

1. New Home by Loraine Masiya Mponela

I have been exposed
to the love of strangers
Seen smiles directed at me
and the smiling eyes
with mouths covered with masks

It has been eye opening
to know that so much love exists
in this city

That a homeless girl can share
a life and be provided with a home
away from home

It has been a learning curve
To have my privileges checked
Closely

That a Malawian girl can speak
English, possess colourful GCSEs
and an award

It has been mind blowing
To experience greatness
Alongside great leaders

I have seen the better side of humanity
love instead of hate

It warms my heart
that humanity is in a better place
in its care for other humans.

2. I am a life celebrating in silence by Loraine Masiya Mponela

I am a life, proud and free
I may not look like you
but inside my body beats a living heart
And in my head a working brain
That reminds me always I Am a life

I may not be a good life
because of what you want me to be
but I am a happy life
because of what I choose too
Let me be and see the flower that I can be

The dirt you pour on me
like manure is making new fragrant flowers
Do not look
close your eyes
smell the fragrance
that exudes from the flowers
that I produce

For I am a life
creating and recreating all the time
celebrating the minutes
and acknowledging the creator
Yes I am a life celebrating in silence
Not better than you
but aware of the gift of what I have been given.

3. I Am becoming by Loraine Masiya Mponela

my grandmother.
I think and act like her
stopping with a load of wood on her head
or a pail of water on her arm
Multi tasking and taking everything
in my stride

Even my food I now love berekete
as well as walking barefoot
feeling the earth beneath my feet

I can see myself constantly digging for this or that
with a headscarf on her head
Always thinking of what to do next
to make sure the family is fed
and children are ready for school

I am becoming my grandmother,
Supporting kids I Am not related to
educating and advising strangers
like I have known them forever
Having opinion about everything as everyone

I am really becoming her
She who shared all her possessions
and in the end was left with little
or none but never cared
Grandmother who admonished us with words
that you can't take anything beyond the grave

Yes I am becoming like grandma
Filled with pride and wisdom, never begging
even if my tummy rumbles with hunger
forever a warrior princess who faced hills,
droughts and famines with a stoic face
that said "this too shall pass."

I am becoming my grandmother
Steeped in the wisdom of time and experience
Knowing that nothing lasts forever
And that at the end of it all
these majestic mountains shall one day become molehills

That he who laughs now
shall cry tomorrow
it is all OK for me
to be like my grandmother.