



Jacqueline Bishop, 2022  
*The Market Woman's Story*  
(Photos: Jenny Harper)

# THE MARKET WOMAN'S STORY

In talking to someone recently about the new set of plates I had completed, *The Market Woman's Story*, in which I traced the figure of the huckster, higgler, vendor from the period of slavery until today while enveloping her in fruits and flowers, he pointed out that my first collection of poems, *Fauna* from Peepal Tree Press, had a section that did a similar thing, for in it I was using local Caribbean flowers to tell Jamaican women's stories. I suddenly realised that I had a long history of using floral imagery to represent female concerns.

For many years I was a closet visual artist, though the work I did produce beginning in primary and high school was always about plants and flowers. I remember once, for example, as a wee thing at John Mills All-Age School, that I got transported while drawing repeatedly the roots of fat sugar cane stalks. It was the most wonderful feeling. Over the years I kept drawing and painting in secret: gigantic blue flowers.

But I kept putting visual art to the side all the way through high school and my undergraduate years, though, unfailingly, I would take visual art classes here and there, but never quite centring art in my life. After all, what was one to do with it?

In 2003, on a lark, I applied to the master's degree programme in studio art at NYU, quite sure that I would never get in.



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