An Interview with Vladimir Lucien:

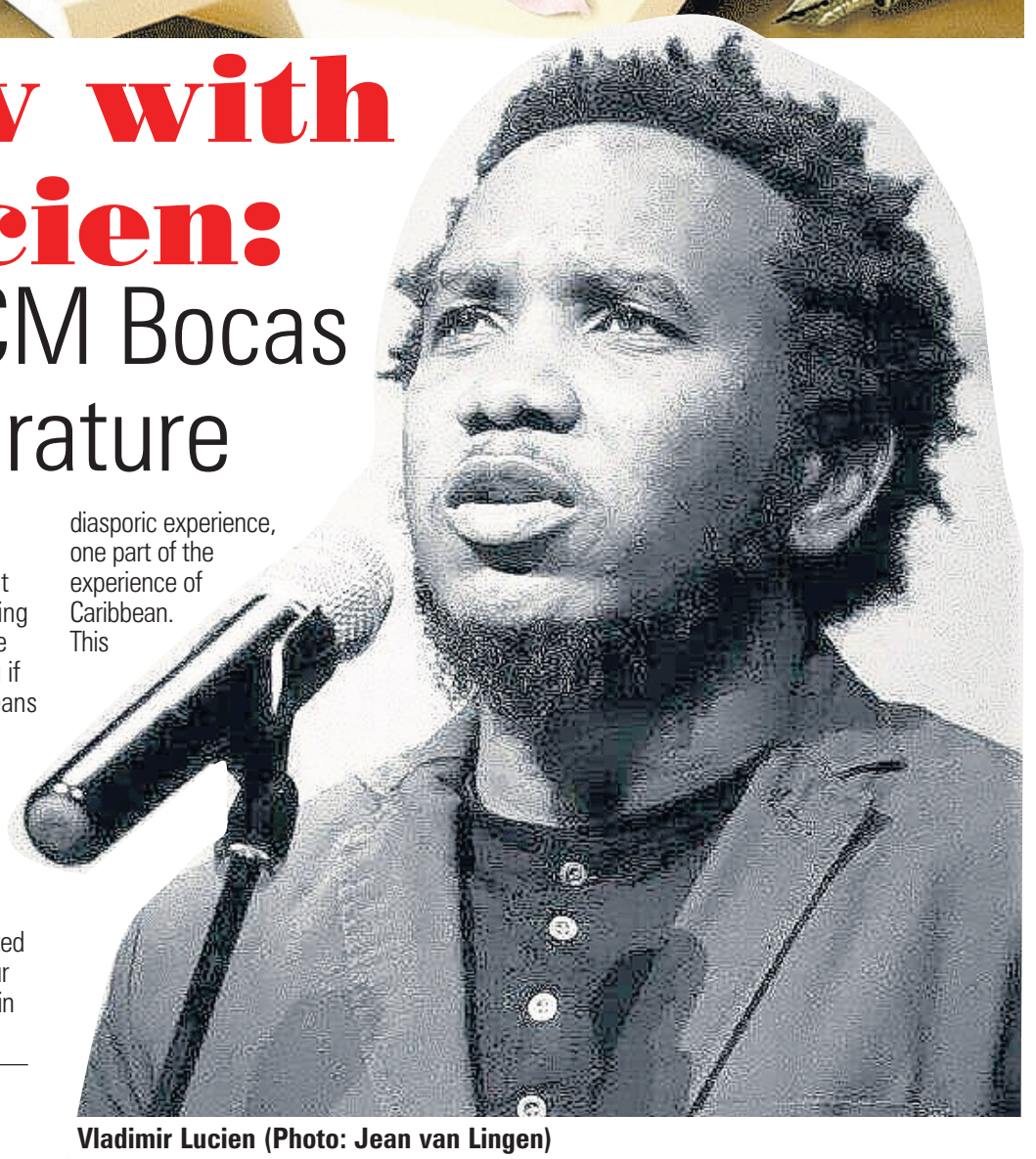
Winner of the 2015 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature

Last Saturday, May 2, Vladimir Lucien was awarded the prestigious 2015 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, during the Bocas Lit Fest in Trinidad, for his début collection of poetry, *Sounding Ground*, published by Peepal Tree Press (Leeds) in 2014. The collection was part of a shortlist that included Marlon James's *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, which had earlier won the fiction category, and *Dying to Better Themselves* by Olive Senior, the winner of the non-fiction category.

Bookends reviewer Professor Stephanie McKenzie interviewed Lucien about the book and his thoughts on the win.

Stephanie McKenzie (SM): Congratulations, Vladimir, on your début book of poetry, Sounding Ground, winning this year's prestigious OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. I'm wondering if you could say what the Bocas Prize means to you and what you feel it could, and might do, for your writing.

Vladimir Lucien (VL): Winning the Bocas prize means the world to me. I wanted to write a book in direct conversation with the Caribbean in the Caribbean. What I mean by that is I wanted to look at our problems or struggles or our beauty — our mundane world from within the physical Caribbean, not so much the Caribbean in relation to the metropole or — What I mean is that a Caribbean person writing, let us say, in the US, is having a diasporic experience, one part of the experience of Caribbean. This



Vladimir Lucien (Photo: Jean van Lingen)