

Afaa M. Weaver – Four Poems

A Street Corner in Louisville

Muhammad Ali and Thomas Merton
stand on the corner of presidents, jabbing
over the way into heaven, Ali a mahogany
spin on absent minded heels, the puns
and rimes of golden gloves gone, Merton
in the wisp body of nothing draws figures
in the air, two bodies locked into each
other, joined and stuck, as he asks Ali
 “Is the heart the target?”
and the old muttering boxer wipes
dribble from his chin, lifts his eyes
to the green light of passing through things
and shuffles along, his heels up and down
like the upturned cards of poker or black jack--
the dealer changing the light from green
to red.

Dill

If you are a spice,
prove it to me,
make something live
on my bored tongue,
fill the chicken
pore by stiff pore
with a taste
from another world,
redeem the jars of you
I have thrown away,
make me mourn
days I shunned you--
like a woman
who proves her love
was all your life
ever neede

Disturbances

Venetian blinds in miniature tilt back
to fold the light into specks of dust,
take in seeds of histories born at night,
the legends of the vital lost maps
of our lives, where the thick way of being
is a land only the blind can navigate, touch
becomes the prime minister of failed eyes,
as we put fingers still wet with sleep
on these plastic ledgers of what is good,
what is bad, what holds the fibers of thin
hair in place to keep age from the pages
of an old man's poetry.

Like the Wind

For Mariah

In your cheeks are the cheeks of my mother,
in your eyes are the eyes of my father,
in your tiny hands are the hands of my grandmother,
in your feet are the footprints of my grandfather,
I hold you in my arms and you are the sum of lives
you know but do not remember, lives you left
on the bank of the old river so you could be born,
so you could come here and make me a grandfather,
and so I am, so I wake up in the morning hobbling
now, knowing more of what walking canes are for,
hoping I will be wise enough to know the pure heart
of a child that has come this far by the terrible faith
of the unborn, the path from silence into jazz.

In a career that began in the 1970's **Afaa M. Weaver** (born Michael S. Weaver) has worked as a poet, playwright, short fiction writer, journalist, and editor. His professional theater credits include the PDI Award for playwrighting from ETA theater in Chicago. The

Plum Flower Dance is his tenth collection of poetry. His home is one of the neighborhoods depicted in "The Wire."

The New England Poetry Club awarded Weaver the 2009 May Sarton Award for his service to the art of poetry and for serving as an inspiration to fellow poets. Weaver shared the award with Fred Marchant of Suffolk University.

Weaver's poem "American Income" (first published in *Poetry Magazine*) won the 2008 Pushcart Prize. He teaches at Simmons College in Boston, MA where Weaver holds an endowed chair.