

MICHAEL BROWN, JR.

Freedom

Salt laid across my lips breaks down to stardust.

So, when I speak, I spit creation.

Now these scattered lyrics are beautiful, but they are not mine.

My fears still fang to nascent lead-cracked muscles. And cording spirituals and soliloquies

Struggle to sing from coke-locked jaws. And the sackcloth flesh

Of freedmen frame my shadow. Now, all these things may beat my heart, but these visions

Do not live. They haunt. I hear them all. And they're echoing through my soul.

It sounds as if from a tomb. And I awake all these nights, sweating, having swung

Pendulous through history. Now I wake and see the lips of lion-like ladies speaking up the sun,

Though they call it "God." And I hear this great migration of laughter

Swaying rapturously through the close-knit buildings. And I take joy in this music, dancing now,

Dragging all those phantoms with me. All black, all shouting. And in this beautiful babel, I lose

My name and lunge into a body.