

Sheila Smith McKoy

Note From The Editor



Richard Wright has indeed taught me through the full range of his writings about my obligations to humanity.

Jerry Ward
 Richard Wright Literary Excellence
 Award Recipient
 February 26, 2011

This issue of *Obsidian* speaks in several voices simultaneously; it is a polygot of sorts. That is, it is, in part, a tribute to the 2008 centennial of the work of Richard Wright assembled by our guest editor, John Charles. This issue also presents a critical look at the growing body of creative work by Haitian writer Myriam Chancy. True to our editorial mission, this issue contains creative work from writers across the African Diaspora and, taken in its constituent parts, focuses on the manner in which writers and writings survive the politics of trauma and transition, issues that are echoed throughout the texts presented. It is also the first issue in which we welcome Shervon Cassim in his new role as managing editor of *Obsidian*.

The conversation that led to our focus on Richard Wright grew out of my colleague's journey to the Wright Centennial celebration in Paris in 2008. Arguably one of the most iconoclastic figures in African American letters, Wright's life journey took him to France, a space that is celebrated for its embrace of African American culture and as a refuge for African American expatriates. We realized that this was an opportunity to focus on Wright's work is a part of a larger African Diaspora, one that has received limited critical inquiry. I thank John for bringing to *Obsidian* outstanding essays from Houston Baker, Rebecca Rutledge Fisher, Barbara Foley, Rachel Watson, Mikko Tuhkanen, and Mikal Craven this issue.

I am also excited about our focus on Myriam Chancy, a Haitian writer working in the Haitian Diaspora. This issue presents an interview with Chancy as well as a review of her latest novel, *The Loneliness of Angels*. It is worth noting here that Chancy is donating the proceeds from this novel to the rebuilding and relief efforts in Haiti. Our creative offerings—poetry from Richard Ward, Edward Bynum, and Grace Ocasio, and fiction from Nkechinyelum A. Chioneso and Gariot Louima—continue our focus across several underexplored African Diasporan cultures. The issue is completed by review articles by John Wall, Patrick Alexander, and Reginald Dewight Patterson.

It is especially fitting that this issue of *Obsidian* is represented by Aya, the Adinkra symbol that celebrates perseverance in the face of adversity, of resistance, and despite the passage of time. I thank the contributors for being a part of our look into the understudied texts that continue to defy, to survive and to inspire.

