

## The Roots

# "Return To Innocence Lost"

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(Ursula Rucker)

Muffled sound of fist on flesh

Blows to chest

No breath

Air gasps

You ain't nothing but white trash, bitch!

With each hit, each kick, each...broken rib

Crack, Crack!

Bones are crying

Mommy's crying and bleeding

And pleading

And then...

Daddy wants to fuck

Dick hard, swelled with power rush

And as if all that wasn't enough

Mommy's seven months heavy with birth

As...Daddy grunts and cursed drunk nothings in her  
bloodied ear

(singing softly)

First...lullaby

First...Son...will...ever...hear

And never forget

Mommy almost bled to death when she have  
him...finally

She'd already lost...three

Uterus-bruised, shredded, and weak

>From being daily beat

And Friday nights were the worse and...

Daddy never came with flowers

Instead he spent hours at some corner spot

With some bar pop named Cookie

Putting his thing down

Soiling Mommy's sheets with...

Sweet...talk shit,

Cookie's cheap lipstick,

Hair grease, sperm, and jezebel juice

To hell with the good news that...

He was a father for the first time

His thirst for wine and women

Clouded his vision...  
No warm welcome for mother and son  
Just...  
The rank smell of ass-crack, funk, and cum  
But Mommy's prayerful strength-her best defense  
She...burned the dirty linens  
Made a fresh bed  
Laid sleeping First Son down  
And never made a sound  
As she purged her scourge  
With birth-blood and quiet tears  
Watching as her fears and love and sacrifice  
Lie there in his soft skin and new life  
Breathing, dreaming, fresh from God's eye  
Mommy's little survivor  
Like...her

Mommy called crazy and scorned  
"cause she two more born  
One boy soon after  
The girl much later and...  
Although they were both sung the same lullabies of  
hate  
Her...First Son, the first one  
Whose...womb-world was profaned  
Came of age playing street games  
With Stewie, Rezzie, and Little Brother  
'Till his heart start to wither  
In pain and shame  
Blamed Mom for the wrong she let Daddy do to her  
And him...  
Let...sins of the Father cause his Innocence to wander  
Found out amongst thieves  
Chose to squander his dreams  
Stopped believing in himself  
Become prodigal with his life  
Make impossible shit right with...  
Gang-ties, crime, lies  
Erase wise, woeful words of Mother  
Replaced them with absurdities of others  
Who had also lost their way

Played a different kind of street game now  
First Son plunged deep  
Speak street-family vows  
Espouse no causes but his own  
See, he couldn't protect Mommy's neck from Daddy's  
grasp  
Or...protect Mommy's ass from Daddy's wrath  
Couldn't shield her ears from...  
Daddy's foul-mouthed, liquor-breath jeers

His only defense-served be confidence  
Brown bottles housed his swift descent  
Phones called cops on block frequent for his  
shenanigans  
Now...Daddy and him twins in addiction  
Driven to false-hearted heavens and friends  
By liquefied demons  
Had become what he despised from Conception 'til End  
Destined for a demise  
Survived nine lives of staying high  
Conning, jewelry-pawning, arrests, theft  
Womanizing...only for money, never for sex  
Bullet in chest, baseball bat to the head  
Left for dead  
So, eyes wide and glassy  
Speech...slowed and slurred  
Lips twitched with caked-up codeine candy  
And mouth corners one December 24th  
Mr. Hide and False Friend  
Took final ride to suburban supplier  
Shots were fired by the gray man  
With shaky hand  
But not shaky enough to miss...  
Hit...Lost Boy in back  
So-called Friend runs for door  
Leaves First Son blood-born  
Lying alone in blood on cold floor

Death was the cause of...  
Returning to Innocence Lost...

Baby 'Sis awake for dawn on Christmas morn  
To Mommy's sobs and shakes  
Daddy's silhouettes of regret  
All past, omitted, and absolved by lost  
As they clung to each other  
Knowing...

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