To my Jewel:
For the Friendship and Fellowship, and the Magnified Grace and Glory!
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FOREWORD

If literature is truly a reflection of life and the truth higher than history, then Shalom Chinedu's Hope Africa is a prophetic announcement in the direction of current development paradigms for the continent that awaits exploration.

Apart from the series of poems in the first part of the collection that speak in invocations of the rising Africa, the greater part of this collection delivers messages of hope occurring as dabs of healing balm. Thus, even when lines are dedicated to the restive Niger Delta, there is the urge to “bear the Excellency of the resilient dynasty”.

The organization of the collection explores the journey of the inner mind. There are forty Poems arranged in four groups of ten, with each around a dominant theme. Part One presents “Hope Africa”, Part Two – “Blow the Trumpet”, Part Three – “Tears of Love” and Part Four – “Prisoners of Hope”. While Part One celebrate the new found joy that must resonate from the dark pages of African history, Part Two digs deep into the spiritual resource of that joy. In Part Three, the poet weaves messages of the filial love,
celebrating his forebears and his partner in the divine assignment of extended creation. Like a consummate artist, he cobwebs these lines to link the celestial, making the Almighty the Master designer. The fourth part draws to a close this exploration. It is not coincidental that this section x-rays such contemporary issues as corruption, brain drain, inequality, banditry and organized crimes.

Unlike a great deal of his kindred poets, Shalom Nwodo Chinedu does not just stop at a parade of evil, he also provides viable solutions. For instance, in “Spirit of Solicitude”, he urges us to “read and read until timidity rid... and / by the verity of divinity, defeat / the spirit of solicitude.”

Shalom Chinedu's poetry is delivered in the language of a scientist which is clinical and precise. His imagery appeals to all the senses, with the message emphasized at all levels.

While I congratulate Shalom N. Chinedu as a budding voice in Nigerian new poetry, I commend these invigorating lines for your reading pleasure. You are welcome to a new genre of Poetry!

Charles Ogbulogo, (Ph.D.)
Professor of English
Covenant University
PREFACE

Hope Africa is a collection of poems specially dedicated to Africa's rebirth. The poems are fresh and original. They share the sentiments of the awakening continent! Hope is a fundamental requirement for any positive change. The verses employ the current of inspiration to ignite the fire of hope. Such virtues that bear on right attitude to life as self-esteem, confidence, patience, prudence and love are presented with captivating simplicity. There are also stirring commentaries on matters of morality, destiny and identity, spiced up with emotive admonitions, enquiries and entreaties. Without exception, anyone can dream a dream and “wake up” to see it come true!

I celebrate my teachers and all the 'helpers of destiny' God has positioned on my way! I specially appreciate my mentor and model, Dr David O. Oyedepo, for the gracious words and mighty deeds that stir my heart and steer my course aright. His teaching on the “Mystery of Hope” inspired this piece. I profoundly thank Professor
Charles Ogbulogo for accepting to write a foreword for the anthology. I am very grateful to Professor Innocent Chiluwa for proofreading this revised edition. My Jewel asked for the compilation; Isaiah Fortress encouraged the publication and Dan Offor packaged them together for your reading delight. To God alone be all the glory!

Keep your hope alive!

Shalom Nwodo Chinedu
February, 2019.
“When hope becomes your companion, life begins to deliver its best for you. To be hopeless is to be helpless... To be void of hope is to live in the grave.”

- Dr. David O. Oyedepo
My Africa, My Dream
God Bless Africa
Hope Africa
Pangs of Royalty
Arise Africa
Be Glad Africa
What's The King's Dream?
Bright Africa
Boomerang
Democracy?
MY AFRICA, MY DREAM

I saw Africa.
I saw the slurry, miry clay flowing thru
The potter’s hands!
I saw Africa, in the mould of life, form
A pot, burnt, sun-baked, strong...
Treasure-full!

I saw Africa.
I saw the slimy, virile germ, growing, swell
The holiest bowel!
I saw Africa, in the womb of life, become
A son, bruised, chastised, discreet...
Born to rule!

