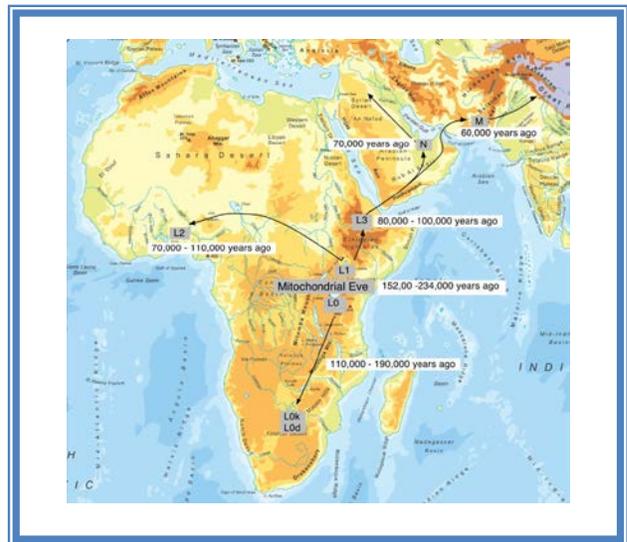


# AU NATUREL

## ANCESTRAL VIBES Lineage, Country life and Evolution

As I'm writing this newsletter, it's St. Patrick's Day. Today, I'm donning all blue. It occurred to me that I should be wearing green if only to honor my known Irish-Scottish ancestors. Since my grandmother is a McMillan, my mother is a McCullom and I'm a McCarthy, I have to acknowledge that these beautiful people had something to do with my being here, although looking at me; you'd never eye the truth. In fact some years back, I met a Native American gentleman on the plane who worked in RTP. He told me of the [National Geographic Genographic Project](#) that was underway. He explained that you purchase a test kit which is mailed to you. After receiving it, you swab your cheek, return the test tube with your DNA, and the Project will send you a report outlining the details of your ancestry. He explained how his own ancestral line snaked up from Africa, went across the European continent and came over to the US. I was intrigued, and the test kit at the time was only \$100; so, I decided to give it a try. The kit instructions explained how due to the fact that I have only X chromosomes, I would have a detailed map of my maternal ancestry. I figured my siblings and I could map our entire family line by then having my brother perform the swab for

tracking the Y chromosome. The Native American gentleman asked me to take his information and let me know the results that I receive back from the Project. So, I did. Well when I got my report back, you never saw anyone more disappointed than I. I expected my



map to look somewhat like the gentleman described as I KNOW I have European AND Native American ancestry, as do most African Americans. Well, I got that sucker back and saw L<sub>0</sub> which is Mitochondria Eve, the origin of humanity (see map). Then, I saw a small off-

## CONTENTS

This issue of Au Naturel is a fairly informal vibe that emerges from and resonates with love. What else? The opening article is a personal and salon update that is cloaked in anecdote. It emerged from a stream of consciousness vibe whose common thread is roots and culture. It's not so brief but prayerfully is entertaining. The next article is a commentary on where we are with natural hair in mainstream society. The final article honors my dear friend, Denise who is now happily married to her new husband Eric. And consistent with my way, I've included a recently penned poem in the Poetically speaking section which I affectionately and informally call "The echo." Can you guess why?

