

**About the book**

Since the creation of the world, people have conveyed their visions and interpreted their thoughts through poetry. *At Sunset* articulates and encapsulates the rigorous challenges facing Africa and different societies of the world today. The poems in this collection explore extensive corruption and dehumanization that have gone unchallenged in different cultural milieus for a long time. The poems are distinguished by their simple use of words to capture the attention of the readers. The themes are transformed to make comments about human struggles. These commentaries unearth the vices of the society and instruct the readers about the poet's vision. The poems in this collection are thematically relevant because they reflect human thoughts and feelings.

**About the Poet**

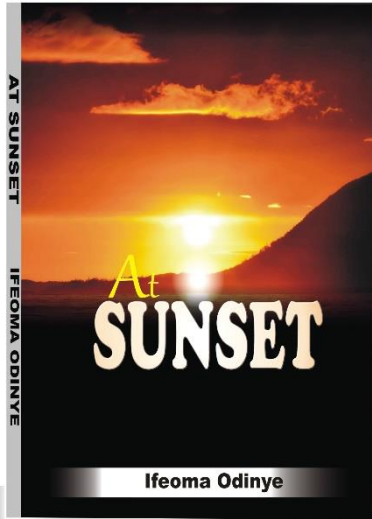


**Ifeoma Odiye** is a lecturer in the Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. She studied at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria; Renmin University of China; and Xiamen University, China. She is happily married with children.



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*At Sunset by Ifeoma Odinye*

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# At SUNSET

**Ifeoma Odinye**

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# Dedication

For the voiceless and defenseless  
With whom and for whom  
I became a poet

## Introductory Quote

There will never be a first-rate poet or a first-rate critic who lacks a first-rate ear; and no one will ever acquire a first-rate ear without working for it... Poetry, alas, like painting and music, is an art- it is not a form of happy self-indulgence; and to master an art or even understand it, one has to labor with all of one's mind and with at least a part of one's body.

(Yvor Winters, *The Function of Criticism*)

# Preface

This collection has been written for everyone; teachers, students and all lovers of poetry. In writing poetry, I have fairly adopted a unique style consistently laced with deep meanings, personification and strong imagery. The poems in this collection are simple and in some ways clouded by hazy thinking and fuzzy rhetoric. It is lively, engrossing, thought provoking and alluring. The individual poems demonstrate my personal emotions, involvement and love of the creative art!

*At Sunset* articulates and encapsulates the rigorous challenges facing Africa and different societies of the world today. It voices a resounding call for a new generation of morally conscious individuals to embrace their challenges and positively change our mundane world. In *At Sunset*, I rattled the world's challenges with a deep sense of passion. This collection also contains the award winning poem in the 2018 Annual EWC International Poetry Competition, 'Zion's Zest' which clearly captures the contrived human insensitivity over human existence.

I have – though very carefully spoken for the voiceless and defenseless. *At Sunset* is set to rekindle a consciousness for self-reflection and world liberation.

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## **(Woes of my Land)**

*The land is mute now  
With none to put new songs  
To our lips and our voices grow hoarse  
So let us listen to songs of today*

**Ezenwa-Ohaeto**

**“A Kind of Songs”- *Songs of a Traveller***

**Before sunset**

Before sunset, poetry births words  
Words formed from squeezed and weathered faces  
Wrinkled by life's unsteady visions  
Drifting high and low, Low and High.

Before sunset, poverty kissed many lips  
Lips that once kissed princes and princesses  
In high towered embellished houses  
Moving up and down, down and up.

Before sunset, birds remained silent  
The silence that awakened the owl  
In the mid-day under a scorching sun  
Shining bright and hot, hot and bright.

Before sunset, people embarked on a pacing chase  
A game of luck, a game of chance  
In the world's driest part and plain  
Humbled by hunger, thirst and want  
Want of food  
Want of money  
Want of water  
Want of shelter  
Want of want.

## **The Sunken**

We are the sunken  
We are the stuffed children  
Leaning on an empty column  
Paralyzed legs infested with poliomyelitis

We are the sunken  
Once, leaning on a fence with nice big slats  
And space around, so free and roomy  
Legs well-guarded, fixed firmly on the surface  
Waiting for a falling star!

We are the Sunken  
Echoing together Thomas Hardy's *Natures*  
*Questioning*  
Questioning the moonlight that once sprayed  
happiness on eager faces  
Sun that brightened the face after a mid-night's  
sorrowful pangs!

Tell me where all past years are,  
Or who cleft the devil's foot,  
And kissed the Angel's forehead like Judas Iscariot?

***The Sunken***

Tell me, I say, tell me  
Tell me why weathered faces stare with visionless  
vision  
Tell me why frail men turned gods over night  
Unleashing fire and brimstone on earth's sojourners?

That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;  
This is strange, falling like dews upon many  
generations  
When men survive only to await tomb's silent  
embrace!  
Tell me, I say tell me  
What then God were to such men?

## **Zion's Zest**

In the hollow of earth's arms,  
I share the open secret of life's misery  
The lurking secrets of my generation  
Sprayed and scented on the blue airy surface  
Which only time and time could tell  
The wagging tales of pains and gains  
The twisted tales of clans and wars  
Tales of cows and colony!  
Tales of lies and deceit!

