

AKINA NANI

PREFACE

My generation, usually called the Mboya Airlift, was in university when many African countries exited direct colonial rule. Neo-colonialism did invade soon after though. Chinua Achebe reminded us that “Until the lions write their own history, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

Many of us saw ourselves as the young lions. We experienced this in terms of the knowledge we found at the assorted universities which did not really include us and our traditions.

Wilfred Cartey’s *Whispers from a Continent* and Stephen Henderson’s *Understanding the New Black Poetry* encouraged me to venture into scribbling some ideas about my continent and its Diaspora.

These books came to my attention, in the mid sixties, during the contestation about Black power in the US, when in graduate school. In the decade of the seventies, my age mates and I were involved in the contestation of what independence meant for the university, the peoples of Kenya and indeed the continent. There were many Africans, including my colleagues at the university, and elsewhere in Africa and beyond, who were also trying to define what our literature could say about our society then and its governance.

Cartey’s influence led me to write my PH.D thesis on social and political ideas in African Literature.

Henderson influenced me specifically in four ways. First, by his argument, one cannot make distinctions between poetry, folklore and prose. Second, peoples’ literature, embracing songs, proverbs, poetry and prose, is ultimately only understood and explained by those within and empathetic to the particular tradition. This argument is not mere ethno centrism but an argument that there should be more empathy for the historic core of our traditions by those who write about us.

Thirdly, Henderson also got me to begin to scribble some poetry. I had never scribbled any up to that point. Fourthly, Henderson pointed at the

importance of using peculiarities of speech from our mother continent, through the middle passage and indeed to the variations found in the US, Caribbean, South America and any other place where there are significant numbers of black people.

I did not get around to publishing the scribbling in English until 1977 when I was teaching at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. The title for them was Akina Dada. It is no longer in print.

One accepts the Mbitian position that one's scribbling can only be judged by others. Therefore, this foreword is only an explanation of how my scribbling came about. That is why some are in English and others in Kikamba.

The English ones were originally written in the seventies. Unfortunately, I did not date them. The Kikamba ones meander from the sixties to the twenty twenties. Their standpoints are varied in time and focus.

Whereas the English ones mainly focus on the global black questions of the sixties, the Kamba ones go back in time to gaze at the pre-colonial, through the colonial, post colonial to the present.

Significant portion of them celebrate ancestors and benefit from some other researches done by my generation and others. The bulk of them were written when I had left university based research and teaching and meandered to journalism for a while, development consulting and later retired. I spent most of my adult life consulting! Youth and schooling years were about thirty years, journalism about three and consulting about forty.

My generation of academics and writers has sought many solutions to what each saw as our problems. Later generations will have to judge whether our scribbling make sense to them. Historically, my generation was cast out twice. First, we were removed from traditional society by colonial schooling initially. Secondly, most of us who were not in country during the first independence decade missed the Matunda ya Uhuru, not only in the civil service jobs-the largest employer then- but also within our communities. We were seen as threats to the emergent state and community leaderships.

This was put to me concretely by one of my high school teachers, in a conference on improving education. I was vocally pushing for more technical training from primary level to University. He shouted: "You are here because we taught you English, not machines." He was a top administrator of education!

An age mate, who was a classmate in high school, asked me:“What were you doing at the university for ten years. Look at me. I have a car and a government house.” A totally illiterate politician said, in a public meeting, that he would buy toilet paper for us to be cleaning him in spite of our degrees!

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IDENTITY

for Ee Mutwanthuku

INITIATIONS

1

Missed paths

Two clasped generations

Seeking re-connection

Idoto we sought

Lament of a he goat

Unmuslim bludgeon for death

Instant mother grinding millet

Instant father procuring brew

Instant brother herding meat

Dry of the driest seasons

Poor of the poorest people

Mobile of mobile most young men

5

Hunter of the hunters

The grove was symbolic

The fourth year of the drought

The third seeking

Seven incisors

Seven swallows

Seven dances

Seven holes to close

Four extended limbs

Three single orifices

Four double limbs

Three foods- grain, meat, brew

“The first ancestors ...

Must have been poor

Must have been greedy

Must have been competitive”

“The highest initiation- dancer hunter, spy

We dance life/death

We hunt to preserve life

We war to preserve kin life...”

“Elephant, buffalo, lion....

(land, job, livestock)

Dancer to tame witches

Hunter to get ivory for Arabs

Spy to trap Maasai.”

Spying on non-tribesmen ONLY?

NEVER

Yet the irony of the beginning

Dancer /hunter spy initiated by the poor

Poverty came with the Arab slavers

Dancer /hunter spy initiations counter insurgency

2

In the real beginning ivory was irrelevant

In the real beginning competitiveness was irrelevant

In the real beginning trade hunting and spying were irrelevant

Two generations have elapsed

Family dragged into Christian gods

Dancer, hunter, spy mutating

7

The first generation initiated only four

Mutwanthuku, Mwonge, Vaimboi, Mutyandili

The second generation ... how do we talk of them

Slaves, porters caravan leaders

And then, Cummings ANDU ANENE

Thus the debating point of the immediate ancestors

Did they miss anything by ignoring dancer hunter spy?

Did they gain by mutating into Christian gods?

Mutwanthuku was the head of the lineage

His sons had been initiated

The grandsons were detoured by famine

Large lineages were created by the first generations

Large hunting areas existed

Large stores of grain existed

Then the famine of rice

Then the epidemic of small pox

Then the backward migration to the desert

Most of the lineage was affected

Fourth wife of third son was not

She had to take the seven out

The seven, four boys and three girls

Tasked to preserve the lineage

Had to cross the seven dry streams

To a desert in metal snake land

3

Dancer, hunter, spy was male

Syokimau represented the older Diop age

She saw the metallic snake splitting origins, presences and futures

There is always the duality of Diop and Cummings

The competition of the duality was male and female

Dogon like, harking to normality was female

But, expansion and crisis were always male

Ironically continuation of lineage was female led

Male led long distance foraging had brought small pox

Thus the harkening to a recreation state became female led

The female predicted iron snake could not be normal

It brought strangers with smoking rods

It ironically also carried rice, hence the famine name

On reaching the iron snake

Mother of the new asomi lineage died

Proximate to a baobab

Was she sacrificed by Shango?

The three girls also died on reaching the metal snake

Was Shango checking Cummings?

Who would expand the lineage?

The four boys foraged ineffectively

They were yet to become hunter spies

Three died of small pox and starvation

The youngest survived

4

He had been born outside at the thome

He did not allow the mother to get past the thome

He thus was born a dancer, hunter and spy

He survived by snatching food

From the iron snake builders

He survived by collecting dropped rice

He survived by snatching meat from lion kills

Boom boom kutch kutch kutch

Woowie woowie woowie

Choo choo choo

Always the sounds

Always the hunger

Always the boom fire sticks

Always the melee

Urchins unlimited fighting for scrap

Always running

Stomachs extended as if pregnant

Hair sandy and silvery as if sixty

Spindly legs of match sticks

The wooden stick thrust to a rice sack

The warm flow of rice onto the sleepers

The dry of the driest season as chewing

The hard of the hardest swallowing

The furtive glances as the teeth grind raw rice

The hurry of hurries

Above all the fear of the whips and the thunder sticks

Then... woo wee woo wee woo wee

The first woo wee mean run as fast as possible

Slow ones became plaster under the iron snakes feet

The un-gorged rice mixes with the pebbles

No disentangling of rice and pebbles in daylight

No moistening parched lips by day

No waiting for Sahibs whip

The second woo wee is for the bush of baobabs

Safety was with buffalo, elephant and lions

Iron snake had strange human like things despising you

The third woo wee meant collapse

Collapse on the baobab tree limbs

The body unwashed and uncovered

At night back to separate rice from pebbles

At night back to drink metal water

At night back to hunt metal snake strangers garbage

Dancer hunter spy

Home with the elephant buffalo and lion

Dancer hunter spy living for several years

Dancer hunter spy

Eats marching

Sleeps watching

Dancer hunter spy

Mwathi na Mwathani

Dancer hunter spy

Mwathi na Mwathani

5

Initiation was strange

Whilst initiation is proximate to homes

Yours was between baobabs and iron snake

Initiation is to get rhythm

Your rhythm was given by woo wee

Initiation is to get strength

Strength was given by fear

Initiation is to get strong stomach

Strong stomach was given by driest rice

Initiation is to get speed

Speed was given by whips and thunder sticks

In initiation one becomes natural

Naturalness was the unknown

In initiation one is usually sandaled

Walking on the snake's metal sandaled you unnaturally

In initiation metal is put into the body
Thunder smoke sticks bore into your backsides

In initiation raw grain -mwee- is eaten
You ate raw rice

In initiation only unmuslim goat is eaten
Unmuslim zebra meat was snatched from lion cubs
In initiation women cook and leave food outside for initiates
The garbage dropped was your food

In initiation there is a brotherly elephant dance
The brotherly elephant dance was real in the baobabs

The brotherly buffalo-my animal- dance was real in the baobabs
The brotherly lion dance was real in the baobabs

Thus you qualified as the initiator of the third generation
Into the first and second traditional forces

Whilst being initiated to the mad stranger's ways
It was only you who survived out of the seven

Before, you had survived thome birth not hearth

You had survived small pox

You had survived influenza

You survived the alien rice and water

You survived the animals

You survived the iron snake

You even survived the white skin human like things

You, I repeat, had been born out of the house

You were initiated by live elephants, buffaloes, and lions

You also were initiated by the iron snake's metal water

Dry rice and strange white skin humans

You became a master dancer, hunter and spy supreme

A Mwathi, Muthiani na Mwathani Munene Muno

You did not know this then

6

The strange and queer human like things

Noticed many dancers, hunters and spies

Ultimately they zeroed on you

The supreme dancer, hunter spy

The buffalo, elephant, lion world

Was hostile to them

They had not been initiated

This was your habitué

They hunted you for seven days

The aathi na athiani protected you

This kept your hunger, sleep and exhaustion away

The elephants, buffaloes and lions protected you

You were theirs in spirit and body

For seven days you tested your initiation

It perfect though unorthodox

7

It is the duty of the Mwathi and Muthiani to venture

It is the duty of the Mwathi and Muthiani to dance life

It is the duty of the Mwathi and Muthiani to hunt death

It is the duty of the Mwathi and Muthiani to spy death and life

It is the duty of the Mwaathi and Muthiani to create life and livelihoods

Therefore you masconned into supreme hunter, spy, dancer

The hunted was to dance, hunt, and spy the new human like things

The hunted was to create the new Aathi na Athiani

8

White human like things caught and remade him

He was taught soap washing

He was taught wearing their cloth

He was taught to eat their food
He was taught to drink their tea
He was a good student
These were his first learning's

A Mwathi Muthiani is a teacher

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A Mwathi Muthiani is a teacher

The Mwathi Muthiani was to become the Mwathani

He was sent to school to learn book

The second learning, was becoming a cook
A Mwathi Muthiani learns to cook
A Mwathi Muthiani learns to cook for survival
He taught three subsequent generations to cook for survival not for fat

The third learning was crop farming
A Mwathi Muthiani is also a crop farmer
He taught farming as it had never been taught
He grew cereals, legumes, fruits, yams and sugarcane
He was still the best farmer in the region at ninety
He hired no labor but sweated himself

The fourth learning was a hunter
A Mwathi Muthiani is a hunter

To hunt is to seek and provide for the lineage
He hunted not only with thunder smoke but with action ideas
He hunted everywhere but hunting the soil was supreme

The fifth learning was livestock farming not ranging
He knew the age of endless ranging was past
A Mwathi Muthiani is a livestock farmer
In limited space he farmed zebu and Bos Taurus
He kept them when others were sacrificing theirs in droughts
Goats were destructive, he never kept them

The sixth learning was a home produce, tea and salt provider
Supplies were far; he shopped for self and neighbors
His soul was never in the Andu Anene trade of past
He knew of the hundreds of years of soul sales
Selling souls and soil was part of the missed way
The human like things had come to essentially sell both
Selling and buying of Andu Anene had besmirched the collective way

The seventh learning was to become a catechist
A Supreme Mwathi Muthiani is a Supreme Mwathani (seer)
A Catechist is not a seer
He became a calm private preacher/seer
He contributed language of the way into the human like things book
Language of a Mwathi Muthiani is the reciprocal way language

His language into the book denied mother of the hunchback worship

The eighth learning was teaching

A Mwathi Muthiani is a Mwathani (teacher of the future)

