

Broken English

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Today a baffled lady observed the shell where my soul dwells
and announced that I'm "articulate"

Which means that, when it comes to enunciation and diction
I don't even think of it
'Cause I'm "articulate"

So when my professor asks a question
And my answer is tainted with a connotation of urbanized suggestion
There's no misdirected intention
Pay attention
'Cause I'm "articulate"

So when my father asks "Wha' kinda ting is dis?"
My "articulate" answer never goes amiss
I say "father, this is the impending problem at hand"
And when I'm on the block I switch it up just because I can
So when my boy says "What's good with you son?"
I say, "I jus' fall out wit dem people but I done!"

And sometimes in class
I might pause the intellectual sounding flow to ask
"Yo! Why dese books neva be about my peoples"
Yes, I have decided to treat all three of my languages as equals
Because I'm "articulate"

But who controls articulation?
Because the English language is a multifaceted oration
Subject to indefinite transformation
Now you may think that it is ignorant to speak broken English
But I'm here to tell you that even "articulate" Americans sound foolish to the British
So when my professor comes on the block and says, "Hello"
I stop him and say "Noooo....
You're being inarticulate... The proper way is to say 'what's good'"
Now you may think that's too hood, that's not cool
But I'm here to tell you that even our language has rules

So when Mommy mocks me and says "ya'll-be-madd-going-to-the-store"
I say "Mommy, that sentence is not following the law
Never does the 'madd' go before a present participle
That's simply the principle of broken English"

If I had the vocal capacity I would sing this from every mountaintop,

From every suburbia, and every hood
 'Cause the only God of language is the one recorded in the genesis
 of this world saying "it is good"
 So I may not always come before you with excellency of speech
 But do not judge me by my language and assume
 that I'm too ignorant to teach
 'Cause I speak three tongues
 One for each:
 Home, school, and friends

I'm a tri-lingual orator
 Sometimes I'm consistent with my language now
 then switch it up so I don't bore later
 Sometimes I fight back two tongues
 while I use the other one in the classroom
 And when I mistakenly mix them up
 it feels retarded like... I'm cooking in the bathroom

I know that I had to borrow your language because mine was stolen
 But you can't expect me to speak your history wholly while mine is broken
 These words are spoken
 By someone who is simply fed up with the Eurocentric ideas of this season
 And the reason I speak a composite version of your language
 is because mine was raped away along with my history

I speak broken English so the profusing gashes can remind us
 that our current state is not a mystery
 I'm so tired of the negative images that are driving our people mad
 So unless you've seen it rob a bank stop calling my hair bad
 I'm so sick of this nonsensical racial disparity
 So don't call it good unless your hair is known for donating to charity
 As much as has been raped away from my people
 How can you expect me to treat their imprint on your language
 as anything less than equal

Let there be no confusion
 Let there be no hesitation
 This is not a promotion of ignorance
 This is a linguistic celebration
 That's why I put "tri-lingual" on my last job application
 I can help to diversify your consumer market is all I wanted them to know
 And when they call me for the interview I'll be more than happy to show that
 I can say:
 "What's good"
 "Whatagwan"
 And of course... "Hello"
 Because I'm "articulate"