

# What Stephen Lawrence Has Taught Us

Benjamin Zephaniah

We know who the killers are,  
We have watched them strut before us  
As proud as sick Mussolinis',  
We have watched them strut before us  
Compassionless and arrogant,  
They paraded before us,  
Like angels of death  
Protected by the law.

It is now an open secret  
Black people do not have  
Chips on their shoulders,  
They just have injustice on their backs  
And justice on their minds,  
And now we know that the road to liberty  
Is as long as the road from slavery.

The death of Stephen Lawrence  
Has taught us to love each other  
And never to take the tedious task  
Of waiting for a bus for granted.  
Watching his parents watching the cover-up  
Begs the question  
What are the trading standards here?  
Why are we paying for a police force  
That will not work for us?

The death of Stephen Lawrence  
Has taught us  
That we cannot let the illusion of freedom  
Endow us with a false sense of security as we walk the streets,

The whole world can now watch  
The academics and the super cops  
Struggling to define institutionalised racism  
As we continue to die in custody  
As we continue emptying our pockets on the pavements,  
And we continue to ask ourselves  
Why is it so official  
That black people are so often killed  
Without killers?

We are not talking about war or revenge  
We are not talking about hypotheticals or possibilities,  
We are talking about where we are now  
We are talking about how we live now  
In dis state  
Under dis flag, (God Save the Queen),  
And God save all those black children who want to grow up  
And God save all the brothers and sisters  
Who like raving,  
Because the death of Stephen Lawrence  
Has taught us that racism is easy when  
You have friends in high places.  
And friends in high places  
Have no use whatsoever  
When they are not your friends.

Dear Mr Condon,  
Pop out of Teletubby land,  
And visit reality,  
Come to an honest place  
And get some advice from your neighbours,  
Be enlightened by our community,  
Neglect your well-paid ignorance  
Because  
We know who the killers are.

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