

If the Drum Is a Woman

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(The title invokes Duke Ellington's 1956 composition "A Drum Is a Woman")

If the drum is a woman
why are you pounding your drum into an insane
babble
why are you pistol whipping your drum at dawn
why are you shooting through the head of your drum
and making a drum tragedy of drums
if the drum is a woman
don't abuse your drum don't abuse your drum
don't abuse your drum
I know the night is full of displaced persons
I see skins striped with flames
I know the ugly disposition of underpaid clerks they constantly menstruate through
the eyes
I know bitterness embedded in flesh
the itching alone can drive you crazy
I know that this is America and chickens are coming home to roost
on the MX missile
But if the drum is a woman
why are you choking your drum
why are you raping your drum
why are you saying disrespectful things
to your mother drum your sister drum
your wife drum and your infant daughter drum
If the drum is a woman
then understand your drum
your drum is not docile
your drum is not invisible
your drum is not inferior to you
your drum is a woman
so don't reject your drum don't try to dominate your drum
don't become weak and cold and desert your drum
don't be forced into the position
as an oppressor of drums and make a drum tragedy of drums
if the drum is a woman
don't abuse your drum don't abuse your drum
don't abuse our drum.....