

Equatorial 'Plane

*With a sound like ice scraping on ice
The engine rises in the warm wet air,
Tail-lights winking, port-holes agleam;
For those inside the landscape tumbles
Away as they mount cloud upon cloud.
Two children play in the dust with dice,
The evening wind tossing the trees,
And for a moment they stop and stare
At what to them may seem
Like a silver scavenger which rumbles
Up into the distant sky with loud
Sounds as it fades and leaves
Two children in the twilight air,
Two urchins tossing four small bones,
The smell of meat warming the air
As the fire licks the inside wall,
Someone old inside groans,
A mother calling from the door,
The children lingering at the call,
And the silence of the evening sounds.*

ROBERT MAURICE POLLET

Black Boys bathing

*The ants trace dust by the stars
And sense the star-dust crackle,
And darken the ground with ears
Which sound the broken crystal*

*Oj waters of the lake which cup
Black bodles in their leaves
Whose thin, silver arms cut
Like water holed by reeds,*

*As sun darkens the sky with red
And dogs lounge by the lake
Pressed wet grass their bed,
And the final drops break*

*On the boys pulling water
As the night resounds
With their splashing laughter
And the last bird sounds;*

*Their eyes gleam in the night
Like wave-tossed fire flies;
Their's the apex of God's light
Which shines through their eyes.*

*Their bodies wade the starry shore,
Their cheek-bones drinking in the wind,
Like new-born creatures unaware,
Wet-skinned, that night is unkind,*

*Or that like all beating hearts
Like birds breathe air and migrate,
Their disintegrated parts
Zoning the sun's low gate.*

ROBERT MAURICE POLLET

An African Dance in an old Palace

*There a dusty, grey, half-collapsed
Palace broke that evening into sound;
The faces lined the evening with their bones,
And children pressed their mothers' sunken paps;
But brown men pumped the sunlight on the ground
Until dust had turned their water into sound,*

*To drown the dead to rest in moving mind;
The men beat drums, the women full and coy;
The windows of the sunken building gaped,
And still the drummer's mask of abstract joy
Made all that sweat a ferment of our kind
And each limb had but drumming for a mate.*

*A bending dwarf blew on an elephant horn,
An old man danced as if he were a girl,
And a girl standing underneath a tree
Bent down and smiled with teeth of ivory,
And, like a cat, tossed a delicate curl,
As she would, wide-eyed, when awake at dawn.*

*And we, staring without grace, but glad,
She white skinned carved in a white dress,
The dust, like sunlight, falling on her hair,
Listened, bemused, to a different race, clad
In alien garments, and could only guess
Why all these men and women were so glad.*

ROBERT MAURICE POLLET

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