



# Poems by Odarro Aisien



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# ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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**DEDICATION**

This booklet of poems is dedicated to my father, Dr. Ekhaguosa Aisien, for his unwavering support and encouragement, as well as his influence as a cultural compass.

# Poems by Odaro Aisien

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# **PART ONE**

## **Expressions**

# ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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## **I. THE RETROGRADE LAP**

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For as long as the rider persists  
In the infamy of his career,  
Shall the hectored horse exist  
With the status of a pariah

How much latitude has been abused,  
How elastic is our inurement?  
Multitudes, averse but seduced  
By the aegis of the moment

Circling the retrograde lap,  
As we gallop towards our nadir,  
In a long, insensate nap,  
Our limbs refuse our ladder

Probing the uppermost stations,  
Hoping for a whit of conscience;  
But sharpening the common vexations:  
Vulgar whiffs of pungence

By the sweeping grace of degrees  
With a brutal sense of process,  
We've ebbed-and by degrees  
In a morbid flight from progress

May the reins of the polity,  
On their favoured jockey fall;  
And usher the quality:  
All for one, and one for all

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We are residents of dusk,  
The East has long delayed;  
But out beauty we'll unmask,  
With our fairer side portrayed

How long shall the rider insist  
On the infamy of his career,  
Or the hectored horse resist  
The privations of a pariah?

## **II. WATER**

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Beneath the sun, on crass relief  
With jaded breath, I falter;  
Then hasten to a sharp relief  
A goblet's gift of water

It's back to digs, the day is done,  
The bowels bellow hotter;  
And culinary things are done,  
In vessels, holding water

Starting, by the riverside,  
At spare delights of fauna,  
And verdancy on every side,  
Incumbent on the water

Man began to find his Earth,  
In time he'd know a quarter,  
And when he made a round of it,  
His first recourse was water

Water, indispensable,  
Instructor of the clime;  
Adjudicator of its level,  
The liquid state, sublime

By its own, no taste accrues,  
Nor sweet olfactory stimulus;  
Nor shade, nor hue, to thus abuse  
Its limpid way, so marvellous.



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Catholic in its solvency,  
For most that flow, the basis;  
For living, it is currency  
For fire, antithesis.

Precious in the oases,  
Gaseous in the sky;  
The flux of Nature's policies  
Is water, passing by.

**III. LONG LIVE THE KNAVES**

© Odaro Aisien

Go by guile (and all the best!)  
There's fortune in your offing;  
A life of wile is sure to wrest  
A kitty, out of nothing

Play the prig, or worse, the prude;  
When virtue renders nothing  
Your consequence shall thus conclude:  
The coffers, or the coffin.

Be this trend your native bent,  
Ahead, ahead, allegro!  
Be it not so inherent,  
Then dance the day's domino.

Fortune's fine, but profusion  
(Which doesn't discommode),  
Though mock the paunch in protrusion,  
Must follow, a la mode.

Does it rankle to acquaint  
The soul, to this occasion?  
Have a drink, and think it quaint,  
And savour your vocation .

Would it please, to feed your broods  
On spoons of sanctimony?  
Eschew the good, should it intrude,  
What's man, without the money?

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Sack your dithers! Correspond  
Scheming by the sentence;  
The Whiteys, when they do respond,  
Shall compensate for conscience.

Though conscience be corroded  
In vice's epidemic,  
Reprieve awaits the loaded:  
They shall suborn the karmic.

Blessed are the knaves!  
Maestros of mendacity  
Puritans seek your graves,  
And thank the universities

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### **IV. BLACKMAN/WHITEMAN (I)**

#### **Paranoid Intercourse**

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Bm           Whiteman, I still feel the whip  
              You lashed three hundred years ago,  
              Though the ache has watered down  
              With time and a softer cane.

I'm still a fisherman of fiends,  
While you only care for what you see:

Wm           Then it must be, my noble friend,  
              There's something you know that I don't

Bm           Whiteman, when shall come our time  
              (You know, like it was before, eh?)

Wm           I'm afraid, my friend, you'll have to wait;  
              But, patience, that's one thing you got

Bm           Well, I got rhythm (or you forgot?)  
              I'm not talkin' scores and sheets  
              I'm talkin' 'bout the friggin' soul,  
              Like music knows herself.

