

Anthology of Ifeanyichukwu Onwughalu

Ifeanyichukwu Onwughalu

Presented by

My poetic side 



Dedication

Christopher Okigbo and Nelly Sachs

About the author

Ifeanyichukwu Onwughalu is a husband, father, poet, realtor and entrepreneur.

A native of Ojoto, he is a nephew to late Christopher Ifekandu Okigbo. He draws a lot of inspiration from Christopher, Nelly Sachs and other poets. The society, environment and live experiences all add as powerful tools his poetic journeys.

summary

Scented roses (a vote for kidney donation)

Before we go in for the knife

Notes to Gogo

Chekeleke in the sunset sky (Of Egrets and flapping fingers)

Wrinkled Petals

A song for Pius (Tribute to Dr. Pius Nwabufo Charles Okigbo, 1924 - 2000)

Cry, my beloved Kyiv

SOS: Mariupol

May day, May day Kharkiv on fire!

Flashes

Shamed Cop

Sit-at-home

It's hard to breathe

your time blows in the wind

Scented roses (a vote for kidney donation)

so it is that the call filtered in
for a journey of love to make
that which many dread
is taken and given on a platter
so now I make to give
I am of privileged few
who gave their treasure
as ransome so you breathe again
who picked the thorns
so you relish the scented roses
I cut my life by half
that your's be full
I passed the ball
so you score the goal
ascend to victory
and live again

Before we go in for the knife

In the shadow of frenzied thoughts
I ask
Will it go well?
In the midst of doubts and faiths
Laced twins in present scenario
I pique:
Will she live?
Half a decade has been served
Flurry of escapades deserving
Voluminous tales
We all got drunk in passion of help
The size that filled a bank
And now lightening the lamp
To see that long pathway to surgery room -
Not of pain but of life I see
Not of tears but of hope it'd be
That her limbs will fly again
That this heart can breathe aloud:
And all once dead come to life
Such that sun lies side by side with earth
In handshake of solidarity
Such that surgeons dance with nurses
In tributary of success
And when wheeled out of rebirth
Glowing shall it be
The colours of her new life

Notes to Gogo

AMEN!

SO ENDS

My prayer for Gogo
This rainy night,
Wedded by freezing breeze,
Brought fond memories of you.

I SEE YOU

In the mirror Gogo:
Even in the darkest times of the night
I see you still;
I close my eyes. I go back to
Teenageville -
It all comes clear, bold and real.

I LONG

To kiss the sweet aroma
Eavesdropping from your kitchen,
Testament of easterly soups.

A MILLION

Strolls we made to the stream:
Fermented cassava and breadfruit -
Our lot and craft,
Graced your firm palms;
Washed clothes left to dry on Idoto greens.

THOSE LOFTY

Hands that squeezed oranges...
Juices flowing into my tender palms;
Those lumped balls

Of fufu into my lusty mouth;
Relished taste after taste
Of the oft testified bitter leaf soup.

YOUR BEAUTIFUL
Cursive writings
Underlined your years of British exposure;
That blank note you gave me to scribble,
I'll ink it with love
Filled with fondest memories -
Wide as West Oakland to West Africa:
Confluence
Of creativity and new friendships.

AS A
Greying hair speaks of age and grace,
Gogo, your's seneraded strength and stay,
Until that dark-dressed death
Broke and sucked away your breath!
But not your towering legacies,
Long built with pride and aces!

AMEN!

Chekeleke in the sunset sky (Of Egrets and flapping fingers)

6 on the dot. another cloudy evening
thunder:
grandeur groans and grunts,
welcome the rain.
they fly by
in rhythm under the blue skies.
brisk and swift,
tender swings,
in their wings,
in the wind -
chekeleke!
my hands meet their sway
in compulsion;
a reflex fashioned in conformance,
reminiscent of infancy:
coated fingers in whitish tattoo -
symbolism of innocence
or of adored superstition.
I checked out my fingers,
let out a chuckle,
waved to the rainy sky,
went back to Durban Gen,
as daylight fades.

