



# *University of* **HUDDERSFIELD**

## **University of Huddersfield Repository**

Bullock, Robert

The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.

### **Original Citation**

Bullock, Robert (2022) The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century. Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield.

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/35745/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: [E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk](mailto:E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk).

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**PhD Creative Writing - Thesis**

**University of Huddersfield**

**Robert Bullock - U1873318**

**The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**21 April 2022**

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**Abstract**

The novel *Dark Tide* forms the creative element for the thesis. It offers a fictional exploration of the origins, lives and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire coast in the long eighteenth century through the character Jack Moss, former slave and machete man at the Bay View Plantation on Plantashion Island (Barbados).

The narrative of *Dark Tide* is roughly apportioned into four parts. The first examines the geographic origins of African slavery, the second, colonial exploitation and racial polarisation in pursuit of economic gain, the third, returning to England, represents the movement of social consciences and the isolation of colonial slave colonies in a world where abolition was gaining momentum. Finally, part four is intended to provide an examination of how black people could have arrived in the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire coast in the long eighteenth century and integrated into rural working-class communities.

The narrative begins on Jack's last night before trial for murder when he is visited by the unique Bajan demon, the Heartman. After brief introductions the pair travel back to the origins of slavery on the west coast of Africa where they experience the dehumanisation of sorting slaves (men, and women and children) in the 'dark room' and sail in the horrendous slave hold of the ship 'Hope' on the middle passage to the Caribbean. The racially polarised lives of those who lived on a British colonial sugar cane plantation is witnessed first-hand before Jack's owners take him with them as they sail back to England. En-route, Jack fights and kills plantation overlooker, Charles Inman, but because on board 'Hope' British laws are in force as opposed to the colonial slave code, he must stand trial at Red Rose City (Lancaster). In England, the socio economics, class and race of pre-industrial revolution Britain are examined as Jack escapes transportation to integrate via an interracial marriage into the working-class communities of the northern uplands.

The unreliable narration of the Heartman and magical realism allow the narrative to explore the lives of those who were merely numbers in ships ledgers, assets on plantation records and names on moss covered tombstones in quiet corners of northern graveyards, in unique, insightful and challenging ways.

The critical exegesis is an accompaniment for the fictional narrative, and it contextualises the historical research that underpins the fiction. It offers a discussion of the anticolonial counter narratives the creative element offers, examines where this narrative sits alongside other literature and suggest ways it makes a unique contribution to literature and history.

423 words.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**Statement of length**

*Dark Tide* is 80,330 words and the critical exegesis is 16,021. The total length of this thesis is 96,351 words.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**Contents**

*Dark Tide – Jack’s Story*

Exegesis

- 1) Introduction
- 2) The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century embodied in the narrative of Dark Tide.
- 3) Inspiration
- 4) Cultural Appropriation
- 5) Craft
  - Overarching Narrative
  - Historical Foundation
  - Point of View & Perspective
  - Examination of Colonialism
  - The Heartman
  - Pseudohistory
  - Therianthropy and Personification
  - Omnipotent and Unreliable Narrator
  - Magical Realism
  - Distinctive Dialogue
  - Examination of Relationships
  - Hegemonic Masculinity
  - Contribution to Literature
- 6) Conclusion
- 7) Bibliography – Primary Sources
- 8) Bibliography – Secondary Sources

***Dark Tide – Jack’s Story***

**Part 1**

**Prologue**

*Me de Heartman, bwoy, de Heartman. ‘Expect dat yu eard o’ Me? De Heartman famous.*

*WHAT DAT? Surely yu eard o’ de heart? De Heart, DE HEART, mon? Ca-bom, ca-bom, ca – bom. It like a drum in yu squidgy lickle pattetic human body dat sooner or later gonna die. Everyone got one. A heart! Listen up! LISTEN UP! (Argh! Dis story gonna be fucking hard work if yu not listen up!) Where was de Heartman? Oh yeah, dat right, de heart. Everyone got one. Dat is, everyone ‘xcept yuhs truly, and dat cos Me de Heartman. Argh! Fuck yu all! Yu ain’t listening! Yu got spuds in yuh lugs? Is yuh nut walnut not coconut? De Heartman him gonna curse yu all to hell and back, hell and back yu pattetic example o’ de human ass hole!*

*Anyhow, dis story, Dark Tide, dis de story o’ de darkest chapter in de history o’ de world, de darkest. Yu see, de Dark Tide, it swept up millions o’ folk, swept ‘em up, bwoy, swept ‘em up and carried dem from one side o’ de world to anodder, den for some over to anodder. Dis de story o’ dose folk. And dis, de first Dark Tide, is de story of Sir Jack (Jackson) Moss, ‘im o de ‘Ting’, of ‘Ting’ town, ‘Ting’ shire, ‘Ting’ land. Hehe! Dat lickle joke o’ de Heartman, wait and see, bwoy, wait and see. Dere plenty o’ lickle jokes in dis story of Jack Moss. Hagree?*

### **Jack's dream**

*Dis first chapter be de dream o' Jack Moss. Jack sleeping, sleeping like a lickle pickney all curled up in him cot. Haha! Dis be a lickle bit o' Heartman mischief Me plant in de skull a Jack but dere be plenty sex an death too. Hagree? Hagree. Fulljoy!*

“Ah, there you are, I’ve been waiting for you, Celeste.” These words are the start of my dream. It’s a dream where I’m watching a young girl that I recognise and she’s with our long dead plantation owner. I say ‘with’ because straight away I can tell that they are about to have sexual relations. He calls her Celeste, but Celeste isn’t her real name. Clearly the Massa, Benjamin Smith, can’t remember her name, if he ever really knew, if he could ever be bothered to find out. Benjamin Smith can’t remember the names of any of his employees let alone slaves. He buys them, he works them to death and then he buys some more. Why should he remember their names? Even the ones he ‘favours’? Why should he remember the names of the young girls that he bends over and thrusts his tiny pathetic ‘ting’ into, that he bounces up and down on top of until the fine plantation house quakes from the foundations up, the ones that sit astride him when his fat legs give way before he’s sown his seed. Why should he remember their names? Why? Why should he? He’s the Massa, and they are nothing. Nothing. He’s sexed so many negroes in his fifty disgusting years on this Earth that he’s lost count, fertilising a fair few and siring a good number of strong brown children who he can’t remember the names of either. But why should he remember their names? Why should he remember anything except his next...

“Me come as fast ah could, Massa,” replies Celeste, half apologetic, half taunting. Celeste has an attitude, she knows it, the Massa knows it, everyone knows it. Clearly Celeste *hasn’t* come as fast as she could, not at all. Celeste, whose real name is Beth, is a feisty girl

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

who likes to make the Massa wait, he *likes* to be made to wait and she knows it, taunting and teasing him with her lithe brown body. He likes it because it gets him more excited, and she likes it because he won't last as long inside her before it shrivels up and he turns over and starts snoring his head off.

*Hehe, de Heartman here, bwoy, de Heartman here, and him here cos yu need to understand someting at dis point. De hero, de dreaming Jack, him not know de real reason dat dis beautiful girl be late. Him not know de real reason, bwoy. Do yu know? De real reason? Course not! Yu has walnut brain! Now de Heartman, de Heartman him has coconut for head, not walnut! OK! Listen now! De real reason she be late is cos she get instruction, mon, instruction. Keep reading, bwoy, keep reading, it all come apparent in due course, Hagree? By de way, don't 'spect De Heartman to 'xplain everyting! No mon! It just cos yu new to de story, bwoy, new so de Heartman him be kind, which is unusual for de evil Heartman. Me ain't usually kind, Me is usually bad to de bone! Hagree? Ha-ha! Back to de dream o' Sir Jackson Moss!*

Seeing her heaving bosom, the Massa is desperate for her, desperate like a beast and like an animal he starts pawing in the air for a grope of her full, firm breasts, "c...come, sit on me child," he can barely get the words out he's so excited. There's spittle running down his chin as if he's about to bite into a juicy steak, and his breathing is shallow and fast. His heart is pounding away in his chest. He is more than ready. Perhaps too ready.

Celeste is barely more than a child, thirteen, but she's got the body of a woman. Slaves grow up quick on Plantashion Island, working in the fields from the moment they can walk, and doing men's work before they even sprout their adult hairs. She's not his usual type, she's



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

larger and more heavily muscled than his preference. She has built up her powerful legs and arms from working dozen hour stretches in the plantation fields clearing up after the cutters have chopped down the wooden stems of the sugar cane.

“Yes, Sir, Massa, Me coming, Sir,” Celeste was rougher with the Massa than his usual preference too, but he was starting to like that.

*Yeah, mon, yeah, him like dat, and de Heartman, him like dat too!*

All his life he has liked to do the thrusting – the man’s work - but with Celeste he found that he doesn’t have to. She does it all for him, and as he is knocking on in years he thinks ‘why not let the blackie do the work for a change!’. I can read his thoughts. Like all the English he knows how lazy all us negroes are, given half a chance. Hell, he even thinks that we are lazy when it comes to procreation with the ‘Massa’ race. But in Celeste he has found a girl who is prepared to do all the hard work so he can lie back and think of England. Oh, England!

Wonderful England, how I miss you except when I’m sat under Celeste, he thinks. In his mind he’s lying in a spring meadow, by a babbling brook, lying on a blanket. It’s warm, but not hot like Plantashion Island with its incessant heat, and he’s staring up at the blue English sky with its delicate white clouds just skittering across on a light westerly wind.

“Celeste! Faster, Celeste!” orders Smith as they become joined. He’s feeling strangely light-headed tonight. Not normal at all. He can’t put his finger on why. Celeste always gets him in the mood, of course, but he’s feeling different tonight. He’s feeling strangely disconnected from this union. It’s like it is someone else who is fucking the girl and not himself.

He’s merely a voyeur.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

No, no! His throat is tightening, and the sweat is running down his skin like a river in flood after a bloody Plantashion Island storm. No, tonight he feels different. But he's so enjoying her. So enjoying her body.

Celeste looks down on him and starts grinding her pelvis fast. Smith isn't a big fellow, apart from his belly and fat legs, but where it matters to Celeste, he isn't big. She doesn't ever get any satisfaction at all with such a pathetic fat white man. But she doesn't let it show.

"It me *pleasure*, Massa," she grins coyly, "me pleasure to meet all yuh needs, Massa, Sir."

Did she say that, he thinks, or am I dreaming? Celeste doesn't normally talk like that. As she grinds away the Massa can't tell what is real and what is not.

"Oh, Celeste, Celeste," the Massa won't last long tonight, not with Celeste in this mood. He knows it and doesn't care. Celeste can grip him in her parts and squeeze his seed out and he never lasts long when she does this. "Oh my God, oh my God!" Shooting pains are cutting into his arms and legs now. The pain! The pain is like nothing he's ever felt before. But the exquisite feeling of what Celeste is doing to him somehow seems to make up for it. He feels different tonight though, still excited but different.

"Fasta, Massa, harda, Massa!"

"Oh, oh, no, that's a little too hard, Celeste. A little too fast, dear," more pains, all around his body as she bounces up and down on him. This doesn't feel right, tonight, not right at all.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Celeste is a strong young woman, a young woman that could work twice as hard as any pink, hairy Englishman. She can carry her own weight in canes and has legs that could run all day around the plantation. She is a prime specimen and Smith knows it. One day she will produce a strong pickney that he will sell on for a fine profit. Never mind her sniffing cries at being separated from her stupid child, a cow can't really feel anything towards its calf, nor a pig towards its piglets, and neither can a negro towards its pickney. But the money he will make from selling it...

The Massa is finding speaking difficult now, "that's a little too hard, dear...a little too hard."

"Nonsense, Massa," Celeste is really pummelling Smith's privates now with her pelvis, back and forth, back and forth. It's as if he's been fed through the huge cane eating machines the slaves call the 'dragons' in the sugar house. Her pelvis has sucked in his private parts and is grinding them up.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"But de Massa tell me him like it hard!" Did she say that, or did he dream it? He can't tell the real from the imaginary.

Smith is breathing too heavy now and his face is turning purple but Celeste does not slow down; in fact, she speeds up.

*Dat cos she got her orders, bwoy, orders! Watch.*

Harder and faster. The fucking feels more like a punishment now and the beating is getting worse. She is starting to enjoy it for a change. The slave, Beth, is enjoying it, the pain he is feeling is somehow making her feel...fulfilled. His poor sack has been sucked in too now

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

and the pain is searing through his body. Celeste rachets up the pace again and the Massa starts to squeal like a pig having its throat slit.

“Celeste! Celeste!” the Massa is struggling to catch his breath and his chest feels like it’s exploding along with his balls, “stop! Please I beg of you!”

Beg me! Beg me! The slave, Beth, loves those words, loves them! The Massa, the mighty, invincible Massa begging her for mercy. But she won’t show him any mercy, not after what he did to her sister. “Nonsense, Massa! Massa like it hard!”

“But Celeste...”

“Just lickle bit more, Massa! Just lickle bit!” Celeste squeals with delight.

“Celes...”

She feels his abdomen contract in pleasure and pain, “Lickle bit more!”

“Cel...”

## **Gaol**

*“Wakey, wakey, Sir Jackson Moss! Wakey, wakey, bwoy!”*

I didn’t think I was sleeping when a strange Plantashion Island voice spoke out of the darkness, or maybe I was. I had, after all, just had a nightmare that the Massa had died in the throes of passion with Celeste.

“Ha-ha! Yeah, yu did, bwoy, yeah yu did! Yu dreamed it alright, mon, yu dreamed it!

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Or...was it a memory? Dey blur, bwoy, blur! Life a blur, bwoy, life a blur, what real and what a dream, dey blur.”

“Who are you?” I, Jack Moss, ask as the long dark night is drawing close to its end. My life is drawing close to its end. Everyone knows that they don’t tell the condemned on what day they’re to go to the gallows, it’s considered cruel, they say, inhuman even. But all my life I’ve not been treated like a human but more like a beast of burden, a donkey or an oxen, something to be bought and sold at market, something that is easily replaced when it dies or gets too weak to do what it is told or forced to do at the hands of a whip. They’re all the same, Toubob, all the same. Cruel. Toubob is what I call the pink people. They think they’re white, but they are really pink. They say the pink Toubob men are the worst, but I know to my cost that the female of that species is much worse, much worse.

“Ha-ha! Hagree. Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru!”

“Hagree? Hagree?” I explode. “Speak bloody English will you man! I’ve bloody had to since the first day I arrived on that island, beaten if I didn’t, whipped if one of my own people’s words came out of my mouth...and anyway, what do you know of English women?”

“Ha-ha! What dat? ‘Bloody’ Jack Moss too good for him island roots, bwoy? Too good? Too bloody good to talk proper Plantashion Island speak, bwoy? Too bloody proud wid him head held high bout to flop around atop dat hangmon’s noose.”

“Me, proud? I’m not too proud! And that island was never my home! I’m African, I am not from Plantashion Island,” I spit on the ground in disgust. Apart from the people I love there, Plantashion Island is hell to me and every other black person.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Hell? It ain’t de real hell, bwoy, ain’t de real hell!”

“It is for those worked to death!” I snap, “worked until they collapse and die!

Plantashion Island is not my home, never has been and every slave thinks the same. We’re from Africa.”

“Piffle, bwoy, piffle! De dark continent, Plantashion Island, England, dat don’t matta, bwoy, dat don’t matta. Yu know yu headed for de noose today, bwoy, de noose. What matta is where yu going, bwoy, where yu going! And Me be de one to decide dat! Me be de narrator, bwoy, de narrator and Me all powerful! Now, Sir Jackson Moss, just yu remember dat, bwoy, just yu remember dat!”

There is a moment’s silence before he speaks again. “Hagree?”

My voice is barely more than a whisper. “Hagree.”

“Good. Now we got dat straight, tell dis curious old...demon, how yu findin out yu for de noose today, bloody Jack Moss, how yu findin out?”

I shrug, “I just found out.”

“Aha...well yu play dat game if yu want, bwoy, play dat game if yu want. It yuh choice. Yu can eider talk to Me or Me go inside yuh bloody skull, mon, straight inside, bore right in trough de bone and de blood and de squidge and read yuh bloody mind! Yuh bloody choice, bwoy, yuh bloody choice!”

“If you must know, my friend in the next cell told me that it was planned for tomorrow, or rather today, that I was going to hang by the neck.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He laughs, it's a sinister laugh that chills me to the bone. "Some bloody friend, bwoy, some bloody friend."

"He is a friend. Been kind to me...but I don't know exactly why he told me? Maybe he knew I had some serious thinking and praying to do before I move on. He knows it means a lot to me to be prepared. He knows that I've never once walked away from a fight and that I would be angry at him if I found out that he knew and didn't tell me," I laugh, "He probably thinks that if he doesn't tell me, I'll haunt him."

He chuckles, "like what Me doing to yu now, bwoy?"

"Mm...something like that," I stare at him. "Who are you anyway?"

"Ha! Yu know who Me bloody am, bloody Jack Moss, bwoy, yu know, but maybe yu don't want to admit it?"

I don't.

"Well, yu gonna. Look at Me a lickle bit more closely bwoy, more closely. Yu know who Me am. Yu know. Everyone on dat island know. And Me bet yu no different, and Me not a betting man. Dere no point in betting yu see, cos Me can see de hand yu dealt, bwoy, see de hand yu dealt."

All night, I had been sat in my cell, waiting for the dawn. All night alone with my thoughts. Until now...and this interruption. I shrug. "So, you're a memory?"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Pah! Memory? No mon! Me ain’t no memory! No memory of yuhs, bwoy! Yu not dat bloody important, bwoy, not dat bloody important! Me only de memory of de bad, bad folk, mon.”

“Pink Englishmen?”

“Ha-ha, Me like dat! Like dat! Respect, bwoy, respect! Hagree?”

I nod. A demon is offering me his respect...some achievement for a dying man.

“O’ course, it true dere plenty bad pink Englishmen and women. Hagree?”

I nod, “hagree.” Although my cell is gloomy and my candle almost burned away, I can see him clearly. He’s right, I don’t remember him, and I would have remembered him because he is...unique.

“Unique? Yeah mon! Me unique!”

He is faceless. Like me he’s a black man but he’s tall, so, so tall, he’s almost a giant. He’s sitting on my chair whilst I lie back on my bed and his long, long legs are stretched out in front of him, his arms behind his head just like he’s relaxing in the middle of a hot Plantashion Island day with a cool drink and a pipe with weed. Except we’re not on Plantashion Island and it’s not hot in this English cell, it’s freezing.

He shivers violently. “Yeah mon, freezing! Brrr! Me never been so bloody cold, bwoy, never been so cold! Me like it fiery hot, bwoy, fiery hot, like furnace.” He pauses and turns serious. “Yu manage sleep dis night, Bloody Jack Moss, dis night afore de noose, bwoy?”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I shake my head. Although my bed is comfortable, and it's comfortable because I have friends in high places, and I have friends in high places because on the voyage over here I killed someone that everyone hated, sleep has evaded me on this my final night.

"Yeah, mon, yu did?"

"What?"

"Yu slow, Jack Moss, slow, slow, slow," he taps his own head. "Me can read yuh thoughts, bwoy, read em, all of em!"

*"I do know who you are!"* I blurt out. I can't imagine why I didn't instantly know him, everyone on my island knows, or rather knows of him.

"Ha-ha! Now yu talking, bwoy, now yu talking!"

"You're the Heartman and..."

He quickly finishes my sentence, "yu see de Heartman and yu gonna die, bwoy, yu see de Heartman and yu gonna die!" There is glee in his voice and if he'd had a face then I'm sure he would have been grinning.

"Yeah, bwoy, yeah Me would! De Heartman, him be grinning from ear to ear, mon! Like dis..." he reaches across my desk and picks up my quill, dips it in the ink and draws a sinister smile on his faceless face. He's highly amused by this and laughs heartily. A shiver runs down my spine.

"Why are you here, Sir?"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Sir? Sir? Now dat respect, bwoy, respect? De Heartman, him don’t normally get much respect, mon, not much. Him get de fear, lot o’ fear, hatred, plenty, but not much respect, bwoy, not much respect. But Me expect notting less from bloody Jackson Moss, bwoy, notting less.”

“Jack!”

“De Heartman struck a nerve, bwoy, struck a nerve? Jackson be yuh Sunday name?”

“Something like that,” I say. Only *she* calls me Jackson.

“Yeah, she does, bwoy, yeah she does! But yu showed her, mon, showed her. Yu sowed her with yuh potent seed.”

“She told me she was barren, boasted about it.” I stare at him. Then I slowly realise, “oh...so that was your doing?”

He chuckles. “Yeah, it was, bwoy, yeah it was! A lickle bit of Plantashion Island mischief, making a barren white missus give birt, mon, a lickle bit of mischief. Dat one of Me finest achievements! And two in one, bwoy, two in one! Ebony and ivory. You know, dat a song, bwoy, a song.”

Bastard!

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah! De Heartman a bloody bastard!”

“Stop that!”

“Stop wah?” he’s all innocent now.

“Reading my mind!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ain’t gonna happen, Jackson.” There is a sneer in the way he says my name, a drawnon sneer. It’s as if he’s taunting me. “Me de Heartman, Jackson, bwoy, de Heartman. Taunting what Me do. De Heartman, him be a cruel sort of...” he’s choosing his words carefully, but I know what he is. “Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do! De Heartman a demon, Me know it, yu know it, everyone on Plantashion Island know it. Let’s cut the dodo shit! Dere ain’t no need for pretending, bwoy, no need for pretending, not in dis fucking freezing cell cos Me, de Heartman, ain’t got no humanity in Me.”

“I’m going to hang in a few hours, Sir, I’ve no time to pretend.”

“Ha-ha! De Heartman like yu, bloody Jackson Moss, mon.”

“Err...thanks.”

The Heartman bashes his fist on the table, and I jump, “oh, for de Devil’s sake ax de question Jackson, bwoy, ax de question! Even Me, de Heartman, losing de will...”

I stare at him, “the question?”

“Don’t mess with Me, bwoy, don’t mess with Me! De question! Out loud!”

I glare at him. “Alright. I’ll ask. Am I going down below?”

Suddenly he’s all innocent again. Coy almost. He tilts his head. “To hell? Dat what yu mean, bwoy?”

I don’t want to say that word, not this close to my execution and not after what I’ve done.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Sure, yu don’t, bwoy,” The Heartman stands up and starts pacing the cell. He’s tall, maybe ten feet tall and he has to stoop right over, “yu know it ain’t ever gonna be dat simple not wid de Heartman don’t yu, bwoy!”

“For God’s sake! I’m going to hang in a few hours!”

He shrinks back, “Ooh, don’t mention dat G word, bwoy, don’t mention dat G word!”  
I’d struck a nerve.

“Yeah, yu did! But time ain’t no concern to Me, Jackson, bwoy, ain’t no concern. De Heartman take as long as Me want. De Heartman him control time, bwoy, control time. Now den, where yu want to start, de beginning, de middle or de end? Mebee after de end? Mebee afore de beginning? Mebee somewhere else completely?”

Of course, I want to start at the end, the suspense is...well, it’s killing me.

“Ha-ha! Hey! Me like yuh style, bwoy, like yuh style, funny to de last. Tell yu what; we start a long time after de end, den just afore de end, and den we go back, just to keep you happy like. Hagree?”

I reluctantly nod, “hagree.”

“So, de Sir Jackson Moss him be speaking Plantashion Island speak after all!” He bows to me mockingly. “De mighty ain’t so mighty after all, bwoy, ain’t so mighty after all.”

“Mm...”

“First, along time after de end...den de Heartman going to show yu de fate of Charles Inman, cos de Heartman him needing a bit of blood n guts to get dis story started. Blood n guts!

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

De Heartman love de blood n guts! Love it. Come wid Me, bwoy, come wid Me for a lickie bit o' Heartman fun...now close yuh eyes, bwoy, close dem, and no peeking! Hagree?"

"Hagree."

**Heads in a bag**

"Arghhhhhhhhh!" A woman screams so loud that I, Jack Moss, wake up from some kind of deep sleep that the Heartman has put me into. One second ago I was in my cell talking to the demon and then darkness enveloped us both. A scream wakes me up and I haven't a clue where I am.

"Ha-ha! Shh...Me tink she seen yu, Jackson bwoy, seen yu. But, he-he! Guess what? She ain't seen de Heartman yet."

"Not ye..."

"Arghhhhhhhhhhh!"

"Hehe! She has now, Jackson, bwoy, she has now! Me just love dis bit, mon, love it...scaring the bejesus out of de alives. It funny as hell, bwoy, funny as hell. Hehe! Never has de Heartman have so much fun as when him scaring de shit out of de alives!" The Heartman is giggling like a naughty child.

"So, so sorry madam, so sorry. You weren't meant to see that," from the ground I can see the shiny brown shoes of a man. From the look of the shoes this is no black man, black men don't often wear shoes, and definitely not on Plantashion Island, and when they do, they don't

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

look like these shoes. Also, from what I've seen of the white men on Red Rose City docks, plenty of Englishmen don't wear shoes like these either. These are shiny and they smell good, that refreshing leather smell that's like fresh cut flowers, not like the leather whips that cut into the backs of the negroes back on Plantashion Island. That leather stinks of puss and blood and agony.

"Like when dey force yu to speak bloody English, bwoy, like when dey force yu to speak bloody English?"

"Yes."

"Ahh! De Heartman love dat smell, bwoy, love it. Love de smell of...pain."

"Love the smell of pain?" I snap. "What the hell are you?"

"What de hell Me? De Heartman a demon, bwoy, a demon, tought dat clear by now, mon." There's a moment's silence before he speaks again, "and dat, dat be Sir Richard Owen, bwoy, him eminent pink English mon. Him well known around dese parts for chopping up dead black mon and playing plenty mischief wid deir bodies. Hehe!"

"That's not funny!"

"Sure, it is, mon! It be plenty funny, funny as hell, bwoy, funny as hell. But Me tell a lie, Sir Jackson Moss, Sir Dick him not just be well known for chopping up dead black mon, him also chop up plenty dead pink mon too. Ha-ha! Plenty! Sir Dick him ain't fussy about who him chop up! Any colour will do! Any colour will do! Him ain't fussy at all. De Heartman like dat in a mon, like dat. Chopping up hobby for him, no, Me tell anodder lie, it be him job. OK, OK, it be him hobby and him job. It nice when a mon can combine him work wid de love of

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

him life, nice, mon. Dat lickle bit like de Heartman. Him job to be evil, and him hobby to be evil. Ain't life swell, bwoy, swell."

In front of our eyes Sir Richard scuttles about trying to catch us but we're a couple of bowling balls, knocking into each other and other things. We're rolling everywhere!

"Yeah, we are, bwoy, yeah we are!"

One minute my nose is on the ground the next I'm staring up at the ceiling, over and over, I'm getting dizzy. Now I feel sick to my...Ah, I can't feel it...

"Ha-ha! Dat cos yu have no stomach, bwoy, no stomach! Yu just a head now. Just big brown coconut head. But dat don't mean we can't be having a lickle Plantashion Island mischief. Come on, Jackson! Move about! Go on! It fun. Move!"

The Heartman has been dead longer than me, if he was ever alive. Clearly, he knows how to do things, like make noises and move. It's him who is doing all the moving, crashing and banging. "Come on!" He roars, "come on, bwoy, come on! Wriggle! Blink! Whatever mon!"

"I don't know how."

"Hey mon! Practice mek perfect, bwoy, practice mek perfect. We like two lickle black melon nipping around and getting into plenty bad mischief. Hehe!"

"No, no you don't!" Quick as a flash Sir Richard scoops us up and puts us back in his large medical bag before locking us in. For someone who looks like a very old pink man, he's remarkably agile.

"Awe!" The Heartman is crushed with disappointment. "Sir Dick! No!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“So,” I mutter, “just a head now?”

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru. But be counting yuhself lucky.”

“Lucky?”

“Sir Jackson! Yu on Earth, bwoy, on Earth, not below!”

I look around but the inside of the bag is dark, “Where are we? Apart from inside a bag.”

“It a long story, bwoy, a long story. But Me suppose we got plenty o’ time, mon, plenty o’ time. We in Red Rose City. Dat him home, de home of himself, de important pink mon wid de shoes. Sir Richard, or Sir Dick as Me call him, him a scientist. Famous English scientist, well dat what him tell everyone, him tell em him famous English scientist. And like Me tell you, bwoy, Sir Dick him like to experiment on dead folk. Reckon him bought us when we quite fresh and gory, bwoy, fresh and gory. Him put some stinking lotion on us and now Me feel quite alive again. Fresh as daisy de Heartman feel and ready to do some Plantashion Island partying, bwoy, partying! De Heartman feel like some ‘kill-devil’, some loud music and a bad, bad womon! Ha-ha!”

“Mm...”

“Yu goody no shoes, Sir Jackson Moss, bwoy, goody no shoes!”

I try to shake my head. “What’s he talking about? Sir Dick? Do you understand what he wants us...dead people for?”

My new friend puffs up. “De Heartman, him understand everyting!”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“You do?”

“Everyting, bwoy, everyting! De Heartman got a brain bigger dan a planet inside him coconut, bwoy, bigger dan a planet!”

“Alright. A planet. That’s big.”

“Damn right it big, bwoy, damn right!” Suddenly he’s calm again. “Ah, well to be perfectly honest, perhaps not everyting. Even a planet brain can’t know everyting, bwoy.”

“You’ve known Sir Dick for a while?”

The Heartman nods. “Plenty o’ time, bwoy, plenty o’ time. And yu know, bwoy, Sir Dick, him talk to de heads all de time, most of it de Heartman ain’t understanding at all. Dose damn words too long. Too, too long. Science words. Stupid fucking science words like ‘ology’ and ‘saurus’, shite like dat, mon, shite like dat. But what Me love de most about Sir Dick is dat him like to cut bits off us, see, de Heartman him actually had eyes before Sir Dick pluck dem out, and two lugs, which him whip off, but now Me got red demon eyes and lug less ear holes. But, de Heartman ain’t ever had a mouth, apart from dis dandy drawn-on one so Me ain’t unhappy. Me look quite Meself, to be honest.”

The Heartman’s red eyes are glowing in the dark. It’s very dark now that Sir Richard’s bag is closed, but the woman is still screaming. I can hear her, the Heartman with just holes in the side of his skull can hear her, the whole place, Red Rose City, can probably hear her, she is waking the dead! Well, she woke *us*.

“Who is she?” I ask.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Frilly Milly!” replies the Heartman.

“Frilly Milly? Is that her name?”

“Who care, bwoy, who care? De Heartman not fucking interested in dat womon, bwoy, not interested! She rich and pink, frilly and fluffy, so she Frilly Milly. Sir Dick be only here for her money, mon. Listen.”

“Oh, Sir Richard! Sir Richard. Oh my! Oh my, oh my!” says Frilly Milly, “what on Earth? Well, I never did!”

“Flibbertijibbert! Flibbertijibbert! Blah, blah, blah! Dat what de Heartman say she saying! Flibbertyfuckingjibbert!”

We can’t quite catch what she is really saying and, truth be told, she is doing a lot of sobbing in between her mumbling. Sir Richard’s voice is muffled too, I reckon he is trying to calm her, but he’s clearly having no luck. I’ve never come across an English woman like this, certainly the Missus is not like this at all! The Missus only screams when I...

“Yeah, she does, bwoy! Yeah, she does.”

“I don’t want to think about her.”

“Ah, Sir Jackson, yu not de king o’ de world, bwoy, yu not de king o’ de world! Yu don’t get to decide, mon. And de Heartman, him got to get him fun where him can, bwoy, where him can. A man got to get him fun where him can. Especially when him dead.”

I stare at the glowing eyes. “Am I dead?”

“Mebee yu dead, mon, mebee yu dead. Go on, ax yuh question, bwoy, ax it.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Why are we in this Sir Richard’s bag?”

“Mebee Sir Dick bought yuh cadaver, Sir Jackson, bought it afore it could all be buried. Now him going to do some experiment on yu, sticking tings in yu, tekking someting out, Me dunno, but him be doing it so him can get one over on dat Charlie Darwin.”

“Charli e Darwin? I’ve...I’ve never heard of him.”

“Why should yu, bwoy, why should yu? But him in all de papers. Ah... ’xpect dat yu not read, Sir Jackson Moss.”

“I can read!”

“You can read, bwoy?”

“Yes! Learnt to read the bible....”

“Tssssss!” recoils the Heartman, “not dat book! Not dat terrible, terrible book. Don’t mention dat book again, bwoy, don’t mention it again!”

“Alright, but you asked. That’s how I learnt to read, we all did, all of us slaves on Plantashion Island, like slaves everywhere.”

“Not everywhere, bwoy, not everywhere.”

“What do you mean?”

“Dey not learn to read on de odder side o’ de pond, bwoy, not learn to read, not de slave in de plantation or cotton fields, dey not learn to read.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Why?”

“Later, mon, later, dat boring. Now, where was de Heartman?”

“Mr Darwin?”

“Dat right! Charlie Darwin! Yu gotta understand, Sir Dick hate Charlie Darwin, bwoy, hate him. Hate him guts. Never stop moaning about him. ‘Fucking Darwin dis and fucking Darwin dat’. Blah, blah, blah! ‘I could strangle dat fucking Charlie Darwin, I could stove his head in.’ Blah, blah, blah! Him always moaning plenty about him going on about him voyages wid him big fucking turtles, and him stupid big book which Sir Dick be saying be mumbo jumbo, tittle tattle, load of shite.”

I’ve seen plenty of turtles, eaten a few, but I’ve never heard of this Sir Richard or Charlie Darwin. Not much English news gets as far as the slaves on Plantashion Island, “Why does he hate this Mr... Darwin?” I ask.

“Cos bwoy, him de man. Charlie Darwin de man. After yuhs truly o’ course! But Charlie him more famous dan Sir Dick, bwoy?”

“The man?”

“De man. Now, tell de Heartman what Sir Dick doing now? Me ax you, bwoy.”

“I really don’t know,” and I really don’t.

“Him making up name for dem gigantic dragons, dat what, making up a name for em.”

“Gigantic dragons?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dinosaur, bwoy, dinosaur! Later. Anyhow, Fucking Charlie Darwin, him be plenty famous round de whole world for him ideas about everyting.”

We sit in silence for a while as Frilly Milly finally stops her sobbing. I haven’t ever heard a girl sob like her, not even a black woman whipped like a mule, and I’ve seen that happen plenty. This woman is like a pickney, a big blubbing pink pickney, but instead of a beautiful respectful black pickney this one is fully grown and, I imagine all the lace that she’s dressed in, like the ones I’ve seen hanging up in the bedroom of the missus.

“Yeah, yu have, bwoy, yeah yu have!”

“Dear Madam,” declares Sir Richard, “these are specimens of my research work...”

“He-he! Listen, we specimen now, Sir Jackson, bwoy. Specimen! Love it!”

“My research is vital to the future of modern medicine,” Sir Dick continues, “vital. Medicine will revolutionise the world, the entire world. But research is expensive. Many members of society have been my benefactors, and this has led to countless discoveries.”

“But what kind of butcher takes a man’s head and peers inside it, Sir Richard?”

“Not a butcher madam, not a butcher at all, a scientist.”

“He-he! Sir Richard on de scrounge, bwoy! On de scrounge like common tief!”

“So, I was executed, and my head ended up as...research?”

“Mebee, mebee not, bwoy, mebee, mebee not. Dis be just one possible outcome, hagree?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Mm...”

“Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

Sir Dick continues, “without modern research the world will not move on, mankind will not reach his lofty goals and potential...”

“Him be giving it all dat, bwoy, giving it all dat! Blahdeblahdeblah! Yu go Sir Dick! Fuck dat fucking Charlie Darwin, bwoy, fuck him and him origin of shite, shite! Yu de mon, Sir Dick, bwoy, de mon!”

“Oh, I’m not at all sure, Sir Richard,” says Frilly Milly, “not sure at all.”

“She a tough coconut to crack, bwoy, tough coconut, dat Frilly Milly, a tough coconut. Hagree?”

“Hagree!” I reply, “can we move on from the inside of this bag, now?”

“Yu fed up, bwoy?”

“I have to say it’s never been my ambition to end up as a head in a bag, Sir.”

“Ha-ha! OK, next de Heartman have treat for yu.”

“A treat?”

“Yu like a spot of revenge?”

“Revenge?” I try to shrug but I haven’t any shoulders.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yu need reminding, bwoy, dat yu is lucky, lucky dat yu in bag, bag in parlour, parlour in house and house in Red Rose City, and Red Rose City on de Earth. Tink about what happens when person die and go down under...Fulljoy!”

**Hell**

Once more I awaken, but it is still dark, dark and hot. Actually, as my eyes become accustomed, I realise it is not...not as dark as the inside of Sir Richard’s bag, it’s just dim. But it is hot though, stiflingly hot, like I’m stood too close to a fire.

“Watch dis bwoy, watch dis. But hush...hush now, de Heartman having de Devil work to do, mon. Look down...”

At my feet before me is a man that I recognise, a man that I hate, despise to the pits of my stomach. He’s called Charles Inman. He is lying asleep on the ground. I watch as the sound of bloodcurdling screams start to wake him from his slumber. Instinctively my hands become fists ready to strike him again, to finish him off.

“Steady, bwoy, steady, him been killed once by yu, can’t happen twice. Believe Me, bloody Jackson Moss, Charles Inman him gonna suffer someting far worse dan death, bwoy, someting far, far worse.”

“Wh...where am I?” Asks Inman. It looks like he’s awoken from a long, deep sleep. The last thing he knew he was fighting the man he called a ‘bastard negro’. That was me, Jack

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Moss, and the rope that he'd intended to wrap around my neck and murder me with ended up around his own before it tightened. It was an accident. Although I wanted to kill him something inside me stopped me.

'Bloody rope should have gone around the negro's neck,' he thinks angrily. Now I can read his thoughts just like the Heartman can read mine. 'Bloody rope should have gone around the negro's neck,' he thinks again, that being the last thing he thought at the moment...the very moment when he breathed his last breath, the moment when he died. 'I should have tightened it and sent the black bugger down to hell where they all belong.'

I shudder listening to his thoughts. Being inside someone's head is clearly not all it's made out to be, not a place you want to be when you come to think of it.

"Shh, bwoy, shh," The Heartman and I are stood next to Inman. "Me be liking yuh way of tinkin, Inman," the Heartman's voice is deep and dark, menacing. It's different, somehow different to the one he speaks to me with.

"What, who said that?" snaps Inman. "Who's there? Where am I?"

"Dat be a whole lot o' questions, bwoy, a whole lot. Now...listen."

Screams, yelling, shouting, moaning fill Inman's ears. It's deafening.

"Stop that noise, stop it now! Now, I tell you!"

The Heartman laughs a deep belly laugh and shivers go up my spine. "Putting yuh fingers in yuh ears won't work down here, bwoy, won't work down here. Firstly, cos yu ain't got any! Me ripped em off just for a lickle bit o' fun!"



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Inman feels where his ears should be, but there's nothing there. His hands move around his face, or what is left of it. There's no eyes, nose or mouth. He's blind and that's why he can't see me. But he can hear without ears?

"We in de mon's head, bwoy, in de mon's head. Me and yu. And all o' dis."

Inman is screaming, "my face, my face! My eyes! Ears! Mouth!"

"Ha! Yu ain't what yu used to be, bwoy, ain't what yu used to be! Not a bit of it, yu not...err humon now." The Heartman is amused and it's clearly pissing Inman off.

"If he ever was..." I mutter.

"What? Who said that?" Inman recognises another voice. "Who else is here?"

"You ain't ever alone here, bwoy, ain't ever alone here!"

"Where is *here*?" he snaps furiously.

"Worry 'bout yourself, bwoy, worry 'bout yourself. Yu about to enter through de gates of hell, bwoy!" in front of Inman is a shadowy figure that, somehow, he can just about make out. He doesn't know it's the Heartman because he's never heard of the Plantashion Island demon. White men don't ever listen to any of the stories that the slaves tell each other. In fact, they clearly think that the slaves are like dogs, who go into their kennels each night, curl up, lick their arses and go to sleep until morning.

"Lick deir arses! Nice, bwoy, nice!"

"Where am I?" asks Inman. "Hell?"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Just de place yu deserve to be, bwoy, just de place yu deserve to be!” The Heartman is laughing – he does a lot of laughing - it’s a deep, disturbing laugh that makes Inman’s bones rattle.

As he’s laughing Inman vision clears and he notices that the Heartman is a black man, so he tries to spit at him.

“Spit!” The Heartman just about keels over at that, he’s laughing so hard, “yu can’t spit, bwoy, yu can’t spit! Yu have no mouth, remember?”

“No fucking bastard negro is going to talk to me like that!” Inman is furious. ‘How dare a black man talk to me like that,’ he thinks, “I talk to THEM like that!’ To Inman we’re like the shit he avoids treading on, that’s what he thinks of negros. He’s whipped many a negro nearly to death for less, nailed their balls to trees for less, ordered other slaves to shit in their mouths for less, locked them in iron neck collars for less.

Neck collars, I recall. Although I’ve only been in a neck collar once, for a few days, but I’ve known men and women who have been in them for months and had the life slowly drained out of them.

“Ah, de neck collar,” reflects the Heartman, “nasty, nasty, nasty.”

Even the Heartman thinks they’re nasty! I’ve seen strong men, proud men, seen them destroyed by neck collars, their brutality completely stripping away humanity.

The Heartman turns to the dead man, “let Me tell yu, Mr Inman, it *yu* dat ain’t worth de shit under Jack Moss’s boots, bwoy, ain’t worth it. De Heartman hate to say it, hate to say it, but dat one good, goody two shoes, bwoy.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Inman's hackles are rising. You can see it. I've seen him get mad before. He's well known on the plantation for his vindictive temper. He is going to lash out soon. But he has no arms or legs to lash out with. They have gone too. Inman is a pathetic specimen of what used to be a pathetic man.

"Jack Moss? Who in hell's name is Jack Moss? Never fucking heard of anyone called Jack Moss!"

"He de black bwoy yu fighting just a minute ago."

"What?"

"Remember? Yu on de deck of *Hope*..." he chuckles, "*Hope* be a funny name for ship dat brings so much misery, don't yu tink? How many people died on *Hope* Me wonder? Tousands? Tens of tousands? It a ship after my own heart, bwoy, after my own heart, if Me had one! De Heartman like ships dat inflict misery. De Heartman like misery and...talking of hearts."

"What! What are you doing?"

"Me ain't got no face either, bwoy..." he's stepped out of the shadows of Inman's mind, a faceless demon, a faceless negro demon. Faceless except glowing red eyes and that drawn on smile. He's ten feet tall, dressed in a smart black suit with a black top hat. He's looming large over him, "and de Heartman him ain't got no heart," his white shirt is opened, skin peeled back, and in front of my eyes his ribs open like a cupboard door, all red and gory, "see. No heart, bwoy, no beating heart."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Inman wretches, but nothing will come up because there is nothing to come up and nowhere for it to come from. There is also nowhere it can come out of either. Inman is being eaten alive by the Heartman's hell, one feature and one organ at a time.

"Charles Inman, Me have to say, yu truly a man after Me own...heart," he chuckles. "Yu real bad bastard. A demon, low life, gutter rat, lower dan even de lowly worms. Yu be one of de most totally evil humans Me ever coming across in Me entire tousand years above and below dis Earth. Kudos!"

I notice the Heartman theatrically doffs his top hat respectfully at his victim.

"I...I don't know what you're talking about, I was just following orders."

"Orders!" The Heartman laughs, "yu weren't *just* following orders, bwoy. Yu enjoy, ENJOY, hurting, raping, killing. Me have to say dat de Heartman really do approve of yu, Charles Inman."

"Wait, who's that? I know him?" A man is being dragged past him by scaly serpents with red demonic eyes.

"Him? Yu do know him. Dat because him be yuh Massa."

"My Massa?"

"Massa Benjamin Smith."

"Massa Smith? Is he down here too?" like Massa Smith in his death throes, Inman is struggling to differentiate between reality and imagination.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

There's a snort. "O' course him down here, bwoy," laughs the Heartman, "course him down here. Him murder plenty, him torture plenty, him rape plenty. De first two of dose by proxy, de last one all by himself! Him died between de legs of a young black womon, remember? What, yu didn't know? Course yu knew?"

Inman is shaking his head.

"Yu knew because yu help mek sure she blame for him death."

"No, no, no I didn't. I didn't. I don't know anything about that."

"ENOUGH! More of dat lickle story later, bwoy, later, after de Heartman finished wid yu. But whatever yu all did to her, dere punishment a plenty down here. And him ain't finish suffering, de Massa, him ain't finish suffering just yet. Hagree, Jack?"

"Hagree!" I reply.

Inman is staring after Massa Smith. "Between the legs? No, no, I didn't...I didn't blame her, didn't tell everyone..."

"Ha! Yu can hear alright, bwoy, even widout dose ears, kudos!" Again, there is a mock doff of the hat before he continues. "Fucked to death him was, bwoy! Fucked to death by lickle, lickle girl called Celeste, 'cept Celeste ain't her name, yuh Massa not know de names of any of him slave, not until now..."

"I don't understand, where am I?" Inman looks around. Without eyes all he can perceive is just darkness. It's hot though and all around him he can hear screams, like the screams of the negroes he's tortured and maimed back on Plantashion Island. Negroes he's put in chains and

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

shackles, nailed by their ears, tits or balls to posts, negroes he's ripped the tongues out of and shit and pissed on.

"Mm...Charles Inman has been highly imaginative with regard to how he inflicted pain on us poor negroes," I mutter.

"Me like a mon of imagination, bwoy, like a mon of imagination," the Heartman reads my mind.

"What?" asks Inman.

"Yes, sirree, de Heartman reckon dem dere sounds of screaming be familiar to yu Mr Inman, Sir, just like dey were familiar to Benjamin Smith, dey be familiar because dey be de sounds of suffering, pain, terror, fear, injustice!"

"What are you doing," a large hand, more like a scaly dragon's claw than a human hand, is reaching towards him out of the sleeves of the Heartman's suit. Razor sharp talons are cutting into his skin, blood is seeping out, pain searing through his body. He tries screaming but no sound will come out. Then it is presented to him.

"A heart, bwoy, a heart!" Inman's warm organ is presented to me. I imagine that normally I would be repulsed by this, but because it's the heart of Inman I have very different feelings, feelings that are telling me he deserves everything he gets. I'm ashamed of myself, but I know this is justice.

"Yeah, mon, justice 'Heartman style'! A heart for de Heartman, bwoy, a heart for de Heartman. Yu see Jack Moss, Sir Jackson Moss, dat what happen to de bad people in de world,

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

de demon harvest deir hearts.” Claws are clicked and dark shapes shuffle towards us. “Now take Inman away, de Heartman deal with him some more later.”

“Now...” The Heartman turns to me, his manner is different. He’s gone from sinister underworld monster to polite Caribbean gentleman in the blink of an eye. Even his attire is once again exquisite and there is nary a trace of blood. “Tell me about yuh first meeting wid dat heartless fellow, bwoy.”

That memory is locked away in the farthest reaches of my mind. It’s somewhere I’ve not visited for years. I shake my head, “please don’t.”

But the Heartman clicks his claws and then turns to me, “it part o’ yuh story, bwoy, part of yuh story. If we don’t tell yuh story how can we move on to dat of odders?”

### **Slave Hold**

The heat of hell is replaced by a different kind of warm, that of bodies, hundreds of them all lying cramped up with barely enough space to move their arms and legs, and no space to sit up let alone stand.

The Heartman and I are just heads again, he grins at me, “we heads bwoy, cos dere ain’t no space in Hope for any more bodies, ain’t no more space.”

I can see that I have been lying in my own filth for over a week, sick as a dog as the big canoe rocks and rolls, from side to side and up and down. I’m still a boy, on the cusp of becoming a man. I’ve grown like a man in places but I’m skinny like a youth. Well, I was skinny like a youth before I left Africa, now I’m skinny because I’m hungry, thirsty, aching

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

and in pain. The man who was next me was from another tribe, but he died yesterday. We tried to speak but we only understood a few words of each other's language. He was older than me and could have been my father. I miss my father. My neighbour got sick, cried all night, ranted, rambled and screamed but then he fell asleep, just nodded off and didn't wake up when they dragged us on deck for a salty scrub down next morning. The life had just drained from his skinny limbs. When they saw him a boss Toubob came and gave orders.

"Charles Inman, bwoy, Charles Inman?"

I nod my head, which is just about all I can do because at the moment as I am just a head, a head who is watching what we all went through, "yes, Charles Inman."

After the orders two Toubob took my neighbour and threw him over to the sharks. We were all made to walk to the side, to look over, to watch. The sea was full of red as they feasted on his weary flesh.

"Dat a warning to yu not to try jump ship, bwoy, not to try jump ship."

I nod. "Then I saw it," I say to the Heartman, getting back to the matter at hand, the crowded bodies in the slave hull of Hope.

"Saw it, bwoy, saw what?"

"Saw Inman talking to a black man."

"Talking to a black man? Dat Inman him talk to de black man all de time, bwoy, all de time."



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I stare at the Heartman, “Inman never talks to the black men! Negroes are beneath him. He shouts at black men, barks orders at black men, but never *talks* to us. You heard him back there in hell, you heard his words. You know what Charles Inman thought of us?”

“Him tink we like de shit him avoid treading on, dat what him tink of us negroes, bwoy, dat what him tink.”

I nod.

“Ah...now Me understand, bwoy, now Me understand. Charles Inman was ‘talking’ to de black man. ‘Talking’.”

“I just saw red,” I blurt out.

Below deck they have scraped out our filth and everyone is back lying down flat out with no room to sit up. Then it happens. They open the hatch, and HE APPEARS.

“They are bringing him,” I whisper to the Heartman. In front of us I can see myself, a young lad, but a clearly angry young boy. They bring HIM down, a couple of Toubob, one on each arm, dragging HIM. HE argues with them, pleads, shouts, begs. At the time I can’t understand what HE’s saying, cos HE is different, HE speaks Toubob, but I know HE is pleading for his life. I know what HE is.

“Dey chain him next to yu, bwoy, next to yu.”

I stare furiously at the Heartman. “I know! I was there!”

After they shut us up, shut the hatch up, we’re back in darkness. HE bangs his fist and feet. HE doesn’t think he should be there, HE thinks HE should be up on deck with Toubob. Doing Toubob bidding. Traitor! Damned traitor! TRAITOR!

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, mon, traitor, mon!” “Scum!”

I say.

“Yeah, scum, bwoy, scum!”

“How can anyone do what HE has done?”

“De Human heart can be an evil place, bwoy, an evil place, full wid greed ‘n deceit ‘n cunning.”

I can see that I’m getting even more angry! Furious! I’ve never been so mad in my whole life. But I know what I am doing. In my mind I know that I’m doing a good deed. I watch as I take my chains and, quick as a flash, wrap them round HIS neck! Traitor! Murderer! Toubob friend! Except they aren’t friends with negroes, and he’s no better than the rest of us. In fact, he’s worse, much worse! Catching and selling us.

The head that I’ve become tries to avert my eyes from what my younger self is doing, murdering a man, a black man, but I still can’t move my head.

In front of us I tighten the chain and the man fights at first. But I took HIM by surprise and there is anger in my arms, anger for his greed. For all those HE’S enslaved, men, women, elders, children, babies...babies! BABIES! Sold babies like lumps of meat, ripping them from their mother’s teat. I remember my dead neighbour, my poor dead neighbour. I tighten and I tighten. HE gets weaker as I get stronger, filled with strength, and then HE goes limp.

“Negro who sell him own to white mon, bwoy, negro who sell him own to white mon?”

The Heartman is unusually quiet.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

My words are barely more than a whisper. “Yes.”

“Mm...want some fun, bwoy?”

**The Missus**

The claustrophobic heat of the hold of Hope has been replaced with a familiar warmth that wraps around you like a blanket. It’s a heat that I’ve known all of my adult life. We’re back on Plantashion Island and stood in her bedroom and the Heartman places his finger to his drawnon mouth to tell me to be quiet.

“Yu going see yusef, bwoy, see yusef in...” he chuckles, “action, mon...”

Darkness envelops the big house of Bay View on Plantashion Island as the newly widowed Elizabeth Smith lies naked on her bed letting a cooling sea breeze gently caress her delicate ivory form. It’s a body I’ve had hundreds of times, or rather a body that has had mine. Her body isn’t like that of a slave woman. Hard, solid bodies, arms that have strength, legs that have power and soft welcoming faces that give a man love, real love that comes from the heart. The body lying in front of us is menacing, slender, sleek, with thin arms and legs that stretch out to delicate pink feet that have never felt the warmth of the tropical sun. Blonde hair is spread out across the pillow. When she’s on top of me and her head droops, her hair caresses my face, soft and feather-like.

“Hehe! Nice one, bwoy, nice one!” whispers the Heartman. “Yu a poet, bwoy, a poet.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

As usual, unless the wind of a hurricane bends the trees almost in two and relentless rain waters the greedy sugar cane plants, it is a still and clammy night. A night when only the dead can sleep.

“De night not de problem, bwoy, de night not de problem, it de day, de heat o’ de day dat de problem.”

“The heat of the day kills plenty of Toubob,” I muse.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru. Dere plenty o’ bodies to harvest on here on Plantashion Island, mon.”

“We’ve all seen them,” I mutter, “seen them arriving on Plantashion Island in their heavy English woollen clothes, only to be lowered into the fertile black earth within a couple of weeks, providing the worms with limitless nourishment.”

“Limitless nourishment from deir succulent fat pink bodies, bwoy, from deir succulent fat pink bodies. Dey die, plenty die on de sea crossings ending many lives sooner, mon, ending many lives sooner.”

I stare at the Heartman as he continues.

“Dey have deir funerals wid deir hymns and prayers to dat white ‘G’ mon dat de Heartman never mention, as de ships toss and roll deir way to dat new, tropical horizon.”

“Mm...”

“De Heartman watch deir watery burials ending deir dreams of becoming rich, bwoy, ending deir dreams of becoming rich.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Slaves don’t dream about becoming rich as they sail toward Plantashion Island!” I snap. “For slaves it’s just desperate painful misery, body after body lining the wooden levels below deck, coming to an end with the relief of death. No funeral, no prayerful words from a respectful captain, only a brutal dragging of bodies up to the light before being sent to the swirling darkness where sharks wait.”

“Dat true, bwoy, dat true. Mon, dose big blue fish eat well when dere be a ship like Hope passing, dey eat well.”

“Some hope,” I whisper.

“Ha-ha! Some hope, bwoy, some hope.”

A slower pace is the lesson an Englishman and woman quickly learn on the Island if they wish to avoid an untimely demise. Slow is the only way on a steamy night such as this.

*Breep! Breep!* A solitary tree frog sings from outside the window. *Breep! Breep!* It sounds like it’s urgently calling for its mate. *Breep! Breep!*

“He-he! Yu here, bwoy, yu here, reporting for duty,” the Heartman tugs at my arm, “he-he, yu on time!”

“Always on time for the Missus.”

Expectation starts to rise slowly in the young woman’s body as it arches away from the clean white sheets that a slave’s exhausted body can only dream of touching. Excitement at the mere thought of my arrival yields a little moan of ecstasy.

“She exploding wid love already, mon, exploding! She a love bomb! Lucky yu, bwoy!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Lucky yu! She a fine womon, Elizabeth Smith, a fine, fine pink womon,” the Heartman made a grab for his own crotch, “shame she ain’t dead, yet, shame. Me look forward to some subterranean sexploits.”

Only recently widowed, the tall, elegant, rich Elizabeth with her porcelain skin and blonde hair would make any wealthy gentleman the perfect wife. Her marriage to Massa Benjamin Smith of Liverpool had been loveless almost from the end of their first year together, when she was barely older than a child, for as Elizabeth had grown into a woman, Smith’s eyes had wandered to any prepubescent negro or mulatto that he could get his hands on and member into, bent over or sat in his lap. That was how he died, my Plantashion Island self had heard, sat beneath a particularly vigorous young girl who he called Celeste, who we know as Beth, who literally rode him to hell and back before leaving him there for the Heartman to devour his insides. Many a villager cheered that young woman as she was carried shoulder high back to the slave village of Hermitage after seeing ‘Massa’ off. “She suffer for dat dough, bwoy, suffer.”

I just nod. I can’t think about that.

“Yu gonna tink about it later, bwoy, tink about it, live it wid her.”

I stare at him and then we’re back in the mind of my younger self, myself who is about to do his duty to the Missus.

“Yeah, yu are, bwoy, yeah yu are!”

As I’m climbing into the chamber I’m thinking about Beth. Beth is a meek girl but when the Massa took her nine-year-old sister and raped her, she vowed to everyone in the village that she’d see him pay for his violation. Everyone had told Beth to hush her mouth for even in the

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

village of Hermitage there were some slaves who weren't averse to snitching to the Massa for some favour or other. They know who they are. Everyone knows who they are.

"Yeah, dey do, bwoy, yeah dey do!"

"You know what happens to a negro snitch?" I ask the Heartman.

"De Heartman know everyting, bwoy, everyting. But Me tell yu, it not de girl that killed 'Massa' Smith, no Sirree."

I glare at him, "what?"

"Not Beth at all, bwoy, not at all."

"Explain?"

"Dat Beth give de Massa a good riding alright, no doubt about dat, bwoy, no doubt about dat. But it someone else, someone much closer to hand dat kill him, bwoy. Yu just ax Elizabeth Smith who kill her husband, go on, yu just ax and yu watch she squirm."

"I can't ask her, it's a memory."

"Ax, bwoy, ax! Memories ain't 'xactly set in stone, bwoy, ain't set in stone. Dey be changing, changing all de time. Yu all have de memory dat changing, changing from one day to de next and from one person to de next. Yu and yuh friend can see someting, de same ting, bwoy, but dat memory be different and it changing from one day to de next. No sirree, a memory ain't set in stone, bwoy, it ain't set in stone. Hagree?"

I shrug, "hagree."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yu can ax she tonight. Just wait and see. Before dat girl straddled de Massa dat night him already dying, dying at Elizabeth’s hand. Go on, ax, bwoy, ax.”

“I’ll ask.”

“Now, concentrate on yuh performance or de Missus be upset.”

The billowing curtains twitch and my gaze moves from the Heartman to them. Had someone else been lying in the bed it would have just appeared to them to be a strong gust of ocean wind caressing this island of slaves, but not to her, to Elizabeth it was me coming as I did every night to service her. She lets out a deep moan just at the thought. This is a woman who is fine tuned for her own pleasure, hagree?

“Ha-ha! Hagree, bwoy, hagree! Now concentrate, bwoy, concentrate. Yu need to concentrate if yu going to be able to ax a question in de memory. It ain’t easy for alives, mon.” “Late!” Elizabeth speaks as if scolding a disobedient servant, which indeed I am. To her our relationship was more about meeting *her* needs than any kind of love or affection and not for a moment did she let me forget who was the one in control.

“Sorry, Missus,” I breathe. I always call her ‘Missus’. Obsequiousness has been whipped into me, whipped into us all.

“Do that again and I’ll bite your ‘ting’ off!” The Missus isn’t joking. Some mornings my back is stinging more than had I been lashed twenty times by the driver of the planter gang for not swinging my machete fast enough. And my poor ting, some days I can barely pee it is so sore.

“Yeah, it is, bwoy, yeah it is! Yuh poor, poor ‘Ting’!”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Shut up!” But I have no choice. Having a sore ting is preferable to being thrown in the gaol to wallow in my own shit and piss, or worse, see my family thrown in the gaol. In any white/black relationships threats are never very far away.

Immediately Elizabeth is up off the bed attacking me, ripping off what clothing I am wearing to get at my body and the object she desires, at this moment, above all else. A lion ripping into the soft flesh of its prey with razor sharp claws. Watching is almost as bad as experiencing it.

“He-he! Yeah, it is, bwoy, yeah it is! Yu can feel yuh pain! Feel it! And yuh poor ‘Ting’!”

At first, when we had just met and had first started our liaison, I had tried to resist the frenzy, but that only made her attack me more fiercely. Now I know better than to resist. I know that the quicker she is satisfied the quicker I can leap back out of the window and escape to my bed to lick my wounds.

Elizabeth Smith gave the impression of being a demure and obedient English lady, but in truth this could not be further from reality. Elizabeth is a calculating and dominant woman. Upon the death of her husband, Massa Benjamin Smith, she had inherited his vast wealth, his plantation and his transatlantic shipping business. Flesh was her real business though, negro flesh like mine, and she found herself even better at making money than her husband. She was better because her standards were lower. No negro, man, woman or child was better than a worm to her. To her we have no feelings, and only the fact that she needed to maintain our monetary value means that she provides us basic accommodation and sustenance to keep her from having to waste money and replace us.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

With an insatiable appetite for male negro bodies, the woman had a sex drive she had not anticipated when she left Liverpool. And she was as surprised as any young, modest lady would be when she had found herself wanting to fuck me for more than a year now. Normally she fucked a young black man two or three times before getting bored of them. But, with me she never seemed to tire, probably because I am a large man, and she likes large men.

“Yeah, yu are, bwoy, yeah yu are! Large! Poor ‘Ting’!”

“Shut up!”

But more than that, there was something about me, when I look at her, what she sees in my eyes is akin to total hatred and she loves that, being hated. Loves being despised. Being hated is exciting to Elizabeth Smith. Being hated by a man who is fucking you the most exciting feeling in the world. No, Elizabeth had not yet broken my spirit so she would keep fucking me until she did.

Pregnancy wasn’t a worry for Smith, she told me that she was barren, she’d never bled, not once, in her whole life and rather than feeling this made her less of a woman, she felt that it made her more...more powerful. She could fuck like a man, anyone she pleased, and walk away if she got bored. And because she owned so many young men, she could have her pick of the cream.

I watch as Elizabeth sits up and urgently pulls at my pants. “I’m getting married again you know,” she mutters as she slurps my ting.

“What?” my heart sinks along with it.

“He-he, bwoy! Poor ‘Ting’!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Fuck no!” Shouts Elizabeth. “No! Not a chance! Stop that at once! You know what I want from you, Jackson!” She only ever calls me Jackson when she is mad at me and she’s only really mad at me if my ‘ting’ underperforms. I can usually stand to attention though, anytime, anywhere. Quickly I take my mind off to my happy place and the large woman who took my virginity. She was nothing like Elizabeth, she was soft and loving and gentle and patient.

“That’s bloody better, boy!”

“He-he, dat bloody better, bwoy, dat bloody better! Poor ‘Ting’!”

“Married to who?” I ask plucking up the courage as she grapples between my strong hard legs.

Elizabeth glares at me and digs her nails deep into my sack.

“Ooh!” even the Heartman feels that one. “Dat harsh, bwoy! Harsh, harsh, harsh! Hagree?”

“Yeah, bloody right I hagree!”

“Is that any of your business, Jackson?”

I bite my lip to stop myself screaming the whole house down. My eyes are watering. No! Who am I kidding? I’m crying from the pain. I can barely speak, “sorry.”

Elizabeth lets go and I relax. “If you must know, Jackson, he’s a vicar. A man of God.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I can't imagine Elizabeth becoming the demure dutiful wife of a clergy man, not considering what she does to me every night. Suddenly a thought hits me, if she goes, I can stop coming here every night almost snapping my ting off with her demands.

“Don't worry though, Jackson, it won't make any difference to us. You'll still be required to do your duty until I get bored with you. And if we go back to England you're going to come too. You're my male concubine. I need you. Now...get inside me boy!”

After she is satisfied, we lie for a while. Afterwards she changes, she is always tender, tender for *her*, not tender for a normal woman. Everything is relative.

“Yeah, it is, bwoy, yeah it is, everyting relative.”

So, I see my chance to ask the question, to ask a question in a memory. I clear my throat, “err...there's a rumour going around the village about the Massa's death.”

“What?” The Missus sits bolt upright, her small perky pink tits jiggle as she does, not jiggle like a proper woman's tits but as much as hers ever do.

I shrug and turn over.

This infuriates Missus, “turn bloody back, Jackson! Turn back right now!” I

do and she's glaring at me, “...mm?” I feign ignorance to goad her.

The face on her is like thunder, “what are they saying?”

“Mm...nothing.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Don’t give me that. Tell me!”

“It’s nothing, nothing.”

She grabs for my ting and yanks it, hard, “tell me?”

“It’s just...” through the pain I can barely speak, “they’re saying Massa was poisoned...”

Missus leaps out of bed. She’s marching back and forth naked as a pickney. Back and forth. Thinking. Her face is stern and she’s bouncing around getting madder and madder. “Who would do such a thing?” she asks at last.

“Mek someting up, bwoy, fast, do it fast, mek up someting fast. Someting to save your ‘Ting’!” The Heartman loves to stir the pot of passion. “Yu need to save yuh ‘Ting’, bwoy! It urgent! An emergency, ‘Ting’ emergency!”

