

## Book review

# 'No Name in the Street'

In a time when almost everyone is writing books and subjects are, unfortunately, limited, what matters is not what one writes but how he writes. Obviously, James Baldwin's literary style has merited him the privilege to add another book to his shelf of published works.

Baldwin's latest book, *No Name in the Street*, entails a discussion of his times and of the American society, categorized conventionally, analyzed thoroughly, and relayed to readers as philosophical thought.

The educational process is depicted as indoctrinating for whites and subjugating for blacks. He also treats other institutions with such analysis.

"One writes out of one's own experiences," according to Baldwin. And, if life is an accumulation of experiences, then Baldwin's eight books indicate he has seen a lot to write about. *No Name in the Street* investigates and relates his years socially, morally, politically, and sexually. The result: it is not his life which is actually being examined but the American system. He tells the story of the Black man in America; he tells the story of America. True. Both stories are

old prose in these 1970's, but Baldwin's literary style refreshes them historically with his usual technique of personal encounters.

He relives snatches of his childhood, his adventures in Europe, his first visit to the South, and his encounters with famous Black activists. As he relays these events, he analyzes them in terms of societal influence, psychological evolution, and social stratification.

"The business of the writer is to examine attitudes, to go beneath the surface, to tape the source," Baldwin once wrote.

And so he does, when he evaluates all facets of life, attributing the devastation of America to generations of social ills and neglect. "Oh pioneers" exemplifies that he is pointing an accusing finger at white supremacy.

Symbolically, Baldwin's work is not Paul Revere's warning. Nor is he assuming the role of a prophet. He is tactfully narrating the unforeseen as to the destiny of America. It is a pessimistic outlook. "An old world is dying," states Baldwin. His prophecies in *The Fire Next Time* are historically rendered in *No Name in the Street*.

"People pay for what they

do, and, still more for what they have allowed themselves to become," he writes. He describes the whites as a people clinging to their captivity and insisting on their own destruction. Why? Because they are thoughtless people who never honestly assessed their past. And, their past actions have made the present inevitable. He writes, "the past makes the present coherent."

This same analysis is used in evaluating the lives of Blacks. As he takes a look at famous Blacks and their lifetimes, he holds accountable the social and political process. He reviews persons like Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and George Jackson during their trials, assassinations, and funerals.

*No Name in the Street* is by no means intellectually nourishing. But, it can be thought provoking.

Baldwin is a writer, not a historian, sociologist, or psychologist. The success of his work stems from his achievement in mastering the contemporary American essay. He has the ability to organize disarrayed events into the form of art.

## MY WHOLE LIFE by Brenda Wadsworth

My whole life is  
So demanding  
I have to be  
Polite and  
Respectable  
I must never  
Step out of  
Place or  
Act  
Superior  
When I  
Hurt  
I should hide it  
And  
Pretend  
There is no  
Pain.  
Why?  
I want to  
Act  
Silly and  
Throw  
Fits and  
Cry and  
Run  
Wild in the streets.  
I am  
Sick of  
Holding things  
In and  
Being conventional.  
One day  
I intend to  
Break loose  
And  
Blow  
This whole  
Phoney world  
Out of  
Place!

Poem (No Name No. 3)  
by Nikki Giovanni

The Black Revolution is passing you bye negroes  
Anne Frank didn't put cheese and bread away from you  
Because she knew it would be different this time  
The Nazi boots won't march this year  
Won't march next year  
Won't come to pick you up in a honka honka VW bus  
So don't wait for that negroes  
They already got Malcolm  
They already got LeRoi  
They already strapped a harness on Rap  
They already pulled Stokely's teeth  
They already here if you can hear properly negroes  
Didn't you hear them when 40 thousand Indians died from  
exposure to  
honkies  
Didn't you hear them when Viet children died from  
exposure to napalm  
Can't you hear them when Arab women die from exposure  
to israeli jews  
You hear them while you die from exposure to wine and  
poverty programs  
If you hear properly negroes  
Tomorrow was too late to properly arm yourself  
See can you do now something, anything, but move now  
negro  
If the Black Revolution passes you bye it's for damned  
sure  
The white reaction to it won't.

