

MANSOUR

Speaking the Language

Of

Life & Love



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Dedicated to Two of MANSOUR's

Favorite People

His Spiritual Mothers

Aunt Marilyn Haynes
and
Aunt Catherine Andrew
(1922 - 2014)



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Forward

No one takes a journey alone. We carry with us the knowledge, experiences, and memories of our past: holding these words of influence and inspiration in our mental bank.

I believe that this man, who I knew as Mansour, discovered something during his lifetime that gave him confidence in the world. In his mind, he penetrated the reality of our existence to such a depth that he could no longer look at other men without sharing a bond with them.

During the course of my life, Mansour was the closest thing I had to a father. One of his “fatherly duties” would be to call me often and leave me with a "poem for the day" whenever I was unavailable. Even today, when I listen to those messages and read his written poems, I am still able to feel his presence. I laugh to myself when I remember how his low, resonating, and authoritative voice would make me anxious to speak to him. He flourished as a speaker and a poet; yet, in both public and private, I recall him carrying a strong enigmatic aura. I have held an ongoing curiosity for how he was able to be so clear in his words while demonstrating that essence of mystery.

Many of his poems demonstrate an unguarded openness and simply communicate valuable messages for people at every reading level. They are short expressions of his

discovered truths and lessons in wisdom, often read as simple and concrete proverbs to excerpts of divine truth. Since his passing, I have accepted that I may never know what gave “Mansour” the ability to be so strong, so conscious, and so compassionate, but the sincerity of his poems have compelled me to have faith in the direction of my own life.

Use caution in the beginning
Use wisdom in the end
Use patience as you move through life
On truth you can depend

This is one of my favorite poems composed by Mansour that I will always carry in my heart.

Ashura Bayyan



Introduction

As Mansour's wife for more than 30 years, I never failed to marvel at his greatness as a noble man of culture. He was so much more than my husband; he became my confidant, spiritual guide, and mentor, and he was this for so many others as well. I was blessed and buoyed by his enduring love, respect, and tenderness – there was never a harsh word or gesture from him. Instead, he always shared compelling and profound words of wisdom and wondrous encouragement at just the right moment. In his presence, I experienced true freedom in that there was nothing that I could not share with him.

I felt honored and thrilled to spend moments with him in verbal reflection and enlightening contemplation. These moments manifested his status as a rare breed: a spiritual being whom I like to call a “man's man” – men respected him, women adored and were drawn to him, children were fascinated by him, and the world of nature embraced and communicated to him in its own special way – in the language of life. This language would manifest during ordinary moments where he opened my heart to reveal yet to be discovered parts of my soul - forgiveness, patience, and, most importantly, acceptance – of myself and of others.

As an authentic Renaissance man, Mansour was both profound and practical. And at the suggestion of those who did not know him personally, I reflect upon his

pragmatism as he transformed his environment through his achievements and accomplishments.

Our journey together began more than 30 years ago when we arrived in Harlem as what I would like to describe as “cultural pioneers”. We worked passionately and persistently together as soul mates and partners to spearhead the development and restoration of our community. We organized and launched tenant associations, block associations, and an award winning not for profit economic development corporation that stimulates cultural and entrepreneurial activity in Harlem and throughout the New York Metropolitan area.

One of our major accomplishments was to provide homeownership opportunities in our neighborhood. We worked to avoid the abandonment and demolition of our building and helped others to organize and sustain their buildings. The majority of our efforts was ours alone and was achieved in spite of entrenched resistance – resistance fueled by a sense of despair and a lack of hope. But despite this collective inertia and apathy, Mansour and I maintained an “audacity of hope” and dared to forge ahead relentlessly. And with the support of local politicians, 28th Police Precinct, numerous city agencies and community based not for profits, and a host of support from committed individuals, we were able to accomplish the following:

- ✓ Organized with a network of other tenants associations to initiate a class action lawsuit whose final ruling was in favor of



community home ownership for the indigenous population of longstanding Harlem residents

- ✓ Secured close to \$1 million for structural rehabilitation and weatherization with the assistance of former Governor David A. Paterson, New York City Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD), and Community Board 10
- ✓ Identified and secured an equity partner who provided access to more than \$2 million in financing and other resources
- ✓ Provided training and management assistance to tenant organizations – we performed this in conjunction with the Legal Aid Society of New York and a local tenant training organization.
- ✓ Worked with NYC 28th Police Precinct and NYC Attorney General’s Office to remove drug and criminal activity from our neighborhood
- ✓ Our green efforts included planting more than 20 trees to help restore our neighborhood to its green and natural glory.



