# Psalm for Black History Month

From everlasting to everlasting
World without end, You Are!

Wrought in my mother’s womb
And even before then
You knew I would be.
Who I would become―or not…
Where I would dwell―or not…
What skin tone I would have
Especially after the sun had touched me;
All these, you, Creator God, had known.

The language that I would speak
Or how many I would speak, hear, and understand
How I would know to call you
And know that you are still the One
How I would pray, praise, or lament
And hope and trust that you would still hear.

My mother continent is Africa
Vast lands and lakes and rivers created by you.
You were there before many a navigator, an explorer, often a stranger
Created invisible lines, invisible boundaries, unnecessary divisions.
Before I knew to call you God or Dieu,
Languages from across many seas,
I learned to call you in the languages
Of my kin and others, closer, nearer, and dear to me,
Present or gone before me
In the continent of my origin, my birth, my roots.

Nyasaye (Luo)
Mungu (Kiswahili)
Mulungu (Ngoni)
Ngai (Kikuyu)
Enkai (Maasai)
Chukwu (Igbo)
Unkulunkulu (Zulu)
Lesa (Bemba)
Mwari (Shona)
You who sees all, hears all, knows all
You who are many in One,
Present everywhere all at once;
You in whose image I am made,
You whose nature is
Love, Unity, Harmony, Sameness,
It matters not in what land I currently dwell.

To you I pray,

Breathe your nature in me
Breathe courage and wisdom in me
Breathe healing over wounds that may still be open
Breathe over scars that may still be tender
Breathe to soothe the hurt that may still linger
Breathe, so that unforgiveness may not inhabit or overwhelm me

Breathe that I may fully live to
Love and be loved
Understand and be understood
Accept and be accepted
Value and be valued
Listen―and be listened to

That I may not be singled out
Because of mere suspicion or stereotype
That I may not be considered as not belonging
Because a person, a people, a system
Just cannot believe or accept that I do

That I may be viewed neither as a token nor an object of pity
But truly and sincerely be recognized as a worthy and deserving human

In the here and now and beyond now

Amen

*―Akinyi Owegi-Ndhlovu*