

The summer of 1967 again brought racial disorders to American cities, and with them shock, fear and bewilderment to the nation. The worst came during a two-week period in July, first in Newark and then in Detroit. Each set off a chain reaction in neighboring communities.

- *Kerner Commission Report, 1968*

SMOLDERING CITY

BY: *Nadine Marshall*

billows of smoke
mushroom swell atop
12th street.

we hold our
babies close, shake them
free from the white

ash covering their
small innocent bodies.
the boys and girls run,
warn us the tanks comin'

red eyes on white faces
threaten to turn us
all ghosts.

the neighborhood becomes
a particular shade of grey,
(the Tigers keep playing)

newspaper man names us.
mob/poor/savage/dogs
criminal/black
(downtown stops turning)

a city
buries racism in the
hum of factories and
says, finally- the negro has
access to the *American
dream*

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black, returns from fighting
America's war & police raid
the party.
round us up like
Cattle, shove batons

in our backs, spit nigga
in our faces & this ain't
the first time

we tight lip our
way home many
nights before this.
let them shake our

pockets loose to
ensure our bodies
return without a
mark for burial.

shrink to become
the most noticed
unnoticed.

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*(A Negro) plainclothes officer
standing at an intersection when
a man threw a Molotov*

*cocktail. in minutes
the entire block in
flames.*

the city moves it's
lips to a war song it knows
well.

(Detroit Race Riots, 1943 -leaves 25 of us dead)

They ain't gon' tell you why the
city burned
just that, it burned.