And I saw Africa:
And the arrays of myriad stars, glowing, lit-up
The oceans of darkness!
And I saw the new solarium of life, burning,
And marshes and forests and deserts...
Turned to gold!
This is Africa,
My Africa, my dream!
GOD BLESS AFRICA

God bless Africa,
Progenitor of my kind!

God bless Africa:
Africa, deep, drenched...
By floods and loud, cascade showers,
And storms of wild, Saharan wind,
The warm, scintillating, sun-baths
Cleanse her white-washed mind!

God bless Africa:
Africa, fresh, regenerated...
With the dew of a new dawn
To the excellence of resplendent
Day-star,
The bright, sublime bride
Smile to adorn her pride!

God bless Africa:
Africa, pure, immaculate...
With ecstasy of flowery exuberance
To the full embrace of stupendous,
Celestial grace,
The fertile, volatile virgin
Erupt in fervent renaissance!

God bless Africa,
Procreator and God-kind!
HOPE AFRICA

Hope Africa,
In dust, interred, out of sight!
Hope Africa,
Precious seeds sown are shooting out
Tender buds!
Sing Africa; sing at sun-set!
Sing through the dusk and darkening shadows...
Stars, bright, are rising
To guide the deepest night!

Hope Africa,
In storm, battered by bouts of tempests!
Hope Africa,
Heaven's windows are open, pouring out
Bounteous graces!
Dance Africa; dance in the rain!
Dance through the blitz and blares and hail...
This isn't the Noah's flood;
There's a rainbow in the clouds!
Hope Africa,
In pains, altered by sorrows of birth-pangs!
Hope Africa,
Womb, full-grown, is pushing out
Its due glory!
Shout Africa: travail and prevail!
Shout through the blood and sweat and tears...
Joys, joys, are bursting forth,
With the dawning of a new day!
PANGS OF ROYALTY
(To the Niger Delta)

Hordes, self-seeking,
Hordes, self-serving,
Drilling, spilling, stealing, killing...
Hordes, desecrating the sacred groves,
Hordes, provoking the ocean's rage!

Why do I wear this bullion crown
As ornament on the Blackman's head?
Why do I bear the pains, and grieve
As if my womb conceived the universe
By a holy intercourse?

Is this my plot? The portion partitioned,
Apportioned, auctioned and sanctioned;
Darkened by fumes of ceaseless incinerations!
Is this my lot? Broods robbed, clubbed,
Ducked, distorted and contorted; disquieted...
Oh me; why, am I in this burning splendour
Gasping to cast out sorrows?

Bravo, bravo, troubled princess:
Dignity is come to birth!
Wear your strength Oh royal armada;
Push, push and bear the Excellency
Of your resilient dynasty!
ARISE AFRICA

Arise Africa,
Dawn is come to you!
See; warriors riding on chariots of fire
Raise your flame!
Awake, awake, O dryly bones of giants,
Leap out of limbo of derision!
Arise Africa,
Garnish your famished, desolate ghosts,
Roaming the earth without any blood!

Great Africa,
A new day is born to you!
Hear; minstrels waving the palms of victory
Praise your name!
Dance O kindred of unyielding conquerors,
Shake Kingly breasts!
Let the flaming swords rend your horizon
And rout the dark, scary clouds!
Arise Africa,
Replenish your ravished, deserted coasts,
Groaning in the agony of melancholy!
BE GLAD AFRICA

Be glad Africa,
Woman, dark and comely.
Be glad sister, sun smiled on you.
You bear the colour of fertility,
Of ground, blessed,
Bringing forth herbs and trees!

Oh, would God
I bear the colours of rainbow...

Why Africa,
Woman, strong and lively?
Rainbow shuts the heaven's bowels
And smite the earth with drought!

Remember Adam's white-rib?
She flirted and birthed man's frailty,
The ground, accursed,
Springing up briers and thistles!

Be glad Africa,
Woman, whole and homely.
Be glad sister, sun smiled on you.
You bear the colour of fidelity!
WHAT'S THE KING'S DREAM?
(To Martin Luther King Jnr.)

Lord, I'm grateful.
Through severed kinship and severe hardship,
Strength waxed!
Though I'm no better:
The finest seeds, sown into burning sands,
Watered by showers of anguish, couldn't open
The desert's womb!
The precious gifts, thrown into churning seas,
Offered to angered mermaids, couldn't calm
The raging waves!

