

May 2020

The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins South Florida Writers of Color Literary Magazine

An Online Literary Magazine

“The South Florida Literary Renaissance

**We know it’s late, but finally, we have arrived,
Not just as attendees, spectators, or followers and supporters,
But as the Visionary and Transformational leaders.
Utilizing the Enduring Power, Creative Joy and Beauty of Words
In Prose, Poetry and Drama,
We are the Organized and Mobilized
Architects, Builders and Leaders of
The South Florida Literary Renaissance.”**

--- Ralph Hogges

**The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins
South Florida Writers of Color
Literary Magazine**

May 2020, Volume 2, Number 1

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From the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Editor

Ralph Hogges

Don't Limit Your Vision

"Don't Limit Your Vision

Some of us cannot see beyond what we have experienced.

It's not that we have sight problems.

The problem is that we have no definitive, confident and determined vision.

Vision to Think beyond the Unthinkable.

Vision to Believe beyond the Unbelievable.

Vision to Achieve beyond the Unachievable.

As for me, my Vision is Clear.

My Resolve is Resolute."

---- Ralph Hogges

In the United States and throughout the world, all too often as writers of color we are overlooked, underrepresented and underestimated. I challenge you, our writers of color in South Florida and throughout the world, to reach deep within your mind and soul and bring forth your definitive, confident and determined Vision.

- The Vision to write books that become winners of the awards: National Best Sellers, Nobel Prize in Literature, Pulitzer Prize, National Book Critics Circle Award and more.
- The Vision to write not one book but numerous books, including sequels and series.
- The Vision to become owners and operators of online bookstores.
- The Vision to become literary agents.
- The Vision to become owners and operators of traditional book publishing companies.
- The Vision to write fiction and nonfiction books and scripts for movies and television series.
- The Vision to write, produce and direct plays, movies and television series.
- The Vision to own and operate production studios for movies and television series.
- The Vision to own and operate television networks.

The power of this Vision will propel your intellectual and artistic genius to thrive. Individually and collectively, go forward with your infinite imagination and creativity to achieve unprecedented and legendary literary accomplishments that this world has never witnessed nor thought possible. Your Literary Genius is in its infancy. I see Literary Giants on the horizon. Yes, it's you, you and you.

To you, the Global Community, after the successful completion of the third annual Hogges and Cowins Book Festival and Writers Conference in Miami, Florida (Historic Overtown), I am pleased and delighted to share with you our 2020 edition of *The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins South Florida Writers of Color Literary Magazine* (An Online Literary Magazine). It further introduces you to members of The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins Writers Group of South Florida and their literary works. We go forth as the architects, builders and leaders of the South Florida Literary Renaissance.

This magazine is free, no purchase or subscription is required. I hope you will enjoy it. Share it with your family and friends and encourage them to pass it on to others.

The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins Writers Group of South Florida

Mission: An organization for beginning, emerging and established writers who desire to engage with fellow writers, develop their craft, publish and sell their books, and advocate and promote the value of reading and writing.

Philosophy: Those who don't know, come to learn. Those who know, come to teach others.

Goals & Objectives:

Writing and Publishing

1. Moderators of the Genres will host and facilitate gatherings of their members to focus on developing the Art and Craft of writing, especially for the beginning and emerging writers. Their literary growth and development is vital.
2. Our Critique Group Process and Procedure will be used to assist our writers with editing and refining their literary works.
3. Resources and connections (*Writer's Market*; *Novel & Short Story Writer's Market*; and *Guide to Literary Agents* – from Barnes and Noble Bookstores and others) can be used to identify publishers and get our member's manuscripts published.

Promotions and Selling of Book Events

1. To host bi-monthly gatherings (in Miami-Dade County & Broward County) to do book readings, sign and sell books.
2. To host and present The Hogges and Cowins Book Festival and Writers Conference, an annual event in Miami, Florida (in Historic Overtown).
3. To announce and promote our events locally, nationally, and internationally.

Strategic Connections & Engagement

1. To establish connections and promote literary engagement with schools, churches, libraries, museums, publishers, newspapers, journalists and other organizations to:

- a. Successfully teach our children of color to value reading, writing and academic excellence.
- b. Establish collaborative partnerships to identify and utilize ways and means to culturally and intellectually inform, educate and empower our communities of color.

Please Note:

1. All of our events will be free and open to the public.
2. No membership dues or fees are required to become a member of this Writers Group.

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The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins Writers Group of South Florida

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Growth in Time of Change

By Delores Smiley, Deputy Editor

No doubt we are all familiar with the quote “The times, they are a’ changing.” Wikipedia states that “This is a song written by Bob Dylan and released as the title track of his 1964 album of the same name. Dylan wrote the song as a deliberate attempt to create an anthem of change for the time. Ever since its release, the song has been influential to people’s views on society, with critics noting the general yet universal lyrics as contributing to the song’s lasting message of change.”

At the completion of the 2020 Hogges and Cowins Book Festival and Writers Conference that was held on February 22 – 23, it was clear to see that the content of the presentations during these two days reflected appreciation for the past with the intent of a robust approach for the future. The keynote speakers shared knowledge gained from their experiences and areas of expertise. The writers’ presentation of their works reflected the passion they have for the genres in which they write. The panel discussions provided insight into how it all comes together. All of this was an indication that the Writers’ Group is poised and ready to burst upon the writers’ scene with all the resources needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century world of literature as it affects the authors and the written word. Armed with enthusiasm and inspiration, the founders followed up with the group by promoting current members and adding new members to the Leadership Team, updating the Organization’s mission, goals and objectives, and preparing for the second edition of the Literary Magazine (Online Literary Magazine), and maintaining the advisory board members and genre moderators.

So what, you may ask, does this have to do with the changing times? My answer is that if an individual or a group aspires to growth, success, and relativity to a selected audience or audiences, one must be prepared to be the source or resource that is in demand by those general audiences. There are new issues and challenges for literary growth arising from ongoing significant change in the world at large, focusing especially on present and futuristic themes and technological transformations.

