

By Isaac Fergusson

He sat with his friends smoking and rapping. Bob Marley. During his lifetime this man had become a mythical figure, yet nothing in his easygoing manner identified a superstar. He did not overshadow or separate himself from the dozen or so Rastamen milling about his Essex House suite. His laughter was uproarious, unpretentious, and free. He blended so snugly with his peers that I could never have picked him out had his face not decorated record jackets, T-shirts, and posters everywhere. A year after his death his words still sustain and warn and fulfill.

I had read about the millions of records Marley sold worldwide and that he was a multimillionaire. Still, I found it hard to reconcile the slightly built, denim-clad man with the explosive entertainer who danced across the stages of huge arenas or penetrated me with his stare from the cover of *Rolling Stone*. Marley got up, and politely took leave of the jolly group. He led me to the bedroom. Lying casually across the bed he carefully thumbed through a Bible. Tonight he will talk with me about Rastafari; tomorrow he will go up to Harlem's Apollo Theater and make more history, more legend.

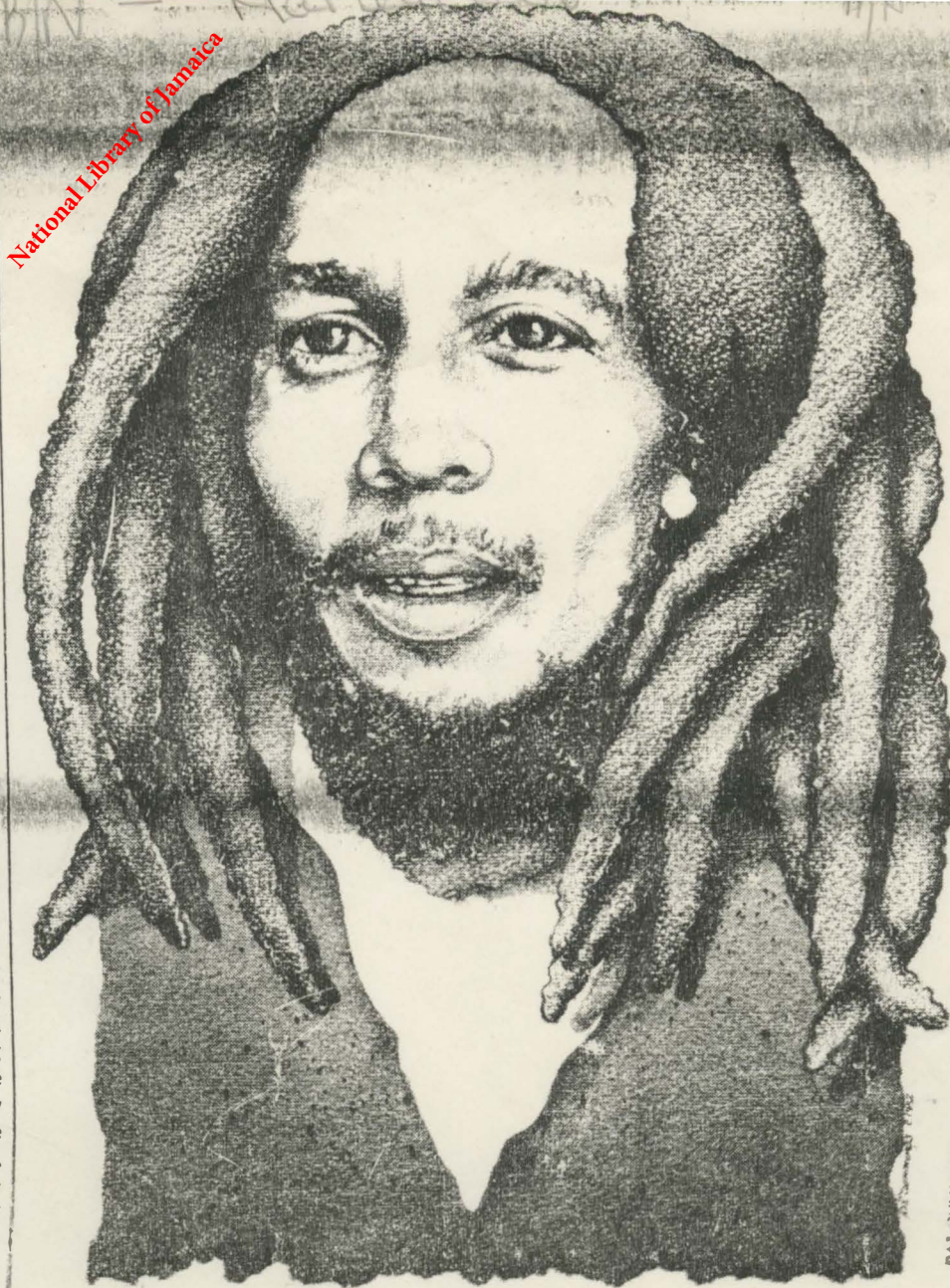
Marley recorded his first song, "Judge Not," in 1961; he was 16 years old then. A helter-skelter music industry was just developing in Kingston where the unemployment rate was 35 per cent and Marley scuffed out a living as a welder. "Me grow stubborn, you know," he recalled when we talked. "Me grow without mother and father. Me no have no parent fe have no big influence pon me. Me just grow in a de ghetto with de youth. Stubborn, no obey no one; but we had qualities and we were good to one another." In 1964 Marley, Peter Tosh, and Bunny Wailer formed the Wailing Wailers. From the beginning Marley strove to convey meaningful content in his lyrics: "Nothing I do is in vain. There is nothing I ever do that goes away in the wind. Whatever I do shall prosper. Because I and I no compromise I and I music. I'm one of dem tough ones." Marley said.

