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# Poet & Activist, Terri Jewell, Dies

BY LEE GASAWAY

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Terri Lynn Jewell, radical Black lesbian activist, poet, speaker and author, died November 26, 1995. Ms. Jewell, 41, lived in Lansing.

Ms. Jewell was born on October 4, 1954 in Louisville, Kentucky. She was a graduate of Montclair State College in New Jersey. She was the editor of *The Black Woman's Gumbo-Ya Ya*, which received the New York City Library Young Persons Reading Award in 1994. She was a prolific writer, with a bibliog-

raphy that extends over 32 pages. Her poetry, prose and essays have appeared in anthologies and periodicals nationally and internationally, including *The Black Scholar*, *Women of Power*, *The African-American Review*, *Sinister Wisdom*, and *Calyx*.

A memorial service was held in East Lansing December 9, 1995 at the Unitarian Universalist Church. In her eulogy to Ms. Jewell, Annie Courtney read, "To be a poet one must be wide open to see and feel the world in all its power, the beauty and the joy, the terror and the danger of it all. Terri was open, she saw, she felt and she suffered it. To be called to be a poet is a blessing and a curse. She never turned away from that call."

Many around the state remember Ms. Jewell for read-

ings of her work, as well as her activism for equal rights for queers and blacks. She had been working under a grant from the Arts Foundation of Michigan on new poetry about black gay author James Baldwin, which colleagues felt would be her best work yet. "She was on the way up," said Lev Raphael, a professor at Michigan State Univ., colleague and friend of Ms. Jewell.

Ms. Jewell received the 1994 Prism Award in recognition of her work in the Lansing gay and lesbian community. Crossing Press has announced plans to posthumously publish two books of her work in 1996.

She is survived by her parents, Midge and Miller Jewell, of Louisville, Kentucky; her brother, Marcus Tandy; her partner, friends and admirers.

The family requests that memorials be sent to The Terri Jewell Scholarship Fund, Box 1721, Lansing, MI 48826.