

## The Clifford Brown Downtown Scope

Verdant leaves give way at the tops of the young elms that line the avenues and the boulevards to the big blueness of sky, almost blinding when my eyes scan near the sun, punctuated by finger-like clouds reaching out for some unseen dynamo in the machinations of the universe

As I tilt my head back I am overcome by the geometry of the world in the soft angles, the wide angles, the angles in between, in the harmonious, intersecting lines that comprise the panes of glass on the faces of the skyscrapers

In the summer ardor radiating sheer waves of heat upward, out of concrete squares of sidewalks milling with intermittent mingling crowds, commuters on foot bustling from building to building, burdened with briefcases, bees in a hive of activity,

Out of concrete streets flowing with the urban blood of automobiles rushing through the arteries, the veins, the circulatory system that keeps this beast alive.

And I close my eyes as I walk through the afternoon ecstasy of a cool garden hose mist as a grocer freshens his produce and the water beads on my bare arms where it can and soaks through the pores of my t-shirt just enough for me to feel it on my chest.

My reflection in storefront windows shifts from window to window, but its face is always smiling as it travels silently through letters of storefront window fonts, blue, blue, red, white, green and on and on, a face in the lexicon of establishment names and sales and open signs, a vocabulary for us city initiates.

Children smile at me as I pass by, eyes twinkling blues, greens, and browns, a miniature box of crayons bobbing gently up and down in this sea of colours, watching my progress through art if only temporarily

Ice cream cones melting in their hands and they dab at the running stickiness of pastel shades dripping down along their fingers, past their wrists, and down the narrow vectors of their forearms and I imagine laundry day mothers with their boxes of detergent shaking their heads at how ice cream stains could have happened.

All I can do is just smile back at the kids and their escorts with a mouthful of teeth that I playfully picture as so white they have the cartoon sparkle in the sun of a toothpaste commercial or two that I had seen and now life was finally imitating that art for a fleeting moment,

Teeth so white they communicate the bliss of the world, the bliss of the cosmos, the bliss of my mind as I allow it to dwell on all the details, this perfect and holy state of physical music-----

-----music

Now I let my mind wander as my eyes wander and my once long strides yield to a lingering lilt: *Who is the real pioneer of jazz? Is there one? Who made this music that calls me back to this place even on my days off?*

This sexy sound I imagine echoing through the clefts of avenue veins, rocking the body urban, from the high-rise tenements to the sterile office placements, monolithic towers reflecting daylight until everything glows,

Making me see vivid colour where once resided varying degrees of grey, hospitable people whom I once considered utterly savage, vivacious youth once considered antisocial, a host of faces brightly lit.

*Who made this light?*

Even car horns seem to play the measures of *Jordu* every time an irate driver is fed up with traffic and his face is beaming with joy. It brings a slinky smile to my face, a bob to my head, a rhythm to my steps,

Order to the world, wide and far, instrumentation on every level, Max Roach rimshots out of the clatter of every garbage can being emptied into a passing garbage truck,

A repeal to the sweltering greenhouse heat, bursts of icy ordnance out of every air conditioner until everything is cool.

Enthralling music of the summer, the afternoon traffic jam orchestra (this one as good as any of the others), I can feel my Jazz Receptors swaying in time with your high notes and your low notes, feeling every bar hit me square on the jaw, complete and total transcendence,

Even when I hear the far off roaming wails of sirens (it could be a fire because you come as a fire out my headphones or it could be a medical emergency for those who were suddenly struck by your magnificence and couldn't wrap themselves around it --- I don't know),

Even when a busker makes his guitar sob for another night of drink and company,

Even when the televisions in the window are yapping, "BUY, BUY, BUY!" and cut to footage of the government yapping, "DEBT! DEBT DEBT!"

Clifford Brown, your trumpet strains and strains to be heard on the radio above the din of it all,

And sometimes I find that I struggle to not hear it even when it isn't playing.