



red clay legacy

| p o e m s | BY RHONDA WELSH • AVAILABLE JULY 7

Media Contact:

R. Yvette Welsh, cell: (313) 247-7713
email: crimsonkairos@rhondawelsh.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CrimsonKairos publishes first title, *Red Clay Legacy***

DETROIT, June 19 – During the Great Migration, people came from the south in search of opportunity. These children of clay often found that the north yielded broken families and mean streets. In her debut poetry collection, *Red Clay Legacy*, author Rhonda Welsh writes about being a descendent of Georgia migrants who live and love in the north – specifically Detroit. The book will be released on Wed., July 7 by newly created press, CrimsonKairos.

In the first section, Welsh's poems explore family relationships, loneliness and the pain of coming from a broken home in pieces like "Don't Touch the Merry-go-Round" and "Ebbs." The second section explores her fundamental spiritual beliefs and the ensuing conflict in pieces like "Struggling" and "Unfailing Love." "Marriage Poem #27" explores the joys of marriage in the third section while pieces like "Another Day" delve into matrimonial disappointment. Section four ties it all together. In it she explores topics like the meaning of blackness in "Pinto Beans and Cous Cous" and the excitement of self-acceptance in "Embraceable Me."

"Red Clay Legacy is actually a memoir. Although the genre is poetry, this is my life story. I am excited by the opportunity to share it," says Welsh. "Some really great artists reviewed the book and encouraged me along the way. It meant a lot to me have the work so readily accepted by other artists."

With a review by legendary poet Nikki Giovanni and a Foreword by internationally renowned poet Jessica Care Moore, *Red Clay Legacy* has been heartily welcomed into the literary canon. This collection is sure to delight and inspire readers as they learn more about Welsh's life. Her journey is sure to help others understand a little bit more about their own journeys.

###

Welsh's poetry has been compared to work by Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni and Lisa McClendon. The only poet featured during the Detroit Institute of Arts Re-Opening, she has performed at the Detroit Opera House, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and several other venues. Red Clay Legacy is her first book. Scheduled for release on July 7, the book is currently available at www.rhondawelsh.com for pre-order. For more information on Rhonda Welsh and her poetry check out the following websites: www.rhondawelsh.com, www.myspace.com/rhondawelsh and <http://cdbaby.com/cd/rhondawelsh>

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT RED CLAY LEGACY

“Rhonda Welsh offers us a poetic view of the strength and beauty of the people of Red Clay – true Earth – the beginning. Whether a love poem or a question of giving, this poet steps up to the plate, hitting a home run! We welcome this voice to the poetic discourse.”

-- **Nikki Giovanni**, poet

“Welsh tackles hard memories and names herself survivor. Like many women poets before her, Nikki Giovanni, Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, Sonia Sanchez, Welsh exposes the naked beauty of being born girl.”

-- excerpt from Foreword, **jessica Care moore**, poet and publisher, Black Moore Press

“I urge you to read these poems of love -- of where we seek it, where we miss it, and where we finally find it. Welsh’s *Red Clay Legacy* allows us entry into not just the sacred spaces of a city girl’s dreams but deep into the chambers of her red beating heart.”

-- **Stacy Parker Aab**, author of *Government Girl: Young and Female in the White House*

“Rhonda Welsh is one of Detroit’s truest and finest voices in poetry and performance poetry today. Her work is dimensional and poetically beautiful while being engaging and attractive to a diverse audience of readers and listeners. Ms. Welsh’s work is alive with passion, faith and the musicality of everydayness. This is a poet for the people. Inside these poems, the reader will find new and refreshing ways to look at the things of our lives. Dig in! Enjoy!!”

-- **M.L. Liebler**, author of *Wide Awake in Someone Else’s Dream* and Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award Winner

“Drawn from a life as raw, rich, and resilient as red clay can be, the deeply personal and refreshingly naked poems in *Red Clay Legacy* put you in touch with your own vulnerability and set you on a path toward freedom.”

-- **Minister Rhonda J. Smith**, “Musings of a (Recovering) Strong Black Woman’s Weblog”

“*Red Clay Legacy* brought me back to the core of what life is really about -- our evolution from childhood to adult. Welsh has given us the special gift of opening the book about her life and sharing it with the world...a courageous act.”

