To Register to Vote in This State, You Must Correctly Answer the Questions in This Examination

1. How many seeds are in a watermelon, boy? How many bubbles in a bar of soap? How many scrubbings does it take for the tar of your skin to rinse off? Have you tried lye? Have you tried salvation?

2. When did your mother stop bathing you, boy? Did she turn her head when she handed you the soap? What did your father say the first time he caught the length of your want? Did he laugh? Tell you to get it out of your system? Did he tell you to find a girl who'd let you practice?

3. When did you first learn you were ugly?

4. Did your Ma tell you not to look people in the eye, boy? Did your Pa tell you to always look people in the eye? Who was right?

5. Calculate the depth of the river where they found your Uncle Charles. Convert to meters. Now miles. Convert to the sound a Negro mother makes when she learns bodies can hold water like a vase.

6. Can you read this? Can you read it good, like you ain't been practicing words all mornin'? Can you read it backward? How 'bout in the dark? Now try it with a mouth fulla cotton and a God who ain't takin' calls today.

7. Define liberty. Use the dictionary if you like. Use your own words if you brave enough.

8. At what temperature does a cross burn? How long do a body swing 'fore you can call it a metronome?

9. Print a word that looks the same whether it is printed frontward or backward.

10. Did you kiss that white girl behind the gym bleachers, boy? Did you press your dirty mouth on hers and believe, just for a second, the world was somewhere else that day?

11. In the space below, write the word "history" backwards and place a dot over what would be its second letter should it have been written forward.

12. How many times have you daydreamt yourself hanging?

13. Open your mouth, boy. Wider. You got your wisdom teeth yet?

14. Did you stand in line for six hours today? You bring a chair? A white man to vouch for you? Did you check your tone when you asked for help? Did you double-check your tone?

15. What was your SAT score?

16. How many grains of sugar in a spoonful, boy? How many grains of sand in an hourglass that runs backward whenever it sees your hands? When'll you learn we ain't never needed your answers? Just your waiting.