

Society of Young Nigerian Writers



VOICES FROM OJA 'BA MARKET

**A Collection of Poems by upcoming poets in Celebration
of Oja 'ba Market**

**Compiled and Edited by:
Wole Adedoyin**

DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to His Royal Majesty Oba Samuel Odugade Odulana the First (The Olubadan of Ibadan Land) for his contributions toward the growth and development of Ibadan land.

INTRODUCTION

Oja Oba is a popular and famous market in Ibadan. It accommodates all kinds of produce sellers and buyers. It is also one of the oldest markets in the history of Ibadan. King's Market is both the commercial and political Centre of Ibadan land.

Mapo and Bere are not quite far from the King's Market and these two places are the most essential locations for Ibadan politics and commercial transactions. To us, there is need to celebrate the market for its contributions towards the growth and development of Oyo State. Its contribution should not be under-estimated.

Apart from politics and commercial transactions, Oja 'ba also plays a significant role in accommodating traditional drummers, flutists, poets, performers, masquerades, dancers who only perform for money.

The Market also bred and nurtured some important national figures and personalities who are making Oyo State proud. The present Governor of Oyo State, His

Excellency Senator Abiola Ajimobi hailed from the area.
It is our belief that these compiled poems will educate,
inform and entertain our readers.

Wole Adedoyin

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THE RAUCOUS AND SERENADES OF THE MARKET

The farmer stirs from sleep to stretch tired limbs

His hope high he prays the gods for bountiful harvest

Gourd in hand, climbing raffia draped across shoulders

The tapper heads to the ancient palm for wine

In recurring rhythms made by his anvil

The smithy forges the last piece of metal

He recalls his ancestry as he stokes the fire

To fashion out tools that we may desire

Unhurriedly, the hunter chants along the lane

For him it has been a rewarding night

Ogun has been kind to fill his bag

The cloth weaver makes haste to the loom

With expert hands from ancient practice

She threads the last bit of wool

To make robes fit for nobles and Kings

Their hearts harbours only one thought

The rewards of labour from the King's market

Where every fourteen days a thousand feet gather

To trade, banter and barter for the best gain

It is now fourteen days since that morning

On the way to the timeless stream of our fathers

In the presence of all and the bustling forest for witness

Aduke and **Abeke** entered into a dance contest

To know whose feet will command the best cheer

Delightfully, Aduke croons with spiteful hiss

As she daintily twirl her wrapper with a mocking tease

And Abeke rolls voluptuous waist with seductive ease

Swinging with grace and the pride of a calm breeze

What a moment and sight it was for all to see

The two beauties throw girlish banter

Our hearts harbour only one thought, the squeal and
thrill

When we shall gather at the King's market

To laugh, urge and clap for the best prize

This morning is a gathering from all corners of the four
winds

On battered Lorries, wrecked vans trailed by wheeled
iron coffins

Astride piping bicycles and noisy bikes with thread bare
tyres

For some it has been an exhausting trek with wares on
balding heads

While silent Mercedes and exotic jeeps rev in corners
with majestic ease

Obada oblivious of class or rank begins to swell in
bubbling grace

On this fourteenth day, even spirits and the dead have
come to trade

The market is decked in exquisite costume to rival even
masquerades

On wooden stands, on the bare ground, a heap in
bottomless bowls

Everything is on display for all eyes to see that they may
fulfil all needs

From far out farms, beyond our borders even as far as
the Eastern seas

Goods, wares and services all mass here whatever it is
Obada will supply

A bell in hand, a cacophony of voices, a string of
itinerant minstrels

Each and one calls attention to haggle and cajole for the
best price

A priest in a corner, a priestess by the road robed in
white, indigo or red

Holding bag of cures ring brass bells for little tokens to
mend the broken

In a moment the market is quiet, gripped by beautiful
melodies

We are forced to leave our stands to watch the two
beauties of our land

As they swing beaded waists, gyrating to tunes gushing
from expert hands

We clapped and urged the dance on; the moment is filled
with fun

After all it is the King's market; by nightfall we head
home to tell the tales.

Tenibegi Karounwi



MARKET GIRL.

