Poems

Editorial Staff

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I Am Black
I was born Black
raised Black
schooled Black
ruled Black

Squeeze me I'm Black
Kill me I'm Black
Love me I'm Black
Turn me I'm Black

I am Black everywhere
in Africa
in Paris
in London
in Australia
in Cuba
in Vietnam
And I am Black in Chicago
I Am Universally Black.

Betty Taylor Ashe
New Carrollton, Md.

Ain't That A Shame?
When you're walking through the street
All alone at night
And there's trash about your feet
And on a corner there's a fight—
Ain't that a shame?

When you look out the window
To get some fresh air
And you start to cough
From pollution everywhere—
Ain't that a shame?

Did you ever want to go to the store
Just to get a loaf of bread
But were too afraid to open the door
For fear of being found dead—
Ain't that a shame?

Jacquelyn Conner
Washington, D. C.

Pilgrimage
Wounded hearts
still carry the banner.
Rhodesia—Rhode Island,
New York—London,
South Africa to South Carolina.
Oh! What an inquisitive crowd!
Contrary to our rally,
Hell-bent that we don't get our honor.
The epitome of naturalness
contrasted with the foul,
What ugliness tends to exist with us now.
The heinous establishment
reeks with feigned pity.
A rancid sympathy,
with exiguous aid,
We must deal with to survive.

Toni Sullivan
Danville, Ill.

I wept yesterday, let somebody else weep today
i wept yesterday when
we shared black nothingness
through the filth and stench
of the slums that are still there
through the lynching of the mobs
who tote guns now instead of rope
through the marching and
the chanting
and the singing
and the praying and the changing
that worked for a time
I'm all used up now
i want the peace of oblivion

After all . . .
i wept yesterday
when we needed weeping
let somebody else weep today

Edelin Coleman Fields
Hyattsville, Md.

You Think Ants Have No Souls
When I was an ant
I wanted to be the Eagle
Circling forests
as high up as the clouds
even above the rain.
I wanted to taste
air on my beak
instead of hard grit
on my million eyes
and antennae
I was so tired
of plodding like a robot on insignificant hills.
Up and down and up and down
Remote control
no control.
A mumified worker on a grain of sand
Accept.
for my aspire, accept.
for my hallucinations
I was dull like the rest
You think ants have no souls
But I do
Becoming a bird is not so far away.
I wish so hard—it will be.
Deep down I am destined
to master the air.
I will.

Tracy Connelly
Howard University