Covid-19 has continued to affect book reviewing this year, as reviewers whom we had to remind wrote us back saying everything from “I’m stuck in Dakar” or “I crushed my right index finger in an anchor mishap two months ago [and] ... typing was problematic for a number of weeks” to “in the midst of the pandemic I fell and broke my leg in two places,” not to mention people’s frequent child-care/remote learning challenges (for some books, we had to identify and ask as many as nine potential reviewers before one agreed) or the difficulties of getting books from publishers to reviewers in pandemic-bombed Brazil. But once again, we express our gratitude to all the reviewers who have, collectively, provided such a rich resource for keeping up with writing on the region.

At the same time, we must lament the fact that a few of the people who accepted a book and promised to review it have, despite a long series of gentle reminders over the past year or two, never shared their reactions to the book. With our apologies to the authors of books that have not been discussed in these pages for this reason, we simply list them here:

*Une écologie décoloniale*, by Malcom Ferdinand (Paris: Seuil, 2019, paper €24.50) [Fortunately, an English-language translation was published in January 2022 and will be reviewed soon.]

*V.S. Naipaul’s Journeys: From Periphery to Center*, by Sanjay Krishnan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020, cloth US$35.00)

*Cuba at the Crossroads*, edited by Philip Brenner, John M. Kirk & William M. LeoGrande (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2020, cloth US$79.00)

*Celia Sánchez Manduley: The Life and Legacy of a Cuban Revolutionary*, by Tiffany A. Sippial (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020, paper US$29.95)

*Staging Discomfort: Performance and Queerness in Contemporary Cuba*, by Bretton White (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2020, cloth US$85.00)

*The World That Fear Made: Slave Revolts and Conspiracy Scares in Early America*, by Jason T. Sharples (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020, cloth US$45.00)
Afrocubanas: History, Thought, and Cultural Practices, edited by Devyn Spence Benson & Daisy Rubiera Castillo (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020, cloth US$120.00)

The British Navy in the Caribbean, by John D. Grainger (Martlesham, U.K.: Boydell Press, 2021, cloth US$130.00)

We begin our minireviews, as usual, with fiction.

Leonardo Padura’s The Transparency of Time (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021, cloth US$30.00 [Spanish original 2018]) follows his excellent Heretics (see “Bookshelf 2017”), also translated by Anna Kushner, adding yet another sprawling work of literary crime fiction to his growing bibliography. (See “Bookshelf 2019” for our take on his Agua por todas partes, a collection of his nonfiction essays.) Like Heretics, this latest work is at once a formulaic procedural, a literary adventure, and a sharp depiction of contemporary Cuba, where socialism and ration books meet the allure of the convertible dollar, where the ever-present sounds of reggaeton symbolize Cuba’s decades-long moral decay, and where many Cubans are dreaming of Hialeah. From the opulent paladores and renovated mansions of El Vedado to the shantytown “settlements” of immigrants on the edge of the capital, Padura’s private eye (and secondhand book dealer) Mario Conde and the hypermacho buddies he’s known since high school once again engage in solving a mystery—this time, the theft of an icon thought at first to be the Virgin of Regla but which turns out to be a black medieval virgin brought back from the Crusades by a Knight Templar and long-sited in a remote chapel in the Catalan Pyrenees. (The nods to The Maltese Falcon and Bogart are not accidental—Conde/Padura has always been a fan.) Most of the book transpires in 2014 Havana, as Conde, obsessively worried about becoming old and useless, explores the wealthy world of illegal art dealers as well as priests, police, and santeros, but five rhythmically interspersed chapters trace the mysterious icon’s historical journey, beginning with the Spanish Civil War and moving backwards to the thirteenth-century Crusades. There is some remarkable writing, sometimes over-the-top, sometimes belly-laugh inducing, occasionally lyrical and touching. The novel may not match the heights of Heretics but it’s strong writing and a real page-turner.

The Playwright’s House, by Dario Suarez (Pasadena CA: Red Hen Press, 2021, paper US$18.95), is the first novel by this Havana-born-and-raised author, now living in the United States, already awarded prizes for his short fiction. The eponymous house belongs to a successful Havana playwright and theater director, arrested early in the novel by state security. His two sons—one a happily-married lawyer who works in a government ministry, the other an in-and-
out-of-prison single man who deals in the black market—become reluctant partners in trying to unravel their father's mysterious incarceration, as they maneuver through the world of theater people, anti-Castro social media specialists, the Catholic Church, a *santera*, and smugglers-to-Miami. Unrelentingly grim in its depiction of everyday life in Havana (the never-ending meals of rice and fried eggs, the constant surveillance by block committees, the ubiquity of state security agents, the endless queues whether for rationed groceries or ice-cream at Coppelia), this is a tale about family relations and the way ordinary people who no longer believe in the Revolution manage to survive, barely, in post-Soviet Cuba.

Overarching patriarchy and male brutality, matched by women's inner strength, suffuse *How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2021, cloth US$27.00), the debut novel of Cherie Jones, a lawyer and writer from Barbados. This intricately plotted book features a host of memorable characters from the bottom to the top of the society, deft use of local speech, and images of high-end tourists, gigolos-on-the-beach, and largely inept local police. Murder and violence never obscure the very real humanity that drive this fast-moving story, one of the best we've read this year.

*Monster in the Middle* (New York: Riverhead Books [Penguin/Random House], 2021, cloth US$27.00), is the second novel by Virgin Islands-born Tiphanie Yanique—in “Bookshelf 2014,” we called her first one, the multiple prize-winning *Land of Love and Drowning*, “a gem,” and this one is as well. The stories, centered on the ups and downs of finding and keeping a love mate, range geographically from St. Thomas to Puerto Rico, and from San Francisco and New York City to Accra. Yanique has a remarkable gift for getting inside her characters’ heads, capturing their distinctive ways of speaking and thinking and dreaming. Captivating writing, an excellent read.

*Pleasantview*, “a novel in stories” by Trinidad-born and -resident Celeste Mohammed (New York: Ig Publishing, 2021, paper US$16.95), includes nine chapters, seven of which have been published as (often prize-winning) short stories. In the fictional town of Pleasantview, we meet Syrian shopkeepers, Muslimeen converts, Pentecostal churchgoers, street gang members, Hindus with roadside fruit and vegetable stands, sex workers trafficked from Venezuela and Colombia, lawyers, politicians, and police, as well as myriads of Black women, but the focus, always, is on family relations—misogyny, poverty, violence, and the allure and perils of migration (to New York, Barbados ...). Told in various registers of Trinidad speech, the stories expose the underbelly of intimate island life. Rachel Manley’s brief foreword compares Mohammed to Chekhov and Naipaul—without going quite so far, we found this debut novel a good read.
Waiting for the Waters to Rise, by Maryse Condé (New York: World Editions, 2021, paper US$16.95), is the excellent translation by Richard Philcox (Maryse’s husband) of her 2010 En attendant la montée des eaux, her roughly seventeenth novel in order of composition. The indefatigable spinner of tales takes us from Francophone Africa (where she lived for many years) to her native Guadeloupe and on to the horrors and beauty of early twenty-first-century Haiti, through stories of a series of vividly-drawn characters. Postcolonial political violence is ubiquitous, but so is desire, affection, despair, and dreaming. Condé’s cynicism and deliberate political incorrectness peeks through (though less than in some of her books), but her fierce, cosmopolitan, unvarnished vision of a broken world filled with wonders and disappointments is what dominates the gripping tale. Fans of this winner of the 2018 Alternative Nobel Prize for Literature will welcome a new book by the woman whom Junot Díaz has called “a literary sorcerer.”

In What Storm, What Thunder (Portland OR: Tin House, 2021, cloth US$27.95), prolific scholar, activist, and novelist Myriam J.A. Chancy has produced a masterwork, an interwoven counterpoint concerning ten survivors of the Douze (in which some 250,000 residents of Port-au-Prince perished), relating their lives before, during, and after the great earthquake of January 12, 2010. From the elderly market woman who bookends the work to her children and grandchildren, from fixers and sex workers in a high-class hotel to the taxi-driver-without-papers in Boston and NGO-architect in Rwanda, these Haitians, whose lives intersect through the tragedy, become people we care about. Chancy provides vivid vignettes of pre-Douze Port-au-Prince, with all its class-based inequalities, as well as the tent camps and other horrors of the botched postquake international interventions, while never letting readers forget the sounds, sights, and smells of the event itself. She spent three years after the quake listening to stories survivors told about their own experiences and those who didn’t make it. Drawing on these and her own rich imagination, she has crafted an affecting, memorable work, rich in the humanity of her Haitian characters.

Why does Saint X (New York: Celadon Books, 2021, paper US$16.99), Alexis Schaitkin’s debut novel, though named “a New York Times notable book of 2020,” recommended by People and O, The Oprah Magazine, and even called “brilliant” by Joyce Carol Oates, strike us as overwritten, and a bit of a bore? Probably because the comments on race, class, gender, and White privilege (as well as the depiction of the Caribbean) that underly the narrative seem so trite. A luxury resort on a fictional small island serves as the setting for a Princeton coed’s mysterious death, after which the story moves between the New York milieux of an island-emigrant taxi-driver and the privileged sister of
the deceased and life back on the island. The White American author, in a note, tells us that she prepared for writing about the Caribbean by reading a list of books (which she cites), visiting Anguilla, and getting a few pointers on how to render Caribbean speech. Oates found the book “irresistibly suspenseful and canny”—we were not impressed.

Marketed as “an unforgettable work of magical realism” (inevitably compared to García Márquez and Rushdie), Popisho (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2021, cloth US$28.00; published in the U.K. by Faber as This One Sky Day) is the third novel by British-born, Jamaica-raised Leone Ross. There are Caribbean normalcies on this fictional archipelago (beauty contests, local elections, class struggles, hurricanes) and frequent discussions of local food, but also a great deal of fantasy. Each person is born with some sort of magical power, such as walking through walls or knowing the thoughts of others, and the central character, a professional cook, is addicted to eating hallucinogenic moths, while others snack on butterflies. There’s a lot of sex (mostly heterosexual) and at one point the women’s pum-pums start falling out; some put them in a pocket, others give them to a friend, and a number of them are strung up on a line in the local whorehouse. Both of us got through all 464 pages of the tale, but with different assessments—R.P. got tired of all the external pum-pum adventures, but S.P. was interested in the way the writing captured, without replicating, Caribbean speech. (The British edition of the book sports an adaptation of seventeenth/nineteenth-century fore-edge paintings, though it’s not hand-painted.)

Dangerous Freedom (London and Roseau, Dominica: Papillotte, 2020, paper US$16.95), by prize-winning Trinidadian novelist Lawrence Scott, is the unforgettable retelling of the often-revisited story (recent films, biographies) of Dido Belle (later Elizabeth d’Aviniere), child of an English sea captain and his enslaved African wife, who is raised in the home of her father’s uncle, England’s Lord Chief Justice. Dido’s recurring early memories, which range across the plantation Caribbean from Spanish Cartagena to British Pensacola, join her ongoing life in England as the ward and confidante of Lord Mansfield (who presided over the famous Somersett and Zong cases). Later married, her fears about the potential capture, enslavement, and transport to the West Indies of her mixed-race sons provide one of the searing vectors of the narrative. The letters exchanged between Elizabeth in London, who, in her later years, is working for the cause of abolition, and her mother in Pensacola, who, once freed, becomes a helpmate for runaways seeking freedom, are a second such vector. Throughout, the contradictions of late eighteenth-century British attitudes about commerce and liberty spring to life, as experienced by characters one grows to care about. Scott’s imagination weaves historical events and artifacts
(Equiano’s abolitionist meetings, Lord Mansfield’s decisions, David Martin’s 1778 Portrait of Dido Elizabeth Belle Lindsay and Lady Elizabeth Murray) into a moving reconstruction of Elizabeth’s life experience. Lyrical and gripping, this book shows how good historical fiction can be.

Island Queen (New York: William Morrow, 2021, paper US$ 27.99) is by Trinidad-descended, Vanessa Riley, a Stanford PhD in mechanical engineering, who describes herself as the author of several books of “Historical Fiction and Historical Romance (Georgian, Regency, & Victorian Eras) featuring hidden histories, dazzling multi-culture communities, and strong sisterhoods.” Island Queen is her most ambitious, recreating the life of Dorothy Kirwan Thomas (1756–1846). Born enslaved on Monserrat, Thomas never learned to read but succeeded—despite experiencing slave rebellions, wars, incest, and rape, and giving birth to ten children fathered by various men—to buy her freedom and become a leading businesswoman in Grenada, Dominica, Barbados, and Demerara (owning a large slave plantation in the latter colony). Consort to Prince William, future King of England, when he visited Dominica (and remaining his friend for decades), she fought for the rights of the enslaved and those of free colored women both in the colonies and on her frequent trips to London. This sprawling historical novel (complemented by a useful author’s note that describes her research) is narrated by Dorothy Kirwan herself, and succeeds in revealing many of the forces that influenced the Caribbean portion of the British Empire during the long eighteenth century. How well it succeeds as historical fiction, we leave to connoisseurs of the genre. (Newspaper reviews have been quite positive.)

Assembly (New York: Little, Brown, 2021, cloth US$ 25.00), Natasha Brown’s beautifully-written debut novel, is a searing indictment of the British class/race system. Granddaughter, apparently, of immigrants from Jamaica, her first-person narrator writes that she was “Born here, parents born here, always lived here—still, never from here.” Brown, who studied mathematics at Cambridge and spent a decade working in financial services, has produced a stream-of-consciousness, often poetic, always biting, account of life as a “successful” Millennial Black British woman, forever questioning the world (of bankers, of men, of old money, of the remnants of Empire …) swirling around her and continuously contending with “crushing objecthood.” One hundred pages to be read in a single sitting, pitch-perfect.

