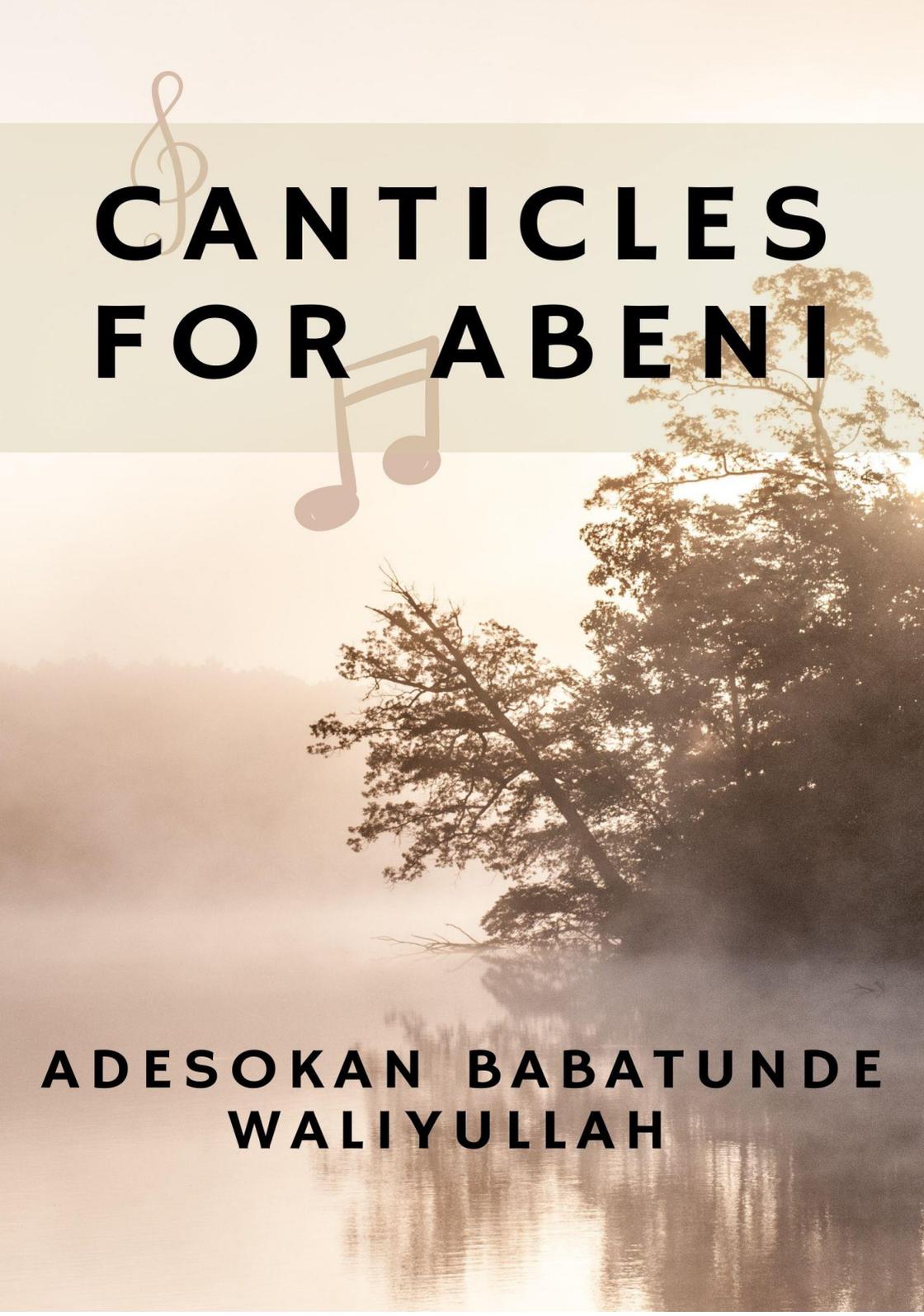




CANTICLES FOR ABENI



**ADESOKAN BABATUNDE
WALIYULLAH**

Canticles For Abeni

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INKspired

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For Abeni & fruits therein delighting me

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Dear Beloved

To know about the soil, one must ask a squirrel
but the scattered drops of today's rain make a
ring of ripples. I think of you, wedding & weather.
How every downpour tick with the clock until
you will tick my mind & cover me like an ocean
mirrors the sky. They said only a fool remains
thirsty in the midst of river so I will open your
kola nut – call forth squirt into river. I will start
an itching & still be the calming balm. I will
make your eyes roll like the moon crossing this
city. I will distill your honey without awakening
your sting. I will gather you into the rainfall, we
are shrubs that no erosion can wash away. Tell
the squirrel that the ring of ripples has spoken.
You are my scripture & this rains verses of
salvation.

