

I Refuse to be called a BLACK woman

They came with their pale white skins,
Having books and twisted grins,
sketching borders on my brown-skinned temple
Naming us not as who we are but as them against sin.

They drew maps on our bodies like unexplored lands,
tied our tongues with foreign languages,
dressed us in shame stitched by european hands
and called it Salvation, as if we'd asked.

They shouted, "Black woman" with a venomous tongue
A label, a box, unnamed.
But I, I am not their slave, not their rung
On the ladder of power, not where pain is flung.

I am not Black as written in their history, not a
Shadow cast by colonial rule.
I am the storm, wind, fire, and air
I carry African nations in this spine.

For black is not what I am, but what Francois made.
A word draped in chains, and the transatlantic trade.
I am more than the scars they have drew,
I am unbought, and unafraid.

So no, I refuse to be called Black,
If it means being silent,
and shrinking to fit, in a continent they stole

Then painted me into it.

I am the colonizers nightmare,
The raging fire of my foremothers
Roaring beneath stolen skies.

So, call me by my soul,
Not the labels you trade, I am Ibongwe,
The oppressor's nightmare.

Ibongwe. Y. Mnguni