

BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE  
by  
Duke Ellington  
- - -

FIRST MOVEMENT

BLACK:

A message is shot through the jungle by drums.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Like a tom-tom in steady precision.

Like the slapping of bare black feet across the desert wastes.

Like hunger pains.

Like lash after lash as they crash and they curl and they cut. DEEP!

Like kidneys that thump.

Like heart-beats that bump...out of tempo.

Like the thud of the butt of the whip.

Like an axe-handle crushing the skull.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Like the crush of the weight of a hob-nailed boot stomping on bare black feet

Like exploding a shell in a gun.

This BOOMing is echoing in the brain. Nerves of a black brood...in tempo.

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1619:

Poor Boola. Chained to the bottom of a slave ship.

Down. Beaten down. Chained to the living and the dead.

Chilled by the icy fingers of the dead black brother

chained to his bleeding arm. Burned by the hot blood

mingling with the sweat of the moaning black soul

chained to his leg. Choked by the stench of the

rotting hold. Frenzied at the soft low moan of

a woman spiralling into a scream of terror. A symphony in torture...Punctuated by the wails of mortal agony.

Poor Boola. Down. Beaten down. No... Don't move. Chains cut deep. The ship rolls. Chains tear at his flesh. The ship pitches. His throbbing, pounding skull beats a tattoo on the mercilessly unyielding boards. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ship pitches. Again and again. Boola thinks: "I'll raise my head with the movement of the ship..." He does. The butt of a whip comes crashing down. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

That single blessed spray of cool, cool mist soothes his fevered, groping mind...Water...Cool green forests...Rich black pregnant earth fresh with rain...Sweet and succulent fruits of the palm...Water...Great dripping chunks of meat... Spoils of the elephant hunt...Water...No....Boola ...you must be dreaming...REMEMBER?....Elephants? ....that was an eternity ago...when you were free ...what do they want with you?...remember?...that slaver took out his knife and gave a great <sup>deep</sup> blue black laugh as he sliced a piece of flesh from your woman's breast...and forced it down your throat... remember?...where are they taking you....Ask them... Go on... BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Boola falls back exhausted...lying in his own  
 dung...nothing matters now...death must take  
 him soon....but Boola had not reckoned with  
 the indomitable will of his magnificent black  
 body's subconscious mind...there could be no  
 submission!

Soon a warm numbness envelopes him. Ah...  
 h...b...that precious silence...stillness...  
 nothingness...to music it seems to have dulcet  
 ornamentation...the theme remains the same...  
 trailing off into nowhere...BOOM! Boom! b-o-o-m!  
 ...floating off...the boom softening...now it  
 moves up again...the movement of the ship...  
 that's it!...the rhythm stealing into his return-  
 ing consciousness...striding into his consciousness  
 ...stirring his guts...twitching his sleeping nerves  
 ...moving his fettered feet...ah! to dance!...to go  
 reeling off into space...but the chains!...those  
 tones!...tones that somehow don't hold their pitch...  
 but seem to smear off...tones not too pure...sort of  
 in-between...sensuous...yes...but not sensual...  
 BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

This dream is far too sweet to last! What is  
 happening...everyone is moving about so...there...  
 my arm is free...now...legs...numb...aching...ah...h...h  
 ...easy...e-a-s-y...sit...the ship no longer rolls...  
 what?....now?...Daylight!...the holds are opening...  
 Air!...blessed air!...sunshine filtering through...  
 black figures crawling toward the sun...up...up....  
 up...up....squirming...squinting...into the blinding...

blazing sunshine...bare...black feet scraping  
an obligato on the slimy...slippery...boards...  
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

He who falls gets the lash...or whip handle...  
or both...out into the sun...at last...WATER...fresh  
...life-giving water....air....life-giving air...  
breathe deep, Boola....FOOD! "Ho-Ho, fattening for  
the killing!"...That's a good one!...

Some try to fight. Some jump  
Into the sea. Ah, to Be free!

On the dark distance looms tomorrow and  
tomorrow and the challenge of a strange and  
hostile world...on a black and timeless night  
...these black and hapless souls are silently  
...swiftly rowed to their Destiny...the SLAVE  
MART!

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1700:

Boola put down his heavy load and gazed about.  
He'd been looking at this tree-swept land  
Reclaimed by steady swinging of his ringing axe  
And was proud of what he saw there. Honest toil  
Was not without reward. Had not this toil  
Restored those steely muscles rippling  
'Neath the black satin smoothness of his skin?  
Had not the sun erased the mark of cruel, cold hate  
That etched his face the night they brought him  
To this strange and friendless place?  
Boola understood.



He was a slave...In kind.  
His body toiled...His mind...  
His heart...His soul...were busy, too!  
Busy with dreams of freedom!  
WORK! WORK! WORK! WORK!  
But to work was to grow strong, and he knew  
Weak men could not survive this test  
Of worthiness to be free!

