

CELEBRATE THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF

Audre Lorde

Gamha Adisa (Warrior—She Who Makes Her Meaning Known)

February 18, 1934—November 17, 1992



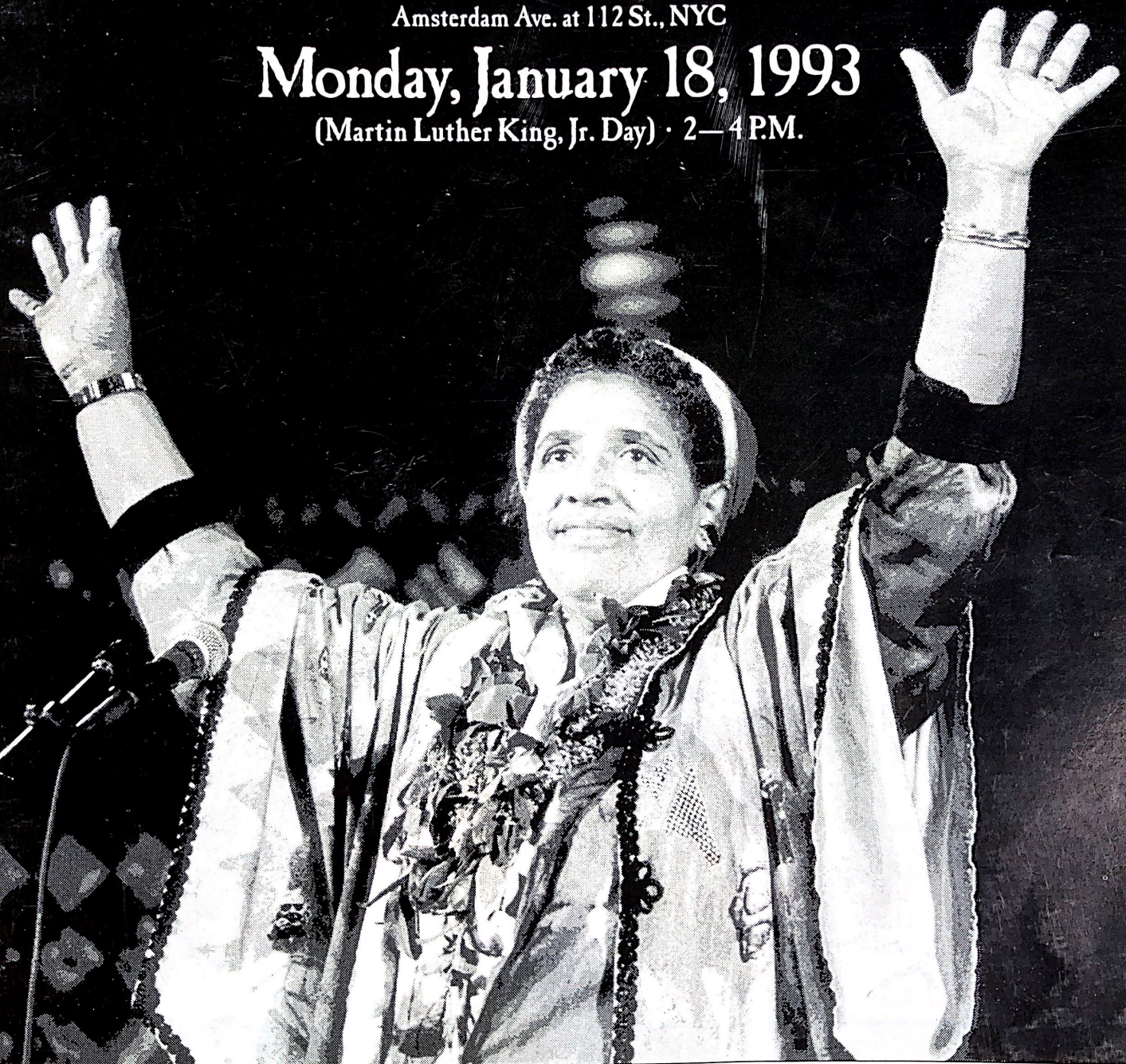
Memorial Service

Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine

Amsterdam Ave. at 112 St., NYC

Monday, January 18, 1993

(Martin Luther King, Jr. Day) · 2—4 P.M.



1991-1993 Poet Laureate of New York State

SUITE OF PRAISESONGS - A Poetry Salute

Mitsuye Yamada

Malkia Cyril

Lucille Field

"Woman" (Audre Lorde)

Patsy Rogers, Composer and Accompanist

Carlos Arévalo

Alburt Rhodes, Accompanist

"Night" (Louise C. Wallace) Composer, Florence Price

"To The Dark Virgin" (Langston Hughes)

"Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" (Traditional)

TRIBUTES

Barbara Smith

Angela Y. Davis

THE HERALD - A Dance Salute

Anika Ellis and Pilar Lynch

"Freedom Now Suite"

(Music: Max Roach)

(Vocal: Abbey Lincoln)

TRIBUTE

Sonia Sanchez

"CALL" - A POEM

Audre Lorde

CANDLELIGHTING

"Amazing Grace" (John Newton)

The Congregation

Page Six

ANTHEM (Purcell)

The Cathedral Choirs

THE BENEDICTION

The Very Reverend James Parks Morton

THE BLESSING

The Reverend Renée L. Hill

THE RECONCILIATION - 1993 UN International Year for the World's Indigenous People

Joy Harjo

THE JOURNEY - A Steelband Salute

CASYM Youth Steelband

RECESSIONAL



THE COLLECT

In the name of the spirit of life, we gather together in remembrance of our dear sister, Audre. We take consolation from the knowledge that she has joined the ancestral line, and is reunited with those who have gone before us. We, her family and friends, are thankful for her life and work. We are grateful for the opportunity to know and love her as a beloved companion on our journey upon this earth. We who are left to mourn, take reassurance from Audre's words and grow in confidence that the spirit of life and love is sufficient as we go forward to face each day. From her work and example, we take heart and make wise use of the power and privileges, with which we have been blessed, in the struggle toward understanding, justice and compassion. We take comfort and rest with Audre in the hands of Afrekete.

Donna Kate Rushin

WOMAN

I dream of a place between your breasts
to build my house like a haven
where I plant crops
in your body
an endless harvest
where the commonest rock
is moonstone and ebony opal
giving milk to all of my hungers
and your night comes down upon me
like a nuturing rain

Audre Lorde
The Black Unicorn

THE BLESSING

I leave you the will to fight; the desire to live; the right to anger, to love, to the erotic, to joy, to transform silence into language and action. I leave you a litany for survival.



LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
*Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.*

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
*We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.*

AMAZING GRACE

Amazing Grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved someone like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear,
And Grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, foils, and snares,
I have already come;
T'is Grace that brought me safe thus far,
And Grace will lead me home

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing our praise
Than when we'd first begun.



*"Once we come to acknowledge the
true nature of the times, there is no need to cover
emptiness with pretense."*

I Ching

Audre Lorde is survived by her dear friend and close companion, Dr. Gloria I. Joseph; her daughter, Elizabeth-Lorde Rollins; her son, Jonathan F.A. Rollins; her sisters, Helen Lorde and Phyllis Blackwell; her half sisters, Marjorie and Mavis Jones; cousins, nieces and nephews, countless loved ones—friends, colleagues, and students on several continents.

A fund has been established to honor Audre Lorde's memory. It will be used to commission a sculptured bust of Audre Lorde and to establish a scholarship fund for Black women writers in her name. The Astraea Foundation will accept these funds. Please make checks payable to: The Astraea Foundation, 666 Broadway, Suite 520, New York, NY 10012.

Donations may also be sent to: SISA (Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa) PO Box 24966, GBS, Christiansted, St Croix, USVI 00820-0966.



Tribute

From: Ika Huegel
Berlin Germany

And when the time came Audre said: "THAT IS THE WHOLE TRUTH", one of the first sentences that Audre Spoke in German. That is the whole truth, as true as that Audre is no more and as true as that Audre is with me forever.

So many do believe and did have a special relationship or a unique connection with Audre. I had neither, we had fun together and we often laughed about the same things. I never told her what she meant to me-that was understood, and that thought never became A burden. I never wrote a poem for her, just a few lines...in my awful English. We laughed a lot and that was important:

And when the time came, we borrowed clothes from each other. Audre wore my jogging suit, and she wore it everywhere. There was no place, where it would have been inappropriate...it was comfortable, that's what counted.

And when the time came, we sat down together and talked, she in German and I in English, with a dictionary between us. She loved the most difficult words, tongue-breaking words in German for "Discussion, Enthusiasm, Radiation, Passion, and Average -Size". Average-Size was the description for a fish she needed to go shopping for, because Gloria was going to arrive the next day, and Audre did not want the fish to be too large nor too small.

And when the time came, Audre talked to me about her childhood. About her first and only sled, which she was unable to steer. She collided with a tree and broke her foot. We talked about everything, about important matters and seemingly unimportant ones.

And when the time came, and Audre became tired and anxious more frequently, we practiced imagery together. We were going to jog in the morning, and it didn't matter whether we really did go jogging. The energy did not come from the action of jogging, but from the idea of it. We felt very athletic.

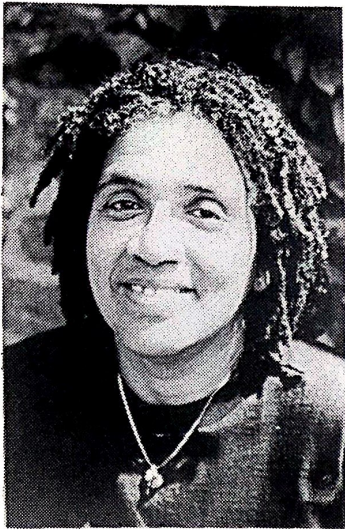
And when the time came when there was more and more pain, and more pain, and Audre woke Dagmar and me in the middle of the night to hold our hand, feeling bad about having interrupted our sleep. I promised her long nights and she knew, that I would be by her side every night. All the way to the last night, when she died.

I loved her for her laughter as much as for her struggle. In the end it was important to her to receive and for once not to give.

Yes, she was like nobody else, she was unique, like we all are...As she said so often, and as she would say today.



KITCHEN TABLE: Women of Color Press



IN MEMORY OF AUDRE LORDE

February 18, 1934 - November 17, 1992

BLACK ▼ LESBIAN ▼ POET ▼ MOTHER ▼ WARRIOR
Co-founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press

The following was written by Barbara Smith about Audre's work with Kitchen Table for the December 13th memorial held in Washington, D.C.

Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press began as a conversation between Audre and myself in the fall of 1980. We had known each other for several years and Audre had called because she was planning to come to Boston for a Black Women's poetry reading on Halloween. As we spoke, she said, "Barbara, we really need to do something about publishing." I said that I'd get together a group of women to meet at my house while she was in town and that was how what was to become Kitchen Table was born.

Our goals were to provide an autonomous outlet for feminist and Lesbian of color writers. We wanted to have complete control not only over what we published, but over how books were produced, copyedited, designed, publicized, and marketed. We named ourselves Kitchen Table, in acknowledgment of our cultural roots as women, whose creativity and strategizing has often happened in the Kitchen. We were also a kitchen table operation because we had no race, class or gender privilege to build upon and, as a result, no capital, except our commitment and labor, to finance our work.

Audre loved the press or, as she often called it, "the table," and was an active member of the collective during our first years of existence. This meant that she handled tasks as varied as reading submissions, finding office space, and taking her car full of books from our office in Manhattan to the post office on Staten Island, where she lived, once a week. Her insights were invaluable as we developed the politics and vision of the Press. One crucial and very challenging decision that we made at the first meeting in Boston was to be a press for all women of color, although everyone who attended that initial meeting was Black.

Audre continued to support the Press even after she was no longer able to participate on a day-to-day basis. She offered her work for publication in the Freedom Organizing pamphlet series, she referred potential writers to us, and she was always available to offer me moral support and advice. She donated all of her royalties back to the press and in addition made regular monetary donations. This summer we began production on a new collection of her writings about cancer entitled, *She Who Survives*, which was not completed at the time of her death.

Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press is a living part of Audre's remarkable legacy. After twelve years it is still the only publisher for women of color in the U.S. Because of our commitment to political activism and liberation as well as to literature, the Press has also served as a visible organization in support of the struggles of feminists and Lesbians of color both in this country and internationally. Kitchen Table will continue to break the silence that Audre challenged with such honesty and beauty in her writing and in her life.

AUDRE LORDE: FRIEND OF FRIENDS

Blanche Wiesen Cook

Poet, mother, teacher, essayist, Black Lesbian Warrior Woman, Audre Lorde was a true revolutionary. Embattled always in our mean-spirited environment, she was also successful in actually changing the contours and the language of the world we live in. She gave us the words and the context to reimage and reflect upon women and passion, anger and the erotic as power. She revolutionized our vocabulary, imagining it possible to use the words we now use long before the controlled press considered it politic or correct; long before the academy found its heart, and the courage. Now we take it as commonplace, and endure the backlash, and forget that Audre was there first in poetry, first in print.

She broke the silence about lesbian lusts and lesbian mothers, she helped us all identify and name the contradictions and hates and anguish within the contradictions and hates and anguish of racism and apartheid, in the US, South Africa, and around this fragile planet called Earth. The world was her playground, the struggle for decency and change her dancefloor.

Audre Lorde always played and danced with purpose, with gusto and joy. She was an activist and principled participant on every major battlefield. She studied long and hard, informed herself and informed us. No issue of human rights, dignity, or survival was casually discarded, beyond her concern. And when it came to her private world, the world she created for sustenance and pleasure, survival and comradeship in struggle, she was as profoundly revolutionary, as profoundly engaged.

Audre lived every day with rare zest, her spirit unconfined, often explosive in anger or pleasure; her vision unlimited by petty obstacles, unimpressed by lies and propaganda. She saw beyond, she sought afar. Although she never called herself a scholar, she was dedicated to the study of life, and all living things. She knew all about every rock, and stone; every flower and leaf; every shell on the beach. She read books about plumbing and window casings, took courses in the arts of glass cutting and painting; and dedicated countless hours to making the most beautiful necklaces -- monuments to loving comprised of healing stones and tiny shells, rare shards, and Audre's love and effort, to protect and embolden.

During my first walk upon the beach after Audre's death, a great Atlantic storm had cast the most amazing variety of shells upon the sands. Shells I hadn't seen in years, and feared lost to pollution. I knew Audre would be pleased, and then realized that now I would never again be told their names, or their history -- and I regretted the times I said as we walked: Audre, just look at the horizon.

For 35 years Audre Lorde was my friend of friends, my confidante, girlfriend and co-conspirator. For the past 23 years Clare Coss was also Audre Lorde's confidante, girlfriend and co-conspirator. And the amazing thing is we shared different confidences, and conspiracies, and all of us survived unscathed, our trust and love intact. This is not to pretend we never disagreed, or fought. We fought all the time -- earnestly and bluntly -- which is partly how we remained steadfast and true.

There was one time when a difference between Audre and me became an agony. It was when I refused to take Iskador after my cancer surgery, Iskador the homeopathic immune booster that gave Audre so many years of robust life. It arrived from Europe, all the vials and needles, and I felt unready to relate to this daily and arduous routine. She could not understand my refusal and we spent many hours trying to comprehend each other. She wrote: "I have always been haunted by the fear of not being able to reach the women I am closest to.... If what I know to be true cannot be of use to them, can it ever have been said to be true at all?"

But I agreed with Audre that cancer is an immune deficiency disease; I agree that homeopathy is the best way to go; I agree this epidemic of immune deficiency is political -- a result of nuclear fallout, toxins and the murderous neglect by business-minded professionals who care nothing about the quality of life, or the future of the planet. And I agreed that I needed to change my life to survive my bout with cancer. But I felt that I needed to play tennis, live in the country, in the woods, away from tension and the city's no longer bearable noises and rhythms. After months of agony, we came to an agreement that Audre wrote of in BURST OF LIGHT: "Our battle is to define survival in ways that are acceptable and nourishing to us, meaning with substance and style. Substance. Our work. Style. True to ourselves."

Now as the epidemic intensifies, and in the US, where the battle against cancer and Aids is not about health, but about profit, we need an intensified movement -- a movement that honors life and living. For Audre the ultimate memorial would be for each of us to dedicate our lives to activism in word and deed and outlook, so that we may give the polluters and the spoilers, the racists and the ravagers, and reclaim and revision the world, true to ourselves in health and harmony -- beyond separatism, nationalist hatreds, death-dealing profiteers -- with dignity, justice, and in our memory: Substance, Style, and Love.

THE GENESIS OF A POEM
by Clare Coss

Audre Lorde lived the last years of her life on the island of St. Croix with her dear friend and companion Gloria Joseph. My partner, Blanche Cook, and I frequently spent time with Audre and Gloria at their Caribbean home.

One afternoon the four of us were driving around Judith's Fancy, the spacious residential community outside of Christensted, where they lived. Gloria was at the wheel, Audre was in the front passenger seat, I was in the back behind Gloria, and Blanche was next to me behind Audre.

They had wanted to explore around the area with us in the car. Judith's Fancy is predominately white. It was unlikely that they would have been seen as two African-American neighbors. It is more probable that they would be seen as two Black strangers suspiciously observing their houses from a slow moving vehicle that somehow got past the security gate.

On our return from the far reaches of Judith's Fancy, Gloria stopped the car on a hillside to check out a huge mansion being built on a bluff overlooking the sea. The spectre of this construction already disturbed their porch view that sweeps across green fields to the glistening blue waters.

A young white woman with a little blond boy came walking in our direction from the building site. She stared at the car uncomfortably and began to pass on Audre's side.

"Is that your new house?" Audre asked, friendly.

The little boy started to fuss and whimper. His mother picked him up and stared at Audre and Gloria, cold and unfriendly. She glanced at us in the back seat.

Audre continued warmly, "We live over there, and we've been watching it go up. When will it be finished?"

The boy frowned and made a face at Audre. "I don't like you. Are you coming to babysit me?" He started to cry.

Audre tried to soothe him. "No, I'm not going to babysit you. Your mother is staying with you. She's not leaving. Don't cry. It's all right."

Gloria asked the young woman when she would be moving in. "It's a spec house. We live over here on this hill." She was unable to address her child's concern and he kept crying out to Audre, "No, No, No, I don't like you."

Audre tried smiling at him, spoke softly and pointed, "We live right over there. We're your neighbors."

He would not be consoled. He could not hear her words. His mother continued to ignore the content of his distress, as though it wasn't happening.

Audre formally bid them "Good Day." While Gloria drove us away, around the corner home, Blanche and Audre recalled a similar incident decades earlier. In a New York City supermarket a child being pushed in the cart by his mother, screeched upon seeing Audre, "Look, mommy, a baby nurse!"

Our mood was heavy. Here on this island called Paradise by the tourist industry, apartheid severs hearts and minds. Over the years Gloria, whose parents are Crucian, has been a vital fighting force for justice and equality on the island -- a fighting force which Audre joined when she came to live in St. Croix.

The four of us talked on the porch -- two Black women, two white women -- wrenched by the depths of the racial divide. Right before our eyes this mother's silence reinforced her child's racial tantrum.

I was deeply affected by Audre's unflinching directness and profound dignity during this assault. It made me aware of the opportunity I had missed to take responsibility and speak to this young woman myself. What could I have said that she could have heard in the immediacy of the moment? I as a white woman might have asked her to explain to her son that Audre and Gloria are neighbors. I might have told her that it is important for her child to learn and to understand that not all Black women are servants.

Our day had been mired by this stomach-turning event. Soon after Audre sent us this poem.

JUDITH'S FANCY

Half-built
your great house looms
between me and the sun.
Shell-smells on the morning wind.
You are younger than my daughter
the boy you hold is blond
the moon is new.
My sloping land brings our eyes level
"Welcome, neighbor," I begin.
Were we enemies in another life
or do your eyes always turn to flint
when meeting a Black woman
face to face?

Your child speaks first.
"I don't like you," he cries
"Are you coming to babysit me?"

AUDRE LORDE

She was an African daughter, citizen of *The First Cities*
Was a one-woman Western Union, sending *Cables to Rage*
Spoke out *From a Land Where Other People Live*
Transacted in *The New York Head Shop*, curated the *Museum*
Knew *Coal* to be more precious, harder and more beautiful than diamond
Became a *Black Unicorn*
Knew above all *Poetry is Not a Luxury*
Sang, and heard, and recognized the *Undersong*
Was *Sister, Outsider*
and *Zami*
Lived and danced *A Burst of Light*
Is now of *Our Dead Behind Us*, within us—
Beckoning across the *Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance*

for Gloria,

On the Occasion of Audre's memorial

with my love,

Michelle Cliff



Audre Lorde was a great poet because she understood the necessity of poetry to our collective life, and because she knew that beauty and bearing witness to the harsh materials of human struggle need never contradict each other. Across the world, poets, readers, activists are in her debt for the light shed by her blazing images. The power of her essays and speeches derives directly from her poetic language, from "the difference between poetry and rhetoric."

My personal debt to Audre Lorde begins over 20 years ago when I found *The First Cities* in the C.C.N.Y. bookstore and realized that this extraordinary new poet was also a colleague, someone I could actually talk with. For most of those years we exchanged drafts of poems, criticized and helped sustain each other's work. For Audre, there was never any boundary between art and politics, and many of my poems were honed in response to her keenly furthering questions. From the other side, it was always an excitement to receive a bundle of Audre's new drafts and see where her vision and craft were evolving. In the last months of her life, she was working on the poems to be posthumously published as *The Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance*, some of them as remarkable as anything she'd written. She was also working on the subtle and inspired revisions of earlier poems which appear in *Undersong*.

Poetry was at the core of Audre's expressive life, her way of knowing. She helped me trust that in myself and not give way or consent to the marginalizing of that precious resource. In her words: "Poetry is the way we give name to the nameless so it can be thought." This resource nourished her as teacher, activist, witness, breaker of silences, leader, survivor, in all the passages of her life, and in her dying, when she asked me to send her books of poetry.

"Poetry is not a luxury," she wrote; and she meant it for all of us.

Adrienne Rich
January 1993



January 8, 1993

Audre Lorde came to see me in the summer of 1976 to discuss whether or not she ought to have literary representation. I, of course, was a reader of her poetry and I felt "special" that she had chosen to come see me. When I looked at the mess her papers and contracts were in, I knew she needed me. Over the years we developed an early morning telephone conversation relationship where we discussed not only her poetry and the state of the world but the raising of children in a hostile and dangerous environment. We also talked a lot about living on the edge and being pioneers in a New World that was going to be created by Audre. Well, she succeeded in what she set out to do. I see her as a galvanizing force, the female equivalent of Malcolm X. Not only did she change the world and make it a safer place for women of color and Lesbians, but she organized women of color around the world and she was solely responsible for making a New World community.

We will never see the likes of her again.

Charlotte Sheedy,
Publishing Agent



**IN GRATITUDE TO THE WOMAN OF VISION,
THE WOMEN OF HEART, THE WOMEN OF FIRE —
AUDRE LORDE**

In the mid-seventies, when the Lesbian Herstory Archives was just making its vision known to the Lesbian world, Audre called Deborah Edel and myself to her Staten Island home. In the plant-lined dining room, she shared with us photographs and early editions of her work. "Take what you need for the archives," she said. Her immediate understanding of why we would dedicate our lives to establishing a home for our collective story; her generosity and trust, her challenging wry words about the past; her gleam of sensual play; her sternness about inequities; her support of women writing even when what they wrote did not reflect her view of the matter; her belief in an international community of women fighting racism; her tenacity to do things her way and her dedication to leaving a record of her journey whether it be to mark her passage through the Lesbian fifties or through a racist America or through the physical and spiritual battle for her life--all this and so much more are why we see Audre Lorde as a living, loving demanding presence for all our days. Her spirit, her words, like a touch, will not leave us.