Easily Fooled, by H. Nigel Thomas (Montreal QC: Guernica Editions, 2021, paper US$ 21.95), recounts the coming of age in St. Vincent of Millington, who becomes an Authentic Methodist Church minister before he leaves for Barbados (where some of his parishioners are also Spiritual Baptists), then flees to Montreal, leaving the ministry, and coming out as gay. Lots of sexual banter, par-
tying, and worries about Methodism and homosexuality. The narrative quickly switches between present and past, with some teenage experiences—such as sexual abuse by a male folk-healer—emerging only at the book’s end.

*Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (Brooklyn NY: Akashic, 2022, paper US$18.95), the debut novel of André Lewis Carter, draws in part on the life experience of the author, a retired U.S. Navy veteran. Cuban-American César Alvarez, the protagonist, a street tough from Orlando, escapes a life of crime by enlisting in the Navy during the Vietnam War where he endures bootcamp, signalman school, and life on an aircraft carrier, encountering rampant discrimination, prejudice, and eventually a full-blown Black-White race riot. Straightforward prose, a bit light on writerly imagination.

*Mona Passage* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2021, cloth US$22.95) is by Thomas Bardenwerper, an American Coast Guard veteran who was stationed for two years in Puerto Rico and, while studying at Harvard Law School, wrote this debut novel. Set in Puerto Rico, its plot involves a straight shooter Coast Guard officer, his Cuban-born neighbor, people-smugglers who traffic Cubans across the Mona Channel that he patrols, and family ties. The story moves right along but the writing is rather wooden, and by the end we wondered whether it might not be better on Netflix than as a novel.

*Les contes du Chemin-Roche* (Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, France: Jets d’Encre, 2020, US$24.90) is the third novel by Louis Zou, a retired schoolteacher and poet from Guadeloupe, in which an uncle describes to his nephew the long-gone rural world of his childhood, presented in the form of eighteen vignettes, with lots of local color (two donkeys named Flore and Surprise), including token use of Creole. Much of the tone (especially in dialogue) is carried by exclamation points, sometimes over two dozen on a page. We found the writing extravagant and pretentious throughout.

*BACPanthère* 973 (Paris: Anovi, 2021, paper €12.00) is a polar by H.K. Bronson (pseudonym of Mickaël Boulard, a former member of the brutal Anti-Crime Brigade in Cayenne). Apparently, the first of a series of self-subsidized books, it allegedly fictionalizes lived experiences, “mixing black humor with trash action” as the bad-ass narrator cruises the nighttime streets on his Harley. Violence, sex, degradation, with a good deal of local color. To be read in one sitting, only by those with a very strong stomach.

*Wisi Bergi—La Montagne Sorcière: Une histoire de résistance en Guyane* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2021, paper US$18.87), a debut novel by Olson Kwadjiani, a 27-year-old “Businenge” who is a French citizen, relates a simple tale: efforts by a young Maroon, his Amerindian friend, and their companions who live in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni to block France’s industrial megamine project on the nearby Montagne d’Or, which threatens to destroy the flora, fauna, and sacred
sites that are part of their cultural heritage. A strategy meeting of Maroons is attended by a troupe of Ndyuka-speaking Spider monkeys, who offer advice; the Maroon protagonist lures a French “lobbyiste” into a homosexual relationship in order to gain information about truck routes, which enables the protesters to block delivery of material to the site; there’s gay sex, violence, kidnapping, and murder; and in the end, when the lobbyist learns that his lover was simply using him for information, he hangs himself. For many reasons, including its comic-book-like plot, this is not our cup of tea—though the struggle against the mining project is laudable.

*United States of Banana: A Graphic Revolution* (Columbus OH: Mad Creek, 2021, paper US$19.95) is a postmodern graphic novel, adding illustrations by Swedish cartoonist Joakim Lindengren to parts of Puerto Rican writer Giannina Braschi’s 2011 postmodern text (also called *USB*). The result is a complex tale about U.S. imperialism and Puerto Rican independence, featuring the Statue of Liberty (who has a Jewish cat), Chico Marx, Zarathrustra, Don Quixote, René Magritte, Fidel Castro, Hamlet, Donald Trump, and many others debating such issues as global warming, terrorism, immigration, mass incarceration, and much more, all in the name of anticolonialism. An introduction by Amanda M. Smith and Amy Sheeran, professors of Latin American Literature and Spanish, respectively, provides important help in unpacking the narrative, citing multiple scholarly sources. This is the trippiest work in this year’s Bookshelf.

*La cripta*, by Puerto Rican writer and professor Félix Joaquín Rivera (Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico: Editora Educación Emergente, 2021, paper US$17.00), a slim text (70-some pages, with a dozen line drawings by Martín García Rivera), is described on its cover as a philosophical, Afrofuturistic, nonbinary, queer work. This strange novella is filled with a variety of monsters (that live not far from Hato Rey), including chupacabras, zombis, and other mysteries and makes occasional allusion to Yoruba beliefs. The acknowledgments include H.P. Lovecraft and Jules Verne.

Finally, we alert readers that Myriam J.A Chancy’s excellent novel largely set in Haiti, *The Loneliness of Angels* (see “Bookshelf 2010”), has recently appeared in Spanish: *Loas* (Bogotá: Lasirén, 2020, paper COL$50,000.00), translated by Mónica María del Valle Idáraga and María Luísa Valencia Duarte.

On to poetry.

*The Dyzgraph*st: a poem (Toronto ON: McClelland & Stewart, 2020, paper US$18.79), by St. Lucia-born, Canada-based Canisia Lubrin, is the 2021 winner of the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. Linguistically challenging (with English, some French, a good bit of St. Lucian Créole, and even some Melanesian Pidgin), this meandering search for self in a world of migration, war, and ecological disaster, with the ghosts of colonialism everpresent, pos-
itively exudes what Glissant called “opacity.” Poet Vahni Capildeo, one of the Bocas judges, commented: “It is thrilling to read it and to relish giving up the illusion of mastery of meaning; to revel in not fully understanding, like swimming beyond the breakers in a sea full of flotsam and jetsam.” Lovers of poetry who are unafraid of experimentation and difficulty need to read this book.

*of colour* (Buffalo NY: Essay Press, 2020, paper US$15.95), by Trinidad-born-and-raised Katherine Agyemaa Agard, is a wondrous blend of poetry, prose, and images (photographed and painted), centered on identity, colors (particularly indigo, but the whole idea of color is in question), family, and place (T&T, Cambridge MA, and Elmina Castle, as well as others). Shifting fonts, blank space, and different-sized images rub shoulders with prose/poetry that is bitter, humorous, erudite, and personal. Questioning herself, always seeking, this granddaughter of a Ghanaian immigrant and descendant of another Scottish one (hence her names), whose undergraduate degree at Harvard was in Social Anthropology and Visual and Environmental Studies, is a young writer to watch.

*What Noise against the Cane* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2021, paper US$20.00), Desiree C. Bailey’s wonderful début collection, plunges readers into her Trinidad and Tobago childhood, her early emigration to Queens (“Me and my brother stare at the skies, waiting for snow. Just 50 degrees ... / Our father in the flesh. No longer over the phone ... / The new school wants to know if I can read cat, dog, hat. I think they think big words don’t exist on islands.”), and her young adult life: the horrors of police brutality (Abner Luima, Amadou Diallo—“Black innocence: chopped down, stolen”) and her ambivalence about *Orfeo negro* (“Aren’t we charmed and exquisite, dancing as we’ve always danced, drenched in our cane-taint?”). The book is framed by a long, moving poem set at the beginning of the Haitian Revolution; its briefer aftermath is set in Brooklyn. And there’s a long poem, “Sea Voice,” a kind of Greek chorus spoken in Trinian nation language, that runs across the bottom edge of every page in the book, evoking the whole diaspora, and the ultimate resilience of its people, as well as the sea itself.

*Letters to America* (London: Carcanet, 2020, paper US$17.83), by Guyanese-British writer Fred D’Aguiar, now based at UCLA, presents 22 poems in which Britain, the Caribbean (Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados ...), and the United States appear in memory fragments, some lyrical, others sharp as bone. We particularly liked “Calypso,” his encounters with a gentle Rastaman (“King David Cooks Ital in Port Antonio”), and his dialogue with MLK in “Call & Response.” In these thoughtful poems, the Caribbean of Walcott and Brathwaite meets present-day Los Angeles.
D’Aguiar follows *Letters to America* with 20 elegiac lyrics in *Grace Notes* (Oswestry, U.K.: Fair Acre Press, 2021, paper £7.50), brief reflections on his recently deceased friend, pianist Grace Theriault. Preoccupied during the year by his own mortality (see *Year of Plagues: A Memoir of 2020*, below), but always retaining a certain lightness in his homage, he speaks to her directly: “We miss you every day / We wonder at all times / how you would view some / thing that happens without / you here with us to see it, / that is how we share it / with you as days line up / between your absence our / continued time moving on / toward the same fate / that took you from us ... / To leave this world for the chance / to be with you might be how we spend / the rest of our days missing you.” There is a quiet intimacy and persuasiveness to these poems.

*Mother Muse,* by Lorna Goodison (London: Carcanet, 2021, £10.99), is a truly stunning collection—62 finely crafted, always interesting poems, most in homage to two women whose contributions to the world of Jamaican music have been underrecognized—Sister Mary Ignatius (“Sister Iggy”), who ran a school for wayward boys and mentored many of Jamaica’s foremost musicians (among them the great trombonist Don Drummond, who starred with the Skatalites in the 1960s), and dancer Anita “Margarita” Mahfoud, Drummond’s lover and, ultimately, murder victim. The poems explore the two women’s backgrounds, Drummond’s conversion to Rastafarianism, Mahfoud’s death, and surrounding themes, and the final ones expand the focus to treat Jamaican colorism, feminism, Mahalia Jackson, Marion Anderson, victims of the Windward expulsions, and even Sandra Bland. The cover image, “Mother Muse,” is a painting by Goodison. This is our favorite book of poetry of the year.

*New Voices: Selected by Lorna Goodison, Poet Laureate of Jamaica, 2017–2020* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2020, paper US$25.00) is a collection of the prize-winning and shortlisted works of the Poet Laureate of Jamaica Prizes for Poetry between 2017 and 2020, the dates of Goodison’s tenure. As one might expect, the poems, by emerging young writers encouraged by Goodison, are varied. Some are in Jamaican Creole, others in standard English, and some switch between the two, evoking everything from Saturday soup to AK-47s, from nation language to bauxite trains. Many surprise and there’s an air of promise throughout.

*This Thing That Is Not A Thing* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 2020, paper US$20.00) is Paulette A. Ramsay’s fifth collection. Presence and absence, speech and silence, things that are not things are the leitmotifs, with gender as the center: women’s speech (or, more often, women’s silence) speaks volumes. Sometimes, it’s sad and existential; other times, fun: “yuh ask him yuh have a mirror / him say yes, mi have mirror / yuh shake yuh head / yuh know is a sign of Jamaican / ugly man syndrome / de uglier dem be / cause there is not one
Jamaican / ugly man / dat know or believe / dat him is ugly // hungry man / bruk foot man / tink him full eye / ... / is true /gully man or rat man / tink him can get any woman.” A rewarding brief collection.

*Make the World New: The Poetry of Lillian Allen*, edited by Ronald Cummings (Waterloo ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2021, paper US$19.99), presents a vibrant selection from this Jamaica-born-and-raised, Canadian dub poet’s decades-long work. These striking performance poems, celebrating a working-class perspective about coloniality and struggle, open with “Queenie Queenie and the Fall of Colonial Empire” (on the Queen’s visit to Spanish Town and the fate of nine-year old Delveena, waiting with her uniformed classmates by the road, who “looked up and saw an ordinary looking white person. She asked to make sure. A dat de Queen? A she dat? A de Queen dat?”) to “Pandemic,” which asks, “How can we fathom that stepping out your door / Or going to the supermarket / to get groceries / or to meet up with friends at dusk / could be a death sentence? // Ask any young Black man.” In an afterword about the pleasure of being a poet, we are advised to “read these poems so you can hear the roll and curvature of the language.” We did and we heard. This is a terrific collection.

*No Ruined Stone* (Farmington ME: Alice James Books, 2021, paper US$18.95), by prize-winning Jamaica-born Shara McCallum, brilliantly imagines the life of Scottish poet Robert Burns as if he’d carried out his plan to migrate to Jamaica to participate in the management of a plantation near Port Antonio in 1786. The poems speak in several voices: Burns (who disparages himself as “incapable of any good at all. / Deepening bouts of depression batter, / leaving me wasted and spent”); Douglas (who opines, “They are good for nothing but toiling and fucking”); Douglas’s daughter with an enslaved woman (who says of her father and his ilk, “wretchedness / is fast imprinted on them, their souls / shrunken by the whip, which seldom fails / to destroy not only those forced / to yield to it, but all who wield it”); and, finally, Douglas’s granddaughter, who is passing for White in Scotland (admitting that “I’d recite the tale we’d rehearsed. / My mother was a Spaniard, over / from the neighboring island of Cuba.”). These poems, based on several years of historical research, are riveting.

*All The Names Given* (Portland OR: Tin House, 2021, paper US$16.95) is the second collection by multi-prize-winning Raymond Antrobus, whose roots are in Jamaica and England. With his deafness often explicit, he writes of his mixed identities, beginning with a visit to the village of Antrobus in Cheshire, where many of his ancestors are apparently buried: “Sir Edmund Antrobus, (3rd baronet) / slaver, beloved father / over-seer, owner of plantations // in Jamaica, British Guiana and St. Kitts.” Intimate, many about family (particularly his mother and father), and often tender, these poems are also about memory and miscommunication. Images of sound, touch, and silence recur. So does
slavery, drunkenness, blackness, and police brutality. This is a spare, thoughtful, truly fine set of poems.

