

## **Assata Shakur "The Tradition"**

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Carry it on now.  
Carry it on.  
Carry it on now.  
Carry it on.  
Carry on the tradition.

Their were Black People since the childhood of time  
who carried it on.  
In Ghana and Mali and Timbuktu  
We carried it on.  
Carried on the tradition.

We hid in the bush.  
When the slave masters came  
holding spear  
And when the moment was ripe,  
leaped out and lanced the lifeblood  
of our would-be masters.  
We carried it on.

On slave ships,  
hurling ourselves into oceans.  
Slitting the throats of our captors.  
We took their whips.  
And their ships  
Blood flowed in the Atlantic  
and it wasn't all ours.  
We carried it on.

Fed Missy arsenic apple pies.  
Stole the axes from the shed.  
Went and chopped off master's head.  
We ran. We fought.  
We organized a railroad.  
An underground.  
We carried it on.

In newspapers. In meetings.  
In arguments and street fights.  
We carried it on.

In tales told to children.

In chants and cantatas.  
In poems and blues songs  
and saxophone screams,  
We carried it on.

In classrooms. In churches.  
In courtrooms. In prisons.  
We carried it on.  
On soapboxes and picket lines.  
Welfare lines, unemployment  
Our lives on the line,  
We carried it on.

In sit-ins and pray ins  
And march ins and die ins,  
We carried it on.

On cold Missouri midnights  
Pitting shotguns against lynch mobs  
On burning Brooklyn streets  
Pitting rocks against rifles,  
We carried it on.

Against water hoses and bulldogs.  
Against nightsticks and bullets.  
Against tanks and tear gas.  
Needles and nooses.  
Bombs and birth control.  
We carried it on.

In Selma and San Juan.  
Mozambique, Mississippi.  
In Brazil and in Boston,  
We carried it on.

Through the lies and the sell-outs,  
The mistakes and the madness.  
Through pain and hunger and frustration,  
We carried it on.

Carried on the tradition.  
Carried a strong tradition.  
Carried a proud tradition.  
Carried a Black tradition.  
Carry it on.

Pass it down to the children.  
Pass it down.  
Carry it on.  
Carry it on now.  
Carry it on

TO FREEDOM!

Assata Shakur

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