KA'CI WOMAN OF THE ARAWAK AND THE KARINABU/CARIB HER SOUND/ING

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KA'CI WOMAN OF THE ARAWAK AND THE KARINABU/CARIB HER SOUND/ÌNG

Abstract
then the island dreamt in my blood tina the river swam in my eyes the soft green hills the blue world of sky and bara'wa
then the island dreamt in my blood
  tina the river swam in my eyes

the soft green hills
the blue world of sky and bara’wa

then this...
ka’ci in a wild dance
no’num flirting
in our skies

wa’ cu wak u’kua ku’rapia’u
waya’maka me’cu crayfish woodpigeon singing bird
iguana cat make small make still
dangerous voyages

the way of the world
before such shame we hide our faces
peek between fingers our bodies go their own way

flourish of clouds
moon comes
  licks at the sun
  who stands
  stunned

who flares out
  hopeful

there is the held breath
there is the heart racing
indecipherable

behind our faces
  the clicks and cries

i admit

this un(ac)countable fraying
the way of flesh
i would undo nothing

in the patch of field
grass sighs
huts
forest
broken cries of children
kati the moon woman
bites

earth trembles
biriha-ali richa
lightning rears up
darkness covers

kuwi yes! fish hook

a slow blood

hya’mohya–ali

and yes so cold

trees bend sweep at my heart’s
air branches claw in my chest
i cling to the house post
i am
uati
uati
there is not

skipping down the mountains
spurt and dr dr dr
ip ip op

a white rain
greasing the leaves the rocks
the beaten earth
wind children dogs
the sudden men stamping the sun into life
with rattles with chac-chacs
with flutes
i join the ululation of women
with wielding
knife and our own blood
we paste & patch the world
flesh of one newly born
our own skin

the crack sealed
the world steadied

deer knelt to our men/manicou fell to the dogs/from teasing bowers a surf of cries laughter/fish leapt at nets/the lean brown bodies of sons stretched towards always refusing the woman's tongue/meanwhile our daughters bloomed/the dry-season poui dreamt in our shoulders/in seams and folds of our body oil corn water wood/honey poured from combs abandoned to stepped branches/once crabs in procession to pots/once a child sang to us from the womb and laughed/a roundedness/an expansion of bright fruits/our circle dances fluted and leapt from dusk to dawn/birds sparkled in the greenish blue air/the kiskadee and golden-headed manakin nested together swooped on high excited wings with the ochre-bellied fly-catcher/the greenlet popped out of the parula/blackbirds tipped their yellow hoods to the singing semp/the soft fresh airs the sweet water

/O the joy/the joy/the joy

first hunger fled then thirst we did as we must we waited singing our stories surprising the fringes of self

ing the joy/the joy/the joy

three moons later

winged sails

from the east

sibilant bearded men

butterflies of death

laughing we gathered fruit

we greeted them welcome

hammers

skulls

sudden

season

savage

iron flame

sickness

out of

gestures

mocking

i:atina suru makuiti i am a mother without a coffin

i do what mothers do

tu-ki ma-ku-ra'-ue tu-ki ma-ku-ra'-ue

they make war O lazy one they make war O lazy one
bin-ha-ri ta-nu-ru man-ne-re im-u
unwilling thou to flee thou my son
ka-ima bi-ci-ka-ni ka-iwa-ku
Come, take the lead Come, wake up
ka-ima bi-ci-ka-ni ka-iwa-ku (sung slowly sadly)
Come, take the lead Come wake up
and so to coarse cloth to blindfold now here
and choking i he-re-tic
i mur-de-er
before their god
their black robes
their flames flirting with my hair
what i did not expect the sweet of silence

i kariphu'ne carib woman
glimpse her
i ka'buru the mixed blood
tongueless
finally
i me'kuru the negro wiri
now
smooth black rich-tongued
i aim what i am
i spread like best butter olive oil
cocoa fat i seep through smooth i aim
to please like corn coconut palm
always available in a lighter version

nunikua
i self
through the deep woods
ara'bsen
of time
nunikua
i myself
iwai'yu hurru
tempest
i aim i
naku my eye naricae my ear
nuracue my belly nu'ruku
my genitalia i aim myself i
tumble through centuries
iatina i am i self
light as air here home
flesh of my flesh ma' brika!
which is to say welcome

....eh eh! it have more in here? but whoso she tink she is?
....SH! m Ari! you're very welcome, of course?
....Penelope, is not me, m Ari, you shushuing! somebody appoint you chief greeter?

and so many shades!
are you well?

....we don't answer that question i am Marie Lancet, Miz Lancet they call me, and you'll find the space you planned. Welcome, i've got to get back to the child. She know nothing bout caring for child.

I am the Caribbean
I Ka'ci

my body my breath
my sons too their fathers
priests gods woven into you
I bring with me the island
its songs and graces
the unbroken thread of all its knowing
the breath before there was breath

....Ka'ci? is why that vine round our wrist?
....Rie girl, i ent see you so long! i thought you gone.
....m Ari, i here to stay, best fix to get along wit me, yes!
....Ka'tsi? have i got that right? stay as long as you like.
....I Ka'ci am not rude or savage am not simple else I would tell you that you are.

Author's Note:
Vocabulary Lists, notes on language and the Arawak song used in the text were kindly sent to me by Ms Anne Lewis, Chief Librarian, National Documentation Centre, Roseau, Dominica, West Indies. My thanks and gratitude.

Words not immediately translated in the text of the poem are:
Ka'ci - the moon; bara'wa - blue water; no'num - the sun