- ✓ In conjunction with tree planting, we created a flower planting program to bring our seniors and young people together for the invaluable exchange of knowledge and wisdom
- ✓ Worked with HPD to ensure that brownstone shells that had been vacant for more than 20 years participated in an affordable homeownership program
- ✓ Spearheaded the creation of a block association whose focus has been to improve the quality of life and to ensure the delivery of municipal services – we also have provided activities for our neighborhood children

“I enjoy reading your letters....you make us as politicians do our job. Keep it up!” These were the inspiring and encouraging words that we often received from Governor David A. Paterson. A large part of our work was an ongoing letter writing campaign to keep all stakeholders in this process engaged. And certainly, our local elected officials were a part of this effort and played a key role in making this project happen for the benefit of the indigenous residents. A special thank you to you, Governor Paterson!

During this same period of securing homeownership opportunities for local residents, our foot print extended



beyond to include entrepreneurial development activities. With the assistance of Columbia Business School (CBS), who prepared a feasibility analysis and a strategic plan, we established an economic development organization. The success of our organization is evidenced by the acknowledgement and awards from the NYC Department of Small Business Services and the Office of Mayor on two separate occasions

Under the Harlem Renaissance EDC umbrella and during our consulting activities, we accomplished the following:

- ✓ Provided management training and assistance and access to financing to over 3,500 established and start-up businesses
- ✓ Sponsored finance and investment forums, business roundtables, seminars, and symposia
- ✓ Trained hundreds of Harlem young people in entrepreneurship and sponsored a business speakers bureau – when this event came to a close at CBS, it was adopted by Harlem Renaissance EDC; thus, this top-notch business, finance, and technology training was available locally to Harlem’s young people
- ✓ Spearheaded the first and, at the time, only community sponsored and operated award-winning farmers markets to provide



much needed farm fresh and locally grown produce to Harlem – this event provided business and market opportunities to local farmers and to local craft entrepreneurs as well; we also

- ✓ provided technical assistance to other community organizations to create farmer's markets in various neighborhoods in Harlem and Brooklyn
- ✓ Created the award-winning Harlem Renaissance JAZZ, FILM & ART in PARK, a three day ArtExpo showcasing the best of art and culture in Harlem
- ✓ Provided strategic planning to numerous Harlem and other not for profits at CBS's Executive Management Education – one of the world's leading executive education programs
- ✓ Served as host organization and mentor for the MBA (Merging Business and Academics) program, a former local internship for high school students – we prided internship opportunities to students from Smith College, Columbia University, Mt. Holyoke College, Amherst College, New York University, University of Poitiers, France, and participants in the



NYC Human Resource Administration's Welfare to Work programs

- ✓ Explored and reported on international economic development initiatives in China, Ghana, South Africa, Guatemala, France and London and implemented measures in our economic development practices

In the aggregate, our work resulted in over \$50 million in community wealth created through home ownership and entrepreneurship.

As Mansour smiles down upon us, let us make him proud by keeping up the good work that he spearheaded. I am inspired, and I am sure those that he touched as well as others are inspired to continue, in their own unique way, the legacy that was Mansour's. And that was to create and solidify the foundation of community, culture, and society (homeownership, entrepreneurship, and wealth) for the benefit of generations to come.

MAIMOUNA

aka

Bonita G. LloydNettles



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“Pieces of Me”, Cecilia, you also served as a source of inspiration for me.



Prologue

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MANSOUR at Work I

MANSOUR Speaking the Language of Life and Love is a testament to Mansour's extraordinary life whereby his talent of sharing himself with others is the essence of who he was. As his words live on through this first volume, I hope that his readers will catch a glimpse of the qualities that drew his family, friends, community, and the world to him.

Language of Life

I speak the language of life
My words enhance voices
Of total being
I sing with the birds
Nesting high in the trees
I talk to the wind
She answers with a breeze
I smile on the shore
Whose laughter waves her seas
I hum for the sun
Her response comes
Through bees
I speak the
Universal language of life
My mind delights in notions
Beyond sound
Beyond seeing
Simply
Beyond



Although I do not consider myself a poet by any stretch of the imagination, I was inspired to write a literary expression to celebrate the life and work of Mansour.

MANSOUR was a Noble African Spirit of Culture with an ancient soul centuries old.

He was not born into Nobility, it was born unto him.
A King among Kings, a Man among Men, from the streets
of Harlem, Barbados, London, Long Island
There were those who longed to touch and be touched by
him

So Divine, so Ethereal, MANSOUR's complexity was
often unfathomable but always transformative.

MANSOUR was a Visionary with an extraordinary insight
into our hearts,
Touching our spirit with his – to uplift and encourage us
to bring forth our individual genius
Inspiring courage in us to go forth and discover the truth
of who we are and to manifest our greatness.

