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The Body Polity

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The Body Polity · *Michael S. Harper*

A half-century ago the Scottsboro Boys
jackknifed into vectors of the runagate
dream, and not the dream of Anglican
vice, when act hid shadow, shadow act.

Decatur relatives and neighbors,
not too far from Chehaw Station and Tuskegee,
flight squadrons and turkey regiments
peopled medical corps, jim crow'd tuxedo junction.

I saw the oldest son of any slave hide his thought
in Latin-English treasury books of Apuleius,
saw the roots of Constitution and the family Bible,
tree and joist of history, and the self: democracy.

A sterling beacon tintype or a worksong;
thumbed eight-ball english, elegiac blues, on any continen-
tal shelf.