

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?