1975

On a New York Street Corner: Canvas #14

Quincy Troupe

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Even in the dim blue light of creation’s flame
it shines.
He’s the silent songwriter of our Apocalypse.
He keeps a Big John de Conqueror root
in his hip pocket & a lodestone
hidden neatly away in his vest
right beneath an old gold watch
on a tarnished silver chain
this powerful composer of the syncopated ebony tune.

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sounds of four-four time
being played by a blind black
man jingling coins jingling
silver blood coins
in a battered tin cup on a corner
in mid-town manhattan a blood
black blue black blind man
nailed too a wooden white cane
noddin off behind dark glasses
a black kansas city man
a new york street blind black man
with a battered tin cup
playing four-four time
playing kansas city bird
prez count four-four time
head nodding diggin the music
of nineteen hundred
& ice cold thirty-four
a blood black man
a blue black blind black
man on a new york street
corner bebopin in time
bebopin on down grinnin
a gold tooth crown
& a small head noddin
crowd gathered diggin
on his music

Richmond Barthé: *Meeting in Lyon / Melvin Dixon*

Lyon is a city of two rivers and Roman aqueducts
two thousand years old. I come by snake-roads
through the faces of three mountains; following
butterflies and the tracks of old bones.

I find you in the hour of molding and the time
of two rivers running here. Old fingers press
into clay; the old ones touch the young
and help them believe.

I look into eyes that have seen through stone,
I listen to lips that gave language to the clay,
I touch the spidered hands that bent bronze into blues.

_Africa Awakening, Meditation, Shoe Shine Boy._
Your blood hardens into stone. “Study nature,”
you tell me in riverwords that pulse two veins in Lyon
and leave Roman remains.

It is why your young-old eyes are _thin-skinned_
and _burning_. Mississippi, New York, Jamaica, Italy,
Sweden and more fire. Bronze burning in black fingers
shed the thin skin, shed the twisted muscles, shed
teeth and tears, leave the _inner music_ and the
mountain butterflies to show the way.

II
Two rivers swell in Lyon and clean the old dust.
_History is stone polished black,_
is _blood and burnt bronze._

Your blood hardens into stone poems. “_What color is art?_”
and “_What color is love?_” The questions and your _crisp_
eyes clean me, let me know the years you read _the muscles_