CONCERTO CHICAGOCONCERTO CHICAGO
A Percussive Concert for the Stage

by Lonnie Carter

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TIME: 2003

PLACE: Chicago, China, Revolutionary War Boston, Afghanistan, Victory Gardens Stage

CHARACTERS: Historical Figures, Historical Figures of the Imagination, and a Chorus of ambidextrous Ambipsychics

CHORUS

Welcome to Concerto Chicago

Concerto - we all play and speak together

We are in Con - CERT-ainly

Chic Chi Town

Cheekawgo

Chicagoski - the Middle Coast

where all the trends get funnelled through and purified

where all the jazz for a century and more comes up from

N'Orleans before it spreads east and west

where Armstrong Louis played his Hot Fives and Hot Sevens

and learned to read his music, yes he did, thank you, Lil Hardin

Concerto Chicago - a mouthful - say it loud

A Rock of Ages Concert swinging low and high

A Sweetness Show that chair-yots back and forth and proud

Sophisticated gents and ladies all - o my!

We'll sing you stories from around the globe

in times both past 'n prez

Stories of heroes to touch your heart and challenge your frontal lobe

stories that last, O YEZ

We sing these tales (here and now) from our fair city

For the here and now,

'though some aren't pretty,

All of courage big and small,

the virtue without which we've no virtue at all

Of fathers and daughters and mothers and sons

and lovers and soldiers who've laid down their guns

and beaten their swords into ploughshares and pens

and sung out their ballads in the dens of lions endangered

by man, rapacious and out of control, digging well after well

the wilderness one big gasoline hole

But ages before these ancient tankers

owned By Euro-trash gangsters

split in two and despoiled the Mediterranean

making the Exxon Valdez look like a tugboat leak

Ages before this petro retro mess

There was this matter of seizing our non-renewable freedoms

The insistence of revolution come to these pre-petroleum shores

Before the Liberty Bell cracked

there was a woman of color

and we know Black Don’t Crack

A woman name of Phillis Wheatley

poet of the Independence War

This word ‘color’

Do you refer to W.E.B DuBois who said at the beginning of the 20th Century

that the problem would be that of the 'color line'

what was that century again?

Phillis Wheatley, the first to publish her poems

The patron saint, the alma mater of ALL Women-Americans in the arts

Wait 'til you hear her chant "Europa" showing the founding of Europe

in all its fits and starts

And tales of Lem Louis Gulliver, South Side slammer-poet-preacher and more

And his twelve year old daughter Baby Glo In-The-Know

We'll let him speak for himself, as the time arrives, givin' us all what-for

And the little one, B Glo, well, she got some tricks in store

And THEN -

there's a trip to Beijing, China - the ancient name for China is Middle Country

just like our Middle Coast

We made sure your passport's up-to-date

No three hour stand-in-line - eighty minutes and you've passed the go-gate

CONCERTO's pure of heart and pure of thought - almost

Cane sugar bubblin' brown, sweet butter for your toast

Stand back away from your televisionary sets, boys and girls,

for all the twists and twirls

This here's live Cirque de Ole

right back achoo in the HippeHoppe-o-Drome

Comin' for to carry you home

Who are we, and you, and you, Mr. Idiosyncratic with the joint

The precise answer we don't know, but to the point

we'll tell you what we dig and do

We dig Teatro Latino

Se habla mucho 'Spagnole

Moviemy dobrze po Polsku

we speak Polski like Stashu the Pole

We infuse the Tower of Baybel with the Power of Sayble

'Cause at the end of the rage

we bring to the table

We're on the same page

And our Mom's name is Mabel

Here we are in Cheek Cheekago

La Raza y Dziennik Chicagoski

Chillin' at Sterches - No Corona, no foolish drinks, limited dancing -

watchin' Sammy through a couple Brewski

Just like Adlai Stevenson said - living in the flat Midwest

We be so lucky, we can see so far in all directions - it's the best

We fre- QUENT the Harold Washington Li - BRAR - y

We party at the Buckingham colored lights fountain

- did you say 'colored'?

We dig the soul gigs at the clubs on Prairie

We pray at St. Pat's and hear the Serm on the Mountain

We appreciate the Filipina nurses at Cook County Hosp

Sayin' nothing bad 'bout anyone else, we prefer their humanity to the occasional Wasp

The Children's Hospital on north Lincoln Ave's

life-saving helicops

making roof-landings for the have-nots and haves

they are the tops

We be slammed at the Broadway Green Mill Slams

We are awed by Granddaddy Slammeister Smith's lyrical brain

- Uptown is to urban what Glencoe is to 'burban –

We goin' there a-GAIN and a- GAIN

What's going on up there, Uptown Colts

up there by the ghosts of Wie BOLDTS

Anyone remember the Cinnamon Bear

and radio drama at Christmas, listenin' by the big con-SOLE

The Writer-Man showin' his age

Hear it, Writer-Man, we on the same stage, we bros and sisses Soul

We head on Southwest for Jamaican insane

scarfin' the Shack's jerk chicken and yams

We're young and old, between and betwixt

So old we can still smell the Stock-yards

In every 'hood, South Side, North, West and Southeast mixed

we hear the hundreds, thousands of corner tavern bards

We hang at 67th and Marquette

We know Bridgeport and the rooms to let

Where the Daley clan used to roost

And Chinese folk now livin' ducked 'n goosed

We're toolin' past 95th and Stony I

We're rehabbin' the haciendas on South Shore Driii

We stayin' clear of the jail at 26th and Californ-- I -Cate

We hoppin' the bus at the Jeff Park turnaround, we won't be late

We headed for the Cultural Center Jose Rizal up on South-PORT

'Mabuhay Pilipinos!' Freedom Fighter extraordinaire

a breath of fresh Manila air

we need more of his sort

We love the CSO and the lawns of Ravin - I - YA

We mourn the loss of the Fine Arts movie shed on South Mich

and one more time is our fondest wish

to see its sexy foreign CIN - E - MA

We watched O'Hare be built - and built and built and built (bars bulls cubs sox)

We watch Midway expand

Remember Conrad Hilt?

The Edgewater Beach - the snazziest hotel in the land

Recall the South Shore Country Club, so lily-white

Now, a multi-culti-hub,

they're gettin' it, gettin' it right

We know it's - SOLDIER, not Soldier - S Field

We ain't no Second City

to no Cleveland will we yield

We walk the Oak Street Beach

Black, brown, yellow, white and red

and we may not love one another

But we have come to respect the Di-Verse - i -tee, each to each

From Halsted and Di-VERSE-EE

From Poo - laski

duh, Crawford - who he?

