

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.