Checking Out Me History

John Agard

Dem tell me  
Dem tell me  
Wha dem want to tell me

Bandage up me eye with me own history  
Blind me to my own identity

Dem tell me bout 1066 and all dat  
dem tell me bout Dick Whittington and he cat  
But Touissant L’Ouverture  
no dem never tell me bout dat

*Toussaint*  
*a slave*  
*with vision*  
*lick back*  
*Napoleon*  
*battalion*  
*and first Black*  
*Republic born*  
*Toussaint de thorn*  
*to de French*  
*Toussaint de beacon*  
*of de Haitian Revolution*

Dem tell me bout de man who discover de balloon  
and de cow who jump over de moon  
Dem tell me bout de dish run away with de spoon  
but dem never tell me bout Nanny de maroon

*Nanny*  
*see-far woman*  
*of mountain dream*  
*fire-woman struggle*  
*hopeful stream*  
*to freedom river*

Dem tell me bout Lord Nelson and Waterloo  
but dem never tell me bout Shaka de great Zulu  
Dem tell me bout Columbus and 1492

but what happen to de Caribs and de Arawaks too

Dem tell me bout Florence Nightingale and she lamp  
and how Robin Hood used to camp  
Dem tell me bout ole King Cole was a merry ole soul  
but dem never tell me bout Mary Seacole

*From Jamaica*  
*she travel far*  
*to the Crimean War*  
*she volunteer to go*  
*and even when de British said no*  
*she still brave the Russian snow*  
*a healing star*  
*among the wounded*  
*a yellow sunrise*  
*to the dying*

Dem tell me  
Dem tell me wha dem want to tell me  
But now I checking out me own history  
I carving out me identity