Now Western up and down from South to North

Let us all come forth

All 'round the U of C, we quit splittin' the atom

Don't you know we all got to eschew dat ratatattatum

From Louis Farrakhan to Hizzoner Weekly Monthly and Yearly

They be in office and mosque for life on their oath

Sometimes it seems the rest of us, gee golly and merely

exist at the pleasure of them both

We comin' full circle from the U of I school

We think ITT is cooler than cool

We went to Loyola, for a year it's true

Attended Wright and Truman and Malcolm X too

And we recall DePaul

When Ray Meyer ruled B-Ball

We know where we were in nineteen hundred and ninety-eight

On Father's Day when Michael fell on the ball

Lordie love him, the greatest of great

The threepeat twice, the gloriest of all

Back in time we go, we taught a course at Roosevelt

When the snows for Bilandic wouldn't melt

We cannot forget Jane Byrne

an elegant lady with a lot to learn

We so old we knew Louis Terkel before he was Studs

We so old we knew the Reverend Jesse Louis This-Distributorship's-for-you Jackson

before he was Bud's

"When shove comes to push

Operation Busch"

We so old we remember the night Lenny Bruce

got nabbed at Mr. Kelly's

for saying that when some nun

ascended into heaven

her diaphragm fluttered to the street

We so old we remember Dick Gregory playin' a club

off Rush Street chain-smokin' his Kents

and still eatin' meat

We so old we saw Nelson Algren on his Wild Side

and his (prototype) Golden Arm Man

by the Polish Roman Catholic Union

on Milwaukee Avenue Milwaukee 'Ulitsa'

and Nelson said, "Sit here and type on my Underwood

and feel where 'Never Come Morning' comes from"

We so old we drank with James T. Farrell

as he gave us Studs Lonigan

and Carl Sandburg, before the Village,

poetized the City of Big Shoulders

and Royko the Mike gave us his col-umn

We so paternally young we fatherin' new novels 'long with Bellow the Saul

the penner of Augie March, Herzog and lots for us all

write for write, he outdone everyone,

can we squeeze his potent bellows and get another one

'Cause who now will Rappicize the Young Black Drummer Boys

it will be us

because we are so young

the young black drummer boys

at State and Madison

beatin', and beatin' and beatin' every drum

And who now will lyricize

the sellers of Street Wise

the rhymer and chimer outside the Art Institute

the mother on St. Peter's sidewalk on Madison with her children in tow

she losin' her teeth by the handful each year

we all God's chillun, don't you know

the good Lord willin'

we hear a rum-a-tum-tum,

But do we hear the voice of Gwendolyn Brooks

Chicago's gift to the nation's poetry-at-large

and now that Gwendolyn's gone

well, we knew where we were

with Gwendolyn in charge

We move on with the newest of the new

Makers of music and dance and drama

off-off-Loop-de-Loop

Shattered Globe

Famous Door

E. T. A.

Stage Left

MPAACT

Strawdog

CTC

Theater with Heft

Remy The Bummpppo - What DO that mean?

And recall the drama makers gone

St. Nicholas and Café Voltaire

We miss them both

Who said life and art be fair?

Avalon and the Zebra Club – to you we tip our hats

The Regal of Marvin Gaye and Sam Cook gives way

to 50 Cent, is Two Bits behind all that?

The WAHOO MAN – he scared us kids out of our wits

Hey there, Herb Kent, still playin' your hits

WAHOO WAHOO!

Now and again we need some respite, some solace, some down home cookin'

We want it all, here in Linkin' Blinkin' ' n Bod Park

we're goin' to Barbara's store to do us some bookin'

Then down to the basin, where's there's hookin' and crookin'

We gettin' loose, shedding the uptight

and later on tonight

We'll head on down to the ghost of Maxwell Street

where Jimmie Lee Robinson still playin' his Delta Blues

and fightin' gentrification and the wrecker's ball

and the news and the news is that

Jimmie Lee, we all mourn for, Maxwell Street he loved

He spent his life and ended it, pushed and shoved

Let's see if Maxwell's still selling

Then Ravenswood El up to Armitage Street

and hear, Hendricks, Murphy, Mahagony and Elling

Where you living these days?

which one of the parks or towns?

Humboldt or Wicker – Up or Down

Buck or Greek – just a three thousand square feet crib is what we seek

With ‘House Music’ up where it all began

We’ll bring down the house

we do it ‘cause we can

Concerto Chicago, a mouthful, say it soft

Let it reverberate to every basement and loft

A Transfiguration of your expectation

A reaffirmation of your confirmation

of the power of the written, spoken, all-sung word

for extremely intelligent children of all ages - now you hear it -

Now - it's - word - heard

We are Chicagoans - proud - confronting the world

and trotting the globe

We are Chicagoans - loud

Let us touch both your heart and challenge your lobe

The Rock of Ages Concert swinging low and high

The Sweetness Show, don't you know

Sophisticated gents and ladies all - o my!

From Phillis Wheatley, poet of the Independence War

To Lem Louis Gulliver, slammer-poet-preacher and more

Not us -

but

YOU

are the one

And thus - we have now - begun

Light change.

We are in the world of PHILLIS WHEATLEY.
Pre-Revolutionary War Boston.

CHORUS
Look, Little Phillis Wheatley, colored girl

In 1760 she such a pearl

She torn from Senegal's neck at age of six

She stood for auction, whips gave her back licks

But viciousness knew some boundary then

As two folks snatched her from the lions' den

They brought her to their home and treated her nice

PHILLIS
Almost.

CHORUS
'Twas Boston before the revolution

PHILLIS
Which was definitely not going to be televised

CHORUS
There were big problems and small solutions

PHILLIS
I learned Latin and Greek before anyone realized

CHORUS
She played with her little white sissie and bro

PHILLIS

But for each eeny meanie meiny mo

They caught me by my two-toned toe

I was a slave, but I wasn't

My mistress, kind, often said, "She doesn't"

When asked by the others whom she had bought

Why I didn't do the work instead of being/been taught

What especially rankled the cook, the maid and the groom

Besides the fact that I never pushed a broom

KITCHEN CHORUS-MATES

Missa Wheatley, Phillis don't do her work

Missa Wheatley, all Phillis do be shirk

We kitchen folk, we the distaff staff

Phillis here, she makin' some dumb po-ems

That be easy as a laugh

We do hard cookin'; we make chicken and goose and sweet potato po-ems

We be the poet - tatoes

We keep this house together like our own

We work these big and pig knuckles to the bone

We be dancin' these toes off'n these toe-matoes

We be workin' our butts offn' the molasses

And this Phillis here sittin', gazin' and then she sasses

SUSANNAH WHEATLEY

Now, children, she has the gift of tongues and eyes

She's teaching us all how to see

KITCHEN CHORUS-MATES
She got a tongue on her alright, that ain't no prize

She just lazy and a vixen pix-ee

She look us cross-eyed, I'll give her a fight

SUSANNAH WHEATLEY
Will you dark folk please get along

KITCHEN CHORUS-MATES
You wants us to dance and then sing a song

We get along, little doggies, little catties, little monkies, just like everybody else get along

SUSANNAH WHEATLEY
Which is not at all

KITCHEN CHORUS-MATES
O, Miss Wheatley, we sorry to upset you so

We grateful to you and the Mr.

