

DRUMS OF MY FATHERS

By E. Roy Cayetano

To Ami, Vira and Isani - Eternally United by Blood and the Drums

Drums of my Fathers
Rumbling in my bones -
Organ music.

Drums of my Fathers
Beating in my mind -
Jukebox blaring

Drums of my Fathers
Capturing my soul -
Sing a hymn to Mary.

Words of my Fathers
Tumbling from my mouth -
Speak the Queen's English

Drums of my Fathers
of my grandfathers
of my ancestors

Drumming in my psyche
Drums of my Fathers
Drum! Beat!
Beat on! Drum on!

And on!
My Garifuna frame and
My Carib -

bean bones tingle
Keeping time with the
Reverberating sounds
of the hallowed trunk
of the hallowed trunk

Whose roots reach deep in -
to the hills
and the vales
and the streams
and the soul

Of Africa -
Reach in -
to the banks
and the water
and the heart
and the mind

Of the Amazon
Of the Orinoco.
My hybrid body shakes and
sways and
rocks and
communicates

With the blur

of wrinkled hands
of hardened hands
With wrists still sore and scarred
after manacles
and cuffs
and chains
gunpowder and bullets
and cross -
shaped swords
That traversed the Atlantic
Calling at West African stations
And palm-island studs
of the golden Antilles.
And like the antelope skin
That captured the clatter and the thunder
of the hoof beat
of the herd
in the African plains
And the rumble and the thunder
of the jungles
and the falls
of the Amazon
I, stretched and taut,
Have taken the beating
and the pounding;
But my spirit
and my voice
Will not be quieted
Will not be muffled; for
I AM the hollowed
hallowed
haloed trunk
and the hills and the vales
and the streams and the soul
OF AFRICA
and the banks and the waters
and the heart and the mind
OF THE AMAZON AND THE ORINOCO
and the wrinkled calloused hands
dragged across the Atlantic
and dumped on the golden
studs and shores
OF THE CARIB -
BEING WATERS.
Yet, you must know,
I was here before all that,
I was here before -
before
the paler faces came;
And organ music
Jukebox blaring
Hymns sung to Mary

and the queen's English
shall not quiet the
Drums of my Fathers
Rumbling in my bones,
Drums of my Fathers
Capturing my mind,
Drums of my Fathers
Recapturing my soul, or the
Words of my Fathers
Tumbling from my mouth.
Drums of my Fathers
of my Grandfathers
of my Ancestors
Drumming in my psyche
Souls of my Fathers
Drum! Beat!
Beat On! Drum On!
AND ON!!!