

ACHÉ

MAY/JUNE 1992

VOL. 4, NO. 2

\$4

A JOURNAL FOR LESBIANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT



Sixteenth San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival

A Frameline Presentation

June 19-28, 1992



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"Keeper of the Flame" cover,

"And Then the Fire Spoke" pg. 22,

"She Who Watches, Dances!"

back cover

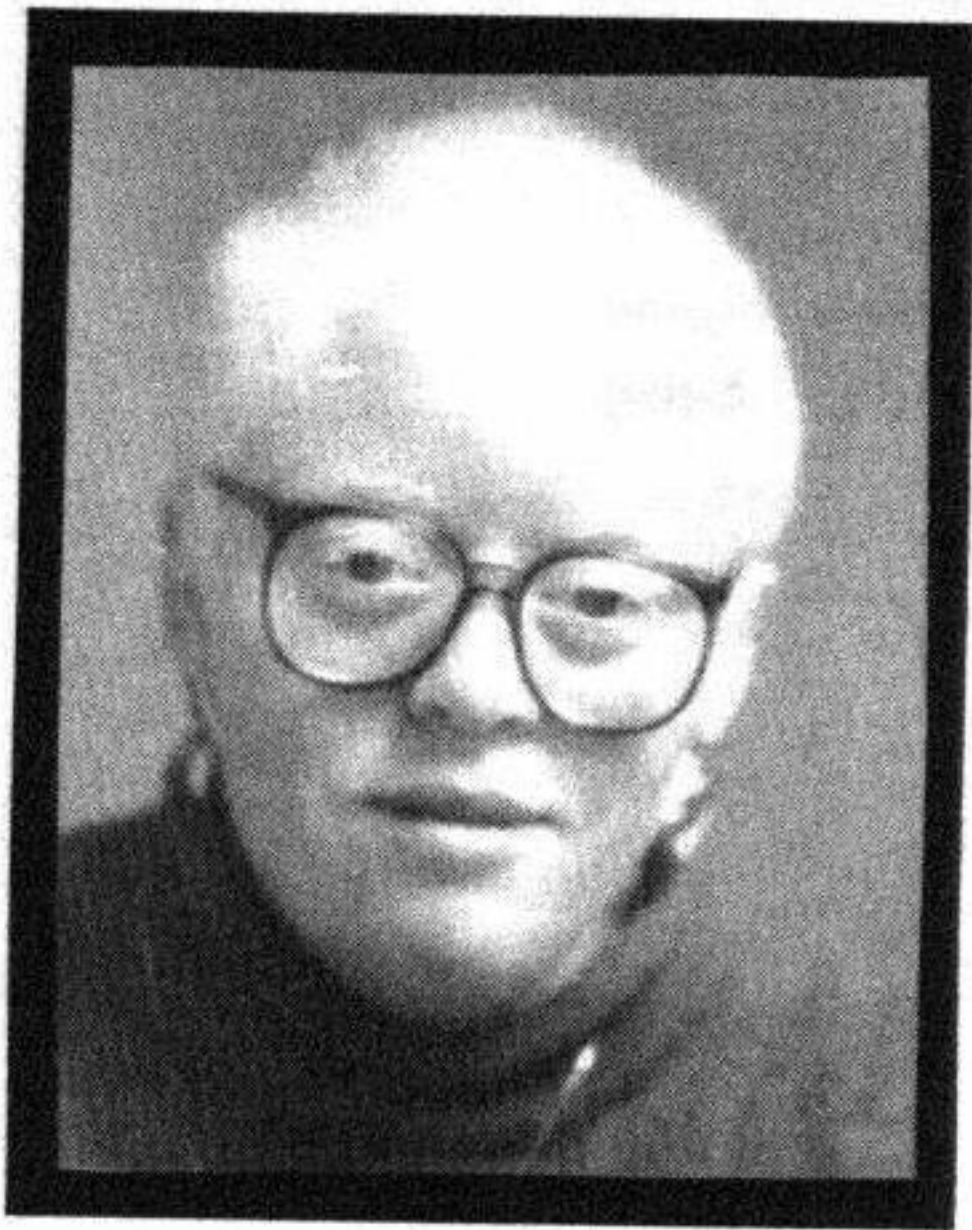
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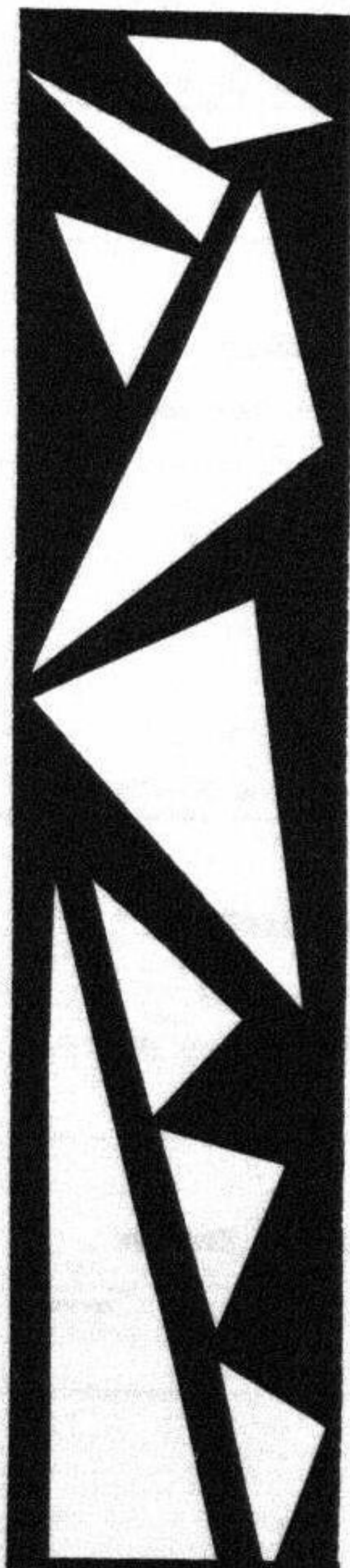
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FROM THE EDITOR



Natalie Devora, Senior Editor



Greetings Everyone,

Welcome to a new year and a new Aché editorial team. We are here to continue where the last group of editors left off. There are at present 12 women dedicated to making certain that your voices are heard, your words printed and your minds challenged.

I am very excited to be continuing with Aché. It is an honor to take on senior editorship. Aché has meant a great deal to me. I first became acquainted with the journal in 1989 at the Dynamics of Color conference where I met Skye Ward. She handed me a now worn and tattered copy of Aché which I took home and read from cover to cover.

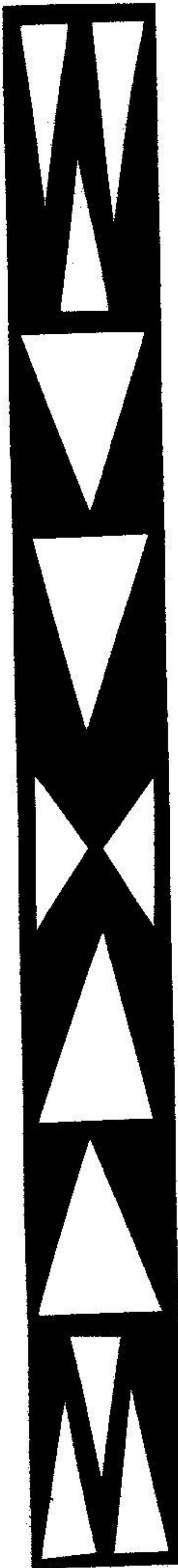
Like many readers, Aché has nourished me. She has fed me when I've hungered for the voices of my sisters. For two years I read the words of African-American lesbians between these pages. I read about the identities of mixed blood sisters, those of black and Jewish sisters, those of women who talked about their relationships with black men. Those words helped me to become more self confident about who I am, an albino woman of African-American descent.

Over the next year you will meet and come to know Dawn Rudd, Heather, Ntombe, Lydia, Aya, Sauda, Dawn Lundy, Stephanie and Ras Ayiah Khan. Ekua (POETRY) and Imani (TELL MAMA) stay on as editors, filling our souls with the melody of words and offering answers to readers' most intimate questions.

What started as the dream of two women, Lisbet and Pippa, has turned into a vision on a much grander scale. Now the Aché journal enters her fourth year. In order for the journal to continue to grow we need your help. Please send in your work: essays, reviews, fiction, poetry, interviews, profiles, art, graphics, photography, features (based on the theme), as well as anything else that you'd like to see in the journal. Remember, don't send originals and always send a self addressed stamped envelope if you want your work returned. If your subscription has elapsed please renew it, and by all means support Aché. Without your contributions Aché may not continue.

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Aché is a bi-monthly publication by lesbians of African descent for the benefit of all black women. The journal serves to reflect and celebrate the wide spectrum of our experiences. We are committed to open



and critical dialogue about the issues affecting our lives, but Aché will not print anything that is oppressive or demeaning to ourselves as lesbians of African descent. We especially encourage submissions from women who have never been published. The editors will work with all contributors to ensure that the final published text has been mutually agreed upon.

The appearance of names or images in this publication does not indicate the sexual orientation of that person or persons. ▼

ACHÉ SUBMISSION POLICY

The deadline for submissions is the first Monday two months prior to publication. Neatly handwritten, typed materials, and 3.5" Macintosh disks using MacWrite or Microsoft Word are accepted. Include name, address and phone number on all submissions as well as a biographical statement no longer than 20 words. Please specify if you would not like your full name reproduced in Aché. Please do not submit originals, we do not have the resources to return them. ▼

I have many hopes for the next year and beyond. I would like to see Aché continue to grow nationally and internationally. I want to see these pages be reflective of our many readers. Aché has the capacity to reach and empower women across the globe, as she has already done.

The Aché Project continues to expand and grow. Starting with this issue there will be an organizational report from the board of directors to let everyone know what's going on with The Aché Project.

The theme for this issue is "Our Relationships to Food." Food both nourishes and provides us with pleasure. There is nothing like remembering the smells that came from our mothers' and grandmothers' kitchens. These aromas are responsible for sending us into our own kitchens, the place where we congregate. Our dishes may be different or they may be the same. Be it fried chicken or tofu, chocolate or cheesecake, collard greens, blackeyed peas and cornbread or stir fry, we celebrate that which nourishes us. We give thanks to the hands that prepare the feasts set before us and we pay homage to that which has sustained us through lean times.

Blessings, Natalie

UPCOMING EDITORIAL THEMES

The editorial theme will be used to direct the content of the feature stories. However, each editors may choose to tap into the theme as they develop their sections for each issue. We encourage submissions for any particular theme to be sent in as early as possible. The deadlines are the first Monday of the month, two months preceding the publications date.

July/Aug. '92 (deadline: May)
Loving Ourselves

Sept./Oct. '92 (deadline: July)
**Resistance
Election Watch**

Nov./Dec. '92 (deadline: Sept.)
**Magic
Election Watch**

Feb./Mar. '93 (deadline: Dec.)
**ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
Our Emotional Health**

Apr./May '93 (deadline: Feb.)
Women, Work & Class

CALLING VISUAL ARTISTS!!

Interested in having your work featured in the Aché journal? For more information write to:

**Aché/Art Director
P.O. Box 6071
Albany, CA 94706**

LETTERS

Dear Aché,

Recently at a ULOAH [United Lesbians of African Heritage] Board/Membership meeting, it came to our attention, by one of your subscribers, that Aché was outreaching to all Lesbians of African heritage for financial support. In recognizing our need to maintain our commitment to support our existing institutions, we made an appeal to the Lesbians of African heritage within the Los Angeles community to contribute funds in order to sustain our Aché publication. ULOAH made a pledge to match the sum of all donations received, and, as a result of these efforts, we are happy to enclose \$100. It is our philosophy, and one of our primary goals to support and encourage all expressions of creativity in the arts. Much continued success and we look forward to our association in the months ahead.

In Sisterhood,

Anita Barnes, Outreach Director & Yolanda Whittington, ULOAH Board

Ed.: Bless you, Sisters!! For more information on ULOAH, you can contact them at ULOAH, 1626 No. Wilcox Ave. #190, Los Angeles, CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Greetings and blessings to Aché!

Enclosed is a check for a one year subscription to your magazine. I am also submitting the first poem I've written since high school. Please be kind. Thank you for coming into existence and keep up the great work and support of our community.

*Yours very truly,
V. René*

Ed.: We couldn't do without women just like you. Your poem is on pg. 32. Send more stuff—soon.

APPEAL FOR FUNDS

Dear Aché,

The Afro Les & Gay Club of Ghana respectfully requests some assistance on the above subject from your group, organization, society to combat homophobia, decriminalizing gay/lesbian relationships, building a clubhouse, and creating AIDS awareness within the gays and heterosexuals in Ghana. Support a

worthy cause. All donations can be sent by cash (registered mail) or international money order. No donation is too small.

AFRO L & G (Ghana)
P.O. Box 7701, Accra-North, Ghana



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As African American lesbians and gay men of the Bay Area, we have a lot to be proud of. We proudly salute the genius of Marlon Riggs in "Tongues Untied," the collective vision of Aché in creating a women's journal of national significance, the "Fierce Love" of Pomo Afro Homos, and the determination of Unity in hosting this year's successful National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference. Clearly, we have a lot to be proud of.

But this is no time to rest on our laurels, we must continue to build on our successes and to lift our voices against the bigotry and prejudice that so many of us face on a daily basis. As you know, the Presidency of the United States, both California Senate seats and various local offices will be decided in 1992. The presence of Pat Buchanan and David Duke in the Presidential race, as well as the more subtle bigotry and homophobia of many conservative politicians, have created an increasingly dangerous political climate in the United States.

LGADDA, Lesbians and Gays of African Descent for Democratic Action, is a new, independent organization dedicated to the political empowerment of African American lesbians and gays. We believe that we can and must work together to impact the political process and to bring about lasting changes in the Bay Area and nationwide. *But we need your support to make these changes happen!*

With so much at stake, your participation is more critical than ever. You may be experienced or new to the political process, either way, we need your ideas, insight and involvement.

We want to offer you the opportunity to become a member of a unique political organization. LGADDA wants your support to build on our initial successes and to continue the important work we have already begun together.

For only \$20 a year (\$10/yr. for those on a fixed income) you can become a member of one of the only political or-

ganizations in the country dedicated to meeting the needs of African American lesbians and gay men.

It's time to stand up and be counted. LGADDA has set an initial goal of recruiting 100 new members by the end of the calendar year. With your support, we can meet this goal easily. Make checks payable to:

LGADDA, 584 Castro St., Suite 130
San Francisco, CA 94114-2588

With your help, LGADDA will continue to work toward our common goal of greater political empowerment for lesbians and gays of African descent in the Bay Area. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

*Randy Miller, Kerrington Osborne,
LGADDA Co-Chairs*

P.S. Our regular general membership meetings are held from 7:30-9pm on every third Thursday of the month at 507B Divisadero St. in San Francisco. Come join us for some serious discussion and lively debates!! ▼



**SEND YOUR LETTERS
& COMMENTS TO:**

**Aché
P.O. Box 6071
Albany, CA 94706**

**Aché is sold at the
following bookstores:**

EAST BAY

**Mama Bears Bookstore
6536 Telegraph Ave.**

Marcus Books

3900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way

SAN FRANCISCO

**A Different Light
489 Castro St.**

**Modern Times
888 Valencia St.**

**Old Wives Tales
1009 Valencia St.**

ACHÉ

**A Message From Aché's New Board Chairperson...
Ouida Cooper-Rodriguez**

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Three years ago, Lisbet and Pippa had a dream, a dream to provide a resource for lesbians of African descent; to provide a forum for our voices to be heard; to provide a community resource guide; and to provide a way for us to share, love, grow and empower each other. The dream has become all of this and more and today we are known throughout the U.S., England, Germany, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand, and the Caribbean.

Three years later, exciting changes are happening and we are growing faster than ever imagined! In 1991, we filed the paperwork for our 501 [c][3] non-profit corporation status and became The Aché Project, Inc. We have also selected our first Board of Directors consisting of 11 sistahs from all walks of life. The board members are Brenda Crawford, Gwenn Craig, Melanie DeMore, Rebecca Hall, Joann Johnson, Earthlyn Manuel, Joi Rhone, Ouida Rodriguez, Cheryl Spear, Lisbet Tellefsen and Skye Ward.

We believe in Aché and we will continue to help to provide a quality publication and events to the community. As with most non-profits, our main focus for 1992 will be fundraising. Until now, Lisbet has "scarried\$" the journal. In 1992, our fundraising committee has vowed to raise \$25,000.

The Board would like to thank the San Francisco Women's Centers, Regina Gabrielle and the entire staff of the Women's Building, the Women's Foundation and Vanguard for their crucial and

invaluable support over the years. We would also like to acknowledge the sistahs who have tirelessly given so much of themselves: DeeAnne Davis, Janet Wallace and the entire 1991 Journal Committee, Adalia Selket, Rachel Sierra, and all of you who have helped make Aché what she is today.

Today, the Aché Project is more than just the journal. It is an organization of sistahs dedicated to empowering lesbians of African descent. We always need your sistah power to help build and strengthen our ongoing committees: Events, Fundraising, Journal and Outreach.

I am very honored and proud to be the first chairwoman of the Aché Board. We hope that you will continue to spread the word about Aché. Buy an extra journal and send it to a sistah in another city, state, or country. Buy an extra journal and send it to a sistah who is an executive, singer, dancer, writer, doctor, mechanic or entrepreneur. Buy an extra journal and send it to a sistah in prison. Buy an Aché sweatshirt and wear it proudly. We are powerful, and together, we will become an even stronger voice within the gay community!

*In love and sistah-hood,
Ouida J.*

You can contact us at:

**Aché Project
P.O. Box 6071
Albany, CA 94706
(510) 849-2819**

We would like the following people for their generous donations to Aché over the past few months:

- Alex C. Alexander
- Darlene Angela
- William Brown
- Cathy Cade
- D. Chambers
- Tobe Correal
- Vega Correal
- Marie Crossley
- Marty Dunham
- Jan Griesinger
- Marilyn Hayward
- Ruth Mahaney
- Judy Helfand
- Phyllis Jackson
- V. Papaya Mann
- Patricia Omdahda
- Pell/WomanCraft West
- Coral Reiff
- Stephanie Smith
- ULOAH
- Betsy Weedon
- & all of you who wished to remain anonymous...

**THANKS TO YOU
WE'RE ABLE TO
KEEP ON....**

Aché WISH LIST:

- † file cabinets
- † laserprinter
- † fax machine
- † copy machine

We're looking for sisters to volunteer a few hours a month to help us fill the following positions:

- † Desktop Publisher
- † Event Organizer
- † Fundraiser
- † Grant Writer
- † Graphic Artist
- † Office Manager
- † Publicist/P.R.

Celebrating 3 years of Aché...

In February, 1989, the first issue of Aché: A Journal For Black Lesbians was distributed throughout the Bay Area. Within three months, the journal had tripled in size and was being distributed across the country. Today, Aché has over 500 subscribers in 8 different countries. Our pages have featured the writings of almost 200 writers and visual artists, most never before published.

As the journal expanded, so did our organizing efforts and soon Aché began producing events in the community. Today, Aché events are known for bringing together diverse audiences from both the Black and Gay communities. On the following pages we look back at the first three years of Aché...

May 13, 1989 ■ Aché presents a lecture/slide presentation on "The Sisterhood of Good Death and a Present for Yemanjá: Afro-Catholicism and Yoruba Religion in Brazil" by noted author and anthropologist Dr. Sheila S. Walker at The Women's Building in San Francisco.

June 27, 1989 ■ We begin the Aché series, a monthly event held at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley. The series begins with 2 films documenting womens' activism around the world: "Sweet Sugar Rage," profiling Jamaica's Sistren theatre collective; and "Minha Vida, Nossa Luta" about a group of Brazilian women working to improve conditions of poverty in their community.

