

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Malakhi Simmons: Excerpts from BLK Haikus

Malakhi Simmons · Wednesday, December 9th, 2020

About BLK Haiku: A few years ago, a friend of mine challenged me to write a Haiku a day, for 30 days. I had always loved the Zen qualities of Haikus, and excepted the challenge. Over the years, when I felt creatively stuck or had something on my mind, Haikus became a form of meditation and a mental puzzle of finding the right words to express my thoughts. Traditionally, a Japanese haiku consist of three lines that contain a kireji, or “cutting word”, in a 5, 7, 5 syllable format, and a seasonal reference.

BLK Excellence

*There she goes again
Adorned with melatonin
Eyes like the full moon*



However, I soon realized that I was pulling from a limited list of these words, because the traditional words were from the perspective of the ecosystems of Japan. I started to reimagine what these “cutting words” would be from the perspective of the African Diaspora. I then worried that by making that change, people would confuse appreciation with appropriation, so I changed them to a 7,5,7 syllable structure too. Coincidentally, 757 is the area code of Hampton Virginia, which was the site of the first Southern reading of President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation... and the BLK Haiku was set free.

Haiku #108

Always remember:
The Marathon Continues.
Blue skies for Nipsey.



#BLKHaiku1

Mustard. Collards. Black Eye Peas.
 Cornbread. Sweet Ice Tea.
 Wish I knew her recipes...



#BLKHaiku2

Sun. Soaked. Watermelon!
 I love Black people...
 Sheeeeeiiit and Muthafucka!



Gene 'Poo Poo Man' Anderson

#BLKHaiku3

SAY HER NAME! All day and night!
 No justice... No peace!
 Until All Black Lives Matter!



LOS ANGELES, CA

#BLKHaiku4

You hear that... in the night breeze?
 Hidden in the trees...
 Shhh, just listen... co... coquí!



(All photos by Malakhi Simmons)

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