



ANTHOLOGY OF LOVE AND SOCIETAL

**AFRICAN POETRY FROM THE SOUL
OF A KENYAN POET**

NEHEMIAH W. OTIPAH

FOREWORD 1

I read this anthology in a sitting. And here I was, staring blankly at the ceiling; who is this guy? In this anthology, I had read blossoming love in a number of poems such as 'In My Dream', 'My Beloved', and 'Reasons', where I envisioned the bed of roses that is the outlook of it. In the very pages were the thorniness of the very love Again as seen in 'Bye', 'Tired', and 'Who'll Blink First'. I read the enemies of love; injustice in 'Justice at Large', violence in 'The Murderer in Waiting', hunger in 'Dear Child', inspiration in 'You Will Rise' and the clamour for effective leadership in 'In Need of a Leader'. I also encountered contemporary issues that touch on feminism such as in 'Elusive Chase', masculinity versus femininity in 'Man Up', depression in 'Get Back' among others.

Of the more than sixty poems, I delved deeper into six poems; the poem "**The African Woman**" is a thought-provoking piece that calls on women to understand the importance of constructive conversation. The persona asks "what if" questions to evoke imaginations of what could happen if women actively took part in national discourse to solve societal problems. The poem encourages women to realize that they are the solution to social and political commotion and that they have the power to be the change that the continent needs. The poem "**Elusive Chase**" is a tribute to African women fighting for equality and the challenges they face in achieving unity. The persona commends their passion and commitment to affirmative action and the pursuit of equal representation and equitable resource allocation. However, the author also acknowledges the elusive togetherness that often hinders their progress. The poem ends with a call to face the dragon of disunity. "**Empty Streets**" is a poem about a peaceful day on empty streets. The persona meets someone, they share a moment and a kiss, and the empty streets bring them together. "**My Beloved**" is a love poem that speaks of the persona's feelings for their beloved. The author writes to their love to express their heart's desires. The tone is romantic and the attitude is that of love. The poem "**Light and Limitless**" describes a one-sided relationship. It expresses the pain and frustration of unrequited love, but ultimately ends on a positive note with the persona finding happiness and freedom after letting go of the unreciprocated love. Last but not least, the poem "**What If**" explores the idea of how one's life can be changed by meeting someone special. The speaker describes how their life would be empty and unfulfilled if they had not met the person they love. The poem highlights the importance of the beloved to the speaker's life.

Ultimately, the poem is a celebration of love and the transformative power it holds.

This poet had articulated notable issues while observing the necessary language aesthetics and poetics. The author takes readers on a journey through the human experience, using vivid imagery and literary devices to create a captivating and immersive experience. The author expertly employs alliteration, assonance, consonance, and rhyme to create a rhythmic verse that is both lyrical and engaging. The text flows like a stream, with each line building on the last to create a captivating and memorable experience. In addition to that, this book is also rich in imagery. The author employs simile, metaphor, personification, and other techniques to create a vivid and detailed picture of love and societal. The reader can almost feel the warmth of blossoming love and the bitterness of betrayal, the pain of injustice and the urge to be human.

My reflections were the answers to my question; who is this guy? He had simply constructed himself in his very theme—love. I met Nehemiah Otipah by virtue of the position I held in my working station. He had come to showcase a book project he was working on. We ended up discussing our successes and insecurities like we had known each other for decades. This comradeship bloomed, and we ended up in the same staff. He held a senior position. I was, by default, a junior. What amazed me was the level of trust he had in us and mostly, myself. We worked. We faced challenges. We feared our insecurities.

Still, we remained focused. Thus;

Here,
I have read love
And its peace of a dove
I have read love
And the trouble in paradise
And I have read the author.
The author has bequeathed us this anthology.
To love, learn, overcome and cherish human relationships.

In conclusion, "**Anthology of Love and Societal**" is a must-read for anyone who loves poetry that speaks to the soul.

—*Denish Odanga, researcher on African literature and cultures*
Universität Potsdam, Germany

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Contacts:

Email: botipah@gmail.com

LinkedIn: [Nehemiah Otipah](#)

PREFACE:

To my cherished audience,

My name is Nehemiah Otipah, and this anthology is a gift both personal and universal. As a poet, I've always been fascinated by the complex and multifaceted emotion of love. I started writing these poems in the year 2020, and over time, they've grown into a collection that I'm excited to share with you.

In this anthology, I explore several thematic issues related to love and society. From the joy of romance to the pain of heartbreak, these poems capture the many different ways that love can impact our lives. I also touch on societal issues, as literature mirrors society, and our interactions with others can evoke a wide range of emotions.

Through deep imagination, personal experience, and keen observation, these poems explore the true sense of love and society. I hope that they capture your attention and quench your poetic thirst. Above all, I hope that they inspire you to think deeply about the role that love and society play in our lives.

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Second, I am grateful to the distinguished literary critics; Denish Odanga (*Universität Potsdam, Germany*), Dr. Margaret Njoki, Dr Anashia Ongonda and Dr. Peter Muhoro (Mount Kenya University), Alexander R. (Germany) for their positive thus constructive criticisms, my friends; Esther Kiritu-Mount Kenya University (MA), A. Osman (Canada), W. Sika (Kenya), Hussein Egal (Canada), S. Bashir (Kenya) among others, for their positive influence and encouragement.

Finally, I thank all the fans of literature especially poetry, it is to you that I write. You are the reason why I am so determined to write more. Thank you.

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PART I: LOVE

IN MY DREAM

I dreamt about you yesterday,
You were beside me all day,
With your curly dark hair,
We enjoyed the coolness of air.
We sat by the shores,
Held our lovely hands,
In unity, in heartfelt emotion.
You gave in without condition,
To my hugs and kisses,
As we let out our bruises.

The evening came by,
We were tired no lie,
We left the beach in happiness,
Tired, but for the calmness,
Of the sea that day!
As the stars sparkled in their way,
I tried hard to cling onto you,
Held tightly your dress blue,
But you slowly slid off my hands,
With my thoughts scattered like strands,
Oh, the effect of many a dream
Would one day make a man scream!

GRATITUDE

I feel nothing but gratefulness,
Nothing, but happiness.
My heart is in a state of warmness.
I must admit I'm in awe,
Of your unrivalled selflessness,
warm touch and heartiness.
I'm still in awe,
Of this momentous occasion,
Of these precious gifts.
Yes, in awe,
Of this royalty-like largesse,
These priceless acts that
Give true meaning to friendship,
Signal a camaraderie relationship.
These kind gestures
Speak to me in silence,
And make me forever grateful.

BYE

It was nice seeing you
And speak and recite to woo,
Your calming self to me
And hoped that ours shall be,
A bond christened on love,
An image peaceful like a dove.

I acknowledge I liked you more
As my eyes and actions did show,
A crime to you, strength to me,
And just like a toiling honeybee,
I stuck to the script of the loved,
When we held hands and trembled.

And I pleadingly said, 'love me,
Please do not shove me.'
But these were simply just words,
Meaningless, pierce-less and hurt less,
Still your trembling hands gave you away,
To show that you were human in some way.

