

Poems of Solidarity for Haiti

This a collection of all the poems submitted to a poetry contest
in support of the people of Haiti
in the aftermath of the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

*Contest held by
Alice Lovelace, Armed with Art
and In Motion Magazine*

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Introduction

Million Plus Remain Homeless and Displaced in Haiti: One Year After Quake

by Bill Quigley and Jeena Shah

One year after the January 12, 2010 earthquake, more than a million people remain homeless in Haiti. Homemade shelters and tents are everywhere in Port au Prince. People are living under plastic tarps or sheets in concrete parks, up to the edge of major streets, in the side streets, behind buildings, in between buildings, on the sides of hills, literally everywhere.

UNICEF estimates that more than 1 million people – 380,000 of them children – still live in displacement camps. “The recovery process” as UNICEF says, “is just beginning.”

One of the critical questions is how many people remain without adequate housing. While there are fewer big camps of homeless and displaced people, there has been extremely little rebuilding. The UN reported that 97,000 tents have been provided since the quake. Tents are an improvement over living under a sheet but they are not homes. Many families have lived many places in the last year circulating from rough shelters to tents to camps to other camps to living alongside other families.

It is important to understand that families may leave the huge unsupervised camps and still be homeless someplace else – like a tent in another part of the city or country. Moving from one type of homelessness to another cannot be allowed to be declared progress against homelessness and displacement.

The key human rights goal is housing, not moving out of the displacement camps.

One illustration of the housing challenge facing the Haitian people can be found in a recent report from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The IOM December report announced a reduction in the number of persons remaining in displacement camps. The IOM then wrongly concluded that the number of people displaced and homeless was reduced accordingly. Why is this conclusion wrong? Because the IOM report does not even try to track where displaced persons go after they leave a particular camp. They equate homeless families moving out of displacement camps as families finding housing.

These types of erroneous conclusions are not only misleading but threaten to hinder badly needed relief efforts one year after Haiti’s devastating earthquake.

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Careful consideration of the IOM report provides an opportunity to examine some of the many important housing challenges still facing Haitians.

IOM Assertion: “We finally start to see light at the end of the tunnel for the earthquake-affected population ... these are hopeful signs that many victims of the quake are getting on with their lives.” IOM reported there has been a 31% decrease in the number of internally displaced people living on IDP sites in Haiti since July.

Fact: Getting on with their lives? Of an estimated 1,268 displacement camps, at least 29% have been forcibly closed – meaning tens of thousands of people have been evicted, often through violent means. Many who are forcibly evicted from one site move on to set up camp for their families in another location, which is often more dangerous. This is not getting on with life; this is searching for less dangerous places for the family tent.

IOM Assertion: People with houses labeled red (uninhabitable or extremely dangerous) or yellow (in need of repair) have “chosen to return to the place of origin or nearby to establish a shelter.”

Fact: As of December 16, 2010, only 2,074 of the estimated 180,000 destroyed houses had been repaired and a small percentage of rubble had been cleared. Decisions by desperate homeowners to move back into still destroyed homes is hardly progress.

It is also not even possible for large numbers of people who were renters to return to their destroyed homes. The destruction of more than 180,000 private residences coupled with influx of international aid workers has made Haiti’s rental market soar. An estimated 80% of those rendered homeless by the earthquake were renters or occupiers of homes without any formal land title. Current rents are unreachable by the majority of displaced Haitians, many of whom who lost their means of livelihood during the earthquake. The IOM admits “The lack of land tenure and the destruction of many houses in already congested slums left many of those displaced with few options but to remain in shelters.”

IOM Assertion: “Some households rendered homeless after the earthquake left congested Port au Prince all-together going home to the regions. Others sent their children to the countryside for a better life.”

Fact: Rural Haiti before the earthquake was home to 52% of the population, 88% of which was poor and 67% was extremely poor. Rural residents had a per capita income one third of the income of people living in urban areas and extremely limited access to basic services. Disaster response following the earthquake has not tackled the extreme structural violence that exists in rural areas, and Hurricane Tomas further destroyed livelihoods of rural communities. People moving from displacement camps in the city to living in a tent in the countryside have not really moved out of homelessness, they have just moved.

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IOM Assertion: “Surviving in poor living conditions during the long hurricane season has persuaded many to seek alternative housing solutions.”

Fact: Homeless people are always seeking “alternative housing solutions.” Camp conditions even before Hurricane Tomas and the cholera outbreak revealed that displaced Haitians were in camps because they had no “alternative housing solutions.” According to a study conducted by CUNY Professor Mark Schuller before both Hurricane Tomas and the outbreak of cholera, 40% of displacement camps did not have access to water, and 30% did not have toilets of any kind. Only 10% of families even had a tent, many of which were ripped beyond repair during the hurricane season; the rest were sleeping under tarps or even bed sheets. A study conducted even earlier by the Institute of Justice & Democracy in Haiti found that 78% of families lived without enclosed shelter; 44% of families primarily drank untreated water; 27% of families defecated in a container, a plastic bag, or on open ground in the camps; and 75% of families had someone go an entire day without eating during one week and over 50% had children who did not eat for an entire day.

Human rights promise housing, not just forcing people away from displacement camps. Haiti needs practical and sustainable solutions for re-housing along with services and protections for the people still homeless.

One year later, it is critically important for the international community to assist Haitians to secure real housing. The million homeless Haitians and the hundreds of thousands who have moved out of the large homeless camps into other areas are our sisters and brothers and still need our solidarity and help.

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Contest Winners

A Sharecropper's Pantoum

M. Ayodele Heath

for a dry season

The drug cocktails that have slashed the mortality rate of HIV-positive people in the U.S. and Western Europe are all but non-existent in Haiti. [O]nly 3 to 4 percent of people with AIDS [there] have access to the newest drugs.
— Alfredo S. Lanier, *The Chicago Tribune*, 2003

Hauling this pine box on a black Chevrolet,
I pray to a candle at the end of its wick.
White burial clothes in a garbage bag,
I ride for a place to die.

I pray to a candle at the end of its wick
on the mud road home from Port-au-Prince
and ride toward a place to die
where mangoes hang and sugarcane turns.

By the dust road home from Port-au-Prince,
I am a black skeleton — 6 feet tall, yet 90 pounds —
where mangoes hang and sugarcane burns.
I turned the earth before I got this thing.

A lesioned skeleton — a rainbow tall, now 70 pounds —
I dream across the waters and of the miracles there
and turn to earth in the jaws of this thing:
eyes — black holes, lungs — green clouds.

Dreaming across the waters and of the miracles there,
white burial clothes in a garbage bag,
eyes — black holes, lungs — green clouds,
I haul my pine coffin in a black Chevrolet.

©2010 by M. Ayodele Heath

This poem won First Place in the Poems of Solidarity for Haiti Contest.

Ayiti

by April 'AP' Smith

You ...
You be Caribbean;
You be French, Indian, and West African: Creole;
You be rich;
You be gold;
You be indigo, coffee bean, and sugar cane; you be sweet,
Beautiful,
Exploited: nigger, slave, coon, chattel;
(But) you be King and Queen, the dream
Before Martin through your own coup d'états;
You be rebellious, revolution, Napoleon defeating,
Gifted; you be Toussaint,
Courageous, Jean-Jacque;
You be 1804: Freedom, Saint Domingue reversed:
You be Ayiti, rooted like Arawak;
You be rock;
You be mountain;
You be strong;
You be back-bone against 32 counts of civil unrest,
Resilient in danger zones;
You be blessed;
You be death by the hand of US Marines,
30,000 in the "knapsacks" of the Tonton Macoute regimes;
You be protest; uproar and war;
You be Yele, YELL-ING so loud
You be exiled: you be Jean-Bertrand Aristide;
You be priest against French inequalities,
Operation Uphold Democracy,
Unwanted,
Sanctioned, cut-off, and sucked dry;
You be bankrupt with no allies,
Butt-naked, bare: in the nude for charcoal and fuel;
You be mudslides, tropical storms, rubble & debris;
You be natural,
Disaster times fifteen;

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Ayiti by **April "AP" Smith** ... continued

Tsunamis, & earthquakes; you be after shakes,
Cracked, fractured, splintered, buried, battered & bruised,

But you ... ,

You never break;
You be remarkable,
Amazing, gritty, and brave;
You be diamond in the rough,
tough, unrelenting,
Courage made of blood, sweat, and tears;
You be soul and blues, smooth and cool,
made of pearl: La Perle des Antilles,
Precious gem,
Ancient and young:
206 years and still number 1;
You be independent
black nation,
Wise & steadfast;
You be Ayiti ,
rooted like Arawak;
You be rock;
You be mountain;
You be strong;
You be strong;
You be strong;
You be strong;
You be strong,
back-bone against 32 counts of civil unrest,
Resilient in danger zones;
You be blessed;

You
Be
Survival!

©2010 by April "AP" Smith

This poem won 2nd Place in the Poems of Solidarity for Haiti Contest.

Wings Soaked in Molasses

by **Darnell Fine**

Seismic activity
Is only felt by those who
Rise from captivity
With Icarus wings
Soaked in molasses
Da Vinci flyin machines
Tied to the throat of the masses
Held the sky like kites with lynch ropes
But cut ties with Europe's horizon
Flew to the fault lines of mountain tops
But they don't see
Saint Domingue
From the summit
Cuz when the left hand of Christ
Is nailed across the Western Hemisphere
Blood don't trickle down past Cuba
It still follows one-drop rules of
Politicized sickle cell
Cataclysm existed well
Before 7.0 hit the Richter scale
When sacrifice and salvation
Is only extended
If it's part of anti-communist agendas
Only if the
Wood from your rafts
Can be used to crucify Castro

If this be by the hands of God
You must admit
Your Lord has Parkinson's
And that catastrophe hung in the balance
When you sung prayer songs,
Dancing ballet devastation
Tapping into the resources of sugar plantations

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Wings Soaked in Molasses by **Darnell Fine** ... continued

It's not cuz they had a pact with the Devil
It's cuz you signed a contract with God
That leased them off as property
So they hold on to Yoruba religion
Like it's the missin link to their humanity

Beat tom-toms when tremors
Leave Haiti broken, bleeding
Leaking from the same mouth
That demanded revolution
Unable to move when
Her legs are trapped underneath
Tons of concrete hatred
As hypocrites add their 2 cents in
One cent less than what America paid when
Each acre of the Louisiana Purchase was sold
Haiti is owed
Everything west of the Mississippi
And the U.S. profits made from slavery
So when Rush Limbaugh talks of
How much Haitians depend on foreign aid he
Maybe should mention the U.S.
Being built on Triangular Trading
And the sugar cane drained from Haiti

Sugar cane be
The crutch that held up
European economies
When men were cargo
Black skin like barcodes; property
And we still counting bodies
From the rubble of 1800s embargoes
And today's debris of immigration policies
The 150 million former slaves paid
France for their own freedom
Crippled Haiti's economy for centuries

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Wings Soaked in Molasses by **Darnell Fine** ... continued

And there are still historians
That don't record Haiti's movement
As revolution
Because slave property doesn't build republics
When they don't work, they malfunction

So Sankofa bird refugees
Seek freedom
Trapped in Diasporas
Speak Creole
With cracked esophagus
In the oppressor's language
Article 12 of their 1804 constitution stated:
No white man can own property
Then the wording of Article 13:
The Polish, Germans
Or any white person
(even British)
Can become a Haitian citizen
And finally Article 14,
Stating matter-of-factly:
ALL Haitians are BLACK
See, Haiti said Black was more than beautiful
Before your heroes knew the ground was shaking

A pan-African country
With a sugar cane history
That looks at the future like a memory
Reads birth certificates as eulogies
But they don't need saving
Just prophecies of the past
To foresee the un-weaving of Fate's tapestry
Re-braided back with reparations
Absent of US intervention
And French imperialism
I wonder if the world will pay attention to Haiti

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Wings Soaked in Molasses by **Darnell Fine** ... continued

Don't do long-term genocides justice
When US Occupation left
Haiti pinned inside the clutches
Of poverty
Army fatigues camouflage well with
Capitalist intentions
Our relief efforts don't make sense cuz
We already left them penniless
Our text message donations
Are just words of comfort Janjaweed
Give women of Darfur—machete in hand
It will take more than Hitler singing
Silent Night to Jews in gas chambers
To give them oxygen

©2010 by Darnell Fine

This poem won an Honorable Mention in the Poems of Solidarity for Haiti Contest.