Lord I'm grateful.
Through unveiled malevolence and vilest cruelty,
Grace surged;
Though I'm not worthy:
I crossed over and stripped and stooped,
And tilled the stony fields until freedom came
And beckoned on me!
Why desecrate the sacred scrolls of liberty,
And bundle a free nation into segregations?

What's the King's dream?
Can showers of love relieve the embittered blood
Crying out for vengeance?
Can rivers of kindness revive the withered brotherhood
Dried from the roots?

What's the King's dream?
Can the carols of heaven's glad tidings bond together
The divided humanity, set on the edge, and bud again
A holy language out of cloven tongues of Babel?

“Hush, hush” a little voice whispered.
“Hush O ship steered by the hands of destiny:
Your humbled identity engendered posterity;
Your trampled dignity tended prosperity!”
BRIGHT AFRICA

Africa, bright Africa. 
Africa of crystal daysprings and festal nights! 
Africa of celestial bliss and paradisal delights!

Africa, bright Africa: 
Africa, the woods and gold of lofty castles; 
Africa, the crafts and curators of ivory towers; 
Africa, the ores and coals of royal armouries; 
Africa, the blood and soul of sacred citadels!

Africa, bright Africa: 
Yoked, she bowed the aching shoulders 
And straightened the stallion’s back for the burdens 
Of freedom; 
Poked, she shoved the aged feathers 
And toughened the eagle’s wing for the flights 
Of destiny; 
Bright Africa, by the heaven's light, scaling heights, 
Soaring beyond the clouds!

Where is the Dark Continent? 
The Eastern dawn was her twilight, 
And Western noon, her midnight!
BOOMERANG

When Africa, proud Africa,
Sang aloud and danced in the sun,
They wondered, wandered about,
And raced to the moon!
Where was morality when they stripped
And raped Africa in a blitz of banditry?

Mulattoes, tan yourselves.
Boomerang...
Boil O Afro-blood, mingled with vinegar! Steam
And splash the mongers, who bite your nipples,
Asking: “Baby, what ails thee?”

Negroes, bleach out yourselves;
Boomerang...
Burn O Afro-power purged with fire! Smoke
And scorch the hypocrites, who load your guns,
Preaching: “Son, love thy neighbour!”

Casanovas burst out...
Boomerang...
Explode O Afro-stars, dazzle the night sky! Burst
And smash the robbers, who usurp your thrones,
Shouting: “liberalise, democratise...”
Dry your tears, Africa. Weep no more!
Seeds, dispersed, are returning with sheaves;
Brothers, divided, are hugging themselves;
Renewed, spreading the good news:
“The sun is risen again!”
DEMOCRACY?

Horns, high and mighty, enraged;  
Assaults, neither assuaged nor stilled!  
Bruised and reduced, Africa cows!  
Herbs, sour and bitter, are engaged;  
Wounds, neither closed nor healed!  
Sick and weak, Africa bows!

And bees hum the song of democracy  
And humble blossoms with stingy slavo-cracy:  
Jazz of emasculation, pipes of pauperization,  
Orchestra of deprivations, lyrics of mastery;  
Western wealth and health swell!

And foxes beat the gong of democracy  
And hit buffaloes into frenzied mob-o-crazy:  
Carnivals of destruction, festivals of revolution,  
Regatta of lamentations, rhythm of misery;  
Africa's birth and death embrace!
2
Blow The Trumpet

Holy convocation
Triune man
Harvest is here
One Little star
Yuletide
Blow your trumpet
Let there be no night
Put laughter on
Battle cry
Breakthrough
HOLY CONVOCATION

The shell is broken,  
Torn apart by forces of metamorphosis!  
The young is surrendered to end the long  
Solitary siege and sedentary occupation!  
Eaglets are tokens of triumph,  
Born with rudiments of greatness.  
Yet, they pine in nests, restless,  
Yawning and beckoning for crumbs,  
Mouths, wide-open!

