

## COLLARD GREEN FIELDS FOREVER

Have you ever seen  
a crop of collards?  
It is a vision of green magnificence.  
Walking along an ordinary road in  
Tuskegee one day,  
I meandered upon a field  
where some industrious hand  
had sown the virile plant  
as far as the eye could see.  
Though the rows were disciplined,  
the vigorous jade leaves emanated  
an overwhelming energy.  
Here was a natural power  
sustaining the faded and leaning  
houses encircling it.  
Spellbound on the field's periphery,  
I remembered the Middle Passage,  
and pictures of slave quarters at mealtime  
whirled.

Collards and cornbread,  
communion meal of  
daily resurrection.

I ate the survival leaf as I stood at  
the field's edge,  
soaking its cure through pores and spirit.

From *Rainrituals*, Broadside Press, Detroit, 1989.