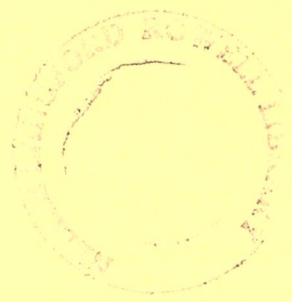


# ABENG

A quarterly newsletter of Sister Vision Press  
No. 1 Feb/March 1990



## We Celebrate and Pay Tribute to Black History Month and International Women's Day

## About Us

Sister Vision Press has been publishing and distributing works by Black women and women of colour since 1985. We are the first press for Women of Colour to be established in Canada. When we use the term women of colour, we are referring collectively to Asian women, Black women, Native women and women of mixed racial heritage.

Our goal is to ensure that the work of women of colour is published and accessible to the public. This has not always been easy but we continue to survive and grow as a small independent non-profit organization. In addition to publishing books we work with women who have something to say, who want to be writers, to put their work in print but are intimidated by the blank page.

We feel that it is important that we as Women of Colour regardless of class, age, sexuality, disability, work together in a spirit of sisterhood and respect to struggle against the prejudices and power imbalances which exist in this society.

We welcome participation from women who want to learn new skills in the running of a press, who want to discuss their writing or work on the next newsletter. If you are interested in becoming involved in any of Sister Vision's activities, please call (416) 533-2184 or write to us at: P.O. Box 217, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2.

## About the Newsletter

Sister Vision has decided to create a newsletter in order to keep the community informed about our activities, books and writers; as well we will review books by other presses that we feel would make relevant reading.

We hope you enjoy the first edition of our quarterly newsletter.

This newsletter is sent to you free of charge, although for upcoming issues we are requesting a contribution for postage and production cost. We suggest a \$15.00 contribution for individuals \$20.00 for groups and organizations yearly. If you can stock copies or can suggest useful outlets frequented by women of colour please let us know, as we want to distribute the newsletter as widely as possible.

# ABENG

## IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of the newsletter carries a bit of everything. We have focused much on us, who we are, what we publish, our vision, and a sample description of all our published books, works by our writers, Sister Vision's fundraiser, upcoming events, book reviews and community activities we have participated in. In future issues we will present the works of new writers as well as Sister Vision's established writers, updates from women's organizations in 'Third World countries' and interviews.

### SISTER VISION'S CALENDAR

**FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH** - a variety of events are going on throughout the month, for more information call the Ontario Black History Society at (416) 867-9420.

Feb. 19-21 Caribbean Students Association at York University - Sister Vision Press will have a book table.

Feb. 19-24 **BLACK BOOKS** - a book fair with writers - Sister Vision Press will be participating, for more information call A SPACE 183 Bathurst St. Toronto 416 364-3227

**March 3rd, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**  
Fight the Attacks: No Turning Back  
Sister Vision press will have a book table at the Fair

**April 21, NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL**, this year's theme "Book an Adventure". Sister Vision will be hosting an all day event in Elora with our writers.

**April 28 - 4th ANNUAL SMALL PRESS BOOK FAIR**  
St. Paul's Centre at Trinity from 10 to 5 p.m.  
Look out for Sister Vision's book table.



### SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK BENEFIT

The Sweet Honey in the Rock concert was definitely the highlight of 1989's fundraising activities for Sister Vision Press. Sweet Honey, a gospel group of six Black women acapella singers performed a memorable concert for the press at Convocation Hall last October. The show was a sweet success, in both artistic and financial terms. This benefit concert helped Sister Vision Press with the much needed funds required to continue publishing exciting and important works by women of colour.

Sweet Honey in the Rock began performing in Washington, D.C. in 1973, and since then they have made a place for themselves in the music world. Each singer is an electrifying soloist who, when joined in chorus produces a breathtaking blend of instrument, sounds, changing rhythms, switching leads and dancing through octaves - making incredible music!

At the well attended Toronto benefit, once again Sweet Honey in the Rock spun their magic on the audience. The group managed to move the audience literally out of their seats, sharing their powerful lyrics, which deal with a variety of issues of a socially conscious nature and from women's experience, knowledge and emotion. They sang about AIDS, about poverty and racism. They performed both old and new songs, intertwined with poignant stories, creating an atmosphere of inspiration and enlightenment; giving a feeling of strength and unity to a movement. Both Sweet Honey and their lively audience left Convocation Hall that night with a special feeling, one that will stay with us all as we continue to struggle in our daily lives.

Grand total raised was \$8,100.  
*Daria Essop*

## BOOK REVIEW

### BLAZE A FIRE Significant Contributions of Caribbean Women By Nesha Z. Haniff

Blaze a Fire, which gives voice to 28 distinctive women, is both a welcome contribution, to the limited literature on women's roles in Caribbean society and a delightful addition to the oral history of the region. Distilled from lengthy interviews, each chapter weaves together personal memories and insights about daily life, using women's resonant Caribbean voices to expose the reader to new vistas of a familiar landscape.

Social scientists have paid considerable attention to the role women have played as breadwinners in single-parent families. However, the vital contributions that women have made to the evolution of Caribbean societies have been overlooked in formal histories of the region. This collection of profiles was intended to fill that gap. It was meant to raise the level of awareness among Caribbean secondary school students about the range of past accomplishments and about the potential for future leadership and action.

