

An Urban School's Kids' Poem

They say I failed. You might agree.
Because I'm 18 years old, and I barely know how to read.
Algebra look [sic] like hieroglyphics.

And my teachers say my attitude is going to hold me back.
But they been (sic) saying that since the 1st grade,
and I made it to the 10th.

They say my friends that dropped out in the eighth grade fail too.
But they were just tired of going to bed hungry at night.
Besides, they couldn't read neither.
So what's the point in going to school?

Teachers told them that they weren't going to make it.
So they traded in college dreams to sell dope and weed.
Stereotypical kids from the ghetto. Still can't read.
But at least their stomachs is [sic] full when they go to sleep.

They say my older brother failed because he ended up in the penitentiary.
But he didn't finish school either.
He stopped going when he was still in elementary.

They say I'm a failure, and maybe you agree.
But I think the system failed me.

See. The classroom is overcrowded, having nowhere to sit and s _ _ t.
On top of that, they did not have enough books for every kid.
I can't remember my teachers' names, because I've had five this year.
It's funny because they say I failed,
when five of my teachers quit.

But I don't blame them.
This building exists for a purpose that isn't being achieved.

I learn more on my own,
at home watching the History Channel on TV,
than I do in the classroom, because
my teacher can't teach.

They say students are disrespectful and violent.
Teachers talk down to you like you are wasting their time.
So yeah. I've cursed out of few of them,
because they were wasting mine.

They say urban schools are like jungles.
And most of the good teachers think that they are too chaotic
to take risks of entering the doors.
But I find it funny that they are suitable for students,
or should I say soldiers;
because we been (sic) molded for war.

Metal detectors and police everywhere.
I feel like I'm in a prison, but –
actually, I know better;
there's one right across the street.
The difference between the two?
I think they receive more governmental funding than my school. See!

They try to appoint the blame on kids like me.
However, my reading level clearly does not accurately reflect
my intellect, my depth or my intelligence.

You see I was able to compose elementary masterpieces
in my mind, while sitting in elementary.
Even though if they are misspelled,
I may not know where to place every period,
comma or apostrophe.

I know it's not the students,
it's the urban school system
that is the catastrophe.

They teach us for testing
because our testing scores,
dictate whether we succeed.
Knowing we are destined to fail,
when kids like me barely know how to read.

So we wanna (sic) feed young minds
antiquated lies about an "American Dream."
That with hard work and dedication
we are able to succeed.

But maybe they are ignoring the fact
that there is an education gap.
And despite the promise
"That No Child Will Be Left Behind,"
I've repeated the 9th grade once,
and stayed back two times.

So they say I failed.
And my brother and friends gave up.
Well I know better!
It's the system that failed us!

I'm 18 years old and in the 10th grade, and I barely know how to read.
Algebra looks like hieroglyphics;
and my teachers say my attitude is going to hold me back.
But they been saying that since the 1st grade.
And look where I made it today,
I made it to the 10th.

So they say I failed but I disagree!
I'm destined to succeed, even though the system failed me.
I'M DESTINED TO SUCCEED, EVEN THOUGH THE SYSTEM FAILED ME!