



# POETRY ABOUT WINDRUSH

## COME WHAT MAY WE'RE HERE 2 STAY, KHADIJAH IBRAHIIM

We crossed in honour to defend the mother country,  
with cocoa, rum and sugar in we skin,  
and the milk and honey England never bring.

We kept on moving, the elder heads  
marching in exodus against  
race, immigration and deportation laws.

Free thinkers composed slogans for pickets:  
*Come what may we're here to stay -  
Without us there is no Britain! Live and let live!*

My grandad said we endured this pain too long.  
Was it God we were waiting for? – his words  
like the hooping of a sermon into song.

Amazing *how sweet the sound*  
of his dark-skin pride  
of *better must come*.

The decades of cold under we feet,  
our children's children barn hyah, we as equal as de next.  
*"So give us our money... so we can pay the rent" –*

Old chants routed across time.  
Even Churchill recalled how we swelled the pot of Capital,  
how the West Indies made the Empire rich and strong.

In the aftermath of Hitler's bombs, in a post-war boom  
of more jobs than workers, we crossed the ocean  
loaded with skills, recrafted and rebuilt dreams.

*In a strange land, we made the grass grow green again.  
But man to man is so unjust and still tangle we blood  
in slave-trade wind. In treating man less than fly,  
to tell the reason why it's so, into history we must go...*



## **GENERATIONS DREAMING I, BY DOROTHEA SMARTT**

Journeywoman. Journeyman.  
You were a generation dreaming;  
journeywoman, journeyman,  
stepping off the plane  
to an unknown future  
from a certain past that  
became more and more like  
the promise that escaped you.  
You were a generation  
dreaming to change the pattern,  
undo the seams, re-style  
the suits you wore  
as you stepped off the boat,  
Windrush-style.

Frederic: this not so young man  
had struggled as a juvenile,  
thirties-style, to unionize,  
enfranchise. A troublesome man,  
proud to be a darkblack  
worker, survivor. You  
split the seams to suit your schemes.

Linda: journeywoman. Journeywoman,  
you were a generation dreaming.  
Coming from a certain past,  
coming to an unknown future,  
coming to bear us and  
spare us from the masterpattern,  
styled, cut, ready-to-wear suit  
of canes, molasses  
thick-set in the heat. Burning  
good white sugar,  
raising a glass of rum  
in the sunset of the master  
as you sailed away;  
meeting this mancountry,  
face-to-face with dreams.  
Journeywoman, journeyman,  
you were a generation,  
dreaming a world, to change.



## **GRANNY'S LOVE POEMS, MALIKA BOOKER**

Imagine her different, a fairy-tale granny  
cooking fudge for brown cinnamon girls like me.  
Her pale sugar eyes twinkle.

Imagine a Guyanese bush woman  
boiling root teas to punch out my fever,  
her tough palms gentling my brow,  
her smile stretching me,  
this child, this budding sun flower.

The truth is not a love poem.  
How can I talk about my granny?  
Red skin, pretty yet brutal,  
her aftertaste a bitter root.