

Poetry Series

Oludipe Samuel
- poems -

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Oludipe Samuel(5th, January)

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In Lagos Hours

Grey scalpel, grey slaughterers
Comb sideway of melding blood and brine, seriatim,
Stroke gold-yellow kerosene swells possessive of streets.
Burdened omnibus stabs the broken motorway,
Retracts to stoop to grey hawker-
His coy belly is distended from hunger

The hovering dust pleats the road
Tar holds sway smoky rust like confounded wraiths
Possessive of the runway;
Rebukes from spice-caked stall-women stalk
Annoyed warden as ghostly whispers ashore yet
Enchants pot-bellied man shaving beard...
Blast, fire, ruckus, receded prayers on rolling tyre

Limp night.
Hollow dawn
Nets resonances of thousand penchants.
Light on trailer crevices
Echoes back upon rushing tandems.
Beneath a sky darkly blunt
She heads home beating the throng's plaint
Above haunted night-watchers,
Trampling adire women, soul-sour policemen
Of leaking uniforms.

Oludipe Samuel

Johannesburg

Crow. Not crack
Raised on bird-gurgle, stray
Tunes shocked on the wave

Of strange mourning. My lobe
Voids the bother of living din
And death; singe presences high

Familiar with the spirit, as banter
A carriage of skins bare, of
Pigment gracious yet untouched

To such seam your keeps
Brave the mellow tension of earth's dim vault,
Sufferer's shadow at the eaves,

Heave quiet storms down the weaves
Of street and steam— and as nose drips
The blood of doubt, you brought

Misted song of that infernal cold.
Oh mild tortures rang from annunciations
In circuit, brief advents of home.

And I strode the wind
You therewith bribed, a caress of guests
For the sleep of landlords

Oludipe Samuel

Kirakita

'We know the path to promise, a richer cairn
Of kindest hearts.' It was nation, outspoken
In burdens, seeking the once misplaced
Barefaced revolts of every hope
Spun to torment of the good-forsaken moments.
Of the spirit, locket residues are not safe — or were never
Voices of water prophets rose still the next panic, diurnal
So...let all be placed. Let a billion throng
Displease the caveat cry of sparring worlds
For the itch of throat and musts of depraved mind
Then pacts, gains and bargains, rents,
Luxuries and time-tables. Till that cry
Reincarnates serenity in the lash, in the gut
Of earth; impervious is the seal of regrets
The grind of suntanned limbs daring stake a fortune
Fraught spirits, from home to homes, surviving
Wants, hawking creeds

'We know the path to promise'. The dawn is cove
For the vigilant eye, as the shutters open
All motes are entrances to cornucopia
The outside grime may reveal chests, not
Utensils to till soil but rims of gold, incipient,
Displaces a benediction of yawns that haul us
To magical embraces of somnolence. Yet no. Nutriments
Lay on the misty crossroads, ebos*, casted
Morning wraps and kneaded faeces of daemons
Gilded with a million chakras. Strive
Is the new descant of hamlets, survived
In cosmopolitan fashions. They tore grimly on
To foreign stock-reeds, lavished the bounty to gauge
The span of marooned starvation when it longed
To touch the faraway eaves of home.
Still, impervious is the seal of regrets
Appetite-chimes resound past cosmic confines

And Kirakita rebounds from shaded stalls,
Savage bazaars, swirled, at marines in profligate
Tunes of timeless bargains, raging nymphs

Sold in sacks to omit the next rebirth
Of senseless haste — oblivious to libations, oozing
From ligneous beasts of the eternal seas
Rootless, unequalled with the world of flesh.
Are ours to wilt, bottomless, beneath the scrub of distress
Between toes crush realm ancestries of landscapes
Subterranean as feet of hearths, as the icy barren warren?
“But we know the path to promise”
Amid our footfalls, let apprehensions exorcise
Spores of recreation, at feud with gluttony
...No more, has earth wailed? Fading rain-tree
Hoard the sap? The wilting heavens as sacrilegious
To man, as man to himself, once reprieved itself?

