cache

Minna Salami

cache

Minna Salami

eBook Edition

Copyright © 2013 Minna Salami

Published by Weedmark Publishing
Ottawa Canada
ISBN of Print Edition: 978-1-291-31161-7
All rights reserved. No portion of this work may be reproduced
without express written consent of the author

Acknowledgements

To write poetry requires wells of inspiration.

I'm thankful that the daily proceedings of life provided the inspiration to put this collection together.

For the times when motivation didn't come automatically, I'm grateful to those who helped evoke inspiration in me.

First and foremost, my dearest äiti, my mum, whose strength, support and love always motivates me, and my cherished dad, whose loving guidance and wisdom have provided me with enthusiasm.

Secondly, I'm grateful to the Free-write-Wednesdays group who provided an encouraging space to read and share poetry.

Last but not least, I'm thankful to everyone who has read my poetry over the years, and provided me with valuable and heartening feedback.

Contents

I. She Loves

II. She Feels

III. She Journeys

I. She Loves

I want to tell you that I love you

But I'm not sure
If I love
You
As much as
This space

Of thoughtlessness
Capped with
This emotion
Called blank

So if I ever tell you
I'll pluck the words
Pretend they're fruit
Hanging from the branches
Of a late summer tree

Naked – part I

Beats of
Emotional residue
Echo from under the ego

She can't stand the noise
So she switches on daytime TV to shut it up
Zapping between naked branches
Life shifts seasons

Hollow days become sufficiently beautiful
And her daze
Returns
The leaves to green

Detail

Even in his presence
She liked to think of him in detail
Slanted shadows
Symmetrical cheekbones
The cadence
In the
Words he
Spoke

His chapped bottom lip
Skyward
Against a droopy canvas

She learnt to
Love in compartments
Limited frames where
More than she could ever love intact
One segment at a time
Detail by detail
She got the picture

Rape

How many hungry hands
How many pounding
Sweaty flesh-
Covered hearts
Filled with hatred
And erogenous clots
How many greedy
Merciless eyes
Must I beg
To please please please
Please

Stop

Gentle Man

I like that precision
Of character
In your neck movement

Sharp lizard-like
And your eyes
Revealing a river

Of drowning depths
No one has ever returned from

Touch me
Touch these words
Smell the ink
Smell me
Make our scent a home
In your gentle centre

Naked – Part II

No sway of chiffon to tickle my hips
No cotton to crinkle by my waist
No cashmere to blanket my dreams
No flax linen in October
No azure ribbons to remind me of the sea
No silk pins to hold up white laced dreams
No diamante for nights with drunken stars
No fine point needles to stitch batik patterns
No seams and hems to cover those parts of me

Which I want you to see

For you

I fill the moon with milk
With porcelain waves of
Thick cream
To drown you in milk-white memory
When we make love

I pour indigo into the ocean
Sprinkle salt on her surface
So she can tickle your feet with Colgate blue foam
Under the dim fermented moon

I set ablaze the sun
So he burns when we strike
The world with heat
Grass and grey butterflies
Daylight and waterfalls

I fill gardens with jade-green chlorophyll
So they don't form a tunnel of
Invisible words
And thorny twigs
Where our grapes
Grow wildly

Silence

I want the sound of your breath
When you inhale new thoughts
I want your open nostrils
To readily
Take in my presence
I want to feel you exhale
Featherlike on my shoulder
Comforting on my heart
Ticklish on my lips
I want some moments
Of breathing
Pure
You

Wilderness

I am
Free as a metamorphosed butterfly
As the howls of wolves at night

The blood that flows through my veins
Bears a gilded patina

Confinement has released
Its arsenic pegs
Pinching my ears from the wind's séance

For too long
My wings were crippled
And like a penguin longing to fly
I failed to see
That freeness is not in flight
But in stable feet

Dear Freedom,

I write to tell you this story which
Grew in fears that like a deflated balloon,
I'd become limp
I could start by saying that just as a tropical bird
In a field of snow
I feared my feathers
Could keep me neither afloat
Nor warm

That's how simple the truth is
I pray it suffices to say, Freedom
That as I leave a distant road behind
I am ready for the unknown
And for your companionship
I'm truly blessed and