Haiti, after Pat Robertson

by Karen Garrbrant

Haiti
this is how thoroughly
we refuse to know you

we mistake wide open eye around a fire
as possessed
crazy
primitive
animal

we mistake your strengths
your rebellions in the name of life and freedom
as wild

the suckling wrinkled paper flesh
who have never had to question roof
next meals
shoes

or whereabouts of missing loved ones
mouth a collective belief system
that ills are self-inflicted by sin
---they make easy diagnostic accusations
Behind the sheen
of tinted windows
and pine sol-shined pulpit

never mind fever blisters
roiling across Atlantic
severe weather systems
breaking out under earthen skin
tectonic plates shift
crumpling volcanic hells
---nobody gets out
alive.

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Haiti, after Pat Robertson by **Karen Garrbrant** ... continued

sacrificial goat
blood rite
broken necks of hens
mojo pouches
and hoodoo
call your wise men and shamans
“voodoo” and “witch” doctor
branding our ignorance with our pale tongues
frightened of your ancient medicines

(meanwhile, we sneak off to altars of Marie Laveau
to hear our prayers and wishes when our own g-ds
are disgusted by our perverted motives)

reference Salem
reference self-righteous proclamation
reference Bible thudding when thumped
reference the words beneath leather bindings
aching for proper translation

we look down our white, peninsular nose
of swamp, glade, primordial teeth
and Floridian oranges without rhyme
at you

dangling

like New Orleans
you are
our mirror
reflecting back heartless Puritanism
unbuckling
and the loose lips wag the tails of
dogs

yet the clamoring white jaws
need your spells

continued on next page

Haiti, after Pat Robertson by ***Karen Garrbrant*** ... continued

they jones for you
uptight in their fraternity ties
they get off on the smell of street
because the thumb of their twisted version of g-d
squishes them
into shaken beer bottles and ejaculate
bulging hard only on vacation
you have been whored like bourbon street
for sugar and too much rum.

we are conquerors of witches
by fire and stake
so beware of what we send
in the name
of "help."

©2010 by Karen Garrbrant

This poem won an Honorable Mention in the Poems of Solidarity for Haiti Contest.

Everybody Running, Saying Jesus

by **Jenny D'Angelo**

The walls coming together and going backwards, in and out.
The furniture moving, mother screaming.

Everywhere people covered in blood, limbs in the street.
In between the bodies, the children cry.

The second night and the third night you do not sleep.
You are scared people will come and do something bad.

You don't have anything but spaghetti and the clothes on your back.
You don't know what your future will be.

Every day you go and get all the ice and water you can carry.
You take it to people who have nothing.

Life is very hard, but you are strong.
The orphans are singing and praying for the people around them.

There is too much work to be done.
Today you have to save lives.

Using a 10-foot plastic pipe, you pass packets of water
and energy bars threaded on a wire to a man under the rubble.

You don't have time to cry right now.
Tomorrow you cry.

©2010 by Jenny D'Angelo

This poem won an Honorable Mention in the Poems of Solidarity for Haiti Contest.

Tomorrow's Toussaints

by **Kalamu ya Salaam**

this is Haiti, a state
slaves snatched from surprised masters,
its high lands, home of this
world's sole successful
slave revolt, Haiti, where
freedom has flowered and flown
fascinating like long necked
flamingoes gracefully feeding
on snails in small pinkish
sunset colored sequestered ponds

despite the meanness
and meagerness of life
eked out of eroding soil
and from exploited urban toil, there
is still so much beauty here in this
land where the sea sings roaring a shore
and fecund fertile hills lull and roll
quasi human in form

there is beauty here
in the unyielding way
our people,
colored charcoal, and
banana beige, and
shifting subtle shades
of ripe mango, or strongly
brown-black, sweet
as the suck from
sun scorched staffs
of sugar cane,
have decided
we shall survive
we will live on

continued on next page

Tomorrow's Toussaints by ***Kalamu ya Salaam*** ... continued

a peasant pauses
clear black eyes
searching far out over the horizon
the hoe motionless, suspended
in the midst
of all this shit and suffering
forced to bend low
still we stop and stand
and dream and believe

we shall be released
we shall be released
for what slaves
have done
slaves can do

and that begets
the beauty

slaves can do.

©2010 by *Kalamu ya Salaam*

This poem won an Honorable Mention in the Poems of Solidarity for Haiti Contest.

All Other Poems Submitted

(in alphabetical order by poet's name)

The contest holders made the decision to include all poems that were submitted in this collection without editing or discrimination.

Black is the Color

*I go to Troublesome to mourn and weep . . .
-- Scottish folk song popular in Appalachia*

Franklin Abbott

18 January 2010, MLK Day, Stone Mountain

beloved
your mother
has broken
her back
your father
died in your quiver
long before
you joined him
you beloved poet
Yves/Assotto
beyond time
whisper prayers
Rumi-like
a flute in the wind of my ear:
help my people
and the midnight art
of our magic
will set you
free

Assotto Saint was the nom de plume of gay Haitian-American poet and performance artist Yves Lubin. Lubin emigrated from Haiti to New York with his mother at age 16. He was instrumental in publishing and publicizing the work of gay African American men and was a fiery poet and performer of his work. He was my friend and lover, a source of heat and solace in difficult times. He died of AIDS sixteen years ago.

Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair is an old Scottish ballad that was popular in many versions in Appalachia and was brought into high profile by the cover recorded by jazz singer Nina Simone. Her version omits the verse that speaks directly to death and grief.

The death and grief in Haiti is present with us all. There are many worthy organizations who need our financial support. My friends Myrl and Tom Trimble in Macon have been working with Haitian Hope which supports education at St Marc's Church School in Trouin, a small rural community about 10 miles from the capital, Port-au-Prince. Myrl said Trouin was devastated by the earthquake as well. Contributions can be made via St. Francis Church, Attn: Haitian Hope Project, 432 Forest Hill Rd. Macon, GA 31210.

©2010 by Franklin Abbott

Anger in Hiding

by **Anthonia Lametu Adams**

Anger
A thing that holds us back
Anger twists the souls,
Turns the heart black
Pushes you away from the one's you
Care for. Blinds you
From life, love
Takes you from home
Isolates you from
The world
Changes minds, emotions
Wishing for the things you lack
Forms from
Jealousy, greed
Destroys good judgment
Turns you
Heartless
But makes you
Stronger
More independent than
Before
Sees the world
Differently, hates,
Has no weakness because you care for
Nothing
Savage
Cruel, aggressive
To even the most delicate creature
Lost need of comfort from
Others
Doesn't desire
Joy
Looks of others
Forgotten
From years
Of staring

continued on next page

Anger in Hiding by **Anthonia Lametu Adams** ... continued

At nothing
So disgusted
Can't stand the smell harsher than
It's own scent

Colors blind
Gray, rock
Red, blood
Sacred colors
Only colors
In the world

Anger
Hot as
The sun
Jagged as lightning that
Streaks across
The sky
Or cool as the moon
Dark as night etched
Across the face
Wrinkles felt
Under eyes, over
Brows, beside
Lips where none
Should be
Lying within the
Cracks and crevices
Of
Your mind
Tearing at your
Insides
Slowly killing you
Within
Killing who you are
Or
What you
Were

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Anger in Hiding by ***Anthonia Lametu Adams*** ... continued

But what is Anger's
True power?

Fear.
Fear to be
Hurt again
Fear of
Losing
Of cowardliness and shame
Fear of not fulfilling
Your dream,
Of
Failure. Won't
Give anymore
Chances
To be
Hurt again
Not again.
Fear of fear
Itself
But too
Blinded with
Pride
To admit it

Anger
Masks you
From
Your other
Feelings
Draws your
Strength
And manipulates
It
Keeps you
In check

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Anger in Hiding by ***Anthonia Lametu Adams*** ... continued

Hides you from
Your true purpose
It
Keeps you in the dark
Lies to you
Haunts your
Thoughts, steps,
Dreams a
Shadow of
Doubt, darkness
Trying to
Conceal you from
The light
Turn you wild
Make you
Confused
Just
A shell
To do its bidding
Would you
Give in or
Fight for Your life?
For freedom
For the ones you love instead of
Hiding, of
Giving in?
Do you have what anger does not possess?

Hope?

©2010 by *Anthonia Lametu Adams*

Okay to Cry

by **Anthonia Lametu Adams**

Cry
Lean on
The shoulders you love and
Cry
Get down
On your hands
And knees and
Cry
If there's no one
For you
Hug yourself
And cry

It's okay

Are you ashamed?
Ashamed to cry?
Do you feel
Weak?
Vulnerable?
Pathetic?
Don't

It's okay

Are you in fear?
In fear to cry?
Afraid of what others
Might think of
You?
Get branded
As a child

continued on next page

Okay to Cry by **Anthonia Lametu Adams** ... *continued*

Don't be a fool
Cry

Women cry
When they express from the heart
Baby's cry in the open
Yet men cry in the dark
Don't wanna talk about it
But can't get over it
Act as if
Tears are sin

Cry
From a broken heart,
A broken home
Broken body and soul
Cry
For a loved one lost
Or one that returned
Or you can't pay your bills' cost
No matter how much money you've earned

Cry on the day that you say
I, do
Yet comfort those who
Can't find their own love

Cry
From fear
Cry
From pain
From memories
That will always be
So plain to see in the back of your mind
Cry
For the ups and
For the downs

continued on next page

Okay to Cry by **Anthonia Lametu Adams** ... continued

Or when your family comes around
Cry
Because you're proud
Cry
Because you're sick
Cry
Out loud
Or silently where you sit

Men shouldn't be afraid
To cry in the open

Jesus wasn't.
Jesus wept
He cried for the
World to see
And sacrificed
For you and me

God wept at our
Evil
And gave us
A second
Chance

Never be ashamed to cry
As long as you live on
Because once you stand and dry your eyes
You'll learn crying makes you strong

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The Only Race

by **Nebadon Adams**

Concrete crumbles,
Buries people under reconstituted Earth,
Many are dead and many have been saved,
Right now, someone is starving,
Right now, someone is thirsty,
Right now, someone is dying,
And Americans argue,
Of all stripes and colors and creeds, they argue,
And they profess their factions,
And they parade their politics,
In ribbons and armbands,
They say, "My race is this and yours is that,"
"If you are not with me then you are my enemy."
I am tired of your definitions,
Of being told I am a color first,
A human being last,
Right now, a Haitian child is crying,
And "Blacks" are "persecuted,"
And "Whites" are "racist,"
Neither "side" seeing the truth...
That life is continuing on,
Without your petty insecurity,
Without your race-baiting,
Without your jealousy, envy, and hatred,
Life is continuing,
And Human beings are coming to the aid of Haiti,
And each other,
All over the world,
So you can hide behind your so-called "color,"
And sensitively shirk from every comment,
But I will help my brothers and sisters,
Wherever they are, whoever they are, and whatever label you place upon them.
Right now, someone is receiving help, and grace, and love,
Right now, someone is going from "Black" to Human.

Mon pauvre petit pays !

by **Edwige Archer-Wuillot**

Des événements tu en as vécu !
De toutes les couleurs tu en as vu !
Toi, jadis, surnommé “La Perle des Antilles,”
Aujourd’hui, tu n’es qu’un triste reflet de toi-même;
Tu ne peux plus te cacher,
Tu es mis à nu dans le monde entier !
Des affres de la douleur, on entend tes cris,
De tes entrailles tailladées, la faim te ronge !
Tu as soif, tu souffres, tu as peur, tu es épuisé...
C’est angoissant de voir
Tes rues jonchées de cadavres et de corps mutilés,
Des survivants hagards ne sachant où aller ?
Des maisons ravagées, détruites,
Transformées en amas de gravas...
Des enfants impuissants, prisonniers des Décombres...se débattant entre la vie et la mort,
Leur regard seul, si désespéré en dit long !...

