

SAMORI TOURÉ SWYGERT



BLACK I (Eye)
on AMERICA

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— POEMS —

Samori Touré Swygert

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American Express

We make love on the Internet via cybersex and chat rooms,
Speed limits, high-speed car chases, and cars that zoom,
Seconds, minutes, days, weeks, years.
It's like unconsciously we're rushing to our doom,
Rushing through life without giving time, room for time.

We modernize, upgrade, biggie size, super size
And advance so quick like it's a race,
That time's clocks and wristwatches need a second
To catch a breather and keep pace.

Over the Internet our children are taught academic and reading drills,
But that has to affect their interpersonal, teamwork, and social skills.
We don't take time to budget and balance our money,
So we rely on direct deposit for our bills.
We are brainwashed with physical narcissism and instant gratification.
We don't exercise, so we rely on diet pills.
A speedy result or product means extreme sacrifice;
I don't think we're that needy because the results aren't that nice.
Increased speed usually neglects learning fundamental concepts,
Like teaching arithmetic strictly by calculator.
Would it really surprise you, if you gave a kid pencil and paper,
Told them to divide, and they couldn't distinguish between numerator and
denominator?

So learning changes all of a sudden.
Would we know how to access computerized information without a mouse
button?
Nature allows itself time for its activities—
Nine months for pregnancy, twelve hours between sunset and sunrise—
Although we fiddle with it through daylight savings time.
Matter of fact, let me finish this rhyme before I run out of time.

Nature has four seasons, and three months for each.
We can go to church on the Internet to hear the reverend preach.
We'll use our credit cards for offering—but let me finish this speech.
We're always in a state of emergency
Because we are always in a state of urgency.
In this world we might end up hospital patients
Just for having patience.

We limit family breakfast and dinnertime to
A drive-thru:
Quick grits, instant cereal, microwaves, TV dinners, and minute rice.

Our birth rate is increasing with such frequency
This has to play a role in the increase in juvenile delinquency.
So it's plain to see
Judges for blacks giving speedy denial
Of the right to a speedy trial.
In fact, we blacks kept Johnnie Cochran's number on speed dial,
All done to keep our children out of the system that's penal.
Meanwhile
We pay fifty to seventy percent of our earnings for cars with increased horsepower,
But how ironic is it that we don't move during "rush hour"?
We always want to rush things,
But car accidents teach us that speed can crush things.
We check out of the grocery store in express lanes
That somehow become the most crowded and stressed lanes.

I'm laughing but I'm serious.
We're so "quick tempered,"
Which also means that we are "fast and furious."

I guess so.

Why should we sip and savor coffee, when we can guzzle espresso

While popping pills of speed?

Off of us entertainers used to feed,

But now music stars don't get real money to earn;

Three weeks before their album comes out, we already have a CD burned.

Instead of praying, we want to talk to God on Instant Messenger

To find out what's taking so long with our Instant Blessenger.

We want to jump into fast cabs, while drinking Slim Fast

So we can have fast abs.

It doesn't matter if we're two-minute brothers or lovers

Because we only have time for quickies and hickies.

We email, priority mail, overnight, and make rushed deliveries;

Our women are rushed into and out of hospitals for premature births,

So premature births are also considered rushed deliveries.

Our life and death are just a mouse-click away.

But anyway, "All aboard the American Express!"

We'll be making no stops,

So I don't know why you boarded in the first place.

American Express!

We're going so fast, "You'll leave home without it!"

"All aboard!"