

JUJUS

ALCHEMY OF THE BLUES

POEMS BY

SARAH WEBSTER FABIO

READ BY

SARAH WEBSTER FABIO

WITH MUSICAL BACKGROUND

PS
3556
A149
J935
1976
MUS LP

University of Alberta Library



0 1620 0188 6751

JUJUS
ALCHEMY OF THE BLUES
POEMS BY
SARAH WEBSTER FABIO
READ BY
SARAH WEBSTER FABIO
WITH MUSICAL BACKGROUNDS

Musical compositions are all originals from the combined efforts of the following: Wayne Wallace, Ronald Fabio, Denianke (Leon Williams) and Cyril Leslie Fabio III. Narration Thomas Albert Fabio.

SIDE 1

1. The Hand That Rocks
2. Sweet Songs
Includes a signature poem "Solemnly Mine" by Cyril L. Fabio III, read by C. L. Fabio III
3. Juju For: Grandma

SIDE 2

1. Chromo
2. Still, A Red Hot Axe
3. If We Come As Soft Rain
4. Jujus/Alchemy of the Blues
5. Jujus/Alchemy of the Blues Instrumental

WARNING: UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION OF THIS RECORDING IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW AND SUBJECT TO CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

©1976 FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORP.
43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 76-750067

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL 9714

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FL 9714

©1976 by Folkways Records & Service Corp., 43 W. 61st St., NYC, USA

ALCHEMY OF THE BLUES

INTRODUCTION

I feel that these represent the epitomy of my experimenting with the integration of music and poetry in a Black idiom taken from the rich source of inspiration welling from the Black experience here in America. With a house band and a resident poet in the Fabio household during the incubation period necessary in making things work as a whole piece this was a good beginning. As you know we had a film and sound expert, Cheryl Fabio, who added another dimension by making a film of the process - "Rainbow Black," I think she calls it. We also had a budding romance between lead guitarist, Wayne Wallace and technical assistant, Renee Fabio, and the offshoot of this "Don't fight the feeling" venture is another member of the extended family as Wayne Wallace is now my son-in-law and even more importantly there is a baby, Tamara Wallace. Fred Cohn, the engineer and co-producer for one of the albums, spent time and energy on the group and wholly entered into the spirit of the togetherness which pervaded the experience. And, last but not least, since your initial confidence in our ability with the production of "Boss Soul" and throughout the months of hard work, we have considered you as one playing a crucial and important role. May I express thanks to you from the whole group.

Very truly yours,
Sarah Webster Fabio

SIDE ONE

1. The Hand That Rocks
2. Sweet Songs (includes a signature poem, "Solemnly Mine" by Cyril L. Fabio III) - read by Cyril L. Fabio III.
3. Juju For: Grandma

SIDE TWO

1. Chromo
2. Still, A Red Hot Axe
3. If We Come As Soft Rain
4. Jujus/Alchemy of the Blues
5. Jujus/Alchemy of the Blues--Instrumental

Sarah Webster Fabio, poet, reading poems by
Sarah Webster Fabio

All poetry with stated exception is the original work of
Sarah Webster Fabio

Musical Compositions are all originals from the combined
efforts of the following: Wayne Wallace, Ronald Fabio,
Denianke (Leon Williams) and Cyril Leslie Fabio III

Musical Directors--Denianke (Leon Williams) and
Wayne Wallace

Narration, male dramatic readings--Thomas Albert Fabio

Technical Assistants--Alice Bruce, Anna Jones,
Bob Clemons, Renee Fabio, Cheryl Fabio, Thomas Fabio

Produced by Sarah Webster Fabio. Co-produced by the
group "Don't Fight The Feeling"

Co-produced and Engineered by Fred F. Cohn

"Don't Fight The Feeling" Band Members:

Wayne Wallace, lead guitar

Denianke (Leon Williams), piano, soprano sax, flute,
tenor sax, alto sax

Ronald Fabio, bass

Cyril Leslie Fabio III, congos

Lawrence E. Vann, drums

Thomas Fabio and Rick Hopton, special effects

JUJU FOR THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE/ THAT ROCKS THE BOAT

Baby,
Last night when
you called me,
feeling smug,
safe, because
you were 2000
miles away;
giving me that
old line about,
"wish you were here."
Jeezuss,
you've forgotten
I'm of the order
of that bad New Orleans'
sister, Marie.
And, I've been known
to have the power.
I mean

I reach out,
touch,
turn
a boat around
in midsea, and
pilot
(him brimming over
like a sinking ship
with memories of
my tender, loving
care)
my man--
as he decides
to come--
right on
back home
to
me.