Thinking with Trees, by Jason Allen-Paisant (London: Carcanet, 2021, paper US$14.99), is a remarkable work that conjures with the sights, smells, and dangers for a Black man walking in a British forest near his new home and with memories of the Jamaican woodlands of his youth: “Our parents and grandparents planted yams / potato slips reaped tomatoes / carrots and so on / Then market then money / then food then clothes / then shoes to go to school // Now I’m practicing a different way / of being with the woods only / I try not to stray too far from the path ... / The daisies glitter / at my feet.” An English park, a Jamaican yam ground ... Learning new names (and meanings) of trees and plants (and even the meaning of walking dogs in the woods) ... Wordworth’s daffodils refigured: “Imagine daffodils in the corner / of a sound system // in Clapham / Can’t you? // Well you must / try to imagine daffodils // in the hands of a black family / on a black walk // in spring.” These strong, lyrical poems are all about the Caribbean immigrant author’s “work of making the land home.” It’s a stunning debut collection.

All the Rage (Brooklyn NY: Nightboat Books, 2021, paper US$16.95), by Trinidian-American literature professor/performance artist/poet Rosamond S. King, screams out its message in a series of poems about police violence against Black people, White fear, and what it is like to live in what she calls “the Abattoir,” where “we live under the blade” and where “there is a larger economy based on our / systematic, continuous / and premature death ... Yonder [where White folks live] they do love our / flesh; they love it jiggling / they love it naked ...” “White Woman Calls Police,” which details case after case of terror (from Emmet Till in 1955 to the Central Park dogwalker in 2020), pretty much speaks for itself, as does “Corona [virus] is in Queens,” where “someone / has to make the meat, someone has to / package it, ring it up, deliver / already rife with Asthma / ,Diabetes, Hypertension, Fibroids / ,Endometriosis, Miscarriages / ,Mental Illness ... / It’s no wonder Corona is in Queens.” More performative than strictly literary, these hard-hitting poems speak truth to power.

Floaters (New York: Norton, 2021, cloth US$26.95), by multi-award-winning Brooklyn-born Martín Espada (poet, essayist, translator, editor, and attorney for the poor) whose father was a Puerto Rican activist and documentary photographer in New York, continues his lyrical yet piercing assaults on bigotry and injustice. “Floaters” are what the Border Patrol calls migrants who drown in the Rio Grande. They are just some of the “Josés” that Espada brings to life (often invoking their names) in this frequently violent, sometimes tender, always relentlessly honest collection of prose poems. Several are explicitly Puerto Rican—“Flan,” “The Five Horses of Doctor Ramón Emeterio Betances,”
and “Letter to My Father” about the beauty and devastation of his native Utuado after the hurricane where “The president flips rolls of paper towels to a crowd at a church in Guaynabo.” A ten-page concluding section provides detailed background on almost all of the poems. In November 2021, Floaters won the National Book Award for poetry.

The Vault (Farmington ME: Alice James Books, 2021, paper US$17.95), by Andrés Cerpa, whose parents were Puerto Rican and who spent childhood summers on the island, is an intimate poetic cry about displacement, mourning, and loss, influenced by his father’s recent death. Images of urns, the vault, ashes, and weeping reappear and, at least at some moments, lead toward a possible future after tragedy and suffering, largely through love. These poems are eminently personal.

Puerto Rican poet and scholar Mara Pastor has gifted us a bilingual (Spanish/English) collection, Deuda Natal [Natal Debt] (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2021, paper US$16.95, with translations by María José Giménez & Anna Rosenwong), titled while on a sea voyage from Mexico to Puerto Rico, rereading Césaire’s Cahier d’un retour au pays natal. These poems (her sixth collection) reflect stays in Michigan, Mexico, and her current home in Ponce. She often interrogates memory, as sparked by everyday objects: “The past of this island can only be seen / in the badly glued shards of a broken rearview mirror: / rusted memories / that are closer than they appear.” Some of the poems movingly (and cleverly) evoke her experience of becoming a mother. Another has the busts of Martí around the world (in Cuba, in Argentina, in Shanghai …) all talking at once, “the chattering so immense, so strident / that every Martí made it impossible to hear the rest.” This is a memorable collection, winner of the 2020 Ambroggio Prize of the Academy of American Poets.

Boat People, 20 Spanish-language poems by Puerto Rican poet/novelist/short story writer Mayra Santos-Febres, was first published by Ediciones Callejón in San Juan in 2005; in 2017 six of the poems were republished and translated by Vanessa Pérez-Rosario, a professor at CUNY, in SX Salon. Now the full set is presented by Pérez-Rosario, who adds a useful six-page essay on the collection’s themes and imagery, writing of Santos-Febres’s “cimarrón poetics,” with Haitian Creole as well as Puerto Rican and Dominican vernacular sprinkled into the verses. This new edition (Phoenix AZ: Cardboard House Press, 2021, paper US$15.00), in Spanish and English, evokes the perilous lives of Caribbean (and other) undocumented migrants in “a watery wilderness / with its enormous city of the dead / swollen in salt.” In the long Caribbean tradition of viewing the sea as the fount of memory and possibility, from the Middle Passage to a space of marronage, these poems take us into the maelstrom, filled with danger, with hope somewhere off on the distant horizon.
Razón de Covid-19 y otros artefactos (ad)yectentes (Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico: Editora Educación Emergente, 2021, gratis) is Puerto Rican poet and painter Edgar E. Ramírez Mella’s seventh published collection. (Like other books in eee’s Libros Libres series, this one is downloadable gratis at www.editoraemergente.com.) With frequent nods to earlier poets, from Blake and Whitman to Darío and Ginsberg, these pandemic poems (of which several relate to Camus’s plague) evoke the writer’s feelings and reflections on particular days, from shopping in a supermercado to home confinement (with too much alcohol and cigarettes). They are personal, strong, and sometimes explicitly political (on the uprising against Governor Roselló, world hunger, or the murder of George Floyd), and they are accompanied by several stunning Cuarentena (quarantine) artworks by Mexican-born René Maynez.

In 2017, Rafael Nino Félix, a poet and professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, published the collection África en mi piel, which has now appeared in a trilingual edition as Africa in my Skin / África en mi piel / L’Afrique dans la peau (Philipsburg, St. Maarten: House of Nehesi, 2021, paper US$ 20.00). Explicitly written in the tradition of Negritude, it decries the inhumanity of slavery, asserts the wish to be (re)Africanized, and laments the horrors of modern racism: “La lluvia cae / bajo la mirada indiferente de las élites / La lluvia cae / bajo la mirada de los dioses / La lluvia cae / bajo el canto de África en mi garganta ... ¿Quién dice que no llevo / en la piel a la lejana África, / el sueño de un esclavo / que no tuvo mañana?” Or, “Yo también sangro en estas islas del Caribe cuando veo / a través de los videos cómo en la nación más poderosa / de la tierra asesinan por negros a mis hermanos.”

sos: Season of Storms (Philipsburg, St. Maarten: House of Nehesi, 2021, paper US$ 20.00) is journalist-poet Fabian Adekunle Badejo’s latest collection—free verse recounting three recent crises in the island: Hurricane Irma, the protests surrounding the French effort to expel the residents of Sandy Point, and the ongoing Covid pandemic. He writes, “I found the zinc sheet / That was once on my roof / In the overcrowded graveyard pond,” or again “My private library / Gone / The public library / Gone / My treasured Bearden / Gone ... The whole house / Gone ... But the mailbox remained / And the bathtub, too.” The longest poem in the book is a heartfelt homage written after the passing of Kamau Brathwaite.

Then, drama:

Two Nineteenth-Century Plays from Trinidad: Martial Law in Trinidad [by E.L. Joseph, 1832] and Past and Present [by Anonymous, ca. 1852], edited by Bridget Brereton & Lise Winer (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2021, paper US$ 25.00), is part of the Caribbean Heritage Series, which previously published four novels, including Joseph’s Warner Arundell: The Adven-
tutes of a Creole (1838). Brereton presents fascinating introductions to each play as well as to the author of the first one, noting that both dramas “are rare examples of nineteenth-century Trinidadian literature.” Lise Winer contributes a helpful “Note on the Language of the Plays.” There is much local color in these short farces (interracial relations, class divisions in the White population, duels, creole speech), and this volume makes the most of them.

Miscellaneous nonfiction, not otherwise reviewed in NWIG:

Antiman: A Hybrid Memoir, by Rajiv Mohabir (Brooklyn NY: Restless Books, 2021, cloth US$27.00), is a remarkable work, mainly in prose but lavishly sprinkled with poetry and ancient song texts, all about identity and (not-)belonging, geographical origins, speaking many languages, and immigration. Family history begins in nineteenth-century Uttar Pradesh and South India followed by indenture and its aftermath as Coolies in British Guiana, then on to Central Florida, Toronto, and Queens (with a year to learn Hindi and discover roots in Varanasi, north India), and, throughout, adventures in being a brown-skinned, queer, outsider. From an early age, Mohabir spends time with his maternal grandmother (who still speaks Caribbean Hindi/Bhojpuri and Guyanese Creole but little English), recording, transcribing, and annotating her songs (and her versions of the Ramayana)—the transcriptions of Guyanese Creole are a joy to read. He deals with White supremacists in Orlando, his homophobic father, and a multiplicity of homosexual partners. There are wonderful passages when he’s asked his caste in what he thinks is his paternal ancestor’s village in India, and is forced to lie because of the complications of what happened to that essential diacritic in British Guiana, or when he describes the micro neighborhoods of Queens, where Guyanese Coolies live in Richmond Hill and Desi (real Indians) in Jackson Heights. Rarely have we read a book about Caribbean immigration that is so intimate, absorbing, and, ultimately, thought-provoking.

Year of Plagues: A Memoir of 2020 (New York: Harper, 2021, cloth US$26.99) is Fred D’Aguiar’s riveting, poetic, and intimate reflection of that Covid-inflected year during which he was diagnosed and treated for stage-4 prostate cancer. Imaginative in form—he dialogues with the disease that is attacking him (sometimes ceding the authorship of whole chapters to it)—and personal in describing the effects on his wife and children. The text is punctuated by memories of his boyhood in Airy Hall, a village forty miles from Georgetown, Guyana (“it had one of everything: one drunk, one madman, one shoemaker ... one corner shop for dry goods, one bakery”), as well as his teenage years in London, where his father drove a bus, and his adulthood in Miami and Los Angeles. Prize-winning novelist, poet, and playwright, he syncopates musings on his suddenly changing body with riffs on his musical and literary tastes, his reactions to the police murders and the BLM movement, and reflections about...
being Black in America, effectively calling on the antics of Anansi to tell his tale. It’s a strong and frightening book, revealing D’Aguiar’s vulnerability as well as his erudition. The extended passages about medical matters, from diagnoses and operations to urine leaks, hot flashes, and Kegels, eventually get tedious, though readers who’ve gone through complex cancer treatments may be more indulgent than we were. Overall, the book is touching, very human—and wonderfully Caribbean in sensibility.

*Musings, Mazes, Muses, Margins*, by Gordon Rohlehr (Leeds, U.K.: Peepal Tree Press, 2020. £13.99), is subtitled “a memoir” but it’s not like any other we (or we’d bet you) have ever read, consisting mainly of excerpts from a diary of dreams, each with a date and time, and ranging in theme from a vast number of lecture gigs about literature, music, and politics through airports and cityscapes, visits to his childhood near the Essequibo River in Guyana, incidents as a bass-man in the Birmingham University West Indian Students’ All Stars Steel Band, scenes from his many years in Trinidad, with snippets of films mixed in (all reimagined in complex dreamwork, some expressed in nation language), plus the occasional essay-style chapter (one on his father, aged 90, and another presenting the full text of his acceptance speech delivered when receiving an honorary doctorate from Sheffield University in 2009). As this master of calypso writes of the dreams, they “are crazy rearrangements of current events, exhumed memories from early childhood, suppressed crises, real and imaginary happenings, cinematic fantasies of violence that have nurtured illusions of power, dominance and control which, despite their absurdity in the realm of ordinary everyday experience, are terrifyingly real in the interior world of shadows.” What’s not to like in this very West Indian plunge into what Rohlehr signals as “mazes, labyrinths, corridors and shadowy places”?

*Memorbing Austin Clarke*, edited by Paul Barrett (Waterloo ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2020, paper US$39.99), is an engaging tribute by friends, editors, and other acquaintances of this pioneering, prize-winning, prolific Bajan-raised Canadian poet, novelist, and prose stylist, who died in 2016. Barrett writes that “he typically woke late, spent the day reading and researching, ate nothing until dinner, had his dinner with martinis at the Grand Hotel, returned home and wrote until the sun came up.” Others describe his love of cooking (often referring to his incomparable, truly wonderful *Pig Tails ’n Breadfruit: Rituals of Slave Food* [1999]), some take up the complex question of his alleged sexism, many applaud his insistence on the challenges of being Black in Canada, yet others his careful descriptions of life in Toronto. There are excerpts from letters exchanged with his friends Sam Selvon and Andrew Salkey (many involving food, and differences between “Jamaickans,” “Trickidadians,” and Bajans), and a hilarious letter describing his meeting with the Queen at
“Buckennam,” which ended saying it was “sweet, sweet, sweet.” The collection makes clear both the critical neglect of Clarke in CanLit and his role as one of Canada’s greatest post-World War II writers and its first important Black one.