Soon the world discovered that Marley was no ordinary singer whose words were designed to be hummed for moments and forgotten; here was a messenger whose lyrics call attention to our condition, to the reasons for suffering. The music brings lightness to the feet and makes them dance, but the beat is a marching drum, a call to struggle: "Get up, stand up,/Stand up for your rights,/Get up, stand up,/Don't give up the fight."

Marley came to be widely respected as a songwriter with a reach that was broad and deep. Eric Clapton had a big hit with Marley's "I Shot the Sheriff," Johnny Nash scored with Marley's "Stir It Up" and "Guava Jelly." In 1972 Marley and the Wailers signed with Island Records, a small London-based company headed by Chris Blackwell, a white Jamaican. Marley, who wrote his songs and arranged his music, made 10 albums with Island. They all went gold; 500,000 copies sold within the first year in England, Europe and Canada. Two albums, *Rastaman Vibrations* and *Uprising*, made gold in the U.S. His only comment when asked about his success was, "The man who does his work well, he shall be rewarded."

During the late '60s the Wailers became the first popular Jamaican group to make Rastafari philosophies and Rasta drumming the main thrusts of their music. Inspired by the back-to-Africa beliefs of Rastafari, Marley took a deep interest in Africa and the slave trade and wrote some of the most devastating statements of black rage ever recorded. His songs were designed both to tell history and to instill pride and hope in a people indoctrinated with the lie of inferiority. "In my music I and I want people to see themselves," he said. "I and I are of the house of David. Our home is Timbuktu, Ethiopia, Africa where we enjoyed a rich civilization long before the coming of the European. Marcus Garvey said that a people without knowledge of their past is like a tree without roots."

Soon, more and more of Jamaica's top



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PAT CUMMINGS

'So Much Things To Say'

The Journey of Bob Marley

musicians became Rastas, and reggae, the dominant music of Jamaica, became the main vehicle of expression for the Rastafari movement. Its radical ideas were carried by radio into every home and soon Rastafari permeated the society. Reggae singers like Marley became more than mere entertainers, they became "revolutionary workers" and representatives of Kingston's poor: "Them belly full but we hungry/A hungry mob is an angry mob/A rain a fall but the dirt it tough/A pot a cook but the food no 'nough" Sung with simplicity and the clarity of Marley's skeletal voice, these ideas were easily understood and quickly absorbed by even the most illiterate among the poor. Through music, Marley and other Rasta musicians attacked Jamaica's skinocratic system that placed whites at the top, mulattos in the middle, and blacks nowhere. Marley sang in "Crazy Baldhead": "I and I build the cabin/I and I plant the corn/Didn't my people before me Slave for this country/Now you look mewith a scorn/Thenyoueat up all my corn."

