

*Christian A. Campbell*



## Curry Powder

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Panday in power now, somebody cries.  
They think they better than people,  
My Trini cousins say, And they like  
Wear Fila shoes. My brother and I  
Laugh and add, they is smell strong  
Like curry powder. Is true, we insist.

Coolies and niggers fighting these days  
But great-grandmummy Nita did not fight  
When she found herself facing the West  
Instead, touching the Negro face of a Bajan,  
Manny. She did not wear saris no more.  
Calypso she liked and could wind down  
With the best of them. She became deaf  
To the ethereal melody of Krishna's flute.  
She chose Manny, not Lord Rama in her  
Hindu epic gone wrong. At her wedding  
She never once uttered Ganesh's name  
And she loosed the grasp of Vishnu's  
Four hands from 'round her waist.  
So her sister's disowned her in the holy  
Name of Mother India. But she made  
Douglababies anyway and did not give  
Then the sacred names of gods: Brahma,  
Shiva, Gauri. She named Granddaddy  
Leon, a good English name, like all the other  
Rootless Negroes. And so Trinidad became herself.

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You know how people go, it took many deaths  
And many births for the Mullchansinghs to talk  
To the Brathwaites again and, finally, Mummy  
And her siblings were born looking Indian enough.  
But Panday in power now and mummy warned  
Me to say Indian and not coolie. One of my cousins  
Told me, with grown up intuition, You know,  
In Trinidad you not black, you dougla.

Panday in power now and my cousins still cuss  
About neighbors with their flags of many colors  
Claiming their yard for as many gods as there are  
Colors. After enough cussing, we all go to eating  
Pelau with roti and curry, and so, with our fingers  
Stained yellow like old documents,  
We, too, stink of curry powder.

