

SPIN

Brother Ali

Us



RHYMESAYERS

Spitting truth to power even after fortune shines
Minneapolis rapper Brother Ali is the neighborhood tough with a heart of gold. Briefly homeless after his

first marriage dissolved, he finally tasted success with 2007's *The Undisputed Truth*, and now, on his fourth album's "Fresh Air," he's playing Al Green records, making pancakes, and watching cartoons with his new wife and children. Happiness hasn't blunted his keen social insight, though, as he empathizes with latchkey teens ("Tight Rope"), reflects on friends trapped in the street life ("Slippin' Away"), and rues slavery's consequences ("The Travelers"). For him, hip-hop means fighting for justice, and as Chuck D attests in *Us*' introduction, Ali is a "soldier in the war for love." **MOSI REEVES**