

1975

# Standing on the Corner

Philip Levine

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Standing on the Corner  
/ Philip Levine

until Tatum passed  
blind as the sea,  
heavy, tottering  
on the arm of the young  
bass player, and they  
both talking  
Jackie Robinson.  
It was cold, late,  
and the Flame Show Bar  
was crashing  
for the night, even  
Johnny Ray  
calling it quits.  
Tatum said, Can't  
believe how fast  
he is to first. Wait'll  
you see Mays  
the bass player said.  
Women in white furs  
spilled out of the bars  
and trickled toward  
the parking lot. Now  
it could rain, coming  
straight down. The man  
in the brown hat  
never turned his head up.  
The gutters swirled  
their heavy waters,  
the streets reflected  
the sky, which was  
nothing. Tatum  
stamped on toward  
the Bland Hotel, a wet  
newspaper stuck  
to his shoe, his vest  
drawn and darkening.  
I can't hardly wait, he said.