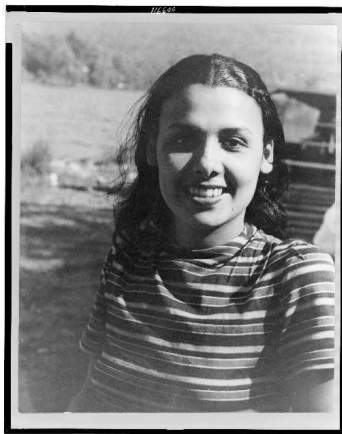


Lena Horne.

by Daniel Alexander Jones



And somewhere, in the bent light at that early edge of your named arc, you look toward the camera lens as the breeze traces your freckled face and you smile. The split second shutter-click a prelude to polyrhythmic projection. You cannot imagine the things you will be – to them all, to us all. You cannot imagine the tolls you will pay – and the howling empty that will accompany so many of your hours. A blessing, then, that the future, like the breeze, sweeps in from behind your shoulders. But in that instant your palms, out of frame, are open. Did you know then you were a warrior? *The*

sad eyes say yes. Did you know then that you would keep the free in you? Did you know then that the light of angels can burn as well as illuminate? Were we to have seen the light lifting from your skin on this day would it have been green as new leaves when you looked toward the camera and smiled? *Lena.* Here, as the last traces of your named arc are drawn into deep night, we watch distant stars flicker on. The sound of our gratitude is hushed, for it is a close sound. It is the sound of us breathing. Just that much fuller, just that much freer, just that much more boldly. The sound of our gratitude is the sound of your light. We see it lifting softly from the skin of a newly coined angel standing gently and smiling into a dark glass lens while somewhere behind her a freer future is sketching itself awake because she wishes it to be so and has the courage to breathe it into being.