The graceful giraffe cannot become a monkey

My husband tells me
I have no ideas
Of modern beauty.
He says
I have stuck
To old-fashioned hair styles.

He says
I am stupid and very backward,
That my hair style
Makes him sick
Because I am dirty.

It is true
I cannot do my hair
As white women do.

Listen,
My father comes from Payira,
My mother is a woman of Koc!
I am a true Acoli
I am not a half-caste
I am not a slave-girl;
My father was not brought home
By the spear
My mother was not exchanged
For a basket of millet.

Ask me what beauty is
To the Acoli
And I will tell you
If you give me the chance!

You once saw me,
You saw my hairstyle
And you admired it,
And the boys loved it.
At the arena
Boys surrounded me
And fought for me.

My mother taught me
Acoli hair fashions;
Which fits the kind
Of hair of the Acoli,
And the occasion.

Listen,
Ostrich plumes differ
From chicken fathers,
A monkey’s tail
Is different from that of a giraffe,
The crocodile’s skin
Is not like the guinea fowl’s,
And the hippo is naked, and hairless.

The hair of the Acoli
Is different from that of the Arab;
The Indians’ hair
Resembles the tail of the horse;
It is like sisal strings
And needs to be cut
With scissors.
It is black,
And is different from that of white women.

A white woman’s hair
Is soft like silk;
It is light
And brownish like
That of the brown monkey,
And is very different from mine.
A black woman’s hair
Is thick and curly;
It is true
Ring-worm sometimes eats up
A little girl’s hair
And terrible;
But when hot porridge
Is put on the head
And the dance is held
Under the sausage-fruit tree
And the youths have sung
You, Ring-worm

Who is eating Duka’s hair

Here is your porridge,

Then the girl’s hair

Begins to grow again

And the girl is pleased.

Questions:

a. With valid evidence from the poem, state who the speaker is. (2marks)
b. What comparisons does the husband make between his wife and foreigners? (2marks)
c. Explain your feelings towards the speaker. (4marks)
d. Which lessons do you learn from the poem? (2marks)
e. In not less than 10 lines, write your own poem about your identity. (10marks)