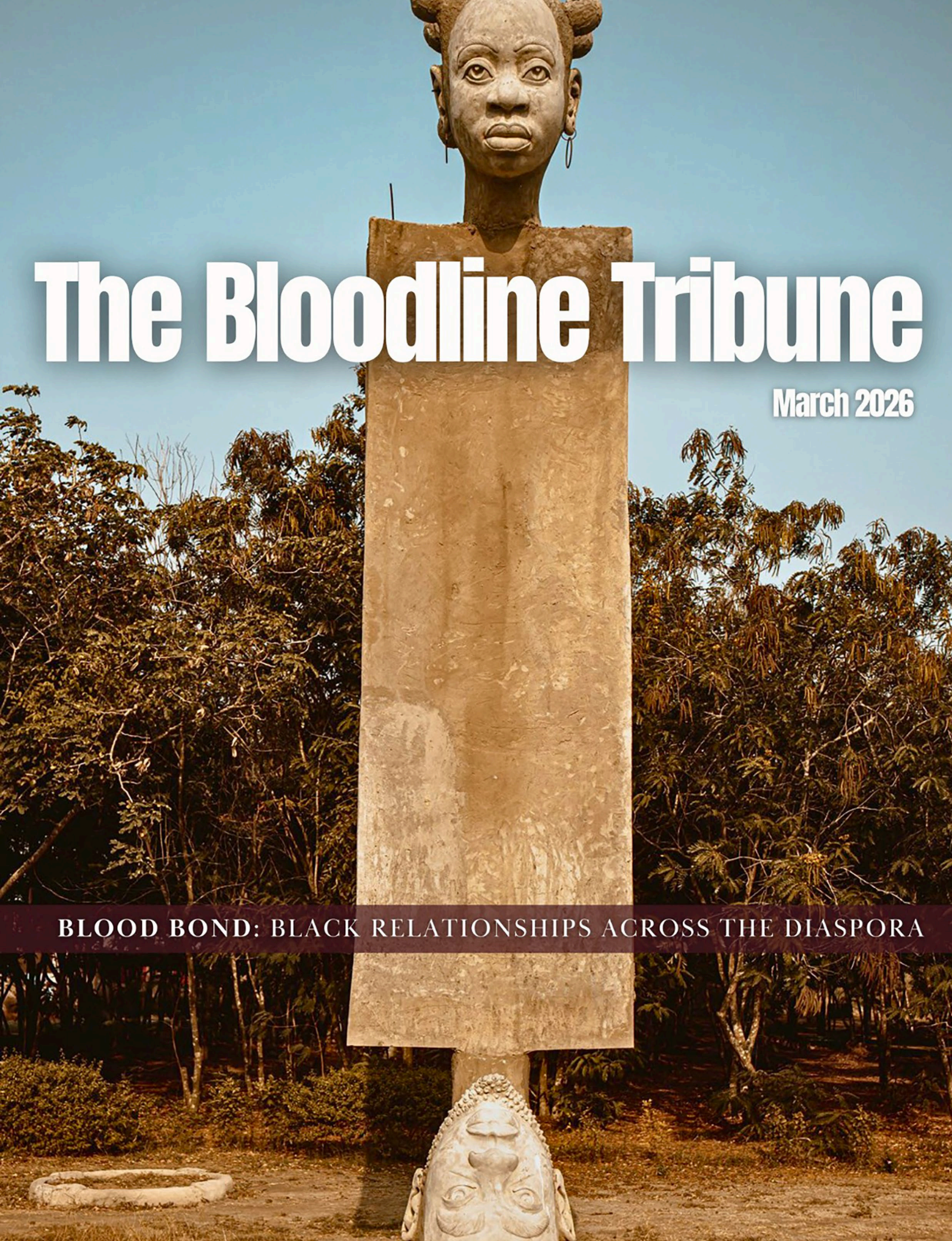


The Bloodline Tribune

March 2026

BLOOD BOND: BLACK RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS THE DIASPORA


TAJI CAN YOU TAKE YOUR HALLOWEEN COSTUME OFF? YOU CAN STOP BEING A DORK NOW!
...
TBL
LOOK HOW SCARY THAT HOUSE LOOKS? LET'S CHECK IT OUT.
NIGGA YOU TRIPPIN' I'M STAYING RIGHT HERE!!
OH YEAH, YOU TRIPPIN' BAD...
WOW!! LOOK AT ALL THE ANCIENT STATUES AND PAINTINGS!!
THIS ONE ON THE RIGHT COULD BE YOUR BROTHER TAJI!
YOU GOT THE HOLY GHOST OR SOMETHING!? WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM??
AMARA, YOU OKAY!?
LOUD BANG IN THE HOUSE...
FUCK THIS, I'M OUT!! SOMETHING TOLD ME TO SIT MY ASS DOWN!!

THE WORK

The Root Note

There was no dedication for this issue

But I would like to extend that honor to the woman who greeted me at the store with a smile and a check on my well-being

I often find refuge in the grace of Black women

As we begin this journey into relationships across the diaspora, that refuge is beneficial

Because as much as we promote Black love and solidarity among the tribes, not everything is pretty

Some things we must call out, question, and like Momma Ida, investigate

Christians and Muslims rarely speak. There is no collective willingness to work together for our race

Black men and women maintain a love hate relationship

Even the camaraderie we do have can turn toxic

Pride. Ego. Lust. Love. Hate. Resentment. Jealousy

All of it fills the diaspora as we search for seeds to rebirth a new awakening

And to do that

to come into alignment like the balance of rays reflecting off our melanin

it requires conversation

We can at least start there

The intention of this Blood Bond, created through Black press, is to spark conversation

I hope these articles reach beyond the pages

I hope they move into real discussions as we build unity across the collective

We cannot change the world overnight

But we can do the work, our work

To be the voice that brings back self-determination. That brings back pride

That when we see each other, we greet with a smile and a warm embrace

Through our joys, our pain, and our journey together

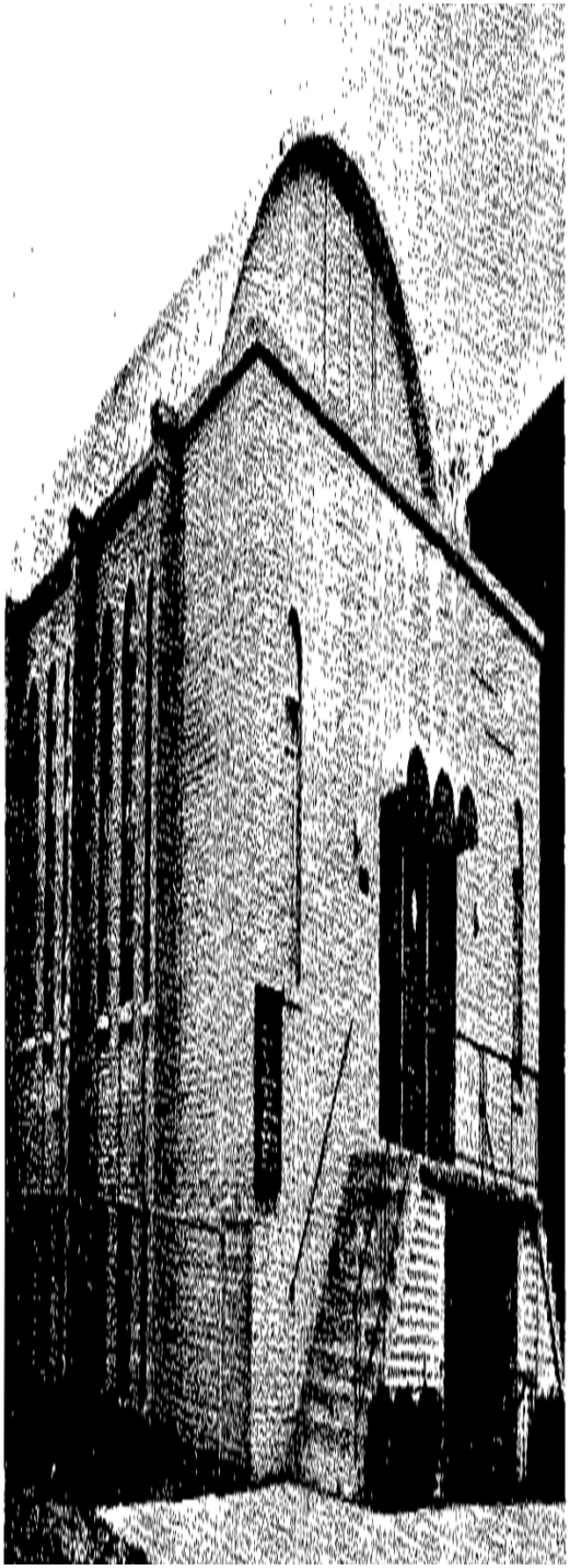
Like the Queen who greeted me that way every time in the store

Because all of her memories are sweet

May she now guide us through Kulanshi with that same grace

May the ancestors guide and protect you always

Chuck King



Black Church & Nation of Islam Parallel Paths, Shared People

Dominique Holiday

The history of African American religious life in the United States is often discussed as if traditions exist in separate lanes. Christianity is associated with the Black Church, while Islam is associated with movements like the Nation of Islam. Yet a closer look at history reveals something more interconnected. These traditions frequently traveled parallel paths, shaped by shared people, shared communities, and shared struggles.

For generations, the Black Church served as one of the central institutions in African American life. During slavery and especially after emancipation, Black churches became centers of education, leadership, social organization, and resistance. Ministers were not only religious figures; they were often teachers, political voices, and community leaders.

Because of this central role, many African Americans who later became influential in other religious movementsincluding the Nation of Islam were raised within the culture of the Black Church. Their early exposure to preaching, scripture, discipline, and community organization shaped their later leadership.

One of the most famous examples is Malcolm X. Malcolm X, who would later lead Temple Number 7 in Harlem, was the son of Earl Little, a Baptist minister and organizer for the Universal Negro Improvement Association founded by Marcus Garvey. Malcolm grew up in a household where the Black church and Black nationalist politics intersected. His father's ministry and activism exposed him early to ideas of racial dignity, self-determination, and

community leadership.

Another important figure is Elijah Muhammad, who led the Nation of Islam for several decades. Elijah Muhammad was born Elijah Robert Poole, and his father, William Poole, served as a Baptist lay minister. Like Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad was raised in a household where Christianity and church life were part of everyday experience before he later became a follower of Wallace Fard Muhammad in Detroit during the 1930s.

These examples illustrate an important historical reality: many of the individuals who shaped the Nation of Islam came out of the same cultural world that produced the Black church tradition. The connection was not simply theological, it was social and cultural.

Both institutions developed as responses to the conditions African Americans faced in the United

- States. They emphasized:
- Community building
- Moral discipline
- Self-respect and dignity
- Leadership within Black communities
- Education and self-improvement

Even the rhetorical styles sometimes overlapped. The powerful oratory associated with Nation of Islam ministers often reflected the cadence and intensity long present in the preaching traditions of the Black church.

In this sense, the Black church and the Nation of Islam can be understood as parallel paths shaped by shared historical experiences and shared people. While their theological frameworks differ one rooted in Christianity and the other in Islamic teachings and Black nationalist thought both traditions grew out of the same communities and addressed many of the same social realities.

Understanding these connections helps provide a fuller picture of African American religious history. Rather than viewing these traditions as isolated or opposing movements, it may be more accurate to see them as part of a broader story of African American spiritual, cultural, and political life, where individuals and ideas often moved between institutions while continuing the larger struggle for identity, dignity, and liberation

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“We’re Not New to This” Chef Amethyst Ganaway on Gullah Heritage and Culinary Memory

Lauren McCaskill

The early morning air hung cool and quiet over the sunny grounds of Penn Center. We sat together on the wooden porch of one of its historic houses, the kind of place where time feels layered rather than distant. It was here, on this same campus, that Martin Luther King Jr. often came seeking refuge from the pressures of the movement—retreating to the Sea Islands to think, write, and organize during the height of the Civil Rights era.

The significance of this sacred ground was impossible to ignore. Penn Center has long been a sanctuary for Black thought, culture, and strategy, a gathering ground where history is not only remembered but actively carried forward. Sitting there, with the salt air drifting in from the marshes and the quiet weight of history surrounding us, it felt fitting that our conversation would center on lineage, foodways, and the stories that shape our people.

Across from me sat Chef Amethyst Ganaway, a cultural voice rooted deeply in the South and in the traditions of Gullah Geechee foodways. Our conversation felt like a meeting across regions of the same diaspora—her influence shaped by the coastal South, mine by a Northern perspective still tracing its own ancestral pathways back through the diaspora. In many ways, the interview became more than a series of questions. It became a dialogue about memory, culture, and the power of food to connect past and present across geography, generations, and experience.

The Heart of It All

Food has always been at the center of the table, the heart of the family. For Chef Amethyst Ganaway, it has also been at the center of lineage, a through line connecting grandmother to great-grandmother, South Carolina to West Africa, past to future.

When asked what she hopes people understand when they hear her name, Ganaway thoughtfully responds:

> *"I hope that they understand that my work is centered on being able to tell true stories about Black culture across the state. But, honestly, across the diaspora as a whole," she says. "I hope that when people hear my name people realize they have a safe space to authentically tell their stories, the stories of the people that are around them, their lives. And that their stories matter."*

Ganaway, a South Carolina born Gullah Geechee chef and cultural historian, is not simply cooking food. She is preserving memory, correcting narratives, and insisting on cultural credit in a culinary world that too often detaches Southern cuisine from its African roots.

The Women Who Taught Her

Ganaway traces her understanding of food directly to the women in her family.

