

1975

Providence, Rhode Island

Al Young

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Recommended Citation

Young, Al. "Providence, Rhode Island." *The Iowa Review* 6.2 (1975): 29-30. Web.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1850>

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we slip thru pirates alley
past the old cathedral
to see kid thomas mute his horn
with a brown paper bag.

Providence, Rhode Island / Al Young

It's spring again
the early part when
the wettest wind
gives you a licking
you'll never forget

You stand quivering
down by the Biltmore
whistling for taxis
as maxi-skirted women
flee the scene
you've just stepped into

The grayness of this
white water city feels
good to blood that wants
to explode on century's notice
shattering calendar meat
& appointments well kept

Colonial afternoons
had to be colder than
the hearts of witches
laid to rest beneath
these charming citypaved hills

Rushing for cover
you now understand the
cooled out literalness
of these old wooden homes

A skinny black man
(a brother you guess)

who commutes between
this stop & Harlem U.S.A.
tells you he's never been to
Brown or the School of Design
but he know for a fact that
it's mafia keep this town relaxed

"They got the highest houses
up in them hills but after them
come all your professors & pro-
fessionals/people with a
highclass license to steal"

You want to come back in
summer when the change takes
place but this brilliant chill
has tightened your head

New England is a poker game too

Mr. Booker T. / James W. Blake

Were you the Brer Rabbit
of African conjuring?
Did you take Stowe's
vision and turn it
into her husband's foe?
Did that scheme
divide our family
or was Du Bois just
the turn man
and Garvey a substitute?
Is it true you taught
Chilembwe how to build
an icon for freedom
out of mud?
Some said it was
because of the white blood.
Did you really wink
approval with Mendel's laws