



James Berry: Windrush songs - Audio

Reasons for Leaving Jamaica

James Berry:

Language use, you see, because most people, most local people, and people who came from slave history, there is a language, it's English but that they spoke you know. So my new life was speaking English properly.

I prepare – an prepare well – fe Englan.
Me decide, and done leave behine
all the voice of ol slave-estate bushman.
None of that distric bad-talk in Englan,
that bush talk of ol slave-estate man.
Hear me speak in Englan, an see
you dohn think I a Englan native.
Me nah go say
'Bwoy, how you du?'
me a-go say 'How are you old man?'
Me nah go say
'Wha yu nyam las night?'
me a-go say 'What did you have for supper [old boy]?'
Patois talk is bushman talk –
people who talk patois them dam lazy.
Because mi bush voice so settle in me
an might let me down in-a Englan
me a-practise.
Me a-practise talk like teacher
till me Englan voice come out-a me
like water from hillside rock.
Even if you fellows here
dohn hear mi Englan voice
I have it – an hear it in mi head!