

## **Eat Me – Patience Agbabi**

When I hit thirty, he brought me a cake,  
three layers of icing, home-made,  
a candle for each stone in weight.

The icing was white but the letters were pink,  
they said, eat me. And I ate, did  
what I was told. Didn't even taste it.

Then he asked me to get up and walk  
round the bed so he could watch my broad  
belly wobble, hips judder like a juggernaut.

The bigger the better, he'd say, I like  
big girls, soft girls, girls I can burrow inside  
with multiple chins, masses of cellulite.

I was his Jacuzzi. But he was my cook,  
my only pleasure the rush of fast food,  
his pleasure, to watch me swell like forbidden fruit.

His breadfruit. His desert island after shipwreck.  
Or a beached whale on a king-size bed  
craving a wave. I was a tidal wave of flesh

too fat to leave, too fat to buy a pint of full-fat milk,  
too fat to use fat as an emotional shield,  
too fat to be called chubby, cuddly, big-built.

The day I hit thirty-nine, I allowed him to stroke  
my globe of a cheek. His flesh, my flesh flowed.  
He said, Open wide, poured olive oil down my throat.

Soon you'll be forty... he whispered, and how  
could I not roll over on top. I rolled and he drowned  
in my flesh. I drowned his dying sentence out.

I left him there for six hours that felt like a week.  
His mouth slightly open, his eyes bulging with greed.  
There was nothing else left in the house to eat.

**Consider and discuss these questions:**

What do you think it's about? Discuss how the poem uses two voices – the narrator's and the man's – to chart the shifting dynamics of the relationship between them.

What do you notice about the writer's style? Are there any striking words / phrases / imagery?

How is the woman's body described and how does the description of the woman's body change through the course of the poem? How does this relate to the shift in power within the poem?

Is the poem solely concerned with gender relationships or are there other possible themes?

Look at the form of the poem, in particular the patterns of sound. What effect do these have? How do they relate to the subject matter?