

John Agard's "Half Caste"

Context

"Half Caste" was published in 2005. John Agard is an Afro-Guyanese poet born in British Guiana in 1949. Agard moved to Britain with his partner in 1977 and his mixed race and resulting experiences upon moving to Britain is what the poem draws inspiration from. Consequently the poem is very personal in nature, however remains light-hearted through Agard's colloquial, humorous and sarcastic tone and use of the occasional basic rhyme or half-rhyme in the absence of a regular rhyme-scheme. The term "Half Caste" was a term used in Britain to refer to mixed race individuals, typically with Afro-Caribbean features.

"Half Caste" is written in free verse with no consistent rhyme scheme or metrical pattern. The poem does use Afro-Caribbean colloquialisms. If you'd like to hear John Agard reading this poem, click [here](#).

Read and highlight the poem below	Use this column to write annotations and notes
Excuse me Standing on one leg I'm half-caste Explain yuself Wha yu mean When yu say half-caste Yu mean when picasso Mix red an green Is a half-caste canvas? Explain yuself Wha u mean	

When yu say half-caste Yu mean when light an shadow Mix in de sky Is a half-caste weather?? Well in dat case England weather Nearly always half-caste In fact some o dem cloud Half-caste till dem overcast So spiteful dem dont want de sun pass Ah rass Explain yuself Wha yu mean When yu say half-caste? Yu mean tchaikovsky Sit down at dah piano An mix a black key Wid a white key Is a half-caste symphony? Explain yuself Wha yu mean Ah listening to yu wid de keen Half of mih ear	
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Ah looking at u wid de keen Half of mih eye And when I'm introduced to yu I'm sure you'll understand Why I offer yu half-a-hand An when I sleep at night I close half-a-eye Consequently when I dream I dream half-a-dream An when moon begin to glow I half-caste human being Cast half-a-shadow But yu come back tomorrow Wid de whole of yu eye An de whole of yu ear And de whole of yu mind An I will tell yu De other half Of my story	
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