As the new Vice President for Visionary Initiatives, it is my task to structure a plan to successfully prepare, position, and empower our writers of color to achieve and produce great literary works as they look into the future to dream, imagine, create and prepare unprecedented ways and means to achieve this goal. I will work in collaboration with Nikisha Williams, Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning, to accomplish this endeavor.

The preparation of our writers should be accomplished by looking at key elements of change from a global perspective. It should be done in consideration of how technological change, shifts in social thinking, and demographic transitions are affecting potential literary growth globally and across major genres of writing. Authors should explore possible scenarios for the global society in the face of rapid change. It is my belief that as we launch out for the next phase of our group activities that we should have a group discussion to review what we have done, evaluate the positives and negatives and decide what and how we want to move

forward. Of course, these discussions would be in line with the revised goals and mission of the group. I also think an evaluation of the profile of our group and the type of audience we would cater to should be discussed. Adopting this approach at this point would prepare us to move ahead with clarity of purpose.

My thoughts on positioning are in line with what I find in research. That is, there are specific questions that need to be answered as one considers writing a book. They are: (a) Determine why you are writing or want to write a book, (b) Understand who will care about your book, and (c) Find out why they will care about your book. It is suggested that every publishing agent will have this discussion with you very early in the process. In other words, the author should know what he/she want to get out of writing a book. What does the proposed content have that will give you some level of success when it is completed and what is your end goal. Also, it is important to know your market readership. Some suggested questions that you should be able to answer once the book is completed and published are:

- Did it help you establish your authority in the field?
- Did it allow potential clients to find you and sign up for your services?
- Did it land you a handful of paid speaking engagements?
- Did it get your brand massive media attention?
- Did it double your company's annual revenue?
- Did it give you the opportunity to share your ideas with others?

Finally, it is suggested that we take our time with positioning because this is the foundation on which the book is built. And, if the questions are answered beforehand, the author will find the rest of the book writing process more enjoyable.

As far as being empowered is concerned, I really see this as a function of this group. This is what it has done in the past and will continue to be intentional for the future. Moreover, I believe that the attention to literary arts leads us to the structure of visionary initiatives as a force for change. At our 2020 annual conference, we showcased various genres that continues to be part of the historical landscape. But, in addition to that, added attention was given to filmmaking and to science fiction. This is visioning that looks to the future.

As we go forward, I believe we should make sure that we focus on our genre writers, examine and share various types of marketing (including non-trade marketing), encourage authors to explore futuristic themes and issues that are impacting our society today from a local, regional, state, national and international perspective. There are many exciting ways in which this can be done.

Not only is it our intent to be a resource for writers but I think we can do more toward showcasing and collaborating with our writers for even more success. I believe we should continue to have monthly meetings and break-out meetings when necessary. The meetings can be onsite and online. That would be determined at the first membership meeting. In addition, if participation is not regular, there should be a plan for making members active or inactive.

One example for moving into the future is to utilize social media to “see” us by together planning (group meeting) and strategizing on how to best use various platforms. We can work on improving plans by which we share and encourage authors’ work. Although our founders

have stressed that fees and other monetary concerns should not be part of our consideration, we can discuss a small membership fee in order for us to invest in members i.e. sending them to a writers' conference or retreat, purchasing and loaning resources, etc. We can revisit how we provide feedback to authors that does not destroy their passion, and leave reviews on places like Amazon.

We must keep in mind that literary arts are designed to inspire, enrich, educate, and entertain. They remind us that there is wisdom, beauty, and joy in language, that others have insights worth paying attention to, that in our struggles we are not alone. Therefore, by helping writers and creating new work and connecting with audiences through publishers and other literary organizations and programs, the Writers Group's intentions are to celebrate the literary arts as an essential reflection of our nation's rich diversity of voices. It's only natural that writers like to think about the future – After all, it's where you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives.

As the Writers Group delve into this exciting era, it is only natural that we spend some time examining, discussing, and taking a leap of faith into how we write, for whom we write, and the purpose of our writing. What do we bring from the past and present to introduce to the future. No one can deny that the harvest is plentiful; let it not be said that the laborers are few. This is a time for change. This is a time for growth. "Someone should write a book about that."

Memories of My Neighborhood Friend: Felix Morisseau-Leroy

Worldly Renowned Haitian Poet and Playwright

By Ralph Hogges, Co-Founder & Co-Executive Editor

It was the year of 1989. I was the Associate Dean of the Faculty, Chairman of the Division of General Studies and Associate Professor of Education at Florida Memorial University. Although I was an academic and enjoyed the pursuit of scholarly works (writing and publishing journal articles and books) and making presentations at national conventions and conferences, I also had a tremendous interest in creative writing. It came easily and regularly to me and it was difficult to resist the temptation.

For several years, I had written a weekly column for *The Miami Courier Newspaper*. Some of my poems had been published in several anthologies, including *Paths Less Traveled: Anthology of Poetry*, *American Poetry Anthology*, *Treasured Poems of America*, and *Windows of the World: The National Library of Poetry*.

My first published book, a novel, *The Next President of the United States*, had been released and I was busy traveling throughout Miami-Dade County to convince bookstores and other venues to display and sell it. Near my home, a stationery and office supplies store owner at Colonial Drive (S.W. 160 Street & 95th Avenue) was receptive to my book and offered to sell it.

One day, I stopped at his store to check on the sales. When I walked in, he was talking to a customer. When they finished, he invited me to join them. He introduced me to the distinguished looking man with a grand snow-white afro. His name was Felix Morisseau-Leroy. The owner said that since we were writers, we may want to get to know each other.

We chatted for a while, and Felix left to walk home. I told him that it was on my way and he could ride with me. I drove the two blocks to his home at S.W. 159th Street & 97 Avenue. He invited me in and I accepted.