Iss jus' dis pickaninny ackin' like she besser dan de res' a us

Aksin' funny questions

Givin' smarty ansuhs

Doin' de dozens

Doin' the doesn'ts

If you think we bein' disapeckfull, we wasn't

PHILLIS
And still I was a slave and I wasn't

Up and down the street, you could hear the slaves be beaten

Though discreetly, o so neatly

Were their cries and whispers orchestrated

Through the night

That by the morning there were smiles of love

Between the welts and bruises

As if no one ever hated

But me –

Me - Mr. Wheatley never ever beat me

The woodshed was for others
The woodpile, small or big,

Never hid this, some said overprivileged, nig/over pampered

I was free to start my writing and I did among the nosy

When word then spread that I had turned my hand to poesie

My mistress, blind, often said, "She doesn't"

And still I was a slave and I wasn't

CHORUS

But no matter what you see in Phillis' face

She tryin' hard to leave that race

PHILLIS

No I ain't

This ain't paint

At my peril I forget I come from Sen-ay-gal

A land where blacks sell blacks like so many dolls

I cannot deny my African roots

Where no women and men wear bonnets and suits

But just as I don't flee from European dress

I know that the goddess Europa was an African Queen, oh yes

OY - ROPA the beauty, and Zeus disguised as a bull

But I'm jumping ahead from empty to full

OY - ROPA, the brown Phoenician beauty

Was walking the fields of her native land

When Zeus the Chief of the Gods, el Jefe

Trained his hairy eyeballs on her booty

A red dress under where he wanted his hand

Swirled before him, swooning blind and deaf-ay

He was paralyzed, puerile, mute-ey

But just before Pandemonium's band

In full cacophony and infernal duty

Blasted him priapic 'cross all of Phoenicia

He transmogrified himself into el Toro Blanco

The White Bull snorting before the brown lass

OY - ROPA, climb up my back and let's ride

Not the first time that brown let white inside

OY - ROPA, climb up my back and let's go

Not the first time that brown sat white below

She knew she shouldn't, this ride would cost dear

Yet nothing would stop her, even huge fear

OY - ROPA dug in with both feet

Across the sea to the Isle of Crete

Held on to his mane and his horns

Before her eyes flashed her newborns

As Toro Blanco swam and heaved

She, passagera luminosa, the mujer shining

She, sendera luminosa, the sea-path shining

Finally onto the shore, OY - ROPE relieved

They took each other standing

Three times demanding

And three sons flew out by accelerated birth

Grew to be kings and judges above and below the earth

But the greatest feat of all was left to OY - ROPE

For she was to found a continent reknowned

She gave it her name

With countries England, Netherlands, Spain, Germany and France

This Asiatic-African woman taught these white folks how to dance

OY - ROPE paved the way for Oirish, Slavs and Scandinaves

And warned them never to make black, brown, red or yellow their slaves

This Asiatic-African woman taught these white folks how to dance

She gave this continent her name

From whence you think Europe came

It came from Dame OY - ROPE

Faith, love and yes, most, HOPE

And I, Phillis Wheatley, am a mixture of black and white nation

I'm what some men fear, but Pater, I'm here

I'm Miss Miscegenation for Pen and Quill

The writing beauty contest winner - First Prize Phill

Light change.

CHORUS

We leave First Prize Phill and those Revolutionary times for just a bit
And head on over to the other side of this spinning top

To give you a taste, a spot and a kick where Peking Duck is it

Szechuan Chicken Lickin as the Socialist Sky falls into the plop

Known as WTO and the Falun Gong flow

of middleaged exercising spiritualists

threatens the Bejeesus out of the Oligarchy

known as The Party

and the noisemakers of the Chinese New Year of the Goat

rams that ‘garchy with the anarchic bleat of Market Capital

in the North Capital known as the Bei Jing!

of cash registers, abacus palm pilots

in a land that’s known a revolution or two

from The Long March of Mao Tse Deng

and the Tanjen caves

to the barbarism he called ‘Cultural’

unleashing the Red Guards Vultural

‘gainst anything deemed intellectual

he or she who even had a thought

was branded ineffectual

Our author was there in ’98, ‘99

His stays, departures, arrivals, were fine and not so fine

He went there from Chicago to Beijing and back and forth

He was rehearsing The Boogedy Boogedy of Sovereign State

Right here in this building on Lincoln North

So why was he going to The Middle Country, as say the Chinese,

Well, these are his words, on that first flight across the Pole, please

He’s got a mortal life indeed

but where’s his immortal soul

Who do we turn to as his alterego?

E. Milton Wheeler, so often in the past, Eddie the Man

as only he can?

Let's hear from Crowley, John,

His interpretation bound to be right on

A one and a two, and Crowley knows to do

JOHN CROWLEY

KEATS DIED AT 28

In Snoop Doggy Doggerel

With Apologies to all Romantics

Major and Minor – except myself

Keats died at 28, no 7, no 6

Today I'm 58, no 7, no 6
You pays your century
You takes your picks
His was the 19th, mine the 20th
He roared in with sonnets ablaze
I'm stepping out with 50 plays
I'm on United going west to east
It's 14 and change the first leg to Tokyo
To see my kids
They live with their mom in Beijing no jokeyo
It's a mad situation Chi Town to the North Capital and its
neo-Capitalist habituation
But it's the hand I've drawn in a game I can't leave
Not this plane, not this now
Here come the drinks, let's dig this chow
Slurping udon noodles and Absolut
Jack Lemmon and George C. Scott 12 Angry Men on mute
My hands swell my feet rank and gross in sweat
The Asian economic miracle, you bet
"When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain
Before high-piled books, in charactery
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain"
The Keats lines have stuck in my craw, been my law
Bellowed my flaccid iambic members
Held my gnarled dactyls to the embers
Jump-started my gaseous prose

Opened my alliterative nose
Ignited my sulfurous eggshell verse
Volcanoed my onomato for better
And lava-ed my poeia for worse
Nuked out the waste from this detracted globe
Ka-boomed every cell and mopped up my lobes
Keats dead from consumption at half my age
And still I cough up fresh blood for the stage
Wait a slaughtered blackened beast
Flying west to east jumping Judas priest
My birthday's over twice as fast
I been robbed conjobbed bent over double
My micro- and tele-scope's been Hubbelled
Something's off, this day's play's been miscast
I'll be 1-1-2 in 28 years
Four times Keats and Percy Bysshe Shell his peer
Holey Moley, as was said in Homer
No wonder O-Diss that jive-ass roamer

Spoke all his lies and never wrote a jot
Striving seeking finding yielding not
So what that in mid-age wrote Samuel Taylor Cole
Those haunted lines from his opium hole
Where yet he floats on Alph the sacred river
And Wordsworth that Lyrical Ballads giver
Was 80 or so before he gave up the ghost
Not all the good die young
Do the young die good's what matters most
Sweet daughters and son I won't take my leave
Dad wants this day back and from age reprieve

The CHORUS emerges.

CHORUS
Some themes are emerging and perhaps they are merging

This is the way, we think, works develop

You look for what's common in the uncommon

The author has a daughter and indeed another

And what he saw in Beijing day by day and bike by bike

Brought home with a smash,

These Beijing girls got to stop before they all crash

We need some pictograms to hear and see

And so we turn

- she burn -

to Lisa T.

CHORUS
Lisa Tejero as

BEIJING GIRL

LISA T
Though the Hellmann's mayo is not real

And the bandits your numbers from the ATM will steal

And the terra cotta soldiers have an artificial feel

You can leave your bikes your children and your yuans

While watermelons and roasted scorpions you chew on

McDonalds mission is one on every corner

thirty-five and counting

With Ronald in missionary position

Cholesterol mounting

There'll soon be peep shows and hard porners

The bicycles still abound

And belching blue trucks rumble

But seldom a horn amidst the sound

They're polite but they ain't humble

I walked across Tiananmen Square

The day Bil Clinton spoke

As I looked down at the squares in the square

My eye took quite a poke

These new ones are of lighter color

That make the older squares that much duller

The tanks had been so heavy

That the concrete had collapsed

They've been replaced and the blood's been cleaned

Now there's plans for stores kids' Gaps

If the Emperor's children in the Forbidden City were still around

They'd be diggin' Shakira all over town

On pirated tapes wearing Tommy Hilfiger capes

DKNY halter tops

Same North Face white boys with Kennedy mops

What's your pleasure, Beijing

Lap dancing or lap tops

Hat's your measure, Tsu Ling

You got enough change for dog chops?

