

suheir hammad

**open poem to those who rather we not read...
or breathe**

fascism is in fashion
but we be style
 dressed in sweat danced off taino and arawak bodies
we children of children exiled from homelands
 descendants of immigrants denied jobs and toilets
carry continents in our eyes
 survivors of the middle passage
we stand
and demand recognition of our humanity

starving for education
we feed on the love of our people
we flowers
the bloom on amsterdam ave
though pissed on by rich pink dogs
through concrete cracks

we passion kiss in the backs of police vans
 recite poetry in prison cells
 stained walls in blood tracing brutality
 know the willow she weeps for
we her jazzy tears taste the fruit of brooklyn trees

fascism is in imperial fashion
but we be style
our tongues long slashed to keep silence
wear blood jewels
our heads sport civilizations
hips velvet wrapped in music
and you can see the earth running
right under our skin

in a state of police
cops act as pigs treat men as dogs
mothers as whores
the bold youth of a nation hungry and cold
an entire nation of youth behind bars grown old
the mace and blood did not blind we
witness and demand a return to humanity

we braid resistance through our hair
pierce justice through our ears
tattoo freedom onto our breasts

the bluesy souls of brown eyed girls
clash with blood on the pale hands of
governments of war
cops who think they're
bluer than they are black
mercenaries sent on a mission to set back
our strength power love

we be eternal style
while evil wears itself down with
guns contracts laws cash
and rouges it's thin lips with human juice
strained off billy clubs
and tightens it's power tie round necks that
just won't bend
we see the price tag dangling out

the cost is our death and
we refuse to pay

we be political prisoners walking round semi-free
our very breath is a threat
to those who rather we not read
and think analyze watch out and fight back
and be human beings the way we need to be

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we wear warrior marks well

fashion is passing
style is everlasting
we