

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS

(poems & sketches)



Kukogho Iruesi Samson

Other books by Kukogho Iruesiri Samson

What Can Words Do (2013)

I Said These Words (2015)

Words of Eros (2017)

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS

we who sowed
HURT
& beaded
PAINS

Kukogho Iruesiiri Samson



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for

*those who sowed hurt
and beaded their pains*

and

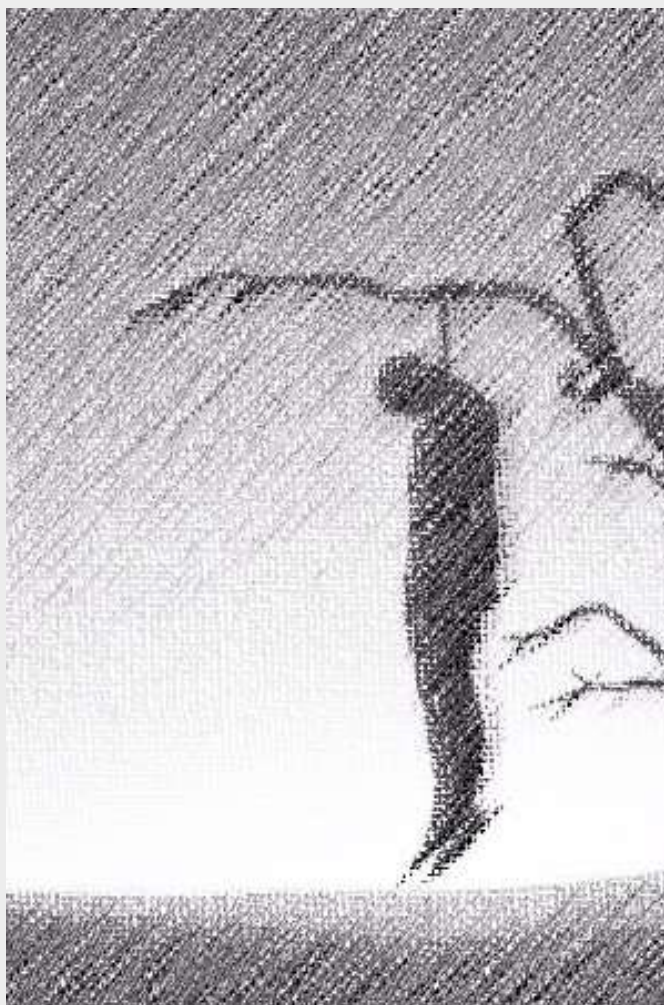
*those who have fallen
into the darkness of life*

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“Depression is like a
bruise that never goes
away. A bruise in your
mind. You just got to
be careful not to
touch it where it
hurts.”

— Unknown

metamorphosis

tiny sparks fell, one at a time
from the furnace of clashing thoughts
unto the leaves of his troubled mind
and no one paid them heed...
so, when he withdrew into himself
like a sprinting snail touched on the nose
his friends called it '*metamorphosis*'

the tiny sparks, they ignited tiny flames
and the tiny flames, they became fireballs
slowly eating the pages of his troubled mind
yet, no one saw the smoke trails...
and as he began to swallow his words
offering silence as speeches at gatherings
his kin, they called it '*metamorphosis*'

the fireballs, they coursed the veins
of his troubled mind, until his thoughts became
iced fire curdling his blood into a lumpy dirge
silently chorused in his shadowed shell...
and when he found salvation beckoning
in the knot of a twine and the branch of a tree
his friends, his kins, they called it suicide!

