

# Foreward, 1619

## Sho Baraka

The devil goes to and fro  
Like a lion seeking someone to devour  
Resist himDon't close the book, I got more to write  
You can change the story, that is my advice  
I read in color, they see black and white  
You just saw the cover, but there's more to life  
Don't close the book, I got more to write  
You can change the story, that is my advice  
I read in color, they see black and white  
You just saw the cover, but there's more to lifeYeah, hello  
Quick introduction before I narrate  
I'm from the west, between Cornel and Kanye  
I grew up between section eight and cloud nine  
During my youth I lost my sense of being colorblind  
In between white supremacy and black nihilism  
AME churches, corner stores and the prison systems  
Hoteps and preachers on the block, they was dropping wisdom  
I would pick it up and just give it a little rhythm  
They said my lineage had a couple of kings  
A couple queens, a couple thieves, a couple fiends  
Despite the struggle, I was teached that we are equal  
I fall short like a midget but I'm down for the people  
The people, argue I died with integration  
Their false liberation is really assimilation  
The youth view my history with some suspicion  
They wanna progress past religion and traditionDon't close the book, I got more to write  
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You just saw the cover, but there's more to lifeHello average, let me introduce you to awesome  
That Harlem renaissance age had some excellent artists  
That miseducation, that midnight marauding  
That life before Eve ate that fruit in the garden  
They say 'You might be on the wrong side of history'  
Well, that depends on who's writing  
Who's reciting, who's typing and who likes it

If we want peace somebody has to do the fighting  
We exit Egypt, happy to speak resistance  
Then turn around, and ask pharaoh for his assistance  
Huh, what is logic to the ignorant?  
What's forgiveness to people who think they're sinless?  
We are those, fully exposed, Adam and Eve hiding our weakness  
Folks who wanna be close but the devil stands between us  
Who knows the dirty souls with an urgent need to be cleaned up  
They oppose my solution, everybody hates Jesus  
Don't close the book, I got more to write

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Yeah, was protesting a law?  
Should I pray or should I write?

Do I want peace, or do I want power so I can try it?  
Who's gonna give the truth when these church moms retire?  
When censorship gets you fired and nobody gets inspired  
I don't care what you look like, black, white or magenta  
I don't care where you come from, Africa or placenta  
We all desperate and broken, given the same dilemma  
Do I serve God, or do I make off in my agenda?  
I remember thinking I was Daniel with the lions  
I'm like Israel in hiding when it's time to fight Goliath  
I've been broken, I've seen death working  
I've fought doubt, I've been knocked out, I know what hurt is  
I run from the truth, but I know where church is  
I failed doing my job but yet I know my purpose  
Praise Jesus I was blind but now I see

But my problem is I think I see too many things  
Let us chiropractic crack open the spine of this book  
Turn a few pages and take a deep look  
This is not the Catcher in the Rye  
This is the African who caught the slave catcher's eye  
Yet an invisible man who has the whole world watching  
Shall we meet the protagonist?  
For I am the colored cog in the capitalist wheel  
With baby faced bronze skin and melon and a peel snatched from the craterless civilization  
My name is Louis Portier  
Arrived on these shores but I've got more to say  
From Bali to Barbados to Beaufort, South Carolina  
Sierra Leone to Sapelo  
Sugar cane on my fingertips and shackles on my feet  
There are limitations to a man so pity me until I sunk my tooth into Jude's freedom

Tastes like grandma's sweet potato pie  
But it goes from master's plantation to mass incarceration  
As the Jim Crow flies, all of this happened, more or less  
This is up from slavery, meets Porgy and Bess  
August Wilson, and Kenya Barris  
James Brown and James Burr  
Kehinde Wiley, and Cara Walker  
George Carrothers, Clinton and Washington  
Carver, the great migration and reconstruction  
From black wall streets, to Harlem Artilliers  
This is black survival and success, put on full display  
Whether it's the Little Rock, or the Charleston Nine  
Trying to integrate, or praying to stay alive  
Thinking that if my work was good somehow y'all would recognize my personhood  
But nah, instead I had to hustle this chocolate charm  
This black brilliance, this ebony ingenuity  
I know what this nation has done, can do, and is doing to me  
Also what it could be and therefore still, I rise  
From 1619 and beyond here I stand  
From being three-fifths of a compromised plan  
Using the breath in my black lungs  
Shouting words from a place of black love  
'I am a man'

Songwriters

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