

Letter To My Countrymen

Brother Ali

Verse 1:

I used to think I hated this place
Couldn't wait to tell the president straight to his face
But lately I changed, nowadays I embrace it all
Beautiful ideals and amazing flaws
Got to care enough to give a testament
'Bout the deeply depressing mess we're in
It's home so we better make the best of it
I wanna make this country what it says it is
Still dream in the vividest living color
No matter how many times my love been smothered
Who's ever above us won't just let us suffer
All of this struggling got to amount to something
This is a letter to my countrymen
Especially those my age and younger than
We're up against an ugly trend
Everybody's hustling don't nobody touch their friends
No group singing and dancing
No anthem nobody holds hands, and...
Instead they give a handheld
And make you shoulder life's burden by your damn self
One thing that can't be debated
Power never changed on it's own you got to make it
That's why community is so sacred
That's the symbol that we make when we raise fists

Chorus:

"Sooner or later" x2

Verse 2:

We don't really like to talk about the race thing
The whole grandparents used to own slaves thing
Pat ourselves on the back in February
Looking at pictures of Abe Lincoln and the great King
But the real picture's much more embarrassing
We're still not even close to really sharing things
The situation of oppressed people
Shows what we feel it means to be a human being
What does it mean to be American?
I think the struggle to free is our inheritance
And if we say it how it really is

We know our lily skin still give us privilege
Advantages given to the few
That are built into the roots of our biggest institutions
That's the truth in life we got to choose
Do I fight in the movement or think I'm entitled to it
This is not a practice life
This is the big game we got to attack it right
Each one of us is headed for the grave
This old crooked world won't be saved by the passive type
This is a letter to my countrymen
Not from a Democrat or a Republican
But one among you that's why you call me brother
Ain't scared to tell you we're in trouble 'cause I love you

Chorus:

"Sooner or later" x2

Verse 3:

They tell me I'm a dreamer, they ridicule
They feel defeated, old, bitter, and cynical
Excuse me but I see it from a different view
I still believe in what a driven few could really do
I know that the masses want to sleep
And they would just rather hear me rapping to the beat
But I want to pass this planet to my son
A little better than it was when they handed it to me
So I wrote a letter to my countrymen
I'll be happy if it only reaches one of them
Reporting live A-L-I, your brother
Mourning in America, dreaming in color

Dr. Cornel West:

My dear Brother Ali,

I think you know deep down in your soul that
something, something just ain't right.
You don't want to be just well adjusted to injustice
and well adapted to indifference. You want to be
a person with integrity who leaves a mark on the world.
People can say when you go that you left the world
just a little better than you found it. I understand. I want
to be like that too.

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