July 25, 1989 ■ The Aché series presents 3 short films: "Crocodile Conspiracy," "Illusions" by director Julie Dash, and "The Work of Elizabeth Catlett" profiling the celebrated African American artist.

August 30, 1989 ■ The Aché series presents "Voices of the Gods," a documentary capturing the rich legacy of African religions practiced in the United States. The evening also featured a live performance of Pat Parker's "Movement in Black."

October 16, 1989 ■ Aché presents poet/performance artist Storme Webber at Modern Times Bookstore in San Francisco.

November 25, 1989 ■ Aché presents a dance/cabaret featuring Charlene Mason, Anna Maria Flechero & friends at Rex's in Oakland.

February 14, 1990 ■ Aché presents "We Come...From Fire" an erotic Valentine's event featuring readings by Darlene Angela, Natalie Devora, Winn Gilmore, Stephanie Henderson, Margaret Sloan-Hunter and Storme Webber at Modern Times Bookstore in S.F.

February 23, 1990 ■ Aché's 1st anniversary event "Celebrating Ourselves;" an evening honoring black women in the arts. This event, held at Koncepts Cultural Gallery in Oakland, featured singer Gwen Avery, poet/

vocalist Rachel Bagby, emcee Maria Cora, storyteller Diane Ferlatte, dancer Debra Floyd, gospel singer Allowyn Price, vocal artist Karolyn van Putten, and performance artist Storme Webber.

April 25, 1990 ■ The Aché series presents "Bahia: Africa in the Americas," a documentary examining the African cultural traditions preserved by the people of Bahia, Brasil, in their music, dance, art, and the Candomble religion.

April 15, 1990 ■ Aché sponsors a one-day workshop for biracial/bicultural women led by Dr. Margo Okazawa-Rey at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley.

May 30, 1990 ■ The Aché series continues with 3 short films: "Cycles" by Julie Dash; "The Mark of Liliti;" and "Hairpiece: A Film for Nappy-Headed People" by Ayoka Chenzira.

June 24, 1990 ■ Aché and Colors co-host a Gay Day Parade afterparty at the San Francisco American Indian Hall bringing together over 450 women to celebrate Gay Pride.

June 27, 1990 ■ Aché presents "How Do You Do," a live performance by a new lesbian of color theatre troupe, the Sapphire Theatre Company at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley. The evening also featured a reading by poet Sonya Brooks.

July 25, 1990 ■ Aché presents two films on women in Brazil: "Mulheres Negras (Black Women in Brazil)" and "Update Brazil," a look at Brazil's innovative solution to violence against women.

August 29, 1990 ■ Aché presents a unique film by director Michelle Parkerson "Stormé: The Lady of the Jewel Box," profiling Stormé DeLarverie, former M.C. and male impersonator of the legendary Jewel Box Revue—an integral slice of black gay/lesbian history.

September 23, 1990 ■ Aché and Colors co-host "Let's Do It Again," an afternoon party/dance at Bahia Tropical in San Francisco.

ACHÉ

April, 1990

Vol. 1, No. 2

A Free Publication for Black Lesbians



The process of defining oneself is life long. As Black Lesbians, we grow up in a world where there are few images outside of ourselves to relate to. Part of our struggle is having to establish two and possibly three and everything to count as, you, us.

However, as Black Lesbians we are offered a unique freedom in that at least once we have an equal chance but to look around to create an image of ourselves in the world. Properly because we fit into no specific world, we must seek to determine and create our own self-definitions. All we must do is look around us, to seek other out in our community, to use the incredible strength and power we maintain in each one of us to define what it means to be Black and a Lesbian.

"I Wanna 'Prevent'" by Barbara Schabas. For info see pg. 14

ACHÉ

May, 1990

Vol. 1, No. 1

A Free Publication for Black Lesbians

To search for power within myself means I must be willing to move through being afraid to whatever lies beyond. If I look at my most vulnerable places and acknowledge the pain I have felt, I can remove the source of that pain from my conscious' agenda. My history cannot be used to further my conscious' agenda then, and that leaves their power over me. Nothing I accept about myself can be used against me to diminish me. I am who I am, doing what I come to do, acting upon you like a drug or a child to remind you of your no-ness, as I discover you in myself.

Andre Lorde
"Bye To Bye"



Artwork by
Alicia Miller

ACHÉ

March, 1990 Vol. 1, No. 2 A Publication For Black Lesbians



Aché (pronounced ah-chay) is a word from the Yoruba people of Nigeria. The word Aché has several meanings/ aspects: to say Aché to someone is to give them your blessing; Aché is also the force, the power that gives us life.

We experience the power of Black lesbians on a daily basis. We wanted to acknowledge this force within our community in a way that was both visible and self-affirming. As this publication took shape, we searched for a name which would best describe our feelings and our purpose; we feel that Aché does both perfectly.

Artwork by
Taha Corvud

ACHÉ

APRIL/MAY, 1991 VOL. 3, NO. 2 \$2 A JOURNAL FOR LESBIANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT



BIACHÉ

September 26, 1990 ■ Aché presents an evening of drama, laughs and videotape with character actor Donna Terry and a screening of "Syvilla: They Dance to Her Drum," a film about dancer Syvilla Fort with a musical score by Edwina Lee Tyler and others.

October 31, 1990 ■ Aché presents "Fright Night," an evening with storyteller Belinda Sullivan at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley.

November 28, 1990 ■ The Aché series features the Sapphire Theatre Company's "Lesbfriends," a lesbian situational comedy. The evening also featured a poetry reading by several Bay Area writers/poets.

December 9, 1990 ■ Aché holds an auction featuring emcee/auctioneer/comedian Karen Williams and performances by dancer Debra Floyd, and musician/vocalists Gwen Avery, Melanie DeMore, and Rashida Oji.

March 2, 1991 ■ Aché's 2nd Anniversary "Tribal Connexions" featuring Gwen Avery, Melanie DeMore, Rashida Oji, Vicki Randle, Sharon Page Ritchie, Belinda Sullivan and Donna Terry.

March 20, 1991 ■ The Aché Series screens a film by director Michelle Parkerson "Gotta Make This Journey," an intimate profile of the acapella group Sweet Honey in the Rock.

April 24, 1991 ■ Aché presents "Fierce Love: Stories From Black Gay Life" - a special evening with Pomo Afro Homos, a performance troupe of black gay men.

May 28, 1991 ■ The Aché Series continues with a film by director Michelle Parkerson "...But Then, She's Betty Carter," a profile of the legendary jazz vocalist.

June 20, 1991 ■ Aché sponsors "Art, the Creative Process and Healing" - a workshop/healing with artist/healer, Asungi.

June 26, 1991 ■ The Aché Series continues with a

screening of "Tongues Untied," the groundbreaking work by director Marlon Riggs.

June 30, 1991 ■ Aché & Hot Colors co-host the 2nd Annual Gay Day afterparty at Club Bahia Tropical in San Francisco. The event included the debut of the band Black Onyx.

August 28, 1991 ■ The Aché Series presents an evening with filmmaker Aarin Burch—the first evening devoted entirely to the work of this young filmmaker who has been featured in film festivals all across the world.

September, 1991 ■ Aché participates in a 2-week cultural exchange co-hosting 13 women of color from Germany. Their itinerary included meeting with various community organizers, and speaking across the Bay Area on the state of people of color in the "new" Germany.

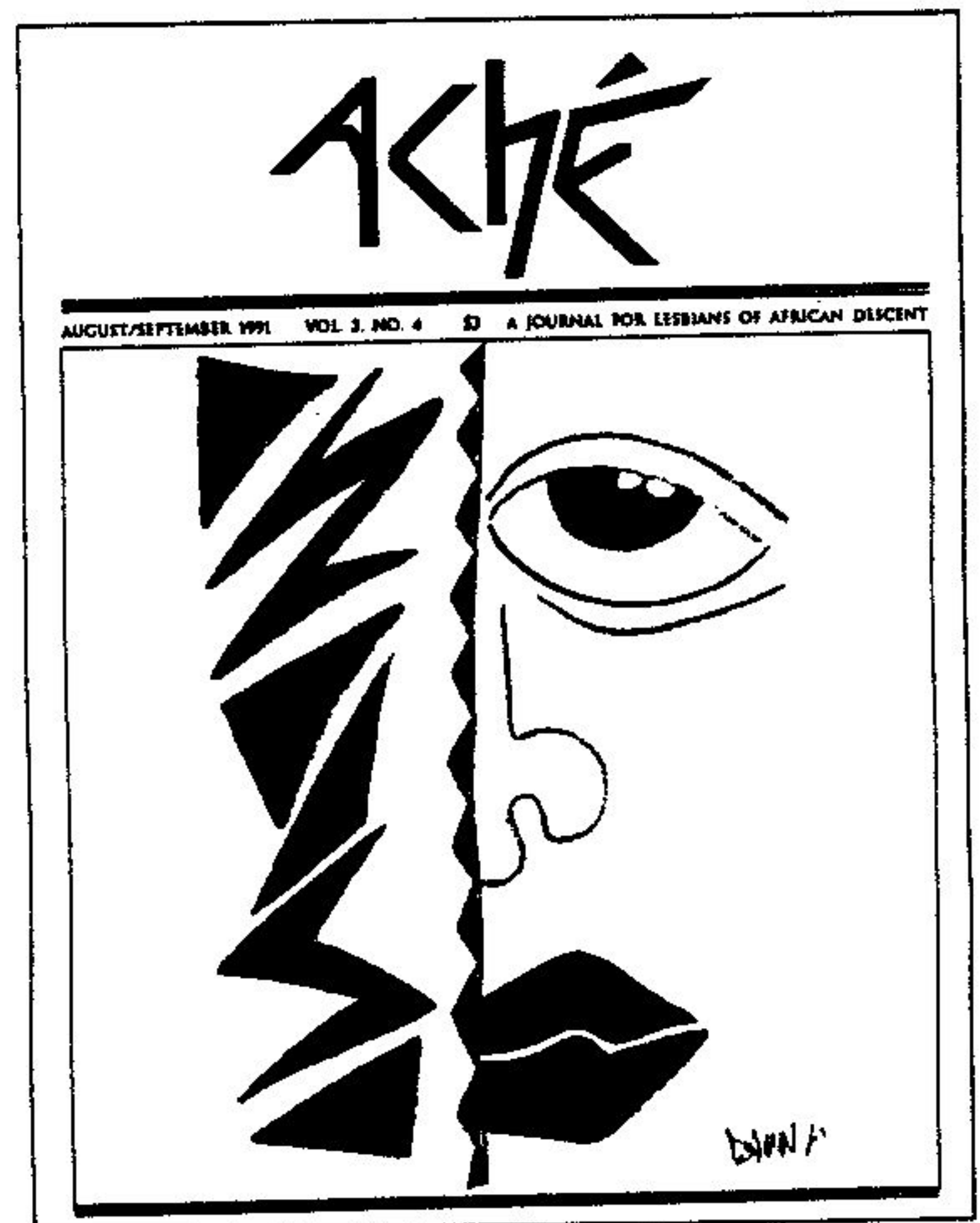
October 30-31, 1991 ■ The Aché Series presents "Fright Night II" — an encore performance by storyteller Belinda Sullivan.

February 14, 1992 ■ Aché hosts the Women's Institute of the 1992 Fifth Annual Black Gay & Lesbian Conference in Oakland, California. The Institute featured a series of workshops/panels on health issues, grassroots organizing, and electoral politics.

February 14-16, 1992 ■ Aché organizes a three-day videofest screening the most comprehensive collection of black lesbian and gay video/film titles ever assembled. Over 30 works were screened for the attendees of the '92 National Black Gay & Lesbian Conference at the Airport Hilton in Oakland.

March 25, 1992 ■ The Aché Series resumes with "Sisters in the Struggle" a documentary exploring the diversity, vision and impetus of the contemporary black women's movement in Canada.

April 22 & 29, 1992 ■ Aché hosts the East Bay debut of "Dark Fruit" — a new work by Pomo Afro Homos featuring Djola Branner, Brian Freeman and Eric Gupton.



"Don't Call Us British!"

(Sistahs From the UK Speak Out...)

Interviewed
by Skye Ward

Getting the truths of our lives out continues to be the first line of defense in our struggle for black liberation. In this interview, three black lesbians from the UK candidly discuss the realities of their lives. They also offer commentary on the misconceptions African American women, and women of African descent in England have about each other. Angela Jackman, Mary "Bunmi" Daramola, and Kehinde "Kei" Adeogun are all first-generation born in Britain, whose families originate from Africa and the Caribbean.

Recently they were in Oakland, California to attend the 5th Annual Black Gay and Lesbian Conference. In this interview they offer their views on a range of topics, from identity politics, class analysis, cross-cultural tensions and political activism, to the effects of the European Community on black people's lives in the UK.

How do you identify yourself sociopolitically?

ANGELA: I identify myself as a black lesbian of working-class origin—now classified as middle-class due to my occupation, I'm a lawyer.

MARY: I identify myself socially being middle-class by default—in the sense that I went to college. I'm of working-class origin; my family came from Nigeria, and they would be defined as working-class. But through education and my work, I would be described as middle-class... I work in social housing.

KEI: As you can see, the issue of class is important to us in Britain. That's usually how we define ourselves politically. I'm a black lesbian and I come from working-class origins, and still define myself as working-class despite my educational background.

Why is that?

KEI: Because I don't see as a black person that I have the privileges that white people who are middle-class have.

How do you locate yourself on an activist continuum?

KEI: I'm not really involved as an activist in any organization at this moment and time. I have been in the past. I believe as black people we are always politically active whether we are in an organization or not because of the racism. We are always having to

challenge, or if not challenge, be aware that there are situations in which we should challenge...

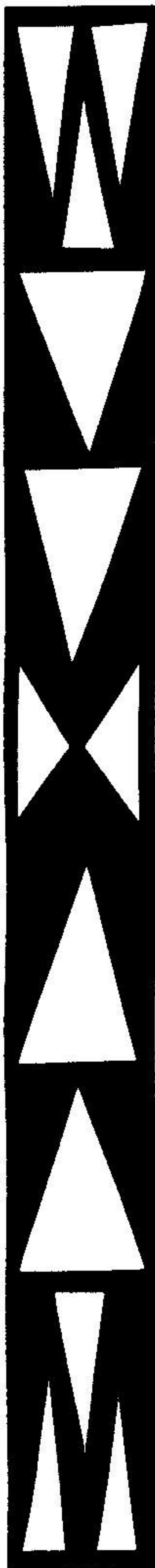
MARY: I think I have to agree with Kei around that—on being active everyday. I don't see myself being visibly involved in any movement per se. My concerns in terms of spare time is certainly around black people and mental health...issues around HIV and AIDS—that's where my visible activism is.

ANGELA: I think as black people and as black lesbians we're obviously faced with daily challenges around racism, and homophobia. But I think in terms of political activism, challenging as individuals, although important, won't have as great of an effect as in organizing as groups, or as factions. You know in order to have some real influence on the powers that be, which are out there, which are against us. The more I become involved in organizing, the better I'm able to articulate my concerns. At present I'm involved with the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre Project, since 1989. The project was founded in 1985. It's been funded since 1985. It is staffed by two full-time workers. The main aim of the project has been to locate secure premises, so that we actually have a centre for black lesbians and gay men in London. We've recently located premises which we will be moving into shortly. From since 1985, the project has run help-lines and advice counseling information over the telephones. The bulk of the work is done around reaching isolated black lesbians and gay men who are coming out.

What are the most crucial issues facing activist lesbians of African descent in London? What is on your political agendas?

MARY: There is definitely an issue around communication with other communities. I think communication has been very poor...just our ability to acknowledge who we are in the UK. I feel we need to seek...we need to travel as a way to communicate.

KEI: HIV and AIDS. Most important getting the message to black heterosexuals...You know to work as black people heterosexual and gays against AIDS. [Angela: I have a problem with that!]...I'm a black person who is a woman and a lesbian, I can't separate. So just as who I am, I think that's what we should



be working on and other health issues.

MARY: ...But we're doing that already. I mean that action and that kind of practice is happening already. I have a problem with us always taking on that role. Wherein we are doing that kind of healing, that kind of work. Because for one reason or another, being black and gay seems to put you in touch visually...in touch with issues that straight black society is not willing to deal with. But you know, at the same time we are being rejected on another level, yet we're doing that fundamental work. Because within that, we're still trying to fight for our right to be. Homophobia is still extremely present.

ANGELA: One of my political agenda items is increasing the visibility, acceptance and placement of gays and lesbians within the black community. I feel that is very high on the agenda. As part of that, continuing the effect of challenging homophobia both within the black community and in white society.

I think as some of us grow older, grow confident, we feel "why should I have to put up with leading double lives;" and just worrying what society thinks. I certainly feel that that's growing more and more within me—like I've had enough of this. So I certainly see that as being on the agenda; naturally HIV and AIDS and general health issues in the black community. And economics, because we're in the UK (United Kingdom) and we're moving within this 1992 European Economic Community (EEC).

Please explain the concept behind the European Economic Community (EEC).

ANGELA: It's the concept of having a common market. So it's almost like Europe becoming one country. It's the idea that people who are nationals of states within that common market, should have freedom and work within that whole area.

Would that include obtaining an universal EEC passport?

ANGELA: Yes. Basically, it's all unified for economic reasons. In theory it's supposed to be a wonderful thing, because your options and choices are supposed to expand, and you're supposed to be able to move where the hell you like within the EEC. The reality is, it's not going to be that way for black people. The move within Europe over the years has been to restrict the rights of black people within the community, and also restrict the movement of black people from outside of Europe, in terms of getting into Europe. And there is a whole issue around the treatment of

black refugees. There is a definite policy to keep refugees out. Black people are seen as being illegal, and not having a place within the white world, which is white Europe. The outcome effect of this in the way black people (who are fully entitled to be living in the UK or the EC) will be treated.

I think there are some real fears along the whole policing which have started—just in terms of the trouble we as three Black British women had getting into the states. They didn't want to let us in at Minneapolis and we were just coming for 2 weeks!

What are your perceptions of African American lesbians, politically and culturally etc.?

...just looking in the faces of women who you know have a completely different history from you...

ANGELA: It's been an issue in the last few years in London. A number of African American lesbians have come over to London and have settled. It's been an issue because very real cultural differences have become really apparent, in terms of how we interact—issues and conflicts have arisen.

One thing that springs into my mind is our political differences. That is a generalization, but what seems to be a fundamental difference is how we view our movements in terms of race politics. I'm very aware that here your emphasis seems to be on African Americans...Black means of African descent and purely of African descent. Whereas the movement in London in the black lesbian and gay community has been much more towards people of colour. I know that you use that term here, and I'm aware that there are organizations based on that perspective. But I think I can say that in London that's more the general perspective, as opposed to one aspect of a broader [movement].

We organize in such a way that we incorporate ourselves as people of colour. Rather than say, "people of colour" we say black, meaning people who descend from Africa, Asia, Middle East and basically everybody who is non-European.

How do you perceive our differences?

KEI: One of the things I found different and also very difficult to deal with, was how black lesbians whom I've met in England, who came from the states, have termed themselves Americans. "I'm American." "I'm from America." I have a real difficulty with that because America is presented to us as nearly strictly white capitalists. I think speaking for all of us here, none of us would say we're British even though we live in Britain and were born in Britain. I'm not British—that's where my family was displaced. I'm African. That's one of the things that really used to play on my mind. And I thought with that difference between us, I didn't think there was any way we could make proper links—links that could make any difference. But I understand now a lot more as to why black lesbians from America call themselves American.

Why do you suppose some African American lesbians identify as "American"?

KEI: In my family I'm first-generation born in the UK. We all here are first-generation born in the UK. So my links with Africa and the Caribbean are obviously so much closer. Black people in the states, when they look back, their links are very much based in America. So I really didn't understand...I know it, but I didn't understand what it meant or the consequences.