3rd mainland bridge

i do not know why i'm standing here
at the edge of the 3rd mainland bridge
my back turned to the road
and the cars that pass by in a hurry
i cannot see the cars but i can feel
the air hit my back as they slice through it
i can feel the ground quaking too...
you see, this bridge, it is dying, like me
and no one seems to heed its groans
it is still standing. they are still passing

i do not know why i'm standing here
on this dying bridge watching a canoe
paddling through continents of debris –
i cannot see the paddler's face from here
but i can swear his nose is crinkled
beaten out of shape by the stench that
crawls out of this water's rotting innards...
you see, this water, it is dying, like me
and no one seems to heed its groans
it is still flowing. they are still paddling

i do not know why i'm standing here
on this dying bridge, above rotting water
counting debris with my back to the road
i should not be here, but this bridge and
the water flowing under, they are like me
men paddle my littered waters and heed
not

the stench of my rot. they ride on my back
and ignore the quake of my weary limbs
so, i will stand here awhile then take a dive
perhaps the water will take my debris...

dave was his original name

dave. that was his original name
everyone has forgotten it
Now that linda and friends have visited
the graveyard of his yesterdays
to exhume long forgotten ghosts
and give him other names...

well, linda and the chatty kin
headlined him in a thousand baptisms
(each was worth a million clicks!)
and dave now answers several names
far too many for one lifetime...

do you know his new names
the ones the blogs wrote about
the hammers that nailed his coffin –
pansy nancy, shit stabber...

well, each name was a conviction
each a nail, a hammer
each one sealed his oaken coffin...

as dave threaded his many names
and wove for himself a noose...

...it seems no one knows



i am looking for my childhood

i stand on a street
i first traversed with tottering feet
barefooted and bare-hearted

no familiar eyeball greets me
as i stop here and stop there
with tears breaching the borders of my
eyes
and smiles curving the junction of my lips
these people think me mad, i know it
for which man, sane, sits by a dump
to scribble unrhymed words?

but how do i tell them that
 i fell here and earned this scar
 i fought there and broke this tooth
 i buried a tear here and there....

i am standing before a door
i used to open without knocking
soft-knuckled and softhearted

it feels very strange to knock
and stranger to see unfamiliar faces
who peek and bark “what do you want”
in the house where you left your
childhood
the strangest of all is to open your mouth
and find your words have evaporated

only to precipitate and fall from your eyes

but how do i tell them that

i am looking for my childhood
to give it the tears of hurt, and of
joy
that were stolen from it...

i
a
m
l o o k
i
n g
f o r
m
y
c
h i l d
h o o
d

l.o.v.e

if life gifts you with love
remember to whisper soft words
that will melt in her face
like ice cream in a toddler's mouth
let her makeup smear your face
in awkward kiss attempts...

if love knocks at your door
without warning, with luggage
do not harry him away
like a *longa-throat* neighbor
no, humor him with jokes
offer a bed and a spoon

if you see love strolling past
like a dreaded ragamuffin with
locks dangling from *rainbowed* hat
do not mock the many colors
instead, squash eggs in your hair
and take a dready stroll

but, if love plays *hide-and-seek*
calling from here, there and nowhere
like backyard-garden crickets
do not congeal your words
do not lock your door
keep your hair dreaded...
for love will surely come!

i know a man who cries with his fists

i know a man who cries with his fists
clenched, they flail at his sorrows
as though to scare them away

this man, he cries with his swinging fists
each jab holding a wail and a tear
but his lips are silent, his eyes stay dry

each day, his fists cry a raging river
that crack bones and break down walls
but his eyes, they never betray tears

so he hits – *the air, his wife, his children*
and he hits – *in anger, in sorrow, in fear*
and each blow is an outcry and a tear

his kin, they walk around him softly
like butterflies perching on cotton wool
thinking him a victim of *Lyssa's* curse

but this man, who cries with his fists
was once told, '*do not betray your tears*
for that is not the way of a strong man'

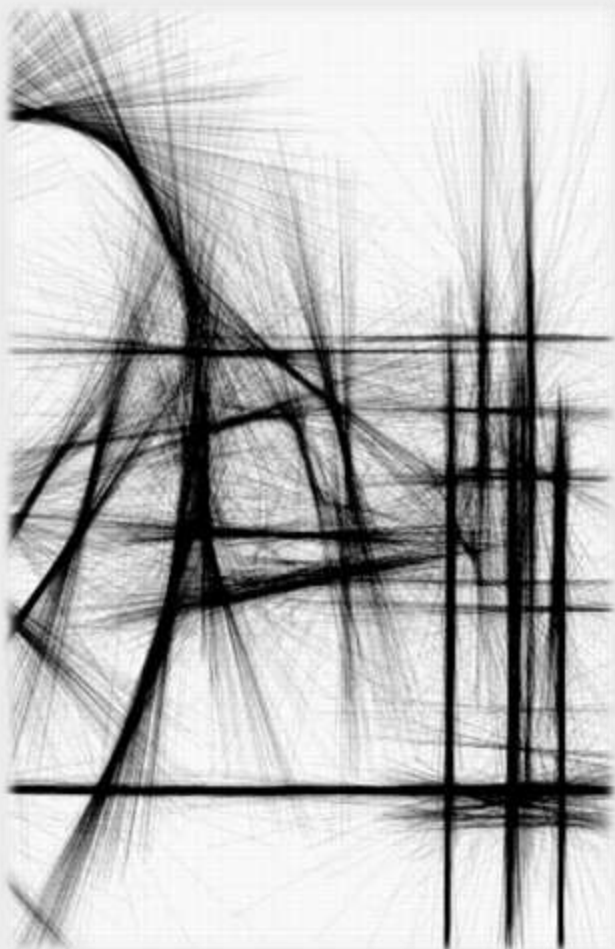
a grown man's tears

have you ever heard a grown man
cry in the voice of a little child
with mucus running from flared nostrils
through bristly moustache into the
cavern between his bawling lips?

well, i saw one such man yesterday
white-suited, he sat behind the steering
of a car that reflected the setting sun
and he wept a river of mucus, sputum
and sweat unto his starched shirt

i saw his tears, they shook him hard
like an enraged tsunami tumbling down
Sumatra's coast to steal 230,000 souls
then he saw me...and the flood stopped
usurped by a smile and sparkling eyes

so i walked away from him
stopping only when I found a quiet place
beyond the reach of eyes and ears
and there i wept my soul into a desert
for the tears yet trapped behind his smile



there are shadows inside me

there are restless shadows inside me
buried in little boxes never to be opened
these shadows, they are multicoloured
like the rainbow, but they are ugly

see, my father, my mother, my kin
they gave me these little boxes and said:
*“son, always hide your tears inside them
for a man's tears must never be seen”*

so i murdered my tears, many of them
and buried them inside my little boxes —
a toddler's sorrows, a teenager's losses
and a bearded man's many failures

my soul is a cemetery for murdered tears
whose ghosts now roam about in silence
casting restless shadows with many
colours
just like a rainbow, but they are ugly

so you see, I know *“a man must not cry”*
but there are many flaming shadows
flitting amongst the tombstones in my
soul
please, let me quench them with tears!

teach me how to be sad

teach me how to be sad
to turn my soul inside out
and let my pains drip dry
like laundry freshly washed

teach me how to wring
sorrow from my eyes and
ignore my bearded penis
when Life's knuckles strike

unteach me to teach me
that a tear amongst beards
is no abomination and
vaginas do not make tears

there are tears in my bones

there are tears in my bones
under this waterproof skin
so tightly wrapped around
my desiccated soul

will you sing me a sad song for
the tears in my bones
they're coalesced, congealed
oh! strum my misery! drum my pain!

cut me! here! there!
perhaps i will bleed out
the tears in my bones
now concealed, congealed

do you not see sadness
forming crystals in my eyes?
do you not hear me?
there are tears in my bones!

people never understand

dream wild
so wild
people won't understand

plan big,
so big
people won't understand

work hard
so hard
people won't understand

never mind
what people say...
people never understand

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS



a man and himself

if a man should go out looking for himself
would he search inside the kitchen shelf
inside a frothy bottle robbed of its waters
or in the pockets of his pissed trousers

see, the man's ears are itching for his voice
over the cacophony of humanity's noise
should he wear earphones made from steel
climb a mountain or burrow under a hill?

ah, the man spends an hour before a mirror
lost, quivering, filled with untold horror
if he asks the image "please who are you"
will he know the reflection fears him too?

should the man seek escape – from nothing
choosing the comfort of rope and ceiling
would we mock, when we see his dead eyes
or offer our bit of kind, posthumous lies

what if that man appeared here writing this
would you show him the short path to bliss?

*(first published in
I Said These Words, 2015)*

that hole

that hole, inside
that the shovels of the mind dig
and you cannot escape

that emptiness, filled
with fears and wilted hopes
that embrace tightly

that brightness, so dark
that your eyes cannot see

those shadows that strangle
even in the glare of light
they are nothing but holes and shadows

holes can be filled and darkness lightened

illacrimo

my soul's garden is dead
and its wilted shrubbery are
burning in famished flames that
i have no water to douse

so i have to go back, back
to the fields of forgotten yesterdays
that i may unearth the many tears
i buried there in tiny mounds

you see, i hid my tears in many places –
some soft, like mother's bosom
some hard, like the floor of our pantry
where my eyes bled salt water

my father, he would whip me and
command the silence of a man
i would run to mother and she would say:
'my warrior, stop crying like a girl'

thus i became the boy-man who
hid many tears in many places
lest they fall before prying eyes and
invalidate his penis' size

now my soul's garden is dry
and its flowers bespeak death
ashened by these hungry flames
that only tears can douse

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS

so i will go back to forgotten yesteryears
and i will exhume my buried tears
perhaps i may yet find waters
enough to resurrect my flowers

song from my soul

This violin is my pen, I am the player
I use this tune to ink teary words
I peel my haunted soul, each layer
As I make my song on these chords

See not my beady tears as salt waters
They are but rivers of seasoned grief
They flow for me, for sons and daughters
Barren but pregnant with unbirthed grief

I have seen thirst standing in the river
Hungry I've been, standing in the barn
Where some have smiled, there I quiver
Orphan I am, I look for my father's arm

I slow no tune to make you somnolent
But my voice shall tear down walls
I am knight. I string my lance, my
instrument
Listen, a troubled soul, helpless, calls

*(first published in
What Can Words Do, 2013)*

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS



the cross

here, alone
i am left to atone
the deeds of ancestors
forgotten in earth's stores

now i must right their wrongs
and creep up life's rungs
from murky depths
to pay their debts

companion of loneliness
i tend to my purse' leanness
slashing at the ferns of hatred
blocking this path i unwillingly tread

alas, the many sins of my father
and the pains of my mother
have packed for me a fate
too heavy for my pate!

high and low

*who are you
not to have
troubles?*

mother Earth's blanket
is sunned noontime
mooned at dusk

the boisterous sea
serves two tides
high and low

*who are you
not to have
troubles!*

silent verses

i.

silence

is a faceless bartender
pouring random cocktails
in mind chalice

if the drinking mind
act drunk, or dies – poisoned
shall we not blame
the silent lips?

ii.

silence

is the faceless bartender
mixing random cocktails
in mind chalice

if the drinking mind
act drunk, or dies – poisoned
shall we not blame
the silent lips?

iii.

silence

is soundless noise
deafening
the listening mind

when the lips

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS

fail to say
is the mind not free
to conjure?

vi.
if i am silent
while the world makes noise
do not think me deaf
or mute

i am only busy
with the sieve of my mind
divorcing grain
from chaff

happiness is sand in a hourglass

happiness is sand
in a hourglass
standing upright

while you marvel
at falling grains
it pours – slow, steady

enjoy happiness
before all its grains fall
to the bulb below!

field of tears
Whenever those beady tears come
Don't let them flow into earth bin
For there are seeds there
Just like in penis-cum

Panic not if tears come
To Tears fields I've been
I slaved there and chose
to be earth cream, not scum

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS



lie-f

raindrops from the eyes
drought in the heart

inferno in the eyes
ice in the soul

life is a lie!

and the world revolves without stopping

a seed dies and the plant is born

sweet fruits grow on bitter-bark trees!
colourful petals flourish among thorns!

rainbows dazzles eyeballs in bitter tears!
friendly laughter grows on foul farts!
love germinates in a fields wasted by hate!

life is nourished where death roams!
we pick precious gold from useless earth!
crack for milky sweetness in knotty nut!
with bitter leaf we make sweet soup!

rolling stone

i am a stone
rolling along the path of life
i do not gather moss

i am shaped, unshaped, reshaped
as i force my way
through life's sharps

now, life thinks me a brick
so he seeks to stick me
into a gap in his wall

but, you see, i am not a brick
i am a stone, rolling still
i cannot fit into walls

tiny moments

when your dark clouds part
for the penis of happiness
will you allow yourself
enjoy the orgasm
before it ends?

*happiness is ice cream in a cup
you should eat it, before it melts
into a cup of useless sweetness
i live for
tiny moments –
like slivers of sunlight
penetrating the hymen
of a virgin rainforest in Africa
do not postpone the moments
in vain search for hours of bliss
for hot coals soon become ash*



i am listening

not listening
alone, i heard a whisper
noising space where only i breathed
i tuned my ears as the whispering came
again
who owns these unseen lips knocking the
door of my soul?
i primed my ears, then the whisper came
again
sneaky sound where only i breathed...
it came from inside, my whisper!
i am listening!

the inside of outside

in the white space between lines
many unwritten letters float
in the lines between white space

in the silences between words
truth wears no coat
in the words between silences

in the inside of outside
self sails a boat
in the outside of inside

*(first published in
I Said These Words, 2015)*

hamartia

failure reached out and plucked me
though i was yet rose unbloomed!

she ate me from within
and spat out my innards!

her fingers breached my chest
and forked out my heartbeat!

she came with an empty basket
and plundered me to emptiness!

*rose, i am: he offers me
she sniffs and smiles
but they see not
the abscess in my stalk!*

going back to yesterday

i am going
going to the place
where i started

i am going back
back to where i was
before i came here

i am going back to yesterday
yesterday, when i did not know that i will
know
what i now know i don't want to know

to the paths left behind...
behind, where yesterday's fertile
droppings lie waste
who will go back with me?

WE WHO SOWED HURT & BEADED PAINS



sometimes

sometimes
the sun peeps
into the sloth's window wistfully

sometimes
the sloth peeps
out of his window wistfully

sometimes
the sun shines
ignoring the sloth behind the
window

sometimes
i am the sloth
ignoring the sun outside my window

if my soup tastes salty

if my soup tastes salty
do not mock me

it's because i seasoned it with tears
from cutting life's onions..

