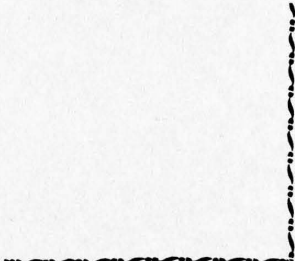
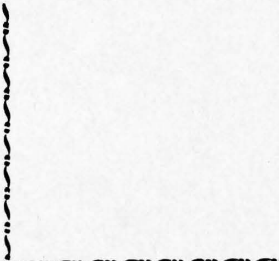


LINES IN AUGUST

Howard James Jones



DEDICATION

Lines in August

Howard James Jones

Printed in Murray, Kentucky

DEDICATION

To Joyce, Jonora and Howie, and all
of our relatives and friends whom we love
so dear. Here is LOVE loving. . . .

Copyright © 1979 by Howard James Jones

All rights reserved.

THEN AND NOW

In early dewy morn
We looked forlorn
For another of our dusky mates
Wondering what had become his fate.

Twasn't like him not to show
Or for work be slow.
Women whined, and men pined,
But our mate, we could not find.

Further into the woods we dwelled
In this man made living hell.
Then, before all our eyes
Stood the truth of America's lies.

There, hanging from a cross
Was another of humanity's loss.
Our friend was gone.
But for what reason was not known.

Had they accused him of rape?
Or was it just another attempt to escape...
To escape from their own inner emptiness!
Could it be that they know black is best?

And they try to compensate
By wiping the slate
Of stolen African seeds
To cover their dastardly deeds.

That was then,
And this is now.

From the deltas of Louisiana he sprang.
But over the nation he sang
Let freedom ring.

A Georgia Congressman
With a Bible in his hand---
A Member of the freedom band. . .

With MLK he had fought
Before a bullet the King had caught.
And for dollars he would not be bought.

Then in the White House came Carter,
Who for black votes bartered
In political ways long chartered.

"To the UN you go," he said
"And there be not led,
Just use your head."

A very outspoken man he became.
Speaking truth was his game,
Unfortunately, to his nation's shame.

"He must go!" from east to west they cried.
And with power from north to south they vied
To destroy him cause they said he lied.

"Human rights to all men
We must defend"
WAS the president's end.

So the dusky man from Georgia asked
Is the Wilmington Ten too much of a task?
Or must their imprisonment be masked?

And the Dawson Five,
Their lot is no jive,
Freedom they can not imbibe.

No more of this talk the nation would take,
For the foundations were beginning to shake.
The head man could not be proven a fake.

The man from Georgia would soon be
homeward sent
With total ruling class consent
For dissension was the thing he rent.

Crosses in forms do change.
However, black men still hang,
And "Freedom" still ring.

This is now,
And so it was then. 8/78

The Feeling of Death

Icy cold,
Slithering,
Odious,
Listless,
Damnable, and
Mean.
Yes,
Selfish,
Offensive,
Useless, and
Lifeless.

For a job. . .

For a dollar. . .

For fame. . .

For NOTHING!

I died.

8/78

suicide

Baby crying,
Trash can ringing,
Woman running,
Motherhood? . . .

SPEAKING WITH FORKED TONGUE

Boy, drink that gin,
That ain't no sin.

And drink a little wine,
My, that looks fine.

Now, roll them dice!
Don't that feel nice?

Chase that hooker.
Ain't she a looker?

Steal that money,
And give it to your honey.

Your old lady, you better cuss,
And raise a whole lot of fuss.

Man, without a doubt,
That's what living is all about.

8/78

Darwinism: Survival of the Fittest

Hair rising,
Nose twitching,
Eyes glistening,
Breath panting,
Lips dripping,
Hands sweating,
Knees weakening. . .

There they stood,
All wearing hoods.

Seven men brave
Ready to attack a knave.

8/78

The Black American

How came you to be lynched?

How came you to be treated as a beast
And thought to be the very least?
How held you your feet to the fire
And not retreat or retire
From the fight for freedom and right
When on your destruction, your nation
did diet?

So, I again ask, how came you to be
lynched?

Deborah, how did you put your heart
In your uniquely played part
In the war you handled so smart?
And, Dorie, only a cook,
My-oh-my, how you made them look
When Pearl Harbor did shook.
So, to you I ask again,
With no pain or insult I intend. . .
How came they to lynch your kin?

changeE

Everything change
and nothing changes.

Yesterday, there were no jobs available
because of a lack of being qualified.

(Go to high school!

get a diploma

Go to college

get a degree)

The government declared equal opportunity.

(Stop thinking you're inferior

Right always win out

Stop acting like a nigger

Tell the truth and you

don't have to fear any man)

Today, there are still no jobs available.

Everything changes

But nothing change.

