

my trinidad



Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow.

February 2024. Issue #02, Volume #15



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My Trinidad Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow is a monthly digital magazine capturing the essence of Trinidad, the most southerly of the Caribbean islands. It offers a nostalgic look at the island that was, and casts a skillful eye on the island that is, in an attempt to enlighten readers to the island's potential.

Its editorial vision is based on the old English philosophy that you can't really know where you are going unless you know where you've been.

In an effort to fulfil that vision our cast is made up of Trinidadian nationals at home and in the Diaspora who represent some of the most thoughtful minds of the day. In terms of infamy as opposed to celebrity, they are as follows:

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Any income generated from this magazine will go directly towards a children's charity to be established.

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The views of readers will be welcomed, and when possible, published. We reserve the right, of course, to edit same. All opinions offered in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher and editor.

Cover Art: Snow Cone Vendor by Rebecca Foster

A good read!

What's Inside! We welcome the first in a new series of political morality by MyT's founder, Tony Deyal. We also welcome Ishwar



Margaret Syne

Publisher's Note

Sooklal as he takes a journey of resilience and fortitude in climbing Ben Nevis.

There is for you, a story of disillusioned love as well as a tragic story of forbidden love during slavery, together with a classic ole time calypso kind of bacchanal love.

On a more serious note, should calypso commen-

tary remain after the court's ruling? Plus a pen portrait of a new calypsonian. The fantasy of two kids on a time train and the essence of the raindrop vital for renewal and completion of an ode. Check out two easy recipes to keep you cool in this hot and dusty dry season, but it is not as sweet as a countryside Watcho's Snow cone. You are privy to more stunning photos of avifauna in SW Trinidad.

I hope your carnival and Valentine's Day went your way. Ash Wednesday opened the Lenten season along with Kite season and more frequent trips to the beach.

Seas are dangerous at this time of year, so look out for the Rip Tides. The Sahara dust continues as it gives us breathtaking Sunsets, but more allergies. Be safe!



Former Carnival king Ted Eustace, portraying "Dracotaur (Lord of the Under Seas)", was one of the more controversial costumes at this year's annual Carnival celebrations. Many critics thought that the costume was glorifying Satan, especially on the cusp of the Lenten Season. The giant costume featured a hideous demon made out of Styrofoam, spanning 40 feet high and 40 feet wide, and was considered a front-runner for the annual King of Carnival crown when the high winds on the stage prevented Eustace from properly showcasing his costume. He eventually placed 15th in the competition, but the masquerader got some solace from knowing his costume was one of the most photographed this year.

The Ghosts of Macaulay (Part I)

Gone Forever where the cane arrows once swayed

Beneath the hill where the cluster of slave barracks stood, a huge spreading samaan tree sheltered weary slaves from the wrath of the mid-day sun. Here the enslaved Africans would rest briefly from their labors in the sugar cane fields and sometimes hurriedly eat whatever victuals they had. It was under this tree that they buried her body. For days on end, her lover would just sit against this old samaan tree where they laid her beautiful body to forever rest. Abrafo would just sit there, staring at nothing. His eyes were wide open, but it seemed that he was not focused on any-



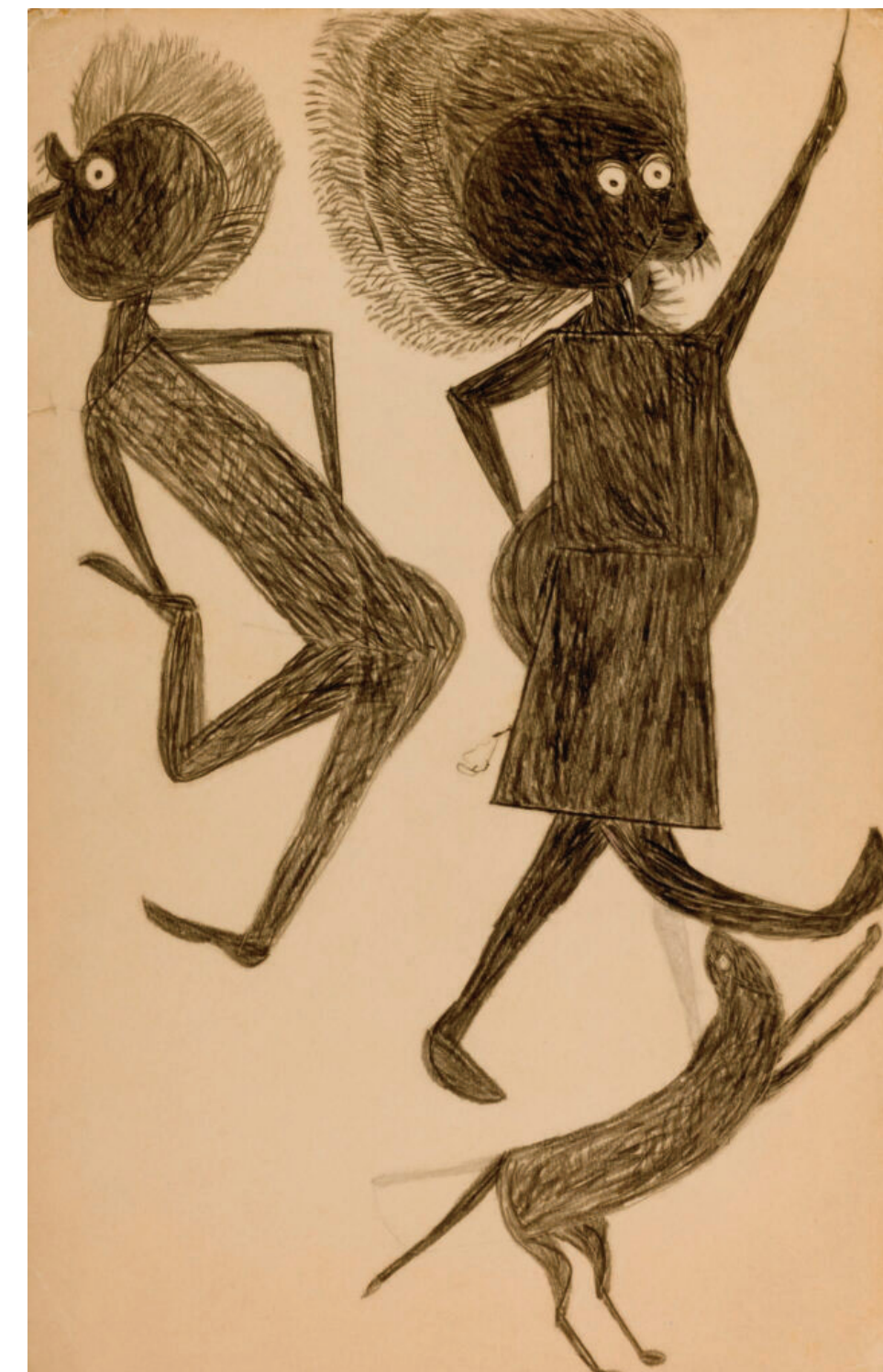
Johnny Coomansingh

thing. Sadness and sorrow commingled in his soul evoking a countenance of hopelessness and despair. He could not accept the fact that she was gone, gone forever where the cane arrows once swayed in the pleasant evening zephyrs. Day after day Abrafo would leave his mother's house to come to this spot. His deep love for Roane overpowered his soul. Yes, Roane Macaulay became the love of his life, a love fraught with disappointment, disaster, and eventually, death. The moments of happiness and excitement he shared with Roane were all too brief.

