



A POETRY CHAPBOOK

NIGHTCLUB

WITH

DOGS

Shitta Faruq Adémólá

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DOGS**

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POEMS

Shitta Faruq Adémólá



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Praises for “Nightclub with Dogs”

“Nightclub With Dogs is a stunner, a page turner, and a powerful collection. In the chapbook, Faruq displays a thingmajig of adroit craftsmanship. If I ran out of phone space, this is definitely not one of the books I’d delete.

—**Taofeek Ayeyemi**, *Author of Tongueless Secrets*

“In his characteristic use of daring and powerful imageries, Shitta Faruq weaves for us the romantic dimensions possible within the perplexities of self and country. The poems are so imbued with fresh perspectives and representations that they strike the mind with very lasting impressions. An intensely beautiful collection!”

—**Ayokunle Samuel Betiku**, *Writer*

“Nightclub with Dogs is a busy intersection where poems, deft and subtle in style, shoulder the weight of delicate subject matters with an elegance that is certain to keep the heart entertained till the last sentence.”

—**Michael Emmanuel**, *writer & editor*.

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Introduction

I give thanks to Almighty Allah for being the first source of my inspiration from the onset. My mum, my siblings, my friends and loved ones.

My poems come from what I go through. Life hasn't been easy for me and my family, and I believe in my pen as my companion. It's no doubt that the metaphors you'd find swimming in the ocean of this book covers nothing but grief, of a boy looking for fulfilment, for a bright star.

I'd love my readers to reflect on the poems in this book, and not feel remorseful, but to find out every beautiful thing that'd come out from fire. Every poem is an exploration, a journey. So, sit, take a coffee, and sip little by little as you enter my world.

How to find a home...

you count your steps— the sand does not know how to be cruel.

you bury your head in the beak of a bird

& tell it to sing.

you vanquish fire & smoked tyres & a boy's mucus circling his nose

& a girl's leg in the middle tasting the sun.

& here, in this poem,

the home you want to find is a space between the teeth of

torn maps.

a country sexing the citizen on Christmas eve as a mole of abandoned fish in a plate of rich delicacies.

& a stupid whore & a stupid leper

& a blue boy narrating the hand of his country

in the clitoris of a lady and her mother, and her mother's mother.

here, love is a packet of smoke near a street, housing a flat

stall where black tyres & broken bottles

pay homage to themselves

on the hands of hoodlums.

you cannot garner the pride to sit on a mother's lap, because

you have forgotten the way she taught you how to

spell your name in your language, how to prepare that delicacy

your grandma once showed you in the kitchen of mud walls.

you forgot how to say "Good day Mother" in the language

your country has distanced you from. your country was so stupid to feed you leaves,

dry and hot the way your mouth tasted when you first ate a live coal.

you, a little poor boy, does not know the way home because

the map to your home is in the spaces of your country's teeth,

& your country is stupid again to not show you the gate to her teeth.

this poem was holy when i first entered it, like the openings of a Bible,

but War! oh what war has marked on the flesh of it is

a body of ghost hunting a peaceful night,

& i have forgotten my way toward this little ellipsis.

When The Hibiscus Is Not Purple

i cut a rose in april blue tulips fall may.
lillies, when august told earth a love story.
to think of this ritual is bringing the earth's crust
on a soft palm— folding it like a wrap of pap, heated during harmattan.
on earth, we are barely gorgeous as light.
 we carry rifles under our palms, so that
even on this playground, the light is kissed with the
blows of darkness. i always try to be beautiful
before a mirror: my room is a portrait of walls; walls
lacking the confidence of breathing air into the chest of a
burning city— a lizard's peppery head.
a boy walks to me;
skin peeled off his flesh; his head a dump of hives
for the gathering of flies. on his tongue was a dragon's fist:
 my uncle told me that is how his body receives
the cardio-therapy of grief. i hold the mirror once more:
what i see is my body dancing towards a furnace for the
beautiful sacrifice of burning; the boy cupping anguish
 in large gulps. sunday. the last time the leaves
were wet was in my dreams; the lilies were
not the yellow rhythms of beauty. anymore.

lord, give me the audacity to be
beautiful before this burning flame.

