

FROM THE ISSUE EDITOR

It is with great pride and joy that I introduce this, the 9th issue of Poui, with its new look, new feel and revived vision. This issue is for us a redoubling of our efforts to cement the journal as a first class exponent for cutting edge independent writing from across the globe, hence the subtitle: 'Wake Up Call!'

We've done some things differently as I am sure you will notice; tweaked here and kneaded there with ideas which we believe will advance the appeal, relevance and reach of the journal. We took advantage of the presence on campus of the poet, Stewart Brown, to help with the selections. One of the more notable changes is the introduction of chapters: '...Other Brave Souls...' delineates the poetry element and 'Postcards' heads the section devoted to prose. We hope you enjoy our expansion. We will continue to work to ensure that Poui realises its full potential. With your support of course. So keep reading. Show a friend what they're missing and let them start reading. But, most importantly, keep writing. The quality of the work, much from previously unknown, unpublished writers continues to enthrall us. Thanks.

Our featured writer this issue is Mark Mcwatt whose work can be found on p13 and p53. A few years ago, as a green behind the ears first year student, Mark taught me how to pick apart a poem without raping it in a prerequisite Introduction to Poetry course at Cave Hill. Subsequently, a few semesters later he taught me how to piece it all together again. A few of the pieces ended up in my soon to be published manuscript, 'Ackee Season' and one survives as a functioning piece of avant garde theatre about a very very mad woman. That Creative Writing Poetry course was as inventive, humble and relaxed as the man himself. You will discover that that wry sense of humour has become increasingly piquant as Mark has *matured*.

This issue also contains the work of Deborah Callender's 'Rodin's Garden' to be specific. It is our sincerest honour to publish posthumously the work of a vibrant creative goddess who enriched each life she entered. Debbie we dedicate this issue to you. You will be...Sadly. Missed....

So then reintroduce yourself to Poui. Without any fancy schmancy government funding (not that we would say no to it!) or over the top launches and in your face releases, here is Poui 9 in all of its unencumbered glory. You can guarantee that we will continue to bring you, from an unbiased perspective, the highest quality writing that crosses our desks. The rest, is up to you. Welcome...to y(our) world!

Mark Jason Welch 2008

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Contributors

Stewart Brown: has taught in schools and universities in Jamaica, Nigeria, Wales and Barbados. Since 1988 he has lectured at the Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, where he is Reader in Caribbean Literature. In 2007, he was Visiting Professor in Literatures in English at UWI, Cave Hill. He has edited several anthologies of African and Caribbean writing, as well as critical studies of Derek Walcott, Kamau Brathwaite and Martin Carter. A volume of his essays on poetry, *Tourist, Traveller, Troublemaker* has just appeared. He has published four collections of poems, most recently *Elsewhere: new and selected poems*.

Jane Bryce: was born and brought up in Tanzania, and educated there, the UK and Nigeria, before joining Cave Hill in 1992 as a specialist in African literature and film, where she also teaches Creative Writing: Fiction. She worked as a freelance editor and a journalist before becoming an academic, and still contributes to newspapers and journals. She has published a short story collection, *Chameleon*, and an edited the anthology, *Caribbean Dispatches*.

Deborah T. Callender: has loved words, writing and reading all her life. She has been Immigration Officer, Teacher, AIDS Information specialist, Property Manager and Manatee Researcher. She has participated in VOICES Barbados Writers' Collective, the NCF Read-in Programme, and more recently at Le Mot Juste, and won several medals in the 2006 NIFCA Literary Arts competition. In the same year, she made the 'short list' in the Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Awards with her collection *Fragments of Friction*.

Kerri-ann Katrina Codrington: is 22 years old. She is a past student of Charles F. Broomes Memorial Primary, The Lodge School and Springer Memorial. She is an only child and a vegetarian. She has been writing for as long as she could remember; She won the Seven Seas Essay Writing Competition and the National Arbour Day Essay Competition in the past. Through the latter she was given the opportunity of meeting Prince Andrew. Writing to her is a doorway for many opportunities.

Corene Cumberbatch: is a 22 year old Barbadian UWI student in her final year of a BSc. Computer Science and Management. From an early age she was interested in writing but only gave it serious consideration when her dear friend Jason Francis continuously prompted her to do so. His prompting and support lead her to be the featured artist in the Advocate's Hello Magazine (2006), and later to the semi-finals in NIFCA Performing Arts in 2007. She desires to inspire and believes that her faith in God, her family's support and Jason's will continually help her soar to greater heights.

