



# The Queer Foundation Scholar

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## 2012-2013 Publication Awards: Poetry

### Was Blind

All dark by the pawn shop  
but I'm reading your Braille,  
your 22-year-old skin  
with its century of scars.

I cuff your shoulder's broad  
sinew in my palm, your collarbone's  
jutt, and wheelie us home. They're  
copper spoons in the burnt-gravy,  
brownout light.

I read each dip and ridge of you  
like an Atlas to a country  
I'll hitchhike through. Your Braille  
skin boasts of a scalpel's edge,  
a feeding tube's neonatal kiss.

I'd like to annotate your eyes,  
your smile, to dogear my copy of you  
like the Bible and I'm the blind  
scholar who touched you and knew.

All dark by the pawn shop  
but the gleam of old motors,  
guitar strings, china, melted gold.  
I read "yes" in a divet the shape of a star  
and think of the wealth people trade.

—Sadie McCarney

### Niggot: A Poem on Jesus's Log/Splinter Parable

*Niggot is a poem written in Black male Pentecostal ministerial voice. The poem displays the illiteracy of prominent local figures that significantly manipulate the moral systems of Black communities across America. With that stated, this poem also displays the conundrum of Biblical literalization within categorically illiterate people. While many ministers are not as illiterate as portrayed, I chose to portray the truth of my experience. Certain stanzas are direct quotes from Black ministers I have witnessed. This poem is not intended to generalize the African American preacher, but give recognition to the African American Gay Christian experience. The concluding volta introduces the hypocrisy of homophobic preaching as the preacher is sometimes utilizing such homophobia as a mechanism to conceal his sexual practice with a biblically-based sexual identity of superiority. This particular piece of free verse follows the form of the Black Arts tradition of the 1970's in which poems were written to be spoken as Spoken Word.*

Shh...

(boisterously) Quiet down y'all there's a Niggot in service.

A Niggot  
is a Niggot  
is a Niggot

And ya can't get no worsen.

I oughtta rebuke that devil in Hell right outta ya

In front of all these people.  
Jesus, I came against that spirit of carnality  
That spirit of effeminacy  
That spirit of homasecsha-ality

That sissy done gotcha, boy.  
But I proclaim now,  
In the name of the Father,  
In the name of the Son,  
And by the fiery hot hand of the Holy Ghost.

I decree deliverance by the Blood.  
Deliverance in the mind  
I decree and declare that this boy  
Is free from all sense of individuality.  
Oh, Lord! Let This boy conform to the slave-like  
Ideals of THIS church.

Boy, you gone get you some pussy.  
And you gone jump the broom.  
And yo babies gone have some  
Babies and yo babies babies gone  
Have some babies. But them babies gone be  
Mama's babies daddy's maybes  
I see generational curses in your future.

Now, church you see this young man used to be a  
Niggot, but now he's just a Negro like us.  
He ain't to worry 'bout no discrimination.  
Dr. King did that, and Jesus did this—  
Tell the congregation how he delivered you.

Matter of fact, tell the whole world.  
Tell the whole world your insecurity.  
Your constant last-picking  
Ass-kicking  
Sass-sissy  
Contemplating  
Immoral mating.

You living that lifestyle—  
That dreaded lifestyle—  
That damned lifestyle—  
That anti-lifestyles lifestyle.

See son, you used to be gay.  
Now, you're normal.  
You're regular.  
We saved ya from:

Abnormality  
Your sexuality,  
Unnecessary brutality,  
Although, I am the brute.  
I'm the root.  
I don't refute.  
I am the oppressor.  
A professor professing a  
Prophetic word on Bert & Ernie's civil union  
Yellow and orange only makes rainbows!

I, Minister Bishop Elder Pastor Reverend Doctor  
Deacon Straight man,  
Know the Word of God.  
We're going to another level:  
Just the thought of a man having sex  
With another man is disgusting.  
Ain't gone be no  
Cross-dressing  
Hip-switching  
Gum-popping  
Wrist-dangling  
In this sanctuary.  
God don't lack fruits.  
Why ya think He forbade Adam  
From eating that apple?

Exactly, that is of the devil.  
I am open and affirming my faith in the word  
And it says, uhh...  
Well, hell, it's an abomination.  
God collapsed Sodom and Gamorrah  
Because every man was homosexual,  
Every woman was a Lesbian,  
And they were all sexing each other.  
Yes, even the children!

Son, I'm gonna love you in spite of.  
I hate the sin, not the sinner,  
Although I realize this is an impossibility  
For it is the only sin you can be and cannot commit.

You damn right,  
You a sinner.  
You damn sinner.  
Burn in hell for all I care—  
Even though I love you sinner.  
My conditional love is the only way to Christ.  
It must suffice for I am as Christian as it gets.

