

## **Toki Wright**

### **"A Different Mirror"**

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[Chorus:]

Let me tell you all a story  
I'd like you all to  
Take a walk alongside  
Take a look at reality  
Alternate reality  
Your history  
A Different Mirror

Am I my father's son?  
Am I my forefathers son  
When his poor daughter  
Whore out of slums  
My instrument  
My heartbeat  
My drum  
Was stole  
In the pits of a ship  
As I squint for the sun  
A heavy lash  
Traveled  
Hit my body mass  
Split it into half  
Cutting like  
A razors edge or glass  
So I laugh  
Gotta be a dream  
To be unfree  
Starved hungry  
Drug by a chain  
Called ugly  
Only my scars love me  
Only the stars far from me  
Charred by the tar  
On a branch where they hung me  
Burned through the blood  
And the bone  
As my soul rose  
Landed in the stomach  
Of my woman  
Soon to be a mother

Snuck out of the slave quarters  
Saw me sway beneath the moon  
Raped so many times  
That she was thought to  
Have a barren womb  
Haunted by the nightmares  
I return in her dreams  
9 months in the fields  
No maternity leave  
Traveled out the birthing channel  
Minutes after I was born  
Overseers came to  
Snatch me  
Right out of my mothers arms  
Blood stains splattered on  
Her tattered clothes  
Weakened by the labor  
She gets up to follow after slow  
Crying screaming no  
But I was sold  
Worked hard until my death  
And in that final breath  
My soul left  
And this curse lasts for centuries  
If you've forgotten  
Read your shirt tag  
What percent is cotton

[Chorus]

Beneath the stars  
And calloused hands from  
Working in the yard  
They said they freed my people  
Yet we still work on the farm  
Several generations past  
Emancipations gone  
I moved off to the North  
And volunteered to fight a war  
The same strain of DNA  
That slaved away  
Is running through the swollen veins  
Of he who joined the draft  
To fight the German state  
And as I held my rifle  
And my Bible  
Up against my rivals  
Crawling under jagged wire  
Tired  
Prayed for my survival  
Tapped the filter

Lit my cigarette  
Frozen to the bone  
Beneath the uniform  
Yet dripping sweat  
Beads under the army greens  
With patches on the sleeves

Lying in a trench  
I hope I'm catching no disease  
After fighting for this country's  
Freedom over seas  
I return to burning crosses  
Fire hoses and police  
It was cool for me to risk my life  
To fight the Reich  
And go and shoot  
But I can't feed my pregnant wife  
Or go inside  
The voting booth  
So I  
Break bricks  
Break dishes  
Shoot dice  
Sip Sherry  
Snort girl  
Shot some boy-boy twice  
Caught wind  
Of a quick come up  
Jewelry store heist  
Said they need a gun man  
To watch his back on Thursday night  
I said all right  
With that hunger in my eyes  
A baby on the way  
My woman's strong  
But still she cries  
So the plans devised  
Meet on Wednesday to go over this  
Life is such a gamble  
With no poker chips  
Leave the plotting meeting  
Stop to call my woman on the pay phone  
9 months she's pregnant  
Swollen feet but she don't stay home  
Working cross the tracks  
Where don't know Blacks live at  
Black child in Jeopardy  
From cleaning White baby's cracks  
Hello?  
I just got up in something dangerous  
She says if it'll get us out of poverty

She'll pray for us  
She clutches on our baby  
I hang up and walk into a store  
Bump into a cop  
While walking in  
He's walking out the door  
Pulled out his baton  
His hand is on his holster  
And the trigger  
Swung and split my head  
And said  
You watch where you're going (Nigger)  
Blood running down my face  
Neck and back  
I couldn't help but react  
Smacked the pistol out his hand  
Punched him in his face until it bled  
Choked him by the throat  
Until his eyes rolled back into his head  
Before he died he struggled  
Reaching out to get his gun  
So inspire by it  
I ain't even think to run  
As the sirens sounded  
I walked down the block  
To catch a breath  
A dozen cops surrounded  
As I lit another cigarette  
I yelled  
I fought your war  
To prove that I'm a man  
They beat me til I died  
But after cuffing up my broken hands  
My soul rose  
And landed in the stomach of my woman  
As she knelt upon another  
Pearly white floor humming  
The comfort of this country  
Has been built on so much misery  
Know the history

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