



JAMAICA CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

An Anthology of Creative Literary Works for the Speech Competition

CHILDREN'S SPEECH ANTHOLOGY

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FORWARD

Here you will find a wide cross section of poems, prose, selections, and stories. Performers of the literary items must be guided by an adult instructor who will assist entrants in the competition with the correct interpretation to ensure that meaning and thought in a clear believable manner is portrayed.

Intended for children twelve (12) years and under, this compilation assists in the offering of available materials and each person will seek to find individual or group suitability. Every child's experience is different. Therefore, each poem or literary selection must match the experience or level of maturity of the child, and even the ability to imagine and sustain believability in the delivery of any speech item.

Trainers having been exposed to high level training through the J.C.D.C.'s workshops and seminars are now better able to match interpretation and suitability. The process of selection of items for participants is now more appropriate overall.

Andrew Brodber, Subject Specialist – Speech, Drama & Literary Arts

THE CHILDREN'S ANTHOLOGY

The competition of Speech is ably assisted by this Speech Anthology. We have in no way exhausted the possible items available to be performed; this serves to guide entrants and provide a ready resource with several choices my team researched, compiled and produced. Competitors are still encouraged to be careful when utilizing new materials not listed here, and original materials written by the performer or the tutor of the performer. When the work is new and unpublished the critical literary assessment may not have been done and the result may be less favourable than expected due to the unreformed or unedited nature of the work. We therefore, encourage and recommend that original works go through the Jamaica Creative Writing Competition first, then upon receipt of literary acknowledgement, that work may enjoy natural inclusion in the following publication of the Speech Anthology.

I bid you happy hunting therefore as you select your items for JCDC's Speech Competition. Do note the full responsibility of the tutor and performer when selecting appropriate items.

Andrew Brodber, Subject Specialist – Speech, Drama & Literary Arts

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THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE

By Robert Louis Stevenson (*from "A Child's Garden of Verses"*)

When I was sick and lay a-bed,
I had two pillows at my head,
And all my toys beside me lay
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
with different uniforms and drills,
among the bed-clothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets
All up and down among the sheets;
Or brought my trees and houses out,
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still
that sits upon the pillow-hill,
and sees before him, dale and plain,
the pleasant land of counterpane.

A CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER

By Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say:
O God! Preserve my mother dear
In strength and health for many a year;
And, O! preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence due;
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy;
And O! preserve my brothers both
From evil doings and from sloth,
And may we always love each other
Our friends, our father, and our mother:
And still, O Lord, to me impart
An innocent and grateful heart,
That after my great sleep I may
Awake to thy eternal day! Amen.

THIS IS CALLED “HAIR-RAISER”

By Judith Nicholls

Why are there hairs in your nose, Daddy;

Why all those hairs in your nose?

Those are vibrissae, my darling;

Vibrissae, as every one knows!

Why are there hairs on your chest, Daddy;

Why are there no hairs on mine?

Hairs on your chest will come later, my son;

Hairs on the chest take some time!

Why's there no hair on your head, Daddy;

Why not a hair on your head?

Hair on the head is an optional extra-

Now eat up you dinner, then bed!

THE COW

By Robert Louis Stevenson

The friendly cow, all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

By Cecil Frances Alexander

Once in royal David's city
Stood in a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood,
He would honour and obey,
Love, and watch the lowly maiden
In whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

For he is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us he grew,
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew,
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
See at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned,
All in white shall wait around

NOW THE DAY IS OVER

By Sabine Baring-Gould

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars began to peep,
Birds and beasts and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With thy tenderest blessing
May our eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of thee;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the deep blue sea.

Comfort every sufferer
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil
From their sin restrain.

Through the long night-watches
May thine angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise
Pure and fresh and sinless
In thy holy eyes.

Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And to thee, blest Spirit,
Whilst all ages run.

THE CANARY

By Elizabeth Turner

Mary had a little bird,
With feathers bright and yellow,
Slender legs-upon my word,
He was a pretty fellow!

Sweetest notes he always sung,
Which much delighted Mary;
Often where his cage was hung,
She sat to hear Canary.

Crumbs of bread and dainty seeds
She carried to him daily,
Seeking for the early weeds,
She decked his palace gaily.

This, my little readers, learn,
And ever practice duly;
Songs and smiles of love return
To friends who love you truly.

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

By Cecil Frances Alexander

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning,
That brightens up the sky;

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

ELETELEPHONY

By Laura Richards

Once there was an elephant,
Who tried to use the telephant-
No! No! I mean an elephone
Who tried to use the telephone-
(Dear me! I am not certain quite
That even now I've got it right.)

Howe'er it was, he got his trunk
Entangled in the telephunk;
The more he tried to get it free,
The louder buzzed the telephee-
(I fear I'd better drop the song
Of elephop and telephong!)

EVENING

(In words of one syllable)

By Thomas Miller

The day is past, the sun is set,
And the white stars are in the sky;
While the long grass with dew is wet,
And through the air the bats now fly.

The lambs have now lain down to sleep,
The birds have long since sought their nests;
The air is still; and dark, and deep
On the hill side the old wood rests.

Yet of the dark I have no fear,
But feel as safe as when 'tis light;
For I know God is with me there,
And He will guard me through the night.

For God is by me when I pray,
And when I close mine eyes to sleep,
I know that He will with me stay,
And will all night watch by me keep.

For He who rules the stars and sea,
Who makes the grass and trees to grow.
Will look on a poor child like me,
When on my knees I to Him bow.

He holds all things in His right hand,
The rich, the poor, the great, the small;
When we sleep, or sit, or stand,
He is with us, for He loves us all.

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES

By Mary Howitt

Buttercups and daisies-
Oh the pretty flowers,
Coming ere the springtime
To tell of sunny hours.
While the trees are leafless,
While the fields are bare,
Buttercups and daisies
Spring up here and there.

Ere the snowdrop peepeth,
Ere the crocus bold,
Ere the early primrose
Opens its paly gold,
Somewhere on a sunny bank
Buttercups are bright;
Somewhere 'mong the frozen grass
Peeps the daisy white.

Little hardy flowers
Like to children poor,
Playing in their sturdy health
By their mother's door:
Purple with the north wind,
Yet alert and bold;
Fearing not and caring not,
Though they be a-cold.

What to them is weather!
What are stormy showers!
Buttercups and daisies
Are these human flowers!
He who gave them hardship
And a life of care,
Gave them likewise hardy strength,
And patient hearts, to bear.

Welcome yellow buttercups,
Welcome daisies white,
Ye are in my spirit
Visioned, a delight!
Coming ere the springtime
Of sunny hours to tell-
Speaking to our hearts of Him
Who doeth all things well.

ABOVE THE BRIGHT BLUE SKY

By Albert Midlane

There's a Friend for little children
Above the bright blue sky,
A Friend who never changes
Whose love will never die;
Our earthly friends may fail us,
And change with changing years,
This Friend is always worthy
Of that dear name he bears.

There's a home for little children
Above the bright blue sky,
Where Jesus reigns in glory,
A home of peace and joy;
No home on earth is like it,
Nor can with it compare;
And everyone is happy,
Nor could be happier there.

FAIRIES PLAYTIME

By D.G.DAMES

Did you know the fairies came
playing on my window pane?
little footmarks could be seen
scattered o'er the glassy sheen
of my window. Down one side
they had made a lovely slide
from the top right to the ledge.
P'haps they'd rested on the edge
of the window-sill and then
flown up to the top again.
If I'm very good they may
let me see them at their play.

A GUINEA PIG

Anonymous (circa 1775)

There was a little guinea pig,
Who being little, was not big;
He always walked upon his feet,
And never fasted when he eat.

When from a place he run away,
He never at the place did stay;
And while he run, as I am told,
He never stood still for young or old.

He often squeaked, and sometimes violent,
And when he squeaked he never was silent.
Though never instructed by a cat,
He knew a mouse was not a rat.

One day, as I am certified,
He took a whim, and fairly died;
And as I am told by men of sense,
He never has been living since.

LITTLE THINGS

By Julia A. Carney

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Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the beauteous land.

And the little moments,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.

So our little errors
Lead the soul away,
From the paths of virtue
Into sin to stray.

Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our earth an Eden,
Like the heaven above.

MARY'S LAMB

By Sarah Josepha Hale

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go;
He followed her to school one day-
That was against the rule,
It made the children laugh and play
To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned him out,
But still he lingered near,
And waited patiently about,
Till Mary did appear.
And then he ran to her and laid
His head upon her arm,
As if he said, "I'm not afraid-
You'll shield me from all harm."

"What makes the lamb love Mary so?"
The little children cry;
"Oh, Mary loves the lamb, you know,"
The teacher did reply,
"And, you, each gentle animal
In confidence may bind,
And make it follow at your call,
If you are always kind."

THE RAINBOW

By Christina Rossetti

Boats sail on the rivers,
And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
Are prettier than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
Is prettier far than these.

MY SHADOW

By Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest things about him is the way he likes to grow-
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an India rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

THE STAR

By Jane Taylor

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveler in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark,
Lights the traveler in the dark-
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

WHAT IS PINK?

By Christina Rossetti

What is pink? A rose is pink
By the fountain's brink.
What is red? A poppy's red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? The sky is blue
Where the clouds float through.
What is white? A swan is white
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? Pears are yellow,
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? The grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? Clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? Why, an orange,
Just an orange!

WHERE DID YOU COME FROM, BABY DEAR?

By George MacDonald

Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry spikes left in.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?
I saw something better than anyone knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get this pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?
Love made itself into hooks and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought about you, and so I am here.

MADISON'S MEDICINES

By Linda Knaus

Madison's mother was never too pleased
If Madison sniffled or Madison sneezed.
So fearful of germs that might cause her these ills,
She stocked up on cough syrups, ointments and pills.

These remedies came in astounding arrays
Of suppressants, elixirs, syringes and sprays,
Supplements, lozenges, drops and relieves
For every affliction from hiccups to fevers.

The Madison's mother felt better equipped
If Madison's postnasal passages dripped.
If Madison suffered a viral infection,
Madison's mother had ample protection.

But Madison's mother lost faith in these drugs
The moment she thought if more serious bugs-
Like what if she comes down with Avian flu,
Or wakes up one morning all purplish blue?

What if she's ever allergic to cats,
Or she loses her hair and has to wear hats?
What if she swallows a poisonous pear,
And has to have round-the-clock medical care?

Madison's mother was taking no chance.
She went to the phone, and she called Dr. Vance.
He patiently listened to all of her fears
As he'd done every day for nearly five years

Madison's mother was quite reassured
As soon as the doctor had given his word
To fill a prescription for general narcotic,
Which usually made her a lot less neurotic.

IF YOU WERE BORN A TISSUE

By Linda Knaus

If you were born a tissue
You'd be fraught with qualms and woes
When tossed away like garbage
Filled with snot from someone's nose.

If you were born a carpet
It would cut you to the quick
When people walked allover you
Then beat with a stick.

If you were born a turkey
You would surely shake and shudder
When someone shoved you in the stove
All smeared with oil and butter.

If you were born an onion
Then your troubles would begin
The moment someone came along
To peel of all your skin.

If you were born a candlewick
You'd surely be a liar
To say that you weren't terrified
Of being lit on fire.

If you were born a teabag
You'd be riled; you'd be roiled
When dropped inside the floral pot
In which you'd soon be boiled?

It puts things in perspective
When you see another's issues.
Be glad you came from Mom and Dad
And not a pair of tissues.

THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN'S HAIRCUT

©2005 By Linda Knaus

The headless horseman's hair was
getting scruffy 'round the ears.
He hadn't had a decent cut
in over twenty years.

He'd heard about a barber
who was recommended by
another headless horseman
so he thought him worth a try.

He tied his horse outside the shop
on second avenue,
went in and asked the barber
for a shave and a shampoo.

He said, "I'd like my hair cut short
but leave some length in back.
I'll need a dandruff treatment too.
I'm fond of wearing black."

The headless horseman thought a bit
before instructing him,
"And then if time permits it, sir,
my moustache needs a trim."

He left there feeling confident
at quarter after one
as he turned and told the barber
"I'll be back here when you're done."

MATH TEST

©2003 By Linda Knaus

Today we have a test in math
and I'm not even scared.
It's not because I've studied hard
or am the least prepared.
It's not that I'm a genius
from a family full of brains.
It's not because I listen well
when Mrs. Clarke explains.
It's not because I'm diligent
or focused that I'll pass.
It's not because I'm smarter than
the other kids in class.
It's not because I'm ready
and it's not because I'm set.
It's cuz my lucky underwear
have never failed me yet.

HAUNTED HOUSE

©2005 By Linda Knaus

"Hello, this is the haunted house.
Are you the lost and found?
It seems we cannot find our ghost.
He's just no where around.

We did misplace him once before.
Just where we can't recall.
But speaking in our own defense,
he can't be seen at all.

We don't know what he looks like so
we can't provide a clue
as to either his appearance,
his dimension or his hue.

We just called missing persons, but
they claim they can't assist.
For they won't look for persons
if the persons don't exist.

It's really quite a problem, sir,
and cannot be ignored.
So if you were to find our ghost,
we'd pay a big reward.

Well, call us if you find him please.
He wouldn't hurt a mouse.
And frankly, sir, without our ghost
we're really just a house."

BECOMING A WEREWOLF

©2005 By Linda Knaus

My step-Dad's becoming a werewolf.
The signs are undoubtedly there.
For some nights he's neat and clean shaven,
on others he's covered with hair.

My step-Dad is well-bred and polished.
He values refinement a lot.
On some nights he's reading the classics
on others he pants when he's hot.

A graduate student from Oxford,
he's earned himself several degrees.
Some nights he is hanging diplomas;
some nights he is scratching at fleas.

He's quite an astronomy expert.
He knows quite a bit about stars.
Last evening he showed me Orion.
Tonight, though, he's out chasing cars.

He's talented on the piano,
but some nights plays badly because
he hits the right keys with his fingers
but usually not with his paws.

On some nights he's just surfing channels
like so many regular chaps.
On others he sits by the table
and begs us for leftover scraps.

My step-Dad's becoming a werewolf
and now more than ever before
I question his love for my mother
when he looks at the poodle next door.

LIONEL'S ALLERGIC

©1999 By Linda Knaus

My poor brother Lionel's allergic to bees.
He's allergic to bug spray and cross-country skis.

He's allergic to canned goods and butterscotch malts.
He's allergic to light bulbs and most Epsom salts.

My poor brother Lionel's allergic to beets.
He's allergic to grass stains and freshly washed sheets.

My brother's allergic to singing in a choir.
He's allergic to sidewalks and socks from the dryer.

Poor Lionel's allergic to all female deer.
He's allergic to sunlight and holiday cheer.

He's allergic to toothpicks and nobody knows
why Lionel's allergic to three of his toes.

He breaks out in hives when he get's near a tree,
But thankfully Lionel's allergic to me!

SICK DAY

©2002 By Linda Knaus

"Why are you in bed here?
Do you have the flu?
Let me feel your head, dear.
It's 98 point 2."

"Do you have a nosebleed?
Are you short of breath?
Were you in a stampede,
and trampled close to death?"

"Do you have the small pox?
Any thing with bumps?
Laryngitis of the voice box,
malaria or mumps?"

"Do you have an earache,
concussion or a sprain,
bitten by a rattlesnake,
have water on the brain?"

"Tell me what's the matter?
Do you need more rest?
"No!" I hollered at her,
"I have an English test!"

BILL AND BETTY BICKLEY

©2004 By Linda Knaus

Dining is disastrous
for Bill and Betty Bickley.
Betty eats too slowly,
and Billy eats too quickly.

Bill comes to the table
and gobbles up the pork,
while Betty's getting seated
and reaching for her fork.

Billy's pouring gravy
and empties out the boat
while Betty ties her napkin
neatly 'round her throat.

Bill eats all the carrots
and finishes the peas
while Betty asks politely,
"pass the veggies, please."

Billy's meal is ending,
And Betty is bereft.
Hers would be beginning
if there were any left.

Dining is disastrous
for Bill and Betty Bickley.
Billy should eat slowly,
or Betty will get sickly.

I'D LIKE TO BE THE LETTER Z

©2004 By Linda Knaus

I wish I were the furniture
or bellybutton fuzz.
That fly that's always buzzing by
is what I wish I was.

I'd care to be a nostril hair
or laces on a shoe.
My right-hand index finger or
a case of Russian Flu.

I'd like to be the letter Z,
a button or a bow.
An eyelash, an eraser, or
a small pistachio.

I wish I were a signature,
a chewed up wad of gum,
a cloakroom hook, an English book,
or crumbled cookie crumb.

Something inconspicuous
is what I'd rather be
when I don't know the answer, and
the teacher calls on me.

IF YOUR EYES WERE POSITIONED IN BACK OF YOUR HEAD

©1996 By Linda Knaus

If your eyes were positioned in back of your head,
you would not see in front but behind you instead.
Just where you were going you'd never be sure,
for all you would see is the place you just were.

I don't expect eating would be any fun.
If you can't see your plate, you don't know if you're done.
You would not see the person with whom you've embraced
or be certain your shoes are still properly laced.

You would not see the beautiful, delicate rose
as you brought it up close to the end of your nose.
You'll undoubtedly miss if you swat at a fly,
and forget about tying a knot in your tie.

When you stand up to bat you won't know when to hit,
and your glasses would simply have no place to sit.
Every day of your life there'd be something to dread
if your eyes were positioned in back of your head.

A NEW PUPPY

© 2001 By Linda Knaus

I've got a new puppy.
I think he's part goat.
He ate all the buttons
he found on my coat.
He ate all the tissues
he found in the box.
He ate at least two pairs
of argyle's socks.
He ate both the laces
he found on my shoes.
He ate both the back
and front page of the news.
I've got a new puppy.
I think he's part goat.
I can't watch TV
'cause he ate the remote.
He ate both my slippers
and swallowed my glasses.
I simply can't wait
until all of it passes.

**POEMS FROM THE JAMAICA CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION
AWARDED SELECTIONS**



MI MISS YUH BAD MASSA

By Jascinth Richards

Every minute a tink bout yuh mi sweet cawn
An a cyah even believe a two years since yuh gaan
Mi honey bunch a dream si yuh every nite
One mawnin a realize a mi sista mi a hug up tite

Dem sey time can heal a broken hawt
But is two years now an nuh healin nuh start
Hah mi suga bun a coulda have any man
But a promise to wait until di day yuh plane lan

Memba wen a jus si yuh, mi ole bady get numb
An how wi use to feed one anedda wid hog plum
Wi share ten cent bulla an suck one bag juice
An go tru pap card pack an pick out all di deuce

An I know de part yuh musi really miss
Fi run wey go a river wen wi a try fi tief a kiss
An yuh use to always borrow Mass Joe ole donkey
As wi ride into di sunset wi was so happy

Madda sey yuh sure fi tek up wid Merican
An yuh goin come back wid boasy wedden ban
A tell har not to sey so it could not be true
Cawse if it really go so den wat will I do

Anyway micase an hurry an come back
An doah bring no Merican gal fi gi mi hawt attack
Cawse yuh a di only one who mek mi hawt beat fassa
An God know sey mi really miss yuh massa

THE GATHERING

By Millicent Graham

For nine nights we gather
Coffee mugs and white rum, with round bread
To feed our dead and those that have traveled

from far. We come when the cusp
of day reads heaven, and there is
no famine of tears. When the families wring out

their hearts like wet rags and hang them
on old cedar slabs. We come:
with our heads dressed, with candles

each face a twisted wick;
to raise a song, to chant,
to flail shook leaves.

IT'S THE CHILDREN

By Jean L. Gouldbourne

It's the children
That sing
It's the children
That cry
It's the children
That laugh
It's the children
That die
It's the children
Whose songs
We blend with rhyme
It's the children
Whose fate
We decide
With time
It's the children
We bleed
It's the children
We feed
It's the children
Whose lives
We spoil with the weed
With the castles

Of now
That we build
In the air,
We further the feeling
Of future despair.
Young man with the trigger
Old man with the knife
It's the children
We kill
When we take a life.

When tomorrow
Approaches
And we will have died
It's the children
Whose peace
We will have denied.

THE FACE

By Malachi Smith

Ah me man
Yes, I am the same one
The same Ashanti
The same Yorubian
The same Dahomian

I come from Congo
I Mandingo
From the Gold Coast
From the Niger
I come from the Nite

Yes, ah me man
The same one
Who dipped from your ship
In the Middle Passage

You thought this man was dead?
No man
I am the face of the waves
Old and grey as the sea
With eyes deep and black
as the moment when
sea gods rescued me

When you feel the rain
Is not God crying
It's me (my scars hurting)
Look up
I am the face of the clouds
Black as the belly of the sea

I am the man in the wind
The hurricane
From the Canary
the eye
with walls of lightning and thunder
I come every summer
I am African
Can't deal with your winters
You thought this face was dead?
No man
I am the glow above these pines
The young son that eagled
Sunday at Augusta
I come to build pyramids

I am Tiger
Nat Yurner, Ashe, Ali, Jesse
Malcolm, Martin, Rodney, Toussaint
Mackandel, Bookman, Dread Scott, Stokley
Gravey, Jimmy, Tosh, Marley

I am Nanny,
Harriet Tubman, Bethune Cookman
Queen Rosa, Althea Gibson, Shirley Chisholm

I am the warrior
Who refused to live in chains
Who refused to let you rape my sisters
Who spoke with my blade
Who denied you the pleasure

I dipped from your ship
And I am still swimming
Surviving

I am the face

D J FANATICK

By Rachael White

DUB

We have the different types of animal dem, And the
Different classes of army man, We have those who
Deal eena Education And those who practice
Construction, Sum eena group, sum a one-man ban
Sum a dem she dem a family Don But...

Refrain:

Whatever and whoever we love
All a dem, wherever and
However We haffi falla dem.

Sum a dem a car an
Sum a dem a gem
Sum a dem hail from royalty,
Sum a ragamuffin
Sum a spic an span
Sum claim say dem have di music –wand but...

