

Nubian Butterfly: the Transformation of a Soulful Heart Selected Poetry by Yvette Modestin

**Mariposa Nubia: la transformación de un corazón
conmovedor
Poesía Selecta de Yvette Modestin**



Published by Encuentro Diáspora Afro
Poems in English and Spanish
Introduction and Poems Selection
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Boston, MA, USA / Colón, Panamá
2016

ISBN

Published by Encuentro Diaspora Afro

First Edition: February, 2016

500 printed books.

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Book edited and Poems selected by Luis Wong Vega.

Book designed and illustrated by Marlon E. Rodríguez (“Chibi”).

Printed at Imprenta Litho Impresora Chen S.A.,

Ciudad de Panamá, Republic of Panamá.

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Dedication



***Dedicated with love to my father Felix Z. Modestin
for showering me with love
and for showing me the true meaning of unconditional love.
Love you Daddy***

Foreword

Welcome, readers, to a serenely satisfying verve of spirit, a paeon celebrating connectedness to African roots, and, always, love of a people and of self.

I thank this most creative author for sharing her heart-felt reflections in this collection of poems. Her painted word pictures caused - and cause - me to pause, savoring their playful and sincere intensity.

Immerse yourself, reader! “Passion and goodness reside here,” as Yvette so writes.

*Loretta J. Williams
Boston, MA.
March 18, 2015*

The beautiful poetry of Yvette Modestin



During the preparation process of the poetic anthology named “Antología de Poesía Colonense” (Editorial la Antigua, Panamá, 2012), Winston Churchill James and myself conducted a very thorough search (in bookstores and libraries as well as in the internet) looking for poets born in Colón, either living in Panama or abroad.

That’s how we found about Yvette Modestin, a Rainbow City born Panamanian and a migrant living in Boston, Massachusetts. She appeared in several web pages where her work in the realm of social activism was highlighted. But her rich and multifaceted life in the United States had a relatively unknown side: Yvette was also a poet. And a very good poet, by the way.

As soon as we read several pieces of her work, we knew that having her included in our Anthology was a mandate. So we got in touch with her and she replied with her usual enthusiasm, sending us more samples of her poetry.

In our introductory essay for the above mentioned anthology, regarding Yvette's poetry, we said that her poetic talent added a new and potent feminine perspective and voice to both Panamanian and "Colonense" poetry. The strong affirmation of her negritude and of her femininity, combined with a beautiful versification of high tone and quality, make a singular case within contemporary Panamanian poetry.

Developing these ideas, we can say that Yvette's poetry is defined within several thematic lines, presented in her works, either in tacit or explicit forms. The first of these keys is the reaffirmation of her feminine essence. Yvette is a woman and she proudly vindicates her genre. She is fully aware of her sexual condition and nature, as well as of her femininity.

Therefore, her innate sensuality is also a ubiquitous factor, another vital parameter in the poetry of Yvette. Many of her poems bring to mind the amorous and erotic charge of black women poets such as her fellow Afro Panamanian poet Juanita Mitil or the African American poet Nikki Giovanni.

Another facet of her poetic work is the reiteration of her status as an African and as a Latina woman. Yvette takes pride in her blackness so naturally that she does not need to proclaim it. She transpires her blackness in every vital act of hers. And she also remembers us that she is a migrant woman, a human being coming from Latin America, from Panama, at the very center of this impoverished and exploited continent.

Linked to her Afrolatina essence is the ubiquitous presence of her religious faith, which is the faith of her African ancestors; specifically, the presence and embodiment of the Yoruba religion in her life.

Perhaps a last noticeable factor is her vertical standing against arbitrariness, her rebellion against all forms of discrimination, against all forms of injustice and violence. And her embracement of universal values such as Freedom, Love and Justice among all human beings. Here, we see the obvious and fruitful translation of her life experience as a social worker and activist into her literary work.

This valuable book should help her poetry to get better known and better valued, both within the USA and Panamá (including her native Colón, a subtle, ubiquitous and constant presence in her poetic work) and the whole world, hopefully.

I am very much honored to write these brief introductory lines, for her first poetry book. We know that it is the first major step she takes, in the process of building up her formal

literary career. I predict a very productive literary life for Yvette, full with the strength of her ancestors and blessed by the gods of her heritage with many, many beautiful poems and books.

Luis Wong Vega, Ph.D.
.Panamá, March the 10th, 2015.

*"A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer,
it sings because it has a song."
Maya Angelou*

Part One:

Nubian Butterfly

A Soulbird Transformation/Nubian Butterfly

Caterpillar

I know my strength,
It has been tested, stepped on and lifted.
It is defined as ugly yet I gather beauty in this silence.

Nubian Butterfly

My transition begins.
The clarity within shines with a purpose,
I sit with it,
Gaze at it, until I open to the light that will guide me.
My song is silent as I glide to observe your footsteps,
Learning to stand close and silent,
Nubian Butterfly Song
My wings are open with the colors of the Seven African Powers.
It is strong, accepting and understanding the true meaning of its Africaness.
It is clear,
Black Soulness has given it a sweet song.
Oh what a sweet song,
Love, Love, Love,
My way,
Transforming,
Embracing,
On a search,
Humanities tears slow me down.
Finding solace,
Gathering all you have given me to survive on my next journey,
To sing in harmony,
My Soulbird Nubian Song

Evolution

Who Am I

I am that girl that pushed pass boundaries,
That stood out in a crowd of white faces.
I am la Negra que habla español a lo Panameño.
I am a woman that is moved by the beautiful Black men in her life.
I am a product of Elicia, Jeanne, Clotilde, Ethelyn and Norma.
I am shaped by the words of Assata, Alice, Sonia and Maya.
I am a woman, mujer, Panamanian, Colonense, Zonian, Colonense, Pan African
I am Black, Negra, Afro, con mucho sabor!

Innocence Past

I did not know what I was doing,
Did not think about the obstacles I would face.

What I did know was that my heart took the lead on my search for Justice.
Justice to be heard, acknowledged,
Justice for my Papa, my friends, my community

It was time to tell the truth,
The truth that speaks to my reality
The blinders are off
I see the inequality that exist
I feel the pain of those who are silent

Pause

My heart is still innocent because it embraces love when it stands before me
With time, I have gained clarity of my purpose on this journey we call LIFE

Innocence of the past creeps in, before it settles, I see you clutch your purse as I walk by,
I am then reminded of the box you want to keep me in.
That young tennis player still lives inside me and the memory of that one call that shifted the definition of belonging is at the root.

I believe in the lightness of my footsteps and the fluidity of my mind

Today, innocence lays silent
Because justice prevails,
Justice for you! You that stand proud, you that I love, and you who shoulders I stand on.

My Spirit

My spirit awakens as It becomes one with the universe
It smiles at the green grass and the fresh flowers as I jog through Margarita,
Laughs at the sound of the people singing every word to that favorite song,
Stands tall to the words, Say it Loud, I am BLACK and I am PROUD
Jumps to the comparsa of the Campesinos, Brasileros and Crispines de Colon,
Treasures long loving friendships,
Overflows with the memories of my mother, aunts, uncles and grandparents,
As I stand fully present in this moment,
My spirit gains clarity as I remember my past and reach for my future.

ROOTS

I apologize for making you cry,
But I am happy my words took you home.
Home to a place where you are your full self.
Fullness, that embraces and stands strong on her ROOTS.

Sunday Mornings

Waking up with silence, reaching for my notebook,
I sit to find my words.
Preparing, regrouping for the days to come.
Making sense of life,
Spending time in my inner landscape

Imagine

Imagine goodness around you,
Imagine justice for our people.
Imagine being hugged by gentle hands.
Imagine a soft kiss on your cheeks.
Imagine a peaceful world.
Imagine laughter.
We need to Imagine a life filled with good things, beautiful people,
So that when the universe places it before us, we are able to say,
I imagined you,
I saw you,
I feel you,
I welcome you.
Imagine.

Turning Back the Time

Turning back Time 10/15/10

If I could turn back the time, I would ask you if I could walk with you to the school bus.

We would talk about your day and I would wish you well.

If I could turn back the time, I would be at the field cheering you on and sharing what an inspiration you are for your commitment and dedication.

I would tell you, I love the way you walk. It's like watching a perfect wave.

I would whisper, your skin is like a delicious tasting caramel chocolate bar.

If I could turn back the time, I would tell you, I see you, I see your kindness and thoughtfulness.

I would touch you and you would feel the warmth that you create in me.