-- **Cherrie Woods**, aka Cherrie Amour, spoken songs artist

FRONT COVER – RED CLAY LEGACY

“Whether a love poem or a question of giving, this poet steps up to the plate, hitting a home run!” – Nikki Giovanni, poet



*red
clay
legacy*

| poems |

R H O N D A W E L S H

foreword by jessica care moore

BACK COVER – RED CLAY LEGACY

“I urge you to read these poems of love – of where we seek it, where we miss it, and where we finally find it. Welsh’s *Red Clay Legacy* allows us entry into not just the sacred spaces of a city girl’s dreams but deep into the chambers of her red beating heart.” – Stacy Parker Aab, author of *Government Girl: Young and Female in the White House*



During the Great Migration, people came from the south in search of opportunity. These children of red clay often found that the north yielded broken families and mean streets. Their offspring were left to find belonging and a sense of place as best they could. Rhonda Welsh is one of those descendants. *Red Clay Legacy* is an intimate look at her life. Readers will travel with her through childhood, into the spiritual realm, within the ups and downs of marriage and finally into self-acceptance. These poems chronicle her journey.

“Ms. Welsh’s work is alive with passion, faith, and the musicality of everydayness. This is a poet for the people. Inside these poems, the reader will find new and refreshing ways to look at the things of our lives. Dig in! Enjoy!!!”
– M.L. Liebler, author of *Wide Awake in Someone Else’s Dream* and Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award Winner

VISIT WWW.RHONDAWELSH.COM
FOR MORE INFORMATION.

U.S. \$12.95

Can. \$15.00

 **CRIMSONKAIROS**
A CRIMSONKAIROS BOOK

POETRY/INSPIRATIONAL



SELECTED POEMS FROM RED CLAY LEGACY

Do Not Touch the Merry-Go-Round

*“You cannot ride the Flying Chairs.”
“Stay away from the Tilt-a-Wheel.”
“Do not touch the Merry-Go-Round.”*

We performed scenes from their failed marriage
like inadvertent weekend thespians.

Daddy bathed our outings in irrational fears.
Through frustrated tears I met his ritual with sighs.

I learned to roll my eyes like mama
when he said something foolish.

This was often...

He wielded humiliation like a hammer
especially at the Michigan State Fair.

I'd cry when he dragged me to the House of Horrors.
The more I yelled, the louder he'd laugh.
We never went in. He just liked to hear me scream.

I was so much like her.
Except he could control me.

Ten years. Ten fairs.
I never did ride the Merry-Go-Round.

© Rhonda Welsh 2010, from the book, *Red Clay Legacy*

Another Day

Oozes like an open sore.
This flesh wound refuses to heal.
Pain reverberates off the walls.
So many reasons to call it off.

Should we put us out of our misery?

But baby then you look at me.
And I fight for us one more day.

© Rhonda Welsh 2010, from the book, *Red Clay Legacy*

Summer of Coltrane

I dreamt I was married
to Gordon Parks.

It was the summer of Coltrane.
Warm rain fell every afternoon
right around four.

I was more enthralled with
myself than I was with him.

Gordon resented me for it.

Richard Roundtree
was a frequent visitor.
Gordon always wanted to
photograph me in big Parisian hats.
As if we were strolling
down the Champs D'Elysee.

This was strange
because we lived in Black Bottom
before the Davison
sliced the races in half.

Gordon advocated
diversity and freedom
and artistic expression.

But he gloried in keeping
me bound.

I was wrapped round
his beautiful finger.

And I liked it.

During the summer
of Coltrane and warm rain,
I dreamt I was married
to Gordon Parks.

BIO – RHONDA WELSH

*I love like I love.
I hate like I hate.
It makes no difference what you think of me,
for my freedom trails behind me.*

Poet, Rhonda Welsh, penned those words at eight years old in Mrs. Pearson's third grade class at Monica Primary School. Thus officially began her love affair with words.

Born in metro Detroit, she is the youngest of four daughters. Her parents Forrest Murray and Rebie Mae Owens (nee Jordan) are both from Warrenton, Georgia. Although Rhonda is a city girl through and through, she acknowledges the profound impact her parents' southern roots have had upon her.

Her biggest artistic influences are Gil Scott Heron, Nikki Giovanni, Phoebe Snow, and Langston Hughes. Rhonda's own work fuses poetry and music. Every piece is meant to be read out loud and every piece has a rhythm. Whether it's life, love, lust, self-realization, loss, or faith, few topics are off-limits.

Her work has been performed at museums, libraries, churches, halls, restaurants, parks, bars, festivals, living rooms, kitchens and a number of other venues. Rhonda is also an arts educator and she has taught with the award-winning InsideOut Literary Arts Project and the renowned Wayne State University Math Corps Program (in the Creative Writing program). She graduated from Cass Technical High School's Performing Arts program and she holds a BA in English and an MA in Public Relations and Communications from Wayne State University. She resides in metro Detroit, Michigan.

HEAD SHOT – RHONDA WELSH



Photo Credit: Karlest Ford

ALTERNATE HEAD SHOT – RHONDA WELSH



Photo Credit: Rogers William Foster

RHONDA WELSH PERFORMING POETRY



Photo Credit: Thomas J. Richardson

ALTERNATE SHOT – RHONDA WELSH PERFORMING POETRY



Photo Credit: Bobby Smith