Abrafo once lived with Hunu his mother in one of the rusty, tin-roofed, whitewashed barracks on the Macaulay sugar cane plantation. His home was not too far away from the manor house where Roane resided. Roane could have seen him from her bedroom window as he tended the donkeys, mules, horses and a couple of cows in the yard below. His muscles glistened in the sun as sweat covered his frame. He was tall, handsome and strong as it gets for a boy of 18. Something about Abrafo gripped her stare; something about his strides lingered in her juvenile mind. This was the beginning of a love between a planter's daughter and a slave. Was it supposed to have happened? Was there some kind of African magic or mystique in the atmosphere that collided with the beliefs of the Scots? Was it some sort of ancestral unity coming to play out a song? A dance?

Despite what the answers could have been to these questions, Roane could not resist him, and he could not resist her. Abrafo would sometimes glance surreptitiously upward from time to time to take a quick peek at Roane as she brushed her curly red locks of hair. She was just about 15 but looked like a 17-year old. Her young alluring breasts overpowered her bosom with a trembling firmness. Her lips were red like the wine of Burgundy, and her youthful form allowed her silken nightclothes to drape sveltely over her curvaceous and "exciting" body. Such was a figure of desirability. She saw a man and longed to be with him. She longed for his hands to caress her lithe and trembling body. There were no words spoken between the two, but she knew that he also longed for her touch. Roane was looking at Abrafo, and the other slaves knew that she desperately wanted him. However, someone else badly wanted Abrafo.

Efua, the 15-year old slave girl who attended to the domestic chores of the manor longed for the eyes of Abrafo. She wanted Abrafo just as much as Roane or perhaps even more. Even though she made quiet ad-



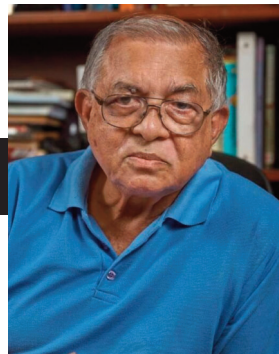
vances to Abrafo, he resisted her like the plague. His interest was in the bosom of Roane. Efua kept a close watch on Abrafo and Roane. Her eyes were opened to their every move. Jealousy swelled in her heart. Her goal was to permanently destroy the relationship.

Societal norms, idiosyncrasies, economic status, domestic and political interference were the factors that stymied the relationship between Abrafo and Roane. They knew that there was a secret love affair ensuing between them, something unexplainable. Nevertheless, their eyes told a story and people were whispering. Efforts to curb her journeys down to the barrack yard every night were futile. Roane did not care! Like a stray cat, she stealthily left her bedroom and stole away from her house when her parents were asleep arriving home just before sunrise. She desired to be with Abrafo.

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Money in the Bank for Panday

This is the first one and the start of Tony Deyal's new series for our magazine, My Trinidad Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. It is dedicated to all our readers who know more about today than yesterday. It is dedicated to the memory of Basdeo Panday and those that were the days. Tony wrote this "Yesterday" on April 20, 2005.



Tony Deyal

Trinidad is the only country where "elite" is a brand of shirt, "republic" is a bank, "independent senator" is an oxymoron, the surname of the leader of the parliamentary opposition is a phrase for a twenty-four hour period dedicated to the celebration of the national instrument, and the Prime Minister can announce an enquiry into the Chief Justice while sitting next to him is a colleague

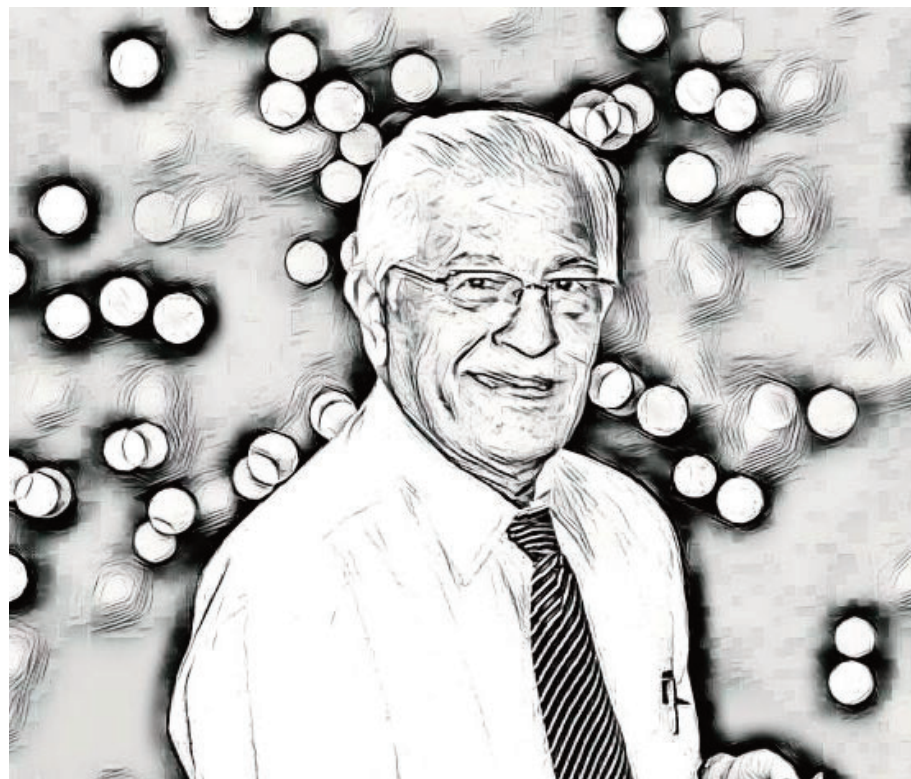
whose son was acquitted on an offence because the policeman who had charged the young man never turned up to give evidence even though the case was called several times. Yet, nothing has so far emerged publicly from the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Attorney General, the Commissioner of Police or the Prime Minister about this. If a song about where did a little flea go could become an all-time hit, consider what kinds of hits we would have if we made up songs about where the policeman, the drugs that are seized or the oil dollars go.

But we are talking about Trinidad and Tobago where "moral" is or was (when I was growing up) a children's game played with a ball, and where the term "tea" was ascribed equally to all forms of hot breakfast liquids so that we had green tea, coffee tea, milo tea and cocoa tea. The only one we did not have was "moral-tea." Now, if we are to understand the head of the United National Congress (UNC) every occupation, profession, or field of endeavour has its own and there is no single yardstick or commonly accepted set of values that is common to all or that underlies and underpins the entire society. It is more than a storm in a teacup, or the present wrangling about the incident between Rowley and Sharma (a cup in a teastorm). It is an important philosophical position, which has consequences for the entire society.

