



Sam Cornish – Six Poems

Bless this House

putting on the neck
tie Negro father ready

for Sunday here's
the son of the man

who makes the day
for rest this clean

shirt is starched

for and the black string
tie pulled tight

beneath his collar
before his

God with his family
thankful this day

this wife
these children

here today thankfully
tomorrow

GENERATION TALK

When jazz

Was cool

And the cats

Were downtown

They said

the drummer

Is a man

White

Folks love

the music

of old

jazz clubs

the smoke

is the faces

of the band

street men

crazy men

crazy

downtown

COURT'S IN SESSION

Judge Roy Bean cowboy judge and jury
in a bar take off your hat

boots on feet upon the floor
no riding into saloons court's in session

whores outside chewing tobacco allowed
no spittin branding cattle ain't your own

talking back to Roy that's Judge Roy
Bean holding you in contempt

stole a horse hanging at noon God rest
your unwashed horsetheiving soul I sure
don't whoring on Sunday
fine but you keep the noise down

beating your wife tell me one thing son
did she step out of line

THE GOOD FARMER

was a dirt poor man working hard
living with his wife and son

the drought helping the misery along
but this year

he hog tied a rustler with a bounty
on his Jayhawking head

and that was better than crops growing
good and ready for the table

thank you Jesus he thought
there is hanging in Yuma

a reward for the outlaw
sitting at his table waiting for some grub

before they take the stage
and then the *3:10 to Yuma**

*Van Heflin in *3:10 to Yuma*, story by Elmore Leonard, film directed by Delmer Daves

THERE IS A TREE IN YUMA*

The bad cowboy
shot clerks drunks
nasty cowhands

grinned at frightened women
he meant them no harm

he hated banks
he was a crook

with a price on his head
handcuffs round his wrist

a farmer led him to town
at the end of a rope

he just grinned
there ain't a tree anywhere

in Yuma
with my name on it

**Glenn Ford in 3:10 To Yuma*

Old Best Friends

The man at the table
With a smile
A firm handshake
Will have a cup
Of coffee
And talk about the poem
Like it is an old friend
Of many years
Someone he is glad
To see again
Good friends
In poetry are rare
And hard to find.

Sam Cornish grew up in Baltimore, MD and has lived in Boston, MA for the past 40 years. In the 1960s, he was a literature consultant for the Enoch Pratt Public Library in Baltimore, where he created and co-edited *Chicory*, an anthology of writing by Baltimore residents. Following his move to Boston, he was a teacher at the Highland Park Community School in Roxbury, MA, and was also active in the Poetry in the Schools program in Boston and Cambridge, MA. During the 1970s, he was a curriculum specialist at the Educational Development Center in Newton, MA where he developed curriculum materials for the public school systems of Philadelphia, Delaware, Washington, DC and other places. In the early 1980s, he was the Literature Director of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities and subsequently, an Instructor in Creative Writing at Emerson College until his retirement in 2006. During that same period, he created for UrbanArts an anthology of writing engraved on concrete slabs installed in subway stations on the MBTA Orange Line. He has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Council on the Arts and St. Botolph Society, among others. In addition to his nine books of poetry and for children, he has been published in dozens of periodicals, including *Essence*, *Ploughshares*, *The Harvard Review*, the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Boston Globe*. From 2008 through 2013 he served as the first Poet Laureate of the City of Boston.