

GLENN HAYES

Mills Blue Rhythm Band

The entire Mills Blue Rhythm Band,
including Edgar Hayes
who never made a name
but graduated with a music degree from Wilberforce
before heading the Eight Black Pirates,

including Shelton Hemphill,
a fine section trumpeter
who rarely had opportunities to solo,

including trumpeter Wardell “Preacher” Jones
who stepped forward, soloed,
tipped his hat, bowed quietly out,

including Lucius Venable “Lucky” Millinder,
the band’s leader, who could not read music,
did not play an instrument, and rarely sang,

including the eighty-five corpses
that “surfaced” yesterday in Baghdad
and that bore obvious marks of torture,

and including today Anna’s spider,
pinched in a Kleenex
and flushed down the toilet.

And yes it's raining now
as if to commemorate
the going down into watery darkness,
rewinding Genesis 1:2,
God sucking his breath back in,
leaving chaos unhedged.

And, true, neither spider nor corpses
(unless you count the miniature
muted trumpets of the flies)
are wailing out a tune.

But listen to this: in a twinkling
the entire Mills Blue Rhythm Band
in natty suits and silver ties
leaps out of its grave
and with two snaps of Lucky's fingers
swings into a version of
Ridin' in Rhythm that knocks
the pennies right off your eyes.

