

## POETRY

# From Dover Raceway to Morgan's Harbour

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This collection consists of three poems. Two of these poems provide snapshots of experiences that are rooted in the Jamaican context. "At Dover Raceway" captures the gathering of racing fans who hail from varying socioeconomic strata across the country, and the unifying excitement that accompanies the races. "I Want to Scull" is about a relatively atypical experience in Jamaica – a sculling team that met for training at Morgan's Harbour. As with other such endeavors, the club became defunct when no funding could be found to repair the sculls or purchase new ones. In contrast, "Becoming Wisdom" is about a journey from a place of brokenness to one of healing and growth.

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**Keywords:** Dover Raceway; Morgan's Harbour; Jamaica

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### **At Dover Raceway**

The sign and then the marl  
part of a procession  
witnessed on either side  
by chariots  
not allowed to race,  
mere conveyors  
of the throng converging.

A pass and then to the overpass  
bodies in concert  
seekers homing in on the  
viewing point of choice  
trackside, dutchie in hand  
or status lounge  
food and drink unlimited  
settling for the start.

The music then the voice  
deejay and commentator in tango  
rhythm and dance  
news stream and humour  
sponsors' names spouting and branding  
in the in-between  
until the cars line up  
names and stats arcing through the buzz  
excitement gathering like congregants  
for worship.

The flag and then the charge  
black and white blurred  
against the whiz of passing colour

total engine red unbeatable  
 blue and yellow gore challenging  
 Chen in white  
 coming back to win  
 Chen in black: emergent victor  
 drifting to applause  
 'til it starts again  
 with breaths bated, scanning eyes  
 roars and moans  
 chased with vodka, rum, and turbo.

### **I Want to Scull**

I want to scull  
 but the boats are broken  
 and there is no money  
 to make them whole again.

They lie face down on racks  
 paint work flaky like sunburnt skin,  
 cobwebs and dust  
 clothing them unchecked  
 in a cage by Morgan's Harbour.

I see them there each time I pass  
 pulling off the road to stand  
 as though visiting a gravestone;  
 remembering  
 the sleek grace with which they lived

on Saturday mornings before dawn  
 slicing through the seas  
 that touch Port Royal  
 eight sculls pulling, flipping, and rising  
 in tandem

and that spill that we took  
 by the mangroves  
 limbs treading water while bailing water  
 until we could climb back in,  
 row back to a pebbly shore,  
 and smile ruefully  
 at our waiting coach.

Each time I drive towards the Palisadoes  
 I remember how much  
 I want to scull  
 to feel the waking sun  
 draw sweat from my arms  
 as we pull those sculls in tandem  
 through the seas that touch Port Royal  
 gulls watching overhead  
 and a manatee from below.

### **Becoming Wisdom**

**I.**

I once loved a man named Broken  
 who lived with his family of fears  
 in a granite house

feeding on bitter roots  
seasoned with rage.  
He drew me in with songs of pain.  
I held him to my bosom.  
His head was too heavy.  
I touched his amber skin.  
It singed my fingers.  
I kissed the tears from his face.  
They poisoned me.  
I smiled to disarm him.  
He pierced me with his sword.

## II.

So I ran to the caves  
that are lapped by the sea  
and watched my blood seep out  
to tinge the water.  
I had gone to give.  
I had meant to heal  
and was almost consumed  
I, now, the Woman called Wounded.  
But my heart still beats.  
Hope becomes my restorer.  
Sister Love comforts me  
and Insight alights on my shoulder.  
My wounds turn to scars  
and I rise again,  
re-christened the Woman called Wisdom.

## III.

I cannot save Broken  
though I yearn for him.  
I now have awoken  
to the truth re: him.  
My scars are the token  
of my love for him.  
In words left unspoken  
I have died to him.

## Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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