



## Who I Be

Who I be?            Who you be?  
Who we be?        We be I, Singular I  
Now the essence of Los Africanos and that of Los Indios run within me  
So when you call me Spanish, all of my  
purity seems to vanish  
cause that is not Who I be  
So don't refer to me  
With words that blur the trueness to my identity  
Defining me by a colonizer's language  
Disregarding my family lineage and my ancestral heritage  
Now I be the rhythm of the conga  
Played to an internal Bomba  
Extending from Nigeria from a culture called Yoruba  
I be the misplaced Coqui  
Snatched away from my existence tree  
Identified to have died but somehow have survived  
I be the sugar cane and coffee  
Of a land which was once cultivated to grow plenty  
I be Earth, Wind, Fire and Water  
In no particular order – rolled into one  
And I be Guasabara – Attack Boricua Attack!  
Still dodging the dog and ducking the gun  
And I be Earth music, protest music like Hip Hop y Plena  
in syncopation with the Sun  
So don't mis-define me  
Insult me ... disrespect me  
Intentionally or unintentionally  
Reshaping my nationality  
Raping the humanity within me  
Romanticizing a brutal history  
Confusing our offspring  
Cutting off their wings  
So they can't fly high and rely on their own  
introspection  
To make those natural connections  
Now the essence of Los Africanos and that of Los Indios run within me  
So when you call me Spanish all of my purity seems to vanish  
cause that is not who I be.

*By Ray Ramirez*