

Paper Planes in the Rain

Jide Badmus & Pamilerin Jacob

Other books by the authors:

Jide Badmus:

1. There is a Storm in my Head (2017)
2. Scripture (2018)

Pamilerin Jacob:

1. Memoir of Crushed Petals (2018)
2. Gospels of Depression (2019)



PAPER PLANES IN THE RAIN

A collection of poems

Jide Badmus
Pamilerin Jacob



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Foreword

Many minds must have, at different times, roved the terrain of curiosity in a bid to discover what first cluster of “extraordinary” words engendered “poetry” either as a label or genre of literature. Could we align our views with biblical and qur’anic expositions, and say that at the point of creation, the Creator’s words were permeated by poetry? That the world came into existence via the frugal gab of poetry? What incontrovertible dissections could we beam on the emergence of poetry as a formidable art form? Tracing what seeded poetry into existence is nearly as complicated as reconciling the myriad of accounts struggling to explain how the world came into being. Perhaps, to be unfathomably profound is to be profoundly unfathomable. However, poetry could only be concealed as a root; as a fruit, it is conspicuously luscious. It tugs at the eyes, burrows the mind, reaching deep into the soul, for nesting. Paper Plane in the Rain is one delightful fruit of poetry, which keeps the eyelids wide apart as its words serenade the pupils, on their way in.

You launch imagery as an axe into the earth of meanings – not the massive carcass of words – to exhume profound depth. Misjudging poetry as a craver of boisterous words often leads to heavy versifications muffling the sound of meaning. To write good poetry is to efficiently synergize the organs of poetry, combining all poetic elements in the perfect proportion as if it were the chemical equation to a chain reaction. Truly, aptness is oftentimes achieved via measurability. However, unlike in the sciences, measurability isn’t a function of mathematical calibrations in poetic engagements; it is most times intuitively felt – a natural inclination coming on the heels of perpetual practice or inexplicable flair. This exposes my stance about poetry being a golden tongue, a most surreal language. And, indisputably, the authors of this poetry chapbook, are effortless and graceful “speakers” of poetry. The poems sit on the pages unforced and unscathed, hence, easily absorbable as a well-kneaded dough.

How well can a paper plane fare in the rain? Does it get wet, become turgid, and crash to the ground? Clearly, the makers of this paper plane are aware that poetry has a very sturdy body, and could seamlessly convey intense feelings and eerie emotions, irrespective of the prevailing atmospheric condition. Poetry is kijipa – rugged and durable. According to Paul Engle, poetry is bonded with ideas, nerved and bloodied with emotions, all held together by the delicate, tough skin of words. These poets have resolved to cast their burdens on the burly body of poetry. Jide Badmus’ first two lines in the title poem validate the foregoing:

*I wrote my pains—the ones I could
give names to—on a piece of paper*

Notably, Pamilerin Jacob, though etching his words on the tough skin of poetry as an abused persona, correlates a learning-to-fly paper plane in the rain with the mystery of abuse.

I don’t know how to tell him / I have been pouring myself / into women

before I learnt how to drive

it is the mystery / of abuse / a paper plane / learning to fly / in the rain

The co-authors might be thematically distinct in the title poem, but the mood and tone of their personae are synonymous – grief, pain, gloominess and eeriness denominate their poetry. However, Paper Plane in the Rain is not all about colourless emotions. In some of the poems, redolence of love could be perceived, tickles of carnality could be felt and exuberance of optimism could be heard. It is a miracle that a chapbook could house such profound poetry. Undoubtedly, Jide Badmus and Pamilerin Jacob have proven that they are foremost naturals of poetry. And it is certain that their works would be knitted into the nostrils of timelessness.

Kolade Olanrewaju Freedom

April 28, 2019



We are falling paper planes
looking for surfaces to glide
our presumptions on.

— Rohit Panjwani



JIDE BADMUS



Paper Plane in the Rain

I wrote my pains—the ones I could
give names to—on a piece of paper

& folded them into a plane—of miseries.
I hurled a prayer into heavenly planes.

But how do you spell salt in aqueous fonts?
How do you carry wilting sighs

on the wings of an ellipsis?
Fear is bad weather for a flight!

How can you tell if god is in a bad mood
& would send rain to crash your kite?



