

**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.