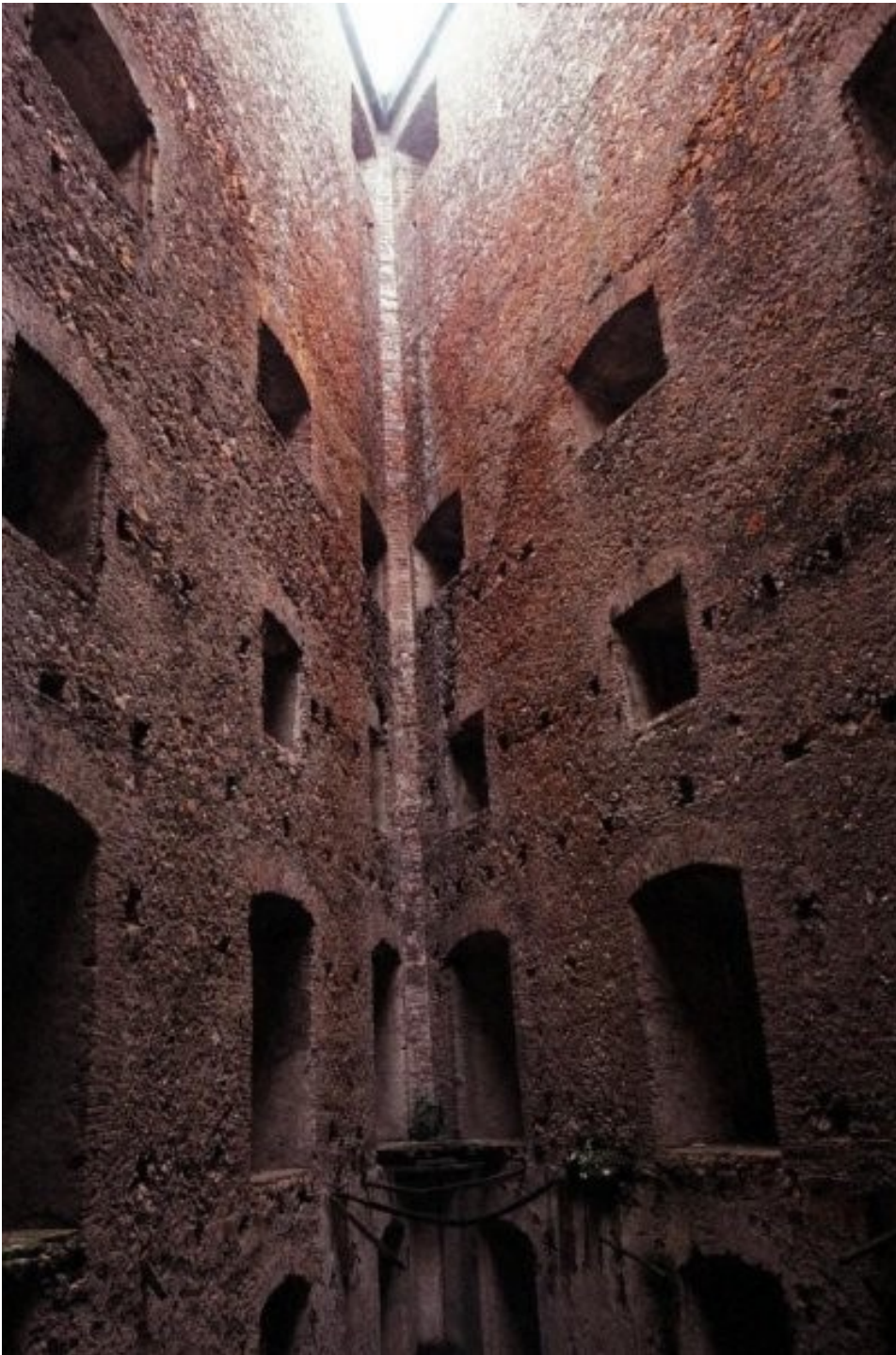


GraceFUL



i walked through Destiny today
with laughter over my shoulder
for the pains of the past
and smiles for the journey ahead
i kissed the forehead of Time today
and my lips were anointed with grace
as fate danced center stage with intimacy
and my soul said yes
lingering... lingering
drops of holy water tickle
the bridge of my nose
as I tell the story of all that
is sacred within me
quietly... quietly
holding hands with Love
i walked through Destiny today

destiny

Naked Chastity Affirming Virtue (2014)

Inside this issue:

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Cover Photo: The Heights of Freedom Citadelle LaFerriere Nord, Haiti (2010)	

FROM OUR
ALBUM

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AWARE Founder Dora Muhammad stands on the resilience of Caribbean freedom fighters preserved by the iconic Citadelle LaFerriere mountaintop fortress built by Haitian Revolution hero Henri Christophe to maintain the island's freedom after it defeated France to restore its sovereignty in 1804. (Nord, Haiti)

MIX UP NICE AN SWEET Going Home

I loved walking back to the house barefoot. My kinky curly afro left to its own wiles. Skin glistening and sun kissed. Refreshed from the natural spa of sea salt. Breath synced to the rhythm of the waves as they crashed ashore, body blended into the fauna of the bay. Immersion becomes union. My center firming not dissolving.

