

to network with other women from the Caribbean when I am not sure who these women are because we have all been fragmented in the woman's community.

I have always felt that I was alone in my identity crisis. Talking to other Caribbean women, I have found that I am not alone. Dialogue with other women who are of my heritage makes me feel whole. Our distinctiveness needs to be recognized. My community is with all Caribbean women which includes all possible racial combinations. Within this large grouping of "Caribbean women" I can further identify with other fragments of my identity. I am of Indian descent, I am a Suni Muslim, and I am from Trinidad & Tobago.

Living in a white society, I hunger for Caribbean presence. For now focusing on Caribbean heritage is a place to begin a support network and to feel a sense of "oneness." It is the only way I can survive in a society in which white supremacy pervades.

Diversity is a synonym for the Caribbean. It is a great assumption to think that a woman from Martinique and a woman from St. Lucia automatically have a connection. In a Caribbean woman's caucus we could break up into many different fragments and we will most probably need to do that.

It is extremely frustrating when I attend feminist meetings or conferences and caucuses have already been defined for women of colour. I may be able to fit into more than one caucus in relation to cultural identity. If a South Asian woman's caucus is formed, I can relate at some level with these women. But how do I explain to them about soca, reggae, the sweet taste of salt fish, pelau, and doubles? Lumping women of colour together—and sometimes women of colour and First Nations women—into one room to talk about the movement and to support each other around the issue of racism is problematic. It is the responsibility of white women to ask women of colour in your organizations or women of colour attending your conferences and meetings what their needs are. Providing an allotted space and label is not good enough. Take direction from us and you will have a stronger movement, a movement that I, as a political woman of colour, may want to associate with.

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NATHALIE STEPHENS

de passage

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ma langue s'est
émiettée un jour
dans la paume d'une femme
qui demandait de quoi
manger

elle titubait dans l'entrebâillement
entre le devenir et l'être
sa main tendue au gré
des rafales de
vent
qu'elle avalait
en silences
de ses lèvres écartées

• •
j'habite les nids précaires
des oiseaux migrateurs
disait-elle
à l'aube de leur envol

elle n'a trouvé comme
réponses
que des regards glacés
prenant chacun leur
place sur les trottoirs
passagers

• • •
elle a dessiné
de ses doigts
dans l'air qui l'entourait
une fenêtre ouverte
ainsi qu'une porte
pour nous inviter

et les regards glacés
en réponse muette
ont construit à
leur tour des murs
pour l'en empêcher

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