Just for the record, I'd like to state that there are many of us [African American women] whose families are descended from slaves; are African-identified, and do not necessarily identify with the dominant white supremacist capitalist culture in the states. We view ourselves as being part of a nation-within-a-nation, characterized by a distinct culture and language.

KEI: I know that now. It was never shown to us that there was a culture within a culture in America. It was never "black american" culture separate from "white american" culture. When I heard black Americans say "I'm American", the only concept I had was white america.

Did your perceptions change upon visiting the states, or upon meeting African-identified black American women in the UK?

ANGELA: For myself it was more upon coming here. I attended the National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference last year in Los Angeles. That was a very important experience for me. It really brought home lots of insights and information...and coming back

again this year.

What misconceptions do you think African American women have of black women in the UK? And vice versa.

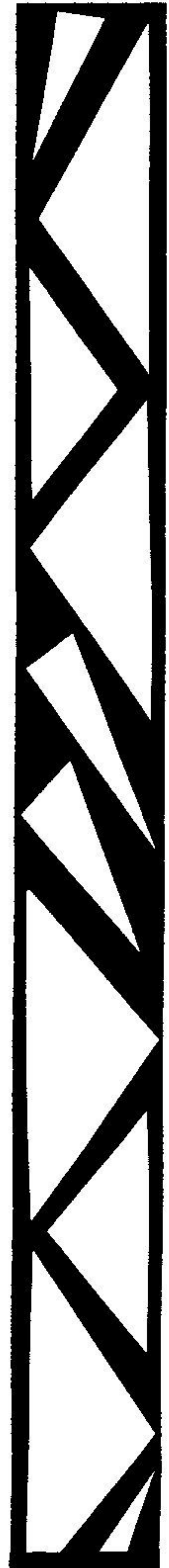
MARY: In England the image of black people in America is one of being very flashy, wealthy. I don't know where this image of wealth is from. Also, that we have little in common that an African American is somehow intrinsically connected with white americans. Yeah getting back to what Kei was saying, that we don't realize that we are the same people. That we have had some of the same experiences... I know I'm being romantic, but just looking in the face of women, who you know have had a completely different history from yourself, but in the present, and quite clearly, we are the same. We only need to look in each other's face and we can see that. [Kei: Very poetic!] But I don't think we realize that. That's why I emphasize the importance of travelling and meeting each other so that we can see each other. And then work very hard so that process [misconceptions] doesn't happen. I think there are a lot of misconceptions, and as a result there is a lot of unnecessary friction.

ANGELA: A number of times I've been surprised to meet Black Americans, who are really surprised to hear that there are black people in the UK. I think there is to an extent probably a misconception that there aren't many black people, and therefore there can't be many black lesbians in the UK. Or a misconception, that because in a sense our history in the UK is obviously so much younger, than the history of black Americans, we are somehow backwards...Because there are big historical [figures] in America, and we really haven't got equivalents in London. I certainly have felt that this feeling from black American women, that we are lesser beings, we're behind, and there is much for us to learn from Americans. I'm sure that there is, but I feel very strongly that there is a two-way process to learning.

KEI: I've always thought it very strange, that people think that there are not very many of us in England. I assure you that there are.

Sistahs, thank you very much.

Skye Ward is the Outreach Coordinator for the Aché Project.



"Daughters of the Dust"

A film by Julie Dash

Reviewed by
Donna Allegra

If Julie Dash's film *Daughters of the Dust*, were a museum, my favorite gallery would be the portraits. At first I could barely listen to the dialogue, wanting instead to gaze upon the gorgeous characters. But then, the verbal text was so rich with substance, it too engaged my wonder.

Ten years in the making, this film is already a legend. People have stories of going to see it and finding that the screening is sold out.

Daughters of the Dust is visually alluring, erotic with its display of African-American women. The cinematography is so acute you can almost feel the spray from the ocean snorting up the shore as the young women played on the beach. The kernels of corn glistened on the ears stripped bare for the family picnic; the languor after the meal was palpable.

Daughters of the Dust won the Sundance Film Festival award for best cinematography, but be leery of those who say the cinematography was the best

thing about it. Though the images of the Black women and children, laser sharp in clarity, were endlessly beautiful; though this depiction was nothing less than homage, the scripting and story also deserve standing ovations.

Setting her tale on a Georgia sea island in 1902 allows for a clear slate on which Julie Dash sketches African-Americans at a juncture in history that resonates into today. *Daughters of the Dust* chronicles a point in the past before we knew what was to come, where African-Americans were grappling with the hope for a brighter future and how best to bring it to pass. It was also a place where the errors that were sewn into that vision can be seen by those of us living in that dreamed-for future.

The promise of greater freedom in the north draws the Peazant family to leave Ibo Landing for the mainland United States. In focusing on the women's realms of being: cooking, caring for and teaching the

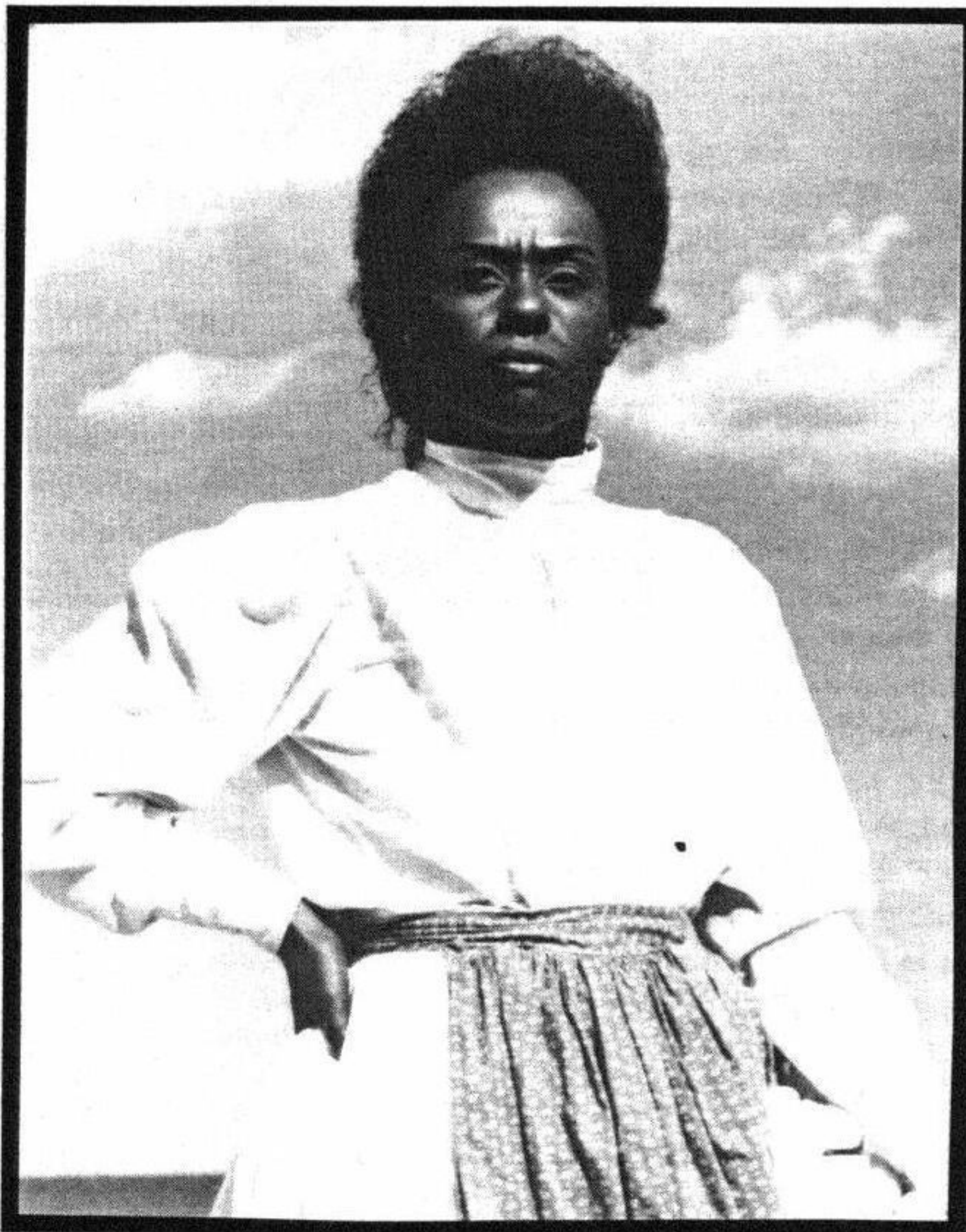


children, walking and talking to one another, Dash presented African-American women as we are amongst ourselves. The Peazant women embodied different approaches in opinion as to how we should proceed as a people - a perpetual discussion amongst Blacks.

Viola Peazant, who organized the photographer to capture the Peazant family on this occasion, held up the banner of Christianity for us to march forth onto salvation. Hagar insisted upon education and assimilation as the road to take. Both of these women wanted to push Africa far away and disclaim the heritage that Nana, the great grandmother of the clan remembers and insists upon. Nana's thought which opens the film, "I am the honored and the scorned woman, the holy one and the profane ... I am barren and many are my daughters" is metaphoric for African-American women. These words also bespoke her position in the family.

Eula and Mary had the questioning hearts. Their minds weren't set and unbroachable like Hagar's and Viola's. Eula, married into the Peazant family to Eli, had no contact with the mainland other than her rape by a white man. She is more African than American, and the spirits of the old ones, the ancestors whom Nana refers to, are close to her.

Yellow Mary had lived in the north and experienced its dubious freedom. She's come home laughing at the backwardness of her homeground. I identified with Yellow Mary as an adult who is also looking back at the neighborhood I grew up in. Her transfor-



mation to embrace her African roots is my story as well.

Yellow Mary is also a lesbian. As a lesbian, I am used to being left out of the picture or else distorted beyond belief in the history books. At one point during the movie, I held my breath wondering if I could let go my guard and trust that my truth would be included in Dash's horizon. Would I sing *Daughters of the Dust's* praises for heterosexual women but still have my verse unheard?

Yellow Mary's mate is a high yellow woman with eyes as green as the Georgia sea. (The joke is that Yellow Mary is a brown-skinned woman, but amongst the Gullah people of the island who have not mixed much with whites, she was "yellow.") This woman says hardly a word in the film, but you can see the love and good feeling between the two. They are openly involved with each other and are not thrown out of the fold on that account. Their relationship was the one portrait of a happy mature couple. The film had other lovers in courtship stages, but these lesbians had the most full grown love.

The Peazant family does not know that the future that awaits them in the north is not the greater admission to culture and education which Viola expects. Yellow Mary knows this and her revelation is that she wants to remain on the island with Nana and the African spirit. A large part of Julie Dash's message is that we need the wisdom of African ancestors, the old souls, so, Nana says, will guide us. America has been an atrocious parent. Its been African values that nurtured, sustained and allowed African-Americans to survive.

America has always told Black women that we are ugly, that we are whores, that we have no rights, that no one wants to hear from us, that we're merely jokes. That message hasn't changed and the past assaults to our sense of self scar us into today. We have aspects of ourselves where we reject and push away our reflections of each other.



in the process of trying to find right answers as individuals and for the community.

Not all members of the Peazant family tree pull off on the boat going north. Some stay, some take other paths. This met-

aphoric truth reflects our different branches that root in the same soil. This soil is the dust that Nana wants to go to when she dies, not some white man's heaven. And speaking of the African root, Nana is finally embraced and her offering is taken up and acknowledged.

Daughters of the Dust swept an epic breadth to outline the origin of present-day issues where we struggle to unravel the knot in a rope that binds us. It speaks of where some of African-American women's current unresolved pains come from.

The film also addresses us toward healing. The richness and truth that it contains are such a relief after all the outright lies and good intentions that miss the mark.

And then, I wonder what white people will think on seeing this movie? How deep into this museum will they explore and be able to identify what is important and significant? Will there be oohs and ahhs that make the right sounds as not to be accused of racism and to be seen as politically correct? There is no good white character in the film. The only references to whites are to their bad behaviors - the slave dealers snatching infants from their mothers' breasts; the white couple who take Yellow Mary to Cuba, hired as a wet nurse for their child, who won't let her return home; the white men who raped Eula and Yellow Mary.

On the other hand, I think the mainstream will love and adore *Daughters of the Dust* just as much as I did, much like the response to Tracy Chapman's refreshing dignity and strong truth. It took ten years to complete this film because potential backers did not believe it would be a commercial success. Hmph. Just try to get a ticket to see the film folks. The lines are long. ▼

Eli, with a common yet perverted sense of manhood, focuses anger on Eula, pushing her away, because she was raped and impregnated with a child possibly not his own. An exhilarating point in the film was to hear Nana, the family elder, say to him, "She (Eula) don't belong to you. She marry you ... You can't get back what you never own."

The Peazant women were ashamed of Yellow Mary who was also raped and pregnant, and cast her out with their disapproval. Hagar, with intolerant, judgmental tones disdains Yellow Mary heartily, yet one of the most painful chapters in our history has been the wholesale rape of Black women by white men. As Yellow Mary says to Eula, "The rape of Black woman is as common as fish in the sea." This is one of the wounds we have yet to heal.

How do we rid ourselves of disgrace for other people's despicable behavior? In a moment of climax, Eula tells the family that they must "...change your ways of thinking before you leave this place ... we carry scars from the past ... we wear our scars like armor to protect us." Dash suggests that we need to have something psychologically akin to the music box case of Yellow Mary's. In her imagination she packs her memories in it and takes them out to look at them when she wants to. She lets nothing outside that case tell her anything about who she is and how she should feel about herself.

This lyrical film stems from an aesthetic that is not about the boy with the biggest dick gets to win because he shouted the loudest and hurt the most people. Even Hagar at her angriest and most bitter isn't a bad guy. The people hurt here were engaged

Donna Allegra: I am a New Yorker of Caribbean descent. I write poetry, fiction and cultural journalism (*Womanews*, *Gay Community News*, and *Sojourner*.) I have recent fiction in *Sinister Wisdom* #46, *Common Lives*, *Lesbian Lives* Spring 1992 issue. My poetry has appeared in *Conditions* 5 & 16, *Home Girls* & others. I'm presently visiting the Bay Area; thinking about moving in. Hope your neighbors won't mind.

New Lifestyles Editor: Heather Flewelling

Welcome to the new Lifestyles section. It is our hope that this can be a space for us to explore the many different aspects of our lives, and for more of you out there to get involved and tell us what is going on in your neck of the woods. We want to know what it's like for you to live where you are. We want to know what the sistahs are up to politically, artistically and socially. Give us the scoop on the racial dynamics of your community. What's it like to be living in Kansas as a lesbian of color? Who's there for support? We want to start building national and international networks so when we travel/move/want someone to touch base with we know who's out there doing work or just trying to get by.

Think of the Lifestyles section as a place you can throw out ideas which have been buzzing around your head for years but have never gotten as far as the paper. What's going on in the big, bad ugly world which affects your daily life? What ways have you found to deal with the good, the bad and the ugly? Where do you call home? How do you find ways of taking care of those places in yourself which cry out to be understood and loved? All of these are things we struggle with as

Send us your thoughts on the lifestyles of the brown & beautiful...

lesbians of color in a world which doesn't want to give us the power we hold over their heads. We are threats to the system, and that terrifies them. Unfortunately it can also terrify us and leave us feeling victimized, misunderstood, scarred, and alone.

So Sistahs, reach out in these pages and hear what your family has to say and offer you in the way of challenge and comfort. Find that one other black lesbian who lives in your state. Know who's doing the same kind of work in other communities. Hear who else is facing lay-offs and discrimination for wanting to live their lives in an open and healthy way. Laugh at how similar our experiences can be. Know where to go when you finally take that big trip to London. Let's create that network which we have been kept out of for so many years, and reclaim each other as our allies and family. ▼

Talkin' To You Sober From Boston, Where the Funk Stops Pumpin' at 2am

by
Nsomeka



Hello Sistahs,

I am writing in order to give you an idea of how it is to live in Boston. Many people seem almost intrigued to get here, and I often wonder why. Boston is really no different than most cities in Amerika. We have poverty, homelessness, gangs, gay/lesbian bashing (which is on the rise for lesbians,) crimes, rape, murder, domestic violence, child abuse, crack houses and beautiful oceans and beaches outside of the city.

Boston has great architectural landscapes, lots of universities and infamous hospitals. There are lots of students here. There are many places to shop, dance and eat, and the vast majority of these establishments and institutions are owned, operated and patronized by "straight" white wimmin/men or white lesbians/gay men. There is a strong history of separatism/segregation in this city which still exists today.

If you want the same energy as you get when you go to Harlem, come to the city of Roxbury, on the border of Boston. There you will find mostly sistahs and brothahs selling t-shirts, hats and jewelry on one block and the muslim brothahs and sistahs selling incense and knowledge across the street. You will also find the ones hit hardest by self-hatred, the depression, the racism and separatism that clearly exists here. The highest selling chemicals are the vials of crack sold on the corners and the alcohol sold at the liquor stores. There are more liquor stores in the cities of Dorchester, Mattapan, South End Boston and Roxbury, than are laundromats, schools and food markets. "Why?" you might ask... Well, the population is predominately Black, Latino and Asian with the inclusion of a few recent young white condo owners: mostly gay white men.

Dyke life? Hmmmm, that's a hard one. There is much diversity here in the lesbian communities. I will begin by categorizing a few of the sub-cultures. There are the exclusive bar dykes who always seem to know your name. There are the dykes who own their own condos and work at IBM or MIT. You see everything among the sistahs: process, dreads, naturals; songs of the orishas, political slogans, and the latest rap and pop tunes. You've got sistahs who are friends

with white wimmin, and sistahs who preach an Afro-centric party line.

But above all, the sistahs are few. If you take all Boston we'd have quite a house party. You will never know who or how many will show up. The same scenario goes for about everything; we're an unpredictable group. There is support on some levels because eventually everyone gets caught up in their own groups and give and get what they need.

Should you live here? That's a tough question. I would say yes if you want to study here, but make a serious effort to live outside a dorm. There is a lot of conservatism and homophobia on the campuses, not to mention the traditional problems of sexism, racism and classism. To work here? Well, we're experiencing a recession here like everyone else, so if you ain't white and educated, your chances of getting hired at a reasonably secure position is low. Finally, if you are used to living in a city where the communities of color are strong and somewhat united, even on a small scale, and a place where the lesbian and gay community is thriving— for lesbians of color, that is— I would suggest you consider moving somewhere else. It can be very lonely out here, especially in the beginning. I know this reality isn't unusual, but if your prospective communities ain't got their shit together, then it makes your survival even harder.

Now I don't want to paint too bleak a picture of Beantown, but reality in the US is reality. Of course we need all the sistahs we can get. Ya'all come up now, ya hear! Course you'll need a place to stay, so contact the bookstores: Crone's Harvest in Jamaica Plain, or New Words in Cambridge. If you want to stay with the sistahs... support Aché so that they can start circulating out here again. Otherwise we will not make the connection. There are no other resources, so we must continue supporting the efforts which are already struggling for our sistahood. Peace up!

**Nsomeka,
livin' in tha city B.**

A TRAVELER ABROAD: SAN FRANCISCO & THE BAY

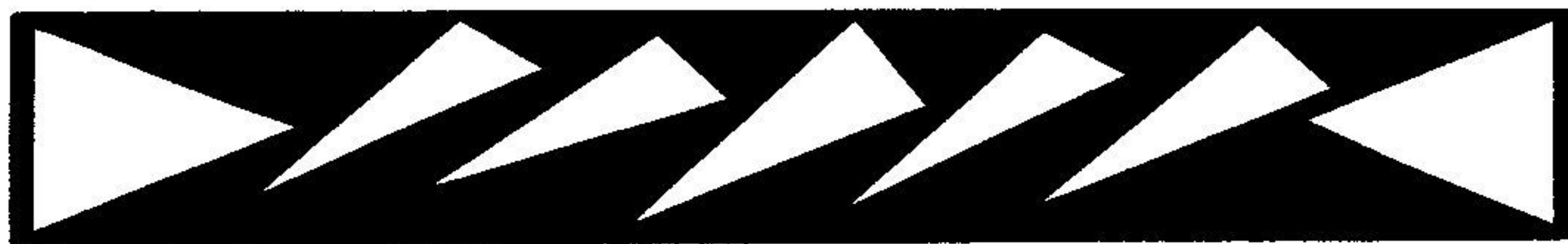
by Ras Ayiah Johan

California, images of beaches, riches and bikini clad women. Apart from that my knowledge of California was restricted, based on what I had picked up from watching programs such as "The Streets of San Francisco."

