**Warnings to a stubborn child**

A poem in English and Bakweri by Cardiff poet Eric Ngalle Charles,   
on his flight from Cameroon.

‘Mama-ma weloooo, Njiya Ne Njiyalene   
Tata-Ma Welooo Njiya Ne njiyalene   
Wama Nuka Too Mooli mekolikoli Zri Ngweya Zruu   
Zri Na muko Moli Mekolikoli Zri Na Ngweya woo   
Zri Nene Jujuke Na Mevomba   
wa neya ene zre ya mawongor’

My mother warned me   
my father, he warned me   
They said   
   
When you reach on top of the hill   
do not sigh, do not show any signs of tiredness   
on top of the hill, I sighed, I took deep breath, I was tired   
That was when I saw Jukuke and his friend Mevomba   
Who took me away   
   
I was tired    
weak

I was a boy,   
my bones soft   
   
the judge banged his gavel   
he shouted

‘Makama’    
‘Makama’

Exile   
Exile

Do you mean exile as in the case of the Molikilikili   
the stick insect   
who died and resurrected herself from death   
to question the grave diggers, the mourners   
why she wasn’t washed    
why she was buried in dirty clothes   
   
Do you mean exile   
as in the case of Mowbray?  
   
or do you mean exile as in beyond the village gates   
to cross seas,    
to climb mountains   
seeking peace and finding none.   
   
in my flight   
I saw my grandmother   
she was rearranging the flowers around my grave   
she rewrote the words on my epitaph   
‘Ngalle was here’   
‘Ngalle is no more’   
   
in my flight, I saw young boys   
I saw young girls   
dancing barefoot in the ‘rains of my dreams

And my broken landscape’

I saw bees pregnant with nectar   
they carried home   
away from exile

**RHYBUDD I BLENTYN 'STYFNIG**

*‘Mama-ma weloooo, Njiya Ne Njiyalene  
Tata-Ma Welooo Njiya Ne njiyalene   
Wama Nuka Too Mooli mekolikoli Zri Ngweya Zruu   
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Zri Nene Jujuke Na Mevomba  
wa neya ene zre ya mawongor’*

Ces rybudd gan fy mam.

Ces rybudd gan fy nhad;

Dywedon nhw:

Pan gyrhaeddi di gopa’r bryn,  
paid ochneido, paid dangos fod ti ‘di blino...  
Ond ar y copa, ochneidiais,

anadlais yn drwm, ron i wedi ymlâdd.

Ac am hynny gwelais i'r diafol *Jukuke* a’i brentis *Mevomba*  
wnaeth ddangos erchyllterau

a mynd â fi o’ma...

Ron i wedi blino   
yn wan i gyd

Bachgen on i,  
a’m hesgyrn yn feddal  
  
Waldiodd y barnwr ei forthwyl llys  
gan weiddi

*‘Makama’   
‘Makama’*

*Makama* - Alltudiaeth

Ai alltudiaeth fel yn achos y Molikilikili?  
- y pry pric chwedlonol  
a fu farw ac yna atgyfodi o farw’n fyw  
gan herio’r torrwyr bedd a’r galarwyr,  
pam na chafodd hi ei ‘molchi wir   
yn lle ei chladdu mewn dillad budr?  
  
Ai alltudiaeth fel profodd Mowbray?  
  
Neu wyt ti’n feddwl alltudiaeth go iawn,

tu hwnt i byrth y pentre, gan groesi'r môr, dringo mynyddoedd,

yn ceisio heddwch meddwl heb ganfod dim?  
  
Ac wrth weld fy hun yn ffoi fel hyn

gwelais fy nain

yn twtio'r blodau ar fy medd,  
yn ailbeintio'r geiriau ar garreg fy medd:

‘Bu Ngalle yma’  
‘Nid ywNgalle mwy’

Ac wrth ffoi, gwelais fechgyn ifainc

gwelais ferched ifainc  
yn dawnsio'n droednoeth yng ngwynfa'r glaw

o fewn gorwelion creigiog

Gwelais wenyn yn drwm gan neithder

yn fy nghludo adre

o'm halltudiaeth yn ôl.

