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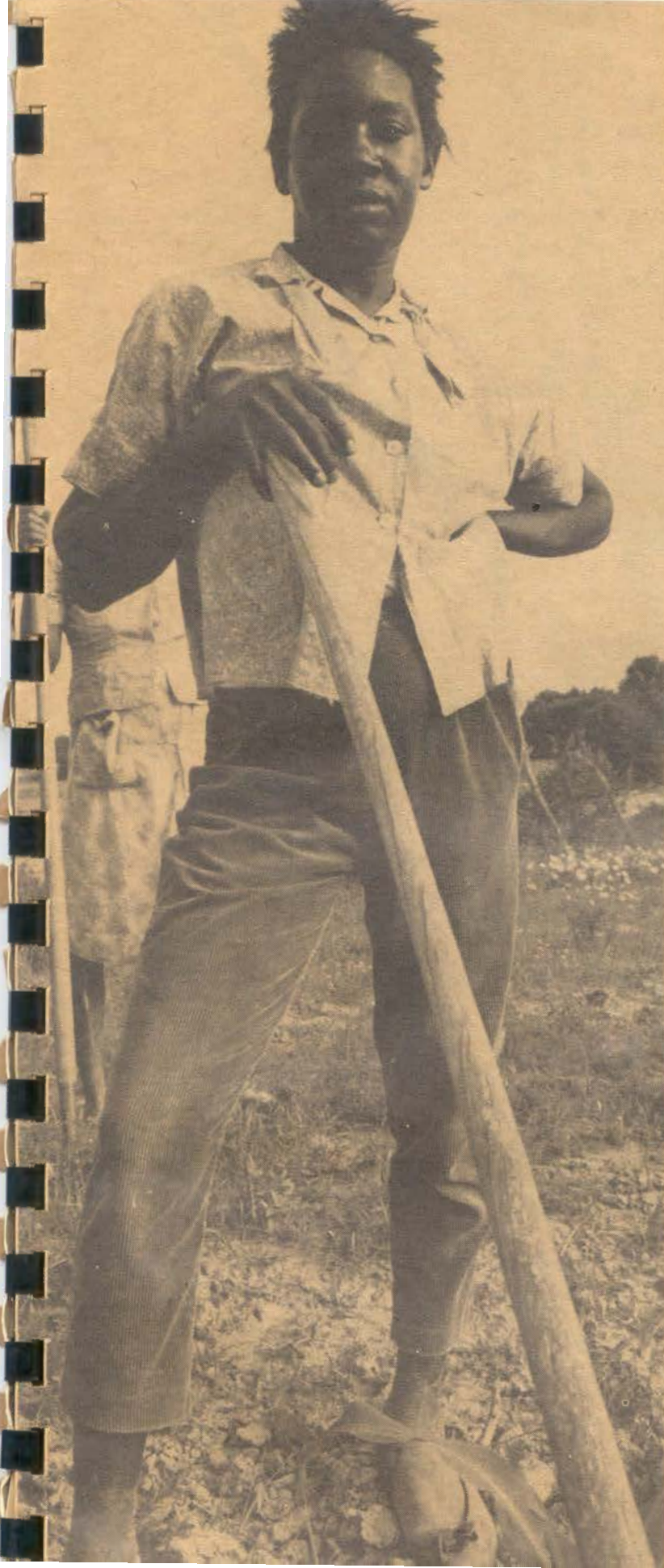
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sncc

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In the furrows
of the world
the paths
of planting
the hoe-trails
of our people
WE
can only be
do
from what we are . . .

by
charlie
cobb

Our hands have
clenched hammers
hoes and hope

our backs have broken
ground

around
the world

our cries have crashed
through

terror torn nights

our bodies burnt
the
earth

a bitter black

to rise in anger.