I was greeted by his wife. We sat down and she served us some lemonade. Felix and I talked for a long time, sharing about our lives and experiences. I was 42 and he was 77. My home was at 15630 S.W. 109 Avenue, just 12 blocks from each other.

We got to know each other well. A prominent teacher of literature and theater, not only did he succeed in having Creole recognized as an official language in Haiti, but also was instrumental in providing the leadership to establish its use in literature and culture.

Fluent in six languages and having lived and worked in his native Haiti, Africa and Europe, he was a worldly renowned and famous poet and playwright currently living in Miami-

Dade County. We talked often about a major literary work that he was working on with a professor at the University of Miami.

On one occasion, I had the honor of accompanying him to one of his poetry readings at the North Dade Regional Library (N.W. 24th Avenue & 83rd Street). He was well received by a large and appreciative audience. It was one of the largest gatherings that I had witnessed for a poet of color.

Although he was worldly renowned, he was especially revered as a literary legend in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood. In his honor, the neighborhood's Northeast 2nd Avenue is officially designated as the Felix Morisseau-Leroy Avenue.

Some of his many literary works include the following:

Poetry

Plenitudes
Dyakout (Diacoute)
Haitiad and Oddities

Short Story in verse

Natif-natal, conte en vers

Play

Wa Kreyon (Antigone) in Kreyol

Other

Les Djons d'Haiti Tom (People of Haiti with Courage)

I learned a lot from Felix, not only about writing, literature and language, but also about the importance of sharing my literary gifts with the world. Although he passed on September 5, 1998, his literary legacy will live on forever.

The Mystery and Magic of Creative Writing

By Rose Stiffin

Writers (especially those who create worlds, characters, and plots) are often very much aware that their livelihood depends on a mysterious flow of events rooted usually in their subconscious. Stories and, thus, characters within these stories will summon novelists; for me, I have had my characters appearing in my dreams. Analyzing the development of the story or trying to figure out why this particular story called to them can actually cause the idea or story to disappear from the writer's subconscious, making novelists steer clear of taking a rational approach to the creative process.

Unfortunately, it is not that unusual for novelists to lose their way in the middle of a book, finding that they are consciously manipulating plot development or character dialogue rather than letting their creativity have the freedom to do as it should – *create*. Authors have said that to get the “creative mojo” back again, it is best to put the book down and work on something else for a while. This break sometimes allows writers to get back on track, because the subconscious will eventually figure out where and how the story should go.

Writers also often admit that they do not control their muses; rather, the muses control or direct them. I agree. Writers should not force a plot or character from the established road the plot or character is on. This abrupt change may be seen in the reading and definitely in the writing.

Writing can often be cathartic, allowing the author to place his/her feelings to pen and paper without detracting from what the created characters are doing. This melds fiction with reality and it should be smooth, seamless blending.

Writers also confess they are not beyond using subterfuge to woo their muse. I tried to write while reading several novels, not to glean ideas from the books – were that it was so! – but to say, *I get what this author was doing. I understand why this character did this*. And I simply love to read. By reading and writing, listening to people tell their stories, I infuse this *external* inspiration with my own *internal creativity*, which fuels my writing. Of course, this is not rocket science, but I believe it is a good testimony of a writer who loves to write. As writers, whether creative or “realistic,” we should take time every day each day.

Write what you know; love to tell readers what you know. There is hidden mystery magic in what you know and what you want others to know. It is magic and it is mystery, but I love them both!

A Special Section for Our Children of Color: Teaching Our Children of Color to Value Reading

During our Book Festival and Writers Conference on February 22, 2020, our Special Guest Speaker, T. Willard Fair, President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Miami, gave us a status report on his Liberty City Initiative. He shared with us the hard-core facts and realities that too many of our children of color can't read and/or can't read well and it is having a devastating impact on their lives. He spoke to us about the importance of valuing reading. His Initiative is focused on changing and improving that situation for children of color in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami, Florida. Our Writers Group has joined Mr. Fair in this endeavor and several of our members have volunteered to participate.

Given the importance and urgency of this matter, not only in Miami but also throughout the United States, we reached out to two of our members that are authors of numerous children books and have tremendous expertise and experience teaching reading, and invited them to write articles on: Teaching Our Children of Color to Value Reading. We are delighted to share their articles and a poem with you.

By J Nell Ford: Teaching Our Children of Color to Value Reading

Reading, for some, has been a lifelong challenge. Not to mention the fact that we, as a people of color got off to a very slow start. Since the 1700's, when the thought of reading might have entered into the thoughts of slaves, the consequences were detrimental. When Frederick Douglass, who was a very intelligent slave, inquired of the skills of literacy, there is no story told of what might have happened to him. Yet, while enslaved, Douglass secretly learned some words from the slave owner's wife. It was not long after that Douglass surmised that reading was power, and any man who learned to read, might find his way out of captivity. The fact that someone stated that a "learned slave was an unfit slave," sparked his interest even further.

Even in today's society, reading is a very powerful tool that must be adopted if we are going to be successful in life. Literacy, literally, drives this country. For instance, test scores, which are closely observed by state and national superintendents, are prime examples. The schools that obtain the higher scores are the ones that we write about, hear about, and want to emulate their curriculum.

So, what part does the African American student play in this society? Having been an educator myself for more than 35 years, I have witnessed the breakdown of African American children not having the same reading skills of other groups. I've asked myself numerous times, "How could a student reach 9th or 10th grade and not have basic reading skills?" What happened? Is it because they were black? No, that can't be the answer. Is it because our beginning was suppressed by ill-wishers? Perhaps.

Fast forward – it is now our responsibility to play catch-up and do what is necessary for our children to face the challenges of today. Often we, as parents, have blamed the teachers, but in reality, the responsibility, initially, falls on the parents. My parents placed me in a

learning environment as far back as I can recall; they were both readers. Thus, I am an avid reader today. I think children emulate what they are exposed to. If a child sees that his/her parents are reading, this, in most cases, will spark an interest in the child's reading curiosity. Thus, leaving an impression.

