

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934-: [from Transbluesency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka, 1961-1995 (1995)] , Marsilio Publishers**

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- [Author Page](#)
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**Volume**

[Page ]

**Foreword**

**FOREWORD**

*by Paul Vangelisti*

[Page XI ]

**Preface**

This selection traces the almost forty-year career of a writer who, along with Ezra Pound, may be one of the most significant and least understood American poets of our century. *Transbluesency* assembles the lifework, from the 1950s to the present, of a truly innovative figure: shaping a body of poetry that is as well a body of knowledge, a passionate, often self-critical reflection on the culture and politics of his time.

As he moves from so-called "Beat" to Nationalist to Third World Socialist, Baraka remains difficult to approach, particularly for a literary establishment positioned somewhere between Anglo-American academicism and the Entertainment industry. As the anthologist M.L. Rosenthal wrote, "No American poet since Pound has come closer to making poetry and politics reciprocal forms of action." This came a decade after Rosenthal, in *The New Poets: American and British Poetry Since World War II*, had praised the early, ostensibly "Beat" poet as possessing "a natural gift for quick, vivid imagery and spontaneous humor." For a critic like Rosenthal, grounded in the Cold War university aestheticism of the fifties, an apolitical bohemianism like the Beats, keeping rebellion and art distinct from politics, would not necessarily be a threat. And, in the long run, such bohemianism would prove not unfriendly, perhaps even stimulating to the histories of established institutions. Instead, a politicized avant-garde like Baraka's, seeking an alternative form of aesthetic and social behavior, was and *is* clearly another matter.

[Page XII ]

What distinguishes Baraka from the start is a kind of lyrical realism that sounds in counterpoint to his Beat contemporaries, steeped as they were in the egocentric idealism of nineteenth-century Anglo-American literature. Like Jack Spicer, Frank O'Hara, Paul Blackburn or Gilbert Sorrentino, *around* but *not of* the Beat public relations machinery, Baraka acknowledged a clear debt to the Anglo-American modernism of Pound and W.C. Williams, while seeking to develop other more international measures throughout his career. It is, in essence, the experimental, materialist, and anti-romantic overtones of the historical avant-gardes, as they filter through Pound and Williams, that place Baraka's poetry in an international twentieth-century tradition, which is both American (i.e., African-American, of the "New World") and firmly outside Anglo-American culture.

In 1912, (the year F.T. Marinetti, flying six hundred and fifty feet above the chimneys of Milan, heard the propeller speak the death of the psychological self and the birth of a lyric obsession with the physical), Ezra Pound wrote that he was in search of a more precise, active speech, a "language to think in." Some fifty years later, after two world wars, and with imperial America clearly on the march, Baraka's first book, *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note*, underlines the urgency of a thoughtful, African-American poetic language. An early indication of this language's parameters is in "Hymn for Lanie Poo," fixing the historical ironies of the rebellious, colonial Rimbaud with the epigraph: " *Vous êtes des faux Nègres.* " The "Hymn" finds its pulse in a parodic reliquary of the avant-garde "Saint"---who, having run off to Paris at age sixteen, clamored, in a notorious letter to his high school literature teacher, about the primal, "universal poetry" of mind and soul. Baraka's

young minstrel/bard (" *schwartz bohemien* " as he refers to himself and friends) opens his mock ode to the primordial in a self-conscious slapstick, playing both within and without his subject:

[Page XIII ]

O,  
these wild trees  
will make charming wicker baskets,  
the young woman  
the young black woman  
the young black beautiful woman  
said.

These wild-assed trees  
will make charming  
wicker baskets.

(now, I'm putting words in her mouth ... tch).

In "Way Out West" (after Sonny Rollins's title composition from the 1957 Los Angeles LP), Baraka improvises upon and ultimately re-evaluates that other great Anglo-American figure, T.S. Eliot, and his monumental rhetorical powers. In the infinitude of empty Western space, the eyes of Prufrock's dream melody are made to open wide, to be shut with a certain finality at song's end:

No use for beauty  
collapsed, with moldy breath  
done in. Insidious weight  
of cankered dreams. Tiresias'  
weathered cock.

Walking into the sea, shells  
caught in the hair. Coarse  
waves tearing the tongue.

Closing the eyes. As  
simple an act. You float

Topography becomes even more extremely and self-consciously defined in the collage piece "Vice." Here Baraka introduces the theme of rage in exile, from a language and culture where the poem seems an incessant reminder of a distance still to be travelled, a music still to be formed:

[Page XIV ]

This is *not* rage. (I am not that beautiful!) Only immobile coughs & gestures towards somethings I don't understand. If I were lucky enough to still be an adolescent, I'd just attribute these weird singings in my intestine to sex, & slink off merrily to masturbate. Mosaic of disorder I own but cannot recognize. Mist in me.

In the sparse and intimate lyric of "Betancourt" (dated "30 July 1960 / Habana": the poet's pivotal visit to Cuba Libre), the exiled rage and distance is, for the moment, reversed. Baraka doesn't look out at the world from inside the poem's North American boundaries, but rather from "some / new greenness," surrounded by a braver language, where "flame / is the mind / ... on strange islands of warmth." He does in that exquisite instance gaze back, from outside, from a revolutionary island and distance, toward poem and country:

(I mean I think  
I know now  
what a poem  
is) A  
turning away ...  
from what  
it was  
had moved  
us ...  
A  
madness.

Back home in the U.S., at the end of *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note*, the exile is once again complete: "Notes for a Speech" beginning "African blues / does not know me. Their steps, in sands / of their own / land. A country / in black & white, newspapers / blown down pavements ...," and concluding with the reductive and terrible "democratic vista" of lower-case nationality:

They shy away. My own  
dead souls, my, so called  
people. Africa

[Page XV]

is a foreign place. You are  
as any other sad man here  
american.

Baraka's first book underscores how the scrutiny of poetic language compelled him to redefine the ideological stance of the poet. Some ten years later, after his Nationalist phase, this research will ultimately bring him to a kind of Internationalism, a Third World Socialist aesthetic of liberation. First and foremost, up through his most recent poems, there will remain a critical, often restless lyricism

that insists, to borrow a phrase from Baraka's *Blues People*, that the poem must "swing---from verb to noun."

Already in his second book, *The Dead Lecturer*, published in 1964 (the year *Dutchman* is produced and wins an Obie, and not long before Baraka moves from Greenwich Village to Harlem), there are several poems back-to-back at the beginning of the collection in which the lyric is turned on itself, or rather on the privileged figure of the poet ("Roi," as he signed himself until 1966). ¶ In the first, "Balboa, The Entertainer," the ironic title pushes a musical intensity, a clarity of diction and phrasing, that is quite disarming:

(The philosophers  
of need, of which  
I am lately  
one,  
will tell you. "The People,"  
(and not think themselves  
liable  
to the same  
trembling flesh). I say now, "The People,  
as some lesson repeated, now,  
the lights are off, to myself,  
as a lover, or at the cold wind.

[Page XVI]

The next poem, "A Contract. (For the Destruction and Rebuilding of Paterson," revisits the populist language of Williams's civic icon (also Baraka's not so idyllic home state) in order to demolish it from within. The poet finds it crucial to attack "Paterson's" imaginative and mythopoetic core, in rebuilding a secular, more democratic and demythologized city---and by extension, poetry---for those who must necessarily live within its limits:

Flesh, and cars, tar, dug holes beneath stone  
a rude hierarchy of money, band saws cross out  
music, feeling. Even speech, corrodes.  
I came here  
from where I sat boiling in my veins, cold fear  
at the death of men, the death of learning, in  
cold fear, at my own. Romantic vests of same death  
blank at the corner, blank when they raise their fingers  
Cross the hearts, in dark flesh staggered so marvelous  
are their lies.

The rest of *The Dead Lecturer* is full of a lyrical multiplicity of rhythms and dictions that by decade's end will make Baraka a preeminent voice in American poetry. Accent and poetic stance, subject matter and ideological reflection are ever in the foreground as the poet is intent on clearing the air of Cold War social and cultural institutions. Along with many of his contemporaries outside the United States, Baraka continued to work from the assumptions of a highly politicized avant-garde. The ideological lucidity which generally defined the Third World and European poetries of the 1960s claimed the right of the poetic act to establish itself as the "conscience of communication." ¶ The poem was conceived as a total, linguistic act, uniquely capable of posing the problem of language: a human product critical of, and invaded by, mass media, government, etc., as well as remaining a primary symptom of reality. "The Politics of Rich Painters," for example, displays an articulate line or statement, driven by the

[Page XVII ]

nuances of shifting and heterogeneous cadences, often spoken, often collaged, always relentlessly material and public, that will characterize Baraka's writing throughout the rest of the decade:

Just their fingers' prints  
staining the cold glass, is sufficient  
for commerce, and a proper ruling on  
humanity. You know the pity  
of democracy, that we must sit here  
and listen to how he made his money.  
Tho the catalogue of his possible ignorance  
roars and extends through the room  
like fire. "Love," becomes the pass,  
the word taken intimately to combat  
all the uses of language. So that learning  
itself falls into disrepute.

Thus, the leap in 1969 from *The Dead Lecturer* to *Black Magic*, the quintessential volume of his Nationalist period and one of the most influential publications of the 1960s' Black Arts movement, does not seem now as extreme as many in the literary establishment would have it. The ideological concern and intensity of earlier verse, such as "A Guerrilla Handbook," can hardly be dismissed as bohemian:

Silent political rain  
against the speech  
of friends. (we love them  
trapped in life, knowing no way out  
except description. Or black soil  
floating in the arm.  
We must convince the living

that the dead  
cannot sing.

The hard-driving cadences of "Green Lantern's Solo" are not so different from the impetus of self-critical pieces in the first two sections of *Black Magic*, "Sabotage" and "Target Study":

[Page XVIII ]

No, Nigger, no, blind drunk in SantaSurreal's beard. Dead  
hero  
for our time who would advance the nation's economy by poking  
holes  
in his arms. As golden arms build a forest of loves, and find only  
the heavy belly breath of ladies whispering their false  
pregnancies through the  
phone.

The political knowledge and the recasting of the rhetorical figure of the poet, which Baraka had set in motion in the earlier collection, bear fruit in the clarity of later compositions such as "Letter to E. Franklin Frazier":

Those days I rose through the smoke of chilling Saturdays  
hiding my eyes from the shine boys, my mouth and my flesh  
from their sisters. I walked quickly and always alone  
watching the cheap city like I thought it would swell  
and explode, and only my crooked breath could put it together  
again.

The same applies to the dire, almost prosaic, reflective energy that concludes "The People Burning." The scrutiny of the poet not only embraces the poem, but questions the very self-consciousness itself of the poetic act, the difficulty of building poetry on what Walter Benjamin calls "individual renunciation": [6](#)

Sit down and forget it. Lean on your silence, breathing  
the dark. Forget your whole life, pop your fingers in a closed room,  
hopped-up witch doctor for the cowards of a recent generation. It is  
choice, now, like a philosophy problem. It is choice, now, and  
the weight is specific and personal. It is not an emotional decision.  
There are facts, and who was it said, that this a scientific century.

[Page XIX ]

Thus, what Baraka said of his former nationalist politics as he helped, in 1973-74, transform the Congress of Afrikan Peoples into a Marxist-Leninist organization, is what might be said of his poetics from then to the present. After publically altering what he termed his "narrow nationalist and bourgeois nationalist stand," repudiating it as, in fact, "reactionary," <sup>8</sup> Baraka has gone on to point out that his intentions as a Third World Socialist are fundamentally like those he held as a Nationalist:

They were similar in the sense I see art as a weapon of revolution. It's just now that I define revolution in Marxist terms. I once defined revolution in Nationalist terms. But I came to my Marxist view as a result of having struggled as a Nationalist and found certain dead ends theoretically and ideologically, as far as Nationalism was concerned and had to reach out for a communist ideology. <sup>9</sup>

So with the Marxist poetry from his later collections: *Hard Facts* (1975), *Poetry for the Advanced* (1979), *reggae or not!* (1981), the limited edition *In the Tradition* (1982) and the long poem *Why's/Wise* (1995). Specifically, with the last two titles, poetic and political projects conjoin in a genesis and almost operatic celebration of African-American music.

After the break with cultural Nationalism, Baraka has emerged as an artist in the international, progressive tradition of Cesar Vallejo, Luis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Aimé Césaire, and René Depestre. With the insistence that poetry be an active, socio-linguistic force, Baraka has pursued, since the early 1970s, a utopian Communist direction, much like what Aragon and Eluard called "lyrical communism." Within this dynamic, Baraka's writing continually seeks allegiance between what is radical or subversive politically and what is avant-garde poetically.

Moreover, as an African-American poet, his career embodies a commitment, along with poets like Césaire and Depestre, to develop a space within this internationalism for the spirit of negritude. For Baraka, negritude plays at the heart

[Page XX ]

of late twentieth-century poetics, animating and transforming what remains avant-garde in the project of Socialist literature. As Depestre writes, "The new Black Orpheus will be a revolutionary or he will be nothing at all." <sup>9</sup>

Many have underscored the exemplar of contemporary jazz in Baraka's work, how it has provided a model of a genuinely avant-idiom, taking from European and Third World art practices alike, to form its own singular, African-American mode. In this regard, Baraka characterizes what for him, at the close of a century, is fresh and contemporary:

If you're a modern artist who's not some kind of cultural nationalist, you understand that you can learn from anything and anybody, see that the whole of world culture is at your disposal, because no one people has created the monuments of art and culture in the world, it's been collective. <sup>10</sup>

More recent work, such as the selection here from *Why's/Wise*, show music and history to be almost indivisible as subjects of poetry. Baraka's chronicles of African-American culture establish a new standard, a mode of composition that is, in its temporal and geographical vision, truly



"multinational."<sup>13</sup> The lyricism of the early books has been challenged and extended to where it is inseparable from his thought, ideological or otherwise. It has become, as he wrote in eulogy of Miles Davis, "a prayer in the future."<sup>11</sup> Baraka's is a verbal music that presages and defines what is to come.

[Page 3 ]


## PREFACE TO A TWENTY VOLUME SUICIDE NOTE.... [By Baraka, I. A., 1934- ]

[Page 5 ]

Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : **Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note**



*(For Kellie Jones, born 16 May 1959)*

1 Lately, I've become accustomed to the way  
2 The ground opens up and envelopes me   
3 Each time I go out to walk the dog.  
4 On the broad edged silly music the wind  
5 Makes when I run for a bus ...

6 Things have come to that.

7 And now, each night I count the stars,  
8 And each night I get the same number.  
9 And when they will not come to be counted,  
10 I count the holes they leave.

11 Nobody sings anymore.

12 And then last night, I tiptoed up  
13 To my daughter's room and heard her  
14 Talking to someone, and when I opened  
15 The door, there was no one there ...  
16 Only she on her knees, peeking into



17 Her own clasped hands.

*March 1957*

[Page 6 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Hymn for Lanie Poo**

*Vous êtes des faux Nègres*

*--- Rimbaud*

### **Poem section**

1 O,  
2 these wild trees  
3 will make charming wicker baskets,  
4 the young woman  
5 the young black woman  
6 the young black beautiful woman  
7 said.  
8 These wild-assed trees  
9 will make charming  
10 wicker baskets.

## Poem section

11 (now, I'm putting words in her mouth ... tch)

### 1

1 All afternoon  
2 we watched the cranes  
3 humping each other  
4 dropped  
5 our shadows  
6 onto the beach  
7 and covered them over with sand.

8 Beware the evil sun ...

9 turn you black

[Page 7 ]

10 turn your hair

11 crawl your eyeballs

12 rot your teeth.

13 All afternoon  
14 we sit around  
15 near the edge of the city  
16 hacking open  
17 crocodile skulls  
18 sharpening our teeth.

19 The god I pray to

20 got black boobies

21 got steatopygia



22 make faces in the moon

23 make me a greenpurple &

24 maroon winding sheet.

25 I wobble out to

26 the edge of the water

27 give my horny yell

28 & 24 elephants

29 stomp out of the subway

30 with consecrated hardons.

31 (watch out for that evil sun

32 turn you black)

33 My fireface

34 my orange

[Page 8 ]

35 and fireface

36 squat by the flames.

37 She had her coming out party

38 with 3000 guests

39 from all parts of the country.

40 Queens, Richmond, Togoland, The Camerooons;

41 A white hunter, very unkempt,

42 with long hair,

43 whizzed in on the end of a vine.

44 (spoke perfect english too.)

45 "Throw on another goddamned Phoenecian,"

46 I yelled, really getting with it.

47 John Coltrane arrived with an Egyptian lady.  
48 he played very well.

49 "Throw on another goddamned Phoenecian."

50 We got so drunk (Hulan Jack  
51 brought his bottle of Thunderbird),  
52 nobody went hunting  
53 the next morning.

2

1 o,  
2 don't be shy honey.  
3 we all know  
4 these wicker baskets  
5 would make wild-assed trees.



[Page 9 ]

6 Monday, I spent most of the day hunting  
7 Knocked off about six, gulped down a cou-  
8 ple of monkey foreskins, then took in a  
9 flick. Got to bed early.

10 Tuesday, same thing all day. (Caught a  
11 mangy lioness with one tit.) Ate.  
12 Watched television for awhile. Read the  
13 paper, then hit the sack.

14 Wednesday, took the day off.  
15 Took the wife and kids to the games.  
16 Read Garmanda's book, "14 Tribes of  
17 Ambiguity," didn't like it.

18 Thursday, we caught a goddamn ape.  
19 Must've weighed about 600 pounds.  
20 We'll probably eat ape meat for the  
21 rest of the month. Christ, I hate  
22 ape meat.

23 Friday, I stayed home with a supposed  
24 cold. Goofed the whole day trying to  
25 rethatch the roof. Had run in with  
26 the landlord.

27 We spent the weekend at home.  
28 I tried to get some sculpting done,  
29 but nothing came of it. It's impos-  
30 sible to be an artist and a bread  
31 winner at the same time.  
32 Sometimes I think I oughta chuck  
33 the whole business.

[Page 10 ]

1 The fireasons parade.

2 (The sun is using this country  
3 as a commode.

4 Beware the sun, my love.)

5 The fireasons are very square.  
6 They are supposed to be a civic  
7 and fraternal organization, but  
8 all they do is have parades and  
9 stay high. They also wear funny  
10 looking black hats, which are  
11 round and have brims. The fire-  
12 masons are cornballs.

4

1 Each morning  
2 I go down  
3 to Gansevoort St.  
4 and stand on the docks.  
5 I stare out  
6 at the horizon  
7 until it gets up  
8 and comes to embrace  
9 me. I  
10 make believe  
11 it is my father.

[Page 11 ]

12 This is known  
13 as genealogy.

5

1 We came into the  
2 silly little church  
3 shaking our wet raincoats  
4 on the floor.  
5 It wasn't water,  
6 that made the raincoats  
7 wet.  
8 The preacher's  
9 conning eyes  
10 filed when he saw  
11 the way I walked to-  
12 wards him; almost  
13 throwing my hips out  
14 of whack.  
15 He screamed,

16 *He's wet with the blood of the lamb!!*

17 And everybody  
18 got real happy.

## **6 (die schwartze Bohemien)**

1 They laught,  
2 and religion was something

[Page 12]

3 he fount in coffee ships, by God.



4 It's not that I got anything  
5 against cotton, nosiree, by God

6 It's just that ...  
7 Man lookatthatblonde  
8 whewee!

9 I think they are not treating us like

10 Mr. Lincun said they should  
11 or Mr. Gandhi

12 For that matter. By God.

13 ZEN

14 is a bitch! Like "Bird" was,  
15 Cafe Olay

16 for me, Miss.

17 **But white cats can't swing** ...

18 Or the way this guy kept patronizing me---

19 like he was Bach or somebody

20 Oh, I knew

21 John Kasper when he hung around with shades ...

22 She's a painter, Man.

23 It's just that it's such a drag to go

24 Way uptown for Bar B Cue,

25 By God ...

26 How much?

7

1 About my sister.

2 (O, generation revered

3 above all others.

4 O, generation of fictitious

5 Ofays

6 I revere you ...

7 You are all so beautiful)

8 my sister drives a green jaguar

9 my sister has her hair done twice a month

10 my sister is a school teacher

11 my sister took ballet lessons



12 my sister has a fine figure: never diets

13 my sister doesn't like to teach in Newark

14 because there are too many colored

15 in her classes

16 my sister hates loud shades

17 my sister's boy friend is a faggot music teacher



- 18 who digs Tschaikovsky
- 19 my sister digs Tschaikovsky also
- 20 it is because of this similarity of interests
- 21 that they will probably get married.



[Page 14 ]

- 22 Smiling & glad/in
- 23 the huge & loveless
- 24 white-anglo sun/of
- 25 benevolent step
- 26 mother America.

[Page 15 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : In Memory of Radio**

- 1 Who has ever stopped to think of the divinity of Lamont Cranston?
- 2 (Only Jack Kerouac, that I know of: & me.
- 3 The rest of you probably had on WCBS and Kate Smith,
- 4 Or something equally unattractive.)
  
- 5 What can I say?
- 6 It is better to have loved and lost
- 7 Than to put linoleum in your living rooms?
  
- 8 Am I a sage or something?
- 9 Mandrake's hypnotic gesture of the week?
- 10 (Remember, I do not have the healing powers of Oral Roberts ...
- 11 I cannot, like F. J. Sheen, tell you how to get saved & *rich!*
- 12 I cannot even order you to gaschamber satori like Hitler or
- 13 Goody Knight
  
- 14 & Love is an evil word.

- 15 Turn it backwards/see, see what I mean?
- 16 An evil word. & besides
- 17 who understands it?
- 18 I certainly wouldn't like to go out on that kind of limb.

- 19 Saturday mornings we listened to *Red Lantern* & his undersea folk.
- 20 At II, *Let's Pretend/ & we did/& I, the poet, still do, Thank God!*

- 21 What was it he used to say (after the transformation, when he was safe
- 22 & invisible & the unbelievers couldn't throw stones?) "Heh, heh, heh,
- 23 *Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows."*



[Page 16 ]

- 24 O, yes he does
- 25 O, yes he does.
- 26 An evil word it is,
- 27 This Love.

[Page 17 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Look for You Yesterday, Here You Come Today**

- 1 Part of my charm:
- 2 envious blues feeling
- 3 separation of church & state
- 4 grim calls from drunk debutantes
  
- 5 *Morning never aids me in my quest.*
- 6 I have to trim my beard in solitude.
- 7 I try to hum lines from "The Poet In New York".

8 People saw metal all around the house on Saturdays. The Phone  
9 rings.

10 terrible poems come in the mail. Descriptions of celibate parties  
11 torn trousers: Great Poets dying  
12 with their strophes on. & me  
13 incapable of a simple straightforward  
14 anger.

15 It's so diffuse  
16 being alive. Suddenly one is aware  
17 that nobody really gives a damn.  
18 My wife is pregnant with *her* child.  
19 "It means nothing to me", sez Strindberg.

20 An avalanche of words  
21 could cheer me up. Words from Great Sages.  
22 Was James Karolis a great sage??

[Page 18 ]

23 Why did I let Ora Matthews beat him up  
24 in the bathroom? Haven't I learned my lesson.

25 I would take up painting  
26 if I cd think of a way to do it  
27 better than Leonardo. Than Bosch  
28 Than Hogarth. Than Kline.

29 Frank walked off the stage, singing  
30 "My silence is as important as Jack's incessant yatter."

31 I am a mean hungry sorehead.  
32 Do I have the capacity for grace??

33 To arise one smoking spring  
34 & find one's youth has taken off  
35 for greener parts.

36 A sudden blankness in the day  
37 as if there were no afternoon.  
38 & all my piddling joys retreated  
39 to their own dopey mythic worlds.

40 The hours of the atmosphere  
41 grind their teeth like hags.

42 (When will world war two be over?)

43 I stood up on a mailbox  
44 waving my yellow tee-shirt  
45 watching the grey tanks  
46 stream up Central Ave.

[Page 19 ]

47 All these thots  
48 are Flowers Of Evil  
49 cold & lifeless  
50 as subway rails

51 the sun like a huge cobblestone  
52 flaking its brown slow rays  
53 primititi  
54 once, twice, . My life  
55 seems over & done with.  
56 Each morning I rise  
57 like a sleep walker

58 & rot a little more.

59 All the lovely things I've known have disappeared.

60 I have all my pubic hair & am lonely.

61 There is probably no such place as BattleCreek, Michigan!

62 Tom Mix dead in a Boston Nightclub

63 before I realized what happened.

64 People laugh when I tell them about Dickie Dare!

65 What is one to do in an alien planet

66 where the people breath New Ports?

67 Where is my space helmet, I sent for it

68 3 lives ago ... when there were box tops.

69 What has happened to box tops??

70 O, God ... I must have a belt that glows green

71 in the dark. Where is my Captain Midnight decoder??

72 I can't understand what Superman is saying!

[Page 20 ]

73 THERE *MUST* BE A LONE RANGER!!!

74 but this also

75 is part of my charm.

76 A maudlin nostalgia

77 that comes on

78 like terrible thoughts about death.

79 How dumb to be sentimental about anything  
80 To call it love  
81 & cry pathetically  
82 into the long black handkerchief  
83 of the years.

84 "Look for you yesterday  
85 Here you come today  
86 Your mouth wide open  
87 But what you got to say?"



88 ---part of my charm

89 old envious blues feeling  
90 ticking like a big cobblestone clock.

