

To the tune of adornment

We who have always been
beautiful

have always been
talented, worthy

always have
mattered

un-regarded or not.

We sew these moments together.

Bead by bead
thread through needle through bead
needle through bead
each one drops
into the shape of
adornment.

When those among our number
wrench harmony
from incessant, discordant noise.

Our hearts
stretched to fibres
across the gap
between continents
across seas, calm and raging
above brimming, tilting vessels
gale-tossed.

Between mystic, ever-shifting lands

away// home
immigrant expatriate
welcome witch hunt

foreigner citizen

one of them

one of us

British, but

where

are you

really from?

belonging

outside//inside?

Harmonic I

Adeyemi's film flashes by
black beauty upon
a black beauty.

Purple gele* crowning
golden regalia
Her Majesty the Mother rides down
Rye Lane.

The octopus tale of identity is told:
of comfort and discomfort
of roots and of

home\\away\\home

I too dobale* at the
sacrifice of a 1,000
Uncles and Aunties and Elders
coming home from the second job at 6am
rising at 8am Sunday morning.
Resurrection life in African glory.

An honour rightly placed
is a weighty pendant
coming to rest.

Harmonic II

Victorian bustles and bustiers
stopped him in his tracks as he turned the page.
Shonibare's Ankara and Dutch wax,
clung to pale mannequins in
gentlemanly and lady-like attire
posed ready for tea and
croquet on the lawn.

Fabrics that Dare had only ever seen
swaying on Brixton stalls
chequering Liverpool Street windows
and gripping the bodies of

Aunties and Uncles and Elders.

Here they were,
patterns louder than a Lagos market
in the gallery, and in the news.

Heart stop
bead drops
something
falls in place.

Harmonic III

Venita stared at her own reflection in Chewing Gum,
as she watched Tracy Gordon find her identity
on that council estate on screen
she was seen.

The ‘crazy’ characters shared for laughs
had lived and breathed on *her estate*.
Like the man who lived alone
in the flat underneath
who one day lit a barbecue
in his living room
and offered bacon sandwiches to the crowd
that watched the fire brigade arrive
and the ambulance take him away.

Someone else had lived that life
and now elevated its comedy
its sadness and its glory.

In this mirror, she now saw
the gap her life had learned to grow around
the gap she had learned to accept.

Secret joy is seeded
as needle pulls through thread
another precious stone
collects.

And what of

Aderin-Pocock’s astronomy
Sentamu’s drumming
Seacole’s statue
Mayor King’s carnivals
Henry’s comedy
Campbell’s modelling

Asante's filmmaking
Boyega's acting
McQueen's documentation?

Let us summon our limbs
let hands collide
and throats raise
praise notes
for each of these
and more

each a bead
in a statement piece
for

Uncles and Aunties and Elders
sisters and nephews and cousins
bros and fam and blud

to wear with pride
in this
strange\\unstrange land.

*dobale means to show gratitude and respect in Yoruba
*gele is a head tie

© Adukeh (Fola Ekundayo) 2020