IT A COME

POEMS BY
MICHAELO SMITH
ME CYAAN BELIEVE IT

Me seh me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it

Room dem a rent
me apply widin
but as me go een
cockroach rat an scorpion
also come een

Waan good
nose haffi run
but me naw go siddung pon high wall
like Humpty Dumpty
me a face me reality

One little bwoy come blow im horn
an me look pon im wid scorn
an me realize how me five bwoy-picni
was a victim of de trick
dem call partisan politricks

an me ban me belly
an me bawl
an me ban me belly
an me bawl
Lawd
me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it

Me daughter bwoy-frien name Sailor
an im pass through de port like a ship
more gran-picni fi feed
an de whole a we in need
what a night what a plight
an we cyaan get a bite
me life is a stiff fight
an me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it
Sittin on de corner wid me frien
talkin bout tings an time
me hear one voice seh
‘Who dat?’
Me seh ‘A who dat?’
‘A who a seh who dat
when me a seh who dat?’

When yuh teck a stock
dem lick we dung flat
tee start fly
an big man start cry
me seh me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it

De odder day
me a pass one yard pon de hill
When me teck a stock me hear
‘Hey, bwoy!’
‘Yes, mam?’
‘Hey, bwoy!’
‘Yes, mam!’
‘Yuh clean up de dawg shit?’
‘Yes, mam.’

An me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it

Doris a modder of four
get a wuk as a domestic
Boss man move een
an bap si kaisico she pregnant again
bap si kaisico she pregnant again
an me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it

Deh a yard de odder night
when me hear ‘Fire! Fire!’
‘Fire, to plate chaat!’
Who dead? You dead!
Who dead? Me dead!
Who dead? Harry dead!
Who dead? Eleven dead!
Wooeeeeee
Orange Street fire
deh pon me head
an me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it

Lawn
me see some blackbud
livin inna one buildin
but no rent no pay,
so dem cyaan stay
Lawn
de oppress an de dispossess
cyaan get no res

What nect?

Teck a trip from Kingston
to Jamaica
Teck twelve from a dozen
an me see me mumma in heaven
Madhouse! Madhouse!

Me seh me cyaan believe it
me seh me cyaan believe it

Yuh believe it?
How yuh fi believe it
when yuh laugh
an yuh blind yuh eye to it?

But me know yuh believe it
Lawwwwwmd
me know yuh believe it
A GO BLOW FIRE

Me naw disown dis-ya talk
fi chat bout me freedom.
Naw tun criminal
siddung fill me lungs wid smoke
an sing song of lamentation
all day long.

Yuh tink every day I a go get up
an jus blow like dus
an when I cry
fi-I tears tun to pus?

I cyaan just a galang
a hope like a barren lan fi rain.
I soon bus

for behind I is darkness,
round I destruction,
an before I
hunger
a go blow fire!

YOUT OUT DEH

Yuh no see it, Trainer?
Look how much yout out deh
a live from han to mout
an jus a run all about
an jus a pester people
fi dutty up dem vehicle
fi get little pittance
so dat dem life can balance.

Yuh tink de only opportunity
we can give dem in dis modern society
is fi come paint political graffiti
an further distort dem personality
an tun dem into wild coyote
dat always a shoot
an every time dem greet we
is a plow an a yow
an I no cow?
Well, watch ya now!

Yuh tink every day
dem a go get up
an pin dem hope
pon politician narrow scope?
Before so,
everyting go up inna smoke!

Yuh no see it, Trainer,
dat blood did on ya
run like water go through strainer?
Yuh tink dem a go remain silent forever
an no get a insight into dem vision
dat two polly lizard an two silver ticks
doan add up to politricks?
Fi dem stop live an fret
an havin regret
like dem life set
pon recalculated step?
Dis-ya soun a murderer,
it cyaan go no furtherer.
de wretched of de eart
goin go meck de downpressor
nyam dirt!