91 I hear the reel running out ...  
92 the spectators are impatient for popcorn.  
93 It was only a selected short subject

94 F. Scott Charon  
95 will soon be glad-handing me  
96 like a legionaire



[Page 21 ]

97 My silver bullets all gone  
98 My black mask trampled in the dust

99 & Tonto way off in the hills  
100 moaning like Bessie Smith.



## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : To a Publisher ... Cut-out

- 1 The blight rests in your face.
- 2 For your unknown musiks. The care & trust
- 3 Undeliberate. Like an axe-murder
- 4 Or flat pancake. The night cold & asexual
- 5 A long sterile moon lapping at the dank Hudson.
- 6 The end of a star. The water more than any
- 7 Other thing. We are dibbled here. Seurat's
- 8 Madness. That kind of joke. Isolate
- 9 Land creatures in a wet unfriendly world.
  
- 10 We must be strong. (smoke Balkan Sobranie)
- 11 People will think you have the taste
- 12 In this hyar family. Some will stroke your face.
- 13 Better posture is another thing. Watch out for Peanuts,
- 14 he's gonna turn out bad/ A J.D./ A Beatnik/ A
- 15 Typical wise-ass N.Y. kid. "X" wanted to bet me
- 16 that Charlie Brown spent most of his time 
- 17 whacking his doodle, or having weird relations
- 18 with that dopey hound of his (though that's
- 19 a definite improvement over "Arf Arf" & that
- 20 filthy little lesbian hes hung up with.)  

  
- 21 As if any care could see us through. Could defend us.
- 22 Save us from you, Little Darling. Or me, which is worse.
- 23 "A far far worser thing I do/than I has ever done".
- 24 Put that in your pipe & watch out for the gendarmes.
- 25 They arresses people for less than that. For less
- 26 Than we are ever capable of. Any kind of sincerity

27 Guarantees complete disregard. Complete abnegation.  
28 "Must dig with my fingers/as nobody will lend me  
29 or sell me a pick axe." Axe the man who owns one.  
30 **Hellzapoppin.** The stars might not come on tonight ...  
31 & who the hell can do anything about that?? Eh,  
32 Milord/ Milady/ The kind Dubarry wasn't. Tres slick.

33 But who am I to love anybody? I ride the 14th St. bus  
34 every day ... reading Hui neng/ Raymond Chandler/ Olson ...  
35 **I have slept with almost every mediocre colored woman**  
36 **On 23rd St ...** At any rate, talked a good match. And  
37 Frightened by the lack of any real communication  
38 I addressed several perfumed notes to Uncle Don  
39 & stuffed them into the radio. In the notes,  
40 Of course, crude assignations, off color suggestions,  
41 Diagrams of new methods for pederasts, lewd poems  
42 That rime. IF ONLY HE WOULD READ THESE ON THE AIR.  
43 (There are other things could take my mind from  
44 this childe's play ... but none nearly as interesting.)

45 I long to be a mountain climber  
46 & wave my hands up 8,000 feet.  
47 Out of sight & snow blind/the tattered  
48 Stars and Stripes poked in the new peak.

49 & come down later, Clipper by my side,  
50 To new wealth & eternal fame. That  
51 Kind of care. I could wear  
52 Green corduroy coats & felt tyroleans  
53 For the rest of my days; & belong to clubs.

54 Grandeur in boldness. Big & stupid as the wind.  
55 But so lovely. Who's to understand that kind of con?

56 As if each day, after breakfast, someone asked you,  
57 "What do you want to be when you grow up??" &  
58 Day in, Day out, you just kept belching.

[Page 25 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Ostriches & Grandmothers!

### Poem section

1 All meet here with us, finally: the  
2 uptown, way-west, den of inconstant  
3 moralities.  
4 Faces up: all  
5 my faces turned up  
6 to the sun.

1

1 Summer's mist nods against the trees  
2 till distance grows in my head  
3 like an antique armada  
4 dangled motionless from the horizon.

5 Unbelievable changes. Restorations.  
6 Each day like my niña's fan  
7 tweaking the flat air  
8 back and forth till the room  
9 is a blur of flowers.

10 Intimacy takes on human form ...

11 & sheds it like a hide.

12 Lips, eyes,

13 tiny lace coughs

14 reflected on night's stealth.

[Page 26 ]

2

1 Tonight, one star.

2 eye of the dragon.

3 The Void

4 signaling.

5 Reminding someone

6 it's still there.

3

1 It's these empty seconds

2 I fill with myself. Each

3 a recognition. A complete

4 utterance.

5 Here, it is color; motion;

6 the feeling of dazzling beauty

7 Flight.

8 As

9 the trapeeze rider

10 leans

11 with arms spread

12 wondering at the bar's

13 delay

[Page 27 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Scenario VI

1 ... and I come out of it  
2 with this marvelous yellow cane  
3 in my hand, yellow cashmere jacket  
4 green felt pants & green boater ... & green &  
5 black clack shoes, polished & fast, jiggling  
6 in the wings ... till Vincente says "rollllem"  
7 & I jiggle out on the stage, hands in my pockets,  
8 the cane balanced delicately under my arm, spinning  
9 & clack clack clacking across the bare sunday clothesline  
10 tilting the hat to avoid the sun & ginergerly missing  
11 the dried branch I had put there yesterday.



12 The motion of the mind! Smoooooth; I jiggle  
13 & clack stomping one foot & the clothesline swings.  
14 Fabulei Verwachsenes. Ripping this one off  
15 in a series of dramatic half-turns I learned  
16 many years ago in the orient; Baluba:  
17 "The power to cloud men's minds" &c., which  
18 I'm sure you must have heard about, doodle-doo.  
19 & then I'm sitting in this red chair, humming,  
20 feet still pecking at the marble floor, the  
21 line motionless with only the tiniest leaf  
22 on the dead branch waving, slowly; With a red background,  
23 & I can't see anything, only hear this raspy 1936 voice  
24 singing in german a very groovy love song; to me.



25 There's a train whistle, too. In and out like this.  
26 When out the open window of early spring, sharp

[Page 28 ]

27 browns & greens fuzzy through the shade  
28 & a fence somehow too bleak to describe, or even  
29 be made sad by.

30 & I'm not even breathing hard. Tapping my feet  
31 so nicely, the cane too, on the red marble. No  
32 echo, that's distant thunder for these early summer storms,  
33 cools off the whole scene too. But waiting  
34 for my next cue, Vincente comes over, lights my cigarette,  
35 We make a date for next wednesday, at the rainbow hut,  
36 & he has a fabulous cigarette holder. & he pats  
37 my cane-hand & says, "you do it up, baby". I'm on again.

38 Sylvia has come out in her smashing oranges & jewelry,  
39 she has her mouth wide & I can hear her listening to  
40 my feet clackings for her deep beauty doesn't include  
41 rhythm. But we make it in great swirls out to the terrace,  
42 which overlooks Sumer ... & the Indus river, where next  
43 week probably all kinds of white trash will ride in  
44 on stolen animals we will be amazed by.



[Page 29 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Way Out West

*(For Gary Snyder)*

1 As simple an act  
2 as opening the eyes. Merely

3 coming into things by degrees.

4 Morning: some tear is broken  
5 on the wooden stairs  
6 of my lady's eyes. Profusions  
7 of green. The leaves. Their  
8 constant prehensions. Like old  
9 junkies on Sheridan Square, eyes  
10 cold and round. There is a song  
11 Nat Cole sings ... This city  
12 & the intricate disorder  
13 of the seasons.

14 **Unable to mention**

15 **something as abstract as time.**

16 Even so, (bowing low in thick  
17 smoke from cheap incense; all  
18 kinds questions filling the mouth,  
19 till you suffocate & fall dead  
20 to opulent carpet.) Even so,

21 shadows will creep over your flesh  
22 & hide your disorder, your lies.

[Page 30 ]

23 There are unattractive wild ferns  
24 outside the window  
25 where the cats hide. They yowl  
26 from there at nights. In heat  
27 & bleeding on my tulips.

28 Steel bells, like the evil  
29 unwashed Sphinx, towing in the twilight.

30 Childless old murderers, for centuries  
31 with musty eyes.

32 I am distressed. Thinking  
33 of the seasons, how they pass,  
34 how I pass, my very youth, the  
35 ripe sweet of my life; drained off ...

36 Like giant rhesus monkeys;  
37 picking their skulls,  
38 with ingenious cruelty  
39 sucking out the brains.



40 No use for beauty  
41 collapsed, with moldy breath  
42 done in. Insidious weight  
43 of cankered dreams. Tiresias'  
44 weathered cock.

45 Walking into the sea, shells  
46 caught in the hair. Coarse  
47 waves tearing the tongue.

48 Closing the eyes. As  
49 simple an act. You float

[Page 31 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Bridge

(#for wieners & mcclure)



1 I have forgotten the head  
2 of where I am. Here at the bridge. 2  
3 bars, down the street, seeming  
4 to wrap themselves around my fingers, the day,  
5 screams in me; pitiful like a little girl  
6 you sense will be dead before the winter  
7 is over.

8 I can't see the bridge now, I've past  
9 it, its shadow, we drove through, headed out  
10 along the cold insensitive roads to what  
11 we wanted to call "ourselves."  
12 "How does the bridge go?" Even tho  
13 you find yourself in its length  
14 strung out along its breadth, **waiting**  
15 **for the cold sun to tear out your eyes.** Enamoured  
16 of its blues, spread out in the silk clubs of  
17 this autumn tune. The changes are difficult, when  
18 you hear them, & know they are all in you, **the chords**

19 **of your disorder meddle with your would be disguises.**  
20 Sifting in, down, upon your head, with the sun & the insects.

21 (Late feeling) Way down till it barely, after that rush of  
22 wind & odor reflected from hills you have forgotten the color  
23 when you touch the water, & it closes, slowly, around your head.

[Page 32 ]

24 **The bridge will be behind you, that music you know, that place,**  
25 **you feel when you look up to say, it is me, & I have forgotten,**  
26 **all the things, you told me to love, to try to understand, the**  
27 **bridge will stand, high up in the clouds & the light, & you,**



28 **(when you have let the song run out) will be sliding through**  
29 **unmentionable black.**

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Vice

1 Sometimes I feel I have to express myself  
2 and then, whatever it is I have to express  
3 falls out of my mouth like flakes of ash  
4 from a match book that the drunken guest  
5 at the grey haired jew lady's birthday party has  
6 set on fire, for fun & to ease the horrible boredom.



7 & when these flakes amass, I make serious collages  
8 or empty them (feinting a gratuitous act) out the window  
9 on the heads of the uncurious puerto rican passersby.

10 ACT I. The celibate bandit pees in the punch bowl.

11 (curious image) occurring friday evening, a house  
12 full of middle class women & a photogenic baker.  
13 Baby bear has eaten her porridge, had her bath, shit  
14 & gone to sleep. Smoke rises (strange for mid-summer)  
15 out of a strange little shack in the middle of the  
16 torn down cathedral. Everything seems to be light green.  
17 I suppose, a color of despair or wretchedness. Anyway,  
18 everything is light green, even the curling little hairs  
19 on the back of my hand, and the old dog scar glinting  
20 in the crooked (green, light green) rays of an unshaded bulb.

21 There doesn't seem to be any act 2. The process is stopped.  
22 Functional, as a whip, a strong limb broken off in the gale  
23 lying twisty & rotten, unnoticed in my stone back yard.  
24 All this means nothing is happening to me (in this world).

25 I suppose some people are having a ball. Organized fun.  
26 Pot Smokers Institute is going on an outing tomorrow; my  
27 corny sister, in her fake bohemian pants, is borrowing something  
28 else. (A prestige item). **These incomprehensible dullards!**

29 Asked to be special, & alive in the mornings, if they are green  
30 & I am still alive, (& green) hovering above all the things I  
31 seem to want to be apart of (curious smells, the high-noon idea  
32 of life ... a crowded train station where they broadcast a slice,  
33 **just one green slice, of some glamorous person's life**).  
34 & I cant even isolate my pleasures. All the things I can talk about  
35 mean nothing to me.

36 This is *not* rage. (I am not that beautiful!) Only immobile coughs  
37 & gestures towards somethings I don't understand. If I were lucky  
38 enough to still be an adolescent, I'd just attribute these weird  
39 singings in my intestine to sex, & slink off merrily to mastur  
40 bate. Mosaic of disorder I own but cannot recognize. Mist in me.

41 There must be some great crash in the slinky world: MYSTIC CURE ...  
42 Cunning panacea of the mind. The faith of it. the singed hairs  
43 of human trust, corrupt & physical as a disease. A glass stare.

44 Resolution, for the quick thrust of epee, to force your opponent  
45 cringing against the wall, not in anger, but unfettered happiness  
46 while your lady is watching from the vined balcony, your triumph.

47 & years after, you stand in subways watching your invincible hand  
48 bring the metal to bear again & again, when you are old & the lady,  
49 (o, fond memories we hide in our money belts, & will not spend)  
50 the lady, you young bandits who have not yet stolen your first purse

51 the lady will be dead.

52 And if you are alone (if there is something in you so cruel)

53 You will wonder at the extravagance

54 of youth.

[Page 36 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Symphony Sid**

1 First  
2 take the first  
3 thing. Blue. The mountain,  
4 largest of our  
5 landscape. From  
6 a dark hall at  
7 the bottom, the shapes  
8 a shadow, without  
9 hardness, or that  
10 ugly smell of  
11 blackening flesh.  
12 The scale  
13 is music, black shadow  
14 from highest wild  
15 fingers placing evening  
16 beneath our  
17 tongues.  
18 A man, a woman  
19 shaking the night apart. Forget  
20 who you are. Forget  
21 my fingers.

[Page 37 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Betancourt

*(For Rubi)*

[1]

1 What are  
2 influences?  
3 A green truck  
4 wet & glowing, seance  
5 of ourselves, elegy for the sea  
6 at night, my flesh  
7 a woman's, at the fingertips  
8 soft white increased coolness  
9 from the dark  
10 sea.  
11 We sat  
12 with our backs  
13 to the sea. Not  
14 in the gardens  
15 of Spain, but some  
16 new greenness, birds  
17 scorching the yellow  
18 rocks at the foot  
19 of the sea's wall. A barrier  
20 of rock, tilting backwards, damp,  
21 thrown up against  
22 a floating dreary  
23 disgust. Even fear  
24 without that self possession. The  
25 night's defection. Walking all night  
26 entwined inside, I mean  
27 I tasted you, your real & fleshy

28 voice  
29 inside my head  
30 & choked  
31 as if some primitive  
32 corruption re-sat  
33 itself in full view  
34 of a puritan flame. And flame  
35 is the mind, the wet hands  
36 mark on strange islands  
37 of warmth.  
38 Big stone nose, nigger  
39 lips, the entire head  
40 thrust from  
41 a serpents snout. Idle  
42 somehow, fire scorching  
43 the plain earth we pulled  
44 up around thinking  
45 to limit its violence. To  
46 contain even that  
47 madness (within  
48 some thrown wall  
49 of words.)  
50 Our gestures  
51 are silence. The sea's  
52 wet feathers slowly  
53 black. (You die  
54 from mornings, looking down  
55 from that silence  
56 at the silence  
57 of roofs. Disconnected  
58 flesh. Not even cars  
59 from this distance  
60 are real.

[Page 39 ]

1 This  
2 is slower. Infused (somehow)  
3 with sound  
4 & distance. Slow

5 the cock  
6 flat  
7 on skin  
8 like  
9 a dead  
10 insect. A  
11 bee, with  
12 crushed  
13 antlers,  
14 sprawled  
15 on its side,  
16 And last night, talking to ourselves, except  
17 when some wildness  
18 cut us, ripped impossibly  
19 deep beneath black  
20 flesh  
21 to black bone. Then  
22 we loved each other. Understood  
23 the miles of dead air  
24 between our  
25 softest parts. French girl  
26 from the desert. Desert man,  
27 whose mind is some rotting  
28 country of snow.

[Page 40 ]

1 There is more  
2 underneath. Rotted, green  
3 beneath hands making  
4 their deadly wishes  
5 show. La casa. El edificio. La  
6 Mar. El hombre. Without seething  
7 tin braziers, no, those weird cups  
8 in novels: chalices.  
9 I was reading  
10 some old man's poems  
11 his morning. A lover  
12 hid himself under  
13 the stink of low trailing  
14 sea birds, heavy sun, pure  
15 distance. He had to go away,  
16 I mean, from all of us, even  
17 you, marvelous person  
18 at the sea's edge. Even you  
19 Sra. de Jiminez. Rubi.  
20 And  
21 I think he knew  
22 all this would happen, that  
23 when I dropped the book  
24 the sky would have already  
25 moved, turned black, and  
26 wet grey air  
27 would mark the windows.  
28 That  
29 there are fools  
30 who hang close

[Page 41 ]

31 to their original  
32 thought. Elementals  
33 of motion (Not, again,  
34 that garden) but some  
35 slightness  
36 of feeling  
37 they think is sweet  
38 and long to die



39 inside.  
40 Think  
41 about it! As even  
42 this, now, a turning  
43 away. (I mean I think  
44 I know now  
45 what a poem  
46 is) A  
47 turning away ...  
48 from what  
49 it was  
50 had moved  
51 us ...  
52 A  
53 madness.  
54 Looking at the sea. And some  
55 white fast boat.

30 July 1960  
Habana

[Page 42]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Insidious Dr. Fu Man Chu

1 If I think myself  
2 strong, then I am  
3 not true to the misery  
4 in my life. The uncertainty.  
5 (of what I am saying, who  
6 I have chose to become, the  
7 very air pressing my skin  
8 held gently away, this woman  
9 and the one I taste continually  
10 in my nebular pallet tongue face  
11 mouth feet, standing in piles  
12 of numbers, hills, lovers.  
13 If

14 I think myself ugly  
15 & go to the mirror, smiling,  
16 at the inaccuracy, or now  
17 the rain pounds dead grass  
18 in the stone yard, I think  
19 how very wise I am. How very  
20 very wise.

[Page 43 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The New Sheriff**

1 There is something  
2 in me so cruel, so  
3 silent. It hesitates  
4 to sit on the grass  
5 with the young white  
6 virgins  
7 of my time. The blood-  
8 letter, clothed in what  
9 it is. Elemental essence,  
10 animal grace, not that, but  
11 a rude stink of color  
12 huger, more vast, than  
13 this city suffocating. Red  
14 street. Waters noise  
15 in the ear, inside  
16 the hard bone  
17 of the brain. Inside  
18 the soft white meat  
19 of the feelings. Inside  
20 your flat white stomach  
21 I move my tongue

[Page 44 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : From an Almanac

1 In the nature  
2 of flesh, these clown gods  
3 are words, blown  
4 in the winters, thou  
5 windows, lacking  
6 sun.  
7 In the nature,  
8 of ideas, in the nature of  
9 words, these  
10 clown god's are  
11 winter. Are blown  
12 thru our windows.  
13 The flesh  
14 & bone  
15 of the season. Each  
16 dead thing  
17 hustled  
18 across the pavement. Each  
19 dead word  
20 drowned  
21 in a winter wind. Are  
22 in the nature  
23 of flesh. These  
24 liars, clown  
25 gods

[Page 45 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : From an Almanac (2)

1 Respect the season  
2 and dance to the rattle  
3 of its bones.  
4 The flesh  
5 hung

6 from trees. Blown  
7 down. A cold  
8 music. A colder  
9 hand, will grip  
10 you. Your bare  
11 soul. (Where is the soul's place. What is  
12 its  
13 nature?) Winter rattles  
14 like the throat  
15 of the hanged man. Swung  
16 against our windows.  
17 As bleak  
18 as our thots. As wild  
19 as that wind  
20 we make (between  
21 us).  
22 Can you dance? Shall  
23 you?

[Page 46 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : From an Almanac (3)**

*(For C. O.)*

1 This bizness, of dancing, how  
2 can it suit us? Old men, naked  
3 sterile women.  
4 (our time,  
5 a cruel one. Our soul's warmth  
6 left out. Little match children,  
7 dance  
8 against the weather.  
9 ) The soul's  
10 warmth  
11 is how  
12 shall I say  
13 it,

14 Its own. A place  
15 of warmth, for children  
16 wd dance there,  
17 if they cd. If they  
18 left their brittle selves behind (our time's  
19 a cruel one.  
20 Children  
21 of winter. (I cross myself  
22 like religion  
23 Children  
24 of a cruel time. (the wind  
25 stirs the bones  
26 & they drag clumsily  
27 thru the cold.)

[Page 47 ]

28 These children  
29 are older  
30 than their worlds. and  
31 cannot dance.

[Page 48 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Notes for a Speech**

1 African blues  
2 does not know me. Their steps, in sands  
3 of their own  
4 land. A country  
5 in black & white, newspapers  
6 blown down pavements  
7 of the world. Does  
8 not feel  
9 what I am.  
10 Strength  
11 in the dream, an oblique  
12 suckling of nerve, the wind

13 throws up sand, eyes  
14 are something locked in  
15 hate, of hate, of hate, to  
16 walk abroad, they conduct  
17 their deaths apart  
18 from my own. Those  
19 heads, I call  
20 my "people."  
21 (And who are they. People. To concern  
22 myself, ugly man. Who  
23 you, to concern  
24 the white flat stomachs  
25 of maidens, inside houses  
26 dying. Black. Peeled moon  
27 light on my fingers  
28 move under


[Page 49 ]

29 her clothes. Where  
30 is her husband. Black  
31 words throw up sand  
32 to eyes, fingers of  
33 their private dead. Whose  
34 soul, eyes, in sand. My color  
35 is not theirs. Lighter, white man  
36 talk. They shy away. My own  
37 dead souls, my, so called  
38 people. Africa  
39 is a foreign place. You are  
40 as any other sad man here  
41 american.

[Page 51 ]

**THE DEAD LECTURER [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]**

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : As a Possible Lover

1 Practices  
2 silence, the way of wind  
3 bursting  
4 its early lull. Cold morning  
5 to night, we go so  
6 slowly, without  
7 thought  
8 to ourselves. (Enough  
9 to have thought  
10 tonight, nothing  
11 finishes it. **What**  
12 **you are, will have**  
13 **no certainty, or**  
14 **end.** That you will  
15 stay, where you are,  
16 **a human gentle wisp**  
17 **of life.** Ah ...)  
18 **practices**  
19 **loneliness,**  
20 **as a virtue.** A single  
21 **specious need**   
22 **to keep**  
23 **what you have**  
24 **never really**  
25 **had.**

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Balboa, the Entertainer**

1 It cannot come  
2 except you make it  
3 from materials  
4 it is not  
5 caught from. (The philosophers  
6 of need, of which  
7 I am lately  
8 one,  
9 will tell you. "The People,"  
10 (and not think themselves  
11 liable  
12 to the same  
13 trembling flesh). I say now, "The People,  
14 as some lesson repeated, now,  
15 the lights are off, to myself,  
16 as a lover, or at the cold wind.

17 Let my poems be a graph  
18 of me. (And they keep  
19 to the line, where flesh  
20 drops off. You will go  
21 blank at the middle. A  
22 dead man.

23 But  
24 die soon, Love. If  
25 what you have for  
26 yourself, does not

[Page 55 ]

27 stretch to your body's  
28 end.  
29 (Where, without  
30 preface,  
31 music trails, or your fingers  
32 slip



[Page 56 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Contract. (For the Destruction and Rebuilding of Paterson**

1 Flesh, and cars, tar, dug holes beneath stone  
2 a rude hierarchy of money, band saws cross out  
3 music, feeling. Even speech, corrodes.  
4 I came here  
5 from where I sat boiling in my veins, cold fear  
6 at the death of men, the death of learning, in  
7 cold fear, at my own. Romantic vests of same death  
8 blank at the corner, blank when they raise their fingers

9 Criss the hearts, in dark flesh staggered so marvelous  
10 are their lies. So complete, their mastery, of these  
11 stupid niggers. Loud spics kill each other, and will not

12 make the simple trip to Tiffany's. Will not smash their stainless  
13 heads, against the simpler effrontery of so callous a code as gain.

14 You are no brothers, dirty woogies, dying under dried rinds, in massa's  
15 droopy tuxedos. Cab Calloways of the soul, at the soul's juncture, a  
16 music, they think will save them from our eyes. (In back of the terminal

17 where the circus will not go. At the backs of crowds, stooped and vulgar  
18 breathing hate syllables, unintelligible rapes of all that linger in  
19 our new world. Killed in white fedora hats, they stand so mute at what

20 whiter slaves did to my father. They muster silence. They pray at the  
21 steps of abstract prisons, to be kings, when all is silence, when all

22 is stone. When even the stupid fruit of their loins is gold, or something  
23 else they cannot eat.

[Page 57 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : *This Is the Clearing I Once Spoke of***

1 The talk scared him. Left alone, with me,  
2 at some water. (Suddenness of your mind,  
3 because you will be saved. Stand there  
4 counting deaths. My own, is what I wanted  
5 you to say, Roi, you will die soon.)

6 And  
7 it went well, till evening, and the birds  
8 fled. Their trees hanging empty at the  
9 river. All of it a creation. More than  
10 ideas. The simple elegant hand, a man  
11 will extend. More than we can lose, and  
12 still talk lovingly of "ourselves."

13 The brush sank behind its silence. This  
14 was a jungle, dead children of thought.  
15 We sat looking, and the wind changed  
16 our fire, it was blue, and sang slowly.

17 Whose mind has this here? The way love  
18 will move. I love you, I say that now  
19 evenly, without emotion. Having  
20 lost you. Or sitting, at the ruptured  
21 threads of light. Wind and birds, spurn  
22 out over the water, silent or dead.

