

Dingane Joe Goncalves, *The Journal of Black Poetry* & Small Non-Commercial Black Journals

by

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The three major publishing institutions are Dudley Randall's Detroit-based Broadside Press (which by the way re-emerged and continues to operate today); Johnson publications, Hoyt Fuller edited *Negro Digest/Black World*; and *The Journal of Black Poetry* published and edited by Joe Goncalves, aka Dingane. Between these three institutions hundreds of poets were published and over thousands of poems distributed in the Black community of the USA and worldwide. . . .

Although] its circulation was not as large [as *Negro Digest/Black World* . . . a circulation . . . over 100,000 . . . the largest literary magazine in American history], *The Journal of Black Poetry* which published 19 issues between the mid sixties and the mid seventies, is one of the most vibrant examples of an independently published, non-academic poetry journal in the history of American publishing.

—Kalamu ya Salaam, "What Is Black Poetry"

Dingane Joe Goncalves became *Black Dialogue's* poetry editor and, as more and more poetry poured in, he conceived of starting the *Journal of Black Poetry*. Founded in San Francisco, the first issue was a small magazine with mimeographed pages and a lithographed cover. Up through the summer of 1975, the journal published nineteen issues and grew to over one hundred pages. Publishing a broad range of more than five hundred poets, its editorial policy was eclectic. Special issues were given to guest editors who included Ahmed Alhamisi, Don L. Lee (Haki R. Madhubuti), Clarence Major, Larry Neal, Dudley Randall, Ed Spriggs, and Askia Touré. In addition to African Americans, African, Caribbean, Asian, and other international revolutionary poets were presented.

—Kalamu ya Salaam, "Historical Overviews of The Black Arts Movement"

Goncalves (Dingane), an occasional poet, is unique in his intellectual typographical approach to ideas (see *Black Fire*), but his service to black poetry has been more obvious in his work as founder-editor of the *Journal of Black Poetry*. He also served as poetry editor of *Black Dialogue*. A quiet, but steady, influence on the new black poetry, he has written some of the most informed criticism to come out of the period. Currently [1976; now lives in Atlanta, Georgia] he runs/operates New Day Bookstore in San Francisco, where the journal and its press are headquartered (Source: Eugene B. Redmond, *DrumVoices: The Mission of Afro-American Poetry, A Critical History* (1976), p. 408).

One of the most important results of the creation of *Black Dialogue* in terms of the Black Arts movement was that it led to the creation of the third important Bay Area journal, the *Journal of Black Poetry* (JBP), in 1966. The editor of *JBP*, Dingane Joe Goncalves, raised in Boston, was a leader of CORE in the Bay Area. In fact, it was in the San Francisco CORE office that the visual artist and poet Edward Spriggs no doubt strengthened, if not actually forged, Goncalves's ties to the various black political and cultural circles centered on San Francisco State. Goncalves and Spriggs (who soon relocated to New York) joined the staff of *Black Dialogue* on which Spriggs served as the East Coast correspondent and Goncalves as the poetry editor. Marvin X was fiction editor.

When *Black Dialogue* received far more worthwhile poetry than it could possibly print, Goncalves saw the need for a new journal devoted to black poetry. The result was *JBP*—on which Spriggs worked too, as a regional corresponding editor from Harlem. In many ways the project of *JBP* was much like that of *Black Dialogue*: to allow black writers with or without wider reputations to speak to each other, to try out their voices. Again, much like the new avant-garde outside the Black Arts movement as well as within it, *JBP* emphasized process over finished product.

However *JBP* became far more than a journal of poetry. It published criticism, reviews, and news about black cultural and political movements sent in from all over the United States (and beyond). Regular corresponding editors, such as Spriggs and Clarence Major in New York, provided some of this news. But reader-correspondents sent in much more, reporting on theaters, workshops, readings, presses, and so on from Savannah to Seattle. Also, despite his political and cultural commitments, Goncalves was in many respects a very reclusive person, staying out of the conflicts that became endemic in the Bay Area after the split between the BPP and many of the Black Arts activists in the Bay Area in 1967, allowing the *JBP* to weather political storms that destroyed, hamstrung, or forced the relocation of many key Bay Area Black Arts activists and institutions.