Reality v. appearance.

Internal v. facadial.

8/78

an overheard
Short Conversation

Said LeRoy to Sapphire, "baby I love you
and we can't let nothing or no one
come between us."

Said Sapphire to LeRoy, "baby I know it,
and we've got to stick together
closer than white on rice if we're
going to get out of this mess."

Said Charles to Annie, "dear heart, we
have to keep things as they presently
exist because it is just in the order
of things."

Said Annie to Charles, "dear, you know
I know what you mean. You work
on LeRoy by telling him how nagging
and pushy they are, and I'll remind
Sapphire about what Moynihan says
and I'll also remind her about how
shiftless and no good they have always
been."

Why I just thought it sounded like the
same old plan as always.

8/78

the otherside of
THE PURITAN WORK ETHIC

One must always be working.

Wash those dishes!

One must never be playing.

Mop that floor!

Cut out all that singing.

Shine those shoes!

And don't dare go dancing.

Clean that toilet!

If one is always kept busy,
His mind soon becomes so dizzy,
Until his lot becomes one of existing,
And not at all truly living.

A slave is so taxed with labor,
Until his freedom becomes a fable
That he forgets to pursue
And thinks that to him is never due.

Keep working!
No time for thinking!

8/78

SOME Differences Between LIVING and Existing

Existing is when the boss is wrong and
brings you into the matter to back
him up and you agree because you
feel "I need my paycheck."

vs.

Living, where if the boss is wrong and
you are brought into the matter, you
tell the boss he is wrong simply be-
cause it is right to tell the truth.

Existing is when a new television comes
on the market, even though you can't
afford it, you go out and get one
because everybody else has one.

vs.

Living where you buy what you buy and do
what you do because you want to do it;
because you think it is right and you
could care less what anyone else does.

Existing is when it is more important to
breathe a breath of air, eat some
food, and say "I'm alive" at any
cost necessary

vs.

Living, where when you've found something
important enough to die for it,
because YOU believe in it, then you
know you are living, even if in death.

One infinitesimal moment of living is worth
more than a hundred years of mere
existence!

Right there Miss Jane Pittman?

Right there "Fiddle Man?"

Right there MLK?

Right there JC?

death

One day it occurred to all Negro women
that they were ugly and black.

ash blonde

auburn

bronze thrill

So they decided en-masse that they wanted
to be beautiful, and on their
ugliness make an attack.

burnt orange

coffee bean brown

dark brown

honey gold

Then they all ran out and died their God
given kinky hair.

light auburn

light sun tanned brown

nut brown

Now, they realize that they are no longer
black and ugly, but blonde (jolie
blonde) haired, red-headed, golden
fleeced, and all in between, wearing
it with a flair.

paprika red

peach glaze blonde

ruddish orange

suntan

I wonder if they are now white?

Putting things in THEIR PROPER ORDER

It was commencement day
And things sort of went this way.

The class included the homecoming queen,
Who winked her eye at the dean.

When her diploma was awarded,
Everyone stood up and applauded.

The crowd next gave a loud salutation
To the football team delegation.

A lady real popular on the yard
With just awful grades on her card

Next came slithering up to the stage
And drove the crowd into a real rage.

Finally, came the honor graduates
Whom the crowd sent messages of hate.

In a corner they all huddled,
As their names were being muddled.

A stranger no doubt would have known
This last group shouldn't have shown.

No applause, no real feel,
Everybody just sat still.

8/78

A Trilogy

THE NEW INTEGRITY

Deny thyself!

Down with thou country! And,

Forget thou God!

If you want to work for us,

You must not make a fuss;

But do what we assign

And things will go fine.

Rule number one covers all.

Do as you are ordered

And you will stand tall.

The boss is always right!

If in that you doubt

And want to make a fight,

Remember, you have no clout!

We control your very being!

You breathe when we say breathe.

And dare not think until we grant the lien.

Your God is us!

Your patriotism belongs to us!

You belong to us!

Your loyalty is only to us!

Retrospection

"Son," the mother said,

"Though we be poor,

Your own man,

You must be.

"Don't be led

And on society become a sore.

You must always take your stand,

And withstand the stormy sea.

"Do not bow your head,
As you do your chore.
For truth, speak very grand!
Even if for your life, you have to flee."

keeping the family together

"Honey,
Today, I tried again
A job to find
So once and for all, a man
I could be.

"But all they asked was
'Why, your last job you left?

'Workers we hire, must
Our company put first.

'We don't mind overlooking
The quality of your work.

'And you must forget
That thing you call right.

'After all, your right
Might well be our wrong.'"

"So honey,
Having no money to pay the rent,
The job I took.
A hard swallow, and I knew
A man had been spent."

8/78

HOME

Home is the place you want to be,
And you'll give anything to see.