As such I was pleased to see those steeply slanting streets for myself and the varied architecture of the houses so much more individual than the houses in England, with its tradition of row upon row of identical terraces. There was lots to see and I made all the tourists stops, even having a ride on one of those bicycle-pulled cabs along the pier leading to Fisherman's Wharf. But I was surprised at the number of

on the streets in towns outside London. My only hope is that something is done about it before it becomes an acceptable way of life.

The other thing I found disturbing was the police and their guns. In truth I have been to other countries where police carry guns but there is something about the vibe here that I found uncomfortable. Maybe it is because so many of the programs that we get on British TV are of the cops and robbers variety, with endless shooting and violence, but I think that it is also because I know how racist the police are in England and the number of accidental killings of Black people that there are, and the police there

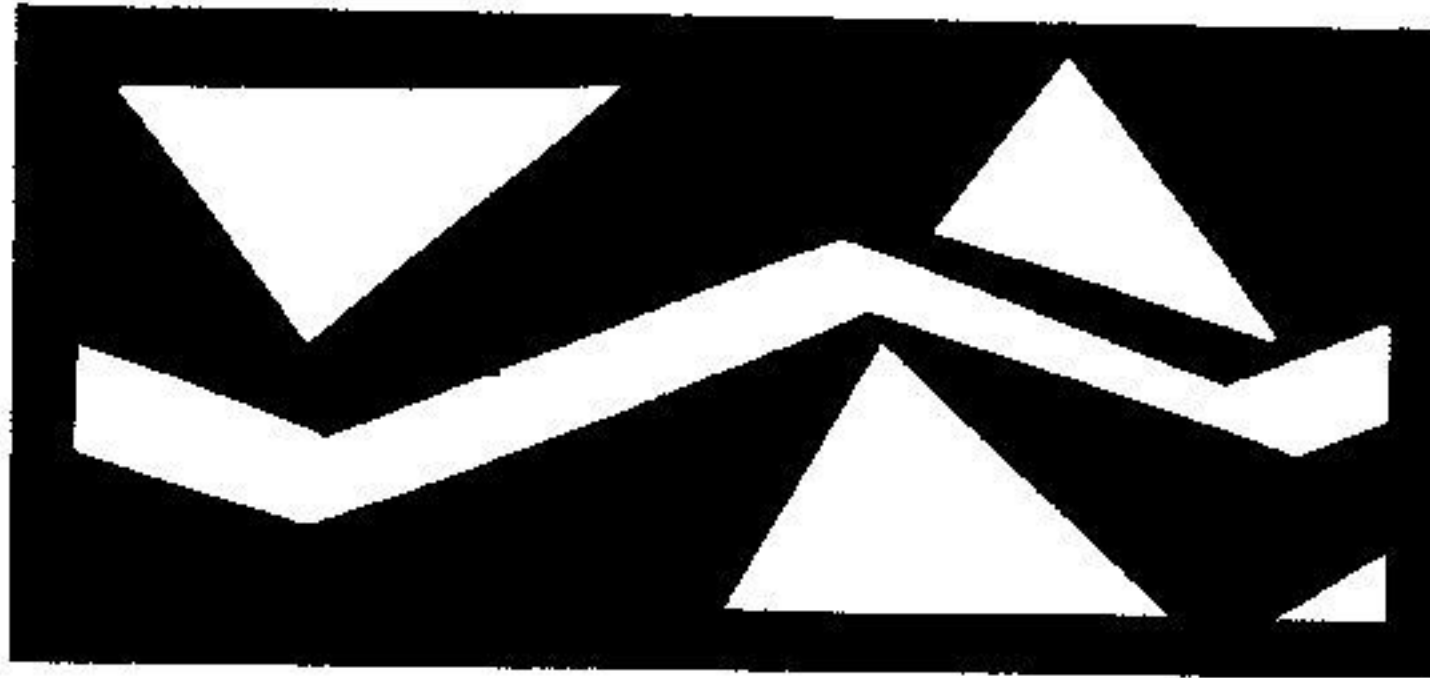


homeless people and beggars on the street. It was an aspect of American life that I had not been aware of before. I found it distressing, especially as so many of these people were Black. What, I wondered, had happened to the American dream. In many ways America struck me as two countries living on one land. The equivalent of a third world country and a first world country existing side by side. This difference was not only visible it was also maintained in the attitudes of the people I spoke to about this situation. The overall vibe towards the people on the street was to behave as if you did not see them. It was a problem to which the general solution seemed to be to ignore it. For myself I found this difficult to do, and in addition, I did not want to be operating on a level where I could so harden my heart to people that I would be able to walk by them without a second thought. Yet it is a vibe that is beginning to become commonplace in England as well. With the erosion of the welfare state by the present Conservative government more young people are being seen

don't even carry guns on an everyday basis.

Of course there were many good things to be experienced. The Castro area was a joy. It was so good to be somewhere where you could walk hand in hand down the street with a beautiful woman, hug and kiss without being the center of some kind of negative vibration. That kind of freedom gave me a high, the echo of which still warms me now. But even through this euphoric haze I was aware at how few women were visible especially of the Black variety. Although one day when I happened by the Cafe St. Marcos there was a whole posse of Black women there and I spent a very pleasant afternoon playing pool and getting to know people. The latter made it all the easier because of the way people always introduce themselves to one another and shake hands before playing a game together. This little ritual does not happen in England the way it happens here, where I experienced it where ever I went. In England you can play all night and never know who you are playing against. You just assume that the person putting

the money in must be next in line. In a sense people here are alot friendlier, it was always easy to get into a conversation with people although I think my accent helped a little. It attracted a lot of attention because it was 'softer and gentler' than the American accent, I found this amusing because in England my accent is considered one of the coarser ones hailing as it does from deepest Lancashire in the North. This vibe reminded me of how influenced we are by the perceptions of people around us. So often we forget that standards of beauty, softness and a whole host of other vibes, such as skin colour, i.e. what is dark and what is light, is only part of a continuum. In some places I have been considered dark in others 'red skinned' and for me it has been an opportunity to look at it and be in situations from another perspective. I have been in situations where I have been considered a great beauty because I am so 'light skinned' and in other situations not even being included as a possible in the 'beauty stakes' because I

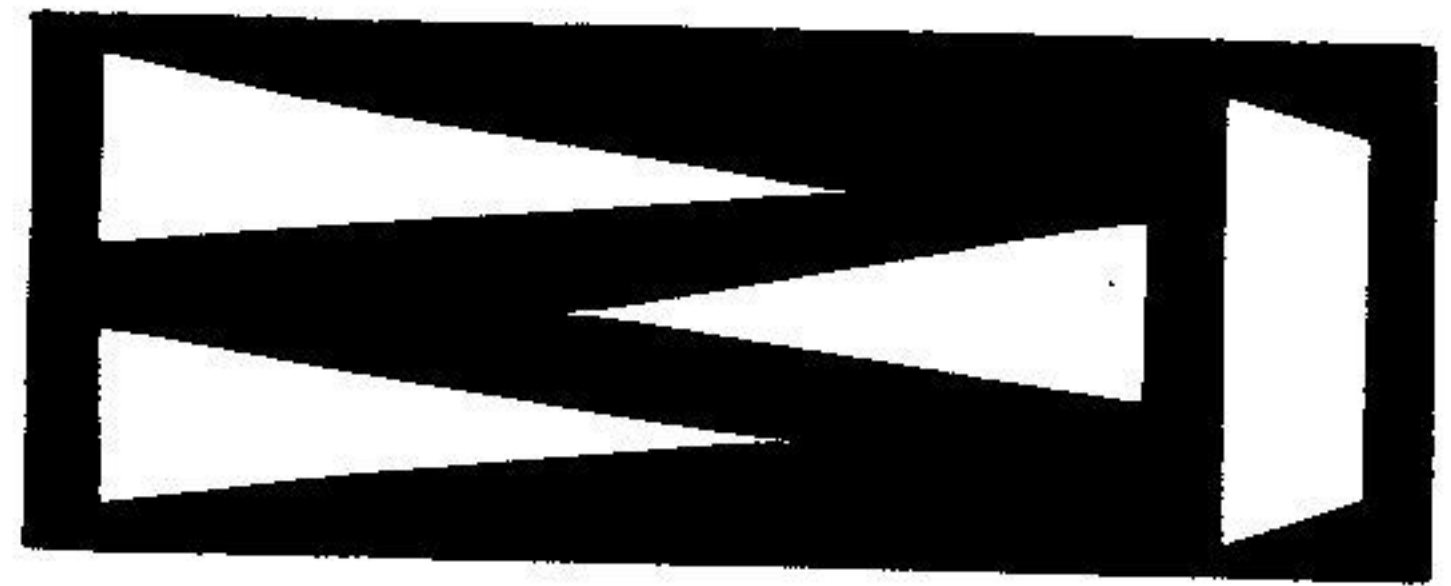


had not one single attribute that was considered beautiful by those around me. The vibes over my accent was like a gentle reminder that there is no one solitary definition of anything. The way that we on the streets in towns outside London. My only hope is that something is done about it before it becomes an acceptable way of life.

The other thing I found disturbing was the police and their guns. In truth I have been to other countries where police carry guns but there is something about the vibe here that I found uncomfortable. Maybe it is because so many of the programs that we get on British TV are of the cops and robbers variety, with endless shooting and violence, but I think that it is also because I know how racist the police are in England and the number of accidental killings of are reacted to, more often than not, on the perception of the person of us, which many times has very little to do with anything we have done or are. Yet we inter-

nalize these outside perceptions so much we forget that whilst in one country, village or town we may be beneath consideration in another place we may be treated and seen as Queens.

Being in America made me feel like a Queen, I don't think that I have ever attracted so much attention. It seems to have rubbed a healing balm over all those times when I have stood in a room full of people and not been seen, or spoken and not been heard. Running parallel to this good feeling was an



ache I felt concerning the way Black people here don't really acknowledge you, even to the point of averting their eyes as you pass in the street. And there are so few visible Rastas, especially women. And it is strange how these differences play on your mind as you question why. For myself, I think that maybe the Rasta movement was more tenable in England because Black people there have less of a sense of being British in respect to how we refer to ourselves and how we are referred to. We are still the 'afro-caribbeans' those who came over in droves in the sixties and took the jobs the white man didn't want but which they are bawling about today because of the high unemployment. Even now third and fourth generation of those sixties pioneers are being asked where they were born. It is as if the British culture refuses to accept that Black people can be born in England because they refuse to have to accept that Black people are also British. Doing so would strike me at the very heart of what their being British means, given that so much of it is steeped in the belief of white supremacy. The British Empire is not dead it lives on the hearts and minds of the people, both white and black. Being a Black American seems to have a higher level of acceptance. The land we are born on is our own so perhaps the back to Africa vibe that underpined so much of the Rasta movement did not have the same level of appeal. But I was pleased to see that many a black lesbian

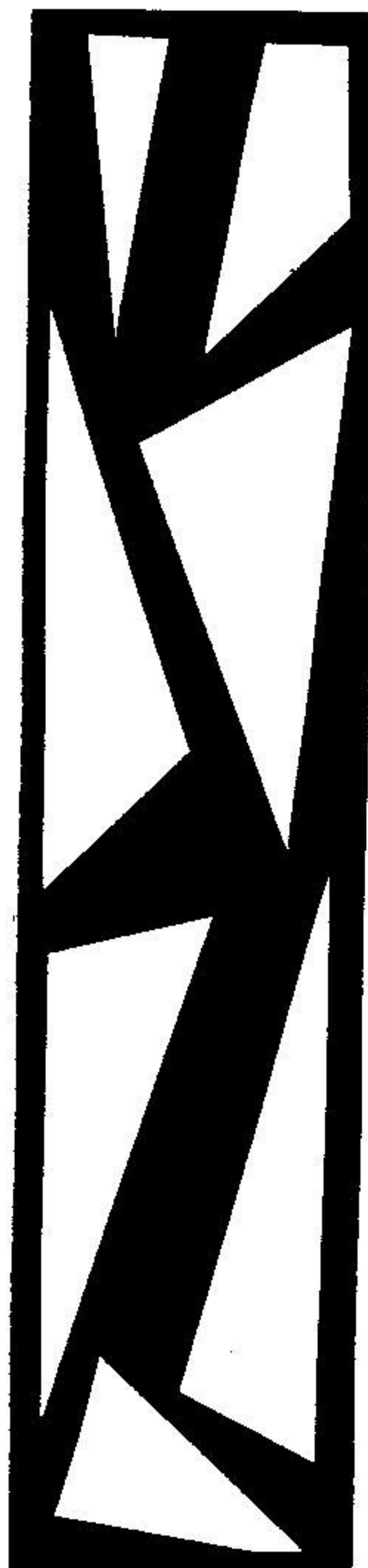
wore locks, it is a strong vibe in England as well, and that most of the other lesbian women I met wore natural hairstyles. It makes me feel like we are accepting ourselves, as we are, more.

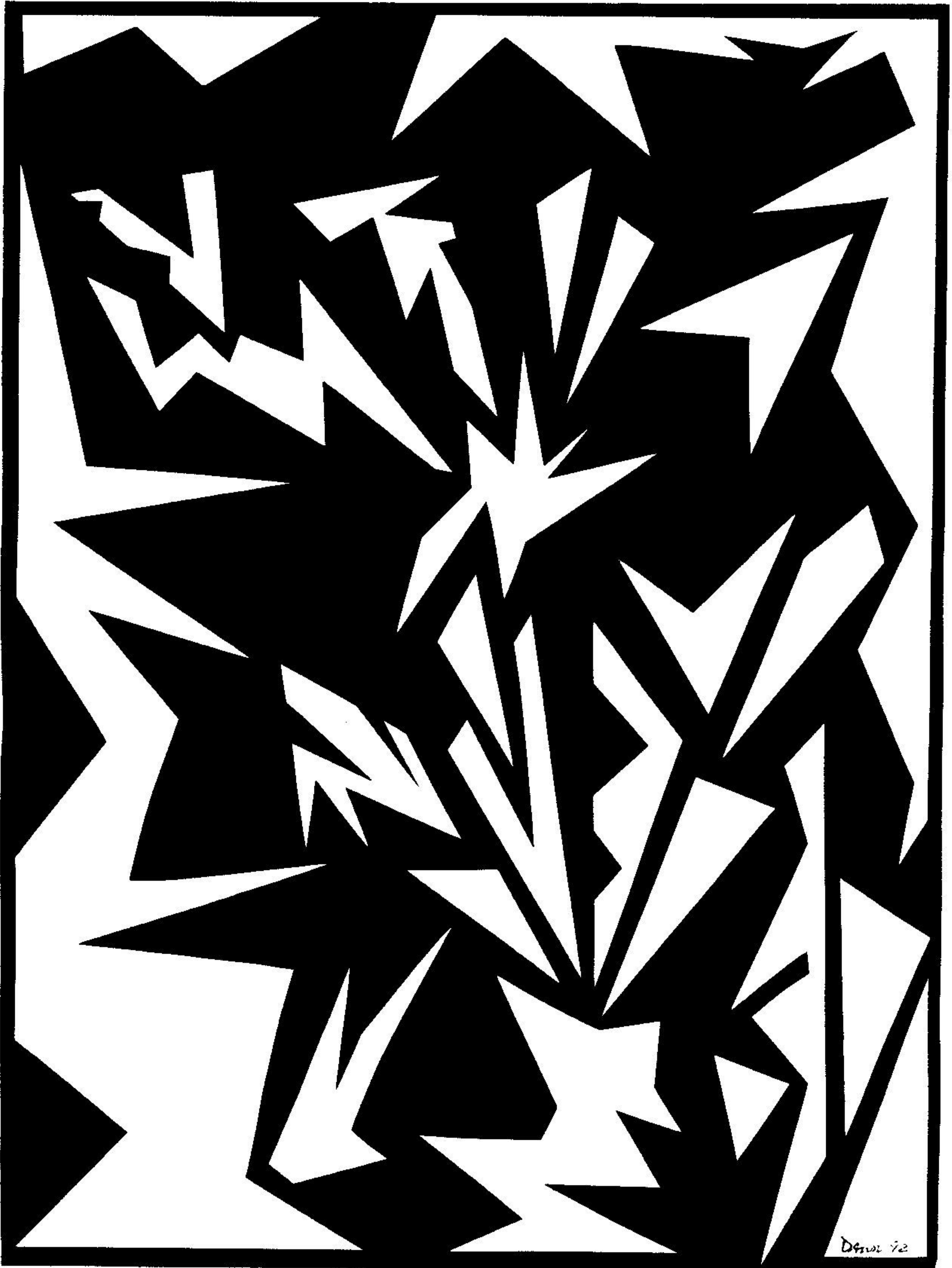
One aspect of San Francisco life that I was looking forward to was the nightlife, after all San Francisco is the gay capital of the world and as such I expected a never ending social whirl of things to do and places to go. As it happened to all the women's clubs and places to be, I heard a litany of places that used to be, Amelia's, Code Blue, Club Rapture, Peg's Place but now the options seem to be Club Q and the Toybox, both of which happen once a week, one in San Francisco the other in the East Bay. I never got the opportunity to go to the Toybox which was a disco and performance night combined. This was a disappointment especially as one night there was a stripper appearing. I, for one, had never come across the concept of women going to watch another woman strip for them. I was initially shocked, surely there could not be much difference between that and men going to watch women strip. Anyway I am not aware of this happening in England, in fact I remember a performance that I went to in London, a Black women only event. One of the artists performed a traditional dance of her country semi-nude as required. The response was amazing. After the initial gasps of shock, embarrassment, lust and head turning (the latter to ensure that other women in the audience were also seeing a half naked woman prancing about the stage) the audience settled into a state of catatonia from which they did not seem to ever quite emerge. What the response would be to a stripper I really do not know.

There were other surprises like Bella's and Whispers in the Bay. Black gay clubs run by Black people. Bella's especially affected me, because inside it is just like a typical Afro-Caribbean club in England. But I cannot imagine anywhere in England where such a club could exist without it being continually under attack or burnt down. Bella's on the other hand seems to co-exist within the Black community peacefully. Whispers was fun, again I know of no place like it in England, a bar and disco combined, frequented by both men and women, this in itself was a new experience for me because it is rare that I have had the opportunity to socialize with gay Black men. The lesbian and gay community is not as together in

that way back home. If you are in a situation where the clientele is mixed it's probably because you have gone to a disco set up for gay men but which allows women in as well. In which case you are likely to be totally out numbered and ignored. Given that I had not had much opportunity to meet Black gay men and still in search of other Black lesbians I wanted to go to the Black Lesbian and Gay Conference. Unfortunately, due to the high cost of registration I could not go officially, but I turned up anyway. ▼


Ras Aylah Johan is a runner, counsellor, photographer, writer, and traveller.