I've got enough activity  
To outwit you on your wife;  
Come let's redo the covenant  
You gave me at the Windies.

Wm           Let's take a walk, the way we are  
  
              To an ersatz Judgement Day;  
              Each man, his cranium to the pyre

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And see who wins the assay!

Bm        You must forgive the old cliché  
            But your star is on the wane;  
            In a thousand years, you' ll praise the past  
            And hide your diminished head.

Wm        Blackman, one more platitude,  
            You're preaching to a prelate;  
            I thought you'd lose the attitude  
            With time and a softer came.

At least, I'm still a supernova,  
And I've got a ways to go;  
And when I'm burnt, I'll fish you out  
At the back of the waiting room

I'll give away the sheriff's star,  
To my friends at the Rising Sun,  
They begged the sun for synchrony  
Of daybreak with distinction.

Blackman, I got one request:  
Don't forget me when it comes;  
I'm talkin' 'bout the Fattest Bone,  
Or won't you be ready then?

Bm        Prudence is your genius;  
            And you got so much of it,  
            As to bend your knees for a modicum  
            Of my life's Work (in advance)

**V. BLACKMAN/WHITEMAN(II)**

**The Zoo**

© Odaro Aisien

Blackman was told, come clear up the zoo  
“The place is defunct, the monsters are dead;  
The lion, of old age; the leopards of heat;  
The python, of tension or too much to eat;  
The cranes, of contention with people they’d meet;  
The last of the camels, of too much conceit.

But the man recoiled:  
“I dey fear this place, O!  
I dey hear one-kind noise;  
one-kind snake fit don escape.....”

One-kind dis, one-kind dat,  
And Blackman lost the job

Whiteman was wooed to wipe out the weeds:  
“We checked out the structures, there’s no one astray;  
Those malignant creatures, we’ve carted away;  
We’ve got files to show you, the dates and their weights;  
there’s more things to say, if you’re willin’ to wait.....”

Whiteman wasn’t willin’.

With a gun for protection,  
Paper for evidence,  
And  
Payday for impetus,

He took up the job,

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Cleared half the bush,  
Then died by a snake bite.

(By Blackman's account)

But Whiteman never came back to refute it.....  
He was caught poaching!

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### **VI. TRANSITION TO THE MOON**

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It's sunset, and the sky  
Gets a valedictory hue,  
By how the full day's sun  
Conspires with her blue;  
It's the threshold that precedes  
The reign of the lunar lamp;  
They're coming, they're coming, they're coming.

It's darker, and it's time  
For the superintending breeze  
To blow a pantomime  
On the silhouetted trees;  
They're telling us again:  
They're coming, they're coming, they're coming.

Interregnum in the sky  
The word is all about;  
The Half-day Tyranny  
Is slowly westing out;  
It's a threshold that precedes  
The reign of the lunar lamp;  
It's the hour that concedes  
To a time of many lights;  
They're coming, they're coming, they're coming.

The lonely lunar lamp,  
Sometimes, will stay away;  
Sometimes, she takes command,  
But comes with half her sway;

Will we make the transition to the moon?

It's darkness, and it's time  
For a confirmatory look



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At many, many, lights,  
And a lonely lunar lamp;  
They've come, they've come, they've come.

## **VII. TWO MEN TALKING**

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First World Man concedes to Third World Man;  
He says: 'don't know the problem with your lot;  
But just for now, your plight is in my eye,  
I watch your way, and no one can deny:  
You work big-big, you get small pay.

First World Man continues his discourse;  
To Third World Man, he says as much as this:  
I don't know science, don't know economics;  
I've got no head for talk or histrionics;  
But this I know, of most the men I see:  
They work big-big, they get small pay'.

Third World Man, amused, contains a laugh;  
To First World Man, he say as much as this:  
My time is near; my brothers, sisters, all,  
One by one, they fled these fetid shores;  
And since they moved, there's something I observe:  
They work big-big, they get big pay'.

First World Man and Third World Man embrace,  
As if to say, 'Who' made the human race?  
Let's pretend, if only for the better:  
You work big-big, you get big pay.

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### **VIII. BIRD OF THE EYRIE**

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Terrestrial earth is a carrier  
Of several known species;  
The arbors keep their quota,  
There's plenty in the trees;  
But none will so aspire  
As the one who oversees,  
Or flies  
Like the great bird of the eyrie.

