***Lucy Lameck*AFRICANS ARE NOT POOR**

**AFRICANS ARE NOT POOR + 223**

Tanzania 1965 Kiswahili

Lucy Lameck, whose full name was Lucy Selina Lameck Somi, was born at Moshi-Njoro, in Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, in the 1930s. She received her primary and secondary education in the Kilimanjaro and Tanga regions, and completed her training as a nurse. However, she refused to work as a nurse in Tabora under a discriminatory colonial system, choosing instead to study stenog­raphy. Between 1955 and 1957, she worked as a secretary with the Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union while at the same time engaging in politics as an activist with the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). In 1957, she accepted a two-year scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, where she earned a diploma in administration, sociology, psychology, and economics, and worked on nationalist politics among the East African community in Great Britain. She spent a semester in the United States, studying international relations at Western Michigan University, before returning to Tanganyika in 1960.

Lameck resumed her work with TANU, and was nominated to serve in parlia­ment by Prime Minister Julius Nyerere. She later became a parliamentary secre­tary in the Ministry of Commerce and Cooperatives. She died in 1992.

Lucy Lameck belonged to the new breed of upcountry young nationalist politicians who were relatively better educated, in the Western sense, than the majority of Dar es Salaam activists. They grew up in areas with considerable mis­sionary influence, where there were many primary and secondary schools, where the cash economy was entrenched, and where people had adopted some Western values and practices. In Kilimanjaro, Lucy Lameck had also been born into a political family: Her mother was a TANU activist who used to host Nyerere at her house whenever he was in the area on political campaigns, and she was a local leader in the women's wing of TANU.

The text that follows attests to her original and unorthodox perspective. In the speech, made in Parliament on June 15, 1965, when she was deputy undersecre­tary for the Ministery of Commerce and Cooperatives, Lameck emphasizes the need for community self-reliance and sacrifice to the creation of a strong and buoyant economy. She refuses to accept the common belief that Africa is "poor," noting that Africa's wealth and sweat built the economies of the rich countries of Europe and the United States. Properly utilized, this wealth could also build the local economy of Tanzania. At the time Lameck made this speech, two years before Tanzania embarked on the *ujamaa* program of African socialism in 1967—the country was still "groping in the dark," as Nyerere used to say; Lameck com­ments on the "confusion" reigning in politics. Lameck, like Nyerere, is struggling to find a clear vision of a modern, functional political and economic system that will be truly African, reflecting of African realities and values, rather than just mimicking the West. In this same vein, Lameck speaks about the need to pre­serve many "venerable and respectable" African customs, while abandoning oth­ers that "retard the development of our country," and especially the advancement of women. In addition to such customs as high dowries, early arranged marriages,

and female circumcision, Lameck regrets what she sees as a resistance to change on the part of some of the Maasai people of Tanzania, who "keep on wearing skins and being photographed by Americans."

**224 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

*MM. Mulokozi*

Mr. Speaker, we have also decided that in our efforts to develop our country, one of our major objectives is to build this country on the basis of self-reliance. For this reason I welcome very much the speech of the Honorable Minister for Finance and, especially, the new estimates, or the [proposed] new contribution, which he calls the development levy, a contribution which, truly speaking, at present is only paid by every Tanzanian who earns an income exceeding 10 pounds per month.

I am not in agreement with my fellow members that a person earning 200 shillings per month or below should not pay anything because his wants are many, he has school [costs], children, and various other costs. But Mr. Speaker, we must remember two things. The first thing is that if there is no other way of increasing national income in general, the numbers of schools cannot increase, nor can roads or hospitals. The second thing, in my opinion, is that in times of war, it is -the responsibility of each citizen to tighten belts, for you can't fight for something for which you do not care, and it is the responsibility of all Tanzani­ans, including those with 10 cents, 20 cents, 30 cents and even 1,000, to tighten their belts and contribute something into our national coffers so that we may get enough revenue, which will enable us to consolidate our country in the coming years, and also to implement self-reliance policies. So I maintain that we all have this responsibility.

Therefore, in general, Mr. Speaker, I find that these "Estimates of Income and Expenditure" have written a new chapter in the history of our country for four major reasons.

First, they uphold our objective of self-reliance; second, they sustain a per­manent basis for socialism; third, they call on each citizen to make sacrifice in the great war of revolutionizing the conditions of life of our people and, in this way, eradicating the oppression and humiliation suffered in the past at the hands of imperialist governments. Last, they also address the fundamental objective of putting the country's economy into the hands of Tanzanians as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the question of the economy is fundamental, because if we can't make use of the freedom that we have now to revolutionize the economy, our politics becomes useless, aimless, and targetless; our future children will laugh at us and reproach us for having failed to use the opportunity we had to lay the foundation for the economy of our republic. Hence, it is quite right that a self-governing country should make every effort to enable' it to govern itself in all economic matters. In general, I very much welcome the estimates brought by

the Minister. **I** am sure that, after not too long a period, we shall begin to see changes in our republic, even though some of us are complaining right now, seeing this as a great burden. But what can we do? It is our responsibility.

**AFRICANS ARE NOT POOR + 225**

Honorable Mr. Speaker, I have three very brief things to say; hence **I** won't take a long time. There is one thing which, to say the truth, disturbs me when­ever it is talked about by the various leaders in our republic. It is something that is often talked about and it bothers me and it is my responsibility to talk about it here in the House today.

Among the words we use when addressing the public, or in various councils, is the phrase that "we are poor people," that our country is still young, and that we Tanzanians are "still poor." This word has been worrying me for quite a long time because, Mr. Speaker, **I** don't agree at all that our country is poor and that Tanzanians are poor people. Our country today has value, it has riches, it has culture, it has people, it has agriculture, it has good land, it has animals, differ­ent types of livestock, minerals—and it is rumored that there are millions and millions of [tons of] coal, iron and other ores—which we have not yet managed to find the means to explore and exploit and process for our benefit. Hence, I don't agree at all that our country is poor and, indeed, when we use the word we only humiliate ourselves. Today, when I looked at the speech delivered by the Honorable Minister, and went over the financial figures for the period from 1960 that he was explaining to us—I can it see here, Honorable Mr. Speaker, I will read—I am sorry I don't have the Kiswahili version, I have the English one—Mr. Minister says: " When we took over the government in 1960 the total budget under the colonial regime for that year was 19,000,000 .pounds for recurrent [expenditure] and 6,000,000 pounds for development, making a total of 25,000,000 pounds. Today I am happy to say that the Nationalist Government has more than doubled the size of the country's budget. The total budget which I have presented amounts to a little over 36,000,000 pounds recurrent and 31,000,000 pounds development, a total of 67,000,000 pounds in one year." Honorable Mr. Speaker, in poor countries people walk [live] on the streets, they go without food and die of hunger, they have no farms, no houses; they have nothing. One could not use the language used by Mr. Minister here in reference to such people. In a one-year period we have been able to raise 67,000,0.00 pounds. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have to be a bit careful about the word "poverty," because we will condition the thinking of the people. Our growing schoolchildren, whom we would like to grow in an independent coun­try, should be able to enter the army of the builders of our republic; if we still tell them every day that we are poor, we will be debasing ourselves and debasing our other foundations. What we lack—and this we have to accept—is that our situation is weak because right now we don't have enough experience and our revenue is erratic. The most important resource for us is knowledge: In our present circumstances, the government is directing its efforts towards attaining expertise in different fields, so that we may disentangle ourselves from this problematic situation, and use our new knowledge to explore the minerals,

**exploit our resources, expand our industries, and employ many workers, so that we may extricate ourselves from this despicable situation.**

**226 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**Mr. Speaker, I think the other thing that makes us feel very poor is the situ­ation of the world in which we live. The world surrounding us is developing fast in the economic and scientific spheres: rockets are being sent into space, huge buildings are being erected, the condition of life is so different, there are many industries, etc. That is why we feel that we still have a long way to go, that we have yet to arrive. But I would like us to remember, whenever we compare our­selves to others, the methods used by them to build their countries' economies. The British, the Americans, and others have built their countries from the sweat of other people. The British had many colonies in Africa and other lands; the** *Americans* **had several** *slaves* **who** *cultivated* **their cotton and other** *farms.* **The Negroes were, and are up to today, cheap labor. In these countries, the gov­ernments belonged to a few people, the rich people ran the governments. They used to get materials and other things from our countries. Yes, we are indeed far behind, it is true. We are many steps behind, but we must always remind our­selves of the basis and the means these fellows used to get where they now are. Let this be an objective and a warning to us, reminding us of our principles. Our objective in this country is to see to it that this country develops in general, right from the districts, towns, villages, and neighborhoods; that the living con­ditions in our country change step by step, village by village, and neighborhood by neighborhood. That being the case, we have to accept that one of our great­est responsibilities is to tighten our belts and do everything we can in order to increase the income of our country, so that our country can develop as fast as we are able to make it. At the same time, we have to remember that we have a great responsibility towards our republic, that of laying the foundations that conform to the needs and experience of Tanzanians themselves: economic, political, and developmental foundations for the people and the community which are homegrown and not stolen from foreign countries, but arise from and are in harmony with the Tanzanian people's experience and traditions.**

**Honorable Speaker . . . we are thankful that, when our Central Committee of TANU met recently, it authorized the Father of the Nation [Prime Minister Nyerere] to appoint a special council or commission to deliberate and advise him on how we may formulate a policy based on African socialism. I very much welcome the idea, for indeed, it will help us overcome many economic prob­lems. It will elaborate on what should be the basis of our socialism, how we should move forward, which of the things inherited from the colonial era are right, and which things in our traditions still have great value and should be preserved.**

**I think this council will greatly help us because there is a lot of misunder­standing, and I often ask myself about the African Socialism that we Tanzani­ans want to follow. Some few years ago, the republic tried to lay down a basis without a clear system and without a guidebook, like a Bible, that elaborates what African socialism is all about. It tried, as much as it could, to use advice**

and the existing foundations to adjust our institutions so as to have a policy which reflects the principles of our African political democracy. However, right now there is a great need to have a clear vision of the kind of future we want.

**AFRICANS ARE NOT POOR +** 227

For at times, there is confusion. There is a lot of talk. Today it is declared that big vehicles should be appropriate• tomorrow small cars are declared bad; the day after there will be this and that declaration. There is confused talk, so that we do not really know where we are going and what we want to be: Will there be motorcars or not? Will there be farms or not? And if farms will be there, on what basis will they be run? What type of economy shall our country have? Will foreigners and the common people living here go on with the same type of life or will their lives be organized differently? Hence, Honorable Speaker, I *welcome* the *council, which will* be *established* by the *Honorable* Father *of* the Nation so that it may expound more on our political principles and chart out a good and clear way forward, so that we do not quarrel in future, or fumble and stumble every day as humans are wont.

On the second matter, I just wanted to hint . . . to the Honorable Minister here . . . that there are some complaints . . . regarding the expenditure of [pub­lic] funds. There are various complaints as to whether government money is equitably spent. I am sure that he is a responsible person and he will investigate this and if there are any practices that he thinks lead to misuse of.public funds, he will no doubt take the necessary corrective measures as soon as possible, for very often our people are ready to contribute whatever they can to the nation-building effort, but the effort should not only end at-taking the money, the expenditure side should also be monitored, and the Honorable Mr. Minister himself must keep a strict eye [on the funds]. For the people who contribute the money have only a low income, and it won't be good if the complaints continue without the Minister taking the necessary steps.

Finally, the Honorable Mr. Minister will be happy to learn that my last point does not concern him directly. It is about customs, and of course it does concern him very much as a leader.

First, Honorable Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to con­gratulate the leaders of the various local governments in our republic, which have helped us to tackle the problems pertaining to customs. Our country, Honorable **Mr.** Speaker, has many laudable and respectable customs. And as it has been said, it is the intention of the government to see to it that customs are preserved, and that some are developed, so that they may serve to sustain our successive generations and our country in general. But it is openly known that there are some customs that very much retard the development of our country. I am one of the many people who shout a lot about this matter, and I will not tire of shouting about it, because it is quite clear that such customs retard the development of our country.

These customs are well known to you, Honorable Members. I know most of you married quite a long time ago after paying a heavy bride price—you have paid many cattle: That is one of the customs which, truly speaking, don't help

**us now And I thank one member who asked a question about cattle: That is, how should a person who owns many cattle be taxed? Our cattle have a high value in the country, if only they will be utilized, and the government has plans for using them in a better way. But there are still such customs of cattle hoard­ing; people still marry by paying many cattle.**

**228 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**Another custom which I know, Honorable Members, is that of marrying off our children while they are still too young, still infants. I know that there are places where young girls are removed from school, where once a girl comes of age, she is removed from school and kept indoors so that she may be married off to a man without her consent, and without her knowledge—because cus­toms say so. Indeed there are also some customs that humiliate and reduce the beauty of women in our republic—you see women having their ears pierced; they have their arms pierced; they are piercedthere, everywhere. Other people in some areas have the habit of circumcising girls; such practices aren't good at all. There are other bad and retrogressive customary practices that continue even now in several parts of the country.**

**Several local governments, as I have said, have made great strides. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate especially the Rungwe District Council, Musoma Local Authority, Morogoro Local Authority, and others that I can't remember now, which in the past never thought about such customary issues. For instance . . . the day before yesterday I arrived in Rungwe in one local authority—where we recently made noise about the hefty bride price where the bride price was twenty cattle, but I am told, the local authority has recently passed a by-law reducing it to six cattle. . . .**

**The Musoma Local Authority has also passed a by-law on a matter that used to exist regarding matrimony. It has been passed, in Musoma Local Authority and Morogoro Local Authority, that no father of an underage school girl shall be allowed to remove the girl from school to keep her inside or to marry her off This is something that has been outlawed by the local govern­ments, and these local governments deserve to be highly congratulated.**

**Lastly, Honorable .Mr. Speaker, this problem of customs does also exist in the Maasai area and I would like to remind this house that . . . the Maasai area is a very big part of our republic; the Maasai people are citizens of this republic. We should not accept nor should we be satisfied that they should keep on wear­ing skins and being photographed by Americans or other people, but we should satisfy ourselves that one day the Maasai will change and that they will be just like their other fellow Tanzanians.**

**Honorable Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I support the motion.**

***Translated by Safi Kiang° and M.M. Mulokozi***

***Bibi Titi Mohamed*SACRIFICES FOR CHANGE**

**SACRIFICES FOR CHANGE + 229**

Tanzania 1965 Kiswahili

The history of Tanzania's struggle for independence is incomplete without men­tion of the central and decisive role of Bibi Titi Mohamed in mobilising both women and men all over the country for the struggle. She is, indeed, often known unofficially as the "Mother of the Nation."