Bare feet on these beaten sands
Like they endured a 'bata' dance
Contrition twines the entrails
Wan face twitched as it prevails
Eyes fierce and dim
As if translating over a seam
I smile
Oh, the thought and touch
Of He who makes me blush
Will He come today?
Will He come to play?
The market is dry,
Like the fishes I sell.
Little shake of the loins
And the raucous reply of cowries.
Straight pestle legs walk forth
To find their owner's lover
Like searching locust beans in a pot
No tarrying till the market is over
Soon, eyes makes four.
The 'alarina' held no place.
Gentle rubbings of the flanks

And little boyish pranks.
Whilst the market fire tongues lick out,
They bade farewell.
Oh, the feeling of lightness
Of the heart. And the waist, too
Ah, the cowries reply no more
Behold, countenance that shows
What a mother's whip will do.

Olumide Joseph Ikotun



BOKO HARAM

Looking behind...

Behind the headlines of suicide

Bombs set off on road sides

To what lays deeper inside

Boko Haram, we pray that

This pain and struggle would one day subside

Innocents falling like birds

Unprotected by the so-called laws

Innocents hunted down without a cause

Many a soul murdered

Hearts slaughtered, Brains knocked out

Young and old fiercely tortured

In pain and grief, we drown

With dry tears hidden in our eyes

But we still live on

While others fight for right, and die?

Sacrificing your own life for a cause

Sends an undeniable message;

Simple tears aren't as expressive

What about our hand in the effort?

Is what we hear the correct expressions

Of misleading directives?

Looking at this war from their side

Where they are pieces of dirt, unfed

Wearing pieces of shirts, unclad

No one is willing to give up pride

And we die for peace in Nigeria

We are bleeding

Because somehow we've been cut by our own ideals

Our people are reeling from the pain

And we all know how it feels

Masses, massacred

Masses, shattered

Tragedy so sad to see

When all that was asked to be

Was to live peacefully

In my home, my prison

Patience has become my weapon

As I await the heat of light

The door out of my plight

Into the sun of spring

Where peace is my king

Evil in creed

Ready to kill

Without need

And succeed in their devilish deeds

What hope is there for the hopeful?

Knowing fully well that hope has lied

I know that every story has two sides

But who wins? The ocean or the tides?

How do we justify

That when others die, it's fine

Ubah Chetachukwu



POLITICAL BROUHAHA

In the savannah lands, in the swampy forest of the Niger
area(Nigeria)

Walking down lanes, farm paths, streets, and markets

You cannot but to help yourself to know more

About such a jocund environment

Which Brings the quest to know of it culture and
chieftains

And the hopes to experience sweetening recitals of the
culture

And high praises of the able leaders

And when the majority reply

They give you the brouhaha

You experience pandemonium

Where the upper and lower lips riot

The air even forcefully seek it passage

With their all tensed eye in view

Everywhere turns rowdy and rumbling

But you still pick up faintly the ideas on their vexed
minds

That the politics we hear and bargain for is not same as
we experience

Our democracy stylishly turns autocratic

Our politics is faceless they say

Minority in power, yet minority rule
Then where is the majority.
They echo louder that
Lincoln's view portrayed democracy,
As a government of the people, by the people and for the
people
But ours choked out "MAJORITY" the people,
Making ours a government, though sincerely of the
people,
But by the rich and for the rich.
Tell me, in our politics
Where a pauper wins
Or even contest in a local election today they query
Anarchy dominates our putrefied politics they roar
And when the elites would give their word
They say we all are the ambassadors,
Of our own poverty
They say we are myopic even to things inch away from
us
Stressing that our myopia made us prefer
Polished goodwill to astute fortune
Then why the hullabaloo when we voluntarily
surrendered to absurdity
Wait for elections and see

If you don't joyfully put in for your allergy they say
Our political disciples is a constitute of eleven Judas out
of twelve
Making Honesty and truth heavily subdued, they say
Then at point they ask
When will honesty ever rule?
And the kleptomaniac fingers be substituted
it is coming, faintly says the majority giving an hopeful
look.

Babalola Adeniyi Abraham



OF GANGSTER GODS AND GODDESSES

My country gods are goons

They take the sacrifice and frighten the bearers

Believe, they are gorged

They gulped till their mouths are forged

Burping into the air.

Their she(s) are whore-lords

Lie, they are warlords

Jezebels of politics,

Their claws ravaging the soul of the state.