(Refrain)

Sum a beetle
An sum a dem a dawg,
Sum a elephant
An sum a draggan an
Sum a beanie-bud
But ... (Refrain)

Sum a di red, red rat
Sum a super-cat,
Sum a dem a snake
An sum a lion,
Sum a alley-cat
A chase the black rat
But ... (Refrain)

Sum a ad-mi-ral Marshall an
Gen-a-ral,
Sum a cap-tain an
Sum a lef-ten-ant,
Sum a ma-jor an Sum a
Briga-dor But...(Refrain)

Dere is de professor
An de principal,
Dere is de lecturer
An de class teacher,
We have de know-it-all
An de know-nutten
But...(Refrain)

Sum a dem a saw
An' sum a pliers,
Sum a pincers
An sum a Spanner,
All a dem a builda
In dere own right
But... (Refrain)

We have granfada
Daddy an mum-ma
Di sista an de bredda
An di toddler,
There is di infant
An di small baby
But ...(Refrain)

Sum a lexus
Sum a dem a benz,
Sum a dem a fenda
Sum love tek revenge,
Sum come clean an
Sum a dem mean
But...(Refrain)

Sum a dem a macka
An diamond same way,
Sum a Wailer
Sum a chat lay-lay,
Sum a dem a lady
Sum a dem rough
But... (Refrain)

Sum a dem a king
An sum a dem a queen,
Sum a dem a prince an
Sum a princess,
Sum a dem a heir an
Sum a heiress
But... (Refrain)

Some natti-natti
For dem nah platti,
Sum shotti-shotti
Sum too chatti-chatti

Sum full a hype
Sum nah lef di pipe
But... (Refrain)

Sum shabba-shabba
Sum a killa killa,
Wi have Flour, Terror
Ninja, Shaggy and Sizzla,
Sum lef dem bawn-lan
An sum a tan-yah
But...(Refrain)

Sum a dem ole
An sum a dem young,
Sum jus-a-come
An sum-a-go-dung,
Sum luv everything
Sum wear bling-bling
But...(Refrain)

Sum a fiah-man
Who bun ebryting,
Sum firs' stage-fright
Was pon Miss Lou-ding,
Sum hotti-hotti
Wile sum no gotti
But...(Refrain)

Keen Eye

“GOING TO THE MOVIE”

By Tyrone Reid

When you leave
Close the door behind you
And turn the key.
You are going to the movies again.
I'll remain here with Mother to watch the fire
Make poetry with the logs
And listen to Norah Jones on the victrola
Persuading him to go away with her
When you return, the glass moon
Will have donned her nightgown.
Inside, only the ash in the fireplace
Will have changed.
We will still be seated here,
In the dark, where you left us.

MISS LISTEN...PLEASE

By Enos Barrett

Miss Listen...Please

Miss, miss
Mi late again
Mi late fi yu tes
But miss
A woulda like fi
Do mi best
But miss
Mi cawn concentrate.

Mi mind jus a fill
Wid hate
When
Mi hafi set up late.
But a no study
Mi a study when
Mi woulda like fi
Study
A di gunshot
Out in a di lane.

Mi a wait fi get
Flat di nine a wi
Jus a watch di
Door to wi one
Room trap.

Miss, my heart jus
A heave but mi
Cawn get no sleep

Mama cover di baby mouth
Du, no mek har weep
Wi cawn mek no sound
Mi big brada mek one little
Hole so him can peep.

Mi fada miss
Mi no know no fada
Im lef
From mi was t'ree
Now mi a sixteen
Im couldn't care

Ka...Pow.. Blam-blam, blam!
Di gunshot dem a wheeze

Come in like dem a scream
But wi cawn do nutten
All lights out. Not a whisper
Not even dawg deh bout

Dis mawning when mi
Wake di 'hole a mi
Da quake
No likkle tea
Las night a likkle calaloo
An dumpling di nine a
Wi eat

Miss, how mi fi think
When mi belly just a scream
Mi 'ungry?
Lawd!
Miss, mi cawn tek it
No more
How must I write your test
Miss,
I want to do my best
But mi cawn concentrate
Mi mind deh back a yard
Jus a t'ink if everyone
Safe
Or, if dinner pon di plate.

Sometimes when mi a pass
Dem a call out to mi
"What'pen dog, yu a idiot
Come satta pon di corner

An' light up a spliff
Yu nuh wan lick shot!"

Miss
Mi know sey we poor
But mi naw go do dat
Dem t'ing deh wi
Hurt
Mi Mada feelings

Lawd inna de ghetto yah
No sweet

The cycle a go start
Tonight again Lawd
Mi haffi fin a way out.
But, Miss, some naw understand
Poverty have wi shackled
Di gunman...
And me,
But Miss,
There must be some other way
Me naw join
No gang

THE MAN ON THE ROCKS

By Victor Robertson

I used to be
Part of the work force
Now I am unemployed, hungry and broke
I am the man on the rocks
I am the man on the rocks
My family has deserted me
My stomach aches
I am hungry
I am the man on the rocks
The runnings making me uneasy
Sometimes it seems
The only way is the Penitentry
I am the man on the rocks
I am the man on the rocks
My clothes torn
No socks no shoes
I have a plan
But who do I turn to
Nobody gives a damn
I am the man on the rocks
I am the man on the rocks

IN SEASON

By Natalie Corthesy

All my dreams
Have become stained
By upper Saint Andrew browning conceit.

Naseberries and guineps
Remind me life is sweet

The bile in my mouth converts
Hypocrisy to reason.

Somewhere between Norbrook, Cross
Roads and Parade gun salutes ripe and
Burst in every season.

My half empty pockets jingle
The red money tune.

I wish...

Naseberries and guineps on a
Cool shady afternoon.

COUNTRY ROAD

By Millicent Graham

Country road. For miles
Nothing but a man, two goats
And wild morning glory

Why I can't marry her? By now
She is elbow deep in soap suds
Or pinned to the wire line,
Navel glistening with rinse water

The river road bends, a bow.
Shot into the sky-
Yellow arrow grass

Sun hot as my head,
I think of her and burst into a
Sweat. Her belly;
In a ribbon of clothespins,
Grows Impatient. "No more
goat business" she says, "time
to mind two kids of our own".

TYPE

By Kimberly Robinson

There are so many types a girl can be.
You've told me I'm the waiting around
For Mr. Right type
Or the I'm looking
For a rich guy type and even the
I'm too good to say hi to you type.

I know I've been the I'm more
Beautiful on a second glance type
(but who normally takes the time to
look again)
yes, then the dreaded beautiful virgin
from head to toe type shouldn't that be
the best type? But no
it's synonymous with the deep, too scary for me
type, and it only attracts the stupid, perverted,
looking -for-a-cure type.

But have you ever considered that
I've thought of my self as the
I'm never seen type that slips under
the radar type,
which explains the not good
enough to say hi to you type.

You've told me
I'm the introspective,
Interesting, deep type, the sitting by the fire
And having wonderful conversation type.
Yes, once you've even told me
I'm the beautiful type, and even the
Forbidden fruit
That some want to possess type
But when,
When will I ever just be
Your type

HENRY'S AMBITION

By Una Marson

Little Henry was just ten and lived beside the sea.
You would think he was ambitious a sailor man to be
But no, though he went fishing and rowing many a day,
His hopes for future happiness did hardly lie that way.

To none he told his secret, though often one would ask
If when he grew to manhood he would like a special task;
His large brown eyes grew larger but he never said a word,
And he kept it as a secret, so that nobody heard.

But out it came one morning in a most mysterious way,
The little man went fishing with his Uncle in the bay.
The sea was very angry and huge waves dashed about,
To hear each other speaking at length each had to shout.

A mighty wave above them rose, they had to sink or swim,
Poor Henry sank beneath the waves, his eyes with fright grew dim.
Full twice he rose and sank again when strong arms caught his waist
and bore him o'er the water; there was no time to waste.

With eyes shut tight, and sputtering mouth his Uncle heard him say,
I cannot drive a motor-car yet I must drown to-day.'
And this was followed by a groan and consciousness then fled.
When next he opened his brown eyes he found himself in bed.

Today Henry to manhood grown can drive a motor car,
And never tires or makes a slip although the way he far.
He now has new ambitions, and I hope they will come true
As the cherished one he uttered when he thought his life was through.

MYSTERIES DEEP

By George B. Wallace

WHO cause the stars to twinkle, the moon to
shed its light,
Hangs the draperies of the day, unfolds the
curtain of the night.

WHO etch upon the fleecy sky a radiant colour-
ed bow,
And blends atop the mountain peak the twilights
purple glow.

WHAT Master taught the waterfall down rocky
steeps to glide,
What Planter grows the Lily upon a mountain
side.

WHO taught the trees to low their heads when
evening zephyrs hum,
The murmur of the chuckling breeze, from
whence the soft winds come.

WHAT makes the cricket hop and chirr, who
planned the Peacocks hue?
Whence came the violet's fragrance when
kissed by morning dew.

They're mysteries deep, so let us not consider
them as small,
They're but glimpses of a GOD Whose Love
enfolds us all.

SHAME OLE LADY

By Opal Palmer

*Eh eh;
Watch de pickney dem nuh.
Dem ah circle round de Shame Ole
Lady bush.
Ah stretch out dem foot, dem hand
and ah touch her.*

*But larwd kuyah.
Watch how she shut-up she yeye
tight, tight, tight,
and ah hide her face.*

*Shame Ole Lady;
Shame Ole Lady;
Wha shame yuh suh?
Shame Ole Lady
Shame Ole Lady
Me a guh shame yuh.
Tink me nuh know sey
a jilt yuh get jilt
mek yuh shame suh.*

*Shame Ole Lady;
Shame Ole Lady;
De pickney dem jusa shame
shame yuh suh.
Poo Shame Ole Lady.*

LITTLE EMERGENCIES

By Katrina Robinson

My mother used to live
With a constant emergency
Actually, there were three

and the days and their urgencies
fell on their faces
like two-year olds trying to run.

She learned that a parent yields to the child
Like a comb to a coarse head of hair. Or doesn't.
They may bend and twist for eighteen years

A tenure that renders unrecognizable
a wedding band worn thin, in a life
where little people demand big things

She never appreciated the alarm clock waking
Up Monday to the morning
Or other dull functions of routine,

Her previous marriage to several
Intangible things. Those too had their expenses
And various mouths to feed.

The children were a band aid over
An area with no wound
And if she even found the cure

For a perfectly chaotic life: Three
Children-
Bright cotton candy laughs,

Stuff noses in April,
Spit bombs and quench aid—
If only the hours were riot proof

three more reasons to be happy
three more hands to reach out to...
three more to frolic, torment and delight

Each of us, a little emergency
each morning waking her with delight,
impatiently, waiting to be outfitted

just right. In a house with rum-sprinkled corners where the
days had hidden agendas
and promises owed.

But not the hands tied up in hands,
not the hands tied up in hands,
not the hands that grip like the alarm-
waking up Monday to the morning.

HOME THOUGHT

By Claude McKay

Oh something just now must be happening there!
That suddenly and quivering here,
Amid the city's noises, I must think
Of mangoes leaning to the river's brink,
And dexterous Davie climbing high above,
The gold fruits ebon-speckled to remove,
And toss them quickly in the tangled mass
Of wis-wis twisted round the guinea grass.
And Cyril coming through the bramble-track
A prize bunch of bananas on his back;
And Georgie—none could ever dive like him—
Throwing his scanty clothes off for a swim;
And schoolboys, from Bridge-tunnel going home,
Watching the waters downward dash and foam.
This is no daytime dream, there's something in it,
Oh something's happening there this very minute!

TO THE SHRINK AT BELLEUVE WHO INSISTS I'M BIPOLAR

By Tyrone Reid

There are no sharp blades here to kill you with
So I make paper birds all morning.
Last time we met, these hands remained bare,
Worn from the lives they used to lead.
But today I reclaim them, each angry finger
That will turn against me tomorrow.

Doctor, I am fond of you;
You tower above this lovely building,
The god of plastic dreams.
Your four eyes try to undress me
To light the secret room of mind
Where I hide, sleep and cry.

