They Were My People

by Grace Nichols

They were those who cut cane
to the rhythm of the sunbeat

They were those who carried cane
to the rhythm of the sunbeat

They were those who crushed cane
to the rhythm of the sunbeat

They were women weeding, carrying babies
to the rhythm of the sunbeat

They were my people, working so hard
to the rhythm of the sunbeat - - long ago
to the rhythm of the sunbeat.