

CHOCOLATE, from page 10

“make chocolate” verses “export cacao.” It’s a vision of shared wealth for the good of both chocolate makers and buyers.

In regards to the injustices of cacao farming Paul said, “the easiest way to be sure is ask one simple question. ‘Where is the cacao from?’ Some countries like Costa Rica have very good quality cacao but are also very strong on human rights. Any human trafficking or child labor is strongly punished and the laws are strictly enforced. Other places like the Ivory Coast do little to dissuade plantation owners from seeking cheap and often very young labor.”

As we purchase chocolate and cacao containing products, wherever we live, it is crucial to learn about how the cacao was farmed and what processes took place in its production.

“Certifications like fair trade are a bare minimum and mean nothing about the quality of chocolate,” Paul said. “You will be happier and healthier if you can find a chocolate you love to eat made by people who are sharing the wealth in their farming communities.”

After tasting chocolate from local cacao suppliers, we walked down a steep set of stairs to the roasting facility. Paul introduced us to the newest chocolate master in-training, whose nickname was Coco; he assisted Paul in demonstrating the roasting and winnowing process, while handing out samples of the beans. Paul continues his work while passing on his craft, educating both tourists and members of the local community about cacao and the injustices within the industry.

As the sky darkened and we made the jungle trek back to the shop, I concluded that Caribbeans is one, of what I hope will become a long line of chocolate growers and producers dedicated to seeing justice reign in the next generation.

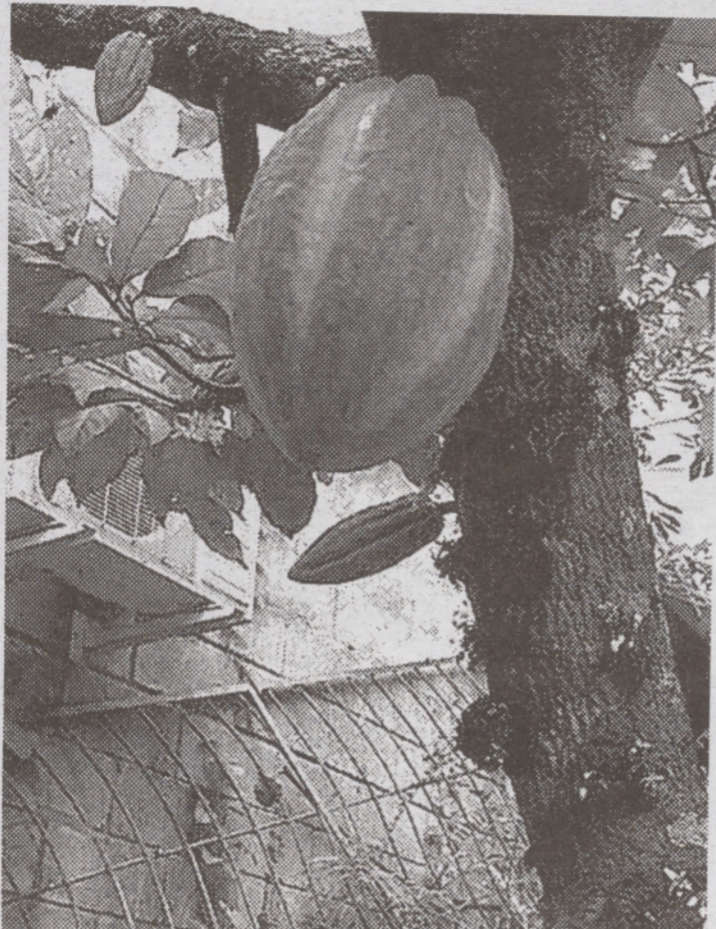


PHOTO BY RIAH KNAPP

A cacao plant on the Caribbeans plantation in Puerto Viejo.

Down to Earth

by Aileen McPherson

Time lost, brain full of cobwebs, memories
 Like ghosts haunt me as I make toast
 Coffee please make the aches
 Ease grogginess due to medications
 Treating pains, out the window I do
 Look, city streets cold grey
 Buildings, steep steel crushing concrete
 Blocks landscapes, sky above cries
 Trying to drown, a dream within everything
 Around, harsh reality not to scream, while
 Others around, working through
 Writing life down.’

Echos

by Daniel Cox

I am the breeze in the night,
 The deep pools of azure are
 Where I reside. I hear the
 Echos of time, I am now
 Silent as a grave
 As I listen to that which
 Is whispered through walls
 The secrets they tell me
 As I remain silent.

It Will Come

by Samuel Kusaj

Whenever I want I know
 I must trust and surrender my will
 And have faith it will come.
 Expectations spoil the gift.
 The surprise of the present that gives me a lift.
 My God how I wonder what might happen next.
 When I fall from God’s grace I’m amazed in the way it corrects.
 The moment I see it all come together,
 The wanting leaves me but not forever.
 If it wasn’t for the rain I wouldn’t appreciate the sun.
 When the storm comes I know I must run.
 The truth is I only have to walk,
 But sometimes it’s fun to run to avoid all the talk.
 Those negative words might just bring me down.
 I hope that you laugh as I act like a clown.
 When I’m wanting I’m waiting and soon will start hating.
 So I must find a way to enjoy this new day!

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