And though some birds are tender  
As they fly the firmament,  
Her name is Grace, the Pretender  
In her fullest element;  
The pithiest reminder  
Is to see her playing Death:  
To be sure,  
She's the great bird of the eyrie.

But when she's in her eyrie,  
She closes up her myth;  
A folded-up retiree,  
At loss for her conceit;  
For the sky is where she reigns,  
Her eyrie, where she wanes;  
Indeed,  
She's the great bird of the eyrie.

But now, she's in the sky,  
She's wearing all her wings;  
She had to leave the eyrie,  
To travel her terrain;  
The way she takes the sky,

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From the manner of her wings,  
She's none,  
But the great bird of the eyrie

### **IX. THE COSMOS QUEST**

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The Cosmos Quest is a constant quiz,  
The more you know, the more it mystifies;  
It lays a load on our sentiency  
Our hearts to hold; our brains, to justify:  
The Cosmos Quest is a constant quiz

Our shovels linger with its little details,  
The spades are honed, but the substrate multiplies;  
Our wits have wandered, but remain beleaguered:  
The verge of Space? The peep of Time?

The Cosmos Quest is a constant quiz,  
As you probe, the more it magnifies;  
A cosmos thought is a timeless tease;  
Time has shown, and thought will testify:  
The Cosmos Quest is a constant quiz.

The script is spread on an endless ream,  
For every score, the consequence is question;  
The ream is rolled in a plenary dimension;  
What displacement lies behind the present?

The questions come, and they come again,  
Our answers only repronounce their rhetoric;  
Like droves of rain, they will pour again:  
A boundless past? The limits of futurity?  
The Cosmos Quest is a constant quiz.

We look our souls in the custody of creeds;  
Or else, we float in the liberty of reason;  
But here, from where our spades are incident,  
Is there a ground for so much accident?

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The Cosmos Quest is a constant quiz,  
The more you know, the more it mystifies;  
A cosmos thought is a timeless tease,  
We hone our spades, but the substrate multiplies;  
The Cosmos Quest is a constant quiz.

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### **X. THE RETURN OF THE WITNESS**

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A thousand years have strained my eyes,  
I saw so much, I lived no less;  
The wisdom of my wizened eyes  
Is the child of a thousand years.

From the watchtowers, at Mawenzi,  
I peered at newborn dynasties,  
The slowly-changing stools of kings,  
I saw a thousand years.

I lived among your long-forebears,  
I grew with your genealogy;  
The kinship-tree, I stay with it,  
As far as a thousand years.

In person, I know the son of Menzi,  
I praise the sway he held;  
I was there before, with Dingiswayo,  
I likewise knew the veld.

I sailed feluccas down the Nile,  
I paddled much of Congo;  
Sometimes, I spoke inter-lacustrine,  
At times, my tongue was Mongo.

Humped with the camel cavalry,  
I drank the desert dust;  
I shared their war-song revelry,  
In the stiff Sahara frost.

Sometimes, I'd ease at Nyasa Lake,  
Or laze at Leopard's Kopje;  
Or, not too far from Mawenzi  
I'd crouch at Uhuru Peak.

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If a woman, I was not yet nubile  
When the Almoravids came,  
They galloped into Ghana's plains  
Before my fledging eyes.

My heels were hardly travel-stained  
At the time of Timbuktu's Tuareg-birth,  
I saw the city when she fell  
To Mali, Songhai, Sharifs.....

Then I saw the gods in a quandary,  
Their word was full of warning:  
They spoke of the men in the caravels,  
From where the seas were unknown.

I saw the elders sit outside  
To manufacture wisdom;  
With every call of eventide,  
I heard a thousand idioms.

I traded guns with Tippu Tip,  
To siloed salt, for grains;  
Sometimes, I gave of my calicos,  
For their price in ostrich plumes.

I had tired of Matabele spears  
When Lobengula was a baby;  
Mzilikazi's father's father,  
I saw their own forebears.

I never knew the Pharaoh's Nile,  
I learnt of Kush, by mouth;  
Before my time, the Punic tribes  
Had wandered to the South.



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But I saw *induna* lose their hair,  
I hold some strands, as keepsake;  
My own had greyed before they came,  
My pate, for long had balded.

I saw the Moors at Tondibi,  
Bring perish to Songhai,  
Benin, I knew, at her apogee;  
I grew with her decline.

