



Voices from the Gaps **Vg**

Saundra Sharp

“

*There's a certain way you make me feel,
 Black Man. Like, when you look at me, I see me in
 your eyes,
 And when you touch me
 I feel myself becoming softer. There's a certain way
 you make me feel
 When you walk my way. Like, when I see you on
 125th, looking
 Bad and beautiful in your Afro and tight
 fitting pants. Taking care of all your business
 Rapping with brothers
 Checking me out
 Being beautiful in your darkness
 erect in your pride
 strong in your determination
 mobile in your laughter
 groovin' in your maleness
 There's a certain way you make me feel
 When I see you at your work. Like, when I see you at
 the Spirit House
 Preparing to build your nation
 And I feel your strength,
 Your need for my presence,
 Your perceptive protection. There's a certain way you
 make me feel,
 Black Man.
 Like,
 your woman.*

— “The Way You Make Me Feel,” a poem found in
 From the Windows of My Mind

”



Quick Facts

- * Born in 1942
- * African-American poet, writer, filmmaker, and playwright
- * Author of *From the Windows of My Mind*

This page was researched and submitted by: Takiyah Barnes, Riguian Berrios, and Shalonda Scroggins



Saundra Sharp

Biography

Saundra Sharp was born December 21, 1942, in Cleveland, Ohio to Garland Clarence and Faythe M. (McIntyre) Sharp. In 1964, she received a Bachelors of Science degree in media production from Bowling Green State University. In 1964 Sharp also acquired a certificate in television and radio production. Furthermore, Sharp received additional education from Los Angeles City College for television and film production studies from 1980-84/88. She currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

One dominant element that one will discover in all of Sharp's literary works is the connection she strives for with people of color throughout of her poems. She is dedicated to promoting a strong image of all black people. For example, in Sharp's poetry collection *From the Windows of My Mind*, one is certain to find that she has a way of becoming one with the reader by using what seems to be personal experiences that she has dealt with throughout her life, especially in dealing with black men. The emotions that Sharp expresses in this book are quite daring, sassy, and unyielding in her attempt to elevate the power of the black woman. Much of the efforts of her poems are about putting the reader in a different mind set in regards to black people.

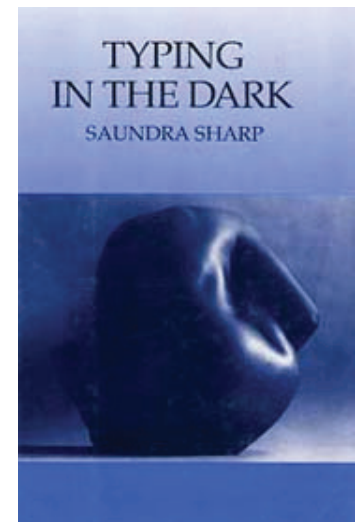
In her poem entitled, "Black Persuasion," Sharp writes, "Put that white girl back where you got her! 'Cause Iiii got the power to make you the 8th wonder! Come get some of the magic B. P. / Positive B.P. / Strong B.P. / womanly, / Powerful, / soft, soft Black Persuasion" (23). In Sharp's poem "Black Persuasion," she makes it perfectly clear where she stands on interracial dating. However, "Black Persuasion" is not her only poem that focuses upon that issue, for there are many facets to how she approaches the subject of the relationship between a black man and woman. Many of Sharp's poems reflect the strength and power that she sees in black women who are often put on the back burner by black men. In the poem, "The Way You Make Me Feel," she presents an tender side to loving a black man. She acknowledges the strong connection and commitment that she has to being with a black man. Furthermore, she expresses the image and union that she shares with other black women in regards to the way most of them feel about the "Ebony" man. In essence, one can truly feel the soulful spirit that Sharp uniquely captures in every word that she writes.