Déroulé 72

22/ACHÉ



I AM A 29 YEAR OLD ARTIST, ACTIVIST, POET AND HEALING WARRIOR WOMAN, COMMITTED TO TRUTH AND INTEGRITY. I BELIEVE WOMEN ARE THE HEALERS AND SAVIOURS OF THIS PLANET, WE HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM OUR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS THROUGH VISION, LOVE AND DETERMINATION. I AM PROUD TO BE A WOMAN, PROUD TO BE OF AFRICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN DESCENT AND DETERMINED TO SHARE ALL THAT I AM WITH MY COMMUNITIES. MY CREATIVITY IS A CELEBRATION OF MY LOVE, MY SPIRIT AND MY DIVERSITY. ▼

**ART IS A MOVEMENT
A SOUND
A TASTE
A STATEMENT
ART IS POLITICAL
POWERFUL
AND ALLOWS US TO RECONNECT
WITH OUR ANCESTORS
ART IS HEALING
ART IS AN EXPLOSION
A RELEASE
A DANCER IN THE DARKNESS
THE FIRST RAYS OF SUNLIGHT
ART TRANSFORMS
IDENTIFIES AND CONFOUNDS
ART IS LOVE AND DESIRE
ART IS REVOLUTION
ART IS THE UNKNOWN FIRE
ART IS THE STILLNESS
THE MOTION
CREATION
MY ART IS MY PASSION
MY FIRE
MY DANCE IN THE DARKNESS**



DAWN IS ACHÉ'S 1992 ART EDITOR.

UNSAFE AT ANY HOUR

BY
LYDIA SIMS

Michael Spinks couldn't do it, Razor Rudduck couldn't do it, even Larry Holmes couldn't do it. It took 18 year old 105 pound Desiree Washington to knock out Mike Tyson.

Tyson has a history of assaulting women in the same manner in which he has made millions of dollars assaulting men in the boxing ring. Tyson told boxing foe Razor Rudduck, "I'm going to make you my girlfriend." With his analogy of his desire to dominate and exert power over women, why is it so difficult to believe that Mike Tyson raped Desiree Washington?

There are numerous concerns to address regarding how the celebrated media cases of Tyson/Washington and Hill/Thomas has impacted the perception of how African American men and women currently relate to each other. For this discussion let's address the specifics of the Mike Tyson/Desiree Washington rape case. For instance, why were Tyson's numerous lawsuits regarding his sexually deviant behavior toward women continually covered up rather than dealt with in a corrective way which may have saved a woman from rape and kept Tyson from his own self destruction? With Tyson's history of lawsuits for sexually objectifying women, why would his entourage set him up by allowing him to participate in an environment such as the Miss Black America Pageant? Why would Tyson's handlers subject these women to a man whose behavior and mentality toward women speaks to rape? Finally, the much asked question: "What was Desiree Washington doing in his room at 2am anyway?"

There is apparently an unspoken rule that after a certain hour in the evening women consent to sex by virtue of being alone in the presence of a man. I'm curious to know precisely what that time is. Cinderella knew that at midnight her chariot would turn into a pumpkin, but that's a white fairytale. I'm addressing the issue of communication, or lack thereof, between African American men and women. Rape is rape at 2pm or 2am. "No" is "no" regardless of the time or place.

Blaming Desiree Washington for being alone with Tyson is like justifying the LA police officer's beating of Rodney King for a moving violation. The issue is the growing mentality that does not allow for men and women to interact in private without a sexu-

al encounter. If a woman is in private with a man during the midnight hours the woman is fair game. The general public assumes that their interaction will be sexual, and some men (and women) obviously feel that the men have a right to sex. Blaming Desiree Washington for being alone with Tyson means that we have sadly bought this premise.

Let's address the issue that speaks to a woman's safety in relation to a clock on the wall. I challenge this mentality. If a woman is not safe with a man at 2am, why is that same man assumed to be safe at 2pm?! If a man rapes a woman at 1am is he less of a rapist than had he raped her at 1pm?! Because of

THE ISSUE IS THE GROWING MENTALITY THAT DOES NOT ALLOW FOR MEN AND WOMEN TO INTERACT IN PRIVATE WITHOUT A SEXUAL ENCOUNTER...

the time that date rape usually occurs and because during the course of a date a woman may choose to socialize in private with the man many of us blame the victim. If a woman is not safe in private with a man, should she then interact with him in public only or not at all?! As women we realize that we are often vulnerable to rape, but if a woman had sensed that she would actually be raped by her date she probably would not have communicated with him in the first place.

Tyson made it clear that he wanted sex on that infamous night. Let's assume that Washington intended to sleep with him or that at least she initially considered having sex with him. Does she have the right to change her mind at anytime during the evening regardless of where she was or what time it was without being raped? If a man states before a date that he wants sex, does that give him the right to rape a woman who refuses to submit to him for any reason? The opportunity exists for women and men to reeducate each other about the moral and legal responses to these questions.

Tyson is accused of having a street mentality toward women. An example of this mentality is that on any given day you can hear young African American males refer to women as bitches and hoers without their even knowing who these women are. This attitude of African American males shows disrespect and displaced anger toward women and needs to be addressed.

Regardless of your sexual orientation or feminist identity women must open dialogue between our sisters and brothers in the African American community in order to stop the destruction of each other. The opportunity exists to discuss with our daughters their need to establish personal boundaries. At the same time when she chooses to experience the pleasures of exploring different levels of sexual intimacy she must realize that there are two people involved in this experience whose emotions and perceptions may be different. Although it is a chore to check in with each other while enjoying the good feelings of sexual intimacy, women must realize that it is difficult for men to shut down if she says no. Thus, active verbal communication is necessary each step of the way so that he is not suddenly and unexpectedly asked to stop.

There exists a great deal of ambiguity when exploring sexual intimacy with a potential partner. The physical pleasures enjoyed by one person may not coincide with the emotional state of the other. Therefore, we must get our brothers and sisters to talk with each other. In addition, we must take advantage of this opportunity to educate our sons that a woman has sovereignty over her body, and that respecting a woman means that they also respect themselves. The door is open to reiterate to men that no is no and that there is a difference between sensual seduction and forced sex. As my younger brother stated, "a guy will probably try his luck but how far he goes depends on the respect he has for the woman."

Usually, it is safe to say that lesbians will not be victims of date rape by a man, however, the rape of a woman regardless of her sexual orientation or ethnicity weakens the psyche and empowerment of all women. Desiree Washington empowered herself and other women by filing charges against Tyson. Her message is that women can fight back and win against the oppression of men. The opportunity ex-

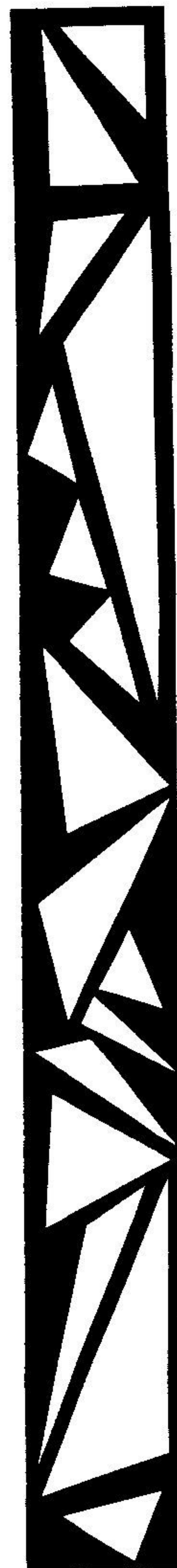
ists to continue this fight through active verbal communication so that we don't lose another generation to the Tyson-street mentality.

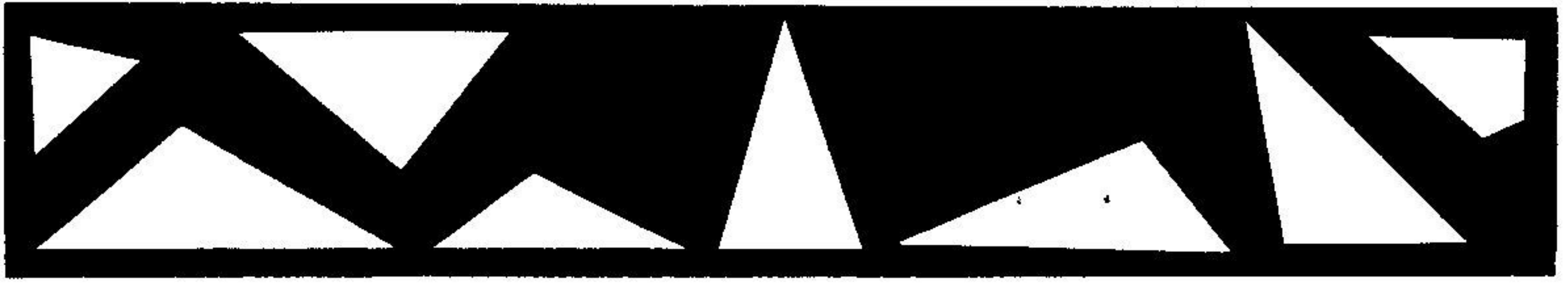
Tyson will be sentenced in March or April and an appeal of the conviction is pending. He could receive a \$10,000 fine and up to 20 years in prison for each of the three counts for which he was convicted. Superior Court Judge Patricia J. Gifford who will sentence Tyson gives an average sentence of seven years for similar rape convictions, thus Tyson could be eligible for parole in about 3 years.

Tyson by virtue of his boxing skills rather than by his character is a role model to millions of people. Washington described how her father, grandfather and brother had all been fans of Mike Tyson and how they used to watch his fights on television. Serving a three year prison sentence for rape does not allow for emotional healing from this betrayal. Serving a three year prison sentence for rape is not enough time to impact the minds of Tyson's impressionable followers, both young and old, who idolize him.

The Missionary Baptist Ministers Alliance, Donald Trump, and Representative William Crawford are petitioning the Marion County Court to suspend the sentence for Tyson. It is fair to say that Trump's interest in Tyson is financial. Should Trump be successful in keeping Tyson free to fight for the biggest purse in boxing history, Tyson will be indebted to Trump who will undoubtedly through the art of the deal make millions from Tyson.

The Ministers and Representative Crawford have stated that the taxpayers should not bear the expense of incarcerating Tyson (which costs more per year than it costs to educate a student at Harvard University). Their efforts are too little too late. Their goal should have been to reach all African American males irrespective of their athletic abilities before they commit heinous crimes. Rather than attempting to keep one man, Tyson, out of prison they should be addressing the issues of internalized hate, their self destructive behavior, and their displaced anger toward women by providing mental health services, educations, jobs, and positive role models to Black males to help keep them all out of prison. As women, as sistahs we can help by opening dialogue with our young men and women. The repercussions are otherwise too great. ▼





New Spirituality Editor: Ntombi

J AM

I am Quick Fire

Fast morning

Finger snapping

eyes flashing

and my laughter is tinged

with the Blues

I am Queen of the Streets

I am a child filled

with wonder

to whom a sunset is a climax

and a secret shared a caress

I am a Sag momma

who sees visions of who we might become
and remembers who we are. I use words to
shape my world and to keep me sane and to
spin out all the loveliness I find inside of me.

I am Ntombi.

I am the new Spirituality Editor for Aché.
It is an honor for me because, any time sis-
ters meet whether in person or on paper and
truly let their hearts touch, it is sacred
ground.

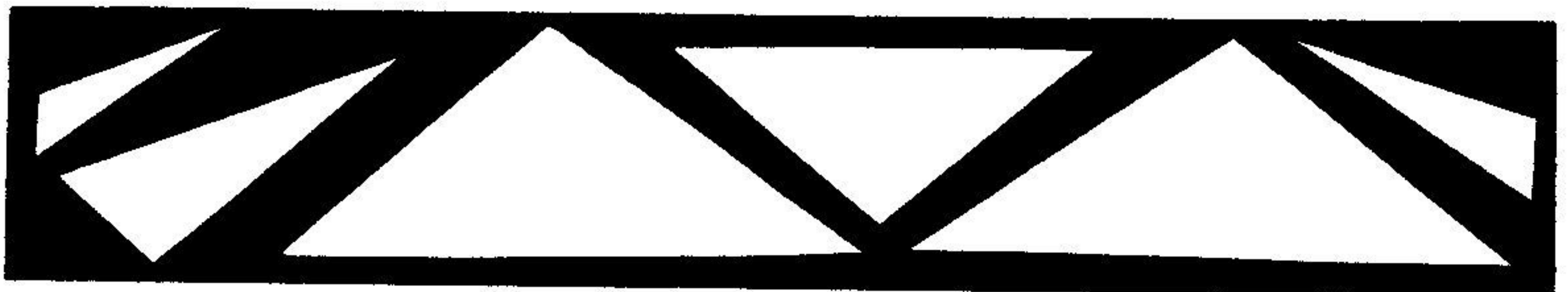
Everything is spiritual to me. I get realiza-
tions doing the laundry, I meditate while iron-
ing, my lover's smile is a gift that reminds me
of the spirit within.

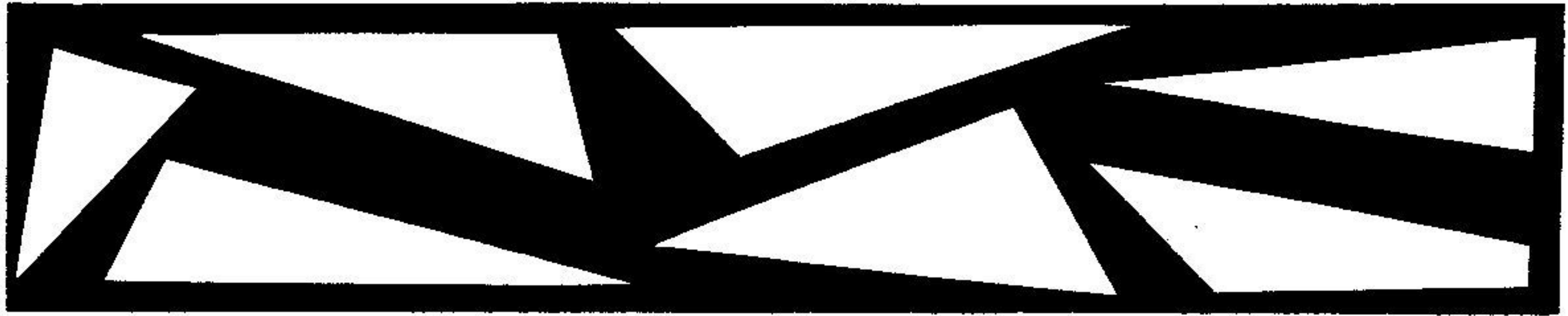
I am not really religious; I adhere to no
particular theology, method of worship or
meditation. I use what works. The music of
my people always works. Sometimes I need
the ocean or a wind-swept silent cliff. Some-
times it is a hot shower by candlelight that re-
minds me of what I already know: that I am
more than a body moving thru time and
space, that there is more to existence than 9-5
and MTV and all the other activities and insti-
tutions that have an impact on my life.

Since I am eclectic this section will be too.
On these pages you will meet a variety of out-
looks and beliefs. But what they will all have
in common is a belief in the power; the grace
and the beauty of you.

I welcome submissions of articles, poems,
insights and quotes. We are in dialogue, you
and I. We are dancing together, discovering
ourselves and sharing our visions.

I am honored to be a part of your life and I
am grateful you are a part of mine. ▼





A FEAST

I savored
crisp curls that lay
at the napes of lonely necks,
that supported beautiful faces of Ivory,
cinnamon and chocolate.

I tasted
the salty tears of a brother
hurting and healing from the
loss of a loved one.

I supped
on the laughter of round brown women
and their softness.

Intoxicating laughter, chocolate
sweetness, Black strength fills and
nourishes me, feeds and sustains
my power.

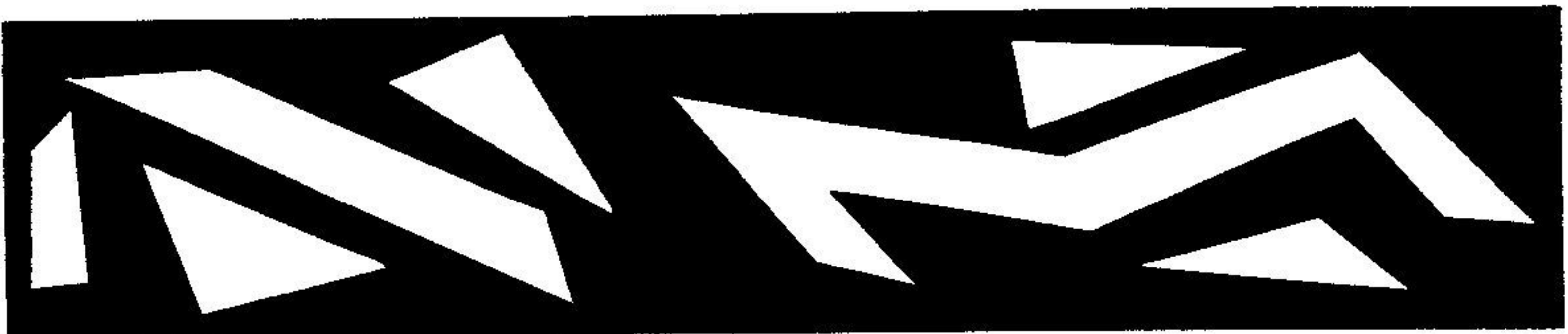
The Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference, "Weaving the Future, Black Gays and Lesbians Together," held in Oakland, California February 13-16, was, for me, an exquisite experience of intense love, joy, and sorrow. Love for the vision of my Sisters and Brothers that created a wonderful space/place for us to exchange ideas and to celebrate and reaffirm our beauty and power. Joy that the members of Unity and the Forum had the dedication and the commitment to give their highest to go through the struggles and emerge victorious, giving us a vision of how precious and vital and courageous we are.

Joy at the participants, so open and willing to share, to experience, TO BE.

Joy that we acknowledged our own; shared our questions, our doubts, our pains and our fears. Joy that we reaffirmed who we are: proud descendants of Africa who are joined together because of how we choose to love.

Sorrow that there were missing faces, sorrow that there were sisters and brothers. I will not see again this side of the veil. Sorrow that the times we are all together as we were this weekend are all too few.

We struggled to understand, to find and share our individual and collective values. We nourished each other. We drank from the well of each other's Inspiration and we were refreshed. ▼



by Francesca Jackson

BE.

BE WILLING.

BE WILLING TO BE.

BE WILLING TO BE WELL.

◆ **BE.** "To have an objective existence" is a dictionary definition. Existence is only a starting point...the actual fact is that your Spirit inhabits a human body and goes through day-to-day rituals to maintain that existence, your presence on the planet.

In typical 20th century form it need imply nothing more than your waking up each morning—going to a job during the day—coming home each night to feed and sleep - repeating that cycle day in/day out for years. Moments of pleasure may be interwoven into this pattern and, particularly if the pattern is unfulfilling, these "pleasurable activities" may compose an element of insidious self-destruct. Life as an endless drone; mere "existence" produces a constant drain on vision, self-esteem and ability to create and lead a life of fulfilling productivity.

◆ **BE WILLING.** Allow for the possibility that however far away it may seem at this moment, you can create a life where your dreams come true. Willingness may encompass admitting fear of change but knowing with certainty at the same time it has become intolerable not to do so. Assess your present situation with honest yet compassionate and loving eyes. Understand that wherever you are now is not what matters so much as where you want to be and your intent to get there. Dream a little dream...darkness in any room disappears with the simple flick of a light switch. What would your life be if you opened yourself to receive more than you ever dared to dream? What will happen when you can't wait to wake up each morning because the work you do each day contributes to your own self-development? How would it feel if you stopped hoping all those little Aches and pains would "just go away" and form a team with your health care provider to not only bring you back to feeling tremendous but to help ensure you never feel any less? What would your children gain if they watched you honor

your emotional self, allowing responsible expression in every arena. What would they learn about honest, courage and the value of truth? How would your present friendships deepen and what kinds of new ones would you form? How good does it feel now to be surrounded by loving support for you to reach your highest? What could you accomplish if peace reigned in your heart and self-assurance guided your every step? What if you promise yourself you'd find out?

