

Poetry Series

Leena Amwaalwa
- poems -

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Leena Amwaalwa(06 December)

I'm a small-bodied, long-legged, dark-skinned, self-lettered flamboyant wordsmith.

I am an industrious, unquenchable burning fire. The humble, good-hearted booksmith next door.

You see, I'm deadly when armed with a pen and paper. Fierce when entrusted with the quiet and peace of the early morning.

24 August

The day that robbed us off love.

The day that cheated us out of guidance.

The day that taught us how to spell loss.

If it was up to me then I'll remove it from the calendar for good.

If it was up to me then I'll turn back the hands of time.

Too bad I don't have that authority.

Too bad it's not my place.

Too bad I can't change anything.

I'll, instead, write it in the books of history.

Leena Amwaalwa

Annamaria

She's beautiful,
She's brave,
She's a gem,
And a certified geek.
She's long-legged,
She's kind-hearted,
She's a diplomatic 'foodie',
An unrecognised health inspector.
She's thoughtful,
She's a genius,
A self-lettered artist,
And a graceful wordsmith.
She's gutsy,
She's purposeful,
A well-versed booksmith,
An industrious gladiator.
She's fierce,
She's a go-getter,
She's my friend,
She's my sister and here's to her.

Leena Amwaalwa

Chronicles Of A Conscious Millennial

Don't belittle me, get to know me first.
I'm no saint, but I know I have a good heart.
Don't look down on people, not even at their shoes.
I may have a small head but I'm not dull.
I may have a small body but I'm not hungry.
I may not own accumulated wealth but I know I'm rich.
I win some just as I lose others.
I believe everyone is talented, unique and beautiful in their own way.
Your opinion matters, just like everyone else's.
It may be painful, it may be gradual but it will eventually pay off.
Treating people according to their social standing equals digging your own grave.
Black to you can be white to someone else and vice versa.
I whole-heartedly stand against body-shaming, character assassination and shenanigans alike.
I am not alone, and so are you.
My strengths tower over my weaknesses.
I believe respect is a democracy, not a one-party state.
Be kind, be humble but stand your ground. You owe yourself that much.
Don't take people for granted, they might not wake up tomorrow.
They see a charity case, I see a just cause.
You see, I am an unquenchable fire. I am an industrious gladiator.
I have a course to run, I have a race to win. I'm starting here, I'm starting now.
Don't underestimate people, you'll be surprised.
Blowing out someone else's candle doesn't make yours shine any brighter.
Avoid being the source of people's sorrow.
People, irrespective of their vast differences, matter.
Your current obstacle doesn't mean you're done. Your recent victory doesn't mean you've arrived.

Leena Amwaalwa

Dreams Of A Conscious Millennial

While I'm young, I want to serve my nation and impose the changes that I want to see.

While I'm young, I want to see to it that every child gets an education and goes on to lead a fruitful life.

The accessible, affordable and life-changing education that unlock opportunities.

You see, the quality, inclusive education that embraces the slow learner and nurtures the fast learner.

While I'm young, I want to see a Namibia equipped with accessible public healthcare facilities and professional healthcare workers.

I want to see affordable, equitable and sustainable public healthcare services.

I want to see zero maternal deaths and I yearn to see a society where mental health awareness is part of our daily lives.

While I'm young, I want to enforce equality and see a society where people's somebodiness matters more than their social standing.

While I'm young, I want to see the spirit of ubuntu at work.

I want to see people involved in decisions that concern their lives and I want to see youth empowerment.

I want to see a Namibia where all are truly equal before the law and I want to see a society where all are enjoying fundamental human rights and freedoms.

You see, while I'm young, I want to see a society where women are equal partners at the table of discussions.

I want to see a girl child embraced just as much as the boy child.

I yearn to see a society that stands against abuse, a Namibia that says no to sexual and gender-based violence.

While I'm young, I want to see sustainable cities and communities made up of decent housing with clean running water and the provision of basic sanitation needs.

I want to see robust climate actions.

You see, the use of clean and natural energies.

In fact, I want to see this scorching sun put to good use!

I want to see a Namibia where there's no poverty, a nation where there's equal distribution of resources.

