

Uncast Shadow of a Southern Myth

Parquet Courts

I'd seen the bloodlands of Antietam
The shotgun shack in Tupelo
But a brick circumference left hollow by Sherman
Crumbling before me how it moaned

His shape swallows my recollection
That phantom silhouette implied
Strange fruit rotting from an airborne and hotter than hell
Is this the king's last man I've spied?

I stood there beside my companion
Scratching a rumor he had heard
Do you have a gun?
What? He said, yeah, you mean this one?
Straight down the barrel was his word

And I smelt the fumes he inhaled swiftly
Each word was hinged upon his choke
Like kudzu creeping up a state tree discretely
Forever bending as it broke

And I heard the jangling keys of Graceland
Ring from his teeth stained brown from coke
Drunk and stumbling like a man of distinction
They clamored shaking as he spoke

Of droves of pilgrims at his doorway
Of Reagan, Carter, Clinton, Gore
Fortunes offered them, refused routinely
This ain't no damn auction house he swore

Black male standing around 6 foot something
Ebbs through the waves of small town blight
A minute coldly from southern affection
Collides secretly into night

Forgive those who trespass against us
Began as the dead intruders plea
Into the very muzzle I'd once peered into
He gives the last words he will speak

But that broken glass supports forced entry
Reminds his lawyer through the phone
What southern judge do you know, comforting gently
Who jails white men who defend their home

No souls were present for the moment
His bombed out brick walls finally fell
Lying face down in the throes of atonement
Checked out of the Heartbreak Hotel

He was the uncast shadow of a southern myth [x5]