Eloignée de toi si longtemps,
Je pensais avoir perdu mon patriotisme !
Pourtant, il est encore là, à l’état latent !
Mon coeur a palpité, tressailli et vacillé
en voyant ta souffrance et tes tourments !..
Cette détresse qui te mine
A ravivé mon amour pour toi...
Sache, petite île, témoin de mon enfance
Que je sanglote avec toi !..
Je sens si fort ce que tu ressens...
J’ai survolé les océans, sillonné les rues
Pour chercher ce passé en vain...
Hélas, je n’ai trouvé que désolation,
Consternation et douleur qui ont broyé mon coeur,
Fléchi mes genoux et porté mon regard
Vers le Plus-Haut, L’implorant de venir
A ton secours !...Tiens bon petite île....

Wake Up: Letters to Haiti

by **Farasha Baylock**

Wake Up..
The Earth needed a shake up
The Earth needed a shake up
The Earth needed a shake
To cause the minds of the innate
Reactions of those who cant escape,
Who are mental inmates to their own earth quakes.
We saw glimpses of glided sweet screams
To help bring sweat dreams to the wealth less, it seems we're selfish.
For we had the chance to help us way before we were helpless
Way before the earth quaked us, Way before the world shaped us,
Way before massa raped us, Took our crops and framed us,
Made us hate us: We were Shapeless, Shameless,
Yet thus I see nothing but dust to drink and dirt to eat.
My tears are too salty for my heart to be sweet
My feet are too bloody, for me to walk in peace,
So fuck a hail mary, Magdelene cant cleanse me
There's blood in these streets.
I said there's b-lood in these streets.

Forget a bucket or a shovel, Ill use my hands
So I can dig to find the truth of what I cant understand.
Why am I homeless in my own homeland?
My homeland aint got no homeland.

God if I keep digging and digging will you help me find?
I wont need bread or water if you help me find me.

My baby's broken, legs swollen, dead bodies in the street.
If I did I dig deep. If I dig to find me.

If I dig, I dig , I dig!
If I dig, I dig, I dig,
If I dig, I dig, Deep.

continued on next page

Wake Up: Letters to Haiti by **Farasha Baylock** ... continued

If I dig to find me.
If I dig, I dig, I dig!
If I dig, I dig, I dig,
If I dig, I dig, Deep.
If I dig to find me.
If I define me,
If i define me,
'Cause its hard to find me
Its hard to find me

So Wake Up
The Earth needed a shake up
The Earth needed a shake up

©2010 by Farasha Baylock

The Tragedians

by **Brett Beiles**

The haunted hotel of Port-au-Prince
is still standing and so is time at
16:53 on 12 January 2010
Twitter's proprietor Mr Morse
who more than a century before
when it was built
might have employed his namesake's
mode of communication
to relate the good news that "...
only one passer-by has been killed ...
the guests are sitting in the driveway ...
no serious damage ...
but many large buildings nearby
have
 collapsed ..."
(never mind their flattened inhabitants
who aren't being helped by the guests).

What would Graham Greene
have made of that over
forty-four years after writing
The Comedians
in which this Gothic pile
featured, then was filmed with
an all-star cast?

Imagine
Richard Burton
Elizabeth Taylor
Alec Guinness
Peter Ustinov
James Earl Jones
David Niven
et al

continued on next page

The Tragedians by **Brett Beiles** ... *continued*

plus, let's remember,
the late, great South African
Zakes Mokaé, who played Michel,
sitting today in the driveway
of Hotel Oloffson
(aka Hotel Trianon)

though in those days back home
Zakes was job-reserved to
do little more than look for weeds
in suburban gardens,
which is why,
unlike the Burton-Taylor constellation,
Mokaé was acting in *The Comedians*
in Haiti.

©2010 by Brett Beiles

THE HARVEST

for Haiti

by **Summer Brenner**

Under the bridge is a boat under the boat a hull and scarlet eye weeping sore and blinded by sights of garnet lips private parts and pearl teeth nails and yellow diamond eyes all the eyes are diamonds

Hair no longer glitters hair is not a jewel hair twines like hanging rope twists like Carib hemp among the debris that drowns the city

Under the bridge is a raft and under the raft a plank with a mouth that swallows houses dogs

churches schools and body parts calling crying singing shouting banging to make themselves heard

Under the bridge is a light under the light a hand with a gun loaded to protect light from rapists looters murderers thieves to protect us all from body parts fighting at the city's edge

Under the world is the world's reflective lining of life and death where the boat bridge raft and light float everything floats because everything is mostly air even water

Inside the island is a hole to China and ladders to the moon plus tickets from Saint-Domingue if the planes crash there are ships with empty bottoms like basements filled with buried treasure

©2010 by *Summer Brenner*

Haitian Girl Speaks Spanish

by **Loune Jodbiatha Calixte**

Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island, Hispaniola. The Haitian border is Anse a Pites while the Dominican Republic border is Pedernales. Though they share the same island, the two counties were colonized by different nations; so Haiti speaks French and Haitian Creole while the Dominican Republic speaks Spanish.

I've got a nose like the matadors do. So when boys walk by I jut out my face and yell anmue! at them. Flare my nose and yell so they're scared and run away.

Papa says it's his nariz with an open ah sound that scares the z so you can barely hear it.

The dust that shadows my skin is his too. His from his grandmother and hers from her grandfather back generations. His dust on my skin.

When he comes home, I cry at him like El Cordobés- The Cordovan- must have when he jumped into the bullring from the stadium seats.

Sometimes I wish I could take my nose, and move to the other side of the island where they have nez wide like bulls and skin black like dirt.

I run so fast I know I can reach Pedernales if I try. Step into French- Anse a Pitres. Creole- Ansapit. Cause here my Rs stick to my mouth like peanut butter, like mamba on a hot day.

©2010 by Loune Jodbiatha Calixte

Standing Next to a Mountain

by **Tichaona Chinyelu**

St. Domingue was a gem.
African blood flowed ruby red
and was absorbed by a land
greener than the Emerald Isle.
Harder than diamonds
the mentality of its colonizers.
St. Domingue was a gem.
St. Domingue was a gold mine
excavated and stripped of all humanity
except coal black cries of agony
until two hundred and six years ago
when St. Domingue, the gem,
turned its back on its nominal flaw
and became Ayiti, land of mountains
the first black independent republic
in the western hemisphere.
Haiti was a jewel:
black onyx freed from the granite of slavery
a chrysalis crystallized into existence
by three frenchified words
it was never meant to synthesize:
But freedom has a price:
150 million francs, to be precise
and with no country willing to buy
the products of freedom
Haiti, land of mountains, was pushed
into the coal pit of debt.

©2010 *Tichaona Chinyelu*

Haiti Poem

by **Natalie "Poetic Soul" Cook**

Celebrities celebrate their celibacy of selfishness
Self-proclaiming sympathy for citizens
Hidden in rubble
Stumble
When the earth quakes
Tumble
As the ground shakes
Crumble
The building breaks
Does it take the famous and fortunate
To share the unfortunate
Forced fortitude of these people?
Is this what moves you?

Heated blood boils from the sun-kissed lips spitting out fire into the air
Misery pours into the cracks of souls
Cracked lips crackle cracking into the cracks of the dirt roads
Crack! Goes the whip as it strips the faith
Crack is not the killer of this unfortunate fate
Bucks piled in stacks
Stacks extinct
For the country is deplete of income
In comes the rumble
Stumble as the earth crumbles

Bodies bleed their sanity
Humanity cries for a remedy
And their cries are never silenced
Unintentional violence
Non existent sirens and
Government denying
These empty souls's hope
They now have to cope with their losses
With this painful and inadequate knowledge

continued on next page

Haiti Poem by **Natalie "Poetic Soul" Cook** ... continued

Calling out a name, but no one is there
Raising hands to only receive despair
Our red, white, and blue
Can't help their red, white, and blue
And the red blood seeps into their mournful blue spirits making them as white as the blankness of the souls in
their loved one eyes

This travesty has tragically trapped
Fathers
Mothers
Sisters
Brothers
Sons
Daughters
Under rubble from the rumble
Causing ones to stumble
As the earth crumbles beneath them
What do you say to someone whose entire family has just died in an
Unnatural natural disaster
Deciding to splatter
Every form of matter
Do you say sorry for being sorry by complaining about you problems?
Or do you watch "Hope for Haiti" feeling like you've done something good, while they're still solemn

Do you hate that for in Haiti
The earthquake has shaken souls
And even though some of these spirits may be revived...
A lot of the bodies cannot be

But for some reason
Haiti
Like James Bond, is shaken not stirred
For what has occurred
Doesn't eliminate the words of
'Bon dieu bon'- God is good
They have faith
When their fate

continued on next page

Haiti Poem by **Natalie "Poetic Soul" Cook** ... continued

Is undetermined
Encouraged by invisibility
Unthreatened by the enemy
Can it be that Haiti has more hope than we?

In Haiti they need we
More than ever, so let's do our parts
Keep them in your prayers, so that the love of God will not be
Shaken out of their hearts

©2010 by Natalie "Poetic Soul" Cook

Confines of Despair

by **Ronald Edwards**

Slivers of light cut thru dust clouds
of cement and pain while desperation
cry's out in vain.
Twisted steel, shaken and bent
imprison broken dreams and abandoned futures.
Dogs sniff ,barking wildly
pushing their once black moist noses,
now caked with death and destruction,
into the nightmares of limbo.
Prayers, petitions and laments
fuse into sorrow and utter horror.
A lone child's hand breaks free from beneath
the rubble of desolation
in a last ditch effort for salvation
grasping at the fleeting vestiges of life itself.
Relief finds it mark ,
as an orphan is dragged free
back into a world of misery.
Hungrily the confines of despair
swallow pitiful masses
left behind to share eternity
below the streets of Haiti.

©2010 *Ronald Edwards*

Pictures Are Taken

03.08.10

by **Malika Hadley Freyberg**

Death toll over 250,000-
Mouths open and gaping,
Perhaps shouting warnings,
Perhaps to breathe in the nightmare
In hopes of breathing out “this is just a dream”-
Who will remember your names?
Eyes wild,
Piles of rubble as far reaching as the arms of those forced to embrace the ruin.
A coca-cola advertisement survives,
Unscathed.
Pictures Are Taken.
Grandmothers covered in white dust
Are baptized in the ashes of the lost.
The flames can be seen in the distance,
A crematorium for a people willing to
Die for their freedom,
Racing now toward the looming stone church,
Once a place of refuge,
Now a dangerous mass reducing its disciples into
Refugees.
Pictures Are Taken from an aerial view-
Perhaps some of you could have been rescued
By the plane harboring the photographer.
Buildings crumble, oblong cracks in the surface
Like those found on the heels of the Griots-
Who will be left to tell the story?
What happened to the hand of the student reaching out for help,
Eyes pleading, from the pile of concrete that was once
Port-au-Prince University?
Pictures Are Taken,
Recording his fear through a lens that protected the
Photographer from being a part of the horrific reality surrounding them-
Pictures Are Taken.