And thus, I promise that my mind
Has taken your bye offer kind,
And I bet as you go about life's journey,
You'll differentiate water from honey,
And realize that my touch though human,,
Was lovely, was caring and golden.

WHO'LL BLINK FIRST?

You and I fell in love merrily
That day when we danced gleefully
We took our vows
And made promises,
To live in blossoming love,
To continually keep romancing,
Harmony and trust abounding.

Today we live like strangers;
Today we tease no more,
Today we're silent and cold
Like craggy snowy mountains.
We sail in the sea of gloom,
And ignore the signs of doom!

Where's the patience we harbored?
Where's the love that blossomed?
We are a shell of former selves,
We smile in pain and die with pride,
We are wild like the mourning dove
Yet, words could reignite our love,
Humility could heal our wound
Patience could restore our bond,
But who will blink first?

LIGHT AND LIMITLESS

Remember when you
Meant the world to me
When I yearned for your smile
While you ignored my tears
When I wrote to you in love
But you grew deaf each hour
When I played a dove
While you cried a wolf
When I composed rhythms
On trouble filled romance
But you spat on my face!
When I pleaded for your love
While you, like a rattlesnake
Hissed, cursed and faked
The anger of a livid lioness!
And I, embittered and hopeless,
Felt worn out and helpless.
And I stopped the pleadings
And wiped the drying tears,
I forgot the unreciprocated love
And smiled and felt alive,
Light and limitless like a dove.

LET ME BE

Why do you peer at me,
Why do you pretend to see,
Why do you knock at my door,
Why be back to a soul poor?
Let me be.

Where were you when I begged,
When I knelt on knees and was plagued,
When I could barely receive a call,
When I had a battered and bitter soul?
Let me be.

Is my recovery noticeable?
My suits and stature amiable?
My stunning bubbly breakthrough?
Or my new stately site at the avenue?
Let me be.

My wounds have healed,
My tears have dried,
I lost my troubles to the valleys.
And my temper tantrums to the hills,
So, let me be!

HOW ABOUT

How about you stop antagonizing me?
How about we embrace peace for once?
When you smile you resemble a queen
When you quarrel, the beauty vanishes
And with it comes the rare ugliness!

How about we sit down to talk
Rather than air our linen out?
When you talk, a princess!
When you scream, you spit venom
Like a rattled poisonous snake.

How about you listen to me?
Before rushing to respond?
When you listen, a dove
When you break items in anger
You resemble a bull on heat.

How about we choose love?
How about we cease to fight?
Your violent acts only worsen
An already precarious situation,
And apart we grow without option.

REASONS

The reasons for my love for you:
You are true to yourself,
You are honest and selfless,
You are loving and caring,
You are clean and pleasant.

The reasons for my love for you:
You are a faithful woman,
You deserve a good man,
You are a peaceful being,
You have a voice to sing.

The reasons for my love for you:
You'll make my house clean,
You'll care for my kin,
You'll be pleasant to be with.
You are the symbol of happiness.

The reasons for my love for you:
You dance gracefully,
You sing melodiously,
You cook deliciously,
You tease laughingly.

I will shower you with praises,
And sing your name in phases,
We'll go to the market for shopping,
And gift you a heart's drawing,
A lasting symbol of our union.

TO YOU.

I wish that you be mine,
I know the year has been hard,
But you are the only hope I have.
I know the year has been dull,
But you are a shining light.
I know the year has been dark,
But you are to me the sparkles,
The Ray of light in darkness,
The beautiful soul that brightens,
The smiling face that broadens,
The crazy feeling that amazes,
You are to me, the Queen
That will on my shoulders lean,
The prize, that ages like fine wine,
And I will hold your hand and you mine,
And we'll Cross over the crazy 2020 line.

EMPTY STREETS

The day was calm,
Neither siren nor alarm,
The trees were still,
I stood gazing at a hill,
From a far I could hear bleats,
As I walked on the empty streets.

The sky was blue.
Then, the wind blew
The dust filled the air
I closed my eyes with care.
A minute or two elapsed
And calm returned so fast.
You stood by the wayside,
Then crossed towards my side.

I began moving right, you too
The empty streets had two,
Dropped keys, you picked and blinked,
I looked at you and winked,
We closed the Gap and kissed.
You and I each other's gift
Given to us by the empty streets.

MY BELOVED

Dear beloved,
I write to you, my love,
To tell you of my heart's desires,
You are the drum with which my heart beats,
The trumpet that blows inside me.
You, for whom my heart beats
You for whom my mind sings.

Your personality I like,
Your thoughts and mine alike,
Your unique gait I admire,
Your stature and smile I desire,
Your curly and springy hair,
For you do I care.
You, for whom my heart beats,
You, for whom my mind sings.

Your light complexion sparkles
Like diamonds in the sun.
Your soft hands so tender,
Like a new born skin.
Your eyes shine bright
Like stars in the night.
You, for whom my heart beats,
You, for whom my mind sings.

Your thoughts light up my world,
Your voice sends a shiver
Down my spine!
Your heart in line with mine,
Your dreams with mine in line,
Your aspirations can change
The world for the better!
You, for whom my heart beats,
You, for whom my mind sings.

SINCE THAT DAY

Since the day we met,
I have never looked back.
The type of feeling I get,
Leaves on my heart a mark!

Your type of skin tone,
Sparkly, soft and tender,
Your voice I can guess
Will soothe and bless,
Your liquid lovely eyes
And your smooth hands
Can caress a wounded soul.

Your dreams look big,
Aspirations ever real,
Your sense of humor
And honesty.
Cuts a niche above
The ordinary.
The kindness you possess,
Will win hearts for you.
You, the irresistible one
You, the Nairobi bound.

UNTIL THAT DAY

We met by the roadside
That day when it rained
So heavy, so hard!
You were all alone
By the lonely shade
Taking shelter,
I saw you, I stopped,
Held your trembling hands
Soft, but so cold
I played the gentleman
Gave you my leather coat
To keep you warm.

You looked at my eyes
With a sense of innocence,
That won my heart,
Irrevocably in love!
And I have sung
The tunes of romance,
While you have played
The listener by my side.
I have laid a red carpet
And you have walked on it
Without a word!
But listen dear
I'll love you
With open eyes,
Unless you change
And play the part.

A VICTIM OF EXPECTATION

I am just a simple man
With dreams to yearn,
Who's to blame,
When your expectations
And resolutions
Are way above my imaginations?

I gave you my hand
In the hope together we'll find,
The success and aspirations
We've always yearned for.
Yes, I married you,
But did I ever promise,
A bullet proof Mercedes-Benz?
A party for your 'classy' friends?
A golden coloured pricey chain?
Did I ever promise heaven on earth?
Annual visits to Dubai
Or a daily bottle of Hennessy?

The frowning face yesterday,
The temper tantrums today,
Are the outcome of frustrations,
Due to unrealistic imaginations.
Even though I am your betrothed,
Please, do not turn me a victim
Of your high expectations!