I shrug and then it comes to me, “one of the other Massa’s, they reckon, from another plantation. Just slave talk, Missus.”

“Ah,” she flops down, thinking. “Well...that makes sense, mm...makes sense. That’s totally possible. Totally possible. They would do that wouldn’t they? Friends to my face but as soon as my back is turned, they would stick a knife in me as soon as look at me. They are jealous of us, of our production.” Through fair means and foul, Bay View Plantation is the most productive on Plantashion Island.

“Yes, Missus, that is what they saying.”

“She kill him, bwoy, kill him, yu mark Me words,” the Heartman whispers, “de Missus murdering her husband dead as a dodo.”

“Jackson,” demands the missus, remembering what I am used for. She’s got that look on her face again, “I need fucking again, boy, and this time do it properly.”

### **Murder**

The Heartman clicks his claws, and we leave the bedroom of the Missus. “Where are we now?” I ask with my hands covering my poor overworked ‘ting’, even though it had only been overworked in a memory the pain felt real enough.

“Real, bwoy, real!”

“Where are we now?” I repeat, ignoring him.

The Heartman glances down and chuckles, “de Heartman him dotting the i’s and crossing de t’s, bwoy!”

“What?”

“Answering de question yu ax Missus a minute ago, bwoy, answering de question.”

We’re in a room. It’s gloomy. As my eyes become accustomed to the dim light, I notice a bed. It’s a bed in a room but not like the bedroom we’ve just been in. Although neat and tidy this is more like a dog kennel than a place a human being lays his or her head.

“Dog kennel? Mm...Me like dat, bwoy, like dat. Watch dis.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“How yu know, Missus?” Beth quakes as she speaks.

“Beth ain’t ever spoken to de Missus before, bwoy, never. She only ever seen her from a distance.”

“The Missus doesn’t have anything to do with us slaves!” I snap before looking down, “unless she wants something from us.”

“Or some ‘Ting’, bwoy, or some ‘Ting’!”

I ignore him, “she stayed in the house mostly when the old massa was alive, ordering the house slaves about.”

“A-ha, dat tru, dat tru!” The Heartman grins then starts speaking in the voice of a woman, “clean dis ‘Ting’, clean dat ‘Ting’, dust dis ‘Ting’, dust dat...”

I glare at him, “something like that. When the Massa died, she took over control.”

Red eyes glare at me. One winks. “Yeah, she did, bwoy, yeah she did. She took total control. TOTAL control of every ‘Ting’, mon.”

“Shh! I want to hear this.”

The Missus continues, “do you really think I don’t know my husband is fucking little girls, Beth, or shall I use your Sunday name, Elizabeth? Or the name he gave you, Celeste?”

Beth’s eyes widen, it is always best not to be noticed by white people if you are a slave, being noticed is never a good thing. “Yu know me name?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I know all your names, girl, all of them. You lot and my dear husband think that I just sit in my ivory tower at the top of the hill, arranging flowers all day long and ordering maids to dust here and there, but I know EVERYTHING. I make it my business to know everything. Always have.”

“Every ‘Ting’!” grinned the Heartman, winking again.

“Shh...”

Beth looks like a goat about to be slaughtered by the blade of a very sharp knife,  
“Me...Me sorry, Missus, really...Me really sorry. It just...”

The Missus holds her hand up and Beth immediately shuts up. “I know what he did to your sister, girl.”

“Yu know?”

“Like I said, I know everything. She wasn’t the first.”

Like the Heartman and I, the Missus has appeared in Beth’s small shack well after midnight. She is dressed in a shabby old dress with a shawl over her head. By her side is her trusty slave hound, Cerberus, with his constantly foaming muzzle and jet-black eyes. The only time the two are separated is when I visit the missus each night, for my safety. Fucking his mistress in front of him is a sure-fire way of upsetting the hound from hell.

“Ha-ha! Yeah, it is, bwoy, yeah it is! Old Cerberus here would rip yu limb from limb bwoy, if him caught yu humping de missus! Limb from limb, mon. Him kill a slave as soon as



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

sniff yu, bwoy.” His laughter slowly dies down. “Ah, well...Getting back to de matter at hand dough, de Missus don’t really care about Beth, bwoy, don’t really care. She don’t care about de sister, or what she husband been getting up to,” his voice is a whisper.

I turn and look at the Heartman’s stooped form. All the huts have low ceilings, and even I have to watch my head, but the Heartman he has to bend double, but at least we have bodies now, being a head was tiring, “what?”

“She got ambitions, bwoy, ambitions. Dat womon got ambitions. And woe betide anyone who get in de way of dose ambitions. Watch...”

The Missus is continuing. “My husband isn’t really in charge of this place, Beth. Never has been.”

Beth steps back as Cerberus slowly sniffs her crotch, “Me don’t understand, Missus,” she barely dares to breathe.

“Don’t make sudden movements, Beth,” warns the Missus.

She doesn’t need to be told twice, “no, no, Missus, no sudden movement.”

The Missus continues, “he isn’t really in control, my husband.”

“Missus?” Beth’s gaze is moving between the dog sniffing her and the missus who she doesn’t want to upset by not looking at her when she speaks.

“I am. I’m in control and I want you to do something for me.”

“Stop doing it with de Massa? Stop de jiggy, jiggy?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Smith laughs out loud before checking herself and the noise that she's just made, "Hell no! I don't care about that, girl. I wouldn't want my husband's pathetic little 'ting', is that what you call it? No, I wouldn't want it near me again! And I would not want his seed inside me. I know exactly where it's been. God knows what I'd catch."

"Den what, Missus?"

"I want him gone, dear."

"Gone? Back to England?"

"No dear, not back to England. Gone, dead, dear."

Beth rocks back, "dead?"

"Dead."

"Me can't kill no one, Missus. Me kill someone and de Heartman rip out my organs afore opening de gates of hell. Eternal damnation for me soul if de Heartman take me organs."

Mrs Smith thinks for a moment. She had anticipated that Beth wouldn't want to do it. Her voice is calm, calculated. She clicks her fingers and Cerberus growls a low 'earthquake' growl.

Beth looks down. On the floor a puddle is getting larger and larger around her bare feet. She's pissed herself with fear. Missus clicks her fingers again and Cerberus wags his tail and cocks his leg up against Beth's. "You will do it, Beth, or the auction that is being held next month in Bridgetown, you and your sister will be in it, sold separately. And you, you will end up entertaining my puppy here. You know he likes to follow people into the forest."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Missus!”

“I thought the idea of separation would jolt you. You’re pathetic! All of you, pathetic!

Cleaving one to another like toddlers! Pathetic. Now, here is how we are going to do this.”

**Slave Hound**

“Where are we now?” I ask. We’re outside. It’s daylight but because we’re in the rainforest the light is dim with dappled sunlight filtering through a dark green canopy high above our heads. The heat is relentless, and even the Heartman is looking hot.

“It not Hell hot, bwoy, not Hell hot! It different. It humid, mon, humid. Dat why yu slave don’t like working in de forest, it humid.”

I remember the months I’ve spent working in the forest, clearing the trees, shrubs, undergrowth, ripping out razor sharp plants and pulling up reluctant roots, making space for the sugar canes to be planted and start their sweet cycle of misery. From the dead forest to the mechanical dragons, the cycle of sugar misery is relentless, chewing up and spitting out slaves a plenty. Sweat dripping down into my eyes, salty skin with rivulets running into my mouth from the first swing of the machete at dawn, to the last of the day as dusk approaches with no let up, no let off. Just hot.

The Heartman is clapping his clawed hands. “Bravo! Dat some speech, bwoy, some speech! Now, back to de story de Heartman telling, de ‘portant story. Now, just one more lickle aside afore Me get back to it, de story, bwoy, de Heartman’s story of Jack Moss and de missus.” My head is spinning, the journey with the Heartman is making my head spin, jumping

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

backwards and forwards, going to the future, back to when I was a boy and letting me see things that other people had done. Spinning.

“Yeah spinning, bwoy, spinning! But it mek total sense soon, de Heartman just painting a picture bwoy, painting a picture of what life like on Plantashion Island, what life like for yu slaves and how tings are run, now watch, Me want to tell yu about what happens to any slave who escape. On Plantashion Island dere ain’t no shark, no Sir, no shark. But dere de slave hound, bwoy, dere de slave hound. But Me tell yu, de Missus was lying about dat Cerberus, bwoy.”

“Lying?”

“Yeah lying! Dat big lazy old hound ain’t done no slave chasing, no siree, none. Him a lazy hound wid gigantic bollocks, bwoy, wid gigantic bollocks. Him big and fat and randy. But him daddy, him daddy a real hound dog, bwoy, a real hound dog, wid de taste for blood, slave blood, now, watch out, bwoy, here dey come now.”

“Come? Who?”

“Escape slave, bwoy! Can yu hear de dog?”

I could hear panting, but not panting dogs.

“Slave hound don’t make much noise bwoy, don’t mek much noise, dat why all de slave frighten of dem, yu never hear dem coming, dem silent as ghost, mon, especially de clever one, and Cerberus papa, he a clever one, de cleverest.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dere no dogs after us, Jake,” whispers a slave called Elias as the pair scurry up the wooded hillside on Plantashion Island. Jake and Elias have been clever; they have run up the streams that flowed gently down the sides of the mountains feeding the plantations in the valleys far below.

“Clever if he been running from normal hound, bwoy, running from normal hound. But not clever if yu running from slave hound. Slave hound dey got big web paws, bwoy, big web paws. Dey like duck feet, mon, duck feet. Dey run up de streams and rivers following de scent of de slave dat hang above de water along with de fly and midge and spider and odder creepy crawly.”

I swipe at something that tries to bite my face even in a memory.

“Ha-ha! De Heartman him love de creepy crawly, bwoy, love em!”

“Shh!”

As the men splash slowly along, Typhon sees them. Moving through the water and barely making a ripple he’s picked up their scent barely half a mile outside of the plantation boundary. Since then, he has leisurely bided his time and followed, waiting until the men’s legs have grown tired at wading through the deep pools and over sharp rocks that nicked them.

Stepping out of the stream, Typhon slinks into the rainforest that borders the river, and walks, unnoticed past his prey.

“Me don’t know,” replies Elias, “we not gone too far, not far enough.”

“Not far enough? We been on de go since last night, and now de sun high in de sky.

We must be miles from Bay View.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Me don’t tink we come so far, look, yu can still see de sea.”

“Plantashion Island surrounded by sea, mon! Nowhere very far from it.”

“Me know dat, but...”

“But notting, climb out of de water, Me legs killing me, and it easier to move on land,”

Jake climbs out and helps his friend, “take five minutes and den get going again. Look, here some fruit.”

As the men sit down, they hear a low growl.

“No!” I say, “I can’t watch this, not two men being ripped limb from limb,” I turn my back as the screaming begins.

“Dat Typhon, him play wid dem, bwoy, play wid dem good and proper, play wid him victim.” De Heartman enjoying dis. “Him like a pussy cat wid a lickle bird. Him pull one leg off, den anodder, him sit on one victim and fart in him face and taunt de odder. Him take him time, bwoy, him take him time. Me love dat hound!”

“STOP!” I can’t listen to either his description or the sounds, the inhuman sounds.

“OK, OK, we go back to de night you ax Missus about what happen to de Massa. Hagree?”

With my fingers in my ears I nod, “hagree.”

## **Wounds**

Suddenly I feel safe. The terrible, terrible sounds of the men being eaten alive by Typhon have gone and all is quiet. I take my hands out of my ears and breathe deep breaths to calm myself. Looking around I can see that we are in another small slave hut. But this one I recognise. It is the tiny hut of my friend Frances Johnson in the slave village of Hermitage which sits down the steep slope from the fine Bay View plantation house. We are stood in the gloom, the comforting, comfortable, familiar gloom. Again, the Heartman beckons me to remain silent and watch.

I watch myself, myself from back then, the Jack I'd watched performing back in the bedroom of the missus, walk or rather stagger in through the door.

"Yu perform good and proper, bwoy, good and proper!" chuckles the Heartman.

"Jack, Jack, what in de good Lord's name has dat womon done to yu now, bwoy?" Frances is like a mother to me. Although only ten years my senior she has taken me to her heart ever since the day she lost her hand in the sugar house. It happened when...

"No, no, bloody no, bwoy, bloody no! Later, tell dat story later, Jackson, on de ship, mebee, mebee when yu on Hope travelling to England, mon. Yu have plenty time den, plenty time before yu start scrapping with dat Charles Inman," the Heartman stamps his hoof on the ground. "Aldough dere plenty o' blood de day yu cut off she hand, bwoy, plenty o' blood! But dis more interesting for now, and dere a better story to tell, hagree?"

I shrug, "mm...hagree," as long as I didn't have to watch a slave hound tear my kin limb from limb.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Almost unable to walk, I stagger into the hut. I'm a sight to see, all bent over and shaking like a stray with the runs. Actually, I look as if I've just escaped the clutches of the father of Cerberus by the skin of my teeth. I hardly recognise myself. Gone is the stud all the girls want to be with, the stud with the swagger and the proud solid shoulders, here instead is an old man who looks for all the world a hundred-year-old cripple whose just been beaten by the overlooker for not picking up enough stones from the field.

"Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do! He-he! What a womon dat Missus is, what a womon!"

I glare at the Heartman. If looks could kill.

"Dat de spirit, bwoy, dat de spirit! Dat why she keep pouncing on yu, mon, dat de spirit!"

The hut is tiny and rickety, just a small bed at one side and a couple of battered wooden chairs at the other, but it's neat and tidy and, after the lion's den I've clearly just come from, it feels safe.

"The normal, Frances, just the normal."

"Here, here, let Me take a look at yuh poor back, bwoy. My goodness! Lord in heaven!"

I turn and can't fail to hear Frances's gasp, though she clearly tried to hide it.

"Is it bad?" I ask.

She takes her time answering. "mm...oh, it ain't any worse dan usual," she replies.

Bad then.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Me got a poultice ready, been expecting yu, lie down, bwoy. Take yuh clothes off.”

Suddenly I’m shy.

“Hey! What dat, yu shy? Jackson Moss shy? Let Me tell yu! Dis womon seen yuh ting before, bwoy! Seen it before! It ain’t notting special!”

I daren’t tell her about how sore my ting is but Frances knows what the Missus does to me, so she spares me any embarrassment. “here some for yuh ting too, bwoy.”

“Thanks,” I change the subject, “I brought food,” the one perk of being fucked mercilessly by the Missus is that she knows she has to keep her prize bull well fed. There’s always plenty of food to take away to replenish my energy, more than I need so I share it with Frances and the others. At first, they laughed and joked about taking the food but when the times got lean, as they always do from time to time on Plantashion Island, they were grateful a plenty for the nourishment my ‘ting’ could earn our village. They laughingly call it ‘ting food’. But ‘ting food’ had proved it could be the difference between life and death more than once.

“Yu know,” says Frances, “she going to kill yu one of dese days, bwoy. Kill yu dead.”

“I’m tough,” I reply through gritted teeth.

“Tough! Yu cut every night, bwoy! Cut deep, bwoy, cut deep, back, legs, arms and ting. You going to get infection one of dese days, bwoy, infection dat even tough mon like yu won’t be able to fight,” we’ve all seen de wounds that de overlookers and drivers dish out, terrible cuts, and when a worker can’t get a poultice on them quick smart, infection comes.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dem overlookers like to mek dose cuts even worse, bwoy, even worse,” sniggers the Heartman.

I stare at my demonic friend, “I know,” I reply, “I’ve seen them rub salt, lime and pepper in the wounds to cause more pain!”

“Ah...dey calculating, bwoy, calculating, calculating how dey can cause de most suffering, mon. Kudos!”

Frances continues, “infections ain’t no respeceter of toughness, bwoy, ain’t no respeceter! And let Me tell yu, even a big mon can be cut down by an infection, cut down dead! And den him buried in de fertile soil to feed de worms and de sugar cane stems.”

“Maybe not for much longer,” I reply.

Frances stops and stares at me. She squints. “What yu know, bwoy?”

“Nothing.”

“Doesn’t sound like notting to me, Jack.”

“Forget I spoke.”

She’s like a dog with a bone. “Ain’t going to happen, spill de bean, bwoy.”

“No, no, it’s nothing.”

“Jackson Moss!” the way she says my name makes me shiver. As a lad I’d felt the back of Frances’s hand, and it hurt.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“She’s getting married again.”

Frances has a look of shock on her face. For slaves, after the slave hounds, change is the worst. Better the devil you knew because the next person who comes whether they be buyers of the whole plantation or just a new overlooker, they could be a whole lot worse than what you already have. And families and friends can be split up. Physical suffering is one thing but physical suffering and losing your loved ones isn’t worth thinking about. No, better the devil you know.

“Me doubt dat, bwoy! Doubt dat.” Chuckles the Heartman in my ear, “Benjamin and Elizabeth Smith, dey bad slave owner. Bad slave owner. Bad to de bone, bwoy, bad to de bone! Change be good, believe me, de Heartman know.”

The poultice is soothing my wounds and I start to relax. “You think Massa died of natural causes?” I ask.

Frances stares down at me. “Why yu ax dat? What yu know, bwoy?”

“Nothing.”

Again, I shouldn’t have spoken, Frances is not going to give up any bones, just like the mangy retches that keep us company and eat our scraps. “What Missus tell yu, Jackson?”

“Not much.”

“Not much or notting, dere a big difference. Bwoy, yu know yuh ain’t leaving dis lickle hut widout spilling de bean. Yu know dat?”

I give in. “I know it. It’s just that she was cagey when I mention it.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Cagey! Cagey! No one in Hermitage surprise dat de missus cagey, bwoy!

Massa him hump young Beth! And believe me, she not de first.”

“She was the last though.”

“Course she was, bwoy! Dat stupid ting to say. But Missus, like as not, will have been jealous. Whether a wife love her husband or not she not want him going out and sleep with anodder womon. Beth a strong young girl, Massa a fat old Englishmon! Some people heard Beth boast. Dey reckon dat after what him do to her lickle sister, young Beth intend to grind Massa’s member clean off, bwoy! Grind it clean off! An who could blame she? Who could blame she? Den him heart stop! Ain’t no surprise to no one! If anyting, it surprise dat Massa last as long as him did! Dat de surprise.”

I stare at where once Frances had a hand. “I wish I didn’t have to cut your hand off, Frances.”

“Me glad you did, bwoy! Me glad you did. If yu ain’t cutting me hand off dat day Me be dead and buried just like Massa! Dead and buried. Now, eat and den get yuhself off to yuh bed, bwoy, yu need to get yuh strength back for tomorrow night. Remember,” she smiled, “de whole village rely on you for de ‘ting food’.”

### **Marriage**

“She look pretty in white, bwoy, pretty in white,” giggles the Heartman as we stand at the back of the small chapel next to the Bay View mansion. It’s a magnificent day, bright and sunny, Plantashion Island at its resplendent best, as is everyone in the church which is crammed with

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

friends from all across the island. There is not a seat to be had on any of the pews that line the inside of the building.

“Dressed up?” I look down at myself. I’m dressed up. Gone are the shabby rags I was wearing in my cold, dark cell. Now I’m wearing a fancy grey suit like all the Englishmen are wearing inside the church. The Heartman is dressed identically.

“Didn’t want to stand out like sore tumb, bwoy, didn’t want to stand out,” he replies.

“It’s a memory.”

“Dat no excuse to let standards drop, bwoy, no excuse.”

“Plenty of people here,” I note.

“De good and de great of Plantashion Island, bwoy, de good and de great.”

“Or the bad and worse.”

“Hagree.”

At the front of the church Elizabeth is stood with Reverend Clarkson. Whilst he is wearing a suit similar to ours, the Missus is dressed entirely in white.

“Hee-hee! She virginal, bwoy, virginal!” The Heartman is reading my thoughts. “Dere going to be big party tonight!”

After the ceremony all the workers are given three whole days off to celebrate the Missus becoming Elizabeth Clarkson and the arrival of a new Massa. And, although they weren’t invited up to the big house to join in the festivities, there is food and drink to spare and

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

be stolen. As with any big celebration, victuals quickly make their way down the valley to where the slave village of Hermitage sits between the big house and the plantation fields where the crop is getting taller by the day.

Hermitage is built on a steep ravine, on land that can't be cultivated, downwind of the main Bay View mansion and just up from the vast fields of sugar cane and the sugar house, with the metal dragons that eat the canes and spew out nectar. Beyond the factory and fields lies the Atlantic Ocean and its views east towards our homeland.

"Do you Elizabeth..." begins the vicar.

The Heartman nudges me. "Watch dis, watch de Heartman mischief."

"Do you Elizabeth," continues the stuffy old, pink faced clergyman stood before the good and the great, "de womon, de fine, fine pink womon wid de *lithe* body, de womon who take de splendid 'Ting' of Sir Jackson Moss, each and every day, do yu take dis fat, pink, balding, vicar from Red Rose City," the voice is that of the clergyman but the words are definitely the Heartman's, "him wid de 'ting' dat ain't comparable to dat of Sir Jackson, to be yuh lawful wedded husband?"

I stare at the demon who is stood next to me.

He shrugs. "If him said dat, you know it much more interesting, bwoy, much more interesting? Hagree?"

I chuckle. I rarely chuckle, have rarely had any course in my life, like most slaves, to chuckle. "Hagree."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman clicks his fingers. “Now de party!”

The hot, bright day has transformed into sultry night-time, and we’re stood in our finery observing the workers celebrating the union.

“How your ting doing, Jack?” asks Frances’s father, George Johnson, with a chuckle, to my younger self, “dere been ‘ting food’ aplenty o’ late,” he pats his rotund belly and burps in celebration.

The small group are sat outside of George’s hut and laugh as they eat their fill and drink rum. A few fat heifers have been killed by the big house for the celebration and there was beef, even for slaves. Even the sleepy dogs that mooched around the village had bellies full of beef. When a cow is killed everyone gorges themselves in the knowledge that in the heat of Plantashion Island meat doesn’t keep long and, with bellies that are nearly always empty, nothing can ever be wasted.

“Roast beef!” sighs the Heartman, “everyone know dat an English celebration not complete widout roast beef.”

Most of the time us slaves survive on the produce that we grow in our small plots next to our huts that we get to tend on Sundays after church. Plus of course ‘ting food’.

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah! ‘Ting’ food!”

“She’s married now, Mr Wilson, Sir,” I reply, sitting back and relaxing, “so my ting is having a holiday.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Everyone laughs. “Your ting certainly earn it keep, bwoy! Your ting feeding dis entire village most of de time, bwoy. And for dat Me tank de Lord.”

“George! Don’t talk like dat!” Scolds his wife Martha as she brings out plantain porridge.

George chuckles, “everyone know how hard Jack’s ting work, Martha! And why yu bring porridge out, womon? We eating beef tonight! Beef, beef, beef! Dis an English celebration, womon. We eat roast beef!” he burps, “we all English gentlemen tonight and we eat roast beef.”

Martha glares at her husband, “everyone knows where de food comes from, George, but no one mention it.”

“Me wonder if de new Massa’s ting as hard working as Jack’s?” mumbles one eyed Billy Jones with a chuckle.

“Yu know how him lost his eye, bwoy?” whispers the Heartman to me as we sit behind the group.

I shrug, “no, not really.”

“Old Massa ordered ‘em to burn it out, bwoy, burn it out.”

“Burn it out?”

“Burn it out wid him own tools, bwoy, wid him own tools. Billy scream so loud him had no voice for a month. Wid him own tools, mon.”

“Why would he do that?”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“De Massa a bastard, bwoy, bastard!”

“Mm...a bastard.”

“Yeah, bwoy! Bastard! Billy say at least him still alive, and dat him got another eye.

Him always cheerful, dat Billy, always cheerful. Bwoy, de Heartman hate cheerful!”

“Bastards.”

Our gaze returns to the joviality of the group, “how can de new Massa ting be as hard working as Jack’s, Billy? It ain’t possible, ain’t possible,” replies George, “de new Massa him a man of God, him ting never used before, bwoy, never! Never seen de light of day before.”

“Yu tink!” snorts Frances. Talk was rife amongst the girls that while the new Massa’s ting might not compare to that of Jacks, it certainly wasn’t for want of trying.

“What yu heard, girl?” asks George.

“Notting.”

“Notting? Spill de beans, girl!”

“Yeah, spill de beans, girl!”

Frances begins, “Me heard dat de new Massa him liking young black girls as much as de old Massa, dat all. It just dat de opportunities not presented themselves...”

“Before now, yu mean,” Billy finishes her sentence. “Ah, what dey say? Better de devil yu know.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Better de devil yu know,” mutter the whole group, “Amen!”

As silence descends on the group the celebrations up at the big house can clearly be heard. There’s plenty of whoops and cheers, laughter and whistles.

“Dem’ll be rolling home tonight,” states Martha, “rolling like a barrel o’ ‘kill-devil’. All over de island. Rolling dem all over de island.”

“Talking o’ ‘kill-devil’,” points George, “look who coming now,” out of the darkness two boys are scurrying towards the village pushing something in front of them. Two large brown dogs are bounding along skipping in front, being cursed at by the lads and nipping at each other’s legs.

The Heartman nudges me. “Everyone who work at de big house know when de time right to ‘liberate’ victuals, bwoy, ‘liberate’ victuals.”

“Amen to that!” I reply.

By now the English folk are so inebriated that you can take something from right in front of their faces and pass it straight out of the window, everyone except the Missus who doesn’t touch the stuff. The Missus never likes to be out of control.

“Amen to dat, bwoy, Amen to dat! How *is* yuh ‘Ting’, mon?”

I ignore him, “so, as long as the Missus is distracted the dining room can be pilfered.”

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru.”

“What yu got dere?” calls Billy.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Sam, a kitchen worker at the big house calls out between giggles, “we find dis barrel of ‘kill-devil’ outside de kitchen, Billy, and we ax if it belong to anyone, but no one answer.” The kitchen of the big house is not actually in the house itself but is a separate building at the back. Pilfering is easy on a night like this as the kitchen staff are run ragged by the assembled massas and missuses. One Massa and one Missus is bad enough, but dozens!

“Amen to dat, bwoy, amen to dat,” mumbles the Heartman.

“Did yu ax if anyone own it?” chuckles Frances.

“Yes, Fanny, we did, we did, mam, we definitely did, we ax, ‘fact de words me and Joe ax were; ‘hoy, does anyone want dis barrel o’ ‘kill-devil’?”

“Hoy?” chuckles the Heartman, “hoy? De Heartman like dat word, bwoy, like it. ‘Hoy?’”

“We did,” adds Joe, his brother, “we said ‘hoy’, but no one replied. Me tink dey too busy in de big house, too busy dancing and drinking.”

“So, you borrowed it?” asks George. “When dey pissed?” “Language, George!” scolds Martha.

“Yes, Sir, we did, Mr George, Sir, we did,” the boys answer in unison, “we did.”

“Well, roll it dis way, lads,” he suggests rubbing his hands together, “and den get back off up to de house afore anyone miss you.”

“Ah, dis a good night, bwoy, dis a good night,” mumbles the Heartman, “hagree?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Hagree. A good night.”

“But, wait,” the Heartman puts a claw to the side of his head theatrically, “hoy! Who in de Devil name dis coming now, bwoy? Who dis coming? Dis someting different, mon, a lickle bit different.”

“What have you done now?” I ask.

“Watch, bwoy, watch.”

Running breathless down the hill is someone else. By the sound of his heavy steps, his stumbling and his curses, it’s not a slave.

I suddenly remember what is happening now, “can’t you change this?” I ask the Heartman.

“Change it? Why de Heartman want to change it, bwoy? Why?”

“Because I know what’s going to happen next,” I clearly remember the arrival of Reverend Clarkson on that night, who I remembered had seen the boy take the barrel and had realised that they were stealing it. They were committing one of the deadly sins, and he was a man who liked to punish anyone he considered was committing one of them.

The Heartman shrugs, “yu want it changing, yu change it, bwoy.”

“Me? How?”

“Use yuh imagination, but remember, bwoy, remember, Me want blood, de Heartman him always want blood.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“You, you boys!” calls out the Reverend. “Come back! What are you doing with that barrel? That barrel is not yours! You’ve stolen it! Stealing is a sin, boys, a sin and you need to be punished.” He is already removing his belt in anticipation, but he is clearly three sheets to the wind.

“Use yuh imagination, bwoy, use yuh imagination, or dose lickle ones going to feel de full force o’ de belt of dis ‘man o’ God’,” the Heartman tries to spit on the floor after saying the last word, “fuck! No mouth! Err...imagination!” To illustrate the Heartman clicks his claws and suddenly we can see Joe on the ground feeling the full force of the biting stings of the belt, as the man of God lashes it on to him time and time again. The ‘snap’ is like thunder as the boy cowers under the onslaught.

I can’t let this happen. I concentrate and click my fingers. Quick as a flash, Martha has flung a cloth over the now stationary barrel and quickly placed the small bible she carries everywhere and the crucifix from around her neck on top. She’s quick witted and devout, Martha. The reverend skids to a halt staring down at the ‘alter’ that he could have sworn was not there a minute earlier.

“Ah! Reverend Massa,” Martha grins with a small respectful bow, “tank de Lord! Yu here at de perfect time, Reverend Massa, de perfect time. We just giving tanks for de union of yuhself and de Missus before de Almighty!”

“Giving thanks?” The Reverend Massa is confused but his eyes don’t lie, there *is* a makeshift altar in front of him.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yes, Sir! Now, if yu having a minute, Reverend Massa, would yu grace us wid yuh presence at our lickle ceremony? It would mean so much to us, yuh new Plantashion Island family.”

“Ceremony?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“You’re having a service for...me and Mrs Clarkson?” Tears are welling in the Reverend Massa’s eyes, replacing the rage that was there a mere instant before.

“Yes, Reverend Massa, Sir.”

“Well done, bwoy! Well done!” grins the Heartman whispering and patting me on the back, “yu a quick learner, bwoy, a quick, quick learner. And cos yu so imaginative, Sir Jackson, Me forgo me desire for blood on just dis one occasion. Now, yu ready for a lickle bit of Heartman mischief afore we set sail for England on dat ship called Hope widout hope?”

### **Heartman Mischief**

We’re now in the bedroom of the missus, which I know well, but not during daylight hours. I only know it in the night-time. The Missus is lying on her bed and Frances and her mother Martha are tending to her. The Missus looks different to how she normally looks. She looks...unkempt.

“Unkempt, bwoy, unkempt? Yu watch dis lickle bit o’ Heartman mischief, bwoy, yu watch it. Dis pure Heartman gold, bwoy! Pure gold.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Missus, Me telling yu, yu having pickney! Dere no mistake about it. Yu in labour.”

One handed Francis is sat at the bedside of Elizabeth Smith-now-Clarkson as the ‘Missus’ pounds her fists into the bed. Fanny and her mother, Martha, who is at the other side of the bed clearly think it will break if she hits it any harder, because every time she bashes it, they shudder and flinch. The two slaves have never seen a woman with so much strength, not even Beth’s dear departed, actually sold on to another plantation, mother. The Smiths like all the other plantation owners occasionally like to shake up their workers by selling some of them and buying new, to make sure the bloodstock remains strong and that the children they produce become productive workers.

“Yea dey do, bwoy, yeah dey do!”

To the slaves knowing that their friends and loved ones had been sold on was even worse than knowing that they were dead. At least when they were dead, they would get the protection of the good Lord.

“Don’t mention de ‘L’ word, bwoy, don’t mention it, don’t mention de ‘G’ word, or de ‘J’ word or dat book dat begin wid ‘B’.

“That’s most of the alphabet then?”

“Just dose religious words, bwoy, just dose religious words.”

“Not possible!” Rants the Missus. “Not bloody possible!” If I, Jack, had been nearby that actual minute I’m sure she would have pulled my poor ting off.

“Could be de child o’ de preacher man, bwoy, could be de child o’ de preacher man?” chuckles the Heartman.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I look at him, “d’you think?”

He grins and shakes his head, “no Sir, de Reverend Massa him ain’t got it in him, bwoy, him ain’t got it in him. Not for him Missus.”

“Bloody demon seed!” Screams Elizabeth, “I am not pregnant, Fanny, I’ve never even bled, woman! Thirty years old and never bled once in my entire life, woman!”

“Me seen it before, Missus. Me seen it dozens o’ times. Been at dozens o’ births, Me and my mamma here, Missus. Pickney coming. What yu tink, Ma?”

“Pickney coming,” agreed Martha, nodding, “coming soon, Me reckon.”

“See, Missus, we agree, pickney coming.”

“Bastard!”

“We...we bastards?”

“Not you, you stupid woman, that fucking Jack, that fucking bastard.”

“Don’t worry Missus, Me plenty experience, Me done this plenty. And Me Ma, she plenty experience too. And we has all de hot water we need, de kitchen be boiling it up, we got plenty!”

“Fuck the hot water!” Elizabeth’s eyes bore down on the poor slave women. “I can’t be having a bloody baby! I’m barren! For God’s sake!”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Martha places her hand on the bible that the Reverend Massa has placed on his wife's bedside when she'd retired, giving him the excuse of a bad stomach. "De good Lord him mysterious. It say so in dis book."

"Dat big mistake by Martha, bwoy, big mistake!" whispers the Heartman with a drawn-on grin.

With extraordinary strength Elizabeth picks up and throws the holy book across the room shattering a valuable porcelain lamp. "Mention any mysterious God one more time to me, Martha, and I will personally bite your daughter's other bloody hand off right here, right now! Got it?"

From the look in her Missus' eyes both Martha and Frances know she isn't joking. Their Missus has a reputation amongst the slaves as being even more cruel than her late husband and would personally lash any slaves who required it. They know that Missus is dangerous because, unlike other owners, she knows all their names, and all their business, all their strengths and all their weaknesses. And she isn't afraid to use a weakness against someone.

"Is everything alright dear?" The Reverend Massa tentatively peers around the door, "there's an awful lot of noise coming from this room. An awful lot of noise."

"Is there, dear? IS THERE? Is there an awful lot of noise coming from this room?"

"Yes dear."

"Bugger off! And don't fucking well come back!"

The man of God doesn't need telling twice. "Ah, well, I think I'll go and make some house calls," he mumbles as he rapidly departs. "House calls, yes, I'll do that."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“You do that! You go and make some fucking house calls, you impotent little pasty twat! Or go and fuck some little black girls!”

Mother and daughter exchange glances. They’re clearly thinking that the pickney might not be the child of the Reverend. And if it’s not the Reverend’s, then they know who the father is and what trouble this can cause not only for Jack but for all the slaves. If the Missus has a black pickney the enraged plantation owners from across the island are not only going to string Jack up by his ting, they are going to flatten Hermitage, fire their houses and run over their vegetable plots with their horses.

Frances’s shocked expression turns to a relaxed grin. “Me can see pickney’s head, Missus, Me can see it.”

“It is a baby?” even up to this last possible moment the Missus has been thinking at the back of her mind that it’s all been some kind of terrible, terrible mistake, some kind of benign illness such as indigestion or something.

“Yu do hear o’ dat sort o’ ting, bwoy, yu do hear o’ it.”

“What?”

“Womon tink she pregnant, bwoy, tink she pregnant, den she fart and it just wind, yu do hear about it, mon.”

I shake my head and concentrate on the scene at hand.

The women look at each other. Pickney or a coconut, thinks Fanny, lets pray for the first, Missus.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“It coming fast, Missus,” says Martha, “fast and smooth...it...him be almost out.”

Between pushes, screams and curses Elizabeth glares at Fanny and Martha. “Colour?”

“What?”

“Colour?”

“Mm?”

“What colour? What fucking colour?”

Fanny looks at her mother, “Me not understand, Missus.”

“What bloody colour is he, girl? What colour?” White, white, be white, she prays, the Missus prays, be white. If there is a God in heaven, make this baby white. She’d laid with her new husband a few times and he had managed to pathetically copulate whilst in no way satisfying her, but she doubted any of his seed, if indeed he had any, had made a union with the eggs she had thought she was incapable of producing. “Is he black?”

Martha smiles up at her missus in relief, shaking her head, “no, no, him not black, Missus. Him white.”

Elizabeth sighed. Thank God! “White?”

“Yes, Missus, white wid a lickle mop a blonde hair. Him a lovely lickle boy wid a lovely healthy ting.”

“Oh, thank God.” He’s got her skin colour and her lover’s attributes. “Thank God.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

A podgy pink crying baby is safely delivered by the slave, Fanny, and while she cleans the blood and gore from his tiny body, Martha sets about cleaning up the missus down below.

“De Heartman ain’t done yet, bwoy, Me ain’t done yet!”

Barely a few minutes pass to allow calm to once again fall on the big house overlooking the ocean, when Elizabeth feels agitated again. She is unable to get the rest she so desperately craves. “I don’t feel so well, Fanny,” she says.

“Not well?” Frances looks at her mother.

“Let Me tek a look, Missus,” says Martha. “Everyting gone just right wid pickney, him be a lovely pickney, and him certainly a good voice on him. But, wait...”

“Martha?”

“Err...”

“What? What is it, Martha? Is something wrong?” Elizabeth’s older sister died in childbirth, and all her life this had hung over her like a dark cloud.

Martha is smiling again, “notting wrong, Missus, notting wrong, everyting right!”

“What do you mean?”

“Missus, yu doubly blessed by de Lord dis day!” Martha crosses herself and looks to the sky.

Elizabeth is tired and confused, “what the fuck?”

“Missus?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I don’t understand, doubly blessed?”

“Missus, yu having another pickney.”

“Two?”

“Mebee three...”

“God help you woman, if there’s three! If there’s three inside me then you’re a fucking goner! I’ll fucking feed you to Cerberus! Swear to God! And your one-handed daughter too! Or I promise you’ll both be sold at the next bloody auction!”

“Pickney here quick and smooth. Oh...”

“Oh? Oh, what?”

Martha looks up at the Missus.

“What?”

“Err...dere a lickle problem wid dis one?”

Tears fill the eyes of the Missus, “he’s dead? No! No! Oh my God, he’s dead?”

“Not dead, Missus. Not at all, him be well and truly alive.”

“Then what?”

“De colour.”

“The colour?”

“Dis pickney black, Missus...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“He’s WHAT?”

**End of Book One.**

## **Book Two**

### **A ship called Hope**

The Heartman picks up a bottle of ‘kill-devil’ and brings it to his... “Ha! Me forgetting, De Heartman him ain’t got no mouth, bwoy, ain’t got no mouth!” He chuckles, “no matter, mon, de Heartman him ain’t going to be stop by a small matter of not having no mouth! No Sir! Me can imbibe dis ‘eau de vie’ through Me skin, through Me skin, bwoy, no problem at all, watch,” slowly the bottle drains through his drawn-on lips. “Ahh!” He draws his claw across his face wiping away the pungent liquid. “Dere ain’t notting like ‘kill-devil’, bwoy, notting. Bwoy, dat nectar almost live up to it name, mon, live right up to it name!”

“Plantashion Island,” I mutter looking around. It is the only home I have ever known but is never a place that has felt anywhere like a home. Home should be a place of safety. Plantashion Island is not a place of safety for any slave no matter how favoured they are by a massa or missus. A slave on Plantashion Island is only ever one whim away from punishment, sale or death.

The Heartman glugs another bottle down. “Dat true, bwoy, dat true,” the Heartman wipes his face with his sleeve and his drawn-on lips come off on it, “bugger me,” he looks down, “Me mouth come off! Well, Me never, bwoy, well, Me never.”

We are stood on the white sand looking out across the bay which has two ships moored up and another approaching from the north-west.

The Heartman slaps me on the back. “Plantashion Island, bwoy, Plantashion Island! Home.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Plantashion Island isn’t my home, Sir,” I snarl.

“Sorry, de Heartman him forget dat Bloody Jackson Moss an Africa mon from de dark continent!” Instead of imbibing more ‘kill-devil’ through his non-existent mouth, the demon now holds the bottle to his ear and pours it straight in. “Ha-ha! Mouths, ears, noses, ass holes! Who care how it go in! Who care! Take de weight off, bwoy, take de weight off,” the seated Heartman pats the sand, but I am too restless to sit.

“No, thanks,” I nod at the approaching ship.

He offers me the bottle, but I shake my head.

“Killjoy! Pity de Heartman him can’t get pissed, bwoy, pity.”

“You can’t? Then why are you drinking?”

He shrugs. “Pain, mebee! De Heartman him like de pain, bwoy, de pain, love de burning as it goes down Me throat,” he nods seaward. “Ah...Hope.”

“Hope,” I agree.

“Me love dat name ‘Hope’, bwoy, love it.”

I turn and stare at him. He’s mentioned it before. “Why would you love it? Why would anyone love it?”

“Why? Cos de Heartman him bad to de bone, bwoy, bad to de bone! Mebee dat it?”

“Mm...” I nod, “I suppose.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Where yu tink ‘Hope’ come from, bwoy? Where?” He’s teasing me while draining the rest of the bottle through his bright red eye which is watering painfully. “Mon, de Heartman him love de pain, bwoy, love de pain.”

“Think?” I reply.

The Heartman is playing with me. “Yeah, mon, tink?”

“I don’t think, I know!”

He nudges my arm playfully. “De dark continent? Mebee? Mebee de dark continent?”

“Of course, the dark continent!”

“De dark continent ain’t always happy place, bwoy, ain’t always happy place. And it ain’t always filled wid friends and happy times.”

“Maybe not, but it’s home.”

“Home ain’t always safe, bwoy, ain’t always safe. Want de Heartman to show yu?”

“Not particularly, but if you must.”

“Ha-ha!” he pats me on the back, “dat de spirit, bwoy, dat de spirit!” his voice changes and he’s mocking me in my own dulcet tones, “not particularly, but if you must’. Love dat spirit, bwoy, dat de spirit o’ resignation, bwoy, de spirit o’ resignation. Love it. But yu has no choice. Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He's chuckling away. He pretends to spit in the empty bottle, plugs it and throws it far out to sea. "Dat de spirit! Let start wid de people yu wouldn't want to call friends, bwoy, wouldn't want to call friends. Watch dis."

**Trapped**

We're suddenly perched high up in a tree, in a canopy that makes up a rainforest. The air is humid and it's hot, that terrible rainforest hot again, like the rainforest that the slaves clear on Plantashion Island. Water vapour is percolating up through the branches and my companion and I feel as if we're fish wrapped in leaves being steamed in a pit for supper.

"Ha-ha! Nicely put, bwoy, nicely put. Ha-ha! Fish steam for supper! De Heartman him like dat! Hold dat tort, fish, bwoy, hold it. We revisit dat one, fish, ha-ha!"

"Why are we here?" I look down and feel dizzy. I don't think I've been this high in my life before.

"You gonna be higher dan dis later, bwoy, later, in de next book when we climb into de crow nest."

"A crow's nest?"

"Later," the Heartman snaps angrily and then calms down. "Later, bwoy, later! De next book, mebee."

I watch him and shake my head, is my omnipotent underworld companion showing human emotions?

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Human emotion, bwoy, human emotion?” he makes a disgusting hoiking sound but then remembers he has no mouth opening to spit phlegm through. “Fuck it!” he mutters angrily. “No fucking mouth hole!”

“Why are we here?” I ask again.

“Why? Because we get de best view o’ de action de higher up we are, bwoy, de best view.”

“The best view of what?”

“O’ de world o’ course, bwoy, o’ de world. And everyting dat go on in it.”

“I know, I know, but of what in particular.” “Look,”

the Heartman nods.

“I can’t see anything.”

“Well den...listen...”

I listen. The forest is full of sounds, birds, insects, reptiles, everything is shouting to everything else. It’s loud. A din! A cacophony! “I can’t hear anything beyond the forest creatures.”

“No...listen...”

I do and, suddenly, I can here footsteps, clumsy footsteps, clattering through the dense undergrowth. Someone is running...

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ha-ha! Well, dey ain’t so much running as stumbling, bwoy, dey ain’t so much running as stumbling. Look!”

It’s a girl. She is perhaps no more than eleven or twelve years old. She’s tall and just about to start becoming a woman. She is vaguely familiar, but I can’t put my finger on it. Maybe it is a girl who has once lived in Hermitage? Or in the neighbouring slave village? I don’t know. The girl is breathing hard.

“Dat cos she been running long time, bwoy, long time. She just about to...”

Suddenly the girl collapses. Abruptly falls over, her foot caught in something, utterly exhausted. She’s making a noise. She is hurt but she can’t scream, she knows she can’t. If she screams, she’ll be discovered. She’s like an animal caught in a trap. She is silently flaying wildly but she can’t get her foot out of whatever it’s caught in. I know that if she could she’d cut or chew her leg off to get away she is so desperate.

“De Heartman him love desperation, bwoy, love it,” he says to me before shouting down at the girl, who can’t hear him. “Listen to de Heartman! Chew dat leg off girl! Chew it off! Right off! De Heartman him want some tender fresh meat, girl!”

I shake my head and the Heartman grins.

“It just Me way of being kind, bwoy, just Me way of being kind. Dat girl chew her leg off she free!”

But the girl is anything but free. She looks behind her and knows she can’t make a noise. Not a sound. The child starts to cry, a silent cry from the pain and the...

“I know you’re there,” comes a tormenting voice through the forest. It’s in a language that I don’t recognise but I can understand it. I stare at the Heartman questioningly.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He shrugs. “Heartman magic, bwoy! Heartman magic. Heartman magic mek yu understand every language, bwoy, every language. It mean yu can understand everyone in de world pleading for mercy. It a curse and a blessing, mon, a curse and a blessing.”

“You’re sick!”

“Yeah, bwoy! Sick! Me like dat.”

A man appears. He’s small and stocky. From a tribe I’ve never seen before but he’s wearing Toubob clothes, and he’s got a Toubob pistol, which he’s waving about carelessly. Black Toubob walks slowly towards his prey like a lion about to pounce and devour his dinner. He is careful though. His dinner is dangerous. She could lash out and he doesn’t want to get hurt, but he also doesn’t want to damage her any more than he has to, or this might reduce her price.

“Yeah, it will, mon, yeah it will! Yu getting wise to dis business.”

“Leave me alone!” she replies between sobs. She’s speaking another language and again I understand what she’s saying.

“I don’t know what you’re saying, girl, but save your breath,” replies black Toubob. He’s grinning like this is all a big game to him.

“My father is right behind me, and he’ll kill you!” she screams. “Kill you! Pull you limb from limb! He’s a big man, the biggest man you’ve ever seen you little runt! And everyone is scared of him.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ain’t no one behind yu, girl! Ain’t no one behind you!” calls out the Heartman. “She fadda him probably doesn’t even know yu missing, yet, and even if him did dey would kill him or...” he looks at me, “worse.”

“Now, stop your struggling,” suggests black Toubob.

I grab the Heartman’s arm, “it’s...him. Him!”

“Ha-ha! Yeah, bwoy, de Heartman know it him. Wondered how long it would be before yu recognise him.”

“Bastard!” I shout. “You fucking bastard!”

The Heartman pulls me back. “Him can’t hear yu, Sir Jack, bwoy, him can’t hear yu.”

“Maybe not but it makes me feel better.

Black Toubob approaches his prey with caution, his voice is low, soothing and menacing at the same time. “If you just calm down then it’s all going to be alright.”

“My dad is massive! He’s going to kill you! KILL YOU!”

“There...there...shh...there’s a good girl,” he reaches out. “There’s a good girl.”

She jolts away. “Don’t touch me!”

“Don’t be like that, dear, no,” he smiles a sick smile. “You should be nice to me, VERY nice. If you knew who I was, then you would be *very* nice to me. I’m a very important man.

People are nice to me if they know what’s good for them.”

“GET AWAY!”

“I said, be nice to me, dear, I’m a man that can make your life better.”

“The Hell you are!” I shout. “The bloody hell you are!”

“De hell yu right, bwoy, de hell yu right! Dat man a liar and a...”

Quick as a flash, Black Toubob strikes the girl over the head with a club and she’s out for the count...without waiting he’s pulling his pants down and lifting her clothes.

“...rapist, bwoy.”

### **Dodo**

“Bastard, bastard, bastard!” I’m shouting but we’ve moved on, already moved on. It’s dark. Gone is the humidity of the rainforest and its smells and sounds, gone also are black Toubob and the girl, although my heart is pounding in my chest twenty to the dozen.

Gone too is the warm sunshine, the sound of waves crashing on the white sandy beach and the sweet smell of Plantashion Island’s rainforest. It has been replaced by a crush of bodies, sweaty, smelly bodies, rammed together so tightly that I struggle to breathe.

“I...remember...this...place,” I can barely get the words out for the crush. My lungs can’t breathe, can’t fill with air.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Remember it? De Heartman him love dis place, bwoy, love it,” the Heartman breathes in dramatically. “Smell dat, bwoy, smell it. Me love dat smell. Dat de stench o’ fear, bwoy, de stench o’ fear. De rank stench of fear, piss, shit, vomit, sweat, fear, bwoy, fear.”

He’s stood right in front of me, so close our bodies are touching. I haven’t been that close to him before now. He feels cold. Ice cold. Inhuman.

“Ha-ha! Yu got dat right, bwoy, got dat right, cos de Heartman ain’t alive. Me dead as a dodo, mon.”

“Dodo?”

“Dead bird, bwoy, dead bird. Long dead bird. Do you know notting? Kill by mon’s insatiable appetite for killing. Couldn’t move yu see, bwoy, not fast, not fast enough, never seen any threats, not til, what yu call him? Toubob? White man?”

I nod.

“Not til Toubob arrive and massacre every last one of dose big stupid birds for deir stews. A massacre. Love it. Want to see it?”

I shake my head. “Not particularly.”

“Ha-ha! De Heartman him here to educate, bwoy, here to educate.”

“I don’t want to be educated.”

“Too late...”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I look down and I've got feathers, grey feathers. Further down still and I've got blue webbed feet. I sigh. "I said I didn't want to see it. I don't want to be educated."

"De Heartman him heard yu, but dis demon want yu to learn, bwoy, learn. De Heartman him an educator, mon, de Heartman him an educator. And, seeing Me de demon in dis conversation, Me get to choose."

I have an urge to peck him, peck him *bloody* hard, peck his stupid red eyes out, but then something on the ground catches my eye. It's a bug or a grub and...it looks so good. I peck it and it's deliciously tasty. "No!" I shake my beak. "I did not want to eat that."

"Yeah mon, yu did! Lovely grub, bwoy, lovely grub! Grub? Get it?"

I nod my beak, "grub? Yeah. What the hell...." I straighten up nearly jumping out of my feathers! I'm stood next to a jet-black bird, a huge jet-black bird with red eyes. He too has large blue, webbed feet and he too is pecking at the ground.

"Hell yeah, mm...hell yeah, dat tasty, bwoy, tasty. Dey can keep deir rice and peas, bwoy, keep em, de Heartman him prefer de grub."

I look up. We're on a beach. It's a white sandy beach and the sea is a turquoise blue colour. There are coconut trees lining the beach. It could be Plantashion Island.

"It not Plantashion Island, bwoy, it not Plantashion Island." He spreads his wings in exasperation. "Tell Me, have yu ever seen birds like dese on Plantashion Island?"

"No," I admit. "But there again, working as a slave on the Bay View Plantation, I don't go out so much. Just to church on a Sunday and each night to..."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“To de boudoir of de Missus? Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do!” The Heartman nudges me with his wing. It’s a pathetically small wing. Not the sort of wing that can help you fly from trouble. “Dat true, bwoy, dat tru. If us Dodo had wing, we could have flown away from Toubob. If we’d had wing, we’d still be alive today.”

“Is that why we’re here? For you to paint a gruesome picture in my head of Toubob killing defenceless, flightless birds? Wasn’t your black henchman raping a child enough?”

“Nope, bwoy, nope, nowhere near enough. De Heartman him notting if not thorough.”

“Thorough?”

“Yeah thorough, bwoy, thorough. De Heartman him don’t leave no stone unturned, ooh,” he spots something, a tiny insect and pounces on it. “Who would have tort dat a fly could be so...delicious.”

I sigh, he’s right, flies do taste good, so good. I’m disgusted with myself. “OK, let’s get it over with.”

“Here dey come now,” his wing nudges mine. “De stars of de story, bwoy, de stars.”

A rowing boat is slowly drawing up on the edge of the sea. Half a dozen men leap out into the water which comes up to their waists.

“English?” I ask.

“English? Look, mon! Dey is wearing fucking clogs, bwoy, fucking clogs! Before dey jump in yu see fucking clogs on deir feet, what do yu tink?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I shake my beak, “I really don’t know.” I really don’t.

“Dey is Dutch, bwoy, Dutch. De Dutch wear clogs, bwoy, de Dutch! Don’t yu know notting?”

“Dutch?”

“It small country just over de sea from England.”

“Near France?” I’ve heard of France. In fact, France and its garlic infused inhabitants was all I heard about on the voyage on Hope from Plantashion Island to Red Rose City. The English seem totally obsessed with their mortal enemies, the French. Apart from French women who they seem even more obsessed with but for another reason.

“Ha-ha, dat a good one, bwoy, a good one! Anodder reason, and dat reason be sexual, mon, sexual. And dat cos dey be, how should de Heartman put dis, bwoy, how? Mm...dey more like de Missus dan normal English women. Dat all Me say.”

“Ah...” the penny drops.

The Heartman laughs, but as he’s a bird it comes out as quite a silly shrill sound, “Me suppose France is a bit near to England, bwoy, a bit. Well, anyway, dem dere Dutch dey as bad as de English, French and Americans.”

“All Toubob are the same.”

“Dat true, bwoy, dat true. Yu learning fast, mon,” he pecks me hard. “De Heartman him proud of yu, Sir Jackson Moss, him of de ‘Ting’, of ‘Ting’ town, ‘Ting’ shire, ‘Ting’ land, de planet ‘Ting’! Proud of yu.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Who would have thought it? Me, Jack Moss, sharing a tender moment with a demon whilst all the while being a silly, flightless bird! You couldn't make it up! "Thanks," a worm catches my eye and without a second thought it's wriggling down my throat. "Disgusting!" I feel like vomiting.

The Dutch are meandering around, then one of them spots us. He mutters something in a language that I don't understand.

"Argh! Heartman magic not work for dat stupid language, bwoy, not work. Fuck!" yelps the Heartman.

"What the..." in the absence of hands, I flap my wings wildly. "You're the Heartman, a demon, you're long dead - if you were ever alive - why would you be scared?"

"Me getting in character, bwoy, getting in character, dat why! If de Heartman him stand here and glare 'Heartman' style, Me tink him realise Me ain't yuh everyday Dodo! And especially when de Heartman peck his fucking Edam sized heart out and feast on it!"

"Edam?"

"Someting for later, bwoy, someting for much later."

"So, you're making a point? But I can't think what."

"Me point, bwoy, is dat Toubob a plunderer, mon, a plunderer. It in him nature. Him ain't got a care in de world about what him take or who him kill, him just has him stupid pink/white life which him tink more 'portant dan de lives of everyting else on dis Hell-on-Earth."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Oh.”

“And de Heartman him just wanted to mek de point dat where we going back to next; dem slaves just as dead as us dodo, bwoy, just as dead. Dey sitting ducks. Dey can’t run, Dey can’t hide, Dey just waiting for deir fate just as much as us flightless old birds waiting to have our necks wrung, our feathers pluck and our flesh eat. It ain’t dat big a step to see de fate of your brudders and sisters, bwoy, not so much...”

“Mm...”

“Actually, de Heartman him tink Me prefer to be Dodo dan slave, bwoy, prefer it.”

“Why is that?”

“Five minutes of fear, bwoy, anodder couple of pain, den peace. Dem slave got lifetime o’ fear ahead o’ dem... lifetime, and dat if dey mek it on Hope, mon Me love that name.

Fuuuuck,” a Dutchman has caught him. “No! Cloggy got me, bwoy, Cloggy fucking got me! Got...neck...”

**Door of no return**

I’m circling my neck trying to get rid of the feeling of the hands of a Dutchman strangling me, as we’re flung back into the dark cramped room. Our feathers have gone. I can’t see down to my feet we’re so jam-packed, but I assume that they’re no longer webbed or blue.

“Dey ain’t, bwoy, dey ain’t” the Heartman shakes his head. “Dey ain’t, yuhs human and mine cloven.”

“Cloven?”

“As in...”

“...you being a demon?”

“Dat true, bwoy, dat true.”

The room is dark and cool but there’s plenty of body heat, though.

“Ha-ha! Yeah, yu got dat right, too, bwoy, got dat right! Plenty o’ body and plenty o’ heat.”

We are stood in an airless room. It’s hard to gauge the size because it’s dark. There are a lot of people in the room, a lot, hundreds. Hundreds and hundreds. They’re all men, young men, old men, small men, large men, men from different tribes if the myriad of languages, that I can now understand, is anything to go by.

“Womon in de next room, bwoy, womon in de next room. Wid de children.”

“Keeping us separate.”

“True, true, separate, bwoy, separate. Dey want to grade dem, de girls, dey want to grade dem.”

I stare at him. “What do you mean, grade them?”

“Grade dem, bwoy, grade dem, which ones dey want fuck and which dey don’t.”

“Bastards.”

“Dat true, bwoy, dat true.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

There's not much talking, mainly it's whispers and it's in a dozen languages.

"Yu want to listen to dem, bwoy? Yu want some more Heartman magic? Yu want de Heartman to mek dem louder?" asks the Heartman who clicks his claws and suddenly the whispers are loud and clear, like a conversation with someone sat next to me.

The man next to me is whispering to a much younger man, maybe his son. He is reassuring him.

"I don't know where we going, son."

"I'm frightened, Pa."

"I know, I know but we'll stay together, that way, whatever happens, we'll manage," the father is putting on a brave face, but he's terrified. I can tell.

"Yeah, him is, bwoy, yeah him is. Dere plenty o' fear in dis room, bwoy, plenty. De Heartman him love it. Plenty o' fear. Soon, some of dem going to be pissing demselves... den shitting demselves. If dey haven't already. Can yu smell any? Can yu smell de shit? Me ain't got no nose yu see."

I stare at him. "Have you no heart?"

"Nose, Me said, I ain't got no nose, bwoy, no nose."

"I know what you said. You are evil, you have no heart, no compassion?"

"Me de Heartman, bwoy, Me de Heartman! Come on," we walk through the throng like ghosts. Whilst they can barely breathe let alone move, we can move about freely, spectre like.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The old man a few heads away is struggling to stand, he looks in a bad way. He's sick. He could be an elder from my village. A man that all the community looks up to. Someone who everyone goes to for advice. Someone who makes wise judgements on disputes when he's asked to. A man with a wealth of experience of life. Someone who is the glue in his community. But here he is an animal being herded towards the butcher's knife. He's speaking to his neighbour, "I can't breathe, friend, my lungs are emptying and I can't fill them back up."

"Hey!" calls the man he's talking to. "Can everyone stop pushing please!"

"SILENCE!" shouts an English voice, "bloody well shut up!"

Everyone stops talking and silence descends. After a few minutes they think Toubob has gone, and they resume their whispers.

"What are they going to do with us?" asks one man.

"I don't know."

"Black Toubob mentioned big canoes."

"Big canoes? What big canoes?"

Someone else speaks. "I saw them, the big canoes, I saw them, they're huge, huge things they are."

"Take us on long journey."

"Journey over the sea."

"Where Toubob comes from?"



“Maybe?”

“They laughed and said we were meat.”

“Meat?”

“They eat us?”

“They eat us?”

“They eat us?”

“They say they roast us, boil us, bake us.”

“They’ll end up wishing they’d be eaten,” I whisper, “just like the Dodo.”

“Yeah, bwoy, dat true, dat very true.”

The men fall silent as huge doors are opened, not the doors they came through when they entered the room but ones at the other side. Light, blinding, white light, floods into the room, lighting up every inch. Eyes are shielded, head bent down, moans uttered.

CRACK! A whip lashes across the top of them, “MOVE! Get a fucking move on!” The men don’t understand.

Black Toubob, half a dozen of them step forward, “MOVE!” They shout in a dozen languages.

The sheep shuffle towards the butchers. Men, old and young, slowly surge forward towards the light.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“You know, bwoy, de Heartman him like de way yu use ‘light’ to describe deir journey, Me like it.”

“You do?” We’re shuffling along with the sheep.

“Yeah bwoy, yeah. A lot of folk tink dat when dey go to...” he tries to spit on the ground in disgust, but he’s not got a mouth, “fuck! No mouth, bwoy, no fucking mouth! Yu spit for Me.”

“No! You were saying?”

“People tink when dey go to heaven dey walk toward de light, de white light, bwoy, walk toward de white light but dey ain’t walking toward heaven now, no sir, not toward heaven.”

“Amen to that, Sir, amen to that.”

“Fuck!” he’s looking hurt, “why won’t yu spit for Me, bwoy, why won’t yu?”

### **Sharks**

“Oh! Where are we now? Heaven?” I ask. I’m floating like a spirit in the sky. My body is weightless. It could be heaven.

“It ain’t. Should have spat for me, bwoy, should have spat!” “It

could be...,” wait! It isn’t the sky, it’s water.

“Guess where we are now, bwoy? Where we are now?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I looked down at myself. “No! *What* the hell are we now?”

“Ha-ha! Me mention fish before. Dis a lickle bit of Heartman mischief, bwoy, a lickle bit. Ha-ha! Me never stop, mon, never. Me never get tired of mischief, Me Heartman mischief! Ah, de Heartman him a comedian.”

“Mm, maybe you don’t...” I was getting used to the Heartman mischief but not which direction it would take my story, that was always a surprise. “What are they?”

“What dey? What dey? Yu idiot, mon? Dey shark, bwoy, shark.”

“Sharks?”

“Yeah, mon, shark, bit like fish ‘xcept wid bigger teeth.”

“Teeth?”

“Yeah, bwoy, TEETH! Someting de Heartman him not got, not wid dis stupid fucking drawn-on mouth.”

“Why?”

“What yu mean, why, bwoy, what yu mean?”

“Why are we here?”

“Why not, bwoy, why not, now swim, mon, swim! It good.”

We are in water, dark grey water and I am being buffeted, knocked and banged around...by sharks. Dozens of them, dozens and dozens of them, writhing like eels in a net.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

There is an excitement building in their bodies which I can feel. They are moving faster and faster, careering into each other and slashing at each other with razor sharp teeth. It is madness.

“Yeah, madness, mon! Now swim, bwoy, swim, it good!” The Heartman is distinct from the other sharks in that they are a dull grey colour while he is jet black.

“Ouch! Something bit me!”

“Bite ‘em back, bwoy, bite ‘em back! Don’t let dem bully yu, mon,” I turn towards him, “dey like dat, bwoy, dey bullies, bullies only respect being bullied, bwoy. It de way o’ de world.”

I look at one of the sharks. I recognise him, recognise his face. It’s black Toubob, the rapist. He’s a shark but it’s also clearly him. I know it. Another one bumps me and it’s the Massa, Massa Smith. Another is the Reverend Massa, then there is the Missus. Another is Charles Inman. Another is Jeremiah Taylor. Others are clearly faces, Toubob faces, the good and the great from Plantashion Island.

“Dey all here, bwoy, dey all de shark,” the Heartman is streamlined and sleek just like all the others. Looking down at myself I discover that I am a similar dark colour to him, and our black skins set us apart from the dark grey bodies of the others. “Ha-ha!” he has a chunk of fin in his mouth and is chomping on it. “De Heartman fucking love shark fin, bwoy, love it!” He took another bite, “even when yu not hungry yu gotta show ‘em who top...fish, bwoy! Dat shark law, bwoy, shark law, like de slave law, de law de law! Show ‘em who de top fish. Keep de others down wid fear and punishment. Dat de slave law. Dis fun, bwoy, fun! Have a bite!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

A sudden disturbance in the water makes all the sharks even more excited. Suddenly they are fighting like cocks in a pit. Blood is filling the water, but it doesn't smell like shark blood. It smells like..."

"Yeah, mon, it does," grins the Heartman, showing row upon row of razor-sharp teeth, "de Heartman him got a mouth now cos Me a shark, bwoy, a shark. A big un!"

"The blood?"

"It dead mon blood, bwoy, dead, stale blood from a body dat been lying dere for hours. It stale. Dis lot dey idiots, dey can't tell, but de Heartman him a connoisseur, a connoisseur of blood, de Heartman can taste it, bwoy, taste it. Me can tell Me fresh from stale, mon, and dis old blood. Come wid Me."

The Heartman swims a way back from the stale blood and the thronging fish, and we poke our black lifeless eyes out of the surface of the water.

"A ship?"

"Yeah mon, yu recognise her?" "No,"

I reply.

"Look at de name, bwoy, look at de name. Look at de bow of the ship, she got a name, bwoy. Look, bwoy, look!"

Our eyes seem to work better under the water, but I can just about make out four letters.

