

J a h a Zainabu



The lines? Rhymes? Rhapsody? For some. For others it's the rhythm, the message, the spirit. Whichever, you are spellbound. Jaha Zainabu is a spoken word, literary and visual artist from Long Beach, CA. She has performed across the nation a variety of stages. She produced her one woman show called JOURNEY, which is also the title of her first of two cds, the second is called UNMASKED. Jaha was a cast member of The Vagina Monologues. She also starred in a theatre production at The Getty Museum. She toured with The Underground Poets Railroad, a documentary to benefit the families of the firefighters who dies as a result of the 911 tragedy. These, of course, are only a few of her accomplishments. Whether the crowd consists of five thousand or five she uses her gift of telling a story well to educate, enlighten and entertain. Ms. Zainabu is also a motivational speaker in middle schools, high schools and colleges. FINDING YOUR IT is the name of one of her workshops where she expresses the truth that we all have a special gift within that we can use to benefit ourselves and the world in which we reside. In addition to her two cds, Jaha also has a collection of her written poetry entitled THE SCIENCE OF CHOCOLATE MILK MAKING.

this poem is not about revolution
or malcolm or tupac or h rap brown
or revenge
not about racism or cuba
not even about assata
but about a mother who rides the blue line at six
is a nurse who loves her son even still
and held him in a light only she and God can seem to see
he was sixteen and licorice black
with a handsome smile and perfect teeth
just like his daddy
he was shot and killed by another mans and womans boy
and this heavy on her neck
somehow not being enough
today she goes about her days
remembering that on the eve of her only childs services
while his body wait alone and cold beyond a comforters cure
his murderer captured only by karma maybe
unclothed his body and
spray painted his casket in red letters and old english font
now tattooed on the chest of her memory
flexed until her forever ends and why
this poem is about the courage it takes to somehow remember
that he always kissed her goodnight
ate greens with ketchup
loved fish with his grits

this is not about rodney king or daryl gates
natasha harlins or stacey koon
not even about soon ja du
this poem has nothing to do with watts 1965
not really but kinda
in a way it is about a brave little girl out in montebello who was beautiful and four
who sat in her room and counted dos, tres, quarto, cinco
loudly under all of her pillows
while her father repeatedly stabbed her mother and then left
and she somehow tearlessly embraced her mothers bleeding dying body
patted her hand, rocked and said

james te queden hacer
Dios te va hacer bonita
(no one will hurt you
God will make you pretty)

there are many stories
and if by chance they should all be told one day
there will be many more even after that
this isnt about la revolution mexicana
I already told you that
only the revolution that occurs in the souls of us who still love the spirits
of those of whom we cannot see
we see these heroes on the bus, on the train, in the next cubicle, at the light
honoring the memory of those faces that may never flash across the evening news
and those faces that do

I pray that when I have passed away
I would have created grand memories enough
to sustain my loved ones will
I pray that in the break of morning clear
they will breathe without having to be reminded
accepting finally
that there is an inevitable death that just comes with living
though religions and philosophies do best they can at explanation
they will not ever have power enough to prevent
having lived life time over and again
I have found laughter to be truest friend
for therein lies
at evils demise
God within us all
this poem
if indeed it is a poem at all
is about dancing on hurt feet

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