

tomcat born on railroad
avenue, scottsboro, alabama
to big tom + lucy belle
weatherly, november 3, 1942

MAUMAU
dad in european theatre
mom + i living
wif his mom + dad

after the war dad + mom + lil sis + i
moved to the mountain
street home. grade + high school
at george washington carver, split
off to morehouse college at the end of
eleventh grade.

CANTOS
two + half years at morehouse
semester at alabama a.m.
then parris island
+ dante's inferno, another semester
at normal, alabama, made Q frat sic
wif bundle of sticks in hand.
indefinitely suspended from a.m.
for publishing The Saint on campus
without permission.

had a vision

TOM WEATHERLY

MAUMAU
AMERICAN
CANTOS

by
TOM WEATHERLY

CORINTH BOOKS NY

1970

to carolyn, joel, chip, roi, tom jr, david,
nathaniel, pat pucci and leon siedel

some of these poems have appeared in *Noose*,
The Saint, Simbolo Oscuro, 3C 147, *Utter & The World*

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autobiography

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had a vision
entered a.m.e. ministry
assistant pastor of saint pauls scottsboro
& next year pastor of church great grandad
pastored (bishop i.h. bonner had feel for tradition).

had a division: left god mother hooded youth &
the country for new york, lived on streets,
parks, hitchd the states.

dishwasher at hip bagel,
waiter in the mountains, cook at lion's head,
proofreading, copyediting, baking, bellhopping,
camp counselor, dealing, fuckd up in the head.
rantd in the saint marks poetry project, ranting
now in afro-hispanic poets workshop east harlem.
HOLDER OF THE DOUBLE MOJO HAND &
13th DEGREE GRIS-GRIS BLACK BELT.

first monday scottsboro alabama

they dont hold grudges
bridges that dont know cars
are in this century.
they dont know better to
ride over wooden bridges
wagons from shotgun ridges
bridgeport, paint rock, sand mountain
they ride to county courthouse
square to honest trades of
samplers, plowshares, shotguns
bloodhounds, homebrew & gossip.
they come to buy back issues of time
from north alabama ridges
over bridges sherman didnt burn.

southern accent

I

the tennessee valley was author of
lush full forest animal lives
that thrive on the drive of the rain—

falls to seed shivering with love,
filling the cottonmouth swamps,
where young blurred visions swam,

shorthaired terrors of inquisition
following dogtrot after father,
questioning his myths.

silver slivers of catfish splash
stink, waters of their ripe breeding.
youth sprawled on grass, idle pole

stuck in mud. the muddy river's murmur
blues, and the river fowl alive
in god's dim eye in tennessee.

II

the tennessee valley is full
of swimming holes dammed for commerce.
catfish swim, creaking in detergents.

bastards of the swan/cranes in
urgent circles follow common
low to suds, where no fish splash.

tva built offices where grass was.
dead pond's beauty screams in the churn
of the bitter turbines whining:

tv's summer reruns are spun-
out backwaters. fishpoles are totem,
ten pound test weight lines hang slack.

to old elm, in cemetery for confederate dead

The pine fragrance,
the magnolia graveyard,
surrounds a gnarled, old elm . . .

among conferences of silence,
honors heaped upon dead men,

it stands, to document the wind,
not their deeds . . .

leaves,
fall,
journalistic season
past historic years:

listen to elm bark in passage
of dixie landed gentry,
it makes no gesture of sound . . .

round its trunk children
chant their games
over buried roots.

Elm roots grow through graves,
neither desecrate nor revere,
crack the skulls open
to brace against the wind.

owl watch, perched in what dark
limbs silent swaying
with the wind.

"South African Judge
Rules Family Is White,
Not Colored."

New York Times
April 30, 1967, p. 86

court changen race by legal decree

worn it is a gesture
as skin, suit won in south
african court i'd be proud
declared white in new jersey
or georgia. proud america

experience limitd
to these states
i'm in for traveln.

whereas the greek states
beautiful the gods the heroes

if a jigaboo dont spill milk
coming he spill it going.

these are like homer's blues
themes. back humpd under
magnolia writn
life of the great black
wasp. state
oracles divine, witch docs
sprinkle bone dust

americus mojo .

i stay here wearing thin
suidt for the climate.

sermonette to jan

I

i write it splash
down
in the roots of water
expanding circles, a leaf
dropt.

my vision see me thru
raw glass
raised to obvious past
survivals: icy pond
in summer as that frieze
the leaf
in ice, hard circles
photograph of april's moon
tides stopd from wavering
weak

strong
my thots stretch
round your body. that water
evaporates

II

your slow back going down
grizzly in your thighs
growling teeth.
owl perch in cypress
swoop down. claws. snatch.
is a slow black form it
is down and down goes it
to.

something dies
in spring. muffled drama
of wings down

down
down.

dawn.

roi rogers and the warlocks of space

(for 'the world' proof of my insanity)

I

"the dominant theme of
the material
taken as a whole
appeals
to prurient interest"

as your new deal
that it is human
beast, that is we all
is what we believe

is where publick
folks lie.

