

Saints Becoming Sinners

Mutuahira Yousaf

Once
In the artless tree
Lived a bird,
As pure as the silk headscarf of the devout nun
In the grey church
That never slips
Oh, so honest

But the wind blew backwards
One day

Wind, the great malefactor
The furious cry
Raised to the sky
The scream
As weak as the dying
Fireworks
In the black skin hands
Of the poverty stricken child

Once
In the artless tree
Lived a child,
Licit, lawful, sinless
And free
Those Virginal wings
So heavenly was he

But the wind blew backwards
One day

Wind, the great evader
As cruel as the blackguard
Of the wide-eyed palace
In the dark yard
Of the miscreant king

The furious cry
Raised to the sky
The scream
As hollow as the howl
Of the black sheep
In the deadwoods

Once
In the artless tree
I,
Waving hands
Picking the red blood cherries

I heard the jailbirds wailing, I smiled
The poor convicts' cry, I smiled
Prisoners of time clapped, I smiled

But the wind blew backwards
That day

Wind, the great offender
Like the infidel heretic
Raised the iced cry
To the silent sky

Unheard
It went unheard
Voiceless
It is voiceless

Biography of the Poet

Hailing from the North-West Frontier region in Pakistan, Mutuahira Yousaf has been associated with the academia for the past 8 years; as a teacher, a researcher, and a creative writer. She has taught at various capacities at different institutions; notably at the Department of Economics, University of Peshawar in 2018-2019. Having a strong background in English literature and English Language Teaching, Mutuahira has taught at various capacities at different institutions; notably at the Department of Economics, University of Peshawar in 2018-2019. In addition, she has been associated with one of the biggest US- sponsored English Language Program in the world, English Access Microscholarship Program, as an English Language Instructor for the past 3 years. At present (2022) she is teaching to the young students of less privileged areas at the University of Buner and Federally Administered Tribal Areas University. In association with Access, her hard work and commitment has paid off in the form of her selection for the South Asian Access Summit and Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) Conference (2019) in Nepal. This opportunity has added to her experiences on the subject matters like equality, tolerance, diversity, and most importantly, feminism.

Mutuahira's research interests include Drama, Shakespearean studies, Comparative and Contemporary studies, and Film studies. Her research publications are mostly based on the need for the revisiting and retelling of Shakespearean plays, especially in the Pakistani context; addressing issues related to honour killings, patriarchy, women empowerment, and feminism.

Aspirant to work for the equal rights of and for women, Mutuahira is a member of the Young Women Writings Forum, Peshawar, and her commitment to the cause is evident from her arguments in her recent research works: *Women at the Crossroads: Gender and Class Intersection in Selected South Asian English Novels* (2021), and *Shakespeare and Pakistani Contemporary Problems: A Critique on the Winter's Tale and Fasana-i-Ajaib* (2021).

In addition, Mutuahira Yousaf, is a poet and short story writer. Her poem *Baba* and the short story *Paroxysm* have appeared in Shaheed Banazir Bhutto Women University's magazine *Lumiere* in 2018.