

David Rubadiri's *A Negro Labourer in Liverpool*

A.MONIKA

Assistant Professor of English
JAC, Periyakulam

David Rubadiri

(Malawi, 1930)

- ◉ Born in Liuli, Malawi on July 19, 1930
- ◉ Poet, novelist, playwright, university professor and diplomat, permanent ambassador of his country to the United Nations
- ◉ 1952 – 1956 : Studied at Makerere University College, Kampala, Uganda
- ◉ Literature at Kings College, Cambridge
- ◉ Diploma in Education from Bristol University, England
- ◉ Teacher at the University of Botswana and dean of the Language and Social Sciences Education Department at the same university
- ◉ 1975 – 1980: Member of the Executive Committee of the National Theater of Kenya

His Publications:

- ◉ *Growing Up With Poetry: An Anthology for Secondary Schools*, 1989
- ◉ *Poems from East Africa*, 1971
- ◉ *No Bride Price* (novel, 1967)
- ◉ The play, *Come to Tea*, in 1965.

His Poems:

- Show a fruitful conscient combination of African influences and European poetical forms
- Black Humour
- Melancholy is accompanied with irony and sarcasm that painfully touch the vital experience of his race

A NEGRO LABOURER IN LIVERPOOL

DAVID RUBADIRI

- ⦿ A poem strives to highlight the plight of a **negro** in **Liverpool**
- ⦿ exemplifies the pathetic situation of the average **negro**
- ⦿ asserts how his individuality is suppressed in a white dominate society

Poem:

- I passed him
slouching in dark backhouse pavement
head bowed
taut
haggard
and worn
a dark shadow
amidst dark shadows

-
- I stared
our eyes met
but on his dark negro face
no sunny smile
no hope
or a longing for hope promised only
the quick cowed dart of eyes
piercing through impassive crowds
searching longingly
for a face
that might flicker understanding

○ this is him
the negro labourer in Liverpool
that from his motherland
with new hope
sought for an identity
grappled
to clutch the fire of manhood
in the land of the free.

Analysis:

- The indefinite article 'a' points to the lack of a specific identity
- 'passes' - hints at the indifference of society as a whole to the plight of the labourer
- 'marginalization' is evident in his position 'slouching'
- The head is 'bowed' when it would have preferred to be straight

-
- ◉ a dark shadow amongst other shadows
 - ◉ no sunny smile as he wears a forlorn expression
 - ◉ The sun is an important and recurrent motif in African poetry

-
- The poet shifts from the indefinite article 'a' to the definite article 'the' in addressing the Negro labourer in the second stanza to assert and affirm his existence in society
 - A Negro - bears a century's oppression that had sought after an identity

-
- - strives to attain the fire of manhood
 - But ironically, even in the Land of the free (England), he is unable to attain
 - the free here are also dead, in a state of decay and stagnation, for they too grope for a light, a ray of hope.
 - He longs for the rays of hope of a sun that will never set for him

Thank you