Home is where you left your people,
And you hope to meet that Old Reaper.

Home is where you left your heart
Because it was so sad to have to depart.

Home is where you learned truth
And can always find your roots.

Home is where love is very revealing
And no one hides their feeling.

Home is the place you want to return
To satisfy your love sick burning yearn.

But what is home, if all your tries
To get back to your ties
Become more and more alibis
As to your being over qualified
And the only available jobs undignified.
Yet, you should feel pacified.

Just Another Old Good-for-nothing

Walking along the railroad tracks,
Wearing worn old tattered slacks,
Was a man almost jet black.

He stooped to pick a daisy,
So you knew then, he was crazy,
And he just looked plain lazy.

He was a pitiful creature,
No doubt, a real leecher
Or another of their old preachers.

So we yelled at him with glee
"You old chimpanzee,
Are you a zoo refugee?"

Then, off they went,
These southern gents,
After being so insolent.

The old man who was quite unlearned,
Saw a little road and there he turned.
And he just sort of seemed unconcerned.

Then he came to a grave,
And sort of gave it a wave.

"Martha," he mumbled,
As he almost stumbled.

"Here, I brought you this."
And he gave it a kiss.

"Ever-body's doing fine."
He said to the "shrine."

Then, as if in court,
He made a report.

"Our oldest son Bob, without much of a
chance,
After the war, came back home from
France.

"As deputy sheriff, he now serve,
And the folks say with much deserve.

"Alice who always cried so much,
Is a nurse and takes blood and such.

"Ben, the lawyer, yesterday, sent some
money.
That boy is still so very funny.

"Sadie, who was always so exact,
Keeps her secretarial work intact.

"Jim is now a local school teacher,
And Arthur is a prominent Baptist
preacher.

"That old playful rascal Hank?
He is vice president of the local bank.

"Tom, as President of the local NAACP,
To our future, holds much of the key.

"Winning a State Legislature seat,
Was for Roy quite a feat.

"And for the elderly, what a joy
Is our social worker LeRoy.

"Tim was always a hard working lad,
But now he just carries pencil and pad.

"A poet, he says he is going to be
Because truth he says he see.

"And the twins with which you died,
In the big city, they both reside.

"A doctor, became Cora
And an engineer became Nora.

"So, you see, we didn't do so bad
With the little bit we had."

Then up he arose with a jerk
To get back to work

Of picking up bottles and cans
With his old calloused hands,

So as to have something to sell
And make himself feel well,

Knowing that that was how he'd been able
To clothe and put meat on the table

For men and women now respected by all,
And who shall never have to crawl.

So back to the tracks he returned
Hoping to get the respect he had earned.

"Hey old nigger" a voice roared
As away the car soared.

"Why don't you go to work and get off
welfare,
And your own load do bear?

"You good for nothing ape!
Get off the landscape!"

8/78

I HAD TO SET THAT NIGGER STRAIGHT

I had in my class this squirt
Who was totally unalert.

As I meandered down knowledge's hallowed
halls,
He had no better gall
Than to thump heads and throw spit balls.

It gave me such an irk,
That I gave him a jerk.

"Listen boy!" I screamed,
Or so it would have seemed.
"Respect for others, you should have
gleaned."

Now that little nigger
Is a man much bigger.

But courtesy for everyone
He never shuns.
Some say he's a real don

Leading the Daughters of the Confederacy
is his maw.
And sitting in the Governor's chair of
Alabama is his paw.

8/78

Norie

Just look at her strutting her stuff.
It's not that beautiful red dress she's
wearing.
It's not those white patent leather
shoes,
Nor is it the warm sun pouring upon her.

But look at that little stride--Boy,
if that isn't an air of pride!
And look at that little dip
in her hips.

Brown eyes,
Corn rows,
Pecan tan skin,
Well formed lips,
An' an ancestras nose.

Norie,
You jus' go on with your badself.
Strut your stuff.
Do your thing.
How more beautiful the world would be
If all your little black sisters
Knew they were as beautiful as you.

3/79

Sunday Morning Sights, Sounds and Smells

Beds creaking,
Water running,
Kindling beaking,
Fire sparkling
Eggs cracking,
Fat-back frying,
Biscuits baking.

People sitting,
Family praying,
Folks rising,
Water running,
Forks tingling,
Plates shining.

Mama calling,
Children dressing,
Folks walking,
Door opening,
People singing.

Daddy bowing,
Streaming tears dropping,
Thoughts rushing,
Unfulfilled dreams crushing,
Faces wiping,
Thanks sounding,
Moans rising,
More songs singing.

Sermon preaching,
Women shouting,
Pennies clinking,
Hands shaking,
Cheeks kissing,
Arms hugging,
Backs patting.

Love loving.

12/78