

## Poem For My Father

*For Quincy T. Troupe, Sr.*

By Quincy Troupe

- 1 father, it was an honor to be there, in the dugout  
with you
- 2 the glory of great black men swinging their lives  
as bats
- 3 at tiny white balls burning in at unbelievable  
speeds
- 4 riding up & in & out
- 5 a **curve** breaking down wicked, like a ball falling  
off a high table
- 6 moving away, snaking down, screwing its  
stitched magic
- 7 into **chitlin circuit** air, its comma seams spinning
- 8 toward breakdown, dipping, like a **hipster**
- 9 **bebopping a knee-dip stride in the charlie parker  
forties**
- 10 wrist curling, like a swan's neck
- 11 behind a slick black back
- 12 cupping an invisible ball of dreams
- 13 & you there, father, regal as an african **obeah man**
- 14 sculpted out of wood, from a sacred tree of no  
name no place origin
- 15 thick roots branching down into **cherokee** &  
someplace else lost
- 16 way back in africa, the sap running dry crossing
- 17 from north carolina into georgia, inside  
grandmother mary's womb
- 18 who was your mother & had you there in the  
violence of that red soil
- 19 ink blotter news gone now into blood & bone  
graves
- 20 of american **blues**, **sponging rococo**
- 21 truth long gone as dinosaurs
- 22 the agent-oranged landscape of former names
- 23 absent of african polysyllables, dry husk  
consonants there now
- 24 in their place, names flat as polluted rivers
- 25 & that guitar string smile always snaking across
- 26 some virulent american redneck's face
- 27 scorching, like atomic heat, mushrooming over  
nagasaki
- 28 & hiroshima, the fever blistered shadows of it all
- 29 inked, as body etchings, into sizzled concrete
- 30 but you there, father, through it all, a **yardbird**  
**solo**
- 31 **riffing** on bat & ball glory, breaking down all  
fabricated myths
- 32 of white major league legends, of who was better  
than who
- 33 beating them at their own crap game with killer  
bats
- 34 as **bud powell** swung his silence into beauty
- 35 of a **josh gibson** home run skittering across piano  
keys of bleachers
- 36 shattering all manufactured legends up there in  
lights, struck out
- 37 white knights on the risky edge of amazement
- 38 awe, the miraculous truth slipping through
- 39 steeped & disguised in **the blues**, confluencing
- 40 like the point at the cross
- 41 when a **fastball** hides itself up in a shimmying  
**slider**
- 42 curve breaking down & away in a wicked sly grin
- 43 curved & broken-down like the back of an ass-  
scratching uncle tom
- 44 who like old **satchel paige** delivering his famed  
**hesitation pitch**
- 45 before coming back with a high hard fast one,  
rising
- 46 is sometimes slicker, slipping & sliding
- 47 & quicker than a professional hitman—
- 48 the deadliness of it all, the sudden strike
- 49 like that of **the brown bomber's** crossing right
- 50: or the hook of **sugar ray robinson's** lightning  
cobra bite
- 51 & you there father through it all, catching  
rhythms of **chono**
- 52 **pozo** balls, drumming like **cuban conga beats** into  
your catcher's mitt
- 53 hard & fast as **cool papa bell jumping into bed**
- 54 **before the lights went out**
- 55 of the old negro baseball league, a promise you  
were
- 56 father, a harbinger, of shock waves, soon come