A teacher was telling me about reading a story to her class about a shopkeeper who raised the price on certain commodities during the war when goods were scarce. The majority of the students, instead of condemning the man's behaviour, supported and strongly approved it, saying "Miss, he right!" Recently, following the hurricane in Florida a badly beaten and battered man was turned over to the Sheriff's Office in one of the devastated towns. He was selling portable generators at about

ten times the normal cost. The people he tried to sell them to reacted angrily and physically, outraged at his attempt to profit from their misfortune.

In Washington right now, the Republican Majority Leader in the House, Tom DeLay has trouble with his interpretation of morality and ethics. Jay Leno's take on it can apply to our politicians as well. He said, "Tom DeLay is in a little bit of trouble. He says he didn't know that lobbying groups were illegally funding the trips he took all over the world. Don't you love this? Whenever these guys are running for office they always tell us how smart they are, how knowledgeable they are, how they know what's going on. As soon as they get caught doing something wrong (they say) 'I'm an idiot. I didn't know what was going on.'" Leno also joked about the hypocrisy inherent in Donald Rumsfeld's utterances about integrity. He quipped, "Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warned Iraq's



new leaders against hiring their friends and family members for government jobs, and then Majority Leader Tom DeLay gave the rebuttal."

In a real sense, the term "political morality" should be seen as an oxymoron or contradiction in kind. Referring to high political office, journalist David Broder says, "Anyone who wants the job badly enough to do what must be done to obtain it should not be trusted with it."

We already have varying moralities. When a builder takes your money and gives you shoddy work, he can justify it by saying that construction has its own

morality. When a mechanic takes your money to buy new parts and puts back the old parts in your car, or says he changed the oil but didn't, that's justified because of a repair morality. When a store sells you repossessed furniture and tells you it's new, or calls on the job and tells your colleagues that you are not paying your instalments, that's justified because Hire Purchase has its own morality.

It is possible that Mr. Panday follows the dictum of management guru Tom Peters and thrives on chaos. It is possible that he has forgotten his Marxist dictum of the dialectic where the seeds of the new society are implanted in the old and only through that process of replacement and renewal, genuine change emerges until the classless society is born. Mr. Panday clearly no longer wants a classless society, certainly not in his political party. The old authoritarian has his own morality and chaos is literally like money in the bank or banks to him. If you believe that the situation will blow over, I predict it will get worse. If you think you've seen the worst, rethink. UNC nothing yet.

The Snow Cone Man

Watcho created the Sweetness of Life

In the heart of Fyzabad, nestled amidst the oil belt of Trinidad and Tobago, there exists a living legend, a pillar of the community whose presence has transcended generations. Fondly known as "Watcho", Mr. Balraj Rambhajan has been the cherished snow cone man, a beacon of joy, for astounding years.



Joseph Lopez

With each passing weekend, he exemplifies steadfast commitment to his craft and unwavering dedication to the community he calls home. As the scorching T&T sun blazes its fiery path across the sky, Watcho's iconic snow cone cart becomes a veritable oasis for parched lips, especially the young ones who eagerly anticipate the sweet relief his arrival brings.

The melodious chimes of his bells have become a symphony of hope, a call to arms for children who rush to their windowsills, balconies, and front yards. With their eyes shining like stars, they beckon him to their doors, their pockets jingling with coins saved just for this moment. With the precision of a seasoned maestro, he crafts his snow cones. Crushed ice glistens like diamonds in the streets, reflecting the vibrant colors of the red syrups he skillfully drizzles. Next, you encounter the classic Trinidadian tradition of condensed milk, often the beloved "Carnation" brand, a lusciously sweet and sticky elixir. To your sheer delight, you can have this drizzled onto your snow cone, imparting a distinctively creamy essence, should you desire. It may cost you an extra dollar or two, but the sheer pleasure it imparts unquestionably justifies the indulgence.

To the young patrons, their faces alight with excitement, watch in awe as he performs this artistry, the anticipation nearly palpable. Then came the first delicate sip. A wave of delight washes over each child's face as the cool sweetness of the snow cone dances on their taste buds. It's not just a treat; it's a moment of unbridled happiness, a brief respite from the rigors of life. In Watcho's hands, a humble snow cone transforms into a vessel of dreams, joy, and community. However, Mr. Rambhajan's serv-



ice extends far beyond the boundaries of his cart. Since selling his snow cone in 1975, he has become an anchor for the community, a symbol of enduring tradition, and a source of inspiration for young and old alike.

His dedication transcends the notion of a simple vendor; he is a cherished part of the neighborhood's soul, a reminder that kindness and tradition can flourish even in the face of change. In a world that often seems to whirl by at breakneck speed, he stands as a testament to the enduring power of simplicity, community, and the unbreakable bonds that tie us together. In every scoop of ice, in every splash of syrup, he weaves a story of hope, one that reminds us all that the sweetness of life can be found in the simplest of moments, and in the heartfelt service of those who truly care.



Easy homemade Ices

These two recipes are ideal for the heat in our dry season. One is creamy the other fruity. You may adjust to vegan milks, and use your required sweeteners as substitutes.

Coconut Ice Cream

In a large blender pour in:

- 2 cups coconut milk (canned or reconstituted powder)
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 - 2 cans sweetened condensed milk
- 1 can heavy cream [all milks and cream can be substituted with cashew or almond milks]

3 tablespoons custard powder (prepare as directed on pkg). This is a thickener and is optional.

1 teaspoon vanilla, almond or coconut extract (optional).

Blend on slow, then, increase to the highest speed. Whip until light and creamy.

Pour into a plastic container with a tight cover. Place cling wrap on top of mixture, touching the surface. Fit on container cover tightly. Place



in the freezer overnight. Next morning blend again and re-freeze. 2 hours before use, blend again and put back to chill. You may substitute the coconut milk with 2 cups chocolate, strawberry, soursop, granadilla, guava or other fruit milks.

Fruit Ice (slushies)

In a suitable blender pour in:

- 1 cup of ice cubes (or more if needed)
- 1 cup chilled fruit juice (your favorite: pineapple, orange, apple, lemon etc)
- 3 cups cleaned and cut fruit (mango, citrus, strawberry, kiwi, banana, seedless grapes etc)

¼ cup syrup (agave, honey, maple, sugar cane) add more to your liking.

Blend until thickened.

You may serve this immediately or freeze for a short time. If frozen over, blend again.

Enjoy! Bon appétit! Try it! All for you!



Pen Portrait: Reanna

After the Calypso Fiesta in Skinner Park a week ago, many people were impressed with Reanna's performance and wanted to know who this young singer was. I am here to help, So here goes!

Who is Reanna?

