

**POETRY PHOBIA: TEACHING POETRY WRITING ON THINGS AROUND US WITH  
ANUKA’S *THE BET WITH FATE***

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**ABSTRACT**

*Poetry is one genre of literature that does not attract many students’ interest because of its assumed complexity and abstract form. It is consequently neglected and left for a small group. At the primary school, teachers teach the younger ones to memorize nursery rhymes without guiding them to put down their thoughts, emotions, and events down as poems. So, poetry enjoys very little patronage at schools. This study consequently examines how to encourage learners to think critically and creatively with language to communicate information on events and things around them as poems. It assesses how to engage children in learning for self-expression by reading poems written on specific occasions and guiding them to communicate information received about something. The study adopts the Read and Explain (RAE), Listen and Learn (LAL) and Observe and Write (OAW) strategies to guide learners to enjoy poems written by a character in Anuka’s A Bet with Fate on things around, observe their environment and write poems. It is expected that if children are engaged in reading and writing poems, potential child-authors who will contribute to national development will be raised. The study concludes also that students’ active participation in poetry reading and writing holds a great potential for their development of language proficiency, active creative sensitivity to issues around, aesthetic curiosity and maximum contribution to national development and adaption to entrepreneurship. Conscious teaching for creative writing can produce creative writers on any of the genres of literature.*

**Keywords:** Poetry, Poem, Creative reading, Creative writing, teaching.

**BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

This study examines the potentials of teaching poetry writing as a form of literacy. Alberta Education (2019) defines literacy as “the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living”. By this definition it is evident that literacy encompasses more than the traditional definition of literacy as just the ability to read and write. Literacy entails guiding and preparing learners to be ‘critical and ethical consumers of information’. “Literacy development occurs not only in school but in every aspect of daily life. We interact with others when we have a conversation. We read maps, advertisements, newspapers, recipes, manuals and websites’ vast amount of media information. We write poems, songs reports, blogs, and emails. Literacy opens the door to the world” (Alberta Education, 2019). Poetry writing is designed to enhance literacy in guiding students learn how to be sensitive to everything and express themselves on virtually everything around them. Poetry literacy is designed to achieve students’ effective participation in negotiating language use in communicating their emotions and information about things around them. Art as a form of literacy encourages students to be taught to communicate using any form that humans adopt to express or receive thoughts or feelings. “Music, visual art, drama/theatre, dance and other genres of literature can constitute

mainstays for teaching for literacy. It is against this backdrop that this study examines how teaching for creativity in order to bridge the ever-wide chasm between life and learning which the fear of poetry on one side, has created and promote literacy. Oftentimes, young learners who enjoyed nursery rhymes as children grow up hating poetry as adults because at that level, there was no attempt at spurring their creativity potentials. Children can be helped to be creative thinkers who can manipulate the events around them as poems that can be published and earn them reasonable income in the future. By writing on the events around them, children write pleausurably for self expression in communicating information about their:

- ☞ pains
- ☞ pleasure
- ☞ friends
- ☞ events in their environment ,
- ☞ issues in the community,
- ☞ problems in the society
- ☞ objects around them
- ☞ national issues.

By touching on virtually everything around them as poetry, the ordinary wears a grab of values: everything gets an essence. Every experience of life is treated as another unique repertoire of information. Creativity is a multifaceted phenomenon which can be developed for all learners at different stages of learning. Treffinger, Young, Selby and Shepandson (2002) see creativity as that which “can be expressed in nearly infinite number of ways in human behaviour and has its origins in several components of individual social experience (p.5). To Plucker, Beghetto and Dow (2004, p.83), creativity is an important component of problem-solving, healthy, social and emotional well-being, as well as scholastic and adult success. It is against this backdrop that this study advances that teachers should not only teach creatively, but also teach for creativity in order to motivate students to think and observe effectively and become continued creative learners who can make well-informed critical decisions and choices in unexpected situations; who can make something meaningful out of the ordinary. Milgram and Hong (2009,p.161) sum that “Societies that do not make every effort to assure that the potential talents of young people are utilized are losing their most valuable natural resource and human capital.

