

Daub and Wattle

for LKJ

Vladimir Lucien

'The house got pulled down... my uncle was in charge of the land and I suppose he just pulled it down. It's a shame really, because when I came back, to look at the place it was as though a part of my life was gone not seeing the house anymore... it was like a whole part of my life just missing.'

- Linton Kwesi Johnson in *Caribbean Journey*

It was make out of what we call *daub*
and *wattle*, which I could tell you now is make
out of bits of wood and mud, and I could
tell you how it was make into a kind of mortar
and how dem mix it up and mix it up
with water, and how de man-dem raise
it with dem own two hand like from pickney
height to man height, and how it stand tall and thick after
like a man bigging up him chest to de air
and de sun, and how dem dash it with white lime
when dem done fi make it shine like de floor that
dem polish and dye. After that, dem
just call it 'wall'. And when dem
raise enough walls, dem call it 'house' —
Is only now so, as it gone, I could tell you bout de *daub*
and *wattle*, bout de bits of wood and de mud
how dem make it into mortar with a likkle
bit of water, and bout de white lime, and de zinc roof,
and de man-dem what raise it that gone long
before the house itself get pull down —
de likkle tings and times that hold it all together.
And now too, I could tell you bout
waking up a morning and going by de river
to bathe, and tying mi goat Betty
by de good grass to graze and
coming home in de cool haze of evenings and
all dem tings and times and days
that before, did mix up in my mind
like a kind of mortar make of all kinda
little tings and times that now so hard
to find, that did raise me up
from pickney height to man height, that
make me lif up my chest like I was
harden and tough like de mud and de wood
and de mortar and de zinc and de lime

and de dye and de hands and de tings and
times that I mix up in here, and de crawfish cane,
and de cocoyam, and de goat name Betty and
de river bath, and de banana chips that my sister did
make and de porridge from mi old grandmumma.
And I tell you bout it not so much fi you, but fi me,
fi de tings and times mi can't tell you bout, like
just de sweet, sad way it mix up and crushing inside
me like a mortar, like de way mi feel and de way
it bring eye-water when mi only say it —

daub and wattle.