"Hope!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, bwoy, Hope! Me love dat name. Hope a good name for ship wid no hope, no hope at all. Dat a joke!”

I shake my long snout. “What’s happening.”

“Dey throwing over de dead first and next dey throw over de sick. Dey don’t want sick on a ship called Hope, bwoy, a ship called Hope wid sick on it is ship dat ain’t going to mek dem Toubob much money. Toubob want his specimens to arrive in tip top condition, bwoy, tip top condition on a ship called Hope. Cos, tip top condition mean tip top price, tip top.”

“What’s happening?”

He stares at me. “What yu think happening, bwoy? Me just said.”

A man appears on the side of Hope. “That man...that man, on the ship...I know him.”

“Yeah, yu know him, bwoy, yu just seen him not five minute ago, bwoy. Mon, yu got a bad memory? One of dem sharks bash yuh nut or someting? Bashed yuh nut till it broken, bwoy?”

I ignore the insult. “Remind me, where do I know him from?”

“Back in dat dere dark room, bwoy, dat dere dark room in Africa, de dark continent.”

Now I know him. “That’s the old man who couldn’t breathe.”

“Yeah, bwoy, him de one.”

“What’s the matter with him?”

“Him sick.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Sick?”

“Sick. Couldn’t breathe, couldn’t eat, drank too little, had de shits, vomited anything him could eat straight back, sick, bwoy, him sick.”

“But he’s someone’s father, husband, grandfather, a village elder, a man of importance.”

“To dem him just meat, bwoy, meat, dat what Toubob see him as. And now him diseased meat, bwoy, diseased. Leave him on Hope and him going to mek all the rest of de meat bad.

Dey got to get him out, get him out quick or dey won’t get paid when dey get to Plantashion Island.”

“Fucking Plantashion Island!”

“Yeah, fucking Plantashion Island, bwoy, fucking Plantashion Island, fucking Toubob, fucking Hope.”

“No!” I shout.

“Sharks can’t shout, Bloody Jackson Moss, dey just eat, fuck, shit and piss; den swim in it all deir lives.”

“No!”

“Dey can’t hear yu, bwoy, dey can’t hear yu.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The old man is too sick to even resist as he's pushed towards the side of Hope. He can barely stand he's so sick. He is a pathetic sight. I could cry for this poor old gentleman being treated like this. Treated like some worthless...

"Piece o' meat, bwoy, piece o' meat?"

"Yeah. What has he ever done to them, to anyone? It's not fair."

"Life ain't fair, bwoy, it just ain't."

With a quiet dignity that no one around him can recognise, the village elder is quietly begging for help with the last ounce of his life force, but no one cares. No one gives a damn. He's not worth anything to them. An animal who's gone down on the butcher's floor who nobody will spare a second of compassion before they meet their fate. My heart is about to explode. Actually, explode for him. "What are they doing now?"

"Dey is having deir fun, bwoy, deir Heartman fun. Dey don't have Jack size 'Ting's', so dey need to get deir fun from somewhere."

"What?"

"Dey is playing with him, playing with de old fadda, playing with him. Dat right, go on! Tease him, hang him over, pull him back, give him hope, take it away," his sharp shark teeth are gleaming. "Dis proper Heartman fun, bwoy, proper fun."

I can't watch, my shark eye is crying one solitary tear. I pray. "Please God, please God, please!" Eventually the sailors grow tired of teasing the poor, sick old gentleman and then it's



over in a flash. They just push him over the edge of the ship, his exhausted stick arms and legs flay pathetically and there's a splash.

"Toubob treat Dodo better than him black brudders, bwoy, treat Dodo better," a fin nudges me. "Come on! Fresh blood, bwoy, fresh blood! Den we gotta go to Slave City, bwoy. Slave City."

"Slave City?"

"Slave City, it ain't an actual place, bwoy, it ain't an actual place, but every Toubob city Slave City."

### **Slave city**

We're men again. We're stood in a town, no, it's a city, it's too big to be a town. It can't be Plantashion Island because there is no sunshine. It's always sunny on Plantashion Island except during the hurricane season when it lashes it down. But it is not lashing down like during the hurricane season here, it's just grey. It could be Red Rose City where the sun rarely shines and where it's cold. We're stood on cobbled roads with buildings, tall stone buildings branching off from the street were standing on, disappearing into the distance in every direction. Looking up, the buildings climb into the grey, rainy sky. The streets are deserted.

"England?" I ask the Heartman who is stood next to me. He's wearing a stylish, tailored dark suit with a white shirt and black necktie, shiny black shoes on his feet, on his head is a strange round hat.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“It called a bowler hat, bwoy, a bowler hat,” he says doffing it at me. “Pleased to meet you Sir Jackson Moss my dear fellow!”

I’m dressed identically. I’ve never worn clothes like these in my life. Never even imagined that clothes like these existed. My legs and arms have never been covered by clothes like these. It feels very...constraining. But the hat. “A bowler hat?”

“Yes, it what all city gents wear, don’t you know, bwoy.” His voice has changed. It no longer sounds like he’s from Plantashion Island, it sounds like he’s from England or somewhere they speak proper English.

“Is it? What are city gents?”

“We is city gents, bwoy, we is,” he’s got a silver topped cane in his hand and so have I. He taps it on the cobbles, and I can hear faint screams from beneath us.

“Are we in England?” I ask.

“In a manner of speaking, bwoy, in a manner of speaking.”

“I don’t understand,” I don’t understand much these days.

“No,” unusually, he’s not smiling, “take a closer look at de ground, bwoy, take a look at de ground. Did yu not just hear de scream?” He stares at me accusingly. “Is yu deaf, bwoy? Is yuh ears full of tato?”

“Potatoes?”

“Tato!” He shakes his head. “No matter, bwoy, no matter. Look down.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I do look down at the cobbles. At first, I think they are just cobbles, pieces of small round stone that are jammed together. Then I look closer, much closer. “Wait? What?” I begin to kneel to get a better look.

“Hey! Watch dat suit, bwoy, watch it! It expensive! Dat suit cost de lifetime of wages of de working mon.”

I stand bolt upright. “Not slaves! Slaves don’t get paid!”

“Ha-ha! Dat true, bwoy, dat true, slave don’t get paid. But, yu a gentleman now, Sir Jackson Moss Esquire, no less, yu don’t kneel down, not for anyone except yuh monarch!” he puffs his chest out. “And dat Me.”

I crouch carefully. I’ve never worn trousers like this before. They’re exquisite. The material is so thick and warm and, considering we’ve left the heat of Plantashion Island for the cold of England, very welcome. And the tailoring is flawless. There are no holes or nicks in them, nothing that needs to be repaired or mended by the seamstresses back home in the village.

“Why don’t yu take a look at yuhself, Sir Jack, bwoy, why don’t yu take a look?”

I look up and see a window and stand. I hardly recognise my reflection, I *do* look like a gentleman, apart from my black skin. No black man can ever be a gentleman in my lifetime, that’s for sure.

“Me wouldn’t be so sure, bwoy, Me wouldn’t be so sure. Gentleman Jackson, eh? Now look down!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Down? Oh yeah. What am I looking at? My shoes?” the shoes on my feet are also exquisite, there’s no other word for them, the black leather is shined so much I can see my reflection in them.

“Not de shoes, bwoy, not de shoes! Below de shoes, mon, below dem! De cobbles, at de cobbles, Gentleman Jackson, look at de cobbles.”

I stare at the small round stones. They’re dark grey and uninteresting, then I spot something, one of them moves, something on one of them moves. Just slightly, but there was definitely movement. Then something on the one next door moves. Looking a few cobbles away, another moves. Then I look more closely. Peering down I can see that they are faces, black faces. Faces with eyes, noses and mouths. They are screaming, silently screaming and shouting. Some are crying, some pleading, some sleeping, some dead.

I look up at the Heartman. “They’re faces?”

He nods, “faces, bwoy, faces, slave faces.”

I run a few feet and look down. All the cobbles are the same, faces, black faces. Each one different to the one next to it.

“Millions of faces, bwoy, millions of slave faces. Now look at de buildings.”

“At the buildings?”

“Yeah, mon,” he nods. “Look closely, bwoy, look closely.”

The walls, instead of stones are bodies, standing bodies, standing naked black bodies, bodies of men, women and children. They are standing on top of each other, feet on shoulders and heads.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“They’re my people,” I gasp.

He nods.

I walk across the city street, “sorry, sorry, really sorry,” I can’t help but stand on the faces of my people. I look at the wall of the building. It’s the same, black bodies, stacked together as tightly as they had been, as I had been with my neighbours, on the voyage on Hope from Africa to Plantashion Island, only vertical.

I rush down the street to the next building. It’s the same. I run down the street pounding my arms, all the buildings are the same, all the buildings, every single one has walls built not with stone but with the bodies of slaves. I rush back to the Heartman and look up.

“Dey all de same bwoy, dey all de same. Dey go up as high as yu want, right to de sky, mon, right up to de clouds, dey all bodies, dey all bodies. Run as far as yu can and dey all the same, buildings built with bodies,” he spreads his arms wide. “Dis entire city built upon de bodies of African slave, bwoy, built upon de bodies of African slave, dis entire city, Slave City.”

I stare at him.

“Now, de Heartman bored,” he says. “Dis all too serious, bwoy, all too fucking serious. De Heartman him not do serious, him do mischief! Me want fun, fun before we get back to Hope. Question. Do yu remember when yu first...” he grins. His red eyes twinkle.

I shake my head at the prospect of what is coming.

“...had relations wid Missus Elizabeth?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I shudder, “I remember...”

**First time with Elizabeth**

Immediately the heat of the hot Plantashion Island sun is making me, in my tailored woollen English suit, begin to sweat like a tropical downpour. I look at the Heartman who seems to be completely unaffected by the temperature.

“It hotter in hell, bwoy, hotter in hell, plenty hotter,” he replies reading my thoughts. I never get used to that. Him reading my thoughts. He clicks his claws, and my heavy suit is replaced with a light cotton shirt and britches. They are similar to the ones I always wore to work but new.

“Dat cos yu a gentleman now, Sir Jackson, a gentleman, and a gentleman never wears rags, bwoy, never. We got standards.”

We’re stood by a sugar cane field. It’s a massive field, the forest has been cleared by the sheer effort of my brothers and sisters and now it’s growing just one thing, sugar. A group of planters, strong, young slaves like me are digging holes and then sticking long wooden canes into them. It’s hard, physical work and only the youngest, strongest and fittest can do it. They’re not all men, there are some women, young women, some with babies, some black, some brown, tied on to their backs sleeping soundly as their mommas backs break in the hot sun.

“Hard work,” I mutter.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, it dat, bwoy, it dat! Hard, hard work! It kill plenty, hard work, bwoy, it kill plenty.”

He doesn't look happy. I'm surprised. “You're not happy about that? People dying? I thought that was your thing, people dying?”

He shrugs. “Dey good people, bwoy, dey good people. Dey ain't destined for de Heartman. Me only get de bad 'uns, mon.”

“Oh,” I can see myself, shirtless and sweating. I look younger, a few years younger.

“Yeah, yu are, bwoy, younger and more...” he grins, the glint returning to his red eyes. “More virile.”

“I'm still young and...”

“Yu dead, bwoy, or as good as, yu on death row. Yu ain't virile. Prisoner on death row ain't virile,” he grabs his crotch and thrusts. “De Heartman de only dead virile mon, bwoy!”

Cane planter me is labouring hard, aware that the junior over-looker is watching us from the back of his horse. Jeremiah Taylor is every bit as bad as Charles Inman but lazier.

“Him lazy bastard, bwoy, stupid, lazy bastard. But,” the Heartman grins, “...him a bad 'un.”

“Mm...” As long as he sees that we're working, he's happy to sit and doze on his horse in the hot afternoon sun, swigging 'kill-devil' occasionally from his silver hip flask. Sometimes he has a quick snooze when he thinks no one is looking. Sometimes he nearly falls off his horse.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, bwoy, him does. Look! She coming, bwoy,” nods the Heartman. “She coming! De Missus!”

Sat next to her driver on the horse pulled cart is the Missus, she’s approaching the big house from the direction of Bridgetown. Looking angelic in her white cotton dress she has a matching parasol over her head to shade her from the sun. A fine-looking woman, she appears to the whole world the gentle lady that I know she isn’t.

“Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do! She ain’t gentle at all. How is yuh ‘Ting’, mon?” The Heartman is holding his little finger in my face, it’s bent.

I try and ignore him. “It’s alright, thanks.” I know that if I don’t humour him, he’ll go on and on about it.

“Yeah, Me will, bwoy, yeah Me will!”

“Stop!” she orders in a surprisingly powerful voice. The driver pulls on the reins. The man at the reigns, Ned, doesn’t appear all too keen to stop though, he’s ready to get back to his stables and have a long drink. It’s been a long hard journey for him and the beast in the relentlessly hot sun of Plantashion Island. But he knows not to get on the wrong side of Missus.

“Whoa! Whoa, boy!” Calls Ned and eventually the horse stops.

“Disobedient bloody nag!” Elizabeth holds her hand out and Ned hops down and rushes around to her side of the carriage.

“She a fine looking womon, bwoy, fine looking womon. If de Heartman weren’t a demon Me would plant de demon seed...mebee Me will, later in de story, bwoy, mebee Me will.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“She’d ride rough shod over you!” I snap.

“Ha-ha! Dat true, bwoy, dat true. Dis Missus might even be match for de Heartman!”

Carefully, the Missus steps down. The overlooker hasn’t seen her though. He’s dozing peacefully, thinking about how next he’s going to skive. Taylor likes to skive anytime he can, any place he can. He’s done nothing but doze, drink, eat, doze, fuck, doze since he stepped off the ship from England two years ago.

“That’s a big mistake,” I mutter.

“Dat a BIG mistake, bwoy, a big mistake. Watch dis.”

“I know what happens next, I was there.”

“Apologies, but dey haven’t, de reader, dey haven’t, hagree?”

I nod, “hagree.”

“Hand me the whip, Ned,” says Elizabeth quietly.

“Sorry, Missus?”

“The whip, man!”

“Yes, Missus, de whip Missus, yes mam,” Ned gives the Missus the whip and she slowly meanders up to the napping Taylor.

She’s surprisingly cat like as she floats over the rough ground. “Mr Taylor!” the missus viciously unleashes the whip towards Jeremiah Taylor, and it lashes him across the face

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

catching him hard. He falls backwards right off his horse and lands heavily on the rock-hard ground knocking the wind clean out of his lungs. She whips him again and he screams in agony. For good measure she does it one more time. From the look on her face, she's more than enjoying punishing him.

"She enjoying it, bwoy, she enjoying it, in de sexual way! Me has to say, bwoy, dat de Heartman him more dan a lickle bit...aroused, Sir Jackson. De Heartman like de dominant womon. Dis womon, she got something of de night about her."

"That's true."

Another crack of the whip. Taylor screams like a slave taking a lashing.

"Now he knows how we feel," I mutter.

"Yeah, bwoy, yeah!"

"Mrs...Mrs...Mrs Smith," Taylor gasps as the air starts to fill his lungs again.

"Don't you Mrs, Mrs, Mrs Smith me, Mr Taylor," snaps the missus. "You were asleep man, fast asleep."

Taylor sits in the dirt like a chastised slave. Like one of the many hundreds of slaves that he's chastised and humiliated over the years. Slaves that he's shown not one ounce of pity towards. "I fear...I fear," he's struggling to get the words out. "I fear that you...that you're mistaken, Mam, mistaken."

The Heartman and I look at each other. How could he think saying that was appropriate?

Her demonic eyes bore down on him. "Are you calling me a liar, Sir!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

You can almost hear the crew of planters in the entire field suck in their breath at the same time as she asks the question. Taylor is the only one who thought that that was a good idea. The only person in the vicinity that would think to argue with the Missus in this mood, was a good, or safe thing to do.

He's trying to shuffle away on his back like a wounded centipede.

"Centipede!" The Heartman has had an idea, but I stop him in his tracks.

I hold up an accusing finger to his face. "No bloody centipedes, please sir, no bloody centipedes! I draw the line at insects! Hagree?"

He reluctantly shrugs. "Hagree. Now, let see how dis bwoy get out of him lickle predicament. Hagree?"

I grin. "Hagree."

The centipede can't move fast. In this position, fast is something he can only dream of. "Liar? Liar? No, no, not at all, Mam."

"Then you're saying that I cannot see properly?" Her shark eyes don't have an ounce of pity in them. I've seen that look before. Normally it's the look she gives me when she's thought up something extra depraved for me to do for her.

"Yeah, mon! Depraved, mon!"

"See properly?" Centipede is moving slowly away but she's following, all the time staying within striking distance of her victim. "No, no, not at all, Mam."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Then what?” the missus is strangely calm. She’s not angry or mad. But she’s got that look in her eyes again. That satanic look.

“She sheer evil, bwoy, sheer evil, an evil person don’t get mad or angry, mon. She get revenge. Watch.”

“Lie down, Taylor,” the Missus orders. She’s standing with her feet a shoulder width apart, she could lash out with her whip again, she’s braced for it. Taylor looks like he’s about to shit his pants. “Lie down?”

“Are you deaf, man?”

He has. He has shit them.

“Yeah, mon, him has! Him shit him pants, bwoy!”

The stink is terrible. “Deaf? No, Mam?”

“But you do accuse me of being...stupid!”

“Stupid? Me? You? No!”

“You’re tongue tied?”

“Oh, no,” I remember what is coming next. I cover my eyes.

Taylor is sat next to a fence post now, that’s as far as the centipede has managed to crawl.

“Yeah, mon, yeah. De Heartman him love dis bit, bwoy, love dis bit, love it!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ned?”

“Yes, Missus?”

“I think you might have a hammer and nail somewhere? Somewhere in your tool-box perhaps?”

Ned knows not to hesitate or question, but even he can’t imagine the Missus will do this to a white man, to a slave without a second thought but not to a white man. “Yes, Missus.”

“Then bring them here.”

“Yes, Missus.”

“Tongue out Taylor,” she orders.

“Mam?”

“Stick your tongue out Taylor. Lick the post. And you...” she points to me, “you take me home while Ned deals with Mr Taylor. Now then Ned, you will deal with Mr Taylor won’t you.”

Ned nods. “Yes, Missus, straight away, Missus!” Ned will not disobey the Missus. And, for all the slaves who have been and will be punished by Taylor, he’ll enjoy it.

We’re transported from the hot dusty sugar field to the cool of the Missus’s bedroom and she is sat on the edge of the bed with her skirt pulled right back, her bloomers off and her legs open. The younger, and apparently more virile version of myself is knelt with his head between her legs. The Missus’s hands are on my head holding me in place whilst she grinds away on my face.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah! De Heartman him have to say, mon, have to say, dat dis a much better use for tongue, Sir Jack Moss, a much better use!”

**Unloading human cargo**

Even as I can taste the acidic flavour of the missus on the tip of my tongue, we’re transported to the hold of ‘Hope’ as she nears Plantashion Island. Gone are the cushions and curtains, the cotton and lace, the scent of sweet perfumes, man-made and natural, and the warm, gentle breeze billowing in through the window, now there are just unforgiving wooden walls, floors caked in human shit, blood and vomit and the all-encompassing stench that this waste reeks of. Below deck Hope’s human cargo is nearing the end of its three-thousand-mile trip across the Atlantic from Africa to the new world. The hull is cramped but now there are spaces.

“Dat wastage, bwoy, wastage.”

“Wastage?” I stare at him. We’re on all fours and I’ve just put my hands in something unmentionable, “Shit!”

“Exactly, bwoy, exactly! Shit! Dey start de journey in Africa wid far too many souls on board, bwoy, far too many. Dey cram in like sardine...”

“Sardines?”

“Fish, smelly, disgusting fish...notting like salt cod, bwoy, notting like salt cod. De Heartman him like him some salt cod...” He gets back to the slaves, “and den dey has wastage.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Wastage?”

“How can Me put it? Some sardine die, bwoy, some sardine die, dey is de old blood and den some sardine get sick, dey is de fresh blood, bwoy, dey is de fresh blood.”

It’s dark in the hold, but not as dark as the room in Africa. There are chinks of light that cast a dim glow on the inhabitants of this underworld. Men and boys are lying flat. There’s not enough head room to sit up let alone stand. We are crouching low.

“Dey get more in dat way, bwoy, dey get more in.”

“More in?”

“More sardine in de can, bwoy, more in de can. Plenty more. Ain’t yu listening!”

“I’m listening!”

“Me tink yu got tato in yuh ears, bwoy!”

“Potatoes? Again?”

“Tato! De Heartman him said later, bwoy, de Heartman said later.”

The men are not talking as they did in the room in Africa, they’re not whispering, and no one is doing anything but cling to life. They’re waiting, waiting like animals going to market, waiting to find out their fate, whether their owners will be kind, whether they will be cruel, whether they will see their friends or family ever again or whether they will be split up. Whether they will even make it to market or perish and be fed to the sharks.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ain’t no way a sardine can live in a can, bwoy, ain’t no way. Dem fish packed so tight in de can, twenty to de dozen as dey say, mon, twenty to de dozen, no fish can live in dat can, none.”

There’s a judder and the ship lurches. Men and boys roll into each other. A few groan, most just lie in total silence. They can’t feel anything anymore. They are immune to pain. They’ve stopped feeling anything. They are clinging to life like shadows of their former selves. I look at the Heartman.

“Hope, she drop anchor, bwoy, she drop anchor.”

“Why does she drop anchor, whatever that is?”

“It big iron hook, bwoy, big iron hook. Dey drop it to de ocean floor. She here. She arrive. Arrive in paradise.”

“Here?”

“Where’s here?”

“Plantashion Island, bwoy, Plantashion Island, dat here!”

“Fucking Plantashion Island!”

“Fucking Plantashion Island, bwoy, fucking Hope, fucking Toubob, fucking tato!”

A door is opened above our heads and blinding white light floods down on all the poor inhabitants of the guts of Hope. All the sardines. In the light they look worse than I could have imagined. They look like a scene from an old picture in a history book or the Lord’s book, a



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

picture of disease or plague or some awful act of God where people are awaiting a terrible death.

“Fuck yu! Don’t talk to de Heartman ‘bout de fucking ‘G’ word, bwoy, don’t do it!”

The Heartman tries to spit on the ground. “Shit! No fucking mouth!”

“Why not mention God?”

“Ah! Me said don’t mentioned de ‘G’ word! Him and de Heartman don’t see eye to eye.”

I look around. “This is terrible. It didn’t seem so bad, when I came.”

“Yu got used to it, bwoy, yu got used to it. But de Heartman like dat phrase, ‘de guts of Hope’, Me like it! Nice, bwoy, nice. Nicely put.”

“Come on you lot, let’s be having you! LET’S BE FUCKING HAVING YOU!” No one stirs, no one is able to. They are either too sick, weary or terrified.

“I said, LET’S BE HAVING YOU!”

Still nothing.

A whip cracks over the heads of the guts.

“Dat nice touch, bwoy, dat nice touch.”

“What do you mean a nice touch?”

The Heartman is laughing. “Yu don’t know, bwoy, yu don’t know?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I shake my head. “No.”

“De Heartman ‘xplain den. In Africa, de dark continent, Toubob, him happy to whip any slave who refuse to move, whip em hard, him don’t care if him hurt dem, don’t give a shit. But, yu notice now dat him ain’t doing dat today, bwoy, not today. Today him ain’t letting it touch dem. ‘Très subtil’, as Me victims on de French islands would say, bwoy, ‘très subtil’. But more of de French Islands in de next book.”

“Why would he not touch them today?”

“Because him touch dem and him damage dem, bwoy, him touch dem and him damage dem! Damage meat, ruined meat! Ruined! We near de market, mon, near de market. Him need to get de best price for de goods.”

Slowly, very slowly aching bones begin to creak as slaves crawl, crawl together as they’re chained to one another, towards Toubob. A young Toubob hops down and unhooks the chains from the decks and the men can move freely, well as freely as you can after you have been treated like meat and are in a space where you can barely crawl.

“They’ll drown!” I cry as we watch from the beach the unloading of Hope’s cargo.

“Relax, mon! Toubob ain’t gonna let em drown, bwoy, him ain’t gonna let em drown! What yu tink dey is, stupid? When it come to money, Toubob, him ain’t stupid, bwoy, him ain’t stupid.”

“I don’t understand.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dey push em off Hope to clean dem up, bwoy, clean dem up before dey go to market. Get de best price dat way, mon, de best price. No buyer gonna want a slave who cake in shit and vomit, are dey, bwoy? No buyer gonna want dat.”

Like sheep the slaves are pushed off Hope into the sea one by one. There is a rowing boat next to them as they splash down. Two Toubob have large poles that they are forcing the slaves under with and another has a brush on a long pole. As the slaves are forced under the brush man gives them a good scour. With bodies covered in open sores and wounds we can feel their pain from here, but they don’t seem to feel it.

“Dey immune, bwoy, dey immune.”

The slaves are bobbing about like apples, gasping for breath and flailing their arms and legs.

“Well, dat woke em up, bwoy, dat woke em up,” laughs the demon, “woke em up good and proper.”

I stare at the heartless man.

“Don’t look at Me like dat, Sir Jack, bwoy, don’t look at Me like dat! Ain’t nobody gonna die today, probably, and de Heartman him need to get fun where him can, mon, since no one gonna die. Ain’t even gonna see a lickle bit o’ blood. Me know...” he snaps his fingers. “Let’s see some blood, bwoy, blood at de hand of Sir Jack Moss.”

“No!”

### **Machete Man**

Now we're inside a large building that I'm familiar with, very familiar with. It's a building that I've worked in for more years than I can remember. A building I despise, that all slaves despise.

"All de slave despise it, bwoy, all de slave despise it. Good one, dat true."

I hated being forced to work in this God-awful place, but I had no choice.

"Yeah, mon, no choice til yuh 'Ting' made yu valuable asset! Now yu is too valuable to waste in de sugar house, bwoy, too, too valuable. He-he!"

I glare at my companion. The sickly-sweet atmosphere is congealing on his face. His jet-black visage is starting to glisten with a sugar coating, and stalactites are beginning to drop from his nose and ears. I've never seen these sugary fangs grow so quickly. It's not normal. Normally it just forms a sickly covering on your skin during a long shift, but not with the Heartman.

"Dat cos Me de Heartman, bwoy, Me de Heartman. Normal don't apply to yuhs truly. It don't apply. Hagree?"

"Yeah, hagree!" Already they are inches long, the stalactites. They look like icy fangs that are quickly growing on his face.

"Yeah, dey do! Yeah, dey do!" he points at someone. "Dat yu, bwoy, dat yu. Sir Jack. Sir Jack of 'Ting' manor, 'Ting' shire, 'Ting' land, de planet 'Ting'!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I have just walked in at the start of my shift. Already I look hot. It's like a furnace in the boiling room. Hotter than the centre of the sun, I imagine. Clouds of evaporated sugar are billowing out of the giant vats but I'm not heading towards them, I'm heading towards one of the dragons.

"Yeah, mon, yeah. De Heartman him love dem dragons, bwoy, love dem!"

"You would."

"De dragons do de Heartman's work, bwoy, do de Heartman's work. Plenty misery dey cause, bwoy, plenty of misery. Plenty bloodshed, limb loss, and de odd death, love dose machines, love dem. Come on, bwoy," Heartman is pulling on my sleeves. "Come and meet de dragon."

I approach the dragon with caution. Force of habit, I suppose. I've seen this particular monster pull many a friend into its mouth, chewing off hands or arms and killing the unlucky. It's a gruesome death to behold, horrendous.

"Ha-ha! And dat why de Heartman him love dis lickle monster, bwoy, love it!" He tickles the machine as someone would tickle a puppy. "But him is Me lickle, ickle puppy, ain't yu bwoy?"

Today it is my job to keep the workers alive. To cut them free if they get entangled in the dragon, to chop off a hand or arm because a person can live perfectly well without a hand or arm, but they can't live if their entire torso gets chewed up in the metal teeth of the grinder.

"Yu de machete man, Sir Jack, bwoy, yu de machete man!" The Heartman pats me on the back, "yu one of Me workers. One of Me best. Dough, Me lickle ickle puppy needs feeding

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

slave meat every day and yu starve him. By rights de Heartman him should be angry wid yu, bwoy, Me should be angry!”

I look at him, the stalactites are a foot long now, he looks like he is stood in a shower of sugar syrup which instantly congeals when it comes into contact with his devilish skin. I despise him and everything he says. “I am not your worker,” I whisper.

“Not yet, bwoy, not yet. Look, here come yuh victim, mon,” he nods as a young slave called Joshua is approaching the machete man.

“Morning, Jack,” the two young men shake hands.

“Look carefully, him still got two hands, bwoy, two hands,” chuckles the Heartman.

“Shh...”

“Not for long, bwoy, not for long!” He turns to the grinder. “Not for long puppy baby! Puppy gonna eat today! Evil Papa gonna mek sure him lickle ickle baby will have a full belly today.”

“Morning Joshua,” I, Jack the Machete Man, say, “another lovely day in hell.”

The Heartman chuckles. “Ah! De Heartman him just love de way yu slave call de boiling house hell, bwoy, love it.”

I ignore him as the men continue to pass the time of day.

“Devil makes work and all that, Jack...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Geth to futhing work!” lisps Jeremiah Taylor who has been forbidden from working in the fields by the overlooker, Charles Inman, since the missus found him napping on his horse and ordered his tongue nailed to a post. “Go on, you lathey bathtardth!”

“Lathey bathtardth,” whispers Joshua and the younger me stifles a snigger.

“What wath that, boy?”

“Nothing thir, nothing,” replies Joshua. The dragons are noisy even though they’re not in gear, the stream is turning their water wheels just outside the building and the cogs and wheels are turning menacingly. They are ready to be unleashed on the unsuspecting sugar cane crop and anyone unfortunate enough to get in the way of their gobbling.

Joshua pulls off his shirt and I mine. I pick up a lethal looking machete and carefully sharpen it up on a stone.

The Heartman grins. “Pride yuhself on having a sharp blade, eh, bwoy, pride yuhself on having a sharp blade? A sharp ‘Ting’?”

I glare at him. “A sharp blade means a clean cut.”

“So it does, bwoy, so it does. And more blood!”

I shake my head. “Less blood, much less,” I’d learned this from the old man who taught me my terrible trade.

It was five years earlier and I was working with old Elijah. I don’t know how old he was. He was just ancient looking, with every part of his skin wrinkled and his hair a white silver

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Toubob colour. I'd been selected to work as the new machete man when the crop was being gathered because I was strong and tall, but I was young enough that they thought I could learn quickly, and I had got a good reputation for being a hard worker at harvest time. I could also cut a cane, a woody sugar cane, so cleanly you could barely hear the sound of the blade splicing it.

“Yu knows how to wield yuh ‘Ting’ bwoy! Knows how to wield yuh ‘Ting’!”

There was never any hacking or splinters with my work, just one clean, fast cut, at exactly the point where I'd intended.

“Yu a good chopper, bwoy, a good chopper! Ha-ha!”

So, when Massa had come looking for someone to learn to be the next machete man, the planters had all suggested me. They said, to his face, that I had the best cutting arm and, to my face, that if there was anyone they trusted to save their lives, if any one of them slipped and fell towards the grinding machines known as dragons, it was me.

“First of all. Mek sure dat yuh blade sharp, Jack, bwoy, a sharp blade save lives,” old Elijah knew a thing or two about sharp blades. After a long shift he even took his machete home each night to sharpen it off even more.

“Dat what old Elijah do of an evening, bwoy?”

“What can I say? There's not much to do in the slave village at night.”

“Except wield yuh ‘Ting’, bwoy, except wield yuh ‘Ting’?”

I stare at the Heartman, who now resembles a gigantic sugar cone, “is that all you think about?”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Death an’ sex, bwoy, death an’ sex, what else it dere, mon?”

In the growing season Elijah oiled the blades continually to make sure they didn’t rust in the humid Plantashion Island air.

“Rusty blade a bad ting, bwoy,” he taught me. “Cause infection and infection can kill a slave nearly as quick as de dragons but wid much more pain, bwoy, wid much more pain. Yu might tink yu is a bringer of pain, Jack, bwoy, but yu really a saver of life, a saver of life. Yu remember dat, remember dat good. De Machete man an important job.”

“Can I use your blade,” I’d asked innocently.

“My blade?” The old man looked at me as if I was mad. “My blade?”

“Err...yes.”

“No, bwoy, no, yu don’t use my blade! Yu don’t use my blade, my blade is my own, bwoy! Yu use yuh own machete. Yu chooses yuh own blade and den yu mek it a part of yu,” Elijah opened a small chest in his hut. The hut was dark and small, but it was as spotless as it could be and there wasn’t a speck of dust to be found anywhere in it. In the chest were a number of small, tightly wrapped, oily cotton packages. The old man took the first out, weighed it in his hands, not bothering to unwrap it and stared at the young me, assessing me. “Mm...no, no, maybe? No...no, it too heavy,” he mumbled, replaced it and rummaged around some more. He brought another out and stared at me. “Show me yuh hand, bwoy.”

“My hand? Which one?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Which one?” he stared at me. “Which one yu wield yuh cutting knife wid, bwoy, in de cane field?”

“My left.”

“Den yuh left, bwoy. Dat a lickle unusual, but yuh left it is. Hold it out.”

I did and he inspected it.

“Mm...small hands, strong wrists, need a heavy blade with a narrow handle, try dis one,” he passed the oily parcel to me, and I started to unwrap it. “Whoa! Slowly, slowly, bwoy, slowly, if yu want to keep yuh fingers attached to yuh hands, bwoy. Well? Do yu?”

Elijah made me feel like I was eight years old again, not a working man. “Yes, Sir,” I replied sheepishly.

“Den do it slowly. Slowly now.”

Carefully, I unwrapped the cloth and there it was, an ancient looking machete. The wooden handle was made of dark wood, wood from the rainforest and was worn smooth. The blade was about two feet long and gleaming.

“Pick it up slowly, boy. Slowly now. Dis a weapon.”

I took the handle and lifted the machete. It felt comfortable to hold not like the knives we used for the harvest, anyone could use those knives and they were heavy and cumbersome, but this felt just right. Comfortable.

“Yu use dat word once already, bwoy, use it already. De readers get bored wid it. Ain’t yu got a better word dan comfortable?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I shrugged. “No. Comfortable describes it.”

“Feel like a blade yu were meant to wield boy?” asked Elijah.

I stared at him, before I’d picked up this machete, I wouldn’t have known what the old man meant, but now I did. “Yes.”

“Well, dis yuh blade. Look after it. Yu gonna save plenty of lives with dis blade, maybe even yuh own one day. Yu mark my word, bwoy, yu mark my word.”

The work of feeding the dragons was hot and relentless. But there was a knack to it. You needed to do it just right. You picked up too few canes and the overlooker would thrash you to within an inch of your life for slowing down the sugar production.

“De Heartman him does like a lickle bit o’ sugar in Me tea, bwoy, a lickle bit! Sweet tooth de Heartman got.”

“You don’t have teeth!”

He looked offended. “Me might have done, once, bwoy, Me might have done once. Dat hurts, comments like dat, dey hurt. Even de Heartman got feelings.”

“Sorry.”

“Dat alright, go on, bwoy, go on.”

Or you pick up too many and you topple towards the dragon and get a hand or arm chopped off by the machete man, or worse.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, mon, much worse! Much, much worse, bwoy. How many arm yu cut off, bwoy? In yuh career? How many?”

I stare at him. “I don’t know. I never counted.”

Red eyes glint. “De Heartman him have and Me tell yu. Seventeen arm and three hand, bwoy, seventeen and three.”

“Futhing geth on with it!” shouted Jeremiah Taylor. Taylor had been angry ever since the Missus had punished him and, the Missus had been rampant ever since too.

“Yeah, rampant, bwoy, rampant!”

“Futhing geth on with it!” Joshua silently mocks the overlooker and the young me grins. Then it happens. It happens so fast we can’t seem to stop it happening. As he’s mocking Taylor, my friend has taken his mind off what he’s doing, what he should be concentrating on. Which is fatal. He’s distracted. Spurred on by Taylor’s order he’s picked up a large bundle of the canes, a bundle that’s far too heavy for him, and he’s walked too quickly towards the dragon. A piece of cane from the last mouthful has been dropped on the floor and at the moment I was going to point this out to Joshua, he’s made the joke about the overlooker’s lisp, and then it happens. It happens fast. Joshua trips on the cane and lurches forward. The heavy load is too much for my friend and he stumbles, rights himself and then stumbles forward.

“He-he! Lunch, ickle baby, lunch!”

“Not on my shift!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

My blade flashes, it's the work of a fraction of a second and there's a scream, and in the blink of an eye Joshua is lying on the floor of the boiling house holding his arm, blood spurting everywhere.

The Heartman shrugs. "Well, least a hand better dan notting, bwoy, better dan notting! Isn't it, puppy? Hand better dan notting? Dat right. But dere a consequence for every action, bwoy, a consequence for every action and dis de consequence. De Heartman him need pain, bwoy, him need it. Must have it."

### **Interrogation**

Suddenly, we're in the Massa's office. I'd never seen Massa Smith's office before this day. This is the day of the incident with Joshua's hand. The first time I'd had to cut off a part of someone to stop them being dragged into the crushing machine and being killed. But the thing I was most nervous about was that this was the first time I'd been inside Massa Benjamin Smith's office.

"You seen inside de Missus's bedroom before dough, bwoy, seen inside her bedroom!" The Heartman nudges me and winks his demonic red eyes. "Nudge, nudge, wink, wink, bwoy! Nudge, nudge, wink, wink! In fact, yu seen *inside* Mrs Smith plenty too."

I ignore him. He's disgusting. Disgusting.

"Yeah, mon, disgusting, disgusting, disgusting! But she such a fine womon, a fine, fine womon wid hint o' de night about her, bwoy. Hint o' de night about her."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

There's a knock.

The Massa calls out. "Come in!"

I slowly step through the door, the younger me. I look terrified. "You wanted to see me, Massa, Sir?" I can barely speak I'm so nervous. Slaves don't see inside the Massa's office, ever! Field slaves barely get over the threshold of the big house and, if they do, they are frowned upon and looked down upon by the snobbish house slaves.

"Until yuh 'Ting' mek dem happy to be alive, bwoy, until dey happy dat yuh 'Ting' so valuable?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Yuh 'Ting' mek dat damn fine womon happy, bwoy, and a damn fine, happy womon treat her slave well. House slave like dat, like to be treated well. And dey all know why she treat dem well, Jack's 'Ting'!"

I ignore him and get back to the matter at hand. Stood next to the Massa are Jeremiah 'lisp' Taylor and the senior overlooker, Charles Inman. Both have looks that would kill on their faces. And their looks are directed at the younger me.

"Ah," Massa Smith looks up and after a few seconds remembers why he'd asked to see the young slave. "Jack, isn't it?"

"Yes, Massa, Sir. Jack Moss, Massa, Sir."

"Ha-ha! Yu groveler, Sir Jack Moss, 'Massa, Sir', ass licker! Yu almost kissing him lickle 'ting', bwoy! Kissing him lickle 'ting'!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What am I supposed to do?” I reply furiously. “He owns me. He owns my friends. He owns the entire village.”

“Mr Taylor here tells me that you cut off a man’s hand this morning, Jack,” begins the Massa.

My head is lowered. I’m going to get a thrashing for this. A hell of a thrashing. I’ve seen men and women get it for a lot less than this.

“Yeah, yu have, bwoy, yeah yu have.”

“I’m told that the cut was a clean one, told that young Joshua is going to live and be able to get back to work very soon.”

I’m slightly relieved but the thrashing might still come. Both Taylor and Inman are positively itching to give me one.

My eyes glaze over as the Massa starts to speak. “And for that I will let you fuck my wife any time you want, Sir Jack Moss of the mighty ‘Ting’ fame...”

I stare at him open mouthed.

There is a laughing in my ears, *my* ears now and also young Jack’s ears. The kid looks like he has heard a ghost. Like all slaves he is superstitious. He believes in ghosts and spirits.

“Ha-ha! A lickle bit o’ Heartman magic, bwoy, a lickle bit o’ Heartman magic. He-he! Him didn’t really say dat, bwoy, didn’t really say dat, not really!”

Young me is staring at the Massa, eyes wide open along with his mouth.

“Is there anything wrong, Jack?” asks Massa.

“Wrong, Massa, Sir?” His eyes focus on him.

“It’s just that you seem quite shocked.”

“Shocked. Sorry, Massa, Sir, could you just repeat what you said please?”

“Repeat?” the Massa looks taken aback, “repeat?” Slaves don’t usually ask him to repeat something that he’s said. But he’s in a good mood. This lad has saved him a pretty penny. He won’t have to replace Joshua. “Oh, very well. I said, I am very grateful that you have saved Joshua’s life, boy. Very grateful. And I won’t forget it.”

I almost bow in gratitude. “Ah...thank you Massa, Sir, thank you.”

“Well, chop-chop boy, back to work, ‘chop-chop dat sugar cane’,” jokes the Massa in slave speak before continuing. “Tell your friends that Joshua is being tended to and will make a full recovery, and that the harvest needs to be processed or we’ll lose the whole bloody lot. Go on lad!”

When the young me has gone the Massa turns to his two men. His tone changes. “Make someone suffer for that, men. Make them suffer for taking their minds off my work, off my fucking work. The bastards could have cost me a fortune, a fucking fortune. But not Jack Moss, not him, someone else. I don’t care who but make someone suffer. No permanent damage, don’t cost me anything, just so the bastards know who’s in charge.”



### **Retribution**

As young Jack returns to his place at the mouth of the dragon, his blade bloodied and ready to strike again, word has got around the estate, spreading faster than a disease, that I have saved Joshua's life.

"Whooth going to geth it?" lisps Taylor with blood thirsty eyes as the pair leave the big house. "And how?"

"Never you mind, how, boy!" snaps Inman. "If you hadn't been so bloody stupid as to fall asleep on your horse then Mr Biles would have been keeping watch in the sugar house and not in the bloody fields. Never made a mistake in his life hasn't Mr Biles, unlike you! It's all your fault. I blame you entirely you bloody incompetent idiot."

"I got punished for it!" Taylor sticks out his tongue.

"I'd have thrashed you to death man, if that were me!" A finger is wagged in his face, "let me tell you, you've come off lightly, boy, bloody lightly!"

"But by a woman. I was punished by a woman!"

"You deserved it, man, deserved everything you got!"

As they walk past the clang, clank, clatter of the blacksmiths forge. Inman turns to Taylor and smiles. "I've had an idea. Come with me. Play along."

As they approached the forge, Billy the blacksmith was happily singing as he banged and clattered the white-hot metal he was heating in the furnace. A happy slave, Billy Ash had

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

a better life than most of the others on the plantation because he had a trade. Slaves with trades were treated better than field slaves.

“Dey a better class o’ slave, bwoy, a better class o’ slave.”

“Yes, something like that. They’re more valuable to their owners.”

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru.”

Blacksmith Billy worked hard, no one could doubt that, and it was fiercely hot in his small stone forge on the fiercely hot Plantashion Island, but he enjoyed his work and was left to get on with it without the eagle eye of the overlookers watching his every move. As long as he did what was asked of him, Ash was left alone.

“Oh! Mr Inman, Sir, Me didn’t see yu standing dere,” he nodded respectfully to the overlooker and put down his hammer. “Mr Taylor,” he nodded at the deputy.

“Busy, Bill?”

“Always busy, Mr Inman, Sir, de devil him makes work for idle hands, Sir.”

“True enough, Bill, true enough.” Bill grinned.

“Did you hear about this morning?”

“Me did, Mr Inman Sir, Me did. God bless Jack Moss for saving young Joshua’s life.”

Inman grimaced. “God bless him indeed.” *Fucking Negro runt.*

“I bet de Massa pleased him saved him life?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Very pleased, Bill, very pleased,” Inman was looking around the forge. Bill was the perfect victim, popular and happy, exactly what a slave should not be. He was a perfect victim to be made an example of.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru!” The Heartman and I are stood in the forge. I knew what was coming next, but I didn’t know how. And, in a way, I’d always blamed myself for what happened to Bill.

“Blame yuhself, bwoy, blame yuhself?”

“Yes.”

“Blame lie solely wid Inman, bwoy, solely wid dat mon, anyone can see dat.”

“Still. If I hadn’t been joking with Joshua, it might not have happened.”

“Yu a good mon, bwoy, a good mon,” the Heartman hoiks to spit, “shit, no fucking mouth! What Me saying? Oh yeah. Yu act out of kindness. Out of trying to save life. Inman him evil. Yu see where him headed. Seen him fate. Down below. Down below to be pull limb from limb, along with him partner in crime. Him bad to de bone, bwoy, bad to de bone.” “What have I told you about keeping your forge tidy, Bill?” Inman is prowling around picking up things, tools, bits of metal, making a pretence of knowing what the things are and where they should be.

“Bad bastard,” I mutter. “Bad, bad bastard.”

“Bad to de bone, bwoy, bad to de bone!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Bill is confused. He's a good man, a happy man, a simple soul. He's never done a bad thing in his life, barely even had a bad thought about anyone, I should think. It's clear that he doesn't recall Inman saying anything about this before.

"Dat cos him a liar, bwoy, a liar!"

"Sir? Me...Me don't...Me don't understand."

Inman has picked up a cloth and is holding the iron rod that Bill is heating up in the coals of the furnace. "Just leaving red hot iron rods lying around... it's dangerous. Very dangerous. It could cause a terrible accident."

"It...it not lying around Mr Inman, Sir, it in de furnace, Sir, heating up."

"Are you calling me a liar?" Inman furiously rounds on Bill with the rod in his hand, the tip is white hot. It's inches from Bill.

Bill is confused. Where has this all come from? He thinks. Where?

"It come from badness, bwoy, from badness!"

"Liar? I don't understand. Me not calling yu a liar!" Bill is worried now, he's not his normal happy self. Bill hasn't had the beatings or punishment that the overlookers regularly dish out to the slaves who work in the fields and the sugar house. Bill is normally left alone. Until now. He's the perfect victim, the perfect victim to be made an example of.

"Mr Taylor," Inman looks at his deputy. "Did you hear what Bill said?"

"Yeth, Thir, I did," Taylor has a serious look on his face.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What did you hear, Mr Taylor?”

“I heard Bill call you a liar, Thir.”

“See, Mr Taylor heard you call me a liar so you must have called me a liar, Bill. Unless of course you’re calling him a liar too?”

Bill is in a panic, a blind panic.

“Blind panic! De Heartman him like dat, bwoy, like it! Blind panic. It apt.” “You

leave me no choice. Restrain him please, Mr Taylor.

Taylor is a strong man, and he’s got the element of surprise going for him. He quickly grabs Bill’s arms and pulls them around the back of his body. Bill’s too shocked to even react, to even think of defending himself, even if he, a slave, could defend himself against any actions of a Toubob, which he can’t.

“Toubob murder a slave on Plantashion Island and him just fined, bwoy, him just fined,” whispers the Heartman.

“I know!”

Bill’s in a panic, “Sir, please, Sir!”

“You have left me no choice, Bill. I cannot let the standards of Bay View Plantation fall. What would happen if all the slaves called their betters liars?”

“But...but...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I’ll tell you what, it would go against the will of God. The will of God I say. No, you have to be punished, you have to be made an example of, man.”

With one hand, Inman pulls Bill’s head back and slowly, very slowly he moves the white-hot iron rod towards Bill’s eye. Bill is screaming but Inman is...enjoying it. Then the blacksmith is released and falls in a crumpled heap on the floor.

“Don’t lie about, man! Get back to work!”

**Frances**

It’s dark now. But from the smell I know where we are.

“No,” I shake my head, “not this! Please not this.”

“Got to see why him bad to the bone, bwoy, got to see it.”

“I know what he did, I heard, why do I have to see it?” I plead. This of all the things that has happened in my life is something that I don’t want to experience again.

“Yu got to see it, bwoy, got to see de full picture, got to. Dat is why de Heartman him here, why Me taking yu on dis journey. If yu don’t see de full picture den how can yu...”

I stare at my ‘friend’. In the pitch-black hut all I can see of him is his red demon eyes

“How can I what?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Notting, bwoy, notting, forget de Heartman say anyting, bwoy.” The Heartman is back tracking. I’ve not seen the Heartman back track before. Normally he’s so confident. So full of himself, so full of cruelty.

“Why do I need to see the full picture?” I ask rounding on him. “Tell me!”

“Forget Me said dat, bwoy, forget Me said dat.”

Before we can go on there’s a scuffle outside and two people crash into the tiny hut. The tiny hut that I can’t see but from the lovely aroma of it, know whose tiny hut it is.

“Who hut is dis, bwoy, who hut?”

“You know whose.”

“De Heartman him know, dat tru, bwoy, dat tru, Me know. But yu need to say it out loud, for dem, bwoy, say it out loud for dem. De Heartman him can go on until de end of time, mon. Til de end of time.”

I sigh. “It’s Frances’s.”

“And who just come in wid Frances, bwoy, who just come in wid her?”

“You know who!”

Red eyes glow, “...til the end of time...”

“Inman!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Mr Inman, Sir, please, Mr Inman.” Unlike the Massa, who likes young girls - the younger the better - Inman likes a proper woman, a more mature woman, a shapely woman, a woman who looks and feels like a grown up.

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah him do, and yuh Frances a proper womon, a proper womon.”

“Hey!” Frances was like a sister to me. I never once thought about her in that way.

“Sorry, bwoy. But yu got to see de full picture, mon. De Heartman him got compassion, bwoy, de Heartman him got compassion.”

“You’ve got compassion?”

“It rare, bwoy, rare but it true.”

“I’ve had my eye on you for a while, Frances,” Inman is all of a dither and can barely get the words out for the excitement. “... and I can tell that you like it when a man like me has his eye on you, woman. A powerful man, like me.”

“Sir?”

“I’ve seen you look at me.”

“Look at yu? No, Sir. Me ain’t ever look at yu.”

Inman quickly lights a candle and the scene before my eyes makes my belly lurch.

“Move your,” he licks his lips and I want to wrench his head clean off.

“It a memory, bwoy, it a memory, yu can change it a lickle bit, but yu can’t change de full picture.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“The way you move your hips, Frances, when you see me,” he grabs her and is kneading her breast, her hips, her buttocks like she’s dough.

Frances is trying to resist but if she doesn’t let him have his way, what will happen to her or her loved ones? So, she...she lets him touch her.

I swing wildly at Inman’s head, but my ghostly fist just passes straight through him.

“It a memory, bwoy,” coos the Heartman, “a memory.”

Inman stops and looks around. “Now, where shall we? Where...shall...mm...not the bed, not a disgusting negro bed,” he spits on the floor. “Don’t know what I’ll catch lying on a negro bed. Flees at the very least. And not on the floor. A man like me doesn’t do it on the floor. I’m not a dog,” he spies where he wants to rape Frances. “Ah, the table. Over the table.

It looks like it’s a sturdy construction. It’ll safely hold our...weight.”

“Sir, Sir, please, Sir.”

“Now, get on your knees, woman, prepare me, madam.”

Slowly, Frances kneels down in front of the overlooker, gets him out and goes to work on him.

I can’t look. I just can’t look.

“Yu don’t have to look, bwoy, yu doesn’t have to...yu can hear de slurps, de slurping noises.”

“NO! That is not funny!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Now, stand up, woman. Over to the table. Bend over. I’m primed. Prepare for superior seed.”

**The food chain**

I’m bent over double, retching, as a familiar voice close by speaks. “Ah...Mr Inman.

“Yu know dat voice, bwoy, know dat voice!”

“Yeah,” I reply wiping the vomit from my mouth, “I know that voice. Where are we?”

“Outside.”

“I gathered that much, outside where?”

“Outside de big house, bwoy, outside de big house.” The big house lies directly between the slave village and the house where the overlooker lives.

“Dey like to watch over tings, bwoy, watch over tings, dat is why de big house overlook de village.”

“I know.”

“Like to watch deir property, bwoy, deir property.”

“Yes.”

“Mrs Smith? Mam? Is that you?” another all too familiar voice speaks. I despise that voice. Despise it.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, mon!”

“Indeed,” replies the Missus. Normally a woman out after dark would feel in danger, would feel threatened by what could happen to her, but not the Missus, that is because the Missus is a predator at the top of the food chain and is scared of no one.

“Food chain, bwoy! Food chain? Dat good, dat very good! And dey better be afraid of her, mon, big afraid, big, big afraid, eh ‘Ting’?”

“Why is a lady out at this hour?” asks the overlooker.

“Oh, just walking my dog of course. Why else would anyone be out at this hour of the night?”

“Cerberus? Cerberus is here?” Inman has always been wary of the Missus’s hound. Everyone is wary of Cerberus. Inman had once threatened to kick the slave hound when he thought the Missus wasn’t watching, but at the last moment thought better of it.

“Him like keeping him foot attached to him leg too much, bwoy, him like dat idea,” chuckles the Heartman. “Him too attached to it.”

“Couldn’t happen to a nicer man,” I mutter.

“Yes, of course he’s here. I can’t trust him to go out on his own, who knows what he might get up to? What mischief. Where, by chance have you been, Sir? Might I ask?”

“Me?”

“Mm...you.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Nowhere, nowhere at all, mam.” Cerberus is sniffing at the overlooker’s crotch, and he’s looking very nervous.

“Nowhere, Sir?”

“No, Mam, nowhere.”

The Missus turns to her dog. “What can you smell, boy? What lies can you sniff on that cock and with who?”

“Madam!”

Without warning the missus reaches down and grabs Inman’s crotch.

“Ouch!” both me and the Heartman gasp and cross our legs.

“Dat nasty, bwoy, nasty. No need for dat.”

“Tell me about it!”

She brings her hand to her nose and sniffs. “It’s damp, Sir, and it has an aroma,” she declares. “I ask again, with who?”

“Madam!”

“Well, don’t answer me then, Sir, but I can tell you that very soon, very, very soon, I will be in charge here and you will answer solely to me.”

“I...I...”

“Enough! Cerberus! Come on boy!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The hound has one last sniff before cocking his leg and urinating down the pants of Inman.

“Dat ironic, bwoy, ironic!”

“Ironic?”

“De Heartman seen Inman piss on a slave more dan once, bwoy, more dan once!”

“Mm...ironic.”

The Missus laughs, “good boy, Cerberus! Empty your bladder, lad, empty it.”

“He-he!” chuckles the Heartman. “De Heartman him know him need to lift de mood and know what would do it, bwoy, know what would do it! Now, on with Me tale and de demise of de Massa!” reptilian hands are rubbed together in glee.

### **The evil dead**

The darkness and tension of Frances’s hut on that night, that terrible night, are replaced with the bright morning of a perfect day on Plantashion Island. “Hey! It perfect, mon, perfect! Dip yuh toe in de water, bwoy, dip em!” calls the Heartman as we stand on the white beach.

“Toes?”

“Yeah, mon, toe, hoove, claw, whatever, just cos de Heartman him ain’t got em, don’t mean *yu* has to suffer!” The Heartman is splashing about in the warm shallow water with his cloven hooves brazenly on show for all to see, all to see if they *could* see this demon, which they can’t because I’m the only one who can.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dat ain’t true, bwoy, dat ain’t true.”

“What?”

“Dat ain’t true.”

“What’s not true?”

“Dat no one else can see de Heartman, bwoy, dat no one else can see Me.”

“What?”

“You said dat yu de only one who can see de Heartman, bwoy!”

“Yeah.”

“Odders can see Me.”

I stare at him. “Others?”

“A-ha.”

“Who?”

“De dead.”

“The dead?”

“A-ha.”

“The dead?”

“Yeah mon. De evil dead!” his painted-on grin is wide.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Show me.”

“Alright, dough we gonna need to be dressed a lickle better, bwoy, a lickle better,” a click of his fingers and we’re wearing smart dark suits, dark funeral suits. They’re the same quality as the city gent apparel.

“Yeah mon, apparel, de Heartman, him got ‘xpensive taste, bwoy, ‘xpensive taste.”

Our outfits are completed with white shirts and black neck ties.

I look around. “A funeral?”

“Not just any funeral, bwoy, not just any funeral, very bad person funeral.”

The only funeral I could remember having happened recently was that of the Massa.

“Dat an excellent guess, bwoy, dat an excellent guess. And what a bad man was yuh ‘Massa’,” his voice changes and he’s mimicking me from the office. “Yes, Massa, Sir, no Massa Sir, three bags full Massa, Sir.”

I glare at the Heartman. I wish I could strangle him.

“Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do! But de Heartman him dead, mon, dead and long buried, unlike yuhself,” his mimicking voice is back again, “Massa, Sir’!”

I shake my head and tut.

“Yu remember how yuh precious ‘Massa, Sir’ snuff it, Sir Jack Moss?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Of course.”

“Fuck to death by de lovely Celeste.”

“She’s not called Celeste!”

“Dat what him call her, bwoy, dat what him call her.”

“Her name is Beth!”

“Whatever, bwoy, whatever! Celeste! Beth! Whatever! Wait...here dey come, here dey come now.”

We’re stood in a small chapel on Plantashion Island and the church is packed with the good and the great of our little part of paradise – all white, except us.

“Yeah mon, de Heartman him black and proud!”

“I’m black and proud! I’m not sure about you, Sir. But, I suppose that your skin changes colour depending on where you are and who you’re with.”

The Heartman turns and stares at me. “Sir Jack Moss, respect, bwoy, respect!”

“What?”

“Respect, bwoy.”

“Respect, why?”

“Yu cleverer dan de Heartman give yu credit for, bwoy, yu cleverer dan Me give yu credit for.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“So, I’m right?”

“Yu is, yu is, bwoy, look. Here de Missus.”

The Missus looks anything but the distraught, grieving widow and, if she hadn’t been wearing black, you would never have guessed that today she was burying her husband. She had a look of...

“Relief?” asks the Heartman.

I shake my head. “No, not relief.”

“Joy?”

“Nope.”

“What den, bwoy, what den?”

I stare at him. “Victory.”

“Victory, ha-ha, victory! Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru, victory! De Heartman show yu how tru in a minute, mon. But first come wid Me.”

We follow the missus, who is proudly alone, not needing the company or support of a man, as she walks up the aisle to the front of the church where she shakes hands with the Reverend Clarkson, who is officiating today.

The Heartman nudges me. “Hubby to be, bwoy, hubby to be.”

I stare at him. He’s got a knack for stating the obvious.

“Yeah, mon, yeah.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“A marriage of convenience, especially after your...”

“Mischief, bwoy, mischief?” “Yeah.

“Yeah, mon.”

After the Reverend gives a moving eulogy, the Missus is invited to speak to the assembled mourners. As she slowly walks to the lectern, the victorious look is still on her beautiful face.

“My husband...” begins the Missus, her voice clear and powerful. “My husband loved this island.”

“Loved the money he could make from it,” I muttered.

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah.”

“He loved Plantashion Island. His heart was here...”

“His heart was in his wallet,” I whisper.

“Him wallet and lickle ‘ting’, bwoy! Him wallet and his lickle ‘ting’!”

“Yeah.”

“He loved his friends and he loved and respected his employees.”

“What?” My head nearly explodes. “She’s as bad as him.”

“Worse, mon, worse. Yuh missus, she ain’t needing no mon, bwoy, except for one ‘Ting’!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“A funeral isn’t the time or the place, Sir!” I snap back.

“Him a bad mon, bwoy, a bad mon, de Heartman him can do whatever him want. Look.”

The casket of Benjamin Smith is open, and the Massa is laid out in his best suit looking for all the world the opulent plantation owner and employee lover.

“Perhaps in only one way, bwoy, perhaps just one, in de physical sense, mon. Wakey, wakey, bwoy!”

Smith’s right eye opens a fraction! Then they both open wide!

“He can see us!”

“Yeah, bwoy, him can see us. And him ain’t de only one.”

The Missus, who is stood looking down on the casket declaring lie after lie and pretending to do her wifely duties stops speaking and looks me square in the face, me, her lover for so many years, the father of her children, and the man she left at the quayside in Red Rose City to rot in a gaol cell awaiting his fate whilst she played happy families with Reverend Massa (but of course she doesn’t know any of this yet).

“She can see yu, bwoy, she can see yu, but she can’t speak wid yu. If she could speak wid yu den it cause a whole, hell load o’ trouble, mon, a whole, hell load o’ trouble. Mebee de world would end, bwoy, mebee.”

“But she can see me?”

“And she can hear yu, bwoy.”

I take my opportunity, “are you happy now, Elizabeth?” I ask. “Really happy?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

She's confused. She looks around. No one has noticed. They are too busy trying to mumble some funeral hymn or another. I look older than she's used to, and she's never seen me looking so fine in a suit and a tie, and of course she's never seen the Heartman before. When her eyes travel the short distance to my friend there's a terror in them that I'd only seen once before (or later to her) – the night she gives birth to her very much non-identical twins.

“Didn’t think I would come back to haunt you, did you?”

“Haunt her, ha-ha!”

I turn to my companion. “Does this all mean I’m dead?”

“Ah! De Heartman him didn’t say yu were or weren’t, bwoy, didn’t say dat.”

“Missus,” The Heartman is speaking to the Missus as her husband is lying in his coffin staring at his fate. “We going to see how yu murdered yuh husband now, lady, see it. See ‘xactly how yu did it, mam, and if we judge that yu acted...how can de Heartman put it? In an evil manner? An evil manner, Sir Jack?”

I agree, “an evil manner, Sir.”

“Den yu see Me again. See Me later in dis tale.”

Missus tries to speak, voices something, but no sound comes out.

“Yu can’t speak, lady, yu can’t speak to us. Yu lost dat right de day yu commit murder!”

He stares down at the Massa. “And yu, ‘Massa, Sir’, Me see yu later. Don’t worry.

De Heartman have all eternity to punish yu, bwoy, all eternity.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“It’s a fate worse than death, Massa, Sir,” I add.

“Nice, bwoy, nice. De Heartman him always tought dat yu had evil in yu, just a lickle bit o’ evil.”

“Even good people think bad things,” I mutter as the Missus stares at me.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru.”

**Deadly nightshade**

We’re now in the rainforest again. Immediately I shed my heavy jacket and pull the tie off, loosening my shirt, and rolling up the sleeves. It’s a steaming hot day and in the distance you can hear the planter slaves hard at work in the sugar cane fields. The workers are singing as they strain sinews, but we can hear the occasional shout of ‘encouragement’ from the overlooker and the sound of his whip.

“Yeah, we can, bwoy, yeah we can. Dose be unchristian words to be sure, mon, unchristian words.”

As we walk the forest opens and we are in a sun-drenched clearing.

“Why are we in the forest?” I ask. Us slaves don’t particularly like the forest. Too many creepy crawlies and snakes. Slaves don’t like snakes.

“Ssss...de Heartman him love dem snake, bwoy, love dem. Love deir smooth skin, love deir fangs, love deir poison.”

“I bet you do, creatures of the Devil.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, mon, yeah mon. Ah, de Heartman him love de forest, bwoy, love it.”

I stare at the Heartman “Why on Earth would *you* love the forest?”

“Cos, de Heartman him plantsmon, bwoy, plantsmon.”

I can’t help but laugh. I can’t help myself, I just can’t. I just laugh, laugh out loud, a real belly laugh. “What? You! You are a plantsman?”

The Heartman glares at me. “Why yu laughing, bwoy?” He looks...hurt. The Heartman, the creature that literally rips the hearts out of those on their way to hell, looks hurt! Hurt!

“That is cos, de Heartman him is hurt, bwoy, hurt, hurt, hurt! Cut to de quick, mon. De Heartman him cut to de quick.”

“Err...I’m sorry. I’m just surprised that’s all.”

“Surprised, bwoy? De Heartman him surprised dat anyting surprise yu about him after everyting him show yu.”

“Mm...you have a point, Sir, you’re just not what I would think a plantsman would look like.”

“Why? Cos de Heartman him don’t have green fingers?”

“Well, your fingers keep changing from fingers to claws, and they are normally caked in dried blood and bits of human organs, so yes, I didn’t think that you have green fingers.” I stare at him suspiciously. “Why *are* you so interested in plants? Plants are...life.”

“Ah! Yu wrong dere! Sir Jackson Moss wrong dere!” His red eyes bore into me.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Plant also death, bwoy, death, slow, lingering, painful death, bwoy, death and paralysis! Plant is pain, plant is torment, plant is madness, plant is de end, or de beginning o’ de end or de end o’ de beginning.”

I stare at him. “What is paralysis?”

“Living death, bwoy, a living death. Love it, mon, love it.”

Everything was becoming clear. “Ah...now I understand...”

“Shh...watch, bwoy, watch.”

We quickly shut up as someone approaches the clearing. It’s Beth. The girl, Beth, who was there when the Massa died.

