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How
der
developed
Africa

for Mexican & Walter Rodney

to be blown into fragments. your flesh
like the islands that you loved
like the seawall that you wished to heal

bringing equal rights & justice to the brothers
a fearless cumfa mashramani to the sisters whispering their
free/zen
that grandee nanny’s histories be listened to with all their ancient
fleches of respect

until they are the steps up the poor of the church
up from the floor of the hill/slide
until they become the roar of the nation

that fathers would at last settle into what they own
axe adze if not oil well. torch
light of mackenzie

that those who have all these generations
bitten us bare to the bone
gnawing our knuckles to their stone

price fix price rise rachman & rat/chet squeeze
how bread is hard to buy how rice is scarcer than the
muddy water where it rides

how bonny baby bellies grow doom-laden dungeon grounded down
to groaning in their hunger
grow wailer voiced & red eyed in their anger

that knocks against their xylophones of prison ribs
that how we cannot give our wives or sleephearts or our children
or our children’s children a sweetend trip to kenya. watch
maasai signal from their saffron shadow
the waterbuck & giraffe wheel round wrecked manyatta
while little blonder kinter

who don’t really give a fart
for whom this is the one more yard
a flim. for whom this is the one/off start

to colon cortez cecil rhodes
for whom this is the one more road
to the soff-voiced thathi-headed waiter

aban. died out of his shit by his baas. at the nairobi airport hotel

but lets his face sulk into i soup
lets his hairshirt wrackle i sweat
cause i man am wearing the tam of his dream in i head

that these & those who fly still dread/er up the sky
vultures & hawks. eye
scarpering morgan the mi/ami mogol

those night beast a babylon who heiss us on sus

but that worse it is the blink
in iani own eye. the sun blott. ed out by
paper a cane fires vamp.

ires a ink wheels emp.
ires a status quo status quo status crows
that tell a blood tale toll/ing in the ghetto

till these small miss/demeanours as you call them
be
come a monstrous fetter on the land that will not let us breed

un. til every chupse in the face of good morning
be
come one more coil one more spring one more no
thing to sing/about
be
come the boulder rising in the bleed

the shoulder nourishing the gun
the headlines screaming of the skrawl across the wall
of surbiton of trenton town of sheraton hotel

dat POR CYAAAAN TEK NO MOOIR

& the babies & their mothers & their mothers & their mothers mothers mothers mothers mothers mothers
sizzled forever in the semi-automatic catherine of the orange heat

flare up of siren. howl of the scorch wind wail
through the rat-tat-rat-a-tat-tat
of the hool through the tap of your head. damp. stench. criall

the well of war flame drilling through your flesh

reduced to the time before green/bone
reduced to the time before ash/skull
reduced to the time before love/was born

in your arms
before dawn was torn from your pillow
in your arms
before the tumours were crumpled into paper bags
inside the star/brook market
in your arms
before the knife ran through the dark & locket steel
between the spine & kidney
in your arms
in your arms
in your arms
i prophesy
before you recognized the gorgon head inside the red eye
of the walkie talkie
towards vlissengens where it may some day end
distant like powis on the essequibo
drifting like miracles or dream
or like that lonely fishing engine slowly losing us its sound
but real like your wrist with its tick of blood around its man.
acles of bone
but real like the long marches the court steps of tryall
the sudden sodden night journeys up the pomeroon
holed up in a different safe house every morning & try
ing to guess from the heat of the hand.
shake if the stranger was stranger or cobra or friend
& the urgent steel of the kis.
kadee glittering its qqurl down the steepest bend in the breeze
& the leaves
ticking & learning to live with the smell of rum on the skull’s
breath, his cigarette ash on the smudge of your fingers
his footsteps into your houses
& having to say it over & over & over again
with your soft ringing patience with your black.
lash of wit. though the edges must have been curling with pain
but the certainty clearer & clearer & clearer again
that it must be too simple to hit/too hurt
not to remember
that it must not become an easy slogan or target
too torn too defaced too devalued down in redemption market
that when men gather govern other manner
they should be honest in a world of hornets

that bleed into their heads like lice
corruption that cockroaches like a dirty kitchen sink

that politics should be like understanding of the floor.
boards of your house

swept clean each morning, built by hands that know
the wind & tide & language

from the loops within the ridges of the koker
to the rusty tinnin fences of your yard

so that each man on his cramped restless island
on backdam of his land in forest clearing by the broeken river
where berbice struggles against slushy ground

takes up his bed & walks

in the power & the reggae of his soul/stice
from the crippled brambled pathways of his vision
to the certain limpen knowledge of his nam

this is the message that the dreadren will deliver
groundation of the soul with drift of mustard seed

that when he spoke the world was fluter on his breeze
since it was natural to him like the water. like the way he listened
like the way he walked. one a dem ital brothers who had grace
for being all these things & careful of it too
& careless of it too
he was cut down plantation cane

because he dared to grow & growing/green
because he was that slender reed & there were machetes sharp
enough to hasten him & bleed

he was blown down

because his bridge from man to men
meant doom to prisons of a world we never made
meant wracking out the weeds that kill our yampe vine