"I was my grandmother's first grandchild," she explains. "And I'm the only one that met our great-grandmother and I still remember her. So I always feel like food has been at the center of our table, but also at the center of our life."

Her grandmother learned to cook from her own mother. Among her siblings, she was the only one who carried those recipes forward.

"When my grandaunts and uncles were passing," Ganaway recalls, "my grandmother was the one who made their last meals. Because they wanted the food their mama used to make and she was the only one that could do that."

Now, those recipes live with the grandchildren and get passed down.

"So I do feel like it's a way that my direct lineage contacts me — speaks through," she says. "And I personally believe it flows even further back into the people whose names we don't know. But we carry a bloodline with them."

The lessons were never just about recipes.

> *"They taught me how to maneuver through this world," she says. "The power that food can hold in keeping memory and creating new memories."*

Banana Pudding and the Spirit of Memory

Her earliest kitchen memory begins at two years old, sitting on a counter beside her grandmother where she was often found in the kitchen.

> *"She always tells the story about how I somehow got down from that counter," Ganaway laughs. "To this day, she's like, 'I don't know how you got down, what spirit was in that kitchen with us.'"*

There was also banana pudding — made entirely from scratch.

"In our family, you had to sit there and stir the custard for like an hour," she says. *"That was my rite of passage."*

And greens. And potato salad. And the extra boiled egg her grandmother would always tuck aside for her.

Memory, she says, absolutely changes the way something tastes.

She recounts a family debate about whether her great-grandmother used sweetened condensed milk in her banana pudding.

> *"My aunt swears she did. Me and my granny are like, 'No she didn't.' But I think that's how lived experience works. Memory can shift the taste of things. But at the core, the spirit is still the same."*

Rice as Ancestral Practice

When asked if there's a dish that feels like an ancestor speaking, Ganaway answers without pause.

"Rice," she says. *"Washing rice is probably the most ancestral act."*

The act itself — rinsing, watching the water turn from cloudy to clear — becomes meditation.

"You know people have been doing this since the beginning of time," she says. "Continuing that process feels magical."

Carolina rice holds particular weight in Gullah Geechee culture. For Ganaway, cooking it is both remembrance and continuation.

"When I cook," she reflects, *"I feel like I'm honoring my ancestors, but I'm also honoring a culmination of my own experiences. I've always learned from my friends and peers, and in that process, we're creating new memories while still honoring the past. Just as cooking rice connects me to my ancestors, it also bonds me to the fact that my friends' ancestors were doing the same thing. Now we can put our own twist on it. I feel like I'm honoring the past while acknowledging the present."*

Diaspora, Disconnect, and Recognition

Living in Georgia after college, Ganaway had a realization while working in a Southern restaurant.

> *"These people were in South Georgia and had never heard of Gullah Geechee culture," she says. "And we're right there, a state line apart."*

She began to see how disconnected many people, Black and white, were from the roots of Southern cuisine.

In her personal and professional growth, Ganaway has encountered many mentors who helped shape her path. BJ Dennis, who once reminded her, "Our lived experiences are valuable, and that does make us an expert on what we know." The words affirmed something Ganaway had always felt but was still learning to trust—that the knowledge carried through family kitchens, community tables, and

ancestral memory is not secondary to formal training. It is scholarship in its own right.

No matter what culinary traditions she studies or techniques she masters, Gullah will always remain her foundation. It is the baseline from which she moves outward—an anchor rooted in history, land, and lineage. For Ganaway, every new skill or cuisine simply adds another layer, but the core remains the same: the flavors, stories, and wisdom of Gullah Geechee foodways.

Across the diaspora, she sees both tension and undeniable connection.

> *"There are diaspora wars online all the time," she says. "But when people argue about gumbo or use words like 'tote' and don't realize where they come from — that's West and Central Africa."*

She is clear: the connections run deep.

> *"We do know our culture, and I love that. But at the same time, I hope people can see the through line across the diaspora. Yes, Gullah Geechee culture is very special and unique because of what happened to us historically, but that doesn't mean it exists in isolation. Whether you're in the Mississippi Delta, southern Texas, or along the Gulf Coast, many of our communities still share deep connections to West and Central Africa."*
>
> *"It absolutely runs throughout the entire diaspora — the things we eat, the way we speak, the dances we do. It's all connected."*

Erasure and the Politics of Naming

When African roots are erased in culinary spaces, Ganaway sees both harm and opportunity.

When asked whether cooking ever feels like a conversation across time, Ganaway doesn't hesitate.

> *"Absolutely," she says. "As Sarah Daise has said, time isn't linear. Everything is intrinsically connected. Cooking is definitely a way to contact the past, but it's also a way to reach your future self."*

For Ganaway, that connection becomes especially important when African roots in food traditions are erased or uncredited. Historically, she notes, Black culinary influence has often disappeared from recipe books or been renamed and claimed by others. Naming those connections, she argues, is part of shifting that power dynamic.

> *"We're in a reckoning right now," she says. "I think people are viewing African food in a better light than ever before. People have the ability now—the resources—to see the connections across the diaspora and embrace them."*

She points to recent recognition of Black chefs as a sign of change. In the past year, more Black chefs have received Michelin recognition and James Beard nominations while cooking distinctly Black cuisines—West African food, Southern food, and other traditions rooted in the diaspora.

But the progress, she says, is uneven.

> *"There's still a big lack of representation when it comes to Black Southern food," Ganaway explains. "And there are still a lot of misconceptions about it. I feel the same way about many African cuisines. The first thing some people say is, 'I don't want to eat food from Africa.' And it's like—you kind of already do. You just don't realize it."*

That disconnect, she adds, fuels unnecessary tensions within the diaspora and makes it harder for Black food traditions to receive the same respect afforded to other global cuisines.

When the conversation turns to food as a political tool, Ganaway places the idea within a long historical continuum, particularly for Gullah Geechee people.

"We've been doing this the entire time we've been a civilization," she says. *"There's nothing new about it."*

For Gullah Geechee communities, she explains, food, farming, and land stewardship carry deep political meaning. Practices like freedom farming—discussed during the festival panel she participated in—are about more than agriculture. They are about liberation and reclaiming ancestral relationships to land and water.

> *"For Gullah Geechee people, it can be incredibly liberating to reclaim stewardship of the land and waters our ancestors were forced to tend here," she says. "But before that, they had a beautiful relationship with the land and the water in Africa."*

Today, reclaiming those practices is both a point of pride and a new struggle, as communities push back against powerful outside forces threatening land, culture, and autonomy.

Ganaway believes that cooking, music, art, and other cultural expressions are all part of that reclamation.

"I think we're in another movement right now," she says. "Another transformation of Black pride and Black power. It's beautiful to witness in our lifetime—but it's also sad, because you ask yourself, why are we still having to fight for this?"

Still, she believes Gullah Geechee culture carries a unique influence in that broader movement.

She wants more than trauma narratives.

"I want people to stop denigrating our food into just scraps and poverty," she says. "We're not new to this. We really are true to this."

"When people talk about these things—about foodways and cultural preservation—Gullah Geechee people are often the first ones mentioned," she says. "If people see us reclaiming these practices, maybe they'll feel more open to doing the same wherever they are."

Land, Water, and Liberation

When asked what it means to call food a political tool within Gullah Geechee culture, Ganaway points to the long history of farming, land stewardship, and survival embedded in the tradition.

"We talked about this a little during the panel last night," she says, referencing the conversation around freedom farming and the role agriculture has played in

liberation movements. "Using farming and agriculture as a means of liberation—of reclaiming ancestral practices—is something we've been doing the entire time we've existed as a civilization. None of this is actually new."

For Gullah Geechee communities, she explains, reclaiming those practices can be deeply empowering.

"It's liberating to be able to reclaim stewardship of the land and waters our ancestors were forced to tend here," she says. "But before that, they had a beautiful relationship with the land and water in Africa. Reclaiming that connection now is something we can take pride in."

Yet that reclamation also exists within a modern struggle. Today, cultural preservation often means confronting outside forces threatening land, access, and autonomy.

"There's pride in reclaiming it, but now it's also a bigger battle against larger powers," she explains. "And while there can sometimes be tension within our own communities, practices like cooking, music, and art are ways we reclaim what was taken."

Ganaway believes the current moment reflects a broader cultural shift.

"I think we're in another movement right now—another transformation of activism, Black pride, and Black power," she says. "It's beautiful to witness in our lifetime, but it's also sad to be part of it because you wonder why we still have to fight for these things."

Because Gullah Geechee culture is often held up as a visible example of African diasporic foodways in the United States, Ganaway believes the community carries a particular influence.

"When people talk about these traditions, Gullah Geechee people are often the first ones mentioned," she says. "If people see us reclaiming these practices, maybe they'll feel more open to doing the same wherever they are."

Land and water, she emphasizes, are fundamental to the survival of any culinary tradition.

"If you're in the culinary field and you don't have a direct connection to land, water, or the people producing your food, then you probably shouldn't be in this field," she says bluntly.

Ganaway notes that many chefs—particularly in large cities—remain disconnected from the sources of their ingredients.

> *"They don't want to meet the farmers. They don't want to meet the fishermen," she says. "They'd rather just order frozen shrimp and move on."*

At the same time, she points out the irony that the modern "farm-to-table" movement is often credited to chefs who overlook the long agricultural traditions that predate it.

"We see people celebrated for starting the farm-to-table movement," she says. *"And it's like—no, you didn't."*

That lack of acknowledgment extends to broader conversations about food history.

> *"When Black culture is brought into the conversation, it usually starts and ends with enslavement," she explains. "People are just beginning to understand that impact, but we're still very far from fully recognizing what it actually means."*

Despite those gaps, Ganaway sees cooking itself as a deeply personal and political act.

> *"Food has always been a means of resistance for Black people," she says. "For me, cooking is liberating."*

In quieter moments, she adds, it also serves as grounding.

"If I'm anxious or overwhelmed, I cook. I clean. That's how I center myself."

When she prepares Gullah food, her intention is clear.

> *"My goal is to honor our past and tell those stories authentically," she says. "Authenticity looks a little different for everyone—every family does something differently. But staying true to the culture I grew up with is the most intentional thing I can do."*

The Importance of Oral History

When asked why storytelling is essential to preserving Gullah culture, Ganaway points to the deep oral traditions that have shaped the community for generations.

> *"Storytelling has been part of our culture from the beginning," she says. "Being a griot has always been an esteemed position—whether you call them a professor, a storyteller, or the village griot in West Africa. Every community had someone responsible for carrying those stories forward."*

Because Gullah Geechee culture has long been rooted in oral tradition, storytelling remains central to how knowledge, memory, and identity are preserved.

"We are such an oral community," she explains. "Storytelling has to be a part of it."

For Ganaway, food is one of the most powerful ways those stories are carried forward.

> *"It's important that storytelling runs through food," she says. "I've eaten food where there's no story behind it, and you can taste the difference. There's no connection to what the person is doing."*

Cooking, she adds, communicates intention in ways that go beyond flavor.

"You can tell when something was cooked with love and intention," she says. *"You can feel that. You can taste it."*

Yet telling the full story of Gullah foodways inevitably means confronting difficult history. Ganaway is careful, however, not to let that history reduce the culture to trauma alone.

> *"I intentionally try not to center everything on suffering," she says. "When you're doing the research and talking to people, those painful things are going to come up. There's no way to bypass them."*

Instead, she believes those histories must be acknowledged honestly while also holding space for pride.

"You have to sit with it. You have to acknowledge it," she says. *"Sometimes it makes me more angry than sad."*

But the story, she emphasizes, cannot end there.

> *"When I think about who we are as a people and as a culture, we have endured," Ganaway says. "Now, should we have always had to endure? No. We should be able to just live and just be."*

Still, she believes resilience itself is something worth honoring.

"You have to find pride in the culture and in the work of remembering where these ingredients came from," she says. "T*hat's part of honoring the past while continuing the story forward."*

Food, for Ganaway, is not trend. It is testament.

And in every pot of rice rinsed clean, every custard stirred slowly, every story told at the table, she is reminding the world:

We are still here.

Wear the Moment. *Stand Out.* Be Different.


HEADWRAPS

CROWN WRAPS

BANDAGE HEART TEE


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Has generated a standard
Reinforced by values
laced with principles
Sewn together by moral threads
That has strengthened the fabric
Of our family
Generation after generation

We are blessed to
taste the fruits of your labor
A waterfall of labor of love
That you have poured into us
Filling up our spirits
Like the rivers that overflow
Raising us up to new levels

Guiding us with your moral compass
Leading us on
The righteous path
You have made the
Extraordinary look ordinary
Embracing life as
our matriarch gracefully
With integrity and class

Your belief faith
trust in GOD
And love of family
Is the bedrock of
The solid foundation
We stand and build on

Like the lioness
Your presence is
Louder than your roar
And commands our attention
Like EF Hutton
When you speak, we listen
To your words
That carry weight
Purpose and intention

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A timeline of trials
Tribulations and triumphs
You are living history

You are the apex
Of our family tree
That continues to branch out
Roots getting deeper and stronger
Stemming from your love being the key

You are one of one
A masterpiece
Our Mona Ruthie
You may be imitated
But never ever duplicated
Forever a Legend
You will always be

Sister

Jay Rene

"Sister… you've been on my mind. Oh, Sister, we're two of a kind, so…Sister, I'm keeping my eye on you…"

Hello Sisters, I am probably showing my age with that song snippet, but that is just fine with me. With this age of mine comes a little wisdom from some bumps, some bruises, some tears, but most definitely some triumphs. So, I don't mind showing my age, but I hope to simultaneously show some wisdom above.

On the internet, I see our Queens showing no love to each other, or even worse, spewing hate. Are we ok? Why are we so mad at each other? Where is love, and why is there so much hate? However, don't believe the hype. There are more of us who love each other than hate each other, but the internet has a way of making the heat seem magnified.

