

1975

He Imagined the Gorgeous Pattern of the New Skin and Settled for America

Primus St. John

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Blown up? Explosives never destroy it.
It cannot be slung or thrown.
Primitive

but it can kill you.

July 4, 1974 / June Jordan
(Washington, D.C.)

At least it helps me to think about my son
a Leo/born to us
(Aries and Cancer) some
sixteen years ago
in St. Johns Hospital next to the Long Island
Railroad tracks
Atlantic Avenue/Brooklyn
New York

at dawn

which facts
do not really prepare you
(do they)

for him

angry
serious
and running through the darkness with his own

becoming light

He Imagined the Gorgeous Pattern of the
New Skin and Settled for America /
Primus St. John

The quiet which is my wife endures:
I have hurt nothing, unless we have touched.

It is the indicative mood, after desire
The Deerslayer

Now middle aged
Has become lonesome and white again

Rising up out of the continent
That is Chingachgook

Red skinned, red eyed morning light
The myth that has happened to the democratic.

That black man over there:
Slaughtered in the hills of my wife . .

Imagination,
Black and breathing.

I am slaughtered in his wife,
It has happened to meaning.

Fit to be Satan—now:
Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville's

I wear my dark skinned hat—
Irreconcilable

In the final phase. Satanic,
It seems to fit me right.

To walk away alone
Into the sunset of our bleeding children.

**For Paul Laurence Dunbar 1872-1972 /
Margaret Walker**

(Centennial Celebration, October 19, 20, 21, 1972)

A man whose life was like a candle's flame:
faint, flickering, and brightened with the poet's light.
He came to earth a butterfly of time