

## **Ka'Ba**

"A closed window looks down  
on a dirty courtyard, and Black people  
call across or scream across or walk across  
defying physics in the stream of their will.

Our world is full of sound  
Our world is more lovely than anyone's  
tho we suffer, and kill each other  
and sometimes fail to walk the air.

We are beautiful people  
With African imaginations  
full of masks and dances and swelling chants  
with African eyes, and noses, and arms  
tho we sprawl in gray chains in a place  
full of winters, when what we want is sun.

We have been captured,  
and we labor to make our getaway, into  
the ancient image; into a new

Correspondence with ourselves  
and our Black family. We need magic  
now we need the spells, to raise up  
return, destroy, and create. What will be

the sacred word?

– Amiri Baraka

## **THE POOL PLAYERS. SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.**

We real cool. We  
Left school. We

Lurk late. We  
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We  
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We  
Die soon.

-- Gwendolyn Brooks

## **Dream Boogie**

Good morning, daddy!  
Ain't you heard  
The boogie-woogie rumble  
Of a dream deferred?

Listen closely:  
You'll hear their feet  
Beating out and beating out a -

You think  
It's a happy beat?

Listen to it closely:  
Ain't you heard  
something underneath  
like a -

What did I say?

Sure,  
I'm happy!  
Take it away!

Hey, pop!  
Re-bop!  
Mop!

Y-e-a-h!

-- Langston Hughes

## **The House Slave**

The first horn lifts its arm over the dew-lit grass  
and in the slave quarters there is a rustling—  
children are bundled into aprons, cornbread  
and water gourds grabbed, a salt pork breakfast taken.  
I watch them driven into the vague before-dawn  
while their mistress sleeps like an ivory toothpick  
and Massa dreams of asses, rum and slave-funk.  
I cannot fall asleep again. At the second horn,  
the whip curls across the backs of the laggards—  
sometimes my sister's voice, unmistakable, among them.  
"Oh! pray," she cries. "Oh! pray!" Those days  
I lie on my cot, shivering in the early heat,  
and as the fields unfold to whiteness,  
and they spill like bees among the fat flowers,  
I weep. It is not yet daylight.

-- Rita Dove