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# Youth in Elder

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You can see the fire in their eyes...

The young men with their jaws to the floor. Saliva and sweat so thick you can just taste it in the air. Some want love little cocoa eyed girl. Brown eyed baby in brown skin. Others want what God gave you. They want the curve in your shape like they could eat it.

You can see the fire in their eyes...

Those white women. You're just another nigger girl in a place you don't belong. Why should you be so special? What you got wrapped in that glossy ebony skin? Get pregnant and hit poverty like the rest of 'em. Who do you think you are? You better stay on your side. So you ignore those looks you get from white men.

You can see the fire in their eyes...

The employers and their racism. They want a good working man. A white man. They've put an image behind success and honey, you 'aint it. Being female is bad enough. Get out of here little Black Bitch. You should lay on your back like the rest of 'em.

You can see the fire in their eyes...

The cops and their profiling. They got their eye on you. Not a damn thing on you. But you'll do something, and when you do, they'll be there to catch it. You're a pretty little thing, but you got the stain that don't wash out the face. With a nigga it's never if, it's always when they'll commit a crime. You got 'em all itchin in their skin just 'cuz you're a little too comfortable in your own.

What to do with you? How can they drop your head from so up high?

Can't take away the beauty you were born with. Can't deny you the degrees you earned. Can't arrest you for crimes you didn't commit. Can't shake your swagger. And oh, they wanna shake it. Shake you like the swaying toes of a hanged man.

You refuse to swing on that rope.

Black, sure. Female, fine. But ignorant you're not having. If the entire race is having a pity party, you're not attending. Got shit to do. Got kids to raise. Got bills to pay. Wanna live and not survive... Thrive instead of struggle.

They try and hold you back but you break free from their oppression... All the lies about "who you must be" if you "look like me." Got a smile that's whiter than any Caucasians skin. And you greet them with it. You're only returned sneers. They want you to shut the smile out. What else could those big lips be for? The only way a nigger's head should be so big is if they've got a large 'fro. You tell your children different. You're as good as anybody.

That ambition is infectious in the home.

Little dark hands clutch A+ report cards. Little charcoal feet run fields. Big white smiles greet condescending white people. You can see the fire in their eyes! It's blazing from within. The hunger. They're hungry like you were. And the world is hungry for them.

They grow. Have children of their own. Pass that hunger. Now I have it... Little cocoa eyed girl. Brown eyed baby in caramel skin.

I see you before me, wrinkled with time.

Every brown fold and crease a tracing of your struggles.

Old and worn.

Made of leather.

Wise and proud.

African American elder,

I can see the fire in your eyes.