The dame has stirred her nest!  
Broods awakened; one by one, borne  
Through the harshest tempests,  
Till wings are tempered for winds of life.  
Eagles are made to soar,  
Sun-faced, mounting storms, to the mountains  
Of prey!  
From blood and fats of fresh kills,  
And honey, sucked, out of ancient rocks,  
The eagles gather, in holy convocation,  
Eyes, wide-open!
TRIUNE MAN

God is gracious to you.
Thrice,
Trinity laboured to birth you,
Triune:
Spirit, free,
In His essence, created;
Body, fashioned,
In His hands formed;
Soul, alive,
By His breath made!

God,
Triune...
In earthen-ware, crowned,
Lord O'er earth, sky and sea!
In His presence, live
O man,
Wonder, born to rule
Three worlds!
God is gracious to you.
HARVEST IS HERE

Sun is sweet.
Let him meet you, ever,
Discreet,
Reaping your own fields!
Harvest is here, my Angel:
A little thought, a little work,
Your basket full to brim!

Moon is a cheat.
Let her greet you, never,
In the streets,
Leaping out of your shield!
Rust is there, my Jewel:
A little talk, a little walk,
Your lustre dull and dim!
ONE LITTLE STAR

Stand astride,
Swing and swing;
Throw your sparkles up, above!
Who knows? One little star,
May hang on the sky!

Sun at evening
Bows to sleep.
And moon, even the crescent,
May not show-up,
When shadows tall and black...

Stand astride,
Swing and swing;
Throw your sparkles up, above!
One little star, aglow,
May ignite your darkest night!
YULETIDE

Joy is descending,
Joy of Yuletide!
Balloons are ascending, touching the sky!
Joy is descending,
Joy of Yuletide!
Blossoms are spewing sweet odours,
Adorning the gardens,
With beautiful colours of Christmas!

Joy is descending,
Joy of Yuletide!
Praises are ascending, swelling the sky,
Distending the clouds,
Bursting into showers of blessings...
It's yuletide:
Heaven is descending, washing the earth
With colourless bash of Christmas!

Ascend, ascend,
O breath-filled mortals,
Let flying colours fill the sky:
Red and blue, yellow and brown,
White and black...
Up, celebrating the Yuletide!
BLOW THE TRUMPET

The night awaits your light,
Stars in black-holes,
Buried in graves of obscurity,
Arise and smile;
Beam the light!
And sky will laugh
And lit-up the earth!

The world awaits your word,
Gods, in earthen vessels,
Reckoned as dusts of the earth!
Arise and speak;
Utter the word!
And heaven will shout
And stamp his feet!

The lowly awaits your glory,
Saviours on holy ground,
Contorted, in agony of birth-pang!
Arise and sing;
Blow the trumpet!
And God will rise
And dance to tune!
LET THERE BE NO NIGHT

In the night,
In the middle of a dream, I screamed...
Night is a nightmare!
Lord, let there be no night!

In the night,
Black shields quenched the arrows of light
And dark horns grew up and gored the skies,
And stars fell into the abyss of darkness!
In the night,
Cold chills drenched the billows of delight,
And sharp thorns rose and ruptured the heart,
And eyes brimmed with rivers of sadness!

And I wept.
And wept in the night.
Night is a terror! Night is a horror!
Lord, let there be no night!

In the night,
Men comatose lie
And common sense die;
In the night,
Princes drowse hiss
And conscience cease;
In the night,
Gods throng the throes of death
And turn to dusts and ashes!

And I wept.
And wept in the night,
Night is a torment! Night is a turmoil!
Lord, let there be no night!

Awake, awake, O my soul,
Awake with the sun!
Night is defeat! Night is death!
O Lord, let there be no night!
PUT YOUR LAUGHTER ON

Arise, put your laughter on.
Laugh and set your world aglow.
Life's but a burst of joy!

When life's tests cast you down,
Arise and put your laughter on.
Laugh and free your soul from hell!
Sorrow aborts tomorrow,
Heaviness genders dumbness;
Depressed and oppressed,
Life turns to a shadow of death!

When life's quests throw you down,
Arise and put your laughter on:
Laugh and shake yourself from dust!
Pressure bursts the future,
Worries hinder the journey;
Demobilized and immobilized,
Life turns to a burden of earth!

