



Nyumba Ya Mumbi: The Gikuyu Creation Myth (African Art and Literature)

By Kariuki Gakuo



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Editorial Review

From Kirkus Reviews

In the ``African Art and Literature'' series, published in Nairobi, a myth explaining the origins of the Gikuyu community, retold in cadenced biblical prose intended to ``match the flavour which traditional storytellers bring to their performance.'' The story tells how Gikuyu takes to wife Mumbi, who gives birth to nine daughters, ``happy and hardworking,'' who become ``beautiful women who rippled with the beauty of the full moon...while their breasts, full and ripe, stood proud as the dazzling peaks of Kirinyaga.'' When the women beg their parents for husbands, Gikuyu follows his creator's instructions for a ritual that produces nine young men; thus the ``clans of the Agukuyu were formed.'' The story, seamlessly incorporating many details of traditional life, is handsomely illustrated with sweeping, splendidly evocative paintings of the primeval mountains and plains in which the impressionistically sketched figures move with natural grace. Notes; bibliography. In the same series (at \$7.95; ISBN: 9966-884-12-2): Nyalgondho wuod-Ombare and the Lost Woman from Lake Victoria, a poetically retold tale about a Luo tribesman who marries a mysterious woman who comes out of the lake and, in time, brings him great wealth. In old age, he turns mean and, drunk, curses her. Vowing revenge with God's help, she walks back into the lake, taking her herds with her. Joel Oswaggo's powerful paintings, in a style recalling Jacob Lawrence's art, are beautifully structured and elegantly framed. Intended for young Kenyans, the books may seem strangely exotic to American readers, but they are authentic, beautifully designed, and well worth introducing. (Folklore/Picture books. 8+) --

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Users Review

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