IT A COME

It a come
fire a go bun
blood a go run
No care how yuh teck it
some haffi regret it

Yuh coulda vex till yuh blue
I a reveal it to you
dat cut-eye cut-eye cyaan
cut dis-ya reality in two

It a come
fire a go bun
blood a go run
it goin go teck you
it goin go teck you

so Maggie Thatcher
yuh better watch ya
yuh goin go meet yuh Waterloo
yuh can stay deh a screw
I a subpoena you
from de little fella
call Nelson Mandela
who goin tun a martyr
fi yuh stop support
de blood-suckin I
call apartheid

for it a come
blood a go run
it goin go teck you
it goin go teck you

an if yuh inna yuh mansion
a get some passion
it goin go bus out in deh
like a fusion bomb
it a swell up inna de goun
an yuh cyaan hold it back
yuh haffi subscribe to it
or feel it
an no bodder run to no politician
for im cyaan bribe dis-y a one
an no bodder teck it fi joke
yuh no see wha happen to de Pope

It a come
fire a go bun
blood a go run
it goin go teck you
it goin go teck you

Some goin go call it awareness
an we goin go celebrate it wid firmness
Odders goin go call it revolution
but I prefer liberation

Fi de oppressed an de dispossessed
who has been restless
a full time dem get some rest

for it a come
fire a go bun
blood a go run
it goin go teck you
it goin go teck you

not only fi I
but fi you too

ME FEEL IT, YUH SEE

Me feel it, yuh see,
fi see so much yout out deh
under such a hell of a strain
till dem don’t even know dem name.
Dem out deh, nuffer dan cigarette butt,
out a luck a look fi wuk,
tinkin dat freedom is a senseless dream,
an grip wid such feelin of hostility
dem woulda strangle a dawg fi get a bone
an devalue dem dignity.

Me feel it, yuh see,
fi see dat inna dis-y a concrete jungle
de yout no got nuttin to relate to.
Some tryin fi get close to Babylon
to pay dem rent
but de system
han down a crucial kind a judgement.
An tears will not satisfy I
to preserve a democrisy
whereby youtful lives pay de penalty
for politicians’ irresponsibility
while dem intellectual pen dragon
a justify de dutty currdunction
dat I live pon like a little mampala man.

Me feel it, yuh see,
f see dat dem twis justice an equality
till it no address I-an-I reality,
dat when yuh teck a stock
big man haffi a run back
fi hanker pon im ole-lady frock,
fi ketch up im stomach
dat stretch out like a hammock.
I AN I ALONE

I am I alone
a trod through creation.
Babylon on I right, Babylon on I lef,
Babylon in front of I an Babylon behind I,
an I an I alone in the middle
like a Goliath wid a sling-shot.

'Ten cent a bundle fi me calaloo!
Yuh a buy calaloo, dread? Ten cent.'

Everybody a try fi sell someting,
everybody a try fi grab someting,
everybody a try fi hustle someting,
everybody a try fi kill someting.

but ting an ting mus ring,
an only a few can sing
cause dem naw face de same sinting.

(Sung) It's a hard road to travel
An a mighty long way to go.
Jesus, me blessed Saviour,
will meet us on the journey home.

'Shoppin bag! Shoppin bag! Five cent fi one!
Green pepper! Thyme! Skellion an pimento!
'Remember de Sabbath day, to keep it holy!
Six days shalt thou labour,
but on the seventh day shalt thou rest.'

'Hi, mam, how much fi dah piece a yam deh?
'No, no dat; dat! Yes; dat!'
'Three dollars a poun, nice gentleman.'
'Clear out! Oonoo country people too damn tief!
Like yuh mumma!'s
'time mumma? Wha yuh know bout me mumma?'
'Look ya, a might push dis inna yuh!'
'Yuh lie! A woulda collar yuh!'
'Bruck it up! But, dread, cool down!'
Might, cool down. Rastafari!'
De people-dem a teck everyting meck a muckle.
Dem a try fi hustle down de price
fi meck two ends meet,
de odder one a try fi push up de price
fi meck de picni backbone get sintering fi eat.
But two teet meet an dem a bark,
dem cyaaa stan de pressure,
dem tired fi compete wid hog an dawg,
but dem mus aspir fi someting better
although dem dungle-heap ketch a fire.