Under the canopy of earth's balled frame,  
I will not keep silent!  
For Zion's sake, I will not keep silent!  
Until priests, kings and conquerors bring their palms to  
be read!  
Palms smeared with blood and water  
In pretense or in one communion!  
Touching heads; round heads fixed in square shaped  
helmets  
Bowed in painful ecstasy ready for the unguarded  
hour!  
Hour of fear and pain!  
Hour of dreaded evil and death!

Turning and turning in the earth's widening gyre, the  
ancient path departs

---

***Zion's Zest***

Leaving the falcons and falconers without a guide  
Things fall apart, the earth cannot conceal  
The falcon's tale of untold pains  
Tales laden with death tolls unnamed and untamed!  
Tales of lost vegetation!  
Tales of sights and sounds!

In Earth's womb the chord forms tight strings on fetus  
neck  
Lurking and waiting  
Lurking and waiting  
Earth's new born in blood-red and coloured water  
Crying, as they strike the chords with unguided palms  
Palms that bath newborns with acid water  
Straight from the earth's scooped bowel  
Burning and burning in endless circles.

Today, I cry for earth's unchanging woes  
Woes of yesterday!  
Woes of today!  
Woes of tomorrow!  
Woes of Dreams!  
Dreams of Zion!



## **The Second Coming**

I listened to the wild cry,  
The wild cry that heralded the second coming of a  
hero  
A hero born to fulfill a destiny,  
A destiny swept under the carpet for decades!

I listened to the wild cry  
My heart bled once again!  
Oh, how dreams quenched,  
And unity broken by divided hearts!  
A hero came the first time,  
And he was silenced  
And sabotaged by his kinsmen  
Who accepted the pythons as friends  
The ones that wrapped around them in python-like  
death  
And lured them to join in the python dance.  
The dance that flung them to the ground.  
Despised and silenced!

In the first coming,  
Thousands were killed on the hero's soil  
Perhaps millions under avarice, hatred and  
wickedness!  
The hero was hushed and blamed for the woes of the  
land.

---

***The Second Coming***

The death of proud sons, women and children caused  
more pain  
And the hero became an outcast in his own land.

Again, I listened to the wild cry,  
The wild cry that heralded the second coming of a  
hero;  
Chants of sorrow here!  
Chants of sorrow there!  
Who knows the fate of the hero this time?

Chants of sorrow everywhere!  
The people live in forced obedience,  
Under a forced marriage cloned by the colonizers.  
A marriage between the beauty and the beast.  
A proud beast without a living conscience or soul.  
The beast tortured the beauty and stirred up more pain  
and hatred.  
Lingering and still lingering for decades!

No hope  
No joy  
No freedom  
No destination  
Only death, death and death!  
Patiently waiting for the second coming!

## **Martyrs**

Martyrs young and fresh as flowers  
Tender and soft in sunlight's beaming gaze  
Hatched untimely by the lopsided gaits of untamed  
hooligans  
Who live in deserted neighbourhood marred with dust  
and rocks  
Neighbourhood smeared with cow dung and rafters  
And awakened by the muuus of the cows!

Martyrs old and weary as the earth's wounded surface  
Winkled and dry in history's untold tales  
Pained by life's thoughtless rhythms  
Rhythms of the lost  
Rhythms of the weak  
Rhythms of sight!

Martyrs young and old cheated of nature's free gifts  
Gifts of life  
Gifts of choice  
Gifts of oneness  
In zoo cloned regions divided by clans and traits  
Subdued under the native conquerors' greed  
Under the silent watching eyes of unseen herdsmen  
killers

***Martyrs***

Who cut and kill, kill and cut in distant Green lands  
Green lands littered with the butchered bodies of  
field's friends.

Friends, both old and new  
Young and old  
Single and married  
Men and women  
Boys and girls  
Children and pregnant mothers  
Whose blood flows in ceaseless pain and rage  
Pain of agony  
Agony of a butchered people  
Silenced in the sands of time.

## **Afra my Afra**

Afra my Afra  
Afra of proud warriors in green land fields  
Afra of which my father chants  
On the soil of distant lands  
Your spirit resonates in me  
Your beautiful spirit that echoes the dying wishes of  
old  
Rekindled by scorned hatred, jealousy and brutality  
The scorn of your people!  
The brutality of your people!  
The people of your blood!

Afra, tell me Afra  
Is the oppressor's hand stronger than your Amadioha  
iron hand?  
The hand that crafts metals and irons in ancient cities  
of Afra!  
This hand which threw Amalinze the cat on the ground  
in swift bravery!  
This hand which fed hungry thousands in war ravaged  
lands!  
The land of great heroes  
The heroes of Afra  
Afra of the Rising Sun!

But in the midst of unarticulated thoughts

*Afra my Afra*

A firm voice awakens my troubled spirit;  
Child of the Rising sun, that spirit pure and brave  
Though hushed, is courageous and untamed  
Like the air which cannot be caged in a container!  
That is the spirit of Afra!  
Afra of old  
Afra of now  
Afra of the future  
Springing up patiently in the hard unwatered soil of  
Afra!