Arise, put your laughter on.
Laugh and set the world aflame.
Life's but a burst of joy!
BREAKTHROUGH

Lift up your hands
O earth;
Take away this burden
Heaped on me!
Why is the choice seed buried
To rot away?

Lift up your face
O heaven
Come and shine on me!
How long, how long? Come
And smile on me!

Lift up your head,
O blade,
Breakthrough!
Leap out of the earth
Heaped on you!
Then, heaven will smile,
And come with dew and rain,
And shine,
Till fruits abound,
The choice seed multiplied!
BATTLE CRY

Like waters of flowing streams
Gone by,
Yesterday passed away.
Let her rest in peace!
Today has come your way
To sound a battle cry
Against your dreams of ease!

Son, the war is on!
Adversaries lurk in shadows, receding,
Cruelties in armour of darkness, retreat
To return at dusk,
And smite with the might of night!

Arise at dawn,
Battle line drawn!
Fight, with the strength of light!
Let sun and moon stand-still
Till lights guide your warriors right;
Foes avowed, vanquished!
3

Tears Of Love

Living legend
My heroine
Tears of love
Creative episode
Haven of bliss
Wedding bells
Love lights
Forbidden fruit
Daily bread
Before the eclipse
LIVING LEGEND

(To my Father)

Before the harvest, seeds fall.
In the soil, soiled,
They shed their encapsulating coats
And rise to live a thousand-fold,
In corruptible earth,
Incorruptible!
And seeds become trees,
And forests, and gardens...

Before the morning, men fall.
In love, deep, asleep,
They escape the entrapment of self
And rise to live a thousand ages,
In mortal hearts,
Immortal!
And men become heroes,
And gods, and legends...

Only fools die!
The wise fall to rise,
Tall, wide, and multiplied!
Cheerio, cheerio, great warrior:
You are my hero!
Only fools die...
Legends live for ever!
MY HEROINE

Mama, my heroine; Engraft-branch of the holy pedigree, Laced with grace, unmatched!

O most bounteous vine, Spread forth the fruitful boughs Of the sun-burst flora Till caressing blazes tone the fruits To the fullest perfection, And the purest, ripest of all, Kiss the breeze in salient bliss and fall, For the generation next!
TEARS OF LOVE
(To my Jewel)

Tears of joy,
Tears of fulfilment,
Streams of the sweet overflow
Of dreams come true!

Baby, you're born
To turn my dreams to deeds
By the labours of love,
Love shining in tears;
In tears of hope,
In tears of commitment,
Joys and pains,
Mingling together,
Overflowing, billowing,
In ceaseless ecstasy!

Cry, baby cry,
Dry not the tears -
The tears of love,
The tears of loyalty;
Streams of the soul, overflowing
To prove true dreams!
Because of the holy vow,
We'll live, wholly,
One for another:
Hearts flowing, eyes glowing,
In wonder of love!
CREATIVE EPISODE

In the beginning,
Earth was dark and void,
Without form...
The Spirit moved, and God said:
"Let there be..."
And light fell and night fled;
Heavens ascended and seas descended;
Herbs and trees sprang up
And covered the earth;
The seas bred fishes and blew out fowls;
And ground spewed out cattle and beasts;
And Adam came
To tend and defend!

If your night is bereaved of moon and stars
And darkness descends to bury your form;
If the mountains are bare and the valleys dry,
And empty winds roar like a mighty sea;
Remember:
In the beginning,
Earth was dark and void,
Without form...
Remember this and hold your peace,
And let the Spirit move...
And with the faith of God, say:
“Let there be...
And there will be...”
For life is a creative episode,
Sabbath comes after the sixth day!
HAVEN OF BLISS

Heaven, the haven of bliss;
Are you a figment of the fallow mind
Deluded segments hallow too wide?

Wide and wild, the skies unfold;
Discrete phases of endless space;
Cosmos dotted with worlds untold!
O constellations of brilliant stars,
Why say of the way to haven of bliss,
“Heaven and heaven alone can tell!”

Tell me, O guardians of the night
Here I stand, staring at the starry skies:
Where is heaven, the haven of bliss?
WEDDING BELLS

We'll wed in Eden.
We'll match along
The garden of delights!
We'll wed in Eden.
We'll sing aloud
In the citadel of lights!

