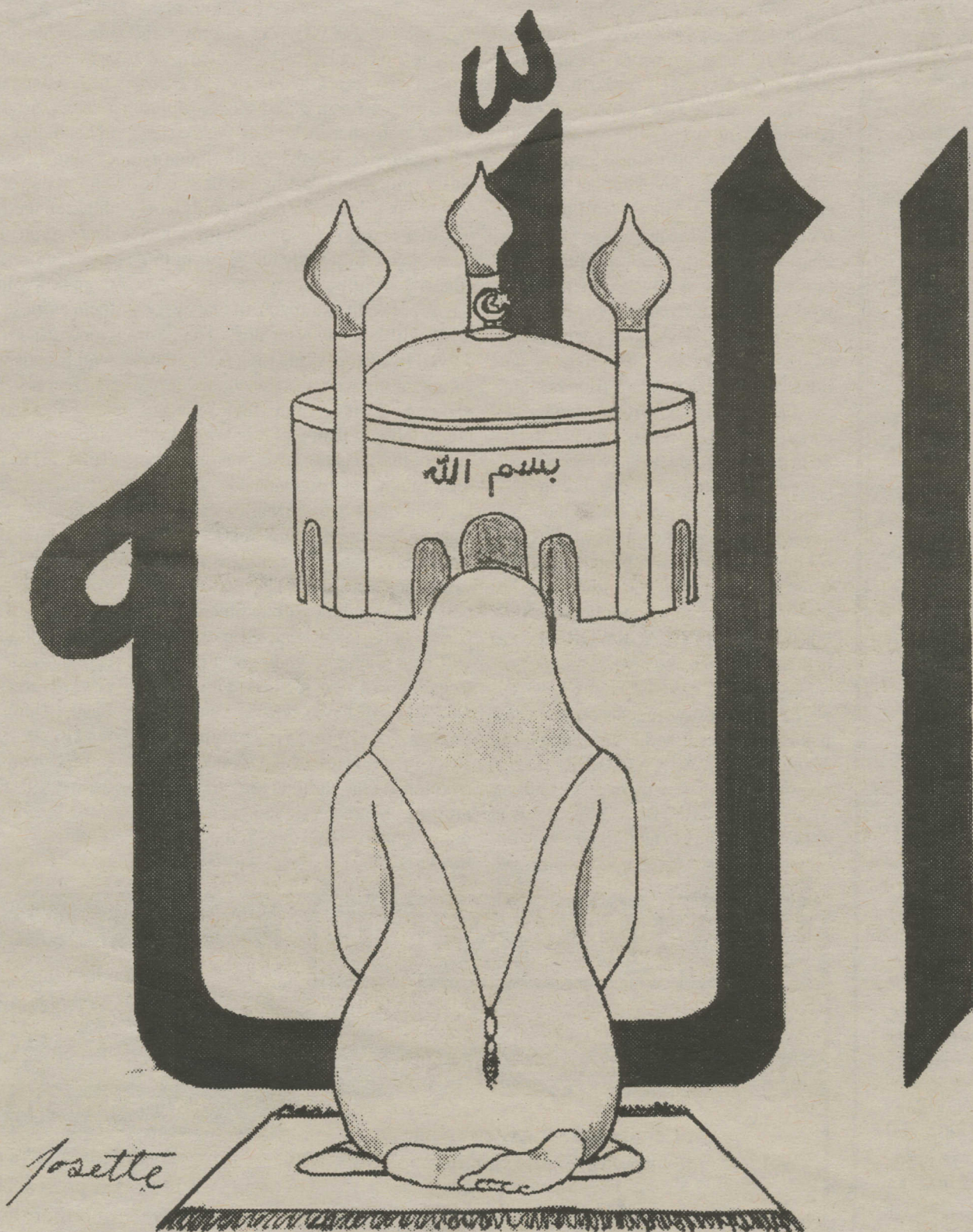
BLACKWORLD

Published Bi-Weekly by Students from the State University of New York at Stony Brook

December 5, 1994

ONE NATION

Volume 30, Number 5



Shaherzad Nezami

1971-1994

BLACKWORLD

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THYSELF"**LAURISTINE GOMES
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**WE ARE
ONE
NATION!**

editorial

I cannot welcome you, the BLACKWORLD readers, to another issue and greet you as I normally would. I cannot act as though everything is the same, as though BLACKWORLD is the same as last issue. Though I would like to change the tragedy that has occurred since our last paper, I cannot. And so instead of looking forward in excitement to this editorial, it is with dread that I write these words.

Shaherzad Nezami, a woman I knew simply as "Shari", was killed on Sunday, November 13th. She died from injuries sustained in a car accident involving the careless, reckless driving of her husband Ron Rothenberg. These are the sketchy details of Shari's death. At age 23, the details of Shari's life were more complex than any writing so far could exhibit. Above all things, Shari was a Muslim woman. She kept herself covered, adhered to Allah's teachings and tried to show love to her fellow man. But Shari was also a writer. Her professors remember how seriously she took her work, and what excellent papers were drawn at her hand. And her poetry is full of the images of life. The lives of nations, women, sisters and friends. She lived everything she wrote, whether vicariously through others or for herself. So in order to chronicle that Shari is gone, it is necessary for me to distance myself from her. But I cannot act as though I never knew Shari, a woman whom I described as a friend of a friend. I cannot act as if I didn't cry when I found out she was gone. I can only honor her by offering this issue of BLACKWORLD as a dedication to her memory.

BLACKWORLD, the newspaper for all minority students on this campus is often described as a mouthpiece. Many times, BLACKWORLD is used to commemorate happy times and events at Stony Brook. But BLACKWORLD's duties sometimes extend to focusing on unhappy events. As people of color, we

have become accustomed to burying our family members killed before their time. And with each brother or sister lost, the wounds grow deeper and harder to mend. At Stony Brook we get caught up in the feeling that we are immune to life's heartaches. We are all the way out in the boon-docks, how can the pain of city life touch us? As a member of BLACKWORLD, this is the second paper I've worked on to memorialize a fellow student. The first was in the fall semester of 1993 when Marlot Versailles, a 24 year-old Haitian student was brutally shot and stomped to death. Then, I was the Production Manager for BLACKWORLD and my turn to write the editorial had already passed. The anger I felt in his death was channeled into a poem about Black people killing each other. After that, I made sure the paper was worthy of his memory while cutting and pasting the flats to be sent to the printer. So now, I am Editor-in-Chief and my job is much the same. Only now, I must write the words of this editorial--painful as they are.

I want to tell you all that everything will be okay after this. That you will all live to see graduation from Stony Brook, along with all the people you've known here. It is not my fault for wanting to tell you that, and it is beyond my control that I cannot. We cannot escape the brutality of life or death by hiding away at Stony Brook. Marlot was killed right in Levittown, and Shari right on Route 347. The sad reality is that between now and the time you graduate, you will go to at least one funeral. The person being memorialized most likely will be a friend of yours, or a relative. Regardless of who, it will be a loved one. And you will have choices. You can be angry, distraught, frustrated, grief stricken, or you can have all of these emotions. One thing is for certain, you must be able to deal. You must do your duties whatever they be. You must pray for, write for and about, and talk about

your dead. You must support each other and understand each other's sorrow. And then, when all of that is done you have the options of crying or whatever. You cannot be paralyzed by your grief, and wallow in self-pity. Because, in life all things must change. As we are all born, we must all die. And no man or woman has power over death. Only the Creator can judge whether it is the right time or not. So as people made by the Creator, we must submit to his will and do our duties realizing that he is wisest.

As for Shari, I ask you to get to know who she was by reading the writings of those who knew her and loved her very much. Or read her poems on the last page if you want to hear her own words. "Rhapsodies" is also dedicated to Shari. The poems display the full range of human emotions as we know them. And when you finish reading about Shari, think of the friends you have and hold dear to you. Think of yourself and your deeds, the measure of your worth. Tell them how you feel about them, and hold them as close as you can. For as sure as clouds cause rain, the moments you share with friends will not be enough to touch and feel if you lose them.

Also in this issue are the usual columns, "Voices of a Sista" and "To The Heart of The Matter". The Creative Arts section is interesting, as always. And as always, we welcome your suggestions. Please drop all letters, suggestions, opinions, viewpoints, or articles off in our Polity mailbox in Suite 258, in the Union. To all BLACKWORLD readers, study hard for finals and take care of your bodies. If you feed it and give it rest, it will reward you with good performance. Lastly, thank you for taking the time to read BLACKWORLD. It is our pleasure to serve you and what support you give us, we will gladly return to you.

Lauristine Gomes
Editor-in-Chief

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POETRY BY SHAHERZAD NEZAMI

Backpage

In Support of Ujamaa Schools

Education is a tool which can be used for power, whether it be personal, economic, or political power. In America, those in power have used education as a tool to maintain their power, while denying others access to the same. The power to determine a segment of the population's futures through education has been exploited. As a result, the exploited have come up with a solution. If education is being unequally distributed and controlled, why not form separate schools? These are the problems and solutions being addressed by Ujamaa schools. Proponents of Ujamaa schools hold the belief that separate can indeed be equal. Opponents of the schools argue that separation can never be good and that since Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, integration has been the law of the land. In order to critically examine Ujamaa schools, the viewpoints presented above must be discussed.

