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# PEOPLE OF PEOPLE, MY PEOPLE

By

Tijan M. Sallah

I have learned slowly with my mind and heart  
That my people are of these taba trees and Kotu hills  
Rich poor old young  
Handsome ugly soft rough.  
People with people in their hearts  
Whose patient voices soar  
Through cracked corrugated fences.  
People of stories song and dance  
Artful with cooking steadfast with living.  
I have learned to love the dik-dik  
Of their early morning pestles in the air  
As they pound onions peppers greens  
In preparation for delicious bisaap soups.  
I have learned to love the scattered giggles  
Of the happy girls of the evening  
As they play hide and seek  
In the fallen mango boughs  
Or around the smoky black walls  
Of the deserted kitchens.  
I have learned freely in the open air  
The way a green parrot learns familiar tunes  
While balancing its feathers in the buoyant wind  
That my people are  
Articulate with wisdom skillful with laughter.  
They mold the children  
Through song and shouting.  
They are people evergreen with satisfaction  
Like the incense trees  
In the garden of the communal gods.  
They are people peopled  
With the joys and pains of people  
Who thrive in ordinary living.