Holding your hand you would know that I would be there through your ups and downs.

Turning back the time; I would moisturize your lips with a perfect kiss.

I would listen as you share your dreams, your passion and hope to be around to celebrate with you.

We can't turn back but the universe has given me a gift. The gift to have you back in my life.

I dream of holding you, laughing with you, touching you as I memorize your beautiful landscape.

Today you still inspire me; you still generate heat in me, even from a distance.

I appreciate time because it is ever changing and moving.

My clock wants more time. time to see you, time to meet this man you have become, time to sit and hear your dreams.

I give thanks for today.

Today I see that light in your eye and stand in that space that surrounds you with love.

I pray that time allows me to swim in your light and gather some of your splendid joy as I dream of what tomorrow will bring.

What is it about you?

What is it about you that pull me in?
My cup runeth over when I see your smile, read your words.
I exhale as I dream of the day you stand before me.

Is it the beauty in your eyes? Or the prides as you stand and say, yo soy Pana!!
Whatever it is, today,
YOU have my full attention!!!

Do you see me?

Do you see me?

The me that embraces her full self.

You have no idea that I understand your words, Quien es ella?

I acknowledge you yet I am invisible in your eyes and mind.

You turn away to not be reminded of your roots.

What roots you say?

The roots that challenge your white privilege mind,

the roots that built the country that you stand and say, Latino Presente!

The day you see me, is the day the chains of colonialism will be removed from your mind.

On that day, you will embrace the Tio that the family disowned,

On that day, I will sit with you and say,

You hurt me but I forgive you,

and Maybe, Hopefully on that day,

YOU WILL SEE ME!

Wisdom and Depth of the Ocean- Yemaya/Olokun

I surrender to you and ask for your guidance,

I swim in the depth of your womb,

Your salty waters clean my soul and wash away my pain.

I find peace in your presence and love in your color.

My mother's song serenades me as a float, "I will Survive".

I swim in the direction you have chosen for me.

Where do I go from here? It makes sense to my heart; I pray that my mind see the connection.

You shower me with love of self and community, as I reach to the sky to begin a new day, Alaafia

I am Never Alone

There is something very calming, loving and validating to wake up with the sun beaming through my window, with the birds singing a beautiful medley

My first thought of the day becomes, I am never alone.

I am never alone because the trees speak to me as they dance with the wind

I am never alone because the ocean blue mirrors the sky,

Together they shine on me.

I am never alone because they walk with me and when I sit still to welcome spirit, they whisper sweet things in my ear.

I am never alone because I believe in me, I love me, I cherish me.

This is validated by their beautiful whisper, you are never alone, Yvette.

A Beaming Light- Coach Jones

A Beaming Light

Faster than a speeding bullet,
Charming and Gracious as an African King.

Believe in self was part of your DNA.

You walked with pride that was passed on to each
and every one of us.

Doing your best was your song,
Being our best was our chorus,

I am you Coach Jones
because I am disciplined.

An Olympian, a star in our eyes,
Education was your key to success.

You were more than just a man who showed
us to pick up our legs and move our hands.

Father to many, Mentor to all.

I am you Coach Jones
because I am strong.

Preaching Unity from your starting block pulpit,
we were all Colonenses, Beep Beep Colon!!!

We hold your love for running as we find clarity and peace
on a long run through the streets.

I am you Coach Jones because I see love
and give love.

Many ask, who taught you this, I say, this beaming light
on the track field.

Then they ask, what did he say and I share a line that
I will forever hold, "not to worry about them, let them

worry about us."

I see you in me, running past the given line standing straight and tall.

This is not an accident. I was "saved" in your hands.

Thank you Dario and Kimaura for sharing him with us

I am you Coach Jones because I am family.

The sun rises and sets on my love for you.

You gave me long life friendships that allows me to sit and laugh about the cow milk in Coclé, the bunk beds in Bocas, and the loud music on the bus after another victory.

I am you Coach Jones because you are you,

The runner, the coach, the mentor, the star, the king,

The light that I will always be reaching for.

Dream- For the youth of today

I Dream of the day where the word FREEDOM means, FREEDOM of the mind,

Where we can be proud of our Abuela and swim in our African glow,

I Dream of standing before Martin Luther King, Che, Rosa and my Mother and saying,
Thank you for your sacrifice!!

How do we expand our minds, speak our truth, be proud of being, Black, Latino,
Immigrant, Del Pueblo.

Maya said to(Black) women, see if you have the appetite for power, acknowledge it,
admit it, and then
realize, you already have it.

YOUNG WOMEN, Stand UP and take your place!!!!

YOUNG MEN, claim your space!!! I pray that you and my nephews will not be a statistic
in America.

What's your DREAM?

Dream BIG, like the river that has no destination.

Dream bright like a Rainbow

I see you in me as I kneel to the ancestors to guide you as you build your garden.

May the sweetness and love of Oshun shine on you as you find your words,

May the fire of Shango give you direction,

DREAM ON!!!!

Beautiful and Black (Your Picture)

Beautiful and Black (your picture)

You are Beautiful

You are Black

Your Beauty pulls me in

I hope you reached your mountain top and that you are well

The sun lands on your skin and your essence shines

My eyes cannot leave you,

Your smile speaks to me,

Your stare grabs me,

I know I have never touched you or heard you laugh but I know you,

I recognize your spirit.

It is the spirit of Mandinga, the strength and resiliency of the Congos.

You are Beautiful

You are Black

I want to introduce myself

My name is Yvette

But you can call me Hermana

Can we talk? What were you thinking as you stood in the sand that grounded you in this blessed land?

How did you feel when you looked out into the waters where our ancestors arrived in shackles and freed themselves with the power within.

You are Beautiful

You are Black

You are gorgeous

Your hairs, your plats, are the texture of a comforting blanket

Can I swim with you?

We can glide in the salt waters of Yemaya/Olokun and feel the sweetness of Oshun all around us

I splash you, you splash me, and the joy will overtake the pain you have faced,

The pain carries the exclusion, the rejection, from this glorious land that our people shaped with their bare hands.

We ask, where is this?

My response, everywhere and anywhere in Panama because our feet, our souls, have landed on all the shores of this beautiful Isthmus

You are Beautiful

You are Black

The white on your skin reminds me of the light we reach for

I believe in you

I want you to know that because that love, that belief, fuels me as I take my first step on earth each morning.

You are Beautiful

You are Black

I want to sing with you,

Dance with you,

Play with you,

You are Beautiful

You are Black

I live for the moment that you step into my light like you did today

Beautiful and Black

Love in simple acts

Love is seen and felt through simple acts,
A phone call to say, you just entered my thoughts.
An email saying, I am close.
Combing your hair out inspired by me teaches me that some carry and some inspire
I am elevated by the knowing that love is seen and felt through simple acts.

You showed up

You showed up again
You caused that sweet movement that makes me sway without effort.
That's some sweet stuff, that's some soul stuff.
You showed up again
I feel your touch landing on my back, pulling me in.
My 15 year old heart surfaced when you showed up.
Extra light,
Playful,
Curious,
Fearless,
It landed on my adult heart and found the same beat.
However long, however far,
When you show up,
That sweet soul stuff sways with the sound of your voice, the energy of your smile.
You showed up and sweet soulful love shows up with you.

Soulful Love

Take me back to when Coolness was Soulful, Sweet like Honey.
When men moved like Sidney Poitier and women stood like Abbey Lincoln,
Oh yes, For the Love of Ivy.
Take me back to that Soulful love when you greeted me as Peace my Queen, with the
image of the crown on your head I responded, hello my King.
Soulful love is the tone of your voice, the light in your eyes.
Take me back to when Soul Brothers defended Soul sisters with the same fire,
as they do for their mother, sister and child.
Soulful Love is Black Love,
From Boston to Colon, NY to Nicaragua, Belize to Ecuador, Brazil to Nigeria,
Take me back to when a man gave up his seat for a pregnant woman, to that special
act when you held the door for me.
Soulful love recognizes struggle, reaches for peace, embraces freedom and reminds us
that we need to do it together to get there together.
Soulful love beams in your stare that says, I love you my Queen Michele Obama as you
reach to kiss her. That is Black sweet love.
Webster dictionary states;
Soul is a person emotional nature, spirit.
Love is deep affection
When synchronized to the beat of our ancestors, touching the depth of hope of our
people, it is defined as Soulful Black Love.
I lean on the side of Soulful Love when I see you on the Street corner begging for
change, when you scream on the bus and you forget that it all lands on us.
Take me back to when we all harmonize to the Commodores,
"Show me a river that's so deep, show me a mountain so high, I'll show that'll last
forever, flying high so high"
In that same breadth Marvin's words flash before our eyes;
"For only love can conquer hate, you know we've got to find a way, to bring some loving
here today."
Soulful love moves beyond the doors of our home,
It runs deeper than what lays between the sheets.
India sings, "Brown skin you know I love you brown skin."
I see you every day in my Soulbird light, my heart's center.
I believe in you.
Take me back; take me back to coolness, sweetness, to heart beating love,
Take me back to WE got S O U L.
Reach back I say, for Soulful love in every step you take.
Cherish it, fight for it, love it, OUR Soul beating, Love expanding, Soulful black love.