In most poems I write, I try to let my burden unwrap into an old Qur'an and recite Kur'siyu to the leaves, so that they stop breathing loss.

in this particular offering of carrying winds for burning,
smoking a particular part of a tree,
there's always a reopening. i admire a smooth skin
for one thing: it exposes your constellation
so bright, so that
you are a version of a star and your moon body
admires the night as usual.

i want to really try a logic: become a demi god
and sit on a throne; and become
a seafarer; and hold every crab
in a soft soil from breath; and manifest unripe mangoes
before they learn how to be sweet.

there are offerings that do not dissolve into
sourness—what story? Google says it's a rate of
2%. that's why i'm not so audacious enough to call
a fox a fox.

i love it when mum calls me a bastard. it's always the renaming

of an open wound under a fiery sun.

there's such beauty, such joy. you'd know how to extinguish fire

during a recession of elation. i am writing

this poem of grief to God. God is so beautiful sometimes he

opens his arms for the birds in you to sprout. i try to look for

joy in the book of his palms: i try to read,

i try to hiccup,

i try to heal,

I, I, i try to say hello, God, what miracle do you

manifest again?

little bird, little song.

i pick words from the mouth of a sharp night
when beautiful stars stood in their gardens of green—not falling,
not falling like the days when beauty was not beauty.
i imagine dragons and the fire in their mouths—the fire, the light
of your face when you stood by the kitchen sink
preparing gizzard and rice.
how, we started this love like a star up and another star up.
like a moon oiling the sex of two lovers with the
palms of its skin. this your beautiful face,
with snow eyes, teeth, an array of cowries
on a fresh palm... dear lover, give me all, give me all.
i'm not the covetousness of death eating the bodies of
cracked souls every single day,
the hand of a beast like impotent miracles; miracles fat
like my left thumb, miracles big like
a body of rats eating the noodles in our room.
give me all, *Afíníké*, your lips of fish, like iced tea,
i am never the deceit of a tortoise. give me all,
your body patterned into beauty no eyes would wave by.

portrait of a depressed boy with salt as tear drops.

i am not going to tell you too
much of my grief, tonight. i am entering this kind
of poem with a broken leg and eyes of salt. tonight, do not mock me,
this is what our body becomes when our
hands do not touch the ear.
on a green land and
green boots, i do not know how to find beauty,
especially during nights, the colour of a virgin's defilement, like
this one i am trapped in. i am tired,
so tired i am feeling like running away from this poem
into heaven i don't really know if heaven
is what people have painted it to be. well,
we do give trials to the unbottling of a glass soft drink with
our molars. heaven is what i feel like entering,
so that, eventually, this bondage like a thrust would fly
out like failed miracles. i really do need to bury a little of my tears, dear
God.
dear God, i am now facing you with my knees, bruised, kissing
earth, a hand of distress. look into my transparent
eyes. i am tired of this bondage these people are offering me
like an atonement. dear God, dear God, it is only
your palms that can water my wounds a Nile. my wounds hot like the
combustion of

of this poem of fire. touch me, God, touch me, God.

i really do need you to touch every part of me for healing. i

am willing to pass through this red sea to a beautiful promise land.

A Boy Learns How to Pluck Ill-luck from the Tree of His Country's Garden.

your country is a Sabre-toothed Tiger with fire
as food: If fire is food, its end product is a flame of
hungry predators thirsty for preys.
You are a boy by the roadside. Your country is chasing your dreams.
You do not know how to run fast—your mother didn't teach you how.
You drink the fire your country defecated. Sorry, it gives you
a sore, [sores] deep like Nile and its forbears.
The fang of your country's original fierceness turns you
a girl that got pregnant in shame. You run. You don't know how to.
Your country catches you by the arm.

you don't know how to pluck ill-luck,
but when your country draws the map that leads to many places
on the wall of your heart,
your songs turn sour, and you run, you run— dry leaves begin to fall.

