

Steven Willis (1992)

Beat Writers

for Amiri Baraka and Allen Ginsberg

I saw the best minds of my generation
starving, hysterical, naked, and left for dead but were destined to
make it.

Ran the negro streets with an angry fix.

Crack(s)

In their nostrils and pavements, the worse condition but were
destined for greatness.

The gunshots from the block influence this poem's cadence.
Living paycheck to paycheck has taught me most of my patience,
the loss of familiar faces has taught me crime is invasive
the source of my inspiration.

A decade before Reagan

A DJing Kool rasta, Bambaataa, and a couple Gangstars helped father
a generation of black epics and sagas

Roger

was raised by Big Mama but learned Crack Commandments from
Poppa

Tasha

bumps the Keef and Waka while guns go *blocka*.

Don't assume.

That bass vibrations can't be felt in the womb, when rock music
fornicated with blues.

The birth of the trap beat generation,
the babies of Boom

equipped with African traditions and America's doom.

To sculptors of Black Culture

And your bohemian ways,

Your hedonistic approach left this boy in a maze
your b-boy counterculture was just more than a phase
it was the cardboard box, in which we were raised
to elevate to a freeze

d boy clocking for fiends

he'll take the mac to your noodle if you reach for the cheese

he want the C.R.E.A.M.
soliloquies of the grieved and the thieved
the Beat Writers who wrote poems to beats
the Kerouacs of the concrete
the Ginsbergs to the curb
the William S. to their boroughs
the masters of spoken word.
(Neal) Cassady's of the Cuckoo's Nest, and the ones flipping birds
Who haikued the obscene. Who free versed the absurd.
There's no way you can reverse.
The bridge between the music and people we wrote.
Or the religious gunned tongues that we tote,
just take note
of the dope rhythmic quotes
that could summarize the ethos
of the young gifted and black growing up cutthroat.
The ethnography of poverty that we coat
in metaphors and similes to help cope
in beloved communities that are deficient of hope
that's why the young and the music elope,
there no way you can denote,
The syncopation that gave voice to the streets
or blackball us from the poet elite
we're owed a canonized seat
right next to Solomon and Sinclair Belize
the Beat Writers who wrote poems to beats.
Lyrical vandals that graffitied the streets
The Beat Writers who wrote poems to beats.
Gold roped chains and Adidas on feet.
The Beat Writers who wrote poems to beats.
Who drove in '64 Impalas, put the screens in the seats.
The Beat Writers who wrote poems to Beats.