Cyaan meck blood outa stone,
an cow never know de use a im tail
till fly teck it, but from dem born
dem a fan de fly of poverty from dem ass
for dem never have a tail fi cover it.

‘Watch me, watch me, watch me!’ ‘Hey, handcart-bwoy,
mind yuh lick dung me picni-dem, yuh know!’
‘Tief! Tief! Tief!’ ‘Wha im deh?
Look out, meck a bruck im friggin neck!’
‘Im a one a de P-dem!’

Yuh see it? Zacky was me frien
but look how im life a go end?
Party politics play de trick
an it lick im dung
wid de big coocoomacca stick.

I an I alone
a trod through creation,
Babylon on me right, Babylon on me left,
Babylon in front of I an Babylon behind I,
an I an I alone inna de middle
like a Goliath wid a sling-shot.

‘Picni-dem a bawl,
rent to pay,
wife to obey,
but only Jesus know de way!
De meek shall inherit de earth
an de fulness thereof!’

But look what she inherit?
Six months pregnant, five mout fi feed,
an her man deh a jail, no bail.

‘Cho, Roy, man! Let me go, no, man?
Me no want no man inna ‘81!’
‘So wha happen? It was only ‘80
yuh did a teck man? Cho, Doris, man,
consider dis late application.’

Dem waan meck love pon hungry belly
jus fi figet dis moment of poverty
but she mus get breed
an dem hafti go face dem calamity.

‘Joshua did seh oonoo fi draw oonoo belt tight.’
‘Which belt, when me tripe a come through me mout?’
‘What happen, sah, yuh get deliver? Yuh naw answer?’
‘Hi, lady, yuh believe in Socialism?’
‘No, sah, me believe in social livin.’

‘Calaloo! Shoppin bag! Thyme!’
‘Dinner mints! Cigarettes an Wrigley’s!’
‘Hi, Albert, which part Tiny?’
‘Hi, sah, beg yuh a ten cent, no?’
‘Meck yuh no leave de man alone?’
‘Hi, sexy! Honey-bunch! Sugar-plum!’
‘Dog-shit! Cow-shit!’
I am I alone
a trod through creation,
Babylon on I right, Babylon on I left,
Babylon behind I an Babylon in front of I,
an I an I alone inna de middle
like a Goliath wid a sling-shot.

Lawk, a find a ten cent.
Lawk, we naw go get no sentance.

TICKY TICKY TUCK

Ticky ticky tuck
everyting stuck
Dem a look little wuk

Wha yuh name?
Me no know

Whe yuh goin?
Nowhere

What yuh lookin?
Anyting

Ticky ticky tuck
everybody bruck
What a luck

No wuk
REVOLUTIONARY

Yuh see all de time
a siddung ya naw seh nutten?
A jus a tink
how a never have no fahder
an how a had to model me modder
fi live ina one little tenement yard
which part everybody tink dem better off
dan de odder, yet when night come
dem ben up like exercise book,
siddung a wonder wha dem a go cook.

She never business bout Africa,
much less fi go like Rasta,
an she woulda wuk night an day,
make sacrifice an pray.
For all she waan fi know,
dat her son come out to sinting better
so she can move outa de hog pen
an show off pon her frien.

I remember de fus day
de bull come inna de pen,
im seh, 'A goin ketch dis jungle a fire
an buil some concrete structure,
dat pon a dark day
yuh can stretch outside an polish de sky!'
An we seh dis was progress,
content wid an incompleteness inside.

Now I tun man
I sight up a revolutionary vision:
if we waan seh roots any at all
we haffi go stop we mumma from movin
from yard to yard

I STILL DEH YA

Yuh member how we get conscious as a yout
dem days when we use to talk nuff bout Garvey
an buy ital yatty till is swell we head
fi come walk wid Rodncy?
It use to bun dem odder one
de way we use to chat bout Marley
an tell dem dat as long as dem imitate
dem will always full up a self-hate.

Yuh no member de big strong straptin black man
dat use to have nuff gal roun im
dat when im walk down de street
everybody start fi talk
an when im open im mout
every dawg start fi bark?
Well, im still down a penitiency
a run battery.

