

POETRY

S2 LITERATURE EXERCISE 1.

DAVID RUBADIRI: GROWING UP WITH POETRY

The graceful giraffe cannot become a monkey

My husband tells me

I have no ideas

Of modern beauty.

He says

I have stuck

To old-fashioned hair styles.

He says

I am stupid and very backward,

That my hair style

Makes him sick

Because I am dirty.

It is true

I cannot do my hair

As white women do.

Listen,

My father comes from Payira,

My mother is a woman of Koc!

I am a true Acoli

I am not a half-caste

I am not a slave-girl;

My father was not brought home

By the spear

My mother was not exchanged
For a basket of millet.

Ask me what beauty is
To the Acoli
And I will tell you
If you give me the chance!

You once saw me,
You saw my hairstyle
And you admired it,
And the boys loved it.
At the arena
Boys surrounded me
And fought for me.

My mother taught me
Acoli hair fashions;
Which fits the kind
Of hair of the Acoli,
And the occasion.

Listen,
Ostrich plumes differ
From chicken fathers,
A monkey's tail
Is different from that of a giraffe,
The crocodile's skin
Is not like the guinea fowl's,

And the hippo is naked, and hairless.

The hair of the Acoli

Is different from that of the Arab;

The Indians' hair

Resembles the tail of the horse;

It is like sisal strings

And needs to be cut

With scissors.

It is black,

And is different from that of white women.

A white woman's hair

Is soft like silk;

It is light

And brownish like

That of the brown monkey,

And is very different from mine.

A black woman's hair

Is thick and curly;

It is true

Ring-worm sometimes eats up

A little girl's hair

And terrible;

But when hot porridge

Is put on the head

And the dance is held

Under the sausage-fruit tree

And the youths have sung

You, Ring-worm

Who is eating Duka's hair

Here is your porridge,

Then the girl's hair

Begins to grow again

And the girl is pleased.

Questions:

- a. With valid evidence from the poem, state who the speaker is. (2marks)
- b. What comparisons does the husband make between his wife and foreigners?(2marks)
- c. Explain your feelings towards the speaker.(4marks)
- d. Which lessons do you learn from the poem? (2marks)
- e. In not less than 10 lines, write your own poem about your identity. (10marks)