

I WAS RAISED BY

SHARONTA PICKERING

I was raised by smooth talking,
Money getting, fast moving,
Wig splitting parents

I was raised by Henderson streets
A never knew if you were going to make it
The next day kind of streets
Watch out for them boys shooting kind of streets
There goes the ice cream man kind of streets

I was raised by sounds of balls hitting the bat
Alarming sounds of crowds cheering my name
Fast running, Kentucky derby sliding,
Home run hitting type of sounds

I was raised by spade
A black, silky smooth dog
Bearing kisses of love and barks of wisdom
Protecting me from harm

I was raised by the sweet smell of buttermilk pancakes
French toast, eggs, bacon, and honey
The everlasting aromas filling the morning air
Like fresh squeezed lemonade on a hot summer day

I was raised by the Caribbean, Spanish, music of my father's accent
His peoples St. Thomas talk and my mother's country twang
Words holding a barrier to the way I speak

I was raised by judgment, and compassion
Two identities ripped apart through a sea of hate
Causing pain and confusion among those who cannot speak