

**IT A COME**



**POEMS BY  
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## ME CYAAN BELIEVE IT

Me seh me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

Room dem a rent  
me apply widin  
but as me go een  
cockroach rat an scorpion  
also come een

Waan good  
nose haffi run  
but me naw go siddung pon high wall  
like Humpty Dumpty  
me a face me reality

One little bwoy come blow im horn  
an me look pon im wid scorn  
an me realize how me five bwoy-picni  
was a victim of de trick  
dem call partisan politricks

an me ban me belly  
an me bawl  
an me ban me belly  
an me bawl  
Lard  
me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

Me daughter bwoy-frien name Sailor  
an im pass through de port like a ship  
more gran-picni fi feed  
an de whole a we in need  
what a night what a plight  
an we cyaan get a bite  
me life is a stiff fight  
an me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

Sittin on de corner wid me frien  
talkin bout tings an time  
me hear one voice seh  
'Who dat?'

Me seh 'A who dat?'  
'A who a seh who dat'  
when me a seh who dat?'

When yuh teck a stock  
dem lick we dung flat  
teet start fly  
an big man start cry  
me seh me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

De odder day  
me a pass one yard pon de hill  
When me teck a stock me hear  
'Hey, bwoy!'  
'Yes, mam?'  
'Hey, bwoy!'  
'Yes, mam!'  
'Yuh clean up de dawg shit?'  
'Yes, mam.'

An me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

Doris a modder of four  
get a wuk as a domestic  
Boss man move een  
an bap si kaisico she pregnant again  
bap si kaisico she pregnant again  
an me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

Deh a yard de odder night  
when me hear 'Fire! Fire!'  
'Fire, to plate claat!'  
Who dead? You dead!  
Who dead? Me dead!  
Who dead? Harry dead!  
Who dead? Eleven dead!  
Woeeeeeeeee  
Orange Street fire  
deh pon me head  
an me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

Lawd  
me see some blackbud  
livin inna one buildin  
but no rent no pay  
so dem cyaan stay  
Lawd  
de oppress an de dispossess  
cyaan get no res

What nex?

Teck a trip from Kingston  
to Jamaica  
Teck twelve from a dozen  
an me see me mumma in heaven  
Madhouse! Madhouse!

Me seh me cyaan believe it  
me seh me cyaan believe it

Yuh believe it?  
How yuh fi believe it  
when yuh laugh  
an yuh blind yuh eye to it?

But me know yuh believe it  
Lawwwwwwwd  
me know yuh believe it

## A GO BLOW FIRE

Me naw disown dis-ya talk  
 fi chat bout me freedom.  
 Naw tun criminal  
 siddung fill me lungs wid smoke  
 an sing song of lamentation  
 all day long.

Yuh tink every day I a go get up  
 an jus blow like dus  
 an when I cry  
 fi-I tears tun to pus?

I cyaan just a galang  
 a hope like a barren lan fi rain.  
 I soon bus

for behind I is darkness,  
 round I destruction,  
 an before I  
 hunger  
 a go blow fire!

## YOUT OUT DEH

Yuh no see it, Trainer?  
 Look how much you out deh  
 a live from han to mout  
 an jus a run all about  
 an jus a pester people  
 fi dutty up dem vehicle  
 fi get little pittance  
 so dat dem life can balance.

Yuh tink de only opportunity  
 we can give dem in dis modern society  
 is fi come paint political graffiti  
 an further distort dem personality  
 an tun dem into wild coyote  
 dat always a shoot  
 an every time dem greet we  
 is a plow an a yow  
 an I no cow?  
 Well, watch ya now!

Yuh tink every day  
 dem a go get up  
 an pin dem hope  
 pon politician narrow scope?  
 Before so,  
 everyting go up inna smoke!

Yuh no see it, Trainer,  
 dat blood did on ya  
 run like water go through strainer?  
 Yuh tink dem a go remain silent forever  
 an no get a insight into dem vision  
 dat two polly lizard an two silver ticks  
 doan add up to politricks?  
 Fi dem stop live an fret  
 an havin regret  
 like dem life set  
 pon recalculated step?

Dis-ya soun a murderer,  
 it cyaan go no furtherer.  
 de wretched of de eart  
 goin go meck de downpressor  
 nyam dirt!