An articulate, urban, Matumbi-Swahili woman, Bibi Titi. Mohamed was a *ngoma* (traditional dance) leader before she became a platform politician; both her talents as a performer and her connection to women's dance associations would prove important tools for her political organizing. As a Mmatumbi, an ethnic group that spearheaded the Maji Maji struggle against German colonialism from1905 to1907, she viewed herself as a freedom fighter belonging to **that** heroic tradition. Born in 1926, she was schooled in the Qur'an , and then had four years of further education.

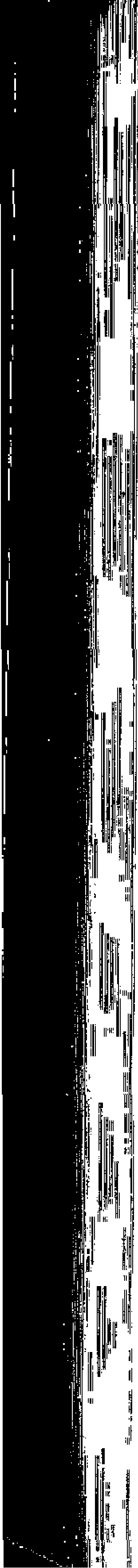
Bibi Titi joined the nationalist struggle for independence soon after the founding of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) by Julius Nyerere and his colleagues in 1954. She was soon prevailed upon to form a women's wing, and henceforth devoted herself fully to the independence struggle. A talented, fluent, and humorous Kiswahili speaker, she toured the whole country with Nyerere spreading the "good news" of *uhuru* ("freedom" in Kiswahili) and gaining converts for TANU in the process.

By the time of independence, Bibi Titi was easily the best-known and most important politician after Nyerere. She became a junior minister in the independ­ence government, and a member of parliament until her resignation after the 1967 Arusha Declaration, which established Nyerere's *ujamaa* program of African socialism and also codified one-party rule in Tanzania. (She would later say that what she objected to most about the declaration was "the undemocratic manner in which it was being imposed upon us.") When she fell out with Nyerere in 1969, she was implicated in a plot to overthrow him and jailed for several **years** before being pardoned in 1972. Her spouse abandoned her because of her politi­cal activities, and most of her property was confiscated. Upon her release from prison, Bibi Titi lived quietly in retirement until the early 1990s, when her role as a national hero was once again acknowledged and her properties *were* returned to her. A major street in Dar es Salaam was also named for her. She died in 2000.

The following excerpts come from parliamentary speeches, the first made on June 14,1965, and the second on July 1,1967. Bibi Titi speaks as the Undersecre­tary for Development and Culture. She reveals her deep concern for the social and economic interests of the common people, especially women, and her sophis­ticated pan-Africanist vision of African liberation. She also expresses her distrust not only of the former colonizer, Great Britain, but also of the Cold War—era United States, after two CIA-backed coups in the newly independent Congo, and U.S. involvement in conflicts in Vietnam and elsewhere in the developing world.

Biti Titi's mastery of both political rhetoric and Kiswahili storytelling, along

with her earthy humor, are discernible in these speeches. Other MPs often inter­rupt her speeches with laughter, applause, and cries of "Hear, Hear."



**230 + THE Min-`IwENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

*M.M. Mulokozi*

***This Is the People's Country***

According to the financial estimates presented by the Minister for Finance, this is a very big budget, and as we know, we Tanzanians have a very big country. In Tanzania we have places inhabited by human beings; we have a big area inhab­ited by animals. Tanzania is a very big country in East Africa. Our population is perhaps about ten million or even twelve million, but I might be wrong if I say twelve million for we have carried out no census since we attained independ­ence. We are told that the whole population of our country is about nine and a half million or ten million. This is according to the British statistics, but at that time, if you came to me in a village and asked me whether I had a husband, how many children I had, I would never say that I have four, five, or six children—never. If I have four children, I might say I have two children; and I know that these two children of mine are not there, they are in Dar es Salaam—they are not in that village. And if I have a husband I hide him unless the headman is lucky enough to know how many people are in his village. So I also don't believe that we are ten million. Mr. Speaker, in this country we feared to say that we had a big family because of the problem of taxation, so husbands slept in the bush to escape taxation, children ran away from here to the bigger town of Dar es Salaam in order to hide—for this city swallows everything. When they want taxes, I don't think they can collect them through searches in a city because the city is filled with alleys where people can hide themselves. I don't believe, there­fore, that we are only ten million, we might be twelve million or eleven million. I don't know, but the government should do all it can so that we know—our main aim is to first know how many people there are in our country, that's all.

And we have a very big country—poor roads, no water wells in our villages, there are no dispensaries, there aren't enough hospitals, there are no community centers for adult literacy classes, we had no equipment to use for our farms, we didn't have enough tractors nor did we have enough oxen ploughs in this coun­try. We, therefore, took over at a very difficult time. A time of great hardship. But through the efforts of our government, our ministers, our representatives, together with the other leaders in the country, and the people themselves, today we have perhaps trebled our annual national budget.

If we look at the population of Ghana, they are now, perhaps, about seven million people but when they took over the administration they were about six and a half million by the British account; their budget was about two hundred million and their country is very small, about the size of one Tabora province before it was divided into two. The population is small and the country is small. In terms of wealth, I don't know whether Ghana is first in Africa or South Africa is first and Ghana is second, but there are fewer people because the

country is small. Our population in Tanzania is big and the country is even big­ger, but its income is small. Therefore, **I** agree with the advice given to us by the Minister for Finance, that if we want to build our nation we must sacrifice; for those who preceded us built their nation through sacrifice, and some started colonization for the benefit of their country. We used to be a British colony here and, the British brought a District Administrative Officer in one place; in another a middle-ranking officer; another one with a little higher position; a Mr. D.O. of whatever type, I don't know; a top level D.C. [District Commis­soner] here; a P.C. [Provincial Commissioner] and another below the P.C. He brought many of his own people to rule here and these were paid salaries from this country of ours.

**SACRIFICES FOR CHANGE + 231**

Likewise, the whole economy of this country has built Britain. That is also sacrifice. They began by sacrificing, they came out, they weakened, and went to rule over other countries so as to bring money and wealth into their country. I can also give the example of China. There are no people who sacrifice as much as they do.

Although we have prepared this budget, the government also needs to look into how people spend their money in this country, for our expenditure exports money involuntarily; we should also ask our government to exert greater efforts to bring in small industries. If people like riding bicycles, why should bicycles . . . be manufactured outside this country? Why can't we make an effort to have bicycle industries in our country? Why don't we make an effort to have radio manufacturing industries? There are now many people who like radios, and if you go to my home, Rufiji, you will see a woman with her pot or tin of water on her head and a radio tucked under her armpit. And this is something that sends money outside. We should also think of those people we want to prevent from exporting the money outside. The government should use all its wisdom to pre­vent these people. Mr. Speaker, those industries that cause us to export our money, like the radio and bicycle industries, should become our own in Tanza­nia. This should have been the first issue on retaining money in our country.

When taxes are imposed upon people, such as taxes on products or salaries, we want the people to ice the benefits. At the moment people see what their taxes are doing and now taxes have been increased, so we want greater govern­ment efforts to show people how their money is spent. Taxes are collected dif­ferently now than they were before. In those days we were taxed arbitrarily. Today we have our District Councils, we have City Councils, we have our own Town Councils; we have our ownrepresentatives who can collect the taxes and when ready can themselves divide them: This amount will build •a hospital in some place; this amount will be for a dispensary or a well in some other place. When we get the taxes, we want the councilors to make a great effort to show people that their money has not been lost. It won't be good if people pay taxes, but the roads are poor. There are some people here in Tanzania who have no roads to transport their products to a market, and also you can't convince a rich man to establish a market at a place where the people are if there is no toad to

transport the crops to where he wants them. Because of this, the ordinary per­son experiences great problems with crops around his house. Now that he has cultivated crops, he wants clothes.

232 + **THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

Many people living in this country live in villages. What do they depend upon to send their children to school? Their crops. What do they depend upon to marry off their children? Their crops. What do they themselves depend upon when they want to marry? Their crops. Even for those who want to get married, I can't even marry until next year; I mean, before I get a bed with which to go to a husband, what do I wait for? To cultivate [my crops so I can] get a beautiful bed to go to a husband with, for these are our customs. Now, if someone has farmed and he or she has his or her target in front of her or him, but then is delayed because buyers don't go where he or she is, we as representatives face great problems and some of us don't come back to this parliament because there is no road. "Ah! This member of parliament hasn't brought us a road at all. He or she hasn't brought us a dispensary, she or he hasn't brought us that." Many people have such goals. So, when we increase taxes we do so for the interest of the people. .

We want to revolutionize, although some people from other places misun­derstand the meaning of revolution. Our revolution is an economic revolution for a better life and we should be able to reproduce a lot. Some generations die due to sick stomachs. When a child wants to develop inside one, one develops stomach problems, and you abort—is this how we are going to increase the population here? We want a revolution. We want to procreate. I too would like to have a baby and hold a child one day. There is nobody who doesn't want to bring another human being into the world. If we are counted, we are ten mil­lion here but we are not in Dar. es Salaam town. The ten million are not in Tab­ora town. They are not in Mwanza town, not in Moshi town, not in Arusha town, not in Tanga town. The ten million are in the villages. The ten million are suffering from disease, the ten million are suffering from ignorance, and this is adults and small children. The ten million want development. They want adult education and to learn contemporary processes. The ten million want to increase their income, to use the land in our country. People in the villages, not us. Not here, but there. The ten million want to sleep in clean houses, drink clean water, sleep in good beds. Soft beds have not been made for townspeople only. We want everybody to enjoy themselves before they die. One's paradise is here on earth. Living in a good place is one's paradise. You can't listen to the paradise of heaven. There are God's Ten Commandments, how can you cir­cumvent them to reach God's paradise? It is dangerous. It is as if you have been offered something across a big gulf and you can't reach there. What we are say­ing is that, while human beings are alive, we should make an effort to have them stay in a good place, eat well, and enjoy themselves in this country. We want everybody to realize that they have attained true independence in Tanza­nia We don't want an independence that benefits us only. . . . We want to change from British colonialism and let the people know that the colonialists

**have really left this country. And we can inform the people of this only through change. We are ready to pay taxes, but we want change. . . .**

**SACRIFICES FOR CHANGE + 233**

**We Tanzanians believe in African unity. We believe African unity is the right of Africans and that all Africans are one. Up to now we still believe that we cannot lose heart. We cannot change our aims as regards our brothers and sisters of Kenya. They are our everlasting brothers and sisters. Our children and their children will still be brothers and sisters. But I tell you that when the top­most leaders, such as our ministers and theirs, our leaders and theirs want to say something, they should do so like adults, they should know what they are say­ing. They shouldn't speak *haphazardly.* The East African Federation doesn't belong to Mr. Nyerere, it is not Mr. Kenyatta's, nor is it Mr. Obote's [leaders of Kenya and Uganda]. The East African Federation belongs to the people of East Africa and the future generations of East Africa. We have been put here by the people, and our leaders have been put there by the same people. We have no right to utter words that contradict the views of our people.**

**Great responsibilities have been entrusted to us by our people. When you have been given responsibilities as a leader, then your trust extends all the way to God. Not everyone can be a leader, even if one has two thousand degrees. But if you are elevated and made a leader, then you have been given light by the Almighty God and you must have the wisdom to use it. We must know this. We believe that one day East Africa shall be one. We really believe so, but I tell you, we shouldn't give our enemies cause for amusement. We shouldn't give the enemies windows to infiltrate and disturb our unity, for while we speak we should also be vigilant against the dangers of tomorrow. We have attained independence peacefully; we must use our independence for building our countries; we must use our inde­pendence to develop the economy to benefit our people in this country. We must use our independence to unite our people, not to separate them. Therefore, I have faith that what we believe is what the people of Kenya believe, and that is that we in East Africa are one, as they themselves sing in a record:**

**The East African Federation We are all delighted.**

**These are Kenyans singing. If you come to Tanzania, they sing. If you go to Kenya, they sing that this is their country Even though we are leaders today, this is the people's country. And they are happy about the federation. Therefore, we can't say to hell with the federation, no. We will do everything to overcome the enemy so that the East African Federation is formed.**

***They Can Never Rule Us***

**Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I am very pleased, for there is in the House a fierce, wonderful, and exhilarating motion. But unfortunately, my fellow Members have already made a lot of useful contributions. I have only one or two words to support the motion presented by the Honorable MP Mr. Mbogo.**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker, the thoughts of all Africans who at that time were not yet independent, who were living in the countries ruled by colonialists, at the time of British elections, they all spent sleepless nights waiting to see who would win the elections. And they stayed awake because they were praying to God that the Labour Party would win the elections. We did not pray for the Labour Party's win because we love the Labour Party very much, but rather because we thought that the Labour Party Constitution favored the downtrod­den, not only in their own country but also in their colonies. And their great pledge was that if they came into power, the colonies would be free.** Even **dur­ing these last elections, although we in this country are already free, we still stayed awake through the night to hear who would win. We stayed awake up to 5** A.M. **as they were counting their votes. When we heard that Labour had won, albeit with a small margin, we were very happy. And those who could afford it held some small parties with their friends to celebrate the news. We were joyous for our comrades and sisters who were still under British colonialism; we thought that they would get out of colonialism like we did. But we were wrong.**

**234 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**Members have said here that the Commonwealth [meeting] this time would reflect not only the opinion of Tanzania, but of the whole world. They knew that the most important item would be about our comrades and sisters of Southern Rhodesia [Zimbabwe]. People spoke who were not used to speaking, but it is said that the British had no response. Instead of working in collabora­tion with the existing regime in Zimbabwe and allowing the people to elect their own government, the British have now come up with another idea of sending a delegation to Vietnam. This is very disgraceful of the British, who have ruled half of the world but have failed to fulfill their promises. We ask the British as our friends, we as members of the Commonwealth, that they reverse their decision. They should speedily convene the meeting they want and change their objectives, and they should give Zimbabweans the freedom to elect their own government as soon as possible. This will be very beneficial to them and will enhance their respect in the world. But if they simply sit and spin their British intrigues, it will be useless for them and a great injustice.**

**On African unity, some members have said that although we are now our own rulers, we are timid. We Africans may have flag independence, but many of us are still mentally controlled by our former colonial masters. This is where our timidity comes from. One has no freedom to decide things for oneself: This is why in our countries all we can do is talk: We talk in our meetings, in our parlia­ments, but we do not really put the talk into action. If we did, we would be giv­ing our comrades and sisters in Southern Rhodesia the hope of an end to their sufferings. Perhaps as the Honorable Joseph Nyerere has said, since the Com­monwealth is in London, when they go and see London and are welcomed by the Queen . . . perhaps sometimes some Africans feel overawed and think that the power of the British persists even in countries that are governing themselves.**

**Why should the Commonwealth, which belongs to all, always meet in Lon­don? What does this mean? If it is the Commonwealth of Nations, why**

shouldn't the meetings sometimes be held in our nations? And if the Common­wealth has childish notions, what is the advantage of this Commonwealth? How does it help us Africans? We must ask ourselves the question, What do we gain? We thought that in the Commonwealth there would be friendship and fraternity where people listen to each other. If the Commonwealth itself appears to be a group of mindless children, like people who have no authority, what gain does it bring us? What gain will the Commonwealth bring us? If some are mocked at the Commonwealth—our elders, our leaders in whom we trust—of what use is it?

