

I Know We Can!!!, Solid As A Rock (Dura Como Una Piedra), My Last Will and Testament

by

Avotcja

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Poet/Playwright/Multi-Percussionist/Photographer/Teacher

Avotcja has been published in English & Spanish in the USA, Mexico & Europe, and in more Anthologies than she remembers. She's also a popular DeeJay at both KPOO in San Francisco & KPFA in Berkeley, California and has been at both stations for more than 40 years. She is an award-winning poet and multi-instrumentalist who has opened for Betty Carter in New York City, Peru's Susana Baca at San Francisco's Encuentro Popular & Cuba's Gema y Pável, played with Raasaan Roland Kirk, Bobi & Luis Cespedes, John Handy, Sonido Afro-Latina, Dimensions Dance Theater, Black Poets With Attitudes, Bombarengue, Nikki Giovanni, Los Angeles' Build An Ark, Dwight Trible, Diamano Coura West African Dance Co., Terry Garthwaite, Big Black, The Bay Area Blues Society & Caribbean Etc. Shared stages with Sonia Sanchez, Piri Thomas, Janice Mirikitani, Diane DiPrima, Michael Franti, Jayne Cortez, & with Jose Montoya's Royal Chicano Air Force & is a Bay Area icon with her award winning group Avotcja & Modúpue. Avotcja was the opening act for the legendary Poet Pat Parker the last three years of her life. She both composed & performed the film score for the Danish documentary MuNu. Her Poetry &/or music has been recorded by Piri Thomas, Famadou Don Moye (of The Art Ensemble Of Chicago), Bobby Matos Latin Jazz Ensemble, & performed by The Purple Moon Dance Project, and was the 1st Poetry performed by New York's Dance Mobile. She's appeared at The Lorraine Hansberry Theater in S. F., The Asian-American Jazz Festival in Chicago, The San Jose Jazz Festival, and Oakland's Malcolm X Jazz Festival as well as The Asian-American Jazz Festival in San Francisco. She's been featured 5 times at Afro-Solo, twice at San Francisco's Carnival, The Scottish Rite Temple & Yoshi's in Oakland, Jose Castellar's play "Man From San Juan", Club Le Montmartre in Copenhagen Denmark, Stanford University, at San Francisco's Brava Theater For The Arts with Cine Accion, New York's Henry Street Settlement Theater, Vantile Whitfield's Studio One Theater in Los Angeles, and The Women On The Way Festival in San Francisco. Avotcja is a popular Bay Area DJ & Radio Personality, and the founder/Director of "The Clean Scene Theater Project (AKA) Proyecto Teatral De La Escena Sobria". She continues to teach Creative Writing, Storytelling & Drama in Public Schools & thanks to the California Arts Council she was also an Artist in Residence at the Milestones Project & the Penal System. Avotcja is a proud & active member of DAMO (Disability Advocates Of Minorities Organization), PEN Oakland, California Poets In The Schools, and the International Women's Writing Guild.

I KNOW WE CAN!!!

We have been here before
We've sang in the face of the Klan
And danced with feet all bloody
On the decks of Slave Ships
On the "Longest Walk"
On Freedom Marches, in Jail cells
And Concentration Camps
Oooops Ghettos
That we were forced to call home
We know this place
The Concrete Jungles, the Reservations
A curse of & by the uncivilized
Who have forgotten
The healing beauty of Grass & Trees
And the gift of clean Water to drink
And have lost their ability to love
We are familiar with
The senseless mayhem of perpetual War
The addictive lust for power
The intoxication of blood lust
And those who prefer
The inhumane sacrifice of their Souls
As they try to steal ours
Yes
We have been here before
We know the Hanging Tree, the rope
The rape of our bodies, our Cultures
The theft of our Songs & our Children
We have swam through the slime of misogyny
We've been here... we know
Racism, greed & stupidity have no conscious
And it is only a matter of time
Before the insatiable self-destruct
Before they devour each other
We've been through it all before
And we can get through it all again
We just have to be careful
Very careful...
The madness of this Narcotic is contagious
We must not get drunk on the stench of this poison
We have too much work to do
We must turn this suicidal Drug

Into fertilizer & let our tears
Fall down on deserts, glaciers & jungles
And run down the faces of
Good hearted people everywhere
I cry & I cry & my tears come like a Waterfall
An unending Waterfall for all the victims of
“Civilization”
We have been here before & together we can heal!
I know we can!!!

