

mulberry fields

By Lucille Clifton

they thought the field was wasting
and so they gathered the marker rocks and stones and
piled them into a barn they say that the rocks were shaped
some of them scratched with triangles and other forms they
must have been trying to invent some new language they say
the rocks went to build that wall there guarding the manor and
some few were used for the state house
crops refused to grow
i say the stones marked an old tongue and it was called eternity
and pointed toward the river i say that after that collection
no pillow in the big house dreamed i say that somewhere under
here moulders one called alice whose great grandson is old now
too and refuses to talk about slavery i say that at the
masters table only one plate is set for supper i say no seed
can flourish on this ground once planted then forsaken wild
berries warm a field of bones
bloom how you must i say

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