**SACRIFICES FOR CHANGE + 235**

The Americans have gained power because the United Nations is in their country. Although members meet there and complain and support each other in all ways, what can they do? The United Nations is in America. This is the time for people to consider where the United Nations can be. And if it isn't so, must it be only in America? At times even the United Nations itself will not be useful.

We therefore say that for Southern Rhodesia, the British must respond by giving it its independence. That is why I am very afraid for our President, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere; I am very, very afraid. For these people who want to penetrate people's minds, if they find they are unable to penetrate certain minds, it is difficult and dangerous. The British display their arrogant, swollen heads when Mwalimu Nyerere says anything there. And this is to let the world know that in Africa there is a dangerous man called Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. This is dangerous and, honourable members, we must protect our President. It is not a small matter; it is a very serious matter, for you can't control Mwalimu's mind, for that is his nature. How can you change one's nature? He may seem to be a very good friend of yours, and given the needs of this country, you can give him many things that are both useful and needed in Tanzania. Then you might think: Now I can control him, but he would never agree to that. And this is not only true today; the British know him very well. Since he began to lead TANU, there was no way to control him. And this is why we Tanzanians have no doubts about Mwalimu Julius Nyerere . . . because we know his true nature, we know how he is, we know his constancy, we all trust him today; all the peoples of this country trust. . . .

Today Americans are imperialists in the world, but they must remember the history of Hitler. Hitler was an imperialist in the world. Hitler's imperialism did not just worry us in Africa. We Africans had not even attained our inde­pendence, but Hitler's imperialism worried the whole of Britain and the world. . . . The powerful, the wealthy, and the authorities seem to forget that there is God, for if they knew that there is God, they would not have found it easy to create dangerous weapons and spend a lot of money to destroy people's lives. But they should remember that although Americans have rockets and atomic bombs, they will one day hunt one another the same way the Germans are hunting each other today.

The people of East and West . . . what are they vexing other countries for? God has given them a lot of wealth, international respect, mighty power, what

more do they want? They want to rule the world. Have they become God? It is God who rules the whole world; it is He who rules us all and He rules paradise as well! Will they be able to rule like him? Will there be two Kingdoms in the world? It will be impossible!

**236 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

That is why the Chinese are exploding atomic bombs. That is the beginning and it is very dangerous. . . .We will also be asked to learn how to make atomic bombs; that is not just a story. For when some people read in newspapers, or when they hear on the radio, they say, These are only talking nonsense, how can they do it? Who knew that China would become a great nation in the world and a fearsome one, too? Some take it as a joke. But the Swahili say: "What people talk about exists, but if it doesn't, it is on the way." If we haven't experi­enced it, then our children or even our grandchildren will see it. Africa will also look for a way of fighting and defending itself. Yes, it will, whatever the cost! Africa will not accept living in a perpetual state of anxiety. We have a govern­ment, but it is as if we don't; we have power, but it is as if we don't. We fear the American! That means, if an American comes here right now, we will all run. We have no flag, we have no soldiers, we have nothing and nobody! How can we live in the world like this? The almighty God can't leave us in such anxiety, for He has created us in the same way He created other people. He has given us intelligence like other people. Our anxiety must have a limit. . . .

The American [president] has made a mess in the Congo and he has killed millions of people. More than three million people have died in Congo because of him! As they have said there, he is not a citizen there. No one knows what he is fighting for there; no one knows what he wants there. He has no need of sol­diers there; he has no need of the country; I don't even know why he is fighting there. He claims he wants to prevent Communism. Why doesn't he go to fight Communism in Russia where it all started? He is coming to ill-treat us, why not go to the root of Communism in Russia! If he wants to prevent Commu­nism from entering Africa, he should stop the Russians, for if they are beaten, they won't have the strength to spread Communism in the world. But those [the Russians] are as fierce as they [the Americans] are. As the Indians would say: "He ill-treats a goat, but the bull he fears." How come? There are the Rus­sians. Why doesn't he go to fight them, for they are the ones who are sending rockets to space all' this time. . . The Russian leader said . . . yesterday on the radio, "I will help the people of Vietnam until they win in their war and I will help anyone in the world who is oppressed." He [the American] should go to fight there [in Russia] with his equal in strength, but instead he is coming here to persecute us. He is losing millions in money to destroy our lives. . . .

Vietnam will win because Americans are fighting from monetary greed, and they will ultimately lose their lives. These Americans are mindless people; all they do is to follow what [President] Johnson and his committee decide. Don't they pity themselves and the way their children, their husbands and their comrades are dying? Aren't these human beings? Why don't they pity themselves and ask their President, Why are we fighting? and let him give his reasons. . . . Vietnam will

fight until it wins, and it will win. Americans will be in great disgrace in the world. They [the Vietnamese] are fighting for their blood, they are fighting for their country, they are fighting for their lives, and they are fighting for their com­ing generations. The Americans will be defeated! They can persecute us. But with them, they will lose. Even here. The Americans should know this. They can never rule us, just because they have the atomic bomb; we will never accept that! We had all better die so they would rule over a desert! We cannot accept our minds to be controlled and instructions to come from Johnson to us in Tanzania. We won't agree to that, and we also won't agree for any Africans in their own country to be controlled by Johnson! We won't agree to that and we will keep on protesting and we will boycott him and spit on him! We won't agree to that! We are telling our African leaders that the words they utter are the words'of their people whom they lead, and they must act on their talk. It would be useless that everyday money is lost on OAU [Organization of African Unity] transport for leaders to discuss OAU matters. Of action in the OAU there is none!

**A** MODEL DAY DURING THE EMERGENCY + **237**

Some people have already realized the value of African unity but we, our­selves, are not aware of the benefits of African Union. We are telling our African leaders that the liberation of Africa doesn't need words but actions. We should begin with . . . Angola [along with Mozambique, still a Portuguese colony]; only then can we boast of our ability to confront South Africa. If we won't manage here, then we will never be able to do it in South Africa! We shouldn't just say empty words and be reported in newspapers or on the radio just talking. We should start passing this test. Our unity should work in Africa to bring independence to our comrades; we then enter Mozambique, Angola, and deliver their freedom to them; that is when we can have hope to let the world know that Africa can fight [in] South Africa to bring our African com­rades their own government. Otherwise, we will talk, we will be laughed at and we will be seen as *hayawani,* as mindless birds or animals. But people who are intelligent human beings, must have commitment when they utter words.

*Translated by Sa?fu Kiango, Saida Yahya-Othman, and Arnandina Lihamba*

***Hannah Kahiga*A MODEL DAY DURING THE EMERGENCY**

Kenya 1966 English

Hannah Kahiga was born in 1944 in Tumutumu, Nyeri District, Kenya, where she completed primary school and high school. She completed her undergraduate studies in English and sociology at Uganda's Makerere University in 1968, returned briefly to Kenya, and then left again, this time for the United States. Kahiga earned graduate degrees at Columbia and Adelphi Universities in New

**York, and taught at the City College of New York before returning to Africa with her family in 1981, settling in Cameroon, her husband's country. There Kahiga­who now goes by her husband's name, Tiagha—worked with the Ministry of Social and Women Affairs, developing services for disadvantaged youth, and was involved in the struggle to integrate women into the development process, help­ing to empower them as participants and beneficiaries. Kahiga remained in Cameroon until 1989, when she joined the United Nations Economic Commis­sion for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since then, her work on behalf of women has been focused on Africa as a continent. Her efforts promote main­streaming gender concerns into the policies, plans, and programs of national, sub-regional, and regional government institutions.**

**Kahiga wrote "A Model•Day during the Emergency" in 1966, and it was first recorded and presented on Radio Uganda's monthly program *In Black and White* in May of that year. Conducted by Miles Lee, and with commentary by David Cook, then professor of English at Makerere, the program introduced new writ­ers and writing from East Africa. Kahiga presents a factual account of human suf­fering during the 1950s, at the height of the anticolonial resistance movement. This movement included both political organizing around the Kenya Africa Union, and the violent activity known as the Mau Mau uprising. The colonial government's attempt to suppress it culminated in the imposition, in October 1952, of a State of Emergency, and with it martial law. Resistance leaders, includ­ing future president Jomo Kenyatta, were jailed, the forests where the Mau Mau had their camps were bombed, and tens of thousands of Gikuyu were herded into "protected villages." Kahiga's text deals specifically with the horrific realities of concentration camps, where many Gikuyu people were confined and forced to dig trenches (some of them literally worked to death), all in an attempt to cut off the freedom fighters in the forests, from their supporters in the communities. The Gikuyu were a special target because, as the community that was most affected by the seizure of African lands for white settlers, they constituted the core of the resistance movement and the Mau Mau uprising.**

**As a girl, Kahiga herself lived through the experience ,she recounts. She vividly remembered it nearly fifty years later. "My family and everyone else around us were rounded up and put into newly constructed huts all grouped together in thousands to create artificial villages that could be more easily controlled. . . . My mother, brothers and sisters lived in one such but along with three other large families. My father lived elsewhere along with other men. Daily life as I recall is what is described in the story," she said in an interview in July 2002.**

**Edward Blishen, the well-known English,writer and scholar who at the time of *In Black and White,* was presenting the Writer's Club program on the BBC Africa Service every week, had referred with admiration to what** he **felt was the "cool tone" of much of East African writing. David Cook preferred to describe it as "controlled writing." Kahiga's prose gives us an idea of what they both meant.**

*Emilia* ***Ilieva***

**238 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**They lived in round huts, the Kikuyus, roughly and urgently built. They them­selves built them under the supervision of Homeguards as instructed by the foreseeing European administrators. Within a week, a hundred huts were fin­ished, with fairly high conic roofs, two windows each and with a circumference of about twenty-five feet. They were thatched with grass, and had mud walls. All were in rows, one but about five yards from the next.**

**A MODEL DAY DURING THE EMERGENCY + 239**

**The rows were separated by pit latrines, about five holes under one roof.**

**Each but accommodated at least five families, regardless of the number of children each family had. It did not matter, whether there was enough room or not; the Kikuyu community had to be collected together to prevent the spread of Mau Mau movement, the white administrators thought. Thus, all the Kikuyus were made to abandon their roomy houses to be crammed into these sooty holes for security purposes.**

**In the early hours of the evening, while the mothers boiled green maize or stirred porridge for dinner, the school children did their homework amidst the smoke and stuffy conditions. There was no room for five tables, one for each family, in this hut. Stools, boxes and things were thus made to serve that partic­ular purpose. Tables or no tables those sums had to be finished, for who wanted to be sent back to the village by their teacher tomorrow, having failed to accom­plish the set task? By and by dinner was served and the study corners were soon converted to dining rooms. It was understood in every family that once one had swallowed his or her lump, the next move was to bed. There was no need to ask for a second helping even if one felt like it, for these were treats and, as such, rarely available. Dinner over the dining corners are then converted to bed­rooms. Everything is collected and heaped in two or three corners. Sisal bags are spread on the floor and father, mother and children line themselves up on these bags. This needed skill and care for nobody among the five families was to be left without sleeping room. Thus with *sufurias* [pots and pans], plates and stools at the bottom of the bed, boxes, bags, and other items at the upper end, the families fitted themselves in the remaining space. There they lay still, chil­dren snoring, a baby crying at that corner, a man turning at the other and some sleepless mothers staring at the roof till the break of the day.**