I doubt it, you got to be paying for those sheer little ankle socks

Riding your bicycle holding a wet rag to your mouth and nose

Dodging pedicabs, double buses and a thousand shocks

Pumping for dear life and they want you to think designer clothes

What's that doing to your psychee

Can you even afford one nut leechee?

Come again, your girlfriends on the backs of their boyfriends' bikes

While you pedal alone you are the only one you do like

Beijing Girl by the hundred thousands

Thou swell thou pretty

Thou just one grain of thou-sands

With your hutongs, I say your barrios, your ghettoes and your ‘hoods destroyed

Hey, darling, it’s just the Asian economic miracle you can’t avoid

With Shell and Mobil phones and investment banks

There’s nobody giving you a chance to say, ‘No thanks’

The AUTHOR's three year-old blonde blue-eyed daughter cannot walk the cobbled stones of the
    Llamastery where the Dalai kept his llamas
Without families of Chinese black-haired folk grinningly pulling her into poses
    for photo ops and that's maybe a pity
If in fact it's true that the adoption macro-economy is humming
    along with a surplus of Sino-girlbabies
And without this in- dust - try in dustiest of Beijing these girls
    would never infancy leave no ifs ands buts or maybes
What are these folks doing with their insistance
    that HIS girl pose for their snapshots
What about Tsu-Ling with her little anklets
    wishing she'd been strangled at birth
    so she wouldn't have to ride her bike
    with leaded gas fumes so thick they're crap-clots
Hey, leaders, you can plant a billion trees in Mongolia to keep the sands
    from rushing across the Beijing plains

But if you lose Tsu Ling, her heart her soul her brains

Like Aretha put it, what you got without a little r-e-s--p-e-c-t-e-e

Is the laundry for 1.25 billion and no tickee

CHORUS

We've gone about as far away as we can go

not leaving the earth, and ladies and gents,

it's not our desire to break the sound barrier

and enter a stratosphere of dubious worth

when we need to return to the scene of birth

Chicago's Great South Side

for a few of us at least that's quite enough of a shooting star ride

Here's el Capitan – Lemuel Louis Gulliver, preacher-poet-man

sir and sire of Baby Glo

Lem Louis has been through all the struggles - he's marched, boycotted,

been hosed Bulldog-Connored and jailed

But now he takes, shall we say, a less confrontational tone

In steps Baby Glo to fill in the hole she feels is his approach

Let's hear what's on her mind and heart and tongue

just a few years back how she would delve

and speak from the wisdom of the Biblical twelve

eulogizing the Rapper the Blapper known as Doctor Snipe

he took six to the chest and three more knocked the wind from his pipe

It's BABY GLO's stage.

BABY GLO

Five cars in his entourage rolling down the strip

White Beemer gives him coorage

like a goddess on the prow of a ship

Snipe Avatar Snipe, the rapper the Main Jet

Fresh from a prize fight where he cadged every bet

With a fistful of Franklins he scratches his small goatee

Contemplating his next move with his record magnate Honey Honey Bee

Honey Honey Bee three hundred pounds at the wheel so tight

Thoughts of his own on this fight night so bright

Iron Mike be like Mike yeah

Tyson the Muslim Tyson the god yeah

LV the city of light luminescent

Nevada the state of power incandescent

Casinos and slots, 21 and blackjack

Afros and 'Mericans Sicilianos and Gangsterwhack

Gangsta' rap be all the rave and rage

Ain't nobody with a ghetto badge going to reach no ripe old age

Suddenly as they all accelerate

All five white Beemers and a Jagyouare leap the gate

Out of the turn come a white Cadillac

Stealing and peeling past the fried chicken shack

Even up with Snipe Avatar and Honey Honey Bee

Open fire 'cross their bows

Lordy Lordy you and me

Snipe takes it in the lung between his tattoos of Cleopatra Christ

Thug Life Sings the Blues and cries -

"My mama said I'd never look her in the eyes

I'd be dead before I got the prize."

But she was wrong

I got the p-r-i-y-z

Blap Blap

Two 'pocalypse e-y-e-e-z

I say - "Dear Mama, I was in your womb with Daddy Black Panther

in Rikers and the Tombs"

And I knew I was born astride the grave

Did not prevent me from being brass and bold and brave

I gatted all those things 'midst the star starry night

'Bout cops, cop-killers, hot bitches - Not right.

Don't you see I was trying to get through, through the shite

Saying those things on the star starry night

On the roof on the beach on the asphalt so black

I'm trying to make my point, front center, yo', Jack

Ladies and girls, you got you your receptacles

Homies and boys, you got you your unbound testicles

Bound to be bursting every which way and then

Careful my bloods you be up for five to ten

Let us all be Aretha and R-E-S-P-E-C-T

We got nothing else on this earth

'Cept what's love and light for you you and me

And now I'm dead

Bled

Fled

I said

Those bullets in my head

I cannot resist

They are the final dissed

Gone

I'm a pawn

From history's dawn's early light

The fight is endless

But the struggle depends less on us

Than on broken glass

Shards up the ass

Twisted 'round

Manacle-bound

Oh say can't you see

By this Snipe's early blight

How so loudly I jailed

At the twilight's fast screaming

Whose raw swipes and knife scars

Torso tattooed with might

O'er the rampage they watched

'Twas so Central Park creaming

And the glockers red glare

Magnums bursting in air

Came through through the shite

That my balls were ripped bare.

Oh say does that star-shattered spincter yet quaver

O'er the land of bloody me

And the home of the salve-er

The fight is endless

My life is not.

LEMUEL LOUIS GULLIVER bursts in on his daughter.

LEMUEL

Your life is not. You got that right. Where you get off talkin' that talk, baby Glo? I'm going to have to put a warning label on your mouth.

BABY GLO

Mah mouf'!

LEMUEL

Don't talk that way. Warning label right across your labials. Parental discretion advised.

Study your history and you won't be standing up in Bughouse Square rattling off some obscenities get you hauled in as some juvenile dee-linquent. This is still the town where they packed up Lenny Bruce at the old Mister Kelly's.

BABY GLO
Not for obscenity, Papa. You told me that history a thousand times. He took on relgion with that smug little sexist line 'bout nuns and diaphragms "Oh, we got Sister Mary Anachronisma ascending right up to Heaven and whoopps! Her diaphragm falls out". And Officer McGillicutty slaps the mezzuzeh off Lenny the Bruce and the cuffs on the meschuggeneh dirtmeister and off to the can and it be the bee-ginning of the end. Finito SCHLUSS!

LEMUEL
Where you gettin' all this foreign lingo? The guv'mint –

BABY GLO
Govern - MENT!

GULLIVER
The guv'MINT gonna arres' you for treach'ry and s-s-s-editchun.

