

"A Poem for 3rd World Brothers" by Etheridge Knight

So keep your bouncing walk, and
keep your hip and mellow talk. yeah – and
keep your jackknife laughter that shakes the air.
cause white / America would have you move
like cubes. stumbling. without rhythm
or freedom. white / america would design
your dance and your speech by computer –
would have you sit in stiff chairs
and squeeze your knees.
white / America would kill the cat in you.

or they will send their lackeys to kill for them.
and if those negroes fail
white / America will whip out her boss okie doke:
make miss ann lift the hem of her mystic skirt
and flash white thighs in your yes to blind you
to your own beauty and that of your sisters
who choke back the hurt and hide their love
behind blond wigs and red wine.
and if you ain't dead
by the time white thighs wrap round your head
white / America will send the thrill of the pill
to kill you.
you digit – you digit?
to down the red devils is to deal in Blk / death
(makes you fuck over your brothers) cuts you off
from your people, makes you cop out
and roam single – thru this graveyard
of white / America. and your ears will be deaf
to the cries of Blk / children who look to you to
protect them from the white / ghosts.

So keep your bouncing walk. and.
keep your hip and mellow talk. yeah – and
keep your jackknife laughter that shakes the air.
white / america seeks to kill the cat in you
cause white / america knows that fire eyes glow
that Blk / muscles are strong
and that if brothers dance together
freedom won't be long –
you digit? – you digit?