

*Gibi Bacilio*

TRANSLATED BY AART G. BROEK



## Together

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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  
Labourled, 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.

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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.