“She de one dat fuck de Massa to death, bwoy, de one dat fuck him to death!” He informs me helpfully.

I glare at him. “I was there, remember? With you? To witness it?”

“Oh yeah, mon, yu were. She one fine...” he seductively mimics Beth’s physical hourglass attributes to me. “One damn fine womon, bwoy, one damn fine womon. What de Heartman him wouldn’t give for a night of jiggy wid dat damn fine womon.”

Beth stops and carefully puts on gloves. Then she takes a bag off her shoulder and approaches some bushy pink flowered plants that are soaking up the sunshine of the clearing. There are lots of them and the aroma is heady. Beth has got a scarf wrapped around her face and she’s careful as she gets near the plants, beautiful as they are.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Beautiful but dey is death, bwoy, death.”

“What is she doing?”

“She tending de plant bwoy, tending de plant. Making sure her bees feed just from dese death plant, just from de death plant. She don’t want it diluting, bwoy, don’t want it becoming weak or less potent.”

“I...don’t understand.”

“Look.” The Heartman is pointing to just inside the forest itself.

“What are they?”

“They hive, bwoy, hive! Do yu know notting?”

“Beehives?”

“Naw mon, fucking donkey hive! Yes, beehive, bwoy, beehive!”

The bees are buzzing busily around Beth, but none ever seem to sting her.

“She deir queen bee, bwoy, deir human queen bee.”

I shook my head. “I don’t understand.”

“She feed dem, feed dem plenty, but she mek sure dey eat what she wants dem to eat. Just dose plant.”

“Why would she do that?”

The Heartman stands up straight and turns his head away from me for maximum effect.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Only plantsmon could tell yu, bwoy, only plantsmon.”

I sigh. “Alright, alright, I accept that you are a plantsman, Sir, hagree?”

He grins. “Hagree!”

“Go on then!”

“Dose plant is Oleander, bwoy, Oleander.”

“Oleander?”

“Dat what dis plantsmon say, bwoy, dat what Me say. Oleander.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Oleander poison, bwoy, bad, bad poison.”

“Poison for people.”

“Naw, poison for metal dragon, bwoy, metal dragon! O’ course, poison for people, bwoy! Animal eat Oleander and it ain’t poisonous, but Oleander so poisonous dat if person eat honey made from Oleander nectar den...” he draws his fingers across his throat and his eyes glow bright, “hello Heartman!”

We’re flung away out of the forest to the kitchen at the big house, the mansion at Bay View Plantation. The house slaves are settling down for their breakfast of bread, jam and fruit.

“What yu got dere, Sarah?” asks Ned to the young girl who runs around dusting and sweeping and running errands. She’s very young, maybe six years old and sweet as a mango.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Sweet as mango, bwoy, sweet as mango?”

I won’t apologise. “There’s no other way to describe her, Sir.”

“If yu say so, bwoy, if yu say so. But, de Heartman him could describe her as a tief.”

I stare at him. “A thief?”

“A tief, bwoy, a tief.”

“Why would you say that?”

“She taken someting she shouldn’t, bwoy, taken someting she shouldn’t and like all tief, she need to be punished.”

“She’s a baby!”

“She old enough to know right from wrong, mon.”

“Surely you wouldn’t take a baby like her?”

“Me take anyone, bwoy, anyone! De Heartman him ain’t proud, not proud at all.”

Sarah dips her hand in to the pot and sticks it into her tiny mouth savouring the sweetness. “Yum, yum,” the exquisite flavour is delighting her young taste buds.

“Sarah!” Beth walks in and spies her, “where yu got dat honey, child?”

“Found it!”

“Found it where?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Sarah won't tell, and she won't give up her prize.

"Sarah, give me dat honey!" Beth is suddenly angry. She's suddenly realised it's her honey, her special honey.

No one has seen Beth angry before. "What harm she causing, girl?" says Ned. "Dere plenty o' honey to go around, child, plenty."

"Dat my honey!" Beth is chasing Sarah around but the child is whippet quick and won't be caught, not when she's found something so delicious as the honey.

"Beth, leave her!" calls Annie, Ned's wife. "Leave her child, she doing no harm, girl."

"It my honey, Annie! She can't have it."

"Oh, my goodness! Sarah!" barks Annie, "give Beth her honey back, will yu please, child! Yu took dat widout asking and, in my book, dat stealing!"

The child suddenly stops. Sarah won't dare defy Annie. She's felt the back of her hand more than once and doesn't want to repeat it.

"And say sorry!"

Sarah's got a big fat sulky lip. "Sorry...Beth."

"Dat sulky lip ain't no sulky lip, bwoy, it ain't no sulky lip," whispers the Heartman.

I look at him. "What?"

"It ain't no sulky lip, bwoy..." his eyes glow, "dat be de poison."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Before he's finished Sarah has collapsed on the ground and is shaking like she's having a fit. Beth, Ned and Annie are at the child's side straight away, but they can't stop the seizure.

"She dying, bwoy, dying a painful death, mon, a painful death."

"I can't let this happen! No, no I can't let this happen. She's so full of life. I can't let you take her!" Without thinking I rush to her side, my sudden movement so violent that the three adults are flung away as if a twister had just blasted through the kitchen. They are scattered like bowling pins banging into chairs and tables by the sheer force of my actions.

"No, no! Yu ain't strong enough yet, Sir Jack, yu ain't strong enough! Only de dead strong enough..."

I look at him, furious. "Look what I just did to them, I won't let you take her. She's a baby," Without thinking and without planning it, using all my inner strength I lift the child off the ground, clean off the ground and start spinning around. Round and round, faster and faster, until she...she starts to vomit, violently vomit, throwing up her guts, harder and harder, her entire insides coming back up her throat, more and more, honey, spit and bile; honey, spit and bile! It's all there, all of it. Then I stop and she drops heavily to the ground.

I'm exhausted and just sit and stare at Sarah without much hope. Then, slowly, very slowly I realise that she is...sleeping. Her breath is normal, and her colour is good.

The Heartman pats me on the back. "Sir Jack Moss, yu is someting, bwoy, yu is someting, mebee yu will win after all, mon, mebee yu will win! At first, bwoy, Me didn't know why de Heartman been sent, didn't want de job. De Heartman him usually a blood and guts

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

mon, blood and guts, but when dey said dere would be plant, poisonous plant, how could Me resist? After all, de Heartman a plantsmon,” he stops and stares at me, the mischief back in his eyes. “Do yu want to see dat honey really working, mon?”

**In flagrante delicto**

“Ah, there you are, I’ve been waiting for you, Celeste.” Is Celeste her name? Actually, I don’t care what her name is. I only want to fuck her or, to be precise, let her fuck me. Actually, I can’t remember the name of any of them, the negroes. They all bloody look the same. Why should I remember their names? Why should I bother?

“Where are we?” I ask the Heartman. I can’t see him.

“Ha-ha! Yu can’t see de Heartman, bwoy, cos we in de Massa’s head, mon.”

“In his head?”

“In his head for his final moments, bwoy, his final moments. Yu seen him die, seen it with yuh own eyes, bwoy, now, yu can feel it, feel him hardness, de hardness of him lickle ‘ting’, feel him passion, feel him heart explode, feel de poison, feel de paralysis, feel him fear. Enjoy!”

Why should I remember their names, continues the Massa, deep in thought and anticipation at Celeste’s arrival.

“Yu feel him growing hard, bwoy, yu feel him growing hard?”

“Yes,” I reluctantly admit. “And I’d rather not.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Not quite Sir Gentleman Jack Moss’s ‘Ting’, bwoy, not quite at all.”

Even the ones that I ‘favour’? Why should I remember the names of the young girls that I favour with my seed, my strong, potent, white man seed.

“Disgusting!”

“Yeah, bwoy, disgusting, yeah!”

Why should I remember their names? Why? Why should I? I’m the master, and they are nothing. Nothing.

“Me come as fast as Me could, Massa,” replies Celeste, half apologetic, half taunting. I know Celeste has an attitude and I like it. It makes her more interesting. She’s clearly made me wait for it, made me wait so I’ll be ready for action when she appears.

“Urgh! Ready for action.”

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, urgh! Action a relative ‘ting’ bwoy, a relative ‘ting’. Action wid Jackson Moss, how de Heartman put it? *Vigorous*. Action wid an old fat Toubob, it more *passive*.”

“*Lazy* you mean?”

“Ha! Lazy, bwoy, lazy!”

Seeing her heaving bosom, I’m desperate for her, desperate like an animal. “C...come, sit on me child,” I can barely get the words out. Ha-ha! My heart is pounding away in my chest.

I am more than ready. Ready to give Celeste a damn good seeing too! A damn good rogering!

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

A damn good fucking on my pole.

“Pole!” I snigger.

“Knob, bwoy, knob, mebee knob better? Knob mek yu tink of someting stumpy, mon.”

“I’d rather not think of anything like that, not with him.”

“Yu no choice, bwoy, no choice. It part o’ dis story. Dis scene set de scene for de next, mon, de next scene in dis story. So *dey* understand better de power of some and de lack o’ it for odders. Now, shh...”

Celeste is young but she’s got the body of a woman. Everyone knows that slaves grow up quick on Plantashion Island, working in the fields from the moment they can walk and doing men’s work before they even sprout their adult hairs. You know, she’s not my usual type, she’s bigger than my usual preference. She has built up her powerful legs and arms from working dozen hour stretches in the plantation fields clearing up after the cutters have chopped down the wooden stems of the sugar cane. Good girl! Making me money and building up her body for me! For my pleasure, my double pleasure, for her master’s pleasure. I don’t know what makes me harder, thinking about fucking her or thinking about her making money for me?

“Yes, Sir, Massa, Me coming, Sir,” Celeste was rougher with me than my usual preference too, but I was starting to like that.

“Poor Massa, Sir’s ‘knob’!” Witters the Heartman.

“Yeah, poor ‘knob’” I agree.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Faster, Celeste!” I order as we become joined. Oh, what’s that? I...I’m feeling strangely light-headed tonight. That’s not normal at all. Not normal. No, not normal. I can’t put my finger on why. Celeste always gets me in the mood, of course, but I’m feeling different tonight. I’m feeling strangely disconnected from this blissful union. Strange. It’s like it’s someone else who is fucking Celeste, not me, and my God! Celeste has changed! My God!

“Dis some real, nasty Heartman mischief bwoy. Him seeing different people him fucked and some him hasn’t. Different slave, his wife, his...wait for dis, wait for dis...his mudder! Ha-ha! And, de icing on de cake, de Heartman!”

“He’s fucked the Heartman?”

“Naw mon! Dat just mischief, bwoy, just mischief! De Heartman him ain’t ever dat desperate, bwoy, ain’t ever dat desperate! And dat fat pink Toubob wouldn’t be so lucky, mon!”

Where’s she gone? Where’s she gone? My beautiful Celeste! Oh, thank God, she’s back! What’s that? No, no! My throat is tightening and I’m so...so hot. So, damned hot. But I’m so enjoying her. So enjoying her exquisite body. Celeste looks down on me a strange look in her eyes and starts grinding her pelvis fast. Oh, that’s so good!

“Urgh!”

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, urgh!”

I’m a well-appointed fellow, some would say well hung...

“What?”

“Yeah, what, bwoy, what, Ha! Him mek it up like de very best writer of fiction, mon.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Celeste really struggles with my...girth... “What?”

I say again.

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, WHAT! AGAIN!”

“It Me pleasure, Massa,” she grins coyly, “Me pleasure to meet all yuh needs, Sir.”

“Oh, Celeste, Celeste,” I won’t last long tonight, not with her in this mood. I know it and don’t care! Celeste grips me in her parts and squeezes my seed out and I can never last long when she does this. “Oh my God, oh my God!” Shooting pains are cutting into my arms and legs now. The pain! The pain is like nothing I’ve ever felt before. But the exquisite feeling of what Celeste is doing to me somehow seems to make up for it. I feel different tonight though, still excited but different.

“Faster, Massa, harder, Massa!”

“Oh, oh, no, that’s a little too hard, Celeste. A little too fast, dear,” more pains, all around my body as she bounces up and down on me. This doesn’t feel right, tonight, not right at all.

“Nonsense Massa, yu tell Me yu is liking it like dis,” Celeste is a prime specimen. One day soon she will produce one of my strong children. One day she will produce a strong child that I will sell on for a fine profit. Never mind her sniffing cries at being separated from her stupid child, a cow can’t really feel anything towards its calf, nor a pig towards its piglets, and neither can a negro towards its offspring. But the money I will make from selling it... I’m

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

finding thinking and speaking difficult now, “that’s a little too hard, dear,” I mumble, “...a little too hard.”

“Nonsense, Massa,” Celeste is really pummelling my privates now with her pelvis, back and forth, back and forth. It’s as if I’ve been fed through the huge cane eating machines the slaves call the dragons in the sugar house. Her pelvis has sucked in my private parts and is grinding them up.

“Ow...ow...ow!” Exquisite pain. Agony and ecstasy.

“Nonsense! Massa tell Me him like it hard!”

This is wrong. Very wrong. I’m breathing too heavy now, but I can’t seem to catch any air. She’s speeding up. Harder and fast. She’s really enjoying it.

“Yeah, she is, bwoy, yeah she is!”

“Celeste! Celeste!” I’m struggling to catch my breath and my chest feels like it’s exploding along with my balls. “Stop! Please I beg of you!”

“Nonsense, Massa! Massa like it hard!”

“Celeste...”

“Just a lickle bit more, Massa! Just a lickle bit!” Celeste squeals with delight.

“Celes...” I feel my abdomen contract in pleasure and pain.

“Lickle bit more!”

“Cel...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“He dead, bwoy, dead!”

“Dead?”

“Dead as a dodo, bwoy, dead as a dodo. Now some Heartman mischief, bwoy, some Heartman mischief. Now for yuh final trip on Hope all de way to Red Rose City, and a lickle bit of murder. Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

The End of Book Two

**Book Three - Hope Starts and Ends here**

**Beth – Guilty**

“Oh my God, oh my God! My husband’s dead! My husband’s dead!” The Missus is shrieking as she and her young maid, Bonnie, discover the lifeless naked body of the Massa in his bed. The Missus is hysterical. I have never seen her so out of control. Normally she is in total command of every situation.

“Pah! She in command of dis situation, bwoy, she in command, total command. Believe yu Me, bwoy, believe yu Me.”

I stare at the Heartman. “What do you mean?”

“She a good actress, mon, a good actress.”

“An actress? I don’t understand.”

“De Heartman right, Jack Moss no coconut head, bwoy, no coconut head! Use yuh eyes, bwoy, use yuh eyes! She faking it, faking it like she did when she fuck.”

Suddenly the assault on my masterly love making skills side-tracks me from the situation at hand. “Faking it, when we fuck?”

The Heartman pats me on the back. The drawn-on grin is from ear to ear. “Naw, bwoy, naw! Not faking it when she fuck *yu*, she never do dat, mon, never. She never need to, dat cos she in total control when she fuck yu, she get *all* de pleasure she want wid yu, bwoy, all de pleasure she want wid yu and yuh ‘Ting’. Naw, she fake it when she fuck wid her husband and odder men, and de Heartman tell yu, she faking it now.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Faking it now, why?”

“Why, bwoy, why?” The Heartman laughs, a deep belly laugh. “Sir Jackson Moss, yu so innocent, mon!”

Nothing adds up. “Why is she faking it now?”

“She stirring tings up, bwoy, stirring tings up so dat de plot tickens like gravy!”

“I don’t understand.”

The Heartman sighed. “De Heartman, him wid de coconut head, him always got to ‘xplain, bwoy, always got to ‘xplain.” He begins slowly, talking to me as if I were a five-yearold child. “She, de Missus, remember her?”

I ignore him.

“She, de Missus, dat yu do remember, she going to pretend dat her husband, de Massa, remember him?”

Again, I ignore my demon friend.

“He, de Massa, him not had ‘natural’ heart attack, bwoy, not had ‘natural’ heart attack. Dat death cause by de poison dat de Missus made Celeste...”

“Beth.”

“De poison dat de Missus made Celeste,” he makes a mock cutting motion with his clawed hand, “slash, Beth feed to de Massa. Anyway, de Missus, remember her?”

So tedious!

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ha-ha! Yeah, mon, yeah. Tedious, bwoy, tedious. Anyway, de Missus don’t want anyone to know dat de Massa died while he fuck Celeste slash Beth.”

“Beth!”

“Celeste slash Beth, whatever, bwoy, whatever! Anyway, if de Missus pretend him not died o’ natural causes, how yu tink people reckon he die?”

I think for a minute. “Of unnatural causes?”

“And unnatural causes, bwoy, what dey?”

“I don’t know.”

“Dey murder, bwoy, murder. Unnatural causes dey murder! And, if dat person who murder de Massa was de only person who knew dat it was de idea of de Missus, and she dealt wid, den she in de clear, bwoy, in de clear. If she dealt wid de Missus be in de clear! Watch dis,” claws are clicked, and we’re stood in the centre of Bridgetown.

“What are all these people, these Toubob gathered for? There must be the entire population of Toubob here.”

“All ‘cept de ones keeping all de slave on Plantashion Island under control, bwoy, keeping ‘em under control. Dey need to mek sure de slave don’t revolt. Dis what happening today, it gonna be a powder keg, bwoy, a powder keg. Me predict a riot! It happen, sometime it happen, de slave revolt. Me show yu in anodder story, anodder story. But dere a few slaves here, dey witnesses so dey can take de news back to de odders.”

“What news?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He grins, there's saliva running down his chin from heaven knows where. "Dat when slave murders Toubob, dey gonna eider hang or burn."

Before I can speak the crowd parts and Beth is led through by a group of burly Toubob. Her cheeks are wet. She has been sobbing. The vitality of her young fertile body has been transformed into that of a ninety-year-old. Her back looks like it's been broken she's so stooped. She's so weak that she can barely lift her head. Beth is staring at the ground with her hands in shackles. She is shuffling because her ankles are shackled, and she's got an evil looking neck brace on her. The small group make their way slowly...

"It slow cos it a ceremony, bwoy, it slow cos it a ceremony."

"A ceremony?"

"A ritual killing, mon, a ritual killing. An execution."

"But Beth was made to..."

"Yu know dat, and de Heartman him know dat, Beth know dat and so does Missus. But no one else."

"SHE IS NOT A MURDERER!" I suddenly shout at the top of my lungs.

"Dey can't hear yu, bwoy, dey can't hear yu."

Beth starts sobbing again. Looking at the faces of the Toubob in the crowd. They're staring at her with not an ounce of compassion. Then she sees the few slaves who have been made to come and witness the punishment and report back.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dey rule by fear, bwoy, dey rule by fear! How yu tink a handful o’ Toubob can control thousands o’ slaves? Fear. Dat what dem Toubob tink about, ruling by fear. Dey ‘fraid dat de slaves rise up and take over. Dey ‘fraid o’ dat.”

In the crowd are Frances, one handed Frances, and her mother Martha and father George. Billy and young Sam are there along with most of the house staff from the Bay View Plantation. Then I see myself. I’m shackled.

“Dey know yu is gonna do someting if yu not shackled, bwoy, dey know.”

At least that fills me with some crumbs of comfort, the fact that they know that if I was freed, I would do something, anything.

I don’t look myself though. My face is swollen, and my clothes have blood on them.

“He-he! Yu already try cause a riot, bwoy, already try, and yu had a beating. A helluva beating, bwoy, a helluva beating.”

My eyes return to the woman who used to be so full of life. So vital and alive. So vibrant. I can hear people, Toubob, in the crowd saying things about her, terrible things about her. How they knew she was devil’s seed, how she was a thief and a child murderer, and that she was a witch who had beguiled the poor innocent Massa and lured him to his death. “My God, my God!” I utter. “Why would they think like that?”

The Heartman shrugs, “dey Toubob and she slave. Dey tink dat dey Christian and she heathen. Dey full humans and she only part human, part animal. And dey tink she a murderer,



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

bwoy, dey tink she a murderer, murderer of a Toubob, dat is. An eye for an eye, is dat not what yuh Christian book say?"

"But she didn't do anything wrong!"

"Wrong place, wrong time, bwoy, wrong place, wrong time. Dat de way o' tings."

A sturdy newly made wooden chair stands in the centre of the crowd.

"It been made by a slave, bwoy, made by a slave. Dat salt in de wound, mon, salt in de wound."

"I've seen them rub salt in actual wounds often enough, why not that."

"Dat tru, dat tru."

As she reaches the chair, Beth is forced to sit down on it. She struggles slightly but the men are too strong. They are too strong and she's too weak.

"Let her go!" I shout.

"Dey can't hear yu, bwoy, dey can't hear yu!"

The shackles, the ones that bind her hands together are removed and the men place my friend's hands on the arms of the chair. The neck brace is removed. Strong ropes are used to tie her arms to the chair. Beth doesn't resist. She's too weak now, and, anyway, she knows she's going to die.

"She dying already, bwoy, dying already."

"What do you mean?"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“She taken a potion.”

“A potion?”

“De missus, she give her a potion, a poison potion. Mebee she got a heart after all, but mebee not, mebee it cos she not want Beth to shout anyting about her and de Massa? Shout it at de last minute,” the Heartman gently taps me. “Yu want to be wid her bwoy, be wid her at de end?”

I look at him. Is this compassion? Compassion from the heartless demon?

“Naw, bwoy, naw, de Heartman him just like to see her burn to death, like to see it from a front row seat. Close up.”

“Bastard!”

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, bastard, dat de Heartman,” claws are clicked and there is a wooden chair at each side of Beth.

As we sit down Beth slowly lifts her head and stares first at the Heartman and then at me. She looks worried when she sees the Heartman, but when she sees me, she smiles. The men who can’t see us back off.

“Jack,” she whispers.

“You can see me?”

“Me can see yu both. Yu and de Heartman.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“He’s not as bad as he looks,” I say with a tender smile. I touch her cheek. “He’s let me be here with you.”

“Him bad, sister, him bad,” says the Heartman, “de Heartman bad, don’t listen to dis mon. Him delusional.”

“But,” she stares into the crowd. “Yuh dere.”

“Long story. I’m here now and that’s all I can say.

Reverend Clarkson moves towards us and reads from the good book.

“LALALALALA!” The Heartman sings over his holy words with his claws covering the place where his ear holes should be.

A man steps forward and lights the kindling under our chairs. Within seconds flames start licking up our legs.

“DE HEARTMAN LOVE DIS PART!” Roars my demonic friend.

“Does it hurt?” I ask Beth, grabbing her hand.

She shakes her head. “A little. Me don’t tink me very much alive now. Me can see and hear yu and him, but not dem. Tell me, me going down below?”

The Heartman is enjoying the furnace so much he doesn’t reply, so I shout across to him. “She says, is she going down below?”

“Down below, bwoy? NAW mon, she not bad, she good. De Heartman don’t like de

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

good down below, dey try and dilute de evil. Naw, bwoy, naw she going upstairs!"

"Did you hear that?" I ask Beth but where one second ago was my beautiful young friend is just a shaft of light.

"She's gone," I whisper.

"Dat rude!" snaps de Heartman, "dat rude, never even said tank yu for de last minutes o' comfort de Heartman gave she!"

All of a sudden everything, the beatings, the torture and the execution of my people gets to me, and I start screaming, hysterically screaming.

**Loading Hope – warm seas**

"Argh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" I'm screaming into something soft and warm as someone taps me on the back.

"Hey! Sir Jackson Moss, bwoy, what is yu, an ostrich, mon, an ostrich? She gone, mon, long gone. Beth gone up above and de Massa him gone down below, bwoy, down below to have him organs ripped from him patetic pink chest by yuhs truly and him demon assistants. Yu met em, bwoy, Me assistants? Dey lovely bwoys, mon, lovely bwoys. Hearts o' gold, bwoy, hearts o' gold, do evil for anyone dey would, do evil for anyone. Lovely bwoys."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Mm...” I mumble as I slowly move my head, my brain full of Beth dying in the flames, and the sight of the Massa dying in the throes of sex. My head plops out and I spit something grainy from my mouth. “What the...”

“It just sand, bwoy, just sand.”

Looking up and wiping the last of it from my face, I’m confronted with another beautiful day on a white sandy beach. It’s always beautiful here, always except when a hurricane is ripping all the houses to pieces. It looks like it could be Plantashion Island but, after the dodo beach, it could be anywhere, anywhere in the world where the grubby fingers of Toubob have stretched out and grabbed anything and everything. Fucking Toubob!

“Ha-ha! Yeah, bwoy, yeah, fucking Toubob!”

I look around. “Is it Plantashion Island?”

“It Plantashion Island, bwoy, it Plantashion Island,” sighs the Heartman as if he’s lost all hope that I will ever learn anything from him.

But how can you tell? These places, these islands, they all look the same, a bit like Toubob, they all look the same. Pink and hairy and angry and that’s just the women!

“Hahahaha!” The Heartman grabs his heartless chest and drops to his knees. I think for a second that he’s having a heart attack, but how can he? How can he have a heart attack? He has no heart to attack him! “Pink...hairy and angry...and dat just de womon, bwoy, dat just de womon! Oh, yu kill dis demon, bwoy, yu kill dis demon.”

He’s in such a joyous rapture that I think he *might* just die. But he can’t die, he’s dead.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

This amuses my companion further. “Dat true, bwoy, dat true.”

“Can’t bloody wait to get off dry land,” a voice next to us speaks and startles me. It’s the voice of a middle-aged man with blonde hair and mahogany coloured skin. A black Toubob! Except it’s clear that his skin has been coloured by the sun not his father’s seed. His eyes are blue and his square chin juts out giving the impression that he’s determining the path of his very existence all the time.

“Determining de path o’ him very existence, mon, determining de path o’ him very existence! Ha-ha! Dat poetic, bwoy, poetic.”

“Who is he and who’s he talking to?”

“Him Captain Wyn, mon, Captain Wyn, and him talking to de sea, bwoy, talking to de sea.”

“To the sea? Why?”

“Him superstitious. Very superstitious. All sailor dey superstitious, but Captain Wyn him a bit loco about de stuff. Loco! Him want to keep de sea happy, bwoy, keep de sea happy. By keeping de sea happy him tink he gonna have a safe journey.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah, oh, bwoy, oh. And if de Heartman were yu, Me would tink a lickie bit more highly o’ Captain Wyn.”

“He’s a Toubob! A sunburnt Toubob! And, he’s the captain of Hope...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Hope widout...”

I point at the Heartman. “I’ve warned you! I don’t like that!”

“He-he, just de Heartman mischief, bwoy, de Heartman mischief!”

“Why should I think highly of him?”

“Him fucking hate Charles Inman, fucking hate him, mon.”

“Why?”

“Dey got history, bwoy, history. History from before yuh time, mon, before yuh time. Dat someting for anodder book. But believe yu Me, him fucking hate him, bwoy, him fucking hate him. But dis man, dis sunburnt Toubob, him might just put in a good word for yu. Dunno.”

“I doubt that, and whether he hates Inman or not, he transports my people in...fucking Hope, in fucking HOPE WITHOUT HOPE, in fucking unhuman conditions, to this fucking hell on Earth!”

“Hey,” the Heartman speaks in a small, hurt voice, “Dat Me line, bwoy, Me line,” a drawn-on sulky lip has appeared on his face. “Yu said yu didn’t want de Heartman to use it. Said it was hagreed. Dat not fair, bwoy, dat not fair. What do Toubob say? Play de white man?”

I snort, “because white men are fair!”

“Dey fair when it suit demselves, bwoy, dey fair when it suit demselves. When it improve deir lives.”

Something shiny catches my eye and distracts me. Captain Wyn is standing in the shallows secretly dropping gold coins into the water.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Him a sailor, bwoy, a sailor,” the voice is still deflated, hurt, “him superstitious. Before and during de voyage him do what him need to stay alive and keep control, mon.”

“Including throwing slaves overboard to feed the sharks!”

“In him mind, him do dat to keep everyone else safe, bwoy, him do dat to keep everyone else safe. In him mind, dat not cruel. People in dis world can do all sort if in deir mind dey tink it OK, dey can do all sort in de name o’ right.”

I shake my head. “You’re justifying him and the transporting of my people halfway around the world to be beaten and worked to death in sugar fields!”

“De Heartman justify notting, mon, justifying notting. De Heartman a demon, bwoy, a demon! De Heartman him bad! Everyone involved in de dark trade evil, bwoy, everyone, but Captain Wyn him a minnow, him only lickle bit bad, cos in him head him tink him doing a good, noble job for de slave. Him tink dat all de slave for, bwoy, him tink dat all de slave for. Working for de white man. In him head. Charles Inman, de Massa, Missus and de others dey biggy, biggy bad, pure evil. And, if yu open yuh ear ‘ole de Heartman him already said yu should tink highly o’ Captain Wyn cos him a man o’ him word. If him see someting, and someone ask him ‘bout it, him tell de truth, bwoy, him tell de truth.”

“And that relates to me, how?”

“Yu gonna be tried for murder, bwoy, yu gonna be tried for murder, know dat. Dat not surprise to yu! And many of de Toubob dey tink yu is a murderer! A black man kill a white man and it murder to dem. But, Captain Wyn, him tell de truth about yu, bwoy, him tell de



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

truth. And de truth be de difference between life and death, in dis world, in dis pink, pink world, de difference between having future and just having passed.”

All around us on the beach is much activity, there are hundreds of people and dozens of small rowing boats that are loaded with huge hogsheads of tobacco, cone after cone of sugar, compressed bales of cotton, and dozens of trunks of tropical timber, which are nearly sinking the boats they are being loaded onto.

“Ha-ha! Plenty of wood dere, bwoy, plenty of wood,” he remarks with a grin, a freshly drawn-on grin. He’s clearly forgiven me. “Have yu got wood, Jack, bwoy?” he grips his crotch theatrically. “Have yu got wood, mon?”

I sigh and shake my head.

“Eh? Eh?” he won’t stop. He playfully nudges me. “How is yuh ‘Ting’, bwoy?” He’s on a roll. “How is dat ‘Ting’ of yuhs, bwoy?”

I ignore him before nodding at the activity. “It will all go in the slave hold,” I mumble remembering the last time I saw the inside of a ship like Hope. “The freshly scrubbed out slave hold. I bet you can hardly smell the stench anymore. I bet it’s all going in there.”

“Sure will, bwoy, sure will. Lay it flat just like de negroes, dey’ll get plenty in, plenty in, mon. Dey can stack logs on top of anodder.”

“They can stack negroes one on top of another, almost,” I reply angrily. “There’s no room to even turn over down there. No room to sit up, no room to stand.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Me know dat, bwoy, de Heartman him know everyting, ‘specially when it come to misery, when it come to misery, de Heartman him de big expert, de big brain, de big nut,” he looks up at the tree that is towering over us. “De coconut.”

“Who’s he?” I nod towards a Toubob who is walking around with a black lad. The lad is dressed in fine clothes, finer than I’ve seen any negro wear apart from the Heartman and myself in our travels.

“Yeah, mon, yeah, we look just fine, bwoy, just fine and dandy in our Sunday best! Yu ready for church and de Heartman ready for some mischief.”

“Who is he?” I ask again.

“Him Dodshon Foster.”

“And the boy?”

“Him Thomas Foster.”

“He’s a slave?”

“Slave, servant, son, de line blurred wid dat one, mon.”

“How can someone be a slave, a servant and a son?”

“It complicated, bwoy, it complicated, hard to understand.”

“Try me.”

“Alright, mon. Dat mon, Dodshon Foster, him childless, and him a mon who need a son, a mon who is seedless but need to speak to him own. De bwoy was orphan, slave mudda

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

dead, fadda Devil knows who. Foster saw de baby before it gonna be fed to de dogs and him save it, den him took him home to him wife. She treat him like a son from de first moment she see him. She not care de colour of him skin, bwoy, not care. Love not see colour, bwoy, love not see colour. Yu 'bout to discover dat."

I don't quite grasp that last part, "you said he was a slave and a servant too."

"It complicated."

"Try me!"

"Him a mon who like to get him own way, and when it suit him, bwoy, him treat Thomas like him own him. Dat mek him a slave. Thomas have good life, plenty food, fine clothe, sleep inside a house wid a roof in a bed wid white sheet, but him ain't ever forgetting him family, him birth family. But him never know dem, and him never will know dem, bwoy, not til de Heartman show him (but dat anodder story, bwoy, anodder story) so him look for love. I tell yu him story later, bwoy, later, in de next book. Back home him falling for white girl and dat always big trouble for de black mon," again he nudges me and winks one of his red eyes, "always trouble."

"What are they doing here."

"Foster own part of Hope widout..."

"I told you about that 'Hope without hope business', you hagree!"

"But...but Sir Jackson Moss, yu just..."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yes, well, I was...I was moved to say it. I was being ironic. You use it as a joke. It’s no joke. Not for slaves.”

Suddenly the Heartman stamps his cloven feet and storms away across the sand and stands sulking under a coconut tree. His arms are crossed, and he won’t look at me. I’ve overstepped the mark with him. I can tell. Demon or no demon, he’s clearly got feelings. Looking at him, maybe my story might never finish, the telling of it might never end? I might wake up in my damp, dark cell and walk to the gallows to hang by the neck until I stop breathing, before going through the pearly gates to relax for all eternity never having seen what happened to me, my sons, the Missus, my slave friends and family and my brothers and sisters who are kidnapped from Africa.

“De dark continent, bwoy, de dark continent!”

Yes, the dark continent. I take a deep breath. I need him, I haven’t realised that before now, I need him, my story needs him, my sons need him, the slaves need him. He’s how our story is told to a new enlightened generation, to stop them making the mistakes of the past. The world needs the Heartman to look at the story of my people...

“Damn fucking right, bwoy, damn fucking right! De world need de Heartman! De world fucking need de Heartman, bwoy. And de Heartman him need a lickle bit of mischief!” he clicks his claws and one of the small boats taking wood out to Hope suddenly capsizes. The two sailors on board are thrown off. One swims clear but the other, the other is underneath a heavy, hard log. He’s under. He can’t get free. The weight is too much. He’s going down. People rush over. Rush over, swim over, but it’s too late. He’s gone. His life has gone.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ah...” sighs my friend. “De Heartman need dat, bwoy, need dat! Death! What Me saying? Before dat, what Me saying? Oh, yes. Foster own part of Hope, Missus own part of Hope, Sir Reginald Nisbet, own part, odders own part of Hope, dat de way of tings, bwoy, de way of tings. Spread de risk, spread de profit, spread de suffering. Now, yon Foster and Thomas dey been on Plantashion Island on business, dey going home to de bleak lands near Red Rose City, to Knitting Town, back to de white girl, dey going home.”

Looking around I can see the Reverend Clarkson and the Missus boarding Hope, there’s Bonnie with them with one of my sons in a basket. I know it must be Michael.

“It Michael, and yu know why, bwoy?”

“Of course, I know why! Michael’s white.”

“Dat true, bwoy, dat true, de colour o’ yuh skin mek big difference in dis world, big difference. But she taking Joe too dough,” the Heartman nods towards the ship. I can see Frances lifting something on board.

I squint. “What...what’s he in?”

“What dat?”

“What’s Joe in?”

“Oh dat, dat a crate. A wooden crate. But de top not on, not yet.”

“The white baby in a basket with bedding, the black in a crate with rags.”

“Dat de way o’ tings, bwoy, dat de way o’ tings.”

I sigh. What a world. “We’re all going to England?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“All de family, bwoy, Michael, Joe, Missus and Jackson,” he winks at me. “Dat cos she want plenty more of Jackson’s big ‘Ting’, mon, plenty more, not de Reverend’s lickle one! Yu be all a big happy multi coloured family.”

“Who’s she?” A pretty white woman catches my eye. She’s small and vulnerable looking but is treating the negroes who are helping her into her small boat with something akin to courtesy. Toubob hardly ever treat negroes with courtesy, not unless they want something, or want to do something to them.

“Not dat womon, bwoy, not dat womon, she good, too fucking good. De Heartman got no time for de good people, mon, no time.”

Then I see a familiar black man, it’s me! At first, I don’t recognise myself but of course I would be here, I would be going to England with...my family because that is where I’m going to be tried for murder. The white woman is talking to me. From this distance I can’t hear what she’s saying, and I can’t remember what she said, but she’s smiling as she’s speaking. She takes my hand and holds on tight. Then I...I lift her up, gently lift her up, and place her in the small boat. There’s something between us, something inexplicable. But I can sense it, I can sense it even from this distance. It takes just a few seconds but, I can’t remember touching or being touched like that before, touching with tenderness. Slaves don’t get much tenderness and never from white people.

“What dis, fucking Mills and Boon, bwoy?”

“Who? What?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yuh toughts, bwoy, dey soppy toughts.”

“Mm...”

“Dat Cecilia Brown, bwoy,” the Heartman winks one of his red demon eyes. “A widow.”

“What?”

“Me just said, dat Cecilia, why yu say ‘what’?”

“You winked.”

He holds up his claws in mock surrender. “Someting in my eye, dat all, bwoy, dat all.”

“No, no, I know you. There’s something about that woman, that white woman who is polite to slaves and who I lifted. Tell me!” I watch as Cecilia keeps hold of my hand for just a moment longer than she needs to.

“Dat widow not so vulnerable as she look, bwoy, she strong, she a strong womon, she got ideas, big ideas, big, big ideas, and dough dat lickle blonde head look nice, fluffy, curly, soft and pink, it a big coconut full o’ de ideas. Big ideas.”

“What’s she to me?”

“She a lot to you, bwoy, a lot.”

“Do we? Does something happen between her and me?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman is about to speak but a shout distracts us. “Watch those logth, man! We don’t need to lothe any more thtock!” shouts the Jeremiah Taylor with his famous lisp distracting us from Cecilia. He’s like most factors, a bastard.

“Ha-ha! Bastard! Straight to de point, bwoy, straight to de point. De Heartman him love dat, love it. Why waste de word, mon, why waste em? Why waste word when just one will do. Bastard! Love it.”

I’m getting angrier and angrier quicker as I see everything that goes on. It’s not like me, I’m not an angry person. I stare straight at the ‘bastard’, Jeremiah Taylor, and remember what I saw in the smithy, what they did to my friend. How could anyone do that to anything.

“Dey evil, bwoy, evil, dat why.”

Taylor’s got a bright purple face and he’s sweating like a waterfall. Literally like a waterfall. The water is erupting out of his pores and flowing down his body. I hardly recognise him he’s sweating so much.

“Futhing heat!” lisps Taylor getting more and more angry. “Why the hell doth it have to be tho futhing hot all the time! Why can’t we have thome thnow or ithe.”

“Ha-ha! Snow and ice can be arranged Mr Taylor, bwoy, ‘fact Me is gonna arrange it, but in de next book, in Joe book, just wait.”

“Futhing heat!” says Taylor again. “Can’t wait to get on the thip and get back home. Futhing heat.”

“Ha-ha! Futhing heat! Maybe de Heartman him gonna kill someone like Mr Taylor wid snow and ice in de next book, bwoy, maybe? Dem English from Red Rose City, dey don’t like



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

de heat o' Plantashion Island, bwoy, dey don't like it at all. 'Fact it kill plenty, de heat, it kill plenty, bwoy."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, mon, yeah. It kill plenty. Yu want to see one kill by de heat, bwoy, want to see it? De Heartman, no doubt, him kill Jeremiah Taylor wid snow and ice in due course, mon, in due course. But, de Heartman him got some mischief up Me sleeve now, mon. Do yu want to see one kill wid de heat, bwoy, kill wid de heat? Want to see Toubob suffer a lickie bit? De Heartman already done it, bwoy, already done it."

"What do you mean?"

"Why yu tink dat pretty blonde womon a widow, bwoy, why yu tink?"

"I don't know."

"Heartman mischief, bwoy, Heartman mischief. Dat womon fit in wid what de Heartman need to tell dis story, she fit in. But afore now dere a small problem, she married, but dat not a problem for de Heartman, de Heartman him can give and de Heartman him can take, 'specially if de victim a bad mon. Do yu want to see a bad mon meet him comeuppance, mon?"

I'm a Christian man, a God-fearing man, I read the Bible and go to church, but Lord help me I couldn't stop myself from nodding.

The Heartman pats me on the back, "dat de spirit bwoy, dat de spirit! Him name Dominic Brown, and him was de husband to Cecilia Moss. De Heartman him kill him, kill him good and proper, and dere plenty suffering, bwoy, plenty suffering wid de heat o' Plantation Island."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Wait!” I stop my friend.

“What?”

I heard something. “What did you say? You said...something?”

“De Heartman, him alway say someting, bwoy, him alway say someting! Us demon spend most o’ deir life under de Earth, we don’t get to speak wid people, not alive people, so de Heartman him making de most of Me journey wid yu.”

“No, you said *something*. Something different. You called her something else.”

“Someting else? Someting else, bwoy? Naw, yu mistaken, mon, mistaken, Jack Moss him got tato in him lugs, we already determine dat. Now, watch dis. Dis what de Heartman did, bwoy, what de Heartman did for de story o’ Jack Moss.”

**The death of Dominic Brown**

A claw is clicked, and we’re stood on the deck of a ship.

“We’re already on our way to England?”

The Heartman turns and stares at me with his menacing red demonic eyes. “Does yu know notting, bwoy, notting? Is yuh nut an empty shell, mon?”

“What? No. What?”

“Den, tell Me, where de sun, bwoy, where de sun?”

“Where’s the sun?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yu deaf? Where de sun? Dat de question. Where de sun, bwoy? Where de sun?”

I point up. “There.”

“Dere! O’ course dere! In de sky.”

“I know that!”

“Dat good, dat good, bwoy. And Jackson Moss, yu can see it setting. See it wid yuh eyes. Yuh stupid brown human eyes.”

“Yes. I can see it with my eyes. My normal, non-demon eyes.”

“And tell Me. It set where?”

I shrug. “I don’t know. In the west?”

He glares at me. “O’ course in de west, bwoy, o’ course in de west. It set in de west. We approaching de Indies from England, bwoy, from England. It set in de west. We headed west!”

I’ve been moved here and there, from one place to another, in the telling of my tale, it’s hardly surprising that for an instant I’m confused. One minute I’m myself, the next a head, the next a shark, the next a flightless bird called a dodo, it’s hardly surprising.

The Heartman pats me on the back, “hardly surprising for de bwoy wid de ‘Ting’.

He’s too much sometimes.

“Most o’ de time, bwoy, most o’ de time!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Confusion over the direction we're headed sorted, I look around. We're surrounded by lots of Toubob, crowds of them. It's like a party at the big house, except they're not drunk and wobbling over each other. There are Toubob men, women, young, old and pink Toubob children. They all look the same to me.

"Dey all look de same to de Heartman too, bwoy, dey all look de same. Pink and hairy and dat just de womon!"

Pink, hairy and sweaty.

"Dat true, mon, dat true!"

They're all dressed in fine attire, the women in exquisite frocks and the men in cotton shirts, woollen breaches and coats, and felt hats. All, I expect, perfectly fashionable around the bustling streets of Red Rose City, Manchester, Liverpool and London, place names that strike horror into the hearts of any slave overhearing a Toubob discussion.

"De slave hear everyting, bwoy, de slave hear everyting."

"Yes. They think we don't, they think we're illiterate animals, but their desire to convert us to their Toubob God means we can all read and speak English."

"Not in de Americas, bwoy, not in de Americas."

"What? What do you mean?"

"Most slave only speak a lickle English in de Americas and dey can't read, bwoy, dey can't read."

"They can't read? We all learn to read."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dose American Toubob ‘fraid, bwoy, ‘fraid.”

“Afraid?”

“‘Fraid dat slave rise up, bwoy, dat slave rise up. Dey tink if dey keep em down dey stay down.”

“But not on Plantashion Island?”

“It different dere. Dose Plantashion Island folk tink dey bound for *heaven*,” he tries to spit, “fuck! No mouth!”

“They think they’re bound for heaven?”

“If dey teach dem de good book, dat dere words, bwoy, dat dere words! Dat ain’t de words o’ de Heartman. And, to teach em de good book slave need to read. Whichever way yu look at it, dose Toubob ‘fraid, ‘fraid of slave uprising, or ‘fraid of spending eternity wid de Heartman, ‘pends which dey most ‘fraid of, bwoy, most ‘fraid o’ slave killing ‘em or de Heartman ripping dere hearts out. Bwoy, dese Toubob look hot.”

I look at the Toubob with their unsuitable clothing. “They do. Too hot. Their clothes look heavy.”

“Tru, tru, mon, tru. A lickle bit too heavy dough, bwoy, for Plantashion Island, wouldn’t yu say, Sir Jackson Moss? What yu tink, mon?”

I shrug. “I suppose.”

The Heartman’s red eyes glint. He’s got mischief on his mind. I can tell.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, mischief, Heartman mischief. Today we gonna go back in time a lickle bit, a few months or so and de Heartman gonna mek someone a widow, bwoy, gonna mek someone a widow,” he takes a big breath. “Ah! It de best day to be on dis Earth! De best! De very best! Breathe in dat sea breeze! Refreshing, bwoy, refreshing! It a day when de Heartman him gonna mek someone a widow! Gonna mek someone available to be anodder mon’s wife. Does de life get any better, bwoy? De Heartman ax yu, does life get any better, bwoy?”

“Tell me what’s happening?” There’s no point beating around the bush.

“No point, bwoy, no point! Alright! If yu is sitting comfortably den de Heartman will begin, as dey say, mon, as dey say. Once upon a time dere was, not so long ago, a ship dat sail from Red Rose City, and it dis voyage, dis very voyage dat we on now, mon. It a rough and long crossing from dat town on de edge o’ de north country, mon, rough and long.”

“How long?”

“Ten week, bwoy, ten long, long week, bwoy, give or take. Dem pink, hairy and sweaty folk is desperate to get on dry land again, desperate, mon,” the Heartman grins, “dey desperate!”

“What?” I ask. “What have you done? You’ve made it longer than it needed to be, the voyage?”

He grins again and shrugs. “De Heartman him need to get him joy where him can, bwoy, where him can.”

Looking around I can see that there’s not a black face to be seen.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dis ship coming from England, not Africa, tek a look, mon, dere no slave aboard, bwoy, no slave, she ain’t built for slave, she built for comfort...”

“Toubob comfort.”

“He-he! Tru, tru! Toubob comfort, bwoy, Toubob comfort.”

I’m looking around. God help me, after everything I’ve seen in Africa, on Hope, and on Plantashion Island, I’m impatient for blood, Toubob blood. And who would blame me?

“Where is he? Your victim?”

“Him call Dominic Brown, bwoy, Dominic Brown.”

“So, he’s the husband of that widow...”

“Cecilia Moss, err Brown, yes, bwoy, yes. But have patience, bwoy, patience, have a lickle bit o’ patience. De story need patience, mon.”

I snap. “Patience! Patience! I’ve seen children raped, a man blinded, a girl burnt to death, people almost suffocate to death, old men, village elders, pushed off the ship to be eaten alive by sharks!”

Naturally, the Heartman is loving this. “LOVING DIS! LOVING DIS!” he roars. “And, yeah yu did, bwoy, yeah yu did. So,” he calms down, “what exactly de point of yuh jibber jabber, Sir Jackson?”

“MY POINT! My point is they were all black! Where’s the Toubob victim?”

“Toubob had him tongue nailed!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“For not being cruel *enough* to slaves! If he’d been whipping or beating a negro, he wouldn’t have had his tongue nailed!”

“Mm, mm...tru, tru, dat very tru, very tru. Yu got me dere, bwoy, got me dere. But yu seen de Massa get ridden to death by Celeste!”

“Beth!”

“Celeste.”

“BETH!”

“Beth slash Celeste! Whatever, bwoy, whatever! Yu still seen her ride de Massa to death!”

“He enjoyed that! He enjoyed fucking her! Until he died, he enjoyed that!” I shake my head. “And she got burnt to death for doing the work of the Missus! God help me I want some justice for my brothers and sisters!” my blood is boiling now.

“Justice, bwoy? Yu want justice?”

“Yes!”

The Heartman turns serious. “Justice ain’t gonna happen, bwoy, ain’t gonna happen. Even wid abolition yu won’t get justice, mon, slavery won’t stop, bwoy, it won’t stop.”

As we’re arguing there’s a commotion. A group of women have gathered around something, and they are shrieking their heads off.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman grins. “Squawking like dodo about to be pluck bwoy, squawking like dodo about to be pluck!”

We walk over.

“It’s Mr Brown!” squawks a woman.

“Poor Mr Brown, poor, poor Mr Brown,” squawks another.

Much faffing around ensues until the familiar small blonde woman is bundled up through the flock. She’s calm, amongst all the commotion, she’s calm.

“She strong, bwoy, strong.”

“What is it?” asks Cecilia. “What’s happened?”

“I’m sorry, Mrs Brown,” declares a gentleman, “he’s dead, mam.”

“Dat one him Mr Jones, bwoy, Mr Jones. Him ironmonger from Red Rose City and him going to Plantashion Island to mek him fortune.”

“His fortune? Harvesting sugar?” I shake my head. “I’ve heard slaves talk about that. All the small growers are selling to the big ones.”

“Economy o’ scale, bwoy, economy o’ scale.”

“What?”

“Yu want to be educated by de coconut, bwoy, by de coconut?”

I shrug. “Is that what you’re calling yourself now, ‘de coconut’?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He glares at me. If looks could kill. “De Heartman him trying to mek dis story a lickle bit more interesting, bwoy, a lickle bit more interesting, interesting to dose dat might not know dis story, to dose dat hide dere heads in de sand and hope it go away.”

“This story isn’t going away!”

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru and it not going away cos we tell dat story in different way, mon. We tell de story o’ de lickle people, de faceless people, de nameless people, we tell de story o’ de majority, bwoy, de majority. Dis slave story, it been told plenty up to now, told plenty by folks wid de big brains and de right to tell it, and it bound to be told plenty more. It a hard story to tell and be told, ‘de coconut’ him just try to mek it interesting, interesting to mek everyone listen, even dose wid deir eyes and ears closed.”

I’ve touched a nerve.

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah! Nerve!” He’s sulking now and won’t go on with our story.

“Sorry,” I sigh. “You, the Heartman, are the coconut and my head is an empty nut.”

He erupts with joy. “DAT TRU! I am, bwoy, I am. De Heartman is de coconut and yu is an empty, tiny nut widout name cos yu is so small and empty.”

I bite my tongue. “You were saying about Mr...”

“Jones, Mr Jones, de ironmonger.”

“Yes.”

“Well, he come to Plantashion Island to mek him fortune. Not wid sugar, not direct anyhow. Him come to see if trade can be made wid de big boys, see if him can supply dem

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

plantations wid tools and metal goods for de dragons. Growing demand back home for de white gold mek many plantation owners tink hard about expanding their operations via... efficiencies."

"Efficiencies?"

"Efficiencies, bwoy, efficiencies. Getting more out o' what yu already got, mon, out o' what yu already got."

"By making slaves work harder?"

"Me not gonna lie, dat one way, bwoy, dat one way. But dey also can use deir nuts, mon, deir nuts like yuhs truly, King Coconut. Dat de Heartman new name, bwoy, Me new name."

"Madam," Mr Jones is speaking, "your husband appears to have suffered from heat stroke."

"Heat stroke? But...but we're not even at the island yet, Sir," replies Cecilia, "how can he suffer from heat stroke when we've not even arrived at Plantashion Island?"

"He-he! Her husband not King Coconut, bwoy, not King Coconut. Mebee him should have taken his wool coat off, bwoy, taken his wool coat off and him Long Johns! Hagree?"

It's hot on deck. "Hagree." I look at the Heartman "So you've killed an 'innocent' Toubob with the heat?"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He looks daggers at me. “Dat Toubob not innocent, bwoy, dat Toubob not innocent! De Heartman him surprise yu tink any Toubob innocent! Him replacement overlooker, bwoy, replacement overlooker. Him here to replace Charles Inman, and him not any better. Him was quiet, dat tru, but quiet ain’t always good, quiet ain’t always better, bwoy. Sometime de quiet ones dey de worst, bwoy, sometime dey de worst.”

“But look at his wife,” I nod at the angelic looking slim blonde girl, weeping gently beside her husband. “She is devastated at the prospect of life without a husband.”

“What am I going to do?” she’s sobbing. “What am I going to do on my own?”

“Dat tru, dat tru. Him got nice wife, bwoy, him got nice wife, but him ain’t nice.”

When he says Brown isn’t nice, I shudder, plantation overlookers aren’t nice by their nature, fear and violence are their currency.

“Yeah mon, dat good, fear and violence deir currency! Yu *is* coconut! Not King Coconut, but mebee Prince Coconut?”

“Does she know about her husband?”

“Me tink she know a lickle, bwoy, a lickle. Mebee. She know him not like to fuck her...”

“What?”

“Him not like to fuck her and she beautiful. What mon not like to fuck dat beautiful womon, bwoy, what mon?” He thrusts his pelvis towards me and grins sickeningly. “She know

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

him get him relief somewhere else. Somewhere him shouldn't. She know him not nice but what can she do, bwoy? She got no power. Womon have no power, bwoy, womon have no power."

"Except the Missus?"

"Even de Missus has to wield her power wid guile, bwoy, wield her power wid guile. Why yu tink she marry 'Reverend small ting'?"

I shrug.

"She need a husband in Toubob society, a womon widout husband like negro. She an underclass, she a half person."

"But she's got money."

"She got nothing, 'cos now it de money of de Reverend Massa and den it Michael who got de money!"

"A baby has money!"

"Him a white male baby, bwoy, him got power even dough him just shit him pants and suck Bonnie's lickle tit!"

"Bonnie?"

"De Heartman wrong, bwoy, de Heartman wrong! Yu is no coconut! No Prince Coconut! Bonnie is de wet nurse to de white baby, it a long story, very technical. Bonnie having child, lost it, but her titties still full o' de milk, blah, blah, mon! Anyhow, it de titty sucking white baby wid money and power when de Reverend Massa go downstairs to see de Heartman!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What am I going to do now,” sobs the newly widowed Cecilia.

I feel guilty, guilty for the beautiful white woman who is crying in front of us. “Why did you have to kill her husband?”

“De Heartman show yu why Dominic Brown a bad mon, bwoy, look...look at what could have been, bwoy, what could have been. But yu not gonna like dis, mon, yu not gonna like dis!”

**What could have been**

“I can tell you! You are in trouble, boy, big trouble!” a very-much-alive Dominic Brown has cornered a young boy in the empty sugar house.

“Dis de empty sugar house on de Bay View Plantation, bwoy, de empty sugar house.”

In comparison to the black lad, he’s menacingly large and fierce looking. He’s bigger than me and the Heartman combined. He’s like a giant.

“Him like dat Goliath, bwoy, dat Goliath, him de stupid giant who didn’t duck when de stone got shot at him skull!”

“I know who Goliath is, I read my Bible!”

“Shh...shh! Don’t say de ‘B’ word again, bwoy, don’t say de ‘B’ word again! Never again! But, Mr Brown, him look different vertical and alive, eh? Different, bwoy, different!”

“Yeah, I think I preferred him dead.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yu will in a minute, bwoy, yu will in a minute, de Heartman him guarantee dat!”

“There’s no one about?” I ask.

“It de growing season, bwoy, de growing season. Yu remember how dey grow de sugar cane?”

“Of course, I remember! I’ve spent enough years of my life in the sugar cane fields breaking my back with my friends!”

“Well, dat why him here today, dis one sly, mon, sly, him know him not going to be disturbed.”

“Mr Brown, Sir?” replies the lad.

“Who is that boy?” I ask.

“Yu not recognise him, bwoy? Yu not recognise him?”

“No.”

“Tek a closer look, bwoy, tek a closer look, look at him eyes.”

In the darkness I squint at the lad. I don’t know him. I’ve got a good memory for faces, but I have never seen this one before. But...he’s familiar, strangely familiar.

“Familiar, bwoy? Strangely familiar. Him got a look of yu, mon, don’t yu tink? A look of Sir Jackson Moss?”

“Of me?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, mon, yu.”

I shake my head.

“Fuck Me! Prince Coconut! De Heartman him very wrong about dat! Very fucking wrong! De Heartman ‘xplain. Him yuh child, bwoy, him yuh child! De son of yu and de Missus. De black one.”

“But Joe’s in England!”

“Him in England in one way o’ telling yuh story, bwoy, him ain’t for anodder.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Dere many story dat de Heartman can choose from, many story. De Heartman him an unreliable narrator, bwoy, an unreliable narrator! And dis story Me choose for today, bwoy, dis de one de Heartman him choose for today.”

“What’s he doing here? In this story?”

“Mm...let me tink...in dis story him been adopted by an old maid, Martha.”

“Martha? The mother of Frances?”

“In dis story, Frances ain’t ever been born. Martha, she barren, bwoy, barren. Dat why she take in Joe. De Heartman him like to tinker wid de facts, bwoy, tinker wid de facts. Him like to weave him web, to stretch de silk of de web o’ mystery.”

My head is spinning.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Don’t spin yuh nut, bwoy, don’t spin yuh nut! It dangerous spinning yuh nut, ‘specially when it tiny nut like yuhs. Now, if yu had giant coconut, like de Heartman, aka King Coconut, it could spin as much as it wanted. Don’t worry, bwoy, don’t worry, dis story just for ‘illustrative purposes’, bwoy, just for ‘illustrative purposes’ as dey say at some point.”

I daren’t ask where I am in all this.

“Yu wid Me o’course, bwoy, wid de Heartman!” He stares at me, smirks, tuts and shakes his head. “Yu has an empty nut, Jack Moss, an empty nut, gentleman or not. De Heartman glad him gave yuh nut to Sir Richard! Glad! Glad him got to chop it off and scare de bejesus out of Frilly Milly. And tell yu what, de Heartman him just might give him it again, yu wait and see, bwoy, yu wait and see!”

“What? Again?”

A movement next to us attracts our attention. “Mr Brown, Sir, please, Mr Brown, Sir,” young Joe doesn’t know what he’s done wrong but he knows it will be something. He’s always done something that needs to be punished.

“What happens when he’s done something wrong?” I ask.

“Glad dat yu ax, bwoy, glad dat yu ax. It mean him pants come down and Mr Brown give him a good spanking, mon.”

My anger is rising.

“Yeah, bwoy, it is!”

Brown pulls up a rickety old chair. “You will be punished, boy.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“He-he! Love dat mon, bwoy, love dat mon. Him don’t even bother to mek up excuse why him punish your bwoy, him just don’t bother. Dere no need for excuse, just de punishment. Bad mon, bad, bad mon! Respect!”

“Respect!” I nearly explode.

“Gotta respect a bad mon who is so bad him don’t even bother wid de excuse, bwoy, gotta respect dat! Him don’t even bother. Want to know what yuh bwoy tinkin, mon?”

“No.”

“Too late, bwoy, too late.”

Joe’s head is remarkably clear and calm, evidently, and he doesn’t bother to argue. If he keeps his mouth shut maybe he’ll just get a spanking and not a...oh fuck!

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, fuck!”

Joe has learned in his young life that Mr Brown might be satisfied with just spanking him, but if he gets his dander up...

“Dander up! He-he, dander up!”

“You’re sick...”

“Yeah mon, de Heartman him sick, bwoy, sick!”

Brown goes to work on the smooth young black arse of my precious son and Joe makes sure he makes just the right amount of noise to satisfy Mr Brown that he’s been suitably punished.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“How he yuh bwoy, mon? How he yuhs? De Heartman him don’t understand.”

“What?”

“How him yuhs? Him not like him pappy, not like him fadda. Him got a brain in him nut, bwoy, a brain!”

I shake my head.

“He half Toubob dough, bwoy, half Toubob, and dey sneaky. Dey sneaky fuckers.”

“He doesn’t look half Toubob.”

“Him de black one, yu know Michael him twin de white one, dat de way it go sometime, bwoy, dat de way it go sometime.”

“Enough!” I shout. “Enough! Show me him,” I nod at Brown, “show me him dying.”

“Ha-ha! Yeah mon! Fulljoy!”

“Inside his head,” I demand, not feeling at all like myself. I’ve changed so much on this journey with the Heartman, changed from resigned and subjugated to angry and vengeful. “I want to feel his...suffering!”

“Yu a fadda, bwoy, yu a fadda, yu seen yuh child suffer, yu an angry fadda, yu want to protect dem, dat why yu not feeling yuhself. Ha-ha! Inside him head it is, bwoy, inside him head.”

**Inside his head**

What's that? Noise? Thumping noise? Making my body...pound? Hot. Fucking hot. Bloody hot! No sea breeze. I can see Plantashion Island. Paradise. Verdant. Plush. Lucrative. Green forests stretching backwards from the white sands and clear blue seas. Paradise. Pounding. Fucking hot.

"Are we in Dominic Brown's head?" I whisper to the Heartman.

"We inside, bwoy, we inside."

"He's not making sense. He's confused."

"Dat tru, dat tru, confusion normal in dis kind o' death, bwoy, normal, de heat mek de brain confused."

"Good!" I reply.

"Dominic? Dominic?" a woman says. It's...Cecilia?

"Dat right, bwoy, dat right, Cecilia. She de widow to be, bwoy, de widow to be!"

Noise. Pounding. Rhythmic. Relentless.

"Is that his heartbeat?"

"What left o' it, bwoy, what left o' it."

Sky. Clouds. Fucking hot. Noise. Drums. Thunder.

"Dominic, my dear!"

"She too good for dis mon, bwoy, too good."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Angel. Porcelain. Alabaster. Blonde. Gentle. Untouchable.

“Untouched by yu, bwoy, untouched by yu, wait til her next husband get her, she let him touch her, she like it and him like it.”

“Cecilia?”

“Dominic, Dominic, I’m listening, dear, I’m listening.”

“Too good. What... done all my life...negro...boys...young...”

“I don’t understand what you’re saying, Dominic my love?” Angel.

Halo. Beautiful. Gentle.

“Blah, blah, blah, bwoy! Sickly sweet shite, mon!”

Drums. Pounding. Two faces? Negroes? Leaning over me? Squashed nose. Large lips. Disgusting. Handsome. Desire.

“Him salivating, bwoy, salivating!”

“What?”

“Him seen yu and him salivating about de tought o’ fucking Sir Jackson Moss, de younger yu!”

Handsome. Face. Body.

“Look! His cock getting hard, bwoy, getting hard at de tought.”

“Disgusting!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yu getting stiff, bwoy, getting stiff! Yuh ting, it getting hard. It getting big. Stiff! Well, it big for yu, bwoy, not big for a real mon, a real mon like Jack Moss here.”

Clarity. Who the hell is this negro? Who the hell is he? What the hell is he? And why is he telling me about my...

“Dis negro yuh future, bwoy, yuh future! And...” the Heartman nudges me, “dis *pretty* mon here, him de future of yuh angel, bwoy, de future. Him gonna mek sure dat your angel get a real ‘Ting’, bwoy, a real ‘Ting’. And when she remember yu, mon, she gonna remember yuh pathetic lickle ‘ting’.”

I’m...her future.

“Yu only got past, bwoy, only past! No future.” No  
future. Red eyes.

“Ah, yu a small nut, Dominic Brown, yu a small nut! Yu heard it right, bwoy, heard it right, yu got no future! Yu dying, bwoy, dying!”

Dying? Young. Strong! Superior! White!

“Superior? Tell Me, bwoy, where yu lying?”

Sky. Clouds.

“Looking at dat sky and de clouds, and how dat normal, bwoy, how?” Pounding.

Thundering.

“Dat yuh heartbeat, bwoy, dat yuh heartbeat.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Heartbeat?

“De one dat about to...” the Heartman smiles at me and then back at Brown. “Watch dis lickle scene afore yu go down below, bwoy, watch dis...it gonna mek yuh heart race like never before, watch...”

We slip gently from the deck of the ship in the bright hot Caribbean sunshine, and the confused mind of the dying Dominic Brown, to a dimly lit...room. It’s a...a...bedroom.

“He-he. A bedroom, bwoy, a bedroom.” “Is that all you think about?” I snap.

“Sex ‘n death, bwoy, sex ‘n death, dat all most folk tink about.”

It’s small but clean, neat and tidy. The bed is old but sound and in it are two people, one black and one white, a black male and a white female, they are together. The movements are slow and sensuous. There is no rush or hurry, there’s just tenderness and...love. The woman is stroking the man’s head and gently caressing the scars that are all over his back, scars from his many punishments, and the man is caressing the woman’s slender neck. They’re naked and in union, sheets have been pushed down, their body heat enough to warm them in the cool room.

“It can’t be Plantashion Island!” I declare, “not Plantashion Island.”

The Heartman explodes. “Is dat what yu tek from dis scene, bwoy? Is dat what yu tek? ‘It can’t be Plantashion Island!’ Dat not de fucking point, mon! Dat not de fucking point! De point is yu together wid his wife, WID HIS WIFE! De black man who he hate, and de white woman he tink an angel! Dat de fucking point!”