shoot from L<sub>0</sub> which was L<sub>1</sub>, which projected a bit west of the where Mitochondrial Eve originated in Eastern Africa; but was only about a stone's throw away in distance. Then the diagram stopped and was finished!! WHAT!! I paid one hundred dollars for someone to tell me my maternal ancestors came from Africa!!!! REALLY!! I was pretty pissed! I thought "I could have done a better job of mapping my ancestry talking to my grandmother!" Sheesh!! Needless to say, I haven't recommended the Genographic Project to ANYONE!! There was some standard report that was generated from the system; but frankly, it was unimpressive. I thought, "Wow, the African gene is THAT dominant!! They can't even find any trace of other ancestry in my body with all of the technology now available. That's crazy!" Well, feeling an obligation to share my results with my Native American source, I gave him a call to update him. After general pleasantries, I said, "Yeah. It wasn't very informative. It placed the end of my matrilineal line at L<sub>1</sub>!! Can you believe it?" Completely without missing a beat and with some enthusiasm, he said: "I knew you were an African princess!" The pregnant pause that ensued was all my doing. I then said something or other that I honestly can't recall, stated a few more pleasantries and concluded the call and the relation. He was/is a sweet soul. But, well... how are you supposed to take something like that coming from a man that's not your spouse? I didn't know; so, I didn't try to figure it out. I would really have liked to get to know him better, if only to learn more about Native American roots and culture. That fascinates me! But, some things are just not okay in this fallen world. I DO wish men and women could live together without the need *to engage or to conquer*. What a wonderful world it could be!! And he could have totally been down with a purely platonic vibe but I wasn't waiting around to find out the hard way.

So with that brief excursion down DNA Trail, I can say that I'm no more informed about my Irish or Scottish roots today than I ever was. But when I look at my great grand-mother (Grandma McMillan's mother), I know *they came, they saw and they conquered*. And so, she was. And so, I am. We didn't start and end in Africa; but, if God so defined African DNA to say just that to

anyone digging up my bones 100,000 years from now, who am I to complain about it? It is and I am. Story done. But boy, will their supposition of life at this time in history be distorted...

Anyhoo, I aint got no green on today. But, I spent a fair amount of time traversing Shamrock Rd in Grand Cayman this past week-end. I wonder if that counts. NOT!! ☺ But, it was fun! It was our first time on the island. My husband has very close cousins there. One is like a brother--Roger. The other is a second cousin, who is now so important to Caymanian society that Lloyd refused to go visit him. I thought the whole thing ridiculous male pride until Roger explained that the relation's neighborhood has 24 hour security. I then thought, "How exactly would we bounce up to the front gate and say, *"Yo boss, we here fi see Cousin Tony. Tell him say, Aunt Patsy say we MUST COME CHECK HIM anytime we in town."* Well, *we dey ya!* (Translation: *We're here!*) *Rum call him na!*" Surely, the gate would have been closed in our faces. So, I get it. But I did tell Lloyd to be sure NEVER to tell Aunt Patsy we came all the way to GC and didn't bother to visit family because he's "too important." CRAZY!!! She would be vexed with HIM AND ME! But, when I look at the [photo of him](#) on the Caymanian site, the family resemblance is unmistakable. (My husband's pic is in a photo below.) DNA is not to be denied, even when we discount family connection. But, it was wonderful to hear from another stranger that we met while walking to the beach that Cousin Tony has a very distinguished career. Unblemished. Impeccable. In a place like Grand Cayman, I think that's pretty impressive. Because as country as it is (*and it's country!!*), I couldn't help feeling that the undercurrent of corruption and entitlement runs deep after talking with Roger's wife who is a police officer. But then, there are beautiful people everywhere in the world. And beauty always trumps negativity where God's will and people prevail. We give thanks.

I enjoyed being back in the company of Jamaicans-- meaning more than one at a time. My first meal was at the Mango Tree--*service was slow as molasses but good quality food!* I easily slipped back into Patois and felt myself longing to visit the motherland (JA). In fact before

arriving, I told Lloyd I didn't want to go to GC at all! I preferred a trip to Jamaica. But, Roger really is like a brother to him and he's been living in GC for about 20 years; so, Lloyd was unshaken. It was a nice get-away. If you ever want to visit a home away from home, try GC. But don't be surprised if you go for a long walk or run and realize you've covered the whole island!! (*Slight exaggeration* ☺) Jamaicans always joke at how small Grand Cayman is. Since we were arriving for the first time, I felt it only appropriate to continue the tradition. So as we were landing at the Owen Roberts airport, my husband says, "I need to call Roger when we land." Not missing a beat, I said, "What are you going to do...holler?!" We both got a good laugh at that one! ☺ When he told me they live in Bodden Town, I said, "Lloyd! They have townships?!" Well in truth, they don't. They have neighborhoods. But, if it gives them a sense of magnitude to call them towns, so be it. To each his own. Culture is EVERYTHING!

