

BOOK SHELF

Book review of the poetry of Henry Dumas, by Bill Ludwig of the West Las Vegas Library.

I first met Henry Dumas in the Black Book. He was saying such beautiful things that I became determined not only to find the source of those beautiful words but to proclaim them to the world when I did find them.

Finally it happened: his poetry was published, in two separate but identical books by different publishers, posthumously, for Henry Dumas was felled by a policeman's bullet in a case of "mistaken identity." Though I had found the source of those beautiful thoughts, the circumstances made me listen all the more carefully.

many sounds. This is the voice I heard in the Black Book:

One of the greatest roles ever created by Western man has been the role of "Negro."

One of the greatest actors to play the role has been the "Nigger."

He also speaks with the sound of the streets:

I laugh talk joke
smoke dope skip rope, may take a coke
jump up and down, walk around
drink mash and talk trash

and with the touch of a lover:

On hands and knees
the ocean begs up the beach,
and falls at your feet

and with the feeling of a father:

I must remember sometime
to lean my head down
and whisper in his ear
and ask him the name
of the country
he comes from.

But Henry Dumas is more than a man of emotional skin and personal attachment to a single moment; he belongs to the past:

The great god Shango in the African sea
reached down with palm oil and oozed out me

and

Up
from Mississippi I grew
Up
from the river of pain

he belongs to the double world:

my black mother birthed me
my white mother girthed me
my black mother suckled me
my white mother sucked me in
my black mother sang to me
my white mother sanctified me
she crucified me

he belongs to this place, this time, this America:

You are a despiser of black
and misunderstander of white.
You are a mystery to yourself
and a hater of that.
You once were a star that blazed,
but now you are overcivilized,
oversterilized, overstated.

Most of all, Henry Dumas belongs to his people
and their future:

APRIL

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 1975 Calendar

1	Classes resume after Spring Vacation
4	End of third nine weeks
6-12	National FHA Week
7-8	State FHA Convention, Reno
9	Small Schools Music Festival, Moapa Valley
10	Board of School Trustees meeting, 8:00 p.m.
10-12	State FTA Convention
11	End of eighth school month
13-19	Earth Week
13-19	National Library Week
14	Pan-American Day
15	Last day to send in your Income Tax Report.
16	Classified Employees meeting, 7:30 p.m.
16-18	Nevada Association of Student Councils, Reno
16-27	Henderson Industrial Days
17	Stage Band Festival, Chaparral High
19	State Spelling Bee (Nevada State Journal)
19	Revolutionary War began, 1775 (Bicentennial)
19	Jr. and Sr. High Bicycling Tournament-Chaparral
20-22	State P-TA Convention, Las Vegas
21-23	State FFA Contests, Reno
21-27	National Secretaries Week
22	CCAEO meeting, 4:00 p.m., Culley Elementary
23-May 3	North Las Vegas Progress Days
24	Board of School Trustees meeting, 8:00 p.m.
25	Arbor Day (NRS 388.130)
25	AEC Science "NOW" Awards Banquet, Las Vegas High Auditorium
28	Sixth Grade Center Fine Arts Day-Convention Center



FOUNDERS OF BLACK PRESS



JOHN B. RUSSWURM SAMUEL E. CORNISH

By Roland E. Wolseley

(NNPA) --- The observance of "Black Press Week," March 10-16, in a half a dozen cities across the country recalls the split which developed between John B. Russwurm and the Rev. Samuel E. Cornish, founders of "Freedom's Journal," the first black newspaper in the United States.

Russwurm of Jamaica, who was graduated from Bowdoin in 1826 as the second black college graduate in the U. S., gave up on a solution to slavery and the race problem here in America in 1929 and instead looked toward Liberia, West Africa, for an answer.

Bones of my bones,
all you golden-black children in the sun,
lift up! and read the sky
written in the tongue of your ancestors

and he calls to each: listen:
so up! you bursting lungs
you sprite of morning breath
up! and make fingers
and play long and play soft
play ebony play ivory

all my people who are keys and chords...

Cornish, founder of the first black Presbyterian Church in the country, believed that solutions to slavery and racism could be found in America. He split with Russwurm over the issue within a few months, left the paper, and devoted himself to his church.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association and the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History plan to memorialize the site where "Freedom's Journal" stood at 5 Varick St., New York City. A plaque is to be placed there later.

Since the days of Cornish and Russwurm, nearly 150 years ago, more than 3,000 black newspapers have come and gone, but more than 200 successful ones are now being published in more than 80 cities and 38 states.

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