“Sorry.”

“Yu a fucking peanut head, bwoy, a fucking peanut head!”

My voice rises, “I said I’m sorry!”

“Hush, bwoy, hush, dis is for him, de dying man, not for yu, de Heartman him want him to feel de love, bwoy, de tru love.”

There are three men, spectre like, in the bedroom, myself - Jackson Moss - the Heartman and the bulky frame of Dominic Brown. The last time I saw him upright he was smacking the bare backside of my son.

“Feel the what?” I ask.

“Deir love, bwoy, deir love.”

The pair have been together a while and won’t be parted until dawn even though a small bump lies cradled between them. The woman stops kissing her husband’s mouth and gently licks his ear lobe.

“MY WIFE!” screams Brown in a fit of jealousy. “That’s my wife! My fucking wife, fucking a negro! My fucking wife, fucking a fucking negro!” Brown tries to lunge at the pair but his ephemeral body just floats through them unnoticed.

“She *was* yuh wife, bwoy, she *was* yuh wife! Yu dead and now she his! And him fertilise her, bwoy, him fertilise her womb like yu never wanted to do. Him send his loving seed into her and now dey having a baby!”

A scream rings out as in a mixture of agony and jealous rage the heart of Dominic



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Brown explodes in his chest. We're back on the deck of the ship as the Heartman digs a claw into the rib cage of his latest victim. Brown looks down in horror as he sees the demon negro grab something and wrench it out. He grins a drawn-on grin, "Me tink dat mine, bwoy, mine! De property o' de Heartman."

**Loading Hope**

I'm staring at the Heartman as he flips open the cupboard that is his chest and places the steaming bloody organ of Dominic Brown inside. Grinning, he closes the doors and fastidiously rearranges his clothes.

"De Heartman him like to look him best, bwoy, him like to look him best," he mutters. We're back on the beach at Plantashion Island and the loading of Hope. Clearly by his manner, Captain Wyn is keen to set sail for Red Rose City.

"Ax de question, bwoy, ax de question!"

"Cecilia Brown?"

There's a sly smile. "Yuh 'Ting' like her, bwoy, yuh 'Ting' like her?"

I'm embarrassed, "No! Yes! No!"

Shouting distracts me. It's purple face Taylor and he's hollering orders. "If any more of that goeth overboard it'th my head that'll roll and your futhing artheth!"

From the look on the face of Captain Wynn, who is already stood on Hope, he is not impressed by any landlubbers, be they slaves or Toubob.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Him got gills dat one, bwoy,” the Heartman nudges me. “Gills.”

“No more sharks please!”

“Yu can almost read de mind o’ de Heartman, bwoy, almost read him mind.”

Slaves from various nearby plantations are heaving the heavy dark timber down along the beach because the cart the mule is pulling isn’t moving on the sand, no matter how much the Toubob kick him. The logs are heavier than they look, they are like blocks of stone, I should know, I’ve chopped more than my fair share of forest and cleared it to plant the canes.

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, yu know yuh way around ‘wood’, mon! Ax de Missus!” He lowers his voice and I barely catch what he says. “And Cecilia.”

“We need to sail by dusk, Mr Taylor,” states Charles Inman looking at his watch.

“Better get this bunch of lazy bastards moving, man, or I’ll cut the rest of your fucking tongue off.”

“Leave it with me, Thir!” Taylor cracks his whips, and the nearby slaves jump out of their skins making the mule move forward across the sand. “What ith thith, you bathtardth! Your firtht day in paradithe? Your firtht futhing day!”

“Do yu remember yuh first day working in paradise, bwoy? Do yu?”

I look at the Heartman, I’ve blocked it out of my mind, “no,” I say quietly.

He chuckles, “well, let de Heartman refresh yuh memory, bwoy, let Me refresh yuh memory...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Jack Moss get yuh backside over here, bwoy!” called George Johnson as a group of slaves get to the part of the rainforest we are to work on today. The weather is hot...

“It always hot on Plantashion Island, bwoy, it always hot! Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

The much, much younger me had arrived on Plantashion Island just the day before and then waited like an animal in a pen whilst Toubob poked and prodded us to see which ones they wanted to buy. We’d been split into groups, older men with skills, young men and older boys with muscles, old women with no prospect, young women with juicy bodies, older children and youngsters with potential. Skins had been scrubbed and oiled to make the produce look less diseased; and arse holes plugged to stop the shite running down their legs and putting off the buyers.

“It was the babies that broke my heart,” I mutter.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru. If de Heartman him had a heart it would have broken too, bwoy, would have broken too.”

I stare at this newly found compassion of the Heartman.

“Fuck yu Jackson Moss, bwoy, fuck yu! Dat ain’t no compassion, mon, dat ain’t no compassion, dem babies are lickle angels bwoy, lickle angels, dey don’t have a chance to go bad and come de Heartman’s way, not a chance. Dat all. Not compassion.”

“Alright. Not compassion, just regret that they won’t get a chance to turn...bad?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

The babies were cast aside because the buyers knew they probably wouldn't live very long. Desperate mothers had screamed for their bairns as callous white hands had ripped them from their scrawny empty breasts. That was the worst thing, seeing the children ripped from the arms of their mothers and flung into pens. Flung into pens ready to be fed to the slave hounds. Children as dog food. Sickening. Most were too sick to scream or cry like babies do, they just lay there staring and waiting to die. It was the mothers who made the sound, using what pathetic energy they had in their exhausted bodies to beg for their young back. For a while they called to them, but the harsh shouts of the traders punctuated with the odd slash of the whip quickly put paid to that. Then they simply simpered in heartbroken silence.

“Dey not all die, bwoy, dey not all die,” the Heartman tries to comfort me. “Some, de healthy ones, dey get pick out, pick out by de old hags, de old hags dat too ‘crepit to work anymore but dey, wid, de Massa’s permission o’ course, allowed to pick out any babies dey tink look healthy enough to grow into useful slave.”

“Thanks for that.”

“Me pleasure, bwoy, Me pleasure. Dat how yuh friend started, mon. Bill de Blacksmith.”

“As a cast off?”

“Cast off, bwoy, cast off. And dat de truth. De one eye blind blacksmith, Bill Ash, him was healthy baby, and de mudder of Martha, she found him under some dead ones, she pick

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

him out and she take him home. She find a tit on some odder slave wid milk in it and she nourish him wid what little milk she could find. Dat why him a happy human, him happy even wid one eye, him happy even wid de pain, ‘cos Bill de Blacksmith, him given a second chance in life, and him know dat, him know dat, bwoy. Happy slave unusual, bwoy, unusual.”

“Jack!” someone is calling me.

“What?” I ask.

George Johnson is calling to me. “Jack Moss, dat yuh name, isn’t it?”

I nod, “yes, Sir. Jack Moss, Sir.”

“Polite lickle lad ain’t yu,” chuckles George. “Well, being polite won’t get yu anywhere wid Toubob, but getting yuh head down, grafting and doing what yu told will. Yu see dem over dere, on de horses?”

I look.

“NO!” Whispers George loudly. “Do it careful like, look careful like, don’t let em see yu looking. Looking is slacking, dat what dey tink, bwoy, looking is slacking, bwoy.”

I look carefully and nod, “yes.”

“Well, de one on de left, him call Taylor, him a lazy pink shit, given half a chance him spend de day drinking ‘kill-devil’ and snoozing on him horse. De one in the middle, Bennet, him yes man, him do whatever de boss ax him and him enjoy it, but de one on de right, dat Charles Inman, him de boss and him a bastard, him kill a negro for just looking at him wrong if him could.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“He can’t?”

“What?”

“You said, if he could, Sir?”

“Oh yeah, him can’t because Massa would have him arse if him damaged him stock, cost him money, mek him go back to de quay to buy anodder slave.”

“But him can do anyting else to yu, bwoy,” butted in another man, “anyting else! And, if him does, den yu soon be praying him killed yu, believe yu, me.”

“Heads down, you fucking lazy black bastards!” Bennet cracks a whip, and the slaves get stuck into clearing the forest.

“It hard work, bwoy, hard work,” declares the Heartman.

“Harder than you can imagine. Chopping and clearing the trees and undergrowth is hard enough, you’re always catching and cutting your hands and arms, but getting the stumps up is back breaking,” my back aches just at the thought of it.

“Yu got de mule, bwoy, yu got de mule?”

“Even with the mules, getting roots up from this solid ground is back breaking.”

“Tell Me, what de womon doing? Over dere, what de womon doing, bwoy?”

“I thought you knew everything?”

“De Heartman him axing for de sake o’ de readers, bwoy, for de sake o’ de readers.”

“They’re clearing back what we, the younger men, have chopped or pulled up.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He grinned. “Ah, womon’s work, bwoy, womon’s work.”

“What the fuck are you doing, bitch?” Bennet is bellowing at a woman. She’s still young enough to be working in the field, but she’s old enough to be suffering from the effects of the back-breaking work. Working in the field is for the young and if a slave hasn’t learnt a trade, or become useful to the estate, then they are in trouble.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru.”

Bennet is off his horse and marching towards her. He has got a determined look on his face.

“Determined to mek mischief, bwoy, determined to mek mischief.” “Determined to make mischief and a point,” I add.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru.”

The sun is high in the sky and Bennet looks hot and bothered, but he always acts extra nasty when Inman is about, just to let the overlooker know he’s more valuable than sleepy Joe.

“Lithpy Joe, bwoy, lithpy Joe!”

“He’s not had his tongue nailed yet!”

“Him got dat lickle pleasure to look forward to, bwoy, him got dat lickle pleasure to look forward to!”

It’s as hot as a furnace in the field, now the trees have come down there is no shelter from the sweltering sun.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“It noon, bwoy, noon.”

“Yes, the start of the hottest part of the day.”

“De Heartman know dat, bwoy, de Heartman him know dat!”

“I’m saying it for the sake o’ de readers, bwoy, for de sake o’ de readers.”

The Heartman ignores my mockery. “She look dog tired, bwoy, dog tired, dat womon.”

“She looks sick.”

“Tired, sick, Bennet not care, him not give a shit, bwoy, not a shit. Him tink when slave go slow it because dey slacker.”

The woman is on her knees. Literally.

“Water, Sir, water,” she’s rasping, her mouth dry and her throat like sandpaper.

“You’ll get a drink when you clear this patch, you lazy fucking bitch. What are you looking at, do you want to feel the crack of my friend here?” he holds his whip out menacingly.

“What the fuck are you lot looking at!” he calls to the other slaves who are watching, “get back to it you fucking lazy bastards. And you!”

He’s slowly approaching the woman who can barely lift her head.

“Dat girl had de shits all night, bwoy, de shits. For yuh information.”

“It’s not unusual.”

She’s pleading. “Me need a lickle drink, Sir, just a lickle drink.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I’ll give you a ‘lickle’ drink, bitch,” Bennet unbuttons his pants and proceeds to pull out a tiny purple tipped pink cock. Thick yellow piss pours out of it over the face of the exhausted field worker. When he’s finished he shakes it off all over her. “Refreshed? Now, get back to fucking work! Bitch!”

**Setting sail**

“Bastard!” I utter as the demonic claws click and we’re on Hope heading east on light winds.

“Mr Inman, a word please,” Captain Wyn, whose face rarely gives anything akin to emotion away looks apprehensive.

The Heartman leans over and whispers in my ear. “Captain Wyn seen signs, bwoy, seen signs.”

“Signs?”

“Signs dat dis voyage doomed, bwoy, doomed,” the Heartman sweeps his right arm dramatically. “Doomed!”

“Doomed?” I stare at him. “What are you? An actor?”

“O’course de Heartman an actor, bwoy, o’ course. De Heartman tread de boards plenty in Me time, bwoy, treaded plenty o’ boards. Me told to break a leg more dan once.”

I shake my head, “break your leg?”

“Yu no tespian, Sir Jackson Moss, bwoy, yu no tespian!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Getting back to the voyage I ask. “Why does Captain Wyn think the voyage is doomed?”

“Ah...” the Heartman’s eyes glint. “Watch.”

Inman approaches with a creepy smile on his face which seems to upset the captain more.

“Captain Wyn not one for smiling, bwoy, not one for smiling. Him tink it sign person too happy, de Captain don’t like being happy himself and him don’t like to see it in odders, mon. To Captain Wyn being happy just axing for bad luck, mon, bad luck. No, dis captain only happy when him unhappy.”

Captain Wyn had appeared jittery ever since Hope had weighed anchor and started the long voyage north-east.

“Even yu noticed dat, bwoy?”

I shrug, “yes.”

“Captain?”

“Mr Inman,” began the captain. “I’ve got some...concerns, Sir.”

“Concerns?”

“Concerns.”

“About what?”

“About whom,” corrected the captain.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Whom?”

“Aye, whom.”

“And whom, Captain, do you have concerns about?”

“Your assistant, Sir, your assistant.”

“I have two assistants, Captain, Mr Taylor and Mr Bennet?”

“The one who goes by the name of...” he doesn’t want to say his name too loud.

“Bennet?”

Inman looks perplexed. “Mr Bennet?”

“I believe that is the...gentleman’s name. And, Sir, I use the word ‘gentleman’ in this instance most generously.”

“You do?” Inman was becoming both intrigued and concerned. He knew Captain Wyn of old, a fine seafarer with a good track record of voyages. He knew that he had sailed the triangular voyage for his employers twelve times previously making handsome amounts of profit for them. He always seemed to manage the least amount of human wastage possible in comparison to some other captains and had a good eye for picking the best slaves when they negotiated with the black Toubob back in Africa.

“Tirteen, bwoy, tirteen, dat de Heartman lucky number!”

“It doesn’t look like Captain Wyn’s lucky number,” I nod at the captain.

“And him anxious because of odder tings, bwoy, odder tings.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What other things?” I ask.

“Ah, well firstly, Hope set sail on a Friday, bwoy, a Friday. Him not like dat one lickle bit, and one of de passenger a priest, bwoy, a priest.”

“A priest.”

“A priest, a man of...” the Heartman points a claw at the sky, “him upstairs. Like de new husband of de Missus.”

“Reverend Clarkson? Massa Clarkson?”

“Dat de one. All told, dis one helluva lot o’ bad luck for Captain Wyn, bwoy, one helluva lot!”

I stare at the captain who although naturally a man of few words, was choosing them extra carefully now.

“What concerns do you have with Mr Bennet, Captain?”

Wyn looks over his shoulder, for who or what I can’t imagine. “I overheard the...gentleman... whistling this morning.”

Inman laughs. “Whistling?”

The look that Captain Wyn gives him makes the Overseer stop his mirth immediately.

“Whistling, Sir.”

“I’m sorry. But I don’t understand, Captain.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Whistling is bad luck, Sir.”

“Bad luck?”

“Bad luck. And...” the captain is nervously tugging at his collar.

“Dat good luck, bwoy, good luck, tugging a sailors collar good luck.”

“And?” asks Inman.

“He called one of my sailors...” the captain can’t bring himself to say the name.

“Please Captain, tell me, Sir.”

The captain speaks in a whisper looking around to make sure that no one can hear him.

“Jonah.”

Inman bursts out laughing, “Jonah!”

In a harsh whisper Wyn replies. “Say that name quietly, Sir, quietly I say, or leave my ship this instant.”

Inman is looking at Captain Wyn as if he’s mad. “You must be mistaken, Captain, you must have misheard.”

“Dat two nails in de coffin of Bennet, bwoy, and one in de coffin of Inman, de Heartman declare dat neider dose men mek it to Red Rose City.

“And there’s another thing, Sir,” mutters Captain Wyn, “something that occurred in the Royal Navy Hotel.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“The Royal Navy Hotel, Captain?”

I look at the Heartman. “Dat where de Captain come across de scum dat mek up him crew, bwoy, where him come across de scum. Look, de Heartman show yu.”

### **Scum**

Instead of the gentle whisper of the constant sea breeze a cacophony of noise blasts my ear drums! Shouting, screaming, bawling, banging, singing, an out of tune piano being murdered by a drunken player. Such a horrendous noise! “Where are we now?” I shout at the Heartman. Smoke is everywhere. Smoke and the fumes of strong liquor.

The Heartman is in his element glugging from a bottle of ‘kill-devil’ at a bar and I’m next to him propping it up. As usual he’s drinking it down via any orifice except his, nonexistent, mouth. “De Royal Navy Hotel, bwoy, de Royal Navy Hotel, Plantashion Island!” He grins. “De favourite place o’ de Heartman...after Hell, ‘o course, bwoy, after Hell!” He’s having to shout too, above the din. There are so many people, so many voices all shouting at the same time.

The room, the saloon bar of the hotel, is jam packed with rough looking Toubob, of various shades of purple, pink and tanned leather brown. Most of them are sailors. They’re noticeable as they’re just off the ship, hairy and boisterous as they have their wages to blow on wine, women and song.

“Dey jam in like sardine, bwoy, like sardine, just like de slave on Hope! Dat how me friend here like it, busy, busy, busy. Ain’t dat tru me lovely?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ha-ha! Dat ‘xactly how Me love it, me darling demon,” replies a woman from behind the bar. She’s a black woman, the biggest, fattest, meanest looking black woman that I have ever seen in my entire life. She is mean looking but she’s somehow beautiful in a beguiling way. I’m scared. She makes the Missus look like a nun.

“Him tink yu look mean, me lovely,” translates the Heartman from thought to words.

“Mean?” the woman glares at me, then smiles, “den dat good, bwoy, cos dat de look dis madam aiming for, mean, mean and nasty.”

How can he talk to her? I think.

“Ha-ha! Him want to know how Me can talk wid you, Rachel?”

“Me bet him does!”

“Sir Jackson Moss...”

“Dis Jackson Moss?” Rachel abruptly tugs the Heartman’s sleeve. “Dee Jackson Moss?”

“It is,” I reply suspiciously. “Why do you want to know?”

Rachel looks me up and down, focusing on the top part of my pants. “Me hear rumour, dat all.”

“Rumours?” I barely dare ask.

“Rumour ‘bout you, bwoy,” grins Rachel. “Tell yu what, if yu want one o’ me girls,

Sir Jackson, for de evening, dere no charge, bwoy, no charge.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I try and ignore her. “How can she see you and me and talk to us?”

“Cos, she dance wid de devil all her life, bwoy, all her life. She lover wid de Heartman, mon, lover for more years dan Me remember.”

“King Coconut can’t remember?”

The Heartman glares at me before snapping back, “it ‘cos o’ all de good loving between de legs o’ dis fine womon, bwoy, all de good loving. It dim Me coconut head a lickle!”

Something inside me won’t let it lie. “Dimmed the King Coconut? I didn’t think anything could dim the King Coconut?”

There’s a moment’s silence that feels like a lifetime. I’ve overstepped the mark. Be playful with this demon when we’re alone but not in front of his woman. He’s clearly a proud demon. I need him to complete my story and that of my children. I need it to help tell the story of my people to those of you with your heads in the sand. I’m sorry.

I know he’s reading my thoughts. “Well, now yu know, bwoy, now yu know. Now yu know de Heartman him ‘portant for yuh life, de life o’ yuh pickney and de story o’ yuh people. Now yu know, bwoy, now yu know.”

“Drink, bwoy?” the woman asks me to break the tension.

I shake my head, “no thank you, mam.”

“Mam?” chuckles Rachel. “Dis one a good boy, Heartman, a good boy. Polite, like.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman hasn't completely forgiven me yet. "Him too good, Rachel, girl, too good. But him cheeky."

"If him too good den why him wid yu?"

"De Heartman telling him story, girl, him story, dat why."

"Him taking yu all over de place, sonny?" asks the madam, "back and forth, here and dere? Up and under? Him showing yu plenty o' bad tings, bwoy?"

I nod. I'm suddenly feeling sheepish.

She pats me on the shoulder. "Den him got a plan."

"A plan?"

"A plan, bwoy, a plan. And believe yu me, a plan can go eider way. Eider way on a whim of de Heartman. If him like yu or if yu boring to him den yu safe, if him not like yu and him interested in yu den yu fucked bwoy, yu fucked and yu headed south. Want a girl, bwoy?"

"A girl?"

"A girl. Me got plenty, bwoy, plenty. Or perhaps yu want de mamma? No charge, as Me say. Yu well known round dese parts, bwoy, yu and yuh..." she looks me up and down like a prize bull, "'Ting'."

"Him got a magnificent 'Ting', me lovely, a magnificent 'Ting', but de Heartman him got plans for it," the Heartman's back on top form. "It needed by a pretty lickle pink girl."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“A pink girl,” the woman spits on the ground. “Dem pink girls, dey can’t show a mon a good time, not now, not ever.”

“Mebee not, girl, mebee not. But him gonna fall in de love wid her.”

“Fall in de love!” Rachel spits on the floor again. “Love? Dere ain’t no such ting!”

“De Heartman tink yu in love wid him, girl? Him tink yu in love wid him?”

“Sure, sure! Me in love wid de Heartman, sure,” Rachel winks at me.

I grin.

“What yu smiling ‘bout, bwoy?” asks the Heartman.

“Nothing, nothing at all, Sir,” I look around. “Why are we here and what are all these men doing, apart from drinking away all their wages?”

“Dat ‘xactly what dey doing, bwoy, ‘xactly what dey doing! Dey pissing all dere wages up against any wall dey can find.”

“Now then! Now then!” Shouts a voice interrupting us.

“Dat Dick Hull.”

“Dick Hull?” I ask.

“Him de Chief Mate on Hope widout...”

“Hey! You hagreed!

The Heartman sighed, “De Heartman hagreed.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“The Chief Mate on Hope?” I ask.

Before the Heartman can answer someone is ringing the big bell that is to the side of the bar and, without exception, the entire room sucks in its breath and goes deathly silent staring at the person who rang it.

“James Bennet?” I whisper.

“Ha-ha! James Bennet! Dat one more reason why Captain Wyn him not happy wid dat mon, bwoy, not happy.”

“Because he rang a bell?”

“Him rang de bell. It only permitted to ring dat bell here in dis bar when Rachel closing. When dey getting talked to by a Chief Mate it bad, bad luck, bwoy, bad luck.”

Hull ignores the misdemeanour, but you can see that he’s going to tell the captain. “Now then. Many of you ruffians will know me, I’m Dick Hull, and some of you might know that my ship, Hope, is sailing on the morrow, at first light,” he waits for a response, any response, but the mob are silent. Anyone who wanted to catch the next ship would have already been at the quay.

“Ship crews made up o’ volunteers and dose dat pressed, bwoy, dose dat pressed.”

“Pressed?”

“More o’ dat in de next book, bwoy, more in de next book, Joe’s story.”

“Right! You rough lot of fucking wankers! I need a crew!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Dick Hull knows that most of this bunch are just off ships and want to spend a few days pissing their hard-earned wages up against walls, walls that they've fucked a whore up against just a few minutes earlier.

“Well put, bwoy, well put!”

But he has orders from Captain Wyn, and if he can't *persuade* some men to come, he'll wait until they're lying in a gutter somewhere and carry them half-cut to his boats and row them out, stick them in the stinking slave hold for a couple of days and only let them see the light of day when Hope is underway for Red Rose City.

“There's free rum for any man who signs up right here, right now!” He bangs a bag of coins down on the counter and straight away half a dozen men, men who have almost spent up the wages from their previous voyage, are straight over to put their marks on the scroll.

“Good lads!” Hull slaps them on their backs, “good lads. Captain Wyn's a hard task master but he's fair as well as firm.”

As Rachel shepherds these few into a side room, bottles of 'kill-devil' are taken through. Hull heads into the room with the volunteers and whispers to his two burley assistants.

“Hang around out here lads, stay til the end and grab some of these stupid fuckers when they stagger out. I want a full complement on board by dawn.”

“What about him,” nods one of his thugs nodding at Bennet.

“Oh, I'll pass on what he's done, alright. Don't worry lads, don't worry, I'll pass it on. Captain Wyn'll deal with him on the ship.”

“On the ship?”

“Aye.”

The thug looks rattled. “He’s not coming with us is he, Mr Hull?”

“Aye, he is that, lad, he is that.”

As Dick Hull silently departs, the merry making resumes.

“Hey dere, sailor, how yu like to give a girl a treat?” A painted woman is standing next to me stroking my head.

“She a whore, bwoy, a whore! She a whore.”

I stare at him.

“She can’t see me, bwoy, de Heartman him a demon, but she can see yu and she tink yu white.”

“White? Why the hell would she think that?”

“Heartman mischief, bwoy, Heartman mischief! Dere no black man come in here, mon, none, if him did, him not last long!”

I smile at the...woman. I can’t tell if she’s young or old. She just looks weary. She is tall, with dark hair and paint on her face like I’ve never seen before. The lips are bright red, blood red, and the cheeks much the same. Her eyes are lined with dark, and she smells...

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“It de smell o’ cheap cologne, bwoy, de smell o’ cheap cologne and plenty of it. Dis womon can’t wash away de scent of all de men she fuck, so she try and mask it. Even de Heartman widout a nose can tell it pungent, bwoy, pungent.” He nods at her. “She teach yuh ‘Ting’ a ting or two for Cecilia, bwoy, dough, teach it a ting or two. But de Heartman suggest yu watch out for de crabs, mon!”

“Maybe next time,” I reply politely.

“Don’t know what yuh missing, bwoy...” she steps back from me and looks me up and down. I feel like a piece of meat, “damn shame! Damn, damn, shame! Don’t know what Me missing, after this lot. Yu new in here me lovely?”

“First time.”

“Word of advice?”

I nod.

“Mek it yuh last.”

The Heartman magically places a gold coin in my palm and I subtly give it to her. “Have a day off.”

She carefully looks down. “Me might just do dat, sailor, Me might just do dat. Now, yu watch yuh back.”

The Heartman grins at me. “Good choice, bwoy, good choice, yu not want de crabs, mon.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Funnily enough.”

“De Heartman tink dat mebee it should be dat Mr Bennet who should watch his back, bwoy, mebee Mr Bennet,” he winks. “Watch dis, dis for dat tirsty womon, de tirsty slave. Remember her?”

“I remember...”

### **Flogging**

“I understand,” continues Captain Wyn as he continues to talk quietly with Charles Inman on the deck of Hope, “that this man of yours...this...”

“Mr Bennet.”

The captain winces at the mere mention of the name. “Mm...that’s the one. I understand that he...the night before last in the Royal Navy Hotel...”

“The night before last in the Royal Navy Hotel?”

“Mm...the very same. That he...rang...” Captain Wyn’s voice drops to a whisper. “Rang a bell when a sailor spoke.”

The overlooker lets out a laugh, “rang a bell when a sailor spoke?” he was speaking loudly.

“Shh...not so loud, man, not so loud!”

“I...I don’t understand,” for once, the overlooker is lost for words.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“He rang the bell, man, rang the bell,” the captain is louder now.

“I don’t understand, Sir!”

“You don’t ring the bell, you don’t, you just don’t, man,” Wyn is apoplectic. “You don’t ring the bloody bell, man! NO FUCKING RINGING OF BELLS!”

“Ring the bell?”

“Yes, man, ring the bell, you don’t ring bloody bells!” Everything, all the tensions that have been building inside the captain are about to erupt. In the space of a few seconds, Captain Wyn has gone from the placid, master of his emotions to an eye popping, purple faced psychopath.

“Dere only one way dis gonna finish, bwoy, dere only one way,” whispers the Heartman to me with the widest drawn-on grin imaginable. He’s loving it!

“Mm?”

“Only one way dis gonna finish, bwoy, only one way.”

“And that is?”

“Badly for Mr Bennet, bwoy, badly for Mr Bennet,” his red eyes glint.

“You’re loving this!”

“Yeah, mon, loving dis, absolutely loving dis! De Heartman him loving dis. Dis meat and drink to de Heartman.”

“Mr Bennet!” the overlooker immediately calls for his assistant.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“De Heartman gonna stir dis pot a lickle bit, bwoy, stir dis pot! Watch dis!” claws click.

“Mr Inman, Sir, you wanted me, Sir?”

“Arse licker!” I mumble.

“Dat man him got a brown tongue, dat for sure, bwoy, dat for sure! But...hoy!

What...what dat ting he got in him hand? What dat ‘item’” the Heartman is up to mischief.

“Heartman mischief, bwoy, Heartman mischief! Me ax again, what him got in him hand? What de Heartman ax? What yu got in yuh hand, bwoy? What yu got?”

I squint. “A bird? A dead bird?”

“Ah, dat not just any old bird, bwoy, not just any old bird.”

“No?”

“Naw, mon, naw. It an albatross, a dead albatross.”

“And?”

“And? Just watch de captain, bwoy, watch him!”

“What the hell is that in your hand, man!” Screams Captain Wyn. He finally erupts. His gasket finally blows. The lava from his simmering volcano is rocketing miles into the sky with monumental pyroclastic energy. He is going berserk. “What the fucking hell have you done? What the hell have you done? That bird, that bird, what have you done to that bird?”

“What bird?” Bennet looks down at the dead albatross in his hand.

“THAT BIRD!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Err...I’ve...never...seen...it...before, Sir!”

“He-he!” chuckles the Heartman. “Dat tru, him ain’t, bwoy, him ain’t. It Heartman magic, bwoy, Heartman magic.”

The captain is full of busy now, full of purpose. He’s moving around looking for something. Looking for something in particular, “No, Sir, no. That’s it! That’s it! You are going to pay for this, Sir! I cannot allow anything like this to take place on my ship, not on my ship, Sir! NOT ON MY SHIP!”

“Captain Wyn?” interjects Inman.

“SILENCE! I don’t need to remind you that I’m the master of my ship!”

A crowd has gathered around the men, and in the distance the Missus has come on deck from her luxurious cabin to see what all the fuss is. Her clothes are a little dishevelled and when the Reverend Massa appears he’s pulling up his breaches.

“She been sat on him, bwoy, sat on him.”

“What?”

“Sat on him, tinkin about yuh ‘Ting’, bwoy, tinkin about yuh ‘Ting’.”

“Turn a barrel, Mr Hull, turn a barrel!”

“Aye, Sir, turn a barrel,” repeats Dick Hull.

“Restrain this man!” orders the captain of two of his sailors who are happy to oblige.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman leans over and whispers in my ear. “Dey all hate him, all o’ dem, bwoy, dey all hate him, and dey hate Inman too. Hate him.”

Inman looks pleadingly at the Missus, but her face is seriously set. She is going to enjoy this.

“She like to see a man bent over, bwoy, like to see a man bent over, eh? Eh?” The

Heartman nudges me.

“Yeah,” I reply, remembering more than one sore backside.

“Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do!”

The black servants have gathered at a safe distance in eager anticipation of what is to come next. They are going to enjoy this too, this small payback.

“Do something, Mr Taylor!” orders Inman but as Jeremiah Taylor steps forward two sailors block his path and push him backwards.

“Strip his shirt off, Mr Hull!” orders Captain Wyn. “And lad,” he says to a sailor. “Fetch me my cat!”

Bennet is not a big man and as he is trying and failing to resist the sailors who hate his guts, Inman continues to plead with Wyn. “Mr...”

“Captain, Sir, Captain!” snaps Wyn, “...and don’t you forget it, man, or the same’ll happen to you!” Captain Wyn appears calmer now, but he is noticeably salivating and shaking, and his eyes are bulging.

“Look at de captain pants, bwoy,” whispers the Heartman.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What?”

“Him hard, bwoy, him hard, him cock hard! Not Jackson Moss ‘Ting’ hard, dat tru, no one could be, but him hard all de same!”

“Your cat, Sir!” the sailor gives the weapon to Captain Wyn.

“And, all the knots are tight, lad?” asks the captain.

“Aye, Sir, tight, Sir.”

Eyes bore down on the lad. “You’ve checked and double checked?”

Claws are rubbed together. “King Coconut liking a mon who prepare for evil, bwoy, prepare for evil, prepare to cause pain.”

“Aye, Sir, checked and double checked, Captain Wyn, Sir.”

Captain Wyn inspects the cat until he is personally satisfied its knots are tight and hard and will cut into human flesh like a sharp knife. “Good lad. Restrain him, men!”

“Aye, Sir.”

“Captain! Captain!” Bennet is pleading like a slave about to be lashed, beaten, raped or pissed on.

Without even looking, I can feel the negroes staring intently at the scene.

“Dis one for dem, bwoy, for dem, for all dem, for all de slave dat been worked to death, beaten, shit and pissed on, dis for all o’ dem, mon! Watch. Captain Wyn, him an expert wid de cat o’ nine tails, bwoy, an expert. De Heartman him love it!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Silence!”

Inman butts in. “Captain Wyn!” But the look the captain gives him makes him shrink back, Bennet is on his own now.

“Brace yourself!”

The Heartman is excited, “yu know, Sir Jackson Moss, de Captain him not need to warn him, bwoy, not need to warn him to brace himself, but Captain Wyn, him a man of honour, bwoy, a man of honour,” the Heartman is loving this. “Yeah mon! Loving dis!”

Fuck! The first strike explodes on pink flesh and Bennet screams.

“One!”

“How many lashes?” I ask.

“Mm...” the Heartman thinks about it. “Let Me tink, bwoy, let de Heartman tink.

Two dozen.”

“Two dozen? That’ll kill him!”

“Two dozen lashes for you man!” declares Captain Wyn.

“Two!”

Bennet screams louder as tiny droplets of black blood appear on his back and start to cover the cat.

“Three!”

Bits of flesh start to coat the cat along with the blood, which is congealing.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Four! Five! SIX! SEVEN! EIGHT! NINE! TEN! ELEVEN! TWELVE!” the screaming stops. You can’t see skin for blood and gore now. Inman has gone. He can’t watch. Reverend Massa Clarkson has disappeared back into his cabin, his erection long gone. Only the Heartman, the crew, my people and the Missus are still there. Even I can’t watch.

“TWO DOZEN!”

“He’s dead, Sir!” declares Dick Hull.

“Untie the bastard and feed him to the bloody sharks, men!”

“Come on, bwoy!” The Heartman tugs at my sleeve as he’s pulling his shirt off and heading for the side of the ship. “Dinner served, mon!”

### **Tenderness**

“Ah...dat de best meal Me had for ages, bwoy, de best de Heartman eat for ages,” he burps.

“It’s all sick, all sickening,” strangely I didn’t get any pleasure seeing the sharks, the Heartman included, rip Bennet’s body limb from limb.

“Yu a gentlemon, bwoy, a gentlemon, Sir Jackson Moss of ‘Ting’ town, ‘Ting’ shire, ‘Ting’ land! A gentlemon.”

We’re back on the deck of Hope. It’s dark now and the ship is quiet. All we can hear is the sound of gentle waves bashing against Hope’s wooden hull and the ropes, rigging and sails

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

whispering and chattering to each other in the strong warm winds which are pushing the ship northeast towards her final destination and my destiny.

“May I join you?” a woman’s voice speaks. I didn’t see her approach.

“Err...yes, mam,” my voice, my voice from the me that was traveling on Hope to Red Rose City, replies. I am sitting on the deck of Hope looking up at the stars.

“He wasn’t a nice man, was he?” she says.

I don’t know what to say. I don’t talk with Toubob. But in the darkness, everyone is the same, everyone has the same-coloured skin. Black and white are all the same. The night makes us all the equal. In the night we’re all just shadows. “Err...”

“It’s alright, I know what he did. I’m not stupid. And I know what my husband did too. He thought I didn’t, but I did. How can anyone read the Bible and then treat a person, people, like they do. They go to church every Sunday and then they do those things. No...if you ask me he got his just deserts. They both did.”

“I...I suppose,” the woman smells good, so good. I smelt her before, on the beach, she smells...clean, soapy, but with a hint of...woman.

“More dan a hint, bwoy, more dan a hint!”

I ignore him. I’m keen to watch myself and the nice smelling Toubob woman.

“She ain’t Toubob, bwoy, she ain’t.”

“She’s white isn’t she?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Toubob not always white, bwoy, not always white, and white not always Toubob, mon. Yu of all people know dat Toubob not always white.”

“You’re the man who helped me into the boat, aren’t you? The tall man? Jack, isn’t it?”

She knows my name! “Yes, yes mam, Jack, Jack Moss, Mam.”

“Please don’t call me Mam, Jack, that makes me sound so old. It’s Cecilia. Cecilia Brown.”

“Yes, Mam, err...I mean Cecilia. I know who you are.”

“Why are you going to England, Jack? Sorry, silly question, I suppose.”

“The Missus is taking us with her to her new home in Red Rose City, Mam...err Cecilia. Taking us to look after her new house and garden.”

“Oh, right. Well, you’ll notice a big difference in Red Rose City to Plantashion Island, I suppose. You’ll notice the cold, I imagine. It’s cold even in summer sometimes.”

“Cold?” I hadn’t really thought about cold. I don’t really *know* what cold is. On Plantashion Island it’s always warm, or hot, or pissing it down and blowing a hurricane, but it’s never cold.

“And this time of year, too,” went on Cecilia. “There might even be snow on the tops too, I suppose.”

“Tops?”

“Hills.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Snow? What is snow?” I ask.

Cecilia laughs, but it’s a gentle chuckle, shared fun not an accusatory laugh or sneer, or a laugh before, during or after punishment or sex, which to the Missus is the same thing. “Of course, you won’t have seen snow before. It’s overrated. It’s beautiful and covers everything. It makes a lovely white blanket on everything, but it’s cold and wet. Yes, very overrated. No, you’ll notice a big change.”

“Boring, bwoy, boring!” sneers the Heartman. “Me want action, mon, action. Watch dis!” he clicks his claws.

“Hold me, Jack!” declares Cecilia in a manner that shouts of ‘Heartman mischief’.

Red eyes glow in the dark before one slyly winks. “Yeah, bwoy, yeah! Yu two is too slow, yu need a lickle bit of Heartman help. Fuck Cupid, de Heartman him got a new job o’ firing de arrows o’ love!”

“The arrows of love!” I laugh.

“De Heartman him branching out, bwoy, branching out. Dey call it diversification, mon, diversification. Not putting all one’s eggs in one basket, dey call it dat too!”

The me on the deck of Hope is shocked. “Hold you?”

“Yes,” the new ‘forward’ Cecilia has already snuggled into me. She feels good as well as smelling good.

“She taste good too, bwoy, she taste good too!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I stare at the red eyes. “*What?*”

“She horny, bwoy! She horny! She ain’t had any since well before her husband died and even den, de fuck was shite! She need some ‘Ting’ fuck, not shite fuck!”

“You’re *so*...eloquent.”

“Learn dat word in de good book, bwoy? Learn dat in de good book?”

“I read other books. The Missus likes me to talk to her...”

“Does she, bwoy, does she?”

“You know she does.”

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru.”

In the darkness our bodies, our shadowy forms, our two grey, colourless shadowy bodies, not one white and the other black, but both grey shadowy bodies are together. It’s tender and...and loving. Suddenly, we’re making love, silently making love. Me, Jack Moss, is making love with a white woman and she’s not forcing me to do things against my will. And I want this. I want the comfort, the warmth, the tenderness.

“He-he! Who yu kidding? Yu want de fuck, bwoy, yu want de fuck!”

“Stop it!” I whisper to him. I feel like I want to stand between the couple and the Heartman with a blanket, stand between them to give them some privacy.

“Fuck privacy, bwoy, fuck privacy, dis Me story and de Heartman, him see everyting.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

After we finish our urgent mingling we lie together under the stars, silently holding each other.

“Thank you, Jack,” says Cecilia.

“Fuck you, Jack Moss!” they can’t hear the whisper of a woman’s voice, but the Heartman and I can. “You’re going to pay for this! Pay for this.”

**Witnessed**

Who is that? In the darkness, who the hell is that? Suspicious sounds. Someone at it. Someone having sex. Someone, who is not me, having sex! Someone fucking!

“Whose head are we in now?” I ask the Heartman. “And where are we?”

“We on de deck of Hope widout...”

“No!

“OK, OK, mon! Calm down, bwoy, calm down. De Heartman him just trying to have a lickle bit o’ fun, bwoy, a lickle bit o’ fun!”

“So?”

“What de hell yu axing again, bwoy, what de hell yu axing again?”

I sigh. “Whose head are we in?”

“Can yu not guess, mon?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“No.”

I can feel the Heartman shake his head. His giant King Coconut head. “Dat tru, dat tru, de Heartman him King Coconut, bwoy! And for yuh information, yuh tiny peanut head information, we in de head o’ de Missus, bwoy, de Missus.”

“Oh shit.”

“Yeah mon, shit, bwoy, shit!”

They’re having sex! Having sex! She’s thinking.

“She’s watching me and Cecilia have sex!”

“She watching ‘Cecilia and I’, bwoy, ‘Cecilia and I’”

“What?”

“Dat what yu just said wasn’t proper English, bwoy, not proper English!”

“That is because, in case you hadn’t noticed, Sir, *I’m* not proper English! I’m not English at all and the bloody language isn’t my language.”

“Mm...dat tru, bwoy, dat tru!”

“I’ve almost forgotten my real, my birth language. Forgotten it because it was beaten out of me. Beaten out of me so hard I daren’t even think it!”

“Den yuh bloody language English, bwoy, it bloody English?”

I ignore him. “What’s she doing?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“She biding her time, bwoy, biding her time.”

“For what?”

“Sex and revenge, bwoy, sex and revenge! Yu reckon yuh ‘Ting’ can go again? Yu, Jack on de deck o’ Hope? Can yu go again so soon after dat sissy, squishy, lovey, dovey episode wid Cecilia?”

“I’m sure we’re about to find out,” I sigh.

“Yu don’t remember dis, bwoy, yu don’t remember dis?”

“You’ve fogged my memory, Sir, I don’t remember much of my story.”

“And dat mek reliving tings all de more enjoyable, bwoy, all de more enjoyable.”

“Please just get on with it.”

“Yeah, mon! Bwoy, de Heartman him love being de King Coconut! Love it! Making all de people live or die, sleep or fuck! Love it!”

The Missus has been waiting until Cecilia has returned to her cabin and her soft bed, happy and loved, before approaching the slumbering form of myself on the deck of Hope.

“Jack?” She whispers in my ear.

“Cecilia?” I reply from within my slumber.

“NOT CECILIA! NOT FUCKING CECILIA!”

“Missus!” I sit bolt upright. “Sorry, Missus, I...I...” words won’t come out.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Shh...” She’s whispering again. “I saw what you just did, Jack. You committed a crime.”

“Crime?”

“The crime of raping a white woman!”

“Raping? I didn’t rape her! I haven’t raped anyone.”

“You took that poor widow woman on the deck of the ship as she was taking her night-time constitutional. I saw it myself, saw it with my own two eyes. You pulled her bloomers down and had your way with her. I saw you, man, and others will have seen you too. They’re bound to have seen you Jackson, bound to, in fact I’m *sure* they are bound to have seen you. But whether they have or they haven’t I will make damn sure of that, man, damn sure of that.”

I’m in a panic. “Missus, Missus, please, I’m...”

“You’re what?”

“Sorry, Missus, sorry.”

“What if...” she stops and plays with me like a spider tormenting a fly, “no, no, this must be reported. This must be reported, a crime as serious as rape must be reported. It must, it absolutely must. But what if...”

“What if what, Missus?”

“What if...” she shakes her head, “No, no, not possible.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Missus?”

“What if you were to...” she pounces on me like a lion eating its prey, dives on me like a shark devouring an old black man. A reptilian tongue is licking out my ear. It’s a slobbering tongue, not dissimilar to that of the, left behind, slave hound, Cerberus.

“Missus?” I can hardly hear for the saliva entering my ear drum on one side. Then she pulls my head over and she’s rimming the other and I’m completely deaf, deaf and numb.

Her hand is on my...

“On yuh ‘Ting’ bwoy, on yuh ‘Ting’! He-he it on yuh ‘Ting’!”

“You’re not pleased to see me, Jack?” words I can barely hear through the spittle flooding my *meatus acusticus externus*.

“Latin now, bwoy, Latin!”

“What can I say, I’m learning new things every day.”

“Dat ‘cos o’ de King Coconut, bwoy, dat ‘cos o’ King Coconut.”

“Yeah.”

“Missus, of course. Anything you want, anything you want...”

“Any ‘Ting’, bwoy, any ‘Ting’.”

Without any warning she’s got me out and is squatting over me. My love has been pitifully cuckolded and now she’s taking back what she saw me give Cecilia, making me hers once again. All the tenderness and love Cecilia showed me is gone, gone for her animalistic

satisfaction. Quickly the Missus reaches climax, without any thought for my pleasure, and then abruptly stands up and walks away.

“This is not the end of this, Jack, not the end of this,” she snarls.

“For once, bwoy, a fuck not enough, not enough,” whispers the Heartman without a hint of his usual gloating.

### **The death of Charles Inman**

“Bloody negro scum!” I open my eyes and the dark night is replaced by a bright day at sea. Hope is gently cutting through the waves, the wind billowing in her sails. Captain Wyn is stood at the helm looking, for him, happy. We are on course, we are moving along to our destination, we’re moving along to the end of Wyn’s thirteenth voyage, his superstitious thirteenth journey. The murder of Bennet has been cathartic, has purged the demons from his soul, and Neptune has been assuaged and once again is looking up favourably from the dark depths below.

“Oh, put the bloody black rat back in its crate!” Since Bennet was whipped to death Charles Inman has been drinking, drinking non-stop, and today he has had a skin full of ‘killdevil’ and when he has had a skin full, he’s a nasty bastard. Even nastier than normal.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru. Nasty bastard. Dat de curse o’ de ‘kill-devil’, mon, de curse. For some it mek dem happy, happy go lucky, de life and soul o’ de party, blah, blah, blah, but for some it mek dem demon.”

“Inman’s a demon anyway,” I say.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Mm...dat very tru, bwoy, dat very tru. But wid no ‘kill-devil’, him might care who watching, wid ‘kill-devil’ him not give a shite.”

“Mm...” Nothing is too debased for Charles Inman when he’s half cut, no violence too vile, no act too extreme. In fact, when he boarded Hope on Plantashion Island ocean-bound for Red Rose City, there is some that might say that the island itself breathed a sigh of relief as if it had got rid of a malignant tumour.

“Tumour, bwoy, tumour! De Heartman him like dat, mon, Me like dat.”

“Thanks.”

No one on Hope likes him. Clearly the slaves hate him. The crew hate him. Captain Wyn despises him.

“Ha-ha! De captain, him tink Inman de dog shite him just trod in, bwoy, de dog shite!”

During the day when Inman is normally sober it’s his tongue that offends everyone, but words can’t hurt people only sticks and stones, or whips and daggers.

“Or de cat o’ nine tails, bwoy, or de cat o’ nine tails. Dat Me favourite pussy. Ha-ha! Question. What yuh favourite pussy, Sir Jackson Moss, bwoy, what yuh favourite pussy? Cecilia’s or de Missus’?”

I ignore him and get back to Inman.

But after dark when he’s been drinking you never know what he will do. No woman is safe from him, white or black, old or young and he’s even partial to the odd succulent young lad if the fancy takes him.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

A few nights ago, he was slobbering over a young sailor before one of the big lads gave him a mighty slap for his efforts and saw him off.

“When him pissed, him a predator, bwoy, a predator!”

When he’s pissed Inman will lash out at anyone getting in his way. But today, today Inman has crept up on Frances in the hope of sewing his seed in her belly again, even though it’s full daylight and everyone can see him.

“Him got no inhibitions, bwoy, no inhibitions! Dat down to de ‘kill-devil’!”

Inman likes sowing his seed in a black woman. He’s raped more than he can remember, and he’s fucked Frances more than once. He likes the idea that with only one hand, resistance is harder for her.

“Him like to fuck dose who can’t resist, bwoy.”

“Sick bastard!”

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, sick!”

But as he approaches her today, he discovers another has obtained her full attention. Since his birth Frances has been tending to the orphaned infant, Joe, giving him his supper and rocking him to sleep and wishing beyond hope, that he was her son to love and hold.

“Dey gonna be parted in Red Rose City, bwoy, dey gonna be parted.”

“What?”

“Frances and baby Jack, dey gonna be parted.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“How? Why? Isn’t Frances going with us and the Missus.”

“She been sold to Dodshon Foster, bwoy, sold on de cheap. Foster need a new maid and de Missus know dere an old crone at de vicarage already. She know dat she look after de runt.”

“Hey! That’s my son you’re talking about!”

“Dat her word, bwoy, her word, not de word o’ de Heartman!”

“What?” says Frances, surprised. She thought she would be safe from Inman during daylight hours and in full view of everyone.

“I said, put the bloody black rat back in its crate!”

Frances is shocked. She has let her guard drop. She’s taken aback and looks around for someone, anyone to come to her assistance. But, before she can reply, Inman snatches baby Joe out of her hands and is swinging him around like a rag doll.

“Baby Joe!” I scream.

“Him vermin to Inman, bwoy, vermin!”

Everything is happening so fast. Inman has a strange look on his face, a look of obsession, similar to the look on Captain Wyn’s face as he was beating Bennet to death. It’s like he’s been possessed by some kind of evil.

Frances is terrified. Truly terrified. Too frightened to speak. Inman slaps Joe and Joe cries. Crying is unusual for Joe as he’s a quiet child, so Inman must have hit him painfully hard.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Don’t hit my son!”

“Him want to kill de bwoy!

“Please, don’t do that, Sir,” pleads Frances. She tries to reach out and save the child but Inman quickly moves out of her way. He’s deceptively fleet of foot.

“Do what? This!” Inman slaps Joe again and the infant is getting really upset now. He’s screaming.

“For God’s sake, him a baby, Sir! Please! Show some...”

“Show some what? Christian compassion? How can I? How can I show Christian compassion for a rat?”

“A rat? Sir, Sir, Me beg yu! Him a baby, a lickle baby.”

“He’s a rat, a black rat and I’m rather partial to rodent for supper,” a viscous looking blade has been pulled out of Inman’s pocket, and suddenly he’s holding it at the baby’s throat. Blood starts to flow. He’s cut the child, cut a baby. CUT HIM!

KILL IT! KILL IT! KILL IT, BWOY A familiar demonic voice is whispering in Inman’s ear. The voice is insistent, persistent and it’s egging Inman on.

“I’m going to!” Screams a rabid Inman. “I’m bloody going to!”

Frances is convinced that Inman is going to kill baby Joe. She’s certain. Certain. “Please help! Please, anyone, help, help please!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman and I watch as in the blink of an eye my strong hand grabs Inman by the hair. Hard by the hair! I've wanted to do that for a long time. The drunken bastard is shocked and drops Joe. The baby falls heavily on the scrubbed deck as Frances lunges forward and scoops him up into her arms. She rushes away, cradling him and soothing him. Quickly, Inman turns the knife on me, the me that is sailing on Hope, but I just knock it easily out of his hands.

"What the fuck are you doing, negro!" screams Inman.

"Stopping you murdering a baby!"

"Murdering a baby? Killing vermin, that's what I was doing, killing vermin, black scum!"

I'm holding Inman back as he flays his arms and legs, trying to punch, kick, bite, scratch me. He's out of control.

"Kill him, bwoy, kill him!" The Heartman is out for blood.

I shake my head, "I won't kill him."

"What is yu, bwoy? A mouse or a mon?"

"Not a murderer!"

"Dat mon try to kill yuh bwoy! Dat mon try and cut him throat, slit the lickle throat o' yuh lickle baby! Kill him! An eye for an eye! Dat de word o'...God!"

"He didn't kill him!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Him going to, bwoy, he going to. And de Heartman him could mek it happen just to show yu.”

“No!” I shake my head as we watch the two men scuffle.

“Me could! De Heartman him could, bwoy!”

“No, please,” I plead with the Heartman. “Please, Sir, I’ve done everything you have asked of me, seen everything you have shown me! I’ve been a head, just a head, and a dodo and a shark. I’ve done everything on this journey, a journey I’m taking just before my death. Please, not that!”

“De Heartman not sure, bwoy, Me not sure.”

“PLEASE!”

The Heartman shrugs. “Since yu ax nice, Sir Jackson Moss, bwoy, since yu ax nice. Well, if de Heartman can’t kill lickle Joe, Me going to kill Charles Inman!” Claws are clicked and the fighting intensifies.

Using all his strength Inman wrestles with me but he’s a pathetic weakling, a bully and rapist, a child molester and he’s half cut. I am strong and clear headed. But as we tussle, we’re getting tangled in rope, lots of rope. It’s everywhere, around feet, hands, body and neck. We’re like flies trapped in a spider’s web. The harder we struggle the more entrapped we become. Harder and harder, more and more entangled. Then Inman has an idea. An idea about how he can kill me.

“DO IT, MON! KILL DE NEGRO!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I will!” Roars Inman.

Inman immediately tries to wrap a noose around my neck, but I duck and, instead of going over my head, it goes over his own.

For a moment my mind, my mind now and my mind then, is full of all the evil this man has done, the people he has inflicted pain on, raped, killed. Men, women and children.

Something deep inside me is telling me that I can kill Charles Inman, that it's divinely authorised; kill Charles Inman, but I am not a murderer, and I can't kill anyone, not even a man like Inman. Knowing that there will be serious consequences I loosen my grip on the rope, but the noose has already twisted and as Inman struggles more and more it tightens. More and more, tighter and tighter. Tighter and tighter, more and more. Inman is struggling for breath now, but nothing I do can help him.

Inman's voice crackles. “Help me!” He's pathetic now. A pathetic specimen of humankind.

Kill him! Kill Him! A voice, an island voice is whispering in my ear now.

“Stop it!” I plead.

“It Me way, bwoy, de demon way! De Heartman him need a heart to harvest. We had a deal, bwoy, a deal. Me save de child, and in return Me get Inman.”

“No!” I roar! “I won't do it!” But I can do nothing. Inman is tightening the noose around his own neck with his flaying and quickly, remarkably quickly I realise Inman is breathing his last breath. I release the Bay View Plantation overlooker, but he suddenly stops moving and goes limp, blood trickling out of the corner of his mouth.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dat take eight minutes and forty-six seconds, bwoy, eight minutes and forty-six seconds from de start of him taunting to him last breath. Dat an ‘portant number for de future, mon, ‘portant number. Dat number gonna change de world.”

Charles Inman is dead. The world is a better place.

### **Chains**

“What can yu expect, bwoy, what can yu expect?” The Heartman and I are sat on either side of myself, me, Jack Moss, Jack Moss the man who had a fight today with Charles Inman. Actually, it was more of a scuffle.

“Scuffle, bwoy, scuffle? What kind o’ half assed word dat, mon, scuffle? It very English, bwoy, very English! Is yu English gent, Sir Jackson Moss? Black English gent? Scuffle! ‘Actually, it was more of a scuffle’. Face de fact, yu kill him, bwoy, yu kill him.”

“I didn’t!”

“He dead, mon, dead?”

“Yes.”

“And yu fighting him, bwoy, before him die, before him die?”

“Err...yeah, no, it was more of a scuffle than a fight!”

“Dere yu go again, ‘it was more of a scuffle than a fight.’ BULLSHIT! Yu kill him, now yu face de consequences, bwoy, yu face de consequences.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

In between us Jack, me, is sat nodding. I've been here since the fight. Sat in the darkness. In the dark room on board Hope. As we sit a door opens and a dim light appears.

"Jack?" whispers a female voice.

"She come for some more 'Ting', bwoy!" The Heartman grins at me, grins at me with his drawn-on grin, his sinister drawn-on grin.

I shake my head. "In my state? I don't think so."

"She a womon wid needs, bwoy, needs. She a widow womon. She ain't been having any 'Ting' for very long time, very long time. Or maybe...maybe she want some demon 'Ting'?"

I glare at the demon and snap, "I don't think so!"

"Jealous, bwoy, jealous?"

"Jack?" We move aside and let Cecilia crouch next to me, Jack. I wake up and smile.

"You came?" I say.

"Did you think I wouldn't?"

I shrug. "We've not known each other long." In fact, I don't know what she sees in me.

The Heartman winks. "De Heartman do, bwoy, de Heartman do! Look sout, mon, sout! Down dere, bwoy!"

"We've known each other long enough," continues Cecilia. She has brought broth and she delicately feeds me. I have never been fed by a white woman before.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Ha-ha! Yu eaten plenty of white womon dough, bwoy, eaten plenty of white womon!”

“I didn’t think you would come because of the fight, of what happened?”

“You saved a baby’s life, everyone knows Inman killed himself, and good riddance.

That’s another one of the bad lot gone,” Cecilia was clearly deceptively strong willed.

“I’ll hang for it.”

Cecilia is silent for a moment.

“Cecilia, I’ll hang for it.” I repeat, staring at her. “A black man fights a white man, and the black man dies, that’s divine justice, the white man gets killed, that’s murder. No one will believe otherwise. No one.”

“On Plantashion Island maybe, but you weren’t on Plantashion Island, Jack, you were on a ship registered to Red Rose City. And that’s where we’re headed. You will face the laws of Red Rose City, not the slave code of Plantashion Island.”

“Dat code draconian, bwoy, draconian. Dat code inspired by de underworld, mon, de underworld.”

“The laws of Red Rose City?”

“Yes, you’ll be tried.”

“Well, that’s it then! I’ll be tried and executed.”

“We’ll have to see. I have money, Jack, plenty of money and I *know* people. Important people.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I shrug. "I don't know why you're doing this for me, Cecilia?"

The Heartman winks at me. "Me do, bwoy, de Heartman do!" and he grabs his crotch.

**Hope is home**

Despite the ungodly hour, the quayside is a hub of activity as Hope is slowly moored alongside two other brigg's that are loading up to catch the tide to get out of the estuary and head for Africa.

"Much on Hope to interest me today, Sir Reginald?" Asks James Booth, Collector of His Majesty's Customs, as he sidles up. Booth, though a tax man, is an honest man, who, unsurprisingly, few of the merchants like to say too much to.

The Heartman and I stand on the quayside next to Booth and Sir Reginald Nisbet. We're dressed in heavy winter cloaks. I pull the collar up to protect me from the icy wind. "Red Rose City?" I mumble, stomping my feet to keep warm.

"Red Rose City, bwoy, Red Rose City. De place where Hope starts and ends."

"You can say that again."

"De place where Hope starts and ends!"

Sir Reginald stares at Booth as if he's just trodden in dog shit and snarls. "Just the usual sugar, coffee, cotton and rum. All the meat has been accounted for on the ledger. You'll get your cut Booth, don't worry yourself, Sir."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Morning, Samuel,” says Booth ignoring the tone of Sir Reginald.

“Morning, Mr Booth, Sir,” replies Sam with a smile. Sam likes James Booth. He’s always had a kind word for him, and Mrs Booth often sends him small treats which Mr Booth gives to him when Sir Reginald isn’t looking. It’s no secret that the Booths feel sorry for Sam for having to live with Sir Reginal Nesbit, merchant, slave trader and part owner of Hope.

Booth looks down at his inventory. “I see that Dodshon Foster is returning from Plantashion Island and...Reverend Clarkson is returning with a...ah yes, a new wife I see. The former Mrs Benjamin Smith, widow of the Liverpool merchant.”

The slave trader knows about everything that happens on one of his ships. “Aye, a widow she is,” replied Nesbit, “yes, the widow of Benjamin Smith.”

“Mm...Benjamin Smith? Wasn’t he...?”

“...a good man, aye, a very good man.”

“Operated out of Liverpool if I remember rightly?”

“Second time you’ve said that Booth, is your brain going soft, man. But, aye, a big fish was Ben Smith, a very big fish, two dozen ships and a plantation and his finger in a lot of pies, including yon, Hope. Widow would have been worth a pretty penny when she married yon man of God, no doubt.”

“Dat Booth him know what kind of pies Massa Smith had him finger in, bwoy, him know,” chuckled the Heartman. “Him got a coconut for a brain like yuhs truly.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I’m glad he’s dead,” I say.

“Glad him down below, bwoy, down below. Well, ain’t yu gonna ax de Heartman what kind o’ pies de Massa have him finger in, bwoy? Ain’t yu gonna ax?”

I sigh. I know he won’t let it drop. He never lets anything drop.

“No siree! De Heartman him ain’t letting notting drop, bwoy, notting. Apart from de coconut on yuh head next time we on a beach together! Ax Me?”

I sigh, “what kind of pies did the Massa have his finger in?”

“Funny yu should ax dat at dis precise moment, Sir Jackson Moss, funny. De Massa, Massa Benjamin Smith, him had him fingers, him fat sausage finger, in meat pies, cos dat is de name de Heartman tought up for de business o’ transporting slave from one continent to anodder. Meat pies. De slave is meat, bwoy, meat. Food for de shark, if yu will recall.”

“I recall.”

Booth looks down at Samuel, for Samuel is a black lad and wonders where his parents came from and how they got to Plantashion Island.

“I know how they got to Plantashion Island,” I mumble.

“Yeah, yu do, cos de Heartman, him show yu, bwoy, him show yu.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Booth and his wife are devout Methodists and Mrs Susan Booth is a mover and shaker in the new abolition movement. She's also the sister of Cecilia Brown. Neither the Booths nor Cecilia Brown have got any time for Sir Reginald, or Dodshon Foster or Massa and Missus Smith (now Clarkson), nor Clarkson himself.

"It useful reading minds, bwoy, useful."

"Useful or a curse?"

"Dere notting wrong wid de odd curse, bwoy, notting wrong."

Getting back to the Booths and Cecilia, "I would never have thought Toubob would have those thoughts."

"We already discussed dis 'Toubob' definition, bwoy, already discussed it!"

"Yeah, well, old habits. I don't know if I'll ever understand compassionate Tou...white people."

"Dat surprise yu, bwoy?"

"Yes."

"Let de Heartman 'xplain, bwoy, let Me 'xplain. White folk on Plantashion Island ain't like white people in odder places, bwoy, ain't like 'em. Me mean, some are Toubob, dat tru, some are, but some ain't. In odder places dere laws, in Plantashion Island dere just de slave code. De Heartman him mention it earlier."

"The Slave Code?"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“De Heartman ‘xplain in de next book, in de sequel, in Joe’s story.”

Nesbit feels very differently about Smith than Booth. “Crying shame. Just goes to show you can’t rely on your three score years and ten, James.”

Booth never actually met the man, Massa Smith. He just heard of him by reputation. It was said that Smith was one of the richest men in Liverpool. “No,” James Booth quickly changes the subject. He needs information for his reports. “The middle passage was profitable this journey, Sir Reginald?”

Nesbit nods, he doesn’t like telling James Booth much. Always the bare minimum. “Aye, plenty of fresh meat,” his face twitches. His pointed features, the sabre shaped nose sat in the middle of the round turnip head, are becoming more prominent with each passing year, every good meal and every glass of expensive wine. “Two hundred and fifty negroes.”

“Two hundred and fifty?”

“That’s what I said. No more, no less,” snaps Nesbit.

The Heartman nudges me. “Dat Booth, him know dat Hope can only transport two hundred and fifty slaves, him know it but look at him face, bwoy, look at it. Him doubt dis figure accurate, mon, him doubt it. Him know about de wastage, bwoy, him know about it.”

Sir Reginal Nesbit rubs his thumb and forefinger and laughs. “Looks like being a good year, James. And,” like all the merchants he begrudges James Booth taxing his endeavours, “what’s good for me is good for His Majesty.”

Booth ignores the jibe. He’s used to it.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Sir Reginald, Sir!” Captain Wyn is calling. He is beckoning that he’s needed aboard.

“Dat unusual, bwoy, dat unusual ‘cos, Captain Wyn, him know dat Sir Reginald him scared o’ water!”

Sir Reginald glances at Sam. “Go on lad, go and see.”

Sam starts for Hope.

“No, Sir,” shouts the captain. “It will have to be you, Sir.”

Nesbit’s head turns turnip purple. “Bloody hell!”

“Do you want me to come, Sir Reginald?” Asks Booth. But the look on Wyn’s face, Wyn’s normally inscrutable, immobile, set-in stone, unimpressed leather tanned granite face tells Sir Reginald that this is something he wants to talk to him about well out of earshot of the tax man.

“No, thank you, Booth. I think we can manage. Come on Samuel, lad, time is money! My money!”

Sir Reginald Nesbit follows the young black lad up the gang plank with his hands on his shoulders. His nails are digging into Sam’s flesh he is so scared. Hope is fully moored, and goods are being quickly unloaded. The ship and the quay are a hive of activity. Sam sees his friend, Thomas, on board and imperceptibly nods his greeting which is returned by his only black friend.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Only black friend, bwoy, only black friend!” snaps the Heartman. “Dat bwoy him ONLY friend! De black mon, old or young, dey have no friends, bwoy, no friends. Mebee out in de sticks, in de uplands, but not in slave town like Red Rose City, Liverpool or Bristol.”

Looking down, Sam sees that James Booth is still watching them board.

“Is that nosey bugger still watching us, Samuel?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Bloody spy! Bloody King’s spy. Scared someone’s going to steal from him, that’s what he is. I tell you lad without men like me there would be no bloody crown in this country! No bloody crown and the country would be bankrupt! We are the honest workers who have made Britain great.”

