

## JACQUI ISPENCER

### I Am the Light

In darkness we find ourselves  
In light we breathe  
The suffocation of oppression  
The alienation of devotion  
To a cause that does not reward  
Yet we remain

It is the remnants of historical traumas  
That sustains and drains our bodies  
Black bodies  
We live in the margins of history  
Always waiting for our turn  
Turning...spinning we fight  
For survival  
For voice  
For entry

#### **I am the light**

How do we live with those that by skinship  
Forget kinship?  
Masking our pain of betrayal we carry the weight  
Too heavy for our minds and physical selves  
It is torture  
Terrorizing intellectually, physically and  
emotionally

Traumas unseen but felt  
Felt so deep we cannot see the impact  
On our minds  
On each other  
Spirits broken and bruised  
Lives tattered and torn  
We exist

Nomads from ancestral lands  
We search  
Attempting to find ourselves  
Looking from the outside within  
We do not draw strength  
Our weary bones tired  
Exhausted from the constant need to be seen  
To be heard  
To be understood  
To be free

#### **I am the light**

Always questioning  
We are seekers of truth  
Our tongues punishable by the skin we are in  
Our hue bemoaning representations of fear  
Otherness

We accept our fate  
Fruitless and endless  
We fight  
Systems created for destruction  
Melanated kings and queens

Our crowns tarnished and forgotten  
Hearts yearning for something  
And gaining nothing  
Heavy are our hearts  
Our spirits wanting to be heard  
But trapped

#### **I am the light**

Liberation from bondage  
Institutionally  
Hierarchically  
Ancestrally  
Intersectionally  
From behind black bars  
We are shackled to nightmarish and embedded  
prisms

Untangling the Black identity  
Challenging the ties that bind  
We gain power  
We gain strength  
We are the vision  
Visions of the future  
Past

And present

#### **I am the light**

I am the keeper of secrets  
The mirror of injustice  
The eyes of a people  
I am the shadows in the night  
The fears of continued fight  
The tears shed out of sight

#### **I am the light**

Tormented with anguish unending  
Cheated of manifestations of glory  
Angry and unworthy yet...

#### **I am the light**

Never to be undone  
Refusing to be tossed away  
Rising as the ancestral spiritual flames  
I am resilient  
I am unyielding  
I will out run  
I will outlast  
I will BE  
Because...

#### **I am the light**

*Jacqui Spencer is an advocate for the betterment of the lives of the marginalized. A mother, and Social Justice Education doctoral student at OISE/UT, her focus is empowering Black women through her work and lived experiences.*