He looked up at the sky and it seemed to say:  
"Boola, look at the sun, you're not alone.  
How warm and friendly it has ever been.  
Do you need more than other men to comfort you?

Look, now, is this not the same golden sun  
Which fired your brain along the calm Euphrates?  
And smiled upon your seeking, searching sorties  
As you followed the course of the Ganges -  
Absorbing here poetic, soaring folklore.  
Leaving there a part of you...a rhythmic song?  
Yes, it's the same. The same old sun which smiled  
Upon you as you pushed along the Nile and planted  
Seeds. Seeds of the first civilization ~~in~~  
Known to man!

Drink them in...their glowing stories  
Of Babylon and all her glories  
Knowing well her culture sprang  
From black men. Forgotten long ago...Meroe...  
From whence the first bright light flamed up  
In Ethiopia to guide mankind along the way.

Buried in the dark, uneasy conscience of Man  
Lies the bright and glorious Truth  
About your heritage. Someday it shall burst its bonds  
And shine forth in the blinding Light of Reason.

Before the great white horde pushed out  
Across the seas to your peaceful, plodding shores,  
The Bantus in South Africa had long since learned  
To till the soil...And bartering  
Was their medium of exchange that did not  
Blacken men's souls with greed and hate!

Your people of the Great Lakes mined the gold  
And silver, traded precious stones and built  
Their homes. They fashioned lovely things  
Of pottery and metal, developing a craftsmanship  
To this day unexcelled! In the kingdom of Songhay  
There flourished a system of agriculture, law  
Literature, music, natural sciences, medicine  
And a schooling system, too. As early as  
The eleventh century you were weaving cotton...  
In the Sudan!

First to smelt the iron and use the forge...  
Masters of the art of basketry, pottery, cutlery,  
Sculpture! Whence came the art of Greece?  
...Out of black Africa!

Prehistoric Europe knew your artistry. To them  
You brought your art and sculptured brass.

Your imagery in ivory, bronze, quartz and granite.  
And you taught them how to fashion glass.

How many scholars know the "Epic of the Sudan"  
To measure the classics of ~~any~~ land?

Black hands hammered copper nuggets into tools,  
Black hands shaped them by smelting.  
You found the bronze the color of your sun-baked  
Skin and worked it into things of beauty everlasting.

The life-blood of all industrial life...your gift.  
Neither ancient Europe nor Western Asia  
Nor ageless China knew about iron...but you did!

Yes, Boola, that same old sun smiled down  
Upon your honest labors in that far-away land  
Of many yesterdays...Count your blessings...  
And take heart! No man can rob you of this  
Great and wonderful heritage. The blinding  
Light of Truth, as ever bright as the sun you behold  
Will somehow penetrate the deep, bottomless pit  
Of obscurity whence you've been plunged,  
Illuminate your path and lead you to high places  
Reserved for those with strength to endure  
And faith to sustain throughout the climb.  
So, Boola, use that energy to clear your mind  
And set your course to be FREE!"  
And Boola did!

---

Alone...in this great land where Boola stood  
Mistreated and misunderstood, unseen Forces  
Worked at setting free his troubled mind.

Voola came...unsought...unseen...uncertain.  
The first to feel the common need.  
She sidled up to him and smiled. His spirit  
Soared and flew to meet...embrace the selfless love  
She brought. Her quiet presence stilled the sob  
Deep down inside.

Woman...woman...how nobly you serve  
And wait so patiently for man to learn  
The things you always seemed to know.

Woman...woman...how deep you plant the seed  
In man to grow into all things for you...

Voola soon grew great with child...  
And Boola's manhood strutted 'round...  
This was enough...for now. Voola knew  
And now she grew straight and strong  
And beautiful. Here was meaning to it all...  
To boost their pride.  
Together, they dreamed the sweet dream of freedom!

---

Out of this deep dream of freedom  
Evolved the blessed release  
Of freedom of expression in song.  
Out of this great need for freedom  
The work-song was born.

Not a song of triumph...

Not a song of burden...

A song punctuated by the grunt ...

Of a heaving pick, a driving axe...

A song punctuated by the swish

And thud of a sledge hammer...

A song to a mule...an ox...

Fellow beasts of burden.

A song preceding the thrust

Of the foot that drove the shovel

Deep into the fallow, yielding earth.

A song accompanied by the lift and fall

Of the bale...

A song sustained through the long lift

And pull of the plow...

A song used as a weapon...

To slash the ties of bondage!

---

Boola sang while he worked...

Boola danced away from a boot in the britches...

A song eased his master's conscience...

Boola reasoned: "I'll sing...

And hide my thoughts from him...

A silent slave was a brooding slave...

A brooding slave was a dangerous slave...

Too many masters found dead...

Or not at all...

So! SING, you black bastards....SING!

SING! SING! SING! SING!