[Page 58 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Poem for Neutrals

[1]



1 A japanese neon landscape blinks  
2 a constant film  
3 of memory. His leaves, his hills  
4 change in dumb perspective. Farmers  
5 and Americans,  
6 say they are blue. Some natural phenomenon  
7 some possible image  
8 of what we shall call history. A jungle  
9 of feeling. In their minds, the broken  
10 tree, **wet blood in the romantic's bulb. our sudden**  
11 **and misconceived beauty. Inept tenderness.** (For  
12 those long girls lay in darkness under our smell.  
13 Those talkers who will not shut up  
14 when the dawn comes. And stand in doorways  
15 letting cold air blow in.  
16 It is a history of motive,  
17 as secure as the economy  
18 for these restless dwarfs  
19 performing miracles for the blind. The wet ring  
20 on their pants  
21 the menace  
22 of our education. It is not Dante,  
23 nor Yeats. But the loud and drunken  
24 pilgrim, I knew so well  
25 in my youth. **And grew to stone**  
26 **waiting for the change.**


1 The calendar is memory. The dead roots  
 2 of the poet's brain. Yellow skin, black  
 3 skin, or the formless calm of compromise. **They will not come**  
 4 **to see, or understand you.** They will call you "murderer,"  
 5 as new songs for their young. The mountains  
 6 in your country, the flat skies of mine. (Except  
 7 by the oceans, the poor hate their shadows,  
 8 and force their agony to dance.

9 All night blue leaves ring  
 10 in Kyoto. And the windows of 5th street  
 11 scream.

[Page 60 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : *An Agony. As Now***

1 **I am inside someone**  
 2 **who hates me.** I look   
 3 out from his eyes. Smell  
 4 what fouled tunes come in   
 5 to his breath. Love his  
 6 wretched women.

7 **Slits in the metal, for sun.** Where  
 8 my eyes sit turning, at the cool air   
 9 the glance of light, or hard flesh  
 10 rubbed against me, a woman, a man,  
 11 **without shadow, or voice, or meaning.**

12 This is the enclosure (flesh,  
13 where **innocence is a weapon**. An  
14 abstraction. Touch. (Not mine.  
15 Or yours, if you are the soul I had  
16 and abandoned when I was blind and had  
17 my enemies carry me as a dead man  
18 (if he is beautiful, or pitied.



19 It can be pain. (As now, as all his  
20 flesh hurts me.) It can be that. Or  
21 pain. As when she ran from me into  
22 that forest.  
23 Or pain, the mind  
24 silver spiraled whirled against the  
25 sun, higher than even old men thought

[Page 61 ]

26 God would be. Or pain. And the other. The  
27 yes . (Inside his books, his fingers. They  
28 are withered yellow flowers and were never  
29 beautiful.) The yes. You will, lost soul, say  
30 'beauty.' Beauty, practiced, as the tree. The  
31 slow river. A white sun in its wet sentences.  
32 Or, the cold men in their gale. Ecstasy. Flesh  
33 or soul. The yes. (Their robes blown. Their bowls  
34 empty. They chant at my heels, not at yours.) Flesh  
35 or soul, as corrupt. Where the answer moves too quickly.  
36 Where the God is a self, after all.)

37 Cold air blown through narrow blind eyes. **Flesh,**  
38 **white hot metal**. Glows as the day with its sun.  
39 **It is a human love, I live inside**. A bony skeleton  
40 you recognize as words or simple feeling.

41 **But it has no feeling. As the metal, is hot, it is not,**  
42 **given to love.**

43 It burns the thing  
44 inside it. And that thing  
45 screams.



[Page 62 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Poem For Willie Best

12

### I

1 The face sings, alone  
2 at the top  
3 of the body. All  
4 flesh, all song, aligned. For hell  
5 is silent, at those cracked lips  
6 flakes of skin and mind  
7 twist and whistle softly  
8 as they fall.  
9 It was your own death  
10 you saw. Your own face, stiff  
11 and raw. This  
12 without sound, or  
13 movement. Sweet aften, the  
14 dead beggar bleeds  
15 yet. His blood, for a time  
16 alive, and huddled in a door  
17 way, struggling to sing. Rain  
18 washes it into cracks. Pits  
19 whose bottoms are famous. Whose sides  
20 are innocent broadcasts  
21 of another life.



[Page 63 ]

## II

1 At this point, neither  
2 front nor back. A point, the  
3 dimensionless line. The top  
4 of a head, seen from Christ's  
5 heaven, stripped of history  
6 or desire.  
7 Fixed, perpendicular  
8 to shadow. (even speech, vertical,  
9 leaves no trace. Born in to death  
10 held fast to it, where  
11 the lover spreads his arms, the line  
12 he makes to threaten Gods with history.  
13 The fingers stretch to emptiness. At  
14 each point, after flesh, even light  
15 is speculation. But an end, his end,  
16 failing a beginning.



## 2

1 A cross. The gesture, symbol, line  
2 arms held stiff, nailed stiff, with  
3 no sign, of what gave them strength.  
4 The point, become a line, a cross, or  
5 the man, and his material, driven in  
6 the ground. If the head rolls back  
7 and the mouth opens, screamed into  
8 existence, there will be perhaps  
9 only the slightest hint of movement---  
10 a smear; no help will come. No one  
11 will turn to that station again.

### III

1 At a cross roads, sits the  
2 player. No drum, no umbrella, even  
3 though it's raining. Again, and we  
4 are somehow less miserable because  
5 ere is a hero, used to being wet.  
6 One road is where you are standing now  
7 (reading this, the other, crosses then  
8 rushes into a wood.  
9 5 lbs neckbones.  
10 5 lbs hog innards.  
11 10 bottles cheap wine.  
12 (The contents  
13 of a paper bag, also shoes, with holes  
14 for the big toe, and several rusted  
15 knives. This is a literature, of  
16 symbols. And it is his gift, as the  
17 bag is.  
18 (The contents  
19 again, holy saviours,  
20 300 men on horseback  
21 75 bibles  
22 the quietness  
23 of a field. A rich  
24 man, though wet through  
25 by the rain.  
26 I said,  
27 47 howitzers  
28 7 polished horses jaws  
29 a few trees being waved  
30 softly back under  
31 the black night

[Page 65 ]

32 All This should be  
33 invested.



## IV

1 Where  
2 ever,  
3 he has gone. who ever  
4 mourns  
5 or sits silent  
6 to remember

7 There is nothing of pity  
8 here. Nothing  
9 of sympathy.

## V

1 This is the dance of the raised  
2 leg. Of the hand on the knee  
3 quickly.  
4 As a dance it punishes  
5 speech. 'The house burned. The  
6 old man killed.'  
7 As a dance it  
8 is obscure.

## VI

1 This is the song

[Page 66 ]

2 of the highest C.  
3 The falsetto. An elegance

4 that punishes silence. This is the song  
5 of the toes pointed inward, the arms swung, the  
6 hips, moved, for fucking, slow, from side  
7 to side. He is quoted  
8 saying, "My father was  
9 never a jockey,  
10 but  
11 he did teach me  
12 how to ride."

## VII

1 The balance.  
2 (Rushed in, swarmed of dark, cloaks,  
3 and only red lights pushed a message  
4 to the street. Rub.  
5 This is the lady,  
6 I saw you with.  
7 This is your mother.  
8 This is the lady I wanted  
9 some how to sleep with.  
10 As a dance, or  
11 our elegant song. Sun red and grown  
12 from trees, fences, mud roads in dried out  
13 river beds. This is for me, with no God  
14 but what is given. Give me.  
15 Something more  
16 than what is here. I must tell you  
17 my body hurts.

[Page 67 ]

18 The balance.  
19 Can you hear? Here  
20 I am again. Your boy, dynamite. Can  
21 you hear? **My soul is moved.** The soul  
22 you gave me. I say, my soul, and it

23 is moved. That soul  
24 you gave me.  
25 Yes, I'm sure  
26 this is the lady. You  
27 slept with her. Witness, your boy,  
28 here, dynamite. Hear?  
29 I mean  
30 can you?

31 The balance.  
32 He was tired of losing. (And  
33 his walking buddies tired  
34 of walking.  
35 Bent slightly,  
36 at the waist. Left hand low, to flick  
37 quick showy jabs ala Sugar. The right  
38 cocked, to complete,  
39 any combination.  
40 He was  
41 tired of losing, but he was fighting  
42 a big dumb "farmer."  
43 Such a blue bright  
44 afternoon, and only a few hundred yards  
45 from the beach. He said, I'm tired  
46 of losing.  
47 "I *got* ta cut 'cha."

[Page 68 ]

## VIII

1 A renegade  
2 behind the mask. And even  
3 the mask, a renegade  
4 disguise. Black skin

5 and hanging lip.

6 Lazy

7 Frightened



8 Thieving

9 Very potent sexually

10 Scars

11 Generally inferior

12 (but natural

13 rhythms.

14 His head is

15 at the window. The only

16 part

17 that sings.

18 (The word he used

19 (we are passing St. Mark's place

20 and those crazy jews who fuck)

21 to provoke

22 in neon, still useful

23 in the rain,

24 to provoke

25 some meaning, where before

26 there was only hell. I said

27 silence, at his huddled blood.

[Page 69 ]

28 It is an obscene invention.

29 A white sticky discharge.

30 "Jism," in white chalk

31 on the back of Angel's garage.

32 Red jackets with the head of

33 Hobbes staring into space. "Jasm"

34 the name the leader took, had it  
35 stenciled on his chest.  
36 And he sits  
37 wet at the crossroads, remembering distinctly  
38 each weightless face that eases by. (Sun at  
39 the back door, and that hideous mindless grin.  
40 (Hear?

[Page 70 ]

### Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Joseph To His Brothers

1 They characterize  
2 their lives, and I  
3 fill up  
4 with mine. Fill up  
5 with what I have, with what  
6 I see (or  
7 need. I make  
8 no distinction. As blind men  
9 cannot love too quiet beauty.

10 These philosophers  
11 rein up  
12 their boats. Bring  
13 their gifts, weapons  
14 to my door. As if  
15 that, in itself,  
16 was courage, or counting  
17 science.

18 The story is a long one. Why  
19 I am here like this. Why you  
20 should listen, now, so late, and  
21 weary at the night. Its  
22 heavy rain

23 pushing  
24 the grass flat.

[Page 71 ]

25 It is here  
26 somewhere. It grows  
27 here. Answers. Questions. Noise  
28 as stiff as silence. Silver quiet  
29 beaten heavy under rains. So little  
30 of this we remember. So few portions  
31 of our lives, go on.

[Page 72 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Short Speech to My Friends

[1.]

1 A political art, let it be  
2 tenderness, low strings the fingers  
3 touch, or the width of autumn  
4 climbing wider avenues, among the virtue  
5 and dignity of knowing what city  
6 you're in, who to talk to, what clothes  
7 ---even what buttons---to wear. I address  
8 / the society  
9 the image, of  
10 common utopia.

11 / The perversity  
12 of separation, isolation,  
13 after so many years of trying to enter their kingdoms,  
14 now they suffer in tears, these others, saxophones whining  
15 through the wooden doors of their less than gracious homes.  
16 The poor have become our creators. The black. The thoroughly  
17 ignorant.  
18 Let the combination of morality  
19 and inhumanity  
20 begin.

2.

1 Is power, the enemy? (Destroyer  
2 of dawns, cool flesh of valentines, among  
3 the radios, pauses, drunks  
4 of the 19th century. I see it,

[Page 73 ]

5 as any man's single history. All the possible heroes  
6 dead from heat exhaustion  
7 at the beach  
8 or hiding for years from cameras  
9 only to die cheaply in the pages  
10 of our daily lie.  
11 One hero  
12 has pretensions toward literature  
13 one toward the cultivation of errors, arrogance,  
14 and constantly changing disguises, as trucker, boxer,  
15 valet, barkeep, in the aging taverns of memory. Making love  
16 to those speedy heroines of masturbation or kicking literal evil  
17 continually down filmy public stairs.

18 A compromise  
19 would be silence. To shut up, even such risk  
20 as the proper placement  
21 of verbs and nouns. To freeze the spit

22 in mid-air, as it aims itself  
23 at some valiant intellectual's face.

24 There would be someone  
25 who would understand, for whatever  
26 fancy reason. Dead, lying, Roi, as your children  
27 came up, would also rise. As George Armstrong Custer  
28 these 100 years, has never made  
29 a mistake.

[Page 74 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Politics of Rich Painters**

[1]

1 is something like the rest  
2 of our doubt, whatever slow thought  
3 comes to rest, beneath the silence  
4 of starving talk.  
5 Just their fingers' prints  
6 staining the cold glass, is sufficient  
7 for commerce, and a proper ruling on  
8 humanity. You know the pity  
9 of democracy, that we must sit here  
10 and listen to how he made his money.  
11 Tho the catalogue of his possible ignorance  
12 roars and extends through the room  
13 like fire. "Love," becomes the pass,  
14 the word taken intimately to combat  
15 all the uses of language. So that learning  
16 itself falls into disrepute.

2



1 What they have gathered into themselves  
2 in that short mean trip from mother's iron tit  
3 to those faggot handmaidens of the french whore  
4 who wades slowly in the narrows, waving her burnt out  
5 torch. There are movies, and we have opinions. There are  
6 regions of compromise so attractive, we daily long  
7 to filthy our minds with their fame. And all the songs  
8 of our handsome generation fall clanging like stones

[Page 75 ]

9 in the empty darkness of their heads.  
10 Couples, so beautiful  
11 in the newspapers, marauders of cheap sentiment. So much taste  
12 so little understanding, except some up and coming queer explain  
13 cinema and politics while drowning a cigarette.



3

1 They are more ignorant than the poor  
2 tho they pride themselves with that accent. And  
3 move easily in fake robes of egalitarianism. Meaning,  
4 I will fuck you even if you don't like art. And are wounded  
5 that you call their italian memories petit bourgeois.  
6 Whose death  
7 will be Malraux's? Or the names Senghor, Price, Baldwin  
8 whispered across the same dramatic pancakes, to let each eyelash flutter  
9 at the news of their horrible deaths. It is a cheap game  
10 to patronize the dead, unless their deaths be accountable  
11 to your own understanding. Which be nothing nothing  
12 if not bank statements and serene trips to our ominous countryside.  
13 Nothing, if not whining talk about handsome white men. **Nothing**  
14 **if not false glamorous and static. Except, I admit, your lives**  
15 **are hideously real.**

4

- 1 The source of their art crumbles into legitimate history.
- 2 The whimpering pigment of a decadent economy, slashed into life
- 3 as Yeats' mad girl plummeting over the nut house wall, her broken
- 4 knee caps rattling in the weather, reminding us of lands
- 5 our antennae do not reach.

[Page 76 ]

- 6 And there are people in these savage geographies
- 7 use your name in other contexts
- 8 think, perhaps, the title of your latest painting
- 9 another name for liar.

[Page 77 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Poem For Democrats**

- 1 the city rises
  
- 2 in color, our sad
- 3 ness, blanket this wood place, single drop
- 4 of rain, blue image of
- 5 someone's love.
- 6 Net of rain. Crystal ice
- 7 glass strings, smash
- 8 (on such repertoire of memory
- 9 as:
- 10 baskets
- 11 the long walk up harbor
- 12 & the insistence, rain, as they build
  
- 13 City, is wicked. Not

14 this one, where I am, where they  
15 still move, go to, out of  
16 (transporting your loved one  
17 across the line is death  
18 by drowning.

19 Drowned love  
20 hanged man, swung, cement on his feet.)  
21 But  
22 the small filth of the small mind  
23 short structures of  
24 newark, baltimore, cincinnati, omaha. Distress,  
25 europe has passed we are alone. Europe  
26 frail woman dead, we are alone

[Page 78 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Measure of Memory (The Navigator**

1 The presence of good  
2 is its answer (at the curb  
3 the dead white verb, horse  
4 breathing white steam  
5 in the air)  
6 Leaving, into the clocks  
7 sad lovely lady fixed by words  
8 her man  
9 her rest  
10 her fingers  
11 her wooden house  
12 set against the rocks  
13 of our nation's  
14 enterprise.

15 That we disappear

16 to dance, and dance  
17 when we do,  
18 badly.

19 And wield sentiment  
20 like flesh  
21 like the dumb man's voice  
22 like the cold environment  
23 of need. Or despair, a trumpet  
24 with poison mouthpiece, blind player,  
25 at the garden of least discernment; I

[Page 79 ]

26 stagger, and remember / my own terrible  
27 blankness and lies.

28 The boat's prow angled at the sun  
29 Stiff foam and an invisible cargo  
30 of captains. I buy injury, and decide  
31 the nature of silence. Lines of speed  
32 decay in my voice.

[Page 80 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Footnote To A Pretentious Book**

1 Who am I to love  
2 so deeply? As against  
3 a heavy darkness, pressed  
4 against my eyes. Wetting  
5 my face, a constant trembling

6 rain.

7 A long life, to you. My friend. I

8 tell that to myself, slowly, sucking

9 my lip. A **silence of motives / empties**

10 **the day of meaning.**

11 **What is intimate**

12 **enough? What is**

13 **beautiful?**

14 It is slow unto meaning for

15 any life. If I am an animal, there

16 is proof of my living. The fawns

17 and calves

18 of my age. But it is steel that falls

19 as a thin mist into my consciousness. As a fine

20 ugly spray, I have made

21 some futile ethic

22 with.

23 "Changed my life?" As the dead man

24 pacing at the edge of the sea. As

25 the lips, closed

[Page 81 ]

26 for so long, at the sight

27 of motionless

28 birds.

29 **There is no one to entrust with**

30 **meaning.** (These sails go by, these small

31 deadly animals.)

32 And meaning? These words?

33 Were there some blue expanse

34 of world. Some other

35 flesh, resting

36 at the roof

37 of the world ...

38 you could say of me,

39 that I was truly  
40 simpleminded.

[Page 82 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Rhythm & Blues (I

*(for Robert Williams, in exile)*

[1]

1 The symbols hang limply  
2 in the street. A forest of objects,  
3 motives,  
4 black steaming christ  
5 meat wood and cars  
6 flesh light and stars  
7 scream each new dawn for

8 whatever leaves pushed from gentle lips  
9 fire shouted from the loins of history  
10 immense dream of each silence grown to punctuation  
11 against the grey flowers of the world.

12 I live against them, and hear them, and move  
13 the way they move. Hanged against the night, so many  
14 leaves, not even moving. The women scream tombs  
15 and give the nights a dignity. For his heels  
16 dragged in the brush. For his lips dry as brown wood. As  
17 the simple motion of flesh whipping the air.

18 An incorrigible motive.

19 An action so secret it creates.  
20 Men dancing on a beach.  
21 Disappeared laughter erupting as the sea  
22 erupts.  
23 Controlled eyes seeing now all  
24 there is

[Page 83 ]

25 Ears that have grown  
26 to hold their new maps  
27 Enemies that grow  
28 in silence  
29 Empty white fingers  
30 against the keys (a drunken foolish stupor  
31 to kill these men  
32 and scream "Economics," my God, "Economics"  
33 for all the screaming women drunker still, laid out to rest  
34 under the tables of nightclubs  
35 under the thin trees of expensive forests  
36 informed of nothing save the stink of their failure  
37 the peacock insolence of zombie regimes  
38 the diaphanous silence of empty churches  
39 the mock solitude of a spastic's art.  
40 "Love." My God, (after they  
41 scream "Economics," these shabby personalities  
42 the pederast anarchist chants against millions of  
43 Elk-sundays in towns quieter than his. Lunches. Smells  
44 the sidewalk invents, and the crystal music even dumb niggers  
45 hate. They scream it down. They will not hear your jazz. Or  
46 let me tell of the delicate colors of the flag, the graphic blouse  
47 of the beautiful italian maiden. Afternoon spas  
48 with telephone booths, Butterfingers, grayhaired anonymous trustees.  
49 dying with the afternoon. The people of my life  
50 caressed with a silence that only they understand. Let their sons  
51 make wild sounds of their mothers for your pleasure. Or  
52 drive deep wedges in flesh / screaming birds of mourning, at  
53 their own. The invisible mountains of New Jersey, linger  
54 where I was born And the wind on that stone

- 1 Street of tinsel, and the jeweled dancers
- 2 of Belmont. Stone royalty they tear down
- 3 for new buildings where fags invent jellies.

A tub, a slick head, and the pink houses waving  
at the night as it approaches. A dead fish truck  
full of porters I ran track with, effeminate blues singers, the wealth  
of the nation transposed into the ring of my flesh's image. Grand dancers  
spray noise and disorder in these old tombs. Liverwurst sandwiches dry  
on brown fenced-in lawns, unfinished cathedrals tremble with our  
screams.

Of the dozens, the razor, the cloth, the sheen, all speed adventure locked  
in my eyes. I give you now, to love me, if I spare what flesh of yours  
is left. If I see past what I feel, and call music simply "Art" and will  
not take it to its logical end. For the death by hanging, for  
the death by the hooded political murderer, for the old man dead in his  
tired factory; election machines chime quietly his fraudulent faith.

**For** the well that marks the burned stores. For the deadly idiot of compromise  
who shrieks compassion, and bids me love my neighbor. Even beyond the  
meaning  
of such act as would give all my father's dead ash to fertilize their bilious  
land. Such act as would give me legend, "This is the man who saved us  
Spared us from the disappearance of the sixteenth note, the destruction  
of the scale. This is the man who against the black pits of despairing genius  
cried, "Save the Popular Song." For them who pat me in the huddle and  
do not  
argue at the plays. For them who finish second and are happy they are  
Chinese,  
and need not run those 13 blocks.



I am not moved. I will not move to save them. There is no "melody." Only the foot stomped, the roaring harmonies of need. The hand banged on the table, waved in the air. The teeth pushed against the lip. The face and fingers sweating. "Let me alone," is praise enough for these musicians.

3

My own mode of conscience. And guilt, always the obvious connection. They spread you in the sun, and leave you there, one of a kind, who has no sons to tell this to. The mind so bloated at its own judgment. **The railing consequence of energy given in silence.** Ideas whose sole place is where they form. The language less than the act. **The act so far beyond itself, meaning all forms, all modes, all voices, chanting for safety.**

I am deaf and blind and lost and still not again sing your quiet verse. I have lost even the act of poetry, and writhe now for cool horizonless dawn. The shake and chant, bulled electric motion, figure of what there will be as it sits beside me waiting to live past my own meekness. My own light skin. **Bull of yellow perfection, imperfectly made, imperfectly understood,** except as it rises against the mountains, like sun but brighter, like flame but hotter. There will be those who will tell you it will be beautiful.

## *Crow Jane*

"Crow Jane, Crow Jane, don't hold your head so high, You realize, baby, you got to lay down and die."

---Mississippi Joe Williams

[Page 87 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : For Crow Jane (Mama Death.**

1 For dawn, wind  
2 off the river. Wind  
3 and light, from  
4 the lady's hand. Cold  
5 stuff, placed against  
6 strong man's lips. Young gigolo's  
7 of the 3rd estate. Young ruffians  
8 without no homes. The wealth  
9 is translated, corrected, a  
10 dark process, like thought, tho  
11 it provide a landscape  
12 with golden domes.  
13 'Your people  
14 without love.' And life  
15 rots them. **Makes a silence**  
**16 blankness in every space**  
**17 flesh thought to be.** (First light,  
18 is dawn. Cold stuff  
19 to tempt a lover. Old lady  
20 of flaking eyes. Moon lady  
21 of useless thighs.

[Page 88 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Crow Jane's Manner.**

1 Is some pilgrimage  
2 to thought. Where she goes, in fairness,  
3 "nobody knows." And then, without love,  
4 returns to those wrinkled stomachs  
5 ragged bellies / of young ladies  
6 gone with seed. Crow  
7 will not have. Dead virgin  
8 of the mind's echo. Dead lady  
9 of thinking, back now, without  
10 the creak of memory.  
11 Field is yellow. Fils dead  
12 (Me, the last ... black lip hung  
13 in dawn's gray wind. The last,  
14 for love, a taker, took my kin.

15 Crow. Crow. Where  
16 you leave my  
17 other boys?

[Page 89 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Crow Jane in High Society.**

1 (Wipes  
2 her nose  
3 on the draperies. Spills drinks  
4 fondles another man's  
5 life. She is looking  
6 for alternatives. Openings  
7 where she can lay all

8 this greasy talk  
9 on somebody. Me, once. Now  
10 I am her teller.  
11 (And I tell  
12 her symbols, as the grey movement  
13 of clouds. Leave  
14 grey movements  
15 of clouds. Leave, always,  
16 more.

17 Where is she? That she  
18 moves without light. Even  
19 in our halls. Even with  
20 our laughter, lies, dead drunk  
21 in a slouch hat famous king.  
22 Where?

23 To come on so.

[Page 90 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Crow Jane the Crook.**

[1.]

1 Of the night  
2 of the rain, she  
3 reigned, reined, her  
4 fat whores and horse.

5 (A cloud burst,  
6 and wet us. The mountain

7 split, and burned us. We thought  
8 we were done.

9 Jane.  
10 Wet lady of no image. We  
11 thought, you had left us. Dark  
12 lady, of constant promise. We thought  
13 you had gone.

2.

1 My heart is cast in bitter  
2 metal. Condiments, spices  
3 all the frustration of earth,  
4 that has so much more desire

5 than resolution. Want than pleasure.  
6 Oh, Jane. (Her boat bumps at the ragged  
7 shore. Soul of the ocean, go out, return.  
8 Oh, Jane, we thought you had gone.

