

OMEN

In my dreams
in the nights gone by,
you have visited me—
I saw you,
almost touched you—
but each time I tried,
you moved further,
further, yet further:
Your dark shilleute,
sharp against the setting sun
almost real—
but each time I looked,
It grew darker
darker, yet darker.

Then to my right,
appeared the homestead—
a ghost place,
open doors
bare compound
but for a light wind
that moved dry leaves
a few feet at a time.

Then under the big mango tree—
Remember, mother,
the one in whose shade pappa reposed
while we played in the sand?
Well,
under the big mango tree,
in place of pappa's chair,
In place of pappa's footstool,
lay his leopard skin,
his ostrich-plume headdress
his girrafe tail armband
his shield,
and his spear.

It was getting dark
and the winds getting stronger:
hissing now,
hissing and threatening—
and suddenly,
first the leopard skin,
then the ostrich' plume
then the girrafe tail
all started to shake..
then to move.....

and it was getting darker,
and the winds getting stronger.

And then I was afraid-
and I looked to call you mamma,
and you weren't there,
and these things were getting closer
the day getting darker
the winds getting stronger.

I took one step to flee,
tripped and fell:
then with a mouth full of sand,
I looked again,
and all the objects were standing
all around my postrate form
stretched on the ground.

I mustered courage to scream,
but suddenly,
in place of the objects,
was pappa:
dressed as for war.
He was ready mamma,
and I was glad.
Suddenly, I was proud.
That, was my dream.

Catherine Alum Odora, 11th January 1988, in Stockholm, Sweden