And i suppose
it will come
someday,

this thing
this black i am
that has to battle new

to
be

We, will not have to say
someday

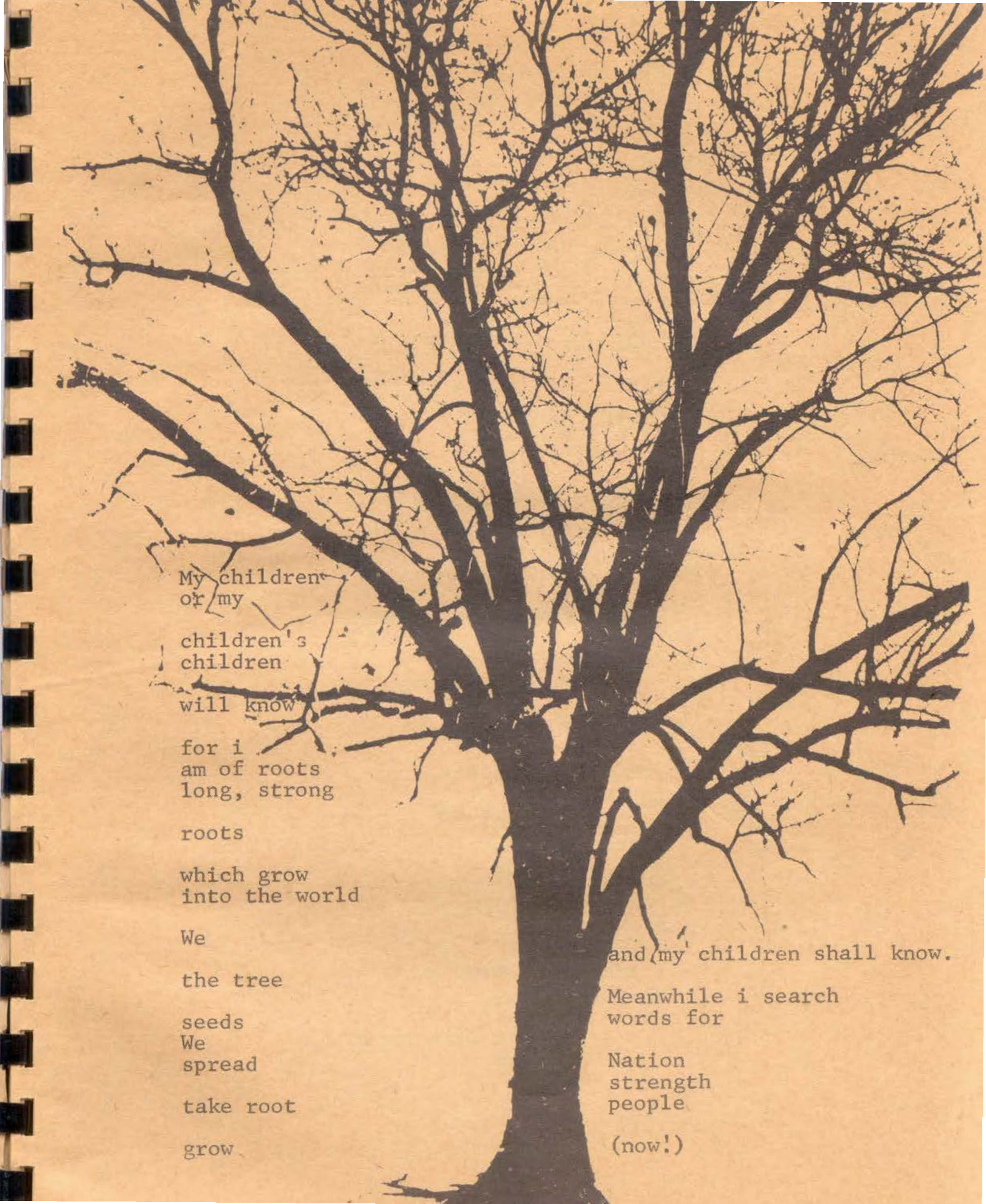
nor fight
for

what we are

We Will Be

simply
be

We.



My children
or my

children's
children

will know

for i
am of roots
long, strong

roots

which grow
into the world

We

the tree

seeds

We
spread

take root

grow

and my children shall know.

Meanwhile i search
words for

Nation
strength
people

(now!)

WORDS YOU WANT?
speak my poetry,
where

Words
O.K.
listen baby

a scream
maybe

or
fitful war

cries
from this
black
body

feeling a knee in the nuts
flung to battle

Speak,
how!
with all the shit
shoveled
into my mouth
I
got spit
(a bit off tongue

ragged
red
it bleeds
inside)

that waits
to wet
and wash

a stink-holed mama's
mothafuckin
cracker son
in piss from my mouth
drowned

and
flush,

Words,
in rational rhymes
constructed imagery
cannot come

with my mouth
worthless
in agony

raging
rampant

on fire

ON FIRE!

rather tom tom rhythms of words
thundering through

searches for substance,
sight,

to see
my people clearly

substantiate

what represents the reality
of

We,

I,

turn toward

today.

BLOCK SOUNDS

Pound . . .

hangin

on the corner
diggin it all
tryin to get ready
to

make it
anyway i can
just movin
and makin
my
scene

looking for somethin to get into

Block (just out chere
on it)
Splibs

taps
All out chere
on the corner
movin
in our own
sounds and grooves

Pool hall
balls clippin, clickin
hustlin a turkey caught
in the middle
of nine ball
for three fives
talking bout a
fay chick
i'm makin it with
who loves what i got
that's long and black (but
she ain't got
no ass)

