

*because YOU want
me to talk
(i will talk)*



poems by

OLETU OGHENENYORE C.

because
YOU
want me to talk
(i will talk)

OLETU OGHENENYORE C.
(Nyore Note)

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DEDICATION

...to my nieces & nephews
Michelle (Michelle Yeo) & Michael (Audu)
Precious (Baby Peeee) & Prevail (Big Boy Peeee)
& Providence (Pro-pro)
& to *Ifie*

i write for you kids
&
to every unheard voice of progress
&
to Aminu Adamu Mohammed
(*example of victims of power-bully in Nigeria*)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

You may know the coach and his assistant but what makes a team is way beyond what you see on the face level. My first chapbook (*Life in the Crucible*) exposes me to a whole lot of people, and I'm just learning how to walk around the hall of poetry. So without some key persons, I won't have made it this far because no man is an island.

Thanks to God Almighty for the gift of the pen. My parent, Mr. Isaac and Mrs. Charity Oletu. They made sure I excelled in reading and writing. And my siblings (Patience, Lucky, Wilson, Edith, Bella), they read everything from me; they remind me of what family is.

Tares Oburumu, the 2022 Sillerman Prize for African Poetry winner. He knows how to push me to aim for the sky, it's a hard walk for me but I love the pressure. You want me to dare the rugged path of poetry, I will.

Thanks, Oyin Bimbo, a friend, my chief editor/publisher and the entire Arting Arena Publishing team. Meeting you is a revolution. Your belief in me births this work.

I won't fail to recognize many behind the scene friends whose works and advice are shaping me; people like Jaachi Anyatonwu and Precious Harrison, though invisible, your input and reading your works has helped me. Etete Osomowo, and Kietese Maxwell has been supportive friends cum brothers . Oloruntobi Agnes, Opukiri Lucky and Favour Deborah; for believing and praying for me.

John Chinaka Onyeche is one passionate lover of poetry I follow and he loves to help other poets, a character I am

under-learning.

My spiritual parent, mentors and family, I live by grace and
your prayers.

I didn't forget you and you, and you, especially you whose
words and contributions online and offline keep bringing
out the creativity in me. The page allotted to me is too
small to call you all.

I appreciate my readers immensely.

FOREWORD

I must say that Oletu at this point has chosen another way, I mean, a totally different artistic style from what we used to know before, and has decided to shed light on some things which often befall us as humans. Anyone from and outside the continent of Africa will relate to each of these poems, as they are nothing but the very heart of the poet, longing to unravel the tales not easily told in the continent. Just like the title of this collection captures, “**Because YOU Want Me To Talk**”.

In this collection of poems, Oletu chooses his way and words to retell what I would like to call “*one’s daily experience and those of others who in one way or the other have been unable to tell their part of the circumstances surrounding them*”.

I personally like how the title depicts a kind of question or longing that the people always want to tell, or show as what they know about life and all that we have to do while living still, as humans, in spite of the difficulties.

I would like to add that, as Africans, just as the themes and spatial reflections of this collection depicts people’s ordeal, their powerlessness for not being bold enough to tell their own stories, no matter the strong hands, always wanting to put them behind before they could meet their light at the end of the tunnels. The language the poet explores here is not difficult; hence, the poems can easily find their way into the very heart of the common man and help them understand the intricacies of living, while they fall in love with poetry.

This is a collection to be savoured like fresh red wine from the southern tips. I must say I'm glad to give it a foreword for your consumption.

John Chinaka Onyeche,
Author of *We Returned To Kiss The Cross*

AUTHOR'S NOTE

One of the greatest challenges of our time is this: there are more observations than ever before and yet the world is becoming more blind and deaf. From government to academics to religion to business and to almost everything, many things are happening yet the chance to talk is becoming slimmer every day. It is tempting to think that things will get better; yes it will by locking freedom of speech in the prison.

I believe in what is called '**freedom of speech**' but I've also heard of '**fundamental human right**'. Well, the latter is something we will never enjoy. However, no matter how wet the eyes may be, it still sees clearly. '**Because YOU want me to talk**' is just a few glimpses to the ills and pain I have observed and bottled to myself over the years, from things happenings to people to things happening to me, yes, we've seen real shit that people don't want us to talk about especially about justice, faith, and power.

I wish to speak but I refused to wash my hands unclean. I never wanted to talk but I have to **Because YOU want me to talk**.