In short, *JBP* was incredibly important in facilitating grassroots communication and a sense of community among black artists across the country. If one truly wishes to gain a sense of the scope of the Black Arts movement and how the movement worked on the ground in the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s, especially outside New York, Chicago, and the Bay Area, the news section of *JBP* is indispensable (Source: James Edward Smethurst. *The Black Arts Movement Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*, pp. 276-277).

The Journal of Black Poetry & Other Small Black Magazines

The situation prevalent in the 1950s in Afro-American literature and magazines reversed itself in the 1960s. The politics and aesthetics of integration, which had been mainstream, appeared by mid-decade to be tributary, and the undercurrent of resistance to cultural integration developed into the dominant force. The larger and older periodicals spoke for integration with Western culture, while the new and smaller publications generally called for a rejection of Western values. The older journals dwindled both in number and influence, down to *Phylon* and *Crisis*. The climate was conducive to black little magazines, however, which proliferated as they never had before. They began in 1961 with *Negro Digest*, which sometimes labeled itself a little magazine, and *Liberator*. These were followed by many others, including *Umbra* in 1963, *Soulbook* in 1964, *Black Dialogue* in 1965, *Journal of Black Poetry* in 1966, *Nommo* in 1969, and *Black Creation* in 1970. . .

Negro Digest/Black World

Although *Negro Digest* changed its focus dramatically mid-decade, later becoming *Black World*, it gave popular expression to similar ideas in the first half of the 1960s. The June 1961 number was reappearance for the journal, which had been issued on a regular, monthly basis from 1942 to 1951. Publisher John H. Johnson, who also originated *Ebony*, *Tan* . . . had recognized a continuing need for *Negro Digest*, as he explained in the first number of the new series. He hoped to satisfy his old constituency, which had long requested a renewal of the magazine. He wanted to join in the presentation of "Negro" news, covered increasingly in periodicals with international circulation.

He desired, as well, to provide an outlet for young Afro-American writers, as he recalled the journal had done in the past. Patterned after *Readers' Digest*, the new series reestablished itself in the mainstream. Until roughly 1965, it specialized in popular articles digested and reprinted from other magazines, many of them white in ownership and orientation. The June 1961 number included, for example, "A Negro President by 1999?" reprinted from *Esquire*; "Plain Girls Can Make It, Too," *Down Beat Magazine*; "My First Boss," *Atlantic Monthly*; and "The White Man's Future in Africa," *Foreign Affairs*. . . .

Editorial comments underscored the general emphasis. . . . In 1961 and 1962, [Hoyt W.] Fuller's name preceded several statements with integrationist implications. Fuller and Doris E. Saunders, the associate editor, coauthored a monthly column entitled "Perspectives" until August 1962, when Fuller became sole author. In September 1961, "Perspectives" observed that "as far as we know, no Negro artist has ever had the good fortune to have his comic strip syndicated or, for that matter, to appear regularly in white newspapers." The telling expression was "good fortune." In both intention and tone, *Negro Digest* of the early 1960s was integrationist. It drew tributes accordingly. Speaking as many contemporaries felt, Dudley Randall applauded the journal in November 1963 for "taking the place of the old *Crisis* and *Opportunity* magazines in providing an outlet for Negro poets."

***Umbra* & Tom Dent**

Others saw *Umbra*, one of the first black little magazines of the period, as heir apparent to the larger Afro-American journals. The editor was Thomas Dent, a staff worker at the NAACP Defense Fund. With the help of Calvin Hernton and David Henderson as associate editors and Rolland Snellings [Askia Muhammad Touré] as circulation manager, Dent issued a periodical more in the tradition of *Opportunity* than of *Crisis*. Writing in the July 1963 number of *Mainstream*, Art Berger, who was one of the *Umbra* poets, described the magazine as "the first major outlet for Negro poets since the days of *Opportunity*," with the exceptions of such "college reviews" as *Dasein* of Howard University and *Phylon* at Atlanta University.

