

MP3 Confessions on the Red Line (Chicago Don't Stop)- spoken word/free form

By Xavier Ramey

I want to find that bass line
On the Red line, winos' song.
That underlying current that makes the time
fly
That over tone that makes the
mind dry
That water That water That water
That Chicago drinks
That NYC sips
That Tha Bay swims in.
But Chicago don't stop.
That bass beat that
bang boom that Hyde Park
BREAK. Beat.
Soothing synths and staccato screeches fill
eardrums like
Water
Like
If I had one wish, it would be to drink
Music
Because my music is
Dinah's Unforgettable/Summertime
My music is
Dr. King's westside marching cadence
My music is the muse to move my
Soul like
BOOM BOOM BOOM
Oooooo,
So smooth.
Chicago don't stop.

LISTEN

It whispers in the night
It is that alarm
Warning sound to the future
It heralds the rebirth of the community
Do you hear it?

I want to hear that thunder clap again
Hear that tweeter tweet?
And that speaker speak?
LISTEN.

The music that carves out the crumbling
foundation
For pain
That builds the cardhouse
For tears
That great sound that showers light rays on
Shadow boxers' Sweat songs
Slap boxers' Smack songs
Rotweilers, pit bulls, and mastiffs in choke
chains yelping Dog songs
The city can't sleep when the speakers speak
The ground can't stop dancing when the
tweeters tweet.
My feet can't stop moving when
Music
Swims through my ears
It is
milk and honey
It is
Ambrosia
It is
Godtalk.
But Chicago don't stop

West side ridin' to Twista
my hood where Scummy emcees get tangled
in Crucial Conflicts
where GD's rep Death Before Dishonor and
bump reinforced chassis' down
K-Town alleys

U can check the Blue Line, Cicero Stop,
where Red got shot back in '96 by the
Vice Lords
Gave him 8 notes to the head, threw his
shoes over the streetlights, sang a song
for his baby momma and let the baby
bangers whisper "God bless the dead"
acapella.

The blood runs red, black and green in K-
Town where the preachers sing Amazing
Grace
church organs hum tunes for new organ

donors wheeled into Cook County.
but out west,
the hustlers sell headphones,
rock g'd up cellphones with 30 watt speakers
just to bump their ringtones,
police sirens provide the melody to the
streets
the dealers slang chords to complete the
crack symphony
and the bangers they beat the heart
strings.
All heads swaying to the neighborhood
gospels
bangin' through four twelves in a box car
Chevy off the lot
filled with fenders full of yayo.
Can you hear it too?

LISTEN.

It is the beautiful intricacies of the melody
that drives heart into somber beats.
Where Heart up north means you're willing
to love
But Heart out west means you're willing to
die
Chicago
is singing to the cadence
the Boom Boom
of gunshots
gangtas die to soundtracks
produced in puerto rican chop shops
and mixed in the collective singsong cries of
used-to-be-mothers when their sons
dropped...
Ya Ya! the bass beat... the late beat.
Ya Ya! the guns scream... the sweet sleep.
Chicago don't stop.

Down the Line

you reach the Circle
where Daddy Yankee isn't welcome
It's elotes and Gypsy King paradise like
Volare.
La gente gulp Cazadores like
agua.
in Pilsen, Latin Kings and Maniac Disciples

scream their sadsong like true paisas-
"Viva La Raza!"
*donde la canción se encuentra detrás de los
callejones
donde los niños luchan con el policía
porque Daley no puede entender que desean
solamente cantar
cantar dios
cantar sus barrio
cantar para sus familia*
The streets run red green and white in Pilsen
Every note de los mariachis drenched in the
agony de
Mexico.
*Cuando no hay vida sin guerra.
Y no hay paz sin el baile de la gente.*
They sing
*Vivir ó morir en el barrio porque
Somos Los Luchadores de Chicago, guey*
But Chicago don't stop.

LISTEN

Chicago weeps songs in soliloquy
when LP frat boys tear down the gossamer
walls of Lincoln Park nightly just to prove
that
they are Lincoln Park
and they will poplock-robot their way into
the jail cells
inebriated like Allende clientele
LP
Where J Timberlake melodically escorts the
underage bar-trixies to stumbly-drunk
perfection as fat chicks cock block the
freshmen boys into late night computer
visits.
Fuck it. They fist pump the pain away.
Life in the Park is the vibrant music the
world hears.
Chicago lends a deaf ear to Lincoln Park
because LP isn't for Chicago
It sings songs to drive out
Kingston Mines' Blues
With technofied Porsches
Rock and Roll 'Royces
and teeny bop assimilated suburbanites.

So Chicago don't stop.

This
is Lake Michigan music
where undertow drags the bass lines
like fishing weights.
Slurs speech like Humboldt Park
Boricua flags stretched
over Division Avenida.
like Wacker Drive homeless songs
cooked over a hotplate.
This
is Columbus Park lagoon serenading dirty
green music
where penny candy
is sold by the pound
and sunflower seed spittin' kids play.
Chicago
Music.
The Green Line takes you out south to the
'Wood
where life is harder than the cement mix
filling
 line breaks
Where cops orchestrate bullets into preteen
boys' stomachs to fill their appetite for
blood and their
night craves.
Off the Pink Line
little hoods get treated at Rush to the
Beep Beep Beep
turned flatline
.....
Chicago don't stop
That ebb and flow
That hip hop
That jukebox
That coffee shop indie rock
Chicago don't stop
Kissing people with your
slippery crescendos
Chopping up potholes with
stalwart staccatos
Trumpets blast to make way for the living
decrecendos
into train platform players of the piano.

With Sub-T disc jockies rockin' one
headphone bobbin heads like yoyos.
Chicago don't stop...
Filling my veins with your music
Chicago don't stop...
Showing the world how it can do it
Chicago don't stop...
Creating lyrical tributaries in the midst of
rap rap to see the
Tap dancing hard spittin' beat splittin'
artists who pummel rhymes from their arms
like crack
It IS an addiction.

Riding Red Line
heading downtown
I think of Chi town
 hear the gears sing
the metal screech
the soul train never sleeps
Chicago
 when the south got too hot, the blacks
 came here to leave the sharecrop
Chicago
 When Mexico lost its standing,
 La gente moved here to open mom and
 pop taqueria shops
Chicago
 Birthplace of the Jibarito, where you
 can get 50 cent samosas and the best
 biryani this side of Mumbai.

The sound
The Umpf Umpf Umpf of techno
The Boom Boom Boom of Rock
The p'Tsk p'Tsk p'Tsk of hip hop
Till the streets are littered with sweat
covered dancers' cadavers who drowned in
the watery symphonic waves of
sound because

Chicago
don't stop.