“Honest workers!” I snort.

“Him delusional, bwoy, him delusional! Mon like dat see what dey want to see, and dey don’t see de suffering dat dere wealth been built upon.”

On board they are met by Captain Wyn who carefully guides the businessman away.

“Problem, Captain Wyn?” Sir Reginal likes Captain Wyn. Wyn is a man who gets the job done and a joke is always lost on him.

“De Heartman, him a joker...”

“Really?”

“Listen to dis. What really killed de Dodo, bwoy?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I shake my head.

“De Don'tDon't!”

The humour is lost on me.

“Doomed voyage, Sir,” declares Captain Wyn grimly. “Doomed voyage.”

“Doomed how, Sir?”

“Two dead, Sir, two dead.”

“Two white men dead?”

Captain Wyn nods. “Aye. The first, needed to be flogged. Needed to be. No doubt. He’s of no consequence. Broke the rules of the sea. Had to be punished. Had to be punished. Couldn’t take the punishment. Soft bastard landlubber, soft bastard landlubber...” the captain is rambling.

“Yes, yes, Wyn, and the second man, Sir?”

“Charles Inman.”

Sir Reginald is shocked. “Inman is dead?”

“Killed, Sir. Killed by a slave.”

“Killed by a negro?” Sir Reginald didn’t particularly like Inman, no one liked the overlooker, but you couldn’t let a negro go around killing white men, what would the world come to if a black man could kill a white man and get away with it Scott free? He can’t believe it. “Killed by a negro?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Aye, he’s here now. Just being brought up.”

I, Jack Moss, the prisoner on Hope, am being led off in shackles. I glance at the black lad stood with the white man who has just arrived on Hope, and he tries to nod at me. I ignore him. The fucking traitor. The Judas. The black Toubob. I look around but the darkness is still enveloping the cold, unwelcoming land that I am about to set foot on for the first time. Looking down to the quayside I see Cecilia speaking with a man, clearly an important man. It looks like she is imploring him. He is trying to calm her. His hands are on her shoulder and he’s trying to subdue her, but she is clearly angry. No, not angry, determined. She looks up at me and can see that her face is set.

“She small but determined, bwoy, small but determined. Dat count for a lot in dis world, determination.”

“You murder a white man, negro?” asks Sir Reginald.

I speak in a quiet dignified voice. “He killed himself. It was an accident.”

“Well, lad, fortunately or unfortunately for you that will have to be decided by a judge,” Sir Reginald spat on the ground.

“Him hate de judiciary, bwoy, hate em, dat Turnip Head hate em. Him tink dey block trade. Dey mek de law and dat block trade, free trade. De meat trade. And de meat trade is money, plenty money. Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Sir Reginal leans over to Captain Wyn. “Pity he didn’t kill him on Plantashion Island or he’d be swinging from a noose already.”

“Hanged already,” I mutter, I Jack who is watching proceedings.

“Want to know how dat feels, bwoy, how dat feels? How hanging by de neck feels. Just for illustrative purposes o’ course, just for illustrative purposes. To help de readers understand better?”

“I suppose...”

### **Dancing legs**

I am being led by some local ruffians along the quayside. Nobody notices me, or admits to noticing me, as they’re meant to be loading ships, and if they are seen noticing me instead of working, they’ll lose their jobs and their families will starve.

“Dese hard times in Red Rose City, bwoy, dese hard times.”

“Hard times?”

“Hard times. De war wid de frogs just finish, bwoy, de war wid de frogs. Now dere no froggie ships to plunder and steal from, now de English will have to work for a living instead of stealing frog gold!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I look at him as we accompany myself, Jack Moss, in shackles along the cobbled quayside.

“More in de next book, bwoy, more in de next book! Promise. More frog fighting and plundering. Plenty more. And yu know by now dat de Heartman him a demon o’ him word, bwoy, a demon o’ him word! Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

We climb away from the river and the ships. The day is just dawning, and the dirty, cold, filthy city is just starting to wake. We watch as disease ridden urchins, working men and women, children and old crones come out of their back-to-back tenements to sleepily shit in the gutters and drains, and piss up against the walls of their neighbour’s homes.

“Dey live like shit, bwoy, live like shit.”

“Great Britain?” I mumble.

“De poor is piss poor wedder dey live in Red Rose City or Plantashion Island, bwoy, dey piss poor wherever dey live.”

“At least they’re not slaves here.”

“Dat tru, bwoy, tru, but mek no mistake, bwoy, mek no mistake dey is owned mon, owned by de poverty o’ deir birth, de poverty o’ deir birth.”

We round a corner and a large, formidable building looms in front of us.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dis de hanging corner, bwoy, de hanging corner. Look.” Claws point up to a corpse hanging from the end of a noose. “Dat de last person to be hanged, bwoy, de last. Dat gonna be yu, mon, yu. Just for illustrative purposes. Just for de readers. Watch.”

A rough bag is pulled over my head and then I feel a heavy noose yanked down and tightened. There is a grinding noise and a creaking sound and suddenly I’m flying, flying high in the sky. Going up, up into the sky. Higher and higher, high up into the sky. Wait, I’m not climbing or flying, I’m dropping. Then I stop. Abruptly stop. My body is not my own now, it’s gone, gone. I’m not in control, death is. My legs draw up to my chin, like I’m sitting in a comfortable armchair in the plush parlour of Frilly Milly. A plush armchair in front of a warm welcoming fire that keeps the chill of Red Rose City from my bones. Now I’m up, I’m standing. My legs are stretching. Stretching right out. Now, I’m dancing, dancing, dancing, legs moving back and forth, forwards and back, up and down. Faster, faster, faster, fast, fast, fast, fast. They won’t stop. If they stop, I stop, so they don’t stop. Now I’m sitting again, but the chair is not a comfortable armchair, it’s a rickety chair in a dirty floored slave house in Hermitage, the slave village on Plantashion Island. I’m stood up again and my legs are dancing again. Harder and faster I dance, harder and faster. Keep dancing, keep moving, keep dancing, keep moving, don’t stop. Now I’m thrown backwards, backwards, backwards hard. I’m on a soft bed with Cecilia, she’s with me, I’m with her, I’m in her. We are together. Then I am back up and I’m dancing again, my legs are dancing, dancing, dancing, dancing. I throw myself back again and I’m on a bed again, this is the Missus’s bed, soft but uncomfortable and she’s on me again. Fucking me. Then I stop.

The End of Book Three

**Book Four - England – The End**

**The beginning of the end**

I suddenly stop dancing. There is laughter ringing in my ears. Mad, demonic laughter. Laughter that can only come from one person. “Just a lickle bit o’ Heartman mischief, bwoy, a lickle bit o’ Heartman mischief, to mek Sir Jackson Moss and de readers tink about what might be...”

I can feel my heart pounding in my chest. “I’m...not...dead?”

“Dead? Dead? What de hell dead, bwoy, what dead? What life? What det? Life, det? Life, det, de line be blurred, mon, de line be blurred.”

“Where the...hell are we now?” Out of the corner of my eye I can see the Heartman. I can see his head. In front of me is a window, a window that’s very close to our faces, and at the other side of the glass lots and lots of people, dozens, no...there are hundreds of people. Young people, old people, white people, yellow people, brown people...black people. Nobody is in chains or shackles, no one is beating or shouting at anyone. No one is whipping anyone. The multicoloured people are all milling around, wearing brightly coloured but very small, badly fitting clothes.

“Hehe! Dey sure are tight dose clothes, bwoy, dey sure are tight! T.I.G.H.T!”

“You can spell!”

“Ha-ha! Tight! Specially de top o’ de pretty girls, bwoy, specially dem top.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

They are tight. So tight. In fact, it looks like the adults are wearing children's clothes and the children...well, they are clearly wearing baby clothes. The clothes are so small that I can see arms, legs, bottoms and bellies. Especially bellies. Big bellies. I've only ever seen bellies like those on rich Toubob.

The Heartman is excited. "What about de breasts, bwoy, what about de breasts!"

It's true. The breasts are everywhere and none of the women are wearing bonnets. They have hair on show aplenty, multi coloured, BIG hair everywhere.

"Big hair, bwoy, big, big hair!"

And their faces, the faces of the women, they are brightly painted like the faces of the whores at the Royal Navy Hotel in Bridgetown on Plantashion Island who are looking to have a sailor bounce up and down on top of them. Then...my eyes work their way down from the painted faces again to...breasts! Breasts! Ample breasts – well, the tops of them...the Heartman was right.

"Ha-ha! Breasts! De Heartman him always right. Me tell yu dat de Heartman him sure like dis spot, bwoy, him like it plenty. What about Sir Jackson Moss, yu hagree?"

I can't help myself. I'm still a young man. Even after being sexually abused by the Missus all my life, I'm a young man. "Hagree!"

"Ah! De Heartman, Mr King Coconut himself, him could stay here all de live long day, mon, all de live long day! Ah...on a day like today when de sun is hot, hot, hot, de girls come



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

out in de little tops dat barely covers anyting, and de breasts dey are looking mighty fine, mon, mighty fine! Yes, Siree, de Heartman, him likes dis place plenty!”

The milling people are looking all around the room, the huge, bright room at statues, paintings, books, bones and animals that look like they haven’t moved or breathed for years...

“More dan just years, bwoy, plenty more! See dat skellington over dere?”

Out of the corner of my eye I see him nod.

“Over dere!”

“Yes.”

“Dat de skellington of fire breathing dragon dat die millions o’ years ago, bwoy, millions.”

The dragon skeleton is gigantic! It fills most of the huge room with its long neck and long tail. It’s...bigger than one of the ships that Toubob brings all the slaves to Plantashion Island in.

“Yeah mon, much bigger! Dat Dippydocus, bwoy, dippydocus!”

“What?”

“Dippydocus!”

“Actually, Sir,” a familiar voice to my right speaks and makes me jump out of my skin.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I try and peer. It's hard to make out but there is another head next to us, another head like us, because I fear that the Heartman and I are heads, just heads, once again, just like we were in the parlour of Frilly Milly such a very long time ago with Sir Richard Owen.

“What yu saying, Sir Dick?” asks the Heartman angrily.

“I was saying, Sir, that actually, it's the remains of a diplodocus, Sir, a diplodocus. I am an expert on dinosaurs, Sir. In fact, I am the one who coined that name.”

“What yu saying, Sir Dick, bwoy, what yu saying?”

“I'm saying that you're wrong, Sir, wrong.”

“Wrong!” his demon head nearly explodes!

“Wrong, Sir.”

“De Heartman him de King Coconut, bwoy, de King Coconut! De Heartman him give yu fucking wrong, mon, give yu fucking wrong! Him gonna whip yuh ass, bwoy, whip it good when him get himself some claws. Ain't no one back answers de Heartman, mon, no one.”

“But Sir...”

The Heartman clicks his tongue, in the absence of a body he can't click his claws and so he has to improvise and, evidently, there is a tongue inside his sealed, mouthless skull. “Less of dat jibber jabber, Sir Dick, less of it! De Heartman, him ain't ever wrong, bwoy, never ever!”

Moving my eyes towards Sir Richard, I can see that he's sleeping now.

“Who right now, bwoy, who right now?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“You,” I sigh. I know better than to argue. He has just hung me from the neck in the last scene after all. I peer around. “Where are we and why are we here? Am I dead?”

“We all dead, bwoy, all dead. Even dat Dippydocus dead! Especially dat fucking Dippydocus, cos him just a skellington. Where our soul lie, bwoy? Dat de question, bwoy, dat de question. Where dey lie?”

“But, what...what happened to me?”

“Ooh...breasts! Plenty breasts!” The Heartman is distracted by a passing pretty brown girl. “Wait, what yuh jibber jabber? What yu want to know, bwoy?”

Angrily, questions squirt out of my mouth like crap from a shitting dog who has gorged himself on food stolen from the master’s table. “We met in my cell on my last night alive, Sir, and the last thing I remember before waking up here is hanging by the neck until I died. Tell me what happens? I have to know what happened. Not just for me, I don’t care about myself, for my children, for my people. I have to know what happened.”

“Happen.”

“What?”

“Tell yu what happen, bwoy, what happen.”

“What?”

“Happen! Is yu an empty peanut, bwoy? An empty peanut, not a coconut like de Heartman de King Coconut?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I don’t understand?”

The Heartman sighs. “Time, life, it ain’t ever finished, bwoy, never ever. To use writer speak, it ain’t ever in de past tense, mon, it always in the present.”

More verbal dog shite pours from my mouth. “Alright. Am I found guilty? Am I executed? What the hell happens?” I try and glare out of the corner of my eye. “And what happens to my friends? What about Frances? What happens to Frances, one handed Fanny, the one I...”

“Chop de hand off, bwoy, chop de hand off?”

“Yes! Her! And what happens to the Missus? What happens to...Cecilia? Does she ever become my wife...and my children? Children! Children! I have children. I had two with the Missus, a white one and a black one, two boys. I know the white one will be alright, white children, rich white ones are always alright. But what about my black boy, what happens to him? What happens to my black lad? What happens to Joe? And, what about with Cecilia?”

He gently biffs me with his skull. “De Heartman tink yu lurve her, bwoy, him tink yu lurve her.”

I stare at him. “What if I do! And do I have children with her? What about the other black people who live in Red Rose City, Thomas and the black Toubob...”

“Sam?”

“Yes. “

“Sam ain’t no black Toubob, bwoy, him ain’t no black Toubob.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Whatever. What happens to him. And,” I look around and stop. “Where the hell are we?”

“Ah! Dis place is de pride and joy of Sir Dick, bwoy, de pride and joy, him life work, mon, life work. Him legacy.”

“Is that why he’s still here?”

“Yeah, mon! Sir Dick, when him die, him tell ‘em in him last will and testament dat him ain’t going nowhere, bwoy, nowhere! Him say ‘you move my body from this place and I will come and haunt you for fucking eternity!’ Me paraphrase him. Him ain’t going nowhere. Him say him want to stay, just him head, all him need is him eyes, bwoy, just him eyes, so him can keep ‘em on him pride and joy.”

“Wouldn’t that scare these people?”

“Dese people! Dese people! Dese people dey never frightened, bwoy! Dey all too stupid to be scared, Jackson Moss, all too stupid! And dey all too busy wid dere lickle ‘d’vices’ to be scared, bwoy! And ‘sides, Sir Dick, him want to keep an eye on him dippydocus!”

“Diplodocus,” I correct.

Red demon eyes bore into my decapitated skull. “Yu want de answers, bwoy, yu want answers or not? Yu want to find out yuh fate? Yu want to find out about yuh friends, de black people, de slave, de Missus and yuh wife? Yu want to find out about yuh boys?”

I nod my decapitated skull as best I can.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Alright. Good dat we got dat clear, bwoy, good dat we got dat clear. Now, let finish dis story, bwoy, finish dis story afore de Heartman him get on to dat of Joe.”

“Joe?”

“Yes Sir. Dat story a whole new book, bwoy, a whole new book! Him go to sea, mon, to sea.”

“To sea? A slave?”

“Naw, mon, no! Not slave, bwoy, not slave. Did de Heartman say him slave? Did him? Did him?”

“No.”

“No, him did not! Joe a sailor, mon, a sailor! Important sailor, bwoy, big friend to a ‘portant admiral, mon. Plenty, plenty respect, bwoy, plenty respect, him even kiss him when him dying, mon, kiss him when him dying! But dat story has more dan its fair share ups and downs, mon, more dan its fair share. It good story, bwoy, good story. Plenty fights, plenty fuck, plenty killing, plenty greed, plenty Heartman mischief, plenty everyting!”

“I’d like to see that.”

The Heartman chuckles. “Oh, yu will, bwoy, yu will. Sir Jackson Moss, yu gonna be plenty sick o’ de sight o’ de Heartman by de time him finish! And yu going to experience it all wid de Heartman, every heartbeat, just like dis lickle adventure, bwoy, just like dis lickle adventure. Now, less o’ de jibber jabber and back to de end of yuh story or is it just de beginning o’ de end, or de end o’ de beginning. Yu get to choose, bwoy.”

“I get to choose?”

“Yeah, bwoy, yu get to choose what real and what not.”

“What’s real and what’s not?”

“Yu deaf, bwoy, deaf? Is de spit o’ de Missus’ mouth still clogging yuh ear holes?”

I cringe at the thought. She does like to suck on my ears.

“Eeuw, bwoy, eeuw! Hagree?”

“Hagree!”

“Dat what Me said, bwoy, what de Heartman said! Yuh ears full of tato? Tato and saliva?”

“Potato.”

“Dat what me said. Tato! Tato and saliva.”

He is disgusting! “Potato and saliva? I get to choose what’s real?”

“What reality, bwoy, what reality? Reality what yu want it to be, mon, what yu really want it to be. Argh! Enough of de jibber jabber, de Heartman him got Joe’s story to tell and him can’t tell Joe’s story when yu is giving him all dis jibber jabber! Now, de Heartman him gonna deal wid de Missus once and for all...dis sad, bwoy, sad...yu gonna cry, yu all gonna cry at home...” he clicks his tongue.

**Elizabeth**

I can smell something familiar even before my eyes become accustomed to the gloom. It's so gloomy after the brightness of Sir Richard's 'Dippydocus' room pride and joy. The smell is the scent of...

"Sex, bwoy, sex?"

"No, no, well not exactly," then I remember the smell.

"Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do! How yuh 'ting', mon?"

I ignore him. We are in the bedroom of the Missus but it's not in the big house at Bay View Plantation, it's in a big house somewhere colder, somewhere much colder. There is a fire roaring away behind us and the Heartman is warming his arse in front of it.

"Hehe! Warming de ass of de Heartman, bwoy, warming de ass. In dese climes, dese northern climes it gotta be done, mon, gotta be done."

"Where are we?"

"We in de heart o' Red Rose City, bwoy, in de heart o' Red Rose City. Dis de house of de Reverend Clarkson and de Missus. We in de future, seven or eight years in de future. Not yuh future, her future."

Looking around, I can see all the familiar belongings of the Missus but nothing...male.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dat because him never come in here, mon, never. Dey not fuck, bwoy, dey not fuck. Not often, not often at all. De Reverend him more devoted to him right hand dan de Missus, but not o’ him own choosing. Him a man, him need de jiggle-jiggle. Him keep trying wid de Missus but she can’t stand de sight o’ him, bwoy, can’t stand de sight o’ him. Den him tried to fuck Bonnie, but de Missus find out and threaten to bite his bollocks off.” The Heartman’s voice changes to that of the Missus. “You go near my Bonnie again Thomas and I will personally make sure you will never go near a woman ever again!”

“So, she didn’t actually threaten to bite his bits off?” I ask.

“Dat de artistic licence o’ de Heartman, bwoy, de artistic licence. But, back to de Reverend Massa. Him get plenty o’ whore at de tavern dough, bwoy, plenty at de tavern. But now and den de Missus feel in need of a man and if dere no one else she let de reverend climb aboard. Until de threat to bite him bollocks off.”

“Bite his bollocks off?” I chuckle. “I can actually imagine her threatening to do that!”

“De Heartman him can imagine her doing dat too, bwoy, Me can imagine dat too! Fact, de Heartman him reckon it really could happen! Hagree?”

“Yeah, hagree!”

“Hehe. Dat mon him been ‘quainted wid him hand and de whores most o’ the years dey been married, bwoy, most o’ de years.”

I’m curious. “What kind of a marriage is it? The marriage between the Missus and the Reverend Massa?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“It a marriage o’ convenience, bwoy, a marriage o’ convenience.”

“But the Missus is rich.”

“Me tell yu before, she rich but she have no power, bwoy, not in society.”

“Of course, she has power.”

“Power over de slave, power over de workers, power over de servant, power over yuh... ‘Ting’! Not power in society, bwoy, not in society, Red Rose City society. Dat why she need a husband, one dat alive. And when she marry de Reverend Massa, him was de one who became wealthy, de one who got her money. De Heartman tell yu, de womon need a husband, bwoy, de womon need a husband. But de Missus not need him tiny ‘ting’, dough. Most o’ de time. And, she find plenty of young white ‘ting’ here in England. Dis delivery bwoy, dat delivery bwoy, dis gardener, dat gardener. Anyting she fancy!”

A pang of jealousy wracks my body. I’m shocked. Shocked at my feelings. I didn’t think I had any feelings aside from...disgust.

The Heartman chuckles. “Sir Jackson Moss, yu feeling more for de Missus dan yu tought, bwoy, more dan yu tought. Yu sentimental creature, mon, sentimental creature. When yu is physical wid womon yu has feelings. But de Missus she different. She cold. Watch.”

In the gloom I can see her, the Missus. She is sat at a fine table in front of a mirror, brushing her long hair. The hair is soft and luxuriant looking. I remember stroking that hair.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yu stroke her hair gentle, bwoy, yu stroke her hair gentle, but she never gentle! She almost pulled what hair yu got out wid her bare hands, mon!” This amuses him.

I stare at him.

“Damn right it ‘muses de Heartman, bwoy, damn right! But it tru, she a fine womon, bwoy, she a fine womon, dat tru!” He grabs his crotch hard. “If only de Heartman human, him could fuck human womon.”

“What about Rachel, in the Royal Navy Hotel?”

“Ah, dat womon, dat womon she a creature o’ de night, bwoy, she a creature o’ de night. More in anodder story, mebee.”

I look at the Missus and shake my head.

“She tinkin about yu, bwoy, she tinkin about yu.”

“Me?”

“Listen.”

Immediately we’re inside the head of the Missus.

“Ah, Jack Moss,” she thinks. “Jack Moss, why did you have to go and get yourself arrested. Why, oh why? You stupid, stupid bloody man. It didn’t have to end then, didn’t have to end. You could have stayed here. Stayed here at the Vicarage. It wouldn’t have been a hard life, not hard like working on the plantation. And we could have spent every night together. Now that I am definitely too old to have children, we could have...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Are you saying she loves me?” I ask the Heartman.

“De Heartman him ain’t saying notting, bwoy, Me ain’t saying notting. Listen, mon, listen!”

“Hell! I could do with a good fucking now,” as she turns, I get the shock of my life. The absolute shock of my life.

“Heartman magic, bwoy, Heartman magic! One minute she got slim belly, next it full o’ baby! Heartman magic at it very best! Hagree?”

“Heartman mischief more like!”

“Dey de same ting, bwoy, dey de same ting!”

“Oh, no! I can’t be, can’t be, not again! I’m too old! Too bloody old. I didn’t even notice the bump. How could I miss it! I thought I’d just eaten too many of old Ethel’s dumplings!”

There is only one way she could have missed the bump. Heartman mischief!

“Haha! Dat tru! Dat Tru! Heartman mischief, bwoy, Heartman mischief!”

“Bonnie! BONNIE! Bonnie, come now! Come straight away! BONNIE! My waters have broken!”

“She’s having a baby!”

“Ten out of fucking ten, bwoy, ten out of fucking ten! Does notting get past de big brown eyes of Sir Jackson Moss, him wid THE ‘Ting’, the ‘Ting’ of the ‘Ting’ town, ‘Ting’ shire, ‘Ting’ land.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I freeze. I remember what happened last time the Missus gave birth.

“Yeah, yu do, bwoy, yeah yu do. But watch dis, dis an altogether bigger ball game! An altogether bigger game of...” he jiggles his pants... “balls. Dis de biggest one, de ultimate. Do yu know what ultimate means, Sir Jackson Moss? Do yu know what it *can* mean, bwoy?”

I do but I need it spelling out to me what it is he’s going to do. Lives are at stake.

“It mean de end, bwoy, it mean de end.”

Bonnie scurries into the room just behind old Ethel Marshall, the housekeeper at the vicarage.

“Mam?” asks Ethel.

“My waters have broken, Ethel! Where’s Bonnie?”

Bonnie is right behind Ethel, “Me here, Missus, Me here!”

“I’ll get some hot water and towels,” suggests the old woman.

“No! Not just hot water and towels, no, no, no! Get the doctor! Send for the quack! I need the doctor, get him now!”

“Yes, Mam, straight away, Mam, I’ll send my Walter straight out for him.”

“No! Not Walter! Not Walter! Anyone but bloody Walter! Anyone! And send my husband away! I don’t want him in the house whilst I’m giving birth. Not in the house I tell you! Tell him to leave!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Missus, yu don’t look good. Don’t look good at all,” Bonnie puts her hand on the brow of the Missus. “Oh, yu all hot, yu burning up, Missus. Burning up bad.”

Bonnie is swatted away, “get off my fucking head, girl!”

“But, Missus, yu burning up!”

“How can I be burning up, girl? The room is like an igloo, a fucking igloo! So how can I be burning up? Put some more coal on the fire Bonnie! More coal! Empty the scuttle on to it, girl!”

After tending to the fire Bonnie puts her hand to the brow of the Missus again but it’s quickly batted away. “I said get off me you stupid negro!”

“Hot water and plenty of towels, Mam,” Ethel sets the water and towels down and stares at her mistress. “Mam, you don’t look very well, not very well at all.”

“Not you as well! I’m perfectly fine, well at least I will be when this little bastard is pulled out of me. Now, where’s that fucking stupid doctor.”

“Walter has gone to fetch him.”

“Walter, that lazy old cunt! I said not to send Walter! Are you bloody deaf woman? Walter won’t be able to find his bloody way out of the garden, let alone find the doctor. I should have sacked the pair of you when I first arrived in this God forsaken city. Should have kicked you out on the streets to wallow in the fucking gutter, in the shit in the gutter like the shit that you are!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“She don’t mean dat,” Bonnie mouths to Ethel. But Ethel doesn’t care. She despises the Missus just as much as the Missus despises every person in the world. She hates the Missus for what she’s done and continues to do to baby Joe.

“Shh...” The Heartman whispers to me. “We gonna tell em about dat in a minute, bwoy, tell em about dat in a minute. Me gonna tell yu de fate of de Missus first. Listen and watch carefully, mon, it good. It fine piece o’ Heartman mischief.”

“Missus!” Screams Bonnie.

The missus is trying to stand but her legs buckle beneath her. Ethel and Bonnie manage to catch her just before she crashes to the floor and help her onto her bed. They have horrified looks on their faces.

I’m shocked. “She’s blue?”

“Blue, bwoy, blue. She dying, she dying, mon.”

I stare at him. The Missus has been a constant in my life for so long, a terrible, terrible constant, but one that I’ve just got used to despising and hating with every fibre of my being. She’s always seemed so...

“Indestructible, bwoy, indestructible?”

I nod. “I can’t believe the Missus is dying?”

“Believe it! De Missus dying, bwoy, dying. De baby already dead inside her. It killing her having it still in her belly, it killing her.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Mam?”

“Missus?”

“Get me Jack! Get me fucking Jack!”

They look at each other. “Jack?”

“I don’t know any Jack, Mam,” says Ethel.

“Jack him gone, Missus,” says Bonnie. “Gone.”

He nudges me. “Go to her, bwoy, go to her.”

I walk slowly over to the bed, the death bed of the Missus and without thinking...take her hand. It’s cold. Ice cold. Lifeless. She looks up into my face, into my eyes. “Jack? You came. I knew you would. What do they know, stupid women!”

I squeeze her hand. “I came.”

Someone coughs over my shoulder, “hey, Missus. De Heartman be here too, girl, de Heartman.”

Her eyes widen as she notices the demon stood beside me. “Who’s he, Jack?”

“You seen me afore, Missus, you seen me afore.”

“I can’t remember him.”

I sigh. “He’s your destiny, Elizabeth.”

There’s a look in the face of the Missus that I’ve not seen before.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“It fear, bwoy, fear.”

She stares at me. “My destiny? What do you mean? What’s happening Jack. What’s happening to me? Tell me what’s happening to me? What are you talking about? I’m having a baby, having that idiot’s baby!”

I shake my head. “There is no baby, Elizabeth.”

“No baby?” she feels the lump, the cold, hard, lifeless lump.

“No baby, Elizabeth. But you’ve had two, my two boys and you only love one, my white Michael, that’s if you even love him. And what about poor Joe?”

She has an idea. “Bring my boys!” she screams at the women who scurry off.

“Too late, lady,” chuckles the Heartman. “Too late.”

“What does he mean too late?”

I can’t answer her. I hate her. Hate her so much. I’ve hated this woman every day of my life since I...I can’t remember. I’ve fallen asleep hating her. Woken up hating her...”

“Fucked her, hating her, bwoy, fucked her, hating her?”

I nod. “Yes.”

The Missus is becoming distant. She’s becoming blurred even to us. “I don’t understand. What’s happening to me, Jack?” She grabs my hand and squeezes with her last ounce of strength.

“You’re dying, Elizabeth.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman shakes his head. “She nearly dead, bwoy, she nearly dead. My helpers coming. Dey on deir way, bwoy, dey on deir way.”

“Joe’s here, Mam,” a fine young black boy is presented to the Missus. And, for the first time in her life, she takes his hand.

She smiles. And when she does, I can see some of the beauty that she could have enjoyed if she hadn’t been so... “Evil, bwoy?” I nod.

She looks at me. “He looks like you, Jack, just like you.”

“Michael’s here, Missus,” a white lad, the same height and build as Joe, appears. He’s white blonde but with deep brown eyes. The boys are identical in size, build and mannerisms but they’re different colours. Michael slowly touches his brother’s fingers seeking some of his bravery.

The Missus reaches for him with her other hand, but the boy is scared.

“Don’t worry, Michael,” says Joe. “She can’t hurt us anymore. Not anymore. The Heartman is here for her.”

Michael looks at his brother, the strong one, his best friend.

“Take her hand, Michael,” says Joe, “go on.”

The Missus takes both hands and smiles. “I’m sorry, boys, truly sorry, for everything. I love you both,” she turns to me. “Will I see you again, Jack?”

I shake my head. “No, Elizabeth.”

“But yu see her again, bwoy, yu see her again, on yuh travels wid de Heartman.”

“I’m sorry, Jack. Sorry to you all. But most of all to you.”

“Oh, fuck! Fuck, fuck, fuck!” Screams the Heartman. “Don’t repent, girl, don’t repent!

De Heartman don’t like repenting, don’t like it! It complicate tings!”

“I’ve been a bitch, an evil bitch. A bad, bad evil, bitch. I love my three boys. I’m sorry.”

### **Babby in a wooden crate**

“Yeah, yeah, blah, blah, blah, stop blubbering, bwoy, stop fucking blubbering, mon!” We’re still in the bedroom but we’re alone with her body. Her body lying cold in the centre of her bed. “Stop dat now, bwoy, stop dat now! Dat an order! Dat a fucking order.”

I can’t help myself.

“Can’t help yuhself, bwoy, can’t help yuhself! Well, let de Heartman help yu, mon, let de Heartman help yu. Dis how much she love lickle Joe.”

I wipe a tear from my eye.

“Stop it, bwoy, stop it bwoy! De Heartman him gonna show yu what him mean.”

“Whimpering, whimpering, where’s that whimpering coming from?” mutters a ruddy faced woman who we can see scurrying around a kitchen table. I know her. I’ve just seen her at the death bed of the Missus.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yeah, yu did, bwoy, yeah yu did. And did yu tink why dat old womon hated de Missus so much?”

“I just assumed that it was because she was an evil bitch.” I cross myself. “Not wanting to speak ill of the dead.”

The Heartman shudders, “stop all dat crossing, bwoy, stop all dat crossing! Stop it dis minute! It offend de Heartman, mon, offend him bad, hagree?”

“Hagree. Where are we?” I ask.

“Well, ‘cos yu ain’t a King Coconut, de Heartman him has to set de scene, bwoy, set de scene. We in England, bwoy, England. It too cold for Plantashion Island, too cold,” the Heartman and I are standing next to a black leaded range it’s glowing red coals comforting anyone who is standing nearby. “Or, sat in,” grins the Heartman sitting, actually sitting, in the fire.

I stare at him. Nothing surprises me about him, or his practical jokes.

“Dis ain’t no practical joke, bwoy, dis ain’t no practical joke. De Heartman him demon from Hell, mon, demon from Hell, it hot in Hell, and freezing in England. Dese lovely coals remind me of home. Lovely home, lovely Hell! Dat all. Ain’t no practical joke. Everyone like to be remind of home, everyone.”

“Except slaves that don’t have a home!”

“Dat tru bwoy, dat tru. Slave have no home, not England, not Plantashion Island, not Africa. Or mebee it where yu lay your hat, bwoy, where yu lay yuh hat or yuh coconut head.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What?”

“Mebee home is where we lay our head, bwoy, and which lovely blonde head we lay it wid?”

“What’s tha saying Ethel, lass?” our conversation is disturbed by a male voice.

“Who’s that?” I ask.

“Him Walter, de husband to fat Ethel. De one dat de Missus not want to send out for de doctor, remember?”

I nod.

“Walter and Ethel dey de people who gonna bring up yuh boy, mon, bring up yuh boy, love him like deir own, love him like a son.”

Walter Marshall is unloading the cart that has just rolled up to the vicarage with the Reverend Massa’s travel chest and his new wife’s goods and chattels.

“Hope just arrived dis morning, bwoy, just dis morning. Hope! Love dat name. Hope widout...”

“Oh, you promised!”

The Heartman sighs. “King Coconut him demon o’ him word, bwoy, demon o’ him word. Anyway, let’s continue.”

Walter has just banged a crate down on the stone floor.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dese people dey good people, bwoy, dey good people. Dey de servants of de Reverend Massa Clarkson and de Missus,” he grins at me and grabs his crotch.

“Not appropriate, Sir, since you’ve just killed her!”

“De Heartman him ain’t ever appropriate, bwoy, ain’t ever appropriate, have yu not learn dat by now? Him ain’t ever appropriate! All dese stories and yu not learn dat by now.”

“Go on.”

“Well...de Reverend Massa, who not fuck de Missus very often...”

“Why do you mention that? It’s not...”

“Appropriate? De Heartman him just said dat him not *ever* appropriate! Anyway, stop butting in Sir Jackson Moss o’ ‘Ting’ town, ‘Ting’ shire, ‘Ting’ land!” He stops and thinks for a minute. “Where was de Heartman, bwoy?”

“Reverend Clarkson?”

“Ah! De Reverend Clarkson! Well, him been away in the Indies for de last two years, bwoy, two years at de mission in Bridgetown, and today de day dat at first light dat him ship dock at St Georges Quay.”

“I was there, remember? That was my ship too, and the Quay was where I first stepped onto English soil before I was taken to gaol.”

“Exactly, bwoy, exactly. But dese good people, mon, dese good people, dey not know about de Reverend Massa and de Missus, not afore a few days ago.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I bet that was a surprise.”

“Yeah, mon, big surprise. Big, bad surprise! Dey been living peaceful life dese past two years and now dat all gonna change, bwoy, dat all gonna change.”

“Whimpering!” snaps Ethel. “Something is whimpering!”

“I can hear whimpering too,” I say.

“Dat because someting is whimpering, bwoy, someting is whimpering! Listen!”

“What’re you harping on about? You’re hearing things you daft old beggar.”

Ethel glares at her husband picking up a pan. “Don’t ‘old beggar’ me Walter Marshall or I’ll have you!”

Walter recoils quickly.

“Him felt de force o’ dat pan afore, bwoy, felt de force o’ dat pan afore, and him know it can crack him nut!”

Walter heads for the door and the still half full cart.

“Dat Ethel, she like de slave hound, bwoy, like de slave hound! Typhon de pappy slave hound. She got a keen nose, mon.”

Ethel’s investigating and is lifting box after box, crate after crate. Walter has just dumped them around her kitchen piled one on top of another.

“Bloody Walter,” Ethel curses, “typical man. Does half a job.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dat de way all de men do a job, girl, all de men. Him just do half job, always just half job! It annoy de womon, annoy de wives, de Heartman him telling yu dis for when yu have a wife, Sir Jackson.”

“So, I do have a wife? Cecilia?”

“Err...err...” he’s backtracking, “de Heartman him speaking metaphorically, bwoy, metaphorically.”

“Bugger me! Are you still on about that noise, it’s nowt lass, nowt!” says Walter as he arrives with more boxes to scatter haphazardly and annoy Ethel.

“It’s not nowt, Walter!”

“It’ll be a babby bird or sommert. You’re a bloody soft touch, you are Ethel, an injured this or dying that and you’ll tek care of it! Bloody soft touch!”

The Heartman nudges me. “She a soft touch for everyting ‘cept crow, bwoy, everyting ‘cept crow. Dat Ethel she hate crow. She shoot at dem wid a home-made pea shooter.”

“Why crows?”

He shrugs his shoulders. “She tink dey de workers of de Devil, bwoy, de workers of de Devil.”

“Are they?”

“Naw mon, dey just crow! Dey just like dead ting, eating dead ting, dat de way o’ nature, bwoy, de way o’ nature. Dey just like dead ting.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Like you?”

“We different, King Coconut and crow, bwoy, we different. Dey just eat dead ting. De Heartman him like killing ting, dead ting boring, unless dey evil, den dey interesting to de Heartman.”

“Walter!”

“Bloody hell!” Walter snorts his protest very quietly, so quietly in fact that Ethel cannot hear it. He lifts the box. Under the box is a crate. There’s an animal in it. A dog maybe?

“Lift the crate on the table!” orders Ethel.

Walter thinks twice about refusing. Then he lifts the crate up.

“Sweet Jesus!” Ethel’s heart nearly stops as she peers inside. She doesn’t wait for her husband and, showing super-human strength, rips the nailed down wood lid off the crate with her bare, work hardened calloused, hands. “Sweet Jesus, Mary and Joseph!” She lifts the dog out and cradles it to her breast. She’s crying, crying and swearing, crying, swearing and praying.

“Ooh! Dat too much praying, bwoy, too much praying!” “Shh!!” I

reply quickly.

Walter doesn’t know what’s going on. He can’t see.

“Sweet Jesus, Mary and Joseph!” Ethel says it over and over again, under her breath, out loud, staring down at the dog and lifting her eyes to heaven.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman puts his hands over the side of his coconut. “Stop dat praying, girl, stop dat praying! It making de Heartman nut sore, sore, sore!”

Walter tries peeking but Ethel barges him away. She’s taken a right shine to this pup, thinks Walter. He’s curious. “What kind of a pup is it Ethel, lass?” he asks.

“Pup? Pup?” Ethel’s eyes focus on her husband of thirty years. The way she looks at him it’s as if she’s forgotten he was even in the room.

“Aye. I’m just curious, like,” says Walter and he is. Anyone can see that Walter is a good man, a good-natured man, and a hard worker. He would have made a good father to a child.

“For yuh information, dey barren, bwoy, barren, like what de Missus tought she was before de Heartman mischief!”

“Walter...” Ethel’s voice is barely a whisper. “Walter, love, it’s not a pup.”

Walter looks confused.

“Walter, it’s a lickle babby.”

“A baby?” I gasp. Things are becoming clear to me.

“Shh...” snaps the Heartman back at me. “Yu no King Coconut! ‘tings are becoming clear to me’! Pah! Dey ain’t! Yu a peanut head!”

When Walter looks more carefully, he can see that Ethel has got her forefinger bent and it’s in the mouth of a baby. A black baby. The child has stopped whimpering and is sucking away on Ethel’s finger.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“A babby? But it were crated up like an animal,” Walter sits down on one of the kitchen chairs. Walter is clearly not a deep-thinking man. He doesn’t think much about his life apart from whether he’s hot, cold, hungry or thirsty. But seeing a baby transported in a wooden crate on a ship has knocked him for six.

“Slave in crate,” I mumble.

“Not de first time, bwoy, not de first time.”

“What is it?” asks Walter in a whisper.

Ethel carefully peels away the blanket, surprised that it’s not disgusting piss soaked, shit encrusted. Someone’s been looking after this babby, she thinks. An angel. She peers down.

“He’s a lickle lad, Walter.”

“A lickle lad?”

“Aye.”

Looking closer at the little baby, Walter can see he’s not in a very good state. He’s barely more than skin and bones. It looks like the ‘someone’ who has ordered him to be put in the crate has not cared whether he would survive or not. It’s a miracle he has survived, he thinks.

“Get us some milk, Walter, lad,” orders Ethel, “the fresh milk ower by the stove. It’ll not be too cawd, babby’ll be able to drink it.”

Walter hands the big jug to his wife.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Pillock! What’s babby going to do wi a jug, Walter? Can’t you see he’s only got a tiny mouth?”

“Oh, aye, right.” Walter pours some of the thick creamy liquid in a small earthenware bottle. The bottle opening is small, and he thinks the baby might be able to drink from it.

Ethel watches her husband, impressed at his ingenuity.

“Here,” Walter hands the small bottle to Ethel.

She takes the bottle and slowly takes her finger out of the babby’s mouth. He’s about to cry until Ethel places the bottle to his lips. He’s hungry but Ethel is careful to make him drink slowly. She doesn’t want him to be sick.

“God knows what he’s been living on!” Says Ethel, “but an angel has made sure he’s been delivered to us.”

“Aye,” agrees Walter.

The baby looks content as he sips the thick white liquid. His big brown eyes are looking lovingly upon Ethel’s face. He knows he’s safe, knows he’s met his new mother.

I look at the Heartman, “Joe?” I ask. “This is my son, Joe?” The Heartman nods.

In his non thinking head, Walter is pondering about the kind of person who could put a little lad in a wooden crate and ship him across the sea. Ethel reads Walter’s mind. She’s a not the kind of woman who uses bad language so when she speaks her husband is shocked.

“Only bastards could do this to a babby, Walter.”

### **Coddled in silk**

The Heartman clicks his claws, and we are transported from the dimly lit kitchen to a fine drawing room with expensive furniture and velvet curtains, “let de Heartman offer yu de contrast to de life of lickle Joe, bwoy, de contrast.”

“Fetch him in,” the Missus, alive and well, is faffing around having tea with the ladies of her husband’s parish. They’re some of the rich and well-to-do of Red Rose City and are adorned in their Sunday best. The Missus doesn’t really care what they think, but it will keep her husband happy if she plays the part of devoted wife. And, if her husband is happy, he might stop trying to paw at her.

“The devoted wife?” I mumble.

“Devoted wife who fuck any one she please, bwoy, fuck anyone she please!”

Beautiful Bonnie slowly brings the child in to the room and the six women all stare at her, rather than who she’s carrying.

“Michael. My son.”

“Michael. And him look perfect, bwoy, perfect, de perfect beautiful white pickney, but lickle do dey know dat him half black, bwoy, lickle do dey know him half black.”

“Mm...if they did know...”

“If dey knew dere would be scandal, bwoy, dere would be scandal!”

“He looks white though,” I reply.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Dat tru, dat tru, him look white, bwoy, him look white, but mebee him children or grandchildren look like yu and me? Mebee? And dat widout de Heartman mischief, bwoy, dat widout de Heartman mischief.”

“Mm...that would put the cat amongst the pigeons.”

“Cat amongst de pigeons? What de fuck yu talking about, bwoy?”

“It’s a phrase, a well-known phrase. I can’t believe that you’ve never heard of it before?”

“Mm? De Heartman, King Coconut, him never stop learning, bwoy, him never stop learning. Life a lesson, mon, life a lesson, and so det.”

The ladies are fawning but not over Michael or the Missus, “oh, isn’t your negro *so* adorable!” pipes up one of the ladies with her painted face.

She is such an ugly woman!

“Eeeuuww!” squeals my friend. “Painted or no, bwoy, painted or no, she one ugly woman, mon, U..G..L..Y. Perhaps she need coat o’ whitewash, cover de whole damn visage? Hagree?”

I nod vigorously. “Hagree.”

Another coos. “She’s so pretty, so very pretty with that ebony-coloured skin!

“That lovely ebony coloured skin,” adds another.

“The hair is so tight and curly,” muses another. “It’s like wire.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What a lovely figure she has. I’ve never thought of negroes having lovely figures! I always thought they looked like men but with saggy...dare I even say the word...breasts.”

“Or pretty faces. *I* thought their faces were all...well...squashed. But hers. Her face is very elfin, yes, elfin. Very pretty and not at all squashed.”

“Look at de Missus, bwoy, look at de Missus.”

“Why?” I reply.

“She getting madder, bwoy, madder.”

“Give me the child and go, Bonnie!” The Missus snatches Michael from her servant and the baby immediately begins to howl.

“De Missus she like everyone to tell her dat *she* beautiful bwoy! She like de attention. Not Bonnie. Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

“What a fine pair of lungs your baby has, Elizabeth!” shouts a woman over Michael, who is roaring by now.

“Indeed,” fingers are placed in ears, “a fine pair of lungs!”

“Elizabeth, I think your baby wants his negro nanny back, dear.”

The Missus is getting redder and redder, “No, no, it’s just he’s not used to so many strange faces being around him.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Strange? Dat tru, dat tru, so many strange painted faces, bwoy, strange painted faces.”

The women continue their unintentional taunting of the Missus.

“It’s as if he likes the negro more than his...”

“...than his mother!”

“Yes, he likes the darkie more than his mother.”

“Want to read de torts of de Missus, bwoy?”

“Oh yes!”

FUCKING BITCHES!

“Straight to the point!” I chuckle.

“Straight to de point, mon, straight to de point! Fucking bitches, bwoy, fucking bitches!

She mad as hell, mon, mad as hell! Her head gonna explode!”

“Bonnie! Bonnie!” yells the Missus. “Bonnie!”

Bonnie appears immediately. “Yes, Missus? Yu shouted, Missus?”

“Michael appears to be hungry,” she snaps, before instantly calming down. “Go and feed him dear.”

“Look at her!”

“She’s so pretty!”

“Such a face!”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Thank you, Bonnie! That will be all. Please go and feed Michael.”

“What’s the matter, love?” asks dear Ethel when Bonnie walks into the kitchen with Michael for some milk.

Bonnie is sobbing. She’s heartbroken.

“Bonnie, lass? Whatever is it, dear?” Ethel has put her arm around the girl who she treats as a daughter and strokes her head. They have not known each other long but Bonnie fulfils Ethel’s need to be a mother, and Ethel fulfils the need Bonnie has for a mum. They’re barely separated these days and Bonnie has learned much from Ethel about England, and Ethel from Bonnie about Plantashion Island.

“Me don’t care about me, Ethel, Me don’t. Me really don’t,” although Bonnie’s accent is rich and lovely to the old Lancashire woman, it is becoming more English. “Me used to it, used to being treated like an object. Like something they own! We all are, all of us, but Michael, poor Michael. No one gave him a second glance!”

“Sit down, lass, put your feet up. We’ve been up since dawn, have a rest,” Ethel takes Michael and sets him down next to Joe on the sheep skin in front of the range. “Oh, look at them. You’d think they were brothers, you really would.”

“Does she not know?” I whisper to the Heartman.

“De only odder person in England to know living wid Dodshon Foster in Knitting Town. Far away from Red Rose City, bwoy, far away. And cos she love Joe, she know not to open her mouth. As dey get older de bwoys dough, de bwoys guess.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“They do love each other, Ethel. They really do. They’re best friends,” she looks at Ethel. “Like us.”

“Aye, lass, best friends like us, lass.”

The boys are happily gurgling and gently grabbing at each other.

“They both have brown eyes,” muses Ethel looking closer. “Don’t they?”

“Me never noticed afore,” Bonnie squints at the pair. “No, you’re right. It’s true. They do both have brown eyes, Ethel.”

“Don’t see many blonde folk with brown eyes, that’s unusual lass, unusual. But,” Ethel sighs. “I think these two are going to have very different lives. Very different lives. Joe! No! Joe! No, stop gumming Michael!”

“Who has what?” Walter barges into the kitchen.

“Shut up, Walter!” the women reply together.

**Thomas and Frances**

“Tell me about Plantashion Island, Frances,” asks young Thomas Foster as he and my friend sit together in front of the range at the end of the day.

My head is spinning from all this zipping around. “Remind me, where are we now?” I ask wearily.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman shakes his head. “We in Knitting Town, bwoy, Knitting Town, and we taking a look at de life o’ Frances and Thomas. Remember Frances? Remember? Yu chop her hand off, bwoy, remember? And she de only one who know de secret of Joe and Michael. Remember?”

I stare at him, “I remember.”

“But Thomas, de Heartman him got big plans for dat bwoy, big plans. But more o’ dat later, more o’ dat later, mon.”

It’s quiet in the dimly lit but warm kitchen and the Heartman is once again sitting in the fire to warm his backside.

“It an ass, bwoy, an ass!”

“Alright. You are sitting in the fire warming your ass!”

“Mm...dat better! De Heartman him notting if not vulgar, mon, notting if not vulgar.”

The other servants and Mrs Foster have long since departed for their beds, and Dodshon is working in his study, counting his gold, with the express orders of not being disturbed.

“Him feeling himself, bwoy, feeling himself.”

“What?”

“Dodshon, feeling himself whilst tinkin ‘bout how much gold him got! It excite him, bwoy, excite him. Some men dey like women wid big breast, odders a shapely calf, odders an

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

older lady, odders someone young and skinny, Dodshon, him like gold! Dat what most o' him type like, gold, why yu tink dey transport millions of slave 'cross de ocean, bwoy, why?"

"Badness?"

"Dat too, dey bad bastards, bwoy, dey bastards, but it 'cos dey love gold! Love it!"

Thomas and Frances had waited until the end of the day to try and snatch time together.

"Dey like mudder and son, bwoy, mudder and son."

"What?" The Heartman has moved from the fire and now he and I are sitting beside the pair on chairs pulled up to the heat. It's comforting, the heat.

"Dat cos de north country 'fresh' bwoy, 'fresh'."

I stare at my companion. He's wrapped up in a heavy coat, hat, gloves and scarf, all items I had never seen before my arrival in England. "And, by 'fresh' you mean, freezing?"

"Ha-ha! Dey have a lickle habit o' understatement, bwoy, lickle habit o' understatement up here in de north country. Dese locals dey quiet folk, quiet folk, mon. Dey different to men like Dodshon, dey have no love o' gold cos dey have none, got none, or will ever have any! And dey de opposite o' de Heartman. De Heartman him a rabble rouser, a rabble rouser!"

"Mm..."

"But dese folk dey mind dere own business and dey keep deir mouths shut," he points a claw caked in dried blood at me. "Yu remember dat, Sir Jackson Moss, yu remember dat."

"Why?" I ask.

“Why?” He sighs. “Yu really is no King Coconut, bwoy, yu really is no King Coconut?”

I shake my head. “I think we’ve already established that. Go on.”

“It just...” the Heartman seemed lost for words. Unusual.

“Dat tru, dat tru, unusual. It just dat dere are places in dis north country, places dat a mon can live widout fear. A mon can live a life, a good life and put down de roots and if him keep him mouth shut him get no trouble, and den, after about...mm...” he thought for a while, “mebee a coupla hundred year, him treated like a yokel.”

“Yokel?”

“Yokel a country mon, bwoy, yokel a country mon. A quiet country mon dat mind him own business and ekes out an existence. Do you know notting? Him work hard, him keep him peace and him not judge him fellow mon.”

“Pah! They’ll be the first Toubob who don’t judge their ‘fellow man’. I snort.

“Hey! Dey ain’t no Toubob, bwoy, dey ain’t no Toubob!”

“What defines a ‘Toubob’ to you? To me it’s the colour of a person’s skin.”

“Colour o’ him skin? Dat not tru, bwoy!”

“What?”

“Dat not tru, bwoy, dat statement not tru.”

“Why?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Cos yu call some black men Toubob! Remember?”

I think for a moment. “I do. Mm...” I am thinking. Then my thoughts move on, move on as if someone is guiding them. They move on to my feelings for Cecilia. This is because my feelings for her are causing me a lot of heartache. On one side when I think about her, I get all...

“Excited, bwoy, excited?”

“Yes. I can’t help myself.”

“You tinkin wid yuh ‘Ting’, bwoy, tinkin wid yuh ‘Ting’!”

“No, I’m not! But how can a black man fall in love with a white woman? Surely it would be a betrayal?”

“Why betrayal, bwoy? Why?”

“Because she’s white and white people have raped, punished and murdered my people.”

“Mm...dat tru, dat tru,” he’s quiet for a moment. “Later, dat for later. But, we getting away from our story, bwoy, we getting away from our story and de readers, dey noddin off! Where was de Heartman?”

“Thomas?”

“Thomas! Dis young mon, dis young mon, Thomas, him find some answers in Frances, answers him search for him whole life and dat more important to Me story.”

“I thought this was *my* story?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yuh story! Yuh story, bwoy! Naw, yu ain’t dat important! It de Heartman story, mon, Me story.”

“Plantashion Island is...” begins Frances. Home always becomes more beautiful with distance, “beautiful, Thomas,” she begins. “It beautiful, bwoy.” Her accent is that of a slave, whilst Thomas’ is that of a white north country merchant trader.

“Beautiful?”

“Beautiful and it is...” she shivers. Her arm that I cut her hand from is aching, it always aches in the cold, and it is always cold in the north country.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru!”

“...always warm. It never gets cold, never, Thomas, never. It rain a lot in the wet season but it rain in de wet season back home too.”

“Back home?”

“Africa, boy, Africa.”

“You weren’t born on Plantashion Island?”

“No, bwoy, Me born in Africa. Dough me a young girl when me taken to Plantashion Island so me can’t remember it. Me only know it from what me parents tell me.”

“It’s unusual that she was kept with her parents,” my stomach lurches as I remember the horrendous pile of alive, dead, dying and sick infants at the slave auction after the arrival of Hope. “Hagree?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Hagree, bwoy, hagree!”

“Me don’t remember being on de ship, either. Ma said Me mind block it out, block out de whole experience. She tell Me plenty dough.”

“She told you about it? Tell me. Please.”

“Oh, Thomas, yu don’t want to know, bwoy. Look forward, son, not backward, yu de assistant to rich mon, rich white mon. Yu sleep in bed wid white cotton sheet, yu eat food every day, no one whip yuh back if yu drop some cane. Dere many a slave who be jealous of yuh life, many. Yu a lucky bwoy!”

“Please!”

“He got curious mind, bwoy, curious mind.”

“It bad, Thomas,” began Frances. “Dey tell me it bad. And plenty people, good people, dey die, dey get sick and dey die. Dey feed us bad food, rotting food, bwoy, no stomach can eat it. For most it not even stay down. Dey eat and den dey vomit or it goes straight through dem and dere no privy on ship.”

Thomas is shocked. “No privy?”

Frances looks at him. “Yu a young black gentleman, yu can’t understand. Unless yu dere yu can’t understand.”

“Dat why we here, bwoy,” the Heartman nudges me, “why we here.”

“Why? Why are we here?”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“We here to tell de story of de slave, mon, de story of de slave, de story dat most folk can’t understand. De truth hard to swallow, bwoy, hard to swallow but sometime a mon need to see and learn about de dark tide o’ history.”

“Could it get much darker?”

“As dark, mebee, as dark, but darker, mebee not, bwoy, mebee not.”

“Is there any light in this story.”

“Dere plenty light, bwoy, plenty. De human being, him or she deir minds always look forward, forward to a new day and dat new day it always brighter dan de day before.”

“But you made it?” Continued Thomas. “And your mother and father.”

“De good Lord was looking down on de family, dat all me can say, Thomas. When dey separate us into de dark rooms...”

“The dark rooms?”

“Dat where dey put de slave before dey board ship for Plantashion Island. Slave can wait in de dark room for weeks if dey unlucky, or few hours if dey lucky. Crammed like...” she thinks for a moment and sees some bilberries that have been preserved in a jar. “...like dose berries in dat jar. No room to breathe, no room to speak, standing or sitting in your own mess.”

Thomas looks like he’s going to be sick.

“It de same on de ship ‘cept you got to lie down, yu can’t stand. Yu lie down and yu stay lying down. All de way from Africa to Plantashion Island, all de way.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Thomas is staring at Frances. “All the way?”

“All de way, bwoy.”

“How long for?”

The endless hours of working in the dragon room has made Frances a little hard of hearing, like most slaves. “What dat?”

“How long are you on the ship?”

Frances shrugs. “Few weeks, coupla months, dere no time on dat ship, no time. Dere no day and only night.”

“My God...” Thomas has realised something. He looks at his pocket watch. It’s gone midnight.

“Dat from him?” asks Frances.

Thomas nods.

“Dat bought wid blood, Thomas, bwoy, blood.” Thomas

starts taking it off.

“What yu tink yu doing, bwoy?”

“Taking it off, I can’t wear it. Not now I know.”

“Thomas,” Frances is speaking in barely more than a whisper. “Everyting in dis house come from dat. Come from de slave trade, boy. It all bought wid blood, bwoy, de blood o’ our brudders and sisters, but yu listen to me, son, yu ain’t responsible.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“I can’t wear it!”

“Yu can’t *not* wear it! Yu ain’t responsible. Yu lucky, lucky, lucky! Der ain’t no slave on Plantashion Island wouldn’t cut him or her own arm off to be yu, boy! To live dis life. Yu lucky, but yu ain’t responsible.”

“I don’t think I can live like this, Frances. Not anymore.”

“Yu bide your time, Thomas, dere a time for everyone, and yuh time come. Yu a pretty bwoy, yu clever and yu educated. When de time right yu give a cup of cold water in de Lord’s name, bwoy, and surely dat will happen to yu, someone *will* give yu a cup too. Dere be a time for Thomas Foster. Me can feel it in me water, bwoy. Yu going to be a free mon, properly free one o’ dese days.”

Thomas smiles.

“But in de meantime, yu can keep yuh old aunty company on de cold dark nights when her arm aching.”

Thomas ignores Frances’s yawns. “Tell me about working on the plantation, Aunty.”

“Me tell you about de plantation, bwoy, if yu tell me about dat pretty knitting girl yu sweet on.”

The boy is embarrassed, “you know about her!”

“Us servant we need a lickle bit o’ someting to brighten de long days. A lickle bit o’ love.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“We gonna leave dem to deir reminiscing, bwoy, leave dem to it. We come back and see de romance o’ Thomas Foster later but now me want to show yu de future for de slave on Plantashion Island.” The Heartman clicks his claws and we’re back on Plantashion Island.

**End of an era?**

“Slaves still working in a sugar field? How is that the future?” I ask as we stand by an immense sugar cane field. I know it’s harvest time because the slaves are bending their backs, swinging their machete’s and cutting the tall woody canes. Back breaking work. Others are scurrying around gathering the cuttings, more still are hauling the piles onto the back of a horse drawn cart.

The Heartman turns to me with his claws on his hips. “Yu has a peanut head, Sir Jackson Moss, bwoy, a peanut head. Not massive coconut like de Heartman. Can’t yu see dat everyting different, bwoy, everyting. Look!”

“What?” I glare at him. “What’s different?”

“Where de overlooker, bwoy, where de overlooker?”

I look around and shrug. “Perhaps he’s having a nap on his horse in the shade?”

“Dere no horse because dere no overlooker, bwoy, no overlooker.”

“No overlooker? I don’t understand.”

“Dese not slave!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Not slaves? Of course, they’re slaves. They’re breaking their backs to get the crop in.”

“Tru, tru, dat tru!”

“Whoohoo!” a woman is calling to the slaves. “Food!” The

men and women all stop and down tools.

“Don’t do that!” I call nervously looking around. “He’ll see you!”

“De Heartman telling yu, Sir Jackson Moss, dere ain’t no ‘he’ bwoy, dere ain’t no ‘he’.”

The workers slowly approach to where the woman, who I recognise as Frances’ mother, old Martha, is laying out mats for them to sit on. She’s unpacking bread and fruit and she’s got water.

“What are you talking about?” I ask.

“Dey free, bwoy, free.”

“Free? They’re still working in the sugar cane field!”

“Me said dey free, not set free, bwoy, dere a difference.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Been abolished, bwoy, abolished.”

“What has?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Slavery, bwoy, slavery, been abolished. England abolish slavery. All de overlooker dey gone to America, gone north, dere still slavery dere. But dat de story for anodder book, de sequel to de sequel, mebee!”

“Abolished slavery?” I look around. The workers look just as exhausted as I remember. But they are sitting talking, and that I can’t remember seeing before.

“Dat never happen, bwoy, dat never happen. Talking forbidden before, mon, forbidden.”

“I don’t understand. You said they were free but not set free?”

The Heartman shrugs. “When slavery abolish, where dey go? De slave. Where dey go?”

“What do you mean? Where do they go. Home! They go home!”

“Home? Where home, bwoy? Where? Where dat? And how dey get dere? How? Yu tell de King Coconut!”

“I...don’t know.”

“Dey free now and dey can go if dey want. Go anywhere dey want, ‘cept mebee not America where dey still slave. But here dey not captive, but dey not set free.”

“Not set free?”

The Heartman sighs. “If dey want dey can leave dis place, bwoy, leave dis place. Dey can try and find a job, mek money somehow but dey know notting different. Dey only know

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

work in de sugar field and in de sugar house. Dat all dey know. If dey go dey always come back, well, nearly always, bwoy, nearly always.”

“Nearly?”

“Mm...well dere some dat go and mek success. Some go to de Royal Navy Hotel and find work on ship. Captain’s like Wyn, dey not care about de colour o’ a mon, if him work hard and do as him told him can be a sailor.”

“Where do they sail to?”

“All over de world, bwoy! But dey need avoid America, a black sailor in American port him at risk of kidnap, mon, kidnap. Him worth more as slave dan sailor. In de American port de black sailor not go ashore, no way!”

“Do they go back to Africa?”

He shrugs, “mebee. Some. But life very different back in Africa, and den dere still ship taking slave to America. De Dark Continent ain’t safe., bwoy, de Dark Continent ain’t safe.”

I look at the workers sat in the shade on mats, talking and eating. “So, they are free. But they still work. Who do they work for?”

“De Massa dead, and de Missus sell up. A lot o’ de plantations sell up to de big mon. De planters dat live oversea, in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Red Rose City. Dey de Planter Class, bwoy, de Planter Class. Dat de technical term.”

“And the workers.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“De workers dey work from dawn til dusk.”

“So, nothing’s changed there?”

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru! But dey get paid for deir work. But being paid mean dey pay rent.”

“Rent?”

“Rent for deir homes. De rent it high. Life still hard, bwoy, life still hard.”

“And food?”

“Dey have to grow or buy deir own food.”

“So, not much better off?”

“But dey free, bwoy, free!”

“Free from slavery, not servitude!”

“Dere a difference!”

“No there isn’t!”

“What about Thomas Foster, him not slave, bwoy, him not slave!”

“He’s still in servitude!”

“Me suppose, mon. De Heartman him tell yu de story o’ Thomas in de next book, bwoy, tell de story of him escape. Yu want to see him fall in love?”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I look at the workers, some I recognise, some I don't. They don't look unhappy. They seem... satisfied.

"Satisfied? Mebee dey happy wid deir lot in life, bwoy, mebee dey happy wid deir lot in life?"

"Maybe they are. But their life is still hard. Not much has changed."

"Plenty change, bwoy, plenty, but plenty more need to change and dat take hundreds of years. Dere been slave for hundreds o' years and it take hundreds more to dim de memory. Now, we all need a lickle bit o' romance, de readers need a lickle bit o' romance, bwoy, a lickle bit o' romance."

"Will I see Plantashion Island again?"

"Mebee in de next book, bwoy, mebee in de next book. If yu mek it dat far..."

**Terrible knitters**

"Where are we now?" I ask as my eyes wearily become accustomed to the gloom. My head is spinning from my journey, the journey whereby my life and the lives of my brothers and sisters has flashed slowly before my eyes.

"Yu lucky, bwoy, lucky."

"Lucky? Me, lucky?"

"Yu given a chance, bwoy, yu given a chance."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“A chance for what?”

“Err...” the Heartman hesitates. He pauses. It’s unlike him. “De Heartman...him said too much, mon, said too much.”

“Too much? You’ve said nothing!”

“Sometime notting too much, bwoy, sometime notting too much.”

*Click, click, click.* The strange sound draws my attention away from my guide. I’m not sure where we are. A gloomy room. We’re in a gloomy room, and as we stand I notice movement, frenzied but controlled movement. It’s all around us. There is no sound apart from the constant, metronomic *click, click, click*. It could be a machine, but a small machine, not like the huge sugar cane dragons.

“Ha-ha! It ain’t no dragon, bwoy, it ain’t no dragon. De Heartman him sure do miss him pet dragon, mon, him sure do miss him lickle baby,” chuckles the Heartman regaining his vigour. “And it ain’t no machine.”

“Not a machine?”

“Naw, mon, naw. It person, plenty person, plenty busy person. Look, bwoy, look.”

Now I can see. The room which is lit by a solitary candle is small but sat around on chairs, up against every wall is a person. There are men and women, old and young and all are making the *click, click, click* with their hands. It’s non-stop.

“What are they doing?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Yu don’t know, bwoy, yu don’t know? Mon, yuh nut sure empty, bwoy, yuh nut sure empty,” he raps his claws on my head.

“Ow!”

“Yuh head like shell, bwoy, big empty nutshell.”