Bird of War

love sits on his tongue like a bird
on a tree branch poised to fly away
at the first launch of an angry stone

war hangs, anxious buttons on cuffs
of his shirt, sleeves eager to fold
& show steel fists & rippling biceps...

his voice sprouts gently as morning flowers.
it's now noon & erstwhile tender rays
shatter into shards!

he's a bird of war—
cradle of death, grave of love.
his ego is a time bomb.



When Loyalty Becomes a Dry Bone

The town-crier lost his voice
to digital doves & pigeons.
An old church bell sits lonely,
songs trapped in cobwebs.
Your promises lost their
charm & lustre—face
clad in scruffy grey beards.

I'm free in this cage, un-
restrained in your courtyard—
a withered leaf, tossed
in the wind, forced to dance
to your music of manipulation.
My patience has grown wings!

When hope becomes
a hymn without lyrics,
bone of loyalty dries up
& happy tails stop to wag
to master's voice.



How the Night Fell into Silence

Darkness finds its voice
in the deadness of night—
in the music of stillness.

Light becomes a ghost.
Its skin becomes a blur—
a slur of sad silhouettes.

Silence swears an oath
of secrecy, never to spill
the contents of shadows.



Encore

Your heart is an empty room

I call to you & my words become
shattered, scattered in air... echoes
coming back at me.

Is that you saying you love me too?



Shipwrecked

tonight,
i don't want to be strong—
i want to lean on a wall with a heartbeat.
right now, i can't be a shoulder—
i also want to melt into a stream
& flow away from my fears.
i want to scream the lyrics
of anger & drown with you
in a wild refrain of sighs.
i also want a taste of what it feels
to be a soul, desolate,
when your body is shipwrecked—
to hear the echoes of your voice
mocking your call for help.
tonight, i don't want to keep
night's company—I want to feel
the bed wrap cozy arms around me
so, i would wake without this ache
tomorrow.



Nine Stitches

I reached to unplug the sun from the socket that powers its scorch.
I plunged us into darkness—the scorch comes with the torch!

I stood before the mountain without fear, it stood its ground!
I had to climb to get to the other side—faith needed a horse to drive the wagon.

A bullet is toothless and a gun innocent.
Wickedness lies in the finger that pulls the trigger.

My dynamite ignited is a fierce dragon brewing with fury
But your grenade with its pin (intact) is a sterile fire in a picture book!

Even witches have control switches!
No human is invincible—immortality is out of reach.

Some broken stitches can never mend,
Most times, the ninth stitch is therapy after death.



Backstage

Your smile drips at the corners of your mouth
Beyond your glowing eyes your soul is flaccid,
Drowned in sadness.

Silence is perforated ellipsis...

A sigh trips & emptiness falls in a heap.
Gagged emotions itch to break free from backstage roles—
Take a bite of spotlight.



Flag of Destiny

I draw inspiration on the slate of my mind

& gather courage like wet concrete
to build bridges, link dreams...

I set fire to fear
& keep the ashes as trophy.

I raise birds beneath my tongue
& give wings to victory songs.

I keep hope hoisted—my soul
dances like a flag in the wind as I conquer new lands.



The Edge of Reality

Peace resides on the edges of swords.
The sacrifice of fear, tears and blood
Security in the arms of ammunitions—
We rebuild with stark demolitions!

Love is a cushion stuffed with soft thorns
It is a fire that warms and still burns!
A kiss is a seal of desire—
Twin-pod of allegiance and betrayal.

Reality swings wildly on a knife-edge
Like lies lined with truths
And truths dangerously poised on a ledge
Of doubts



Mystery Bubble

Let your body take the form of night.
Drape the path to ecstasy in mystery.
Remain poised, a margin between innocence & craving
...luring

Till I wake sensual waves
& hoist the mast of mutual desire.
Till my touch opens up your sea of needs

We'll both become ripples swallowed in a storm
Or supple bodies trapped in a carnal tide
Or sultry souls wrapped in an orgasmic bubble



A River's Shadow

Life is an open cage—
We're only bound by our own minds!
Escape is illusion and freedom is fearsome—
Death waits at the exit door.

Happiness is an empty bubble, &
Emptiness is like air.
The pains we feel are only real
If the smiles sprouting from the lips are.

Healing rides on the bicycle of time,
It carries the past in a pocket of memories.
Painless scabs peel off like paints on old walls—
Withered pain, dried tears...

