

ROSETTA KHALIDEEN

Globalization and the Domestic Worker

The politicians and economists
Ponder globalization ...
The global economy ...
The global marketplace ...
Words ... clichés ...
What do they mean?
I'll tell you what the mean
To me a poor domestic worker,
Lured from my home in the Caribbean
Drugged with sweet intoxication of Canada;
Globalization means
I am nothing more
Than a white man's whore,
Prostituting principles
Compromising values,
For salmon paté,
French bread,
Coffee, muffins,
Cups of latte,
A landed visa!
Globalization means
I launder linen
For minimum wage,
Wait on supper tables,
Soak dishes in soft suds,
Clean the toilet,
Scrub the floor,
Do the chores
No other woman will endure;
My mistress ill treats me
But I cannot complain,
Who will listen to a black woman
Tell on her white boss?
Who will believe a black woman's pain?
The threat of deportation
Looms large upon my head,
I cannot face the shame of return
I'd rather be caught dead;
Yes, I dream of sitting in the shade
Of the old tamarind tree
Filling my lungs with scented air ...
Wild jasmine and frangipani,
The waving rice stalks
And majestic bamboo trees
Sweet music to my listening ears;

My heart aches for sandy beaches,
Warm star spangled nights
The call of crickets
And the throaty bellow
Of night frogs;
But I left ...
Escaping bonds of the IMF,
The shackle of food lines,
Unemployment,
Dollar devaluation;
Now I'm a prisoner
Locked in a global economy ...
A way of life
Purchased only by the loonie
Not in Caribbean currency;
I'm the descendant of slavery
Running from my history
But it still catches up with me;
I fall victim to the lustful eyes
And hands of my other master
But again, who will believe?
It is I who seduce him
What in God's name can he see in me?
Me ... in my black poverty!
I am condemned because I'm black
I have heard:
"Black women have no souls"
So even if I die
What will the difference be?
I am destined to hell
Globalization ...
Global economy ...
Global marketplace ...
My global reality!

(Based on a true story of a Caribbean woman who came to Canada as a domestic worker.)

Rosetta Khalideen is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. Her work is in the area of adult education and critical social theory.