continued on next page

Pictures Are Taken by **Malika Hadley Freydberg** ... continued

Buildings wail, leaning toward the ground,
Seeking a place to take root,
Avoid falling further from the after-shock.
Walls splinter in a way that renders carpenters useless-
When will Jesus show his face?
Did not enough of them believe?
Did the mustard seed get washed away,
Along with the lives and dreams of a
People who communed with the dead?
Now they join them,
The number of ancestors rising with each
Exhalation,
Pictures Are Taken.
The Presidential Palace
Reduced to a pile of lost elegance.
Victims grasped by fist and ankle,
Suspended from dark hands in a
Dead-man's float-
A child receiving medical help
Looks at the camera with
Eyes still sparkling-
But her face relates her resignation
To being made a spectacle,
Her Pain
Big News-
Will this smother the embers in her iris?
Pictures Are Taken.
Distrusting eyes slant to the left
As bandages are provided-
Where is this God of yours?
Were the Ancestors lonely?
Did they yearn for more company,
Did they get drunk on libations poured in ritual
And forget to protect you?
Were your clothes tattered by the
Quake,

continued on next page

Pictures Are Taken by ***Malika Hadley Freydberg*** ... continued

Or had life worn them out before your
World was rocked?
Pictures Are Taken
As Women lie on their backs,
Accordioned metal beneath them,
Waiting for help.
Others make their beds in the street,
Asphalt the only constant now.
School children stand by,
Hands clasped before them as though
Patiently awaiting their impending punishment.
A grandfather with two broken legs looks behind him,
Twisting at the waist,
Hands braced against the pavement,
Propping him up like a kick-stand,
Wondering if he will ever be able to do either again.
People search for the undead-
Pictures Are Taken.
American-born Haitian heads bow in prayer,
Faces pressed against their fingers
As though they can get closer to God
By coming face-to-face with their own DNA-
Pictures Are Taken.
A father cups his frightened daughter in his arms
And she peeks out from beneath his shoulder,
Eyebrows furrowed, worry lines already on her young face-
Pictures Are Taken.
Caracas loads medical supplies
While American eyes watch from their televisions-
Pictures Are Taken.
The British are next to arrive,
Taiwan close behind.
The caption says
People search for survivors-
Pictures Are Taken.

continued on next page

Pictures Are Taken by ***Malika Hadley Freyberg*** ... continued

Black bodies crumble into dust-
Pictures Are Taken.
Children who were already hungry
Are crushed beneath the weight of the Wait-
Pictures Are Taken.
Generations of freedom fighters are Lost,
Pictures Are Taken.
After-shock from the after-shocks land blows to
Brown backs while
Pictures Are Taken-
Where are those Pictures Taken?
In what flip-book are they housed
Once the film is developed,
Frozen images of the lost captured for an eternity?
All we know is that
Pictures Were Taken.
But Is It Enough
To Stand Witness
While Pictures
Are Taken?

©2010 by *Malika Hadley Freyberg*

Here Their Cry

by Janet "JagWonder" Grant

I Can Hear Their Cry
Deep in the silent night
But when the morning comes
They dry their weary eyes
I can here their cry
Beyond the crumbling walls
When they come reaching out
I'll catch them fore they fall

I here stomachs growl
With hunger and the pain
Where they lay heads at night
They leave bedding blood stained
Desperate to find Peace
Abroad they risk their lives
Lost in the ocean deep
but still I hear their cries

I hear mother's say
How will my children feed?
To say there's no more food
And hear their hungry screams
I can hear the roar
of improvised stricken land
beaten down to dusk
by both nature and man

Lord, Oh Lord
her voice is very weak
Beneath the violent storm
I hear her silent scream
Closed in by its darkness
I can hear her crying
And all the while
Her children are dying

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Here Their Cry by ***Janet "JagWonder" Grant*** ... continued

A nation torn by way
Violent quakes and storms
Lord please send down your angels
And hold them in your arms
Yes hold them in your arms
Please hold them in your arms
Hear them crying!
Hear them crying!

©2010 by Janet "JagWonder" Grant

COME OUT SINGING

by **Shayla Hawkins**

for the survivors of the Haitian earthquake, January 12, 2010

Please don't harden yourselves
like the rock and cement
that seemed so strong
until something stronger
came and shook them
broke them
and changed them
into graves

But be like that 15-day-old baby
pulled from the ruins
that killed her mother

Take this awful newness
shake your fists at death
breathe in spite of the pain
and live anyway

Linger and love
like Roger
who stood for six days
at a collapsed bank
knowing beyond knowing
that his wife Jeanette
was alive
somewhere inside

Know that you are precious
fight for your life
and when your strength alone
is not enough
ask for help and pray
cry as needed
but remember

continued on next page

COME OUT SINGING by **Shayla Hawkins** ... *continued*

to bless Bondye
who for His own reasons
helped you survive the shattering
that destroyed so much else

Remember Roger and Jeanette
Remember the revolution and resilience
that runs through your blood

Remember Anna Zizi,
whose faith was stronger
than the collapsed cathedral
where she lay for 10 days buried
then sang
at the beautiful impossible moment
of her rescue

Remember the renegade beating
of her heart
Claim her strength
her stubborn will to live

And in spite of the bones
and houses broken
in spite of the dreams
and lives forever lost,
survive anyway,
live through the terror and
sòti avèk chante
come out singing

©2010 by Shayla Hawkins

Villanelle de Dlo

by **M. Ayodele Heath**

Fanm bezwen ti gout dlo pou change lavi[†]

— from an ad for a Haitian clean water project

Is water we're drinking, water that's killing?
I balance this bucket in the bowels of the slum:
The one who is thirsty? Or the one who is dirty?

Father says, in 2nd John, Jesus turned water to wine.
Father, find us a miracle for when water poisons.
Is water we're drinking, water that's killing?

With a dishrag, I dampen each eye that needs washing
and wring-out what's left to boil the bouillon.
The one who is thirsty? Or the one who is dirty?

My tears cannot cool them, so the twins keep crying,
Tout ko mwen cho. Fevers burn like the sun
when water for drinking is water that's killing.

This island's a daydream where zombies are bathing
where I, twice a day, fill this five-gallon drum.
The one who is thirsty or the one who is dirty?

In ditches, in alleys, with mosquitoes I'm vying,
but I cannot win, when I can only choose one:
The one who is thirsty? Or the one who is dirty?
when water for drinking is water that's killing.

†Women need a little bit of water so life can change. (Creole)

©2010 by M. Ayodele Heath

migrants' prayer

for the Port-au-Prince prisoners

by **Vanessa Huang**

"It is terror, it is birth, it is destruction, it is freedom, it is humiliation, it is jubilation." –Aurora Levins Morales, "1804: News from Haiti," Remedios

Let this be
the tremble
 to unearth your safe
 return—where lovers, children,
 grandparents recognize each old and each new,
 where we strangers learn to escape
the prison of terror: your danger,
where each of you may learn to know
 the freedom of sleep
off your feet
 again.

Let this crumble
 of prison and court-
house reveal
 the empty
 in sending armed puppet wolfmen
to roam the nightfall street for you,
 whisper rumor into the ear
 of your neighbor—an empty
enough
 the burden of your scarlet
 letters in cremation and still
awaiting charge
 come to be held by all.

Let this be
earth's unshaking
 will against takeover strokes

continued on next page

migrants' prayer by **Vanessa Huang** ... continued

of state, a clarion call
that your forgotten bodies gift
Haiti the unrelenting strength
in memory and patience
in love enough to nurse
back such poverty
of aggression.

Let us grow
curiosity
about these loulou lynchings—
a curiosity born not of collectors' mind,
occupation's chronic spectacle,
—a curiosity woven
instead
of flesh sensation,
perennial heartmemory,
wisdom of our captured:
Imagination's
refused bereavement.

©2010 by Vanessa Huang

Haiti is waiting

(Haiti ap tan)

by **Ja A. Jahannes**

A dark gray mountain of swirling death
Rises to the outer Heavens
Carrying the voices that heard the rumbling
Long before the ground shifted its place in the Earth
In this unexpected time nothing returns the same
Nothing can claim the vacant eyes that look without seeing
Nothing can give this time and place a name
All are kin to this wilderness of tragedy
The sky does not close over the land
The fresh uncovered dirt speaks to death nearby
There is no victory for prophets who speak tragedy without vision
Nothing can stop the sun from shining through hearts that sing
The world turns now on a new course
The just and the unjust have no tribunal here
We write history on the scarred bodies and minds of the poor
We build love on love's foundation
We teach ourselves to humble ourselves before God
We erect for the celestial ones, seen and unseen
A tower of action that needs no language
We hold yesterday with yesterday, embracing tomorrow today
We clear a path through Haiti to the world
We overcome the barren spirits which blind our strength
We write the future over desolate and despair
We build a monument for which there is no blueprint
Haiti is the waiting monument
Haiti is the waiting monument
I say, Haiti is waiting
I say, Haiti ap tan
Haiti is waiting

© 2010 by Ja A. Jahannes

Ja A. Jahannes is an international award winning poet and playwright.

I need to speak to god

by **Ja A. Jahannes**

I need to speak to god
i need to speak to god
i said
making the cellphone a line to the devastation
debris, death, despair, dark clouds
broadcasting over and over from Haiti
a talking head answered
she is not at home
where is ... she
i asked
i looked out my ghostly window
she went out to sea
came the reply
when will she be back
not until good and evil meet for lunch
that could be a long wait in the Caribbean,
i said to myself
stepping into the shadow of pain
could be a long wait indeed
what was i to do with my Sunday school prayers
my excessive lunch
my memories of Port au Prince
with my holiday money
i look at my blood breakfast
filled with disdain for those who speak benedictions
like obituaries
of a people who are so much of who we all are
so god is not at home
i shall call again and again
if she does not answer soon
i will have to go
to the cemetery to talk to history
i really need to speak to god
there are people still coming alive
in Haiti
and we must help

Haiti Lives

by **Rochelle Johnson**

Saint Louis, Missouri

You cry
I cry
And we feel your pain
But remember God remains the same
Keep the faith
Through His amazing grace
You will be received
You will be transformed
And the wonders of His glorious love
Is never done

So live on Haiti
Because He lives in you
Through your hardships
You glorified His name
As the rumble was cleared away
You cried out
I am not afraid of death
And sang out His praises
Glory be to Jehovah
Haiti lives
Your lives are not in vain

©2010 by Rochelle Johnson
January 22, 2010

Haiti - January 2010

by **Patricia Spears Jones**

Matter of factly—such a phrase? She said
10 days after the tsunami there were dead bodies on the beach

Matter of factly—there has been no work for poor Haitians
Other than scrounging, knifing and waiting for better times

Those times come via hurricane, now earthquake –such misery brings
Dollars for foreigners come to loot what little is left—the trees

Almost gone; the ocean polluted; children unschooled,
Except, matter of factly, the elite, but soon they will leave.
They have to leave.

What is history but a story that can lift you up
or dash you down a mountain of debt and despair.

I speak little French, no
Creole, but I know matter of factly that a people has been
Oppressed, damned, picked apart, and glued back together
As some thing monstrous resembling colonizers' storytelling

Oh yes America has been more at ease with colonels with guns
than with mothers who weep
for their children's mouths dry from hunger
their children's limbs limp from hunger.
their children's hearts weak from hunger.

But there are the mothers fathers children
clamoring for their story in the making-
cursing a fevered earth cracking

Angry with insects as they pick through rubble for the loved ones
Last heard singing across the street, down an alleyway

continued on next page

Haiti - January 2010 by ***Patricia Spears Jones*** ... *continued*

Under bright hot sun, striking signs on the earth to mark a different
January day facing back towards crumbled earth and desolate rains

And forward to those mornings
When the ground is steady, buildings shape shadows
and children sing on their way to school.

©2010 by *Patricia Spears Jones*

“Poor Haiti”

by **Shenishe L. Kelly**

Haiti and her poor people
were portrayed poor
prior to Port-au-Prince’s
pounding
and paparazzi painting
portraits of her pain,
and people pausing in pity
puzzled by her plight
and pastors prophesying
about “paganism”
and persecuting her to
purgatory.
Haiti and her poor people
were portrayed poor
prior to the presidential
pardon
and politicians passing
petitions
and pledging patronage
and pundits poking puns
at her punches
and patronizing her
practices and patois.
Haiti and her poor people
were portrayed poor
prior to her port
plummeting
and pretentious press
purporting their power to
propagate their programs
and preying on patients
praying for patience while
paralyzed by panic
and public who was privy to

continued on next page

“Poor Haiti” by ***Shenishe L. Kelly*** ... *continued*

her predicament preceding
this problem
and placed her pleas in its
peripheral until providence
propelled it into purview.
Poor Haiti, Poor Haiti, Poor
Haiti
and her proud people
and her profound people
and her persistent people
and her positive people
who still possess power.

