

Damaged, But We Still Love You

When you gave us to them
For mirrors and beads and pieces of silver
You killed us both
Because we were always
Stronger together than apart
Some of you kept the
Generational wealth you earned
As slavers
Of different tribes
And to this day, you still
Make excuses
You smile and laugh
And you cannot understand
Why we do not laugh with you
You tell us to call you
Mama, Papa, Sister, Brother
But Mama, Papa, Sister, Brother
Would not do such things
Would not say such things
You call us guests
You call us tourists
And visitors and foreign
You call us strangers, even as you
Reach your hand into our pockets
We tell you what happened to us
After they took us
After they took everything from us
After they held guns and whips and knives
At our throats and dared us to
Speak our African language
Practice our African culture
Worship our African gods
Use our African names
Remember our African traditions
Remember our African ways
They promised a real death
Not just the living death of
A brainwashed zombie who
Performs for the master's delight
And delivers children for the master
To sell and build wealth for the master

The daily torture of the enslaved
The trauma and mental stress of
Constant hatred with no escape
The raped, abused, traumatized, tortured
Ones who managed to survive
And maintain some semblance of sanity
You look into their eyes
As they tell you their story
Of what happened after they took
Everything, including children
People that we loved and adored
People who made the living
Bearable
After they took everything we
Loved and believed in
You look, and you say
It's not so bad
You look, and you say
That was a long time ago
You look, and you say
You complain too much
You look, and you say
Work harder
Stop expecting
Stop talking
That language
We do not want to hear
Your words
Unless and until
You speak the way
That we will hear you
Speak our African language
Practice our African culture
Worship our African gods
Use our African names
Remember our African traditions
Remember our African ways
And forget
The four hundred years
It took you to develop a
New culture, tradition, history, religion
In order to survive
We tell you what happened to us yesterday
What happens to us today

What will happen to us tomorrow
The torture that remains
A part of our life every day
And still and still and still
You smile and laugh and say
Forget, forget all of that
Forget every last bit of that
Once more a brainwashing
Relinquish your identity once more
The four hundred years of your
Culture that you developed has
No place among us here
We do not accept the mutation
That you have now become
That they made you
Fix yourselves
Or else
Remain a stranger
In a strange land
A guest
A tourist
A visitor
A foreigner
An aberration
All we want from you
Is the wealth that you used
To relinquish to your master
That, we will accept
That and only that can belong to us
And then you may leave
The same way you came
As strangers