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| **Twa Fèy, Twa Rasin** |
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| Twa fèy, twa rasin oJete bliyeRanmase sonjeMwen genyen basen mwenTwa fèy tonbe ladan nJete bliyeRanmase sonjeEskalye BoumbaTwa fèy tonbeLan basen mwenLangaj oTwa fèy tonbeLan basen mwenZila MoyoTwa fèy tonbeLan basen mwen Langaj oTwa fèy tonbeLan basen mwen | Three leaves, three rootsThose who discard, forgetThose who reclaim, rememberI have my basinThree leaves have fallen in itThose who discard, forgetThose who reclaim, rememberStairway to HeavenThree leaves have fallenIn my basinSacred wordsThree leaves have fallenIn my basinSacred pathThree leaves have fallenIn my basinSacred wordsThree leaves have fallenIn my basin |
| This is a song about how precious things are sometimes neglected by people who do not value them, but are cherished by others who understand their significance. To highlight how important ideas can be trivialized and discarded, the song presents the Kongolese notion of the universe as though it were speaking of three worthless leaves falling into a pool. In reality, the leaves and the pool are both symbolic, and their meanings can be understood by reviewing Kongolese beliefs taken to Haiti during the 17th and 18th centuries.  The people of the Kongo Kingdom believed the universe to have three spheres. Each of these spheres, or world of spirits, was also referred to as a water domain. The song has three leaves falling into a pool so that each leaf, immersed in water, is representative of one of the domains. The people of the Kongo believed that trees are in contact with each of the three domains. They reasoned this to be true because trees stand on the earth, have roots in the underworld, and reach towards the sky. It follows then that trees are in constant contact with earth spirits, underworld spirits, and sky spirits. For this reason, in Haiti, trees are used as repositories of Ancestral spirits, the Lwas. Trees are considered sacred and their fragments are used as symbols of the three spiritual domains. The song uses the term three leaves or three roots to refer to the three worlds of spirits. At times in Haiti, reference to the three spiritual domains is done using earth rather than tree analogies, and is said as three rocks or three islands *(twa fèy, twa ile).* The analogy with the three leaves also exploits the fact that leaves are abundant in nature and not commonly viewed as precious. The Haitian Kongolese heritage is made analogous to fallen leaves whose significance is lost on those who discard this culture. This is the reason why the song says “*jete, bliye”*. To those who have rejected it, the Haitian Kongolese tradition is as worthless as a few leaves. However, for those who value and understand the tradition, the three leaves are precious and ought to be safeguarded. The song expresses this by saying, “*ranmase, sonje”*, implying that those who reclaim the three fallen leaves are those who remember and value their heritage. Nowadays, the term *“jete* *bliye, ranmase sonje”* can be used to describe anything that one neglects but others value.  In 2006, Preval exploited this adage in his effective run for the office of the presidency. He used “Twa Fèy” as his campaign slogan and used the traditional song to court Aristide’s popular base. The song was used to suggest that those who rejected Aristide have forgotten the merits of the Lavalas movement, while those who support Preval value that political organization.  The “*Twa fèy twa rasin*” song is traditionally played on a Petwo beat to honor the popular King Don Petwo IV of the Kongo. To honor Kongolese Ancestors, the non-Creole terms used in the song come from the Kikongo language of the Kongo. These two terms are *Boumba* and *Zila Moyo*. In Haiti, as part of honoring our Ancestors, we consider the languages spoken by them as a sacred language called *langay* or *langaj*.  *Zila* is the Kikongo word for path, and *moyo,* the word for eternal. *Zila Moyo* is called *Gran Chemen* in Haiti and it refers to the circle of life, meaning the constant birth and death cycle.  *Gran Chemen*, or the sacred grand road of life, is considered to be the path that inevitably takes us to join the Ancestors.  *Boumba* is a class of Ancestral spirits that are believed to reside at the top of steep mountaintops in the Kongo. It is said that to visit the summit of these steep Kongolese mountains, one would have to build a staircase. This Kongolese idea is sung about in Haiti as “*klouwe m ape klouwe bwa, eskalye Boumba, se bwa m ap klouwe*.”  In short, this song shows how precious concepts about the universe can be trivialized and abandoned by some, while being treasured and upheld by others. This Haitian traditional song is about valuing and honoring one’s heritage. Kikongo words are used to emphasize that our Kongolese heritage has not been forgotten.  |

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