

TUNE INTO ENGLISH

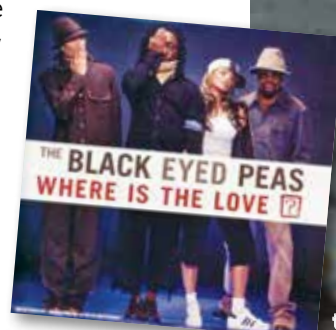
# Black Eyed Peas' Where is the Love

Con questa canzone piena di messaggi positivi il gruppo di Los Angeles è diventato un punto di riferimento del pop-rap.

In September 2001 the Black Eyed Peas<sup>1</sup> were in California working on preliminary recordings for "Elephunk", their third album, when the 9/11 attacks on New York's World Trade Center happened. This greatly affected their songwriting, as they attempted<sup>2</sup> to crossover<sup>3</sup> from being an alternative hip hop group to reaching a wider audience as a more marketable<sup>4</sup> pop-rap act<sup>5</sup>. In an interview founding member will.i.am said the emotions in *Where Is The Love?* are from that time, when he created a loop<sup>6</sup> over and he and his two bandmates wrote lyrics, each performing his own verse. The chorus is by Justin Timberlake, although his record company refused to allow him to be credited<sup>7</sup>.

The song is a reflection on social injustice in the world, and is almost entirely in the present tense. It begins with will.i.am's condemnation of domestic terrorism, discrimination and hate. The chorus<sup>8</sup>, by Timberlake and new band member Fergie, is a plea<sup>9</sup> for a better world, before the second verse, by Taboo, laments chemical warfare<sup>10</sup> and the profits<sup>11</sup> of war. The final verse, by apl.de.ap, expresses the rapper's disillusionment with capitalism and fake news.

Released in 2003, the song propelled<sup>12</sup> the Black Eyed Peas to superstardom and was that year's best-selling single in the UK. In 2016 they recorded an updated all-star version for a new generation, focusing on terrorist attacks and gun violence. ☹



**Mama:** this informal word for mother (as in the second line) is also a term of endearment for a girl, as in the first line.

**The Bloods and The Crips and the KKK:** the first two are Los Angeles gangs, the last one is the acronym for the white supremacy hate group Ku Klux Klan.

**y'all:** a contraction of 'you all', used to address a group of people.

**Can you practice what you preach Or would you turn the other cheek?:** these lines refer to Matthew 23:3 and 5:39 in the Bible.

**Why are there pieces of love that don't belong?:** a reference to homosexuality.

**them dividends:** this is an often-heard incorrect use of the pronoun 'them', it should be the determiner 'those'.

**deny:** thy brother

What's wrong with the world, **mama?**

People livin' like they ain't got no mamas  
I think the whole world's addicted to the drama  
Only attracted to things that'll bring you trauma

Overseas<sup>13</sup>, yeah, we tryna stop terrorism  
But we still got terrorists here livin'  
In the USA, the big CIA

**The Bloods and The Crips and the KKK,**

But if you only have love for your own race  
Then you only leave space to discriminate  
And to discriminate only generates hate  
And when you hate, then you're bound<sup>14</sup> to get irate, yeah

Madness is what you demonstrate  
And that's exactly how anger<sup>15</sup> works and operates

Man, you gotta have love just to set it straight<sup>16</sup>  
Take control of your mind and meditate  
Let your soul gravitate to the love, **y'all, y'all**

[chorus]  
People killin', people dyin'  
Children hurt, hear them cryin'  
**Can you practice what you preach**  
**Or would you turn the other cheek?**

Father, Father, Father, help us  
Send some guidance from above<sup>17</sup>  
'Cause people got me, got me questionin'  
Where is the love (love)

It just ain't the same, old ways have changed  
New days are strange, is the world insane<sup>18</sup>?

If love and peace are so strong  
**Why are there pieces of love that don't belong?**

Nations droppin' bombs<sup>19</sup>  
Chemical gasses fillin' lungs of little ones  
With ongoin' sufferin' as the youth die young  
So ask yourself, is the lovin' really gone?

So I could ask myself really what is goin' wrong  
In this world that we livin' in people keep on **givin' in**

Makin' wrong decisions, only visions of **them dividends**

Not respectin' each other, **deny thy brother**

A war is goin' on but the reason's undercover  
The truth is kept secret, it's swept under the rug  
If you never know truth then you never know love

Where's the love, y'all, come on? (I don't know)

[chorus]  
I feel the weight of the world on my shoulder  
As I'm gettin' older, y'all, people gets colder  
Most of us only care about money makin'  
Selfishness<sup>20</sup> got us followin' the wrong direction

Wrong information always shown by the media  
Negative images is the main criteria  
Infecting the young minds faster than bacteria  
Kids wanna act like what they see in the cinema, yo'  
Whatever happened to the values of humanity?  
Whatever happened to the fairness<sup>21</sup> and equality?

Instead of spreading love we're spreading animosity  
Lack of understanding, leading us away from unity

That's the reason why sometimes **I'm feelin' under**  
That's the reason why sometimes I'm feelin' down

There's no wonder why sometimes I'm feelin' under  
Gotta keep my faith alive 'til love is found  
Now ask yourself  
Where is the love?

Father, Father, Father, help us  
Send some guidance from above  
'Cause people got me, got me questionin'  
Where is the love?

Sing with me y'all (one world, one world)  
We only got (one world, one world)  
That's all we got (one world, one world)  
And something's wrong with it (yeah)  
Something's wrong with it (yeah)  
Something's wrong with the wo-wo-world, yeah  
We only got (one world, one world)  
That's all we got (one world, one world)



SCAN & WATCH



Scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet and listen to the official song on YouTube while reading the lyrics.

**I'm feelin' under:** I'm feelin' down feeling depressed.

Fergal Kavanagh runs the website [www.tuneintoenglish.com](http://www.tuneintoenglish.com), the web's largest free resource for learning English through pop music.

Tune into English  
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SCAN, READ & LISTEN  
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UPPER INTERMEDIATE B2

GLOSSARY

- 1 **black eyed peas:** fagioli dall'occhio
- 2 **to attempt:** cercare di
- 3 **to crossover:** mutare, transitare
- 4 **marketable:** commerciale
- 5 **act:** spettacolo
- 6 **loop:** circuito a ripetizione
- 7 **to credit:** menzionare
- 8 **chorus:** ritornello
- 9 **plea:** appello
- 10 **warfare:** guerra
- 11 **profits:** profitti
- 12 **to propel:** spingere, proiettare
- 13 **overseas:** all'estero
- 14 **bound:** destinato
- 15 **anger:** ira
- 16 **to set straight:** sistemare
- 17 **from above:** dall'alto
- 18 **insane:** pazzo
- 19 **to drop bombs:** bombardare
- 20 **selfishness:** egoismo
- 21 **fairness:** equità, correttezza