

Foreward, 1619

Sho Baraka

The devil goes to and fro
Like a lion seeking someone to devour
Resist him 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 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 life Yeah, 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 taught 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 tradition Don't close the book, I got more to write
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You just saw the cover, but there's more to life Hello 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
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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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