I’m used to his insults by now. And I know that his bite is definitely worse than his bark, so I can cope with the odd insult or two.

“Yeah, bwoy, yeah, it is and yu can. Yu don’t know what dey doing?”

“No.”

“Dey is knitting bwoy, knitting, ‘fact, dey is de terrible knitters, bwoy, de terrible knitters!”

“Terrible?”

“Dey like machine, yu right, bwoy, human machine.”

“Slaves?”

“Naw mon!” He shook his head. “Dey not slave, bwoy, dey not slave, not quite. But dey just as tied to deir work as slave...”

“Except no one owns them.”

“Wouldn’t be so sure, bwoy, wouldn’t be so sure. It true, mon, dey not rip from their families, beaten and rape and dey not ship halfway round de world on ship called Hope, bwoy de Heartman love dat name, Hope wid no hope! Love it! Love it!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“You promised!”

“And,” a solitary finger claw is wagged in my face, “de Heartman him honour him word...sometime. But dese folk, dey is in bondage. Mek no mistake, bwoy, mek no mistake.”

“Bondage’s better than being a slave?”

“Hagree. Better bondage dan slave.”

“Why are we here, wherever here is?”

“Here be England, bwoy, England.”

“England? The Red Rose City?”

“Nearby, mon, nearby. Knitting Town.”

“That’s where Frances lives.”

“Exactly, bwoy, exactly!”

“Why are we here?”

“Listen.” The Heartman tips his head theatrically to which there is a knock at the door.

“Dis why, bwoy, dis why.”

“Come in lad,” calls an old woman who doesn’t stop *click, click, clicking*. She’s clearly expecting someone.

The door slowly opens but in the gloom I can’t make out who is there. It’s just a shape.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

It's a man, no, it's smaller than a man, it's a boy. A Toubob, wait! No, not a Toubob. It's a black boy, but he's dressed in fine clothes. Not city gent garments, but fine, expensive clothes. But he's black. It's Thomas.

"He-he! Him black, bwoy, him black, Thomas black but him de foster son of a gentleman, ha-ha! Foster son o' Mr Foster! Foster o' Foster!" He's chuckling away as I glare at him. "Ah well, at least de Heartman him tink dat funny. Yu no sense o' humour Sir Jackson, bwoy, no sense o' humour."

"Tom!" mutters a clicker. To which almost all the others join in with greetings. The black boy appears welcome.

"Him welcome, bwoy, him welcome! And dat cos dey friends."

I take a closer look at the clickers. They're white. Toubob. Well, they're quite grubby looking. At least they started out with white skin!

"Humour! Dat humour! At least dey started out wid white skin! Humour!" The Heartman continues. "Dey white bwoy, but dey ain't Toubob. Dey ain't Toubob. Dey ain't dose white who steal black people from de Dark Continent. Dey not lovers of gold, probably ain't ever seen no gold, dese people. No, dey is workers, dey is bondsmon."

"Workers?"

"Knitters, bwoy, knitters."

"Mable, Enid, Jim, Edmund, Momma, Pa, Grandpa..." Tom went on greeting the knitters.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“How’s life treating you today, young Tom, lad?” asks a very old man.

He looks so old that he’s bent double on his chair, but his fingers are moving at a lightning speed.

“Terrible, bwoy, terrible.”

“Mm...”

Tom sighs. He’s not one to complain. As Frances reminds him his life is better than most, better than most black people, and better than all the people in this room. “Can’t complain, Grandpa.”

“Him ain’t de bwoy’s grandpa, bwoy, him ain’t.”

“I can see that.”

“Bwoy! Colour ain’t no way to determine if a mon yuh grandpa, grandma, or pa or mudder, bwoy, ain’t no way at all. *Yu* got a white son! Hagree?”

“Hagree.”

The conversation continues before I can argue with the Heartman.

“Brought some cake,” Tom puts a small bag down on a side table. “And ale.”

“Cake!”

“It’s nothing special. It’s old, a bit stale. And it’s only a small flagon of ale.”

“We’ll share it out, Tom, lad,” says Grandma.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Grandpa's eyes light up. "Stale cake sounds like manna from heaven."

"Grandpa he likes him some cake, Tom," adds Grandma.

"I know," said Tom. "That's why I brought it. It was going to be thrown out, but I remembered that Grandpa likes cake."

"You're a good lad, Thomas, a good lad."

I stare at the Heartman. "A black boy, dressed like Toubob, bringing food for white...workers. That can't be right! I can't believe it."

"Everyting turn upside down, bwoy, everyting turn upside down, arse upon tit, head over heel, upside down."

"Where is the Master today, Thomas?" asks a young girl called Eliza. She's Thomas's age, fourteen with porcelain white skin and dark brown hair.

Thomas fidgets nervously upon questioning.

"Ha-ha! Him sweet on her, bwoy, him sweet on her, and she on him."

"He's black and she's white!"

"Pah! Dat coming from Sir Jackson Moss!"

"The Missus..."

"De Heartman him ain't talking about de Missus! Him talking about Cecilia, bwoy!"

"I thought I was..."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Special? Unusual? Different? Yu ain’t none of dose tings, bwoy, none of dose tings, white and black romance ain’t limited to just yu, mon! And to dese kids dere ain’t no difference between dem, de colour, bwoy, ain’t no difference. De difference be dat young Thomas him work at de manor whilst Eliza, she just a terrible knitter.”

“What?”

“Dey different class, bwoy, different class.”

“He’s in Liverpool, Eliza,” Thomas can’t look Eliza in the eyes, which amuses the assembled terrible knitters.

“She’s over there, Thomas,” utters Pa.

“Pa!” scolds Grandma, “Thomas is a shy lad, he’s never spoken to a girl he likes afore.”

“I...I...” stutters Thomas. “I don’t like Eliza,” the words just come out and the boy regrets them almost as soon as they leave his lips.

Eliza carefully puts her knitting down. She’s a good knitter, she learnt almost before she managed to crawl but she’s not a terrible knitter yet, she can’t do it without keeping a very close eye on her fingers. Without speaking she rushes out of the room.

“Thomas!”

“I’m sorry, Grandma, the words, they just... they just came out.”

“Go after her, lad,” orders Grandpa.

“But...I can’t...it wouldn’t be seemly.”



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“You’ve upset her, lad,” adds Pa, “that’s not the way we’ve taught you to behave. We don’t upset each other, lad. There’s enough upset in this world, enough folk who want to do us simple folk harm. Go!”

Thomas does as he’s told. Outside the small house a wind is ripping off the high fells cutting anyone outside in half. There’s a hint of winter in the air as the odd flurry bites into his dark skin. Shielding his eyes, he looks for Eliza. Then he hears her sniffing.

“Eliza?” he approaches with care. “Is that you?” When he finds her she’s crouching in a small outhouse. Chickens are pecking around her oblivious to the clog-shod feet or the approaching well-made brogues of the second human.

“Leave me alone, Thomas!” she sobs.

Thomas crouches beside the girl. “I’m...sorry,” he reaches out and touches her shoulder.

An electric shock startles her and she jumps.

“I’m sorry, Eliza, I do...do like you, it’s just I’ve never...”

Eliza’s head bobs across the divide between them and kisses him full on the lips.

“Bingo!” The Heartman punches the air in triumph. “Dat de way to go, bwoy, dat de way to go! White girl kisses black bwoy and it ain’t got notting to do wid who in control.”

I stare at him and sigh. “Nevertheless, it won’t last. Love is not enough.”

“Love not enough, bwoy, not enough?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“No, not for a black man.”

“Yu wrong dere, bwoy, yu wrong dere.”

“Wrong?”

“Dis ain’t no normal, everyday black bwoy, mon, not at all. Dis a survivor. De Heartman show yu later, bwoy, show yu later. Now,” he rubs his claws together in glee. “We need to move on from Thomas, we need to move back to de story.”

“My story?”

Red eyes glare at me. “De story o’ de Heartman, bwoy, de story o’ de Heartman! And, we need a lickle bit of scene setting.”

“Scene setting?”

“For de end, bwoy, for de end.”

“For the end? My end?”

“De end o’ de story!”

He’s confusing me.

“Damn tru, bwoy, damn tru. Now, are yu ready, mon?”

“Yes. Set the scene, Sir.”

“Yuh wish, bwoy, yuh wish it Me command!”

“I sincerely doubt that!”

### **The sands**

More wind, much, much more wind. We're not on the fells now, we're out in the open and a powerful wind is making standing upright hard. I look over and the Heartman has his long travelling cloak wide open like wings, and the wind is picking him up.

"Flying, bwoy, flying!" he calls as a gust lifts him clean off his feet.

"Where are we?" I shout.

"De sands!"

"The sands?"

"De sands!"

"The sands where?"

"De sands o' Red Rose City!"

The wind suddenly drops, and we're stood together on a massive open expanse of...sand.

"Dat why it call de sands, bwoy, dat why it call de sands!"

"Alright."

"Dere be plenty of sand on de sands!"

"Why are we here?"

The Heartman nods, "we watching *dem*."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Approaching us are two people, a man, an old man who is walking bent double, and a young lad. He must be about ten. He's tall and strong looking. He's sniffing the air and peering at his feet.

"Can you see, lad?" asks the old man.

The boy nods. "Aye, Walter, Sir, I can see." His accent is strong. It's like that of the old man. It's a Red Rose accent.

"And what time is it, lad?"

The lad looks up at the now visible sun. "Just afore noon, Walter, Sir." The lad's face is black. His features are familiar. It's my son.

"It Joe, bwoy, Joe."

"He's growing up."

"Him de spitting image of Sir Jackson Moss, bwoy, him de spitting image."

My heart lurches at this comment. It's my son and yet I've not seen him grow into this strong looking lad. Not seen him be a child. Will never see him become a man. It's been left to this old white man.

"Walter a good mon, bwoy, a good mon."

"Walter from the Vicarage?"

"Dat de one. Him taught him everyting him know, bwoy, everyting."

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“What are they doing?”

“Dey navigating de sands.”

“Navigating the sands?”

“De sands dey dangerous, dere quicksand, dere mud pits and de tide move fast when it come in. De sands dey a dangerous place,” he rubs his claws together, “dere plenty people kill on de sands, plenty.”

“What are they doing though?”

“Dere only few people who know de sands, understand de sands. Walter him one of dose people and him taught Joe de secrets.”

“Why?”

“It part o’ de plan o’ de Heartman, bwoy, part o’ de plan o’ de Heartman.”

“What does he want to do with his life?” I ask.

“Him like de sea, bwoy, de sea and de sands. Him like it. Him like de freedom of de sea and de sands. De sea and de sands are de future o’ Joe, de future, just like de terrible knitters de future o’ young Thomas.”

“The future?”

“Now, it time,” In the distance a bell chimes and the Heartman puts a claw on my shoulder, “for yuh future. Yu ready, bwoy?”

“Ready? Ready for what?”

“For yuh future, bwoy, for yuh future, yu still got tato in your ears?”

“Potato.”

The Heartman ignores me, “tato...spuds or Missus spittle in yuh ears?”

“My future?”

“Dis de last minute o’ yuh past, mon, de last minute, and de next is de first minute o’ yuh future. Could go either way, mon, either way,” he looks me straight in the eye. “Are yu ready?”

I know he means the trial is about to start.

“Yu is a King Coconut! Yu right, it about to start and dere going to be a choice. A choice to be made. One be dat noose yu swung from and de odder is de future wid de good folk. Be careful, bwoy, be careful, choosing ain’t straight forward. One wrong word, bwoy, one wrong word and yuh neck stretches! But mebee dere no choice for slave? Slave have no choice. Mebee de choice for de Heartman? De question is, is de Heartman fed up wid Sir Jackson Moss, or is de Heartman not? Dat de question. Pissed off or not? Death or life, past or future? Now de time for de decision o’ de Heartman.”

“What are you doing?” I ask the Heartman after his dramatic life or death speech.

“What, bwoy, what?”

I shake my head, “did you really need to do *that now*?”

“When a man gotta piss a man gotta piss, bwoy! Even de Heartman.”

### **The dock**

“Jackson Moss, of Plantashion Island.” I am standing in the dock at the court next to the Gaol in Red Rose City. The sands are long gone, the dark room of the terrible knitters is a dim and distant memory, the death chamber of the Missus part of just her future, now there is only me. I’m not just a head now, either, I’ve got a body too, but for how long they’ll stay together I don’t know. I could be hanged at any moment.

I remember, as in a dream, that as I had been escorted here the ghosts of the executed, executed over the centuries had lined my way, silently clapping me. The gaolers couldn’t see them, of course, but I could. Before I’d met Him I wouldn’t have been able to see them, wouldn’t have wanted to, but my time with Him has... has made me a better man.

Long dead old crones, bent almost double are clapping me, thieves, murderers and ruffians, are waving me on, all colours and creeds, but all with their lives extinguished within these ancient, cold damp walls. Before Him they would have been dead to me, too, invisible. Before Him, I was a slave, ignorant of my history, the history of my brothers and sisters. Before Him, I only knew there was injustice, not what shape it took and on what...scale.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru, de Heartman him educate yu, Sir Jackson Moss, educate yu. But mek no bone about it, yu a hero, bwoy, a hero,” sat beside me in the dock is the Heartman dressed in his finery. “And believe yu, Me, de Heartman, him not like good men, him not like dem at all, not one bit! Him prefer bad, bad men. But Me been given dis challenge by a greater power. Dey say ‘Heartman, stop sitting under dat tree on Plantashion Island drinking ‘killdevil’, stop glugging dat nectar through yuh ears, bwoy! Get off yuh ass and do some work wid a good mon. Yu tell him story and dat of him brudders and sisters for de whole world in

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

de Heartman way! Tell de story to dem dat never listen! ‘Cos de Heartman way o’ telling stories interesting. And Me say, ‘naw tank you, bwoy. De Heartman, him don’t have time for no good mon. No time at all for storytelling, so fuck yuh story tank yu kindly!’ And dey say, ‘yu know dat good mon got a big ‘Ting’ bwoy! A very big ‘Ting’ And Me say, ‘a big ‘Ting’ you say? A very big ‘Ting’? Why yu not say dat in de first place!’ A very big ‘Ting’ mek de story a lickle bit naughty and de Heartman him like de naughty story! Alright den! De Heartman hagree to tell de story o’ dis good mon and his brudders and sisters ‘cos it need to be told in de Heartman way!’”

I sigh. I’m used to him by now. And by the looks of things, I might be spending eternity in his company.

“Yu be so lucky, bwoy, yu be so lucky!”

The judge continues. “Jackson Moss of Plantashion Island you stand before me today accused of...” Before us is sat a bawdy looking crowd of Toubob and ghosts. All, Toubob and spirits are silent. I had expected them, Toubob, to be baying for my blood. But they’re just sat. They don’t look sad, why should they? Who am I to them? I’m just a black man who killed a white man. They’re here to see blood spilled.

“Dey not, bwoy, dey not.”

I stare at him. I’m the only human who can see him.

“Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru.”

The Heartman’s presence is somewhat comforting.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Comforting! Comforting! Somewhat comforting! Fuck dat! De Heartman ain’t comforting, bwoy! Take dat back, bwoy, take dat back. De Heartman him ain’t comforting! Somewhat or not! No, sir! De Heartman, him don’t do comforting, Sir Jackson Moss! De Heartman he trouble wid a capital ‘T’!”

But we’ve been on a journey together and you feel like a...

“Don’t say dat word, mon!” he explodes. “Do not say dat word!”

Friend.

The top of his head blasts off his skull, ACTUALLY BLASTS OFF sending his top hat, he’s wearing a top hat and expensive black suit today, shooting into the air. “Awe...yu went and said it, bwoy, yu went and said it! How can de Heartman be anyone friend? It ain’t possible, bwoy, de Heartman him evil trough and trough! De Heartman him even said de ‘F’ word to de greater power, bwoy, even said de ‘F’ word to de greater power! Now dat rude! RUDE!”

But he is the only one still sitting beside me.

“Dat not tru! Well, dat tru, actually, but metaphorically speaking, it ain’t tru. Yu got yuh gal.” He nods, and sat at the side of the room, barely visible because of her tiny stature, is a woman who is staring at me with tears in her eyes. I recognise her but I...don’t.

“She yuh beloved, bwoy, she yuh beloved.”

My beloved? My memory is blurred like the view from the windswept sands that Joe and Walter were navigating before the gusts piped down.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Cecilia Brown. She yuh sweetheart.”

The wife of that...that man. The woman who cared for me. The woman I shared love with on Hope.

“Hope widout...”

“Not now! I’ve got more to think about now!”

“Ha-ha! Yu has got a coconut head after all, bwoy! Bravo! De power of de Heartman rubbing off on Sir Jackson Moss.” He grins, a freshly drawn-on grin. “She going to like yuh ‘Ting’, bwoy! She small, dat for sure, but she all womon, bwoy, she all womon, and she going to like your ‘Ting’.”

I glare at him.

His hands go up in mock surrender. “OK, OK, she going to like your ‘Ting’ in a romantic, soppo way, bwoy, not in a Missus way!”

But I am about to be sentenced to death!

“Mebee, mebee not, mebee yu will be and mebee yu won’t be, bwoy. Mebee yu is executed and then mebee yu is a free mon. Watch!”

The judge starts again. “Sir Jackson Moss, of Plantashion Island, de mon wid de world renowned ‘Ting’...”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I glare at the Heartman who is in raptures. He falls off his seat he laughs so hard. But he's real, the judge, magistrate, official, whatever he is. The man who is in charge of proceedings is speaking with the voice of the Heartman until he suddenly isn't.

"Jackson Moss of Plantashion Island you stand before me today accused of...murder. You are sentenced to be taken from this place to a place of execution where you will be hanged by the neck until you are dead."

**Dead**

As I am ushered from the silent room the only sounds that I can hear are the sobs of Cecilia.

All at once she's on her feet. "No!" She's screaming. "NO! NO, NO, NO! He's innocent!" Then she collapses, faints, like someone has pulled a sharp blade across her throat extinguishing her own life. An old man sat next to her is quickly on his feet and supporting her lifeless tiny body.

"Come on, Jack lad, come on," the gaoler is leading me out. "I've got money, lad, she's given me money, I'll make sure 'is palms are lined, I'll pay the executioner. It'll be quick. You won't feel a thing. Then, you'll be away to a better place, son."

He leads me gently up some stairs and then cramped stone passageways with barely enough room to pass, its low claustrophobic stone ceiling forcing us both to stoop as we shuffle along.

"Is there anything you want me to tell her?" The gaoler asks. "Any last messages you want me to give 'er, lad?"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

I turn my head as he pushes me along. His face is kind, but his hands never leave me, their grip firm and immovable.

It's all happening so fast. After my endless journey with the Heartman, back to Africa, then on to Hope, with no hope, to my life and the lives of the slaves on Plantashion Island. Thirty years in one night, and then a brief conversation, then a speech from a crusty old Toubob and my fate is decided. Within minutes I will be dead. Hanging from a rope over the cobbled square that has seen all the ghosts die over the centuries.

"Just tell her...sorry."

"Sorry?"

"Sorry we didn't have longer together. Sorry that we didn't have a life together."

The gaoler nods solemnly. He'll tell her. I know he will. I trust him.

We reach a small arched door before which one of the other gaolers stands.

"Sorry, Jack lad," he says, "it could have gone either way."

He opens the door and the light, the bright white light, of my final moments is intense. For a second, I'm back in the room in Africa waiting to be shuffled on to Hope, with no hope. For a second, I'm back in the sugar cane field on Plantashion Island, sweat rolling down my face as I toil with my brothers and sisters in the Caribbean sun. For a second, I am stood on the beach awaiting my departure for England. Then, just for a second, I'm stood with Cecilia, looking down on Red Rose City, watching the ships come and go and looking to a future together.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Put this on, lad,” the executioner places a bag over my head. He didn’t have to ask me, he could have just done it. He was just being kind.

“Tell her sorry,” I mumble.

“Aye, lad, aye,” something heavy is passed over my head and strong hands tug and place it just right.

A voice next to me starts to utter prayers and I know it’s the end.

There’s a clunk and I drop.

My head is jerked backwards, and I slowly start to fall asleep. It’s the end.

Then, someone taps my shoulder. “It ain’t de end, bwoy, it ain’t de end! It one end, just one end. Not de end. Watch!” Claws are clicked and I’m back in the court room.

**Alive**

“Jackson Moss of Plantashion Island,” the judge is speaking. But this time, there is no sign of the black cloth that he had placed on his head before. He’s just got a dusty old wig on. “I have heard the statements of the witnesses and I am fully satisfied that you stand before me today accused of...manslaughter.”

What is happening? Why not murder?

“She got contacts, bwoy, contacts?”

“Who?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Cecilia, she got contacts and money. And, Charles Inman, him not a popular man, bwoy, Charles Inman not a popular man, not popular in Red Rose City. Him a man who mek enemies. Dere few people here not sorry to hear dat he died on Hope widout...”

“Please!”

“She got contacts, dat all de Heartman saying, all him saying, but yu still got to take yuh chance, bwoy, take yuh chance when it presented. Mek a choice. Hagree?”

I nod. I’ll take my chance at life, a new life, with new life. I noticed the small bump, “Hagree!”

“I sentence you to be deported to Australia! To Van Diemen’s Land where you will undertake hard labour at a penal colony. Your ship leaves at first light on the morning tide.” The assembled citizens of Red Rose City all suck in their breath at the same time, making sure there is absolutely no air in the cramped room.

Cecilia is on her feet, “Jack! Jack! I’ll come! I’ll come! I’ll come to Van Diemen’s Land!” She’s looking flushed, a healthy pink colour not the white as a sheet that she was the last time I saw her.

“Yu hero in deir eyes, bwoy, hero in deir eyes, and in him,” he nods at the judge. “Him no fan of Charles Inman and him sort, dey no fan of a man like Charles Inman and de Massa, or de Missus or Reverend Massa Clarkson. Dis lot, de people here today to watch, dey suffer at de hands o’ dose Toubob. But dey powerless. De judge him a Methodist. Him a friend o’ Cecilia. It go against him...” he tries to spit on the floor. “Fuck! No mouth!” Then he speaks

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

in barely more than a whisper. “It go against him *Christian* values to have yu executed for dis crime. But him has to punish yu, bwoy, him has to punish yu.”

I stare at him, open mouthed.

“Yu got friends in high and low places, bwoy, friends in high and low places and dat a good ting, mon.”

“The ship leaves on the next tide. You will be transported to Van Diemen's Land without further delay.”

As the news sinks in, I’m bundled out by the gaolers who have become, if not friends, friendly faces during my time of incarceration. They are firm but respectful.

“See yu on de ship, bwoy! See yu on de ship! Mebee...”

**The End**

“Where are we now?” I ask. It’s later that day or is it night. It’s night because the light from the small window in my cell has changed from watery Red Rose City sun yellow to silvery north country moon.

“Dat almost poetic, bwoy, almost poetic! We back in de cell, bwoy, back in de cell.” The Heartman is sat on the bed next to me.

“It’s all starting again,” I say quietly shaking my head. “Another ship, another voyage. No life, still a prisoner.”

“Yu alive, bwoy, yu alive!”.

“Alive for what!”

“Alive for life, bwoy, alive for life. Yu could be swinging by yuh neck by now, mon, by yuh neck and yu could be heading upstairs to meet wid dat ‘G’ mon at dose pearly gates, dose fucking pearly gates!” He tries to spit on the floor in disgust. “FUCK IT! De Heartman him hate dose fucking pearly gates, mon, hate dem, and him hate not being able to SPIT! One of dese days me SPIT!”

I shrug.

“Oh! De Heartman pissed off wid yu, bwoy! Pissed off! Yu no fun, mon, no fucking fun, yu such a goody! De Heartman need de end! And den Me need de Plantashion Island sunshine, de ‘kill-devil’ and den getting between de legs o’ dat lovely Miss Rachel!”

He clicks his fing...claws and we’re at the quay, on the dockside. In the dark a huge ship is loading supplies. The scene is busy but strangely quiet. I’m stood on my own. There are no shackles on my hands or feet. No one is near me. The longshoremen are busy and are ignoring me. I’m dressed in a thick woollen coat. It’s good quality, but not a gentleman’s coat. The collar is pulled right up, and my three-cornered hat is pulled down over my face to keep the cold out. No one can recognise me. No one can see my black face. In the darkness every man at least appears equal.

Someone whistles but the longshoremen ignore it. The sound blasts out again and I turn in the direction it came from. It’s an old carriage, the two horses are stomping on the cobbles their breath like flames in the cold early morning.

The driver whistles and I point at myself.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Who the fuck else!” he mumbles as he nods. He’s grumpy and pissed off at being made to get out of his pit so early.

I walk slowly over. The door of the carriage is opened, and a woman’s voice speaks.

“Get in Jack.”

“But?”

“Get in.”

“I...I.”

“Van Diemen's Land or this carriage?” The voice is soft but firm.

I don’t need to think. I’ll take my chance at life. I climb in and the carriage starts, bouncing over the cobbles.

The woman, the small, blonde woman grabs my hand.

“Where are we going to?”

“North. Somewhere no one will ever find you, Jack Moss.”

Sat across from us is Him. He’s shaking his head. “De Heartman, him fucking hate happy endings, bwoy, fucking hate dem!”

Where am I going?

“De north country, bwoy, de north country where it too fucking cold to do anyting but sit in de fire! Enjoy yuh life Jack, enjoy yuh life, and mek sure yuh missus enjoy yuh ‘Ting’, bwoy!”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“But, but...”

“Dere plenty places in de north country where a mon can live a life widout questions, bwoy, plenty places. For fuck’s sake, it snow dere in de summer, in de summer! Who de fuck look for anyone dere! De Heartman, him fucking hate happy endings! Fucking hate ‘em.”

“What about Joe?”

“Ah! Well, dat might mek up for dis shite ending! Might just mek up for it, bwoy, one last killing! Or two!”

“Joe’s going to die?”

He shakes his head, “watch, bwoy, watch!” For  
the final time claws are clicked.

**The End is nigh**

“WHERE IN GOD’S NAME ARE WE NOW?” I’m having to shout above the roar of the storm. The deafening, horrendous storm. A hurricane wind is lifting me off my feet, cutting into the skin on the side of my face, making my eyes weep from the unceasing tumult, and my ears bleed from the unrelenting blast. The sky is a menacing dark grey, lit occasionally by lightning and its accompanying thunderous crescendo. “It’s a hurricane and we’re back on Plantashion Island?” Just a second earlier we were sat in a carriage headed to my happy ending and now, now we’re on the edge of Hell itself.

“Naw, mon, naw, it ain’t Plantashion Island, bwoy, it ain’t. Too cold for Plantashion

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Island, bwoy, too cold!”

“Then, where are we?” I can barely see for the assault on my senses. All I can see is grey, grey sky, grey ground, never ending, grey ground, that is stretching for miles and miles, flat and never ending.

“Dis de sands bwoy, de sands!”

I look down. There is sand, rippled grey sand, under my boots. “The sands?”

“Yu seen yuh bwoy on it just afore and yu saw it when yu arrive in Red Rose City, mon!”

“Err...I was in shackles when I arrived, remember, King Coconut!”

The Heartman ignored the jibe. “Now yu mention it, bwoy, now yu mention it.”

“Why are we here?”

“It de end.”

“The end?”

The Heartman shrugs, “One story end, bwoy, and anodder begin. Dat de way o’ life, and death, always beginning, always ending.”

A noise, a noise above the din of the terrible weather distracts me. A fast thudding is approaching and then passes us. It’s a man on horseback. “Who is that?”

“Dat Joe, bwoy, dat Joe.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Joe? What’s he doing out here on the...the...”

“De sands, we out on de sands, bwoy, right out on de sands.”

“What is he doing right out on the sands? Isn’t it dangerous?”

“Yu seen him learn everyting from old Walter, so not for dat bwoy, dat bwoy him know dese sands like de back o’ him hands. Him spend nearly every day o’ him life out here on dese sands. Him come out wid de old man, Walter, and de old man him teach him everyting him know about de sands. Naw, dat bwoy, him safe here.”

“But the sands, they are dangerous?”

“Dey plenty dangerous, bwoy, plenty dangerous. De Heartman him see plenty death on dese sands. Dey unpredictable see, unpredictable. Dey unpredictable and dey hungry. Hungry for flesh, just like de Heartman.”

Joe is riding his horse fast across the expanse. He keeps slowing and inspecting his route then speeding up. Once or twice he stops and turns and listens, and then speeds up. He’s got plenty of bags strapped on to his mare.

“Is he going somewhere?”

“Him escaping, bwoy, him escaping. Him taken one beating too many from de Reverend Massa and now him escaping. But de Reverend Massa him not happy. Watch.”

The Heartman clicks his claws and we’re on the shore looking out over the sands, what you can see of the endless sands, because they are being lashed by an ‘end of the world’ storm.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“End o’ de world storm? De Heartman him like dat, bwoy, like dat. End o’ de world!

De Heartman wish!”

“Tell me where that black bastard has gone, boy!” The Reverend is screaming at his other stepson. My son! My white son!

“I don’t know, Father, I don’t know,” replies the gentle voice.

“Liar!” The Reverend slaps Michael around the face and he falls heavily.

“Bastard!” I shout.

“Dey can’t hear yu, bwoy, dey can’t hear yu.”

Michael is crying. He’s a young man but he’s crying.

“Michael not tough, bwoy, not tough like Joe. Him a thoughtful bwoy, a kind bwoy. Him a bookworm.”

I walk over and look down on my white son, who is so scared he can barely lift his head. My heart jolts. I’ve seen that look before, seen it a lot. Seen that look on the faces of slaves.

“Dat de look o’ fear, bwoy, de look o’ fear. Yu seen plenty o’ dat.”

“He’s white, but he’s my son,” I’m crying now. “He’s Toubob but he’s my blood. He’s of their violence, of her violence but he’s half mine, he’s half slave. He’s scared like a slave.”

“Him scare like a slave, bwoy, him scare like a slave, dat tru. Afore now, when de Reverend raise him hand, it Joe who step in and protect him brother. Dat Joe tough. Joe not

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

cry, not even when him a baby, never cry, bwoy, never, ‘xcept when Charles Inman try and slit him throat. Him been beaten plenty for him brudder and him brudder love him, dey love each odder. Dey de same blood. But dey got to take different path in life, different path.”

The Reverend is looking for his pistol.

“He’s going to shoot him, shoot Michael.”

The pistol is raised and aimed at the cowering young man, the scared young man, my son. The hammer is pulled back.

“HIM GOING TO MURDER YUH BWOY! MURDER YUH BWOY!”

NEVER! Somehow, I manage to funnel the wind and a westerly Atlantic blast knocks the man of God clean over. When the Reverend manages to right himself, he remembers it’s Joe he’s after, not the pathetic boy at his feet.

“You’re fucking scum!” Clarkson sneers at Michael with a firm kick in the lad’s ribs.

“Fucking scum! I’ll deal with you later.” He disappears into the stable and saddles his horse.

“Later!” He calls as he gallops off over the sand.

“I’ve been waiting for you!” Joe couldn’t leave his brother, not to the temper of their stepfather. The two men on horse-back have met, right out in the bay, the tidal, sandy, sea free bay. Joe knows that the tide will return soon, but he knows his way to the shore. He could have been long gone, but he couldn’t leave his brother. As he’s turned and started to head back towards

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

the vicarage, he's come face to face with the vicar, the angry, brutal slave owning clergyman who is bent on punishing him once and for all.

“Why's he waited for him?” I ask. “Why hasn't he run?”

“Dis why, bwoy, dis why! De Heartman show yu, mon, de Heartman show yu what dat man o' 'him upstairs' done to dat old man, Walter.”

Punches hail down on Walter as he cowers at the feet of the man of God. Each thud uses the vicar's full strength, each accompanying his vicious, drink induced justification.

“You!”

“Couldn't!”

“Keep!”

“Out!”

“Of!”

“My!”

“Business!”

Walter tries to reply. Tries at first to defend himself but he is old, walking is a struggle now, getting up from his fireside rocking chair on his own impossible, standing unaided more and more difficult because the once vibrant master of the sands is old.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Walter's a good man. A good, old, God-fearing man. He attends church every Sunday and says his prayers before bed. He's lived with his loving wife for over fifty years and when they had not been blessed with children had seen it as God's plan and not thought too deeply about it. But when the babby arrived he had seen some reason for his simple life, some reason to be living on God's Earth, someone to pass the knowledge of the sands on to as his father had passed it to him and his father to him. Walter didn't care that the babby was black. He was a babby, a son, an angel sent from God and he and Martha have loved the lickle lad like their own. They've always been careful, though, and no more so than around the Reverend who was known for his temper and his liking of strong liquor.

"What happened to spark his fury?" I ask as I struggle to watch the unrelentless assault. I've seen many a man, many a slave beaten like this but not a white man. Truth be told violence is violence whether it's inflicted on black or white. Sickening. And this old man has loved my son like his own. I can't watch.

"De Reverend him caught dem, bwoy, caught dem."

"Caught them doing what?"

"Caught dem acting like fadder and son. Caught Joe call Walter 'Pa'."

"How!" The punches continue. His fist are bleeding as they batter the body of the pathetic old man.

"Dare!"

"You!"



“Treat!”

“My!”

“Son!”

“Like!”

“Yours!”

“He’s not your son!” I shout. “He’s mine! And this man, this good man he took him in and loved him!”

“Him can’t hear yu, bwoy, can’t hear yu!” “You!”

“Old!”

“Bastard!” the final punch knocks the last breath of life out of the old man. Knocks the last drop of air from his weary old lungs that struggled to breathe anyway. Battered his knackered old heart so hard it couldn’t pump the tepid life-giving liquid around his punctured old veins. Cracked his already smashed skull until his brain no longer controls his bodily functions. Left the once fun-filled body dead.

As Joe turns and starts making his way back towards the shore, he almost knocks down the two men who are walking towards him.

“Pa? Pa? Is that you? What are you doing out here, Pa?”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Joe quickly dismounts and rushes to Walter. “What’s happened to you, Pa?” Walters clothes are all torn and covered in blood.

“He’s alive?” I ask the Heartman.

“Him a ghost, bwoy, a ghost. Him using what left o’ him time here on Earth to warn him son, mon, using it to warn yuh son.”

Walter smiles. “He’s killed me, Joe, lad, killed me, son.”

“What?” Joe tries to grab Walter, but his hands pass through the body of the old man.

“No!”

“It’s true, lad. We’ve come to warn you.”

Joe looks passed his white father, there’s a man with him. The other man is an elderly black man.

“Wait!” I say to the Heartman. “I know that man!”

“Yu has got coconut head after all, bwoy, yu has after all!”

“It’s the man from Hope!”

“Hope widout...”

“Not now! It’s the man who was...the old man who was fed to the sharks. The man who became ill. The village elder. The one who pleaded with them to help him. The one who went down like an animal in a butcher’s shop. The one they pushed overboard for the sharks to devour.”

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

The Heartman grins. "Him de one."

"This is an old friend," replies Walter. "He's come to collect me." "Collect you?" asks Joe.

"I've not got long, Joe lad, but I need to tell you two things."

"Two things, Pa?"

"Aye. That I love you, son, always have, ever since I found you in that crate, and always will and secondly, he's behind me..."

Walter's loving smile is replaced by a familiar visage of demented Toubob hate as his Pa is transformed into the Reverend Massa. "Waiting for me lad? Waiting for your destiny more like! You've sinned boy, sinned."

Joe laughs. But it's not a humorous laugh. It is a mocking laugh. Although the lad looks like me, he's tough and quick thinking like his mother. "*I've sinned!* What kind of a man of God are you! Fucking anyone who'll give you the time of day, drinking yourself senseless every night, SLAVE OWNER! Child beater! Murdering an old man because he can't walk fast anymore! He was like a father to me, a father!"

I shake my head. "Bastard!"

"Dat tru, bwoy, dat tru, clear as de sun in de Plantashion Island sky!"

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

“Right is right!” says the Reverend. “A man must sow his seed. A man can enjoy the blood of Christ, and a sentient man has a right to educate the heathen! And that old fool, the idiot got in my way!”

“Fight me like a man, Sir!” Joe marches towards the Reverend. His blood is coursing around his veins.

“Not so fast, Joseph!”

“Watch out,” the Heartman tugs at my coat sleeve. “Dat man ‘o God, him a coward, bwoy, him a coward!”

“I know his sort!” I agree. “I’ve come across his sort plenty in my life. He’s like a lot of slave owners, he’s tough when he’s got a whip, a knife or a pistol.”

“So, you’re going to shoot me!” Shouts Joe. “Kill me in cold blood? Fight me, Sir, fight me!”

“Why should I fight you when I can kill you with a single shot,” the Reverend raises the pistol. Aims the weapon. Cocks the hammer. “Prepare to die, Joe Clarkson!”

“That’s not my name, my name is Joe Moss! JOE MOSS!”

“BASTARD!”

Clarkson fires.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

There's a huge boom and a flash of blinding light and the Reverend falls from his horse, falls heavily onto the waterlogged sand, a large burning hole where his heart was. As the Heartman quickly pounces on the dead man I stand next to my son looking down.

"They'll blame me," mutters Joe.

"They always blame the black man," I reply.

Joe lifts his head and looks me in the eye. We're the same height, exactly the same height. "Wh...where...did you come from, and who's he?"

The Heartman has his head inside the open chest of the Reverend and he's gorging himself on the organs of the dead man. It's sickening, truly sickening, but I don't care. I don't care what the Heartman does to him, whatever he does will never make up for all the evil he and his sort have done in their lives.

"He is his future, he's not ours, son."

"Who are you?"

"Don't you know?"

"Yes," he looks at me. "I know," he nods. "I do know. I thought you were dead."

I shake my head, "I'm not dead."

"Will I see you again."

"Maybe," I shrug. "That's up to him. He's the narrator."

"I know who he is. Bonnie told me about him, told me about my history. She talks with

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Frances. He's the Heartman."

"Yes."

Joe looks down. The water is getting deep. The tide is returning.

"You'd better go, son."

"What about you, Father? It's not safe. The tide'll be over your head in minutes."

I shake my head. "We're not really here, Joe."

Joe hugs me. And it is real. The hug is real. Our bodies are solid. Father and son. We are real. My life is real. His life is real. His future is real. The history of our ancestors is real. The future of our children is real. Our lives matter. Their lives mattered. Their lives will matter.

The Heartman looks up, his face covered in the blood of his victim. "Blah, blah, blah, bwoy, blah, blah, blah! Hagree?"

THE END OF *DARK TIDE* – JACK'S STORY

## *Dark Tide Exegesis*

### **1 Introduction**

Evil becomes possible when we refuse to think. We become easy to manipulate. And then one day we find we have lost control of our lives, our freedoms, our world. The fact of being alive means we have a responsibility to life. We can't escape the responsibility of thinking, of asking questions – *Ben Okri*. (Norman, 2020).

My intention is that the readers of the creative output of this project, the novel *Dark Tide*, think that its eighty thousand words begin to examine this insightful short quote by the novelist and poet, Ben Okri, in whose character, the spirit child, Azaro, (Okri, 1991), I can see similarities with my unreliable narrator the Heartman, who is the central unique literary element in my story.

*Dark Tide* is an epic tale that encompasses half the world and follows the main protagonist, Jack Moss, as he relives capture, transportation, existence as a slave on a sugar plantation on Plantashion Island (Barbados) to life as a free man in the north country (Westmorland). Utilising Jack's stream of consciousness and techniques such as shifting spiritual atavism, out-of-body existentialism, therianthropy and personification it begins to examine (and will be further examined in subsequent *Dark Tide* stories) the role of transatlantic slavery, planter class subjugation, colonial mercantilism and class in northern England as Britain grew from an agrarian economy to an industrial one.

The project began with my discovery of a black woman's mummified hand on an old lady's mantelpiece, close to where I live in Yorkshire. This exegesis explores my research and places the book in a literary and historical context.

### **2 The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century embodied in the narrative of *Dark Tide*.**

*Dark Tide* is the fictional creative output of this project entitled: *The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century*. Its intention is to examine, for a literary audience, how the history of the world has been manipulated by the colonial few (to quote Fanon 'The colonist makes history and he knows it.' (1961, p. 15)), to allow it to ignore and accept the exploitation and manipulation of the many for their own purposes for hundreds of years.<sup>1</sup> It thus makes evil not only possible, but a real and an accepted part of how literature, emanating from and mirroring history, has created a collective social amnesia to depict our 'western' heritage which is especially relevant for the people of African descent who form most of the main characters in *Dark Tide*. The scholar Na'im Akbar states that this social amnesia has completely erased the cultural memory of those whom it has swallowed up because 'for many people of African

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Power, utopia and the historical consciousness are intricately connected and influence the identity of a particular social structure as well as the individuals whose lives are dictated by that structure.' (Jenson, 2008)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

descent, an accurate understanding of their collective experience has been displaced and distorted by historical, cultural and social amnesia'. (Lewis T. L., 2008)

The narrative of *Dark Tide*, and the research that underpins it, like the life of the woman who inspired the project, is a journey, a grand over-arching adventure from one side of the world to the other. *Dark Tide* is not only a slave narrative, but also a work of historical socio-economic fiction about those who benefited from the transatlantic trade and those who were exploited by it, and how a small group of those exploited peoples settled in northern England and integrated into working class communities. It is also a work of magical realism as its subversive narrative tries to push against the traditional colonial representations of history that have been exposed by the writings of Fanon, Akbar and Charles Mills,<sup>2</sup> and tries to integrate reality and fiction, the ordinary and extraordinary, believable and unbelievable because this genre allows the author of this narrative to create 'a matter-of-fact integration of reality and fantasy, an almost taken-for-granted intimacy between the extraordinary and the familiar.' (Tekdemir, 2011, p. 42)

As with Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843), the Heartman and Jack Moss do not actually physically go anywhere they remain in Jack's gaol cell. But metaphysically *Dark Tide* is a literary journey that starts and ends in one place, a beautiful, bleak part of northern England where my forefathers and mothers lived and where the characters in this narrative settled. It is the place we all call home. This project looks at how one specific group of people from half a world away came to call this place home via the horrors of the triangular trade.

*Dark Tide* also introduces the Heartman to the world, and this one literary creation is what makes the narrative stand out, challenge perceptions and makes readers ponder the reality they have accepted in powerful, poignant, humorous, innovative and disturbing ways. The Heartman is an unreliable narrator who can transcend time and societal norms. He is unique in literature as an omnipotent, omnipresent black demon, manipulating the narrative and characters to conform to some masterplan that readers speculate about whilst continually keeping them guessing which direction the narrative will take.

Although built upon primary historical research this is not a history project it is a literary and creative undertaking for the award of PhD in Creative Writing. The historical research undertaken as part of this project underpins and informs the creative process of writing the novel. Historical research acts as a 'starting block' or 'jumping off point' for the narrative, with the intention that the resulting story first makes a unique contribution to literature, and then, secondarily, to history.

In addition to the Heartman, in several keyways, the creative output of this project, *Dark Tide*, makes unique contributions to literature. Firstly, *Dark Tide* provides a new narrative voice which challenges the enduring dominant voice that has prevailed for thousands of

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Standard textbooks and courses have, for the most part, been written and designed by whites who take their racial privilege so much for granted that they don't even see it as political, as a form of domination. Ironically, the most important political system of recent global history, the system of domination by which white people have historically ruled over and in certain important ways continue to rule over non-white people, is not seen as a political system at all. It is just taken for granted.' Charles Mills. (Lewis T. L., 2008)



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

years,<sup>3</sup> that of stories recorded, told and examined from the perspective of the white male ruling class who have held, and continue to hold, power in our modern world. This exegesis will examine how it is the voice of privileged white males who have often formed our understanding of our history, for they were the writers of it, and they wrote mainly of and about themselves. In contrast, the narrative in *Dark Tide* is told by an omnipotent black Barbadian/African mythical character.

Uniquely, *Dark Tide* also offers a counter-narrative as it examines sexual power relationships during the time of colonial black African subjugation, going beyond those of the traditional white male/black female perspective of a novel like Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), and considering sexual power relations from the point of view of white female/black male. As women too were often excluded from the dominant narratives of sexual power relations of the time, any relationships that were recorded were from the white male perspective. The counter narrative of this creative output begins to somewhat redress the imbalance of this hegemonic masculinity.<sup>4</sup> The origins of this stem from listening to an insightful lecture by Professor Diana Paton entitled 'Mary Williamson's Letter' (2019) which highlighted the pitiful plight of woman in slave cultures.<sup>5</sup> I was subsequently inspired to offer a counter-narrative with two strong female characters in particular, Elizabeth – 'the Missus' – whom Jack Moss has a submissive and destructive sexual power relationship with, and Rachel Pringle Polgreen, which allows *Dark Tide* to complicate our conceptualization of gender and power dominance and to challenge the reader to consider more deeply the violation of sexual exploitation.

More than anything, *Dark Tide* tells the story of fear. Almost all slave narratives, of which *Dark Tide* must reside with, resonate with fear. *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison, *Underground Railroad* (2016) by Colson Whitehead, *Blonde Roots* (2009) by Bernadine Evaristo, *The Long Song* (2010) by Andrea Levy, and *Roots* (1976) by Alex Haley all drip with fear as if it is the life blood coursing through their pages. But fear can be as contagious as the diseases that ran rampant through colonial slave communities. (Mason, 1986) Throughout the pages of *Dark Tide*, readers see that the ruling classes also lived perpetually in fear; fear of revolt, fear of loss of lifestyle, and ultimately fear of death, and this drove them into the creation of ever more brutalised practices to dominate their subordinates and maintain the control they needed to survive. A growing awareness of this fear and desperation, and its subsequent brutality, ensued in Europe and, as chasms widened between life in England and Barbados, this ultimately contributed to the English abolition movement.<sup>6</sup>

Although *Dark Tide* tells the story of Black people living in Britain, Black people lived in Britain before the long eighteenth century and they long predated transatlantic slavery. In fact slavery itself existed in antiquity (Painter, 2010). Dr Onyeka Nubia (2019) and his fellow

---

<sup>3</sup> The dominant voice has prevailed since Roman times when 'the surviving literary sources from the ancient Roman world were authored almost exclusively by wealthy men of the upper classes'. (Aldrete, 2020)

<sup>4</sup> 'Hegemonic femininity is defined by a position of dominance and power, rather than a submission to men.' (Hendriks, 2015)

<sup>5</sup> Diana Paton's lecture referred specifically to enslaved and manumitted women.

<sup>6</sup> The American historian Professor Christopher Brown who I corresponded with at length during my research encapsulates this 'To a people who wished to think of themselves as Christian, moral, and free, the abolitionists presented an opportunity to express their reverence for 'liberty, justice, and humanity,' and at little cost to themselves. Who besides those with a personal stake in the slave system could object to that?' (2006)

scholar of black British history, Miranda Kaufman (2017), have discussed general acceptance of people of colour prior to the transatlantic slavery of the long eighteenth century, and indeed in his seminal work on black British history Peter Fryer states that there have been black Britons for thousands of years (1984, p. 1). Even the history of British enslavement predates the long eighteenth century and the relationships that are featured in *Dark Tide* between the black characters and working-class white people in the north of England become more plausible when it becomes clear that economic exploitation of the lower classes, black and white, in transatlantic commerce are seen as anything but new. Prior to the landing of the first ship arriving in the New World from Africa with holds full of black slaves, it was white working-class servants or *engages*, to use the French term, who arrived from Britain and Ireland in the case of Barbados, as labour. Like African slaves these indentured servants were bought right off the dock with the most skilful and healthiest attracting the best prices, whilst the old and sick were practically worthless and cast aside. The similarities between what happened to them and what would happen to Africans is remarkable and *Dark Tide* builds upon this interracial class solidarity. Whilst these indentured servants were not technically owned by their employers, they were inextricably tied to them for a fixed period during which they were worked into the ground and regularly into the grave. So short was the life of an indentured worker that at least 2000 of these servants arrived in Barbados each year until 1666 (Stuart, 2012, p. 49), admittedly small in numbers compared to the African slave trade but still considerable considering the infancy of plantation production.

One example of class integration that my primary research has uncovered is how some black settlers in northern England moved from countryside to towns as the industrial revolution gathered pace in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many working-class families, my own and my wife's included, were split by the pace of industrialisation, with some remaining to work on the land whilst others moved to work in the urban factories of Lancashire and West Yorkshire. This was the case when some of the well-known black Dalesman John Yorke's children moved from Swaledale to the industrial hubs of Bradford and Leeds seeking employment along with their fellow white villagers.<sup>8</sup>

In the narrative of *Dark Tide*, working class solidarity is promoted as something devoid of racial overtones because, although the scale and inhumane severity differed substantially, economic exploitation of the lower classes existed well before the first ships unloaded their holds of black slaves. *Dark Tide* also tells the story of the traditional maintenance of power of the wealthy white classes over Africans, imported as slaves, and considers their relationship to this class both in Barbados and in the northwest of England.<sup>9</sup>

*Dark Tide* explores and considers the transient and often brutal nature of life in a particular situation but does not stop there. It considers also the transcendence of the human soul

---

<sup>8</sup> The archive at the Dales Countryside Museum contains a family tree for the Yorke family <https://www.mylearning.org/stories/1776-african-youth-of-the-dales/528>

<sup>9</sup> The period that this thesis covers predates the growth of nineteenth century racial theories so eloquently discussed by Ryan Hanley in his Alexander Prize Essay 'Over the course of the 1820s, as demands for an extended franchise became more urgent, the black slave was increasingly represented to emergent working-class readerships as being essentially different from, and inferior to, them. These comparisons ultimately comprised a form of racism that was eventually to inform plebeian opposition to abolition in the 1830s and 1840's.' (2016, p. 104)

## **PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

through the use of magical realism, which will be discussed more fully below, in the vein of such classic works as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Marquez, 1967), *The House of Spirits* (Allende, 1982), *Midnight's Children* (Rushdie, 1981), *Nights at the Circus* (Carter A. , 1984 ) *The Famished Road* (Okri, 1991) as well as slave narratives such as *Kindred* (Butler, 1979), *Underground Railroad* (Whitehead, 2016), *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) and the thought provoking speculative fiction of Evaristo's *Blonde Roots* (2009).

Using a stream of consciousness of the main character, Jack Moss, and the narration of the unreliable Heartman, *Dark Tide* contributes to the critical examination of the slave narrative, to social, economic and gender power constructs, fear and class identity, and how the industrial revolution was built upon the profits of slavery. It also examines how our collective perceptions have been distorted by a historical, cultural and social amnesia which has been formed by those who have written and continue to write history, to the detriment of many direct descendants of transatlantic slavery.

### **3) Inspirations**

The inspiration for the creative output, *Dark Tide*, stems primarily from my discovery of the story of a mummified hand of a black woman, the hand of one Frances 'Fanny' Johnson,<sup>12</sup> sitting on the mantelpiece of an elderly lady, Eliza Dear (who evidently described 'Fanny' as a beloved servant of her family), in my hometown in the early 1990's (Burns, 1997).

During the course of my research, I spoke with a former librarian from the University of Leeds, Anne Reid, who had known Eliza Dear when she lived in Settle before relocating to Spain in the mid 1990's to be with her family. Although I obtained an email address and tried to make contact with Eliza Dear, I received no reply. But it is safe to say that the discovery of the story of Frances Johnson's mummified hand inspired this entire project, and so began a quest to discover how a woman like Frances might have lived, and how she might have lost her hand. There are many historical possibilities as to how hands were lost, perhaps in an agricultural accident in a sugar cane field? Or as punishment?<sup>13</sup> But most would not tie up with the account of the high regard in which the Satterthwaite family, her employers, evidently held Frances, and why the hand would be kept as a memento of her for over a century.

Like many British based merchant families with interests in the West Indies in the long eighteenth century sugar was key (Sheridan, 2000), and the Satterthwaites made much of

---

<sup>12</sup> 'The hand had almost certainly belonged to Frances Elizabeth Johnson (Fanny) born in St. Kitts in the West Indies in 1751 and brought to Lancaster by her owner John Satterthwaite in 1778. He had just married Mary Rawlins and this marriage had combined two significant Lancaster families who made their money in the slave and West Indian trades as many other families did in the period when the city was the fourth largest slave port in Britain.' (Rice, 2011)

<sup>13</sup> 'Amputation as a punitive or correctional method has its roots in old civilizations. It has been used through the ages in various parts of the world.' (Mavroforou, 2014)

their fortunes on the back of this white gold,<sup>14</sup> during the production of which limb loss was not unusual. This connection with sugar production formed the most plausible option as to how Fanny could have lost her hand and is mirrored in *Cane Warriors* (2020), where Alex Wheatle tells of how the main character Moa's father had his arm hacked off by a man with an axe called Mooker, to avoid being dragged into the sugar cane crushing machines. There are many accounts of limb loss in the eighteenth-century sugar industry (Shuler, 2011) and, therefore, it could have realistically happened to anyone who worked in a Caribbean sugar refinery.

Although there is something terribly gruesome about the loss of a hand, there is also something magical and spiritual that reaches beyond mere facts and into the writer's imagination, something that took the nature of *Dark Tide*, although anchored within the genre of historical fiction, firmly into the territory of magical realism. It quickly became apparent that as a writer of informed historical fiction I needed to look beyond the facts discovered during archival research. But that by no means diminishes what can be discovered in the act of reading between the lines of archival texts which can provide more for the fiction writer than the dates, acts, ledgers and registers that they contain. One set of documents that I studied in detail were the *Satterthwaite Letter Books*.<sup>15</sup> The Satterthwaites were ancestors of Eliza Dear and this made them the logical starting point for my archival research. These letters undeniably provide a unique insight into the transatlantic trade of the eighteenth century, but perhaps it is what they allude to, and the short personal messages that are dotted throughout the letters that help characters form in the fertile soil of the writer's imagination.

Although the archival work undertaken initially was extensive, from early in this project it became apparent that this was uncovering what Hilary Mantel would call just 'scraps' (Attar, 2017) of useful information. But, in the fifth of the Satterthwaite letters I came across a letter Benjamin Satterthwaite wrote to a William Dingman where he discusses his thoughts on selling a boy called Bryan, and his hopes of getting £60 or £70 for him and the securing of a weekly allowance for the boy (Satterthwaite, 1764). This denotes that Bryan, although called a boy, clearly was a high value asset who could command an allowance - field slaves certainly did not command any such thing because they and their offspring lived a life of enslavement in perpetuity (Stuart, 2012, p. 102), and were likely to be sold on when their usefulness in the sugar cane fields or their owner's economic circumstances dictated (Butler, 1979).

It would not come as any surprise to anyone familiar with the work of Fanon (1967) that when reading the accounts of Benjamin Satterthwaite only the voices of the colonial planter classes are heard, not the voice of Bryan, or the other personal slave mentioned in letter eight, Prince. But it was the lives of Bryan and Prince that I was interested in for my creative

---

<sup>14</sup> According to James Walvin (2017) 'Sugar had become synonymous with slavery' (p41) and 'By the end of the eighteenth century, sugar was available everywhere; it was sold in marketplaces, corner shops, fashionable emporiums and even in the simplest of village stores. The world had become addicted to sugar.' (p50)

<sup>15</sup> The Satterthwaite Letter Books were donated to University of Lancaster by the Johnson family. Access is obtained in the library's Special Collections Department. Transcription and digitisation are ongoing (Lancaster, n.d.).

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

project. They were the ones who lived similar lives to Frances Johnson and the potential characters of my narrative.

How must the numerate and literate Bryan and Prince have pondered their lives and that of those around them? How must they have felt? What were their thoughts on their situation, their lives, the working conditions and lives of their black brothers and sisters who toiled in conditions significantly worse than the ones they enjoyed? What did they think about the brutal systems of punishment used to maintain order amongst the slaves which they must have witnessed if not experienced first-hand? What systems of beliefs were held by both high-ranking slaves such as Bryan and Prince and their lowly compatriots to justify their existence on this Earth? Did they go to church or chapel, or did they worship deities from their home continent? These were all questions the discovery of the existence of Bryan and Prince posed for me.

Whilst the underlying direction for this entire project came from a source astonishingly close to the place that I have always called home, the questions that the discovery posed, and how those answers could be unlocked, required a thorough understanding of the people who lived similar lives to Frances Johnson, when she resided in the Caribbean, to lay the foundations of this project. In truth Frances Johnson gave me, as a researcher, very few facts, just where she was baptised<sup>16</sup> and buried, that her hand ultimately was interred in the Priory Church in Lancaster (Tavor-Bannet, 2011, p. 155) (via a remarkable transatlantic journey from Settle to St Kitts and then back to Lancaster), and the fact that it had sat for an indeterminable length of time on an old lady's mantelpiece. But how Frances could have lost her hand, by whom, if indeed it was severed by someone rather than an accident, and why it was lost, inspired the entire creative output of *Dark Tide*.

Prior to the discovery of the mummified hand, the project had a much wider remit. The original title of this research project which was '*The stories of the ethnicities of the people of the Yorkshire Dales (1660 - 1914), the historical 'whiteness' of Dales communities dispelled*'. But prior to unravelling the story of how Frances Johnson could have lost her hand it became apparent that the project would have to be altered in a number of ways:

- Initially, by focusing only on black residents like Frances Johnson.
- Narrowing the time-period to the long eighteenth century,<sup>17</sup> specifically for the purposes of this project from the late seventeenth and the charter of the Royal Africa Company,<sup>18</sup> to early nineteenth century which coincided with the end of the Napoleonic wars, the growth of abolition, economic recession, and the growth of racial theories and the subsequent polarisation of the working class on racial grounds.
- Widening of the geographical area to be researched to include the northern Lancashire ports. My research discovered that most of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales would have entered England through the northern Lancashire ports. In fact I only

---

<sup>16</sup> During the research conducted by the historian Audrey Dewjee she conclusively disproved Professor Alan Rice's 2011 assertion that Frances Johnson was baptised in The Priory, finding parish records that proved that she was baptised where the majority of her body is buried, in Caton Churchyard, where the Satterthwaites had relocated to from Lancaster. This opens up much conjecture as to why her hand was interred in The Priory in 1993.

<sup>17</sup> 'The long eighteenth century began with the return of Charles II to the throne' (Allegretti).

<sup>18</sup> Although granted royal charter in 1660, it was the subsequent revised charter of 1663 that allowed trade in slaves. (Davies, 1957, p. 41)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

discovered one person who did not enter England this way. He was a runaway black man named Thomas Anson who, it is believed, came into England through Liverpool due to the Sill family connections with Liverpool.

The ensuing primary research I undertook identified around seven hundred potential characters for my creative output, most merely names on a parish register, others, names engraved on a moss-covered tombstone in a quiet corner of an overgrown church graveyard, some, like the aforementioned Thomas Anson, were black people mentioned on ‘wanted’ posters (Mundell, 2018).<sup>20</sup> Occasionally, some became part of local folklore as in the case of Sambo, a vulnerable black boy who is buried at Sunderland Point whose grave still attracts many emotional tributes (Gerzina, 2020).

If uncovering details of the lives of black people when they lived in the West Indies was hard, uncovering anything beyond snippets about their lives when they lived in northern England proved extremely problematic and difficult. There are almost no accounts of the lives of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire coast beyond what is known about John Yorke, Thomas Anson, Frances Johnson, and Jim Chance, a black servant of a well to do Lancaster merchant family. There are some blurred photographs of the black ‘terrible’ knitters of Dent, which inspired incorporation into the narrative of *Dark Tide* as the place where my fictional Frances Johnson settled. I was also able to have sight of the, now lost, old photograph of the pupils of Dent school which clearly showed black and white children attending class together. But without the remarkable coincidental discovery of the mummified hand of Frances Johnson in my hometown, and her connections to the Satterthwaite family and their well-documented Caribbean connections this project might never have even got off the ground.

#### **4) Cultural Appropriation**

I remain firmly behind the idea that authors – and creative artists, in general – should be allowed to express themselves beyond the bounds of the culture into which they were born. To not have that right would mean that I could never pen a novel populated by white protagonists. There is, some argue, a fine line between cultural misappropriation and cultural appreciation. After all, in an increasingly interconnected, globalised world, cultures are continually mixing – it’s inevitable that we will see a sharing of cultural ideas, traditions, fashions, symbols, and even language. For me (and many others), this is a good thing, a way for cultures to understand and empathise with each other. (Khan, 2020)

There is much to unravel in the above quote by the author Vaseem Khan. The rights of creative artists not to be constrained, the right of writers to have protagonists with ethnicities

---

<sup>20</sup> ‘RUN AWAY, From Dent in Yorkshire, on Monday the 28th of Aug. last, THOMAS ANSON, a Negro Man, about five Feet six Inches High, aged 20 Years or upwards, and broad set, Whoever will bring the said Man back to Dent, or give any Information that he may be had again, shall receive a handsome Reward from Mr. Edmund Sill of Dent, or Mr. David Kenyon, Merchant in Liverpool.’ (Mundell, 2018)

that differs from their own, and the interesting concept that what could initially be seen as cultural misappropriation could indeed become cultural appreciation.

Whilst I feel much of what Khan says is valid, I do not agree with Bernadine Evaristo when she describes cultural appropriation as ‘completely ridiculous’,<sup>21</sup> because those of us that write about other cultures need to develop a thorough understanding of how colonialism has misappropriated and misrepresented history, division and race for centuries. But, perhaps Ralph Ellison, in his 1970 essay (Ellison, 1970), was correct when he said ‘since its founding America has been a flowing river of appropriation of other cultures and traditions—and that it is impossible and foolish to reduce such richness to politics’. (Judge, 2021)

When writing about black history, especially the victims of transatlantic slavery as in *Dark Tide*, it is not the rights of the writer but the rights of those being written about that should be at the forefront of the mind of any author because, to quote Charles Mills ‘the system of domination by which white people have historically ruled over and in certain important ways continue to rule over non-white people, is not seen as a political system at all. It is just taken for granted’. (Mills, 1997)

‘Taken for granted’ is something that I hope the narrative of *Dark Tide* addresses on every page. It was certainly at the forefront of my mind when I wrote it as I constantly asked myself what right I, a white man, had to write about any aspect of black history. Being white working class, I could only try and understand the fury redolent of Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) or the anger of Ralph Ellison’s narrator in his classic novel *Invisible Man*, (1952). And, although inspired like many others by fellow working-class Yorkshire writer Caryl Philips whose work ‘weave(s) connections between historical periods as a way of revisiting history through an imaginative recreation that calls upon the reader to see beyond the obvious landmarks and insidious stereotypes in novels’ (Birat, 2021), I don’t share his Caribbean ancestry. For me, the fact that black people integrated into the socio-economic community I call my own inspired me to research their origins, stories and legacies. These black residents were the neighbours of my ancestors, and their untold stories are as important to the history of my community as my story, but the narrative has to be empathetic and informed.

Without question, my own origins are something that drew me initially to the story of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales in the long eighteenth century, how they lived and integrated into working class communities, and how slavery shaped the economic upheaval of the industrial revolution that changed the north of England beyond recognition. I hope this will draw me into further academic research and *Dark Tide* stories.

Any conscientious and empathetic writer should start their narrative journey by attempting to gain an honest understanding of the lives of those they are portraying, because the narrative

---

<sup>21</sup> "This whole idea of cultural appropriation is ridiculous," said Evaristo, "Because that would mean that I could never write white characters or white writers can never write black characters. Look in television: That happens all the time. But there is this idea that when it comes to fiction that you are supposed to stay in your lane. It is a total nonsense." (Sanderson, 2019)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

matters to those who are being portrayed in ways that perhaps, on face value, we do not understand. To those whose history we are writing about, our narrative is more than words on a page; they have spiritual meaning as well as resonance. When reading the thoughts of Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, a writer from one of Canada's First Nations, her words about the stories of her people had deep resonance with my understanding of cultural appropriation and the responsibility of the writer 'they (our stories) are the wealth of our people; they are what give life and continuity to our existence; they are what link us with our collective past, and our collective future'. (Tsosie, 2002, p. 303)

Because we are, therefore, borrowing this intellectual property, a writer clearly has a responsibility to the stories their narratives bring to the world. When a writer commits pen to paper, the narrative is more than words because they are memories of someone else's past and, depending on your spiritual outlook, future. Writing in the *Guardian* in 2016 the thoughts of the author Hari Kunzru echo my own:

Good writers transgress without transgressing, in part because they are humble about what they do not know. They treat their own experience of the world as provisional. They do not presume. They respect people, not by leaving them alone in the inviolability of their cultural authenticity, but by becoming involved with them. They research. They engage in reciprocal relationships. (Kunzru, 2016)

From the outset the *Dark Tide* narrative must be clarified in one important respect. It is not focusing entirely on the history of African slavery but laying the foundations of the story of the black people who *came* to northern Britain and put down roots in the area where I was born and bred. But concerns about a white writer writing about the experiences of people who came to where they call home are something that, whilst it should not weigh down a creative project like this, must be respected, brought into the open and addressed from the outset.

