

## IRON SHACKLES

Africa, land of deserts and green jungles!  
In you began our wanderings;  
from you came the beat of the drum,  
that sound which echoes in our hearts.  
Your people were uprooted  
from your villages and your jungles;  
the white man had arrived,  
driven by the wicked glint of gold.  
Soon was heard the dragging of iron  
and the frightened flight of birds.  
Blood and tears stained  
the story of 'civilised' man.

The boats with their human cargo  
crossed the blue of the wide ocean,  
leaving behind a trail of death,  
maltreatment, violation and abduction.  
The slaves had lost everything;  
all except their dreams and their songs.  
Their song could be heard in the fields,  
sweat with the taste of sugar cane.  
Their hands bled gathering the white cotton  
of the plantation;  
but Negro spirituals were born  
with the sound and clear rhythm of the drum.

Their pilgrimage found compassion  
in the human mind and heart;  
new doors were opened,  
the birds were scared to fly no longer.  
The African sound began to make itself heard  
during 'apartheid' and in white Alabama.  
How marvellous to see, in the White House,  
a black American president!  
How shameful that slavery still exists  
in the concrete jungles!  
What barbaric 'civilised' society allows  
the practice of an activity so inhumane?

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