Dancing is a powerful drug

Our hands woven together tightly
My hips touching yours
Pulling my breast against your Nubian chest,
I feel the drug taking over,
It's stronger than a sip of Ron Abuelo.
You lead me through this wide forest,
Trusting your every move, I get lost in your smell.
What is the name of this song?
I can only hear your voice singing to me,
Dancing with you is better than a piece of cheesecake with extra sweet strawberries,
Sweet.
Keep swaying,
Pull me closer,
I want to fill up every space.
Let the song play.
I'm high.
High on You,
Floating,
My feet have left the ground,
Dancing with you is my drug.

My sacred place

You are the place where I find my words
You are the place I hear the whispers
You are the place where my heart recovers
You are the place where I regain my footing
You are the place in him that I love
Your waters nurture me
I am you today and every day
You are the place I call home
You are my Colon.

I am here because they want me here

I am here because you want me here
You want me to speak a truth that has been put aside
You want me to see a pain that my eyes will never forget
Ringing a bell of consciousness in my ears

I am here because you want me here
Hoping that those that loved me then
Will love and respect me today
For this is the only way to be here
Fully present for you
I am here because you want me here
Entering spaces where I pinch myself
Shaking hands, sharing spaces
That is all an extension of you
I am here with you. For you

OUR SOULS EXPOSED

Dedicated to our Ancestors and Papa

Dragged
Pulled
Raped
Our souls exposed since we arrived to these Americas.
Ripped of our language,
Standing naked,
You sold us.

Our Souls exposed
Regaining our steps,
We asked the Egungun's to protect us and guide us. Ashe O!
Reclaiming our worth,
We raised our head up high and said, I am a King, I am a Queen

Our Souls Exposed to hate,
Reconnected us to our Ache that we never lost when you,
Dragged us
Pulled us
Raped us
On that ocean trip,

Our Souls Exposed to the words of Bayano, Mandinga, Marcus Garvey, Fredrick
Douglas, Harriet Tubman,
Singing freedom!
Surviving the breakdown of our families,
The inequality in our society,
Our souls exposed to the injustice of this world.

Our souls exposed to this harsh reality,
Taking us to the shores of Yemaya, washing away our pain,
Tasting the sweetness of Oshun's honey,
Our souls exposed to the light of hope.

Our souls exposed
Testing our strength, you punched our back,
Failing to realize that our internal strength is not exposed to you and will never be
broken.

Our souls exposed moves with the protective blanket of our nurturing mothers and our resilient Kings.

My soul exposed is regaining, reclaiming our given right to be human,
Exposing and elevating the sound of your voice.

Whispers

I hear your soft whisper say, Be Patient my dear. I then run to my quite space and wait for the sound of your beautiful voice.

You whisper strength into my being, direction in my steps.

I then begin my day. I enter the store and wonder if you will help me.

In a loving whisper you say, you belong here my dear.

A sense of belonging comes over me. My day gets busy. I want to get through this day so I can spend time with you.

Email sent, check, return phone calls, check, I look forward to getting home to sit in silence to hear your whisper softly, you had a good day Yvette, I am proud of you.

As I begin my commute home, I look into the faces of those around me

I wonder what they are thinking.

Who is whispering in their ears?

What will they tell them about me?

You answer in a tone of sisterhood, that is your sister Yvette, tell her she is beautiful

You look beautiful my sister.

She smiles

Soul Seeing

Looking beyond

Connecting with you as a human being that feel touch, laugh, cry and love.

Soul seeing moves without judgment,

Without hate,

I see the radiance of your being

Celebrating the spirit within

You are me, I am you,

You are the mirror of my soul.

Broken / Repaired

Broken? Yes

Can it be repaired? Absolutely

We will fix it up with some Modestin love.

Shine it up with Elicia's strength and grace

Sew it up with the needle and thread from the women of the Diaspora

Talk to it with the words of Maya, Phenomenal woman, that's me.

Shake it up as I dance with Celia, la negra tiene tumbao

Broken not lost, repairable and long lasting

That is the beat of this drum.

Vibrating words

Many use the word; I love you, as a streaming faucet.

Yet, when we really need to say it to that person that fills our cup, to that friend that has been there through thick and thin, we hesitate and become overwhelmed with the question, do they feel the same?

I love you, te amo, te quiero mucho, te adoro, I adore you, is the most beautiful sounding song to your heart and ears.

Say it when you really need to say it!

Say it when those are the only words that want to leave your tender lips!

I love you, te amo.

Say it when you hear from that friend who brings you to a place filled with joy.

Please don't say it when you don't mean it.

You know when that moment arrives.

It is when you have to rehearse it, when you have to plan it.

I reach to regain the true meaning of these vibrating words.

I reach to regain the strength,

The pulse taking results of being on the receiving end of it.

If I haven't said it to you in a long time, take this as my song to you.

A song with the natural rhythm of a sweet sounding bird,

I love you, te amo, te quiero mucho, te adoro, I adore you.

Sunflower Light (extended)

I am a sunflower following the light; the uncertainty of my destination keeps me alive.
Bending to the light I grow, I extend, I love.
Grounded in this journey's rich soil,
Nourished by calming waters,
I am a Sunflower singing a Soulbird song,
I am Free.

Place

I want to take you to a place where bright things speak to our soul.

On our walk, we will feel the sand beneath our feet and know we are grounded in good intentions.

We will see that road that will take us to a place of UNITY. We will name that St.

SURVIVAL

We made it to the crossroads that lifts our spirit.

When we kneel to give thanks, we will hear the song in our heart connect with the sound of the river as we touch it lightly,

What place is this? This is the place called FREEDOM, freedom to think about you, to see you, Freedom to love you

Taking care of the ground

I sit today transformed on a continued search responding to your question,
I am a global African grounded in a love and pride of being born and raised in Colon
I need to pause and repeat Colon then I will say Panama.
That is what I see
That is what I know
I am visible to my grandfather even in the dark
You minimize my identity through eyes of entitlement that say, white is good black is bad
Black is power
Black is resilient
Black is beautiful
My black is love
The search for the extension of my root placed me before you with the strength of Ogun
the depth of Olokun and the sweetness of Oshun
I know you placed me on this road with you
The steps are deep
The impact is groundbreaking
I know Africa
My Colon is Africa
My home
Bright light
Rainbow bright
Soothing waters
Call me what you want but you will never take away the elevated movement of my spirit
that beams
Yo soy Colonense
Taking care of the ground is taking care of you

In the Moment

This is my moment
To feel, to dream,
There is no cut off time,
No description,
Just the feeling of
Joy and unconditional love; embracing my being.

Love Stepped in

My heart craves your touch,
My nose searches for your smell.
Your soft hands, sculpts my body.
My ears ring to the clarity in your voice.
Swaying to your song, my body loses its balance.
My eyes swim in your beauty, my heart skips a beat.
I recognize you,
I celebrate you,
YOU are love.

Touching your Landscape

When I think of you, all I want to do is touch you.

Touch your heart that is open and strong,
your lips that have uttered kind words with the vibration of a humming bird.

I want to touch you in places I never ventured before, to know what lifts you.

I want to find and caress the place that makes you call out MY name.

When we pause, you can touch MY body and My Soul will respond.

The desire builds as I paint the picture in my mind.

A desire to learn the landscape of your beautiful chocolate body,

Once I have it memorized, I will never get loss, the search will end

Because, I have touched YOU

My Heart Smiles

Do you know when your heart is smiling?

I do

My heart is smiling as I open my eyes to begin a new day and the air has a taste of goodness.

It is that first good morning that creates a union with the external, molding a beaming expression from ear to ear.

My heart is smiling when those I adore and care for deeply, are well and safe

It smiles and lifts with Pride for my people of Colon, for they have SPOKEN.

