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TOWARD THE PRESERVATION OF A HERITAGE
(Dedication of the Howard University Museum)

Cold grips the day;
relentless wind slaps walls
paying tribute to the past.
Here accumulated bit by bit,
a heritage escapes the sweep
of wind and rain, of ice, of desert sand.

Here the abstract is trapped
in tiny shard, starlight of other ages.
The rites and deeds of early men
are anchored on the tip of pens
to live on the yellowing page.
Brass and gold sculpture proof
in frozen form.
Portraits define features here and there;
one name, then another echoes
from the long hill climb.

Segment by segment the past resurfaces
to join the truth of history
moving toward our future,
whole and new in our thinking.

May Miller
8/12/79