Joan Nestle
Lesbian Herstory Archives

*Dear Audre, our teacher, friend, mentor, sister, warrior,
we will continue to provide a meeting place for women
poets. Moved by your spirit our voices will be heard.*

In gratitude,
The Audre Lorde Women's Poetry Center

Hunter College, City University of New York
695 Park Avenue, Room 102 TH
New York, NY 10011
(212) 650-3838



ALL YOU HAD TO DO

Audre
Audre
Audre.

All you had to do was
Simply smile
And our dreams unfolded
Gloriously
Our fears faded in/to your gaze
And we reveled in your wisdom
Healed, happy, whole

All you had to do was
Speak our names
And pain melted to poetry
Wondrously
Our feelings emerged, accepted
And you lovingly heard them all
Softly, searching, sweet.

All you had to do was
Hold us near
And stars blinked golden amber
Reverently
You touched the chords within us
Gently beckoning our unspoken awe
We trembled, we marveled, we loved you.

Lorde
Lorde
Lorde.

Winnie "Oyoko" Loving

*Love ♡
Oyoko
Nov 19, 1992*





I have never written poetry at any time in my life. Strange, when I received news that Audre had passed on to eternal life, lines started passing through my mind.

Audre was a rare person in more ways than one. She was special and unique in her own way. As I write I cannot stop the pain in me which invites tears to my eyes. She had rare inner strength for accepting the inevitable, regardless of its magnitude, eventuality and pain.

It took a long time for those of us who lived with her to recognize her godliness. She had some supernatural qualities I could never describe or interpret.

"SHE WAS RARE AND SPECIAL. MAY HER SOUL REST IN PEACE"

A TRIBUTE IN DEAR MEMORY OF AUDRE

Her nature calm and sublime
Her spirit in thought all the time
Her temper sharp yet yielding to mold
Her tongue under stress willing to unfold
This was Audre.

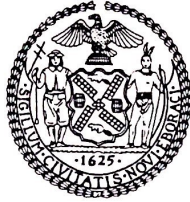
She was gentle as a dove unperturbed
But sharp as lightning confronted by a challenge
Pain failed to disturb her gentle smile
Or, in any way to tamper with her peace
This was Audre.

Leave her to rest through her eternal sleep
To enjoy her well earned cold-earth bed
Her soul to remain her maker's wealth
Peace' Peace" Peace" Audre
Till someday, someplace, we will all reassemble

May her soul rest in peace.

Ellen Kuzwayo,
Soweto, South Africa





THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

January 18, 1993

**Audre Lorde Memorial
The Cathedral Church of
St. John the Divine**

Dear Friends:

I join you in celebration of the life of Audre Lorde -- Gamba Adisa (warrior -- she who makes her meaning known). Author of seventeen books of poetry and prose, recipient of the Manhattan Borough President's Award for Literary Excellence, New York State Poet from 1991-1992, Audre Lorde refused to be circumscribed by any single identity, she wrote as a Black woman, a mother of two children, a daughter of Grenadian immigrants, a Lesbian, a feminist, a visionary.

A child of our city, born and raised in Harlem, Audre Lorde's work confronted the worst in order to experience the best. Her writing was not removed from the political reality of the day -- she co-founded SISA: Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa and Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. She was, according to Barbara Smith, "the kind of artist who used her gifts to bring about revolutionary change."

"Illumination" is what she considered poetry, stating "it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are -- until the poem -- nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt." Her words will remain "jewels in the open light." Her son, Jonathan, her daughter, Elizabeth, her dear friend and close companion Gloria I. Joseph, her family and her friends can rejoice in the knowledge that Audre Lorde's brilliance will shine forever.

Sincerely,

DAVID N. DINKINS
MAYOR

Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Capitol Building
P.O. Box 477
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
U.S. Virgin Islands 00801
(809) 774-6484



VIRDIN C. BROWN
PRESIDENT

Senate Building
3000 No. 1 Contentment Rd.
Suite 2,sted, St. Croix
U.S. Virgin Islands 00820
(809) 773-0426 or (809) 772-7413

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

A mighty, electrified, and love-filled burst of light, who at birth was named Audre Lorde, but renamed Gamba Adisa, departed this earthly life on November 17, 1992.

The Virgin Islands, the Caribbean, and indeed the entire world, was illuminated by her poignant and altruistic writings. Now we mourn her passing. It is not often that a person with the brilliance, insight, and humble spirit possessed in the person of a Gamba Adisa touches and comes into our lives. We, here in the Virgin Islands, and St. Croix in particular, were blessed to have had the opportunity to benefit from her knowledge.

Poet, Pan-Africanist, novelist, essayist, educator, advocate, and the recipient of many prestigious awards, such as the Walt Whitman Citation of Merit, and designated State Poet for the State of New York, was the personification of a leader, a mentor, and a friend to all who knew her. It is said that the greatest of us are taken just when we are beginning to live. I am of the opinion that there may be much truth in that adage.

As President, and on behalf of the members and staff of the entire Nineteenth Legislature of the Virgin Islands, I convey my deepest sympathy to the family members, numerous loved one, and countless friends of our beloved Audre Lorde, Gamba Adisa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virdin C. Brown".

Viridin C. Brown
President
19th Legislature



ALEXANDER A. FARRELLY
GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT HOUSE CHARLOTTE AMALIE,
THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

The Virgin Islands has suffered a great loss with the passing of Audre Lorde. We were exceedingly proud that a world renowned poet and activist was so impressed with our island lifestyle that she assumed residency and became integrally involved in the community. During her seven year residence on St. Croix, she championed the causes of women's rights, peace and freedom for all humanity.

I extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Audre Lorde. May her soul rest in eternal peace and her spirit remain forever in her literary works and the hearts of those whose lives she touched.

Alexander A. Farrelly



We will miss our cousin Audre in this present world. Her strength, commitment to social justice, and her words have given us courage. Love to you, Audre.

Ingrid Washinawatok for the
Indigenous Women's Network

**ALOHA KAKOU. GREETINGS FROM THE NATIVE PEOPLE
OF HAWAI'I.**

Our beautiful islands send the lament of our ancestors across the great Pacific Ocean and the continent of North America to those who loved our friend and sister, Audre Lorde.

She is at peace with her ancestors now but she still walks among us. Through her words and her powerful life she made a path of courage, resistance, and hope for many people.

With you, we honor and sing of a woman of the world, and a sister in struggle.

Because the Hawaiian people are marking the centenary of the overthrow of our government by U.S. Marines and white missionary descendants in January 1893, we are unable to send an emissary.

But please know that we are with you in spirit. We give this gift of cloth, called a kikepa, which is the Native dress of our women. Audre herself would have loved the coincidence of her memorial service and our centenary.

May the colors of our islands reflected in this cloth remind all of us of Audre's vibrant life.

Aloha no, Aloha no.

Haunani-Kay Trask, for Ka Lahui Hawai'i

Haunani-Kay Trask



GOVERNMENT OF KA LAHUI HAWAII
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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HANA, MAUI HAWAII
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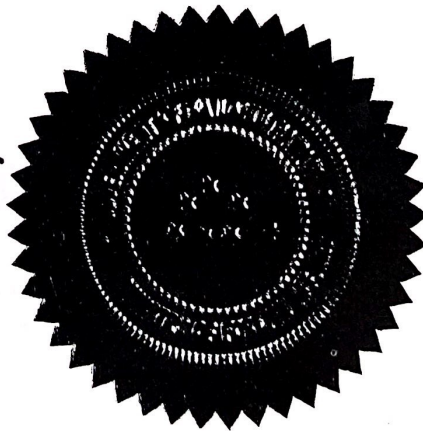
January 17, 1993

Poet activist Audre Lorde was known and loved by many people of Hawai'i, especially by our native Hawaiian women. On this date, marking the centennial of the illegal overthrow of our Queen by the United States, and marking the indigenous Hawaiians' struggle to regain our national sovereignty, the Government of Ka Lahui Hawai'i acknowledges the legacy of Audre Lorde, beloved African American fighter for social justice and human freedom.

Aloha,



J. Kalani English
Minister of Foreign Affairs



IN MEMORIAM OF AUDRE LORDE

Audre Lorde is gone. I am saddened by her expiration. She is not there any more. Only her words will be everlasting for me. It was not a sudden death. But we are all saddened by a death we were expecting some time ago. Why not? It is a sudden death. I cannot accept it otherwise. She was a big mama. She was a founder of our actual style and of the meaning of being a black female in the Western World. Audre encouraged many people, many young writers and poets. Her essays supported all kind of struggles. Great woman of the West Indies, of Grenada, of New York, for almost four decades she has been a woman of powerful imagination, vision and love. There she is. There she arrives among ourselves with a beautiful smile, a sister's smile.

Nancy Morejón,
La Habana, Cuba
6 diciembre 92

THE ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN WRITERS OF AFRICA (OWWA)

The Organization of Women Writers of Africa remember our sister poet Audre Lorde. We deeply appreciate her contribution to literature and the struggle for justice and progress.

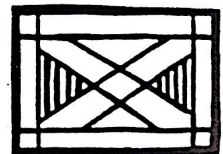
She left us great memories
Beautiful poems
and the optimistic spirit of optimism.

Long live the sheroic poetry of Audre Lorde.

The struggle continues



Jayne Cortez P.O. Box 96, Village Station, New York, NY 10014 USA
Ama Ata Aidoo P.O.Box 4930, Harare, Zimbabwe, Southern Africa



Adinkra Symbols
"House built to stand
windy & treacherous
conditions"

1/4/93



AUDRE LORDE, A MEMORIAL

PEN, the writers organization, wishes to honor Audre Lorde, the American writer, the writer of the Americas, the Black woman poet and essayist, who so graced this nation's letters.

She possessed the rare brilliance and courage required to transform the symbols of her outsideness — her skin, her gender, her sexuality, her illness, even, as she laughingly noted, her proud corpulence and near blindness — into enabling words, into force fields of strength. Audre Lorde made a habit of difference, stared it down, reforged it, celebrated it, rescued it from its pain to name it a source of revelation. This *Sister Outsider* would fix her own status. Yet she was not a solitary fighter, an introverted purveyor of elegant words. At a lecture in East Lansing, she wrote in the *Cancer Journals*, "I identified myself as a Black Feminist Lesbian poet, although it felt unsafe . . . because if there was one other Black Feminist Lesbian poet in isolation somewhere within the reach of my voice, I wanted her to know she was not alone."

Audre Lorde accompanied many within the reach of her voice and words. The path of our survival, she once said, whether Black, white, old, young, lesbian or heterosexual, lies in our willingness to "reach down into that deep place of knowledge and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. To see whose face it wears." This was her cathedral. This was why she could write in the poem, "Call":

I am a Black woman stripped down
and praying
my whole life has been an altar
worth its ending. . . .

Paula Giddings
Vice President
PEN, American Center



IF WE CAN HEAR MALCOLM, WE CAN FIND AUDRE IN US

Audre Lorde and Malcolm X had common roots and a common vision. Both had parents who migrated from Grenada, making them first generation Caribbean Americans. Malcolm and Audre were politicized by social and political injustices—racism, poverty, sexism and the general dehumanization of human beings. Both were wedded to personal acts of liberation; he was wedded to preaching the love and just social order he found in Islam, she to writing and seeking the power she found in being Black, female, lesbian, feminist, cancer patient and all-time revolutionary. When the movement lost Malcolm to an assassin's bullet in 1965, Audre Lorde was 31. Neither of their lives had peaked. Over the next 18 years that it took Malcolm to be brought back center-stage into national prominence, Audre surged forward against some of the same debilitating currents. In the same week that Malcolm is finally resurrected, a 14 year cancer robbed us of Audre.

Neither went quietly. As his blood spilled out in Harlem, silencing none but cowards, Malcolm's short life spoke of his tenacious and indefatigable struggle from ignorance, illiteracy and violence to the life of a shining engagement with personal and political transformation for the good. His best legacy is that hundreds of millions in the US, in Grenada and everywhere else are giving a positive review to his best text—his transformed life in service for change.

I first met Audre as she and others received me at a Caribbean Women's Conference in St Croix in the 1980's. I shall forever remember her invitation for us to walk along the beach in the early morning light. She took me step by amazing step through a central theme in her life—women's political struggle worldwide. She had me in the palm of her hands as Malcolm must have had her and others when he spoke. In 1982 at Harvard University, Audre said that she was one "who didn't really hear Malcolm's voice until it was amplified by death." On that most ordinary but scintillating of Caribbean mornings, as we gathered shells from the beach, Audre's life was amplified for me. Getting past our differences, I truly heard her passion for undoing social injustice, I understood her rage and anger, and I heard Malcolm in her.

