

AN ANTHOLOGY INSPIRED BY OAU

WHY I SING GREAT IFE AT WEDDINGS

COMPILED BY 'JOBA OJELABI



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Comments on “Why I Sing Great Ife At Weddings”

“Why I Sing Great Ife at Weddings is a delightfully readable collection of recollections, stirring reflections much in the poetic manner of Sandstorms in June and Night Visions — then flecked with some splendid prose.

In its capturing of a wide variety of individual experiences, the anthology also manages to evoke shared memories that easily resonate with past generations of Great Ife students.”

Adedapo Treasure Adeniruju, Editor at Reflector Africa

“Reading this anthology is like listening to a close friend who loves to tell stories without holding back. This is a collection of experiences that will stay with you.”

Kemi Falodun, Writer and Co-editor of Night Visions

“In what can be characterized as a priestly procession, the contributors to this anthology map the psychological, political and sociological landscape of their institution. And upon every facet of OAU life they encounter, they sprinkle the holy water of sprightly, poignant, and witty verse and lucid prose.”

Moyo Orimoloye, Founding Executive Editor at Agbowó

“WISGLAW is a worthy addition to the literary corpus interrogating that idyllic microcosm of erudition and culture, Great Ife.”

Dami Ajayi, author of *A Woman’s Body is a Country*

“This is an absolute masterpiece. As someone who has passed through the four walls of Great Ife, each story resonated with me on a really deep level.

Although there were different accounts, I found it intriguing how I could relate with all of them. WISAGIW takes you on a roller-coaster ride. You want to laugh. You want to scream. You want to smile. You want to tear up. You want to pause and let a line sink in. This whole experience is golden.

I am grateful for the opportunity to relive my journey through OAU again. And if any of my friends want to know what being in Great Ife feels like, I will just send them this absolutely amazing work.

And lest I forget, #WISAGIW reminded me of why I actually need to sing the Great Ife anthem at my wedding.”

Orifunke Lawal, author of 25for25; A Memoir

“Flipping through the pages of this anthology is a surreal yet serene journey into melodious Great IFE memories that ambles across the past and present. Each piece is a pulsating potpourri of bedazzling diction and mellifluous metaphor coming together to form a symphony.”

It is a worthy read for every lover of literature.

Emmanuel Faith, Winner Albert Jungers Poetry Prize 2019

Why I Sing Great Ife At Weddings

An Anthology Based on OAU

PUBLISHED BOOKS

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III

*“Ife, We must never let you die
We must hold you close by
For it was inside the firmaments of your fortress
That our dreams were hatched.”*

Samsudeen Àlàbí, *Sandstorms in June*

PREFACE

When Joseph Olaoluwa contacted me about compiling poems on OAU and how he would like my work to feature in his collection, I was quite surprised. Firstly because at the time, I didn't think my poetry was good enough to feature in any collection, even though I had written a couple of poems about OAU before then. But working with Joseph on *Mementoes* exposed me to a wide array of literary pieces that had tried to immortalize the great Ife. And from *Sandstorms in June* to *Night Visions* to *Mementoes*, most of the pieces in these anthologies were mind-blowing, especially if you were a true Great Ife, the type that experienced the institution thoroughly.

Fast forward to a few years later, here I am playing Joseph's role, seeking out other writers to try once again to document the Ife experience. A wise person would ask what the rationale behind doing what has already been done is. But a careful reader would notice that *Sandstorms in June*, *Night Visions*, and *Mementoes* are not just anthologies about Ife but are documentations of specific timelines in Ife. This, as a matter of fact, makes each of these anthologies unique despite being centered on a similar theme.

Why I Sing Great Ife At Weddings is another attempt to dare to do what its forerunners have done successfully, keeping time and place in a book. With respect to contribution, the collection might also just be the biggest currently, with submissions from twenty-one contributors using poetry, prose, and photography as means of expression.

A peculiarity of our timeline that we have tried to highlight in this book and perhaps has influenced the

title of this collection is the unusual attachment of the Great Ife and weddings. And in an attempt to understand this relationship, one would realize that getting into Ife is like a wedding. A ceremonious binding of two entities for life, or as most priests put it, “for better or worse.”. Like most marriages, the Ife experience for most is a bitter-sweet one, and some may even end in nasty divorces. This is why a simple memento can bring back all the memories in an overwhelming instance. And how do we respond? We Sing!

What greater memento is there of marriage than a wedding? With *Why I Sing Great Ife At Weddings*, we have tried to share some of the experiences that come with being in a marriage with Ife; the good, the bad, and the ugly so the next time you see people singing the Great Ife song at a wedding, you just might understand why.

-Joba Ojelabi

Ile-Ife

January 2020.

FOREWORD

In 2011, I was a student at OAU, Ile-Ife. Bright-eyed, curious, fresh from secondary school in Ikare-Akoko. It was on a Sunday that my father dropped me off at Fajuyi Hall. The night before that, I had stayed up late at night in Ado Ekiti, thoughts drifting like the ocean, wondering what this new world had for me, how different it would be, if Ife would embrace me or spit me out.

I would spend the next few weeks trying to find my foot, attempting to explore in full length the commonality this new world was offering. Stretching hands towards new friendships willing to accept me, opening my mind to new possibilities, remoulding my body and mind to fit this new place.

Few months after my arrival, the school was closed down because the students protested against an increase in the acceptance fee. I still remember the protests, clear as day. The intensity of passion under the hot afternoon sun, student leaders giving reasons why the school authorities must bow to the wishes of the majority. Such was the atmosphere in Ife, it was no ordinary place, not for cowardice or silence in the face of oppression. You are not aware when Ife begins to change you, the metamorphosis begins slowly, from inside out and someday you look into a mirror and see it.

The magic Ife wields is nostalgia. In 2012, I left Ife for Ibadan and I did not return fully to experience the place again until 2017. Upon arrival, I wrote in my journal- "Ifè does not open her arms to welcome you the way Ibàdàn would. You know this because you notice how she takes you in slowly, cautiously, like a coy lover telling you to learn the language of her body first before yearning to speak to it. But when she finally lets you in and you learn

all her songs and her stories, and when you leave (as we all must, ultimately), Ifè plagues you with nostalgia so crippling that you begin to give yourself to all the things that remind you of her...”

Why I Sing Great Ife at Weddings is longing distilled into a gourd for readers who have once experienced Ife to read, feel and remember again. A remedy for homesickness and reminiscence from afar. The voices in this collection are warm and welcoming, they ease the reader back to OAU gently and they paint such profound images of Ife in the minds of those who have never experienced it. In *Getting A Degree*, ‘Dimeji Ogunranti writes about struggling to keep up with the demands of the school- “OAU is a horse ride/ OAU is a backbreaker/ OAU is a cheap high/ OAU is a long hangover” he goes further to describe the school in such a way that evokes strong memories- “OAU is a floating swan/ OAU is a bat in flight/ OAU is a glorious dawn/ OAU is a dusk in sight”

But this collection is not just about struggle or the physicality of the momentum that drives students at Ife to break or succeed, it is a strong testimonial to love, lust and desire with poems like Shedrach Obafemi’s *An Evening At Indulge* where he described the effect the object of his attraction had on him “*She sat across the table and spoke soulfully like the classic sound of heavenly orchestra/ driving Beethoven to extinction*”. Joba Ojelabi in a tribute for Kareem-Ojo Anuoluwapo reminds us about the transiency of existence and the permanency of grief- “*for ever since I held your cold body/ everything else seems less warm*”

Why I Sing Great Ife at Weddings is an important collection of lives and experiences that needed to be written. A constant reminder of a force OAU is and the influence it continues to exert on everyone who has passed through it. It is a gift from Ife, to Ife. Enjoy it.

Olu Afolabi
Ado-Ekiti,
March, 2020

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Ibukun Oyerinde

Why I Sing Great Iife At Weddings

Joba Ojelabi

Him

It all started on a concrete pavement
somewhere on the border of Angola and Mozambique;
both relics of greatness
the only new things were Elujoba's bathroom tiles
and the colors freedom painted on our hearts
so, when the time came to sing the freedom song
we basked in the glory of 5,000 voices
even though it was just you and I in the room;
just like it is today

Her

Mother had warned me of preying phalluses
Wandering predators that only bore philistine intentions
but she did not warn me of eyes like yours
eyes that pierced the very depths of souls
so, I knew that day as they all sang



of greatness, beauty and love
that mother didn't prepare me for you

Me

I wouldn't really know 'cos I wasn't there
I only came for the food
and to once again bear witness to the beauty of life's ironies;
like two entities becoming enslaved to one another
yet singing a song of freedom,
riding on the promise that victory is only ascertained
when the struggle continues...



