

POEM FOR CICELY

I am Abeni, descended from ancestors from a different shore.

They prayed and received me.

A daughter of Oshun, clad in shimmering golden yellow.

I am blessed.

But this new land is not my home. I am of rivers, not of oceans.

Whipping does not make my back stronger, nor my steps faster nor my fingers nimbler.

The welts on my skin exist to remind you of your own ugliness.

My strength and beauty lie deep within, far beyond your touch.

If I am blind, it is only to my own beauty. Unable to see the world yet to come.

The floor is filthy and cold, but my heart remains pure and warm.

After all,

I am just a child of three times the number five.

Pray for me, remember me.

I am Abeni.

Even though they called me Cicely