[Page 91 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Dead Lady Canonized.**

1 (A thread  
2 of meaning. Meaning light. The quick  
3 response. To breath, or the virgins  
4 sick odor against the night.

5 (A trail  
6 of objects. Dead nouns, rotted faces

7 propose the nights image. Erect  
8 for that lady, a grave of her own.

9 (The stem  
10 of the morning, sets itself, on  
11 each window ( of thought, where it  
12 goes. The lady is dead, may the Gods,

13 (those others  
14 beg our forgiveness. And Damballah, kind father,  
15 sew up  
16 her bleeding hole.

[Page 92 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : *Duncan Spoke of a Process***

1 And what I have learned  
2 of it, to repeat, repeated  
3 as a day will repeat  
4 its color, the tired sounds  
5 run off its bones. In me, a balance.

6 Before that, what came easiest. From  
7 wide poles, across the greenest earth,  
8 eyes locked on, where they could live, and  
9 whatever came from there, where the hand  
10 could be offered, like Gideon's young troops  
11 on their knees at the water.

12 I test myself,  
13 with memory. A live bloody skeleton. Hung as softly  
14 as summer. Sways like words' melody, as ugly as any  
15 lips, or fingers stroking lakes, or flesh like a

16 white frightened scream.

17 What comes, closest, is  
18 closest. Moving, there  
19 is a wreck of spirit,  
20 a heap of broken feeling. What

21 was only love  
22 or in those cold rooms,  
23 opinion. Still, it made  
24 color. And filled me

[Page 93 ]

25 as no one will. As, even  
26 I cannot fill  
27 myself.

28 I see what I love most and will not  
29 leave what futile lies  
30 I have. I am where there  
31 is nothing, save myself. And go out to  
32 what is most beautiful. What some noncombatant Greek  
33 or soft Italian prince  
34 would sing, "Noble Friends."  
35 Noble Selves. And which one

36 is truly  
37 to rule here? And  
38 what country is this?

[Page 94 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Audubon, Drafted

(for Linda)

1 It does not happen. That love, removes  
2 itself. (I am leaving, Goodbye!  
3 Removes  
4 itself, as rain, hard iron rain  
5 comes down, then stops. All those  
6 eyes opened for morning, close with  
7 what few hours given them. With tears,  
8 or at a stone wall, shadows drag down.

9 I am what I think I am. You are what  
10 I think you are. The world is the  
11 one thing, that will not move. It is  
12 made of stone, round, and very ugly.

[Page 95 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : If Into Love the Image Burdens

1 The front of the head  
2 is the scarred cranium. The daisy  
3 night, alone with its mills. Grumbling  
4 through history, with its nest  
5 of sorrow. I felt lost  
6 and alone. The windows  
7 sat on the street and smoked  
8 in dangling winter. To autumn  
9 from spring, summer's questions  
10 paths, present to the head  
11 and fingers. The shelf. The  
12 rainbow. Cold knuckles rub against



13 a window. The rug. The flame. A woman  
14 kneels against the sill. Each figure  
15 halves silence. Each equation  
16 sprinkles light.

17 Grey hats and eyes  
18 for the photographed  
19 trees. Grey stones and limbs  
20 and a herd of me's.

21 Past, perfect.

22 Each correct color  
23 not in nature, makes  
24 us weep. Each inexpressible  
25 idea. The fog lifts. The fog

[Page 96 ]

26 lifts. Now falls. The fog  
27 falls.

28 And nothing is done, or complete. No person  
29 loved, or made better or beautiful. Came here  
30 lied to, leave  
31 the same. Dead boned talk  
32 of history. Grandfathers skid  
33 down a ramp of the night. Flame  
34 for his talk, if it twists  
35 like light on leaves.

36 Out past the fingers.  
37 Out past the eyes.

[Page 97 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Black Dada Nihilismus

[1]

1 . Against what light

2 is false what breath

3 sucked, for deadness.

4 Murder, the cleansed

5 purpose, frail, against

6 God, if they bring him

7 bleeding, I would not

8 forgive, or even call him

9 black dada nihilismus.

10 The protestant love, wide windows,

11 color blocked to Mondrian, and the

12 ugly silent deaths of jews under

13 the surgeon's knife. (To awake on

14 69th street with money and a hip

15 nose. Black dada nihilismus, for

16 the umbrella'd jesus. Trilby intrigue

17 movie house presidents sticky the floor.

18 B.D.N., for the secret men, Hermes, the

19 blacker art. Thievery (ahh, they return  
20 those secret gold killers. Inquisitors

[Page 98 ]

21 of the cocktail hour. Trismegistus, have

22 them, in their transmutation, from stone  
23 to bleeding pearl, from lead to burning  
24 looting, dead Moctezuma, find the West

25 a grey hideous space.

2

1 From Sartre, a white man, it gave  
2 the last breath. And we beg him die,  
3 before he is killed. Plastique, we

4 do not have, only thin heroic blades.  
5 The razor. Our flail against them, why  
6 you carry knives? Or brutaled lumps of

7 heart? Why you stay, where they can  
8 reach? Why you sit, or stand, or walk  
9 in this place, a window on a dark

10 warehouse. Where the minds packed in  
11 straw. New homes, these towers, for those  
12 lacking money or art. A cult of death,

13 need of the simple striking arm under  
14 the streetlamp. The cutters, from under  
15 their rented earth. Come up, black dada

16 nihilismus. Rape the white girls. Rape  
17 their fathers. Cut the mothers' throats.

[Page 99 ]

18 Black dada nihilismus, choke my friends

19 in their bedrooms with their drinks spilling  
20 and restless for tilting hips or dark liver  
21 lips sucking splinters from the master's thigh.

22 Black scream  
23 and chant, scream,  
24 and dull, un  
25 earthly  
26 hollering. Dada, bilious  
27 what ugliness, learned  
28 in the dome, colored holy  
29 shit (i call them sinned

30 or lost  
31 burned masters  
32 of the lost  
33 nihil German killers  
34 all our learned

35 art, 'member  
36 what you said  
37 money, God, power,  
38 a moral code, so cruel  
39 it destroyed Byzantium, Tenochtitlan, Commanch

40 (got it, *Baby!*)

41 For tambo, willie best, dubois, patrice, mantan, the  
42 bronze buckaroos.

43 For Jack Johnson, asbestos, tonto, buckwheat,  
44 billie holiday.

[Page 100 ]

45 For tom russ, l'overture, vessey, beau jack,

46 (may a lost god damballah, rest or save us  
47 against the murders we intend  
48 against his lost white children  
49 black dada nihilismus

[Page 101 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Guerrilla Handbook**

1 In the palm  
2 the seed  
3 is burned up  
4 in the wind.  
5 In their rightness  
6 the tree trunks are socialists  
7 leaves murder the silence and are brown  
8 and old when they blow to the sea.  
9 Convinced  
10 of the lyric. Convinced  
11 of the man's image (since  
12 he will not look at substance

13 other than his ego. Flowers, grapes  
14 the shadows of weeds, as the weather  
15 is colder, and women walk  
16 with their heads down.  
17 Silent political rain  
18 against the speech  
19 of friends. (We love them  
20 trapped in life, knowing no way out  
21 except description. Or black soil  
22 floating in the arm.  
23 We must convince the living  
24 that the dead  
25 cannot sing.

[Page 102 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Green Lantern's Solo**

[1]

A deep echo, of open fear: the field drawn in  
as if to close, and die, in the old man's eyes  
as if to shut itself, as the withered mouth of  
righteousness beats its gums on the cooling day.  
As if to die  
without knowing life.  
Having lived, when  
he did (an old stout God  
in the spent bones  
of his dignity. No screams  
break his wooden lips  
His urine scatters  
as steel, which will fall  
on any soft thing  
you have. (Murder

is speaking of us.

I break and run, or hang back and hide  
having been killed by wild beasts in my young wife's  
sleep. Having been torn into small echoes of lie, or surrounded  
in dim rooms by the smelly ghosts of wounded intellectuals. Old  
science majors  
whose mothers were brilliant understudys  
or the famous mistress of a benevolent gangster.  
Some mysterious comment on the world at the birth  
of the word. Some mysterious jangle of intellects bent on the  
crudeness

[Page 103 ]

of any death so perfectly ignorant as ours.  
My friend, the lyric poet,  
who has never had an orgasm. My friend,  
the social critic, who has never known society,  
or read the great italian liars, except his father  
who calls the whitehouse nightly, asking for hideous assignments.  
My friend who has thrown himself against the dignity of all human flesh  
yet beats at its image, as if he was the slow intellect who thought up  
God.



No, Nigger, no, blind drunk in **SantaSurreal's beard**. Dead hero  
for our time who would advance the nation's economy by poking holes  
in his arms. **As golden arms build a forest of loves, and find only  
the heavy belly breath of ladies whispering their false pregnancies through  
the**  
phone. **The stagnant image of bats sailing out of their mouths as they  
shape the syllable of revenge. Let me say it is Love, but never feeling.  
It is knowledge, but never perfection, or something as stupidly callous  
as beauty.**



So important a silence as their lives, dwindled, rusted, corrupted away. As the port, where smoke rises for the poor french sailor and his indian whore. There are bones, which still clog those blue soft seas, and give a human history to nature. **Can you understand that nothing is free!** Even the **floating strangeness of the poet's head** the crafted visions of the intellect, *named, controlled*, beat and erected to work, and **struggle under the heavy fingers of art**. What valley, what mountain, what eagle or afternoon, is not fixed or changed under our feet or eyes? **What man unremoved from his meat's source, can continue to believe totally in himself?** Or on the littered sidewalks of his personal history, can continue to believe in his own dignity or intelligence.



[Page 104 ]

**Except the totally ignorant  
who are our leaders.  
Except the completely devious  
who are our lovers.**

No man except a charlatan  
could be called "Teacher," as

big birds will run off from their young  
if they follow too closely, or the drowned youths at puberty  
who did not allow that ritual was stronger than  
their mother's breasts.

The completely free are the completely innocent, of which  
no thing I know can claim: despite the dirty feet  
of our wise men, their calm words hung in a line, from city  
to city: despite the sickening courage or useless honesty  
of men who claim to love each other and resolve their lives  
as four letter words: despite the rightness, the strength  
the brilliance and character, the undeniable idiocy of poets  
like Marx and Rousseau.

What we have created, is ourselves



as heroes, as lovers, as disgustingly  
evil. As Dialogues with the soul, with  
the self, Selves, screaming furiously  
to each other. As the same fingers  
touch the same faces, as the same  
mouths close on each other. The killed  
is the killer, the loved the lover



and the islands of mankind have grown huge to include all life,  
all lust, all commerce and beauty. Each idea a reflection of itself  
and all the ideas men have ever had. Truth, Lie, so close they defy  
inspection, and are built into autonomy by naive fools,  
who have no wish for wholeness or strength. Who can not but yearn

[Page 105 ]

for the One Mind, or Right, or call it some God, a thing beyond  
themselves, some thing toward which all life is fixed, some static,  
irreducible, constantly correcting, dogmatic economy  
of the soul.



[Page 106 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : War Poem

- 1 The battle waxed (battle wax, good night!
- 2 Steep tumors of the sea's energy
- 3 shells, shells, gold lights under the tree's
- 4 cover.)

- 5 In spring the days explode
- 6 In Spain old cuckolds watch their wives
- 7 and send their money to America.


8 Straw roofs, birds, any thing we have not  
9 got. Destroyed before it got here. *Battle*,  
10 an old dead flower she put on her breast.

11 Shells crush the beach. Are crushed  
12 beneath her feet. Wait for night,  
13 and the one soldier will not mind us  
14 sitting here, listening to the familiar  
15 water, scatter in the shadows.

[Page 107 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Political Poem

(for Basil)

1 **Luxury, then, is a way of**  
2 **being ignorant,** comfortably   
3 An approach to the open market  
4 of least information. Where theories  
5 can thrive, under heavy tarpaulins  
6 without being cracked by ideas.

7 (I have not seen the earth for years  
8 and think now possibly **"dirt" is**  
9 **negative, positive, but clearly**  
10 **social.** I cannot plant a seed, cannot  
11 recognize the root with clearer dent  
12 than indifference. Though I eat  
13 and shit as a natural man ( Getting up  
14 from the desk to secure a turkey sandwich  
15 and answer the phone: the poem undone  
16 undone by my station, by my station,  
17 and the bad words of Newark.) Raised up  
18 to the breach, we seek to fill for this

19 crumbling century. The darkness of love,  
20 in whose sweating memory all error is forced.

21 Undone by the logic of any specific death. (Old gentlemen  
22 who still follow fires, tho are quieter  
23 and less punctual. It is a polite truth  
24 we are left with. Who are you? What are you  
25 saying? Something to be dealt with, as easily.

[Page 108 ]

26 The noxious game of reason, saying, "No, No,  
27 you cannot feel," like my dead lecturer  
28 lamenting thru gipsies his fast suicide.

[Page 109 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Snake Eyes**

1 That force is lost  
2 which shaped me, spent  
3 in its image, battered, an old brown thing  
4 swept off the streets  
5 where it sucked its  
6 gentle living.  
7 And what is meat  
8 to do, that is driven to its end  
9 by words? The frailest gestures  
10 grown like skirts around breathing.  
11 We take  
12 unholy risks to prove  
13 we are what we cannot be. For instance,

14 I am not even crazy.

[Page 110]

### Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Poem for Speculative Hipsters

1 He had got, finally,  
2 to the forest  
3 of motives. There were no  
4 owls, or hunters. No Connie Chatterleys  
5 resting beautifully  
6 on their backs, having casually  
7 brought socialism  
8 to England.  
9 Only ideas,  
10 and their opposites.  
11 Like,  
12 he was *really*  
13 nowhere.

[Page 111]

### Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Dichtung

1 A torn body, correspondent  
  
2 of extreme cold. Altitude  
3 or thought, colliding as an image  
4 of  
5 moving water, time, the slip  
  
6 of simple life. It is matter, after all,

7 that is corrupted, not  
8 spirit. After all, it is spirit  
9 that is corrupted  
10 not matter.  
11 The role given,  
12 mashed into protein  
13 grace. A lifted arm  
14 in shadow. A lifted thinking  
15 banging silently  
16 in the darkness.  
17 I fondle what  
18 I find  
19 of myself. Of you  
20 what I understand.  
21 Trumpets of slow weather.  
22 Love blends  
23 in season.

[Page 112]

### Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Valéry As Dictator

1 Sad. And it comes  
2 tomorrow. Again, gray, the streaks  
3 of work  
4 shedding the stone  
5 of the pavement, dissolving  
6 with the idea  
7 of singular endeavor. Herds, the  
8 herds  
9 of suffering intelligences  
10 bunched,  
11 and out of  
12 hearing. Though the day  
13 come to us  
14 in waves,  
15 sun, air, the beat  
16 of the clock.  
17 Though I stare at the radical



18 world,  
19 wishing it would stand still.  
20 Tell me,  
21 and I gain at the telling.  
22 Of the lie, and the waking  
23 against the heavy breathing  
24 of new light, dawn, shattering  
25 the naive cluck  
26 of feeling  
27 What is tomorrow  
28 that it cannot come  
29 today?



[Page 113]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Liar

1 What I thought was love  
2 in me, I find a thousand instances  
3 as fear. (Of the tree's shadow  
4 winding around the chair, a distant music  
5 of frozen birds rattling  
6 in the cold.  
7 Where ever I go to claim  
8 my flesh, there are entrances  
9 of spirit. And even its comforts  
10 are hideous uses I strain  
11 to understand.  
12 Though I am a man  
13 who is loud  
14 on the birth  
15 of his ways. Publicly redefining  
16 each change in my soul, as if I had predicted  
17 them,  
18 and profited, biblically, even tho  
19 their chanting weight,  
20 erased familiarity  
21 from my face.

22 A question I think,  
23 an answer, whatever sits  
24 counting the minutes  
25 till you die.

26 When they say, "It is Roi  
27 who is dead?" I wonder  
28 who will they mean?

[Page 115 ]

### **BLACK MAGIC [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]**

[Page 117 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Three Modes of History and Culture**

1 Chalk mark sex of the nation, on walls we drummers  
2 know  
3 as cathedrals. Cathedra, in a churning meat milk.

4 Women glide through looking for telephones. Maps  
5 weep  
6 and are mothers and their daughters listening to

7 music teachers. From heavy beginnings. Plantations,  
8 learning  
9 America, as speech, and a common emptiness. Songs knocking

10 inside old women's faces. Knocking through cardboard trunks.  
11 Trains  
12 leaning north, catching hellfire in windows, passing through

13 the first ignoble cities of missouri, to illinois, and the panting  
14 Chicago.  
15 And then all ways, we go where flesh is cheap. Where factories

16 sit open, burning the chiefs. Make your way! Up through fog and  
17 history  
18 Make your way, and swing the general, that it come flash open

19 and spill the innards of that sweet thing we heard, and gave theory  
20 to.  
21 Breech, bridge, and reach, to where all talk is energy. And there's

[Page 118 ]

22 enough, for anything singular. All our lean prophets and rhythms.  
23 Entire  
24 we arrive and set up shacks, hole cards, Western hearts at the edge

25 of saying. Thriving to balance the meanness of particular skies.  
26 Race  
27 of madmen and giants.

28 Brick songs. Shoe songs. Chants of open weariness.  
29 Knife wiggle early evenings of the wet mouth. Tongue  
30 dance midnight, any season shakes our house. Don't  
31 tear my clothes! To doubt the balance of misery  
32 ripping meat hug shuffle fuck. The Party of Insane  
33 Hope. I've come from there too. Where the dead told lies  
34 about clever social justice. Burning coffins voted  
35 and staggered through cold white streets listening  
36 to Willkie or Wallace or Dewey through the dead face



37 of Lincoln. Come from there, and belched it out.

38 I think about a time when I will be relaxed.

39 When flames and non-specific passion wear themselves

40 away. And my eyes and hands and mind can turn

41 and soften, and my songs will be softer

42 and lightly weight the air.

[Page 119 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Poem Welcoming Jonas Mekas to America**

1 This night's first star, hung

2 high up over a factory. From my window,

3 a smile held my poetry in. A tower, where I work

4 and drink, vomit, and spoil myself for casual life.

5 Looking past things, to their meanings. All the pretensions

6 of consciousness. Looking out, or in, the precise stare

7 of painful reference. (Saying to the pretty girl, "Pain

8 has to be educational.") Or so I thought, riding down

9 in the capsule, call it elevator lady, speedless forceless

10 profile thrust toward the modern lamp, in lieu of a natural

11 sun. Our beings are here. (Take this chance to lick yourself,

12 the salt and stain of memory history and object.) Shit! Love!

13 Things we must have some use for. Old niggers in time on the

14 dreary street. Man, 50 ... woman, 50, drunk and falling in the street.

15 I could say, looking at their lot, a poet has just made a note of your


16 hurt. First star, high over the factory. I could say, if I had any courage

17 but my own. First star, high over the factory. Get up off the ground, or

18 just look at it, calmly, where you are.

[Page 120]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Poem Some People Will Have to Understand

1 Dull unwashed windows of eyes  
2 and buildings of industry. **What**  
3 **industry do I practice?** A slick  
4 colored boy, 12 miles from his  
5 home. I practice no industry.  
6 **I am no longer a credit**  
7 **to my race.** I read a little,  
8 **scratch against silence slow spring**   
9 afternoons.  
10 I had thought, before, some years ago  
11 that I'd come to the end of my life.  
12 Watercolor ego. Without the preciseness  
13 a violent man could propose.  
14 But the wheel, and the wheels,  
15 wont let us alone. All the fantasy  
16 and justice, and dry charcoal winters  
17 **All the pitifully intelligent citizens**  
18 **I've forced myself to love.**

19 We have awaited the coming of a natural  
20 phenomenon. Mystics and romantics, knowledgeable  
21 workers  
22 of the land.

23 **But none has come.**  
24 ( *Repeat* )  
25 but none has come.

26 Will the machinegunners please step forward?

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Letter to E. Franklin Frazier

1 Those days when it was all right  
2 to be a criminal, or die, a postman's son,  
3 full of hallways and garbage, behind the hotdog store  
4 or in the parking lots of the beautiful beer factory.

5 Those days I rose through the smoke of chilling Saturdays  
6 hiding my eyes from the shine boys, my mouth and my flesh  
7 from their sisters. I walked quickly and always alone  
8 watching the cheap city like I thought it would swell  
9 and explode, and only my crooked breath could put it together  
10 again.

11 By the projects and small banks of my time. Counting my steps  
12 on tar or new pavement, following the sun like a park. I imagined  
13 a life, that was realer than speech, or the city's anonymous  
14 fish markets. Shuddering at dusk, with a mile or so up the hill

15 to get home. who did you love  
16 then, Mussolini? What were you thinking,  
17 Lady Day? A literal riddle of image  
18 was me, and my smell was a continent  
19 of familiar poetry. Walking the long way,  
20 always the long way, and up the steep hill.

21 Those days like one drawn-out song, monotonously  
22 promising. The quick step, the watchful march march,  
23 All were leading here, to this room, where memory  
24 stifles the present. And the future, my man, is long  
25 time gone.

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The People Burning

*May-Day! May-Day!*

---Pilot talk

- 1 They now gonna make us shut up. Ease
  - 2 thru windows in eight dollar hats
  - 3 sharpening their pencils on match books. List
  - 4 our errors and lies, stumbling over our souls
  - 5 in the dark, for the sake of unnatural advantage.
- 
- 6 They now gonna line you up, ask you about God. Nail
  - 7 your answers on the wall, for the bowling alley owners
  - 8 to decide. They now gonna pretend they flowers. Snake stalked
  - 9 large named vegetables, who have, if nothing else,
  - 10 the title: World's Vilest Living Things.
- 
- 11 The Dusty Hearts of Texas, whose most honest world
  - 12 is the long look into darkness, sensing the glittering
  - 13 affront of reason or faith or learning. Preferring
  - 14 fake tiger smells rubbed on the balls, and clothes
  - 15 the peasants of no country on earth would ever be
  - 16 vulgar enough to wear. The legacy of diseased mediocrity.
- 
- 17 Become an Italian or Jew. Forget the hatred of natural
  - 18 insolence. The teetering sense of right, as balance, each
  - 19 natural man must have. Become a Jew, and join the union,
  - 20 forget about Russia or any radicalism past a hooked grin.
  - 21 Become an Italian quietist in some thin veneer of reasonable
  - 22 gain. Lodi, Metuchen, Valley Stream, welcomes you into its

23 leather ridiculousness. Forget about any anarchy except the

[Page 123 ]

24 understandable urge to be violent, or flashy, or fast, or  
25 heavy fisted. Sing at Radio City, but never rage at the chosen,  
26 for they have given you the keys to their hearts. Made you  
27 the Fridays and Saturdays of the regime, clothed you in promise  
28 and utility, and banned your thinkers to worship the rags  
29 of your decline.

30 For the Reconstruction, for the march into any anonymous America,  
31 stretches beyond hills of newsprint, and dishonorable intention.  
32 Forget any dignity, but that that is easily purchased. And recognized  
33 by Episcopalians as they pay their garbage bills. The blueprint's sound.

34 And the nation is smaller and the loudest mouths are recognized  
35 and stunned by the filth of their hopeless truths. (I've got to  
36 figure this all out. Got to remember just where I came in. Freedom Suite,  
37 some five six years ago, Rollins cradling the sun, as it rose, and we  
38 dreamed then, of becoming, unlike our fathers, and the other cowboys,  
39 strong men in our time, raging and clawing, at fools of any persuasion.)

40 Now they ask me to be a jew or italian, and turn from the moment  
41 disappearing into the shaking clock of treasonable safety, like reruns  
42 of films, with sacred coon stars. To retreat, and replay; throw my mind out,  
43 sit down and brood about the anachronistic God, they will tell you  
44 is real. Sit down and forget it. Lean on your silence, breathing  
45 the dark. Forget your whole life, pop your fingers in a closed room,  
46 hopped-up witch doctor for the cowards of a recent generation. It is  
47 choice, now, like a philosophy problem. It is choice, now, and  
48 the weight is specific and personal. It is not an emotional decision.  
49 There are facts, and who was it said, that this is a scientific century.

[Page 124 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Death Is Not As Natural As You Fags Seem To Think**

1 I hunt  
2 the black puritan.  
3 (Half-screamer

4 in dull tones  
5 of another forest.

6 Respector of power. That it transform, and enlarge  
7 Hierarchy crawls over earth (change exalting space  
8 Dried mud to mountain, cape and whip, swirled  
9 Walkers, and riders and flyers.  
10 Language spread into darkness. Be Vowel  
11 and value  
12 Consonant  
13 and direction.  
14 Rather the lust of the thing  
15 than across to droop at its energies. In melted snows  
16 the leather cracks, and pure men claw at their bodies.  
17 Women laugh delicately, delicately rubbing their thighs.

18 And the dead king laughs, looking out the hole  
19 in his tomb. Seeing the poor  
20 singing his evil songs.

[Page 125 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Success**

1 Among things with souls, find me.

2 Picking thru the alphabet  
3 or leaning out the window. (Lives  
4 and magic.) Old witch city, the  
5 lights and roads (floating) up near the tops  
6 of buildings. Electric names, which are not  
7 love's. A rolling Eastern distress. Water cutting  
8 the coast, lulling the mysterious classes.

9 Murderers humming under the window.

10 A strutting long headed Negro. Beneath the red silk

11 of unique social fantasy. Shore invisible under tenements.