BABY GLO
Well, ain't dat bitchin'!
And I learned this foreign lingo in schul.
You sent me to schul with Naomi Saperstein. Remember?

LEMUEL
I sent you to Naomi's play group, didn't I?

BABY GLO
Right after Mama died. I was two and counting. That is, I was counting and I was two.

BABY GLO
You called my first day after the play school and the first thing I said was, "Cool, Daddy, cool."

LEMUEL
And I thought you were saying 'school' or schul'. You can't quite yet say 'school'. Like you say 'pease' when we're trying to get you to say 'please'.

BABY GLO
And then it hit you.

LEMUEL
It hit me you were my two-year old hipster and you were saying -

BABY GLO & LEMUEL
Cool, Daddy, cool.

A Woman has entered.

WOMAN
I rang the bell. I knocked. Nothing. The door was ajar. I heard voices. Yours. And yours.

LEMUEL has just been hit with a ton of bricks.

LEMUEL
Melanctha?

WOMAN
Yes.

LEMUEL
But you're not Melanctha.

MELANCTHA
I'm not the Melanctha you're thinking of. But I AM Melanctha.

LEMUEL
You're her daughter.

MELANCTHA
I'm also yours.

BABY GLO
Daddy?

LEMUEL
Yes, Baby Glo?

BABY GLO
Daughters don't have to look like their fathers.

And here we leave THEM for the time.

CHORUS' turn.

Lem Louis Gulliver has a daughter and perhaps another

And daughters perhaps have a long lost brother

Love-children all - shouldn't all children be -

We all have our off-spring, in a manner of speech

Tutors tutees - tutees tutors - teach

The sorcerer's apprentice could be you or me

Phillis had children, biological two

We think they survived but a year or so

But her poems and her strength and rock-hard resolve

Brought forth progeny and prodigies, rock 'n roll hard and evolved

Women of colors - and even white got its own special color -

In all walks of arts and science, politics and bidness

shot through and through with self-reliance

Here's Phillis again doin' herself proud

- Let's see who we need yet to introduce

Among the cast as we look around

We forgetting somebody playing so fast and loose?

Why, Nambi Evelyn, are you feeling neglected?

You think we don't love you when the opp'site's selected

Hit it, girl, reprise Phillis now

You're last, here no one's least, no how

How's your French, know 'la bete noir'?

NAMBI EVELYN

'The Beast Black', ma cherie, bon soir

CHORUS

I ain't touchin' that one

No, sir, no, Madame

Not with a long , long pole

She Eve, now where's the Adam

Let's see how Phillis got herself hitched

To a blacksmith no less, he dug her carriage

if you gettin' our horseman's draught

a free man of color, Samson Osee Power Frock

Bloodied unbowed, and a reverend to boot

Fresh from shoein' a mare, hopin to UN-shoe this mare

and make her First Lady of the Flock

SAMSON OSEE POWER FROCK is there.

SAM OSEE

Sam Osee Power, Free Man of Color

PHILLIS

You'll plant, grow and eat my apples and make my cider muller

SAM OSEE

I know you're famous beyond belief or about to be

and would never consider someone below your station

But know I'm a darkie for all seasons

There's relationship between us 'though I've been

here for generations

And you I hear are the first of your clan to cross the Pond

Quite a splash you've made but I still see the mark of the bond

PHILLIS
As will you ever, you can't erase the imprint of the chains that bind

SAM OSEE
So, how now, fair girl, let's get down a little more than kin and less than kind

PHILLIS
You've been taught to read -

SAM OSEE
Taught myself.

PHILLIS
Impressive, my dear man, I shan't ever call you boy

With world enough and time I won't be coy

It's not the classes that separate us

Nor my poem-baking some call a ploy

It's that I don't fancy any position that would mate us

SAM OSEE
Come away with me forth

PHILLIS
We already are north

SAM OSEE
Northernmost where the war won't touch us

PHILLIS
We can't leap out of our skin

SAM OSEE
You tellin' me?

PHILLIS
Death is the wages of sin

where to? Maine?

You think there the slave trade's any nicer, Cain?

SAM OSEE
You think I killed Abel because I breathe

That I'm here because I've offed my bro

And lit my fire so my passions seethe

You've pegged me wrong; it just ain't so

PHILLIS
Did you pray to the Lord and sacrifice

Is that how you've survived and more than twice

SAM OSEE
I don't have a brother I know

We were all separated decades ago

I was left to fend for myself

Expelled not from the Garden but the holding pen

A boy in a land of so-called men

So I learned to shoe and I learned to preach

I learned some physic I trained me a leech

I got a cook's hat and I learned that too

May I have this dance, please hold me to you

PHILLIS
I haven't spent time at my desk today.

SAM OSEE
I haven't spent time at my pans today

I could salt some cod or I could fry it

I cook a mean beanpot, want to try it?

You could do the dance of the seven veils

very Biblical

I'm feelin' very Adam Riblical

You could take from my side

As I sauteed and souffle'd

consomme'ed and etouffier'ed

A culinary ride

And when it was your turn

To baste my rotisserie

And taste my beau-kissery

Salve my creme brulee burn

PHILLIS
I haven't spent time with my pens today

SAM OSEE
I haven't spent time with my pans today

PHILLIS
I'd be toiling, praising of God

SAM OSEE
I'd be oiling, braising of cod

PHILLIS
I'd be looking for that euphonious rhyme

SAM OSEE
I'd be cooking with that rosemarious thyme

PHILLIS
I'd be gesticulating and tossing off mime

SAM OSEE
I'd be taste testilating and squeezing in lime

PHILLIS
I'd be striding, a light-hoofed horse on piano keys

I'd be gliding glissando seeing what no one else sees

SAM OSEE
I'd be shelling some jumbo shrimp, paella, please

I'd be stirring the crockpot, baking like no one believes

PHILLIS
I'd be reaching for the blood-red poesie stars

I'd be beaching my catamaran on the fantasy isle Mars

I'd be making what the ancients made - ex nihilo

I'd be fingering that cornet blow Joshua blow

And the walls for a day, the walls quotidian would come tumblerin' down

Only to be rebuilt, those walls of ordinaryness and evil reknown

What is it to write a syllable clean

To hear it, mouth it, say and exclaim it

When everyone else has made that sound mean

Its life has no life 'til you've turned it 'round

Shouted or whispered it newly re-found

The neologism, the newly-minted

Everybody says it, we hear it on the streets

We write it down, that makes it writing?

I think not

People say it, that makes it poetic?

I think not

It's not poetry and everyone should knowetry

SAM OSEE

Woman, that's some heavy art you layin' on me

Woman, for my un-art part, you sayin' I see

The world different from behind my stove

Than you as a poet with your mind's treasure trove

Well, I gots me my own Corn-you-cope-ee-ay

It goes in my mouth and down my throat

to my nice tight tummy where it happily lay

And that what I call poetry and art

So stop the language, please, and let the dancin' start

Put down your pen

I leave my pan behind

Let my arms 'round you send

To that love-land beyond the mind

Light change.

CHORUS

That night of course led to a first lil chile

And soon there were two and that made it chillun

Before Planned Parenthoodcame to the 'hood and tried to stop black folks from believing in genocide to terminate a mom's preggers

Aren't we all pro-life, by that we mean, we believe in life, do we not?