**Case in point:** While we were there, people apologized several times for the weather. I thought, "Is this bad weather?!!!" Clear blue skies, 70 degrees temps. I was perplexed. But then, it was explained by a nice gentleman, named Dennis Hue, who we met while walking on the Beach Bay beach (and who also happened coincidentally to be friends with Lloyd's mother when they lived in Santa Cruz, JA back in the day (CRAZY!!), DID I say the world is small? Oh, sorry. The world is small!!! Not just GC!!). Well, he explained that the waves are choppy so that's why it's considered bad weather. CRAZY!! When I was a teen, we used to sail in waters like that with little hesitation. Once you know how to right a capsized boat, you're good! But then like I said, culture is everything! While in Cayman, do as the Caymanians.

**Another case in point:** Grand Cayman is an island full of wild chickens. They're EVERYWHERE!! Walking up and down totally undaunted and unharrassed, Lloyd was incredulous!! He said, "ROGER, you no bother grab two of dem rooster and put them in a pot, man? A waa gwon? (Translation: *What's wrong with you?*)" I said, The average Haitian and Jamaican would be in heaven

and would kindly cull down the population a bit--free of charge!! Roger just laughed and said, it's mainly just the Filipinos that bother them. So as Lloyd and I walked down Beach Bay Rd. going to the beach, we pondered how all of these chickens got here. We guessed and surmised. And then within the hour, the universe delivered Dennis Hue. Building a rather quick rapport while admiring the ocean and talking for over an hour, he offered his most recent catch of fish (Sprat) as a token of friendship and gave us a lift back home. That's a totally island vibe--common among country people from all over the world. When we commented on the wild poultry running all about the place, he explained that he is the reason for all of the chickens in GC! I didn't look at Lloyd but I could hear his thoughts and imagine the heavy cynicism in his eyes. We both were so silent, that Dennis dove into his story:

*You see, it was about 1986. I used to work near the airport and a man from Brazil had a stash of baby chicks that he couldn't take back with him. He asked me if I liked chickens and would take care of them. So, I said, "Yes." Well, I was out for the day. When, I got back to my office, there was a box of six chicks with a note explaining that they are Araucana chickens from the Amazon. He told me to take care of them and they would give me a surprise." So, I took them home and cared for them. They produced pretty, colorful Easter eggs (blue, pink). I figured that was the surprise he was talking about. Very pretty! Well, one day I came home and my chicken coop was ransacked and the chickens had gotten out. I thought it was my wife because she and I were separating and she knew how much I loved the chickens. But, it could have been a dog. I don't know. I just know that the chickens had all flown into the bush. I tried to get them but, it didn't make sense. So, I just left them. After I counted about 17 full grown chickens in a pretty short period of time, I stopped counting.' And without missing a beat, Roger's wife Janette (Paulette) said: That must be true because I came to GC in the 90s and there weren't so many chickens like now. I don't recall seeing them at all then." When I considered how many eggs hens produce, and the fact that humans are not eating the eggs to cull the population, I realized the story is truly believable! And so, the history of an island's wildlife is revealed after a brief encounter with a ~~stranger~~ friend.*

I believe his story because GC aint big as a minute. (*I passed two strangers with noteworthy hairstyles at different times during the day and saw them separately in the supermarket later the same day!!*) As many hens as I saw walking around with baby chicks...TRUST!! It's more than likely. I voiced that they should probably have a purge before too long though because [it was pretty eerie how plentiful the Iguanas](#) and chickens are. And without missing a beat, Dennis explained how the Iguanas are vegetarian but island conditions are forcing them to evolve. He explained how he and another guy saw an Iguana kill and eat a chicken recently!!! If that's true, it's truly time to purge and even the Iguanas know it!! That's just too freaky for me. Who am I to say how life should evolve. But, while passing a group of green Iguanas along the roadside, the scene was way too reminiscent of Jurassic Park! *CREEPY!!!*

