

Jide Ajidahun

(Department of English Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State
Nigeria)

1.

Because I am Black

I can't breathe
Because I am black
I can't breathe
Because I am in chains
Only the Whites can breathe
Because they are Whites
But when Eledua made me
He put precious life in me
Which the Whites now crush
Like the bones of Christmas chicken
In broad daylight
Behind the devil's tyres
Because I am Black
Oh! My colour! My crime!
This Blackness! My albatross!
But the Whiteness is their madness.
I'm the most hated
Because I'm Black
Breathing is reserved for the Whites
And death for the Blacks
'As flies to wanton boys'
So are we to the Whites
The Whites breathe
But the Blacks bleed
The Whites walk freely
But the Blacks die freely
George is gone without a Judge

And Floyd is floored
By the cruel knees of the

Monstrous White cops
But I'm Black and comely!
And yet, I'm in shackles
I'm the handiwork of the Almighty
Fearfully made
And wonderfully created
His very express image.
The Excellency of His power
But now, I can't breathe
Because I am Black.

2.

Oh Pius!

Pius, loved by all
And mourned by all
Your pen was mightier than sword
But weaker than death
You hoped to fly back home
On the eagle's wing
Alas! You flew home
On the Ethiopian's flying fangs.
Your last flight! Ha ba!
The muses refused
To save you, Pius.
As they watched
Your dismemberment
When you were not Pentheus
The piety of Pius could not appease
The cruel messengers of death
But the Lamb will decorate you
In eternity
Pius was lavishly endowed by Eledua
But wantonly downed by Esu Laalu
Polished. Pruned . Polite.
Comely. Lovely. Stately.
Courtly. Royal.
Smart and Canny.
All gone like the unwanted stench.
Pius! Oh Pius!
You peeped into the world
And made your marks indelible
Imprinted on the sands of time

And hurried back to the world beyond

Like Abiku

The elephant is gone!

Without bidding us farewell

Without a song

We groan over your demise

And wail uncontrollably

We sigh but you are gone.

Omo Adesanmi!

Oko Olumuyiwa!

Baba Tise!

Adieu!

3.

Not now, dear Lord

Not now, dear Lord
Your message, yet undelivered
Your books, yet unwritten
Lost souls, yet unreached
Your tabernacle, yet unbuilt
Many grounds uncovered
Empty hands to show my Saviour?

Not now, dear Lord
Give me more time
To write the books
To deliver your words
To utter the divine utterance
To win more souls
And build you a house.
Like Solomon did.
But not with more wives
And concubines
So my heart can stay with you.

Not my desire
To stay a day longer
In this empty place, Lord
I long for my glorious crown
In exchange for this exhausting cross

Just more time, dear Lord
Not as I will but as You will.

4.

A Requiem for Sam Praise

SAM is gone!

Without waiting for SAN

Our mouths are stilled without any Praise.

Mangled in the rubbles

Ravaged by the devouring metals

Blown away by the moving caravan on the road.

Why should the calm SAN be taken away by the stormy dragon?

Why should the quiet SAM be dismembered by the hysteria of DAN?

We grieve over your irredeemable loss.

Our hearts sigh

We mourn your sad exit.

We moan your tragic departure

And we groan uncontrollably.

Our feet quake, SAM.

Our hands quiver.

Our hearts flutter.

Our mouths wither.

Our steps tremble!

So, you are gone, SAM?

Without any farewell.

Death, you are cruel!

You took away SAM in his prime.

With dreams unfulfilled.

With potentials untapped.

You plucked his ivory in the morning

And roasted his petals

You turned his hood into raffia
His wigs into rags
And deflowered him in the debris
Without his permission.

Objection, my Lord!
But the gods were not listening.
And SAM is sentenced innocently
To the early grave
Without any charges
Without any trial
SAM is gone.
Ah! Ah! Ah!
We are pained.

And SAM will be missed.
But the PRAISE will come back to SAM
On Ayipada day
The Resurrection Morning.

That he spoke about.
Goodnight, SAM!

5.

My Teacher

Momma saw the future
And taught me
Very early in life
How to cook
Because she knew one day
I would be married
To a wife who has no kitchen

Papa saw tomorrow
And taught me
Very early in life
How to look away from apples
Because he knew one day
I would be happily married
To a wife who has no breasts

And God taught me
Very early in life
How to be deaf
Because He knew one day
I would be happily married
To a nagging wife.