so, do not mock me

my cross

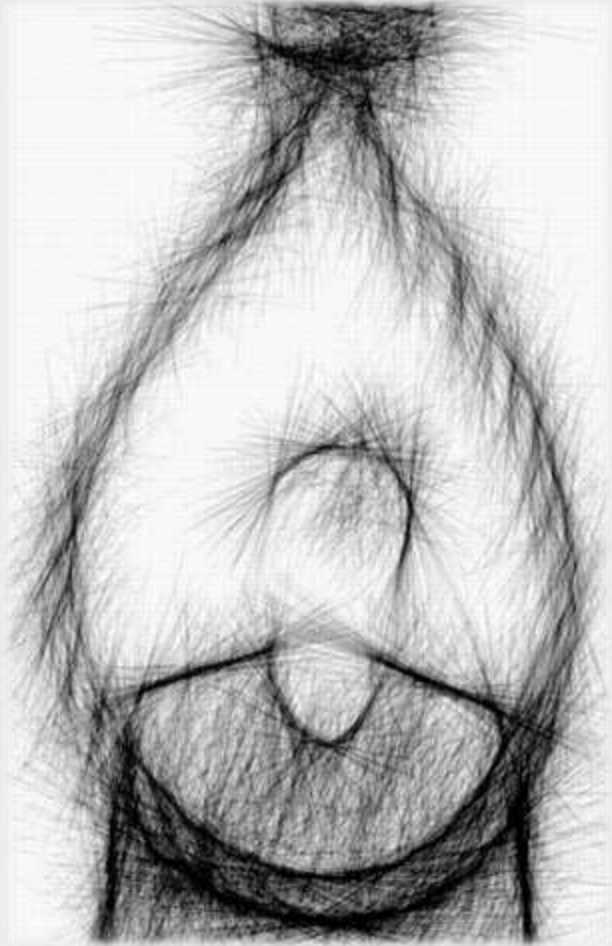
each time I pass, you say “*i envy that boss*”
if only you knew the weight of my cross
you would call my success mere dross
but my face wears thick smile-gloss
so you mumble “*i envy that boss*”
now, would you want my cross?

blank skies

only conscious eyes can probe the skies
only spheres with balls dare it's vastness

breathing body urges its eyes
they look up in total blindness

dead heart, blank eyeballs
wiping stubborn tear-falls



happiness is sand

happiness is sand
in a hourglass
standing upright

while you marvel
at falling grains
it pours – slow, steady

enjoy happiness
before all its grains fall
to the bulb below!

envy me not

Do not envy me
because I wear a smile
and my face bears no tears

See, my eyes are wells
I seldom fetch from them
but they hold waters, aplenty

If I wear my sorrows
like a royal raiment
you would flee my ugliness

So, envy not my shoes
for I know where it pinches
My toe-corns will bear me witness

it rained...

and so the rain came...
the sun sprinted to bed
that its flame may remain lit
sniggering, the moon rose early
and it straddled the dark pompously

down, below, on earth
a cold body cuddles itself
on a bed crafted for a couple
it's dreaming, of fingers, sneaking
into wet crevices and molding mounds

so it rained, very hard
all the roads are flooded
the sneaky-fingers is stranded
it's waiting, cold, on the other side
two cold bodies... on the day it rained



“

*It is easy to let go and walk
away from people whose lives are
toxic to ours, who bring us pain
and more ups than downs. But
when the one you're fighting is the
being inside of you, heart vs mind,
body vs soul, you realize that no
matter how many times you walk
out, slam the door and leave, it can
never be goodbye.”*

— Samira Sanusi,
I Wrote This For You (p.36)



Kukogho Iruesi Samson is a Nigerian writer, publisher, multimedia journalist and youth mentor, known for his work with young Nigerian writers and the promotion of Nigerian writing through his multi-platform educational and publishing firm, *Words Rhymes & Rhythm Ltd.* Author of four poetry collections — *What Can Words Do* (2013), *I Said These Words* (2015), *Words of Eros* (2017) and *We Who Sowed Hurt & Beaded Pains* (2017), Kukogho has won accolades for his writing, including the 2012 Orange Crush Prize For Poetry, the *Nigerian Writers Award* (NWA) for ‘Best Poet In Nigeria 2015’ and the 2017 ANA Prize For Fiction (First-Runner-Up), for his unpublished novel, *The Devil’s Pawn*, and the GT Bank Dusty Manuscript Prize 2018. He was also on the *Nigerian Writers Awards’ list of 100 Most Influential Nigerian Writers Under 40* in 2016, 2017 and 2018. He lives in Abuja, Nigeria.

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