

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.