The singer became the high priest, prophet and pied piper of Rasta and captivated the people of the third world. Unlike most religious cults Rastafari has no written rules or procedures; its members are united by certain common beliefs and

uncommon rituals. The rituals and even the beliefs vary from one Rasta group to another. Bongo-U, a college-trained pharmacologist and now a Rasta medicine man in Montego Bay, says: "You will never know the Rastaman through books. You can tell the Rastaman through deeds, but to know the Rastaman you must live the experience—it's the only way." Some Rastas are devoutly religious and of exemplary moral character; others are thieves and criminals. Some Rastas are hardworking and industrious; others believe employment means surrender to "Babylon." The only two beliefs all Rastas hold in common are: Haile Selassie is God; repatriation to Africa is the only true salvation for black people.

"Rasta is the most dominant, most important thing in my life," Marley once told me. "You have one man defend capitalist and other man defend socialist . . . finally you have I and I who defend Rastafari." Marley believed that in the Rastafari way of life there was an urgent message for the rest of the world. He believed that it was his divine mission to spread the word of the living, almighty "Jah," and also to inform blacks in the West that they are a lost tribe of Israelites sold into slavery in a Western hell called "Babylon." Marley came to help an uprooted and displaced

people establish an identity. Bob Marley, who worked to explode the myth of a white God in a black society, was the first person to tell me that Israel was a man and not a place. He said the people who live in the country of that name are imposters. To Marley and all orthodox Rastas, blacks are the true Hebrews.

Rastas refer to themselves as 'I and I,' speaking always in the plural because they believe that God lives inside them. To express this divine presence they change the numeral in the title of Selassie I of Ethiopia and pronounce it like the personal pronoun. Most Rastas adhere to a strict vegetarian diet.

In the strictest Rastafari sect, called Niyabingi, Rastas take an oath pledging "death to black and white oppressors." Yet they refuse to carry weapons: "Violence," Bongo-U explains, "is left to Jah. God alone has the right to destroy." Niyabingi Rastas cite Genesis, saying that God made the earth with words—"Let there be light, Jah said, and there was light." They believe that when all Jah's children are united in one cry—"death to black and white oppressors"—destruction will surely come to the exploiters. "Rastas believe in mind power and in the power of the elements, lightning, earthquake, and thunder," Bongo-U says.

From the Book of Numbers Marley and other Rastas took the command never to cut their hair: "All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow." This is the oath of the Nazarites which Jesus took. According to biblical injunction, Rastas cannot eat while others starve. They live communally, sharing goods and services among their community.

In the mid-'60s when there was an unprecedented rise in gang warfare and violent robberies in the West Kingston ghettos—police and politicians alike blamed the Rastas. The government ordered an offensive against Rasta communities and police viciously routed them and burned their homes. The worst attack involved the July 1966 destruction of Back-O-Wall, the worst part of the ghettos where numerous Rastas had settled in makeshift un-air-boarded shacks. At dawn heavily armed police ringed the settlement with bulldozers while the occupants slept. Without warning they leveled the settlement, injuring and arresting scores of Rasta men, women, and children. This attack failed to destroy the Rastafari movement; instead it was scattered throughout Kingston and the rest of the island and soon began to challenge the norms, beliefs, and habits of Jamaicans throughout the island.

Once entrenched all over Kingston, the Rastafari, who had a history of self-reliance based on fishing, farming, and handicrafts, now inspired the youths to seek alternative employment outside the "shitstem!" Their call to "come out of Babylon" spurred an explosion of creative art and today Rasta painters and woodcarvers are transforming Kingston into a showplace of talent that generates considerable tourist business for Jamaica. But the most important product of the Rasta artistic renaissance is reggae music. Numerous drumming brotherhoods developed in the Kingston ghettos as unemployed youths and former rude boys turned to music as a profession and creative outlet.

