**What I learned**

What’s a community

Not always common,

Not always unity

What’s a researcher?

Ask a few questions

In perpetuity

Equations learned

Wasn’t new

But came through to me

White with A

Beats Black MA

Became true to be

What’s a community

Not always common,

Not always unity

What’s fair?

Ask a few questions

Hit with rules unseen

Equations learned

Wasn’t new

But combined them with me

Educated or Black

Am I not both like you?

Challenges unforeseen

What’s a community

Not always common,

Not always unity

Broken with educated peers

Bonds me to genetic nears

Brings me back where denied before

Equations learned

Wasn’t new

But combined them with me

Brains left behind where I came?

Said the educator Bishop in town east

Couldn’t learn what I know already

Assumed knowledge stated

Time in UK to be

Equalled smarts unseen

What’s a researcher?

Ask a few questions

Linking others to me!

Lessons learned

Words are old

But the book is new

What is fair?

Is it your rules

Or the hand of Providence?

Assumed knowledge stated

Time in UK to be

Equalled smarts unseen

What’s a researcher?

Rigged games caused to fail

But Peter brings my rise!

Lessons learned

Words are old

But the book is new

My hand is mine

Not controlled, not denied

World quality my court of appeal!

Assumed knowledge stated

Time in UK to be

Equalled smarts unseen

Are you angry?

My words not to be denied

In your court, I can’t be tried

Lessons learned

Words are old

But the book is new

Researching prowess

Implicit in words prior

Listened words are mine as well

Their words mine

My words theirs

Together we tell our story

Their words frustrated

In tune, but separated

Gifted griot from the inside and out

Griots know, but do know

Art is lost

But needs to be known

I know with them, they with me

But children denied to be

Buying into denial they can’t see

Their words mine

My words theirs

Together we tell our story

What’s this to do with research?

My tune, their words

With my inside out flair

Griots know, but do know

Art is lost

But needs to be known

I failed in school

But succeeded in education

Peter got it right again!

Their words mine

My words theirs

Together we tell our story

My prior denial like theirs

Higher hurdles, but uncared

Except for us to tell the story

Griots know, but do know

Art is lost

But needs to be known

Churchill’s schools of control

My education to let go

Of still indirect hegemony

Oh Churchill and co.

Of words

Still echo

Education is not school

School dictates for many

But education for the *‘chosen’* few

Think of grammars

And of selection

Of Black children still being marked down

My thoughts

With their prose

Decades bridged, but Coard’s words still ring true

Oh Coard, and of others

Of equality

Human balance of scales

Schools out of school needed

Countered shaded rules for us to be defeated

History shared, but these lessons unheeded

Oh I’m a researcher

But are my words to be heeded

Or lessons to be cheated

Is there fear from my findings?

Does equality scare many?

Not all, but how little has changed!

Oh plenty has changed now

2011

v. 1970

E R endings change to an A

Bought into boxes of this day

Me and interviewed dovetailed echoed dismay

How have I changed from denied teacher,

To a researcher reaching and searching?

Whilst Bishoped and Browned out of schools

Black equals over criticalism

Foreign equals unsaid criticism

I learned, but Peter’s rule helped in time

Oh I must not too much jest,

Researcher’s privilege of digress

Indirect, but in the name of progress

Mind is rarely linear

Moments brilliant, however circular

Moved forward in ways unexpected

Oh I must progress

My audience must expect

Why I’ve changed, as research progressed?

Long history of some triumph

Combined with some long history of thwarts

Equality then and now doesn’t exist!

Oh I must not too much jest,

Researcher’s privilege of digress

Indirect, but in the name of progress

50 or 14 thousand Professors Black

And less than 1 percent of Headteachers

Where to go from here?

Oh I must progress

As this audience expects

Why I’ve changed, as research progressed?

Voices missed because have left

Ceilings low, or well deft

Avoided new and old colour filter?

Oh I must not too much jest,

Researcher’s privilege of digress

Indirect, but in the name of progress

Are there British Black lecturers in history?

Or are there any black VCs?

Because of such will I be perceived as quality?

Oh I must progress

As this audience expects

Why I’ve changed, as research progressed?

As those voices missed

Like mine, indirect gifts

Theirs unsaid, but mine implicit

What have I learned

After 3 years here?

What have I learned about Northants?

Some enjoy Black cultures,

But many still afraid

Even some equate Black with poor reputation

Where do I go, where do we go?