A Physiotherapy with A Bird

First assignment: Underline the words that describes you
my father has a hunchback for beauty
gunshot in Borno—the girls do not know how to smile
last summer, like before, the sun is an assault in the mouth of a dwarf
Jamal threw a rock at my pelvis
Simi wanted to love, so she sang *Complete me*
this is a type of poem for ghosts
sometimes, when i try to cry, i am often betrayed by my tears

Second Assignment: Use those words to form the mouth of a poem:
the language of our grief is a hunchback
with the beauty of a gunshot. like,
the sun is an assault in the mouth of a dwarf.
you throw a rock at God; spit at Him;
tell him why His ghost is the constant recycle of
your tears.

Third Assignment:
go to your lover; show her
the scars on the walls of your skin and sleep

Google Maps

at lesson: church rats chop books,
turn in their looks light; open a dairy

and become milk of plight; flood
a certain gravity of weightlessness
until the testimony

of a leper becomes more leprous;
tenuous along a long array of cripples;

ripples the ghosts shook like a rock with
hands a battalion of war.

a sun is shining—callous like a python.
a coin has two sides: my tongue of sour songs;

bird, a bird stupid enough to perch on
a bleak roof with a wing the therapeutic

of an accursed.

church sermons, and i am still
an unrepentant child of the world.

i will pick a flower in a garden of thorns
i will find the route to my foot.

cut me wide, i am your festive ram.

oh, holy knife,
pierce me!

feed my bones
your gentle
touch of piety

on this ground
of debauchery.
on this mountain,

oh, holy knife,
on this mountain
of hot tongues,

pierce me well!
feed my bones your
most beautiful
threnodies

i have touched

the mouth of God

on a rack he has
placed it, gently,
with a soft palm.

i, have slapped
a cheek. cheek
so pure a white

garment of sanctity.
rip me with
a palm a
bone of bottles,

marked on a little
boy's skin with
nudity so pure.

cut me wide, oh knife
i am not just a
festive ram.

To The Man Who Called Mother 'Whore'.

sorry, man. it wasn't my fault. *Ours.*

it was the runny water that caused the pollution,

and this spring in my eyes is not enough

to quench the thirst

that creeps in me.

don't worry, but I tell you,

she's not a whore, but a worn jacket on the backs of fat men,

a spider building its web for honey

and yellow. yes, a pale-yellow butterfly singing in a faint voice

for the wind to tell the world all it has.

yes. I will tell the world what it has:

my father says if I come to his grave, and pin him tongues

of prayer. he might

come over to draw your beards and tell you to shout louder.

my new way of naming grief

my street in Lagos does not have a very good
mouth for feeding a lover beautiful kisses.
we gather *dey* here for our level.
for this under bridge *wey* we *dey* catch cruise,
mosquito *dey* wire person bite *wey* hot like say *na* fire.

i didn't go to a school here. you don't go to school
when your father's pocket is a well dried of water,
when even your mother wants to feed the pots in your kitchen
the warmth of fresh bean sauce,
the big rats have turned themselves the owners of the territory.
and these unpainted walls are peeling like dried mucus from a
little boy's nose. *i no dey*
go school, na life for street
dey make me form big boy, na him dey carry me go big level.

you are never ashamed of the retelling grief has marked on your forehead.
well, na life. no person fit catch him power.
from day one your father's soul entered a new flesh
in earth's skin, to the new markings of its long fingers
on his fragile body,

*you tell God say make him no touch you,
make him leave you for the level wey you gather dey.*

soldier ants and birds fall on your tongue,
you pour fire like spring from each corner of your mouth,
you tell God again; this new way of calling
grief a streaking fictional sex story
is not your fault.

don't mind so much, my Nigerian English.

In The Name of Lazarus

And You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than this.

—Mark 12:31

a spring,

bullet betrays the gun powder.

the animal in you cries,

like a new born.

you escape hell,

death does not care for

you the way you care for it.

you are a rainbow,

splinters. you splinter

like a tree. like rain,

you sex the earth—

you forget to pray—

to read your bible,

to master the royal law.

this is how i cry.