Dawn Victoria Hanna: born in Nassau, Bahamas, Miss Hanna was trained at the East-15 Acting School for Method acting(Essex, England) majoring in Drama and Modern British theatre. Dawn has explored many aspects of the performing arts, including music and movement. She has lived and worked in England for eight years during which time she earned membership in the British Actors Equity. She has also used the potential of her training and background

with special needs children, continuing the exploration of art as a healer. She has taken an academic break to reconnect to her roots in the Bahamas continuing to explore the visual arts and writing, and hopes eventually to go on to do a Masters and PHD program in The modernist movement in the 20th century in literature and the visual arts.

Krista Rebecca Henry: born in Montego Bay, Jamaica on April 19, 1985. A past student of the University of the West Indies, Henry graduated top of her class with first class honours in Literatures in English. Presently she works as an entertainment reporter with the Gleaner Company and the STAR- the leading newspapers of the country. Sometimes going under the pseudonym 'Rebecca Somers', Henry is a part time poet writing when the inspiration strikes and usually generated around emotional situations. She hopes to one day be as eloquent and thought provoking as poets such as Derek Walcott and Margaret Atwood.

Dee Horne: is a full professor and Chair of the English Department at the University of Northern British Columbia. She has published over 30 poems and is the editor and publisher of Scroll Press (http://scrollpress.com) and Scroll in Space (http://scrollinspace.com).

Deanne Kennedy: has written poems, stories and plays from childhood days. She first entered N.I.F.C.A. while at school, gaining a silver for poetry and a gold for embroidery. In 1993 she gained five gold and four silver awards in Visual Arts and in 1994 won the inaugural Fielding Babb Prize for landscapes. Last year she gained two gold medals in literary arts, and her poem "This Gem Named Barbados," was nominated for the Prime Minister's award. She has also won the Aids Award for three consecutive years, the UNICEF Award in 2005 and the ICC Cricket World Cup Award in 2006. Since the 1990's her poems have won awards in the International Library of Poetry in America, and she was a double winner in C.B.C.'s "Salute to Barbados" for poetry and folk songs. She was also invited to Boston to perform in their Bajan Independence Celebrations. In 2005 she launched a CD – "Adina!" which featured some of her most popular songs, stories and poems. Her work features in the first two publications of "Calabash," and she feels privileged to have been included in three editions of "Poui."

Richard Lynch: born on the 1st day of January 1981, is a young man with many hats and much less shoes. The former Queen's College student studies Literatures in English at UWI Cave Hill campus. The young man is perpetually depressed and just as determined. He enjoys tomfoolery and is pleasant to be around. He hopes you enjoy reading his work as much as he enjoyed writing it.

Mark McWatt: was born in Guyana and is Professor Emeritus of West Indian Literature at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, where he still teaches a course in Creative Writing (Poetry). He has two published collections of poetry: *Interiors* (1989) and *The Language of Eldorado* (1994), and a third collection, <u>The Journey to Le Repentir</u>, will be published in 2009. His collection of short stories, *Suspended Sentences* won the Casa de Las

Americas Award and the Commonwealth Prize for Best First Book in Canada and the Caribbean in 2006.

Renuka Maraj: is a graduate of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine and has had her poems and short stories published in the Indo-Caribbean Cultural Council's magazine *Divali 2002, POUI*, Cave Hill's Literary Annual and *Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters*. Her work will also be a part of the *Journal of Caribbean Literatures* and two of Macmillan Caribbean's upcoming anthologies.

Milt Moise: was born on the 30th of November, 1980 in Castries St.Lucia. He attended secondary school at St. Mary's College – the same secondary school that produced such luminaries such as George Odlum, Kenny Anthony, Sir Arthur Lewis and Derek Walcott. The Arts, and particularly Literature, is Milt's passion. The at times dismissive attitude to artistic expression is a theme often explored in his poems and short stories. Despite the on going battle he believes is taking place in the West Indian social realm over the value of art, he intends to become a professor of Literatures in English and a writer, positioning himself as a central combatant in this tussle.

Philip Nanton: Lecturer and freelance writer. His recent publications include contributions to 'Caribbean Dispatches: Beyond the Tourist Dream' (ed) Jane Bryce, Macmillan Caribbean, 2006. In 2008 he wrote and produced the Barbados based spoken word Cd 'Island Voices from St. Christopher & the Barracuda

Jeanne O'Day: taught Literature in college and university for twenty years. She now lives and works on St. Thomas and published in Caribbean journals.

Sam Patterson: was born in Saint Vincent. He grew up there and in New York City. He was educated in the USA and England. He divides his time between London and New York City (researching, lecturing and writing).

