



**study the masters**

like my aunt timmie.

it was her iron,

or one like hers,

that smoothed the sheets

the master poet slept on.

home or hotel, what matters is

he lay himself down on her handiwork

and dreamed. she dreamed too, words:

some cherokee, some masai and some

huge and particular as hope.

if you had heard her

chanting as she ironed

you would understand form and line

and discipline and order and

america.

-Lucille Clifton, *new poems* (2000)