He taught the universality of the knowledge of the way

He extends knowledge by always venturing

He embodied all past knowledge

He created potential for future knowledge

He was the teacher supreme

He taught the principles of the way

He taught what he understood at the baobabs

He taught them not to students but to all as equals

The teacher supreme also taught the place of the iron snake

The way of the first and second traditions were the basic principles

The iron snake road was just an alternative means to other futures

The Supreme Teacher taught Wathi

The supreme Teacher taught Uthiani

The Supreme Teacher taught the interpenetration of Wathi and Uthiani

The Supreme Teacher thus taught WATHANI

The Supreme teacher taught the interpenetration of opposites

The Supreme Teacher thus taught Wathi/Uthiani and Iron Snake

Grandsons of the famine grandsons
Seventh since the first initiation of three
Welcome to the grove
I am Isanusi Muviti
I am Idoto Kathambi
Tell us about your useless selves

“We were born in war
We were born after the famine of bones
We were born during Burma

*We remember the grinding of cassava
We remember the stomp of the boots
We remember the dewy morning going to school*

We never saw drum
Whenever saw arrow
We never saw brew
We never smelt the sacrifice

*We felt Gandhi
We felt Dedan
We felt Giap
We felt Bella
We felt Nkrumah*

We felt Lumumba

We felt Mboya

We never danced elephant, buffalo, and lion

We danced phantom muthirigu

We danced masked highlands blackening

We never talked to the grove

We were sent to thingland for the future of our country

We travelled with heavy tread and false rhythm

We never spied reciprocity

We collected things

We agonized over what is power

These were momentary preoccupations

Most of the time we remembered vaguely

The first supreme dancer, hunter, spy

We remembered his strength and purpose

Day in and day out he would wake before sunrise

Day in day out he would toil in the boiling sun

When others came to visit

There was cool water, food and tea

When others were sick he visited

When others had nothing for pot he shared

We remember the strange exchange with a dear friend

Every dry season each would visit master fundi

Each would buy the other exactly the same cloth

Many would not allow boots to visit

Many would not allow wanderers to visit

Many would not listen to the young

He allowed boots and wonderers to visit and stay

He would listen to our folly for days on end

Then he would teach us whatever he was doing

We remember others saying he was strange

We remember his slow smile when we told him this

We remember his gifts of guavas, papayas, tangerines and oranges

He was the only source for miles

When we travelled to thing land

We appreciated him most

There was nobody to give us even water

In thing land his iron snake lessons were remembered

Memories of his idea that thinglanders live and die alone
Memories of the idea that there is no reciprocity of even water

*In thing land his patience grew in us
Patience to sidestep thing land's mad rhythm
Patience to know osmotically the baobab grove*

In thing land his temperance grew in us
Temperance about food, drink and things
Temperance about irrelevant company and empty smiles

*In thing land his silent fire was lit in us
A fire which seeks to strive always
A silent fire which questions greed
A fire which constantly opposes greed
A silent fire constantly asking:
Who are we?
Where are we from?
Where are we going?*

When we were toddlers, he used to ask us
Where are you from?
Who are you?
What will you become?
Where are you going to?

We were uncircumcised and did not know the answers

We therefore come to Idoto Muviti

We therefore come to Isanusi Kathambi

We therefore come to seek the way through you

Judge us as you see fit.”

10

These strange seekers at the seventh grove entrance provoke memory

These strange seekers at the seventh grove entrance need real history

These strange seekers at the seventh grove entrance will be our future

We have lived thousands of seasons since Benue Kwa

We have lived wathi

Lately we have lived wathi and uthiani

We have lived dancer, hunter, and spy for eons of time

We Isanusi Kathambi must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

We Kathambi Isanusi must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

We Idoto Muviti must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

We Muviti Idoto must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

We Kathambi Idoto must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

We Idoto Kathambi must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

We Muviti Isanusi must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

We Isanusi Muviti must pass to them that reciprocity is the first principle of our life

It was ruled that reciprocity be taught to these grandsons of famine grandsons

Seventh since the first initiation of the first

Seventh of the seven in the spring of primary tasks

In the elephant dance man dances woman

In the elephant dance woman dances man

In the elephant dance maman dances unity

In the buffalo dance family dances man

In the buffalo dance woman dances man

In the buffalo dance faman dances unity

In the lion dance family dances village

In the lion dance village dances tribe

In the lion dance tribe dances nation

In the lion dance, nation dances family, village and tribe

In the lion dance state dances unity of all

The people shall be in unity at the family village tribe and nation
That the family village tribe and state shall be unity is our highest law
That family village tribe and state shall be unity is our highest law

The hunter hunts for others

The hunter hunts with others

The hunter hunts for life

The spy does not herd

The spy can only work with others

The spy works for the nation

The spy builds unity against enemies

Of the family, village, tribe and nation

We do not dance only for self

We do not hunt only for self

We do not spy only for self

WE DO NOT DIE FOR SELF

The real tradition is based on reciprocity

The real tradition is based on reciprocity

Reciprocity connects us through the thousands of seasons

You call him the supreme teacher

We accept your new found wisdom

*He knew the way when we taught him at the baobab
We initiated him alone*

*Each age has its seventh grove
We know one of you will set the seventh grove near his baobab
The elephants, buffaloes and lions will enforce our wishes*

11

“We only brought you the baobab bark
The future will give us and ours baobab tree’s life
We will bring you its pods for your porridge

*Our age is the driest of the last five centuries
The seers are few
The perverted dancers, hunters and spies many*

This is the driest of the past dry ones
Dancers dance politicians
Hunters hunt contracts
Spies hunt families
Thing landers abound

Yet you seers have progeny
They exist in prophetic space
Refusing to trade you
Refusing to trade your knowledge

27

Refusing to trade your traditions

Ultimately refusing to trade family, village, tribe and nation

SEERS IN PROPHETIC SPACES ARE MASCONING

SEERS IN PROPHETIC SPACES ARE MASCONING

SEERS IN PROPHETIC SPACES ARE MASCONING”

for Micere Mugo

DECEMBRIST SISTERS

Asomi: WHO ARE YOU?

Sisters: “We are hoboes

Hoboes traveling light

Lucky to borrow

A bed for the night

Careless about tomorrow

We are émigrés on foreign soil
Condemned in a cold and heartless country
To hide the deepest things we feel.” (1)

Asomi: WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Sisters: “You can tell me as many lies as you like
I need to know the truth

Give me darkness! Give me shadow!
Give me a patch of shadow to hide my face in shame!”(2)

Asomi: DON'T YOU WANT PROGRESS?

Sisters: All progress is retrogression
If the process breaks humans

“Technologies and states live for a day
Then they go their way, and pass us by” (3)

Asomi: YOU ARE JUST MINDLESS FOOLS

Sisters: “Mind is the highest product of matter
Everything in life is flow and changes..... (T) he mind itself
Can also produce change and material result.” (4)

1. Andrei Voznesensky, Homeless

2. A.D. Siniavskii, The Makepeace Experiment (London: Collins, 1965, pp. 131 and pp 43
3. Andrei Voznesensky, "Oza".
4. A.D. Siniavskii, The Makepeace Experiment, p. 52

for A. Keino

THE DUALITY

It had been the season for looking after cattle
Mama constantly worried whether the chicken eaters
Would raid our cattle

You were the supreme mother, owner of all the cattle

Keeper of the eternal fire

Long ago you could marry a camel keeper

But, your father had said that

Camel places are not good for children

You were therefore married in and by our village

Your sons had sharpened spears many times

To raid cattle from the chicken eaters

For honored guests you always killed a bull

Your daughter so desired a child then

This is getting ahead of the story

Grass was before concrete

She had endured endless seasons of looking after calves

After your schooling her on how to cook she told us

Mama said, " You should always feed them first"

However, there always was her alternative self

She did not want to be governed

By wood divination flame

"I am a person" she said to us

But she had to fit

She could never choose not to cook

She had to inherit your fire carrier role

A carrier of the fire always cooks

For a time she reneged on the role

This ambivalence was temporarily resolved

When she demanded that her younger brothers cook

But they could never become our carriers of eternal fire

She ran to the cattle kraal

And usurped the brothers' role as the sharpeners of spears

Yet all she could do was to cry at the kraal gate -never raid

As Ogotamele would put it, she could not plant the horns

At the supreme bull sacrifice

It was the season for herding cattle in the green pastures

There descended upon us the season of the donkey

When, if you hear a donkey bray, you kill and eat it

It arrived before they began training you as our next supreme fire keeper

This was after your mother had gone to barter first the weak son

Then the second weak son in Mwanzi's country

To keep the strong younger ones and you alive

You, born to inherit renewing fire at the hearth and us
Had to forget cattle, goats, chickens and chew raw and dry millet
Your mother bartered more children to keep the stronger alive

The family had to continue

The clan had to continue

The tribe had to continue

This was the season of sorrows
This was truly the season of sorrows
For you and us

Strange spirits unrelated to our dead us and the unborn came

You were not allowed to see them

This would contaminate your vigilance over our eternal fire

Your persona pushed you there since you were not weak

You admired and always sought strength's ambivalence
You were hypnotized by the alien spirits

Your feet, squelched through mud, slithered on wet grass,
Slid on pebbles and got pricked by thorns
So as to go and learn do re mi fa so la and babaa black sheep

Later it was Highlands where you had to bring twelve ribbons
In spite, of the ritual need for no hair in our rituals

You learned to flick imaginary long blonde curls from your face

*It was the season of sorrows for us as we grew up without you
There you sought strength sitting with one hand below the table
Eating with the other praising Okot's mother of the hunchback*

You were taught to praise their eternal cosmos not ours
Since we and the spirits knew you were the future keeper of our fire
We came to visit expecting to be allowed through the gate

They had wanted a list of those you wanted to see
You listed somebody called NONE who was not us
Our season of sorrows grew

The second schooling was at the city of mud
Four of you, who had swallowed the fantasies of Highlands
Connected by being collected and the city swallowed you
*We were not there and did not have an age mate keeper of the fire
Your persona which always cried "I am me"
Did not know or need us*

You did not want to be hustled or hustle our village
You were therefore what you thought you had to be _
By trapping the camel eater's son

His existence had also been incomplete
Exiled from his community until you engulfed him
His being wanted to freeze you at the hearth

You so badly wanted to leave keeping our eternal flame
You travelled with him to the land of the white cold
Yet you really were not with him and vice versa

You parted the day you giggled
When a stranger accidentally said: "Camel land is no place for a child"
That made you soul break remembering your bartered brothers

It masconned the seasons of famine, sorrows, alien schooling

With the fire dance of Nomo by Ataka

The sensible Tuareg sister in blue

It also was the season of your new schooling
In the concrete jungle
You lost the memory of our camel brother

You forgot him as you forgot our community
We bush persons would say
You were on this path since do re mi fa so la ti does

The Brother watched you from the airport
To your downtown shopping and onto

“Can you have drink with me?” That is all

Validation was therefore nothing more than curiosity

We do not condemn you

Fanon had explained

We of the village and the dry lands had failed you

We only wanted you to protect us as tradition demanded

Yet we had exposed you

If you thought why did you not see?

That this was like the time of sorrows

When your mother and our ancestors had to barter children

A person is never validated outside the social milieu

We also travelled your route

But we kept looking for you

In your seasons of concretized jungles

Through pseudopodia and osmosis

We knew you existed so we sought you

We collapsed our time and space

To reach you

At Thirty, Four, Common, Wealth, Hall

“Mama told me to always make sure that they are well fed.”

“The twelfth commandment is you shall not be hustled”.

“I am me”

“I exist in spite of the other”

“Being defined by the other is unacceptable”

Yet our community defines female and male roles

All of us struggle with humanizing the village and the concrete jungles

Sisters and brothers question the historic roles

This, at times, denies their getting union cards and becoming

Then of course there is the past of some of us who burnt out

Like the marriage in the concrete jungle

We had traveled the white cold way

There were no keepers of eternal community fires there

Fear is deadly at initiation even in the white cold lands

Some wanted circumcision

Others wanted initiation into the union club as persons

At other times relationships were strictly intellectual

Incestuous as all intellectual relationships are

In the goat herding, cattle herding, cookery, concrete jungles

Some of us, at different times, sought Zamani

Not by water but by fire

The priestess of fire was greedy at times
Some of us shunned her
Initiation and work were individual struggles

*Therefore we worked
We made blue heat possible in the prophetic space
As our Bahia brothers would say
Since hope is the possibility of less evil*

We are, but do we therefore think?
Eternal community fires give and grow in the giving
Eternal community fires can be intellectualized and modernized

Since they have been through all past community seasons
To seek community fire is not to just dream
It is to accept that it can kill the death of white cold
It can achieve the transmutation of personal lives
It was the season of community introspection
“One needs to go to a room alone to deal with the world.”

