

Poetry Series

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

- poems -

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Khethiwe Ramathuthu(06 August)

I am just a simple girl, who has grown to become a woman who cannot help but go through life feeling.

I have often feared that someday I will feel too much, even for my own heart and mind to comprehend, and that is the reason why I would rather much prefer to write it all instead.

I love writing poetry it is the only place where I can say things that I feel and see without scaring people.

It is a place where I can let people eaves drop into my conversations with God.

Be Still My Heart

When you want to cry, stop because look Jesus loves you and he is saying breath I have got you.

Be still,look heaven is looking at you with all the angels lining up their hugs to you, they will come in rain drops to tell you it is okay.

Be still, oh my wrestles soul and let not the doubts keep you up at night and steal your peace.

There, catch the Lord's kiss in the wind.

His presence is felt in the air after the rain has washed the earth.

Be still my heart though it may seem as if it is never ending, but keep the faith cause joy cometh in the morning.

Oh Lord my God keep my heart safe in your hands give me strength to rise above all of this.

Though I am a grown woman, I am still but a child that needs you to lift her up so I can shine and glorify you.

Be still my heart in the arms of the Lord

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Death Comes

Death comes like a small breeze in the night sneaking in on all the unsuspecting only to kill the fire that burns on the candle light.

Kwa cima izibane, the light is gone, when death comes.

A life once celebrated, where a person used to lay.

We used to call you by name and you would answer and now we will hear your voice no more, and will never see your smile again.

Kwa cima izibane, the light is gone, when death comes.

We bid you goodbye and wish you a safe journey home to be with your Creator who will receive you and welcome you back like a dove returns to his master after it had travelled the world.

Those whom you have left behind are left wondering why, feeling that it is not fair, what will they do without you?

Kwa cima izibane, a lifeless body remains like an empty gong

Death comes like a small breeze in the night sneaking in on all the unsuspecting.

Kwa cima izibane, the light has gone

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Have You Forgotten How To Love Me

Have you forgotten how to love me?

You used to hold me up like a trophy you could not put down.

You used to show me off like a rare diamond and now you do not even look up when I come back from work.

Your kisses are saved only for special occasions and you do not hold my hand any more.

Have you forgotten how to love me?

You used to look into my eyes and know if I was happy or sad and now all of a sudden I have to tell you how I feel.

or maybe, could it be that you have forgotten how to love me.

Hello my love, my name is me, the woman you have been married to for 10 years.

Remember how you used to love me

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Hello My Friend

Hello My friend

Oh, how I have missed you.

I missed your smell, your taste and the happy places you take me too.

But why do you delight in my misery?

Why won't you let me be happy without you?

Why does your love cost me my family, my job, my health, dignity and everything that I love except you?

You knew I would come back to you once I had been to the happy place.

You knew you were bad for me and yet you still took me anyway.

Don't you love me?

And if you do not love me why is it that you are the only one who does not judge me and who accepts me?

Is that not what love is?

But why do you delight in my misery?

Why won't you let me be happy without you?

I am the point of death.

You have finally cost me my life.

Please let me go, my family loves me see how their crying and begging me to stay with them.

Goodbye my friend please let me go.

Your love is not free, it only brings shame and hurt to me and the people around me.

Please let me go, because you are not my friend no more, because you never were a true friend.

Let me live.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Let Me Praise You In My Trials

Ululating to the top of my voice saying Bayethe Ngwenyama yeZulu, Lion of
Juda, the Rock of ages because I know Victory is mine.

Let me praise you in my trials when pain pierces my soul so that tears are
running down my face, because I know they awaken the Lion in you, the father
in you, my God Jehovah

When they seek me to persecute me, Iet me praise you because this battle is not
mine.

When death comes knocking at my door for it comes for every one young and
old, when it seeks to devour my young ones, those whom you have blessed me
with to find pleasure in, only for a little while, let me praise you because all
things work together for good for those who trust in you.

