

Even in the dim blue light of  
creation's flame  
it shines.  
He's the silent songwriter of our  
Apocalypse.  
He keeps a Big John de Conqueror root  
in his hip pocket & a lodestone  
hidden neatly away in his vest  
right beneath an old gold watch  
on a tarnished silver chain  
this powerful composer of the  
syncopated ebony tune.

### On a New York Street Corner: Canvas #14 / Quincy Troupe

sounds of four-four time  
being played by a blind black  
man jingling coins jingling  
silver blood coins  
in a battered tin cup on a corner  
in mid-town manhattan a blood  
black blue black blind man  
nailed too a wooden white cane  
noddin off behind dark glasses  
a black kansas city man  
a new york street blind black man  
with a battered tin cup  
playing four-four time  
playing kansas city bird  
prez count four-four time  
head noddin diggin the music  
of nineteen hundred  
& ice cold thirty-four  
a blood black man  
a blue black blind black  
man on a new york street  
corner bebopin in time  
bebopin on down grin  
a gold tooth crown

& a small head noddin  
crowd gathered diggin  
on his music

## Richmond Barthé: *Meeting in Lyon* / Melvin Dixon

Lyon is a city of two rivers and Roman aqueducts  
two thousand years old. I come by snake-roads  
through the faces of three mountains; following  
butterflies and the tracks of old bones.

I find you in the hour of molding and the time  
of two rivers running here. Old fingers press  
into clay; *the old ones touch the young*  
and help them believe.

I look into eyes that have seen through stone,  
I listen to lips that gave language to the clay,  
I touch the spidered hands that bent bronze into blues.

*Africa Awakening, Meditation, Shoe Shine Boy,*  
Your blood hardens into stone. "Study nature,"  
you tell me in riverwords that pulse two veins in Lyon  
and leave Roman remains.

It is why your young-old eyes are *thin-skinned*  
and burning. Mississippi, New York, Jamaica, Italy,  
Sweden and more fire. Bronze burning in black fingers  
shed the thin skin, shed the twisted muscles, shed  
teeth and tears, leave the *inner music* and the  
mountain butterflies to show the way.

### II

Two rivers swell in Lyon and clean the old dust.  
*History is stone polished black,*  
*is blood and burnt bronze.*

Your blood hardens into stone poems. "What color is art?"  
and "What color is love?" The questions and your crisp  
eyes clean me, let me know the years you read the muscles