

Say My Name

Meleika Gesa-Fatafehi

My name was my name before
 I walked among the living
 before I could breathe
 before I had lungs to fill
before my great grandmother passed
 and everyone was left to grieve

My name was birthed from a dream
 A whisper from gods to a king
 A shout into the stars that produced
 another that shone as bright
They held me without being burnt, humming lullabies in
pidgin

My name was passed down from my
 ancestors
They acknowledged my roots grew in two
 places
So, they ripped my name from the ocean
 and mixed it into the bloodlines of my totems

My name has survived the destruction of worlds
and the genocidal rebirthing of so-called ones
It's escaped the overwhelmed jaw of the death bringer
 Many a time
It has survived the conflicts that resulted in my gods,
 from both lands, knowing me as kin,
but noticing that I am painfully unrecognisable and lost
They are incapable of understanding
 the foreign tongue that was forced on me

My name has escaped cyclones and their daughters
It has been blessed by the dead
As they mixed dirt, salt and liquid red,
 into my flesh
My name is the definition of resilience
It is a warrior that manifested because of warriors

So, excuse me as I roll my eyes or sigh as you
mispronounce my name
 over and over again
Or when you give me another
 that dishonours my mother and father
That doesn't acknowledge my lineage to my island home
or the scents of rainforest and ocean foam
You will not stand here on stolen land
 and whitewash my name
For it is two words intertwined
 holding as much power as a hurricane
Say it right or don't say it at all
For I am Meleika
 I will answer when you call

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