## IT A COME

It a come  
 fire a go bun  
 blood a go run  
 No care how yuh teck it  
 some haffi regret it

Yuh coulda vex till yuh blue  
 I a reveal it to you  
 dat cut-eye cut-eye cyaan  
 cut dis-ya reality in two

It a come  
 fire a go bun  
 blood a go run  
 it goin go teck you  
 it goin go teck you

so Maggie Thatcher  
 yuh better watch ya  
 yuh goin go meet yuh Waterloo  
 yuh can stay deh a screw  
 I a subpoena you  
 from de little fella  
 call Nelson Mandela  
 who goin tun a martyr  
 fi yuh stop support  
 de blood-suckin I  
 call apartheid

for it a come  
 blood a go run  
 it goin go teck you  
 it goin go teck you

an if yuh inna yuh mansion  
 a get some passion  
 it goin go bus out in deh  
 like a fusion bomb

it a swell up inna de groun  
 an yuh cyaan hold it back  
 yuh haffi subscribe to it  
 or feel it

an no bodder run to no politician  
 for im cyaan bribe dis-ya one  
 an no bodder teck it fi joke  
 yuh no see wha happen to de Pope

It a come  
 fire a go bun  
 blood a go run  
 it goin go teck you  
 it goin go teck you

Some goin go call it awareness  
 an we goin go celebrate it wid firmness  
 Odders goin go call it revolution  
 but I prefer liberation

Fi de oppressed an de dispossessed  
 who has been restless  
 a full time dem get some rest

for it a come  
 fire a go bun  
 blood a go run  
 it goin go teck you  
 it goin go teck you

not only fi I  
 but fi you too

## ME FEEL IT, YUH SEE

Me feel it, yuh see,  
 fi see so much yout out deh  
 under such a hell of a strain  
 till dem don't even know dem name.  
 Dem out deh, nuffer dan cigarette butt,  
 out a luck a look fi wuk,  
 tinkin dat freedom is a senseless dream,  
 an grip wid such feelin of hostility  
 dem woulda strangle a dawg fi get a bone  
 an devalue dem dignity.

Me feel it, yuh see,  
 fi see dat inna dis-ya concrete jungle  
 de yout no got nuttin to relate to.  
 Some tryin fi get close to Babylon  
 to pay dem rent  
 but de system  
 han down a crucial kind a judgement.  
 An tears will not satisfy I  
 to preserve a democriy  
 whereby youtful lives pay de penalty  
 for politicians' irresponsibility  
 while dem intellectual pen dragon  
 a justify de dutty currydunction  
 dat I live pon like a little mampala man.

Me feel it, yuh see,  
 fi see dat dem twis justice an equality  
 till it no address I-an-I reality,  
 dat when yuh teck a stock  
 big man haffi a run back  
 fi hanker pon im ole-lady frock,  
 fi ketch up im stomach  
 dat stretch out like a hammock.

but a goin walk pon me blistered feet  
sing louder dan de abeng  
through me swollen mout  
an stan firm  
wid me puppa holograph  
drench in blood

Sunday a come

## I AN I ALONE

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I an I alone  
a trod through creation.  
Babylon on I right, Babylon on I lef,  
Babylon in front of I an Babylon behind I,  
an I an I alone in the middle  
like a Goliath wid a sling-shot.

'Ten cent a bundle fi me calaloo!  
Yuh a buy calaloo, dread? Ten cent.'

Everybody a try fi sell someting,  
everybody a try fi grab someting,  
everybody a try fi hustle someting,  
everybody a try fi kill someting,

but ting an ting mus ring,  
an only a few can sing  
cause dem naw face de same sinting.

(Sung) *It's a hard road to travel  
An a mighty long way to go.  
Jesus, me blessed Saviour,  
will meet us on the journey home.*

'Shoppin bag! Shoppin bag! Five cent fi one!  
'Green pepper! Thyme! Skellion an pimento!  
'Remember de Sabbath day, to keep it holy!  
Six days shalt thou labour,  
but on the seventh day shalt thou rest.'  
'Hi, mam, how much fi dah piece a yam deh?  
'No, no dat; dat! Yes; dat!  
'Three dollars a poun, nice gentleman.'  
'Clear out! Oonoo country people too damn tief!  
Like yuh mumma!  
'Fi-me mumma? Wha yuh know bout me mumma?'  
Look ya, a might push dis inna yuh!  
Yuh lie! A woulda collar yuh!  
Bruck it up! But, dread, cool down!  
Alright, cool down. Rastafari!

De people-dem a teck everyting meck a muckle.  
 Dem a try fi hustle down de price  
 fi meck two ends meet,  
 de odder one a try fi push up de price  
 fi meck de picni backbone get sinting fi eat.  
 But two teet meet an dem a bark,  
 dem cyaan stan de pressure,  
 dem tired fi compete wid hog an dawg,  
 but dem mus aspire fi someting better  
 although dem dungle-heap ketch a fire.