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO

When you see a beloved feeling low
And she cares nor cries no more,
When her Bible is a den of dust
And her prayers a thing of the past,
What should you do?

When you see her smile as you mess
And laugh when you retrogress,
When she chuckles as you cheat
And muffles when you meet,
What should you do?

When you see her stop coming to you
And grow forgetful as a ewe,
When she bids bye to the roses
And is fine when the door closes,
What should you do?

DEAR PAPA

Dear Papa,
I remember you waking up early,
To prepare on your long journey,
To go work and sustain our family,
To travel far away in a shuttle bus.
I remember the beautiful clothes,
The school bags and shoes,
The uniforms and books
That you bought for us.

Dear papa,
I remember your frowning face,
The dressing down you gave us
When we messed up and about,
The silent control you wielded on us,
The stern look to remind us of rules,
The occasional smiles,
The rare praises,
Yes, I remember them all.

Dear papa,
You are so special,
The embodiment of zeal
And determination.
The example of hard work
And motivation,
The symbol of tough love
Definition,
The epitome of discipline
Foundation.
I will forever treasure you, papa.

DEAR MAMA

Dear mama,
I remember you waking up early,
I remember you doing it gladly,
The pieces of advice you whispered,
The exciting stories you shared,
The precious gifts you spared
For us, yes, I remember mama.

Dear mama,
I remember the stories in the evening
After we had finished dining.
The reprimands in the morning
When we had woken up late,
Rushing towards the gate.
I remember your daily prayers,
Your delicious unforgettable meals;
The sweet brown baked cakes,
The inviting round rolled chapatis,
The boiled and fried beef stew,
To name but just a few.

Dear mama,
I love you sana (so much),
You are the glue that holds us together,
The spark that keeps us shining,
The motivation that keeps us winning,
The treasure that makes us sing
In gratitude and thanksgiving.
I will forever treasure you, mama.

TIRED

There are dark clouds hanging
Over our shaky connection,
A looming storm gathering
Over our fickle union,
Your aversion to commitment
Is slowly becoming a poison,
That is slowly eroding
This which we call a relationship

Look into the horizon
And see the sadness,
The pain, hurt and sorrow,
Look deep into your own cold heart
And see the ticking time bomb.
Your on and off signals
And unpredictable actions,
Changeful as summer's wind,
Are more a weight than I can carry.

Yesterday you beamed,
Your eyes lit up with delight,
Today you are sullen and sunk,
Dull like an abandoned
House on the hill,
You are as yet unsure
Of what our future holds,
You think he'll give you comfort
Yet he leaves you with regret,
Which you quickly forget,
As you stay heartbroken
On my temporary abode,
For a while.

I've grown tired of your fickle signals,
Tired of your unstable affections,
Tired of unending unpredictability,
Of you rushing out
Like I'm no more than a house on fire,
Only to dash back in
As if you witnessed some horrors outside!
This time around my dear,
Do not sprint out like a deer,
To he who never appreciates
Your invaluable presence,
For you may come back
For the usual consolation,
And find out that I moved
To a much better location,
Leaving behind a desolate house,
That's dark, cold and sterile.
This time around, my impetuous love,
Please think before you act.

THE SPARK

There's a spark that sparkles,
There's a feeling that circles,
There's the emotion so strong
That forms a unique bond.
There's an excitement unexplained,
A strong urge that's ingrained
Deep in my vulnerable heart,
When I'm with you.

It's been a year since we met,
Yet your glow stands out
And you beautifully illuminate,
My world of romance.
Your beauty is fresh like dairy milk,
Your calculated steps forever unique,
Your soft touch simply gorgeous,
You breed envy among your peers!

You are filled with royalty,
You make my heart beat buoyantly.
You are made of love,
It radiates like a dove.
You are the human gold
And the warmth in the cold,
You are the Queen of my heart,
You, the spark so bright!

INFECTIOUS SMILE

How about you smile,
Just one more time,
Your infectious smile
Explosive like a mine.
Your smile inspires
The truest emotions.
Your natural smile
Is worth every dime.
You smile and I smile back
You tease and I tease back
You are a gem in trueness
Your beauty is timeless,
Your smile is priceless!

WHAT IF

What if I hadn't met you?
I would be roaming endlessly
In search of comfort,
For you've given me that which
Is invaluable,
You, the comforter.

What if I hadn't met you?
I would be helplessly getting bitter,
Of disappointments,
Of hypocrisy,
Of materialism,
In the realm
Of love.
For you are the symbol
Of an honest union.

What if I hadn't met you?
I would be searching tirelessly,
For I couldn't do with less
But every bit of who you are,
I would be desperately knocking
On doors; wooden and steel,
For your type of love is unique,
Beyond compare.

What if I hadn't met you?
I would be inept of a spark,
I would be as dull as a desert,
I would be uncertain and hurt.
For without your presence,
My love would be an illusion,
Pegged on unreality.

THAT MOMENT

The moment I set my eyes on you,
The moment my eyes met yours,
That moment when we stared
At each other for a while,
When I couldn't let you off my sight,
That moment when I overcame fear
And stopped stealing glances,
For I couldn't hide my emotions
I stared right through your eyes.
That is the moment I treasure the most.
The moment that you ruptured my thoughts
As I stood there hypnotized,
Anxiously waiting for your signal,
And you obliged.
That moment never gets stale!

QUEEN OF MY WORLD

The morning is here,
The Queen is awake,
She has had a sound sleep
And I'm right by her side.

The morning is here,
The Queen stretches,
She squints and yawns,
'My Queen is hungry.'

The morning is here,
The Queen is in the kitchen,
The house is filled with aroma,
In the kitchen there's a murmur.

The morning is here,
The table beckons, "come near"
I'm seated there salivating,
Taking the bites with a crunching,
With my ever-present fairy tale,
My Queen, at the table.

GOODBYE

You and I have a special connection,
A bond as strong as Tungsten,
A past both beautiful and magnificent,
We have climbed the mountains
And rolled down the valleys,
We have nursed our painful injuries
And celebrated our fitly gains,
Yet today marks a new day.

We would sit down, tell stories and learn,
We would look up see the setting sun,
We would laugh wholeheartedly,
We would cry unashamedly,
We would talk about our memorable past,
We would meet our goals so fast,
We would celebrate our wins
And highlight our gains
Yet today marks a new day.

Let us talk about your toddler steps,
Your fear of failure and missteps,
Let us talk about your free self,
The strength with which you demolished
A wall that is naturally established,
Of professional paths and friendly ways,
Of conquering fears and vulnerabilities,
Of your constant will to have a say,
For today marks a new day.