In Stuart Hall (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2020, paper US$25.00), a volume in the Caribbean Biography Series, Annie Paul describes Hall’s life in direct narrative prose, drawing on his own autobiographical writings. She first outlines his childhood world in Kingston—his mother who aspired to upper-class status, his mild-mannered father who was chief accountant for United Fruit, the tennis court, and the many servants (whom the young Stuart liked to frequent)—a family atmosphere he found “suffocating and intolerable.” His escape was high school—Jamaica College, where the curriculum mimicked that in England—and the library at the Institute of Jamaica, where he read left-wing publications, already rebelling against his family’s “carefully constructed cocoon of class privilege.” With a Rhodes Scholarship at age 19, he headed for Merton College, Oxford, in 1951 for a degree in English Literature and gradually shifted his identity from Jamaican to West Indian. Three years later, as a postgraduate, he was playing jazz piano in a local café but still feeling like a colonial, linguistically and otherwise alienated from the working class he wished to embrace, even while developing ideas about diasporic identity and moving away from literature towards the historical, social, and political questions of the time. By the late 1950s, he had become one of the architects of the New Left and moved into Cultural Studies during the 1960s, bringing the tools of literary criticism to the study of working-class society. The 1970s and 80s at the Open University made him a public intellectual, through his widely-admired teaching on TV. “By the mid-1990s,” Paul writes, “Hall’s work had become influential in shaping the field of racial and ethnic studies globally. He was now a foundational figure for scholars in Britain, the United States, the Caribbean, India, Hong Kong and beyond, redefining the parameters of race research and identity.” By his death in 2014, this prolific author—whose published work transcended numerous disciplines, from history and sociology to film and criminology—had been awarded 29 honorary doctorates. Yet, Paul notes, “Despite his global currency, Hall’s death received little acknowledgment in Jamaica, where neither radio nor television stations paused their broadcasts to take note of his passing.”

In Selected Writings on Race and Difference, by Stuart Hall (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2021, paper US$31.95), editors Paul Gilroy and Ruth Wilson Gilmore gather 22 of Hall’s essays and lectures, dating from 1959 to 2006. They divide the work into three parts: “Riots, Race, and Representation” (with a focus on race and the media in Britain), “The Politics of Intellectual Work Against Racism” (with a focus on teaching and homages to C.L.R. James and the
Calypso kings who worked in England), and “Cultural and Multicultural Questions” (including Hall’s thoughts on Gramsci, Fanon, and the signature “Race, the Floating Signifier”). Gilroy provides a useful introduction and the collection, as a whole, is a terrific sampler of the master’s thinking.

In another slim volume in the Caribbean Biography Series, *Lucille Mathurin Mair* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2021, paper US$25.00), historian Verene A. Shepherd offers a sympathetic no-nonsense account of this anticolonial, pan-Caribbeanist feminist pioneer. After a colonial education in middle-class Jamaica, Mair was part of the generation of immediate post-World War II students from around the West Indies who attended University College London and LSE (including Elsa Goveia, Errol Barrow, Forbes Burnham, and Michael Manley). Excelling at History in England, she actively participated in the political debates of the day concerning independence and nationalism. In 1949, Mair followed her St. Lucian husband, who had become a barrister in London, back to his native island, where she taught and had three children until he died in a traffic accident a decade later. Returning to Jamaica, she pursued a doctorate in history, became involved in national politics, and went on to a career at the United Nations, where she served as Jamaica’s deputy permanent representative and became the first woman to be named U.N. Under-Secretary-General. Her doctoral thesis, “A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica, 1655–1844,” written under the direction of Goveia, was the first ever written on Caribbean women. Until her death in 2009, she remained an advocate for women, especially from the Global South, with Nanny of the Maroons as one of her guiding beacons.

*A Concise History of the Caribbean (2nd Edition)*, by B.W. Higman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, paper US$29.99), updates the original 2011 publication, which James Walvin called in his *NWIG* review “as fine a single volume study of the region as we are likely to get.” The narrative has been somewhat rewritten, there is a new section on World War II, and Higman now also seeks “to direct attention to contemporary challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, epidemic disease, and questions of identity and sovereignty ... and demands for reparations.” As in the original volume, only islands are included—Belize, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana remain beyond its scope. The exclusion of these territories, which seem so integral to the Caribbean story, is for us a missed opportunity. For example, discussion of the role of East Indian migrants in Trinidad suffers without comparison to the experiences of their counterparts in British Guiana and Suriname. Higman writes: “Trinidad was the most important receiver of Indians, taking about 40,000 by 1870, followed by Guadeloupe and Jamaica,” but British Guiana received many more indentured Indians than Trinidad and Suri-
name about as many as Jamaica. And he discusses Caribbean maroonage and Maroons without ever mentioning the most numerous of all Maroon peoples, in Suriname and French Guiana. Moreover, given Higman’s knowledge of the terrain, we frequently wanted more detail and nuance. Walvin called the original edition “a masterly feat of compression,” but perhaps it also demonstrates the limitations of any single-volume overview of the region. (We remember Sid Mintz—who, along with Michel-Rolph Trouillot, has been dropped from Higman’s updated bibliography—struggling for decades with his own version but always rejecting what he had drafted as being insufficiently complete.)

_Writing Gender into the Caribbean: Selected Essays 1988–2020_, by Patricia Mohammed (Hertford, U.K.: Hansib Publications Limited, 2021, US$38.73), has won the 2021 Barbara T. Christian Literary Award of the Caribbean Studies Association, which also gave the author the CSA Lifetime Achievement Award. This hefty volume (707 pages) collects 21 essays, including a half-dozen that were presented as lectures but had not been published. Many have been significantly revised. They range from a measured evaluation of Sparrow’s take on gender to a consideration of the impact of third-wave feminism on the Caribbean, from gender relations among early-twentieth century East Indians to a confrontation with masculinity in the life of Eric Williams. It’s a good place to explore changing trends in Caribbean gender scholarship during the past several decades, although the remarkable emergence of work on LGBTQ communities is largely absent.

_Methodologies in Caribbean Research on Gender and Sexuality_, edited by Kamala Kempadoo & Halimah A.F. Deshong (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2021, paper US$45.00), presents 28 (almost all previously published) essays that, together, encompass the history and scope of gender and sexuality studies in the Caribbean, from the 1960s to the present. The emphasis is on the Anglophone Caribbean (though there are chapters on Cuba, Haiti, and Suriname), with contributions from Lucille Mathurin Mair, Bridget Brereton, Patricia Mohammed, Gloria Wekker, Barry Chevannes, Rhoda Reddock, Lynn Bolles, Gina Ulysse, and many others. The focus is on methodologies, and the collection will be useful for graduate courses in several disciplines, as it offers an excellent overview of the field.

_Maladies of Empire: How Colonialism, Slavery, and War Transformed Medicine_, by Jim Downs (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2021, cloth US$29.95), is true world history, ranging from India and the Crimea to Jamaica. Turning the history of epidemiology on its head, inspired by Black feminist theory and criticism, Downs argues that “the simultaneous occurrence of the international slave trade, the expansion of colonialism, the Crimean War, the U.S. Civil War, and the travels of Muslim pilgrims” played a signal role in the devel-
opment of modern medicine—with enslaved Africans, soldiers and sailors, and imprisoned populations being the main (nameless, unconsenting) contributors. From demonstrations of the human need for oxygen, worked out by physicians on slave ships such as the infamous Brookes, to the understanding of cholera epidemics, as garnered from the Jamaica outbreak in 1850–51, the book shows “how slavery is imprinted on the DNA of epidemiology.” It also shows that, contrary to expectations, “Most doctors at the time thought of infectious disease primarily in terms of social and environmental factors rather than racial difference.” This excellent study inverts the usual focus on medical men to show how war, slavery, and colonialism shaped modern medicine.

Unmasking the State: Politics, Society and Economy in Guyana, 1992–2015, edited by Arif Bulkan & D. Alissa Trotz (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2019, paper US$48.95), is a book that we learned of only in late 2021, too late to assign it for a regular review—but we wanted to bring it to the attention of readers. The 500-plus-page volume focuses on “the PPP [People’s Progressive Party] years,” from 1992 (when the first free and fair elections since 1964 occurred) to the near-present, “a discrete period for analysis, though within a larger context where historical divisions, persistent constitutional manipulation, and systematic and institutional failures have produced successive periods of authoritarianism and corruption” (p. xix). The 18 chapters are organized under the headings of Constitutionalism, Democracy & Governance; Legacies of Racial Dysfunction; Insecurities of Neoliberalism; The Politics of Gender and Sexuality; and Lenses of Hope: Alternative Engagements with the State. The contributors range from graduate students to well-known senior professors, from specialists in law to forest management, from finance and economics to gender studies and politics, and from accounting to anthropology. Concerns about the environment vie with accounts of the LGBTIQ+ movement, and crime and ethnicity vie with masquerade and folklore in this wide-ranging and well-informed collection about Guyana’s very recent past.

African Maroons in Sixteenth-Century Panama: A History in Documents, edited by Robert C. Schwaller (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021, paper US$34.95), opens with an excellent summary of the history of these early freedom fighters, before presenting a treasure-trove of documents from the Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla), in English translation. From the first reports of maroons in 1525 through King Bayano’s mid-century maroon communities and Francis Drake’s raids, all the way to the first treaties between maroons and the Spanish (1579–81), the book makes clear that these Panama maroons are the best-documented maroons anywhere in the sixteenth century. As with other documents on maroons in the early Americas (from those in Hispaniola to the residents of Palmares in Brazil), there is precious little infor-
information in maroon voices or about life in maroon communities themselves. Nonetheless, this is an important collection, making available a slew of documents on early rebellions and rebels against slavery in the Americas.

*The Illustrated Story of Pan*, by Kim Johnson (Port of Spain: Pangea Ltd, 2021, cloth US$50.00), is the second edition of the acclaimed 2011 publication (which was highly praised by Bridget Brereton, Stephen Stuemple, and many others). The new, oversized, 300-plus-page book, with one or several photos on nearly every page, is an absolute joy, written by the former director of the Carnival Institute of Trinidad & Tobago and the world’s greatest expert on the history of pan. After a reflexive introduction about photography and oral history, and a chapter on early twentieth-century (mostly percussion) music in Trinidad, Johnson treats “The Audacity of the Creole Imagination” and the invention of pan during World War II, when more than 100,000 restless U.S. troops were stationed on the island. Lord Kitchener, whom Johnson calls “the poet laureate of the steelband movement,” in 1944 sang how the panmen could defeat the Nazis: “We are quite prepared to meet this madman from Germany / No bullets, no gun / The beating of the steel band go make you run / Adolf Hitler, be on your guard / Here comes the steel band from Trinidad.” Johnson traces American influence, beginning with the tremendous popularity of Hollywood films as early as the 1920s, and how it shaped Carnival and mas. There are chapters on the gradual bourgeois acceptance of pan and its incorporation into island politics. But Johnson lets the remarkable photos, chosen from his archive of 4,000, and the oral testimonies he has gathered over the years from pan pioneers (which are a great read) speak largely for themselves. This is a book that anyone interested in Carnival, Trinidad & Tobago, Caribbean music, and the West Indies should savor for years to come.

*Miss Pat: My Reggae Music Journey* (New York: VP Music Group, 2020, cloth, US$55.00) is at once a memoir, a family photo album, and a history of the dissemination of Jamaican music during the second half of the twentieth century. Authored by Dorothy Patricia Chin (Miss Pat herself) with help from four contributing writers, it chronicles her life and the central role she played in the development and dissemination of Jamaican music, from Mento, Ska, and Rocksteady to Reggae and Dancehall. This (very) large format, (very) amply illustrated volume, richly peppered with encomiums by a range of musicians, takes readers from her childhood, through the early years of the efforts that she and her husband, Vincent “Randy” Chin, made to promote musical forms in Jamaica (Randy’s Record Mart, followed by Studio 17, in Kingston), and on to their 1970s move to New York (Jamaica, Queens), where they founded VP Records, today the world’s largest independent reggae label and distributor of Caribbean music.
In *Rough Riding: Tanya Stephens and the Power of Music to Transform Society*, edited by Adwoa Ntozake Onuora, Anna Kasafi Perkins & Ajamu Nangwaya (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2020, paper US$37.00), Tanya Stephens—reggae and dancehall star, social activist, and feminist—known for her super-woke lyrics, gets her due in diverse chapters written by scholars, reggae artists, and cultural activists. As Carolyn Cooper writes in the foreword, “Stephens rips fabric as a political act, tearing down the veil of respectability that conceals the rot in society. Violence against women and girls is her primary preoccupation ... but she also punches holes in the façade of propriety that barely conceals a wide range of social injustices that oppress marginalized groups in Jamaica.”

*Aerial Imagination in Cuba: Stories from Above the Rooftops* (New York: Routledge, 2019, paper US$22.95), by visual/multimodal anthropologist Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier, and illustrated by José Manuel Fernández Lavado, is an innovative ethnography of life in Santiago de Cuba. In five brief chapters, she explores “what wi-fi antennas, cactuses, pigeons, the lottery, congas, and bees have in common” in the hope that she can provide “a sense of how the sky allows forms of circulation to happen. The sky [she insists] is a space of circulation, and a multitude of information travels through the air.” The ethnographic vignettes, what she calls “illustrated ethno-fiction stories,” are “interspersed with historical, social, and economic background information.” The characters are “in part fictional” but “based on people who are part of my personal life in Cuba.” (She is married to a Cuban whose family lives in Santiago.) Taken together, these intimate stories—wonderfully told—along with the drawings paint a compelling and often moving picture of everyday life in Cuba's second city.