Reanna studied Music and Spanish at the University of the West Indies, and later pursued a Masters degree in Education at the University of Toronto. She is presently employed as a music teacher at Naparima Girls' High School in San Fernando. In her spare time, she is into drama and the Iere Theatre Productions Ltd is lucky to have her as an active member.



Margaret Syne

Since her primary school days, Reanna has been singing calypso. Together with her well-known father, Victor Edwards, they make a formidable writing/composing team indeed. As a student, she won the calypso championship five times. She continued with her love for the art form. When she became a teacher, she entered and won the Teachers' competitions. She came out the winner several times!

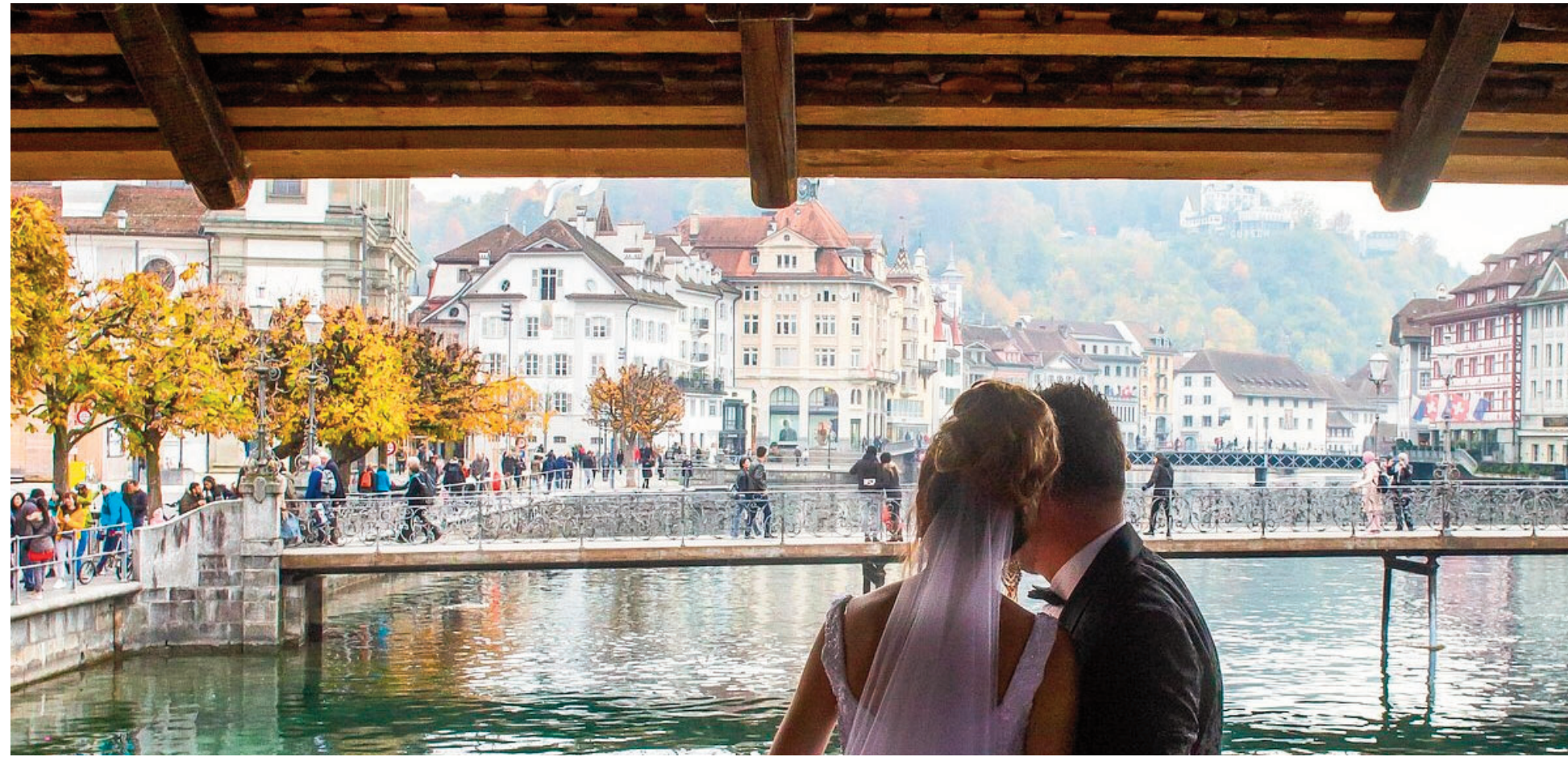
What about the Lyrics for the Calypso 'Paria'?

There was a family discussion about the absence of the topic of the fatally trapped divers in the oil pipeline, among the popular Calypsonians. None of them chose to deal with such a pressing issue of the death of four divers during the Carnival of 2023. The silence was deafening! Reanna was inspired by this lack of acknowledgement of the tragedy. Therefore, she got together with her father and penned a calypso on the issue. Last year, she sang her calypso at the school competition and won!

This year, she entered the South Calypso Monarch with the same calypso, 'Paria' and qualified for the finals. At the finals, she experienced some technical difficulties during her performance. Taking that unexpected issue in stride, she hopes her message has reached, and will reach, a wider audience. Finally yet importantly, she hopes the families of the divers will receive justice soon.

Reanna Edwards-Paul sends her thanks to everyone who helped with the calypso, and supported her throughout her journey. Best Wishes Reanna!

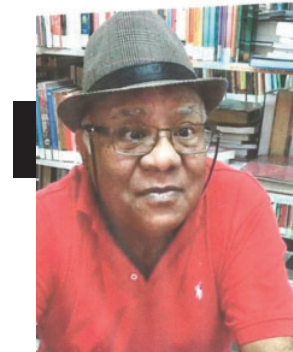




Love and Marriage in Calypso

Most people see calypso as social commentary because long ago it served the purpose of telling stories, relaying news events and criticizing government, the upper class and the politicians. Calypso was divided

into two categories: the social commentaries, which had songs dealing with politics and community issues; and the humorous calypso, which told stories of events, real or imagined, with the intent of making the audience laugh. As Carnival and Valentine's Day are so close together this year, I want to talk about a special type of calypso that comments on the



Mootil Boodoosingh

passionate and sometimes mischievous relationships between men and women, the calypsos of Love, Marriage and Betrayal that would make you chuckle and also think. As I am seventy-two, I will use some lyrics from older calypsos.

Back in 1937, Lord Caresser sang:

"It was love, love and love alone, that cause King Edward to leave the throne." This is how he commented when King Edward of England gave up being the king so he could marry the American divorcee woman, Wallis Simpson whom he loved. According to the rules at that time, she could not become queen and he abdicated being King of England for his love!

Compare what King Radio sang in 1937 when his love abandoned him:

"Five hundred dollars, friends, I lost

What made me sell me cart and horse.

Don't you know?

Mathilda, she take me money and run Venezuela.

Five hundred dollars, friends, I lost

What she made me sell me cart and horse.

Don't you know?

