



Red Dust Road

Tanika Gupta, adapted from the novel by Jackie Kay

Jackie (Nigerian Scottish heritage) is growing up in Scotland in the 1970s. She is the adapted child of Helen and John. In this speech, sixteen-year old Jackie admires Angela Davis for her activism and bravery, whilst seeing herself reflected in Angela.

(Jackie is in her bedroom reading. A poster of Angela Davis is hanging up. Jackie kisses Angela Davis' face on the poster again and again and then steps forward)

JACKIE: On my bedroom wall is a big poster
of Angela Davis who is in prison
right now for nothing at all
except she wouldn't put up with stuff.
My mum says she's only 26
which seems really old to me
but my mum says it is young
just imagine, she says, being on
America's Ten Most Wanted People's List at 26!
I can't.
Angela Davis is the only female person
I've seen (except for a nurse on TV)
who looks like me. She had big hair like mine
that grows out instead of down.
My mum says it's called an Afro. If I could be as brave as her when I get older
I'll be ok.
Last night I kissed her goodnight again
and wondered if she could feel the kisses in prison all the way from Scotland.
Her skin is the same too you know.
I can see my skin is that colour
but most of the time I forget,
so sometimes when I look in the mirror
I give myself a bit of a shock
and say to myself Do you really look like this?
as if i'm somebody else. I wonder if she does that?

I don't believe she killed anybody.
It's all a lot of phoney lies.
My dad says it's a set-up.
I asked him if she'll get the electric chair
like them Roseberries he was telling me about.
No he says the world is on her side.
Well how come she's in there I thinks.
I worry she's going to get the chair.

I worry she's worrying about the chair.
My dad says she'll be putting on a brave face.
He brought me a badge home which I wore
to school. It says FREE ANGELA DAVIS.
And all my pals says 'Who's she?'

Act 1, Scene 12