The writing of the two *ta'rikhs*,  
I saw it with my eyes;  
Battuta's pen is in my pouch,  
I'm keeping it, for keep-sake.

I saw the blood-stained assegai,  
As *impi* homed from battle;  
At another place, I took repast  
Of roasted Lozi cattle.

With rested back on baobab,  
In witching-time and firelight,  
I called the forest by different names,  
Cokwe, Mossi, Bambara.....

I'm a witness to a thousand years,  
The focus of abundant ears;  
I should relate in recency,  
Before I stray too far.

The guns I heard at Kiriji,  
They sound like yesterday;  
I keep my recall, of Kurunmi,  
Before, at Ijaye.

Of Nok, I saw the figurines,  
But they weren't of my time;

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I saw the figures, I felt the clay,  
But I didn't meet their craft.

I scaled Ahaggar, rode Maghreb,  
I sauntered Kalahari;  
I drained elixirs made of herb,  
In camp, with Samori's army.

At Marakkesh, I marketed;  
My face was known at Fez;  
Sometimes, I spoke in Sukuma,  
At times, I yarned in Nyanja.

I roved around with the Nyamwezi,  
In search of occupation;  
I saw the meaning of Ruwenzori,  
The Mountains of the Moon.

By the time I was in middle-age,  
The Askia were in mother's-womb;  
I saw many other dynasties,  
From my watchtower, at Mawenzi.

I saw the infant Nyatsimba,  
First, of the Mwene Mutapa;  
Mbire clings my memory,  
Three fathers before him.

I swam the streams of Siluko,  
Used Niger salt at Mopti;  
I ate the meat of the marabou,  
Drank succulents in the dry Namib.

A thousand years are in my eyes,  
My tongue, too old to tell a lie;  
My demeanour and my wizened eyes  
Are the price of second childhood.

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The men who built the Madugu  
At Mansa Musa's pleasure,  
I lived beyond, I saw their sons  
In the sway of Sonni Ali.

When Ezana reigned, I wasn't there,  
Did I mention 'Aksum'?  
I didn't see his Christian court;  
It held before, by half my age;  
They only told me of his fame,  
His sway across the Red Sea.

But a thousand years are in my eyes  
I saw so much, I omit too much;  
My tale persists, my tongue recedes;  
My apologies to one and all;  
I shall be back, in the docks of History,  
To recite a thousand years.

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### **XI. EYRIE-BIRD**

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The early call of the crepuscle  
Is a time for many things;  
The eastern light and the morning crow,  
The harbingers it brings;  
A time will come for the pageantry,  
There's a time for everything;  
She'll fly, she'll fly, the eyrie-bird.

And for eyrie-bird, in her domicile,  
The motions have begun;  
Her morning preen is a promiser  
That the raptor will return;  
She casts away her yesterdays,  
And rouses to the dawn;  
She'll fly, she'll fly, the eyrie-bird.

Eyrie-bird, she's majestic, I pry at her parade,  
The way she flies, it seems to be, she's finished with her rapture;  
Her urgency is over; for now, she promenades,  
In flight, in flight, the eyrie-bird.

## **XII. THE SEAFARING MEN**

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The seafaring men must have been quite a kind,  
I can see the birth of an offing;  
When sea-ways were grim, unkind with the wind,  
There were caskets in lee, for the quaffing.

For the seafaring men must have gambled ambition,  
To have dared such infinite ocean;  
Unending in motion, on infinite ocean,  
The advent of shore, prolonging.

And the seafaring men must have seen quite a sight,  
To have seen three suns and no strangers;  
Alone in their flight, their peculiar plights,  
The doldrums, the deeps and its dangers.

And the seafaring men must have heard it at night,  
The voice of the black sea-abyss;  
The sound of the night, all sea and no sight,  
Abroad, on a broadwise abyss.

The seafaring men, not the mere fishermen  
Who paddled for the sake of sea-fodder,  
The seafaring men were a good breed of men;  
Their tyroes could not have been tender.

The seafaring men, not row-boys on rivers,  
Constrained to the creeks and crevices,  
Their innards sustained for two men in liver,  
For they fared in the far-sea premises.

The seafaring men, they stay on mind,  
For I witnessed the birth of an offing;  
The seamen of old, not the ships of today,  
Which I see, at the birth of their offing.