Until 1966 Marley's music consisted mostly of glorifications of the rude boy desperado life style. He had had hits with "Rude Boy," "Rule Them Rudy," "I'm the Toughest," and the rude boy anthem "Steppin' Razor." But Marley came under the influence of Mortimo Planno, a high priest and a force among the West Kingston Rastafari, and his transformation began. Marley said Planno guided him to a consciousness which was always in him, and which he only had to recognize. He emphasized that no one can make a person a Rasta: "You have to look inside yourself to see Rasta," he said. "Every black is a Rasta, dem only have to look inside themselves. No one had to tell me, Jah told me himself. I and I looked inside I-self and I

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saw Jah Rastafari."

After Planno, Vernon Carrington had the Prophet to Rastafal, and the founder of the Twelve Tribes of Israel Rastafari sect to which Marley belonged, took the singer even further into Rastafari: "Gad revealed back to I and I the secret of the lost Twelve Tribes," said Marley, who learned that each person is assigned to a tribe according to the month of their birth. "I was born in February so I'm from the tribe of Joseph," he explained. "Somebody born in April could say they are Arias and that's what they will be because the word is power and you live it. But if you say you are Reuben, then you realize you find your roots because you become Jacob's children which is Israel. Jacob said thou art Reuben, thou art my firstborn, the beginning of my strength, the excellency of my dignity."

In "Redemption Song" Marley identified himself as the present-day incarnation of Joseph, son of Jacob: "But my hand was strengthened by the hand of the almighty." Genesis 49:24 says of Joseph: "But his bow abode in strength and his hand was made strong by the hand of the almighty." Ramdeen, an East Indian dread, pointed to this biblical verse and said, "Same man that Bob Marley. Jah gave him the gift to write that music and put those words together. His mission was to deliver Israel through songs of redemption."

In 1967 Marley quit recording, left Kingston and returned to the St. Ann's mountain village where he was born. There in those hills he made a covenant with a new God, Jah Rastafari. This was to prove a pivotal event in his life, in his musical direction and in the history of the Rastafari movement itself. For a year Marley roamed the hills and practiced the ways of Rasta and soon Rastafari permeated his entire being. When Marley returned to Kingston in late 1968 he brought with him a new music and also a mission to take the word of Jah Rastafari to the people. His religion became the content of his music, and the music therefore became the medium through which he set out to take Rastafari to the world. Jamaica's ex-prime minister Michael Manley said, "Marley took what was a subculture in Jamaica and elevated it to a dominant culture. He took a folk art," he continued, "and he elevated it into a universal language of communication."

Marley's first song of religious testimony, "Selassie I Is the Temple," came in late 1963. This was followed by "Duppy Conqueror," "Small Ax," "Trenchtown Rock"—these songs zeroed in on poverty, injustice, and the evil of power politics. Marley had experienced a rebirth, and ready or not, Jamaica and the Rastafari had a new prophet. By constantly calling attention to the social inequities and by threatening and demanding redress, Marley and the Rastafari, mainly through music, moved not just the poor, but also middle-class intellectuals to question the ethics of Jamaican society and the conduct of government officials. Tremendous pressure was brought to bear on politicians as the music urged the people to view them with distrust. During the months preceding the 1972 elections, the ruling Jamaica Labor Party (led by Prime Minister Hugh Shearer) reacted by banning such songs from the radio. But a brisk black market developed in reggae and the music still played a big role in the defeat that year of the JLP by Michael Manley's People's National Party.

Without ever getting involved in power politics Bob Marley, who said "me no sing politics, me sing bout freedom," became a political force to be reckoned with. He was quoted and courted by both factions of Jamaica's political establishment. Jamaican Albert Reid, a 63-year-old tractor operator, swore that if "Bob alone was in power in Jamaica we would have a lovely, peaceful country."

In Jamaica and abroad, Bob Marley transcended barriers of race, color, and class. Marley said to me, "The different peoples of the earth are the different flowers of the earth. Jah made them all." Indeed, people all over the world perceived

that despite his problack stand he was not a racist, they knew he stood for love and respect for all peoples. Waiter vocalist Judy Mowatt says that "even people of different languages and different cultures understood because his message was simple. He sang about the need for love and unity amongst all people." The universality of the Rastafari message is perhaps the most important factor in the worldwide acceptance of Marley's music. Reggae music is also infusing new radical content into British and American popular music—the Wailers, Steel Pulse, Burning Spear, are topping the charts. At the Garden concert, Oja, a black American Rastaman, spoke of its connection to blacks here: "Reggae can make the music much more relevant to the real life experiences of black people in America. We listen to our radios more than we read or watch television and what does most of the music say to us? Party, party, dance, dance, get down, get down. But a reggae song might deal with the lack of food for the people, or about the war in Zimbabwe, or the need for blacks to unite. That's why it's so important for our people to hear reggae."