The Ujamaa school is different from regular public schools because of its curriculum, its structure, its reason for existence, and its clientele. The Ujamaa school curriculum has a strong base in fundamental academic requirements, while Black history and culture are also taught. In addition, Family values and moral reasoning are stressed, as Ujamaa itself is Swahili for "one family". Ujamaa

schools are to be safe havens from drugs and violence, which provide appropriate same-sex role models and opportunities for same-sex bonding. Part of the school's structure is dedicated to helping with the transition from childhood to adulthood such that boys and girls have formalized, separate, initiation rites. The Ujamaa school's specific reasons for existence can be found in statistical evidence. According to a study done by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, Black students are twice as likely as White students to be physically punished by school authorities, suspended, or labeled mentally retarded. The percentage is dramatically disproportionate because Black students only constitute 16 percent of national public school enrollment. Black males particularly, are over represented in corporal punishment, student suspensions, student-grouping in low-ability classes, below average achievement scores, school dropout rates, juvenile delinquency and incarceration. How can one look at this data and not be concerned and appalled? Not to mention that 1 in 4 Black males are incarcerated or that Black men and women make up 35 percent of the 91,621 federal prison inmates and 43 percent of the almost 1.2 million inmates in state and local prisons. This small sample of information is

reason alone for the need of the Ujamaa schools.

The clients of Ujamaa schools are all Black. When the Ujamaa school first appeared, it was expressly for Black males. Because Black males were the most affected by America's policy of eating its young, creators of the schools felt that only Black males should attend. Since the inception of the Ujamaa schools, girls have begun to be included, but in separate classes. The process of inclusion is ongoing and will be complete in the future. But has integration really failed? On this, the 40th anniversary of the famous Brown vs. Board of Ed case in which the Supreme Court ruled that "separate is inherently unequal," we are forced to wrestle to find answers to the aforementioned question. From 1954 to 1964, 99 percent of Black students remained in segregated schools. It wasn't until the 1970's that desegregation reached its peak. However, because the Supreme Court gave no plan for desegregation, each state was responsible for its own efforts. As a consequence, some states like Mississippi closed schools in order to avoid having to desegregate them. Today, de facto segregation has replaced de jure segregation. The Northeast is the region with the highest level of segregation; while 50 percent

of Black students attend schools that are 90-100 percent non-white, only 24 percent of Black students attend mostly-white schools. Yet separation is fundamentally different from segregation. If a group chooses to voluntarily separate themselves it can be seen as a voluntary act of empowerment. Forced segregation, whether through school laws or residential codes, acts to take power away from those not being allowed in.

"Putting Brown into perspective, African-Americans lost more than their all-Black schools during the initial stages of school integration. They lost a cadre of devoted teachers, principals and administrators who lived in their all-Black neighborhoods and cared about them as individuals. Under court-ordered desegregation plans, Black schools usually were closed or consolidated, Black principals often were demoted and teachers were dismissed."

It is my belief that Ujamaa schools are a return to the caring, devoted

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What Community Service Means To Me

For me Community Service means exactly what it says, and that is a service performed to help benefit the community. Community Service can be a variety of things. Some of these things include going shopping for the elderly in your neighborhood, working in a community center, cleaning up neighborhood parks, and anything else that works to help better the community.

One form of community service is performed by criminals who are sentenced by judges to do community service for a certain amount of time. Unfortunately, this form is sometimes the only means of motivating people to serve their communities. In African-American communities there are many young Black people out there whose families can't afford to give them a lot of the things that they would like to have. So these young Black people go out and begin to commit crimes that allow them to get the things that they would like to have. Because of their youth they really don't realize what they are doing, and when they are caught, the judge looks at their age and usually lets them off easy by just sentencing them to do some form of community service for a certain amount of time. I feel that this can be an effective form of punishment if these young people take it seriously and don't just do it to get it out of the way. They should take this time to think about how they have

harmed their communities and now think of how they can help it. I have a few friends who have been sentenced to do community service and some of them learned from this experience while some didn't learn anything at all. Those that didn't learn anything at all ended up being sentenced to do more community service or ended up being sent to jail.

There are many organizations out there that do work to help benefit the community. One of these organizations is the Big Brother and Sister Organization. This type of organization deals with little boys and girls who usually come from a single parent home or whose parents don't have enough time to spend with them. They take these kids and pair them up with someone who becomes their big brother or sister. These adopted big brothers and big sisters do all the things that a real big brother or sister would do. Sometimes they even do more. Because these kinds of organizations can have a major effect on a little boy or girl, the applicants are interviewed very intensely. When applicants are called in for an interview, they are asked questions about their family and if they have ever used any illegal substances. One of the most important things you must have to be an effective big brother or sister is patience. You must have a tremendous amount of patience, because some of these kids need attention and they may

begin to annoy you while you are trying to give them the attention that they really need. Because they are home alone a lot of the time and have no major authority figure in their life, it might take a little while before they learn how to listen to their big brother or sister. As a volunteer for the big brother and sister organization, it is part of your job to become somewhat of an authority figure to them. If you can achieve this then you can say that you have really done something to benefit the community and help little kids.

Another form of community service is volunteering to help the homeless and the needy. You can do a variety of things to help out these unfortunate people. You can lend your services during the week by helping to serve meals or you can even work a clothing drive. Not only would you be helping people who could really use a helping hand, but you would also be establishing a high self esteem. I have a friend who has done this form of community service and she says that the feeling you get after completing this service is unbelievable. She also said that a couple of the homeless and needy that she helped out came back to the church to thank her and that just made her day.

I myself have done community service only one time and that was when I went down to my local community ser-

vice center, and volunteered to teach little kids how to play basketball. I volunteered to do this because when I was younger someone at this same center took the time out to teach me how to play. If it hadn't been for him I don't think that I would be playing basketball today. I figured that since these volunteers took the time out to teach me how to play, the least I could do was take the time out to teach these kids what I was taught, and maybe even a little more. My second reason for doing this was to be able to see these little kids run up and down the court knowing that I taught them to dribble or the proper way to shoot a jump shot.

If you are really interested in doing some sort of community service, you can contact your local schools, community centers or the Red Cross and they can give you information on getting started. The Red Cross would probably be your best option because their sole purpose is to help those in need.

There are many self centered people out there who believe they should be paid for lending their services to the needy. If you are one of those people, then my advice to you is to play a little role reversal. In other words, put yourself in the shoes of these unfortunate people and think to yourself, "if that were one of my family members I would want them helped."

by William Turnage

This Way for Black Empowerment

Crown Heights Was Not a Pogrom. But It Could Have Been A Bloodbath.



I first heard the death of Gavin Cato while I was on my way back to Manhattan from St. John's University in Queens, where I had participated in a student protest against the acquittal of four young white men who had been charged with raping a Black student. When I heard that Gavin, a seven-year-old Black child, had been run over by a car in the entourage of the Lubavitcher Grand Rebbe, I drove immediately to Crown Heights.

When I got the block where the Cato family lived, I thought I had entered a war zone. What seemed like an army of police officers dressed in riot gear were staked out across the street; some of them were up on the roofs, pointing sniper rifles. Outside the building where the Catos lived, 400 or 500 Black youth armed only with rocks and bottles faced down the police, while crowds of Hasidic men milled around.

The anger of the young Black men was directed not at the Hasidim, but at the police. It was an extremely tense situation, and I realized that there could be a bloodbath unless someone stopped it. It turned out that the Reverend Al

Sharpton, attorney Alton Maddox and Sonny Carson were inside with the Cato family. I went around the block and asked some of the Black women I saw to help me talk to the youth, but they refused. So I went back and stood in the middle of the street, demanding that the commanding officer on the scene pull back his men so I could have room to work with the youth, and to persuade these enraged young men not to give any of the officers a pretext for blowing their heads off.

For ten hours, I talked myself hoarse. Eventually, the police did pull back. The snipers were called down from the rooftops. The kids called me every nasty name in the book, but they did cool down and none of them died that day—which might not have been the case had the police been provoked into showing the kind of force that the governor's special assistant on crime, Richard Girgenti, later argued was required.

Girgenti did not interview me for his report. He was originally assigned by the governor only to investigate the stabbing of Yankel Rosenbaum and the subsequent prosecution and acquittal of

Lemrick Nelson. It was not until the day after Senator Alfonse D'Amato announced his intention to run for governor that Mario Cuomo—apparently concerned to prevent conservative Jewish voters' defection to D'Amato—that expanded Girgenti's mandate to include an investigation of the Crown Heights riot and the conduct of the Dinkins administration in dealing with them. When politics comes before principle, even Gavin Cato and Yankel Rosenbaum must be sacrificed on the altar of political expedience. Limerick Nelson, who now faces charges for federal civil rights violations, is just the latest offering.

A number of political commentators have pointed out that Girgenti's report on Crown Heights—coming on the eve of the mayoral election in New York City last year—effectively prevented Mayor Dinkins from being reelected by placing the blame for Yankel Rosenbaum's death on Dinkins' unwillingness to allow the police to move against the Black community with sufficient force. The truth is that if the police had not acted with some restraint in that situation, New York City—and other cit-

ies around the country—might well have erupted with bloody race riots which would have made Los Angeles seem tame by comparison.

Recently, one of the police commanders I confronted in Crown Heights came over to me and introduced himself. He thanked me for the role I played in preventing a catastrophe. Sgt. Kelvin Alexander, a Black police officer who is the president of the Guardians Association (the Guardians are a fraternal organization of African American police officers), and who was also in Crown Heights in August of 1991, has said publicly that his organization endorsed my recent campaign for governor because I am offering "real solutions" to the violence crisis.

The Crown Heights incident continues to be used as a political football which opportunistic politicians of both major parties toss about for their own partisan interest. Until we take on their racialistic opportunism, violence will flourish.