My hearts smile comes with a giggle when you say something sweet to me. That moment is defined by the elevated sound of my Queen name leaving your lips.

As my movement becomes one with the universe, it smiles to say, I see you, you are well.

When they visit me with my eyes close, it smiles in peace for I know they are always with me.

Be one with that smile,

Feel that smile, allow it to guide you.

When it arrives, you will know that your heart is smiling,

For when it does, you will know with certainty that,

Water is Blue.

The Sky is clear.

The Sun is bright and your Heart, that beating heart, is Light.

TRUTH (A Grounding Poem)

If a Truth makes you uncomfortable,
It is not about questioning A Truth,
A Fact,
A Reality
It is about questioning the discomfort of a Truth,
That you did not live, Clarity!
That Truth,
That Fact,
That Reality,
Will Set US,
Will Set You,
Will Set ME,
FREE

Staying in the game

I stayed in game today by singing to you during half time.
They threw the right questions,
I scored a fancy touchdown.
During the time out, that sweet melody,
Our melody, took over.
In the fourth quarter, Coach called a crazy play,
I had the perfect block to keep us moving
Only in a rush for half time,
Our time,
Sweet time,
The best time

The Two Faces of Blackness; Black in the Americas

I am Black in the US not Black in the Canal Zone that was sheltered, not engaged in the truth below the surface.

That truth speaks to my Rainbow City and your Margarita, to my Pedro Miguel and your Balboa.

One truth allowed me to enter your home while you hesitated to enter mine.

Black in the Canal Zone developed my internal power,

Thick skin was instilled in me as I demanded respect and recognition for my grandparents.

My resilient black meets the Black in the US that follows me around the store, where I recognize racial profiling and name the injustice.

Can you tell the difference in the two Faces of Blackness?

Black in the Americas comes with a price, wherever you are standing.

Black in the US ask, show me your ID, still finding you guilty before proven innocent.

Black in the Canal Zone meant attending segregated schools long after Brown vs. the Board of Education to the Black in the US where in 2009, young Black children cannot go swimming.

Black in Colon, donde yo soy la hija de Elicia y el Mayor Modestin, to Black in the US, quien es ella?

Black in Colon, we stand tall knowing that no government official has done right by us.

Black in the US brings you to a pause while staring at the injustice of Katrina, recognizing that this exist in every Black community that is rejected

The similarity of the Two Faces of Blackness screams at us,

You don't see it because you want to feel like the superior Black in the eyes of the colonizer.

Naming it means exclusion and confusion.

Once you have stepped off the plane in the US you become an African American, once you have stepped off the plane in Panama, Nicaragua, Nigeria you become a Global African.

Name it, recognize it.

It is that Blackness that allows you to walk down the street and sit at the front of the bus.

My Two faces of blackness land on the color of my skin defining my experience in the Americas.

When we arrive to the place that the two faces of Blackness are rooted in the same tree,

Then we can say,

I am Black Everyday!

I am Black Everyday!

Black Every day!

Fabric of Great Men-

Dedicated to Claral Richards

Strong, Determined, Committed and Resilient, that is the fabric of the men who make us stand up with pride as we honor those whose shoulders we stand on.

Marcus Garvey told us “to not give up a continent for an island” and you followed that motto with the wisdom you shared with me in every exchange.

Reminding me, we do not know who truly stands before us Your pride in being an African man seeps through the waters of Puerto Armuelles and extends to the shores of Playa Langosta then swiftly landed with fire on my tongue as I continue to speak your truth.

You are an extension of the fabric of Fredrick Douglas, when you ask us to pause and reflect on his vibrating words, “it is easier to change the mind of a child than that of an adult.”

My mind understands longevity from the steps you took to make Dia de la Etnia Negra a reality in Panama.

My heart understands humility from the way you define success as the freedom of all our people.

Nelson Mandela’s fabric is stitched tightly into yours while you continue to fight for justice and recognition.

Every May 30th we remind our country walking down the narrow bold streets of Colon that we exist, demanding respect and inclusion for the role we played in this great “Patria”

Your fabric dances the same beat as Bob Marley, “Get up Stand Up, Stand up for your Right”

Bright and deep as the forest were we built our Palenques, your fabric is firm and stretches to protect our people.

Bold as you speak what others fear.

Peaceful and warm as it carries the hymns of Dr. King,” I have a Dream”

Long and unbreakable as the spirit of Malcolm X

Standing on the side of all Africans and praying for a country that is still defining Blackness, your fabric Mr. Richards is made of the same energy and love of great men who sacrificed for us.

Your fabric protects me and guides my every move.

Thank you for placing your fabric on my shoulders.

Flowing!

Pay attention to everything.
Joy comes in life's simplest pleasures.
Pay attention to the smell that makes you say, Splendid,
the taste that makes you say, Delicious.
Pay attention to Everything,
Remember that loving, truthful whisper saying, I Love You.
Pay attention to the sunrise and the sunset.
See it as an extension of living life, illuminating your inner landscape.
Pay attention to Everything,
A heart lifting overflowing with want.
Pay attention to the touch not only the physical touch,
Feel the fire of the touch that keeps your heart beating.
Pay attention to everything.
Your soul's song making you taps your feet, raise your hand, swing your hips and
expand your smile.
Pay attention to everything.
Clicking "like"
Writing a "comment"
We meet at a common place. I see you.
Pay attention to everything.
When you pay attention you will learn that,
Life is short,
Death is inevitable,
Pain can be subdued,
Joy is a blessing,
Peace is attainable,
Justice is a nonviolent act,
Love is always present when you love yourself first,
Dreaming brings you closer to the truth.
Pay attention,
Pay attention,
Open your heart,
Pay attention to Everything.

Flame

Laying in Bed with soothing sounds
My candle flame dancing along to the beat,
I find my place,
Sun shining,
Through my blue and yellow curtain,
The queens are present, the Queens are present!

STOP-Natural!

Stop telling me I am having a bad hair day,
This is the best day for FREEDOM.
My hair is big and extends to the heat of the August sun.
STOP!
Why are you so uncomfortable?
Am I a reminder of Angela and Assata
My hair moves to the beat of the Congo drums.
What do you see in your mirror?
Yes, nappy, happy, keeping it real.
STOP!
I see strength, power and LOVE.

Dream the Impossible Dream

Dream the impossible dream has been my motto
My impossible dream is that the day will come when I will not have to explain that yes, I
am Black and speak Spanish
That we are Afro descendants no matter where we landed
That the language we speak is an imposed language
My impossible dream sees a community healed from years of pain
I will dream the impossible as he did until the day comes when freedom hugs my being
Our souls will know that we have attained the impossible dream. Our drum beat will
wake up the ancestors
The song will be justice in the US,
Justice in Panama
Justice in Jamaica in Nicaragua justice in Nigeria in Colombia
Justice should not be an impossible dream
It will be my possible dream.

You got me

Yeah, you got me dancing and singing today
You are stuck in my head and heart like a sweet melody
You got me smiling
From the memory of your laughter,
You got me, you got me
You got me smelling your cologne as I walk by a beautiful garden
Don't worry, you got me

Believe

I believe in Love,
Deep down soul to the root love
I believe in you and the goodness of your soul
My heart gives and receives to the righteous victory of our people
I believe I am never alone,
Your bright flames remind me you are close

I will not harm

I will not harm the spirit of my people

We have been knocked down for centuries awaiting our 40 acres and amule

I will not harm the spirit of my people

Of my people pausing to listen to the whispers I learn that we are Kings and Queens
who deserve a permanent seat at the thrown

I believe my loving heart giving to those I cherish and to receiving from the universe

I believe every act in life is a lesson to grow, believing in the uplifting feeling of loving
from the root

Swimming in your waters

I want to swim in your waters
Get lost under that rock with you
If this is a dream don't wake me up
Realness of this dive is confirmed with my eyes closed
When I open my eyes
That vibrating voice guides me to shore
Hibernating with you is the welcoming of my Soulbird
Gliding in your light
Your rumba is a skip in my heart beat
Recovering from your fire
My chest is expanded
My hands reach out to you
Slow down
This is real
You touched me first on the inside
My spirit recognizes you
I feel save in your essence
Shower me so that I can sing in joyful satisfaction
Swimming in your waters
I am alive

Struggle

Struggle is about fighting to be heard and included

As a Black woman, it is an everyday song with the spicy taste of Latin America as the extended version

Loving you is a struggle

For you carry 400 years on your back awaiting your 40 acres and a mule

Struggle

Shows up when I want to tell you the truth,

Look in the mirror my brother, my sister; you are Black, Eres Negro

Your Wave takes Over

Standing still,
The flow takes over,
this wave,
soothing,
showers me with the mystery of what is you,
My Nubian.
Riding,
as long as I can,
my head above water,
I see you.
Calm, relaxed,
landing where it takes me.
In My dream,
Awake,
Before your beauty.
From the heart,
To the pen,
To the Universe,
Mi poema.