•

& so the bomb
fragmenting islands like the land you loved

letting back darkness in

•

but there are stars that burn that murders do not know
soft diamonds behind the blown to bits
that trackers will not find that bombers will not see
that scavengers will never hide away

•

the caribbean bleeds near georgetown prison

•

a widow rushes out & hauls her children free

Stone
(for Mikey Smith)

When the stone fall that morning out of the johngrow sky
it was not dark at first. that opening on to the red sea sky
but something in my mouth like feathers. blue like bubbles and light
carrying signals & planets & the sliding curve of the world like a water
picture
in a raindrop when the pressure drop

When the stone fall that morning i
couldn't cry out because my mouth was full of beast & plunder
as if i was gnashing badwords among tombstones
as if angry water was beating up against the curbstones of the
palisadoes
as if that road up Stony Hill round the bend by the churchyard on the
way to the
post office was a bad bad dream and the dream was on fire all the way
past the
white houses higher up the hill and the ogogs bark
ing all teeth & furnace and my mother like she upside down up a
tree like
she was screaming and nobody i could hear could hear a word i
shouting
even though there were so many poems left and the tape was switched
on & running
and the green light was red and they was standing up everywhere in
London
& Amsterdam & at UNESCO in Paris & in West Berlin & clapping &
clapping & not a soul on Stony Hill to even say amen and yet it was
happening happening
the fences began to crack in my skull and there were loud boosboonings
like
guns going off them ole time magnums or like fireworks where I
dreadlocks were in fire
and the gaps where the river coming down and the dry gully where
my teeth used to be
smiling and my tuff gong tongue that used to press against them &
parade pronunciation
now unannounce and like a black wick in i head & dead
and it was like a heavy heavy riddim low down in i belly bleeding dub
and there was like this heavy black dog thumping in i chest & pumping
murdereremmmrr

and my throat like dem tie like dem tie a tight tie around it . twist
ing my neck quick crick quick crick and a never wear neck
tie yet and a laughing more blood and spittin out lawwwwwww
and i two eye lock to the sun and the two sun staring back bright from
the grass and i

bile to de butterfly flittin . but i hear de tread of my heart
the heavy flux of the blood in my veins silver tambourines
closer & closer . st joseph band crashing &
closer & bom sica sica boom ship bell &
closer & bom sica sica boom ship bell &
when the saints . .

* 

and it was like a wave on Stony Hill caught in a crust of sunlight
and it was like a broken schooner into harbour muffled in the silence
of its wound
and it was like the blue of peace was filling up the heavens with its
thunder
and it was like the wind was growing skin the skin had hard hairs
hardering
it was like Marcus Garvey rising from his coin . stepping towards his
people
crying dark . and every mighty word he trod the ground fell dark &
hole behind
him like it was a scream i did not know and yet it was a scream . my
ears were bleeding
sound . and i was quiet now because i had become that sound

the sunlight morning washed the coral limestone harsh against the soft
volcanic ash
i was & it was slipping past me into water & it was slipping past me
into root
i was & it was slipping past me into flower & it was ripping upward
into shoot
while every tongue in town was lashing me with spit & cuttass wit &
ivy whip &

wrinkle jumbimum . it was like warthog grunting in the ground . and
children run
ning down the hill run right on through the splashes
that my breathing made when it was howl & red & bubble and sparrow
twits pluck tic & tapeworm from the grass
as if i-man did never have no face as if i-man did never in this place

When the stone fell that morning out of the johncrow sky
i could not hold it back or black it back or block it off or limp away
or roll it from me into memory or light or rock it steady into night be
cause it builds me now and fills my blood with deaf my bone with dumb &
lawwwwwwwlawwwwlawwwwlawwwwlawwwwlawwwwlawwwwlawwwwlawwwwlawwww
STONE

for Mikey Smith 1954–1983
stoned to death on Stony Hill, Kingston

When the stone fell that morning out of the johncrow sky

59
it was not dark at first, that opening on to the red sea humming
but something in my mouth like feathers, blue like bubbles
carrying signals & planets & the sliding curve of the
world like a water pic. ture in a raindrop when the pressure. drop