I often ponder these types of things as I scroll through social media. At times, I feel the urge to say something myself, not so loving, but I pause. At times, I feel as if something is pulling inside of me when I catch myself. I ask myself, "Why were you about to do that?" and I must admit I am usually unhappy when it hits.

We all have unhappy times…what we do during those times matters most. My misery has never loved company, but when you introduce social media to the equation, you can find yourself doing just that - looking for company in your misery. However, the beautiful thing about life is that as long as we are alive, we can learn, grow, and do better things. Girl power is a thing, but Black Girl Magic… whew… now that is necessary, magical, inspirational, and ancestral.

One of the first things we must do is heal. Heal from old trauma, old relationships, old addictions, old mistakes. We must forgive ourselves and give ourselves the grace we give everyone else. At times, we are the least appreciated, least supported, and least protected. We must not be part of the problem, but part of the solution.

Next, we must check ourselves. This can be the hard part. There is a song from back in the day by Ice Cube and Das EFX. The song goes "check yourself before you wreck yourself" …am I showing my gray hair again? Well, the ability to do this is a superpower. Checking ourselves keeps someone else

from having to do it. It gives us pause before we say or do the wrong thing. It is valuable, and every Black Queen must conquer this superpower.

Also, our power is in our unity. Our power is in our love, compassion, and empathy for each other. We should be lifting each other, motivating each other for greatness, supporting each other's dreams and hopes, and helping each other conquer our fears and obstacles.

The world around us hates us enough; we can't afford to hate each other. There was a time when the pride of being a Black woman overrode petty things. Where we raised our fists together and said Black power, and all power to the people.

That spirit is still in us. It is deep and in our souls… entrenched in our bones. It's the reason that we know how to season food without a cookbook, and we know how to heal ourselves from herbs, and how our hips move to their own rhythm that is always on beat.

Start with inside your own home. If you have girls who live in the same house as you, build them up and lift them up. Be everything that you needed. Then extend that love to your community. When you see your fellow sister, say hello and ask her how she's doing. If you see that she's struggling, offer some support, even if it's just encouraging words. Help our elderly women, our mothers, and young

sisters, trying to carve out their part of the dream.

Our nation is only as strong as we are. We are the ones who raise our future, and we must lead with love so that our nation can rise, strong and lasting. Take a vow with me…that when it comes to our fellow Sisters, we pick up the mantra of "I have my Sisters back."

Together we are stronger. Together we are powerful and together we create our future. We have purpose, we are needed, we are loved and we are necessary. Stay encouraged and Sister… I got your back.

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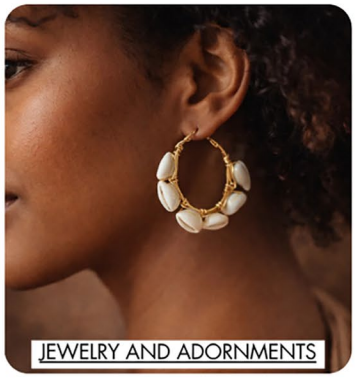
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Chuck King

You can wait until the roosters crow, but soon there will be no more doves to release at funerals.

Early Mornings

The lack of discipline it takes for morning preparation today compared to the past may have lowered the sense of urgency to actually have intentional days. Sure, the latest iPhone may be able to play your favorite song at high volume and cycle through your snooze sessions, but it is not the same as the call of duty that came when the rooster crowed in the field. It was not simply a call to wake up. It was a call for responsibility, for purpose. That is my intention with this piece.

Long have those days passed. Church bells do not ring anymore to gather the town. Today, the calls to gather the people are few. Beyond the church, elderly engagement, which once stood as structure, is now replaced with a silence mixed with criticism and absence.

Sodom and Gomorrah with bullets could be happening at their front door. Prayers enter chatrooms before they ever touch these streets. In this sickness of mind, praying itself has turned into a scapegoat that lets God handle everything while rejecting all accountability ourselves. The church itself provides no soldiers for these battles amongst our youth, while melanin blood soaks garments before leaking into the streets. God himself is absent in these wars.

The irony of waiting for him to return to stop our tribe from going to him at the gates before they even fully mature.

This is the frustration. This is the anger that sat on the church pew with fellows who are gone now. Their names are in stones, on papers that become bookmarks as the elders' council sits quietly, choosing to be ignorant

.

Until it is their grandchild.

Even then they submit to an acknowledgement that we are beyond solutions, only observing the slaughter on the evening news.

System Errors

Before unity is ever shown, youth are taught separation. He is not shown the pride of his skin as Father Garvey showed, and she is not made aware that she is the mother of all bloodlines. We are taught, often forced, who to call God, what to call him, and how to serve. The God that looks at us in the mirror is ignored.

Thus, if we the people are scattered, how can the youth believe in peace if they see no examples? Violence only stirs from our differences. Different blocks that no one owns the deed to but require the deed of your soul. Colors once established in communal union against imperialism have become target markers. Their founders are elders now. This plea also goes to you, even through the prison walls.

The ancestors sacrificed everything, establishing programs to push our existence. Schools, institutions, hospitals, and wealth were systematically removed while their history is hidden in basements today. In their place sits the repeating baseline of Black history. Dr. King pleading to coexist and Momma Tubman freeing the slaves. Or did she?

Were the chains ever removed?

I pray her spirit covers us today as we travel through these underground railroads of knowledge, carrying the truths they once held in secrecy.

These are the answers to the common questions that arise. Why are our youth killing each other? Why is there a thirteen-year-old in the courtroom with a body but unable to read his own paperwork? How does a young lady lose her life to a stray from a young brother who plays tough online but fires into a crowd? Why has death on media outlets become a morning ritual of the most unsanctified acts?

Before this level of crisis could initiate, every form of identity had to be stripped away. There could be no existence of truth and no evidence of prevalence.

Education came from those whose intent was always to remain in power, like slaves in the big house yard hearing the Bible.

Backstage

Our ancestors wait like lost dreams waiting to be revealed with every book we pick up and every article written. The knowledge we share is resistance and the only solution I have found prominent so far. The village is gone. The environments are toxic. Yet the seeds watered from our ancestors' tears still come from good soil.

We often speak of our differences, where we of melanin call home, our stories, and our religious choices. Yet even the violence amongst our people is diasporic in nature. This is no mistake. It is by design, beginning with the music of my generation.

Once a wave that hyped us all in the moment, it came with a curse that can carry pain. The creators now lie either dead or in confinement while each generation continues the rhythm and gravely continues the act.

We went from Black-owned music labels that uplifted our Black women and told resistance stories to bragging about hurting each other, all while filling the pockets of those who control the narrative.

The only thing contagious in this is self-hatred and violence.

When I came across the UK drill era, it was not surprising that the same script existed, only catered to their way of force under stricter gun laws and access thereof. Forming tunes around the up-close and personal stabbings of each other should be a signaling alarm itself. Yet it only highlights something deeper.

This was never solely a music problem, as elders often scapegoat it to be. It is a structural problem, a structural technicality within our race that is simply shown vividly in music. Music is only art, and we of melanin have always used art to plead our case when conditions cannot be translated by words alone.

Which brings the point in matter.

Headphones

Why do elders complain about the music yet ignore the structure of chaos it is birthed in? How naive are we to say melodies are the source of generational genocide? Have our ancestors not sacrificed so that we could intentionally march to our own drum and choose our own fate?
This purposeful ignorance safeguards us from accountability, if safeguard is even the word for this destructive thinking.

The pattern must be exposed before any solution can prosper.

The problem.
The ignorance.
The justification.
The cure.

The problem is always brought to the communal consciousness of our people by the critical thinker,

the one who recognizes that the principles do not align with the conduct. Contrary to popular belief, this often comes from the younger generation. Claudette Colvin refused to give up her seat on the bus long before Rosa made headlines. The young people in the streets who are tired of burying their friends often say the solutions must come from more than just a church house.
Ignorance itself is cancerous. It spreads faster than any potential solution because it brings a sense of relief with little to no effort, a false validation.

When their names flash across papers or news screens, we change the channel. When the pastor closes the sermon at the funeral and walks away, he rarely makes intentions to save the next life. Instead he prepares the next speech.

Ignorance is a recessive trait held in a dominant race.

We were never meant to be non-confrontational in situations that required confrontation. Every false peace that is built on ignorance must be shaken to its core. We must address our youth beyond police brutality alone because we cannot continue to remain ignorant of the brutality we inflict on each other.

Yet still, why do we continue to ignore?

Because the culture has granted permission slips.

I Guess You're Right

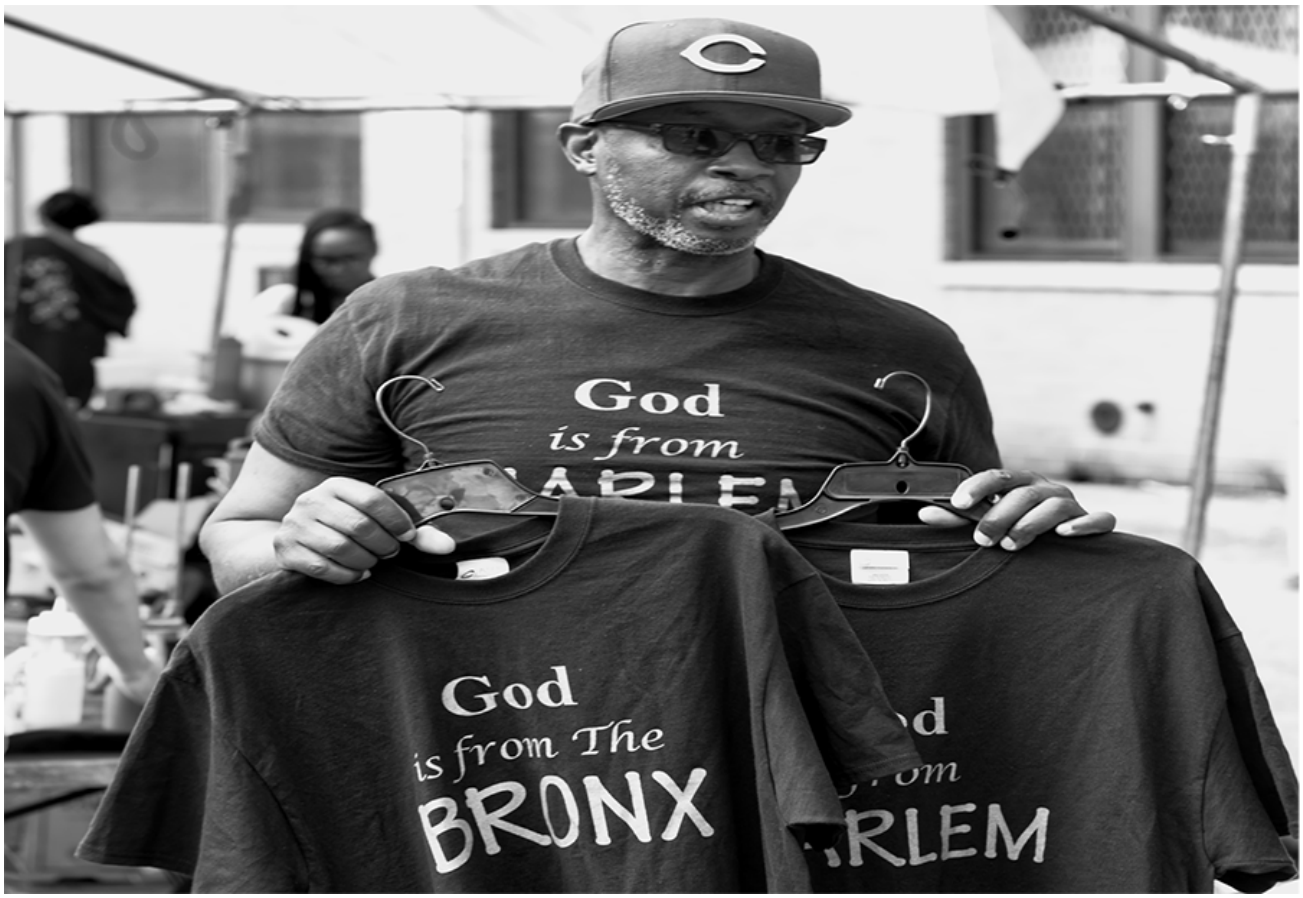
Some justify this behavior with self-gratitude, convincing themselves that any help once given fulfills their duty to the lifelong crisis of the diaspora. Others follow the example of leaders or religions that present a God who answers prayers but requires nothing in return.

"Just pray on it" has become one of the most toxic and manipulated stances within our culture today. We are no longer in the service to safeguard our communities as a life's work. These justifications create the illusion that someone somewhere is doing enough.

Like doctors in a research lab, we have searched for cures to recover from centuries of kidnapped prisoners of war called slaves. Mentally, however, there has been no cure, and we are more sick than we care to admit.

Elders sit with this image that prayer alone will solve youth genocide without building communal environments or engaging with the same youth they criticize. The same prayers Fannie Lou Hamer once cried will not halt genocide across the diaspora, reduce the number of Black and brown youth who become property of the state, or heal our tribe in truth again.

Prayer has become the chip we remove from our own backs and place on someone else's.



The colonizers wanted us to pray, not to figure each other out, but to forgive them.

Our Part

These acknowledgements I claim only as an eyewitness. A youth who has engaged elders, built relationships, and tried to hold both my generation and those before accountable. My greatest regret, if one must say, is not addressing the urgency of these patterns sooner.

We can only reciprocate what we are taught and what we learn. Garvey said it best. Bless the day we can look ourselves in the mirror with pride and become the narrator of our own moral judgment.

