

# Rhythms of Truth

(A poetry Anthology organized in celebration of Nigeria @ 53 Independent)



Awolowo



Azikiwe

Edited  
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For The Literate And Creative Development Of Nigeria Young Writers



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**Compiled by:**

**Wole Adedoyin**



For The Literary And Creative Development Of Nigerian Young Writers

## **Dedication**

Dedicated to all the Contributors.

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## HEADLESS GIANT, SHOELESS ELEPHANT

Competent minds master the hands,  
Orchestrating its dexterous activities,  
And a stable head man the torso,  
Guiding in its nexus meandering.

Of what good is a big head?  
That is lacking in grey matter?  
Or a bulging ocular mass,  
That sees not beyond the nose?

Bravery is sometimes an illusion,  
More so in a land without a vision,  
Where walking but dead bipeds,  
Are found leading the true living.

They came like a swarm,  
Asked for our mandates in poll,  
Disguised their 'shallolity',  
With the depth of wealth they advertised.

Gathered around them were fellow cronies,  
With all manners of shadowy pasts,  
Shrouded together behind their opulence,  
Deceiving the people with planned games.

One would have thought they meant good,  
Especially so, given their acclaimed background,  
Shoeless past, would endeared them to us,  
No! Desire for boot caused them to loot!

And if there is still a foot to lead,  
Must have been smeared in mire,  
In such a moral sludge and perversion,  
That no eye would love to behold.

It is our land and our home,  
It is the nature's gift to us all,  
In the center they sit like a dome,  
Playing off our future like a ball.

Out of every four black men on earth,  
In the four corners of the globe,

We are potentially allotted a slot,  
An uncommon ratio the world over.

With the Atlantic wetting our feet,  
And bright sunshine leaking our sebum,  
Our soil permeate with Niger and Benue rivers,  
Ours is a special land with unparalleled fecundity.

Even if we are not going to plant,  
It still has given us enough to fetch,  
We only are not as half as blessed,  
With averagely focused leaders.

If our leaders have heads at all,  
It must be the size of their belly button,  
Such a vestigial central element,  
With lost function since their very birth.

That truly must be their state,  
Or worse, yes, because ants think with their heads,  
Building castle and keeping for rainy days,  
Which our leaders have no clue about.



One may then wonder aloud,  
Had we been under the leadership of ants,  
For over fifty years of our false freedom,  
We perhaps may be better off as a nation.

The thinking of our leaders is so primordial,  
Little wonder they yet wallow,  
In a state of survival of the fittest,  
Eating rapaciously with their twenty digits.

In a world where orders are kept,  
The crops of our so-called leaders,  
Should be goaded like the he goats,  
Pointing them to the path of followership.

To think that we have leaders today,  
Is to have removed cap from the head,  
To cap the navel, and relieved the feet its duties,  
Capping the occiput with the sandal.

***IbisolaBabalola.***

**Note:**

Hopefully, the country, Nigeria, the giant of Africa will one day have the true headship/leadership to steer her affairs in the right direction. Also in lieu of complaints and excuses, not just a shoe, but also a solid foundation will such leaders build for the generations yet unborn.

## A GIRL'S DAYLIGHTMARE

Nigeria, Africa:

Disintegration phobia;

Abandoned house,

Torn blouse,

Swollen eyes,

Broken lips,

Torn skirt,

Wounded heart,

Dashed soul,

Bruised hole,

Lost pride:

She.

Terrorism,

Sitting lonesome;

Bad intention,

Hardened groin,

Strong arms.

Other comrades,

Bloodstream rush,

In ambush,  
On queue,  
A cue,  
To do  
And undo.

We are men set out to kill the lion  
With bare hands, but ends up in its belly.  
It pains that we are only pawns!  
The lumps of mourning anger in my heart  
Can be held in the hand like pebbles.  
But what can clay-pot say to the maker?

Suddenly, the cooked yam germinated!  
As Kofi Awoonor, ended a journey at Westgate,  
When the harvest is yet due;  
Yet, it is the beginning of another journey  
Geared towards the immortal gate.