Dent and his associates profited from the advice of Langston Hughes, who had attended some of their poetry readings in the early 1960s at the Market Place Gallery of Harlem. Probably recollecting his own association with many previous journals, Hughes urged the young writers to establish a noncommercial magazine for the publication of their own work. He might have advised them, too, to separate art from politics. Surely the "Foreword" to the first number of *Umbra*, issued in the winter of 1963, recalls statements made by Hughes and his contemporaries in the 1950s as well as in the 1920s. "We maintain," it read, "no iron-fisted, bigoted policy of preference or exclusion of material. *Umbra* will not be a propagandistic, psychopathic or ideological axe-grinder. We will not print trash, no matter how relevantly it deals with race, social issues, or anything else." The magazine would publish work of "literary integrity and artistic excellence," and it would encourage young, unknown authors who might be "too hard on society" or present an aspect of "social and racial reality" which could be unpopular in terms of the larger culture.

Those writers, featured in succeeding numbers, included Julian Bond, Ray Durem, Calvin Hernton, Clarence Major, Ishmael Reed, Conrad Kent Rivers and, among others, Rolland Snellings [Askia Muhammad Touré]. *Umbra* did not provide them with a consistent outlet, though, since it appeared irregularly and with divergent emphases: as an anthology in 1967 to 1968 and 1970 to 1971, and most recently as a "Latin Soul" number in 1974 to 1975. In 1967, Henderson became editor and moved the periodical to Berkeley, since California had become the locale for many of the newer publications. *Umbra*, meaning darkest shadow of an eclipse, materialized just before the emergence in the mid- 1960s of the black arts movement, a label characterizing the activities of revolutionary black writers and artists of the day. Set in the pattern of earlier publications, the magazine did not take a major part in the movement. It did, however, provide an early exposure for writers who would emerge with influential essays and poems in the newer and much more radical black journals.

While the civil rights movement encouraged aesthetics of integration, the violence of the 1960s stimulated a new literary politics, aesthetics of separatism. The apex of the civil rights movement in 1963 underscored the tragic ironies in American life and made hollow, for many, the integrationist approach in many contemporary magazines, especially in *Crisis*, *Phylon*, and the early *Negro Digest*. Even as Martin Luther King affirmed a philosophy of nonviolence and peaceful change, a series of brutal murders shocked the nation. . . .

Many young black writers and intellectuals read only the tragedies of the day. They thought Martin Luther King's call to integration an echo in the wind, a repetition of views which had been long proclaimed but had done so little to change the reality for blacks in America. Their rage found expression in the little and noncommercial magazines they developed. The most important of those magazines, the ones basic to shaping a black aesthetic for the period, were, in order of their importance: *Negro Digest*; *Liberator* of 1965 and 1966, when influenced by Larry Neal and LeRoi Jones; and the three Journals originating in California, *Soulbook*, *Black Dialogue*, and *Journal of Black Poetry*.

The Revolutionary Black Journal

Carolyn Gerald, writing in the November 1969 issue of *Negro Digest*, noted a relationship between separatism and the contemporary little magazines. "The revolutionary black journal," as she labeled the new periodical, "made its appearance at that moment in our history, somewhere in the mid-Sixties, when black people began to forsake civil rights and integration, and began to seek out a sense of self." She called the journals revolutionary because, to her way of thinking, they represented "the literary enactment of the crisis of the Sixties: the Break With The West."

Gerald, like so many others, alluded to separatism, nationalism, and revolution in her article but did not explicitly clarify the terms. Her further commentary suggests, however, that she was equating separatism with cultural nationalism, or black arts by and for black people. Through the little magazines, she explained, "black literature reorganizes itself, serving the cause of blackness by analyzing its suppression and recreating its images and its myths." As the periodicals indicate, a majority of participants in the black arts movement were making an equation similar to Gerald's, between a break with the West and cultural nationalism. Others talked, in addition, about economic separatism from the larger culture, and sometimes about a nation for Afro-Americans either within the boundaries of the United States or in Africa.

Criticism of White & Negro Media

Those who identified with the black arts movement wanted their little magazines to go to the heart, or the essential reality, of blackness. Thus, they insisted the journals be black at all levels of involvement, from owner to reader. In the first issue of *Soulbook*, the editorial board indicated accordingly that "to further the cause of the liberation of Black peoples we feel that this *Journal* and all ensuing issues of it must be produced, controlled, published and edited by people who are sons and daughters of Africa." Contributors came under the same umbrella. Generally, there were exceptions to the de facto rule that contributors be black only in the early issues of the magazines. Ted Vincent appeared in the second number of *Soulbook*, dated Spring 1965, with his article on "W. E. B. Du Bois: Black Militant or Negro Leader?" According to Carolyn Gerald, a considerable amount of discussion and "many editorial reservations" preceded his inclusion.

