

Anne N. Lutomia

Purdue University, 610 Purdue Mall, West Lafayette, IN, 47907, USA
Email: alutomia@purdue.edu

Changing Dreams

I

Twenty-five years in Kenya
I dreamt in Swahili and in English, sometimes
I saw hazy images of a three-year-old me in Eastleigh
Walking towards Swahili speaking veiled Somali women
Smelling the fresh homemade spaghetti and oud

II

Ten years in America
My dreams are like silent movies
I neither speak Swahili nor do I speak English
But understand those voiceless moving silhouettes in my dreams
I worry about my dreams
What language do you speak in your dreams?

III

Sixteen years in America
I can hear my voice in my dreams
I can see blurred images too
I speak English with these ephemeral beings
I worry about having dreams with those who don't speak English
Hoping for silence not to stifle our conversations
Hoping for a chance to speak in their language fluently

IV

Seventeen years in America
I want to dream in English and other languages
To see full images of those in my dreams
To hear myself and others speak in languages we understand
I want to understand the meaning of my dreams
I want to remember the words of my dreams when I wake up

My Mother's Falls

my mother, once strong
tall and healthy
is growing old, weak and ailing,
but still wants to live her life like before

this morning she called me

she said her back is aching
her voice had lost its energy and rigor of her motherness

she has fallen twice recently
the first time while in the garden
the second time in the same garden
both times while jumping across a distance she underestimated

she complained about becoming shorter
she also lamented about her inability to estimate distance
her falls worry me and make me uncomfortable
we agreed she jumps no more

in our silence we spoke to each other
fearing a fall that could lead to death
i sternly warned her against any jumping
then we said goodbye and hoped for no more falls

Finding Freedom

Grandma never ate the gizzard
Mama never ate the gizzard
Aunt never ate the gizzard
I choose to eat the gizzard
Women are not supposed to eat it
Only men can eat it
They take turns to eat it
If Baba is not around to eat it
My five brothers will eat it
 If brother one is not around to eat it
 Brother two will eat it
 If brother three is not around to eat it
 Brother four will eat it
 If brother four is not around to eat it
 Brother five will eat it
My turn to eat the gizzard will never come
Alas! Now, away from home
I can buy, cook and eat it
I can order it from restaurants
I can eat it in private and in public spaces
I can eat it anywhere and everywhere
This delicacy that I am forbidden to eat
It is crunchy and tasty
It is my turn to eat it
I have had enough of the gizzard
My appetite and excitement have waned
I choose not to eat the gizzard