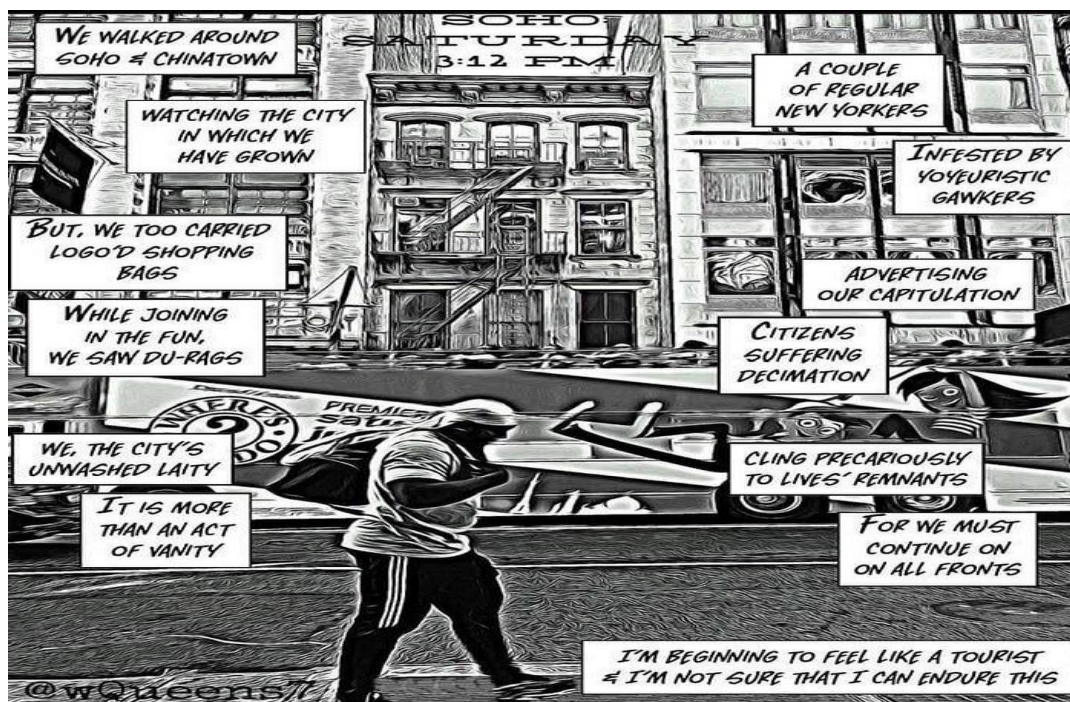


BE: The Summer Issue ♡♡

This season's issue pays tribute to the **#BlackLivesMatter** summit at LaGuardia Community College (led by Kyle Hollar-Gregory, Esq., Jason Hendrickson, Rachel Romain, Allia Abdullah-Matta, Andre Ford, Sultan Jenkins, Ryan Mann-Hamilton, Wendy Nicholson, Charis Victory, Shaunee Wallace, Donniece Davis, and Jeffery Batts) and writer and activist **Alexis Pauline Gumbs**, a "Queer Black Troublemaker and Black Feminist Love Evangelist." We're thinking about how to support each other, sustain commitment, and create change, while living with joy and complexity...**BE** thanks to Irwin Leopando and the English Department at LaGuardia Community College for supporting our work. Thank you to Elizabeth Jardine, Thomas Cleary, and Ann Matsuuchi for archiving **BE** and allowing us to share and preserve the journal.

— The Editors: [Ahmad Wright](#), [Tara Christina](#), and [Rochelle Spencer](#)

"On the Streets of American Cities" from the collection **Comic Sonnets** by [Stafford Grégoire](#), a poet, artist, and college professor based in Queens, NY.





Poet and Writer Opal Moore

[A New Blues](#) by [Opal Moore](#)

“We need a new blues.” Yusef Komunyakaa

1.

In these longing days of grieving

It must be true that sorrow is

A summons to story and we are

A people reborn of a telling.

So many stories of us...

Love and love readies us for grieving.

[And death makes way for blooming.](#)

“When Humanity Weeps; or Salt Tears on Brown Cheeks” by **Michele Simms**



Dr. Michele Simms-Burton, Writer, Editor, and retired Professor

I have always believed that the pain that a human must summon up to mete out pain against any sentient beings comes from a spirit broken in childhood. That period in our lives when we are most innocent spawns the possibility of whole human adults emerging, if we are not tampered with. Therein lies the challenge. To resist, recognize, or repress the urge to allow one’s own brokenness to undo a child’s goodness takes an imagination committed to the future

“The Black Lives Matter Summit 2023 Impact on Black Community and Diversity” by **Kyle Hollar-Gregory**



Kyle Hollar-Gregory, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, LaGuardia Community College

The 8th Annual Black Lives Matter Summit 2023 at LaGuardia Community College was a series of in-person and zoom events that took place from April 21st-27th, 2023. It was integral in bringing about awareness regarding our Black communities' historical context in the World.

Additionally, the Summit addressed issues regarding diversity, violence, socioeconomic disadvantages, discrimination, education and racism that plague our Black communities. The theme of the Summit was "Uplifting Black Youth Through Community Engagement." The goal was to illustrate how the power of unity and community will lead to positive change. Our communities are being plagued by violence and anti-Blackness educational programs/policies that discourage diversity. We must continue to support our communities and educational initiatives such as the Black Lives Matter Summit in order to effectuate change.



Loren S. Cahill, Assistant Professor of Social Work, Smith College

[“Black Girlhood as Creative Breath”](#)

Alexis Pauline Gumbs taught me that universities do not deserve my allegiance and that my only necessary freedom projects are rooted in me unapologetically loving my Blackness and exploring my breath. Every time I return to her words I am challenged to playfully experiment with writing mediums. Gumbs also encourages me to be a more fearless Black Feminist that archives our past, and present and champions equitable futures. Perhaps, most importantly, she constantly reminds me to have the courage to create greater accessibility in my evangelical love praxis that by definition exists outside of tenure metrics.

[“Undying Love of Motherhood”](#) by Shiauchen Kenny Chin

<https://medium.com/be-a-journal-of-black-experimental-and-interdiscip/be-the-summer-issue-1549773c1239>

Gumbs connects progressive, futuristic ideas to history. Throughout our history, mothering is an emergent strategy: we see mothering from Black Lives Matter activists, the Women's Liberation, the American Civil Rights Movement, and the Queer rights movement. All these movements were created with love, family, and leadership.



Shiauchen Kenny Chin, Essayist, Restaurant Manager, and LaGuardia Community College Student

“Horticulture” by Anastasia Figuera

The art or practice of garden cultivation and management

How long does it take you to reverse engineer a flower to the seed?

Tell me,

How long does it take to rip apart the fruit bore of a gentle tree?

Tell me,

How can you rip apart petals, pull out roots from fertile ground?