Let me praise you when the ones I love betray me and are found in the council of
my enemies because if you are for me who can be against me.

Let me praise you in my weakness, when sickness has come upon me because I
know your power is made perfect in my weakness.

Let me praise you when words are gone from my mouth, when hope is just but a
glimpse in a faraway distance, whispering in my darkest hour EL Roi God of
Seeing I know you see me in my distress.

Let me praise in my trials

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Lufuno(Love)

My son's name is Lufuno and I swear he is love himself.

His face is love, his smile is love, everything about him is love.

When he touches my face with his little hands he is love.

His walk and his step is full of love, there is nothing about him that is not love.

His eyes are gentle, and he has two dimples that show themselves only when he is naughty.

He is like spring followed by a band of butterflies, where ever he goes love follows.

It chases him it, over takes him, he trips on it, he stumbles over it.

He cannot get way, he cannot refuse or deny it, it overcomes him.

My son's name is Lufuno and I swear he is love himself.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

My Father's Name

I am my father's daughter.

I carry his name with pride and honour.

His name is not that of kings, or that belonging to a chieftaincy, but it is one that commands respect that he has earned.

Yes I am my father's daughter and I carry his name with honour and pride.

This is the name that he made for himself, he was 13 years old when he ran away from home in Mpumalanga and made his way to Pretoria.

He slept in construction pipes and he worked in white peoples gardens to earn a living.

What he is now, what he became is a testimony of God's hand and a willingness of a soul to be obedient and work hard.

My father's name is Msibi Ndlondlo, Qotshwayo, Ndlondlokhotshe manonelekhatsi njengendlati.

He is Diliza umthangala wazigwanyana u flubhu isibham sashaya bili sangapha. And this he knows, he knows it in his sleep, he knows it without doubt. When he approaches the throne of God to call out His name and present his case concerning him and his affairs, he says "I am the one you have saved the one you have kept for your glory only".

"I am the one who is a product of a split marriage, who was raised by his aunt, who was nobody's favourite, and you gave me favour and have seen me through today to be a leader in my community, to be a father to the fatherless, to be in the council of man to tell them the things of old, the things that were taught by our ancestor on how to walk in reverence of you as our God, as head of our lives, so we can be heads of our families "

My father's name is known to all who have had the pleasure of meeting him as wise, as stubborn, strict, and a hard worker.

To his elder he remains humble, he still sits closely to listen to their stories of old to learn so he can teach, so he can understand and explain imvelaphi yethu.

How privileged I have been to be born to this man's name, to be raised and lead through his wisdom, to have been loved and truly loved by this man.

My bum has suffered in his hands, I have been carried on his shoulders, and his shoulders are big.

I am my father's daughter and I carry his name with pride and honour.

This is the name that he has never brought shame in his conduct to his family;

this is the name that his wife calls him by with respect and endearment.

My father's name is Msibi Ndlondlo, Qotshwayo, Ndlondlokhotshe
manonelekhatshi njengendlati and I am my father's daughter.

The Lord has blessed him with two daughters of his own to cherish and raise in
His way so that they can be the princesses of mother earth.

Today they hold their heads high to world and say I will bring up your children
for I am my father's daughter and he has raised me to be a queen.

One he called Sibongile and the other he called Khethiwe, upon receiving his
daughters as his inheritance on earth from God he said we thank you Lord
(Sibongile) and he acknowledged that yes he has been chosen (Khethiwe) in
the will of God to be Diliza umthangala wazigwanyana u flubhu isibham sashaya
bili sanqapha

To destroy people's expectations of his life and build on what God has called him
to be.

Yes I am my father's daughter and I carry his name with pride and honour.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

My Love Song To My God

How wonderful and beautiful you are?
How excellent, pure and powerful you are?

You love me with a love so pure, so awesome, it amazes me, and it humbles me.
Your love is my hiding place where I always feel safe, loved and accepted.
You have kept me always, and have directed my steps since I was in my mother's womb.