Sun will hug dew-clothed fields
And feed tenderly waving buds
With sweet, refreshing kisses!
Moon will lead a procession
Of bridal train of myriad stars
O'er lands of gold, bdellium, onyx...
Birds will sing the union's anthem,
Beasts cheering, trees clapping,
Fishes flapping silvery palms...

And Heaven will rejoice
And join us in holy matrimony!
And joys will rend the sky
And tear the mountains down,
And earth's burden will roll...
Into the sea!
LOVE-LIGHTS

As I looked into your eyes, meteors
Shot through the sky’s symmetry!
And sparkles of love glowed and ignited
The sanctuary of Adam’s creativity!

As I looked into your eyes, Orion
Knit together, in a celestial artistry,
Illumined the beacon of endless love,
The Northern star in a galaxy of fluidity!

As I looked into your eyes, the sun
Rose to unveil the sacred mysteries
Of perpetual love, of the Day-star
Dazzling my firmament for eternity!
FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Like a cap, neatly fit,
Heaven and earth meet, and knit together
At the farthest horizon!
Like soul-mates, so intimate,
Sun and moon click and stick together
During eclipse!
Like the newlywed, united by a sworn affection,
Rivers and oceans kiss and mix together
In deep blue sea!

But Ada and I are kith and kin,
Nearer than twins in the womb, bound together
By bonds of blood!
Here, dogmas and taboos hold sway:
Legions of contradictions that turn hearts away
From the love, so dear!
Else, why should the fruit, so near,
Be forbidden and kept for the stranger far away
From the family tree?
DAILY BREAD

God be with you
As you stand before the board
Of prospective bosses,
Tossing minds about, to find
The culprit, who match paper claims,
To convict for bread!

God be with you
And justify your humble looks,
And rectify your tensed-up nerves,
And electrify you brain-cells,
Tinkling, linking thoughts together,
To prove your true worth!

God be with you
And give you this day
Your daily bread!
LETTER TO MY FATHER

This is a letter to my father.
Today, I find courage to write to you
A letter from the heart of my soul...
O why, why didn't I find courage,
When we walked together, hand in hand,
By moonlight, in the night,
Before the day broke into mourning?

Because I feared your rod,
The rod whose strokes made me cry,
The cry of a beloved son,
The son you gave your father's name!

Father, I remember you:
I remember those arms that held me up,
That made me sit on big shoulders to see further;
I remember those eyes that followed me everywhere,
That led me about and guided my faltering steps;
I remember those ears that listened to me every time
That heard the sweet harmony of all my cries!

Today, I remember you...
And upon the altar of your rest,
I lay my first, my best;
The son to give your name!
Father, why are we born here?
Are men like breaths, mere puffs of smoke,
That go up in circuits, trailing each other's tail,
With no track on the shores of life?
Are men like wagers, mere pawns in a lawn,
To be offered to ancestral idols; the sacrifice
That breaks the day into mourning?

This is my prayer,
A plea from the heart of my soul...
Why are we born here? Tell me
Before the eclipse sink the earth into darkness,
And men, hanging between two worlds,
Behold the children beckoning for tales,
The tales which no one can tell,
Before the day breaks into mourning!
4
Prisoners Of Hope

Prisoners of hope
Too late
Another slavery
Comrades-in-arms
Coup d'etat
Spirit of solicitude
Echoes of harmattan
Offer them pity
Parade of insanity
The end
PRISONERS OF HOPE

The prisoners are not only those who pine away
In caves of depravity.
The bandits, awaiting bail or jail, and convicts
Gagged by solitude and servitude, soon offset
Their offences or scale the prison fences!

The prisoners are not only those who pant aloud
In captivity of duty:
Soldiers rumble in lion's den!
Workers are humbled with donkey's burden!
Police wiggle around the vulture's carrions!
Warders wriggle in holes with snakes and scorpions!
The regimentals, caged by powers of wages,
Segregated in wards for rewards, soon age
Out of use and turn to refuse!

