Romare Bearden Takes The Long Way Home

Romare Howard Bearden
Pale onion skin and round
African American artist
Carrying wounds, jazz, words,
Watercolors and works
In graphite, serigraphs and ink
Takes the long way home.

All his troubles as a Negroid man
On a personal odyssey
Traveling
From North Carolina to New York
Facing
Fierce battles and tribulations
Found expression in an ancient Greek story
About family and home.

Romare, why did you make
The people black in your paintings?
Is the question.
If a child in Benin
Or in Louisiana
Sees my paintings of Odysseys
He can understand the myth
Better is his answer.

Who would dare ask
His contemporaries
Why the people they paint
Are always white?
Their faces are colorless
Yet why insist that ours
Must be too.

The long way home
Has his heroic experience
Fashioned as a modern story on canvas
Romare warring
For himself and others like him
His hands heavy with revelation
And resurrection power.

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