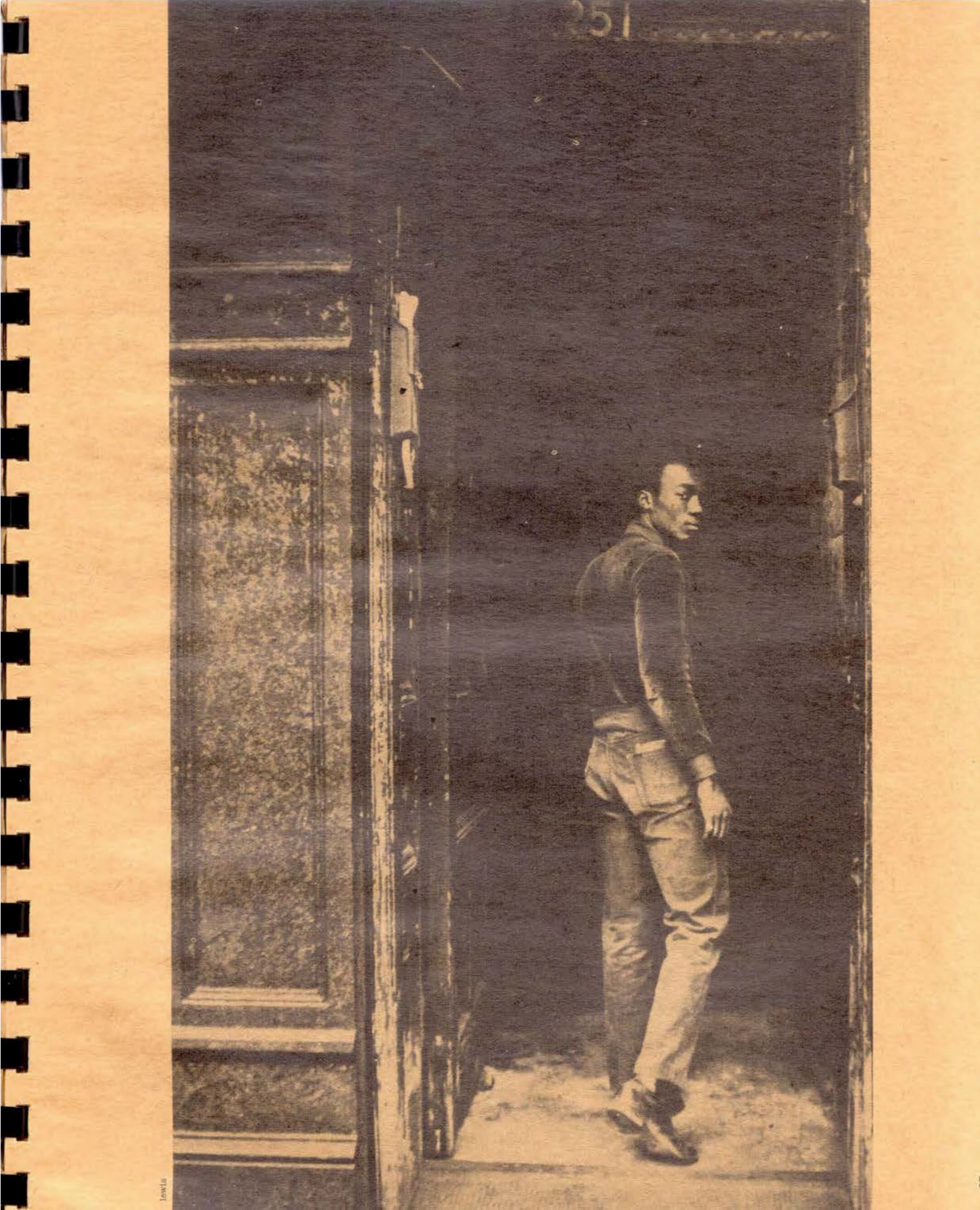
Gonna get strung out tonight
just out there
blowin this whole scene
on my own groovey gig
floatin
out there
so far
i
can't get back in

if we was ready
i'd be the first
to blow
charlie
and his whole godamn scene
away.

got to split
to this down set
really get into a thing
might not know where
but i'll be out there

black sounds
pound. . . and POUND.

spring '65



L.A.-

the order of things

With it's attempt
at a sanity
of it's own

W A T T S

was insurgent
that sultry night
roaring

out
in

not fitting
disorderly abandonment
of your
orderly

Criteria For Humanity
You

have made humanity
things

Things denied
are taken
if desired
and forbidden
Things

are smashed
if they hurt
and

your whiteness
is a thing
that hurts and
Must be Destroyed
for it

can never be taken

you have

taught that
black
cannot ever be
your white
and

will keep away the things of your
whiteness,

You

will be destroyed
in the frustration
of your denial

for you

cannot

give
up

the things
of your narrow humanity.

It is you
who feels the pain
for a burning supermarket

and cannot

hear the cry
of a hungry child

You

who
cry only

for the sacking of your things

ii

In all the exploding
of your disorder

You
still
can only
kill

Discomfited
you remain
in the insane
of your glib not seeing

and incited
within your blighted humanity
You

wonder why
your disorder erupts

and
cry

that the sanity surging

is
not
yours

And that your order

of
disorder

must prevail.

iii

What's happening?
Watts' happenin'
and you ain't into it yet

You still talking

that

obey
ofay
shit!

Where
in your pleas
for peace
and order
and quiet
(so you
can sleep)
are your cops
unarmed

and your armies
that don't kill?

Where are your wars
that don't disturb?

oh quiet
the riot

get a
cop

to
stop

the destruction

of The Best Ghetto In the Country
where

t h e y
should understand
lawful expression

and

responsibility
to oppression

(besides
we have more guns)

IV.