6

The Year is Dying

The year is dying
The rivers are drying
The grass is withering
The leaves are falling
The sun is scorching
Our skins are shrinking
The aged are groaning
The wind is blowing
The dusts are gathering.

Filling our nostrils.
And painting our hairs.
Beclouding our roads
Decorating our faces.
And our tunnels filled
With human wastes.
Waiting for the rain.
The waste disposer
And soon the erosions.
And the flooding.
And soon we are homeless.

The year is dying
Our forest is barren
The trees are felled secretly
For firewood
To give local flavour to our delicacies
Because the oil is for the rich.
The trees are felled secretly
And for quick business
Soon our forest, our desert.

And the animals too.

The hunters' fire.

And the bush burning

Hunting for meat.

Burning our farms

Blistering our homes.

Because of meat.

And nature suffers.

And then the booming

Of the fireworks.

And their pollutions

Deafening our ears.

Pounding our hearts.

Congesting our lungs.

And soon death.

The carnage on the roads,
The dismemberment of human bodies.

Oh the year is dying!

And must we die with the year?

Soon, the cattle egrets will be here.

Heralding the coming of the cattle.

The poor man's farm

The greener pasture for the cattle.

Soon the herdsmen at dagger drawn

With the peasant farmers.

And then the blood.

And then the blood

And the travails,

And the travails,

Soon, another year.

And life goes on.

7.

My Son

Before the altar,
Go to the crèche and learn,
And to the old people's home.
When thou has learned
Thou can consider getting married.
When thou art married,
Prepare for war.
Be thou strong!
And gird your loins.
Let bread be on your right hand.
And wine on your left.
Corn on your table.
And oil on your head.
Let your candle be lit always
Your golden vials be full of odours.
Your cistern with running waters.
And be ravished with her loving roes.
Let wisdom be your sister.
And understanding your kinswoman.
Hold your rod at all times.
And let your eyes be single.
Drink a little honey.
And plant rose.
Enjoy its fragrance.

And endure its thorns.

8.

Goodbye, Ranganathan!

I enrolled in your academy

Two decades ago.

I became your disciple.

Mastered your doctrines

And skilled in your craftsmanship

I sought wisdom

And I found it.

I pursued knowledge and counsel.

Hume skilled me in the schedules

And the literary warrant

And Bliss coached me the entries rules

And Moy about law

Cutter schooled me the cutter number

Oh Ranganathan!

You taught me

The law of impartiality

But they showed me unfairness.

I knew your law of parsimony

But your children are prodigious

And gluttonous.

I like your law of symmetry

But your house now a cemetery

I wrote on the sun for them to see

It was published in the sky

And on the fast moving moon

The house of knowledge

Now the abode of fools

They are cruel and brutish

They despise knowledge

And abhor the truth

And turned the schedules
 Into schemes
 And into guiles
 And cutter number
 Into hamper
They make a merchandize of knowledge
 Your brass is turned into dross
Your shelves now stack vanities
 Your guides now gods.
 Your carrels now
 Caressing gadgets
 Strangers are here!
 They milk the vendors
 And fleece their clients
 The Trojan horse
 Has invaded your house
 Where integrity is vice
 And dishonesty is virtue.
We part tonight, Ranganathan.
 To meet no more

 I am gone Ranganathan!
 I now find comfort
 In the Poetics of Aristotle
I find solace in the Odes of John Keats.
 I will sing in the orchard of Chaucer
And revel in the sonnets of Shakespeare
 Goodbye, Ranganathan.
 We will meet no more.

9

Locomotive Sepulchre

The locomotive sepulchre
Dogged my feet
Like a sweeping flood
And scrubbed the hungry road
Of every moving object
My heart panted
It stretched forth away
Every automobile like a wrapper
And painted the road with blood
The waves of the wicked raged
The gate of death was opened
And I saw the doors
of the shadow of death
I sighed
I moaned
Saw the carving coffin
And the commendation service waiting
And the pall bearers
But I escaped
Like a bird from the snare of the fowler
Because He kept me.

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