And then,

You call it growth

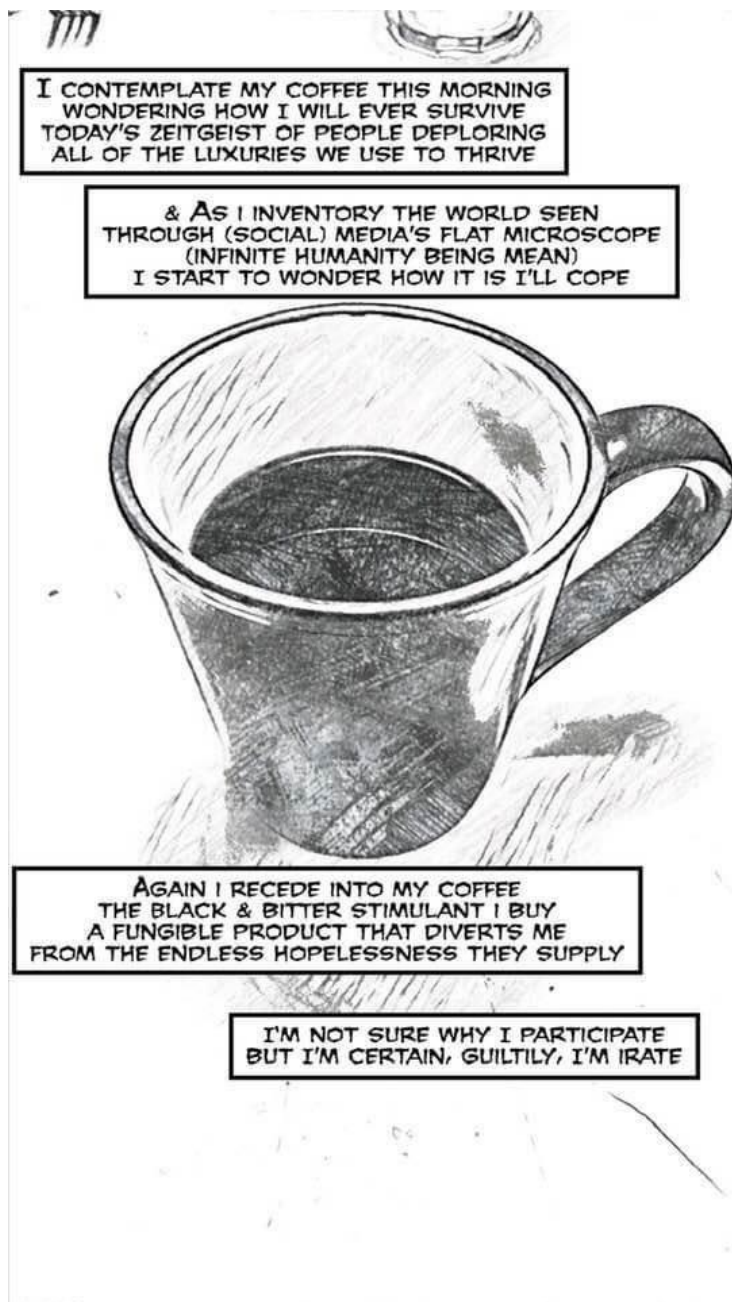
“Papa Bois” by [Anastasia Figuera](#)

Papa Bois, they love the animals now.

They’ve decided to bring some revival to the earth they scorched.

“I Contemplate...” ” from the collection **Comic Sonnets** by

[Stafford Grégoire](#)



Interview with a Change-Maker (Part I)

BE is reaching out to people who are developing new visions and bringing necessary conversations to the forefront. We hope our

short mini-interviews can provide a forum for exchange. **BE**

spoke to Elijah Caballero, a LaGuardia student and the host and

creator of Flex the Connect. You can reach Elijah at

flextheconnect17@gmail.com; [phone number redacted]; or

Instagram @flextheconnect.

BE: What's your ultimate goal for this project?

Caballero: We want to create a Breakfast Club for the

school...What issues interest students? What sorts of issues affect

students? We're concerned by the lack of communication and the

lack of involvement between different populations within the city.

Flex the Connect is a place to talk about the issues that matter to

you. School is not the only place where we can feel productive and

diligent.

