

**Who am I?
By Elvys Ruiz**

Who am I?
Ancestral question
that brings me to the past
A history of both:
 Your happiness
 My misfortune
At what point
our equality broke
 and made us different.

Who gave you the right
to make me less?
And dehumanize me.

I was African by origin
but you changed me into something
else

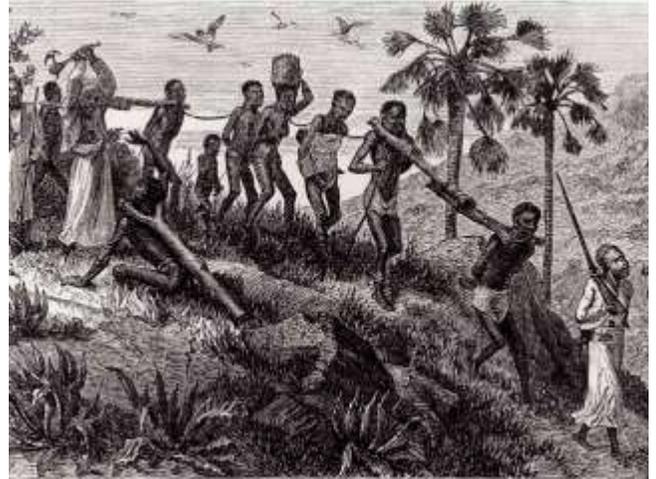
 Changed my ethnicity
 and named me a color
Henceforth I was black
The black is dark
And darkness brings fear
Why are you frightened?

Black is Prieto
Moreno is black
Negro is black
Black is mishap
Galipote is black.
 El diablo negro
 There is the Voodoo
 The reason for my Fucú
 *That is what you think
 your racial prejudice...*

And black is pigswill
Is that who I am?

In the name of God
You baptized me slave
and suppressed my religious beliefs
ruined my culture
fragmented my lineage

With your colossal power
You destroyed my caste
hurt my great ancestors
and tore me away from my homeland
My beloved African savannah.



1520, now in the Hispaniola
20 million slaves
will arrive later
to the Americas

In Saint Domingue
There are not more coffers
For so much wealth
"The pearl of the Antilles"
France is a powerful nation
While in the plantations
work and death
death and work
We left everything there
our skin and soul
to supply the world with sugar.



Three centuries later
of pain and disgrace
the slaves break their chains
Helped by voodoo

People dance jubilant
Joy flows
Haiti is reborn
The first black republic
Soon the dance stops
and the faces are filled with bitterness
Freedom came at a cost
150 million
of Francos
France imposes its punishment
for your emancipation.

This huge debt
Stopped the progress of the nation
Death and poverty rises
as well as tribal fighting
that do not stop.
Mulatos against blacks
Blacks against mulattoes
The mulatto at the top
The black at the bottom
¿Grifo yo?
Corruption and bad governments
have led this country into a
pandemonium
and its people hopeless.

In Dominican Republic
soy bracero
the man who weighs the cane
robs me
The plantation owner laughs
And everyone is silent

In the bateyes, the apartheid
I think of Mandela
We do not have rights
only harvest
From dawn to dusk.



1937
Say Perejil
the guard ordered
One more dead
Trujillo's whitening the race...
began taking place: Is a genocide
Thousands of Haitians dye
and no one seems to care
They are black.

Today
A new nation flourishes
My sweat is in every wall
Of the Punta Cana resorts
In all infrastructures
In all sorts of commerce
That has enriched the nation.

But also today
They stripped me from my Dominican
citizenship
They deported my families
My destiny is uncertain
Where is the justice?
Who am I?
I am black.

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*The author is a writer, cultural essayist,
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