The prisoners are not only those who fret about
In dungeons of fate:
Majesties, held by ardour of despoiled nuggets,
Bang royal hearts on ivory thrones!
Masses, hemmed in squalor of night-soil maggots,
Fag loyal heads in horrible ghettoes!
Clerics, hedged by glamour of cosmetic piety,
Ring regal tones in comely domes!
Jurists, wedged by clamour for cosmic equity,
Swing legal scales in solemn silence!
The sentimental, tied with fetters of honour,
Variegated by robes and codes, soon roost
In the vintage of madness or recompense!

Chance or charter, choice or necessity,
We pine. We all pine away,
We pine by creed and greed and need,
We pine in dreary gaols for sundry goals!
Prisoners through and through,
Gagged by magnetism of indulgence,
Caged by ostracism of prejudice,
Held by egoism of providence,
Hemmed in ostrichism of indifference,
Hedged by fatalism of ignorance,
Wedged by spiritism of solicitude!

Hear O prisoners of hope,
Hear the blood of sacrifice cry:
Go forth! Spread out!
TOO LATE

My breath flowed with songs...
Beckoning on you!
My lungs bubbled
Until they ruptured and melodies ceased!
My hands spread out, wide open...
Waiting for you!
My arms stretched
Until they stiffened and withered away!

My heart erupted like a spring, flowing...
Flowing to you!
My breasts throbbed
Until they sagged and desires died!
And my eyes streamed and streamed,
Rolling for you!
Emotive rivers surged
Until the fountains shrank and dried up!

Too late!
The mother's tenderly love is wasted,
On broods, spoilt and estranged:
The Wayward and the outlawed,
Who know neither shame nor pain!
Hope has played her tricks on me!
Now, at twilight, what's life worth?
Worthy sons bear their father's name,
But ears that hear not, soon join
The severed head in the dance of shame!

Alas, who can breathe free air
When spewed ghosts roam the streets
And vultures and hordes of flies feast
On cadavers, bloated, dismembered:
The Bywords, and outcasts,
Who know neither shame nor pain!
ANOTHER SLAVERY

We danced with the steps of liberty
When our sons conquered Whiteman's pride
And returned with captured virgins!
Then, our daughters, adorned the royal beads
And paced to embrace their grooms!

Soon, the world turned,
And our princes eloped and became eunuchs
In harems of dumped concubines!
How I weep for the loyal brides,
Pinning away in strange widowhood
For the estranged manhood!

And the world turned again
And our princesses returned, tired, debased,
With contempt and ailments and laments!
How they bend in penance and recompense,
For wombs bereaved of nations, unborn!
Yea, they water every altar with tears,
Tears of their embittered whoredom,
Whoredom of an impetuous generation,
A generation of desperadoes gone, unsung!
O dear, where's the destination
Of a world turning round and round?
COMRADES-IN-ARM
The comrades are armed
To trade skills and schemes!
Hand in hand, join together,
They showcase our stuff!

Comrades who rob with pen,
Extol our brain-power:
The chiefs, we robe and red-cap,
And turban with eagle feathers!

Comrades who shoot and loot,
Display our bravery:
The thieves, we revere and praise,
And bow to save our souls!

Comrades who cat-walk, naked,
Parade our charm:
The queen, we hail and cheer,
And crown to sell our pride!

We are the comrades:
Comrades-in-arm; armed to aid,
And kill, in instant or instalments!
Hand in hand, join together,
We showcase our stuff!
COUP D'ÉTAT

The lords are gone with slavery.
Servants have become the masters,
Feigning to serve!
Men who forsook their farms are the Honourable,
Harvesting fellowmen's sweat;
Women who scorn motherhood are the ladies,
Swearing to cover their age!

All went well,
All savouring the euphoria of freedom,
Until valiant guards rose to froze the rowdy parties
And zombies came out of shoel, marching...
Deaf! Dumb! Dim! Deadly!
Afro-mania: an evil genius is commanding
The sacred order of lunatics!

God save my soul!
Witches may protect the egg-heads, prostrate,
Licking bloodied boots!
Eagles may flee to bewail the tigers of Niger
Learning to pray behind the bar,
But home is sweet:
Soja go, Soja come!
SPIRIT OF SOLICITUDE

Though searing beats raze the earth
With charring heat;
Though blinding blitz daze the heart
With shimmering pangs;
A blaze of faith will erase our fears!