The holy seers at the pew of nation's wealth

Hallelujahs for the descendants of Iscariot

The apple at core of Eden

They flaunt their fangs before the TV

Saying they are bishops of the big shops

Saying they never mess Mass with mess.

They poly-tick the budget

To fatten their Swiss pockets

I say, they poly-tick the budget

To swell their foreign success

The returning farts of their VIP's anuses

Choke the masses to death.

They are busy thugging away the sacrifices

See, they are jackbooting the bearers

What is more so pleasant

Than to see the sun go red?

I say, what is more so pleasant

Than to see the moon go pale?

They no longer live in shrines
But bungalows with heaven
With bulletproof doors and windows
I say, they no longer live in temples
But mansions with mild sun
The modern spirits with modern brains.

Salawu Olajide



THE ONE IN WHITE (EYO)

Have you seen the play of Adamu?

Mortals of earth, have you seen the play,

Of Adamu Orisha?

The one in the white mask waits,

His rod stiffly in hand,

He waits in the wings of life,

Ready to take center stage,

The tall white one,

O great Eyo gogoro!

The one whose feet are ever impatient,

Who's dancing feet stirs up,

The black dust of mourning in men's heart,

The one whose hat,

Skims effortlessly slicing through air,

Reaching deep to pluck at the chords of our hearts,

Close down Carter Bridge!

Cordon off Tinubu square!

Gather round you great people,

The spine of western Nigeria!

Hide your motorcycles,

Their sounds I want not,

Draw off your sandals and quench your cigarettes!

The white masquerades are about to dance,

Let no suku be seen on our women,

Let no bicycles be wheeled in!

People of idumota, where are your eyes?

Let your feet be in the multitude,

Children of Oduduwa!

For we have seen the death of another great man,
The grim reaper's hands have seized,
Another son of Odu'a!
The one in the white mask has been called out!
Watch out for his staff!
Stare closely at his moving feet,
Let us mourn and dance,
From Idumota to Iga Idunganran.

Onwuasoanya Chika Tobi



**THE PRAYING VOICE BESIDE THE OSUN
RIVER**

The smiling sun above gave an indication of the voice,
Yet, out of the frightening silence it mumbled,
Sending down the spine a feeling of loneliness so
infectious,

Reminiscent of solitary human existence in the jungle.
Again came the tiny voice from beside the peaceful
river,

'Bless me mother and make me a mother'.

Her troubled twinkling eyes the color of a lively liver.

Discalceate feet rooted to the spot like mortal.

In August, her supplications would not have been lonely,

But now, the only companions are the ageing priestess'
merciful eyes.

Then the bellowing and grumbling from above so loudly.

Just before the cascades, something lighted up her
relieved beautiful eyes.

Now drenched and soaked in her white attire and
undried,

It was hard to say if she had smiled or cried.

Babatunde Idowu Ebenezer.



TWENTY CHILDREN...

A tale of a score of kiddies
That they claim cannot be
Together for two decades.
True indeed is the postulation
Of our great sagacious Mother Africa
With her third leg that shivers
And shakes as if it would break.
The third leg she uses
In guiding us to the path of rectitude.

So, it's true
That change changes not.
Change is constant;
Change, an immutable canon of the nature
That witnesses the birth
Of all civilizations
Yet she doesn't leave
Her post as she also
Stands there again
To bid them farewell.