Another way to cultivate the value of literacy in our children is to encourage them to read to you at an early age. Other ways are:

- Express to them the importance of excelling in school.
- Rewarding a child has always been a positive reinforcement, as well.
- Engage them in fun reading activities.
- Encourage them to retell the story in their own words.
- Children enjoy writing their own stories.
- Have them to create their own endings to any story.
- Give them a list of unrelated words and have them to create a paragraph.
- Encourage memorization.

And this list goes on.

Truth is, there is little difference in the learning styles of African American children and other groups. Regardless of the poverty level or community influences, if we expose our children at an early age, and continuously enforce the importance of reading throughout the formative years, then African American children will be and is - a force to be reckoned with.

By Dearta Smith: Teaching Our Children of Color to Value Reading

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free” – Frederick Douglass.

For Frederick Douglass, reading was an essential piece of the puzzle that allowed him to escape the horrific and dehumanizing conditions of being enslaved. He obtained an impressive level of educational success during a time when African Americans could face severe consequences, even death, for learning how to read. It is therefore not surprising that he equated reading with freedom. Reading gives us access to information about a variety of subjects. Information acquisition, especially in an area of interest, can produce an intoxicating effect on one's psyche, attitudes, and decision-making capacity. As such, it is vital that our children receive the encouragement, support and sustained guidance to develop one of the most common bridges of knowledge – reading.

Reading is not an innate skill. Reading must be fostered, explained and systematically taught in order for children to derive the greatest benefit. And, there is no better place for that guidance to begin than in the home. Children constantly observe the patterns, hobbies and interests of adults in their environments and they tend to model a great deal of what they see. Children receive cues from adults and caregivers for what activities to seek out, how long to

remain involved in those activities, and what is the prescribed value of those activities. When children see us engage in reading, we indirectly ascribe a high value to literacy. We reinforce the ideas that gaining exposure to information, broadening our perspectives, and having a rich lexicon all have great implications for future success.

In contrast, when our children are not provided with rich reading opportunities, they face potential barriers that are quite challenging to overcome and can result in negative future outcomes. Gail L. Thompson and Cynthia T. Shamberger wrote an article entitled, “The Gift That Can Save Lives: Teaching Black Students To Become Good Readers.” The authors noted that, “Poor reading skills are correlated to poverty during adulthood (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010), prison incarceration rates (Kunjufu, 2005), dropping out of school, and struggling academically in other subjects besides reading (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010).”

There is a lot at stake for those youth for whom reading is challenging. Correlating with Frederick Douglass’ quote, freedom literally hangs in the balance for struggling readers.

Geneva Gay, in her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice* (2000), asserted that “when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly.” For many of our students, seeing themselves represented in illustrations and in print is a huge selling point for reading.

To spark the embers of inquiry and gain a greater buy-in for reading, we can provide children with content that is meaningful and interesting rather than have blatant or passive resistance to that “chore” or “work.” Additionally, we can read aloud to children consistently and with enthusiasm. Reading aloud will help children to hear the sounds used to form words and thus aid in their development of phonological awareness skills. We can begin when our children are young (yes, infants and even in utero) modeling and engaging them in pleasure reads with vivid books and colorful language. Initiating pleasure reading early in a child’s life is a great way to positively mold their perspective about reading and imprint the value of this essential skill.

We can read aloud to them early and often so that they gain consistent exposure to vocabulary concepts. We can read using varied modes of intonation to demonstrate message distinction and perception based on the suprasegmental aspects of language. We can spend time talking with children about illustrations and text which will facilitate their increased attention to task, help them to develop better comprehension skills and teach them how to encounter books and engage in the reading process. We can show them how to use their imagination to perceive and appreciate their world and the world around them.

In short, when we teach our children to value reading, we are helping them to become unique, independent thinkers. We open up the cage of illiteracy and provide them with the tools needed to experience a lifetime of freedom. I encourage us all to actively partner with parents to build and enhance the reading skills of every child because their life may depend on it.

A Poem – To Value Reading

By Ralph Hogges

What you Value Determines and Dominates

The Focus of your Attention,

The Focus of your Time,

And the Focus of your Effort.

Knowledge is Power.

Knowledge comes from Reading.

If you want to be Powerful,

Read, Read, and Read.

Poets and their Poems

Sharing the Beauty and Power of their Poetic Gifts

Mourning Glory

By Linda Adderly

Storms may rage about you,
Mightier than any foe;
And the fury of its waves,
Toss you wildly to and fro.

The thrashing and the crashing;
Fill you with unfathomable fright... but...
Do not fret and don't you worry,
In the morning dawns the Light.

The clouds shall part before you
Giving way to clearer skies,
For no harm shall e'er befall
A child of God, blessed in His eyes.

He is ever-present before us,
Armed with the master plan
And those storms that rage before you,
Are under His command.

So, have faith and hold on tightly
To His hand with all your might;
Do not fret and don't you worry
In the morning comes the Light.

Who Is Barack Obama?

By J. Nell Ford

Who Is Barack Obama?
He is the product of a dream deferred;
The child born before Abe Lincoln's cruise down the Mississippi River.

He is the bird that was captured, but sang his way out of the cage; the
blood of our forefathers left stained on the minds of the oppressed.

He is the great-great-grandson of the slaves driven by the sounds of chains, sounds of bare feet running through unknown marsh; the “hush” in each lullaby that your foremothers dared to moan during the daylight hours.

He is the grammar – unpublished in the books yet to be printed;
The diamond and the cut of each mountain that we failed to climb.
He is the “who” in each question unanswered in your history book;
He won the lottery back in 1865 – but was refused payments due to irreconcilable differences.

He is the rock that stands firm upon a cloud – that is supported by the vision and dream.