Teaching for creativity facilitates students’ overall development, self-actualization, and contribution to nurturing future creative leaders who can positively affect their communities. Teaching for creativity provides a supportive learning environment that makes students feel safe, worthy, and encouraged to express their natural curiosity and abilities with adequate support for developing productivity, personality and social skill (Davis 2004). In using literature text to teach poetry writing, the communicative skills of the students are developed. Through the independent creative method of teaching poetry writing, the learners’ confidence of expression, i.e. the expressive function of language can be effectively manipulated.

The Nigerian economy, which has rested greatly on oil, is fast dwindling. Many individuals now search for other avenues of survival. If a child is trained to be a writer in any of the three genres of literatures, he/she will be made to learn on time the need for not depending on white-collar jobs but to manipulate his/her creativity as survival strategy. By so doing too, the values and virtues of hard work, independence and success, which the African society strives hard to inculcate, will be accomplished in our school children early enough. Again, if the children are meant to know that they have the creative potentials they can develop to contribute positively to societal/national development, the vice of spending too much time viewing the television, navigating all applications in the mobile phones and computers can be reduced. By organizing writing on the most neglected genre of literature-poetry, students’ interest in this genre will be stirred and they will cherish every event or object around them, their creative potentials will be fanned to flame and many of them will turn celebrated poets tomorrow.

Ifechelobi (2009, p.110) asserts that “writing helps to shape life and we are in an era where the child is keen on reading and learning faster than the adults. We must also note that whatever a child picks has a great influence in shaping his future. If what a child reads or focuses on is the negative, they will surely create a negative impact on the impressionable minds of our young people”.

The impressionable state of our children's life calls for the need to shape the minds positively for greater output. The process of shaping the child's mind entails making him a good observer who takes note of every minute object or event or things around him. Hemingway observes that "if a writer stops observing, he's finished". Experience is communicated by small details intimately observed. The need for positive human development for children is of paramount importance since they are 'the father of the man and success and failure of the future of the nation lie in their palms. Through their writings,- their poems, they can talk to other children in the nation about the most cherished socio-cultural norms and moral principles; the need to eschew the hateful vices of immorality, violence, idleness, fraudulent practices, laziness, disrespect and others. Those things they cannot muster the courage to say to the adults verbally, they can say to them with their writings. That way, they too, will contribute immensely to human and national development.

Poetry as a genre of literature touches all spheres of the human existence. Literature has to do with life as it is lived in the society. The different activities embarked upon by men and women whether good or bad are held up as mirror by writers with the view of correcting wrongs. Literature also indicates that creativity as an attitude towards life and development is more obvious and easier to nurture in young children than it is in older children and adults who have been affected by environment that encourage intellectual conformity, suppress creativity and overlook talent potential (Beghetto and Kaufman, 2007).

When children learn from a younger age to write poems, it gives life a new meaning and a new dimension. It gives one an opportunity of communicating and sharing one's experience with the world. It makes one sensitive and very observant. The writer knows no dull moment in life, no idle period. Everything counts, every event is an experience worth documenting, for with God the maker, each minute has a million experiences shared. The child or learner needs to be directed to appreciate this fact and know also that one can achieve firm, as well as a living writing poetry. Writing poetry develops the communicative skills and potentials of learners. When learners are motivated to creatively express themselves, their proficiency in the use of the English language will be improved as they use language at every instance to express their impressions, observations, feelings, attitude towards everything and their ability to do things with words will be improved.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study sets to:

- ☞ examine the 'Read and explain Strategy' with female-authored poems on every event of life in Anuka's *The Bet with Fate* as stimulus for students' interest to write poems on things around them.
- ☞ assess the 'Listen and Learn' (LAL) strategy as tool for improving creative thinking.
- ☞ highlight the effect of 'Observe and Write' strategy (OAW) on students' creative writing
- ☞ guide students write poems on their experiences and things around them

