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Naphiri

Edison Mpina

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Edison Mpina · *Malawi*

NAPHIRI

I have not been worried about you, I
was sure you understood. I have been worried
about your school fees, for
which I phoned your headmistress. She understood;
but things changed today.

Along Gilbert Street, I saw a girl like you
but white, unlike you, walking with black
disconsolation, like worn out springs in her legs.
I thought about you. Is this how
you have kept in my absence?

She wore a denim as knife-edged as yours
dipping and shuffling her feet, innocent as yours
in the dead leaves which have surrendered to the fall
fight here. She was as dismal as the owl at daybreak.
Is this how you are?

Karla walked with hardship along the street, like
you did in your youth walking upstream the Chimbamera River.
Tell me, this is not the way you are keeping
in my absence, is it? Couch ears each day now
to the landing planes.