

Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I A Woman?"
Speech given in 1851 at the Women's Rights Convention in
Akron, Ohio. Song interpretation by Anne Feeney, *Original
Recordings*. Anne Feeney (2004).

That man over there say
 a woman needs to be helped into carriages
and lifted over ditches
 and to have the best place everywhere.
Nobody ever helped me into carriages
 or over mud puddles
 or gives me a best place. . .
And ain't I a woman?
 Look at me
Look at my arm!
 I have plowed and planted
and gathered into barns
 and no man could head me. . .
And ain't I a woman?
 I could work as much
and eat as much as a man--
 when I could get to it--
and bear the lash as well
 and ain't I a woman?
I have born 13 children
 and seen most all sold into slavery
and when I cried out a mother's grief
 none but Jesus heard me. . .
and ain't I a woman?
 that little man in black there say
a woman can't have as much rights as a man
 cause Christ wasn't a woman
Where did your Christ come from?
 From God and a woman!
Man had nothing to do with him!
 If the first woman God ever made
was strong enough to turn the world
 upside down, all alone
together women ought to be able to turn it
 rightside up again.

Nina Simone. "Four Women." *Four Women:
The Complete Nina Simone on Philips*. Verve
(2003).

My skin is black
My arms are long
My hair is wooly
My back is strong
Strong enough to take the pain
Inflicted again and again
What do they call me?
My name is Aunt Sarah
My name is Aunt Sarah

My skin is yellow
My hair is long
Between two worlds
I do belong
My father was rich and white
He forced my mother late one night
What do they call me?
My name is Siffronia
My name is Siffronia

My skin is tan
My hair is fine
My hips invite you
My mouth like wine
Whose little girl am ?
Anyone who has money to buy
What do they call me?
My name is Sweet Thing
My name is Sweet Thing

My skin is brown
And my manner is tough
I'll kill the first mother I see
My life has been rough
I'm awfully bitter these days
'Cause my parents were slaves
What do they call me?
My
Name
Is
Peaches

Ursula Rucker. "For Women." *Ma'at Mama*. !K7 Records (2006).

My skin is brown
My hair is platinum blonde, today
Burgundy tomorrow
My nails is long
I know no sorrow, cause
Ain't nothing i care to know, but...
Where my check so i can get my tix for the jay-z show and
I do aspire to be a video-ho do
And i know
Pop-eye got shot last night
But
That's how it go
In da ghetto
In da ghetto
What do they call me?
Read the tattoo on the left breast
My name is...lexxus
Yeah girl
My name is...lexxus
Get it right
.

My skin was young, so young
It burned and tore
My hair was pressed and curled
And tied with ribbons that sunday morn
September 15, 1963
I screamed
In the basement of the church, i screamed
The last day i would ever see
Ma and pa would never know the woman
i would grow up to be
I was an involuntary offering for humanity
Why did they hate me?
Why dey hate me, so, so, sooo
What did they call me?
Four little girls
Four little girls
.

My skin is tough
This woman
This
Lunch and home, mistake and love maker
Double shift worker
Sometimes warrior, sometimes weak
This wife
This single soldier
God-given, god fearing, god doubting
This, bearer of wisdom and fruit and pain
This... Once girl...sometimes still
Saint, sinner, teacher, multi-tasker, friend,
This everyday wonder
This...woman
This...nation-builder
This...raiser of leaders, of losers, of babies, of
Boys who will become men
Girls who will become women
This...woman
Some call me mama
Hey mama
Hey mama
Hey mama
.
My eyes are a rainbow
I reflect the spectrum
I have seen much
My heart weighs heavy
Even with joy i feel so much
My hair is electric
I am ablaze, i am the source
I can feed you or starve you
Breathe life into you or bleed you
I can fuck you or love you
I don't care how they call me
I know who i is
Call me...
Crazy, divine, ma'at, true honeybun, supreme
Pontifica, electric lady, holy prostitute
I don't care what you call me
I know who i is
I know who i is
I know who i is
I know who i is
I is...
Mammy, mulatto, welfare mom
Matriarch, mid-wife
I is

Talib Kweli & Hi-Tek: *Reflection Eternal (Train of Thought)* "For Women." Rawkus (2001).

Talib Kweli] (Spoken)

Yea, so we got this tune called "For Women" right
Originally, it was by Nina Simone
She said it was inspired by, you know
Down south.
In the south, they used to call her Mother Antie
She said No Mrs.
Just Antie
She said if anybody ever called her Antie
she'd burn the whole goddamn place down
I'm over past that
Coming into the new millenium,
we can't forget our elders

[Talib Kweli]

I got off the 2 train in Brooklyn on my way to a session
Said let me help this woman up the stairs
before I get to steppin'
We got in a conversation she said she a 107
Just her presence was a blessing
and her essence was a lesson
She had her head wrapped
And long dreads that peeked out the back
Like antenna to help her get a sense of where she was at
Imagine that
Livin' a century, the strenght of her memories
Felt like an angel had been sent to me
She lived from nigger to colored to negro to black
To afro then african-american and right back to nigger
You figure she'd be bitter in the twilight
But she alright, cuz she done sseen the circle of life yo
Her skin was black like it was packed with melanin
Back in the days of slaves she packin'
like Harriet Tubman
Her arms are long and she moves like song
Feet with corns, hand with callouses
But her heart is warm and her hair is wooly
And it attract a lot of energy even negative
She gotta dead that the head wrap is her remedy
Her back is strong and she far from a vagabond
This is the back of the masters' whip used to crack upon
Strong enough to take all the pain, that's been
Inflicted again and again and again and again and
flipped it
to the love for her children nothing else matters
What do they call her? They call her aunt Sara.

