

Lenard D. Moore is a native of Jacksonville, NC. Moore's poetry, essays and reviews have appeared in numerous publications. His most recent book, *A Temple Looming* was published by WordTech Editions (2008). He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Margaret Walker Creative Writing Award, three Haiku Museum of Tokyo Awards, the 2006 Sam Ragan Award, and the 2008 Raleigh Medal of the Arts Award. He is the founder and executive director of the Carolina African American Writers' Collective. An assistant professor of English at Mount Olive College, he is the director of the MOC Literary Festival and faculty advisor of *The Trojan Voices*.

Interrogation of Harriet Tubman

You say I should escape with you,
follow the North Star that spills light
like my good breast drips milk.
I've already had my children snatched
from me as if they were brown eggs
in some nest. So you think I'm going
to trust you? What am I going to eat?
An oak leaf? A pine needle? A twig?
My feet feel like axed wood.
My body feels like a sack of sweet potatoes.
You brave woman going to poke
that pistol in my side, make me walk.
I don't know what massa might think.
He said I was real good. And you say
you're taking me to freedom
that's as wide as this pitch black night.
Can you tell me what's waiting for us
in the thicket? Will a horseman be there
with his long black whip? A gun slung
over his shoulder to take us back
to that plantation? So why should I
follow you and the North Star tonight?
I hear a growl to our right.
I hear a yowl to the left.
You say keep walking with my feet
straight ahead, quick and quiet.
I think about my three children
snatched and sold. I want them back.
Will I ever see them again?
I push back branches, duck limbs
and side-step weeds. No water here.
Can your pistol shoot the horseman
off his horse without missing him?