Awo's Office

David Adekeye

I. Ways

Night and Rain

Inextinct expanse of greens and browns

That stands tall still amongst a thousand barks

Surrounded by soothing wish-washes of flowing waters

Heavy aubergine clouds cloud the skies from end to end

Ominous and weighty fluffs that pulse with life

Even as the dark-winged birds hover still

Harmattan and Day

Shuffling feet lift off warm hard bunks

Last night's bucket of water is now dry

Shuffling feet scoot to battle at fountains

Schlepping and willful bodies take notes at seven

The bald man up front points out some ripped jeans

'When will you all become learned and cultured?' he screams



II. Scrolls

Night and Rain

Willing brains fight weak brawns

And weather frostbites that to a theatre

'Let's get treated.' he says and sits

And that night-stand that has been since forever

Joins hungry souls to hives of knowledge

As nocturnals outlive risky mosquitoes

Harmattan and Day

Tuesdays and Thursdays. Ah! That general course

Stale lights light laughs at the seven o'clock dash

Lessons here are learnt the minute not by fuss

The Amphi with its sweet rotund neighbour is a hub

Basements shield worn butts from the fiery sky

Laboratories remain on fire till the moon's shadow is cast



III. Groove

Night and Rain

Hands and hearts lock thirstily on walkways
Maintenance gates pulse with purrs of affection
While on moving grounds, love is set ablaze

'Kabash, kabash, kabash!' Soameone near the green field rattles
'Allahu-akbar!' The hall muezzin cries at dawn
Palmwine and peppered meat is the Kegites' trademark

Harmattan and Day

Boo and bae sit in wisdom's boulder
Romance hovers and knowledge flies away
If love was a nest, then theatres are trees

Duos are mighty happy as the bald man leaves
Smoothies and ice creams flow down bypaths
Love never minds an empty account



IV. Hustle

Night and Rain

Sunset births a harvest of bananas at the gate

While the moons bear the riskiest of all snacks

'Good evening, buy your bread and moi-moi' rings through my ears

Sneakers and rings and bracelets and lumberjacks

Is now on everyone's WhatsApp status

Hustle o is what consumes my data

Harmattan and Day

Delivery packs change hands

Ping ping! Who's the new buyer?

Canopies canopy fairs at Akintola and SUB

Basements are a hub of gums and sweets

Top floors burn with amazing restaurant aromas

'Brother, sister, photocopy.' Oh! That tires me





Ibukun Oyerinde

Getting A Degree

'Dimeji Ogunranti

You are here like an empty bottle, A voice calls to you from a place you've never been, You've got a death wish but little will. If you have a voice, all you will say is that:

OAU is a horse ride,

OAU is a backbreaker.

OAU is a cheap high,

OAU is a long hangover.

Don't we all fail as humans?

The sad thing about being human is that when we fall, we don't break into silver pieces of beauty like bottles. We can only pick up our scratched frames, pull up our underwear, use some mouthwash, arm ourselves with a smile and some mascara and continue. Starting again is for losers.

OAU is a floating swan,

OAU is a bat in flight.

OAU is a glorious dawn,



OAU is a dusk in sight.

The first time you sang great Ife,

You raise your voice and you bask in the song. They told it is going to be 'for, learning and culture' but you ignored 'sports and struggle'. That is where it all went wrong.

Getting a degree

Is a dance with insanity

Making you age faster than time

It is a cup that you overfill with oil

Then with sweat

Before it asks for your blood

It strips you of your humanity

Before feasting on your rationing

When it ages you like time

And discards your shriveled self esteem

Like an orange skin

And leaves you in the rain

Weeping like a lost broom

Wondering how you got there



An Evening At Indulge

Shedrach Obafemi

Hues are painted same and letters appear imaginary in the dark,
A little fluster of scarlet amber would make no difference on a best night.
She is an exception.

The sun was closing up its labor for the day on a cool Tuesday evening,
I was at Indulge gulping a bottle of chilled water after three wraps of velvety
Àmàlà,

Beethoven's sonata classically oozing out of the deck making the evening a
perfect one,

Stood to take my leave and then she walked through the door in a black dress,
And just like a ray of light would chase all darkness away, she disarmed the noise
in the cafeteria, everything stood still and only the sound of her heels on the
ground beat the silence,

I sank back into my seat and kept a fixed gaze on the maiden that just walked in,
A beauty that beats the absorbing strength of a dark night and stood ashore like
the moon in the midst
of a lumpish of stars,

It's hard to concentrate when her visage exuded brightly outside her black dress,
I was mesmerized with the aroma that pierced through the air and seamlessly
drove to extinct that of any within 3 a three- miles radius,



She sat across the table and spoke soulfully like the classic sound of heavenly orchestra,

Driving Beethoven to extinction,

I was disarmed of my mighty virtues and became a coward in her presence, right there my heart was locked on her visage, and my eyes almost sold me out, they couldn't stop staring.

I mustered some courage and said 'Hi' and that was the beginning of a beautiful journey.

Indulge didn't just indulge me with food that satisfies the belly, but also the heart, the mind and the soul.

(Indulge is a restaurant on OAU campus)



Letter to OAU

Ebun Ololade

Dear Great Ife,

Time really isn't man's best friend, but you've proven me wrong by withstanding its effects. You've been the unsinkable Titanic ferrying thousands of intellectual from your abode. I really missed your hospitality, your bright and powerful wings with which thousands of alumni used for flight.

Our then great IFE is now in chains, shackles from every nook hold her down. Your magnificent structures are now eyesores, not to mention how well you've lost your place amongst world bests. The administration may be handicapped but you've been administering justice long before I was born. I wouldn't want to talk about your elegant unions - like a disturbed pack of cards, they've crashed.

We wouldn't watch you suffer anymore; it's time to repaint your faded glory. It's time to set you back on the right course. We will build more hostels while rehabilitating your old ones, your campus that once was Africa's most beautiful will fight back for her place. It is time to decongest your lecture theaters - it's where our intellectual minds once gathered.

We are your greatest asset, it's time we prove our worth, show the world that our Alma mata is not a dumping group - she's a poor mother with successful children. It's time we pull all strings, and set the pace again. You've been faring well all this while; all you have to do is hang on - even if it's just for a short while.

You've birthed great ones in every session; it's time to get you covered, ease all lesion.

Yours in spirit,

Unknown Alumnus.





Hassana Abdulkadir

A Flicker of Light Before the Dawning

Kabir Adejumo

To start with, apologies to Taylor Swift for using a line of her heartfelt lyrics 'Beautiful Ghosts' for the title of my piece, majorly to document my experience in Obafemi Awolowo University. Like every other Nigerian kid with rapid primary and secondary school education, I graduated from secondary school at the age of 15 but unfortunately, I didn't secure admission into the most prestigious university in Africa until 19.

What the above story simply tells readers who have heard about me before now is that I am a success with a history of failure and learning from my past mistakes shaped my life. I got admitted into OAU during 2015/2016 academic session and I had my first experience of being in a beautiful environment after my stay in ghetto for several years before admission.

Upon resumption, the resolution was simple and straight - it was to make an impact and also make the family proud. Since OAU is known for its products, my aim as a fresh undergraduate was not just to make my family proud but to as well make the country proud. All achieved within my four year stay on campus. How? I was determined to succeed against all odds.

I have read about OAU and the radicalism of its students. I read about how the students fought for the dualization of Ibadan-Ife express road during the military era. If any positive change would take place in OAU in the 21st century, I must be part of this development. Perhaps, I would not want to be killed like George Iwilade (Afrika), but I really wanted to complete his assignment of



transforming Great Ife to an institution where sanity reigns. Though, I did not get admitted for the course study I opted for - this denied me of the dream to become Gani Fawehinmi upon graduation.

Alas! All thanks to Association of Campus Journalists who shaped the never do well mentality of not being Gani Fawehinmi to the dream of being widely read like Dele Giwa - not to be killed like he was bombed. No one likes death - not even any of God's prophet. Being the Dapo Olorunyomi, Kunle Ajibade, Babafemi Ojuda on campus would mean well and that was how I conceived the idea of writing - first, as a protest writer who was already romancing those in the 'left' ideological groups before resumption.

As an undergraduate looking for a platform to speak the truth and shine (no one is an altruist), I wrote to popular news outfits on OAU campus as a contributor but they all did not respond when I needed their platform most. My Facebook wall and WhatsApp groups where my articles were read by default got me some readers and eventually some of those readers encouraged me to start a news platform. That was the birth of OAU NewsTrack. A media organisation that later became the Sahara Reporters and Premium Times in Obafemi Awolowo University.

Sure, those that were not comfortable with the platform's journalistic style opposed my views on several issues. The students' union officials of course were not happy that a platform was notorious for exposing their ills. The University management of course felt, I was stepping on too many toes because of my support for equality and egalitarianism. While those in power did not conform with my practice of journalism, many colleagues in the practice on campus also questioned the ethical standard but, the practice of guerilla journalism has

been in existence long before the democratic rule. For me, the end justifies the means. I was not particular about how the stories were written; I was particular about the impact those stories made. After all, George Orwell also affirmed that “journalism is printing what others do not want printed”.

Yes, there were threats from all angles but I achieved all I was looking for as a student after my first year on campus. I was privileged to write for major newspapers and was the first to interview, Professor Isiaka Aransi when he became the Dean of Students’ Affairs. The story got featured on New Telegraph newspaper. Although, that did not make us friends. We fought on several issues all in the name of putting authorities on toes. Soon, I saw myself reporting for Premium Times, I saw laurels coming my way, the idea of writing a book for student journalists mentorship became real and the University had no choice than to celebrate a cornerstone.

In summary, this is my OAU story.



