

BOOK REVIEW: UNVEILING POETIC COMMUNICATION IN THE WOMB OF THE CROCODILE, A POETIC PEEP AT LIFE CHALLENGES FOR CHANGE IN NIGERIA (PART ONE)

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SHAIBU
Department of mass communication
Bingham University

Preamble

In my kindergarten years, two major things happened that created a lasting impression that birthed The Womb Of The Crocodile. One was the killing of a crocodile in a hunting expedition of five boys. One of us hit the crocodile with a cutlass and there was a boomerang that returned the cutlass to the forehead that left a big cut him. We looked for known leaf applied it to the deep cut and the blood flow stopped immediately. We then made fire, roasted the crocodile, removed the scaly skin and neatly opened the womb. To our amazement, we saw all manner of things in the stomach...glasses, brooms, bones, stones, sand, leaves, entrails of other animals, etc. We neatly remove them all and had a sumptuous barbecue!

Many years later, the creative impulse resurrected having observed many socio-political anomaly in my country and that yielded a piece of poetry titled The Womb Of The Crocodile with all manner of 'iri-iri' contents in it. This is the subject of this review of The Womb Of The Crocodile published by Diamond Prints and Designs Ltd Lagos in 2007. The second experience was another hunting expedition, this time around we were looking for bush meats and rats, when we cited one, it ran into a hole! We dug the hole and saw the body of what we perceived to be our catch. One of us, the boldest quickly ditched his hands into the hole only to be bitten by a very poisonous snake... before we could get home all his body pores were bleeding with blood. A drink of herbal concoction however stopped the bleeding and he is alive up-till today. I am yet to creatively look at this in another creative pilgrimage or unwind my brain to come up with a title that reflect this particular experience.

It Is a delight to take you to the world of creative writing and the creative writer in these different poetic pieces.

1. TOKUNBO MENTALITY

When it is not available,
When it has not been made available,
When our leaders do not have it available
Yes sarcastic scarce commodity,
Yes lack of cerebral commodity
Has met governance an oddity,
In health and Medicare,
In agriculture and food security,
Necessity is the mother of invention,
In using your commodity to get commodity.
After all command
When we cannot get what we want,
Or want what we have,
You use,
What you have to get,
What you want.
Tokunbo mentality,
It has come to stay!

About The Poem

This piece reflects our mentality for second hand goods or penchants for whatever is imported from other climes that has made us parasitic human beings with no capacity to produce what we consume.

2. THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

Yesterday is gone.
Today is real.
Tomorrow stares us in the face.
The reality of today,
The fleeting pleasures of today,
Makes tomorrow so far away.
Let us not forget that yesterday,
Was so far away from today.
But yesterday is now gone,
And today is real,
Today may soon be yesterday.
And tomorrow soon will be today,
But as the journey stares us in the face,
Let us not forget today,
The verdict of history,
That will soon stare us in the face,
To make us men and women of yesterday.

About The Poem

This warns that we shall all be remembered by what we have done or said in our social political and economic evolution as individuals and a nation.

3. POWER

Power is sweet,
In the mouth of ignorant leaders.
Power is better,
In the mouth of tyrant leaders,
Power is bitter-sweet,
In the mouth of the wise leaders,
Power is selfish,
In the hands of evil leaders
Power is to placate cronies,
In the hands of porous leaders.
Power is to empower the less privileged,
In the hands of designing leaders,
Power can be destructive,
In the steps of evil leaders.
Power can be constructive,
In the steps of godly leaders,
On which side of life/power divide,
Are you wielding power?

About The Poem

This piece exposes the different ramifications of power for us to be educated towards proper use of powers.

4. SIN IS SWEET

Sin a sweet
Sweet in the mouth,
Of those in the flesh.

Sin is sweet,
Sweet in the mouth of the canal.
Yes Sin can be sweet,
Sweet in the mouth of the heartless.
But the end?
Sin is sweet,
Sweet in the mouth,
Of those with genesis without revelation.
But the end?
Thereof is more bitter than bitterness!

About The Poem

This talks about sin and its presentation as sweet with the resultant consequences for us as human beings to apply our hearts to wisdom.

5. THE EVIL THAT MEN DO

It is believed by men and women of old,
That the evil that men do,
Lives after them,
The good that men do,
Is oft interred with their bones.
The evil that men do,
Will be echoed by beneficiaries.
The vile bile that men unleash,
Like a stone in the market place,
Will fall on them or their children.
The siege that evil men unleash,
Like an egg will break,
And splash in their faces.
And the faces of their children,
And their children's children.
The gangsteristic misdemeanor of evil men,
On hapless men and women,
Will meet the day of nemesis,
The day of judgment,
When all knees must bow!

About The Poem

This talks about the boomerang effect of the evil that men do that lives with them here or hereafter.

6. THE RULE OF THE GUN

The rule of law,
Is better than,
The rule of the gun.
The rule of the Pen,
Is mightier than,
The rule of the sword.
The rule of good,
Is better than,
The rule of the goons.
The rule of democracy,
Is better than the rule of jungle.
The rule of good governance,
Is better than,

The rule of divide and rule.