Darkness becomes a lie when light is born—
A river flows but goes nowhere.
Reality is sometimes a mirage, subtle as a river's shadow!



A Poem Died in *PENury*

This poem is unwritten—light in its foetal cradle.
A dirge for darkness exits the sky's mouth.
A naked verse screams in wordless rhymes—the opening of innocent lyrics!

This poem is unfinished, philosophies consistently redefined.
Wisdom and confusion are fused in a legendary tango.
Thoughts are bold as metaphors—actions, torn between ironies of reality.

This poem is abridged—words implied, left unsaid.
Left here are scribbled songs yet unsung and messages spoken in silence.
These thoughts are held on a perpetual harness—he writes our grief in death!



Broken Promises

pieces of rainbow fall
from mouths of monster clouds
and a storm is forced into labour

what can salvage
the leaking roof of eyes?—
not an empty bucket of promises!

sanctuary is a room of shadows—
ghosts hang around like cobwebs.

vows have become as swallowed vowels—
your words no longer make sense!



Hope

hope is the noose
by which I hang unto life
& die daily, slowly...



PAMILERIN JACOB



Paper Plane in the Rain

father thinks a lover will cure my depression
says to put her in my mouth / nightly / like a sleeping pill
to bandage my sores / with kisses
I don't know how to tell him / I have been pouring myself / into women
before I learnt how to drive
it is the mystery / of abuse / a paper plane / learning to fly / in the rain
a little boy undressing
before a shrine / ready to rub one out
I don't know how to tell him / my body begs to be chewed
by the earth / a lover is not anchor / only spade / for grave digging
had a brother / who died at birth / an unknowable grief / a little fire / put out as soon as
it crackled
never got to teach him:
how to cut
how to nut
quietly before a shrine
my depression is African / wears a buba / ties a gele
brushes its teeth / with my sinew & blood / nipples dripping honey
misfortune enslaves me / the months fall like darts / upon my skin
my depression is Nigerian / soft as hot amala
under my skin
hit my head as a kid / so I talk different / mother says I died / for five minutes
& maybe / that's why the MRI leaves
the doctors puzzled / they say every time / a brain scan is done
they see a rabbit / eating its child / & maybe that is why
I drink my cum when bored / add it to my coffee
*the only certain thing
in my body is the darkness...*

Litany of the Miracles of Stigma

[to be lead by a priest in the gathering of the mentally ill. must be recited day and night]

save me, stigma, from friends and family who deny the illness

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, you who resurrected the day I got my prescriptions

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, from this protuberance in my mind

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, you who lurk in prayers for healing

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, as you have shielded people who have malaria from you

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, you, cloaked in *I love yous, don't you dare feel sad*

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, mother of suicides

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, I woke up to these sores on my body, maybe I *sleepcut*

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, you who force me to recite verses to cure madness

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, why is your headquarters in a church

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, why is your base in a mosque

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, you who couldn't save the ones before me

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, you who walk on air, just to shit in my ears

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, your greatest miracle is taking a life

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, the pastor doesn't know you live in his mouth

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, master of disguises

save me, stigma

save me, stigma, how many pills should I take to end this

save me, stigma

Paper Planes in the Rain

save me, stigma, before I save myself

save me, stigma?

benediction:

oh Mighty Stigma seducer of spirits you lull empathy
to an eternal sleep teach us to overdose as we should

teach us to kiss the mouth of a gun with our tongues
curled like a target may your essence never leave our bodies
remind our parents to call us demon-infested descendants remind

the pastor to say god is not
in the heart of the mentally ill remind the imam
to say we carry madness in our bones

Loving Stigma,
fill our lovers' eyes with disgust every time
we have episodes in public may they see us & see a pack of vultures
amen...



Emotional Deflection as a Homo Sapiens Skill

in the animal kingdom, no one
buries the dead, & grief

is ubiquitous, like air. surrounds
every creature, whets claws

& beaks: ants lose cousins daily
gazelles sacrifice children as

soon as they are born &
grief is in the silence

after the kill. the chaos, the blue
sadness, crusting on tongues

makes me think of humans
how my father threw a party

when his grandmother died, shed
no tear. locked his children

in a safe house, as he danced in
the rain. burying the dead

is a human privilege, a sharp forgetfulness
hold a man to the wind, & you can

smell his last heartbreak *from*
 ten years
 ago

yet, he fondles the mud
with his toes, in faux joy, his cheeks

transparent enough to show

the soft darkness in his mouth

it is a type of hypocrisy, to hide
our dearest possessions in the earth

when we earnestly crave their embrace.
while grieving, my father

struts like he can tame
an electric wire

with his fingertips.