This was thought out before when the dead of Zamani ordained
That individuality is only a part of the inner self, i.e. intellectualization
Society of the ancestors dominated all

Thus we go through the varied seasons
Wondering why we were selected as deviants to achieve
It is terribly humbling to find what duality demands

*We hustle and hassle to maintain our individual sanity
But we will never initiate ourselves
Others define, bisect, and program us at initiation*

However at times there are prophetic moments
When we meet as equals at the hearth
Seeking the blue fire at the eternal community source

Those are beautiful moments
We should always seize them
We should also enjoy them

It was the season of introspection
“Why are you hustling me about mother?”
How could I explain?

To accept that both of us are Ogotamelle’s initiates
Is also to agree to share
Sorrows, barbers, schooling and introspection

One is always entwined with THE others

*Thus all become like overlapping sets or molecules of DNA
We exist completely only together*

Though many do not understand the loneliness of the initiation
We have never been muons deflected away by magnetic fields
The loneliness takes us and ours in milliseconds from before the Zamani
When the old dead were young
Through concrete jungles to the end of time

Could, of course, put it another way
That is in the beginning was mother the fire keeper
Who begat Ocol who begat son of sonless father
Who begat Shango
Or, alternatively, at the midnight hour, if you hear an owl hooting outside
You get out of bed, and chase it away
In the morning you put a broken pot on a tree before women touch the
ground

The season of introspection is characterized by loneliness
Loneliness is encapsulated and verbalized in our traditions
And, as you point out, it is osmotically understood

*The only problem then with us initiates is
We cannot decode the loneliness of ourselves
Like the village which watched you cry at the kraal gate*

The village also watched you mother's return
From Mwanzi's without the children
The village watched when she killed the donkey

The village knew why
The village came and sat silently
Supporting her by their presence, and blocking her dying alone

I am also the village

I also saw you barter your soul to get the initiation sponsorship

I also saw Kung Fung come and go leaving a bartered soul

I also came and sought to be by you
That way the village humanized the concreteness of your jungle
If I was/am wrong, the village was/is wrong
Since brothers take care of sisters and vice versa

This is the season of migration to Mother
You hassle me in terms of information theory
I had travelled Middle Passage before you

This trip was all work
I wanted to find the continuity of the message
Embodied in those who had "been to the mountain top"

And those who 'separated and were saved'
Their gatekeeper is your gatekeeper
Harvard is not Todai

I sought to see a lighted Middle Passage
I sought to know that the previous initiates
Are preparing to sponsor the next age set

*I sought to know the date of the planting of the horns
I found out that all the gatekeepers were uncircumcised
All this added to my loneliness*

Therefore, as my generations supreme fire keeper
You knew you had to kill all their "children"
Since they are not even things

It was shattering to find that the hyena was still eating its tail
The vulture was waiting for the hyena to fall
You worried about this, so you did a Kung Fu

*If we had not been initiated, we would stop here
Initiation forced us to recall, to know, and to extend the Zamani
In light of the Sasa since Shango and Nomo never dialogue directly*

Although a spastic dance of young initiates
Unsure of the steps is acceptable now
As we become the sponsors of the initiates
And later initiators,
Defined as creators of possibilities of less evil
We shall dance all dances of our universe
With room for the fulsome dance of two
Linking the Zamani Sasa, and Kesho
We shall insure the end the loneliness of the uninitiated

“You should feed them first”

“A keeper of eternal fire always cooks and cooks well”

You cooked as Okot and your mother would approve

You left us music Azda, Kamata, Abulatee, Mama Africa, Bango

You did not leave us with the Midnight Mover

Or Jane telling the other that they were co-wives in the land of white cold

Later there was Medieval, Jazz and Brazilian

To cook and to provide music on your volition

Was to transcend the powers of your specific deity

And to incorporate many community deities

Music always accompanies circumcision

You do not eat and drink alone like a witch

Since both deny the individual mind and community potential

IN THE BLACKS DANCE OF THE UNIVERSE

EACH PERSON DANCES COMMUNITY

IT DELITES AND HELPS EACH PERSON TO ENDURE

IT IS FOOD GENERATIONS LEAVE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

THE DANCE IS SAGALA OF SAGALA FOR GENERATIONS NOT YET BORN

for Stephen Henderson and Wilfred Cartey

TO EAT GRASS ON THE ROAD

1

Mere desert flowers they are

Hiding in the micro-catchments

Yet we ask them to plant horns

All acacias flower

All baobabs store water

All weaver birds sing

In the south Nkomolick

In Babylon Corelick

In Double Two Tontons

It was a season of planting horns

It was the season of planting horns

Magnetic tapes expanding micro-catchments

The non-dying baobab gives water in droughts

The ant hill feeds in deserts

Both giving life to the many

Felix said develop solar power in deserts

Janet said organize the streets

Rasta said chill

Desert flowers hide in micro-catchments

Magnetic tapes expand micro-catchments

Pogo produces magnetic tapes

Gladys watched from the stoop at 125th Harlem
She controlled its communication channels
Gladys, did you know Armah Ata Aidoo?
She cooks at Cape Coast

We saw black stars last night
Must we forever sing blues?
How about our own gospel?

2

I cannot cope
I am integrated through Blue Bambaras
I am a man, more accurately, a loa trying to be a man

I have seen Gladys, Bambara, Paule, Maya and Masquez
I have seen Scorpio and Snake devour Shango
Therefore I have been to the top

Micro-catchments trap plant horns
Petals and stamens grow in those micro-catchments
Karma is the Congo

I slither from cornmeal to fish through yams
I slide from herbs to plasma exchange
I know not the route from rap to development

I know not the route to irrigation

I know not the route to natural fertilizers

I know not the route to community

They lie that my ideas are bisexual

Owning and cooking only perverted ideas

Without separating action and idea

3

Weaver birds are heroes

Jackals are heroes

Frigates are heroes

A garden is planted by two

A garden is harvested by two

A garden is not for "heroes"

Plantations are still planted by slaves

Plantations are still harvested by slaves

Plantations are not for future heroes

Micro-catchments naturally exist in valleys

Micro-catchments kill frigates

Micro-catchments appease Shango' deadly heat

At the sacrificial grove we waited
Creating micro-catchments
Armah married Jok there

Our micro-environments will live for ever
After growing into macro-environments
Armah mediates with Shango in big valleys

A home always has Shango and Armah
A home always has Karma and Chikwu
A home always has Mojo

Communities have work and prayers
Communities must always feed themselves
Communities must have spears and magnetic tapes

My ears cannot hear clearly
That new sacrificial horns have been planted
But Maya has already cried for community rituals

4

Few visit my knowledge soul
Loneliness alone never forgets to call
As Armah equivocates

Yet micro- environments are drained

Micro-environments are transistorized

Micro-environments cannot compete with the idiot box

Vultures and frigates hover

Spreading turbulent thoughts about countries

Screaming through Armah's night

The penetrating dust of the driest of dry

Screaming, burning penetrating lungs

We cry for unhearing fake saviors

The young running off

Sliding, slithering, crashing bodies

Onto spine twisting pink platforms

AIC and CIA embracing CORE

Pulling, tugging and crushing bodies

Against the trinity of blacks

Yet they shoot horses and Rastafarians

In the animal republic

As they auction some Wambenzi

Hence, do not dance the mad jig

By the midnight mover

Whose deadly petals always kill stamens

5.

“Layers of white clouds

May separate me from you in the distant part

Toward him who longs for you

Do not be distant in your heart” (Ki no Tsurayuki)

Though slavery institutions

May separate me from you in style

We communicate osmotically

Distances and history stand between us

Time and memory gracefully serves us

Remembering Chaka designing a stabbing spear

“Should I arise and go to you, or wait

For you to knock? The choice was hard:

And while I doubted still, I fall asleep,

With door unbarred” (Anon)

If we had epizootic controls

Tuaregs would thrive trading south

Awaiting epizootic knocks is hard

Dropping from Futa Jalon

The Niger runs deep abutting radioactive minerals

Bauxite, copper and coal are close also

It is lonely in the recesses of my mind

Even when you call

Smithing macro-environments demands planting of spears

Yet you demand stamens in your valley

When smithing is fighting scorpions

Batuta said red and black never mix

6

Awakened by laser cold heat

I wander among the ruins of Tchakaya

Looking for Chaka's spear

Drugged by Double Two

I wander among the ruins of Monamotapa

Looking for Ogotamelle's peace

Lulled by Baraka

I wander among the tendrils of Nummo

51

Looking for Kilimanjaro

Agitated about Sahelian planning

I wander the ruins of high yeller jackals

Looking for the mingling of unexciting souls

Singing of midnight mover's dirty drawers

Wailing for communities broken

I cry without tears

Waiting for frigates

Warmed by nsima

Worshipping individuals

Historians have become frigates

Wallowing in wordless worlds

Waiting for the very poisonous Desert Flower Calypso

Yet THEY watch

Waiting caught between Mbiti's Sasa and Kesho

Knowing of Franco's rumba

Waiting, living, birthing

Loving, building, dying

Fossil water trapped under the desert anthill

Micro-environments always regenerate
Recharges are always from the sky
Hence Shango's electricity: Hence Armah's rainbow

Bambaras scared of Karma
Hence many mothers
As if pistils generate alone!

7

The lady was a tramp
Tramps do not community make
Society nurtures and controls

Children of many unrelated mothers
Always arguing about their futures
Singing about the midnight mover

Black intellectuals dancing, sighing, singing
Blues permutating to Jazz
Midnight mover transmutating to dharr

Our Los Angelino brothers and sisters
Solitarily dreaming of mojo
The loneliness of the treetop

Tramping southward
Slicking for the sun
A time for Bahia's faith

Never forgetting
The bittersweet smell
Of relations hatching

8

Kwanza Yam
Christmas of Hanukah
Death of the Savannah

Blues syncope offbeat
Waiting for Afo-a-Kom
Landed in white cold
Acid head missing
Maya, Bambara, Ogun
At the Bahamas

Half corner back high yellor
Trombone wailing
Into Macro-catchment valleys

Centuries of myopia

Ogun thirsting for blood

Bambara marrying Ocol

Mayibuye, blues, highlife

Mwethya ritualizing umundu

Millet growing: grinders dying

Sister slick going to sunny Botswana

Flying in hopeless torment

By the fake catharsis of fake voting

9

I will take the body to town

The soul to the village

Micro-catchments to macro-catchments

Limits and distant dissonances

Inchoate stamens and pistils

Screaming for timeless prophetic INNER space

Fragmented

Cynical

But also loving

55

I am Setif

I am Katanga

I too am Attica

We are forever Mutha

We are forever Mutha

We never go to Mutha to hunt

Four and three are few

A satellite falls here

The piano wails

Rhinos charging tourists

Professors processing minds

Trane cooking

Under Trane

Perfect strangers none are

Manu Ndimbango's sax confirms

I too have seen beauty

Mothers tapping baobab water

Mothers cooking grits

I too have seen beauty

'Forest People' watching wet rainforest leaves

Tabu Ley singing Mongali

I too have seen beauty

Rastas transfixed

By Angelinos bumping

Sisters singing and crying

Angola current fogging

Ogas hopping

12

Black of the gathering of tribes

Leaves wet with pregnancy

Roots dry with impotence

Black of the gathering of tribes

Coconuts dead

Concrete dripping dry

Black of the gathering tribes

Stems of greens and grit

Flowers of rice and crabmeat

57

Black of the gathering tribes

Manure of calypso

Water of juju

Black of the gathering tribes

Out growing Negritude

From isms to specific place and time analyzing

Black of the gathering tribes

Jackals and frigates

Denying transmutation of Ananse

13

Tuned to catch harmony

Hearing only raucous positions

Seeing dependence deepen

The artists unknown

Satellites of unity mojo

Sacrificed families and bodies creating

Artists creating collective mojo

Bush telegraph working

Solid state mojo is schooling

In our creating loneliness
Tentacles must reach all
Though politicians shoot

'Since I am convinced
That reality is in no way
Real
How am I to admit
That dreams are dreams?" (Saigo Hoshi)
You hope- defined as possibility of less evil

14

With the advancement of race
Historic communities disintegrate
As we strive for new ones and loves

If we die a-creating
May the loas mediate
Travelling from the Sasa to the Kesho
May today's saxophone
Marry the ancient Balafong
And sire our Comsat

May the catamaran, the mule and the hoe
Ionize into laser beams and muons

59

As we transcend plasma exchange into Sagala

May the seasons of anomie creatively
Push the wailing harmattan away from us
And warm ours in the lands of the white cold

