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## Native Son

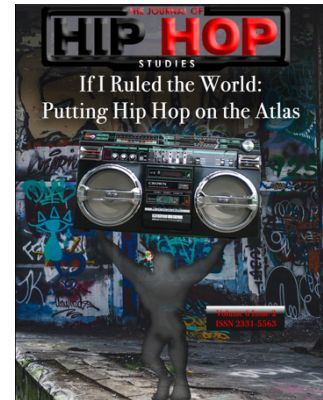
Ikeogu Oke

*Journal of Hip Hop Studies, Special Issue If I Ruled the World:  
Putting Hip Hop on the Atlas*

Volume 6, Issue 2, Winter 2019, pp. 233 - 234

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34718/ea4m-6m28>

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

**A warning to our readers: Please note that this poem contains a reference that might be upsetting and painful because the *n-word* is used (in the fourth verse). We were not able to ask the poet to provide a commentary on his choice of this word since he passed away in November. The journal has decided to print the poem as it was originally written, in order to honor the memory of Ikeogu Oke (1967–2018), one of Nigeria’s most highly respected and venerable wordsmiths.**

### No. 9: Native Son

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

I come from where I was to where I had been;  
And watching our new ways, what have I seen?  
What have I seen in changed America?  
Our hopes get slimmer, their plot gets thicker.

**Chorus:** Here’s the return  
Of the native son  
To where it seems fun  
To hit and run.

} *To be sung,  
the other  
stanzas rapped*

So ever are we running from hit and harder hit;  
And ever are they chasing to hit us more and more.  
Their cops remain as eager to turn on us the heat,  
As they’ll be tomorrow, and had been before.

I come to see my folks, my homies and my niggas,  
To know how well they’re faring, the ones I left behind;  
And their state of being, and the thought it triggers,  
Still upsets my feelings, and irritates my mind.

*Repeat chorus.*

I wish their lots were better;  
I wish their paths were free,  
Free from every clutter  
In this land of liberty.

But some system locks your padlock  
And throws away the key;  
And thus begins your hard luck  
To set your fortunes free.

*Repeat chorus.*

And you won't break the door  
To avoid their law's disgrace  
(That haunts the black and poor)  
Though it is your own place.

And so their padlock stays  
Until you find their key;  
Or seek to press your case  
And end up just like me.

*Repeat chorus.*

March 1, 2018