

W. Yusef Doucet

I was born and raised in Los Angeles California, and have been a life-long Californian. I am the father of four incredible daughters and one fantastic son, and the grandfather of four precious granddaughters and two shining grandsons. I have been a faculty member of the Santa Monica College English Department since 1999. I co-founded and facilitated the Dyamsay Writers' Workshop with DJ Watson in Santa Monica, CA, the Third Root Writers' Workshop with Lisa Marie Rollins in Pomona, CA, a poetry reading series at the former Velocity Café with Edgar Montgomery in Santa Monica, CA, and produced seasonal readings and performances at the City Market of Los Angeles Gallery, all projects of the Ubwenge Artists Collective (co-founded with DJ Watson and Lisa Marie Rollins). I currently co-program and co-host Liberation Cinema!, a monthly film screening at the AFIBA Center in South Los Angeles, and I am a member of the Joko Collective, a grassroots community education project (Check us out on Facebook). Through submitting to Root Work Journal, I hope to join a wider circle of cultural workers engaged in re-imagining a world that affirms life, re-visioning a world that affirms Black life, African humanity. I hope to learn that We are approaching a critical mass of consciousnesses, enough to break through the wall between Us and the world We want.



Diaspora (para Itana)

W. Yusef Doucet
Joko Collective
doucetyu@sbcglobal.net

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We all belong to each other.

Diaspora (para Itana)

Thousands more miles separated a little black girl
At play with red chickens in her grandma's yard
In Salvador, Bahia and the black boy throwing a baseball
Against the red brick wall in his Los Angeles backyard.

Why should distance matter?
Why should language matter?
“When you speak, I know you in my spirit,
In my spirit right here.”

She speaks with her hand over heart.
Why should distance matter?
Why should language matter?
“I'm so glad,” he says. “I've known you

My whole life, in my heart right here.
I could hear you giggle when the baseball
Bounced back and your delight
Would scatter the chickens.”