Well needless to say, I was out of the salon a bit but have been quite engaged at Wake Tech with the new set of students. I'm quickly realizing why they limit the class size to 10. With 9, my hands are full! Everyone is at a different place in their knowledge of style techniques and the aim is to bring them all to the same standard. So a lot of time is spent going over basic fingering and hand techniques. But, the novices are *RAPIDLY* catching up with the others. I'm happy with their progress overall. Soon, there will be another cadre of stylists armed and ready to serve. And so, the beat goes on. We give thanks. ☺

## THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

### A commentary on where we are with natural hair

My sister Jasmine sent me the [attached article on a sister who was recently sent home from her job in Toronto because she wore her hair in a natural bun](#). The sister is beautiful so it's most assuredly a loss on the part of the establishment. But, it's still one of the things that makes you go hmmm. To briefly summarize for those not clicking the links, the sister applied for a job at a bar and grill and got it. After attending the interview and two days of training wearing braided extensions, she returned to her natural roots on day 3 by wearing a natural bun. She was informed that server staff are expected to wear their hair down, so she took her hair *out* of the bun. The manager could see that her hair didn't hang *down* so, she was sent home. After the incident, she didn't return to work based on her mother's advice.

These articles really don't faze me anymore because as much as we want to believe we live in a fair and equal society, we don't. It doesn't mean I'm resolved. Just that I choose my battles. This case is one that many sisters would bristle at; but in my mind, the greatest error made was one of omission...not commission. Firstly, the omission is in failing



Embrace the beauty of you.

P.S. If you're looking for a quiet, cozy vacation spot to visit with your significant other, GO TO GRAND CAYMAN!! Truly!! You'll love it!! If you're looking for a place to stash your money, GO TO GRAND CAYMAN!! Period. With 550 banks and lawyers and accountants galore, you'll find the shoe that fits. But know this: You've **got** to keep paying the lawyers and accountants to stay out of trouble. Otherwise, your goose is cooked. If I had those kinds of pockets, you better believe I would have opened an account. (Yes, I researched before going. :-o) With Trump, Clinton, and Wall Street realities ever-looming in America, I would have an offshore account without thinking twice!!! I probably shouldn't say that, but you know already: I don't care. ☺

to train the staff of the expected standard. The establishment should have informed the servers of the policy upon being hired; because in the absence of doing so, the policy seems arbitrary. But if in fact, they have the policy and the server came to work previously in compliance with the policy, it is natural for them to assume that she would continue to do so in the future. White women don't change their hairstyles nearly as much as Black women. And the truth is that many White people still don't understand Black hair. Despite these cultural variables, the bar and grill obviously wasn't discriminating against her race because they hired her wearing a very traditional, very Black hairstyle. In essence, what by default happened was that they discriminated against her hair texture. Braids hang. Straightened hair hangs. Natural hair in its loose, textured state often does not; because depending on the texture, it wasn't designed to. So, "down" and "out" therefore have two very different meanings to very different people. The net effect is that it is the establishment leadership which needs to introspect to determine what it is trying to achieve as the aesthetic standard for servers in their business. This is the second error of omission.

The establishment needs a clear vision of what professionalism looks like. If I wear my hair disheveled and unkempt but it is down, am I matching the standard? I would think not. So, it is clear that the current policy of wearing the hair "down" is inadequate to define the standard of professionalism. Because these things are subject to interpretation, leadership should make clear what the standard is and notify all staff that they may be asked to go home if they are found out of compliance with the standard. The sister's bun was very stylish and professional, as most buns are. So, getting caught in semantics, the manager attempted to enforce a policy that was really unclear in its intent. The establishment has since acknowledged that stylish updos are an acceptable standard; but then, you could get caught in defining "up" which suggests a different look from this sister's nape-level bun. It's all pretty crazy.