Whites occasionally gained access to the magazines through letters to the editors. In published comments, some of the correspondents denounced the journals' separatist policies. The June 1966 issue of *Liberator*, for example, included a letter from Eileen M. Wilcox, who had been active in civil rights while a student at the University of Kansas. She told editor Daniel Watts that she liked his assessment of the black establishment but not the commentary directed toward whites in the movement: "I can't welcome this trend of Black racism. Your terminology sounds as ridiculous as that of the Klan and George Lincoln Rockwell." In statements printed immediately following hers, Watts informed Wilcox that she spoke "in the name of [a] W.A.S.P. perverted version of 'ethics and humanity.'" Watts and the others included such missives from whites because they showed that the journals were making their break with the West.

As they sought new approaches to race and culture, the supporters of black little magazines denounced the "white racist press," to use the words of Willard Pinn in *Soulbook*. They warned their audience away from what they called white magazines, which included *Atlantic Monthly*, *New Yorker*, *Saturday Review*, and other large publications, along with such small journals as *Angel Hair*, *Dust*, *Kumquat*, *Mundus Artium*, *Out of Sight*, *Trace*, and *Vagabond*. "They all," declared Pinn, "stand for the perpetuation of racism, genocide and outright lying. The purpose of the white oriented mass media is to white orient." Publishing houses managed by whites bore the same symbolism, as several of the other writers explained.

In an essay printed in the *Journal of Black Poetry*, Ahmed Alhamisi challenged his colleagues to use their own publishing houses: "It is time we refuse to submit our creations to such publishers as Dial, Harpers and Row, William Morrow & Company, Bobb-Merrill Company, Grove Press, Inc., Merit Publishers, Marzani and Munsell, or International Publishers, to name a few." The clear alternatives were black presses which had emerged in the 1960s, including the Free Black Press of Chicago, Journal of Black Poetry press of California, Black Dialogue press of New York, Jihad press of Newark, and especially Broadside press of Detroit, established by Dudley Randall, and Third World Press of Chicago, developed by Don Lee, later Haki R. Madhubuti.

A few other little and commercial magazines came under fire. One of them was *Studies in Black Literature*, a scholarly journal in the planning stages which was to be edited by Raman K. Singh, a native of India, and to be developed at Mary Washington College in Virginia. Hoyt Fuller took repeated aim at the journal partly because its editor, he claimed, had "adopted the white attitude toward black literature"—the idea that whites can understand and criticize black literature as well as can blacks. Richard Long, among others, seconded Fuller. Writing in the September 1970 number of *Liberator*, he described the proposed journal as "clearly an act of imperialism motivated by opportunism."

Commercial black journals drew most of the criticism. To writers for the black little magazines, the publishers of the larger periodicals had sacrificed their own heritage to business interests. They had some trouble assessing John H. Johnson, since he issued *Negro Digest*, a primary instrument of the black arts movement. Larry P. Neal, an influential contributor to the little magazines, advised his contemporaries that "we must support existing firms like Johnson publications, force them to publish meaningful work by deluging them with the best that we have." To Neal and the others, the worst of Johnson was *Jet*, which one writer called "a substitute for *Coronet*," and *Ebony*, labeled as "an imitation of both *Life* and *Playboy*." They focused particularly on *Ebony* and on *Essence*, published by the Hollingsworth Group and considered another of the "negative forces" or "isolated entries in the bowels of a decaying America." . . .

Joe Goncalves, as editor of *Journal of Black Poetry*, summarized the case that his magazine and the others presented against *Essence*. "We need," Goncalves declared, "land, fresh air, Black love, good food, freedom from the beast. *Essence* offered us cosmetics, the desire for the latest everything, and plain nonsense. In full color, its intent was to move us further into consumption, and our direction, even now, should be production and a-way from this beast's goods."