Saundra Sharp

Biography continued

Through her poetry, Sharp forces her audience to take notice of what is happening in their environments, for her objective is to encourage people to make a positive effort to change what they see as negativity in their community. For instance, in Sharp's poetry collection *In the Midst of Change*, her focus is not only upon dealing with relationships, but she also deals with controversial issues that were taking place, particularly during the seventies. A quote that supports the ideology of Sharp's controversial style comes from "Niggers and Time," Sharp says, "the revolution isn't coming, it has already begun. But niggers don't have time to revolt -- we're too busy. Niggers is some of the busiest people in the universe. Niggers is busy -- waiting. Waiting for Rap to be found waiting for Angela to be free waiting for the Panthers to get it together waiting for the Klan to fade away waiting for a new Malcolm to be born . . ." (7). The primary essence of Sharp's poems is to maintain a realistic connection with anyone who willing to lose control for a moment or so, thus allowing her to take one on a magical voyage of stirred emotions and rhythm that make sure to make an eternal impression upon the spirit of the reader. One will find that Sharp's poems are vibrant in their style and guaranteed to keep a reader on his or her feet.



In addition to being a contemporary African American writer/poet, Sharp is also an actress on stage and television, and a filmmaker. She also taught in New York Public Schools from 1956-67, and at Duchess Community College in 1970. In 1976, Sharp founded and served as the director of Lorraine Hansberry Playwrights Workshop. She has performed in a number of Off-Broadway plays, including *Poetry Now*, *Black Quartet*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Black Girl*, *To be Young*, *Gifted*, and *Black*, and *Five on the Black Hand Side*. *The Poet & Performers* and the *Theatre for the Forgotten*, *Al Fann Theatrical Ensemble* are among the several productions she has been appeared in. In addition, Sharp is one of the head coordinators of the Togetherness Productions, a theatrical company for young black creative artists. Sharp is also a member of the board of directors of Children's Art Carnival.



Saundra Sharp

Biography continued

Over the years Sharp has composed numerous plays. One of her more recent plays was staged in 1988. During that time she was the executive writer at Voices Inc. of Los Angeles, California for the play "The Sistuhs." In conjunction, she served as the director for Black Film/TV Technicians and Artists in 1980. Moreover, in 1989 she was noted as the publisher/editor for *The Black History Film List: Poets Pay Rent Too* and finally in 1978 she was the publisher for *Blood Lines* featuring Robert Earl Price.

Over the years Sharp has earned the right to be called a Renaissance Woman. She is not only a member of the prestige film organization, Reel Black Women; Atlanta African Film Society, she is the founder. Furthermore, she is a member of the Black American Cinema Society. Sharp certainly has her plate full of extraordinary achievements, which contributes to exemplifying the humanitarian persona that many other women of color possess.

In addition to Sharp's contributions to the film industry, she has been a determined advocate for educational enrichment for children and young adults. Her contributions extend from administering readings on television programs such as "Like It Is" and "Soul" to reading poems by other poets on record albums for Scholastic Magazines. Not surprisingly, she has also taken time out her hectic schedule to be an active literacy volunteer/tutor. In addition, she was also featured in a New York City Board of Education radio series entitled "The Black Experience." Furthermore, she appeared in "Our Street," a dramatic television series of the Public Broadcasting Services as Cathy Robinson, 1973.

Sharp has received numerous recognitions and honors. In 1992 she received the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, Best Script Award. In 1990-91, she was an honoree of the Southern Bell's Calendar of Atlanta Black History saluting women of achievement. During the Bush Presidency, Sharp served as a member of the President's Advisory Board for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. And lastly, the Atlanta League voted her as being one of Atlanta's 100 most Influential Women.



Saundra Sharp

Selected Bibliography

Works by the author

Black Women for Beginners: A Writers & Readers Documentary Comic Book (1993).

From the Windows of My Mind (1970).

In the Midst of Change (1972).

Soft Song (1978).

Typing in the Dark (1991).

Works about the author

Hawkins, Walter L., ed. *African American Biographies. Profiles of . . . Current Men and Women* (McFarland & Co., 1994).

Acker, Ally. *Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema, 1896 to the Present* (Continuum, 1991).