Dimeji Ogunranti

PreDegree

Joba Ojelabi

(for Kareem-Ojo Anuoluwapo)

Good morning

this morning,

Again, I woke up to the sound of panic in the hallway
indescribable chatter announcing your exit
reminding me of the biggest lesson there was to learn in Moro;
no one's ever promised tomorrow

Boys will be boys
it's what they promised
but you weren't just a boy
you were the conduit;
our passage to manhood
for ever since I held your cold body
everything else seems less warm



Chronicles Of Ololade

Ebun Ololade

I woke up unusually late today, oh God! I have CHM class in the next twenty minutes. I rushed out of bed, nearly stepping on my bunk mate. I don't need a seer to tell me I'll be very late if I'd wait to take my bath. I quickly brushed my teeth and I forced two slices of bread down my throat before dashing out, I didn't bother scanning the room before leaving.

Well, I got to First Bank lecture theatre late but thanks to my friends, I've got a seat reserved for me at the front, I haven't settled down completely when the lecturer arrived. As usual, he's grumpy, potbellied, and angry. More like he fought his wife before coming here to offload to us. Quickly my book and pen is up, ready to put down all what he has to say. Even though I know most will be stories. After two boring hours of talking and sending students out, the lecturer left and I was free to go home, at least to bath and cook my precious sweet beans with OAU bread. I've decided to suspend reading till evening while I enjoy the cool breeze of Awo Café.

I stepped into my room in Angola and I sensed trouble. Yes! Real trouble. One my big locker was wide opened, my clothes were on the floor, my bed was thrown outside, my laptop that I always locked away out of my fear of it being stolen, was outside with one of my roommates. Everyone stared at me, the entire 14 guys I shared a room with. Everyone in their corner, staring with lucid eyes, ready to devour me.

'ehm, wh.. Who. did t.. This?' I stammered.



I was answered with a resounding slap from one of them. I was shocked. I didn't waste time in returning mine and it led to a scuffle. 'Where is the phone you stole?' The oldest guy in my room asked. I was stunned and words failed me.

'*Stole?*' I emphasized.

'*Yes*' Another replied.

'*What's the meaning of this joke?*' I questioned.

'*Well, we all woke up this morning to find our phones where we were charging it except Ayo's own and yours and we believed you took the two before leaving, in fact you're the only one that has stepped out of this room today.*'

'*You better provide my phone or else*' Ayo fumed, ready to punch me.

'*Ehm... Ehm.. I.. Was... I am..*' I stood saying nonsense.

In less than three minutes, I couldn't get myself. The Hall Executives came and I was bundled out like a goat. That was the worst day of my life. I was beaten and tortured; my friends were not allowed to see me, my phone was seized, I was stripped to my boxers alone.

The Hall security officers were about to start another round of beating since they believed I refused to confess when the school security came in. One of my friends has informed my uncle who is a Dean. He had called the school security. They busted into the interrogation room of my hostel and untied me.

'*Why are you torturing only him?*' The Head of the school security team questioned.

'*He was the only one that went out*' My hall security officer answered.

'*And so? He was the only one that went to class; does that mean he automatically took the phone to class? Is he the only one staying in the room? What of the other 14 guys*



Dimeji Ogunrant

including the owner of the phone, have you questioned them?'The school team asked. *'What if this is a set up? What if someone else in the room took it? What if after he left a stranger entered the room? You can't just conclude so easily.'*The man shouted annoyingly.

*'Take him away, we have to start this investigation again.'*The school security head said instructively.

As one of the men wanted to lead me out, I felt my soul leaving my body. I was slowing going unconscious, my legs couldn't carry my weight and I collapsed.

I could hear them shouting and running helter-skelter, Health center has been informed and one of them was trying to resuscitate me.

There's this Yoruba proverb that says *'it's better to die, than be shamed and disgraced'*.

I felt like dying, I wished not to wake up again as I slowly closed my eyes.

Idols

Emmanuel Ogunwale

We used to look
at these idols
and whisper
pretty little fables
about them in awed tones
'look at that boy. Medicine
See the girl, Law, OAU'
Lost in adoration,
we saw these wonders
and wondered
when we would be the next wonder

Now we're here,
these wonders
wondering what willed us
to believe anything, ANYTHING, about this
was wondrous.



Last Holiday,
I got back home
to see these people
these innocent fresh eyed kids
looking at me
with the same naive look of wonder
in their eyes,
all so old, yet so new.
Ah, these kids,

They think the OAU experience is
wonderful.

They think entering this school is the
pinnacle of everything.

You and I,
we know better.



Ibukun Ouerinde

On the Death of Dr Nick Ibokwe

Dimeji Ogunranti

Night, corpulent night

When war is brewed in steamy beds of sleepless generals

And love is sipped from endless saucers of harlot coins.

I am being roused by silly servants of the pedagogy

Stop the ragged bawl.

The living is only wailing,

Let the dead morn the gone.

How do you remember what never left you?

13-12-2019

Alumni Hall entrance

(A few days later, at the same spot, I met the procession for Dr Adeniyi)

Upon the Death of Dr Adeniyi

Dark murmuring bodies roil by

Like heavy gray wind

They won't rest

The earth won't sleep

They'd knock on the door of hades

Till it throws up the gone.

19-12-2019

Alumni Hall Entrance



Dawn Of Consequences

Tèmítópe Òjó

Fighting drowsiness, blinking and opening eyes now
and in a couple of seconds shutting it again
as the Muezzin's voice blustering over the audio enhancement tear in through
the silent audio spectrum of dawn,
the bats are returning and dawn has nearly arrived,
I welcome it with sleepy eyes of course, barely oblivious to the work on the table
before me

I gaze at my work in its infancy,
one which I must face head on as '*ọmọ Akin*' and '*shana*' that I am...and drag it
through its teenage
years to the adulthood of completion
Or maybe I would rather face the music,
the dirge-like kind that mourns the nosediving and tragic descent of CGPA
and the kind of rapid transposing and beat change, like bebop jazz on steroids
leaving me impotent and nearly unable to flow to it, to whirling in of confusion.
after all, don't they say the dancer must follow the music when the sound and
beat changes?





Hassana Abdulkadir

What then do I do in this futile endeavor of mine in facing the music?
the kind of, my determination and willpower will overcome
or maybe I will resign to fate and welcome it when it arrives with open arms
saying,
'Consequences of my actions, welcome, I have been expecting you'.

Seven Words

Emmanuel Ogunwale

I read
in
a
book once
that,
there are
seven words
that will
make
any woman
love you.

Well,
I know
two
that
once



made all

the

authorities in OAU

tremble :

Aluta Continua

Befriended

Aanu Soneye

There are times we mourn when the streetlights burn
through the dark glimmers and the scariest glows.

The hearts that break have their secret aches
that bears in every bone, ten holes.

When winter comes, we are singing songs
on a marching trip with stone-cold lips.

The cracking chill warms our couple-feel
that makes our hugs go rogue.

And times she bleeds for a joke half said
and oh, my laps, her most time spent.

The things I feel are memories melt
into tales I ache and cry to tell.

I burn empty pots as my stomach hurts
since *Garri* is the food for noon.



For nightfall come when a man must hum
a song for his cherished and beloved boo.

There are sun-burnt days we walk to Kays
to buy a pair of toasted pies.

Two bottles of coke may get me broke
yet, for her, I had rather die.

On a night in May by the silent bay
I spoke of my restless love for her.
In a homely tone that froze my bones
She said "*you are more than friend to me*"

There are times we mourn when the streetlights burn
through the dark glimmers and the scariest glows.
The hearts that break have their secret aches
that bears in every bone, ten holes.



The Old Is Lost

Feranmi Adedokun

When I was sad and down
And deeply hurt
I stood up and sat down
And deeply thought
Of things blessed and tender,
Things fair and just
And these things made me ponder,
For those things are treasures that can't be bought.
I stood up and thought in wonder,
Of things old and true but lost
And the new generation's blunder,
Like love turned to lust,
How badly have things been altered!
They would pay and bear the cost.
The new things are unworthy to be uttered,
But these things are now a must.
These vile things have been carefully buttered

And into the hearts of young men thrust.

I am distressed and embittered,

For the old and good is lost.





Dimeji Ogunranti

Sábó - Làgèrè

Taiwo Sokunbi

(Voice of a bus-conductor on OAU campus)

I see many broken dreams

Whether here or there, I do not know.

Crawling with melancholy on their faces

I wish I could mend those pieces together

But I have no idea of the route they take.

I see another man

On the path I choose to thread

With his smiling specks of gray

Cooking meals for the hungry souls

And his own belly dances to the tune of his worms.

Here, I see a young boy

On this pathway of dreams

With his tattered shirt and scattered hair



Giving water to the thirsty men

And his lips are like leaves in the desert.

And again, I see

This damsel with many scars

Selling fortunes that make men stars

Washing the bruised legs with water and hope

I hope someday, her scars would turn to stars.

I see many broken dreams

On the other side of the west

At the backyard of *Ori Olókun*

I wish I could mend those pieces together

But I have no idea of the route they take.

Upon Leaving OAU

Dimeji Ogunranti

Boys are born in houses,
Men are made in fields
The stop is sweet
But life's too short to wait.

This park is wide and bright
But buses are meant to go.
The road is long enough
At a point or a curve
We'd meet again.

The pool is deep and sweet
But water is meant to flow
Que sera sera
Those who'd go would go.