Racial stereotypes are a trap white novelists can easily fall into. The novelist Laura Fish explains 'the portrayal of black characters by white writers has largely been perceived as difficult; they are often portrayed in roles that are stereotypical and grotesque. Black men when they do figure are generally portrayed as a negative force'. (2006, p. 510)

Whilst at first glance *Dark Tide* could be seen as perpetuating this negative and stereotypical portrayal, for example the Heartman's constant references to the size of Jack Moss's penis, but instead I feel it echoes Philips' argument that such narratives offer a counter narrative 'call(ing) upon the reader to see beyond the obvious landmarks and insidious stereotypes in novels'. (Birat, 2021) *Dark Tide* utilises this overtly sexualised banter to allow the narrative to expose the sexual exploitation of black males by white females in the form of Jack's destructive relationship with Elizabeth. In this Jack is forced to remain in the relationship, and remain subservient and servile, because of his commitment to maintaining the safety of those around him whom he loved. The acceptance of sexual exploitation by their owners to protect their loved ones is something the characters in *Kindred* (Butler, 1979) like Jack, accept as a sad fact of life, but in *Kindred*, the exploiters are white males and the exploited are black females.

*Dark Tide* is clearly a narrative that is intended to tell the stories of people with backgrounds different to my own and to portray this story with honesty and integrity, and is, to quote



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Margaret Vickers 'also intended to engage both readers and writers in the process of considering other peoples' truths and viewpoints while firing our imaginations'. (2010, p. 561)

During the writing of the novel, I sought expert advice from the eminent black British historian Dr Onyeka Nubia whom I spoke to about this regarding *Dark Tide*; he reminded me of the salient facts 'who else is writing this narrative? Who else is writing about the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales in the long eighteenth century? No one! This story has to be told'.

And whilst I am in agreement that the story has to be told, it has to be told with great understanding of the importance and sensitivity of the subject. The intention of *Dark Tide* was never to portray that story as my own family history but to research the stories and legacies, and the backgrounds of black people, creating something that is unique and sympathetic and which takes readers to places they would never have imagined in ways that stimulate and intrigue, but with humility and respect. The intention of *Dark Tide* was, to quote Vaseem Khan again, to encourage 'cultures to understand and empathise with each other.' (Khan, 2020). In conclusion, the thoughts of A.L Kennedy are pertinent:

Fiction doesn't appropriate, it creates. That's the wonder of it. Fiction proves that humanity can think of things that never were and then make them – in this case, not a new government, or a new way of designing cities, or a cure for cancer, but a narrative that can involve any reader in a further imaginative act. (2016)

#### **4) Craft**

In this section of this thesis the creation and literary foundations of the Heartman, Jack Moss and the overall narrative of *Dark Tide* will be critically examined. This section will offer an explanation of how the extensive historical research was interwoven into the fabric of the narrative and it will analyse the style of its prose. How and why the main characters were chosen will be explained and the relationships that are forged between these characters will be analysed. I will also examine the historical foundations the narrative is built upon and covers, what literary tools were used to do this and where the story sits with other narratives in similar genres that address the representation of the long history of African and Black identity.

**Overarching Narrative** – This is something *Dark Tide* intentionally is in a very literal sense. Jack's story, as with the stories of all the real life residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century who were victims of transatlantic slavery, is a story that encompasses half the world and in such it sits with a novel such as *Midnight's Children* (1981) that the author describes as a narrative that is a 'capacious, large hearted fiction, that tries to gather up large armfuls of the world.' (2021)

As the narrative of *Dark Tide* unfolds spectre-like Jack and the Heartman guide us through the story of the lives of slaves as Jack journeys through his life, sometimes in human form, sometimes mutating into other forms enabling him to witness and relive his and the lives of other slaves from Africa to Plantashion Island (Barbados), to England.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

As a creative writer the process I prefer is an organic unfolding of the narrative. Once the two main characters were born, and the style of the narrative decided upon, I knew only that Jack Moss could not die in this story. I was telling the story of how someone who migrated to northern England had to survive the trials and tribulations of the life of a former slave. How he managed to survive such a life offered many literary possibilities, but stream of consciousness seemed the obvious narrative style; the narrative exists within the mind of the main protagonist, guided by the omnipotent narrator, so it seemed natural that the reader would join them in Jack's mind as the story unfolds multitudinous thoughts and feelings as they pass through.

**Historical foundations** – The historical research that was undertaken to underpin this project has already been discussed in some detail. Many notable works in similar genres are built upon solid empirical foundations including Harris's *Sugar Money* (2017), Wheatle's *Cane Warriors* (2020) and Butler's *Kindred* (1979).

The infamous case of the 'Zong massacre' which notably informed Fred D'Aguiar's novel *Feeding the Ghosts* (1997) is another one.<sup>22</sup> Rather than merely recounting the horrors the author uses various literary devices including a fictional slave, Minta, who in the story has already met with one of the sailors, First Mate Kelsall, on the slave ship. Somehow Minta manages miraculously to survive the massacre and her literary voice allows D'Aguiar to create a work of fiction which tells the story of the enslaved from *their* perspective. But it is how the author blends archival research with his imagination of what other documentation could exist that creates a narrative that *Dark Tide* bears similarities to.<sup>23</sup>

**Point of View & Perspective**- The subheading of *Dark Tide* is *Jack's Story*, and the successful creation of the voice of a main protagonist is vital to understanding the narrative. Just as Fred D'Aguiar created the fictional Minta so successfully, and at one point in the story it is clear that her voice is almost magical as she calls to First Mate, Kelsal,<sup>24</sup> Jack Moss is the fictional creation whose voice resonates through *Dark Tide*.

From the very early stages of writing *Dark Tide*, I realised that I needed a main character from whose point of view my narrative would be told. That character was Jack Moss, the machete man, the man who stands at the sugar cane crushing machines at the fictional Bay View Plantation and acts swiftly when a slave stumbles or falls whilst feeding the machines.

---

<sup>22</sup> When on 29 November 1781 132 slaves on board the 'Zong' were thrown overboard either because of disease or lack of water, a subsequent legal case was brought for the ship's owners to be able to claim on the voyage's insurance.

<sup>23</sup> 'The novel both depicts and exceeds the known archival documentation of what happened on board the Zong. D'Aguiar invents several documents, highlighting the legal fetish of the logbook and our own historiographical reliance on it, undermining its power, and questioning its status as evidence.' (Walters, 2013)

<sup>24</sup> The way Minta calls to Kelsal in D'Aguiar's text is a good example of what he describes as magically reinvigorating someone who can't speak 'Magical realism as a declaration in the text is usually when someone can't speak and then they must be magically reinvigorated in some way. So, in narrative terms when magical realism appears in the text, you're meant to think, How can this person speak? What state are they in? It's meant to immediately make you question their corporeal reality in the world, their body-ness. Have they crossed? Have they passed?' (Kocz, 2014)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

He is the man who in *Dark Tide* severed the hand of my fictional Frances Johnson.<sup>25</sup> In planning any fictional story, point of view immediately sets the tone of the narrative arc. In deciding whose story was being told in *Dark Tide* it was paramount from the start to have a clear point of view, to quote Lodge 'a fictional story is unlikely to engage our interest unless we know whose story it is.' (1992)

In *Dark Tide* the point of view had to be from a character that could transcend the stories of others. This led to the creation of Jack, a character to draw together the stories of the real-life characters: Frances Johnson, Joe (Lancashire), Dodshon Foster, Thomas Anson, Massa Benjamin Smith, Missus Elizabeth Smith and the Reverend Clarkson, and to tell the three-pronged story of the African transatlantic slave trade, life on a Caribbean sugar plantation and the settling of black residents in the Yorkshire Dales.

For a novel telling intimate stories such as those in *Dark Tide*, first person perspective allows intimacy and immediacy where the writer can develop and share intimate thoughts about the characters he is creating and the narrative arc that he is unfolding. It allows the reader to immediately become part of that creative world. Using Jack as the main first person allows the telling of a slave's very personal experience from capture, through transportation, to arriving in the Caribbean and working in inhumane conditions, to coming to England in an intimate personal narrative.

The much, much younger me had arrived on Plantashion Island just the day before and then waited like an animal in a pen whilst Toubob poked and prodded us to see which ones they wanted to buy. We'd been split into groups, older men with skills, young men and older boys with muscles, old women with no prospect, young women with juicy bodies, older children and youngsters with potential. Skins had been scrubbed and oiled to make the produce look less diseased and arse holes plugged to stop the shite running down their legs and putting off the buyers. (p.202)

The Jack Moss character is a perfect overarching creation because in his role as the machete man, like Alex Wheatle's character, Mooker (2020), he is held in high esteem, binding together the stories of slaves (whose lives he saves) and slave owners (whose money he protects by keeping their property alive). The character of the sexually attractive Jack is also intrinsically linked to the Missus, who bears his children, and the woman he comes to love, Cecilia, with whom he ultimately settles and puts down roots in the northern uplands of England, thus laying the foundations for the entire reason for the project. Many books in the same 'genre' as *Dark Tide* have a strong main character, Miss July in Levy's *The Long Song* (2010), Lucien in Harris's *Sugar Money* (2017), Doris in Evaristo's *Blonde Roots* (2009). These strong main characters are a literary central cog that branch out to tell one overarching narrative.

**Examination of Colonialism** – Like D'Aguiar's Minta the character Jack Moss is a literary tool to help unlock the voice of the voiceless because, as we have discussed, the archives held

---

<sup>25</sup> Of course, as already discussed, how Frances Johnson lost her hand is unknown. She was no doubt a 'house slave' and my research uncovered no accounts of this kind of punishment amongst servants. It is possible that Frances began life as a field slave and was then transferred to work in the big house after losing her hand as a punishment by an overseer. During the busy harvest time, house slaves did on occasion help out in the sugar house.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

virtually no information about people like him, or her. To circumvent this wall of silence it became clear that what was needed was a thorough examination of British colonial island life, both enslaved and enslavers, and an examination of the hopes and fears of these people, and the belief systems that existed to provide succour to the human souls that lived in the colonies.

Very quickly it became apparent when reading accounts of eighteenth-century planter life that there was a growing fear amongst the slave owning planter class<sup>26</sup> which proved the fertile soil for ever more brutal methods of maintaining control. This was voiced at the time by a Satterthwaite contemporary Edward Long<sup>27</sup> in his book *History of Jamaica* (1774), where he suggested that amongst the outnumbered planter class the much-feared indigenous beliefs of the enslaved would spread, disease like, amongst them much to the detriment of island life, or rather how the planter class could retain control over their large workforce. To counter this they, the slave owners:

Insisted on the increasing Englishness of Jamaica, even as he [Edward Long] warned of the descent of some common white Jamaicans into the ways of Africans, absorbing the tricks, superstitions, diversions, and profligate discourses, of black servants, equally illiterate and unpolished. (Beasley, 2009, p. 26)

As slave numbers increased on British islands there was also a growing fear of the perceived invidious 'negro' belief systems and religions of the enslaved which included Obeah<sup>28</sup>. Because of the perceived influence of these 'negro' beliefs, this growing fear amongst the planters is not to be downplayed. Throughout all Caribbean islands the constant fear of uprising or revolt was tangible amongst the white minority.<sup>29</sup>

This outnumbering was only one reason that the British colonies feared revolt. There was also the issue of geographical isolation 'the planter class lived in constant fear of servile insurrection. The blacks outnumbered the whites ten to one. The planters were largely isolated in their islands and could not rely on outside help'. (Hall, 1964, p. 325)

Even newly arrived planters who held more abolitionist ideals immediately changed their views when faced with the fear of slave revolt and their own mortality (Stuart, 2012).

Fear and terror were endemic for the Island of Barbados in particular. Not only were the planters fearful of slave revolt, the unfamiliar beliefs of those that overwhelmingly outnumbered them and their geographical isolation, but evidently slaves harboured fear about

---

<sup>26</sup> Green suggests that in their 1970 study of Worthy Park Estate in Jamaica Craton and Walvin discovered that the planter class were not 'uniformly callous towards their staff'. (Green, 1973)

<sup>27</sup> In terms of the narrative of *Dark Tide*, in his writings Edward Long drew similarities between Caribbean slaves and English labourers (Seth, 2018)

<sup>28</sup> Obeah was the spiritual belief and healing system that developed amongst the enslaved in the Caribbean. It covered a highly diverse set of beliefs that originate from the different parts of west Africa where the slaves were captured. It developed in different ways on different islands incorporating indigenous belief systems of peoples such as the Kalingo, Carribs and Maroons 'The Planters ...feared these heterodox healers because they had such a high influence on the slave population and often played a prominent role in rebellion and subversion.' (Stuart, 2012, p. 264).

<sup>29</sup> 'Slaveholders, always surrounded and vastly outnumbered, lived in constant fear of the people they sought to permanently subjugate. To live in the eighteenth-century Caribbean was to live on a constant war footing.' (Hanley, 2021)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Barbados even before they endured the punishingly inhumane life on the island's plantations. In an account written in 1694 by John Phillips, the captain of the slave ship *Hannibal*, he stated that 'the black people have a more dreadful apprehension of Barbados than they have of Hell'. (Rothman, 2008) When researching the spiritual beliefs and mythology of the slaves that resided in this 'Hell', it came as no surprise that a uniquely Bajan or Barbadian creature could evolve from the fear of the slaves that so completely summed up life in pre-abolition Barbados. This creature, the Heartman, would become my narrator in *Dark Tide*.

**The Heartman** - As with many slave cultures, there are many magical mysterious creatures that abound in West Indian folklore, from witches to mermaids, to duppies to wolf creatures and forest beings, but all are non-human, and all seem to pervade the entire region in various forms and with different designations. Only one is human-like and only one exclusive to Barbados, the Heartmen, who are described as spirit men who 'supposedly kill and disfigure children, offering their hearts to the Devil as a sacrifice. There are many tales of Heartmen whose existence seems to come and go with the sugar cane crop season'. (Lewis L. , 1990)

In *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon analyses the reason for the existence of such creatures in slave societies as a response to the brutalised experiences of the subjugated:

The colonized subject draws on the terrifying myths that are so prolific in underdeveloped societies as inhibitions for his aggressiveness: malevolent spirits who emerge every time you put one foot wrong, leopard men, snake men, six-legged dogs, zombies, a whole never-ending gamut of animalcules or giants that encircle the colonized with a realm of taboos, barriers, and inhibitions far more terrifying than the colonialist world. (1961, p. 18)

From the very moment the character of the unreliable narrator of the Heartman was conceived as pivotal in the story, the possibilities that his magical abilities could give *Dark Tide* became limitless. Using an unreliable narrator suited the narrative of *Dark Tide* broadly and the creation of the character of the Heartman specifically. Unreliable narration does not have to turn belief on its head, but it can subtly change the reader's perspectives on certain characters and storylines and leave them questioning what exactly they have read. More than anything, unreliable narration can allow a book to move beyond the logical and practical to the unbelievable, shocking and sometimes magical, changing direction in an instant and always putting the reader in doubt about the ultimate outcome of the story.

Because the Heartman is a demon in human form he can somewhat relate to his victims and even with the readers, and they can relate to him as they constantly search for any humanity in him. But as well as having no features on his face he has no heart, literally and metaphorically, and thus must harvest the hearts of 'evil' people. Jack's story, and the way the Heartman narrates it, offers the writer the ability to create a journey that can change at any moment, where the protagonists can undertake scenes that are not even remotely related to the narrative arc but seek to create a wider understanding of certain human characteristics as in the chapter *Heads in the bag*. This chapter allows readers a sideways glance at famous Lancastrian scientist Sir Richard Owens who conducted experiments on the cadavers of

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

executed Lancaster gaol prisoners, and in Dodos we witness the ruthless plunder of the natural world by eighteenth-century explorers.<sup>31</sup>

But the Bajan Heartman is not human, and early in the narrative Jack is reminded of his new acquaintance's hellish origins when he witnesses the fate that awaits the enslavers, who have no awareness of the culture of those they enslaved:

“Worry ‘bout yuhself, bwoy, worry ‘bout yuhself. Yu about to enter through de gates of hell, bwoy!” in front of Inman is a shadowy figure that he can just about make out. He doesn't know it's the Heartman because he's never heard of the Plantashion Island demon. White men don't ever listen to any of the stories that the slaves tell each other. In fact, they clearly think that the slaves are like dogs who go into their kennels each night, curl up, lick their arses and go to sleep until morning. (p.26)

**Pseudohistory** – Events in Jack's story are sometimes based on real events, and at other times on pure fantasy and the author's informed imagination. Octavia Butler used her informed imagination to excellent effect in *Kindred* (1979) to explain her main protagonist's reason for travelling back in time each time the son of a Maryland plantation slave owner, Rufus Weylin, encounters life threatening situations.

As useful literary devices for the writer of novels of magical realism, Jack and the Heartman transform into objects and creatures so that they can endure the shock and horror as bystanders, one passive, one active. This is intended to increase the impact of the narrative on the reader by making them part of the story, with immediacy. As a creative writer of a slave narrative utilising magical realism, the discovery of a potential literary tool such as the Heartman allows the drawing together of historical fact, documented contemporary fears and a confused, disparate, evolving system of beliefs that permeates amongst the enslaved. In *Dark Tide*, the Heartman allows a literary intertwining maelstrom of the extraordinary and ordinary to be created. And to quote Geetha, many readers will no doubt see obvious similarities between the intertwining style of *Dark Tide* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Marquez, 1967) with their subtly changed perception of the world because ‘Magical realism inherent in the novel is achieved by the constant intertwining of the ordinary with the extraordinary’. (2010, p. 3)

The creation of the Heartman specifically allows the subject of slavery to be opened for further examination and scrutiny by a new generation of thinkers perhaps unfamiliar with a masterpiece such as Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976). And, to tell the story of those who were ripped from their homes, transported half a world away to toil at the hands of merciless ‘Toubob’, but without knowing the ultimate direction of the narrative.

In an example of Heartman unreliability in one of the final chapters entitled *Dead* (p.319) Jack is found guilty of murder and condemned to death:

It's all happening so fast. After my endless journey with the Heartman, back to Africa, then on to Hope, with no hope, to my life and the lives of the slaves on Plantashion Island. Thirty years in one night, and then a brief conversation, then a speech from a crusty old Toubob and my fate is decided. Within minutes I will be

---

<sup>31</sup> Sir Richard's father, also called Richard (1754-1809), was a West Indian merchant and slave owner.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

dead. Hanging from a rope over the cobbled square that has seen all the ghosts die over the centuries. (p.320)

To reinforce his omnipotent demonic powers, in *Dead* the reader sees that the Heartman even flashes Jack's life before his eyes prior to his execution:

He opens the door and the light; the bright white light of my final moments is intense. For a second, I'm back in the room in Africa waiting to be shuffled on to Hope, with no hope. For a second, I'm back in the sugar cane field on Plantashion Island, sweat rolling down my face as I toil with my brothers and sisters in the Caribbean sun. For a second, I am stood on the beach awaiting my departure for England. Then, just for a second I'm stood with Cecilia, looking down on Red Rose City, watching the ships come and go and looking to a future together. (p.320)

**Therianthropy and personification** - One of the unique ways that the Heartman navigates the narrative of *Dark Tide* is with therianthropy and personification. Therianthropy is the belief of the mythological ability of human beings to metamorphose into animals by means of shapeshifting and is used throughout *Dark Tide*. The use of therianthropy in this format is unique in literature. Variations of it have been used effectively in fantasy and science fiction literature from the brutal vivisectionist Dr Moreau in H.G Wells *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) to the more modern Simon Thorn books for younger readers (Carter A. , 2016) to several examples that are more pertinent to my use of the technique as in the Harry Potter novels of JK Rowling (1999). Unlike Rowling's characters, in *Dark Tide* the Heartman can change into any creature and anything, thus enabling a whole world of creative opportunities, including the long extinct Dodo 'I nod my beak, "grub? Yeah. What the hell...." I straighten up nearly jumping out of my feathers! I'm stood next to a jet-black bird, a huge jet-black bird with red eyes. He too has large blue, webbed feet and he too is pecking at the ground'. (p.83)

The superstitious and magical emphasis of *Dark Tide* had been intentionally part of the story from its earliest inception, and not just because of my examination of the underlying cultures that African slaves brought to Barbados which were an important part of the lives of the incarcerated (Handler, 2000). But also, because in the ultimate destination of Jack, Joe and Michael Moss in the north of England there is a long history of belief of the supernatural. The Lancashire coast and Yorkshire Dales where Jack Moss and the others were migrating to has a long history of magic, mystery and witchcraft. This has inspired writers like Joe Delaney and his *Spooks* series (2014) and Jeanette Winterson's fascinating novella about the Pendle Witch Trials, *The Daylight Gate* (2013).

Naturally, therefore, from writing the earliest chapters of *Dark Tide* I wanted to create some tangible link between my story and the paranormal history of the area, including the aforementioned Pendle Witch Trials that are so culturally important to Lancaster (which I call Red Rose City in *Dark Tide*), especially since the place where most of the witches were held and executed is the same place in the novel that Jack is held. In fact, in *Dark Tide*, Jack has a supernatural experience with these so-called witches, on his way to the hangman's noose in the chapter entitled *The Dock* and this is because he is in the very building where the witches were hanged years before 'Long dead old crones, bent almost double are clapping me,

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

thieves, murderers and ruffians, are waving me on, all colours and creeds, but all with their lives extinguished within these ancient, cold damp walls'. (p.315)

Personification of the chapter *Heads in the Bag* (p.14) enable Jack and the Heartman to see into a white middle-class parlour in Red Rose City. This scene is taken full circle towards the end of the novel when the time transcending deity, which is the Heartman, briefly takes readers to the present day to witness the multicultural society of London in 2021 (p.258) and the real Sir Richard Owen's finest accomplishment, the Natural History Museum.<sup>32</sup> I intend to continue to use these tools in subsequent *Dark Tide* stories. Almost at the beginning of the sequel *Storms* Jack and the Heartman become coins to witness the washing of the slaves in the fountain, upon arrival from Africa on the slave ships, allowing the reader to witness the dehumanising degradations endured by slaves.

As a literary device Therianthropy is well known in many slave cultures, especially in oral storytelling traditions, and it also allows the modern creative writer to tell a story through different eyes. Whilst such chapters may confuse when read in isolation, when taken in the larger context of the entire body of work, characters can experience something from different perspectives, observer (the chapter *Heads in the Bag*), persecutor (the chapter *Sharks*), when previously they have been the persecuted (the chapter *Dodos*).

In the chapter *Sharks* Jack and the narrator are watching the slave ship Hope from the ocean along with the other Selachimorpha who are waiting for their feast. In one of the most emotional scenes in the entire story, the sick old man, who Jack had seen previously in the *Dark Room* awaiting loading onto Hope, is seen being pushed overboard and ripped to pieces. In a vivid description of the elderly man's dignity, those who are pushing him to his death do so in the cruellest of ways and this, if it were needed, brings home the terrible cruelty of the middle passage.

In the chapter *Slave City* (p.98) Jack and the Heartman become well attired city gents who walk through a northern British city based upon Manchester (BBC, 2008), but it could have been Liverpool<sup>33</sup>, Bristol or Lancaster or indeed a plethora of European cities, which were built, if we are to believe the Williams Thesis,<sup>34</sup> upon the toil, sweat and tears of black Africans. Slave City is a city with screaming cobbled faces for roads and walls rising high

---

<sup>32</sup> Sir Richard Owen was born in Lancaster and was a prominent biologist, comparative anatomist, geologist, palaeontologist and known for coining the term dinosaur (Wessels, 2015). His anatomical dissections may have included the bodies of those executed at Lancaster Castle. He established the Natural History Museum and had a distinctly uneasy relationship with Charles Darwin that the Heartman is able to utilise in the narrative of *Dark Tide*.

<sup>33</sup> 'Bordeaux and Liverpool owe their importance to the trade and deportation of millions of slaves.' (Fanon F. , 1961, p. 58)

<sup>34</sup> The Williams thesis was first put forward by Trinidadian Prime Minister Eric Williams in his book *Capital and Slavery* (1944) – which has been republished in the UK in January 2022 after forty years. Williams states in his book that transatlantic slavery generated the financial impetus of the industrial revolution back in Britain which so affected the lives of the rural working-class communities that the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales integrated into in the north of England. As my own working- class family were also split by the demographic changes Williams describes I hope Slave City represents the empathetic attempt to create links and similarities in lives of the rural working class in the Yorkshire Dales and those former slaves who integrated into those communities in the long eighteenth century.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

into the sky, built with black bodies jammed tightly together as if they are on the slave ships on the middle passage.

**Omnipotent and Unreliable Narrator** - Because the Heartman is an extraordinary omnipotent and unreliable narrator, moving around in time within the story is entirely natural and even expected. Predominantly Jack is taken back in time, to re-examine past events, but he is also occasionally taken forward. And towards the end of the story, he is taken forward in time to experience the narrative of his son, Joe Moss, blurring the lines of the temporal and narrative arc – we move from Jack's story to Joe's, but the characters, spectre-like, can communicate through these mists of time.

Early in the development of the narrative it became apparent that the creative output could either be constrained by a timetable of real events or I could use something or someone to make any event become usable at any point in the narrative. In *Midnight's Children* (Rushdie, 1981) the narrator looks back upon his own life, and magically upon the lives of his ancestors and although a fascinating method of retelling of the past in *Dark Tide*, because, as discussed, any slave narrative was not my own,<sup>35</sup> I needed someone more 'spiritual'. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, much inspiration for the development of Jack's and the Heartman's experience came from Ben Okri's spirit child Azaro (1991) who allows his readers to 'directly partake in the profound uncertainty of experience between the natural world and the supernatural.' (Raynaud, 2012)

**Magical Realism** – As already mentioned *Dark Tide* clearly falls within the genre of Magical Realism. The use of, or to be more precise, the blurring of temporality in the narrative is something commonly used in fiction to good effect. From the first page of *Midnight's Children* (1981) Rushdie blurs the lines of his characters which gives the text a strangely magical feel telling the story of the main character's grandfather, Aadam Aziz, who we first meet as he bashes 'his nose against a frost-hardened tussock of earth while attempting to pray. Three drops of blood plopped out of his left nostril, hardened instantly in the brittle air and lay before his eyes on the prayer-mat, transformed into rubies'. (p. 4).

From the very outset magical realism lays the foundations for the feel of this novel in which 'Rushdie's narratives play provocatively with disparate ways of seeing' (Sangari, 1987). In *Dark Tide* the Heartman allows the narrative to 'play provocatively' with not just disparate ways of seeing but hopefully, in the best tradition of the magical realism genre, disparate ways of understanding the world around us. From the way the Heartman speaks, in heavy patois, to his irreverent attitude towards everyone, to his cruel sense of humour and total belief in his own importance, a writer can become someone so different to themselves that during many parts of the writing of the novel it felt as if the characters are actually writing the text.

A scene in *Dark Tide* where Jack and the Heartman, in spirit form, attend the funeral of the old 'Massa' does exactly as Geetha notes, intertwining the ordinary with the extraordinary:

---

<sup>35</sup> 'When I started writing [*Midnight's Children*], the family at the heart of the novel was much more like my family than it is now...For example, I did have an aunt who married a Pakistani general, who, in real life, was one of the founders of, and the first chief, of the much-feared ISI, Inter-Services Intelligence agency.' (Rushdie, 2021)

The Missus, who is stood looking down on the casket declaring lie after lie and pretending to do her wifely duties stops speaking and looks me square in the face, me, her lover for so many years, the father of her children and the man she left at the quayside in Red Rose City to rot in a gaol cell awaiting his fate whilst she played happy families with Reverend Massa (but of course she doesn't know any of this yet).

She's confused. She looks around. No one has noticed. They're too busy trying to mumble some funeral hymn or another. I look older than she's used to, and she's never seen me looking so fine in a suit and a tie, and of course she's never seen the Heartman before. (p.144) <sup>36</sup>

Throughout the narrative Jack and the Heartman use characteristics of magical realism to address what Geetha would term 'some of the most difficult and meaningful themes' (2010) including the capture of slaves in Africa, the privations of the middle passage and the slave hold, brutal overlocker punishment, child abuse, sexual assault and rape, and the constant need to set an example to other slaves to maintain order. This latter point, I hope, pays homage to a novel such as *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) which 'is laced with magical realism that brings shocking aspects of American slave history to light'. (Christie, 2012)

In an emotionally charged (almost) conclusion to the story, Jack and Elizabeth's black son, Joe, turns back after escaping from the vicarage only to find that his fate is being brought to him by his personal past. Whilst riding across the sands, something makes Joe halt his escape, dismount his horse and turn around to confront the fears that have driven him away. He is immediately confronted by two ghosts, one his white would-be stepfather, Walter, and the elderly black man who was fed to the sharks by the crew of *Hope*. The ghostly elderly black man is a character that represents many who suffered the same fate including those murdered on Zong. (D'Aguiar, 1997)

Although *Dark Tide* did not start out with the intention of being a work of magical realism, and to quote Marlon James 'nobody who practiced magical realism called it that. Gabriel Garcia Marquez wasn't writing magical realism – he was writing reality.' (Vangel, 2019) But, in the development of the main characters, the narrator and the storyline meant that by using techniques developed by writers such as Rushdie, Marquez and Morrison, this became the best way to bring the narrative to life, the best way to allow the writer's imagination to fill in the gaps that history has left vacant and create other perceptions of the world.

Although *Dark Tide* is anchored firmly in just one time-period and place (the night before Jack's trial and his gaol cell) the story uses frame narratives to allow the Heartman to take Jack back in time to relive not just his own past but the past of other slaves in the manner of Dicken's *Ghost of Christmas Past* (1843). Jack and the Heartman also visit the near future, to

---

<sup>36</sup> Churches and religion feature powerfully in *Dark Tide*, the above-mentioned funeral of Massa Smith, the marriage of the Missus and Reverend Clarkson, and the constant reminder that Reverend Clarkson was a slave owner: Franz Fanon discusses the role of the church in oppression of the colonised 'the Church in the colonies is a white man's Church, a foreigners' Church. It does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the white man, to the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor'. (1961, p. 7)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

the house of the fictional Dodshon Foster in the fictional Knitting Town in Westmorland,<sup>37</sup> to see how Frances has settled there and how she has developed a strong bond with young black boy Thomas Foster, advising him of how lucky he is:

“Oh, Thomas, yu don’t want to know, boy. Look forward, son, not backward, yu de assistant to a rich man, a rich white man. Yu sleep in a bed wid white cotton sheet, yu eat food every day, no one whip yuh back if yu drop some cane. Dere many a slave who be jealous of yuh life, many. Yu a lucky boy!” (p.294)

In his inimitable fashion the Heartman moves the narrative of *Dark Tide* back and forth and with one final flourish of his unreliability by showing Jack being executed, until time is allowed to flow normally as the book nears its end, and it is Joe’s future narrative we are looking into and the choices he will face in his future:

“Him scared like slave, bwoy, him scared like slave, dat tru. Afore now, when de reverend raise his hand, it Joe who step in and protect his brother. Dat Joe tough. Joe not cry, not even when he a baby, never cry, bwoy, never, ‘xcept when Charles Inman try and slit him throat. Him been beaten plenty for him brother and him brother loves him, dey love each other. Dey the same blood. But dey got to take different paths in life, different paths.” (p.329)

**Distinctive Dialogue** - It is clear that the unreliability of the narrative arc created by the Heartman is the bedrock of the creative output that *Dark Tide* is built upon. But it is the patois that the Heartman uses which strikes readers when they start reading *Dark Tide*, because from the very beginning of the text he talks directly to the reader. ‘Me de Heartman, bwoy, de Heartman.’ (p.1) He talks to the reader with authority and, although he is a demon, we will discover as we read the book that he can speak ‘proper’ English when he wishes ‘it what all city gents wear, don’t you know, bwoy.’ His voice has changed. It no longer sounds likes he is from Plantashion Island, it sounds like he is from England or somewhere they speak proper English’. (p.99)

The Heartman speaks as he does because he is a fictional timeless Caribbean demon, and he is someone who transcends the eighteenth-century colonies. From early in the evolution of the Heartman character, it was clear that the demon should have a heavy patois as with key characters in many other books in this genre. The way the characters speak in *Sugar Money* (Harris, 2017), *The Long Song* (Levy, 2010), and *Strange Music* (Fish, 2009) places them in the Caribbean that modern readers recognise. The use of patois can sometimes be off putting to the reader, but sometimes it immediately transports readers to a geographical place. This was intentional when developing the patois used by the Heartman.

In reality no one knows how slaves spoke, some of the earliest audio recordings I have listened to are housed in the library in the University in Atlanta, but these were, firstly, from the early twentieth century and, secondly, from America and therefore not relevant to this narrative. The consensus of opinion amongst academics including Berlin (2000) and Delgado (2019) is that slaves would have been severely punished if they spoke in their native tongue and this is

---

<sup>37</sup> Knitting Town is based upon the Westmorland town of Dent with its history of exquisite knitting and its ‘terrible’ knitters.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

reflected in fiction in *Roots* (Haley, 1976) and *Blonde Roots* (Evaristo, 2009). So, it is reasonable to say that they would have spoken English in a similar way to their captors or owners with an accent influenced by their native tongue.

My primary research did uncover evidence of how black residents in Lancashire would have spoken. When the slave runaway, upon which the character of Joe Moss in *Dark Tide* is based, escaped from the real Reverend Clarkson of Heysham, the subsequent wanted notice indicated clearly that the escaped slave spoke with ‘a broad Lancashire dialect’ (Westgraph, 2018). Therefore, it can be assumed that slaves, former slaves, and black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire coast would not have spoken with any kind of accent similar to the modern West Indian accent, but in a manner like the white English owners and community with which they associated and integrated, and from whom they learnt English.

To overcome how Joe learns to speak, in *Dark Tide* baby Joe is effectively brought up by the housekeepers at the vicarage, Walter and Ethel Marshall, whom he calls Ma and Pa, and he takes his linguistic intonations from them:

“A babby? But it were crated up like an animal,” Walter sits down on one of the kitchen chairs. Walter is clearly not a deep thinking man. He doesn’t think much about his life apart from whether he’s hot, cold, hungry or thirsty. But seeing a baby transported in a wooden crate on a ship has knocked him for six. (p.281)

Whilst Joe would have spoken like Walter and Ethel (i.e., eighteenth-century Lancastrians), the Heartman would not. He is a fictional, omnipotent, omnipresent creation that transcends time. The intention is to ascribe to him modern Caribbean traits to allow the Heartman to be acceptable to the tastes of the modern reader of *Dark Tide*. Caribbean patois as we know it in the twenty-first century is a combination of English and the legacy of many African languages and indigenous tongues. These would have been numerous. In the chapter *Dark Room* Jack discovers the slaves awaiting shipment speaking in dozens of languages, and when he is given the power of omnilingualism by the Heartman, he can understand all of them and listens to their worries and fears as they wait in the ‘dark room’ not knowing their fate:

We’re stood in an airless room. It’s hard to gauge the size because it’s dark. There are a lot of people in the room, a lot, hundreds. Hundreds and hundreds. They’re all men, young men, old men, small men, large men, men from different tribes if the myriad of languages, that I can now understand, is anything to go by. (p.88)

To a lesser extent, the patois spoken by slaves would have included the languages of any native peoples, the Arawak and Carib peoples (Beckles, 2016), that they might have come into contact with on the respective islands, and it evolved over the centuries.

However, language is a tool that a writer can use to geographically place a story for the modern reader, and with the aim of geographically placing *Dark Tide* I deliberately wanted my characters, especially the Heartman, to speak with a type of known patois. But it was clear to me that Jack Moss should not speak with as strong patois as is the case with Jamaican ‘July’ in Andrea Levy’s *The Long Song* (2010). This is very much a creative decision. However, I wanted the Heartman to be identifiable as someone distinctly West Indian, but because the Heartman is enigmatic, he can speak like an English ‘gent’ when he wants, as a

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

way of creating a singularity, or individuality that intrigues and keeps the reader attentive to his narration.

**Examination of Relationships** - *Dark Tide* is a literary examination of relationships: inter class relationships, inter racial relationships, sexual power relationships, economic relationships, and utilising stream of consciousness, the relationship a human has with his own inner thoughts and imagination. The most important relationship in *Dark Tide* is the one between the narrator, the Heartman, and Jack Moss. Jack believes his fate rests solely with the Heartman and the demon reinforces this throughout the novel to the point where he lets Jack think he has been hung. This scene had a profound effect upon me and was influenced by the dignity the character Emile expressed as he was hanged in *Sugar Money* (Harris, 2017), and shows just how far the Heartman will go to remind Jack of who is in charge.

Throughout *Dark Tide* the narrative also highlights the chasm between the upper/middle class and the working and underclasses (Emmer, 1995), which slaves were categorised as. But it also examines the relationships between the white planter class and the white working-class employees who undertook roles such as overlookers. Reinforcement of the hierarchy was constantly needed, owner to overlooker, overlooker to black driver, black driver to field slave. And, whilst I do not deal with it in *Dark Tide*, there was a clear hierarchy amongst slaves on plantations, with slaves in a position such as a machete man, or the Satterthwaites Bryan and Prince, being much higher than lowly field slaves and thus they were expected to mete out punishments to maintain the equilibrium. In *Sugar Money* Jane Harris (2017) gives brutal accounts of slaves being forced to punish other slaves in the most depraved ways as part of the systematic subjugation. Instead, in *Dark Tide* the narrator highlights how an overlooker like Charles Inman would have punished slaves:

Without eyes all he can perceive is just darkness. It's hot though and all around him he can hear screams, like the screams of the negroes he's tortured and maimed back on Plantashion Island. Negroes he's put in chains and shackles, nailed by their ears, tits or balls to posts, negroes he's ripped the tongues out of and shit and pissed on. (p.30)

The narrative is particularly unique regarding the relationship between Jack and Elizabeth. There do not seem to be any previous novels that explore such a black male slave /white planter class female relationship with the exception of Horane Smith's novel *Lover's Leap* (1999). But Smith's story is the tale of interracial love rather than a white female/black male exploitive sexual relationship of Jack and Elizabeth.<sup>39</sup>

In *Dark Tide* we learn that Elizabeth's sexual exploitation of young male slaves pre-dates her relationship with Jack. As the physical element of her marriage to the Massa has broken down, just as her husband has sexual relationships with young black women, including the character Beth, we discover that the Missus has had countless sexual relationships with young black men. She also uses her sexuality and power to control white male employees, and whilst refraining from intercourse with them she clearly relishes their arousal and fear. In one scene the Missus meets the Overlooker Inman late one night 'Normally a woman out after dark would feel in danger, would feel threatened by what could happen to her, but not the

---

<sup>39</sup> In *Lover's Leap*, Jerome is a slave owned by plantation owner, Alfred Campbell, who falls in love with his daughter Anita. (Smith, 1999)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Missus, that's because the Missus is a predator at the top of the food chain and is scared of no one.' (p.136)

One of the obsessions of the Heartman, with his Joker-like characteristics,<sup>40</sup> is to repeatedly force Jack to revisit his sexually exploitative relationship with the Missus, where at times Jack becomes more than just an observer but a participant once again. It is a relationship where Jack is forced to pleasure her domineering sexual appetite for young black men, which we revisit again in the sequel to *Dark Tide, Storms*, even though Elizabeth dies in this first novel.

Unique in historical fiction, *sexually* dominant women appear to be omitted from traditional historical literature, except for the lesbian relationships such as those created and examined by Sarah Waters in *Tipping the Velvet* (1998). But in *Dark Tide* Elizabeth is a pivotal figure, someone Jack cannot get away from, both in his own head and from the constant reminding by the Heartman. Elizabeth is portrayed as sexually dominant and domineering and we know she has had many men like Jack, but for some reason Jack is the one she cannot discard and from whom she cannot move on. On page 38, Jack is taken back to Elizabeth's bedroom by the Heartman:

"Late!" Elizabeth speaks as if scolding a disobedient servant which indeed I am. To her our relationship was more about meeting her needs than any kind of love or affection and not for a moment did she let me forget who was the one in control.

"Sorry, Missus," I breathe. I always call her 'Missus'. Obsequiousness has been bred into me, bred into us all and although all the negro women see me as the stud of Hermitage in my relationship with the 'Missus' I am the one doing what I am told to fulfil the sexual desires of the woman. My needs are never considered. Never. My thing is a tool for her pleasure only. (p.38)

But it is precisely because the Missus is barren, that she does not have the threat of pregnancy hanging over her head. Therefore she can sexually predate upon whomever she wants, when she wants, and this gives her masculine power:

Pregnancy wasn't a worry for Smith, she told me that she was barren, she'd never bled not once in her whole life and rather than feeling this made her less of a woman, she felt that it made her more...more powerful. She could fuck like a man, anyone she pleased, and walk away if she got bored. And because she owned so many young men, she could have her pick of the cream. (p.41)

In a moment of pure 'Heartman mischief' though Elizabeth's life is turned on its head. On page 73, when the 'barren' Elizabeth gives birth to two boys, one white and one black, readers know that their lives will forever be determined by the colour of their skin.

But, for all the dark humour and mischief of the Heartman, and his inappropriate remarks about Jack's manhood, Jack has an intense sexual relationship with the Missus, which explicitly represents Jack's place in the colonial system as an owned human being. At no point is the male character ever depicted as enjoying the sex because of the physical and mental

---

<sup>40</sup> 'There are seven symptoms of antisocial disorder that occurred in the joker character such as failure to conform to social norm, deceitfulness, impulsivity, irritability and aggressiveness.' (Aprillia, 2020)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

pain inflicted on him. In her own way the Missus is punishing Jack just as much as if he were being whipped by the overlooker in the cane field. The Heartman's remarks about his penis size drive home the pain of his enslavement and the obsequiousness he says has been bred into him by the perpetuating nature of the colonial system.

In Chapter 7 of *Kindred*, the time travellers Dana and Kevin come across slave children playing 'slave market':

'Now here a likely wench,' called the boy on the stump. He gestured toward the girl who stood slightly behind him. 'She cook and wash and iron. Come here, gal. Let the folks see you.' He drew the girl up beside him. 'She young and strong,' he continued. 'She worth plenty of money. To hundred dollars. Who bid two hundred dollars?' (Butler, 1979, p. 105)

In *Dark Tide*, Jack's treatment by the missus is perpetuating colonial enslavement just as much as the children playing 'slave market' and this is reinforced continually by the inappropriate remarks of the Heartman. Naturally, after his treatment by the Missus Jack craves the gentle intimacy that his interracial marriage to Cecilia will ultimately offer him.

**Hegemonic Femininity** - The sexual domination of the Missus over Jack allows the narrative of *Dark Tide* to turn the general dichotomy of hegemonic masculinity and sexual exploitation of black female slaves by white male owners on its head. Instead, it proposes something different, a hegemonic femininity where the women are dominant over males of whatever race. Sexual exploitation of female slaves by white male owners is well documented,<sup>41</sup> as are sexual relationships between black male slaves and white working-class women (Beckles, 2016), but as we have seen the relationships between white women from the planter class (Dunn, 1972) and black male slaves are extremely unusual.<sup>42</sup> *Dark Tide*, although not gratuitous, forces readers to think again about the conditions that create the ability of people to sexually exploit others.

Telling the narrative of the relationship between Jack and Elizabeth also allows a brief examination of gender power constructs that were so evident between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, not only in the colonies but in the extended English legal system that weighted financial power towards men (Malay, 2014). In *Dark Tide*, when her first husband Benjamin 'Massa' Smith dies his widow is forced to marry again even though her husband was vastly wealthy, and the transfer of Benjamin Smith's wealth went to the second husband omitting his wife in lieu of a child's coming of age. To complicate matters further for Elizabeth not only does the death of her husband lead to her being required to remarry to maintain her place in island society, but ultimately it will be her white baby son Michael who will inherit the wealth when the stepfather dies, not his mother, even though he is a young child.

---

<sup>41</sup> As previously discussed, Professor Diana Paton highlights this in her Royal Historical Society lecture entitled 'Mary Williamson's Letter' (Paton, 2019)

<sup>42</sup> Fanon discussed white planter class female/black male interracial sex as a way of regaining possession of power 'The gaze that the colonized subject casts at the colonist's sector is a look of lust, a look of envy. Dreams of possession. Every type of possession: of sitting at the colonist's table and sleeping in his bed, preferably with his wife. The colonized man is an envious man'. (1961, p. 4)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**Contributions to Literature** - As discussed at the very beginning of this exegesis, although I feel *Dark Tide* offers a counter narrative to the dominant white male colonial one, offers insight into a new hegemonic femininity, and discusses the unity of the lower classes regardless of race, the creation of the Heartman is the element of the narrative I feel makes the largest contribution to literature. The Heartman is a narrative tool that allows *Dark Tide* to bring to the fore the fear so endemic in the entire system of black Caribbean enslavement. As a narrative tool he offers challenges to white colonial history, the economic and social impact of slavery, gender and class roles, and he transcends the material world to examine the metaphysical in new and interesting ways.

With regard to what I intended to achieve with *Dark Tide* and its narrator, Saidiya V. Hartman's (1997) comments sum them up, and could almost be discussing my novel:

The effort to "brush history against the grain" requires excavations at the margins of monumental history in order that the ruins of the dismembered past be retrieved, turning to forms of knowledge and practice not generally considered legitimate objects of historical inquiry or appropriate or adequate sources for history making and attending to the cultural silence, exclusions, relations to violence and domination that engender the official accounts. (1997, p. 11)

'Brushing against the grain' is what the craft of *Dark Tide* does, and to achieve this throughout the novel the Heartman 'excavates the margins of this monumental history'. As a determined and relentless storyteller, the Bajan demon draws in class, sex, pain and punishment, profit and greed, mischief, humour, inappropriate language and death to make readers understand the story of Jack, and everyone else involved in slavery. His intention is to create a literary maelstrom that not only 'brushes against the grain' but provides hope. Word play is an integral part of *Dark Tide* and the Heartman, and this word 'hope' is used literally hundreds of times in the narrative. Indeed it is one of the enduring pieces of Heartman mischief when readers discover that the slave ship in *Dark Tide* is named 'Hope'.

## **5) Conclusion**

In reading the following quote by Ayobami Adebayo about Octavia Butler's classic 1979 novel it is my hope that readers may feel that *Dark Tide* could, one day, replace the word *Kindred*:

*Kindred* transgresses genres and defies simple classifications, at once fantasy, neo slave narrative, historical fiction and more, the sophistication of its form matches the complexity of its narrative. (1979, p. xii)

Any narrative which tells the story, even partially, of slavery can never be an easy read, or it could dilute the effects that are still felt almost two hundred years after abolition. Stylistically, *Dark Tide* is intended to challenge the reader and subvert the rules of storytelling in ways *Midnight's Children* (Rushdie, 1981), *Underground Railroad* (Whitehead, 2016) or *Blonde Roots* (Evaristo, 2009) do. The strong patois of the narrator, which is intended to provoke and startle readers, is likely to alienate many who like a comfortable, armchair read. But my intention is that through the Heartman the story addresses



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

the subject area in different ways, using different techniques and methodologies, and is never to downplay the, often, excruciating memories and legacies of slavery, especially for those who are descendants of the evil trade that shipped millions of men, women and children to endure horrific sufferings.

I am sure that men and women just like Jack and Frances would have brought their culture, memories and beliefs, including the Heartman, to the area that I have always called home. They would have become neighbours to my ancestors and hopefully told stories of their history to anyone interested. Or perhaps they would not, like many military men or veterans, or other sufferers of trauma, that keep their darker histories locked inside themselves. Because of this I feel the narrative provides a strong sense of solidarity with the displaced peoples who form the main focus of this creative work. As well as being a slave narrative, the Heartman and *Dark Tide* tell the story of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales in the eighteenth century in insightful and imaginative ways with the hope that once again it will always be remembered.

Using the magical realism of the Heartman, more than anything, *Dark Tide* also examines the relationship between a displaced person, his own personal memories and the memories of his forefathers, and his own mortality, along with how this influences his ability to lay down roots in a new place and integrate. It also uses spiritual atavism and out-of-body existentialism to examine the relationship a troubled, displaced person has with his own soul and his creator. This creative output does not intend othering or the hijacking of the histories and legacies of others but sits in solidarity with them and acknowledges the need to tell their, hitherto forgotten, narrative.

As a title, *Dark Tide* is an unintentional trope and I hope in two words represents the power and resilience of the fictional characters such as Jack, Joe and Beth, and the people upon which their narrative is based, John Yorke, Thomas Anson, Joe the runaway slave and, of course, the 'beloved' Frances Johnson to whom I dedicate this story. When I think now, as a PhD researcher, that when I was a child, I walked past the house every day, on my way to primary school, where Frances's hand resided on an old lady's mantelpiece in Upper Settle, it seems more than fitting that I have been the one to be inspired by her life to tell the story of black Dales people like her. Individuals like Frances were forced to cross oceans, face privations we can barely imagine, work until they bled, were beaten to within an inch of their lives but they surged forward with enough determination and spirit to lay down roots and become a part of our northern English culture that has up to now all but been ignored. But, as in all tides, they do turn, and the *Dark Tide* turned because of these inspirational ancestors. I sincerely hope that Frances and those who undertook similar life journeys found some sense of belonging and peace in the land where they spent their final days.

Finally, whilst *Dark Tide* lays the foundation for this narrative, the creation of Jack Moss, the Heartman and Elizabeth, I hope to continue to tell the stories of these black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire coast with further books in innovative, magical ways.

Indeed, the next story, *Storms*, tells the real story of Thomas Anson and his astonishing escape into the British army, uncovered by my friend, historian Audrey Dewjee, Joe Moss's escape from his beloved 'sands' and his taking of the King's shilling in the navy, and the narrative of Frances, wife of the most famous sailor in the land, Horatio Nelson, and her slave owning heritage on the island of Nevis.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Prior to concluding, I would like to quote Rushdie and his thoughts on *Midnight's Children* one last time 'I wanted to write a novel of vaulting ambition, a high-wire act with no safety net, an all-or-nothing effort.' (Rushdie, 2021)

I genuinely hope the narrative of *Dark Tide* shows my own ambition and all-or-nothing effort as an enduring tribute to those whose lives it touches upon and to encourage the honouring and celebrating of the diversity of our society. And I hope that my creation, the Heartman, can open the hearts and minds of a modern generation of readers to a part of our history that we must never forget and a part of our history that may be closer to our own than we might think – in my case, my hometown. For the final word I would like to turn to the forty second president of the United States, President Bill Clinton:

We are all, regardless of race, genetically 99.9 percent the same. Modern science has confirmed what ancient faiths have always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity. Therefore, we should do more than just tolerate our diversity; we should honour and celebrate it. (Clinton, 2000)

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**Bibliography Primary Sources**

Allende, I. (1982). *The House of Spirits* . Buenos Aires: Bantam.

Baldwin, J. (1962). *Another Country* . Penguin Modern Classics.

Butler, O. (1979). *Kindred*. Doubleday.

Carter, A. (1984 ). *Nights at the Circus*. Londond: Chatto & Windus .

Carter, A. (2016). *Simon Thorn and the Wolf's Den*. Bloomsbury.

D'Aguiar, F. (1997). *Feeding the ghosts*. Granta Books.

Delaney, J. (2014). *The Spook's Apprentice*. Red Fox.

Dickens, C. (1843). *A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*. London: Chapman and Hall.

Ellison, R. (1952). *Invisble Man*. New York : Penguin.

Evaristo, B. (2009). *Blonde Roots*. Penguin.

Fish, L. (2009). *Strange Music*. London: Random House.

Haley, A. (1976). *Roots*. New York: Doubleday.

Harris, J. (2017). *Sugar Money*. London: Faber and Faber.

Levy, A. (2010). *The Long Song*. London: Headline Publishing Group .

Marquez, G. G. (1967). *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Jonathan Cape.

Morrison, T. (1987). *Beloved*. Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Okri, B. (1991). *The Famished Road*. Jonathan Cape.

Onyebuchi, T. (2016). *Beast Made of Night*. Razorbill.

Rowling, J. K. (1999). *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Bloomsbury.

Ruff, M. (2016). *Lovecraft Country*. Picador.

Rushdie, S. (1981). *Midnight's Children*. London : Jonathan Cape.

Smith, H. (1999). *Lover's Leap*. Miverva Press.

Waters, S. (1998). *Tipping the Velvet*.

Wells, H. G. (1896). *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Heinemann UK.

Wheatle, A. (2020). *Cane Warriors*.

Whitehead, C. (2016). *Underground Railroad*. Doubleday.

Winterson, J. (2013). *The Daylight Gate*. Hammer.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

**Bibliography – Secondary Sources**

Akbar, N. (1984). *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery* .

Akbar, N. (1996). *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery*. Mind Productions & Associates.

Allegretti, C. (n.d.). [www.easternct.edu](http://www.easternct.edu/speichera/understanding-literary-history-all/the-long-eighteenth-century.html). Retrieved from [tps://www.easternct.edu/speichera/understanding-literary-history-all/the-long-eighteenth-century.html](http://www.easternct.edu/speichera/understanding-literary-history-all/the-long-eighteenth-century.html)

Aprillia, A. (2020). Antisocial Disorder of Joker Character in the Dark Knight Movie Direct by Christopher Nolan. *Jurnal ilmiah Bahasa dan Sastra*, 129-147.

Attar, R. (2017, June ). *Hilary Mantel on the secrets of successful historical fiction* . Retrieved from <https://www.historyextra.com/period/tudor/hilary-mantel-interview-challenges-historical-fiction-thomas-cromwell-wolf-hall-mirror-light/>

BBC. (2008, July 11). *Revealing Histories*. Retrieved from [www.bbc.co.uk/manchester: http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/content/articles/2008/07/11/110708\\_manchester\\_slaves\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/content/articles/2008/07/11/110708_manchester_slaves_feature.shtml)

Beasley, N. M. (2009). *Christian Ritual and the Creation of British Slave Societies, 1650-1780*. University of Georgia Press.

Beckles, H. (2016). King Cuffee's Stool, General Bussa's Horse and Barrow's Plane. *Journal of Caribbean Culture*.

Berlin, I. (2000). *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Belknap Press.

Birat, K. (2021, April 2). *Caryl Phillips*. Retrieved from Commonwealth Essays and Studies: <https://journals.openedition.org/ces/4424>; DOI:

Brown, C. L. (2006). *Moral Capital* . UNC Press.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

- Burns, K. (1997, April 23). <https://castleparkstories.org/chapter-13/>. Retrieved from castleparkstories.org/: <https://castleparkstories.org/chapter-13/>
- Christie, A. (2012). A Beloved Performance: Reading between the Lines. *Babel : Littératures Plurielles*, 105 – 120.
- Clinton, W. (2000, January 27). *Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union*. Retrieved from [www.presidency.ucsb.edu](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu): <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-joint-session-the-congress-the-state-the-union-7>
- Davies, K. (1957). *The Royal Africa Company*. London: Routledge .
- Delgado, S. (2019). *Ship English*. Language Science Press .
- Dunn, R. S. (1972). *Sugar and slaves : the rise of the planter class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. Williamsburg: Chapel Hill.
- Elder, M. (2007). The Liverpool Slave Trade, Lancaster and its Environs. . In S. S. Richardson D., *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery (pp. 118-137)* (p. 127). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press .
- Ellison, R. (1970, April 6). *What America Would be Like Without Blacks* . Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/>: <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,943970,00.html>
- Emmer, P. C. (1995). SCHOLARSHIP OR SOLIDARITY? THE POST-EMANCIPATION ERA IN THE CARIBBEAN. *New West Indian Guide*, 277-290.
- Engerman, S. (1972). The Slave Trade and British Capital Formation in the Eighteenth Century: A Comment on the Williams Thesis. *The Business History Review*, 430-442.
- Fanon, F. (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Paris: Francois Maspero.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Peau Noire, masque blancs*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

- Fish, L. (2006). "Strange Music": Engaging Imaginatively with the Family of Elizabeth Barrett Browning from a Creole and Black Woman's Perspective . *Victorian Poetry*, 507-524.
- Fryer, P. (1984). *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*. Pluto Press.
- Geetha, B. J. (2010). Magic Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 345 – 349.
- Gerzina, G. (2020). *Britain's Black Past*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Green, W. A. (1973). The Planter Class and British West Indian Sugar Production, before and after Emancipation. . *The Economic History Review*, 26(3), 448–463.
- Hall, G. M. (1964). Negro Slaves in the Americas. *Freedomways*, 319-330.
- Handler, J. (2000). SLAVE MEDICINE AND OBEAH IN BARBADOS, CIRCA 1650 TO 1834. *New West Indian Guide*, 57-90.
- Hanley, R. (2016 ). SLAVERY AND THE BIRTH OF WORKING-CLASS RACISM IN ENGLAND, 1814–1833 The Alexander Prize Essay. . *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 26, 103-123.
- Hanley, R. (2021). Review of the book Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War, by Vincent Brown, and: Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture by Sudhir Hazareesingh]. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 55(1) , 103-107.
- Harley, C. (2013). SLAVERY, THE BRITISH ATLANTIC ECONOMY AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION. . *Discussion Papers in Economic and Social History* , 5.
- Hartman, S. V. (1997). *Scenes of Subjection – Terror, Slavery, Self- Making in Nineteenth Century America*. . Oxford University Press.
- Jenson, M. (2008). Power, Utopia, and the Manipulation of the Historical Consciousness: Perspectives from Collingwood. . *Utopian Studies*, 19(2),, 233–264.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Judge, M. (2021, December 7). *Let Us Now Praise Cultural Appropriation*. Retrieved from <https://lawliberty.org/let-us-now-praise-cultural-appropriation/>

Kaufman, M. (2017). *Black Tudors*. Oneworld.

Kennedy, A. L. (2016, October 1). *Whose life is it anyway? Novelists have their say on cultural appropriation*. Retrieved from Guardian.com: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/01/novelists-cultural-appropriation-literature-lionel-shriver>

Khan, V. (2020, September 2). Retrieved from <https://vaseemkhan.com:https://vaseemkhan.com/2020/09/02/cultural-appropriation-why-people-need-to-get-a-grip/>

Kocz, N. (2014, April 8). *THE RUMPUS INTERVIEW WITH FRED D'AGUIAR*. Retrieved from <https://therumpus.net/2014/04/08/the-rumpus-interview-with-fred-daguiar/>

Kunzru, H. (2016, October 1). *Whose life is it anyway? Novelists have their say on cultural appropriation*. Retrieved from guardian.com: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/01/novelists-cultural-appropriation-literature-lionel-shriver>

Lancaster. (n.d.). <https://onesearch.lancaster-university.uk>. Retrieved from [www.lancaster.ac.uk:https://onesearch.lancaster-university.uk/primo-explore/collectionDiscovery?vid=LUL\\_VU1&collectionId=81127497100001221](https://onesearch.lancaster-university.uk/primo-explore/collectionDiscovery?vid=LUL_VU1&collectionId=81127497100001221)

Lewis, L. (1990). Exploring the Folk Culture of Barbados through the Medium of the Folk Tale. . *Caribbean Studies*, 85-94.

Lewis, T. L. (2008). How Much Has Changed for Black Men? An Interview with Haki R. Madhubuti. . *AmeriQuests* .

Lodge, D. (1992). *The Art of Fiction*. Vintage Books.

Lodge, D. (2011). *The Art of Fiction*. London: Vintage.



**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

Long, E. (1774). *History of Jamaica 3 vols.* London : Arno Press.

Madhubuti, H. R. (1990). *Black Men: Obsolete, Single and Dangerous* . Third World Press.

Malay, J. (2014). *Mary Hampson Her Story of Marital Abuse and Defiance in Seventeenth Century England.* Stamford University Press.

Mason, K. (1986). Demography, Disease and Medical Care in Caribbean Slave Societies. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 109-119.

Mavroforou, A. (2014). Punative Limb Amputation. *Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research*, 3102-3106.

McDade, K. (2011). Liverpool slave merchant entrepreneurial networks, 1725–1807. *Business History*, 1092-1109.

Mills, C. (1997). *The Racial Contract* . Cornell University Press.

Mundell, N. (2018, December). *runaways.gla.ac.uk/blog/*. Retrieved from *runaways.gla.ac.uk/blog/*: <https://runaways.gla.ac.uk/blog/>

Norman, K. (2020, November 11). *An Interview with Award-Winning Author Ben Okri. The Nigerian author is known for his own brand of magical realism.* . Retrieved from *Earlybirdbooks.com*: <https://earlybirdbooks.com/ben-okri-books-interview>

Nubia, O. (2019). *England's Other Countrymen Black Tudor Society.* Zed Books.

Olende, K. (2022, January 28). Retrieved from <https://socialistworker.co.uk:https://socialistworker.co.uk/reviews-and-culture/at-last-eric-williams-classic-book-capitalism-and-slavery-republished/>

Painter, N. I. (2010). *The History of White People.* New York: W W Norton and Company .

Paton, D. (2019). MARY WILLIAMSON'S LETTER, OR, SEEING WOMEN AND SISTERS IN THE ARCHIVES OF ATLANTIC SLAVERY. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 153-179.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

- Post, Y. (2012, October 31). Retrieved from <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk:https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/its-official-dna-tests-show-yorkshire-people-really-are-different-breed-1879236>
- Raynaud, C. (2012). The texts as riddle and Death's many ways: Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*. *Dans Etudes Anglaises*, 331-346.
- Rice, A. (2011). Ghostly and vernacular presences in the black Atlantic. In E. T. Bannet, *Transatlantic Literary Studies 1660 1830* (pp. 154-168). Cambridge University Press.
- Rothman, A. G. (2008). *Major Problems in Atlantic History*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Rushdie, S. (2021, April 3). *Salman Rushdie on Midnight's Children at 40 'India is no longer the country of this novel'*. Retrieved from Guardian.com: [www.guardian.com](http://www.guardian.com)
- Sanderson, D. (2019, December 3). Retrieved from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk:https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/booker-winner-bernardine-evaristo-writes-off-cultural-appropriation-bklfsqhgk>
- Sangari, K. (1987). *The Politics of the Possible. Cultural Critique*.
- Satterthwaite, B. &. (1764). Retrieved from [https://onsearch.lancaster-university.uk/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=44LAN\\_ALMA\\_DS11128306880001221&context=L&vid=LUL\\_VU1&lang=en\\_US&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine](https://onsearch.lancaster-university.uk/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=44LAN_ALMA_DS11128306880001221&context=L&vid=LUL_VU1&lang=en_US&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine)
- Seth, S. (2018). *Difference and Disease. Medicine, Race, and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sheridan, R. (2000). *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies 1623-1775*. Kingston : The University of the West Indies Press.
- Shuler, K. (2011). Life and death on a Barbadian sugar plantation: historic and bioarchaeological views of infect and mortality at Newton Plantation Plm V. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 66-81.
- Stuart, A. (2012). *Sugar in the blood*. Portobello Books.

**PhD Creative Writing Thesis - Robert Bullock - The stories and legacies of the black residents of the Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire Coast in the long eighteenth century.**

- Tavor-Bannet, E. (2011). *Transatlantic Literary Studies, 1660–1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tekdemir, H. (2011). Magical Realism in the Peripheries of the Metropolis: A comparative approach to Tropic of Orange and Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills. *The Comparatist*, 40-54.
- Tsosie, R. (2002). RECLAIMING NATIVE STORIES: An Essay on Cultural Appropriation and Cultural Rights . *Arizona State Law Journal*, 300-310 .
- Vangel, M. (2019, October 8). *A lesson from Marlon James, Epic Storyteller*. Retrieved from [www.macalester.edu: https://www.macalester.edu/news/2019/02/a-lesson-from-marlon-james-epic-storyteller/](https://www.macalester.edu/news/2019/02/a-lesson-from-marlon-james-epic-storyteller/)
- Vickers, M. (2010). The Creation of Fiction to Share Other Truths and Different Viewpoints: A Creative Journey and an Interpretive Process. *Qualitative Inquiry* , 556-565.
- Walters, W. W. (2013). *Archives of the Black Atlantic : Reading Between Literature and History*. 2013: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Walvin, J. (2017). *Sugar The World Corrupted from Slavery to Obesity* . Robinson .
- Wessels, Q. (2015). Anecdotes to the life and times of Sir Richard Owen (1804–1892) in Lancaster. *Journal of Medical Biology*, 226-233.
- Westgraph, L. (2018, November 13). *Runaway Slaves in Britain: bondage, freedom and race in the eighteenth century*. Retrieved from <https://www.runaways.gla.ac.uk:https://www.runaways.gla.ac.uk/database/print/?rid=796>
- Williams, E. (1944). *Capitalism and Slavery*.
- Wright, B. E. (1974). *The Psychopathic Racial Personality* .