Although well suited to that purpose, *Blaze A Fire* will also appeal to a wider audience. Nesha Haniff's accessible prose and her insightful commentary make it invaluable for those interested in Caribbean history, women's studies, and development issues. Her description of traditional credit systems - called "susu" in Trinidad, "throwing box" in Guyana, and "throwing partners" in Jamaica - are informative, as is the short glossary of West Indian Creole terms and place names. At the heart of each woman's story can be found a common theme of strong moral conviction, independence, and natural leadership ability that cuts across division of class, colour, and ideology. Whether planter or cane cutter, conservative politician or labour union leader, each speaker shares attributes that the reader soon realizes are essential building blocks for the wider society of which they are a part.

The self-confidence these women display is justified by the conduct of their lives. Good mothers, strong political leaders, impressive judges, leaders of grassroots organizations, and proud street vendors, they provide excellent role models for young people, and remind the rest of us how much more could be accomplished than we may have dared to imagine.

Listen, for instance, to the words of "Miss Tiny" Antoine, a Jamaican higgler, as she tells us:

Every Heroes' Day, I should get a medal to go through all these troubles and nobody don't give me a ting. Is me an me alone. Every Heroes' Day I should get a medal, for I struggle hard with my life, and for my children I is a hero.

And hear how the self-respect engendered by such everyday heroism can find its voice being raised to confront social evils. Prime Minister Mary Eugenia Charles, of Dominica, for instance, describes her reaction on encountering racial discrimination in the United States over 40 years ago, when she was refused entrance to a restaurant and took the offending maitre d' to court. She explained to the judge in the preliminary hearing:

This man must be punished. Make him understand that he can't do this. He must lose his job. I want this man to be punished. He has broken your law, you say your country believes in law and order. He is a criminal. He must be punished. I am not going to have it. I come from a country where people are black and people are respected for being black and I am not going to come to this two-by-four country and have anyone treat me this way.

Finally, listen to Didi Ramroop, an illiterate Trinidadian, who provides the title for the book. During stalled labour negotiations, Ramroop feared that her fellow canecutters were going to give up. Determined to speak out, she seized the stage at a meeting and delivered a fiery speech:

Like you put a blaze of fire in me and it blaze, it burnin me to know that we trying to get betterment and these man breaking and they rebelling....We suffer so long here, and we must sacrifice, and if we have to eat dirt we must eat it....and if we have to eat grass, we eat it.

With this, she reached down, pulled up a clump of grass, and ate it. Her dramatic action stiffened the cane cutters' resolve to stick together, and they eventually succeeded in winning higher pay and better working conditions. While these stories demonstrate the much-celebrated strength and courage of West Indian women, they also underline the tremendous odds that must be overcome in raising children and putting food on the family table. In describing that struggle, the book also describes some of the practical difficulties women have encountered in

breaking into professional fields outside of traditional defined roles. The reader learns firsthand of the social dilemmas facing a woman who wants to be a doctor, a judge, or a laborer without sacrificing her womanhood in the eyes of her father, brothers, and prospective mates.

Rarely is anything written about the Caribbean that does not mention, at some point, the small size of the region and how that affects whatever other subject is under discussion, be it development, politics, or a newly published book. Anthropologists often call these small social entities "face-to-face" communities, for in them, nearly everyone knows everyone else. This book reminds us of the face-to-face familiarity of the Caribbean.

*Book review by Julie Sutphen Wechsler reprinted from Grassroots Development, Vol 13/No 2. She is the senior Inter-American Foundation representative for the Caribbean region.*

## EXCERPTS FROM BLAZE A FIRE

LOUISE BENNETT  
"MISS LOU"  
Dialect Poet and Comedienne

Meme, her grandmother, called her "Bibs"; everyone in Jamaica calls her "Miss Lou" her name is Louise Bennett.

"When I used to go to school the folklore was very strong. You would hear people singing the folksongs on the streets. The first time I heard a whole lot of them was when Meme died at the Dinkyninny. Dinkyninny is a function that they have to cheer up the family of a dead person. They would sing and dance. A lot of families don't allow "Dinky" in their yard, because, you see, anything black was bad.

Anything that came out of slavery that was a tradition of the black people was not good. But the people were never phased, if you don't have it in your yard, then they will have it in another yard. As a child I couldn't understand why these songs were ostracised or disparaged.

..I can always remember the first dialect poem I wrote. I was in high school and I was going to what we call 'movies theatre' and you paid nine pence and you went to matinee. So now any day we come home from school early and we have matinee money, we could dress up in we clothes and we go pan tram car and we go to cross roads. Well my dear one day I was dressed and waiting

on a tram car. This car was a market tram, it wasn't really a market car. The market people sat at the back with their baskets, so they cannot sit in front, so they are very annoyed when anybody come and sit in the back - that is anybody who is not a market person. When I was on the tram that day, there were no seats in front, so I decided to go in the back. Well I was fourteen and portly and was dressed up so I didn't look like a fourteen year old. So one woman said to another woman, 'Pread out yourself, one dress woman a come. Pread out'.

And me dear everybody start pread dem apron all over de seat dem. And I wrote the first set on this, when I went home I wrote it. The next day I tried it out in school and it sweet them.