Lorna Pilgrim: was born in Trinidad of Barbadian parentage. In 1987, her short story *Soul in Siege* won third prize in The Tradewinds Collective National Literary Competition. The following year, *Soul-mate* won the Cedar's Prize for Excellence in Contemporary Poetry. For the past decade she has been teaching English Language from home, from the primary to tertiary level, as well as 'O' level and CAPE Literature. She gives back to her community by mentoring children in a holistic Bible group, KIDS' VIBE, three Saturday afternoons monthly. She hopes soon to devote more time to writing her first book.

Debra Providence: is a graduate student in Post-Colonial Literatures. Born in St. Vincent, she has published fiction and poetry in Cave Hill Literary Annual (POUI), Sable Literary Magazine, and non-fiction in the Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies.

Maria Soledad Rodriguez: was born in Puerto Rico, studied there and in the United

States, and lived in the South Pacific for a while. She teaches women's, Caribbean and United States Lit-erature at the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico.

Eric Rose: was born in Nassau, The Bahamas, on August 2, 1974. He received his Mass Communications and Journalism Associate degree from The College of The Bahamas and his Print Journalism Bachelor of Arts degree from Clark Atlanta University. He was recognised with The Bahamas' National Youth Achievement Award in 1992 and the Caribfest Award for Excellence in Literature in 1994. Mr. Rose shares his poetry on several broadcast programmes, and at concerts and festivals, including Carifesta IX in 2006.

Victoria Sarne: an Englishwoman far from home and far from youth, sometimes feeling like a little girl in too big shoes, I have discovered that my voice enables me to survive the good the bad and the sad times.

Sandra Sealy: is an award-winning Barbadian writer of fiction, poetry and drama, with work published in the region and beyond. Her poem "Beauty Of The Bald Head" penned in 1998, moved from page to stage in 2005, via her CD single (Butterfly Creative Productions/ Kolaiah Studios), to an award-winning music video (Pelican Films). An ejazznews.com review by John Stevenson says, "[Sandra's] foray into jazz poetry is nothing short of spectacular as she manages a perfect fit between sensual, dusky delivery, and the rollicking intensity of the crack team of Bajan jazz musicians accompanying her." Sandra has published a volume of poetry "Chronicles Of A Sea Woman"

Obediah Michael Smith: has published ten books of poems, a short novel and a cassette recording of his poems. He has participated in writers' workshops at the University of Miami and University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. He has a B.A. in Dramatics and Speech from Fisk University, and has taught English Language and Literature in high schools in New Providence, on Grand Bahama and on Inagua.

Omi J. Maya Taylor: when asked the question about why 95% of her poems are untitled the 25 year old self proclaimed "southern fried Bahamian" Omi simply replies "I believe in most cases creativity speaks for itself". For the South Carolina native of Bahamian descent creativity speaks in the form of her first self published book of poetry and prose "Body Bound, Mind Free". Independently released "Body Bound, Mind Free" lived up to its title with 65 untitled poems. Riding on the success of her 2005 debut that exceeded her expectations and those of others, Omi is taking her art to new horizons with the 2009 release of "Such Things just need to be said". Currently she resides in Atlanta, Georgia and is enjoying being a new wife and mother. She can be contacted at omi taylor@hotmail.com

Mark Jason Welch: is a Barbadian born writer and actor. His work has appeared in the recently re-launched Caribbean literary journal **BIM** and the anthology collection **Winning Words** (Foundation Publishing 2004), **From This Bridge I See** (Foundation Publishing 2005) and **The Hole and Other Stories** (Foundation Publishing 2006). Mark has also had articles and

work published in **Arts etc.** magazine and has appeared in the **Writers Ink** anthology *Bazzar!* In 2006 he was awarded the Irving Burgie Scholarship Award, in 2007 the Kamau Brathwaite Award for literary excellence. In January 2008, after being short-listed in 2003 and 2005, Mark became the recipient of the **Frank Collymore Literary Arts Endowment** with his manuscript of poetry entitled '**Ackee Season**'. Mark holds a Bachelors of Arts in Literatures in English primarily sponsored by a Prime Minister's Scholarship which he recieved in 2003. He is preparing for the publication of '**Ackee Season**'.

Nick Whittle: started reading his poetry at VOICES in 1999 and has received NIFCA Bronze Awards in 1999, 2000 and 2001. He was featured in the CBC television series Bajan Griots in 2000 and participated in the UWI Poetry Summer Workshop led by Kendel Hippolyte in 2001. He is also a visual artist and exhibits regularly.