May the young do battle
Comsating, rapping clarifying
As the old uproot sisal boundaries

May we galvanize Mother, Islands and all Diasporas
Dance solid state
And love retrieval systems and geophysics

May we energize the vacuums in islands and continents
As we transmit mojo power
Through techno-exchanges and touring
“I do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old
I seek the things they sought.” (Basho)
May the frigates learn
Their young to pick
When from Congo forests they fall

May our families qualitatively grow
May they titanium weld their FUTURES

As we create cybernetic synergisms

May we computerize and know

The ways of rainfall and harvesting water

To feed selves and to deny an Ethiopia begging

May catamarans become glomars

As solargy green house yams

For the dinner of the gathering tribes

May we transport the Congo system

To the Sahel

To break the bread dependency

15

The world of Abiku

Is the world of Abiku

And yet there are owls

Dancing at the gathering of the tribes

Pass water

Only on wet leaves

The loneliness from community

Travelling, touching and creating

61

I wallow in our memory

“Journeying through the world

To and fro, to and fro

Harrowing the small field

Time passes and the world changes

The remains of the past

Are shrouded in uncertainty

I do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old

I seek the things they sought” (Basho)

16

Our thermonuclear fusions and fissions

Are ideas of communities

Contained in our plasma

Breasts facing elements

Ideas of cultural roots

Are growth not poverty

Straightened hair

Pancaked face

Inability to cook

A hot blood

Corridors of impotence

62

Daughters of Kathambi

Naked owls

We walk congealed

Umbilical cords knotted hopefully

Mysterious loveliness exists

At magnetic barriers

Bumping

There eagles dancing communities

Frigates soar

Pawning our love

17

Acacias indicting fossil water

Palms commemorating Sherman

Guavas mediating limits between us

Palm fronds make fishing nets

Palm fronds make mango containers

Palm fronds make potato containers

Middle passage equaled death

Aid equals death

Non-alignment growth equals possibility of life

63

The old sea race
Capsules afloat
Brings water's life

The feet of community hopes
Tread upon all forms of love
Tying them in a fertility dance

In the Savanna
When the owl wails
Maya loves

Knee against knee
Bahia against Congo
A pre-middle passage communion

The owl murmured to dancer
The dancer smiled to the owl
The dawn of trane-baraka

The owl showed anus to the dancer
The dancer screamed to the owl
The death of Giovanni's rooms

The scream of people's waves
Splitting the atom
To the infinity of mojo

"The great drought
Becomes a brown cow
And then becomes a moo." (Sanki)

The Atlantic scourge
Becomes a mangy dog
And then barren

The sound of death
The photogenic Sokugwo
Nurture concrete jungles

The rainforest dripping wetness
Is the calypso
The mother of edible fungi
One thinks by listening
To the sounds and solitude of change
Bumblng from kin peoples

"To be a mistress
Is enough to tame me

I cut a water melon" (Kiyoko Tsuda)

18

I return

Always burdened

Of the past of blues

Loneliness is marriage

Incubated

In a nuclear family

Loneliness slithers

Like a nucleated family

In a polygamous society

Only last night

Did we see black stars

Must we always sing the blues

19

Artists creating

Sagala/Mascon

Community

Psi particles

Ions communiting

66

Mascon future

The owls must mascon

Mascon ain't Marx

Mascon ain't Mutha

Lord Shango, take our hands

Lord Jok, take our hands

Lord Amma, take our hands

Owls with hurt

Trane concentrating

The hurt of our particles masconing

Cosmic hurricane dance

Owls are not lazy

Sagala dense is not lazy

Thermo fusion and fission of owls

Mascon communities

Plasma contained by mojo fields

The past rains on us

Sometimes blurring our mud identities

As micro-environments mascon

Black bottoms grow rice and okra

Micro-environments grow oranges and papayas

Thus black bottoms equal microenvironments

Black water blues

Desert Blues

Mayibuye in E Flat

Leadbelly

Rolling Jerry

Franco Bebey

Can you dig?

Angelino sisters walk softly

Can you dig?

The Khoisan people walk softly

Total ecotone control

Owls can dig weave, smith and cultivate

Space-time arrested

Zamani and Sasa ultraviolated

Sagala cooking

Broken drumsticks

Angelinos ululating

Not O. E. O orioles

We study our histories backwards

Black gale of Songhai

Umbilical jazz

Lord Shango, take our hands

“A drum is a woman”

Changing changes

Gathering of the tribes

To build

A global dialect and dialectics

Critical mass

Midnight hour mover

Osmotic telecommunicating

Formal structures were pre-critical mass

Sagala demands informal communication

Digesting of jazz, history and arts for technics

Travelling owls

Laser /Nuclear centers

Touching, healing, loving, analyzing

Triggering owls

Nucleating, transmutating selfs

Chain reactions contained by circumcision fields

Travelling owls

Intergalactic energy sources

Killing time/space physics

Travelling owls

Ultraviolet/radio ray eyes

Synergizing past/future technics

Travelling owls

Loving mojo circumcision

Familiating and communiting

Sagala is Olorun

Sagala is chronosless

Sagala is ultimately space less

There is no death

Only rolling sheets of sound and wetness

Though individuals come and go

Mystic deep

Primeval things

Magnetic fields containing plasma

Technics to save those more rib than child

Technics to fleshen ribs clear than guitar strings

Technics to jam orioles

Owl with Shadow

Shadow between promise and praise

Shadow with technics for the collectivities via dolarosas

Drums of mental telepathy

Timelessness of masks

Creating our global community

Owls raw, green, wet, silent

Owls with enun tutu

Owls with kanua kahoro

Masks showing teeth

Countering definitions

Masks loving sisters and brothers

Masks cool

Masks bundu

Masks of Oquinca and Oamcandjomo marrying

Owl drum

Owl drumstick

Owls in love-cool

Sagala cool

Owls sensuous and moral

Body and soul woven in Mascon

Cool in telemetry

Between Sasa and Zamani

Earth being cool

Owls cooling our universe always

Owls cooling desertification

Owls dancing to cool society

Owls without broken pots

Owls with sheathed timeless arrows

Owls beyond heat

Owls restoring human rivers

Owls without death

Owls circumcising jackals and frigates

Owls with permanent cool hearts

Owls with sum sum

Owls both female and male

Owl's masconing

Sagala earth being cooled

Since they are older than it

20

Owl people

Shooting at the wind and violating gravity

People making revolutions happily

People dialectically and universally attuned

To limitless telescoped visions

Communiting

People with and within communities

Intellectual and living people

Ashamed of no past, growing

People without prison graduate leaders

People without plastic media leaders

73

People without O.E.O. leaders

People with and within communities

Intellectuals living within communities as of old

Not ashamed of no-past and thus growing

People with snake, iguana, and crocodile

People knowing the cock

People planting horns

People without concertina chests

Knowing and serving

Mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers

No confusion between all of us

People with yam

People with baobab mascon

People with circumcision cool

Cooling mass media on us

Cooling synthetic heroes

Cooling alien settings and institutions

People jumping inter-galactaly in thought

Simply people in touch

“In condensed time
After the awkward fall
(Since) we always fall at the starting” (Lenrie Peters)

A people in community
Space-time arrested
By Sagala at the drum play

Sharing beyond Blood River
Singing Mayibuye in Engoli
Space time arrested by Sagala

Tangible unities people
Inner directed unities
Uncontrolled

In the beginning was Sagala
Sagala was ours
Sagala was before mascon and plasma

Owls binu
Weaving only in daylight
Never beating the ground at night

Owls pure
Owls cool
Owls Sagala

for Generals

THE KHAM SIN

Dado Masada

Tlas Masada

Shazli Masada

Pompeii Masada

Josephus Masada

Vespasian Masada

Cleopatra Jones Masada

Nachtsyl in Pale

I against my brother

I and my brother against the world

Strength is our greatest deterrent

Curzon Allenby

Lawrence Wingate

Had I known the unknown

I would have done more good

Henry Kosygin

Alexi Kissinger

I prefer doing without sympathy

There is a victory that cannot be erased

Guideline takes us by goa

Gainful takes us over

Strela finishes the goa takeover

Scud is equal to walleye

Tow supports shrike

Kelt neutralizes maverick/walleye

Snapper/ Sagger embrace tow/law

Our wounded nation has honor

Allah maana

We shall turn your days into night

Allah is with the patient

The pain is with us all

When will it end?

How many more centuries?

for Patrice Lumumba

GOMA

Goma is a bomb

Goma is a volcano

Goma explodes the myth of a nation

The settler called the sacred dance *ngoma*

Goma is the dialectical opposite of Kivu mineral riches

Goma kills

Dance the elephant dance in Goma

Dance in Goma by way of Shaba

RE-COLLECTIONS

for Cyrus Kamundia

OTHER IMPERIALISMS

To be born here is to die here

To be loved is to die here

To be honored here is to be tortured

We walk in tires

We mascon to heal

We kaya for mulaa

Ages come with Leadbelly

Cacti grow roses

Ideologues are vomit in the morning

At Kenyatta they save dog mates

At Thuku's they slaughter intellectuals

Where is the mascon dense?

Sisters take care of brothers

To be or not to be was never the question

Migrants easily stop at mascon dense

Migrants scat dozen roll

Migrants scat dozen roll

Migrants scat dozen roll

for Okigbo

PLEADING

Titans of a century are rare

Like eagles nesting on water

Titans of a century are rare
Like leopards eating kola nuts

In the beginning were caves
The caves begat the mule
The mule begat the match
The match begat the snow
The snow begat the ion
The ion was the titan

Titans of a century are rare
Like fox bats in the harmattan
Muviti shakes skins when a Titan dies

Titan of a century
Mascon the third generation a tad
It is a long way to seven
It is a long way to seven
It is a very long way to seven

for Pio Zirimu

MAMBO YAMBO

How would we know
That the kilos clap was to summon death

When in the first seasons we hoped
The rains would be early?

How would we have known
That the collective
Held the pus of centuries
As the impalas came to us in peace
After they had eaten steel grass?

How else would we know that the dead
Had nothing to do with the age grade
Theirs was just ritual of acceptance

We had lost our magic
We had only a savannah
Stretching for miles on end

“Pale face stranger welcome”
Was this not the undoing?
Why then do you blame those with second initiation?

Bad blood stays for seven generations
A medicine man counts up to seven
A medicine man counts up to seven

for Okot Bitek

DEAD SHADOW

Their shadow died

When the baobab screamed

There is no water

Dead shadow

Not knowing

Stones grow

Dead shadow

Not knowing

To drink water

Paleface drinks shadow

Paleface drank the shadow

Paleface is drunk from shadow

Dead souls we do pale face barschina

Dead souls we do asomi barschina

Dead souls we do ethnic lite barschina

The baobab screams Water Dead Soul

There is no kudzu here

There is no kudzu here

for Steve Talitwala

Joni

Path of thunder

Night of very very long spears

Minuted ninety

This is the southward crawl

This is the death crawl

We the animated

Were hoping for a regional collective

Harvesting sodom apples for goats

There are dreams of total plan

There are dreams of flat stomachs

There were dreams of mind over matter

Yet he grins

Yet he hugs

Yet he marches

He had practiced in Nyandarua

African death unknowing of the southern crawl

Junior field marshal is not tinsel

Junior field marshal is not bloated stomach

Junior field marshal is commitment

The southern crawl

The desert crawl

The death craws claw

Was stealthy

Like Senior Field Marshal was taught

Joni you grinned in Nyandarua

Joni you grinned in Malaya

Joni you grinned in Egypt

Joni you also grinned in Tanzania

Joni you grinned in the Congo

Why do you grin?

Please spare mine

Please crawl northward

Watching out for the new southern crawl

for Toni Cade Bambara

JANE PITMAN'S OTHER SELF

The drum always throbbed
She reading the Bible
Asomi father understood the Bible

The stereo drips the blues
Her heart throbbed as she walked
The son is transfixed by sheets of sound

When water was carried from the river
Lovers could eat leaves on the way
She insisted on relocation of the homestead

Walking in the savannah
She thought of the permanent drought
In Savannah she walks undulating

Walking in Savannah
Her son thinks of mint juleps
Eating grass drums silent

This is a long drought
But for us from Savannah Palms
Baobabs are notched seven not dozens
for Cheikh Anta Diop

PRAYER

I have seen Askia knot Serer
Keorapetse smother spear fire
Baraka whip Christian cry
Henderson dozen Soyinka

I have seen acacias turn grapefruit red
Melons spouting whistling thorn
Grits dripping blood
Brothers chopping inheritance
Sisters eating bloody blues

Mari Marry Thiongo
Mari Marry Thiongo
Mari Marry Thiongo
Mari, marry Thiongo please!