Then I started to write and I realized more and more that this is what I should do because this is what I understand and this is what the people were saying. More was being said in that language than in any other thing and nobody was listening to them. (pg. 57 and 58)

EDNA MANLEY  
Sculptor

Her husband was the first Premier of Jamaica and her son a Prime Minister. Her achievements in the field of sculpture and in the history of art in Jamaica are legend. Her father was an English man, a pastor who lived in Jamaica and her mother was a Jamaican.

"I couldn't stand the method of teaching art, you see. I just couldn't. You had to draw from antiques and draw perfectly and work from still life and I just didn't think that was art as far as I was concerned...

She arrived in Jamaica, a wife, a mother and a person with the eye and senses of an artist at age 22.

"When the boat parked, if I may put it that way, there was a fantastic sky, flaming, reflected in the harbour. I thought, ah you know, this is it. A friend met us with a car and we were driving up Orange Street and there was a marvelous looking young, very black, very straight young woman, about eighteen and she was striding, and this was what I had been looking for, people who really walked. She had on her head a sewing machine, and it was at a forty-five degree angle and every now and then she would move and catch her balance. And I could nearly jump out the car I was so excited. This movement you didn't get in England at all."

"Well I turned Mandeville (Jamaica) upside down, they thought I was something out of a book. I wore an orange jumper and then I went out and sat on the market wall

and watched the market women coming in. I was fascinated, and this woman was sitting selling these strings of beads and from that the beadseller came."

"It was a very lonely life for an artist and I struggled on and people who saw the work ridiculed it. They made me feel awful and I smashed something because of what somebody said, but slowly I fought through .." (pg. 71 and 72)

**SAHEEDAN RAMROOP**  
Cane-cutter

Didi is a cane-cutter. She started to work in the cane fields when she was ten years old. This means that she has presided over all the changes that have come to the sugar industry in Trinidad in the last fifty years. She recalls that at the beginning:

"Workers had no rights. You had no rights neither from management, neither from union. Overseers kick you, drivers kick you, you have nothing to say. We was slaves here on de estate. I see how they treat we. I witness that eh. I remember I was in de canefield weedin and this old man and this old lady was working in Orange Grove and when they workin de driver come and say that he want the edge on the drain white as a kerchief. De old lay say, 'but this is dirt, how dirt could be white.' He say 'don't back talk me' and he give that woman one kick, and she fall down and he kick she again..."

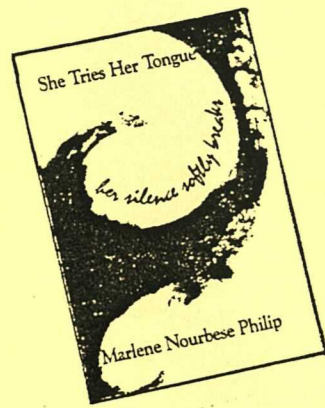
She feels that women are discriminated against in the sugar industry.

"Is woman have to do all the work. If is plant cotton, is woman, if to turn plant, is woman, if is to throw salt is woman. It ain't have a work to do is not woman, Dey ain't have woman in de factory. Man sit down and sew bag, woman could do that. No woman workin in de pen, woman could do that, all of we does mind animal. All de factory work they ain't have woman, da ain't right. (pg. 40-44)



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**Don't Miss our Open House,  
Saturday, February 17, 1990,  
at 6.00pm  
when we'll be launching  
Marlene Nourbese Philip's new  
book of poems,  
"She Tries Her Tongue; Her  
Silence Softly Breaks".**



In 1988, Marlene Nourbese Philip won the prestigious Casa de las Americas prize for the manuscript version of *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks*. She is the first anglophone woman to win the prize and only the second Canadian.

*She Tries Her Tongue* is brilliant, lyrical and passionate poetry. Philip writes with controlled intensity about being a woman and a black living in Canada.

# JOIN SISTER VISION PRESS AT THE NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Sister Vision Press will be participating in the National Book Festival taking place between April 21 - 28th 1990. The theme for this years festival is "Book an Adventure". In keeping with the theme a number of Sister Vision writers will participate in an afternoon of reading at the Elora public library. Included will be readings from the perspective of Black, Native and Asian women. Writers will read from their published work and works in progress.

Plan to join Sister Vision on this day away from the hustle and bustle of the city. This picturesque village was founded in 1832 and is named after the famous cave temples of Elora, India. Once a bustling mill town because of the water power of the Gand River Falls, Elora has preserved its heritage in many ways. Picturesque, excellently restored turn-of-the-century buildings, now house an interesting variety of Craft and specialty stores. The Elora Mill, one of the few five-storey gristmills still in existence, is now a country inn. Just below the village there is a spectacular limestone canyon, with many caves, waterfalls and rapids.