I must admit...  
I always thought you were kinda cute.

–Javon Smith

### My Life as a Tragic Drag

*Julian Wynne is a semi-autobiographically-based character. He is 27-year old man conflicted about his social existence, career, past and future, but one thing he remains content about is his sexual identity as a straight man. He is emotionally unstable.*

Julian:

I couldn't even get my wife to love my life. Drag costumes I sew, so I've reaped sown. I cannot be a man dressed as a woman. A real man, anyways. I draw, renege my drag. I have dealt with my hand dealt too long.

I'm just trying to live my fantasy. I remember watching RuPaul in Crooklyn thinking, fantasizing really, "That must be what I'll be like." Mama never thought much of my highlighter-painted toe nails, towel as hair insistence, or heels obsession, but I knew that fulfillment would not come from anywhere else. So, I studied; from Martin Lawrence, Tyler Perry, and Jim Carey to Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and the works of Ben Johnson. As sophisticated as I'd feel, relating to the latter, and a comedic relief, the former, I am neither. I'm just a half-witted, doubtful, straight man. I just—who said all art was reserved for the gays anyways? I want social acceptance.

Figuring out a drag name's not my forte. I can lip-synch for my life, but I can only come up with *Huffington Post-Op* to perform under? That's the best I could come up with. Might as well book my drag persona a flight to Tijuana with silicone and prosthetic prosthetics and open up a practice. Dr. Post-Op—kinda has a ring to it: a bumpy white orally transmissible ring, or the dingy dusty ring of my flesh I left in the tub this morning resembling desert sand and cacti needles, the ring (*recognizes something missing from*

*left-hand finger*) absent from my divorced hand. Oh Jesus, fondle my life.

Yes, that's moi—vulgar queen by night, yet classy educator by day; I just need a name for it. You'll never see me dancing on bars half-naked, except for when I do. And when I do, I keep it classy. Even when I have to explain Huff Post-Op is just a stage name, and there's no "op" no time soon, I keeps it classy. But as classy as I keeps it, I seriously need an identity crisis or something. What was this half-assed attempt at displaying social relevance? This is what I do—ask myself rhetorical questions. I try cunning like Sharon Needles, never works. Not on stage, not in parent-teacher conferences, not in the Laundromat. Could you believe 4-years of uptight downright professors, caffeine, and loan accrument bought me a \$30,000 salary, a night job as a transsexual blogger, and a credit card at Bubbleland? Me neither.

You know, one of these days, I am going to teach a lesson on appositives. And the example on the board for all my freshmen will be, "Mr. Wynne, drag queen, is still your favorite teacher." One day, I'll stop simply dreaming dreams, and begin doing dreams. Until then, I'll practice such soliloquies, blasting "Who You Are" by Jessie J in this same mirror. Every day. Yes, that's me—vulgar queen by night, yet straight.

–Javon Smith

Ideas and opinions expressed in *The Queer Foundation Scholar* are those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of The Queer Foundation.

The Editor.

## About the Poets

**Sadie McCarney** of Nova Scotia, Canada, was a 2010 QF Scholar who attended St. Thomas University in Nova Scotia for two years. She was a recipient of the 2010 Nova Scotia Talent Trust Lieutenant Governor's Award for Artistic Achievement. Her poetry has appeared in The Found Poetry Review and in the Prairie Fire magazine.

**Javon Smith**, a 2011 QF Publications Award recipient, is a junior at DePaul University, pursuing a degree in Secondary Education/English, with minors in African and Black Diaspora Studies, Theatre Studies, and LGBTQ Studies.

As a Golden Apple Scholar of the State of Illinois (the award provides him with \$23,000 a year in financial support for four years), Mr. Smith has pledged to teach in a poor school district for a minimum of five years. He currently volunteers his time sharing his love of poetry with students in a poor school district.

October is LGBT History Month, and The QF is celebrating because, in schools where LGBT history has been ignored or passed along quietly for some decades now, students are learning openly about the rich heritage of our diverse community and its invaluable contributions to the way we are as a society today. School administrations in L.A. and in Broward County have officially recognized LGBT History Month this year. Students everywhere-- over a million served by those two districts alone--are having a different experience from that of those who went before them in those hallways and classrooms. What better time to find out what your school is doing for equality and to fill in the gaps left in many history and English textbooks or to encourage high school seniors to write their essays for The QF's Essay Contest. The rich resources available online for free from Equality Forum (at <http://lgbthistorymonth.com>) plus the writings of former QF essay contestants (free at <http://queerfoundation.org>) make it easy for parents, teachers, and involved community members to suggest learning projects and essay topics to help students engage in history in exciting and meaningful ways.

Please join The QF as we celebrate LGBT History and the works of those courageous, creative individuals who have gone before us.

