

## ***Everywoman, in Black and White***©

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*Dedicated to Terri Houston, Vicki Gardine Williams, and Maxine Waters*

*Written in 1993*

White sisters, you starve yourselves to death.  
You want to be but a wisp. You have no voice.  
Your mothers raised you on fairy tales of passive beauty  
Rescued by a stranger prince. They had no choice.

White sisters, you hide your extra pounds in dark,  
Idolize Twiggy's skin and bones, and Jackie's not much more,  
Whose little-girl voice concealed her soul. You wither on  
*Your* vine, and called *us* "slaves"?

Wake up, woman! Listen to my mother! Kidnapped,  
Raped, abandoned—but never quite destroyed.  
Never enslaved in spirit. She carries herself with dignity.  
Her name is Strong.

Her beauty is born of the African sun, her strength  
of struggles she survived. And she has pride.  
Her pounds are hers, and if they come, she wears them proud  
With color and adorned.

Her mother taught her how to rear her young and work  
And keep her soul. She had no choice.  
She taught her to try harder, be better, endure more,  
To pray and listen to the inner voice.

She has roots to the center of the universe  
And a spirit that will not fade, nor hide.  
Her presence, like the pyramids, assumes its place  
On earth with awesome pride.

Find her, white girl. She can be your teacher, if you will,  
Nourish you, encourage you.  
Listen to her strong almighty voice. And take your rightful place  
As Sisters under the Sun.