**On the stroke of four o'clock in the morning the huge gong at the Head­man's camp is hit hard and loud. At the sound of this the mothers quickly shake themselves up and steal out of their bags. Hurriedly they kindle fires and boil some porridge. This they put in bottles to take with them on their long safaris and the rest leave in the pots for the sleeping children to enjoy later. The remains of supper are packed in tattered pieces of paper and put in small sisal bags. Infants that cannot be left behind are securely fixed on their mothers' backs. Elder children are woken up to be given the day's instructions—what to do after school or even instead of going to school. Within three quarters of an hour, with pangas and shovels in one hand, luncheon bags hanging from their shoulders and the other arm at the back supporting the babies, the gallant mothers hurriedly make for the Headman's camp to join the men who have**

|  |
| --- |
| already got there. They must be punctual lest something extra lies in wait for them even after the hard day's work.  At the Headman's camp the multitude lines up in twos and the homeguards check that all are present. This finished, all homeguards are distributed along the long rows and the long march begins. Kialua is fifteen miles away, their des­tination. They have to reach there before seven o'clock in the morning. A con­stant moderate pace had to be kept, therefore. A whip always accelerated the speed of those who lagged behind.  The minute they reach their destination, the day's toil begins. The digging and the shoveling go on incessantly. The ditch they worked so hard on was meant to go all round the forest. A trench fifteen feet deep and ten feet wide with sharp sticks planted at the bottom, was good enough to keep the terrorists from crossing over into the rural area. Every day, the ditch had to be advanced ten yards. Babies would cry, women would faint, men would collapse, but who cares? The target had to be hit, and that before the end of the day. Half an hour's break was given for lunch. Few carried any. For most people the precious half hour was more for, resting their weary bones than for filling their stomachs. Time and again some fell into eternal sleep even during the half hour, but all passed unnoticed. The ditch had to be dug up; Mau Mau terrorists had to be kept off from the people; security had to be given to the Kikuyu tribe.  As the sun goes down, the people go down with it. Most women have already reached the end of their tether. It is therefore for the stronger men to put more effort and dig up the last foot to set their comrades free. With persist­ence, the last bit is done. The last grain of soil is shoveled out and backs can be turned to the cruel ditch. Limping, ill and utterly exhausted, the Kikuyus drag themselves back to the village and into their huts. Some have to answerAinwel­come questions from the children at home. "Where did you leave Mother, Aunt?" or "Where is the baby, Mummy; you did not leave it behind?" Slowly shaking their heads and with tears in their eyes, the answerers tactfully explain how the missing comrades achieved eternal rest by the Kiahia Ditch.  ***Grace Akinyi Ogot* ELIZABETH**  Kenya **1966 English** |

**A pioneering writer of modern African fiction, Grace Akinyi Ogot was born** May **15, 1930, in Kenya's Central Nyanza Province, where she has lived most of her life in the town of Gem. A child of Luso parents who had converted to the Angli­can Church, she attended Ng'iya Girls' School, where her father taught, and Butere High School, and trained as a nurse and midwife in Kenya,-Ugan-da, and England. Ogot later worked variously as a scriptwriter and journalist for the BBC**

**240 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**Overseas Service, a community development officer, and a public relations repre­sentative of the Air India Corporation of East Africa. In politics, she served both as an elected and nominated member of parliament, an assistant minister of cul­ture, and in ambassadorial positions at the United Nations and UNESCO.**

**ELIZABETH + 241**

**Ogot's reputation, however, rests mainly on her career as a writer. A founding member of the Writers' Association of Kenya, her early stories including "The Year of the Sacrifice" (1962) and "Ward Nine"(1964) appeared in *Black Orpheus, Transition,* and *East Africa \*journal.* Ogot continued on a trailblazing path with the publication of *The Promised Land* (1966), which shares with Nigerian writer Flora Nwapa's *Eftru,* published the same year, the status of being the first mod­ern novels written in English by African women. Ogot's literary output consists of two novels, the second being *The Island of Tears* (1980); a novella, *The Graduate* (1980); two volumes of short stories, *Land Without Thunder* (1968) and *The Other Woman* (1976); and a rewriting of the Luo myth of lost innocence first published in Dholuo as *Miaha* (1983) and republished in English as *The Strange Bride* (1989).**

**Ogot's fiction draws equally from the rich history and customs of the Luo people and her own multidimensional career, which spans Kenya's rural and urban experiences. "Elizabeth," the story selected for this volume, was published in 1966 in *East Africa Journal* and later incorporated into the collection *Land Without Thunder* under the title "The White Veil." Ogot presents the rape, preg­nancy, and subsequent suicide of a young female secretary as a crisis in gender and class relations with dreadful emotional and psychological consequences for women seeking the validation of their communities.**

***Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye and Tuzyline Pita Allan***

**It had just struck 8 o'clock when Elizabeth entered her new office. Immediately the telephone rang, and she picked it up nervously.**

**"Hullo, 21201."**

**"Hullo there, is that Mr. Jimbo's secretary?"**

**"Speaking, can I help you?" Elizabeth tugged the telephone under her chin and drew a pad and a pencil from the drawer.**

**"Oh, yes, may I speak to Mr. Jimbo please."**

**"Sorry; he has not come yet; he does not come till 8:30 a.m. Could you kindly ring again, please?"**

**"Right-o, I will do that."**

**"Hullo—hullo . . ." but Elizabeth heard the click the other side and then the usual buzzing sound. She replaced the receiver with a bang, annoyed that she had not got the caller's name.**

**The door leading to Mr. Jimbo's office stood open. The spacious office, with a huge mahogany desk and a deep green carpet covering the floor, was neatly arranged. There were no curtains on the windows; instead, light Venetian blinds were drawn up on the large windows facing the main road, suggested that the sun entered the offices in the afternoon. Everything was neatly arranged on the**

**table and a photograph of a very attractive woman holding two little boys stood smartly at one corner, like watchmen guarding the office. Elizabeth scrutinised the photograph and then returned it to its place. She went back to her office and stood at the little window to look at the jammed traffic below. The offices of the Department of Aviation were in Manila House on the 4th floor on Heroes Lane. From there one could see a good part of the city and the stretch of empty land that extended along the Mombasa road to the airport.**

**242 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**Elizabeth wondered how long she would stay in the Department of Aviation. She had moved from two offices in a matter of months since she returned from the U.S. where she had taken her secretarial training. She first worked for four months in a big American motor firm as a secretary to the assistant manager; and when that failed she found employment with the Wholesalers and Distrib­utors Limited, as secretary to the European manager. After two agonizing months, and unable to satisfy the demands of her boss, Elizabeth walked out of her job without giving any notice. Both bosses had given her the impression that she ought to be a cheap girl ready to sell her body for promotion and money. When Elizabeth turned up at the Department of Aviation for interview, the personnel officer apologetically but conclusively told her that they could only take her on at 4790 per annum instead of her previous salary of £850.**

**Footsteps on the stairs alerted Elizabeth. She walked back to her desk and busied herself on the typewriter. Presently, the door opened and Mr. Jimbo walked in. Elizabeth got up automatically and opened the door leading to the main office after murmuring, "Good-morning." Her new boss eyed Elizabeth from foot to head and then sat heavily on a rocking chair. Elizabeth dosed the door gently and continued with her work.**

**Before long the bell rang, and a green light flickered above the internal line. Elizabeth picked up the receiver.**

**"Would you come for dictation right away, please?"**

**"Yes, sir, right away." She picked up her shorthand notebook and pencil and entered, the main office.**

**"Sit down, will y❑u."**

**Elizabeth obeyed. At that moment the private telephone rang, and Mr. Jimbo relaxed in the rocking chair and spoke leisurely to the caller. Elizabeth examined her new boss surreptitiously. He was about 40 years or so. About 5'9", jet black, he had an oily skin, chubby face, and boldly brushed black hair. His upper teeth looked too white to be real—and his dark gums exaggerated the whiteness. His deep fatherly voice was full of confidence and authority. He did not look the mischievous type, nor did he look fierce. But Elizabeth knew that tine alone could tell; she would do her best to stay on the job this time, if only to avoid being a rolling stone.**

**"Right, see you and madam at about 8 p.m. Bye."**

**He replaced the receiver and started dictating straight away.**

**At 11 a.m, Elizabeth had typed a heap of letters—and she placed them before Mr. Jimbo for his signature. He frowned at her. "That was quick."**

**Elizabeth smiled and closed the door behind her. She had been warned about the amount of work in Jimbo's office by the previous secretary, but she was confident she would manage. By 12.15 p.m. she had cleared her desk, and she walked out for lunch feeling less nervous than she had been in the morning.**

**ELIZABETH + 243**

**The following Monday a beautiful woman walked into Elizabeth's office to see Mr. Jimbo, who was having a meeting with senior members of the depart­ment. Elizabeth wondered where she had seen the woman before. She was tall and slim, with a pale chocolate skin and a startling hair style.**

**"Is he busy?" she asked cautiously.**

**"Yes, he is having a meeting," Elizabeth told her. "What is your name please? I will tell him on the phone."**

**"I am his wife," the lady told her with a genuine smile.**

**"Now I remember where I've seen you! I have seen the beautiful photograph you took with your two sons. Please sit down, Mrs. Jimbo. I will mention to him that you are here."**

**Elizabeth pressed the bell and whispered, "Your wife is here—shall I tell her to wait?"**

**"No—I will speak to her right away."**

**The telephone clicked, and before Elizabeth could give the message, Mr. Jimbo stood at the door.**

**"Sorry, Amy dear, would you take the driver, the meeting is still going on. I will give you a ring when I finish."**

**"Right, will be hearing from you then." She turned to Elizabeth. "I'd better be going."**

**Amy Jimbo thanked Elizabeth and left with the driver. She looked a con­tented good wife. Elizabeth believed in a happy marriage—that was her secret dream. Now to see the Jimbos so confident and in love intensified her longing for her lover at Ohio State University in the United States, where he was firtish= ing his post-graduate studies in engineering. She stared into space for a while, and then returned to her typewriter.**

**The busy weeks slipped into months, and when Easter came, Elizabeth with two girl friends took a long weekend to Mombasa where they did nothing but bathe, eat, and write the longest love letters they had ever written. For Liz, there Was plenty to be thankful for. At last God had answered her prayers: she was working among people who respected her womanhood and capabilities: Mr. Jimbo had given her the respect she had longed for and other members of staff had not molested her in any way. Sometimes he had given her much work, and often she worked late in the evenings when all other secretaries had gone home. True, during the past weeks, with plenty of late hours, she had experienced moments of fear. But what had calmed her eventually was Jimbo himself: the fatherly boss. He once told Elizabeth, "I hate to leave you to walk to the hostel alone when it is so late, but I don't believe in giving lifts to young girls. Soon the town would start gossiping and you would get a bad name for nothing. You have a Fong future in front of you, my child. You should protect your name."**

The girls arrived back in the city by night train, ready for work on Tuesday. With only a few days to go before the International Aviation conference in Nairobi, Mr. Jimbo's desk was piled with numerous draft documents for sten­cilling. And a pile of cards to be sent out for a cocktail party to be held on the eve of the conference still stood untouched. Elizabeth worked late each evening to reduce the pile. Mr. Jimbo gave her a spare key so that she could leave the office when she pleased. He also instructed the watchman to be around the building whenever Elizabeth was working late.

**244 + THE Mm-TwENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

That Saturday afternoon was particularly hot. Liz glanced at her watch; it was about 1:30 p.m. As she covered her typewriter to dash out for lunch, the door flung open and there stood Mr. Jimbo beaming at the door. "You poor kid—still working! The world is not ending today, my dear."

"Thank you, sir, I have finished now I will have plenty of time when the conference is over next week—have you forgotten something, sir?"

"No, I thought you might still be working and I came to release you."

"That is kind of you," Elizabeth answered with a smile. It was rare to have bosses who really cared about the amount of work their secretaries did, she thought.

Jimbo walked into his office, and Elizabeth took her handbag and magazines ready to leave.

"All right,.sir, I am off now."

"Just a second," he fumbled with some papers and then looked up. "I have more packed lunch here than I really need—here, have a bite."

Elizabeth did not want to share Mr. Jimbo's packed lunch—he had not expected to find her in the office anyway and she knew Mr. Jimbo was just being polite.

"Thank you, sir, but I would rather not—my lunch will be waiting at the hostel."

"Go on, don't be shy. I can't eat all these, come in and sit down."

"No, sir, I really must go, I would rather have a proper lunch—I missed breakfast."

"Come on, don't argue, justone."

Out of sheer politeness, Elizabeth went in and sat on a settee. She did not want to appear rude to a man who had treated her with great respect. Yet she hkted his persuasiveness. He handed her a packet, and she picked out an egg sandwich. Then out of the blue, the boss moved over and sat with a big sigh beside Elizabeth on the settee.

"I am impressed with your work, my girl. Since you came, this office looks different. One never really knows what a good and efficient secretary is until one has one." He paused and picked up another sandwich.

"Thank you, sir—pleasure is mine—you are an easy person to work for—I was not that good till I came to this establishment." She tried to dodge the rough surface of Jimbo's tweed coat that rubbed.against her upper arm.

