

“Child of the Americas”
by Aurora Levins Morales

I am a child of the Americas,
a light-skinned mestiza of the Caribbean,
a child of many diaspora, born into this continent at a crossroads.
I am a U.S. Puerto Rican Jew,
a product of the ghettos of a New York I have never known.
An immigrant and the daughter and granddaughter of immigrants.
I speak English with passion: it’s the tongue of my consciousness,
a flashing knife blade of crystal, my tool, my craft.

I am Caribeña, island grown. Spanish is in my flesh,
Ripples from my tongue, lodge in my hips:
the language of garlic and mangoes,
the singing of poetry, the flying gestures of my hands.
I am of Latinoamerica, rooted in the history of my continent:
I speak from that body.

I am not African.
Africa is in me, but I cannot return.
I am not taína.
Taíno is in me, but there is no way back.
I am not European.
Europe lives in me, but I have no home there.

I am new. History made me. My first language was spanglish.
I was born at the crossroads

and I am whole.

(1986)

Child of the Americas

I am a child of the Americas,

A **(skin color)** of the **(region of your home)**,
a child of many diasporas, born into **(birth continent)** at a crossroads.

I am a **(national, ethnic, religious identity)**,
a product of the **(kind of neighborhood)** of a New York I have never known.
An immigrant and the **(gendered offspring)** and **(gendered offspring)** of immigrants.
I speak English with passion: it's the tongue of my consciousness,
a **(specific creative object)**, my tool, my craft.

I am **(birthplace)**, **(type of land)** grown. **(Native language)** is in my flesh,
Ripples from my tongue, lodged in my hips:
the language of **(savory food)** and **(sweet food)**,
the singing of poetry, the **(specific kind of bodily gestures you use to communicate)**.
I am of **(region)**, rooted in the history of my continent:
I speak from that body.

I am not **(continental origin)**.

(continental origin) is in me, but I cannot return.

I am not **(kind of people)**.

(kind of people) is in me, but there is no way back.

I am not **(another continental origin)**. **(Continent)** lives in me, but I have no home there.

I am new. History made me. My first language was **(mixture of different languages)**.

I was born at the crossroads

and I am whole.