Gemeinschaft

I tread on a century of dead leaves
watching dead roots dissolving into
fresh foliage. I find you in a story of
freshness. Bone strong like alphabets
healthy like a syllabic vowel. With this
country full of denied dreams &
scattered families, Abeni will you be
my homestead, instead? My clean farm
to weed with pleasure? My swept path
to tread every dawn?

I would dash into the forest & cut stakes.
I would dash into the grassland & cut vines.
I would bear pains to build a befitting shrine
some gods may not answer their people
but you rhapsodize me with malted mountains,
verdant valley, beads of heavens & a forever
dwelling.

For a Mouth Sweeter than Salt

Tribute to Prof. Toyin Falola

I mutter words into the mouth of prayers
May your grey be golden & everything bald
Be a balm of knowledge

Corals, stones, beads strung in silk thread,
Like droplets of you raining into a stream &
Pouring greatness into Ogunpa river.

You rise from a city that gods draped by
7 hills & bathed by 4 rivers where time
Wrestles season & season rosaries stories.

You mount memoirs from the mouth of
Mapo Hill, with your words raining praises
That soften the anthill to sands.

The gods shall make your wealth like Oje
A market that draws footfalls like magnet
Fame conspicuous like a hall on a hill.

For you have turned proverbs into herbs &
Charmed well-timed seasons into histories
That only a god could have scribbled.

Twin Mountains

yielding curves / & carving knife /
i stroll into the street of a hamlet /
a promenade of smooth, soft skin /
its lofty follicles rubbing my fingers /
spread-eagled on her back /
i dwell in intrigues /
& wondrous relish /
a lush vale with quiet inlet /
who welcomes a gringo /
with a decibel of moans /
who allows a stallion to eerily plow /
its yielding field /
astride this fountain of "cum-passion" /
jumping / gambolling /
counting strokes / & strides /
a brightness suns the night /
into momentary morning of flashes /
edges sewn / with 100 strokes /
until twin mountains soften & spasm /
in love / heaving "cum'on" /

Come, and Be my Baby

(a rejoinder to Maya Angelou)

I cook a nest to crush the best flower
But my reputations travel fast & close
Doors. The song I ate for you still hooks
My throat. Its words fall off into
Disappointing cyst of my abdomen.
A navel is lyrics on the highway. Fast
Cars moving, honking as your love travels
My veins. Folks would smoke anything &
Sit on cocktails to get high. A moment
With you would spare me such frills.

Come. And be my baby. Let trumpets
Sound each time you straddle me to
Destinations, known but undefined.
Let everything breathe again. Let me
See you *brake* into a smile as I fondle
You into gravity. Let this Adam crave
Eve again & again, in the privacy of Eden.

The First Time, I was

beaten by broken times.
she mends me in her oven
a depth i have never been before.
a warmth i have never felt before.
its fuzziness unhinges my brains &
spilling strength to my spines
*"you are in. start moving &
find your rhythm."*
i float around the room
on waves of my waist
hoping to memorize everything
of this first love
my white lies intimately
beside your red.
smear me. which farmer will want
his palm unsullied?
Let me be brown with your soil
Let me plough. Let me plunder
Let this sac hits your perineum
adding rhythm to rhythm

Lullaby

Let this tree shed leaves
to your desperate harmattan

shed your inhibitions and
shed your skin

The aprons of twin doors-
fruits and roots, welcoming

the breeze of my hands
kneading every follicle

into fine foliage of brown
honey - white milk. A new wind

across this valley
whispering love notes

Sweet but not short
Spells in a chrome of colours

May the shore of your face
hold me warmly

When my hands "*undress*
your silence" with

the lullaby of my phalanges.