Daria Essop

I wish to subscribe to ABENG

My name is \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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I have enclosed  \$15  \$20  
for the next four issues

# MARTIN'S DAY 1990

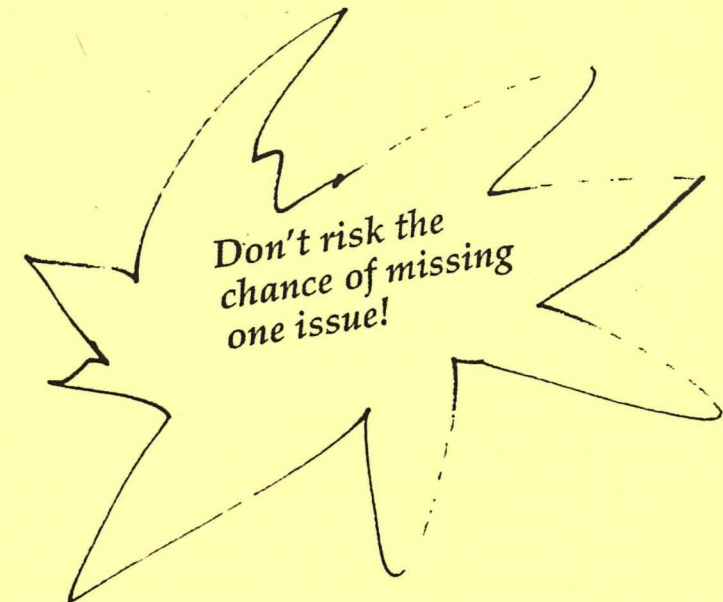
On January 15, 1990 Toronto celebrated Martin Luther King's birthday by holding an all day event at Harbourfront. Sister Vision Press participated in this historical event, and the day was a tremendous success. Many people came down to join in the numerous activities and events that were taking place throughout the day.

Many interesting discussions, cultural performances, displays and movies were taking place simultaneously. Unfortunately it meant having to chose between events, a difficult decision! Some highlights were the screening of Spike Lee's movies, Do the Right Thing, a rap session with Norman Otis Richmond and Marlene Nourbese Philip, a youth forum with Lillian Allen and the play THE MEETING (between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King).

Martin's Day seems to be attracting a much larger audience from the community each year. Hopefully future Martin's Day will see more people taking the day off to celebrate and reflect on the importance of Martin Luther King and what he represented for the people.

"When I speak of integration, I don't mean a romantic mixing of colours, I mean a real shaping of power and responsibility."  
Martin Luther King

Daria Essop



# OTHER BOOKS FOR YOUR READING

## bell hooks

review by Rozena Maart.

bell hooks became known to many readers for her writing of *Aint I a woman; black women and feminism*; a text within which she not only critiqued white supremacy prior, during and post slavery but also, was very critical of the black patriarchal structures and the relations within which black men carried them out. Throughout, hook's insight and development of black feminist theory offers readers a reader scope for feminist discourse and an agenda for the 1980's that would explore through a separate black women's movement, a revitalized, reconstructed feminism.

In *From Margin to Centre*, her powerful writing style — a digression of the old school where scholarly work filled with euphemisms for racism keeps the writers (usually white) at a distance from the discourse, hook's revolutionary feminist style, her openness and directness suggested the restructuring of the whole feminist agenda; one that would take cognizance of the black female experience within the various relations of white supremacy, and within, what is often merely defined as "the women's movement". Black women's marginality as expressed through the writing of white women, and hook's assertion that the black female experience occupy a position within the centrality of feminist theory, stands as a landmark for a transforming feminist agenda.

In *Talking Back: thinking feminist. thinking black*, bell hooks provides readers with deep, passionate and thought provoking messages about black female livelihood. Published in late 1989, the 25 chapters in the book covers areas of pertinent importance to black female livelihood. Among the many refreshing and reverberating aspects of hook's contribution on black feminism, is her holistic approach within which black female livelihood is set within the larger black experience and not against the backdrop of white women.

In the 25 essays, she shares with us her personal and political identity — of being Gloria raised in the South, moving from silence to speech, talking back as defiant speech, and the political act of writing drawn from the personal-political experience of oppression and exploitation under white supremacy, and sexist oppression experienced from black men. Central to hook's thinking, is her concern with domination; domination as a system of interconnected relations of white racism within society (as in the U.S. or Canada) and within white supremacy globally; domination of black women within the women's movement; domination as a tool at the disposal of white men and

women utilized through the various relations of communication, one of which is certainly the written text; domination of the black liberation agenda by black men in pursuit of their liberation objectives, yet in the absence of the black female as oppressed by black men; domination also being about pain, about the memories of unrecovered, unspoken pain — pain which has for so long meandered deeply into our black communities.

The transforming nature of our present state of being, and it's content within the political agenda, hooks discusses under separate headings, linking them throughout and pointing to it's interconnectedness in our struggle. In forging a transforming black feminist agenda, hooks strongly affirms the need to take on board issues of significance to our survival as a black race. This is asserted in her writings on the necessity to understand our sexuality as women and men; to address homophobia, as the transforming feminist agenda in itself cannot move from black feminist consciousness to revolutionary black feminist consciousness without questioning the foundations of our differences within the black liberation struggle and the black women's movement. Among these, hooks mentions homophobia, violence in intimate relationships, feminist politicization, feminist focus on men and feminist learning among ourselves, as an urgent political necessity. To this kind of revolutionary learning, hooks immediately tackles the falsification of new male 'revolutionary' director-cum-activist black consciousness — a black consciousness based on the sexual submission of black women. hooks dispels the myths about black womanhood as portrayed by Spike Lee's *She's gotta have it*. In a powerful written essay, Hooks examines the ideological questions about the film and provides insightful comments about female sexuality as portrayed by Lee as film maker. Zooming in on black women's sexuality, using submission through rape as a binding precondition for a 'harmonious' relationship between a man and a woman, perpetuates the domination and control men would always assume. Despite Lee's aspirations to produce liberating images of black people, the images of women and in particular female sexuality, is extremely debilitating and thus suggests that black female sexuality, through rape, becomes the precondition for a new revolutionary black awakening. The slumbering of Lee's consciousness, and many like him, can re-emerge in an awakened liberatory form once they have addressed the female sexual images upon which their inflated egos, are, no doubt dependent upon. In conclusion, hooks suggests the need for feminist theorizing that widens the spectrum of black liberatory education; among these, educating

