

SITTING UNDER A SILK-COTTON TREE

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by Philana Omorotionmwan

*We are African women and we know, in our blood's telling, the tenderness with which our foremothers held each other. It is that connection we are seeking.*

*—Audre Lorde*

CHARACTERS

MOTHER: a black woman

DAUGHTER: another black woman

SETTING

A large screen serves as a backdrop on which intertitles, lines from Scene 3, and videos from Scene 4 are displayed.

Scene 1. Force-Fed Like A Strasburg Goose

*(Inter-title: How do I free myself from this poison?)*

*Spotlight on a pile of garbage that tapers off as it increases in height. MOTHER enters. MOTHER picks through the garbage, carefully choosing pieces.)*

MOTHER

Supper!

*(DAUGHTER enters. DAUGHTER attempts to hug MOTHER, but she recoils in disgust. MOTHER cuts a piece of garbage with an oversized knife and fork. She attempts to stuff it into DAUGHTER's mouth several times. DAUGHTER refuses each time. Then, finally)*

MOTHER

Chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga tooooo  
tooooo!

*(MOTHER feeds garbage to DAUGHTER.)*

MOTHER

*(pointing to DAUGHTER's hair)*

Too nappy.

*(MOTHER cuts another piece of garbage. She attempts to stuff it into DAUGHTER's mouth several times. DAUGHTER refuses each time, though not as strongly as before.)*

MOTHER

Chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga tooooo  
tooooo!

*(MOTHER feeds garbage to DAUGHTER.)*

MOTHER

*(pointing to DAUGHTER's lips.)*

Too big.

*(MOTHER cuts another piece of garbage. She attempts to stuff it into DAUGHTER's mouth several times. DAUGHTER refuses each time, though not as strongly as before.)*

MOTHER

Chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga tooooo  
tooooo!

*(MOTHER feeds garbage to DAUGHTER.)*

MOTHER

*(pointing to DAUGHTER's stomach.)*

Too fat.

*(MOTHER cuts another piece of garbage. She attempts to stuff it into DAUGHTER's mouth several times. DAUGHTER refuses each time, though not as strongly as before.)*

MOTHER

Chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga tooooo  
tooooo!

*(MOTHER feeds garbage to DAUGHTER.)*

MOTHER

*(pointing to DAUGHTER's feet)*

Too wide.

*(MOTHER cuts another piece of garbage. She attempts to stuff it into DAUGHTER's mouth several times. DAUGHTER refuses each time, though not as strongly as before.)*

MOTHER

Chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga tooooo  
tooooo!

*(MOTHER feeds garbage to DAUGHTER.)*

MOTHER

*(pointing to DAUGHTER's skin.)*

Too black.

*(DAUGHTER attempts to hug MOTHER, but she recoils in disgust. MOTHER cuts a piece of garbage. MOTHER stuffs it into DAUGHTER's mouth without any resistance.)*

MOTHER

*(pointing to DAUGHTER)*

Too. Too.

*(MOTHER exits. DAUGHTER stares at pile. DAUGHTER picks up garbage with her hands and begins to stuff her face. She continues for some time, even through gagging several times. Blackout.)*