12 The Jew who torments Hitler in Paradise, wiping thick fingers

13 on a hospital cloth. His fingerprints on the dough, marking it

14 before baking. Drifting to sleep in Pelham, fucking a female spy.

15 This man was used against me,  
16 in a dream.  
17 Broken teeth  
18 Dirty apron  
19 Hires a bowery desperado,  
20 to pull out the garbage

[Page 126 ]

21 and imagine the whiteness  
22 of his wife's withered stomach.

23 Ding

24 The proportion of Magic  
25 has seeped so low.

26 For the 1st person plural

27 America, then,  
28 Atlantis,  
29 in blind overdose.

[Page 127]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The New World**

1 The sun is folding, cars stall and rise  
2 beyond the window. The workmen leave  
3 the street to the bums and painters' wives  
4 pushing their babies home. Those who realize  
5 how fitful and indecent consciousness is  
6 stare solemnly out on the emptying street.  
7 The mourners and soft singers. The liars,  
8 and seekers after ridiculous righteousness. All  
9 my doubles, and friends, whose mistakes cannot  
10 be duplicated by machines, and this is all of our  
11 arrogance. Being broke or broken, dribbling  
12 at the eyes. Wasted lyricists, and men  
13 who have seen their dreams come true, only seconds  
14 after they knew those dreams to be horrible conceits  
15 and plastic fantasies of gesture and extension,  
16 shoulders, hair and tongues distributing misinformation  
17 about the nature of understanding. No one is that simple  
18 or priggish, to be alone out of spite and grown strong



19 in its practice, mystics in two-pants suits. Our style,  
20 and discipline, controlling the method of knowledge.  
21 Beatniks, like Bohemians, go calmly out of style. And boys  
22 are dying in Mexico, who did not get the word.  
23 The lateness of their fabrication: mark their holes  
24 with filthy needles. The lust of the world. This will not  
25 be news. The simple damning lust,  
26 float flat magic in low changing  
27 evenings. Shiver your hands  
28 in dance. Empty all of me for

[Page 128 ]

29 knowing, and will the danger  
30 of identification,

31 Let me sit and go blind in my dreaming  
32 and be that dream in purpose and device.

33 A fantasy of defeat, a strong strong man  
34 older, but no wiser than the defect of love.

[Page 129 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Burning General**

1 Smoke seeping from my veins. Loss from  
2 the eyes. Seeing winter throw its wind  
3 around. Hoping for more, than I'll ever  
4 have. Forgetting my projects, and the projected  
5 sense of order, any claim to "sense" must make.  
6 The reason Allen and the others (even freakish  
7 pseudo dada mama) in the money jungle of controlled

8 pederasty  
9 finally bolted. Shut and gone, at the same time.

10 But can we replace the common exchange of experience with stroking  
11 some skinny girl's penis? Is sense to be lost, all of it, so that  
12 we can walk up Mulberry Street without getting beat up in Italian.

13 Violence and repression. Silly Nigger hatred for the  
14 silk band of misery. They are right, those fatty doctors. Perhaps  
15 it is best to ease into kill-heaven than have no heaven at all.  
16 What do you think, Eddie, out there in Idaho shivering against  
17 the silence, the emptiness of straight up America? What's it look like  
18 there?

19 Can we ask a man to savor the food of oppression? Even  
20 if it's rich and full of mysterious meaning. Can you establish  
21 (and that word must give my whole game away) any kind of equality?  
22 Can there be such thing forced on the world? That is, that the poor  
23 and their owners appreciate light wherever they are, simply as light.  
24 Why are you so sophisticated? You used to piss and shit in your pants.  
25 Now you walk around *thinking* all the time, as if that sacred act

[Page 130 ]

26 would rewrite the world in bop talk, giving medals to every limping coon  
27 in creation.

28 Is there more to it than that? This is the time to ask, even while perfecting  
29 your line. We realize that ends and means should be separated, but who  
30 will do the separating? The evaluating. You want your experience  
31 thought of as valuable. Which is, listen baby, only another kind  
32 of journalistic enterprise. Not worthy of that bumpy madness  
33 crawled up your thighs when the urine dried those sweet lost winters,  
34 and tears were the whole fucking world.

[Page 131 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Tone Poem

*(for Elvin Jones and Bob Thompson)*

1 A host of loves is the city, and its memory  
2 dead sense traveling (from England) on the sea  
3 for two hundred years. The travelers show up in Japan  
4 to promote peace and prosperity, perhaps a piece  
5 of that nation's ass. Years later, years later,  
6 plays rework the rime of lust. As history, and a cloud  
7 their faces bang invisible notes, wind scribbled leaves  
8 and foam. An eagle hangs above them spinning. Years and travelers  
9 linger among the dead, no reports, gunshots white puffs  
10 deciding the season and the mode of compromise. The general good  
11 has no troops or armor, subtly the books stand closed, except  
12 sad facts circled for unknown hippies carrying the mail.  
13 I leave it there, for them, full of hope, and hurt. All the poems  
14 are full of it. Shit and hope, and history. Read this line  
15 young colored or white and know I felt the twist of dividing  
16 memory. Blood spoiled in the air, caked and anonymous. Arms opening,  
17 opened last night, we sat up howling and kissing. Men who loved  
18 each other. Will that be understood? That we could, and still  
19 move under cold nights with clenched fists. Swing these losers  
20 by the tail. Got drunk then high, then sick, then quiet. But thinking  
21 (and of you lovely shorties sit in libraries seeking such ideas out).  
22 I'm here now, LeRoi, who tried to say something long for you. Keep it.  
23 Forget me, or what I say, but not the tone, and exit image. No points,  
24 or theories, from now on, just me and mine, when they get me, just  
25 think of me as typing with a drink at my right hand, some women who  
26 love me ... and the day growing old and sloppy through the window.

[Page 132 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Gatsby's Theory of Aesthetics

Verse, as a form, is artificial. Poetry is not a form, but rather a result. Whatever the matter, its meaning, if precise enough in its information (and direction) of the world, is poetic. The poetic is the value of poetry, and any concatenation of elements is sufficient to induce the poetic. What you see is as valuable as what you do not. But it is not as meaningful (to you). Poetry aims at difficult meanings. Meanings not already catered to. Poetry aims at reviving, say, a sense of meaning, or meaning's possibility and ubiquitousness.

Identification can be one term of that possibility. That is, showing a thing with its meaning apparent through the act of that showing. Interpretation can be another term. That is, supporting a meaning, with one's own life. That is, under, standing. And using that position as a map, or dictionary. Depending on whether you move or sit.

I write poetry only to enlist the poetic consistently as apt description of my life. I write poetry only in order to feel, and that, finally, sensually, all the terms of my life. I write poetry to investigate my self, and my meaning and meanings.

But also to invest the world with a clearer understanding of it self, but only by virtue of my having brought some clearer understanding of my self into it. I wrote in a poem once, "Feeling predicts intelligence."

But it is possible to feel with any part of our consciousness. Whatever part of us does register: whatever. The head feels. The heart feels. The penis feels. The penis is also, because it is able to feel, conscious, and has intelligence of its own. No one can deny that intelligence, or at least no one should try. The point of life is that it is arbitrary, except in its basest forms. Arbitrariness, or self imposed meaning, is the only thing worth living for. It is the only thing that permits us to live.

[Page 133 ]

The only time I am conscious of my limitations is when I am writing. The rest of the time, there is no standard, at all reasonable, for judging, in fact, what limitations are.

*Year of the Buffalo*  
1964

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : All's Well**

*(For E.R. & M.B.)*

- 1 *African in the Bush of the Hatreds. One gone .*
  
- 2 An old time love withered, in seeing, off and on
- 3 in a thing like rain (the wetness in your head, and
- 4 all the stampeding, fear, hacked open skulls grinning
- 5 sensing your loss, the words floating just beyond your
- 6 fingers (invisible antennae
  
- 7 Just drew a blank, dope nod
- 8 corrupting what's left, and that nothing
- 9 confusion of blankness, the hatred when I wake
- 10 silence for motives, she, woman I am with, is
- 11 silent, as the dream of some other woman, never
- 12 existed, tho she be of flesh and red sperm spinning
- 13 through her veins. This woman came when I stuck her
- 14 iron insect screams holes. Blood flew up into the
- 15 dropper, we sent it back in her. Eyes rolled up,
- 16 lap quivered, lip shook. The next time she
- 17 got depressed going cross town. She held me so.
- 18 Not understanding the buildings stopped, and sky
- 19 hung above them just the same

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Bronze Buckaroo**

*for Herb Jeffries*

1 Soft night comes back  
2 with its clangs and dreams. Back  
3 in through the base  
4 of the hairy skull. The heavy pictures, unavailable  
5 solaces, emptying their churchy magic  
6 out. Golden girls, and thin black ones  
7 patrol the dreamer's meat. Things  
8 shovel themselves, from where they always are. Spinning, a  
9 moment's indecision, past the vision of stealth and silence  
10 Byron thought the night could be. Death blow Eliot silence, dwindling  
11 away, in the 20th century. Poet clocks crouched in their Americas.  
12 Dreaming of poems, only the cold sky could bring. Not room poems, or  
13 fireplace poems, or the great washed poetry of our dizzy middleclass.  
14 But something creeps and grabs them, rapes them on the pavement. The  
15 Screams  
16 are not essays, rich blonde poetess from the mysteries of Kipling's harmon  
17 nica! Not guileful treatises of waste and desire, stuck somewhere  
18 nursing her tilted beauty, like some old fashion whore, embarrassed  
19 by God, or his diseases. The funny heart blows smoke, in the winter  
20 and gives us all the earth we need. In summer, it sweats, and remembers.  
21 Half way up the hill the mutineers stand, and seek their comrades out.  
22 I am half way up, and standing.

[Page 136]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Numbers, Letters**

1 If you're not home, where  
2 are you? Where'd you go? What  
3 were you doing when gone? When  
4 you come back, better make it good.  
5 What was you doing down there, freakin' off  
6 with white women, hangin' out  
7 with Queens, say it straight to be  
8 understood straight, put it flat and real  
9 in the street where the sun comes and the  
10 moon comes and the cold wind in winter

11 waters your eyes. Say what you mean, dig  
12 it out put it down, and be strong  
13 about it.

14 I cant say who I am  
15 unless you agree I'm real

16 I cant be anything I'm not  
17 Except these words pretend  
18 to life not yet explained,  
19 so here's some feeling for you  
20 see how you like it, what it  
21 reveals, and that's Me.

22 Unless you agree I'm real  
23 that I can feel  
24 whatever beats hardest  
25 at our black souls

[Page 137 ]

26 I am real, and I can't say who  
27 I am. Ask me if I know, I'll say  
28 yes, I might say no. Still, ask.  
29 I'm Everett LeRoi Jones, 30 yrs old.

30 A black nigger in the universe. A long breath singer,  
31 wouldbe dancer, strong from years of fantasy  
32 and study. All this time then, for what's happening  
33 now. All that spilling of white ether, clocks in ghostheads  
34 lips drying and rewet, eyes opening and shut, mouths churning.

35 I am a meditative man, And when I say something it's all of me  
36 saying, and all the things that make me, have formed me, colored me  
37 this brilliant reddish night. I will say nothing that I feel is

38 lie, or unproven by the same ghostclocks, by the same riders  
39 always move so fast with the word slung over their backs or  
40 in saddlebags, charging down Chinese roads. I carry some words,  
41 some feeling, some life in me. My heart is large as my mind  
42 this is a messenger calling, over here, over here, open your eyes  
43 and your ears and your souls; today is the history we must learn  
44 to desire. There is no guilt in love.

[Page 138 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Red Eye**

*(for Calvin Hernton and Ishmael Reed)*

1 The corrupt madness of the individual. You cannot live  
2 alone. You are in the world. World, fuck them. World rise  
3 and twist like you do, night madness in rain as heavy as stones.  
4 Alabama gypsy talk, for peeling lips. Look in your mother's head,  
5 if you really want to know everything. Your sister's locked up  
6 pussy. Invasion of the idea syndrome like hand clapping winter in.  
7 Winter will make you move. Or you will freeze in Russia and  
8 never live to see Napoleon as conceived by Marlon Brando.  
9 We are at the point where death is too good for us. We are  
10 in love with the virtue of evil. This communication. Rapping  
11 on wet meat windows, they spin in your head, if I kill you  
12 will not even have chance to hate me

[Page 139 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Western Lady**

1 The sick tightening. Brain damage movie  
2 of forbidden flesh, laying in the shadows  
3 breathing without purpose, meat stacked



4 in terrible silence, her mother wept  
5 to think of that meat, her father, paced  
6 and said the star spangled banner into  
7 his brain damage soup. These were windows  
8 we looked through. The brother died in a  
9 guitar school, stringing guitars and praying  
10 for a piece. And it was his own movie star  
11 slipping green panties over high heels. Hence  
12 his pimples, and the bunching of his waistband.  
13 No one is expected to be rich *and* smart. Hence  
14 planes go down from 30,000, full of screaming  
15 materialists, whose mothers stunted them  
16 hanging around election machines. It was the metal clack  
17 that did it. A flag lobotomy, which has the victims  
18 wallowing on warehouse floors, whistling popular Bach.  
19 I suffer with these announcers. Butter and egg men,  
20 whose promise rolled with the big ice, them's pre-  
21 historic times.

[Page 140 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Return of the Native**

1 Harlem is vicious  
2 modernism. BangClash.  
3 Vicious the way its made.  
4 Can you stand such beauty?  
5 So violent and transforming.  
6 The trees blink naked, being  
7 so few. The women stare  
8 and are in love with them  
9 selves. The sky sits awake  
10 over us. Screaming  
11 at us. No rain.  
12 Sun, hot cleaning sun  
13 drives us under it.

14 The place, and place  
15 meant of  
16 black people. Their heavy Egypt.  
17 (Weird word!) Their minds, mine,  
18 the black hope mine. In Time.  
19 We slide along in pain or too  
20 happy. So much love  
21 for us. All over, so much of  
22 what we need. Can you sing  
23 yourself, your life, your place  
24 on the warm planet earth.  
25 And look at the stones

[Page 141 ]

26 the hearts, the gentle hum  
27 of meaning. Each thing, life  
28 we have, or love, is meant  
29 for us in a world like this.  
30 Where we may see ourselves  
31 all the time. And suffer  
32 in joy, that our lives  
33 are so familiar.

[Page 142 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Black Art**

1 Poems are bullshit unless they are  
2 teeth or trees or lemons piled  
3 on a step. Or black ladies dying  
4 of men leaving nickel hearts  
5 beating them down. Fuck poems  
6 and they are useful, wd they shoot  
7 come at you, love what you are,  
8 breathe like wrestlers, or shudder  
9 strangely after pissing. We want live

10 words of the hip world live flesh &  
11 coursing blood. Hearts Brains  
12 Souls splintering fire. We want poems  
13 like fists beating niggers out of Jocks  
14 or dagger poems in the slimy bellies  
15 of the owner-jews. Black poems to  
16 smear on girdlemamma mulatto bitches  
17 whose brains are red jelly stuck  
18 between 'lizabeth taylor's toes. Stinking  
19 Whores! We want "poems that kill."  
20 Assassin poems, Poems that shoot  
21 guns. Poems that wrestle cops into alleys  
22 and take their weapons leaving them dead  
23 with tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland. Knockoff  
24 poems for dope selling wops or slick halfwhite  
25 politicians Airplane poems, rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr  
26 rrrrrrrrrrrrr ... tuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuh  
27 ... rrrrrrrrrrrrr ... Setting fire and death to  
28 whities ass. Look at the Liberal

[Page 143 ]

29 Spokesman for the jews clutch his throat  
30 & puke himself into eternity ... rrrrrrr  
31 There's a negroleader pinned to  
32 a bar stool in Sardi's eyeballs melting  
33 in hot flame Another negroleader  
34 on the steps of the white house one  
35 kneeling between the sheriffs thighs  
36 negotiating coolly for his people.  
37 Agggh ... stumbles across the room ...  
38 Put it on him, poem. Strip him naked  
39 to the world! Another bad poem cracking  
40 steel knuckles in a jewlady's mouth  
41 Poem scream poison gas on beasts in green berets  
42 Clean out the world for virtue and love,  
43 Let there be no love poems written  
44 until love can exist freely and  
45 cleanly. Let Black People understand  
46 that they are the lovers and the sons

47 of lovers and warriors and sons  
48 of warriors Are poems & poets &  
49 all the loveliness here in the world

50 We want a black poem. And a  
51 Black World.  
52 Let the world be a Black Poem  
53 And Let All Black People Speak This Poem  
54 Silently  
55 or LOUD

[Page 144 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Poem for HalfWhite College Students**

1 Who are you, listening to me, who are you  
2 listening to yourself? Are you white or  
3 black or does that have anything to do  
4 with it? Can you pop your fingers to no  
5 music, except those wild monkeys go on  
6 in your head, can you jerk, to no melody,  
7 except finger poppers get it together  
8 when you turn from starchecking to checking  
9 yourself. How do you sound, your words, are they  
10 yours? The ghost you see in the mirror, is it really  
11 you, can you swear you are not an imitation greyboy,  
12 can you look right next to you in that chair, and swear,  
13 that the sister you have your hand on is not really  
14 so full of Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton is  
15 coming out of her ears. You may even have to be Richard  
16 with a white shirt and face, and four million negroes  
17 think you cute, you may have to be Elizabeth Taylor, old lady,  
18 if you want to sit up in your crazy spot dreaming about dresses,  
19 and the sway of certain porters' hips. Check yourself, learn who it is  
20 speaking, when you make some ultrasophisticated point, check yourself,  
21 when you find yourself gesturing like Steve McQueen, check it out, ask  
22 in your black heart who it is you are, and is that image black or white,

23 you might be surprised right out the window, whistling dixie on the way in.

[Page 145]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : American Ecstasy**

- 1 "Loss of Life Or Both or Both Hands or Both Eyes . . . . . The Principal Sum
- 2 Loss of One Hand and One Foot . . . . . The Principal Sum
- 3 Loss of One Hand and One Eye or One Foot and One Eye . . . . . The Principal Sum
- 4 Loss of One Hand or One Foot . . . . . One half The Principal Sum
- 5 Loss of One Eye . . . . . One fourth The Principal Sum"

[Page 146]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Are Their Blues Singers In Russia?**

- 1 Spies are found wanting. They wanted
- 2 in line, on the snow, a love to get high
- 3 with, and not, the line, a lie, a circling
- 4 tone of merciless involvement, the pushing, the
- 5 stomping, an image of green space was what the spy
- 6 wanted, standing there being shoved and hurled around
- 7 by his nostrils. They cold nights, after waiting, and
- 8 worse mornings. When the girls go by, and the lights go off
- 9 and on, to forget the clocks, and the counting of cobblestones
- 10 to keep pure cellar static off his back. The li'l darling, holding
- 11 'is wee wee he gotta pee, a little run down he leg. He pants soiled,
- 12 the wind freezed that part of his leg that wanted love most

- 13 We stand for tragic emblems when we return to the pros and cons
- 14 of the world. The shielding, for nothing. God's contradictions we

15 speak about as if we knew something, or could feel past what we  
16 describe, and enter the new forms of being. See the door and enter,  
17 get in out of the snow, the watermoccasins, and stuff, mud he  
18 carried around in his mouth, or on the ground up to his ankles,  
19 it'll get stupid or boring. So much, so much, to prepare a proper  
20 place, to not exist in.

21 The day was a bargain.  
22 A jew on the corner was thinking  
23 of bargains. A dog, out back  
24 did not start yet, howling, puny words,  
25 barking in sorrow, a boat, for the spy's family to ride in  
26 while they watched a sinking image of the world, and the spy's death

[Page 147 ]

27 in snow they could really dig as beautiful or cool or somewhere else,  
28 or just grimy lace curtains would make them hang against the boat's window  
29 dreaming of God. The disappointment would come  
30 after they opened their mouths, or version last  
31 would come, and coparmies would salute the jewish dog  
32 barking the rhythms of embezzled deserts.

33 We are all spies for god.

34 We can get betrayed. We ask for it, we ask  
35 so much. And expect the fire the sun set the horizon  
36 to slide through human speech dancing our future dimensions.  
37 We expect some real shit. We expect to love all the things  
38 somebody runs down to us. We want things, and are locked here, to the earth,  
39 by pussy chains, or money chains, or personal indulgence chains, lies, weak  
40 phone calls, attempts to fly when we know good and fucking well we can't  
41 and even  
42 the nerve to get mad, and walk around pretending we are huge magnets  
43 for the  
44 most beautiful force in the universe. And we are, but not in the image of  
45 wind  
46 spreading the grass, or brown grass dying from a sudden snow, near the  
47 unemploy-

48 ment office where the spy stands trying to remember just why he wanted to  
49 be the kinda spy he was

[Page 149 ]

## **HARD FACTS [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]**

[Page 151 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : History On Wheels**

1 Civil Rights  
2 included Nathan  
3 and the rest  
4 of them, who got in america  
5 big shotting off the agony  
6 a class of blue Bloods, hip  
7 to the swing and sway of  
8 the usa. yeh all the 1st  
9 negroes world wide, joined  
10 knees, and shuffled heroically  
11 into congress, city hall, the  
12 anti-p program, and a thousand  
13 penetrable traps of cookstove  
14 america. a class of exploiters,  
15 in black face, collaborators,  
16 not puppets, pulling their own  
17 strings, and ours too, in the  
18 poor people's buck dance, w/o  
19 the bux. But see, then later,  
20 you talkin afrika, and its unity  
21 like a giant fist of iron, smashing  
22 "racialism," around the world. But see  
23 that fist, any fist, reared back to

24 strike an enemy, shd strike the real  
25 enemy. Not a colorless shadow for  
26 black militants in residence, to  
27 bloat the pockets and consolidate  
28 the power of an international

[Page 152 ]

29 bourgeoisie. In rag time, slanting  
30 stick legs, with a pocket full of  
31 toasted seaweed, and a bibliography  
32 of bitter neocapitalists or bohemian  
33 greys, celebrating life in a dark garage  
34 w/ all cars banned until the voodoo car  
35 appear. The way the rich blackies showed  
36 after we marched and built their material  
37 base, now niggers are left in the middle  
38 of the panafrikan highway, babbling about  
39 eternal racism, and divine white supremacy  
40 a hundred thousand dollar a year oppression  
41 and now the intellectualization, the militant  
42 resource of the new class, its historical  
43 valorization. Between them, john johnson  
44 and elijah, david rockefeller rests his  
45 smiling head.

[Page 153 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Das Kapital**

1 Strangling women in the suburban bush  
2 they bodies laid around rotting while martinis are drunk  
3 the commuters looking for their new yorkers feel a draft  
4 & can get even drunker watching the teevee later on the Ford  
5 replay. There will be streams of them coming, getting off  
6 near where the girls got killed. Two of them strangled by  
7 the maniac.



8 There are maniacs hidden everywhere cant you see? By the dozens  
9 and double dozens, maniacs by the carload (tho they are  
10 a minority). But they terrorize us uniformly, all over the place  
11 we look at the walls of our houses, the garbage cans parked full  
12 strewn around our defaulting cities, and we cd get scared. A rat  
13 eases past us on his way to a banquet, can you hear the cheers raised  
14 through the walls, full of rat humor. Blasts of fire, some woman's son will  
15 stumble  
16 and dies with a pool of blood around his head. But it wont be the maniac.  
17 These old houses  
18 crumble, the unemployed stumble by us straining, ashy fingered, harassed.  
19 The air is cold  
20 winter heaps above us consolidating itself in degrees. We need a aspirin or  
21 something, and  
22 pull our jackets close. The baldhead man on the television set goes on in a  
23 wooden way  
24 his unappetizing ignorance can not be stood, or understood. The people  
25 turn the channel  
26 looking for Good Times and get a negro with a pulldown hat. Flashes of  
27 maniac shadows before  
28 bed, before you pull down the shade you can see the leaves being blown

[Page 154 ]

29 down the street  
30 too dark now to see the writing on them, the dates, and amounts we owe.  
31 The streets too  
32 will soon be empty, after the church goers go on home having been saved  
33 again from the  
34 Maniac ... except a closeup of the chief mystic's face rolling down to his  
35 hands will send  
36 shivers through you, looking for traces of the maniacs life. Even there among  
37 the mythophrenics.

38 What can you do? It's time finally to go to bed. The shadows close around  
39 and the room is still.  
40 Most of us know there's a maniac loose. Our lives a jumble of frustrations  
41 and unfilled  
42 capacities. The dead girls, the rats noise, the flashing somber lights, the dead  
43 voice on  
44 television, was that blood and hair beneath the preacher's fingernails? A few

45 other clues

46 we mull them over as we go to sleep, the skeletons of dollarbills, traces of  
47 dead used up  
48 labor, lead away from the death scene until we remember a quiet fit that  
49 everywhere  
50 is the death scene. Tomorrow you got to hit it sighs through us like the  
51 wind, we got to  
52 hit it, like an old song at radio city, working for the yanqui dollarrrr, when  
53 we were  
54 children, and then we used to think it was not the wind, but the maniac  
55 scratching against  
56 our windows. Who is the maniac, and why everywhere at the same time ...