**(Songs of Childhood Memories)**

*But that was when the general was a boy  
When the old path beneath the breadfruit tree  
Led to the wonder of the aerial zone  
The general is a man he is now a man*

**Chimalum Nwankwo**

**“AFTER: For the Burnt Out Taper in the Ivory  
Tower”-Towards the Aerial Zone**

---

**Memories (Nostalgia)**

One picture, just one more to create the world I once  
cherished  
The faces I once admired under the shades of Udala  
tree  
Where Udala children gather in rustic fields of green  
leaves.

We stooped and looked through the clustered leaves  
Necks bent backwards; eyes fixed in upward search  
Against the noon-day glare patiently waiting for the  
Spirit of Udala  
The gentle spirit that drops Udala balls in odd hours of  
the mornings and noon.

Unexpected, the Udala balls fall like the muddling  
sounds of pestle and mortar  
Gracing the hard surface of brown and green.  
All looked and scampered upraised beneath the giant  
Udala tree  
Where devotees cluster with search illuminated faces  
Faces that meet faces; devoutest friends of Udala fruit  
Far from home; not far from home!



## **Epigram on a Girl**

She is a girl!  
A very lovely maiden!  
Sweet and tender  
Gentle and innocent  
Under natures reign!

While in the house  
While on the road  
She becomes a prey  
And needs help amid the mighty flood of mortals' ill  
doings!

With copious grief,  
She mourns as her pride is stolen!  
Still with watery eyes,  
She succumbs to passion devoid of love,  
And shows her grief in the secret locket of her failing  
heart.  
And screws up her hypocritical face as if nothing  
happened.

## **Early Morning Melancholy**

I caught this morning's gaze of daylight  
Underneath a deep shady tree of sadness.

I lay sunken under the breath of morn,  
Still and silent as if calamity had just begun!

I listened to the beats of my heart  
And felt a cruel pain that bended my neck.

I pressed one hand on the aching spot  
And wished sorrow had no name.

This passion lifted me upon my feet,  
And made me struggle for life.

On that very spot of the earth  
Where melancholy struck in the morn!

## **Songs of a Simpleton**

Strike the chord and let my muse flow  
From the dawn of history  
To this present day!

What is life?  
Why do men love evil more than good?  
Past years ago,  
These are questions illumined by me,  
A mere simpleton!  
Who has spent most of his life in the dark of the earth  
Alone and forlorn!

And now my brother, it is time  
To tell the story of a crime  
As black as the dark night.  
Though secret, yet with copious anguish I grieve.  
When in sweet prime  
My noble lady goes.

Fear or sorrow,  
I have no power to sing  
Sadness or pain,  
I cannot bring the pleasure of past years.  
I am on the cold hills side  
Now purple with love's wound.

---

*Songs of a Simpleton*

I still hear the thousand footsteps  
That raped my noble lady  
And cut short her breath in the rising morn!  
There, they laid her in the dirt;  
And buried her alive in the mud.  
Near the dark deserted house in the farm!

My noble lady has passed away  
In the silence of the morning.  
She now sleeps in silence  
Where slumber does not weary the dead!

## **(Songs of Reflection)**

*If my scarlet sorrow should impale you  
Where you walk silent across the field  
If my purple laughter had faded  
And the fractured moon, in the aftermath should  
Stagger  
If this my voice be muted  
Before the festival of the flutes  
Let the song still be sung  
In your heart  
Let the song still be sung  
When lights are out  
For the agonies of a generation are measured.*

**Obiora Udechukwu**

**“Prelude”-What the madman Said**

## **In the Dark**

In the dark, I can see a tiny dot of light at the end of the tunnel  
Where I lay squeezed underneath a stone buried;  
The steep cutting rigid and rough upon my skin.

In the dark, my mind has withered from the squeeze  
Alone, I palely wait for nature's quest  
No birds sing! No flowers bloom!

In the dark, darkness lulled me asleep,  
And there I dreamed-  
The latest dream I ever had in the darkest side of the tunnel.

I saw pale youths, death pale youths everywhere  
They cried-'we need change!'  
I saw their starved lips sealed with threats  
Threats of hunger! Threats of death!

***In the Dark***

Again I saw a figure with a conqueror's gaze  
And sure in strange language he said to the pale  
stricken youths-  
'You are all stars! You are the future! The future of  
tomorrow!  
Waiting to catch a falling star!'

The figure said, 'go and catch a falling star!  
Get up and catch a falling star!'  
Since yesterday, the star continues to fall!  
The pale youths continue to wait!  
Hand stretched towards the airy space.

I saw the figure's stern look  
I saw his horrid warning,  
I saw the pale youths' tight lips in the gloam-darkness,  
Gapping wide in utmost dismay  
And I awoke, and found me still in the dark  
In the darkest part of the tunnel  
Where I see the moon palely loitering.

## **Mystery**

Between the sun and moon,  
Between the day and night,  
Between the sky and sea,  
Mystery is formed in the pulse of hearts!  
Witnessed by freighted faces and lips  
Under thrones which draw men to weave the web of  
mystery  
Till heart, body and life freeze into nothingness!  
Nothingness, absolute nothingness!