Cyaan meck blood outa stone,  
 an cow never know de use a im tail  
 till fly teck it, but from dem born  
 dem a fan de fly of poverty from dem ass  
 for dem never have a tail fi cover it.

'Watch me, watch me, watch me!' 'Hey, handcart-bwoy,  
 mind yuh lick dung me picni-dem, yuh know!'  
 'Tief! Tief! Tief!' 'Whe im deh?  
 Look out, meck a bruck im friggin neck!'  
 'Im a one a de P-dem!'

Yuh see it? Zacky was me frien  
 but look how im life a go end?  
 Party politics play de trick  
 an it lick im dung  
 wid de big cocoomacca stick.

I an I alone  
 a trod through creation,  
 Babylon on me right, Babylon on me lef,  
 Babylon in front of I an Babylon behind I,  
 an I an I alone inna de middle  
 like a Goliath wid a sling-shot.

'Picni-dem a bawl,  
 rent to pay,  
 wife to obey,  
 but only Jesus know de way!  
 De meek shall inherit de earth  
 an de fulness thereof!'

But look what she inherit?  
 Six months pregnant, five mout fi feed,  
 an her man deh a jail, no bail.

'Cho, Roy, man! Let me go, no, man?  
 Me no want no man inna '81!'  
 'So wha happen? It was only '80  
 yuh did a teck man? Cho, Doris, man,  
 consider dis late application.'

Dem waan meck love pon hungry belly  
 jus fi figet dis moment of poverty  
 but she mus get breed  
 an dem haffi go face dem calamity.

'Joshua did seh oonoo fi draw oonoo belt tight.'  
 'Which belt, when me tripe a come through me mout?'  
 'What happen, sah, yuh get deliver? Yuh naw answer?'  
 'Hi, lady, yuh believe in Socialism?'  
 'No, sah, me believe in social livin.'

'Calaloo! Shoppin bag! Thyme!'  
 'Dinner mints! Cigarettes an Wrigley's!'  
 'Hi, Albert, which part Tiny?'  
 'Hi, sah, beg yuh a ten cent, no?'  
 'Meck yuh no leave de man alone?'  
 'Hi, sexy! Honey-bunch! Sugar-plum!'  
 'Dog-shit! Cow-shit!'



I an I alone  
 a trod through creation,  
 Babylon on I right, Babylon on I lef,  
 Babylon behind I an Babylon in front of I,  
 an I an I alone inna de middle  
 like a Goliath wid a sling-shot.

Lawd, a find a ten cent.  
 Lawd, we naw go get no sentance.

## TICKY TICKY TUCK

Ticky ticky tuck  
 everyting stuck  
 Dem a look little wuk

*Wha yuh name?*  
 Me no know  
*Whe yuh goin?*  
 Nowhere  
*What yuh lookin?*  
 Anyting

Ticky ticky tuck  
 everybody bruck  
 What a luck

No wuk

## REVOLUTIONARY

Yuh see all de time  
 a siddung ya naw seh nutten?  
 A jus a tink  
 how a never have no fahder  
 an how a had to model me modder  
 fi live ina one little tenement yard  
 which part everybody tink dem better off  
 dan de odder, yet when night come  
 dem ben up like exercise book,  
 siddung a wonder wha dem a go cook.

She never business bout Africa,  
 much less fi go like Rasta,  
 an she woulda wuk night an day,  
 make sacrifice an pray.  
 For all she waan fi know,  
 dat her son come out to sinting better  
 so she can move outa de hog pen  
 an show off pon her frien.

I remember de fus day  
 de bull come inna de pen,  
 im seh, 'A goin ketch dis dungle a fire  
 an buil some concrete structure,  
 dat pon a dark day  
 yuh can stretch outside an polish de sky!  
 An we seh dis was progress,  
 content wid an incompleteness  
 inside.

Now I tun man  
 I sight up a revolutionary vision:  
 if we waan seh roots any at all  
 we haffi go stop we mumma from movin  
 from yard to yard

## I STILL DEH YA

Yuh member how we get conscious as a yout  
 dem days when we use to talk nuff bout Garvey  
 an buy ital yatty till is swell we head  
 fi come walk wid Rodney?  
 It use to bun dem odder one  
 de way we use to chat bout Marley  
 an tell dem dat as long as dem imitate  
 dem will always full up a self-hate.

Yuh no member de big strong straptin black man  
 dat use to have nuff gal roun im  
 dat when im walk down de street  
 everybody start fi talk  
 an when im open im mout  
 every dawg start fi bark?  
 Well, im still down a penitentiary  
 a run battery.