Guilty conscience must confront the fact that we have routinely engaged in music that promotes violence wars.

Humility and transparency must recognize that music is culture, a language waiting to be decoded. Many staples of my era are now dead, imprisoned, or have grown far enough to step off the chessboard they were once placed upon. They, like me, carry a responsibility to decode the structures that keep this genocide going and rewire the culture not by changing our words but by changing our

actions and our thinking.
In this action we become the generational bridge.

The connector.
The generational key.

If you did not know your role in this liberation, you do now, blessed to have been made aware before becoming elderly. When the ancestors grant you the opportunity, carry the purpose to do something different.

Common Ground

Whether young, old, child, or senior, this task is a collective effort for us all. Through the aggressive attempts to separate us, the Bloodline, our bloodline, stands as a survivor of the common ground. Beyond these pages embellishes a space more sacred than the church pews, one that shares the love of the Gullah praise houses in the woods far from foreign voices, like the songs of the 54th Regiment.

Here we can have safe, impactful, transparent conversations. I urge you not only to store the context of this discussion but to transfer the knowledge into tangible practices that extend beyond church walls, temples, prison walls, family dwellings, and all places alike.

In these rooms resides a presence not here in flesh but a guide to us all. To our ancestors. To our Kulanshi, those who have paved the way before us. To them we are all still in our youthful days.

The spiritual connection to our ancestors must go beyond religion, differences, and biases within the collective. This is a sacred unifying force if we are to truly practice what we preach.

If you cannot trust the word of a religious leader or the common man, trust the wisdom of those who came before you. A personal connection with the Kulanshi is beneficial not only for the self but for the collective as a whole. They are the mediators of generational gaps, composed of all who have joined them, old and young.

The question now arises in our intentions. Are we willing to mend the relationships in our personal lives, our communities, our tribe, and do our part to restore the village that the child today never knew existed?

Are we willing to remove ourselves from mental plantations and begin to till our own gardens?

Solutions must become generational actions rather than generational liabilities.

The dots of the Bloodline must be connected not by DNA alone but by belief.

Belief in a better sovereign tomorrow.

May the ancestors guide and protect you always.

Bury Me in a Free Land
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1858)

Make me a grave where'er you will,

In a lowly plain, or a lofty hill;
Make it among earth's humblest graves,

But not in a land where men are slaves.

I could not rest if around my grave

I heard the steps of a trembling slave;

His shadow above my silent tomb
Would make it a place of fearful gloom.

I could not rest if I heard the tread

Of a coffle gang to the shambles led,

And the mother's shriek of wild despair

Rise like a curse on the trembling air.

I could not sleep if I saw the lash
Drinking her blood at each fearful gash,

And I saw her babes torn from her breast,

Like trembling doves from their parent nest.

I'd shudder and start if I heard the bay

Of bloodhounds seizing their human prey,

And I heard the captive plead in vain

As they bound afresh his galling chain.

If I saw young girls from their mothers' arms

Bartered and sold for their youthful charms,

My eye would flash with a mournful flame,

My death-paled cheek grow red with shame.

I ask no monument, proud and high,

To arrest the gaze of the passers-by;

All that my yearning spirit craves
Is bury me not in a land of slaves.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Kwaku ntow

Culture Call

Chuck King

In the sunsets of Asia

In the jungles of Indigenous Australia

I can't hear you

I know nothing of your culture

yet you look like me

The sun glares back off your skin

like me

Africa can't be the only place

our tribe exists

Answer the call

Chant your Indigenous chants

Say our Indigenous prayers

Call on our ancestors together

so the nation may stand

as the rock

that was called built on that church

But I need no church

to know my worth

My people hurt

Call to the tribes

and let the Gods come themselves

In our differences

we each bring something to the table

Tones of melanin

be our color spectrum.

Not a damn soul free

yet we argue

If your enemy matches your identity

take a long look in the mirror

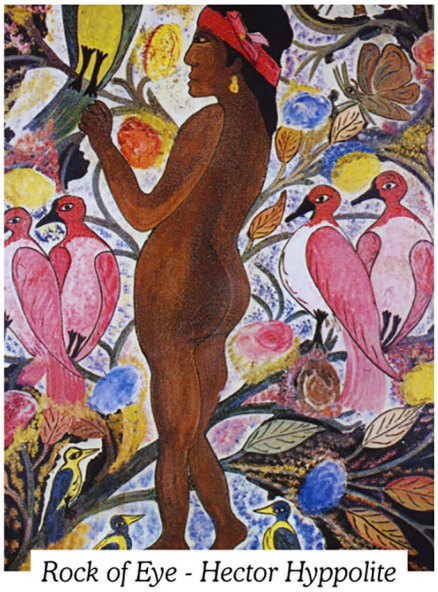
a longer look

in your soul

COLORS OF THE DIASPORA

BY SELINA GELLIZEAU

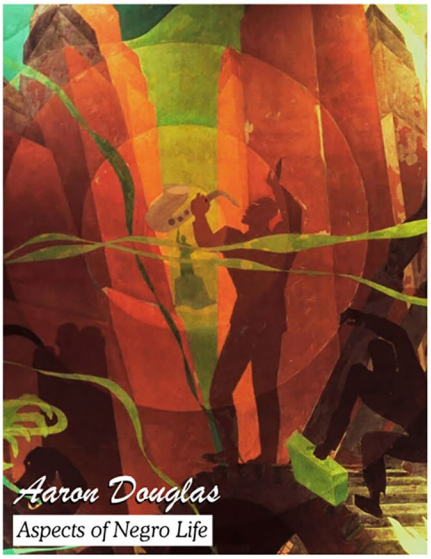
J. M. BASQUIAT ~ CROWN



Rock of Eye - Hector Hyppolite

THE BLOODLINE

MARCH 2026



Panel no. 3 from Jacob Lawrence's The Migration Series

Celebrating the art of impact, creative self-expression, and the power of artistic influence within the black diaspora.

Colors of the Diaspora

Black represents the realm of the living, the embodied world, the density of material existence.

Innovation in Color and Form

The people were scattered. But the color remained.

The word ***Africa*** is a Roman inheritance, first used to describe a region in North Africa and later expanded by European "mapmakers" to name an entire continent home to thousands of civilizations, languages, climates, and artistic traditions. Long before it was mapped, partitioned, or politically consolidated, the land held mineral reds drawn from iron-rich earth, indigo-bearing plants cultivated and processed for dye, gold extracted from riverbeds, chalk-white clay used for ritual markings, and natural greens intensified by the sun.

When people were displaced through colonial labor systems, and forced migration, geography shifted. Naming and language shifted. But color knowledge transcended time and travel. Indigo techniques crossed oceans, red earth symbolism resurfaced in new soil, white garments retained sacred meaning, and gold remained a signifier of lineage and power.

Now, when we speak on the pigment carried on in memory, we pay homage to our ancestral practices, if even unknowingly; of dye practices preserved under constraint.

Throughout the diaspora we've transformed the use of color by deepening their symbolism and reimaging their meanings in places far from where they originally appeared.

Body of Color: A Call Before A Theory

In Western art history, color is often taught as optical science. In Afro-centric knowledge systems, rather than simply being observed, color was felt in the body,

Before color was formalized as science, it functioned within cosmology.

Art historian ***Robert Farris Thompson*** documented the depth of color symbolism within Kongo and other Afro-Atlantic religious systems in ***Flash of the Spirit***. Though not African himself, he carefully traced how color functioned within Kongo visual philosophy and how those meanings survived across the Atlantic in Afro-Brazilian, Afro-Cuban, and Haitian spiritual traditions.

Across multiple African and Afro-Atlantic cosmologies, **white** carries meanings that extend far beyond surface purity. In Kongo philosophy, it is associated with the ancestral realm and the threshold between visible and invisible worlds. In Yoruba traditions and their diasporic expressions in Brazil and the Caribbean, white garments signify spiritual alignment, composure, and readiness for sacred encounters.

Among Akan (West African) communities, white clay marks reverence for ancestors and participation in rites of passage. In African American spiritual traditions, especially within praise houses and certain church practices, white clothing often signals consecration, mourning, or spiritual rebirth. While each system remains distinct, a shared structural logic connects them. White mediates transition, marking an altered state and aligning the body with forces beyond the material plane.

RED

RED appears across African and diasporic systems as a color of activation and charge. In numerous West African cosmologies, red signifies heat, vitality, and dynamic force. It is linked to movement, transformation, and the intensity of embodied life. In Afro-Atlantic religions, red beads, cloth, and ritual elements often mark protection, spiritual urgency, or invocation. In African American church and celebratory aesthetics, red carries energy and praise.

The McIntosh County Shouters, Coastal Georgia

In some ***ring shout*** traditions, red garments or accents intensify the atmosphere of spiritual movement, visually amplifying the rhythmic circling, clapping, and embodied call-and-response that define the practice. Though interpretations shift across regions, a common pattern persists. Red activates, protects and moves with force.

The McIntosh County Shouters and the Echo of the Ring

Along the marshlands of coastal Georgia, a circle still forms. Hands clap. Feet slide in rhythm. Voices rise in call and response. This is the ring shout, one of the oldest surviving African diasporic traditions in the United States.

Among its most visible keepers today are the McIntosh County Shouters, based in Georgia's Gullah-Geechee corridor.

The ring shout is not shouting in the modern sense. It is a communal spiritual movement rooted in rhythm and repetition. Participants move counterclockwise in a circle while clapping, stomping, and singing. The body becomes the instrument. The feet provide percussion. Their voices revisit memories.

Scholars such as Sterling Stuckey, Portia Maultsby, Mellonee V. Burnim, and Samuel A. Floyd Jr. trace the ring shout back to West and Central African ritual movement traditions.

Though enslaved Africans were often forbidden from using drums, rhythm survived through handclapping and shuffling steps. Over time, the practice merged with Christian worship in praise houses across coastal Georgia and South Carolina.

The McIntosh County Shouters preserve this form today, maintaining its essential elements: circular movement, call and response, layered rhythm, and the sliding shuffle step. Similar traditions endured throughout the Sea Islands and the broader South, especially in Gullah-Geechee communities.

The circle itself holds meaning. Across Afro-centric cosmologies, circular movement represents continuity and communal power. The ring shout is not performance alone. It represents an inheritance of ancestral tradition through motion. Though traditions that crossed the Atlantic were made scarce by forced assimilation, they did not disappear. They gathered, adapted, and endured with rhythm, not missing a beat.

BLACK

Black, across many African and diasporic traditions, does not signify emptiness. It signifies density and embodied presence. Dark earth tones reflect fertility, grounding, and continuity with soil and ancestry.
Black, across many African and diasporic traditions, does not signify emptiness. It signifies density and embodied presence. Dark earth tones reflect fertility, grounding, and continuity with soil and ancestry. Black can mark containment, endurance, and protective strength.

Within African American cultural expression, black has been reclaimed as identity and affirmation in the face of racial distortion. Across these systems, black grounds and stabilizes. It affirms lived, embodied existence.

Black represents the realm of the living, the embodied world, the density of material existence. These are not aesthetic preferences. They are metaphysical assignments. Color in these systems operates as orientation. It instructs behavior and marks time while signaling readiness and distinguishing states of being.

When sacred white garments appear in Afro-Brazilian Candomblé, they align the wearer with ancestral presence. When red beads appear in Afro-Atlantic ritual contexts, they do not simply decorate the body. They charge it.

Before color was studied in laboratories, it was studied in ritual.

Indigo: In Depth We Go

Indigo is one of the oldest dyes in human history. Long before synthetic pigments, societies across West Africa, South Asia, and the Americas cultivated indigo-bearing plants and mastered the complex fermentation process required to produce ***blue***. In West Africa, particularly among Yoruba, Hausa, and Mandé communities, indigo dyeing was a specialized craft tied to gendered labor, trade networks, and status. Deeply saturated blue cloth signified discipline, skill, and social standing.

In the Americas, Indigenous civilizations such as the Maya independently developed blue pigments long before European arrival. Maya Blue, created by combining indigo with mineral clay, adorned murals, ceramics, and sacred spaces as early as the first millennium BCE. Blue was associated with water, rain, sacrifice, and sacredness. The pigment carried cosmological weight.

Under colonization, indigo shifted from sacred dye to global commodity. European demand for blue cloth intensified plantation cultivation in the Caribbean, Central America, and the American South. Enslaved Africans were forced into indigo production, often drawing upon preexisting dye knowledge while enduring dangerous fermentation processes. Once marked by prestige and mastery, then became tied to coerced labor and export economies.

Indigo Dye Pits: Dala Kurmi - Kano City, Nigeria

Yet indigo's symbolism was maintained throughout history. In diasporic textile traditions, blue retained associations with depth, endurance, and authority. It appeared in headwraps, church garments, quilts, and painted surfaces. In modern and contemporary art, artists such as Beauford Delaney, Alma Thomas, and many Afro-Caribbean painters used blue not as melancholy, but as transcendence, atmosphere, and spiritual interiority.

Indigo absorbs light rather than reflecting it. It holds depth. Across the diaspora, it came to signify memory that cannot be erased, knowledge that survived transport, and identity that endured beneath the surface. What traveled across

oceans was not only a plant. It was process, meaning, and resilience.

Color was never only seen. It was invoked. It was worn as protection. It was applied as threshold. It was carried as cosmological instruction.

Instead of disappearing under displacement, these color systems migrated. They adapted to new geographies, new plant dyes, new soils. But their assignments endured.

In Afro-Atlantic religions, color is not theory. It is call and response. It is cosmology in visible form.