## **The Fool**

The fool said no sense, said no sense  
He said no sense!  
Tired men chase money all day long  
And neglect their health every day!

Nonsense! Nonsense! Nonsense!  
The fat slob of a fool said, nonsense!  
There is no sense in much chase!  
There is no sense in nonsense!

Nonsense! Nonsense! Nonsense!  
There is no sense in nonsense!  
But in every nonsense; there is sense!  
Make no mistake; there is sense.  
In every mistake, there is take.  
Take it or leave it,  
The fool has spoken!

## **My Dream**

Seven years ago I dreamt of a golden city  
A baby golden city, from Utopia town;  
But the noxious huge bug squashed its buildings to  
dust!  
The city became naked and dumb!  
And the spaces became void and ugly!  
A loud and gentle voice echoes;  
Beware of the bugs, my son beware!  
Their jaws bite, their claws catch!  
Beware of the scorpions, and shun  
Every slimy creepy creature!  
Beware! Beware!

## **Reflection**

A little joy here,  
A little pain there,  
Life rolls!

Like the seasons,  
Life is also flavoured!

Each wound is perfect for the body!  
Happiness blossoms from time to time,  
Leaving pain to guide its steps;  
And plant its seeds on life's land under mourning.  
When joy can sweetly flow in the prime of earliest  
youth.

## **The Waste Land**

Blasted lay that land,  
We are proud of!

Nice weather,  
Wise men,  
Nice people,  
A plenteous crop on green land vegetation!  
Wise talk of a kind!

Now lay desolate the land which once harbored  
civilized minds,  
And watered the ground with the finest oil.  
The land now lay scorned with spluttering, hateful and  
impotent end.

Now, not a plenteous crop grace the land,  
Only poverty, scarcity and animosity push hard across  
the sand of time!

## **Madness**

The mad man said,  
There is a strain of madness in every man!

We are all mad men!  
We are all mad men!  
A minute madness,  
An hour madness,  
An endless madness!

We are all mad men!  
We are all mad men!  
Walking about the streets  
Head filled with unguarded thoughts,  
Mouth filled with speeches!

We are all mad men!  
We are all mad men!  
Mumbling toothlessly in and out  
With naked foot stalking in different directions  
Busily seeking a continual change.

***Madness***

We are all mad men!  
We are all mad men!  
We are all mad creatures learned and unlearned  
Gentle, tame and meek  
But sometimes put ourselves in danger.

We flee from ourselves and sometimes did seek  
ourselves.  
Now we've become wild and do not remember  
That the sun steams on the roofs where  
Rain has once sprayed!

## **1AM**

I am spirit, soul and body

I am blood, flesh and water

I am emotion, feelings and passion

I am drunk with yesterday's woes that I seem to stand  
upon a shaky ground

Because the past has passed away and the future is  
staggering

Today is standing still and the future is a serious matter

Because I am bare, speechless and numb!

## **Freedom**

Freedom, freedom, where is freedom?

The prisoner points to the guard

The guard points to the boss

The boss points to his master

The master points to the heavens

And said,

This world is a haunting place!

No one is free!



## **(Woes of Man)**

*Yes! My heart is withered  
The tremors have dropped from my caresses  
And my passions are spirited now  
As abandoned lumber.*

**Chinweizu**

**“Spring Memories”-Energy of Crisis and Other  
Poems.**

## **Scars of the Mind**

We will fight!  
Once again, I say,  
We will fight,  
When they least expect it!

The scars of rape  
Over our minds and body  
Like red-hot arrows on the chest  
Have finished us!

We are the incubators of the future,  
Great girls of innocence;  
Subjected to man-made torture  
Under the full glare of sunlight gaze!  
Under the darkened clouds of the sky!

We are the young pure maidens,  
Young lovely maidens  
Whose innocence has been pulled to the mud  
Among reedy rascals!

***Scars of the Mind***

United in vision,  
We will respond with the flames burning in our  
hearts!  
Yellow, blue and red flames!

The past is burning us with red-hot flames!  
The future is steaming with red-red flames!  
And the smell of flames hit our nostrils with passion!

A child- a girl in her zero year  
So brief her presence on earth  
Is consumed in an unwholesome flame;  
Which the middle aged maidens dread!

Young lass in her prime,  
Consumed within the infernos of home and streets  
Crying each minute in a broken monody.

A woman clutched tightly around the neck  
As flames waves distil her body.

Sinking recklessly in the guarded flames!

*Scars of the Mind*

We are now lost in the flames!  
We cannot keep silent  
And allow the prodigal take our best portion  
And return with the wicked-slit of his tongue  
To placate our raging mind!

Nowadays, we grow out  
Abandoned;  
Recklessly abandoned!  
Trapped on the open and closed space  
Here! There...

**On bended Knees**

On bended knees I crawl to your presence with awe!

On bended knees I see each day pass into nothingness!

On bended knees I become a sadder and wiser man!

On bended knees I watch the world unfold!

On bended knees I become calm and quiet!

On bended knees I went like one that hath been  
stunned!

On bended knees I rose to see morrow morn;

The sunshine I once craved for!

The freshness I once desired!

