

TO THE PERRY HARVEY, SR. PARK

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Listen for the music as you walk

Where the past still sings and shadows talk/ as once

They did when life was new

With dreams they dreamt, the same as you . . .

When time for them was a flight of steps

Bo Jangles choices right or left

Behind brown eyes that see no more

The potholed streets and padlocked doors.

But we welcome you to a place of dreams

Where children's voices romp and scream.

For, what surrounds us now in stone

Was a wonder once, of flesh and bone

A stage of joy and misery

From the throngs of a vast diversity.

Ray Charles lived here with walking stick

& Swing time piano sharp and quick

That parted a sea of racial hate

& pushed back segregation's gates

While somewhere, Ella Fitz misplaced

A basket filled with jazz and grace,

Laced up with bebop melodies

That would out-last all eternity!

& At the end of his new-raised park

Perry Harvey, Sr. in the dark/ of evening

Climbs his pedestal down

& walks once more this hallowed ground

So, we bid you welcome to this place

Where the unseen meet you face-to-face

Where little girls pause to hug and kiss/ you

Then return to dance the Twist

While stout Kid Mason doffs his hat

Then points to where his store once sat,

Just down the way, across the street

Where the souls of morning shoppers meet.

Moses White on a Cozy Corner is here,

Standing like an oak tree, tall and severe

While Ms. Essie Mae Reed, though now unseen,

Cooks a steaming pot of collard greens

So, sculptor, shape your works of stone

Let them dance like no-tomorrow in their
newfound home

& Skateboard racers, may you, too,

Be converted by the majesty of Central Avenue

& Let the Scrub Palmetto be

Our own unsung symbolic tree . . .

Then we shall point beyond these leaves

To the still proud St. Paul AME

& recall her sisters who still stand

As Godly reminders of a Central Avenue Land

While somewhere near, a school bell rings

As cloistered daughters teach & Meacham's children

sing

& Lady Day retakes the stage

Of the Cotton Club from a by-gone age

& Doctors and lawyers, the best the world could find

Still outlive the lies of old Jim Crow, for, the Truth is
never blind/ yet, is

A studied look at Tampa that at once rings crystal-
clear

That a fervent way of living has somehow persisted
here

& marched in grandeur smart and bold

Like the Tift of the Maroon and Gold . . .

A rainbow-hued kaleidoscope

This promised land of Faith and Hope

Announces it no longer shall be buried underground

So, we welcome you, this afternoon,

For, the past, at last, is found!