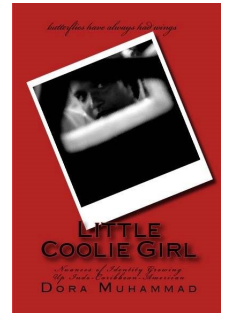
I often stopped for a chat in the snack shop with whoever was there. It was the spot to meet up and hang out. Few people knew my name; everybody instead called out my belonging to my grandmother as my instant identification. On the last day of my summer week in Grenada, I wanted to take one last soak in the sea before leaving for the states. After packing and laying out the clothes for my travel, I brushed my hair into a ponytail and headed to a do a quick walk-about to say my goodbyes.

At the shop, people did not recognize me at first because my sleek waves had replaced my

dancing coils on top of my head. Instead of farewell smiles, I found disdainful smirks. And the love for my grandmother was vanquished. When "She's a true coolie" popped out of someone's mouth to the laughter of others, I realized I was being showered with derision as my mother's daughter. Standing just a few feet apart felt like a mile away from the same people who chatted me up just hours before and every day during my stay. The Caribbean heat could not penetrate their icy personas.

It was the first time I was called a coolie. The isolation of the derogatory basin forcibly inhabited by the Indo community converged in that moment. Where *dougl*a became a bad word and nothing was nice about my mixed heritage. I wanted to grab a comb and pick out my ponytail.

My flight back gave me much time to reflect. Did fitting in result or depend upon the conscious disappearance of culture? Was assimilation required for



*If they sending Indians to India
And Africans back to Africa
Well somebody please just tell me
Where they sending poor me?
I am neither one nor the other
Six of one, half a dozen of the other
So if they sending all these people
back home for true
They got to split me in two
Mighty Dougl'a (Clitus Ali)
Calypso song "Split Me In Two"*

survival? Was diminishing the distinctions of Indian identity necessary to reformulate a space in the Black mainstream? I had discovered the phenomenon of passing for Black, an existential slide of identity that moves in varying directions across the Indian Diaspora.

*Little Coolie Girl:
Nuances of Identity
Growing Up Indo-
Caribbean American
(2019)*

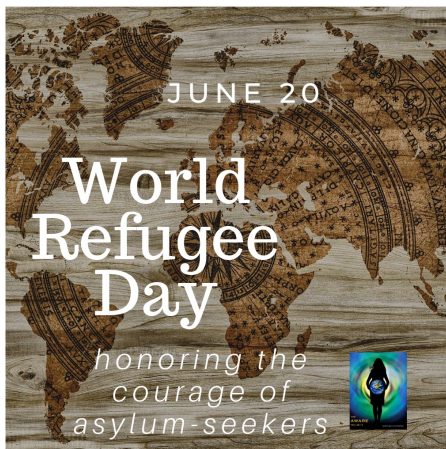


each step may not be visible
but the way forward is clear

our principles lay our path
CREATIVE GRACE CONVERSATIONS



RESPECT FOR LIFE World Refugee Day, Forced to Flee



The United Nations defines a “refugee” as someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. While their case is being evaluated, they are called asylum-seekers. Already vulnerable after being forcibly displaced to leave everything behind, this temporary status categorizes the most vulnerable population in the world.

Every minute, 20 people flee their homelands to escape violence, terror and torture. The only global instrument that codify protections for them are the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

Entered into force in 1954, it is rooted in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also pulls fundamentals from other international conventions to coalesce a global standard for asylum protection.

Its statutes and principles have been the source for immigration laws and policies in countries around the world. The rights outlined in the conven-

tion include:

- The right not to be expelled, except under certain, strictly defined conditions
- The right not to be punished for illegal entry or stay
- The right to work
- The right to housing
- The right to education

education

- The right to public relief and assistance
 - The right to freedom of religion
 - The right to access the courts
 - The right to freedom of movement within the territory
- The right to be issued identity and travel documents



The Trump Administration’s proposal to charge application fees for asylum claims, its treatment of asylum-seekers in border detention camps, and its policy of sending asylum-seekers to Mexico to await a hearing violate their internationally recognized human

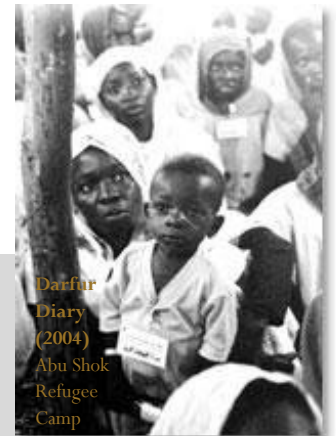
rights. The convention protects people against arbitrary detainment simply on the basis of seeking asylum. The most important safeguard is against *refoulement*, or the expulsion of refugees. It provides that no one shall expel or return a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom.