Full of sweet dreams, health, and endless joy!

## **Solitude**

Under the greenwood tree  
Solitude hangs on my throat  
And turns my merry notes into a melancholic tune!

Under the watch of rough weather  
My spirit is not finely touched  
To produce the lyrics that nature lends  
Like a thrifty goddess clouded in the glory of her  
creator!

Under the greenwood tree  
No birds sing and the sedges have shrivelled  
In the ancient lake that nourished many plants!

Under heavens watch  
I see horrid warnings  
I see starved lips  
I see withered sedges from the lake  
I see no birds sing a fairy's song  
I see wild eyes searching aimlessly!  
I see solitude!

## **Deceit**

Senorita Senorita  
The first time you came  
You brought red roses  
And spread them gently under my nose;  
Searching my eyes with deeper gaze.

Senorita Senorita  
The second time you came  
You brought perfume  
And scented my body  
With white jasmine  
Caressing it with your long fingers!

Senorita Senorita  
The third time you came  
You kissed my cheeks  
And coated my lips with your saliva.  
I became numb and stunned!  
As what I love, I may never like too much!

Senorita Senorita  
The last time you came  
You touched my balls and vowed to be mine

**Deceit**

I gave you my heart and money!  
You got me drunk and vanished!  
Only to reap me of my heart!  
What's this?  
Is it love?  
For whose sake all the vows be?



## **A Phone Call**

A phone call  
The lady said to the man.  
And I will reveal your secrets to the world!  
I am the woman from the streets  
Whose heart has been butchered.

One phone call  
And I will cast out your sins  
And spread them on the roof top!  
Money is my joy, my life, my crown!

I am the lady in her prime  
Who has been shunned by a ragging poverty  
Accompanied by pity and ruth for years.  
So I cannot shun the broad way that oils my mouth  
with food.

Candy is sweet  
This you said!

Sugar is nice  
This you said!

***A Phone Call***

Honey is the best  
This you said!

Capturing my heart with your fancied talk  
And shined me with your hot embrace.  
You waked and fled  
No money! No love!

## **Confusion**

Rose-cheeked Papali said,  
The king is dismayed and full of discord.  
I will catch his conscience  
And play the harps to sooth his sorrows.  
The king said,  
I want to die  
Let me have the song  
That gallops fury away  
And springs rhythms in joyous syllables.

Rose-cheeked Papali said,  
Rest in soft peace and listen to the crickets sing!  
There, no falling houses thunder on your head  
No anguish fever dew on your forehead  
There, you sojourn alone!  
Alone, alone on the cold land side!

## **A Valediction to Dolly**

*(for Professor Dolly Chinwe Ekpunobi)*

She came in silken grace  
A maiden clouded with white lily  
And garlands of stars upon her head!

Pretty Dolly she was called,  
A simple maiden of honour and beauty  
Decorated by heaven's beaming gaze of lights  
And a simple heart laced with virtues  
Uncommonly seen amongst men!

Dolly's beauty swept men away  
And lured them into a deep sleep  
Leaning together with parted lips naked and bare!

She carried herself with uncommon grace  
A genius under nature, under God,  
Ennobled with unconscious love and reverence  
Till the sun declined a radiant shot on her!

***A Valediction to Dolly***

She sat on a low bench waiting for the sweet hour  
Upon the silent path with no visible shades.  
She prayed more and talked less  
When that dark hour came;  
Dolly embraced her end in joyful ecstasy!

She now sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is there!  
So calm and still!  
So still and calm!  
A silvered image of tranquility!

## **(Songs of Liberation)**

*Day by day  
Night by night  
That day will come  
When Africa will be one  
That will speak our freedom*

**Ifi Amadiume**

**“One Uhuru”- *Ecstasy***

## **Now's the Time**

Now's the time

Time for action and less speech

Time to mend the fallen fences once admired by other  
builders

Time to rebuild the houses now turned shanties

Time to rebuild narrow unkempt and meandering paths  
called roads

Time to cleanse the cities of rubbish piled high on the  
streets.

Now's the time!

Time to separate the wheat and the chaff

Time to create a huge space between good and evil

Time to create happiness and spaces between hatred  
and love

Time to be more open than closed!

Now's the time!

Time for change and chance in a haunting world as  
fierce as death

Full of strife that never falls amiss

Swallowing everything due for man!

***Now's the Time***

Now's the time!

Time to change powers that chase men as preys  
Time to bridge the endless gap between the poor and  
rich

Now's the time!

There's not much time to waste with all those ills  
which haunt us while we breathe.

The speedy eager chases stealing men's pace and  
breathe panting to die.

Now's the time!

Time for mirth and fun!

Don't let the scoundrels screw you!

For life's just a few drops

To live in hell and die a first death!



## **Xenophobia**

Damn you all! You dark brothers stink!  
You came to the South gate and built your tent there!  
You hypnotized our girls just like the sun with your  
purple-brown coloured faces  
Only to burn their hearts with steaming hot words!  
You stole our lands and took up our jobs!  
You left us idle staggering day and night in the streets  
like the whoreson dog!  
And now, you dark brothers, it is time  
For us to tell the truth to you!  
To tell the story of a second crime committed against  
the South!

