

Common, A Song For Assata

[Common]

In the Spirit of God.

In the Spirit of the Ancestors.

In the Spirit of the Black Panthers.

In the Spirit of Assata Shakur.

We make this movement towards freedom

for all those who have been oppressed, and all those in the struggle.

Yeah. yo, check it-

There were lights and sirens, gunshots firin
Cover your eyes as I describe a scene so violent
Seemed like a bad dream, she laid in a blood puddle
Blood bubbled in her chest, cold air brushed against open flesh
No room to rest, pain consumed each breath
Shot twice wit her hands up
Police questioned but shot before she answered
One Panther lost his life, the other ran for his
Scandalous the police were as they kicked and beat her
Comprehension she was beyond, tryna hold on
to life. She thought she'd live with no arm
that's what it felt like, got to the hospital, eyes held tight
They moved her room to room-she could tell by the light
Handcuffed tight to the bed, through her skin it bit
Put guns to her head, every word she got hit
"Who shot the trooper?" they asked her
Put mace in her eyes, threatened to blast her
Her mind raced till things got still
Opened her eyes, realized she's next to her best friend who got killed
She got chills, they told her: that's where she would be next
Hurt mixed wit anger-survival was a reflex
They lied and denied visits from her lawyer
But she was buildin as they tried to destroy her
If it wasn't for this german nurse they woulda served her worse
I read this sister's story, knew that it deserved a verse
I wonder what would happen if that woulda been me?
All this shit so we could be free, so dig it, y'all.

[Cee-lo vocals]

I'm thinkin' of Assata, yes.

Listen to my Love, Assata, yes.

Your Power and Pride is beautiful.

May God bless your Soul.

[Common]

It seemed like the middle of the night when the law awakened her

Walkie-talkies cracklin, I see 'em when they takin her

Though she kinda knew,

What made the ride peaceful was the trees and the sky was blue

Arrived to Middlesex Prison about six inna morning

Uneasy as they pushed her to the second floor in

a cell, one cot, no window, facing hell.

Put in the basement of a prison wit all males

And the smell of misery, seatless toilets and centipedes

She'd exercise, (paint?,) and begin to read

Two years inna hole. Her soul grew weak

Away from people so long she forgot how to speak

She discovered freedom is a unspoken sound

And a wall is a wall and can be broken down

Found peace in the Panthers she went on trial with

One of the brothers she had a child with

The foulness they would feed her, hopin she's lose her seed

Held tight, knowing the fight would live through this seed

In need of a doctor, from her stomach she's bleed

Out of this situation a girl was conceived

Separated from her, left to mother the Revolution
And lactated to attack hate
Cause federal and state was built for a Black fate
Her emptiness was filled with beatings and court dates
They fabricated cases, hoping one would stick
And said she robbed places that didn't exist
In the midst of threats on her life and being caged with Aryan whites
Through dark halls of hate she carried the light
I wonder what would happen if that woulda been me?
All of this shit so we could be free.
Yeah, I often wonder what would happen if that woulda been me?
All of this shit so we could be free, so dig it, people-

[Cee-Lo]
I'm thinkin' of Assata, yeah.
Listen to my Love, Assata, yeah.
Your Power and Pride, so Beautiful...
May God bless your Soul.
Oooh.

[Common]
Yo
From North Carolina her grandmother would bring
news that she had had a dream
Her dreams always meant what they needed them to mean
What made them real was the action in between
She dreamt that Assata was free in they old house in Queens
The fact that they always came true was the thing
Assata had been convicted of a murder she couldna done
Medical evidence shown she couldna shot the gun
It's time for her to see the sun from the other side
Time for her daughter to be by her mother's side
Time for this Beautiful Woman to become soft again
Time for her to breathe, and not be told how or when
She untangled the chains and escaped the pain
How she broke out of prison I could never explain
And even to this day they try to get to her
but she's free with political asylum in Cuba.

[Cee-Lo vocals]
I'm thinkin' of Assata, yeah.
Listen to my Love, Assata, yeah.
We're molded from the same mud, Assata.
We share the same Blood, Assata, yeah.
Your Power and Pride, so Beautiful...
May God bless your Soul.
Your Power and Pride, so Beautiful...
May God bless your Soul.
Oooh.

[Assata]
Freedom! You askin me about freedom. Askin me about freedom?
I'll be honest with you. I know a whole more about what freedom isn't
than about what it is, cause I've never been free.
I can only share my vision with you of the future, about what freedom is.
Uhh, the way I see it, freedom is-- is the right to grow, is the right to
blossom.
Freedom is -is the right to be yourself, to be who you are,
to be who you wanna be, to do what you wanna do. [fade out]