

KATHY ASHBY

Song of Whitman and the Black Man

You may have read Walt Whitman's poem all the way through, songs about himself.
You may often go back and re-read the part where he comes upon a Negro man, a run-away,
sitting on his woodpile.

Your heart breezes balmy, as he assures him and leads him all limpsy into the house,
loosens, as he fills a tub to wash away sweat and awkwardness
warms, as he slaves to heal his bruised feet and the galls of his neck and ankles
warms further through, as he clothes him and welcomes him to sit at the table

Your heart glows at his recuperation then accepts it is his time to pass on north.
You may be determined to master this noble manner, hope you have the courage
remembering that this whole week,
the gun, fire-locked, leaned in the corner,

the only prisoner, held captive by kindness.

ways as has been shown in this paper. The four women, however, were determined; they had purpose, and had their eyes on the finishing line. They were also aware of the fact that these institutions were not created to serve the needs of their communities, but that of mainstream society. However, they were very conscious of their history; the sacrifices that their ancestors made for them, and that they were standing on the shoulders of mighty men and women of the past. They were also aware of the presence of their ancestors in their midst.

The narratives of Black women's leadership experiences in the academy have provided a deeper understanding of what happens in boardrooms, in the corridors as well as in their homes. What is very clear from these narratives is that these women know who they are; they know their strengths and their resilience. They know that they are standing on the shoulders of great Black women leaders from antiquity to the present. The women leaders may not have taught at all in Canadian schools, but their spiritual strength has been passed on from generation to generation. Despite the fact that the few women in leadership position in the academy feel isolated, invisible, silenced, and at the same time keep a smile on their faces; they know they are not alone in their invisibility. Additionally, Holder et al. confirm the invisibility; the disregard of credibility that Black women face, and the onslaught of cruel perceptions and stereotypes are real. Mainah's study also confirms the notion for the disregard for Black women who held educational leadership positions in academia in the U.S. The narratives

in this paper show the hostility that Black women face in a variety of contexts. Racism plays out in multilayered ways that have major consequences. The racism that the women faced was expressed as covert, indirect, and more ambiguous, thus creating challenges in identifying and acknowledging its occurrence (Dovidio and Gaertner), while still impacting and oppressing individuals in profound ways (Sue et al. 183–90). For instance, all the participants from my study confirmed microaggressions, and these were also confirmed in the literature review by Holder et al.

The findings in this study corroborates with the literature that was done that delved into Black women in leadership positions in terms of Corporate America, Schooling, the Academy, and the responsibilities around family that Black women uphold. In addition, we examined Black women in leadership positions in the United States, South Africa, and Britain. It is my hope that this work will provide useful frameworks, findings, and insights into the need for further research on the topic of Black women in leadership positions, not only in the academy but other organizations.

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