



## **A letter to my mother in Africa**

My mother, (all black mothers whose children have left)  
You taught me how to hope  
like you stayed hoping in difficult times.

We played as children around the hut  
boys played with a rag football in the sand,  
we girls looked on in clouds of dust.

But we grew up and went to school  
your hut could not charm me anymore.  
I wanted a beautiful house  
just like the whites and the rich in our country.

Then there was the white man  
who promised me a beautiful house, my dream,  
lots of money, a nice job as a dancer,  
I love dancing -mother- you know  
how happy I was, dancing at our village parties.

Despite your warning and your care  
I went away my head full of beautiful promises.  
Full of hope that all my dreams would come true.

You taught us to hope -mother-  
Like you stayed hoping in difficult times.  
But inside me life has killed hope.  
I do not hope anymore,  
because I don't think there is any hope.

I write to you now in tears  
-will you ever receive my letter-  
I am in a cold country without friends  
my dream lies smashed on the floor  
and my tears have blended with the fragments.

They have cheated me -mother-  
Something that had never happened to me.

I am ashamed to tell you what has happened  
my body as merchandise, stained and abused  
I cannot sing anymore, I cannot dance anymore,  
I cannot come back anymore,  
because I am a disgrace to you -mother-  
and for the whole family.  
And still I hope to see you again,  
because you are still my mother.

Poem by Sr. Martia v.d. Burgt, SRTV member