With his broader Visionary Powers, MANSOUR
witnessed and shared what was beyond the horizon.

MANSOUR was a Driving Force who could turn the least
of us into the best of us with his discerning Wisdom.

MANSOUR's Sense of Humor tickled our fancy to the
point of mischief
Reminiscent of Alegba at the Crossroads but Shango and a
Marabout he was to the heart!



MANSOUR had an Artist's inner eye for science, the
cosmos, and culture – a sense of form, balance, and
symmetry that was pleasing to the eye and ear,
An ability to create literary and artistic works in a
moment's instant.

MANSOUR was a Romantic boldly and unabashedly
sharing love, poetry, flowers, and special gifts to those near
and dear, and those near and far.
His first love was his family, friends, his people, his culture,
and the world.

MANSOUR loved, lived, and spoke the Language of Life
He is no longer with us but his Noble Spirit remains in
our hearts and minds.

MANSOUR was a Man for All Seasons
A Man for All
Whose words and wisdom live on forever!

MAIMOUNA



I LOVE



MANSOUR and MAIMOUNA

Woman

I see in you a woman
Whose life
Has just begun
I see in you a woman
Of beauty, love, and fun
I see in you a woman
Whose mind
Is clear and sharp
I see in you a woman
Whose charm springs
From her heart
I see in you a Woman
Of both
Pride and dignity
I see in you a woman
Of strength and
That strength
Is rich and free
I see in you a woman
Whose warmth dissolves
The dew each day
I see in you a woman
Whose smile chases
The blues away
And all the things



I see in you
I see with just
One glance
And all the things
I see in you
I see clearly
Not by chance



A Place Divine

When
I look
Into your eyes
I see
The beauty of
Your soul and
I am inspired to
Love you forever
For true love lives
Beyond
Space and time
In a
Realm most holy
In
A place divine



Flower

You are so
Beautiful
To me
More precious than
Pretty
For pretty
Comes and goes
But the
Sweet pure flower
Of beauty
Flows
Deep in your
Soul
And never grows
Old
And never grows
Old
You are so
Beautiful
To me



Light Your Way

Speechless
On the morning
In silent prayer I say
Thank you for the
Glory
This very special day
Thank you for
In safety
You
Slept the night
Away
With patience
Peace and wonder
God bless
And
Light your
Way



With Loving Care

Every night
Before I sleep
I say a
Prayer for you
I ask that
God please
Keep you safe
And healthy
Through and through
That all
Your dreams be happy
That you wake
To God's
Delight
That he bless
Your day
With loving care
And
Protect you
On through night



Thoughts of You

Sometimes
I wake
In
The middle
Of the night
With
Thoughts of you
And smile
And
Ask that
God
With all his
Might
Protect you
All the while



Let Love

Let
Wisdom speak
Let
Sorrow sleep
Let
Love engage
Sweet passion's reach
Let
Love indulge
Sweet
Passion's sweet



Love Compelling

Truth
Can be
Relative
To a
Particular
Point of view
But love's
Beat
Is constant
Compelling
All you do



Kindred Spirits

We
Are kindred
Spirits
You and I
Our souls
Breathe
The pulse
Of the eternal
Our love
Beams
The joy
Of
The divine



Joined Together

The only
Thing
That is
Greater
Than love
Is
Love that
Is
Joined together



Love Contends

Love
Contends with
Nothing
Save the
Beauty
Of serving
Self



Enough

When
Times were
Tough
When
The Road was
Rough
You gave me
Your love
And
That was
Enough



Beautiful

You are
A beautiful woman
And
Your beauty
Speaks to the
Core
Of life's
Existence
You are
A beautiful woman
And
Your beauty
Beats to the
Score
Of love's
Persistence
You are
A beautiful woman.
Amen



I Love You

How
Swift the hours
Dance
By each day
How
Sweet the flowers
Bloom
Bright each May
How
Warm his heart
In the
Heat
Of her sway
How
Deep her love
As his
Lips
Gently say
“I love you.”



Spiritual Love

A lover's gift
A physical manifestation
Of a deeper
Spiritual love
A love that exists far
Beyond
The restrictive walks of time
And as such
Love can never
Truly be experienced
In one life time
Therefore lovers' eternal truths
Can only be witnessed
Can only be measured
Through the arts
Of patience of
Persistence of
Kindness of
Giving of
Supporting of
Caring of
Uplifting of
Loving



All of a Sudden

All of a sudden
It happened
And they were free
To follow their dreams
Free to sing
The good news
Free to make
A grand difference
Free to live
As they choose
When all of a sudden
It just happened and
God sent them to love
To free them
From the blues
Free to sing
The good news

