OLD, NOT SO GIFTED . . . AND BLACK

(A reply to To Be Young, Gifted and Black by Lorraine Hansberry)

You look at me, but you don't see me.
You listen, but you don't hear what I say.
Yes, I have been neither seen nor heard.

It may be, it just could be, that
In the past I have avoided your gaze
And spoken only in a whisper.

O, there is great rejoicing by the "young,
Gifted and Black."
Thank God, they have stepped onto the highway!

But you hear me . . . I don't mean to be left behind.

True, I am in the twilight of my years.
But, you know,
When the daylight fades away
You see the stars!

The trials and tribulations I have borne
But served to strengthen the old oak.
The suffering and pain I have endured
Toughened the old cypress.

(Continued)
This gift of fortitude I pass on to you.  
I have given much and I have much yet to give.

The outward eye may dim, but the inward eye  
Remain clear and sharp.

The voice may weaken, but still  
Utter words of wisdom.

The hand may quiver, yet reach out to comfort.

The finger may bend, but point out the right road
To some misguided soul.

The limbs may be gnarled and tottering  
Yet stand up for truth and justice!

Moreover,  
Soul and spirit cannot be measured by man.

"Old?" Yes...  

"Black?" Yes!...  

"Not so gifted?"  

What do you think?