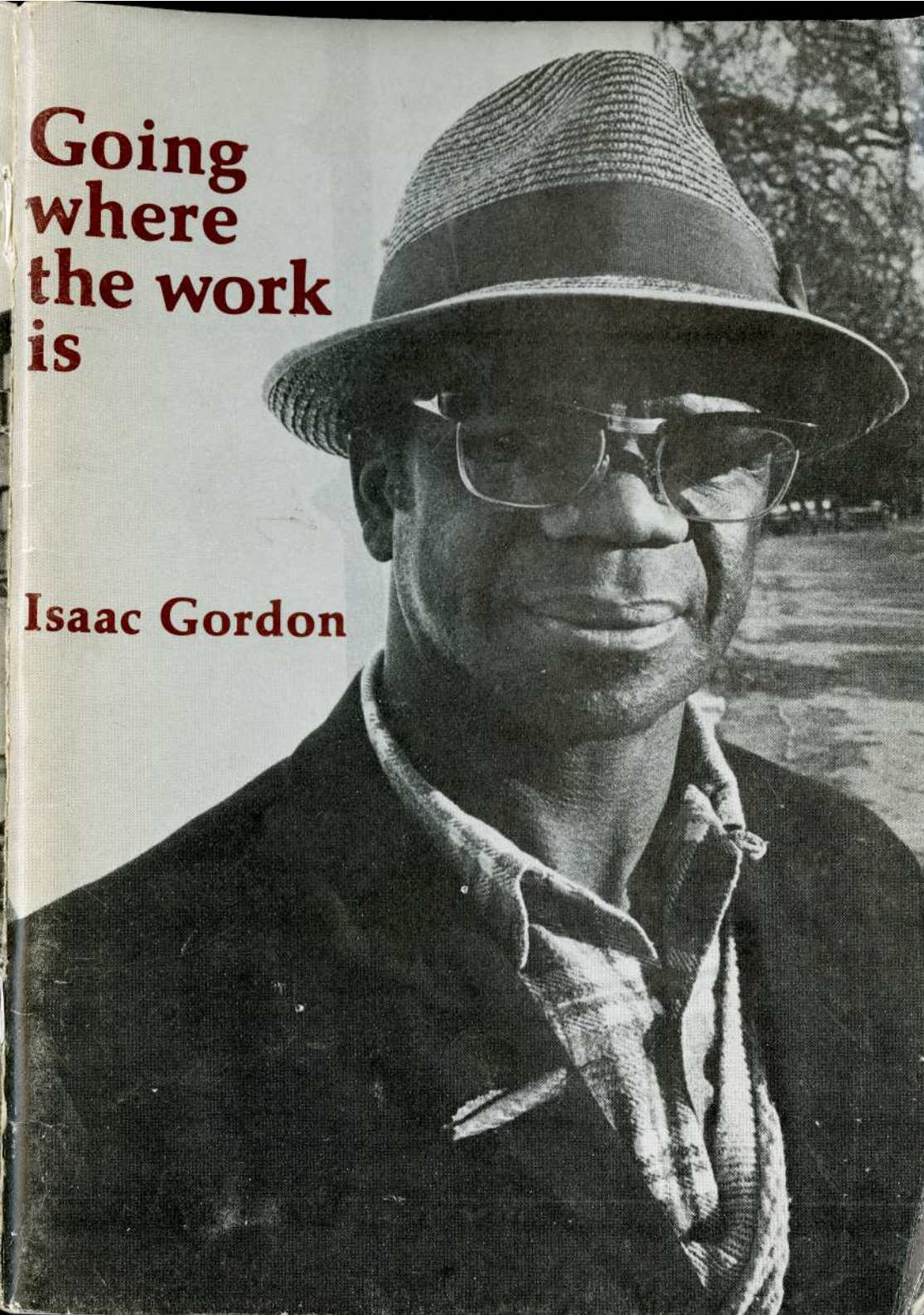


**Going
where
the work
is**

Isaac Gordon





Scrap metal yard.
They buy the metal and sort it.

7 The accident

I came to this country in March 1960.
My first job – a scrap metal yard.
I working on a machine cutting up metal.

At eight o'clock I start to work.
I have to take up the metal and feed the knife.
There are two blades.
The one at the bottom don't move.
It stand still.
Just the top one move.
It comes down and up, down and up
and chops the metal.

At nine o'clock the accident happens.
I had been on the job one hour.
I feed in the metal to the machine.
It have a piece of wire inside of it that didn't cut.
The rest cut but the wire didn't
so the weight of what didn't cut
just pulled my hand straight into the knife.
I scream out. The foreman come.
I did have gloves on
They take me to the Royal Northern Hospital.
There was lots of blood.
They take the gloves off.
Take my coat off.
I think them must have put me to sleep.

I was screaming,
and after I don't know what happened.

First time I know what happened
is when I wake up in hospital.
I stayed in four or five weeks.
It was three fingers cut.
They put my hand in plaster up to the elbow.
Then I come home.
I go to the hospital back. They have a look at it.
They send me to a rest home in Southgate,
for another four weeks.

After this they take off the plaster
and look at it.
Then I went back in another hospital in the city.
I spend about three weeks there.
When they take the plaster off
the tops of two of the fingers were dry and dead –
no life in it, so they take it off.
I lose one joint off one
and a half off the other. They save one.
It was more than six months before them heal up.

The machine didn't have any guard.
It should have a guard.
I have to get a lawyer and I get £850.
I never heard anybody speak
about such things before,
so I don't know if £850 is enough.
The lawyer gave me the money
and I put it in the bank and I make it up
and in 1969 I bought a house.
I still prefer to have my fingers than the house.

Extract from *Going where the work is* by 25
Isaac Gordon, Centreprise 1979.