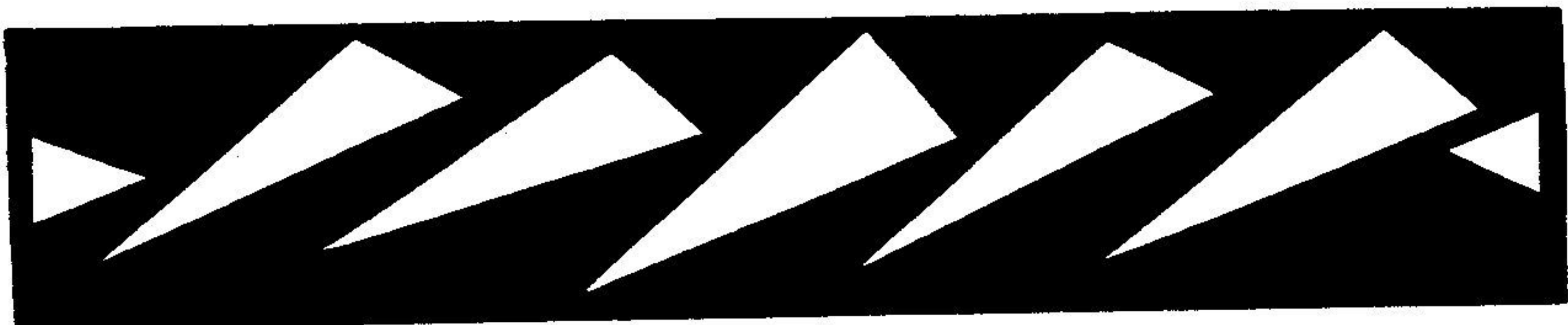
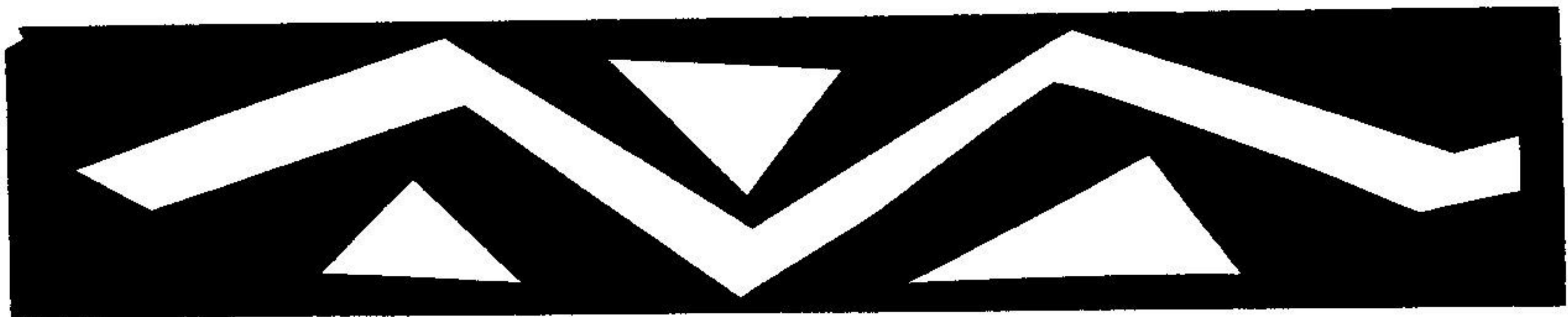
◆ **BE WILLING TO BE.** Every achievement, great or small, first incubates as an inner thought before its birth into outer action. It is, therefore, essential that we follow, on a daily basis, the age-old axiom, "Be still and know..." Going light years beyond the dictionary of "BE", we might arrive at an outlook where "BEING" involves a quiet union with Universal Intelligence as the source of thought, the motherload of knowledge. Contrary to the apprehension of many, long years of meditation are not a prerequisite for daily connection with one's Higher Self. The creative possibilities are endless. Whether it's the first 15 minutes quiet time arising each a.m. or the last 5 minutes before you drift into sleep, make certain it's a time you won't be disturbed, take a couple deep breaths, relax and join your inner dweller. If this is your first experience allowing yourself conscious daily time for introspection, the first steps may be tenuous, and it may feel like "nothing's happening." Be patient, release expectations of what "should" happen and allow the time to unfold and evolve. Ask that your next steps be guided and give thanks for the knowledge as it comes. You may become re-acquainted with sides of yourself you haven't seen in a long time. Welcome yourself home.

◆ **BE WILLING TO BE WELL.** Living "high-level wellness" has come to mean balance of all aspects of one's life. The beginning stages may require what seems an undue vigilance but be assured it will quietly recede over time into a lifestyle change that easily supports more of who you really are. I have found that a crucial ingredient to continued success

involves holding regular "Committee Meetings." Everyone's committee will vary in composition, but most of us are at one point or another, represented by such members as "No You Can't," "It's Too Hard; Better Quit Now," "Ain't None of Your Other Friends Doin' This So Why Should You," among others. It is these voices that can become the unseen banana peel and leave us wondering what happened when we were doing so well. All of your "inner personalities" have served an important role in your journey to this point. Starting with the most vocal ones, take the time to speak to each one and thank them for all the help given. Explain that you're moving in new directions now and would like them to use their skills in a new way to support and assist you. Once assured their existence is not threatened, they will rise to align themselves with you such that feelings of "being pulled in opposite directions" recede. Take the first step - be willing. Be willing to be well. ▼

Dr. Francesca Jackson is a chiropractor and homeopathic practitioner in Oakland. She is a beautiful and powerful woman dedicated to living life fully.

She heals with her words and her hands—Francesca lives from the space of her heart.



SANCTIFIED SISTER
by Dawn A. Rudd

Sanctified Sister
Oh So Holy Roller
Roll over me
You in that prim black dress
hat tipped just so
What you got cookin
after church?

Sanctified Sister
Oh So Holy Roller
Singing looud in the choir
Crying hard
Laughing
Mouth wide open
I like you
I respect you

Sanctified Sister
Oh So Holy Roller
I'll cook greens for you
on Sundays
Yams, cornbread
Macaroni and cheese
waffles and fried chiicken

Sanctified Sister
OH SO HOLY ROLLER
Let me feed you peach cobbler
warm, sweet, oozing
sticky, flaky, soft
Butter rolling on your tongue
Peaches clinging
like my juices

SANCTIFIED SISTER
OH OH SO HOLY ROLLER
I need to feed You sister
Feed you from my plate

DIET
by Ekua Omorupe

An obituary to dead women
who won the victory over
their body fat.

They fought relentlessly
against the temptations of:
French breads with jam
Italian buttered pastas
cottage fried potatows
Crispy baked chicken
Flaky croissants
Orange carrots
Zucchini squash
Romaine lettuce
Ripe tomatoes
Yellow bananas
Roasted unsalted peanuts
Soft avacados
Sauteed prawns
And red apples.

They lay
shrunken in steel coffins
wrapped in burial shrouds.
What praises for their bravery?
What trophies for their now
perfect bodies.



For Tatiana

by
Joi Rhone

"I hate you" are the words I remember coming
From the mouth of this nine year old
How could she hate me?
Didn't she know I wanted the best for her?

What she knew was that I was trying to break her spirit
Much as my parents had done to me when I was a child
"Children are seen but not heard"
And she wanted me to hear her, to listen to her

But I couldn't

Because in her I saw a childhood that I missed
In her I saw a person who at nine could express feelings and emotions
In her I saw a child who shared an incredible bond with her mother
In her I saw that she and her mother are a family
Not the dysfunctional one that I remember, but a healthy, loving family
In her I saw her mother's face, the face of the woman with whom I shared a love, a bond
a passion that would irreversibly change my life and no longer was my vision of a
"forever love" a dream—it could become a reality and
In her I saw everything I held to be true was going to be challenged

And I couldn't let it— "I am the adult, you are the child"

WRONG

Tatiana is the adult and I am the child.

She teaches me how to feel emotions, how to express from your heart.
She teaches me what it is like to go ice skating and hold hands.
She teaches me faith in myself, because only she believes at 34 I can overcome
my fear of water and learn to swim.
She teaches me that children are the real adults when it comes to forgiveness
we chronological adults don't have a clue.
She teaches me that the innocence of pure love will shift anything.

"I hate you" has shifted to "I love you."

And I do love her—she has given me back the most precious part of my life.

This is for my friend, my ice- skating buddy, my daughter, my teacher—

For Tatiana

But I Am A Lesbian, Too

by jae

Joe lives and works in the Bay Area.

I am so many things
I am a woman
African-American in flesh and spirit
Midwestern town
born and raised
Baptist
bred and indoctrinated
Holy Spirit
lovin', singin', shoutin', 'bout
Bible
readin', memorizin', prophesyin', from
Music
playin', makin', feelin'
Children and other gentle creatures
carin' for
Hard working
committed to my community
and the "survival of my people"
Intelligent/Creative
always thinkin' 'bout something
Compassionate and Giving
even to my disadvantage
But I am a lesbian, too
I love women
and I love woman-stuff
I love woman softness
woman curves
woman flesh
woman lips
I love the spirit of which women are made
I love woman strength and endurance
I love the Mother
in God my father
I feel for and am fired by woman pain
I hear woman cries
in evry man's land
I shed woman tears
I am woman passionate
I am so many things

So why is it, then,
that in this world/in my world
"I AM A LESBIAN, TOO"
cancels out everything else that I am?
I am all the above and so much more

But I am a lesbian, too
and I am that as much as I am
anything else

Hasten the day, oh Lord,
when ALL that I am
shall be acknowledged and accepted—

even within my own heart

What Do You Know? by V. René Pratts

you're the woman for me you said
and i'm the woman for you
we loved
we made love
we laughed
we cried
we shared our deepest secrets
we even analyzed

i've found another you said
as 2 years came to pass
i love him and he loves me,
i've found my true, alas

as tears rush down my face
i reflect and now regret
now i know i'm the woman for you
but that was never enough was it?

V. René Pratts: Originally from Chicago, Ill.,
I've lived in many parts of California. I currently live, work and attend college in Sacramento.

From our Granmomma's Kitchens

by Dawn Lundy & Heather Flewelling

We have come together because our various herstories of the kitchen need to be told. Black womens' experiences differ immensely. But for many, the kitchen was and remains a retreat for women, a meeting room where ideas are turned into power, a space where stories are told. It is essential that black lesbians discover a discourse outside of the white feminist struggle. When black feminists' creativity is referenced it is done via traditional media; art, music and poetry. But rarely is the creation of food—that which promotes life—and its canvas, the kitchen, expressed. It was our schoolin' place, where we were taught how to care for ourselves and others; how to catch a man, how to feed and nourish the hunger in our bellies and hearts, and how to protect our love from the bitter cold.

Questions arise when our discourse unfolds: how do we deal with the "body struggle" as the Other asserts that beauty derives from thin hips, thighs and lips? How do we dissect the limitations in Michelle Wallace's "Myths about the strength of the black woman—such stereotypes as 'mammy,' 'Sapphire,' 'matriarch,' and 'Aunt Jemima?' How do we confront the reality of those Afrikan mothers for whom the kitchen is a second life-sentence after an eight-hour day?

In the following we explore our own experiences of oral and cultural herstory in the kitchens of our great grandmothers, grandmothers, mothers, and ourselves. We share the clarity and confusion of being both heroine and victim to the myths and realities of our collective identity as black women and lesbians. We celebrate and condemn the words and lessons of our oppressors and our foremothers. We learn from and teach each other the joys and sorrows which have been baked, borrowed, and stolen from our memories. And, as is only fitting, this discussion takes place in our kitchen...

HEATHER: When I think about the kitchen, I think of the personal and political implications of slavery in our past and present. For white women the kitchen has symbolized slavery to one's domestic place. The feminist movement has striven to bring white women out of the place of heat and into the places of power. Why and how do we as black lesbians hold onto the place which brings us back to the heart of slavery? Possibly because it has always been the only place where we were left alone—for many a place of comfort; ours to rule and control. Out of the heat and fire have come our creations; rich and full tales of love and hardship.

DAWN: Yes, I agree. Because the kitchen was a place where black women felt powerful, black feminist struggle has not viewed a migration out of the kitchen as key to our liberation. It's strange because just as white women can view the kitchen as a place of enslavement, for us it literally was. But once we began to claim it as ours, a certain amount of power was taken. This is still visible in the way our mothers can say "Get the hell out mah kitchen!" when their children begin to "run them ragged." I remember things about my grandmother's kitchen in particular. Like the familiar smell of bacon that invaded the house on Sunday morning. Breakfast was essential. In her calm, understated way my grandmother would coax our gathering.

HEATHER: Yeah, I know what you mean. The kitchen is a place of family. My mother grew up in a multi-generational home, so her grandmother was the keeper of the family health. My mom learned how to roll out biscuit dough at five. But the funny thing is that my grandmother never learned how to cook because she was taken care of by everyone else. She was the Queen, but it was of other rooms in the house and not the kitchen! I remember when I was seven she cooked me pancakes for breakfast. They were the nastiest things I had ever tasted! When I told my mother she said "Shhh, don't say that. It'll hurt Nana's feelings." But Nana said, "No, Becky, she's right, We're waiting for Pop Pop to come home and feed us." And so in the midst of the traditions which are passed from mother to daughter, sometimes a generation is skipped. I sometimes wonder

what we miss by not having the kitchen be our place of power. We don't get it in the world. We are beautiful when we are in our own spaces, but we lose something when we step outside the doors of the rooms heated by long afternoons of roast chicken and sweet potato pie. Nana was going out once and she looked spectacular to my mother's child-eyed innocence. When Mom told her, Nana glared at her with such a mix of pain and pride and said, "Don't ever say that again. It doesn't matter how I look here. When I step outside these walls I'm just another nigger."

DAWN: I know what you mean. Sometimes I feel torn between wanting to be accepted in the world and embracing traditions in our culture that are powerful though not societally acceptable. We are, right now, developing our own language to talk about our experiences, on our own terms! I mean, although my mother thought of cooking as a chore at the same time I get this fascinating image of my grandmother who used her kitchen craft—her art, to give us a sense of who we were. Some unnameable voice keeps saying "Unleash your chains and seize the world!" More and more I am able to see that the power acquired at home, indeed in the kitchen, can be taken with me wherever I go.

HEATHER: It's pretty incredible what you're saying about our cooking-culture being art. It seems that when the art is tied so strongly to the nourishment we've been talking about—of the body and soul—we raise very difficult issues. If cooking and eating are artistic nourishment why are our bodies not seen as products of this creative process? As black women we have something so rich—to the palate and the spirit (we are so fine!) yet we are so far away from being recognized as beautiful in the larger society. All of the love and the hate we have for ourselves comes out of this symbolic gesture of making ourselves in the kitchen: the love is the deliciousness of the tastes our mothers dish out, and the hate is the way its dishes stick to our thighsbumsbelliesbreastsfaces pushing us further from white norms of beauty.

There is no room for a big-brown-woman in a thin-white-girl country-culture.

DAWN: Yeah, it really makes you want to say "to hell with what they say is beautiful!" After all, those same people who are bombarding us with these ideals of femininity and beauty are fucking up the whole world. One of the things you were talking about before was our oral tradition and how stories are told and invented there. It reminds me of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* where the parallel place for men to gather was the porch. They would sit and signify (another art form,) telling how they caught the fish that was "this big," and if it hadn't been for "so and so" they would have cleaned out the sea. For women the kitchen was the place where they could tell their stories, speak their truths. It's there where my mother and grandmother gave me advice about the world, saying "Don't be spreading your legs to every Tom, Dick and Harry. They ain't no good. Jus' want one thang." And for us, now, as black lesbians the kitchen-talk is immensely different.

HEATHER: That makes me laugh and cry! We get such mixed messages; on the one hand we're told not to spread our legs for every engorged dick who searches for relief, but I know my mom certainly didn't mean for me to open my heart and legs to another fine woman! But these non-traditional conversations still take place in the kitchen. It seems like every time I'm home Mom and I have these gently-threatening conflicts about sexuality. I'm always torn between wanting to share my life with her, but I know that she's still afraid of what the world holds for a person with three major "strikes" against her: to be black, a woman, and a lesbian. As lesbians, we are rewriting the mother/daughter scripts. I find that I have often struggled with lovers about how to merge our herstories of kitchen-culture. Whose place is it? Who's in control when there are two herstories of women competing for power? For as much as the kitchen is a place of comfort and caring, there are still aspects of control and desperation which seep

into our relationships and play themselves out in the daily battles over food. What happens when you're involved with a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian? What happens if you can't cook the traditional dinners of ribs and ham hock flavored black-eyed peas? How does our tradition live on in barbequed tofu?

DAWN: Yeah, and what if your father will only give up his recipe for barbecue sauce to his son? But, that's off the subject. The thing about two women competing for that reign in the kitchen is intriguing. If, as in many of our relationships, there isn't clarity about who should do what and who's to decide what you should eat, there is definitely going to be some letting go of the past on both parts. In a way, though, I think that's good. It's a great way to forge into new territory, one that has both tofu and pork ribs.



And so our discussion could go on like this for generations. Will we recreate the stories and traditions we have been brought up with? Will our daughters and sons share our teachings as black feminist lesbians with their children and grandchildren? Will our kinfolk become healthy from the different recipes of food and folklore in our growing communities? The spectrum of our internalized hate can be healed with the sharing of our own experiences tied to the myths and realities of our herstories. As we seek to overcome our sometimes low self-esteem in the everpresent white male society, we must come to create new avenues to explore our bodies, our traditions, our souls. We need to be aware of how we can hold onto the richness of what we have created in our kitchen-culture, and go forward with the intention of nourishing ourselves, each other, and our children. The recipes to health and happiness have always been there, in our granmomma's

kitchens. And as our granmomma's daughters we must validate who we've come from, as we continue to define where we're going. ▽

Dawn Lundy: I think of myself as a poet, though I am sometimes torn between my need to express my art and my political drive. I am working to combine them to my satisfaction. Presently, I am a student in the Master's program in creative writing at San Francisco State University.

Heather Flewelling is a mixed race lesbian who is the daughter of a courageous and powerful black woman and a gay white minister father. She sees herself as a visionary between communities. A healer with words and with her career, Heather is venturing into the Aché community with hopes of bringing more of us together for support, challenge, and celebration. She is currently a student in the Masters of Social Welfare program at U.C. Berkeley.



Making Way For New Recipes

By
Aya de León

There was a time when I'd go into my room and close the door for an intimate moment with an Entenmann's danish. Those were crazy college days when I would sit at the typewriter chain-popping baby Reese's peanut butter cups as I did my schoolwork. I was in a 3,000 mile long-distance relationship, and I had to get my chocolate from somewhere.

Those days, Top Ramen and tunafish were on the wholesome end of my diet. Mood swings were the order of the day, flowing with the sugar highs and lows—my poor housemates.

Chocolate was my drug, and I had an ugly monkey on my back. When I stopped eating chocolate, it was just the first in a long series of foods that I have eliminated from my diet. There are certain foods that just don't work for me—they make me feel crazy, eat crazy, or just don't sit well on my stomach.

I think, as Black women, we often turn to food for love and comfort—because it's cheap and convenient—because we can use it to stuff our feelings, and still function. I got some of my best grades when I studied with chocolate. And I know I'm not the only one.

As Black women, we are so often called upon to hold it all together. We don't have time to break down or space to cry out. Or as Black lesbians we are terribly isolated, repeatedly betrayed, and food is a trusted friend who will always be there.

But for me, things are changing. I want to release the pain, frustration, shame, violation, and fear, rather than packing it further in.

