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# Night Visits

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# Jas. Mardis

I don't know. One night I was tucking her in and the next night I was crawling in bed with her . . .
—an incest father

#### NIGHT VISITS

Tonight
as I break the silent threshold
of my daughter's doorway
to plant the final goodnight blessing
to seek the sureness of her comfort
to fret away the final

under-the-bed monsters that await her urgent potty sprint

I want to be sure that
no more than four breaths
quiver the tiny hairs of her brow
that no more than
a lightly mussed shadow
breaks the stillness of her covers

I want to be certain
that my steps and the final cradle of her head
takes no more than

seven seconds on each of these night visits

and that her brow is never furred by my presence either sleeping or awake

#### Because

I have watched the wives
cradle
what was left of their child
somewhere between mother, new friend and mistress

#### Because

I have known that the tiny faces must have silently cringed into the abyss of confusion

when the eyes revealed that the Saviour from this pain is the bringer of this pain

**Tonight** 

as I break the still silent threshold
of my daughter's doorway
back into the dimly lighted hall
back to the sureness of
not having fallen toward the hellish
fray of that
from-Heaven-falling
of that

drowning mixture of confused need and soured panting

I am wondering
which doorway is being broken
which pink covers are tonight
being daddy-ruffled

which harrier of children
is frozen still
in his leaning over the head of a child
waiting for those
tiny, prickly stems of eyebrow
to finally fall back into place

and

I am wondering
why his bed-lone wife
has not come hurrying through the dimly lit hallway
to see what is
taking him
so long
again
tonight

## THE REMEMBRANCE

for Displaced Africans Everywhere

In my blood there is the rhythm

beating
stepping out the steady pace
of the journey
long remembered in my blood

and I can only think of some gritty, sandaled foot black by any measure patting the sand beating out the constant flow of stepping churning the already beaten and broken grains further into the mist that sand becomes along