

1994

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Recommended Citation

Brodber, Erna, One Bubby Susan, *Kunapipi*, 16(1), 1994.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol16/iss1/69>

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Abstract

This man here Cundal. Frank. Don't know if you know him. Used to work down at Institute way back when. Now this man now, write a book and say in there say Miss Susan is something some Arawak person carve into a cave. Man even have a photo in this book, of a lady standing in the mouth of this cave and looking for truth like as if is somebody really carve her. But I am here to tell you that nothing don't go so. Them long long time when Cundal writing, where them get camera to go take picture of Miss Susan? You no see something not too quite right? Is just these white people like come to people country, look round two time, take photo, measure this and measure that, no ask nobody no question, no sit down and meditate, and baps - them have answer. Same way. So this man now write it into book that Miss Susan is a Arawak carving and people believe. What in book is gospel so everybody go believe. Well is not so. I am sitting down quiet to myself when my ears start to tingle and I get a strong smell of that flowers that we used to string as bead. The smell so strong, I nearly faint and then the lady start to talk and she tell me.

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Well Cundal right bout one thing. The place. Miss Susan really belongs to that place. To be exact, she feel she belong there. I already tell you she don't carve there. Now I telling you, she feel she belongs there. So the place is right. Dryland. Near to Woodside. In the parish of St. Mary. Now, you know Westmoreland? That is another parish. Now, look at the map of Jamaica. Right. Well you see how Westmoreland chack over the other side of the world from St. Mary. Well, forget that. Just them white people and them scribes again. Listen to this now. The world is not flat. Columbus done tell them that long time, so why them must draw the map flat out like a dry up goat skin with no goat, is something I can't see. Pay them no mind. Now, if you take that map and roll it a certain way, you will see that Westmoreland nearly to fit into St. Mary. Now listen again. If you go outside and take a long pole and push it down into the ground, you see that there is a whole world down there. Sea, earth, river. You can swim the sea and you can swim the river but you can't swim the earth. But the earth have many holes and you can walk upright. No need to swim, for those who never born with fin. You can walk under the earth from one side to the other. Anybody who know how the caves situate that

is. Now why I telling you this? For you to know that for those who really know the land, it is nothing to get from Westmoreland to St. Mary. Look again in hour book and see if the people who really know the land was not doing the same thing in St Mary that the Westmoreland people was doing. Communication knowledge. That's what I call it.

Is a simple matter when you look at it. But simple as it seems to me now and to you now, I didn't find it out for myself. Is Miss Sue tell me. Say it was nothing to swips from Westmoreland to St. Mary. She used to do it all the time. Is Westmoreland she rightly come from, but she land up in a cave in St Mary. Not as a carving. And I coming to tell you how now. Miss Sue say, time for her to get married and she never want to married. She did like fly through cave and talk to rat-bat and climb tree and talk to bird and so on. She never want plant no maize and beat up nothing into mortar. Matter of fact all this bammy that her people so proud bout never mean one thing to her. Too dry. She could find fat grass to eat raw any day so why plant cassava and grater it and dry out the milk and cook it? Never make no sense to her and she couldn't bother with it. And that is what a wife suppose to do with all her time. Excuse me. Not true. Not all her time, for them used to play bato. I don't know what that is. Favour like soft ball to me when she describe it. She say big man and woman used to play it too. And regular. So it really wasn't mortar pestle all day long. But what sense thump ball when she coulda swing from tree to tree and whistle to the birds and be by herself But them insist say everybody must married. So Miss Sue say, she say, run way for her rather than this wife thing. And she do it sudden. Just get a vaps and leave. Tell no one. Now you know that Miss Sue wouldn't really have nothing to pack. The picture on the money is real. Ain't nothing but a little grass around the hips and grass was easy to come by. So she split. In one second.

I don't say she disappear into nothing. That would make it easy and as she tell me, it was not easy the way she reach to Dryland, though it was really close in a way, to her place. What happen now is this. Everybody know everybody. The whole place divide up among chiefs. You leave from one spot to the other, is a new chief. And no fussing or fighting. If they see you at one place long, they say you want to join them and they start same time to find out if you married and if you not married to marry you off and get you into this bammy-making, bato-playing thing all over again for married is all them know bout. No sense in that. So Susan decide she ain't go touch earth except at night when nobody not around to see her. So is pure cave she into all day. Now when she staying in this Dryland cave, a strange thing happen. Hard as she listen she couldn't hear a thing. No mortar pestle, no 'yeow, yeow' and bato playing. She say she

say to herself 'Must be just a breed of backless dogs living in this place'. So little by little she start to come out to the cave front. She don't see nobody so she start to make it a habit. Both the staying in that cave and the sitting out at the front from time to time in the day.

