

Jean-Claude's toilet seat

I've seen
A lot
Of shit in my day

Especially at night
When he thinks no one
Can see him take a dump

But the aroma
Fouls the atmosphere for weeks
Air freshener does not help

The candles work
To cleanse the air but
He can't stand the light

Sometimes he squats on me
Just to pass gas, that is how
He contemplates his future moves

Most thrones are plastic
I am carved ivory tusks
From the Congo

I know the true him
He takes me everywhere
I have my own encasement

And always travel first class
I am better than a pet
More reliable than a gun

If it is true, you are what you eat
It is even truer, you have been
What you shit

my father is dead. again.

(for my father-friend tom dent)

1.

i was thousands of miles away
when tom's tree fell

the weight of missing him
answers the age-old question

because
his aftershock's tremble

reverberates within
the chamber of my skull

at all
the oddest moments

like discovering a special person
within the skin of a child of mine

and discerning at the same time
a lady i used to love

a lady whose love
shaped me

there are periods
when our ability to perceive

presence and potential
is predicated

on having been groomed
by those who have gone before

on having been shown
how to see beyond

what is now
what is known, how

to appreciate the shape
of things to come

all this prescience a product
of learning the living wisdom

some come from a brusque old man
whose gruffness was so tender

so touching
in its honest intimacy

as he suggested that
there was something beyond

what ever was
and is, and yes, even will be

there is always
something more

something better
to be/come

2.

english words were never meant
to adequately articulate
the anguish in our mouths, our hearts
when we lose the stretching part
of our selves - the stairs we climb
to see further, to descend deeper
as we look out and over
past the limits of horizon line

our vision is improved when we stand
on the shoulders of elders
whose height hoists us higher
than we could ever grow
if we remained flat-footed
married to the ground

the view from these human
balconies enables us to eye
not just near and far
but also back and down
into the wells
of our own personalities

if we are fortunate
we have fathers
who help us
clearly see
depths
as well as distances

3.
perhaps a moan
is the most profound
sound one can make
when a father is gone

when my first father died
i cried publicly
this death time my tears
for tom are silent
words on paper

the two times
a man is most
alone
are when
he loses
a father and when he
loses his own
life - his
beginning his end

4.

in the new orleans
that tom knew
old griots die singing
they do not go silently
into some lonely night

in his new orleans
we do not kill our fathers
to prove that we have arrived

but rather we learn
from them that we can
crack open the kernel
of our own becoming
only by completing
the final maneuver
of life's ultimate passage rite

the step of accepting the torch
and making of ourselves a light

volunteering
to lift the father spirit
to shoulder the responsibility
of becoming beacon
for those newly born
and those yet to come

in our new orleans we do not stop
at simply burying aged bodies
we also dance forward
from funeral line
and accept the awesome
task of filling father shoes

if i really come from
a house of the rising sun,
if i really believe
in resurrection
if i am really
my father's son
then i must be reborn

be his life
after life

5.
in earth ways
my father is dead. again.

but yet again
he lives

the older i become
the more people i contain

another of my fathers
is dead

long live
my father

long live my father
in me

long live
my many fathers

long live
long live

all the fathers
i am

and all the fathers
i will ever be

STILL RUNNING

(meditations on integration)

1.

escaping plantations is not
simple
simply
a matter of running
away / for
to getaway successfully

you must not only run
from
but establish yourself
in

the place
to which
you run

somehow

create a home
create community
some how

shape space
transform
the alien air
of here & now
where ever
you are

into the welcoming
embrace
of home

2.

now that the big house
is on fire
and none of the world
is offering water

the progeny
of our former masters
hang out welcome signs
and proclaim
we are all the same

we can even sleep
in their beds with them
if our amnesia is deep enough

the price of admission:
leave your soul at the door, preferably
outside, not even on the porch
but in the yard
the back
yard

now pledge
allegiance
to this system
your history does not
matter

that the jails are full
of us
does not matter

that our illnesses
are at record levels
does not matter

that we own less
have less wealth
than ten years after
slavery
does not matter

if we forget
who we were
who we are
does not matter

3.
when we think
the other
is our problem

we have become
our own problem

after all
aren't we all
wayfaring pilgrims
just passing thru

a strange
land, all of us
in need
of a helping
hand?

