Black Cowboys

Bruce Springsteen

Raney William's playground was among Haven's streets
Where he ran past melted candles and flower wreaths
Names and photos of the young black faces
Whose death and blood consecrated these placesRaney's mother said Raney stay at my side
For you are my blessing, you are my pride
It's your love here that keeps my soul alive
I want you to come home from school and stay insideRaney'd do his work and put his books away
There was a channel showed a Western movie everyday
And that brought him home books on the black cowboys of the Oklahoma range
The Seminole scouts that fought the tribes of the Great PlainsSummer come and the days grew long
Raney always had his mother's smile to depend on
Along the street of stray bullets he made his way
To the warmth of her arms at the end of each dayCome the Fall, the rain flooded these homes
In Ezekiel's valley of dry bones
It fell hard and dark to the ground
It fell without a soundAnd they took up with a man whose business was the boulevard
Whose smile was fixed in a face that was never off guard
In the pipes 'neath the kitchen sink his secrets are kept
In the day, behind drawn curtains in the next bedroom he sleptAnd she got lost in the days
The smile Raney depended on dusted away
The arms that held him were no more his own
He lay at night his head pressed to her chest listening to the ghost in her bonesIn the kitchen, Raney slipped his hand between the pipes
From a brown bag pulled five hundred dollar bills and stuck it in his coat side
Stood in the dark at his mother's bed
Brushed her hair and kissed her eyesIn the twilight Raney walked to the station on streets of stone
Through Pennsylvania and Ohio his train drifted on
Through the small towns of Indiana the big train crept
As he lay his head back on his seat and sleptHe woke and the towns gave way to muddy fields of green
Corn and cotton and endless nothing in between
Over the rutted hills of Oklahoma the red sun slipped and was gone
The moon rose and stripped the earth to its bone

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