

Fifteen / Shirley Williams

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

I looked in her face
and seed the woman
I'd become. A big
boned face already
lined and the first line
in her fo'head was
black and the next line
was sex cept I didn't
know to call it that
then and the brackets
round her mouth stood fo
the chi'ren she teared
from out her womb. And
yo name Bessie, huh,
she say. (Everyone
call her Ma o' Ol
Lady.) Bessie; well
le'me hear you sang.
She was lookin in
my mouth and I knowed
no matter what words
come to my mind the
song'd be her'n jes as
well as it be mine.

Soft Kid / Waring Cuney

Soft kid bought a hot dog
He needed a steak,
Went to bed with the chills
Too tired to shake.

Soft kid bought a hot dog
He needed a break,
Fell asleep with the Blues—
He forgot to wake.