Though lofty mountains crumble
And tumble into the vale;
Though silent fountains rumble
And fumble in the dale;
A ray of hope will dry our tears!

To drown in eerie floods: ne'er!
The torrents may twitch the earth;
The currents may bewitch the heart;
Timorous devvel and sore travails
Of multitudes, multitudes,
In the valley of solicitude!

Awake O sleeping god:
Read and read till timidity rid,
Mind mended, captivity ended,
And by verity of divinity, defeat
The spirit of solicitude!
ECHOES OF HARMATTAN

Wind is blowing; wind of harmattan;
Wind, blowing to show fowl's rump!
The wind is blowing cold and dry!
I can hear the desert storm:
Whirlwind of fiery trials,
Sweeping health and wealth!

Rain is falling; rain of harmattan;
Rain, falling to reveal the vulture's form!
The rain is pouring down and down!
I can touch the dusty showers:
Torrents of clattering tongues,
Blasting heaven and earth!

Fire is burning; fire of harmattan;
Fire, burning to sweep grass-cutter's backyard!
The fire is burning hot and red!
I can feel the blazing flame:
Wild-fire of virulent thoughts,
Wrecking homes and hopes!

Harmattan, harmattan!
Scaly, scary harmattan!
Harmattan, biting to mark the pink lady's age!
The blade is cutting deep and deep!
I can see the claws of the fiery beast:
Fangs of vengeful acts,
Tearing flesh and bones!
OFFER THEM PITY

Their enmity
May shock our simplicity;
Their wanton cannons
May rock our serenity;
Yet, we'll offer them pity!
Their falsity
May bewitch our sincerity;
The rude vulgarity
May breach our civility,
Yet, we'll offer them pity!

Though imbeciles
Grip imperialism and rip veracity
To malign our dignity,
We'll offer them pity!
We'll offer them big names:
Hippopotamus! Hippocampus!

Else, we pitilessly offer to them:
An incense to silence immunity
And disease the doctrine of felicity,
Humanity seethe in frenzied bellicosity,
With the ferocity of Armageddon
PARADE OF INSANITY

I

Soldier: Captured rouges on parade,
         Ready for inspection, sir!
         Bloody rapists: drilled and stilled,
         Insanity suspended!

General: (Nods. Inspects the parade)
         Bastards! Dullards! Insanity!
         Parade dismiss!

Soldier: Ate e...n s h on!
         By the left quick march,
         Left! Right! Left! Right...
         To the abattoir, forward March!
         Left! Right! Left! Right!
         (Returns alone)
         Insanity dismissed,
         Summarily dismissed, sir!

General: (Nods. Smiles)
         Good boy, one more peep!

II

Soldier: Renegade zombies on parade,
         Ready for inspection, sir!
         Bloody 'coupists':
         softened, smoothened,
         Insanity suspected!
General: (Head-toss. Inspects the parade)
Traitors! Saboteurs! Mutiny!
Parade dismiss!

Soldier: Ate e...n s h on!
By the left, quick March,
Left! Right! Left! Right...
To the psychiatry, forward March!
Left! Right! Left! Right!
(Returns with the group)
Insanity confirmed, Sir,
Awaiting your orders!

General: (Grins. Thunders in rage)
Enough is enough! Shoot!

Soldier: Yes, sir!
(Position to shoot.)

But heavens thundered
And earth shook.
And General fell down
And died!

Soldier: (Turns round)
Ah... Insanity is dead!
THE END

When the fathers return
To see their remains amongst us,
They'll find no trace!
Chicks, their wings sheltered, are the vultures
Hovering o'er men;
Lambs, their arms tended, are the wolves
Roving around pens;
Dogs, their meal-crumbs fed, are the lions
Roaring in dens!

They'll not see the beautiful wreaths laid
On rainbow-painted mausoleums
Or smell the sweet odours oozing forth!
Preyed upon, they'll cry and descend
To bind us with no grace!

And fathers will abhor their children,
The children who devour their world;
And the world will detour into oblivion,
And end!
“Freedom is the discovery of your true self: self-worth, value and self-esteem”

- Dr Myles Monroe