He is the beacon of light found on the dark night beach shore –
searching for the child who is crying “can you help me?”

He is the wheel of the chariots that took ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulon and lead the way to Mount Tabor; the “hum” in the songs of praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

He is the face of every American who ever hoped, wished, dreamed, imagined, struggle, given, taken, buried, begged, ran, fallen and yet... he refused to give up.

Who, then, is Barack Obama? He is the 44th President of the United States of America.

I See Walls

By Shelly Cameron

I see walls on every side of me.
Dark walls. Brick walls.
Walls that are made out of steel and the toughest stone.

I can't see my way through.
I'm overwhelmed,
but then I am comforted in the knowledge that you Lord can see for me.
As I hold onto you, you embrace me and hold me firm.
You comfort with the words,
All will be well and Everything is going to be alright.

But still my heart longs for those days when I don't have to worry.
You are in control and I long for your quiet peace. A peace that passes all understanding.
Unto you I lift up my praise.
My heart yearns for you as in a dry and thirsty land.
For with Christ in the vessel I know I can smile at the storm.

CLAY IN THE POTTER'S HANDS

By Rosemarie Cole

MOTIONLESS

DARK

BROKEN

Hard is Clay in the Potter's hands
He begins to press and mold
For the shape to take hold
He wants to put Clay on a stand

BEAUTIFUL

CLEAN

SMOOTH

Refined is Clay in the Potter's hands
On display, for all to see
Earthen vessel of honor to be
In that far away land

RESTORED

SHINY

GLORIOUS

Perfect is Clay in the Potter's hands
An eternal masterpiece
The Potter is well pleased
For that was the original plan

How to listen to your better half – just do it!

A lesson from Ben Cowins to help the fellows get their Groove Back

By Benjamin Cowins Sr.

Do it the easy way

Do it your way

Do it her/his way

Do it with class

Do it class-less

Do it at home

Do it away from home

Do it twice or more

Do it with friends

Do it the Dr. Ben's way

Do it slow and easy

Do it slipping and sliding

Do it quickly
Do it by ignoring her/him
Do it the academy award way

Do it like an educator
Do it like an author
Do it at any age
Do it well
Do it like a hero or she-ro

Do it with energy
Do it with enthusiasm
Do it with a happy-face
Do it rocking and rolling
Do it standing-up

Do it sitting down
Do it without lying
Do it with a straight face
Do it while watching TV
Do it with a smile

Do it in the car
Do it in the home
Do it quietly

Do it with a gift, do it intentionally, do it happily, just listen!

A New Era

By Susan Lycett Davis

Teams, Zoom, Face-time.....Skype
Suddenly it's more than just a hype
Businesses are now forced to see
The value in conducting work remotely.

This pandemic, deadly as it may be
Has had a positive effect on society
Some areas that show great change...
Relationships, social connections, technology, the spectrum and range.

The world's been taught to be polite, without being tactile
Gestures of goodwill have taken on a much different profile.

Social distancing, which isn't foreign to some
Has brought appreciation for having space to go and come.

Suddenly technology is not just associated with millennials and geeks
The world now understand that this is what productivity seeks
Remote working will become the norm
As the generational gap closed-in on how we perform.

Communication, especially listening, has been much improved
Conference calls and virtual meetings have become the groove
A better understanding of other's roles have been borne
While new cultures and structures are being formed.

It's a new Era.... Things will never be the same
Covid- 19 is letting us know it came
We've lost loved ones at a speed that wasn't dope
But through it all we must cling to hope.

Hope of a better tomorrow.... A life that is HIP
Humble, intentional, prepared and equipped.
To live a life of service and care
In the knowledge that God is indeed near.

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A Prayer of Hope

Abraham Thomas

Father, "our hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness. We dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock we stand. All other ground is sinking sand" Father, we love You and thank You for what You are doing in our lives, as we hunker down as the children of Israel did on the night of pestilence. We sit with the lamb's blood on the door posts of our hearts.

Father, we recognize that You have been good to us. You have been better to us than we have been to ourselves. Even in times like these, we see Your goodness and Your mercy. You are still waking us up, starting us on our way. Even though many of us can't go anywhere, we are in our right minds. We have roofs over our heads and food on our tables. Even for those who don't have abundance, You have provided way stations throughout the community where Your children can go to obtain food.

My understanding is too weak, Father, to try to comprehend what You are doing. All I know is if You are doing it, it is being done for our best. Your word tells us that all things work together for the good. We love You, Father, I love You. I thank You for my soul's salvation that You gave me through Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the dead with all-power in His hands. I thank You for the Holy Ghost that Jesus gave me to dwell inside my heart and control me.

Father, as You deal with the Coronavirus, please have mercy on the people who have no choice but to go to work. Protect them and shield them from danger. Control their minds so that the devastation of what they are experiencing will not weigh heavily on them. Lighten the load they bear. Jesus as you take care of the care givers and walk the halls where our Father's children lay stricken with the Coronavirus, give them Your healing touch and restore their health. And, Dear Jesus, when you enter a room where the old tent is leaning and leaking too much, give them a home in Your Kingdom.

Father, I deliberately did not deal with the political aspects of what is going on. I did so because I didn't want to appear to be partisan. This is far more important than the sides people find themselves on. This is about the well-being of Your children. However, I do thank You for the revival the Coronavirus is causing. More and more people, in their desperation, are turning to You, and that's a good thing.

Thank You for Drs. Hogges and Cowins who have encouraged the members of the Writers Group to write while spending time waiting for things to get better. Give them clear minds and objective vision so that the story of Your mighty works can be chronicled as a testimony of (how we got over) Your goodness and mercy, bless our homes, in Jesus' name I pray, Your servant Abraham, Amen.

