

## WHAT IF I SUDDENLY SAW AND YOU DIDN'T

A. Kefeni

It was in the early part of my childhood that I lost my sight.  
Since then I have never seen a human being, an animal or a thing. Of course,  
this doesn't mean that I have been blind to everything in this world.

Otherwise I wouldn't have lived - I would have long been dead.

By interaction with other people, by gathering pieces of information,  
and by using my other senses,

I recognize, rationalize, and usually draw sensible conclusions.

I have some idea about beauty and ugliness,

About sunshine and clouds,

About grins and smiles.

I have certain impressions about expressions in the face.

I even dare to interpret a gesture which is commonplace.

But after being non-visual and sightless for so many months and so many years

What if I now suddenly saw?

How great would the impact be on my life?

How much would it affect me?

I know that coal is black, milk is white and grass is green.

But to me all these are abstract - what else could they be?

The coal which I once knew as «black» I suddenly see as a reality.

A colour will never again be represented by an object, but be  
itself an entity.

The ink-printed books and the handouts, which to me were blank pages,  
The blackboard scribbles which to me were funny little knocks and  
silly little squeaks

Now become real signs representing figures, words and sentences.

The journey to and from the classroom, to and from the dormitory,

Which required a great deal of memory,

Now becomes a leisurely walk in the midst of miscellaneous  
observation and admiration,

Without the need for dependence on someone else,

Without fears or doubts

As to whether I would fall into a newly dug hole,  
Without the embarrassment due to hesitation

As to whether I would bump into a car

Or disturb the peace of a too-much involved busy couple.

Once I started seeing, I would start to form a value judgement of my own  
Rather than relying on that of someone else,

Bright things would become brighter, dark things darker.

Thus into the depth of life I would go deeper and deeper.

Into the challenges of life I would go about easier and easier.

Well now! What about you?

You men and women who think you know everything,

Do everything, because you see,

You who think you dress and wash or even eat and drink  
Because you see,

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Because you see,

Although I never wish or ever dream  
That you would be ...  
Have you ever thought of what you would experience  
If suddenly, you didn't see?

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« I PLEAD GUILTY TO HATRED »  
A BRIEF STUDY OF  
THE NOTE OF PROTEST IN AFRICAN LITERATURE  
Dr. A. K. Sinha

« I plead  
Guilty  
To hatred,  
My anger explodes  
Like a grenade,  
And destroys like a hurricane,  
My jealousy is darker  
Than the coming storm  
And madder than thunder ...  
Cut off this rope,  
Free my hands and feet,  
I want to chase  
The thief,  
I will smell him out  
And smear the road  
With his brain» ...

These are the words with which an African poet Okot P'Bitek presents the song of the Prisoner in his poem entitled «Sacred Rock». Indeed, a great deal of African Literature strikes us as a protest against the bewildering wrongs of the contemporary society. The bitter colonial experiences in Africa seem to have made many of these African writers believe that all the so-called «standards» set for them by the «white man» were misleading and had to be rejected. A general repudiation of the white man's codes of conduct becomes an immediate necessity for these writers. Their new ideal world is not made up of dancing attendance to the white man's culture, but of a new social commitment to interpret and educate the African society. They are out to expose the destructive effect of the colonial influences. They seek to formulate a new kind of humanism as a replacement for the paralysing «values» of the white man. And James Baldwin makes this clear when he makes the following observations in his «Nobody Knows My Name».