

"Even in darkness there is hope"

moments in the day

I.

by the playground watching little boys run and shout and challenge and girls by the double doors to the school guard pastel dresses and white leotards and black patent shoes

buying the paper at the newsstand I see glossy covers legs spread for the anonymous subject eyes see nothing lips parted without betraying a voice

man in a suit approaching on the sidewalk optically probing my thighs seeking my breasts

at home stepping into the bath is mirror-reflected me

fragmentation

II.

straining vision to catch movement in the dark dead-bolting the door keeping close to couples in the park thinking planning preparing ahead during and after everything

voicing my truth in class then meeting eyes in the hall attending the vigil that stirs resentment and rage avoiding wrath by smiling quietly at male attention always everywhere

fear

III.

throat constricting around unheard cries that turn inward ribs screaming caging in and sheltering the exploding heart body shedding flesh to avoid poison and violation weeping eyes that cannot blur their vision

pain

IV.

refusing to relinquish my core to this finding and connecting to the others pointing at reality and speaking it in your face taking the power you can never steal never access being and being and being

anger knowledge community strength

on my mind

you did not only take a life. you also took a future. you took it from all of us; From her family, From all of those people whose day she changed with her smile. you had no right.

you walk today you did not know her? you did not deserve to. you killed a part of us. How could you? How could you? Every minute you run free adds more to our pain. you had no right.

you do not know what happens. To families. To her family; to us. you stole all of her dreams. you took her chance. you did not think. you did not care. you had no right.

you have no right to walkplayskipingdancelovehaterunHIDE

D. Spencer

YOUR AFRICAN WOMAN?

Am I your African woman Only when I am a virgin? Am I your African woman When I am passive and obedient? When my wishes are irrelevant to your world When I am available at command To conceive, preferably sons To wash and clean your home To cook and dust till dawn And to wait up till you're soundly asleep

Am I your African woman Only when my face is worn with falsities When I absorb without fuss all the pain you afflict When my clothes are cut to conceal my curves And my eyes are lowered in submission To affirm you all, preferably at all times To receive only when given To give and give of myself And to bravely pretend that all is alright For to state my mind, is traitorous To stare back, inappropriate To enjoy my body, slut-like To chose my education, selfish To love myself, unforgiving If all these things make me an-African If this is what is branded as feminism Then my choice is simple I cannot be your African woman

Ivy Kusinga

Robbed of Life

Life is that precious free gift given to us by this world, It may not be perfect but it is there for us to build;

I want to cry through hardship I want to laugh in friendship, I want to feel the cold biting air and feel the rain in my hair. I want to live.

Fourteen young women no longer live No longer see winter frost on the ground, No longer hear their friends voices Their world scattered in one swift moment. By one confused man.

So many dreams that could have been So much more they should have seen, They were young, intelligent and strong They never did anything wrong.

I know that life is unfair, I know that people are not all good, But why, please tell me why they had to die? That is something I never understood.

Please promise me that never will there be such a waste of life, Tell me that what happened was just one crazy moment Promise their families and friends that society will never hurt innocent people again, And if they can hear you, could you also make this promise to those fourteen young women?

Miyurathy Muhunthan