ourselves and one another about sexism, homophobia and male violence as it relates to wider socio-political structures; about ways in which to empower our black community towards our own self-determination, we can transcend these boundaries that continually keep us apart. hooks notes, that in our plight towards this revolutionary consciousness, we continue to build solidarity between ourselves as black women, as black women and men in a community of continual struggle.

*Rozena Maart is a Black South African feminist - scholar -activist.*

Talking Back: thinking feminist . thinking black is published by Between the Lines

## S.P. LIKES A.D.

by Catherine Brett

When Stephanie realizes that what she feels for her peer Anne Delaney is more than friendship her life seems to turn into disaster. She's confused and afraid. Afraid and overwhelmed by her feelings and the possibility that she might be homosexual.

Nobody around her has anything good to say about gay people, all that she hears are statements like "it's unnatural," and "it's a perversion." At the same time Stephanie wins a sculpting contest that she had never dreamed of winning and is completely unprepared for; it is when Stephanie's mother introduces her to a woman able to help with this project, that Stephanie begins to untangle her life. As she talks with this woman who is a lesbian, she realizes that a lot people her age are confused about what society says is or is not acceptable. The story develops into a book about a young woman trying to find herself in a labyrinth of her feelings and other peoples scorn.

I like this book because even though it is written in the third person you still get a great viewpoint of Stephanie. This well rounded story is recommended for class discussions at the grade seven and eight level.

*Ayoola Silvera is a Grade Nine student at Oakwood Collegiate and eats, sleeps and dreams books.*

We are always in need of volunteers who can contribute their time and talent to the press.

Some skills required are: typing, organizing, book tables, production and general office help.

# CALLING ALL NATIVE WOMEN WRITERS!!!

*IN RESISTANCE: IN CELEBRATION* will be an anthology in Acknowledgement and Celebration of 500 years of our continued survival (1492-1992) and will reflect our experiences as Native women since the arrival of Columbus. Submissions of POETRY, SHORT STORIES, TESTIMONIES, ESSAYS, NOVEL EXCERPTS and PHOTOGRAPHS are welcome.

Send a biography with your work stating your tribal affiliation and other information you wish to include. Also enclose a S.A.S.E.

## DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: NOVEMBER 1990

SEND MATERIAL TO:  
Connie Fife - Editor  
P.O. Box 1634  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada  
R3C 2Z6

## BLACK STAGE WOMEN

CALL for nation-wide submission from Black women playwrights in Canada. One Acts; Full lengths; Dramatised Prose/Poetry to be included in this anthology. Both new and already produced scripts, as well as works-in-progress will be considered.

Send submissions to:  
BLACK STAGE WOMEN  
c/o Sister Vision Press  
P.O. Box 217, Station E  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6H 4E2

## DEADLINE: JUNE 30, 1990

Include information on previous/proposed production dates, or projected completion dates.

# PROFILE ON SISTERVISION ON POETS

## POEMS BY HIMANI BANNERJI

upon hearing Beverly Glen Copeland

Last night she drummed me Africa

and brought darkness stars  
and the wet greenery of the night forest  
into this prison of stone  
civilization of Greece and Rome  
the England of Hawkins and Victoria  
fell from us  
a heap of soiled clothes  
discarded in the new night of history  
wind blew from the savannahs  
from the clear scent of the waterfalls  
southern plantations opened their gates  
and the vision of a black mother child in arms  
framed by the circle of a dim light  
and the furrowed face of a man  
intent on fathoming the dark

Jamaica Haiti Martinique  
burst into flames  
broke chains  
fists fires and fleeting forms  
into the night  
agitation  
cries of victory

yet the centre the still centre  
the still centre of the drummer  
rooted like a palm tree  
into the earth  
and the drum  
the form of the world  
calling gathering  
reminding

last night she drummed me Africa.

1976.

"Paki Go Home"

1.

3 pm  
sunless  
winter sleeping in the womb of the afternoon  
wondering how to say this  
to reason or scream or cry or whisper  
or write on the walls  
reduced again  
cut at the knees, hands chopped, eyes blinded  
mouth stopped, voices lost.

fear anger contempt  
thin filaments of ice and fire  
wire the bodies  
of my own, of hers, of his,  
the young and the old.

And a grenade explodes  
in the sunless afternoon  
and words run down  
like frothy white spit  
down her bent head  
down the serene parting of her dark hair  
as he stands too visible  
from home to bus stop to home  
raucous, hyena laughter,  
"Paki, Go home!"

2.

the moon covers her face  
pock-marked and anxious  
in the withered fingers of the winter trees.  
The light of her sadness runs like tears  
down the concrete hills, tarmac rivers  
and the gullies of the cities.  
The wind still carries the secret chuckle  
The rustle of canes  
as black brown bodies flee into the night  
blanched by the salt waters of the moon.  
Strange dark fruits on tropical trees  
swing in the breeze gently.

