

Poetry Series

Aswani Sammy Luyove
- poems -



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Aswani Sammy Luyove(1983)

Aswani Sammy Luyove was born and raised in the rocky hills of Hamisi, Vihiga county; a stone throw off the shores of lake Victoria and the magnificent wonder tor, The Crying Stone of western Kenya, in 1983. Attended Jimarani Primary School, and O level education at Givole Secondary School. He is a teacher and freelance journalist, driven by political instincts and a great passion for poetry. He is currently the Managing Director of Alliance Training College in Nairobi.



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When Tomorrow Scares

by Aswani Sammy Luyove

When tomorrow plans to go astray
Bowels won't hold but shaky shy
Yet tomorrow must come anyway
The sun sets and darkness draws nigh
Fear engulfs with a tremble in the thigh
But a new day must come with its say.
Vigil and bold catch it astray as you pray
Lecture it about God who is the way
And tomorrow shall not turn you prey
He shall have the final say
And not a thing shall stray,
But tomorrow shall just pass away
As joy dawns in another new day
So let tomorrow come His way.

Aswani Sammy Luyove



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Time Is Dump (Iii)

Time Is Dump (III)

I recall the day we were on an outing
At an adventure valley in the Rift,
As we rolled a little in the grass resting
It's the eagles flying above us that knew why;
Because they too rolled as we did, but in the air,
And they enjoyed the trending movie of that day
As they paired to make a family.
Do you remember the white wild lily
With two flowers and a bud!
They symbolized you, me and our 'child'
But why has loneliness crept in
And captured our highness!
And drawn us apart!
But I remember you said time will tell.

Then you baked me a cake,
That cake was a rattle snake!
Though sweetly running down my throat
It poisoned my heart,
With an enormously high voltage of love,
But now word has it that you're flying above
Above the longest stretch of my arm and eye
It's clear that I'm lonely
And time must say something
Just a thing!

But it has been too long for us
And my beards are now singed
I know the distant between us
Is killing our status of being
And I don't know how you are fairing.
But if you are lonely and not 'calm'
And this to you is the telling of time,
Don't fear its insurgency and let your potato
Burn too much with anger and be a volcano
To boil with passion and explode in surrender
And burst into an endless flow of lava and ashes,

Yet you are lonely
Just because time is dump.

If time has taught you that it doesn't wait
And this is the telling of time, don't await.
If time talks to you before it does to me
Don't be like a mule and stay mute for me.
If you get a man friend for I'm a 'boy' friend
Awaken from your slumber and warm up to the trend
And demystify the big fog of loneliness
And act for time is dump.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Time Is Dump (Ii)

Time Is Dump (II)

When you pronounced your love
I felt like a male dove,
And knew loneliness was gone,
But why am I alone!
When you laid your breast
On my bony chest,
I felt them prick me the best.
It was a lightening sensation
That seemed wouldn't come to suspension,
And the sweet scent of the oil in your hair
That ever engulfed the air
Ticking a permanent register in my noses,
Yet I'm lonely!

When we wallowed in the valley
You and me, between East and West alley
With our hearts still fallow and swift
Like the remote adventure valley in the Rift
Where we kissed the first
And my nerves caught frost
And I became subconscious
But you thought I was smiling
So you went own with the killing!
Yet today I am lonely,
Still waiting for time to tell.

When you stretched
Your long body on my bed,
What do you think I thought in my head!
I had become somebody instead
To deserve of such refined gold
From the vast in the entire erratic world.
And we wooed we would remain two
Thinking days would be few
And we confined our fate and dreams by time
But now time won't say nor remember a thing!
Tell me why I'm lonely,

Now that time our trusted master is dump!

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Time Is Dump (I)

Time Is Dump (I)

Having had your dose of 'piriton'
You still couldn't sleep on!
But said you were lonely
And I thought another dose would be lovely
And so in my arms you dozed
And like a baby you snored
Yet you still dreamt you were lonely!
When I asked why you were lonely
You said time didn't bind our dream dearly
That we wouldn't be together
And hopes we couldn't gather,
But the very time will tell,
And true to its spell
Here I note, as per your remark
That time didn't get stuck
And so you had to pack
And left on my heart a mark
Whose ink is unalterable,
Yet now I am still lonely.

Do you ever think I miss
Your endless calls and kiss!
The wrecks and pleading of my bed!
Does it occur to you what we did?
That I will never find time
To forget your services though firm
Because I was an opportunist
Being a principal bachelor!
Now I know time flies silently
And indeed, time is dump.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Hot Rain

HOT RAIN

I see it falling,
As it showers on me like a hot geyser,
It wets my heart and I'm wading in it
Like a duck wading in the mud,
Its drops make me sweat
Making my heart throb like a tinsmith hammer,
And my ribs ache from the quarrel against
Its endless gongs, endless I must stress
In fact my ribs are soon bursting
Like a badly beaten drum
I stammer and drawl like a baby,
So, what is it in the rain!

I'll not paste my lips and go mute
No. I'll not be silent,
No. I'll not drool like a hyena.
I'll not walk in the rain alone
Because you are the rainbow
So, I will count its colours
And call them names
And discover what burns in the hot rain
To cool the ache and throbbing in my chest
For the rain is hot.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

I'll Beat The Grass

On the road to the grinding mill,
Where my wife grinds her posho,
There, by the path-side,
In the tallest of the thickest grass,
A black masculine cat hides by;
And the tall strands of his many hairs
Scare my wife, her stomach boils
with fear like a boiling pot of porridge,
She can't get her posho peacefully,
For she fears black cats;
It's ominous among her people
that when a black cats crosses your way
Then all is bad!
So my wife gets uneasy,
When she glimpses at him
Her heart beat jumps a beat.

But,
I'll not be cowed to let my balls frozen,
I'll beat the grass along the path
And track his paws, and risk his claws;
To restore the regular rhythm
Of my wife's heart; I'll beat the grass.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

The Gods Have Spoken

I listened...and heard
The yelling of the poor child;
Bones bulging from the head,
And I wonder,
Have the gods closed their ears!

I walked...and met
A big man as big as can be fat;
A tummy biglike a pot,
And I wondered,
Have the gods closed their eyes!

I petition for the sheep,
Whose words dry on their lip,
When they fear the weep.
As the shepherd swims in their milk:
His son shall choke or drown,
Of the ill goured milk... and by such he'll die;
His daughter shall wed mad men that prey,
The ones that eat grass...and by such she'll lie;
For the gods I have spoken!
And so be it.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Love Is Young

They embrace and kiss
They intertwine
They toss each other and whine,
But in silent screams
Because they are young
And you are old.

They give promises... though empty
They walk hand in hand ignorant of onlookers
As if they are only two, on a lonely isle,
And the sight of them, will piss you off;
Because you are old, and love is young.

If you dare stop them;
They'll hide in the darkness
And seek each other through coded gestures
And strike the match stick on the match box
And instead make their infatuation deeper,
Quickly like hens and you won't catch a thing
Because you are old, and love is young.

You've noted the long hours they take at market!
You've heard some grits fall on the roof at night!
You've noted the many short calls and winks at sight!
You've heard the whizzy whistles as of a jet flight!
And you thought it was the night runner to fight!
And their secrete slang that you won't catch!
Because you are old, and love is young!

A damsel will start vomiting in the morning
Because the youth-man's arrow never misses target
Its sting is the only punishment for infatuation;
And at the chief's baraza, the'll be paraded
Scolded and ashamed, but forced to exchange vows
As the affected parents exchange camels and bulls
Because you are now old enough, and love is young.

But it is fun to see the young fall in love their way,
They are like budding scented flowers on a windy day;

They seethe your noses, swing and sway
When you don't want to see them just look away,
It's fun to see the young fall in love and have their say,
Because they are young and their love is young.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Evil Is Beautiful

I have walked the streets of life
And observed the ways of men,
I have measured their deeds,
And I wonder why the evil smile!
I discovered that the face of evil
Is beautiful and attracts vile:
It glitters like a python,
It walks nude like a prostitute,
It makes the murderer click
It makes the robber party,
It makes the adulterer erect,
It makes the covetous scheme,
And appeals to the sinner.

I know why the evil stray
And so the vilest of men pray:
'Open my eyes to the hidden treasure
Secure me from the secured enclosure
And bless the loot of my hand
For evil is mouth watering and grand,
As it smiles it calls irresistibly
And my fulfillment is in its commission.'

Aswani Sammy Luyove

A Husband

I was writing a new dictionary
Of words people never understand
I wrote word by word, up the alphabet,
Then the animal they call 'husband'
Was I to define, as a man that:
When he has an ache in the head,
You take aspirins in his stead;
When the village calls him mad
You strip naked
And storm the market in his stead
And leave him at home chained;
When he has his nose running close,
You blow and wipe your own nose
And deep your feet in cold water,
To freeze his fever.

Aswani Sammy Luyove



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Mama Africa

Mama, I hold for you,
Trust that no epidemic can spew.
Your rocky back has mastered
All trials of humanity,
Smashing all odds of calamity,
So, why should you cry Mama!
You can't count the pangs of hunger
That you have encountered:
From prolonged droughts,
To the dreaded mosquitoes;
Yet you mastered their dance moves,
And you made it Mama,
So just don't cry,
Because of the economic dilemma
Of this small flu virus.

Mama you've been called names;
That you eat apes,
That's why you contracted ebola
And your hands are dirty
That's why you caught cholera;
But what did they eat
To contract this coughing thing!
Like a drunkard you have staggered,
Waded and drowned
In your own mucky tears;
Like the floods of the Tana river,
But are you not still growing!
So mama, just don't cry!
Because of some virus called Covid 19.

From the slave trade in the west,
Colonial apartheid in the south,
The growing Sahara in the north,
To the animosity at the horn;
Your back has not broken yet.
Like an overburdened donkey you breathe,
And sneeze and cough daily

To be cowed by quarantine.
Just harden your back more
To learn a few new vocabulary:
lock down, hand sanitizer
...social distancing....
Then how do you die now!
Because of the corona epidemic!
A few graves will mound around,
But they shall sink and grow grass
And you will wake up again Mama,
And return to your grace
And mail Corona as RTS...
Returned back to the sender,
So, just don't cry Mama!
Because of Covid 19.

You are surviving graft
And bleeding like a cow's split throat
But Covid 19 shouldn't bring you down
And make you stoop too low
To beg from your opportunistic enemy.
Who has fake doses of vaccines ready
To trade with you; but crush you.
Don't bend over yet, and soil your hands,
There is hope and safety in the unity,
Among your daughters that hardens
Your backbone of food, trade and love.
So Mama Africa, you will make it
Just don't cry Mama.
Because of Covid 19.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Landlady

I'm evicted
My house is flooded
The rains silently swept it
And all assets of it are gone;
So lease me a place
A place at your house,
I'll pay rents and rates promptly
Till the floods are gone.
I know the first door is occupied,
I'll not mind the next,
Try me on, O landlady
Yours is good a heart
So generous and good.
Too good to bypass,
O landlady!

Aswani Sammy Luyove



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I Believe In Friends

You may perceive me your enemy
But you are not my foe
For I believe you're not an adversary,
When the Lord does bless me
I'll call of thee, hug you
And celebrate with thee
For I believe in friends.

I may not be your friend
And you are neither my ally,
But when the opponent strikes you
I'll not camp with them
I'll not draw my sword to smite you,
So draw yours not when I strike.
For no villainy but friendly fire
For I believe in friends.

But now our swords are sheathed
You distrust me, and bethink me a rival
But you'll be dismayed, when you strike me,
I'll not draw my sword to smite you
So draw yours not when I strike,
For no villainy but friendly fire
For I believe I friends.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

The Broken Nut

My heart wails in vain
Tears stain my pale cheeks
When I remember the pain
I incurred as my very own daddy
Smashed his walking stick on my raw nut
And squ-e-e-zed, and soaked
Himself with the juice of my purity.

My nut is bro-ken with brutality
And the shell I greedily guarded
Is cracked like a pot, for eternity
By the one I trusted possessively
And now left me for the worst!
I'm now empty for my would be suitor:
But an unconcealed crack
Of my broken virginity.

I have descended the lane of dignity
In the hands of my trusted one
While in the eyes of the community!
Yet they want me silent and tongue tight
And mute like a water pot.
No. I'll yell aloud and stand with myself
For all damsels eating with me
This slice of fear.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Simiyu My Husband

My husband Simiyu says he bought his television
To keep himself happy, the reward of my bride price,
My husband thinks TVs are God's art, he argues:
'When I homed late
There was not cooking, washing...
So I got you my TV, for entertainment.'

Yeah... he likes the late night news:
After the kids doze off, we can now watch his news.
But me, after the daily chores
I can't watch past the summary of the main items.
So my husband is distempered
He calls me lazy and cold
Like the inside of a refrigerator
That he'll take me back to my people
Because I can't watch:
The main bulletins, world news, sports news, weather...
And, but not least, the summary again!
And at last a late night movie!

And the news director; my very own Simiyu
Only runs short commercial breaks, between sections
Followed by instant cuts into the next
Cut...cut...and cut not a single mix!
He says healthy couples
Must watch all these!
So when I doze he asks: Did you eat well?
Puuh! Simiyu my husband?
At this rate, you will break my spinal code!

Aswani Sammy Luyove

A Son Of The Nation

His hands were stiffly stretched
And had not been long cold
The dying warmth could still be felt
But the man smelt.
Dark and hard patches of weary hands' skin
Firmly spread open and thin,
Darkened knuckles and whitened palms
Evidence that he had served under terms;
Dry healing scars with bladed clots that tears
Whose smack must've torn many in jungle affairs,
Blood oozed from the bullet sprayed head
Yet at home his youthful wife waited, waited...
But the man was lying here busy;
Dead in line of duty, finding bread!

Dead in line of duty, bravely saving the nation!
In twenty one gun salute and standing ovation
The nation will mourn for three days
For the fallen hero and we shall part ways.
The pregnant widow and child shall mourn the rest
For knowing him the best,
Promises from the bare burial speeches
She'll have to follow; yet the man died in line of duty
When his hands couldn't pull the trigger.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

My Thing Is Something

Those sunken cheeks are not her own
My darling was a thing,
In fact those sunken cheeks
That you now call wrinkles
Are what dimples were.
You never saw the youth she was;
So you think I wasted my father's cows!
My children, I'm missing two toe nails
Lost staring at her;
One the first I saw her,
Another the second we met.
Now my children,
You look at her contemptuously!
Or is it because you're big boys
With some big jobs in the city!
So you think she's cold at heart
Like vujeni; the slept over maize bread!
Oh! No. My thing is something.

Your darlings have painted lips
Like cats that ravaged on rats
And walk derisively before her
Like peacocks!
Because her legs are heavy now as iron rods,
But I tell you my sons, she shook my spine
Like shimuga; the milk gourd
Without touching me,
My thing is something.

She's strong to succumb to nine pushes,
You my nine disdainful children!
But I wonder if my daughter will push twice,
Her mother says she swallows some 'aspirins'
And her husband, her husband she says;
Wraps himself in piped plastic papers!
That's how they deny us grandchildren,
O. My thing is something.

I paid a whole herd in my wife's dowry,

Her mother said she could grind
A debe of millet on the grinding stone
And she cooked the best
That none of your peacocks can match.
My sons,
How many heads of cattle,
Did you pay in your wives' dowry!
O. My thing is something.

My daughter,
The only one daughter of your mother
The said image of your mother,
How many cows have I received
From your beloved hunter!
Yet your father's only pride!
Even just one cow for your mother's milk!
Whose name your daughters will fight for,
Puuh! My thing is something.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

That's The Girl

With holes shallowly drilled through her cheeks
just by a smile; with a well swollen hip, legs
proportionally fit, on which her strength rests;
with a thorax small a little like that of
a praying mantis, and not like the grasshopper's;
with stiff steady breasts and swaying hips
that deceive the old men; and sting the lusty
and ugly eyes of boys; that's the girl.

Her firm still steps make her breasts vibrate like
a spring, in a wave that strikes and reddens the
wet eyes of boys; as she walks her backside falls
and talks- ping! pong! ping! pong! Her teeth are evenly
spaced and whiter than glucose, with a gap between
the incisors; her tongue wipes her lips before she utters
each word, softening her words as if they were wiped
by a cotton swab; that's the girl.

That is the girl that any son whose father didn't
curse by the strip of his nakedness, will chase her steps
and say: Hey! Hi? But her mother keeps vigil and warns:
Boys are beasts that prey on small breasts.
Her high school teacher calls her a blade on the sums
and smart at the roof. If you sneak her into
your isimba at home, and your mother saw her,
but she wouldn't flog her; that's the girl.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

A Time Is Coming

There is coming a time
We'll be one even by a dime
A time with not races
Races of people and places
Nor tribes, this time we'll be one
Without superiors at a table of wine,
Also gone will be inferiors
And oppressors,
Because there is coming a time
A time we'll all be alike
Not black nor white or such like
This time to me
Not one of us shall see,
All who live today!

But, we can make that day
Through a bloodless biological fight;
With our guns corked tight
Let's take the war from the street
And to our bedrooms we retreat
And play the biological game of numbers
With their daughters
And father their nephews and nieces;
And initiate a population crisis
And there is coming a time
When rioting for Floyd won't be a crime,
And a lot of them will be here
As a lot of us will be there;
And all races under extinction
As a one half cast generation
With just one complexion.
As one people emerge
Free at last to converge,
The oppressors and the oppressed,
Both one at last;
There shall come a time.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

Don't Tell Me Your Name

I'm staring at you
Because you look new
Your beauty is stunning
Like a sea squid,
But I know my queen-mother,
The mother of my little angels,
The daughter-in-law of my mother,
The sheath of my only spear,
The one that you now claim;
The queen-mother, loves me dearly.

But now I seek acquaintance,
Don't tell me your name
Because I'm a sound-dreamer,
And my queen-mother is a schemer
And callous!
She'll stalk me for your name
In the middle of my nightmares
So don't tell me your name,
Though I love your irresistible fame.

Your geography;
Features of your landscape
Are vast and perfect;
Are visible even to the blind
And these of you, make you dearer,
So I feel you,
And see you
And love you
But, I fear shame
Don't tell me your name.

My dear one,
The Queen-mother is unforgiving
And she'll kill herself
If I call her by a fling's name.
She'll hang her children
When she finds me guilty of infidelity!
So don't tell me your name

If you love me.
And when you touch me my dearer
Don't spray yourself with your sweet lotion
The queen-mother is a horse with smell
So, just love me a portion
And don't tell me your name.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

I Am Afraid

Dear countrymen and women
The state is ill-breeding.
I am afraid the herd is astray
That the cow that calved yesterday
Is grazing with the bull.
And this bull; her own son
Is mocking her still sore rear,
I am afraid inbreeding is at bay
And the calf is highly vulnerable, as prey
To the deceptive daughters of Eve
And the envious sons of Cain
Who as predators galore;
While herdsman quarrel over bread
I am afraid!

I am afraid
That the calf
Plays with the sons of the enemy
Whose mothers hunt a kick throw afar!
While the warring herdsman
Play pinky n' ponky behind the bush!
I am afraid.

Aswani Sammy Luyove

A Letter To Mummy & Dad

I remember some time back,
When I was the only child on your back
Food was plenty, I ate as I could
And me, I was all you valued,
But now the pot has broken down
And given birth to too many dishes!

It started with you mummy,
When I sought the matter with your tummy,
And you said you ate too much githeri.
That bloated your stomach!
A few months later the tale turned slippery:
"An aeroplane dropped us a mzungu
While flying tourist past, after witnessing
The co-habiting of humans and lions,
The dreaded man-eaters of the Great Tsavo
Then flying to the Great Congo forest,
To view Africa's wonderful primate;
So the pink thing fell by accident, "
But now the poor mzungu
Turned to be my sister!
A sudden threat to my love
And now we scramble over one andazi!
Whose price doesn't respect its shrinking size!

And then you dad, your pay slip hardly changes,
But you keep swelling mum's meals register:
Don't you see the shooting price of maize flour!
Don't you read teacher's school fee letters!
If you don't see daddy, I do;
I don't want more sisters nor brothers.

Aswani Sammy Luyove