SOLID AS A ROCK

(SOMETHING FOR MARGARET WALKER & ROQUE DALTON)

I am a rock
Eternal ... old as dirt
I sing with the spirit of mountains
And the Moon?
Old girl's just another one of my many God-daughters
I am a rock
The Mother of iron & diamonds
Me & only me!
I'm the one that put the beauty in all your precious jewelry
And my Son?
He's always been the kind of pest you can't get rid of
Boy's hot as a volcano
I am a rock
Me? ... I'm the true royalty!
Sensuous intelligence & passionately sensitive
Mother Nature's number one agitator
I am the regal foundation of existence
The indispensable gritty mortar that lives in the mouth of every Poet
I feel as comfortable
In the flash of gaudy mansions
As I am in the dirt hidden beneath the fingernails of the poor
Look for me & you'll find me
I'm that same rock
That welcome little pebble
That caresses the feet of festive dancers
And at times I'm a worrisome pain down in your shoe
I can be that small familiar restive mound in the park
And at the same time
Be swimming in the forgotten blood at the bottom of the sea
I am a story waiting to be told
And where there's smoke there's always fire
So open your mind & help them to remember me
Help take the wrapping off these Poems & memories
Remember me well
I am the rock
Respect me for what I lived for & we will grow
Forget me & like the rain in the sky
You're gonna fall!

DURA COMO UNA PIEDRA

(ALGO PÁ ROQUE DALTON Y MARGARET WALKER)

Yo soy una piedra
Vieja como la tierra eterna
Canto con el espíritu de las montañas
¿La luna anciana?
Nada mas que otra de mis Ahijadas incontables
Yo soy una piedra
Madre de acero y diamantes
¡Yo! ¡Solamente yo!
Yo doy la luz a la joya preciosa
¿Y mi Hijo? ¡Inmóvil molesto!
Este Chacho es un volcán caluroso
Una piedra soy yo
¿Yo? ... ¡La realeza de verdad!
Inteligencia sensual con pasión sensitiva
La primera agitadora de la naturaleza
Yo soy el fundamento real de la existencia
El adobe indispensable en la boca de cada Poeta
Vivo igual
En salones de palacios vistosos
Y en la mugre escondida debajo de las uñas de la pobreza
Búscame
Soy la misma piedra
Una piedrecilla bienvenida
Una caricia de pié de bailadores alegres
A veces un dolorcito atormentando en el zapato
Un tranquilo montecillo en el parque y
A la vez nadando en la sangre olvidada al fondo del mar
Yo soy un cuento esperando un narrador
Y donde hubo fuego hay cenizas
Por éso, recuérdame
Abre la mente y ayúdame
Ayuda este desenvolvimiento de poemas y memorias
Y recuérdame bien
La piedra soy yo
Respétame y creceremos
Olvídame y como la lluvia en el cielo
Te vas a caer

MY LAST WILL & TESTAMENT MUSIC IS MY NAME

Sweet freedom,
I have walked hand in hand with your melody
Across hilltops I've run with the wind
I've sung the sounds that the first snows bring
Under trees that danced with no fear of hungry axes
I've traded songs with a friendly lizard
Even he could hear me
I've made love in grass
With the B-Flat that holds the universe together
When the leaves sway, it's just me moving somewhere
And when the wind blows
It's only me whistling the Blues
And when I die
Just bury me with an Eighth Note so I won't be lonely
Cover my body with Sheet Music
And I will caress it even in death
Don't cry at my Funeral ... serenade me on my way
Stick your hands in the paint of melody & color me Music
Make the unmistakable flavor of my Spirit
Another poetic spice on the path to forever
Let it all begin again right here
Sing to me, party with me, dance for me & Mambo me
Passionately into that always present sphere
Consciously conjure me musically
Make sure those other folks can't conveniently forget me
Make sure that "they" remember the Word/Song that is me
The Blue harmonic gift of existence is my legacy
Hold tight to the wild Gospel Spirit of Jazz in me
Make sure "they" know
That I've always been the kind that won't be quiet
An uncontrollable sassy vibration, a song that sings forever
I'm an in your face melody that will never be gone
The truth of
The Cubop that holds the heart of reality together is me

Been here long before the beginning began
I came
Holding down the rhythm of wordplay where ever we are
Always as close to you as the nearest Song
A rejuvenating lyrical presence written all inside your DNA
And I promise to never let you forget
I'm like the Bomba, a fire in your soul that's here to stay
Music is my name!