

Stories and poems by

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Memories of Sun

STORIES OF
AFRICA AND AMERICA

EDITED BY JANE KURTZ

an african american

BY MERI NANA-AMA DANQUAH

i wanna tell you a story
of washington, dc
of atlanta, georgia
of addis abbaba
of tangier, soweto and lagos

i wanna shed some light
on the dark continent
i wanna tell you a story
of me

i stand before you
dark and proud
asante princess
african queen
born and bred
on black soil
in a black nation
they call ghana

Memories of Sun

i spoke the language
of my ancestors
i ate the food
planted by our mothers' hand
i danced the drumbeats
of our animist gods

an asante princess
an african queen
who crossed the middle passage
arrived in america
speaking very little english
with thick lips
and thick accent

unable to pronounce my name
people called me
the foreigner
the african girl
i went to school
with your daughters and sons

your cousins and friends
mimicked their speech
dressed their style
seemingly became one of them

i wove my blackness
my africanness
chameleon-like
into the red, the white and the blue
which is the fabric of this nation
wanting desperately to belong

when i sleep
i snore with the lions and tigers
in the safari land
i snore with the sounds
of the noontime traffic on georgia avenue
in the district of columbia
when i dream
the voices of jomo kenyatta, patrice lumumba
and dr. martin luther king, jr.

Memories of Sun

 speak to me in unison
 when i cry
 rain falls on the sahara
 and the potomac river overflows
 i sway to alpha blondy
 as easily as i do stevie wonder

 open your ears
 my children
 and listen to this griot
 talk of history
 being made
 i wanna tell you this story
 of my life

 the blood which flows
 through the left side of my body
 is the mississippi river
 every day i wake it croons
 “lift every voice and sing”
 the anthem of the american negro

the blood which flows
through the right side of my body
is the Nile river
every day i rise it screams out loud
“Africa, oh Africa, cry freedom
for all your children”

don't think me confused
because i don't know
where home is anymore
i just know
that the veins
in the body from the right and the left
flow to the heart
and become one love

if i die on African soil
bury me in jeans and sneakers
let my tombstone read in English
“Native Washingtonian”
and sing an old Negro spiritual for me please

Memories of Sun

if i die on american soil
pour libation on the ground
lay a flag of red, green and gold
with a black star
on my coffin
let the talking drums spread the news
let the words on my tombstone
be multi-lingual and let them scream
asante princess
african queen

let no one question my origin
let me live and die in peace
as who i am
because you see
I have broken all barriers
of love and unity
i am
in the truest sense of the word
an african american