In a voice full of persistence and calm, and with leaping waves reaching for our ankles, she spoke of her victory over cancer. It was in recession; her herbal remedies and stress-reduced life was a winning combination. We laughed about all the bush remedies she recalled her mother having in their Harlem home five decades ago. That night a group of us re-enacted a Grenadian home; a great meal, bush teas (from Audre's and Gloria's garden) and peals and peals of laughter that sturdy souls make. We became sisters on that visit. In her loudest and her softest story-telling, data-gathering voice, Audre was not going quietly; she was pressing on with life, and like Malcolm, taking us along.

Unlike Malcolm, Audre returned to Grenada again and again before her death. After the 1983 US invasion, she went "as a concerned Grenadian American," being "proud to be of stock from the country that mounted the first Black English-speaking people's Revolution in this hemisphere." In her 1984 *Sister Outsider*, she spoke for Malcolm about what she understood from her December visit to Grenada: "The lynching of Black teenagers and shooting down Black women, 60 percent of Black teenagers unemployed and rapidly becoming unemployable, the presidential dismantling of the Civil Rights Commission, and more Black families living below the poverty line than twenty years ago—if these facts of American life can be passed over as unremarkable, then why not the rape and annexation of Grenada?"

Of death Audre said: "it is only another face of that continuing battle for self-determination and survival that Black women fight daily." That face has been the struggle for personal dignity and the survival of families that so many Caribbean immigrants and others fight here in the US. And our fight would be that much easier if Caribbean Americans would come to know Audre. She is a hero trying to stop us from dying before we face death. In the closing part of her talk at Harvard University's Malcolm X Weekend in 1982, Audre parted from her young students with these words: "Malcolm X does not live in the dry texts of his words as we read them; he lives in the energy we generate and use to move along the visions we share with him. We are making the future as well as bonding to survive the enormous pressures of the present, and that is what it means to be part of history." Audre Lorde was a woman of incredible courage. She was part of Malcolm's history and her invitation to continue the struggle, along with his, still stands.

By Dessima Williams

Excerpted from the Carib News, December 1, 1992



KING AND LORDE: DRUM MAJORS FOR JUSTICE

People of the world gather in memorial for Audre Lorde (1934-1992) in the grandeur of New York's St. John The Divine Cathedral, the first time ever a woman of color has been so honored in its sacred chambers. And on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday anniversary 1993, King would have been so proud.

He was a drum major for justice. He said that true intelligence was in having a tough mind and a tender heart. He counselled us to match deeds with our words because words by themselves are not enough. He insisted that the strength to love was necessary if we were to keep our humanity whole while overcoming forms of human oppression. He was **COURAGE** in bold print, in large letters.

Audre Lorde, too, was **COURAGE** in bold print, in large letters. She too was a drum major for justice. Poet Laureate of New York State, her voice in prose and poem was a trumpet of conscience, a clarion call for radical freedom everywhere. Hers was a militant beckoning for human dignity and respect for all outsiders. She found common cause in struggles against divisive "Isms." From Selma to Soweto, from Berlin to Tienamen Square, her dream was of an equality in which the individual was respected on her/his own terms. She wrote and spoke that people are bursts of light who actively create and effect their desires and their wills: The Power Within Each Person is Erotic and Complete.

Of herself she said, "As a Black lesbian feminist comfortable with the many different ingredients of my identity, and a woman committed to racial and sexual freedom from oppression, ... my fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am openly, allowing power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living".

Lorde and King were uncompromising in insisting on True Democracy. Once Lorde addressed an organizing conference for African American delegates to the world congress of women which was to be held in Nairobi, Kenya. The audience was hushed, reverent, respectful. Her voice was strong and clear. She gave them what they had come for and gave them more. Why were she and other "sister outsiders" not allowed to be openly lesbian and full participants in the Black struggle for human rights? Had they not marched and demonstrated with Dr. King? Hadn't they gone to jail and died for civil rights? When would their contributions to Black struggle as gay and lesbian people be acknowledged? "Change means growth, and growth can be painful. But we sharpen self-definition by exposing the self in work and struggle, together with those whom we define as different from ourselves, although sharing the same goals."

...We have chosen each other
and the edge of each other's battles
the war is the same...
(Audre Lorde)

Don Quinn Kelley, Ph.D.,
Professor of History, Medgar Evers College



AUDRE LORDE REMEMBRANCE

The last time I saw Audre Lorde, she said to me, "last week I was dying, but now I'm not." I was dying, but now I'm not. I have never met anyone who was more self-possessed and self-determined than Audre Lorde. She looked fiercely within herself, she looked fiercely at people and the world around her, and she called it like she saw it. How wonderful that Audre, who was once a little girl who did not talk much and could not see well, born in Harlem during the depression, determined herself to become one of the most visionary, outspoken and eloquent writers of our time.

She brought us together, not only here in the US, but also in Canada, Europe and Australia. She brought us together in Berlin, Soweto, Amsterdam and St Croix. She brought us together, women and men Black and White, Asian and Latina and Indigenous, of all sexualities and class backgrounds. Audre brought us together even when we weren't so sure that's where we wanted to be.

There are as many stories about Audre as there are people here today. You remember the first time you read *Zami* or *The Cancer Journals*. You remember the first time you came across one of her poems that stayed with you; the first time you used her writings in a class; the first time you heard her read; the first conversation you had with her; or, the first time you did battle with her. A few weeks after her death, a small group of mostly Black lesbians gathered together to remember Audre, to read her work and talk about the influence she had on our lives. One quality that was mentioned over and over was Audre's generosity. There was story after story of how Audre would answer letters, send cards and unsolicited checks, and write references and recommendations. She served on committees, boards, and panels. She traveled to meet with groups of women when she didn't feel well. She apologized when she realized she was wrong.

Audre, in her complete generosity of spirit cleared a space within herself, that in turn made it possible for her to take space, clear a space for us to be. Audre cleared a space that never existed before in just this way. She cleared a space for lesbians and gay men, for people of color and indigenous people all over the world. She made a space for women and men of all races, all classes, all colors. She cleared a space for Black Lesbians that has never existed in the history of the world. In the words of historian and scientist Evelyn Hammònds, "Audre taught me how to be a Black Lesbian. She taught me not to be ashamed. She showed me that I could be a Black Lesbian and live a productive life, a life of integrity. She showed me that it was possible to see being a lesbian as a source of strength."

We have been blessed to have Audre in our lives. And most of all, because of her, we have each other. Precious Audre. We miss her. But, there is something we must always remember. We here, are as precious as Audre. Anything we would hesitate to say to Audre we best rethink before we say it to each other. Anything we regret not saying to her, we best say to each other. Anything we wish we had done for her, we best do for each other. Precious Audre. She was dying, now she's not.

Precious Audre.
You were dying. Now you're not.
Kate Rushin



Audre Lorde said she was a poet, not a theorist, yet one line of hers was worth textbooks of theory. Think, for instance, of "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House." She refused to depart from the position of the powerless, and in so doing she taught us that the powerless know the powerful far better than vice versa—that women know men better than men know women; that Blacks know whites better than whites know Blacks; that lesbians know heterosexuals better than heterosexuals know lesbians; and thus she was able to write universally, with empathy for all. She combined, in a way that cannot be replaced ever again, the tough mind and the tender heart.

Because she was honest about her long struggle with cancer, we have known for a long time that we might well have to live in a world without an Audre Lorde in it. Each time we read new words and poems of hers, there was that added weight and poignancy of their limits.

As a woman who also has had cancer, her courage and tough-mindedness meant something special to me; yet she also reminded me that we are far from special. One in three Americans will have some variety of cancer, thanks to the environmental degradation of this planet. And learning how to live with the death that faces us all, cancer or no, even while we fight its injustice with every breath, was also her special gift to us. In her words, "once I accept the existence of dying as a life process, who can ever have power over me again?"

As a white woman, her writing was vital to me. It never once made me feel excluded or confronted for the sake of confrontation, yet it constantly reminded me that there can be no love until anger and honesty have cleared the way. As she wrote, "when I define myself, the place in which I am not like you, I'm not excluding you from the joining—I'm broadening the joining.

Yes, she was unique. There is no replacing her. There is only the future of letting her words draw out the qualities in us that she nurtured so bravely in herself.

If we do that, she will live forever.

Gloria Steinem



We mourn

AUDRE LORDE

18. 2. 1934
New York

17. 11. 1992
St. Croix/Virgin Islands

The Department of Literature and Linguistics of the University of Osnabrück have decided to confer on Audre Lorde the honorary title of Doctor of Philosophy in the spring of 1993.

Throughout her life, in her literature, through her personality, Audre Lorde fought for human rights. To the end of her life, her voice was raised against racism and all discriminations.

Meeting Audre, getting to know her, convinced people of the necessity and the possibility of accepting difference, of mutual respect, of crossing boundaries.

We will honour Audre Lorde with a memorial celebration.

Sigrid Markmann
Marion Kraft
Hartmut Lutz
Wolfgang Karrer

INTERNATIONAL, CROSS-CULTURAL BLACK WOMEN'S STUDIES SUMMER INSTITUTE

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The meaning of Audre Lorde lives in millions of people of different continental regions. Her words, ideas and activism crossed oceans and lands because of the universal truths she wrote, spoke and acted upon, illuminating the diversity and complexity of the human experience.

As a woman of power, activist quintessential and international advisor to the Institute, Lorde helped to connect many women to each other across boundaries of nationality, culture, race, caste, religion, sexuality, language, age, social class and ideology -- including indigenous women, South ("Third World") women, ethnic minority women, immigrant women, migrant women, rural women, refugee women, women oppressed and exploited -- *Sisters in Arms* fighting for national, democratic and human rights; for justice and freedom.

Lorde, also known as Gamba Adisa, worked to give us to each other in all our social wretchedness, our rage, our natural beauty, our cultural majesty, our creative political and personal potential: *Sister Outsiders* yearning for a world in which we can love and be loved without qualification. A world she knew we could bring to pass if we linked arms in struggle. A world the Institute struggles to forge.

January 18, 1993

July 13-August 7, 1987
London, England
Focus: *Women's Condition*

July 11-30, 1988
New York, USA
Focus: *Women & Communications*

August 7-26, 1989
Harare-Bulawayo-Zvishavane,
Zimbabwe
Focus: *Women & The Politics of Food*

March 16-23, 1991
Auckland, Aotearoa (New Zealand)
Focus: *Human Rights & Indigenous Peoples in the "Information Age"*

August 2-23, 1991
Frankfurt/M.-Bielefeld-Berlin,
Germany
Focus: *Black People & The European Community*

August 1-14, 1993
Caracas, Venezuela
Focus: *The Black Woman: Five Centuries of Resistance & Cultural Affirmation in the Americas*



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Joining hands and hearts with women and children for peace and for justice

**Thank you for teaching us about
our strength and for reminding us
how much difference we can make
in this world.**

**Thank you, Audre, for being
part of our lives.**

**With gratitude and love,
From all the MADRE family.**

Vivian Stromberg
**Vivian Stromberg
Executive Director**

Zala Chandler
**Zala Chandler
Chair, Board of Directors**

**AUDRE LORDE: FROM PALESTINE TO NEW YORK CITY
WE ARE YOUR SISTER!**

"History is not kind to us
we restitch it with living
past memory forward
into desire
into the panic articulation
of want without having
or even the promise of getting

And I dream of our coming together
encircled driven
not only by love
but by lust for a working tomorrow
the flights of this journey
mapless uncertain
and necessary as water."

Though Audre Lorde does not specifically mention Palestinian women, we feel that these words capture the essence of our reality.

