

PAUL MORAND

BLACK MAGIC

TRANSLATED *by* HAMISH MILES

✧ WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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PRELIMINARY

1895.—Charles, our gardener at Ris-Orangis, shows me the illustrated supplement of the PETIT JOURNAL, wherein a soldier with a sugar-loaf helmet is killing Malagasy. Entry of the French into Antananarivo. First childhood memories.

1902.—I am taken to the circus in Paris. Cake-walk. A couple of American Negroes in Sunday best, with the Olympia bouquet in their hands, prance their way into the twentieth century.

1914.—September: 9 p.m. Senegalese infantry march down the Boulevard Saint-Michel. Direction—the Marne.

1916.—September. Throughout one whole evening a man with a Creole accent, and the monotone of one of Conrad's narrators, opens my eyes to the poetry of the Antilles, the hierarchy of rum. It is Saint Leger Leger.

1919.—Darius Milhaud arrives from Brazil. He describes Bahia, the black Rome, and plays me those Negro SAMBAS which are shortly to serve for the music of his BOEUF SUR LE TOIT.

1920.—I return to France. In the post-war bars. So sublime,

so heartrending, are the accents of jazz, that we all realise that a new FORM is needed for our mode of feeling. But the basis of it all? Sooner or later, I tell myself, we shall have to respond to this summons from the darkness, and go out to see what lies behind this overweening melancholy that calls from the saxophones. How can we stand still while the ice of time is melting between our warm hands?

Away! Away!

1925.—*Jibuti.*

1927.—*Havana, New Orleans, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Virginia, the Carolinas, Charleston, Harlem.—Guadeloupe, Martinique, Trinidad, Curacao, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Alabama, Mississippi.*

1928.—*Dakar, Guinea, Senegambia, the Sudan, the Southern Sahara, the Niger, Timbuktoo, the Mossi country, the Ivory Coast.*

30,000 miles. 28 Negro countries.