We want a hero: an uncommon want,  
To tell this new story; not like Nelson Mandiba  
Mandela  
Who fought the white cabals with wits and long  
speeches  
Only to bring in an ancient friend that sticks closer than  
a brother.  
Therefore, we need a hero to take our ancient friends  
away  
Far away to their lands before the devil possesses us  
again to cut them open!

---

***Xenophobia***

Chase all the dark brothers away and let us reclaim our land!

A land slowly passing into nothingness; full of drug barons and street merchants!

Chase them away and let us reclaim our land!

They scrape for the ambiguous and dig for the profound in every corner of our streets,

Because Money is their master!

They shoot and kill leaving dead bodies littered everywhere,

Because Money is their master!

Away you black brothers from the west away!

Away from our lands!

Our souls are full of discord and dismay!

For our spirits are fiercely touched

And the madness in us must not be cured until you leave!

Our madness speaks volumes!

Our madness trespasses beyond friendship

Where the conscience becomes deadened each passing day!

## **Zenophobia**

Words are indeed strong, and a small drop of words  
makes the mind weak!

Words fall like dews upon mighty hearts, and produce  
a rage that consumes a whole clan!

Words rolling from the mountain-springs in the South  
have plunged us into solitude!

We are now on a wild secluded atmosphere!

And the thought of deep seclusion still stares us in the  
face!

Many years are past; many lengthy year, and again we  
hear

These painful words rolling from the South mountain-  
spring!

“Damn you all! You dark brothers stink!”

We are stunned and pained; and ask each other: what’s  
this?

You cut us open, shot and pushed us to the wall!

You’ve pushed us beyond our limit and we are held  
sore bound!

---

**Zenophobia**

Now's the time to bare our hearts!  
You have threatened us enough!  
Threats of hell and no hopes of paradise!

We are your black brothers!  
Black brothers from the once rich land called the Giant  
of Afra!  
We stood behind you through thick and thin!  
We left our land and enriched yours with our strength  
and talent!  
We married your women to form a stronger bond!  
You left every job for us, and say 'our brothers are  
industrious and stupid!'  
They can help us build our country!

Now, the South stands tall and you want us to leave!  
Oh South brothers! Oh South brother! Cease thy raging  
chants and let us be!  
You chanted in the past against the white rulers; you  
got your freedom!  
You chanted to rule your country; it was granted!  
Now you are chanting for your brothers to leave your  
land!

You have killed us enough!  
You have jailed us enough!

## ***Zenophobia***

Look homeward brothers, now, and melt with ruth!

We have bled enough!

We have bled enough!

Look homeward brothers, now, and melt with ruth!

Look homeward brothers; I say, look homeward  
brothers!

Tomorrow is too fresh to smear one's hand in  
mountainous excreta;

And today paints a dry picture of hapless youths!

But one thing at least is certain- This life flies; so does  
time!

And a bard may chant too often, but not too long!

## **The Voice**

The voice of one crying bitterly is heard in the dark nights.

It is a lamentable time for man!

A head falls- there, there, there...

A second head falls-here, here, here...

A third head falls –there, there, there...

Where the masquerade dances in the dark nights.

The voice of one crying bitterly is heard in the broad daylight.

A plague has befallen the land.

The stream now flows backwards.

The wind blows with no direction.

The cloud fleets uncontrollably and gallops away with such fury and force.

The heart beats randomly leaving an awed man rooted to a spot.

The voice rants and rants!

The voice rants alone in sweat and blood!

The voice breaks constantly ripped by loneliness!

The voice becomes silent and dried-up like the dead leaves in winter streets!

The voice is silent...

The voice is no more...

The voice, the voice...

**The Poet said**

The poet said,  
Let words form muse  
Let the air invoke the future  
To plant in the land crocus and petal.

The poet said,  
There is no way back  
Daylight is cracked  
And night swallows everything.

The poet said,  
Don't let the present shove you down  
Don't let it act like it owns you  
The righteous cannot rot in ignorance  
Life is a damned short loan  
Don't take your chivalrous ornament to the cemetery  
Where strife falls amiss!

## **Arise**

Arise, ye sons of the rising sun!  
The jackals and hyenas are on a spreeing chase,  
To ravage your warrior sons.

The black hyenas howl  
The black jackals howl back in joyful ecstasy.  
They howl in unison,  
Ready to pounce on sight the children of the rising  
sun!  
They dart their tongues into the air waiting patiently  
to eat them alive!

Awake, ye sons of the rising sun,  
And take the mantle with your hand  
For your arms are not weak!

Awake! Do not conceal defeat  
Your fathers' labour must not be in vain!  
Arise, I say arise and take up the mantle!  
You have tarried so long, so long;  
And the spirits of your fathers are ruthlessly restless!



***Arise***

Arise, I say arise!

Arise and do not dread the darkness that covers the sky

Nor the power that made darkness loom over the land.

Many sons were slaughtered in the past,  
Many children hungered by the lingering wars;  
Yet your fathers' strengths were not crippled  
By the scourge of hate and fear  
Or the guns and knives that mocked their mortal  
bodies.

Arise, I say, arise!

