

D. S. Marriott / THREE POEMS

THE GHOST OF AVERAGES

1

hard work,
 hard even for a nigga, but not you.
The French grammar,
 lies open on a table
smeared with grease, oil, —
 unfettered by the chains
opening the mind begins its flight
and maybe, . . .
 who knows
the harvested cornfields are green, once again,
 a home for what can be reclaimed
 rather than loss, or delusion,
derided by you, Booker,
 as proof the ancient memories lie unredeemed.

2

There is hard work
 in the school yard.
I am Kunte Kinte on the hill,
the stars torn from the rolling dusk,
 I sit side by side
 with the dark, the unwelcome brown.
Re-read says my father,
 the coal dust lining his eyes
the focus

for the reprieve of time, the art of discovery,
for the receipts
of less gnarled hands and feet.

He used to call me 'dee',
reminders, too, of how missed letters
are often the most permanent of things
when the tin can spills
onto the oilcloth near the unopened book
and he takes deep breaths
on his knees
reading the seams of coal for 'this is not-me'.

3

I wrote his funeral program in *Word*.

If one day,
life rains on you
a similar dereliction and collapse,
read that French grammar.

And the boy,
pitied for the ever patient, worn-out binding,
the loneliness and levels of neglect,
gives tithes against his will:
remember what is valued, the price it gives.

The privilege is reserved for us —

Each letter blackened
because a wish to live is deeper
than seams to be mined,
or eyes darkened by dust.

SOMEONE KILLED THEM

The sadness fits the sudden and violent end —
or is it just the longing to know what happened?

You wake up,
Where are you?
You can't get used to being dead,
your body hanging from the railings
not far from home.

Who's that beside you?
Hanging with an electric flex round his neck — it's your uncle.
You haunt the town of Wellington, the brick walls and parked cars.
Your deaths seem weirdly believable.

What day is it?
Millenium New Year's Eve.

You were safe until 11.55 p.m.

Then you walked through the pub door . . .

Sinead sits waiting for you at the Elephant & Castle. She still is.

ORANGE & GREEN

Come, Amelie, come.
We need to carry this thing forward,
get back, go beyond,
as we sit, talking,
drinking coffee,
riding in cars & trying not to remember
the old familiar me, the precious one.

Sometimes

it's just the fading; taste
the assignment of what lingers, what is.
Do you miss all that? Do you miss 50s tv?

The world inside our heads
keeps us going past the orange stripes of sunset
beyond the green trees, till we stop. The black dog
hams it up as if he were a wolf
and not the old urbanite he is!

The eye of the tv burns on the dark yellow walls,
a little yeast, for the romance of memory,
never revealing, ever concealing, the wound that matters:
as we live by the heart,
lit by our thoughts, sure of welcome,
whispering behind the lips we kiss.