

Black Expressions

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IBWALA KICKS OFF LITERARY SALONS IN APRIL

Led by one of

LA's top writers, IBWALA's Sunday Salons promise opportunities for stimulating conversation, sharing & learning in a literary context.

Due to popular demand, IBWALA will be instituting literary salons in 2005. The salons will be a regular forum to share work, exchange ideas, host authors, discuss classic black writers and promising new ones, and generally provide a stimulating social circle for our membership. Since this is brand new, the format is fairly fluid and experi-

mental at this point.

Journalist Erin Aubry Kaplan (*LA Weekly*) will host the first salon in her home on Sunday, April 17, 2-4pm. For location, please r.s.v.p. at (323)755-3862. The focus of this first salon will be poetry. How has poetry evolved since the Black Arts movement of the 1960s? How does rap, hip-hop and spoken word extend the tradition and break from it? What does it mean to employ a "black voice" and how does poetry now fit into that

expectation? Please bring your thoughts, as well as a favorite poem or two for discussion.

The second salon will be June 19th. And in observance of Juneteenth our topic will be the role of the slave experience in shaping black literary traditions. How have the classic narratives of people like Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth influenced the way we tell our life stories now? Have we traded the "up-from-slavery" story for the "up-from-the-ghetto" story, or have we moved on to a more complicated paradigm? What's our story now, and who's telling it most accurately? We hope to have a special guest moderator at this salon, so please try and make it.



President's Message *Talent: God given or developed*

Oh, why can't we all just get along? Well, Rodney, it's probably because for many of us creatives these two talents are polar opposites and subject to intense conflict. It has often been said that one has one or the other. Seldom both. A God-given gift is artistry that is for some as easy as breathing. The gifted can create at the drop of a hat. These people have vision that can see bright clouds of diamonds where most others are fogged in by misty mountains of coal. Is that you? Consider yourself blessed. Or not.

Developed talent is not quite as rare as God given ability, but it comes at a dear price for many of us creative types. This type of talent involves a slavish dedication to craft. Developers make diamonds out of lumps of coal. They pay a mighty deal of attention to the basics and are the sort of people to reach deadlines when the God given folk are on to the next brilliant, soon-to-be-unfinished, project.

You wouldn't have much in terms of art without either type. The visionary is just as necessary as the creative grunt. But the problem arises, though, when you have both types raging within you. As I do.

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