We have explored the adventures
And conquered the insurmountable,
We have played our cards
And we've won with class,
Yet this is not over just yet,
Ahead lies the mother of all battles,
Ahead lies the ghastly demons,
But you can conquer the wall,
You can muster your strength all
And thrust it thus make a way,
For today marks a new day

I will remember your spirit of a champ,
Your mind that lights brighter than a lamp,
Your ever-present expressions,
Your never-ending questions
And creative imaginations,
Your ever correct intuitions
And unmatched potential,
As I await your victory call.
And I write this filled with tears,
Tears of unquantified happiness,
I write this with utmost emotions,
The ever-uneffaced memories,
I write this while smelling victory,
As you rewrite your story,
Though I will cheer you from away
And hope it all began today.

IN YOUR ANGER

Your stoic expression,
Your hardened face,
Your sharp looking eyes
And trembling hands,
Portray immeasurable anger
That boils from head to finger,
Yet in your anger lies forgiveness.

Your insincere 'all-is-well' look,
As you turn and speak back,
Your staggering movement
Shows the degree of torment
Your plastic smile gives you away,
Exposes the inward disarray,
Yet in your anger lies forgiveness.

Amidst the turmoil and pain,
A glimmer of hope remains.
Forgiveness is the key
That will set us free.
With time, patience and care,
We can learn to forgive and repair.
For in your anger, I read love.

LOVE GONE SOUR

Remember when you and I met
Here at this well-kept monument,
Remember when we shook hands
And stole a glance,
Remember when we drowned in hugs
In warmth and love,
Do you remember?

Remember when we cooked
Coconut rice and chicken thighs,
When we held hands with a grip
As you sat on my lap,
When we romped and skipped
Then clumsily tripped,
Do you remember?

Remember when you smiled broadly
As my hands held yours intimately,
When you could never let me go
Guarding us like soldiers in a war,
When my warm embrace meant the world
And your soft caress kept me glad,
Do you remember?

Fast forward four years gone
And I'm right here all alone,
Seated beside your favourite chair,
Staring blankly at the golden layer,
With my mind still clinging onto the past,
Reeling and in despair like an outcast,
Do you remember?

REFOCUS

Why are you staring away?
Why do you frown all day?
Your somber mood
Reverberates in the hood,
Your look of boredom
Defines this home.

Why are you staring away?
You stare away like I'm a stranger,
You've aped the look of a lone ranger,
Seemingly fatigued by this field,
This field that is concealed
Deep within our hearts.

Why are you staring away?
Yes, we've had our fights, verbal,
We've had our losses, hurtful,
But what assurances lie in the land
You so intently gaze upon?
The land the other side that seems greener
Devoid of anger, losses or pain?

Why are you staring away?
To the land of pretense and illusion,
The land of unrealistic imagination
And potential confusion,
That land of infatuation.

Why are you staring away?
Take in a deep breath and rethink,
Let the reality of love sink,
Then, we'll rebuild our walls,
We'll learn from our losses
And we'll refocus on ourselves.

MILES AWAY BUT CLOSE

Miles away but close to the heart,
Miles away but fresh in the mind,
Miles away but your imaginary self
Looms large in this forsaken hut,
Miles away but only visually.

And I live like in a hole,
As if in some sort of torture,
Your absence swallows me whole,
The prints of your departure
And wounds from the hurt,
Are fresh like baked cake!

Miles away, but physically,
Miles away, not spiritually,
Your unwavering romance
Leaves me on the look
for your unknown return,
Praying and beseeching
That wherever you are, I will be,
To rebuild this for you and me.

YOU PUSHED ME HERE

The past week has been tough,
As you chose to play it rough,
I heard them call me playboy,
They say I treated you like a toy,
I heard it whispered at the market
And in the dreary streets of Nairobi,
But who pushed me here?

The past week has been eventful,
I got messages to make a phone full,
They call me an unfair and a rugged liar,
They say I deserve the consequences dire,
I heard it on my way to the bridge,
Two three four people beside a ridge,
Whispering near River Nairobi,
But who pushed me here?

The past week has been ironic,
With my name no longer iconic
In my in-laws' lips,
They talk of me in bits,
A family member turned stranger,
Cursing that I be a lone ranger,
In the village near Kakamega,
But who pushed me here?

The past week has been yours,
You tell these lies as chaos ensues,
I know your word is stronger against mine,
And though you wield power over the line,
I will not cower as you sling me with mud
Or narrate tales opposite to what we had,
In the villages, towns and cities,
But who pushed me here?

The past week has been comic,
You told your story in speech and ink!
What about your misdemeanor
Even as you paint me a sinner.
Forgetting how you slept in calmness
Amidst the noticeable indifference,
In the bedroom and living room,
But who pushed me here?

Remember when I begged for your love,
When I yearned for the peace of a dove,
When I wrote songs in your praise
And added valuable gifts to amaze,
When I sang to you as my world
And treated you tender like a child,
When you ignored my complaints
And served me all your pretense,
When you obliterated our photos
And concealed our videos,
That we should love in private!
You pushed me here.

YOUR SILENCE

Your silence pierces hard,
Yet deep down you know,
That my heart gets covered
With ice, freezes like a snow
When you are not around,
But my love to you is sixfold.
Thus, your silent self
Will not make me less bold,
Cause how can I put off
The firing fire of romance,
Nor leave quickly in a huff,
That'll leave me in a trance,
Still cursing quite gruff!

MY HEARTBEAT

You are my heartbeat!
I liked you from the first sight,
That memorable day we met,
Your image illuminated like light,
Your unforgettable gorgeous eyes,
Your stunning and steady pose,
Your now famous freestyle walk
Down the decorated pavement,
Never cease to fade from my mind.
Listen, my dearest,
Love conquers many a mile,
And though it may take a while,
True love is worthwhile.
So let us make our way
And make memories all day.

LET US REGAIN

I have seen all there is,
The ravishing and the hideous,
The tall and the quite tiny,
The dumb and the brilliant,
In the months we've been apart.

I have seen all there is,
The mindful and the mindless,
The generous and the heartless,
The focused and the aimless,
The calm and the troubled,
In the months we've been apart.

I have seen all there is,
Yet as I stood by the roadside
Moving against the wind,
It blew me towards your direction,
Leaving me without an option
But to swallow my pride
And embrace you like I'm mad,
Yes, madly in love with you!
And regain the lost months
The months we've been apart.

REAWAKEN

Ours is a dry river,
An idle bed filled with cold,
Prompting me to write a poem
That speaks in a tone so bold,
So you and I can reawaken
That which has gone to slumber.

Thus, allow me to remind you dear,
How you leapt to my heart like a deer,
How I embraced you wholeheartedly,
Then I whispered to you purposely,
Words, words and words -romance!
As you stood in a perfect stance.

This poem should refill our river,
Give it a perfect and timely rebirth,
Let me look at you as my diva,
As clear unlike a labyrinth,
As straight as a dart and forthright
And re-whisper the words of old!

THE SILENT NIGHT

What's in the silent night?
The night devoid of peace,
The night without a sound,
The night of utter silence.

What's in the silent night?
The mood terrifying and tense,
The silence that's deafening,
The war without words.

What's in the silent night?
The night of pure guilt,
As when I remember,
My past careless acts.

What's in the silent night?
The pure betrayal and backstabbing,
The one orchestrated surreptitiously,
Has come and is biting viciously.