Critical of the larger culture and its periodicals, writers for the black little magazines tried in the 1960s and into the 1970s to establish a black literature founded on new aesthetic principles. At the prompting of Hoyt Fuller, along with a few others, they developed theories about the black aesthetic, as they called it, in their essays and poems contributed to the periodicals. The best definitions of the term emerged, in fact, from these contributions. In the introduction to his anthology of essays, entitled *The Black Aesthetic*, Addison Gayle identified black journals as the primary vehicle for discussions of the black aesthetic: "This anthology is not definitive and does not claim to be. The first of its kind to treat of this subject, it is meant as an incentive to young black critics to scan the pages of *The Black World (Negro Digest)*, *Liberator Magazine*, *Soulbook*, *Journal of Negro Poetry*, *Amistad*, *Umbra*, and countless other black magazines, and anthologize the thousands of essays that no single anthology can possibly cover."

The term itself, with its definite article, glossed over a considerable divergence of opinion, even among those writers who considered themselves revolutionaries. . . .

Amiri Baraka, aka, LeRoi Jones as High Priest

The contemporary scene produced a new hero in LeRoi Jones, later Imamu Amiri Baraka. By the last half of the 1960s, he was clearly the charismatic leader of the black arts movement. With his concept of the revolutionary theatre and his Harlem Repertory players, he stimulated the movement in its early years. With his inflammatory essays, featured in all the black little magazines, he did much to shape the movement. With his well-circulated poems and plays, he gave quotable examples of the new writing. He also popularized its vocabulary, the use of both sacred and profane language.

Jones defined the black poet as priest. Hence, in an essay published in *Journal of Black Poetry*, he told his colleagues that "we must, in the present, be missionaries of Blackness, of consciousness, actually." He offered his message—dealing with the spiritual values of blackness—as the prelude to apocalypse, to a new and beautiful black community. In labeling the enemy, a decadent Western culture, he referred to the "beast," an expression from Revelations. The label reappeared frequently in the work of his contemporaries, as did reference to "missionaries of blackness" and explanations of the phrase.

Inspired by Jones, Don Lee declaimed that "black poets will be examples of their poems, and if their poems are righteous the poet will be righteous and he will be a positive example for the black community." In his afterword to *Black Fire* (1968), a poetry anthology he co-edited with Jones, Larry Neal recalled another expression of his collaborator and described the black artist as "warrior," "priest," "lover," and "destroyer."

When commenting later on the black arts movement of the 1960s and early 1970s, Neal referred to its "language of religious reform" and to "the new religiously inspired nationalism." He also noted the scatological vocabulary. Rather than conflicting with the religious language, it served the same end, cultural liberation. Neal explained that black writers used obscenity to "release tension" and to sever black literature from "its genteel moorings" and Western ways. . . .

With the departure of Neal, Jones, and a few others, including Clayton Riley, *Liberator* went into a decline from which it never recovered. In the late 1960s and in the early 1970s, some of the editors of other little magazines began to criticize the journal. Joe Goncalves focused briefly on *Liberator* while reviewing Don Lee's *Dynamite Voices* in *Journal of Black Poetry*: "*Liberator*, perhaps first, which Don regards as important for the rise of Black poetry (and it was not) began to open its pages to Black (actually Black) writers, but lacking the adeptness (or money or whatever) of *Negro Digest*, *Liberator* could not pull the co-option off." The truth about *Liberator* lies somewhere between the estimates of Lee and Goncalves. *Liberator* was important to the black arts movement, but only in the mid-1960s. Watts himself was not a creative writer, nor was he particularly interested in literature. When Neal resigned from the journal, Watts could not reestablish the primacy *Liberator* had enjoyed among black little magazines and in the black arts movement. . . .

Little Black Journals in the West

The 1960s saw the furtherance of a process Alain Locke had noted in 1928, when he described the spread of beauty to the provinces. Black little magazines showed by their locations that New York was not the focus of the black arts movement. Among the most influential of the small black journals, *Liberator* alone originated in New York City. The other periodicals appeared to the west, *Negro Digest* in Chicago, and *Soulbook*, *Black Dialogue*, and *Journal of Black Poetry* in California. Chicago had been the scene of some notable Afro- American journals, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, but California had never before hosted any of the significant black little magazines.

Many Easterners were discouraged by the move westward. Askia Toure, who had been associated with the Umbra poets, also of New York City, declared it "a shame that our main journals . . . are all located on the West Coast!" The California magazines, influential as they were, did not alone constitute the "main journals." They were, however, perhaps the most outspoken of the small magazines, and hence they attracted considerable attention to themselves and to the black arts movement in the 1960s.