And, besides, food can be so wonderful when I don't abuse it. I've come a long way from tunafish and Top Ramen—to making curry chicken and vegetables, black beans and rice, fried plantain, and sweet potato stew. My cooking has become an expression of love for myself, an important part of my emotional growth, as well as my spiritual path. My food has become a joyful offering to my ancestors, and their blessings are beyond description. ▼

SOUL FOOD FROM MOMMA'S KITCHEN

recipes by Heather Flewelling

So you always wanted to impress your friends with that down home soul food dinner but forgot to ask your momma for the recipes. Or all she could tell you was "a dollop of this and a pinch of that." Some help that was. Your loving hands are twice the size of hers so you always end up adding too much of one thing and not enough of another. You're tired of your guests running for the water after too much flaming tabasco sauce. Here's a little bit of a guideline for some of those dishes your momma always fixed you. Pass them on to your lovers, daughters and sons, and friends. Enjoy!

MOMMA'S RIBS

Get yo'self a side of baby back pork ribs. Clean 'em off good.

- rub 'em down with onion powder, thyme, rosemary, marjoram, and oregano
- simmer them for about 50 minutes in a pot o' water full of the same spices

While you're waiting make a marinade with:

- 1 cup red wine (or substitute)
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 3 tbs. worcestershire sauce
- 3 tbs. of honey (no, not your girlfriend!)
- 1 tspn. of minced garlic
- Tabasco to taste

Let them soak in the marinade as long as possible (preferably overnight.) When you go to cook 'em up, re-baste them with more of the marinade, cook until done but tender. They're tastier over a hot grill, but you can bake them for about half an hour and then throw them in the broiler until they're crispy. Either way, they should make your tummy happy and allow our traditions to live on through this health-conscious time.

BAKED MACARONI AND CHEESE

This is for a regular casserole; for a crowd use one lb. macaroni and adjust eggs, milk & cream.

- cook half pound macaroni in salted boiling water until tender, but not soggy
- drain macaroni well in colander, set aside
- grate large amount of extra sharp and coon cheeses on wax paper, set aside
- beat together 2 eggs, 1 cup milk, 1 cup cream
- in baking dish, layer pasta, salt and pepper, dots of margarine, cheeses (ending with cheese)
- pour egg mixture over pasta to top off casserole dish (if not enough liquid, add more milk/cream)
- bake in 350 degree oven for 45-60 minutes (put foil or cookie sheet under dish to catch any spills)

GREENS

Use kale or collards or a mixture of both greens.

- in large pot cover 2 ham hocks with water
- add crushed red pepper, packet of Good Seasons Italian dressing mix, minced onion, garlic
- simmer for about 1 hour
- trim and then wash greens well in cold salted water
- drain greens well, chop in half and put in pot
- fry three slices salt pork
- add salt pork and pork grease to greens
- simmer until tender

SHORTCAKE/BISCUITS

- sift together: 2 cups sifted flour, 1/4 cup sugar, 3 tsp. baking powder, 1 tsp. salt
- cut in with pastry blender 4 tbs. shortening (4 unsalted butter, 2 Crisco)
- lightly stir in 2/3 to 3/4 cups cold milk
- shape lightly into a ball
- roll out and cut into circles
- bake 20 minutes in a 450 degree oven

BLACK-EYED PEAS

- wash and drain 1 lb. black-eyed peas
- put in large bowl, cover with cold water, soak overnight
- in large pot, cover 3 large ham hocks with water
- add 1 tsp. crushed red pepper, garlic powder
- simmer for 1 hour
- add peas and their liquid
- add to ingredients in pot: large diced onion, 3-4 pressed garlic cloves, celery salt, 1 cup wine (any)
- simmer over low heat until done (about 3-4 hours)

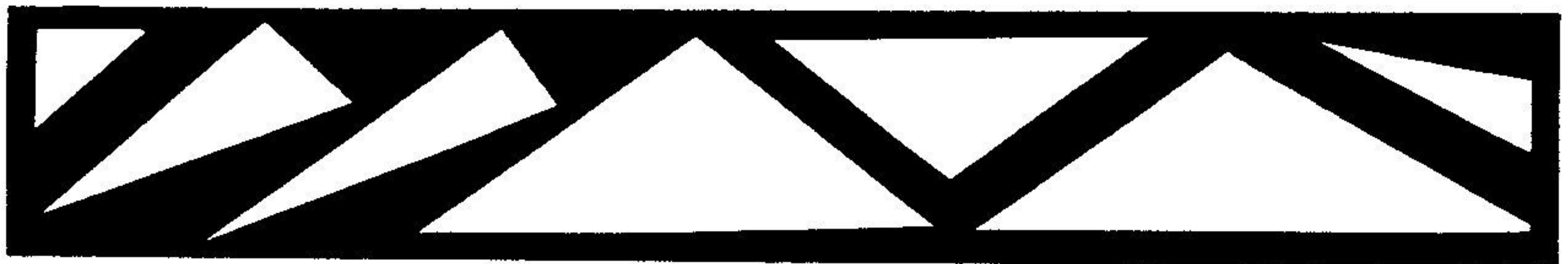
**New Fiction Editor
Stephanie Smith**

This is your new Fiction Editor's Bio, not a personal ad. So you probably don't care that: I EAT RED MEAT...I'm a Taurus...no wife (got a honey, though)...no kids, but I want 'em...did college, hated it...did New York, hated it, miss it...I EAT RED MEAT...I love the smell of asphalt in the mornin'...I EAT RED MEAT...Don't take myself too seriously...take fiction submissions very seriously...excited to join the Aché family.

Storme Webber showed me a copy of Aché while I was still living in New York. I moved to San Francisco in 1989 and sought out Lisbet. She informed me that an upcoming issue would explore our experiences as racially-mixed lesbians and invited me to work on the issue. I had my first piece published in that (March/April 1990) issue of Aché. That piece "*Mixed Nuts*," has evolved into my most important project: a semi-autobiographical novel about growing up as an African-American/Jewish lesbian in the midwest. Recently, I was contacted by a ma-



for feminist publisher who expressed her interest in reviewing the manuscript upon completion. She tracked me down through Aché after reading a piece of my fiction, "*Simon Says*," which appeared in the October/November 1991 issue of the journal. Aché has been good to me. It is my turn to give something back. ▼



Hi, My name is Owena...

by Tamara Carrol

Owena was looking through a food and health magazine as she was sucking on some BBQ neckbones. She came across an article which read, "Hi, my name is Teri and I am a compulsive overeater." Get real, she mumbled, if those God-forsaken words ever departed from my mouth, I would truly leave this earth. She continued to suck on the neckbones.

I'll be the first to admit how much I enjoy consuming a bird or two, macaroni and cheese, collard greens, sweet corn, yams and upside-down seven-up cake, all in one sitting, every Sunday. But where I come from, that's called good eating. Yes, I do love a righteous meal. Sometimes I get so full I can hardly walk, let alone breathe. But the food is soooo good, it's difficult to put down.

The doctor said I should be more diligent in eating properly and exercising. Ha! What does that old white man know? Black women have been out-living everyone since long before Baby Jesus was born. If something ain't broke, don't fix it. Yeah, that's what I say.

Suddenly, Owena remembered that Gina had planned a get-together for the following Saturday night. Everyone is going to be there, she thought, "I've got to slim down," she screamed in a panic. Participating in the "yo-yo syndrome" was not unusual for Owena. Her eating patterns depended on her social calendar. If she had more free time, she ate more. When there were social events, parties or dances taking place...

STARVATION

Owena starved herself for the get-together. Sure enough, she looked good enough to eat. Of course, she could only nibble at the party because her outfit was too tight. All night, Owena looked forward to going home where she could ingest a full platter of homemade peach cobbler.

The next day, Owena was careful to stay away from sharp objects. If punctured, Owena believed she would exude dough and cobbler from her wound. However, it was not long before another occasion called for her to drop a little weight. But this time, Owena could not stop eating. She ate everything in

sight, including mint flavored toothpicks. She was no longer eager to view her fine curvaceous sistah' shape in the mirror. Avoiding her reflection made her eat even more.

No matter what Owena did, she could not stay away from food. She became deeply obsessed with her food consumption. She even refused to attend outings and gatherings. This was very unlike Owena, the "Social Queen." Her entire day consisted of eating and watching television. She stopped returning phone calls and totally isolated herself from family and friends.

Weeks went by and Gina became alarmed when she did not hear from Owena. Gina called Owena one last time before travelling over to her house to investigate.

When Gina arrived, the door was unlocked. The doorknob was sticky with jelly donut residue. After stumbling around a bit, Gina found the light switch. She was amazed and befuddled by what she saw. There on the walls, floor, ceiling, sofa, carpet, pictures and everywhere Gina could see, were pieces of Owena.

It had finally happened; Owena ate and ate until she literally exploded.

It took a few days for Gina to pull herself together, but she knew that she would have to get things organized. A fabulous pot-luck would be held in Owena's honor. All of her favorite foods would be prepared. It would require the efforts of all sixty guests to replicate Owena's favorite menu. Prior to dinner, family and friends paid their last respects. There Owena laid, in a pink, plastic tupperware shaped casket. Closed, of course.

Her epitaph read:

Owena Barika
"She loved to eat...a lot"

Tamara Carroll recently relocated from Southern California and now resides in Berkeley. She is currently employed at a non-profit agency in San Francisco that provides direct services to women.

Seduction

by Reatha Fowler

Preparing a meal is the ultimate erotic experience. It embraces all of our senses, as in the act of making love—tactile, visual, auditory and, of course, our sense of smell. For me, shopping for the ingredients is like a courtship—looking for just the right vegetables to make the meal complete. Taking the entire morning to touch, smell and look for the freshest, most colorful ingredients to compliment the evening. Smooth, shapely, deep purple eggplant; firm onions; fragrant cilantro; full red tomatoes.

In preparing the meal—chopping, kneading, stirring, folding, slicing and whipping—the colors from the vegetables and fruit tantalize my eyes. The softness of the avocados makes my fingers tingle, the smell of the garlic makes my mouth water and the “goosh-goosh” sound of the mayo in the Cuisinart makes me smile with memories of her.

This piece is for those of us who love and appreciate food in all of its forms of seduction and for those of you who eat to live.

The woman at the cheese counter smiled broadly at Lourdes while assisting her with the ingredients for her dinner. The warmth of her smile precipitated Lourdes to smile in kind and appreciate the beauty of this Incan looking woman. Copper colored skin, black satin hair, strong bones and muscles in her arms that could give Big Girl hugs. She briefly fantasized asking this woman to dinner. Quickly, she proceeded with her purchases and gathered her bundles, embarrassed that this woman with such a full and loving smile might have telepathy.

Lourdes has been planning this meal to share with Akosua for the past week. She sifted through her files, magazines and endless cookbooks for just the right flavor to express the evening. Her relationship with Akosua had been through numerous peaks and valleys over the past five years. Through all of it they have maintained and continue to make special time together, just like the first. Cooking is how Lourdes most likes to express this feeling for Akosua—not by rolling in avocados and licking chocolate mousse from her pussy—but with the creation and giving of love with one's hands. With the creative inspiration

of Keith Jarrett and Tania Maria as background, she begins to create a masterpiece that would make even a woman with estrogen deficiency, cream.

The bread dough is rising. The sweet smell of yeast permeates the kitchen and dining room. She presses her gracefully long index finger into the dough, testing its readiness. As she feels the softness, she grins in satisfaction. Lourdes pounds the dough and begins the gratifying kneading process. She touches the warm, soft dough, folding and pressing—soft, then hard; soft, then hard—and feels it rising within her hands. Sweat rolls down her back. She leaves the dough to rest and rise once again.

Lourdes turns to the 'fridge, pulling out the salad greens. She smells the bitterness of the escarole and the woody scent from the arugula as she dries them in her favorite kitchen gadget—the salad spinner. She fondles the avocado, testing for the correct ripeness—soft but firm. She cuts the avocado in half and removes the seed. With a small, sharp paring knife she makes very thin slices, scoops out the fruit, butterflies it and rests it over the salad greens. She takes the perfectly ripened tomato and cuts it into wedges. She slips her finger into the wetness of each wedge, removes the seeds and arranges the wedges on the salad plates.

It is now time for the laborious job of shucking the oysters. Holding the oyster firmly, she flips the knife between the shell halves, opens the shell and the oyster appears. Slicing the muscle, she frees the oyster meat. Squeezing fresh lemon on the oyster, she watches as the juice runs over the mound and down its folds. Lourdes proceeds to crush garlic and ginger for the sauce, refusing to remove the smell from her fingertips with lemon. She wants to be reminded of this experience tomorrow and smile.

She returns to the dough, rolls it out, and cuts it into circles. She rubs each circle with butter. Feeling that the dough is at its maximum softness, she folds the circles into rolls and rests them in the pan for baking.

By now the kitchen is full of heat; Lourdes has stripped down to shorts and a tank top. She hears a key in the door—Akosua has arrived. ▼

Reatha Fowler lives and works in Oakland, on her journey looking for joy in life.

Calendar

ART EXHIBITS

May 11-June 19

●**Malcolm X—No Sellout**, an exhibit featuring 25 artists from the Bay Area and New York City co-sponsored by Taller Sin Fronteras and Koncepts Cultural Gallery at La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Reception May 19, 4-7pm with music by Pharoah Saunders. Info: (510) 814-9054/451-5231.

May 23-June 27

●**Orlanda Uffre, James Denmark, and Irmagean**. Bomani Gallery, 251 Post St., 6th floor, San Francisco. Tues.-Fri., 11-5pm, Sat. 12-5pm. Info: (415) 296-8677.

EVENTS

Thursdays

●Jazzy Thursdays at Club Politics featuring live jazz with **Angela Wellman**, trombone; **Calvin Keyes**, guitar; and **Walter Savage**, bass. Music charge \$3, complimentary appetizers. 5:30-8pm. 5800 Shellmound, Emeryville. For more information call 601-4888.

May 19/Tuesday

●First Annual Malcolm X Birthday Party hosted by Cynthia O. Toliver, featuring live music, videos, and Caribbean cuisine. \$5-10. 9pm-2am. Nightbreak, 1821 Haight St., S.F. (415) 647-3663 or 267-3129.

June 5-7/Fri.-Sun.

●**Festival at the Lake**, a 3-day fest at Oakland's Lake Merritt featuring live music, arts & crafts, exhibits and food. Performers include Friday: **Dance Brigade**, **Pete Escovedo** and **Opal Adisa**; Saturday include **Grupo Campana**, **Belinda Sullivan**, **Marijo**, and **Living on the Edge**, who will be performing June 6 at 4pm on the Beach stage. Sunday includes **Conjunto Cespedes**, **Dimensions Dance Theater**, **Mango Jam**, **Altazor**, and a special Sunday Storyteller segment featuring **Delores Orr**, **Diane Ferlatte**, **Opal Adisa**, **Telrah McNair** & others. 10am-6pm.

Lakeside Park, Lake Merritt, Oakland. \$5.

●**The 1st Annual West Coast Lesbians' Festival**, will be held in a comfortable wooded camp in Malibu. Performers include **Lillian Allen**, **Melanie DeMore**, **June** and **Jean Millington**, **Karen Williams**, the **India Cooke Trio**, **Rashida Oji**, **Avotcja** and many others.

June 7/Sunday

●**Aché Poetry Reading** - Come meet the past and present editors of the *Aché* as they read from their work and discuss the future of the journal. Readers will include **Blake C. Aarens**, **DeeAnne Davis**, **Natalie Devora**, **Winn Gilmore**, **Ekua Omosupe**, **Paula Ross** and **Stephanie Smith**. \$3-5 donation, proceeds to benefit *Aché*. 6-9pm. Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St., S.F.

June 10-11/Wed.-Thurs.

●BOOK PARTY - **Essex Hemphill** will be reading and signing copies of his new book of poetry "*Ceremonies*." On Wednesday he will be at Club Benna Napoli, 2330 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. \$5. On Thursday at 7:30pm at Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St. in San Francisco. Free.

June 12/Friday

●Singer/Songwriter **Melanie DeMore** along with **India Cooke**, **Erika Luckett**, **Jean Millington**, **Jackeline Rago** and **Mary Watkins** will perform to raise funds for Melanie's new upcoming recording. The evening will feature several new songs which will be released on the recording. 8:30pm. \$8 adv/\$9 day of show. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley.

June 13/Saturday

●**Gwen Avery** - The Sugar Mama of Soul will be performing at Mama Bears Bookstore, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. \$7-9 reservations recommended. Women only.

June 21/Sunday

●GAY/LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL - "A

Place of Rage" & "**Khush**" - 2 powerful documentaries by Pratibha Parmar. "**A Place of Rage**" (1991, 52 min.) is a dynamic celebration of African-American women and their achievements featuring interviews with Angela Davis, June Jordan and Alice Walker. Within the context of the Civil Rights, Black Power, and feminist movements, the trio reassess how women such as Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer revolutionized American society. "**Khush**" (1991, 24 min.), taking its title from the Urdu word meaning "ecstatic pleasure" is an uplifting documentary about South Asian lesbians and gay men in Britain, North America, and India. \$6. 6:30pm, Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St., San Francisco.

●**Les Femmes** is back!! A Women's Jazz Club brought by your hostess, Boa. Featuring live music by a women's jazz ensemble and a performance at 11pm by **Belinda Sullivan**. \$10. 8pm-12 midnite. 139 - 8th St. (enter on Minna St.) San Francisco.

June 22/Monday

●GAY/LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL - **MUJERES VISIBLES** - Seven strong works by and/or about Latina women. Includes Osa Hidalgo's "**Mujeria: Olmeca Rap**" - a Chicana-lesbian animated musical montage that imagines the Olmeca culture and the 3000-yr-old monolithic heads as female characters plus Hidalgo's latest tape "**Primitive and Proud**;" "**Not Because Fidel Says So**" detailing the public reaction to Cuba's small but growing gay and lesbian community; "**Susana**" and "**Falling Through the Cracks**;" two portraits of Latina lesbians. \$6. 5:30pm. Roxie Theatre, 3117 - 16th St., San Francisco.

●GAY/LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL - "**Born In Flames**" (1983, 90 min.) is a tale of feminist activism set in an imagined future, ten years after a socialist revolution. Also screening is "**Chasing the Moon**" by Dawn Suggs, (1991, 4 min.), a poetic evocation of a black woman's journey through a night-time urban landscape. 7pm. Castro Theatre, Castro & Market St., San Francisco.

To get your events in the Aché calendar, mail your listing to:

CALENDAR EDITOR
P.O. BOX 6071
ALBANY, CA 94706

June 24/Wednesday

●The Aché Series - *The Chocolate Factor* featuring Avotcja, Peter Barclay, Wayne Corbitt, Lester Jones and Madame X performing original music, poetry and dance. 7:30pm. \$7. La Peña Cultural Center, Berkeley. (1 block from Ashby BART.) No one turned away for lack of funds.

June 25/Thursday

●A TRIBUTE TO MARLON RIGGS
Presentation of the 1992 Frameline Award. Through his ground-breaking films such as "Tongues Untied," and through his writing in anthologies like *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men* Marlon has helped shatter the silence surrounded the black and gay experiences. This special presentation will include clips of his work, as well as tributes to him by friends including Blackberri, Pomo Afro Homos, Alan Miller, Nicole Atkinson, Rupert Kinnard and Akiba Tiamaya. \$6. 7pm, Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St., San Francisco.

June 27/Saturday

●Linda Tiller & Her Motown Band - will be performing at The Omni, 4799 Shattuck Ave. (nr. Telegraph) in Oakland. 9pm. Tix: \$14 adv./\$16 door available at BASS, Mama Bears.

June 28/Sunday

●1992 Gay Pride Day - Come march with the African-American Lesbian & Gay contingent. We're meeting at 8:30am at 101 Spear St., San Francisco. Wear your Aché t-shirt - late-comers, watch for the Aché banner (we shouldn't be hard to spot.)

●GAY/LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL - The premiere of the latest work by Marlon Riggs "Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien" Through music, poetry, and chilling self-disclosure, five seropositive black gay men speak of their individual confrontation with AIDS. Also screening are from England "Rage and Desire" a memorial to black gay photographer Rotimi Fani-Koyode. Ruppert Gabriel's elegant, personal film also raises powerful questions about race, sexuality, and identity. Also

from England is Pratibha Parmar's "Double the Trouble," a tale about one man's search for his community. That the man is Indian, gay and disabled leads to some revealing confrontations. \$6. 5pm. Roxie Theatre, 3117 - 16th St., San Francisco.