Oletu Oghenenyore C,
Imode, Delta State, Nigeria.
2022

1

THE SECRET

(for the inquisitive)

there
are things
you just know
how to do yet no
one ever has shown you
how to;

the picture
occurs and
reoccurring
in state blank
without beauty
& they wonder if
you are human
or alien

no one
needs
an 'i too know'
personality
here...

keep the flowers
and vase yourself

*CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS**(after every truth seeker)*

my ears are full -

first, to pulp
then to death
she was beaten
for challenging her master
who tried to rape her
and dreams
follow the wooden box
to the gods knows where.

take your child to school
you selfish man
he listened,
& that's how junior
was murdered in primary five
by his seniors.
dad press for charges
& the system ask him to back off
them judges must have been b_._._._.

a baby
with the feeder
was never accounted for
in the birth registry,

yes, for crying too loud
history says
he was killed too
but mom was told
don't cry, it was a stillborn.

uncle lost my cousin to traffickers
not a spoon of tears was parceled home
neighbours cry something's fishy
police spook the wheel
skeleton fell off the closet

can't tell it all
but my ears are full
and blinded
and my eyes deaf
with the worms
in the can

*THE RUNWAY OF DEMOCRACY**(after Jagaban and his likes)*

the chaos
in the palace
open him to big score
little did we know
we are cheering a snake
into office.

poor in maths
yet rich in con;
lower himself to read
the situation

that's how upper chamber
profit satan on a massive scale
with tiniest risk

they take advantage
of every unfamiliar move;
coups happen everyday
since our demons choose to go crazy

you shake
they move
you sit
they grumble
you loss
they win

FRIENDSHIP

*(after every Judas;
for every Jesus)*

dragged me
to the end of the cliff
gagged me
& offer handshake
of friendship,
how do you intend
to make me live
when you scheme my fall
with my foes?

i know every move
i choose to play the fool
& you didn't kill me
so
let not your conscience
prick you,

i let you
win.

5

POLITICS

(for every marginalized region)

all was well
with the sharing formula
until turbulence brew
when the strongest
of the party clowns
hijacked the throne
regardless
of age or rank

the dictionary is confused
as Queen Elizabeth lookalikes
claim to be youths
in the green and white colony
King Charles can't wait that long here
so some altered the spelling
from obedient to *OBIDIENT*.

it's few days
to the fourth cycle
but the cry
is when will the full moon

shine on our hut?

since it rises in the north
& sets only in the west
but we are one
sai...

6

LOVE

i want
a colour
right before me
that will blend
with my environment
alleviating this stress,
guess what heaven sent me?

you.

but the priest
bar me from telling,
it's called blasphemy
without sharing kola at home
& bringing a ring before him.

no wonder
the street
wear off-white
more often
than the pew;

haha.... Genesis one
verse twenty-eight is what again?
the street is in full compliant

LEADERSHIP

loyalty,
is like sugar

once its melt
in the ocean
you won't have anyone else
by your side

at the end
you will eat by yourself
on the dining table

•••

for liverpool-dians
it's
'never walk alone

POWER

power
like the Spring of Greed
gets you blinded
once you taste
a drop of it;
one will only be known
as a once good man
after then.

power...
a sweet wine
of selfishness;
it keep their souls
refreshed
& even some priest
can take the office
from their Christ.

SAFETY

when
the birds
suddenly stop chirping,
smell an ambush.

antelopes
too
dodge
bent stick

*(they never betray,
the never,
trust me,
never
will
they;*

*once beaten
two times shy).*

WOE OF A RISING STAR

a meditation under the sun —

the filial bond
between a father
& son
is amusing;
he wants his son to surpass him
but get jealous when he does so
by his own route

when
he became the first to be
in this field
and that,
family business about expiring.

what was daddy thinking before
when he said 'grow, son grow'?
now he's saying 'over my dead body'

may we not miss
the burial
but
may success soar

SILENCE

that question
is what
i can't
answer
now;

friends and family
blind my senses,
& one shouldn't
make hasty decisions

& today
is a good day,
worry should be dealt with
some other time.

PAIN AND GRIEF

the wound
look pretty deep
but i'm used to it

dada say
no one get used to
being wounded

it hurts every time
you gets a new cut,
i scream when i get stabbed too;

it's okay to scream
once in a while like a newborn -
antidote: it helps to pain.

WARNING:
tip is not for boys;
blah! blah! blah!

...boys don't cry.

THE UNKNOWN

not knowing
the answer
worried me.