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They're steering away, I see them at sea,  
But they sail for many-less slumbers;  
The farers before were long on the sea,  
Not such as their sea days were numbered.

The seafaring men, I'm losing their offing,  
From the berth of their last-seen harbour;  
In a few days and nights, they'll fare, in the offing,  
Of a rest, from their high sea's labour.

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### **XIII. AN OLD CLICHÉ**

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It's Nineteen-sixty, the wind is blowing,  
I took the words from an old man's speech;  
Blowing out, with the wing of change,  
Are the seamasters and their Channel friends.

Flags are changing, the heralding  
Of a watershed, on the continent;  
They'll have to wait for the Portuguese,  
And Ian Smith, in the 'seventies;

And since the wind, a lot of water  
A lot of water, has passed the bridge.

Every people have their story,  
Reddened eyes, or glory-stories;  
Some may speak about Sharpville sorrow,  
The Madiba, and new tomorrow;  
Some may remember Nkrumah;  
Some may allude, to Kasavubu.

We have our own, we have our story,  
A lot of water has passed the bridge;

October wind and the Green-White-Green,  
The whole republic in incipience;  
Our budding eyes were future-bright,  
A common focus, a mutual fight.

Then sentiments began to sunder,  
A lot of water has passed the bridge.....

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Mutiny, by three young majors,  
Tinderbox for a major war;  
Minor sparks, then sweeping pogroms  
Another coup..... a major war.

But the young republic stuck together  
In the iron hands of benign Gowon;  
And since it stuck, a lot has happened,  
So much water has passed the bridge.

There was a coup, and one miscarriage,  
A martyr's name on the latter's face;  
The GNP was of liquid gold,  
As we made our way through the First Transition.

Such are history's sudden turns,  
Plebiscite was told, *defer to guns*;  
The First Transition, The Second Republic,  
And four years of suffrage,  
Were blown away.

Familiar music filled our ears,  
The martial sounds of another coup;  
We nodded our welcomes (did we have options)?  
Breathing the ether of public restraint.

We entered an age of acronyms  
There were many names, and many appointments;  
They mobilized and sanitized,  
They *structurized*, they made adjustments.

Then we moved around to another Transition,  
The word was a new cliché;  
And since the word, a lot of water;  
A lot of it, has traversed the bridge.



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A date in June and the ING;  
A Rivers' man in the hangman's noose;  
We were paying dear for liquid gold,  
And telling it with cautious news.

It's 'Ninety-seven, and here we are,  
Were still repeating an old cliché;  
I stake my prayers on what would be,  
That the corridor should be crossed in peace.

In the 'sixties, the wind was blowing,  
I stole the words from an old man's speech;  
And since the wind, a lot water,  
A lot of water, has passed the bridge....

### **XIV. SO THE YOUNG MAN SAID**

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‘Lagos girls na wa O’, so one young man said;  
‘Dem wan take the last card, wey you wan take reach Yaba’.  
‘Dis kin’ place, na wa O’, so the young man said;  
‘Dem eye go dey your five card, wey you wan take reach Yaba’.

‘Lagos town na wa O’, so my friend confessed;  
‘Dem go fight and injure, just to enter bus;  
‘Dis kin’ place, na wa O’, so the young man said;  
‘All your dress go scatter, before your place-of-work’.

Lagos town na wa O’, I heard it on the bus;  
I only paid my five card, I didn’t say a word;  
I simply took my own place, among the teeming horde;  
‘Lagos girls na wa O’, so the young man said.

‘Lagos town na wa O’ na evribodi’ talk’;  
A lady had to interrupt, she had her mind to say;  
‘Dem go dey say ‘na wa O’, but na dem dey full di place’;  
All of this was started, by what one young man said.

‘Where dem eye dey follow, wed dem see the girl?’  
I thought she’d only interrupt; she had some words to say:  
‘Dem no dey like to buy fish, but dem wan chop di fish’,  
And the lady brought rejoinder to what the young man said.

‘Lagos girls na wa O’, so one young man said;  
I only heard it in the bus, I never kept the notion;  
‘Dis kin’ place, na wa O’, so the young man said;  
And I didn’t join the lady, when she brought rejoinder.

### **XV. THE FACE OF NATURE**

© Odaro Aisien

She's such a beauty, the face of Nature,  
The way she arrays herself;  
Sometimes, she goes in gilded light,  
Some aspects show her dulcet side;  
Sometimes, she floats her seven colours  
On a slowly-fleeting screen.