In strife-torn Africa where various nations are in struggle for political power and self-determination, songs like Marley's "War" inspired the revolutionaries to keep up the struggle: "... Until the ignoble and unhappy regime/That now hold our brothers/In Angola,/In Mozambique,/South Africa,/In subhuman bondage,/Have been toppled,/Utterly destroyed,/Everywhere is war." His "Zimbabwe" became a war cry for SWAPO and ZANU guerillas on the battlefield in what was then Rhodesia. This song internationalized the struggle and helped to win world support for Zimbabwe's liberators. In 1978 the Senegalese Delegation to the United Nations presented Marley with the Third World Peace Medal, in tribute to his influence as a revolutionary artist.

Marley went even further in contributing to Zimbabwe. He headlined a concert at Boston's Harvard Stadium and raised money for the new nation. For the first time in modern history, a popular singer had thereby demonstrated that he could use his music and his popularity to influence the outcome of a war. This action won Marley worldwide acclaim, but also earned him enemies. As Marley developed he became increasingly secular and international in scope. Consider his 1979 release, "Babylon System," which deals with workers passing their lives toiling in the capitalist profit machinery: "We've been treading on the/Wine press much too long,/Rebel, rebel./Babylon system is a vampire,/Sucking the children day by day,/Sucking the blood of the sufferers." Marley called on the sufferers to take action to change their own lives. Such lyrics can be interpreted as anticapitalist and progressive, merely liberal, or anarchist—depending on the perspective of the listener: like the Rastafari ideology from which it comes, the reggae message is open-ended. And as Rastafari and reggae become more widespread, people of diverse political ideologies read their own meanings into the religion and the music.

Some Marxists read and interpret the songs as invocations to the international working class to unite and overthrow capitalism. "Marley's reggae is the world's most powerful battle cry," said leftist economist Teresa Turner. "The task at hand is collecting the survivors of centuries of exploitation, racism, and degeneration—people who, as explained by Marx, are necessarily left out of the mainstream of society. Those survivors are potential revolutionaries and Marley's reggae invokes them to keep up the fight as the life's work of this generation. The mission of Rasta is to recreate society on a moral basis of equality."

But theocratic Rastas like Marley are both anticapitalist and anticommunist, saying that both systems are evil and designed to oppress and destroy. They give allegiance to no authority but Jah Rastafari. Says Bongo-U: "We shall set politics against religion, religion against commerce, capitalism against com-

B/W
Marley, Bob



LP Discography

Coxsone

1. *The Wailing Wailers*: 1964-1967
2. *Best of Bob Marley and the Wailers Upsetter*
3. *Soul Revolution Part I*: 1968
Soul Revolution Part II: 1969

Trojan

4. *Soul Rebel*: 1970 (UK import—TBL 127)
5. *African Herbsman*: 1970 (UK import—TRLS 62)
6. *Rasta Revolution*: 1970 (UK import—TRLS 89)

Beverleys

7. *Best of the Wailers* (JA import—BLP 001)

Calla (CBS)

8. *Birth of a Legend*: 1970-71 (2 CAS 1240)

Island/Tuff Gong

9. *Catch a Fire*: 1972 (ILPS 9241)
10. *Burnin'*: 1973 (ILPS 9256)
11. *Natty Dread*: 1975 (ILPS 9281)
12. *Wailers Live*: 1975 (ILPS 9376)
13. *A Taste of the Wailers* (Limited Edition DJ: UK only)
14. *Rastaman Vibration*: 1976 (ILPS 9383)
15. *Exodus*: 1977 (ILPS 9498)
16. *Kaya*: 1978 (ILPS 9517)
17. *Babylon by Bus*: 1978 (ISLD 11)
18. *Survival*: 1979 (ILPS 9542)
19. *Uprising*: 1980 (ILPS 9596)

—I.F.

munism, and set them to war! And they shall destroy themselves." Since each Rasta is in constant contact with God—reading a chapter of the Bible every day—there is no need for intermediaries. Thus there are no conventional leaders in the movement.

