

CELEBRITY

KWAME DAWES

For Charles Harris

Here go the Crawford Colored Giants. Take
my picture, Mr. Teenie; you know I could
make you a star, could make it that
you don't have to run numbers no more;
just catch my big smile and pass it
along; make me look good, that's all.
When I swing that tree trunk, I will
always smile so people will know
this man is playing with other men
like they are boys. Here go Satchel
Paige. Man's one ugly fellow, but, Lord,
he learned to make everybody
else laugh so hard they look
ugly like him. Here go Josh Gibson.
Ask him to tell you who everybody
said was the hardest-hitting,
cleanest-eyed nigger up there in
Pittsburg. Ask him to tell you
what he said to the devil down
there by the Ohio River, under a bridge,
drunk as a skunk, what he shouted

into the winter sky after he puked
two days of barbecue and bourbon
into that river—how he told Scratch
to make a deal, give him Old Troy
Moxon's quick eye and cold swing,
how he will be glad to settle down
in a duplex in hell. That is what
he said, crying like that, and we all
heard it, Mr. Teenie. So folks
know that what you see ain't
all there is. This fat rolling man,
big hands, big head, a belly
taut like I got seven months of child
in me; this piece of everyday
crap who can't get no respect
from his own offspring, who's
moving other people's crap
for a living, this simple black man
used to be somebody, Mr. Teenie.
So take the damn picture. I could
make you famous, brother, you know it.