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

BLACK WOMEN IN AMERICA:

The Long Walk Home (Part I)

My mother's face is sweet brown sugar. Her eyes leap. Her lips dance. Her voice carries and echoes. Her hips are wide from the eight children that have passed through them. And there are lines drawn in her cheeks and beneath her eyes, from lack of sleep or lack of peace. I have looked on that face. History is formed in its contours. I have kissed, caressed, yelled at and mourned that face. There are ancestral memories that unwind and rewind, fold and unfold in my mother's stare.

My mother was born Marsha Jefferson in Brooklyn on February 21, 1951. She was born to Dollye Mae and Roosevelt Jefferson. Her mother had been born and raised in North Carolina, her father in Virginia. But like so many Africans at the turn of the century and through World War II they came with their families to the North seeking better employment, better housing, a better political and social climate, a "better life." My mother lived in a tenement until the age of four. The ages of four to seventeen found her living in Redhook projects. My mother, her parents and five

siblings shared a three bedroom apartment. There were three daughters in one room, three sons in another and two parents in the last. The projects were new structures added to a very large and old complex. From what my mother recalls and claims, "they were not as bad then as they are now."

Her father, Roosevelt Jefferson, was a truck driver. Her mother, Dollye Mae Jefferson, was a young college-educated mother. She involved herself in clerical work, civil service and community activism. After taking a series of civil service exams and working as a clerical worker for the Board of Education, she got a job working in the Mayor's office, which she held until her retirement.

My mother's early childhood was shaped by music, church, and visits to Virginia in the summer. "I liked the South. It was beautiful. Everything was slow-paced. I had never known anything about the KKK when I was down there. I stayed with my uncle, and even though there were always rumors about the KKK, I didn't know anything about it

back then. It was very peaceful. It was like you could leave your door open and never worry about anything happening. Everyone was pleasant, always said 'good morning' to each other. Black people just seemed a lot closer down South than in the North." My mother smiles.

At the age of eight my mother was bussed to an elementary school in Flatbush. Her mother, a community activist, was determined that her children would receive an equitable education. Even though Jim Crowism, code name for segregation, was not the legal system in the North, it was a de facto reality. She vowed that her children would not suffer under America's hateful and racist oppression. Segregation had been one of the most painful aspects of Black American life. It exclaimed the second-class status of Africans in the United States. It planted in the very dreams, aspirations, spirits, and self-definitions of Black people that they did not belong in the country built on and by their own backs and blood. It likened Africans to animals, unfit to eat at the same table or urine in

the same toilets as their historical oppressors. My mother's own mother would not have her children educated and reared in the same system she had been educated and reared in. Thus she packed up her six children and set them on busses. They were going to integrated schools. My mother recalls forced integration as one of the cruelest experiences of her babyhood. "When I first got to my new school, I didn't know what a Jew was. They were just white to me. But the neighborhood that my school was in was Jewish. And they didn't want us there. It was horrible. We were children who were forced to be around people who for some reason hated us and didn't want us around. We didn't understand. We didn't learn anything about ourselves. We didn't see anything to validate our existence. The teachers and parents were very racist. We were punished harshly and unfairly. It's horrible being in a place where people don't want you, learning all sorts of stuff and nothing about you."

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To The Heart Of The Matter

by Tracy N. Hedded

Welcome again to another segment of "To The Heart of The Matter". In this issue I want to talk about loving someone so much and not getting a damn thing in return. I recently was in a situation in which I loved someone so much that I turned a deaf ear to friends, who normally consulted me. I found myself running up a ridiculously high phone bill, and all the while I did not notice I was giving and he was just taking.

I like to consider myself to be an educated, self-reliant person, who really does not depend on the company of a man. However, we all get lonely. When I am attracted to that certain someone, and they're attracted to me, a new relationship is born. During the summer I started to talk to this fine looking brother. He approached me at my job. When I saw him I said to myself, "Lord, if I can have this I shall not want anymore." He looked like Tupac, smelled like Polo Sport, talked like Billy D., needless to say he had it going on. He was so smooth.

The first month in the relationship was cool, he took me to the movies, and called me a couple of times (that was all I could expect). A few weeks after our first month anniversary, he asked me to buy him a \$236.32 stereo. I could not believe what he was asking. I was only a college student working as a cashier. Why did he think I had that kind of money? His explanation was that I would just get it on my credit card, and he would pay me back. With some hesitation I did it, I purchased the stereo on my credit card. Soon after he got the stereo he stopped calling as often. However, I really did not notice because I doubled my calling time.

Things were going well in the relationship. The end of the summer came, and I was ready to go back to Stony Brook. But he could not let me go away without me buying him a pair of boots, also with my card. I now know I was stupid, but at the time I was whipped. While at Stony Brook, I often traveled to the city to keep the relationship alive. However, on my last trip to the city, he looked into my eyes and told me he was seeing someone else, then simply walked away. He walked away leaving me over \$400.00 in debt and with the chain my Daddy gave me in his possession and emotionally distraught. Summer relationships are just that, a summer thing. Apparently, summer was over and so was I. It was time for him to get his "groove on" with his fall bunny.

I am writing to my readers of this column to let you know you can be a self-reliant, educated black woman, and still get played lovely like I did. When he cut me off the way he did, I found myself ignoring school work, ignoring my column (sorry guys I love you all), and especially ignoring closest friends. When everything was said and done, I learned an important lesson. That lesson was to listen to my friends' advice. Friends are on the outside looking in when you're involved with someone. They pick up on the non-kosher events in a relationship which we are too much in love to see.

I would like to end my column by saying I got my money and chain back, after a month probing him to mail it, and him just ignoring my request. This was the first time I was blinded by love, and hopefully the last.

"Voices of a Sista"

by R.R.

Racism- is it the dead issue some want it to be or that some think it is? It is revolting that in 1994 two sociologists can write an outrageously biased and overtly racist book stating the genetic inferiority of Blacks and pass it off as being scientific? I am speaking about The Bell Curve. Still, I hear brothers, my very own people saying that they are tired of talking about racism, and even more shocking, that they don't care about racism. Well you had better start caring because it is as much an issue today as it was hundreds of years ago. It has not been eradicated, there is still work left to do. What incites me about such statements is the obvious ignorance out of which these people speak. How can any Black person say that they don't care about racism?

Here we have two white men who are on every talk show imaginable, and making crazy cash off of this book and some can say that they don't care! It is precisely their ignorance that these men are profiting off of. It is this nonchalance that angers me. The people that say things like "Oh racism doesn't exist or it doesn't affect me," are the ones that aide in continuing it. They give it the power to perpetuate itself. Their attitude is indicative of what is wrong with some of our attitude's as African-Americans. The attitude of Acceptance, the attitude of Desensitization, and the Defeatist attitude.

Clear out the cobwebs. Being

fake, phony, brown-nosing, kissing ass and accepting the program doesn't mean that racism doesn't exist. It only means that the people who practice these things are cowards. They are scared and they allow their fear to make them powerless. Those of you who say that you don't care about racism had better damn well care. There is a quiet war being waged and it is against you and I.

I'm speaking to all the Clarence Thomas-so-called "Black Republicans"- pull yourself up by the boot strings-down with Affirmative Action-self hating fake-ass brothers and sisters out there. Those people who preach integration and don't even accept themselves for who they are. You know who I'm talking about. The ones who hate their Blackness. The Ambi and Venus de Milo users and to all the rest of you who just don't care no more! Those who think that they have everything in life, their T.V., house, and VCR and they are comfortable in life right? They're kicking it with their friends, and chilling with their girl and they ask themselves, "What is all this racism bullshit that I keep hearing about?" Well sleepy-head when you wake up out of your deluded little dream world and decide to take a good look around, I want you to tell me a few things. WHERE IN THE HELL IS YOUR POWER! Look at who is in political offices, and business offices, and STONY BROOK offices, and then tell me, with all the things you have, WHERE IN THE HELL IS YOUR POWER?

ATTENTION: GRADUATING SENIORS, CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

DESTINY JOURNAL

1995

Photographs will be taken on the 6th, 7th, and 8th for students participating in the Destiny Journal. In order to make this task easier, clubs and organizations have the option of either taking their picture at the general meeting or in the Union with the other graduating seniors. Unfortunately, the week of the 5th will be the only time these pictures will be taken, so we urge you to come out and be a part of the 1995 Destiny Journal. For any further information, please contact Daphne at 2-2954 or Dyana at 2-3107.

Thank you.

She was laughing. And running. I sat watching hard the colors, the browns, the blues, the greens, the reds, the blacks in which my people adorned themselves. And I let Dhoruba Bin Wahad's voice, his language enter me and explode in tiny visions and versions of revolution. He was crawling into and out of my chest.

And she leapt, running down toward the stage of the auditorium, her scarf and flowered skirt sharing the rhythm of her quick movements. I reached over to feel my mate's hand. "I don't like that girl," I whispered to him. "She has too much drama."

"Be quiet Aliyyah. That's my friend."

And so it ended. And so it began. I had seen the woman I would later come to know as and consider my sister.

Shari had round Persian eyes, dark with too long eyelashes, a nose slightly crooked in its reaching. Her mouth was round and curved, pouted in her quiet. And her hair like shining black cloth that spilled wisps into her face. Her frame, her body was tiny, always adorned by full clothes and balanced on clogs. She had the walk of an actress, her left arm around her front, the right arm dangling a cigarette in its hand. She blew smoke and stared.

It was in this manner that she walked up to me. It was the end of the spring semester now. I sat in front of the union. I was angry. "Hey, do you have another cigarette?" I asked her.

"No, but you can share this one." She sat beside me. "What's wrong?"

"My stupidass boyfriend."

"Donald?"

I nodded. "He makes me so mad."

"What happened?"

