

# Circles: Buffalo Women's Journal of Law and Social Policy

---

Volume 2

Article 6

---

10-1-1993

## Remembering Audre Lorde

Masani Alexis DeVeaux  
*University at Buffalo*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/circles>

---

### Recommended Citation

DeVeaux, Masani Alexis (1993) "Remembering Audre Lorde," *Circles: Buffalo Women's Journal of Law and Social Policy*. Vol. 2 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/circles/vol2/iss1/6>

This Personal Commentary is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Circles: Buffalo Women's Journal of Law and Social Policy* by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. For more information, please contact [lawscholar@buffalo.edu](mailto:lawscholar@buffalo.edu).

"REMEMBERING AUDRE LORDE"

*by Dr. Masani Alexis DeVeaux*

It was Cuba, 1985. There was a lull in our busy schedule. Some of us -- Toni Cade Bambara, Mildred Pitts Walter, Audre Lorde, and myself -- were sunning on the rooftop porch of the Habana Intercontinental Hotel. We were part of a delegation of Black women writers invited to tour and experience Cuba. It was winter back home. And we were craving sun.

Lying on lounge chairs next to each other lazily, Audre and I talked; shared suntan oil. We'd never really met before then, but I admired her, from the first moment I'd read some of her early poems in Cables To Rage, and then later, in From a Land Where Other People Live. Her poems spoke to me in a voice I could hear my own in; and I hungrily sought it out as she published more work in the 70s and 80s. The more I heard from her, the more I admired the way she stood up as a Black lesbian, feminist, mother, warrior poet, come to do her work.

And that day in Cuba, she was open and funny, easy to talk with. When I shared my unease being in such an illustrious group of Black women, she was immediately generous. The affirming nod of her head, her words, her acknowledgment of our shared sisterhood as Black women writers, paid me the highest compliment, at a time I sorely needed someone like Audre to shore up my determination to stay steady, and to keep writing. She gave me a hand to hold, and a mirror to hold in my other hand.

We shared more about ourselves, getting to know each other, as we bussed around Havana with our delegation -- visiting with the poets Nancy Morejon and Nicolas Guilleun; taking pictures with the group; at meals; talking at her room at night about the status of lesbians and gays in Cuba; and had the Cuban revolution truly challenged racism.

On the way back to the States, we sat next to each other in the airport, waiting for the short flight back to Miami. Audre had a copy of her book of poems, Between Ourselves, on her lap. When I mentioned that I had not seen or read it, she graciously lent me a copy. I opened it to the title poem, a statement about searching for community, and learning who one's people are. "Between Ourselves" opened up for me the expanse of Audre's literary vision, because it helped me to see that racial ties were not the only ties I had to other human beings. They could not be, if I were to truly do my own work here on this planet.

Where I had once just admired her, I was now also inspired by her. Inspired to see her poems and essays as maps to help chart my way as a writer and thinker, through a racist, homophobic society. Inspired to see her "biomythography", Zami, as a welcome history of Black lesbian life in the 50s. Reaching out, personally and in her work, Audre inspired me to know and not forget my own value. And I am still thanking her for that; wherever, among the stars, she is now.

Dr. Masani Alexis DeVeaux is a published author and is an Assistant Professor of Women's Studies, in the American Studies Department, at the State University of New York at Buffalo.