

## Ishion Hutchinson: Post-Visit

By: Sara Noreña

The second week of the Winter With the Writers Festival was an overall success. On Tuesday, Rollins College welcomed its second visiting author, Ishion Hutchinson, with great delight. Interns and guests were bustling with joy at the arrival of the world-famous Jamaican poet, whose readings moved the masses with their vast imagery of landscapes, seascapes, family life, and community.

Hutchinson arrived to Orlando on Tuesday afternoon and then made his debut at the college during an important reception the following day. He joined a number of guests, interns, and staff at the Galloway Room for the celebration and recognition of the Book a Year Program. This program helps the college's library acquire a significant amount of books each year and it was of great value to have such an important poet helping Rollins celebrate this event. The reception featured an important talk by Professor Richard Foglesong, who discussed the dangers of having a large corporation in a small city, using the example of the Disney World and Orlando relationship. This provided for a beautiful coming together of multiple departments in the college.

On the next day of Ishion's visit, he and some of the interns went to a lunch reception. Things took an unfortunate turn when the author began to feel ill with a toothache and was therefore unable to attend the master class he was scheduled to give. Carol Frost stepped in and taught the master class in his place. During this class, six student's poems were read aloud and workshopped by both the class and the professor. Students received a significant amount of feedback from a range of people and each author received a personalized list of things they were doing right as well as things they could improve upon.

After the master class, the poet rejoined the college. He confirmed that he was feeling much better. Guests and interns filed into Bush Auditorium in order to hear the poet read some excerpts from his work. English majors, members from the Caribbean Student Association, English professors, interns, book club members, and Hutchinson fans were all peppered across the seats. He read a number of poems from his book *House of Lords and Commons*. The reading was both moving and emotional as his passionate tone beamed across the auditorium. The crowd went on a rollercoaster of emotions as he read; sometimes laughing, sometimes feeling nostalgic, sometimes nodding their heads in agreement at the political commentary in the poems.

Once the reading was over, there was a Question and Answer session with the author, moderated by Carol Frost. The poet answered a number of questions. Some were serious, others were funny and they all had the crowd engaged. Hutchinson discussed what inspired him, who he was influenced by, how he dealt with language dynamics as a bilingual poet, what the differences were between his first and second book, and what he was currently working on. He joked with the crowd during this final question by saying: "I am working on.... a poem."

Following the reading, fans and students gathered around Hutchinson for a book signing. This portion of the event was both exciting and intimate as aspiring poets and eager readers asked him questions and commented on his work.

Overall, despite a few hiccups here and there, the Hutchinson visit was memorable and enriching in a number of areas. It was successful and pleasing to have such an incredible writer on campus. Certainly an experience that will not be forgotten.