

Royale

~~Start~~

Wynton

I ever tell you 'bout *The Royale*?

(Jay thinks, shakes his head – no.)

WYNTON (CONT'D)

First time I ever got in a ring,  
Back behind a sausage factory in Quint City,  
The smell of pork, so sweet it stung your nose,  
Tuesday nights,  
Eighty, ninety men used to gather 'round,

...

What they called *The Royale*.

...

...

Friend o' mine –  
Named Herbie Robinson, from Cleveland –  
Said you could make more'n a week's worth of wages if you won,  
So shit,  
There I was –  
And a man comes,  
And he picks six of us, maybe seven,  
Take us,  
*Blindfolded*,  
And herd us into this ring.

...

They take a bottle,  
They ain't even have no bell,  
They take a *bottle* and they *smash* it.  
And when you heard that noise,  
Boy,  
When you heard that smash,  
*Blindfolded*,  
That meant you start swinging.

...

Couldn't tell where you were, really,  
Sound of men throwin' change,  
Sound of men screaming their throats bloody at six black boys in a ring.

...

First time I went, I got knocked out in ten seconds flat,  
Didn't know *which* direction punches were comin' from,  
But my *second* Tuesday –

...

Shit,  
I'm a fast learner, ain't I?

JAY

...

WYNTON

Wadn't no "purse" at *The Royale*,  
If you should happen to make it,  
If you was the last one standing,  
*Prize was* that they take that blindfold off,  
And you got about a minute to stuff your pockets.

...

My eyes get used to the light,  
Eighty, ninety men in suits,  
They keep throwin' change,  
I'm stuffing my trousers with nickels, quarter-dollars –  
One week, *two* week's worth of wages,  
Boy,  
I walked outta there with more money than I'd ever held in my life.

...

...

I get home.

*Proud.*

I empty them pockets,  
Right there on the kitchen table,  
And in the middle of my pile o' coins –  
I see these things – look like pebbles.  
Covered in dirt and covered in blood,  
These –  
**Other boys Teeth.**

...

**Ain't** *one* of them mine.

(He laughs. As proud as he is ashamed.)

WYNTON (CONT'D)

To this day –  
Ain't a coin I hold in my hand that I don't try to wipe the blood from.

JAY

...

WYNTON

...

JAY

...

WYNTON

How long I been with you.

JAY

What?

END