



Events and Happenings

- Did you know the **NUSOL Natural Hair and Beauty Expo** is coming to the Durham Convention Center (Marriott Hotel) on Saturday, June 6, 2015? Check out [their website](#) and [their Facebook page](#) for regular updates. Mark your calendars. It's going to be live...AS USUAL! There will be vendors, lectures, classes, hair shows, music and beautiful vibrations. You don't want to miss it!!
- **Radio One's Women's Empowerment** is scheduled for Saturday, April 18, 2015. It's hard not to know about this event as it has been advertised on all Radio One stations very frequently. All the same, if you're not a radio buff, you might have missed the announcements. This year's featured speakers are Bishop T.D. Jakes, returning for the second time, and Jussie Smollett from Empire. My new favorite television personality is Taraji P. Henson, or Cookie. She was scheduled to speak but it looks like Jussie is standing in for her. I'm a big Empire fan! The show is loud and crazy, and I honestly think that we can all use a bit more of the extraordinary in life. This show definitely fits the bill. I personally will be unable to attend the show this year due to a prior commitment but I don't doubt that it will be a day to remember. With Kem as a featured artist, he alone is worth the value of the ticket. Trust, he's going to TURN IT OUT!! Brother is THAT GOOD! Check out the [link](#) for more information:
- **Family Health Ministries Annual Fundraising Gala** - Are you looking for some great gift ideas for Mother's Day or Father's Day? Perhaps you just want some unique gifts to purchase in advance of Christmas? Or maybe you just want to contribute to a nonprofit doing great work in Haiti? Whatever your motivation, check out the link below to scan silent auction items: <https://portal11.bidpal.net/Portal/bpe287500/main/home.html>

Featured items include three day or week long vacations on NC beaches, the Virgin Islands or on a NC mountain retreat. The auction is the same day as Women's Empowerment, but have no fear. You can use your smart phone, tablet or computer to bid remotely. Proceeds will go towards the construction and launch of the Leogane Family Surgical Center. Pastor Leon DoLeans, FHM partner and prominent Haitian community leader, will be one of the guest speakers.



Salon Updates

Salon Discounts

May Mother's Day Special - 10% off for mother's; 25% off for grand-mothers. Specials will be applied to all services over \$50.

May and June Graduation Special - 20% off the cost of all hair care services over \$50. Please show your student ID at the time of your hair care service.

Summer Swimming Special (June-August) - Box braids for all girls up to 17 years of age for only \$140. That represents a savings of up to \$40. Specials for children under 10 years of age will be determined on an individualized basis.

This Issue of Au Naturel

For this issue of Au Naturel, I'm sharing some works that have been inspired by inner soul struggle, mentors and God. Of late, contemplation has been my closest friend. And through the process, I observe and accept. I think it's pretty funny that God wraps our lives in layers of sameness, routine, cycles and somehow, we collectively expect a different outcome... "progress"... knowing... enlightenment. Is that not Einstein's definition of insanity? Perhaps, Einstein was insane to say such a thing. Or perhaps he had a much deeper insight that most people miss in viewing those words superficially. I think Seal may have the [best explanation for our collective reality](#). His music has revisited me of late. My kids smile when they hear tunes from [Seal II](#) as they conjure childhood memories of plying the back seat on their way to school with his sensuous baritone weaving webs of metaphorical genius. Today as I listen to those lyrics, I know that I'm hearing the words for the very first time. And somehow, I feel I could have written many of them. But since I didn't, I only marvel at the insight of the then-very-young man who is the true author of these works. He reminds me of a lad from my past—a poet and a beautiful soul.

And so, it is with this poetic vibe in full tow that I release these thoughtful reflections on life as grounded in this foundation of contemplation and wonder. If you're not down with poetry, check out the next issue. In the interim, Embrace the beauty of you.

Honoring My Roots...Respect Due

Years ago, 1984 to be exact, I met a beautiful, young man named Billy. Tall, black, lean. He was a second year English literature major and I was a first year student. We talked a lot. Heck, we did a lot of things. But one of the things that we most enjoyed was reading poetry. He and some of his friends founded the Langston Hughes Literary Society and I felt delighted to be part of the group. We would meet in one of the classrooms on Mr. Jefferson's campus. Maurice usually arranged the venue; he was classic preppy, somewhat elitist and very theatrical. Our gatherings had to reflect the reverence of our deed in honoring our past; so, lighting was always subdued.

Poetry reading was our primary means of sharing. To prepare, I combed the literary works of Rita Dove, Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes and Claude McKay. But the poet who consistently rocked my soul and ultimately brought me to my feet was Nikki Giovanni. I tried to expand and stretch outside of her scope but time and again she pulled me into her web and I was enraptured. So invariably, my compatriots knew that when Schatzi takes the mike, it's going to be Nikki. After reading her works, I began to write and recite poetry of my own. She inspired all that is in me...poetically speaking.