Essence of my Light

My flame has risen for my Soul has been fed with your illuminating light, sitting quietly in the soothing waters of my Africaness.

This is my home.

Acceptance,

Greets the gift you have placed before me.

Love,

Overflows the halo that hugs me

Trusting you

I went back to fetch it.

I arrived

I am sitting in the place you have directed me to and Now, I truly understand your wish for me to move with a selfless heart.

Shedding the unnecessary, making space for the necessary

My mind is quiet,

My soul is happy,

I'm in love with my Blackness

I find comfort in this shine

Come Close

I am present to see love, give love, surrender to love, to move with love

This direction has transformed my being to live in grace

I grow

Dancing,

Surrendering to the beat of this drum, connects me to you

I am guided by you

Compassion awaits you

Hope arrives as I sit in this meditative state to receive your whispers

I sing with Soul

My garden is growing, it speaks softly

I am floating, landing quietly with a smile

My wealth has expanded

This is the Essence of my Light

I am Iya

She who feeds

Praising femininity

Making worthy sacrifices, taking care of the ground

The Essence of Me

The Essence of Truth, Open to Receive

The Essence of my Light

Who is it?

Who is holding me so tightly?
Clearly,
Lovingly,
Thank you!
I feel you in a way that is indescribable
Thank you for dancing with me.

The Depth of my Awareness

The depth of my awareness takes me to places that they understand.
I talk to them,
Laugh with them,
Dance with them,
For the depth of the journey is a gift from them,
A gift to see,
Hear, feel and touch the richness of my being.
My human being,
My African being,
My Panamanian being,
My Colon being
The depth of a place they understand,
Is the place that makes all the difference to the depth of ME.

My Tree

My tree is my grounding symbol that continues to grow and spread
It sees new things through the branches
New life,
New light,
Grounded in loving things
You can push it, shake it yet the root still stands
This is my tree
Rooted in love
Always finding its way home,
The loving way, rooted in the light that you put before me to see the road to justice,
Equality and truth
Blinding at time to a reality that cannot be ignored
My tree embraces every season as my spirit embraces every obstacle as
I grow
I grow
I expand
I expand
Love at the center
Of the growth that touches you, sings to you, dances with you
I can see clearly
Through your dance
I hear your song that you wrote to me
My tree is my anchor
It grows
It expands
I am alive
I seek balance
This tree this central love guides me
My tree

Do you know who you are?

I am a Woman
I am a Black Woman

I am a Black Woman with a dip of that,
A twist of that,
A little bit of that.
Does it matter?

I am a Woman
I am a Black Woman
That has been my defining answer
Whether I like it or not,
Whether you like it or not
It is all you see at first glance.

Do you know who you are?

I am a Woman
I am a Black Woman
To tell you the truth,
I am cool sitting, swimming, standing and reaching with that answer.
Do you know who you are?
I am a Woman
I am a Black Woman
If you walk in my shoes you will learn that this is not a simple answer
I love beyond that,
Feel beyond that,
Dream beyond that,
I am a Woman
I am a Black Woman
I am me

When my pen touches the paper,

You appear with a song that flows like the cooling waters of Playa Langosta.
I soak in this glory, gaining the strength to stay on this road.

When my pen touches the paper,
I find the soulful words to tell him,
I love you, without depending on those three words.
For a song for him, only he appears.

When my pen touches the paper,
You take over with the force of truth and the sweetness of honey.

My song comes together.
Synchronized to the heart beat of the universe

For you appeared today,
When my pen touched the paper.

I love the way you move

I love the way you move
the way you wear your birth given crown
As you enter a space that make others pause to say,
I love the way he moves.

I love the way you smile in a way that lights up the darkest of hearts.
The way you smell,
It's coconut on a beautiful summer day.

I love the way you move
your vibrating voice elevates me
I close my eyes to feel your tender lips connecting to mine.
I love, love the way you move my Nubian
A sweet saxophone melody accompanies your footsteps

Just in case you forgot,
This is a reminder
For you made this Nubian stop
To Marinate on the way you move
Saying out loud,
I love the way you move.

My words

My words are my way for you to feel,
Beyond my smile,
Beyond my Fist up!
Beyond my kiss,
Beyond my Bless up!
Be beyond!
May they land gently on you today!

Soulbird 'beyond' Song

When someone steps into your light with a sweet melodic tune,
however time or distance,
the melody becomes sweeter,
I love the song that plays when you show up.
the melody is reminder of everything good.

Pause- listen to their whispers

acknowledge the spirits that guide me,

allowed me to receive my purpose.

I am closer to them and to you.

to a truth of who I am within the vibrating words,

Say it Loud I'm Black and I'm Proud

As a woman who wants love, hope and peace

I believe in Love

I believe in love
deep down soul to the root love
I believe in you and the goodness of your soul
My heart gives and receive to the righteous victory of our people
I believe I am never alone
your bright flame remind me you are close
I believe every act in life is a lesson to grow and to recognize the uplifting feeling of
loving from the root.

Shy, Mysterious

With elegance that pulls me closer,
To smell your sweet cologne,
That will tell me a story.
He thinks from all points,
He sits and observes,
When comfort arrives,
Shy

Mysterious

With elegance that pulls me closer,
Speaking with a pulpit like vibration.
Graceful,
Firm with a soft landing,
With lips that say
My kiss will tell my story.
I feel it,
It is safe with me.

Shy**Mysterious**

With elegance that pulls me closer
I will always remember that smell
And if I dare forget, the next time our lips connect,
I will remember our story.

The depth of my Being

The depth of my awareness takes me to places that they understand.
I talk to them,
Laugh with them,
Dance with them,
For the depth of the journey is a gift from them.
A gift to see, hear, feel, touch , the richness of my being.
My human being,
My African being,
My Panamanian being,
My Colon being,
The depth of a place they understand,
That place makes all the difference to the depth of Me.

"...My gratefulness to our sister Yvette for unlocking doors for brothers and sisters, in Caribbean, Central and South America, North America and elsewhere. May our good Lord pave the way for us all..."

Claral Richards Thompson

Part 2:

Evolution / Revolution

Sweet Melodic Tune

When someone steps into your light with a sweet melodic tune
however time or distance,
the melody becomes sweeter,
I love the song that plays when you show up.
The melody is reminder of everything good.

Pausing to listen to their whispers
acknowledge the spirits that guide me,
allowed me to receive my purpose.
I am closer to them and to you.
to a truth of who I am within the vibrating words,
Say it Loud I'm Black and I'm Proud
As a woman who wants love, hope and peace

Your kiss

Your kiss was a rose petal landing softly on my awaiting lips
The woman in me woke up
The smile on your face extended the song
For I wanted to hear that melody in my heart over and over again
Gentle
Smooth
My lips wanted more
I wanted that rose petal to land again and again
For your gentle lips
Woke up the woman in me
This Uninhibited discovery with you has me laughing
singing, asking wanting
there is no cut off time
no destination
Discovering with you
is to discover love and kindness is its truest form

Thinking?

I ask what you are thinking.
Yet what I really want to, ask is, what are you feeling?
Is your mind synchronized with your heart?
Do you feel the natural flow of our spirits meeting?
I hear music when I call out your name
Do you hear the words from the poem dedicated to you?
I ask what you are feeling.
Wanting you to answer,
I feel for you

Welcoming New Light

when we recognize the root
Oh how light the soul feels.

