

**Slam, Dunk, & Hook**  By Yusef Komunyakaa

Fast breaks. Lay ups. With Mercury's Insignia on our sneakers, We outmaneuvered to footwork Of bad angels. Nothing but a hot Swish of strings like silk Ten feet out. In the roundhouse Labyrinth our bodies Created, we could almost Last forever, poised in midair Like storybook sea monsters. A high note hung there A long second. Off The rim. We'd corkscrew Up & dunk balls that exploded The skullcap of hope & good Intention. Lanky, all hands & feet...sprung rhythm. We were metaphysical when girls Cheered on the sidelines. Tangled up in a falling, Muscles were a bright motor Double-flashing to the metal hoop Nailed to our oak. When Sonny Boy's mama died He played nonstop all day, so hard Our backboard splintered. Glistening with sweat, We rolled the ball off Our fingertips. Trouble Was there slapping a blackjack Against an open palm. Dribble, drive to the inside, & glide like a sparrow hawk. Lay ups. Fast breaks. we had moves we didn't know We had. Our bodies spun On swivels of bone & faith, Through a lyric slipknot Of joy, & we knew we were Beautiful & dangerous.

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