For Michael Smith

*Jamaica —
of Maroon — resistance — gun and struggle*

*In my country too
'Anyone' can become president
but not an alien*

*in the land of 'truth and justice'
our people fought not to die on welfare*

*In my country too
Seargent Majors grow fat
in seat of office.*

*In my country too
whole villages are wiped out
of election fever*

*In my country too
missiles are hurled
at the heads of the dispossessed*

*In my country too
they fill the mouths with silence
of the silent majority*

*If poets could be stifled
the whole world would choke
on the thoughts muffled in their throats.*

*But we have our poets — our griots —
the captive minds unfurl —
the silence now erupts
in quiet mumbling corners —
the voices join our own
join with others
rise and rise again
encircle and begin again*

*that same breath which gave life to thought
inspires*

Iyamide Hazeley