"I'm glad to hear that. The only thing that worried me is this, my child." He

**fingered the little diamond ring on Elizabeth's left finger.**

**ELIZABETH + 245**

**"Oh that—sir, nothing doing for another two years or so and by that time a lot of changes will have taken place."**

**She almost told him the truth: that °chola was coming back in November and they planned to get married on New Year's Day—but that was still a secret. "Who is he—I mean this lucky chap—what does he do?"**

**"Still a student," Elizabeth answered nervously.**

**"He is lucky, a real lucky man to possess you. You are efficient, you are femi­nine, and you are very beautiful." And his heavy arm went round Elizabeth's slender waist and gripped her tight.**

**"Oh, please, sir, please—stop this—please," and she struggled to her feet.**

**"Listen to me, Liz—listen," Mr. Jimbo spoke sternly. "1 can't hurt you, I like you like my own child, I can't hurt you—honestly. I-1 just wanted to tell you that you are so enchanting, and I—I just wanted to feel your body close to mine, but I won't hurt you. I promise."**

**She felt the hard pounding of his heart. He looked at her warmly, with yearning. Elizabeth pulled herself together and broke loose from Jimbo's grip. The humid air stifled her.**

**"Please, sir—let me go, I am engaged to get married, soon—please, Ochola will not understand, nor will your wife, your children, and the people. And think of my job—oh, please, let me go—" and she sobbed aloud.**

**"Now you are to behave like a good girl—the people will hear us—and think of the scandal. I've told you that I can't hurt you—I care too much to hurt you." He locked the door and put the key in his coat pocket. Beads of perspiration stood on his nose and his forehead, his muscles were as taut as the top of a drum, and his face was wild with excitement.**

**Elizabeth never suspected that beneath the firm crust of Jimbo's restrained face, a volcano simmered. Physical contact had provoked an eruption. "I just want to feel your breasts, nothing more—then we can go to lunch."**

**He moved over to her, but she ducked behind the desk—and then to the window, and to the door and back to the desk. But Jimbo caught up with her and dragged her to the settee. He searched for Elizabeth's mouth but the girl was too violent and buried her face in her skirt. "Please Liz." He kissed her ears and her neck, then her upper arm, while his big hands reached desperately for the young breasts. His hot breath and the masculine odour that radiated from his body made Elizabeth quite sick. She drew away from him, her face in a gri­mace of pain.**

**"No, Liz, you're so lovable," he whispered. "Your lovely skin is smooth and tender like the petals of a flower. No, no, I can't hurt—I can't, I care too much. Just let me feel the warmth of your womanhood. I won't hurt you, Liz. I prom­ise. I do-1 do—." Elizabeth fought helplesslybeneath this bulky man who had posed as an angel for so many months. And it was like one of those terrible nightmares without an end.**

**The day was spent. Elizabeth threw blankets off from her body. Her pillow**

**was damp, and the crumpled photograph of her fiancé which she was tightly embracing when she dozed off to sleep had fallen on the floor. She got up slowly and walked to the window facing the city centre. The pain between her legs had worsened and her whole body was aching as it did on the first day when her friend tried to teach her to ride a bicycle. The city looked peaceful except for a few cars moving homewards away from the business area. The tip of Manila building could just be seen facing Embakasi Airport which it served. Down below in the central park were hundreds of sightseers—mostly Asians—sitting in groups, men and women segregated. Their innocent children ran wildly like bees among flowers. As a child, Elizabeth had felt happy chasing grasshoppers in the open fields below her home opposite the River Nzoia. She and her little cousin had looked forward to the time when they would be adults. They wanted to discuss adult subjects and perform adult duties.**

**246 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**Then she thought of the day when her periods came at the age of eleven, how she ran to her grandmother's but weeping that she was sick and how her granny comforted her and told her that she was now a woman and must behave like an adult, and stop playing with boys. She remembered how she had looked her in the eye and asked innocently: "What do you mean?" To which her granny had replied, "When a mature girl plays with boys, it is like a child playing with fire; the child can burn herself and probably burn her parent's house and cause great sadness. In the same way, when a mature girl plays with boys and becomes pregnant outside of wedlock, she destroys herself and eventually destroys the whole family."**

**Although she did not understand the words of her grandmother, the horror in her face indicated to her that it was a bad thing and she ran back to her mother's house reciting the words—"It is like a child playing with fire; it can cause much sadness."**

**Elizabeth drew up the curtains to shut out the city and its people from her. She felt out of step with the sophisticated life in towns. She wondered whether she would ever get used to it. A sudden aching longing for her home in the country, the close-knit family life she had shared there, and the security she had felt, gripped her. She took her toilet bag and walked slowly to the wash-room. She entered the incinerator room, pulled out her blood-stained nylon pants that Ochola had sent her for Easter, and wrapped them tightly in a brown paper bag. She pressed the incinerator open, and dropped the pants in the fire and let it close. She stood there sobbing quietly as the pale smoke reluctantly curled up towards the sky. Jimbo had robbed her of the treasure she had hidden away for so many years. Her whole world had fallen apart, and she felt nothing but bit­terness and sorrow at the thought that she had nothing left to offer her man on the wedding day.**

**Elizabeth left the hostel early Monday morning with a group of friends. But instead of catching the double-decker bus that went to Heroes Street, she took a footpath across the central park towards Station Road. She walked briskly, dodging the stream of cars that poured into the city. When she reached the Labour Office at 8 a.m., hundreds of women of all ages had already arrived and**

were waiting for the doors to be opened. Some gray-haired women 'sat in a group, talking in low voices. Elizabeth's heart went out for them. Sorrow had eaten away their youth, leaving permanent lines•on their foreheads.

**ELIZABETH + 247**

As the number swelled, their morose faces reminded Elizabeth of the seek­ers of the kingdom of God who used to throng her father's church on Sunday, when she was small. But no! She felt that God must have 'moved to another land where people acted more justly.

A hand resting on Elizabeth's shoulders startled her, and she turned round sharply.

"Liz, what are you doing here? Come into the office." She followed the Labour Officer into the crowded office and sat down.

"Don't tell me you have left that job again." Elizabeth nodded.

"Why this time, Elizabeth, were they being naughty again?" She nodded.

Mrs. Kimani, a middle-aged motherly woman had dealt with hundreds of cases similar to Elizabeth's, and seeing that Elizabeth did not want to say much she did not press her.

"I can't press you to tell me the story, my child—my heart is full to the brim with story after story of you women who have suffered shame and cruelty in this city. You see those young women out there. They are secretaries and typists who want different jobs."

Elizabeth looked at Mrs. Kimani with keen eyes. "That is what I want—help me find a different job, even if it carries half my present salary."

"No, Liz, don't say that—you are one of our best secretaries, we can't lose you. Let us try Church Organisations this time Liz, don't give up too soon."

Elizabeth looked at Mrs. Kimani with stray eyes—she liked her motherly advice, and she had helped many girls to get good jobs, but this time it was not her fault.

"Ma, remember how you talked to me when I left the American firm and the Wholesalers? You assured me that working for a fellow African with the coun­try's progress at heart, would be different. Ma, now that it has failed with the African, I have a strange feeling that it may not work even with Church Organ­isations. They all seem to be alike, inside the Church or outside. I have made up my mind."

"O.K., Liz, try these places. I will ring to tell them that you are calling this morning. Call on me if you are unsuccessful. And remember what I tell so many young people like you. Man has defied the Laws of society; God alone will deal with him, and it has to be soon." Mrs. Kimani watched Elizabeth disappear at the gate.

At the end of the week Elizabeth got a simple job with the Church Army, to care for destitute children in a small home. The work needed simplicity and patience. The woman in charge of the home asked her to shorten her nails. She had to wear a white overall, a white hairscarf and flat white shoes. One look at herself in the mirror nearly knocked her down.

"A nun? No, a nurse? No, no, no, a shop assistant? Oh no, an ayah? It looked

**like it. From a top grade secretary to an ayah!" Elizabeth tucked in a little flimsy hair that stuck out of the scarf near her ears. She followed Mother Hellena into a big hall where some thirty grubby-looking children were playing. Some were clay-modelling, some were painting, while the smaller ones were playing with wooden bricks. Mother Hellena turned to Elizabeth.**

**248 + T Min-TwENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**"All these poor things have never known anything called love. They know they were brought into this world by somebody, but they don't know who! They hear other children like themselves have mothers and fathers, brothers and sis­ters, but they have nothing. What you and I can give them is what they will ever remember. Their whole future is in our hands."**

**All these eager and pathetic eyes were fixed upon Elizabeth and tears stung her eyes, for she knew she had no future to offer them. She herself had lost her bearings. She had escaped from the sophisticated life of the city, hoping to find solace and comfort among the innocent children. Now they were all looking at her with yearning eyes, each one of them calling out to her, "Our future is in your hands, give us love and comfort which we have never known."**

**Elizabeth suppressed her tears and turned to Mother Hellena. "I did not know you had such a great task, mother. I will offer them the little I have."**

**Ochola was shocked to hear about Elizabeth's new job. Her letter sounded pessimistic, but Ochola felt too guilty to press her. It was a mistake on his part to have allowed Elizabeth to return•to Africa. He could have married her in the United States and they would have returned together as man and wife. But Elizabeth had insisted that she wanted to be married among her people and he gave in to her. Now with so many miles between them, Ochola found it difficult to be tough with her. He was returning home in five Months' time and he hoped to have everything under control.**

**Elizabeth struggled through the first week—the children were noisy, reckless, and often rude. They had looked eager on her arrival, but now they resented her presence. She thought of ringing Mrs. Kimani and telling her that she had changed her mind, but she could not bring herself to it. After one month the children started to like Elizabeth. Their pathetic gratitude made her at once humble and frustrated. The children needed so much more than she could give. She asked God to give her patience and understanding.**

**In the middle of June, Elizabeth felt very sick. Mother Helena nursed her at home for two days but her position gradually deteriorated and she had to be admitted into hospital.**

**She spent three restless nights in hospital, but on the fourth day, Mother Hellena was allowed to talk to her. She was better and could eat. Mother Hel­lena pressed her hands tightly and looked away from her.**

**"Elizabeth, the doctor tells me that you are expecting a baby." The young woman's heart pounded painfully against her chest and she felt very hot like a person suffering from a severe fever. The words played in her ears again. Did expecting a baby mean the same thing as being pregnant? She sat upright with a jerk and faced Mother Hellena.**

**"Did the doctor say so, did he say I am pr—?"**

**ELIZABETH + 249**

**She let her lips close and ran a hand over her belly under the bedclothes. The °confusion, the bitterness, and the self-reproach for what she regarded as per­sonal failure had blotted everything out from Elizabeth's mind so that she had not realised she had missed two months. She grabbed Mother Hellena's arm and did not let go—she had to hold on to some thing. Violent pain was stab­bing at her throat, her chest, her belly. The look on Mother Hellena's face could only be rebuke to her: "You are going to bring another unhappy, fatherless child into the world. Another destitute."**

**She recollected the admonition of the grandmother: "When a mature girl plays with boys and becomes pregnant outside of wedlock she brings much sad­ness to herself and to her family."**

**Exactly one month after leaving the hospital, Elizabeth made up her mind. Sooner or later Mother Hellena was going to get rid of her. The man she loved tenderly would not understand her even if she spoke with the tongue of angels. She could not return home to face her parents and grandmother. And she knew that firms did not like to employ pregnant women. The picture of Amy Jimbo came to her mind—it was the first time she had thought of her. Happy, con­tented, and secure for life, when she, ElizabettOn. her tender age, had no roof above her head. No, it was not fair. While Jimbo posed as an angel in the eyes of his wife, she, Elizabeth, was suffering shame and want—how heartless! She slipped her engagement ring on her finger and when the children were resting in the afternoon she dashed into town to have her hair done. As she sat lazily on the hair-dresser's chair, the woman teased her:**

**"You have got a twinkle in your eyes. Are you meeting him tonight." "Yes," Elizabeth whispered back.**

**"You are a beautiful woman, he is so lucky."**

**"Thank you—he is very handsome too, and kind."**

**The words resounded in her mind to mock her.**

**In the evening Elizabeth told Mother Hellena that she would spend the weekend with her uncle's family in town. She pulled out a notebook from her handbag and gave it to Mother Hellena. "Perhaps you may like to read about my childhood and my life in the city I wrote it some time ago—I will take it on Monday." She pressed Mother Hellena's hand and left to catch a bus to the city.**

**There was nobody at Mr. Jimbo's home when Elizabeth got there—they might have taken the children for a drive, and perhaps the servants were spend­ing their Sunday afternoon seeing friends. Elizabeth stood at the door for a while but the wind was biting around her ankles: it was going to rain. Presently she noticed the laundry-room near the garage was open. She pulled a notebook from her handbag and scribbled a message: "I have come to stay, it is chilly standing at the door, so I thought I would wait for you in the laundry-room. It is me, Elizabeth."**

**She tied the note on the door handle. The Jimbo family returned home just before sunset.**

**"Somebody has been visiting us," Amy said, opening the note. Then she read it aloud. Mr. Jimbo snatched the note from his wife's hand. He tried to say something but only smothered meaningless sounds came out. Then he walked down to the laundry-room in silence, while his wife, Amy, and the children stood dumbfounded near the door.**

**250 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**Jimbo flung the door open, and saw the body of a woman dangling on a red scarf. His feet gave way and he sagged to the ground.**

**"Quick, Amy, quick, the police please, an accident!" Dusk was gathering fast. The police were on their way to the house. They will probe, cross-examine and double-check their facts till they reach the truth, Jimbo thought. Oh my God, ending up like this!**

**Elizabeth Masaba's notebook was handed over to the police by Mother Hel­lena, and she knew she was doing the right thing. The Mother Superior thought grimly of all the other girls who were trapped in this way by those who are more powerful than they are.**

***Hamida Mobamedali*THE RETREAT**

**Kenya 1967 English**

*Drum Beat,* **the collection of poems from East Africa compiled by Lennard Okola in 1967, has a unique significance in the history of East African literature. It is one of the earliest products to reflect the concept of East Africa as a unified poetic entity. It also assembles, through careful discrimination and selection, those poets who both excel individually as practitioners of their genre, and repre­sent collectively the emerging trends in the region.**

**Hamida Mohamedali, one of only two female. authors in the volume, therefore, stands out as a pioneer EastAfrican poet. She was born in Nairobi in 1946. At the time of this poem's publiCation, she was twenty-one years old and an arts student at University College, Nairobi. The poem is full of spiritual longing, expressing the desire for retreat into a deeper, truer, but thus far still-elusive abode.**

*Emilia Ilieva*

**I have lusted to' flee away,**

**From the insane wantonness Of a feeble mind**

**Teased by doubt, hate, and fear.**

**I have lusted to flee Where the virile spring**

**Loosens the spirit from the womb, To be left off, scampering, sheathed By streaks of shimmering splendour Of the sun. Set aflame by**

**THREE Pouts + 251**

**Twin Destinies**

**Love and Hope.**

**Truth, God, my Father;**

**Thou, whom I discern**

**In the glinting dew drop**

**Perching, in the quiet of the morn, On green cactus;**

**Thou, whom I discern**

**In the cold clod of mud struggling With a young blade of grass.**

**My song to Thee remains unsung.**

**I have sought quietude in the**

**Lingering tender *sitar,***

**The panting rhythm of the drum,**

**The seductive scraping of the violin.**

**I have yet to banish**

**Anguish and weariness of this aching existence.**

***Rose Mbowa*THREE POEMS**

**Uganda 1967, 1971 English**

**At the time of her death in 1999, Rose Mbowa was associate professor of drama at Kampala's Makerere University, the first academic and the first woman to achieve that rank. A graduate of Makerere and the Theatre School of Leeds Uni­versity, England, she chaired the Music, Dance, and Drama Department at Mak­erere for nearly a decade. She contributed significantly to the modernization and promotion of Ugandan theater, and several of her compositions and productions, including her epic musical play *Mother Uganda,* about Uganda's postindepen­dence experiences, were performed across Africa and Europe.**