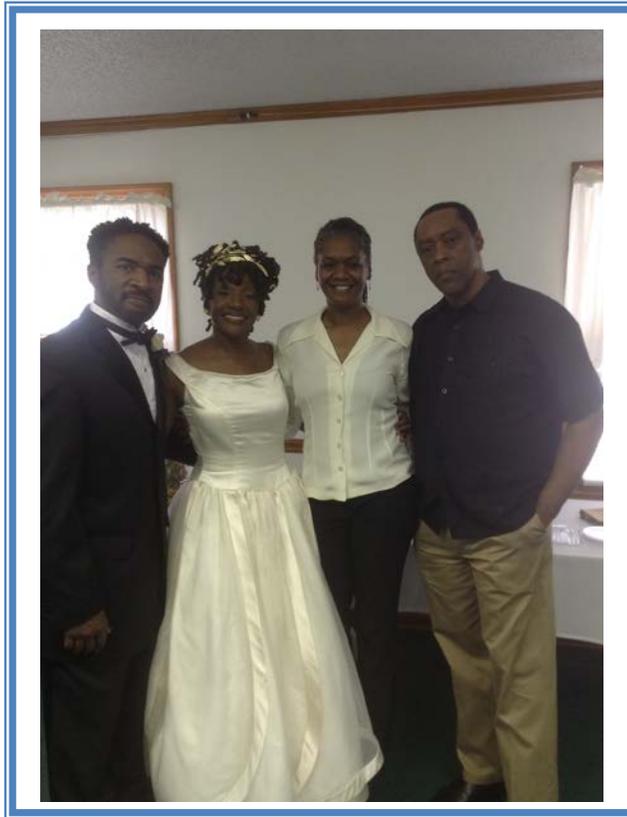
Personally, I can understand NOT wanting servers to wear scrunchies and ponytails as many people use this as a go-to style when they don't want to do their hair. All the same, a scrunchie and a ponytail on thick, long, straight hair can look very chic while on thin, fine, short hair, it can look like "you're not trying." On thick, short, kinky hair, it can look a hot mess while on thin, short, fine and curly textured hair, it can look rather chic (as was the case for this sister). Perhaps the scratch test is simply to ask the server: If you were to put a business suit on wearing your hairstyle, would you feel that you were appropriately attired for a corporate interview? I think that standard would likely help many servers and managers alike to define "appropriate" on an individualized basis.

The whole affair makes me tired to think about it, truthfully. The reason is that our society has a lot of baggage and so, misunderstandings happen easily. If we were all the same, an offense could not be taken. But, since we aren't, we are challenged to always look out at others with eyes of love. Likewise, we should always assume that others are looking at us with the same eyes. Invariably, you will find that you're wearing rose colored glasses; but, is that so terrible? Sometimes, it's dangerous but I want to believe that a foundation of love can only take us towards positive resolution of all differences. You set standards for quality and excellence and help people to reach it; but, without uniforms, you invariably fall short of the mark. There is no clear uniform for the hair. With styles, the standard of professionalism is as variable as the different hair lengths and types. Sometimes fashion and fad define the standard more than quality and professionalism. **Case in point:** Cheerleaders at many HBCUs are expected to wear relaxers or hair weaves in order to meet the loose, hair requirement of the squad. Here, braids are not even allowed! WHAT??!! *(One of my students in a former HBCU cheerleader and explained this to the class. I was shocked and disappointed that a people who created Jazz music, defined dance and innovated fashion are trying desperately to look-like Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders in order to professionally support their team. We did this to ourselves.)* And so, I embrace that I'm getting older and more out of sync with the times. I watch and observe and try not to judge. But frankly, it is for these reasons that I don't wear extended styles. What you see is what you get? Everyday! No delusion or illusion. Like it or leave it. Ultimately whatever you choose, we understand each other. And that eclipses pretense all day long. And ultimately, **THAT** is why Trump is so well loved!. (No, I won't go there. We don't have time or space. ☺) XOXOXO

