

"Other Villages Other Voices"

Stepchild

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Every animal one track all its own
and not 16

Without lamps
We spend more time awake in darkness
Looking into fires and trees
Without motors
We hear all of nature's drones
Feel the slightest chirpings in our bones
Bring the outside world into our homes
Commemorating with rhyme and reason
mime in season
The source of every sound

Step Child,

Other Villages Other Voices

Village voices in Nigeria
Muhammadu Marwa's people cry out
But are not heard here in Manhattan
Children in mass graves outside Kano
Small news arriving late in New York City

But Sunny Ade's smile is front page stuff
Yoruba minstrels bringing the original jive
The prototype shuffle, aboriginal cakewalks
Big winks and rolling eyes to the big city
Serene smiles blind to all corruption
Wicked cool ices memories of Biafra
Or any meditation on Nigerian crude sold cheap'
The Bonny crude, pure, clean, sulphur-free
Black gold, black futures sold to Seven Sisters
While Sunny smiles and takes his little steps
The hip bro wonders if "Bob may have been forwarded
So that Sunny could save the West with juju music."

According to some mysterious cosmic mastah plan
I like the man, I love the music, I put five
On the wet forehead of the talking drummer
(amplified to sound like Western cannon)
For playing nicely to the baby girl
So chubby and fine she should have been twins
But I am not fooled

Nigeria is weak, the bribe taker
Traitor to Third World Solidarity
And Yoruba delusions of cool and kingship
The dry rot heart of that
These brothers been selling each other
Into slavery since the 16th Century
Oyo raiding on Ife, Ife on Ekiti, Ekiti on Ondo
Ondo on Ijebu, Ijebu on Egba, Egba on Ketu
Long practice, bad juju, degradingest story never told

If they really cared about the ancestors
The future generations, the chubby little girl
They would not sell the oil so cheap
And the music, the Cultural Attire
A fancy stitched agbada
Could not substitute for justice

Oya! Give those who offend you throat disease.

Orishala! Give us better brains.

Eshu! Cut the bullshit.

A child is a gift.

Steph Hill,