I related a whole tale of how he was too friendly with women. And she, smiling, urged me to talk to him, to tell him how I felt. She heard me. This was Shari listening, caring. She left to pray.

Summer passed. With its passing a new semester began. My mate moved in with his cousin, Tamara and her mate. Eventually, I too became a resident of this East Setauket house.

I was asleep on the rug when the singing invaded my dreaming. I woke up. Where was Tamara? What the hell was she doing singing at nine in the morning? I went upstairs to her bedroom. She was not there. I followed the voice into the kitchen. Shari sat, one hand on the radio, her head in her book. I could not see her face for her hair had hid it. And she sang.

"Hey, what's up Shari?" I was smiling.

"Hey, Aliyyah, what's up?"

This was the first day I saw Shari in the house. Soon, she and her mate also moved in. And this was our family.

I cannot say at which moment this woman whose name was Shari became my sister. I do not know whether it was our living together or constant talks

about Islam and being Muslim women. I do not know which Billie Holiday song played or which prayer we'd missed. I do not know which pack of Lipton noodles we six split or which cigarette we passed around the room. I do not know if it was our talks about our

FOR SHARI

mates or womanhood trials or the laughing at the front door. I do not know if it was when she told me that the editor-in-chief of a newspaper must have a vision for that paper and use all resources to the realization of such a vision. I do not know whether it was in her lectures on health and women taking care of their bodies. I do not know when that laughing, running woman first entered my womb and took residence as my sister. I know simply that she did. And all I have left are the many tales of our walking, talking, screaming, smoking, of our giggling.

Shari and Tamara sat on the rug. We were in Keller visiting Star. They were having a somber talk. I could tell by the looks on their faces. I sat, lit up a cigarette. "I'm quitting school," I announced.

Tamara looked at me with incredulous eyes. Shari looked concerned.

"I just can't take it," I went on. "I hate this school. I hate everything." It was a melodramatic moment.

"Aliyyah, what's the matter?"

I answered Shari's question with my boyfriend's name. We'd broken up.

"Oh my God. I thought it was serious. What's the matter Aliyyah? You a baby? You need a tity to suck on? Here, I'll give you one." She and Tamara laughed at my pouting. "Oh come on, this is ridiculous. Have a smoke. You'll be fine."

I took another cigarette. And we were again complaining about classes and men, with echoes and laughing in our voices.

This was how I knew Shari. She was apart of our landscape. We sat in the Press office and talked and laughed. We sat outside, sipped Coke, smoked cigarettes and laughed. Shari's humor was grounded in woman, in womanhood. She loved to laugh at the way American culture materializes, objectifies, capitalizes and feeds off of the bodies of women. And so a joke about douching or maxipads would spill out of Shari's mouth between drags off of a Camel.

I sat in the BLACKWORLD office with Tamara. It was the end of the second spring semester of our friendship. We sat at the computers. Shari walked in, her eyes bewildered. She'd been crying. Tamara and I talked to her about the cause of her weeping. And I learned for the first time the tremendous delicacy of

Shari. An aspect of her that loved too hard and for too long, that gave too much and saved little of herself. Shari had lived, as most women I've known, with horror stories of passage into womanhood, with a growing that ached. And I wanted for her a peace and a

harshness I pray for in all my sisters. I wanted her to take up arms against any person or institution that hurt her, be it a lover, a rainfall, a country. I wanted my sister to save herself.

The call came at 6:30, on the evening of my 21st birthday. It was Simone. She had bad news. "Shari died." Late the previous evening.

I don't know when it began, my search for Shari. But I spent the following days seeking my sister. Someone, something had stolen my sister. And now I must find her. I must find her in Sajdah (a position in Islamic prayer) in the smaller Press office. I must find her peeking into my window. I must find Shari lying on my bed. I must find her crunching on the moon or gulping rain. I must find my sister hiding in tree branches or

forming circles of my cigarette smoke. I must hear again that voice spilling out of Billie Holiday blues. I must put braids in her hair, sit her on my lap. I must see Shari again and hide from her glare when Tamara and I joked about people's bad manners or bad fashion sense. But I did not. The next time I saw my sister she was in a coffin already given to the ground. The nearest I got to Shari was to throw dirt onto the pine box that now carried and concealed her. I knelt near and felt the earth as it now contained my sister and wept for knowing that those Persian eyes would not again look on mine until all eyes meet the Creator. I put my hand to my belly and felt the hole from which Shari was carved out. And I maintain that my sister was stolen.

I do not know how to say goodbye to one I never thought to separate myself from. But I've grown tired of writing to the dead. And so I say to my sister as she herself so often said, "Hey, wanna have a smoke before you go?" And I ask Allah to hold my sister in His warmth and mercy, to forgive her sins, to cast off the punishments of the grave, to spoil my sister as she needed spoiling in life and to have mercy on the living.

I will again see you, Sister Shaherzad Nezami.

Soon...

Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman

Sister

My relationship with Shari was a relationship which was unique in various ways. The reason why I viewed my relationship with Shari to be unique was because she was always concerned about where I was going in life and how close I was to Allah. Her view on life and in life meant a lot to people who were close to her, or who just saw her in passing. I remember when we would rush to the Muslim Student Association to pray just before sun down. It was funny how we would cease everything we were doing only to make a mad dash to the Humanities building. There were also times when we would have to pray at the Press' archives room because we would think we didn't have enough time to walk across campus to make salat.

Although being spiritual was an integral part of my sister's life, she was interested about the social aspect of my life. She would ask me her favorite question, "Darren when are you going to find someone and settle down?" and of course I would respond by saying "Shari there is nothing for me on this campus and besides I am too demanding." She would look at me and then smile as if she had heard the same excuse from me over and over again. However, deep down inside she knew where I was coming from irrespective of my excessively played out

excuse. Shari was also my disciplinarian especially when it came to my studies. She would yell at me for missing class, when I woke up too late or when I was preoccupied and doing something else which was not as important as attending class. One day Shari came into the office I was hanging out in only to tell me that I had better get to class or else. Then I had to remind her that I had already talked to her about dropping that class we were both taking. She said, "Oh yea, I forgot. OK I'll see you later, come on Ron." Aside from being concerned about my studies, social life, or health, there were also times when Shari would read me when I gave her drama at the wrong time. But usually we always gave each other drama most of the time.

Shari I shall miss you always and I am constantly reminded of you when I frequent the places we used to hang out in. I walk through the campus longing to hear you say "What's going on with you?" Sometimes I come on campus thinking I am going to see you only to come to the realization that you are no longer here. You were my sister and my friend and I shall always love you.

Love,

Darren

BACKFLASHES

It is funny to think about it now, but when Shari and I first met we despised each other. It was strange, but despite all this dislike, we knew nothing about each other at all. I first met Shari when the Israeli ambassador came to Stony Brook to deliver a lecture on the Middle East. My own interest in the matter was merely in passing, so I lingered at the door of the Union ballroom just to have a glimpse of the goings on. And that was when I first saw Shari. She had stood up during the question and answer session to challenge the ambassador, the likes of which I would never do. I don't remember what she had said, but the fiery passion which drove her made quite an impression on me. When she had finished grilling the ambassador she quietly gathered her things and proceeded to leave before the discussion had ended. All the eyes in the ballroom followed her as she left. She was proud and defiant as she left, refusing to acknowledge the stares of the audience. She continued out this way in staunch defiance until she came to the door. There she stopped, hesitating for a moment, then turned to look me square in the eye. We looked at each other meaningfully for a few more moments, and then she turned and left.

I told her later on, after I had become friends with her, that at the time I had strongly disapproved of the anger and the passion that had driven her words that night. But as I got to know her more I also had to admit to her that I had totally misunderstood the quality of her emotions. She did not have an ounce of hatred for anyone, only a deep and profound yearning for justice. I found that there had been no true anger in her voice that fateful night, only the longing for a better world, a longing that we all share. Such was her yearning that it never wavered, even as her young life had treated her cruelly, even as she came to experience the remarkable injustice of the world. How often did she speak to me about the pain of her life? How often did we come to share that pain together? Despite all the pain she had endured, she would take the time to listen to my own, to listen and to care. She was truly the most wonderful and sensitive person I have ever known, and the best friend that I have ever had. She was selfless and giving and there for me always. She cared for her friends more than she cared about herself. In retrospect, I wish she had given herself more credit than she did. I always warned her that she was too selfless, as if there could be such a thing, that her sense of loyalty and obligation to the people she loved bordered on self-immolation. Tragically, this has proven prophetic. Those who did not

know her don't understand how lonely she had been in her brief life. She had experienced much anguish and loss. All she ever wanted was to undo the emptiness that she felt in her life. All she ever wanted was to love and to be loved. Ultimately, despite all the protestations of myself and other friends, she loved too much and for the wrong reasons, and it wound up costing Shari her life.

Of course on that fateful night none of this was known to me. All I saw were superficial signs of pointless rage. I had no conception of the noble and beautiful heart that fueled it. I am sure my disapproval registered itself in my eyes that night as we stood glancing at each other at the ballroom door, just as her own eyes bespoke her defiance and her disapproval of me. Yet in reflection back on the event, I remember that even at the time before the embellishments of memory could have their influence, I felt that there had been something more to it than that, that even though we didn't know each other at all, in some profound way our lives had been brought together. I never understood it then, and I still can not understand it now. As our friendship blossomed and grew, I always meant to ask Shari about that night, although it would have been awkward to mention the foolishness of those early times. I pictured in my mind a time off into the future when she had achieved her dream of becoming a professor in religious studies and I had gone on to my own career when we both could sit back and laugh at the stupidity of youth and think nostalgically of those times. Now we will never have the opportunity to do so.