About The Poem

This reflects the military experience in Nigeria that reflects all manner of experimental trial and error administration with little or no dividend of democracy!

7. ALONE, ALONE ALL ALONE

Alone,
Alone, all alone,
In the shark infested waters.
Alone,
Alone, all alone,
Deserted by trusted friends and confidants.
Alone,
Alone, all alone,
Used, dumped, and smeared like a limp old rag.
Alone,
Alone, all alone,
Abandoned to swallow my pride and eat my vomit

About The Poem

This reflects the loneliness of lives Pilgrimage experiences of being used and deserted by trusted friends.

8. ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE

Enemies of light,
Hiding in the dark,
Of blackness of this world.
Enemies of sight,
Blindfolded in the dark,
Of blackness of this world.
Enemies of life,
Hiding under the yoke,
Of blind folders of this world.
Enemies of progress,
Looting and starking,
In the corruption of the world.
Enemies of the people.
Taking what belongs to the people,
Through hook and crook from the people.
Enemies of government of the people for the people,
And by the people.

About the poem

This talks about the different enemies of man and zeroes in on the enemy of democracy and good governance.

9. YOU KILL AND YOU TAKE

You kill,
And you take,
Death will never depart,
From your household!
You kill,
And you take,
Poverty will never depart
From your household!
You kill,

And you take,
Blood will never depart,
From your household!
You kill,
And you take,
Blackmail and character assassination will never depart,
From your household!
You kill,
Are you take
Sadness and not joy shall ever co-habit,
In your household!

About The Poem

This talks about corruption that is rooted in killings with all manner of resultant consequences

10. GRACE

Unmerited favour.
Unresisted glamour.
Caring flavor.
Unmeasurable succour!

About The Poem

This talks about Amazing Grace, how great the sound that saved a Wretch like me

11. MISSING

There is a vacuum in our hearts,
That cannot be filled with frivolity.
Increase and greed cannot feel it.
Riches and affluence cannot fill it.
Prosperity, power and pageantry,
Atheism and hedonism cannot fill it.
There is a vacuum in our hearts,
Wealth, women and wine cannot fill it.
Excessive intellectualism, rationalization cannot fill it.
Canal desires and wishful thinking cannot feel it.
Oh the vacuum in our hearts!
Believe it or not,
Only the owner of the earth,
The firmament, the Galaxy,
Only the owner of the fullness of the earth,
Firmament and Galaxy can feel it!
Do you have Him?
In your heart?
To fill (feel) it?

About The Poem

These talks about vacuum in the hearts of men and women that only almighty God can feel

12. OF DEBT OF TIME AND DIME

I owe a debt,
I cannot pay!
He paid the debt,
He did not owe!
My lifetime,
I will give him my lifetime!
What do you do with your lifetime?
What do you do with your dime?

What do you do with your time?
What you do with your dime?
Determines your mission and vision in this life!

About A Poem

This talks about the debt we all owe that we cannot pay and what we can do to attempt to pay such debt.

13. ADJECTIVES OF DECEIT

The one that says,
The one that says,
And does what he says.
And self-made enigma.
The mover and shaker.
The embodiment of wisdom.
Adjectives of deceit,
Reeling out of professional singers and praise singers!
Let no one,
Bears these adjectives of deceit,
Lest the dealer of Nebuchadnezzar,
Deals the mortal blow,
Two manufacturers of adjective of deceit
As the beneficiaries of vain adjectives of human deceit,
Becomes the late!
Let's no one,
Bears these adjectives of deceit
Lest they are humbled by their Maker
Who hates unnecessary boosting of ego?
By manufacturers of vainglories,
And adjectives of deceit.

About The Point

This is about our different painting of the picture of ease and tranquility in the face of our different problems and calamities until we are dead.

14. BROKEN GATES OF BILL GATES

Oh the broken gates of our own future Bill Gates!
As "never accept power" bills our gates.
And "gee zeem" shatters our gate.
Also water resources daily knocks our gates.
To break and shatter the future of our Bill Gates
As poverty closes the gates,
To our own Bill Gates.
Say no more to the closing of our gates,
As a future vision of our Bill Gates.
Is daily shot on their faces by our closing of gate,
Of windows of opportunities of our Bill Gates!
Welcome tomorrow, welcome change and
Prosperity that beckons to open our gates.

About The Poem

This piece reflects on deliberate closing of the future to our young ones even when we mouth that they are the leaders of they are the leaders of tomorrow.

15. THE WINDOWS

Broken opportunities from their windows,
Wailing and tears in the night by widows,

Memories of late husband in the night of the widows.
Oh the unrealistic realities of the widow,
Bastardization of the days of widows,
As tradition and culture shut their windows.
The forced marriage of husbands elder brother by the widows.
Oh the lonely days of the widows.
The descent of the lonely part of the widows,
As tears and traditions broke their windows!
Nobody knows the trouble through their windows,
As towns men and women gang up to break their windows!
Yes, I know from the breaking of moms windows.
Oh the trauma and psychological torture of the windows,
Of the land that makes widows,
Of our moms through short windows,
Of dialogue, understanding and seeing eye to eye with widows,
With traumatized widows of broken windows.