When the stone fall that morning out of the johncrow sky

i couldn’t cry out because my mouth was full of beast & plunder
as if i was gnashing bad words among tombstones
as if that road up stony hill. round the bend by the church
yard. on the way to the post office. was a bad bad dream

& the dream was like a snarl of broken copper wire zig zagg.
ing its electric flashes up the hill & splitt. ing spark & flow.
ers high, er up the hill, past the white houses & the ogogs bark.
ing all teeth & fur. nace & my mother like she up, like she up.

like she up. side down up a tree like she was scream.
like she was scream. like she was scream. in no & no.
body i could hear could hear a word i say. in. even though
there were so many poems left & the tape was switched on &
runn. in & runn. in &
the green light was red & they was stannin up there &
evva. where in london & amsterdam & at unesco in paris &
in west berlin & clapp. in & clapp. in & clapp. in &

not a soul on stony hill to even say amen

& yet it was happenin happenin happenin

the fences begin to crack in i skull.
& there was a loud boodoooooooooooooooooongs like
guns going off. them ole time magnums.
or like a fireworks a dreadlocks was on fire.
& the gaps where the river comin down
inna the drei gully where my teeth use to be smilin
& i tuff gong tongue that use to press against them & parade
pronunciation. now unannounce & like a black wick in i head &
dead.
& it was like a heavy heavy riddim low down in i belly. bleedin dub
& there was like this heavy heavy black dog thump. in in i chest &
pump. in

murder

& i throat like dem tie. like dem tie. like dem tie a tight tie a.
round it. twist. in my name quick crick. quick crick.
& a nevva wear neck. tie yet.

& a hear when de big boot kick down i door. stump
in it foot pun a knot in de floor. board.
a window slam shut at de back a mi heart.
de itch & ooze & damp a de yaaad
in my silver tam. bourines closer & closer.
st joseph marching bands crash. in & closer. &

bom si. cai si. ca boom ship bell. bom si. cai si. ca boom ship bell

& a laughin more blood & spittin out
lawwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww
i two eye lock to the sun & the two sun starin back black
from de grass

& a bline to de butterfly fly in

& it was like a wave on stony hill caught in a crust of sun.
ligh

& it was like a matchstick schooner into harbour muffled in the
silence of it wound

& it was like the blue of speace was filling up the heavens
wid its thunder

& it was like the wind was grow in skin. the skin had hard hairs
harderin

it was like marcus garvey rising from his coin .
stepping towards his people crying dark

& every mighty word he trod. the ground fall dark & hole
be. hine him like it was a bloom x. ploding sound .

my ears was bleed. in sound

& i was quiet now because i had become that sound

the sun. light morning washed the choral limestone harsh
against the soft volcanic ash. i was

& i was slippin past me into water. & i was slippin past me
into root. i was

& i was
slippin past me into flower. & i was rippin upwards

into shoot. i was

& every politician tongue in town was lash.
ing me with spit & cut. rass wit & ivy whip & wrinkle jumminum

it was like warthog . grunt. in in the ground
& children running down the hill run right on through the splash of pouis that my breathe. ing make when it was howl & red & bubble

& sparrow twits pluck tic & tap. worm from the grass
as if i man did nevva have no face. as if i man did never in this place

When the stone fall that morning out of the johncrow sky

i could not hold it brack or black it back or block it off or limp away or roll it from me into memory or light or rock it steady into night. be

cause it builds me now with leaf & spiderweb & soft & crunch & like the pow,
derwhite & slip & grit inside your leather. boot &

fills my blood with deaf my bone with hobbledumb & echo.
less neglect neglect neglect neglect neglect &

lawwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww

i am the stone that kills me
Dear mamma

i writin yu dis letter...wha?
guess what! pun a computer ok/kay?
like i jine de mercantilists!