For the five years that preceded the diagnosis of cancer Rasta prophet Bob Marley had been working incessantly, ignoring the advice of doctors and close associates that he stop and obtain a thorough medical examination. No, he wouldn't stop, he would have to quit the stage and it would take years to recoup the momentum. This was his time and he seized upon it. Whenever he went into his studio to record he did enough songs for two albums. Marley would drink his fish tea, eat his rice and peas stew, roll himself about six spliffs and go to work. With incredible energy and determination he kept strumming his guitar, maybe 12 hours, sometimes till day-break; but he had to get just what he wanted, always the perfectionist.

When Marley and the Wailers arrived in New York in September 1980 for their concert at Madison Square Garden, straight away I sought them out. Minion Phillips, a close friend of Marley who traveled with the Wailers, was even then extremely worried about Marley. She had had some terrifying dreams. In one she dreamt that Bob stood before her and she saw a big serpent curled up and moving round and round in his stomach, eating it out. "I'm afraid for Bob," she said. "I have

a feeling something terrible will happen. I don't think this tour will be completed."

"Marley! Marley! Marley!" resounded under the huge Madison Square Garden dome, then amid thunderous applause the audience of 20,000 jumped to its feet. There he stood. About five feet four inches, a slim man in denim jacket, jeans, and construction boots with his guitar held fast before him like a machine gun. He threw his ropelike head of hair about and it became a whirlwind around his small black face. The crack of a drum exploded into bass, into organ. And high above the roar of the audience, the sinewy terror sliced through the inky space like the shrill call of a sea gull: "There's a natural mystic flowing through the air/If you listen carefully now you will hear/This could be the first trumpet, might as well be the last/Many more will have to suffer/Many more will have to die."

He became rock-still and intent at the microphone, a presence at once shocking and magical, totally in control. His eyes were dark holes in cheeks of slate. A huge crown of matted locks beaded his face and fell onto his back and shoulders. I jumped the barriers between seats and moved to different ends of the Garden, searching hard for signs of any weakness. Marley seemed in excellent form and the audience screamed for more each time he completed a song. "He's okay," I told myself, "he's got to be okay to perform like this."

The band was silent. Marley picked out a low note on his acoustic guitar: "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery/None but ourselves can free our minds/Have no fear of atomic energy none of them can stop the time . . . These songs of freedom is all I ever had . . ." But why was he singing this one alone? And why the past tense—"all I ever had?" The next day, Sunday, Marley collapsed while jogging in Central Park. Tuesday the same thing happened in Pittsburgh during what became his last concert. The following Saturday I visited Rita Marley and Judy Mowatt. "How's Bob?" I asked. Rita took my hand. "We don't know for sure," she answered, "the doctors say he has a tumor in his brain." I looked up at Minion Phillips and she was staring straight into my eyes. We both knew. The horror choked me.

The knowledge that Bob Marley might soon die haunted me for those months he spent fighting for his life in Dr. Joseph Issel's cancer clinic in West Germany. Still I was shocked when I heard that he had died in Miami on Monday, May 11, en route to Jamaica. He knew the work was over. While in the hospital he told his mother, Cedella Booker, that he had had enough of the needles which for seven months pricked at his flesh. Less than 70 pounds, he was too weak to lift the guitar he hardly left alone for 20 years. Says Mrs. Booker, "He wasn't afraid or bitter at the end. He said he was going into the hills to rest for a while."

Bob slept and Rita Marley flew back to Jamaica. She journeyed to the mountains of Nine Miles Village, St. Ann's. Marley had lived in a small house built by his father on the side of a steep hill overlooking the village in the valley below. There on that hill, Bob sat on a huge stone and wrote his classic, "Trenchtown Rock." There she had spent some of the happiest days of her life. Bob's tomb would stand beside the house right where the stone sat. She carefully chose the spot.