She blows her beauty, the face of Nature,  
On the sylvan dress she wears;  
She awaits a time of wind-politeness,  
To weave and wind, reveal her lightness;  
She's so much beauty, the face of Nature,  
How she arrays herself.

At night, she sleeps, the face of Nature,  
Lulled by her lunar light;  
Her shades and chromes were made for day,  
The florid show, it pales away;  
She dims her cloak and makes for night,  
Dressed in lunar light.

She's the mother of beauty, the face of Nature,  
She rollicks and she rises;  
With dipping glades, she undulates;  
With avine heights, she elevates  
She's so much beauty, the face of Nature,  
How she arrays herself.

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XVI. RHYTHM (*or rather*, AFRICAN MUSIC)**

© Odaro Aisien

African music is rhythm;  
Rhythm, it started from here;  
Its seeds were sent, to the other places,  
But here, was the place it began.

It flowered in the sparse Sahel,  
It gathered, in the denseness of Guinea;  
And though its seeds were sent around,  
They still know their pedigree.

Melody was raised at the Orient,  
The Europeans, very good arrangers;  
Rhymes were suited for letters,  
African music is rhythm.

It took its tone, on the Caribbeans,  
It was palpable in New Orleans;  
From sugarcane fields to Speak-Easies,  
African music is rhythm.

It followed the drums of the Fante,  
It hung, to Hausa horns;  
It could echo the timbre of iroko,  
Or mimic the mane of the lion.

It tapped from the gongs of Niger,  
It spoke, in Yoruba drums;  
It claps with cowrie-percussions,  
It simmers, in Xhosa songs.

There were special ones for coronations;  
Some were enshrined for war,  
Some for the new-yam occasions,  
African music is rhythm.

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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It rattles the roofs of my village,  
It rolls, from Ibo reeds;  
Harmony, melody, they come as embroidery,  
African music is rhythm.

African music is rhythm,  
Here, was where it began;  
And though its seeds were sent around,  
They still know their pedigree.

African music is rhythm;  
Rhythm, it started from here;  
And though they use it everywhere,  
It still knows its pedigree.....

(Repeat and Fade)

## Poems by Odaro Aisien

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### XVII. VOYAGERS

© Odaro Aisien

The Muezzin sings his Friday songs  
The corollary follows;  
The churches fill, the Ganges throngs  
But we're voyagers  
Of the same Village.

Some learnt their songs in tropic outbacks,  
Some grew up with the Talmud;  
From crowded naves to Shinto scapes,  
We are voyagers  
Of the same Village.

Voyagers of the same Village,  
Different streaks, different paces;  
From navel's-chord, to the open Highway,  
In vassalage, to Environment  
We romance our roots,  
Re-grass our routes  
But we're voyagers of the same Village.

There are several *isms* and different *logies*  
Separate creeds, for final causes  
There are many fractures, among the faithful  
It is Chaosville, or another day?

Relatives of a growing distance  
Burying heroes, breeding ciphers  
Agonized in pursuit of Purpose  
Making music, seeking lodestars  
We variegate our Physiognomy  
We're cats and dogs, for Teleology  
But here we are, on the same Voyage  
Voyagers, of the same Village.

### **XVIII. CITY**

© Odaro Aisien

City, so much city  
Expressed in stark variety  
A 'Cee-class' is taking off  
Mallams are taking alms  
It carries a certain nuance  
It's portrayal, in any city.

In the gamut of the multitude  
There are all sorts of attitudes  
Preachers and puritans  
Sharppers, shenanigans  
And who can say  
How avails the day  
Congested freedoms?  
Reflective home-bounds?

Exciting, Lagos City  
Saturating, yet dilating  
She burgeons day by day  
Her fill is far away  
Noir-ish, garish, crazy  
City, so much city.

**XIX. WHIMS OF A WANDERER (II)**

**Ever-Changing World**

© Odaro Aisien

The Mozarts, and the folk-song  
The Pre-Raphaelite movement  
The rumours of John Prester,  
It's an ever- changing world

The old men and the moonshine  
The newness of the muskets  
The Ming China, the Moguls  
Newton, breaking ground.

And now, they 're playing grunge  
And doing spadework on Mars  
It's an ever changing world  
Ever-changing world.



