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Bless Up: Poems

Jada A. Grice

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*Bless Up**



Jada Grice

*Wishing people a good day, time, experience (Derived from Native Jamaican Patois)

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School**3rd (Up)Grade**

This is the age where the children

Stop being babies and begin

Sporting canes

Kindergarten cries are left behind

And 3rd grade gusts of exact proclamation appear

1st grade shuffles are left behind

And 3rd grade upright posture is embedded in the ever developing spine

2nd grade banter is squashed

And 3rd grade mediated debates are caroted up

Childhood play is gone

And adulthood Bingo is implemented:

Barely

Ignorant

Now

Growing

Optimistic

On Pizza & Rain Showers

Rain comes in and the children ask

Does it rain a lot in America?

I tell them it does, it goes

Drip

Drip

Drop

The children eat pizza hut for lunch

They ask

Do you eat pizza in America?

I say yes I do

They ask what kind?

Pineapple

Pepperoni

Or

Cheese?

I say,

All of them but who would want

Pineapple on pizza, sort of like who would want rain in

Jamaica?

I Fall Sick and the Heavens Fell Down

I've got a headache

Boom, bang

I've got a stuffy nose

Sniffle, tang

I hear the pitter-patter of feet

Skip, bang

I'm laying down in the teacher's lounge

I hear a knock on the door

Tip, Tap, Tang

My babies bust in with a bang

And their voices in my ear rang

When are you coming back to class?

Are you better now?

Please come and play with us?

Auntie Jada we are concerned about you

Come back,

come back,

come back,

come back

I rejuvenate and rush

out to the gate

I stare and see my kids sliding down the slide and they culminate on the dirt with a

BANG

Auntie Jada

This name

No this title

Has me feeling like an adult.

Do I even deserve this title?

I hear this name at least 20 times a day

The first week it sounded foreign

The second week it sounded like home

As soon as I stepped off the plane

It sounded like me

And then I realized,

No it is

ME

Events

Airport

I get to the Philadelphia International Airport

At 4 am only to be

Delayed

I leave at 8 and

In Miami I wait

Rather I flee

To my next gate

JADA GRICE

JADA GRICE

Is blaring over the loudspeakers

And I run on my connecting flight

I am in the middle seat for both flights

I feel great protection

As I fly into Kingston

I see the hills

And the Carribbean Sea

Eerily enough

I see, rather feel

Home

Devon House

Who da think
That Jamaica had a millionaire.
He was black?
Wah Gwaan*?
I'm good just putting my teeth back in mi mouth
You mean Jamaica had a black millionaire
Back in 1881?
Wah Gwaan?
I am still trying to wrap mi head around dat
Well don't take all day mon, Wah Gwaan?
Alright mon mi think I can grasp it.
What a tour we just took
Ethereal

*Wah Gwan- "What's going on?" (derived from Native Jamaican Patois)
For more information about Devon House → <https://www.devonhouseja.com/about-us>

Ocho Rios

Carribbean Sea so Blue
Black that is the hue
Of a people
Of a land
Of a fervent rhythm
Soca rhythm that is
The sand is
Pale, pale
Crisp, crisp
Clean, clean
Hot, hot
Like the fried
Bammy
Curry Chicken
&
Roti
That is being served
I discuss Howard University during the Black Panther Era
With Uncle Sterling
He attended then
His wealth of knowledge is vast
About as vast as the
Carribbean Sea
That laps onto Pearly Beach

Cruising

As I cruise along the highway with
Loved ones
I am taken aback by the history lesson I learn along the way
We pass the hanging tree
Where Jamaicans were hung
Just Because
It was chopped down in 1960
But emanates still in 2019
We cruise past
Sugar Cane
That was a main export during the enslaved era
I learn that the maroons live in the Blue Mountains
That is also where pure Blue Mountain Jamaican coffee sprouts
And some Spanish descendents in Spanish Town
I learned that there are 14 parishes overall
And that Unity Valley is in St. Ann's parish
Jamaica is a small island
With a Big Love
One Love
Out of Many One People
(1962)

Family

Moravian

You might be wondering what my Moravian family does
And I can tell you
It is a sprinkling at the very beginning

.....
.....(Love).....
.....And then again at the transformed beginning...
.....(Then more love).....

Church Folk

Chile

Church Folk are church folk

Everywhere you go

I've traveled near and far

Through the US

And four of Jamaica's 14 parishes

And I've discovered

That we all clap,

Stomp,

Shout,

Sit,

Stand, and

Praise

Similarly

Then why is it that we are separate

And whenever there is a time for

Interdenominational worship

We then

clap

stomp

shout

run

jump and

praise ourselves out of each other's way

Aunty Lorna

This woman
Is truly a force to be reckoned with
She is quiet yet
Strong
She is the first star shining in the sky at night
And the last sun ray stretching in the early evening sky
She is shimmering
Shattering
 Glass ceilings that is
A female senior executive at JICA
A Japanese government agency in Jamaica
International Relations Degree
 And 4 fluent languages later
But you remain humble and mentored me through it all
Held my hand when I got scared
Drove me to school and dropped me off like I was your duckling and
Loved me into
Being

Aunty Weida

You came to me in a hurry
A published educator on one hand
And a loving mother on the other
Going to work every morning was a joy because you were there
With tough love
And peace from above
You introduced me to
Lawyers
Bankers
&
Businessmen
But most importantly you nudged me closer to Him
You are the Prada purse professional in my eyes
And one of God's angels

God

God is that you here in Jamaica?

Yes.

There is God in every B

R

E

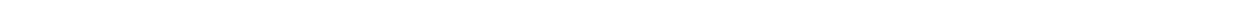
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And Peace in every P A

L M.



Moulding

God I'm in a country by myself
For the first time
I know I have children to look after
Gardens to tend to
Teachers to answer to
And a host family to love
But what about me
I got butterflies in my stomach at the airport
I smile more than I open my mouth to speak
God I want to write an open love letter to you
Please produce a moulding in me
Renew my intentions
Order my steps
Shape my words
Mould my mind so that I can leave a lasting impact on my
Students

Grateful

It is flowing from my heart

Gratefulness

Who da thunk

That you God would see me fit to

Teach in Jamaica

Live in Jamaica

Learn in Jamaica

To love in Jamaica

Bless Up

God I did it

No rather You did it

I went to another country

And

Engaged

No really engaged

I found a family for life

Where would I be without you?

Jamaica is really another homeland for me

The people you introduced me to

I could have never met

Elsewhere

I was embraced into a community and

Sifted into the Jamaican Rum Cake of society

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends

Thank you for laying down your life for me so that I could lay down a path in Jamaica

In your name

So that I could Bless Up!

About the Author



Jada Alyssa Grice was born in Abington and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She grew up in the Baptist church and is a daughter to Rev. and Mrs. Edward and Antonia Grice, sister to Jessica, Jillian, and Joshua Grice, friend to many, and a constant student of life and the Lord. She is a recent graduate from Ursinus College, she received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature. She loves reading, writing poetry, traveling, exploring new cultures, and nature. She will start her service year as an AmeriCorp member, a College and Career Ambassador, in West Philadelphia Public High Schools this upcoming Fall. She hopes to one day continue her education and publish poems and novels.