I stand here, I, the late mourner at the cemetery,  
Watching them hammer nails to your coffin  
And gracefully haul it into the eternal womb,

Where mortal enemies lay in ambush  
At the feet of solitude seeking new entrants.

We have really come to the watershed,  
And there is poverty of words of expression,  
My saliva too, is all dried up.  
The eternal gatekeeper have closed the door behind me,  
Others have all gone back home.  
But, I want you to know one thing still;  
Your poetry roars and can be heard from afar,  
It lingers still, and in the concave of my memory  
It lodges evergreen.  
In my mind, you're eternally crested in gold,  
In my heart, you'll forever be remembered!  
Sleep on.

*Chime Justice Ndubuisi*

### **Note**

Using girl as a symbol of weakness, as well as subject of oppression, the poem tries to highlight recent acts of

terrorism around the globe, in Nigeria, and more recently in Kenya which led to the death of one of the poet's literary role models.

## **ARE THESE MEN OR BEASTS?**

We cry blood from the hands of those  
Who hunt for themselves  
Some thousand drums of pains  
Who dine as they watch us wail  
In the teary stream of flames  
Who invoke some ghost-like figure of fumes  
And dragon flames that dance sky-ward  
Devouring flesh and dreams.  
O! Tell me are these men or Beasts?

See our brow bleeding from their daze  
And heart often seeks asylum in the belly  
See traders returning home, headless,  
Only to be laid in the peaceful rest,  
Some rusted and heaped  
Like fishes on the racks,  
See, they rain fire on thatch huts  
And defecate on sacred earth.  
Tell me, are these men or Beasts?

Oh tell me!

You who made our north your battlefield

And flood headlines with carnage news,

Who **Haramed** the night with dark garbs

And slaughter stars before birth.

Tell me, are you men or Beast?

If men, then tell me,

Where is your LOVE?

Yes, where is your LOVE

**Note:**

The poem “are these men or beast” laments on the inhuman activities carried out by the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Northern part of Nigeria, how they have destroyed lives and properties in our beautiful Nation, the poet’s personae asked where is there Love if they are actually men.



## GO ASK THE FLOOD

Fellows, we too have danced  
To this painful throb  
Shed rain, sweat and blood  
At that dastard flow,  
Some did paddle through farmlands  
Only to watch dead sweats  
Slouch to ocean side,  
Some groped in liquid darkness  
Wrestling the wilds with fears and qualm  
But water is water, and land is land  
He who must follow breath's path  
Must leave the beds for the crabs.

Now the flag is white  
And we have come back  
When canoes no longer sail through sitting rooms  
Or crabs sleep in cooking pots, fireless,  
When crocodiles no longer landlord our quarters  
Forcing men to seek asylum in foreign camps  
When fishes no longer perch on trees

Or oysters sit on easy chairs.

We have returned happily

Like a man whose net has befriended a kingfish.

But all the gold have gone, who took them?

“Go ask the flood” they answered,

Ah! Do gold now float on water

That it be stolen by ebbing flood?

“May be it did when it left, just ask the flood”

Jeih! Fellow, wouldn't it sound insane if I ask the flood

Who tapped my gold and left my plastics intact?

I crave thee let love lead our steps.

**Note:**

This poem laments and condemns the non-patriotic action of many Nigerian citizens during the 2013 flood that flowed into many parts of Nigeria from the Cameroon dam destroying properties and forcing people to leave their homes.

The poem brings to light how many people broke into the apartments of their neighbours during the flood to

steal valuable properties claiming they were stolen by the flood.

## HUNTED

*(For students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria)*

Hunted!

Preyed!

Hunted!

Night, they sap us of joy mounted

Stabbing our smiles so flaunted

To reap fruits unplanted.

Hunted!

Preyed!

Hunted!

I am that scholastic flower

Forced to entertain butterflies;

Butterflies, whose eyes

Are hybrids of blood and fire

Whose chest bears the heart of scorpion.

Hunted!

Preyed!

Hunted!

I am that scholastic voice

Screaming high through the heart of night

Pleading each night for his my breath

Willing to bribe the cocks for a little crow.

Hunted!

Preyed!

Hunted!

Sister,

The testimonies of your mouth

No longer amaze us;

Of losing treasures not stabbed,

Of being stabbed not muted,

Of hearing neighbor's cries falling on deaf ears

And forsaking yours...

