

Bottle In The Shape of A Leather Bag
For cousin Joe whose feet won't fail him now.

I.

[prelude]

From “afro blue” to “mood indigo” to “darker than blue,” the colour blue and its attendant music has more hues and more vibrations than any other colour in the spectrum. blues are indigenous and contagious. every body knows their name. they are a way of keeping records, of documenting lived experiences, of transmitting history. blues reveal a primordial wisdom, healing truths for all types of hurts.

blues are the colour, the sound of our times. and these are indeed some of the bluest times the world has as yet witnessed. blues announce everything. twisters, earthquakes, mudslides, avalanches, hurricanes, and real WAR for imaginary weapons. and who's sane? caught. 10,000 suspected SARS civet cats destroyed. 400 suspected mad cows slaughtered. homeland insecurity: low (green), guarded (blue), elevated (yellow), high (orange), severe (red). colours, like sound, emit certain vibrations. so even shadows cast a blue light.

gathered among this issue's pages is an attempt to chart a trajectory of “the blues” by way of the “blues.” the sound began with colour and lightning still strikes a transcendant chord. we travelling still. this work reveals us one inside the other. the spit the grit the funk the flesh. an act of grace.

on the altar. a candle lit. for the passing of my friend and mentor Eric “Rick” Stanley. a radio dj who introduced me to “the blues” when I was in high school. Koko Taylor, Willie Dixon, the original version of “Hound Dog” by “Big Mama” Thornton. even then a deeply profound resonance. a soul remembering. there is no place like home.

II.

[fragments]

“black night opens its jaws
to reveal a flight of stairs”
—Bei Dao

Picasso's Blue Period (1901-1904)

blues beneath

blues above

this be all the blues

coloured sacred texts

shades wash over me

05.02.03/Friday:

dream one:

a dog the size of a pig
is wearing a blue knit sweater

dream two:

blue hands writing in a
blue notebook with
blue quadrille lines.

dream three:

walls of ancient caves are covered
with album covers of vinyl blues
records

realtime:

a new novel speaks of a writer who over time becomes obsessed with writing in a blue notebook made in Portugal. art is where the world is within our own blue reach. our own blue making.

III.

[coda]

“Things are not as they seem nor are they otherwise.”

—Lankavatara Sutra

bliss :: love :: fate

arise :: arrest :: attest

while waiting for a bus, a woman preaches to an imaginary congregation. minds turn back on themselves to reflect. blues be a worship service. a late night dance. a field of expression without beginning and without end. whatever it all is is. and it's all we have.

blues are about freedom. about emancipation. still. one cannot encounter blues and remain untouched/unchanged. and so in this editing, i emerge as if from a tunnel.

turn the page. go inside. see what you make of this offering.

– giovanni singleton