

### **Before I slice my cake – Monologue by Esther-Rennae**

The women in my family had a history of regifting their heartbreak. Each splintered piece was cemented in a cake for their children's children's children to devour and fill up desolate hours of their past lovers' retirement once again. Mother's older sister was the worst of them all. Aunt Emeka. The type to send me feminist anthologies and chalk up speeches of sovereign independence; "rebuke dependence" yet would mourn over men that did not reap the love she planted. It started with her Father. Her tears were exhausted slopes wet with his absence. My Mother was no different, though she took the slice of her abandonment issues, dressed it with her icing just to be left to crumbs on a broken plate. "Fragile woman..." she whispered as she pinched the sharp of my chin. "...Too slick, shaven and slaving for the guy that doesn't reply back to your bed, head to pillow filled with tears. Make up, chin up, keep your head up. Moisture and gestures, you say your grace but still no pleasure. Won't you let your hairs down in all the right places. Unstiffen the bones of your endurance! Your body is not a tour. He invaded your stadium and came back for more with a ticket he never bought. Preserve your purity, your body is not designed for reservations to his inconsistencies, incongruities, incapacibilities and his 'pretty please', please please don't end up like me!" Mother wept. The women in my family had a history of regifting their heartbreak. Each splintered piece was cemented in a cake for me. The cake was not my enemy though the ingredients were pure poison. The flour the father. The sugar the abuse. The butter the dependency, the better the cake. My stomach ached from the thought of its taste. That day I tucked my family recipe to the back pocket of my heart - so that my freedom and breakthrough and trophies would not be defined by the bitter-sweetness of bodies and men. History is not a tragedy, phenomenal woman. The heartbreak Passover opened a floodgate of freedom for each woman's lustration. My children's children's children will eat from my cake. It will taste, "She is grace. And a tenfold of the starry scars in the sky. Fulfilment in her eyes would make a man fly then melt in her palms. One of God's many galaxies with stars for scars, heart for hurt. She couldn't escape the havoc of love, past, love that passes after a warm embrace. She seldom let that lock down her race to grace. She is you but you are ten billion galaxies and more. This is not a warning, phenomenal woman. Pass the torch and find your light in the darkness of a past pass your belonging. You soar higher than this. You sky wider than this. You life brighter than this." Truth is I haven't figured out how to bake my cake. Life will throw its ingredients. And pretty words are not enough to build a life and handle its 'whys' so I'll go through thousands of recipes just to find my taste and I'll find my pace. I promise... I'll say my grace before I slice my cake.