

Before They Called You White

Brother Ali

At what point did poor European people that used to rebel
Against the ones that forced them to work land they didn't own and die with
nothing of their own
What was it that turned their hearts so that they start to Identify with power
even though they're powerless
Identify with wealth even though they're broke?
It's the invention of whiteness

They call you white by white standards
Damn what they're talking 'bout human first
Stand and curse the dirty hand that first crafted the plan
Spread it through the land and shattered the damn earth
This is sickest system that ever existed
Since this earth beginning, commenced, it's twisting
How you convince men with red blood to bleed?
Completely devalue what a human being means
Nobody called themselves white several centuries ago
They were living off the land with the trees
They were Dutch, they were Irish, they were German
They were Greek with culture, families, tradition and beliefs
Rich blood suckers saw new soil to seize
And they ain't 'bout to get their hands dirty, cracker please
Swindled you to trade in your identity
Showed you pie in the sky and promised you a piece
With symbolic image in the scripture that you're reading
White holy angels and black evil demons
You were so starving that you started to believe it
Now you'll die colonizing for somebody else's greed
Don't you see the overseers are still in the field?
Every breath a warden breathe he still in the jail
You will never own that farm or the prison for real
Terrified of the time when your victims rebel
Listen you don't fear them, you fear the blood on your hands
All the ugly you done to that man
That woman, that child, that land
That sea, that sky, that they'd look you in the eye
And demand that you tell them why
All them years whipping and lying and killing
Generations of poison and bombing and drilling
All designed to turn the hearts of your children to stone
Got post traumatic slave master syndrome
How the hell are y'all going to heal, be made whole?
You identifying with the people in control
You can't throw a human in the bottom of a boat
Unless somebody got a damn chain around your soul
In that middle passage asking who got stole?
A hot auction block where your blood ran cold
Every day a cop let them shots explode
You're gon' have to find a way to regain your soul

I said the eye can't see itself
It can't sit back, critique itself, and peep itself
It needs help
Take the sword for example
No matter how hard, it can't carve its own handle

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The inner city of our cities is like another country. The rules are different. It's almost like you need a passport there. The police treat people differently. When I lived out in the suburbs, if my car broke down on the highway and a state trooper pulled up behind me, I wouldn't have been scared. I'd have been glad. But young man after young man after young man had been beaten by the police and the only way you know, you've got to be with the people and we live separated. We go in air conditioned cars and we stick on your interstates and hang out with people just like us. Well, by God's grace, I was brought into this, and seeing how race plays a part and how poverty plays a part, and my job is to go out to the American people