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DOUGLAS GARY FREEMAN

MEMORIES OF MY YOUTH

as children
we learned to stand on one leg
clasping bundles of hope between our teeth
not because we wanted
to resemble flocks of black flamingos
one foot in the smelly pile was better than two
the sky beckoned
its blue hues a promise
we carried in those little bundles
clamped tightly between our still forming teeth
some of us were trapped
unable to free the one foot-fall for lift-off
there were others whose wings were clipped
when their bright eyes betrayed
their recognition of amerikkka's truth
ninety-nine shots fired
as their backs arched
the majestic power of wings spread wide
surging upwards towards blue redemption
this is how sky colour became word for despair
anguished stain lynchings passed for religion