©2010 *Shenishe L. Kelly*

“Ayiti, Quisqueya, Bohio”

by **Shenishe L. Kelly**

Forge forward Haiti
You have more fortitude
than the fragile foundation
on which your feet fall.
Do not fret
Have faith filled with fire
your flattened-land has a future
that's full, fertile and fruitful
Forsake not your forefathers
who fought fearlessly
against the French
fulfilling your freedom
Forget not the fight
of fourteen-ninety-two
Forge forward Haiti
filled with fervor, fire, and faith.

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Haiti's Psalm

by **Joshua Lesser**

*I lift my eyes up to the mountains
From where does my help come? (Ps. 121)*

Shock, aftershock, aftershock
The devastation seems endless
Long after the earth has stopped moving
From where does help come?

From Haiti, we hear the cries around the world
We see the broken bodies, buildings jumbled
A structural collapse of comprehension
From where does help come?

The weight of it all crashes down
Like a palace wall
A calamity of sadness and death sealing us in
From where does help come?

But from the safety of our living room
We can turn off the television, the radio, the computer screen
Close the magazine, recycle the newspaper
From where does help come?

And if we shut our eyes
Succumb to our overwhelm and the fortune of being able to
Ignore the brokenness through our distance then
From where does help come?

The body of Haiti is broken
And its spirit sputters:

A spirit that was born breaking chains with the deepest knowing
That every human being was created with Divine love
Free and equal

continued on next page

Haiti's Psalm by **Joshua Lesser** ... continued

Where the refrain of the country reverberates
"Strength through Unity"
May we find the way to share this immense burden
To strengthen through unity
To hear their cry as our cry
To help rebuild the country and revive its spirit
To not ask where does help come
But help us become that help that extends
From the Unseen One, the creator of the heavens and earth.

Together we pray, may
The Vigilant guard you from all evil, and keep your lifebreath safe.
The Shepherd guard your going out and coming in, from now unto eternity.

Joshua Lesser
Rabbi, Congregation Bet Haverim
Founder, The Rainbow Center

©2010 by Joshua Lesser

Haiti Arise

by **James D. Logan**

Caribbean sunsets rest in hands of hope
Calloused from heat and fallen concrete
Working around the way of death
Laying quietly on the dusty streets

Orphaned dreams cling to unfamiliar bosoms
Weathered dreams sit rubble side unsure
Men bicker and barter for rations of life
And mothers give praise from their core

Sufferers wonder in the speed of help
How are these men of God not quicker?
A stone throw from a palace of debris
Tents glisten in the candlelight's flicker

Nations are full off prayer and song
Melody's come in Caribbean sunsets
And the euphony purchases a peace
And hope for the greatest Haiti yet

From the fallen concrete there is passion
Rolling through hills, burning the skies
There's a soul surging through the land
Shouting, Haiti arise! Haiti arise! Haiti arise!

© 2010 James D. Logan
1-26-10 11:07AM

Haiti Love

by **James D. Logan**

Infra-structured from the outside
With no blood, still hearts beat
Parading on dirt streets
The dust sings beautifully
Once fires rekindled the song
And the religion they do, heals
When the fluid of life spills
Haiti love
Souls shake in the sun
Many, the dead, take flight
Help comes from abroad
The dust sings, hear it
It sings of loss
It sings of change
It sings of hope
The dust sings
Haiti love
Dreams lay in concrete coffins
A prince's port looks shanty
Help lands one at a time
And the song, if you ask me
Sings rightly, hear it
Bondye Bon
Bondye Bon
And a child's smile sprouts from the dark
Haiti love
Third world brown
Red, blue and black
Many a bone cracks
And from the third we slip back
Singing forward to the world
Around to the far corners
The dust settles, but the song
Is still sung

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Haiti Love by **James D. Logan** ... continued

Haiti love
In the backdrop of rubble
There is a flow of music
Rich with life to reclaim
Prayers to sing
And on streets with no names
The dust dances
Third world first rate
Feel the dance,
Hear the song
Haiti love
Haiti love
Haiti love
Bondye Bon
Haiti love

© 2010 by James D. Logan

Haiti Poem

by **Heather Long**

What do we have to look forward to?
The scathing soreness, the horrible hurt, the unrelenting pain,
Mother's missing, grandparents gone, loved ones vanished,
Churches cracked, shelters shattered, buildings to boulders ,
Smiles to scowls, merry souls mope,
Dark rubble, heavy hearts.
How to make a new start?
Churches were made from pebbles.
Infants were transformed into men.
We must start somewhere,
This is a blessed, fresh way to begin.
Opportunity lies everywhere.
Under every crater, beneath heaps of debris,
We are still here.
Let go of the worry, set your mind free.
The grass still grows, the clock still ticks,
The sun rises every morning over our shambles and sticks,
To inspire us with divine guidance,
This is a chance to become one,
Break bread with those that are different,
For we are all brothers and sisters,
Openness and love, unite and merge,
New families emerge.
Together we are strong,
Fresh grins on faces,
Joyous singing in the streets,
We survived.
Clouds are parting,
Blue skies are underway,
Grimaces turn glad, glares turn to glows,
Putrefying turns fertile,
Land is anew.

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Haiti Poem by **Heather Long** ... *continued*

Souls are restored.
Hope pierces through,
We can do this together,
You and I,
Me and you.

©2010 by Heather Long
March 13, 2010

Haiti: 1.2010

by JKS Makokha

“Preamble”:

humanity tense
sends condolences as
tears in words console Haiti

Part I:

burp! BURRP!
EarthquUUUAKE!
cosmic constipation!

AMEN!
Sirens, screams,
quakes commence!

in Pòtoprens
both nature and life
now struggle to survive!

in Pòtoprens –
crushing ceilings
on citizens wailing!

in Pòtoprens –
gutting ghetto floors
below fast feet falling!

Claang!-Crassh!
coco-co-cocoughs

continued on next page

Haiti 1.2010 by **JKS Makohka** ... continued

crying radio studios!

petrified
chihuahua puppies
in châteaux coffins!

howling omens
under a chapel bell,
an owl in a Haitian night!

“Run!”
UNO listening
Haiti on the line!

Part II:

Pupils of Hope
on eyes of global media,
a universal idea of Haiti

iron noise
man-made whirlwinds,
rescue from the world

delirium
duvet of fine dust,
digging steel claws

blood sweat
taut black skins
greasy green gangrene

ascending
an odour of death,
diseases, descending

continued on next page

Haiti 1.2010 by **JKS Makokha** ... continued

a tanning face
behind a surgeon's mask
a mask of humanity

sunshine rays
patients on concrete
pain fenced in patience

baby doc
a cheque of euros
the past in atonement?

Haiti peers up
her future she sees now
not her own history.

planet in midlife
crises on her creasing face –
explanation of earthquakes?

“Postamble”:

oblivious,
the planet marathons
on on the path of Earths

©2010 by JKS Makokha

Note on the Author: JKS Makokha is a Kenyan writer living in Berlin, Germany. He is the author of *Reading M.G. Vassanji: A Contextual Approach to Asian African Fiction* (2009) and co-editor of a new volume on African literary criticism, *Negotiating Afropolitanism: Essays on Borders and Spaces in Contemporary African Literature and Folklore* (2010) with Jennifer Wawrzinek. Makokha teaches courses in African and South Asian literatures at the Institut für Englische Philologie at the Freie Universität Berlin. His poetry has been published in journals such as *Atonal Poetry Review*, *African Writing*, *Journal of New Poetry*, *Postcolonial Text* and *Stylus Poetry Journal*.

Can You Tell Me?

by **John Maney, Jr.**

From under dust and fallen rubble
an orphan's cry
eske ou ka di mwen?

From between crushed concrete I hear
eske ou ka ede non?

sweltering smell of rotting flesh
with buzzing flies feasting
a voice cries can you tell me?
can you help?

Agau has grown angry
another earthquake has hit
like the fire that created Haiti
on top an African graveyard
far from Africa
planted by ruthless slavers

a voice cries can you tell me?
can you help me understand?
why Americans come with
more guns than food or water

all African people cry
from the now
from the swelling ancestors
surrounding Papa Ghede
Petro and Rada cry
can you tell me why?
can you for once help?
without wanting my freedom
in exchange.

©2010 by *John Maney, Jr.*

in a devastated town

(Port-au-Praince, January 2010)

(translation)

by **Andra McCallum**

I lean on the wall
still hot from the conflagration
no friend
no foe in the vicinity
the ground collapses
the whole world crumbles
the stars die

I begin to listen to rough down-to-earth voices
the grass rising to new footsteps
the ash holding a new firmness
a stream gurgles into a stone basin
a cat comes home to a scorched doorstep
I straighten up
now I can see over the shoulder of misfortune

in a roupit toun

(Port-au-Prince, Januar 2010)

A lean oan the waa
sweltrie yit frae the lang fire
nae freend
nae foe aboot
the grund gies wey
the hail world crummles
the staurs perish

A stert ti listen ti couthie vyces
the girse risin ti neu fuitsteds
the ess hausin a neu solitidie
a burn brattles inti a stane troch
a cat cams hame ti a birselt doorstane
A grou mair muckle
nou A can see owre wanluck's shooter

Haitian Orphans

(translation)

by **Andra McCallum**

The water pours over the waterfall
to fill the pool below,
and every bubble that flutters across its surface
reflects a unique vision.

A hundred thousand visions
of same scene, it is said;
but at times my mind imagines
that every one holds within itself
each its own particular world.

Many such as these find their way down the stream a
[short distance,
before they vanish as if they had never been;
and many more hardly outlive
the blink of an eye.

But, as often as not, all this happens
outside anyone's notice;
and short or long,
many are the worlds that live and die
as if they had never been.

Haitian Orphants

The watter tuims owre the linn
ti fou-up the puil ablo,
an ilka bubbly-baa that flichters cross its face
reflecks a vesyne aa its ain.

A hunder-thoosan vesynes
o the self-same sicht, it's said;
yet whiles ma thocht daes fancy

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Haitian Orphants by **Andra McCallum** ... continued

that ilkane hauds wi'in its sel
each its ainsel warld.

Mony sic fand their weys doon the burn a wee,
afore they vainish gif they'd niver bin;
yet monys mair scarce ootlest
the blinter o an ee.

Buit, aft's no, this aa transacks
wi nane tae tak tent o it;
an short nor lang,
mony's the warld that lives an dees
gif it haed niver bin.

©2010 by Andra McCallum

My Haitian Man

by **Miriam Medina**

My Haitian Man
Stood up freed me
No more slavery

Strong calloused hand
Fought the French colonizer
We declared victory

Haters mocked planned
Lied spied died occupied
They bequeathed misery

Papa Baby Doc
Exploitation never stopped
Attacked my sanity

Artificial natural disaster
Shacks crumpled broken babies
Dire abject poverty

My Haitian Man
Buried alive rise fly
To our destiny

©2010 *Miriam Medina*

From the collection "Persecuted Poet."

REVOLUTION

by **Miriam Medina**

We live in clouds
Away from crowds
Beauty so serene
Elevated dreams

We exist in night
Surrounded by blight
Hunger so extreme
Subterranean screams

We drink fine champagne
Devour gourmet grain
Infinite money spent
Sublime content

We live with pain
Almost moved to insane
Revolution new rules
Arrogant fools

©2010 *Miriam Medina*

From the collection "Persecuted Poet."

Haiti's Song

by **Ashley L. Milburn**

Songs of the Father on TV,
Haiti's soul exposed
waiting too long,
echoes of Astor Domes.
on buried Freedom's Fields,
over instant reruns,
cries are tuning to song.

The video-talk hides the views.

Interviewing crushed bones,
form safe white spaces,
they throw Loafs of bread
like stones.