●THE TOYBOX WEST - We begin the evening with cards and board games, then progress to live entertainment by talented performers, followed by hours of dancing to the popular music of our female d.j. Admission: \$9. Come join 200 beautiful sistahs at The Toybox!! For location, or to be placed on the mailing list, call (510) 235-9346. Put your best face forward, because in The Toybox, The Toys R Us!

●BLACK POETS WITH ATTITUDES - Five Black women who sizzle, snap, and pop through verses that will soothe your soul, excite your hormones, rub your ego, and leave you hungry for more. Featured are Joy Holland, Wanda Sabir, Avotcja, Beverly Garrett, and Abimbola Adama. 7pm. \$7. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley.

RADIO

●Women's Magazine "Lesbians of Color" on KPFA, 94.1 FM from 12noon-1pm on the 3rd Saturday of every month. Host: Margarita Benitez.

COMING IN JULY

Aché & Les Femmes
PRESENT...
"The Dating Game!!"

Wednesday, July 29th, 7:30pm
La Peña Cultural Center
3105 Shattuck Ave., Berk.

If you're interested in becoming a contestant please mail a SASE to:

The Dating Game
P.O. Box 6071
Albany, CA 94706

"Voice & Visibility" A Lesbian of Color Project

invites you to a series of workshops for Lesbians of Color and friends. Everything you wanted to know about your legal rights and how to protect them.

Legal Documents to Protect You and Your Partner: Powers of Attorney, Partnership Agreements, Wills, and others.

Tuesday, June 9th, 6:30-8:30pm.
Center for Positive Care
3180 - 18th St., Ste. 102 @ Folsom
in San Francisco.

Tuesday, June 16th, 6:30-8:30pm.
The Aché Project
3122 Shattuck Ave.
(enter via driveway on Woolsey)
in Berkeley.

Donations requested.
No one turned away.

Upcoming workshops include:
Immigration, Employment
Discrimination, Public Benefits
& Health Care Benefits,
LOC Grassroots Organizing:
Incorporation, Non-Profits,
Collectives, etc.

Sponsored by the
National Center
For Lesbian Rights.

(415) 621-0674.

BULLETIN BOARD

All listings with the exception of SERVICE and JOB LISTINGS are free of charge to lesbians of African descent.

SERVICE & JOB LISTINGS—25 words or less costs \$20 per issue. Any message over 25 words will cost an additional \$20. Listings should not exceed 50 words.

FLYER INSERTS: To insert a flyer for mailing with the Aché journal, \$25-100 donation to help cover postage. For more information contact Adalia at (510) 601-6844.

CONFERENCES/ FESTIVALS

The 1st International Conference on WOMEN IN AFRICA & THE AFRICAN DIASPORA: BRIDGES ACROSS ACTIVISM AND THE ACADEMY will be held July 12-22, 1992, in Abuja/Enugu, Nigeria, West Africa. For more information contact Organizing Committee, Women in Africa and the African Diaspora, c/o Prof. Obioma Nnaemeka, CAFS, 496 Ford Hall, Univ. of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455. (612) 624-9089/624-6310.

WEST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL will be held June 5-7, 1992 in a comfortable wooded camp in Malibu. It will be a Lesbian pride celebration with a special emphasis on creating a multicultural Lesbian event. Lillian Allen, Karen Williams, Rashida Oji, Melanie DeMore and many more comedians, singers, artists, dancers, etc. For info call/write Particular Productions, 279 Lester Ave. #3, Oakland, CA 94606 (510) 763-9228.

EAST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL will be held on June 18-21, 1992 at their site on the NY/PA border. Full program of music, art, comedy, workshops, readings, panels will be presented. Lesbian Healers planning conference will be held, and ASL intensives (pre and during festival) will be held. Performers include Lillian Allen, Rashida Oji, Karen Williams, India Cooke, and others, with a special appearance by Margie Adam. For more info: Particular Productions, 279 Lester Ave. #3, Oakland, CA 94606 (510) 763-9228.

The 14th National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference & 10th Annual AIDS/HIV Forum: July 8-12, 1992, Los Angeles CA. Making Health Care Human: The Impact of Age, Gender and Race. Special Emphasis: Strategies for Inclu-

sion- Responding to the Changing Face of AIDS. Write now for registration and preliminary program: NLGHF Registration, c/o The George Washington University Medical Center, Office of Continuing Education, 2300 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

CARIBBEAN WOMEN WRITERS CONFERENCE: Curacao, July 28-31, 1992. The conference intends to build a strong platform for women writers, to meet in order to further define and enact their commitment to the future. Themes include The Caribbean and female vision for the 21st century. Conference includes panels on subjects like the multicultural prism and the indigenizing process, the internalization of class, color, colonial and gender oppression in the writing of Caribbean women writers, theater as an educational tool for building national consciousness and women's pride, and the single mother and her experience. For info write Drs. Joceline Clemencia, Chairperson of the Third International Caribbean Women Writers Conference, Bureau of Language Affairs, Sede di Papiamentu, Scharlooweg 29, Curacao, Netherlands Antilles, phone (5999)616471. Act now-- paper deadlines have past and space is filling up.

GROUPS

Black Lesbian Support Group for women in multicultural relationships. Meets 1st Sunday of month in Oakland. Info: (510) 839-3302/653-5732

BAYBLAG (Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays) meet to network, socialize, educate, do political work, have fun. Info: Midgett (415) 648-3658

Black Woman's Support Group for Rape and

Incest Survivors: Give and get validation; share feelings and similar experiences; understand how the hurt still affects you; develop sisterhood. Led by Derethia C. Dual, MFCC with 15 years experience as an individual and couples therapist. Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:30; Future Worlds Foundation Center, 4171 Piedmont Ave, Oakland (across from Piedmont Theatre). For more info call (510) 652-9918

SISTAH SISTAH: A lesbian/bisexual women of color support/social/rap group at UC Berkeley. Meets weekly. For more info call the Women's Resource Center at (510) 642-4786.

Lesbians of Color/Third World Lesbian Support Group: meets Thurs, 6:30-8pm; \$3 donation (no one turned away); Pacific Center, Telegraph and Derby, Berk. For info call Camille Barber, (510) 548-8283.

Multi-Cultural Bisexual Lesbian Gay Alliance: UC Berkeley. Women's social group every Thurs. 8-10pm. Women's Resource Center Library (Golden Bear Bldg. 2nd floor). All women invited for film nights, conversation, community sensuality, debates, play, and more...

Racially-diverse lesbian writer's group open to new members. Call Cristina (415) 626-0475.

Old Lesbians Organizing Committee: The OLOC is a national steering committee of Old Lesbians, 60 and over. It is committed to networking with Old Lesbians everywhere in order to: confront ageism within our own community; explore who we are and name our oppression; analyze the experiences of ageism, which has been so little defined; develop and disseminate educational material; facilitate formation of new groups and stimulate existing groups to confront ageism; make our presence a visible force in the women's movement. OLOC is asking for donations for the publication of the "Facilitator's Handbook On Confronting Ageism for Lesbians 60 and Over." For more info on donations and contact people in your area write to: OLOC PO Box 980422, Houston, TX 77098

NOTICES

This is a call for support and solidarity. The Freedom Day Parade is coming on Sunday, June 22, 1992. We are organizing a contingent of lesbians and gays of African descent with the theme Visibility '92. We are calling on individuals and organizations in the community to support this contingent by coming out with banners and pride to show our cultural diversity and pride. For more information, or to help work towards its success, please call (510) 451-2551 ext. 4 and leave your name, number and a message. Coordinators: Sheila Head and Michael Bell.

FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO DARE TO CREATE DRAMA!! Sapphire Theatre Co. is offering acting workshops (for beginners especially.) The classes are designed to create a firm foundation of acting skills, improvisation, voice, and physical skills will be developed. Workshops are \$5 each. For information call (510) 653-4945 and leave your name and number.

Dear Sistahs, I live in Boston and am planning to relocate to either Berkeley or Oakland this summer (June-Aug.) I am a poet/activist/lesbian. I am hoping to live with 1 or 2 people. I can pay rent immediately (\$300-400/mo.) Ideally, I would like to stay somewhere for a month while I search for a space. I can help financially during that month. If you can provide the space, or have any suggestions, please call me collect at (617) 524-7313 (eves.) Peace and harmony, Nsomeka.

D.C.'S 2ND ANNUAL BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY PRIDE DAY will be held on Sunday, May 24, 1992 at the Banneker Field Playground, Northwest, Washington D.C. This event is being held to raise the level of social consciousness, civic involvement and to emphasize the importance of AIDS education and prevention within our community. For further info contact: Carlene Cheatam, P.O. Box 48581, Washington D.C., 20002. (202) 546-7189.

PRODUCERS WANTED!!! Aché is looking for black women with experience in producing events who are interested in working on The Aché Series and other upcoming Aché events. If you'd like to get involved please send your name, phone number, and production inter-

ests/experience to Events, Aché, P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706.

BRAINY, ARTSY GALS - A monthly art salon for lesbians only. Come share a light potluck, socializing, and the sharing and appreciation of art by Bay Area lesbians. Anyone interested in participating, please contact Leslie at (415) 824-4401.

PUBLICATIONS

MAMARROOTS: AJAMAJEBI - an Afragoddess spiritual and cultural network. Join our innovative and international sistahood! Our quarterly publication is dedicated to Afrikan Matristic Spirituality, Mythology, Herstory, Culture, & Politics. We welcome \$\$ contributions and submissions in the form of articles, reviews, images, short stories, rituals, events, correspondence, and resources. Membership/subscription \$25 yr. Asungi Productions, 3661 No. Campbell Ave., Suite 108, Tucson, AZ 85719-1524. Phone: (602) 327-0987.

Aché: A Journal For Lesbians of African Descent is a bi-monthly publication by, for, and about black lesbian diversity. We accept submissions which explore the lives, opinions, herstory, and culture of our communities across the globe. Single issue: \$4. Subscription: \$18-25 yr. Aché, P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706. Phone: (510) 849-2819.

BLK: a national black lesbian and gay newsmagazine featuring profiles & interviews, excellent coverage of current events, and a comprehensive media watch. Single issue: \$2. Subscription: \$18/yr./\$30/2 yrs. BLK, Box 83912, Los Angeles, CA 90083-0912. Phone: (213) 410-0808.

Black Lace, an erotic quarterly from BLK publications. Crossing over the threshold of the politically correct to another, more intimate kind of sisterhood. "Let's celebrate," says editor Alycee Lane. "Let us share our fantasies frankly, honestly even brutally...to hell with what we've taught ourselves to think. Pledge allegiance to your entire black woman selves." Single copy: \$6. Subscription: \$20 yr./\$36-2 yrs. Black Lace, Box 83912, Los Angeles, CA 90083-0912. Phone: (213) 410-0808/fax (213) 410-9250.

KUUMBA is a new literary magazine for lesbians and gay African Americans. The quarterly features poetry from across the country and from Africa as well. It's name comes from one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa, meaning "creativity." Single issue: \$4.50. Subscription: \$15 yr./\$28-2 yrs. KUUMBA, Box 83912, Los Angeles, CA 90083-0912.

LESBIAN UPRISINGS! The voice of lesbian feminism in the Bay Area. Year's sub., \$15. For free sample copy call/write Box 423555, San Francisco, 94142 / (415) 441-6238.

WOMEN AND RECOVERY - A new monthly newsletter for women in all aspects of recovery and professionals providing women's services. Sample issue: \$1. Twelve issues, \$18 plus \$4 postage. Women to Women, P.O. Box 161775, Cupertino, CA 95016.

I'm flat, but funny, 8" x 11", I like to lie by your bed and there's a good time between my covers. I'm Girl Jock, the quarterly lesbian humor magazine. Subscriptions: \$11/yr. Girl Jock, Box 2533, Berkeley, CA 94702.

SERVICES

PSYCHIC ASTROLOGER - Astrological readings, analysis of strengths, weaknesses, and the child within... Call Clea (415) 292-7267.

Saundra Leiby, MSW, psychotherapist-- interested in working with clients of color. Micaela Lovett, supervisor. License MFC 23665. Sliding Scale. (510) 534-5006

COUNSELING FOR WOMEN — "Let's break the bonds of the emotions of oppression and fly with the sun in our hearts" Simb-wala, (510) 531-5103

GWEN AVERY FOR HAIR — Precision haircuts, styles, colors and perms. For appt. call (415) 550-7666.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED

MULTI-CULTURAL LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS Anthology. First-person writings, cas-

ettes of dialogues O.K. Can request interview. Some topics of interest: racism within and outside relationship; having/raising children; socializing/friendships; language differences, etc. Contact: Rene Dawson & Terri Jewell, co-editors, P.O. Box 23154, Lansing, MI 48909. SASE required with all correspondence.

AT THE CROSSROADS is a brand new visual, performing and literary arts journal for women artists of African descent! Arising from the virtual absence of documentation of Black Canadian women's art, and the apparent need for a cultural and political magazine encompassing a wide range of issues, ATC aims to become a creative outlet for artists here and abroad. Manuscripts of poetry, short stories, journal entries, experimental writing, radio plays, theatre, interviews, screen plays, transcribed performance pieces, and all other forms of creative writing are welcome. Also welcome are submissions of visual art-- line drawings, mixed media, painting, quilts, sculpture, beadwork, photographs, etc. Accompany your work with a brief bio and any other relevant info. Please send photographs or photocopies of art work-- no originals. All work not sent in self-addressed, stamped envelope will not be returned. All photographs will be returned. Send to: At the Crossroads: A Journal for Women of African Descent c/o Karen August-

tine, PO Box 317, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S8, Canada

BLACK LESBIAN CULTURE BOOK being compiled. Seeking past and present photographs, names, organizations, anecdotes and rumors, song titles and lyrics, publications, notes on personal style, lovemaking tips, recipes, black and white artwork, references, her-story and heroes, conferences, ANYTHING by, about, for Black Lesbians. Also need fundraising ideas! Contact Terri Jewell, PO Box 23154, Lansing, MI 48909, or call (517) 485-3500 anytime.

CALLING ALL BISEXUAL WOMEN-- a call for written and visual work for the first anthology published in Canada by and about bisexual women. At least half of this anthology will be written and produced by women of color. We are excited and honored that it will be published by **SISTER VISION PRESS**, a Black Women and Women of Colour Press. Send a SASE to Bisexual Women's Anthology, c/o Sister Vision Press, P.O. Box No. 217, Stn. E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2.

MIXED-RACE/ LIGHT SKINNED? Autobiographical contributions, text and visuals, for book by mixed-race/ light skinned Black lesbians. For further info contact: SS, c/o BM 4390, London WC1N 3XX, England.

FROM WEDDED WIFE TO LESBIAN LIFE: STORIES OF FORMERLY MARRIED LESBIANS. Personal narratives, short autobiographical fiction, poems, and before-and-after photographs sought for anthology. Deadline: July 15, 1992. Send submissions & SASE for guidelines to Deborah Abbott/Ellen Farmer, 1515 Capitola Rd. Ste. E, Santa Cruz, CA 95062.

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES: Writings by Mixed-Blood and Multiracial Women of Color is an anthology of writings about our lives seeking fiction, poetry and essays from our many perspectives. Submissions must be typed, double-spaced or neatly printed. Please submit two copies of all your work, up to five pieces may be submitted. Deadline: June 30, 1992. Mail to editors: Kate Miller, 224 Minor Ave. N #A, Seattle, WA 98109 or Jamie Lee Evans, 482 - 44th St, Oakland, CA 94609.

HOW DO I LOVE ME? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS: Writings by Women On Self-Love seeks love poems by women to themselves for anthology. Will also consider short prose (500 word max). Include 50 word bio. Send SASE + stamped business-sized envelope to: Leslea Newman, PO Box 815, Northampton, MA 01061. Deadline: June 15, 1992.

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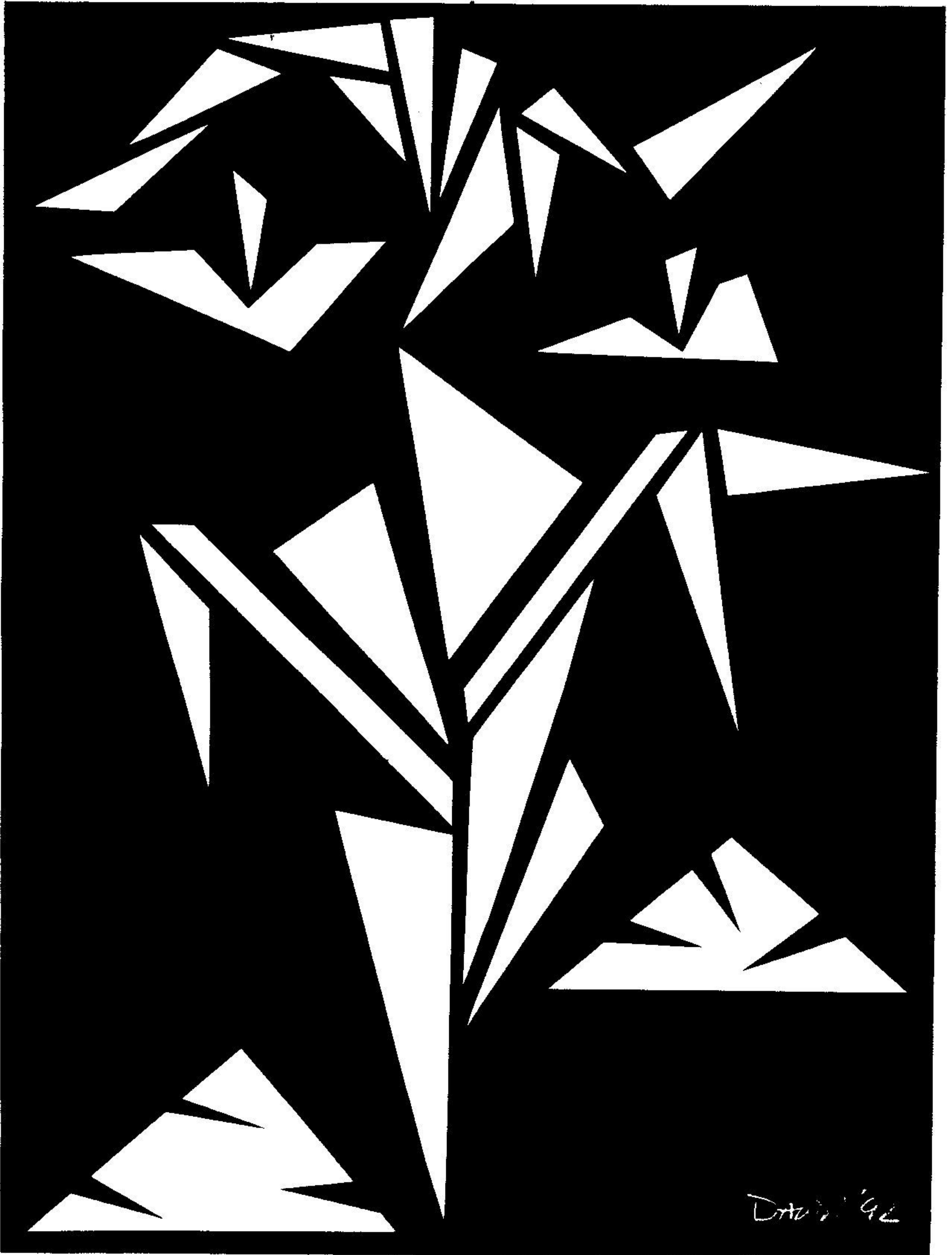
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"Akhé." Aché, vol. 4, no. 2, May-June 1992. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/ENUYGZ525454616/AHSI?u=umuser&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=d3b97692. Accessed 8 Dec. 2022.