Mathilda, she take me money and run Venezuela

Mathilda, Mathilda, she take me money and run Venezuela

Well, the money was just inside me bed

Stuck up in the pillow beneath me head

Don't you know?

Mathilda, Mathilda, she take me money and run Venezuela."

If we listen to the advice that some calypsonians give, we could save ourselves a whole lot a trouble. Hear the Mighty Sparrow as he makes recommendations about marriage in the song Grandpa's Advice:

"Two women in my life, one of them got to be my wife

Two women in my life, one of them got to be my wife,

Betty love me but I love Myra, gone to explain to grandpapa,

What should I do, who should I wed? Grandpa watch me and then he

said...

The one who you love, never marry to she,

Is the one who love you, she go make you happy

Keep the one that you love on the side all the while

But the one who love you, take her straight down the aisle!"

Sparrow also counselled us to take heed in his rendition of No Money

No Love:

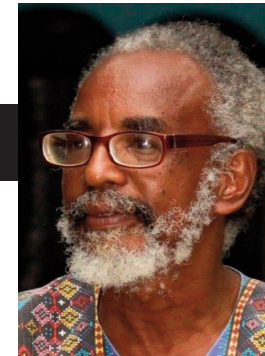
"Ivy pack up she clothes to leave, Because Johnny was down and out

All alone he was left to grieve, She had a next man in South

Continued on Page 12

The Beast is Wounded

So the court has attempted to shut down a calypso giant and by so doing shut down political commentary in calypso and turn this once fearsome, mighty Lion into a harmless whimpering lamb. The kaiso plebs are reacting and calling for blood, Inshan's blood and the judiciary blood. It's as if, having fallen asleep in 1990, they have awakened from their slumber and time traveled into 2024.



Zeno Obi Constance

Let us not forget that Inshan is grappling a weak and limping lion... [not the master Cro Cro eh, but kaiso, the political kaiso, commentary.]

Kaiso, from Emancipation to Canboulay; from the Duke of Marlborough, to Atilla, Tiger, Radio, to Stalin, Valentino, Maestro, Chalkdust, to Watchmen, et al... kaiso has produced the fearless griot, whose duty it was to keep the people in authority, the public figures of influence... accountable... "With lyrics to bring governments down".

However, since the 33-3 victory of the NAR, in 1986, rather the 3-33 defeat of the PNM, the tide began turning as singers closed ranks and threw their support for the Reds. [Not all eh, as we shall later discuss]. Therefore, by 2010 only the foolhardy dared climb the Skinner Park stage and bad talk Rowley or, pass from courage into the realm of stupidity, and heap praise on Kamla. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread...Say, what you want about Kamla, just doh say she's Royal.

MBA, Gypsy, Aloes, Defosto, Crazy, Massive were among the sacrificial victims.

It was a case of 'do so eh like so'. Cro Cro, correctly, must be allowed to sing,

Commentary must remain in calypso


Raise yuh hand and support Cro Cro

But the anti Red brigade posse must be silenced, booed, toilet paped, heckled, not allowed to perform. A situation, which extended to the tents, to the election calypso competitions.

The definition of commentary was no longer an attack on the powers that be but now only songs that attack the opponents of the Reds. A nation divided...

In 2024, there are more calypsoes against the Yellows, who have been out of the corridors of influence for almost a decade, than the Reds, whose authority and decisions hover over the society since 2015.

So by the time Inshan took on Cro Cro the political calypso was wounded, its existence hanging on a slender thread. Fiesta and Dimanche Gras no longer entertain [pun intended] such. The political calypso has effectively shot itself in its feet.

Philatelic Society of Trinidad & Tobago
 (Founded May 1942)
PO Box 596, Port of Spain, Trinidad, WI
Meetings; 2nd Wednesday, every month
at St Mary's College, Frederick St., Port of Spain

Ode to Varsha

On the arid landscape of the soul
Windswept and tossed
In the dry, parched ground,
The seed of love listens for a sound,
Waiting to hear
With patient ear,
The pitter, patter, pitter, patter
Of liquid hope,
But no, not yet,
Search for dewdrops.
Anxious days
Clear, azure skies...
Strained eyes
To find even one cloud
Small or great,



No clouds today—wait!
For those who wait

Johnny Coomansingh

tery feast,
First gentle, soothing drops
Liquid missiles follow in train,
Feel the fury of monsoon rain!

Sod is broken,
Open, open, open
Precious seed of love
Taste the rain upon your mouth,
Sprout!

Good things do come
And from the East
Thunderheads bearing a wa-



Welcome Spring

In a small town nestled far away, there lived a happy, lively family. There were two children. Tim was the older brother and Glana, the younger sister. They are getting ready for the departure of the New Year train. The New Year train leaves when the clock shows one hour and one minute after the last arrival. This tradition started when two people were looking for a paradise and stayed in each place they visited for one hour and one minute but unlike the story, which says the journey to one place, takes four days, the actual amount of time it takes to travel to a place is one day.



Jayna Boodoosingh

This is why the smart, important train provides the comforts of home like: Wi-Fi, food, TV, drink and even a machine that allows you to create your own world. You can just step into it! If you're late, you are sucked up into the void but no one yet has ever been known to be late. Amazingly, the train never is delayed and when you're early, you can choose any music that the train will play during the journey. Everyone was awake and packing except baby Glana who was fast asleep in her crib but one hour later, everyone was fast asleep and Tim was the most tired because he packed the most.

The big day arrived, and the mum woke everyone in the household...except... Glana. They had just arrived in their compartment when the dad realised that Glana was absent! He could not go to fetch her because the smooth, brown doors were closed. Suddenly, Glana woke up and climbed out the crib before she went outside, she saw the trees around the train and the void sucking the houses like how humans drink a drink. Unusually, she... sang! Only in baby version of course and as she sang, a purple outline outlined her as she floated back to her jovial, crying mother. This went down in history as the story of 'The Baby who Sang' and the year she was late was no other than 2024.

Spring.

One rainy day, I looked out the glass and I could see buds beginning to open, trees starting to blossom, plants rising from the ground, animals waking up from hibernating and much more. When I finished grooming the lovely plants I observed how people react to this change of season, I planted some trees and flowers because it was now sunny and half of the flowers were for pollinators and the rest to look pretty or for my bouquet. When I was done, I sprinted back to my room and sighed when I reached my room. I said "farewell winter, welcome spring". All the way through, I was feeling cheerful and delighted; I'm not even a little bit upset.

Jayna lives in London and is eight years old.

Love and Marriage in Calypso

Boodoosingh from Page 8

She said openly I really love you Johnny, But you ain't have no money
So what will my future be. Even though you love me?
We can't love without money, We can't make love on hungry belly
Johnny, you'll be the only one I'm dreaming of,
You're my turtle dove
But no money no love."

He gave good advice when he said to look for a rich gyal to marry.