About The Poem

This highlights the pathetic plight of widows in Africa.

16. THE EARTH,

The earth,
With its stores,
Of wonders untold,
Is pregnant,
Ready to give birth,
In the womb of time!
The earth,
With it's stores,
Of wonders untold,
With sire siblings,
That will make
Or mar the world

About The Poem

This reflects the potentials of the earth and man's capacity to make or mar the world

17. ON THE WINGS OF THE STORM

Gliding against,
The tide of time.
Rising against,
The tide of time.
Rising against,
The wind of the storm.
The man died,
In any man,
Who keeps silent,
In the face of tyranny

About The Poem

This reflects our collective need to fight tyranny in our systems

18. BROADCASTING

The one that talks without listening,
Have you understood,
The three principles,
Of your relevant existence?

If you program,
Program well!
If you power,
Power well!
If you promote,
Promote well!
In this era,
Of diverse media competition,
It is no longer enough,
To talk without listening!

About The Poem

This poem reflects the vision and mission of broadcasting

19. CHANGING THE GOAL POSTS

A scored a goal,
The rabble hooted,
And clapped their sapped hands!
B scored a goal,
The rabble hooted,
And sapped their clamped hands!
Oh that our goal post,
Be permanent in one place,
Instead,
Of constantly,
Changing the goal post!
The speech,
That attracts a crown,
May call,
For the removal of the crown!
Oh that we stop,
Changing the goal post!

About The Poem

This reflects our new normal posture of ever changing rules, regulations or the goal posts to suit our whims and caprices.

20. THE CIVIL EVIL SERVICE

Yes Sir,
All correct, Sir.
I agree with you Sir,
Even when I don't know Sir.
What you are about to say Sir,
You are always right Sir.
I am loyal Sir,
Biting and blowing,
The game,
Of the civil service,
Now turned evil service!
The man does not like you Sir,
He is against your regime Sir,
If he is not with you Sir,
You must be against your regime Sir!
Blackmailing and character assassination,
The game,

The game,
Of civil service,
Now turned evil service!

About The Poem

this reflects the deceptions in our civil service which i call evil service

21. POSITION FOR ALLOCATION

Get positioned,
For your allocation,
For your location,
Determines your allocation,
In this era,
Of dislocation,
For relocation!

About The Poem

This makes a point that our locations determines our allocations

22. FRAIL CHILDREN

Frail children,
Of unfailing God.
Feel free not to fail,
As feeble frail children,
That finds God not to fail.
Remain frail,
For unfailing Maker, Defender Redeemer,
And friend,
To mold you,
Not to fail,
As frail children,
Of unfailing God!

About The Poem

This poem makes a case that we should make ourselves as malleable as clay for God to mold us properly.

23. IF ONLY

If only people know,
That what goes into the mouth,
Comes out as shit you know,
People will know,
That to be corrupt,
Is as a result of lack of know how,
If only people know,
That acquisition from days to months,
Comes out as vanity you know,
People will know,
That to acquire and acquire,
Is as a result of lack of know how!

About A Poem

This reflects the cause and effect of corruption in our society and they need to know them and be careful.

24. "ATINOLO"

"Atinolo",
Spreads mats,

Left right and center,
North, South and center,
And ended up,
Sitting on the bare floor!
“Atinolo”,
Spread mats,
Left right and center,
North, South and center
East, West and center,
And ended up,
Sitting on the bare floor!
So are we all,
So are we all behaving like Atinolo who,
Spreads mats left right and center,
North, South and center,
East, West and center,
And ended up,
Sitting on the Bear floor,
Of corruption!

About The Poem

This reflects a mythical figure in Igala tradition to state that whatever we acquire in corruption will be useless to us ultimately!

25. AS I AM GOING

As I am going,
This is what I will tell him,
You boast,
You bet,
You beat your chest,
You scheme,
You fume,
But have you taken your basket,
To pack what he will tell you?
It is only a fool,
That underestimates,
The power of the enemy!

About The Poem

This reflects that when one lights a fire in quarrels and boast he or she should expect to be burnt.

26. EVIL

Evil is like a man,
Standing on a mountain,
You can only see,
Standing on a mountain,
The sinful man on his own mountain,
When you least know the mountain,
Of your own sin!

About The Poem

This talks about blame-game that does not take into consideration that we are equally guilty of the sins we accuse others of.

27. THE WOMBA OF THE CROCODILE

Have you ever cared,
To open the womb of the crocodile?
Have you ever paused,
To think about the contents,
Of the good, the bad and the ugly,
That is the womb of the crocodile?
The womb of the crocodile,
Is pregnant,
Just like the world,
Waiting to deliver,
The good, the bad, the ugly,
For you to have,
What you want!

About The Poem

This is about the different content of the womb of the crocodile which is our world.