**Born in Kibuye, Kampala, in 1942, Rose Mbowa attended Kibuye Primary School, Buloba Junior Secondary School, and Gayaza High School before enter­ing Makerere University, in 1964, to take an honors degree in English. At Mak­erere the early- to mid-sixties are often referred to as the "golden years" of Ugan­dan literature. From that time forward, many of Mbowa's classmates also built distinguished literary and scholarly careers. Vital components of their education**

**were regular public readings of young writers' work and student-edited literary periodicals. Such activities engendered the poems included here.**

**Two other Makerere activities that contributed significantly to Rose Mbowa's development as an artist were the weekly radio program featuring East African writers called *In Black and White,* and the Makerere Free Traveling Theater (MFTT), both run by Rose Mbowa's teacher and friend, David Cook. The MFTT was both a cocurricular training exercise in drama for undergraduates and an outreach program to take theater entertainment to upcountry and especially rural East African communities. Every year, during the university's long vacation, members of the program traversed the East African countryside performing—free of charge, as its name indicates—elaborate repertoires of plays and other entertainment.**

**After a brief spell in broadcasting, Mbowa entered professional theater, even­tually recognized as Uganda's best actress. A winner of nearly all the top national theater awards (best actress 1973, Presidential Meritorious Award 1975, best pro­ducer 1982 and 1983), she also held several international awards, including the U.S.'s Manillow Fellowship. In 1998, shortly before her death, she received a standing ovation at the Kennedy Arts Center in Washington, D.C., for her per­formance as Mother Courage in *Nalukalala,* a Ugandan adaptation of Brecht's famous play. Among her many pioneering activities was the launching of theater­in-development activities in Uganda, where performance not only entertained but also sensitized and mobilized rural communities, encouraging them to discuss and deal with developmental problems and challenges.**

**The three poems below were written during Rose Mbowa's undergraduate years at Makerere. They exhibit obvious influences, including stylistic quirks, of the kind of English verse that Ugandan undergraduates then studied, including Shakespeare, the Metaphysical poets, the Romantics, and a smattering of T. S. Eliot, as well as the King James Bible. Beyond this, however, the reader senses the emergence of an individual and original voice, aware of the challenges facing a young person coming to maturity in the early years of Uganda's independence. In both "Light" and "Ruin," the :author explo'res that perilous but inevitable, "unquenchable" struggle for self-knowledge that ends in ambiguous "transfigura­tion." Both poems have a strong metaphysical aura about them, rendering them open to various interpretations. A feminist reading of "Ruin," seizing on the striking images of the imposing, solid structure 'w.td the tenacious "she" who dares to confront it, may justifiably identify a challenge to patriarchy. Rose Mbowa confided to friends, however, that the poem was inspired by a physical reality in the neighborhood of her childhood home in Kibuye. There was a biobandoned house on a rise near her home, she said, about which she and her friends specu­lated as they walked by, wondering what lurked behind those imposing closed doors. "That Game,' onr the other hand, is more speci**fi**cally grounded in Uganda's historical experience. It contains numerous allusions to the troubled political events, beginning in 1966 and culminating in 1971 with the total usurpation of the original independence mandate, first by Milton Obote's dicta­torship and ultimately by Idi Amin's.**

***Austin Bukenya***

**252 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**RuIN**

**Up on a hill it stood immovable, Dark and gloomy in the dusk; A heavy silence hung in the air**

**Restraining her courage, her will; But on she walked.**

**A cricket whistled breaking the silence, Lighting her path and her will;**

**Then suddenly it stopped,**

**As if suppressed by a heavy hand, Still—on she moved.**

**Every move drew her nearer,**

**Every move gravitated towards the gloom;**

**Giant trees, heavy and dark before her rose,**

**Guards on duty, erect in the dark, Through them—she pushed.**

**With eyes closed, arms outstretched, She groped in an envelope of black; The air grew dense and doomed,**

**Her heart drummed faster and louder; To the door—she stepped.**

**With trembling hands she pushed, A squeal pierced the air;**

**Flashes blinded her sight;**

**And down she descended at a blow, On the grim, rude stone.**

**THAT GAME**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **With dazzling eyes: sweet poison in teeth, He to the core armed plays his game; Triumphantly the fools applaud,**  **While the wise weigh;**  **With feet on edge, mouth in mid-air He cunningly his prey surveys;**  **Then suddenly he aims his shot: Fool and wise applaud,** | **THREE PoEms + 253** |

**The game is won,**

**254 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

**In the center firmly he stands:   
Luxuriously flies by that time.**

**The time has flown: no fruit has yet emerged: Fool and wise their heads together bend; Meanwhile he comfortable puffs his pipe, Belching the while for the richness of it all; Then suddenly—**

**Eyes open: ears unstop As the crowd clamours, Clamours for its share: Eyes left—right--**

**Up and down he stares, Starts—**

**Gripping the table he aims his shot: Once sweet, bitter becomes the poison: Edgeward blows the storm, Persists—accelerates**

**Arms outstretch**

**Eyes madly dart;**

**Topples—and stares into darkness.**

**LIGHT**

**To fight reality is to open a swinging door, the blows we aim, on us do land:**

**we stagger transfigured in the truth, and victors in defeat we stand to live**

**as from cells prisoners burst into life.**

**Thus she staggered as into being she came: she'd believed she lived life in her cell**

**and had cried for a veil over her newborn light that melodiously burns unquenchable.**

**That flaming self answered, and now steadily rises on the way till caution pricks that sole to**

**a halt that gnaws-**

**0 fount of joy—peak of light let light have light, then**

**life will be.**

***Aiwa/Yuma Nalwadda*A WIDOW'S LAND INHERITANCE**

**AWIDOW'S LAND INHERITANCE +** 255

Uganda 1969 Luganda

Mwajjuma Nalwadda represents the new Muslim Ugandan woman, strategizing to fight for her rights in the face of traditional Ugandan patriarchy. Her name, Mwajjuma, an Africaniaed form of "Bint Juma," indicates that she is a second- or even third-generation Muslim, and she is clearly conversant in Islamic law and practices. Armed with this knowledge and with her literacy, she takes on the sheikhs who have conspired to deny her and her daughters their rightful share in the family's property. Mwajjuma Nalwadda's challenge provides intriguing insights into the predicament of the Ugandan Muslim woman, perceived by many to be doubly disadvantaged by African tradition and Islamic male supremacy. Her tactical approach is not to oppose either institution head-on, but to demand that they play fair on their own terms—and to her advantage. Nal­wadda understands that the injustice being done to her and her children is essen­tially sexist, but ultimately she interrogates the sheikhs' distorted interpretation of even the little to which the system entitles her.

Islam was introduced into Uganda in the middle *of* the nineteenth century, when the Waswahili and Arabs from the East African coast established close links with the rulers of the country. It has ,remained a significant religious force, with a following of about 10 percent of the country's 24 million people. Several factions have developed among the believers over the years. The Nateete Bukoto African Muslim Community, of which Mwajjuma Nalwadda's husband was the leader at the time of his death, was characterized by its preference for the blend-ink of Muslim beliefs with African customs and traditions. Apparently this posi­tive approach could be used opportunistically, as demonstrated by the sheikhs' recourse to traditional clan structures in refusing to allocate land to Mwajjuma Nalwadda's grandchildren.

Kiganda society is structured into fifty-two clans, each characterized by a totem, subtotem, drum signal, name list, and ancestral territory. The totems are often animal symbols, hence Nalwadda's reference to her grandchildren as belonging to the Leopard clan. The clans are patrilineal, meaning that a person inherits her or his clan from the father. Since the clans are also exogamous, for­bidding intermarriage among members of the same clan, women will automati­cally belong to a different clan from that of their mothers. As such they would not be eligible to inherit land from their mothers' clans. This is an aspect of the tradi­tion that Mwajjuma Nalwadda challenges as contradicting the *sharia,* the Islamic legal framework. The "fire" for which she threatens to pray is of course hellfire, or *jebanam* of which, in Islamic belief, there are seven levels of increasing severity; depending on the gravity of the sinner's transgressions.

Nalwadda's appeal is addressed to the leader of the African Muslim Commu­nity Bukoto Natete in Kampala.

*Austin Bukenya and Abasi Kiyimba*

16 November, 1969

**256 + THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY (1936-1969)**

Sheikh Zaid Mugenyiasooka

The President General

Sir, I am writing to you *on* a matter that you know well, the matter of *my* land as the widow of the late Sheikh Abdurahman Sekimwanyi.

I explained to you that three of my deceased children were entitled to a share of [their late father's] 'land, according to the Islamic Sharia, because they died long after their father had died. But the people who distributed the land delayed [and the children died before the distribution]. So whose fault was this? As their mother, I am entitled to inherit their land, according to the Islamic Sharia.

My daughter, who died last, Aisa Najjuma, left three children, and these children should be given her land. This idea of saying that the children are of the Ngo *clan* and cannot inherit land *of* the Lugave clan is not valid in the Islamic Sharia.

Lastly, as a widow of the late Sheikh Sekimwanyi, I am entitled to a share of his land.

Sheikh Kayinda and his colleagues, who handled the land distribution say that shall not' get my share as Sheikh' Sekimwanyi's widow, and that I shall also not get the share of my children who died after their father. My three grandchildren, who lost [their] mother, have also been denied their mother's land; so where is the justice, and how do they [these sheikhs] understand the Qur'an? Are they torturing me because I am a woman? Have they forgotten that we were created by the same God?

Now Sheikh Kayinda is ill, and may die before settling this problem [of the land]. I am appealing to you to intervene in the matter before it is too late; for if Sheikh Kayinda should die before he puts right this issue, the fire that will burn him will be constantly requested for by me.

I am,

Muwajjuma Nalwa.dda

Widow of the late Sheikh Abdurahman Sekimwanyi

*Translated by Abasi Kiyimba*

**LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**(1970-1995)**

1

***Grace Akello*PRAY, No REVENGE**

**PRAY, *No* REVENGE + 259**

**Uganda 1979 English**

**Grace Akello was born in 1950 in Katakwi, formerly part of Soroti district in the eastern part of Uganda. After studying at Tororo Girls' School, she attended Makerere University, graduating with a degree in social work and social adminis­tration in 1974. Akello left Uganda for Kenya during the military dictatorship of Idi Amin, and lived in exile for years. After returning to Uganda, she became a member of parliament for Katakwi in 1996, and in 1999 was made minister of state for Gender, Labor, and Social Development (Entandikwa). Currently, she is the state minister for Northern Uganda Rehabilitation.**

**Grace Akello has been active in political, social, and cultural issues in Africa for more than thirty years. She is a founding member of the Nile Book Service, which specializes in sending textbooks to African schools. She has served as a board member of Christian Aid, worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation, and served as deputy editor of Viva, a Nairobi-based women's magazine.**

**Akello's collection of poetry, *The Barred Entry,* was written in the 1970s while she was in exile in Kenya, and published in 1979. The poems are a lament for Uganda, giving voice to both the living and the departed who suffered under war and repressive dictatorship. Pray No Revenge" reflects the voice of a victim for whom exile was a form of death.**

***Florence Ehila and Beverley Nambozo***

**I found neither time nor place To howl my revenge**

**To threaten vengeance**

**Thick and fast**

**On my treacherous seed**

**I found neither time nor place To curse them**

**To annihilate them**

**To annihilate their existence To wipe out their seed**

**I found neither time nor place**

**To prowl over their exhausted sleep With spiteful claws strangle**

**Their supple pulsating throats Or spirit evil**

**Mangle and destroy**

**The seat of their reason**

**I found neither time nor place**

**To perch over my weed-smothered grave**

**My grass-garlanded grave**

**To wait and shock pregnant women With my vanishing dissipated corpse**

**I found time and place**

**When rejected and confronted MY ancestors**

**Showed Creator-endowed mercy**

**And prisoner-like**

**Seeking solace and justice My erring, rebellious breed I paraded before their eyes Till sick with pity**

**My bosom they clasped**

**In 'eternity-lasting warm embraces**

**Accepting without question My deserted**

**Rejected**

**Unmourned death**

***Miriam K Were*THE MISCHIEVOUS COW**

**Kenya 1980 English**

**An internationally acclaimed medical expert in public health, particularly in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and control, Miriam Khamadi Were is also a suc­cessful author of books for young people. Between 1970 and 1980, she published four novels in rapid succession: *The Boy in Between* (1970), *The Eighth Wife* (1972), *The High School Gent* (1973), and *Your Heart Is My Altar* (1980), all of which have been standard secondary school readers. The novels capture the trou­bled state of adolescent life in a society in transition from the tradition-bound world to the modern, which is embodied by the values of Western education and the search for individual fulfillment. *The High School Gent,* for example, belongs to a subgenre of East African writing in the 1970s aptly called "the university novel," for it depicts conflicted school-aged characters caught between two cul­tures. The young female protagonist in *The Eighth Wife* faces a threat from the power of polygamy to render her, as it did the sixth wife, "a mere showpiece," and in *Your Heart Is My Altar,* the dilemma facing the narrator is how to forge a**

**260 + LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1970-1995)**

sexual and cultural identity unmarred by conflicts of gender and ethnicity.

**THE MISCHIEVOUS Cow +** 261

With the honest emotion typical of a young, precocious mind, Chimoli, the narrator and main character in *Your Heart Is My Altar,* provides insights into the limited ways women are perceived in the society and how this affects the personal growth of young boys and girls. The novel's implicit message is that self-worth is a gift African societies must give their youth, and that gender prejudice, as mani­fested in the bullying tactics of some of the male characters and, in the local chief's opposition to female education, considerably narrows young women's chances for success. The novel's first chapter, titled "The Mischievous Cow," introduces readers to the narrator's world of family and friends and its impact on her budding sense of self. It blends the images of repression at home and violation in other arenas to make clear early on that coming of age is not going to be easy for the narrator. Her identification with the "mischievous cow," the family's favorite among a herd of cattle, points to both vulnerability and strength as an important dynamic in the lives of the young.

