

A History of Black People¹

Donald Vincent

we be the kings and queens
of ancient cities,

Pythagoras of pharaohs' pyramids
or reaping sword swingers
following the drinking gourds.

we be the soul of the blues—

can't sleep at night,
can't eat a bite
because the nation we love,
she don't treat us right.

we be a most beautiful black,
salmon-pink colored skies
in the mind of the blind.

¹ after Jean Michel-Basquiat's painting

The Evolution of the Simpleminded Negro

Donald Vincent

A history never told
Privileged folk always feel guilty
Guilty are the underrepresented
Guilty are the misrepresented
Slanging spoken words on the back of buses
In a country with no justice
 In a country with no justice
 In a country with no justice

(This record skips on repeat)

In a country that
Must be concussed
To conceive these visions
Since we don't believe in dreams
Especially those of King
 We twitter-activism and protest
 Evoking spirits of Malcolm X

Hopped off slave ships
Out of the cotton fields
In debt to the government
Making my payments
Can't forget to pay rent
Push packs to get paid
 Push packs just to save
 Push packs until the grave.

Became my own master
Always been royalty
My skin is an art gallery
Painted with crucifixes
To save me
 From lynchings as a consequence
 Of too much Melanin in my pigment

The ropes turn into cuffs
Cuffs are the court
Courts aren't a sport
 The only history
 You can know is your own

Everything that glitters

Is not gold
 Everything black
 Is not evil.

If I am gunned down
The universities will say,
I never earned, never learned
 Say I stole my degree(s)
 (Both of them)

If I'm gunned down
or shot unjustly please
post all of the photos
 I've taken with white women
 For they shall start the revolution.

Don't forget the one(s)
With Obama
From the Wax Museum
Or his cardboard cutout quoting
His support of the troops
To show I love(d) my country
 Can they love me back
 At least half as much