

Fishladder: A Student Journal of Art and Writing

Volume 1
Issue 1 *Spring 2003*

Article 15

10-11-2011

Native Tongue

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Recommended Citation

Hardy, Myron Jr. (2003) "Native Tongue," *Fishladder: A Student Journal of Art and Writing*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 15.
Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/fishladder/vol1/iss1/15>

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Native Tongue

MYRON HARDY, JR.

We were friends, still are.
 Grew up together on trial and error.
 Now, he's told when to shower,
 when to wake up and when to have dinner. —
 Ah'm not much more free, here, on the outside,
 other demands are just as imprisoning.
 His brother and ma brother are also friends.
 They, too, are growing up together, like our moms have.
 They both talk the talk and walk the walk,
 we spoke and strutted, so long ago.
 But not everyone can strut,
 And not everyone can properly speak slang.
 For instance, ma brother has his tongue fixed on
 the complimentary word Dawg: Watch out Dawg! What's up Dawg!
 Get that for me Dawg! Move your feet Dawg!
 Once, nigga was his preferred word.
 Ah had to check him on that,
 make sure he knew the lesson.

Ah call everyone nigga—except for women.
 However, the word is gender neutral,
 but black owned.
 Other people can be niggas, but can't say nigga,
 at least not to or around someone colored.—
 In view of the white guy dancing outside, butt-naked,
 in the freezing cold of winter for concert tickets,
 “Look at this nigga! Dee.” Ah said jokingly,
 nudging Dee's shoulder in line at the concert hall.
 “Dawg, it aint even that serious.” He replied,
 looking and laughing.
 The “Chinamen” who slipped off his skateboard
 trying to do a trick down rail,
 “That nigga got scrapped.” Ah humored, half-laughing.
 “Ah hope he's alright.”
 And to the coolest Black men Ah know,
 “Stay cool niggas!” Life is an apricot.

Ah wrote him for the first time yesterday.
Began my letter with,
"This is long overdue, forgive me for being distracted."
"I still am distracted." Ah wrote also,
"His eyes are on the sparrow, my eyes are on his crown.
Look to him for guidance, and he will set you free, as he did Peter.
Peace and Love, ma nigga—Stay Up!