

FIVE FOR ORNETTE COLEMAN

By

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ORNETTE

“I was born in Texas . . .”

*Texas Moaner Blues*

Clarence Williams

Always tacking back,  
yearning for the hostile home  
from which he could roam  
but never  
wretch himself

as it had been wretched  
from Mexico  
a century before.

Fort Worth, cattle and big oil,  
coloreds were menials, at most,  
served, when let,

and him  
only a sanctified country boy,  
(never not so) and  
anywhere he was he  
was never more than a blue  
heartbeat from  
Where the West Begins.

How come it was  
so complicated,  
when it could,  
just as easily  
have been so simple—just

to let him be,

and be heard?

Forerunner

(Recorded  
9 October 1959)

“ . . . but I didn't stay . . . “  
*Texas Moaner Blues*  
Clarence Williams

Could tell by the little jump-up,  
arsy-versy, skittering as  
mice in a maze, toy  
blues tunes he tooted,

that through fresh from the coast,  
he was first out of Texas; y'know,  
show downs, sidewinders,  
wide open spaces, buckaroos,

and that he'd crossed a new frontier  
to the territory of concrete,

**STOP**

and

**ONE WAY** signs,  
and its institutions  
of investment.

We, be-  
boppers,  
recent outlaws our  
selves, were wont to tut and shunt,  
being sentries of settlements  
we'd staked out as your own.

Lonely Woman

(Recorded  
22 May 1959)

Yanked awake into the cold blood  
of night's deepest doubt—*What?! Is*  
its source—some wind whimsy; breaks clinch,  
wood wince? Some odd-beat catch  
in night's respiration;  
choke in its throat? A creature's declaration  
of its circumstance, or warning  
to its kind? Some  
child's whimper?

What? What presence or absence  
jolts in dark's vale  
to set your heart to double-time?

Some Other

(Recorded  
26 July 1960)

What is  
is and  
if you see it  
like with a child's eyes  
for what it is

and why

then you might  
see  
it's in disguise

and if revealed  
might be other-

wise.

## Change of the Century

(Recorded October 1959)

“After this, men can believe anything,  
expect anything.”

Archilochus

1.

Each  
free-bounding note  
sung with such sincerity  
it dissuades faith in rigidity or form,  
canon or norms—

for what are they  
but theories and conventions;  
but watercolors  
on a sunny wall;  
busted latches on a gate?—

Till, with wires crossed,  
syntax askew,  
but no lines drawn,

the shifting, twining fictive  
interplay of Ornette’s shrew-foolish,  
go-bang tune’s joy and sorrow,  
gray and gay, bleak-bliss,  
dreary-cherry, same-strange, dim-  
shimmering refracted impressions  
abounding dark-bright and hurly-burly,  
send your head in-to deep  
blue ruminations all swimmy-swirly.

2.

So,  
is tomorrow  
something else?  
That is the question!!!!