

Sonia Sanchez

(1934-)

TO ANSWER THE QUESTION of how I write, we must look also to why I write. I write to tell the truth about the Black condition as I see it. Therefore I write to offer a Black woman's view of the world. How I tell the truth is part of the truth itself. I've always believed that the truth concealed or clouded is a partial lie. So when I decide to tell the truth about an event/happening, it must be clear and understandable for those who need to understand the lie/lies being told. What I learned in deciding "how" to write was simply that most folks tend to think that you're lying or jiving them if you have to spice things up just to get a point across. I decided along with a number of other Black poets to tell the truth in poetry by using the language, dialect, idioms, of the folks we believed our audience to be.

Homecoming

i have been a
way so long
once after college
i returned tourist
style to catch all
the niggers killing
themselves with
three-for-oners

with
needles
that cd
not support
their stutters.
now woman
i have returned
leaving behind me
all those hide and
seek faces peeling
with freudian dreams.
this is for real.
black
niggers
my beauty.
baby.
i have learned it
ain't like they say
in the newspapers.

Malcolm

do not speak to me of martyrdom
of men who die to be remembered
on some parish day.
i don't believe in dying
thouh i too shall die
and violets like castanets
will echo me.

yet this man
this dreamer,
thick-lipped with words
will never speak again
and in each winter
when the cold air cracks

with frost, i'll breathe
 his breath and mourn
 my gun-filled nights.
 he was the sun that tagged
 the western sky and
 melted tiger-scholars
 while they searched for stripes.
 he said, "fuck you white
 man. we have been
 curled too long. nothing
 is sacred now. not your
 white faces nor any
 land that separates
 until some voices
 squat with spasms."

do not speak to me of living.
 life is obscene with crowds
 of white on black.
 death is my pulse.
 what might have been
 is not for him/or me
 but what could have been
 floods the womb until i drown.

blk / rhetoric

*(for Killebrew Keeby, Icewater,
 Baker, Gary Adams and
 Omar Shabazz)*

who's gonna make all
 that beautiful blk / rhetoric
 mean something.

like
 i mean
 who's gonna take

the words
 blk / is / beautiful
 and make more of it
 than blk / capitalism.
 u dig?
 i mean
 like who's gonna
 take all the young / long / haired
 natural / brothers and sisters
 and let them
 grow till
 all that is
 impt is them
 selves
 moving in straight /
 revolutionary / lines
 toward the enemy
 (and we know who that is)
 like. man.
 who's gonna give our young
 blk / people new heroes
 (instead of catch / phrases)
 (instead of cad / ill / acs)
 (instead of pimps)
 (instead of wite / whores)
 (instead of drugs)
 (instead of new dances)
 (instead of chit / ter / lings)
 (instead of a 35¢ bottle of ripple)
 (instead of quick / fucks in the hall / way
 of wite / america's mind)
 like. this. is an S O S
 me. calling.....
 calling.....
 some / one
 pleasereplysoon.

A Poem for My Father

how sad it must be
to love so many women
to need so many black
perfumed bodies weeping
underneath you.

when i remember all those nights
i filled my mind with
long wars between short
sighted trojans & greeks
while you slapped some
wide hips about in
your pvt dungeon,
when i remember your
deformity i want to
do something about your
makeshift manhood.
i guess

that is why
on meeting your sixth
wife, i cross myself
with her confessionals.

Poem No. 3

i gather up
each sound
you left behind
and stretch them
on our bed.

each nite
i breathe you
and become high.

Towhomitmayconcern

watch out fo the full moon of sonia
shinin down on ya.
git yo/self fattened up man
you gon be doing battle with me
ima gonna stake you out
grind you down
leave greasy spots all over yo/soul
till you bone dry. man.
you gon know you done been touched by me
this time.
ima gonna tattoo me on you fo ever
leave my creases all inside yo creases
i done warned ya boy
watch out
for the full moon of sonia
shinin down on ya.