

Pretty flacko nigga

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



The poem "Hard Rock" by Tethering Knight is a poem that takes place in a prison (or possibly somewhere else like a sporting event, a dining room, etc. But a prison fits the context better). The poem is about a black prisoner that comes back after being in the Hospital for the Criminally Insane. The Inmates are reminiscing on all the crazy stuff Hard Rock used to do that they had always wished they could do. During Hard Rock's time at the Hospital he had a brain surgery in which they "cut out part of his brain and shot electricity through the rest.

The speaker of the poem is recalling all the stories of crazy things Hard Rock used to do before he left and telling the listener how much of a bad ass Hard Rock was. The speaker of the poem is an Inmate at the prison; maybe Hard Rock's cell mate, friend, or just someone that knew about him. Who the speaker is talking to is unclear though. It is most likely another Inmate, assuming that the setting is in a prison, however it is not clear within the poem exactly who the auditor is. The situation of the poem and the whole reason why the speaker is even recalling all of these memories is because it's been said that Hard

Rock is soft now. The "word" has it that Hard Rock is a shell of what he used to be and will just stand there with a stupid smile on his face when tested. The old Hard Rock didn't "take no shit from nobody" but now the word going around is that the new Hard Rock has been tamed. The tone of this poem begins as inspired and almost proud, like a little brother talking about his cool older brother. The speaker seems to have a lot of respect for Hard Rock. Hard Rock is a hero to the speaker because Hard Rock will act out situations that the speaker could only ever dream of doing; he was their "destroyer.

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The tone quickly changes in line 27 to sad, almost nostalgic sounding. The inmates are reliving all of the crazy stuff he did before his surgery. The fact that he has been tamed now leaves the inmates "crushed" and hopeless. They no longer have someone that will carry out the fantasies they dream of doing, whether it be sticking up for the blacks when the Jail block bully comes around or even beating up a guard. They want to convince themselves that it is all an act, Hard Rock is a little bit smarter now and is waiting for his opportunities, but they know in their hearts that Hard Rock is no longer the same guy he used to be.

The theme of this poem is about race and what problems black people faced in those times. The poem was published in 1968- the same year that Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. The poem Hard Rock could be a metaphor for timeline of events that happened in the '60s. Martin Luther King (Hard Rock) was one of, if not the most, prominent face of the civil rights movement. MILK wouldn't settle for anything less than what he wanted to see happen and nobody could stand in his way. If someone tried to stop him he would just keep trucking and fighting for his goal. In the poem,

Hard Rock would pummel any and every body in his way, regardless of who they were, similar to how MILK would "take out" whoever stood in his way. The surgery Hard Rock goes under could be a metaphor for the assassination of MILK. Hard Rock is no longer what he used to be, he can no longer kick ass and take names because he is physically unable to (MILK is physically unable to keep fighting because he is hopeless. They always dreamed of doing the things Hard Rock did but they feel incapable (the black population is shocked

and devastated by Milk's death and feel hopeless and as if they can never achieve what he did).

The fears of years, like a biting whip, Had cut grooves too deeply across our backs. " The years and years of slavery, torture and demutualization of black people is too ingrained into the current (sass's) black population's minds and they feel as if they are not brave enough, smart enough, or important enough to take a stand and make the kind of changes that MILK had once done. The poem is written in mostly iambic pentameter. Lambs are how people speak in everyday life so with it being written in iambs it makes the poem seem " regular" and not " poetic. The poem sounds like a conversation you would hear if you were to listen in on prisoners talking. The dialect of the poem also gives it more of a natural feel. The reader feels as if they're reading an excerpt from a prison conversation rather than reading a poem. No rhyme scheme is detected in the poem- except for 4 lines. The author adds two couplets in the beginning and the middle of the poem. He does this to reinforce the point what he is trying to get across within these lines. The break in the normal flow and rhythm of the poem with these couplets grabs the attention of the reader and makes them focus on what the lines have to say.