YOU DONT LIVE ON MY STREET

So you want to know
why I'm always high
And why you never
ever see me cry?
Why do I shoot up all this junk?
Have you ever seen your dad sloppy drunk?

Sure I would like to have more knowledge
But my dad drank up my money for college.
So, how can you look at me with such conceit
When you don't even live on MY street.

So you want to know why I ran away?
Why in boarded up buildings I'm hiding each day?
You want to know why I choose to steal
And do what I have to, just to get a meal?

Well, I don't worry about getting good grades.
All I worry about now is getting AIDS!
Look at you with your life so sweet
But you don't live on MY street.

You ask me WHY at fourteen I'm having this baby?
Am I ignorant, retarded, or just plain lazy?
What on earth was I thinking about?
I was hoping my momma wouldn't put me out!

See, your mamma's boyfriend ain't messing with you,
And putting his hands on your little sister too.
Naw, the seventh grade I didn't complete.
But, hey, you don't live on MY street.

So you want to know why I dropped out of school?
How many times can you be called a "fool"?
Ever since first grade I been called slow.
so I wouldn't give the answer even if I did know!

And how was I supposed to concentrate?
When I can't remember the last time I ate
Do you live everyday with defeat?
Then you don't even live on MY street.

You ask me why I stay with him.
When he beats my head again and again?
You want to know why I don't get upset,
When he makes each drunken idle threat.
Well, do you have rats running cross your head?
When you lay down in your broke-down bed?
Do you have shoes to cover your feet?
Then you don't live on MY street.
You want to know why I'm not raising my "chile?"
Well, you know, I ain't worked in a while.
You want to know why I don't keep in touch?
Is buying some Pampers asking too much?
Can I start coming 'round' the place?
I'm ashamed to let my "chile"see my face.
You s'posed to get out of the kitchen if you can't take the heat!
So, naw, you don't live on MY street!

You don't know a thing about me,
But, there are some things that you must see.
Until you have walked in my shoes for awhile,
And had a taste of my lifestyle.

Until you have lived in my house,
and given a name to each mouse.
Until you've seen your mama get beat,
You don't even live on MY street

Until you have walked my walk,
Until you have talked my talk.

Until you have knelt down on my knees,
Until you have eaten my government cheese.

Until you have smelled life through my nose.
Until you have worn my panty hose.

Until you have seen life through my eyes.
Until you have worn my dress size

Until you have lived inside my head,
Until you have laid down in my bed

Until you have read what's on my mind,
Until you have stood in a welfare line

Until you have been called my name
Until you have felt some of my shame

Until you have sold some of my dope,
Until you have lost all of my hope

Until you have stood under my rain,
Until you have felt some of my pain

Until you have eaten what I've had to eat,
Then understand this: YOU don't LIVE on MY street

written by
Rebera Elliott Foston M.D.