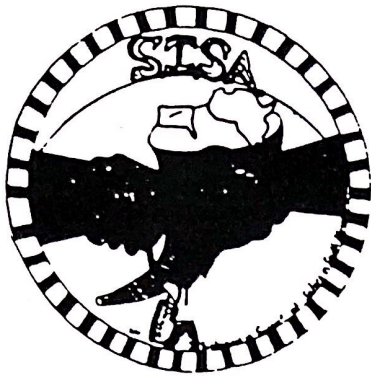
As we struggle with pain, losses, tears and anger, we are reminded of Audre Lorde's refusal to pull any punches.

As we defy mental and physical degradation; share our love and joy over small victories - personal and collective; reclaim our dignity and humanity; and attempt to carve a safe space for ourselves, our people and our children; her relentless spirit, her insistence to fight on, and her harmony within guide all of us.

Audre Lorde: Your Legacy Lives ON!

Union of Palestinian Women's Associations in North America





SISTERHOOD IN SUPPORT OF SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

SISA

The Founding Mothers of SISA, (SISTERHOOD IN SUPPORT OF SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA), along with the Zamani Soweto Sisters and the Maggie Magaba Trust, two self-help organizations in South Africa, are profoundly saddened by the loss of our warrior sister, Audre Lorde. Since SISA was formed in 1984, Audre was an enthusiastic supporter of the goals of the organization, namely to link hands and resources with our South African sisters and their families and to educate people about the oppressive apartheid regime. Audre was one of our most successful fund raisers, frequently closing her public readings with a plea for funds. In many of her poems she speaks about the painful and courageous liberation struggles of the South African people.

The South African women vividly recall the joyous occasion meeting Audre and other SISA members in Europe. The dancing, singing and community meals shared between South African and African-American sisters were exquisitely wonderful! Such memories will be inspirational to us as we continue fulfilling the aims of SISA.

You, Audre, Gamba Adisa, were/are truly our Sister in Arms.

Lovingly,

SISA Founder: Gloria I. Joseph

SISA Founding Mothers:

Zala Chandler

Johnnetta Cole

Andre N. McLaughlin

Barbara Riley

Audre Lorde, Black, Lesbian, poet and feminist activist, born in New York City of West Indian parents, was a member of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA). She along with her companion Gloria Joseph attended the first general meeting of the association, held in Barbados in November 1988, and in May 1989 she conducted a poetry workshop as part of CAFRA'S two-week Creative Writing Seminar held in Trinidad and Tobago. Participants of this seminar spanned the entire Caribbean region including Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Dominica, Surinam, Curacao and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. For them this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience which they will never forget.

One of the recommendations of this Seminar was the publication of a simple publishing handbook for women writers, to assist women writers of the Caribbean region, many of whom were not familiar with the publishing world. This publication, which was available in 1991, included as its first article a reprint of Audre's now famous essay, *Poetry is not a Luxury*.

In 1985, Audre moved to St. Croix, a bit closer to her Caribbean roots. She reflected that "living there has been a period of great restoration, ferment and education for me" (*Sojourner*, November, 1989:18). Outspoken on the colonial relationship between the US. Virgin Islands and the continental USA, she said in 1989: "The Caribbean is nobody's basin. A basin is something you wash your hands and feet in!"

Audre's passing has left all of us who knew her or have drawn inspiration from her work with a deep sense of loss of a sister who lived her life in the best way she knew, and in so doing, enriched the lives of all who passed her way. While we mourn her death, we celebrate her life and take solace in her words: "Once we recognize the existence of our death, without embracing it, there is really nothing they can do to us again."

CAFRA (The Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action)

Dear Audre:

You made us proud to be Caribbean. You made us, as women strong. Your courage, your spirit and your love will continue to inspire your Caribbean sisters.

Always,
WAND, CAFRA,
Peggy, Rhoda, Joan, Honor, Andaiye
All 'a We



The Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network and ISIS, International celebrate Audre with you today. We have been deeply touched by her life and work. Through her words, her spirit will continue to inspire and live with us.

We learned with great sadness about Audre's passing. She will be dearly missed. We have fond memories of our past gatherings, particularly in France where we shared her dear, loving smile. May her soul rest in peace.

Maggi Magaba Trust
Zamani Soweto Sisters Council, South Africa



**STATEMENT FROM
'AUDRE LORDE MEMORIAL SUPPER' ORGANISING GROUP,
LONDON, ENGLAND**

It was a strange but not uncharacteristic irony that upon hearing the news of Audre's passing, each of us turned to that poem, phrase, sentence, or essay from her writings which spoke most personally and powerfully to us. In our individual solitude, we remembered that Audre had shown us how to use the pain and terror of a loss that strikes deep at the heart of our sense of who we are. Her struggle against and with cancer became the metaphor through which we might all learn to share in the development of a commitment to breaking the silences which cost nothing less than our lives.

Her courage urged us to reach for the possibilities which might be garnered from speaking and acting out against the enforced separations of 'race', age, class, gender and sexuality. She dared us to make connections across the invisible but powerful boundaries which divide us, whilst serving the interests of those who rule.

Two themes became organising principles of Audre's life: to seek for and make connections; and to continually break and challenge silence and invisibility. She connected with women in South Africa, the Caribbean, throughout the USA, and in Germany and Britain. She encouraged black gay men to recognise each other; black women to look 'eye to eye'; and white women to see more than their own images.

In London, at the First International Feminist Bookfair in 1984, we had the opportunity to join her in battle against what she called a "monstrosity of racism". In the absence of any invited involvement of black women from the local community, this innovative event could have divided us from women of colour from overseas, whose input had been invited by the organisers. Audre connected and spoke; we all benefited.

Survival and creativity – the one leading from the other – is an idea and practice she bequeaths us. For in the context of the Europe of the 'New World Order': in which unification means fortification; in which there is an alarming increase in racist violence and murder; in which organised and systematic mass rape is carried out in the name of an 'ethnic cleansing' process reminiscent of another sinister period of European history, there is a clear and present danger that silence and inactivity will yet again not protect us from horrors worse than our combined imaginations may muster.

In this context Audre's physical absence only defines our task more sharply. She summons us to dare the journey toward wholeness. A wholeness of self-definition, self-love and autonomy. A wholeness of liberation. Where difference is a strength and creativity blossoms. To honour Audre we need to struggle for it. To struggle for it we need to organise. Let this be a beginning.

The members of the Cross-Cultural Initiative of Black Women in Germany (IISF e.V.) were deeply moved to receive the notice of the passing of our beloved and sadly missed sister, Audre Lorde.

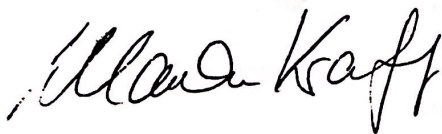
Audre Lorde's literary works, her worldwide activities for the rights of oppressed people, in particular Black women in the diaspora, her outstanding personality and her concern with the various struggles for human rights, justice and dignity have left a deep impression on the small community of Black people in Germany, various minority groups, the women's and lesbian movements and many scholars and students of American culture and literature.

In Germany, Audre Lorde taught American literature and creative writing. Here she inspired the publication of the book *Farbe bekennen (Showing Their Color)*, and it was through her and her various international contacts that our Initiative became part of the international network of Black women, enabling us to host the International Cross-Cultural Black Women's Studies Summer Institute in Germany in 1991. She taught us and many others, women and men, young and old, people of different backgrounds and identities to look at our differences as an empowering force, to better understand ourselves and each other.

Personally and politically, Audre Lorde had a special relationship to Germany, where she had numerous friends. She was shocked by recent political developments in Germany and the new wave of racial violence against migrants, foreigners, asylum seekers and Black people. Only weeks before her death, she and Dr. Gloria Joseph published articles in several German newspapers, warning against racism and hate, and sent personal letters to politicians, unions, churches and youth organizations protesting racial violence and advocating solidarity. To us, Audre Lorde really was a Black Lesbian Mother Poet Warrior, a self-definition by which she opened so many readings and lectures in this country. Many of us knew her personally, many of us mourn the loss of a real friend and Sister in Arms. Her works and her memory will stay alive, and we shall continue our various struggles in her spirit.

For the
Cross-Cultural Initiative of Black Women in Germany (IISF e.V.)

Marion Kraft



IN CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF AUDRE LORDE 1934-1992

The Congress of Black Women of Canada (Quebec)
The Black Caucus, 3rd International Feminist Book Fair

The Congress of Black Women of Canada chose the cactus as a symbol to show the strengths and resiliency of Black Women. It is of a family of plants that thrives under adverse conditions. No matter how arid the soil, no matter that no care or attention is given, the cactus survives, multiplies, flowers and bears fruit. It is a fitting symbol. With or without assistance, the Black woman manages to educate herself; rears and educates her children; tends to her sick and aged; labors both inside and outside her home. She survives-and the race survives.

Though we no longer see Audre Lorde's majestic figure and warm smile, memory will continue to generate the confidence and inspire the courage that she radiated. Her immortality is assured in the soundness, forthrightness, sensitivity and timelessness of her words and work.

She spoke to and for Outsiders, and we, Black sisters in Canada, feel secure and nurtured in her voice. She also spoke as well to those who make outsiders of themselves by attempting to force others into outsider status. Indeed, her writings, rooted in the realities of the daily, mundane and exceptional experiences of the individual and the collective, at home and abroad, prove that no woman/human is free until all are free.

A great humanist, teacher, womanist, and philosopher, Sister Audre not only transformed "silence into Language and Action," but she led the way for others to do so. In these remote northern climates, as elsewhere, Black women have traditionally had to nurture each other. We have been Outsiders. Differences in age, class and gender preference have created further levels within this isolation. Audre's writing clarified for us how these barriers hinder our freedom and empowerment.

Those who were privileged to see and hear her at the 3rd International Feminist Book Fair in Montreal in 1988, can never forget the empowerment and healing she inspired in her exhortations for inclusion and respect regardless of age, color, class, gender or creed. Young Quebec Black Women can never forget her outreach and encouragement when, forced by circumstances, they painfully took an outsider stance at the Book Fair.

In the face of great personal adversity and suffering, Sister Audre's tranquility and wisdom nurtured and healed many of us in our individual and collective hurts and struggles. She blazed trails in her open, sincere and compelling analyses of psycho-social, physical, political, psychological and other issues. She responded with unparalleled openness to many of the varied problems that mark the human condition. Instead of making her vulnerable, this wrenching frankness proclaimed her wisdom. Our Sister's ethical stance and her tenacity will ever remain a beacon guiding many to find Refuge, Healing and Empowerment within themselves and to extend the same in Peace to others.

We are richer for her sharing. The world is a better place for her wisdom, and we are thankful for her.

WHEN WOMEN

(dedicated to Audre Lorde, 1990)

When women link hands
and let hearts embrace
a common goal
then we'll erase
blots we see
then we'll silence
clamor we hear
then we'll soothe
hurt we feel

When women
control the weaknesses
resist the weapons that calibrate woe
according to
class, colour, creed...
then WE
shirley small



HE WAHINE TOA O TE AO FOR AUDRE LORDE

Haere atu ra, e hine
Haere atu ra ki te ara whanui
a Hine-nui-te-po
Ki te po uriuri
Ki te po tangotango
Ki te po kerekere
Haere atu ra, e hine
Ki nga wahine atua
Ki nga tupuna whaea
Haere, haere, haere....

The karanga rings out
Across the mountains
Across the seas
To the land that holds
Forever
A woman of our times
A woman whose feet
Will not make footmaps
in the sands of my tupuna
Whose laughter
Will not be heard
on the marae of my iwi
Whose hands
Will not caress
the precious pounamu

Instead
Her Words
will continue to be raised
Against the injustices
of the world
Against the tyrannies
of people
gone mad with power
Against the oppression
of women

As long as her sisters
of colour
of race
of creed
Remember her

So,
Kaua e tangi

Don't weep
Except
For Ourselves
She doesn't need our tears

She needs our voices
to speak
to sing
to celebrate
her life

She needs our words
to fight
to educate
to persuade
to rally
people together
in solidarity
against the cruelties
of the world

Let us never forget
Her pain
Her joy
Her passion
For life and living

And
in remembering
Take the strength
of all she was
And make her dreams
Live.

