

Dwight Maxwell



What Patrimony Can Do To A Body

Because of patrimony
I hung up my western name neatly
On a hook I found sleeping
In a corner of my house.
I undress in the corner,
Lift up some loose floor boards
And buried my western attire.

I cooked soup in the corner,
Boiling all my books from the western cannon.
I drank the soup, passed it out later,
In a black-hole corner.

Reclining on my bedroom floor,
My arms stretched a mile in opposite directions,
Palms tepid, wide open looking at the roof
Naked, except for the painful vice around the heels –

I took off my Oxford shoes,
Stretched the sole out on my window sill,
Gave it to the birds.
I looked at my feet torn and callused
My African toes glued together
Like a statue's toes. I bent down
And straightened them out,
Viciously let in the air.

I opened the door of my western shack,
Walked out — out of my meticulous shack to gather fuel.
I got some dried up leaves
Sprinkled them generously through the ad hoc
Of my western living room.

I got two bone white stones out of my head, rubbed them
Till they burnt my skin and catch the leaves.
My western shack burns like a klan cross
On the manicured lawn of some unsuspecting Negro.
While the shack burned, I skipped to my dessert,
The hyena in me laughing.

