



Poeti

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Literary Annual

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Contributors

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Elizabeth Best is a teacher of English at Harrison’s College and a part-time lecturer in Linguistics at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. She began writing poetry seriously in 1990. Her work has been published in the *Caribbean Writer* and *Voices 1*, An Anthology of Barbadian Poetry.

Susan Brown is the author and illustrator of two books, *Frederiksted Gingerbread* and *Victorian Frederiksted*, a former teacher on St. Croix, U.S.V.I., where she and her husband raised five children. Her work has been published in *BIM*, *The Caribbean Writer*, *Crescendo*, *Greenprints* and two anthologies. Ms. Brown now lives in Florida, USA.

Jane Bryce grew up in Tanzania and has been a journalist specialising in contemporary African Arts and Culture. She lived and studied in Nigeria for several years before coming to Barbados, where she teaches African Literature and Creative Writing at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill.

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Nailah Folami Imoja (nee Charmaine Gill) is a creative writer. Her writing awards include the Kamau Brathwaite Award for Literary Excellence, 1998. Since 1996, she has written *Rhyme and Reason*, a weekly newspaper column about writing and writers. She is a Cultural Officer - Literary Arts with Barbados’ National Cultural Foundation.

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Lelawattee Manoo-Rahming was born in Trinidad in 1960, married to a Bahamian, she makes her home in Nassau, Bahamas. A self-employed Mechanical/Building Services Engineer and part-time University of the West Indies

Lecturer, she expresses her creativity and seeks enlightenment through poetry, short stories, essays, sculpture and drawing.

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Dan Olakunle is the pseudonym for Bamidele Babalola; born on December 16, 1961, in Maiduguri, Northern Nigeria. He had his early schooling in Nigeria and read medicine at the University of Ife, also in Nigeria graduating in 1986. Serious writing began circa 1975. He published poems and fiction, the most recent work being "The Pull of Blood" in 1998. At present he is clinical medical officer at Black Rock, Polyclinic, and a member of *Voices*, Barbados Writers' Collective.

Esther Phillips is a graduate of the University of the West Indies and the University of Miami where she completed a Master of fine Arts in Creative Writing. She has published in various magazines and journals, the largest being *Mangrove*

Lorna Pilgrim was born in Trinidad, of Barbadian parentage. In 1987, her story, *Soul in Siege*, won 3rd prize in a national competition. In 1988, *Soul Mate* won the Cedars' Prize for Excellence in Contemporary Poetry. Jesus Christ is her Muse. She is a part-time lecturer at Capriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies.

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Brenda Simmons was born in St. Lucia, the West Indies, a long time ago, lived and studies art in England and Europe, and now resides in California, USA, where she began to write poetry in 1990. Via poetry, she seeks to express the divine concealed within the mundane.

Hazel Simmons-McDonald was born in St. Lucia and at present teaches Applied Linguistics at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. She writes both poetry and fiction and several of her poems have been published in international journals and Caribbean anthologies.

Obediah Michael Smith is a Bahamian writer, he is also a real estate broker. He is a graduate of Fisk University with a degree in Dramatics and Speech. On scholarships, he attended poetry and fiction workshops at CWSI at University of Miami. He has self-published seven books.

Jerome S. Wynter was born on the island of Antigua. He studied English at the University of the West Indies in 1993, and is currently doing a Master's degree. He professes to be bilingual and works part-time as a research assistant in Spanish in the Multilingual Lexicography of the Caribbean Language Usage Project.

Susan Brown

Through The Door Open

Through the door open
comes only the dawn.

Quick wind lifts my hair,
grass folds over ground
untouched by your step.

Bare are my bones,
my heart peels back
soft as fruit
scenting my body

hungry this hour
for you
through the door once again
to appear.

Esther Phillips

Seashells

Across the broken spectrum
of a seagull's cry,
your face comes back to me,
half-sketched in sunset,
I've always loved collecting seashells,
I picked up so many as a boy

You, the curious mixture:
all scientist, careful of every detail;
the artist, who loves those days
you call *seeing*,
when even a rusty nail is brilliant,
and the hair on your arms
stands straight at the way
light falls over Bathsheba
and casuarinas arch themselves
against the sky.