*Negra cubana tenía que ser* (Barcelona: Ediciones Wanafrica, 2020, paper €19.00) collects over 60 previously published short texts by Cuban feminist, lesbian, and Black activist Sandra Abd’Allah-Alvarez Ramírez. Varying from childhood reminiscences and political reflections to essays on music, ethnicity, migration, discrimination, sexuality, love, and race, as well as memories of women from Celia Cruz to Audre Lorde, it paints a picture of an alternative, underground current in Cuban life.
Lydia Cabrera’s classic *La lengua sagrada de los Ñañigos* (1988) has finally been published in English as *The Sacred Language of the Abakuá*, edited and translated by Ivor L. Miller & P. González Gómez-Cásseres (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020, paper US$45.00). This oversized, richly illustrated paperback appears to be the largest lexicon of sacred words and phrases in the African diaspora, collected by Cabrera largely in 1940s Regla and other parts of Havana. The early nineteenth-century ancestors of these Cubans arrived, enslaved, from the Cross River region of Nigeria and southwestern Cameroon and melded a set of lodges and rituals for mutual aid, both conserving and creolizing prayers, rites, and practices from their various homelands. Miller’s useful introduction and a plethora of notes add value to Cabrera’s research, as does an appendix on Cross River etymologies. Many of the editors’ comments are amplified by those of modern-day Abakuá specialists whom they consulted. The editors largely share Cabrera’s posture of trying for an “insider’s” view of Abakuá, engaging only occasionally with the large, sometimes critical literature on the subject.

*Diario Habana 1804*, by Alexander von Humboldt, edited by Michael Zeuske (Havana: Ediciones Bachiller, 2021, available gratis at http://www.bnjm.cu/img/noticias/2021/10/28/DIARIO%20HABANA%201804%20HUMBOLT.pdf), is the first publication of manuscript pages, unknown to scholars before 2006, that Humboldt wrote in Havana (in French, Spanish, and German) and that are now in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków, Poland. Zeuske’s learned introduction (40 pages) helpfully situates the diary among Humboldt’s prolific writings, voyages, and concerns about slavery in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution and the expansion of sugar in Cuba. And it reminds us that Humboldt was “an abolitionist, anti-colonialist, and anti-racist” as well as “one the best exponents of the application of science to the progress of humanity.” Humboldt’s diary, amply annotated by Zeuske, is consistently comparative, offering demographic and agricultural data on Jamaica, Haiti, and other Caribbean islands, as well as greater details garnered from his stay in Cuba.

Since we began writing entries for “Bookshelf,” we’ve enjoyed many books of photographs that capture life in Cuba, from street life and rituals to domestic scenes and rural landscapes. But none have bowled us over—artistically, conceptually, and in terms of their innovative composition—like Raúl Cañibano’s *Absolut Cuba* (Baden, Austria: Edition Lammerhuber, 2021, cloth €59.00). Cañibano was a welder in Cuba who taught himself photography, developing a “somewhat surrealist” style based on his study of great paintings. The black and white photos are remarkable creations of differently layered imagery, often managing to capture in-your-face close-ups coexisting with faraway figures. Many reflect his fascination with different forms of water ... street floods, ocean
waves, rain-drenched faces, and more. His integration of shadows—always thought-provoking and often humorous—is just one of many devices he calls on to connect disparate elements in an imaginative composition. Leonardo Padura Fuentes’s introductory essay is just the icing on the cake ... and well worth reading for anyone trying to grasp what it is that makes Cuba Cuba.

_Tiempo de fotografía_, by Gilda Perez (Ediciones inCUBAdora / Libri Prohibiti, 2021 (ebook available gratis at https://indd.adobe.com/view/642846bc-35c9-4316-9a41-51e6817b91b7 or for download at https://incubadorista.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/ebook_gilda_perez.pdf) begins with a set of brief analyses/homenajes from a dozen well-known Latin American photographers, and then presents 24 of Perez’s striking black-and-white images (mainly of Cuba but also several of Switzerland, Spain, and Venezuela), mostly from the 1980s and early 90s, before she went into exile—she currently lives in Miami. They are well worth contemplation.

_Folk Stories from the Hills of Puerto Rico / Cuentos folklóricos delas montañas de Puerto Rico_, by Rafael Ocasio (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021, paper US$19.95), is a bilingual anthology of folktales collected in 1914—15 by John Alden Mason, working under the supervision of Franz Boas, on the Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In his 27-page introduction, Ocasio outlines the collecting methods (including the use of schoolchildren as transcribers, the anonymizing of the Jíbaro tale-tellers), the years of editing by an early twentieth-century Stanford Spanish professor, Aurelio Espinosa, and the eventual publication of the full set included in this volume during the 1920s, in the Boas-edited _Journal of American Folklore_. (Mason also collected some stories from Black Puerto Ricans in the fishing community of Loíza, but these were never published.) The political and intellectual background to this collection, and more detailed analysis of the content of the tales, can be found in Ocasio’s _Race and Nation in Puerto Rican Folklore_ (2020)—see the review in _NWIG_ 95(3&4). The stories themselves, although stripped of much of what would have been their vernacular flavor by the collecting, transcribing, and editing process, are nonetheless fun to read. Like Mason, Ocasio is charmed by the figure of the Jíbaro (the identity of his own parents), the rural “White” mountain dweller, and sees them as representing if not _the_ essential culture of the island, at least a very important part of it.

_Mi María: Surviving the Storm, Voices from Puerto Rico_ (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021, paper US$19.95), edited by Ricia Anne Chansky & Marci Denesiuk (who teach English at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez), presents 17 narratives collected between 2018 and 2020 using the Voice of Witness oral history method, which means that subjects offer birth-to-the-present accounts, culminating in this case with María. The stories are varied, featuring speak-
ers from different walks of life: coffee farmers, a dental technician, students, teachers, artists, a physician, a hotel worker ... There are commonalities—the utter debacle of federal aid, the lamentable quality of the public education system, frequent back-and-forth migration to the mainland. And there are a few gripping accounts of the hurricane experience: Zaira, a teacher, and her husband, Juan Carlos, who survived the hurricane by floating for 16 hours on a patched air mattress in a house filled to the ceiling with sewage. Taken together, the stories paint a picture of contemporary Puerto Rico, shamefully neglected by its U.S. overlords yet, somehow, surviving with a distinctive flair.

*Chulos de la pobreza y otras crónicas* [Poverty Pimps and Other Chronicles] (Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico: Editora Educación Emergente, 2021, paper US$19.00), by Puerto Rican anthropologist and social critic Rima Brusi-Gilde Lamadrid, is a series of chatty reflections, most written between 2017 and 2020, covering the aftermath of Hurricane María, the overthrow of the governor, and the coming of Covid-19, as seen from Mayagüez, Río Piedras, and the Bronx. Following on her three other short books of literary chronicles, published between 2011 and 2019, this one again presents her mordant take on everyday struggles and experiences, from a conversation with a flat-earth proponent to thoughts about racism and Aunt Jemima. The work is nicely illustrated by the line drawings of Zuleira Soto Román.

*Filosofía del cimarronaje*, by Pedro Lebrón Ortiz (Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico: Editora Educación Emergente, 2021, paper US$25.00), extends the importance of the concept of marronage in political philosophy, which has been growing in recent years (see, for example, Neil Roberts’s *Freedom as Marronage* [2015]). But this book attempts to put the phenomenon directly into dialog with decolonial thought. After an outline of studies on maroons and marronage in the colonial Americas, the author tackles European modernity and defines marronage (or at least what he calls “analytical marronage”) as possessing the possibility to point to an escape from that modernity and institute a decolonial turn. The final chapter draws on these claims to examine the so-called “verano boricua [Puerto Rican Summer] del 2019” and finds certain parallels with the Haitian Revolution—an attempt to apply grand political theory to the challenges of present-day Puerto Rican life.

*Caribeños at the Table: How Migration, Health, and Race Intersect in New York City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021, paper US$24.95), by Puerto Rico-born-and-raised public health professor Melissa Fuster, is a chatty study of the foodways of Puerto Ricans, Dominicanos, and Cubanos in the metropolis. She begins with her own migration at age 20 to Miami, where she learned that Cubanos called *frijoles* what she’d always called *habichuelas* and
that she needed to ask for *jugo de naranja* instead of her habitual *jugo de china*. She continues her story through grad school in New England and finally to her research site in New York, where she interviews 24 Caribeños and 17 registered dieticians who work with these populations to construct a picture of what and when they eat, and the health consequences. Food as culture, food as nostalgia, changing eating habits through the generations—all this and more. Not a deep study, but one that examines migration through the lens of food, marking out the differences between these three sister populations and the ways they have adopted (and changed) the Big Apple.

*Atlas critique de la Guyane*, edited by Laurent Polidor & Matthieu Noucher (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2020, paper US$49.24), is thought-provoking and a pleasure to peruse, a model of critical thinking. Illustrated throughout in color, brief essays by some 80 specialists (cartographers, sociologists, historians, anthropologists, ethnobotanists, linguists ...) interrogate the way the territory is represented in maps—from the projection chosen to the scale (for example, the standard map of France in schoolbooks still shows Guyane [as an island!] the size of Réunion, though it is 33 times larger), from its noninclusion in maps of the Caribbean to a study of the official vs. the vernacular toponyms of the neighborhoods of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, from deep analyses of how (and why) various historical maps were drawn to considerations of the features on maps drawn by various Indigenous peoples. Throughout, there is emphasis on the production and politics of history—and maps—and the enormous power that attends it. There’s a long section on the maps used in “education” and what Guyanais students get out of them (as well as the maps in comic books and films). After reading this stimulating 331-page work, one will never again imagine that any map is a neutral representation.

*Marronnage: L’art de briser ses chaines*, by Thomas Mouzard & Genevieve Wiels (Paris: Loco, 2021, paper €27.00), is the colorful catalog of an eponymous exhibition at the Maison de l’Amérique Latine in Paris, originally scheduled for 2020, and for which we were invited to lecture. (Because of Covid restrictions, the exhibition has apparently been moved to 2022.) It is lavishly illustrated—eighteenth-century engravings from John Gabriel Stedman’s *Narrative* and others from the nineteenth by P.-J. Benoit, a number of historical photos, including some by Pierre Verger, an extensive supply of images (scenes and carvings) by Jean Hurault (a frequent visitor and the author of an important book about Maroon art), and 12 brief, full-color sections on artists-or-photographers (nine of them Maroons, including one woman). There are a few howlers (“Art was the system of communication on Suriname plantations because communication between slaves was not allowed” [p. 81]) and it’s heavily oriented toward the French side of the Suriname-Guyane border (John Gabriel Stedman’s first
name becomes “Jean” and his important two-volume *Narrative* is downgraded to a “livre de souvenirs”), but in general it’s a handsome, if shallow, catalog intended for the general French public.

*Drifting Studio Practice*, by Dutch filmmakers Lonnie van Brummelen & Siebren de Haan (Berlin: Hatje Ganz, 2021, paper €40.00), is the dual language (English/Dutch) publication of the pair’s University of Amsterdam Ph.D. dissertation, a detailed and thought-provoking reflection on the making of two films, the first about fishermen in the Dutch village of Urk, the second and more extensively considered one, *De sitonu a weti* (2018), made with the collaboration of Saamakas (and some Okanisis) in Suriname. The authors painstakingly lay out their procedures of consultation with Maroon villagers, their recordings of conversations, the way they crafted them (along with excerpts from published books) into a Saamaka-language script, and the eventual staging of the film itself. They made choices, supported by their discussions of political theorists (from De Kom and Césaire to Glissant, Mignolo, and Haraway), to stress the ways Maroons conceptualize the forest/rivers/stones/spirits as one with the world of humans. The film gives modernity a very minor role—no cellphones, only a bit about chainsaws or tractors, and much more traditional clothing than the jeans and t-shirts commonly worn today. The book is an interesting and honest reflection on the cinematic choices they made. And one gets a believable picture of the ways Saamakas reacted to this attempt by the film crew to depict their lives with dignity.

*Trouillot Remixed: The Michel-Rolph Trouillot Reader*, by Michel-Rolph Trouillot (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2021, paper US$30.95), is affectionately edited by Yarimar Bonilla, Greg Beckett & Mayanthi L. Fernando, all three Trouillot’s former PhD students at the University of Chicago, his final academic post. A useful 32-page editorial essay introduces the 16 diverse chapters—standalone essays first published as articles or book chapters, a radio interview, and brief selections from two of his books, *Peasants and Capital* and *Silencing the Past*—organized thematically rather than chronologically. As R.P. wrote in his 2013 *American Anthropologist* obituary, in the all-too-brief span of 25 years “Rolph established himself as the leading Caribbeanist of his generation and perhaps the most influential Black anthropologist in the world.” This book should permit students to enter into the special world of MRT’s intellectual concerns, his creative and original interrogation of the foundations of anthropology, history, and Caribbean studies, his relentless questioning of the very categories with which we think.

*The Jamaica Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2021, paper US$29.95), edited by Diana Paton & Matthew J. Smith, joins the previously published Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Haiti readers in this
outstanding Duke series, packing in more than 100 excerpts from books, articles, archives, and songs about the place that Columbus called “the fairest isle that eyes ever beheld.” The book is organized in eight sections, each with a dozen or so excerpts: I: Becoming Jamaica—the Taínos, the Spanish period, and early Maroons; II: From English Conquest to Slave Society—pirates, plantations, Maroons, language; III: Enlightenment Slavery—Creole society, the Black Church, Apprenticeship; IV: Colonial Freedom—Free Villages, the Morant Bay Rebellion; V: Jamaica Arise—rural Jamaica, Garvey, the 1938 rebellion, the West Indies Federation; VI: Independence and After—Reggae, ganja, Michael Manley; VII: Jamaica in the Age of Neoliberalism—Seaga v. Manley, skin bleaching, the case for reparations; VIII: Jamaicans and the World—the diaspora (Panama, Cuba, New York, Florida, England ...) and much more. It’s hard to think of a better introductory resource on the island, replete with bibliography, illustrations, and excellent brief introductions to each chapter.