Modestly excluding mention of his own periodical, which merits the same appellation he gave the others, Goncalves claimed that the early issues of *Soulbook* and *Black Dialogue* were "bombshells." . . .



Former editors and contributors to *Black Dialogue* magazine (left to right): Aubrey LaBrie, Marvin X, Abdul Karim Sabry, Al Young, Art Sheridan, Duke Williams, not pictured Dingane (Jose Goncalves), and Sadaat Ahmed.

Black Dialogue and the Revolutionary Artists

Black Dialogue, the second of the California little magazines to materialize, emerged from a rivalry its supporters had with the editors of *Soulbook*. In the fall of 1964, black students at San Francisco State founded their own campus organization and decided that one of its primary objectives would be the creation of a revolutionary little magazine. Many of the students disagreed with some of Bobb Hamilton's and Kenn Freeman's understandings of black journals. Wanting a periodical which could serve a wide variety of opinions, they labeled their own effort "Black Dialogue" in an attempt to provide a forum for open discussion of literary and political questions.

They secured the following staff, which released the first issue of *Black Dialogue* in the spring of 1965: Arthur A. Sheridan as editor; Abdul Karim (Gerald Labrie), as managing editor; Edward S. Spriggs as New York editor; Joseph Seward as African editor; Aubrey Labrie as political editor; Marvin X Jackman as fiction editor; and Joe Goncalves as poetry editor. Goncalves was the only one of this group to have had editorial experience, and he consequently devoted long hours to the production and distribution of the magazine.

The initial three issues of *Black Dialogue* established a format which continued for the duration of the journal's publication. After a lead editorial, an article would follow which focused on a literary-political matter, as in the opening number with LeRoi Jones's "The Revolutionary Theatre" or in succeeding issues with contributions from other influential figures, such as Larry Neal and playwrights Marvin X and Ed Bullins. The third installment of the journal, released in the winter of 1966, captured well the enthusiasm and emerging focus of the publication. Its editorial and one of the essays were directed specifically toward the evolving black aesthetic.

In his article, "Revolutionary Black Artist," James T. Stewart detailed the editorial call for a "new direction" in black writing based on "a thorough assessment of our cultural heritage and our present position" in American society. He answered affirmatively to the rhetorical question he had posed: "Can the black revolutionary artist rid himself of the oppressive aesthetics of the white society in this country?" The rest of the number featured creative work consonant with Stewart's conclusion that a new black literature must unfold from the "very rockbed of the Negro experience." Poems, short stories, a one act play, *Flowers for the Trashman* by Marvin X (Jackmon) and an "open letter" to black women—"My Queen, I Greet You," by Eldridge Cleaver—reflected the editorial staff's effort to meet the outlook presented by Stewart.

Askia Touré's Critique of the High Priest

Published in the winter of 1967-68, the sixth issue of *Black Dialogue* contained a strong reminder of the premise upon which the magazine had been founded. A staff reorganization had occurred in 1967, and Abdul Karim emerged as editor of the journal with Spriggs, Goncalves, Marvin X and Askia Toure as associate editors. Toure, despite his displeasure over the concentration of black artistic happenings in the West, arrived in California one year later to become an instructor in the Black Studies department of San Francisco State, where LeRoi Jones taught in 1967. Prior to his move, Touré had inaugurated his involvement with *Black Dialogue* by urging inclusion of his "Letter to Ed Spriggs: Concerning LeRoi Jones and Others" in the sixth number.

The letter was printed, but only after heated debate among members of the editorial board. "He has been approached by brother Abdul and others to modify some of the more caustic remarks of the text," Touré revealed, speaking of himself in third person. He refused to alter the letter, even though he had written it prior to the "Newark Rebellion" and had since become concerned over the safety of Jones, who had been arrested: "When it comes to the attacks of the Beast, the bourgeois, or other nagger-lackeys, I will defend ' Roi with my life if necessary. However, between us nationalists, I believe these words should be spoken."

Touré emerged as one of the few revolutionary blacks who would challenge Jones. In sharply worded statements, he accused the writer of "Reactionary Super-Blackism, a dogmatic nihilism--in Black literature as well as politics. . . ." Using *Slave Ship* as an example of Jones's work, he faulted the man for his anti-white bias and for a failure to develop positive perceptions of Afro-American culture. He also stressed the need for "internal self-criticism" among black writers and advocated a "militant, iconoclastic criticism that would be directed toward the 'sacred cows' within our group."