Should we end each other's right here on the spot?

It's become a terrible cliche in the West

That life in the Orient is undervalued at best

Which brings us to China again, or its embassy in Belgrade

When we accidentally on purpose, no, just kidding, when we accidentally bombed the Chinese Embassy when we said we'd send aid

Bombs - Aids

or Bomb-Aid

Sounds like a rock star benefit to me

where all the profits 'stead of going where they should

find themselves in pockets of the bad not the good

Our author was in China when those bombs made their mistake

He heard an earful 'bout the value of Asian life, well, listen up

what's your take

The Chinese Ambassador with heavy stilted accent
Not once have you acknowledged that your criminality in bombing our embassy has violated our national sovereignty and taken the precious blood of Chinese lives.

LONNIE (as newsman)
Mr. Ambassador, the President has apologized profusely and the reason we invited you to be on this program is to have this open exchange of views. Surely, you don't believe that NATO deliberately bombed your embassy -

The Chinese Ambassador
You have yet to acknowledge the travesty of trust, this betrayal of international law, this rampant violation of human decency. Your government is lying to its people and the world.

LONNIE (as newsman)
Sir, the CIA has said it had an out-of-date map -

The Chinese Ambassador
The United States of America expects us to believe that, with all its power and technical expertise, it didn't have the proper map, that it didn't know it was deliberately bombing the embassy of the People's Republic of China?

Do you think we are fools?

LONNIE (as newsman)
Of course, we don't think you are fools. We have respect for you -

The Chinese Ambassador
Not once have you acknowledged your dishonesty, this deception that lead to the murder of Chinese citizens. How is it possible for China ever to believe the United States?

LONNIE (as newsman)
There is this little matter of the Congressional report stating that China stole U.S. nuclear secrets -

The Chinese Ambassador
An outrage. We don't need to steal your secrets. Keep your sordid little secrets. We have our own sordid little secrets. We don't need to steal yours.

LONNIE
Let me drop any pretense of being a newsman and talk it straight. Mr. Ambassador, you give us too much credit for being so smart that we couldn't have made this mistake with the map. Of course, we are stupid enough and I say "we" indeed, we are studpider, stupidest and let me tell you when I noticed it starting and this will resolve the whole issue perfectly and we can get back to R & K, that's Rhythm and Karaoke, In the 50's, 60's and even later out in Burma Shave country, which takes too much explaining, when you went to fill up your car at the gas station, inside the station, in plain sight, were maps - maps of the United States and maps of every state, detailed, precise, colored, not as in Negro, maps. And you know what they cost? Nothing. All maps were free. Every driver had an accurate map of wherever he wanted to go, or bomb, for that matter. And where did people go? Everywhere. And what did they bomb? Nothing. Then some jackass got the bright idea that he'd charge for these maps - 2,3,4 bucks - and it caught on - and this mentality gripped the nation. Except some. Then many, in fact, rebelled. They refused to pay. People did without maps. Soon the maps yellowed on their little metal vines inside the gas stations and the phrase, 'He couldn't find it on a map' became meaningless because the maps weren't being drawn and therefore could not be found.
And then the bombing began.

And that's the honest-to-God truth.
And I love the Chinese people because they are honest.
And the Chinese people love me because I tell them the truth

CHORUS

Bombings, explosions, collapses of towers

It's made us all fearful, nostalgic for flowers

put gently into the barrels of soldiers' guns

An innocent age, or so it seems,

three and a half decades past

Hippies Yippies giving way to Yuppies Buppies

Then Gen X'ers. now Gen Gen'ers and Triple XXX'ers

Anarchic environmentalists heaving garbage pails

through Starbuck's windows

at the Battle of Seattle

Anthraxic scientific governmentalists -

and who do you think been sprinklin' those spores

in the shells of our snail mail escargot

if it wasn't a high-up official with security clearance

Be at the state of highest alert every second of every hour

yet just go about your daily lives

Are they kidding?

Who can live this way without going stark raving batty?

Eat more, walk less, as our nation's children go fatty

O, the Prez can jog 'cause he's got the time

And the Secret Service will follow

But the rest of us got to earn the dime

And we eat at McD's and wallow in the grease of their patties

as we mourn for Sec'tary Powell

Drive bigger, conserve littler

Conservation makes the rad-libs feel good, as the stealth VP puts it

But it drives not immediate profit and is therefore useless to all high-oilers

To resurrect a bathroom line from the Nixon-era

DICK Cheney before he DICKS you!

What's he give a Halliburton for the future

He's had eleven heart attacks

his chest is one big suture

His daughter's gay - and he says - stay away - absolutely postively

She says to him, "See it this way, Dad, I ain't been in the closetively

"You're a prick and a half and that's a generous count by about a prick

"Let's get this straight, or crooked, Pops, this Alaska wilderness drill?

"Stick a derrick up YOUR arse and see how YOU like that mount"

Rush in the rest of the CHORUS

LONNIETY – THIS TRANSITION IS WEIRD-O . . . SEEMS TO BE REFERENCING LEM/BABYGLO

CHORUS

Let's leave that there before daughter and daddy

Escalate theirselves beyond the time when they played patty cake

There must have been a moment or two when they agreed to agree

All parents get there before one or both decides to forsake

We got another family tale we cannot neglect

Played out close to where we're sitting between us and the Loop

Just south of Avenue North on an old map we may still detect

A Big Story just up from downtown, Ida B Wells will give you the scoop

The famed IDA BE WELLS addresses us.

IDA BEE

Projects. The Projects. Twenty stories, twenty-five.
Stuff black people in these cinder blocks, in cities such as Chicago
won't burn, no repeat of the Great Chicago Fire 'cause they're cinders
already
'cinder' like no Cinderella, nothing but wicked sisters in these cavernous
symbols of what The Man would have you believe his length is
stuffing black people, making sure that the oldest mammies are at the very
top so when the elevators don't work and rivers of piss running down
the stairwells that Mama Lucy and Sister MayAnn have to climb that
mountain, they have been to the mountain and now their wheelchairs are
rolling through the Valley of Death
stuffing black people in these towers to contain them no sister with hair
long enough to be Rapunzel, can't let herself down from the twenty-fifth
stuffing black people like anchovies in olives, sardines in cans, Japanese in
subways, Sowetans in buses, Jews in cattle cars twenty-five stories high
stuffing black people like pimientos into the Projects, the blood-red
pimiento Projects, very Yin and Yang, that red on our black skin
Projects with names such as the Ida B Wells Projects, the Robert Parker
Projects and my fave of faves, the Cabrini Green Projects, named
after Mother Cabrini, an Italian immigrant come to Chicago who
started shelters, no twenty-five story shelters to be sure
Cabrini Green, ten blocks to the south be Marina Towers, a sort of unleaning
Tower of Pisa, chocked with shops and white people and The Loop, the
Sears Tower, onetime tallest building in the world and Michigan
Avenue's magic mile
Cabrini Green, ten blocks to the north be Lincoln Park where elevators do
work and gentrification is the perk of Lincoln Park
named after the Great
Emancipator Proclamator
His Gettysburger Rapp
Held the South to the Union's map
Frederick Douglass Dapper
The first U.S Cabinet Rapper

Now Cabrini Green

Smashed up between
The North and South House
Divided against itself it cannot stand
and the high rises in the middle will fall to the land
'Cause the decades have gone and gone and it's clear that you cannot have a series of buildings set far apart and twenty-five stories high with people throwing their Ebony and Jetsam on to the broken asphalt below and that these caves piled on top of each other have to come down courtesy of the wrecker's ball and chain
Because the experimentation, the alienation, the denial of alimentation weren't ever going
to work
Come down, Cabrini Greenies
Come down, Robert Parkers
Come down, Ida B. Wells

You got to get down
so we can now all be stuffed into two three story housing, human size not Babel size keep all that speechifying air up there on the twenty-fifth all sky where towers used to be.

