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## **T.S. Eliot Was A Negro**

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### T. S. ELIOT WAS A NEGRO

During Eliot's Senior year in college after he lost a copy of *The Pardoner* and wept he listened closely to Edison's faint recording of Whitman's voice at the Library of Congress and the words and the coals inside the victrola curled the lime on his top hat and the nimble conversation put Eliot at ease and each image echoed inside his rather large ears and he brought them closer to the flip side of the red vinyl with only one pale slip of the poet's tongue and he learned on the evening tide of his mulatto life how the smoke signals from his pipe circled the town green of his hometown and the hourglass inside his father's vest pocket gave a warning to the citizens of the world and as their children marched behind the blue tail of the wonder mule and sang in celebration the doctor looking out over the parade finally realized what had made a young Eliot dream about the city workers who tossed Eliot's plague caked body into death's carriage left stalled by the helmsman on the corner of Bishop and State in New Haven who stood before the temple under a prehistoric shadow and years later recorded how Eliot had read poems and lectured to his students from this same corner in a wedding of laughter and science until he awakened in sweat as the constable held Eliot's skull clean as a monkey's jaw above the altarstone two and a half miles from Yale University and thirty-six miles from the rose garden at Elizabeth Park in Hartford and while on his knees before his God he remembered exactly how he had fallen asleep in the afternoon in his mother's arms after he had breastfed and listened to her whisper the nursery rhyme of the wonder mule who stood like a mantis on its burnt hind hooves and fell dead on its raw side as the town steeple collapsed in snow and the citizens their children and the human militia perished in flames the day he was born.