Phillippa Yaa de Villers: after studying mime and theatre in Paris, Phillippa Yaa de Villiers returned to South Africa to work as a stage actress and improviser for ten years. As an alternative source of income she developed a career in television writing, she has written for Backstage, Takalani Sesame and Soul City among many other television shows, and collaborated with Pule Hlatshwayo and Swedish writer Charlotte Lesche to create Score, a three-hour miniseries for Swedish Broadcasting and SABC 1. In 2005 she was the runner-up best writer in the Performing Arts Network of South Africa's Festival of Contemporary Theatre Readings for her play, Where the Children Live. She has performed with Myesha Jenkins, Napo Masheane and Bushwomen. This year she appeared at the Jozi Spoken Word Festival, and was invited by National Poet Laureate of South Africa, Keorapetse Kgositsile to join James Matthews, Lebo Mashile and Khanyi Magubane at the 12th Havana International Poetry Festival this year. Recently she wrote and performed Original Skin, a one-woman show which was showcased at the Market Theatre Laboratory. After winning a grant from the Centre for the Book in November 2006, she published her first volume of poetry, Taller than Buildings, which is now in its second edition. She is currently touring the country giving readings and performances – this year she has performed in Adelaide, Australia, Birmingham, England, Havana, Johannesburg and East London. She lives in Johannesburg with her son, three dogs and a cat.

Renuka Maraj

Answer

I want to know where all the oil and gas money going?

They boasting that we rich but is pot hole in Port of Spain

Slums lining the way to town, man

And poor people risking life and limb daring across the road to the dump

Is a shame in this day and age!

Like mih pardner say
Why they doh give all ah we some money
Then who waste, loss
But most ah we smarter than them suit and tie fellars
We could show them how to run tings,
How to treat people like people
Even when is not election time;
How to take care of we own before showing off.
Yes, we go help the other countries too.
But we have to put we house in order first
From Laventille to Caroni to Cedros;
Toco too, people suffering.
Hospitals overcrowded,
Houses flooding
And relief no where in sight.

I want to know where all the oil and gas money going?

Some big boys have to do some accounting.

Yes, they have some women too but it seems is more for window dressing

Numbers doh change a culture overnight

Man tell me, tell all ah we, where the hell the money going!

Dee Horne

Climate Change

The Thames is rising, Venice is sinking. Elsewhere, desertification and forest fires prevail. Plugged in, but tuned out, people stop thinking.

Consuming goods and fuels that are drinking resources dry, they ignore the polar bears' travail. The Thames is rising, Venice is sinking.

Getting and spending without blinking, escalating debt, no economies of scale, plugged in, but tuned out, people stop thinking.

Ignore Gore and others, who are linking consumer choices to climate changes; dismiss their words as rant & rail. The Thames is rising, Venice is sinking.

Oceans, like over filled dumps, are forever stinking. Toxins abound, in food and air; no longer able to inhale, plugged in, but tuned out, people stop thinking.

Hurricanes and typhoons come too soon and ice caps are melting.

Mountain pine beetle proliferate and across the Rockies sail. The Thames is rising, Venice is sinking. Plugged in, but tuned out, people stop thinking. Jane Bryce

Going Home on the Mary-Rose

The small yellow boat hove through the water, engine chugging. Dawn was breaking and Fitz and Shakey had been out all night, fishing by the light of the reflector lamp off the Atlantic coast of the island. They had a good haul, and had set the Mary-Rose for the St. Philip shoreline, thinking of breakfast, of the price they would get for their fish, of sleep and of firing a few later with the boys in Green's rumshop.

The island lay ahead like a dormant whale, and they were still in deep waters when they saw the other boat. From the outset, there was something not right about it, something still and strange about the way it floated, unanchored and undirected, drifting on the current. As the small engine bore them closer, Fitz stood up in the prow, shading his eyes with his hands. Shakey steered, and they drove forward, bucking a little against the waves. The sun was coming up behind them, and all ahead still lay sunk in a green slumber. Fitz couldn't make out any movement, and something told him the boat was empty. Abandoned by drug runners, maybe; it happened sometimes on this side of the island. But usually they heard about it from Sarge Neville when he came for his after-hours drink at Green's, and there'd been no word about this one.

As they drew alongside, Shakey cut the engine and they bobbed on the water next to the larger craft. It was a big cruiser, a workhorse, not a pleasure craft. Just an unprotected deck, a rough covering for the controls, a cabin below, no more. The white hull, at eye-level with the two fishermen, was streaked with rust. A rusty length of cable, dangling from a ring, made a slight grating noise from time to time as the vessel shifted on the water. Fitz took an oar and maneuvered the Mary-Rose the length of the larger craft. At the stern they found a rusted iron stepladder. Shakey tied the boat to the lowest rung and followed Fitz up the steps.

