

Scene in a Resurrection City

Mother, guiding light,
The hands that took me from the earth,
Weep no more for me.

Star that shines in the darkest east
Dry your tears, thick as blood-rivers
gorging the horizons of your cheeks.

Rise elegant cobra till you are
The magical breath in palm trees,
For once again your fathers' music quakes the air.
Herald of an impounded storm,
His voice is rock thunder resounding
From the stomachs of drums and the thighs
That leash them like walls of craters.
The thighs of your sons.

Rise, strip the medals of praying from your elbows and knees
Strip the bands from your waist and your breasts
Throw the dead hair from your crowns
Come dance with me on the streets
Where giant cedars and silk cotton trees
Stand out from your very veins under the roadsides.

We have not forgotten the hunts that put
Feathers in my hair and skulls on our chests,
That made us men.

We have not forgotten yam and cassava
Taken from the earth like brown babies
We have not forgotten the evening fires
Turning your face to brass.

The sculpture they now call primitive
Yes mother, you hang in their white conscience.
Those arms you so willingly stretched out,
Those arms that were cut off with your heads,
Now hang in their white marble conscience.

Mother, we are your sons.

Don't you recognize the tongues that tasted your wounds,
Or the brows that were lined with rivers of blood
At our parting?

The wounds are now bitter mending strings
That fire our songs.

We rise, the spirits of blackest Africa,
We rise before you, Mother, guiding light
Star that shines in the darkest east,
Hear us, your long lost sons.

LeRoy Clarke

Feb. 28th, '69.