

1975

Boston

George Buggs

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They jes lay there open
in her lap short stump
like fingas curved ova
the callused grey-white palms

his ass go when Time come

gir'—and she can't talk plain 'count
of her lip—gir' I whip
any bitch that got two
legs won't think on it twice

Make yo hand in a fis'

She ain't heard and her hands
is meaty, deep veined wid
red brown lines a little
lighter than her skin her
nails bite down past the quick.

Don't no man jes beat on
me but time I whip my
nigga ass don't care who
right who wrong that's the time
he stop bein my man

what he do you
nonya

(the long lip puffed and black)

how much he take
nonya

(I seed this in a dream)

Boston / George Buggs

Downtown, citizens design destruction.
Black Bostonians bend,
bear the burden of being far from home.
White Boston fears the future.

White Boston fears its own, fears love,
living, yet loves building fear
of black faces,
who live, in their former homes.
Who live where architectural beauty
has long since been detained in
the vacuous heritage of Boston's fame.

Beauty
has fallen away from this place.
Mortar once was spiritual.
Brick was flesh of constructed fortune
for O'Reillys and O'Rourkes.
Thought, communicated, was phone.
There were no wrong numbers one could call.
Infant dreams curled in sleep,
in children's sleep,
coursed in playtime thru their veins,
in vain, in vain.
Fathers and mothers loved each other.
Each would rise. Each would come and go
out the exits of the other's living.

Brogue
suited sidewalk supervisors
come to the sites of demolition holding
blueprints of constructed tears,
outlines of false concern.
Can recount the names of initial
occupants, addresses, designs of places
they now own.
Can sign receipts for their victims
who live, in abjection, away from thrones.
Can go to their suburbs of cash and crowns.
Can, if they want, be alone
and left alone to grand glittering balls
or restricted quiet zones.

In Roxbury this scene:
They are there. Can go nowhere.
Good black women.
Good black men bearing beauty

in baskets of dusky denim, cotton shirts,
monotonous underwear.
Too-mature children—little girls, little boys
know dark joys and little else
or little more—
play at playing and do not play,
grow hard, go mean.
Now it seems the good have gone
or stay, invisible, indoors
or watch from waiting windows
for the rumbling wrecker's crane.
Come for the final shattering,
the final destruction of their names,
the destruction of dangerous halls
where anger plays its solemn games.

The craned hate hies to destroy,
strives to dismember, fragmentize,
dreams of dark denizens.
Rises, an ungainly Brontosaurus,
anachronistic, yet there
to destroy illusions and dreams
it cannot discern nor claim.

**Boston, 5:00 a.m.—11/74 /
Etheridge Knight**

Awake! For Mornings
Are the same as Nights.
The troops goosestep
Through the sleeping streets.

The Missionaries / Samuel Allen

Look, the hotel!
Was it arson?

Excitedly, my partner said
We should hurry on to the next mission.