The Light Still Burns

By Rediet Asfaw

They say every child is born with light to guide their way,
but some are raised where systems slowly steal that light away.
Black children learn too young the weight of silent doubt,
a world that builds the walls, then asks why we can't climb out.

They see it in the classrooms where expectations fall,
where dreams are treated smaller, like they were never tall.
A counselor might whisper, *“Choose something safe instead,”*
while brighter futures flicker quietly inside our heads.

The struggle isn't talent, or effort, or desire,
it’s doors that close too quickly on ambition climbing higher.
It's poverty and pressure, it's chances left behind,
a system built on limits placed on brilliance of the mind.

But light was never meant to fade beneath that weight of fear,
it only needs a spark, a voice that says, *“Your path is here.”*
So give the youth a mentor who shows them they belong,
someone who proves their future can be fearless, bright, and strong.

Because when Black youth see the heights that they can reach,
a thousand closed doors open with the power that we teach.
And suddenly the system that once held them in its chains
must face a brighter future rising stronger through the pain.

Their light was never fragile, never something that would burn
it only needed guidance, and the courage to return.