A song eased the lash...The whip fell  
Less frequently across his weary back.  
Boola sang. His master smiled. His slaves  
Were happy. He complimented himself on  
His Great Philanthropy. Arraying himself,  
On Sunday, he strolled off to church  
To praise the good God who'd given him  
His strength and power...  
Power to force another to earn for him  
His right to life!

Strength dissipated  
In evilness and fear!

Boola watched...waited...learned.  
Boola learned to till the soil,  
Bail the cotton, load the barge.  
Boola was anxious to learn.  
His ageless wisdom gave him patience,  
Great strength and endurance.

Come Sunday. Boola was irresistibly drawn  
To that pretty white house with the steeple  
So tall, shining there in the sun.  
Those who entered the wide oak doors  
Were scrubbed and polished and all spruced up.  
How happy they seemed! Bonnets nodding,  
Faces shining in the morning sun.  
DING! DONG! DING! DONG!

A new note entered his consciousness.  
It was pleasant to hear. Boola listened.

The music was soothing and sweet...  
Even from the outside looking in.

He longed to enter and be a part  
Of this silv'ry tongued

DING! DONG! DING! DONG!

From his perch in the tree-tops  
The stained glass windows became the white fern  
Flaming mangoes, wild berries, palm fruit  
Of the dear, dead past. Collars stirred him...DEE!  
The music floated up to him..  
And filled his heart with a strange, new ache.  
The music seemed to beckon, saying:  
"Come, it is for you, too. You are not bad".  
And as he listened, Boola thought:  
"Maybe the master is not a bad man, either...  
Maybe he just doesn't understand..."  
DING! DONG! DING! DONG!

One sunny Sunday morn, as Boola climbed  
Down from his perch, a kindly lady, whose prayers  
Had scarcely faded from her lips, approached.  
She saw the rapt expression on his face.  
Boola bowed. She paused. "Carry these for me  
And help me home..." One of the things  
She handed him was a book. A book they all  
Carried on Sunday to the little white house.  
Boola could read a little now.  
Not that his master would have it so.

Boola glanced at the cover. It said:  
"HOLY BIBLE."

Once they reached the lady's home  
Boola clutched the Bible to his breast.  
It seemed to him to be his own.  
The lady understood. "Do you want it?"  
"Yes'm!" his fervent reply.  
"Take it then and read it. It will help you.  
But do not let your master know!"

Come Monday. A sleepless night of struggle  
Left Boola not a weary man...but a man  
Of new and boundless strength.  
A man fully refreshed.  
A man strong with faith.  
A man alive with hope.  
With something to cling to.

Something to live for.

Something to work for.

Something to hope for.

Something to sing about...

Something to SHOUT about...

Going about his tasks that sunup to sundown  
Boola's face smiled into the sun.

Come Tuesday. Voola touched the Bible.  
She had watched over his searching.  
Had seen his back straighten  
His eyes glow.



She had witnessed a man reborn.  
Curious...she opened the Book. Gropingly.  
Her lips formed the words. Her mind found  
The deep and beautiful meaning there.  
Understanding transformed her tense,  
Taut features into a bright and radiant beauty.  
From within.

Come Wednesday. Boola and Vooolá talked it over.  
Surely, this was the same thing.

Only the language differed.

"In the beginning the Lord God created the heaven  
And the earth..." it was the same...all was not lost  
What matter the language or the name...  
The meaning was the same!

Sharp and strong the solemn words tumbled  
From their lips. Tenderly, the meaning there  
Assuaged their troubled hearts. Earnestly,  
They sought remembrance of this new, inspiring  
Blessing. Thus they strengthened mind and spirit.  
Momentous step toward Freedom!

Come Thursday. In sharing there was greater joy.  
The light was ~~still~~ shining brighter now.  
The Word spread swiftly. Every black man  
Found new Courage in the promises it held.  
Something new had come into their  
Black and empty lives.

Come Friday. The little ones felt it, too,  
Whispering: "Our God is the same  
As Massa Charlie's. And He is a good God.  
When we leave here, we're a-going to a big  
Beautiful city of golden streets,  
Where the roof-tops are studded with diamonds.

Children listen carefully when old folk speak  
Among themselves. They were learning, too.  
Quick to feel that something new and good  
Had entered their lives. The tension lifted.  
The black pall receded.

Come Saturday. And black men trudging homeward  
Bare feet slapping, tatters flapping,  
Down the dusty paths toward rest,  
Their aching backs and shooting pains  
Of hunger pulling them along,  
Their gaits were broken to a toddle.  
Broken by the agony survived....

On they came...  
Still strength enough to hum...  
If only to themselves  
In voices more sonorous...  
Strong...Deep...Clear...

Their broken gait seemed to mock them...

A rhythmic toddle-o. In tempo...

The tempo, too, beaten down...Deep...down.

ROOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Their gait a little ragged...Like syncopation...