Beauford Delaney,

Beauford Delaney, Light and Faith

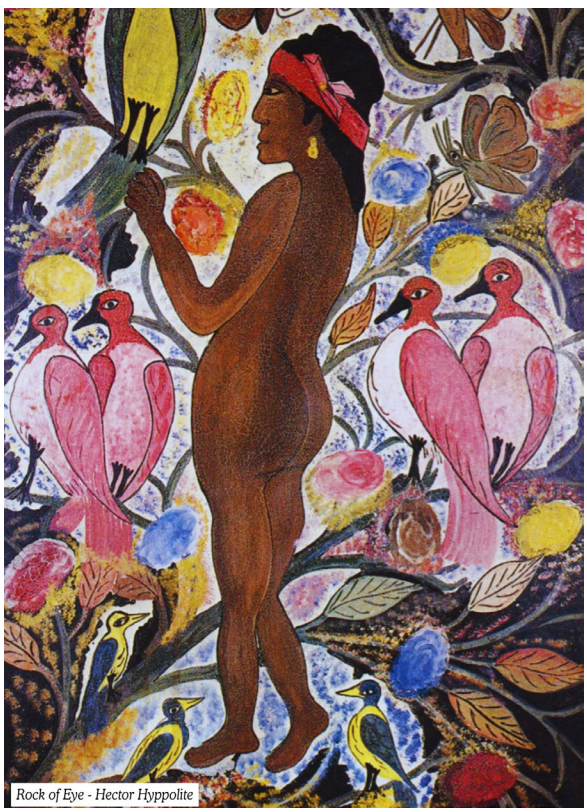
Sacred color systems migrated with displaced people. Ritual white garments appeared in Afro-Brazilian Candomblé ceremonies. Bead color codifications in the Americas echoed West African cosmologies. What had once belonged to specific ethnic groups became diasporic memory, reshaped under new, well traveled suns.

If Western theory asked, "How does color behave under light?" diasporic knowledge asked, "How does color behave in spirit? In body? In community?"

Instead of disappearing under displacement, color adapted and thrived rather than settling to only be seen.

Intensified in Exile

Across the diaspora, turmoil was structural. Land was renamed, while labor was extracted. Movement was restricted and surveillance was constant. Under those conditions, expression was not afforded casuality. Color became deliberate.



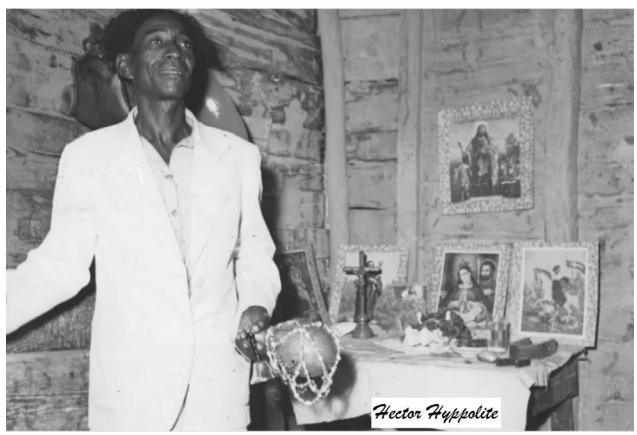
Rock of Eye - Hector Hyppolite

In the Caribbean, coastal light amplified pigment. It wasn't neutral and it pressed against surfaces. Salted air faded paint, while the environment craved saturation. Turquoise walls, mango orange facades, sorrel reds, and guava pinks would eventually emerge as environmental response and cultural assertion.

Haitian painter ***Hector Hyppolite*** translated a saturated world onto canvas in the mid-twentieth century. His paintings, rich in tropical greens and vibrant blues, fused everyday life with spiritual symbolism. Figures, though they appeared flat, were charged with presence through shape and placement.

The color that surrounded his figures suggested that spirit and land were inseparable. Even when still, his palette vibrated and invoked memory. Saturation was reverent rather than decorative, refusing to settle for dullened surroundings.

This pattern repeats. Under colonial rule, forced migration, and economic constraint, visual language became concentrated.



Geometric Memories: Quilts and Abstraction

In the United States, material restriction helped shape another response. ***Harriet Powers*** worked with indigo, red, and ochre as they remained scarce and barely accessible to the average person of color. Making them a perceivable luxury. Her geometric shapes offer viewers a

moment to consider what could be depicted even under constraint. Blocks of color stabilize memories, leaving nothing out.

What is a quilt, and where do we find them?

What is a quilt, and where do we find them?

In ***Gee's Bend***, a small and historically under-resourced community in Alabama, quilts were not made for galleries. They were made for warmth, family, and survival. The women of Gee's Bend worked with what was available to them. Old clothes, worn denim, work shirts, towels, and fabric scraps were cut, arranged, and stitched together, wasting nothing. Their economic limitations, giving life through visual language.

The quilters of ***Gee's Bend*** extended a logic shaped by necessity. Improvisation grew from accessibility and intuition. Asymmetry became rhythm with patterns that did not follow strict rules. They responded to what was in hand. Their palettes reflect a labor of love,

land, and endurance. Faded blues, work-worn indigo, softened reds, and muted browns carry the imprint of daily life.

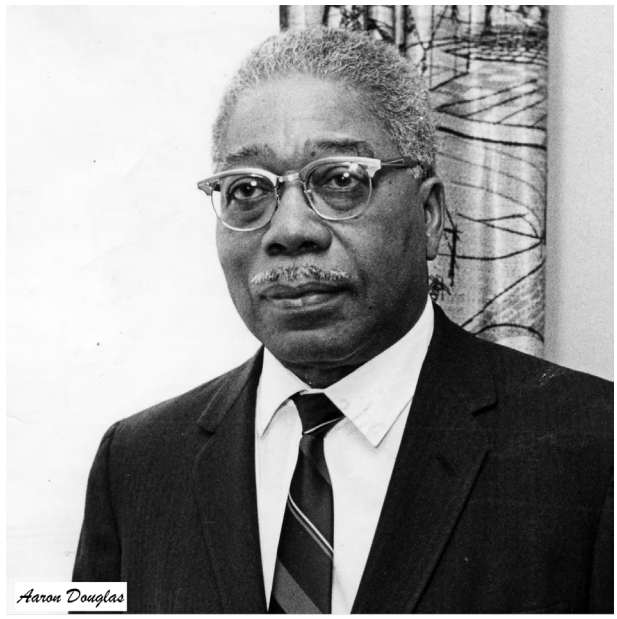
These quilts often resemble paintings, but they were not created as art objects. Although later, institutions would recognize them as contemplative expressions, their abstraction already existed in their work as a form of demand for resileinece.

Structure was rebuilt from fragments ensuring geometry carried use. Each quilt is practical and intentional. It holds warmth and a piece of history.

In the early twentieth century, Black artists in the United States redefined modernism.

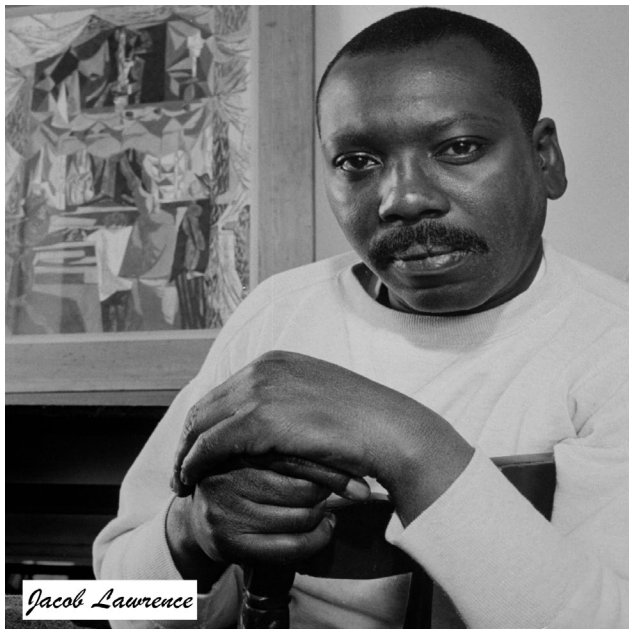
During the Harlem Renaissance, ***Aaron Douglas*** worked within segregation and cultural dismissal. Douglas did not borrow modernism, he contributed to building it. His muted greens, browns, violets, and golds move through radiating structures. The beams of light feel spiritual, but they are also directional. They organize history. His palette reflects awakening under pressure, dignity within limits.

His palette reflects contemplation and collective awakening. It feels aligned with jazz rhythms and African design memory.



The tones suggest a search for grounding during rapid social change. Color becomes both historical recall and forward vision after long experiencing the present.

Jacob Lawrence used rust, navy, mustard, and green with intention, they were colors with jobs. Colors of train cars, factory floors, worn coats, crowded interiors, and recalled views of long distances. His palette is grounded in lived environment and carries the weight of movement that was shaped by necessity.


Jacob Lawrence

His color fields are flat, but they're not empty; they hold tension. They press against one another, guiding the eye through scenes of departure, waiting, and arrival. Each hue is placed with care,


Panel no. 3 from Jacob Lawrence's The Migration Series

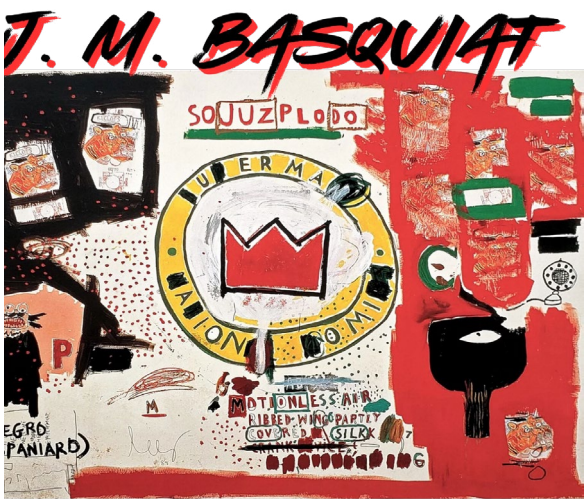
structuring the rhythm of migration. Lines direct the body forward and angles are used to suggest urgency. Rather than dramatizing suffering, Lawrence holds it to the way people actually live it.
He does not soften what happened, but he does not turn it into something to be consumed either.

In the late twentieth century, color moved to the streets. Graffiti artists transformed urban walls into layered fields of neon, black, and metallic sheen.
Facing another kind of pressure for visibility.

As a child, I was unfamiliar with ***Jean-Michel Basquiat's*** work. I've had the privilege of experiencing the emotional depth his color to canvas invoked.

He threw color into the open the way people speak when they are not being filtered. There was no careful buildup.

His reds felt abrupt, his yellows interrupting thought spaces to draw in the eye. Blues resting underneath like something older, something that already served a purpose and did not get fully erased. His surfaces look worked over, like they have been physically handled, reused and returned to. The color felt restless, like unsettled nighttime thoughts.



Paint and text sit side by side without trying to resolve or explain each other. Nothing is cleaned up. Nothing is made easy to read.

And underneath all of it, there is something that does not go away, the crown. It appears, disappears, comes back again. Never polished, never fixed. Always present. ***Basquiat's*** color still holds all that is happening now, what was happening then, and what has been carried forward.

It's all depicted as distant but it all feels accessible. Like it has been lived alongside. The color does not sit on the surface. It stays where it has been placed


Jean-Michel Basquiat

In Afrofuturism, gold no longer simply references ancestry. It references possibility. Violet and indigo extend beyond fabric into galaxy. The future becomes chromatic territory.

Across continents, ***Wangechi Mutu*** devoted time to layerig color slowly.
Her greens feel grown, almost still damp like roots under a barely dry surface. The surface is uneven, marked, alive in a way.

They carry a foliage-like density, that meets a body of soil. It feels like land and vegetation. As if each of her paintbrush strokes are creating a cycle of life. From leaf fall, to ground, to earthly

nutrients feeding back to the roots; re-offering an erect, statuesque tree. Her body of work holds both growth and rupture at once. The background offers no relief. It is muted, almost airless, allowing the figure to carry the full intensity of the image.

"I stepped beyond the edge of my own breath, and found the sky waiting inside me. What I thought was an ending, was opening into light." ~ ***Selina Gellizeau, The Body Electric.***

I reached for color that spoke only to the body from life back to it's place, as a lightform. Deep, warm, and uneven to speak to how we were molded from what naturally occurs in nature.

I worked reds onto the canvas the way afterbirth generously spills onto the surface

surface of a bed following the arrival of new life. Though the absence of symmetry typically plagues me visually, I was able to accept its truth while I revisited my perceptions around imperfection. I avoided correction and allowed the body to emerge unpolished and appreciated the wholeness it did offer in the end.

I stayed with browns. Not one brown, many. Some warmer, some deeper, some almost soft when the light touched them. I let them sit beside, on top of each other, blending in where they naturally did. That felt closer to how skin actually lives, as a reflection of the earth's natural range, from ground to sky-reaching beings.

The red didn't feel like paint. It felt more like something that needed to come through as a reminder of life that once was. I didn't place it carefully or precisely. I let it run where it wanted to before guiding it with my expired credit card, to its settling location on the canvas. It gathered and broke apart. I didn't prevent neatness, I just didn't make space for it.

It reminded me of what the body releases when it has done something powerful. Always a cycle of rebirth not something to hide or clean up too quickly, just something that was real and marks that something has happened.

The gold didn't come intentionally, but it's an accident I'm content having made.

I used it sparingly because light is rarlely needed, in large, to be seen and felt. “The Body Electric” invites observers to remember that from light we come, and to light we must return.