[Page 155 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Real Life**

1 Ted, Ted? In the bay at the bottom of the wat  
2 er lies the president of the united states,  
3 his chappaqui  
4 dick, bent around an immigrant in an  
5 automobile. Nixon calls from the coast, you thought  
6 you'd get away clean, but my vengeance  
7 comes from beyond the grave.  
8 Nixon slobbers on the phone, wetting the cocaine on the desk  
9 he and pat have been snorting since  
10 early morning, herb alpert blurting low contradictions in the wings  
11 Shadows gather on the windows, then blow twisted into the whole dark  
12 which comes now he lights go on  
13 in the white house. Ford cracking his knuckles  
14 turns off the tv and calls nixon  
15 you alright dick, he says, white whistles jag at nixons calm, high  
16 and wild, pat's jaws quivering, green and blues come off the screen  
17 and stutter 3-D in the room, sympathetic and wanting to rub them  
18 he cant speak  
19 rockefeller's talking  
20 ford says the plan, was national

21 unity, the new money  
22 and the old,  
23 he cant speak, nixon cant, high, and hot, cripple forever upstairs  
24 pat starts to pee on the rug, and roll in it. Her giggles like a vincent  
25 price movie, without popcorn, nixon slobbers, trying to make a point, ford  
26 is saying national unity, as rockefeller grins, his finger, shoving up into  
27 the air, across a thousand miles, at the mad western capitalists and their  
28 southern friends. Yall dont know how, this shit works, he is saying (really)

[Page 156 ]

29 the commentator, looks over his shoulder, as if he knows that nixon is  
30 watching. Ford whispers numbly, dick, dick, yes,  
31 mr. president?

[Page 157 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Horatio Alger Uses Scag**

1 Kissinger has made it, yall. He's the secretary  
2 of state, U.S.A. The anglo-snakes have called him  
3 mooing to their side, his bag-time with rocky helped  
4 a lot. His ol lady, was once, they say, rocky's main  
5 squeeze ... intellectually. But Henry, the k, pushes through  
6 his dangerous glasses. His wine smile sloshes back and forth  
7 he's thinking, as he speaks. A fast man on his feet. The subject,  
8 a cold threat to the a-tabs (it makes him feel vaguely nationalistic,  
9 but not in an irresponsible way, him bein a jew and all  
10 ya know ... but they hired him not for his jewishness "grrr ... he sd  
11 what is that", but for his absolute mastery of the art of  
12 bullshitting.  
13 And so, he lays it all out  
14 across the U.N. decks for all  
15 to hear, and be afraid. His freckles, even,  
16 show, so synonomous with america is this  
17 fat priapic mackman  
18 A-rabs, he says, you betta  
19 be cool with that oil & shit

20 & beyond us all, you cdda laught  
21 is the realization that the shadowy figure  
22 in the arab getup, is yo man, rocky, makin  
23 the whole thing  
24 perfect

[Page 158 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : When We'll Worship Jesus**

1 We'll worship Jesus  
2 When jesus do  
3 Somethin  
4 When jesus blow up  
5 the white house  
6 or blast nixon down  
7 when jesus turn out congress  
8 or bust general motors to  
9 yard bird motors  
10 jesus we'll worship jesus  
11 when jesus get down  
12 when jesus get out his yellow lincoln  
13 w/the built in cross stain glass  
14 window & box w/black peoples  
15 enemies we'll worship jesus when  
16 he get bad enough to at least scare  
17 somebody---cops not afraid  
18 of jesus  
19 pushers not afraid  
20 of jesus, capitalists racists  
21 imperialists not afraid  
22 of jesus shit they makin money  
23 off jesus  
24 we'll worship jesus when mao  
25 do, when toure does  
26 when the cross replaces Nkrumah's  
27 star  
28 Jesus need to hurt some a our

[Page 159 ]

29 enemies, then we'll check him  
30 out, all that screaming and hollering  
31 & wallering and moaning talkin bout  
32 jesus, jesus, in a red  
33 check velvet vine + 8 in. heels  
34 jesus pinky finger  
35 got a goose egg ruby  
36 which actual bleeds  
37 jesus at the apollo  
38 doin splits and helpin  
39 nixon trick niggers  
40 jesus w/his one eyed self  
41 tongue kissing johnny carson  
42 up the behind  
43 jesus need to be busted  
44 jesus need to be thrown down and whipped  
45 till something better happen  
46 jesus aint did nothin for us  
47 but kept us turned toward the  
48 sky (him and his boy allah  
49 too, need to be checkd  
50 out!)

51 we'll worship jesus  
52 when he get a boat load of ak-47s  
53 and some dynamite  
54 and blow up abernathy robotin  
55 for gulf  
56 jesus need to be busted  
57 we ain't gonna worship nobody  
58 but niggers gettin up off  
59 the ground  
60 not gon worship jesus  
61 unless he just a tricked up

[Page 160 ]

62 nigger somebody named  
63 outside his race  
64 need to worship yo self fo

65 you worship jesus  
66 need to bust jesus ( + check  
67 out his spooky brother  
68 allah while you heavy  
69 on the case  
70 cause we ain gon worship jesus  
71 we aint gon worship  
72 jesus  
73 we aint gon worship  
74 jesus  
75 not till he do somethin  
76 not till he help us  
77 not till the world get changed  
78 and he ain, jesus ain, he cant change the world  
79 we can change the world  
80 we can struggle against the forces of backwardness, we can  
81 change the world  
82 we can struggle against our selves, our slowness, our connection  
83 with  
84 the oppressor, the very cultural aggression which binds us to  
85 our enemies  
86 as their slaves.  
87 we can change the world  
88 we aint gonna worship jesus cause jesus dont exist  
89 xcept in song and story except in ritual and dance, except in  
90 slum stained  
91 tears or trillion dollar opulence stretching back in history, the  
92 history  
93 of the oppression of the human mind  
94 we worship the strength in us

[Page 161 ]

95 we worship our selves  
96 we worship the light in us  
97 we worship the warmth in us  
98 we worship the world  
99 we worship the love in us  
100 we worship our selves  
101 we worship nature  
102 we worship ourselves  
103 we worship the life in us, and science, and knowledge, and

104 transformation  
105 of the visible world  
106 but we aint gonna worship no jesus  
107 we aint gonna legitimize the witches and devils and spooks and  
108 hobgoblins  
109 the sensuous lies of the rulers to keep us chained to fantasy and  
110 illusion  
111 sing about life, not jesus  
112 sing about revolution, not no jesus  
113 stop singing about jesus,  
114 sing about, creation, our creation, the life of the world and  
115 fantastic  
116 nature how we struggle to transform it, but dont victimize our  
117 selves by  
118 distorting the world  
119 stop moanin about jesus, stop sweatin and crying and stompin  
120 and dyin for jesus  
121 unless thats the name of the army we building to force the land  
122 finally to  
123 change hands. And lets not call that jesus, get a quick  
124 consensus, on that,  
125 lets damn sure not call that black fire muscle  
126 no invisible psychic dungeon  
127 no gentle vision strait jacket, lets call that peoples army, or

[Page 162 ]

128 wapenduzi or  
129 simba  
130 wachanga, but we not gon call it jesus, and not gon worship  
131 jesus, throw  
132 jesus out yr mind. Build the new world out of reality, and new  
133 vision  
134 we come to find out what there is of the world  
135 to understand what there is here in the world!  
136 to visualize change, and force it.  
137 we worship revolution

[Page 163 ]

## Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A New Reality Is Better Than a New Movie!

1 How will it go, crumbling earthquake, towering inferno, jugger-  
2 naut, volcano, smashup,  
3 in reality, other than the feverish nearreal fantasy of the capitalist  
4 flunky film hacks  
5 tho they sense its reality breathing a quake inferno scar on their  
6 throat even snorts of  
7 100% pure cocaine cant cancel the cold cut of impending death  
8 to this society. On all the  
9 screens of america, the joint blows up every hour and a half for  
10 two dollars an fifty cents.  
11 They have taken the niggers out to lunch, for a minute, made us  
12 partners nigger Charlie) or  
13 surrogates (boss nigger) for their horror. But just as superafrikan  
14 mobutu cannot leap  
15 ardskinhat his  
16 way out of responsibility for lumumba's death, nor even with his  
17 incredible billions  
18 rockefeller  
19 cannot even save his pale ho's titties in the crushing weight of  
20 things as they really are.  
21 How will it go, does it reach you, getting up, sitting on the side  
22 of the bed, getting ready to go to work. Hypnotized by the ma-  
23 chine, and the cement floor, the jungle treachery of  
24 trying  
25 to survive with no money in a money world, of making the boss  
26 100,000 for every 200  
27 dollars  
28 you get, and then having his brother get you for the rent, and if

[Page 164 ]

29 you want to buy the car  
30 you  
31 helped build, your downpayment paid for it, the rest goes to buy  
32 his old lady a foam  
33 rubber  
34 rhinestone set of boobies for special occasions when kissinger  
35 drunkenly fumbles with her blouse, forgetting himself.



36 If you don't like it, what you gonna do about it. That was the  
37 question we asked each  
38 other, &  
39 still right regularly need to ask. You don't like it? Whatcha  
40 gonna do, about it??  
41 The real terror of nature is humanity enraged, the true  
42 technicolor spectacle that  
43 hollywood  
44 cant record. They cant even show you how you look when you  
45 go to work, or when you  
46 come back.  
47 They cant even show you thinking or demanding the new so-  
48 cialist reality, its the ultimate  
49 tidal  
50 wave. When all over the planet, men and women, with heat in  
51 their hands, demand that  
52 society  
53 be planned to include the lives and self determination of all the  
54 people ever to live. That is the scalding scenario with a cast of  
55 just under two billion that they dare not even whisper. Its called,  
56 "We Want It All ... The Whole World!"

[Page 165 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : A Poem for Deep Thinkers**

1 Skyemen coming down out the clouds land  
2 and then walking into society try to find out  
3 whats happening---"Whats happening," they be saying  
4 look at it, where they been, dabbling in mist, appearing &  
5 disappearing, now there's a real world breathing---inhaling  
6 exhaling concrete & sand, and they want to know what's  
7 happening. What's happening is life itself "onward & upward,"  
8 the spirals of fireconflict clash of opposing forces, the dialogue of  
9 yes and no, showed itself in stabbed children in the hallways of  
10 schools, old men strangling bankguards, a hard puertorican  
11 inmate's  
12 tears  
13 exchanging goodbyes in the prison doorway, armies sweeping

14 wave after wave to contest the ancient rule of the minority. What  
15 draws them down, their blood entangled with  
16 humans,  
17 their memories, perhaps, of the earth, and what they thought it  
18 could be. But blinded by sun, and their own images of things,  
19 rather than things as they actually are, they wobble, they  
20 stumble, sometimes, and people they be cheering alot, cause  
21 they think the skymen dancing, "Yeh ... Yeh ... get on  
22 it....," people grinning and feeling good cause the  
23 skymen  
24 dancing, and the skymen stumbling, till they get the sun out  
25 they eyes, and integrate the inhead movie show, with the  
26 material reality that exists with and without them. There are  
27 tragedies, tho, a buncha skies bought the loopdieloo program  
28 from the elegant babble of the ancient minorities. Which is

[Page 166 ]

29 where they loopdieloo in the sky right on just  
30 loopdieloo  
31 in fantastic meaningless Curlicues which delight the thin gallery  
32 owners who wave at them on their way to getting stabbed in the  
33 front seats of their silver alfa romeos by lumpen they have gotten  
34 passionate with. And the loopdielooers go on, sometimes  
35 spelling out complex primitive slogans and shooting symbolic  
36 smoke out their gills in honor of  
37 something  
38 dead. And then they'll make daring dives right down toward the  
39 earth and skag cocaine  
40 money  
41 whiteout and crunch iced into the statue graveyard where Ralph  
42 Ellison sits biting his  
43 banjo  
44 strings retightening his instrument for the millionth time before  
45 playing the star spangled banjo. Or else loopdieloo loopdieloo  
46 up higher and higher and thinner and thinner and  
47 finer  
48 refiner, sugarladdies in the last days of the locust, sucking they  
49 greek lolliepops.  
50 Such intellectuals as we is baby, we need to deal in the real  
51 world, and be be in the real world. We need to use, to use, all  
52 the all the skills all the spills and thrills that we conjure, that we

53 construct that we lay out and put together, to create life as  
54 beautiful as we thought it could be, as we dreamed it could be,  
55 as we desired it to be, as we knew it could be, before we took  
56 off, before we split for the sky side, not to settle for endless  
57 meaningless circles of celebration of this madness, this madness,  
58 not to settle for this madness this madness madness, these yoyos  
59 yoyos of the ancient minorities. Its all for real, everythings for  
60 real, be for real, song of the skytribe walking the earth, faint  
61 smiles to open roars of joy, meet you on the battlefield they say,

[Page 167 ]

62 they be humming, hop, then stride, faint smile to roars of open  
63 joy, hey my man, what's happening, meet you on the  
64 battlefield  
65 they say, meet you on the battlefield they say, what i guess needs  
66 to be discussed here  
67 tonight  
68 is what side yall gon be on

[Page 169 ]

## **POETRY FOR THE ADVANCED [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]**

[Page 171 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Pres Spoke in a Language**

1 Pres  
2 spoke in a language  
3 "of his own." What did he say, between the  
4 horn line  
5 s, pork pie hat

6 tenor tilted  
7 pres once was a drummer but gave it up cause other dudes  
8 was getting  
9 the foxes  
10 while he packed his tomtoms  
11 "Ding Dong," pres sd, meaning  
12 like a typewriter, its the end  
13 of this  
14 line. "No Eyes," pres wd say, meaning  
15 I didn't cdn't dig it, and what it was was  
16 lame. Pres  
17 had a language  
18 and a life, like,  
19 all his own,  
20 but in the teeming whole of us he lived  
21 tooting on his sideways horn  
22 translating frankie trumbauer into  
23 Bird's feathers  
24 Tranes sinewy tracks  
25 the slickster walking through the crowd  
26 surviving on a terrifying wit  
27 its the jungle the jungle the jungle  
28 we living in

[Page 172 ]

29 and cats like pres cd make it because they were clear they, at  
30 least,  
31 had to,  
32 to do anything else.  
33 Save all that comrades, we need it.

[Page 173 ]

**REGGAE OR NOT! [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]**

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Reggae or Not!**  
*A piece to be read with Reggae accompaniment.*

1 Inside beyond our craziness is reality. People rushing through life  
2 dripping with  
3 funk. Inside beyond our craziness and the lies of phillistines  
4 who never wanted to be anything  
5 but Bootsie  
6 w/ golden curls  
7 and a dress tho they black as tar  
8 beyond our inside, beyond wvo, beyond craziness  
9 dripping with  
10 reality  
11 is the funk  
12 the real fusion of life and life  
13 heart and history  
14 color and motion grim what have you's  
15 beat us eat us send us into flight  
16 on the bottom-ism on the bottom  
17 up under-ism, up under  
18 way down-ism way down under-ville  
19 feet bottoms, everybody put us down  
20 we down  
21 how we got down  
22 how we got, hot, how we got so black  
23 & blue  
24 how we cd blow  
25 how we cd know  
26 how we cd, and did, and is, and bees, how  
27 how how, and how how how, and how and why and why why

28 like big eye nigger motion  
29 heavywt champ

30 white hope party  
31 populists in hoods  
32 the real jesse jackson  
33 our history  
34 our pain  
35 our flight  
36 our fright  
37 our terror ... AHEEESSSSHHHHHHHHHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE  
38 our women watched when the crackers cut off our balls  
39 in the grass, they made the little girls watch  
40 stuffed them in our mouths  
41 (this was before they complained about  
42 OPEC, before they complained about baraka being rude  
43 before malcolm set kenneth clark on fire  
44 (and after too ...  
45 but history  
46 the development of the afroamerican nation  
47 in the black belt south.

48 from blue slaves  
49 from green africa  
50 from drum past and pyramid hipness  
51 from colors colors all the time, everyday, bright---bright---brightness  
52 red green yellow purple orange wearing niggerssssss AAAAAHHHHHH  
53 violet violent shiny head shiny shoe knife carryin niggerssssss  
54 AAAAAAAA  
55 dust, cripples staggering  
56 white hats, blood, blood in the cotton  
57 wear the fuck out it  
58 love you baby  
59 drunk motherfucker

[Page 177 ]

60 preachin in the twilight madness and jesus fuckem  
61 hell all around  
62 white face hell  
63 inside beyond the madness history  
64 beyond the scag, history  
65 beyond the oppression and exploitation

66 Aheeeeeeeeeeee---balls  
67 in the sand  
68 preach!!  
69 baldhead rip off  
70 teach!!  
71 chicken eatin metaphysical  
72 loud talkin chained up motherfuckas  
73 anykinda nigger jet plane flyin ishmael reed lyin nigger  
74 andy young hung like a sign announcing the new policy  
75 get a paycheck pay the madness pay the blood pay the history  
76 beyond the sick ness and racism  
77 history  
78 today's combustion  
79 for the revolutionary future  
80 beyond the madness and cocaine  
81 beyond the male chauvinism and baby actin niggers  
82 who want disco to substitute for their humanity & struggle  
83 And the alligators clappin they hands Garvey, man  
84 yeh, Nat man, alligators in the sunlight  
85 in the day time now  
86 sittin beside us groundin  
87 man, I see it  
88 it no fool I  
89 I no be fool dem tink  
90 no fool I  
91 alligators Marcus  
92 Nat man, they come right up to us

[Page 178 ]

93 and explain scientific why our shit aint right  
94 why we need to be under dem,  
95 why we need to bend and sway like  
96 dead boy wilkie, downtown with them  
97 no fool I, I no for fool, bee, bee crazy sometime  
98 sometime be out, be way out,  
99 like crazy mother fucka  
100 purple language come out I mouth  
101 ya know,  
102 but Nat man,  
103 Marcus,  
104 alligator

105 they organize to love us  
106 take us out ourselves  
107 got whip mout whip eye whip talk  
108 all for fool I but I no be no fool for they  
109 I no go for ghost, like dig, pig, I fuck you up for fun

110 like a dance  
111 like pussy russo in the joint  
112 want to control the pills  
113 instead the blood drove a shank in his titty  
114 ya punk he scream they take him into solitary  
115 an alligator  
116 he say why you want to separate bozo  
117 ((that he inside name for I  
118 bozo, like H.Box Brown say, the muthafucka  
119 upsidedown  
120 he bozo  
121 I---I  
122 all eyes, a we eye, us, like raging black purpleness  
123 as music, as rhythmic sun screams our color lay for them

[Page 179 ]

124 The nation, he said,  
125 he had been cut,  
126 the nation  
127 does not, he said,  
128 and before he cd get it out  
129 I drove the blade deep down thru  
130 the adam's apple, severing the jugular

131 and man, hey, instead a blood  
132 ya know, the racist punk,  
133 all words spill out  
134 all words run on ground like bleach waterbug  
135 all words say no, like lula, say no, say, like lula, no  
136 say, hey, say, no, like lula, trying to kill i i no like clay  
137 say he, words spill out where blood shd be, abstract shit all out  
138 say hey, why you gonna split



139 1979 a calm time compared  
140 1979 cool compared to what will be  
141 1979 fire in me banked compared  
142 up against what will be  
143 all I's we, this cant go on  
144 this cant go on, all this  
145 this craziness, beyond it is us  
146 is history, our lives, and  
147 the future. Beyond this  
148 beyond craziness, beyond capitalism  
149 beyond national oppression and racism  
150 beyond the subjugation of women  
151 disco bandit style beyond  
152 lies of the disco bandit  
153 beyond lies of the mozart freaks  
154 beyond joe papap and papap joe

[Page 180 ]

155 beyond breznev, and all the little multi-colored breznev clones  
156 masquerading as radicals telling persons they revolutionaries  
157 beyond all the little latest generation of human failure pettybourgeois  
158 explainers of the bullshit, beyond everything but what will last what is  
159 real, what the people will make and demand, what they are and have been,  
160 there is Self Determination and Revolution  
161 There is Revolution and Self Determination  
162 there is the fire so broad a rainbow of fire, a world full of fire  
163 there is all bullshit for now exploding  
164 so ready all busshit for next be explode  
165 all fire so flame rise so for fire be heavy and everywhere now  
166 *Self Determination*  
167 *& Revolution*  
(sing)

168 *Revolution*  
169 *& Self Determination*  
170 World, to be, for I and that person  
171 and every person, for all I's all we's all they's all all's together be  
172 cool now compared to explosion life future  
173 when every minute is blow up of everyting stupid always  
174 is cool now compared to all exploded jack the ripper rich ass

175 to people smashed powerful garbage dead forever by our hand  
176 to destroyed dumb systems of exploited pain corrected by annihilation only  
177 forever till the next shit  
178 be in the struggle conscious comrade  
179 be in the struggle righteous friend  
180 its cool now, the nation, the workers mad but shit aint rose  
181 beyond the calmness history and pain  
182 beyond the torture history and future fill each other with flame  
183 its cool now, the alligators talking to us like we cant see whats on they mind  
184 jimmy carter cant talk to you  
185 jesse jackson cant talk to you  
186 bootsie and the funkadelic cant talk to you  
187 Who can talk to you---who can still bullshit you

[Page 181 ]

188 who can set you up with lies you aint heard  
189 with unscientific science and metaphysical analysis  
190 alligators in the disguise of the hiptime  
191 alligators from the old alligator pad,  
192 fake communists, sham revolutionaries  
193 they can and do and will till broke head screams  
194 talk to you they can shoreuff anyway busshit the besta  
195 you, but a alligator got bad breaff smell like a alligator  
196 a alligator eyes is white and bloodshot, full of alligator  
197 images, a alligator brain is fulla alligator thoughts teathy  
198 and slimy and fulla dead half ate animals. a alligator bite  
199 when they talk and they tryin to con you they be bitin and it  
200 hurt so you bash them and they look at you weird you say stop  
201 bitin muthafucka and talk if you goin to i dont eat no alligator  
202 but they make hip pouches to carry my goddam papers in  
203 It's a higher level of bullshit goin down  
204 a much higher level of bullshit  
205 goin down, aint even bullshit, its alligator shit  
206 some sophisticated amphibian feces goin down  
207 up under they bumps and tears, up under they alligator eyes  
208 mostly up under they alligator  
209 lies. a much higher level of bullshit goin down

210 do you really think Henry Winston was hipper than Rochester and if so why  
211 do you really think Andy Young was hipper than Andy Old

212 or that Angela Davis was hipper than Beulah or Poncho be with Cisco  
213 or that Alligators got sidekicks hipper than Gabby was with Roy & Dale  
214 Some sidekick muthafuckers some sidekicks, want us to call the nation  
215 sidekickania  
216 got sidekick inside they eyes eat and breathe love bein sidekicks and got  
217 sidekickitis  
218 so much grey stuff hang out they ears droolin eye tears into dirt  
219 come out the closet sidekicks

[Page 182 ]

220 its calm now & cool, 1979 a calm time, sidekicks can still get over  
221 ride alligators upriver to trade, the jungle is smokin but coolin  
222 and the sidekick deals get made. Come out the closet sidekick  
223 Roy Rogers retired, Cisco doin reruns  
224 Mantan been canonized by the Sidekick society  
225 And Booker T. been made an official militant on the lower east side

226 cant tell multinational unity  
227 from side kick-ism-itis might even fight us  
228 but all folk got to dig it for be real  
229 for be hot  
230 for be us  
231 for be life thrown into future  
232 too much pain go down  
233 too much hate  
234 too many people like we, no go for alligator  
235 ghost  
236 we is nation in suffering  
237 we is nation in chains  
238 the latest spears will not even be spears  
239 tho the warcries sound the same  
240 reach out for the comrades reach out for true comrades  
241 reach out for allies reach out for real allies  
242 no fool I this alligator, all I's look for light  
243 we no be fool for alligator, nor the alligator big time friend  
244 We be for heat & fire  
245 We be for genuine war  
246 No be fool for alligator  
247 *Self Determination*  
(sing)

248 *Revolution*  
249 We know our friend for fighting  
250 We know our comrade for struggle  
251 no be bullshit only for word noise

[Page 183 ]

252 no be dry dull stuff but war war war war war  
253 fuck a bourgeois alligator  
254 lyin he tryin to be help  
255 we know our friend for fighting  
256 we see our comrade they struggle  
257 no be fool for alligator  
258 with some new time chauvinistic lie, by, by, by, no fool I  
259 by, no fool all I

260 dead folks dead pass away  
261 rich shit dead pass away  
262 liars imitating revolution die  
263 pass away  
264 beyond bullshit is history  
265 beyond deadshit is history & pain  
266 niggers riding alligators will get blown away when the alligator do  
267 even in the calmest of times  
268 *Self Determination Revolution*  
(sing)

269 *Revolution Self Determination*  
270 We no be fool  
271 for alligator  
272 our comrade hear and understand  
273 To liberate we got kill  
274 To liberate blood must flow  
275 To liberate imperialism gotta go  
276 we for kill racism, we for kill our oppression and every other person  
277 too  
278 alligator bullshit for big time rich folks  
279 he bite yr militance off like sleepy monkey with tail  
280 in the wrong place  
281 its calm now, jojo, story teller, compared to other future time hotting

282 hotting be back be back be black be black and all other color too  
283 we for win anyway

[Page 184 ]

284 we for all us win  
285 we in people laughing our victory song  
286 our victory  
287 song go like this

288 *Self Determination*  
289 *Revolution*  
290 *Self Determination*  
291 *Revolution*  
(sing)

292 *Self Determination*  
293 *Revolution*  
294 *Self Determination*  
295 *Revolution*  
296 *Socialism Socialism Socialism*  
297 DEATH TO ALLIGATOR EATING CAPITALISM  
298 DEATH TO BIG TEETH BLOOD DRIPPING IMPERIALISM  
299 I be black angry communist  
300 I be part of rising black nation  
301 I be together with all fighters who fight imperialism  
302 I be together in a party with warmakers for the people  
303 I be black and african and still contemporary marxist warrior  
304 I be connected to people by blood and history and pain and struggle  
305 We be together as party as one fist and voice  
306 We be I be We, We We, the whole fist and invincible flame  
307 We be a party soon, we know our comrade for struggle  
308 We be war to come we bring war we no go for alligator  
309 we kill his trainer too

310 *Self Determination*  
311 *Revolution*  
312 *Self Determination*  
(sing)

313 *Revolution*  
314 *Socialism Socialism Socialism*

[Page 185 ]

315 Only Socialism will save  
316 the Black Nation  
317 Only Socialism  
318 will save the Black Nation  
319 Only Socialism will save  
320 America  
321 Only Socialism will save  
322 the world!

