

# Joshua Beckles\_Bradley University\_Done\_Poetry

📅 Fri, 3/13 1:50PM ⌚ 10:13


## SUMMARY KEYWORDS


lynching, body, black, man, life, spoke, began, victim, voice, child, celebrate, lynch, clung, richard, resurrection, scars, billie holiday, richard wright, felt, blood


## SPEAKERS


Joshua Beckles


---

 Joshua Beckles 00:29  
Been feeling different in my black body lately. There is a tightening on my neck more than usual. Been questioning my usefulness to gravity like I'm related to something very like I am something very

 Joshua Beckles 00:49  
Sun blistering over my head. I am a man's head hung at the end of the road.

 Joshua Beckles 00:57  
See if I were alive,


 Joshua Beckles 01:05  
Since I'm not allowed I will tell you my story like I'm resting in power like I have bloodlines dripping out to me like the bottom of leaves


 Joshua Beckles 01:17  
Black skin torched men was like scored em turned them to a pouch, black legs.


 Joshua Beckles 01:27  
A prize winning photo, mountain next to deer or antelope


 Joshua Beckles 01:33

 Joshua Beckles 01:55  
Hunts black body for big kill for Sunday entertainment


 Joshua Beckles 01:37  
As the morning hallelujah praise on your knees Black boy for the Lord to bless your soul. Shiver in your cabin listen to the town folk Sing we shall overcome our hope.


 Joshua Beckles 01:54  
Bleeds

 Joshua Beckles 01:55  
from my lip

 Joshua Beckles 01:58  
onto your guiltless hands

 Joshua Beckles 02:01  
Learn from a black man in the black club that does true.

 Joshua Beckles 02:06  
Hang from that tree.

 Joshua Beckles 02:14  
New York Times of February 12, 2019, tells a story of George and Nate Dorsey and Richard and Dorothy Malcom. For black men and women marked, shot, and lynched by four white men in 1946. The incident was said to be the last mass lynching in American history. And while a federal investigation was ordered, no one was charged with her murder. Why? Because until December of last year, lynching was not considered a federal crime. The Washington Post December 28, 2018 explains. After 200 years of failed efforts the justice for lynching victims act finally passed with many celebrating and this would be something to celebrate if it had happened in the 19th century, the failure to recognize lynching as federal crime disregards the identity of the victim and the heads that killed them. So through the lense of a lynch victim's ghost, this performance doesn't seek to celebrate legislation but simply asked how could this have possibly taken so long? Using the poetry "Between the World and Me" by Richard Wright, "Bleed Through" by Chemisey, "The Transport" by Tobias Read and "On Survival Lynching" by Damien McLeod.

 . . . - . . . - - - -

J Joshua Beckles 03:27

A single voice resurrection.

J Joshua Beckles 03:30

One morning, while walking through the world I stumbled upon what I found to be my executioner to see skin pale in a prideful history, boasting in bigotry. The sun died in the sky that day and the witnesses rose and sink, thousands of faces swirling around becoming that my life be burned they hadn't strip me of my clothing doctoring my tea into my throat on my own blood to tie me to the sapling monster. Clung to the hot tar as it fell from my hot flesh so I moaned in agony and my blood was cool.

J Joshua Beckles 04:14

Cooled by the baptism of gasoline, so I closed child like to the sides of death. Clung and release

J Joshua Beckles 04:25

My spirit

J Joshua Beckles 04:31

I heard a voice say, "you won't feel like yourself for a while." Heard it say to me, "let me introduce you to your ghost" And my bones began to shake, lifting me into the atmosphere, turning me into a rotation of remembering

J Joshua Beckles 04:46

Flannigan, 1882

J Joshua Beckles 05:01

He wasn't named but, but his body was spotted with larva discoloration like the cattle he allegedly stole. He didn't speak because of their removal of his tongue but his scars spoke for him.

J Joshua Beckles 05:16

Said this body knows injustice.

J Joshua Beckles 05:20

Knows the sins of close cotton the temperament of heated twine this mind knows regret knows the feeling of obedience and penalty at the same time I felt akin to this man.

J Joshua Beckles 05:38  
As if this scorched skin was somehow my great great great grandfather.

J Joshua Beckles 05:44  
Our interaction was silent, but our experience spoke volumes. I felt my Phantom begin to bind to him but a necklace began to tighten. So out of curiosity I asked what was happening and the air was finally Your time is up.

J Joshua Beckles 06:00  
Landing 1918

J Joshua Beckles 06:07  
Now this place looked familiar not from documentation but decendents of

J Joshua Beckles 06:15  
Mary.

J Joshua Beckles 06:18  
All this time.

J Joshua Beckles 06:22  
Her body no longer suspended in the sky but still slick. Her child only allowed seven years of growth in this spirit round Mary's eyes were filled piss the fuck off.

J Joshua Beckles 06:37  
She spoke with Ray said do not forget this.

J Joshua Beckles 06:43  
For this was not done in vain. Remember

J Joshua Beckles 06:48

J Joshua Beckles 00:40  
Billy's lyrics

J Joshua Beckles 06:50  
lest you disrespect this body this body has been roped into being the backdrop of racism. Over the  
severance of marriage, trying to harvest his body from the forest, but you can't lest you dangle with it.  
sleep there waiting for you're waiting for your resurrection once more. My legs began to tighten and I  
began to ask the air where are my uncle Richard, my cousin

J Joshua Beckles 07:28  
Before I was catapulted here.

J Joshua Beckles 07:30  
I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry

J Joshua Beckles 07:43  
you weren't supposed to see me like this

J Joshua Beckles 07:47  
I'm sorry you got this

J Joshua Beckles 07:52  
It was never supposed to be like this

J Joshua Beckles 07:55  
I'm sorry it took so long for you to see me like this. I'm so sorry that slave ships arrived from the shores of  
your childhood, and demanded that you've handed over, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry that this news will teach  
you more than you will ever learn. I'm so sorry that this place cares so much about black children that  
even lynchings have a kids version. I'm so sorry

J Joshua Beckles 08:20  
but no, no, this is not your fault. No, please No, this is not your fault you love no more than ever. So the  
next time that fear tries to make a hiding place of you, the next time that America tries to come for your  
throat, lift up your neck. Show them your scars and tell them that your life is everything God forgot to give  
them. Tell them that it's yours and they can't have it. Tell them that they will not let another Billie Holiday,

of a black voice death even when your life slips and rolls into their hands. They will not make a Billie Holiday for black voice. Here we celebrate survival because survival is a celebration in itself. And when they try to make a Mississippi burning of your life, tell them how you survived.

J Joshua Beckles 09:10  
But don't forget us.

J Joshua Beckles 09:16  
Please don't

J Joshua Beckles 09:22  
Bury me with dignity.

J Joshua Beckles 09:25  
Put gardenias in my hair. Make sure that my body stay beautiful and peaceful and light.

J Joshua Beckles 09:39  
But make sure that this body

J Joshua Beckles 09:51  
stays off of masters wall.