

'orphan tongue'

after Jamaica Kincaid,
Elizabeth Cotten

i.

isn't it odd, we be
talking, like this

in the criminal's
language,

dictating the right
of his wrong.

we be
 hold by trial
these truths
 evidence of
self-evident lies

and such what
not your country
can, but what you, what-
what can

such conversating
really mean: *raising*
cairn,
piling stones upon burial grounds,
but it ain't a bit of use.

now four scores
and the seven
after

find me some, and
i'll fix you a line

to make the going sweet,
the gone less bitter