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LONDON ROCKS

Brenda Lee Browne

This is the story of Dante Brookes, a young man growing up in London in the late seventies and early eighties when sound systems ruled the party scene for young, Black British youths of Caribbean heritage. He navigates the loss of friends, police harassment and being a teenage father while forging a career as an MC.

Dante stumbles into the acting profession and also becomes a writer. It is through these disparate experiences that he learns that the pen and mic are mightier than the sword.

"The scratchy back beat is the only thing that reminds him of his father, a man whose features he shares but whose voice he tries not to remember. The man who, one morning, "went to buy some fags," (his mother's words) and, "kept on walking."

"The scratchy seven-inchers were among the few things he left behind that Dante's mother did not throw out. Dante would play them on his little portable record player. Sometimes he would sing along, but most times he would just sit and listen to the music – each instrument, each riff, rhythm, drum snares and beat. He got so good that he could identify a band, an artiste before the first lyric as he knew each note, each instrument."

BRENDA LEE BROWNE was born in London to Antiguan parents. She studied journalism and started her career in the Black media before moving to Antigua in the mid-1980s where she began writing and publishing short stories and poetry. In the mid-1990s, she returned to the UK and gained an MA in writing from Sheffield Hallam University. She returned to Antigua in 2003 and established Just Write creative writing workshops and has worked with government agencies, adults and inmates at HMP in Antigua. Her work has appeared in a number of anthologies in the USA, UK and Canada as well as online. Brenda is the mother of one and a lover of cricket, chocolate and handbags. Blog: handbagsandchocolate.wordpress.com.

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