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SMALL TALKS &



SHALLOW THOUGHTS

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SMALL TALKS AND SHALLOW THOUGHTS
Peter Omoyele



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Table of Contents

Nothing Heard God (Creatio Ex Nihilo)	5
Once Dead	6
The Altar Call	7
The rich fool	8
Lunch Break	9
We Hear the Honks of Many Horns	10
For Nahimifalo	11
Improper Additions	12
The First Time They Say “I Love You”	13
You know I Love You	14
Good Men	16
This or That?	17
Afterlife	18
This Poem is Writing Us	19
Dear Critics	20
Men Ought to Always Pray	21
Ending Tomorrow’s Lives Today Pt. 2	22
Father, hold my hands	23
People Pt. 2	24
Standing on the shoulders of giants	25
Parents forgotten, forgive your children	26
See my hands	27
Comfort slaughters all	28

Nothing Heard God (Creatio Ex Nihilo)

In the beginning

Before the sun knew to shine

Nothing could listen

Once Dead

We used to be dead men
living through the stench
of infinite decay.
Swallowed by greed and pride,
our desires shackled our fiery glow
— left us as prisoners
in these stony hearts.
Marooned upon these cursed soil
until the savour of these men
fluttered against our rot.

The Altar Call

The altar call is a dispatch to fish,
Each stride to the pulpit, a step into the seas.
Behold the fish, salivating for the bait,
Still heavy with its last course.

Caught, stuck, it chokes on the
Hook and wriggles on.
The hook draws a course in its gills,
Into the deep sea, beneath the crashing waves.
Its eyes are cold, wreathless, and bloodshot.

The sea has lost its claim on one more fish.
One more fish will now climb trees.
To the sea, it says, you are dead and gone,
You cannot drown a fish or stop it from climbing.

A splash, a ripple, amidst the crashing waves,
One by one, shoal after shoal, is swimming
To the shores for trees to climb.

The rich fool

From waves of sweat,
and fruits of pride, two feet
striding atop bumper harvests,
a chalice of delight
from summer's fountain

In the mountain's hair
is a golden strand,
amidst black strands.
Two feet up, face down,
his drool soiling his spoil.

Lunch Break

Right across the street from the high-rise,
in a corner of the bustling car park,
is the shabby Ofada rice canteen
serving a good number of the hustlers
on most floors of the skyscraper.

It's a whole 2 hours till lunch break
but you can hear its noise far away
in the buzzing of Iya Amoke's Itele,
in the smorgasbord of savoury aromas
wafting from one table to the other,
in the garage boy's tussle for his change.

We Hear the Honks of Many Horns

All day, we hear the honks of many horns
Screaming loud.
Angry as the horny man, when, after
Fallen clouds,
His wife refuses his advances for
Rounds.

The deafening sound, the red noise, all at once,
Everywhere.
We hear the honks of many horns
Too much to bear
All day, all night, they blast like guns
Here and there.

For Nahimifalo

There are days when I am Nahimifalo
and days when I am not.
My heart is a shuddering sluice gate in the morning,
and a wide-open city gate at night.
If only I could swim against the tide,
I would be standing.
If only I could let go of the fool's gold,
I would be the Pirate's trove.
Nahimifalo, this is for you:
To love you is to be the Pirate's trove.

Improper Additions

As far as these unions go,
one and one
do not make two —
one is ideal.

A half and a half
do not make a whole —
a quarter is more likely.

The First Time They Say “I Love You”

The first time should strike like a baby's first words.
You should have waited long enough to hear it.
And hope that it won't be the last time you hear it.

You know I Love You

Yes, I do feel like a stranger,
an acquaintance of this lady
who I once dated.

We hardly speak,
except to agree
on our next rendezvous,
burnt out by the white noise
from words we didn't speak.

We hold conversations in muffled speech,
barely making a point,
hoping something is heard
from the much that was said.

Here, with this stranger,
in an awkward moment,
I feel nothing more than hurt
that must soon end.
Words fail me.
Thought bubbles swell in my busy brain
protesting to be greeted, rioting to be introduced.

But I look at her
and I see a glimmer of her again
The lassie I fancied.
The maiden I fell in love with.

Hey, stranger!
I hope this is not you
I think I may be having a nightmare,
but still, I feel the need
to let this out;
not so much for your sake
as for mine,

to call these fears
by the name they bear:
My heart in a poem.
You know I love you.

Good Men

There are just not enough
good men. That is the problem.
No act is kind or selfless.
Kindness squats like a pauper
with a host labelled as scum.
Like a shiny masterpiece
superimposed by shabby mediocrity.

Despite this awful reality,
someone has chosen to trust.
And even dared to let
these half-brained scums raise
her frail whelps.

Tiny shreds of good
lumped into fragile egos
and conceited hearts,
held together by a frame
with a dangling organ,
sharing the good in them
with others, as though
they were the messiahs
these women were promised.

This or That?

I may fill my heart with this man's lies,
or let the truth dwell richly in it,
let it marinate on this one's rudeness,
or soak it with that one's gossip,

I may think of that lady's hate,
or let my heart soak in that man's love,
take flight or fight at a given moment.