Doh study what people say. Listen to his song Mister Walker:

"She ugly yes, but she wearing them expensive dress
The People say she ugly, but she father full a money
Oh Lord Mamma, woy, woy

Good morning, Mister Walker I come to see your daughter
Oh, Mister Walker! I come to see your daughter
Sweet Rosemarie, she promise she gone marry me
And now I tired waiting! I come to fix the wedding
After the wedding day, I don't care what nobody say
Every time I take a good look at she face I see a bankbook
Oh Lord Mamma, woy, woy

Good morning, Mister Walker I come to see your daughter."

But sometimes you have to really careful that you don't get trapped
as Melda is plotting.

"Melda oh you making wedding plan, carrying me name to obeah man.
All you do can't get through, I still ain't go marrid to you." Did Melda get
through? Go and listen to this calypso classic and find out.

Yuh know man does feel dey smart but when dey in love dey does
geh outsmart easy. Hear wuh Theresa do tuh Sparrow:

"You're worse than a dog Theresa, girl you break my heart
This morning you take me dollar, now you're playing smart
This morning you come, we talk the business quiet and soft
Every time I come by, you making excuse trying to put it off.
Sparrow leh me go, boy don't hold me so, Me mama go know,
Sparrow darling wait till tomorrow."

All ah we know how woman could set up man and when man in love
they does believe anything. A Guyanese calypsonian named King Fighter
came Trinidad to sing in a calypso tent and meet a gyal and fall in love.

Leh he tell you the story in song:

"Only last week, Sookie tell me, she go follow me to B.G.
Now ah set back and ah ready, hear the nonsense Sookie tell me.
Ey, you must consult Mooma and then consult Poopa.
Come leh we go Sookie, Come ley we go.
King Fighter, Ah love you, Ah won't tell no lie,
Come leh we go Sookie, Come ley we go.
But me Daddy go vex and me nani go cry.
Come leh we go Sookie, Come ley we go.
Now ah reach home, by she father, he bring a peerah, tell me baitha,
The he rein bach as if he worried, oh me lardo, Sookie shouting.
Ey, you must consult mooma and then consult poopa.
Come leh we go Sookie, Come ley we go.
Then he pull out, a revolver and he ask me what's the matter.
Look ah take off, like a donkey, even a jet plane couldn't catch me.
Ey, you must consult mooma and then consult poopa.
Come leh we go Sookie, Come ley we go."

Some ah dem young boys eh working anywhere but they want wife.
Well piece of advice by the Mighty Shadow should set them straight:

"A young man,
Ask for my opinion, about a lady
He want to married
You working "No!" You joking "No!" You stealing "No!" You dealing
"No!"
You looking for horn, plenty, plenty horn boy
You lookin for horn, you going to get horn boy.
Why you want to marry? You doh have no money
You eh working no way. You doh have a pay day
You think is so thing does work. You think is so?
I wish you luck. Without money, to buy honey
You headed for misery. She want hairdo and callaloo
And you eh have nothing.
Somebody go horn you. Yuh better believe it.
Somebody go horn you.
Ah hope you could take it padna."
So, all the young men listening today, I hope allyuh learn something.

Photos from South West Trinidad



By Sham Sahadeo

The Sunset. Since the dry season started, there are magnificent sunsets on the south west coast. The Sahara dust from Africa clogs the atmosphere with haze in sky. This dust increases the scattering of light. The result is more colorful sunsets. It was too sweet this evening to not get up on the Ridge of the Green Forest for this capture.

Below left: The Hummingbird. Up close with a little wink, the Rufous-



breasted Hermit Hummingbird puts in a quick appearance before being picked up by the radar of the Copper-rumps, which are the perennial bullies of the garden. Choice of blooms at the garden is mostly the Ixora and the Vervines.

Below right: The Great White Egret

Meanwhile, back at the wetlands of the SW Peninsula, a Great White Egret fans its stunning wings as it settles down after landing on the branches of the White Mangrove trees.



Protect Yourself from COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS)



WASH YOUR HANDS AND USE HAND SANITIZER



AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK



THOROUGHLY COOK MEAT AND EGGS

 www.health.gov.tt
 [Ministry of Health-Trinidad and Tobago](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryofHealth-TrinidadandTobago)
 [TrinidadHealth](https://www.youtube.com/TrinidadHealth)
 [MoH_TT](https://twitter.com/MoH_TT)
 [minhealthtt](https://www.instagram.com/minhealthtt)

The Ghosts of Macaulay

Coomansingh from Page 3

Roane wanted more than just looking at him in the morning sun while he worked in the yard. She longed for his manly touch and embrace.

All the slaves knew that something was happening between Roane and Abrafo. Hunu understood the deep love they had for each other. The little village kept the big secret. They all treated Roane like family. They all loved her and shared everything with her, even the morsels of food they created with scraps of meat, chicken feet, hog tails, yams and other ground provisions. There were times when the young and robust men would beat their drums much to the Roane's delight. She would dance in the glow of the fire that blazed in the yard. The sweat formed from her rigorous dancing only served to amplify her exquisite beauty.

After the dance, Abrafo and Roane would quietly depart. Their walk would take them to their favorite spot under the samaan tree. On this spot, they engaged in beautiful acts of love. They could not resist one another. Sometimes they would go down the hill to a secret hallowed spot, a big clearing in the middle of the cane field where they would feel safe and comfortable, a place where no one would trouble them. It was on this spot that Abrafo and Roane involved themselves from time to time in "unlawful" encounters. Roane wanted everything that Abrafo could have given to her. It was on this spot that she eventually conceived.

The news of Roane's affair with Abrafo reached the ears of her parents. Efua became jealous and mischievous. She thought that despite his love for Roane, Abrafo would have considered her instead. Efua wanted Abrafo just as much or even more than Roane. Jealousy welled up in her heart and she set about the task of smashing the relationship between Abrafo and Roane.

Efua mouthed off her disdain about Roane's conception to Maisie Macaulay, Roane's mother: "How could he leave me and give a child to your daughter? How could he do that to one of his own kind? I wanted him! I love him but he loves your daughter! He's wrong, wrong, wrong! He must be punished!" "How great a matter a little fire kindleth." Maisie was not too disturbed but Roane's father was incensed. He could not stand the idea that his daughter was bearing a child for one of his slaves. Two days before hearing this "horrible" news, Mr. Macaulay celebrated Roane's sixteenth birthday by erecting a statue of his only daughter on the highest hill adjacent to the manor. Roane was supposed to have been the heiress to his property. He was so proud of his beautiful daughter. The fete that followed was indescribable. There was so much joy and happiness in the air. Everyone was happy then.

In his eyes, this pregnancy was probably the most despicable event to have happened to his family. Roane remained in her room with a constant flood of tears in her eyes. Although her mother begged and beseeched, Roane wouldn't eat or drink anything. Mr. Macaulay's anger increased exponentially as the day drew on. His ranting and raging led him to consume whisky without stop. The whisky did nothing to quench the thirst of his intention to kill Abrafo. That night he did not sleep a wink. His mind was made up. Abrafo must pay! He must die!

