



TWO READERS FROM THE BUZZARD'S BAY WRITING PROJECT
RESPOND TO ELLEN LEBOW'S ARTWORK:

Haiti

by Pamela Bullard

In her hand she holds the last plant left from her garden. It seems to pulse with life. It would have produced one of her herbs, the village knew her for that. The path to her door had been beaten down through the years by those about to give birth, the wounded, or those suffering from the mysterious fever.

The plant's emerald leaves and strong sinewy stems caressed her cheek. She brushed the herb gently across her forehead. She knew it would die soon if she didn't plant it, but where on the devastated terrain could she carry her treasure and find rich soil to maintain its life?

Rubble covered everything. Her children were gone. Their absence was a dagger digging into her belly. They'd been carried to safety by some of the white doctors from across the sea. She wouldn't hear a word against 'les blancs' (the whites) or 'les français', a nickname for any educated foreigner with authority.

The plant seems to speak to her now. "Your friends are all gone, your houses, vegetables and goats, your schools. Your family is far and your emptiness is great. Today you won't go to the well for water; you won't pick us with the love that made us grow. You won't put us in the sun and breathe deeply of our essence, before storing us in your many glass jars. When the neighbors' baby is carried desperate to your door, you will hold her under the Calabash tree and begin your chants to the river goddess.

Tomorrow, where the gaunt faces of the village gather, you will see the baby open her eyes. You will massage her little body with your thin arms and hands. Your cheek to hers, you will send her your healing. The current you know so well will pass from your body and soul to hers. All this you will do without us.

Some years will pass before Marie descends from a ship off Port-au-Prince, grown away from you into a girl you'll never recognize. One day, when 'les médecins, les étrangers et les bateaux' have all returned from where they came, you will see me coming back up from under the concrete beams no one could lift. You will sigh and say, 'Vie mwen recomense' - My life begins again."

Haiti

by Ric Calleja

Once again pleading black faces wracked in grief
stare back from the TV screen.
The living all look stunned,
while corpses covered in white sheets
pile up by the side of the road.

Somehow NBC news anchor Brian Williams gets to Haiti
before the food and water arrive.
Our hunger and thirst for images
must be greater than their need to eat and drink.

If I was Haitian,
I wouldn't let the news people broadcast my image
to their well fed viewers across the USA
Unless they gave me a bottle of water and one of those ready-to-eat meals.
In the next broadcast there's talk of violence.

US marines drop food and water from helicopters, setting off stampedes.

On Sunday a mass is held outside the earthquake ravaged cathedral.
But God has fled Haiti.
The human spirit is what we need to resurrect.

Here and there the camera strays from the destruction,
giving us a glimpse of the tropical paradise the island must have been
when the Taino Indians roamed its length and breadth,
spearing manatees and making bread out of the yucca root.
Maybe it's time for Haiti to start again.

Tragic Tuesday

by Nicola Burnell

It took seconds to turn a nation into rubble
To end one hundred and fifty thousand lives
I tip tea into my china cup
And wince at the news of this latest destruction

Grey dust settles over bodies pinned beneath homes and schools
As screams erupt from panic stricken survivors
Cries for help heard around the world
Through high definition television

Rescuers straddle concrete graves straining to hear the breath of life
As abandoned bodies lie in the streets, no time to identify the dead
Numbd by this horror I sip my tea
In the safety of my Cape Cod living room

Children carry parents on scraps of wood to a makeshift morgue
Where corpses pile up like trash in the parking lot of the hospital
I reach for the comfort of chocolate
And surf channels for more sad news

Lives frozen, families shattered, survivors stunned
Cracked crypts become recycled graves
Hours pass and tea becomes red wine
I gasp at rescue workers creeping across precarious rubble

A child is found after five days in a concrete coffin
Though skeletal, he smiles at the mother who refused to give up hope
I sigh with relief at their moment of joy, then switch it off and walk away
Curling up beneath a soft fleece blanket, I try to forget

But the nightmare continues
With new images of outstretched arms rotting in the sweltering sun
Tea still tips into china cups
As a deeply unsettled world scrambles to its feet

Frustration mounts when AID sits in boxes at the shattered airport
Water trickles into towns, too slow to save lives
Reassured by the global response of money and compassion
The world catches its breath and routines are resumed

Tent towns emerge as strangers become neighbors, become family
Embraced by their own resilience
In need of inclusion I text another donation
While cooking pasta and sipping Pinot Noir

Night brings Haitian voices raised in a chorus of community
Strong, beautiful people refusing to break under the weight of their loss
As the news turns to a diamond studied million dollar wedding cake
I have to believe that we won't forget
That we can all help rebuild Haiti
One donation at a time

"ONLY WHEN IT'S DARK ENOUGH CAN YOU SEE THE STARS"
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Publisher's Note: CapeWomenOnline is not just a magazine; it is a community that reaches across the world.

As our Haitian neighbors struggle to rebuild their lives, we hope to help keep the relief effort active long after our televisions stop broadcasting their haunting images.

This page is a place to share our reflections of what happened in Haiti. If you would like to submit your thoughts, poetry or artwork please email our editor, [Katie](#).

We will post your submissions in future issues.
Please support the [Clinton Bush Haiti Fund](#)



Graphic by [Bryan Jordan](#)

Artwork and Photographs contributed by Wellfleet artist
Ellen LeBow, co-founder of [The Haiti Project](#)



Mother with Last Born



Vanez

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Ellen LeBow's Art can be seen at the [Rice/Polak Gallery](#)
430 Commercial Street
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(508) 487 1052

Haitian Artists from the small village of Matènwa use
their creativity to help rebuild their community



To learn more about the Haitian Artists of Matènwa
visit www.artmatenwa.org



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Read a February 8, 2010
article in
Boston University
Today:

Return to Haiti:
Observations,
Reflections, Tears

by Seth Rolbein

<http://www.bu.edu/today/2010/02/02/return-haiti-observations-reflections-tears%0D>