I want to see a nation where corruption is a taboo.
I want to see communities standing up against social ills and I want to see people genuinely holding hands.
While I'm young, I want to see zero hunger in Namibia.
I want to see investment in agriculture and food production.
I yearn to see a Namibia that eats what it produces.
You see, I want to see decent work where minimum wage is not only on paper but in workplaces too.
I want to see enterprising business entities, industries and production hubs for national economic advancement purposes.

While I'm young, I want to see rhinoceros with their horns intact.
I want to see pangolins safe in the wilderness and I want to see zero game poaching.
I want to see every tree being cut replaced by two and I yearn to see our marine resources flourishing.

You see, while I'm young, I want to build bridges and not borders.
I want to live to see an Africa where we are all one big happy family that is yet to meet.
I hope this poem is just the beginning.

Leena Amwaalwa

I Am No Saint

A good man taught me to never put people in social standing categories. To accept others for who they are and to be kind to everyone.

Now I'm no saint, but I do my best.

A caring woman taught me to never use my privileges in life as a means to belittle people.

I'm no saint, but I'll hold on to that principle.

A wonderful friend taught me to never turn my back on anyone that has contributed to my journey.

See, I'm no saint but I'll forever be grateful.

An invaluable mentor taught me to never lose my head and to always keep a good heart.

Now I am no saint, but I do my best.

A kind brother taught me to never lose courage. To always soldier on, no matter what.

I am no saint, but I'll give it my best shot.

A talented artist taught me to identify what I like and to never cease watering it.

I am no saint, but I'll keep at it.

A fierce sister taught me to be my sister's keeper, but most importantly, to always be my own keeper.

You see, I am no saint but I'll get there.

Someone wiser than myself taught me to always listen, not so as to respond, but, sometimes, to simply understand.

I'm no saint, but I'm learning everyday.

Life taught me to be grateful and humble, yet at the same time to always stand up for myself.

Now I am no saint, but I am all I have.

Leena Amwaalwa

I Had A Friend, Her Name Was Depression

We met some years ago.
We'd greet each other from a distance, until we eventually became friends.
Depression was a good sister.
Understanding and cheering me on every time I decided to give up,
Depression was my rock.
When things didn't work out, Depression was always there.
Offering a shoulder to cry on and wiping my tears.
Every time I decided to try again, Depression would offer her meaningful input.
'Why try again when you're just going to fail, again'.
And I always listened to her.
Why, she was my friend.

Depression, oh so supportive and funny.
And so we grew closer, and I started calling her Dep.
I stopped eating.
I let go of my hobbies.
I stopped taking care of myself.
I cut everyone off.
I gave up on my dreams.
I stopped making time for everything else, but Dep.
Time passed and we kept each other's company.

Lo and behold, Dep became possessive.
She'd remind me about all the pain.
She'd help me count and note every heartache.
She'd fuel my ill thoughts.
She'd help me map out hatred and revenge.
She'd keep me in isolation, a prisoner of my dark thoughts.
She'd feed me with self-loath and she'd remind me that I'm not good enough.
That I wouldn't amount to anything and that it is in my own good to listen to her.
And sadly, I believed her for she was my friend.

Fast forward to a couple of years later.
I met someone else.
Her name was Self-Love, and she sometimes go by Self-Forgiveness.
She was fierce and good company to be around.
So we became best friends very fast.
But Dep wouldn't have none of it.
She became enraged and she turned against me.

She thought I'd do everyone a favour by ending it once and for all.
And all of a sudden I started noticing sharp objects.
I started studying my wrists and thinking how easy I could slash them.

Fortunately, Self-Love was there.
Persistent and adamant, she taught me how to love myself again.
She taught me how to forgive myself and everyone who had wronged me.
She taught me to stand up, dust myself off and soldier on.
That I may not make it tomorrow but I'd eventually get there.
She reminded me about how amazing and beautiful I am.
She helped me see that I have a purpose in this world.
That I wasn't a mistake and she helped me re-discover my talents.

And so here I am.
I may not yet have accomplished what I set out to do.
I may not yet be where I meant to be.
But I sure am not where I used to be.
And now I know where I intend to go.
Here's to Self-Love.
Here's to Self-Forgiveness.
Here's to self-rediscovery.
Here's to soldiering on.