YOU KNOW

That you are a friend on high and low?
You know
That you were once in Chile and I know?
You know
That I pray for your wins to flow?
You know
That the feeling between is mutual?
You know
That we'll go on a trip to Zanzibar?
You know
That we've dined and danced in a bar?
You know
That I want you at my graduation?
You know
That we've supported us with affirmation?
You know
That ours is built on progression?
You know
That we both cherish determination?
You know
That I wrote this and you know?
You know
That you find it good for a show?
You know
That I deserve credit for the flow?
You know.

IF ONLY...

If only we could love right
Love through day and night.
If only we could tell the truth
Whether to Rose or Ruth,
As when you and I remember,
How we sat beside an ember
How your lies rolled and swirled,
Leaving me in a backstabbed world-
Devoid of peace but dishonesty,
Longing for nothing but honesty.

PART II: SOCIETAL

DREAMS DEFERRED

Stories are told
Of precious and pricey dreams,
Of dreams of a thousand words,
Dreams of dimes and of dollars,
Dreams beyond imagination,
Dreams of an entire nation!

Stories are told
Of extraordinary dreams,
Of beyond the norm aspirations,
Dreams that would shake the dead,
Dreams worth a million dollars,
Dreams considered priceless!

Stories are told
Of dreams as strong as steel,
Of dreams for salvation
From poverty and frustration,
Dreams of an entire generation
Yearning for lifelong elevation.

Stories are told
Of dreams massacred,
Dreams lacking oxygen,
Dreams burning in an oven,
Dreams beaten into submission,
Dreams without a vision.

Stories are told
Of looming hopelessness,
Of continued procrastinations,
Dreams tired and depleted,
Dreams neglected and dead,
Dreams deferred and lost!

THE MURDERER IN WAITING

You married her with pomp and colour,
The wedding reception in the parlor
Went down as one of a kind,
The bridesmaids and bridegrooms
Shone brightly with elegance,
They danced gracefully
And matched flawlessly.

Two years down the line,
Your romantic norms on the decline.
You stopped visiting the shrines
To pray that your union shines.
Your lovely hugs turned blows,
Your soft touch, now hard it goes,
Brutality characterized the new you
As your atrocities towards her grew!

Before, you would call her darling,
Today, you call her while snarling,
Before, you hugged when home,
Today, your anger bubbles like foam,
Before, you held her hand with pride,
Today, you shun her like she's dead!

The bruises on her face
Define the new phase,
With pity replacing her smile,
She walks on your hostile mile,
You treat her like a slave,
And she helplessly nears her grave!

She makes a prayer in haste,
By now you're too preoccupied
As your eyes on a skirt are tied,
You no longer see her beauty
As you drive in your Suzuki,
Your gaze cast on other women,
Out of fear, she says Amen,
She is like a walking corpse,
And you, the murderer-in-waiting!

THE POOR MAN

He stood there trying hard to smile,
He remembered the many a mile,
He had walked to reach there.
This part of the city had good air.
Unlike downtown's filthiness,
Uptown swam in cleanliness.

He remembered the long journey,
Exhausted, tired and without money,
He'd walked five kilometers
To try his luck in the streets
One passerby came and sneered,
The second passer-by and the third,
Looked at him with pity,
His torn shirt and trouser,
His tired eyes and blazer,
Were enough ingredients for his story.

As the sun began to set,
He thought of begging as a bet,
Pure gamble with good and bad luck,
Today hungry as ever he stood.
Desperation defined his mood,
Two coins for the whole day!
He picked his stuff and walked away,
He would sleep in the trenches
And give it another go the next day.

THE DEVIL IN YOU

You seem to be in a hurry
Running past the busy streets,
You ignore the traffic lights
And can't see an oncoming car,
The miss is noticeable
Judging from the onlookers.
You breathe in, a sigh of relief
Make a Cross sign and move on,
The devil in you!

You finally reach your destination,
You find a few people ahead,
You think your case is special
And everything should stop for you.
You ignore "first come, first serve."
Then, with a wry smile, you think,
'Two hundred shillings would
Propel me to first on the line'
Winking and smiling at the duty nurse
Wins you the attention you yearned for.
Oh, poor you, she can't take it,
You are given a tongue lashing,
Here you try hiding your face
There the attention on you grows.
You humbly sit at the right place
And 'patiently' wait for your turn.
So, you can wait too, phew,
The devil in you!

ELUSIVE CHASE

As your recent fight for equality,
Slowly but steadily gains momentum,
I am your staunch supporter,
Dear African woman.

As you fight for equal representation
And equitable resource allocation,
Your concept of affirmative action
And how you pursue it with passion.
I silently marvel at your openness
But your elusive togetherness!

As you fight with affirmation,
With vigor and resolution,
I eagerly watch in anticipation
For full rights realization.
Yes, to the leadership slots,
Yes, to the women rights,
Yes, to the praiseworthy plaudits,
But first, face the dragon of disunity.

GREAT STEPS.

Great is the heart that gives,
So special that it lives
To bless and caress,
Touch and comfort
Wounded souls.

Great are the steps
That care not to hurt
By trampling down on the weak!
When you are humane,
Your steps will speak out
You'll think before you leap,
The world will smile at you.

GET BACK

You were born healthy,
Had dreams in plenty,
Aspirations and inspiration,
Your set plans in motion,
Despite humble beginning,
You dreamt of winning
Titles and trophies,
Awards and certificates
Yours like mine was valid.

You were indeed talented,
Many baptized you blessed.
Your creativity and innovation
Won you haters and supporters
As you rose into stardom,
Critics waited like a time bomb,
Here racial insults and threats,
There cyber bullying and taunts.

Minutes, hours, days have passed,
Months, years, now in the past,
Your vulnerability came to the fore,
Your brave-smiling face no more,
The unyielding impenetrable wall
Helplessly caved in like a hole.
Look at you now,
Cancer sticks on one hand,
Liquor products beforehand,
The effects taking a toll
Tearing apart your sorry soul.

Depleted defeated and disturbed,
Avoided loathed and insulted,
Mental instability knocks
As you, a shadow that walks
With suicidal thoughts in motion
Loss of dreams and ambition
Feigns a confident face,
But your grotesques unappealing look
Gives you away like an open book.
They sit and watch as you groan,
Laugh and mock as you moan
Tired traumatized and alone
You bid your soul to addiction.

And I plead with you to arise
Recollect yourself and realize
Emotional pain is hard to bear
When everything is a nightmare
And you feel lost and alone
And think you're on your own.
So I give you my helping hand
And watch you take your grand
Playing tunes of redemption
Of second chances and reversion
And see the need to reawaken
Your promising self and to regain
To reach out for help and you will see,
There's a brighter future waiting for thee.

