

1972

Last Affair: Bassie's Blues Song

Michael S. Harper

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harper, Michael S. "Last Affair: Bassie's Blues Song." *The Iowa Review* 3.3 (1972): 21-22. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1386>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

LAST AFFAIR: BESSIE'S BLUES SONG

Disarticulated
arm torn out,
large veins cross
her shoulder intact,
her tourniquet
her blood in all white big bands:

*"Can't you see what love
and romance has done to me?
I'm not the same as I used to be,
this is my last affair."*

Mailtruck or parked car
in the fast lane,
afloat at forty-three
on a Mississippi road,
200 pound muscle on her ham bone,
'nother nigger dead 'fore noon:

*"Can't you see what love
and romance has done to me?
I'm not the same as I used to be,
this is my last affair."*

Fifty dollar record
cut the vein in her neck,
fool about her money
toll her black trainwreck,
white press missed her fun'ral
in the same stacked deck:

*"Can't you see what love
and romance has done to me?
I'm not the same as I used to be,
this is my last affair."*

Loved a little blackbird
heard she could sing,
Martha in her vineyard
pestle in her spring,
Bessie had a bad mouth
made my chimes ring:

*“Can’t you see what love
and romance has done to me?
I’m not the same as I used to be,
this is my last affair.”*

Michael S. Harper
(copyright by author)

THE BURIED SWORD

at the place where two rivers meet I am alone
I am always by myself
I am like a captain dancing in the night sky
saying aye-aye to himself
I am like a mourning ship in the waters of dead horses
my blade is a mirror where no one stands
I open my eyes and I see a cavalry of ghost riders
looking for their ring fingers and feet
and the boots falling out of the stirrups at dawn
and the plumed hats of battle drifting away
I only led the dead
the brave that don’t sing
know not to pick me up again
I only want to sleep where there is no saluting
the moon is a bullet the night is a pistol
and death is a horse and silence the rider

1962