

OR: TOM-TOM

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A Tale Of Two-Toms

(UNCLE TOMS OF EAST ST. LOUIS & ST. LOUIS)

a poem
by

EUGENE B. REDMOND



This poem can be purchased at the following places: East St. Louis -- The Monitor Newspaper, 413 St. Louis Avenue; The Truth Shop, Corner of 10th Street and Summit Avenue; Sykes Prescription Laboratory, 1516 East Broadway. St. Louis -- House of Negro History, 3014 Union Blvd.; The House of Umoja, 1740 Division; The Blacksmith Shop of Black Culture, 4167 Fair Avenue; Black Liberator Office, 2810 Easton Avenue.

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(Or TOM-TOM)

The Daily play unfolds;
Time mellows
Them in their roles
As salesmen of Black Souls.

Black, brown and tan masks
Hide white minds and yellow hearts:
Slime sits in plush chairs
At City Halls;
Dregs float to the surface of coffee;
Piss replaces drinking water.

They hastily count unhatched votes,
Making whores
Of hot ghettos.
Little embryos of ideas,
Mere beginnings of dreams,
Suffocate in the grip of greenbacks
While Uncle Toms perform abortions
On a ghetto pregnant with Blackness.

Toms are sales representatives
For Colonialism, Incorporated,
The largest producer in America --
Manufacturer of the Negro
And the computerized darky.

On the plantation
They wore halos of hog-grease
(In sun their heads were on fire),
Over-alls,
And carried sticks
For UPPITY niggers.
The new weapon is lips,
Sneakier than the waters of the Mississippi,
Doors of an obscene tongue
Shouting BROTHERS & SISTERS
While delivering them up
To the ESTABLISHMENT for
30 pieces of anything white.

Neither gone nor fading away,
Tom
IS:
Politician with rump for sale,
School principal bent on blackmail;
Black teacher who is not for real,
Fire captain making deals on hills,
Preacher sneaking in City Halls,
Slick policeman on fixed-up calls;
Deacon sleeping on fat pay-roll,
Poverty pimp in suits of gold;
Shiny Black mayors-for-a-day,
Alderman with nothing to say.

Black businessmen who raise
Their prices higher than Orr-Weathers
And Pruitt-Igoe Projects and put
SOUL BROTHER signs in their windows;
Silk suited college graduates
Or over-all-attired foremen
At McDonnell Aircraft Co.

Mostly they are politicians
Selling souls for mean ambitions;
Some wear horn-rimmed glasses
And manufactured faces;
Few are eager lasses
With white-eye catching laces;
Ward women spreading lies,
Fat chauffeurs swatting flies.

Yes, TELL-TALE special cops
Or fags THE MAN adopts.

Can't you hear them singing
"Tweedle dee Tom"
In the Missouri Athletic Club
And on Signal Hill?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Native East St. Louisan Eugene Redmond, a prize-winning poet, is teacher-counselor in Southern Illinois University's Experiment in Higher Education and a Contributing Editor of the East St. Louis Monitor. Redmond holds the bachelor's and master's degrees in English Literature from SIU and Washington University, St. Louis, respectively. His poems and articles have appeared in several publications including The Monitor, Focust/Midwest, Free Lance, Reflections, Tambourine (an anthology of St. Louis area poets), The ALESTLE (SIU's student newspaper), The Sou'wester, The Mill Creek Intelligencer, The Metro-East Journal and a publication of the Illinois Governor's Committee on Literacy and Learning.



NOTE ON THE ARTIST: Distinguished artist Raymond Cason, a native East St. Louisan, teaches at the District 189 Adult Education School. Cason holds the bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from Arkansas AM&N. His paintings have won nationwide praise; some of them hang in the homes of residents of Illinois and Missouri and in other parts of the country.



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