

once. He was indeed proud to have such teachers. He looked up to them and always followed their good advice.

But this time he came off badly by following their good advice. Yes, his thoughts had been drifting. He was picking up the thread again. His teachers had advised him—all of them—to make good use of the vacation by visiting educational institutions like art galleries, libraries etc. He had walked into the building

that was marked in great letters: PUBLIC LIBRARY. He had gone straight to the shelves. There were other people there, also children. He noticed that some of them stared at him. He knew why. He did not bother about that. He was becoming quite used to such stares already. However, when after some time he had approached the lady at the desk he was politely told that the library was not meant for persons like him. It was exclusively for the use of the "other section."

Things I Don't Like

BESSIE HEAD

*I am Black.
Okay?
Hot sun and the geographical set-up
Made me Black;
And through my skin
A lot of things happen to me
THAT I DON'T LIKE.
And I wake each morning
Red murder in my eyes
'Cause some crook's robbed me again,
Taken what little I had right out of my hands
With the whole world standing by
And doing nothing
Okay?*

*Don't want your sympathy, brother,
Keep it. Keep it.
No wait. Give it to my enemies,
They'll need it.
I'm Black so I don't want your sympathy.
Okay?*

*Don't care. I don't care.
But this evening is kind of beautiful,
All soft and warm
And I feel mad lonely
Right in the hollow of the stomach.
And birds are flying home
With sunset on their wings
And everything's wrong with me
And I don't care,
And some bitch woman with dull brown eyes
Fries eggs and polony
For the fourth successive night,
Eggs and polony for supper,
And I don't know when last I had a woman.
The way I feel—so sick,
Never want a woman again
And I don't care
Lord, but the night is good
And the stars are hot green lights
Exploding and exploding
And everywhere there's kids and men and women
But I'm hanging around with nothing but hate,
Hate so bad that I don't want your sympathy.
Okay?*

*Why must they rob me,
Can't count the number that robbed me,
Why? They took all I got,
Even dignity.
Then they threw something at my feet
And I looked down. It was me.
My labour. My heart. My life
Shattered; and I was no more.
While the thieves walked on laughing
And no one said a word—
Okay?*

*But you don't know me.
The kind of man I am
Enough for you to see I'm Black.
Poor boy, you say. He's so simple,
And sweet.
But you. It's you that robs me
And I don't know how to fight you
A thousand million thieves;
Do you wonder I hate you? And say;
TO DAMN HELL WITH YOU ALL.
Good, bad and sympathisers—
Okay?*

*Look at this crazy little kid,
Dirty face.
Grinning as though life is good.
Don't know nothing kid. It's terrible.
Huh? Give you a penny. Get. Scram.
Don't look at me like that kid,
'Cause what I am is inside me,
A heart that loves fiercely, without hope,
'Cause tomorrow is the same as yesterday,
And signs all round say
NIE BLANKES; WHITES ONLY please.
And I go in back doors
And still I'm robbed.
Do you think I'm the kind of man
To stand around forever and be robbed?*

*Oh no.
Today is my day.
Going to get back tit-for-tat,
All you stole.
Going to fight you till you or I
Lie smashed and bleeding dead
And don't care who dies,
You or I,
But going to fight—
OKAY?*