Lover's give

Dear love, let all be still tonight
like a silence trapped into an expectation
of what's next
the breeze holding the leaf in mid-flight
fireflies pausing in mid-light
the stars glaring mid-stare
let all listen to the stillness of me in you
the strength of my entrance
the gasp that pauses you in mid-moan
everything like a sea stays still in mid-wave
a rock firm into your earth, filling mid-depth

then moves. all listens to your whisper
of love. cooing - sailing through forest
of the skin. a voice lapping over the trees
a tongue licking the world into a lake
into a rush. into a pause. into a spasm
into firm splutter of an onrushing passion
a fountain of *'I am a woman, here is my soul
- take me into the wilderness to re-taste
the apple of this origin again'*

Between a Biology of Wants & Desire

I am stuck in between a biology of wants
& desire, that I grow into a tunnel full
of voices & echoes

My first woman told me in my early age
that girls are gods & orgasms are songs
of glories

On a night a bee descends on my balls
I become a microphone twirling verses
& amplifying the gods' whispers

My last sojourn to the shrine of honey
I seek the tutelary goddess, carving
Strength from my firm bones

After rhapsodies, I realize that the bee
that spawns, that licks, could bite men
into pains & pulses

Abeni Mi

Abeni, the cloud cakes into a new day
& the dawn dazes your brightness into
my eager eyes. The light that faded
late yesternight arrives early –
It is here to pamper you at sight
Aaa—beeeeee—niiiiiiiii mi
My voice ferries the sweetness of
a singing bird & it falls like a rainbow
shell. Early this morning when my palm
is still pure, free, from toil of the day
I lay it on you & I funnel the blessing
of the new day into your parting lips.
I muffle “*good morning*” with good prayers.
I bond blessings unto your skin.
With the glitz & glamour, your eyes
become a daisy of silk to dwell in.
Here, I offer you words fashioned
into flowers
Here, I offer you words portioned
from my heart

Canticle

Before you, mountains of milk
Naked I *come*
Before your goggling glories
A pleading prodigy

Courting your cathedral
Slinking into your succulence
Build I, a sanctuary of you
With canticles at dawn?

In this outlay of luring curves
A martyr moistens you with
Litanies
Bare like a cheering chalice
Footed in a flower, twanging

The psalms out of a violin
All verses from you
Hymns, hymens & amens
Like butterflies
Satin-ed
Into books.

A Shovel Ripples the Soil

Like the scraping of her lips on mine
a shovel paths a yielding earth. What
is it in a kiss than a mere landlocking?
When the skirt is the sky that falls away,
and a rainbow is the arc of hips that is
revealed

Somehow, like a passion won't stop until it
rains, something faint then firm, grows
resolute. A shovel ripples its paw under
the veneer of a supple soil. All molds are
beads seeded in the planet of pleasure.

I am the heaven's dew – you are its
richness. You are the soil, an abundance
of grain and the new wine.

I have no strength to pull out

& the last cloud that heaves me
shatters into a thousand storms
A barrel infesting the gourds with
my sovereign. If the forest is
the lung of the earth, let me seed
myself in the air you consume.
So, when I die, the best part of me
sprouts & sprouts again like Moses'
staff, pathing the end into a new
beginning. Till the earth breathes
no more & the last letter of my
name shatters into generations

Dear Poem 36

Every mountain offers an altar
like the rostrum of your chest
where prayers & pleasures are
rosaries of realities. A crab sits
by your brook praying the stream
would not carry it away. It knows
that the wetland gives life to the
river that overruns the rushes &
the sedges. Here, I wait till a slit
of the crescent becomes a full
moon & I fish in its quiet inlet
If mothers were once girls, I treat
a body of water like an ocean of
worship. I am the son of his father
who struts & spears with this violin.
Until doves dance in the film
of your eyes & the sky shudders
you to smithereens.

The Night You Finally Sleep Over

I quilt a bouquet of flowers into your
twilight with emotion sutured into words.
Each letter breathing a dawn of meaning
into your past darkness.

I tailor you in with a thread of this rain
& a bubble of its breeze.

Your lips moan words while my hips
draft delights with ancient ink

Dark fruits dangle & fall swaddled
in darkness. Letters are lamps where
the world sleeps with the evening.

Then a commune with ancestors, stirs
a puddle that lies within

A rainbow of fireflies- a Chapel of bees
humming in your throat until you swallow
my roar, softening it into imperishable
moans & echoes that die thousand time
in the silo of your silence

I find myself in a dream

where your sight weaves
a passion fiercer than words,
where in the dead of the night,
you set something in me ablaze.
a fire that never sleeps, but burns.
Like a rain. Like a wildfire
crackling through senses.
when sun has slept, we can do
night things. The moon, a shield
that pulls us close. Before we
wake. Before the dawn breaks
let us stay longer
in this flirtatious dream
Before we wake to another
argument that comes with
the dawn.

The Queen Of The Night

I cannot sleep yet
because I owe you lines;

a fine my heart breathes
to pay.

The night steals my pen,
a poem sets with the sun.

But my love is the breeze
that breaks the dawn:

Your company all night,
a presence all day

Let the breeze course
through your silky petals,

carrying the smell
of your sweet nectar,

across my threshold,
my queen of all nights.

*The Queen of the Night: *Cereus* cactus known by many names such as the Princess of the Night or the Queen of the Night, the *Cereus* cactus is a species of cactus whose flower only blooms at night, typically between the months

of July and October. The flower has a warm, soft, floral scent, with a touch of sweetness.

This Morning is a Sword

The night, its sabre like my
teeth, knives through your sky

32 white roses nestled in
two moons; full & yielding.

You yell, you roll, &
the half-morning thunders along.

A lightning. A spasm of shivers.
A fusion of everything.

The line blurs. Visions slur.
& the morning cuts through

the final piece of darkness.
All suddenly fresh & flashy.

As we rest drinking in
the new morn.

My love falls from a tree

at the market square in
Akesan Oyo where the wind

of change defies gravity
My love travails

in the silky wind that lands
at Osogbo

At the palace's backyard
there a maiden

chaste, waits without a haste
But my love like a local herb

has no dosage. It's a whirlwind
the lady has to embrace.

Abeni

nature croons thy name
every minute I am inflamed
I find a moon along a path
a talking drum along a stream
a little swish as the wind rustles
my feet's flipflop on a shoddy
path that sounds thy name
the thunder rumbles while
the lightning crackles
All: Abeni

you crackle without lightning
you rumble without thundering
your name rustles with leaves
slithering with rosy weaves
I love better than the flipflop
my heart larger than its shoddy drop
I am the talking drum
the beating stick's chum
every minute's strum
All: Abeni

I rivet to find you
in the white noise of office AC
in the burning chant of a goal spree
in the sonorous call of the muezzin
even in my car with tyre screeching
I hear you in everything
not because it's Val
but it's your birthday
And All is Abeni.

Queens Are Flowers

Resilience with soft solidity.
Queens are flowers that bloom
even in the hardest seasons,
while mahogany falls sideways.
Kings cried at birth, men
whimpered at night to a cool
solace of a welcoming hug.
The breasts heaved a constant
strength that could not be found
in occasional manhood.
Queens never fail,
they birth kings.

"I Shall Bail Low" (Aisha Bello)

The "highs" of the pulsating cadence
in my heart, the culminating furore of
my cooking love is like a burnt porridge
stoking the peak like a stenographer's
hands. Love like the three Juzz's- one
for Dad, for Mum & for the issues
My love is at the "highs"

The "shall" depicts the potency of my
conviction, piercingly accurate beyond
purport like a blindfolded Messi against
a man-less goal post. With the certainty
of seeds in an orange, with the pact
between feet & path, the "Highs shall"
as the days run into nights without
constraints--

The "bay" to every sailor is a cardinal
source leading to all wondrous ventures
A single source to which every hunter
returns after snaring a mammoth game
The "bay" to the watermelon is the mouth
that speaks love in volumes. The "bay" to
the love is the heart that clings to the
sweetness of all fruits. The "highs shall bay"
somewhere, like the sky to cosmic bodies

And the "low" is the humility, father of

greatness to unfold, the restfulness of a
newfound "bay". From former wondering
I bail out. To this valley, like the sun, the
moon & the stars find repose in the sky.
Just like the three Juzzs, greatness is
formed. A union born with a new flag
unfurled. I hope you feel this & find yours
too. "I shall bail low" (Aisha Bello).

Iseyin

Iseyin welcomes us to her thighs
through a long lonely road that
reminds us of birthing —
a mat of greenery welcomes
us like invaders, the grey twig
amidst the aged greenness
watches dolefully. Palm trees
on mound, stand like sentinels
protecting their queen. River
Ogun spills across the towns'
waist like mercurial beads. A
huge mountain
wears white cassava flakes like
a damsel's make-up.

A circular road lures us in, a giant
inselberg spilling breast milk to
the scattered brown roofs
like a thousand Odu's on a giant
Opele.

Oja oba, the heartbeat of trade
greet with hustling smile, a tidy
air to humans that sell in the day
and Humans that sell in the night.
Talking drums invade all gatherings
sparring encomiums to win naira.
We are at Iseyin where gods weave
“fine ofii”, a science of clothing that
smirks at dangerous harmattan more
than thousand suits”

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