Hunted!

Preyed!!

Hunted!!!

Brother,

The wailings of your mouth  
No longer melt us;  
Of machete swinging rightward  
When you swing leftward,  
Of “cut ‘m, kill ‘m, knock ‘m, and chase ‘m.”  
Of complex machines uncovering the secret of padlocks  
Of gold and silver tapped window-ward...  
Hunted!  
Preyed!  
Hunted!

Now see our hands tied backward  
Sniffing there stench each night  
Eyes hosting rain, crimson red,  
Dawn, police van gallivants  
Teasing siren button like happy kids on game pads  
Vigilante seizing hoodlums from brave scholars, “case  
closed!”

O! Hunted!  
Preyed!  
Hunted!

**Note:**

The Poem “Hunted” laments on the insecurity of the Nigerian Students, especially Students of Tertiary Institution, the poet’ personae describe the Nigerian Students as being Hunted and preyed, living and studying in fear on the unknown, it brings to light how students ‘ properties are stolen and their lives sadly taken from them in different campuses.

## **IF FAILED DEAD MEN CAN TELL THEIR WISH**

Unwanted scenes and memories are stored in our unborn  
future

Our lives has become prey to pains

And in every rising dawn, we walk to different  
destinations

Nursing fear in our minds

For every news heard carries gigantic problems

Bombs threat

Strikes

Terrorism, all in massive grades

And still our consciousness rises and fall

We intentionally mock our innocent beautiful colours

Parading streets with dead hopes

Our elected gods continues to plague our ears with well  
refined lies

And we being happily sad fix lifeless smiles for  
celebration sakes

If failed dead men can tell their wish



That's if life awards them the second chance  
Then we won't want to be dead wishers someday  
For our lives only counts when we strike right cords of  
life

Oh!

Only if failed dead men lying in regrets  
For being speechless when life was their friend  
Can help me write this poem  
Then we won't want to waste our precious lives  
romancing issues

We must all learn not to beautify sin with words  
Sink yourself in the right ocean of life  
Than to be forever lost in an unknown stream  
Celebrate what needs to be celebrated  
And not what calls for merriment  
For this beautiful country is gradually strolling to  
embrace death  
And it sometimes dares us to ask  
Have you seen dead bodies before?  
And we get answer with another ask

Are there not dead bodies everywhere?

Then what the celebration when questions bounce back  
to questions

Leaving us all in oblivion

*Osigwe Benjamin*

**Note:**

The message packaged in this poem is to wake people's consciousness that not all celebrations are worth to be celebrated. The ASUU "Academic Staffs Unions of Universities" strike is nearly four months bouncing. Terrorism and corruptions are rapidly growing, if these issues cannot be attacked, then what are we celebrating when we are still not mentally free?

## **MY SOLE RESPONSIBILITY**

Is it my sole responsibility?

To craft and Name

The jet and airplane

To outdo gravity

Or re-make nature, if possible?

Yes, it is.

But the Wright Brothers did it.

Is it my sole responsibility?

To save my Negro skin,

Above mortal stupidity,

And make 'em listen,

To achieve the seemingly impossible?

Yes it is,

But martin king Luther Jr, did it.

Is it my sole responsibility?

To fly my country's flag,

Though behind bars

Doing nothing, but, liberate fellow unjust;

And write the future  
Yes it is,  
However, MADIBA did it.

Is it my sole responsibility?  
To put up a struggle,  
Fierce fight, without Google,  
Getting myself in red;  
That might lead to my untimely death?  
Yes, it is  
But M.K.O made that feat.

Is it my sole responsibility?  
To call and embrace  
All those wronged by a bloody race,  
Even if am o'er that pace,  
And offer them a future?  
Yes it is,  
But that's what mother Theresa accomplished

Is it my sole responsibility?  
To conquer mankind

Make 'em tremble at my feet  
Yet be so nice and get 'em blind  
Surely, which is making history  
Yes it is,  
Alas, that's Alexander the great and his fleets

Is it my sole responsibility?  
To engage in all godly activities  
Befitting a good, loyal, patriotic citizen,  
Along the open paths of a shadows  
That are crowded and funded  
With gentlemen and hallows,  
And the silent streets  
Where flesh eaters campaign.  
And the lonely sea.  
Which harbors thieves and pain.  
And the loony lane  
That grooms death,  
Without complaints whatsoever of distress?  
Yes it is, and for you too,  
Nobody to do it for us;  
Accomplish the impossible,

Re-write history and predict the future.  
The land NIGERIA calls, please obey!!!