*Critical Dialogues in Latinx Studies: A Reader*, by Puerto Rican scholars Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas & Mérida M. Rua (New York: NYU Press, 2021, paper US$45.00), consists of 39 chapters, some previously published, others written for this volume, organized into seven diálogos (conversations). Explicitly multidisciplinary, blurring the boundaries between the humanities and the social sciences, the essays cover colonialism and decolonization, migration, incarceration and policing, gender, the politics of labeling, racialization, and much more. Geographically, the collection spans South and Central America, from Argentina and Peru through the Caribbean and Mexico—and on to New York, Chicago, and elsewhere. Overall, this is a provocative and useful reader for classes.

*Embodying Black Religions in Africa and its Diasporas*, edited by Yolanda Covington-Ward & Jeanette S. Jouili (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2021, paper US$28.95), explores the relationship between the body and religious experience. Only two of its 12 chapters are devoted primarily to the Caribbean—one on the “rebirth” of bèlè dance performance in Martinique, the other on Haitian Bahamian Protestant worship. The islands appear in some of the other essays, for example, Trinidad in a chapter on Ifá and Orisha devotion across the Americas, but most of the chapters deal with rites in Africa.

*The Earliest African American Literatures: A Critical Reader*, edited by Zachary McLeod Hutchins & Cassander L. Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021, paper US$24.95), focuses on British North American texts from 1643 to 1760. However, there are brief mentions by the editors of Cartagena, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Christopher, and “St. Martinique” (though the original document has the French island unsainted), and the documents
(newspaper extracts, autobiographies, court records) bear occasional witness to the back-and-forth movement of the enslaved between the mainland and the Caribbean.

The Jean-Michel Basquiat Reader: Writings, Interviews, and Critical Responses, edited by Jordana Moore Saggese (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021, paper US$34.95)—a rich, illustrated collection of documents—qualifies for inclusion here in that the Brooklyn-born artist's father was Haitian, his mother was the child of Puerto Rican immigrants, and as a teenager he lived for a couple of years with his father in Miramar, Puerto Rico. Basquiat was bilingual and Caribbean Spanish words appear printed out in various paintings (guagua) as well as standard Spanish ones (mujer, cabeza). According to the vast range of interviews, commentaries, and other essays in this fascinating volume, however, Haiti played no role in his output and Puerto Rico figured only slightly. Throughout, Basquiat, the stunning artist and art-world celebrity who died at age 27, depicts himself and is depicted by others as quintessentially late-twentieth-century New York, rather than Caribbean.

Lubaina Himid: Memorial to Zong, edited by Alan Rice & Andrea Sillis (Lancaster, U.K.: UCLan Publishing, 2020, paper £10.00), offers three thoughtful essays on Turner prize-winning artist Lubaina Himid, with full-color illustrations of her work, from acrylics on both found porcelain (her Lancaster Dinner Service series) and canvas to large installations, many of which evoke the sea and the horrors of the Middle Passage. Discussion of her well-known Memorial to Zong, which memorializes the 1781 event in which sick captives were thrown to their deaths, is joined by the story behind Himid's later work on another tragedy at sea in which captives on the French slave ship Le Rodeur were shot, hanged, or jettisoned after a virulent breakout of ophthalmia blinded both captives and crew. The 58-page book served as the catalog for a 2020 exhibition at the Lancaster Maritime Museum, and features reflections on the role of that city in the Atlantic slave trade.

Caribbean Volunteers at War: The Forgotten Story of the RAF’s “Tuskegee Airmen”, by Mark Johnson (Barnsley, U.K.: Pen and Sword Aviation, 2021, paper US$26.95), is a no-nonsense, affectionate account, based on a combination of archival research and Johnson's discussions with his Jamaican great-uncle, former RAF Flight Lieutenant John J. Blair, DFC, who shared stories of his experiences flying Lancaster Bombers over Germany in 1944 and 1945. Johnson was able to uncover some 500 West Indian, “colored” volunteers who became aircrew, over a third of whom were killed in action. (There was a total of 6,000 Black and colored Caribbean volunteers who served in the RAF in various capacities.) An appendix lists the names, islands, squadrons, and fate of the men in the aircrews. The book is filled with stories of the nighttime bomb-
ing runs over German cities, being shot down over occupied territory, and the horrors that the bombs wrought. And it makes clear the heroism of these volunteers, defending a deeply racist Britain and its empire.

_Sustainability at the Crossroads: Challenges and Development Opportunities of the Guiana Shield_, edited by Jack Menke (Paramaribo: Institute for Graduate Studies and Research, Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname, 2021, €17.00), claims to treat sustainability in terms of culture, production, nature-biodiversity-health, and regional integration. Developed out of a series of lectures and workshops in 2018–19 from scholars in the region (which is defined as portions of Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia and the whole of Guyana, Suriname, and Guyane), the contributions range from the role of drums in Saramaka Maroon life to the organization of historical archaeology programs in the region’s universities, from a history of extractivism (balata, timber, gold ...) to the use of medicinal plants, from the health of Indigenous Surinamers to local hydroenergy projects, and the relative lack of regional integration. The chapters fail to hang together and they vary widely in quality. Remarkably, there is barely a mention of the discoveries of offshore oil in Guyana and Suriname, even though Exxon Mobil, Shell, Total, Apache, and other multinationals seem poised to radically change the “development” of these countries forever.

_The Border of Lights Reader: Bearing Witness to Genocide in the Dominican Republic_, edited by Megan Jeanette Myers & Edward Paulino (Amherst MA: Amherst College Press, 2021, open source pdf: https://www.fulcrum.org/concern/monographs/1v53k057r), is a moving memorial to Trujillo’s 1937 massacre of some 15,000 Haitian men, women, and children, including their Dominican-born descendants. Paulino has, with justice, called the massacre “the largest lynching of Black people in the Americas in the twentieth century” and Border of Lights, a volunteer collective, has organized annual pilgrimages each October since 2012 to the border towns of Dajabón, Dominican Republic, and Ouanaminthe, Haiti. This extraordinary 333-page anthology, which includes scores of color photos, stresses cross-border histories and collaboration and clearly links the massacre to current politics. Among the many contributors to the book, most _NWIG_ readers will recognize Julia Alvarez, Raj Chetty, Edwidge Danticat, Lauren Derby, Rita Dove, Maria Cristina Fumagalli, April J. Mayes, Edward Paulino, Silvio Torres-Saillant, Richard Lee Turits, Chiqui Vicioso, and Évelyne Trouillot, but there are many more—community organizers, graduate students, poets, painters, playwrights, and photographers. We highly recommend this effort.

_The Italian Legacy in the Dominican Republic: History, Architecture, Economics and Society_ (Philadelphia PA: Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2021), edited by
Andrea Canepari, ambassador of Italy to the Dominican Republic (available at https://issuu.com/ciaosantodomingo/docs/28.05.2021_italianlegacyindr_compressedis) is a ca. 500-page tome with 47 chapters and numerous color illustrations, including several semi-academic essays but many more that mainly serve Italian public/diplomatic relations. It was sent to us, unsolicited, by the ambassador, who offers copies to any scholar or university library that requests one, in English, Spanish, or Italian versions.

Dictionary of Latin American Identities, by John T. Maddox IV & Thomas M. Stephens (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2021, cloth US$125.00), follows in the footsteps of two editions of Maddox’s Dictionary of Latin American Racial and Ethnic Terminology (1989, 1999), which we have not examined. The new 909-page volume claims to present “21,000 terms related to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality … in Spanish [64% of the entries], Portuguese [23%], French, and their Creoles [13%], used over the past five centuries,” covering Brazil, Hispanophone South and Central America, and the Caribbean, the Francophone (and French Creolophone) Caribbean, and the Francophone Indian Ocean islands (as well as Québec?). The Anglophone and Dutch Caribbean are excluded (which means that if you run across a reference to someone as a “buckra,” for example, and want to know what it means, you’re out of luck). It seems based, at least mostly, on a series of questionnaires offered to a large number of “informants.” Maddox, a professor of Spanish literature, provides an extensive introductory essay about the uses of racial and ethnic terminology, quoting from major literary figures in each language; one could argue with many of his views. Overall, we found it difficult to imagine how this work might be useful, as the words it juxtaposes in its listings are so immensely varied and some important ones are absent.

Since we had trouble getting a copy from the publisher, Bridget Brereton kindly offered to contribute a note about the 2020 Bocas Prize winner for non-fiction, Shame on Me: An Anatomy of Race and Belonging, by Tessa McWatt (London: Scribe UK, 2019, paper US$17.13):

McWatt was born in Guyana, emigrated with her family as a small child to Canada where she was raised and educated, and now lives in the United Kingdom. Her ancestry is quintessentially Caribbean: Arawakan, Chinese, (East) Indian, African, Portuguese, Scottish, English—ancestors from four continents. Her book is a meditation on race, belonging and not belonging, identity, family, and migration. It’s structured as an “anatomy of race and belonging,” with chapters on nose, lips, eyes, hair, ass, bones, skin and blood, the physical attributes through which we “read” race. McWatt reflects on what it means to be “mixed,” to have many ethnic identities, to have no clearly marked place to belong to. Her book is based on wide reading and erudition lightly worn; it combines the
erudition with deeply personal recollections of her family and her own history, illustrated with many striking photographs. This is a beautifully written, profoundly moving, and deeply reflective book.

We also signal the publication of the annually-issued journal *ideaz*, the latest volume (No. 15) of which is *A 2020 Vision of the Rastafari Movement: Revisiting the Field and Taking Steps Forward*, edited by Michael Barnett, Giulia Bonacci & Erin C. MacLeod (Kingston: Arawak, 2020, paper US$23.00)

In *Sunshine Kitchen: Delicious Creole Recipes from the Heart of the Caribbean*, by Vanessa Bolosier (London: Pavilion, 2021, cloth US$19.95), the “heart of the Caribbean” is Martinique and Guadeloupe, so the book contains (different versions of) recipes for many of the dishes that we’ve made in our own Martiniquan kitchen over the years. The one for “Breadfruit Migan” adds no lemon and oil at the end—which we’ve always considered essential for its oh-so-creamy consistency. And the “Colombo” expands possibilities for our (much simpler) goat curry, adding potatoes, eggplant, and yam and suggesting that it can be made with chicken, pork, mutton, goat, prawns, shark, and even skate. There are many interesting riffs on both everyday and holiday foods from the French Caribbean. Overall, we give the book an enthusiastic thumbs up (despite the fact that it confuses calabashes with gourds—see *NWIG* 56:69–82).

Once again, Rosemarijn Hoefte has kindly provided an overview of recent Dutch-language books that may be of interest to our readers. Here it is:

Let’s start with a splendid volume: *Nola Hatterman: Geen kunst zonder kunnen*, edited by Ellen de Vries (Zwolle, the Netherlands: Waanders, 2021, paper €27.50). The gorgeous reproductions alone make this book worth having. De Vries has managed to gather many of Hatterman’s unknown works, surely not all of the same quality, but they give a much-needed overview of the artist’s development. Now her oeuvre consists of more than 500 drawings and paintings. The 11 essays show how specialists grapple with explaining the individual and the artist and placing her work in existing traditions. Nola Hatterman was controversial during her life time, and this volume attests to the fact that she still is. Was she a courageous transracialist (Stephen Sanders) or a white dominant woman in a colonial setting who reduced individuals to the color of their skin (Lizzy van Leeuwen)? As so many artists, Hatterman cannot be pigeonholed. This book is a great way to get to know her and her work, that is an important example of the shared Surinamese-Dutch (post)colonial cultural heritage.

Shared (post)colonial heritage is also addressed in twin volumes on cultural heritage in Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao edited by Gert Oostindie and Alex van Stipriaan. *Antilliaans erfgoed 1: Toen en nu* and *Antilliaans erfgoed 2: Nu en verder* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 2021, paper €29.50)
each) are the outcomes of the Traveling Caribbean Heritage project, financed by the Dutch Science Foundation, on the development of Antillean heritage and its relation with nation building and nation branding. In 18 chapters, the authors—from the three islands and the Netherlands—discuss topics such as (the lack of) cultural policies, transnationalism, museums, language and literature, and cultural expressions. It is trite to say that contributions in edited volumes are uneven, but here too there are thorough, engaging chapters alternating with rather predictable and bland essays. Nation branding seems an afterthought; only a few authors (Rose Mary Allen & Gregory Richards on Carnival; Artwell Cain on museums, monuments, and Aruban identity; and Luc Alofs on heritage education) do more than pay lip service and actually engage with the concept. Reflections by 11 Antilleans in and from the three islands and the Netherlands on such topics as slavery, identity, festivals, traditions, language, stories, rituals, the nation, and connections intersperse the chapters. When reading the last intermezzo in Part One on connections: “there is no fruitful interaction between the six Antillean islands” (Felix de Rooy) and “there is consciously or not a strong connection between the islands because of language or familial ties” (Tibisay Sankatsing Nava) I wished that the contributors had engaged more with these different voices.