PS
3556
A149
J935
1976
MUS LP

ONCE MORE,
THE SWEET SONGS

For Carl Mack

Sweet songs,
you said,
were gonna come
again, My Man,
and didn't they?
Jetted in on
a ray of radiance
like the sun
to shine on those
in our midst and
the still unborn
in this hour
of our great need.

You prophesied
the return of
mandolins and
tambourines and
tinkling bells,
triangles and
cymbals, and they
sided in on beams
from Pharaoh
as I slept,
taking me
unaware,
tripping,
blowing
my mind.

"SOLEMNLY MINE"

by Cyril Leslie Fabio III

Solemnly mine,
Universal Man,
Thinking, feeling,
loving, teaching, and learning,
rapping with the gods
while soul claps hand
in a communion,
solely mine.

Yeah—
I still hear
Those fun bells,
those we-are-one
bells, distant now
then near
like a sounding
dream,

and I know
soon now the
sweet songs are
gonna pour
like rain
from our love-torn
souls one more time.

Yeah,
Yeah,
Yeah.

Right On.
Right On.
One More Time.
Right On.

JUJU FOR GRANDMA

(In Memory of my slave ancestor,
Elizabeth Storey, for whom I
grandma-sat during my childhood.
Born circa 1858: died 1953)

Grandma's talk
was Black talk,
no "jive-ass nigger bit"
but real down-to-earth-
hardtimes-and-good-feelings
talk.

She made no bones
about it, her spirit was
contained in the little red book
of Gospel Pearls—old songs
of the old-time religion
which brought her and her
loved ones through the dark past;
brought love/sorrow to the
crystalization of tears raining
blues from her eyes.

She knew she bore
the cross; shared the
Christian's curse with Him,
the most beloved yet crucified;
and, in that knowledge, grew
a divine grace which marked
the character of her life.

She was African.
She was slave.
She spoke little
but when she spoke
there was a lot
of knowledge,

of faith, of beauty,
of love, of understanding.

Now, Grandma's talk
was strange talk.
Grandma's thoughts
though were full, clear;
her ideas were dense.
Grandma's tongue was
a double edged sword.
Grandma's words
made sense.

"So-so" was always
how she felt, or,
"God willing, tolerable."
She spoke in parables,
"pretty is as pretty does."
She spoke in proverbs too,
"As you sow, so shall
you also reap."
She spoke in similes
and metaphors to
objectify the quality
of her being.
"My life is like this
old quilt—scraps
and pieces, odd shapes
and colors; but,
a work of love
stitched in time
into a special design—
firm, color fast,
warming to the body
and the soul."

She spoke in riddles,
when we got too close
and were in her hair,
putting us in our places
at a proper distance:
"Maro Saro,
Elizabeth Jane,
Ala Amina Fortune,
Mo:ri ya pen."
She spoke in rhyme
and in tongues unknown,
"Aku Baka, Soda Cracker,
Aku Baka Bo.
Does your mama chew tobacco?
Aku Baka Bo."
She had her numbers

in counting lines
which doubled for
hide-and-peek games.

"Eena, mena, mina mo...

One for the money,
two for the show,
three to make ready,
four to go.

All hid? "

All hid.

All

hidden in the
mystery of her life
which formed the
rainbow bridge
from our ancestral past
to the point where
now is already over
the hump, and the
"in a little while" which
forms our tomorrows
becomes our yesterdays.

All hid.

All

hidden in the
violation and the void
of grandma's world.

Grandma's hands
were tender.

Grandma's feet were
calloused and tired.

Grandma's eyes
were weary.

Grandma's back was
sturdy and broad.

Grandma's talk
was strange talk.

Grandma's thoughts
were dense.

Grandma's tongue
was a double-edged sword.

Grandma's words
made sense.

Grandma took a life
of living hell
and through toil, love, faith,
human worth,
gave it meaning,
worked it
into common sense.

(From the chapter "Grandma's Talk" in the book
Black Talk: Soul/Shield/Sword, Vol. 1 to be
published by Doubleday & Co.; recorded on LP
album "Jujus/Alchemy of the Blues"

CHROMO

Color it
blue funk
this sound
that tears
singing
from me
in beauty
of agony;
this colored
thing—

so many
blues,
the hues
of my
spent days:
blue, the eyes
of my soul
starred
in twilight
gaze.

Color—
in high
tones, low—
this non-
harmonic
sound
full of woe
"me"
chromo...
chromo...
chromo...