Night came and darkness fell like a deathly shroud over the estate. Fearing for his life, Abrafo ran away and went into hiding. Breathlessly he ran from the plantation as far away as he could, but he was not far away enough. Early the next morning Mr. Macaulay called for his slave masters. With their bloodhounds rearing to go, they started hunting for



Abrafo. By four o'clock in the evening they came upon Abrafo who was hiding in a cave located about two miles away. Bound with chains on his hands and feet, his captors walked him back to the manor's yard and tied him to the whipping pole. They left him there until morning. That night, voracious swarms of mosquitoes drank their fill from him.

Weakened and weary, Abrafo sobbed incessantly. Screaming and begging for mercy, Abrafo looked up with hope at Roane as the bullwhip mercilessly met his bare back. After several strokes, Roane could not take it anymore and found herself between the whip master and Abrafo. She held on to the whip but was tossed aside like a straw in the ocean. She fell to the ground and wept as the whip continued to find its mark on Abrafo's bleeding back. Roane became deaf to the sound of the whip meeting Abrafo's back. She became numb to the event. Eventually, she got to her feet and slowly walked away. She did not walk back to the house. Her mind was telling her to go to that special spot in the cane field where she and Abrafo spent their precious moments. She walked up the hill to the samaan tree and ambled down the other side of the hill disappearing into the cane field. Running through the tall cane stalks, she felt the sharp edges of the bladelikey leaves cutting into her arms. She couldn't care. Eventually, she came upon the hallowed spot and fell to the ground. Tears gushed from her eyes but Abrafo was not there to comfort her.

(Adapted from the soon to be published book titled: Leh Mih Tell Yuh by Johnny Coomansingh. Look out for the intrigue in Part II in the March 2024 issue).

Conquering Ben Nevis

A Journey of Resilience and Discovery in the Scottish Highlands

In June 2023, my wife, daughter, and I set out to visit my wife's grandmother in England. Eager to explore the neighbouring landscapes, we found ourselves in the breathtakingly beautiful country of Scotland. The rolling hills, picturesque valleys, and serene landscapes instantly captured our hearts, making us yearn for more adventure.



Ishwar Sooklal

It was during this time that my wife's cousin, Shawn and I decided to take on the daunting task of conquering the mountain known as Ben Nevis.

Standing tall at 1345 meters (4,413 feet), Ben Nevis posed a formidable challenge. However, we were determined to push our limits and make this climb an indelible part of our family's travel memories. Before this challenge, I had done a lot of hiking in Trinidad, exploring the lush landscapes and breath-taking waterfalls that adorn its terrain. From scaling the heights of Lady Chancellor Flag to discovering the serene beauty of Maracas, Edith, Avocat, and Balandra waterfalls, each adventure presented its own set of challenges and rewards.

The ascent to the peak of Ben Nevis was not without its difficulties, as the terrain presented both physical and mental challenges. There were countless moments during this hike when I felt the urge to quit. The steep inclines, rugged paths, and occasional bouts of exhaustion tested my resolve. The unpredictable Scottish weather also added an extra layer of complexity, but with each step, we felt a sense of accomplishment and determination. As we ascended, the panoramic views became more awe-inspiring, and the camaraderie between Shawn and me grew stronger.

However, amidst the fatigue and uncertainty, one thought remained steadfast in my mind: I never wanted my daughter, Samara, to see me as a quitter. I envisioned sharing stories with her about perseverance, determination, and the sheer will to overcome obstacles.

I couldn't bear the thought of recounting a tale where her father merely made it halfway up the mountain. That thought alone propelled me forward, pushing me to my limits and beyond. With every step, I was fuelled by the desire to instil in her the values of resilience and fortitude, to show her that with unwavering determination, anything is possible.

As I stood on top of Ben Nevis, gazing out at the majestic expanse of the Scottish Highlands, I couldn't help but feel immense gratitude towards Samara. She unknowingly became my source of strength, motivating me to conquer not only the physical challenges of the climb but also the mental barriers that threatened to hold me back. In the end, it wasn't just about reaching the summit of Ben Nevis; it was about the journey—both the literal ascent up the mountain and the metaphorical journey of self-discovery and growth. And one day, when I sit down with Samara and recount the tale of this adventure, I will proudly tell her what she helped me accomplish.

Reaching the summit was an emotional and rewarding moment. The vastness of the Scottish Highlands unfolded before us, and the realization that we stood atop the highest peak in Britain was both humbling and exhilarating. The sense of achievement and the stunning scenery



made every ounce of effort worthwhile. This experience taught us a valuable lesson in perseverance. Climbing Ben Nevis became a metaphor for life's challenges – demonstrating that with determination and a supportive team, one can conquer even the highest peaks. The journey, both physically and metaphorically, reinforced the importance of pushing boundaries and embracing the unknown.

I wanted to share this story, as it not only highlights the beauty of Scotland but also emphasizes the power of human resilience and the rewards that come with stepping outside our comfort zones. I believe our adventure on Ben Nevis is a tale worth sharing with the community, inspiring others to embark on their own journeys of self-discovery and exploration.

If this article has inspired you to follow my example and embark on your own journey to conquer Ben Nevis or any other formidable peak, I would offer a few pieces of advice garnered from our experience:

1. Prepare Adequately: Prioritize thorough preparation before setting out on any mountainous expedition. Research the terrain, weather conditions, and necessary equipment. Ensure you are physically and mentally prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

2. Safety First: Always prioritize safety above all else. Familiarize yourself with proper hiking and mountaineering techniques, and never underestimate the unpredictability of nature. Be vigilant and heed any warnings or advisories from local authorities.

3. Respect the Environment: Show reverence for the natural environment and wildlife that call these mountains home. Leave no trace behind, and adhere to principles of responsible outdoor ethics to preserve the beauty of these landscapes for future generations.

Continued on Page 16



Conquering Ben Nevis

Sooklal from Page 15

4. Listen to Your Body: Know your limits and listen to your body throughout the ascent. Pace yourself, stay hydrated, and take breaks when needed. Pushing beyond your physical capabilities can lead to exhaustion or injury, jeopardizing both your safety and the success of the journey.

5. Embrace the Journey: While reaching the summit is undoubtedly a remarkable achievement, remember that the true essence of the journey lies in the experiences along the way. Take time to appreciate the stunning vistas, forge connections with fellow adventurers, and savour the moments of triumph and camaraderie.

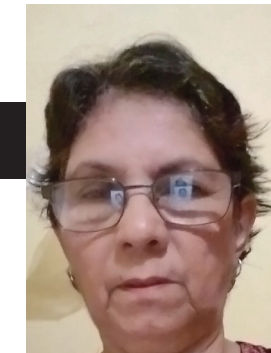
6. Find Inspiration in Challenges: Embrace the challenges that arise

during the climb as opportunities for growth and self-discovery. Approach obstacles with a positive mindset, drawing strength from the knowledge that overcoming adversity can lead to profound personal transformation.