### **THEORETICAL CLARIFICATION**

This study employs the communicative/functional or national approach to language teaching propounded by McGregor 1970. The major tenet of the communicative approach to Language Teaching (CLT) is that the best way to learn a language is by listening, speaking, reading and writing it. Communicative language teaching is learner-centered. This approach is interested in guiding the learners to appropriate the right knowledge that will aid effective use of language. It aims to teach not just the grammatical rules but rules on how to appropriately use the language to achieve communicative competence which is seen as the hallmark of educational attainment as well as national integration. This approach appears to be viable methodology that will aid ESL teachers. Some CLT strategies include: dramatization, dialogue, debates, reading for pleasure, oral conversations, asking questions, mock interview, role play/simulation, composition writing, storytelling, creative writing etc. These methods or strategies aid in producing productive learners and consequently peaceful society (Nzeakor and Nnadi, 2001).

Harmer (2005) sees CLT as a name given to a set of beliefs which include a re-examination of what aspects of language to teach as well as a shift in emphasis in how to teach because language is perceived as a process that can only be accomplished by using language for the purpose of communication. Olukpe (2007) adds that communicative approach assumes that language is communication and emphasizes the different social functions language performs. These studies demonstrate that CLT is a functional approach to language teaching.

The communicative approach to language teaching is interdisciplinary in nature and so adopts an eclectic theoretical base. The principles of communicative approach according to its advocates rest on the assumptions that:

- ☒ learners learn a language through using it to communicate;
- ☒ the goal of classroom activities should be authentic and meaningful communication;
- ☒ communication involves a combination of the different language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- ☒ fluency is identified as an important aspect of communication;
- ☒ the guiding principle of this approach is to train students to use these language forms appropriately in a variety of context and for a variety of purposes (Nwaigwe 2007).

Maduekwue (2007) also articulates the six characteristics of communicative approach:

- ☒ The emphasis of communicative approach is more on language function than on language form; on language use more than usage. In this perspective, Widdowson (2010, p.2) notes that usage is an aspect of performance in which the language user demonstrates his knowledge of linguistic rules. Use on the other hand is another aspect of performance to which the language user demonstrates his ability to use his knowledge of linguistics rules for effective communication.
- ☒ Essentially, CLT focuses largely on the purpose for which the language is used. In other words it asks the question, what does the learner want to accomplish through language?
- ☒ It is also learner-centered
- ☒ More emphasis is placed on functional fluency and appropriateness and less on grammatical accuracy
- ☒ Sequencing and grading of elements are largely based on learners' needs and sociolinguistics considerations.
- ☒ It calls for integrative assessment procedure that forces learners to display actual communication ability in life like tasks.

The rationale for adopting the communicative language teaching approach in this study is premised on the fact that the practical application is task or activity based. Language learning and usage in this vein is task-oriented.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The stratified random sampling technique is employed to select ten poems from Anuka's novel - *The Bet with Fate*, which serves as primary source of data for stimulating the students' interest in writing poems. In like manner, the stratified random sampling technique is adopted to select three private schools in Isiala Mbano Local Government Area from which twenty students that serve as the population for the study are drawn. The poems written first on My Dream Word on her gaining admission. 'My Dreams which depicts her determination, 'True Friend', 'A Tribute to Our Roommate and Friend' 'Shattered Dreams'. 'Herein lie my battered self' 'Where do we go from here?' 'Why waste a single tear?', 'The stage is set' "Amidst thorns and prickles, I finally found my way".

The three strategies of 'Road and Explain (RAE)', 'Listen and Learn (LAL)' and 'Observe and Write' (OAW) are adopted to guide the experimental group to listen and learn as the teacher reads and explains the poems in Anuka's *A Bet with Fate* and observe and accord value to the ordinary and relevance to every event as poem.

