

A GAY POEM

By Keith Jarrett

They asked me if I had a gay poem
So I said “Straight up, no!
“My words don’t deviate between straight lines
My poems don’t mince their words
Or bend
Or make queer little observations”

They asked me if I had a gay poem
So I answered honestly
That, no, I didn’t have any gay poetry
And even if, unthinkably, I did
What would it say about me?

I mean, even presenting the question
Puts me in a precarious position
And how would I even begin to broach the subject
With my own creation?

Like... “Excuse me, poem, are you gay?
Have you grown up contrarily to what I wanted you to say?
I most certainly didn’t write you that way
Was it something I said, something I did that turned you?
Maybe I should have peppered your verses
With sport, girls and beer
Maybe as your author I deserted you...
Or did another writer turn you queer?”

Ok, let’s say, hypothetically, that this poem is gay
Maybe it’s just a confused poem that needs straightening out
Maybe I could insert verses from Leviticus
Speak over it in tongues
Douse it in holy water
Recite it the Qu’ran
Give it a beat, beat, beat
Boom box blasting out in the street
“Batty poem fi dead, batty poem fi dead
Rip up chi chi poem inna shred”

They asked me if I had a gay poem
And I answered “No”
But the truth is I didn’t know
Until one of my very own poems stepped up



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POEMS

And tapped me on the shoulder
 It said, "Look here Dad/Author
 I'm now that much bolder
 And I'm not confused
 And not alternative
 And even though the words I choose to marry with
 Make me different
 It don't make me any less eloquent

"I don't need to be overly elegant
 So maybe that's why I stepped under your gaydar
 But why are you so afraid to embrace it?
 Face it! It's just another part of me
 You can't erase it

"The more you try to label me with your twisted synonyms
 The more you say you hate the sinner
 And despise the sin
 The more you try to clip my words
 And stifle my expression
 The more I know it's you, not me,
 Whose morality should be called into question"

They asked me to read out a poem
 They said, "Choose one of your strongest
 One of your best
 Choose a poem that don't stand for any foolishness"
 And they asked me if I had a gay poem...
 So I said
 Yes.