

# These Waters

Talib Kweli

I gotta split this honeybun in four ways  
No heat because the gas is off us, it's goin' on four days  
Depression in the corridors, pressed to the doorway  
No power in my tongue, nobody cares about what the poor say  
Fuck the system, Willie Lynch 'em, what they did to us  
I'm walkin' to the cornerstore, the scenery's ridiculous  
Commercial with the old hands about how it used to be  
They witness the digression but the struggle shit ain't new to me  
I'm from the place where all the money and respect is missing  
Poverty stricken but the pastor still collect commission  
We think we free but unknowingly we accept restrictions  
I'm out the dark because my hunger sparks my scepticism  
Was always taught embrace my elders and protect the wisdom  
Peaceful, still neglect the victim but we give it that permission  
Black girl, thick skin, woman [?]  
She's the reason we're a diamond so I call her pressure

Spent a long time searching for the heart I'm feeling shy  
I can feel the freedom in me; I can make it to the other side  
And when my mind begins to drown  
When the world's tryna bring me down  
I'll still be keeping my head above these waters

All muthafuckers afraid to speak out so they tweet out  
Celebrities hashtag revolution on the rebound  
My life is in rehearsal, why you think I always freestyle?  
People are getting beat down, yo [?] Niko turn that beat down  
Look, you wanna make history, boy, you tryna make it out?  
Too many negative people in your circle you gotta take them out  
See [?] paper route  
Find the combinations cause I never took the safer route  
I wanna see my people wealthy, in body and mind I'm healthy  
But some people just wanna settle for a selfie  
It's hard to level with the devil in me  
And the next man is tryna sell me a dream, in a pyramid scheme  
Wake up now look, my vacation is a permanent safe haven  
Man, this system isn't game, why you think they buying PlayStations?  
My people in body bags and you watch Twitter lobby gagging  
And would rather spend \$200 on Jordans that everybody have

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I walk for miles and no smiles  
I live for my brother who didn't know how  
I see the envy in my know-how  
I know the world looking at me, the ocean so shy  
The sun got my skin brown  
Michael could easily be Michelle

No doubt, so foul  
Being a girl is half silent, part-time loud  
No Matel, no L'Anglaise like mine to play with  
I'm surrounded by magic  
Put the hood in my cloud, you can't have it  
No curfews for godless bandits  
This is the world I've been handed  
Mother ships and Cutlass Supremes landed  
Not a fan of bandwidth  
I communicate with ancient Sanskrit  
Use the lead to write the life I was dealt with  
Always number two to you  
But I know I'm the curve of every corner  
The place you gotta stop before you cross one  
And it's usually the hardest story, from the brightest smile  
And the sweetest child  
And you cry rape and smile  
You steal the lost and found  
Indigenous screams keep my mouth shut and my dreams deferred  
Word, I'm a blue bird, in the jay territory  
I'm my great-grandmama's glory  
These new trees wanna lynch me or whore me  
While my arms keep stretching at climbing past rings of stories  
My block is be more and black  
My block steals horses, the hearse and fire's back  
My eyes tire from watching my back  
My existence is a matter of fact  
Retold this fiction, I created form, style and diction  
Surviving was my first adult decision  
I breathe, I love, I travel, I pray  
Beyond this place, this moment, this walk from my door  
To simply make to the other side of the day