Wrinkled Petals

My country's image is waning
Each passing day.
What can we make of her
Coat of rags?
Let's burn her shadow and
Make us a tattoo of grief,
Epitaph hugging her obituary
Consternation in silence.
Violence:
That riotous beauty sought after
all over:
Scorching deserts to
creaky creeks,
Plateau tops to
plain greens -
Even the rains have lent in their cries
Witnessed on the faces of charred victims
Whose offsprings:
Kankara
Kagara
Shiroro
Owerri
Chikun
Kajuru
Zamfara
Oyo
Aba
Abakaliki
Benue -
Wail each day till their throats run dry;
Till their famished mothers

No longer hold high bony fists

Above pale faces.

Evolution of vultures:

Ant-infested faggots are up in arms;

What's the fate of the fetcher?

A song for Pius (Tribute to Dr. Pius Nwabufo Charles Okigbo, 1924 - 2000)

Tell us,
How do we crack the riddle
Dropped from the sky?
How do we hold the tears
Tossing endlessly
Like thousand rosaries
Of rain on heat?
Tell us,
How do we pile up the cries
Of kernel from same palm that was you
That now weep we must weep
And mourn we must mourn?
Tell us,
How do we tell the story
Of twinship padded in sorrow
Closely knit by blood:
Of same womb
Of same learning
Of same fame
To bow out
At the season of sleep?
Tell us,
Have you sojourned
To complete the logic
Of tripartite unity:
Of Christopher, Lawrence and blessed Pius
Like Father, Son and Holy Spirit...
Tell us, have you?

Cry, my beloved Kyiv

bring back the blue skies
coloured red
by rages of bloody wars

bring back the shiny sun
made pale by weary plumes
of greedy need

so my heart can meet with your's
bickering aside
division away

so our children can play in winter's hands
and sunny haze
oblivious of the masquerade
ghosts steering behind

so that we can display
our beauty
fairly and squarely
in our once safe streets

o tell me it's a dream
we wake to another world
another reality realer than dream
patched up in Kyiv hills

like another life unlived
we dance to unfamiliar song
sad one in Babylonian rivers

like white stallions stumping around
in the southern plains of Ukraine

will stones direct our paths from city to sea
and in whispers decree our creed
in secret
that holds the fishes in harmony
and restore our reality
in fine lines of peace

SOS: Mariupol

I heard you have been starved
I'm told you are too weak to cry
Your face too dry to smile
Your feet too feeble to flee

I saw your home bombarded
Thick smokes eclipse your blue skies
I'm sure your sun is unwilling to shine
Even your moon ashamed to glitter

You took a cue from Babylon
And Kalmius now chorus her sad tales
Wailing to Azov's feet
Not a single grain found on her fertile soil

O my sweet Mariupol
Hold on one more day if you can
I'm coming dressed in legions
Succour and doves are with me
To set you free from captivity

May day, May day Kharkiv on fire!

A city once vibrant. Flourishing -

now filled with pain and fear:

Desolate. Such that her belly is emptied: citizens on the run...

Emptied of families once gathered at dinner -

Laughter flowed freely when mouths fed at table -

Borsch and cutlets. Salo and kielbasa.

Where are they now?

Burrowed in bunkers? Or

Buried in rottenness?

Here lie dead bodies bloating on streets:

Russian birds spewed acids on them.

Z jets roared in her skies -

Like stars that died thousand years ago. Now down. Now burnt.

Ashes and smokes: fatal losses -

Brave warriors of watch night hail!

May day! May day! They retreat! Like

A dog with tail between it's legs. Such that

May day happened in February

Enemy drained. War paused...

Drama of talks in field of play

Kaboom in a tete-a-tete

Cocktail of diplomacy. Pretense in display.

O ye corridor, can you grant me exit to safety?

Free from this cacophony:

This denazification. This demilitarization. This deceit
That gurgled our blood.

What will tomorrow unfold?

