

WITHIN THE PAPAYA and other poems...

By Abasiama Emmanuel Udom

Poetry editor Hezekiah writes: Within the Papaya, "lies the seeds of tomorrow," Who could deny this lady with lines such as these? Right from the outset, is she quoting someone else? I would rather remain in sheltered ignorance than stoop to Google. I prefer to believe they're hers. 'Scattered words' like flower petals. No need for me to go on so long as she can...HS

WITHIN THE PAPAYA (13 LINES)

lies the seeds of tomorrow,
hungering for the deepness of earth's womb
shouting to be out to bed,
crying, calling a future unknown
still a future anyway.
Within the Papaya,
is buried tomorrow's song and a future heir,
all calling and praying,
praying amiss yet not caring
for to be born it's prime desire,
looking towards the tomorrow of 'maybe'
a land of uncertainties and laughter
of smiles and a change.

**FOREVER BY DAY.
(16 LINES)**

Maidens will throw their trash in newly hewn gutters,
mother's will flaunt their remnants in freshly dug paths
and forever by the day, rats it be that will visit,
to dance and play amongst laughing children,
to feast on uncovered bread, laughing in the face of our disgust,
for it be us that let them roam, these carriers of what we fear.

Father's will push the papers into government roads,
and pray the rains come down to wash them
further down the lane to their neighbour's--
So forever by the day, rats will call to their friends
wearing skin grey and sick, take the streets of the Delta
ravaging, nibbling all in their path be it food or foot.

Forever by the day, temperatures will run high
sweat dancing down our necks and faces,
the signs of the virus that is here.
Still we do as before, forever by the day.

WHISPER SORRY
(18 LINES)

Should you not ask me if,
the fire of hunger in my soul is quenched
before I am named a glutton for eating too much?
Should you not seek, if,
you'll find hurt in my spirit
afore you call the hawks to peck on my wound?
Should you not search, if,
within your heart lies a thicket of darkness
before you quench the light arisen in my bowels?
Should you not watch out if my will is gone,
then make me weak, fit for the grave--
Find my why, then send the consequences,
before you name me, seek to see through my eyes.
I do not pass the blame,
but do not tell me 'be careful'
when all I want is a whispered sorry
a soothing of my loins, a balm on my sore feet and hands.
Should you not?

THE POET SPEAKS:

What inspired my poems?

Life.

The constant inspiration for my poetry is man, his actions and inactions. I like to explore man's tears, failures, successes and his mind (difficult).

In these poems, I explore themes of change, of how we all call others names, take sides without fully understanding a situation and how it hurts. Forever by the day, then carries with it this air of resignation and a call to action. It mirrors southern Nigeria and our common practice of dumping refuse in gutters which leads to flooding.

My poems have come from a place of awareness and a wild hope.

Stylistic influences:

The first poet to influence me was Robert Louis Stevenson. I love the way his work breathed with him (awareness of him) even after all these years. He also displays a different variant of English.

The Poems of Maya Angelou and Emily Dickinson have also influenced my writing with simplicity of diction, message, and a slight touch of irony.

Why poetry is important?

I always liked the pull of the unknown poets and writers had but poetry became more important to me from 2013 when I was battling with depression. Reading it from then was for not only for pleasure but to heal my soul.

Poetry writing for me is a tool, my way of relating with the world, telling snippets of my life's experiences and using it to tell things that I cannot say to your face for fear you would not hear me.

AUTHOR'S BIO: *I am a Writer with works in Still Point Literary Magazine, Sandy River Review with others forthcoming.*