

## My Can by Claudette Joy Spence July 2020

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Bags packed  
Not ready to go  
Yet go I must  
Based on a mother's trust.

Bags packed  
With anger  
And no dreams  
With tears unshed,

For the life to live in the land of my mother's dreams  
Leaving father relatives friends school mates  
Netball team members without much of a farewell  
To mourn my departure  
To hope for a best future.

A child of two who loved each other  
For whom they had dreams unspoken together  
Within the child's hearing  
Go you must for America is waiting.

Jamaica the land of my birth my identity  
Often heard the ridicule  
In the popular culture  
Of Africa and going back to Africa,  
Your ancestral lineage shows  
Africa, Europe, India, China, Syria  
How can we be Africans?  
We are Jamaicans.

Clinging it to my breast in my new home  
Made me belong, brought me solace with tears on my heart  
Among a people displaced  
And often not accepted.

"It's because you are Black"  
He told me

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“They always give money gifts  
For co-workers who have catastrophes.”

Days later

“It’s because you are Black”  
He told me  
“That your money gift is so  
Much smaller than what they give to their White co-workers.”

How do you know when they are shading you?  
Because of the color of your skin  
How do you know when they are shading you?  
Because you show up Black African.

But  
I am not African I am Jamaican  
I am not Black I am Jamaican  
I am not African American I am Jamaican  
The protective call; I don’t want to be one of them, I am Jamaican.

Shading because of the perceived Black African of you  
Their eyes are on the physical  
They don’t see you Jamaican  
Others see you Jamaican and resent you too.

Respected and respectable Africans  
At home and abroad who travelled and studied  
And lived truth in USA as Black American  
Lit a path to my identity was it - Jamaican or African?

With new eyes to see shading in the system  
With a few privileges bestowed on me  
I was easily drawn to work to shift di shading for me and my people dem;  
Years of work brought changes a Band-Aid can offer  
Now our younger people take the baton to shift to deeper prosper.

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Foreigner – never in the land our Creator  
Jamaican limited to place of birth and early teachings  
American limited to tenets of materialistic preachings  
African reclaiming my ancestral origin  
African American claiming my identity  
With all Black people of Africa and too of those born in the Americas.

I am African American in the physical  
With the joys, pains, bewilderment and at times privileges of been seen as Black  
I am Love I am Peace I am Joy in the spiritual,  
Beyond the critical  
Where a Light shines my path so  
Without regret I won't look back  
Limitless. ---END---