

THE DOX THRASH MURAL*

They say Hoods sprayed it! Kids tagged it! A blackout box!
They say Kids? In freezing butt cold? Who pitch-black caulks
A point-blank square bull's-eye? *They say* Square arty quacks!
Same old war on murals! *They say* Simmering packs!
They say Snarkies from the 'burbs! Messing good old Blacks
At home! Naw! *They say* Nobody there for years, folks!
Not since Brother passed? Not since '64 riots?
Naw! *They say* Brother tied good heritage in knots!
They say Pop left bad kiddy tags! Old smart-mouth jokes!
The last word? *They say* A snot-nose tribute to Dox!

Hearsay. All wrong. Government—oops—did it.
“Slum clearance.” The streets he loved. Bad credit.
He never owned that wall, the mural gone.
Down the block in brief reprieve his sweet old home.

*In 2001 a tribute mural to the master printmaker Dox Thrash was installed at 2442 Cecil B. Moore Avenue in Sharswood, a North Philadelphia neighborhood famed for its jazz venues, where he lived and worked for decades. When painted over by government workers, it was replaced in 2015 by a new mural at 1631 Girard Avenue, where it has since been almost totally blocked by new development.