Leena Amwaalwa

I Made A Mistake

I should have laughed more,
I should have lived more,
I should have observed more,
I should have listened to my gut,
I should have followed my heart,
I should have jumped when I had the opportunity,
I should have done more of what makes me happy,
I made a mistake.
I shouldn't have kept quiet,
I shouldn't have bitten my tongue,
I shouldn't have cared what society would think,
I shouldn't have been scared,
I shouldn't have ran for comfort,
I shouldn't have underestimated my ability,
I shouldn't have limited myself,
What a horrible mistake.
I should have held my head high,
I should have been fierce,
I should have been bold,
I should have been brave,
I should have been tough,
I should have stood my ground,
I should have kicked,
I should have yelled,
I should have shoved back,
I should have done something, by all means,
But I did not.
Instead I lowered my head,
I ran for comfort,
I miscalculated my ability,
I kept my opinion,
Well, this ends today,
For I'm coming to get what is mine,
I'm coming to collect what is due to me.

Leena Amwaalwa

I Stand Against Violence, I Say No To Abuse

She was our friend
She was our sister
She was our rock
Our pillar of strength
And our fountain of joy.
But when you ripped off her clothes and shoved her down
When you degraded her to a rubbish
You took her self-worth.

She was our mother
She was our aunt
She was our provider
Our shelter, our voice.
And our fountain of wisdom.
But when you kicked and punched her to a pulp
When you degraded her to a walking shell
You took her dignity.

She was our leader
She was our teacher
She was our artist
Our source of pride
And our future.
But when you took your gun and squeezed the trigger
When you degraded her to a corpse
You took her life.

Leena Amwaalwa

In Defense Of Being Different

Your interests may be trash to someone else,
and vice versa.

That doesn't make you wrong or them right,
but different.

A big-sized head isn't wisdom,
and a small-sized head isn't dull.

See, long-legged doesn't mean
you can see in the future,
short-legged doesn't mean you're stuck
in the past.

A small body doesn't mean lack,
just as a big body doesn't mean abundance.

Solo isn't lonely,
and a crowd isn't company.

The 'haves' aren't rich,
the 'havenots' aren't poor.

See, your current obstacle doesn't mean you're done,
your recent victory doesn't mean you've arrived.

Coming last isn't defeat,
just as being first isn't bravery.

Leena Amwaalwa

It Is My Fault

I keep blaming society for using me and dropping me like a bomb,
but, really, it is my fault.

I expected society to be kind to me just as I was kind to it.

I expected society to pick up when I call just as I picked up when it called.

I expected society to break a leg for me just as I broke a leg and an arm for it.

I expected society to have my back just as I guarded its back and much more.

I expected society to break my fall just as I cushioned it when it fell.

In fact, I expected society to show up just as I showed up.

Boy, was I wrong and self-misguided.

I have learned my lesson and I'm learning to correct my mistake.

Leena Amwaalwa

Leena The Flamboyant Wordsmith

Mine is not your smartphone-age flamboyance.
Mine is not your modern 'here-today-gone-tomorrow' kind.
It lies not in my step,
But in the rhythm of my voice.
My flamboyance lies not in the switch of my hips,
But in the slickness of my tongue.
Mine is not stitched in the texture of my garments,
But wrapped in the taste of my words.
It is not in the styling of my hair,
But in the flow of my stanzas.
My flamboyance is not in the structure of my figure,
But in the boldness of my art.

Leena Amwaalwa

Leena Writes

I'm not you, and you'll never be me.
I advocate for causes that are dear to my heart.
See, I root for things that makes me happy.
I love 'wordsmithism', books, poetry, art,
sweets and many more. You're frowning,
told you I'm not you.
I have always been an activist,
and I'll always be one.
My battles aren't your battles,
and vise versa.
I like politics, from a distance.
See, I'm who I am and not what I am.
I believe there's a good heart in everyone.
How to locate it, that's the problem.
I think we can make a difference if we really
appreciate and value others as equal humans.
I'm not perfect, so is everyone.
How about we embrace our perfect imperfections
and live life while we have it.
I stand for any charity deed,
especially heartfelt and ones kept to one's self.
I believe everyone's story matters.
That when we combine our efforts,
we'll surely give humanity a better face.
See, I believe everyone was meant for a unique purpose.
How about we help one another to discover our callings.
I believe we're who we are because someone else was or is.
I pray to live to see the day when we'll finally
help each other unconditionally.
The day when we will genuinely lift each other up.
Help me help you, it is possible.

