Air Raid over Harlem

Scenario for a Little Black Movie

Who you gonna put in it?
Me.
Who the hell are you?
Harlem.

Alright, then.

AIR RAID OVER HARLEM

You’re not talkin’ ’bout Harlem, are you?
That’s where my home is,
My bed is, my woman is, my kids is!

Harlem, that’s where I live!

Look at my streets
Full of black and brown and
Yellow and high-yellow
Jokers like me.

Lenox, Seventh, Edgecombe, 145th.
Listen,

Hear ’em talkin’ and laughin’?
Bombs over Harlem’d kill
People like me—

Kill ME!

Sure, I know
The Ethiopian war broke out last night:

BOMBS OVER HARLEM
Cops on every corner

Most of ’em white

COPS IN HARLEM
Guns and billy-clubs
Double duty in Harlem
Walking in pairs

Under every light
Their faces
WHITE
In Harlem
And mixed in with ’em

A black cop or two
for the sake of the vote in Harlem

1In 1935 Italian forces under Mussolini invaded the African nation of Ethiopia, an act that aroused protest among blacks throughout the United States.
GUGSA A TRAITOR TOO
No, sir, I ain't talking 'bout you, Mister Policeman!
No, indeed!
I know we got to keep order over Harlem
Where the black millions sleep
Shepherds over Harlem
Their armed watch keep
Lest Harlem stirs in its sleep
And maybe remembers
And remembering forgets
To be peaceful and quiet
And has sudden fits
Of raising a black fist
Out of the dark
And that black fist
Becomes a red spark
Planes over Harlem
Bombs over Harlem
You're just making up a fake funny picture, ain't you?
Not real, not real?
Did you ever taste blood from an iron heel
Planted in your mouth
In the slavery-time South
Where to whip a nigger's easy as hell—
And not even a living nigger has a tale to tell
Lest the kick of a boot
Bring more blood to his mouth
In the slavery-time South
And a long billy-club
Split his head wide
And a white hand draw a gun from its side
And send bullets splaying through the streets of Harlem
Where the dead're laying
Lest you stir in your sleep
And remember something you'd best better keep
In the dark, in the dark
Where the ugly things hide
Under the white lights
With guns by their side
In Harlem?
Say, what are yuh tryin' to do?
Start a riot?
You keep quiet!

You niggers keep quiet!

Black World
Never wake up
Lest you knock over the cup
Of gold that the men who
Keep order guard so well
And then—well, then
There'd be hell
To pay
And bombs over Harlem

Air Raid over Harlem

Bullets through Harlem
And someday
A sleeping giant waking
To snatch bombs from the sky
And push the sun up with a loud cry
Of to hell with the cops on the corners at night
Armed to the teeth under the light
Lest Harlem see red
And suddenly sit on the edge of its bed
And shake the whole world with a new dream
As the squad cars come and the sirens scream
And a big black giant snatches bombs from the sky
And picks up a cop and lets him fly
Into the dust of the Jimcrow past
And laughs and hollers
Kiss my
!x!&!

Hey!
Scenario For A Little Black Movie,

You say?
A Red Movie to Mr. Hearst
Black and white workers united as one
In a city where
There'll never be

Air raids over Harlem
FOR THE WORKERS ARE FREE
What workers are free?

THE BLACK AND WHITE WORKERS—
You and me!

Looky here, everybody!
Look at me!

130  I'M HARLEM!

Harlem, 1935