

Poetry Series

**Femi Folami**  
**- poems -**

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## Femi Folami(1953-)

Born in the fifties at a time when America was in the midst of its jim crow era and segregation was at its peak, Femi Folami-Browne was born to parents deeply affected from incidences that occurred in the rural south. Her parents, though were brave enough to pull up stakes and move to Miami to help in Henry's Flagler's folly of creating a tropical paradise from the murky swamp land he purchased.

Her parents' first jobs in Miami were as caretakers of a hotel owned by wealthy Jews who trusted her parents with the run of the Sea N' Sun. Her first and only friends for the first five years of her life were day workers hired by her parents and transient guests from all over the world who wanted a glimpse of the brave new world called Miami Beach.

Femi vicariously experienced the brutality of both urban and rural America through the traumatic stories of her parents and tales from relatives who had to 'run'. She also engaged her deep sense of empathy from meeting friends from the Philippines, Germany and the North who vacationed at the motel that was her home. It was this combination of experiences that shored her spirit and from which rose a well of hope and faith in a brighter future.

When it was time for formal schooling, segregation reared its ugly head and prevented her parents from enrolling her in Treasure Isle Elementary the closest to her motel/home. Instead the Jewish benefactors of her parents chose to put a down payment on a home in Miami sub-division being populated by the black working class.

Her father was truly grateful.

The town was called Brown-sub and later became Brownsville. It was there that after knowing almost no other black people, she was introduced to other black children who would taunt her and call her names. It was there she developed a thick skin, a careless attitude and a strong dislike of school, if not learning.

It was at Northwestern High School though that her sensitivity to social issues was formed. It was there at sixteen years of age that she joined the Theatre of Afro Arts as a founding member and was so mature for her age that she was inadvertently invited to be on the Board of Directors. When the founder, Wendelle Narcisse learned her age, he and his wife Eddie became her mentor and the author credits them for helping shape her artistic bent.

Though writing at home was a hobby, it was at the Theatre of Afro Arts that nurtured her and gave her black role models to emulate. Her first poems were published in a literary journal that she edited called 'Iyalode'. It was the same year that he got her first byline in the Miami Herald as a staff writer. Writing has been her passion ever since.

Years later, she would travel to Africa and amass a collection of plays, lyrics, hundred poems that till today have not been published and ripen waiting to be enjoyed. The poems in this e-book collection are from the earliest of her work...excerpted from the manuscript waiting for a loving editor and tentatively titled

'For Those Who Love'. Poetry loving people...introducing the work of Femi Folami.

# Ahhhhhhhhh

Aminatu cries when she makes love,  
while Abena whispers.

And I sit watching, waiting.  
I think the sky is falling,  
I know my heart is longing,  
I touch myself in places and  
I can fly away.

Come inside I hear him!  
Come inside, come quickly!  
I think the sky is falling and  
I will fly away.

Mensa sighs, I want her.  
I see her and I want her  
I felt the throb inside her  
and, I can match her pace.

Babamram says, well maybe...  
maybe she thinks I am crazy?  
While Abena whispers,  
will he come today?

Femi Folami

## Albert C.

So simple then  
to ask that  
all that would  
be  
true  
or false,  
or,  
black or white,  
or right or wrong is...  
for naught?

Truth is most elusive  
and goes against the grain.  
Then, again,  
it is veiled within the heart of man.

What have I to conclude?  
No more nor less than this...  
That I know all I need to know...  
Or,  
I know nothing...and,  
that is  
all  
there  
is.

Femi Folami

# Animism And Cosmic Order

The snake and the snow goose spoke.  
And we, crouched low under the big  
birch tree and made peace with  
frog and the turtle.

Watching stars dance in the wilderness  
of my own mind, underneath a blue/black  
ring will the earth stop when we kiss.  
Will all worlds whirl then collide?

There are no accidents when  
the snow goose speaks of love, unions and  
providence.

Femi Folami

# Beginning

in the beginning,  
i saw the light  
so i embraced the  
darkness and  
love what it is.

Femi Folami

# My Mind Speaks In My Aloness

I.

We can come  
together,  
I know.  
Despite our distance,  
our bodies have forged  
the mountains of  
tongue, teeth,  
fingerpainted trails,  
long for the painter of  
these remembered  
legacies.

II.

Images flash  
and thunder rolls.  
Missing you has become  
a sweet obsession.

III.

Taste and touch  
and melted sunrises turn  
to moons of planets,  
like Mars, Pluto, Venus...  
Love me Goddess Cassandra,  
do not be cruel, After all,  
Aphrodite was my best friend.

Three for me,  
all because he is not here  
to take the stiffness from my  
shoulders, and I am not there  
to take his stiffness into me  
and let the  
the warm waves wash over



us.

This is a ritual  
of solitude.

Femi Folami

# Reach

Reach into memory,  
remember unions,  
unspoiled, unbroken...  
dry those cleansing crystals,  
Let Love Flow Again...

Say it three times softly,  
in a whisper, in a whisper  
Shout it once...just for luck,  
then move on.

Cross yourself my dear,  
it will get better and you  
know it.  
It will never be the same,  
when all that pain is gone.

Reach into memory, touch the circle...  
feel it pulsing, light a candle,  
watch it flicker  
dancing shadows know your name.

Reach into memory,  
touch the center,  
hold it gently,  
let the oil warm a little,  
You are annointed,  
Let it pour!

Femi Folami

# Reciprocity

And I blew you a kiss,  
sent it sailing, sent it soaring  
on the winds of Oya, to keep  
you safe, make you warm.  
And I knew that goodbye,  
was a beginning, just beginning..  
of a new life you see, of a new life for me,  
and I labored and laughed at my impudence.  
Wondering where did it come from?  
this 'she thing' made of 'he thing'  
and I laughed and I loved my lost innocence.  
And that kiss that I flew and sent sailing to you  
on the wings of a prayer, on the winds of Oya,  
set us free, made me strong  
helped  
us be...all alone.  
She and I now full grown,  
and we both wonder at your absence  
and ignorance.

Femi Folami

# Voodoo

She chanted holy words,  
my momma did.  
And me, listening all  
the while from the inside,  
thought I had better  
appear, before she  
blew her magic trick.

Femi Folami