**PROCEDURE 1: READ And A EXPLAIN (RAE) AND  
PROCEDURE 2: LISTEN AND LEARN (LAL)**

The researcher read and explain ten poems from Anuka's A bet with fate while the experimental group listen and learn.

**MY DREAM WORLD**

*Just yesterday, it was still a dream  
Today, it glows right before me  
Captivating my being, setting my theme  
Stirring in me the urge to live  
Like dawn, it beams across my face  
Dragging my feet to an unknown stage  
Whispering the rules of a new game  
Cos, definitely, I must achieve my aim  
Although I still marvel at its sight  
Something tells me I've got to soar  
For it's the turning point of my life  
And without delay, I need to fly  
I've yearned, hoped and talked  
About my world, my future, my all  
Finally, here I stand in awe  
Gazing*

The experimental group is told that the poem is not complex. It is merely on the poet's excitement on her ability/the feat of gaining admission. An uncreative person will not find this event worth writing on. She chronicles all her experiences in life as poems.

**MY DREAMS**

*Sweet, sweet dream world  
What dreary welcome I receive  
After days of wishful thinking  
Wilt thou inflict me this way  
Why Tis no funfair at all  
I know your music calls for work  
Would be a fool to hope on luck  
When rest would rather toil  
I don't want to sink in mire  
The song of losers I shan't sing  
All my life, I've waited to sweep  
Yeah, sweep away every trace of shame  
Determination has barred the road to flee  
Courage bids my eyes open to see  
All that my strength could ever achieve  
And who would dare thwart my dreams (p.12-13)*

Her determination to brace the difficulties to be faced as a student is written down as a poem. The hard reality that university education is a difficult task is absorbed followed by a determination to work very hard to achieve her goals. Her fourth poem "It is a girl child" is written and read to defend her presentation for GENS 101 on Women and National Development. She ends thus: "...and I would love to conclude my argument with a poem. This piece is meant to challenge every female in this hall today. Our presence is needed, and if we refuse to be bound by the fetters in which the society has held us captive, then every aspect of our nation, be it political, social or ethnic will experience a bloom. When women are also given a chance to contribute to societal development, the product will be a platform where in the right of the citizens are respected and everyone is challenged to give in their best to enhance the rapid growth and development of our nation. Here goes my poem: (p.28)

### **IT'S A GIRL CHILD**

*"It's a girl child", they whispered  
The moment 'Portia' in Shakespeare's play-  
The Merchant of Venice was born  
Although some managed to smile, many were sad  
What a waste! It should have been a male child  
A woman has no worth at all in this life  
The next must be a boy, they silently prayed  
For only then shall drums of celebration be heard!  
Poor female child! What cruelty fate held for her!  
Daily, she felt the pangs of womanhood  
Without a flinch, she could foretell her fate  
A punching bag, delivery machine and sweaty housewife  
Daily toiling under the heat to meet the desire of selfish man  
No! She declared to the hearing of all  
I may be a woman, but I'm very strong  
And though society doesn't believe in me  
I believe greatly in the power of a woman  
The power to dream big, and live my dream  
Just like the almighty designed it to be  
Well, daring woman! For with determination and courage  
She kept to every single word of hers  
The last time I checked on my hero  
More laurels than many a man has she won  
And for unending generations to come  
My legend shall always be celebrated! (p.30)*

Kemi's poem celebrates the worth and values of a woman. She clearly states in simple language the regret and sadness that greet the birth of a female. The female child's birth is denied being celebrated. The male child takes all the celebrations of being born. But she believes in the power of a woman and believes that with determination and courage, she will accomplish a lot in life. She ends by saying that the last time she checked on her hero, "more laurels than many a man had she won and for unending generations to come; my legends shall always be celebrated!" (p.30). She encourages women to strive harder as their accomplishments will bring them into the lime light of history. She looks around her culture and writes on the reality of the time.

Rakiya commented;

"That poem was excellent"

Did you get someone from English department to write it for you?"

"No, I wrote it myself" Kemi replied.