- i. grief is a bastard
- ii. death is a beautiful heartbreak
- iii. a brown soil is like a tree
- iv. it swallows a boy's flowers
- v. when i grieve, i'm not me anymore
- vi. when i sink, i'm not me anymore
- vii. tragedies— a hard nut— a broken jar
- viii. grief is a bastard
- ix. death is a beautiful heartbreak
- x. it won't tell when it would visit your skin.

to make use of water

after Safia Elhillo

i begin by not diluting, the first thing i forget

is the yorùbá word for *Oríire* the english word for inflation and

[is this a success?] the yorùbá word for *ìrìnàjò* the english word for loss & journey

the yorùbá word for *mo sá fún e tó* the english word

for running. & I'm not a [stupid boy].

mark the song on my lips.

i am not stupid, and atlantic here didn't get my tongue—

it only rips it into the tears my father could not mop dry.

it only does burn the cartridges on my tongue, that the songs

i want to sing fails my throat.

that the map I draw to lead me home gets broken.

i do not dissolve / I swim /

i want to go home...

i drown / because last night, when i learnt how to swim,

i didn't master it/. Do not mind me, i'm just a slow learner.

the only song i knew was swimming into loss

& a gravity of scattered teeth.

i want to go home...

Glossary

Oríire: Yorùbá word for Success

Ìrìnàjò: Yorùbá word Journey

Mo sá fún e tó: I Yorùbá word 've given you enough space. (A clause for running)

letter to Boy

rain dropped like atomic bombs // from the mouth of // of a tree // war
was in our chests // we carried artilleries on our palms // we exhumed
what we swallowed // from our green bodies // & like a saviour // we
plucked // the blood in us // into a cow's skin // dear Boy // yesterday
// we didn't know the maps leading // to our hearts // like small shards of
bottles // our voice broke into the relic of a defeated warrior // we cried
// hoping to see the miracles of brokenness //...

... mother has always gulped into my ears,
that a sour heart has hope of sweetness.

on a moonlight,
she spoke of a broom stick & a wind -

a broom is a fragile wind if it does not have
the palms of its brothers

along the river of its waist.
she spoke of the war that kissed us yesterday.

dear Boy,
a war is a happy ride if a brother is
another brother's brother,

if a laughter is another laughter's laughter.

sometimes, when i look at this poem,

i resuscitate my memory into the water.

i see a fish & a fish —

when i see the fish, i drink my

mother's breast, and go home.

home is in the throat of a dove.

a brother is making a house for a bird with

his left leg. a sister is walking down the

stream for evening water.

a wife is on her husband's lap,

tendering her affection to him.

sometimes, when i look at the wars

we have seen,

i do not panic, because, here,

a brother is another brother's brother.

&

we do not label our scars by ourselves—we
pour them into the wind.

poem for a bullet.

tomorrow is Christmas. that means a chicken's feather
will suffer the breaking of dead leaves
i am going to offer it.

last Christmas; hot, a burning wall, a mud house with no
roof, the lady, heavy in the front and flaccid at the back,
that father brought home when he was high.

he tells me. *She is the new refuse dump.*

my mother, rivers floating into her blue eyes, holding her
wrapper like a costly brick.

the *Chicken*, a war stories where the hero fell by a sword
the mouth of sharp stones.

same last year, i wanted to cook a dinner for a witch - witches, here,
are our Mothers. a mother is a second god in my fatherland,
and once your fingers enter their eyes, you would not know why
you keep doing and losing things.

i took a salt, poured heavy measurements in the bowls of the
clay pot. I never learnt how to cook for a Mother of silence.

so this chicken is getting bare like a cold floor,

i pour it in an hot water, add more salt, pepper.

forgive me, Christmas Children, if this chicken lacks the rudiments
of your taste, do not strip me too hard, shoot me too hard.

aubade to a dove

my first love letter was in high school— the girl,
gap-toothed, beautiful like the language of the stars.
her voice, a note of a sparrow, cold, like, sweet pomegranate
juice fetched from the forest of bees.
her eyes a large fluorescent ray of light, large like
gulf ball. she is the beauty they say, lies in the hands of
the beholder. it is only in the
sacrifice of our love that kisses
invisible shine.

