

# New Directions

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## Poems

Editorial Staff

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**Challenge**

In reaching for that far distant goal I  
 seek  
 My arm often seems too short,  
 But I stretch until it aches with pain  
 Only to find  
 I must stretch it again.

Marcus G. Wood  
*Baltimore, Md.*

**Life Is A Drop of Happiness**

Life is a drop of happiness  
 A drop which sometimes turns to tears  
 But tears are a refreshing waterfall of  
 wisdom  
 Which can wash in smiles of a truth  
 one has learned.

Sherrie J. Calfield  
*Washington, D. C.*

**Keys to the Cage**

As I walk along a street in Blacktown  
 Viewing foundations of buildings burnt  
 in rage,  
 Old men and young men play upon  
 life's stage,  
 With lightless eyes they saunter about  
 No longer enraged.

Defeat has them all encaged,  
 They move about like rats in a maze  
 Sometimes doped, drunken, broken, in  
 craze,  
 Arrows of life, pierce them from their  
 haze,  
 They are basking contently in the sun,  
 Dying with no fires ablaze.

Pour a sage into the holes your arrows  
 have made,  
 A sage to defend them against Death  
 Stalking in the maze,  
 Death is stalking,  
 Shaking with rage;  
 Death is rattling keys to the cage!

Wilma D. Perry  
*Silver Spring, Md.*

**David They Call Him**

David they call him  
 A foreigner among native borns  
 To rule by stick and whip  
 Painful strokes agile

David they call him  
 Khakhi in a clad clothed  
 Sheer force awfully encased  
 In the person of turgid flesh  
 And a face starkly white and sulkily  
 ugly

David they call him  
 A gobline in human mantle  
 Among mortals peaceful and humble  
 Terror of sight to childfolk  
 A woe to every village far and near

David they call him  
 Prospecting gold for money  
 Prospecting blood for both  
 A marksman and a sharpshooter  
 A dear is now shot dead  
 Then a man subtly unarmed  
 'An African mistakenly killed'  
 So lukewarm an excuse  
 That never be venial.

Mohamed K. Salad  
*Mogadiscio, Somalia*

**Royalty**

A young Nigerian queen  
 sat at the bus stop  
 on a red bench  
 provided by the chicken place  
 and looked disdainfully  
 around  
 at her exhaust filled kingdom

She straightened her cut off royal robe  
 about her jeans  
 and stared unknowingly into the alien  
 world.

And I watched her in amazement  
 at the survival of classic beauty in  
 black.

Betty Taylor Ashe  
*Howard University*

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**Negritude**

Look back,  
Return,  
Dig Deep-  
To the roots.  
There is "me"!  
"Me"!  
That is "me"!  
Truly,  
don't you see?  
That is truly "me".  
Black!  
Somebody!  
"Me"!

c.m.j.,sr.  
*Washington, D. C.*

**Talking With Myself**

Thoughts going through my mind . . .  
Change . . . Revolutionize.

Make me what I am.  
A woman . . .  
luscious fruit,  
a rebel,  
a leader,  
an idle hand,  
substance of time,  
sister to Remus and Romulus.

I am created unjustly.  
I should be a tree willowing  
or a vast mountain.  
All these feelings and emotions  
I have to express  
and such a diminutive space I occupy.

S. Mervette Marshall  
*Silver Spring, Md.*

**Portrait of a Snake**

She crawls on her grey belly  
In the muck of her unstable mind . . .  
Slithering, twisting, this way and  
that . . .  
Small, beady eyes, zooming in  
On imagined foes,  
To get within striking distance  
Of those whose backs are turned,  
But who know that she is there . . .  
Hissing madly to herself, with wounded  
vanity,  
At their scorn, their lack of fear,  
And their total awareness of  
Her serpentine inhumanity.

Valerie Parks Brown  
*Washington, D. C.*

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