

Jacqueline Bishop



## Those Were My Young Green Days

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Great Grandmother over me making sure I pounded  
the cocoa beans right.  
It took me all summer to learn,  
Great Grandmother shook her head, said:  
"Listen girl,  
cocoa pods grow green,  
ripen yellow,  
                  mature purple,  
burst them open with a stone,  
look, like this,  
*eat the soft white insides;*

Or grind them in a mortar  
until the cocoa is your color,  
roll into balls,  
put to sun,  
then drink cocoa-tea hot in the mornings."

Huddled between Great Grandmother's legs  
as she combed my hair, she reached for  
the pomade that made Mother hold her nose.  
                  "But see here,"  
Great Grandmother would cut her eyes,  
                  hiss her teeth,  
"Same oil you use to use,  
but stop,  
Kingston make you into fool-fool girl.

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Calabash

Now be careful with Star Apples —  
they will bind you up.  
The big tree at the edge of our land  
bear only purple fruit;  
Some trees only green fruit.  
Break the Star Apple open,  
eat only the white part,  
stay far from the pink part —  
bind you bad girl.

At night you walking,  
let somebody call to you twice before you answer —  
never answer a first call.  
Turn 'round twice you pass silk cotton tree.  
Rolling Calf start to run you down  
make sure you reach junction before it  
lie down like a star.

Spirits can take the shape of animals,  
if you ever catch a fish that is too big,  
have eyes that look strange,  
put it back where you get it from.  
Don't carry home stray animals,  
one start to follow you home —  
spin two times to confuse it.

Sunday you going to church, cover your head,  
and I hope your mother don't have you going  
those none-soul churches in Kingston.  
Learn first to dance a yard  
before you dance abroad,  
keep your head up high,  
you will go far,  
you is you great grandma's child."