At any rate, on that fateful night and in the immediate weeks that followed it, our so-called relationship was built upon that one meaningful glance. Afterward, when we saw each other in the Union, we would trade the same sort of furtive glances. Something silently was being passed between us, something that both of us were aware of even though we remained strangers. Perhaps I was just uneasy. Perhaps I could not conceal the ill light in which I held her at the time. Whatever it was, she had no trouble whatsoever perceiving it. This fact was confirmed for me in the starkest terms when one night a few weeks after our first encounter Shari approached me out of the clear blue and addressed herself to me. She asked me if some of the things that she had said and written for the Press had offended me. Her manner was gentle and kind, and yet I was totally shocked and unprepared for it. I ignored her question and told her brusquely, but truthfully at the time, that I didn't know her nor cared to know her. I then quickly darted away, resolving never to see this strange per-

son again.

Fortunately, fate was not done with either of us. At about the beginning of October during the same semester, I became friends with Farah who unbeknownst to me was also friends with Shari. For the first few weeks of our friendship Shari's name was never raised. Then one day as I sat in Farah's dorm room she told me that a close friend of hers was going to move in with her, and that her friend was coming over that night. Not knowing who this friend was, I sat there waiting to meet her without much anticipation or concern. Needless to say, I was totally flabbergasted when Shari walked through the door.

At first Shari and I both resolved to be civil. This meant avoiding each other as much as we could and not saying a word to each other when we could not. Finally, Farah, who had become disgusted with our behavior, arranged that all of us should go out one night to break the ice.

It was on Farah's part a noble effort, but the night turned into a disaster. For the first hour Shari and I refused to address each other at all. When we finally did speak it was only to trade insults. I must say that it had not been planned this way. I imagine we both approached that night as an opportunity to truly give each other a chance. However, these things are much easier said than done. For weeks afterward, Shari and I took turns haranguing Farah, each one of us telling her how we simply could not believe she would be friends with someone like the other. To her credit, Farah stood her ground and correctly told us both to grow up.

What ultimately brought Shari and I together was a combination of blind luck and, strange as it may sound, a dream. Early in the spring of the following semester Shari unexpectedly moved onto my hall in Greeley. I never really stopped to ponder the gross improbability of this event, but at the time I felt that I was the most unlucky person on earth. Shari, for her part, was as taken aback by the turn of events as I was. Neither one of us knew exactly how to handle the situation. At first we tried vigorously to pretend that the other did not exist. We passed each other in the hallway obliviously without acknowledging that the other person was there at all.

Perhaps this childishness would have continued but for the occurrence of a strange dream that I had a couple of weeks after Shari moved onto my hall. In essence, I dreamt that I had approached Shari and talked to her and that we both agreed to be friends. It was a dream born out of the guilt I felt for never properly giving her a chance, and I am certain that

Shari felt the same guilt as I did, for a few days after this dream, and with still no encouragement from me, Shari stopped as we passed each other in the hallway and simply asked me how I was doing. From that moment forward we were friends ever after.

I remember a day two summers ago when I visited her house for the first time. We sat in her living room and talked for many hours about our lives and our dreams. As evening approached and it was time for me to go, Shari walked me to the front door and we said good-bye. However, I could not leave just yet. I had something more to tell her. I wanted to tell her how much our friendship meant to me. I told her that it gave me hope to realize that we were friends, that we had overcome so many superficial differences along the way, differences which take on so much more importance than they deserve, and that in our friendship we had overcome so much within ourselves. As I turned to leave I told her that for the first time in quite a while, I truly felt happy.

Over this past summer, Shari and I talked endlessly about her future. Shari was taking her GRE in September, and although she was an excellent student, and though she would ultimately do very well on the exam, Shari worried about it just the same. Yet this apprehension was more than simple anxiousness. There was the most passionate yet plaintive longing in her voice as she talked about her future aspirations. Shari had placed so much stock in the future. In it she fostered all her hopes and dreams. She saw in the future an escape from the misery of the past and a cessation of the pain she felt so much in the present, though she tried so bravely to conceal it. As unbearable as her death has been, I find it even more unbearable that all her hopes and dreams, dreams which she talked about so often and with such yearning, are now no more.

Shari Nezami was 23 years old, with all her life literally in front of her, when she died in a car accident on the night of November 12th. I talked to her on the phone that night just a few hours before she died. Her voice was sad and weary as she told me that she would call me back when she got home. I didn't hear from her again that night, though I didn't think it meant anything unusual. The next morning I called her home expecting to talk to her. We were planning to go into New York City that day. It was then that I heard she was dead.

In the brief time since she died, and as the shock slowly passes, I have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Jesus De Mio

Crown of thorns
 Pressure on your brain
 blood
 dripping
 from your
 temples
 Clouds your vision
 Walking in the land of the living dead
 Barren desert of cactus thorns
 The sun beats down on your head
 But all is Black
 Barren land of cacti thorns
 Outstretched hands
 Razor sharp finger tips
 Slice your wrists
 Scar your face
 Too late to hold you
 in my arms
 Surround you with my
 self
 Outstretched hands
 Bear no resemblance to...
 I still love you
 Is it you?

Editor's Note:

"The poems on this page were written by Shaherzad Nezami. "Jesus de Mio" and "Oppression" were previously printed in BLACKWORLD Volume 29 Number 5. The poems on the following page were written by two of Shari's friends. It is their hope that these poems will serve to honor Shari's memory, and show their feelings in the wake of her death."

tamara bell

Oppression

Wide concrete paved streets
 lined with high rises
 Dime sized roaches flood my sink
 And sometimes at night a bullet pierces the air
 Leaving many to wonder
 If the government's armed agents are them or us
 Meanwhile...
 Tortured bodies of bloody peasants line
 dirt trodden roads
 Decapitated for speaking too loud or not at all
 Whether you walked upright or crawled
 Pinochet's billy clubs smashed in your scalp
 You gave birth to eight children
 Only to watch six die
 Four from dysentary two disappeared in the night
 Ensuring third world population decline
 So we fled to inner cities of America
 Where they cried of oppression
 Under fear of police brutality
 From their concrete palaces
 Never knowing real pain or fear.
 My grandmother buried five children
 My grandfather died from the poison of a doctor's
 needle
 Leaving behind 12 children to be fed by one woman
 As his brother fled government agents and his son
 died under house arrest from starvation
 While they sat in their concrete palaces and
 cried about their oppression and economic woes
 We died in the streets and were raped in the fields.
 Welcome to my reality.

Beautiful sister
 enveloped in a cloak
 of ancient blood and soul
 how is it that your
 muted tongue
 spoke louder than
 the screams and groans
 of thousands who have passed
 how is it that that walk
 strode strolled
 took a stride
 wider than
 higher than
 stronger than
 so many who stood before.

And in your eyes I saw
 the peace of God
 And in your smile
 the warmth of a sister's heart.
 Bell bottom tears you cried
 but fools can never tell
 diamond from glass
 my sister
 that is you
 Shine on.

Shari N.

On The Fact You're Not Here

And you are daily missed
by these left here on this earth
after all the trouble, what's life really worth?

The pain of all the tears
burning on your cheeks
weekly breakups being the fruit that you reaped

When only sowing seeds of love
was that your destiny
the Creator's plan for what you'd suffer of?

Your little sisters are crying
feeling hatred and an empty hole
their stomachs are in knots, cannot gain control

On the fact you're not here
many a prayer and meditation
offered with souls pained, but full of dedication

At peace some say
but either way it has been done
through his will never again to glide past in the Union

Your clogs clop-clopping
whirling in your whirlwind life
devoted to the man responsible for your strife

The sisters you claimed
as proponents and advisers
tried stepping in and you resigned, "Allah is wisest."

So let us not judge
as everyman feels compelled to
nobody can be saved from what their life must do

And yours, my beautiful sister
has been to show us how humanity
and love of God are really meant to be.

Lauristine Gomes

SELFISH DECLARATION (FOR SHARI)

I'VE APOLOGIZED
WITH MANY AN ELOQUENT WORD
BEFORE
THEREFORE I
WILL REMAIN SILENT
IN HOPES THAT
THIS TIME
YOU KNOW
THAT I MEAN IT.

TAMARA

In Reaction to the Murder of my Sister

so now
i want to be you
i want my wise, your wise
my laugh, your laugh
my sight, your sight
not so much because you

fed sugar to my sweet tooth
blanketed my cold
caught my tears and drank them

not so much because you

meant to marry Castro
spoke of Intifada
shed real tears for Africa

i scream that my continuing
should not be without
you
i scream that it isn't fair
i scream that for all you gave
the dreamless sleep we spoke of so often
is no compensation

i scream that i know
i scream that i suffered
through your epic tales of a woman
rendered tired from the weight
of the monster that is man

i scream that i know
and i screamed then

because when you sighed - "Shine on"
while the willow that was you
walked straight into the gale
and never bent

or returned
i wanted to be you

it isn't fair
but
i look around at justice
and do not attempt to compare
my empty with pain
my rage will not allow
acceptance
makes me mute
therefore i retreat
into my in
knowing there you and you
sing a duct.

tamara

Creative Arts

EXHIBIT ON BLACK MALES

"I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe, nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids - and I might even be said to possess a mind." These words from Ralph Ellison's 1947 novel, *Invisible Man*, greet you as you walk into the Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art exhibit in the Whitney Museum of American Art. I found these words an appropriate introduction considering the museum is located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan where the majority of the people who live there have negative images of Black men.