You have always had a plan for me and it is in discovering your plans for me that I wonder who am I that you should think of me always, order my steps and be concerned of my going out and coming in.

Oh, and when I see your power displayed of how you order the winds, the stars and the seas then I am afraid because how can one with such power and authority give favour to one such as me and be concerned about my life, my thoughts and my joy.

How can one so great become concerned about working all things for my good?
Sometimes I find myself trying to explain how sweet your love for me is and I can only think of the sweetest of nectar that satisfies my thirst.

Your love for me is all I need, it gives me strength, and it is the reason that I can hold my head high without fear and walk boldly, it is where I discover who I am.
Thank you my love, my God, my Father, you are my King, my councillor, my provider my Healer my Warrior.

You satisfy my thirst you feed my soul; you whisper to me things untold.

I love you Lord your love is so beautiful, in it I find myself and I am happy.

In your love I dance around like a child dancing in the rain because I find myself and I am beautiful.

In your love, wow I am also like all of your creation created wonderfully and faithfully.

I am so in love with you.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

My Mother In Law

My mother in law is from a different world from mine, raised to uphold different traditions and values.

She is Venda and I am Swati, she cannot speak my language and neither can I speak hers.

She is my husband's heart, he loves her so.

She looks at him with eyes that reminds me of the first time I looked at my baby boy, and wonder in amazement if this is how I will still be looking at my son even after he brings a wife home.

But I know she love me.

I know she loves me because in our quiet times she shares with me the lessons she has learned; she tells me stories of her past that even my husband does not know.

These stories she does not share all at once sometimes we are sitting under the tree, sometimes we are sitting next to the fire.

It was in one such occasion when we were sitting under a shade and she touched my hair and I knew she loved me

It is in our quiet times, just me and her, no one else around to see, to testify and say I was there.

These are the times I understand why Ruth stayed with Naomi.

My mother in law is my husband's heart but I know she loves me.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Tell Me, Were You A Man

Mandela wa Nsondo were you man?

Were you man that you loved and forgave just like the son of God who forgave His oppressors?

Were you man or was it your destiny to remind us that we are gods like David called us, we are the Royal priesthood like Jesus called us, we have the capacity to love, to forgive, to change, to create and when we have done it all in our glory to know that were are just man for Gods glory?

Nelson Mandela were you man when you accepted all races, and were found at the feat of children.

Were you man when in your strength you did not shy aware from war yet you did not go knocking at its door?

Tell me, were you a man when you choose to serve your people over your family and eat bread from the plate of your oppressor.

I look in your eyes when you smile and I am haunted by the understanding that I see, the compassion that is looking back at me, tell me! Were you a man?

You remind me so much of my grandfather, your stories bring back so much of my people's history, stories of kindness, stories of courage, stories and gestures of what the world calls uBuntu and yet it is how we used to live in the days of old.

Tell me, were you man and if yes, if yes then God lived in you and you were truly His temple.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

The Beauty Of Being A Woman

I have found the beauty of being a woman amongst other woman.

When I give myself permission to engage with different types of woman, from different walks of life, of different ages I find the beauty of women.

When I let go of the prejudice taught to us by different cultural divides, religions and look at the women from the place of love and understanding I see and feel the beauty of being a woman.

For many of my youthful days I was of a female gender because it was by design, I did not choose it neither did I have a problem with it, because being a woman, is like being black it has challenges of its own but these challenges builds your character and makes life so interesting that when you sit down and think about it you would not have it any other way, because life is interesting that way.

When I was a girl I felt I had the biggest chip on my shoulders and competed with the boys the best way I knew how, intellectually, I challenged them in their way of thinking, I debated issues with them that adolescent boys did not want to think about yet they spoke to me about them in order to save face when all the while they just wanted to get under my skirt.

It is this arrogance and pride that caused me to rebel and not allow myself to love and enjoy the pink colour, baking, cooking, cleaning and order. To me doing those things meant that I was submitting to rules and regulations that were designed by men under a tree, as I used to put it in order for them to be more superior to women.

And do not get me wrong, I did not hate being a woman but I thought my main purpose in life was to prove to men that I was not the weaker sex.

I was an equal in all my relationships and sometimes even superior, and this is a women who never dated anyone of the same age as she was, because again women biologically mature quicker than men.

When I became a women is when I fell in love with my husband, when all the walls of Jericho fell and all of a sudden what I thought was men's agenda on earth was turned upside down and giving myself to him and not just my body, my vulnerabilities and fears was an inevitable.

It's like God suddenly said to me I have found your match somebody who will

teach you,
even if it brought you pain like none you have ever felt, what it is to be a
women.

Whilst my husband is teaching me what it is to be a woman,
and to submit either by choice or by love, engaging with other women who have
gone through similar things that I have had to learn, some face the same fears
but disguised in different forms I have found the beauty of being a women.

I have learned you do not have to let yourself go and not look after yourself
because beauty is for shallow people.

You do not have to neglect empowering yourself with knowledge and skill in the
hope that some men will marry you and save you from your human responsibility
of using your talents to contribute to life with your works.

I have found the beauty of being a woman amongst the old women, who have
seen it all, have done it all and are not fazed by much anymore.

I have seen beauty in women walking down the road in the morning in groups
laughing loud with their long skirts and doekies, to get to Mrs's house so they
can clean their houses get paid and go back to take care of their families.

I have seen beauty in the woman on Destiney's covers who are full of ambition
and drive.

I have seen so much beauty in being a woman that I finally feel that God has
won His case and the verdict was that there is no weakness in being a woman
only beauty.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

The Reason Why I Sing

To be blessed and kept by the grace of God.

To be the beloved and privileged to have the knowledge of Him,
It is the reason why I sing, it is the reason why I am filled, and it is the reason
why I stand.

I stand in the mist of it all; I stand in the knowledge that all things work together
for good for me.

I smile and my eyes are filled with the mischief of a child because I have come to
the knowledge that none of it really matters actually all of it is designed for my
glory, for me to be lifted, for my Joy for me to shine, and for me to stand
because when I stand it is to God the glory.

I am not proud I am humbled to the point of my knees because I realise once
again it has absolutely nothing to do with me but it is done for me in order for
God to show Himself through me.

I am a vessel of Gods glory, when I am weak He is Strong and His Armour shows
to the world, when I am beautiful His beauty is revealed, and oh! When I am rich
His riches pour out to the world to touch those whom He cares about, who move
His heart.

I go to where he says I must go, I bloom where He plants me, and I am a vessel
for His glory.

That is why I sing and that is why I stand.

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

What Matters Is How You See Me

I am beauty in your eyes.

I am queen, I am mother and I am provider.

There is nothing that I do not know, there is nothing I cannot do because in your eyes I am flawless.

In your eyes there has never been anyone like me, I am a goddess.

You love me with a love filled with faith and belief, it is hard not to want to live up to it because what matters is how you see me.

With your beautiful, gentle soul, you receive me and you accept me, you celebrate me but you never choose me.

In your eyes I am not guilty of sin, I cannot do any harm, I am as perfect as a summer's day.

It is the reason why I wake it is the reason why I am blessed because of how you see me.

Because what matters most is how you see me

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Where Are The Men?

Hee hee nibo yelele kani, where are the men?

Cries a woman lifting her hands to her head, as she walks into her shack to find her two year old daughter whom she left playing outside not far away from where she was hanging her clothes raped.

Where is he, who is he?

Could it be that it is my brother, or maybe my husband?

Was it the neighbour or the gardener, the man walking past who saw her playing in the dirt in her pink dress and thought what, what really does a man think when he goes into the body of a small, young innocent little girl like that?

