

THERE'S A CIVIL WAR IN MY HOUSE

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Anxiety rests on the chipped wooden chair comfortably, looking slightly effortless even though it is wrapped in blood. Wounded, limping like a stray dog as it lays down all its brutal truths. Its confronting sight is so so draining; haunting. There's a civil war in my house!

A gathering of masses curbed like sardines, each with a neglected story to tell. A riot for space, purposefully manifesting the flawed, stretch marked side of the truth; that no one really wants to see. I hear guns! I hear guns and a severely bruised Black woman crying and the echo of her vacant Black spirit screaming for recognition; her Black folded face wondering if it will ever end. Wondering if the man she calls her lover is indeed a lover of her bones, because every weekend he comes back home reeking of alcohol and feasts on her bones until she can't walk anymore. And when she's lying helplessly on the floor begging for him to stop after he had kicked her, and kicked her; that is only time she ever sees my father smile at her.

There's a civil war in my house, and when my father gets consumed by this system and his anger, we all feel it; see it. He takes out his penis at the dinner table and pees inside the pots carrying the meals, that we so worked hard to cook. He throws around bottles of alcohol to our faces and then accuses us of wasting his money because he was not done drinking the alcohol that he so voluntarily decided to throw in our faces. He swears! He swears the devil and

his homies* out of hell; and this little house we call our home becomes the hell. It becomes a cold hell clustered by my father's complaints, his bitterness, his dead dreams; and that song he so passionately sings with his fist in the air, every time he's done beating my mother up:

***“freedom is coming tomorrow.
Freedom is coming tomorrow.
Freedom is coming tomorrow.”***

I do not know this man! This man who I demonize. This man who quotes Holy Scriptures as a basis of criminalizing my mother's body. This man who has turned our home into entertainment for the whole township to gaze at, and have something to talk about at the taxi rank. This man who sings about freedom after committing such an atrocity. I do not know this man; because my father never used to be like this. He never used to throw his weight around as a means of making a statement about how powerful he is. Nor did my father associate abuse and violence with power.

I hate him for what he does to my mother; for what he does to us. And more often than not; I am tempted to look him in the eye and say 'Father; father you are not a man, father you are a boy'. And every Sunday morning when he is lying on the bed, consumed by all the liquor he had the previous night; I find a spot somewhere in the house to kneel and bargain with God. I bargain with God and ask God to save my mother from this beast I call my father. I ask God that my mother's story makes the prime time news so that they can take my father away and save us from all this sorrow; but I immediately cancel that request because I do not want my mother's pain to be exploited for white capitalist gain. And before I stand up and seal

this deal with God, I ask God to mend my father, to create in him a clean heart, to speak to him so that he can get up and find help.

I want my father to account for what he's being doing to my mother, because it is wrong and cruel and violent; not to mention abusive. And I would also like to know where my father learnt this wrong, cruel, violent and abusive behaviour. Who taught my father these problematic power dynamics? There's a civil war in my house and all of us need saving!

Decolonize masculinity. We cannot be anonymous anymore!