### **XX. SUNSET REVERIE**

© Odaro Aisien

There's a time when the sun is scarce  
And the trees are throwing sighs  
Day is nearing dark  
But prior to the night  
I relent in my day-old tracks  
To a Thursday's evening light  
She brings her shade,  
And I serenade  
My sunset reverie

The augury, it is sheer  
Aurora, all the air  
Day is nearing dark  
But just before she departs  
She diverts my day-old tracks  
To her scenery of departure  
Beneath her shade,  
I sibilate  
Sunset Reverie.

## **PART TWO**

# **The Hinterland**

### **XXI. THE NINETEENTH STREET**

© Odaro Aisien

Are they journeying to the nineteenth street  
For the better or the worse  
Relax with a glass of IMF  
Avoid the besuited horse traders  
Is there more to be said of the nineteenth street  
Than charity for the poor  
Savour your glass of IMF  
Hide from besuited horse traders

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXII. THE HINTERLAND**

© Odaro Aisien

We're throttling through the hinterland  
of third world history  
steering away from a miry road, returning  
to rollock on a hasty pass  
    meandering through the miles  
    refurbishing our tyres  
    leaving a place  
where most of us have been before  
approaching a place which, hopefully, should make our  
next-door neighbours look at us and say  
they tarried for quite a while  
but they're managing their mileage

pothole after pothole  
(they've started refilling the macadam)  
we're trailing further from the miry road  
congesting our boot with expectation  
    raising up the hood  
    the usual punctuations  
be dogged with the toolbox, effect the right correction  
on sunday morning, do your genuflections  
and our distant friends will espy us and say  
they made it through the mire  
they're managing their mileage

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXIII. ANOTHER AIRLIFT**

© Odaro Aisien

I hear the sounds of another airlift  
Landing with envoys of sympathy  
We heard the drone, we await the grains  
We've nothing  
To offer but receptacles

There's a cover story on the Eritreans  
Some hackneyed news  
Of the carnage in Congo  
I hear the voices of the summiteers  
Discussing how to cheapen AZT

Parturition of a box of fruitage  
Bundled away to some orphanage  
Start a war, let's do some diamonds, I'll dust you  
A cabin on the gravy train

I think it's time we forgave those colonists  
We're masters of our habitudes, you know what I mean  
I'll need electricity  
To pull down these fahrenheits  
I've had quite enough  
Of pyrimethamine

Where hope is a sky with impending grain  
We've nothing to declare but receptacles  
Listen to the howl of one more airlift  
They're filling our baskets with sympathy

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXIV. FIELDS OF YEARS AGO**

© Odaro Aisien

It's funny, it's funny when you look at cattle rearers  
Travelling from their home Sudan  
For fodder on the fertile Guinea  
Funny, it's funny when you look at cattle rearers  
In the news there is GM food  
I was just reading of e-commerce  
They're walking on the fields of years ago

It's funny, it's funny but I've seen the cattle rearers  
As they carry their basic instruments  
As they travel from their home Sudan  
By the roadside, on the left  
There's a view of cattle rearers  
Walking on the fields of years ago

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXV. THE FOURTH DIMENSION**

© Odaro Aisien

What dimension

Is the fourth dimension

Is it time, the theatre of the future-tellers?

Is it spirit, the oblivion of the naked mind

Is it mind, the reading-room of perception?

What dimension is the fourth dimension

They seeded us a question

We've been sprouting out responses

But should we tether our story

To teleology

Do we call it incidence

The work of a witless agency?

What dimension is the fourth dimension

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXVI. FAMILIAR STRANGERS**

© Odaro Aisien

You polished my tray of minimum wages  
Then you threw yourself a party  
No bottle, no entry  
You blandished my place with  
A little bit of upholstery  
I powdered you with my gratitude  
You departed  
With my gratuity

Janus is truly standing at your door  
He dimmed your sight and paid for glasses  
Just like before?  
Progress is certainly  
Piping in your ear  
If you juxtapose  
With your yesterday, whom would you prefer?

We've titled your play  
The familiar strangers; your guise, unable  
To evacuate our view



### **XXVII. SCHOOLYARD GAMES**

© Odaro Aisien

Charity begins at home (it's probably your mother)  
Who blew the whistle for the schoolyard games  
Laughing in ambush  
With a dozen of her friends  
Clarity is the preserve of darkness (the world is very arcane)  
A few of my friends have been shooting bull's eye  
They rehearse at the coven of second sight

You are fool to cope by your own device  
You live  
In a land of many dimensions  
Reason will stray you  
Retina, betray you  
How do we slacken these day-to-day tensions?