CHORUS
Let's stop a sec and look around Chi Town

- BESIDES

the Irreplaceable Indispensable Irrefutable Black Folk

The I I I B F's

everywhere, we do mean everywhere

from Gulla Geechee, Carolina

Bugaloo, Missippissi

that's M-i-s-s-i-p-p-i-s-s-i

Virginia Georgia ArkanSASS

Loo - siana Alabama

kiss me where the sun don't shine

been on these shores of Ole Lake Mich an aeon or three

and most of that we still weren't free

Forgive us if we look upon

all others who of late they came

as if they've just arrived and on

And on they come they're all the same

NO THEY'RE NOT

Of course they're not

but one thing's clear

The I I I B F's the only ones who never wanted to come here so bold

Who didn't think these streets were paved with gold

the only ones, compared to us,

they ain't so ain't so old

We be almost native Americans

'cept there ARE Native Americans

Choctaws, Chippewas, Navahos

Mohawks, Schagticokes

Illinois, Indian - A

O - Hi - O and all the rest

be named for tribes some now extinct

R.I.P., have peace in rest

Let's stop a sec and look around Chi Town

And forget our diffs we all got it bad

We see the Mung from Laos - yellow - brown

We're in this together, however mad

We got bold immigrants everywhere

And Russians Muskovites who speak on a tear

Somalis Kenyans Slovenians Haitians

New Delhi women red-dotted foreheads

Kosovars Sudanese, nations 'pon nations

Some people so poor they never knew beds

Koreans Cambodians Vietnamese

Hondurans Puerto Ricans scores from Belize

Cubanos packed together on boats

    they'd fall into the Bay de los Puercos

    Estornudar!

    if one of them sneezed

Guantanomoans fresh from guarding el Quaeda in their pens

Forty years we've been assassinating Castro

And ever he eludes us 'though we've poisoned his hens

Pollo con arroz

    los gallos y toros

    he's eaten it all

    stuck it -

        comidas -

    down our gargantas

Called us 'gusanos con enanos maricones cojones'

Chinga la madre, says Papa Fidel

Chinga la madre, Yanqui Yanqui, go to hell

"But of course, I wouldn't mind trading with you

my finest baseball secret pitches

"I was una estrella knuckleballer. Himmie Carter y Karol Woytila,

el Presidente Himmah

y el Papa Juan Paolo (the Third en Espagnol)

have kissed my tarmac, in a manner 'hablando'"

y el Papa Juan Paolo (the Third en Espagnol)

have kissed my tarmac, in a manner 'hablando'"

CHORUS MEMBER
My cabby tonight was from Habana via Miami

CHORUS
Your cabby?
your CABBY?

Since when do you 'CAB'???

It's now a cliche, but when can you hail

you Blap Person

who will pick YOU up

by the curb you will fail

and if you rush into the street

a cab will knock you off your feet

CHORUS (CAB) MEMBER
I do it I do it I get me my cabs

My cabby my cabby last night was Albanian

I made the mistake of asking, "Are you Romanian"

"Ceausescu (Chowsheskoo) did you see him up 'gainst that wall

"No no, pretty schwartze, we had Enver Hozha

Ceausescu the Potzer wasn't so very bad at all

Then night before last

"Kabul - I am from Kabul," a Pashtun man proudly said

"El Quaeda I only wish they'd died - a

"I want them want them want them - dead!"

I saw the cabbie's name and number

I wished to know who I was with

He couldn't have been any humbler

This young Mohammed name of Smith

The Rest of the CHORUS

Smith!

CHORUS (CAB) MEMBER

This here's,

a tale of a mother and a son

Listen up close, hear the daisy cutter bombs droppin' a ton

CHORUS

Ode for an Afghani Mother, Who, upon Arriving at the Name Registration Office to Change her Sixteen Year Old Son's Name, with his Permission, from Mohammed to Smith, Finds the Office Destroyed

To pulverize the terror still at hand

Annihilate the turban and the beard

To strafe and re-strafe every grain of sand

Destroy the camel driver he so feared

The stated goal that "we will end these states"

Who harbor thugs, boxcutter slasher fiends led by bushy-bearded clerics

Who wage 'jihad' and spew so many hates with their 'fatwas', their hysterics

'Wanted: Dead or Alive', not folks but hell-hounds legion

We'll never do another thing 'til we smite them in their region

One fleeing mom of six in Kabul said

"Afghanis aren't your enemies, we're dead

Already, don't you see our women bashed

By men too whipped to know they're being lashed

I've never had a right to lose or choose

I'm simple, women like me ever use

Whatever paltry nothing we can find

We tend our caves, our huts, our tents, our goat

Our mountains, deserts, unforgiving, blind

Our throats so parched we've never seen a boat

Restraining evil's rage must be your goal

Not setting fires anew in this hell-hole

You can't bomb us back to the first Stone Age

We've never left that pre-Historic page

Uzbeki, Turki, Paki, Kurdi, Tajeki and every other 'Stan'

These are our homelands, we live how we can"

So volunteer across America

Buy and fly our flags at record rate

For what?, it leads us to Hysterica

And deaths of Sikhs we drive by shoot and hate

Is this what we Americans now mean

To smear the filth of others makes us clean

Reshines our honor, raises towers new

We're still the many; they are still the few

Towers are Babel speechifying air

We need to sound the All Clear, with a death-defying stare

Why not re-build with eyes of human size

in this great land of the free

Why not NOT bomb and win the human prize

in this great land of the free

CHORUS

A few more matters of concern to us

Korea North, Iraq Baghdad to suss

Just fifteen years have passed

But all the hist'ry that's amassed -

In the fabled year of 1988

Lemuel Louis Gulliver ran for President

The slur 'darkie horse' he could laugh about with his closest aids

'though the slur for sure was tinctured/biled with hate

That was his way, one might say that that was his bent

To turn the viciousness of others upon themselves and see how their importance fades

The convention that year was in Stymietown

Home to a crooked Mayor, a twisted Governor and a Cardinal perverse

They tried to keep him from speaking despite his renown

They thought to slip him in at the beginning, but then they dealt him cards worse

They shoved him to the end of the eve when the crowd was restless and wanted to leave

But enough stayed on and he made a buzz

For the brothers, sisters and an albino cuz

And when the speech built and built and the word got out

The delegates returned and began to shout

Nothing would stop him, he would have his say

Lem Louis the Gulliver, the man who don't play

And here in its fullness is what he said

Fearing only fear itself, he sweated, cried and bled

LEMUEL

When I was growing up on Iron Road on Chicago's Great South Side, the Stockyard were still in

Use. Every day the cattle, the pigs, the sheep, the oxen were driven into massive holding pens.