And where were the men when that happened, Amadoda emadodeni, izinsizwa nsi.

Where were the men when an old women gets raped at 84 years of age, where are her sons, her brothers, and her uncles.

Where are they to protect her then, to speak against this heinous crime and say enough is enough?

Where are the men when day in and day out women walk in fear not knowing if I might be next, if it is going to be my brother, my husband, my father?

Is the neighbour one of them, maybe the pastor?

Were the men not supposed to protect us?

Can they not see us when we cry?

Are we not the ones who carry them for 9 months, do we not breast feed them, care for them that they grow big and strong only for them to become our tormentors.

Where are the men?

Where are you my brother, my father and my lover?

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Whose Story Is It To Tell?

And why after so many years do we still feel that there should be secrecy around it?

Why is it still a disease that people feel they have to be ashamed of, that they have to defend themselves for having it, as if they did some heinous act to get the disease?

I ask you because this is my story, but I do not know if it is mine to tell.

Can I tell the story if it affects so many people.

And as much as I know that me telling my story might set someone else free, might make the world see that here we are presented with an opportunity to tap into our humanity, our sense of Ubuntu, it might also make the people who are affected feel that I have taken the decision to disclose away from them, that I have taken their privacy away from them and now they have to be ashamed or feel that they have to defend themselves.

Whose story is it to tell?

This is my story, I am HIV positive, my sister is HIV positive, my friend is HIV positive, my mother is HIV positive but who isn't?

Who isn't HIV positive or is affected by HIV, who has not suffered the loss, the shame, the fear, almost everyone in South Africa.

Why then do we still make the ugly jokes, so and so is so..... thin I think he has the three letters?

You are coughing so much I think unamagama amathathu.

Do you know how painful it is to hear that to a mother who has just buried her child because of the same illness?

Do you know how painful it is to a sister to hear that being said about her sister, do you know how painful it is to a women who contracted the illness from her husband who has just passed away and she has had to sit on the mattress and mourn him even though he has never said I am sorry to her.

This is my story, and I know this is the story of a lot of people but not too many people know that in my story I have seen the families being taught to forgive, and to love and truly choose to love like I have never seen in this lifetime before.

Very few have felt the love of a family working together to rebuild, to redeem a

marriage.

This is my story but whose story is it to tell?

Whose story is it to tell that through the grace of God that life does go on and that it goes on as if nothing ever happened.

Whose story is it to tell that through the grace of God, the love and support of a good family, you and I are no different.

This is my story but I do not know if it is mine to tell and until I can truly tell the story without fear and without doubt,
then Lord please save us, save us because we are a people so far away from love that even when you present such opportunities like HIV for us to come together, love one another and care for one another we are still not able to see it.

This is my story, the world is HIV positive but does not want to tell the story, so who story is it to tell anyway?

Khethiwe Ramathuthu

Woman You Are Strong

The burden you bear, the trouble you carry,
But God is not fazed because He knows that you are strong,
"Greater is He that is in you than he that is the world".

Woman you are strong.

Woman you are able.

You can love when there is no hope, make a home where there is no peace.
See the woman of Afghanistan they send their sons to fight because fight they must, while they gather their daughters for safety.

Woman of Kenya, let their children feed on them when they themselves have nothing in their belly.

Because" It is written, not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God".

Woman you are strong, and your beauty hides your hardship.

In your arms you raise them; on your backs you carry them.

They are man, even though when they are kings they forget, you raise them.

Woman you are strong.

You have stopped many wars while you lay in bed with your beloved, and your arms have been home to many who are fatherless.

Children run at your feet, your smile is inviting.

You are hope personified.

When you weep your tears touch the very heart of God, and He is moved with compassion.

You are God's secret weapon and have always been.

You gave birth to the Savior, and by Him the Power of God

Woman you are strong.

Woman you are able

Khethiwe Ramathuthu