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The Mulatto Murders Lily's Son (1948)

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The Mulatto Murders Lily's Son (1948)

1. Irvin goes to calm a raging friend

Irvin's fishmeat skin gleamed white despite the dark,
despite the shot that hung the blackout curtains on his world.
His blood unmade the rage of Bert Molina, black enough
to blot the whiteness Irvin carried like a flag.

The gunstock bruised Bert's collarbone. The bullet
burned the air the way rage burned that space
between his lungs where no-one held his heart.
The blood wrapped Irvin's brightskin in the night.

2. Bert's buddies wake Mark from sleep

Glasspecking woke Mark, a knockback in his rucksack,
home from war and far too drunk to wonder why
no skullmask hid the lightbulb, why
no laughter slipped from Irvin
as Mark laid his head to sleep.

Bert shot Irvin

kikikik

a bullet in the belly

Mark drank to lose his soldiename,
bid snores expel his memory,
sought sleep untroubled by the dead.

kikik

and Irvin died

kik

jacksacked in a backseat

kikik

fingers black with blood

3. Mark tells Lily

The news stole Lily's spit. She couldn't cry.
She couldn't turn. She looked at drunken Mark for two
and counted only one. Her mind said, *Oh my Jesus*,
but her heart said, *Oh my son*. She didn't hear her children
or the sirens or the men who carried Bert away.

She never heard her helper cry, *Miss Lily, oh,*
Miss Lily, oh, they kill your whitest son.