Sheepskin gained

But to be respected?

Black history still not taught mostly

Yes here, but not elsewhere

My work, but not to work?

What have I learned

After 3 years here?

What have I learned about Northants?

I have confidence in man

Institutions still mostly work to deny

What I do, but here supports

Where do I go, where do we go?

Knowledge gained

But to be respected?

How can British Black history

Not be significantly taught currently?

Is Britain 50 years behind America?

What have I learned

After 3 years here?

What have I learned about Northants?

People want to learn what is taught

Black British history not out of naught

Can be used to develop a community

Never planned this PhD

‘Cause Black history

Creates a label

Understood thanks to Fanon

Denial of race sought through this trial

Epidermal racial schema has been overcome

Who will solve this problem

of race in Britain?

Will forty years be like forty acres and a mule?

As my son becomes like me

Will he have to leave to become free?

Because Britain isn’t now a meritocracy

Never planned this PhD

‘Cause Black history

Creates a label

Will I be permanently within history?

Somewhere post-PhD

Will Black in Britain continue to equal non-history?

Who will solve this problem

of race in Britain?

Will forty years be like forty acres and a mule?

Can only strife engender questions

Why Black people alienated

When equality still yet to be achieved?

Never planned this PhD

‘Cause Black history

Creates a label

Research needed as a start

Created opportunities made as art

More research needed, but will support follow?

Who will solve this problem

of race in Britain?

Will forty years be like forty acres and a mule?

Research has gleaned

Hierarchy still retained

Only small spaces still had for brown or black

Why have I talked

With not said of research

Exactly what is it I’ve done?

Consumerism was its base

Affected tremendously other things in its wake

Yeah, CREAM so true then and now

What have I gained from this researching life?

What has been offered,

Resulting from this ironic government gift?

Caribbean strength of spirit evident

Work ethic very strong

Thanks mum, I know where you’ve helped

Why have I talked

Little said of research

Exactly what is it I’ve done?

Consumerism affected education

Cultural currency of frustration

Until Black Caribbean in Britain pride developed

What have I gained from this researching life?

What has been offered,

Resulting from this ironic government gift?

Solaar listened to before commencing

Different language, common understanding

Oral history for me evidential through his songs

Why have I talked

Not much said of research

Exactly what is it I’ve done?

Research impact for the community

For those listened to collected oral history

Including unknown Black British history’s existence

What have I gained from this researching life?

What has been offered,

Resulting from this ironic government gift?

When Brown said Marley was crap

Represented power paradigm’s trap

Lost in resistance, but through AHRC gained Providence

Oh make me a man who always asks questions

When can’t ask

One must further question

Then Black people were denied culture

Now humanities sliced with same venture

Denied knowledge equates ease to control

When one can’t question

One can’t live

Might as well be an ape or dog

To question is to be human

To critique is to succeed

At uni or any place of learning

Oh make me a man who always asks questions

When can’t ask

One must further question

When Black British history isn’t being taught

At 130 unis currently in Britain

Is this evidence of quality in historical research?

When one can’t question

One can’t live

Might as well be comatose in state

As I research, I live

Knowledge gained, but to give

People threatened, but attack in silence

Oh make me a man who always asks questions

When can’t ask

One must further question

Politricks first exposed by Fielding

After being banned by Walpole

Black British history by omissions exists akin

When one can’t question

One can’t live

Except to support what powerful give

As I research, I live

So much history to give

Stories told, but voices suppressed

As I conclude

Rest my voice instead

What is it that you’re thinking?

Have I been troublesome to you?

Has my voice been threatening?

To what it is you might represent?

As I research, I live

Only knowledge

And strength of equality to give

Full humanity of equals

Why is that so strange?

Not just words, but in all of existence

As I conclude

Nearing resting my voice instead

What is it that you’re thinking?

Through researching local Caribbeans

In struggle and strife, succeeding

Imagine if they had equal chances

As I research, I live

Only knowledge to give

Their stories but through my voice

As I listened, I learned

Lessons challenged

Whether words of country match deeds

As I conclude

Nearer to resting my voice instead

What is it that you’re thinking?

Through research, I’ve been shaped

Understood what frustrates

Colour, but lowered chances equates

As I research, I live

Only knowledge to give

Their stories, but lives have transformed

My research rests, questions not to abate

Another step

And we’ve been irrevocably shaped