The title of this poem ‘Womba’ means smiles of a sleeping child in Bakweri, Eric’s mother tongue. The poem was inspired by Gillian Clarke during meeting in the Hay Festival Writers at Word tent in May 2018. She advised the poets to revist a childhood memory. Gillian chose a rug, Eric chose a sound.

Womba

Womba-Womba-Womba

he smiles of a sleeping child,

that's how I remember you.

In August, *Mbua Njorku*,

When the rains came,

We sit by the fire side

Counting three stones

Eyes red, smoke.

Womba-Womba-Womba

The smiles of a sleeping child

That's how I remember you.

When I was hungry

My mother's pot empty

She gave me palm oil and Coco yams.

When my sister was hungry

My mother wasn't home

I gave Queenta Palm oil and Coco yams.

Then, my brother came

We went to the farm

We looked for *'Mbete'* dry wood

We chased brown squirrels

"Carry the wood on your head"

Says my brother

"It will make your bones strong"

"That's why you have a big head"

My sister says.

Womba-Womba-Womba

The smiles of a sleeping child,

That is how I remember you

My brother hides under the Mango tree,

He smokes a cigarette.

I pray my mother catches him,

She did.

We saw a black snake,

It licked its lips

My brother ran, fast,

His feet did not touch the ground.

We met by the Stream

Where three roads meet,

He held my hands

He told me the story of a woman

She lived on a tree,

On that tree, there's a nest,

In the nest, there's a feather.

Womba-Womba-Womba

The smiles of a sleeping child,

Is how I remember you.

WOMBA

Womba-Womba-Womba

gwên plentyn sy'n cysgu,

dyna sut dwi'n cofio'r teulu gynt.

Ym mis Awst, *Mbua Njorku*,

glaw'r eliffantod .

Pan ddeuai'r glaw mawr

bydden ni'n eistedd o gwmpas y tân

yn cyfri cerrig yr aelwyd - *tondo ine, mbia ine* - i ddewis stori

a'n llygaid yn goch yn y mŵg

Womba-Womba-Womba

gwên plentyn sy'n cysgu,

dyna sut dwi'n cofio'r teulu gynt.

Pan oedd eisiau bwyd arna'i

a chrochan fy mam yn wag

cawn olew palmwydden a yams

pan oedd eisiau bwyd ar fy chwaer

a mam ddim adre,

fe rown i olew palmwydden a yams i Queenta.

Yna, daeth fy mrawd

ac aethon ni i'r fferm

i chwilio *mbete*, coed tân sych

ac i redeg ar ôl gwiwerod brown.

"Caria'r pren ar dy ben"

meddai 'mrawd

"wnaiff o gryfhau dy esgyrn"

"Dyna pam fod gen ti ben mor fawr"

meddai'n chwaer.

Womba-Womba-Womba

gwên plentyn sy'n cysgu,

dyna sut dwi'n cofio'r teulu gynt.

Mae 'mrawd yn cuddio dan y goeden fango,

yn cael mwgyn.

Dwi'n gobeithio caiff o gop gan fy mam

Ac mae o.

Welson ni neidr ddu,

llyfodd ei weflau.

Rhedodd fy mrawd fel y gwynt,

a'i draed heb gyffwrdd a'r ddaear.

Arhosodd amdana'i wrth y nant

lle mae tair lôn y pentre'n cwrdd.

Gafaelodd yn fy nwylo

a dweud stori'r ddynes

oedd yn byw fyny'r goeden;

fyny'r goeden yna, mae'na nyth

ac yn y nyth mae 'na bluen.

Womba-Womba-Womba

gwên plentyn sy'n cysgu,

dyna sut dwi'n cofio'r teulu gynt.