Did they spy you?
Language oppresses like class

for Chelagat Mutai

RETRO DEVELOPMENT

Rupees bore pounds

Pounds bore kilos

We clap kilo when Suit campaigns

Frasilas bore pounds

Ounces bore grams

We clap kilo when Suit campaigns

Goats bore kids

Goats bore kids

We buy blankets with kids

The cattle bore calves

The cattle bore calves

We build lineages with cattle

Shoats die when Suit campaigns

Cattle die when Suit campaigns

Lineages die when Suit campaigns

Ndeiya twinned Kalahari

Sahel twinned Baobab

Suit ONLY shouts

Suit is Gwazi: Suit is Citoyen

Suit is the Sahara you knew while young

For Francis Nnaggenda

PAMPAZONKE

Sitting under baobabs

We long for the Congo

Sitting under baobabs

We long for the Congo

Congo is Zaire

Congo is Zaire

Scream Wazambanga Waza Waza.....

Scream wanza (outsider)

Scream mbanga (danger)

Scream waa aa (get lost).

This is Africa

This is Africa

This is Africa

for J.J. Okumu

AID

Is it green in Bamako?

Is it green in Kano?

Is it green in Kinshasa?

Is it dirty yellow in Arusha?

Is it dirty yellow here?

Is it silvery in Angola?

Is aid so sweet?

Do we eat aid?

for Ngugi wa Thiongo

DAUGHTERS OF MWARI

We are also daughters of Mwari

Stones, Tanzanite, Tsavorite we know

Lingering, swearing, and worrying about motherlessness

Routes Arusha, Moshi, Lungalunga

At times re-routed to Moshi o Tunya

Always hiding, furtively utilizing part time lovers

My father was a Mwatu wa Ngoma

I am Masaku

What do you see in Mtani Mpare?

Arise! Go to Tanzania

Arise! Go and learn the trade from Kaka

Arise! Go to Moshi and prospect in bars

Mpare was a Mwalimu

Mwalimu has not taught

That furtive smuggling net to Mwanza

I am going to prison

The Old Man was here last week

Nthongo, as in source, was here last week

He is now broke after his brother's election

Tanzanite, Tsavorite not Diamonds are for ever

Tanzanite, Tsavorite, not Diamonds cut classes

Tanzanite, Tsavorite, not Diamond dealers are our citizens of the world

Mutha, Lunga Lunga, Tsavo

Moshi, Ngoma, Loitokitok

Mbeya, Singinda, Moshi o Tunya

Utu ni kujitengemea. Wanitaka?

Nyumbani chakula cha madini kipo. Nipo pia.

Natembea kishima na heshima ata nikienda jela

Ujamaa ni Utu?

Utu ni Ujamaa?

Utu ni madini

Kinywaji chachemsha mbongo

Bongo yatengeneza mali

Mali ya madini ni ya kipekee

Hivyo ukabaila

Mali ya uma yajitembeza

Mali yapekee yajiuza

Mali ya madini yajiua?

Utani unadumu

Uzani unadumu

Hivyo hivyo ujamaa/upepare

The train rolls

The stones crack

Sisters drown in beer and madini

So the brothers

Rolling sheets of life

Rolling sisters and brothers

While we debate integrating our thoughts

for Ndururu

MAMA NJERI

You began as a caricature in imperial radio
You accidentally strayed into town
You lived in a ten footer of reeds
You were their dumb sidekick
Yet you became our dialectic

Kariokor and Ziwani were yet
River Road had only a river and reeds
Paved roads like Delamere
Meant abuse and beatings

Paths for you and us
Were dusty warm wet and cold
In paths we dodged ticks, dew and snakes
In roads we avoided their dogs, horses and whips

You graduated in the city

You became a brewer of Njohi, Busaa and Changaa
You were not dumb as they thought
You avoided roads up Whitehouse Way
You silenced Kimutais with mugs

We learned curry and parota from you
We learned teatime and so made it to boarding school
We learned to walk avoiding their cars
We learned we could beat them at their game
We learned the niche we were assigned in their plans
We took courage and marched on in school

THEN CAME MAU MAU

You wore suruali
You build the house frames
You become a plasterer of walls
You became a thatcherer of roofs
You, above all, send guns to Nyandarua
You had to survive home guards
Without homes to guard
You hoped we and your daughters would become more than you

We saw but did not feel you
We were learning to collaborate in school

We were learning to get ten footers by informing
We were learning that to get tea we had to out Kimutai Kimutai
We wanted big stomachs unlike you

*You built the home without hunting
You nightly heard the boots coming
You knew that they would not eat leaves but command
You felt nothing as
They violated all
Yours are all tribes!*

We herd and felt the boots tramping your home
We knew it was you and future mothers victimized
We rejected high tea and elephant dances
We felt but did not understand you
Although we began breaking the book walls

THEN CAME THE PHANTOM MUTHIRIGU

We heard you on land clearly for a while
You sang so loudly the songs of the elephant dance
You sang so loudly the songs of marching from River Road to Haille Selassie
You sang the songs of the years of teeming game
You sang a long refrain of the doctor who had been un-witched
You sang of the desert, sea ,forest, fish, arrow and spear peoples

*You sang of our meeting you at Machakos Airport
You sang of a new age with eternal rhythms
You sang of the possibility of life in stony patches
Your songs married the elephant, peacock,
fish, camel, lion, goat, chicken and ngoima dances
We mumbled your song first
Then we began to sing it on key always
We all sang it.*

THEN CAME THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

*Your spear sister abused you because she needed grazing
Your banana sister abused you because she needed more wetlands
Your legume sister abused you because she needed more terraces
Your arrow sister abused you because she needed more reeds
Your fish sister abused you because she needed more water
Your camel sister abused you because she needed more browse*

We heard your lament when your daughter burned your suruali and house

We heard your lament as your daughter competed with you in building

We heard your lament as your daughter refused the first seeds from your home

We heard your lament when she rented out your house

We heard your lament when your daughter sold your plot

We heard your lament as your daughter rejected Kariokor for Karen Gardens
We heard your lament when she denied your visiting her children
We heard your lament when your daughter lived in a mansion rather than a home
We knew she planted the future family in sand rather than in loam
She became a fake **PLANTER** unlike the original **MUMBI NINE**

*We therefore understand that there are no mothers like you around
We therefore accept many only know the sasa without a future
We know there are no homes to thatch
We therefore live in tents without songs
We accept lamentations for endless cycles of the deaths of homes
We now know it is only our age of schooled fools who hope
We cannot create legacies within windless muthirigu*

*Yet you are a critic again
You fill television and radio with laments
Dust and dew do not touch your soles
You sing for the big men for a living
We are sure they do not know your songs*

*You still have utu
You understand our tribal and national dusty and mildewy ways
You warn us of death of living alone
You warn us of death if we eat alone*

You warn us of death of drinking alone

You warn us of death if we are jiggered alone

You warn us of death of not eating but yawning alone

In Mathare they still know you

You live, dance and laugh with its thousands

Kimutai knows not to touch you and yours at last

Ndururu, your age mate, swears you are Mumbi's Queen!

We do not know how patient you are these days

We would like a date to brief you

We have put on suruali for matching to KESHO

*We have learned to dodge carts, bicycles, cars, lorries and even
planes*

We now understand why we must always return to Mwari

We honor you for showing us the way

You blessed and anointed us to survive this dark SASA

JOURNEYS IN DIASPORA

for Zeta Williams

KATUNGE

My old deer hunter friend had gone berserk

The last of the drink had been Jim Crow

I was going home and we would not hunt together again

Deer season was precious for us

We hunted and talked Diaspora

Thousands of miles away

The inside of the aircraft was freezing

Then the staccato of “fasten your seat belts” exploded

We were to land in Dakar returning to the Motherland

The exit to the Diaspora had been through zoo London, ten years before

There food, weather and Diaspora blacks were freezing
In Dakar, they hopefully would be warm if not hot
I would smell home if nothing else

Colonialism is FULL power
Food French Afro, water from Paris
Waiter uniforms blue collar jumpsuits with Belafonte necklines
Thirteen men clean two hundred square feet reception
The Ton Tons sloven and relaxed
They liberated Paris Twice
When will they liberate Dakar?

The parting had started last week
The brother leaned and said
“Your leave for Africa next week
I have been asked by Nairobi to talk to you

Notice I come to you through Europe
Hence I do not have dashikis
I will speak at The International Implications of the Black Power Movement
I assume the content is about groups and individuals
What can you tell me?”

Two months later, after touring Ujamaa
He was back in Nairobi

This seconded faculty member was dirty from travel
Katunge had arrived from the Nile spotless

Hiltons and KANUS existed in circular symbiosis in Nairobi
Jock One - Katunge- monopolized television coverage as a returnee
Jock Two -faculty member- wanted equal coverage
Both accepted the Nairobi scene for it was fatter and cooler than Dakar

Their fight was just greed for publicity
It lacked even a modicum of local or continental knowledge
Both had found opposite sex television promoters
The spectacle was as empty as a winos bottle

These negritudinous Jocks had lived in Dakar for years on grants
Exploring all the slave shipping areas of the west
They had been in East Africa for years also
They had wallowed in the miasma of fake nativism at times
Of course there were historic shipping ports for blacks to explore

But they missed Bangamoyo, Mombasa, Malindi, and Diani and so on
These strangers were disoriented completely
These strangers did not know Nubia
They never connected Congo with peopling the East

“To come to Africa is to go to hell if you are a correct sister” Katunge said

She forgot correct sisters with afros, wigs, dashikis and rap deal correctly
They know about the origins
They should also know about differences

Above all they should know how a beggar survived for four years
With a shilling borrowed from a prostitute since he is also us
He belongs to the Black world
We do not praise poverty - we must feel poverty and end it

State is smart:

Now no pale extortioner makes the rounds enforcing
When the brother was in the circuit in West and East
His interest was with oil, uranium and sharpshooters

The sister has been all over
On study with scholarships
She has no university base
She has never published
Research is so sweet?

for Jaqua Nana

YEARS OF THE MONKEY

It was a good year

There were many of us building a country

This would be good for Amina looking for a second wife

Who would extend the lineage for her

She would sell some of the family land to pay dowry

She did not have papers called titles

Her land carried the graves of ten generations

She worried that the land would be bought

By the descendants of the watumwa

It had never been sold to Arabs or Europeans

Amina went to a land broker from bara who kicked her out

She said that the insolent bara broker was mtumwa and kafiri

Aminas' people believed Arabs had civilized them by osmosis

The bara broker saw her as kafiri and mtumwa also

The broker had been the colonial PC's messenger

He was fluent in Kiswahili only

The PC decided long ago that beach fronts would make him a pile

He made his messenger a broker and through him made the first buys

Then brought his settler kin to buy beach land from Kiunga to Lungalunga

His African deputy was busy understudying him

Most settlers, like him, were not planning to settle but to sell to the incoming Wambenzi

The PC had learned these tricks procuring cattle for Livisi

Otherwise called Kenya Meat Commission, during WW11

Later he had raided cattle in Turkana and Pokot

They supposedly had Nangana!

During Mau Mau, he had privatized the Olenguruoni livestock

When the originators of the Mau Mau oath were relocated

Later, he agitated the coastals to secede

Those days the land broker was meek and respectful

As a messenger, he was meek and quiet

Letters and files don't talk

He was living in a car park shack behind the PCs office

His family's stomachs filled only a few days in a month

This was before we inherited a flag and land registration

After the flag, the broker transited to an arrogant Mtu wa Bara

He said a herdsman drinks milk

He was rich but also a slave to his Wambenzi kin

His black kinsmen and women in black power buying

They came every weekend from a place called Nairobi

They changed their cars every month

They knew about checks/ cheques unlike Amina

They did not accept that the Aminas were also them

The initial Wambenzi bought from the colonial PC retired but not tired

They never saw him

They only saw the broker

The broker now drove

He lived in Nyali

The colonial PC lived in Kilifi Creek

These later comers bought from the previous deputy PC- a full PC now

He lived on the island in a government house

This new PC handled all the sales of the ex colonial Europeans and Indians

The former messenger was the spanner boy

This went on for more than ten years

After the native PC took up the trade

He insisted on green ink for transfers

It supposedly came from the Highest Source in the land

This PC and the broker made oodles of money

They were busy donating in all harambees

They were busy in selling ivory

They were busy in selling Tsavorite

When the first highest source slept, this PC slipped

He made the call to his boss in Nairobi

He did not know this would led to the interest of another tribe

He was moved and his beach bonanza evaporated

At the new Highest Source office

He had to explain why the green ink and the oodles of land

He got away by donating

The new source wanted to know all the owners

The new source squeezed and bankrupted them all

The new source was building another house
Amina sought the new source from the small house
She pleaded but the upshot was bitter

Others from the new source's house sold it to themselves
Their objective was to compete with the past ruling house
The new house sought out the colonial PC

He feigned senility and left for Australia the following day
The new house got him in Australia
Just like they got his clients later

Amina's family graves were spared
But the rest of her land
Was "acquired" for a school and a chief's office
Truth is they sold it to the state

How does one build a house on graves?
How does one learn
"See me Lakayana with my spear" next to a grave

Sales had started in a place called One Fish long before Uhuru
An Arab called Barouk sold a mile
He got a check/cheque of two thousand

In the village, we hear it bounced like a ball
That was when you and I were singing
“See Me Lakayana with my spear”

The Liwali, we hear, was still powerful
He knew about check\cheque
We no longer sing See Me Lakayana with my spear
We sing see my sunken stomach

We carry union cards like Amina
We concentrate on fearing the Wambenzi
They know how to make check\chegues dance muthirigu

Amina is now old and wise she is at the mercy of
Chiefs, D.Os, and DCs, PCs and ABOVE
We, like her, are constantly told “It has been decided above”

We have never been there
Even though we act for above
And sing to above

We beg above
We die for above
Are we novemberists?