Too much praise hides the view.

While, women's songs rise,
from twisted streets,
bouncing off broken walls;
a child is pulled from a hole,
his arms praises the sky.

The video-talk hides the views,
sounds of praise drowning out,
their commentary.

Hush, now!
Haiti sings.

©2010 by Ashley L. Milburn

BUT NOT OUR HOPE

by **Tinashe Muchuri**

Haiti

We lost a city
We lost a people
We lost a village
We lost a state
We lost a culture
We lost a generation
We lost a community
We lost a palace
But not our hope
For survivors.

Haiti

We lost love
We lost guidance
We lost life
We lost shelter
We lost children
We lost parents
We lost livestock
We lost pets
But not our hope
For a future.

Haiti

We lost roads
We lost degrees and certificates
We lost schools
We lost hospitals
We lost books
We lost drugs
We lost literature
We lost health water
But not our hope
For a renewed life.

continued on next page

BUT NOT OUR HOPE by ***Tinashe Muchuri*** ... *continued*

Haiti
We lost poets
We lost musicians
We lost politicians
We lost usurpers
We lost sports people
We lost visitors
We lost social workers
We lost time
But not our hope
For another day

Haiti
We lost temples
We lost our joys
We lost our happiness
We lost investments
We lost our scientists
We lost our friends
We lost our enemies
We lost our inventors
But not our hope
For a fresh success.

©2010 by *Tinashe Muchuri*

You, me, us

by **Tinashe Muchuri**

I am talking about me
to myself
you!

I am speaking about you
to me
myself.

I am screaming about myself
to me
about you.

I am not alone.
You are not alone.
We are together.

I am you.
You are me
We are we.

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Poetic Combat – Elegy for a writer

by **Khainga O'Okwemba**

Let every pen now go to war
And let us laugh at their lack of wits
Those who despoiled a tradition

Tonight I play my lyre to another bard
To mock that violent landslide
For now in death God is born

And this is nature's cataclysmic smile
Showing its contempt for human relations
Leaving in its wake a widowed child

But that wit in pen is dissolved in memories
And now this definitive absence from earth
Could only be immortalized in verse

I see a politician draping caskets in black shrouds
I watch with closed eyes a Washington Consensus hearse
Tomorrow I bade a friend and relative in Haiti farewell

Was that a Neo-TERZA RIMA, an admiration of the old
Or a Pseudo-TERZA RIMA, a bastardization of the old
This verse engraved on the scroll stands on opposite ends

**Khainga O'Okwemba is a Kenyan poet and essayist whose
Work is published in leading Kenyan newspapers &
Treasurer of the Kenyan Chapter of International PEN.*

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Universal Superpowers

by **Guilty Penmanship**

What if I told you that my poems had super powers?
Secret abilities able to amplify life times two
Capable of colossal feats times 3 ...

What would you think if I told you ... that my poems ... had super powers
Would you believe me?

Or would you disregard as nonsense
And contend that life is not of comic book full of cosmic cops and crooks
No fairytales of for told happily ever after

Young man stop kidding yourself... you are no hero

Would this be your response?
Would you doubt the powers of my art form armed to teeth with hopeful hand grenades

Don't make me pull out this pen
And scribe scriptures that will blow the hell out of the Devils Domicile
Believe me I will write a poem that will save the World ...
... it will be Powerful, Inspirational, Genius spliced with the Super Natural

This poem ... is a battle

Quilting words into bulletproof blankets to cover the bodies lost to brutality
Re-injecting all the spilled blood back into the house holds of heart broken mothers
enhancing the vision of evil tongues to watch what they say
Just listen

My voice brings this poem to life
Carries the universe on my back

Humbly watches innocent institutionalized prisoners set free from chains
Unclothed from hand me down hospital scrubs
Handed back their integrity
Maybe even an apology for months lost

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Universal Superpowers by ***Guilty Penmanship*** ... continued

held captive from society, distant from
family members who no longer
recognizes distinct features on face
Remember me

I am a metaphor

For mothers who scatter about clueless
Newborns strapped to bosom
Like loaded M-16 machine rifles

Armed with ammunition ready for Armageddon
Use these similes as your survival kit
Use these stanzas to staple smiles onto Haitian lips
As soliloquies sedate seismic eruptions
Absorb aftershocks
Rebuild roofs and walls from rubble
Pave brand new memories throughout fallen neighborhoods
Wiping the confused tears from sleepless souls nesting on concrete,
Thirsting aquafina
Desperately waiting to be rescued from the worlds apathy

We will make them listen,
To the sound of unified cries
We scream a heaviness

Tipping the rictor scales pass 7.0
Reversing the affects of continental plate shifts

We will give you our Poems

I promise you they are powerful

So we write these letters down for the people
Let them defy gravity as a means to uplift
This is proof of flight without wings

So we are waiting

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Universal Superpowers by ***Guilty Penmanship*** ... continued

For every soldier to fly home from active duty
All limbs intact, No drug habit
Because despite government admission
80% of veterans never receive a college degree
120 of them commit suicide each week

And 40% of those sleeping on the street
Are vets... with no assistance to get back on there feet
But, these words are just the beginning

I ran into a homeless father today, he was a veteran
Shared the poem with him I wrote last night
He cried, listening to its beauty
Then begged for pennies to satisfy hungry pains
He missed his son's first day of kindergarten
Said these words reminded him of his laughter before his death

I could not save him
Could only offer a dollar & 50 cents or maybe a cheap meal at waffle house
Still... I could never repay him

What's an egg sandwich vs. suffering?
Hash browns do nothing for PTSD
Even if smothered covered scattered and chunked
I could not save him

I could only write this poem

Give it the power of telekinesis to move you out of your seats
Breathe fire from lips to inspire a movement to explode
Speak volumes loud enough for the world to hear without microphones or amplifiers

We give you our poems
Hoping you'd pick the perfect character
To portray you as hero

So Show me your power moves
Or just hang up your cape

Three in a Million - Voices from the Haitian Camps

by **Bill Quigley**

The United Nations reported there are 1.2 million people living in “spontaneous settlements” or homeless camps around Port au Prince. Three people living in the camps spoke with this author this week, before the hard rains hit.

Jean Dora, 71

My name is Jean Dora. I was born in 1939. I live in a plaza in front of St. Pierre’s church in Petionville [outside of Port au Prince]. I am here with twelve members of my family. We all lost our home.

We have a sheet of green plastic to shade us from the sun. We put up some bed sheets around our space.

I have many small grandchildren living here with me. My son and daughters live with here too.

My daughter will soon have a child. She will go to the Red Cross tent when it is time for the baby to come.

I worked for the Chinese Embassy for 36 years. I cleaned their offices. I retired in 2007. Until the earthquake I lived in an apartment with my family. The building was destroyed.

At night we put a piece of carpet down on the ground. Then we lay covers down and try to sleep. When it rains, the water comes in.

We bring bottles to fill up with water. But we have very little food.

There is no toilet in the park. We must go behind the church.

continued on next page

Three in a Million - Voices from the Haitian Camps by **Bill Quigley** ... continued

My son used to work to support us. He is a good chef. He worked at a restaurant by the Hotel Montana. The restaurant was destroyed. He lost his job. There is no work.

During all my days, I have never seen anything like this. I am not in a good position to say what will happen next. I think things are not going to change. I hope things will get better. But I don't think so.

My son has no job and he cannot help our family. If my son is working, we can all stand up. If he is not working, we are down.

The future is not clear. It looks dark for us.

Nadege Dora, 28

My name is Nadege Dora. I am 28. I have three boys and one girl. I am supposed to deliver my baby this month.

I now live in the plaza in Petionville with the rest of my family. Our house was destroyed. I used to sell bread on the street to make a little money. The father of the children does not help us. It is as if we are not alive to him.

We are just trying to survive. No one in our family is working. There is no work.

If you get a ticket you can go get a bag of rice. But I am a pregnant woman. I cannot fight the crowds for a ticket. I tried. But people were squashing me and I was afraid I would get knocked down and crushed.

My niece helped a woman bring rice back from Delmas [another neighborhood outside of Port au Prince]. She shared her rice with us. Right now we still have some

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Three in a Million - Voices from the Haitian Camps by **Bill Quigley** ... continued

rice. But we have no oil. No meat, no milk, nothing but rice. We have no money to buy other ingredients. Since the earthquake I have never eaten a full meal.

When my baby comes, I will go to the Red Cross tent to have the baby. I went there to see a Doctor. They gave me some pills. Those pills made me sick.

The mayor came here and asked people if we had relatives in the countryside. They would help us go there. But we do not want to go to the countryside. We don't know anybody in the countryside. We need to have a better life than this.

Garry Philippe, 47

My name is Garry Philippe. I am 47. I live by the airport entrance. I built my own tent. I tied a sheet to a tree and I put up poles to hold up other sheets.

I live here with my five children. My wife was killed in our house in the incident. We lived in Village Solidarity. I owned our house. I built our house over 4 years, step by step, as I got the money. I was outside when it happened. My girls were by the front door and ran out. My wife ran back to help the boys and she died.

We had no funeral for my wife because we have no money for a funeral. I buried her myself in a cemetery by Cite Soleil.

The children cannot imagine that their mother is gone just like that. They are always thinking about their mother.

We do not have beds. When it is time to sleep we put

continued on next page

Three in a Million - Voices from the Haitian Camps by **Bill Quigley** ... continued

bags on the ground. Then we put our covers on the bags and sleep.

We wash ourselves by putting water in a bottle. Then we stand in a pot and pour the water on our selves.

When it rained we went to a place where they had a plastic tent. We stayed there till the rain stopped. More than 20 people were inside that tent.

Before, I was a mechanic in a garage. Where I worked was destroyed. There is no work since the quake.

We heard other camps got bags of rice. In our camp, nothing. I ask friends for food. Sometimes someone will give us something to eat.

We have no toilet in this camp. When we have to make a toilet, we do it in a bag. Then we bring the bag to the edge of the camp. It is about a one minute walk away.

We see the trucks going in and out of the airport. Many trucks. But the trucks never stop for us.

It is not safe here. But what can I do? I accept it, it is God's work. We pray in the camp together.

No one has come to talk to us to tell us what is going on. We know nothing about tents or tarps. There is no school for the children.

I cannot tell you exactly what is going to happen next. I am not the Lord. I think it is going to get worse for us in the camps. We need tents and food. We need water and school and jobs. We need help to find a place to stay. The rain is coming soon. Water is going to come and our babies will lose their lives.

These Are The Last Days

by **Ellington Reed**

These are the last days
When the cries of the earth
causes babies to quake
Rising from their sleep
to be stolen in the streets
Did Tesla give his life for the man to have and electro-knife
to extend his hands to GOD by reducing buildings to sod
Man's time has come no more slaving in the sun
It i time to stand for freedom, free of oppression, free from fear,
free from death?
Dark days are upon us the days of supermen and hero's of valor are past
These are the last days we will see many great works preformed by man
but never the gracious salvation and mercy soon to be shown to us by
GOD
These are the last days pray for the people of Haiti, pray for the
people of the earth, pray for yourself and your loved ones!
For soon we shall all of the American dream, The African dream, the
dream of Mankind, to be one people under God's rule. For only then
will we be truly united... indivisible... with liberty and justice for
all
And not this Nightmare
Not this so called life
To would be rulers and devils I say:
What up!
Sak Passe!
your days are numbered
Map Boule
I am good
For the Almighty Jehovah God will make my hand strong
I will worship you be blessed and never die!

©2010 by *Ellington Reed*

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGHHH-bolish

by **Saimurai (Simon M Murray)**

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAArghhhh!---

---bolish all
celebration, commotion,
promotion of the notion
that we are free,
de owner of de plantation
now owns de penitentiary

I hear voices:
A chemical brown voice
blairs out
from behind
a plastic bush:

ASBO
TESCO
GITMO
LET'S GO
BACK TO WORK
BACK TO SCHOOL
NO STOPPING
BUSINESS AS USUAL
– CARRY ON SHOPPING.