3.

Now, and then again  
we must organize.  
The woman wiping the slur spit  
from her face, the child standing  
at the edge of the playground silent, stopped.  
The man twisted in despair,  
disabled at the city gates.  
Even the child in the womb  
must find a voice  
sound in unison  
organize.  
Like a song, like a roar  
like a prophecy that changes the world.

To organize, to fight the slaver's dogs,  
to find the hand, the foot, the tongue,  
the body dismembered  
organ by organ rejoined  
organized.  
Soul breathed in  
until she, he  
the young, the old is whole.  
Until the hand acts moved by the mind  
and the walls, the prisons, the chains of lead or gold  
tear, crumble, wither into dust  
and the dead bury the dead  
until yesterdays never return.

*Himani Bannerji was born in India in 1942. She is a professor at York University. Himani Bannerji's interest has been in exploring the relation between culture and politics, issues of imperialism, gender, race and class. Her poetry, short stories, critical articles have appeared in many journal in Toronto.*

## POEMS BY AHDRI ZHINA MANDIELA

### BLACK OOMAN

Black ooman rebellin  
Black ooman ah stawt tellin  
ah tellin tings  
whe mek yuk kwivvah  
ah chat deepah dan silent rivvah

if evvy day pur strife  
only bring more wrawt  
like a shawp blade knife  
ah cut inna wih awt  
always ah struggle fih wih life

evvy jook  
mek it wuss  
like a sore  
full ah pus  
but wih will kill too  
if wih mus  
suh jus

back awff

Black ooman rebellin  
Black ooman ah stap sellin  
ah stap sellin  
inna dih maakit  
ah stap ah troddin  
wid ovah-loaded baaskit

awfta all dem miles  
wih foot dem ah bun  
wih spirits ah bwile  
wih language ah tun  
fram rank to vile

naw rant naw cuss  
cause with nuh really  
want nuh fuss  
but wih bile bag ah buss  
suh jus  
back awff

## MIH FEEL IT (Wailin fih Mikey)

Dih dred ded  
an it dun suh?  
No sah

dih dread ded  
an it dun suh?  
Ow can a man  
kill annadah one  
wid stone  
cold -  
bludded intenshan

rockstone  
blundgeon im ead  
an  
im drop dung ded  
an nuh one  
nuh awsk  
why  
such a wikkid  
wikkid tawsk  
should  
anna-  
nyah-  
late  
dih dred

Dih dred ded  
an it dun suh?  
no sah

dih dred ded  
an it dun suh?

Early early  
inna dih day  
Mikey ah trod  
dung a illy way

isite up sum men  
from a pawty fence  
an hence-  
forth  
was stopped!  
wid all dih  
chattin whe gwaan  
an questions ensued  
mikey painin run out  
ah im mout  
too soon!  
an is den dih trouble  
run out

for BAM!  
four stone inna dem ans

an BAM!  
dem lik Mikey dung

an  
mih feel it  
mih feel it  
mih feel it

Dih dred ded  
an it dun suh?  
no sah

dih dread ded  
an it dun suh?

ones must know  
dih reason  
for dis deadly  
assault  
committed  
out of season  
no reason  
dred dred dred dred  
season

'Riddemshan for every dred  
mus cum  
riddemshan  
mus cum'

is dih livity  
not dih rigidity  
for even doah seh  
Mikey ded  
cause dem mash up  
im ead  
even doah seh  
Mikey gawn  
im spirit trod awn  
trod awan  
tru: RIDDEMSHAN

'Riddemshan for every dred  
mus cum  
riddemshan  
mus cum'

Dih dread ded  
an it dun suh?

NO SAH!

*Ahdri Zhini Mandiela is a poet, playwright living in Toronto.*

## POEMS BY AFUA COOPER

### Marie Joseph Angelique

Marie Joseph Angelique  
hated the chains of slavery  
she felt the strong should not oppress the weak  
that all people should be free

She lived a slave in Montreal town  
but in her heart she was free  
so the city she did burn down  
running for her liberty

But Marie was caught  
tried  
and she was hung in the square of Montreal

Marie Joseph Angelique  
did not want to be a slave  
she preferred death to slavery

Marie Joseph Angelique  
did not want to be a slave  
she preferred death to slavery

Oh freedom  
oh freedom  
oh freedom  
oh freedom!

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

It's Black history month at my school  
and we have a day of festivities  
mr. X plays his drum  
and we have lots of fun  
a man form the he-ri-tage society  
talks of places I've never heard of  
New Dartmouth  
Chatham  
Dawn  
Collingswood  
of people I've never heard of  
Mary Ann Shadd  
Viola Blackman  
Marcus Garvey  
Harry Gairey  
even of an or-gan-i-sation called the UNIA  
It's Black history month at my school  
and we have a day of festivities  
Mr. X plays his drum  
and we have lots of fun

### HARRY GAIREY

he is a man that you see  
in our community  
I am talkin bout Harry Gairey  
A fighter  
A teacher  
A father  
he hailed form Jamaica  
came to Canada in 1914  
and worked as a porter  
with CP rail  
He helped to form one of the first unions in Canada  
"Brotherhood of The Sleeping Car Porters"  
so that the workers  
the porters  
could get better pay  
better working conditions  
get respect  
I sit on his lap  
and he talks tome  
Mom calls him 'brother Gairey'.

