

Know Yourself

Kae Tempest

If you saw the younger you, what would you say to them?
I would say, "Thanks." I would say "Peace"
I'd tell "Soon child, you're going to find release"

Long time coming to right now
Pipe down
Lifetime looking for things I thought I found already
Falling to the floor like I'm alright I'm steady
I send myself back so I can tell me
Twenty years deep in the rhymes and beats
And I'm still so far from finding peace
Every line is a ladder I can climb through time
So I walk straight faced through the winding streets
I eat the bread of rhythm I drink them milk of rhyme
But I've been carrying a bag of shame that's bigger than me
Dragging it behind me up an endless staircase
Until the day I realised
This doesn't mean what I think it does
I don't need to carry this forever
I left it in the clearing by the firepit and ran
Back to the child I was - looking for an elder
I saw myself there
Took myself by the hand

When I was young I sought help from my older self
I came into my head, I told me know yourself
When I was young I sought help from my older self
I came into my head, I told me know yourself...

I was 17, heaven seemed close enough to touch
I had never been happier
Chest against the barrier watching Wu Tang
My own character starting to bloom
I was learning how to capture a room in two phrases
20 years deep in the rhymes and beats
Close my eyes and speak
Down the wires of time
I go back to the child I was
When I put myself on the line
I had to beg for the mic
I had to deal with the ignorance
I had to get better
I wanted bigger things
These days those days are far away
I try and catch them in my sights, but they start to fade
Now I sit amongst crate loads of rhyme books
And I think about the old days that the time took
I thank the little me that put the work in, like -
Could you picture me when you were spitting sixteens?
Surfing the top deck - Penning them bars
Underage in the clubs taking charge of the mic?
Precocious little nothing with the world in your sights -
I am on it now. I will
Work harder, this is peace to the kid I came after
(Peace to the kid I came after)
The words are the bridge between the present and the past
I know myself at last

When I was young I sought help from my older self
I came into my head, I told me know yourself
When I was young I sought help from my older self
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Know yourself
Know yourself

Soon child you're going to find release (Soon child you're going to find release)