

TWO POEMS BY INNOCENT BANDA

“At the Counter Where I Stand”

At the counter where I stand
In the pub where I drink
In the town where I live
So easily out-numbered by
White people — how so easily like home
In Mulange Club, Tchyolo Club, Limbe,
Country Club — White pockets
In the middle of free Africa sponsored
By a generous people blind and deaf
To the cry of muted waiters
Treated like dogs in the white pockets
Of home sweet home . . .

“Above the Sky is Grey”

Above the sky is grey at the tail end of autumn
The air is crisp and the hillside is in colours
Of dying leaves slowly falling or as often torn
Off reluctant branches by cold westerlies . . .
And as I view all, I see you in back of my eyes
I hear you in the walls of my ears.