Together

Indian, Ai, Indian, where are you?
Where are you hiding, Indian?
Once you were
Here, but you're gone now
Where here—once
Gone?

You were surprised by cannons
Trampled upon by leather boots, you were
Left bathing in blood, open wounds
You were enslaved
Red slaves, you were

Indian, Ai, Indian, where are you now?
Where have you gone to?
Going, going, gone!

Go! Leave from here! Be gone!—they ordered.
Behind your head, curve your bodies
Bow your backs, carry the loads—the command.
You willed it not, you refused
Agile bodies, poised
Attuned to hunting and fishing
Succumbed, burst and turned to dust
Dust ... Indian
Indian ... dust ... dust ... gone

Africans replaced the pulverized Indian bodies
African bodies cut loose from their umbilical cords
Snatched away from tribal societies with Zumbi and Nanzi
Flung on the coasts of Caribbean islands.
Calabash

Ai, African, African
Where are you?
Are you still with us? –Gone?
Going, going, gone!

Replacing, you did, pulverized bodies
Indians: suffered, broken, died –dust
You carried the rocks that had crushed Indian pride

You handled the sharp flints that had cut Indian imagination
To pieces, you transformed the shapeless
Stones to huge colonial houses, dug
The wells while infernal heat hit home
Wells of wealth for slave
Owners, graves for the African bodies turned skeletons.

Ai, African, African –Where are you?
Are you still with us? – Going, going, gone!

You toiled and moiled to serve the slave
Owner, that abused you, your kids, your wives
Laboured, ploughed, snowing heaven
On earth for the slave
Owner, creating hell for you to live in and die
At the dead of night, holding your breath, you,
Mournful yet relieved, would find the trees bent against
And brood over the tambú of your being
Brooding, brooding

Cut off, chopped off, uprooted
Indians were, Africans were
Ripped, unearthed, torn away
From their soil, sucked away from their waters
Their sun blocked out

You bled, blood, bleeding
You were, night and day, bloodshed, blood
Gushing, spouting
Soiling Indian skins
Soiling African skins
The skins of slaves and the slaves they bore.
Calabash

African ... Indian
Indian ... African
Where are you? Where have you gone to?
Going, going, gone!

Blood, sweat, tears of Indians, of Africans
Mixed, mingled with European sperm, muddled
Blended as colours do
And created Antillean man
Caribbean Antillean man and woman.

Rise! Raise your heads!
Do not stare at these bloody navel strings of yours
Bind them up, tie them together
Blood will congeal, heal
It will.

Look! Curaçao, there you are!
We welcome you, Bonaire!
Saint Martin, am I glad to see you!
Oh my, you too, Saba!
You made it! Statia!
Come join us, Aruba! Do!

We’re on the road. We are
The Antilles are
The Caribbean islands are, have
The same past
The same history
The same oppression
The same struggle
We have
The same hope and future
Haven’t we?

We have; Antilles
Caribbean come closer
Join us, Embrace
Together
Finally.