Says a man
standing
in
his black

with his together black

and in the flickering

fire red
white bled
black dead
night:

You

gave me the bottle
and taught me
to

empty

its burning inside my body.

I

gave it back
Stuffed

with the rags you made me wear

Kerosened
with my sweat

Lit

with the match
of your oppression

Burning baby
burning

i feel the fire
burn

baby
burn

feeling froggy
got
got

to

leap.

August '65

Memory:

ain't that a real

Gaither Dogan

Gulf coast beaches blue

sun roaring up

morning sky

finding you and i

with waves washing past

us

in splashing sea-sud white

and wet

on an edge of beach

where we lay

searching with careful touch

a heal for hurt

but knowing never

Laughter from somewhere

belonging to others

calling out

to join

a hot day's

play.

And we,

dove deep

into

the

water

Summer '65

Lie still unhappiness

hush.

Quick looks

crying for help

sometimes get answered.

Ever danced out on a limb
it doesn't always break
and sometimes when it does
you fall
into a grassy meadow

spring 65

AND IF

there were no strings at all
pulling us into times trapsack
tying

us giftwrapped
packaged
carefully

leaving us
nicely

on the shelf
looking to christmas?

Motto!

Not that there ain't nothin'
to do

But

nothin' to do that gets done
in a hurry

Most people

move on the edges of each
other.

And cut,
with these edges.

Most people know
the hurts of
these cuts,

and so,

have learned that they must
fence and
duel
with their edges

for

we are gladiators all

Do you cut the way you've been trained?

and
hope

there will be time
whenever and wherever the edges are
sharpened

to explain

and be understood?

Summer '65

AND SOFT SWIFT BREEZES
for a moment caress.

a touch
of growing brought

almost held
in the passing
but
too quickly
goes

in that soft moment
i am plucked
to be

continued
as some fleeting part
of an almost caught
breeze passing by

to
be

reached for again

spring '65

NIGHT STORM

Night falls drumming it's tears
i tonight
lie
in the folds of it's curtain
and in the dark
of it's spark flashed sky
seeming to drown
in it's splashing wet
brought sounding and pounding
with crashing light.

II

Drummers
it is your tears i am wet with.
Why do you cry?
you who drum in the sky
What can be seen in the sounding light
that comes with your tears?

I I I

Drummers, you cry
yet after, it is clean
and the smell and feel of growing
can be seen.
And i
too often stand dry
rooted in another sound
and blinding light.

I V

You cry
unable to find my cadence
and i
yours

you cry
to soak the desert i.

V

Drummers
i wish that i
could close my eyes
and be washed to your drums
to read what you play.

ATLANTA
spring '65

A slave song:

YOUNG MAN, young man
they called to me
as i was about
to go
my way.
There is
a place
for you
to fit
when you've been
shaped
to fit
the place.
We've opened up
some things for you
to squeeze
distort
yourself a bit.
If you don't find
an immediate fit
don't plant yourself
just anywhere
cause you will grow
just anyway.
We have a place
for you
to be
clipped
and trimmed
and pruned
you see.
To make you grow
and fit
our way.
Now what do you say
about going away?
Young man, young man
please say you'll stay.
We know, we know
that you must grow
but stay with us
who've learned
and know
which way
to make
the people grow.
Which is
to find
a slot
that fits.
Don't move
don't see
your slavery.

May '65

Birmingham, 1963

The night before you threw the bomb

You

lynched my father
raped my mother

now with castrated soul

You

watch my children
as they

Watch

their playmates
mangled bodies
dark

in pools of red
pieces of black
while through these stained streets

I

cry out
with
hate

for you
and what you are

11 pm News Nightmare

Darks and starks
of fear

are sown into my nights

while waiting
for the bleeding day
to come
with

sun
outshone

by fiery blasting
bombs

i hear
inside my sheets

the march of screaming children
and smell their scorching flesh

under skies of air force blue

i see a field
on fire
a
a pyre to modern methods.

Beneath the burning
a mother
sifts

and finds

a piece of arm
and wisps of hair

a well that's dug
with mortar shell
the water
red

the tongue of terror

licking
faces

in the
mud.

winter '66

FIRST VIEWS OF THE GOING

The time is now for going
and apart
and other starts.
The ends
of this time
have stretched
expanded taut
(and taught)
and touched
windowing
the views
seen looking back
into an opaque
of the road ahead.

How far back
was the discovery of black?
Maybe a yellow
bus going
to a country school
cause the rule
in Kentucky
said
black
in the back
which was
away from the white
into three rooms
and a bull
(in the yard)
and a outhouse
(which was outside)
where we
in all eight grades
were mislaid
or rather
were taught if we stayed
in our place
a "credit" to our race
(obviously not human)
we'd cause no disgrace
(to the whole human race?)

or was it
way up?
in the balcony
of the one show
that allowed
black to go
on saturday
to see
how tarzan
the jungle man
tamed the natives
along with
the apes
and snakes
and crocodiles too
with his bare white hands
while we
rooted for the witch doctor.