Thorns and roses or lilies -
Or basket of crimsoned hibiscus?

Dearest Iryna send in flowers from yonder:

Hordes of them to flood me. To fly
To your warm homely hands.

Flashes

in midst of vicissitudes
you say
let bygones be bygones

how can this be
when one bygone has eloped
bagging along
his inadequacies
beyond borders unknown
and the other lounged into a hole?

I digress...

and come to think of it
how similarities ring through -
that it rained in Ojoto:
after my grandmother was buried,
after my father was interred,
after my sister went to the grave.

and you may say:
rain is
now a herald of cleansing
a revelation
that their souls have reached
beyond the clouded realm of eternity.

I move on...

these vicissitudes come to town
where everything is in God's hands;
co-harboring
in a makeshift shade

accommodating spent men -
labourers
hungry and begging
in casting and binding session.

I shake my head...

next to them
a political signage on Trans-Ekulu bridge -
three big fat heads smirking at them
whose god is better?

I wish...

that the rain:
that leveller of realities
can sweep these vicissitudes
down Udi hills to the tributaries
linking the river lines
to the Atlantic's high current.

they sail away...

Shamed Cop

Sainted thief
Salute!
Thieving saint
Decorated.

When a palm frond made for shade
Is burnt to ashes,
Not even skeletons can mask his beauty.

When a parliament gives you an award,
Be certain of a visit from ant-infested woods.

When a Cardinal fresh from conclave,
Frolics in hideous huts,
Broken kernels will adorn his neck.

What sort of medal was he expecting?
Like David's who slew tens of thousands?

You became transfixed in soured grapes -
Fresh from hallowed chambers,
All in shades of intent.

Corrupted by the palm wine they gave you:
High and tipsy in your jubilation of robbery;
A dreaded hunter shadowed to a dingy cell.
In torrents of shame
Prancing about on
Rancid banana peels

Greed has coloured the medal
Adorning your shadow's neck,
Like a canvas

In mixture of blood
Of victims' pains.

I wonder what runs through your mind
In the chambers of prison.

Sit-at-home

Empty streets, distraught zone
It's quiet and empty in all places
In fear and tears we walk alone
Forlorn looks on saddened faces

One man jailed for a whole nation
In solidarity we take our chains
And where he goes we march on
In his loss we find our gains

What's become of the blood-letting
Even the loudest of voices are silent
They loot, they destroy in profit getting
Dead bodies litter wherever they went

Seems like the devil has made east his encampment
Corpses and blood eaten and drank in sacrament
I like the solidarity in our cause
We must fix our broken laws

This rollercoaster is a déjà vu
Now we sit at home me and you
How long it'll last we don't know
A fearsome monster it will grow

After full circle it will turn around
When it has reached it's full course
In all our land peace will abound
If in one accord fairness we endorse

It's hard to breathe

it's hard to breathe. when
mosquitoes sing. with their queen -
too heavy to fly
succulent dinner she had
benevolent me. on a platter of sleep
but she's damned noisy.
flapping wings. not alone -
fly by, fly in, fly on:
in endless berths. skin top base
like a 3D exploration -
these extreme dancers
fly-dancing on my skin.
their queen:
her's was majestic. focused.
sweet violin
she blew to my ears
my body her on-shore suckling
to her belly full; that
flip of hand. she got caught
my palm a canvass
of blood and death -
her death, my relief. but,
this nagging pain stays on.
headache,
of her making. sickness
of her calling - flip flap
of her wings. to her death,
of their queen.
it's hard to breathe. hard
to sleep, when mosquitoes fly -
when they dance as I sleep.

your time blows in the wind

spread your hands
like you own the skies. speak like thunder and
let the rain fall. act the script.
own the world; even hakuna matata happened
when all animals bowed to simba.
your's is coming.
take the step helon habila took on plateau plains
of purple hibiscus: chimamanda's silver lining
and aprons round your waist
and big one on israel adesanya's shoulder.
all will wait till your time comes. for now
it blows in the winds. it will come.