Embrace your language as your strength

The sliver cord binds your language to your heritage;

And unity in an undivided accord pulls down the  
enemy's camp.

Arise, your dreams must not be cut shot

By the mere howling of hyenas

And the continuous howling of the jackals!

Arise and fight for your right and freedom

***Arise***

Snatched in the broad daylight under your fathers'  
watchful eyes.

Arise and let your lordly men hewn strong like an  
ancient rock,

To wrestle the future into their hands.

To stir the looming darkness and clear the clouds!

Arise and stand undivided!

To dismantle and build anew,

For each morning, opportunity-

Like the sun-dawns anew!

Arise! Do not stand and wait!

Put your brains to use

And let your mortal frames

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

At last the sun will rise!

After sunset,

The sun will surely rise!

## **The Dance**

This is not the season to dance  
And roll your waist like the Calabar women  
This dance is a new one  
An alien steps of secret drums  
Hidden in the unseen path of the gods.

This is not the season to dance  
Because happiness has gone on tour  
And laughter lives in exile in an unknown land.  
Where mortals cannot thread.

This is not the season to dance  
For we are in the hands of traitors  
Who are a swarm of mysterious bees  
Haunting daily the threatened  
In dry secluded atmosphere!

This is not the season to dance  
For war looms on the surface  
And our leaders have grown wings  
To flee our land if war afflicts!

***The Dance***

This is not the season to dance  
But a season to seek refuge  
In the bosom of unity  
Which gathers more legs  
In the lyrical eloquence of the gong,

This is not the season to dance  
But a season to invoke an eagle  
Possessed by the gods  
To wrestle power from generals' hands  
And disrobe them like mad men  
In the middle of the road!

This is not the season to dance  
But a season to fight the war  
Red-eyed without fluttering.  
To seize and salvage our land!

This is not the season to dance  
But we must dance day or night  
To gather strength and battle the tide  
In order not to drown on the high sea.

We must dance  
We must dance  
Till we speak freely of freedom.

## **Accolades**

I have seen men pouring accolades like rain  
On robbers who emptied the public treasury  
And defiantly stood to placate the raging people.  
A cheerful leader, a worthy man  
A man from Jupiter  
A god-sent  
The Honourable!

I have seen men pouring accolades like rain  
On die-hard prostitutes who roam the streets  
Naked and shameless without guilt or remorse  
A beautiful lady  
A free giver  
A honey pot  
A Bae!

I have seen men pouring accolades like rain  
On yahoo boys who steal people's money without  
mercy  
And divert their hard earned currency in fraudulent  
transactions  
A sharp boy  
A correct guy  
A money bag  
A Malay guy!

***Accolades***

I have seen men pouring accolades like rain  
On all shades of ills and vices  
Driven by quest for money or vanity!

No accolades for virtues  
No accolades for good deeds!  
No accolades for good people  
No accolades, no accolades!

## **Sunset in Afra**

At sunset, Afra is not weakened  
At dusk, she will not be silenced by the fractured moon  
Which staggers lazily in the fast darkening skies.  
When crickets plod the sleeping paths  
In songlike voices  
Seeking to be heard!

Let their voice be heard  
Let their voice not be muted  
To utter the deepest secrets of the nights  
An untold tales silenced by the hands of time.

At sunset, Afra will not die  
She will live out the darkness  
And shade her scales like a python  
Fresh and renewed,  
She will rise tall and stand.

Afra will find the black goat before dusk  
Afra will survive  
Afra will rise again  
Afra will surely rise again!

## **To my Country**

It is enough!  
Enough of these killings and bombings!

It is enough!  
There is a feeling of fear in the air.

It is enough!  
Our land is now soaked with blood.  
Blood of the innocent, blood of the guilty,  
Spilled maliciously on the surface of the earth.

It is enough!  
These killings have taken our joy away  
And put our economy in downward slope  
That our country now becomes  
So open to the bare world.

It is enough!  
We are determined  
For no joyless form shall control our mortal lives  
anymore!  
Nor take our strength for granted!



***To my Country***

It is enough!  
We are determined,  
To take the future with our hand,  
The hand of unity,  
Heralding a new dawn!  
A new song!

It is enough!  
Power must change hand to spring love  
And shun malice, hatred, and anguish!

Power must change hand,  
To bring in a good desired change.  
A change borne out of goodwill!  
A change conceived in an unembellished womb,  
Natural womb that holds true to God's creation!

## **Sweet Spirit**

Sweet spirit from the east side  
Raised a sweet hurrah  
And my passion is sweetly spirited  
That I now imagine things

I must seize this moment  
To salvage and burst afresh  
To rekindle the dying fire in me

I must gather strength to walk the stage  
In order not to drown in agony  
And drench in sorrowful compassion

I must battle and rescue me  
I must lean on the sweet spirit  
To teach me how best to fight

Ooh sweet spirit of the east  
Fall afresh on me!

***Sweet Spirit***

Agent of history  
Unravel untold secrets!

Oooh sweet spirit of the east  
Renew my strength in joyful ecstasy  
Never to exist in vacant nothingness!