The sun had risen clear of the horizon and the baby blue of the deck reflected the early sunlight back at them as they stepped aboard. Whether it was the glare, or a miasmic shimmering which seemed to hang just above the level of the deck, a doubt entered them, and they paused and looked at each other. The craft swayed gently, knocking the fishing boat once or twice. Apart from the soft knocking and the occasional grating of the iron cable, all was quiet.

They could feel the heat of the early morning sun beginning to bite their skin, and they knew they couldn't afford to leave the fish much longer. Fitz drew a breath and approached the entrance to the cabin. A pile of clothes lay there, blackened and salt-encrusted. He touched them gingerly with his foot and leapt backwards, almost knocking Shakey into the sea. "Shakey man, that's a man!" Shakey recovered his balance and came forward. They both looked down at the pile of clothes. Staring back at them was a face, shrivelled beyond human recognisability. Nothing in their experience had prepared them for it. They were in a world half-remembered from childhood, enjoyed with hot-dogs and popcorn at the Drive-In, or glimpsed on television news programmes — wars in unpronounceable places, bodies felled in the desert dissolving into dust, shrunken heads prepared for witchcraft rituals, mummified figures guarding tombs filled with long-lost hoards of treasure in adventure quest stories...

Clothes and skin had become inseparable, as though a process of gradual dessication had melded them together. Both were black, though whether that was their original colour, or whether sun-scorched from long hours under a fiery sky, it was impossible to tell. As they stood there, the fishermen became aware of a faint odour, something like dried fish, released from the body by Fitz's probing foot. "Come on man, lewwe go." Shakey pulled his friend back towards the stern and the safety of the Mary-Rose. "This is for the coast guard. Lewwe go and report."

Hours later, the two of them were at the dock as the coast guard towed the blue and white vessel in and the fellows from the hospital carried what was left of eleven passengers ashore. Rags, smelling of saltfish. Fitz and Shakey bowed their heads among the onlookers. They had spent the day relating their story, first to the coast guard, then to Sarge Neville and his superior officers, and would do so again later, to a gathering crowd at Green's rumshop. The sensation of strangeness which had entered them through all their senses - struck their eyes with an image which had no answering name in their store of language, entered their lungs with the odour of dried fish, and still sent electric currents up Fitz's leg from where he had prodded the body - hadn't lessened with the successive tellings, but grown and swelled and coursed through their veins like rum. A world defined by the familiar boundaries of horizon and shoreline, street and rumshop, had been thrown all askew by their encounter with the death boat in the deep water. Dreams rushed in on a floodtide bearing the flotsam and jetsam of their fears.

In that deep water, a crowd of people swirl and turn in the current, monstrous foetuses in the amniotic fluid of a devouring ocean. Amnesiac sea, where the drowned secrets of centuries lie shackled by an umbilical cord that binds them to a forgotten continent. Mindless of history they press forward, fifty at a time, into a flotilla of boats floating towards extinction, driven to an old world by desire for a new world order. Not cargo, for money crosses palm. They purchase their fate. Ishmael clutches in his pocket the scrap of paper with the magic number that guarantees his survival. But - no telephone to heaven. Ishmael watches as the larger boat which towed them from Senegal cuts the tow-rope, leaving them to drift to Spain on the tide. He watches the canaries flash their yellow feathers in the sunset before they fade, their wings dip into the water, they droop and drop from view over the edge of the world. During three months adrift without food or water, one by one his companions, like canaries, fade, droop and finally drop from view as he heaves them overboard into the waiting arms of the maternal sea, Ishmael the undertaker, clutching his talismanic number, the only distinguishing feature by which to tell him apart from the other ten taken by the coast guard from the abandoned vessel.

Mummified. The drinkers shake their heads over the fate of Ishmael and his ten companions, and the thirty-nine more who must have made up the complement. From Green's rumshop on the edge of the village they look out at the Atlantic, the sea that devoured so many African lives back in the days of slavery. They agree how terrible it is to have to leave your country and take such risks in search of a new life. How they are lucky to live here, in this place, on the other side of the Atlantic from Africa, on a coral island in the Caribbean where life is sweet and a living can still be made from the sea.

But Fitz and Shakey, throwing their nets from the Mary-Rose, or sitting at ease in Green's rumshop, have stepped, however momentarily, into a domain where death stared at them from the face of a man with clothes for skin. Though death did not exact the ultimate price of their trespass, they paid a forfeit all the same. The fish they haul out of the shimmering waters will always remind them of the dead African, and of all the others who lie beneath the sea that bears them home daily in the Mary-Rose.