

Strange Fruit by Abel Meeropol

This song, written by Abel Meeropol and performed by many artists (but most notably, Billie Holiday and Nina Simone,) is a dark and profound song about the lynching of African Americans in the Southern United States during the Jim Crow Era. In the lyrics, black victims are portrayed as “strange fruit,” as they hang from trees, rotting in the sun, blowing in the wind, and becoming food for crows upon being burned.

It was a protest song that Billie Holiday very bravely performed under grave threats and at high personal cost. This song was covered by Nina Simone, whose version was later sampled on Kanye West’s [“Blood on the Leaves”](#) featured on his 2013 release *Yeezus*. Also sampled on [Abdallah’s “1435”](#) track.

Southern trees bear a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant south
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop