THERE’S A LOT OF INJUSTICE IN THIS WORLD

I have taken many

mercies for granted

**It’s Friday.** Tomorrow I’ll receive an award from the Voice of Hope organisation.

As we rehearse, I look at my fellow awardees and wonder what they were nominated

for.

My train of thought is interrupted by a melody. In the four days I’ve been here, I’ve

learnt that the melody goes off after every hour. When this happens, everyone must

observe a moment of silence. Meaning you press the “pause button” on what you’re

doing (or thinking) and simply reflect on your inner self. I think it’s called meditation.

As the place sinks into a deep silence, I don’t reflect on myself. I’m thinking about

what everyone else thinking. Are their thoughts wandering too?

The minute is over and the melody is gone. Well, at times it’s spiritually beneficial

to reflect on the self.

It’s raining heavily. We’ve been told that people can take silent walks to meditate.

I’m very cautious of the weather, especially when it comes to exposing myself to the

rain. These are some of the unwritten rules for people living with HIV. Never expose

yourself to rain, cold or dust. Never ever. You may survive, but you don’t want to

deal with the consequences of disobeying HIV’s unwritten rules.

There’s another reason why I’ve never taken walks in the compound since I arrived.

The person

who received us

said it was safe to

walk around, although

one may occasionally

encounter

a bear.

“If you encounter

a bear, don’t panic.

Go on your way

calmly and don’t

show your fear.

Bears are friendly

animals and unless

provoked, they don’t

attack humans.”

The last thing I

want to deal with

is a bear. Its docility

is not for Asunta to

prove.

Saturday evening.

We’re all set for the

awards. I’m the first

on the podium. My,

I’m being feted in

the world’s *numero*

*uno* city: New York.

I feel humbled. There are two people I wish could have been here to witness this.

One is my father. I know he would have stood with me after I tested HIV-positive. I

know. And he would have been proud of me today.

The other person is the principal who disclosed my HIV status in the most inhuman

way ever. I wish she was here to witness how God rewrote her tragic script.

I start my presentation by showing a person being given home-based care. He

can barely walk without the assistance of a community volunteer worker. There’s

progress. The person is now mentoring others in a group therapy. Besides, he is

rearing dairy goats that provide his family with milk.

The other awardees share their stories. Stories of pain. One from Afghanistan

has been struggling to make the situation of the common man known, as stronger

nations struggle. He has been arrested and kidnapped to stop him from telling the

world the story of war in Afghanistan.

He shows where he works in cafes without water, electricity or basic necessities.

He walks for miles in the scorching sun to have his stories published. And he has to

do it pretty quickly because if his foes get him, all his work will be destroyed.

It is eye-opening that some people live in fear and the devastation of war,

whereas in Kenya I take so much for granted. I can hear quiet sobs as I restrain my

tears, seeing pictures of massacred children and women. I make a mental note: this

is a lesson to take home, especially now that we’re going into a General Election.

Next is a lady from Chile. She shares how she uses her skills to bring justice to

the society. In her investigative journalism, she seeks employment in government

offices where she exposes corruption. She does the same in hospitals where the

medical staff have no regard for human life and in the police force where bribery is

rampant. She resigned several times because she said she only witnessed pain and

no justice. Later, she reconsidered this decision and went back, saying, “The little I

can do is let the world know there’s injustice in the world.”

I return home the following day reasoning that my situation isn’t as bad as those

of the other awardees. I’m grateful that God has placed me in a far better place to

serve humanity.

This is the diary of Asunta Wagura, a mother-of-three who tested HIV-positive

23 years ago. She is the executive director of the Kenya Network