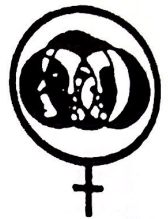
**Powhiri Rika-Heke, Aotearoa
(New Zealand)**





Women's Coalition of St. Croix

P.O. BOX 2734 • CHRISTIANSTED • ST. CROIX • U.S.V.I. 00822
(809) 773-9272 • FAX (809) 773-9062



A TRIBUTE TO AUDRE LORDE

Gamba Adisa. Warrior. She who makes her meaning known. Audre Lorde.

We, at the Women's Coalition, are deeply saddened at the passing of such a dear friend. Audre was one of the four feminist speakers at the Women's Writers' Symposium in March, 1981. Out of this symposium the Women's Coalition was formed. From that time on, Audre became the Coalition's mentor.

In "Sister Outsider," one of her books of essays, Audre wrote,

"Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences..."

Her courage, her strength and tenacity, inspire us. For many, she became a catalyst of change.

Her poems and essays transcended race and sex barriers. Because she wrote about truth, she wrote about injustice, she wrote about prejudice and hate. But she also wrote about motherhood, love and dreams.

For fourteen years, Audre lived and came to terms with the knowledge of the cancer inside of her. She shared that personal suffering through her writings in "The Cancer Journals." Yet, at the same time, she continued her crusade against racial oppression and sexist violence. Her words were her sword.

Seven years ago, Audre made St. Croix her home. She loved St. Croix. She loved the flowers, the sea, the breezes, the people. She wanted to be here when she died. She was. Several of us at the Women's Coalition visited her before she died. She spoke of what a wonderful life she had had, how blessed she had been. She died peacefully. We, at the Coalition, are proud to have known her.

Audre lives in all of us who knew her and in all who have read any of her work or heard her speak.

In "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger," she said,

"I am who I am, doing what I came to do, acting upon you like a drug or a chisel to remind you of your me-ness, as I discover you in myself."

Thank you, Audre Lorde / Gamba Adisa, for being you.

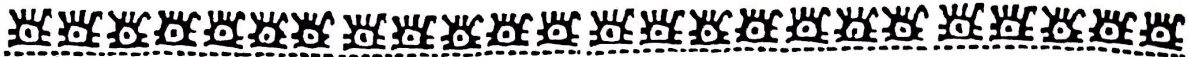
The Women's Coalition of St. Croix

Audre was an honest, selfless sister warrior, willing to expose her vulnerabilities so that we could become strong and name ourselves: Latinas claiming and defining our lives. A daughter of the Caribbean, she saw life through the prism of multiple cultural realities, giving us an example for our work and struggle. She grasped the pain and love of oppression, clearing paths for us to follow. She was a liberating spirit whose life and work touched us. Refusing to be silenced, Audre knew we were not supposed to survive and define our destinies. She gave us the greatest gift: how to find our own vocabulary and transform our own realities. *Gracias, hermana, compañera maestra.*

Celia Alvarez
Women's Studies,
Arizona State University West

Liza Fiol-Matta
English
LaGuardia Community College





IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION and IN LOVING MEMORY

We have the power those who came before us have given to us,
to move beyond the place where they were standing.

Audre Lorde, in "Learning from the 60's",
Sister Outsider

Because Audre Lorde lived, loved, worked and wrote, many of us came to Boston to celebrate her in October 1990. Because celebrating her life, love, work, and writings was not enough, some of us met again in December 1990 and, since then, have been struggling to build a movement. We named ourselves Revolutionary Sisters of Color (RSOC). Audre Lorde helped us make our first baby steps.

"We are indigenous women of Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Islands, the Americas, and the Caribbean. We are the descendants of the indigenees of these regions. We are the World's Majority."

from the RSOC brochure

"We came to agreement on the following points of unity: To organize against capitalism, imperialism, colonization, racism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Arab oppression, anti-Jewish oppression, class oppression, ableism, ageism, Eurocentrism, militarism, imperialist intervention, and religious persecution." from The RSOC *Statement of Unity*

We need to join our differences and articulate our particular strengths in the service of our mutual survivals, and against the desperate backlash which attempts to keep [us] from altering the very bases of current world power and privilege. Audre Lorde

in "Apartheid USA" *A Burst of Light*

We exist and continue to struggle not only because of Audre's loving inspiration and encouraging words, but also because of her generous donations of hard cash which helped bring women to meetings and our brochure into print.

The future of our earth may depend upon the ability of all women to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference. Audre Lorde

in "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference"
Sister Outsider

We have Audre Lorde's words and exemplary life to help us make a way/claim a space in which we are able to live and thrive. We invite women of color of common purpose to join us in building our movement.

We have chosen each other
and the edge of each others battles
the war is the same
if we lose
someday women's blood will congeal
upon a dead planet
if we win
there is no telling

Audre Lorde

Revolutionary Sisters of Color

P.O. Box 191021, Roxbury, MA 02119-1021

I had never met someone with a generosity of spirit and love that so immediately reached out to enfold me as when I had the special honor of meeting Audre last spring. Like old familiars, we talked and rejoiced and commiserated and held hands for an hour despite her debilitating illness. What a fountain of wisdom and humanity! I am blessed by having been touched by Audre's writing and her person.

Marlon T. Riggs

To Audre:

You reached out to us across your anger over and over again. You spoke to our students across all their differences, renaming the voice of authority. The possibilities you've left us for crossing over, renaming ourselves, and loving, dear Audre, are limitless.

Ros Petchesky, Ph. D. and Carolyn Somerville, Ph. D., Women's Studies, Hunter College

After I attended the poetry workshop facilitated by Audre in Trinidad in 1989, I learned that poetry is a weapon that can be used to bring about change. My work was never the same again. It was like a window had been opened inside me.

Paula Thomas, Trinidad, West Indies

Audre, I met you on the page many times, but once we met face to face. As you shook my hand, your eyes raked me, searched my face, as if to ask, *'And what are you doing with your life?'* Your unspoken question was not framed in curiosity only. I have never felt so accountable. Since then, I have spent my life answering your question; feeling your close, active spirit, unflinching eyes, and strong, warm hand.

**Peggy McIntosh, Ph. D., Associate Director,
Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA 02181 (617) 283-2522**

...Audre Lorde became a controversial figure during her last years. Her stance on women's oppression and Third World women's particular triple jeopardy grated the narrowness of black nationalists and male chauvinists alike. The many changes that this world must go through to achieve a true understanding of humanity will be reached through the wisdom and strength of poets and activists like Audre Lorde. She has given us inspiration and insight that will live into the next millennium. Her poetry is a treasure that we will return to for renewal and vision. We are yet to realize the depth of her words and the breadth of her spirit.

**Melba Joyce Boyd, Ph.D.
Director, African-American Studies, University of Michigan - Flint**

To be in the presence of Audre Lorde was to experience an unparalleled generosity of spirit. Sister Audre's life, as lived, represents the full embodiment of courage. We will miss her. And we will remember her when we scrutinize ourselves in the mirror. We will evoke her spirit as we dare to explore our feelings, dreams and visions as the "skeleton architecture of our lives." Sister Audre taught us that "what is most important...must be spoken;" she taught us that our silence will not protect us. Whenever we are tempted to back away from this challenge to live fully, her voice will be there, singing us forward. This is her gift to us, and we must walk with this love and the responsibility it implies.

**Joanne M. Braxton, Ph. D.
Department of English, The College of William & Mary**



WOMEN'S CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

3023 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA. 94705
(510) 548-9272

So many of us at the Women's Cancer Resource Center found in Audre a role model and inspiration for our own personal struggles for survival. She was the first to write about letting the world see our single breasted selves, that the world would know of this epidemic and our stricken sisters not feel so alone. Her cancer journals brought so many women out of the isolation and shame that is so common with illness in our society. Audre's accounting of her journey transcended the personal through identifiable experiences that point out the political nature of this epidemic. Audre leaves a legacy of strength, hope and connection. We grieve her loss and honor all the women who continue to share in the "continuum of women's work of reclaiming this earth and our power."

Audre's writing has touched so many for so long. It was a particular joy to hear the voice of a woman connecting so many issues of struggle—always working, challenging her self as well as her readings to face conflicts together rather than as adversaries. To have had the opportunity to have met her, to hear the authenticity in her voice, and to see the strength of her presence is a memory to cherish. We will continue the struggles, knowing in our hearts that she is always with us.

Karen Schneiderman
Disabled Persons Liberation Front

KALEIDOSCOPE

For your womanly love I will rise
Like the eternal mother of light
and wane not
In the hunger of your passion

For your feminine touch I will illuminate
In the colors that you dream of most
Red, gold, orange, purple, and blue
All I ever want
All I ever need is you

And if the rain should smear

Our dreams to watercolors
Please fear not
For the strong pulse of the rainbow
Shall prevail us through the cascade

Leading to fingerpaints
Of a proud, shameless and unconditional hue
All I ever want
All I ever need is you

Sonya M. Hemphill



The Board, Staff and Volunteers of
Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation
join with people around the world in paying tribute to

Audre Lorde

and expressing our love and admiration for her as a black, lesbian, poet, warrior.

Audre was a friend, colleague and mentor to us. The values that she stood for and lived, leave us with abiding hope that we too, can move forward as whole beings with all our identities. Hers was and is a journey towards wholeness.

We thank her for her support to Astraea since its inception in 1977. In 1991 Astraea established the first Lesbian Writers Fund in the U.S.. Audre served as a judge for the emerging writers grants. To our astonishment, but not surprise, she was determined to finish this process even though she was very ill. She made the final poetry selections with Jewelle Gomez from her hospital bed.

In that same year the Astraea Board of Directors honored her with the first Sappho Award of Distinction.

Audre, thank-you for your words, your truth, your courage.

Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation . 666 B'way . Suite 520 . New York . NY . 10009 . 212.529.8021

*In honor of Audre Lorde
and the struggles for Black, lesbian, women's, all
liberation*



Jews for Racial and Economic Justice
200 West 72nd Street #49 New York, NY 10023
tel 212 721-3585 fax 212 721-3798

In remembrance of her
work and the support
she always gave us.

Asian Lesbians of the East Coast
PO Box 850
New York, NY 10002



We are a social, political, supportive group.
General monthly meetings open to all
Asian Pacific lesbians.
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CONDITIONS, a feminist magazine of writing by women with an emphasis on writing by lesbians, from 1976 to 1990, celebrated the work of Audre Lorde in Issues Four (1979), Five (The Black Women's Issues, guest-edited by Barbara Smith and Lorraine Bethel, 1979), Fourteen (International Focus 11, 1987), and Sixteen (A Retrospective, 1989).

Members of the Editorial Collective join with the community to mourn the loss of her transforming voice and presence in the world.

Dorothy Allison (1981-'85)
Mi Ok Bruining (1990-'92)
Elly Bulkin (Founding editor, 1976-'84)
Cheryl Clarke (1981-'90)
Jan Clausen (Founding editor, 1976-'82)
Jewelle Gomez (1981-'83)
Melinda Goodman (1987-'90)
Irena Klepfisz (Founding editor, 1976-'80)
Dorothy Randall Gray (1985-'89)
Randye Lordon (1985-'87)
Paula Martinac (1988-'90)
Carroll Oliver (1981-'83, died during
the summer of 1992)
Nancy Clarke Otter (1982-'85)
Pam A. Parker (1986-'89)
Annette Pelâez (1985-'87)
Mirtha N. Quintanales (1981-'83)
Mariana Romo-Carmona (1988-'92)
Sabrina (1985-'88)
Debbi Schaubman (1984-'86)
Rima Shore (Founding editor, 1976-'82)
P. Mikie Sugino (1989-'90)
Adrienne Waddy (1983-'84)



*We will remember your courage
and continue to struggle with difference
in all our communities.*

APICHA
The Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS

A community of people living with HIV/AIDS, friends, families, lovers, volunteers, supporters, board and staff members,
committed to providing HIV/AIDS services for A&PIs in New York.

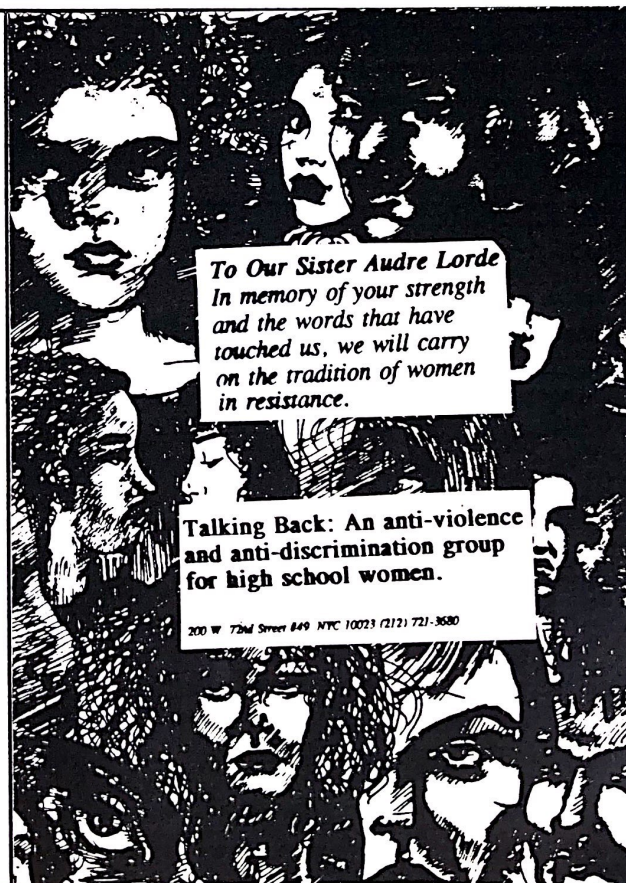
For more information, please contact
41 John Street, 3rd Floor * New York, NY * 10038-3701 * Tel: 212.349.3293

SHE IS OUR SISTER



*Black Women's Collective (Toronto)
knows that death cannot silence
Audre Lorde. She is present with us
when we unite as Black women, as
lesbians of colour, and celebrate the
power of our shared existence.*

*She will always be our Black
lesbian warrior poet mother still
making trouble.*





Sister Insider,

Thank you for your

words

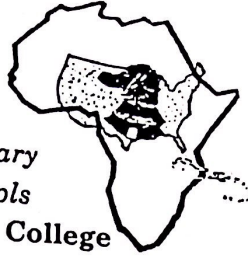
presence

fire.....

Safiya Bandele & Staff



*Africana
Resource
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Elementary
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Medgar Evers College

of
The City University of New York
1650 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225

In honor of *Audre Lorde*

Thanks for the poetic legacy left for our children.

**Dr. Charlotte Y. Phoenix
Dr. Florence M. Tager
Co-Directors
ARCES at MEC**

**Contact:
Ms. Gilda B. Pew
(718) 270-5197**

In celebration of the many lessons of courage and language in the legacy of Audre Lorde, with enduring faith that justice and community are the products of our struggle with difference and our speaking when we are afraid.

The brothers of

Other Countries: Black Gay Men Writing
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(212) 505-0506

Gay Men of African Descent
150 West 26th Street: Ste. 503
New York, NY 10001-6813
(212) 741-3462



COLORLife!

THE LESBIAN, GAY, TWOSPirit, & BISEXUAL, PEOPLE OF COLOR MAGAZINE

We at **COLORLife!** Join Our Entire Community
in Commemorating the Spirit, Commitment, Struggle and Triumph
of **AUDRE LORDE**.

She was there behind the collective consciousness
of an entire movement for twenty-five years,
and was a guiding force in our generation.
Black, Lesbian, Poet, Warrior, Mother, Teacher, Comrade-in-Arms, Cancer Survivor . .

Audre described herself in all these ways . . .

But we all know she was much more.

Audre Lorde lives on . . .

She lives on in each of us!



MEN OF ALL COLORS TOGETHER, NEW YORK
BOX 1518, ANSONIA STATION,
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10023

As gay men in search of leadership on our key questions of how to work on the issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism and anti-Semitism within a multicultural context, we found our vision, our voice, our direction mainly through the writings and cooperative support of Womyn Of Color, especially sister Audre Lorde.

Since our founding in 1980, we have been personally touched and challenged by sharing the insights of Audre Lorde across a broad range of issues . . . anti-oppression, interraciality, anti-apartheid, multiculturalism . . . in short, a commitment to the struggles for true liberation. Audre gave exceptional meaning to the concept that "None of us are free unless all of us are free." Her writings and her time with us were essential to our acquiring the courage to continue our work, and her insights and support embodied a sense of multiculturalism even before we had that term to identify our goals.

Thank you, Sister Audre. You were a phenomenal individual. You served as an incredible example of someone who persevered to give voice to an understanding that, by speaking the truth with integrity, we can enjoy love of ourselves and each other, unsurpassed. Your gifts were -- are -- numerous, and your words and support gave us the inspiration to continue, to strive even harder, to realize and achieve our goals. We will continue your work with a similar level of vigor, compassion and commitment . . . and we will gain greater insights for our truths by the words and vision you left for us to cherish . . .



Audre Lordé

in memorial

Your words and spirit touched us all.....

in every home..... at every table.

Our many thanks,



The Human Rights Campaign Fund
Tim McFeeley, Executive Director
1012 14th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20005
(202) 628-4160





*With you in spirit
celebrating the life, love and legacy of
Audre Lorde,
sister, friend, mentor, and guide*

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**"...poetry is not a luxury."
and neither are poets...**

**In Memory of
Audre Lorde**

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF OF



THE LESBIAN AND GAY
COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER

HONOR THE MEMORY OF

AUDRE LORDE

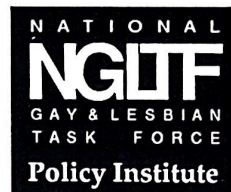
1934-1992

POET LAUREATE, WRITER,
MOTHER, TEACHER, WARRIOR,
AFRICAN ANCESTRAL LESBIAN FEMINIST,
ANTI-CANCER ACTIVIST, LEADER,
MENTOR, VISIONARY



*"Those who have died have never, never left...
they are in the rustling trees,
they are in the groaning woods,
they are in the crying grass,
they are in the moaning rocks...
The dead have a pact with the living."*

Diop/Barnwell



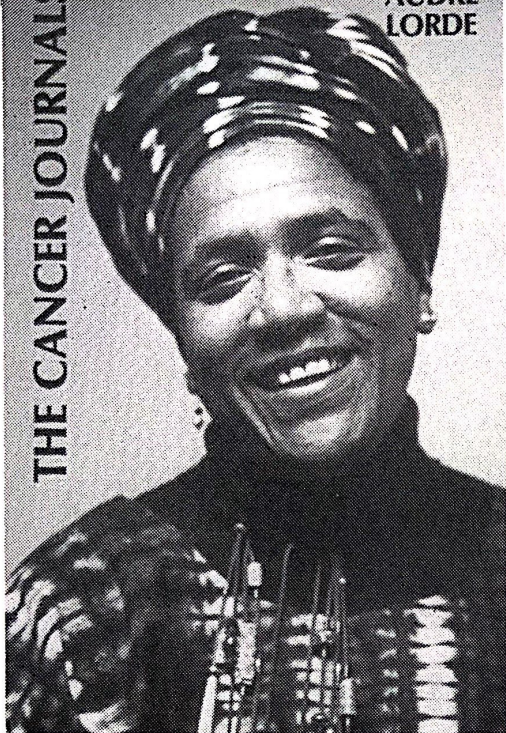
Audre Lorde stood in the blinding glare of all her oppressors and nonetheless learned to love herself. Those of us who strive to empower others need to learn, as did Audre, that self-love is the river from which real love and power flow.

—Evelyn C. White
editor of *The Black Women's Health Book*
Seal Press



THE CANCER JOURNALS

AUDRE
LORDE



"My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. But for every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging our differences."

The women of Aunt Lute Books celebrate Audre Lorde's life and mourn her passing. Jayna Brown, Jamie Lee Evans, Fabienne McPhail Grant, Lisa Kahaleole Chang Hall, Vita Iskandar, Melissa Levin, Chris Lymbertos, Joan Pinkvoss, Renée Stephens



Women's Press (Canada) joins with you in honouring the life and work of Audre Lorde and in mourning her passing. As in her lifetime, Audre Lorde's words continue to fill us with hope and inspiration, her ideas still beckon us toward a truly liberating feminism.



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The aim of each thing which we do is to make our lives and the lives of our children richer and more possible. Within the celebration of the erotic in all our endeavors, my work becomes a conscious decision--a longed-for bed which I enter gratefully and from which I rise up empowered.

When I speak of the erotic I speak of it as an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives.

--from "Uses of the Erotic" in *Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press, 1984.
First delivered as a paper at the Fourth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Mount Holyoke College, August 25, 1978.

AUDRE LORDE'S WORDS HAVE PROFOUNDLY TOUCHED THE LIVES OF WOMEN THE WORLD OVER. SO MANY OF US WHO STRUGGLE AGAINST AN OPPRESSIVE SOCIETY, WHO RAISE CHILDREN, WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN CHANGED BY CANCER, WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE NORM, WHO LOVE LIFE, HAVE FOUND AND WILL CONTINUE TO FIND COMFORT, STRENGTH AND JOY IN HER WORDS AND HER LIFE. THE CROSSING PRESS IS PROUD TO HAVE PUBLISHED THE WORK OF AUDRE LORDE.



*“Poetry is the way we
help give a name to the
nameless so it can be
thought.”*

**Feminist bookstores
worldwide
celebrate Audre Lorde’s
life,
work,
and
words**

Coordinated by the Feminist Bookstore Network



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Feminist/Lesbian Book Publisher

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original publisher of
The Cancer Journals

We celebrate and honor Audre Lorde's life,
and her powerful words which live on in our hearts.
In her name, in the name of women everywhere,
we reaffirm our commitment to continue the work she began,
the work she encouraged us to do.

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the strength of my vision and purpose,
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who
encouraged us early
helped us to see
inspired us with hope.
left us with courage

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"I Am Your Sister" Exhibit from The Lesbian Herstory Archives based on materials donated to
the collection by Audre Lorde.

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Pamela Dinkins, Kathy Markland

STAGE MANAGEMENT:

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LEARN ABOUT LORDE

A LITANY FOR SURVIVAL: THE LIFE AND WORK OF AUDRE LORDE

A Film by Ada Gay Griffin and Michelle Parkerson

"...it is better to speak, remembering we were never meant to survive."
Audre Lorde, *Litany for Survival*

The Audre Lorde Film Project began in 1986 as a way to augment and extend the contributions of a gifted and courageous warrior woman whose remarkable life was relentlessly threatened by cancer. Last September, we received word that we may finally receive the funds necessary to complete an unprecedented documentary of this exceptional writer and cultural theorist. Over the many years of filming and recording the marvelous works and views of Audre Lorde, we have been blessed with her loving involvement, encouragement and leadership. The exceptional kindness and support of her many friends and loved ones, especially that of Dr. Gloria I. Joseph, are deeply appreciated.

Love always,
Ada, Michelle & The Third World Newsreel Crew

For more information and material contributions, please contact Third World Newsreel at 335 West 38 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277

AUDRE LORDE: 1991-93 NEW YORK STATE POET: THE WOMAN AND HER WORKS

Thursdays, 6:00-8:50 PM

3 credits

Professors: Dr. Zala Chandler & Dr. Andrée McLaughlin

HUM 269-050: This course examines the personal and political persona and selected literary works of Audre Lorde, contemporary poet, essayist, novelist, teacher, and the first African American woman to be named New York State Poet. Emphasis is placed on how the literary voice of Lorde, author of fifteen works of poetry and prose, has influenced the Black women's consciousness movement in the USA and internationally, and how her own life experiences and political vision inform her writings. The course also screens relevant film, video, and audio profiles. (Prerequisite: ENGL 100)

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Poetry:

The First Cities (1968)
Cables To Rage (1970)
From A Land Where Other People Live (1973)
New York Headshop and Museum (1974, 1977, 1981)
Coal (1976)
Between Ourselves (1976)
The Black Unicorn (1978)
Chosen Poems - Old and New (1982)
Our Dead Behind Us (1986)
Undersong: Chosen Poems - Old and New - Revised (1992)
The Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance
(forthcoming 1993)

Prose:

The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power (1978)
The Cancer Journals (1980, 1983)
ZAMI: A New Spelling of My Name (1982)
Sister Outsider (1984)
A Burst of Light (1988)

Pamphlets (Kitchen Table Women of Color Press Freedom Organizing Series):

#2 *Apartheid U.S.A.* (1986)
#3 *I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities* (1986)
#4 *Need: A Chorale for Black Woman Voices* (1990)



OBITUARY

Audre Lorde

(Gamba Adisa)

February 18, 1934-November 17, 1992

Poet, novelist, essayist, educator and activist, Audre Lorde died at her home on St. Croix, US Virgin Islands on November 17, 1992, after a valiant 14 year struggle with cancer.

