



Practices of Freedom

Blackmailed by Academia

Bro.ken

“Though the colored man is no longer subject to barter and sale, he is surrounded by an adverse sentiment which fetters all his movements. In his downward course he meets with no resistance, but his course upward is resented and resisted at every step of his progress. If he comes in ignorance, rags and wretchedness he conforms to the popular belief of his character, and in that character he is welcome; but if he shall come as a gentleman, a scholar and a statesman, he is hailed as a contradiction to the national faith concerning his race, and his coming is resented as impudence. In one case he may provoke contempt and derision, but in the other he is an affront to pride and provokes malice.”

*Frederick Douglass
September 25, 1883*

They regret to say that although well qualified, I don't get the job.
Am I angry? You're damned straight I am! Go polish my knob.
The committee decided to choose someone else
And, sure as shooting, they don't look like myself

Angry black men are no longer en vogue
They'd rather you be a sycophantic pogue
And take it, and bear it, and suck up the sin
Of being male and smart, but in a black skin.

'Twas a competitive opening of this I'm sure
It's just they don't hire the nigger du jour.
I guess it was something they couldn't explain
It certainly wasn't based on my credentials or name
It couldn't be color, race, gender, or sex
Because I'm supposed to be equal when compared to the rest.

And despite all the professing of searching for best
It seems I'm unable to pass their opaque test.

But checking their roster, I see something's amiss
In all of their pictures, and profiles, and lists
I look in my mirror and see nothing like this.
More sympathetic than warmed over Pablum.

These progressive, socialist, liberals all surely protest
Look among our faculties, we have Black women, Latinas and yet
Despite best intentions, do they fully represent?

Scenes familiar, you must admit
But I'm really getting tired of this discriminating shit.
I'm ready to kick ass on the academic block
To make sure these suckers don't turn back the clock.

Blackmailed by academia
By souls in white anemia
Don't blurt out the obvious
Or risk being seen as loud and obnoxious

Going through the interview motions is just a protocol
Because they really have no intentions of hiring you at all
So make your great impression or make yourself a fool
It simply doesn't matter, you'll not be at this school.

So where are all the black men in academia? Why such a dearth?
One can only surmise that he's the "Wretched of the Earth."

The few black men in AE are either gay or effete,
So the message seems to not threaten, but be sweet.
To protect fragile white women and lesbian queers,
Strong black males draw nothing but sneers.
Oh, you'll see a black African male or two
But when his contract period nears
He'll be shuffled back across the ocean blue

If you're reading this then it is by a miracle.
It means it got past the gatekeeper's uncritical gaze
In early times I'd have a serving plate filled with petits-fours
But even now, as a free man, I still don't rate
In post-black Obama I am considered a Boor.
Now I risk getting shot trying to enter either door

Perhaps an extended party metaphor would serve to illustrate
How much the folks in academe have tried to block the gate
I'm not trying to crash someone else's party
I know that would be unwise
But I am determined to get my portion
Of the employment opportunities that **all** of our taxes subsidize.

I am expected to have the social decorum to know just where to stand
And to know I'm not wanted and keep the conversation bland
That the only job open for me is to be their security
At least my father or grandfather was allowed the dignity
...of servant's tray
Now the message is just, stay away!

I am to have the good graces not to embarrass my host and guests
 I can ill afford to attend or be allowed to work the fest.
 I am to stand by and swallow the indelicacies and try not to digest.

The crumbs and bums and social scum, but keep my tongue at rest.

All their research and scholarship has come with a score
 Subsidized by tax dollars and federal grants galore
 To practice up on people from near and distant shores
 They took their wives and lovers and kids and pets
 They wined in hotel rooms and high powered jets
 They hoard their obtuse findings in journals and in books
 And present it to each other and steal it back like crooks.

They issue subsidized tuition loans to burden the poor
 And create obstacles to learning you can be sure
 And they keep piling up useless work so you're forever in debt for more
 But the smart niggas that peep the game, get shown straight to the door
 Look around the room, you'll see them no more
 In order to keep the education franchise safe and secure

They cry social justice and equity for all
 But ask them for some and then watch them stall

In this thought I'd be remiss
 If I failed to help you realize this
 These jobs are reserved for the chosen few:
 Whitey's wife, consultant, and Ashkenazi Jew

And if you think I'm making or faking this
 Just take a look at the faculty list
 Maybe a spick, a chink, a spook, or wop
 Might even have a nigga sittin' at the top

But it's all designed to put to a stop
 To the claim that we discriminate
 Yet black males singly suffer their state
 And truth for them remains a hollow fake:

Epilogue

“In the opinion of the court, the legislation and histories of the times, and the language used in the Declaration of Independence, show, that neither the class of persons who had been imported as slaves, nor their descendants, whether they had become free or not, were then acknowledged as a part of the people, nor intended to be included in the general words used in that memorable instrument...They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.”

Roger B. Taney, Chief Justice, Dred Scott Decision, 1857