JUSTICE AT LARGE

They snatched away her innocence
At the tender age of eight.
They thought to themselves
Eighteen would be late.
But the arm of Law proved too long,
It clasped firmly on the fleeing scum
And brought hope for the afflicted.
The day for Justice came
And we in numbers matched
To the courtroom.
The man in robes strode in,
His eyes red, his demeanor mean
And we all stood in respect.
Then boom, the case began,
Tension in the courtroom built
Our silent cries for justice found voice
And amidst all the noise,
She stood there unbowed, a fighter,
Yet, in his calm-like composure,
He set them free on bond
On receipt of a brown envelope.
And the mighty had their way again!
Two years down the line,
They walk freely around.
Justice delayed or Justice denied?

LISTEN TO ME

I am that child,
The one looking wild.
The weak child lying down,
The most disgusting in town,
The one with a rugged look.
I hold a bottle of glue and suck
Every drop of its content.
The child who amidst all the trouble,
Lives in a place filled with rubble.

I have walked up the hills,
Down the valleys,
Battered by the freezing cold nights,
Shattered by torrential rains that
Sounded like angry buzzing bees.
Stretchered on the wheels of
Poverty and bleakness,
I have seen the dark side
Of the human race.

The streets have been made my home,
The hustle and bustle for food.
Left overs have become my dessert
Why can't I join my sisters at the banquet?
In those safe homes you built for them,
After rescuing them from the dungeons.

Look at me in my deplorable state
48 hours gone since I last ate
I am here lying, I am here groaning
Besides a grotesque gutter.
Yet when I cry, I am weak,
When I laugh, a clown,
My presence you detest!
Spare me the judgmental scene
That can barely make me win
Those scorching eyes, those fake lies
Do not appeal to my heart.

But I cling onto hope,
I do I do,
And pray for better days,
That will set my heart ablaze,
With the love of a human heart,
The touch of a caring creature,
Those assiduous faces, listen,
I, can be good too, I, can reform too,
I can speak some nice English too.

DEAR CHILD

Dear child,
I look at you lying down,
I can feel the pain within,
Of hunger and starvation,
Disillusionment and frustration,
Dear Child,
I can see despair and brutality
Written all over your face.

I see your light brown eyes,
The tears and heavy sighs,
The bushy brown eyebrows,
Wrinkled and dry skin,
Rough and bruised palms,
The hollow cheeks and weak chin,
Tells of the tales within.

I see you looking at the sky
Pausing and asking why,
The weather is so cruel,
The plants survival is like a duel,
Why the drying leaves,
The scorching sun on trees,
The fading rivers,
The drying taps,
All a sign of doom!

It wasn't your fault
To be born in aridity
In a place filled with torridity
All dark, no light. But,
As you close and open your eyes
There is hope that one day,
Water will be yours to the fill
Food by your side like a hill
Dreams be realized in you,
Dear Child.

MAN UP

You want to possess every bit of success.
You detest any sign of weakness.
You say you are synonymous to perfection
And scrutinize every bit of my action.
You condemn me when I slip
And threaten me.
You see every solution
Cast on your leather whip!

You proudly define masculinity,
With burly arms and deep voice,
With rough palms and steady poise.
You keep saying I should toughen up,
I look at you inquisitively,
You look at me, I look down.
You call that fear, and ask me to look up,
“Man up”, you keep saying.

I will not man up if it means violence
I will not fan the fire of ultraviolence
If it means I lay a finger on the one I love,
Have selective amnesia on critical issues
Signal fear to those I call family.
Or be disrespectful and hurtful
To the closest, the caring,
The ever-present persons around me,
I will not.

You look at my eyes yet you can't read them,
You call me son yet you can't define me,
You ask me to man up
But the meaning is lost on you.
You condemn my every slip,
Yet you forget how you trip,
MAN UP father!
Please, **MAN UP**.

If you **MAN UP**,
You will discover I too did,
You will find out we still love you,
And learn to say sorry,
Albeit a single, two syllable word,
It will heal scars on mama's heart and face,
We will get past the hurt and start a new phase,
Mama will restore her beauty,
Love will be restored at once,
If you **MAN UP**,
Then, perhaps you will realize its true meaning.

MR. POLITICIAN

We look at you
Walking in groups,
Speaking juicy words
Spitting lies!
We stare at your deceiving face,
The castles you build in the air,
As you say in a deceptive way,
What you will deliver,
If elected.

We observe your fake smile,
When you talk of many a mile,
You're willing to walk with us.
Your promises: tarmacked roads,
Hospitals for the sick,
Houses for the homeless
And fees for the hopeless.

We listen keenly as you speak,
Minutes, hours, days to a week,
And we can sense the lies,
As we look into your eyes,
And we assure you, 'our own'
We will not fall into your
Well laid down plans of deceit!
Promises that never come to fruition
In this predictable nation.
Listen, this time you will fail,
All because you have said
The much you will do
But you never said how!

THE PANDEMIC

The roads were empty,
The silence was eerie.
The air felt oppressive,
No one was expressive.
I walked some meters ahead,
Suspicion growing in my head.
I moved past gloomy faces,
All resulting from the cases.

Fear and anxiety loomed large,
The restrictions like a scourge.
No movement here,
No talking there.
Life had taken a new turn,
And everyone felt the ban.
No shaking hands
And singing in bands.
No teasing, laughing
Nor chatting in a grouping.

As everyone minded their business,
Increasing cases bred hopelessness.
With human contact unacceptable
The future became unpredictable.
Restaurants closed, hospitals filled,
Only one or two patients healed.

When all these come to an end
And we can reunite with a friend,
When happiness replaces fear
And we can walk freely with a cheer.
Then, I would sit and deem,
The past happening a bad dream.

THE NATION'S NUMBER ONE ENEMY

As you stand in a boastful manner,
Waiting for free things like manna,
Your posture speaks dissatisfaction,
As your insatiable appetite rolls in motion
You ruin rather than build the nation,
As you slay the good and leave the bad.
You are a vice that makes one mad.

Your target is money,
It sweetens your tongue like honey.
And you take it's every drop
And move your way to the top.
You are like cancer,
That eats a body to its core.
You are like the virus,
That slowly but surely kills.
You are like a monster,
That seeks to rip us into shreds.

The fruits of your labour:
Joblessness and homelessness,
Roads filled with pot holes,
Youths in unemployment
Broke and without a cent.
Droughts hence hunger
Malnutrition and deaths,.

As you sit on your stinky seat
Pondering on your next hit,
I promise you; I will not cower.
I will take it upon myself
To slay the dragon, you,
Your treacherous ways will be outwitted
Your disposition of deceit, repudiated!
Your hidden deception will be no more,
Your rare ugliness and your corrupt core
Will be replaced with honesty and decency
You, the nation's number one enemy.

KENYA MY BELOVED

Kenya is beautifully made, so wow
Land of plenty, rich soil to plough
Look east west, north south, all round
See the hills valleys and rivers found
Mount Kenya the highest in the land
The great rift, the steepest at hand.

Kenya is filled with talent
Lupita the Oscars champion
Sauti Sol the musical lion
Kipchoge in one fifty-nine
Set a record so fine
Lumumba with his eloquence
Kenya swims in greatness.