In the U.S., a person can apply for refugee status in two ways – affirmative or defensive. Upon their initial entry and application, the process is affirmative. An interview with an officer of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services agency to determine if the person’s fear is credible must be set within 45 days of their application and a decision must be made within 180 days after the interview.

If the officer denies refugee status, the person can renew their claim, an appeal of sorts, which takes them through the defensive process.

Their case is then placed within the immigration court system. As of July 2018, the average wait for an immigration hearing was 721 days as the courts struggle to handle its backlog of over 733,000 pending cases.

The Trump Administration’s push to shorten the processing



Voiceless & Vulnerable

Sexual violence used as a tactic in war is a crime against humanity.

Women are condemned and isolated as affiliates, rather than victims, of armed groups during conflict. Children hang in a legal limbo, and are vulnerable to recruitment, radicalization, trafficking and exploitation.

The issue of children born of war lies in the margins of international human rights frameworks as well as peace and security measures.

June 15 is observed as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict to raise awareness and demonstrate solidarity with survivors.

time will only further trample upon the rights of asylum-seekers. Good governance would call for increasing the number of immigration judges to ensure a thorough, efficient and just review.



An African Burial Ground is located beneath the ramps and roads of the Franklin Street exit on I-95. Steps lead from the busy Broad Street near the 16th Street on-ramp into an open expanse of green. The site features several historic markers and a small monument.

RICHMOND SLAVE HERITAGE TRAIL

consists of 17 sites located throughout the city's Shockhoe Bottom downtown neighborhood.



Devil's Half-Acre is a site with remnants of the Lumpkins Jailhouse. Located adjacent to the Main Street train station, the historic marker tells of the violent horrors associated with the jail where free Africans or those who escaped from plantations were brought to be imprisoned or executed.

juneteenth

While the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery in the U.S. officially on January 1, 1863, news of the decree did not reach the state of Texas until nearly two-and-a-half years later. Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865 to tell Confederate fighters that the war had ended and they had lost.

In 1980, Juneteenth (June 19th) became an official state holiday in Texas. Today, an increasing number of cities recognize the day as a celebration of culture and achievement within the African American community while maintaining a solemn remembrance of the arduous journey to freedom of Africans and their descendants in America.

The **Richmond Slavery Reconciliation Statue** completes the triangle of Richmond; the city of Liverpool, England; and the Republic of Benin, each of which played a prominent role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Three identical statues symbolize a commitment to new relationships based on honesty and forgiveness.

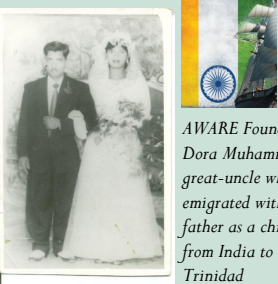
Reconnaissons et pardonnons le passé
Célébrons le présent
Construisons l'avenir dans
la réconciliation et la justice.

Acknowledge and forgive the past
Embrace the present
Shape a future
of reconciliation and justice.



When Preserving History Embeds Racism

Celebrating Arrival or Nah?



AWARE Founder Dora Muhammad's great-uncle who emigrated with his father as a child from India to Trinidad

The *Fatel Razack* docked at the Gulf of Paria in Trinidad on May 30, 1945 with 227 immigrants from India aboard. Signing up for indentured work on the island, families traveled with hope for a better future in the Caribbean. However, the system of indenture that followed the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean has been evidenced as an extension of the colonial rule that oppressed Africans and indigenous peoples. While Indian Arrival Day was first established in Trinidad, similar observances occur in Guyana, Suriname, Jamaica and other islands. The national holiday has evolved from a remembrance of arrival to a celebration of heritage, replacing the pain of the past with the hope of the present.

One of the oldest Black communities in the U.S. was also the first freedman's town. With its history literally written in Black marker on its walls, homes within the 70-acre peninsula known as Pocahontas Island were first inhabited by free Blacks after the American Revolutionary War.

The town is also recognized as a part of the Underground Railroad that carved a path to freedom in the North. Annexed to the city of Petersburg, today the community is a designated historic landmark in Virginia, preserving a history of free movement and thought within the Black community.

