

So you think I am a Mule?

"Where do you come from?"
 'I'm from Glasgow.'
 "Glasgow —?"
 'Uh huh. Glasgow.'
 The white face hesitates,
 the eyebrows raise,
 the mouth opens
 then snaps shut
 incredulous
 yet too polite to say, outright,
 liar
 she tries another manoeuvre
 "And your parents?"
 Groan. Not again.
 It's such a bore.
 'Glasgow and Fife.'
 "Oh?"
 'Yes. Oh.'
 Snookered, she wonders where she should go
 from here —
 "Ah, but you're not pure."
 'Pure? Pure what?
 Pure white? Ugh. What a plight.
 Pure? Sure I'm pure,
 I'm rare...'
 "Well, that's not exactly what I mean,
 I mean... you're a mulatto, just look at..."
 'Listen. My original father was Nigerian
 to help you with your confusion.
 But hold on, right there.
 If you Dare mutter mulatto,
 hover around hybrid,
 hobble on half-caste,
 and intellectualize on the
 'mixed race problem',
 I have to tell you:

take your beady eyes offa my skin;
 don't concern yourself with
 the dialectics of mixtures;
 don't pull that strange blood crap
 on me, Great White Mother.
 Say I'm no mating of a
 she-ass and a stallion,
 no half of this and half of that,
 to put it plainly, purely,
 I'm black.
 My blood flows evenly, powerfully,
 and when they shout Nigger
 and you shout 'Shame'
 aint nobody debating my blackness.
 You see that fine African nose of mine,
 my lips, my hair. You see, lady,
 I'm not mixed up about it.
 So take your questions, your interest,
 your patronage. Run along.
 Just leave me.
 I'm going to my black sisters,
 to women who nourish each other
 on belonging... There's a lot of us
 black women struggling to define
 just who we are,
 where we belong
 and if we know no home
 we know one thing:
 we are black;
 we're at home with that.'
 "Well, that's all very well, but..."
 'I know it's very well.
 No but. Good bye.'

Jackie Kay

