

MILK IN MY COFFEE

One man's attempt to demonstrate the diversity of love

by Anthony Davis

When people hear the word "miscegenation," they often confuse it with "misogyny," the hatred of women. "Miscegenation," a dastardly term used throughout the United States for hundreds of years, as defined by Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, means "a mixing of races; amalgamation, as by intermarriage of black and white."

The word rarely is applied to gay couples, but it happens: black with Irish, white with Asian, Hispanic with Muslim, etc. This, too, is a mixing of races, cultures and taboos.

Gay Men Mixing in the Kettle of Love is a book project under development by Larry Cross. His aim is to celebrate the diversity of love, cultures and life—men coming together through the attraction of their souls and not their skin tone. Cross, a white man who had a long-term relationship with a black man, is clear to explain that miscegenation covers more than the stereotypical black/white scenario, as most people assume.

"Miscegenation goes far beyond black and white," he says. "My project is not black and white. That would be easy to do; I could do that here in Portland. I want to do the universality of love as I perceive it—people getting together ideally because they love each other."

Cross is a perfect example of that ideal. His journey began in Clarion, Iowa, a far cry from a land rich in artistic and racial diversity.

His father was a vocal teacher, which exposed him to a variety of music, including gospel, which he immediately fell in love with. "Spirituals were always a part of my life," he proclaims.

After high school Cross attended University of Iowa. He then pursued a master's degree in library science at University of Oregon and ended up in the Bay Area, where he lived for 30 years, 16 with his now-deceased partner, Kerrigan Black.

With his love for African culture, art and men, it's pretty easy from the outside to assume he is just another "dinge queen" (white men who are into black men exclusively, only for sex and control), and the question has to be asked: Just why was he attracted to men of color?

"Well, my tastes have always been quite Catholic," Cross states. "I started with an Englishman, an Irishman, a Filipino, and about 1976, for whatever reason, the gods sent me to black men. There are those who are attracted to black men because they view them as objects. They cannot have them any more intelligent than themselves. All the black men I've been associated with have been far more intellectual than me."

SUGGESTED READING

- *Sex and Race (Volumes I, II, III)* by J.A. Rogers
- *Interracial Intimacies* by Randall Kennedy
- *Last Night on Earth* by Bill T. Jones and Peggy Gillespie



Larry Cross is developing a book about interracial relationships among gay men; inset, Kerrigan Black

Cross' own process of self-discovery and spiritual development has made him more aware of the challenges of living and loving for men of color.

"My partner and I were black and white," he says. "Somewhere rooted in all this it's important to me because it's such a racist society. And I'm trying to figure out my role in that. I don't think you can live in this country without having some tinge of racism. It's very difficult, and I don't like it. But I do believe we are all God's children. Society would be so much better if we acted upon what I learned in Sunday school and fourth grade: God is love, do unto others as others do unto you, love thy neighbor as thyself."

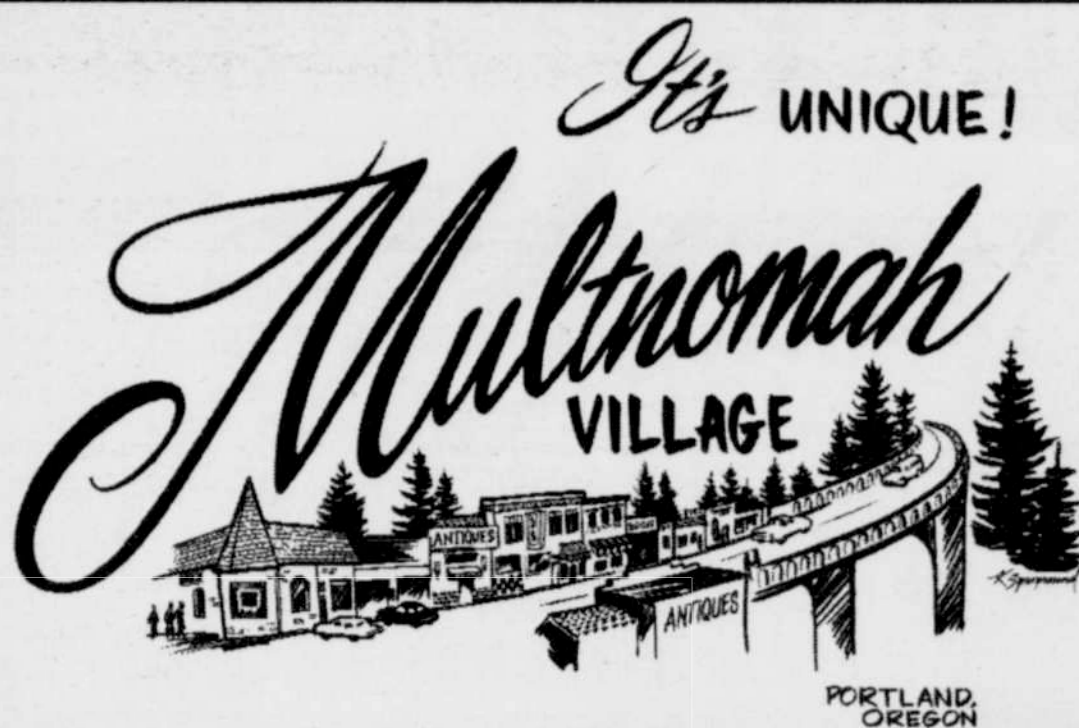
This is part of the main objective of the project: to bear witness to the quantity and quality of mixed gay male couples and to promote universal love. He hopes to have the book finished in about a year.

Cross also owns Heebie Jeebie Music, which produces educational audiovisual material about African American history and music. Recently while suffering from AIDS, he didn't believe he would be around much longer to complete his life's work.

"This last year when I thought I was going to die and I didn't, I thought what is my purpose in life now? What am I suppose to be doing?" he questions. "I think my real purpose is to help encourage young people to read and hopefully improve the world in some way—make people more understanding of one another." □

LARRY CROSS is looking for biracial couples to submit their pictures and stories for his project. For more information call 503-232-5623 or e-mail cross@heebiejeebiemusic.com.

ANTHONY DAVIS is a Portland free-lance writer.



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