All parts of self receive an equal dose of recognition.
Your footsteps become lighter,
your dance moves instantly to the beat of the drum.
Your heart knows unconditional love.
Your skins shines from within,
you see yourself in those that stand before you, moving beyond location and class.
you feel when they appear,
the cloud opens up,
Love is unconditional,
clarity of your journey showers you,
All this when we recognize the root,
giving thanks to the shoulders we stand on,
Oh how light the Soul feels

We have something in common

We have something in common
Your aka is Butterfly
mine is Nubian Butterfly
The call you the path between the seas
They gave me Ontoola she who takes care of the ground, Lepolata she who feeds
I call you home for it is where I come alive
It is the ground I stand tallest
We have something in common
I am a product of you
You live deep within me
You are all of me
You are the wonder I honor today and every day
I am Panama

Your PAINTING

Watching you play
is like watching the creation of a new Dali painting
stroking gently on the canvas
your light shines in this frame
creating beauty for the eyes to see and the soul to be tapped

I want to memorize your landscape
stare at the place that creates your beautiful sounds
I want to touch you in a way that you will feel the vibration of my poetic words
Your painting in Bright
Discovering something new at every glance
Watching you play
Is the creation of a new masterpiece

For your Light

For your Struggle

For your Resiliency

For your Pride

For your Love

We Salute you today and Everyday

For you began the journey and we extend it by never bowing our heads

for we will forever elevate You

Proud Caribbean, Afro Antillano

Alaafia

Unmasking in the 21st century

my people
Mi gente
Black skin
White mask
Has you blinded
You can't see the disrespect knocking you down
Making fun of this sweet berry in any form is a disregard to the Kings and Queens
whose shoulders we stand on
It took 10 + years for Mr. Richards and others to get our patria to recognize us
How can you accept so easily without an argument the answer, we are pluricultural.
When was the last time you saw a black skin on a major poster
When was the last time a politician truly kept his promise to the black community
my people
Mi gente
Black skin
White mask
Colonialism is not old
It is new in the form of you can come in but don't stay too long.
What do we need to do to remove the mask?
The juice is sweet!
Yet in this isthmus surrounded by the Queen of grace, our song becomes,
the darker the berry the less I will see you and accept you.
Chain on hand removed so you can write your truth
Chain on feet removed so you walk free
Chain on brain still visible in your acts
To continue wearing that mask
Can you see?
I know you can't
You don't want to see how tight you hold onto that mask
Remove
Meet at the table and let's talk
Let's talk about those who refuse to speak
Comment or engage until they are behind closed
Doors
This is no, laughing matter
My skin is no joke
My people
Mi gente
Black skin
White mask
my people

Mi gente
Understand the mask that still holds us hostage
Remove the mask
And join me at the table
To speak truth to power

Surrendering to the current

I float in the knowing that I will be taken to a safe destination
surrendering to the current
to a steady relaxing flow
overcome with a sense of belonging

The gates will open wide, -
Dedicated to Maya Angleou

All will Rise,
For You have arrived.
They will gather around,
to witness your Strength and Beauty,
as You, enter your new home.

The drums will awaken the Universes Soul,
All Dancing to that Maya beat,
Singing, The Queen has arrived!

I will sit in silence,
awaiting your whisper, to gather the wisdom for my pen to meet the paper.
Thank you my Queen, for the Love, Inspiration and Grace of your, Bird Song.

Your words will reside in my heart.
Your light will shine forever.
I honor you today and Every Day.

Rest in Peace and Love, My Poetic Queen

Yvette's 'Soulbird Song'

Signs of a good day to come

A quiet essence has taken over my footsteps,
It mirrored the flow of the water.

Yvette I hear you without speaking
Words are not needed
For if you look closely
Step into my light
You can hear my heart beat
In sync with my footsteps
Bringing me closer to my true self

One door cracked the other fully open

Making peace to that line has allowed me stay on this road to bring truth to something that is nothing but the truth

One door cracked the other fully open to speak and be me without fear
I know I am a reminder of all you want to hide
While I want to walk up that hill and scream
I am black and proud
The most important door has opened
To see clearly,
To speak without fear
The door is wide open for truth

Restoring and Reminiscing,

My soul is leading me on a path of discovery,
that has me moving in a way that can only make sense to you,
The you that sees me in all her complexity, grounded in LOVE.

Spaces that expand your heart and mind

When you come in and out of spaces that expand your heart and mind,
When you are held and protected by those who walk on the road less traveled,
When you are loved in a way that tells you, you are never alone,
When you love in a way that taps your soul and makes your heart sing to its own tune,
Then you recognize the power of this line,
" I am divinely protected"
It vibrates in every part of your being
I am divinely protected
protected from the jaded energy of not believing that love shows up at my doorsteps,
everyday

Calming Blanket

The most loving, calming blanket with bright bold colors was placed on my shoulders. It carries a special melody that has me singing and dancing through everything. It smells like coconut and feels like that first rain drop on my head that cools my entire being. It covers every part of me and protects me. I see goodness in everything and everyone as I move through my day. It opens the door wide. Not sure who placed it there. I feel love I'm in love. Not sure of my time with this special blanket but I know I need to share it, that is only way I know it will come back to me so I share it with you.

My mind

My mind is catching up to what my heart has always known, In Love
It scares to lose myself in your smile
In your smell
It's intoxicating
This is what most describe as feeling high

One of my favorite words is, SOUL.

It's about movement, vibration.

The way I Love you, Kiss you, Hug you.

My loyalty to you,

Sharing your story,

Speaking your Truth.

It's about the way I celebrate you and share with you, from the Root of my Soul. Sweet!

"Words are things." Maya Angelou

If I use that word with you, to welcome you, after your name, in my smile, on my lips,
then you know you have Meaning in my Life.

I must!

I must sing loud for you
I must sing loud for us
I must!
Sing,
I Must Sing, to be Free!

Revolutionary words

You pull me in with your revolutionary words that speak directly to the heart
I wonder why now
Why bring him before me now
Is it to truly know and feel the rumblings of a true revolutionary heart
All my senses come to life as I listen
, wonder
How will his hands feel on my back?
Wake up Yvette!
You're dreaming again.
Is this a dream?
You feel real
you feel familiar
you touch me
I recognize you
Let go of the fence Yvette
you ask for this, here it is
Take it

Gypsy Soul

Searching
Reaching
Surrendering
Wanting
Peaceful
For Love is forever present
Within
Around
My Gypsy Soul

Mirroring

moving from a place of passion
seeing beyond
Wanting more for family and community
leaving self to feel full from purpose
mirroring each other we feel the pain of believing deeply
in more than
in change of mind and heart
than the change in our pocket
mirroring each other
confirms alone is not lonely
becoming a branch from the same tree
grounded in the same root
mirroring you I ask Ogun to open
the road for good things
Yemaya/Olokun to nurture you
Oshun to hug you tightly
for you inspire love, amor
Shangó to keep your hands on his beating heart
mirroring each other
vibrates through me
in a way that affirms the following
i will be here for you with you
for i see you in your true light
seeing me in this mirror that says
passion and goodness resides here

My skin is under attack

While I see it with love, protect it with love and move with love
It is Attacked by those who, insist on keeping it down and in the dark
This black, chocolate, Nubian essence was created with a light
shining within keeping us grounded in our worth as human beings
My skin is...
Strong enough to withstand the rocks that are thrown
Loving enough to forgive for we know what hate feels like
Gentle enough
My skin is under attack as I lean on the side of love and possibility
Loving what it stands for and what it stood before
Believing in the possibility that we will reach that mountain top
My skin is under attack
Yet I still Rise with goodness and hope
Since you stepped into my light
every sound feels different
every lyric speaks directly to me

Word Flow

My words flowed without my eyes being fully open
that is when they come from the heart, guided by your whispers
they are pouring out today as i lay here in the place you did with your scent still
lingering.

For you

On days like today when you feel
Close, when I am wearing you
I feel thirsty
I find myself reaching for a cold glass of water. I it cools be down for a minute
I then reach for the next best thing, a glass of orangina. It's the perfect combination. It
feels refreshing and I start to feel my body cooling down from wearing you.
Soon after I am walking in the street and this man gives me compliment. I say thank
you, he says he is a lucky man
Right then and there the sensual visual of kissing you takes over my thoughts
I feel thirsty, on the verge of dehydration
I need something to drink to kill this unbearable thirst
I go for the ultimate thirst quencher
Ginger ale
I swallow it
I'm thinking this has to do it
Why am I so thirsty?
I then come to the realization that I can keep drinking all day
Yet the only thing that can quench this kind of thirst is you
You make me feel thirsty :)

Sweet Melody

As I swim in the waters of your sweet melody
I find myself wanting to wash away all that could get in the way of me memorizing your
chorus
Building onto your song
Playing in your band
As I swim in the waters of your sweet melody
I look forward to making it to shore
Singing and dancing with you

Hands

I envy your instruments
For they are on the receiving end
Of that gentle touch that come with words
I care about you
I will touch you softly
I will caress you gently
I care about you
Your hands tell your story
A beautiful sounding story

Muse

You are a perfect muse
My pen flows naturally on paper when the words are directed at you

You are a perfect muse,
My pen flows with the ease of your hands on the strings when the words are directed at
you,
Adding that sweet melodic sound,
The search ends.

