



the Caribbean Writer
Where the Caribbean Imagination Embraces the World

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Dignity, Power and Place
in the Caribbean Space

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The Bob Marley Effect is Infectious

Tiffani Thames

Many are curious,
about my precious locs,
some in shock,
others gawk.
They're so mysterious
and intelligent,
frizzy locs,
are nature's natural elements,
eliminating
superfluous embellishments.

Officially,
the Alpha and the Omega
Swimming openly
along the Nile,
Egyptian queens
swaggered this hairstyle.
Embodying the red clay
of the Himba.
They strutted
with the spiritual
in the sand dunes
of India.
Stroking the Caribbean waves.
Then they swirled
the world
one by one,
like striking rays
from an unassuming sun.

My black dreadlocks
cascade
throughout my scalp.
Some skinny,
others fatty
each one has

a personality.
Steadily making interconnections,
providing a fortress
of mental protections.
It's like giving birth
through immaculate conceptions,
one hundred and thirty-two times.

Each loc resides
on different sides
of my head.
But they're united,
like the ancestral kente
woven by warp threads.
Natty dreads.
Their shared experiences
exceed boundaries
of reality,
firmly matted,
into the realm
of spirituality.

Locs are well matured,
they've endured
a revolutionary force.
As thousands
ran to the Jamaican hills,
Showing bravery
by escaping
a dreaded slavery.
The locs knocked
against one another,
making onlookers
start to shudder.
Their reputation
became righteousness.
As they fought alongside
knives and cutlasses.

Then they dance to songs
too rhythmic
for the mainstream.

Earning an enduring theme.

As martyrs,
nothing can supersede.

My dark locs
are a beacon

of light,
for the world

to ignite.

Like the coming

of the equinox,
they're unorthodox.

Blazing of self-respect,
spoken in any dialect.

I suspect,

it's quintessentially
a Bob Marley effect.

They're infectious,
leaving me breathless,

to be a segment

of this endless cycle
of human relentlessness,

is esoteric excellent.

In essence,

My locs
are my freedom-manifested.

And that:

"satisfies my soul."

Order of the British Empire

Latoya S. Smith is an author and doula living and loving in Los Angeles California. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from Bethune-Cookman College and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Lindenwood University. For the last 10 years, she has taught world history and language arts at the secondary level. Her works include two published books: *An Ode to Freckles* and *Poor Mr. Monday*. Two of her essays were recently published in *Gay Parent Magazine*.

Linda Smith holds a Ph. D. in Literatures and Languages of the Anglophone Caribbean. She is an assistant Professor of English at the University of the Virgin Islands.

Eunice Heath Tate is an author, poet, essayist whose work has been published in *The Caribbean Writer*, *Calabash*, *Merdians*, *The Jamaica Gleaner*, *Macomère*, and other anthologies. She currently resides in Central Florida where she continues to write inspirational fiction, nonfiction and poetry.

Tiffani Thames is an Associate Professor of Communications, enrolled in a doctoral program at the historical Howard University. She is a budding poet from Chicagoland, with Guyanese in-laws.

Fabian M. Thomas is a Calabash Writers Workshop Fellow. He has previously been published in *Other Countries Press* (NYC) *Sojourner: Black Gay Voices in the Age of AIDS* (1993), *Gents, Bad Boys & Barbarians: New Gay Male Poetry* (Alyson Books, 1995), *Fighting Words: Personal Essays by Black Gay Men* (Harper Collins Publishers, 1999), *Chroma: A Queer Literary Journal: Foreigners* (Issue #3, August 2005), *So Much Things To Say*, *100 Calabash Poets* (Akashic Books/Calabash International Literary Trust, February 2010), *The Caribbean Writer*, Volumes 24, 25 and 28, as well as *Jubilation!* (Peepal Tree Press, September 2012). In 2018, he self-published a collection of gratitude verses, affirmations, spoken word and prose entitled *New Thought, New Words*. In addition to being awarded gold and bronze medals for

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IN MEMORIAM *Kamau Brathwaite, Michael Gilkes, Habib Ramlal Tiwoni, Marcia Jameson*

A Compelling COLLECTION FROM ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN SPACE

POETRY

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Berkeley Wendell Semple
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Brenton Cross
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Shavar C. Whyte
Stanley Niamatali
Teresita Matos-Post
Tiffani Thames
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Trichell Cheefoon
Winston (Bobby) Nugent
Yates Young

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Neala Lunada
Patricia Harkins Pierre
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Fabian M. Thomas
Lynn Clarke
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Natasha Persaud
Scott Ting-A-Kee
Warrick Lattibeaudiere

ARTWORK

Idilko Tillman
Jade De Clerq
Paula Obe
Thajilah Olaiya



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