Are these years of the monkey?

for Armah Ata Aidoo

NGONZEKU

A foreign Christian Organization, documenter of African crises

Wanted to trap the innovations out of the Nigerian crisis

Local Christians would document the spiritual

It was interested in the other innovations for its use

Two of us were hired and travelled separately

To meet at Enugu Airport

The University of Nsukka van was packed

We were saved by a former university mate

Bringing a soul sister wife home for the first time!

She and her family were Texans working space industry

She could not be sent to the devastated village

The initiation had to be at the airport

We beggar consultants had to wait

The Schnapps was opened, kola nut offered

Libation poured and some drunk

Praises of this African Oyinbo sung

The prowess of the hunter brother getting married praised

The leader of this traditional ceremony

Was a specialist in classical music at Nsukka!

Driving from Enugu to Nsukka, the soul sister repeatedly asked:

“Why are these roads so poor?

Are we to travel on such roads always?”

Nobody in the Land cruiser replied

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. Brief all sisters intending to marry natives that African roads are always bad*

We were told while driving that Nsukka

Was a Siamese twin of Michigan and Durham

It was hoped that it would change Ibadan and Lagos
By pioneering new social and scientific approaches

We arrived at the exclusive Flats Ford
We were informed the name meant “Light from the Sky”!
The Duty Clerk was meticulous in filling forms

His Oyinbo Black boss obviously had nothing to do but read
Who was invading Flats Ford
We did not qualify for we had limited Oyinbo genes!

We were told the source of such madness
This fake Oyinbo boss had practiced eye this and that
In United Kisumu for thirty years!

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. “Retired eye this and that make bad bosses on losing sight.”*

The clerk concurred saying;
“My Oyinbo Boss had been appointed by the Lagos boss
He kills us all”

We had to try to board with a Nuclear Scientist acquaintance
A former director of Research on Application of Nuclear Power -RAP
He welcomed us to his expansive and very comfortable mansion

“ When the boy said somebody called about staying
I thought it could only be you since in a conference in Accra, last year,
You said that one of Africa’s priority issues was to decipher
Concentrations of applicable innovations for our use
We were expecting you, Nwo.”

Later as initial briefing he told us:

“I did not know the war was being fought over oil
When I knew, I wrote the General in Lagos

That alienated those who were my friends here
I cannot find support even to set up a machine laboratory
I want to apply nuclear physics to machine tool design
We offered this to those in Enugu
Nobody was interested
Oil has killed us

We learned that the Federal soldiers were invincible
We also learned our soldiers were cowards
Our army commanders were incompetent.”

For many days after, he rambled endlessly
No nuclear plant or teaching had taken place here
But many conferences had been attended by your key informant

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

*1. Watch out for conference hopper consultants!
They have zero grounding on key innovations around them.*

We had failed to get coherent picture from Mr. Nuclear Physics

We thought we would try Mr. Sociology

Another key informant of yours

He had done research on Mau Mau in Kenya

He explained: "When I was in Kenya,

I had not yet studied the sociology of religion

But I wrote a study of Mau Mau which they sat on

They only published the portions of gossip interest

I had a copy here...I lost the original manuscript during the crises

We are in a mess

We have mobilized an army of a quarter million people

Oil has spoilt everything

Those who debate only ask whether we should demobilize

And go professional or whether civilians are better fighters

The net effect has been consolidation of civilian power

We have a research project to determine attitudes to government

I am particularly interested in relations among the states

They operate within a national scenario of balanced proto-coalitions

In the army, the basic split is between those who want a professional army

And the ones who want to maintain the chaotic ponderous quarter million

This cuts across tribal groups nobody controls

You find balancing at the armed forces command

The command of the different services and a very interesting

Shifting of divisional, regimental and battalion commands

Some innocuous captains have found themselves

In charge of fighting divisions overnight and transferred the following day

Usually to an innocuous transport battalion

Nobody raises questions within the army

This accentuates the power of the un-accountable civil servants

Therefore you hear the common epithet super permanent secretary

You ask about a realignment of East Central, Midwestern and Benue Plateau

To pool their oil, wood, agriculture and mining capacities

This ignores the fact that the military governor Midwestern is a very astute politician

He is interested in playing politics at the national level

His control of North Central and the Western States assures their
Over representation at the officer, business and super-permanent secretary
levels

Oil has obliterated the issue of realignment

There is more to eat from oil in the fragmented structure

North Eastern State, Kwara State, North Western State
And South Eastern State, are too small to become brokers

Lagos State will have to be catered for, shall we say,
It is the set of National Government”

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. Throughout the interview, Mr. Sociology or more accurately
“Gossip”
Drank Napoleon Brandy! Give your consultants a float for such
offerings!*
- 2. There is nothing from him about people -ordinary people*
- 3. He is the classic perennial sky scenarios maker*
- 4. He does not know any innovation*
- 5. You should drop this one from you informant list*

One of the Nsukka design assumptions in crossing Michigan and Durham
Was that it would have room for retired civil servants
To pass on their historic practical knowledge to the young

However, many chose to peddle their influence at Lagos or Enugu
An exception was the Old Man who thirty years before the crisis
He had risen from a village administrator to a super permanent secretary

Later a diplomat and now retired

He says Mr. Sociology hides things in big words

Old Man reads every newspaper, journal or book which come his way

His comments were short, brutal and above all sincere

“We are a sick people, our intellectuals have let us down

Where there is no freedom, they say there is

You say they imagine the ultimate Nigeria, I do not agree

If they are, why do they not speak

You also say staying in their country, is an ideological statement

I disagree, in Nigeria, we have enough people to begin having exiles

Wole spoke, Okigbo spoke, we now read of men who died yet they live

Wole is beginning to have impact on public opinion

How can you close a border to books?

We get it, it is typically Nigerian that

A book would cost 20 Naira rather than the legal 5 or 6

After all, we have oil!

During the crisis we learned quickly
That the graduates were useless

When we were running from here to there
It was the traditionalists who saved us
They organized people

They taught them bush foods and medicines
Yet, we killed them
We lied to them about new *garri* and rockets

We also lied to them about winning the war
The RAP boys were cheats
They made petrol for their own speculation

How did Prof. Nuclear buy a Mercedes
One month after the crisis started?
If you want to see creation and creativity follow Mr. Giant”

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. Experience is golden even when anchored on limited education*
- 2. Anger limits him from discussing stuff*
- 3. His lead led us to unearthing innovation diamonds*

In a famous book of *Kaburu* literature
There is a story of a giant hamstrung by Lilliputians

Such a character is the war's Mr. Giant

Giant refused to die and worked for everybody

He always held a court of sorts at a bar

In a proto slum abutting Nsukka

Money stolen from the university

Built it and rented it back to house its canaille!

When we were introduced he was nursing a beer

Wondering whether a contraption

He had designed for Obi was working,

Obi had not come back to report

Since the crisis begun

Giant has used his brain to design and produce ordinary things

He had trained as a bio-engineer

He was an underling in Prof. Nuclear Physics department

He was never promoted since he mixed with the wrong set

The war led him to commit class suicide and travel with the displaced

He, like them, did not have a home, clothes or tools

Yet he applied his bio-engineering skills to, first, design food storage ways

Others copied him and got the credit

He made cooking oil, grease and "petrol"

In backyards from many local materials
Local people say he is the only person who

1. Asked them about their problems and
2. Found a solution for them FOR FREE

These days he rots in a rented university proto slum
The university dons do not give him research and fabrication money
They fear he would outshine their nothingness

Every day he tramps out to the little towns and villages
Finding out things being used and improving them
When new things are needed, he designs and:
Fabricates them together with the people
He therefore institutionalizes specific technology needed
For any particular function identified by the people in a specific place

When his work is
Copied or improved by the ordinary people
They come to show him their work

This facilitates continuous technical improvements
The university and state technical agencies
Have nothing designed and fabricated in use

Walking towards Aba, Giant says:

“We made a mistake of thinking that those who shout most
Are the ones with the greatest knowledge or following

As nobody, I get accused of denying

A needed technical revolution

But what I do is revolutionary

Creating useful technical solutions

For ordinary life is revolutionary

I am not concerned with ultimate state aims, arms, means and glory

I might die and decay, but my work will never die

I teach only ordinary people and tinkerers.”

Then he offered to guide us through the state AT NO COST TO US

His buddies would help us know and we would mainly walk

I expected Enugu environs to be pockmarked

Yet walls were newly plastered and painted

Enugu was jumping

War was a past memory, the Boss, a new native colonizer was there

With a two army division of occupation

The old colonial section residents were the new military elite

Standards had to be kept
The shrubs were flowering
The green grass was cut

“I thought of dynamiting the whole hill
To create this road when we were blockaded
I did not, that Ndombolo might have obliterated Enugu
So we did a small waltz blast” said Giant

The road tortuously snakes around the hill
Sparing the hill delayed the invaders for a few days

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. If you need a road builder Giant is your man*
- 2. If you want a procurer of people innovations Giant is your man*

We did not get to see the new Local Boss
He decided to send us to his new arts Tsar
Who had hidden in the land of white cold during the war

In our Nsukka earlier visit, we knew students had asked him:
“Where were you when Okigbo died
Why did you only come with the occupiers?”

The only comments he made to us were:

“I was not an occupier, we in the new government here,
Believe to develop the continent
Is to encapsulate and to totalize both ideas and actions

Thus we call for a moratorium of Capitalist aid
The comprador bourgeoisie will not survive
The fighting against domination of Nigeria
Is the naval cord we must cut.”

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. There is no kudzu here*

After this inane mouthful we walked out -to breathe first
Then to meet Ngonze at the still dead and occupied Onitsha

The bridge reconstruction had not started a year after the war
The contractor claims he is waiting for steel from United Kisumu
Giant says the Zik clique uses the steel to build new bomb safe town houses

Note also that the ex RAP boys
Had offered to rebuild a self reliance steel mill
They were turned down since dependence is sweet for the new rulers!

Ngonze was married to Emeka before the crisis
Ngonze’s mother was from Cotonou

Her father and her husband were from Aba

She is studying training family planning staff

Not because she believes in it

It allows her to set up a future trading network

Her family planning boss, from an international body, does not know this

After meeting her we set an appointment in Port Harcourt in a week

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT

- 1. You should keep in touch with Ngonze if you want network forming skills*
- 2. You should never mix her with bureaucrats for she would eat them alive*

Port Harcourt was birthed by slavers money

Its old elite was pulverized by the war

Ngonze was mobilizing to wrest Port Harcourt from the old and new occupiers

The only way to build the state wide trading was to recruit

Those who circumstances led them to sell their bodies

Donors thought family planning was a burning issue

They did not know that Giant had found a local pill

To block rape pregnancies

It also ends the rapists' erections forever!