You don't understand the magic
Of talking to oneself, quiet alone.
I am king of all my memories lost.
Once I was handsome. Now I am myself,
Counting infinite rows of paper birds,
Praying that somehow they'd turn blades.

THE RAIN

By William Henry Davies

I hear leaves drinking rain;
I hear rich leaves on top
Giving the poor beneath
Drop after drop;
'Tis a sweet noise to hear
These green leaves drinking near.

And when the Sun comes out,
After this rain shall stop,
A wondrous light will fill
Each dark, round drop;
I hope the Sun shines bright:
'Twill be a lovely sight.

THE LAST DAY

By Pamela Mordecai

If this were the last day
I ever would spend,
I'd find a sad person
And make him my friend.

I'd tell him a story,
I'd sing him a song,
I'd go for a walk
And I'd take him along.

I'd tell him a story
Of rivers and seas
And mountains so high
That they do not have trees

Of castles of ice
That sparkle and glow
And a fine mist of clouds
And a powder of snow.

I'd sing him a song
Of a place far away
Where for months it is night
And for months it is day

And colourful curtains
Of dazzling light
Dance over the skies
In the months of the night.

In the months of the day
We would walk, he and I,
To the place where the line
Of the sea meets the sky.

We would play with the fishes
And ride on the waves
And visit the oysters
Deep down in their caves

And they'd tell us fine stories
My good friend and me
And we'd smile at the sun
And talk to the sea.

GOOD MANNERS

By George B. Wallace

It is so easy to say.....
"Good Morning",
To be friendly and civil too,
To move with a ready
"Beg Pardon",
And always a bright
"Thank you".

It is so easy to say
"I'm sorry"
Politely to open a door,
To lift your hat to a lady,
Whether she be rich or poor.

It is so easy to show
"Good Manners",
Regardless of colour or creed,
To tender the aged and helpless,
The aid that they truly need.

It is so easy to foster
"Goodwill",
So easy to say a kind word,
Why should your answers be surly,
A tone of insolence heard.

So be courteous, and considerate,
Say "Please"
Whenever you can,
With measures of Love and good
Breeding,
You are always a Gentleman.

JAMAICAN AND CARIBBEAN SELECTIONS



LIZZIE

By Pamela Mordecai

Lizzie is a good girl
always helping Mums;
Lizzie does her reading,
Lizzie does her sums,
tidies up the kitchen,
clears away the crumbs,

But Lizzie doesn't like
to feed the dogs.

Lizzie is a good girl,
eats up all her greens,
chomps away her carrots,
gobbles down her beans,
Fridays Lizzie helps to wash,
Saturdays she cleans,

But Lizzie doesn't like
to feed the dogs.

Jasper is her brother.
Jasper is a gnome.
Who can find that little boy -
Never is at home;
down in the pasture
Jasper likes to roam

With the three huge
hairy mongrel dogs.

Lizzie is a big girl
she has lots of chores-
taking out the garbage,
going to the stores.
"Nine years old is old enough -
I was scrubbing floors
When I was nine years old,"
her Mama says.

"Jasper is a little fellow -
he is only five;
he was such a tiny baby

that he barely stayed alive!
I wonder where he is now
and when he will arrive

For supper and his
nice warm bath?"

Lizzie is so angry
that she starts to cry:
"Jasper's not a baby
so I don't know why
Mother never gives him chores.
sometimes I wish I'd die

So he would have to
feed the foolish dogs!"

One day it was raining
Lizzie slipped and fell -
hit her elbow and her knee
and hit her head as well.
The doctor sent her straight to bed.
"Only time will tell," he said

When Lizzie can get up
to feed the dogs."

Mummy is so worried:
who will do the chores?
Help to clean the windows?
Go to the stores?
Hang up the washing?
Sweep all the floors?

And who will feed
the three hungry dogs?

Mummy, Lizzie whispers
"Let Jasper do some chores...
He can clean the windows.
He can bolt the doors.
He can't hang up the washing yet
but he can help sweep floors
And he can surely feed
his friends the dogs."

"Yes, let me, Mummy!" Jasper shouts.
'I'd love to sweep the floors
and I'll help do the washing
and I'll buy things at the stores
and lock up the windows
and bolt down the doors

And I will surely feed
my friends the dogs."

Lizzie is so happy
she can hardly speak.
Her knee is better in one day,
her elbow in a week.
"You're fine so quickly. Lizzie girl!
That tumble was a freak!"

The doctor says, "but
I know you won't mind
if Jasper keeps on feeding
them dogs..."

NEW SCHOLAR

By Louise Bennett

Good mahnin, Teacher — ow is yuh?
My name is Sarah Pool.
Dis is fi-me li bwoy Michal
An me just bring him a school.

Him bawn one rainy day, ma'am, it
Was comin awn to night —
Ugly baby grow pretty fi true,
For dis one was a sight.

Him bawn de week when Rufus
Jack-fruit tree did start fi bear,
Is dat same mont Oby pig dead
— But me figat de year.

We call him Mi, Mike, Mikey,
Jay, Jakey, Jacob, Jack,
But him right name is Michal Jaco'b
Alexander Black.

No treat him rough, yaw, Teacher;
Him is a sickly chile:
As yuh touch him hard him meck nize'
Some people seh him pwile.

Teck time wid him yaw teacher-
If him rude an start fi rave
Dis beat annoder bwoy , an him
Wi frighten an behave.

For nuff time when him rude a yard
An woan hear at all
Ah jus beat de bed-poas hard, mah,
An yu waan fi hear Jack bawl!

Now dat yuh know hi, lickle ways
Ah not havin no fear
Dat anyting wi mel him, so
Ah lef him in yu care.

THE CATERPILLAR

BY JEAN L. GOULDBOURNE

*Every day
the caterpillar ate
leaves.
He never slept.
He had no stomach,
just a round stocky
face
legs
and an elongated
base
as fat as his doomed
non-christian soul.
He ate leaves
drank dew
crept anew
across the already
eaten leaves -*

*Next day
his soul
Sought to adjust
to wings,
poor things -*

*They started wet
but touched
the sun
and flew.*

THE GOLDEN TABLE

(A legend of the Rio Cobre) By **Tropica**

Sparkling, flashing, gleaming, glowing,
Where no eye can see its rays,
Rests the mystic golden table
Dreaming dreams of olden days.
'Neath the Cobre's silver waters
It has lain for ages long;
And an undertone of warning
Mingles with the river's song.

Just as noon (so says the legend)
Comes the table every day
Softly to the river's surface,
Where the yellow sunbeams play;
For one magic moment lingers,
Then sinks slowly out of sight,
While its crystal prison shimmers
In a cloud of burnished light.

Since it sank that far-off evening
'Midst the lightning and the rain,
Never man has found the table;
All his seeking has been vain.
Still the jealous Cobre guards it,
Safe concealed from human eye -
While it charms its golden captive

THE LAST ONES IN

By Dennis Scott

The animals came from far and wide
all day, and when they were safe inside,
just as it was getting dark
the elephants got to the door of the Ark.
'They're BIG!' Mrs. Noah whispered. 'Oh dear,
do we really have room for those in here?'
Then all of a sudden,
BRA-DUM! BRA-DUM! BRA-DOOM! went the
thunder,
HWIT! said the lightning,
and the first rain fell
down
down
down.
'Quick!' said Noah, 'It's beginning,
see how the water is getting deep?'
And they squeezed themselves through the great,
red door
and sighed, and settled on the floor,
and went to sleep.

THE WILDWOOD

By Vivian L. Virtue

There is a wildwood I remember,
Where boyhood used *to* roam,
In fair Saint Andrew, dear Saint Andrew,
Which is my "goodly home;
A place embraced by royal hills
Whose peers are none to seek,
Where Hope and Mammee waters wed
Under that sovereign Peak.

'Twas joy to wander through the wood
In search of prickly pear;
The golden granadilla, too,
May still lie growing there;
And do the rodent bats yet drop
Ripe almonds and naseberries
Among its glades? And blush there yet
The ruddy, wilding cherries?

How, when we found some errant vine
With melons wide-surrounded,
Mellow and cool and nectarous,
Our hearts with gladness bounded!
O fruitful wood, O happy wood,
Your innermost recess
Was known to me and dear to me
And full of loveliness.

The guinep, star-apple and plum
Grew wild among its ways,
Where flocked the zealous John-to-whits
To pipe in festal praise.
The ground-dove and the pea-dove moaned
Their nameless grief's around.
And many a patriarchal tree
Stood gaily orchid-crowned.

Time was when I with truant feet
On some rebellious morn

Stole sheltering to its bosky heart.
Rod-tearful and forlorn.
. . . And would it welcome now and shield,
If from the world I fled
Back to its sanctuaried peace
With memories garlanded?

Now dawning hours have fled the vale,
I climb the steepening day
In vain pursuit, and leave behind
That wildwood, far away . . .
But I shall not forget its paths
Hallowed by youthful pleasure;
From moth and rust of Time and Change
Preserve, O heart, this treasure!

VIDA AND ANT

By Jean Goulbourne

Mr. Vida sat

cross legged
beneath the
cotton tree
eating fruit.

Ant laughed -
'Watch me eat
the j u i c e
from his face
and give him a nip'

Ant crept up
Vida moved
Ant smiled
Vida squirmed
and ate
Vida wiped
Ant bit
Vida danced
Ant escaped

The cotton tree
smiled
Vida sat
and ate
and scratched
and stretched.

GOD BLESS WEST INDIES

By Olga Maynard

We need Thee, God, in little isles
Within the Carib Sea.
Give, as Thou dost, the sun's full rays,
The grace that comes from Thee.
Dwell Thou upon each valley green,
Each palmy-edged shore,
And let Thy love, like waters warm,
Encircle us still more.
We need Thee, God, in hours of stress,
When winds are fierce and high,
When fiery mountains fill with fear,
Be Thou Almighty nigh.
The bamboo glade, the saman shade,
The rich brown fruit are Thine,
For mercy from Thine open hand,
We pray, O Lord divine.

Bind us around with cords of love,
And make us true to Thee;
Our hearts and homes in peace unite,
Here in the Carib Sea.

DROUGHT IN MANCHESTER

By Ethel Rovere

Another day of sunshine,
Another day of heat.
The grass once lush and verdant
Lies parched beneath our feet.

For months no rain has fallen,
Each scorching day goes by.
A runner tells us that the spring
At Nottingham is dry.

The public tank at Mandeville
Gave out three weeks ago,
And now if Berry Hill should fail
Where can the people go?

The red hibiscus blossoms
Are small and pale and wan.
The dainty blue plumbago
Droops—withered by the sun.

Our stock are dying daily
For lack of grass and grain,
Our crops are parched and withered.
Almighty God, send rain.

STORIES AND PROSE



HOW PEEL HEAD FOWL KETCH ANANCY

By Louise Bennett

Once upon a time it was a hungry time. Bans a food control an rationin was a gwan, an some people wasa feel it hard like now.

Well, Bredda Anancy couldn't stan deh bear it like everybody else — him goh meck law seh dat if yuh ketch anybody a ceitful pon yuh, yuh got right fi teck weh everyting dat dem got.

So Anancy get one pick-axe an shovel an him go pon one piece a rock-stone by de roadside an start dig.

Bredda Dog was passin an see him. Dog seh: "Mawnin, Bredda Nancy." Anancy seh: "Mawnin, Bra Dog."