7. Celebrate Achievements: Whether you reach the summit or not, celebrate the milestones and achievements attained during the journey. Every step taken towards your goal is a testament to your resilience and determination. Ultimately, embarking on a mountainous adventure is not just about conquering peaks; it's about embracing the spirit of exploration, pushing boundaries, and discovering the depths of your own capabilities. May your journey be filled with unforgettable experiences and moments of triumph, that inspire and enrich your life's tapestry.

Fooled by Romantic Novels

It was a Friday afternoon in February, and Lara was watering flowers in the yard. A slight noise made her look up, the old paint-pan that held the water, suspended and tilted. She noticed eight year old Ronnie, who lived a few houses away. He was watching her and smiling in a secretive, knowing manner. He handed Lara a folded piece of notebook paper, said to her, "Jimmy send dis fer yuh."



Vilma Seusankar

Lara stared for some seconds as he ran. She put down the paint-pan and opened the paper. Someone had sent her a letter. She looked at the signature and saw that it was Jimmy's. She read the words and she felt angry. She was only sixteen-years-old and not interested in boys, but this letter's words implied a romantic interest in her.

Lara was attending secondary school in San Fernando. At this stage, she was in form four and was having enough frustrations with boys who sat behind her, pulling on her bra and laughing like maniacs. She had few friends, but they were all casual. Reading was her favourite pastime. From the many books she borrowed from the library in San Fernando and students at school, she felt that she knew all about love. Still, she wanted to stay far from romantic associations. Her only goal was to pass five subjects.

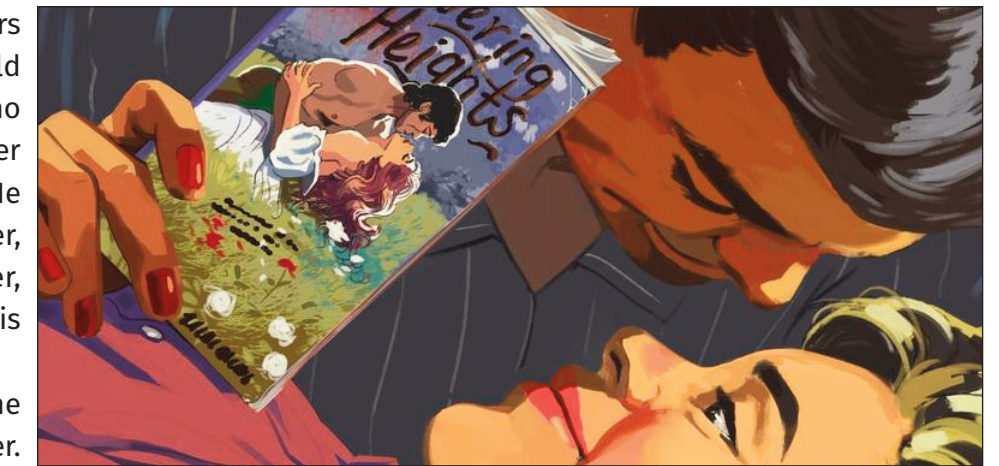
She went to cinemas on weekends to watch Indian movies; mesmerised by the romantic boy-girl song and dance scenes. She knew the songs "by heart" and sang loudly while doing chores. Her family was poor. It was a miracle that a term would pass and she would still be going to school. However, the bigger miracles in Lara's life were the library and the bookstore on the High Street where her father worked. The store's owner allowed his employees to borrow the books from the store's stock.

Reading the romantic Mills and Boon novels was her favorite pastime. Like love-romance, contents in the Indian movies that she was so fond of, they shaped her interest.

Jimmy continued sending love-letters to Lara, sometimes with Ronnie or Lara's younger brother, Bobbie. In the beginning, Lara hid the letters under her mattress. A few times, she told Jimmy angrily, "I don't want any letters from you. Stop sending them!"

Later, she retrieved and re-read them with dreamy eyes. Jimmy was five years older than she was. In Mills and Boon, the man was always older. Lara felt that she and Jimmy were well suited. She agreed to go cinema with him one Sunday. They sat in the back row and got in a few smooches. Jimmy graduated from high school and became a Clerk I in the Public Service. Then things started to change. Jimmy was sent to a remote countryside location, and he met up with new friends.

Jimmy started coming home late from work and regularly drunk, even during the week. She continued to see him because he was his quiet, respectful self when he was with her. Now she was 17 and despite her former resolution, she was hopelessly in love. Time passed and Lara finished secondary school with a full certificate and got a job as a temporary clerk. Now, she met up with Jimmy who had a car and they went for drives. Then the story took a steep curve.



Lara's mother never approved of Jimmy, but Lara ignored her. Jimmy's sister, Jada, had a school friend who used to visit and even spend nights. Then a sad thing happened. Jimmy started taking Jada and her friend out to the odd bazaar on a Sunday afternoon, at different villages.

Many times, Lara watched from her house crying as the three of them left in Jimmy's car, looking happy with not even a half-glance in her direction. Even then, Lara could not bring herself to leave Jimmy. With a new desperation, her relationship with Jimmy graduated to a sexual one. One day, Lara missed her period although they were always careful. When another month passed and no period, Lara was in a panic. She decided to tell Jimmy that she was pregnant and she was going to a doctor to find out for sure. When Jimmy suggested that she ask the doctor if he could give her something that would cause her abort the foetus, she was shocked.

She cried that night as if the tears of the whole world came out of her eyes. The Doctor gave her something to drink and told her that within a few days, she should be bleeding and the abortion would begin.

She went home and waited. Days turned into weeks with no bleeding. Lara resolved that even if she had to mind the baby by herself, she was keeping it. Jimmy continued drinking with his friends and go out with Jada's friend...and Lara cried herself to sleep, wake and work. One day Jimmy met Lara after work and told her, "Go in a jewellery store and choose an engagement ring. She was shocked, yet pleased. She saw a set that contained two rings, one for the "engagement" and one for the wedding. She told him where the rings were sold and he bought them.

An engagement and an early wedding followed so her pregnancy was not obvious. The wedding was small and as Jimmy lived just over the road, the same guests attended both sides, by walking across. There was no line of cars to "follow the wedding." Just the two of them went to the photo studio nearby to take out the formal picture. When they returned home, most of the guests had left, including Jimmy's work-buddies with whom he had expected to enjoy some drinks. He was not pleased. The formalities were over with the pregnant Lara being very tired. The newly married couple went to his room. This tiny room would be shared from now on and Lara sat on the bed with the hope that Jimmy would personally welcome her as his wife. However, instead... "Hmmm." He said, "If we didn't take so long in the studio, Jerry and dem woulda still be here and they might have even give me money." Lara looked at Jimmy, fully awake now, and realised that all the Mills and Boons dreamy fantasies were fake. Reality had arrived with its real face.

PHOENIX
Paws & Claws
 Rescue and Sanctuary TT

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- Collars (if cat, quick release)

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- Lettuce
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Cash donations can be made to
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- Soap powder
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