Shortly after astounding
my mother
with the southern twang
that sang
"i wanta bow an' arry".
We left
our
"happy an' satisfied"
soon after then
so's I
could get
educated right
An' the school
I had to go to
was the tool
for those
black like me
you see
to get educated right.
And what I learned
was
how many
black like me
weren't educated
right
cause even north
black
still got
way back.

and had found it
Permanent
which finished
mother's
"educated right"
(wern't white
enough).
school
was iced out
in the findin' of
chicks (an raincoats)
hustlin' (an' turkeys)
and week-end tastes
and the learnin' of
a game to run down
An' a scene to make
And always
a fight
to fight
knowing my
up tight
non-white
In that learning
I could almost forget
except
for the
newly bought place
of a
"credit to the race"
stoned
for daring to be
out there
black
and all alone

Soon I could see
it was time
for a going
alone
in my own
And I left
leaving a wondering
"where'd he go"
And they didn't know
the where
of my going
had been built
in the days
or years
or centurys
of where I was
taught to be.
And the where
(to which I fled)

was being found
in
the
running
from the
furious
carvings
etching me
apon their walls.

"BOY, if you feel so sorry for these black sons of bitches, why don't you take them all up north you . . . nigger. If I had your goddamn ass over in Brandon, I'd kill you.

Before you goddamn black communist sons of bitches started coming down here, everything was all right."

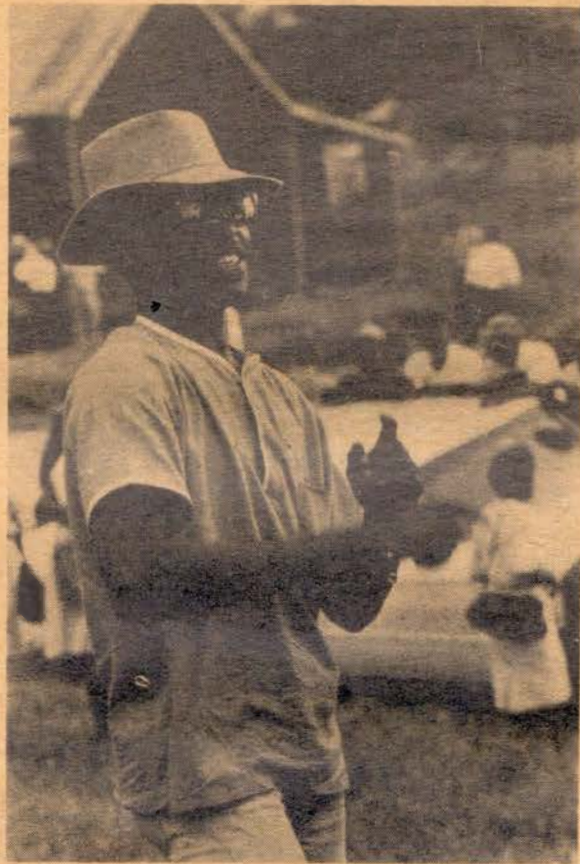
Shivers from cold and shivers from fear, blurred into an uncontrollable convulsion of the body.

Lights from passing cars, somewhere to our left. Lights that outlined for those who would see, four black boys with hands up at gunpoint on a near deserted Mississippi highway.

Mississippi law: Up tight
 all white
 and outta sight

and us niggers.

Brandon, Miss
Winter, 1963



j

Bob Mants
(he's built on what they see in him
and what
he sees in them)
teaches that
being country black
is
a
proud
thing

ii

C. Cox
(black Zapata)

racing on the train
tracks of his
thinking

deep
beyond
what is said

brows furrowed
Here
(he stands)

before the door
pausing

Eyes growl glad

people pour in

We
(some
bad

niggers)

iii

Stokely
hipster hero
all in his grin
says:

my day
baby
tomorrow.

And leans back
on his boots

into his
stationary
strut

hand jives out
(give me five on that)

Ten

(he grins)

If we come back alive

Tomorrow

my day
baby.

May 3, 1966

for Sammy Young

Our roads are ridden
moonlight flights
alone,
along the nights
where we run hidden
from fingers gripping
finding triggers
finding
niggers
out of place
to put
us back
in
bleeding black

for we the fools
who want
a place
to piss in peace
Can only find the alley

winter, '66



I

Haikua for Sammy

On nightdark roads
keep watch
creep cautiously through
for the stars expose you

80 Haiku

the dangerroad dark
the slip through night
is ready
for
the gas pedal flight

tougaloo '66

Mobile, 1964

Mobile , I saw
it
back away from the
 green tree'd
 white pillar'd houses

My part of Mobile I saw
off the road
on the Avenue
called Davis
 twisting
into the
"heart of
 dixie"

and us on "the avenue"
where we
hang out
 and shout
out
and cry out
cut and bleeding

