

I Am No Princess

By Salimah Husain

The Edited Version

Once upon a time,
My great, great, grandmothers crossed an
ocean,
Crossed a sea,
Across the *kala pani*,
Sold to the false promise of gold.
They unknowingly signed on to slavery.
They were forced to marry strangers,
And live in tiny *logies*.

They were not free to choose,
Free to simply be.

From dawn to dusk,
They worked the cane fields
In bare feet,
Wielding cutlasses
In chapped hands,
With their babies strapped to their backs.

Dreary days filled with physical aches
and pains,
Were entwined with weary yet
joyful laughter.

They were mothers, wives and workers.
They **are** mothers, wives and workers.
The women of my family -
Past and present -
Strive to earn every little penny.
Their struggles have allowed me to
stand tall:
Free to choose
Free to simply be.

I am no princess,
Sitting around,
Waiting for a knight
In shining Armani,
To roll up in his Ferrari,
And rescue me.

I am no princess.
I am not Cinderella
Or Aurora.

I am a woman,
Empowered by the generations of
superwomen before me.
Selfless in their sacrifice,
They have passed onto me:
Their strength, their courage,
Their unfathomable beauty of
heart, soul and face,
Their character and their faith.

They are not princesses -
They are practically goddesses
Such is their magnificence -
The brilliance of their combined essence
Will forever resonate with me,
In me,
Through me
For all eternity.

**kala pani - black water*

**logie - a shed or hut open at the sides used to house indentured labourers in British Guiana*