PIONEERING SPIRIT

By Joan Cartwright

Focus on your goals because all your wants and needs
Are different from everybody else's
Listen to your heart, your dreams and your thoughts
Don't go jumping on the wagon just to follow the crowd

If your true opinion is not popular,
Go on record as the real opposing force
A significant minority agrees, but they're scared
They know you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt
That you are a pioneering spirit

You're not here to compete, so, feel free about yourself
You are gifted in art and land and food
Have the confidence you need to accept that you'll succeed

Never doubt that you've a right to all that's good

Keep your mind on your money; save it for a rainy day
Peace of mind is a valuable thing
Stand up tall for your rights without underhanded schemes
Fight back and watch the onlookers sing

If your true opinion is so unpopular
Go on record as the real opposing force
A significant minority thinks you're right, but they're scared
They know you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt
That you are a pioneering spirit

Claim your power; raise your ego
Don't put yourself down; pick it up
Praise your mind your body and your soul
Let the old disappear; go and try something new
Make a positive attitude be the beacon of YOU!

Keep your mind on your money; save it for a rainy day
Peace of mind I a valuable thing
Stand up tall for your rights without underhanded schemes
Fight back and watch the onlookers sing

Everybody's got a problem, a cross, a wall
Face it. Talk about it. Walk that mile
Take a break from your family, be a rabbit on the run
Take a chance, you might meet that guy or girl
On the fly, through the sky, you ascend to on high
On the fly, you are a pioneering spirit

Going nowhere? School's no thrill?
Find a subject, if you will
That can open your heart and feed your face
You see, money you get doing something, truly, you don't like
Is just hanging with the joneses on the take

Your opinions may not always be too popular,
Go on record as the real opposing force
A significant minority agree, but they are scared
'Cause they know you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt
That, like you, who does exactly what you do,
They're the same in this game

And they see to be free they must be
Pioneering spirits, too!

Pioneering Spirit © 2003 Joan Cartwright

Childhood Bliss

By Lisa James

When I was a child
I was quiet & shy
My eyes looked at the world
One glimpse at a time
But several observations
Captured my imagination

My mind was my safe haven
I didn't care to speak
But spoke when
I was spoken to
Always respectful
Always disciplined
But purposefully quiet

I had the most delightful
Conversations
With me myself & I
I was never bored
I was never lonely
I didn't cry

I lived happily
In my own little world
It comforted my soul
It made me feel whole
It made me feel free
Therefore
I could always be me

That truly made me smile
Because I didn't have to hide
It allowed my dreams to grow
It allowed my thoughts to flow

It allowed me to find
Ways to captivate my mind

I discovered my greatest
Passion, love & joy was to write
It actually kept me up most nights
It helped me to explore
And kept me motivated
Passionately wanting
To learn more & more

The words ran through my veins
And through my fingers
And on to each page
Such a continuous
And poetic flow
I could write for hours you know

Every thought that I had
Whether I was angry, happy, scared or sad
I could write down how it made me feel
I could be honest,
I could be truthful
I could be real

It took away my fears
It made me want to share
For I could speak through my words
And now finally I could be heard
In a beautiful & awesome way
It's like speaking to God
When I Pray

It soothes my soul
And comforts my mind
It makes me peaceful
Keeps me aligned

So thank you Father God
For this Precious Gift
I'm truly blessed because of it

I'm very grateful
Yet still somewhat shy

But when I write
I'm confident & full of pride
I feel like a Spiritual ButterFly
Cause when I write
I'm able to FLY

Written & Credit by Poet Lisa Lee Love James
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LAST TIME

By Ettosi Brooks

The last time I saw Jamaica I'd said goodbye to my heart.
I lost it somewhere between Hope Gardens and Constant Spring.

So we meet, So we part.
I remember staring at the bus as it retreated from me carrying my love, hopes and dreams.
The moon, impassive to human foolishness, sent a soft shimmering sound floating by.
I looked through tear veiled eyes at her hand, bright fullness.
A baby in her mother's arms stared at me. You know, the way children do as if it was
God looking at you through their eyes.
Now, the child full blossoming with the careless beauty of youth, sashays past me.
I knew it was her at once, but she did not know me. How could she?
It had been twenty years.
She was elbowing me. Smiling. "memba?"
"Yes,"
Early morning. The birds were singing – Percussive patterns skipping like a game of
Dandy Shandy through the sultry air.
Drum...
Riiidid...
In the mall people, step, stride, shuffle.

Riiidim...
The same ones the taxi driver used to navigate the streets.
And Stop!!!
Someone break the ridim.
Almost cause an accident.
The driver slowed down, cursed.
And, six eight time speed toward the hills.
My eyes clung to them – a life support till we reach.
Masses of yellow butterflies swarmed soft.

The child again... this time she was flying. Circling above my head.

"Take my heart with you."

"But.... What will you do without it?"

"Silly!" said the wise one.

"I won't care because you will always be a part of me."

So every now and then, sitting at my desk frozen shouldered, she comes by wafting her Apple rose perfume, tapping out a rhythm with slender fingers on the wooden desk.

"Memb?"

Shoulders drop soft, no snap, no pop in my spine. Now they undulate like the Red Hills.

"Yes, of course. Ah 'Memb."

The Secret of Love To My Loving Husband

By Rhodessia Strong

I'm glad we took time to think together; it strengthened our relationship.

I'm glad we took time to pray and worship the Lord together in love.

I'm glad we took time to be friendly to each other; it was the road to the happiness we shared.

I'm glad we took time to work. It was the price of success.

I'm glad we took time to pray; it was the greatest power of the earth.

I'm glad we took time to forgive, for it strengthened our marriage.

I'm glad we took time to spend time together, for we experienced a true love.

I'm glad we took time to love and be loved, for it was the way of God.

Though I am glad, I will miss the door opening for your arrival at 4:15pm.

Though I am glad, I will miss watching the 10:00 o'clock news with you.

Though I am glad, I will miss you letting out your recliner while I'm letting out mine.

Though I am glad, I will miss us shopping and doing all the things we enjoyed together.

