

JACQUI ISPENCER

I Am the Light

In darkness we find ourselves
In light we breathe
The suffocation of oppression
The alienation of devotion
To a cause that does not reward
Yet we remain

It is the remnants of historical traumas
That sustains and drains our bodies
Black bodies
We live in the margins of history
Always waiting for our turn
Turning...spinning we fight
For survival
For voice
For entry

I am the light

How do we live with those that by skinship
Forget kinship?
Masking our pain of betrayal we carry the weight
Too heavy for our minds and physical selves
It is torture
Terrorizing intellectually, physically and
emotionally

Traumas unseen but felt
Felt so deep we cannot see the impact
On our minds
On each other
Spirits broken and bruised
Lives tattered and torn
We exist

Nomads from ancestral lands
We search
Attempting to find ourselves
Looking from the outside within
We do not draw strength
Our weary bones tired
Exhausted from the constant need to be seen
To be heard
To be understood
To be free

I am the light

Always questioning
We are seekers of truth
Our tongues punishable by the skin we are in
Our hue bemoaning representations of fear
Otherness

We accept our fate
Fruitless and endless
We fight
Systems created for destruction
Melanated kings and queens

Our crowns tarnished and forgotten
Hearts yearning for something
And gaining nothing
Heavy are our hearts
Our spirits wanting to be heard
But trapped
I am the light
Liberation from bondage
Institutionally
Hierarchically
Ancestrally
Intersectionally
From behind black bars
We are shackled to nightmarish and embedded
prisms

Untangling the Black identity
Challenging the ties that bind
We gain power
We gain strength
We are the vision
Visions of the future
Past

And present

I am the light

I am the keeper of secrets
The mirror of injustice
The eyes of a people
I am the shadows in the night
The fears of continued fight
The tears shed out of sight

I am the light

Tormented with anguish unending
Cheated of manifestations of glory
Angry and unworthy yet...

I am the light

Never to be undone
Refusing to be tossed away
Rising as the ancestral spiritual flames
I am resilient
I am unyielding
I will out run
I will outlast
I will BE
Because...

I am the light

Jacqui Spencer is an advocate for the betterment of the lives of the marginalized. A mother, and Social Justice Education doctoral student at OISE/UT, her focus is empowering Black women through her work and lived experiences.