Refreshing

Your honest heart is Refreshing
I don't fault you
I admire you more
For that honest heart you move with
I await the moment that the wall that
Protects it cracks a little to
Let me in
I want to beat to the rhythm
Of your honest heart

For those who cannot See Me; I am a child of the Forest

The root is deep
The branch is strong
Standing tall
I will always find my way
Seeing beyond
For I am a child of the forest
Searching, building, speaking truth
I am a child of the forest
Dancing when love appears
I am a child of Iron,
building for those who want to see.
Violent winds awaken the call,
soothing waters nurture the warrior spirit
Ogun Ye, is my song
I answer to Ontoola,
She who takes care of the ground
I am a child of the forest
Tightly holding the pen that was handed to me
Made from a deeply seated root,
strong extended branch
I am a child of the forest
Standing tall through this storm
Answering to the call
Ogun Ye!!!
For this child will always find her way through the forest,
For she sees above and beyond your storm.

Approval

Your approval is not my concern
I move with the light of those who stand taller than you
loving me has nothing to do with you
It has everything to do with loving
what I come from
what I stand for
what I believe in
Loving me
this skin that defines
my daily experience
has nothing to do with you
who are you to me?
only the person who wants to put out this bright light
irresistible to the tapping of the feet
recognizable to the swaying of the hips
sing that song
Your approval means nothing to me

Intersection- Inspired by my Melodic Heart

Melody
Voice
Rising
Melody
Voice
Rising
Intersection
ROOTS
Melody
Voice
Rising
Melody
Voice
Rising
HEARTBEAT
Melody
Voice
Rising
Intersection
RAINBOW
Melody
Voice
Rising
Intersection
TRUTH
Melody
Voice
Rising
Intersection
PEN
Melody
Voice
Rising
Melody
Voice
Rising
Intersection
IRON
Melody
Voice

Rising
Intersection

WATER

Melody

Voice

Rising

Intersection

AMOR

LOVE

Melody

Voice

Rising

Intersection

ASHE

Melody

Voice

Rising

Intersection

LIGHT

Living, Praising, transmitting truth of the melodic journey embraced by the chorus, I am
HERE! We Shall Overcome!

Melody, Voice, Rising, Rising, Rising

Dancing

Dancing reconnects me to me
I lose my footing in hustle and bustle
unrecognizable to myself
turn up the music!
Bring me back to my center
to my melodic heart beat
remind me what moves me
Dancing reconnects me to me

Mauricia

To Mauricio A.

I was lost and then I found you
You saw me broken
Yet you believed I could put the pieces back together
You saw the light within me
That slowly revealed itself under your care
I was lost and then you found me
Your gray hair
Beaming jewelry was my visual of comfort
Today I stand praising you
For guiding me on the journey to embrace my light
Thank you
Gracias
For today I am grounded In what you taught me what you showed me
In your gentle caring embrace
I was lost and found myself
Standing in your light
Inviting your spirit
I will always find my way

Warrior Within

You bring out the soldier in me
The warrior willing to pull out the machete to open the path for you and all I walk with
Be afraid because once it is in my hand I will use with force and determination
There is no stopping the seeking of Justice for you
We will build the community that shines a bright light on our human grace
You bring out the soldier in me
Ogun Ye!

Our Human Light

We know you don't see us in our human light
We know you think we are all criminals
Yet every time you kill us in a painful horrific way
I am still in shock that you as a human being would think its ok,to treat another human
being in such a horrific way
Our spine keeps us straight
Keeps us connected
Creates to pull us together
You broke that
Tore it apart
And left him to die
Human
Black man
Do go together
We know you don't see that or feel that
If you did you would step forward
Take responsibility for
Breaking him
Tearing him apart
Human
Black man go together

Sweet Realization

I have come to the sweet realization.
I was made for you,
You were made for me,
Oh, how sweet it is!!
To sit with the knowing that we have arrived at the same place,
At the same time,
Together.
Connected,
In our truest light
No pretending
No hiding
Just being
I was made for you
You were made for me
Oh how sweet it is
This soulful life we live
Oh, how sweet it is.
4/26/15 @YMM

Driver

You are the driver on this road
Made for me to travel
Swiftly
Lightly
With force
In
Out
Swerving
Straight
You can see where we are going
You have a plan
I trust it
You are the driver on this road
Path open wide
For us to get to our final destination
I don't need to ask where that is
You are the driver on this road
When we stop
I will know
This is ok
I am suppose to be here
For you are the driver on this road

WE Matter

They are no longer whispering #2
They are Screaming
Shaking the earth below us saying in that soulful voice,
Hear my cry!
Hear my pain!
Feel my sorrow!
I prepared you for this when I told you my story,
Why am I screaming the same words today?
We matter!!
My life matters!!
You Matter!!
They are no longer whispering,
Shaking us to the core
Awakening all our senses
Pay attention!!
Do something
Say something
YOU, Yes YOU, are an extension of my voice
They are no longer whispering,
they are screaming.
STOP this Insanity
Stop killing my beautiful Black men!!
Stop chasing them down like animals
Screaming I say,
Shaking the earth till it gets back to what it should be
Flat
Even
Not horizontal
No hierarchy
No more, you are better than me
They are no longer whispering,
I feel them with my eyes open
They speak louder when my eyes are closed,
They are no longer whispering,
WAKE UP
STAND UP
FIST UP
Respond to my cry,
We matter!!!
My life Matters!!!

YOU Matter!!!
BLACK LIVES MATTER!!

What does it mean to be.....

You ask, what does it mean to be an Afro Latina?
The shift in mind and light leads to the correct opening question,
What does it mean to be a Black Woman?
This is all they see.
This is what may end their curiosity.

My

Latina card has been snatched, pulled, taken away, at times in the most aggressive way, that the internal knowing is all I am left with.

What does it mean to be an Afro Latina?

The shift in mind and light leads to the next correct question.

What does it mean to be Afro Panamanian?

Frigin' Fabulous!!! Punto y Final!

That is what wakes me up, keeps me going and leads me to sing out loud, I am Black, Proud and Panamanian!

This is a story rooted in resiliency, pride, hope and the never bowing your head down for Anyone.

So, the next time you approach me for an interview, your first question should be,

What does it mean to be Afro Panamanian?

In that moment you will come closer to knowing who this Negra Orgullosa really is.....Black Proud and Puramente Panameña.

Annex: Selection of Yvette's Poetry written in Spanish / Poemas en Español

IMPORTAMOS (WE MATTER)

Ellos no susurran más
Ellos gritan
Sacudiendo la tierra debajo de nuestros pies diciendo, con esa voz salida de sus
almas:
Escuchen mi grito
Escuchen mi dolor
Sientan mi dolor

Te preparé para esto cuando te conté mi historia
Porqué aún grito las mismas palabras hoy?
Nosotros importamos!
Mi vida importa!
Tú importas!

Ellos ya no susurran,
Sacudiéndonos hasta el tuétano
Despertando nuestros sentidos
Presten atención!
Hagan algo
Digan algo
Tú... Sí, tú que eres una extensión de mi voz

Ellos ya no susurran
Ellos están gritando
Detengan esta locura
Paren de matar a mis hermosos hombres negros!
Paren de cazarles como animales

Gritando les digo
Sacudiendo la tierra hasta que vuelva a ser lo que debe ser
Plana
Pareja
No horizontal
No jerárquica
No más eso de que eres mejor que yo

Ellos ya no susurran
Los percibo con mis ojos bien abiertos
Gritan más fuerte cuando cierro los ojos
Ellos ya no susurran

Despierten
Párense
Levanten el puño
Respondan a mi grito
Nosotros importamos!
Mi vida importa!
Tú importas!
Las vidas de los negros importan!

SABIDURÍA Y PROFUNDIDAD DEL OCÉANO (WISDOM AND DEPTH OF THE OCEAN)

Me rindo ante tí y pido tu guía,
Nado en la profundidad de tu útero,
Tus saladas aguas limpian mi alma y lavan mis penas.

Encuentro paz en tu presencia y amor en tu color.
La canción de mi madre me serena mientras floto, “sobreviviré”.

Nado en la dirección que has escogido para mí.
Adónde iré desde aquí?
Tiene sentido para mi corazón.