A sort of 4/4 accompaniment to their humming  
And singing...now had a more definite pitch.  
It didn't go smearing off so hopelessly.

Come Sunday. With all the whites inside  
The church, their less fortunate brothers  
Emerged from everywhere to congregate  
Beneath a tree. Huddled there, they passed  
The Word of God around in whispers.  
Each sipping the reverent purity  
Of each trembling word till he was filled  
To bursting with the joy it brought!

/

Thrilling, puzzling, strange it was...  
They spoke of love of all mankind...  
What then was this? Did they not hear:  
"A false balance is abomination to the Lord;  
But a just weight is His delight..."  
"When pride cometh, then cometh shame;  
But with the lowly is wisdom."  
"The integrity of the upright shall guide them;  
But the perverseness of transgressors  
Shall destroy them."

In turn they trembled for the transgressors.  
Their joy knew no bounds when words of hope  
Renewed in them their faith and trust in God.

HUSH! Don't shout about it. No!...No!...Not!!  
Keep it down! Down! Enjoy your sweet suffering

Of this profound upheaval of love and joy  
In aching silence...

Noiselessly...they'd inch a bit closer...

Closer...Closer...

When the loud white voice inside rang out  
In Triumph...the blacks outside  
Would grunt subdued approval.

When the whites inside lifted voices  
in joyous song...

The blacks outside would hum along,  
Adding their own touches...weaving melodic,  
Harmonic, rhythmic patterns.

Thus the spiritual was born.  
Highly emotional worshipping of God  
In SONG.

---

Thru all the bloody, burdened years  
Boola has clung to the Word of God.  
Boola believed.  
his faith remained the Kindly Light  
To lead him safely through the darkness  
Of despair, misery, hunger, pain.  
God was good, but in His infinite wisdom  
Would allow one blessing at a time.  
And he answered honest prayers.  
He opened Boola's mouth  
and made those voices heard.

He touched Boola's heart  
And gave those golden sounds a lilt...  
A depth...that no one else could duplicate.  
He nudged the whites  
And said to them: "LISTEN!"

They listened and were lifted up.  
Those golden tones were lulling tones.  
Their consciences were glad. Glad the slaves  
Had found the Bible....Singing to their God...  
Reassuring...Calming...Healing...  
Curtness soon gave way to calmness.  
Harshness melting into happiness...  
The spiritual was soothing to singer  
And slavemaster, too!

---

Soon the song was shut away.  
No longer could it swoop and swirl and soar  
And hurl itself against the sky...  
And fill the free, free air...  
Where it was born. No!

The master must possess that, too!

The golden tones...the silv'ry tones  
Passed into the master's keeping.  
A golden voice...a silv'ry voice  
Could venture near the master's house...  
Or even into it...passport to clean beds

Good food...wooden beds...clean bodies.

The body must be clean in the master's house  
Poor Master! Why must he crush his soul  
With FEAR? Why must he live a lie  
Of inequality? Why must he force his lie  
On others? Why must he pick clean the bone  
Of the silver-throated thrush  
And golden lark  
And leave the crow to rasp alone?

---

"Oh, well, here's something new.

Let's sing about this. Our work is lighter...'

The song lifts...but the spiritual slips in  
And out and in again as they see and learn  
New things. Boola worked and dwelt in song.  
He sang and thanked the Lord for the crumbs.  
And he thanked the Lord for his growing  
Knowledge of the ways of this strange,  
New world. And he waited.

It is not true...that all his songs  
were songs of sorrow. tantalizingly,  
His humor slyly touched upon  
His master's gullibility.

"Yassa, boss!" Simple, wasn't it?

Not hard for Boola, who had learned to laugh  
Silently with eyes stretched ~~wide~~ wide

His master's gullibility.

"Yassa, boss!" Simple, wasn't it?"

Not hard for Boola, who had learned to laugh

Silently with eyes stretched wide

With servility.

Humble and meek...He laughed inside.

The slave songs broadened,

Cov'ring all things.

Sometimes soft...

Sometimes LOUD...

A rainbow of color...

Complete with pot of gold...

Paradise to come

On their way to heaven...

In tempo!

The pulse...the beat

Was ever present.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOOM! BOOM!

The master carried a long staff

Clutched to his bosom, into the cavern of the

Boola saw his way into the gallery of the

He could feel...

His master's hand...

Of acclimating him: "Poke

Go on at the wall." Boola

In the "front door" he

Did they not realize...

Closer to the door...

With servility.

Humble and meek...He laughed inside.

The slave song broadened,

Cov'ring all things.

Sometimes soft...

Sometimes LOUD...

A rainbow of color...

Complete with pot of gold...

Paradise to come

On their way to Heaven...

In tempo!

The pulse..the beat

Was ever present.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The master carried his fear with him...

Clutched to his bosom, into the haven of love.

Boola sang his way into the gallery of the church

He could sing...yes...