Adewale Bakre



THE CLOSING STAGE

I'm afraid the end-time is near

See the sickening immunity of depraved heads

The impudently imprudent misfits –

The perfidious president, the gluttonous governors,

The crooked councilors, the law-breaker law-makers,

All self-seeking merchants of loot

See the cynical, disillusioned masses

I'm afraid the end-time is here

See the political stooges called judges

See the bloody liars called lawyers

See the opportunistic stratocrats

Patriotically riding on the civilians' profligacy

See the many masked mass murdering extremists,

Bearing lunatic loathing for western ways

Shelling churches with gory thirst

See the many aggrieved Deltan bands

The vengeful victims of our insensate state

Making a Milch cow of many abducted fellows

Perceived as agents soiling the Deltans' oil

And soiling the soil on which the Deltans toiled

I'm afraid the end time is here

See the many blood-thirsty tribal fanatics

Ruining prized assets and innumerable human souls

See the many unwaged, disenchanting youths

Willing tools in the hands of disloyal patriots

Fuelling feuds among the diverse peoples

See dismembered bodies strewn on bloody streets

I'm afraid the end-time is near

See the ubiquitous, unceasing crunch

Wrecking the mighty and the limp nations

See once potent currencies now growing irreversibly
limp

See corporations crashing for dearth of cash

See nations mourning mass hunger-induced deaths

I'm afraid the end-time is near

See religion now commonly commercialized

See homily now bereft of the customary pious creed

See Morality talk murdered for prosperity greed

See religion now spawning satanic breeds –

Witchery, Wizardry, *Illuminatism*, *Voodooism*,
Vampirism...

See occult authority prevailing in the world

See daemons ruling “God’s” houses in saintly guise

I’m afraid the end-time is near

Education now perverts than edifies

See the erudite now sorrily very corrupt

See schools now breeding grounds for sordid
socialization

What killed the founding philosophy of academy?

See varied perversions now besetting schooling world
over –

Astute book wizards ghosting for slow-witted learners,

Teachers conceding morals to crispy currencies

Schools jostling for fame at all costs

Students too deeply distracted to learn

The government giving meagerly to learning course

Parents desperately wanting brainless kids succeed at
exams

Occult acts permeating tertiary, high and basic schools!

I'm afraid the end-time is near

See modern society so upturned

Homes are fractured, and the kids wander off

See society extolling unwarranted fortune

As laurels seek the disreputably wealthy few

And mediocres shot into the Hall of Fame

Ritual killings, fraudent crimes, prostitution...

All offshoots of the materialism society backs

See untamed freedom breeding lunatic lust:

Homosexualism and bisexualism

Shipped from the liberal Western world

Now stretch across the earth's length and breadth

I'm afraid the end-time is near

See the abundant infections now afflicting us

As though newly spawned by some angered gods

See the apocalyptic disasters now daily rocking our earth

The Ozone exhaustion, the volcanic eruption

The quaking, the surging and the monstrous flooding...

Surely the end is near; no, it is here!

Adebesin, Ibraheem Adekunle



THE BEAUTY AND POWER OF YORUBA CULTURE

Beauty of culture fades away when

The state fails to appreciate the

Culture of their father land.

The power of culture becomes

Restless when we Yoruba people

Fail to inculcate our culture in the

Pattern of living.

Most people forget that a state

Without a recognized culture is

A country with no identity.

At times I begin to imagine

The greatness of God, who

Allow Yoruba culture to be

Distinguished. But our people

Fail to acknowledge that.

The angels in heaven are
Rejoicing and shouting hosanna,
For our culture represent an
Epitome of beauty.
It very painful
And sound disgusting
And my eye balls are painted red
Whenever we youths fail to give prominence
To our culture.
All in the name of
Civilization which has eroded everything
About us.
Many of us are dancing in
The pool of civilization like the
Wave of the river. Forgetting that
There is pride in our Yoruba culture.
What is the gain of a state that fails to

Appreciate its culture, not knowing
That such state is gradually moving to
A state of jeopardy, if care is not taken.
Should we put the blame on our
Parents and teachers.
What of the role of the government
In redressing the abnormalities
Surrounding our culture.
It is high time our culture should
Be taken to a greater height and not
Folding our arms.

Adeleye Kunle



OJA OBA MARKET

The heritage of Oodua, Olofin Adimula,

Emperor and founder of Yoruba people.

Your children still delight to the sound of cultural tune.

They pump in and out even move sideways with their
buttocks.

The drum is the vocalist while they harmoniously backed
up.

Their steps met with every beat as they hang softly to the
tips of their agbada,

They spin round

Jump up and down

Struggling with their shoulders as if battling unseen
spirits

It is our heritage, our culture we must follow.

I wish to see the children of this Orisha

who used Ewon to travel from heaven to earth.

When I journeyed to the city of seven hills,

The only city that accommodates strangers and visitors

Behold the king's market

where buyers and sellers mingle together

The city where Oyo war slaves once settled,

Oja oba!

The king's market,

You hide your traders under your wings

And give them protection from intruders

Dalinton Joshua

