

On learning about Cissy's death, I contacted David, who now has a diploma in agricultural mechanization, and asked him to tell me all about the sad event because we wanted to assist. This is what he wrote to me.

My elder sister, Cissy Namale, lost her child with her first husband who died while you were still here. She never got another straight man. She found a Muganda man, Mr. Mukalazi Kato of Tororo and had two children with him. Their names are Denis Mubiru aged twelve and Rita Namubiru aged ten years. She then lived with Mr. Ocho of Busia, a Mudama, and had Davis Ocho who is now eight years old. Later, she had Jofrey Kasangwa, who is now four years old, with a Mr. John Kasangwa, an army officer. Mr. Kasangwa returned to Ruanda and it is believed that he died during the fighting. At the moment, Jofrey is being cared for by Mr. John Mwesigwa, also an army officer, who was my sister's most current husband. He lives in Tororo officers mess. She died while delivering his baby.

My family has adopted Cissy's four children who will live in our home in Uganda with Maama Faisi, their grandmother. There is no question Cissy was Maama Faisi's daughter.

But, there should be many questions asked and answers must be found soon. At a minimum, answers are needed to the following questions: should African men treat their daughters as personal property to do with as they wish? Should African girls be married so young? Should African mothers not be consulted—indeed be fully involved—in decisions involving their daughters? When will all African women have access to counselling, education, and contraception? When will African girls be considered as equals with boys when it comes to education and other rights?

In all, when will the rights of African women be considered human rights?

Joyce Nsubuga is a Ugandan-Canadian who came to Canada with her family in 1984. She has a Masters degree in health sciences from the University of Toronto and works as a community health consultant with the Public Health Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Health. She works with African immigrant women in Toronto and returns to Uganda periodically to help disadvantaged women's groups organize and carry out community health projects. She was awarded the 1994 Community Award for New Immigrants by Skills for Change, a Toronto-based non-profit organization.

¹Senga is the title of a paternal aunt in local dialects.

²Most of the highly educated Ugandans adopted English ways—behaviours, attitudes, and language—in their day-to-day lives. A few, like my husband and I, continued to follow our tribal culture and traditions. Hence we remained "African" in our way of life, while many others had become "Europeanized."

SHARRON CHATTERTON

A Voice for Dolly

The mushroom shades of dawn are in the window.

You asleep, a girl sixteen,
a broken mouth now fanged
bouquet of hair, its armful
thrown against the pillow,
supine upon the bed
against the brown of skin
the bones a matchwood broken,
in the sheath.
No longer girl.

In your father's photographs,
that famous lens,
the man who reached beyond his breed,
photographer who took the race,
forgot you
leaving all your kin
to follow in the smoke.

In your father's photographs,
you are a girl,
as fragile as the deer,
all eyes, demure
a girl grown slender in the name
as tightly bred, peripheral
as at the mission school.

Pregnant at twenty two
eleven children, six now dead
and thirty years of beatings
disfiguring your head,
you count their names on broken hands,
your painted nails
lineworkers for their bread,
who hang now at the hem,
a binary alive or dead
no rhythm in the noughts
and crosses of their battery.

This hotel room holds out the years,
this sleep, necessities of day.
As I keep watch,
a daughter in the heart,
the taupes of dawn
untie the grey,
your hair a drift,
your mouth,
An Elder's mouth.

Sharron Chatterton lives in Teslin, Yukon Territory. Her poetry has been published in literary journals since the '70s.