

Did They...?

Part 1

When they saw you
What did they do?
Did they open their loving arms to you
Embracing every bit of your essence
Marinating in your spirit
As if the absorption would
Save their very lives
Welcoming you home
To the sweet bosom of familial love

Sweet like cinnamon sticky buns
Fresh out of the hearth
In the still sleepy parts of morning...

Sweet like ripe red California
Seedless grapes
Recently picked off the vines...

Sweet like the soft skin of
A newborn baby
Newly bathed and powdered
Just before falling into a
Peaceful slumber...

Sweet like the anticipated
First kiss of untrained lover's
Stealing away for a moment of play...

Did they ask of your whereabouts
Concerned for your safety and well being
Rejoicing at your accomplishments
Proud like they were the initiators

Did they...?

When they saw you
What did they see?
Did they see themselves
As though gazing through a looking glass
Mirror images of your shared ancestry

Did they see golden sunsets
Of Mother Africa in your eyes
As you met each gaze one on one

Did they see burnished copper
And priceless jewels
In the undertones of your skin

Did they see great Kings and Queens
Of our native land
Their blood flowing like the Nile
Through your veins
In the firm but proud
Set of your jaw
As you faced them head on

And did they see a shared struggle
Of a people in Diaspora
Being enslaved and denied
Basic rights yet still
Knowing enough to go within
To search out self-worth
And dignity
Shown in every stride
Of your powerful gait

Did they see someone
Who knows what it's like
To have more month than money
Yet still finding a way to press on
Despite it

Did they look at you
And call you Sister?

Did they...?

Part 2

When they saw me
Their first instincts
Were to put up a guard
All around themselves
To protect them from my friendly advances

Friendly like a homeroom teacher
Introducing a new student
When she transferred in the class
Midway through the semester...
Friendly like seagulls
At the beach

Knowing you hold their
Next meal in your knapsack...

Friendly like a child
Sharing his sandwich with a buddy
Whose lunch was stolen
By a neighborhood bully...

But they shunned me as though
Something other than my friendship
Was infectious

When they saw me
I heard the rise of whispers
Going up all around me

It sounded like a hive off honeybees
Attacking their prey
And I was it
But I could only make out
Snippets of what was being said

The way my ears were ringing,
I knew they were talking about me

I felt their evil eyes upon my fair skin
Burning holes in my flesh
As I tried to shrink out of sight
Even though I didn't want to

I came offering peace and friendship
But no one wanted it
How did this happen?
How did I end up defending an honor
I didn't even know I had

I saw their razor sharp eyes upon my hair
Slashing away at my silken
Flowing tresses, their mouths
Telling me to put my hair up
Saying that it offended them

But I didn't understand why
I had spent so much time on it
Brushing it until it shone
I felt so much prettier
When I let it flow freely

They saw the fear
Standing at attention
In my half Asian eyes
Not even sunglasses
Could hide it
And they smiled when they saw it

They did not acknowledge that
We shared the same ancestry
Choosing to forget that one drop made it so
But I knew

No one looked at me
And called me Sister...

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