[Page 187 ]

**AM/TRAK [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]**

[Page 189 ]

**[Trane]**

1

1 Trane,  
2 Trane,  
3 History Love Scream Oh  
4 Trane, Oh

- 5 Trane, Oh
- 6 Scream History Love
- 7 Trane

2

- 1 Begin on by a Philly night club
- 2 or the basement of a cullut chuhch
- 3 walk the bars my man for pay
- 4 honk the night lust of money
- 5 oh
- 6 blow---
- 7 scream history love

- 8 Rabbit, Cleanhead, Diz
- 9 Big Maybelle, Trees in the shining night forest
- 10 Oh
- 11 blow
- 12 love, history

- 13 Alcohol we submit to thee
- 14 3x's consume our lives
- 15 our livers quiver under yr poison hits
- 16 eyes roll back in stupidity

[Page 190 ]

- 17 The navy, the lord, niggers,
- 18 the streets
- 19 all converge a shitty symphony
- 20 of screams
- 21 to come
- 22 dazzled invective

23 Honk Honk Honk, "I am here  
24 to love  
25 it". Let me be fire-mystery  
26 air feeder beauty"  
27 Honk  
28 Oh  
29 scream---Miles  
30 comes.

### 3

1 Hip band alright  
2 sum up life in the slick  
3 street part of the  
4 world, oh,  
5 blow,  
6 If you cd  
7 nigger  
8 man

9 Miles wd stand back and negative check  
10 oh, he dug him---Trane  
11 But Trane clawed at the limits of cool  
12 slandered sanity  
13 with his tryin to be born

[Page 191 ]

14 raging  
15 shit  
16 Oh  
17 blow,  
18 yeh go do it  
19 honk, scream  
20 uhuh yeh---history  
21 love



22 blue clipped moments  
23 of intense feeling.  
24 "Trane you blows too long".  
25 Screaming niggers drop out yr solos  
26 Bohemian nights, the "heavyweight champ"  
27 smacked him  
28 in the face  
29 his eyes sagged like a spent  
30 dick, hot vowels escaped the metal clone of his soul  
31 fucking saxophone  
32 tell us shit tell us tell us!

4

1 There was nothing left to do but  
2 be where monk cd find him  
3 that crazy  
4 mother fucker  
5 duh duh-duh duh-duh duh  
6 duh duh  
7 duh duh-duh duh-duh duh  
8 duh duh  
9 duh duh-duh duh-duh duh  
10 duh duh

[Page 192 ]

11 duh Duuuuuuuuuuhhhhhh  
12 Can you play this shit? (Life asks  
13 Come by and listen

14 & at the 5 Spot Bach, Mulatto ass Beethoven  
15 & even Duke, who has given America its hip tongue  
16 checked  
17 checked  
18 Trane stood and dug

19 Crazy monk's shit  
20 Street gospel intellectual mystical survival codes  
21 Intellectual street gospel funk modes  
22 Tink a ling put downs of dumb shit  
23 pink pink a cool bam groove note air breath  
24 a why I'm here  
25 a why I aint  
26 & who is you - ha - you - ha - you - ha  
27 Monk's shit  
28 Blue Cooper 5 Spot  
29 was the world busting  
30 on piano bass drums & tenor

31 This was Coltrane's College. A Ph motherfuckin d  
32 sitting at the feet, elbows  
33 & funny grin  
34 Of Master T Sphere  
35 too cool to be a genius  
36 he was instead  
37 Theolonius  
38 with Comrades Shadow  
39 on tubs, lyric Wilbur  
40 who hipped us to electric futures  
41 & the monster with the horn.

[Page 193 ]

## 5

1 From the endless sessions  
2 money lord hovers oer us  
3 capitalism beats our ass  
4 dope & juice wont change it  
5 Trane, blow, oh scream  
6 yeh, anyway.

7 There then came down in the ugly streets of us  
8 inside the head & tongue  
9 of us  
10 a man  
11 *black blower of the now*  
12 The vectors from all sources---slavery, renaissance  
13 bop charlie parker,  
14 nigger absolute super-sane screams against reality  
15 course through him  
16 AS SOUND!  
17 "Yes, it says  
18 this is now in you screaming  
19 recognize the truth  
20 recognize reality  
21 & even check me (Trane)  
22 who blows it  
23 Yes it says  
24 Yes &  
25 Yes again Convulsive multi orgasmic  
26 Art  
27 Protest

28 & finally, brother, you took you were

[Page 194 ]

29 (are we gathered to dig this?  
30 electric wind find us finally  
31 on red records of the history of ourselves)

32 The cadre came together  
33 the inimitable 4 who blew the pulse of then, exact  
34 The flame the confusion the love of  
35 whatever the fuck there was  
36 to love  
37 Yes it says  
38 blow, oh honk-scream (bahhhhhhh---wheeeeeeee)

39 (If Don Lee thinks I am imitating him in this poem,  
40 this is only payback for his imitating me - we  
41 are brothers, even if he is a backward cultural nationalist  
42 motherfucker---Hey man only socialism brought by revolution  
43 can win)

44 Trane was the spirit of the 60's  
45 He was Malcolm X in New Super Bop Fire  
46 Baaahhhhh  
47 Wheeeeeeee.... Black Art! ! !

48 Love  
49 History  
50 On The Bar Tops of Philly  
51 in the Monkish College of *Express*  
52 in the cool Grottoes of Miles Davis Funnytimery  
53 Be  
54 Be  
55 Be reality  
56 Be reality alive in motion in flame to change (You Knew It!)  
57 to change! !  
58 (All you reactionaries listening

[Page 195 ]

59 Fuck you, Kill you  
60 get outta here! ! !)

61 Jimmy Garrison, bass, McCoy Tyner, piano, Captain Marvel Elvin  
62 on drums, the number itself---the precise saying  
63 all of it in it afire aflame talking saying being doing meaning  
64 *Meditations,*  
65 *Expressions*  
66 *A Love Supreme*  
67 (I lay in solitary confinement, July 67  
68 Tanks rolling thru Newark  
69 & whistled all I knew of Trane  
70 my knowledge heartbeat  
71 & he was *dead*

72 they  
73 said.  
74 And yet last night I played *Meditations*  
75 & it told me what to do  
76 Live, you crazy mother  
77 fucker!  
78 Live!  
79 & organize  
80 yr shit  
81 as rightly  
82 burning!

[Page 197 ]

## IN THE TRADITION [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]

[Page 199 ]

### Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : In the Tradition

(for Black Arthur Blythe)

*"Not a White Shadow  
But Black People  
Will be Victorious ... "*

[1]

- 1 Blues walk weeps ragtime
- 2 Painting slavery

3 women laid around  
4 working feverishly for slavemaster romeos  
5 as if in ragtime they spill  
6 their origins like chillers (lost chillen  
7 in the streets to be  
8 telephoned to by Huggie  
9 Bear from channel 7, for the White Shadow  
10 gives advice on how to hold our homes  
11 together, tambien tu, Chicago Hermano)  
12 genius bennygoodman headmaster  
13 philanthropist  
14 romeos---  
15 but must coach  
16 cannot shoot---

17 hey coah-ch  
18 hey coah-ch  
19 trembling fate wrapped in flags  
20 hey coah-ch  
21 you can hug this

[Page 200 ]

22 while you at it  
23 coah-ch  
24 Women become  
25 goils gals grinning in the face of his  
26 no light  
27 Men become  
28 boys & slimy roosters crowing negros  
29 in love with dressed up pimp stupidity death  
30 hey coah-ch  
31 wanna outlaw the dunk, cannot deal with skyman darrell  
32 or double dippin hip doctors deadly in flight  
33 cannot deal with Magic or Kareem ... hey coah-ch coah-ch  
34 bench yrself in the garbagecan of history o new imperial dog  
35 denying with lying images  
36 our strength & African  
37 funky beauty

38 nomatter the three networks idiot chatter

39 Arthur Blythe

40 Says

41 it!

42 *in the*

43 *tradition*

2

1 Tradition

2 of Douglass

3 of David Walker

4 Garnett

5 Turner

6 Tubman

[Page 201 ]

7 of ragers yeh

8 ragers

9 (of Kings, & Counts, & Dukes

10 of Satchelmouths & SunRa's

11 of Bessies & Billies & Sassys

12 & Ma's

13 Musical screaming

14 Niggers

15 yeh

16 tradition

17 of Brown Welles

18 & Brown Sterling

19 & Brown Clifford

20 of H Rap & H Box

21 Black baltimore sister blues antislavery singers

22 countless funky blind folks  
23 & oneleg country beboppers  
24 bottleneck in the guitarneck dudes  
25 whispering thrashing cakewalking raging  
26 ladies  
27 & gents  
28 getdown folks, elegant as  
29 skywriting  
30 tradition  
31 of DuBois  
32 Baby Dodds & Lovie  
33 Austin, Sojourner  
34 I thought I heard Buddy Bolden

35 say, you're terrible  
36 you're awful, Lester  
37 why do you want to be

[Page 202 ]

38 the president of all this  
39 of the blues and slow sideways  
40 horn. tradition of blue presidents  
41 locked up in the brig for wearing zoot suit  
42 army pants. tradition of monks & outside dudes  
43 of marylous and notes hung vibrating blue just beyond just after  
44 just before just faster just slowly twilight crazier than europe or its  
45 racist children

46 bee-doo dee doop bee-doo dee dooo doop (Arthur  
47 tradition  
48 of shooters  
49 & silver fast dribblers  
50 of real fancy motherfuckers  
51 fancy as birds flight, sunward/high  
52 highhigh  
53 sunward  
54 arcs/swoops/spirals  
55 in the tradition  
56 ¼ notes



57 eighth notes  
58 16th notes  
59 32nds, 64ths, 128ths, silver blue  
60 presidents

61 of Langston & Langston Manifestos  
62 Tell us again about the negro artist  
63 & the racial mountain so we will not  
64 be negro artists, Mckay Banjoes and  
65 Homes In Harlem, Blue Black Boys &  
66 Little Richard Wrights, Tradition of  
67 For My People Margaret Walker & David Walker & Jr Walker  
68 & Walker Smith Sweet Ray Leonard Rockin in Rhythm w/  
69 Musical Dukes,

[Page 203 ]

70 What is this tradition Basied on, we Blue Black Wards strugglin  
71 against a Big White Fog, Africa people, our fingerprints are  
72 everywhere  
73 on you america, our fingerprints are everywhere, Cesaire told  
74 you  
75 that, our family strewn around the world has made more parts of  
76 that world  
77 blue and funky, cooler, flashier, hotter, afro-cuban james  
78 brownier  
79 a wide panafrican  
80 world

81 Tho we are afro-americans, african americans  
82 let the geographic history of our flaming hatchet motion  
83 hot ax motion  
84 hammer & hatchet

85 our cotton history  
86 our rum & indigo  
87 sugar cane  
88 history

89 Yet, in a casual gesture, if its talk you want, we can say  
90 Cesaire, Damas, Depestre, Romain, Guillen  
91 You want Shaka, Askia, (& Roland Snellings too)  
92 Mandingo, Nzinga, you want us to drop  
93 Cleopatra on you or Hannibal  
94 What are you masochists  
95 paper iron chemistry  
96 & smelting  
97 I aint even mentioned  
98 Troussaint or Dessaline  
99 or Robeson or Ngugi

[Page 204 ]

100 Hah, you bloody & dazed, screaming at me to stop yet,  
101 NO, hah, you think its over, tradition song, tradition  
102 poem, poem for us together, poem for arthur blythe  
103 who told us again, in the tradition  
104 in the  
105 tradition of

106 life & dying  
107 in the tradition of those klanned & chained  
108 & lynched and shockleyed and naacped and ralph bunched

109 hah, you rise a little I mention we also the tradition of amos and  
110 andy  
111 hypnotized selling us out vernons and hooks and other nigger  
112 crooks of  
113 gibsons and crouches and other assorted louses of niggers that  
114 turn from  
115 gold to shit proving dialectics muhammad ali style  
116 But just as you rise up to gloat I scream COLTRANE! STEVIE  
117 WONDER!  
118 MALCOLM X!  
119 ALBERT AYLER!  
120 THE BLACK ARTS!

121 Shit & whistling out of my nkrumah, cabral, fanon, sweep---I cry  
122 Fletcher  
123 Henderson, Cane, What Did I Do To Be So Black & Blue, the  
124 most perfect  
125 couplet in the language, I scream Mood Indigo, Black  
126 Bolshevik, KoKo,  
127 Now's the Time, Ark of Bones, Lonely Woman, Ghosts, A Love  
128 Supreme,  
129 Walkin, Straight No Chaser, In the Tradition

[Page 205 ]

130 of life  
131 & dying  
132 centuries of beautiful  
133 women  
134 crying  
135 In the tradition  
136 of screamed  
137 ape music  
138 coon hollers  
139 shouts  
140 even more profound  
141 than its gorgeous  
142 sound  
143 In the tradition of  
144 all of us, in an unending everywhere at the same time  
145 line  
146 in motion forever  
147 like the hip Chicago poet Amus Mor  
148 like the Art Ensemble  
149 like Miles's Venus DeMilo  
150 & Horace Silver reminding us  
151 & Art Blakey sending us messages  
152 Black Brown & Beige people  
153 & Pharaoh old and new, Blood Brotherhoods  
154 all over the planet, land songs land poems  
155 land sculptures and paintings, land niggers want still want

156 will get land  
157 in the tradition of all of us in the positive aspect  
158 all of our positive selves, cut zora neale & me & a buncha other  
159 folks in half. My brothers and sisters in the tradition. Vincent  
160 Smith & Biggers, Color mad dudes, Catlett & White Chas & Wm,  
161 BT, Overstreet  
162 & the 60s muralists. Jake Lawrence & Aaron Douglass & Ademola

[Page 206 ]

163 Babatunde Building More Stately Mansions  
164 We are the composers, racists & gunbearers  
165 We are the artists  
166 Dont tell me shit about a tradition of deadness & capitulation  
167 of slavemasters sipping tea in the parlor  
168 while we bleed to death in fields  
169 tradition of cc rider  
170 see what you done done  
171 dont tell me shit about the tradition of slavemasters  
172 & henry james I know about it up to my asshole in it  
173 dont tell me shit about bach mozart or even ½ nigger  
174 beethoven  
175 get out of europe  
176 come out of europe if you can  
177 cancel on the english depts this is america  
178 north, this is america.  
179 where's yr american music  
180 gwashington won the war  
181 where's yr american culture southernagrarians  
182 academic aryan  
183 penwarrens & wilburs  
184 say something american if you dare  
185 if you  
186 can  
187 where's yr american  
188 music  
189 Nigger music?

190 (Like englishmen talking about *great* britain stop with tongues  
191 lapped on their cravats you put the irish on em. Say shit  
192 man, you mean irish irish Literature ... when they say about

193 they  
194 you say nay you mean irish irish literature you mean, for the

[Page 207 ]

195 last century you mean, when you scream say nay, you mean  
196 yeats,  
197 syngue, shaw, wilde, joyce, ocasey, beckett, them is, nay, them is  
198 irish, they's irish, irish as the ira)

199 you mean nigger music? dont hide in europe---"oh thats  
200 classical!"  
201 come to this country  
202 nigger music?

203 you better go up in appalachia  
204 and get some mountain some coal mining  
205 songs, you better go down south in our land  
206 & talk to the angloamerican national minority  
207 they can fetch up a song or two, country & western  
208 could save you from looking like saps before the world  
209 otherwise  
210 Palante!  
211 Latino, Native American  
212 Bomba, Plena, Salsa, Rain dance War dance  
213 Magical invective  
214 The Latin Tinge  
215 Cherokee, Sonny Rollins w/Clifford Brown  
216 Diz & Machito, or Mongo SantaMaria

217 Comin Comin World Saxophone Quartet you cannot  
218 stand up against, Hell No I Aint Goin To Afghanistan, Leon  
219 Thomas million year old pygmies you cannot stand up against, nor  
220 Black Arthur tellin you like Blue Turhan Bey, Odessa, Romance can  
221 Bloom even here in White Racist Land It can Bloom as Beautiful,  
222 though flawed by our oppression it can  
223 bloom bloom, in the tradition  
224 of revolution

225 Renaissance  
226 Negritude  
227 Blackness  
228 Negrismo  
229 Indigisme  
230 sounding niggers  
231 swahili speaking niggers niggers in turbans  
232 rna & app & aprp & cap black blacks  
233 & assembly line, turpentine, mighty fine female  
234 blacks, and cooks, truck drivers, coal miners  
235 small farmers, iron steel and hospital workers  
236 in the tradition of us  
237 in the tradition of us  
238 the reality not us the narrow fantasy  
239 in the tradition of african american black people/america

240 nigger music's almost all  
241 you got, and you find it  
242 much too hot

243 in the tradition thank you arthur for playing & saying  
244 reminding us how deep how old how black how sweet how  
245 we is and bees  
246 when we remember  
247 when we are our memory as the projection  
248 of what it is evolving  
249 in struggle  
250 in passion and pain  
251 we become our sweet black  
252 selves

253 once again,  
254 in the tradition

255 in the african american  
256 tradition  
257 open us  
258 yet bind us  
259 let all that is positive  
260 find  
261 us  
262 we go into the future  
263 carrying a world  
264 of blackness  
265 yet we have been in the world  
266 and we have gained all of what there  
267 is and was, since the highest expression  
268 of the world, is its total

269 & the universal  
270 is the entire collection  
271 of particulars

272 ours is one particular  
273 one tradition  
274 of love and suffering truth over lies  
275 and now we find ourselves in chains  
276 the tradition says plainly to us fight plainly to us  
277 fight, that's in it, clearly, we are not meant to be slaves  
278 it is a detour we have gone through and about to come out  
279 in the tradition of gorgeous africa blackness  
280 says to us fight, it's all right, you beautiful  
281 as night, the tradition  
282 thank you langston/arthur  
283 says sing  
284 says fight  
285 in the tradition, always clarifying, always new and centuries old

[Page 210 ]

286 says  
287 Sing!

288 Fight!  
289 Sing!  
290 Fight!  
291 Sing!  
292 Fight! &c. &c.  
293 Boosheee dooooo doo doooo dee  
294 doooo  
295 dooooooooooooo!  
296 DEATH T O THE KLAN!

[Page 211 ]

## HEATHENS [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]

[Page 213 ]

### Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Heathens (*Freedom Jazz Dance or Dr. Jackle*)

**1**

1 They Ugly  
2 on purpose!

**2**

1 They get high  
2 off Air Raids!

**3**



- 1 They are the oldest
- 2 continuously functioning
- 3 Serial Killers!

#### **4**

- 1 They murder
- 2 to Explain
- 3 Themselves!

#### **5**

- 1 They think
- 2 Humans
- 3 are food.

#### **6**

- 1 They imitate
- 2 conversation
- 3 by lying

#### **7**

- 1 They are always naked
- 2 and always dirty
- 3 the shower & tuxedo
- 4 don't help

[Page 214 ]

#### **8**

- 1 They go to the bathroom
- 2 to have a religious

3 experience

**9**

- 1 They believe everything is better
- 2 Dead. And that everything alive
- 3 is their enemy.

**10**

- 1 Plus Heathens is armed
- 2 and dangerous.

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Heathens in Evolution**

- 1 When their brains got
- 2 large enough
- 3 They created
- 4 Hell!

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Heathen Bliss**

- 1 To be Alive
- 2 & Ignorant

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Devil Worship**

- 1 is Heathen
- 2 Self Respect

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Civil Rights Bill #666**

*The Negro Heathen Enablement Act.*

- 1 "Essentially, it allows more Negroes to become
- 2 Heathens."

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Heathen Technology & Media**

- 1 Seek to modernize
- 2 cannibalism
- 3 & make it
- 4 acceptable to
- 5 the food.

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : 'Christ Was Never in Europe!'**

(Kwame Toure)

- 1 AT LYNCHINGS
- 2 HEATHENS WEAR
- 3 WHITE TIE
- 4 IN FORMAL
- 5 HOOD & ROBE
- 6 IN THIS FRENZIED
- 7 RITUAL
- 8 THEY RECONFIRM
- 9 THE SUPERIORITY

10 OF THEIR CULTURE!

[Page 216 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Heathens Think Fascism is Civilization**

- 1 AND THAT THEY ARE SUPERIOR
- 2 TO HUMANS & THAT
- 3 HUMANITY IS METAPHYSICAL

To under stand that ...

can you? I mean really  
really dig what that means ... It's like monsters roaming  
the earth ... who sting to live, who know no better. Who, like  
wild animals, might sing, or make a sound some way, that  
might pretend, imitate, a human cry, the sweet rationality of  
love.

That is the art of it, that it exists and carries with it, so many  
complexities, even that craziness, but then aesthetics is con-  
nected to the real. The deadliness of that

ugliness, or uncomprehended smoothness. The technology of  
predatory creatures who feed on flesh, who shit on the tender  
aspirations of human evolution, because they have no concep-  
tion of humanity. Except as that natural yelp, which they can  
see as somehow, a reflex of what that might be. It took that  
kind of vision for them to understand the use of religion in the  
changing world. To cloak themselves in the modest trappings  
of early christianity, having murdered its prophet for power and  
profit.

[Page 217 ]

## Wise, Why's, Y's [By Baraka, I. A., 1934-]

[Page 219 ]

### Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Wise 1

*WHYS (Nobody Knows  
The Trouble I Seen)*  
Trad.

- 1 If you ever find
- 2 yourself, some where
- 3 lost and surrounded
- 4 by enemies
- 5 who won't let you
- 6 speak in your own language
- 7 who destroy your statues
- 8 & instruments, who ban
- 9 your omm bomm ba boom
- 10 then you are in trouble
- 11 deep trouble
- 12 they ban your
- 13 own boom ba boom
- 14 you in deep deep
- 15 trouble
  
- 16 humph!

17 probably take you several hundred years  
18 to get  
19 out!

[Page 220 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Wise 2**

*Billie's Bounce*  
Charlie Parker

1 I was of people  
2 caught in deep trouble  
3 like I scribe you  
4 some deep trouble, where  
5 enemies had took us  
6 surrounded us / in they  
7 country  
8 then banned our  
9 ommboom ba boom

10 the confusion  
11 the sickness

12 /What vision in the blackness  
13 of queens  
14 of kings  
15 /What vision in the blackness  
16 that head  
17 & heart  
18 of yours

19 that sweet verse  
20 you made, I still hear  
21 that song, son  
22 of the son's son's son's  
23 son

[Page 221 ]

24 I still hear that  
25 song,  
26 that cry  
27 cries  
28 screams  
29 life exploded

30 our world exploding us  
31 transformed to niggers

32 What vision  
33 in the blackness  
34 your own hand sold you  
35 "I am not a king or queen," your own hand  
36 if you bee of the royal catch  
37 or the tribes soulwarped by the ghoulishness

38 I still hear those songs and cries  
39 of the sons and sons and daughters and daughters  
40 I still bear that weeping in my heart  
41 that bleeding in my memory

42 And I am not a king  
43 nor trader in flesh  
44 I was  
45 of the sufferers  
46 I am among those  
47 to be avenged!

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Wise 3**

*Hipnosis*  
Grachan Moncur III

1 Son singin  
2 fount some  
3 words/ Son  
4 singin  
5 in that other  
6 language  
7 talkin bout "bay  
8 bee, why you  
9 leave me  
10 here," talkin bout  
11 "up unner de sun  
12 cotton in my hand." Son  
13 singing, think he bad  
14 cause he  
15 can speak  
16 they language, talkin bout  
17 "dark was the night  
18 the ocean deep  
19 white eyes cut through me  
20 made me weep."

21 Son singin  
22 fount some words. Think  
23 he bad. Speak  
24 they  
25 language.



26 'sawright  
27 I say  
28 'sawright  
29 wit me  
30 look like  
31 yeh, we gon be here  
32 a taste

[Page 224 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Wise 4**

*Dewey's Circle*  
David Murray

1 No coat has I got  
2 no extra chop  
3 no soft bed or favor  
4 no connection with the slaver

5 dark was the night  
6 our eyes had not met  
7 I fastened my life to me  
8 and tried to find my way

9 talk did I hear  
10 of fires and burning  
11 and death to the gods

12 on the dirt where I slept  
13 such talk  
14 warmed me

15 such talk  
16 lit my way

17 I has never got nothing but hard times and punishment  
18 Any joy I had I made myself, and the dark woman  
19 who took my hand and led me to myself

[Page 225 ]

20 I has never got nothing  
21 but a head full of blood  
22 my scar, my missing teeth.

23 I has never got nothing but  
24 killer frustration/ yes dark  
25 was the night  
26 cold was the ground

27 I has never got nothing, and talk  
28 of rebellion  
29 warmed me

30 Song to me, was the darkness  
31 in which I could stand  
32 my profile melted into the black air  
33 red from the flame of the burning big house

34 in those crazy dreams I called myself  
35 Coltrane  
36 bathed in a black and red fire  
37 in those crazy moments I called myself  
38 Thelonius  
39 & this was in the 19th century!

