

Africa Wailin

Stereo-Prophet trow down
at Bathurst and Bloor
an di dj bawl out
"yes, crowd a people
mi seh mi love unu"

Africa wailin
as Stereo-Prophet
Trow down at bathurst and bloor
an wi seh elizabet is a whore
and john paul is satan
an wi fire some shats inna di vatican

An wi trow some stones on the boys and girls
who throw wi resumes in the garbage bin
An seh "we've hired already"
while di media report that in we hood
is 60% unemployment

Africa wailin
as Stereo-Prophet trow dung
inna downtown
at *Tequila*
an 300 sing as one
sing along wid di dj
sing along wid the singers
wid Sanchez an June Lodge
an Gregory, Cocotea
an Delroy
an africa wailin
Alas, alas Kongo
nari, nari Kongo

Africa wailin
as Toronto get hot
an Black people dance
communally
heads up
backs arched
eyes watchin
a far away scene
hands boxin
di air
an feet an hips move

inna kumina, nyahbinghi
300 dance as one
an woman wid dem man rent
a tile an di man wid di hangle conneck
wid di triangle
an di dj leap in di air
a Watusi dancer
as fire fire
from the Spear
lick him inna him head
an him grab a second mike
hole both a dem a him mouth
an start fi talk in tongues
Nari, nari, Kongo
alas, alas Kongo

Girls in weave, red
gole, and green
dread wid locks down to dem feet
we all hold hands as we embark
on a journey
as we cross di passage
wid Freddie ina big ship
and Marcia is troddin us to Mt. Zian
for a healin an baptizam

An we help each other as we begin dis passage
weak an tattered
cold and afraid
Lady Saw is embarkin as Oshun
Burning Spear, di griot from Kangaba
Rita an exiled priestess from Kumasi
will start a new world religion
an we love each other
we gentle wid each other
as we continue di journey

An Africa still wailin
an we still crossin
no jobs here in babylon
is jus pure batterayshan
our men led like sheep into prison
an ours sons lost in whiteness

Africa still wailin
for her children
scattered on white shores

wanderin in di trangle
 tryin to find their way home
 Girls in red, green, and gold weave
 an dread wid locks down to their feet
 women in shiny shiny clothes
 tight like rass
 an men in basic black
 wid gole chain allick
 confess their love to each other
 as we sing wid the dj
 an the singers
 songs etched in our memory
 songs that live
 at the tip of our tongue
 an we hold hands an begin a journey
 tru a narrow passage
 as Stereo-Profit trow down
 inna dungtown
 an two beas car park pon di street
 watchin I n I
 Ready fi caas shackles pon we again
 an as wi fling rockstone inna babylon
 boone
 Africa is still bloodclaat wailin
 wailin
 wailin
 wailin

Afua Cooper

*** Note on Dub Poetry** by Franca Iacovetta

Originating in Jamaica and usually associated with reggae music, dub poetry draws on African Caribbean oral traditions, with its use of proverbs, riddles, and nursery rhymes, and it remains a form of protest and rebel poetry. While male dub poets first gained public recognition, women from the start have brought their political and personal agendas, voices, songs, and rhythms (riddims) into dub. Lillian Allen popularized dub poetry in Canada in the 1980s, transforming the Caribbean Canadian poetry scene. Like other women and feminist dub poets, Afua Cooper uses multiple forms of expression, including chorus, metered rhymed verses, and chants, and her words pulsate with the rhythm of passion. See also Afua Cooper, ed., *Utterances and Incantations: Women, Poetry and Dub* (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1999).