Rita decided then to build a temple with a roof and space enough for her to sit and talk with Bob. He would not be buried under the earth, but rest in a vault five feet above ground. She would embalm his body in the same way Egyptians and tribal Africa s preserved their kings. Generations to come will be able to break the seals, draw Bob out and gaze upon him. She would take him to his resting place with the pomp and glory befitting a king.

When a king dies everyone has a theory; the reggae king is no exception. Some, like Fatso who sat behind me on the flight to Kingston, say that Marley committed suicide. Did Marley work himself to death at age 36, or did he work so furiously because he knew he would die young? Marley was

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always rubbing his forehead and grimacing while performing. Did he know something no one else knew? "Who feels it knows it Lord," he sang in his "Running Away" in 1978. "Bob spent too much time up in the ozone layer, that messed up his health," said his photographer friend, Fikisha.

There is talk of foul play, despite what police say. One dread told me Bob was killed because he was an important revolutionary. He argued that "laser beams" were hooked up between the spotlights while Bob performed and they "burn out 'im brain." Jamaican police sergeant Vernal Savane was certain marijuana killed Marley. "Ganja has destroyed a lot of youths," he insisted. To Rastas that claim is ridiculous. Rasta George, a Niyabingi dread, said, "The holy herb can kill no one, it can only heal I and I."

But the most controversial belief of the strict Niyabingi Rastafari is their total rejection of death. "Don't expect a man like Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh at Bob's funeral," said Niyabingi Rasta Ras Joe, "them men are livers—they do not deal with death." Psalms 6:5 says, "For in the grave there is no remembrance of thee," thus Niyabingi Rastas like Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer say let the dead bury the dead. They do not attend funerals. No hard feelings exist between the three founding members of the Wailers, indeed, if Peter died Bob would not have shown up at his burial.

Marley, like other Rastas, believed that a person manifests himself again and again in the flesh. Thus Selassie is the same man, David. Marley has given up one body, but he will manifest himself again in a new body in the days to come. To Rastas who believe Marley was the "fleshical manifestation of Joseph, son of Jacob," his passing merely marked the departure of a great prophet and there was no sadness. Dread I-One, a one-legged Rastaman taxi driver, pointed into the starry blue sky and said there was no need to be sad because "we are numerous as the stars. Every prophet that falls, 12 are born."

Wednesday, May 20, was a national day of mourning, and by noon 12,000 persons had beaten me to the Arena, viewed the body and left. Another 10,000 gathered outside the Arena trying to get in before 5 p.m. Thousands rushed the gate and police resorted to tear gas to repel them. Sister Sissy, aged 60, held fast to a young man she did not know and fought her way forward

as if she could not feel the tear gas biting at her skin. "Me never get tear gas on me befo," she said, "but me tek it only for Bob Marley. I never knew him, but oh I loved him. God knows he was a true prophet. I had to see 'pon his face before they bury him."

I stood there staring at what looked like a doll with Marley's face. It was a very eerie experience, hearing his voice, watching him lie there. His handsome face looked scrubbed, plastic from embalming, but the trance only increased its mystic magnetism. His majestic locks, scorched by radiation aimed at his brain, were laid in twisted ropes almost down to his waist. He was still wearing his gold, red, and green undervest and knitted wool cap in the colors of the Rastafari, and his usual jeans and denim jacket. The stream of faces of a thousand different colors flowed slowly along in step to his voice wailing from huge loudspeakers: "So old man river don't cry for me/Cause I've got a running stream of love you see/And no matter what stages/ . . . No matter what rages . . . changes/Rages they put us through/ We'll never be blue. . . ."

At 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 21, over 200 police officers and thousands of Jamaicans lined the road outside Kingston Max Field Park Ethiopian Church. His Eminence Archbishop Abouna Yesehay, the Western church head, came to Kingston to officiate at a members-and-invited-guests-only ceremony which began at eight. Inside the gates the bishops gathered, arrayed in splendid gowns of gold, silver, and crimson. Like wise kings from the East they mumbled prayers in Amharic and Geez as the archbishop lit frankincense which filled the church. Drums pounded amid the tinkling of bells and the humming of songs and prayers. Journalists and television crews hustled in to take all the space between the altar and the congregation, blocking the view of church members and guests.