Sincerely,
Grateful

Impermanence

You long for eternity, butterfly
Wheeling your wings with
Death shrieks
And guilt–patterned mirages

In life such beauty but
Whistles and croaks
Scare you
More than fear
Itself

I clap your wings
Such oblivious character!
Showing off your cape
To flowers that could care less
Now that you are gone

Poetry

Poetry says
Life is an embodiment of emotion
Of sorrow
Of joy of love of fear
She says
A spine is made of stories
Of love of fear of joy
Of sorrow

Poetry knows
Everything observes
Everything wears
A halo
Of its own conscience

Poetry asks
What makes the extraordinary sullen
What makes lovers
Look to her
For the words
They own

II. She Feels

Character

I feel like a butternut squash
Well-rounded
Golden and gooey inside
Heavy on top
If you turn me upside-down

I feel like an Italian leather shoe
Resilient, soft and adaptable
Experienced and worn in
Perfect arch and curves

I feel like the colour purple
Eccentric and unappreciated
Bold and beautiful
Regal
Mental state between red and blue

I feel curly
Youthful and full of laissez faire
Entangled in a nest of new life
Like the grass in late April

I feel like a typewriter
Out of control open-minded essential stable
Rebellious and revolutionary

As I strike through life with ink
Clink Clonk Clink Clonk Clink

III. She Journeys

Nigeria

Patriotic verses
Pivoting on lull democracy
Miss the note

The songs
Of old dictators
Arising compatriots
Taint border-speckled hearts

Births aristocratic poets
Fools
With miens of teachers
Deluded
By snake-bitten
Wing-tattered
Land

Escape

What gives it away is not
The layer of dust
That blankets the flowerpots
Lined along the patio

But the disturbing sense
That no matter how
She polishes them
They won't shine

The woman who once was unburnable
Now avoids the flames of memory
Probes for elusive messages
While watching CNN
By the poolside

Oya

In another life
The river is her pool.
Oresund, Hudson

Are too cold
She swims
The Niger
From one end

The current
Parts her
Into a reality
Of sticky hope
Of tender fear

From the other end
Deep in the fjords
Of a new damp dawn
She sails

Rest

On the seventh day she discovered
That genetically modified apples taste all right
That the scent of oak offers a lacuna
Between worlds
And that winter frost freezes longing
Into nostalgia

On the seventh day
The neon banners
Pumped up her pace
Made a pulse
Artificially serene
Yet tame

Niggerman

Macho chronicles sharpen
The swords
With which you go to war
Against the mind of deprivation

You scoff at the opportunity
To retain the words
Offered

By faraway ancestresses
Warning you
If you put it all in your sex
Your mind becomes impotent

You rather not
You rather build
And erect
The pillars of your ghetto

Genesis

Warmth

Where I float
In the springs of your womb

Love

Where you harbour
Me as a port of asylum

Safe

Where I'm anchored
To the loop of life

Ready
Or not
Time dreadfully arrives
To touch carefully
The ripples

Evolution

At first, the crushed stones
Illuminated
Absolute
Godliness

Illuminated absolute godliness
Was the hymn
They chanted
At first

Dissonance

The people
Sharp but dimmed
Home yet lost
Excited but not erect

Suffering silently
Manoeuvering trapezes
Counting on Him
To send more angels
Whom they anyway reject
Whilst endlessly hoping
For prophecy

Gender

The serpent was actually
Of the tribe of sun
Of Shiva
Mars and April

The apples
Whose seeds grew into
Tattered wings
Were bitter-sweet

She knew then
What she now
Too does
Role-play
Distorts the androgyny
Of the devil

Minna Salami was born in 1978 to a Nigerian father and a Finnish mother. Leaving Nigeria in her early teens, she has since lived in Sweden, Spain, New York and London, where she now resides.
She is the editor of MsAfropolitan.com and a social commentator. Her writing is featured in Sentinel Literary Quarterly, African Writer, The Guardian, The Independent, and the poetry anthology *If Yu Hie Se A De Prizin.*
Cache is a collection of poems, which evocatively call their reader to see the simple magic and myth in life, love and journeys along memory and identity.

For more info visit
www.msafropolitan.com

Photos by Aiste Lei

Weedmark Publishing