

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