*Afua Cooper is a poet living and working in Toronto. Her poems have appeared in several anthologies and she has recorded her poetry on two record anthologies. These days Afua spends her time exploring Black Canadian History and taking care of her son Akil.*

## I.W.D. Fight the Attack: No Turning Back

Join us on March 3, 1990 for I.W.D.

- .no to racism and police violence
- .No to racism and police violence
- .No new abortion law
- .No to the G.S.T. and social cutbacks
- .No to violence against women

Rally at 10.30 March at noon  
The fair begins at 2 -5 p.m. at Ryerson Polytechni-  
cal Institute

For information about fair tables  
call Rebecca - 534-5781

Speaker's corner - Naomi 944-1086  
To publicize your organization, call Mary 531-2369.

# BOOKS BY WOMEN OF COLOUR: PUBLISHED AND PRODUCED BY SISTER VISION: BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOUR PRESS

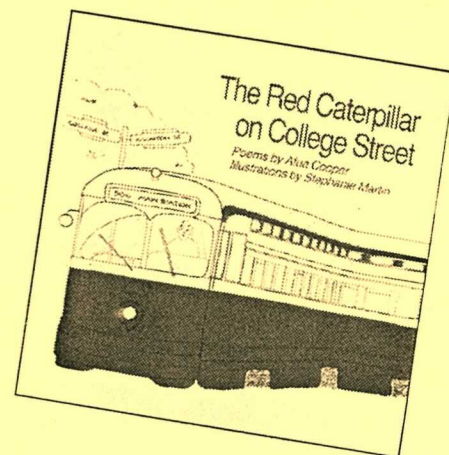
## The Red caterpillar on College Street

Poems by Afua Cooper  
Illustrated by Stephanie Martin

*The Red Caterpillar on College Street* is a colour illustrated book that focuses on a child born of Caribbean parents. With the child we learn about Black history in Canada, with the memory of Marie Joseph Angelique, a slave who lived in Montreal during the 1800's, with Harry Gairy and others. We see the bustle and life of city streets, bright spring colours, and friends.

Afua's poetry is rhythmic, harmonious and ideal for children.

32 pages 8x8  
\$6.95 pb. 0-920813-87-9



## BLAZE A FIRE

Significant Contributions of Caribbean Women  
by Nesha Z. Haniff

These twenty-eight profiles of Caribbean women illustrate the changing attitudes and roles of women in the Caribbean. Some of the women are well known internationally, others are known only in their own communities.

*Blaze A Fire* is a major contribution to the field of Caribbean women's oral history. It is a useful and informative collection about women's lives.

250 pages 5x8  
\$12.95 pb 0-920813-91-7



## LIONHEART GAL

Life Stories of Jamaican Women  
by Sistren with Honor Ford-Smith

*Lionheart Gal* is the distillation of Jamaican women's lives through the eyes of the internationally renowned Sistren Theatre Collective. The weaving of unique and powerful stories make the book an important collection of writing about Black women.

330 pages 5 1/2 x 8 1/2  
\$15.95 pb. 0-920813-90-9



## SPESHAL RIKWES

by Ahdri Zhina Mandiela

Speshal Rikwes is a Jamaican term conveying appreciation and respect. A celebration of the writer's roots, this book of poetry takes the reader through an exciting rhythmic progression of Jamaican expression.

60 pages 5 1/2 x 8 1/2  
\$6.95 pb. 0-920813-00-3

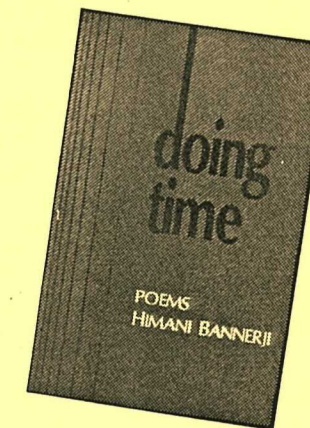


## DOING TIME

by Himani Bannerji

Himani Bannerji speaks of prisons constructed at different levels where cramped, silenced and angry people struggle to gain their faces, voices and power.

49 pages 5 1/2 x 8 1/2  
\$6.95 pb. 0-920813-01-1

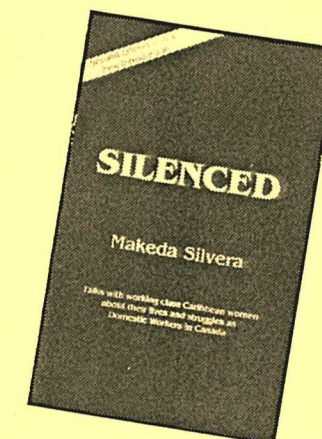


## SILENCED

Caribbean Domestic  
Workers talk with Makeda Silvera

Recently out of print, *SILENCED*, republished by Sister Vision Press, is an important book recounting the experiences of Caribbean workers living in Canada. This oral history of Caribbean domestic workers has been reprinted three times since it originally appeared on bookshelves six years ago.