95
well not quite!
i mean de same way dem tieflin gun
power from sheena & taken we blues &
gone
...

say
wha? get on wid de same ole

story?
okay
okay
okay
okay

if yu cyaan beat prospero
whistle

No mamma!
is not one a dem pensive tings like ibm or
bang & ovid
nor anyting glori. ous like dat!

but is one a de bess tings since cicero o
okay?

it have key
board &
evva

ting. like dat ole
reminton yu have pun top de war. drobe up
there ketchin duss

only wid dis one yu na ave to benn dung over
to out out
de mistake dem wid white liquid paper. de
papyrus
ribbid & soff
before it dree up flakey &
crink. like yu was paintin yu house

um doan even nuse no paper yu does have to
roll
pun dat blk rollin pin like yu rollin dough pun
a flatten

& does go off ping pun de right hann wing a
de paper
when de clatterin words start to fly & fling
like a ping. wing

wif dis now
long before yu cud say jackie robb
inson or rt-d2 or shout

dis ya obeah blo
get a whole whole para
graph write up &

blink
pun a black
bird

like dat indonesian fella in star
trek
where dem is wear dem permanent wrinkle up
grey

& white flannel cost
ume like dem gettin ready to
jogg

but dem sittin dung dere in such silence a
rome
it not turn
in a hair pun dem wig/wam &
hack/in out hack/in all sorta back
up & read
out & fail
out & think &
it even have trash
can for garbage from all part/icles a de gal.
a $X_y$
&a mamma

a doan really know how pascal & co.
balt & apple & cogito ergo sum
come to h/invent all these tings since

de rice & fall a de roman empire
& how capitalism & slaveley like it put
christianity
on ice
so dem cd always open dat cole
smokin door a hell when dem ready for ash or
a psalm
sangridge or
choke

Why i cyaan nuse me hann & crawl
up de white like i use
to?

since when i kin
type?


dats wat i tryin to tell ya!

yu know me cyaan
neither flat
foot pun de key

boards like
say
charlie chap dance/in

far
less touch
tapp/in like bo.

jangles

walk/in down chauncery
lane

yu hear/in me mwa?

but i
mwangles!

a mean
a nat farwardin wid star
wars

nor sing
songin no bionicle
songs or like sputnik &

chips
goin bleep bleep bleep bleep bleep bleep bleep bleep
into de peloponnesian wars

but i
mwangles


in a ceratin girl
frenn about

it/she kinda look at i funn.
y like if

she tink i has $\chi ber\chi es$ or aids

so she soffly soffly silk.
in i off like if i is sick.

ly or sorrow or souse

Why a callin it
but is like what i try.
in to sen/seh &

seh about muse.
in computer

& mouse &
learn.

in prospero ling.
go

&
ing

not fe dem/not fe dem
de way caliban

done

but fe we
fe a-we

for nat one a we shd response if prospero get
curse
wid im own
curser

though um not like when covetous ride miss
praedial
mule

but is like we still start
where we start/in out start/in out start/in
out start/in

out
since menelek was a bway
& why is dat &

what is de bess way to say so/so it doan sounn
like
brigg
flatts or her. vokitz nor de

π.
san cantos nor de souf sea bible

nor like ink. le & yarico & de anglo sax
chronicles

&
mamma!

a fine
a cyaan get nutten

write
a cyaan get nutten really

rite
while a stannin up hey in me years & like me
inside a me shadow

like de mahn still mekkin mwe walk up de
slope dat e slide
in black down de whole long curve a de arch

i
pell
a
go

some
times smile.
in nice

some
times like e really laughin after we &
some
times like e helpin we up while e push.
in we black dung
again

like when yu rumbellin
dung
into de under
grounn

on one a dem move.
in stair
crace &

like yu fuh.
get like yu wallet or some
ting like
dat
& yu cyaan nevva turn
back

nor
walk back up
nor
even run back up
outta there

cause de stair.
crace
crazy &
creak.
in & snake
skinn. in
it
down
down
&
how. ever
yu
runnin up runnin up runnin up runnin up
it still
goin down
goin down
goin down
goin down
like sa.
hell
like sy.
phyllis
like
the edges of the desert
&
guess who down dey at de top
a de line wid dante & dodo & julie &
nappo & nix & adolph
kaisermann be. havin like one a de boys
but idi & splash & pol
pot
&
a whole rash a economists pullin we up by we
boot
straps & smo. kin
pot
bellied ha/ha/ha/ha/ha/havana cigars
& grand master sergeant doe &
brand new imperial corporals smilin of

cordite &
leather

strap & vd & vid.
eo

&

the
striped eyes of nigerian tigritude
& like what yu say happ.

enin inna
libraria

all a dem brooks of the dead
&

mamma

a know yu can plant lettuce & nice but yu
cyaaann eat ikebana

Yet a sittin dung here in front a dis stone
face

eeee
lectrical mallet into me

fist

chipp/in dis poem onta dis tab.
let

chiss. ellin dark.
ess writin in light

like i is a some. is a some.
body.
a X
pert or some
thing like moses or aaron or one a dem
dyaaam isra
light
&
mamma!

Dies irae dreadful day
when the world shall pass away
so the priests & showmen say