Renaming my country

let us begin with a bullet a scar, on the
borders of the map my twin brother nurses
every day. in that map, did you remember
the bird? a spring of dead leaves mouthing
each corner of its skin the colour of an
African girl in tears. sometimes, in our
country, we do not get pot-bellied by the
gravity of our sweat. like, a tomb in Borno.
girls do not break their laughters with pride,
and candle light is poured under their tongues
so that they do not become the fulfilment
of the scripture. we are a constellation of
many bleak colours painted in the walls of
meshes that do not suit our destinies.
we are turning into teeth, the fangs of a carnivorous
animal. they say we hunt our preys. invariably, we
are preyed. what sweetness? what, sweetness? what, bitter sweetness
a prey is preyed upon by another prey?
in my country, a dream is sometimes an ugly whore.
i want to really confess before God. on miracles, i'm trying
to be truly beautiful, so that the mouth of this city like

a whale does not swallow my destiny.

i'm in this poem today because i'm

a poet.

i tend to hold my mic like a muezzin, and call people to

the worship of renaming a burning county.

Night Spells

This is Romance, This is romance. This, too is Romance. - **Logan February**

a gathering of moths—candles light a very dirty
dialect of blood spills. see, her. see me
under a duvet. the calibration of
my new way of teething lips
is functioning on her tongue - her tongue.
her sweet tongue sweeter than fanta.
coca cola— her skin glows like summer sun.
she touches me - my legs, ice. my legs the fish.
i am cold and hot.
This is romance, This is romance.
spell this spell on my shivering tongue. oh girl. oh angel.

death, o death

okay, tonight, this new poem
i'm holding not too gently, not
too hard like a baby's soft palm
a cow's milk. i am a heart of memories. i'm trying to

remember that day you came, and saw,
and conquered my father in
a battle of redness. your hand, heavy like
the mouth of that girl that called a boy

names when he approached her by the street. my father's skin, brown— a
sky without a night star,

a memory of bones hidden in the silence of a graveyard.

the way you held his

neck, twisted his throat and poured hot oil

in it. o death, this poem i'm writing to you

does not call for your teeth to show me each sprinkle of

light dropping like harmattan fog— fog white

falling like hard flakes from the corners of it.

i'm trying to be lenient with my hand.

i am not a black boy with a black heart. so, death, this poem is just
an epistle of a bomb blast beside my chest of quietude. here, listen to me,
you are
supposed to be pruned off like flowers
in a garden where moths gather to prey.
your mouth should have been shut off like an old
door, your spittle, o death, die, fall by the powers of
your prowess. die hard, do not visit your death with
a face the smile of a goddess.
o death, i am holding my hands gently
from your bare chest because
a man does not call God a fool.

that day you told father to lie on his tomb, shivers escaping his
face like flies. did you not see
the warmth? the red in his eyes?
the traces he left with heavy footprints?

o death, what mouth pushed you on an embarking.
you weren't so soft in the heart
that day your spears invaded in his
chest, the way a midnight thief
would host a seminar of colours in the house of a chief with the
belly of a pot.

o death, i am writing this poem just for you. that's why I
am trying not to be too poetic. i am writing because
i need to let you be tender like cold water. *the peeling of orange skin.*
you, taking my father
has always made me nurse a wound, o death.

i am hoping your ears are open like a door to a temple,
the spring falling with heavy pours. death, this poem is just a little aftermath
of a city falling
by the heavy touches of your gait.

boundaries

i am an open diary // documenting the skin of scars // like a birthmark //
like tea made by a witch // like a cross // like jesus and his ministry // the
spittle that draw map on his jaw // like, when i open myself like a gap-
tooth in the middle of a love story // i burn // i am crawling on my knees
like a burnt wall // the remnant of my lost battle was crumbs from a
beggar's mouth // like, when i lost a battle against my country's enemy //
my heart split like an open room // searching for spaces in the mouth of a
poem // a poem is the aftermath of an ill-luck // when you lose a battle //
you are not called a loser // you are called a tongue of bruises // and a
defiled girl // like, in most poems, you don't call war war // you call the
son of your mother the scorn of your father // you don't call a boundary
boundary // you call the faith of a muslim boy the fate of a lurid soil //
you do not say a boy is sailing to another life with a cursed hair // you call
him 'stupid' // because when you mean 'stupid', what you thought of //
was the train that couldn't take you home away from a scorpion's bite //
what you call immigration is walking with your tongue // to another
country for another broken war.