& i'm scared, if
this path i'm taking
is the right one?

i'm afraid
of the spears
aimed at my neck

& how history
will remember me
bothers me too

fear
is what keeping me going
& i won't let go of it

Fear
too has
positive energy

LOVE LOST

i
have so many
wonderful people
around me;
you are one
of them.
i'm sorry
i didn't tell you earlier,

twenty-six years
was twenty-six chances
to water the flower
budding twelve times a year

& now the cow
has lost its tail
who will ward off
the flies?

history
taught me not
how to nurse
this wound

SNOOPS IN THE TEMPLE

that is not what our *DA-D-DY* said,
learn to do it like us

dress, talk & act like him in robe
no man has seen God before
but him that is called

& the Word
was watered
by his words

wait a sec
is gossip a godly virtue?

there were plenty hallelujah
racing alongside the testimony
so they can misfire your misfortune
as talebearers on the street

& heaven watched
unmoved

16

MYSELF

my sin:
because
i refuse to downgrade
from god
to human

and
i solve puzzle
with my left brain
thinking outside the box

my creed:
& God *said* let there be light
& there was *Oghenenyore*.

17

LOST

(for all looking for God)

but why not me?
they said
everyone cannot be the idol
someone should follow a saint
to the grave
someone must,
they said
i can't be a hero
that God don't use rebels.

shut up!
that priest is lying

who was Moses?
was he Pharaoh Moses
or God Moses
or Amram Moses?
he fought Egypt
and question heaven.

my turpitude was being a vanguard
without consulting
the church pharisees,
& sadducees,
& fathers

& mentoric CEOs.

they forget Martin Luther
had a rift with the papacy,
and the spell of discipleship
cast they on me
wearisome, i can tell this path
lead not to the Lord's bosom,
this can't be the light.

long sermons; St Mary was exhausted
collecting my prayers.
Eutychus died inside me
& there was no Paul to wake him up
i dose off before the last amen.
i feel this bird want to migrate;
Noah cut them lose after the war,
no after the flood;
but our synagogues hate freedom.

God loves everyone,
but that priest said *He loves some more*
who closed the door and chew the key?
& concocted us not to embrace the altar?
don't look inside, they say from behind
the doors are holy, when open,
it's suicidal to look; just keep faith.

only dead men can carry God
how, road to introduction —
kiss the Pope's feet
and Eden will come in into you;
hands rub hands
here, take, candles as high as money,
burn them, each carrying its own flame,
humility is humanity or not so?

conducting service like funerals,
wearing the badge of servitude;
gray since Adam,
wrinkle on my face,
i loss my grace of being me
and i became the me they wants me to be.
this is not His Church.
pretend the pulpit isn't bloody,
blood is the fire God intended
our blood over His son

i do not know where to go,
the river or a country.
forgive me, o God, i was in their church
looking for your Church.

WHEN WILL IT BE OCTOBER
(for J.W. George)

when will it be october
i hope it, soon
it reminds me of us
how we met
i remember, how we first met
the colour of the day
the pleasant breeze on that happy day
& the rain
on the day i left for the war
who won't remember all of that

i remembered it all
our first kiss, beside the window
when the rain was still coming down
the street was well lit
& people under the umbrella
like in movie scene;
you are always in my dream

looking back, all those times
worse than nightmares
are now happy moments
because of you

unto us

a son is born

if october did come again
and i get through to you
i will thank you
you will always be my dream

i believe in love again
because of you

ODD WORLD

if poverty is a ware
who would buy us load of it
if problems are avoidable
who will build us a wall

the casket, the most loved in my culture
tears may fill the glasses
but the lungs with oxygen
should be left unattende

*AFOTOLO**
(for Aminu Adamu Mohammed)

may i speak in Adamu's voice:

i cry myself to sleep every night
when i remember how we
started 2015 together,
so emaciated
like stock fish
imported from Holland
but after countless trips
out of this our game reserve
with taxpayers' monies
dad has to employ a carpenter
to rearrange the door
for entrance and exit purposes.

i'm sorry, mama,
i didn't impress you
with the words i said.
i'm sorry for my cruel word
i mean to say *afotolo*
& not fat

sorry for the misunderstanding
we may not understand each other
but Nigerians understand better.

**Afotolo means a swollen stomach in one of the Nigerian languages.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Oletu Oghenenyore C. (pen-name: Nyore Note) is a rebel-poet, activist, storyteller, author, content creator and an aluminum fabricator of Urhobo origin in Delta State but lives in the Creek part of Bayelsa State. If he is not reading and writing, then he is watching a movie or taking a walk or busy chitchatting about anything on or offline. He loves to write of happenings around him. His works have found home/forthcoming in many anthologies and online journals like ArtingArena, Poemify, The Yellow House Library, Williwash Blog, African Poem Archives blog, etc. He is the author of a chapbook 'Life In The Crucible' and many others to come. He can be reached via
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OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

Life In The Crucible

<https://mehaa.direwords.com/new-release-free-download-life-in-the-crucible-by-oletu-oghenenyore-c/>

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ABOUT THE PUBLISHER



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