22-12-2019

Awo hall



Tired Is...

Emmanuel Ogunwale

Trudging home. It's evening, sunset shine slanting on
labored footsteps crunching warm gravel,
with tired feet. From the phone, music clambers out gently, it seeps out slow...
and slips through tired
ears into weary heart and weary bones onto a tired soul.

I got a head full of white noise, Passenger sings, a heart full of silent fears...
Moving with the traffic, oceans of people all around, up and down all with the
same weighted tiredness,
inexorably going everywhere and nowhere, much like life, much like now, one
step away from the
workhouse of stress and work as the sun casts desperate glances on this tired
earth, and the bats come
to play.

And God is on his throne...

as well as the football fields and the spectator stand and at the White Walls
where they tongue up



above, beside IGI where lovers tongue themselves down here, and you snigger tiredly, remembering an

encounter with that girl who put the hoe in OAU...

You trudge through all that to get here,

here to this point where Marley comes on after dinner, you take a coke and the pain recedes.

It all goes away suddenly... till morning where the courage it took to go to class day after day was

enormous, but you have to avoid scores that make men weep you've never had yourself.

Yet.

Shuffering And Shmiling

Ibrahim Bajepade

Struggling to fit my ass on a flat cushion seat.

'Town-gboro, town-gboro!' the driver calls.

The sun beats my dark skin into gold.

Eleven humans packed like sardine

Our sweats becoming the oil

My last 100 Naira squeezed tight in my palms

Like a cross in a Catholic's grasp

Hoping, almost praying this bus conductor

has change...

Ears plugged,

Fela's *Shuffering and shmiling* playing at the loudest volume

Then Baba says something

'Everyday my people dey inside bus

Chorus: Shuffering and shmiling

:Dem go reachy road go-slow go dey

Chorus: shuffering and shmiling

:Dem go reachy house power nor dey

Chorus: shuffering and shmiling'



These lines are my life in Afrobeats

My heart is heavy, searching for but never finding free lift

But my smile lines creak into position

I manage to crack a sad smile, always.

Even when results are unfavourable.

Like Attendance in a Colloquium

Joba Ojelabi

You will gather once or twice a year in an overpopulated hall,
discussing the issues that affect you.

This you must do in all sincerity
and while you may forget the purpose of your gathering
you must never forget to pass attendance
Do this in remembrance of me

And when the day comes,
your deliberations will be like attendance in a colloquium
painful bites of a toothless dog

Dear J

Iqmat Babarinde

Dear J,

There are a whole lot of things I want to tell you. Like how my new neighbour is even worse than my last neighbour. At least my last neighbour only used to smoke once in a week. It must have been some sort of ritual. I know because I took note. But this new one... He smokes all the time!

The smoke oozes into my room through the kitchen's window - it makes me cough. He gets high every day, so high - he loses his bearing. Just the day before yesterday, I heard him shoving his key into my door's keyhole. I know it was him because I heard him cursing loudly when the door refused to open. Afterwards, he kept banging and kicking at the door, like it was going to burst open anytime. I was tempted to open the door and give him a slap to help him come to his senses. But I remember the need to be conscious with guys, especially the drunks, who could be potential rapists.

On some days, my new neighbour can be very nice. He waves at me whenever we see on campus - in the *town-gboro* bus too. Once, I took a bus to campus and he paid.

You know J, he sometimes reminds me of you. He has brown eyes just like yours. There is a look he gets when he smiles, it makes me remember your smile too. His lips sort of twist and crinkle, and they sort of highlight the cleft on his chin. The cleft that is very much like yours. He even laughs like you used to.



I told my roommate that he often reminds me of you. She looked at me with this very sad eyes and sympathetic look that held other meanings. I know! She must have thought, “wow, she’s losing her mind. She must really miss him.” Of course, she’s right. Not that I am losing my mind, the part about me missing you. I really do miss you. She probably doesn’t see the resemblance between dark skinned you and our light skinned neighbour. Do you know that just yesterday, she actually took me to see her doctor at the *Health Center*? She told him I was going through trauma. Imagine! Me? Trauma? No way! A carry over in *SER* is the only thing that can make me traumatized.

To put it mildly, I stormed out of the *Health Center*. I was mad at her for two reasons. First off, she lied to me. She told me all I had to do was tag along with her to see her doctor. Meaning, she was the one with issues, not me. Second, I am not losing my mind. I am just simply missing you.

The problem now is that as I stepped out of *Health Center*, I looked over at *Awo Hall*. I don’t know why I did. Maybe because I heard the voice of the *town-gboro* driver calling from that direction. Then, I remembered the day I met you. You know, the day I bumped into you in front of *Awo Cafe*. The same day you wrote a poem about in your exam the next day, because you didn’t know what to write. The day you blamed me for the carry over you had waiting for you. I still don’t think you failing that course was my fault, honestly.

I remember clearly that you were the one who first tried to talk to me. You were the one who followed me all the way to *Anglo-Moz*. I mean, if you knew you had an exam, why didn’t you just go read? By the way, there is this thing called Lecture Free Week, you should have studied then. I don’t know why you didn’t.

Maybe if you had, even if you had not read anything a day before the exam, you would still have passed the course.

Oh, Dear God! I don't know why I got off track again. My roommate always says that it's the history blood in me, she says I can't just talk about anything without adding background information. Maybe she's right. I do love talking.

Where was I? Oh yes.

So, once I got out of the *Health Center*, I remembered the day we met and all the things we talked about that night. My day had started off badly, with an 8:00am paper. I had not expected that day to end with a handsome guy keeping me company, and telling me about his everything. I remembered that you had been eating *as e dey hot's* puff puff. Suddenly, there was this urge in me to do something that you once did.

I know you're thinking "no, no, she did not do it." But J, yes. Yes, I did it. In spite of my always saying that I don't see the hype about *as e dey hot*, I - the girl who misses you - bought *as e dey hot*. Because I missed you.

Let me tell you something interesting; next week Saturday, a course mate of mine is getting married. I don't know if you'll remember her, but there is this girl we used to see on our evenings out at NFA with this guy who was in his final year in your department then. I don't need to describe the things they used to do, but, I'm sure you know all about it. Because you also saw those things. Anyway, remember how you always swore angrily after you saw them that the chances of them getting married was as low as the probability of you dying before the age of 50. Well, J, you were wrong. Very wrong. They are getting married next week. And she is very happy.



As much as I loved proving you wrong, it would have been nice if you had been right about one thing; that the probability of you dying before 50 was very low. You should have been right J. You should have been, but you were so wrong. Here's another random fact about my life: as at the time I met you, I had never attended a candle night. In fact, I prayed to God when I gained admission to never let me have a cause to attend one. Everything was fine.

Guess who messed it all up? You.

Thanks to you, I attended my first candle night on O.A.U campus a month ago. And it was your candle night. I get that you were very excited about finally scoring a date with me. A date you had been trying to get since last session. I get that the movie we wanted to see was awesome. Even better that thanks to *Imagine Cinemas*, it would cost just #500. So, all you had to spend on the movie was #1000, never mind the extra costs. Don't worry, I didn't have to calculate that for long. I know basic maths.

I don't understand what you were doing at *New Buka* when we had a date at Oduduwa Hall in less than 30 minutes. Okay fine, you went, but why didn't you concentrate on your way back. You knew just how dangerous that side of O.A.U was at night. You know, I really hate myself for calling you when you already told me you were on your way. Why wasn't I patient? Why did you even pick the call? Why did you spare me the time of the day? Why weren't you looking ? Why did you have to die?

J, you remember that you told me that there are so many things that we will never understand. I didn't understand the tightening in my chest when I heard the news. You know, the news of your death. I mean, I was just talking to you



seconds ago. Then the next moment you were gone. I didn't know that intense feeling of emotions could make you lose control of speech. I didn't know your feet could go numb from shock. And most importantly, I didn't know I had the ability to scream from pain- like a football fan whose team just lost a match. I think I even screamed louder than that. My voice must have traveled the universe in seconds.

I miss you. I miss you so much. I miss the way you used to laugh, like another planet had opened up. I miss the way you smiled. And the way your voice got sort of commanding when I was being stupid. I miss hustling for town bus with you. And I miss how warm your hugs used to be. An hour ago, I thought I saw someone like you at the bus stop. I chased after him, and only stopped when I lost him. Maybe my roommate is right. Maybe I am losing my mind.

With love,

K.





Hassana Abdulkadir

Shall We Prey?

Ibrahim Bajepade

They lay filthy hands on the sheep
In their own sheep clothing
And preach against grass
While tapping ass like palmwine
And fellow sheep tap from them
Nonexistent anointing
But let us not close our eyes
And pretend we are blind to these scenes
One day, the 411 white walls of your Jericho
Shall turn to rubble
This time not by sonorous singing
But by the noisy bleating of tired sheep

A Sadly Too Familiar Tale

Emmanuel Ogunwale

'When I finish secondary school at 17,

I will

enter OAU by 17

study medicine for 7 years

graduate at 24

serve at 25

become a billionaire at 30!

And OAU chuckled

'After I pass my second Jamb at 18,

I will

enter at 18,

study medicine for 7 years,

graduate at 25,

serve at 26,

become a billionaire by 30!

