

Rolling Drums

Black child in the Promised Land

Why do you cry in terror

Throughout the night

Night of a thousand sounds

Screams in the street

Moans in your room

Thrashing things in the walls

The sounds of your world

The sounds of the times

Are these the sounds

Sending terror through your heart

The sounds of the night

Sounds of here and now

Or, perhaps, of days past

Days before your coming

Crying on the sea

Clinking of chains -- binding.

Strange languages -- unknown now

Drifting into the night

From a hundred dark holds
Damp and salty
Resounding whips on flesh
Or contemptuous voices
Behind white faces
Are these the sounds
Filling your lungs with terror
These sounds, near yet far
Are they sounds of other men
Other times, other places
The rolling of drums
Is that what you hear
Drums announcing freedom's lunge
The shot heard 'round the world
Concord is near
Black hands on the drums tonight
Is that what fills your ears
Black child in the Promised Land
Why do you cry tonight?