I've seen how you handle shells:
how you brush the sand gently off,
how your fingers trace every inch of them,
caress the smooth inner whorls of them

It tells me you can feel
every fissure,
every healed over scar;
probe the warm bright places
where my music begins
clearer than bird-cry,
sweeter than the ocean-song
a sea-shell never loses.

Deep Blue

"Jeez-u, Lover of my soul/Let me to Thy bosom fly. Chile, I don't want no red at my funeral, eh. Wear your little deep-blue dress with the lacy white frills and the little white Peter Pan collar, that your Granny sew for you with she own two hands."

"Yes Granny."

Rachel's tiny palms were soothing Granny's throat, but the gas wasn't coming up in its usual loud chorus: OOH AHHHHHH! Rachel sang her favourite jingle rhythmically:

Green, green, you kiss the Queen
White, white, you fly your kite
Red, red, you pee your bed
Blue, blue, God loves you
Black, black, you break your back
For piece of pomerac!

Deliberately, Rachel had left out two colours:

Yellow, yellow, you kiss your fellow

and pink . . . ? She dared not! Not in Granny's house!

Intermittently, Granny was dozing off. Rachel had been telling her about the marvels of *Deep Blue*, but Granny was still confused.

"No, Granny," Rachel again explained patiently, "*Deep Blue* is the computer that beat the Russian champion at chess, the other day." Rachel knew the historic event had occurred last Sunday, but Granny disapproved of even indoor games on the Lord's Day.

"Granny," the child chimed, in awe, "the T.V. say, that *Deep Blue* can calculate 100 billion to 200 billion moves in 3 seconds!"

"A machine outsmart a man? The tower of Babel resurrect! Jeez-u, Lover of my soul/Let me to Thy Bosom fly!"

A bout of choking coughs erupted. Rachel quickly handed Granny the makeshift spittoon. Rachel waited until the paroxysm had subsided and Granny had covered the container and had placed it on the bed-head. Then she asked the question.

"Granny --?" Rachel began, creaming Granny's throat.

"Yes?"

"Granny -- you really believe it have a God?"

"Look, child, common sense make before book, just as colour make before computer. Don't let Satan fool you, child. God deep-blue sky seeing a billion billion moves every second, *right here* in Boy's Lane, *right here* in D'Abadie and in the world. Yes, chile my DEEP BLUE seeing all the moves we making: good and evil."

Granny's voice was low, but beaming with pride.

"You ever stump your toe, chile?"

"Of course, Granny! You remember last August? You self pack salt on my buss toe. It burn me like pepper self, and I bawl for so. You remember, Granny?" Rachel lifted her scarred toe as proof.

"What was the first name you did call, chile, when you stump your toe?"

"Oh God!"

"Chile, you remember the earthquake?"

"Yes, Granny! It make all the trees and the big, big houses swing! I pelt through the door, jump on your bed and hide under your skirt. You remember, Granny?"

"Well then, child, respect the Almighty, not a machine. God ent abdicate His throne like Edward VIII; neither to Man, nor machine. This is *His* world. He is still reigning. With all the moves *Deep Blue* making on Man - how many you say it could make, chile?" Granny was breathing louder.

Rachel's eyes blinked and opened wider.

"100 billion to 200 billion in 3 seconds, Granny."

"Chile, don't break your back for a piece of pomerac. *Deep Blue* could make only one move, *one move* when it play-

ing chess with God in an earthquake.”

At last, Granny was smiling.

Rachel burst out giggling.

“Tell me what that move is, Granny! Tell me!”

“Down! - Flat - down - on - its - face - on - the - floor -
begging - for - mercy - from - my - DEEP -- BLUE --- loving -
- - - LORD.”

With seas singing agreement, Granny’s last words rasped
from her cancered throat.