## **Tega Majemite**

### **ABOUT THE POEM;**

The poem talks on collective responsibility, which is the way forward for Nigeria. The first 6 stanzas are just mere representation of collective responsibility. Much of the central idea of the poem is contained in the last and longest stanza.

## **RHYTHM OF TRUTH**

It's true news of independence  
Until nineteen sixty still dependent  
On wisdom and vision from West  
Our friend or foe; so had to tell  
From lens of benefit withheld  
And gains of diversity dispelled  
Hardly grasp trend of independence

True; news of patrons never joking  
Hope; first of October awoken  
Flash; news of independence got broken  
To all; was taken beyond token  
In speech; liberation wittily spoken  
No miss; gain of liberation afloat  
Will be haves, soon will grow  
Would lead, for many to follow  
Our brilliance, a gift we hallow  
Our dreams, a future to remould

It's true no option was revealed

On true meaning of self regime  
No inclination it kills country dreams  
Or corruption means leadership  
Or leadership equals theft of treasury  
As Giant of Africa world worshiped  
To least in Africa we got gossiped

But it is still true, that in Nigeria  
Time don't heal trauma of leadership  
Only brings back horror of ruler-ship  
Yesterday was hurt to heal today  
Tomorrow awaken, not healed but dazed

Truth is independence brought;  
Self-government with no succour,  
Nigerianization yet no favor;  
Except the fight to own it all  
A tale of thieves in daily world  
That destroys everything but one  
The mind and fist for corruption



It is true the impact of corruption  
Offers no truth, no education  
Differs and reverses every expectation  
Entrenching spirit of dilapidation  
Through road of lost, dead mission  
Hope of growth falls into dereliction  
Joy of strength ended in manipulation  
Left stranded with no passion  
Milked lifeless with blurred vision

Fifty three years after it is clear  
Truth of corrupt-independence  
The paradoxical co-existence

*Sola Adesola*

**Note:**

The poem is on how the menace of corruption has denied the country of the gains of independence. No one talked about the challenges of leadership at independence or that oil and wealth would be a curse

than blessing. The poem focuses on the untold side of independence struggles.

## SOMNAMBULISM AT DAWN

I just sit and stare  
While he grunts noisily  
Biting hard on his gums  
Swallowing invisible gin

His belly bubbles up and down  
His skin shines with sweat  
His face wrinkles into a frown  
Then slowly, a smile appears

He rises, still chewing  
Takes a step towards me  
My heart skips two beats  
Like an afterthought, he turns

I sigh with relief  
Smiling as he heads outside  
He grunts like the black goat he is  
And looks back straight at me

“Help him before he wrecks himself”

The conscience (angel) in me screams  
His stupidity amazes me  
He surges forward on wobbly feet  
“How dare I commit sacrilege?”  
His black monstrous skin  
Against white angelic beauty  
“Ugh!” I spit with irritation

“Kripes! I’m paid to watch him”  
“But he’s old enough to watch himself”  
Conflicting spirits argue in my head  
As he takes the dreadful step

The consequences fill my brain  
As he edges towards the stairs  
Bruises, tears, blood, bones  
Scars that will last a while

He grunts again as he plunges  
I watch his bumpy ride down  
Forgive, if you think me unfair  
Life, like they say, is never fair

His superiors, my parishioners  
They'll be rid of me, that I know  
But they will take me out with reverence  
"I'm better than their kind," so they said

I, the unfortunate, indispensable teacher  
The stranger who coaches the lucky student  
Forgive, but rejoice in my victorious failure  
I'm just an obedient son of my race

***Rita Okonoboh***

**About the Poem:**

It reflects the tendency of the Nigerian government to defer to foreign standards, regarding many issues that plague our economy.

