

2000

# You Didn't Know

Titilola Alexandrah Shoneyin

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Shoneyin, Titilola Alexandrah. "You Didn't Know." *The Iowa Review* 30.2 (2000): 31-32. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.S240>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

## YOU DIDN'T KNOW

I

When you were strutting  
up and down like a chicken  
looking for a place  
to lay her eggs,  
You didn't know.

When you were looking at me  
from over your nose  
kissing your bloody lips  
stained by that lipstick,  
You didn't know.

When you were calling  
my old in-laws "Aunty this" and "Uncle that"  
desperately looking for their good eyes,  
You didn't know.

When your glossy studio pictures  
adorned the parlour  
displacing my stern browning ones,  
You didn't know.

II

When he was allotting you  
the single room next to mine  
bellowing that he needed privacy,  
You didn't know.

When your steaming tears  
mingled with the onions  
as you withdrew, pregnant  
to the grinding stone,  
You didn't know.

When you saw the new queen  
and you were screaming,  
swearing to drink a calabash-full  
of rat poison,  
You didn't know.

### III

That the same whip  
that raged up the back  
of the undeserving senior wife  
is simmering patiently  
in the thatched roof of his bedroom  
ready to bruise the pride  
of the young-blooded wife.

### IV

Now you know.