SHELLING PIGEON PEAS - on the day after Derek Walcott spoke

Lelawattee Manoo-Rahming
anthuriumcaribjournal@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/anthurium

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/anthurium/vol7/iss1/24

This Poem is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarly Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal by an authorized editor of Scholarly Repository. For more information, please contact repository.library@miami.edu.
Gungo, toor, gandules
Pulse off the tongue
Staccato
Exotic like some import
But the true import
Is not the high-yield pigeon pea
Common in the tropics from India to Africa
Paramaribo to Nassau

The true import is the people
Black, brown and yellow
Who came in waves
Through sea water waves
In ships slave and cargo
Black, brown and yellow
Compartmentalized
Like peas in pods
Oblate, boat-shaped
People pods

Forming ties across bounds Jahaji bhai
Boat brothers and then blood brothers
Jahaji bahin sisterblood
Finding solace in shelling peas
Shelling the stigma of servitude
Collecting the protein-rich
Seed encapsulated in green
Flavoring pots of nostalgic stew
Christmas pelau
Pea soup, rice n’peas
Peas shelled by these hands
On the day after
Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott
Touched these same hands
Spoke his words,

*Development must consider poverty*

We are of poverty but we are not
Poor of spirit
For we are the children
Of the black, brown and yellow people
Who came in pods
Across blackened seas

Who sloughed off pain
Like they sliced sugar cane
Who sucked on salt
Ate sada roti with oil and pepper
Banded their bellies
Bent their backs
And cutlassed clear paths
Through the burning cane
For us all
To find our way
To the river cool and bright