

Them*(Wilmington, NC 1969)*

Even as a boy growing up, I was not afraid of them.
The history of back seats was set aside for me by them.
Any story refuses to tell the whole story of them,
But I will try to tell you tonight how I came to know them.
At seventeen I saw 3 crosses set ablaze by them.
At eighteen my first real job was working for one of them.
I remember the parades marching to a drumbeat of them.
Green and purple robes, hooded hats adorned them.
The Grand Wizard of the Night emptied hate onto them.
And the hate became empty spaces in between them.
Sucking fingers, little children paraded streets of them.
The third number, eleventh alphabet, the definition of them.
Jews and blacks never counted silently to any of them.
Beautiful white girl, slits cut for eyes, one of them.
Pillow case over the head, two sheets on a bed full of them,
hiding beneath the burned and torn history pages of them.
Nathan planted a confederate forest expressly for them.
then he up and died riding a horse monument for them.
Shotguns and bullets, shoot to kill us, not them,
never understanding ropes are made to fit, also, them.
Even as a boy growing up I was not afraid of any of them.
Tonight I listen to Pink Floyd rendition of Us and them.