But he couldn't sit with the worshippers

Of the Christ who said: "Peace on earth...

To men of good will." Boola sat upstairs,

In the "Crow's Nest" they called it.

Did they not realize he was above them...

Closer to that Heaven they were whouting about?

---

Like great red maple leaves in autumn,

White-hot with hate, shaken with rage



The Indians descended upon the colonies...

Thus, the common danger fusing...

Another step forward...

Boola's "dress rehearsal" for FREEDOM!

As early as 1652, in Massachusetts

Boola proved more than a match

For the crafty Indians. He, too, knew

The secrets of the forest. The redskins

Were quick to see the why and how of things

And sought Boola as an ally.

Working, singing, praying, fighting,

Boola's pulse quickened...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Boola's spirit rising from the dusty fields.

Heroes..strong and firm...rising from the fray.

Chains breaking...Hopes rising...Boola fighting

For or with anybody...for FREEDOM!

## SECOND MOVEMENT

BROWN:

1770

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The black mood of Boola lightens

Usefulness and courage and the

Scene brightens. The blessedness

Of honest toil transforms him.

Communion with the soil

Enriches him. He is no longer a beast

Of burden in a foreign land.

Christ suffered, too!

There was work to do.

Boola belonged!

Strange, perhaps to those who have but one thought...

The thought of Self...Not Boola's kind.

Ringingly clearly, boldly thru the din

Of today's great fight for freedom

There falls upon the conscience of the land

That selfless, solitary voice with courage

Strong enough to cry out against

"Taxation without representation!"

A strong unselfish black voice

That did not stand back and mutter

In a dark corner: "Now, you see how it feels

To be oppressed!"

But loud and clear his booming black bass

Rolled out and thundered over Boston Common...

"WE WANT TO BE FREE! Down with oppression!"

Five years before the battle of Lexington  
 Black blood was shed in the birth struggle  
 Of this great republic!

YES, BOOLA BELONGED!

Crispus Attucks ignited the spark  
 Boola and his brothers emerged from the dark  
 Dankness of nonentity to march  
 Across the blood-stained pages of history.

Five thousand black hands reached out  
 For muskets, flintlocks, axes,  
 Hick'ry sticks, blunderbusses, tree limbs...  
 Any old weapon was <sup>a</sup>/good weapon.

Five thousand black hands joined white hands  
 Against the common danger fusing.  
 Tattered and torn, battered and worn  
 Boola's boots in unison.

Fierce and valiant, bare and bleeding  
 Boola's soul in unison.  
 But first he must fight for the right  
 To fight the great fight for freedom!

---

Black hands popped the prop right out from under  
 The ethnological farce of Bourbon theory.

Black hands and minds busied themselves...  
 Black hands and minds...stalking history...

Black hands, sensitive, seeking black hands  
getting the feel of sails  
Fashioned new devices.

Black hands, warming to the iron and steel  
Familiar with the furrowed land  
Creating harvesting machines to ease the work  
Of hands grown tired and calloused.

Black hands, familiar with the waving stalks of cane  
Working out new ways in each succeeding day  
To revolutionize the sugar industry.

Black hands were feverish...staking history!

Black shoulders heaved against the cannon  
At Fort Ticonderoga. Dragged it down  
The mountainside with Ethan Allen's  
Green Mountain boys to force the British  
From Boston...Boola MAKING history!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM.

Onward Boola marched to freedom...  
White Plains...Stillwater...Bennington...  
Red Bank...Fort George...Stony Point...  
Boonesborough...Princeton...Monmouth...  
Saratoga...Bemis Heights...Long Island...  
Boola's been there!

Boola, too, had a stake in this. A sacrifice  
To make. She nursed the wounded...

Slipped thru enemy lines...signalled information  
From her clothes line...Trudging thru the snow  
Skirts stiff to the waist...Extended like a  
Ballerina's...in the bitter freezing cold...  
Bringing strength to Boola...Bringing courage...  
Bringing hope....

VOOLA BELONGED!

VOOM! VOOM! VOOM! VOOM.

---

The "Spirit of '76!" Ah, yes, but they did not tell  
That the strong and stalwart soldier  
Who stirred his comrade's spirits  
With tilting fife and drum...was a black man!

Preserved for posterity

Was a face of lighter hue.

But WE knew

It was BARZILLAI LEW!

Great, giant of a man was he.

On to Valley Forge he piped. All the way  
From Groton. Lifting up the lads he met  
And setting all in motion!

On to Bunker Hill he strode

Shunning rest and ration

Sure, he had a job to do

To help to save the nation.

Fifing, drumming, singing, humming

Battle cry of freedom.

At his side marched Boola, too,

Knowing they would need him.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

On to cross the Delaware...Bledding...starving...

Freezing...crashing down all barricades,

Capturing the enemy. The feat was most

Bewildring. Major Barrington, General Prescott

...Pride of Britain's fairest...

Were but naught to Boola's boys...