## GIVING THANKS FOR GOOD FRIENDS

### ...A Match Made in Heaven

I love this woman!! (See photo below.) She is Vanessa Denise Joyner Bennett--a beautiful courageous, faith-filled gem of a soul. I met her when I was working at the NC Division of Public Health a few years back. One day, my soul said to slow down and take a look. So, I did. I'm so glad I did! She's one of the best people I know, hands down!! I once accused her of having "laughed me off the ledge" more times than I care to count. It's true! Sometimes life can seem so heavy, and then, Denise comes up with some one-liner and I'm on the floor in stitches. She has a natural born wit that emerges from intelligence, wisdom and a willingness to see the folly of all things under the Sun. But, she's also a praying woman. I recall one spell of activity in which she said, "Schatzi, your life experiences are really starting to feel Job-like." And with that, she delivered in my hand a book of prayer for spiritual warfare. I thought, "Wow!!" They have books like this? She then took me with her to church and her pastor preached an entire sermon on spiritual warfare. I'll never forget her for that, or the beautiful St. Paul's AME Church of Kenly, NC!! That was the venue of this picture with my wonderful friend, her new husband Eric and my life mate, husband and friend Lloyd. Eric has got a prize, for real!! I think he knows! ☺ The church was PACKED and I think about 95% of the attendants were the bride's friends! Sister has it goin' on like that! Her sister gave a most beautiful sermon on [John 2:1-12](#) before the wedding ceremony. Then said, "Well, Jesus attended a wedding! Since we're all gathered here today, why don't we just have one too?" And with that, I never



saw a man appear out of nowhere so fast as Eric!! *DANG!!* That man was standing at the pulpit ready to go before I could even fathom where he had materialized from. It was as if his spirit was saying, "Let's get on with it. I've got a honeymoon to attend, people! Move along, move along!" I smiled inwardly. No hesitation there, **WHATSOEVER!!** Denise, as always, was/is a beauty to behold. I can't BELIEVE she got through the ceremony without crying. By looking at her face walking down the aisle, I could read her thoughts though: *"Don't cry. I'm not going to cry. When! Breathe. Don't look at him! Don't look at Pastor! Smile. When Jesus! Breathe. A few more steps. Good. I'm at the pulpit now. WHEW!!! Thank you Jesus...Focus on the words... Breathe..."* NOT AN EXAGGERATION!!!! My husband asked me before the wedding, "Is she a timely person?" I said, "Absolutely! ...if she's not having a meltdown. If so, any number can play." That girl is the biggest cry baby I know! ☺ That's said with absolute love. She has a sensitive heart. ☺ I used to be like that. Life... All the same, I cried a lot that day. Joyful tears!!

Lloyd also found the sermon quite engaging! I think that's because he's taken up wine-making and is convinced the only soul better than him at the task is Jesus Himself! He's kind of arrogant like that sometimes. ☺ But, the wine IS GOOD!! My family is from Duplin County (on my Mom's side) and my uncles used to make wine regularly back in the day. My aunt

Joyce is the only person who kept the family tradition. Well one day after having some of Aunt Joyce's brew, Lloyd asked her how to make it. [Her wine is the only alcohol I'll consume as a matter of course.] Well, I'll just say that after tasting Lloyd's coconut wine, his blueberry wine and his carrot wine, my aunt concluded that *"The student has eclipsed the teacher."* And she bowed her head in reverence. In fact before my grandmother tasted the coconut wine, she was having a time with her appetite. She had NO DESIRE to eat whatsoever and was frankly worried. Then she tasted Lloyd's brew, coughed to catch her breath, and shortly thereafter ATE DOWN THE HOUSE! We all got a laugh out of that one!! I witnessed it firsthand. HILARIOUS!! [It's because Lloyd over-proofs HIS brew. Shhhh. If he ever tried to sell it, the ABC authorities would have to re-think their wine classifications after lighting a match and watching the contents of the bottle catch afire!! Shhhh. He makes lighter, sweet varieties for me though. ☺] If he's going to do something, it's going to be right, or it won't be done at all. The net effect of this however is that when he gets a new recipe in his head, we're all liable to have that same food or drink for weeks on end until he gets it right, then he's satisfied and moves on to something else. I've experienced that with his sour sop ice cream, his sweet potato pudding and his Caribbean roti. My son's don't mind when he's on a curry goat kick though. In fact, my youngest son recently told me of how he went out with friends to a restaurant only to leave thinking, my Dad cooks better than this!! I think I'll eat at home next time. Truly, it's a wonder I'm not