Kenya is blessed with attractions
The wildebeest migration in Masai mara
The ever-flowing river of Mara
The soaring heights of Aberdare ranges
The coast and its sandy beaches
The steep Menengai crater
Ngare Ndare Victoria and hells gate
Have your mind blown at the Gedi ruins
Ollaro Mara and loita plains
Kenya is indeed a sight to behold!

Our land is rich in culture
Different tribes to capture
Agikuyu Abaluhya Abakuria
Hindi Masai Abagusii
The Taita Taveta's fiesta
Ugali biryani mahamri
Samosa halowa kashata!

Kenyans are friendly
Tourists treated warmly
You can travel everywhere
You can stay anywhere
Anytime, appreciating different cultures
Dancing to diverse tunes
Booking world class hotels
Villa Rosa Sankara Serena
Ole Sereni Panari Sarova
Kenya is the place to be!

Kenya is developing
Our economy improving
Tourism the back bone
Agriculture the pillar
Cultural tolerance and inclusion
Peace love unity in motion
Our uniqueness and diversity
Our strength and vivacity.
With every beauty on land and sea
Tour Kenya and you shall see
That Kenya, is truly the place to be!

MOTHERLAND LIKE NO OTHER

She is a motherland like no other,
She has gone through fights
She has encountered bruises,
She has gone through wins
She has encountered losses,
My motherland has seen it all.

She is a motherland like no other
She has gone through droughts
She has encountered rainfalls,
She has gone through wars
She has encountered peace,
My motherland has seen it all.

She is a motherland like no other,
She has green vegetation and fertile lands,
She has dried leaves on dry lands,
She has food surplus on one side,
She has food shortages on the other side,
My motherland has seen it all.

She is a motherland like no other,
She has selfless chiefs ready to light,
She has self-serving chiefs ready to bite,
She has peace makers embracing dialogue,
She has war mongers baying for blood,
My motherland has seen it all.

She is a motherland like no other,
She has brilliant children
Bright and with a vision,
She has ignoramus ones
That spun their right to vote!
Bribed, played, cheated like a dolt!
My motherland has seen it all.

THE AFRICAN WOMAN

What if she realized her strength?
What if she realized that her weakness
Is rooted in disunity and discord,
What if she realized just how far
Her wings could soar,
Just how firm her feet could get,
What if?

What if she finally understood
That compassion begets peace,
That envy is a recipe for chaos
But love is the ingredient for success,
That divided, one falls,
But united, one prospers
That it is innocuous to celebrate
Her fellow's success and create
That winning feeling -amazing!
What if?

What if she draws inspiration
From women pace setters
The Merkel, Michelle and Rice
The Samia, Simonetta and Banda
Say 'yes I can' and in a minute,
Drift away from her former self
In order to realize her true self,
What if?

What if she realized that gender roles
Are simply a construct, allocated duties
That hold no power over one's destiny
That it would be far more liberating
To smash fiercely gender stereotypes
Than to be limited and bounded,
To be shackled like a captive,
To be cast into a dark, dire world
Of dependence and lack of belief
In one's self worth,
What if?

What if she leaps at the opportunity
Readily available in the community
And understand that affirmative action
Would be better done in unison
With the opposite gender
That her success will not be a result of
Physical and verbal wars, nor scars and bruises
But consistent and constructive discussion
Void of any expletive-like disruption
What if?

What if she realized that feminism
Has its different strands:
Liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist,
That she has the leeway to choose
Her desired strand,
But it's better to embrace a strand
Comprising constructive conversation
That's built on unity of purpose
Rather than toxic discourse,
What if.

What if she realizes she's the solution
To the social and political commotion
Hence deal with her timid self
And embrace bravery,
Hold each other's hands
And partake in national discourse,
Peer through the societal problems
And rise to be the solver,
What if she is the change that
The continent sorely needs,
What if?

WHO ATE OUR MONEY?

As we sit beneath the scorching sun,
I hold tightly onto my remaining son.
As the harsh weather takes its toll
And water dries up from the soil,
We are left wondering,
Who ate our money?

Aren't we supposed to have a dam?
Shouldn't we have machineries in the farm?
Where's the Gulana-kulalu irrigation?
Where are the fruits of devolution?
Of dams that are deep-never ending
Of roads accessible -never bending.
We are left wondering
Who ate our money?

We sit dejectedly in retrospect
Conversing in our dialect
We know we are cheated,
But like a hungry bear, we stand defiantly!
One day, they will tell in a hurry
The degenerates that ate our money,
By then we'll possess the energy
To revisit them endlessly!
But for now, we are left wondering,
Who ate our money?

9 QUESTIONS

One, what if we made our diversity
Our hallmark?
Two, what if we adored our
Rich cultural uniqueness?
Three, what if we embraced the good
And kicked out the bad?
Four, what if we became each
Other's keeper-
By shunning tribal hatred,
Thus reject tribal chiefs
Who spew bigotry and lies?
Five, what if we embraced love,
By caring for the starving
And the homeless?
Six, what if we embraced cooperation
And build a united front-against
Hunger, diseases and sickness?
Seven, what if we utilized our right to vote
To reap what we sow than regret?
Eight, what if we cast votes on ideology and
Not on place of birth nor tribe?
Nine, what if we made our diversity
Our indomitable strength?

THE SPECIAL LAND

I dreamt of that land,
I dreamt of that beautiful land,
Different from my motherland.
That land of sufficient honey,
That wonderful land far away,
Yes, I dreamt of every bit of the land.

I dreamt of her inhabitants,
Hardworking as ants.
The flowing-crystal blue rivers,
The beautiful sprawling green pastures,
Her unique virtuousness,
Motherly care and neighbourliness,
Her rich and tranquil grassland,
Yes, I dreamt of every bit of the land.

I dreamt of her incorruptible self,
Impartiality before the law,
Her insurmountable unity,
Neither storms nor rollercoasters!
Her bountiful yearly harvests to share,
Her noticeable rooted care and flair!
Yes, I dreamt of every bit of the land.

I dreamt of her unending love
That spread wide like an ocean,
And her peace in fulfilled promises.
Her resolute Justice system
That inspired confidence,
Her nurtured godliness and resilience
Stand tall like the sky scrapers!
Yes, I dreamt of every bit of the land.

HOME

Home is far away
A thousand miles away
Home, where my placenta is
I heave a longing sigh.
My heart aches for home
When will I return?

The day I left home
Still lingers in my mind
Those memories still fresh
Those mental wounds still raw
I made away in a scurry
I was indeed in a hurry
To save my future
Or so I thought,
To secure a job
And so I prayed.
But now the longing is real
When will I return?

I left my folks in limbo,
My father holding his 'fimbo'
I mouthed a short prayer
And it was performed right there.
Then I drifted off my chair,
Leaving their faces in despair.
But now the longing is real
When will I return?

I have achieved my goal
To travel around the world
And now I have a yearning
To see my memorable motherland
To sit and dance with family
And enjoy the invaluable care.
Hence this indescribable feeling-
Of my joyous heart beating
Fast like the wooden drums
Conjuring the spirit of yams
When will I return?