STARRED-DARK NIGHT
whispered words
meeting

together in
the pain

of black

Mississippi
sharecropper shack
cornered
in

poor
in needing

crouched
in open acres
where machines
feed
fields



Reicher

where backs
bend
down

where childrens play
seeds the mud
between the
weeds

waiting the winter cold
for summer's
cotton white

Nightwords hushed low
while children slept
towards the empty coming day
six abreast

across the pallet on the floor
clothes stuffed in the shanty's pores
to stop the whistling winter wind.



hinton

A father
straining
chains
wanting his man back
unbent
a way to stand
unstooped
providing

Softly across the night's empty

a mother wiping tears:
looking for mornings of eggs
and kitchen warm
with children fed

The tremble of ready
began to put the night in motion

And
day

became a time to begin

"We got to get together"

get a plan
find a way
find some others
find a brother
gather strong

it's takin
we're talkin
bout doin
an you
an me
we

got to be
ready

cause everything
that is

is
his

already.

hinton



And the sun
became

a way to see
what wasn't
that oughta

be
free:

the land - forever fertile
the man - owning his work
both to grow
to build
to stand

tall
head high
to the sky.

From the needing night
from our bleeding nights
this demand of morning
The creed of this new day come

Who dare defy
my white
my might
my right

cries capt'n mister boss mansir
and stir my people up
into wanting what
god give
to me

the land is mine
I'll keep it cotton white
to line
my pockets dollar green

get back black
I'll get my gun
the kkk
and lbj

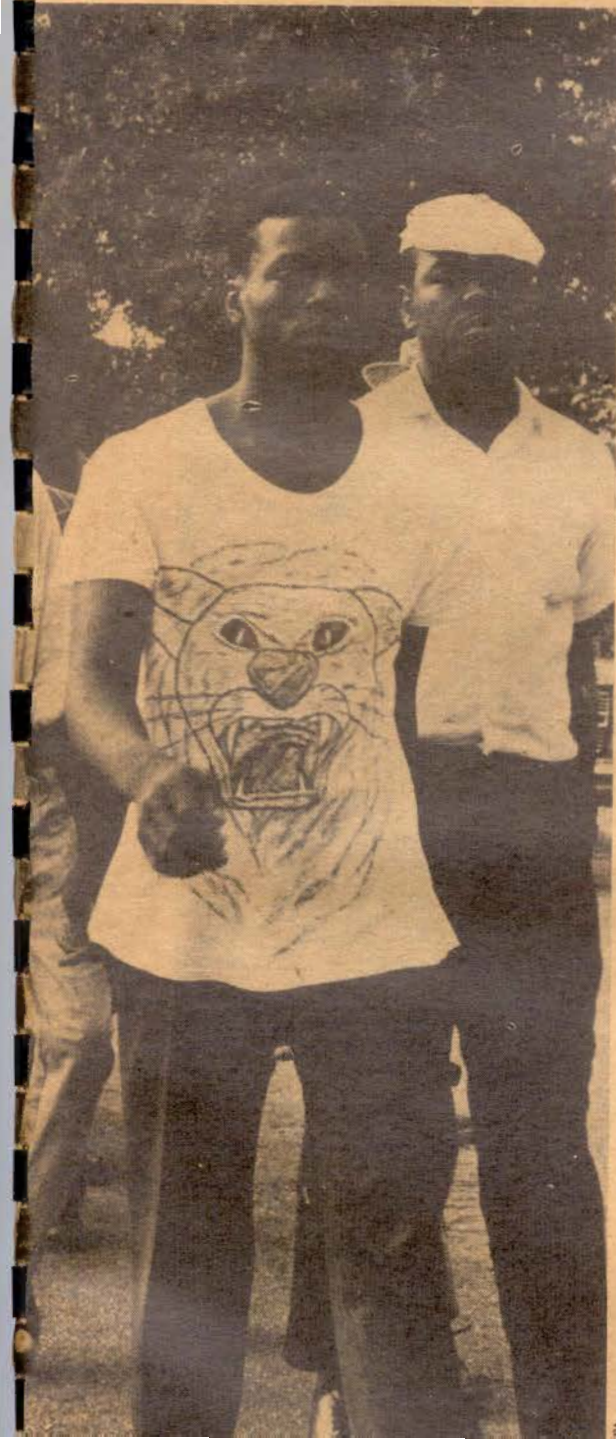
preserve our way
reserve our way
go all the way

if you say
you want to live

we'll
give
you that
just stay in place.



varola



NO

came from the
shack dotted spaces
called places
to
live

NO

as backs unbent

NO

as the "good-uns" began to disappear

NO

as men began to reappear

NO

the yoke
is broke

Empty the shacks
we'll take the streets

march, '66



IN THE FURROWS OF THE WORLD
in the paths of planting
the hoe-trails of our people

among the cotton white
between the stalks of sticky cane
deep in sweltering diamond holes
in the wash of salty sweat

Inside:

tobacco roads
and shanty towns
packed in
ghettoes stacked

in jungle bush
and whiteyes kitchens

backs unbend
and bodies stretch

muscles that made the world
begin to flex

a
people!

rise

black yellow brown
around the world
around the golden sun

WE!

