

HEIRS

By

Marvin E. Williams

Today when these children, seeds of my seed,
bleed the blood that I bled yesterday;
when their locksedup heads broadcast so loud
the hurts that have taken roots and flower
in our soil, my soul becomes a hungry sponge
that dribbles to feast on their pain,
dribbles to soak up their infant curses
before they mature into volcanic silences.

But I bequeathed these hurts to them:
this stoic earth whose eyes brook no tears;
this aching hand that caresses no aged kin;
this carnival laughter that bellows
each warm December, offering
a drunken catharsis for the robbed and robbers;
this archipelago that curls up
in each of its fractional wombs, denying
its denizens the vibrance of a rainbow world.

But I bequeathed these hurts to them,
and no heir surrenders the estate
to the reincarnated dead, so they curse me
with their knotted heads: they curse me
for loving too long the hurts
they've begun to love,
like a woman's womb haltingly loves
the implanted child of a rapist.
But the eyes of youth hornily chase
the twitching horizon, hornily
solicit the stripteasing future;
so how can they see where I was blind
that this love, our heirloom, ambused me
at the bequest of my forebears?
How can they see that time compels a dilution?

So I sit like a dumb ox
grazing on their growing silences,
grazing on their solitude thickening inward
like the spicy heart of Paz's Mexico booming
in its embalmed echo. I wince, I choke
as their juicy curses dehydrate
into hoarse gutturals, as their love-roots
sprout trees rigid against tradewinds'
muscular proddings.

So I sit on this stump the young woodcuts left,
hearing the thumping
pulse of silence vibrating with omen.
I sit on this guillotined stump feeling
a humping in my arthritic blood,
celebrating
the flowing in of a new doubt, a new hurt
we might have to nurture and love
until it grows old and leaves us. But
like a gambler with nothing, I call
for the new doubt of more cards,
knowing
nothing can't give birth to less than nothing.

So with nothing to lose,
I sit in this tingling sunset
and follow the cloudy ringlets
dancing out the dungeon of my corncob pipe
and pray, like some gambler,
that a restless breeze will burst its August shell
and shake
these dormant trees; that the hurricane's
winds which bar our windows
each wet September
will blow anger's chipped chips furlongs
beyond the bog that hugs their blocks.
I pray, Lord, I pray
that no busy twirls will interfere
with the newly unwinded threads of air;
I pray
no twirling undertows will swirl them back
to embracing their twisted spools.