No bodder talk how dem dance use to cork!  
 An we jus stan up outa de gate  
 as teck een de King dub plate!  
 But wait,  
 no im same one did tell we dat  
 im have a plan fi free de African  
 fi stop open door fi Sheraton?  
 Fi all I know,  
 im deh a far-out a reach out.  
 An de odder one?  
 De system jus reduce im to a fashion  
 an meck im deh pon im knee  
 a beg fi im dignity.

I still deh ya  
 a sch yuh haffi stop sing De Carpenters'  
 'Only Yesterday' an meck we create we today  
 dat tomorrow dem democracy  
 doan reduce revolutionary  
 to a folly.

But look, yuh got hands  
 an yu damn strong.  
 No submerge yuhself under de pressure  
 an meck freedom haunt yuh  
 till yuh tink dat dere can never be better  
 so might as well yuh suffer.

If yuh waan two ends fi meet  
 only yuh can do it,  
 by awakenin yuh soul to yuh reality  
 an determine not to devalue yuh dignity.  
 Stan up like Tacky!  
 Regardless of de term  
 yuh haffi stan firm  
 fi we chart we destiny.

Yuh feel de heat?  
 Who will suck anodder kisko-pop?

## MECK DEM KNOW HOW YUH FEEL <sup>49</sup>

Meck dem know how yuh feel  
 fi siddung deh so long,  
 an a no you one de pressure a teck.  
 Down to de yout-dem inna Brixton  
 stop sing glory to Englan,  
 for not even a laugh  
 can come outa dem heart  
 de way dem desperate  
 fi sinting fi nyam.

Meck dem know dat bull inna pen  
 waan fi come out  
 fi go chat wid im frien  
 an backward dem wid dem  
 mock-ritual-of-poverty chat  
 dat dem hold we wid  
 when election pop.  
 Dem tink we doan know,  
 meck dem galang so.

Dem tink we figet Vietnam  
 when we did jump an shout  
 dat dem fi drive dose barbarians out  
 an never realize dat dem a human  
 dat have a burnin desire fi free  
 like any odder man.

Meck dem know how yuh feel,  
 an no bodder come to me  
 come look sympathy,  
 for friendly understandin  
 is not de solution.  
 We waan answer, or else  
 dis-ya civilization ya  
 cyaan go no further.

## SAY, NATTY-NATTY

Say,  
Natty-Natty,  
no bodder  
dash weh  
yuh culture!

Say, Natty-Natty,  
no bodder  
dash weh  
yuh culture!

For de teacher man know it  
but im naw tell de sheep  
dat ratta ratta  
no bring back new teet  
when yuh dash weh de spliff  
an yuh teck up de sniff.

Remember yard is yuh mumma,  
pon groun yuh sleep,  
a seh she teck yuh picni  
when yuh tired fi breed,  
an if yuh no sleep  
yuh mumma no sleep  
an if yuh a go die  
she a beg Gawd  
meck she die too.

So say,  
Natty-Natty  
no bodder  
dash weh  
yuh culture!

Say,  
Natty-Natty,  
no bodder  
dash weh  
yuh culture!

Yuh no country-come-to-town,  
yuh born a Jam-down,  
so no figet yuh gal a yard  
an teck one from abroad  
an lick out pon de beach  
an ejaculate  
between a *Time* magazine.  
Dem will spread it  
pon a Boo York scene  
seh yuh's a dollar-a-day dread.  
A better yuh bald yuh head!

So say, Natty-Natty,  
no bodder  
dash weh  
yuh culture!

Say, Natty-Natty,  
no bodder  
dash weh  
yuh culture!

A know yuh disillusion  
when yuh see de politician  
im teck out yuh daughter  
an im buy her supper  
an im get her fat  
an im call it culture.

But say, Natty-Natty,  
 be aware of de cultural smuggler!  
 Say, Natty-Natty,  
 be aware of de cultural smuggler!

No bodder teck we revolution, man,  
 so tun touris attraction!

## ROOTS

Roots

Roots

Roots

Lawwwwwwd  
 an dem a roots  
 an dem a roots

Roots

Youtman-dem searchin  
 de crevice an corners  
 fi dem roots

Lawwwwwwd  
 an dem a roots  
 an dem a roots

But searchin fi im roots  
 a cause an explosion  
 between man an man

Lawwwwwwd  
 but dem a roots  
 but dem a roots

Some a seh  
 which roots  
 when de only roots dem can trace  
 start wid dem modder  
 an end wid dem granmodder

dem naw roots  
 Lawwwwwwd  
 dem naw roots