The End of *Black Dialogue*

Over a year and a half passed before *Black Dialogue* surfaced again. When it did appear in the spring of 1969, the journal bore a New York City address. In the months following the last publication, the supporters of the magazine had dwindled to Edward Spriggs. Hoping to revitalize the enterprise, he had moved it East and had attempted to involve other writers in the effort. As indicated on the masthead of the 1969 issue, the journal had an editorial board consisting of Spriggs, Nikki Giovanni, Jaci Earley, Elaine Jones, Sam Anderson, and James Hinton, in addition to a group of regional editors, including Joe Goncalves for the West Coast, Ahmed Alhamisi and Carolyn Rodgers for the Midwest, Julia Fields and A. B. Spellman for the South, and Ted Jones and K. W. Kgositsile for Africa.

"Our determination," the editors declared in the 1969 issue, "is still Black. Our printer is still Black. We are still distributed and sold (where possible) Black. *Black Dialogue* remains 'a meeting place for the voices of the Black community--wherever that community may exist.'" With the same number, they accordingly tried to mediate among differing perceptions of Afro-American politics. The lead editorial called for an end to the hostility between the Black Panther Party and Maulana Karenga's Us organization and urged reconciliation between the two groups. The number, like its predecessors, did not succeed as a "meeting place," as Carolyn Gerald indicated when characterizing the journal as being less consistent in tone and format and less militant than was *Soulbook*. Without strong support for the magazine, Spriggs could not sustain the publication. In 1970, he produced the last issue of *Black Dialogue*.

Joe Goncalves & *The Journal of Black Poetry*

Journal of Black Poetry emerged from the foundation established by *Black Dialogue* and *Soulbook*. Joe Goncalves, editor of the *Journal*, traced its lineage: "First came *Soulbook*, then *Dialogue*, and then the *Journal*. That is important because the *Journal* in many ways was born of *Soulbook* and *Dialogue*." The *Journal* came right on the heels of its forerunners, the first number issued in San Francisco during the spring of 1966. "Published for all black people everywhere," as stated on the table of contents for each number, the magazine originated and, unlike the others, continued as a quarterly.

The *Journal* involved many of the same persons connected with the other California magazines. In the spring of 1967, Goncalves secured Clarence Major, Marvin Jackman, and LeRoi Jones as contributing editors. He brought Larry Neal to the group in the summer of 1967; just months after Neal had left *Liberator*. The only contributing editor to resign from the journal was Clarence Major, whose place was taken by Ernie Mkalimota. Goncalves secured, as well, the services of Ed Spriggs and Ahmed Alhamisi as corresponding editors, and Ed Bullins and Askia Toure as editors-at-large. He also appointed guest editors, who selected all the materials for special issues. They included, among others, Major, Alhamisi, Spriggs, Don Lee, and Dudley Randall.

Goncalves kept his editorial staff through the demise of the *Journal*, in the summer of 1973, and into the beginning of a new magazine. Published in San Francisco and edited by Goncalves, *Kitabu Cha Jua*, meaning "book of the sun," emerged in the summer of 1974. Like the *Journal*, it was "for all Black People everywhere." "When possible," it would appear as a quarterly. The qualification, which had not been seen on the masthead of the *Journal*, was necessary. Funding has been more difficult to obtain in the 1970s than it was in the 1960s. *Kitabu Cha Jua* has, as a result, been an irregular publication, with the most recent issue having appeared in 1975. The magazine has published many of the poets included in the *Journal*, but it is a child of the times. It talks about the decline of Black Nationalism and it lacks the exuberance of the *Journal*. *Kitabu Cha Jua* is not, then, a mere reappearance of the *Journal* under a different name.

Joe Goncalves assumed his most outspoken stance in the *Journal of Black Poetry*. In editorial comments, he mentioned his heroes, all of them among the most forceful and blunt of black speakers. He identified Marcus Garvey as "perhaps the greatest black man who ever lived." Malcolm X was also high on his list. "If you want to grasp the importance of Malcolm," he instructed his readers, "compare the late writings of Sonia Sanchez or Imamu Baraka with their early, pre-Malcolm works."

