

Poetry Series

Bonwell Rodgers

- poems -

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Bonwell Rodgers(26 July,1991)

My name is Bonwell Rodgers and I grew up in Blantyre (Malawi) with my family of five (Dad, Mom, myself, Chiyembekezo and Susan) . Life was simple. My siblings and I were very happy and our family was happy too. For many days a week we would leave home to attend school. Soon we found a rhythm of what to do in our lives. Later in 2006, dad passed away and this made life a bit harder.

I quickly understood the importance of preparation, hard work, and respect. I applied these values to my endeavors by planning my activities for efficiency, working on my goals every single day, and giving my body the necessary rest it needed to operate. I worked hard at school. Though not a gifted learner, I tried hard to do better in class and come up with good results. Growing up a so called 'African life' taught me that hard work and thrift are sometimes the only things a person can afford. My upbringing has completely supported my development and I am thankful for it.

Comrade

Struggle after struggle we fought
with our hearts and minds adjacent
we drove out our ruthless enemy
NOW the battle is over
you declare our comradeship officially over
You find fault with my nose
you say wealth doesn't suit me
Saying I don't have a step to pace with it
and you elope with another comrade
me gaping at you disappearing in thin air.

Bonwell Rodgers

Death Of An Author

Sniffing peril in the air,
am retreating back to my hole,
hoping a heel doesn't close it before am safe.
My fellow comrades with four,
some six feet have banished me
from the insect kingdom saying am a freak,
cause I have one eye when the rest possess a pair of them.
Whatever; as long as I have legs,
I will walk to my original hole though alone.

The best way to defeat an enemy,
is to make friends with the enemy.
Am going to make friends with the locusts or grasshoppers
with the whole trust they won't make me chop
when their mouths salivate at my fatty neck...

'Hey comrade! ' says the brick headed old fellow.
'Comrade, am not gathering today,
some cowards demands my head forgetting we are all insects.
No matter they adopt names such as major general, captain, constable, etc
they will never become those two legged creatures
who drinks us together with their hot tea
whenever we surround their cup for our means of life.

Why should we be divided as some 'more equal' than the rest of us.
Their cocktail parties cannot be attended by an outcast like me,
without titles in the military...'
'Friend, times have changed, things have fallen apart, and we are no longer one.
If a chicken comes to attack you,
the rest will be cheering your last breath.
Am old now and in the evening of my life
give me a decent burial.
Unless you tell the present generation to unite,
you will never win against those murderous chickens.
They will always torment you... '
That was the last voice I heard from the brick headed old comrade... He died...

Bonwell Rodgers

Long Live Ignorance

Don't pray with it for it can let things down,
gobble our brain and make us myopic.
It can make us fail to see what's in front of our nose.
What is the reason for albino carnage?
Surmising their bones are serendipity
Does yours not bring you lot?
Why not use them to peg away?

Ignorance is also raiding savants,
for they believe in black art,
thinking someone will penetrate their home,
through a lock hole and exit without a spoor.
Why thinking that he has been whack by a hammer,
when reality shows, its stroke
Why squander time to go to magic healers
instead of rushing to the hospital and save life

If there is that science called witchcraft,
does it benefit anybody?
Does it give you food to eat?
Can it redeem you from death?
Why claiming to have an air floater when you are trekking barefoot?
If it is real, why are you still an indigent?

I think we need to wake up!
Wake up and see real things
Wake from this slumber of foolishness,
which is intimidating even the wits and grip their brains.
Filtering their cognition,
and turn them into vassals of ignorance.

(July 21,2016)

Mango

Asungwana akunga mango,
mango a phee, ali mumtengo.
Abwinoabwino amakhala patali,
patali pokola chidwi cha maso,
Pofuna kulimba chiwindi ukamakwera
kukonzekera kutsakamuka.

Ndiye ngati walimba mtima tambala iwe,
kwera mpaka pamwamba.
Njole ukazipeza,
Koma usaiwale kuti ukhoza kugwa.
kugwa pansu, osati m'chikondi.