poem after alcohol

my new sleeping style is a frog's jump.
i am an after-rain, here, i do not smell with
the mouth of an incense.
i stink. do not mind me too much.
our bodies do not scent after a cold nightclub.
look me in the eye.
there are many routes— do not come here alone. here— my
eyes a constellation of pepper. maps. maps.
i dance and i dance, saunter into mud.
my voice is a voice, thick like the skin of a particular animal.
i walk home. i don't think i know where home is

Paranoia

January, a boy eyes the moon
seductively. Delilah demolishes a home.
Geography says my bones are hidden in a mouth
of a certain television station.
Google says I'm Eighteen. Google does not know
my birthday is in a few days.
My birthday is coming in a few days, and man has
Only a hot phone with boring memes to watch.
I am going to celebrate with no girlfriend, no
Boyfriend. Man does not know who to call on
a January like a tragic slam poetry.
Like, a grandiloquent river side with two lovers— man
Rubbing girl with scarred lips. Man rubbing another girl
With romance. Man loves to *rock* two birds at a time.
Now, when man suffers back ache, man does not write
a happy poem— only aubades to fireflies.
Me, in a box of stones, embroideries a scar on me,
Me, lilies not yellow,
Me, blood not red, me blue in the eye like a bright sky.
Sometimes, me, in a poem like this, a dog eyes me
Its dirty fang—

Eye me one more time— *i ain't got time for your bates.*

I am going to India to see Gaia Raja.

Haemorrhage

so go home / our bodies do not perform prodigies for a bastard / we do not fabricate guns to form teeth / so that it spills our tongues into / the future of a fine leper / at school / i teach my students how to hold a leaf / especially if it's a dry one / at the mosque / i never in the first place prepared for a sujud / because our enemies do not always forget to perch / their arrows hold flowers that prick the neck with poisons / our bodies try to find beauty in a city of ugliness / we call it a research of water on a dry map / how a snail sails home with a broken carapace / i am no longer going to hold my breathe / for a fragrance the beauty of ash anymore / i know of a new ghost in the cemetery / who is audacious enough to embark on a beautiful / travelogue of wearing a new body / in a new skin / so go home / there's reinforcement in recuperation.

cosmology

you always wonder this wound now

has wings.

forgive me first. i want to unmask the fire on

my forehead to kiss earth a holy dance.

a Gordon—

being safe is no longer a name a boy rakes.

the universe begins with darkness. i am not to blame.

my body is the genesis of a new universe.

i am the God: *Let there be a noise at the backyard of*

a garden. Let there be a flower with beautiful scents.

Let this body be more gorgeous.

in the name of a cemetery

night,
a broomstick breaks.
there's a turn around
of silence.
the wind itches my legs
like termites.
i must really write about
the snail—
its sails. i actually want to
play *Temz*. but on nights
like this, we're not mostly given
our meals. i kiss a girl's mouth
with all inventions of lust.
she slaps me,
pours coal on my skin.
a frog croaks in my chest.
i can hear its songs, and
the beauty surrounding its language.
he says *This cup shall not pass*.
on another night, i read poetry. i write
poetry. do not blame my naiveness.
that is what i do to heal.

I hold my phone and write poetry for Mum, because on earth, we do not invent our successes without the magic of their tractors.

mum, i am impotent as a poet if
i don't invent muses for the toils of your hands.
poetry is good if it addresses the right
thing, the way food is delicious with
the complete ingredients.

today, i want to *unbeal* from my sour harmattan lips,
i am turning into a designer poet, so that
i can materialize my expertise just for the
sake of you. i want to re-immortalize my
stanzas like flowers so that you are the radiance of the moon.

mum, at this particular moment, do not brood
over the songs that stick at you with
the flights of a charmed bird. sometimes, we are
a gift, sometimes, a surprise package. sometimes,
we pack our dreams into paradise and
tell God that's what we want
our bodies to become when we
are ugly at the face of a mirror.

do not get tired of picking flowers in a garden.
mum, how you label our chests with handsomeness,
how you erase the thistles with your bare palm,
how you scorn at the rats in the
bodies of the flowers, so that they don't give us
scars.