Were was born in Kakamega District of western Kenya, the sixth of ten chil­dren of devoutly Christian parents. She attended William Penn College in Iowa and studied medicine at Indiana University, completing her medical degree at the University of Nairobi. Her academic achievements also include a master's degree in education at Uganda's Makerere University and a master's and a doctorate in public health from Johns Hopkins University. Were served for several years as the Kenyan representative at the World Health Organization, and was head of the Kenyan mission in Ethiopia, where she also served as director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Country Services Technical Team in Addis Ababa (CSTAA). Currently, she is chair of the board of the African Med­ical and Research Foundation (AMREF) and the Kenya National AIDS Control Council. Her tireless advocacy on the behalf of young people and public health has earned her numerous awards, including the first U.S.-sponsored George P. Tolbert Health Award for outstanding contributions to International Health in 1980 and the International Order of Merit in 2000.

*Tuzyline Jita Allan*

"I'm going to kick the whole lot of you out of my home," the familiar voice of Father rang and echoed throughout our homestead.

"If your mother takes your side again," he continued, "she can take the whole lot of you back to her clan with her. I can manage this home alone much better without a lot of good-for-nothing mouths to feed."

Father was at it for a long time. And for what must have been the one thou­sandth time, Mushitoshi was the cause. Mushitoshi, that cow with a demon in her head, had again sneaked out of the *bona* and into the neighbour's crop. At the very sound of Father's voice we went to our usual hiding places in the small bushes in the homestead. I could see my little brother, Chimwani's head peep­ing out from behind the banana leaves. He was not too young to know that he, too, must hide, but not old enough to realise that too much curiosity can reveal pur hide-out. I and my sister Limwenyi, just older than I, were desperately

trying to find shelter behind a bush that was not big enough for one of us.

"Ssss," I hissed as I crouched down, you stepped on my toe."

"Shut your mouth!" she hissed back.

"But you stepped on my toe!" I insisted.

"A beating with a whole bunch of sweeping sticks will hurt a whole lot more

than a little pressure on your toe. Can't you hear he is close to us?"

That it hurt from a beating with a bunch of sticks wasn't a lie. We had all had our turns of it, on and off I could very well remember the kind of feeling one got when a whole bunch of sticks descended on the legs and behind. It wasn't as if Father went to get the sticks just to wallop us. He simply picked up the bunch we used for sweeping around the outside of the homestead.

"Keep on hiding," Father's voice rang out. "I know only too well where to catch you. Lazy ones like you have pits for stomachs and your mouths will soon be watering."

"God, I am hungry," I whispered to my sister as Father's voice reminded me of food.

"When are you not ever hungry?" my sister whispered impatiently as she put her hand across my mouth.

Well, I couldn't blame my sister. Quite ,often I wished I was like her. She could sulk for a whole day and keep her mouth closed, closed even to food. I couldn't say that of myself. I always made up for any difference between Mother and me, often by giving in, I guess because I didn't want the sun to set while I was angry, but also because my stomach wouldn't give me peace over one missed meal.

Listening to my sister's talk, you might have thought she hated me. But in fact she always hid me in the furthest corner, away from my father's sticks. There was that time I was trying to fight her when she hit me just a little too hard and I let this be known with my strong voice. Since fighting was illegal in our home, it meant a beating for both of us. When Father entered the kitchen where we were, my sister helped me out of the house first by putting me through the window. When we got outside, it was raining and we could not go to hide in the shrubs. There was a big woven *lwichi* (tray) leaning against the house, so my sister hid me in that while she pressed herself against the wall.

Father followed us to the hick of the house. He saw my sister standing against the wall.

"Where is your sister?" he asked with what was supposed to be a firm voice but which sounded full of concern. My sister did' not answer back. She just changed positiong, placing herself between the *lwichi* and Father. Father must have been curious that she was not trying to run away and thought she was pro­tecting something behind the *lwichi.* He took her by the hand just as I peeped to see what he was going to do. His eyes grew wide as he saw me.

"So you're hiding your sister from me," he said in almost laughing tones. "I thought you two were fighting!" So saying he walked off amused. As soon as he left, my sister pointed an unfriendly finger at me. I held her across the waist.

"I am your friend," I told her. "You hid me from Father."

**11 262 + LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1970-1995)**

Ili

**"You are not my friend," she told me but I didn't care what she said. 'She was not pushing my hands off her waist. Besides she was stroking my head.**

THE **MISCHIEVOUS Cow + 263**

**Father's voice was still ringing out as he addressed the air when Mother returned from the market. We could see Mother through the spaces between the branches. Father happened to look back and his eye caught her figure.**

**"Where are your children?" he demanded of her.**

**"How can I know where** *your* **children are when I spent the whole day at the market?"**

**"No doubt you will be cooking for them," Father continued.**

**"What have they done wrong?" Mother asked.**

**"What have they done wrong?" went on Father. "They left Mushitoshi loose**

**and drove her into the maize crop!" he told her pointing to the garden.**

**"We didn't drive her into the maize crop," I protested in a whisper. Father**

**had apparently forgotten he was a Christian, and should tell only the truth. My sister did not say anything then. She just pulled my ear.**

**"Mushitoshi is not a cow," Mother was saying. "She is a better thief than even Icheji." She referred to the well-known thief of the area. "The devils are on the head of that cow," she declared at last.**

**I could no longer keep my head under the bush. For Zone thing, there were goodies in my mother's basket. For another I just wanted to have a look at her when she dared stay near to Father and talk with him when he was in this mood. It was a mood that made Father a completely different man. It gave him eyes that I feared to see. No one saw my head pop up from behind the bush. Father was following Mother into the house, reminding her in quieter tones of what a useless bunch of children she had borne him, and how they had all taken after** *her* **clan. Mother had, over the years, reminded him that there were more useless people in** *his* **clan than in hers. But having noted that this did not change his opinion, she just heard him in silence.**

**No sooner had Father's voice died down than our ears were met by the shrill tones of the owner of the maize. Everytime I heard Nyamusi's voice I thought she must have a sharper voice than anyone.**

**"You wealthy plough-users will not let a pdar hoe-digging woman harvest anything," she was saying in that voice of hers.**

**"This time I will not let it pass," she continued. "I will miss church for once and go to the witchdoctor and you will wake up one morning and find all those cows dead."**

**No wonder Father's countenance changed when cows went into the crop. He must have dreaded hearing that sharp voice. The memory of it could bring to mind a night of howling dogs and owls, and ghosts dancing in the nude.**

**Mushitoshi had caused more trouble in the home than anyone I know. She would be placed in the** *Boma* **with the rest of the cows, but she would never be found there in the morning. She would keep nudging at the poles until they gave way and then she would sneak out alone. Father decided to tie her up with a rope. For a while, this worked beautifully. But one morning she wasn't there**

**and only a piece of the rope was left. Our joy and jeers at her defeat were thus short-lived. It was not the piece of rope that told us she was gone. It was a man's voice one early morning.**

**264 + LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1970-1995)**

**"I am going to sell this beast and make good the destruction she has brought about in my crop," he bellowed.,**

**Even Father was spell-bound. He couldn't wait to dress. He went to see the speaker with a blanket wrapped around him.**

**"Neighbour," Father answered as amicably as he dared, "I myself tied up this cow. I do not see how it could have found its way to your crop."**

**I guess Father was thinking what we all thought: that there had been too much quietness'and some neighbour had come to untie Mushitoshi and lead her to the man's *shamba.***

***"Is* this not your cow?" asked the angry neighbour.**

**"It is," agreed Father. "Come to the house, neighbour," he continued. "Let's go on talking there."**

**They went in to the hot tea awaiting them. Later on they walked off together amicably; this time with Father wearing a shirt.**

**That evening we told Father we thought some neighbour was playing a trick on us. He dismissed it weakly. In fact he was of the same opinion but dared not be too outspoken about it.**

**"I'm going to catch the man in the act," declared my big brother, Ligami. "I'll come with you," little, brother Chimwani said excitedly offering to join my brother in the nightwatch.**

**"Yes, you can come tonight!" he said to a very delighted Chimwani. "I'll come with you," I, had also chimed, caught up in the excitement. "This is not a woman's chore," retorted Ligami.**

**Well, that is the way it was. I was either too young or I was kept away because I was a woman. What was there in this world for a youngster that hap­pened to be a woman? Someday, there must be an answer.**

**That night there was triad tapping on our door.**

**"Come and see!" Ligami called to us.**

**Well, I guess that is usual. First boys tell you to keep away because they do not want girls and the next minute they are calling for you.**

**"Come and see Mushitoshi at her tricks," he added. I stumbled after my sis­ter,,who was already up and was now standing in the doorway.**

**Mushitoshi was a white cow with black streaks. It was easy to see her on such a moonlitnight.**

**Mushitoshi walked slowly towards the tree onto which she was tied, with a new rope. Then with great speed she ran back. She did this several times.**

**"So this is the way she weakens the rope and eventually breaks it!" someone wondered.**

**"Who said cows don't think?" Limwenyi exclaimed.**

**"You always say my brain is thick as that of a cow," I reminded her. "Cows are not so stupid after all."**

**Mushitoshi had the surprise of her life that night. She was just about ready to gallop off when she noticed us all round her. Ligami tied her forelegs together and her hind legs together and tied these in turn to a 'tree. She lay down and was so still that she seemed dead. Hence my father's shock that next morning. It was a pity, because we were sure that for once we wouldn't wake up to the voice of someone screaming at our homestead on account of that Mushi­toshi. But all the same we woke up to the resonant notes of Father's voice who didn't like the idea at all. Ligami painstakingly explained to Father how Mushi­toshi gets away and how this was the only way to restrain her. To our surprise and delight Father agreed that we should picket her this way.**

**But it was difficult to be one thought ahead of that cow. She who had been meek and manageable most of the day, keeping her tricks for the night, decided to try out all her mischievous ideas in the day-time. This made my distaste of cattle-herding even greater.**

**"It's easy," my sister would tell me. "That's why the men do it."**

**"That's true," agreed her girl friend. "You just sit under the tree and let the cows graze. When they are satisfied, you simply drive them to the stream to drink and then they walk quietly home."**

**As a matter of fact, girls often looked forward to the times when their broth­ers were away so that they could look after the cattle, and have a lazy day. I had not been lucky with cattle-watching.**

**The first time I took the cattle grazing I came back with less than a third of them. The next time it was Mushitoshi who saved my day. I guess she had the sense to notice how frightened I** *was.* **Whenever she saw a cow wander off, she would go with it. As soon as she stopped she would moo loudly enough for me to hear her. Then I would run and drive the wanderers back to the herd. It sur­prised everyone to see the complete herd coming home that day.**

**"How did you manage it?" someone asked.**

**"Mushitoshi was wonderful," I told them. "She did the watching for me."**

**"Don't talk so loudly," Ligami cautioned, "It will harden Father's heart." Lig­ami and the rest of us had been trying our best to persuade Father to sell that cow; but he just wouldn't hear of it.**

**r There had been the time when Mushitoshi broke her legs and we all thought that now she would only be fit for someone's meal. No one in our home would eat her meat of course; she was so much one of the family. But it was odd with Mushitoshi and us. If you asked any of us what we wanted done with the cow, we always said, "get rid of her." But when it came to negotiating the deal, noth­ing was good enough in exchange for Mushitoshi. When she broke her legs, we were not brave enough to kill Mushitoshi ourselves. None of us would do it I guess we wanted the excitement that came with her adventures. So we took turns nursing Mushitoshi's broken legs until she was able to walk again. As if to thank us, her adventure and misbehaviour became less.**

**For me Mushitoshi was wrapped up with the memories of a special day. It was the day I discovered that young boys could be nice to strange young girls.**



**THE MISCHIEVOUS Cow + 265**

**It was the year I had started school. Ligami and Limwenyi had been at school for a long time. Now it was my turn. But I had to miss school now and then when the herds-boy was away. This particular Saturday the latter and my brothers had gone to watch the circumcision rites of a cousin. Mother insisted that Limwenyi was now too big to herd the cattle, so I was sent off with them.**

**266 + LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1970-1995)**

**There are disadvantages of not going cattle-watching regularly. I missed out on a lot of things that I should have known or I would not have been so easily fooled.**

**The boys of my clan were so powerful that we had no trouble with intruders from the other clans coming into our land, so we spent the time playing.**

**We would play *Ndaroba.* Each one of us has a stone and we sat in a circle as usual.**

***Ndaroba***

***Nandaroba Ndaroba***

***Nandaroba Makuli yetsa***

***Makuli yetsa ne.fifile na ndaroba***

***Majina ngako***

***Majina ngako nosbinda no sasakwe.***

**We played this for a while and booed those who were slow and were caught. Then we•layed *Awoyi Kongolo* followed by *Ing'ombe.* I was feeling good that afternoon and thinking that boys were not so bad after all. 1 guess that is why they caught me.**

**"Let's show Chimoli something," one of them said. It must have been their password for what followed. No one asked what.**

**"Yeees," they agreed in a chorus. I looked from one boy to the next, per­plexed:**

**"It's really simple," one of the boys explained to me.**

**"Bring her here," one of the called out. "We'll 'show her here."**

**I was getting a bit frightened but I was also curious. After all, I reasoned, these'were boys from my clan. They couldn't bring too much harm to me. So I walked on to the spot. I was really 'surprised by what I saw.**

**"What is new,about cattle dung?" I asked them. For there was only a pile of dung. It must have been dropped there by a great big bull.**

**"Nothing really," said the boy who had 'called to us plucking a piece of grass as he said so. He stuck the grass right in the centre of the cow dung pile. He turned fo me.**

**pick up this grass," he said, "and put another one there to see if you can pick if up. We'll pick up grass without teeth." As he said so, he knelt down and picked up the grass without difficulty**

**"There is nothing difficult about that,"1 told them. "But I won't pick it up with my mouth because I hate 'the smell of cow dung."**

"Come on," someone said. "If you don't we'll know that girls can't do such a simple thing." That did it. Did these idiotic boys think I could not pick the grass up with my mouth just because I was a girl?

**THE MISCHIEVOUS COW + 267**

I decided that **I** could show them. I knelt down and bent my head to the grass. I was just plucking the grass from the dung heap when someone pushed my head down. My face right to my ears sunk into the heap, a good measure of it going into my mouth. There followed a roar of laughter that deafened my ears. In the meantime, I tried to get the dung out of my eyes and mouth. I was so filled with rage I could have wrung anyone's neck. But there were no necks to be wrung. So **I** just wailed as loudly as I could while **I** made my way to the stump where I had left my gourd of drinking water. I washed off as much dung from my eyes and mouth as I could and sat down weighing out the various types of revenge that came to my mind.