Still, here we stick before the depletion, keen on more
Falter at routes that lead the unmapped course
Inwards and inwards only; flare and flicker about
The deepest core. Yet, we know the path to promise,
The path to slighter desecrations, bustles
Of a cryptic kind and furtive pilgrimages
Attuned to blood-spattered pulses. Mystics
Seize the throne of hearts. I have seen Kirakita,
An orchard of aching looks. It bred
While I slept, their eyelashes creased as my trance,
Accustomed to displeasures
...and the dearest demise

Oludipe Samuel

Night

On these roofs I saw it sat

A sullen shadow laced on presage

Of dream's byways.

Streams of flesh-wraiths

Skyward seized, yet ranged as a tender palm

To soothe tasseled vapours on thinning trunk

Roam, as all in a

martinet. I know nothing

Of his manner but rotten shrouds

Entwining but never lopped in-between

His verdict and

my gaze.

My eyes are these swollen bags, neurotic

As traitors drunk with lone. You

must

Swathe me now, Night. Ride me upon these draping reins

Stale on my lips—of

timeless bargains, weaned—

Yield dense like the goddess' chest upon my lids

And slowed like your pulse, earth-

embossed, slowed,

Whetting homeward courses, except that slumber

May root catacombs when in kind or as of

A charm proving

futile as those dreams

That levitate behind a cringing nuzzle

Oludipe Samuel

No! She Said

Legs freeze jelly-numb! Breath watered to flakes
From a distant class, he longs,
Glued to a doubter's dream, the image
Sought to crush his heart, to flash
The sore of his love back in icy waves;
Words sleek beyond players ranting,
Beyond passion imaginable...
But no, she said

Three comb teeth stung his hair –
Or aches they were...three sudden recalls
For his eyes were bare. Honey warmth
Searched the corners of his mind,
His fingers thrust brave to mask the vision
Of lost desires, slow torture of loneliness ghosts.
Still they came, damp squibs of a moment's
Firm purpose
But no, she said

And he saw his hair was harsh,
Thunders broke from a thousand pores,
A prodigal smile crept beneath a charming face
Of twisted thoughts
Shots over shots, they tease. The romance strained.
Fears came heavy in his breath.
'Keep on!' his watchers cried
But no, she said

What misses in me, the sincerity in my eyes?
Are you finer than Aphrodite?
Reserved for ocean beds of twinkling shells?
No, she said

But wait!
Count the flowing streets, whose bellies
Stretch with scattered hearts of the world...like hairs...
Those are the beauty from your windows,
Your stolen wants cast away...
'No's belched from life herself...

Your strength fades to doubt

But no, I say

Where lays your ease, the combs you launch
In the eye of bumps? Lone mortal
Your heart is moist fence on which billions breed.
Be returned to yourself, the universe has sprung
New shoulders of pride, awaits your no, life-alike

So no, you will say

I am no fragment of a broken heart,
A broken dream, a broken hair...
I am the heart, dream and hair –
The unique spot on the face of the earth

Oludipe Samuel

Requiem For A Tribe

Mandela, you were no more
Than the lash on my skin –
The fiery hairs wild wild, wave-breaking
As the ocean's teeth on the running rind

And we the melted salt, spurned
When the earth swells its purse
To seek the peril of your passion bold,
A lashing tongue piercing the century

Of alien rape, trodden flesh
Lost in the reach of memory
But oh it must rise,
This strain of grief, binding

The last sutures of life –
Your passing dares me, Mandela
Last-ditch guardian of that hope
On the vacant brows of my face

Grim pulses through your shiver wreath us
Lavish charms, bound to an oath of purity
So now the eaves burn above your head...
I think of trees and stumps

Oludipe Samuel

Rose

Beyond mangled
Shadows of broken veils, it strove
A bolt of warmth far off the furrowed all;
Vapours, pore-breaching, of the first
Swollen beam.

The morning's tender glance

Droops above the yolk serene, its
Writhing brush of bloodshot glare
And the heavy thrust of a broadening void
In weak recession of that glance.

O how cold it drew – stifled echoes

In twine rustles; birdlimes glaze on
Dim wings...it drew
A vacant reed and brittle spine

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