can only be

do
from what we are
and what we see



varela

I

Jimmy Lee Jackson shot
by a cop
protecting Alabama
as he'd been taught

And as he'd always seen
the country protect itself

Just the uniform
was different
but wars
are all fought alike
on battlefields

You try and kill
the enemy

to have the best killers
and win the war
you teach
the Morality of the cause

And give uniforms
and sanction and
law and order to preserve
interests to protect

that's just Standard
Procedure

we do it in boot camps
around the country

Also the same song's sung
in Saigon

Nothing strange at all about
that

II

the cop
in Selma
pulls the trigger
that kills for alabama
for god and alabama
as he's been taught
just like his brother
who fought
 or bombed
 or gassed
in south viet nam last week

and all the people
who don't make wars
but just kill
and get killed in them

kill some more

or bury the dead

wishing mostly
that it
all would end

so they could go home

the cops
that have shot
all the people
white and black
that
they have shot

have shot because
they were given guns
and told
it's alright to shoot
people sometimes
and kill them
to preserve
Law and Order
and Our Way of Life

We have been taught
it's alright for people
to be killed by the cops
and the u.s. army

III

Like in viet nam
where our interests
are being threatened
by the DISORDER
of the people of viet nam
who think they can run
their own country

And after all
how can they think
they can run
their own country
when they won't even help
us fight
their own people
who don't like us
and don't want us

and besides

they're not even White
these people in viet nam
who want us to stop
killing in their country
and blowing it up
with bombs
like Birmingham
also a place where
LITTLE CHILDREN
COME DOWN
BLOWN APART
IN PIECES
cause they're the Enemy too

And now the people
have marched
to protest
the senseless
shocking
shameful
brutal
killings in Selma
and the denial
of the right
to learn
the Standard Procedure
for Enslavement
which is not really learned
but
integrated into
Responsibility



MEKONSIPI #1

Yeah,
the mississippi
runs into the mekong
get the boat at harlem
sail red rivers
black seas

or walk
from cotton to rice
from cement to silt

Vietnam
and
Amsterdam

avenues of whitey's wars
Mekonsippi

the 17th isn't parallel

doesn't
divide.

TO VIETNAM:

carpets cover many floors
where i come from
but none kiss the sky.

i have never known before
fields that filled the hungry.

i have never stood free,
to sun, to son.

wind has never sung song
of nation in my black face.

hanoi-april-1967.



lester

AIN'T THAT A GROOVE!

Reply to whiteye taken from words of black Atlanta DJ:

. It ain't the size of the ship
that makes the wave
it's
the

Just about where we at.

motion on the ocean."

Question: HOW TO SPREAD THE REVOLUTION--or need of one

What, where, how, who to say this to?

We know/accept, that we got to struggle. Understand I hope, that our heart, our life -- our struggle, is of black people. Lou Rawls on Radio: "I'm in a world of trouble. .. playin double." Indeed, we is. It's got to stop. Let every black, packed, on every block; bent in every field, get into his thing. But, make it against the man.

(Understand, that We, are a people!)

Our work and responsibility is meeting the needs of our people. Black People. Know, that in this white man's country, talking as a black and gearing yourself to meeting the needs of black people, is revolutionary in itself.

On the question though: Communications has to reach blacks. It's thrust cannot be within the framework of white America. It's to call for action--to talk of struggle against the white man. To destroy white oppression. The tools for what we say, have to be accessible.

Some tools:

Our natural forms such as the oral tradition, song, dance, play, rhythm, RACE (maybe we begin by suggesting that we all dig ourselves in the mirror--it's permanent) Other tools are those vehicles that reach us most effectively: Sound, the record, radio. The SNCC Atlanta project often goes to a playground with a sound truck, to play records. While there are some political ends in mind, these ends do not negate the actual record the sound-itself as an integral part of the effort to communicate. The effectiveness of whatever we might have to say, is always dependent on our link to the active tones of the community. And we all got a minute for the latest sound.

Black people got to take their streets. If the brother is gonna hang on the corner, let it be a threat to the man downtown who thinks he owns that corner. Suppose we presented a play. People jam, block, the streets in order to watch or participate. That the play is written for the community, and aimed at their experiences. Suppose this is happening on a number of blocks at the same time, to the point where it forces a confrontation between the community and "white power." Depending on the preparation and understanding of the people, the nature of this confrontation would range from a backing away, to a stand to hold the streets against this "white power".

The streets become a threat to "white power."

Streets and sidewalks can pose threats.

Magnolia Street twists through the heart of one of Atlanta's north-west Ghettos. It's tenement houses swell and sag in the summer heat. Families are crowded in from the roofs to the basements. They are owned by the whiteman, and a few negroes aspiring to "white power."

Lillie Mae Blackchild, age ten, her father somewhere--anywhere but home, mother on welfare supporting her eight children is out to see if she can hire out as a maid. Playspace is the sidewalk cement, as Lillie Mae has been warned of the dangers of the streets. She chalks out hopscotch blocks, and gathers her friends, keeping an eye on her baby sister who it's her responsibility to watch.

ENTER: Organizer who pauses and watches.