"You wrote that piece?" Ibrahim, the group leader asked.

"Yeah, I had to. My roommate advised me to spice up my presentation with a poem" (p.31)

Kemi emphasizes the importance of poem as element of beautifying every written piece and driving the message home. She is in science department but she writes poems meaning anybody from any discipline can write on any of the three genres of literature.

When the hall administrator punishes Kemi and all her roommates by locking them out in the night for Idongesit's offence of washing plates beside the room in board day light. The only option is sleeping in the classroom but Rakiya her friend, accommodates them and goes to the extent of cooking rice for them even by one a.m. (1.00A.M). Moved and amazed by Rukiya's generosity, she writes a poem on 'True friend'

### **TRUE FRIEND**

*Wherever man sets his foot  
Troubles always shall receive him  
Rusty hopes, lost dreams, teary eyes*

*Forever his lot on life's boat  
On desert sands must he tread  
Or grasp a share of nature's kiss  
Whether or not he deserves it  
No thorn shall his feet spare  
How mortal men need to groan  
For only a piece of sugary cake!  
Day and night, he cries in pains  
For mother earth's fury is unending  
No more blessings of hers shall man see  
Yeah, sinful man deserves it all  
A twisted face, shabby look and deserted hut  
His companions throughout a lifetime  
And did I just see a sorrowful man smile?  
Indeed, my eyes seem not to fail  
In spite of such misery and shame  
I see someone holding man's battered hand  
Sitting beside him in the cold  
Saying to man, cast away thy worries  
Behold, the face of his comforter looks familiar  
What other face than that of a true friend! (p.46)  
When Dupe, her roommate died of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, Kemi grieves and*

writes:

***A TRIBUTE TO OUR ROOMMATE AND FRIEND (p.70)***

*Without warning, the sun has set in on us  
Today, by a cruel twist of fate, Dupe is no more  
Fate has indeed struck us a fatal blow  
And our hearts would forever bleed  
You weren't 'Mother Theresa' but your extreme display of kindness could never be equaled  
Whenever anyone was in need, you were always ready to be of help  
Ever loving, forgiving and kind - you were a light to us, and we all revelled in your radiance  
Now, how do we close our eyes to sleep?  
Knowing that your bed will always be vacant  
How do we exist knowing that we used to be four and not three?  
Who would be there to put a comforting arm round our shoulder whenever we are in despair?  
Who would tease us to lighten our mood whenever we are sad?  
How can we ever go to watch a show in 'Drama Hall' knowing that you wouldn't be there to perform?  
Who would ensure that we wake up to our alarms and not go back to bed when we need to read?  
Who would share her pocket money with us whenever we are broke?  
Who would amuse us with stories of her childhood?  
Who would always render a word of advice in our moments of confusion?  
Graceful in every way - you were the perfect example of womanhood  
Sadly, today all our dreams, hopes and expectations together are lost to the wind  
All the plans we made for our convocation and national youth service year have withered away.  
We all hoped, and prayed to serve our fatherland in the same state, attend each other's wedding ceremonies and tell our children stories about our days together on campus.  
Now, all we have to tell them is a very sad tale of how our lively roommate departed from us without even saying goodbye  
Indeed, pebbles of sorrows have fallen deep into our world  
Now, ripples of tears have appeared on our faces  
We still can't fathom why you left us so soon*

*But who are we to question the Almighty?  
Although we would never see you again until we meet in the other world, you would forever live in  
our hearts  
And we are grateful to God that you came into our lives  
For your sincere show of love and affection to us; we would forever be indebted to you.  
May your gentle soul rest in perfect peace. (p.70)*

Still crying over the loss of her friend, Dupe, who would have been a world talent, she writes the ‘Shattered Dreams’. She says; “Dupe’s act was always a combination of talent, beauty, skill, courage, eloquence and intelligence. She was really capable of performing anywhere in the world. Dupe Adeoye would have been a movie star if her life had not been cut short by the sharp blades of the deadly disease, AIDS. Kemi often wondered how she contracted the disease although she had a strong feeling that Jacob was the ‘donor’. Since she wasn’t sure, she tried to take it off her mind. She wiped away the tears from her eyes and put out her small exercise book from her bag. She also brought out a pen, and began to write a poem on shattered dreams.

