

# The Artist

By Nikki Giovanni

And so it comes  
To this

The sun beating  
Down

The people indifferently passing

And we . . . out  
Of breath  
In a pool of salty  
Sweat  
Laughing Happy  
In each other's  
Trust

That once again  
We gentled the stone  
All the way down  
And will now

Push it back up

But we will wait  
Until the sun sets

We will wait  
Until the stores  
Close

We will wait  
While they put their garbage bags  
In the streets

We will wait  
Until the dogs and rats  
Sniff their choices

We will wait  
Until the street cleaners  
Push their brooms  
And the women offer their wares

We will hope  
The men are kind

We will salute  
The mood rising

We are Sisyphus

We write the poems  
We paint the portraits

We sculpt the statues  
We quilt the blankets  
We set the tables  
We make the beds  
We wipe the tears  
We rock the anger  
We hold on to tomorrow

We push the rock up  
And we gently bring it down

We were promised  
Only a gift so light

You keep me  
From being  
Lonely