

AFRICANA

BY

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An AFRICAN WOMAN enters. Her face is painted black. She holds a black book in one hand -- a black paintbrush and paint can in the other. She puts down the paint, opens the book, turns the page and --

AFRICAN WOMAN

Slavery was his name. His soul inky as midnight, hard as coal. His voice soft like the petal of a deep blue orchid. He whispered to the unknown parts of her. She felt as if her very breath belonged to him. Chains, choking her at every word. Her feet trudged through the dirt, caked in blood, wound after wound. He told her she could not enter certain doors. They were not meant for her. He told her she was not quite as beautiful as the others. She was not meant for them. He told her, her lips were too big, hair was too wild, skin was too bronzed. As he spoke, her life was written on crisp, ivory pages. And there her story was formed. A single book at first. Then another. And another. Slowly she became...

(then)

A shelf of pain. Coated in thick black paint. Burdened by books that tore her open. Her thoughts were well worn pages. Smudged, crumpled, touched by history she could not control. A history that struck like chords of thunder upon the chambers of her bleeding heart.

THEN, the African Woman puts down the book and sits on the floor. She picks up the paintbrush, dips the brush in the paint can and paints her hands, her neck, and her arms. Satisfied. She stops, picks up the book beside her and rises. She turns the page and--

AFRICAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

(taking a breath)

He was with her always. She grew up. Tamed her hair, bit her lips, Stayed away from the sun.

(MORE)

AFRICAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

But still. He lingered. Haunted.
 Clung. She escaped him through her
 tears. Like rain, the hurt wet her
 face. She drank in the cool drops.
 She could stand in it until the end
 of time. There she was free to
 feel. And oh, how she felt. Fuck
 him, she thought. She knew who she
 was. In her deepest depths, there
 was still an ember that lingered.
 Alone, she held herself. Rubbed her
 fingers around her rib cage.
 Believing that big, wine colored
 wings were once there. Ah, freedom.
 But then, the he would return. She
 tried to hide. To fight. But he
 screamed and shouted. Reminding her
 mahogany would never be ivory. So,
 she tried to please him. Follow him
 to the bottom of the sea.

(then)

And there he left her to die.

She puts the book down. Sits. Dips the paintbrush in the
 paint can and begins to paint her legs and finally her feet.
 Satisfied, she picks up the book again. She rises. Turns the
 page and --

AFRICAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

(takes a breath)

Alone in the blue, she breathed it
 in. Soaked in the silence.
 She held onto the tiny ember
 inside. And danced with her
 thoughts. They danced back.
 As the music played, she found
 herself in... Ghana. Egypt. Kenya.
 Senegal. Libya. Sudan. Nigeria.
 Mozambique. Colors strewn upon her
 body, gleaming like gold. Seeping
 into every pore. Detail. Texture.
 Wind. Sea. Desert. She was home.
 And he no longer possessed her. Her
 teeth ivory. Her skin black. Her
 soul light. Africana, she was.

The African Woman drops the book and strides off stage.

THE END.