

ihсан bracy
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Theatre artist, author and educator, ihсан bracy was a graduate of Bennington College in Vermont. He is the author of two plays, *Against the Sun*, the Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831 and *N'toto*, a spirit play, as well as two volumes of poetry, *cadre* and *the ubangi files*. Twice a CAPS finalist in poetry, he is a former member of the New York State Council on the Arts. ihсан is a member of the New Renaissance Writers Guild. Ihсан requested that both his novels be in lower case type.

AN INTERVIEW WITH IHSAN BRACY AUTHOR OF *IBO LANDING*

Who are you?

i am a forty-six year old afrikan american brother of geechee ancestry, born in staunton, virginia and raised in brooklyn, new york. i am an urban child of the city, raised with southern sensibilities.

Why did you write *ibo landing*?

growing up with a large extended family, there were always tales told. *ibo landing* grew out of stories i heard when i was a little boy. one day while looking at my three children, i realized that i wanted to pass this legacy down to them. *ibo landing* provided a way for me to ensure this inheritance for them.

What inspiration did you use for the writing of *ibo landing*?

i drew my personal inspiration from my ancestors. in particular there was my grandmother big mama and my great-grandfather daddy franklin. i spent my summers down in virginia with them, and it was here that i learned how to say “yes ma’am and no sir” during these breaks from the city i learned more about the people i came from and a world very different from the brooklyn projects. it was here that i learned to cherish family. of course from a writing standpoint i was inspired by a number of great writers, too numerous to mention, but the ones that come to mind immediately are zora neale hurston, ernest gaines, toni morrison, octavia butler, henry dumas, and arthur flowers. i was always drawn to the authors who wrote about the down home peoples.

What did writing *ibo landing* do for you?

when i wrote the short stories in *ibo landing* many times i felt myself transported, as the sounds and smells would come to me. i would hear the language and see the landscapes. many times i felt that the stories were revelations that my ancestors were allowing me to see. i felt such a sense of accomplishment and completion, when the work was finished, as if i had been entrusted with a sacred task by my ancestors that was now completed.

What did you discover in the writing of *ibo landing*?

i discovered not only the ancestral voices within me, but finally understood my place in the context of my family, a sense of the continuum with which i see myself and now my children. i also appreciated for the first time the inheritance of love, wisdom and humor

that is truly my birthright, passed on to me by the warmth of my family. there was a revelation that in the particular is the general, within the individual is the whole, through the microcosm one can glimpse the macrocosm, that stories important to me can reveal truths universal within the human nature. □ i found clarity in simplicity and a sense of peace within myself and somehow a place for myself in the world.