the size of a house!! But then, I do have to watch my figure to ensure that he stays mesmerized!! ☺ People have asked me for years how I stay my size. My pat response is: *Girl, if I don't watch my figure, my husband won't either.* And that's that! I'm not excessive about it though, 'cause I can tear down some food! I got it honest (ref. Grandma! ☺) But for years, Denise was my walking partner; so, we stayed on task with figure shaping for quite a while. I'm sure her husband's equally delighted at all the hours she's put in over the years pounding the pavement. In fact after taking this photo, I turned to look for sister-girl and she and her man had disappeared--taking flight on gossamer wings to a blissful union in their beautiful garden. I smiled and said to Lloyd, "Let's roll."

So with that introduction, I can say that I'm overjoyed that God has graced my life with beautiful friends like Denise Bennett. I pray that I've been half the kind of friend to her that she's been to me. I don't know if I have at all. I tend to be over-extended at times. But, she's always welcoming when I make the time to connect. As I'm writing this missive, she's in Puerto Rico on her honeymoon. As she returns, I'll be flying out to Grand Cayman for a brief stint with Lloyd. My prayer is that the next time we see the Caribbean, it will be all four people pictured in this photo, there together in union, in communion and in friendship. Amen.

## POETICALLY SPEAKING

### **A Mystical Love Song, Part II: Divine Love**

By: Schatzi Hawthorne McCarthy

Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.  
And I will smile coquettishly and say "Thank You, My Love."  
You are most divinely beautiful and gracious.  
Who am I that You would even care to kiss me, with the kisses of Your mouth?  
I remember.

**I am** Your beloved.  
Who was waiting for You with my lamp full of oil.  
You came most unexpectedly and drove me absolutely insane.  
My virgin mind could not contain the consciousness of Your appearance, so I bled.  
Yet, **I am** most grateful that I was prepared.  
**I am.**

Let me kiss him with the kisses of my mouth,  
We will rejoice in communion with Your presence with passion, power and intensity.  
Through me, let him achieve gnosis of Your divine love for him,  
So that his soul may be healed, if for but a moment.  
He remembers.

**You are** so merciful and so exquisite.  
Ecstasy was but an illustrative word.  
But today, it is astounding concerto--a masterpiece!  
Is it not appropriate that every cell of my being should explode in rejoicing at Your presence?  
Passion is etched in our being-ness for all eternity.  
**We are.**

I breathe with a new breath, and the fragrance of Your being inspires me to want to leave this plane and take flight into infinity. Yet I exhale and am grounded in knowing that this life is a precious gift.

You are here with me, in me, part of me. So what place could be more sacred than my own body...my temple of divine love for You? In the realm of duality, it is the kingdom of heaven.

Thank you, My Love. You are a most gracious host. As for me, I will care for our temple with even greater honor and reverence; for I knew not how sacred and majestic she is. Before Your coming, I could only surmise.

O daughters of Jerusalem, know this:  
I am (you are) love. I am (you are) loved. I am (you are) beloved.  
Awaken love in divine time.  
Be love.  
[Spirit is worth the wait.](#)  
But in the interim, WAKE UP!!

March 3, 2016

EMBRACE THE BEAUTY OF YOU.