

## **‘Black Black Black’ by Oluwatofunmilayo Akingbade**

I am black. But I am first African.

I grew up in Africa,  
Nigeria to be particular.  
Where the honk of cars and the chatter of hawkers  
can be heard even from afar.  
Where the smell of suya and meat-pies  
is always round the corner  
right next to the children begging  
to live on more than their naira.

Her beauty has been plagued  
by corruption, crime and ignorance  
but beautiful she remains  
Her hair; kinky, short but extravagant.  
They call her  
scam, old fashioned, illiterate  
but from her womb,  
intelligence proliferates.

I am black. But I am also woman.  
So I work twice as hard  
to prove I belong.  
I straighten my hair  
to look professional,  
but still they look at me  
and see sub-human.

Slim, round, tall, short.  
We come in all shapes and sizes  
From hair-stylists to surgeons  
We have ambitions to do more for society.  
Yet they tell us to dream smaller,  
to have no power,  
to stay silent  
but we only protest louder.

I am black.  
My first language is English  
yet they look at me like I’m alien.  
I’m no ET  
Rather, I’m born again  
I live in faith for I am saved by Him.

My culture, you claimed  
My history, you hid.  
I write from pain no more,  
but from peace in my truth.

I am more than the colour of my skin.  
I am African, Woman, Christian and I'll sing it  
My worth is not in your words,  
But in my excellence.