

The Caribbean Writer

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“I See Myself as a Fledging Writer of Poetry” - Noreen Michael



Noreen Michael, Chief of Staff for President Hall, is no new comer to poetry. As a child she loved reading and going to school. Although she is not certain at what age she was introduced to poetry, she thinks it was in middle school, and the poem that lingers in the back of her mind is “Lochinvar,” by Sir Walter Scott. She had to memorize and recite the poem, and recalls with fondness that she enjoyed the entire process and was pleased with the outcome of the poem, which she understood.

The real Lochinvar who inspired Sir Walter Scott to write the poem was James Montgom-

ery, who along with his three brothers, were exiled from Scotland for their religious beliefs. They found safe haven in Ireland, until the time of the American Revolution, when they were again subjected to persecution owing to their religion. Consequently, they felt the best recourse was to travel to the USA and hide out in the wilds of America. Once in America they joined the struggle for Liberty, and although James was just a youth, he went into the battle field with his father to fight and bore his musket like a veteran.

Although Dr. Michael majored in English as an undergraduate student, she confesses, “I was not very fond of poetry, so I don’t really have a favorite poet.” Yet, the names of several poets are familiar to her and she adds, “There are some poems, however, that have had an impact on me, to include Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 116;” Rudyard Kipling’s “If;” Robert Frost’s “The Road Not

Taken;” and Maya Angelou’s, “Still I Rise.” Busy with her role as Chief of Staff at UVI, Dr. Michael found the rhythm and emotional sentiments of poetry luring her, so she remarks: “In the last few years I have developed a greater appreciation for poetry and really relate to the poetry of our own local poet, Attorney Trenzgenza A. Roach – his poem, ‘Sugar Song,’ being one of my favorites.”

A long time advocate of the humanities, Dr. Michael firmly believes in this discipline as a transformative tool. When pressed about the role of poetry she has this to say, “I feel that poetry can serve as a means of helping students with self expression; helping our students really appreciate varying perspectives on the human condition; demonstrating both the power and beauty of words, and understanding peoples and the times in which they lived or live.”