"thomas, we're near
the toilet
if you're worth it."

we are
we
an era
calmly
measured
learnt
wholly
cosmo
politan, airconditioned
soul slang

"who urge no less than music"
accept a-1 sauce.

roi rogers and the warlocks of space

II

one fact
not erect
moot fact
she grab
of me, woman takes
the question. o ezra
the koran has lanie poos
name inscribed in it, in gelded
silver ink. critics
book the book printd
on fasces & fingerprint

fort fantasy

(mended wind image today,
rites by the ganges

roi rogers and the warlocks of space

III

hadassah leavenburg
baby you're selectd
marry me in my pre
fascist period. why
because i
dig yo fat
thighs
rumpd ass
bald domed tits
cunt that's a live
home to huge beasts.
we be fuckn kosher
'til i find what
shine means.

roi rogers and the warlocks of space

IV

o mother, wild, driven black
held restless tomcat
balld into your womb.

a wombat electd to big
tom's wife. a worship freed
november 1942.
know my dark is
huge as alarms
the sea, waiting at night
crouching.

salty gal

the apartment is two rooms.
no boudoir for you.
if i forget your self,
if you must remember it.
sit to the window. watch red-white-blue
smokestacks on avenue D.

steam & smoke
changes. a small room.
claws & horns in to conflict
at the waterhole/at the saltlick.
these panes may be walls
from the outside.

... & come back
in to me, opening
& darkly smiling. one season's
change from a nondescript.
our bedroom is two windows.

"say a man has privileges" /

for carol mothner

i know how yr hard
to hear friends talk
to yr ear

is no dogs
nose, no cat eye.

it is setting to write
wet paw, sandpaper tongue
in welcome wagon town
what of it?

& its so, determine
not to speak out
write it down nor appear
in public forums

run it down in public
the charge the media
feeds back to my & your craw

:sweetest thing i ever saw
him say to me, "melissa
your skinny bones
knock on my door when sun
gone down."

/from Joel Oppenheimer

your eyes are mirth

your eyes are mirth
trauma. i am he,
born out of the laughter
of your sleep. your
sleep closed to me
traps me inside it. waking
in the morning of joy.
i am ignorant and stretch
my shape . . .

and you awakening
pull me close.

to a woman

for denise levertov

can't say it's not
a language that makes you
repeat its singing

for you i groan
thru subway stations
avenue B to avenue D

it is beginning
it goes down
thru centuries

dawn to eve
that movement past
tense & strain.

it's not father who groans
but the son remembering
mother, a snatch

back to the beginning
not the warm hole now.

the Lions Head has a cub in its mouf

joel o & pete hamill tell me how
the windmills they defeatd
during th 50s,
corso is mad but theyre drunk tonite
i dont listen feel th splinters
or pick them out & glue 'em together.

SUMP SONGS OF TOM

whats in a doggie bag

for nathaniel oppenheimer

joel is enrolld
at berlitz school languages
learn to speak dog

3 lessons he talks
to dogs fluent in their language
practices at the Lions Head

what is the world coming

to talk to dogs.
i met this kissie
frog last nite with blonde hair . . .

the 90 lb week

(for sam & ezra)

keep book the cash
move figures, why
bank tellers stay late
keep book
the figures dont
lie cheat steal.

this is the first & great
commandment throw up
poker chips, the money
changers out, the hands.

the phone is bugged is
registered in yr name
there is the trick to
tear the yellow pages in half.

liz bitch

for tom campion

i'm not the gentle
honorable man of collar
speaks from scottsboro
interested to read that
sociological inverse
relationship, lynched
& the price of cotton

& not speak in fronts, follown
my life in your freed dom

given what in me the test, the shit
is a standard F A A 2 pound pigeon

is shuffle down the buffalo gone west
we grease on their bones, we going west

"Breaks time, as dancers

"From their own Musicke when they stray/lay awake

"and just can't eat a bite, she used to

"be my rider."

imperial thumbprint

this is a white
world dont give damn shit
to me boy. is whether live
or dead black is not
white nor is life or death

neither living nor dying
speak under breath curse the
skin you give man mother
goddamn the street full

outside where there is white
tomorrow is today the black

walk down fifth avenue, hawkbill
in my hand.

gerrymander

*for jerrold & lightning
& howling*

no man how hard
you fuckn try you cant
you aint snow white. no
black light black suburbs
& no kite rainbow out of
you head in 1940

smoke smack
lightning jus get you high.

