

## FATHER, WHY?

by Gloria Kang'a

Onerousness weighing my myocardium down,  
unfeasible to comprehend.  
Oh, my aching heart!  
Reduced to nothing but tears. Bitter tears.  
The cherished flower of my innocence, denuded from me.  
Abandoned, with the darkness as my sole companion,  
ghastly standing alone in the nerve-damaging, eye-watering cold

Vulnerable.

I lie awake, blaming myself.  
Night terrors.  
Thoughts, scary thoughts.  
Voices, terrifying voices.  
Silently being submerged in this unknown sea, drowning.  
Can you see my arm wave? Can you see me reaching out? Can you see me try to resurface?  
It's hopeless, I've been left for dead

Relieved.

I can tell that you have noticed how I don't eat much anymore.  
*Mama* thinks I'm doing this to be a runway model. Hilarious, isn't it?  
Working tirelessly, like a construction worker in the relentless Nairobi heat,  
in an attempt to mould this body into a different one,  
gradually dismantling that vulnerable girl -  
the one abandoned in the nerve-damaging, eye-watering cold.  
Remember her?

Determined.

"Maybe if my body had not matured so quickly..."  
"Perhaps I shouldn't have worn that dress..."

“What if it was just an ordinary male impulse?”

“It must have been *shaytan*’s evil voice...”

“Can’t I just look past this, it’s not that serious...”

“Surely, it was my fault.”

Compunction.

You managed to convince me that I was the cause of the problem,  
Yet somehow, I have bestowed upon you grace which you are indubitably unworthy of.  
Maybe it is because I have come to realise,  
the time to let go is long overdue.  
My solemn hope is that i’ll truly be able to completely pardon you one day,  
not for your sake, but mine.

For this onerousness is weighing my myocardium down

I will,  
nay,  
I must experience the joie de vivre,  
running in the moonlight, happy,  
feeling the raindrops on my hand, tranquil,  
shedding tears of unadulterated joy, bliss,  
all of the little things life has to offer -  
the elements I never paid much attention to.  
I swear this by every mother’s tears

Hopeful.

But for now,  
my soul longs for the answer to a single question,

father, why?