

pered by class-ridden pretensions and a few male fantasies. Of course I didn't think about it quite in that way then, just felt a bit better than before, a bit more accepted. When I did notice, it was because some other mixed-race girl seemed more exotic than me, and I felt the same kind of resentments I seemed to get from girls with darker skin.

When I bumped into Sylvia years later, there seemed to be only a fondness for each other, but something meanwhile had stuck. Was it a fear of retribution for the wrongs I felt I'd committed under a false and privileged light? Privilege is a shifting, slippery thing and, notably between girls and women of colour, attacks and counter-attacks can be made from all sides. Back at primary school, it hadn't been just Sylvia and I who had parted ways—Julia, Martine and I also blamed each other as the real culprit, true to “mulatto, quadroon and pure whitey” form. We had struggled for positions on a continuum based on racialized images of sexuality and desirability. Who needed the house and the field, as featured in *Roots*? It was all happening on my front doorstep.

Janet Kofi-Tsekpo was born in England in 1969 to a Ghanaian father and a British mother. Her poetry is published in Bittersweet: Contemporary Black Women's Poetry, the Journal Wasafiri, and other anthologies, and she has performed on radio and at several venues in the UK and Ireland. She has an MA in Area Studies (Africa) from the School of Oriental and African Studies, and was winner of the Zeena Ralph Memorial Prize for her essay "Healing the Wounds: Interpretations of Identity and Race" (published in Mixed Race Essays, SOAS 1996). She currently works as a mentor and youth worker, and runs writing and other arts workshops for young people in schools.

FEMME

Giliane Obas

Assise sur mon trône Une douce pluie tombe	J'entends toujours leurs chants d'espoir Emporté par le vent, Leurs cries de victoires
Je suis femme Je suis reine Je suis femme Africaine	Mes pières exocées Nous y sommes arrivés
Celle qui règne Sur les brousses et les plaines	Avec une rage J'ai cassé mes chaines Et dans mes yeux Couleur ébène Ils ont vu ma haine
Ma tristesse et mes pleures Oui j'ai senti la douleur Dans mon coeur, la fureur Oui, j'ai surmonté ma peur	Les diamants et l'or Saisis par les voleurs Ne compareront jamais Au trésors que j'ai dans le coeur
Dans mes oreilles Résonnent toujours Les cries horribles Les voix du passé	Alors la tête haute Devant mon peuple Je me tiens
Mes enfants kidnappés Si violemment arrachés De leur mère bien-aimé	Ma couleur bronze Luisant au soleil La tête haute Je me tiens
Pendant des années J'ai pleuré J'ai senti leur souffrance Cette douleur immense	Admirée par mon peuple J'airai toujours ma fierté,
Agenouillée, j'ai pleuré Imploré Tendu vers le firmament Mes mains ensanglantées	Je suis femme Je suis reine Je suis femme haïtienne
Dans mes plaines	

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