*"Ich bin so dumm, du bist so dumm,
wir wollen sterben gehen, kumm!"*

Galgenlieder

Christian Morgenstern

*'i'm so dumb, you're so dumb,
let's go kick the bucket, comeon!"*

TW

titty blown blue

love is all right, but shit
loaded for bare
necessities "ive done more
for you baby
than yr daddys ever done"

walk on the tops of my shoes.

you hump like a horn
thru traffic.
"done more for you baby
than yr daddys ever done."

a proper song, entitled: coonbitch, to polly green

for mike allen, a marked saint

traveln salesmen pump my joint
collective farm wife, make this
killn floor stern, killn deck
aft document:

roi jones
in the year of our lady
did you not write
on page 17
"old envious blues feeling"

the hound diggings where
ole bean dug up a pewter raccoon
our roots too deep to go down

or own to bunny
who'll buy my violets
i can't get started.

the peckers ride off
lookout mountain to some pass.
cut them off at possibly

possibly mosby is the posse
the marshal clan &
chases the treed muse, the flower of
backdoor.

bitch hazel-eyed goddess

my lady bring me
ten young virgins.

my lady bring to my black dick your white cunt
no treed rhetoric for those hounds at me

fuckn commit to our bedroom not bullshit horns
or cattle prods.

my lady bring me possums
suckn to your belly

four of them bitch hazel-eyed.
& this is my lady.

war bride

gerlinde the virgin wif spear
remembers
german children deprived of fireplaces

birch logs snap
hot cinders at us.

mount moriah deacon AMEN
beardless strong
speaks nothing to his own dark
sisters wif thighs like jewels

what the songs i remember meant
where songs sung

mr mason mr dixon

baby, you aint best of the lot

(a *purim* song, first degree)

leroi rides again is freed
man shuffling home to
read the good book WASHD IN THE BLOOD
BURNING SPEAR. hadassah knows
theres a pogrom tonite & always
an eclipse. hadassah went dressn up
royally:suh haman erectd the stake.

HANG HIM ON IT.

the saddle is empty of
the accuser.

MAUMAU AMERICAN CANTOS

1

intersection

honking sirens approach at,
searchlights

honk out
FRANK

kill you dipshit fagot
motherfuckers.

& frank never know
how to outguess stupidity

the blood, the mean
woodenframe the coptic site
blues

the mans honking

dont come

at my door.

CANTO 2

the yellow brick road

for trane

we trespass the blues
hanging outhouses in picture frames

a record heard
live performance
blow easily

 forgotten phrase. we bleep
 dont read music. listen
dont move dont you remember
saxophones never die.

titty toad down
remember, read scratchy
sheet music, croak
in the backyard.

CANTO 3

the issue, the blood, is heavy

dearest big tom & lucy belle

they mebbe come suck
at me the fan, & fuck up the current

modern jawless vertebrates
lampreys

new york citys dont hold their
mouf right anthony travia
or the estonian minister of
cultural affairs to the U.N.

southern politics aint got
less probably *mores* of the region
flavor: big jim folsom
the man in bama
forkd a chaw the cracker get his
mouf around wouldnt choke.

now you teachers share—
crop reared me, now the sirens
honk at my hymns to malcolm . . .

what the man . . . did to stoke
fire beneath his black
skin fuses his soul the thing, not in ideas
my poetics a sociology independent
of the results

bullets in mississippi
election returns in vietnam

the token
NEGRO even i have to include
in that

nostril on top the head
the laterally placed eye, behind
which are the gill openings

dip shit mothafuckn blood
suckers, stuff the ballot, drain
the treasury, increase taxes
so what honest hard work bring
you eat out the horn
& hardart dairy queen.

as you see yourself the language is,
your politics aint the moral.

CANTO 4

gullfish

what is black
in me is not like white
you thot enuf
to say what we were
brought up to be

our parents we are not.

you no souf carolina gal
tell me i bring no
chocolate to an occupied town . . .
is another war i'm involved
in will do

 speak of my
 self respect
 for myself

no success, the score is
success, the ritual put down
all the blues gone west
mongers of the world unite!

CANTO 5

coon fire

the landscape was
musical cartoons.

tattoo the sound of
blood on my eardrums

taut, the tenses
i were wolfish to dance
dance the half romance
the language

& violence, music to
dance to
violate the progress:

rust at the muscle.

"Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!"

CANTO 6

americus mojo

brown stone woman honkn outside,
my honeydew rider.

o deliver me my lady, tom
reconstructd tom, dont ride no more fronts for the lily
BLACKJACK PERSHING

THE HIGH KITE SUCK YOUR
BONES.

east fifth street sings TPF out my ears the morning
you're not here

i sat up all nite with the kittens packn my leaving
poems

3 corner box got me my lady
i've gone down on your body broken open in
remembrance

my front door is your front door, no backdoor lily
as a black gals pussy moans waycross georgia.

