

UCLA

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies

Title

Shared Pains

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4h2203c1>

Journal

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 14(3)

ISSN

0041-5715

Author

Gebre, Bogaletch

Publication Date

1985

DOI

10.5070/F7143017038

Copyright Information

Copyright 1985 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

SHARED PAINS

by

Bogaletch Gebre

This is this land
Where children look like
shrunken bags
like old men with no bellies
their souls hanging
on a string of skeleton
with no life force

Where is this land
my country
the foot print of time
museum land
the story of the earth
cradle of mankind

How can the nightmare of famine
The agony of starvation
The death of the nation and its future
unfold under supervision
of U.N. and relief agencies

I run here and there
to tell the story of my people
their plight and desperation
I prayed and pleaded
for food and medicine

Where was World Vision
CARE and AFRICARE
BARAC and Oxfam
FAO and UNICEF
newsreporters and cameramen
politicians and clergymen
gobbling up all the donations
giving out little
here
there
to keep everyone on the borderline
of starvation

Let me ask
My friends ... observers
people of this world
had this pestilence hit Europe and America
the English or French
what could have been the response

Death among the people of color
those of Africa, Asia and Latin America
the victims of slavery and colonialism
thought to be "normal" or "natural"
in captivity
or in feeding camps.

Who is responsible to this holocaust
governments or nature
U.N. or relief agencies

Oh...Oh...Yes
There is plenty of blame for everyone
Enough to go around many times

I woman in the diaspora
an individual
I share the tears and agony
the pain and despair
the hopelessness and helplessness
crippled by anger and rage
choking
a part of me dying
everyday

I must ... I must ... do something
To curb the course of history
from starvation and poverty

I must ... I will ... do something