i must really confess, mum, you are the best thing
happening to me.

mum,
i really need to give you this packet of poems right now,
so that you hold them like an egg,
and walk home without a song of grief.

little Boy clasps. he wants to buy a new star.

he wants to begin a new music. he wants
to hatch a new egg. he

holds a flower. his father tells him to breathe. his
green body would smile. it'd actually

become a Nile.

he wants to begin a new song. he wants to

say goodbye to the wind.

he wants to say goodbye to the sea.

he wants to

formulate his teeth with whiteness. like snow,

he wants to be an angel's garment. little

Boy plays the guitar. little Boy tunes the key.

little Boy is tired of burning.

little Boy is tired of churning.

a bird asks me what it means to fly

i dilute the water in my veins. a road that is meant for widows is
to be placated on their chests— their black robes
and scarred faces.
yesterday. just yesterday, i bury myself
like root into earth. the road to a
bird's joy is in flying.
i didn't know before. i never knew.
but when the tickles of laughter bounced like ball
along the shore of this bird's eyes,
i imagined the chains that used to clog its beak— denying it of songs.
i imagined its tears synonymous to Nile,
and i knew, i knew well that
every secret of a bird's songs, and smiles
is in flying.

i believe i can fly

i look at the stars to count the number of
light on their skin,

a moon— its curved waist like the cheek of
a beautiful girl.

when a star falls, i pick it, dust it with my palm,
and, tomorrow, i am not going to forget to bury
it in my pocket. i will carry it under my oil palm,
and walk into a market of laughters. in the market of
laughters, a boy touches my sister's leg, and tells her
love is sweet. when money enters love is sweeter. she tells him,
smiles, her teeth of snow dropping rays of
a bright light.

i hold the star like a girl just born. this baby
of egg is not a poetry of broken metaphors plucked
into the eye of a black wind. most times, it is what
greenness we give a leaf entering hot water.

when i touch the eye of the moon, i am given a
banner of my sweet dreams coming live on the palm of
a girl's eye; a breakup letter from a girl you never loved,
your drunk father singing you a good bye song while
pushing your bags out of His house,

your student in high school going for his MFA.
most times, when these dreams begin to hatch into a new
dawn, Allah would welcome my praises
the way people welcome a new child.
some days, i have been a bird in a chain,
my beak a refuse of silences,
most times, i have been holding my wings from a fine wind,
falling and rising in a dream of war.
most times, when i fly, i am fed the teeth of an owl.
this is how i have held my skin so long from walking into joy.
tomorrow, when dawn milks the flavours of its breast,
i am going to fly above the world like an achieved dream.

i must confess, i'm really walking these miles

i must truly say my life is breaking into joy— like dawn
hatching into a new day. i must truly say
this dream is getting sharp like a caramel—
a fine sand in a building factory.
when i sleep before the days that come before today,
i thought of many doves swallowing the fire
of a dragon. like, they
gulped it like a stream, and
poured it on my palm. my palm
was an arsenal of war invented to spell
doom to the wrinkles in my throat.
a hawk perched on my right eye.
it drew a line in my eye, tore its beak
for another salvation.
salt and whips labelled my body of earth worm,
i shivered like a boy in the cold.
i must truly say this story did not mark itself
on a rock— a rock is a museum of history,
i must truly say i'm now a mother's joy, matching my
laughters to a promise land.
these days, i'm singing my joy in the body of

a snail's shell. the way

i do it is like a bright night holding

the tales of old women under a moon.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Shitta Faruq Adémólá, Frontier XIV, is a 2021 SpringNG Writing Workshop alumni; a young Muslim Poet, budding French linguist, Phone Photographer and Fiction Writer From Nigeria. He is the author of a micro-chapbook "All I Know is I Am Going To Be Beautiful One Day" (Ghost City Press, 2021).

His works have appeared or are forthcoming in Jalada Africa, Beestung magazine, Blue Marble Review, Serotonin, FERAL, Third Estate Art, Rigorous Magazine, Icefloe Press, and elsewhere. He is the winner of the Fitrah review poetry prize, 2021, and tweets @shittafaruqade1.

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