Dog seh: "Yuh hard at work, Bra Nancy."

Hear Anancy: "Yes, Bredda Dog, me dis a dig dah little place yah fi plant few head a yam."

Po Dog so frighten, hear him under him breat: "Lawd, oh is how Anancy a go plant yam eena rock-stone?"

Anancy jump dung pon Dog an seh: "Ketch yuh!" an teck weh de hole a dog little bone and scrapses meat

Little afta dat, Anancy spy Bra Jackass dah come, so him start dig again. Wen Jackass done tell him mawnin, hear Anancy: "Bra Jackass, yuh no got no minty coco can gi me fi plant, sar? Me mecking a little fiel out yah, yuh know."

Hear Jackass quiet under him breat: "Ha ha, from ah bawn ah never see a man meek fiel pon rock-stone!"

Anancy calla awn pon Jackass an teck weh all de grass out a him cart.

Well, Sista Peel Head Fow! hear how Anancy was a gwan, an she meck up her mine fi get even wid him. So she get one big horse-mane comb, like wat dem a call soul comb or Afro-pick dese days, yuh know, an she get one bristle-teet brush an a jar a lay-him-

straight hair dressin, an pass by which part Anancy was diggin.

Hear her: "Mawnin, Anancy."
Anancy seh: "Mawnin, Sista Peel Head Fowl, weh yuh goin?"

Hear Peel Head Fowl: "Me jus going roun to de barber fi cut me hair to a shoulda lengt an dress up fi de ball tonight."

De sinting shock Anancy till him halla out loud: "Lawd a massi, me no mean fi ceitful, but is how Peel Head Fowl a go a barber an she no got a kench a hair pon her head?"

As de wud drop outa him mout, baps, Sista Peel Head Fowl seh: "Ah ketch yuh!" an heng awn pon Anancy an teck weh all de tings wat him did teck weh from de odder people dem an de lickle crips weh him have fi himself.

An das one time wen smaddy get even wid Anancy.

Jack Mandora, me noh choose none.

HERO NANNY

By Louise Bennett

We have one Jamaican proverb what say “If breeze no blow, yuh no know say dot fowl got skin.” An lawks, missis, from Authority go announce Nanny as National Hero, a dont get fi fine out ou much Jamaica smaddy still shame a dem slavery heritage! Mmmm.

De gal Muches, she gi out, “Cho! Whe meck dem haffi go dig out dat-deh ole slave duppy fi tun National Hero?”

Aunty Roachy eye-dem glisten wid bexation, an she wheel roun pon Muches an holler, “Not duppy Hero, a Warrior Oman! Siddung, Muches, meck me tell yuh bout her.

Grandy Nanny couldn stomach slavery. Mmm. She use to hate de very soun a de wud ‘slave’, an she teck a oath an vow fi use Nanny Town which part she live as a refuge an backative fi all runaway slave who coulda fine dem way dere, mmm.

“But it wasn easy fi fine yuh way dere. So Nanny use to sen har warrior bredda dem by night fi rescue de slave dem from de plantation-dem. Yes, tief weh de slave from de plantations by night, give dem safe passage pass Nanny pos into Nanny Town.

“Yuh can jus guess how de slave owner-dem did vex bout dat! Yes, Puppa! Yuh know omuch time dem sen soldiers an militia fi attack Nanny Town people dem? Mmmm.

“Nanny woulda meck her people-dem dress up demself eena leaf an disguise up damself like tree an bush an hide demself eena rock an stump.

“An meanwhile de attackin soldier-dem a march up a hill, dem would see de whole hillside a rush dung pon dem, tree an bush a gallop dung lacka horse pon dem!

“Yuh can guess how de soldier-dem frighten so till dem all dash weh dem! Ammunition an pick up dem foot eena dem han an run like dem pepper dem. History book say ‘The soldiers were baffled and retreat in alarm.’ Lawks, what a joke!”

Muches holler, “Nanny pop dem! Gwann talk, Miss Roachy. Gwaan talk.”

Aunty Roachy she, “Grandy Nanny couldn talk much English, but she coulda meck drum talk an she coulda meck horn talk. She always wear her abeng horn tie pon a string roun her wais, an she woulda stan up a de head a de precipice up a Nanny Town and fling back her head an lif up her horn an blow any message she want, to har Maroon people-dem.

“All like de day when she feel de danger dat di way into Nanny Town was not secret no longer an de soldier-dem was marchin in, she soun de abeng message to her followers, an tell dem fi pull foot cross de hills, keep to de mountain, put plenty mountains between dem an dis mountain, an fine a new hidin place, an den she start fi set fire to de town an soun de abeng again, an she, “Stay free! Stay free!”

Well, same time as Aunty Roachy stop fi ketch breath, one bwoy name Cubbitch come een an gi out, “What a gwaan? What a gwaan?”

De gal Muches say, Miss Roachy a tell we bout Nanny.”

Hear de outa-order bwoy, Nanny goat?” An him start holler, “Baaa! Baaa!”

Aunty Roachy wheel roun pon him an say not Nanny goat, Cubbitch. Not goat. Woman! A strong fearless Jamaican warrior oman dat wouldn buckle under slavery. Your ancestor, Cubbitch, dat yuh shoulda proud a, an stop holler ‘baaa, baaa’ an holler ‘tallawah!’”

Cubbitch say, “Pop story gimme. Miss Roachy.”

Aunty Roachy, say, “My granmodder tell me say dat fi her granmodder tell har say dat Nanny Town and Compong Nanny an moore Tung Nanny was de selfsame Nanny. Mmmm.

“An when history book say dat Cudjoe was de mose darin Maroon leader of de time, everybody did know say dat it was him sister Nanny who wasa gi de orders fi swoop dung pon de plantation-dem a night time an set fire to de cane piece dem an leggo de slaves-dem an bring dem fi strengthen de Maroon forces-dem, a oh!

“But Nanny wouldn have no part or lot wid Peace Treaty signin. An when Cudjoe was determine fi sign Peace Treaty, Compong Nanny teck weh herself from Compong Town an go back to Portland. For Nanny say as long as dere was even one slave pon plantation no black smaddy was free.”

Hear Cubbitch: “A so Anty Roachy?”

Aunty Roachy say, “A so! But black people never got nobody fi write dung fi-dem hero deserving deeds eena book, so from generation dem write it dung eena dem remembrance. An my granmodder tell me say fi-her granmodder tell har say dat a fi-har granmodder did tell har say, a so!”

Ay yi yie!

THE GOLDEN TABLE

Retold by Hyacinth Campbell

People say that there is a big golden table in a pool in the Rio Cobre River. The table is a wicked table and if anybody sees it and tries to pull it out, it will suck that person right down into the river and drown them.

The story goes that hundreds of years ago, a pirate or sea-robber, named Jackson, killed off all the people on his ship and came ashore in Jamaica with a lot of gold that he had stolen from other ships. He hid the gold in a deep hole near the sea and went from place to place looking for somewhere better to store his gold. He came to Spanish Town and started working as a carpenter. He bought some land on the Rio Cobre River and built a house with a deep cave underneath it and stored his gold in this. He used to spend all his time playing with the gold and talking to it.

Then he built a big wooden table and took all the gold and nailed it on the table piece by piece, until the table was just one big shining gold table. And he would sit and look at the golden table and run his hands over it. Of course, nobody else knew about it because he did not allow anyone to come to the house. And nobody wanted to come anyway, because Jackson looked so wild and dirty that they thought he was mad, and kept away from him.

But one year, a bad storm came. Houses were blown and washed away. The Rio Cobre flooded and washed away Jackson's house with the cave underneath. When Jackson saw the flood coming he grabbed on to the golden table and wouldn't let it go, and he and it went down into the deep water.

Next day when the storm was over, people came at midday to see if anything had happened to him. They couldn't see any sign of him or his house, only a deep pool where the house used to be. As they stood there looking at the pool, the water began to move and it seemed as if something was coming up from the bottom. As they watched they saw the golden table come up to the top, turning round and round. As it reached the surface of the water and the sun hit it, it flashed like fire. Then it slowly went back down, turning round and round (as if something was sucking it down).

After that, people used to come and watch to see if they could catch a glimpse of it. And every now and then they would see it come up at midday, flash like fire, and go back down again. But they said if you ever tried to pull it out, it would suck you down in the river.

One planter from St Catherine said he didn't believe it and he wanted the table for himself. So he got a long cattle chain, and harnessed twelve bulls to one end of it. On the other end he fastened some big hooks to hook on to the table. Then he got three

slaves ready to dive in and fix on the hooks and three slave boys with whips to drive the bulls and pull out the table.

The planter called out, 'Ready! Dive!' and the three slaves dived into the river and fastened the chain around the table's legs. Then he called out to the three slave boys with whips, and the whips went CRACK! CRACK! C-R-A-C-K

The bulls pulled and pulled. The planter shouted, the slaves screamed, and the bulls bellowed.

But the table began to sink. Slowly but surely it went round and round and deeper and deeper. In the end the table went back down into the deep water, dragging all of them shouting and screaming and bawling with it. So people say that if you go to the right place at the right time, you will see the golden table come up and flash like fire. But you must not try to take it out, or it will suck you down to the bottom of the river and drown you.

FROM TIGER TO ANANCY

By Louise Bennett

Once upon a time and a long time ago, the Tiger was king of the forest.

At evening when all the animals sat together in a circle and talked and laughed together, Snake would ask:

'Who is the strongest of us all?'

'Tiger is strongest,' cried Dog. 'When Tiger whispers, the trees listen. When Tiger is angry and cries out, the trees tremble.'

And who is the weakest of all?' asked Snake.

'Anansi,' shouted Dog, and they all laughed together. Anansi, the spider, is weakest of all. When he whispers no one listens. When he shouts everyone laughs.'

Now, one day the weakest and strongest came face to face, Anansi and Tiger. They met in a clearing of the forest. The frogs hiding under the cool leaves saw them. The bright-green parrots in the branches heard them.

When they met, Anansi bowed so low that his forehead touched the ground. Tiger did not greet him. Tiger just looked at Anansi.

'Good morning, Tiger,' cried Anansi. 'I have a favour to ask.'

'What is it, Anansi?' said Tiger.

'Tiger, we all know that you are strongest of us all. This is why we give your name to many things. We have Tiger lilies and Tiger stories and Tiger moths, and Tiger this and Tiger that. Everyone knows that I am weakest of all. This is why nothing bears my name. Tiger, let something be called after the weakest one so that men may know my name too.'

'Well,' said Tiger, without so much as a glance toward Anansi, 'what would you like to bear your name?'

'The stories,' cried Anansi. 'The stories that we tell in the forest at evening time when the sun goes down, the stories about Br'er Snake and Br'er Tacumah, Br'er Cow and Br'er Bird and all of us.'

Now, Tiger liked these stories and he meant to keep them as Tiger stories. He thought to himself, 'How stupid, how weak this Anansi is. I will play a trick on him so that all the animals will laugh at him.' Tiger moved his tail slowly from side to side and said, 'Very good, very good. I will let the stories be named after you, if you do what I ask.'

Tiger, I will do what you ask.'

'Yes, I am sure you will; I am sure you will,' said Tiger, moving his tail slowly from side to side. 'It is a little thing that I ask. Bring me Mr. Snake alive. Do you know Snake who lives down by the river, Mr. Anansi? Bring him to me alive and you can have the stories.'