You could pay for pentecostal soldiers  
(Though I favour a pot of homegrown alchemy)  
Enlist for submarine protection  
Anyhow, deal with the enemy

My friends are busy at their observatory  
They snipe  
From the coven of second sight

### **XXVIII. OUR CENTURY**

© Odaro Aisien

Our century was a century  
of the greatest degree of secular change  
the most rapid release of the popular wind  
from hitherto  
never such a radical break  
our century was a century

our century was the century  
that fired the wheels of the automobile  
inspired the hymns  
of a fabulous quartet  
never before  
such a radical break  
our century was a century

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXIX. WORDS**

© Odaro Aisien

All the flora, all your acres  
Who taught you how to grow?  
Were you planted here by accident?  
Or obeying the letters  
of written ordinance  
Gather the fauna  
number their strains  
Who taught you how to live?  
Trivial things on a trivial planet?  
Or words in the letters  
Of written ordinance

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXX. NEW SONG**

© Odaro Aisien

Drop your baits and off to fish  
Heave your fortune on some beggar  
Tell a corper to go to Zamfara  
Certain Greeks to forget enosis  
Press ahead with nuclear shielding  
Pay lotharious to go for gelding  
And show  
What straw  
Waves wind of fidelity

Counsel fish on how to swim  
Tutor a lover how to love  
Assure Sango that he is thunder  
Insulate without your glove  
Become a vulture by metamorphosis  
Use cerise for photosynthesis  
People  
Suspect  
That you might catch a falling star

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXXI. ISANDLAWANA**

© Odaro Aisien

Some are enemies over Good Friday  
Some are worrying over the TBT  
Camp David led a man to the grave  
Bretton Woods is yielding profits

But never think it will be the same  
I can still remember Isandlawana  
As if to cite their own example, from afar  
Janissaries gallop in your dream

Some are labouring with the tools of love  
They work at the RSPCA  
Come to my dinner for sturgeon eggs  
Package your pap with Musa leaves  
Describe your heart on the page of purpose  
Open your phosphorus when it is dark  
I can remember Isandlawana  
You shouldn't think  
It will be the same

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXXII. MORE WORDS**

© Odaro Aisien

Trust

Is a privilege

That flatters any man

You can use it to pack your pockets

You may append it

Unto your name

Justice

Is a fearless whore

Another day, another man

Some may amble

Alongside Gandhi

You can gallop with Don Quixote

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXXIII. ALWAYS WONDERED**

© Odaro Aisien

Are you saying you didn't see that cleavage  
In earnest, you didn't feel concerned  
Do you state that your system  
Fails to succumb  
To yearnings, for femininity

It was their second cousin  
That was shading the family portrait

I've always  
Wondered why those guys are so  
Are they followers of a native urge  
Are they burrowing  
In forbidden earth  
I've always wondered  
How some guys are so  
Reorganise your polarity, do not  
Pluralise sexuality

## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXXIV. CONVICTIONS**

© Odaro Aisien

I have an acquaintance, who's a Zionist  
Farming soils from ancient dreams  
His shop-assistant is ultra-Orthodox  
In his eyeball  
You see the halachah  
My acquaintance, though rather secular  
Did some service with the Hagganah

Convictions at a crossroads  
Ideals, at an exhibition

I see a Cypriot hugging Turkey  
Kurds who'd rather keep their distance  
I know my classmate is now with the ETA  
I'm pro-Spanish, a little quieter

I hear them talk about pretty women  
Irish fathers who were Orange  
Chinamen with their different Systems  
Tamil Tigers in their foliage

Ideals at an exhibition  
Crossroads of convictions



## ***Poems by Odaro Aisien***

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### **XXXV. COMMENTARY**

© Odaro Aisien

Perfidious Albion

It's your language that we're speaking

Triggerman Samson, they're hacking away your polarity

Middle Kingdom, I befriend you for your potential;

Keep an eye

On Bharat, she's brimming beyond her baskets

Greybeard Great Bear, give good advice to your children

Ever-hot Sahara, look to your South

There are one or two