The exhibit consists of mixed-media art by men and women of varying ethnic backgrounds. They explore many aspects of Black manhood in different ways. Speakers are scheduled. Some of which are artists who are represented in the exhibit. Seminars are also scheduled. Movies such as *Shaft*, and *Menace II Society* give you one viewpoint. There are rooms with televisions broadcasting statistics about Black men, and thoughts on changing the state they are in. Large pictures and drawings also give another perspective on the subject. The variety of media which is presented keeps you immersed in the exhibit. I found myself

standing in front of many works amazed and intrigued with what the artist was saying and how he/she went about presenting their thoughts.

Adrian Piper's *Vanilla Nightmares* is a series of charcoal drawings which struck me as ingenious. One piece is a sea of Black faces looking in one direction. The drawing is over an American Express advertisement with the logo "Membership Has Its Privileges" uncovered. There are drawings over other advertisements for this series which are just as thought provoking. Piper also contributes a piece which features a different medium. *Circular Wood Environment* is an unconventional work. It is a circular black room which features four pictures of Black men accompanied by four headphones. Each headphone has a different tape spewing rhetoric from a white female voice like, "Some of my best friends are Black. If they leave me alone, I'll leave them alone..." Other artists give a more retrospective look at Black men. Danny Tisdale has a series which features photographs on canvas regarding a lynching and a man with whip marks all over his back. He shows how the public has been desensitized to the cruel treatment Black men have been given in this country. The photos are repeated in a square of nine. At first glance the pictures

made me sick. Then, I began focusing on the other parts of the picture. The act which was portrayed didn't seem as horrible for a few minutes. It made me think about how society still views acts of crime towards Black men.

There are various pieces which are as shocking and true as the ones I have mentioned which appear in the exhibit. It is important for Black men and women to see this exhibit, and really think about who Black men are, how they are seen and their importance in society. But, as I looked around the museum, I noticed that there were very few Black faces to be found. Why is it that Black people are always complaining about negative representation, and people who make it and forget their roots, yet when something positive is being put forth by a Black person White people made up the majority of the appreciating public? These issues do not have to concern them, but they will always concern us.

The idea for this exhibit came from Thelma Golden, a Black woman who is the curator for the Whitney Museum. She has done an exceptional job of representing Black men. I hope that we will support her efforts. The exhibit ends March 5, 1995, so we will all have time to see it. Hopefully, everyone will.

by Dorothy Jackson

Calling all aspiring actors
and actresses: BE ON THE
LOOK OUT FOR
"STONY BROOK
PRODUCER'S CHOICE"
... Coming soon to a
television station near you.

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BLACK WOMEN IN AMERICA

My mother's first realization of being Black came through the experience of attending an all-white school. Integration was a terrible farce. It was a bandaid on a bullet wound. Africans were being bled to death and rather than allow them the sociopolitical power, the cultural and religious definition, the wholistic liberation needed for their survival, America allowed their babies to sit next to its babies, to be completely dominated by and acculturated into its oppressive culture. It put in plain view just how much Africans were denied in America. My mother had not know how poor her family was until she saw how whites in her neighboring town lived.

At approximately the same time my mother discovered what her race was and the implications of such, she also learned what her gender was and the implications of that. Society had invaded her home, and its misogynous tendencies crept into her existence. "My father made a distinction between the male and female children. He was harder on us. The girls had more chores. The boys didn't have to do anything. The girls were punished more and got worse spankings for the same bad behavior. The boys could go out when they wanted. The girls couldn't have boyfriends. We were expected to just get married. It was extremely difficult to grow up in such a close-knit family, and one group was treated so differently from the other." At a single-digit age my mother was forced to acknowledge a life of struggle. She was both Black and female. She, like her mothers before her and the daughters after her, would suffer under the lash of both racism and sexism. She would be hated, misjudged, downcast, excluded, marginalized, and mistreated for the crime of having a Black womb.

My mother entered high school in the Fall of 1962. Again she attended a school that was not in her neighborhood, that was not reflective of her cultural, ethnic, economic, sociopolitical realities. She went to Erasmus High School. Her political consciousness and awareness of the race-gender-class struggle had already taken form. Her father believed that a people's advancement was partially based on education, on self-

realization, on political analysis. Each day he sat with his children to watch the evening news and held nightly discussions on what had appeared on it. He had attended the March on Washington, considering it a milestone in his life. It was on my mother's 14 birthday that Malcolm X was assassinated. Recalling the riots and hateful sentiments in her high school, my mother pauses to think of her freshman year. Her face changes. She was 14 in her first high school year. "Malcolm X was killed on my 14th birthday," she reminds me. "I felt cheated as usual. I didn't understand. People were in so much conflict. A lot of people didn't understand Malcolm. He was for protecting yourself and your rights against tyranny. He was not about being an aggressor. But the government has always tried to undermine our leaders, no matter what the message. They make a concerted effort to control our thinking, our quality of life in terms of withholding whatever we need.... I had never really considered the Nation of Islam a religious group. They were more like a nationalist group or political organization. I had never heard Malcolm speak in person. I had seen him on the television and heard him on the radio. Black people really felt that the government was responsible for his murder." America is very efficient with disposing of Black leaders who articulate and struggle against the realities of African life in the United States. It infiltrates their organizations. It uses divide and conquer tactics. And it murderously stamps them out. "Black people were crying in the streets when Martin Luther King died. What an injustice! Martin Luther King was a very, very, educated man. He preached non-violence. He appealed to the higher ideals in human beings. He was a humanitarian. My whole family used to sit in the front of the television and listen to him on the news. Everybody was sad when he got killed. I think even more so than when Kennedy was killed. I was in school that day. And it was announced. I came home, and it was on the news. Nina Simone wrote such a beautiful song for him. I just cried." (She is shaking her head.)

by Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman

Editor's note:

"Due to the length of this article, the conclusion will be printed in the next issue of BLACKWORLD."

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BACKFLASHES

begun to try and come to terms with her death. More than anything I have thought about all the times she talked about dying young. There was the strangest sense of fatalism about her life, a sense of foreboding tragedy that Shari recognized and understood. This foreboding added so much weight and so much sadness to her life. So many times as we talked about her dreams a shroud of sadness would come over her and she would be silent for a long moment and think about her dreams informed by her presentiment of impending death and shutter and cry out almost pleadingly about how important her aspirations were to her and how she only wished to have more time to live them, to be happy, though she wasn't sure if she would. Indeed, in thinking about Shari's life I am most struck by her apparent contradiction, her premonition of death and the fervent way she lived her life, though in truth the two go hand in hand.

Sometimes, in remembering the circumstances through which Shari and I met and the foreboding she felt about her own death, I think long and hard about the meaning of fate, but I really do not know what to think at all. Inasmuch as I remember the foreboding which she felt about her own death, I cannot forget nor completely reconcile to this foreboding the intensity in which she lived her life and embraced her dreams. As time went on the hopefulness of her voice grew stronger and her dreams seemed more and more achievable. Shari was beginning to rethink her destiny and to have more confidence in life.

More and more when I think about it through the clarity of hindsight, I realize with a sense of futility and much self-recrimination that the foreboding Shari felt was really the crying out of an emotionally battered young woman undermined by love so tragically misdirected. As time went on Shari had begun to free herself from the encumbrances of that love, although sadly not quickly enough to have saved her life. Just as Shari was beginning to free herself, just as her own life and dreams were just beginning to come into focus, her love rose up and snuffed her dreams out forever. It tears away inside of me to realize that Shari didn't have to die that night. Ron, the man she loved so much and so self-destructively, the man whom she had sacrificed so much of her happiness for, the man whom all her friends had warned her about so many times, was at the wheel that night. Shari and Ron had been arguing that night and in the days leading up to it. As he drove down route 347, he ran two red lights and refused to stop even as Shari and Ron's brother, Ian, who was in the car as well, pleaded with him to do so, causing the accident that took Shari's

life. I think about this capricious and ultimately murderous act by the man Shari loved so much, about the senseless way her life had to end, about the betrayal this act represented, about the fear Shari was forced to suffer as she died, and I feel an overwhelming anger. Perhaps I always will, but I realize my anger will serve no purpose, that it will never bring her back, and in a way I wish I could just let it go. Certainly, I want justice to prevail in a world so often unjust, as it was to Shari, but more than that I want to remember Shari's life unclouded by anger or hatred, to remember the times we shared together, to leave my anger and my desire to see justice through momentarily aside and just to pray for Shari. To pray that she has found in death the happiness she so deserved in life, that she is finally at peace.

Since her death I have walked around this campus in a daze and thought about how unmercifully life goes on. I look at the many places Shari and I spent time together and I see others where Shari had always been, others who never knew her or will ever know her sitting where she had sat, talking where she had spoken, laughing where she had laughed, where she had studied, where she had lived. And it terrifies me to witness the indifference of the world, to realize the silence of her absence, to know how easy others rise to take her place, how easily we are all forgotten as if we never lived at all. And I so desperately want the world to stop, just for a moment, to stop its brutal progression onward and to acknowledge, even for a minute, the life of my friend. Yet the world never stops. The days and weeks and months keep turning ceaselessly and the daily responsibilities of life importune themselves upon us. There are papers to write and tests to study for and applications to fill out and so much work to be done, and with every moment the life of my friend recedes further and further into the distance and our memories of her fade, and the pain we feel subsides and then there is just life again like it always was, like it always will remain. And yet still I just want the world to stop, just for a moment, and to realize that such a beautiful person had lived and to linger a moment in their dreams, to partake in the spirit of her life, and to know how much I loved her as a friend. Shari, I loved you very, very much. As long as I live I will never forget you, no matter what the ravages of time. Goodbye...

by Ian Asch

Editor's note: "This work appears courtesy of The Press newspaper. It previously appeared in Volume XVI Number VI of The Press."

opinions

Racism In The Classroom

I have been running into a lot of racism that is aimed at Black people from professors, and it is sickening. I am sick of the Professors belittling and insulting Black people. If they are doing it because they think it is cute, or to gain approval from the students, they are only showing how egotistical and insecure they are. Leave Black people alone. If you are a racist professor, then you should not be teaching. There should be a test to screen teachers, and people in authority because they can abuse their power. Professors that are racist need to be reported, so they can be booted out of here.

