



Portraits of Langston

O Mistress Mine (selections).....Juliana Hall (b. 1958)

O, mistress mine

If music be the food of love

Come away, come away, death

If love make me forsworn

Fear no more the heat o' th' sun

Portraits of Langston.....Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)

I. Prelude: Helen Keller

II. Danse Africaine

III. Le Grand Duc Mambo

IV. Silver Rain

V. Parisian Cabaret

VI. Harlem's Summer Night

Texts

O Mistress Mine

Texts by William Shakespeare

O, MISTRESS MINE

[Twelfth Night – Act II, Scene 3]

O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming.
That can sing both high and low;
Trip no further, pretty sweetening;
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE

[Twelfth Night – Act I, Scene 1]

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! It had a dying fall;
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more.

COME AWAY, COME AWAY, DEATH

[Twelfth Night – Act II, Scene 4]

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet

My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown;
A thousand, thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

IF LOVE MAKE ME FORSWORN

[Love's Labour's Lost – Act IV, Scene 2]

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?
Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd!
Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove;
Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers
bow'd.

Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes,
Where all those pleasures live that art would
comprehend.

If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;
Well learned is that tongue that well can thee
commend;

All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;
Which is to me some praise, that I thy parts admire.
Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful
thunder,

Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
Celestial as thou art, O pardon, love, this wrong,
That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly
tongue.

FEAR NO MORE THE HEAT O' TH' SUN

[Cymbeline – Act IV, Scene 2]

Fear no more the heat o' th' sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:

Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' th' great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak;
The Sceptre, Learning, Physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone;

Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou has finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renownéd be thy grave!

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Texts by Langston Hughes

HELEN KELLER

She,
In the dark,
Found light
Brighter than many ever see.

She,
Within herself,
Found loveliness,
Through the soul's own mastery.

And now the world receives
From her dower:
The message of the strength
Of inner power.

DANSE AFRICAINE

The low beating of the tom-toms,
The slow beating of the tom-toms,
Low . . . slow
Slow . . . low —
Stirs your blood.
Dance!
A night-veiled girl
Whirls softly into a
Circle of light.
Whirls softly . . . slowly,
Like a wisp of smoke around the fire —
And the tom-toms beat,

And the tom-toms beat,
And the low beating of the tom-toms
Stirs your blood.

IN TIME OF SILVER RAIN

In time of silver rain
The earth puts forth new life again,
Green grasses grow
And flowers lift their heads,
And over all the plain
The wonder spreads

Of Life,
Of Life,
Of life!

In time of silver rain
The butterflies lift silken wings
To catch a rainbow cry,
And trees put forth new leaves to sing
In joy beneath the sky
As down the roadway
Passing boys and girls
Go singing, too,

In time of silver rain When spring
And life
Are new.

JAZZ BAND IN A PARISIAN CABARET

Play that thing,
Jazz band!
Play it for the lords and ladies,
For the dukes and counts,
For the whores and gigolos,
For the American millionaires,
And the school teachers
Out for a spree.
Play it,
Jazz band!
You know that tune
That laughs and cries at the same time.
You know it.

May I?
Mais oui.
Mein Gott!
Parece una rumba.
Play it, jazz band!
You've got seven languages to speak in
And then some,
Even if you do come from Georgia.
Can I go home wid yuh, sweetie?

SUMMER NIGHT

The sounds
Of the Harlem night
Drop one by one into stillness.
The last player-piano is closed.
The last victrola ceases with the
"Jazz Boy Blues."
The last crying baby sleeps
And the night becomes
Still as a whispering heartbeat.
I toss
Without rest in the darkness,
Weary as the tired night,
My soul
Empty as the silence,
Empty with a vague,
Aching emptiness,
Desiring,
Needing someone,
Something.

I toss without rest
In the darkness
Until the new dawn,
Wan and pale,
Descends like a white mist
Into the court-yard.