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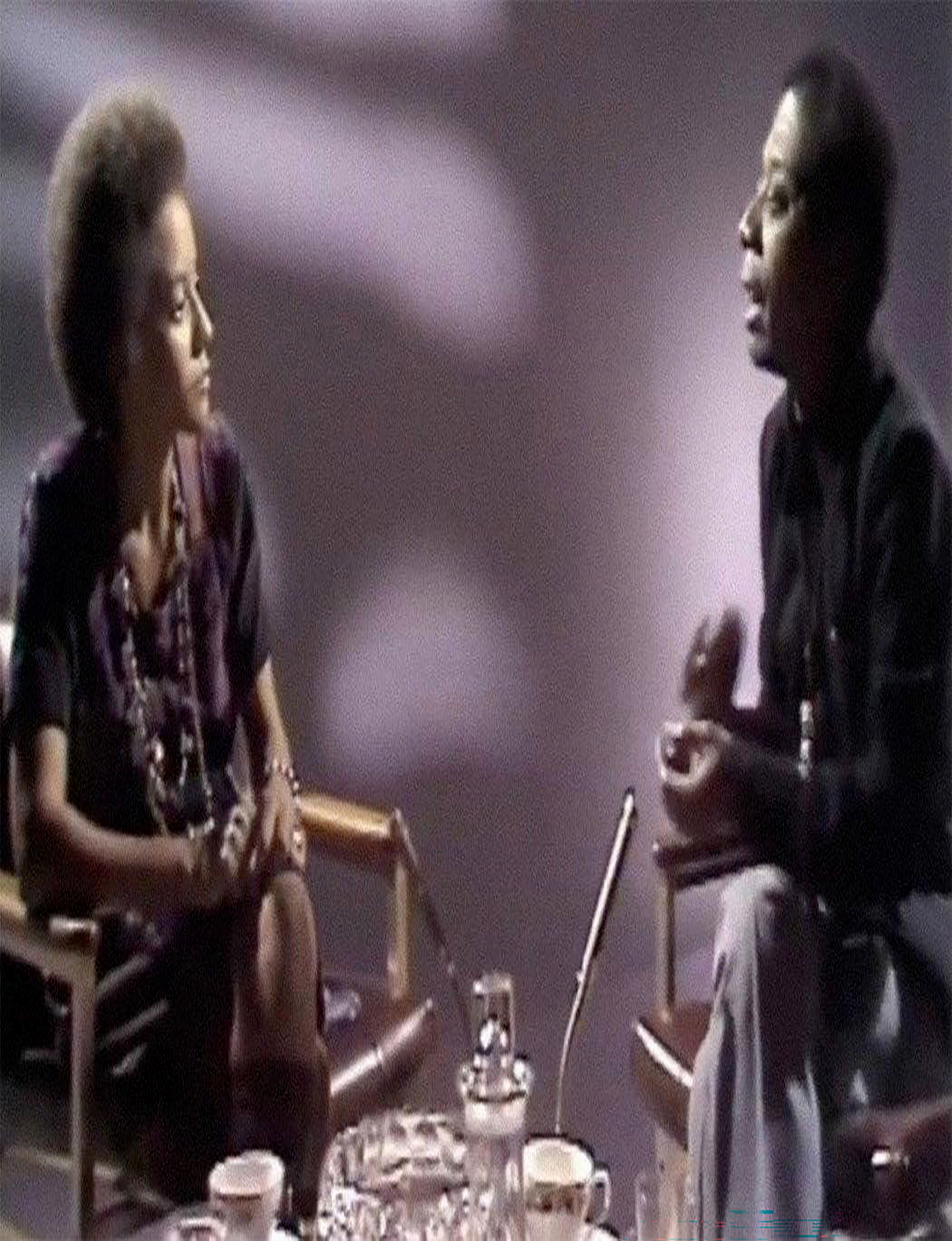


Because I Love You, I Get the Least of You

Love, Truth, and Relationships in the Black Community

Lauren McCaskill

A Conversation That Still Resonates

In 1971, James Baldwin and Nikki Giovanni sat across from each other for a public conversation in London that was as intimate as it was candid. Televised but deeply personal, their dialogue drew viewers into the inner workings of Black life, exploring race, gender, responsibility, and love with a level of honesty rarely seen on public platforms at the time. It was not a staged discussion for appearances; it was a reckoning — a rare moment where the external forces shaping Black existence — systemic oppression, societal expectation, economic limitations, and cultural scrutiny — were connected directly to the tender, often fraught, dynamics of intimacy. Baldwin and Giovanni were not speaking abstractly. They were naming the daily pressures that infiltrate homes, relationships, and families, the ways love must coexist with survival, and the quiet compromises often made in private spaces.

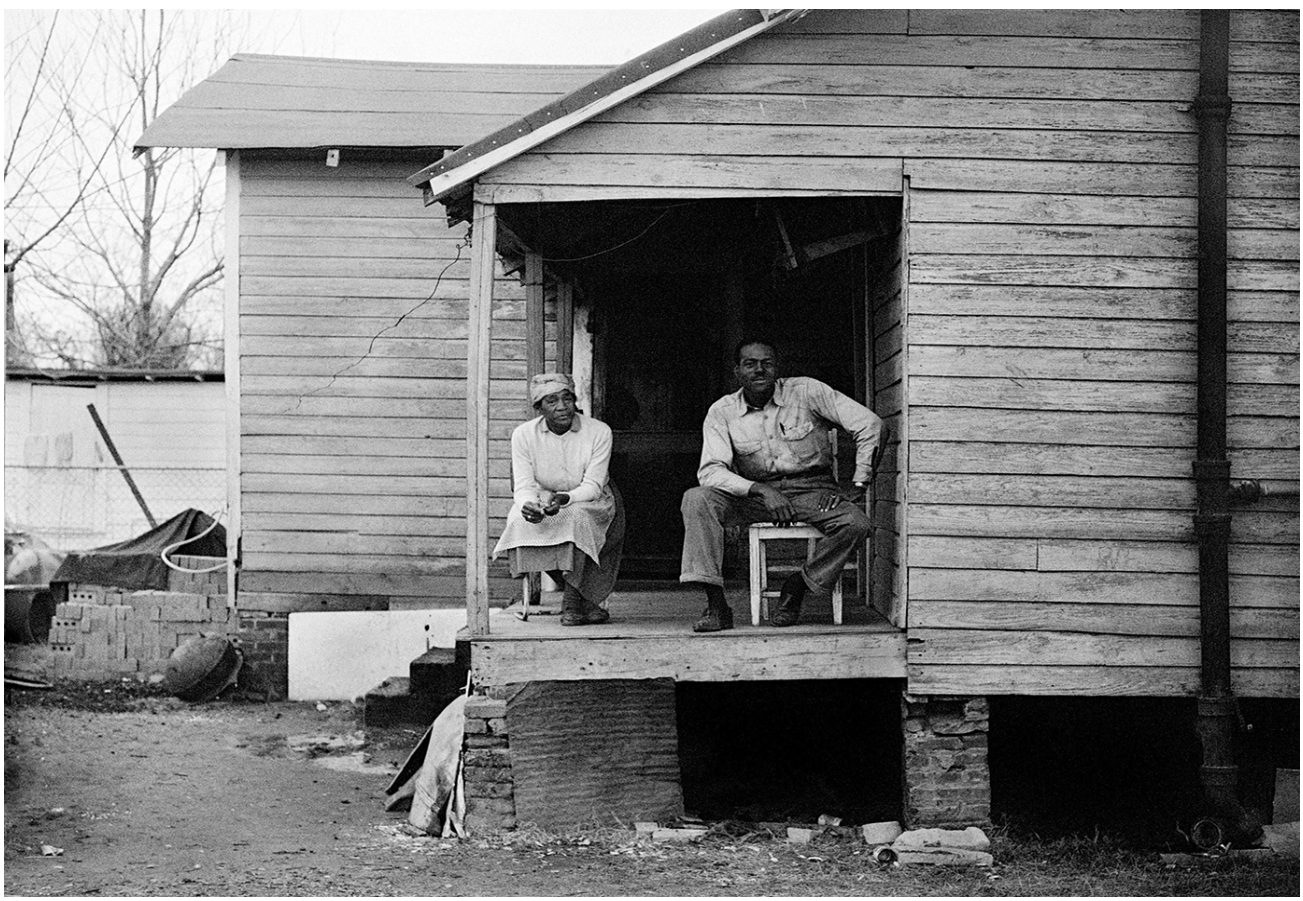
Giovanni's words remain among the most piercing in that conversation:

"Because I love you, I get the least of you."

This statement endures because it names a painful, universal truth in many Black relationships: the people we love most — those for whom we would sacrifice and endure — often inherit the least of our time, attention, and emotional labor. It is a critique of imbalance, yes, but also a profound call for accountability, presence, and reciprocity. In this line, Giovanni encapsulates the tension between love and survival, between devotion to family and self, between giving to the world and giving to the ones who matter most. It is a truth that resonates across generations, echoing in the lived experiences of families, in cultural narratives, and in the modern stories of intimacy in the Black community.

By framing love as both moral and radical, Baldwin and Giovanni challenged viewers to confront the cost of withholding presence from those we hold dear. They asked us to consider: what happens when the world demands the best of us, but those we love receive only remnants? And conversely, what power exists when love is fully given — undivided, intentional, and ethical — even in the face of societal oppression?

Historical Context: Love Under Siege



To understand the weight of Giovanni's statement, it helps to consider the historical pressures on Black love. From slavery to segregation to modern systemic inequities, African American families have been forced to navigate external violence and internal strain simultaneously. Families were torn apart by the slave trade. Segregation limited economic opportunity and social mobility. Policing, mass incarceration, and economic precarity continue to place enormous stress on Black households today.

These external pressures seep into homes and intimate relationships. Baldwin described the effect of American society on Black men: humiliation and exhaustion from public oppression can translate into emotional withdrawal at home. Giovanni acknowledged this reality, yet she insisted it cannot be an excuse for withholding love or presence from those closest to us.

Giovanni recognized these realities but refused to accept them as justification for neglect within relationships. She insisted that love requires presence, honesty, and reciprocity, even in a world that so often demands survival over tenderness. To withhold emotional labor, to reserve only fragments of oneself for the people who matter most, perpetuates the very strain that external oppression has imposed. Love, in this context, is an act of courage and resistance — a deliberate choice to give fully, despite exhaustion, injustice, and societal pressure.

Nikki Giovanni: Speaking Truth in Love

When Giovanni said, "Because I love you, I get the least of you," she articulated the frustration many Black women experience. Often expected to be strong — emotionally, spiritually, and economically — they may receive only fragments of care, attention, or intimacy from partners.

Her critique extends beyond gender, too. She challenges the broader pattern of emotional scarcity in Black relationships: people give their energy to the world, to survival, to public performance, and leave the residue for home. Giovanni reframes love as accountability. To love is not simply to protect or endure; it is to fully show up. Baldwin's and Giovanni's conversation becomes a blueprint for honesty: critique is not rejection — it is invitation to deeper connection.

Baldwin's Moral Lens on Love

Baldwin's concept of love was moral, not sentimental. Love, he argued, is transformative: it can reshape the individual and the collective. This is particularly relevant in the Black community, where love is both personal and political. Every act of intimacy and care becomes part of a larger resistance

to dehumanization.

Baldwin and Giovanni's dialogue highlights that love is relational labor. It requires intentionality, presence, and courage. In a society that often devalues Black life, relationships can be spaces of reclamation, where vulnerability is not weakness and emotional labor is mutual.

The Gendered Dimension of Love

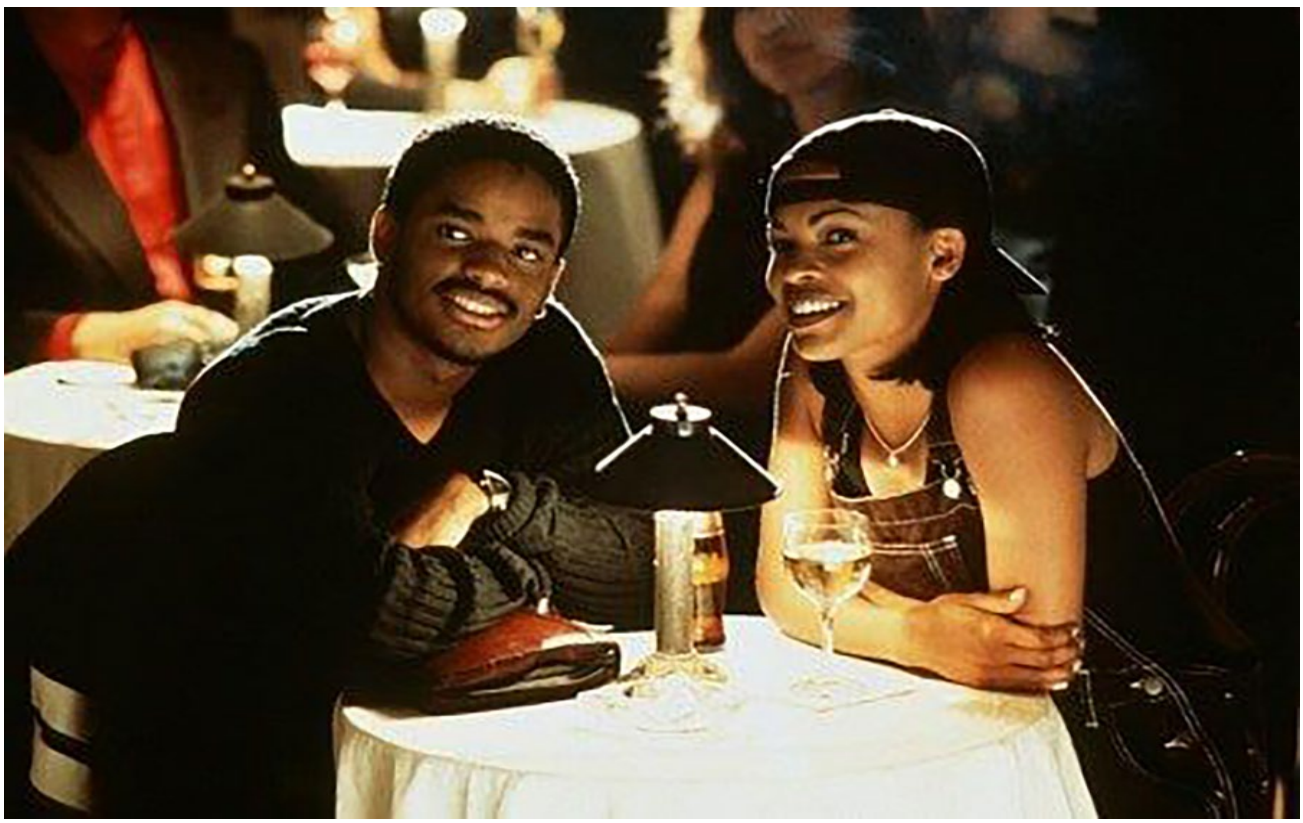
Giovanni's words also uncover the gendered pressures in Black relationships. Black men often navigate societal expectations that distort their sense of self, while Black women are expected to carry both their own resilience and their partner's. This imbalance contributes to patterns Giovanni identifies: the partner who loves deeply often receives the least emotional presence in return.

