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Ode to Memphis Blues

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ODE TO MEMPHIS BLUES

LAUREN S COTTLE

Billie Holliday hung herself in my dreams.

Dr. King pleaded to an unlistening, raging America. The heart of the beast trapped
behind so
many hairy, locked doors it can no longer
feel for tenderness.

Understanding is the crux, the sound of hope.

“But I want you to know tonight / that we /

As a people /

Will get to the promised land.”

In the dream the sky imploded

and we held a string to keep ourselves

from washing up on foreign shores.

Then it became clear with brilliant red orange: We are apart.

Where is the America of empathy?

The white man didn't bring it here.

My soul has hurt for generations.

Drowning in words, memory, and rye.

When will you find me?

Will it be soon enough?

When will you carry this burden with me? When will you share this burden with me?