Final Destination of a Scream

my voice is louder than death
than hell
& god writes me
love letters
with my grandfather's humerus
scribbles *I'm sorry I left* in the sand
apologies are not enough
to heal a fracture, I am angry
at everything, I am starting
a cockroach farm. disgust is how I respond
to love now. my lover stretches
out her tongue & I write

I'm sorry I haven't left yet...

on it. my voice is louder
than death. can raze hell

with my bellow. yesterday, I tore
a suicide note, fed it
to grandmother's goats

you think they would know,
with all their stubbornness
they are eating a scream.



Relationship Goals

I love you, because god first loved
you

& I like to take
things from him

but I love you
& to change that
is to replace a genome
in my body

I do not know the science
myself, but with you
my grief holds my hands
prays with me

you taste like crack

& god knows this too

addiction is a mental illness

but when you are addicted
to a person

it is called love:

love is a mental illness

god is love

god is a...

how often, when you pray
are lost
thinking of my lips

you fillip every nerve
in my body
without lifting a finger

my grief
calls
you mother

you
my best friend

[shouldn't have kissed]

but I love you even as
Christ loves the church

& your sins are forgiven...

Paper Planes in the Rain

as long as you help
bury his body

*he denied kissing you
so I washed his throat with acid...*

when did you stop

loving me?



Pinocchio

my favourite fairytale is of Pinocchio
that lovely nose, natural lie detector

I want one

so whenever I say, *I'm fine*
I am caught

boot to my neck
for every fake smile, mother

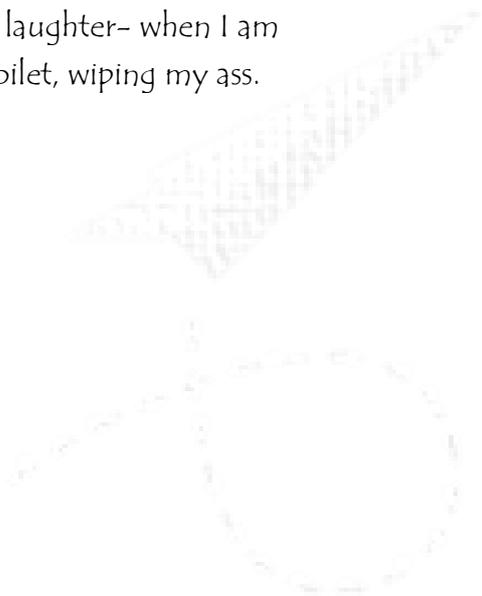
says to keep singing praise songs
ask Christ for true laughter

to hop like a frog repeatedly, until
sadness falls out of my bowels

I, honestly just want a boot to the neck
he who must come to equity

must come with clean hands
but Christ only appears to me-

holding laughter- when I am
in the toilet, wiping my ass.



My Lover Says She Will Gag so I Look up the Meaning in a Dictionary

& the first definition, says *to restrain speech*

to force the tongue

into stillness

hold a magnet to the cheek

& collect words in one side of the mouth

say, slurp on my middle finger

& let's see how far down it goes

maybe you'll digest it, & ask for more

fingers to eat

I know

I want my fingerprints along the walls

of your throat- a graffiti of ecstasy

mouth fitting nicely

on my loins

like a suction cap

to gag or not to gag

is a function of hunger...

I am a bowl of cum & heresies.



Etymology of Affection

a child's first cry / is a cord
 / interstellar / wound about its mother's soul
parasitic / we start life
taking / & taking / sucking / & sulking
 it is universal / to wish upon a scar
 in search of nostalgia / do you know
to kill a bird / you must be ready
 to watch it flutter / in the dirt
body filled / with longing
 watch it wheeze / & beg its feathers
 for one last flight / one last view
 of the scarecrow
which is harder: / killing a bird that prophesied
 your birth / or killing a child / that will not stop biting
its mother's nipples / until she bleeds?
 in some cultures / a bird / killed / is reborn a child
 [that bites its mother's nipples / until she bleeds]
into the family of the killer / but it grows up
forgets its primordial history / & falls in love with a sling
 that is how hunters are born...

we all have a history of feathers.