PARZAILLAI LEW sought the rarest!

---

On the land and on the sea...Boola fought for liberty

Gone from the pages of history

Names of black men who made us free.

Deep in our hearts the light burns bright

For the brave blacks who shouted:

"PAY OR NO PAY---WE FIGHT!"

---

(West Indian Influence)

S whooping down like great black leaves  
Suddenly hurled by an angry breeze  
Came the seven hundred Free Haitians  
Of the Fontages Legion to descend  
Upon the British at the Siege of Savannah.  
With the tide turning against the Allies  
There came the Fontages Legion's surprise...  
And Boola's heart was filled with hosannas!  
His black brother from across the sea  
Had come to fight for his liberty!  
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!  
Haiti resounding the echo of Africa was loud here.  
Tropical drums...sexual drums...  
Savage drums...religious drums...  
Sexual drums...passionate...exotic...  
Sensuous...weird...flavored with Latin.  
Boola heard and felt it all. Boola  
Absorbed them into his being.  
He was enriched altho' he did not know  
His own rich blood and music had flavored  
This new and startling sound  
Which stirred his being.  
Unknowingly, he covered ground with one  
Destined to shape the fate of other blacks  
Across the sea from whence he came.  
A man who bore the name of...Christophe!

Christophe! Brave and gallant, Christophe!

Who carried home the seeds of freedom  
From this troubled land to sow them  
With another black brother whose name  
Has lived in the hearts of <sup>the</sup> oppressed...  
...Touissant L'Ouverture!

Up went Boola's head...Up went Boola's hopes...

Up...Up...Up went the song  
In Boola's heart...  
He had done his part!  
Boola belonged!

Surely, now he'd get his due. Many blacks were free.

But why not all?

The war was won...

Where was HIS liberty?

"Get away...Get away...Get away..." Tears in his heart

Seemed to say. "Once I am free

I'll come back and free my brothers...

One by one, if need be...

But I must be FREE!"

So...Boola planned and prayed and waited.

Boola now began HIS fight in earnest.

White hands were soon outstretched.

The hands of men who knew that one man

Enslaved held all the land in bondage!

"All men are created equal..." A noble document...



But to Eoola it was sheer hypocrisy...  
A mockery of men's souls.  
Four million blacks wanted to be free!

Swimming, walking, crawling...tens, hundreds, thousands  
Of miles...onward to freedom.  
Through untracked forests...wastelands..  
Pursued by blood-thirsty men and beasts...  
Hunted...In swamps...On the mountaintops...  
Tracked down like wild animals...  
Still they plunged on...travelling by night  
Hiding by day...Feeding on roots...leaves..  
Wild berries...swimming rivers...bruised  
And bleeding...on...on...Still fighting  
Tho' the battle had been won!

BOOM! BOOM! 'BOOM! BOOM!

Some succeeding...some failing. Still the frenzied flight  
Continued. Some sought to stand  
Their ground...Moving into swamps...  
Hiding in the mountains...Making homes  
Wherever they halted....Farming, fighting...  
Wherever they fled...they fought to be free

Out of this welter of broken bodies...blasted hopes  
And shattered dreams...Arose mighty men  
Of action! Nat Turner...Denmark Vesey...  
The Gabriels...The Catos...The Toms!  
The greatest of them all  
A black woman...HARRIET TUBMAN!

HARRIET TUBMAN...How long will be remembered

Your utter disdain of self,

Your dauntless courage!

Your blessedness of purpose!

How you laughed at the efforts of the faithless

With their ~~snare~~ blood-hounds and gold

With which to snare you!

And you...with God's own hand to guide you!

How you prayed for rain and snow and sleet

To cover up your tracks

And save your precious cargo.

How you triumphed over all their ego!

How brave you were when weaker souls

Lagged back with fear, altho' your heart

Was anxious, too. How glorious the lesson

In humanity you taught your brothers

Not too blind to see.

Frederick Douglass cut the bonds in 1838...

Escaping to a land where he could breathe.

But not content to save himself

He set his mind to work to make

His brothers free.

In seven years from slavery he pushed right on

To England. Just seven years from slavery

He begged the world to hear...(with head

Held high)

The plight of helpless black souls.

Shattering the structure of slavocracy

Brave black men fought to be free

What did they know

Or care of economic stability?

Abraham Lincoln knew and sought to set it straight...

Unbalanced by their dreams of power...

Softened through contempt and scorn

Of Nature's laws of fitness

Over-confidence was born of generations

At ease, whipping black men to their knees.

They erred. They dared  
To fight the losing fight

And bitterness took hold.

Again the black man took his stand and fought  
the same fight over.

He knew the side to fight beside

And soon the South relented.

They even took him in to win

Their folly was repented.

Men and useless blood shed  
And women left to mourn the dead.