And OAU chuckled

'After I enter with this Agric course at 18,

I will ensure I

get a 5.0 in my first year,

switch in my second,

study medicine for 7 years

graduate,

serve

and become a billionaire....maybe by 32!'

And OAU chuckled

'This second semester, in my part 1,

I will make sure I

avoid the complications of the last,

get all-star A's in all my courses,

get on first class,

switch in my second,
Study medicine,
graduate and
serve.'

And OAU chuckled

'This second year, I'll
clear all my carryovers,
get all-star A's in the rest of my courses,
get on second class upper,
graduate and
serve'

And OAU chuckled

'This third year, till I graduate
All I know is,
I will sha not die.
They can't hold me forever.



I will sha graduate’

And OAU finally bowed respectfully,
speaking for the first time :

‘Lesson learnt’

Exams

Gbolahan Latinwo

Exams are near,
Subjects are not clear,
Questions appear,
Answers disappear.

The halls are set,
Economics students have met,
Not for a fest,
To know that the reward for labour is rent.

The students are here,
Already in fear,
The lecturers are there,
Waiting to be dared.

Lecture theatres remain occupied,
Because the students have been clarified,

No results will be modified,
Unless the date is nullified.

My notes are plain,
My mind is the main,
My brain is in pain,
But I have a lot to gain.

The Story Of How I Failed

Iqmat Babarinde

The walls are white,

The ceilings are white.

Even the ceiling fans are white.

And don't get me started on the sheet of paper before me.

It is white too

and

VERY

BLANK.

A very blank sheet of paper,

A sheet of paper that should be filled to the brim with ink

Like my class's renowned igi iwe's answer sheet.

I am certain I saw him last night at Anglo-Moz,

So, I don't understand how he's even writing.

Come to think of it,

Maybe shanas like him don't even need to read.

I don't know what to write.



I wish I could write about New Buka

and the amazing things I see there,

Or talk about Iya Ila's food at new market,

Or maybe how amazing as e dey hot is.

But I can't...

This is an exam;

An academic exam.

There's a tight feeling in my chest

And I know what it is.

It's the fear of failure and my CGPA reducing drastically.

I might very well be on my way to Road One.

I'm listening to shots being fired at bats

And staring out at Amphi when I remember.

I remember how everything would have been fine

If I had not met her yesterday.



I was on my way back to my hostel

After a very intense exam that evening.

Hungry and angry.

Seun Risky's risky called my name and I had to obey.

Preoccupied with eating and walking,

I had bumped into her in front of Awo Cafe.

She seemed to be in a hurry

And she was fighting an outburst of laughter.

The voices and laughter that followed her told me all I needed to know;

She had just experienced the Awo Boys aro.

I will not discuss the extent to which I made a fool of myself

To get her attention.

I wish I didn't have to say this, but,

I followed her from Awo Cafe

Past PG Hall

Down to Anglo-Moz.

The place was alive with people- all calling to see their babes.

And then, we sat and we talked - about everything and nothing.

Failure must have sat down beside me too,



Because I didn't even leave to study my books.

Instead, I stayed and studied her.

The dimple on her left cheek and the way her eyes lighted up when she smiled.

Then, I wondered how it would be like to kiss

And touch her at Motion Ground.

It was close to midnight when I left her.

My plan was to sleep and wake up by 2.

The rest of the night would be spent crash reading before the 8:00am exam.

It wasn't anything new, crash reading was very normal to me.

In fact, I dealt well under pressure.

This morning, I woke up to my 7:00am alarm.

It was then that I knew it;

I had been gotten by my village people, disguised as O.A.U bats.

Now, I'm here

Watching the bats fly around the trees and in the sky.

As I trace the patterns of the bats,



I can't help but wonder if I'll be on my way home soon.

Then, I hear the invigilator say 'stop,'

Two things happen at once;

My heartbeat skyrockets and I start to panic.

I am so having a carry-over!



Before The Next Madness

Taiwo Sokunbi

Let me thread the elite path
When the sun still gives its light
Let me girdle my loins with books
So that when the next madness comes
I'd be covered by the pages of books.

Let me burn midnight candles
And be the knight of the night
Let me live in the days of my nights
So that when the next madness comes
My sleepless eyes would fight my plight.

Let my night offerings
And the prayers I mutter in between my fears
Shade my soul from the Ogba Femi's arrows
And when the next madness unfolds
My melting knees would save me from this mess.



Before the next madness comes,
Let me wrap myself in the bosom of Hezekiah
Let the pillars of his house my shelter be
That at the mention of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi
Let every madness disappear.



Arro(w)

Labake Adejumo

There are certain things that chafe us (maybe me) that we silence and stifle. Although it is good to have opinions as well as connotations, I believe it should exude from a broad minded and humane place.

I've always been a monophobe; which means I've often dreaded walking alone. So the day wasn't particularly my favourite as my friends had left earlier. Normally, that wouldn't happen or at least I would have avoided it. We would go home together, after all, we came to school together. It was a silly reason but I chose to use it all the time. I'd chant the popular Liverpool's motto too and laugh about it. But this day, it failed me as I did walk alone.

Do not get me wrong, I can walk alone, but I fear it in a very odd way making me try to avoid it. It was just few weeks after exams and the dry season had fully set in, so first off, the School environment was unusually quiet and also dry. I had stayed back to learn a skill. The harmattan did not make things better as it was obvious through my dry and chapped lips that I licked at intervals.

The walk to the hostel was longer, even as there was no bus that fateful evening. We were not many too that were waiting for a bus, so I just stood, rather disinterestedly, punching my phone. Soon, a bus appeared dropping his passengers who were dressed like footballers. They were sweaty and noisy. It didn't bother me at first.

Then it started to bother me as soon as one of the blustering bullies shouted in a jargon of Yoruba, that I was too 'thin', comparing me to a typical broomstick



and any other unappealing reference. I stifled. I looked around hoping it wasn't me but they went on and on, laughing hysterically. I remembered how people had told me about the popular 'Aro'. I had never experienced it and I wasn't sure this was it, but garnering a couple of stories, it seemed like it. I was very uncomfortable with the noise they made at my back but my legs failed to move. My knees automatically became jelly like and I just stood, bloodless. I tried to shut out what they were saying, but like someone wearing earphones, every utterance was abnormally loud.

I didn't know if I was grateful to understand 'Yoruba' a bit then, because they said a couple of things I did not understand. A few people were giggling near me. My fellow 'waiting-for-a-bus' mates. One of them even gestured to me, implying that they were talking to me. How could he?

Could he not see my perfect facade? Why did he choose to ruin it? So many things were running through my mind like a marathon, but my demeanor remained cool. I tried so hard to keep it that way.

I rummaged through my bag, to find my earpiece(my second half), but that was the brink of it because my clumsy attempt at it exacerbated their mirth. They ranted more things about how I resembled the earpiece. This should have been funny but it wasn't funny to me and that moment I was sure if it was someone else, it wouldn't have been funny either. Every statement pierced me like an arrow. I wasn't even the hard girl I thought I was.

They seemed to talk about everything on me, from my favorite light blue baggy shirt they compared to that of a cleaner, to my beautiful brown faux locs they thought looked like a dirty mop. I wasn't strong for this and definitely wasn't prepared. It was the worst time to be alone.



Two of the guys even moved forward to my side, assessing my face and body and of course, everything they said about it was negative as I could see the shaking of their heads. I felt the tears fill my eyes, blurring my vision. I couldn't afford to blink yet, it'd fall. I was doomed. My legs seemed to have a little life already, so I moved forward and they knew, so their voices were louder.

This was not right. I did not like it at all. When my friends described the 'aro' to me, it seemed rather funny but this wasn't or was it just me?

What amazed me is that they still stood, as tired as they appeared, blurting whatever they could think of at me. Maybe not 'think', whatever seemed to 'pop in their head' because they did not think, in my opinion.

It was rather unintelligent and irksome.

Finally, a bus arrived and I entered. I could still hear their high-pitched laughter and I silently prayed for the bus to move faster. I plugged the earpiece readily and played *Calm winds* by Enya. I don't know why I did. Also, I did not know if that was a good choice or not, because I did cry all through the bus ride. Good thing I was at the back of the bus, it flowed without reluctance.

I was in despair. I watched my self-esteem die in the hazy atmosphere at the car park. I remember the shame and I remember feeling thin-skinned and weak. I did not understand all of it fully, but I do remember that was my first significant brush with depression.



A Night At Awo

Emmanuel Ogunwale

She's a hoe!

Call her out!

She's a hoe!

Call her out!

But we don't know why she came

Does it matter?

Call her out! She's a hoe!

But her visit is none of our concern

Does it matter?

Call her out!

But this harassment could affect her mental health

Does it matter?

Call her out!

But how would you feel if it was your sister?

Does it matter? Call her out!

Okay, shall we?

Olosho! Olosho! Olosho.....



FIRE-MACY (PHARMACY)

Shedrach Obafemi

Who dares stroll into a lake of fire with shirts and ties?

Brace yourself with fears; not of burning but of how long.

Don't be deceived by the building where it resides.

It resides in one of the most beautiful habitats, just like the heart of men, stinking thoughts in a glowing body.