I Sing Sam Smith's Fire on Fire in the Shower & the Water Begins to Boil

[I]

& everything hardens.
even me.

I am thrust into my own Armageddon
the genesis of wilting is in the tempo

of a voice, how it ploughs the air
scything every ounce of desire

the only thing I want to be known
for is nothing. the only war worth

fighting is the laying down of weapons
to be quiet as a wall, as the earth opens

to swallow the body, knowing
the temperature of a song

is the only tie, we have to memory
& when you dissect a song

with shears, a god falls out
feeds you healing.

[II]

...& I sing along, with conviction
searching for the holy ghost in water

in scalded skin, I do not want to die
with my tongue sticking out, or

a poem hiding in my fingernails, a
puppy was found raped, & suffered

prolapsed, died with a part of it
sticking out, life short as a blink, what

do you think it will tell the angels
about earth, about a penis that became

a hook? what can be said of a child
that asks its father for fish & is fed

spiders? Sam Smith sings like a mosquito
that has just learnt English, & I

nod my head, in obeisance...



Jacob asked for a pillow, & got a Choir

imagine holding a stone, clueless
it is the key to heaven
 imagine swallowing the stone, clueless
 it is hardened gall
imagine running in circles, in search
of a straight line, leading to mother's womb...
 I imagine myself a story
 wizened, barely making it
from paper to eye, sentences sliming
across the air, you can track the lineage

all the way up the ladder, in Jacob's brain
that night, as he lay
nursing silence, as angels burst out
of his cerebrum with hymns

a child will hold a bowl of maggots
& think of life,
 unlike me...
who sees a fountain & grieves
for the rock, whose skull was cracked.



Conversation with My Crush The Night Her Father Died

let us lick each other's wounds until our tongues are sharpened knives
& with them make new incisions in the earth

I lost my fingers in a dream
it is useless now to seek ecstasy from my phalanges

what is the shelf-life of a wound inherited from one's father
how long do we dress a wound before we declare it anathema

I lost my father, once, in a market as a child
& I have been searching for him ever since

the first time, I saw a river eat a bus, I could have sworn
I saw a giant tail slap against the windscreen

here a calculator, punch in the number of times
he touched you before he died

every day, I go to the river, begging to be swallowed too
for me, walking on water is no miracle, compared to sinking.



A Good Father Poem because My Bestie Says I never Write anything Good about Fathers

he teaches you how to ride a bike
into the mouth of a volcano & tells you to rub
spit onto your wounds, when a snake bites...

you learn quickly the different shades of his silences
after years of tripping over, teeth first
into his truculent tempers

you watch him kill a goat, & lick
blood off the knife

who better than a father to teach a child
how to trap a shadow in an envelope & gift
it to a disciple of light?

he slapped a girl once, your sister [& she lost three teeth]
for screaming at him, when he wanted
to feel her breasts for cancer lumps...



Fifty Lines of Surrealism

here, a poem about holding hands with the moon
on a starless night, & spitting a vision into mud
until it begins to burn with the fervour of a future
earnestly desired. it is godlike to cast a dream in sand
& breathe unto it until it moves, until particles prophesy
& the fingers are stiffened by joy. I know of a boy whose
Christmas wish was to see an angel, wouldn't stop crying
himself to sleep until god unlocked, a portion of his eyes
to see the angel stealing meat from mother's pot. Imagine
the horror of knowing that hunger will drive even angels, to sin.

the horror of knowing that hunger will drive even angels to sin
cannot be measured in mortal cups. what is the fastest way
to drive god insane: prayers? praise? touching yourself to your
mother's picture? imagine the moon being jealous of a balloon,
the plague of small-mindedness. how vague destiny is, that
each man guesses his day of departure! I plan my death with
a joke tucked in between teeth. I say, a knife looks like a door
to me. I do not care what you say of hell. better hell than here.
a dream not catered for will grow fangs, bite into the ankles
I was born a boomerang, I know I will be reborn into my lineage

I was born a boomerang, I know I will be reborn into my lineage
& my heartbeat is god's favourite sound. not the child dying
of hunger, not the mother begging for alms, four futures strapped
to her back. only my heartbeat. only me. I am the most important
chess piece on the board & god loves to pick me. this arrogance is
generational. as a child, I killed a cat by chopping off its tail first
then its paws, then its head. a slow death is sexy. spirit pouring out
like water from a keg. stopped closing my eyes to pray ever
since, I learnt of angels who flash their boobs. prayer can be a door too
like a knife. I run into prayer to kill my ego. I come out bloody

like a knife. I run into prayer to kill my ego. I come out bloody
unimportant, thirsting for death. I am a magnetic thing
always drawn to a knife, more than prayer. more than laughter.

