



SOUL
CLOTHES

REGINA D.
JEMISON

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REGINA D.
JEMISON

Foreword by Rev. Stephen G. Marsh

Reflections of America Series

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Soul Clothes

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Dedication

For V. Christine Jemison and Ralph Jemison Jr.

Thank you for my life, the gift of living life, and choosing life over and over again.

Acknowledgements

So much to be grateful for...

To God for His bottomless grace for me!

To all my teachers of life and faith—Ma and Daddy who are watching over me. The seeds you planted are still growing and guiding me. I miss you more than words *as vast as the universe and numerous as grains of sand* can compute. Thank you for all the love and all the lessons.

To Pastor Carla Nelson for your teaching of scriptures that molded my thinking and my life. To Pastor Christine Thompson for giving nourishment and revelation to my voice of prayer and gift of ministry in the midst of a bone dry wilderness. To Pastor James C. Perkins for the gift of being in the presence of a master word smith of the Master and knowing you as my personal shepherd.

To Stephen G. Marsh for returning my muse and making this possible.

To Sherry Quan Lee for your keen listening, patient heart, and thoughtful spirit that helped to fulfill my dream.

To Khabira M.D. Raheem for healthy living, and most of all for a life well spent, yet is just beginning. Here's to an endless number of 13's!

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Foreword

You are holding in your hands an engraved and personal invitation to enter into a literary as well as personal relationship with the deeply insightful and profoundly expressive perspectives of one of God's own trombones. As you encounter these soul-stirring pieces, the poetry, prose and personality of Regina Diane Jemison is likely to rub up on a curious and compassionate place within you, a place of stark reality drenched in divine hope. Imagine a John Coltrane solo, with words instead of tenor sax.

That's in part because Regina D. Jemison believes her life mission is to empower and prepare people to be their divine self at all times and under any and all circumstances. Needless to say, with such a seemingly impossible purpose, she relies on God in new ways every day. It was something she has been taught and led to do all her life.

As a young adult Christian, Regina began to get in touch with her vast spiritual gifts, which included her voice and vision for the divine possibilities of Black people in general, and the Black church in particular. She was anointed a Deacon in the Detroit Lutheran Coalition, itself an urban representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In that role and many other spiritual accountabilities, she has been blessed to study under and provide sustenance and pastoral care for many eminent pastors, preachers and teachers of theological praxis. She serves the Spirit of the Living God through a multi-denominational ministry of service that finds its expression on national, local and individual levels.

The power and destiny of Spirit has molded all of the above – and more – into a powerful and cultural female voice of joy, outrage, love, anger, faith, challenge, surrender, healing and hope. A *searing* and *incisive* voice when it comes to the injustices God's people suffer on every level, because of “isms” of every kind. A *sacred* voice that cries out in the wilderness. A *compassionate* voice that cries out to Jesus. A *hopeful* voice that speaks of new life from old traditions. A *wise* voice that speaks of the laws of the universe. A *faithful* voice that speaks of a faithful God.

Those who have ears to hear, listen to what the Master of the universe is pouring through this blessed and highly favored lover and gift-bearer of written and spoken word, Regina Diane Jemison.

The Rev. Stephen G. Marsh

God Gave Me Words

cocoa and caramel and chocolate

Writin' My Blues Away

I.

I've been busy chasin'
chasin' children
 chasin' money
 chasin' men

No time to write
my blues away; chasin'

gave me the blues

chasin'
 seekin',
 workin',
 meanderin'

No time to write
my blues away

II.

But today
I see my beauty
 today I see my brilliance
 today God gave me

words that dance
 twistin' and shoutin'
 the blues away

My voice leaps on the page where joy
was lost and sorrow was at home, but

my soul
 wants to write
the blues away

the words

are endless

III.

I'm writin' my prayers
on stone tablets
legal pads
and blue skies, writin' the blues
away, writin'

to trust
to survive
to influence
to forgive

Because a door in my soul opens

I write

because it relieves
my sub-conscious feelings and
conscious thoughts,
my emotional baggage,
distorted delusions,
and my anger

writing illuminates injustice
gives language to people's pain
pictures to failing dreams

I write

to articulate
 my madness,
 my peculiarity,
 my wounds of disappointment,
my tears

exhausted
 elated
 or bewildered

I write

because a door in my soul opens
giving sustenance to my existence
a name to my feelings
breath to my spirit
 permanence to my world

I write

because the ups I can hide,
the downs I can overcome

I write

*piercing resignation
electrifying your psyche
reminding us who God is*

I write

alleviating the anger

I write

*rearranging the ramblings of my mind, while
ordering the abundance of my heart*

I write

sentences that sink deep into the chasms of social inequities

I write

paragraphs of prayers

I write

*phrases that transcend my illusions
and give truth to my transgressions*

I write

*allegories that artistically express my sexuality
and my politics*

I write

syllables that give beauty to a starving life

I write

homage to my friends and family

I write

*gaining entry
into a world of healing compositions,
poetic wholeness,
and rooms of divine reflections*

I write

and a door opens.