Boys are funny, I thought. They make you happy and then play such a dirty trick. **I** said in my heart a hundred times that I would never again join in any fun games with boys however innocent they looked. Who knows how they can twist things around. I also said in my heart that I would never take up a pre­arranged challenge just because someone told me that if I didn't do so then they would conclude something about me. To hell with their conclusions!

Just the thought that the dung had gone in my mouth made me start crying again. I started to curse in the words Mechi wa Lukulu used when he came and asked for food and found that it wasn't ready.

"As you walk may you stumble on a stump and may it pierce your intestines to shreds," he would say.

Thinking of some of the curses I had heard made me cry and laugh. I was quite unaware of time and of the person who had approached me. To make things even worse he was a boy, and a strange one at that.

"Go away," I shouted at him holding up my gourd ready to strike. I hoped he'd go quickly since he was much bigger than **I.** He was the size of my brother, Ligami, and I didn't really want to start a fight. **I** also noticed another thing. Mushitoshi had plodded her way to me and was rubbing her nose on my leg. **I** guess she was reassuring me of her support in case I needed it. I moved to the other side of the cow so that the cow was between me and this strange boy.

"I know you," he Said to me. "I go to school with your brother and sister."

"Go away," I hissed again. "I have never seen you before."

"I am not from these parts," he said amicably. **"I** often visit my relatives in the clan next to yours and come to your clan sometimes."

"Go away!" I screamed.

"I saw what the boys did. They are bad boys. I was sitting in the tree from over there and **I** had been envying your fun. Then they did that to you."

"Go a-w-a-y," I started crying all over again.

"I had made something for you while I sat in the tree. **I** was afraid to bring it lest your boys beat me. I was going to give it to you when you started off back home. Then they did that to you."

**All he was succeeding in doing was to make me cry more and more. By this time Mushitoshi had lain down and I was sitting beside her.**

**268 + LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1970-1995)**

**He sat on the other side of the cow.**

**"Try it on and see if it will fit," he said, reaching across the cow and handing the grass-woven bracelet to me. It was lovely. It was even better than the ones my sisters made. It was cream in colour with red spots. A beautiful bracelet.**

**"Why did you make it for me?" I asked unbelievingly.**

**"I like you," he said shrugging his shoulders. "I like the way you were laugh­ing as you played with those boys."**

**"You don't know me," I said.**

**"I like you," he said for the last time and stood up. "I will help you round up your cattle and drive them home."**

**Mushitoshi must have decided that he wasn't too bad; she was rubbing her nose against his leg while he walked off and rounded up the cattle. It had become late. We drove .therh to the stream where I washed my face a bit more thor­oughly, and then we drove the cows towards my home.**

**It is no problem 'driving cattle home with a stranger you don't know. You don't have to talk to each other. You just make sounds for the cattle to move on. Every so often, I looked at the woven bracelet on my wrist.**

**"Goodbye," he said when he came close to our homestead and he ran away. And I did not even know his name!**

**Boys are funny, I thought. One-minute one of them is being very cruel and you want to send the whole lot of them to the bottom of the lake, and the next minute one of them is being very kind. I guess if you take revenge you hurt a'lot of innocent people.**

***Anna Chipaka*A BARMAID'S LIFE**

**Tanzania 1980s Kiswahili**

**Anna Chipaka was born in 1955 and grew up during the early years of Tanzania's independence, when girls who wanted an education faced many obstacles, npt least among them early pregnancies. In some towns there were few openings for women who dropped out of school beyond working in bars, brothels, and petty. trade. Anna Chipaka dropped out of school because of pregnancy and faced a dif­ficult life, both as a wife and later as a barmaid and trader. Yet, in spite of her lack of formal education, she exhibits a high level of awareness of how her own life experience relates to larger social and economic issues affecting all working women.**

**The text that follows has been excerpted from a longer narrative, recorded in Kiswahili in the mid-1980s as part of a project to document the lives of ordinary**

Tanzanian women, and later published in English in a book called *Unsung Hero­ines.* In these selections, Anna Chipaka tells of her early life, including her rela­tionship with a kind and loving stepmother—a contrast to the common stereo­type of the "evil stepmother." The rural African communal way of life also comes into play, when young Anna goes to the village to live with relatives. Training in matrimonial matters is usually given by the aunt or the grandmother or the *soma,* the village woman responsible for initiation rites. Girls who spend their early lives in towns rarely receive this training; as a result, they art usually`--a§ in Anna's case—very ignorant regarding sexual matters Until it is too late.

A **BARMAID'S LIFE +** 269

After her early premarital pregnancy, described here, Anna Chipaka did marry and have more children. Later, she divorced her husband and, left on her own to support herself and her family, returned to Mbamba Bay to live with her mother. She offers a rare glimpse into the unenviable conditions of life for barmaids, who form a special caste of sexually and economically exploited women in African urban areas. In her later life, Chipaka settled in Dar es Salaam as a trader. She died in 1992, survived by five children, all of whom she managed to educate up to postsecondary school level.

*MM Mulokozi*

I was born in Mtwara (where my parents had moved to, from Mbamba Bay for wage employment) in the month of February, 1955. My parents are from the Wanyasa tribe living on the shores of Lake Nyasa, in Mbinga District. I was,the youngest of the three children. There were two girls and only one boy who later died. I didn't know much about my mother until I was about fourteen. My par­ents separated when I was about three years old, and after a divorce, my mother moved back to Mbamba Bay. We were brought up by our father and step­mother. From what I can remember we were a happy family and we lived com­fortably. Both my parents were workers; my father traveled a lot. His job as a trade unionist demanded long and extensive travels; we did not see as much of my father as we would have liked. He was a good man but strict, and he pro­vided well for us. I do not remember going hungry;: family.

we were a happy famil

My step-mother, on the other hand, was quieter. She looked after us and fed us well. She did not talk much, but she gave us all the freedom and she loved us. We got on very well. In 1958 my step-mother gave birth to a pretty baby girl and I loved my pretty little sister very much. I carried her on my back as I played. My mother worked hard; she woke up early in the morning, prepared breakfast for us and made sure we ate breakfast before she left for work. She had a full day, working from morning and coming back late in the afternoon. While she was away, we were left in the care of a young ayah. We used to play with other young girls in the neighborhood, and we had great fun together.

As I was growing up I usually played with the neighbors' children my age. Some of my playmates were slightly older, but we got on well. The older girls sometimes sent us away, but as I grew up I was accepted and played with them and the boys. When I was about thirteen I had my first menstrual period. It

came as a shock to me, as **I** did not know what it meant. . . . From my aunt I learned about the new changes taking place in my body. . . . While staying with my aunt I was only taught the basics and a few facts of life which I did not even understand; and I went to school as usual.

**270 + LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1970-1995)**

**I** became pregnant when **I** was fourteen and in primary school in Dar es Salaam. **I** do not remember what happened. It was such a long time ago, but I know the man was much older. . . . After I was six months pregnant I realized something was wrong. . . I was very healthy and plump and nobody noticed that I was pregnant, not even my step-mother or neighbors. A few months later my step mother did notice; and she began to ask questions. I was frightened but she was even more frightened because she did not even have the courage to tell my father. When **I** was in my eighth month my step-mother picked up courage and went to see my uncle and told him the "bad" news. My uncle in turn went to see his younger brother and together with my step-mother they discussed the issue and decided to tell my father. . . .

The meeting of my aunts, uncles, my grandfather, my sister, myself and my parents took place in our house one evening. . . . My father was so angry that he threatened to throw me out of the house but my aunts and uncles calmed him. I was made to reveal the name of the man who was responsible. The next day a message was sent to his home and he came with his brother. Naturally, as is usual, the man refused responsibility.

I could not believe my ears. **I** think I began to grow up from that day, . . .

I decided to work in the bar as a waitress or barmaid. At least they didn't ask for a certificate or high education. Some of the girls **I** came to know were bar-girls and they made enough money to live on. It was not much, but it kept them going. It was not a decision I made on impulse. It took me weeks before **I** grad-daily accepted my situation and plucked up courage and applied for a job in a bar. **I** did not like the idea but the odds were against me. I was determined to bring up my children myself and support them too.

**I** approached one of the bar owners about a job. He wanted to know if I had any past experience as a barmaid. I said no. He said, "I wonder if you can do it. It is a tough job." I said, "I could try." So I was offered a job. **I** got my first ori­entation on how to attend customers and take their orders. Some customers were nice but others were not. **It** was a traumatic experience with all these men around you, each one trying to catch your eye or paw you. Eventually I got used to it. The job involved serving drinks to customers, providing a pleasant atmos­phere in which customers would want to spend their money, and ensuring 'that they came back. Some of the customers were very pleasant, but occasionally we got customers who, after a drink or two, turned nasty or misbehaved, and as a barmaid you had to take in the whole scene silently. It was expected of you, if you Wanted to keep your job. So most of us stood the test and silently accepted abuse without reacting.

I was not earning much—my salary was meager—but **I** got enough money from tips. Most barmaids make a lot of money from tips, for some customers are

**very generous, and especially the regulars. Somehow there develops some kind of bond between the bar girls and customers. I cannot explain what.it is. If you are good, well behaved, and pleasant, they like you. Of course a lot of other things happen in bars, and some women earn additional income through prostitution.**

**A BARMAID'S LIFE + 271**

**In 1979, after working in Songea as a barmaid for a few years, I found myself a bigger house and bought a few more household goods, and went back to the village to collect my other children. I wanted to be near them. I was used to having children around me, and I missed their joy and laughter, even the times they were naughty and difficult. We had a long discussion with my mother about the welfare of the children and the job I had taken. My mother tried to persuade me to give up the job and stay in the village. I explained to her that she need not worry. I had made up my mind to work and support my family. I explained to her that I could not cope with *shamba* (farm) work, and since my ambition was to educate the children beyond primary education, I did not see how I could raise enough money by growing crops. There was no market, not even the co-operative authorities came to buy crops from peasants, and from what I could see, people did not produce for the market but mainly for their own consumption. Sometimes they sold rice or nuts, cassava and maize, which are staple foods through a barter system, but normally people do not sell such crops. A lot of fishing goes on, but it is on a small scale, and this is normally a male-dominated occupation. So I had a limited choice for generating cash to support my children. .**

**Towards the end of 1980 I decided to move to Dar es Salaam. I had resigned from my job on a matter of principle. You see, the owner of the bar was a very unscrupulous man. He cheated us on our salaries. For a long time we werepaid less than our actual salaries. . . This is what he used to do on payday. He would call you into his office and pretend to count eight hundred and fifty shillings, but first he made you sign the receipt for the money and then he only peeled off two hundred and fifty, which he gave to you. We used to protest but not loudly because we were afraid of losing our jobs. We knew he was exploiting us but we also knew that by signing the receipt of 850 shillings even though we did not get the money, we knew it would be very difficult to prove that he was stealing from us, no one would believe that we did not actually get our full salaries if he saw that we had actually signed the receipts ourselves.**

**But one day I just got fed up. I got drunk and told him off, and the next day I reported the matter to the police who came and questioned him. He denied it, but I told them to ask the other girls. He was finally told to pay me my full salary. He paid me two months salary and I left! I took all the children back to my mother except for the youngest one and I told her I was going to Dar es Salaam to look for a job.**

**In Dar es Salaam I lived with my sister in Tandika for a few months before I finally decided to look for a job. In 1981 I got a job at Silent Inn. It was inter­esting but very tiring. We worked for long hours. This was the time when Kamanyola—(Marquis du Zaire Band), one of the best bands in town used to**

**play at Silent Inn. The weekends were full and we worked very hard serving customers. It was backbreaking. On Saturdays for example we worked from 5 p.m. to 4 a.m. in the morning. You could not go home at that time because transport was not provided. So we normally stayed on until the early morning hours. We complained to the management about our security, so he provided a room within the bar where we could stay if we were unable to get home. Some­times, *if* it was your turn to prepare food for the customers (food was also served at Silent Inn), it meant you continued to work until the beans or meat was ready—so you just rushed home for a short nap and at 5 p.m. you were back again working. The management was mean. Do you know how much we got paid? Five cents per bottle! But one could sell up to 50 crates of beer during weekends. But you did not get much money still. All of us got more from tips than from our salaries, as you can see, and that is why we stayed. I had already sent foamy other children by then. Two of them came. So I had three with me and my mother kept the other two.**

**272 + LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1970-1995)**

**Mlimani Park bar had by this time been opened and we heard that they were paying decent salaries, that is, the official minimum wage. Most of the girls left Silent Inn including myself and we joined Mlimani Park. For those who were not officially employed, they were paid by the bottle like at Silent Inn except that here they paid one shilling instead of five cents per bottle. I was employed and received the basic minimum wage: Because of my long experience and sat­isfactory work performance I was promoted to position of supervisor. My schedule of duties as a supervisor included supervising all the barmaids, to maintain discipline, settling disputes among fellow workers and generally see­ing ,to it that everything was going smoothly, and bringing up any issues of importance to the attention of the manager. I liked my job. My salary was 650 [shillings] per month on top of money from tips I received from customers. That way we managed to lead a decent life and the children had enough to eat; my second daughter was already in class three by now I found someone to look after the youngest child so that the others could attend school properly and reg­ularly.**

**Working as a barmaid has its pros and cons. First there is no job security, you can be hired and fired at a moment's notice. Second; there are no fixed salaries, as most of the bars are owned by individuals who unilaterally decide how much to pay you. The women who opt to work in bars are in any case desperate and do it at their own risk, so they accept the arbitrary conditions and terms of serv­ices as stipulated by the owner. . . . This is very exploitative relationship. The barmaid's real money comes from tips that we get in cash or kind. On average a barmaid can make between 400 [shillings] and 800 shillings a day from tips alone. . .. Most of the women who come to work in bars are often sin­gle parents with children. They are divorcees or widows, deserted wives, and sometimes young school girl dropouts. They are not stupid, because at the back of their minds they are thinking of their children and how to support them. So if you are offered a beer, you will accept it, while you sit and chat with the**