

tucked under arm?  
What is this I hear  
of your creations—  
OUT OF MYTH,  
OUT OF INSANITY, OUT OF ILLUSION?  
Mr. Booker T.:  
were you the green moss  
on the trees  
leading slaves to Jordan?  
were the interpretations of  
you purposely distorted;  
like our music, literature.  
US?

Who carved your mask?  
Was it a synthesis of the  
African continuum?  
Did it fit so tight  
brothers questioned/diatribed?

Mr. Booker T. were you an UNCLE TOM?

*for James L. Talps*

## Port Arthur / Shirley Williams

*(from SOMEONE'S SWEET ANGEL CHILE:  
BESSIE SMITH)*

what he do you  
nonya

*(I seed the eye swolled shut)*

how much he take  
nonya  
*(I seed this in a dream)*

**Make yo hand in a fis'**

They jes lay there open  
in her lap short stump  
like fingas curved ova  
the callused grey-white palms

his ass go when Time come

gir'—and she can't talk plain 'count  
of her lip—gir' I whip  
any bitch that got two  
legs won't think on it twice

Make yo hand in a fis'

She ain't heard and her hands  
is meaty, deep veined wid  
red brown lines a little  
lighter than her skin her  
nails bite down past the quick.

Don't no man jes beat on  
me but time I whip my  
nigga ass don't care who  
right who wrong that's the time  
he stop bein my man

what he do you  
nonya

*(the long lip puffed and black)*

how much he take  
nonya

*(I seed this in a dream)*

## Boston / George Buggs

Downtown, citizens design destruction.  
Black Bostonians bend,  
bear the burden of being far from home.  
White Boston fears the future.