## **Dread at Dusk**

At dusk, I fear that I may cease to be  
Upon the earth's starred scary zone

Up up in the cloudy skies decorated with stars  
I see shadows of light on high romance

As I trace the silver lines twinkling  
I relish deeply the faery power of creation

When I behold the darker part of twilight  
A darkish colour clouded my memory  
Like shadows with strong magic hands

There, I stand alone on the shore of the world  
Lonely and forlorn like a full-ripened grain  
Abandoned in the quietness of the field

***Dread at Dusk***

At dusk, solitude beckons  
My pen gleans the loitering darkness  
On books piled high on the shelves

There I pen my fears in the charactery of my sadness  
Till sleep drifts me to unconscious malady.

## **My Song**

My song will climb the ladder of wisdom  
To feed the ailing crowd with thought provoking lyrics  
And sweeten the ears with a honey-tune.

I will let the air hear the chorus of my song  
To awaken the muted in broad daylight  
To fill up the space between the skies and the lands.

My song will climb the ladder of change  
To turn back the hands of change  
And let the villain taste the pain of wickedness.

I will recruit my song to fight this war  
With ten thousand musical chords  
To invoke the musical strains  
Like armed men firing bullets into the crowd.

My song will gather the waves of history  
To tell the truth betrayed by a clan  
So terrible the lie, so terrible the deceit!

***My Song***

My song will travel all roads  
For I have seen people scampering for shelter  
On a road where four foot paths meets.

My song will climb every wall  
To greet every homestead  
Like a nightingale,  
I will rain my song as accolades  
Like dews sprayed on the grasses.

## **(Songs of Hope)**

*Soon enough  
Between the false paths  
And the road untried  
Between wish and will  
We shall awaken*

**Odia Ofemimun**

**“For B.J”- *The Poet Lied***



## **Hope**

Yes! Our hope will not wither  
Our passions are knitted together in unity  
So strong and true!

No vague ignorance can strike us again  
No beast can swallow us again  
No acid rain can burn us again

Behold, our new hope is rising  
Our armies are of new order  
Daring against all odds

Indeed, our hope has not faded  
It has not been squeezed out  
Like crumpled orange rind

Our hope is alive  
Rising, rising, rising...

## **Echoes**

Here we are echoing our new song  
Many stuffed men on dry ground

Here we are standing on withered branches  
Many voices echoing the new song

Here we are singing  
For what we believe

Our hope is not dead  
It will grow into a star

A light for our future generation  
A guide for our children!

## **Sacrifice**

The sun is sinking fast  
The day is dying fast  
But my hope is still awake!

Without a second thought  
My soul would yield  
This one sacrifice;  
To save the souls of thousands alive.

One sacred sacrifice I would give  
Before abiding in the breast of the earth;  
Dead to self, and dead to death

To keep one sacred hope alive  
One divine hope  
Hope of eternal freedom!

## **Flag of Dawn**

On the hills of life  
The flag of dawn appears  
Signaling a new order  
Proclaiming the day is near;

The day light will shine  
In darkness and burst forth

That day, all wrong will be revealed  
That day, justice shall stand straight  
And every hurt healed.

That day, righteousness and peace  
Shall walk the earth bare with a sea of glory  
Spreading from pole to pole unto earth's remotest part.

Surely, that day will come  
When the flags of dawn  
Will stand on golden sand

***Flag of Dawn***

That day will come  
When our land will be delivered  
From error's chain.

That day will come!  
I say, that day will come.  
When the land will be calm!

## **Vows**

Sing, o people!  
Our vows are yielding hope  
Our prayers are yielding answers!

Through this weary pilgrimage  
We are a succeeding race  
Under man, under God!

Sing, o people!  
Our wandering footsteps are guided  
Our prayers are not in vain  
For our Great watchman  
Towers above our affliction.

Sing, aloud!  
I say, sing aloud!  
Let your hope be rekindled  
To save your souls from wrong  
To save you from the snares of evil

**Vows**

Sing aloud!  
I say, sing aloud  
And press onward with better hope  
For life's duty has just begun  
To win this race more bravely.

Sing aloud!  
I say, sing aloud  
Faint not nor fear  
For the future will win  
To tell the tale in the unseen future!

## **No More Trembling**

No more trembling  
We are now strengthened with mystic powers  
Without a veil on our face

No more trembling  
Even when joy sinks before us lowly  
Surrounded by thorns and scorpions

No more trembling  
When mystery surrounds us  
Piercing our bonded hearts deeply

No more trembling  
For we do not fear again!

We are no more earthly minded  
And our service makes us glad and free!



## **Exultation**

With shouts of exultation,  
I applaud you all, Children of light  
Swallowed by the thick darkness of the night  
Day by day, day by day.

With songs of exultation,  
I applaud your determination  
To stand so thick and strong  
And bear the burden of the day.

With the lyrics of the flute,  
I applaud your strength in labour  
Which ends with sunset rays  
For rest to rule the weary.

With the sound of drums,  
I raise the song of harvest  
To separate the wheat and tares  
To cast the tares into the fire  
To salvage our fields!

***Exultation***

With claps of exultation,  
I urge you to raise a song of hope  
To remain faithful to that final harvest-hour  
Ripening with great dreams!