I'd suggest you choose a shirt very thick because of the nights, well, not very thick after all I'd choose

cold over heat,

You'd see men with tailored shirts and matching trousers on shining shoes,

And the ladies, ravishingly hot and gorgeous on fitted skirts and blouses that exude awesomely their

barrage of endowments,

They'd make you rise, not just in the morning alone, but all through the day,

But be mindful, behind these sophistications and gorgeousness are scars and patches of unhealed

wounds,

Some struck once, twice, trice and some, more like a double figure.



Not because they are palpable to the flames, but because a gold is never a gold until it passes through

fire and it is said that 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown'.

Some didn't know the fierceness of the furnace before taking the swing; after all, no man chooses the fire, even though it is required of all to pass through it; either now or in the hereafter, it's inevitable.

Their nights are scarred with desiccated dreams of uncertainties that shroud the rising sun,

And when the dawn finally comes, they mask up their fears and troubles with appealing clothing.

So next time when you ask about pharmacy, I'd show you a burning furnace and ask how well you can stand the heat.



Dear Alumni Lover

Ibrahim Bajepade

Dear Alumni lover,

I might cook up stories

But this body is not firewood

I feel single in love and I hunger

When do I get to enjoy the dividend

of this one-sided relationship?

Dear Alumni lover

Do you not think it is risky?

That you drag me out in the middle of my slumber

Away from my warm-blooded bed-sharers

Into the light of the night

Only to get you shawarma as e dey hot

55% of my monthly allowance, gone

Like the fire in our one-sided relationship.

I Am

Dolapo Sanni

I am this or that

or something like this, or that:

I am:

a sentence without a stop

a paragraph with comma splices

a pencil without lead

a prepositional phrase without its compleative

a pot void of content

a painting made with air,

and so on, and so forth;

I AM A MAN WITHOUT LOVE

I am:

a voice in the wind, fading, fading, fading

an empty barrel making no noise

a piece of paper shredded by rats

a key without door
a log of wood laying untouched in the forest
a grain of sand in a desert,
and so on, and so forth;

I am:

a man without love, without a woman
a man whose flaccid penis knows no softness
a man decaying, fading, fading, fading—
an old piece of shit;

I am:

the eyes you see in the corner, on your way to
his house

I am the man that once loved you, but, whose
bed has become too hard for you to bear.

I am this or that

or something like this, or that.

Call From Our Future

Abdimateen Oluyedun

Great Ife students

The way forward is as thus

As 'Future' guardians

/IFE'FA:MESI/

Welcome to the faculty with aesthetics

Where thinking faculty beautifies the head

Filled with workload till doubting feeling fulfilled

Smart heads enthralled in hands of five departments

And the mighty ones might fall aiming the certificates

Five years on a five-grade point journey

First year external stress gives zero point

Points of second and third sum up to fourth

And the fifth is two-fifth of the total point

Five years resisting resit, repeat and withdrawal

Some exhaust in 5+x where few make it in 4+ fun

Ending part two may not infer two years down

Entry to part three may not be three years to go

Balancing at this equilibrium but just 10% sure

Still 40% one must fight for after four years gone

Where the extra year comes unknown before the actual

Different definite answers and all correct ringing aliquot

Different senses expended for one same type of license

Cooperating with incorporated corporate dressing stress

All in the form of training towards the infallibility fallacy

Regardless of Gender or Marital status but the stress

All end up with a loaded bachelor degree after years

All inducted as men of honour in a longed-for hour of life

Pharmacist in the making, you may never touch any many

The motto remains, "*As men of honour, we join hands*"

My Chemistry

Taiwo Sokunbi

Here, in our world of shooting shots

Not all gentlemen get hard ladies...

A little dose of swag with a drop of creativity

When taken at the heart of a lucky night

Always melts a stony heart, like...

This your structure is organic;

It intoxicates me like alcohol.

The benzene rings round your waist,

Remind me of cycloalkanes.

Bae, you're my chemistry.

Your smile; the heat that sublimates my heart.

Every time my body touches your body,

Like hydrogen in a lighted splinter,

My head pops up!

Bae, you're my chemistry.



Your sparkling teeth like diamonds
Saves me from reactions arrows
And in the balls of your eyes,
I see my unborn kids spinning like electrons.
Bae, you're my chemistry.

Open wide your arms of valence,

I want to bond till stars are scars.
The taste of ester that fill your lips,
Makes chemistry more meaningful to me...
Hey! You're my chemistry.



Stress Sciences

Titilope Ojelade

I had no idea of what was before me.

All I knew was I fell in love too quickly,

With the idea of beautiful gowns and nice flats,

Skimpy skirts and fancy bags, angelic wardcoats
and shiny tags.

The idea of shirt and tie once turned me on.

I was just too eager to start living the ‘real life’

White House was a mere rite of passage.

And when I got in?

No one told me the fun and anticipation would
be laid to rest a week after.

No one told me I would soon stop taking pride
in carrying those gigantic textbooks around.

No one told me I would be a constant blessing
to Baba Lawal’s life.

No one told me it would get to a point that I

would have to weigh options and stab classes.

Oh, what I definitely didn't understand was
reading my ass out during MBE, until I experienced it myself.

For the first time in my life, I looked like a proper refugee.

The ones you don't even see on TV.

My other friends had to book appointments to see me.

Yes me, appointments, no secretary, No PA.

No one told me that I had to jealously guard my reputation,

As college is a community of tales, filled with so many jokers.

All they all say is 'do not cast'

Nobody told me that eventually, you'd leave the

80s and 90s for the geniuses,

Respect yourself and do what you can do, and graduate.

Attendance is like oxygen.

You've got none, you will perish.



Most times, my body just sits in class, my soul and spirit are in Lagos.

It's a bittersweet experience in college.

Some days you love it, sorry, like it, other days

you just want to give up.

At this point, I want to give a shout out to all the public holidays.

Y'all are the real MVPs.

Don't get it twisted, College actually produces giants,

The fittest survivors, with resilience running in their blood.

'My name is Sanmi, I'm in Faculty of Law, part 5,'

'Oh, I'm Faith, College of Stress Sciences,

Medical Rehabilitation, part 4,'

'Do you mind if I have your contact and we hang out on Friday?'

Damn it. He's cute. But Friday? I have an incourse on Monday.



'God When?'

Joba Ojelabi

I live in a small house beside hugs and cuddles
in the evil streets of Twitter DMs
seeking succor in voice of GIFs
'cause there is no love in these streets
only likes; and if you're lucky enough
maybe a retweet

But if you ever find love here, know this;
that it's the little imperfections of picture perfect
like the shyness in his eyes and the stain on her shirt
the ugly background and the love in their eyes.

If you ever find love here, you must hide it in two words;

"God When?"



The Masquerade

Foluso Odediran

The evening moon is gazing with great ardor,

Fanfare at the market square,

Here, where the hides of dead chimpanzees speak in sweet melodies,

Here, where the talking drums speak in parables of our brave ancestry,

Here where we pour libations in supplication to the gods.

Ologbojo had dwelled in the sacred forest of Igbale,

Where he assumed the masks and regalias of the dead.

Ayangalu had beaten the sacred igbin drum at the late hours of the night seven times in seven full moons

Where Ologbojo had also danced the ritual dance seven times in seven full moons

In sacred consummation of the living and the dead.

But the cock crowed in the arm of horror...

The dancing feet now dangle on the arm of the aged Iroko.



Folake

Ayomitide Aina

An irritated hiss escaped her lips as she held her index finger down on the backspace key of her MacBook. She'd been trying to construct a semi-adequate CV for the sales analyst job she was applying for. The blinking cursor on the blank page that stared at her only further served to mock her, and she slammed the lid of the laptop angrily, as if it were the reason she lacked any job experience despite graduating seventeen years ago. Her tummy rumbled, and she glanced at the wall clock that read 5:27pm. Anthony would be home soon, and she hadn't started dinner.

She should've had the help prepare dinner before dismissing the staff, she thought as she examined the contents of the fridge. The low hum of the fridge was the only thing to be heard as she stared unblinking at the packs of left-overs and fruits. She wasn't sure how long she stood there before reaching for transparent bowl that contained the mouthwatering afang soup she and Anthony had eaten last night and trashing it. "Folake! This is superb." He had said last night as he sucked off the residue from his fingers while making that smacking noise she hated. But she overlooked it today as he beamed at her, quite pleased with the meal. "I'm glad you like it. Ifeoma gave me a few tips." Folake got up to pack her plate and his. "I think Ifeoma should give you some more tips." She scoffed now at the memory as she poured four cups of beans onto a tray. It was apparent now he was referring to other things besides cooking.

Folake desperately tried to concentrate on the orchestra composed of the low



hum of the fridge and the pitter patter of each dicotyledon hitting the base of stainless steel pot she had fetched from the cabinet. But it all faded into the background as the memories of that afternoon came back to her. “Hello!” Her tone had been sharp; whoever was on the other end was interrupting her soap opera on Telemundo. She’d paused the show easily anyway, but the show was in its finale and every scene was vital. “Folake, it’s me!” Although the voice on the other end of the call sounded far too giddy to be someone she didn’t relate to on a personal level, she still pulled away from the phone to eye the unknown number displayed on her screen. She was fed up with how most Nigerians lacked the common courtesy of introducing themselves on the phone. It was why she had taken to never answering unknown numbers. It was always a distant relative of a distant cousin she had probably met only once when she was a child, calling because they had somehow found out her husband had oil money. “Uhm Folake, how are your twins? They’re in school abi? Kolade and Tolu are still at home o. You know how the economy is.” Nevermind the fact the caller wouldn’t be able to recognize her children on the streets. “I’m fine, I haven’t been able to get the complete money for the surgery and the doctors say time is of the essence.” Nevermind the road traffic accident had occurred because the caller had delayed servicing his car.

