**Child of the Americas (1986)**

by Aurora Levins Morales | Puerto Rico & United States

I am a child of the Americas,

a light-skinned mestiza of the Caribbean,

a child of many diaspora, born into this continent at a crossroads.

I am a U.S. Puerto Rican Jew,

a product of the ghettos of New York I have never known.

An immigrant and the daughter and granddaughter of immigrants.

I speak English with passion: it’s the tongue of my consciousness,

a flashing knife blade of crystal, my tool, my craft.

I am Caribeña, island grown. Spanish is in my flesh,

ripples from my tongue, lodges in my hips:

the language of garlic and mangoes,

the singing in my poetry, the flying gestures of my hands.

I am of Latinoamerica, rooted in the history of my continent:

I speak from that body.

I am not african. Africa is in me, but I cannot return.

I am not taína. Taíno[[1]](#footnote-1) is in me, but there is no way back.

I am not european. Europe lives in me, but I have no home there.

I am new. History made me. My first language was Spanglish.

I was born at the crossroads

and I am whole.

Reproduced from the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*.

1. The Taíno peoples were the indigenous inhabitants of what is now called the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Cuba, and the island of Hispaniola. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)