work is taken up in North America. And you've made very clear that you are interested in having the work read and understood through literariness. A number of years ago you said in Other Solitudes you didn’t write from any margin. You didn’t write from any Canadian margin. You wrote from a centre. You wrote from the centre of black literature. And if people wanted to understand your work they had to read Derek Walcott, Kamau Brathwaite, and Bessie Head, a host of Latin American writers and so forth, just to name a few. And when In Another Place was published, the book still wasn’t read from within that place.

DB: I really still think that Canadian criticism needs work. You still have reviewers who are struggling to figure out the origins of their own literature. That is those they consider “their own” and “literature,” right? The level of criticism is not deep enough. It’s not thoughtful enough. Well I often think, okay, how did I come to reading, right? And maybe I’m assuming that that is how everybody comes to reading. That is, reading is an act of faith, and it’s also an act of investigation. So, when I’m sitting at ten or eleven, and reading Durrell, I don’t have any idea about England. But I leap into it as a knowledge-making enterprise. I've just read this Italian novelist, a book called Silk. And another called The Reader by a German novelist. I leap. Right? I begin from the small assumption that it is possible to leap, and that I am curious. The novel doesn’t only have to come to me, I need to go to it too. I have to go to the text and I have to say, I'm going to learn some things here.

As it is Black writers are either reviewed for what might be plumbed from their work as a sociology of Black people or they are remarked upon for not presenting any signs of it at all. Either way it revolves around the same preoccupations. Black writers in this country have still to receive an intelligent reading. The kind of reading that says “No, I don’t know. I’ve never lived in that body but in good faith, I will go where the book is going because I am interested in what human beings do.”

Dionne Brand is a Governor-General award winning poet for Land to Light On. Her work includes two novels, In Another Place Not Here and At The Full and Change of the Moon, as well as a collection of essays Bread Out of Stone.

Leslie Sanders is Associate Professor of Humanities at Atkinson College, York University and the author of The Development of Black Theatre in America: From Shadows to Selves.

Rinaldo Walcott is Assistant Professor in the Division of Humanities, York University and the author of Black Like Who?: Writing Black Canada and the editor of Rude: Contemporary Black Canadian Cultural Criticism.

MARIANNE MATTE

L’éclair

Finis les longs jours de ténèbres
Reviendrai-je celle aux paupières de rêve?
J’ai fait taire la nuit
Dans la mémoire frissonnante
Des plaisirs douloureux
Mes mains sont pleines de lunes blessées
Et mon âme hurle dans la solitude de ma geôle
Mon regard se perd
Dans les ciels détrempés de l’angoisse
Mais mon esprit est réveillé
La philosophie culmine dans mes souliers
Je suis en prison pour mieux me libérer
Et danser sans fin
Ma nouvelle joie de vivre
Et l’ivresse d’un bonheur déjà acquis

Marianne Matte a passé de nombreuses années en voyage de l’Amérique du Sud en Europe carnets de voyage et poésie sont en attente de publication.

SHEILA PETERS

to the morel

through
black humus
de/composed
un/buttoned
the god’s ancient erection
nosing wrinkled through leaves
the succulent phallus
un/figged
tastes the
un/folding
of may’s warm and generous cunt

Sheila Peters lives near Smithers in northwestern B.C. Her first book, Canyon Creek: A Script, was published in 1998 by Creekstone Press.

CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES/LES CAHIERS DE LA FEMME