



*May the peace & joy of
the holiday season
extend into ...*

2023

2023 HOLDS PROMISE

Moving forward into 2023, I seek promise for family, friends, and the overall community of man. I beckon positive energy to envelope all with compassion, empathy, humanity, love, morality and understanding. Through a lens of hope, I wish health and wealth for all; not wealth as in finance, but wealth in relationships. WE ARE ONE! We cannot continue to destroy others without destroying ourselves! Once we understand "we are our brothers' keeper," we will understand we ALL must do a better job of caring for one another regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, religion or color. 2023 holds promise as long as we do NOT bore a hole into the vessel, which is promise, and allow its contents to seep out!

WHAT THE AUTHOR IS READING!



Sorry, no updates! I am still reading LOVE SONGS OF W.E.B. DU BOIS by Honoree Fanonne Jeffers! Unfortunately, I keep getting distracted and it is not a quick read. Because of the various story lines, each time I return to it, I have to remember the characters and how they fit into the genealogy of the family. I am closing in on page 500 of 799, on my phone via Kindle. I WILL get it read by the end of next quarter. I refuse to allow a book to defeat me!

50-YEARS REUNIONS

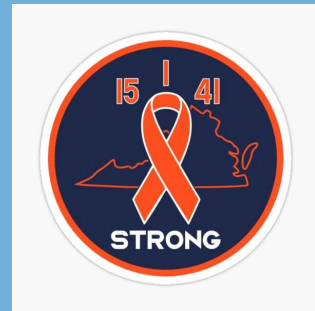
Oh yes, you read correctly ... reunions ... plural! RVA high school classes of 1972 were disrupted and legislatively bused hither, thither and yon! Six high schools became seven

with the addition of Huguenot, which was annexed from Chesterfield. I was bused to Huguenot! Huguenot held a 50-years reunion in early October and the citywide reunion was held at the end of October. I only mention both reunions because I could not mention one without mentioning the other and I co-facilitated a discussion during Huguenot's reunion weekend. A classmate, now an attorney in Florida, reached out to me and inquired what I thought of the inclusion of a discussion during the reunion weekend. The purpose of the discussion was to provide classmates an opportunity to share with and listen to one another's perspectives of our busing expectations, experiences and outcomes as well as how the experiences influenced how we do or do not think now.

Unfortunately, of the nearly 200 participating in the reunion weekend activities, less than 20 participated in the discussion and some of the 20 were guests. I was the sole representative from our Black classmates during the discussion. As a co-facilitator, I listened, commented and enlightened; I also made it abundantly clear my comments were my own and I, in no way, was speaking on behalf of other Black classmates as my experiences were mine and not everyone's. Without detailing what transpired, let it suffice to say "eyes were opened for many" and some departed with their points of view altered!

SLAIN AND BROKEN

Generally, I am not in the habit of releasing poems before they are published. However, as I sat and watched the [livestream](#) of the Memorial Service honoring the lives of Devin Chandler, Lavel Davis Jr. and D'Sean Perry, who were killed by a fellow classmate, words gelled and the following was penned. "Slain and Broken" will be published in **LET TRUTH SHINE!**



Four lives loss
Three slain
One broken
Families splintered
Three -- of the slain
One -- of the broken
Individuals overwhelmed
Innocence shattered
Because they were there
Four beautiful, vibrant, young men
Loss
Three slain
One broken
Four beautiful, vibrant, young men
Promised futures ended
Three slain
One broken
We may never know the why
Because he who is broken
May not know
Senseless deaths

Every day, every damn day
Numbers steadily rising
No ebb, no flow
Just rising
Not because of bigotry
Not because of police
Just senseless deaths
Senseless killings
For what?
A minor slight?
An errant snub?
Jealousy?
Four more lives loss
Three slain
One broken
Four more families splintered
Three -- of the slain
One -- of the broken
Individuals overwhelmed
Innocence shattered
Because they were there
Individual deaths,
But, a loss for all
Their deaths not in vain
Their lives had meaning
They will be remembered ... always!

R.I.P. young kings!

ENDING ON A HIGH NOTE



I received, in December, an email from a young woman whom I have never had the pleasure of meeting. Following are her words, which she gave permission for me to publish. I was deeply touched by her desire to reach out to me and am very grateful for these "flowers" being presented while I am here to express my **GRATITUDE!** I promised her anonymity!

Hi Yolanda! You don't know me, but I wanted to let you know how much of a profound impact you have had on my life. In 2014, I was a sophomore at Clover Hill High School. My favorite teacher, Ms. Clarke was teaching American History. She quickly became a friend, mentor, and all-time favorite teacher of mine. She made every student feel seen and she truly cared about our success. In becoming close to Ms. Clarke, she gave me your book

"What I Know... Poems of Life". On the inside cover, she wrote about how authors like you spoke for her when she felt like her words didn't matter and encouraged me to always live out loud. She wrote "May you live out loud and let people hear your voice". Tragically, Ms. Clarke passed away a few months later after battling cancer. I still feel the random pangs of hurt missing her. I'm now 26, living in Boston. I kept this book with me through every dorm, apartment, condo, and town house. I revisit your book and Ms. Clarke's note every now and then, and I thought I ought to let you know. Thank you for giving other women a voice when they aren't sure how to use their own. Your impact has rippled outward and I will continue to pay it forward. Thank you.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for my "flowers" and thank you to all who continue to support me and my poetry! I look forward to publishing my eighth literary child, **LET TRUTH SHINE!**, in 2023.

May next year be a year of blessings for all!

FAITH - HOPE - LOVE!



May 2023 bring you flowers,
Y.B. Taylor, Writer



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