

I AM JAMES SOMERSET

I am James Somerset
I am an incarnation
I am James Somerset

I took my chance
Yes, I took my chance
To be
Yes, to be
But it was not to be

To become free?
Free of what?
Free from what?
Free from whom?

Free from the Kingdom
The Kingdom of dominion
Freedom
What is Freedom?
Free from the King's dominion
Yes, free from what?
Free to be?
But not to be?
Yes, I took my chance
Only to be
To be me
The human I am
But it was not
To be

I am marked
Scarred for life
Branded for life
Traumatised for life
Once a slave
Twice a slave
In a world anchored on enslavement
Yes, the global economy
Rests on enslavement
Fed on the oxygen of my labour
The oxygen of my intellect
The oxygen extracted from my resources
The life line of the global economy
I have remained
The economics of slavery and enslavement
And to be free?
Free from what?

I am back here
Not left to be
A scar on the human conscience?
Complicit conscience
A conscience that is complicit
That collective complicity
That keeps the memory of slavery going
Going, going, gone
The auction
The auction block
The commodity stock
Where the stock of my labour is sold
Where the stock of my resources is bartered
The stock exchange of today
The auction block of yesterday

The conscience can block away
For the collective complicity to carry on any way
So far as it profits to dominate
And damn another human

Am I not human?

In the court of the King's Bench, I stood
On account of a writ of habeus corpus
Fortuitously obtained by my godparents
Elizabeth Cage, Thomas Walkin and John Marlow
Enabling me to enlist the sharp voice of the Granville Sharps
To harp on my freedom and human rights
My right to be
Before Lord Mansfield

My judgement day before the Lord
Yes, before the Lord my Lord
As it shall be in Heaven
As it shall be on earth
Such is my damnation
And such was the judgment
Free to be?
But not to be?
Consigned to purgatory
As a salve to the collective guilt
For the auction to go on
Now at the stock exchange
For the going, going, gone - to go on
At the stock exchange
With the gong to hammer and seal the deal
That does not heal

The collar of dominion
The white collar and the noose
The hood of their brood
The Bible and the cat-o'-nine tails
The klan and the man
Such is my tale

Look at me, I am James Somerset
I have not changed, still chained

The voices of the Equianos, Heyricks, Princes, Wilberforces
Were forces for universal abolition
Not accomplices of the catholic Doctrine of Discovery
The vestiges which still underpin global trade and commerce
Defining diplomacy and public policy where my fate is concerned

If my conversion and faith in the baptism could not change me
How could my faith in the law change me
In all propriety I am property

I am James Somerset
I was the Yorke-Talbot ruling
I am the Mansfield Ruling
I am James Somerset
On whom the sun ever sets
In the white man's field
My Lord Mansfield
What has changed, what has changed
My Lord
Am I not what I am, still bent in the field of unending slavery

Lord, I am still entrapped in the man's field
Unlevel field for the man only
The man who still rules the roost
In the era of globalisation
Euphemism for white supremacy triumphalism
The problem of the colour line remains
And so I proclaim
Two hundred and fifty years on
Oh, my Lord, I proclaim
Not to defame
But to claim
Me
That must be
My being
My humanity ...
But not to be
I am James Somerset
Hear my voice!

Going, going, gone
For me the gong tolls
To Sierra Leone to toil
To Haiti to toil
To the Congo to toil
And on my own soil where my lot is cast
In the pits of neocolonialism
Euphemism for neo-enslavement
Yes,
Going, going, gone
And to the coltan pits
Where I toil
From where I dwell
And yell in hell

Where my lot is cast
By the demands of the market
The slave market – that stock exchange

I am James Somerset
I am an incarnation
I am
But
a
commodity
Going, going, gone
For whom the bell tolls?
No! It is the gong that is still tolling

Nothing has changed
I am an incarnation ...
James Somerset

Going, going, gone ...

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