Leena Amwaalwa

Now, Woman

I'm not going to sit here and tell you that I know it all, because I don't.
Or that you're better than them, because it is not a competition.
I'm not going to sit here and tell you it's okay, because it's not.
I'm not going to sit here and tell you it's easy, because that's a lie.
I'm not going to sit here and tell you to keep enduring,
because I know it's not right.
I'm not going to sit here and tell you to wait things out,
because I know you deserve better.
I'm not going to sit here and tell you it's part of life,
because that's not what you were made for.
I'm not going to sit here and tell you what society would think,
because only your opinion matters.

Instead, I'm going to tell you to go out there, find you and do you.
I'm going to tell you to embrace you and love you.
I'm going to tell you to identify what makes you tick
and work on it as much as you can, your quality of life depends on it.
I'm going to tell you to sit down, rest and try again tomorrow,
because you need you.
I'm going to tell you to improve your skills and be better than you were
yesterday.
I'm going to tell you to woman up and be the queen that you choose to be.
I'm going to tell you to make yourself comfortable at the table
and claim your equal share.
In fact, be loud, bold and beautiful while you're at it.

Leena Amwaalwa

Ode To My Sister

Today we celebrate a champion,
We celebrate a gladiator.
We celebrate a virtuous woman,
My food bank and my mother's daughter.
Here's to more cakes,
Here's to good health,
Here's to abundant wealth,
Here's to more food!
Happy birthday, Klaudia.

Leena Amwaalwa

Self Introspection Hour

I had people blowing out my candle behind my back while declaring heaven and earth in my face.

I had people hollering they'll fight with me, for me but when the time came, all they did was whisper inaudible support.

I had people promising to stand in my corner, come what may but when shove came to push, there was only one hand. Mine.

I had people affirming that they got my back, all the way. Well, the last time I checked my back was up against a hard concrete wall.

I had people calling me favour girl, but when I needed to collect I couldn't reach them.

So you see, excuse me if I don't show enthusiasm to your well polished words because well polished is just too slick for me.

Excuse me if I don't clap to your declarations because even strong words don't hold water.

Excuse me if I tune out your reassuring voice because your reassurance is just not reassuring enough for me.

Excuse me if I don't invite you to my feast, because I only know how to cheer alone.

Excuse me if I don't reach out to you anymore, because I just realized that I'm truly all I have.

Excuse me if I don't acknowledge your presence anymore, because your being there has just become another background noise.

Excuse me if I don't accept your support because the strings attached are visible even from this far.

Excuse me for declaring that I am, I can and I will. Because I am, I can and I will!

Leena Amwaalwa

The Intruder

It came bearing gifts.
Gifts of destruction and death.
It came hauling notices.
Layoffs, suspensions and evictions.
It came bearing setbacks.
Immediate closures and lockdown.
It came dragging depression.
Economic, social and otherwise.

It came lugging a surprise.
To both scientists and researchers.
Nurses and doctors are overwhelmed.
Priests and prophets are stunned.
The WHO is troubled.
Renowned professors are baffled.
A big yet invisible enemy.
An 'inapprehensible' intruder.

Millions are engulfed by pain.
Thousands are no more.
Hundreds are drowning in shock.
Tens are blanketed in anxiety.
What now?
Why here?
Until when?
The world wonders.

Leena Amwaalwa

The Revolution

It began in the 1800s.
Pioneered by tactical barefoot warriors.
Shouldered by gallant gladiators.
Underequipped yet driven.
Energized by chants, songs and determination.
Fuelled by the desire for freedom.
Freedom for themselves, future generations
and those who couldn't fight for themselves.
O ye yoke of colonialism!

It was gradual, bitter and brutal.
Yet they eventually emerged victorious.
A vitoria e certa.
Sweet freedom.
Only, the feeling did not last.
For today we are on a different mission.
We are waging a different war.
We are wielding different weapons.
We are singing different songs.
We are moving to a different tune.
We are chanting different slogans.
We are stirring a different direction.
We are employing different tactics.
We are launching different offensives.
For we are facing a different enemy.

I say the battle is just warming up.
I say we pick up the torch and soldier on.
That we hold hands and march forward as one.
I say we wage war against all social ills.
That we don't stop until we are all truly free.
I say we lift as we rise, so none is left behind.
It starts here.
It starts now.
A luta continua; vitoria e certa.
Eehtaa!
Taa, taa!

