

# TAINO

BRIDGET HERRERA

Father  
Chieftain  
Headdress of fronds  
Whose plantain trees reign over the island  
Beneath the green canopy  
Hammocks sway  
While bitter palm fruit kisses  
Native face  
Budding heart beats on tip of shoot  
Red flower weeps with bended neck  
As I see caravels  
One  
Two  
Three  
Sail close to shore while children sleep

Mother  
Warrior  
Golden Flower  
Feathered crown beseechs sky  
Yuca tubers nestle below her feet  
Beware  
Cassava sap  
A deep torpor breeds

Enclave  
Ghosts  
Defiler of sand  
Silver finger points to stay

Pearly teeth brazen pale face  
While nature's children fade away

“Aji Aya Bombe!”  
“Better Dead than a Slave”  
Drink venom milk to set souls free  
Mother  
Father  
Climb up tree  
Dangled fruit  
Heads tilt to sea  
To sway again  
While paradise bleeds

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