On March 25th, Ms. Giovanni came to NCSU for an evening of sharing. My longtime client, NCSU director, former bookstore owner and friend Lisa was very eager to announce her pending visit. And because I fondly recall those days of podiums and subdued lighting and romantic hearts, I said simply, "I'll meet you there. Please text me the details." At 71 years of age, Nikki did not disappoint. I fell in love all over again. I remembered why she had so inspired me so many years before. She was endearing, comical, enchanting. I was enamored with her grace and her humility and her transparency. She is a woman of small stature but her words have inspired generations. And I too was impressed at her intensity. In her poems, she revealed the heart of a lioness who has dared to face the Goliath of racism and call him mad.

Additionally, Nikki is a woman who has loved well...with passion and intensity, unapologetically. On March 25th, my love was rekindled as I remembered her. I think a part of me had forgotten; but, here she was. And I laughed freely and often. So, I accepted her silent influence on my life and my being-ness. It was so wonderful to know that [ego tripping](#) is one of her favorite poems as it was mine, many years ago. It was equally refreshing to know that her works are not recorded to memory as I have remembered none of my own. It is in the spirit of reflection on the simplicities of life that I share these works inspired by an evening with Nikki Giovanni. Check out this beautiful essay that she read during [an interview with Muhammad Ali](#) (about 14:30 minutes into the segment) so many years ago.

Musings on a 24 Hour Melody, Chord in G^d Major

Insomnia

I have a very bad habit of waking at 1, 2, 3 sometimes 4 o'clock in the morning. I lay here and ask why sleep eludes me and entices me with the possibilities of a blissful union. But, I know that sleep is the closest that we get to death on this Earth plane. And life ain't done with me yet, so maybe sleep eludes me to remind me that the future is now and I must move forward. But, I imagine the day that I will evade sleep and embrace death. And when that day comes, my soul will be released into the current of weightless flight and I will be whole...prayerfully peaceful.

For today, I rise in the bosom of the night and play with some love lines and contemplate a day when I too will know sleep as with a lover who embraces me throughout the night and only releases me when he knows that I am fully satisfied by his warm and caring nature. And I wear his love throughout the day, longing for the moment when again I will sink into his outstretched arms and be peace.

But now, I am without a lover. He has evaded me for many decades. Not since I was a child could I sleep with the passion and the abandon of a puppy at play. Momma used to always worry about me 'cause not even the hounds of hell could wake me when I was in the grips of my somnolent lover. But now, he eludes me, and I stalk the night. So, I conjure lines of anticipation. Coaxing my lover to take the words and transform my moment into a blissful, memorable dream of deep inhales and deep exhales, and spontaneous repositioning, and sighs and caresses.

I await my lover. Tonight's morning, he is playing hide and seek...staring at me from behind my Oriental screen and testing my brain waves for level of intensity. He knows my mind is too active so he waits for the right moment to approach to consume my essence. I feel him coming now and so I release, preparing to end this poem. And he kisses my lips. I lift my eyes to the heavens for greater knowing, for his timing is always impeccable. Surely, God is in control of this dance. I accept my place in this space at this time. And I drift.

Poem completed - March 26, 2015 @ 3:12am.

And Still I Rise

(Inspired by [Maya Angelou's poem of the same title](#) and by spring in NC)

Another day dawns, and I prepare to take my place in the line-up on the social continuum called workforce. I live my life to make a difference but in my heart of hearts, I know that my labor is only temporary. As fleeting and transparent as a rainbow, it will dissipate and be nothingness once again. And still I rise.

The hustle and bustle of the day's infancy feels surreal as I navigate adeptly through the traffic. Some people seem transfixed as if they don't realize where they're going or maybe they're on automatic. I'm always an aggressive driver. Not because I'm in a hurry. But, because when I drive, I'm in the zone. And I'm as intense as when I'm doing any other thing. And when I'm done with it, I move to the next phase of the day. Sometimes, it seems the drive was completely pointless. And still I drive.

I enter my office with three large picture windows and eye my tropical oasis dancing at the corner of my desk. My orchid is showing the others what God's favor looks like through her beautiful purple blooms, and I notice three additional sprouts of perfection to come. She is kind of vain that way. I turn on the computer, the space heater, the electric throw that embraces my midsection, but never the overhead light. I fill the kettle with water for tea which I drink throughout the day. And I sit down to create. Hours unfold sequentially. I break the rhythm of this cadence with a noonday walk and then continue the dance. I return home, commune with family, take a bath and press replay. And still I dream.

It may seem that the routine would be uninspiring or even boring, but have you ever watched a brown-headed nuthatch flirt with her mate as they greet the first orchestra notes of spring? Have you taken the time to notice how seductively the Bartlett pear tree adorns her finger tips with the memory of snowflakes newly melted along her lines? Or how the yellow of the daffodils and the forsythias frolick across the landscape for the briefest sojourn only to disappear for an entire year? Or how the caterpillars fall from the trees, some of them being squashed underfoot while other transform into graceful butterflies—only to live for a brief moment in time and then recycle. Sometimes, it all seems so repetitive. [Yet with the dawn of spring, all of God's Creation sings: And still I rise. So, here I go rising.](#) 😊