The debate on the Dutch colonial past doesn't show signs of abating. For the Caribbean that means that slavery, its aftermath, and remembrance are the foci. The debate has turned into a war of words as it is closely connected with extremely charged political issues of citizenship, belonging, identity, and racism. Two new books illustrate this trend: Henk den Heijer's Nederlands slavernijverleden: Historische inzichten en het debat nu (Zutphen, the Netherlands: WalburgPers, 2021, cloth €29.99) is a comprehensive historical and historiographical overview of slavery in the Dutch Caribbean colonies, reflecting decades of research and teaching. In Slavernij en beschaving: Geschiedenis van een paradox (Amsterdam: Ambo Anthos, 2021, paper €20.99) Karwan Fatah Black offers a more mundane overview of what he calls the European meta-narrative of slavery during antiquity, in the Islamic world, and in the Atlantic, arguing that this narrative overstates the deep roots of western zest for liberty and obscures the recent cultural legacies of colonialism and slavery. Both authors carry the slavery debate to the present: Den Heijer's final chapter is titled “The slavery past, racism and identity politics” (my translation) while Fatah-Black's title is “Historians and White identity politics.” Two examples: Fatah-Black underlines the racialization of the status of both African enslaved workers and White owners, while Den Heijer argues that there is no historical proof of the relationship between slavery or colonialism and racism in the Netherlands and that slavery belongs to the past, current-day racism to the
present. Not surprisingly, these two authors take very different views of the Black Lives Matter protests in various Dutch cities in 2020. To Fatah-Black, who calls them a movement of “unparalleled magnitude,” it is an example of racism finally taken seriously and recognition of the “unique and rich intellectual tradition of the Afro-Atlantic diaspora.” Den Heijer sees them as an American phenomenon with little or no relevance to what he sees as a different situation in the Netherlands. The debate will continue, but the ad hominem attacks by both scholars, in these books and Dutch media, do not seem particularly helpful in fostering a greater understanding by listening to different perspectives.

Dirk J. Tang’s *Met Hollandse bedaardheid: Hoe Nederland tussen 1800 en 1873 slavernij in de koloniën afschafte* (Zutphen, the Netherlands: WalburgPers, 2021, paper €14.99), is a matter-of-fact booklet about the abolition process in the Dutch colonies and the limited discussions of the topic in the Netherlands. Tang identifies four influences that determined the outcome of the debate: external (read: British) political pressure; legal, philosophical, and Christian/Biblical arguments, including the influence of the Enlightenment; liberal economic considerations in an industrializing Dutch economic landscape; and emancipatory influences, as women played a prominent role in the abolition movements. This clearly written volume, taking a Dutch perspective, is intended for a nonacademic audience; it lacks notes and an index.

The “rediscovery” of Anton de Kom continues to inspire more publications. *Antonlogie: Verhalen over het gedachtegoed van Anton de Kom* (Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, 2021, paper €20.00) focuses on Anton de Kom’s life and ideas as a source of inspiration in our own times. Introduced by Mitchell Esajas, this not overly exciting volume includes an essay by Liang de Beer (winner of a contest on the writer’s relation to De Kom’s ideas) on the impact of colonial history on her family. The jury also selected a poem by Rudya Mena, “To Anton de Kom, to Activists Then and Now.” Other contributors are Nina Jurna (on the memories of activists De Kom and Louis Doedel), Guno Jones (De Kom and citizenship), Ianthe Sahadat (on her personal memories of being introduced by her father to De Kom’s life and work), Humberto Tan (on Oneseimus, the African man who mitigated the impact of a small pox outbreak in Boston in 1721), and Vincent de Kom (reconstructing Anton de Kom’s return to Suriname in 1933).

Anton de Kom’s Surinamese perspective on the history of his country of birth was unique in Dutch colonial historiography, but his indictment of stifling Dutch colonial policy was not. Partially inspired by Marcus Garvey, Pedro Pablo Medardo de Marchena in 1929 wrote a fierce indictment in Papiamentu against racism and other humiliations suffered by people of color on account of the colonial state, the Roman Catholic Church, and big business on Cura-
çao, for which he was prosecuted and jailed. Aart G. Broek has now for the first time translated Medardo de Marchena’s important pamphlet into Dutch, with a lengthy introduction on its historical context as *Medardo de Marchena: Staatsgevaarlijk in koloniaal Curaçao* (Haarlem, the Netherlands: In de Knipscheer, 2021, paper €17.50).

Suriname-born Louis Doedel was another activist, in both Curaçao and Suriname. Nizaar Makdoembaks’s *Journalist Louis Doedel kaltgestellt in Wolffengbuttel: Politieke psychiatrie in de kolonie Suriname* (Leeuwarden, the Netherlands: Elikser, 2021, paper €59.50) is a work in progress. In 1937, Suriname Governor J.C. Kielstra had Doedel committed to the colony’s mental hospital Wolffengbuttel. Out of sight, he became a nonperson, often presumed to be dead; only after political pressure he was released in 1979. A physical and mental wrack he passed away soon after his release. Despite the volume’s uneven balance between primary and secondary issues, it includes valuable information, also in the form of facsimiles of archival records. Physician Makdoembaks not only wants to record Doedel’s life and suffering, but also to rehabilitate him as a writer and publicist. In the end it is a call for rehabilitation of not only Doedel, but other, often forgotten, victims of the Suriname colonial regime as well.

More history. A doorstopper is *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie: Opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid 1816–2010*, by Petra Groen, Anita van Dissel, Mark Loderichs, Remco Raben & Thijs Brocades Zaalberg (Amsterdam: Boom, 2021, Cloth €55.00). The last part of this handsomely illustrated three-volume Dutch colonial military history focuses on Dutch imperialism and military actions in the Caribbean. In four chapters Groen and Van Dissel discuss how Suriname during slavery was the theater of a permanent colonial war with different levels of violence. The authors compare the inside threats of marronage and other forms of resistance to a permanent peat moor fire that could be contained but not extinguished. After abolition, the military was the last resort to suppress rebellions and slowly but surely the colony became a police state. In contrast, the six island colonies faced external threats, from Venezuela in particular. But the Caribbean possessions were changelings in Dutch colonial policy and received little support. During World War II, U.S. military presence was much needed to protect the oil refineries on Aruba and Curaçao and the Suriname bauxite mines. After the war, it was U.S. protection that enabled Suriname and the islands to find their bearings again. In the twenty-first century the colonial military legacy continues to be visible in the Dutch presence in the Caribbean Sea, still under the wings of Washington.

A mysterious episode of Dutch military presence in independent Suriname was the role of Colonel Hans Valk during the 1980 coup d’etat. In *Hans Valk: Over een Nederlandse kolonel en een coup in Suriname (1980)* (Zutphen, the
Netherlands: WalburgPers, 2021, paper €24.95), Ellen de Vries tries to reconstruct the Valk-affair and determine whether he helped the 16 sergeants led by Desi Bouterse to gain power, as has often been alleged. She has no clear answer, except to say that Valk did not perform his task with due caution and tact. A precise reconstruction turned out to be a mission impossible.

Chan E.S. Choenni’s *Geschiedenis van Hindostanen 1873–2015: India—Suriname—Nederland* (Zoetermeer, the Netherlands: Sampreshan, 2021, cloth €29.50), intended for a nonacademic audience, includes hundreds of b/w photographs, but no bibliography or extensive references. Based on four previous books by Chan Choenni and the late Gharietje Choenni, this volume celebrates the socioeconomic, cultural, and political integration of (indentured) migrants from British India in Suriname and later the Netherlands in the period 1873–2015. In 2015, the so-called Hindostani community in the Netherlands was larger than the group living in Suriname.

*Papieren paradijs* by Marlies Medema (Utrecht: KokBoekencentrum, 2020, paper €21.99) is a bit of an outlier. This historical novel on the disastrous colonization attempt by Dutch farmers in Suriname is written from the perspective of Anna Pannekoek, the wife of pastor Arend van den Brandhof, the controversial initiator of the plan. It relates the social-cultural background of the couple and the plan to start a colony along the Saramacca River to improve the perspectives of dirt-poor farmers in Holland. Anna is more than reluctant, but in 1845, halfway through the 400-page book, the family finally makes the Atlantic crossing. Instead of paradise they find misery; the colonial government has allotted them a plot of land unsuited for agriculture, and an epidemic decimates the population. Within months Anna dies, leaving behind eight children. In 1854 Van den Brandhof and seven surviving children return to the Netherlands. The book is based on archival material, including a few letters by Anna and Van den Brandhof’s correspondence, and secondary literature. In 2021 the National Archive in Suriname received two authentic letters from 1844 and 1848 regarding this so-called *buru* colonization.

Three family histories that differ in approach and scope. Marcel van Kanten’s *Wortelzucht: De geschiedenis dat ben ik* (Volendam, the Netherlands: LM Publishers, 2021, paper €24.50) is a search for his roots in Suriname, the Dutch East Indies, the Netherlands, and beyond. Van Kanten counts 13 different ethnic backgrounds in his family tree. The best parts are when he presents his research on location; less convincing are the fragments in which he imagines himself as one or another of his ancestors. *De Doorsons: Op zoek naar een Afro-Amerikaanse slavenfamilie in het Caribisch gebied* (Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 2021, paper €25.99) is a labor of love and far more than a family chronicle. In her role as *griot*, anthropologist Roline Redmond relates a fasci-
nating, meandering social history of Suriname since the nineteenth century. In the search for her family, who left few paper traces and aren’t particularly interested in reading, her encounters with family members and other interlocutors are crucial. Redmond has a great ear and a felicitous writing style, and has produced a must-read for anyone interested in Suriname. Autobiographies or biographies by family members are often congratulatory from rags-to-riches accounts. In contrast, *De goudsmid: Marginalisering en veerkracht van een Hindoestaanse familie* (Zutphen, the Netherlands: Walburg Pers, 2021, paper €19.99) is a tabu-breaking account of author Ruben Gowricharn’s father, Parmeswar Gowricharn, a successful goldsmith in pre-independence Paramaribo whose business faded after moving to a different neighborhood. It is not only a story of loss, alcoholism, and ultimately suicide, but also his family’s ostrich behavior and *tapu sjén* (Sarnami-Hindostani for covering your shame), and of resilience. In the words of mother Soersati Gowricharn, son Ruben, with his Dutch PhD in sociology, would uphold the family honor. She did not live to see her son’s promotion to full professor. In *De goudsmid* the academic couldn’t contain himself, larding the narrative with sociological and anthropological theories, but this doesn’t obscure the gripping story of his father and his family.

Two (auto)biographies by Surinamers in the Netherlands. Paramaribo-born Stanley Menzo, former Ajax goalkeeper and now manager of the Suriname national team, is portrayed by Mike van Damme in *Menzo: Het gevecht onder de lat* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, paper €20.99). The legendary Johan Cruijff chose Menzo as Ajax’s goalkeeper because of his field playing skills. His popularity in Amsterdam didn’t save him from racist abuse, and Menzo occasionally struck back at such abusers. That was in the 1980s, but research shows that in 2021, 40 percent of the professional soccer players in the Netherlands consider that racism is common on Dutch soccer fields and stands, and one fifth say that racism is still a tabu. Maybe less well known is Joyce Sylvester, constitutional lawyer, civil servant, and consultant, who published *Bentú de burgemeester? Autobiografie van een pionier* (Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, 2021, paper €19.99). The first woman of color in the Netherlands to be appointed mayor, Sylvester is regularly listed as one of the 200 most influential persons in the Netherlands. In a rather prosaic style she tells about the many obstacles, including racism, she had to overcome in her way to the top. Illustrative is the anecdote that provides the book’s title: at a reception at the city hall of the town of Naarden a man looked at her and said “Are you the mayor? No, I can’t believe it!”

On to politics: André Haakmat was a key but short-term political player in Suriname in the hectic period between the military coup of 1980 and the December murders in 1982. Back in the Netherlands he supported (now vice-
Ronnie Brunswijk in his guerrilla war against commander Bouterse and the National Army, only to declare his renewed support for Bouterse a few years later. Haakmat's *Late oogst: Politiek-staatkundige en economische beschouwingen* ([Amsterdam]: Novum Publishing, 2020, paper €15.90) follows two interesting earlier publications: *De revolutie uitgegleden* (1987) and *Herinneringen aan de toekomst van Suriname* (1996). In 19 chapters, Haakmat covers a lot of ground from nation building to constitutional law to land policy, finishing with a tribute to poet Michael Slory. This work, marred by typos, jumbled footnotes, and a general lack of editorial care, seems written for specialists.

*Hoewijhierookzamenkwamen: Pleidooi voor menselijkheid, nieuwsgierigheid en de verbindinge kracht van verhalen* (Amsterdam: Utgeverij Balans, 2020, paper €12.50) is an accessible essay by Kathleen Ferrier, the chair of the Unesco Commission of the Netherlands on the role of narratives, language, and the meaning of words in Latin American dictatorships, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands. Ferrier calls for inclusive democracies that give a voice to women and people with a bicultural background. It is based on Ferrier’s 2019 Anton de Kom Lecture on Discrimination and Tolerance at the Resistance Museum in Amsterdam.

Next literature and poetry: *De nieuwe koloniale leeslijst*, edited by Rasit Elibol (Amsterdam: Das Mag, 2021, paper €21.99), consists of 22 essays by established authors, poets, and critics on how to (re)read, (re)discover, and rethink Dutch colonial classics. Some are well known, such as *Max Havelaar* by Multatuli, others may be hidden gems—I discovered Frans Lopulalan’s *Onder de sneeuw een Indisch graf* (1986) on Moluccan experiences in the Netherlands. Ten chapters cover nine novels and one volume of poetry on the Caribbean published between 1931 and 2018: *De Stille plantage* by Albert Helman (Xandra Schutte), *Mijn zuster de n****** by Cola Debrot (Stephan Sanders), *Sarnami, hai* by Bea Vianen (Warda El-Kaddouri), *Dubbelspel* by Frank Martinus Arion (Kees 't Hart), *Kollektieve schuld* by Edgar Cairo (Rasit Elibol), *Over de gekte van een vrouw* by Astrid Roemer (Basje Boer), *Schilden van leem* by Boeli van Leeuwen (Yra van Dijk), *De morgen loeit weer aan* by Tip Marugg (Michiel van Kempen), *Badal* by Anil Ramdas (Manon Uphoff), and *Habitus* by Radna Fabias (Alfred Schaffer). Despite the (deliberately?) awkward title, this is a rewarding read.