4.

regardless

of what those who own
to live
tell you

you can only really own
whatever you brought
into this world

whatever you brought with
you is all that you can
take when you leave

5.

you can not escape
the plantation

if you are carrying
their architecture

in your head
in your heart

6.

some of us
run

away

some of us
run

towards

until we die
all of us

are
running

7.
zig zag
brother

reverse field
stutter step
skip, hop, & jump

zig zag
sister

they'll catch us
if we stand still

8.
our people
are our hills
—amilcar cabral

I think we should live
up in the hills
—burning spear

9.

no rest for the weary

believe

I'll run

on and see

what tomorrow brings

DANCING INTO THE DARK

#1

will there be music
will we sing
will a beat be kept
will rose petals droop & then fall
will fragrance fade
what
will be the last sound heard

a note
a noise
some song's fragment
the terrible finality of sudden silence

the last breath
the expiring light
a memory
a familiar
the softness of starlight
the whisper of river wave washing ashore
or what
ever was the sonic disturbing us
in the milli-moment before we were born

#2

will our out going be our fingerprints
distinctive in detail for each of us
a mark behind after the deed is done
the sign of our touch

or will farewell simply shudder
flicker
disintegrate slowly
eventually gone as if we never were
here or there, thinking and doing
upon departure
will there even be
enough time
to realize
we are gone

some of us need the comfort
of believing that there is something
else other than what we are
something before and beyond
what we are, something other
than what we are

why is not existence enough
the blessing is to be
the eventually is not to be

time is an efficient cosmic cleaner
removing our breath, our enterprise
our art, our everything, removing
us from everything

like when I stare into space
and realize the stars
do not need to be seen by me
they shine without
my eyes fascinated, fastened
upon them

FREEDOM—A Haitian Rant

After we ran our oppressors into the sea
You have since never tired trying to run us into the ground

After the earth opened its jaws to swallow us
Your assistance rushed in to bury us

You say we cannot govern, our government is corrupt
Who kidnapped Aristide, the president we elected, a priest
who made our world work and not simply prayed for miracles,
in fact, we elected him twice, and twice you took your guns and
made him leave and would not let us vote for anything he represented—
our government is not corrupt, corrupt is the government you put in
our president's place, our government is in exile

You swear we are not capable of caring for ourselves, perhaps
We are too busy servicing your sex tourists, making your mickey mouse
clothes, and sewing your balls you love to play with

You say everyone envies your freedom
Yet it was our soldiers who saved George Washington's ass
in Savannah when you were fighting for your freedom but
you never give us credit for helping to create your freedom
and worse yet when you got your precious freedom you did not
give freedom to all your citizens—we in Haiti were the first truly
free country in all of the Americas, everyone was declared free
in our new republic, everyone red, black, white, yellow or brown—
no one was a slave in free Haiti, it took you almost a century
to free your enslaved people, yes not until 1865
did you even halfway declare all your male citizens as Haiti
was free on day one of our birth (tell me I am wrong
but I believe you did not let women vote until 1920)
no one who knows our history envies your 2/5 free history

You say we are poor but when will you give us back the money you sent marines to steal from us in 1915 when you invaded us and took over our banks, no matter how long a thief keeps what he stole, no matter how many generations gone, he is still a thief, which is why

one of your presidents, the paedophile Jefferson who took up with a thirteen-year-old, famously said:
when I think that god is just, I tremble
for the fate of my country

When we think that god is just, we just smile and pray the day of reckoning will soon come, beautiful as a Jacmel sunrise

We are Haitian, we love freedom
who are you and what do you love?