

A. Neil Deo

BAS' PANDAY, COOLIE PRIME MINISTER

I watched it on the news
One I thought I'd never see
One to make the world uneasy
Uncomfortable with our views

Trinidad of ethnic fears
I saw, I felt, I lived it myself
Truths accumulate on a shelf
Dusty with the brown man's fears

But why this tribal unity?
East Indians speak in Creole
Whisper, "Him is not we people!"
My accent gave me away

I wrote, cajoled, protested, paid the price
Not even sibling-victims did me a turn
When spurned by the academy, I yearned
For a little thanks, some rice with spice

Bas' who persisted against all political charges
Was every man, and every laborer's brother
Raised up now, Prime Minister
He excludes me, gives marching orders

Calabash

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