## THE ALMAJIRI BOY

His face a metaphor of hunger  
Ramshackled by a lurked fear  
His voice dwindles to beg  
“Alaaro”  
His eyes, a personified sight of poverty  
They swirl and swirl around  
“Alaaro”  
His tongue sarcasm to thirst  
Wallowing tremulously in despair  
His torn feet’s soles  
Defiance to the Maiduguri mid-day sun,  
His scrawny thin neck  
An irony of a vulture,  
His spaghetti legs  
A verisimilitude of malnutrition  
His shadow withers into mirage,  
I was stupefied  
Lest the whirlwind billows him away.

*Ishaya Elisha Birma*

**Note:**

‘Almajiri’ is a common name given to learners or disciples in local Quranic schools, mostly in northern Nigeria. The poem cuts across satire and humour. It portrays a cinematic picture of a hunger-intoxicated almajiri who came begging for food (“Alaaro”) around my neighbourhood in Maiduguri. Underneath the surface of ‘The Almajiri Boy’ is a scathing message to both individuals and society to caress and fend for these forsaken ‘Almajiris’.

## **ABOUT THE ENTRANTS**

### **Chime Justice Ndubuisi**

Hails from Udi in Enugu state. He's a graduate of English and Literary Studies from the renowned University of Nigeria Nsukka(UNN). He is an unrepentant poet and humanist. Some of his poems have appeared in The Muse: a journal of creative and critical writings of the students of Department of English and Literary Studies at UNN. He is currently a National Youth Service Corps(NYSC) member serving in Oyo state.

### **Ibisola Babalola**

A physician plying my trade In the University College Hospital, Ibadan as Resident Doctor in the Dept of Family Medicine. He has Published some of his works on Treasures (Poems. [www.treasurespoems.com](http://www.treasurespoems.com)), presently working on my second book towards the Nigeria Centenary celebration.

### **Osigwe Benjamin**



Benjamin was born in 'PORT-HARCOURT' and was bred in LAGOS in a slum called 'AJEGUNLE'. He is a pen and performance poet, a member of AJ. HOUSE OF POETRY and E.R.C.(EDUCATION RIGHT CAMPAIGN). He has performed for different events such as Lagos state Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government vice chairman, for Chinyere Darline Eziegwe, the authoress of BEAD OF ESSENCE and PARABLE OF DEEDS, for SPLENDID LITERATURE AND CULTURE FOUNDATION 2013, for Professor Wole Soyinka, on his birthday at the ANA LAGOS centre. He was among the youths that organized a concert at GODDEY CINEMA, BORNTRWAY AJEGUNLE. "WE ARE BETTER THAN THIS!".

His set, when he was in Secondary school won the EKO LAGOS STATE FIRST GOVERNOR PROJECT AWARD in the person of (Governor Baba Tunde Raji Fashola). And so many other events. He is a teacher at GOLDEN ANGELS NUR/PRY SCHOOL.

AJ. HOUSE OF POETRY'S "poet of the week" July 31st 2013, also performed at (ANA LAGOS READING). He is also among the teachers that taught currently at the (E.R.C- FREE SUMMER COACHING IN AJEGUNLE), for students in SSS1-SSS3. EDUCATION IS OUR RIGHT NOT PRIVILEGDE".  
The new acting coordinator of E.R.C Ajegunle branch.

### **Tega Majemite**

A lover of poetry, just graduated from secondary school and a Nobel laureate dreamer.

### **Sola Adesola**

A writer and a poet. I have some of my write ups on social media and my blog. I am the winner of the first Lacasera Apple story. Presently working on a Christian book and gathering materials for more books.

### **Rita Okonoboh**

His hobbies include taking photographs, writing, editing and reading. He loves reading books and never humble when showing his my collection of works.

### **Ishaya Elisha Birma**

A graduate of English Literature from the University of Maiduguri, Borno State. He is native of Gashala Kufam, Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa State. Also, his the incumbent representative of Society of Young Nigerian Writers (SYNW) in Borno State. A vibrant social critic, both at my Alma Mata and among my peers, thus a seasoned poet. He is currently editing his forthcoming debut collection of poems- The Song of Mourners and Other Poems.