Tiger stopped speaking. He did not move his tail. He looked at Anansi and waited for him to speak. All the animals in the forest waited. Mr. Frog beneath the cool leaves, Mr. Parrot up in the tree, all watched Anansi. They were all ready to laugh at him.

Tiger, I will do what you ask,' said Anansi. At these words a great wave of laughter burst from the forest. Tiger laughed loudest of all, for how could feeble Anansi catch Snake alive.⁷

Anansi went away. He heard the forest laughing at him from every side.

That was on Monday morning. Anansi sat before his house and thought of plan after plan. At last he hit upon one that could not fail. He would build a *Calaban*.

On Tuesday morning Anansi built a Calaban. He took a strong vine and made a noose. He hid the vine in the grass. Inside the noose he set some of the berries that Snake loved best. Then he waited. Soon Snake came up the path. He saw the berries and went toward them. He lay across the vine and ate the berries. Anansi pulled at the vine to tighten the noose, but Snake's body was too heavy. Anansi saw that the Calaban had failed.

Wednesday came. Anansi made a deep hole in the ground. He made the sides *slippery* with grease. In the bottom he put some of the bananas that Snake loved. Then he hid in the bush beside the road and waited. Snake came crawling down the path towards the river. He was hungry and thirsty. He saw the bananas at the bottom of the hole. He saw that the sides of the hole were slippery. First he wrapped his tail tightly round the trunk of a tree; then he reached down into the hole and ate the bananas. When he had finished, he pulled himself up by his tail and crawled away.

Anansi had lost his bananas and he had lost Snake, too.

Thursday morning came. Anansi made a *Fly Up*. Inside the trap he put an egg. Snake came down the path. He was happy this morning, so happy that he lifted his head and a third of his long body from the ground. He just lowered his head, took up the egg in his mouth, and never even touched the trap. The Fly Up could not catch Snake.

What was Anansi to do? Friday morning came. He sat and thought all day. It was no use.

Now it was Saturday morning. This was the last day. Anansi went for a walk down by the river. He passed by the hole where Snake lived. There was Snake, his body hidden in the hole, his head resting on the ground at the entrance to the hole. It was early morning. Snake was watching the sun rise above the mountains.

'Good morning, Anansi,' said Snake.

Good Morning, Snake,' said Anansi.

'Anansi, I am very angry with you. You have been trying to catch me all week. You set up a Fly Up to catch me. The day before you made a Slippery Hole for me. The day before that you made a Calaban. I have a good mind to kill you, Anansi.'

Ah, you are too clever, Snake,' said Anansi. 'You are much too *clever*. Yes, what you say is so. I tried to catch you, but I failed. Now I can never prove that you are the longest animal in the world, longer than the bamboo tree.'

'Of course I am the longest of all animals,' cried Snake. 'I am much longer than the bamboo tree.'

'What, longer than the bamboo tree across there?' asked Anansi.

'Of course I am,' said Snake. 'Look and see.' Snake came out of the hole and stretched himself at full length.

'Yes, you are very, very long,' said Anansi, 'but the bamboo tree is very long, too. Now that I look at you and at the bamboo tree I must say that the bamboo tree seems longer. But it's hard to say because it is further away.'

'Well, bring it nearer,' cried Snake. 'Cut it down and put it beside me. You will soon see that I am much longer.'

Anansi ran to the bamboo tree and cut it down. He placed it on the ground and cut off all its branches. Bush, bush, bush, bush! There it was, long and straight as a *flagstaff*.

'Now put it beside me,' said Snake.

Anansi put the long bamboo tree down on the ground beside Snake. Then he said: 'Snake, when I go up to see where your head is, you will crawl up. When I go down to see where your tail is, you will crawl down.'

In that way you will always seem to be longer than the bamboo tree, which really is longer than you are.'

'Tie my tail, then!' said Snake. 'Tie my tail! I know that I am longer than the bamboo, whatever you say.'

Anansi tied Snake's tail to the end of the bamboo. Then he ran up to the other end. 'Stretch, Snake, stretch, and we will see who is longer.'

A crowd of animals were gathering round. Here was something better than a race. 'Stretch, Snake, stretch,' they called.

Snake stretched as hard as he could. Anansi tied lint round his middle so that he could not slip back. Now, one more try. Snake knew that if he stretched hard enough he would prove to be longer than the bamboo.

Anansi ran up to him. 'Rest yourself for a little, Snake, and then stretch again. If you can stretch another six inches you will be longer than the bamboo. Try your hardest. Stretch so that you even have to shut your eyes. Ready?'

'Yes,' said Snake. Then Snake made a mighty effort. He stretched so hard that he had to squeeze his eyes shut. 'Hooray!' cried the animals. 'You are winning, Snake. Just two inches more.'

And at that moment Anansi tied Snake's head to the bamboo. There he was. At last he had caught Snake, all by himself. The animals fell silent. Yes, there Snake was, all tied up, ready to be taken to Tiger. And feeble Anansi had done this. They could laugh at him no more.

And never again did Tiger dare to call these stories by his name. They were Anansi stories for ever after, from that day to this.

FRANGIPANI

By Olga Maynard

Maroni had spent nearly all his life running along the long stretches of beach, lent so kindly to the children of the Carib race, trying to catch the golden tints that were always lingering on a dainty shell, a ripe fruit, the shimmering sea, and most of all in the sunset. He never missed a sunset. In bright weather or dull, the sunset displayed such glorious hues that he had often wished he could bathe his dark body in them and become part of the lovely picture. He had never yet caught a glimpse of the artist who must have painted all the wonderful things around him, although he had been out in the open all his childhood years.

Now he was a young man, and could not easily express his sentiments to other young men who found great delight in hunting, fighting, and a king hideous wars and quarrels.

The other young men regarded Maroni as mad, and some of them influenced his mother to give him medicinal draughts in order to cure him. She did this, but he seemed to be possessed of the beauty evil more than ever.

His life, however, was brightened by a gentle maiden, Frangipani. who, because of her own weakness sympathized with Maroni. Though she loved the forest life, the constant dancing attendance on the youthful warriors of her race annoyed her. She loved the flowers; she wished she had been given of their dainty scents and their soft beauty, in order to delight others. She would have been satisfied if she were only a leaf. On the common quest for the Beauty Giver, Maroni and Frangipani had met one evening and had admired the beautiful together. What a joy it was to be able to unfold one's very self to some one else! That meeting had led to other meetings, other talks, until at last they discovered quite a new beauty - to them at least that of love.

But this discovery led to new sorrow, for Frangipani's forest chief rebelled at the thought of a union with Maroni. "An absolute disgrace," he said.

But Frangipani determined to cling to Maroni at all costs for he alone could share and understand her thoughts.

Their lives were made very sad, for the Caribs had expressed a determination to banish them. This was not such a distress when they knew they would always be together, but a love of their native land forbade them taking any definite step.

One evening, as the last wonder-tints were disappearing in the west and the flowers were lazily nodding their heads, they, laden with their sorrow, longed secretly to ride on the cloud and go down into the Great Beyond. This must have been a very great longing, for curiously enough, the cloud returned and hovered over them. Then down, down, down it came and the pair held each other's hands in fear as the Sunset Queen appeared. They knew her without being told, for the folds of her dress were the soft sunset streaks they could always see in the west. She brought with her a dainty perfume and an air of sweetness such as one smells in a garden at the still twilight hours. She called them by name, as if she had known them long ago, and told them in her soft sweet tones that she had arranged a plan to help them.

"It will be." she said, "the only means of escape. You, Maroni, must become a moth with some of the tints you have longed for, and you, Frangipani, will be a shrub with long velvet leaves and beautiful flowers, and for each other you will live. Stay here in the glade together, out of the reach of your mates, and then I shall take you for ever."

By this time Frangipani noticed that she did not feel quite the same; there came over her a numb sensation that was not altogether unpleasant. When the Sunset Queen

vanished she realized that she was no longer a Carib girl, but a real shrub with the velvet leaves she had wished for, and Maroni, where was he?

There he was, on one of her arms, but not the moth that the Sunset Queen had promised he would become - had she deceived them? Maroni seemed disappointed. He too was surely changed, but into a worm-like creature, with many legs. His colours were magnificent enough, but he was a worm, a helpless worm, and with such an awful sense of hunger! He could hardly speak to Frangipani. There was only one consolation and that was the fact that he rested on one of her soft boughs.

Frangipani was the first to break the silence. "Beloved," she softly said, "Are you satisfied with the new state of things?"

"Not quite," he said. "Rejoice that you have got your desire. But I have a feeling that if this awful hunger were appeased I might be content - but what is there to eat? Perhaps in this new life I must go down in the mud for food, or eat leaves. What do you say, my dear? In that case I'll have to leave you!"

"Not so," said Frangipani. "Proud as I am of my beautiful leaves, I would give them all to you, rather than have you leave me. As your hunger is so great, then I offer you these beautiful leaves which are now part of my very self."

"Ah! My heart," Maroni sighed, "rather let me die than be the means of your destruction!"

As he spoke, there stole over him such a sense of weariness that he was soon quite faint. Frangipani gently shook the drops of dew on to his cold body and this revived him. Such hunger, they were convinced, must instantly be appeased, or it would mean certain death. She tried to convince him that death meant a lasting separation, and that his acceptance of her leaves would at least keep him with her for some time. Maroni understood and began to eat the delicate leaves. Although Frangipani saw her leaves rapidly disappearing, she experienced great joy in making the sacrifice. It was indeed a feast of love!

In a few days' time Maroni's appetite was thoroughly satisfied, and he could only rest against Frangipani's naked arms and sigh for the joy of it all. The Sunset Queen was quite forgotten, and they would not have remembered her if Maroni had not, after the fourth day, realized that his body was undergoing a curious change. He called to Frangipani and explained the strange symptoms, but she, in turn, knew that the only person who could have helped them was the Sunset Queen. Despairingly she watched her lover, but her surprise and joy knew no bounds when out of his many-legged form emerged a moth of the daintiest hues. Maroni fluttered and alighted on Frangipani's slender arm. What bliss! They were truly a part of the wonder picture. Frangipani was proud of the sacrifice she had made.

That evening the Sunset Queen lingered above Frangipani, while Maroni rested on one of her boughs.

"My children," she said, "you will never leave this country and as long as I am Queen of the Sunset, you will live for each other. Sometimes Maroni must leave you, but during his absence your leaves will come again and you will be covered with beautiful flowers. When the flower-season is over, Maroni will return to you."

Frangipani thanked the Sunset Queen who quickly left the lovers.

"Life will be well worth living now," was all they could say.

Frangipani still smiles sweetly in the flower-season, for the thought that Maroni must return makes her happy.

THE MERMAID'S COMB

By Hartley Neita

The Dornoch River starts as a large pool of water at the foot of a tall cliff near Stewart Town in St Ann. In the days the women from the nearby districts come to the pool with large bundles of clothes to wash, and while they scrub and rinse, they keep a wary eye on their young ones swimming and splashing in the water downstream.

But at nights now, in spite of its inviting peace, no one goes to the pool for the people of these districts are fearful. And their fear is born out of a legend that has come down through the years from parent to child that has made this river-source a pool of mystery.

No one knows where the water that forms this pool comes from, but what they do know is that it is bottomless. And there is strangeness about this place. There the trees grow tall and tower towards the sky, and if you look up into the lacework of branches far above your head you can see the leaves trembling when the breezes blow and sweeping the sky clean of clouds.

And the trees are thick with leaves which shadow the pool, so that the sun never finds its way through except at the odd moment when a thin beam lights this quiet and secluded spot.