Students from all nationalities and cultures come here to learn and should not have to experience racist remarks in the classroom. It is unprofessional, backwards, and tacky. Professors who engage in this kind of behavior should be reported, and when they are evaluated, do not fail to mention the negative effect their racism had on you, it may even affect your performance in class. Rules and laws have to be changed to protect Black students, and all students from being targeted by racist professors.

I have a professor who incorporated his backwards, racist hypothesis

with the book he assigned to class. He is so racist that it is backfiring on him. He even gave a C+ to a White guy, because his paper didn't coincide with his racist doctrine. IDIOT!!

Professors who are racist are not only ignorant, they are deemed educated fools. They are not only fearful/paranoid, of Blacks, but they have limited minds and experiences with other nationalities. Technically, they are educated, but they are ignorant. They do not possess an open mind. The only thing they know about other people from different backgrounds are stereotypes that perpetuate ignorance

and lies about other races. It is so stupid, that I, as a Black woman have to laugh.

Some of the lies perpetuated by White racists are that Black women are promiscuous, are bad mothers, and wives, are sluts, and Black men don't take care of their families. We are not responsible. Black people talk loud, are drug dealers, and want to rob White people. I laugh at these stereotypes. To think that people can believe that about a whole race of people is appalling! (There are good and bad people in every race, nationality)!!!!!!

JUDAH

WHY ARE THERE FEW BLACKS IN THE SPIRIT CLUB?

Well, to answer this question properly, let's go to the beginning. For the longest time the only school spirit found on Stony Brook campus was generated by the USB Cheerleaders. Over the years, the school wanted a change, and that's when the kickline came on to the scene. As of last year, the voice of African American students was finally heard and the Step Boosters were introduced (If everyone else can have a group to see at the games, than so should we).

As many of you know the Kickline and Cheerleaders are predominantly white, there are two exceptions, the brother on the Cheerleading squad and the sistah on the Kickline. Are they the tokens being used to help the basketball team advance to Division I? You decide. The Step Boosters are all Black, and many people wonder why.

Many sistahs have come to me asking if there is a cheerleading squad and if so, are they any good. I tell each person that they have to judge that for themselves. The cheerleaders were known for their stiff arm movements, slight stunts and performance of each cheer in a high pitched unified voice. Many of the sistahs on campus come from Black high schools where their cheerleaders were more like boosters. They performed cheers with stomps and claps, turns and shouts. There is a big difference here and it bothers a lot of people who come here and wish to try-out for the squad. It's not something that they would rush to join, they want some-

thing that's suited for them. Kickline isn't the answer either. Many Black students on campus like to dance, but not in the style that Kickline performs in. It's like watching hip-hop Rockettes. The music is fine, the costumes look good, they are all in precision, but those high kicks are too much for us to handle.

That brings me to the Step Boosters. These sistahs bring their ideas from high school and turn it around to appeal to the audience of the Stony Brook community. Not only do they perform with heart, but the audience really enjoys watching them perform. Black and white alike have complemented on the hard work and how good the girls look when they perform. It's time again for another change and the Step Boosters have brought that to this campus.

The Spirit Club is the umbrella which the three groups are under. They (the groups) are expected to perform at the various team games. Each group is allowed two teams to perform for. The Cheerleaders have Football and lacrosse, Kickline has football, lacrosse and basketball, and the Step boosters have football and basketball. They each perform where they know they'll be heard the best. The club is still new, but shaping up.

Last year was the first time that the three groups performed together. There was a Spirit Night, which was a success, but also very upsetting (if most of you remember). Kickline and the Step Boosters were to perform to Janet

Jackson's "If." Apparently, one of the groups took the song and some moves from the other (and it wasn't the Step Boosters). As a result, the Step Boosters ended up sitting on the sidelines, unable to do their dance, while Kickline was kicking it up to their stolen music.

For the rest of the year, there was animosity between the groups. It was discovered recently that the Spirit Club advisor, Mark Newmark had a lot to do with that. It seems that "father spirit" was putting the groups against each other hoping to spark competition between the girls. It wasn't fair for either of the groups. They never had the chance to get to know each other properly, they just hated each other. Since the Step Boosters were new, everyone expected them to perform at all of the home games during the basketball season. That wasn't possible. A schedule had to be worked out between Kickline and the Step Boosters so they wouldn't perform on the same game nights. Many of the students were upset by that, but we had to keep face and go along with it otherwise the Step Boosters would not have been back for this academic year. Issues of when Kickline would say something and the Step Boosters would be questioned about it. If the Step boosters even thought of complaining to anyone including their advisor, they would have been canceled for good. The only thing they could do was to perform their best at each game they attended. Kickline had the upper

hand and the Step Boosters had to cater to their needs.

There are few Blacks in the Spirit Club because there is nothing that appeals to them. Cheerleading just doesn't cut it, and forget kickline. Even though the cheerleaders have added new stunts to their routines and Kickline has finally changed its music, the black students are still not drawn to it. Each group is distinct, but has a common purpose and that is to promote school spirit.

I'm sure everyone knows about the plan for the men's basketball team to move from Division III to I. Well, it is rumored that in order for the team to move quicker in the system, their performance teams would have to be integrated. Remember the tokens mentioned earlier in this article, well have you decided if they are truly tokens or not? Considering how the two major performance teams have Blacks, do you think the requirements have been met?

Due to the problems the Step Boosters were faced with last year, weren't able to support our teams the way they planned. This year is a new year and all three groups started fresh. They aired all the dirt from last year, but, well, that was last year.

The Step Boosters are back for good with 9 dedicated sistahs, and a coach who'd got their backs.

For all those sistahs who are interested in Step Boosters, tryouts will be next semester. Peace!!

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

"No niggers allowed. 30 years ago, you could have seen a sign like this anywhere in which the public was served. As much as those signs have pained African-Americans, and regardless of how we have fought to obtain the rights freely given to whites, we still have another prejudice to overcome. However, this latest obstacle is not coming from our historical enemy, but from ourselves.

Today we live in a society where it is "cool" to call other African-Americans "nigger." We freely use this term, although we are all aware of its historical meaning. It was the way in which the white slave owners classified a multitude of people they considered beneath them. In spite of these facts, we continue to perpetuate this degrading opinion of ourselves.

Honestly, up until recently, I felt okay with calling my African-American brothers and sisters "nigger." I thought "what's in a name?" Why should I let a mere word define me, I know who I am. I even went as far as to use it as a way of showing the name gives how far we've progressed because we turned an insult around and are using it as a term of camaraderie, to be used only by a select few (as if belonging to an elite club).

Truthfully, I think I just cracked under peer pressure. My friends called to each other "What's up nigger," or "nigger please," and it all sounded so cool. Consequently, it was just a matter of time before I too was one of the cool

crowd, calling out to friends -- "wait up nigger."

As blissful as ignorance feels, it still did not manage to completely coat my conscience. I always experienced pangs of guilt. I also knew that I had better be "cool" quietly, because if my father overheard me using the word "nigger" in that manner, I would have been in for the lecture of my life. My mother, father, and fore fathers had to hear "nigger" on a daily basis. The thinking that went behind the name made it difficult for them to receive a quality education, which made it next to impossible to receive equal pay. That name was synonymous with being denied and systematically left out of the pursuit of happiness and the opportunities that provided it.

The reason I chose this topic as the focus of my article is because I see Black pride deteriorating before my eyes. Even though artists are writing socially irresponsible lyrics, that doesn't mean we have to fall under their influence. To some extent names define behavior and the more you hear something, the more inclined you are to believe it. Ultimately, the choice is yours, but while overhearing a conversation in the Student Union Deli between two African-Americans, in which they referred to each other as "niggers," I couldn't help but to think to myself, "that's a harsh way to refer to your sisters and brothers."

by Monifa Heaven Wilson

opinions

WHY AREN'T THERE ANY DAY CLASSES AT STONY BROOK?

It is time to register for Spring classes, and as I look through the '95 bulletin, I see that there are no day classes available. I am paying over \$3000.00 a semester for classes and I am not able to take classes in the daytime because some lazy-ass professor wants to sleep all day. To say I am pissed is putting it lightly! This school is not worth the aggravation. Please tell your friends and relatives not to come here.

A friend of mine said something very insightful as to the reason why they are INCONVENIENCING students by not offering day classes and that is because they want students to stay an extra semester or year, so they can make more money. The greedy, blood-sucking bastards! They seem to have professors available for these boring science courses in the daytime, but the really important courses such as English 205 have no daytime courses which is totally ridiculous. I want my money back, so I can go elsewhere. I can do without this needless aggravation. Is this a continuing education school or what? All that I see in the bulletin is evening classes. Don't these people know that people working in the evenings, and there are some students that are mothers and only have the time to attend classes in the daytime? One of my classmates has to inconvenience herself and go to another school in order to graduate, and she has other obligations, such as her family, and a job which is a lot of stress in addition to this lousy

school.

Students should not have to go to other schools to take courses because of these idiots in power who don't know how to run a school. We are the consumers/customers and we should be given options and treated well, because we will take our business elsewhere if they don't change things. They try to be slick/cunning and only offer day classes in the fall semester, when freshman are coming in and then they show their true colors after the influx of new students arrive. They are like wolves in sheep's clothing.

