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An Africa Thunderstorm

David Rubadiri (1930–)

Post-modern/colonial/African Poet

Glossary
Sinister— evil/menacing
Din — loud noise
Jaggered— pointy
Pelting— rain falling fast + hard

Theme:
Natural disaster. Overcoming oppression. Chaos.

Form:
Two parts which divide the content into the **general** and the **specific**.

Wind builds up 4 times (4 interwoven stanzas) like a main act in a plot.

The irregular no. of words on a line, with many single-word lines, captures the unpredictable progress of the wind and the accompanying clouds. This technique is also evident in the second part of the poem, where the frantic movement of the village women as they 'Dart about/In and out/Madly' (lines 22- 24) is physically demonstrated by the line divisions.

Sound Devices:
This poem utilises sound effectively. Much use is made of onomatopoeia as the wind is 'whirling' (lines 7 and 19) and it 'whistles' (lines 14 and 25). The noise in the village has the screams of children competing with 'the din of whirling wind' (line 19). As the storm gets closer, its imminent arrival is heralded by the onomatopoeia of the 'Rumble, tremble, and crack' (line 31) of the thunder, and the impact of lightning striking the earth.

Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject)
Outraged/fierce

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Chaos/distressed

the setting is in Africa.

Metaphor

1 From the west → Origin of storm identified from the west
2 Clouds come hurrying with the wind
3 Turning sharply — Adjectival connotations
4 Here and there → Juxtaposition
5 Like a plague of locusts → Simile—swarming in
6 Whirling, — Onomatopoeia
7 Tossing up things on its tail
8 Like a madman chasing nothing. → Simile — Juxtaposition

Underlining the appearance and potentially destructive nature of the storm.

Makes room for transition of clouds as a passenger on wings of wind

stanzas one and two, describes the storm as it gathers momentum

9 Pregnant clouds → Personification
10 Ride stately on its back,
11 Gathering to perch on hills
12 Like sinister dark wings; → Simile—Evil archetype
13 **The wind whistles by** → Onomatopoeia
14 **And trees bend to let it pass.**

Metaphor

L9 comparing the wind to a monster thrashing its tail about, emphasises the unpredictable nature of the storm, which adds to its danger.

The description of the clouds (lines 12-13) makes the clouds reminiscent of some bird of prey waiting for the opportune moment to strike.

The path of the storm has not been diminished by the trees. In fact, the trees give way to allow it to progress unhindered.

third stanza describes its impact on human existence.

15 In the village
16 Screams of delighted children,
17 Toss and turn
18 In the din of the whirling wind, → Alliteration + Assonance
19 Women,
20 Babies clinging on their backs
21 Dart about — Mortal man hurried by onrush of wind.
22 In and out
23 Madly;
24 **The wind whistles by**
25 **Whilst trees bend to let it pass.**

Repetition L 14-15 + 25-26
Almost exactly the same; 'And' has been replaced with 'Whilst'.

The 3rd stanza continues in its depiction of noise and movement as villagers anticipate the storm's arrival. We notice how the children react with 'Screams' (line 17) of delight, possibly because of the thrill of potential danger. The women hurriedly attempt to prepare for the storm, although it seems that their efforts may be pointless as the 'Clothes wave like tattered flags' (line 27), completely at the mercy of the wind.

26 Clothes wave like tattered flags → Simile
27 Flying off
28 To expose dangling breasts → Female anatomy exposes prize possession of the woman
29 As jagged blinding flashes
30 Rumble, tremble and crack → Onomatopoeia: Cacophony
31 Amidst the smell of fired smoke
32 And the pelting march of the storm. → Personification

The poem ends with the storm breaking, but stops before it actually hits. The progress of the 'pelting march of the storm' (line 33) tells the reader that this storm cannot be stopped and will be a mighty one.

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