

THE SPEAR

Hush Hush gentle breeze-
You mock my sore feet
and swollen face,
my bleeding arm
my unfired AKA [AK 47 hand-held machine gun].
my whole body weak
Yet my spirit strong.
In my ears ring the noise
of the yester battles
which took from me
the co spirit
of my life
of my soul.

You mock the ancestral shrine
that stands in the midst
of our homestead,
the war spears
handed from father to son
father to son
and father to another son..
now lying cold....
untended....
Never to be.

You mock the sharp labour
of the womb
from which I came
into the world
on that clear night....
the "Luga" stars
of rich harvests
shining, glittering, smiling
blessing each moan
each cry in labour
as she groaned
and heaved
and pushed,
and pu-u-u-sh-ed.
and bathing in the glory
triumphant beads of sweet
on the pretty forehead
all at one
with the stars above...
on that day.

You mock the happy laughter
of my childhood

of bare buttocks
in the sand,
the whistle
of the herdsboy
in the plains
the lowing of the cattle
the full udders
swinging like a pendulum
bespeaking a life
of wealth
and marriage
and birth
the flavour of ghee
and sour milk
treaded in the large guord
that mother kept
solely for the milk
and for the honey.

You mock the beauty
of a new day,
the golden sun.....
distant horizons
Only that for me
there might never be
a new day.
It's mid-morning
but my sun has set
spirits live
and bodies die
so must I
likewise head
my AKA unfired
our spears untended.

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