[“My Mother Lived Through Nightmares”](#)

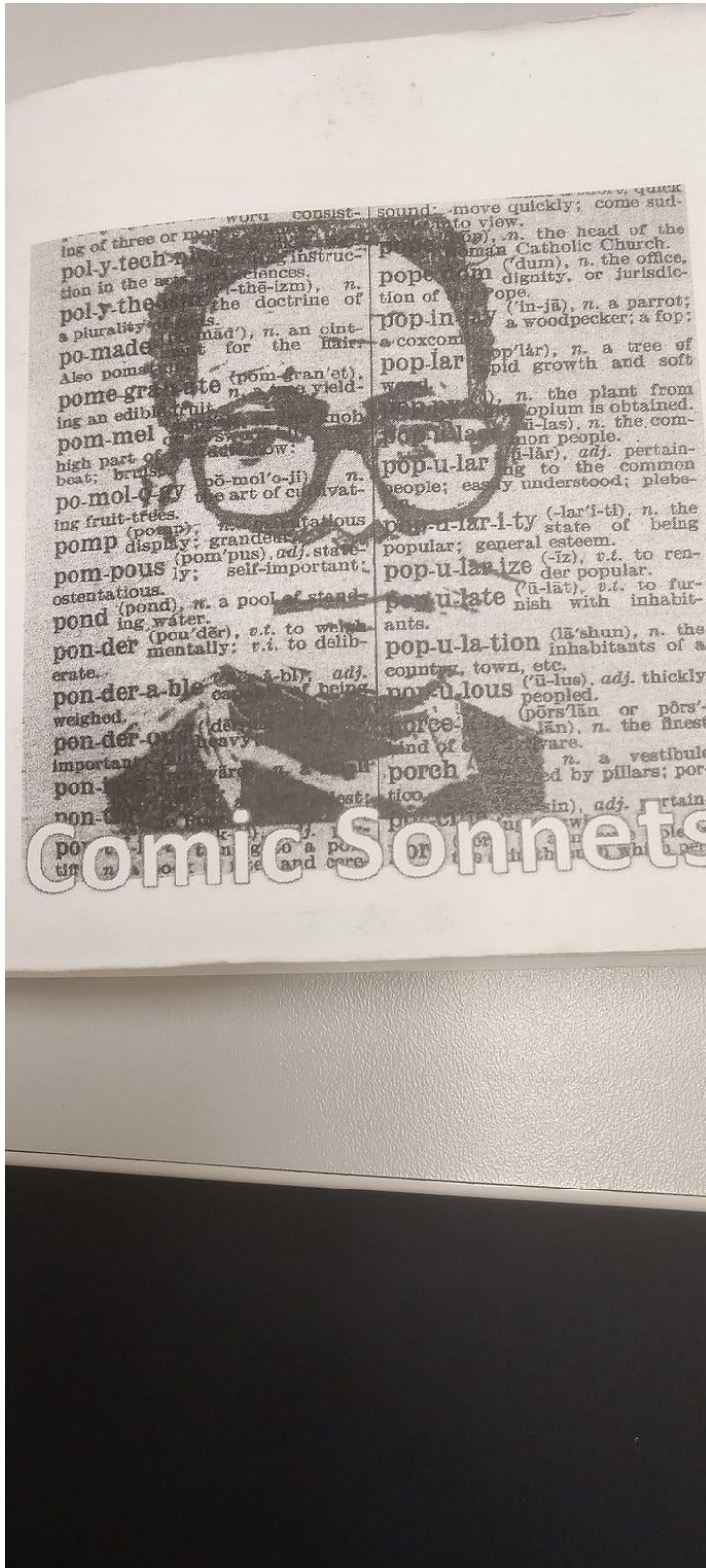
[Sumiko Saulson](#)



Sumiko Saulson, award-winning AfroSurreal author

The first poet I ever loved was my mother, Carolyn Saulson.

When I was a little one still in pigtails back in the Seventies, she had already been published as a poet, whose poem about the darker sides of love graced a velvet poster sold in record stores and headshops. On the dayglo poster was the silhouette of a Black woman in profile, long-necked, regal, and powerful.



<https://medium.com/be-a-journal-of-black-experimental-and-interdiscip/be-the-summer-issue-1549773c1239>

Self-portrait from [Stafford Grégoire](#), author of *Comic Sonnets*

Contributor's Bios:

1