

FIVE POEMS ABOUT YOUTH

By Alice Jossy Kyobutungi Tumwesigye¹, Bishop Stuart University

Song of a Teenager

Here I am
Impressive, intimidating
But powerless though powerful.
Here I am
A definition:
Defined by society
A rebel
A delinquent
Searcher of identity
An ambitious, self-seeking individual
Without direction, without experience
Without a sober mind-
Or so they say.

They think for me, choose for me,
Speak on my behalf
Control my every move.

I want to know me
My capacity, my ability,
I want to do all the things I am denied
And discover how much power I wield
I want to say all I feel
Exercise all my uniqueness.
Let me discover
What lies on the other side-?
Of the cage...
Oh how tired I am
Of being the other.

¹ Alice Jossy Kyobutungi Tumwesigye (B.A. Dip Educ. MUK, M.A. Lit MUK, PhD (LCS)) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Languages and Literature at Bishop Stuart University Mbarara Uganda. (Email addresses: ajtumwesigye@educ.bsu.ac.ug/tjossyallyce@gmail.com): +256772/702/431031/ Postal Address: Bishop Stuart University P.O Box 9 Mbarara.

Blessed Curse

In ecstatic excitement, my youthful spirit soared
As I, in apprehension, gracefully cat-walked down the rump;
To be the centre of attention.
Walking confidently in the hearts of men
Smiling disarmingly in their being
To receive the crown of fame
And taste the power of beauty,
My beauty.
To trample down the pride of rivals
And arouse their quiescent envy.

Like a wildfire, my fame spread
Far and wide, my name broadcast-
To keep me afloat, all media channels;
Their goal.

That led them and me to pill-power
Together, we traversed the hurdles
Till we touched the summit
Not without sham stamina
With fake age, fake face, fake skin
Fake courage, fake esteem...

Till one truthful day
The decoy faded
To reveal:
Scared, timid, desperate me
Lean, haggard, worn
In a, once upon a time-
Beautiful shell.

Let it not Hold You Back

Let it not hold you back

Let it not catch you now

Like a hare, as swift, run-

Pause not to breathe or look back

With all your might, run-

Until you outdo your betters

In this race of life.

Let not your age snatch your zeal

Rather let it spur you on-

Allow not your peers to lead you astray

Instead, guide them through the dim alleys of doubt

As you slip through the dark foliage of adventure

To miss out not, but still see far...

Dash through edgy adolescence

Allowing transcendence to foster your steps

As you let Him, above, hold your hand-

Let not your youth hold you back.

The Young Adult Character

I am their lesson plan
A demonstration, a practical exercise
For teachers, poets, scholars...
To teach, to preach, to study.
As a '*Beauty Queen*', an object on display,
I preach decency and safe sex
To the '*Child of a Delegate*',
Who advocates girl-child rights;
And promotes the gender- agenda...
When '*Things Fall Apart*', I ran away with the white men
To expose the darker side of Africa
And as a '*Houseboy*', my fate pathetic, used and abused,
I preach morality despite being warned that;
'*Prettyboy, Beware*' of the paedophiles! Expose their evils!
While in a '*Voice of a Dream*' that is sought at a great cost,
My dreams are shattered although
In the Moses series, adventure is my toll
Though teachers and administrators won't let me be.

I want to walk in their world, see myself in their mirror;
I want to dream, to search, to find...
I want to face my fears
And dry my tears
Dear writers, scholars, all, please
Let me be me.

A Letter to my Mind

Dear Mind,

Listen, O listen to this, my plea.

You get ready, I beg you;

Ready for manipulation

To be swayed to their side

Ready for objectification

To be what you must

For their satisfaction.

Listen O listen to this:

To wait for their, 'No!'

Their 'Stop!'

And their 'Wait!'

To avoid conflict or stress.

Wait to be used and abused,

Despised and dumped

Get ready for disapproval

Dismissal and ambivalence

To be blessed and cursed at once-

With thanks, receive:

Orders and counsel,

Caution and sermons

As you brace yourself for;

More perception

More intelligence

More sensitivity

To travel towards maturity

On the road to self-identity...

Listen, O listen to this, my plea.