As I deem fit, agree or disagree,
hold on or let go, love or hate,
share or hoard, pray or worry,
act now or procrastinate...

Ultimately, who will I be
when the deeds have been done,
when the doers are dead and forgotten,
and I'm left alone, babbling by myself?

Just the sum of me
and the deeds I have done.
Who can I be but, surely, my choices?

Afterlife

So many spirits have drained off Earth's cliff
Into the fiery chasm of Hades' thirsty lungs.

Some others have fallen in the earth's crack
With their stabbed backs against its walls.

Tumbling ever on and on through earth's tract
Landing ghastly in Hades' vast gut.

We can only hope that much more than these
Will hold their own till the skies are cracked.

This Poem is Writing Us

This poem will not form neat lines,
the words refuse to hold together in a verse

but mourn as the writer mourns,
from dusk till dawn,
through the still silence of the night.

Our paths diverged but crossed again
to cry together, and grieve and part
and meet again. Travelled

overseas, over land, over mountains
and the wild. The journey begins with
seven jumps and ends with seven wriggles.

There has to be other fingers in sync
with us, another handwriting, something with
a will of its own. Not you. Not me.

This poem is writing us,
we are reasoning with rhyme.

Dear Critics

The words that critique
me mine the stones
with which I build grand
castles of my own.

Precious stones whose
shiny strength is
my edifice's firm
foundation and towering pillars

Pillars of spikes that
should skewer like icicles
have pushed me forward
like well-oiled bicycles.

Men Ought to Always Pray

If a potentate with deterministic capacities,
Whose verses made universes, lifeforms, and you
Invaded history and the planet, and roamed its cities
Prayed all night in his human form. Why not you?

What intent or thought formed in your mind,
Painted prayer as a suggestion to follow, or not?
And your mind, being depraved and blind,
Makes these lies in your thoughts hard to spot

But the potentate prayed because he wore flesh
Because he was among men in a corrupt world
Because it is how the divinity in humanity stays fresh
Because it is how passion and compassion get hurled

They must pray hard who find themselves to be human
And harder who find themselves among other humans

Ending Tomorrow's Lives Today Pt. 2

Little lady, think again, though you have judged it
Choice and comfort, it hardly is;
For the comfort which you think you have chosen
Has left many necks strangled and lungs frozen

From seeds and soils, which are but shadows,
Much life, therefore, from you should grow
But hitherto our best future has become past,
Buried without graves, while others watch aghast

You are a captive of convenience, shackled by choice
And things so precious you have esteemed as toys
Diseases and dearth have served the same overlord
Better than you ever will; why gloat in words?

All who have ever lived came through you
And no more will come if you won't let them through

Father, hold my hands

It's your gift to me, but it takes from me
Help me now, for what my body cannot bear
I flee it, but it chases faster than a killer bee
My strength to run won't last another year

I dare not hold my lassie's hands for long
Nor kiss my sweet maiden's fair lips
Such raging fire erupts, passion so strong
That all that's left of my restraint it rips

You are the true pleasure, and in you
I seek delight; you renew my strength
But my little man wants its thrill too
Like a high priest demanding a tenth

Down on my knees, I've fallen
High to skies I've lifted, Father, hold my hands

People Pt. 2

I've seen good people wreak havoc
I've seen great carnage serve the good
And even calm people run amok
Yes, selfless acts misunderstood

Kind people stretched to their limits
And cruel people occasionally charitable

Yet nobler things I've seen of people
Who lose themselves giving to others
People are like diamonds in the rough
The mess is not what they are made of

Standing on the shoulders of giants

Oh, so these men are
miles taller than Denver
Standing on their shoulders,
I can touch the peak of Everest
What? I shouldn't stretch my hands too much
Are you worried I'll have my fingers burned?

Parents forgotten, forgive your children

Of the glorious youth
children are born
with groanings and joy
daughters and sons

Slowly, in their cribs,
the babies grow,
and love and care
Is all they know.

New people roam
the old yard
Trees that were not
now forms an orchard

The children are taken
and the old left alone
Parents forgotten, please
forgive your clones!

See my hands

See my hands
How they hold tightly to hers
That's where they should be
They have a purpose
They reach
They have
They hold

Comfort slaughters all

Comfort slaughters all

All that creeps

All that crawls

All that slithers

All that flies

All that walks

All that swims

But adversity cleanses

It painstakingly prunes

It separates the vile from the virtuous

The depraved from the innocent

And those who drown from those who float

The tempest should not be stopped;

it should be survived.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Omoyele is a poet, a creative content writer, and a brand strategist. He lives and writes from Lagos, Nigeria.

Among other things, Peter is a Christian and a Golden State Warriors Fan.

He loves music, basketball, short films, and the outdoors. His other hobbies include boring people with his love and admiration for Pastor Oge C. Ogwe, Sekoutoure Abodunrin, Olakunle Soriyan, Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie & Stephen Curry.

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