### **SHATTERED DREAMS**

*In an isolated cottage beside the great Caspian Sea  
Lived a teenage girl with her aged grandpa  
Day by day, she sat by the sea side  
Watching the unending parade of ships  
And dreaming that one cold, chilly morning,  
A sweet, cute sailor boy would stop by  
And perhaps, put a diamond ring on her finger  
Her prayers must have touched the heavens  
For surprisingly, on her sixteenth birthday,  
Her grandpa gave her a wish stone for a present  
‘With this wish stone, every dream of yours shall surely come true’  
Grandpa happily told her  
Faster than an antelope, she ran to the seaside  
And without wasting a moment, made her wish  
Just like grandpa promised, the wish stone worked  
For a sweet, cute sailor boy really passed by  
Ready to place a diamond ring on her yearning finger  
Sadly, she never even saw her sailor boy  
Neither did she feel his tears drip onto her skin  
As he begged her to come back to him  
For just after making her wish  
She began to play with rattle snakes on the seashore  
Too much poison did she take into her body  
For only a second before her dream sailor boy arrived  
Still holding her wish stone, she dropped dead  
And now, her grief-stricken grandpa never stops howling  
If you ever travel on the great Caspian Sea  
You would surely hear the echo of his voice  
Shattered dreams! Shattered dreams! Shattered dreams!  
He cries all day long.(p. 75-76).*

When Kemi checks her first semester result and feels disappointed at seeing a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.29, her tears roll unchecked down her cheeks. She is convinced that she has put in her best. Mr. Bankole sees her crying and shows her his GPA of 1.79 in his first year and subsequent 5.00 GPA. He advises her that:

“Your future is in your hands. No matter how bad your result appears today, with determination and courage, and courage, you can also graduate with a first class honour” p.80



... Make hay while the sun shines. Don't be discouraged by what you saw on the notice board today. It should challenge you. Don't forget that what you do with your time today determines the class of degree you will graduate with tomorrow...

...One more thing, make sure that you do not just read to pass, but also to know. You don't know where you will find yourself tomorrow" (p.81)

Mr. Bankole's words had stirred a new zeal in her. She was suddenly aglow with renewed vigour. She couldn't wait to prove to Jason that she was no idiot. Her formula was simple more work, less play. As she walked inside her room, she felt so overwhelmed with excitement. Her roommates were out and the atmosphere was very conducive for writing a poem. She really had to write one because her poems inspired her. She fished out her small exercise book and pen from the book shelf and began to write. (p.81).

**Herein lay my battered self**

*Herein lay my battered self  
Lonely on a couch of tears  
Wallowing in the murk of life  
Groping for a ray of light  
When all my scorers leap  
And trust that I must quit  
Then shall I feel my being  
Leave this pit of defeat  
Now, let all eyes watch  
Look! There goes my hurt  
And here! Tis really my song  
Certainly, no longer a noise  
For though my heart quakes  
I shall never ever shake  
Just because I am persuaded  
To rise above my boundaries (p.82)*

When Kemi's department has not sent their result to Senate to enable them go for another batch of N.Y.S.C. having missed the first one and no one is giving them attention and the strike commences. She writes:

**Where do we go from here?**

*Where do we go from here?  
Who else do we beg for help?  
We are weary, stranded and confused  
Our legs are already aching  
From trekking and searching for a solution  
We thought someone would have mercy  
And help us plead our cause  
But all we see are piercing eyes  
That glares at our helpless selves  
As if it has become a sin  
To desire what we truly deserve! (p.97).*

Her lexical choices are used to show her level of frustration. Her choice of rhetorical questions portrays her mood. The lexemes of forlornness: weary, stranded, and confused, show their state of hopelessness. 'Our legs are already aching in line 4 "from trekking and searching for a solution" in line 5 show that the suffering has been for a long time and they are 'helpless' - our helpless selves... As if it has become a sin to desire what we truly deserve'. The words are simple and depict the poet's pitiable situation and state.