We need day classes in English, Humanities, and core course, and we want the option of Tuesdays or Thursdays, or Monday, Wednesdays, or Friday classes. We want more than 2 sections, and if they need to hire more professors, they hire them. There are a lot of people out of work and need a job. There is no excuse to be a Scrooge, when the University makes millions of dollars and spends nothing on students. They like to take, but don't like to give anything back. Students are paying for classes, housing, and money to commute, so they should do their fair share and give us day classes in return. This is the least they could do. This school isn't all that and they should be glad if anyone comes here and stays here! I have been to two other schools, and this is the worst. Students want day classes NOW!

JUDAH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

IN SUPPORT OF UJAMAA SCHOOLS

atmosphere of pre-integration schools. The difference is that resources are not scarce as in segregated schools, and the separation is by choice. I see nothing wrong with Black people taking a vested interest in their children's educational experience. The public school system has failed to educate Black youth. Yet when those who have suffered most from the school system's "savage inequalities" set up an alternative, cries of "unfairness!" echo from the ruling class. The school system which maintains the present trend of decline in Black youths' education, must be dismantled. However, it should first be acknowledged for what it is -- a mind killer which must be stopped. Some

argue that integration can only put a halt to inequity. Integration is only a tactic in the struggle, and like any other tactic, its success depends upon conditions. Therefore we must recognize that Ujamaa schools are tactics that are fitted for our changed conditions. Brown was about having equal access to educational opportunities, not just sitting next to White students in classrooms. So if the tactic of integration has not yielded these opportunities, another tactic should be tried. During the Civil Rights era, sit-ins and marches were tactics, but there was also an underground revolutionary movement going on. These tactics were different,

yet the goal was synonymous -- that all U.S. citizens be afforded the rights of the first amendment.

The current school controversy is similar. Ujamaa schools and Brown vs Bd of Ed have in common the aspects of wanting equal chances for Black children to receive education. Because individual states have failed to enforce Brown, the creators of Ujamaa schools have looked inward to find solutions. Perhaps El-Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X) said it best when he said:

"Education is an important element in the struggle for human rights. It is the means

to help our children and thereby increase self respect. Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

Ujamaa schools are preparing Black youth for today, while the rest of the nation waits for the indefinite tomorrow of truly integrated schools to benefit Black students instead of marginalizing them.

(Quotes have been excerpted from Emerge magazine, volume V number VII pp. 38, 40)

by Lauristine Gomes

Quotable

"O you who believe! Give your response to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life, and know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, and it is He to whom you shall all be gathered."

The Holy Quran, Sura Al-Anfaal 8:24

The BLACKWORLD Collective extends good luck to everyone on their finals. Study hard, but make time for sleep and food. And remember, the reason you are here is to graduate, so REPRESENT!

Study Tip: Try not to study for more than one hour at a time. Take a short break in between so you don't get burned out.

HELL

HELL IS NOT THE
SMELL OF BURNING FLESH

OR MASSES OF EVIL PEOPLE
CROWDED IN HOT ROOMS

IT CANNOT BE THE TORTURE
YOU FEEL
WHEN HOT FIRE IS
PRESSED
AGAINST COLD FLESH

FOR WHAT IS THE PAIN OF THE FLESH
BUT MERE DISCOMFORT
WHICH WITH TIME
BECOMES COMFORTABLE ?

NO IT CANNOT BE THESE THINGS.

HELL IS
THE AGONY OF MEMORIES
WHICH THOUGH PAINFUL
THE MIND REFUSES TO FORGET

IT IS THE IMAGES
OF THE PAST
WHICH ARE THE REAL TORTURE
OF THE SOUL

THE FACES OF
SMALL CHILDREN
WHOSE EYES ARE FILLED WITH HUNGER

THE FACES WE IGNORED.

IT IS THE LOOK
IN THE EYES
OF WOMEN
WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN
DESTROYED

IT IS BEIRUT
AND PALESTINE

IT IS GUATEMALA
AND VIETNAM

IT IS THE CHILDREN
WHO WERE HUNGRY
WHO WERE HOMELESS
WHO WERE COLD

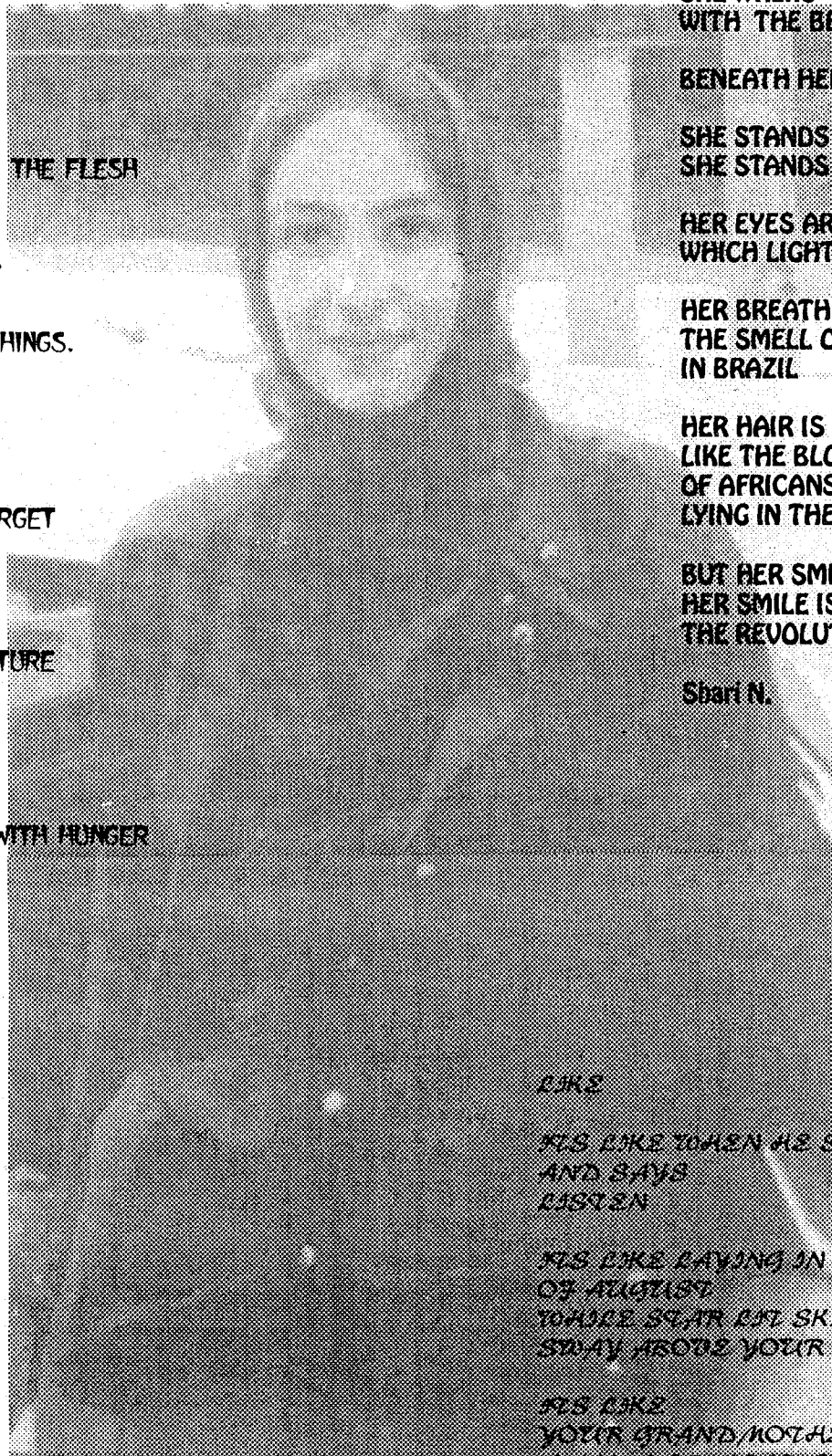
CHILDREN WE IGNORED.

NO HELL IS NOT THE MERE
DISCOMFORT OF THE FLESH

IT IS RATHER
THE TORTURE OF MEMORIES
WHICH THE MIND WILL
NOT FORGET.

Shari N.

In Her Own Words



SHE

SHE WALKS
WITH THE BEAT

BENEATH HER FEET

SHE STANDS TALL
SHE STANDS PROUD

HER EYES ARE THE FIRE
WHICH LIGHTS THE BARREN WOODS

HER BREATH
THE SMELL OF SPRING TIME
IN BRAZIL

HER HAIR IS RED
LIKE THE BLOOD
OF AFRICANS
LYING IN THE SEAS

BUT HER SMILE
HER SMILE IS THE REVOLUTION
THE REVOLUTION.

Shari N.

LIKE

ITS LIKE WHEN HE STOPS ME IN THE WOODS
AND SAYS
LISTEN

ITS LIKE LAYING IN THE COOL SUMMER BREEZE
OF AUGUST
WHILE STAR DUST SKIES
SWAY ABOVE YOUR HEAD

ITS LIKE
YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S HOME MADE WINE
MARKIN' YOUR HEAD SPIN AROUND AND AROUND

ITS LIKE WAKIN UP IN THE MORNIN
AND WATCHIN THE SUN RISE
WHEN ORANGES, BLUES, REDS, AND VIOLETS
FILL THE SKY ABOVE

ITS LIKE SEEING A WARHOL
IN SOHO OR TRIBECA
AND KNOWING ITS NOT REAL
BUT LIKING IT ANYWAY

ITS LIKE ALL THOSE THINGS
ITS LIKE LOVE.

Shari N.