

Jacqueline Joan Johnson

BEDSTUY NOTEBOOK

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Mr. Faison

The oba of my block
wears a paper hat
at the just-so right angle
a big, triple belly man
his arm the size of a
young girl's waist.
The color of roasted almonds
he wears only a paper hat
thinking cap
his personal gri gri
greasy, sometimes wrinkled
always brown paper
bags.

Crossed mason dixon line in '46
with wife and three sons
started from nothing
started small
saved everything
bought a house, then buildings
a store
and more buildings
wears no jewelry
owns one pin striped grey suit
he owns every corner
in three directions
this black millionaire
wears only brown
paper
hat