

LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 7

SUBJECT: Literature-in-English

TOPIC: African Poetry “The Song of the Women of our Land” by Oumar Frouk Sesay (I)

CLASS: SS1

WEEK: 7

SUMMARY

In the colonial era, women oppression, gender discrimination, inequality and enslavement were solidified across the African continent. “The song of the women of my land” is the song of a deep lamentation over the fate that has fallen women in Sierra Leone. It explores the image of a traditional lamentation. Women were put into cruel situations and engage in agricultural activities so they sang about the sufferings and agonies they pass through. Rural women were involved in managing forestry resources. At the same time, they were denied education and employment. African women have continued to endure their condition, singing away their sorrow and hoping for a new dawn of joy but their sufferings are left unsung. In fact, only a few members of their communities even have good memories of these women after their death. When occasionally, a person remembers such women, it is not uncommon to see the person compose or perform a dirge in their memory. Apparently, this is what Oumar Farouk Sesay does in this poem.

SETTING

The setting is apparently the countryside in Northern Sierra Leone, most probably Masingbi in the Tokonili District from which the poet hails.

The time setting of the poem is clearly in the distant past, as suggested by such phrases as ‘the vast void of time’, ‘long ago’, and so on.