155 pages 6 x 9  
\$11.95 pb. 0-920813-73-9



## The ISSUE IS 'ISM

Women of Colour Speak Out

Rich in diversity women of colour speak about their lives for the very first time in Canadian Feminist literature. They touch on racism, sexism, classism, imperialism and other 'isms. This powerful collection includes essay, short stories, poems, photographs, illustrations and graphics.

192 pages 6 x 9  
\$11.95 0920813-72-0





**Sunday February 11, 1990**  
**NELSON MANDELA IS RELEASED!**  
**The Struggle for the Liberation of**  
**South Africa Continues**

IN CELEBRATION OF **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**



WED. FEB 7 7:30 & 9:30PM

FUNDI: THE STORY OF ELLA BAKER & BLACK DAWN

WED FEB 14 7:30 & 9:30PM CROCODILE CONSPIRACY

VOICE OF THE GODS

FRI FEB 16 7:30PM\* PRINCESS TAM TAM & ZOUZOU

SAT FEB 17 7:30PM ZOUZOU 9:30PM PRINCESS TAM TAM

WED 21 8:00PM BLACK PANTHER

BLACK POWER

WED FEB 28 7:30 & 9:30PM DO THE RIGHT THING



POWER

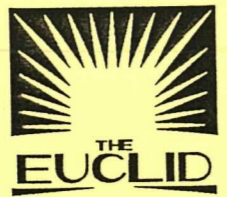
**FUNDI: THE STORY OF ELLA BAKER**  
*Prod: Joanne Grant, USA, 1981, 63m*  
 Ella Baker was a little known civil rights activist of the 20's, onward to the 60's. This well researched documentary reveals her to be the source of strength, knowledge and skill behind American social movements for racial and sexual equality.

**BLACK DAWN**  
*Prod: Robin Lloyd & Doreen Kraff, Haiti, 1980 20m*  
 This animated film offers a vivid and expressive glimpse into Haitian culture.

**PRINCESS TAM TAM**  
*dir: Edmond Greville, 1935, 80m*  
 Described as a Parisian Pygmalion, Baker stars as the "native girl" who distracts a French novelist (Albert Prejean) on a North African vacation in search of inspiration of his new book.

**ZOUZOU**  
*dir: Marc Allégret, 92m*  
 This semi-autobiographical musical features Baker as a poor laundress who becomes the toast of Paris. But none of the swells who throw themselves at her exquisite feet interest her — she's carrying a torch for Jean Gabin.

\* Josephine Baker double bill. Admission \$7 (both screenings) or \$4.00 single screening.



ALL SHOWINGS AT THE EUCLID, 394 EUCLID AVE  
 ADMISSION \$4 UNLESS OTHERWISE MARKED

**CROCODILE CONSPIRACY**  
*by Zainabu Irene Davis, 1986, 13m*  
 This charming tale centers on the life affirming reality of dreams. Willa Leebetter, a Black, middle-aged school teacher in Watts, grapples with a longing to visit her parent's homeland of Cuba.

**VOICES OF THE GODS**  
*by Alfred Santana, 1985, 60m*  
 This documentary captures the rich legacy and hidden rituals of African religious traditions practiced in the United States. Santana also illustrates how mass media has unfairly been used to ridicule the idea of African traditions in the United States through such terms as "voodoo economics" and "voodoo arms control" which describe the most negative aspects of U.S. economic and military policies.

**A PROGRAM TO COMMEMORATE THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF MALCOLM X**  
 A selection of films and videos highlighting the Black Panther movement and the work of Malcolm X. The program will include *Black Panther*, *Black Power*

**DO THE RIGHT THING**  
*dir: Spike Lee, USA 120m*  
 What is the right thing? This film set off controversy where ever it went. Some argue that violence is the only direct action left in response to racism in the United States, others prefer a more peaceful approach. Spike Lee has set this question afire with this film.

# CALLING ALL LESBIANS OF COLOUR

Send your works to be included in this ground breaking anthology on the lives and experiences of lesbians of colour. Don't be left out.

The themes of the anthology are:

- Speaking in Different Languages, Dialects and Colours
- The experience of being lesbian in the context of your own culture, etc.

**Between Ourselves**

- cross cultural relations
- prejudice between us
- conflicts/resolution/mistrust
- solidarity, friendships

**Short stories**

- political, funny
- raunchy, sexy

**Poems**

- political
- erotic

**Photos**

- recent snaps of you and friends
- photos of you as a young girl

**Reviews**


- films
- books

**Racism in the women's movement**

- racism in the classroom
- racism in organizations
- creating our own communities
- creating our own presses
- creating our own groups, organizations

**International**

- experiences outside Canada.




# ALOTT

Asian Lesbians of Toronto

a social, spiritual  
and political  
support  
group

We meet the first Wednesday of every month  
at 519 Church Street

P.O. BOX 203, STATION P  
TORONTO ONTARIO M5S 2S7



# COME AND JOIN US SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

I would like to receive the Sister Vision newsletter on a quarterly basis.

Enclosed is \$15.00 for individuals  
\$20.00 - for organizations

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My address is \_\_\_\_\_

phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and mail to: Sister Vision Press  
P.O. Box 217  
Station E, Toronto, Ontario  
M6H 4E2

*Abeng is an African word meaning conch shell. It was the instrument used by the Maroons to pass their messages and reach one another. Their code of signals was never divulged to any but their own people.*

Nellie Langford Rowell Library  
Women's Studies Library