Bonwell Rodgers

Muona Polekera

Amalume,
Kano kokha ndiyankhula.
Chizolowezi chanuchi n'chotani?
Chochenjeretsa ana ndi kuseri kwa mbamu.
Inu mwati anafe tikutsinkha ndiwo,
Mwatitcha ana ochititsa manyazi,
Ofunika kuingitsidwira kutali pakabwera alendo,
Komatu ukathyali wanu tautulukira.
Chiyambire kupitamo m'mbalemu kwathu n'kusunsa,
Inunso mwafuna kutiphimba m'maso pochita zomwezo.
Mbamu zanu n'zambina,
Polowa m'mbalemu zikungofikira pakuda.
N'kutuluka zitanenepa kwambiri,
Zitapanga mang'a m'nthitimu,
Tikungodabwa kuti m'mbalemu mwayera,
Kodi ndiko kuchenjera kwanu?
Kosunsira limodzi ndi ndiwo.
Lerotu muona polekera,
Nthuli zathu mutibwezera,
Apo ayi tinena kwa agogo.

Bonwell Rodgers

Oo! My Poor Face

Sitting on the couch, looking at the mirror, watching my face.
To be honest, from the tip of my toe,
all the way up, to the hair of my head,
I see nothing pleasing for exhibition.
My legs are curved like a bow
almost making a complete circle when standing.
From there, lies my thin thighs and a slight behind,
tagged along with my stomach rotund.
Hanging on my hanger of bones are my long thin arms.

Talking of the face I am staring now breaks me.
From the top of my head, down
I have two eyes, very large like awls.
My skin is black, extremely black as death,
generous with great acnes
Are they sent by someone who envies my skin?
My big nose hangs planted on the center
giving the impression that I was born to blow it.
My lips are heavy; like all the flesh on my cheeks is gathered there.
This ugliness comes deep from my core
for my unfortunate looks are coupled with putrid behavior.

But wait: What am I thinking?
I have a heart to mend
Beauty must come deep from the heart
otherwise it may be hypocrisy
why focus on the hood
When I have habits to shade, manners to curb.
I have to start with mending my heart
although I have unfortunate looks,
at least I should have a beautiful heart.

Bonwell Rodgers

Shy Boy's Confession

Seeing my sun going up
I have to calculate my dusk,
by finding someone to accompany me
through this dark jungle of life.
In every life rains fall
I want someone to give me shelter.

My heart tells me am madly in love with you
But I have a problem;
am a shy boy, very shy like a hedgehog
I asked someone to bring you home.
Now here you are, I show my heel and turn into thin air.
Meeting you, all my sentences evaporate.
I am a genuine paranoid.

But today I will tell you the whole story.
Am ready to face the consequences,
I will vomit what is in my heart.
I will squeeze every sentence out of my mouth
I will tell you how much I love you,
and ask you what you think of me.

Bonwell Rodgers

Slap That Drum!

Slap that drum with vehemence.
Make the cloud mad.
Induce a man of God to shake,
until the ground break.
Hit it man, strike until it cry out loud,
and make mortals move their hooves,
extricating granulated earth in the air.
Sweep the whole crowd with mellow mood.
Beat away their anxieties
and quake off their troubles
Slap that drum man of rhythm!

Life is baggy with storms.
In the name of music, stop the rain!
Lynch it with elation
let's whirl until the tallest dwarf
Stir the body freely and make hands fly
Life is what you make.
Don't allow it to make you,
compose happy moments
set yourself free with a swing
So man of drums, make it cry hard.
Make our hearts thud.
Slap that drum man of rhythm!