Challenge changed to prophecy and still

Is hanging in the air:

"Till all the wealth piled high  
 By bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years  
 Of unrequited toil shall be sunk,  
 And until every drop of blood drawn  
 By the lash shall be paid by another  
 Drawn by the sword...this war goes on..."

Old Abe said that...and later made another challenge  
 The Emancipation Proclamation!  
 A nation's honor bound in simple phrases.  
 Returning to man his God-given rights  
 To be free!

Now, do you ask why he fought in 1652?  
 Now, do you feel as he felt in 1770?  
 Now, do you know what he knew in 1812?  
 Now, do you think as he thought in 1917?  
 Now, do you fight for the freedom for which he fought  
 in 1945?

---

Boola jumped for joy! His freedom won...

But whither? He faced a lifetime  
 Of freedom, tho' it be shrouded  
 Now in uncertainty and insecurity  
 Still...it was sweet to be one's own!

A sad note was sounded in the hearts of the old fol  
 They had earned the right to finish out  
 Their sorry lives unworried and at ease...  
 What now? "You must go...you're free...  
 "Get up and go!"...But where?  
 Nobody knows but Jesus....

"They set us free...but left us alone  
To starve...to freeze...to die..."

Boola searched his soul and found the answer:

"I took it from the earth for others...  
I'll scratch it out for myself  
With bare hands...if need be.  
They haven't beaten me!

Reassured, his singing and dancing grew wilder...

And took on a flavor of abandon.

Happy people drunk with freedom.

Laughing...crying...working...praying...

Digging...pulling...

War clouds gathering...

EMANCIPATION! AH!!

---

Elation, frustration, joy and sorrow  
Got all mixed up in the hearts of these poor souls  
Set free. Helter-skelter they sought a shelter  
From misery...hunger...the annihilation of pity!  
But none of these things matter to them  
When danger threatened their country again.

And brave black men marched off once more...  
This time to fight the Spanish-American war.

At San Juan Hill where Boola stood  
Triumphant with the flag flung high,  
The blood of black men, bad and good  
Was shed by men unafraid to die.

And marching home a hero came  
Who learned that to play the white man's game  
Was to suffer the loss as well as the gain  
And the joy of the victor was turned to pain.

A medal hung proudly from his chest  
But where were the arms for his head to rest?  
And when he learned someone had to lose  
---That's how Boola got the blues!

Groaning blues!      Biting blues!  
Moaning blues!      Fighting blues!  
Laughing to keep from crying blues!  
Boola had the blues!

"The Blues...

The Blues ain't...

The Blues ain't nothin'...

The Blues ain't nothin' but a cold grey day  
And all night long it stays that way."

Ain't nothin' that leaves you alone

Ain't somep'n you want to call your own

Ain't nothin' with sense enough to get up  
and go

Ain't nothin' like nothin' I know.

"The Blues...

The Blues don't...

The Blues don't know...

The Blues don't know nobody as a friend.

Ain't been nowhere where they're  
welcome back again..."

Sighing...crying...

Feel just like dying...

"The Blues ain't somep'n that you sing in rhyme

The Blues ain't nothin' but a dark cloud  
markin' time

The Blues is a one-way ticket from your  
love to nowhere

The Blues ain't nothin' but a black  
crepe veil ready-to-wear.

"The Blues ain't nothin'...

The Blues ain't...

The Blues..."

---

### THIRD MOVEMENT

BEIGE:

HARLEM! Black metropolis!  
Land of mirth!  
Your music has flung  
The story of "Hot Harlem"  
To the four corners  
Of the earth!

Listen:

"Soft voices laughing...shuffling heels...a  
kaleidoscope of color...the savage moan of  
the saxophone...the primeval beat of the  
jungle...Boston, Mass.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Enlightened savagery...frenzied wizardry..they  
ripple and swell with strange and eerie sounds...  
....Cleveland, Ohio

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Scorching...primitive jungle calls...wild...joyous  
...The rhythm rises...falls...Rocky Mt., N. C.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Brooding atmosphere that haunts the memory...the  
busha-busha of the steel pan on the trap drum...  
steeped in revelry...New York City

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Feverish melancholy...nervous vitality...exciting  
as Stravinsky...Paris, France

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!



"Elation and despair go hand in hand...and there will  
suddenly pervade the air...a mournful elegaic  
outburst...London, England

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Dynamic outpourings of religious fervour...Copen-  
hagen, Denmark

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Strains at once thrilling...soothing...delicately  
haunting...Glasgow, Scotland

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

---

#### Jungle drums

Bombard the brain

Bootleg hooch

To dull the pain

Mellow tones,

The rattle of bones

Blocks of sound

And feet that pound.

Cheerful

Tho' your money'sorrowed.

Carefree

Tho' your heart is sorrowed.

Golden whisperings

Of the brass

Woodwinds rustling

Leaves of grass.

Wa-wa wailing...

Spirits trailing.....

BOOM! BOOM!

BOOM! BOOM!