Organic green voice
spreads seeds
like
neglected weeds:

aaaaaaaaaaaA-bolish all
co-operation with multi-national corporations,
i-pod, i-phone, i-home, i-clone,
i, i, i... me, me, me, me,
quicker cheaper contracts

continued on next page

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGHHH-bolish by **Saimurai** ... continued

cannot bring liberty,
turn off big brother,
see reality c--c--t--v
de owner of de plantation
spells apartheID with ID...

Chemical brown
blairs out
from behind
plastic bush:

HUMAN RIGHTS
HAVE GONE WRONG
POLITICAL MADNESS
HAS GONE CORRECT
SEVEN SEVEN
NINE ELEVEN
DATES WE CANNOT
EASILY FORGET.

Organic green
spreads seeds
like
neglected weeds:

aaaaaaaaaaaA-bolish
abomination
of a bomb-making nation.
erase email,
turn Facebook face to a book,
reclaim time and space
that MySpace took,
look up from the gutter,
dim stars of celebrity,
the owner of de plantation
CEO of military...

continued on next page

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGHHH-bolish by **Saimurai** ... continued

brown blairs
behind chemical bush:

FREE PRESS
FREE VOTE
FREE MARKET
FREE TRADE
EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL
DON'T ASK WHERE –
OR HOW – IT'S MADE.

green spreads weeds
neglected seeds:

aaaaaaaaaA-bolish de myth
of freedom granted
by philanthropist
free freedom fighting names
of CLR James,
Nkrumah, Nanny, Nehanda and a
thousand Dessalines;
stitch bullet-holes of history
and herstory to see
de owner of de plantation
media monopoly...

brown blair barrack bush:

STICK TO THE CURRICULUM
STAY ON COURSE
TURN TO THE CHAPTER
“ABOLITION
= WILBERFORCE”.
DO NOT UPSET THE SPONSORS
NO, IT'S NOT HYPOCRITICAL
FEEL FREE TO SPEAK FREELY
JUST MAKE SURE IT'S NOT

continued on next page

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGHHH-bolish by **Saimurai** ... continued

PO-LIT-I-CAL.

green weeds spread seeds:

aaaaaaaaaA-bolish
media monopoly, ID, military,
abolish bomb-making nations,
abolish multi-national corporations,
abolish the penitentiary
and – to be truly free,
abolish plantation owners
of de e-k-k-k-onomy.

©2010 by Saimurai (Simon M Murray)

REPARATION SONG

(with One-Love I and I respect to Robert Nesta Marley and Ayiti)

by **Saimurai (Simon M Murray)**

*INTRO: Wilberforce was the White saviour,
All Afrikans are dumb di dumb dumb*

Old private—companies, yes, they still rob i;
Sold I Wilberwash and “heroes” like William Pitt,
Centuries after they supposedly freed I
We still dealing with destruction of we culture—identities—institutions
—society—religions—philosophy—land—peoples—history—herstory
and Black inferiority/ White supremacist bull-shit.
But my Haitian brothers and sisters were strong
By repelling the armies of Spain, Napoleon and Blighty.
They died for this generation
Rebelling Triumphantly.

So, Wont you help to bring
some movement towards long-awaited—much-needed—deserved
— and—
necessary freedom? -
'Cause we all need to have:
Reparations dialogue;
Reparations dialogue.

Do not congratulate yourselves for abolition of slavery;
When kkkapitalism still capture we body & minds.
Wo! Pay no tax for atomic weapons or energy,
'Cause all-o-dem-a is just climate crime.
Long must we kill their profits,
Till they stand aside and look? Ooh!
Yes, the human race, we're all a part of it:
They got to give back what they took.

Wont you help to bring
Dese first steps in the process of global-justice—truth—reconciliation
—and—overstanding—the—complexities—and—legacies—of— Maangamizi
(the—Afrikan—holocaust—of—chattel—colonial—and—neo-colonial—enslavement)

continued on next page

REPARATION SONG by **Saimurai** ... *continued*

— and—
true freedom? -
'Cause we all need to have:
Reparations dialogue;
Reparations dialogue;
Reparations dialogue.

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Beyond The Boundaries

(meditating on the meaning of life)

by **Kalamu ya Salaam**

I.

who am i
who visits
who stares at sights
who strains to catch the
drift of conversations
who bathes
who dresses
who eats
sometimes two or
more times a day?

what does my black skin
mean to similarly skinned people
when there is money
in my pockets
and no pockets
on their pants

or

when I glide pass
at a hundred kilometers
an hour as they
trudge step by step
cross rolling mountain side?

these are tense questions
testing my thought

II.

who asks for their lot
who chooses parents, or
selects birthing spot

continued on next page

Beyond The Boundaries by ***Kalamu ya Salaam*** ... continued

i have I.D., U.S. certified,
but what is my identity
Haiti haunts me
there are eyes I saw
in those hills
in the silence of those
noisy nights, Haiti

i turn over
back to the wall
even in the dark
i keep seeing me
beyond myself
climbing to the side
of some overfull tap-tap*
singing out in comfortable tongue

“keep going,
keep going, don’t stop
i’m alright!” Haiti,
are we,
are we alright?

congealed into too many urban areas
our people idly littering stolen streets, oh
these spaces are so bitter
Africa has had
to walk so many rough waters
we need rest
we need rest but must
press on, “keep going,
keep going,”
never mind that the
particulars of our nativity
are luck and circumstance
what we do
with our after birth

continued on next page

Beyond The Boundaries by ***Kalamu ya Salaam*** ... *continued*

is the singular
importance

III.

who knows what Toussaint
lurks in the heart of Haiti
how can we new slaves
of an old world order
not be Haitian
not have fight
and freedom flowing
in our veins
flashing, flaming like
gold shooting through
sturdy human hills

never mind the language,
a barrier, breakthrough
the dress code
a barrier, breakthrough
the lay of the land
a barrier, breakthrough
breakthrough, yes
individualities do differ
but essences, our
essences rise and converge

IV.

go beyond the boundaries,
where we're coming from
matters
matters so much more
than where we've been
where we were born

if we fail to recognize
that there is no one

continued on next page

Beyond The Boundaries by ***Kalamu ya Salaam*** ... continued

human who is totally foreign
then we ourselves will
fail to become anyone
oh Haiti, Haiti
Haiti, heart of hurt
Haiti, heart of hope
you hit so hard
at the meanings of life

the call of
conch shells
caper so softly
cross our verdant
land, cross valley
cross water, Haiti
everywhere
we hear your history

somewhere slightly west
of here, in Jamaica, we say
i and i

i and i
meaning I am
i and I am
you and you are i
and you are you and
it is getting late

and I fall asleep
awakened
by this important
Haitian hiatus

and become a
different person
more conscious
of all I am

Haiti Mon Chéri

by **Ashley Rose Salomon**

Even though shaken Haiti still stands
It has come the time when we must unite hands
No more crying about a divided land
We must rebuild our country with bricks
Instead of sand

She has survived brutal beatings from Mother Nature's hurricanes
She has been victimized, raped, sold and enslaved
Both evils, fueled same flame
Cause these hurricanes follow the same path as the slave trade

Her fight for freedom
We the world
Have forgotten
But even in the silence
You can hear her revolutionaries marching

Vowing,
Haiti her resurrection
As long as long as her people keep their faith in God and start repenting
The people of Haiti are chosen
And not forsaken
I take this earthquake as an omen
Cause it has awoken
The Haitian
In all of us and
The same cement that
Destroyed our precious country
Will solidify our nest of trust

And like a PHONENIX!
Haiti will arise from the dust
Its burning desire to rebuild
Fueled by the lost of crimson blood

continued on next page

Haiti Mon Chéri by ***Ashley Rose Salomon*** ... *continued*

Our people have gone to hell and back again
Living in a post-modern day Babylon
But still keeping their faith in heaven

Because this fight to overcome is embedded in our souls
That why Haitians were selected as the Revolutionaries
Sent to liberate the world
And now the time has come for the world to answer her cries
LONG LIVE HAITI TIL THE DAY I DIE!!!

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continued on next page

“Life Like death, lasts only a little while.” – Edwidge Danticat

by **Hamzat Sani**

A voice is lost forever to shock
Lost the moment its owner released it,
trying to shelter eyes that could not leave
the image of his mother’s life rushed out of her,
by the home he grew up in

Earthquake

Have you ever been so shook
screams mute your tongue
burdened by a pain unspeakable,
silence the only sound that comforts you?
It took a quake to shatter the dew
rearrange their world to be renewed
Each life deserves it’s on news

Earthquake

Haiti is crumbling they say
Bodies are everywhere, few are found
The earth rumbling
Black bodies litter streets
200,000 gone in earth shift, flash bang release
Concrete heaped over;

Churches in prayer
Pupils swelling schools
Hospitals already overburdened
Homes with dreams

Earthquake

continued on next page

"Life Like death, ..." by **Hamzat Sani** ... *continued*

Some say the gods were at play
Others muse that the earth must have been vexed
and in order to vent, decided to dance
a jitterbug pace
Gave its partner a shimmy and shake

Earthquake

Lives tossed like dye
It is a game of luck and chance
The few lucky are pulled moments away from nonexistence
The many are not given a chance
their lives are gone instant
Loves left under still crushing buildings
and maybe they are the lucky

Earthquake

The reality of the lost is hard to stomach
so we follow numbers to still our emotions
50,000; 150,000; 200,000 plus
When so many are lost
it is easy to forget the worth of one soul
A mother's touch cold
A father's line pulled
A child's eyes closed

Earthquake

Who will live in the hell left behind?
When death tolls are counted
News channels turn blind
Haiti becomes another tragedy, folded in our minds
But poverty will continue to grind,

continued on next page

“Life Like death, ...” by **Hamzat Sani** ... *continued*

collect children in its pockets
Macoutes will continue crimes,
use fear for profit
And the people have to live with this knowledge
Our lives are so polished

Earthquake

No use trying to weep fears away
“This ain’t fair.”
But fair ain’t never live here
Comes round seldom
We seldom see tragedy
until it drapes itself in crimson sheets
and human heart beats deplete
We release our human responsibilities to each other
and wonder why no peace

Earthquake

It is paralyzing,
watching the earth shake loose its skin
Pat Robertson calling this punishment for their sins
Whose life ain’t worth saving
 Tell that to the forever grieving husband
 lost in life, to his one love, mother of his children
 Tell that to daughters
 forever tormented by a mother’s last breath before death

Earthquake

Amongst the still living
All that is ever left is
“Breathe, Eyes, Memory”

©2010 by Hamzat Sani

To Haiti

by **Janice Sapigao**

salivating at strange lands
this dry tongue
also shakes
and searches
for faith in
horizontal churches
crowded campsites
cement downpours

lamenting layers
of earth's apology
surround citizens' surfaces
news casts know not
to tread softly
rather they operate
with seismic skewed arches
blanketing
your rebirth

©2010 by *Janice Sapigao*

Haiti

by **Rommi Smith**

'Haitians have faced their tragedy with dignity and stoicism- not that you would know it from the way the disaster has been reported. Haitians will rise, rebuild and live again' –

Andy Kershaw in: Stop Treating These People Like Savages, The Independent, January 21st 2010

I

If it's the theory that decides the architecture of the truth, then turn the camera's eye, the radio's ears this way to hear the unsung song; the one whose sisternote

we've heard before; the one that takes its shape and frame from the tune of a Hurricane: Katrina, Katrina, Katrina. The one that twists the word survival, til it spills the let-

-ters: l and o and o and t and i and n and g; the one that lifts the thirst of colonial centuries and quenches it with: savage; until what is left

is Voodoo Hollywood and violence; then aid is Western bread – with spite's interest.

II

The West, can it now forgive the fact that Haiti, just would not sit down inside the black box of confession and admit to: 'Needless Insurrection'? Toussaint's ghost's

awake, and its shadow: Jean-Baptiste Belley, as NGO's, like hawks poised in the dark of aftermath, survey the Sugar Bowl, composing lists, assessing risks

continued on next page

Haiti by **Rommi Smith** ... *continued*

of bread and water - to security.
While news reporters dramatise, their fears
are actor-less; the tidy lines behind
them evidence. The lie's forgetting this:

Haitians dream in revolutions, not
in earthquakes, hurricanes, dictatorships.

