

MAP 11th RESA 12

Like He

Seemed hard as stone – my daddy – no way to tell what lay beneath
Bronze like stone, my daddy, no white except his teeth
Brought food, brought love, brought shelter, and inspired me to be
as great a man some day – a man as great as he

The first time my eyes saw them, fear grasped my heart and soul
No lips, no eyes, bone-white, their eyes were just like winter's cold
I could see the fire dancing – hell's fire dancing in their eyes
as they tried to break our spirit and to terrorize our lives

Daddy never seemed afraid, shotgun grasped into his hand
Told them we would never leave from our roots on grandpa's land,
who had been a slave in that age before the siblings' war
In response, heard footsteps leavin' from our old wood cabin door

The next day, daddy told me say my prayers so God could keep us strong
Said the woods nearby'd been smokin'; said that somethin' there was wrong
Wasn't scared, I thought for sure daddy'd keep us safe that day
Foolish boy, thought daddy brave, ain't gone waste his time and pray
So then, daddy went to interrogate them trees and hear their news,
but when night bird came-a singing, was no longer fooled by hemlock's ruse

Loud hoopla in that forest, big black forest on that night
Gathered round somethin' lit by torches, givin' off surreal light
Snuk up closer, couldn't see much in the smoke and in the haze
Only visible: one brown face, who I wished would meet my gaze

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He was tryin' not to fall, his neck tied up high onto that tree
He was tryin' hard not die, when his eyes looked and found me
There was a sea of unmasked faces, black hearts glad to see his pain
What use was a fake freedom when his neck was still in chains?

He tried to leave me smilin', even when he felt hurt the most
And the sea of white still laughin' – wicked cacklin' sea of ghosts
Tears left daddy's eyes as his lips choked out to me one final farewell
and then his big black body finally lost, now free from all this hell

I waited until later, expectin' nothin' but black dust
Blown away by cruel white wind – a hateful, racist gust
When I came back to come get what I could, there was nothin' there to get
but a look at where my dad was, of burnt wood and ash – a pit
And I knew my daddy prayed to God when he was hanged that day
Tears in my eyes, with broken heart and nothin' left to say

He had always said, "When God's with us, scared we should never be."
Knew he was right; had to be brave, had to make them see
that we would never break, never quit, and I must be like he
'cause I knew my dad was scared that day and twice as scared as me