And so, your song has stirred the souls

Of men in strange and distant places

The picture drawn by many hands

For many eyes of many races.

But did it ever speak to them

Of what you really are?

Did it say to them

That all your striving

To take your rightful place with men

Was more than jazz and jiving?

Did it say to them

"The joy I'm giving

Is the foil I use to lose my blues

And make myself an honest living?

How could they ever fail to hear  
The hurt and pain and anguish  
Of those who travel dark, lone way  
The soul in them to languish?

And was the picture true of you

The camera eye in focus

Or was it all a sorry bit

Of ofay hocus-pocus?

How then, this picture  
They have drawn?

It can't be true

Is dance and sing

That all you do...

And moan!

Harlem...for all her moral lurches  
Has always had  
LESS cabarets than churches!

Who draped those basement dens  
With silk, but knaves and robbers  
And their ilk?  
Who came to prostitute your art  
And gave you pennies  
For your part...  
And ill-repute?

Who took your hunger  
And your pain  
Outraged your honor  
For their gain?

Who put the spotlight  
On your soul...  
And left you rotting  
In the hole  
These strangers dug?

Who brought the dope  
And made a rope  
Of it, to hang you  
In your misery?

Who brought disease  
And at their ease  
Broadcast for all the world to hear  
That there was "death and danger" here?

Why did they need to spread their fear  
And discount every good thing here?

Who are these men?  
Do they not know  
Their God whom they profess to love  
Is Watching all from up above?

Why were you shoved and  
Shut off there.  
To smother...die...  
In your despair?

And Harlem...  
How'd you come to be  
Permitted  
In a land that's free?

The drums of war BOOM out again  
We join the ranks in keeping  
Conscious of the need to share  
The trials of a world that's weeping.

Seek not for honor  
Nor for gain  
But rather for the joy of doing...  
For credit is an empty thing  
Unless accomplishment's derived  
From a burning, aching need for giving.

A black man gave blood plasma  
To a world of suffering  
In it's blackest hour.  
His endless toil and searching  
Was for knowledge ...not for power!

Once more you've heard your country call.  
Patient...wond'ring...you give your all...  
Altho' the livid, vivid "why" evolves within  
your brain

You know that right or wrong--your homeland  
will remain

Eternally your own land. For this you  
Join the black, the brown, the beige  
In fighting for the chance to wage  
The fight for right  
'Neath the red, white and blue!

Ah, yes! But Harlem  
 You are strong.  
 You've stood the test  
 And they are wrong!

You've dodged the snare of subjugation  
 And ripped the bars with education,  
 And now you stand prepared to lead  
 Your brothers from the wilderness  
 Of hopelessness and need.

TAKE HEART!

In every land where you have been  
 You've left your mark on all the men  
 Who since have perished...  
 And you've survived!

The Caribs and the Indians  
 Have long since vanished  
 You kept a part of them alive  
 And in your song their song's revived!

Yes, Harlem!  
 Land of valiant youth,  
 You've wiped the make-up from your face,  
 And shed your borrowed spangles,  
 You've donned the uniform of Truth  
 And hid the hurt that dangles  
 In heart and mind. And one by one  
 You've set your shoulders straight  
 To meet each challenge and to wait  
 Till justice unto you is done.

The drums of war BOOM out again  
 We join the ranks in keeping  
 Conscious of the need to share  
 The trials of a world that's weeping.

Seek not for honor  
 Nor for gain...  
 But rather for the joy of doing...  
 For credit is an empty thing  
 Unless it's thru the joy of giving.

Remember DORRIE MILLER!

A black man gave blood plasma  
 To a world of suffering  
 In it's blackest hour.  
 His endless toil and searching  
 Was for knowledge...not for power!

Black, Brown and Beige...6...Cavanaugh

"The Blues...

The Blues don't...

The Blues don't know...

The Blues don't know nobody as a friend

Ain't been nowhere where they're welcome  
back again..."

"Sighing...crying...

Feeling just like dying...

"The Blues ain't sump'n that you sing in rhyme

The Blues ain't nothin' but a dark cloud

markin' time

The Blues is a one-way ticket from your lov  
to nowhere

The Blues ain't nothin' but a black crep  
veil ready-to-wear."

"The Blues ain't nothin'...

The Blues ain't...

The Blues..."

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### THREE DANCES:

1. West Indian Dance
2. Emancipation Proclamation (celebration)
3. Sugar Hill Penthouse

~~xxxx~~WEST INDIAN DANCE commemorates the participation  
of the Haitians in the revolutionary war:

...swooping down like great black leaves

suddenly hurled by an angry breeze

came the seven hundred free Haitians

Of the Pontages Legion to descend

upon the British at the Siege of Savannah.

With the tide turning against the Allies

in a time the Pontages Legion's surprise..

the world's heart was filled with hosannas!

Is black brother from across the sea

had come to fight for his liberty!

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