

I am a road that has a beginning and not an end.
 I am a man without a purpose.
 I am a man without a love, without a home.
 I am a man who hears no questions, who gives no answers.
 I am a quiet man with no one to talk to.
 I am a dreamer with no more dreams to dream.
 I am a man without a place.
 As long as I wander from darkness to darkness,
 As long as I drown in the current of time,
 As long as this happens, I will have no place and will always be
 A man without a face.

20 MINUTES TO WRITE

Bernice explained that the poem is about "a Negro in a white community who is willing to take the back seat.

"He's a good man but he just takes what people give him. He's losing respect for himself and other people are losing respect for him, so he's not a person anymore."

Bernice, a tall, quiet, but poised girl, said she didn't go through the writing agencies that beset more than a few poets who never see their work in print.

WRITES OTHER POEMS

"It took about 20 minutes," she said of the 37-line, free-verse poem. "I was just rattling it off and my mother said, 'That's good.'"

Bernice said she hoped the poem would reach a wide audience because "some people have a tendency to turn their heads to things they don't want to face up to."

She has written several other poems now and next year will be in a creative writing course at Germantown High and work for the school paper.

An "A" student in English, Bernice said she has about a "B" average overall. History, she said is her favorite subject, but at the mention of math she grimaced.

John Dunn, a member of the school district's curriculum office, said the Macmillan text using her poem is among many new curriculum materials to be used in a \$150,000 federally financed program to improve basic skills in disadvantaged areas.

DIFFERENT CULTURE

Over a hundred elementary schools, as well as the junior highs, will be part of the program, he said.

It is an attempt to "shift the way schools look at a situation to get them out of their stereotyped thinking," Dunn said.

"In the past, we've tended to think of disadvantaged pupils as dumb. But we're learning that they really have an entirely different culture."

He said that instead of grammar drills, for instance, the emphasis at elementary school level will be to encourage self-expression and communication. Negro history will also be emphasized.

Bernice's poem, said another school official, Mrs. Emma Lou Dawes, will be used in a special part of the program aimed at lifting the "self-image" of Negro pupils.

"Her poem," she said, "would be taught for its psychological and sociological meaning as well as the beauty of its structure."

STATEMENT BY HARCOURT, BRACE & WORLD, INC., PRESENTED BY CAMERON S. MOSELEY, VICE PRESIDENT

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