

## Deeper Than Hip-Hop Tupac 2Pac Poetry Enlightens

Written by Robert ID2734

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When the name Tupac Shakur is brought up in hip-hop culture, many think of the iconic rap figure, or maybe the part time actor Tupac (2Pac) or maybe the activist side of the man Tupac.

A side of the legendary hip-hop figure that is sometimes over looked is the poetry that Tupac wrote. Yes his tracks are poetry set to beats, but his writings are as deep as the man himself.

Tupac's poetry and writings have been read and dissected by many and have been quoted and studied. "The Rose That Grew From Concrete," is a collection of deep in thought poetry the hip-hop artist penned between 1989 and 1991 before he was famous for his rap talent.

The Worcester public school systems added Tupac's book to their summer reading list. The Shakur Estate and Leila Steinberg publish the book of Tupac's poems which contains 71 poems written by Tupac from 1989 to 1991.

Harvard University co-sponsored an academic symposium entitled "All Eyez on Me: Tupac Shakur and the Search for the Modern Folk Hero." The speakers discussed a wide range of topics dealing with Shakur's impact on everything from entertainment to sociology.

Many of the speakers discussed Shakur's status and public persona, including State University of New York English professor Mark Anthony Neal, who gave the talk "Thug Nigga Intellectual: Tupac as Celebrity Gramscian" in which he argued that Shakur was an example of the "organic intellectual" expressing the concerns of a larger group. Professor Neal has also indicated in his writings that the death of Shakur has left a "leadership void amongst hip-hop artists." Neal further describes Tupac as a "walking contradiction", a status that allowed him to "make being an intellectual accessible to ordinary people."

Professor of Communications Murray Forman, of Northeastern University, spoke of the mythical status surrounding Shakur's life and death. He addressed the symbolism and mythology surrounding Shakur's death in his talk entitled "Tupac Shakur: O.G. (Ostensibly Gone)". Among his findings were that Shakur's fans have "succeeded in resurrecting Tupac as an ethereal life force."

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And maybe we as fans have resurrected Tupac to a higher plane than that of the ordinary hip-hop or rap musician. The reason is he (Tupac) was so much like most of us. We understood him and he understood us.

In "From Thug Life to Legend: Realization of a Black Folk Hero", Professor of Music at Northeastern University, Emmett Price, compared Shakur's public image to that of the trickster-figures of African-American folklore which gave rise to the urban "bad-man" persona of the post-slavery period. He ultimately described Shakur as a "prolific artist" who was "driven by a terrible sense of urgency" in a quest to "unify mind, body, and spirit."

Michael Dyson, University of Pennsylvania Avalon Professor of Humanities and African American Studies and author of the book 'Holler If You Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur', indicated that Shakur "spoke with brilliance and insight as someone who bears witness to the pain of those who would never have his platform. He told the truth, even as he struggled with the fragments of his identity."

Other academics at the Harvard Conference spoke of Shakur's impact on entertainment, race relations, politics and the "hero/martyr" status to which he was elevated by fans after his death.

The University of California, Berkeley introduced a new course in 1998 called "History '98: Poetry and History of Tupac Shakur."

So we can see the impact that Tupac has had and is having on society. If not an impact then why is his writings and poetry being delved into so deeply?

Maybe Tupac himself said it best when he wrote Changed Man, which is on the Better Dayz album. Pac spits:

haha, everybody think they understand a nigga

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sh\*t u niggas don't know me

ya'll know that nigga on the rap songs

ya'll know that nigga in the movies

you don't know this nigga in 3d

the real live right up against u in front of your face....(sh\*t)

Westside

So if you want to know Tupac better and understand Tupac better, the best place to start is not in the hip-hop songs or the mighty rap songs of the late hip-hop icon; but in his writings and poetry.

"The Rose That Grew From Concrete" the book is a great starting place. It is also an album, but you only get 25 tracks, but it is good to hear the poems as spoken word. People like Jasmine Guy, Sonia Sanchez, Mos Def, Dead Prez, Reverend Run, Nikki Giovanni, Quincy Jones/Mac Mall, Sarah Jones, Russell Simmons, Malcolm Jamal Warner, Chief Okena Littlehawk and many others put it down.

Growing out of that book of poems by Tupac also came "The Rose, Vol. 2 - Music Inspired by Tupac's Poetry," the album contains 15 tracks inspired mostly from poems in Tupac's 'The Rose that Grew from Concrete' book of poetry.

The Cd contains an array of genres, including rap, hip-hop, soul, R&B and spoken word offerings. The guest artists on "The Rose, Vol. 2" include one of hip-hop favorite artist and one

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of Tupac's friends Shock G, down south rap artist Ludacris, Lyfe Jennings, hip-hop rappers Bone Thugs -N- Harmony, Tupac's group The Outlawz, Memphis Bleek, and Talib Kweli, among many others. This to should be looked into and studied.

Tupac's poetry is connected to many things. Many can feel the words Pac wrote. Tupac poetry is quoted at grassroots movements, protests, spoken word competitions – it seems his words are everywhere.

Tupac wrote a poem called 'Just a Breath of Freedom for Nelson Mandela'. During a Nelson Mandela fundraiser in Toronto, DeeJay Ra from Hip-Hop Literacy read this poem and you can hear that reading by DeeJay Ra [HERE](#) .

Not only is Tupac's music world wide but all his words carry a lot of impact. Please check out the poetry written by Tupac and other writings of his. Learn of the man Tupac Amaru Shakur – he is much deeper than hip-hop or rap; and that is why his legacy continues to grow with every passing day. Get to know Tupac the man and then you will understand why many hold him in such deep respect and why others study him to try to understand what they can not see.

"Once people take time to find out who I really am you'd be surprised" – Tupac Shakur

All the aforementioned books and tapes are available everywhere.

Please visit the only 'Official' Tupac Shakur sites on the net at

<http://www.2paclegacy.com>

<http://tasf.org>