Often introducing herself as "Black, Feminist, Poet, Mother, Warrior Woman," in a recent African naming ceremony on St. Croix, Audre Lorde was given the African name Gamba Adisa—Warrior: She who Makes her Meaning Known. A writer of enormous power and stature, Audre Lorde was an influential and inspiring leader. From 1968, when her first book of poetry, *The First Cities*, was published to her forthcoming *The Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance*, she published ten volumes of poetry, including: *Cables To Rage*, *From a Land Where Other People Live*, *New York Head Shop and Museum*, *Coal*, *Between Ourselves*, *The Black Unicorn*, *Chosen Poems-Old And New*, *Our Dead Behind Us*, and most recently *Undersong: Chosen Poems-Old and New-Revised* (W.W.Norton). Her novel, which she called a biomythography, *Zami; A New Spelling Of My Name*, and her generative essays on cancer, race, love and hate, war and peace, art and passion (*The Cancer Journals*, *Burst of Light*, and *Sister Outsider*) have been widely reprinted and translated—most notably: "Poetry Is Not a Luxury," "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic As Power," "Apartheid USA," "A Litany for Survival," "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," and "I am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities."

Her mother Linda Belmar was from Carriacou, Grenada, and her father Frederick Byron Lorde from Barbados. A graduate of Hunter College and Columbia University School of Library Science, Audre Lorde was Professor of English and held the Thomas Hunter Chair at Hunter College; she also lectured widely throughout the United States, Europe, Africa, Australia and New Zealand and taught frequently in Berlin (where she received alternative cancer therapies for over eight years). She served on many literary and editorial boards, and was active in many political organizations. She was a founding member of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press; and SISA—Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa, an organization that sends financial support to women's self-help groups in South Africa and maintains ongoing connections between the women of South Africa and the members of SISA in the US and Europe.

She was the recipient of many honors and awards, including an Honorary Doctorate of Literature, University of Osnabrück, Germany (1992); Honorary Doctorate of Literature, Hunter College (1991); Honorary Doctorate of Letters, Oberlin College (1990); Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, Haverford College (1989); a worldwide celebration and tribute *I am Your Sister Conference: Forging Global Connections Across Difference* (October 1990); the Manhattan Borough President's Award for Excellence in the Arts (1988); and most recently the Walt Whitman Citation of Merit, naming her New York State Poet for 1991-1993.

Reprinted from The St. Croix Avis



Audre Lorde is a voice of eloquent courage and unflinching honesty. She grew up speaking with the voice of a poet—passionate, always, about telling the truth and sharing, her triumphs and her pain with her loved ones, her community and the world.

She has never outgrown the passion as she has sung her songs of joy and anger, of desire and loss. She writes about love and suffering in vividly honest and penetrating language but with artful dramatic dexterity.

There is no cant, no idle conjuring in Audre Lorde's work. She allows herself to be known fully. Her imagination is charged by a sharp sense of racial injustice and cruelty, of sexual prejudice. She cries out against it as the voice of indignant humanity.

She is candid, even bold about the hard truth as she has witnessed and lived it. But she has not missed the sweetness either. She sings, too, of the love and sisterhood among women and of the tenderness that accompanies the tension between parents and children and mothers and daughters.

Audre Lorde is the voice of the eloquent outsider who speaks in a language that can reach and touch people everywhere—outside and in.

It has been said of Audre Lorde that she is like the black unicorn of which she writes: a magical and mysterious bearer of fantasy draped in truth and beauty.

Audre Lorde is a poet of courage and pride, of hard-edged anger, and of indomitable hope, for light and change. We honor her today with the pride of knowing that she is our sister and our true neighbor.

Now therefore I, Mario M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby award this Walt Whitman Citation of Merit for Poets to Audre Lorde and designate her State Poet for the State of New York for the years 1991-1993.

Governor Mario Cuomo
November 12, 1991

The Congressional Black Caucus salutes the life and legacy of 1991-1993 New York State Poet Audre Lorde, known also as Gamba Adisa. A literary giant, she has painted graphic pictures through words. She has told the story of the oppressed and has fought the battle for human rights with dignity, integrity and unyielding commitment. Her work lives on and beckons us to embrace the global struggle for justice.

Congressional Black Caucus, Congress of the United States
Congressman Kweisi Mfume, Chairman
January 11, 1993



ADDENDUM TO AUDRE LORDE MEMORIAL PROGRAM JOURNAL
JANUARY 18, 1993

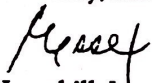
Dear Audre:

Your powerful, sky-soaring, heart-piercing, soul-stirring words will forever resonate with commitment, integrity, and responsibility. Thank you for your poetry and essays, woven as they were of courage and precision, love and bravery. You gave us living, fire-breathing words capable of healing, tearing down, building up, braving the long nights and languishing days. You gave us words we could use wisely. Words we could depend on. You gave us, simply, your life as a lesson to guide our own lives through this maze of destitution and despair that some would call a country, a nation, a home. You gave us words to counteract the myths that would seduce us to our deaths. You gave us words to bridge our differences and point us to collective power instead of a singular, selfish glory. You gave us words to teach us how to define ourselves and love the persons we defined. Words cast like life ropes, like spells, like mirrors for us all to face and name what we see reflected back.

You once said to me, "Essex, no one comes from their consciousness fully developed." In that statement you summed up, for me, the daily task of being accountable to ourselves and to one another, truthful and honest, and of course open to change. Committed to change. Determined, in our willful ways to make change a reality, to replace the cages and the rooms of disempowerment where we might choose to dwell without mirrors, without reflection, without courage. You said, "Look within," you said, "Don't be afraid," you said, "I support you," you said, "I love you," you said, "Man," you said, "Brother." You welcomed your brothers to come into the circle you were creating. You never barred us from participating in envisioning a new world. You only asked that we be brave, we be strong, we be committed to *working* for a joint liberation for the oppressed, a joint liberation for us all. You reminded us that new worlds do not come delivered on silver platters. New worlds, new ways of living do require getting the hands dirty. New worlds require more than lip-service and appearances.

I will continue to return to your words when I am not sure of my own way, when I do not trust my hand, when I cannot hear my voice within. I will forever know, through your work, especially your poetry, Audre, that there is a way to make a meaningful difference. There is a way to build a bridge, forge a bond, help one another. God bless your soul for showing us this and many, many other things.

Love,



Essex Hemphill, January 11, 1993

Dear Audre:

You said surviving is a revolutionary act. You were a fierce cancer survivor, defying for years the death sentence of metastasis to the liver. And the system in which we live is sicker than the worst sickness, for capitalism created cancer, just as it created AIDS and imperialist war.

You stood up openly against white supremacist patriarchal capitalism as a "Black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, mother of two, including one boy..." So while capitalism perpetuates cynicism, alienation and genocide, directing its entire energy on profit and not people, you represented, fully and proudly, matriarchal collectivity and matisma, connecting with the natural bonding of all women and our struggles.

Audre, you were the expert on "difference" and taught us to find power in our very differences, choosing the radical, oppositional consciousness as women, people of color, lesbians/gays, working class, and the under/unemployed.

You were a warrior without compromise. Poet Laureate of New York State; your writings read and appreciated by millions; your activism acknowledged from the US to South Africa; from Berlin to the Caribbean. You were a friend to *Radical Women*, a socialist feminist organization of women of color, white and Jewish women, which agrees with you that the US has taken the wrong side of every liberation struggle around the world. And we also share your vision of building a revolutionary movement that puts victory within our grasp.

We have much work to do, Audre, but from the smallest skirmish to the final conflict, you will inspire our hearts and minds, your name emblazoned on the banner for freedom flying in the wind.

Nellie Wong, Merle Woo, and Emily Woo Yamasaki for *Radical Women*



JANUARY 18, 1993

I welcome the opportunity to speak on this occasion in celebration of a life lived fully, courageously, deeply, even if always on the edge! It is difficult to capture the essence of the extraordinary gift of Audre Lorde to humankind. However, I want to share with you, in particular, Sister Audre's legacy to women, particularly women of African descent. I want to do this from the perspective of one who has been, for the past six years, President of Spelman College, the oldest college for Black women in the US. In many ways, I have also been, in this capacity, a mother since I consider the students at Spelman my surrogate daughters which is a mighty responsibility in these challenging times. And so, I pondered those gifts my sister left for these young Black women, and for generations yet unborn. If I could sum up in one sentence the genius of Sister Audre, it would be that she was a master teacher with clarity of vision and a mighty voice!!

First, and perhaps most important, Audre showed them, my Spelman daughters, and us, how to love ourselves as Black women. She taught us that this awesome task of self-love is fundamentally a political act in a culture which despises, devalues, marginalizes, and attempts to erase us. She also provided us a road map to negotiate the treacherous terrain of North America, where racism, sexism, violence, and homophobia abound. And finally, she demonstrated that a life devoted to revolutionary change and growth is a life worth living and ultimately dying for.

Our sister warrior is no longer here in the flesh. All of us gathered here will carry parts of her with us as we continue her struggle to make this a more humane world.

I especially want to acknowledge a very special gift of Audre's to Spelman College. We will be the repository of her papers which will be housed in the new Cosby Academic Center in a state-of-the-art archives which is attached to the Women's Center. It is appropriate that the papers of Audre Lorde, one of the most important Black feminist writers/thinkers of our time, find their home at Spelman. May your spirit, Audre, also infuse those hallowed grounds.

Johnnetta B. Cole, Ph.D.
President, Spelman College

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The Gay Men's Health Crisis: an advocacy and education organization that provides direct services to
over 4,800 people with AIDS, educates the public about HIV
and advocates for fair and effective AIDS policies at city, state, and federal levels.

BOOKS BY AUDRE LORDE STILL IN PRINT:

*The Black Unicorn; ZAMI: A New Spelling of My Name; A Burst of Light; Sister Outsider;
The Cancer Journals; Our Dead Behind Us; Undersong: Chosen Poems - Old and New - Revised*



2-

doubt, and fear: "I've given myself plenty of practice in doing whatever I need to do, scared or not, so scare tactics are just not going to work . . . but some of my nightmares were pure hell. . . ."

Audre Lorde's lesson to lesbians, as we struggle for health in this carcinogenic and woman-hating world, is to bring the totality of our environment, in its most positive, progressive, and radical sense, to bear upon that struggle for health. Lorde shouted down the silence on women's health and so many other issues, by becoming educated, by preferring knowing to not knowing, by using her immense energies, will, and knowledge to mediate her disease, and by connecting with the energies of women who loved her and whose lives have been possible because of her work. She traveled, organized, connected with women of color, lesbians, feminist from New York to New Zealand. She was in the world and being in the world was her instrument of power, her great bargaining chip, her means of negotiating her daily living with cancer. Her disease was not the ~~final~~ enemy, on^{ly} a symptom of inimical forces. Struggling against the dominance of those forces kept the cancer from consuming her psychic and physical life.

Audre Lorde worked hard, like most black women and most lesbians and most feminists. Today's Lesbian Health Fair is a celebration and an affirmation of the hard work and ~~countless~~ of Audre Lorde and countless other women who have struggled with chronic and terminal illnesses. Never taking anything for granted nor thinking any course of action ~~was~~ neutral or apolitical, she remained engaged:

I wish to live whatever life I have as fully
and as sweetly as possible, rather than refocus
that life solely upon extending it for some unspecified
time. I consider this a political decision as well as a
life-saving one, and it is a decision that I ^{was} fortunate to
be able to make.

Books:

Cancer Journals. Aunt Lute Foundation.

A Burst of Light. Firebrand Books.