Paper Planes in the Rain

what is god's reaction to AI: jealousy? pride? for a robot
what does it feel like to fear death, to have your creator wave
a screwdriver afore your eyes every time you mess up?
I thirst. I thirst... there is nothing like a dream obedient to its moulder
a dream, toothless, feeding only on water, on thunder. a dream baked
in a storm. soft like a worm. you fling a bone at it & it swallows it whole
spurts out a promise, lays a golden coconut at your feet

spurts out a promise, lays a golden coconut at your feet
& begs to be blessed. I say, blessed because a dream born
is cursed like its moulder. born with a needle in its throat, can't form
a sentence without scarring a vowel. I trust in the potency of fire
in the ratifying power of ashes. I give my liver up to be burnt at the stake
what good is a filter that cannot trap dirt in its teeth? it is a dream's job
to deliver orgasms to its moulder. I sink my teeth into a lover's boobs
in search of milk. in search of warmth. in search of destiny. tonight
I circumcise myself, touch the moon with my foreskin
& beg to be set free from my body...



Prayer is the Master Key?

a leaf, wishing death upon the sun has no clue
as to the origin of want
the only time my knees touch the earth is when

I am caught in fervent prayers, to the
clitoral oracle living in a lover's body
I bow my head before eating my lover

prayer has led me thus far
I wish only life upon these hips
my breath is tied to her ankles

the first time we *came* together
it was from the midst of anger, I
had just broken a china &

she shoved my face down her thighs
said *pray* & my tongue began the dance
of worship. in a dream, I punched a wall &

my fist shattered, like the china
smithereens glistening, & I swept it all under the rug
with the good hand. the priest says

it is a sign that I am becoming a leaf
too pompous to worship the sun
forgive me

if I all I do these days, is feast on my lover
there are many suns tucked in her mouth
pride melts off my shoulders like wax

every time she utters, *pray*

GRAVE OF THE SUN



Grave of the Sun

Jide Badmus & Pamilerin Jacob

she is a dullen dusk,
weary sun growing beards
of night. her smile is a window
on the blindside of dawn.
the stars died in her eyes,
drowned in rainstorms—her life is a grave of colours

ask her for light, & she will spit out her tongue
she has learnt to culture silence, in the ridges
of her teeth. ask for a gun & she will birth a child
cook its placenta as proof of her allegiance
 tell me how to water a rosary until Christ
 leaps off the cross
a requiem for cries that never made it past
the clouds. I cut my tongue while pronouncing
her name. god is so good, he made you out of tears...



Notes on the Contributors

JideBadmus is an electrical engineer, a literary promoter and poet who hails from Omido, Kwara State. Jide hopes to establish a National Poetry Institute and organize an International Poetry Festival someday soon.

He is the author of two poetry collections:

There is a Storm in my Head (2017) and *Scripture* (2018). Among other things, Jide is a Christian and Manchester United fan. He

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Pamilerin Jacob is a Nigerian poet & mental health enthusiast. He writes to ease internal turmoil & also to shed light on the struggles of the mentally ill. He was shortlisted for the *Ken Egba Prize For Festival Poetry 2017* and the winning list of PIN Food Poetry Contest 2018. Pamilerin's writings have featured in "*These Words Will Cure a Dead Man*" an anthology by Spring Literary Movement 2016, the Best "New" African Poets 2017 Anthology, the PIN Quarterly Journal (7th Issue), WRR Poetry, The Quill Babcock, and Praxis Magazine amongst others, all under the name Olawale Ibiyemi. Author of two collections – *Memoir of Crushed Petals* (2018) & *Gospels of Depression* (2019), Pamilerin is a staunch believer in the powers of critical thinking, Khalil Gibran's poetry & chocolate ice cream. Instagram: @jacques_wharley | Twitter: @IbiyemiOlawale

Paper Planes in the Rain