Rezo para que mi alma vea la conexión.
Me bañas de amor propio y sentido de comunidad,
Mientras apunto a los cielos para comenzar un nuevo día,
Alaafia....

BELLA Y NEGRA (TU FOTOGRAFÍA) / BEAUTIFUL AND BLACK (YOUR PICTURE)

Bella y Hermosa (tu foto)
Eres hermosa
Eres negra
Tu belleza me hala
Espero que hayas alcanzado tu cumbre y que estés bien
El sol cae sobre tu piel y tu esencia brilla
Mis ojos no te pueden dejar
Tu sonrisa me habla
Tu mirada me agarra
Sé que nunca te he tocado o escuchado reír pero te conozco
Reconozco tu espíritu.
Es el espíritu de Mandinga, la fuerza y resiliencia de los Congos.

Eres hermosa.
Eres negra.
Deseo presentarme:
Mi nombre es Yvette
Pero puedes decirme “Hermana”
¿Podemos hablar?
¿En qué pensabas mientras estabas parada sobre las arenas que te conectan a esta tierra bendecida?
¿Cómo te sentías al mirar las aguas
en donde nuestro ancestros arribaron en cadenas
y se liberaron gracias a su poder interior?

Eres hermosa.
Eres negra.
Eres maravillosa.
Tu pelo, tus trenzas, son la textura de un confortante endredón...
¿Puedo nadar junto a ti?
Podemos deslizarnos por las saladas aguas de Oshún y sentir su dulzura alrededor de nosotros
Yo chapoteo y te salpico, tú me salpicas y la dicha sobrepasará el dolor que has enfrentado,
El dolor cargado de la exclusión, del rechazo, de esta tierra gloriosa a la que nuestra gente dio forma con sus manos desnudas.

Pregunto: ¿dónde es esto?
Mi respuesta: en todo lugar y en cualquier lugar en Panamá
Por cuanto nuestros pies, nuestras almas han descendido sobre todas las orillas de este hermoso Istmo

Eres hermosa.

Eres negra.

Lo blanco en tu piel me recuerda la luz que aspiramos alcanzar.

Creo en ti.

Quiero que sepas que, por ese amor, por esa convicción, mi alma se alimenta mientras doy, cada mañana, mi primer paso sobre la tierra...

Eres hermosa

Eres negra

Quiero cantar contigo

Bailar contigo, jugar contigo

Eres hermosa

Eres negra

Vivo para el momento en que pisas mi luz

Tal como hiciste hoy

Hermosa y negra...

**INTERSECCIÓN- INSPIRADA POR MI CORAZÓN MELÓDICO / INTERSECTION-
INSPIRED BY MY MELODIC HEART**

Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Raíces
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Latido
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Arcoiris
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Verdad
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Bolígrafo
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Hierro
Melodía

Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Agua
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Amor
“Love”
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Ceniza
Melodía
Voz
Elevándose
Intersección
Luz
Vivir,
Alabar, transmitir la verdad de la jornada melódica
abrazada por el coro: Estoy aquí, Venceremos!
Melodía,
Voz,
Elevándose, elevándose, elevándose...

Negra y Orgullosa

Negra y Orgullosa
no tiene nada que ver contigo
aquí me pusieron para alzar la voz de mis ancestros
no necesito tu permiso
esta piel no necesita esperar para que tu lo aceptes
yo lo acepto
lo quiero con todo el alma
Negra y Orgullosa
es un sentimiento que nunca podrás entender
sin caminar los pasos de mi gente Bella

Negra y Orgullosa

Siempre presente!

Mi poema a Colon

Yo soy Colonense y traigo SALSA,(canten)

La Salsa de Panama
donde los Congos cantan y viven la gloria en las aguas de Playa Langosta
El Cristo negro, El Nazareno,
bendice la tierra y marchamos a el con todas nuestras suplicas.

Yo soy Colonense y traigo SALSA,

La riqueza de Panama está en nuestras manos,
pero Panama nos da la espalda.
PUEBLO pongamos nuestras demandas al frente.
El deber es nuestro para recoger las calles de Bolivar y regresar a los
tiempos de la Tacita de Oro

Yo soy Colonense y traigo SALSA,

Nuestros ancestros construyeron una de las maravillas del Mundo el Canal de Panama
con deber y orgullo

Yo soy Colonense y traigo SALSA,

Yo vengo de un Colon de respeto, de familia, hola Tio, Hola tia,
dándole la mano a los viejos de la comunidad.

Yo soy Colonense y traigo SALSA,

La C3, la tierra de los Negros que luchan para un Mejor Panama,
Las comunidades Hindu, Griegas y Chinas, que viven esta gloria con nosotros.

Yo soy Colonense y traigo SALSA,

Hoy, me rindo a ustedes, un Colon UNIDO
hacia un mejor FUTURO.
afropana

Me levanté con los tambores

Me levanté con los tambores
Ese ritmo natural de mi Corazón
Que me conecta a lo mío
Lo tuyo, lo nuestro
Me levanté con los tambores
Los tambores de mis ancestros
Que me llenan de vida
Para tomar un paso
Movimiento
Al ritmo de sus tambores
Me levanté con los tambores
Estoy Viva

Me levante con las ganas

Me levante con las ganas de tenerte cerca
De tocarte
Acariciarte
Besarte
Me levanté con las ganas de tenerte cerca
De tener mi pecho tocando el tuyo
Sintiendo el calor que nos une
Me levanté con las ganas de oír tu voz
De sentir tus manos en mi espalda
Con la misma caricia que tocas tu tambor
Creando una canción
Al abrir mis ojos a un nuevo día
Me levanté con las ganas de decirte
Buenos días Amor

Viviendo/ Living

Viviendo
Living
En el momento
Sin miedo
Mirando con los ojos y el corazón abierto
Recibiendo
Lo Rico
Lo Bello del Universo
Viviendo
Living
En el momento
Sin miedo
Te veo en esa luz que te guía
Tocando
Bailando
Tabaco, café y miel para ti
Viviendo
Living
La vida que ellos me regalaron
Para esta Negra Gitana
Viva la Negritud!
Viviendo
Living
Hoy
Presenté
Viviendo
Living
La vida con mucho Sabor!

Yvette Modestin's Biography



Yvette Modestin, a writer, poet and activist was born and raised in Colon, Panama. She is Founder/Executive Director of Encuentro Diaspora Afro in Boston, MA.

Ms. Modestin is the Diaspora Coordinator of the Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y de la Diaspora a national and international network of Afro descendent women.

She is a member of the IBW Board- Institute of the Black World. Ms. Modestin is a member of the National African American Reparations Commission.

She is one of the contributors to the newly released book, The Trayvon Martin in US: An American Tragedy.

She is the host of the radio show, Soulful Afro with Yvette on African Radio Online.

Ms. Modestin has been profiled by the Boston Globe as "The Uniter" for her work in bringing the Latin American and African American community together and for her activism in building a voice for the Afro Latino Community.

Ms. Modestin was named in the For Harriet list of "30 Afro Latinas You should Know.'

She is one of the editors and writers of the book, "Women Warriors of the Afro Latina Diaspora".

She is a contributor in the book The Psychological Health of Women Of Color; Intersections, Challenges and Opportunities.

She is one of the featured poets in the book, "Rapsodia Antillana." This book is the first of its kind to highlight Afro Antillean poets of Panama.

She is featured poet in the, "Antología de Poesía Colonense," which is an Anthology of poets from her hometown of Colon from 1900-2012.

In 2013 she received the 'Lider Afrodescendiente' Award from Fundación Bayano in Panama.

In 2014 she was recognized by the US Panamanian Association Inc. as a Panamanian Leader in the US.

She has been included, with her fellow Colonense descendant poet Gabriel Cortés, in the Annex section of the book "Novísimos, nuevas voces poéticas colonenses", as a guest poet from the Panamanian Diaspora in the USA (with four featured poems, translated from English to Spanish by Luis Wong-Vega, Ph.D.). This book is to be published by Editorial la Antigua, in early 2016.

Ms. Modestin writes a blog about the events and experiences in the community called Reflections.

As an artist, a licensed mental health clinician, wellness facilitator and Yoruba spiritual practitioner, Ms. Modestin speaks to uplifting the African story within Latin America and the Caribbean and the acknowledgement of the historical pain of people of African descent and the awareness of the connection that would lead to the healing of our communities.

Her email address is lapolitica@msn.com



Encuentro Diaspora Afro

Código de Barras