The line "Because I love you, I get the least of you" is a call to reimagine these dynamics. Strength should not be stoicism, protection should not be distance, and love should not be rationed. Full presence, vulnerability, and reciprocity must become the standard.

Modern Reflections: Continuing the Conversation

Decades later, these lessons remain urgent. Today, Black relationships are navigating both historical burdens and new pressures: economic inequality, social media scrutiny, and cultural expectation all weigh heavily. Yet the conversation Baldwin and Giovanni modeled provides a path forward. It emphasizes truth-telling, mutual accountability, and courage as cornerstones of healthy relationships.

It challenges us to ask: Who receives our softness? Who gets our attention? Who truly inherits our care? And how can we break cycles of emotional scarcity, ensuring that love is not the residue of a day's labor but the focal point of our lives?



Both Baldwin and Giovanni framed love as radical. To love fully — in honesty, presence, and commitment — is revolutionary in a society that constantly devalues Black life. It is not sentimental; it is ethical. Giving our best to one another, not just to survival or performance, reshapes our homes, our communities, and ultimately our culture.

To heed Giovanni's insight is to challenge historical patterns:

"Because I love you, I will give my fullness, not my leftovers."

This lesson resonates in popular culture, particularly in films that explore modern Black love. Consider the relationship dichotomy in Love Jones, where Darius and Nina are both brilliant, ambitious, and emotionally aware — yet their love struggles under fear and miscommunication. Darius, like many Black men navigating societal pressure, retreats from vulnerability, while Nina, a fiercely independent woman, struggles to reconcile her need for connection with self-preservation. Their tension mirrors Giovanni's warning: love cannot thrive if either partner offers only fragments of themselves.

Similarly, Poetic Justice presents Justice and Lucky. Their story highlights the collision of personal trauma and societal expectation. Justice, shaped by grief and disappointment, hesitates to fully trust, while Lucky grapples with the weight of masculinity and provision under systemic pressures. Their connection blossoms only when honesty, risk, and emotional presence align — echoing Baldwin's assertion that love is moral, not sentimental.

These films illuminate a recurring pattern: love in the Black community often exists in tension with survival. Partners must navigate not just personal differences but the residual effects of systemic oppression, intergenerational trauma, and cultural expectation. The dichotomy lies in balancing protection with openness — giving the world your best while also reserving the fullness of your heart for the person you love.

In modern contexts, these dynamics persist. Social media, economic pressures, and generational trauma complicate intimacy, but the lessons remain: authentic connection requires presence, honesty, and shared accountability. Love that is partial, hesitant, or distracted becomes a form of survival rather than liberation. Giovanni's insistence on receiving the fullness of a partner's love is therefore as relevant today as it was in 1971.

Towards a Fuller Inheritance

The Baldwin–Giovanni dialogue teaches us that love can be reclamation, a defiance of systemic oppression, and an intentional act of generosity. It is ancestral. It carries forward the lessons, struggles, and triumphs of those who came before us. To love fully is to honor that lineage.

The revolutionary act they modeled is deceptively simple: presence over absence, honesty over avoidance, and reciprocity over depletion. If the people we love received the fullness of our attention, care, and truth, what could Black love look like in the next generation?

Giovanni's words are both critique and hope.

"Because I love you, I get the least of you."

It is a line that confronts, challenges, and calls us to action. It asks us to examine our patterns, our presence, and the depth of our intimacy. It asks us to give more, withhold less, and honor the moral and spiritual work of love.

In doing so, Black relationships can become not just sites of survival, but spaces of joy, growth, and liberation. And in these spaces, love becomes its own form of resistance — generational, communal, and deeply human.

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Brotherhood Among Black Men: Presence or Performance?

Darryl Ben Yudah

In every generation, the idea of brotherhood among Black men has carried both power and expectation. From the fields of resistance during slavery to the organizing halls of the civil rights movement, unity between Black men has often been the backbone of survival and progress. But in modern times, a question quietly echoes within our communities: is brotherhood truly present, or has it become a performance?

True brotherhood is not loud. It is not measured only by social media posts, public praise, or performative loyalty in front of an audience. Real brotherhood lives in accountability, protection, honesty, and support when no one else is watching. It shows up in the phone call when a brother is struggling, the mentorship offered to young men searching for direction, and the willingness to correct a friend with love rather than abandon him in silence.

However, modern culture sometimes encourages performance over presence. Brotherhood can be reduced to appearances—group photos, slogans about loyalty, or temporary alliances built on convenience. When conflict arises, when success creates envy, or when hard truths must be spoken, the performance often fades and reveals whether the bond was real or simply situational.

Yet throughout history, Black communities have built powerful institutions that reflect authentic brotherhood. Black fraternities, mentorship organizations, and community groups have long emphasized discipline, education, leadership, and collective responsibility. Historically Black

fraternities, in particular, were created not just as social organizations but as networks of scholarship, activism, and lifelong support. Through mentorship programs, service projects, and professional connections, these institutions have cultivated generations of Black men committed to uplifting one another and their communities.

Even within more complex and controversial environments, such as Black street gangs, there has historically existed a powerful sense of brotherhood and loyalty. While many gangs formed under difficult social conditions and often led to destructive outcomes, their origins were frequently rooted in protection, neighborhood solidarity, and a search for belonging among young Black men navigating poverty, violence, and systemic neglect. In those spaces, the language of "brotherhood" still reflected a deep human desire for unity, identity, and mutual protection.

Private conversations, small gatherings, and trusted circles have often been where real brotherhood grows strongest. In barbershops, community centers, churches, gyms, and late-night talks between friends, Black men have historically shared wisdom, pain, strategy, and encouragement. These quieter spaces allow honesty and vulnerability that public performance sometimes cannot sustain.

I personally engage with brothers from different walks of life—different neighborhoods, different tribes, different experiences. Whether it's Big B from Mob Piru, Jai from Campanella Park, UNC Big Skull from 83, UNC Mob James from Mob Piru, UNC Big Sykco from 60, Mont G from the GDs, Compton D, Boob and Tanc from 90, my relative Dubloc from 90, Travon the Israelite—son of the legendary Stanley "Tookie" Williams—or my Hebrew brother Duse'M from LA Brims.

Despite the different backgrounds and affiliations, we created something deeper than labels: a genuine space of brotherhood.

Within that circle, conversations move freely—about life, love, hood politics, sports, religion, spiritual discussion, history, entertainment, and current events. It's a space built on respect and trust, where Black men can speak openly without fear of judgment or misunderstanding.

In a time where many Black men feel overlooked or isolated, these kinds of spaces matter more than ever. They allow men from different experiences to share wisdom, support one another, and release the pressures of the world.

Those conversations—full of real energy, honesty, and shared understanding—become more than dialogue. They become therapy, mentorship, and community all at once. The presence of brotherhood itself can reduce stress, strengthen the mind, and help combat the very real struggles many Black men face today, from high blood pressure to mental and emotional strain.

In Columbia, South Carolina, a powerful example of this exists at The House of Hathor, where the For Brothers Only Men's Group meets every first and third Tuesday of the month from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30

p.m. The group was created by James Shadd of Shadd Law Firm and operates as part of the Villager Group, a social group that has been active in the community for approximately six or seven years.

This gathering serves as a social and cultural space rooted in African heritage and focused on building authentic brotherhood among Black men. The discussions often center around manhood, responsibility, culture, and the shared experiences of navigating life as Black men in America.

The group emphasizes several key areas:

Mentorship & Community Leadership

Members focus on mentoring youth and young adults while encouraging education, health and wellness, and community leadership. The goal is to uplift the next generation and improve the quality of life within the community.

Networking & Economic Empowerment

Beyond conversation, the group functions as a network for building relationships that can lead to

business opportunities, financial growth, and collective economic empowerment.

Professional Networking & Community Activism

Through collaboration and dialogue, members strengthen professional ties while also addressing issues that impact the Black community locally and nationally.

Mental Health & Support

Equally important, the group provides a supportive environment where Black men can discuss spiritual growth, mental health, and social pressures in a space that encourages openness and healing.

Organizations and social groups like this demonstrate that presence matters. They create essential environments where Black men can connect, share knowledge, build wealth, mentor the next generation, and support one another's mental and emotional well-being.

At the same time, the digital age has introduced new forms of connection. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and online communities allow Black men to celebrate achievements, amplify voices, and inspire each other across cities, states, and even continents. While online engagement can sometimes lean toward performance, it can also create visibility, solidarity, and cultural pride on a global scale.

Ultimately, both presence and performance can serve a purpose. Public expressions of unity can inspire communities and challenge negative stereotypes, while private bonds nurture the trust and accountability that sustain real brotherhood. The key is balance—ensuring that what is displayed publicly reflects what truly exists behind the scenes.

Brotherhood among Black men is strongest when it moves beyond appearances and is rooted in genuine connection. Whether through mentorship, fraternity bonds, community organizing, or simply checking on a friend, true brotherhood is measured not only by what is shown to the world, but by what is practiced consistently in everyday life.

1. Presence Builds Real Brotherhood

Presence reflects real relationships. It's the mentorship, the private conversations, the barbershop talks, the fraternity meetings, the brother pulling another brother aside to give advice or correction. These moments create trust, loyalty, and long-term support systems.

Historically, **many of the strongest forms of Black male brotherhood were built through presence:**

Black fraternities mentoring younger students

Civil rights leaders organizing in churches and homes

Community elders guiding younger men

Even neighborhood circles where brothers looked out for each other

These were not performances—they were lived commitments.

2. Performance Has Power, But It's Limited

Performance—through social media, public unity statements, or visible displays of solidarity—can still be useful. It can:

Inspire people

Spread messages quickly

Celebrate Black achievement

Counter negative stereotypes

But performance alone can sometimes become surface-level unity if it isn't backed by real relationships.

3. The Strongest Brotherhood Combines Both

The best model is actually Presence first, Performance second.

Presence builds the foundation.

Performance shows the world that the foundation exists.

Think of it like this:

Presence is the roots of the tree.

Performance is the branches people can see.

Without roots, the tree falls.

Top 10 Songs of the Month
Soundtrack to Brotherhood: Presence Over Performance

Music has always been one of the strongest expressions of brotherhood among Black men. From soul and R&B to street anthems and conscious hip-hop, artists have consistently explored themes of loyalty, accountability, struggle, and uplift. These songs capture the spirit of presence—showing up for your brothers, your community, and yourself.

1. "Royalty" – Gang Starr feat. K-Ci & JoJo

A timeless record celebrating dignity, legacy, and the idea that Black men should see themselves as kings. Guru's message reminds listeners that true royalty is carried through character and respect.

2. "You Will Know" – Black Men United

A powerful collective anthem performed by some of the greatest R&B voices of the 90s. The song emphasizes unity, purpose, and the emotional depth of Black male brotherhood.

3. "The Black Hand Side" – Pharoahe Monch feat. Styles P

A gritty and conscious hip-hop collaboration that speaks to loyalty, respect, and the realities of brotherhood within urban communities.

4. "It's Different" – Statik Selektah feat. M.O.P. & Cormega

This track highlights the authenticity of street loyalty and the code that binds men who grow up navigating similar struggles.

5. "Boys to Men" – New Edition

A classic reflection on growing up and stepping into responsibility. The song captures the transition from youth to manhood—a core theme of mentorship and brotherhood.

6. "Let the Homies Know" – Burberry Curry

A modern track rooted in loyalty and communication among tribal men. It speaks to the importance of letting your circle know where you stand and who you stand with.

7. "I'll Be Around" – Rappin' 4-Tay

A West Coast classic about staying solid and dependable—two pillars of authentic brotherhood.

8. "Bigger Than Life" – Nipsey Hussle

Nipsey's message is about legacy, growth, and building something meaningful beyond the individual. His music consistently promotes uplifting the community and your circle.

9. "Do Better" – Ab-Soul

A deeply reflective record encouraging accountability and self-improvement—an essential part of strengthening brotherhood and personal growth.

10. "Brotha" – Angie Stone

A soulful tribute honoring Black men for their strength, resilience, and beauty. It reminds listeners that recognition and love are essential to building healthy brotherhood.

Bonus Track

"Head High" – Joey Bada$$

An uplifting record encouraging perseverance and pride while navigating life's pressures.

Together, these songs form a musical reflection of brotherhood—from street loyalty to spiritual uplift, from mentorship to manhood. They remind us that while public expressions of unity are powerful, the true strength of brotherhood is found in the everyday presence we offer one another.


