

Brother Ali

★★★

US Rhymesayers

**White albino Muslim MC
gets a bit too heavy**



POSSESSED of serious skills and a social conscience, this white albino rhymers has gone, as he says on his fourth album, from homelessness to hanging with his kids in a house like "the Berenstain Bears." *Us* sounds great, with Ali's sensitive, stentorian voice plowing through sleek jazz and blues loops from producer Ant. But the album ends up blandly heavy, weighed down with dark street dramas and lessons about how "the same color blood just pass through our veins." Ali, a devout Muslim, was more interesting a few years back - see 2003's terrifically funny "Forest Whitiker," where the man who may be the whitest rapper alive has good fun disparaging his looks. C.H.

Key Tracks: "Fresh Air," "Bad Mufucker Pt. II"