Well whoever this distant relative was, Foláké was determined not to remember. “Me who?” “Toyin na. Don’t you recognize my voice?” The last statement irked her greatly, and she could feel her patience wearing thin. But she didn’t want to come across as rude.

The last time she had hung up on a distant relative for uttering that nonsensical question, her mother had called her the next morning to berate her like a child

caught stealing meat. “Is that how I raised you? Lo wá eni t’ó bí e. Ñtorí mi ò le bí omo t’ó lè wà this mannerless.” Ironically she had been in a meeting to discuss Kehinde’s disrespectful behavior towards teachers. The proprietress shook her head subtly as if saying in her head *‘like mother like daughter.’*

“Toyin from where please?” She tried her best not to snap.

“Toyin Adepoju.”

“Tantalizing Toyin? Toyin from Regina Passes?”

“Fabulous Folake. It’s good to hear from you o.” Her irritation was quickly replaced with excitement as she recognized the voice of her childhood friend and playmate till they went their separate ways after high school. “We have so much to catch up on. Why don’t you come and see me in my hotel. I’m in Lagos for a few days.” “I’ll be right over.”

The Royal Hibiscus hotel is a newly renovated hotel in the upside of Ikoyi. It combined the standard of an international hotel with the hospitality of home with its Nigerian contemporary theme. The indoor restaurant that overlooked the Olympic sized swimming pool was lined with hyperrealist artworks of Fela Kuti and Olamide, with the décor of a restaurant straight out of Paris.

The two ladies had lunch and ordered desert and then drinks and were still not done trading stories of their youth and their current lives. Foláké was on her second drink and enough conversation had been made for her to start detecting the typical superiority complex she got from most working class ladies. It was odd coming from Toyin though. In secondary school, Folake had been the prettier and more vocal of the two. Toyin had been more reserved, hanging out in the background whenever yet another boy approached them to flirt with



Folake. She assumed Toyin would simply graduate from medical school before settling down like she had planned. Now the woman before her was a lively Microbiology graduate that actively imported foreign materials and exported both material and ready to be worn Ankara outside the country. “You know one has to hustle. Gone are the days we could rely on our degrees. Most families need both parents working to make up with ends meet.” Folake didn’t miss the hint of irritation before Toyin took a sip from her drink. She didn’t mind either, it wasn’t her fault her husband made more than enough money for her to sit home and enjoy her life of luxury. She wasn’t going to feel bad for it either. Being a beautiful girl meant she didn’t have to struggle in life. Any beautiful girl that complained about being broke was simply a fool, and if anyone had a problem with her life being so easy they could drown. Folake signaled the waiter for the check.

“I think we’ve had enough for the day.”

“I hope you’ll be around for my husband’s fiftieth birthday, it’s in a week.”

“Ahhh!. I would probably be in Ife by then; I want to visit my mother before returning to the states to take care of some business.”

Folake breathed a sigh of relief as Toyin walked her to her car.

“That’s too bad. I was looking forward to seeing you again.”

“We’ll keep in touch.” Toyin pulled her into an embrace.

“Of course.” Folake reciprocated the embrace, knowing fully well, they probably wouldn’t.

She thought of ordering pizza for the kids but remembered they were visiting

their cousins in the states. Maybe she shouldn't have let the twins go this summer, Kehinde's attitude was becoming increasingly disrespectful and Taiye was withdrawing in the way teenage boys do. She regretted staying back to avoid her in-laws who were never really pleased with the fact their brother married a Yoruba girl. She'd chosen to further aggravate them by calling her children by their Yoruba name instead of their Igbo or English names. "Stop calling him Taiye in public, please use his English name. We're not in Nigeria." Her sister-in-law had chastised while at a mall in Chelsea. "Taiye, jòó sáré bámi ra bread yen t'ó jo finger. Mi ò fé eyin t'ó ti brown jù o." She'd intentionally added extra force and gesticulations to "embarrass" the woman further. Perhaps next year she would ask Anthony if they could scrap the UK and visit somewhere else.

She was pulled out of the mental checklist of countries she would like to visit when she noticed Anthony's car parked in front of a restaurant. It wasn't the first time she had seen his car in parked at a restaurant or a mall. She was aware he entertained a couple of university undergraduates. She heard the professions of love during his failed attempts of whispering in the bathroom before crawling into bed with her. She wasn't blind to the message notifications that popped up on his phone during dinner, or how he could take some business calls in the room whilst others could not be heard in the room due to "poor network."

But she ignored. Such was expected of men. Today however, was different, because right next to his car was Ifeoma's car. She parked across the street, waiting for something, anything. It could just be a coincidence; they might be meeting different people. Anthony had more class than to be fucking their next-door neighbor. Ifeoma was too 'holy holy' to be sleeping with a married man. There were probably cobwebs down there since her husband passed away five



years ago. Yet something in the way blood pooled in her legs, and her mouth became as dry as the Sahara, told her this was not a coincidence. As a child, she remembered watching a lot of Nollywood movies where the women would readjust their wrappers before descending on each other. Folake's version of that was to remove her diamond earrings and place them in the glove compartment of her car.

It happened in a flurry. Anthony and Ifeoma walked out of the restaurant, their arms intertwined and laughing about something, probably how stupid she was. Her heart sunk to her feet, as they exited the car. It was as if some primal force had taken over her, similar to the one that had possessed her mother the day she came home from school with red welts marring her back. She'd begged and pleaded with her mother not to do anything, everyone was given the same punishment for making noise. But her mother behaved like a woman possessed, marching to the school and dragging the teacher by his collar and nearly choking him. "Sé e fé pa omo mi no? Àbí èè mò pé mi'ì ní'keji láyè yî?." She'd been so ashamed of her mother that day and swore to Toyin that she would never disgrace her children like that.

As Folake crossed the road to the adulterer and the betrayer, she said a silent prayer of thanks that neither of her children was there to witness her pull off Ifeoma's wig. "Husband snatcher! I will make sure you meet your own in the grave." She screamed more profanities at Ifeoma, at Anthony, even at herself for being a fool. Her screaming and scratching drew the attention of by-standers and security had to intervene to pull her away. "You are a very stupid woman. You are a very stupid woman." Despite her hoarse voice and disarray as by-standers ushered Ifeoma into her car and security restrained her, Folake continued to

scream. “It’s okay madam.” “Forgive them.” “People are videoing you ma. Don’t bring shame to your family.” Anthony leaned on his car, a look of shame on his face as he watched strangers restrain his wife like a mule. “Let me go! Let me go.” Her cries went unanswered, as she was ushered away from the scene. The farther away she got from Anthony, the more her anger gave way to despair. “Anthony has killed me o.” She wailed, throwing her arms up in absolute distraught.

She wiped away the tears that traveled down her cheeks, as she diced a bulb of onion. She silently cursed the onion, knowing fully well the tears in free fall were not solely because of them. She’d lost count of how many times she’d swabbed her face with the back of her hand today. How she hadn’t been involved in a motor accident on her way home was a miracle. She sighed heavily while adding the onions and half a dozen other ingredients to the steaming pot of beans. Since getting home, her emotions had switched rapidly between anger and sadness like a light switch, occasionally balancing somewhere between the two in a dark place that left her contemplating a murder suicide. She’d envisioned leaving him, finding a job and moving out with the children. It was in her sudden thirst for freedom, she had attempted to construct a CV. Her sadness was intensified by with the knowledge that nothing would happen.

The world wouldn’t crumble, the earth wouldn’t shake, and life would go on as usual. Who was she kidding? She was too used to her lifestyle to make such a sudden change. How would the twins grow up in a broken family? What would people say? Her mother would disown her for bring shame on the family by leaving her husband. Her friends would desert her to avoid contacting the ‘bad marriage’ curse, even though they were in the same shoes. The ones that would stick around would only do so, so as to mock her in private and feel better about



themselves. The only upside would be her distant relatives might stop badgering her for money. She was not the independent type; she'd married straight out of university and had her twins the following year. Nobody would hire her, and she never had that entrepreneurial sprint. Anthony had tried to get her a shop once, but she lost interest and didn't see the point. Now she was stuck. The orchestra consisting of three instruments, the silent humming of the fridge, the simmering pot and her barely silent sobs, floated absently through her ears. As she wondered how many other women felt as trapped as she did? How many more people were chained to their current situations by the question, "what would people think?"

Untitled

Adedolapo

I was never scared of loving
The thought of not being loved back frightened me
Giving my all and getting half or nothing in return
Was something I didn't want to experience again
So I decided to gather the pieces of my broken heart
Patch them up and forget the past.
I braced up for the journey of life alone
Then you came along
Ruined my not so perfectly laid out plan
But hey! I'm not complaining
Because the very emotion that broke me
Is the one that also healed me
I got lost because of love
And love found me again.