When her mother tells her about her birth, a scary story of her being born on a cold and rainy night wearing two bands on her right wrist. "One of the band was black while the other was silver coloured. ...Ifa revealed to the priest that the black coloured band signified a very gloomy destiny. It was also

revealed that you would no doubt fulfill that destiny, but you alone possess the key to rise above that destiny, and fulfill that of the silver coloured band which signifies a very rosy future. While the Ifa priest was still speaking, I noticed a small black cloth lying beside the lamp that was burning. When I drew Adebayo's attention to the cloth, he said that it was a mysterious cloth, and it has the same meaning as the black band. He went further to say that the gods placed it beside the oil lamp for a reason. After all the evils have befallen you, you alone would decide to either glow like the lamp or wallow in sorrow. You can clearly see for yourself that the prophecy of the black band has been fulfilled. Like the Ifa priest said, only you can unlock the prophecy of the silver colored band and oil lamp" (p. 107-108).

Yemisi, Kemi's mother brings out the two bands; a black one and the other, the silver coloured one, and hands them to Kemi telling her that she is an extraordinary child, but, besides her, no one can unlock the greatness in her. Her mother tells her that all she needs is dogged determination. She thoughtfully mutters the words 'dogged determination'. After hours of pondering on the mystery bands and Adebayo's interpretation, a smile spreads out across her face. She pulls out her small exercise book and a pen from her hand bag. Still smiling, she writes:

**Why waste a single tear?**

*Why waste a single tear?*

*When dark clouds increase my fear*

*For never shall it be heard*

*That, such lovely eyes again wept*

*Over the frailty of moral men*

*For herein lies my strength*

*Although time and tide may pass away*

*My dreams shall never ever sway (p. 109-110)*

"She reads the poem over, and feels a glow of satisfaction. In an instance, she falls sleep" (p.110).

She is determined to be accomplished in life and nothing will stop her. "My dream is never to cry over the issues of life but to go out there and seek solution". After that, she goes to seek a job in the Devlon, the largest Engineering firm in Osun state.

Kemi writes another poem when the C.E.O of Devlon, a white man, refuses to consider her application because she has neither a statement of result nor gone for the mandatory national youth service. Onu has intervened and asked the C.E.O to give Kemi a chance to prove her worth since she specializes in water resources and environmental engineering at Global University or stand a risk of losing a contract with the United Nations to establish modern water treatment plants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Engr. Onu said;

"Maybe, we should start considering that because for all I care, we only specialize in employing first class idiots year after year" (p.115).

"Sir, we won't lose anything if we just give her a chance" (p. 116).

Engr. Onu is asked to go and find the lady. When he sees her, he said;

'You may just be the 'Saviour' we have been waiting for. We need a detailed design of a modern water treatment plant. Can you do that in six months?'

"I can do it". She said in a loud voice.

"Can we now go to the C.E.O's office?"

"Yes sir, but please permit me to write down something"

Before he could reply, she pulled out her small exercised book and pen from her bag. She began to write quickly.

**The stage is set**

*The stage is set*

*For with fate, I made a bet*

*The spectators have come*

*Not to watch, but undoubtedly mock*

*Impossible, their eyes say*

*Every lip reveals that I've gone insane*

*I hear the whistle*

*My due with fate is sure to begin  
And everyone shall know  
What extent an aggrieved soul can go!*

She is determined to show the world that she will realize all her dreams in life. She believes that no one should let disappointments destroy one's dreams.

After her success and firm as an international figure, her alma-mater invites her to deliver a seminar on the topic 'Expanding the Horizons of Engineering in Nigeria'. She has established quite a number of companies as well as an engineering firm that specializes in construction of dams - YEMKO. Her success makes her being likened to Bill Gates.