Giant had heard this as folklore until the elders asked him

To increase supply of a traditional family planning drug

He designed a sealed cooker for extracting the drug

Traditionalists had, in the past, made it in open pots

Closed steaming of herbs and barks

Made a more concentrated drug with less stock, wood and time

He increased the drug shelf life by adding natural stabilizers

This created a shelf life of six months whilst before it only lasted a day

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. If you need traditional family planning drug, in other settings, contact Giant*
- 2. Expect Ngonze's trading network to extend it all over Nigeria*
- 3. Versions of it had been used and extended since more than five centuries ago when the Bantu, then known as Benue Kwa, left for eventual dispersion to East and Southern Africa from Katanga*

Around Onitsha we also saw other innovations under Giant's tutelage

One was motorizing hand carts for slum and rural uses

This has tremendous impact on the poor especially for water collection

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. Motorized hand carts have a tremendous impact on the economy of the poor in rural and slum urban areas.*

- 2. Those made by Giant and his tinkerers with rubber wheels and bodies of scrap steel are long lasting and lighter than the old wooden ones*
- 3. They are of use across the continent*

Another innovation by Giant around Onitsha

Was setting up bucket nurseries

For fruits, vegetables, medicinal shrubs and trees

In urban slums and rural communities, their impacts on nutrition, health

And improving general labor productivity, is self evident

In one village we saw green belts around compounds in the dry season

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. We are convinced that such a multi-prong approach should be Extended to as many communities as possible in all your programs*
- 2. Their impact on nutrition, especially for children is superb*

A third major Giant activity was composting

Small stock waste, human waste and household waste for fertilizer

This was then used in cropland, this was not just ingenious but brilliant

In Nigerian and many other countries on the continent,

Farmed soils are over leached

Population densities deny rotation and land resting

Further, artificial fertilizers are expensive and acidify soils

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. Since most of your programs target the rural and peri-urban poor
These soil improving solutions should always be incorporated*
- 2. They have direct impact on the nutrition, health, land productivity
and ultimately the overall economy of the poor*

The fourth Giant innovation was improving small stock milk production

Small stocks are central to improving diets of the rural and peri-urban poor

Giant got the idea when the war cut milk powder imports from Europe

Since the local breeds are small, they produce little milk and meat

He convinced an old Fulani livestock trader

To procure better bucks to improve the area small stock

This trader travelled all over West Africa

Selecting prime male goats and sheep

For cross breeding with the diminutive local breeds

Giant designed a water cooled semen refrigerator

And the needed allied artificial insemination equipment

These were fabricated by his tinkerers

He later improved the original designs

To build human food solar refrigerators for the poor

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

1. Note that Giant knew the first problem was not storage
2. Production of milk and meat were low so everything was consumed and long term supply compromised
3. Note that Giant mobilized an ALIEN trader with vast external networks
 - To undertake the critical activity for long term food improvement
 - That is to obtain improved bucks to increase milk and meat production
4. Once the bucks were in place, he had to design equipment for
 - a. Extraction of the semen
 - b. Its storage
 - c. Its transfer to the females (insemination)
 - d. And its subsequent storage for later use
5. This conceptual chain morphed to refrigerators for human food
6. It also morphed to improved production of milk and meat
7. Ultimately it improved nutrition of the population

The fifth major innovation by Giant were triggered by two tinkerer friends

Who had produced “cloth” using only tree bark

They became mattresses and storage “bins” of the displaced

After Giant showed them how to add discarded rags, waste paper and plant leaves

They became wearable cloth

We bought long lasting shirts made from this mixture!

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

1. The creative stuff during the war came from the ignored poor
 - They were trying to solving problems for themselves, not for fighters
2. Giant latched on this and technicalized the solutions initiated by the poor
3. Therefore look for poor peoples’ problems first

4. Then find the empathetic Giants to solve them

We and Giant meandered to Port Harcourt
To meet Ngonze and her husband at their shack
The husband had become a taxi driver to a Riverine Madam
This was strategic, he could divert “traffic”

The big people here are
A mixture of many continents and colors
They prefer their riverine kin

Thus Ngonze, her husband and family planning nobodies
Are the classic others
It is clear why they become traders through the oldest trade
So they hang around for droppings from the locals

She talks of the recent past bitterly:
“We died at Orlu
Emeka left me at Orlu with the children
When he was gang pressed for the war

We lost all the children at Orlu
I have been unconscious since then and I never dream
I only look for at least five naira a day

We pay seventy five kobo for our room daily
These days we live in these holes
To exchange job information for us, relations and friends

We are abused here
But also needed
None of the locals work here

Can you see the office block over there?
Do you see anybody working?
They are all asleep

That is the secretariat of the military government of the Rivers State
How then can you ask why houses are being built,
At Urlu, Ulli, Aba, and Oweri and not Port Harcourt?

Do you know where they got this new population of the city?
They sailed to each Rivers State village and got two people from every ten
To be contributed so that some of their people will be seen here

They are afraid we will take over
They put the people into houses
We used to own here before the war

How can they live here and do NOTHING?

How can they be so useless?

My people work

You see those white people

They are AID clerks

They hire them rather than Ibo clerks who are jobless

It is funny, some of the white clerks never type!

They also live on the beach to avoid mosquitoes

We Africans are really stupid.”

We and Giant left her in deep depression

Some say this is unprofessional

So be it

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. In the evening we discussed her again and it was clear to Giant and us, that the donors' family planners would become Ngoze's traders in a year or two*
- 2. She and they were going to fly*
- 3. We have no solution to the underlying ethnic comments other than flagging it to all donors.*
- 4. However, it is clear to us that in the long term the non-working ethnicities will lose.*

On leaving, she gave us a letter to take to Onitsha

We were going to get directions from one of her family planning 'traders'

She trades at the broken pylon of Onitsha's Bridge

On arrival, she took us to a military camp
Everybody started saluting us at the gate
Strange behavior for a crack force!

The riddle was soon solved the lady did not cross the gate barrier
She went back obviously she had been there many times
We were escorted in to meet the boss

He grilled us for half an hour
Before accepting and reading the letter
The letter was simply addressed to Major from Benue

We did not know it was for the Commander of the Crack Recce Division
Onitsha
We were asked to stay for at least a day
He transformed us to honored guests and himself to a civil host!

To say we were scared
Is an understatement of the century
No kidding

He perceived this and very slowly but surely
Dug up our backgrounds without aides
When he got satisfied he invited us to the Mess

We were to dine and be introduced to all his key officers

No formal ranks but just single names

After dinner he talked the night away

It turned out that he had a long military lineage

Benue produced military personnel since colonization

He was very proud of it

However, he was looking forward

To when they would take over the country

He talked about a potential Alliance between

East Central State, Benue Plateau State and Midwestern State

He talked about how the hardcore North had oppressed others

He got philosophical about the war outcomes

“We have had curious outcomes of the war

For example the marriages

The soldiers believed that if they marry a Ngonzoku,

They would get smart children

Of course at the beginning of rehabilitation

The Ngonzes had no choice

They had to eat,
They threw themselves at the feet of soldiers
Later, we officers caught on
We rounded all prostitutes

We moved them to the army camps
We got our sons, a strategy for improving future behavior!
Incidentally that is how I met Ngonze”

He talked about his future- a lie
“All I want is to go back to Benue and farm
We have always been identified as soldiers, which is wrong

We are the only people with enough land
To get into commercial agriculture
I already have three thousand chickens at home”

When we last heard of the Major from Benue
He was the master mind of a successful national coup

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

1. Soldiers have two natures like the WWII gun

My people put it more effectively: “Asikali me mii ili ta ivuti”

They therefore are not to be trusted

2. Keep them away from your purported development work

3. If you do not believe us check out where they have ruled

Ngonze had insisted we go to Ulli

She said, "Ulli will always be."

We did not understand why initially

However, when we got there, we did

Ulli is sacred ground to honor the war dead

The local military had stolen the relief food when they ran from Ulli

To end the war, the winners starved the people at Ulli

The crazy post war commander of Port Harcourt

Was trying to obliterate it by digging up the road/airport

Yet the skeletons of the crashed planes were everywhere!

A stranger does not need to be shown the airstrip

An expatriate Catholic Sister,

Who lived there through the war

Explained that initially there was no need to check the relief food

However, they were disgusted when the rulers stole it

To be ware housed for future trading

When their people were starving

She was telling us this in front of a bishop who also stayed

He went mute during the war and has never spoken

He cried hearing the Sister tell us this

He wailed when the sister explained that the

Conquerors slaughtered all the orphans

RECOMMENDATION TO CLIENT:

- 1. We cannot find any reason for you to ever involve the military in development*

From Ulli, we travelled to Orlu and Owerri

And other villages which made the last stand

We became aware that the road to Aba committed privileges to the elite

They had maintained them in the shift of internal power

Controlling East Central State

From the Oweri /Onitsha clique to the Aba clique

They had raided all aid

They had forced the poor into the ragtag army

Whilst maintaining all privileges to themselves

The poor recognized helpers like Mr. Giant and his tinkers

We were happy to be told this

When we were not travelling with him

This therefore was not idle praise

The poor also recognized Okigbo- denigrated by many in power

Ngonze, had memorized his poems

One time she had spontaneously shouted

“ He died a mango shoot on concrete”

The people always knew they were being exploited by their kin

Even when they were struggling to survive

They asked us to explain to others their case

Ngonze refers:

“We are a people

We cannot be ruled by radio

Language is important to us

Touching is important to us

We have learned to only exist -not to live

How do you expect us to follow those who drink our shadow?

What do they want us to do when even Zik

Has taken the fifth Ozo in Onitsha waiting for elections?

I tell you, we suffered and they ate

Tell your people clearly we suffered and they ate
It was a war for their eating!"

The return was tedious, jiving at Club 2 in Lagos
Those from there and Western State asked:
How did you manage there? Were you not attacked by bandits?
We left that night, my colleague for Accra and me for Addis

Over the Nigerian oilfields
Nigger gas was flared to maintain global gas prices
Only 10 percent is tapped,
The rest makes people sick and poisons their land

In Addis, parrots were in full swing,
With executive jets and paratroopers
Amin questioned the utility of buying European
Rather than Ugandan drinking water
He was complemented by another
General about his watery wisdom!

Then I flew southward over deserts I had recently tramped
Which we will never irrigate and lush plantations we kill for
Never using them to uplift all
I touched down surrounded by machine guns and howitzers
They are looking for somebody called Black September

Ironically, it is just ten years since our phantom **Itwika**
There are no pale faced strangers crushing the pumpkin
Our directors are in London defending Rowland

Yam rot has set up here too

Today is Madaraka

This is supposed to be home

for Aubrey Nkomo

SOCIALIZATION

"You and I were young and looking for union Cards"

Since the messenger died there had been only Taili.
But still there were farms and LPOs as if that was all
Sacrificial dogs for Ogun only get banged

Yia still talk of commitment to the thirty hours a week
To devote to the work of values
This is after the years of wandering

Netaba is giving away the hundred shillings
At times one wonders whether it is a Yathui meeting
Or changing the new/old order by etherizing minds

"We were young and still looking for union cards"

The question of the right way
Has taken us from the ways of the ancestors
Through the three part debate structured by the Chief
To the tail fire of the space craft which does not burn it

"We were young and still looking for union cards"

Last October we were told our dear friend died
Giving inspiration to the muses
Expect the writing of "The Messenger's Exile and Me"

The piece will argue that it is not the limits
Which separate us, as they should but
Distances created for us by others
we, cripples, must be propped up

"We were young and still looking for union cards"

King had come with thought over politics
As if action-ideas needed could be split into pieces
The wisdom of our fathers was that we could not eat the world

Taili travelled many distances preaching suffering without bitterness
Deferred gratification is dead, gratification time is upon us
Suffering is also dead, it was only for union card seekers

Clerking for the perennial true institutions

“Is a way of building an African future!”

Taili says

“We were young and still looking for union cards”

It was in April that the Muzungu, who had a Swahili Union card

Reminded us that we had met at the ASA

This can mean father in my native lingo!

I suppose that is why there are many tortoises at ASA

They argue development is their technocrats’ eternal truth

Actualized in offices run by pseudopodia, spastic rhythm and osmosis

“We were young and still looking for union cards”

You had ridden the loa which was brought by the messenger

You said we had to fight

How do you then explain the fake African culture studio?

“We are no longer young and working for union cards”

The message, which is also the medium, was silent
Until there was Father, sending a cable to the wrong person
You were with us but we did not know you

You were afraid of us and just ground your teeth
Until the end of your illusions as the Bookies paralyzed you
It is always easy to be charged with stealing
"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

We were taught, by ancestors, not to beat messengers
For the contents of their messages
A messenger is just a loa to be ridden
We rode this one hard since "Sanity lies in the etherized mind?"

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

The brother messenger said goodwill to the new rulers was needed
Was this the last of the last Ndebele or just the Mazruic three ways?
Debate on After-Africa is supremely phony, it wanted clerks, not thinkers

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Perhaps the only truth in these debates about our paths
Is in Okigbo's water maid, who is always ebony

As if this absolved the failure of the carriers

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

The brother called after Sekou made the first pronouncement

On the Messenger

After Taili said that the new three were too stupid to do Taili stuff

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Of course he knew this was the Boakye model

He was bringing pressure to bear on Father

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

At the villages in Azania and Ethiopia

One was taught that death demands action

It is only in the land of white cold

That death demands words

Nkrumah was a king and a messenger

Sekou said, in Azania and Ethiopian villages

Messengers are never cursed

How could Pong curse them and make the desert Boom?

