BLACKOUT POETRY LYRICS

# Follow the Drinking Gourd performed by Eric Bibb

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When the sun comes back

And the first quail calls

Follow the drinking gourd,

For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd

The riverbank makes a very good road

The dead trees will show you the way

Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,

Follow the drinking gourd

The river ends between two hills

Follow the drinking gourd

There is another river on the other side

Follow the drinking gourd

When the great big river meets the little river

Follow the drinking gourd

For the old man is a-waiting for to carry to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd

*Bibb, E. (1997). Follow the Drinking Gourd [Song]. On* Shakin’ a Tailfeather*. Music for Little People.*

# Blackbird (1966) by Nina Simone

Why you wanna fly Blackbird?

You ain't ever gonna fly

Why you wanna fly Blackbird?

You ain't ever gonna fly

No place big enough for holding

All the tears you're gonna cry

Cause your mama's name was “Lonely”

And your daddy's name was “Pain”

And he called you “Little Sorrow”

Cus you'll never love again

Why you wanna fly Blackbird?

You ain't ever gonna fly

Why you wanna fly Blackbird?

You ain't ever gonna fly

You ain't got no one to hold you

You ain't got no one to care

If you'd only understand dear

Nobody wants you anywhere

So why you wanna fly, Blackbird?

You ain't ever gonna fly

Why you wanna fly, Blackbird?

You ain't ever gonna fly

You ain't got no one to hold you

You ain't got no one to care

So why you wanna fly, Blackbird?

You ain't ever gonna fly

You ain't ever gonna fly

*Simone, N. (1966). Blackbird [Song]. On* Nina Simone with Strings*. Colpix Records.*

# Strange Fruit (1939) performed by Billie Holiday

Southern trees bear a strange fruit

Blood on the leaves and blood at the root

Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze

Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant South

The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth

Scent of magnolia, sweet and fresh

Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck

For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck

For the sun to rot, for the tree to drop

Here is a strange and bitter crop

*Holiday, B. (1939). Strange Fruit [Song]. Commodore.*

# What’s Going On (1971) by Marvin Gaye

Mother, mother

There's too many of you crying

Brother, brother, brother

There's far too many of you dying

You know we've got to find a way

To bring some lovin' here today, yeah

Father, father

We don't need to escalate

You see, war is not the answer

For only love can conquer hate

You know we've got to find a way

To bring some lovin' here today, oh, oh, oh

Picket lines and picket signs

Don't punish me with brutality

Talk to me, so you can see

Oh, what's going on

What's going on

Yeah, what's going on

Ah, what's going on

(In the meantime)

Right on, baby

Right on babe

Right on babe

Mother, mother

Everybody thinks we're wrong

Oh, but who are they to judge us

Simply 'cause our hair is long?

Oh, you know we've got to find a way

Bring some understanding here today

Oh oh oh

Picket lines and picket signs

Don't punish me with brutality

C'mon talk to me

So you can see

What's going on

Yeah, what's going on

Tell me what's going on

I'll tell you what's going on

Ooh ooh ooh ooh

Right on baby

Right on, right on

Right on baby

Right on baby, c'mon, right on

*Gaye, M. (1971). What’s Going On [Song]. On* What’s Going On*. Tamla.*

# Long Violent History (2020) by Tyler Childers

It's the worst that it's been since the last time it happened

It's happening again right in front of our eyes

There's updated footage, wild speculation

Tall tales and hearsay and absolute lies

Been passed off as factual when actually, the actual

Causes they're awkwardly blockin' the way

Keeping us all from enjoyin' our evening

Shoving its roots through the screens in our face

Now, what would you give if you heard my opinion

Conjecturin' on matters that I ain't never dreamed

In all my born days as a white boy from Hickman

Based on the way that the world's been to mе

But it ain't never once made me scared just to be

It's called me belligеrent, it's took me for ignorant

Could you imagine just constantly worryin'

Kickin' and fightin', beggin' to breathe

How many boys could they haul off this mountain

Shoot full of holes, cuffed, and laid in the streets

'Til we come in to town in a stark ravin' anger

Looking for answers and armed to the teeth

30 aught sixes, papaw's old pistol

How many, you reckon, would it be, four or five?

Oh, would that be the start of a long, violent history

Of tuckin' our tails as we try to abide?

Oh, would that be the start of a long, violent history

Of tuckin' our tails as we try to abide?

*Childers, T. (2020). Long Violent History [Song]. On* Long Violent History. *Hickman Holler.*

# Eyes On the Prize (“Hold On”) performed by Sweet Honey in the Rock

Paul and Silas bound in jail

Had no money for to go their bail

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Paul and Silas began to shout

Jail door opened and they walked out

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

I got my hand on the gospel plow

Wouldn’t take nothing for my journey now

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Well the only thing we did was wrong

Stayed in the wilderness too long

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

The only thing that we did was right

Was the day we started to fight

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

We met jail and violence too

But God’s love will see us through

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Only chain that we can stand

Is the chain o’ hand on hand

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

*Sweet Honey in the Rock. (2000). Eyes on the Prize (“Hold On”). On* Freedom Song*. Sony Masterworks.*