

Literary

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THE BEST OF GUIDES

*I cannot say what Life is,
For I am much too young,
And all that I can know of Life,
Must come from older tongue.*

*For only those whose sands run low
Can say what Life may be,
So ask the old for answers,
And do not question me.*

*Be guided by the aged,
Who've travelled far and long,
Whenever youths try to direct
Man's course with voices strong.*

*To be led into forest deep
By those who know no tracks,
Can safely ensure nothing,
Except a journey back.*

*So if the old don't lead us
To find their journey's end,
Instead of moving on from there, We'll have
to start again.*

By Stephen Moore
(St. Malachy's Memorial High School)

EGG-SHELL (for dianna)

*holy voices peep
through your keyhole*

*handclaps ricochet
on your egg shell form*

*cradled like sin
on a floating saint's bed*

*you bask in the warmth
till it slips away*

*voices still whisper
in ashes and black
accusing....*

By Kwame Dawes

GUNMAN

*A trickle in the dry bed
the echo of crazy birds swoops
something glitters.*

*Two black cats
clean their tools
stripped to the flesh.
Their laughter tumbles like water*

The police come

*One gets away with gun in hand,
his pants on a rock to dry,
hides in a guava patch.
The other is riddled to the river bed
pop-popping his flesh
till he cries for mother.
The gun twitches on the stones.*

*The echo in the valley fades
only a trickle flows still to dry...
no rain to come in the hollow sky,
just the curse of dry days
in this dry-bed cemetery.*

*In the dark
gunman scratches his back
on a twisted guava limb
the still air sniffs his blood
a trail for hounds to follow.*

By Kwame Dawes

BLESS HER SOUL, LORD (for dianna)

*Her round laughter
crowds out loneliness...
from her throat
she flatters
"I want you"*

*A thinker,
she trails your thoughts
overtakes them
leaving dust in your mouth*

*Her closet prayers
birth intimate words;
I dare not enter
or destroy*

bless her soul, dear Lord.

By Kwame Dawes