©2010 *Rommi Smith*

So Many People

Ardelle Stowe

age 10

So many people
and lost lives,
so many people
struggle to survive.
So many people
show only bones,
so many people
lost homes.
So many people
who spiritually died,
so many people
who thought JESUS was no longer alive.
So many people
who's face are long,
so many people
dead and gone.
So many people
in a better place,
so many people
that have been erased.

©2010 by *Ardelle Stowe*

The fire is burning

Keanu Stowe

age 6

(this piece was inspired by several photos printed out from NYtimes.com and prompt Dear Haiti)

The fire is burning.
The steam is
rising in the air,
people are running and
turning like they are in
a maze.
They have to get away from
the fire.
The helicopter is waiting at
the end of the maze
to rescue them and
bring them home so
they are safe from the fire in the maze.

©2010 by Keanu Stowe

Dark Matter - Dark Honey

For Katherine and Ben

by **Alice Teeter**

We live in honey - invisible - outside the knowledge
of what our eyes can see - our mouths can taste.
At any moment - under any circumstance - there
in being - that sweetness is.

©2010 by Alice Teeter

Monday Morning Blues

by **Alice Teeter**

On each and every Monday before dawn
the blues come down just like they always do.
I arrive at work wanting to be gone,
shake in the grounds to start a hot black brew.
I've either slept too long or not enough.
There is no cat to coax my mind to peace.
The glare of the screen and a short dry cough,
my back hurts, I grow more and more obese.
We were born to be outside and run
across the grass, down by the riverbank,
hunting with the cats and out in the sun,
not tap, tap, tapping, gazing from a tank.
Let me not spend another whole day inside;
they might try to wake me, find that I have died.

©2010 by *Alice Teeter*

Let the Children come...

by **Frances Vernell**

They were Conceived by a lust
For discord and instability
Dis ease was something
She was borne into
He sometimes began too twitch
At high pitch voices

They squirm
Birth in the hands of certified,
triple star practitioners
of welfare recipients whom.
like their mom, Pledge to honor
This facilitating mentality
of the functional social refugee

Each ones frail limbs were nourished by
some body else's grand~mah hands
Or the drop by visits,
of " ain't your mama, Sade Mae"
Thoughts of families picnics'
pinned with mind torn dreams,
nothing was every as it seemed

Yes these little ones
nursed on the bare , brittle nipple tops
of Dollar-rama colored water, laced with fructose,
orange tropical fruit drinks
cooed in the arms of justice
that consistently inquired about the
Legacy of each ones fore fathers
knowing full well
The seed barer had since forth ,
hence And so far, forever more
Aborted ever semi-slightly annual duty
of the fairly faithful father ritual.

continued on next page

Let the Children come ... by Frances Vernell ... continued

His first steps were launched of the
Table tops of the roach wagons
Serving lunch to a flow of
cast away blue collar workers
followed by the steady stream of
wel-fraud inductees

Her first words were the mimic lyrics of
The case-totters. distraught spirit
With an elastic, silhouette tone to
ex sin u ate a proper piercing rendition
of the county's debilitating mission

He learnt his A-B-ZZ
From the sectional sighs
that labeled , Accordingly
The Stages of their
Statistical Application
No place to roam.
He stared at his reflections
In the glass plated
Speaker windows'
and the scuff~ marks on the floor
his momma's blue house shoes
left behind
However, once they stood before
Gated windows M-F-P
Housing was practically free

Her Christmas Dress never left the racks
Memorial Days were far too few
and seldom did the in- betweens come true
She witness, he paid unexplainable dues
stolen or lost , drawn from "yes~ sir" years blues

The daily warrior scars
That laced her legs

continued on next page

Let the Children come ... by ***Frances Vernell*** ... *continued*

Spoke of un aided tumbles that
Accompanied numerous falls

And To the walls of
their card board doll house box
His sadden mirrored glossy smile
Plastered warrants, citations
testimonial cries.

His molars were cut
on the bootstraps of societies
occasional Goldie Locks or
the faultless Robin in the hood
They arrived with Sister-nun-ya,
And a sack lunch for a smile
To captivate by the activities
Of fraudulent Integrity.
veiled in promises of
Common Christian Unity

Yet each time an urgency grew
Spirited from our own community
to retrieve and lead our self power facility
The surreal guts of this posed visit
lost its glory
No deep pockets, what! new direction?
the once invested opportunities
came apart at the seams
turned out to be more
hyped up personal schemes

This ass~ault birth lynching,
Held yet another small one by
slim ankles,
Dangling their freedom
Swaying in search of

continued on next page

Let the Children come ... by ***Frances Vernell*** ... *continued*

humane kindness,
Screaming for grace.

Yes, and still not a heart could there be
That these young ones
would not willingly meet
Unceasingly greet, with innocent
Songs of laughter, guiding their feet.

Leaping and Scattering
forwards
Cloudburst of visionary valleys
Rainbow bulging bridges
Leading to pondering paths
Where Angel wings,
willing take flight

One may questioned the essence
of their tender souls
How often can a wandering spirit
cope with a wounded heart
And not cripple the Human scout?

Could the childish grace
of innocence remain intact?
Are they able to withstand
the inevitable negative impact?

Still deep from within they gladly convey
their ability to seek with an ever lasting praise
the joyous discoveries they find alone,
along their daily ways.

He sees beyond the scanty scope of the plaintiff
Past the mystic mask of the defender

continued on next page

Let the Children come ... by ***Frances Vernell*** ... *continued*

As she carries forth with motherless wit
The Startling truth of each birthday missed

little ones constricted by the cords
Of slum lords, fathers in prisons,
mother s lost to systems
little ones that
greet Rebirth ,
threw visionary horizons,
unceasing thunder,
childish wisdom,
Humble play,
Contentiously gravitate
Simple blessings
To our own
Universal Wonder
Or a new babes' slumber.

©2010 *Frances Vernell*

Lament: Haiti, Our Name Is Pain

by **Jerry W. Ward, Jr.**

The children

The wide innocence of eyes,
The clean innocence of love,
The fresh innocence of mind

Hear the grumbling
Of tectonics and travel
Through the folding to the bottom

The children

The purity of their play,
The sun in their fragile smiles,
The promise of their hair

Descend into the rumbling
Of spirits realigned, uncertain,
Scope the fractures of a future

The children

Not a flying back but a falling forth
Through horrors so French, so Spanish,
So Amerindian, so multi-natured,
So multi-mad, so muted-magical

Cycle the quaking tongues,
The bodies cursing bodies
All middle passing in the agriculture of bones,
The blood-crushing music of stone

The children
Leave us disappeared
In the fissures of our wounds,
Limited in our explicating wonder.

The Haiti Chronicles

by **Mary E. Weems**

One love to my Haitian brothers and sisters. These poems started coming and I wrote them in the order they appear. All of them were inspired by both what I've been hearing and seeing on the news. I have been taking a break from listening to dangerous fools like Limbaugh lately, so all of these were inspired by either local news or CNN. My prayers continue.

One Grandmother's Blanket

Yesterday hope for Haiti spent the day in Cleveland.
Long lines of people in cars, on buses, walking from
the streets of the neighborhood brought small amounts,
large amounts, whatever they could.

One man unloads with help from a volunteer, they
are of two different races, two different genders
and ages but share clasped hands, warm palms united
for a moment in peace.

When they've unloaded his offerings, she notices
a carefully folded blue blanket in his trunk, I
interrupt the story to imagine Linus,
thumb in mouth, mighty blanket attached
to his arm like a vein, the Charlie Brown cartoons
I watched him in, my childlike understanding
of his need for security from something he could
see and touch, even at night.

Breaking free from memory, I hear the young
woman share that when she politely asked
if intended to donate it, he paused
for only a moment and said "It was my grandmother's
and I wasn't planning to donate it but the people
in Haiti probably need it more than I do."

In that moment I'm with my own grandmother
dead 21 years. I am crouched beside her hugging
her leg in the hospital bed she lay in at home,

continued on next page

The Haiti Chronicles by ***Mary Weems*** ... continued

oblivious to the fact that I'm 34 years old--she is
my blanket, the security I cling to even now
when I reach up to give her a hug.

News Reports

of Looting
ring hollow as a bell
with no chime
I pause like the end
of a phrase
can't finish the sentence

Can Bread be Stolen?

When the earth has cracked
like an egg, people are starving,
and there are no sellers
to buy from?

Killed for 5 bags of rice

Headline CNN. I see the dead Haitian brother's body
on the ground. He's bleeding, the white rice he gathered
from the truck that lost it on the ground scattered
around him like the leftovers from a wedding,
circles like a wedding band.

His mama weeps to the world, her body writhing
in anguish, no arm around her shoulders.

I am in struck with red, her eyes,
the danger signs all over the island.

Witnesses who gather during the 2 1/2 hours
the man lay dead on the ground repeat over and over
no one was looting, no one was looting, no one was looting.

The police, on alert for looting instead of life,
shot him thinking he was stealing what dropped

continued on next page

The Haiti Chronicles by **Mary Weems** ... continued

by the grace of God, the same God the policeman
and the man-- when he was alive
used to pray to.

Mourning

even one person takes everything
even from a distance. Humanity
a chorus, care more than a package,
prayers , and endless steady, holy
as the sounds of Haitian voices
day after the first quake
singing
singing
singing

First messages to family in America

identical:
I'm alive, thank God, I'm alive,
I'm glad I'm alive

January 20th 2010

Devil wakes up mad. Another quake
in Haiti.

Untitled

A friend who lost her last parent
when she was 65 remarked Now I feel like an orphan.

Another adopted a baby girl for Christmas. Tells
me her doctor offered her a pill so she could
breast feed.

Haiti. Orphans fill acre after acre, eyes hold lost
parents, hands hungry for food, a place to rest.

continued on next page

The Haiti Chronicles by **Mary Weems** ... continued

They are too lost to be afraid, will follow anyone.
All of their words are questions about family,
not knowing where they will wind up, not knowing
when they will be able to grieve.

Grave

Slave ship keeps coming back
like a smell caught in the air,
a cloud riding the atmosphere.
Survivors search and grieve
wonder how to honor the dead
as mass graves open and close
and not even a list is made.

Found Poem

**CNN, 1-24-10, 8:35 a.m.
Faces of Faith*

Six days after the quake,
a bank building is torn town.
One man waits for his wife
he knows she's still alive
and runs in with others
each time the demolition stops.

He calls her name in the rubble
Jeannette? Jeannette?

She answers:

I need water, it will be a great pleasure.
Rescue workers ask if she's okay:
yes, my fingers are broken.
She has a message for her husband:
Even if I die, I love you so much,
don't forget it.

continued on next page

The Haiti Chronicles by ***Mary Weems*** ... continued

Pinned by one hand under a beam,
suddenly she's freed, smiling, wincing
but alive. First words:
Thank God. Don't be afraid to die.

Things go better with Coke

I stopped drinking coke 5 years ago
because I'd read: in many states
the highway patrol carries two gallons of coke
in the trunk to remove blood from the highway,
put a t-bone steak in a bowl of coke and it will be
gone in two days, a can of it that sits
in a toilet for an hour--will clean it.

But this morning 11 days into the tragedy in Haiti,
a young Haitian brother is found alive, buried
on the groceries side of a grocery store. He
is smiling, not-hungry, happy as anyone to be
breathing. He shares the details of his diet like a man
sharing a secret recipe.

Cookies, chemical filled, processed, trans fat
delicacies, beer, the breakfast food of champions,
and Coca Cola, mixed with the water left in his body
kept him alive like gallons of water, and I,
crying in my bowl of organic fiber-filled
cereal, am suddenly incredibly thirsty
for an ice-cold glass of the 'real thing.'

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