Though I am glad, I will miss the path you made from your side of the bed to mine, it is fading.

Though I am glad, I will miss your embrace, your touch and your kiss...

Love, Your Rose

Mommy Dearest

By Samuel J. Strong III

To the mom I love whom no one can replace.

In which my heart will always have space.

For all the times you showed me you cared.

If no one else I knew, you'd be there.

Word's can't express what I feel inside.

And my love for thee, I will not hide.
When you see me now, you can rest assured.
For Life's struggle has made me mature.
If I had one wish, do you know what it will be?
That my dearest Mom live out all her dreams.
I Love You Mom.
Your hard work payed off.

.....

Ode to COVID – 19

By Rose Stiffin

Conspiracy theories abound. You were created out of hatred, punishment, mutation.

Operating through deliveries, pickups, curb side deliveries, social distancing and mask that make us look like criminals are the new normal.

Victims of the infection come from the poor, the tired, the downtrodden and the hungry. In other words, the same people that any disease has attacked have been us.

Isaiah prophesied this would happen and what to do. Heed his words.

Distancing is the key.

19 more reasons are not listed.

It's Fair

By Susie L. Ingram

He walked in astute, in red shoes, black pants and black shirt. The color block emblem on his long sleeve coordinated with his red shoes. Indeed, he was the next speaker abroad the panel of writers to speak. A colleague introduced him, but making sure to include a mocking memorance of his past. Yes it was jokingly said, but overtly meant that the red shoes should have been lost along the way a long time ago.

"He so then," carried on his speech with dignity and pride. "He so," sounded loud and strong. "He so" said, "This is how I got to where I am today." He said so, "This building you're sitting is because of me." "And so," he went on to say, "These new and paved streets is caused by me." "And so," he then said, "Somebody ought to write this."

"And so," the conclusion as a writer, I saw the mystery of his work become the magic of his embodiment. He challenged the writers and so he said, "Who will read this story of one can't read?" "And so," I began to write a story like this. Johnny can't read, but saw and read those

red shoes. "And so," he became the mystery that makes one want to read. "And so," he was the magic when he said, "Somebody ought to write this story."

Writers of Color in South Florida

Some were born in the United States. Others were born in Jamaica, Bahamas, Haiti and numerous other countries. They are the writers of color in South Florida pursuing their literary craft as beginning, emerging and established writers.

Adhering to the Philosophy, *those who don't know, come to learn; and those who know, come to teach others*, as put forth by The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins Writers Group of South Florida, they are the creative and intellectual writers and leaders of the South Florida Literary Renaissance.

Because we want you to get to know about them and their books, we have provided this contact information, including their names, titles of some of their books, email addresses, and websites. We encourage you to communicate with them. Invite them to do book readings, signings and keynote speeches at your venues and events, and serve as special guests on your television and radio programs. Buy their books and share their contact information with your relatives, friends and others.

Name & Title of Books	Email Address	Website
1. Linda Adderly Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none">From Where I Stand	addlmh@aol.com	
2. Lorraine Allen Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none">57 Poems Of & For Life	lallen5915@aol.com	
3. Dr. Nivia Binett-Carroll	niviaphd@gmail.com	
4. Vivia Bromfield Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none">On Eagles Wings	vbrom1061@yahoo.com	
5. Ettosi Brooks Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stori, Stori: Caribbean Tales with a Little Jazz	tosisong@gmail.com	https://ettosibrooks.org

6. Thelma Calloway thelma48@bellsouth.net
7. Dr. Shelly Cameron scameron@ccahr.com www.shellycameron.com
Books:
 - Success Strategies of Caribbean American Leaders in the United States
 - Motivation Quotes to Boost Your Success
 - Green Light: When God Says Go
8. Jeff Carroll coachyojeff@gmail.com <https://www.amazon.com/default/e/BOONEN9GOA/>
Books:
 - The Harlem Shake
 - Welcome to Boss Lady's Planet
 - Rasheeda the Zombie Killer
9. Dr. Joan Cartwright asalhsouthflorida@gmail.com
Book:
 - Blues Women: First Civil Rights Workers
10. Dawn Ellicott Clinkscale anuday4you@gmail.com
11. Rosemarie Cole ocole8760@aol.com rosemariecole.com
Books:
 - The Playground Bully
 - A Call to Repentance
 - Romance 31.... The Marriage Booklets
12. Corey B. Collins 8277co@bellsouth.net
Book:
 - The Thanks You Get
13. Sheila Cottingham g24sheba@yahoo.com
14. Steven Cottingham g24sheba@yahoo.com

15. Dr. Benjamin Cowins, Sr. cowinsb2002us@yahoo.com

Books:

- Positive Thoughts – They are in the mirror with you: Valued Affirmations, Motivating and Inspirational Sharings for Youths and the Young-at-Heart
- The Cowins History and Heritage: A Literary Journey about an African American Family that was anchored by Albert and Sarah Cowins in the 1800s in Warren County, Georgia
- The Vietnam War – Black Bullets, Flashbacks & Untold Truths
- The Art of Good Cursing
- High Hopes and Challenging Realities: Defeating Racial Problems at Florida International University 1972 – 1982
- Blesses and Too Smart to Fail Too: Inspirational Affirmations with Biblical Scripture References for Youths and the Young-at-Heart

16. Melissa Hunter Davis editor@sugarcane-media.net

17. Dr. Susan Lycett Davis sdavis@nova.edu www.drsueandyou.net

Books:

- I am Jamaica
- Ode to Miss Lou... From the Soul of Dr. Sue
- Ode to Miss Lou... and many more from Dr. Sue

18. Raymond Dunn Dunnsr859@bellsouth.net

Book:

- The Robin That Could Not Sing

19. Vernell Everett vern1936@bellsouth.net

Books:

- Beyond Fear
- The Shady Side of the Street
- Unknown Heroes

20. Daisy Ferguson promed007@att.net

daisymferguson.com

Books:

- Congregational Prayer by the Word
- Congregational Prayer by the Word – Volume 2

21. Dr. Dorothy Jenkins Fields djf@bellsouth.net

22. J. Nell Ford 143jford@comcast.net

Books:

- The Doodle Bug Story
- Champ: Our Neighborhood Dog
- A Visit to Doodle Bird Island

23. Gary Francis gary@touchingmiamiwithlove.org

Book:

- Where's My Father?