Circled cycle

Iyunade Beecroft

The end

The beginning

Of a new end

The beginning

The end

Of another beginning

Life is a circled cycle

Never an end

Never a beginning

Only a continuation



Epilogue

Joba Ojelabi

(for Labake)

I want to marry you in a ceremony

I'd choose modesty;

but I am an only son's first son

swimming in a pool of Yorùbá women

and if there's anything you have taught me

it is that Yorùbá women can't contain happiness

so, we'll let our mothers laugh loud

in colourful attires and coolers of food that are hardly ever enough

When our mothers go home

we'd find solace in the company of friends

I hope they sing the Great Ife song

so we can fade into a timeless epilogue

knowing that love is not always a bed of roses...



CONTRIBUTORS



Joba Ojelabi

Joba Ojelabi is a young writer and graduate of the Obafemi Awolowo University. Although from the ancient town of Oyo in Oyo state, Ojelabi currently resides in Lagos, Nigeria. He believes strongly in the need for art as a means of expression. He currently tweets @jobaojelabi.



Dimeji Ogunranti

Dimeji 'Qasoomah' Ogunranti was born and bred in Lagos, Nigeria. He is an Obafemi Awolowo University alumnus of literature-in-English. He is a photographer and an art curator. He intends to use his works to induce people to have conversations about the hard truths of the society.



David Adekeye

Adekeye David Iyanuoluwa is a spirited poet who finds great comfort in writing just about anything. He is a 200-level student of Obafemi Awolowo University. He sees poetry as a salient tool to remediate social ills through the appreciation of persons and authorities. He has several unpublished collections including Prime Time.



Egun Ololade

Ololade Egun is a student of the prestigious department of Microbiology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun state. He is currently the Editor in Chief of his department and the Faculty of Science Chief debater. With the pen name Ololade Writes, he seeks to change the world with words and make planet Earth a better place for next generations.



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Ogunwale Emmanuel (Numero Uno) is a 300L student of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Easygoing, friendly and what some people might term devastatingly handsome (actually only one person. My mom. When I was 8), he is an ardent lover of pun, prose fiction (fantasy and sci-fi) and Bukowski like poetry.

Temitope Òjó

Temitope Òjó is a Law Student of OAU, he enjoys Literature in all her genres, and politics, he is also very much enthusiastic about history and culture Activism, More so, he enjoys Music and is a Guitarist, he has been running a book club; Bookhub Ife along with Jọba Ojẹlabi for the past one year.



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Ibrahim Bajepade, with the pen name ‘Tòmíwá’, is a PENultimate student of English and Literary studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife. A lazy writer who gets his inspiration from Godknowswhere, a punstar and a lover of simple relatable writings.

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Babarinde Iqmat Gbemisola is a part 4 student of the Department of History, Obafemi Awolowo University, 2018/2019 session. She believes in freedom of expression. So, she expresses herself through writing and art. When she is not writing or painting, you’ll find her reading and getting lost in another universe.



Olamilekan Jacob

Jacob Timothy Olamilekan is a poet. A 400 level of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-ife Osun State.

Gbolahan Latinwo

LATINWO, Gbolahan Jubril is a part 2 student of department of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Technology. Leaving behind the impression people generally have of engineering students, I love to write and wish to develop myself more in the act of public speaking. I love to write poems and I like using myself as the main subject.



Labake Adejumo

Omolabake Adejumo is a 300-level student of the Faculty of Pharmacy. She is a deep thinker. Her love transcends from novels to music to writing. She would rather write than talk to people.



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OLUYEDUN, Abdmateen Temitope is a student of Faculty of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University. He attended CTY group of schools, Ibadan for basic and secondary education, like interjection, he completed his basic education at FGC Ikirun. He had his Cambridge A 'levels at the International School Ibadan where his writing journey began consequent to weirdly wider reasoning.

Hassana Abdulkadir

Hassana is an undergraduate pharmacy student of the Obafemi Awolowo university. An aesthete , a fine art nature photographer, food writer and food photographer. See more of her work on her instagram; @hassanah.aa

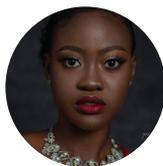


Taiwo Sokunbi

I am Sokunbi Taiwo, with the pen name, Nuel the Great. I am a pharmacy student of Obafemi Awolowo University. I hail from Abeokuta; the capital of Ogun State.

Dolapo Sanni

Sanni A. Omodolapo loves to write stories, even though it might not be his forte. He thinks he can write, but, his stories have not been published anywhere; not even on his mother's WhatsApp status. He currently studies English at Obafemi Awolowo University, with an unwaning fear that by the end of his four years there, he would have lost his head to semantics, phonetics, pragmatics, and so forth.



Titilope Ojelade

Ojelade Titilope Faith is a 400-level student of the Department of Medical Rehabilitation, Obafemi Awolowo University. On days Titilope isn't doing her Physiotherapy magic, she's writing poems and articles on health, lifestyle and research. She's a volunteer at ONE, and a social media manager for OAUEVENTS.



Ayomitide Aina

Ayomitide Aina has been a writing since age ten. Most of her work includes fictional stories that implement elements of her own life. She is currently the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of ANA, OAU Chapter and a contributor to Blaud Magazine.

Foluso Odediran

Odediran Foluso popularly known by his pseudonym "craftmaster" is a poet, a screen writer and a story teller. He is a graduate of literature from Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife. His writing prowess cuts across the three genres of literature. He has many of his works published in online platforms and with Association of Nigerian Authors; OAU chapter, where he was also a member.



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Ibukunoluwa Oyerinde is a final year Law student of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. He is currently the Public Relations Officer of the Law Students' Society, OAU. He doubles as a Graphic Designer with interest in Photography and Voiceover Acting.

Aanu Soneye

Anuoluwa Olusegun Soneye was born in Osun state, Nigeria. He is a graduate of the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. He is a lover of literature and a writer of poetry and short stories. He is the author of the poetry anthology titled "The Silence in a Dying Man's Farewell". Some of his works have featured in Tuck magazine, Pride magazine and The Voices Project Poetry Library among many other online platforms. Furthermore, his works have also appeared in prints in Citadel of Words (BPPC 2018 anthology) and Micah (NSPP 2019 top 100 anthology). Also, his works have been shortlisted for the 2019 Nigerian Students Poetry Prize (NSPP), 2018 Albert Jungers poetry prize and the Brigitte Poirsons monthly poetry contest. His work "What we need is Woman" won the September 2019 edition of the BPPC. Most recently, his work "A Practical Guide to letting Go" also made the finalist list of the Wick Poetry Centre national call(Kent State University) Aside literature, he also has a penchant for music.

Iyunade Beecroft

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Adejumo Kabir

Adejumo Kabir left Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in 2019. He is a great researcher with many investigative journalism awards to his name. He loves community journalism and supports all aspects of public enlightenment. He has experience writing well-researched papers for online publications. He was Finalist for Best Student Fact Checker category of the African Fact Checking Awards, South Africa in 2018. He is the author of Campus Journalism Beginners' Handbook and Director of Campus Press Hub.



AFTERWORD

Why the Great Ife memory never leaves...

Many would have wondered and maybe probably asked you- at home or even in school what is so special about OAU? Why would some dudes sing a Great Ife anthem with such gusto at their wedding

You know the story being spoken off- at the time it broke, Twitter almost did crack. One cursory look through the curious thread and you discover that the whole world wanted to come to the school. There is a reason. But you would not understand even while you are in. The reason is simple- memories are a function of nostalgia; an element of the past. And so why you fight for an A, to be blessed by a D, you curse, hate, cry- maybe even give up and graduate with the hopes of making it in another life, outside.

It usually begins a few months after, maybe when you are in Law School, service or somewhere you always wanted to go to. Then the memories keep flooding in and you realise that you can sing, you can laugh and dream.

As hilarious as this illustration sounds, that is what makes the 59-year old institution tick. Poem to prose, style to style, Why I sing Great Ife at Weddings reveals snippets of little parts of you- whether you attended Great Ife University or any other Nigerian University.

Revolving around spectacular themes like Anglomo, Townboro, a dwindling grade and more; these writers espouse more reasons why people struggle to get into Obafemi Awolowo University and why life as a student could sometimes drain you and keep you pre-occupied. Living in its four walls could be a full-time job. That's why it makes more sense to sing the anthem at wedding- a constant reminder that we are not what we have been through.

An average Great Ife story tells a story of grit, pain, patience and the long road to freedom. It reminds you that life is a continuous vacuum and strength can reside in the beauty of the sunrise or the fleeting departmental parties organized at the beginning or end of every stormy semester. In the end, the experience never leaves us. It's an initiation in a cult of some sort. Whether you leave the country or not, the aluta never truly leaves your office spaces- the desire for greatness never leaves your psyche. It's there. Not even an exorcist can cure the great Ife grit.

No doubt the writers and words therein are indeed destined for greatness. But this lofty act, should not end here- it must be preserved- generation to generation. How the times have changed, and the stories this embodiment of work carries takes us on that journey. For us outside these walls that yearn to learn more about the gist innermost of these halls, this tradition is how we catch a glimpse of a memory that pops up at weddings a time too many.

Joseph Olaoluwa
Multimedia Journalist and Author, Mementoes.

Why I Sing Great Ife At Weddings

