

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.

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 ^{deep} grey/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 fee...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!

In 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!

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
 Known to men!

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 amethyst.
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 thás 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. Colours 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. Boola 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 Voola 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 ~~slowly~~ 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.

*Just like
that!*

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!...No!!!

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 bitter words flow

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

Black...19

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 on, lost in thought...

Clutched to his bosom, into the cavern of his,

Boola saw, his way into the gallery of the church.

He could see...he...

But he couldn't see the...the...

Of unchristian... "Peace..."

To men of good will." Boola...

In the "Great East"...

Did they not realize... was about...

Closer to that heaven... the...

With servility.

Humble and meek...He laughed inside.

The slave song broadened,

Covring 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 ^a 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...Bleeding...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 wooping 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 ^{the} 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 ~~steed~~ 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 soul
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 fan 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's borrowed,

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 their 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 its 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..."

THREE DANCES:

1. West Indian Dance

2. Emancipation Proclamation (celebration)

3. Sugar Hill Penthouse

~~xxxx~~ THE 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 Fontanges Legion to descend

upon the British at the Siege of Savannah.

With the tide turning against the Allies

there came the Fontanges Legion's surprise..

And Goolie's heart was filled with hosannas!

His black brother from across the sea

Had come to fight for his liberty!