Once a rock stood at the edge of this pool. A rough, white mass of stone that on moonlit nights glowed with a strange light which brightened the pool. This rock, the people said, was the throne of a mermaid called Dora. Today the rock is gone. It tumbled deep into the pool many, many years ago, but the people who believe the legend will show you where it rested its weight during the lifetime of the legend. They say the spot will remain there until the end of time, for no blade of grass, no shrub or tree will ever take root on this bare patch of earth.

Yet, the people of the neighbourhood have never seen Dora. They say that long ago she swam away down the Dornoch and into the sea. Since then, people in other parts of the island have seen her combing her long, silky, green-tinted hair as she sits on rocks in various rivers, in Martha Brae, the Rio Grande, the Black River, and in more recent times on Pim Rock in the Rio Cobre.

The legend says that on moonlight nights Dora used to sit on this white rock near Stewart Town, and because the light shining from the rock gave the pool a glow she would look at her reflection in the pool, and humming softly to herself, would comb her hair. The song she hummed was strange, and it lilted across the river and the trees, so that people around could hear it. It was strange, yet beautiful, and it had something about it that was sad and haunting.

The tune she hummed had no words, but to all those who wanted and hoped for the things they never had, the meaning of the song was clear. It was an invitation to come to the pool and frighten her, and if they wanted the something badly enough, then Dora would leap into the pool and leave her comb on the

rock. And though deep under the water, her song would still continue in the ears of the lucky one, and the words were clear:

'Take my comb home and I will come to you in your dreams, and anything you ask of me, I will give you if you will only return my comb.'

This was the song.

Now in Stewart Town there lived a girl named Hazel. Her father was wealthy and Hazel had everything she wanted. Her dolls were the envy of every mother in the town. They walked, cried and some even spoke saying, 'Mama, Mama.' Hazel had no cause to play 'dirty pot' as did the other children of Stewart Town. Oh no, she had a real kitchen set, with a small stove, pots and pans, knives and forks, and even cups and saucers. If Hazel wanted anything, she got it.

But there was one thing her father could not give her, and that was the thing she desired most of all. Her hair was short and stubby and she longed for hair that could rest on her shoulders and tickle her when it shook as she walked. So while the children envied all her possessions, here was something they could tease her about. And they did.

Hear them:

'...Eh, picka-pecka head ...'
'...How is the cane row ...'
'..Child, is how you head look so like
when fowl done eat coconut meal...'
'... Eh, Haze?..!'

This was her torment. She bought patent oils from Kingston's best stores. She tried all the things the old women of the village suggested - coconut oil, toonah leaf, banana root, single bible, policeman oil ... all and everything, until sometimes her head stank with the mixture of herbs. But in vain.

So when one night Hazel heard the mermaid Dora singing, it seemed as if the song was for her alone. The pool was nearly a mile from her home, but to Hazel the song came as if from below her window. It was clear and sweet, the invitation strong and full of appeal. And Hazel left her bed softly, for fear of drowning the song from the pool, and once outside she ran straight for the river and the rock that was Dora's throne.

It was Hazel's haste that frightened Dora that night. As she neared the pool, her feet tangled with some brushwood and as she tumbled to the earth she screamed. The scream shocked Dora into terror, and like a flash she dived into the pool.

When she heard the splash, Hazel knew that Dora had gone, leaving her comb behind. Jumping and forgetting her bruised knees she ran towards the rock. And sure enough there was a comb that could only be the mermaid's comb. And it was too, for among its finely carved teeth were a few silky strands of the mermaid's green-tinted hair.

The dream didn't come that night; it never comes the first night. But on the following night Hazel was hardly asleep before Dora appeared in a dream, as promised. The

mermaid was beautiful, more beautiful than Hazel had imagined, but she hardly saw the flawless perfection of Dora's face, for her gaze was fastened on the hair that flowed softly over the shoulders, below the waist, and down until it sheathed the mermaid's fins.

Dora was the colour of chocolate that has been two days sweating its juicy coat in the boiling sun. Her face was almost full-moon round, and the green glory of her hair framed it with gentle curves and waves.

And Dora's voice was soft, sweet and caressing. 'What do you wish for most of all, my child?'

Hazel choked with emotion. 'Oh, I want hair, beautiful and long as yours, dear Dora,' she begged.

'This you shall have, my child. Come with me to the pool. Sit on the rock that is my throne. Look down into the water, and comb the hair that you now have. The lovely hair you seek shall be yours.'

The dream ended, and Hazel woke suddenly and was out of bed and running through the woods straight for the pool. She scrambled up on the rock, and sat looking down at her reflection in the pool.

And she began to comb.

So soft were the teeth of the comb as it passed through her hair, that she was reminded of a knife passing through soft butter. Each time the pull-through was longer, and looking down Hazel saw her hair reaching now to her neck, tickling it with such strangeness that she felt her blood curdling with cold. Then her hair was stretching past her shoulders, and it was soft and brown, like the tuft of hair at the end of an ear of full-grown corn. Soon it lay in thick tresses against her lips.

Then the rhythm of the combing became a command. It was as if other hands were helping her to comb. The hair grew heavier and heavier, and her neck bent under its weight towards the pool. Hazel saw her hair spreading on the surface of the pool, and as it soaked up the water, it began to sink, further and heavier. Then there was a splash as the hair dragged her from the rock and deep down into the pool. Her hands lost the comb as she tried to grab at the edge of the rock, but her fingers slipped helplessly on its mossy green surface. And then she was grasping at empty air, and then water.

Next night Dora was back on the rock, singing her wordless, haunting melody, and combing her hair with her comb. And she was smiling now, smiling.

ANANCY AN DAWG

By Louise Bennett

Once upon a time Bredda Nancy an Bredda Dawg did live ina de same yard an Anancy did have nuff pickney, but him nevah nyam a him yard at all. Anancy did married. Every evenin when him come home from work an him wife gi him dinner Anancy always seh to her: "Cho, mi wife, me cyaan teck weh de lickle nyamin from yuh an de pickney dem. Oonoo eat. As me a big an strong man me wi do widout."

Bredda Dawg hear Anancy tell him wife so every evenin, an Bredda Dawg seh to himself seh: "Anancy mussa nyam him belly-full some weh before him come home, for him too craven fi tun weh food." So Bredda Dawg meek up him mine fi find out Anancy secret.

Now all dis time, Dawg had a girl frien who always sing a certain song fi Dawg. De song go so:

Choogoo-choogoo dah me Missa Dawg oh
Choogoo-choogoo dah me deh yah.
Mi dear, mi dear, beg yuh open de door wid yuh
silvery key.
Someting dung a Santa Marie, oh
Choogoo-choogoo dah me Missa Dawg, oh
Choogoo dah me deh yah.

Anancy use to listen and ketch de song, but Dawg nevah know.

Well, one mornin Dawg falla Nancy, an him see Bra Nancy gallang gallang so tell him ketch a one big duckunno tree, an Dawg hide backa some bush an watch Anancy. Him see Anancy nyam an nyam, so tell only one duckunno lef pon de tree. Anancy jump up fe ketch i but de limb was too high fe him reach. Anancy climb de tree, an de limb bear dung an him couldn't ketch de duckunno. So him go up, de duckunno come dung, so him come dung, de duckunno go up.

Same time Bredda Dawg come from backa de bush an do like him deh pass. Hear him: "Mawning Bredda Nancy!"

Hear Nancy: "Mawning Bredda Dawg - ah beg you help me ketch de duckunno here, sah."

So Anancy go up pon de tree an de duckunno heng dung to de grung an Bredda Dawg grab de duckunno an run. Anancy Jump offa de tree an run afta him, an him see Bredda Dawg run dung ina one hole.

Anancy pass de hole like him never see, an den hide backa some bush, an start sing de song wah Dawg girl frien always sing to Dawg, ina de girl frien voice. Him sing sey:

Choogoo-choogoo dah me Missa Dawg, oh,
Choogoo-choogoo dah me deh yah.
Mi dear, mi dear, beg you open de door wid you silver key,
Someting dung a Santa Marie, oh,
Choogoo-choogoo dah me Missa Dawg, oh,
Choogoo dah me deh yah.

Wen Dawg hear de song, Dawg run outa de hole and baps Anancy jump over pon Dawg back an put him two heel ina Dawg side dem, an him squeeze an him squeeze an him squeeze till him squeeze out de duckunno outa Dawg belly.

From dat day till today anyweh yuh buck up a hungry mawga dawg him got two sink ina him side dem, is wich part Anancy foot did squeeze him. Is Anancy meck it.

Jack Mandora, me noh choose none.

ANANCY AND SORREL

By Louise Bennett

Once upon a time, Christmas Eve morning, it was Grand Market morning and Bredda Anancy stood by his gateway watching all the people going down to the market. The basket on their heads and the hampers on the donkeys were laden with fruits and flowers and ground provision.

Anancy called out: 'Happy Grand-Market everyone.'

'Thank yuh, Bredda Nancy,' replied the people.

Anancy said to himself: 'Wat a crosses pon me. It look like seh everybody pick off everything off every tree an carry gone a Grand-Market.' Anancy groaned as a cart-load of oranges and grapefruits went by. 'Amassi me massa, dem don't lef a ting ina de fiel fi me scuffle!'

Anancy waited until everybody had passed on their way to the market, then he went from field to field in search of scufflings.

'Wat a hard set a people, sah!' Anancy grieved. 'Dem clean out everyting outa de fiel dem - not a chenk a scufflings fe me.'

Suddenly Anancy exclaimed: 'Wat a sinting soh red!' And he broke a long stalk of a long red plant and held it to his nose. 'It don't got no smell,' said Anancy, 'but it pretty fi look pon. I wonder wat it good for?'

Anancy picked a few more pieces of the red plant and stuck them in his trousers waist, mumbling to himself, 'Well since yuh is de only ting I can scuffle, I am scuffling you, red sinting. I don't know what I am going to do with yuh yet. I don't know if yuh can eat, but I might even haffi eat yuh!' Anancy laughed: 'Kya, kya, kya, kya.'

He danced and sang all the way to the Grand-Market. When he got there Anancy looked around at all the beautiful stalls full of fruit kind and cooked food and food cooking. Anancy said to himself: 'I will have to work up my brains an fine a way to raise someting.' He stopped in front of a stall with plenty of oti-eati apples, pointed to the red plant in his trousers waist, and said to the stall keeper: 'Hi missis - swap me some a fi-you red tings fi some a fi-mi red tings.'

The woman asked him: 'Wat fi you red tings name? Anancy seh: 'Swap me firs and I will tell you.'

The woman replied: 'Tell me firs and I will swap you.'
Anancy seh: 'Swap me firs.' The woman seh: 'Tell me firs.'

The man in the pumpkin stall next to the woman's oti-eati stall shouted: 'Missis, if you want de red tings why you don't jus grab it away from the lickle man?'

Anancy laughed: 'Kya, kya, kya,' and shouted back, 'Grab it if you bad!'

The man grabbed after Anancy. Anancy said: 'Slip!' and ran. The man chased Anancy through the market. Several people joined in the chase, shouting: 'Tief! Tiefs! Tief! Catch the tief!'. Anancy kept slipping them, darting in and out of stalls until he reached the hominy stall.

The hominy woman had a big jester-pot full of boiling water on the fire. She was just about to drop the hominy corn in the pot when Anancy flung the bundle of red plant into the water. The crowd rushed to the pot. One man exclaimed: "It red like blood! It fava wine!"