## Original short story complete here

Mark E. Coplon shifted his weight nervously in the plush orange chair of the waiting room. In the twenty-five minutes he had been there his eyes had completely and carefully etched the impression of each painting, each chair, each book, and each individual occupying the same room upon his memory. It was quiet. Almost too quiet. His eyes now bore a hole through the door leading outside.

The phone on the receptionist's desk buzzed noisily. He averted his gaze, yet allowed his eyes to rest briefly once again on every object that fell in his path, until they finally reached the desk and the motion halted. With a faint sigh he put down the magazine he had been holding for the past ten minutes and twisted in his chair to face the nearest window. And then he thought—dared to think about the unexplainable series of events that had brought him to Life Planning Facilities that Monday morning.

So much had happened, he did not really know where to begin. But here he had come to place the bits and pieces of his entire twenty years on the desk of the Central Council—the eternal Central Council that promised to help people create some type of life and style out of a frustrated and tortured existence.

He laughed softly to himself, knowing that the Council would be undertaking a big problem when all the ups and downs of his past existence had been divulged. Would they seriously believe that one so young could be so completely botched up?

He had done nothing, seen nothing, felt nothing. Emptiness. A void. People he shunned, though companionship he longed for desperately. Think. He could not really think. It was too painful. Requiring too many associations, too much conscious effort. He feared contemplating the vastness of the ordeal. Nothing was oriented. All was disjointed, confused. WRONG.

Wait. He was frightening himself. He jerked back around in the chair, pressing the base of his spine hard against the interior that only gave softly. He quickly re-evaluated the scene. Not much had changed. The receptionist was talking to another client. He relaxed and gingerly lit a cigarette.

The Central Council, he snickered, the great Central Council. *Could* they possibly help though, could they possibly help? Could they? Could they? He had heard so many lovely stories and read of their amazing accomplishments with people like himself: the misfits, the lonely, the sad. The Central Council made them human, gave them feelings, a purpose.

Mr. Coplon, Mr. Coplon. The receptionist was tapping his shoulder. You can go in now. His eyes darted about the room. Everyone was watching him. Not with sneers, but gentle, prodding glances. Go ahead. Go ahead. Give them your life. Your blood. Go ahead. But you'll never come out Mark E. Coplon. You'll never come out. Their soul is better than no soul Mark E. Coplon. Their soul is better than no soul.

### AUDITIONS

How many niggers did you say were out there?  
Four.  
Give classic ballet as a starter...  
If they can do that  
Mak'em walk on water!  
Ruby C. Saunders

### DO YOU READ YOUR PAPER?

- Who proposed the theory of the "new niggers?"
- What Black leader mobilized the Black community during the "Wilmington Insurrection" of February 4-6, 1971?
- When are the regular BSM meetings?
- What is the legislative organ of the BSM and when does it meet? Who is your campus area representative on this body?
- What is the fundamental premise of Brianism?
- What five things should we do to relate our college experiences to the Black community?
- Who is the coordinator of the BSM drama group?
- Who was the first Black athlete of the month?
- What country did "Stu" represent in the Olympics? He has won a Bronze Medal — was it in the Olympics? If not, where?
- Who is the director of the UNC YWCA?
- Name five (5) important events in the Black experience that happened during November.
- What is the "Ebony Expressions?" Who was its founder and in what Black institution did it have its beginnings?
- Who is being quoted?  
"Pat yourselves on the back brothers and sisters, and then bend over and let the man kick you some more, until you get tired of it . . . . When you come back from your Third World Ego Trip . . . . Come join us. We'll still be struggling . . . . we will still be Black!"

"Come together, read, discuss and agree upon a Black agenda for liberation."

### "UNITY, AWARENESS AND LIBERATION"

- Who is the Black Resident Advisor in your dorm and where does he live?
- There are some "firsts" for Blacks at UNC this year. Do you know what they are?
- Who is Dr. Blyden Jackson and what course does he teach?
- How much are BSM dues? Who do you pay them to, and when are they due?

IF YOU CANNOT ANSWER ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS, REREAD THE PAST TWO ISSUES OF YOUR *BLACK INK*! READ YOUR FUTURE ISSUES MORE CAREFULLY.

IF YOU ANSWERED ALL OF THE QUESTIONS CORRECTLY, KEEP ON PUSHIN' . . . . MORE POWER!!!