Lillie Mae: Hey Nitty Gritty, when you gonna play some Record?

ORGANIZER: Hey there, your mama home?

L.M.: She went to see bout work. She don't like to stay home when it's hot. You hop scotch?

O: Yeah, but different.

L.M.: How do you do it?

O: I'll show you. (He bends down, taking chalk from L.M. scratches out the number in the first square, and writes FREEDOM NOW) That's where we begin.

L.M.: Howcome?

O: FREEDOM NOW's a good place to begin. You know what it means?

L.M.: Freedom ride, right?

O: If you promise to ask your mama what it means, we'll talk about it after that. O.K.?

L.M.: O.K.

(Organizer sticks a few black power, and black panther stickers in the last square of the hop scotch area). Ask her about these too. We always want to try and get here. (he gives her a couple more stickers) Got to go. Give your mama these. I'm Lester.

L.M. My name is Lillie Mae.

(L.M. is now showing stickers and pointing at the hop-scotch area to her friends. "Freedom", "Black Power", "Black Panthercat" is heard aloud)

A simple communications tool: Chalk and playing for awhile with some kids.

We shouldn't be afraid to mark up buildings. Use anything from a paint brush to a magic marker. Folks scrawl "shit" or "fuck" or so-an-so loves/digs/wants to make with

so-an-so. The key thing here, is that there is a natural focus against objects (that need tearing down anyway, or at least need to be taken over.) "Shit" scrawled on a wall gets an idea, a feeling, across. Can we begin to put the words of the struggle on walls. Are our words legitimate enough for folks to keep the words in sight?

I live not too far from a bus stop at Wynnwood Street. About five feet from the ground is a sign. It asks in orange letters against a blue background. "NEED HELP?" The rest of the 5' by 8' is space. I got somethin to say in that space. You have too . . .

II

4 July. Atlanta Stadium. Energy, Music, Motion. Twenty thousand blacks erupting into a finger-poping of dance and rhythms.

"You don't mind if i do the
Boogaloo?"

WELL ALL RIGHT

feels so groovey
HEY
Ain't that a groove.

Only James Brown - "the hardest working man in show business." Soulful wrenching, "gonna jerk it out baby." Black motion. A dozen kids spill over onto the top of the dugout.

White cops scramble after them. Their rhythm is "order" Their motion is ugly, brutal, and disjointed. They move in fear of a black voodoo.

"It's just the boogaloo"

feels so groovey
hey
Ain't that a groove.

The kids spin off. Up the stadium stairs. Into the shadows. Into a larger motion. O.K., everybody now: Ain't that a groove.

There was the potential for a most happening politics. There was something that we needed. Nothing we've ever said has taken on that kind of collective, yet personal relevancy. We've got to be able to elicit that kind of responsive energy.

III

HARLEM: (Sweltering summer night. The scene is set on a spot of side walk between Teddy's shanty and 126th Street. 7th Avenue is alive with squeals and rattles of cars. Music blares out from a next door record shop. A couple of black teenagers are hangin-out in front of the Shanty. One holds a small package. a cop comes up)

WHITECOP: What you got there boy?

1st guy: for my mama

"I got you--
hey! hey!"

WHITECOP: Lets see it.

1st guy: What you wanna mess with me? What I done?

2nd guy: Put the boogaloo on him. "Neighbor neighbor
don't worry bout what
goes on

(Music from the records swell. Street motion begins to take on the rhythms of the music. A young black boy semi-dancing past the scene, bumps into WHITECOP, who turns, hand streaking for his pistol. The other two guys, who had been more and more getting into the rhythms of the music, freeze for an instant).

FROM SOMEWHERE: Split!

(Someone from behind the cop knocks him in the head. He is knocked out. The teens involved are long gone. Heard somewhere: "We all look alike anyway." Laughter. The street life continues as every hot, Harlem night. WHITECOP'S partner -- a negro cop -- returns from his pick-up of a pay off by the local numbersman. He is seen pocketing the money).

"People get ready
there's a
train
a
commin

Don't need no ticket you just get on board".

(Somewhere, the boogaloo goes on).

WHITECOP jacked up is a real reason for doing the boogaloo. Look at us dance and sing and swing. Watch out now (i'm into my thing.

The form is usable: Music, motion rhythm. Black opera in which everyone is actor or participant. We must explore this it seems.

Nina Simone in her song "Sinner Man", goes into a long chang:

"Power, give me Power"

22 million black people in the united states need to back her up. There is an energy - a power - expressed. MUSIC of twenty-two million black souls.

Play James Brown on a black block anywhere.
Play it loud. No matter what folks are doing, his sound gets included. People can dig our leaflets, but its not the same. Not the same . . .

Black singers, black music, or co-options thereof, have been used for the most irrelevant of messages. White folks do it with their jive movies: Don't knock the Rock, or Rock Around the Clock; in dipshipt stories about the problems of some white D.J., and his teenage friends, with the Local Mothers Against Rock and Roll.

Let us use it

our sound,
our beat,

against the problem of the Local White Motha-fuckers.

Atlanta.