Bonwell Rodgers

The Death Cry

The death cry roared
And wake all the guardians in the ward
the monster entered
Walking around the beds claiming its dues
Picking up the weak and tired
As if they failed to pay their debt
Leaving behind the innocent with ravaged faces
A moist washcloth on their foreheads
Arms folded, eyes out

'But not my brother, he's still green! ' someone exclaimed at the corner bed
'Hurry up and call the doc immediately! '
They wrestled with the monster at the top of their voices
Doctors came by, playing their elaborate charades
The invisible enemy came and surpass them
Planting its fangs and crush the throat of their only one,
blocking his airway, and asphyxiated him
his last gasp evaporating
Seizing him at the salad age,
leaving behind people wailing!
Moving to the next bed.

Bonwell Rodgers

The Old Caterpillar Should Lead The Way

You have lived long enough,
you've seen a lot.
Sleeping long have made your hair come out gray
This makes you capable to pave the way for us
Take the lead in this immense bush
In case it will bow for many days.
But thistles and thorns including itching grass awaits.

Show us how to cross this tarmac road
Where giants of metal, the giants of no mercy, break bones
They make a way on our backs and turn us into two
Brow out our brains and seal our mouths
That's why you have to lead the way
So that little ones should follow your steps
Without fear to blow up
But to grow up to maturity.

Lead the way and sacrifice yourself
Throw yourself to the chickens.
Walk through running waters,
because that's what the ruler is obliged to do.
So stop torturing us and eating all our food,
your duty is to lead us, not to munch our rations and beat us.

(July 21, 2016)

Bonwell Rodgers

Transmuted Fowls

These inflated fowls,
swelled up with mutants and antibiotics.
Priced like Lamborghini poultry,
the Ayam of Cemani,
ribbons of Indonesia,
birds of price esteem.

Four hundred million slaughter a year
a fine massacre for profit.
Full of venomous chemicals,
ready to make peoples table.
They please their life with a bite of slow death,
and inject chemicals of cancer through their mouths,
chewing their days, so and so.

Truly, death is expensive.
But prices of these chickens are also very steep.
Money suckers, with a value of a cow.
It's like they were raised in a rich family,
went to a high school,
walk in university corridors
and graduated with a price tag.

Glossary

Lamborghini poultry is a very expensive breed of chickens. These chickens are black inside out.

Ayam means 'chickens' in Indonesian.

Cemani is the village where they originated. It also denoted the color of the chickens since they are 'completely black.'

Bonwell Rodgers

Waona Chiyani Mwanawe?

Waona chiyani mwanawe?
Chomwe chakudodometsa chotere?
Nkhope yako yaderanji?
N'chiyani chadzetsa kasupe m'masayamo?

Ndaona zinthu ine
Poto ndavundukulayu ngotentha
Chivundikiro chandikanirira m'manja
Mkono wanga wauma
Maso anga alowa mkati
Mutu wanga wasweka
Matumbo anga akubwadamuka
Mafupa anga atheteka
Mavuto andifupikitsa msinkhu
Andidyera mnofu wanga.

Ndikuona mavuto m'potomu
Onenepa ngati mvuu
Akubwera athanzi okhaokha
Ojintcha ngati mlambe
Olemera ngati mwala.
Amphamvu ngati madzi osefukira.

Andithyola nthiti zanga
Aphinya mapapo anga
Mimba yanga yatumuka,
Ndi mpweya wosowa kothawira.
Nthangala ya mutu wanga yafwamphuka
Maganizo anga auma
Nzeru zanga zauluka
Ine n'kugwira njakata.

N'kulakalaka n'kanakhala nyerere
N'kanalowa pauna n'kuthawa
N'kanangotsenjira kuti asandionenso
Ndani angandichotse minga ya pansanayi?
Anthu onse akungondiyang'ana
Achinansi andithawa
Mabwenzi akundinyogodola m'maso muli gwa.

Moyowu ngwangati anyezi
Timausenda tikulira
Kenako timayamba kulala ngati moto
Ndipo kenako timasungunuka
Kenako n'kuuma.
Ndiye mukafunsa kuti waona chiyani mwanawe?
Ndaona zododometsa,
Ndaona manthu wamavuto.

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