I CAN SEE

I can discern the gloom in your poise,
As you stand and walk straight
To conceal the many bends,
As you sit and gaze vacantly,
The pain you exude effortlessly flows,
Hitting hard like blows
For all and sundry to see.

I can see the sombreness on your face,
Your silent cry noiseless
Ringing out in the air and the sea,
Your fake smile
Stunning but yet unnatural
Defines the new you.
And it defiantly emerges
As noticeable as daylight.

I can hear the worry in your voice,
The light tone you imitate
Is as obvious as a torch lit in the dark,
The all is okay with me talk
Slowly chime out your mouth,
Exposing the dryness and despair

I can sense some mild hope within,
Hope for everlasting change,
Of happiness and brightness.
I can see the resolve within
Of the heavy decisions needed,
Of the steps you'll need to take,
The ladders you'll need to climb,
That will shun pessimism
And restore optimism.

OBSCURITY

In the midst of blowing winds
And the raging sandstorms,
Lies a hopeless face
Scared and in a sorry state,
His hope is far-fetched
Many miles away!
Help me understand why,
The human race has lost
The human touch!

In the midst of the cold nights
And drenching, torrential rain,
Lies a homeless man, shivering
Yet only few yards away
Mansions, bungalows, castles
Stand glittering and imposing
The scene is nauseating,
Help me see why,
The human race has lost
The human touch!

In the midst of political bickering,
Lies the man that can't read nor write.
Yet only a few yards away,
Are celebrations and empty chants of
'Free education for all'
Help me get why,
The human race has lost
The human touch!

In the midst of the busiest city
Walks the graduate with a degree,
He thinks hard on the significance
Of education for liberation,
He stands still and with tears,
He is unable to allay his fears.
Yet a hundred yards away,
Driving in a slick limousine
A guy with four jobs at hand
Four pay slips beforehand!
Help me see why,
The human race has lost
The human touch.

IN NEED OF A LEADER

We crave honesty
We tire of deception
Of unfulfilled promises
Of sweet but lying tongues
Of fake and blind cheers.
We are in a quagmire and with
A high appetite for borrowing,
We are in a dreamland filled
With fantasy and ecstasy,
We are smiling from without
But hurting from within!

A quick glance around the land-
Depicts growing sense of fatigue,
Fatigue from thorny politics,
Fatigue from quixotic promises!
There's looming hopelessness,
From entrepreneurs overburdened
To unemployed ones disheartened,
From the taxpayers disgusted
By the theft of public funds,
To those disturbed to see
Beneficiaries of looting-
Waylay their newly acquired gains:
Of lands in gated communities,
Of hotels termed world class,
Of posh cars-bulletproof windows,
To secure them from scorching eyes,
Rather than the guilt of thievery!

In the wake of every scandal
Chicken gate, gold gate et al,
Comes meaningless
Barking and threats
PR resolves and arrests
That hit dead end!
And we've seen ourselves forget
The bad so quickly
And recycle these chosen chiefs.

We don't need taunts and threats,
We need action.
We don't need shaky directives
We need firm ones.
We don't need PR stunts
But honesty. We need
Chiefs with a lion's fury
Who watch and pounce.
Chiefs, who like good parents,
Will detect our misery within,
Than judge us from our outward
Pretentious selves!
Chiefs, who care to fulfil
Their promises without coercion,
Whose record is not in question,
Who'll put us in growth motion
And trigger a national cohesion,
We need a Lee Kuan type intervention,
We are in need of a leader.

DONKEY SPEAKS

I trudged down the rugged valley
Carrying your water in a hurry
Back up the tiresome hills
And round rough and steep terrains
To fill the big awaiting drums
And fill them, I did!
Does it ever cross your mind
That I get thirsty too?

Last month you harvested well
A harvest deemed bountiful
I was right by your side
Carrying to and from the farm
You filled your granaries
And prepared sumptuous dishes
But let me feed on the aroma,
Does it ever cross your mind
That I get hungry too?

Last week you coughed violently
You were sad and lay dejectedly
As I looked on with your dear wife
We both feared for your precious life
And yet the next morning -a hopeful sight
As to the hospital you were rushed,
Does it ever cross your mind
That I need a veterinary too?

What worries me is the present cold
As I shiver and wish you sold
My soul to a caring passer-by.
For after months of the cold so bleak,
Comes the heat making my body so weak,
Yet you sleep soundly with no dismay,
Keeping extreme weather at bay
Does it ever cross your mind
That I need a roof upon my head?

Last night I saw something wild
I screeched in fear but couldn't hide
Unlike you who has a padlock
I don't have a door to lock
And so, I'm at the mercy of fate
As creatures roam in the night,
Does it ever cross your mind
That I need security too?

I earn you your daily money
And sweeten your life like honey.
I help you pay your bills
And lift a load off your shoulders,
Yet you trade my kin for hide
Forgetting our good but our bad,
Does it ever cross your mind
That we have emotions too?

YOU WILL RISE

Say I will rise and you will
Say, mean it and make it real,
Either you whisper the words silently,
Or speak the words, roar them loudly,
Till the doubters exclaim, yeah!
'I will rise, I will rise like they'

Like Maya Angelou in 'Still I rise'
Like Dangote to the echelons of fortune,
Like Barack Obama to the highest office,
Like Elon with rockets into ethereal space,
You will rise!

Like Luther's legacy in civil rights realization,
Like Madiba Mandela post incarceration,
Like Oprah and her tale of transformation,
Like a colony to a duly developed nation,
You will rise above the set limitation.

From ashes and turmoils, you will rise,
From rejection and repudiation, you will rise,
From the fear of failure, you will rise!

You will rise, if you hold on to your dream,
You'll rise if you hang on one last time,
You will rise if you keep the fire burning,
Of an imagination kept alive by believing,
That for every sunset, there'll be a sunrise,
You will rise!

PEACE OF MIND

Peace of mind isn't hidden,
It's Within reach so don't be sullen
Instead, pursue it with all the might
And darkness will turn into light
As peace knocks on your door.
So, hold onto every coming hour
Just as you do with the promise
Of heaven and like a chase
That ushers glory with celebration
Peace of mind can be your portion
Only if you change your mindset!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nehemiah Otipah is a Kenyan born poet and an experienced educator in English Literature. He has **performed poetry** since his childhood days and adjudicated poetry under English elocution in the Kenya Music Festivals. He began **writing poems** about 10 years ago. He has been **awarded** several certificates for emerging among the best in the country in various poetry competitions. His poems have been featured in **festivals** such as KMF and Gift Festivals while some have been **translated** from English to other foreign languages and featured in **international magazines** such as **The Helezon** among others and in literary discourse, interpretation and analysis. Nehemiah is currently pursuing a PhD in English Literature at Mount Kenya University. Not only is he **a poet** but also a firm believer of **social justice**. This has had some influence on the content he advances in his poetry. He has since shared his poetry on Google as a way of reaching out to a wider audience.

FOR THE LOVE OF POETRY