

My Caribbean Mother

Is a dancing banana tree
Caught up in the windstorms of time.

Her hips are full of water
And her heart is a vast plain.

Trees are her thoughts
And oceans, her distant memories.

A thousand footsteps have visited her front porch,
Yet no one can *cartograph* her soul;
Her greatest secrets are kept secret.

She is a proverb to a fool
And nourishment to the destitute.

She knows the science of love,
Sings the songs of angels
And, in the great courts, is heard.

She is at war with hatred and foul pebbles;
Two long arrows at her side,
She walks the streets at night.

Her hands are made of pickles and bush.
She stirs the water in the pot and many fishes are slain.

Her smile is as wide as a watermelon;
Her teeth, seeds in its flesh. She sprouts
And grows, holding back a reservoir
Of youth. Her beauty stands immaculate.
Her will, strong and armored like the bark
Of an ironclad tree. She falls only to dance
And sleep, dreaming of life-giving hills.
She rises on the far side of the sea,
And when the sun goes down, all that is left
Is a cool breeze and the music of harp 'n fist.

Tourism I: A Guide to Bahamians

We Bahamians know laughter and we know kind medicine.
We know dance and we know fighting rhythm.
We know warmth and we know fire,
And we know the difference between the two.

We know St. Mary and we know cathedrals.
We know God and His Holy Mother—the Electric Spirit.
We know the rite of running through church aisles
Because sometimes running saves our lives.

We are good at smiling and we try to mean it on most occasions.
We love summer but we don't like the heat.
We know hard work despite our lackadaisical attention.
We love feeling free but sometimes don't know how
To govern our own minds.

Yet we are proud. We are yellow, black, and blue.

We are our ancestors, their curses and their blessings.
We are giant bodies of salt, heading towards the sea.
We are the sand and the coral. And mighty the harbor.
We are the land and the foliage. And the tropical green.

We are powerful dreams that we sometimes forget.
We are old songs, the music between the *rake* and the *scrape*.
We are naked creatures, desperately marching
Hand in hand among the bushes

Heading toward

any opening of light.

JUNKANOO

I am steel drums
Emblazoned in flagrant fire

I am empty whistles
Imploring the tremulous wind

I am quaking bells
Pressed against unforgiving hands

I am roaring trumpets
Declaring heavenly war

I am tender feet
Thumping upon rocky soil

I am deep bass and contralto
Murmuring ancient wisdom

I am dangerous emotion
Thrashing inside cool flesh

I am pulsating baritone
Disturbing immovable sea

I am translucent vessels
Conducting lightning and thunder

I am euphoric praise
Inebriated with African soul

I am tireless flame
Steady inside the heart of a man

Spoken out

Spoken out

LOUD.