

Re-awakening the Shrinking Blossom

by Ikenna Nwakamma

For Elo

I

She is now a stranger to herself
She knows no more the shape of her heart
A heart so numb, but familiar with sorrow
So broken as it drifts apart
Ruptured lily, once radiant like an after rain sun
Once aspirant to the great heights
She once felt her arms like wings
Ready to challenge the sky to a race.

Once a lily with allure and blooms
Full in her innocence, full in gaiety
Like pumpkin by the waterside
Her nectar and pollens primed
Waiting the visitation of the butterfly
Waiting for the symbiosis that creates greenness

Lo! It was the Caterpillar, not the butterfly
It was the burrower that went for her core
Invader of the bloom that ruptured her blossom
Taking her nectar in exchange for venom
It was the shrinking of her petals early in the morning

II

Suddenly, the sun ceased to shine in her eyes ...
Radiance choked by yoke
Her night hid with a knife
On her bosom, treasures were plundered
Leaving sorrow, tears and blood.

She bore in her, fermented rabid pleasure
And lesions of forced passages
On her are footprints of a pleasure Pirate with diseased loin
Poor sister familiar with sorrow
With eye sacks drained of tears

Let me tell your tale
And defile the treacherous silence
Let me bear witness to your stripes
... judgment to the mute
Let me bear witness to the death of the sun
And chant the dirge for justice with raised fist

Let the silence break
Let the moon find courage and expose the angles of the night.
Let my words give you strength
In your strength, the bloated egos will deflect.
Let me tell your tale
That silence may know some shame.

III

Suddenly, her innocence dripped off her head,
For she bears on her face the mark of the beast
With heated infirmity in her blood stream
Leaving pains, blames and shame.

Suddenly the Holy Ghost took leave of her...
A virus stricken temple
The pulpit of her salvation, now the fulcrum of her damnation
And the sword of Herod is over her head, proclaiming judgment ...
"Your loose loin kissed rabid pleasures
Your mouth is unfit to praise the lord of host"

Like her master led with a cross to Golgotha,
she walks through the darkness of transgression
Staring at faces once fraternal,
All scornful, none mournful
... a leper in the house of Yahweh
And like Julius Caesar in the face of treachery, she whimpered in silence
"et tu brethren"

IV

I hear you Elo
I feel the silence in your solitude
I hear you, daughter of my father
I see you peeping through the cracks
Thirsting for sunshine

Reject the redefinition of you with a viral surname
You are Elo, the bearer of dreams.

I hear your whimpers; I hear the whispers
Worry not of the inanities of the apocalyptic horsemen
Worry not of the infirmities of your bloodstream
Dispel the disgusts with a bust out of your shrinking blossom
For by your smile and affirmation to greenness
You shall disarm the spineless virus

Drop the gong of the leper, take the branch of the Olive
Show your face to the skies again, and seduce the sun into full shine
Hold my hands, lean on me
For behind your cloudy face laden with a heavy heart
I see the gaiety, and freshness out of suffocated viruses

Let the sun rise again in your eyes
Open your petals to the sun of the new dawn
The scars on your skin are the marks of your strength
Let smile find its place on your face again
And make melodies out of your tale.

Ikenna Nwakamma is a Nigerian with Master's degree in Public Health (MPH) from the French School of Public Health, Paris France (EHESP Sorbonne Paris Cite), a Postgraduate Diploma in HIV Education and Management, and a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry. He has over 10 years of experience in program management, monitoring and evaluation, and research. He has worked in development and implementation of international donor funded programs across HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender, UHC, maternal and child health.

Ikenna was the President of Creative Writers Association of Abia State University Uturu and had contributed in an anthology of creative writing. He won the art award at the International Conference on Stigma at Howard University in 2016 with his Poem "Suddenly, anointing bowed to the yoke". He is currently the Program Manager for INERELA+ Nigeria and Co-Chair to The Coalition of Civil Society Networks on HIV and AIDS in Nigeria.