24. Camille Frazer camfrazer@yahoo.com

Book:

- The Unveiling

25. Richard Gibson rgibson66@yahoo.com

26. Bea Hines bea.hines@gmail.com

27. Dr. Ralph Hogges ralphhogges@bellsouth.net www.ralphhogges.com

Books:

- Inspired by the Harlem Renaissance
- Poetic Splendor of the Morning
- The Love of Books and Academic Excellence: A Memoir
- Crossing the Jordan River: Reflections on My Spiritual Journey
- Forty Years in Academia: Farewell to My World of Great Books and Renowned Scholars
- Me and My Best Friend: Making the Best of Our Later Years
- Living a Purposeful and Meaningful Life: Sermons and Words of Wisdom to Help You along the Way
- Seven Short Stories and Eight Poems
- Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama: Presidents Extraordinaire of the World
- Dr. King's Dream and Barack Obama: Yes We Can
- Lifting Our Literary Voices: An Anthology of Poetry, Short Stories and Essays
- The Life and Legacy of Nelson Mandela: Blueprint for a New Humanity –
accepted for publication by the History Publishing Company (HPC), LLC of
Palisades, New York

28. Susie Ingram richleeing@yahoo.com
Book:
• God Lives Here Too
29. Donald Irving acts238_us@yahoo.com
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32. Esther Johnson queenestherj@att.net
33. Lateresa Jones lajonesusa@gmail.com
34. Lyra Brizzard Logan lyra@webmaster-e.net
Book:
• Learn to Program with App Inventor
35. Dr. Willie Logan logan@olcdc.org
36. Emma Martin emmaleemartin777@gmail.com
Book:
• I Cried Out and He Heard Me
37. Audrey Moss mossr1971@yahoo.com
38. George Moss george@GMOSSDESIGN.COM www.gmossdesign.com
Book:
• The Chronicles of Ann & Lo
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40. Rudy Murray, Jr. rudymurray1977@gmail.com
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42. Dr. Kitty Oliver oliverko@aol.com www.kittyoliveronline.com

Books:

- Multicolored Memories of a Black Southern Girl (University Press of Kentucky)
- Voices of America: Race and Change in Hollywood Florida (Arcadia Press)
- Multicultural Reflections on Race and Change (Bordighera Press)

43. Angela Thomas Peterson freeanntp@yahoo.com

Books:

- This Too Shall Pass (Christian)
- Through the Eyes of God... Poetic Messages of Hope (Poetry)
- I'm Not a Giant, I'm Just a Big Kid! (Children's anti-bullying book)

44. Dr. Anne S. Pruitt-Logan annepruitt19@msn.com www.lucydiggsslowe.com

Book:

- Faithful to the Task at Hand: The Life of Lucy Diggs Slowe

45. Patricia Reid-Waugh preidwaugh@yahoo.com www.reidwaughbooks.com

Book:

- Retirement: A New Adventure

46. Sharon Ritchie-Brown srbrown6176@gmail.com

Book:

- Retribution of Madness

47. Dr. Indiana Robinson inyaso@hotmail.com

Books:

- Pioneers: First and Second Book of Proverbs and Social Commentary in and of Songs
- The ABCs of APA: An Incoming Student Inspiration Guide
- Confronting Escapism: Retreating Back to Reality

48. Stephanie Cottingham Rodriguez scottingham88@gmail.com

49. Kyrie R. Samuel gracecos1@gmail.com

Book:

- Kyrie Love Grandma Soooo Much

50. George Simpson georgeasimpsonjr@mail.com

51. Dr. Delores M. Smiley mixsmi45@bellsouth.net smileypresentations.com

Books:

- The Harvest: Keeping it Real
- The Journey: From the Garden of Eden to the Promised Land

52. Dearta Smith dcstherapy@gmail.com www.deartasmith.com

Books:

- Will You Read With Me?
- A Snack for Samuel
- I looked in the Mirror

53. Aliya Stanford ananda0601@bellsouth.net

Book:

- Princess So'la, In My World

54. Dr. Rose Stiffin rstiffin@FMUNIV.EDU

Books:

- Casino Blues
- Groovin' on a Half Shell
- A Winter Friend

55. Rhodesia Strong rhodesia@aol.com

56. Rev. Abraham J. Thomas athoma43@bellsouth.net

Books:

- Gilbert Lawrence Porter, Ph.D.
- Everybody Loves Skeeter
- The Heat Man

57. Arnetha A. Thomas arnethathomas@aol.com

Book:

- Get Through, Going Through Life

58. Dr. Thea Long White theawhite8910@gmail.com

Book:

- Sprouting into Success

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Book:
• To God be the Glory
61. Nikisha Williams nikisha@omiokunbooks.com
62. Tameka Williams-Walker williamseducationfl@gmail.com www.williamseducationfl.org
Books:
• 10 Questions to Help You Find That Amazing Partner
• Take Back Your Life: How to Triumph through Adversity
63. Virginia Williams vwilliams53@bellsouth.net
64. Asiah Wolfolk-Manning asiahunlimited@gmail.com www.asiahunlimited.com
Books:
• Unlimit Yourself
• Be Empowered: A to Z
• Teen Motivation 101: Ten Secrets of High School Success

“The Legacy of Books

As humans, we die, but books live on forever,

Culturally and Intellectually,

Enriching the lives of Future Generations.”

--- Ralph Hogges
(www.ralphhogges.com)