No bodder talk how dem dance use to cork!
An we jus stan up outa de gate
as teck een de King dub plate!
But wait,
no im same one did tell we dat
im have a plan fi free de African
fi stop open door fi Sheraton?
Fi all I know,
im deh a far-out a reach out.
An de odder one?
De system jus reduce im to a fashion
an meck im deh pon im kne
a beg fi im dignity.

I still deh ya
a seh yuh haffi stop sing De Carpenters'
'Only Yesterday' an meck we create we today
dat tomorrow dem democracy
doon reduce revolutionary
to a folly.
But look, yuh got hands
an yu damn strong.
No submerge yuhself under de pressure
an meck freedom haunt yuh
till yuh tink dat dere can never be better
so might as well yuh suffer.

If yuh waan two ends fi meet
only yuh can do it,
by awakenin yuh soul to yuh reality
an determine not to devalue yuh dignity.
Stan up like Tacky!
Regardless of de term
yuh haffi stan firm
fi we chart we destiny.

Yuh feel de heat?
Who will suck anodder kisko-pop?

MECK DEM KNOW HOW YUH FEEL

Meck dem know how yuh feel
fi siddung deh so long,
an a no you one de pressure a teck.
Down to de yout-dem inna Brixton
stop sing glory to Englan,
for not even a laugh
can come outa dem heart
de way dem desperate
fi sinting fi nyam.

Meck dem know dat bull inna pen
waan fi come out
fi go chat wid im frien
an backward dem wid dem
mock-ritual-of-poverty chat
dat dem hold we wid
when election pop.
Dem tink we doan know,
meck dem galang so.

Dem tink we figet Vietnam
when we did jump an shout
dat dem fi drive dose barbarians out
an never realize dat dem a human
dat have a burnin desire fi free
like any odder man.

Meck dem know how yuh feel,
an no bodder come to me
come look sympathy,
for friendly understandin
is not de solution.
We waan answer, or else
dis-ya civilization ya
cyaan go no further.
SAY, NATTY-NATTY

Say,
Natty-Natty,
no bodder
dash weh
yuh culture!

Say, Natty-Natty,
no bodder
dash weh
yuh culture!

For de teacher man know it
but im naw tell de sheep
dat ratta ratta
no bring back new teet
when yuh dash weh de spliff
an yuh teck up de sniff.

Remember yard is yuh mumma,
pon groun yuh sleep,
a seh she teck yuh picni
when yuh tired fi breed,
an if yuh no sleep
yuh mumma no sleep
an if yuh a go die
she a beg Gawd
meck she die too.

So say,
Natty-Natty
no bodder
dash weh
yuh culture!

Say,
Natty-Natty,
no bodder
dash weh
yuh culture!

Yuh no country-come-to-town,
yuh born a Jam-down,
so no figet yuh gal a yard
an teck one from abroad
an lick out pon de beach
an ejaculate
between a Time magazine.
Dem will spread it
pon a Boo York scene
seh yuh's a dollar-a-day dread.
A better yuh bald yuh head!

So say, Natty-Natty,
no bodder
dash weh
yuh culture!

Say, Natty-Natty,
no bodder
dash weh
yuh culture!

A know yuh disillusion
when yuh see de politician
im teck out yuh daughter
an im buy her supper
an im get her fat
an im call it culture.
But say, Natty-Natty,
be aware of de cultural smuggler!
Say, Natty-Natty,
be aware of de cultural smuggler!

No bodder teck we revolution, man,
so tun touris attraction!

ROOTS

Roots
Roots
Roots
Lawwwwwwd
an dem a roots
an dem a roots
Roots
Youtman-dem searchin
de crevice an corners
fi dem roots

Lawwwwwwd
an dem a roots
an dem a roots
But searchin fi im roots
a cause an explosion
between man an man

Lawwwwwwd
but dem a roots
but dem a roots

Some a seh
which roots
when de only roots dem can trace
start wid dem modder
an end wid dem granmodder
dem naw roots
Lawwwwwwd
dem naw roots