A motorcade quickly assembled after the service and cruised across West Kingston, passing by Marley's Tuff Gong Studios and then turning into the National Arena where a state ceremony had to commence at 11 a.m. The huge arena was filled to capacity. State politicians, ambassadors, international media, music stars and thousands of Rastas dressed in white with red, green, and gold caps mingled and talked, and then the politicians took turns making speeches: Sir Florizel Glasspole, Michael Manley, and finally

"Rastafari!" "Rastafari!"—in death official society finally recognized Marley and his God

Bob
Prime Minister Edward Seaga. He announced that a statue of Marley standing with his guitar is to be the first erected in Jamaica Park, a shrine for distinguished Jamaican heroes. "May his soul find contentment in the achievements of his life and rejoice in the embrace of Jah Rastafari," said Seaga and the audience jumped to its feet. Thunderous shouts of "Rastafari! Rastafari!" punctuated the applause—in death official society finally recognized Marley and his God.

At the end, Wailer musicians, incensed at the way the establishment co-opted the funeral, pushed aside police pallbearers, and Marley's lifelong companions bore him outside. Horse-mounted police forced a path through the huge crowd and the motorcade moved. People piled into trucks and buses, some rode motorcycles, others set out on foot. Down through Spanish Town, down past a thousand shanties, up into the mountain passes and through villages where people gathered in solid walls along both sides of the road, deeper and deeper into the heart of Jamaica, they traveled back to the hills from which Bob Marley came.

I arrived at a steep hill atop which the mausoleum stood and fought my way up. I pushed a black-suited man aside and came face to face with a smiling Edward Seaga standing on the threshold of Marley's tomb. Black-jacketed men flanked him. Seaga arrived by helicopter, avoiding the slow and grueling 55-mile trip in a 90-degree sunsplash. Yes, he had seen Jamaica come out that day. No, he had never seen a funeral like this, yes, it was an incredible sight. He moved aside, I stepped around him and saw the open vault waiting.

I heard the crowd exclaiming and there came the police pallbearers battling uphill like packhorses straining under their heavy load. They headed straight for the vault and pushed the coffin in. "Bob Marley, king of reggae, has chosen to come here to rest," someone announced over a loudspeaker. And 10,000 voices all rose up. Did they shout, "hail him"? Or was it, "praise him"? Coherence was lost in a roar that reached up to the sky. Again and

again, they hailed him.

The photographers scrambled to tree tops and clambered to the roof of Bob's father's house. A trumpet pealed. The sun burst between the silhouettes atop the mountain and illuminated Bob's ledge. His wife and mother sang: "Angels of mercy, angels of light singing to welcome the pilgrim of the night." The sun dropped behind the mountain and immediately it was cooler. Only the bishop's voice broke the silence, reading the final sermon. A stout man placed a red metal plate with a gold star of David—this was the first seal. One by one he inserted the studs and fastened them. A heavy steel-wire grill was bolted on—the second seal. They fastened a plywood sheet in place and poured buckets of wet cement between plywood and metal—this formed the third seal.

Darkness falls swiftly once the sun leaves those hills. The television crews, the police, and the politicians hurriedly boarded vehicles, engines roared, trucks and cars negotiated tricky turnabouts and rumbled downhill at 7 p.m. African drummer Olatunji walked around Marley's tomb ringing an agogo, a ceremonial bell. The drummer struck out a range of different pitches and rhythms. He stopped at Marley's head and rang out a long penetrating peal that ricocheted off the mountain sides and lingered in the still darkness. The mountains became giant lumps of coal. Down in the riverbed a fire burned before a small house. Shadows danced and moved in and about the yard. Powerful speakers drove Marley's voice out the door, it resounded against the hills and filled the night: "How long shall they kill our prophets/While we stand aside and look/Some say it's just a part of it/We've got to fulfill the book./Won't you help to sing/These songs of freedom... redemption songs."

One-legged Abraham Moriah came hopping uphill to the tomb on his crutch to welcome Bob home. "Bob made us hold our heads up. He has to call my father uncle, all of us in the village is one family. He gave us a message of honesty. I believe he is a prophet because many things he talk fulfill."