Joseph Dial, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

# From the editor's desk ....

## Sometimes all I can do is laugh.

The one-upmanship game played by the Republican presidential candidates this past spring sometimes led to "If I am elected" promises that were so absurd that I wondered if the candidates thought they were running for student body president in "Yet Another Teen Movie."

I laughed the day Mr. Santorum turned himself into the Great Wizard of Oz and stated that, if elected, he would immediately eliminate all gay pornography and once he accomplished that magic feat, with no further ado, homosexuality would disappear from the land within a month.

What a novel idea! It's gay porn that made me a homosexual. I always thought the Grimm Fairy Tales did it! I mean, I long ago realized that I not only read them dozens of times as a child, but that it was always the charming and handsome prince I wanted to live with happily ever after! I can ignore cause and effect as easily as Mr. Santorum and his followers!

Santorum's theory should mean that watching straight porn would turn us straight, right? The former Senator may actually have hit onto something! The people of Utah have the highest birth rate in the nation; they also have the distinction of spending more per capita on straight porn than the residents of any other state. A spokesman for the Romney campaign promised some of the more vociferous national homophobes back in early July that, as president, Romney would crack down on all pornography, but perhaps he should consult with his fellow Utahns first.

## Laughter trumps anger and rage.

So, too, may never naming the worst homophobes and their organizations. Would-be tyrants thrive on attention, and negative attention is better than no attention. Whether they burn the Qu'ran, picket military funerals, or make outrageous statements on talk radio or TV, the media eat up their every word, creating a firestorm of protests that engenders more

publicity that ensures the wing-nuts that their audiences won't diminish, and no doubt also ensuring that their supporters will keep opening up their wallets and purses.

The media will argue that we have a constitutional right to know who the bigots are, but many reporters today don't know how to differentiate between reporting and inventing the news. The more outrageous a statement, the better. The hateful comments and acts of a certain Baptist church in Topeka, Kansas, aren't news anymore; they're not even entertainment. They're very old broken records, reported by the press on a weekly (and sometimes daily) basis for over twenty years.

The Southern Poverty Law Center and several queer blogs do a good job of keeping track of hate groups, and they report without providing the hate-mongers the sensational headlines often found in the mainstream media. Several gay activists who provide our enemies daily sensationalized headlines seem more interested in promoting themselves than in advancing equality for all sexual minorities.

It wasn't that long ago that the "h" word was never printed in the mainstream media in the U.S. unless reporters were dealing with a psychopathic killer. Even if we were "out," the vast majority of us still didn't really exist, and it's not surprising that very few people took us seriously. Is there a lesson there we could learn to use against our enemies? Something about learning to differentiate between real and perceived threats.



*If you think you can't make a difference, try sleeping in a room with a mosquito.* African proverb.

## Was the Chick-fil-A brouhaha worth it?

I rarely consume greasy meals from fast food outlets, so I have no more reason to patronize The Colonel (the nearest outlet is 2 miles away) than I do Chick-fil-A (the nearest outlet is 344 miles away). So I couldn't get excited about a boycott against Chick-fil-A.

However, I was not surprised or shocked at what happened after Dan Cathy stated what had been obvious for years. The firestorm. And the backlash.

Look at where most of the outlets are located, e.g., Texas, 263; North Carolina, 143; Florida, 155; Georgia, 196; Virginia, 104; Alabama, 66. Look at the number in the "Blue States": New York, 1; Massachusetts, 2; Oregon and Washington, 0. Even California's 52 outlets are meager in comparison to those in Texas and Florida, and many of California's are in decidedly conservative communities. Did someone really think we were going to get an

outpouring of support in homophobia-land? Why?

Nancy Pelosi could say she prefers the Colonel's Kentucky Fried Chicken (that various religious right organizations have been boycotting), but then there are no Chick-fil-A outlets anywhere near her San Francisco district. The nearest are more than an hour's drive away in Sacramento. [I have since read that one is opening in the Bay Area,

but it's still not in Pelosi's district.]

Yes, the U.S. has a long history of boycotts, but they rarely succeed and most often backfire when they deal only with social rather than economic issues. Notice that the same individuals who criticized certain mayors for saying that they'd do everything they could to keep Chick-fil-A from opening an outlet in their city have said nothing over the past 20 years when numerous mayors and city councils have actually succeeded in keeping Wal-Mart from locating in their fair cities. Fair working conditions and wages are at stake, and they were behind the successful United Farm Workers boycott of California grapes many years ago.

The most vociferous homophobes were salivating early on in this brouhaha at the probability that we'd finally handed them a victory. The main organizational defender of Chick-fil-A is the same association that called for a boycott of the Maplethorpe Exhibit when it was at the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati in 1989, and the boycott instead brought millions to the Center, setting attendance records. See a parallel?

