

Jazz After Dinner

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On a snowy evening I shall feel his sounds,
Quietly moaning, inviting cold air to listen,
Call pleasure from golden keys. Old friends
Will kiss their company, sit to relax and dream.
And music, crying, like an elderly man
That sometimes after sunrise greets morning
Will pervade the world, profusely fill
That evening and me, celebrating life.

For Our Mothers

For our mothers
Born of humble ancestral origins,
Suffering bondage and
Enduring the shackles of slavery
And nurturing a people and a
Country with power and strength
And glory and greatness;

For our mothers,
Queens of the universe
Who give us beauty
And sweetness and light
Radiating with positive energy
And spiritual illumination
And making us rise to all
Propitious occasions wherever
They may be in the world;

For our mothers
Whose gifts to America were
Phillis Wheatley and Frances Harper,
Elizabeth Keckley and Zora Neale Hurston
And Margaret Walker and Gwendolyn Brooks
And Alice Walker and Lorraine Hansberry
And Maya Angelou and Nikki Giovanni;

For our mothers who also shared
Mary McLeod Bethune and Dorothy Height,
Patricia Harris and Barbara Jordan,
Mary Berry and Ruth Simmons
And Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor
And Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King
And Oprah Winfrey and Suzan-Lori Parks;

For our mothers walking with faith spreading
Joy, sleeping with tears from painful years,
Shouting when unhappy, praying when the world seemed
Hopeless, trying always to be architects for a better
World, one that will heal all the people
All the sons and daughters and their many generations;

For our mothers
Pillars of the community
And Saviors of the world
Who love us.

Drinking

is a sobering experience
like sipping vodka in a
topless bar
multiplying movements
till flesh burns.

Like one body becoming two
as problems diminish
or destroy.

It is beer and wine
that build fire
for stomachs and fools
like a wife and child
scolding for prevention

because alcohol retains
false power to conquer
with empty words. It

is like the lion
drinking blood
from animals' guts

it is guzzling constantly:
sipping and quenching.

Its wetness is tears;
 camouflaging scars,
 breaking the heart.

It's drowning hopes
 confusion visiting; it's
 drunken sleep and scattered

dreams transforming the now.