STILL, A RED HOT AXE

For Johnny Hodges

My Man,
yo' axe
still
yo'
blow
blown
now that

you've gone
"Things
ain't what
they
used
to be."

For so many
years—all my life,
I guess,
you've been around
in the background,
acing it with the Duke,
doin' yo'
tan and beige
and black and blues
thing.

It's kinda
hard to believe,
you've gone on
to join those other
music makers like
Otis Redding and
Coltrane—
leaving us a little
more empty now.

But, go right on,
My Man,
you're the immortal best;
you've earned yo' throne
and rest.

So, go right on.
Take the A train
home.

IF WE COME LIKE

SOFT RAIN

If

we come
like soft rain—
pattering gentle,
not raging in torrents—
secretly
whispering
in answer
to each other's

urgent calls;
rescuing our spirits,
souls from
precarious ridges
(canyon rimmed and
night entombed)

Then,

the morning
of our new lives
should shower in
rainbows.

But,

if rooted in the
unfeeling quicksand
of the troubled past,
we hesitate
to move closer to
tenderness,

And,

if deafened
by the cacaphony of
the reigning chaos
so much so
that we only hear
the fading echo of
our awakening calls

and come as

night falls—
in a vacuum
just to fill a void—
it is better
to not
come at all.

Love—

like lode stars—
pulls us together
toward our eclipses
and equinoxes;
or else,
like shooting meteors
speeding by tangentially
to flame
and fall;
burning to ember,
leaving so little essence
to remember.

If we come

like rain, freely,
with a downpouring
of smiles and/or tears

running breathlessly
in answer to
each other's call,
then come we must.

Or else

we should wish
for each other
the dawn of
brighter suns

JUJU FOR RAY CHARLES ALCHEMY OF THE BLUES

(For that poet-singer Ray Charles,
the crown Town crier written on
his birthday during the
San Francisco Black Expo '72)

"Cry," or
"Baby, don't you Cry,"
you'd croon, and crying
too, in a voice with a crack
you'd keep a whole lotta
Black Mamas from
blowing their stacks.
It's only life and
we all have to
let go with tears,
sometimes, and it
don't even hurt, or if
it hurts, it hurts so good.
Tears, like clocks,
tell you what time
it is and, properly aged,
tears turn jewels.

What turned your
Sweet'N Sour tears
into gold wasn't:

1. Winning grammy awards
from the National Academy of
Record Arts and Science
in good old Use-Me-Up-Merica.
2. Silver records hurled from the
discs of the colonial motherland.
No, to get on down and give
the drummer some:

1. To yo' Mama, granny, Aun' Jemima
2. To Black ghetto life and the rain/tears/
sun/smiles poured on in heaps everyday
3. To the dudes/brothers/jocks hanging
out on the blocks still with you
4. All those soul sisters who're for you,
even some non-Black ones.

But it was you, Ray,
who knew what to do,
who through magic,
vision, prophesy, hope, heart,
and everlasting hurt
took genius and created a
meaningful, lasting, three-generation
musical tradition,
made it a musical ritual
to ease the growth from
snotty-nosed, lonely
Black child to man.

Dammit, Ray,
you hit the universality
of always being willing to
to cry again either with
a sour or sweet taste.
But tears and kisses both
wet the soul,
baptising it into a
full life.

I danced on a dime in the 40's.
I took a teen son to see you—
as a high moment in his life in the 60's.

Now, he's ready to have his son blessed
by your truth, all his daughters too.

Who else but you
could cry, hang out tears to dry,
drop tears and then lament that
you'd run out of shoulders to cry on
and brag about how many times you
could cry, and even badmouth
happiness with the conviction that,
"After my laughter come tears."

Heartbreaks fall and aren't healthy
at all when they keep hanging around
too long, so you wised us up to the fact
that if you can let your hair down
and it eases the pain, do it;
if tears falling like rain clear
the air, let it be;
if it takes blues to chase away
the blues, sing your song,
and if it takes something more
to pull yourself together,
then get it on and "Let's go get stoned."

Hoodoo wise, like the holy spirit
moving on sabbath times, Ray's
got a song to tell you what dose
of tears is your thing.

Langston Hughes said, "I've known
rivers...my soul has grown deep like
a river," but who but you could
seriously ask somebody to, "Cry
me a river, 'cause I've cried a
river over you." Or when you begged,
"Don't Cry, Baby" it was all in vain,
when you dropped that sweet suggestion
that after drying tears, "Let's be
sweethearts again." Cry, cry, cry,
Ray, and let some soul rain in.