CANTO 7

first thesis

for m.l.k., jr.

aim get your sights & its sound
in abstract or journal movements
to a peace settlement

old western fancy

dude shot my man

dead,
precious lord blow off
theres no willy in th blues theres no you.

CANTO 8

valley stream carol

summer returnd 3 days. winter is slow.
cant concentrate where thot enters here goes
head bodyless LOOK OUT TOM POOL DOOS
GET YOU
freight trains gone in last round house. home
fret no music made, no drama, shiftless
out of head gear, disorient blues takes firm
control these days keep me cool enuf collect
my thots my fingers (your river hips flow away)
swim wif th current holdn breath.
east fifth street children dont fear broken glass
come rescue me losing touch system
reality, blue singn me wif his bad mouf.
them mushrooms th stink of pool doos pussy
biography of joseph smith on my desk
life & times change again look old
things pewter wif designs on 'em made in england
unicorn products limited go lovely
to th kick hills. my tongue is blue any form you wish
come bird fish worm sing swim
loosen th black belt.

CANTO 9

lucy belle

d b a rider
ginger hips bred
you said
captain easy
go down on
river hips
new orleans
louisiana
where my mouf sings
a goat song
(th chorus line.)

CANTO 10

wooten

th black hat stingy brim
on th street you live
one more day wearing it angel
enuf so you live. enuf.
devil lights up th day knowing
which hat to wear in his
green avenue stompers above franklin
going downtown, th robins
by stuyvesant, nostrum, utica avenue.
over wireless 'robins nest' slim harpos
blue thang. do your thang blue sea
cop the reefer ride away
th highs translate literally
railway carmens soft white underbelly.

CANTO 11

east corinthian

village period piece hettie
cohen got her jones, wiped th colostrum
off th mouf of his first poems
days down wif it.

east fifth street kikes have retreatd to
maw of long-guyland, few ulanower cong.
a saturday holdn act from soap opera kahn.

lissen mama right -handed -wingd
i'm head tomcat round this spray
net weight in th morning
c-wt. & eighty th motherfuckn all
limitd to th east side & fillmore music
gem spa & i cant spare a dime.
my poems & lil tomcat in your belly
teethn on raw blood too are down wif it
(totem is in th spirit house) th red-
bone hunger.

pair-bond

what is heart
is untransplantable

is not the house
we move in, home to.

caroline your ears in the wind
hear me
speak to home.

blues for franks wooten

House of the Lifting of the Head

let me open mama your 3 corner box.
yes open mama your 3 corner box.
i have a black snake baby his tongues hot.

you shake round those curves baby dont quite make
the grade.
you shake round those curves baby dont make the grade.
man come home tired dont want no lemonade.

we been blowing spit bubbles baby in each others mouf.
we been blowing spit bubbles baby in each others mouf.
burst all them bubbles mama norf cold like the souf.

let me be your woodpecker mama tom do like no pecker
would.
let me be your woodpecker mama tom tom do like no
pecker would.
open your front door baby black dark come home for
good.

mud water shango

a big muddy daddy my daddys gris-gris to the world.
i'm a big muddy daddy daddys gris-gris to the world.
got a mojo chop for sweet black belt girl.

daddys a river & my mamas shore is black.
daddys a river mamas shore is black.
flood coming mama you cant keep it back.

lightning in my eyes mama thunder in your soul.
theres lightning in my eyes mama thunder in your soul.
i'm a river hip daddy mama dig a muddy hole.

a bouquet for my lady

red & yellow fooles coat.

yellow ladys
bedstraw. white ladys bedstraw.
3 faces under a hood.
love in a mist. smoke of the earth.
old mans beard. devil in a bush.

wild madder. sun spurge.
good night at noon.

violet-coloured bottle. egyptian
lotus water. phisick spurge.

tom weatherly

hato rey 1969

This first edition of *maumau american cantos*
totals 3,000 copies of which 50 are numbered
and signed by the poet

The book was designed by Joan Wilentz and
printed by the Profile Press of New York

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entered z.m.e. ministry
assistant pastor of saint pauls scottsboro
disciple of saint/j.c. coleman
+ next year pastor of church great granddad
pastored (bishop i.h. bonner had feel for tradition).

had a division: left god mother hooded youth +
the country for new york, lived on streets,
parks, hitchd the states.

waiter in the mountains, dishwasher at hip bagel,
proofreading, copy editing, baking, bell hopping,
camp counselor, dealing, fucked up in the head.
rantd in the saint marks poetry project, ranting
now in afro-hispanic poets workshop east harlem.

HOLDER OF THE DOUBLE MOJO HAND

+ 13TH DEGREE GRIS-GRIS BLACK BELT.

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