*Woman singing in the background
[Talib Kweli] (+ Background Vocals)*

I know a girl with a name as beautiful as the rain
Her face is the same but she suffers
an unusual pain
Seems she only deals with losers
who be usin' them games
Chasin' the real brothers away like she
confused in the brain
She tried to get it where she fit in
on that American Dream mission paid tuition
For the receipt to find out
her history was missing and started flippin
Seeing the world through very different eyes
People askin' her what she'll do when it comes
time to chose sides
Yo, her skin is yellow, it's like her face is blond
word is bond
And her hair is long and straight just like
sleeping beauty
See, she truly feels
Like she belong in 2 worlds
And that she can't relate to other girls
Her father was rich and white
still livin' with his wife
But he forced himself on her mother
late one night
They call it rape that's right
and now she take flight
Through life with hate and spite inside her mind
That keep her up
to the break of light a lot of times
(I gotta find myself) (3X)
She had to remind herself
They called her Safronia the unwanted seed
Blood still blue in her vein and
still red when she bleeds
(Don't, don't, don't hurt me again) (8X)

[Talib Kweli] (+ Background Vocals)

Teenage lovers sit on the stoops up in Harlem
Holdin' hands under the Apollo marquis
dreamin of stardom
Since they was born
the streets is watchin' and schemin'
And now it got them generations facin' diseases
That don't kill you they just got problems
and complications that get you first

Yo, it's getting worse,
 when children hide the fact that they pregnant
 Cuz they scared of giving birth
 How will I feed this baby?
 How will I survive, how will this baby shine?
 Daddy dead from crack in '85,
 mommy dead from AIDS in '89
 At 14 the baby hit the same streets
 they became her master
 The children of the enslaved, they grow a little faster
 They bodies become adult
 While they keepin' the thoughts of a child her arrival
 Into womanhood was heemed up by her survival
 Now she 25, barely grown out her own
 Doin' whatever it takes strippin',
 workin' out on the block
 Up on the phone, talkin' about
 (my skin is tan like the front of your hand)
 (And my hair...)
 (Well my hair's alright whatever way I want to fix it,
 it's alright it's fine)
 (But my hips,
 these sweet hips of mine invite you daddy)
 (And when I fix my lips my mouth is like wine)
 (Take a sip don't be shy, tonight I wanna be your lady)
 (I ain't too good for your Mercedes,
 but first you got to pay me)
 (You better quit with all the question, sugar
 who's little girl am I)
 (Why I'm yours if you got enough money to buy)
 (You better stop with the compliments
 we running out of time,)
 (You wanna talk whatever we could do
 that it's your dime)
 (From Harlem's from where I came,
 don't worry about my name,)
 (Up on one-two-five they call me sweet thang)

Scratches + Woman singing in the background
[Talib Kweli] (+ Background Vocals)

A daughter come up in Georgia, ripe and ready
 to plant seeds,
 Left the plantation when she saw a sign
 Even thought she can't read
 It came from God and when life get hard
 She always speak to him,

She'd rather kill her babies
 than let the master get to 'em,
 She on the run up north
 to get across that Mason-Dixon
 In church she learned
 how to be patient and keep wishin',
 The promise of eternal life after death
 for those that God bless
 She swears the next baby she'll have
 will breathe a free breath
 And get milk from a free breast,
 And love being alive,
 Otherwise they'll have to give up being
 themselves to survive,
 Being maids, cleaning ladies, maybe teachers or
 college graduates, nurses, housewives,
 prostitutes, and drug addicts
 Some will grow to be old women, some will die
 before they born,
 They'll be mothers, and lovers who inspire and
 make songs,
 (But me, my skin is brown
 and my manner is tough,)
 (Like the love I give my babies when the
 rainbow's enuff,)
 (I'll kill the first muthafucka that mess with me,
 I never bluff)
 (I ain't got time to lie,
 my life has been much too rough,)
 (Still running with barefeet,
 I ain't got nothin' but my soul,)
 (Freedom is the ultimate goal,
 life and death is small on the whole,
 in many ways)
 (I'm awfully bitter these days
 'cuz the only parents God gave me, they were
 slaves,)
 (And it crippled me,
 I got the destiny of a casualty,)
 (But I live through my babies
 and I change my reality)
 (Maybe one day I'll ride
 back to Georgia on a train,)
 (Folks 'round there call me Peaches,
 I guess that's my name.)