"Do you know who that woman is?"

"It's like asking Bill Gates to be our guest of honour"

After the successful seminar and its attendant ovation, the university authorities conduct her around the school. It is recorded that: At the age of forty, Kemi was still addicted to her small exercise book and a pen. After the seminar, the Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Idris and other prominent members of the Senate committee take her round the school to show her their achievements. At the Faculty of Engineering, they want her to see the contributions of the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) to the faculty.

Immediately she stepped out of the black Limousine parked at the faculty's parking space, she pulled out the exercise book open from her hand bag. "Please give me a minute" she said to the others. If there ever was a time she desperately needed to write, it was now. She smiled as she wrote (p. 135).

**Amidst thorns and prickles, I finally found my way**

*Amidst thorns and prickles, I finally found my way  
Though shrouded in darkness, my eyes saw a gleam of light  
Without relenting, I chased after the light  
Determined to soar higher than the eagle  
Today, it looks like the world has yet another wonder  
Another mystery for generations yet unborn  
For who would have thought  
That on the same spot where I once stood  
With teary eyes  
And I who once begged for a little mercy  
Now towers higher than all those who I begged  
Continuously, they sing my numerous praise  
Overnight, I have become a great hero  
Let no one forget the secret behind my glow  
I made a bet with fate. (p.135-136)*

Her lips spread out in a smile of satisfaction as her eyes ran through the poem. "I won the bet". She muttered, and continued her tour with the group.

After all her sufferings in life especially in her alma-matter, where she suffered cases of missing scripts and the refusal of the faculty of engineering to submit the names of the graduating students to the Senate making them miss the mandatory Youth Service, she returns a prominent woman

...that on the same spot where I stood with teary eyes

...and I who once begged for a little mercy

Overnight, I have become a great hero (p. 136).

In spite of all the disappointments, she secures a job with Devlon and succeeds in designing a modern water treatment plant. She stuns the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo with outstanding projects she executes and her name has never stopped resounding across the world.

...Now towers higher than all those I begged

...Overnight, I have become a great hero.

Her life history from suffering to greatness and its attendant firm is documented as poems. An uncreative person will not consider the event worth documenting as poems.

### PROCEDURE 3: OBSERVE AND WRITE (OAW)

The researchers guide the experimental group to observe their environment, their classmates, teachers and every object in the environment. They are made to know that poetry can be written on things / events around us. They mention things around us such as:

- ☞ palm trees
- ☞ mango tress
- ☞ school bags
- ☞ teacher's table
- ☞ friends
- ☞ the school
- ☞ classrooms
- ☞ books
- ☞ brooms

They name events in their communities such as

- ☞ teaching
- ☞ learning
- ☞ Christmas
- ☞ Easter
- ☞ child dedications
- ☞ funeral ceremonies
- ☞ traditional marriage ceremonies

### DISCOVERY

After using 'Twinkle Twinkle little Star' to teach them rhyme scheme and other literary devices, the students write the first drafts of poems on palm trees which were read in the class and corrected. After that exercise they were asked to write on anything that attracted their imagination. 15 students out of the 20 experimental group constituting 75% were able to write creatively on things around as poems as can be seen in the appendix.

### CONCLUSION

From the study, it is concluded that creativity can consciously be developed and nurtured. When learners are taught creatively and guided properly, they can develop the sensitivity to things around them and can consequently write prolifically on them in both poetry and other genres. Creativity awareness on writing on things around us can help produce creative writers who will address both the social, political, economic, religious and other issues. It will build up students' expressive faculty.

The involvement of children in 'Read and Explain' (RAE), 'Listen and Learn' (LAL) and 'Observe and Write' (OAW) are very powerful strategies of promoting children's growth in writing poetry in particular and can aid writing generally in other genres. It is evident that literature as a form of discourse uses language greatly to do thing and consequently constitute form of literacy.

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