The same organization has either led boycotts or joined other boycotts organized by other groups against Starbucks, J.C. Penney, Target, General Mills, Abercrombie & Fitch, The Gap, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Google, to name but a few: all boycotts that have essentially fizzled or back-fired and all involving “hot button” social issues.

So what have we won? Certainly the Jim Henson Company’s reaction is commendable, but if Lisa Henson is such “a strong supporter of marriage equality,” as a company spokesperson said, why did she wait so long to sever the company’s ties to Chick-fil-A?

And what about Amway (alas, I hear someone is promoting a boycott for the same reason), White Castle, Waffle House, and Carl’s Jr., all of which contribute substantially to extreme anti-gay and anti-choice organizations? Do we plunge forward

with more boycotts attracting even more negative attention?

What did trouble me was that the brouhaha gave Mike Huckabee, Sarah Palin, Rick Santorum, Michelle Bachmann, and other now washed up, homophobic politicians another chance to revel in the national spotlight while spewing their hatred.

We were outflanked and out manoeuvred. We let our enemies turn the brouhaha into a one-sided 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment issue. How sad to have read that so many people who participated in the so-called Appreciation Day said they were supporting the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment’s freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

Yes, people need to be reminded again and again that the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment does indeed give Chick-fil-A, its founder and his son the right to voice their villainy and to put their money where their mouth is. It also gives us the right to criticize them, to boycott their company, to attempt to convince their advertisers to drop them, and to do so with an organized battle plan that helps people understand we are neither trampling on anyone’s freedom of speech nor freedom of religion such as this villainy implies:

<http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2012/08/09/665861/conservative-magazines-to-trick-lgbt-allies-into-opposing-free-speech/>

It should no longer surprise us that religious reactionaries have two sets of moral standards. One for themselves, in which the end justifies the means, and another for everyone who disagrees with them.

Of course there are people who hate us intensely. Why is that a surprise or a shock? But HRC, GLAAD and dozens of other groups at the local, state, and national levels have done more to promote equality by working behind the scenes with many corporations. Change isn’t happening fast

enough? Ah, the ever-impatient American.

I don't object to boycotts per se, but my take: we got played royally this time. Our national associations let us down. Personally, I wish we would focus on the positive, not the negative: who we should patronize rather than who we should not. It's impossible for our enemies to attack us for the companies we support; they can launch boycotts of those companies as they have (with no success), but just because we patronize Starbucks or Abercrombie & Fitch or Nordstrom's doesn't give our enemies leverage to accuse us of trampling on their freedom of speech or their freedom of religion.

## BADGE OF EQUALITY YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS' POLICIES ON GAY MEMBERS



WHY IS DISCRIMINATION "ABSOLUTELY THE BEST POLICY" FOR THE BOY SCOUTS?

TAKE ACTION:  
GLAAD.ORG/SCOUTS  
CHANGE.ORG/SCOUTS  
CHANGE.ORG/SCOUTSVOTE



Apparently, at least two Scout Councils accept gay members: the Northern Star Council (Minneapolis/St. Paul) with about 70,000 members and the Boston Minuteman Council with some 17,000 members.

Be prepared for our enemies on the far-right to pounce on us once more, however, now that the Boy Scout cover-up of sexual abuse is no longer a secret. We can once again expect them to equate homosexuality and pedophilia.

## How can you help?

- Consider serving as a mentor to a QF Scholar. Although the QF Scholars are "out and proud" in high school, as they go off to college/university, they face new challenges ... challenges that previous generations may not have.

Being a mentor doesn't necessarily require a lot of time. Most often it means periodically reminding the QF Scholar that you are there if he/she needs to talk to someone. Some mentor/pupil relationships (mostly carried on via email and telephone) end after an initial contact because the Scholar comes with his/her own coterie of mentors; some can continue a lifetime. Our mentorship program is really intended to increase the likelihood that our Scholars will succeed in their freshman year and that increases the chances that they will receive a college degree.

Dr. Dial and I try to match mentor/pupil in terms of academic and career goals first. Unfortunately, that isn't always possible. But if you are the least bit interested in being a mentor, please let me know so that if either Dr. Dial or I find a possible "match" in the future, we can pursue the matter with you. No contacts are set up without the expressed a priori approval of both the possible mentor and the pupil.

- Contribute an article or letter to *The Queer Foundation Scholar*. As editor, I do reserve the right to reject submissions outright, especially if they involve anti-queer invective. However, I do welcome reasoned or constructive criticism of ideas and opinions I express in this newsletter.

- Share each issue of *The QF Scholar* with supportive family, friends, and neighbors.

- Contribute.

See <http://queerfoundation.org/html/volunteer.html>

Our two scholarship programs depend on individuals like you.

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