BROTHERHOOD
SOUNDTRACK
THE MUSIC OF PRESENCE
BETA YISRAEL BLVD
BROTHERHOOD AVES
TRACKLIST
1. GANG STARR – "ROYALTY" (FEAT. K-CI & JOJO)
2. BLACK MEN UNITED – "YOU WILL KNOW"
3. PHAROAHE MONCH – "BLACK HAND SIDE" (FEAT. STYLES P)
4. STATIK SELEKTAH – "IT'S DIFFERENT" (FEAT. M.O.P & CORMEGA)
5. NEW EDITION – "BOYS TO MEN"
6. BURBERRY CURRY – "LET THE HOMIES KNOW"
7. RAPPIN 4-TAY – "I'LL BE AROUND"
8. NIPSEY HUSSLE – "BIGGER THAN LIFE"
9. AB-SOUL – "DO BETTER"
10. ANGIE STONE – "BROTHA"
11. JOEY BADASS – "HEAD HIGH"
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Most Worshipful Brother
Lynwood F. Givens, Grand Master

SEE BETWEEN THE LENS

Thickcode

Intro: Have you ever heard of " Àwon omo Bólà " in the street ?

Have you ever seen "No Scavenger"?

If you see between the lens, you know everything around you is you.

You are the reflection...You either accept or seek change that starts from you

One of the finest poets says, "The world is yours."

If you believe it belongs to you, it becomes your heart.

You say the world is mine; it is yours to keep it clean,to keep the sky blue ,and be green enough to see the land green

Be environmentally ready to keep your name in history by telling people if the world is plastic, everyone would melt away.

Tell somebody:If the world is made of plastic, the heat of reality would cause everyone to melt away

Look up the sun is warning us, and the moon is waking us

To see between the lens and know we cant win a war against ourselves

I don't even pray we stumble into one , I can't even picture the consequence because it is too dark

How can I destroy about 71% of myself?

Destroying the coastal ecosystem and the plastic pollution is going gaga

We seek revolution

Suddenly, we see black boys with baggy sacks walking like street monks

They bow down to everybody

Unconsciously driven to keep plastic off the hood and beautify the world

They don't walk around in Botega, but their street language is another artistic expression

They hustle under the scorching sun, observing everything like adventurers searching for lost gold

They preach the street gospel of recycling, and no one is listening.

Truthfully,they preach the street gospel of recycling , and no one is listening.

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1091 BROUGHTON STREET, ORANGEBURG SC
APRIL 19TH 2PM-4PM

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MAY 16TH 3-5PM

VIBEZ COFFEE
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JUNE 5TH 6-8PM

WASHINGTON CAFÉ
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This past week, the Wilmington Public Library became a living archive of memory, struggle, and resilience. Fredrika Newton, a guiding force in preserving the legacy of the Black Panther Party, shared her story with a room of engaged listeners. For over three decades, Newton has been a custodian of history—not only of her late husband, Huey Newton, but of the movement that reshaped Black liberation in America. Her reflections remind us that the work of revolution is never only public; it is lived in quiet acts of courage, care, and community.

Walking into the library, there was a palpable sense of reverence. A small group of attendees leaned forward as Newton spoke, effortlessly weaving her personal narrative into the broader tapestry of the Black Panther Party's history. From her teenage years to her role in safeguarding some of the most critical artifacts of the movement, she presented a story of devotion, resilience, and revolutionary love.

"I was never in the spotlight," Newton said. "Most women weren't. But we were the heartbeat of the work—teaching, feeding children, organizing survival programs, running community schools. We made the revolution tangible in people's lives."

Her words underscored a truth often omitted from popular narratives: while men in leather jackets and berets became the iconic image of the Black Panther Party, it was the women behind the scenes who sustained the movement. They taught children, organized meals, ran clinics, and coordinated

Honoring Legacy and Revolutionary Love: Fredrika Newton at the Wilmington Public Library

Lauren McCaskill

educational programs. “We didn’t do it for recognition,” Newton explained, “we did it because it was necessary. And it still is.”

Joining the Struggle

Newton’s entry into the Black Panther Party was shaped both by her upbringing and by circumstance. Raised in a household steeped in activism—her mother a Jewish woman committed to fighting racism—Newton was surrounded by ideals of justice from an early age. Yet, she admitted, she did not initially intend to join the movement. College in Oregon took her away, but returning home, she found herself drawn into community work: helping children, feeding neighbors, and building relationships with the youth.

“I started working in a cooperative grocery store,” Newton recalled. “Kids would come in selling newspapers and collecting donations for the free breakfast program. I began giving them free food. And that connection became my doorway into activism.”

She joined the Party at nineteen, navigating the complexities of a movement under constant threat from federal and local authorities. Membership was not glamorous or easy; Newton recounted the

constant pressure, fear, and surveillance that made daily life both dangerous and exhausting. Yet, in spite of these hardships, she discovered the profound impact of community-centered activism.

The Work Behind the Movement

Throughout her talk, Newton emphasized the importance of the Black Panther Party's survival programs—community schools, free breakfast initiatives, health clinics, and more. These programs were not merely social services; they were strategies for liberation. They empowered people to imagine possibilities beyond the constraints of systemic oppression.

"The Party's work was about making people think, to give children a chance to imagine what they could do," Newton said. "If they weren't hungry, they could dream. If they had care and support, they could thrive. That was the revolution. And that work still needs to happen today."

Newton highlighted that the often-celebrated figures of the Party—the men seen in media images and films—were only part of the story. "You never saw the men teaching kids at five in the morning, feeding them breakfast, testing for sickle cell," she said. "That was the work of women. We were the backbone. We were the unseen organizers. And it was by design—because the revolution required endurance, not spectacle."

Preserving the Revolution

Perhaps one of Newton's most enduring contributions is her work preserving the Party's history. She has meticulously archived and digitized thousands of documents, photographs, and files, ensuring that future generations can access an unfiltered record of Black Panther history. Among these are FBI files obtained through COINTELPRO, the infamous program designed to surveil, infiltrate, and disrupt Black liberation movements.

Newton noted the chilling context: J. Edgar Hoover, the longtime FBI director, publicly called the Black Panther Party "the single greatest threat to the internal security of the country" in 1969. The Party, committed to community survival and Black self-determination, became the target of one of the most aggressive domestic intelligence operations in U.S. history. Newton's work ensures that this truth—and the Party's responses—remain part of the historical record.

"Digitizing these documents wasn't just preservation," Newton explained. "It was resistance. It was saying: the story of our people will not be erased, twisted, or forgotten. We are reclaiming the narrative." Her archival work has made it possible for scholars, students, and activists to study the inner workings of the Black Panther Party—not just the images of men in berets, but the strategies, programs, and courage behind the headlines.

Revolutionary Love and Personal Sacrifice

Newton's reflections also gave an intimate glimpse into the personal sacrifices behind revolutionary life. Her partnership with Huey Newton was marked by both love and challenge. They created a home and a semblance of normalcy amid extraordinary pressures—imprisonment, surveillance, and displacement. She described maintaining a sense of safety, routine, and love in a world intent on dismantling both the movement and their family life.

"We had to guard our hearts," Newton said. "This work is hard, and it breaks your spirit—but it also demands care for yourself so you can sustain it." From preparing meals to navigating public scrutiny, Newton's daily acts of care were revolutionary in their own right, sustaining not just her family but the ideals of a movement under siege.

The Bond Between Fredrika and Huey

At the heart of the Black Panther story is not only political struggle, but the profound human connections that sustained it. The love between Fredrika Newton and Huey Newton was more than a partnership—it was a meeting of souls, a bond forged in the heat of revolutionary struggle. They met at a moment when both were young, idealistic, and searching for ways to turn their passion into action. Fredrika recalls those early days not simply as romance, but as a convergence of purpose: two people who recognized in each other the courage, resilience, and devotion needed to serve their community.

Their love became a sanctuary amidst the constant pressures of activism. Newton describes their relationship as one of "revolutionary love," a deep, unshakable commitment that mirrored the Party's dedication to the people. In a moment that has become emblematic of that devotion, a comrade once turned to her in the midst of debate and said, "Sister, comrade, I would die for you." It was not hyperbole—it was a vow born of shared struggle, trust, and the understanding that the work of liberation required sacrifice.

For Fredrika and Huey, love was inseparable from the revolution. It grounded them, offered solace in isolation, and reminded them that the fight for Black liberation was ultimately a fight for the dignity and survival of their people. Through this lens, their personal bond was political: the depth of their care for one another reflected the depth of their care for the community they served. In honoring that love, Newton reminds us that revolutions are powered not just by ideology or strategy, but by the human heart—the willingness to commit fully, to endure, and to protect those we love, even in the face of extraordinary danger.

Lessons for Today

Newton's reflections were not merely historical; they were a guide for contemporary activism. She stressed the importance of rest, care, and community preservation—reminding attendees that the work of liberation is ongoing and must be sustainable. "The revolution is in the hands of the youth," she emphasized, "and the answers are often already within our communities. All we need is courage, care, and commitment."

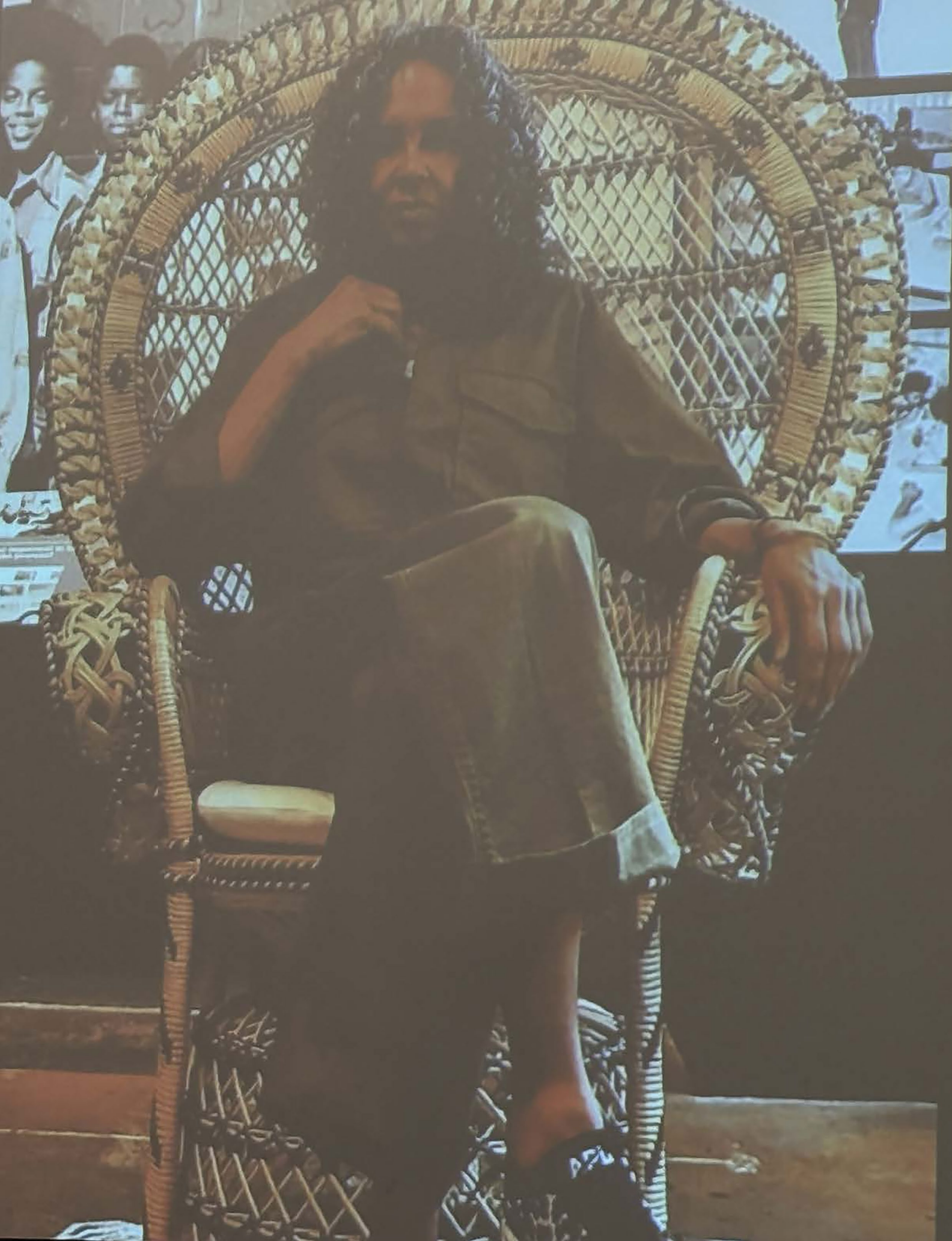
Her stories also illuminated the power of joy, humor, and love as forms of resistance. From moments with her family to small acts of kindness in the community, Newton illustrated that revolutionary work is sustained not only by ideology but by human connection.

A Living Legacy

As the session closed, the room remained quiet with reflection. Newton's presence reminded all who attended that the Black Panther Party was not just a historical moment but a living example of what organized, community-centered activism can achieve. Her life and work embody the dual commitment to preservation and progress—ensuring that the lessons of the past illuminate the path forward.

Through her steadfast dedication, Fredrika Newton has created a bridge between history and the present, between struggle and strategy, between love and liberation. By preserving FBI files, digitizing archives, and documenting the lived experience of the Party, she has ensured that the revolution—and the courage, care, and resilience that powered it—cannot be erased.

Her message is clear: the revolution is ongoing, the work of love is revolutionary, and history—preserved, honored, and shared—cannot be ignored.



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