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## Elder Brown

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**Elder Brown**  
**Emiliano Lebron**

When I was young  
I remember going to a church  
A small church  
Just outside the view of the harbor.  
This church was an "urban" gospel church  
Let's call it that.  
It was a nice little church  
A lot of nice people there  
And one usher:  
Sister Hill.  
Sister Hill frightened me  
And she always came out of nowhere  
Nowhere!  
And knew exactly what you were doing at all times.  
I was five  
I could barely see over the pew  
But I always saw Sister Hill  
And Sister Hill saw everything  
How could that not scare me?  
Anyway...  
I remember the pastor of that church  
His name was Elder Brown  
Not Pastor Brown  
Elder Brown  
Even on the streets he was Elder Brown  
In the grocery store?  
Elder Brown  
I never did know his first name  
But I knew that Elder Brown was a prolific preacher  
And a loud one  
And apparently a very sweaty one.  
He always had a towel in his hand  
And when he preached, people sat at attention.  
You couldn't sleep through that service  
Trust me, I tried.  
The way he preached  
Could keep anyone awake through that morning  
He could preach on the most basic of bible verses  
And add so much emphasis  
While he was toweling his head  
From the sweat that accumulates from what I suppose to be  
A response to the mix of lighting, speaking, and his preacher's robes.  
He would stomp his feet

He would speak so sternly  
He would repeat himself  
With the words "I said"  
He would give a strange sibilant sound  
His vocal exclamation point.  
It woke me up many times  
It can catch people off guard.  
He would read one verse  
And he laid into it:  
*And Jesus said to his disciples*  
*I said, Jesus said to his disciples [hhhuh]*  
*He said, "I go to prepare a place for you [hhhuh]*  
*A place of many mansions [hhhuh]*  
*If it were not so*  
*I said, if it were not so*  
*I would tell you."*  
*Can I get an "Amen?"*  
He was an amazing preacher  
Though since I was only five  
The intellectuality of his sermons escapes me.  
However, his passion for preaching  
His very essence  
Remains with me forever.  
For, you see, Elder Brown knew one thing  
He knew that if he was to give an effective sermon  
He couldn't just talk  
He needed to declare, with certainty, what he had to say  
He needed to emphasize every word  
He needed to preach.  
He knew that the power of words was not in their meaning  
But in how they were spoken.  
He knew that if he gave his words power  
If he could amplify every word  
People would listen.