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Makonnen said: "We are children of despair"

Ake said "Africa kills its best, we are always caught between living
And dying without ever knowing love or service"

Armah is convinced that bureaucratic tendencies
Would be acceptable values if used to end death
Is this Egypt in past millennia?
But there is always the problem of materialism
Somebody screamed
We jumped Armah

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Laban pointed out that the messenger
Had been collecting the latest words from the brothers
Of course the Stiftung, which was freedom cultural

Sent the words from the brothers
They said the messenger could not be the medium
Could the medium be the messenger?

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Since the beginning were asomi

The verandah boys could not be seen as the beginning

It is the asomi who were the continuation

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

We were to buy cars since we had union cards

We could not afford the pilgrimage

It was expensive since we did not have passes

We had no passes since Boakye liked caviar

This could only be provided to those

Who were ugly monsters from the sea

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Of course the mamawota was a colonial creation

Since the caviar providers

Were dumb/wise to the message

The 1957 pilgrimage was expensive

Brazil 66 exiles sang Mpha

The Boakyes talked of the exiled wanderer

Who some idiots confuse with the messenger

Their argument being

Wanderers always have a message

Forgetting that a griot was always stably located

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

The exile wanderer is Mphalelian only when

He is not a messenger and has become euro-centric

Illich would deny this mobility by asking: "Qualitative for What?"

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Idiots raise the problem of Seko

Since beauty is in the eye of the beholder

The problem is a nullity

One is always guided by the stars in a dark night

"We are not longer young and looking for union cards"

There is no distinction between ideas and actions

There is indeed only action/idea

Therefore the quest for **the way** is mystification

We should know that to look for one way
For all of us is to wallow
Some of us will have to live in the bush and create

We have had few Sacrifices to and for Mother
The Manchester London/New York axis was comfortable
So was the Sorbonne
After these came the Prison Graduating
And the second status inversion for the verandah boys
When we were getting union cards
We praised all these
"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Mythology would have us believe they sacrificed
They did not, we send them
They failed us

Sacrifices were in the dry lands
Sacrifices were with the crippled
Who could not be rehabilitated

Sacrifices were with the sick
Who died
Without treatment

Sacrifices were made by the stunted
Who we could not feed

Wakabuku, a very wise landless Nyakenyua Woman says

"We all surrendered and failed to sacrifice"

Surrender to who we asked her

She replied *"The new devils."*

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Her elaborations are vivid

"We will have to sacrifice love of the comfort of marriage"

"We will have to sacrifice bringing up lazy children"

"We will have to sacrifice idle time visiting"

"We will have to sacrifice being ticks on others"

"We all have become misfits in the ancestor's eyes"

"The times demand death of bad politics"

"Bad tribal and country relationships and underdevelopment"

"Leaders have become obscene and debasing to us all"

"We have to fight them- not to gloat that they are our kin as we do now"

"To say a continental competitor is unacceptable to our ancestors "

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Nnaggenda's drawing/painting/ sculpturing of death
Is as it was when the insides of the dead and yet to be born were straight
This he kept reminding us

He was accentuating the messenger and the medium
We knew the godfather of killing
Wanted his boys to go to collect one Obote

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

They had been such good friends
When my in-laws called
He said they should meet at the bar

He had nothing to say although in Guyanese and African villages
He would have been charged with marrying and trying to kill a kinsman

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

Jukina had travelled the long road from Dar-es Salaam
To the land of moon walk while we were serenaded with millet porridge
Rather than the tiered and yeasty derivative usual there

The sabbaticals from three continents represented hope
But the ugly monster from the sea called it quaint
Jukina and Juikinee have accepted the sacrifice

Thousands of miles split the home situations
But the pure spirits vibrated in cosmic unity
Just like the dead and the yet to be born do

There was hope in the Itenges and the writing
Although Yia would still call it a conference

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

This is the essence of monastic viva completiva

It is all about sacrifice

It is all about the negation of dada nihilismus

Above all it is about traditions and values

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

You said you were frustrated since sixty nine

You talk of the Baraka who used to work in the area of dead words

Where the people with crooked insides ignored him

You said you wanted to go to the land where the beard was accepted

You say this will rend the curtains of blood in your eyes

Put there by the clans of the moon walkers who blind you

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

You say you can only live
Outside the hell we created in the name of
Our special duty of saving humanity
By osmosis and pseudopodia

You further shout,
It is only a question of the union card
But we have the union cards
Nikki and Angela have union cards: Armah has a union card
Have they superseded the message?
We are supposed to ask wither? Have we?

Answers only come from correct and straight insides
Insides rooted in the birthing of traditions

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

You knew the brother had red curtains
This was to exhibit the crookedness of his mother's insides
This had led him to leaving mother

"We are no longer young and working for union cards"

He had become a medium in the land of white cold

Yet we could never really escape his antics

“Imagine, your goat eating was so unique

This is the problem my brother

How can you worry about the beard?”

“Grant grants neocolonialism which

Came after the beard, goatee and the moustache

How can you take a Nnaggenda to the land of white cold”

“We are no longer young and working for union cards”

It is true the journey is always tedious

But all future is synergistic, making the SASA longer than rope

It had to fill the complexity:

It cannot be spastic:

It has to be prescriptive

“We are no longer young and working for union cards”

We bought cars and did not travel to Mecca or Rome

Indeed we could not even hope to find Mecca or Rome

We had the union cards but not straight insides

We had the Pongs trying to usurp the medium of the message

Yet in spite of all our union cards

We did nothing

“We are no longer young and working for union cards”

We explain ourselves in many ways

“We were the children of the age of despair”

“They were our best of friends”

“That sort of thing is common”

“You ought to show goodwill”

“She likes a perm and is possessive”

“Let us go and buy a car”

“We must sacrifice”

“They do not understand”

“We are no longer looking for union cards”

“There is the problem of materialism”

“We must spend x number of hours every week”

“We will be the garbage heap of history”

“I know-I have written a poem about it”

“When they investigate your shopping, things are bad”

“That was bad”

“Six months ago , you were complaining about not being used, work now”

“You see , a generation procreates and dies within the incubus that is mother”

“Brother, Aprils come and go but we must not eat crow”

“It is, after all just socialization and NOT SOCIALISM”

“Socialization to just fill your stomach at all COST?”

for Ayi Kwei Amah

CHENCHEMA

There was a problem of contacting the old fools

Past masked masquerades

Are clearly not the strong breeds in Ghana

Joe had tried hard but you know him and his Othello

A veneer is not a mask

How does one begin to discuss the tumult

Of the first three days if one makes all the connections

Between the dead , the living and the yet to be born?

The only thing near clear was the shoe shine

Attempting to write a poem at the square

There was the smell of death

We had to fingerprint, slither and later move on

Boakye used to wonder about

The old woman who went to the beach

To discuss the messenger as Armah explains

He was only interested in sand, sea and pebbles

The only things which survived

The sea's appetite for the Gold Coast

We were young bush people

We did not know seas

Boakye used to say only the sea endures

When I met him in Ghana his first non-sea comment was

“ I admire the old man who was imprisoned

At the castle where they sold slaves

He did not crack

When they took him from us, they knew getting the golden stool

Would mean the end of the people

We must make something over this.”

As I was saying before

Europeans pointed out the wealth of the oilfields

Boakye became the messenger

There always is a thing about messengers

They attract like magnets

They burn thereafter

For Boakye, it was first messing around

He would go to the meetings

He would sit at the verandah and listen to stuff

From the Dicks

Who should have been pushing the message

Or rallying the cutting off of the informers

Messengers also like to think

That the message is the medium

They therefore look for the Boakyes

The first assignment was just to go to bring the food

This is the bottom ladder's rung

The second was to work just to get a meal

We were young and wore

Cowboy hats and tight jeans

We knew that the bad guys had been to school

We knew they did not miss food
Boakye thought he was the gulf
And could bellow like the sea

Hired as a youth winger
He got proper trousers and food
He found a business selling protection to the schooled

The party of the messenger
Had to raise money
From the educated and employed

Boakye learned ten percent early in his third rung
When the Messenger got detained at the castle
We were impressed and continued preaching his message

This was just living and eating by raiding
He began marching
As crowds increased, many dashed him

His fourth rung was become the spokesman
Of the detained Messenger
A pliable directors' assistant
Would connect his calls, growing the pie

Phone calls raise money

Calls set demonstrations for the Messenger

Phone calls also expand ten percent sources

The fifth rung was satiation by cold country women

Some spies against the Messenger

It did not matter, they had money

They also had more than ten percentages

They also had more source longevity than the book locals

They celebrated him

He excelled

He was not alone

He saw that the Messenger got some goodies

The Messenger was not his only source

Banda was calling him

Banda had said sensuality traps natives

That is why Mamawota was always significant

That is also why the Mwari cult recurs

That is why we wait eating leaves

You see those little girls
They are waiting
The brother is waiting at home or over there

We want people to have love choices
Boakye also made the sister with dyed red hair
She was something when angry

Yesterday she was angry
Mamawota done become a jealous monstrosity
She would sell him to Serumanga's idiot
Boakye had forgotten about Serumanga's tailing idiot

Mamawota had learned to shoot and swagger
We did not pay attention to her or Serumanga's idiot

We were never Calvary just Indians
Yet the idiots inherit the earth

The sixth rung was the boom boom
It rang for the Boakyes
There were the similar houses
And the exile of the Messenger

Slaves never get sick

So perhaps the Messenger did not
Boakye lives

I have travelled with the notes
Of both the asomi and their mutations
Makonnen believes that the struggle is going on

Grant accepts contestation of class without race
Makonnen grants race without class
The Messenger harmonizes both they say
The messenger harmonizes both?
Spaceman supposedly grants the unity of race and class
But not the difference of dialectical dynamics

These are operationalised by Asomi
It is the Spaceman understanding
I had sought in travelling to Ghana

This particular Sunday
The feast was with one of the ten per centers
I had made my bid

A charter on women
Before Chamangula, Mulungushi and Arusha
The seed stretches for light

The hermit's eye covers are torn for vision
The house was developed privately
Proximate to the Messengers creation at Tema

Next to it were Nyakenyua mabati shacks
Further was one who moved to center, from the left,
With four stories, ten car garage, marble floors

Its mama cried "Everything other than brandy is out."
This was the left of the leftovers
She said "The Serumanga idiot had relegated us to this"
We stayed till afternoon: Caviar was served
I was a recoiled spectator

I dream of the hundred years of solitude to come
And the possibility of you sharing it ontologically
Leaving I meet the prop-jet set re-colonizing us

I move to Le-Gon's Nimma space: Our Historic Messenger
You and I were the young once: We are no longer so

These days belong to the hustlers, but there will be prices to pay
There will be tomorrows and we will vindicate the Messenger
If we find the cure of our madness

There be children of the future
Their strong breed will endure
If they spit out the greed of the hustlers
By marrying ZAMANI, SASA and KESHO

For Kivanguli and Kisuke

MIGUMO AND BAOBABS

Nothing appears to grow under Migumo tree
Nothing appears to grow in Hiltons?
Nothing appears to grow in the land of Sheba Hilton?

But in the land of Sheba Hilton flourished
The desert wind re-routed us to it
We assorted travelers

Some seek sculptures others inspiration
At the Migumo Hilton there are two basic views
The back embraces All Africa and the now sterile palace

In the valley baobabs dominate

They embrace tin shacks and malnutrition

This is strange

Things grow under baobabs everywhere

Branches and body allow water and light

The body stores water for farming

The unity of opposites

Palaces, shacks, Hilton ,mud, bricks, concrete

Is Hilton circumcised?

All Africa conferences are uncircumcised

Did Sheba ever hear of Isanusi?

Did the baobab ever hear of the circumcision of Hilton?

Did the palace understand the contamination?

When the Migumo die few root shoots struggle

When the baobab dies new growth starts

What does Hilton sire?

Did the unity of opposites work?

Was the valley joined to the Mountain by the Hilton?

Rather than a deadly concrete tramp

We three tread the foot path to the Church

Shoots and shootings are in the land of Sheba

We watched khaki in many colors
Not Sheba's woven cloth
The day after the lions were freed

The endless hunting was switched on
Friends polarized
The new discourse is bloody red

THERE IS NO KUDZU HERE

GLOSARY

