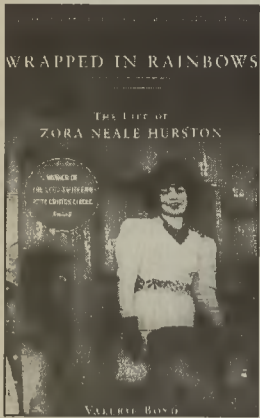


Hurston biography paints vivid picture of writer



Harlem Renaissance stalwart Zora Neale Hurston is the subject of "Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston."

By Artellia Burch
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Every now and then a great biography surfaces that is just as rich and brilliant as its subject.

"Wrapped In Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston"

by Valerie Boyd is a masterpiece. Boyd gracefully replays the stimulating life of one of America's greatest writers.

Thanks to the extensive research and interest of Boyd in the subject Hurston's complex life leaps off the pages. Boyd allows the reader to become connected to Hurston along the Harlem Renaissance writers

like Walter Thurman and Langston Hughes.

Boyd gives readers a history lesson on Harlem in its golden period and a brief peak into the lives of black icons like blues singer Bessie Smith and W.E.B. DuBois.

DuBois is often mentioned in this manuscript due to his close connection and often strained relationship with Hurston, Hughes and other Harlem writers.

In fact Boyd's research allows you to even take a mental glimpse into the controversial magazine "Fire" that Hurston and friends created that published risqué literature. Creators of Fire sought to distance themselves from national magazines like Crisis, The

NAACP's magazine and Opportunity, the Urban League's literal mouthpiece.

Fire's contributors even attempted to use material that was so controversial in an attempt to get the magazine banned in Boston. DuBois was so disturbed by the magazine his mood could instantly change into a contemplative silence when the publication was mentioned.

Readers especially Hurston fans can't help but have a better understanding of this female literary giant. Boyd courageously goes the extra mile to reveal things about the secretive writer from the South.

Hurston's writings were rich with voices and folklore from South. She was one of

the first to bring Southern voices to life in national published literature. Boyd allows the reader to revisit Hurston's home in Florida as well as travel up Southern roads with Hurston and Hughes as they collected folklore and stories.

"I have been in Sorrow's kitchen and licked out all the pots. Then I have stood on the peaky mountain

wrapped in rainbows with a harp and a sword in my hands" a saying by Hurston is the birthplace of the book's title and is the perfect summation of a brilliant book about a timeless icon.

Boyd has done what many writers attempt. She shown her subject great justice on these pages and added her name to the list of talented biographers.

Tights take on multiple personalities

Continued from page 4B
about showing off the nylons. A pencil skirt is more refined. Cropped pants offer just a taste.

Meredith Sloane loved the idea of fishnets, but there was nothing on the market that satisfied her. "My style has always been sexy-funky, so I wanted to create a product that combined these two

elements and was also versatile," she says.

So Sloane created Melonets — fishnets with a funky elastic band. They're the perfect accessory because they can be dressed up or down — and they move up and down. Says Sloane, "They can be worn above the knee, below the knee, under a short or long skirt, as lin-

gerie, or underneath pants."

We know fishnets won't offer much in the way of

warmth. But you'll have that I Look Good Glow.

Benefits of cancer trials called into question

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for evaluating medical treatments.

"If you ask the people who got Gleevec for CML [chronic myelogenous leukemia] whether being in a clinical trial was good, they'd tell you it saved their life," said Charles Weaver, an oncologist and founder of CancerConsultants, an Idaho-based company specializing in market research for hospitals and drug companies. The firm also maintains a large Web listing of clinical trials that doctors and hospitals pay to be listed on. "The reason I would participate in clinical trials personally is the belief that you have access to better therapy," Weaver said.

Joffe noted that Gleevec, a drug approved in 2001 that has extended the lives of some leukemia patients, was not included in the analysis because no study directly compared patients who received the drug with similar patients who did not.

"It's hard to see how patients could make a mistake participating in a clinical trial," said Richard L. Schilsky, chairman of the Cancer and Leukemia Group B Cooperative, a large national consortium of clinical trials. But, added Schilsky, who is also an associate dean of medicine at the University of Chicago, "it may be that we need some refinement of the message" doctors give to patients considering whether to join a study.

Ellen Stovall, founder of the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, an advocacy group based in Silver Spring, said that while she found the study "good but disappointing," it "doesn't change my view that we need well-designed, well-funded clinical trials. To me they are the only way right now that tracks how people with cancer are being treated." Stovall noted that most adults treated for cancer receive care in physicians' offices where the quality of care is varied and oversight is nonexistent, as is the case with other illnesses.

"We tell patients that clinical trials often test unproven therapies and you should not go into a trial thinking that you will have a therapeutic effect," said Fran Visco, a lawyer and breast cancer activist who is president of the National Breast Cancer Coalition.

Joffe said that the study was spurred by the authors' interest in examining the evidence for the widespread claims among leaders in the field of oncology that patients in trials do better. Researchers sought to identify studies that compared patients who enrolled and those who did not, to determine whether this was true. Although the studies used somewhat different criteria to measure outcomes, most examined differences in survival as well as the length of time it took a patient's cancer to recur or progress. Through a computerized search using the Medline database, researchers found 24 studies involving a dozen different cancers, ranging from localized, early stage breast cancer to aggressive brain tumors. Studies involving both children and adults were included.

Joffe said that about 14 of these studies showed that clinical trial patients had better outcomes. But when they sought to determine the quality of evidence for that conclusion, they found that only three studies adequately controlled for differences between patients. Those exceptions involved certain pediatric cancers, some blood disorders and studies conducted before 1986, an era when great strides were being made in curing childhood leukemia.

In most studies, Joffe said, it was impossible to conclusively determine how much of the observed benefit was due to factors other than the trial itself — for example, whether trial patients were healthier than those in the control group. While this study failed to find a clear demonstrable benefit to trials for individual patients, no one would dispute that they are critical to proving, or disproving, whether a treatment works.


A series of clinical trials conducted in the late 1990s found that high-dose chemotherapy with bone marrow transplantation for women with advanced breast cancer was no more effective than standard treatment and often caused a lot more suffering. The toxic, expensive and risky therapy had been embraced by some activists and researchers who pushed insurers to pay for it in the belief that it prolonged women's lives.

Visco, a member of the Institute of Medicine's blue-ribbon National Cancer Policy Board, has said that the popularity of bone marrow transplants represented the triumph of hope over experience and underscored the importance of evidence-based medicine.

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