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Y's 18**

*Explainin' The Blues* (Ma Rainey)  
"Georgia Tom" Dorsey

1 What are  
2 these  
3 words

4 to  
5 tell  
6 it

7 all?  
8  
9 facts  
10 acts  
11 Do they have  
12 their own  
13 words?

14 !Exacts!

15 The Scientist in love  
16 w/precision  
17 but we need  
18 this  
19 we must have  
20 it  
21 the exact real

22 the concrete  
23 what it is

[Page 227 ]

24 & that whole  
25 is story

26 Africa  
27 Slave  
28 mind memory  
29 Birth  
30 A land across  
31 the ocean  
32 Blue Water  
33 Green world  
34 Blood  
35 & Stopped Motion

36 These mismatched slaves  
37 they cooled  
38 readjusted  
39 the black  
40 forever  
41 the white  
42 till the debt's  
43 paid  
44 (for them to  
45 become  
46 as new  
47 as we  
48 so they  
49 become  
50 the overseers)

51 this world of  
52 limits  
53 twists

[Page 228 ]

54 & opposing  
55 forces

56 these elements  
57 of constant  
58 Change

59 What is yr world  
60 & yr face  
61 yr clock's  
62 confession

63 Have you slept w/  
64 the constitution  
65 3/5ths of the darkness  
66 spoke to

67 refer to the records  
68 thereby  
69 dumb romance  
70 it's lie  
71 for a flag's  
72 health  
73 a class  
74 stealth  
75 to cover  
76 its murder  
77 its beatings

78 As a domestic  
79 bleeding  
80 a near by  
81 tragedy.

[Page 229 ]

82 We cd go to Dred Scott  
83 for testimony  
84 Henry Bibb

85 We cd ask Linda B  
86 or Henry  
87 The Box

88 We cd be drawn into  
89 eternity  
90 w/ David and his  
91 *Appeal*

92 To speak of all  
93 we have  
94 feel!

95 Only reality  
96 say  
97 Where we will  
98 go  
99 It's tethers  
100 Its' chains  
101 Its' sick pricks  
102 inventing  
103 crushings  
104 for our lives  
105 a decoration  
106 of horror  
107 they cd define  
108 & understand  
109 they cd justify  
110 our deaths  
111 & torture

112 they cd be clean  
113 & taking  
114 a little

115 taste

116 As the lightning  
117 tried to illuminate  
118 Animal life

119 Their smiles even  
120 chill us  
121 mad poseur  
122 posing as  
123 the mad doctor  
124 who is the original

125 American  
126 Nazi  
127 The southern Himmlers  
128 & Goebbels, baked  
129 in our dying

130 What the war  
131 proposed  
132 our entrance  
133 as citizens  
134 who once had been  
135 slaves

136 This 13, 14 & 15 yr numbers  
137 in the

138 lottery

[Page 231 ]

139 This Freedman's Bureau

140 this 40 acres

141 as grounds for

142 identical

143 social

144 valence

145 political

146 economic

147 (not Sociology & Social Democratic

148 political

149 Bohemianism)

150 Revolution, The question

151 the answer

152 What revolution

153 cd not be

154 destroyed

155 bought

156 or postponed?

157 What revolution

158 cd not be

159 sold out?

160 All those

161 in the real

162 world



163 all those  
164 that have

[Page 232 ]

165 actually  
166 been

167 The betrayal of Niggers was necessary  
168 to welcome  
169 Imperialism!

170 That was its condition  
171 The Killing of  
172 Nigger  
173 Democracy

174 So Spain  
175 it's decorated  
176 past  
177 The Philippines, Puerto Rico  
178 Cuba, the booty

179 The new era

180 amidst our sunlight  
181 mass laughter  
182 emancipation  
183 The Paris  
184 Commune

185 The Berlin meeting to divide  
186 the Dark Places  
187 Colonial Pie

188 What the Slave Trade  
189 Wrought.

[Page 233 ]

190 That one day the Heathens  
191 wd actually come on the real  
192 side - that they wd take our  
193 hearts as funny valentines

194 That they wd stick our lives & history

195 in the toilet bowl  
196 (toxic  
197 waste)

198 & claim our  
199 past  
200 & future

201 As the Commune  
202 smashed  
203 dead

204 The rehearsals  
205 for Buchenwald  
206 & Belsen  
207 carried out in the  
208 American  
209 South

210 Unwilling nigger actors  
211 Heavy  
212 Minstrels  
213 this torture Birth  
214 of the

215 Black Nation

[Page 234 ]

216 The "rule by naked terror"

217 can not be called

218 Fascism

219 because we

220 are

221 Niggers

222 & that

223 is too

224 famous

225 for the likes

226 of us

227 Fascism

228 wd come later

229 in Europe

230 (naturally)

231 & be well advertised

232 as an excuse

233 for Israeli

234 imperialism

[Page 235 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : History-Wise #22**

*Black Mountain Blues*  
Bessie Smith

1 "The only  
2 railroad  
3 guaranteed  
4 not to break down!"

5 100 years  
6 Before  
7 The Col-  
8 trane  
9 The  
10 real  
11 *sub*  
12 way

13 Ms "Moses" Streamliner  
14 John Parker's Darker

15 Sparker  
16 at Night  
17 No light  
18 but a far star  
19 North

20 &wayoff  
21 Like a whistle or a horn

22 The black night  
23 fills

24 our ears

25 We gon' go  
26 has already

27 gone

28 "Choo Choo" is the translation  
29 in somebody else's

30 Station

31 #

32 Whoooooooooooo Whoooooooooooo  
33 Whoooooooooooo Whoooooooooooo Whoooooooooooo

34 is its real  
35 sound

36 from way up under  
37 the ground

38 Way  
39 Down

40 Whoooooweeeeee Whooooeeoooooooooooo  
41 Whoooooooooooooooooooo

42 Thats it real  
43 sound  
44 Under Ground!

[Page 237 ]

45 & then sometimes  
46 if the night is cold  
47 & bright

48 that whistle cries  
49 like all through

50 that night

51 that whistle cries  
52 & it moans

53 Whyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy' sssssssssss  
54 Whyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy sssssssssss  
55 Whyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy  
56 &c.

[Page 238 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : 1929: Y you ask? (26)**

*Chime Blues*  
FletcherHenderson

(piano solo)

1 In "The Masque of the Red Death"  
2 near the end  
3 of the ball  
4 a deadly stranger appears.  
5 Not Vincent Price,  
6 Some thing with eyes like numbers  
7 mouth a siren about to wail  
8 Screamed headlines, the dope of the radio.  
9 The party goes freeze  
10 the Butlers and Maids get their notices  
11 they are skeleton walkers, boat feet,  
12 Wings, dark countenanced baritones  
13 Willowy sopranos; the hall  
14 Swept with an actual tide  
15 of Red & Black---The White  
16 is the silence as the Flag Waves.

17 Did some one say, "The Renaissance  
18 is over?" Or was that the living  
19 Dying wind, reality, or the Rags  
20 of yr future? The living dying wind  
21 adhesive against wet w/ blood top hats  
22 souls w/bullet holes. Ex leapers smashed  
23 against the bankruptcy of bullszit & oppression.

[Page 239 ]

24 Finally we know, half superiorly,  
25 all these guests  
26 will die of the Plague. The Black Death!  
27 The Red Death! The Plague!

28 Horror movie statistical murders.

29 Dead in old houses

30 & under cars. In chain gang Gulags

31 & share cropper concentration camps.

32 Most of us wake up in a crumbling

33 plague ridden mansion.

34 Imitation music

35 Imitation laughter

36 Imitation people

37 w/ Imitation Lives-

38 A nation of minstrels

39 and ignorant powerful people

40 plus slave niggers almost as insane

41 as their

42 oppressors!

43 A ritual of Black & Red Caped

44 Devil Messengers

45 In the shadow of the casement glass

46 Our glasses, raised in the air,

47 are frozen

48 in a shadow

49 as wet

50 as blood!

[Page 240 ]

51 It begins to snow outside

52 beyond the dead forest,

53 inside the naked empty grey cities

54 The snow is spotted w/ blood.

55 A madman's signature



56 is shown on television.

57 Disease, now, is

58 continuous!

[Page 241 ]

### **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Stellar Nilotic (29)**

*You Gotta Have Freedom*  
Pharoah Sanders

1 You want to know

2 how I escaped? (There were bright yellow lights now, and red

3 flashes.)

4 Can we talk here? Are we all ex-slaves? (a laughter

5 ruins the dawn silence, and the birds acknowledge us

6 with their rap of flutes).

7 That star, just over the grey green peak (the moonlight

8 acknowledges us and makes us shadows.) Was how I was led,

9 A slender black woman, around 23, put out her hand, turning

10 toward the star. You know how night is, the star was blue and

11 beautiful. Around it music, we drummed through the forests.

12 Their ignorance, that country of "Their" and its united snakes

13 unified in madness, and worship of advantage. You cannot

14 have aristocracy, except you have slaves.

15 They teach you that.

16 Yet our going, our breathing, the substance  
17 of our lives, was with us chanting

[Page 242 ]

18 against whatever was not cool.

19 This was always, and remains  
20 a foreign land. And we are

21 undoubtedly, the slaves.

22 There is some music, that shd come on now.  
23 With space for human drama, there shd be some memory  
24 that leaves you smiling. That is, night and the way/  
25 Her lovely hand, extended. The Star, the star, all night  
26 We loved it  
27 like ourselves.

[Page 243 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : At The Colonial Y They Are Aesthetically & Culturally Deprived (Y's Later) (31)**

*Maple Leaf Rag*  
Scott Joplin

- 1 SHARK MONSTER Rockefeller
- 2 Codes. Explosion is War.
- 3 For Wha? (The Blood)
- 4 Profits
- 5 of New
- 6 Avant disease come to ya'
- 7 What was in the bush / yr society
- 8 smoked
- 9 EATS EATS
- 10 its terror
- 11 White Beast
- 12 alive w/ Harpoons
- 13 inside it the bones
- 14 of whole nations

- 15 Slavery, Concentration
- 16 Camps, Plantations
- 17 Gas Chambers

- 18 The death of Reconstruction was
- 19 the death of the dream
- 20 the death of the reality
- 21 The death of any wd be American
- 22 Democracy!

[Page 244 ]

- 23 Bloodless "Jaws" whale shark monster
- 24 it kills include cultures
- 25 now post McCarthy where
- 26 is Grapes of Wrath or I Was

- 27 A Fugitive or the truth
- 28 of itself? Was Sam Spade
- 29 a Communist Sympa

30 thizer? Or Philip Marlowe?  
31 But even that individual cry  
32 for straight shot Democracy  
33 cd finally find itself banned in darkness  
34 while Robotic Horror pornography makes us  
35 consumers of masturbation and degenerating  
36 values.  
37 An america where the only academy awards  
38 go to Ronald Reagan w/ Clarence Pendleton as  
39 Ben Vereen. "Boogity Boogity" an  
40 Ellison description of Ellison describing.  
41 The teeth of imperialism is a chant  
42 for the dying things needing to die.  
43 Its poison swelling EAT EAT  
44 Its cry of terror!

45 You see (a whispered  
46 aside)  
47 even its "humanity"  
48 (a people of slave holders)  
49 was a kind  
50 of minstrelsy

51 An unconvincing  
52 Black Face Act.

[Page 245 ]

53 Now the flicks are a form of Commerce  
54 less and less  
55 of art  
56 Film innovation was revolutionary  
57 Eisenstein's Red Montage  
58 With that connection, the tech  
59 nology & casual populist dream

60 Equality.

61 So much popcorn.  
62 The Jews, Italians, Irish, Poles, & c.  
63 had first to give up  
64 being that  
65 to enlarge the baby slave holder  
66 Fat banker fish  
67 to be its evolved "revolutionary"  
68 Sleek sea thing  
69 (Sleek?  
70 A nigger  
71 in its teeth  
72 The feed of bulging monsters  
73 so creative they invented  
74 fascism in the black belt  
75 of democracy  
76 So the Black Face, Dixie Land, thin rag, non-"race,"  
77 Funny hat, Paul Whiteman  
78 stiff seat, noun baked non swing  
79 of the "cool," bebop's cover.  
80 Or for the Shorties & Rodgers  
81 & Bru's & Becks & the green  
82 of our dollar - oh man- to  
83 the "progressive jazz" of glass  
84 adjectives w/ no where to blow.

[Page 246 ]

85 Until we get fusion & its con  
86 a cool out of new blues  
87 turns a chain to a flexible  
88 rubber unbreakable straw  
89 for yr elevator colored nouveau,

90 to the gallows garden  
91 of the floating compradors

92 where their eggs, like body snatcher  
93 pods lay hatching way in the middle

94 of the air.

95 This bend of class  
96 to the death of itself  
97 & rebirth in fake neon flames.  
98 Elvis Presley was the FDR of  
99 the 1950's, the philosophy  
100 was workable & when the  
101 Beatles moved in simply slander  
102 them w/belittling Jesus  
103 & enlarge the American market.  
104 Nigger Music became figure  
105 music. Chocolate death  
106 Plastic. Instead of rejection-  
107 The Huge monster's mouth  
108 Him/Her's protein digesting skin

109 To Europe? To The Past?  
110 But leave reality to the  
111 real & the living

112 By the end of the 19th century

[Page 247 ]

113 they cd convert the sorrow songs  
114 to Barber Shop  
115 Quartets.

[Page 248 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : 'There was Something I Wanted to Tell You.' (33)  
Why?**

*African Lullaby*  
Babenzele Pygmies,  
S. Africa

1 Revolutionary War  
2 gamed  
3 sold  
4 out  
5 The Tories  
6 still in control  
7 of the culture

8 English Departments  
9 still  
10 & the money & "culture"  
11 in an "English"  
12 accent.

13 The Green Mtn Boys  
14 Tom Paine The Bill  
15 of Rights

16 tried to cut  
17 it

18 But then 19th century  
19 Explosion, Free the  
20 Slaves, Kill feudal

[Page 249 ]

21 ism, Give rights  
22 to the Farmer & Worker

23 the vote to Women

24 But that got blew  
25 Hayes-Tilden, Bloody  
26 Democrats

27 Traitor  
28 Republicans

29 The Ku Klux Klan  
30 (A murder Gang!)

31 & that leap, into industrial society  
32 democracy they sd  
33 Got all but Killed  
34 tho murdered  
35 many times!

36 Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Ho  
37 Fidel, Nkrumah  
38 Martin, Sandino  
39 & Malcolm X

40 Have all been  
41 betrayed

42 All revolutions bear their own  
43 betrayal, & betrayers  
44 The world is complex

[Page 250 ]

45 its reality materially  
46 simple



47 It is the dying of the life

48 the quenching of the spark  
49 the greying of the light  
50 the cold whiteness of the recently  
51 full of flaming inspired intelligent  
52 heart! The dead entrail of our  
53 collective traditional  
54 enemy. Animal  
55 connections. Metaphysics.  
56 Greed. Anti Science  
57 lives. Ugly in power  
58 and uglying up our only  
59 life.

60 The rot, the lie, the opposite  
61 will always, if there is ever  
62 that, exist. As life means death  
63 and hot cold. Darkness lights'  
64 closest companion. Its twisted,  
65 & rises as a spiral. It is No &  
66 Yes, and not It for long.

67 *Motion* , the beat, tender mind  
68 you humans even made music.  
69 But, our memory anywhere  
70 as humans and beyond, parallel  
71 to everything, is rise is new is  
72 Changed, a glowing peaceful  
73 Musical  
74 World.

[Page 251 ]

75 What betrays revolution is the need  
76 for revolution. It can not stop in life.  
77 Whoever seeks to freeze the moment is

78 instantly, & for that instant, *mad!*

79 We are servants of life in upward  
80 progressive motion. Fanners  
81 of the flame. Resistance is Electric.  
82 Fred sd, its measurable on every  
83 block.

84 The wd be stoppers of revolution  
85 are its fossil fuel

86 Winter comes  
87 and Spring

88 We can sometimes  
89 hear  
90 explosions!

[Page 252 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : YMCA #35**

*After The Rain*

Trane

[1]

1 We talked all the time  
2 as spirits we were

3 allowed.  
4 & watched the different  
5 primates in their turns  
6 & elegant twists

7 We caught the rising virus  
8 like a style of neon  
9 murders. A calm  
10 blood washing upward

11 Between giggles & drunk laughter  
12 wisdom hit the walls  
13 & ceiling, windows  
14 closed if open  
15 opened if  
16 closed

17 It was never quiet  
18 no familiarities  
19 were permitted

20 The good guys sat  
21 & watched the door

[Page 253 ]

22 the wizards crawled  
23 from 14th St to the  
24 outer crust

25 Colors & rain  
26 The well dressed well spoken  
27 The poverty stricken  
28 The lonely  
29 The important  
30 maniacs

31 They were singing through their  
32 noses, & fingers  
33 Everybody was a headline  
34 A massacre that cd not  
35 be a revelated gorilla

36 These were rich people & Heroes  
37 The stink was not stink, the garbage  
38 not really garbage. If you cd bend concrete  
39 & hang like the high tent of drunken rapists  
40 Applause wd rock & roll you in yr dreams

41 Awards could be coughs  
42 hands reaching  
43 poetry of climaxes  
44 proposed. Crippled

45 Weasels I knew  
46 & sang a song  
47 for the airplane  
48 underground

[Page 254 ]

49 Not to be subjective  
50 a heart full of dashes  
51 no opening through backs  
52 exploding in their  
53 dreams.

54 It is not enough to witness, you are  
55 somewhere anyway  
56 & you wont sweat.

1 Riding through the valley  
2 Sundays coldness a hole  
3 in summer. A red dark ball  
4 pasted over  
5 with notes

6 But picture The Tempts  
7 Do-walking  
8 clean among black  
9 waves

10 Picture a blinding whiteness  
11 like Cab Calloway's  
12 shoes

13 the nigger computers  
14 bluey reporting  
15 ghosts ahead  
16 who are cannibals

[Page 255 ]

17 We ponder for the Bop-trillionith  
18 time

19 The Madness  
20 of the Gods

[Page 256 ]

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : The Turn Around Y36**

*The Turn Around*  
Hank Mobley

1 Jack Johnson

2 was convicted

3 of White Slavery!

4 He was probably

5 the only person ever

6 convicted in this

7 country

8 of Slavery!

9 -Coyt's Son

## **Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : ('One More Time')**

*Humph*  
T. Sphere Monk

1 Likewise

2 in all these years

3 I only seen one time

4 Downbeat called somebody

5 a "racist" from the front cover

6 & that was LeRoi Jones. Was

7 the only time.

8 -Likewise

[Page 257 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Lord Haw Haw (as Pygmy) #37**

*All Blues*  
Miles

1 We were here

2 *before*

3 God

4 We

5 *invented*

6 Him.

7 Why?

8 That's a good/ god damn

9 question.

[Page 258 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Speech #38 (or Y We say it this way)**

*Be Bop*  
Diz

- 1 OoBlahDee
- 2 Ooolyacoo
- 3 Bloomdido
- 4 OoBopShabam
- 5 Perdido Klackto-
- 6 Veestedene
- 7 Salt Peanuts oroonie
- 8 McVouty
- 9 rebop

- 10 Ornithology
- 11 BaBa Ree Bopp

- 12 Ooo Shoobie
- 13 Doobie

- 14 & The Sisters
- 15 Dooie Blah
- 16 &
- 17 Dooie Blee

- 18 a Kuka mop

- 19 Bee Doop Doop
- 20 ie Doo



21 pie -Lemon Drop  
22 Be Doopie  
23 Doop Dop

24 Squirrel  
25 in The Glass  
26 Enclosure

27 of the essential  
28 Transbluesency

29 We dreamt Paradise  
30 w/you  
31 Naima

32 Savoying  
33 Balue Bolivared

34 in black Night  
35 Indigo

36 Brownie Red  
37 Hollywood Hi Noon  
38 Trane Lights

39 Salaam Thunder  
40 electricity trademark

41 Yr heart  
42 in Repetition

43 de Milos

44 Monk's Shades  
45 made the tru/man  
46 of a Hairy  
47 Square  
48 symbol  
49 in faded corniness

50 Gold Electric  
51 Natural Grace  
52 like  
53 Freedom

54 Horns  
55 of our  
56 Description - Desperatenesses'  
57 Drums

58 Sharp spectrum Blace  
59 painted hard light

60 Lush life romance  
61 ancient  
62 trade.

63 Hideehideehidee hee  
64 ooooohhhhhhhhh

65 Oh Imperial Ghost  
66 who is no  
67 Ghost  
68 & Real

69 Autumn

[Page 261 ]

70 I think of you

71 & the sorrow

72 of gates

73 & absences in your soul

74 America

75 like the dead

76 spaces

77 like ignorance

78 between the

79 stars

80 The Ape said,

81 "Floogie,

82 Lucy, Baby!"

83 Human light

84 in your

85 African

86 Eyes.

87 Travelin Travailing

88 Majestic

89 Life Form

90 Scatting

[Page 262 ]

91 Boogieing

92 Cosmos In

93 Cosmos

94 Rhythm

95 Rapping, capping

96 hand

97 slapping

98 Black Poet

99 Chanting

100 to the 1st fire.

[Page 263 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : So the King Sold the Farmer #39**

*Angels & Demons At Play*  
Sun Ra

1 The Ghost

2 Ghost

3 Watch out

4 for the Ghost

5 Ghost get you

6 Ghost

7 Watch out

8 for the

9 Ghost

10 In bitter darkness screams sharpness as smells

11 & Seas black voice

12 Wails

13 in the death filled

14 darkness

15 Their bodies disease beneath intoxicated floors

16 A seas shudder afraid its turned

17 to Blood

[Page 264 ]

18 The bodies

19 they will, in death's shill

20 to Lionel Hampton  
21 Ghost Look out  
22 for the Ghost

23 Ghost  
24 is have us  
25 chains  
26 is be with  
27 dying

28 is caught

29 Sea mad, maniac  
30 drunken  
31 Killing sea

32 Ghooooooooost

33 Ghooooooooost

34 The chains  
35 & dark  
36 dark &  
37 dark, if there was "light"  
38 it meant  
39 Ghooost

40 Rotting family we  
41 ghost ate  
42 three

43 A people flattened chained  
44 bathed & degraded  
45 in their own hysterical waste

46 below  
47 beneath  
48 under neath  
49 deep down  
50 up under

51 grave cave pit  
52 lower & deeper  
53 weeping miles below  
54 skyscraper gutters

55 Blue blood hole into which blueness  
56 is the terror, massacre, torture  
57 & original western  
58 holocaust

59 Slavery

60 We were slaves

61 Slaves

62 Slaves

63 Slaves  
64 -  
65 Slaves  
66 -  
67 Slaves

68 -  
69 We were

70 Slaves  
71 -  
72 Slaves  
73 -

74 They threw  
75 our lives  
76 a way

77 Beneath the violent philosophy  
78 of primitive  
79 cannibals

80 Primitive  
81 Violent  
82 Steam driven  
83 Cannibals

84 RR

85  
86 My Brother

[Page 267 ]

**Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- : Y The Link Will Not Always Be 'Missing' #40**

*The Wise One*  
Trane



- 1 Think of Slavery
- 2 as
- 3 Educational!

## NOTES

1. [Back ^](#) [Note 1

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2. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 1

[1] Both title and epigraph, "A blue fog you can almost see through," are from a Duke Ellington composition, on his 1946 Carnegie Hall LP.

3. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 2 2

[2] *Salmagundi* , nos. 22-23 (1973), quoted in *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader* , p.xxi.

4. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 3

[3] *Ibid.*, p. xix.

5. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 4 3

[4] Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," from *Let's Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings* , Los Angeles: Sun&Moon Press, 1991, p. 92; Pound's "A Retrospect," from *Literary Essays*, New York: New Directions, 1968, pp. 3-4.

6. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 5 4

[5] Rimbaud, *Complete Works* , Wallace Fowlie ed. & trans., U. of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 304.

7. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 6

[6] Baraka was born Everett LeRoy Jones; the middle name LeRoi to appear in the fifties.

8. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 7 5

[7] Adriano Spatola, "A Vaguely Ontological Aspiration," *Invisible City* , 16/17 (June 1975), p. 33; translated and reprinted from *TamTam* , 2 (Parma, 1972).

9. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 8 6

[8] Walter Benjamin, "Addendum to 'The Paris in the Second Empire of Baudelaire,'" *Invisible City* , 21/22 (November 1977), p. 33.

10. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 9 7

[9] KPFK, Los Angeles radio interview, March 1976; transcribed in part in *Invisible City* , 23/25 (March 1979), p. 8

11. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 10 8]

[10] *The Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones Reader* , p. xxviii.

12. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 11 9]

[11] Speech to the Tricontinental Cultural Congress in Havana, 1967, reprinted in *Invisible City* , 10 (October 1973), p. 9

13. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 12 10]

[12] KGNU, Boulder, Colorado, broadcast, July 27, 1984; transcribed in part in the *Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones Reader* , pp. 249-50

14. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 13]

[13] *Ibid*, p. 250.

15. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 14 11]

[14] "When Miles Split!," forthcoming in *Eulogies* , New York: Marsilio, 1996; originally in *Sulfur* , 30 (Spring 1992), p. 5.

16. [Back ^](#) [Footnote 12]

Willie Best was a Negro character actor whose Hollywood name was Sleep'n'eat.

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