Now Susan tell me how she used to sit down still and do this deep breathing, for with all the time she bound herself to spend in the cave, when she get air she did want to take in as much as she could take. Now I don't know if these Arawak Indians is any relative to the Indians in India but I swear to you, what Miss Susan show me that she was doing, was one of those yoga pose that make a person look like Buddha. Now what you would think if you come up to a cave and see a person who you never see yet in the small-small community that you live in, sitting down like a Buddha? Talk the truth. You'd think it was a duppy or a God. Exactly. Well somebody did come and somebody did think so. And this is the beginning of poor Miss Susan's sorrows.

Miss Sue did have it in her head that the quietness of the place was because those who did live there run way leave it and she say to herself 'This is mine. A gwine relax.' But it was not quite so. Man, woman and child - except for that lazy one, playing sick-gone off yes, but only for part day and on shift. Everybody wasn't there one time and when them come home, them so tired, them just drop asleep. Gone make clay pot and make them in abundance. Mr Christopher Columbus come with him red rags and all a-body and them breed of barkless dog now bartering pot for red rag. That's how come the place was so quiet and Miss Sue so alone. But the little boy come and see her and start coming back and seeing her in her Buddha pose and start to have nightmare and to blurt out that him see a god and to have people saying is sick him really sick.

Now you know them always say anybody who say them see God sick, and usually them leave you and your imagination to fight it out. Until they come to need a God. Like how you see AIDS now, it was syphilis that time that come with the tourist rags. People start dropping dead like flies. And the bad treatment was something else. Man used as target practice! It was bad enough that everybody was running off to Agualta Vale to mess around in clay and march down to close to Port Maria where the whitemen be and were in the bargain neglecting them ground and putting life out of kilter. Now married life was mashing up for the whitemen was putting their hands and all, where they should not be put and on top of that beating up the Arawak men and running their swords through them. It was time enough to need a God so when what lazy chap keep on saying that is a god him see, man and man start to make a trek, a few at first, to Miss Susan cave.

Now I have to stop to tell you that the lady's born name was not Susan. Many a time she tell me, but that Arawak name cannot stick in my head and since she don't really object and everybody know who I am talking about, let it remain 'Miss Susan'. Right? Right. So as I was telling you, people now start to come and peep at Miss Susan in her Buddha pose and to nod - 'Is God.' A funny thing was happening too, and to Miss Sue. When she take the pose, is like vibrations would come through her fingers from the air and she would know all sorts of things. When the first man come up and put a problem, Miss Sue find she just give him a answer straight out of her head and that she was right. She turn God now!

Miss Sue say she didn't mind the questions, for is not really she was answering, is just something or someone using her mouth, but what she did mind was the whole heap of thanksgiving. Up to now, she can't get rid of the smell of duppy chain out of her mind. So much garlands come make out of this thing and put round her neck. No more peace any more.

Can't even breathe. People cooking racoon and agote as sacrifice to her. People is something else though! It happens that she could really get into a deep meditation and she find the meditations getting longer and that those times she don't even feel like passing her business-there, but it would come by itself all the same. You know the people rush her push her down, take up this thing, say is gold from the gods, must be that the white man want! Push her away and scrape it up, say they going pay tribute with it! The thing get so ridiculous with no little bit of space for herself that Sue start to consider that it was just as cheap she did married and put up with the bammy-making and the bato. One thought lead to the other and the other to her usual rebellion and Miss Sue say to herself 'Not a blast' and decide that she not going to be no God with no privacy. She decide she gwine form dead and let them leave her.

How she going do this now? She stand up straight now, press herself against the cave wall and hold her breath yoga style. And people did believe that she was dead. And it vexed them. At the very time when the tourists eating out them life and they have no help but from this God, the God decide to strike! Is stones now. And they start to pelt her. You could say that they want to get her back to life, if is kind, you kind. But I know that is plain straightforward disappointment and vexation that make those stones come. Even when she drop, them still flinging. Even when she so weak, she drop off of the rock face altogether and long time drop into the sink hole, them still seeing her there and still stoning. Day after day. Is now them practice to try to see if, like the whiteman was doing with them, they could use her for target practice! Now them try to throw stones round what them think is the outline of her body! Go look at it yourself

and see if you can't see how the flying stones lick the rock face and make the sink that form the image?

So is so the carving come. No man don't sit down and carve it. And is no real likeness of Miss Sue. Anyway, it is not the habit of that breed of Indians to carve? They mostly draw. So is just anger make that image. I don't know why Miss Sue want me to tell this story but I tell it. Perhaps want to set the record straight. Perhaps want to say something about freedom but if is that, I can't see the point for I can't see that running from hole to hole and being a people's God is any kind of freedom. Perhaps she want to say you must be careful how you give or how you stop giving. I don't know. People still flinging stone at that cave. They even lick off one of the breast that those before them make in anger and them now call the image *One Bubby Susan*. I don't know if is something she want to say about this woman's lib business like how she is a woman. Perhaps she want to say to women 'Make them call you angel but don't make them make you into no heavenly being, for that is so-so burden-bearing and the day name day you say you tired, them get vex and lick you down kill you.' I don't know but here is the story and I know that the man Cundal shoulda-eh study him head well before him go call Miss Sue this flesh-and-blood woman a carving.