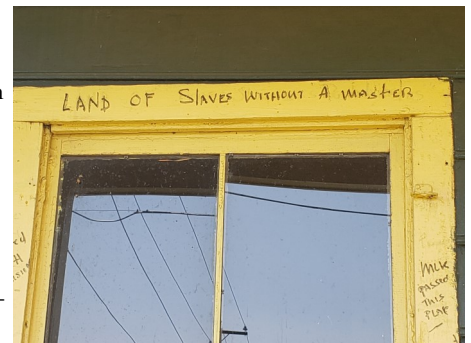
A little less than 25 miles north of this preserved port lies a much starker record of history. Amidst the busy downtown enclave of Shockhoe Bottom, historic markers along the Richmond Slave Trail meander through the metropolitan business district. The last site is an African Burial Ground, but it



is the pathway to the green pasture that holds a dark example of how preserving history can embed racism.

Along the wall of an underpass, the largest boulders are noted as original stones from the gallows of the Lumpkin Jailhouse. Gallows where free Blacks or captured runaways from plantations were executed. The torture and terror associated with the history of the jailhouse led to the moniker of Devil's Half-Acre for its grounds.

overpass physically embeds elements of a failed system of oppression and colonialism. Its walls grip a past that far too many people find difficult to let go and instead choose to uphold as valuable.



Inspiration springs up with each footstep along the streets of Pocahontas Island, echoing a native soil enriched by freedom; while solemn anger brews in tracing the bricks in Richmond's modern-day infrastructure in the blood of those who sought to live in their innate freedom. Whose bright idea was it to build with the reuse of gallow stones?

It is not symbolic or metaphoric, like the Confederate statues that line many American streets. The

This marred construction is more insidious than the Confederate flags that fly high throughout Virginia. It stands as a clear indicator of the true reconstruction of society and culture that we must be bold enough to undertake in this country.



2020 CENSUS Why a Complete Count is Key



Since 1790, the U.S. government has taken a census of its population and associated demographic information every 10 years.

Participating in the census is a vital civic responsibility that undergirds the future of the public and private sectors in states and localities for the **next 10 years** because it creates 22 datasets that guides 16 major federal programs (300 federal programs in total), economic development decision-making in the business community, research in academia and policymaking, and equitable representation in congressional and state legislative districts.

This year's Census will primarily be conducted online, creating an additional barrier of limited to no access to the reliable Internet (broadband) for historically "hard-to-count" populations (rural communities, communities of color, immigrants and low-income households) due to geographic isolation, limited language assistance and housing instability.

CENSUS DAY APRIL 1 2020

When completing the census survey, you'll note where you are living on April 1.

States are incentivized to see themselves as partners or ambassadors supporting federal efforts and take a leading role in educating and encouraging the fullest participation of all communities in the Census.

By April 2020, households will receive an invitation to participate in the census. You'll then have three options to respond: online, by phone, or by mail.

Find out how you can help ensure the most accurate count in your community and network: 2020census.gov/en/how-to-help

CENSUS TIMELINE

June – September 2019: The Census Bureau opens the remaining area census offices. The offices support and manage the census takers who work all over the country to conduct the census.

August 2019: The Census Bureau conducts in-field address canvassing. Census takers visit areas that have added or lost housing in recent years to ensure that the Census Bureau's address list is up to date.

January 2020: The Census Bureau begins counting the population in remote Alaska.

April 1, 2020: Census Day is observed nationwide. By this date, households will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. You'll then have three options for responding: online, by mail, or by phone.

April 2020: Census takers begin following up with households around selected colleges and universities. Census takers also begin conducting quality check interviews.

May 2020: The Census Bureau begins following up with households that have not responded.

December 2020: The Census Bureau delivers apportionment counts to the president.

you miss the spiritual being before you
just passing through this life
don't get distracted by the physical attractions
delighting in temporary indulgences
missing the best of ourselves
finding our steps far away from our purpose
gaining the world losing our souls

when we make the Creator sufficient in our lives
we move seamlessly through this space
His Light our footprints His Glory our fingerprints
what falls away lifts us
and the fruit that remains
reminds us of the spiritual beings passing by

when The Creator becomes sufficient

Because of Christ
the love letter of my life (2013)



carnival feathers (2011)

WISDOM NOTE | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019



passage

n. a phrase or short section of a musical or literary composition

origin. Latin *passus* meaning *pace*

CREATIVE GRACE CONVERSATIONS

The AWARE Project is a non-profit organization that leverages a multi-media art platform to raise awareness, increase civic engagement, and further the advancement of policies impacting women's rights, child welfare and human rights.

By intersecting community and municipality, faith and advocacy, and the arts with policy awareness, it creates a dynamic synergy offered to inspire the humanity in others with an unmatched passion to improve the quality and dignity of life of the vulnerable and marginalized.

Advocacy for Women's
Activism, Rights & Empowerment

THE AWARE PROJECT

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