They all squealed and bleated, mooed and snorted themselves crazy waiting for the wrecker's axe

This was before mechanization, when gigantic men – Africans, Slovaks, Croatians, Polish Jews, Finns, Germans – personally did the killing, men so hardened and begrimed with the slaughter of

Beasts that the animal blood had gotten up under their nails and in along their arms and chests and

was pumping in their hearts and down into their legs and so complete was this takeover that not a drop of human blood remained in their veins. But this transformation didn't make them dumb, it didn't make them without feeling, it didn't strip them of their humanity, unless you say that they had been stripped of that the day they took up the axe. No, it made them one with the beasts of the earth, even as they brought down the axe. And when the animal cried out, the man cried too, for he knew as this primordial blood rose in his face and the stench invaded and overpowered everything and everyone for miles around, he knew that someday the violence and the inhumanity would have to run its course. Today the Stockyards are gone, but the brutality and the desolation have spread. No lnger confined to a few square miles on the South Side, the lust for revenge increases, revenge against the innocent for the very crime of being innocent. So why has the violence not run its course? Why has the inhumanity spread? Why has the cancer grown? Was that African who brought the axe down on the shoulders of that bullock wrong to feel the agony would sometime end? Was that Lithuanian who thundered that axe on the neck of that ox wrong to sense that the agony would sometime end? No. it's always darkest before the morn.

As a boy in that darkness on the coldest blowingest winter days, I got out of my bed to begin my work. There were cracks in the windows and a light blanket of snow across my grandmother's quilt which she'd made from every old patch of cloth, wool, silk, gaberdeen and crockersack. Snow on the floor and the smell of carnage in the air. As the light began to push through the sawdust, I saw my younger brothers and sisters, still under the quilt under the snow and I thought, dear Lord, give me the strength when it's darkest. Always darkest before the morn.

My generation is the transition. I have the blood of man and the blood of beast and I have the stink of the age-old charnel house in my brain and the smell lets me never forget that the man and the

beast are one. Theirs is the stomping ground, the Mother Eart, a thing of beauty and power and culture. Always darkest before the morn.

All over the globe, from Watts to Liliputzfrom the North End to Schlongdignagia, from the land of the Inuits drowning in alcolholism to the land of the houyhnmhnms seeing only Red Eye, from the mines of Jestrzebie, Solidarnoshch, to the mines of Pretoria, Amandla!, from the barrios of Buenos Aires to the universities of New South Despair, our courage is undermined, our resolve is spat at, our character is stomped on, our common ground is rebuked and nuked by

Chaos
Loss
Injury
Malevolence
Abandonment
Xxcrement Exclusion
Xxcrement
Always darkest before the morn

I was not supposed to make it. You see, I was born of a teenage mother who was born of a teenage mother. I know the –

Chaos
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Xxcrement Exclusion
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Something else I know and that's the fundamental challenge of our day. The ending of economic violence. The violence of that Black and that Lithuanian against that bullock and that ox, economic violence against both man and beast, smells down through the decades, wafting into the economic violence of today. But that African and that Lithuanian knew that they had not begun

that violence, they knew that they were in the middle of that violence and we know that we can be at he end of that violence. Always darkest before the morn.

I am here to bring you a sword. A sword that cleanses us of violence, a sword the tip of which is bathed in sweet potato pie, Cool Papa Bell I hear you calling, Jackie Robinson, you are my personal inspiration, my mainest of baserunners, Satchel Paige do look back we are gaining we are all gaining.

How so? A World Voter Registration Drive taking Mother Ground to high places. If the mountain will not come to Mother Ground, Mother Ground will go to the mountain. Black Cat and White Swan will go to the mountain. Mayor Schmolloch and Gubernatio Macchio and John Cardinal O'Condom will go to the mountain. The Reverend Al Blimptoin, Soul Senator # 1, will go to the mountain.

And the lions and the lambs, the tortured and the torturers will lie down together on top of that mountain. And we'll all cry and exult. Cry freedom. It's always darkest before the morn. Keep hope alive. I love you very much. I love you very much.

Cry freedom.

Celebrate
Love
Integrate
Move
Act
Exclaim Exult Exalt
Excellence
Excellence
Excellence

(This CHORUS following may or may not be the lead in to the FINALE.

CHORUS

There's but one thing more left to say and see and touch (Bei Da

Gulliver's speech was but the penultimate

We've heard Phillis and Lem and many things Chinois (SheenWHA)such and such

Now the Eee Pee Logue, yes the ultimate

The Excellence Protection Logue

The Word as we know it, the Truth as we show it

Word Up, Truth Up

And this is what's happening, W'asupp, 'Supp and the rest

The country's in a terrible barrel of expletives deleted

We use to hear the phrase Oil Depletion Allowance - don't you love the folks who come up with this mojo jargon?

They be the same who do not speak of Peace anymore, but rather "Permanent Pre-Hostility"

They be the same who would send our kids to War College,

the most expensive college of all

They ain't ever going to give Peace a Chance

Too busy giving War every Opportunity and a Tax Break

every oil slick a greased palm

every political appointee a cash bonus

every hanging judge an extra rope

every contributing cat a fat allowance

Bringing us back to Oil Depletion

Sure it's going to get depleted

maybe not in our kids' lifetime

and sure we have no scruples about saddling future generations

with the worst of the worst

as we said previous "We already had eleven heart attacks apiece,

why we be inn-arrested in Permanent Pre-Hostility

formerly known as Peace"

So that's why some of us formed the Excellence Protection Logue, The EeePeeLogue,

for, for all our sarcasm and cynicism, and all the asm's and ism's, we got a very serious message and since Western Union is on the slide the skid known as Row, west on Madison Ave where the giant baseball bat by Claes Oldenburg who did the gianter lipstick in the shape of a cannon in the war memorial plaza at Yale University during the Vietnam years where the giant baseball bat stands before the Unemployment Office to remind us we need a bat in the head to remind us we got nothing to do but everything to pull ourselves out of what Jimmy Carter so rightly called this "malaise".

we got to uphold The Word,

'cause, as the boys and girls on the street know,

the Word is Made Flesh

every day and every hour,

and Flesh, like fruit, rots real quick

And as we know in bidness

Change has to come from the boardroom down

Not the Union Up

HERE'S THE FINALE. Which will be devised at the last possible moment. Pretty scary, hey?

Finito/Tapos

some bits and pieces of something or another

Irish Protestants, Catholics look exactly alike

Arabs Israelis look exactly alike

Yet one says the other can be smelled down the ages

The evidence? - well, history's pages

are b.o.'ed with blood

The odor envelopes

the stench pounds with a thud

Each hurls at the other a dirty bomb inside a scud

Each his own coprophages rather than allow

the flower of peace to have one bud

The Serbs Croats and Muslims

The Indians the Pakistanis the Sikhs

(The religious right ain't met the right Christian

thank you, Reverend Sharpton)

Then those Africans the Hootsies and the Tutus

the Tootsies and the Hutus

slaughtering each other

Now black folk got a different sort of problem

that's finally the same

You know there's a black man across the street

Why don't we get it

A black woman you know that walk and a half

ain't never been seen on another pair of feet

But what about these quad and octoroons

mulattoes and high yellers

Adam Clayton Powell and other straightened-hair fellers