

Mos Def, A Soldier's Dream

(Mos Def speaking)

Im not gon sing a song or nothing.

Um, what that term they call it post traumatic stress syndrome? That thing that uh, soldiers will get. I think a lot of people get that. Its like when you experience somethin and uh, it affects you for a long time afterwards. I guess everything works that way. Certain things have more impact than others. Sometimes it visits you in your dreams or when youre quiet or just at peace or trying to be at peace. A lot of soldiers get it. A lot of common people get it. A lot of the time common people are soldiers, thats just the way it works out.

This is a soldiers dream

The other night I was tumbling towards an uneasy sleep
When I had discovered myself
Atop the sweet sticky firmament of my dreams.
Daybreak came and discovered me
With my fantasies pasted to my face.

I cant look at you right now.

&quot;Show me your eyes," she says.

"Later," he says. "Now, now."

Shame is a prison you know.

Yeah, well discretion is a fortress

Youre starin and lookin too closely.

Theres so much about me that I hide

That careful eyes will recognize.

If you look closely youll notice

That the pattern on this soft cloth shirt

Is made of workin mens sweat

And prayin folks tears.

If you look closer youll notice

That this pattern resembles

Tenement row houses, project high rises,

Cell block tiers,

Discontinued stretches of elevated train tracks,

Slave ship gullies, acres of tombstones.

If you look closer, youll notice

That this fabric has been carefully blended

With an advanced new age polymer (oh man, thats nice)

To make the fabric lightweight

Weatherproof, and durable.

All this to give some sort of posture and dignity

To a broken body that is a host for scars.

I am the new landmark. I am the museum of injury.

Soldiers visit me and admire me quietly,

Whispering amongst themselves. Youre no soldier.

Your soft bright eyes never have to

Survey the battlefield,

Much less its collected relics of which, I am one.

So, my flesh bullet-ridden remains hidden

Underneath these soft fabrics

Which I carefully select

That stand in for how I used to feel,

For how I remember feeling,

For how I dream about feeling,

For how I feel about you.

And now your curious fingers want to search

Beyond this tender armor.

I cant look at you right now

(This is my rifle there are many like it but this one is mine) 2x

Your eyes are too careful,
Collecting it all arranging it all;
Surgically, robotically, exactly.
I cant look at you right now
But that doesnt matter because
You can look at me and the longer that
I dont return your gaze,
The harder that your gaze
Starts to run across my back
Like a nervous policemen's hands:
Brisk, intent, anxious for discovery.
If discretion is a fortress
Then youre threatening to destroy it
By simply standing at the gates
And refusing to leave.
I cant look at you right now,
But you can look at me. Do you see me?