Goncalves's prose could be as hard-hitting as the poetry of Sanchez. The Summer-Fall 1969 issue affords a good example of Goncalves at work, as it featured his interview with Ishmael Reed. In fielding queries, Reed had been so lengthy in his responses that Goncalves could not add his views. He consequently appended his "Afterword" to the printed interview.

As the interview shows, Reed was one of the few young writers who dared attack the black arts movement. He labeled the black aesthetic as "a goon squad aesthetic," and he described the leaders of the movement as "fascists" "flying around the country in . . . dashiki[s] talking about" what black writers were supposed to do and doing very little. Malcolm X, he proffered, would not have sanctioned such actions because he was, in his last days, "a universalist, a humanist, a global man." "This tribalism is for the birds," Reed concluded.

Goncalves thought Reed had gone white and thus could not see how "whitenized" other cultures had become. Reed, he declared, had published in white magazine--"always serving some white man's purpose"--and had been attracted to white women--"Reed, drunk, sniffing white girls, dependent, lays [sic] dead about the white man's fort."

After reading *Dynamite Voices*, Goncalves feared for Don Lee as well. He criticized both book and author soundly in the last issue of the *Journal*, even though Lee had been a frequent and desirable contributor to the magazine previously. Lee, he asserted, had "white problems," and *Dynamite Voices* "is ultimately a restatement of the white aesthetic." He faulted the writer on several counts: for quoting from a "white nationalist," T. S. Eliot; for having a full-page advertisement for *Dynamite Voices* in *Poetry of Chicago*; and for appearing in anthologies of black poetry coming off white presses. "Talk about creative prostitution!" Goncalves exclaimed, using an image he favored when denouncing blacks for supposedly white ways. He criticized Lee once more for comparing the journal to *Poetry*, which Goncalves considered a "mournful . . . activity." Giving a definition of his own periodical, he explained: "The *Journal*, despite its name is not a 'poetry' magazine. It is a means of communication, and poetry is one of the ways we communicate."

The use of poetry as a primary means of communication was borne out by the flood of contributions that came in from the young writers published in all the other contemporary black little magazines. Despite a general consistency in the tone and emphasis of the creative offerings, a minority of the poems were somewhat diversified in subject and style. Clarence Major, for example, celebrated the existence of a three-year-old girl in "My Child." Only her curls, "like Mack sparkling things," suggested her racial identity. My Child stands out among the other poems because of its quiet, precise statement.

The pieces usually rendered in the *Journal* spoke in loud tones of racial matters. Sonia Sanchez represents the emphasis in "on seeing pharaoh sanders blowing," a writing which rejoices in the destruction of the United States:

it's black/ music/ magic
u hear. yeah. i'm fucking
u white whore.
america. while
i slit your honkey throat.

The essays, including editorials, were another primary means for communication in the *Journal*. The most influential essayist was Baraka, who made an impact on his peers with two particular contributions. It was in "Statement" that he urged his contemporaries to be "missionaries of Blackness." He popularized some of the imagery characteristic of the black arts movement with "The Fire Must Be Permitted to Burn Full Up," a piece recalling the foreword to *Fire* of the 1920s. "The fire is hot," Baraka chanted; "Let it burn more brightly. Let it light up all creation
....

Let the fire burn higher, and the heat rage outta sight." As "firemakers," black writers were destroyers and creators, he concluded: "Ahhhh man, consider 200,000,000 people, feed and clothe them, in the beauty of god. That is where its at. And yeh, man, do it well. Incredibly Well."

Larry Neal, in his 1976 discussion of the black arts movements, called the *Journal of Black Poetry* "the first and most important" of the West Coast little magazines. The *Journal* was not the first to emerge, but it was the "most important" of the three publications. It appeared regularly, unlike the others, and it lasted longer. Since the periodical did not include political articles, it could provide a greater outlet for the young writers. It consequently gained the endorsement of *Negro Digest*. "The *Journal of Black Poetry* should receive," declared Hoyt Fuller, "the immediate and enthusiastic support of everyone who loves poetry and is concerned about supporting black writers." The *Journal* made a place for itself in the black arts movement. That place was not, however, so significant as the one occupied by *Negro Digest*, viewed by Neal as the magazine having "had the most consistent effect on contemporary black letters."