

AND CARET BAY AGAIN

NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

ALSO BY VELMA POLLARD

Poetry

Crown Point

Shame Trees Don't Grow Here

The Best Philosophers I Know Can't Read or Write

Leaving Traces

Fiction

Karl and Other Stories

Homestretch

Other Prose

Considering Woman

Considering Woman 1 and 2

Non-fiction

Dread Talk: The Language of Rastafari

From Creole to Standard

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VELMA POLLARD

AND CARET BAY AGAIN

NEW AND SELECTED POEMS



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To my grandchildren:

Stephanie, Stephen, Brianna, Amari and Manuel

from

CROWN POINT

1988

CROWN POINT

The sea hums endlessly
Stars through the darkness
wake my homespun peace...

‘...A see mi great granfather
jumping hopscotch and playing marble...’

I see MY grandmother praying

‘...Bless the Lord oh my soul
and all that is within me
bless his holy name...’

and the round green world of penny-royal
smells the room
through windows cool and sweet
and khus-khus from the cupboard
counter smells.

On the shelf her pan
a miniature suitcase black and red
with stamps and old receipts and dust
there too her bible large and black
its file of leaves in red
turned to us kneeling
this bible full...
God’s words and other words
birth dates and marriages
and deaths

‘... and forget not all his benefits
who forgiveth all thy iniquities
who healeth all thy diseases
who satisfieth thy mouth with good things...’

Thus speaks my Gran
through this Tobago silence...
and recreates the order of her room
and recreates the aura of her God
and speaks so clearly in me...

Perhaps the clutter of my life
obscures her voice
Perhaps the clutter of my mind
frustrates her
streaming to my consciousness
Perhaps her mystic to me
waits my silence
waits my tomorrows' spaces.

NATIONAL HEROES 1980

How many Baptist heads must young Salome seek
because she danced the Horah for a king?

how many times must tumbrils
rumbling pass from lady guillotine?

how many Jewless houses Hitler do you ask?

how many Blacks must dot the middle stream?

how many corpses dangling in the wind
must feed their stench
must poison all this land
before you retributive givers
cancelling plagues
call off your hounds of hell?

SUNDAY THOUGHTS (FRENCHMAN'S COVE)

Troubled with ologies
the paper tigers claw us and each other
raking the muck that smells in tier on tier
poisoning the land

but in the cove where almond trees
orelias and their parasites hang cool
where blue/green
gently hugs the jutting rock-face
every second splash
or lover-rough and hungry
hurls whiteness on its grey
calm holds the earth

beyond
space hides the ripples
blue/green marble
stretches to a boundless edge
unless a smart canoeist
sudden turns his boat
and somehow marks
that something ends here
or begins

that smooth sea
hides the litter of a thousand earths
washed in by earthquake storm or tidal wave
perhaps
the sea will wash our land
perhaps
destruction with its blessed cleansing
will call our country
to a baptism.