

A few random thoughts through my glass door...

Through my glass door I sit on my bed and watch as people dodge the rain and the pot holes walking up and down the hill. Those walking down have empty jerry cans while those walking up have ones filled to the brim and overflowing with water – sometimes blocked by a baby banana so the water won't escape. Yes it's the end of the dry season so every drop counts.

There are siblings holding hands up and down this hill, while old men are holding their walking sticks and the Mumma's are holding their babies – on their backs and balancing a basket of bananas or avocados on their heads. Nearly everyone, old and young are holding their bibles – yes it's Sunday today and they are all walking to church. The western world doesn't even see that on Christmas day!

Then there are those who just keep on working on a Sunday, there are guys carrying planks of woods on their heads while a little five year old girl carries a bag of charcoal on her head and her mother a jerry can of water.

Everybody is dressed in their Sunday best, from a three piece suite for the men to their finest matching African prints for the ladies with a headscarf to complete the outfit. Little sisters are dressed in matching dresses and the boys are matching their Daddies in their own three piece suites and ties. The older men have 'bowler' hats on, yet, they look very distinguished.

In the background you can hear the arcapello of the church choir.....and then the heavy rains fall down and I must remember to take my umbrella – as soon as it starts - It stops again. Stopped for now – that is until the day I do seven days worth of washing and it pours like never before – oh well at least they are getting a good rinse cycle I guess!

There is reflective mirror on my door so I can see out but they cant see in, my door is probably a good spot on the hill to stop and have a rest because it seems that is what a lot of people do, they stop for a few moments, catch their breath and then continue up the hill. As I watch I see the children running and occasionally falling down head first down the hill and oh how I hear them cry – that red gravel has gotta hurt. I watch the Mumma's walk slowly up the hill just one step at a time and the heavier Mumma's even slower again. The old man with his walking stick also goes at a snails pace, then there is the Dad and his four children running late for church so they run up the hill.

The stories the lines on their faces must have to tell, and the calluses on their feet not to mention the memories in their hearts from the genocide of years gone by – yes it's twenty one years ago now, but for so many it was just yesterday. I hear a conversation about the genocide at least every other day – oh the untold stories of that time in history. It's so difficult for a mzungu to even fathom let alone understand and comprehend once you get to know these beautiful and brave people of Rwanda. God gave the middle east oil and he gave Africa time – but do we sit and spend time listening – really listening to their stories? Our house help told me the other day that her family were killed with a knife and left to die in a pit latrine. I have no comprehension – none.

Tomorrow it will be all of the school children in their school uniforms walking up and down this hill again. In the afternoons I sit on my bed and have the door open and the school kids from Fruits of Hope walk past, take three steps back, look in, notice its me – run up to catch up with their friends and then I hear them say, "it's Michele, it's Michele Black!" And so they come back with about 15 friends who then just stand and look in through my door – saying "hello Michele Black".

We have moto's going up and down our hill sometimes with a passenger and sometimes on their own, and then we have the pure grunt of the big four wheel drives from the army – yes our neighbours are in the army – kind of reassuring. There are right hand drive cars and left hand drive cars – anything goes in this lovely country.

I'm not yet sure what is harder to walk in, the slippery dry red sandy dirt or the slippery wet red sandy clay? Yes we've finally had two days with some rain so that red dirt has turned to red clay. I have to say walking down this hill is a little like mastering the skill of skiing down a mountain – you have to know just where to step at the right time and at the right angle. There is the same noise of people sliding on the sandy red dirt as there is when someone skies behind you on the ice – similar but nothing a like at all – its hot and you have sweat dripping off you as you walk back up, compared to the freezing cold of sitting on that chairlift at the snow.

So that was just to paint a little picture for you about 'my hill' – what I sit and look out to everyday, I moved my bed so I could look through the window to the world and wonder about the window to their souls.... Hope you can too now!