*Because* is the 1979-debut volume of Carla van Leeuwen (1955–80). The current edition (Haarlem, the Netherlands: In de Knipscheer, 2021, paper €17.50, with a brief epilogue by Klaas de Groot) presents poems (some in Dutch, some in English) from the original volume as well as 22 from an unpublished volume, “Interval,” and seven found in the Van Leeuwen family archive. One of the main themes is the difficulty, or even inability, of belonging, with fantasy as the only escape. Saya Yasmine Amores’s *Bāṉsuṟikegam: Het verdriet van de fluit* (Haarlem, the Netherlands: In de Knipscheer, 2020, paper €17.50) came
out about a year before her death in 2021. Previously known as Cándani, she was the first female poet who wrote in Sarnámi-Hindostani (1990). Her latest volume includes 35 poems in in Sarnámi, with Dutch translations, from a dreamy teenager who, like Van Leeuwen, also struggles to belong in times of uncertainty and hardship.

Michiel van Kempen & Effendi Ketwaru compiled an anthology of poems by Jit Narain (Djietsnarainsingh Baldewsing), Een mensenkind in niemandsland (Haarlem, the Netherlands: In de Knipscheer, 2020, paper €19.50). Selected from ten volumes published between 1977 and 2019, the poems in Sarnámi-Hindostani and Dutch (with translations by the poet) highlight Hindostani life and culture in Suriname, but also the importance of remembering. “Poetry can't heal what is broken, but it can keep the memory alive and express the longing for what used to be.”

Demerararamen, by Antoine de Kom (yes, the grandson of) is a volume of poems in Dutch and some in English (Amsterdam: Querido, 2021, paper €16.99). In nine segments he shares his wide-ranging observations, from a nine-page charge against former military dictator and president Desi Bouterse (without mentioning his full name) to a reflection on Anil Rambdas and his suicide, to the loneliness of human beings in the current world. I assume that the title, “demerara windows,” refers to the constructions that partially keep the world (and the heat) out, and yet let part of the world (and the wind) in. Invites you to read again and again.

Finally, edible delights. Paramaribo: Een culinaire smeltkroes by Judith Cyrus (Amsterdam: Fontaine, 2021, cloth €34.99), a richly illustrated cookbook, doubles as a rudimentary travel guide highlighting Paramaribo as a culinary melting pot. Many recipes include the origins of the dish, different ethnic influences, and the occasions when it is served.

Thank you Rosemarijn!

We end this year’s Bookshelf by listing information on titles that we have noticed but have not read (and often not requested from publishers)—in some cases because their Caribbean content is restricted to a chapter or two, in others because they didn't seem sufficiently compelling given NWIG space limitations, and in some cases because, despite our multiple requests to publishers, the books never reached us. Taken together, these titles testify to the large number of books being published that at least touch on the Caribbean.

Balai de Sorcière, by Lawrence Scott (Montreal QC: Mémoire d’Encrier, 2021, paper US$45.60) [the translation of the Witchbroom, first published in 1992 and recently reprinted by Papillote Press.]

The Marvellous Adventures of Mary Seacole, by Cleo Sylvestre (Twickenham, U.K.: Aurora Metro Books, 2021, paper US$16.99)
Modern Odysseys: Cavafy, Woolf, Césaire, and a Poetics of Indirection, by Michelle Zerba (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2021, cloth US$99.95)

As If She Were Free: A Collective Biography of Women and Emancipation in the Americas, edited by Erica L. Ball, Tatania Seijas & Terri L. Snyder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, paper US$29.99) [Four of the 24 biographies depict women in the Caribbean.]

Transcending Boundaries: Migrations, Dislocations, and Literary Transformations, edited by Igor Mauer, Wolfgang Zach & Astrid Flögel (Tübingen, Germany: Stauffenburg, 2021, paper US$88.79). [It includes 34 papers from a 2018 conference in Ljubljana of which only two relate to the Caribbean.]

Twenty-First-Century Feminismos: Women's Movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, edited by Simone Bohn & Charmain Levy (Montreal QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021, paper US$37.95) [There’s only one chapter (on Haiti) on the Caribbean.]

The Soviets' Greatest Gambit: The Cuban Missile Crisis, by Alan J. Levine (Lanham MD: Lexington, 2021, cloth US$105.00)

War of Intervention in Angola, Volume 4: Angolan and Cuban Air Forces, 1985–1988, by Adrien Fontanellaz, Tom Cooper & José Augusto Matos (Warwick, U.K.: Helion, 2021, paper US$29.95)

José Martí's Liberative Political Theology, by Miguel De La Torre. (Nashville TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2021, cloth US$99.95)

Afro-Latinx Digital Connections, edited by Eduard Arriaga & Andrés Villar (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2021, cloth US$90.00) [Two of the 22 chapters deal with Cuba; the rest are outside of the Caribbean.]

The Metropolis in Latin America, 1830–1930: Cityscapes, Photographs, Debates, edited by Idurre Alonso & Maristella Casciato (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, cloth US$70.00) [There's one chapter on Havana.]

Jamaica’s Evolving Relationship with the IMF: There and Back Again, by Christine Clarke & Carol Nelson (Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, cloth US$119.99)

The Necktie Man: The Sentimental Journey of a Windrush Teenager & Trade Union Pioneer, by Navel Clarke (Kingston: Pelican, 2021, paper US$25.00)

Women in Jamaican Music, by Heather Augustyn (Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2020, paper US$39.95)

The Christena: A Story of Tragedy and Survival, by Whitman T. Browne (Miami FL: Urlink Print & Media, 2020, paper US$17.44) [Describes a ferry sinking between St. Kitts and Nevis, 1970, in which more than 200 drowned.]

Nevis. Living. History, by Pamela Purves (Altona MB: FriesenPress, 2020, paper US$44.77)

Inheritance: The Story of a West Indian Family, by Ian McDonald (Cascade, Trinidad & Tobago: Paria, 2020, paper US$14.00)
Medical and Wellness Tourism in Jamaica, by Richard I. Bernal & Henry I.C. Lowe (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2020, paper US$16.95)
Decolonization of Psychiatry in Jamaica: Madnificent Irrations, by Frederick W. Hickling (Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, cloth US$109.99)
State of Mind: Politics, Uncertainty and the Search for the Jamaican Dream, by Chris Tufton (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2019, paper US$24.95)
Truth be Told: Michael Manley in Conversation, by Glynne Manley (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2019, paper US$35.00)
The W. Arthur Lewis Reader, edited by Hamid A. Ghany (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2019, paper US$16.95)
American Foreign Policy in the English-Speaking Caribbean: From the Eighteenth to the Twenty-first Century, by Samantha S.S. Chaitram (Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, paper US$24.99)
Armed Forces of the English-speaking Caribbean: The Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, by Sanjay Badri-Maharaj (Warwick, U.K.: Helion, 2021, paper US$29.95)
A Toolbox for Exuma, The Bahamas: Environmental Management, Design, and Planning, edited by Mohsen Mostafavi Mohsen, Gareth Doherty & Robert Daurio (New York: Actar, 2021, cloth US$54.95)
Turning Tides: Caribbean Intersections in the Americas and Beyond, edited by Heather Cateau & Milla Cozart Riggio (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2019, paper US$35.00) [2016 Trinidad conference proceedings.]
Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy among Perinatal Women in Guyana: Challenges and Lessons for Developing Nations, by Debbie Vitalis (Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, cloth US$99.99)
Pan-Caribbean Integration: Beyond CARICOM, edited by Patsy Lewis, Terri-Ann Gilbert-Roberts & Jessica Byron (London: Routledge, 2021, paper US$48.95)
Haiti’s Jewish History, by Joseph Bernard Jr (independently published, 2021, paper US$25.00)
The Archaeology of Island Colonization: Global Approaches to Initial Human Settlement, edited by Matthew F. Napolitano, Jessica H. Stone & Robert J. DiNapoli (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2021, cloth US$95.00)
Crimson Waters: Piracy Across the Ages, by Don Mann & Kraig Becker (New York: Skyhorse, 2021, cloth US$26.99)
Public Health and Beyond in Latin America and the Caribbean: Reflections from the Field, by Sherri L. Porcelain (London: Routledge, paper US$44.95)
Stories from our Indian Elders, by Dornald Lenroy Thomas (self-published, paper US$16.99) [Descendants of immigrants from India to St. Vincent.]
And finally, books, almost all for “Bookshelf,” of which we were unable to obtain a review copy, often after several requests:

*La palabra imaginada / The Imagined Word*, by Rafael Trelles (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Museo de las Américas, 2020, paper US$30.00)

*Desde la otra orilla: Ensayos, notas y prólogos dominicanos*, by Efraín Barradas (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Cielonaranja, 2021, paper US$20.00)

*Antes que llegue la luz*, by Mayra Santos-Febres (Madrid: Planeta, 2021, US$13.95)

*La colonisation de la Guyane (1626–1696)* 2 vols, edited by Martijn van den Bel & Gérard Collomb (Paris: Hermann, 2021, paper €45.00 per volume) [a collection of texts from archives, diaries, letters, etc., with commentary.]

*La couleur de l’agonie*, by Gisèle Pineau (Petit-Bourg, Guadeloupe: Caraibéditions, 2021, €20.00)

*La Trace: Agouzou, femme esclave*, by Monique Arien-Carrère (Paris: Éditions de l’Institut du Tout-Monde, 2021, €22.00)

*The Fat Lady Sings*, by Jacqueline Roy (London: Penguin, 2021, paper US$13.17)

*Incomparable World*, by S.I. Martin (London: Penguin, 2021, paper US$12.39)

*Without Prejudice*, by Nicola Williams (London: Penguin, 2021, paper US$13.80)

*Bernard and the Cloth Monkey*, by Judith Bryan (London: Penguin, 2021, paper US$12.31)

*The Dancing Face*, by Mike Phillip (London: Penguin, 2021, paper US$12.85)

*Minty Alley*, by C.L.R. James, with an introduction by Bernardine Evaristo (London: Penguin, 2021, paper US$12.54)

*Zion Roses*, by Monica Minott (Leeds, U.K.: Peepal Tree Press, 2021, US$17.95)

*Fortune*, by Amanda Smyth (Leeds, U.K.: Peepal Tree Press, 2021, US$19.95)

*Kingston Burning: A Novel*, by Rachelle J. Gray (Fort Lauderdale FL: LadyGray Publishing, 2020, US$12.58)

*Pandemic Poems*, by Olive Senior (self-published 2021, paper US$9.99)

*Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, by Ernesto Che Guevara (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2021, paper US$19.95)

*I Embrace You with All My Revolutionary Fervor: Letters 1947–1967*, by Ernesto Che Guevara (edited by Maria del Carmen Ari Garcia & Disamis Arcia Muñoz) (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2021, cloth US$30.00)

*The Bolivian Diary*, by Ernesto Che Guevara (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2021, paper US$19.95)

*Che Guevara Reader: Writings on Politics and Revolution*, edited by David Deutschmann & Maria del Carmen Ari Garcia (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2021, paper US$22.95)

*Tania Bruguera in Conversation with Claire Bishop* (New York: Fundación Cisneros, 2021, cloth US$25.00)

*Of Women and Salt*, by Gabriela Garcia (New York: Flatiron Books, 2021, cloth US$26.99)
Review Articles

Rockers: The Making of Reggae’s Most Iconic Film, by Theodoros Bafaloukos (Berkeley CA: Gingko Press, 2021, US$65.00)

Libertie, by Kaitlyn Greenidge (New York: Algonquin, 2021, cloth US$26.95)

Hidden Cuba, by Magalie Raman (Antwerp, Belgium: Luster, 2021, paper US$25.00)

No Man’s Land: A Political Introspection of St. Lucia, by Anderson Reynolds (Vieux Fort, St. Lucia: Jako Books, 2021, paper US$24.95)

Beginnings, Endings, and Salt: Essays on a Journey through Writing and Literature, by Edwidge Danticat (Miami FL: Books & Books Press, 2021, paper US$18.95)

Léon Bertrand, regard sur sa politique culturelle et patrimonial, by Pierre Chambert (Paris: IDÉM, 2021, €14.60)

Lycanthropia, par Emmanuelle Alloy & Harry Hodebourg (Hallennes-lez-Haubourdin, France: TheBookEdition, paper €15.00—self-published)

All the Water I’ve Seen is Running, by Elias Rodrigues (New York: W.W. Norton, 2021, cloth US$26.95)

A Lantern in the Wind: A Fictional Memoir, by Ameena Gafoor (Hertford, U.K.: Hansib Publications Limited, 2021, paper £12.99)

The Bread the Devil Knead, by Lisa Allen-Agostini (Brighton, U.K.: Myriad, 2021, paper US$14.95)

Things I Have Withheld, by Kei Miller (New York: Grove Press, 2021, cloth US$26.00)

The Vanishing Girls, by Callie Browning (s.l.: Black Coral Publishing, 2021, paper US$11.99)

The Magnetic Earth, by Édouard Glissant & Sylvie Séma-Glissant (Toronto ON: Quattro Books, 2021, paper US$20.00)

Changó, Decolonizing the African Diaspora, by Manuel Zapata Olivella (London: Routledge, 2021, paper US$44.95)

I Was Never the First Lady, by Wendy Guerra (New York: HarperVia/HarperCollins, 2021, cloth US$26.99)

Black Teacher, by Beryl Gilroy (London: Faber & Faber, 2021, cloth US$21.26)

Home in Florida: Latinx Writers and the Literature of Uprootedness, by Anjanette Delgado (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2021, cloth US$26.95)

The Day I Fell Off my Island, by Yvonne Bailey-Smith (Brighton, U.K.: Myriad Editions, 2021, paper US$14.95)

Finding Home: A Sentimental Journey, by Gemma Stemley (self-published, 2021, paper US$19.99)

Why Should We Be Called “Coolies”?: The End of Indian Indentured Labour, by Radica Mahase (London: Routledge, 2020, cloth US$160.00)