

Tribute 2

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THEMED INTERVENTION

Tribute 2

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Abstract

This tribute was written as I reflected on losing my mother while BLM and COVID-19 unfolded during the summer of 2020.

KEYWORDS

Black Britain, BLM, COVID-19, windrush

My mother, Ethel Gayle was to be the central character in my planned submission for this TIBG Intervention. My mother had been a constant thought in my mind as COVID-19 had interrupted our communications. During early drafting, my mother died. Overwhelming grief followed. At the same time, I was a witness to the escalation of anti-black violence across Britain as it played out in response to the Black Lives Matter protests (Jouavel, 2020) and on NHS wards where COVID-19 became the measurement of racism (Godlee, 2020). My body gave way to exhaustion. After a period of rest, I was able to begin reflecting on the year of 2020. We heard more confessions from the nation-state as it admitted (yet again) to the existence of institutional racism. The Police, NHS, Judiciary and Academy were indeed racist, but the people who wear the uniforms, judge our characters, and mark our essays were ruled to be innocent (House of Commons, 2020). No one is to be held accountable for the present state of bigotry. I am frustrated but not in despair. I am lifted by my mother's voice in dreams. "Those who can't hear, must feel." "Don't walk in fear." "Don't make anybody make you feel shame." My mother came to England in early 1959 from what was then the British Colony of Jamaica. As the narratives of my elders known locally here as the "Windrush Generation"¹ pass into the British archives (McQueen, 2020), those of us left behind know (because our parents, aunts, uncles, big/little cousins, and neighbours told us) that each generation must recognise coloniality in its current forms (Brand, 2020). The blood running through my veins is evidence that we are making and creating a living. I will turn up the volume and continue to sing (McKittrick, 2016). Rest in peace, Ethel Gayle (1933–2020).

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

No new data were created.

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ENDNOTES

¹ “The Windrush Generation” describes the citizens located in the British Colonies who migrated to the United Kingdom between 1948 and 1971. In more recent times, the term has become synonymous with those who arrived from the Anglophone Caribbean region.

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