Anancy looked into the pot and laughed: 'Kya, kya, kya, kya. It don't only look like wine,' he shouted, 'it is wine.' Anancy mumbled to himself: 'Poor me bwoy, ah hope is not poison.'

The man who started the chase rushed forward, grabbed a spoon and tasted the liquid. He made up his face and said: "It don't taste good."

Anancy said: 'It don't finish brew yet: It want some sugar, a little piece a ginger, a little cinnamon, and then you stir so, and then you stir so.'

And Anancy took a little of all the spices from the hominy lady's stall and threw into the pot. Anancy tasted the *brew*. 'Kya, kya, kya,' Anancy laughed. 'It taste nice like real-real wine.'

The hominy-lady said: 'It smell nice.'

Anancy looked fondly into the pot and whispered in wonderment:

'How you so real, so-real, so-real!'

Somebody in the crowd shouted: 'It name so-real'

The crowd took up in chorus: 'Truppence wut a so-real. Truppence so-real!'

Anancy brewed and sold so-real all day; it was the most popular drink at the Grand-Market. By the end of the day, in true Jamaica fashion so-real had become sorrel. And from that day to today, sorrel is a famous Christmas drink. Is Anancy meck it.

Jack Mandora, me noh choose none.

BEWARE OF YOUR WORDS

By L. E. Ferguson

Please weigh your words before you speak,
For words are powerful things!
By words, God did the worlds create;
Proving thereby, that words are great
With peasants or with kings!

And mankind, blessed with gift of speech,
Has power in word also;
A world of business swings along,
Because man's word is also strong,
Whether in 'yes' or 'no'.

Please weigh your words before you speak,
For words are funny things!
By words you may be justified,
Or so condemned, you want to hide!
They are sweet or bitter 'springs!'

Please weigh your words before you speak,
For words are curious things!
By them men curse, by them they bless,
Words can bring grief or happiness;
Quite often they have 'stings!'

Please weigh your words before you speak,
For words are dangerous things!
Men use guns to destroy and kill,
But words can do a greater ill,
And cause more sufferings!

Please weigh your words before you speak

For words are costly things!

Talking something you cannot prove,

To crush someone you might not love,

Can give a fortune 'wings'

COCKROACH AN FOWL

By Louise Bennett

Once upon a time, Cockroach was a very good music-man an everybody wat have a dance always want Bredda Cockroach fi play fi dem. Well, Bredda Nancy wid him usual cunny goh ask Cockroach fi meck him, Anancy, tun Cockroach manager.

Hear Anancy: "Bredda Cockroach, me wi look afta yuh an see to it dat not a soul can tief yuh but meself. Of course yuh know, Bredda Cockroach, dat me hooden rob yuh! So jus leave everyting to me an me wi fix yuh up."

Well, po Cockroach nevah have noh sense fi nutten else but music, soh him meck Anancy manage him.

Anytime people gwine keep up dance, Anancy goh an charge dem a big price fi Cockroach play, an him get half a de pay in advance. Him teck dat fi himself, an gi de music-man de odder half afta him done play. Sometime Anancy hooda teck de mos a de money, an tell Cockroach seh de people dem didn't meck noh money an dah beg him fi see wid dem.

It gwan an gwan soh till one New Year's Eve Bredda Fowl an Sista Fowl have a dance an get Cockroach fi play fi dem.

Now dem days drum was de ongle dance music, an dem had fi put Cockroach ina de drum fi meck him play sweet. Das why Anancy coulda tief him soh much.

Well, de New Year's Eve Bredda Cockroach goh ina de drum an start fi play an sing seh:

Me secret, yerry de drum dah goh

 Tookoo-tum, tookooma-tum

 Yerry de drum, oh

 Me secret, yerry bell dah goh

Ring ding ring ding

Yerry de bell oh...

See yah, de music sweet, yuh see! All de fowl dem start to yanga and merrenge roun de room. Everybody wasa enjoy demself.

Wen de fus tune done, Bredda Fowl an Sista Fowl bring nuff drinks an tings fi eat come gi Anancy fi him an de music-man. Anancy nyam off everyting an nevah gi Cockroach a chenks. Cockroach play ovah an ovah, an all de time de fowls bring tings fi him eat an Anancy nevah gi him none.

Po Cockroach play an sing soh till him start get hungry an tiad. Him seh to Anancy: "Lawd, Bredda Nancy, me dah dead fi hungry. See ef yuh can get lickle sinting fi me eat, noh?"

Anancy seh: "Cho, Bredda Roach, yuh too craven, man! Yuh noh see seh de country dah suffer from food shortridge? Shame pon yuh, man, fi quarrel ovah food ina dese days!"

Bredda Cockroach seh: "Me naw quarrel, Bredda Nancy, but me won't be able fi sing much longer ef me noh get someting fe eat." Po Cockroach start play an sing again, but him coulda only knock softly an yuh coulda hardly hear him voice. Sista Fowl seh: "Cluck-cluck, cluck-cluck, de music noh good at all." Bra Fowl seh: "Coocooreeco, meck we beat up de music-man an him manager!"

Anancy seh: "Lawd a massi, Bredda Cockroach! Yuh mean yuh gwine meck me feel shame? Play louder man!"

But all Bra Cockroach try, him did too hungry an weak, an not a soun couldn't come from him troat.

De fowl dem get bex an seh dem gwine beat Anancy soh till him sof. Soh Anancy open de drum an trow out po Cockroach ina fowl yard, an all de fowl dem gadder roun an nyam up Cockroach. An from dat day till teday anyweh a fowl see a cockroach him meck fi him. Is Anancy meck it.

Jack Mandora, me noh choose none.

FREE SCHOOLIN

By Louise Bennett

Listen no! Oonoo did read de big headline eena newspaper yessideh weh seh "Education to be free"?

Lawks, missis! My Aunty Roachy she jump fi joy an holler, "Time never too long fi bannabis grow bean! Whai! Dem shoulda print dah-deh headline eena red letter dis mawnin! 'No care how teacher cross, school boun fi gi recess!' Yes, Puppa! What a boonoonoonoos gif fi pickney eena Child Mont! Free education fi all from primary school right through to university!"

Den same time one croomojin gal who always ready fi dash dutty water pon people bleachin clothes, she gi out seh, "Cho! It cyaan happen! Is which part poor Jamaica gwine get de money from fi do all dem wagga-wagga sinting? How we gwine get de money?"

Aunty Roachy jus wheels roun pon di gal an seh, "Same way yuh did able fi lengten yuh midi skirt an meck moxi fi wear go a Mona foreign travel bredda welcome-home party because yuh did like him off! For 'When jackass smell corn him gallop'

Dat mean, when smaddy got sinting good fi look forward to, dem wi work hard fi get it. An pickney welfare is a great future heritage to we all, for if we doan look after pickney now, den we naw gwine got nobody fi look after we an look after Jamaica an look after we worl affairs later on, a oh!"

Hear de foo-fool gal, "But we cyaan afford it, Miss Roachy."

Aunty Roachy holler, "'Jackass gallop meck Jackass lively.' We cyaan afford not to afford it, so we better afford it! For if we less-count pickney, den we maltreatin de future a we country, mmmm. More so now dat we independent an a rub shoulder wid whole heap a big nations all over de worl an got we own ambassadors an all dem sinting-deh. Yes, bwoy!

"Any lickle run nose po ting bwoy eena Jamaica nowadays can get a chance fi grow up an tun Governor-General or Prime Minister or any a dem sort a big shot dere. An any lickle po ting gal pickney who put her head to dem lesson an have good mine can grow up an tun lady senator or even married to ambassador or any kine a big shot. Yes, mam! Any lickle mirasmi baby who cyaan even hole pinda-shell good now can hole Jamaica destiny eena him han later on!"

For as Aunty Roachy seh, de sky is not even de limit fi pickney elevation, for outer space is reachable!

Lawks! Prime Minister speech was both boonoonoonoos an tallawah, for all pickney deserve de chance fi get education if dem can teck education!

An my Aunty Roachy start fi sing a song:

Chorus [Sing together]

Education, studiration!

If yuh bright den yuh got de right
To education!

Me full up me purse wid money,
Dem tief it weh from me.
Me full up me belly wid food
An as me sneeze me feel hungry.
Me full up me brain wid learnin,
Wid sense an knowledge gran,
Me feel relief not a tief can tief
Me education!

Chorus

Chile, if yuh got ambition,
No matter how yuh poor
Nutten can keep yuh down now
Dere's free schoolin galore!
Wid one step bram bram into
De bes school in de lan
To qualify an tun boasify
Wid education!

Chorus

Mas Joseph tun-foot nephew,
Jane twis-mout gal Ritty,
Tata daughter a study
Fi university!
Dem countenance not handsome,
Dem station is not gran,
Dem clothes is wreck but dem brain can teck
De education!

TI MARIE

By Olga Maynard

'Ti Marie was so gentle that she never kept company with the big trees. She preferred to live with the green blades of grass. They loved her, and she never hurt them with the thorns on her arms. She made the field on which they all lived beautiful with her dainty purple flowers. When in the early morning the drops of dew stood on her delicate leaves, 'Ti Marie was, to the blades of grass, the prettiest creature in the whole world.

She loved the morning; it was then that she saw the boy who brought the cows into the pasture. His bright yellow shirt blended with the rosy tints of the morning and when he called to the cows, "Hi! Hi!" there was something in his voice that made her quiver with delight. He was so very kind, and he never let the cows trample upon her pretty puff-like flowers. 'Ti Marie loved him with all her heart. She felt that he loved her too, as he sometimes plucked one of her pretty puffs and pinned it on his shirt. He was not always tender, for he had once pulled roughly and her thorns had pricked him, but 'Ti Marie was proud that his blood had trickled upon her dainty leaves. And so her days were filled with pleasure, and she hoped that he would marry her.

One morning she was awakened by peals of girlish laughter, and soon she saw her cowboy walking and talking with a girl in a beautiful dress. They looked very happy and 'Ti Marie bent to hear what they were saying. "Come, little wife," she could hear her cowboy saying to the pretty girl, and he repeated it so often that there was no doubt in 'Ti Marie's mind that the one she loved was already married.

All around the field grew dark. 'Ti Marie could see nothing but her disappointment, and her grief was so great that she closed her eyes for days so that she would not see her lover happy with another.

This was long, long ago, but 'Ti Marie never forgets and she will never marry. At the sound of a man's footstep she shuts her eyes and remains very still until he is out of hearing. But if you tread very softly and say gently "*Ouvres, 'Ti Marie, c'est moi,*" (Open, 'Ti Marie, it is I) twice or three times, she will unfold her delicate leaves and show to you the dear little purple flowers that make our field beautiful.

O WHAT IS THAT SOUND

By W. H. Auden

O What is that sound which so thrills the ear
Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear
Over the distance brightly, brightly?
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,
As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear;
What are they doing this morning, this morning?
Only the usual maneuvers, dear,
Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there;
Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?
Perhaps a change in the orders, dear;
Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care;
Haven't they reined their horses, their horses?
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,
None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want, with white hair;
Is it the parson, is it, is it?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer, who lives so near,
It must be the farmer, so cunning, so cunning;
They have passed the farm already, dear,
And now they are running.

O where are you going? Stay with me here.
Were the vows you swore me deceiving, deceiving?
No, I promised to love you, dear,
But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,
O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;
Their feet are heavy on the floor
And their eyes are burning.

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