

Poetry Series

Goodness Tchibueze
- poems -

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Goodness Tchibueze(21/03/1992)

Goodness Mgbemere graduated from Jet Age Private Secondary School, Umuobiakwa, Obingwa L.G.A, Abia State, Nigeria...

A World In You

There is a world evolving inside you;
A new world which this world is yet to see.
It is evolving in a water-pot in a closet,
A kind of closet that begets light.
When the uneasing wind tosses you,
Know that that world is complete,
Hanging on the slopy steep of Time,
Circling coyly, ready to roll out
From the closet into your arms
With its own light, to lighten your heart
When darkness descends betw'n you and your bed.

Goodness Tchibueze

At The Promontory

The cloud was fast gathering and
She had sat there
For a too taut time,
On the lip of the promontory
Which overlooked the ocean:
She was dressed in a blue gown
Which paired with the ocean's,
A notepad laid by her left side.
The wind was playing with her hair
And she did not stir.

What sight has ever marveled the sun,
Or has ever made him queasy and pale?
I was some slim steps faroff
Writing, watching and waiting,
All at once, and resolved
Not to intrude her state.
While i was not done
She was, as things implied, done;

And with the foremost droppings
Of the downpour, she dropped
Into the ocean; the downpour ceased!

Fire ants of shock
Stung me up on my feet,
And i went to where she had sat:
Picked, and read the note;
Lo, she had written so much
In a few fine lines:

'...We're in a free world
That costs so much;
A small world vaster than itself,
Shallow yet deeper than its base,
Promising success through Golgotha.
A world that bestows victory
After nailing you to its cross...
Oh, oh... what a world!

Since there'll always be the sun,
I'll give myself to the ocean
For my spirit to rise with her's
And fall with the rain through
The cycle that sustains the water;
And i shall be dropping with the rain,
No more from the lip of any promontory,
But from the lip of the cloud.'

Goodness Tchibueze

Being Two As One

Being Two As One

With our differences won;

Let us be in the fortress of our arms,

Under the shadow of love's charms,

And remain inseparable as land from the earth.

Let us pass a love-led life and breath:

Life without love is labourious and lost;

Only hearts void of meekness can boast,

And wine-blurred eyes claim they see

Things rolling in the wheels of the sea.

For emptiness gives forth the loudest din -

And hallucinatory sights many glasses of gin.

But we are not like them, we are a pair

Temperate as Morning's soothing air,

Whose exploits halt the feet of time

And make the world's bell chime.

We are a pair of scissors joined by love

That though we may part 'neath and above,

We must draw back to become whole.

Let us cut our foes from crown to sole

Who swear, with devices of jealousy,

To dismember us hide leniency

In so doing; we should be keen.

For they are rough, tough and mean.

I am naught and exist not without you;

United we are one, divided we are two.

Are we not the breath and heartbeat of time?

Let us determine which ways our adversaries to birdlime,

Though it takes us one thousand decades to devise,

Or many decades more to quell the uprising,

Which may rear up as a surge of wrath,

By the strength of an aged truth.

Being two as one, let me unto you be

A beast, you can tame and bridle me;

And from wherever I lie, I would still

My ears to hear your whistle or shrill,

And would gallop to wherever you are.

The demise of beauty leaves a scar,

But your beauty shall never decay

Nor shall your smiles the sun slay,
Hence you will have your youthfulness, even in oldness;
And your beauty shall never wear from illness.
Though Age imposes on us nostalgic cries,
You will forever be immortal in my eyes.
Let us be in the fortress of our arms,
Under the shadow of love's charms
If we are to survive these dispensations
Of fiery heads driven by gory intentions,
Or else we should unsheathe our blade,
Or execute them on the gallows they have made.

Goodness Tchibueze

Courting Her

Having denuded you in my innermost eyes,
I have toured and explored your state:
The thickness of your feminine territory
Would topple the sovereignty of man
And ruin to slum his Peacock-estate;
In all i hold your backbone in awe.
Let me tear the veil of your maidenhood
Through a pleasurable, passionate bout
Now that heaven's fieryball is dying
And cannot drain the tonic of our age;
Neither burn nor char our colourfulness.
I would give a gift of many decades
Which among men and beasts is rare:
All to your beauty you could keep my name.
Let not the knight of three swords
All my efforts tear to rags
Nor into the earth ants drag
All my fruits of our affair
Would be ours to keep and relish.
Oft i had stood and watched you bend,
And i had gazed at the fruits of your chest
Hence let me march your feet to the priest
Who would with God's signet proclaim
Us whole; let the petals of roses
Shower on us amid cheer and ovation.
In season and out of season
My love would stretch wide your lips
And dim your eyes in pleasantness;
Though houseflies murmur my mind,
And mosquitoes carry to the ears of all walls
The doings of my heart; i would spread
My love on the hanger of God
Where termites would never eat it with their axe
Or with clay conceal world
Would be ours to run, and nature's fierce
Practices we would drive to the footlesspit.
Let me tear the veil of your maidenhood
And cram your pillow with the matters
Of heaven, and make your bed

With the sweet-smelling flowers of the earth
Now that heaven's garment is clean
And the earth blossoms in her green.
Let us now lay for the passionate bout
Not when the serpent's toxin would gush
Into the salty sea of our desires
And finish our frisking fish.

Goodness Tchibueze

Four Limericks

(i)

A wretched man sat upon a seat
Nigh the fire, as he felt the heat
He thought, 'Lo, this, all things can burn
To dust and never any spurn! '
So he jumped into the fire from his seat.

(ii)

A koboless man who rode from afar
Went to drink in a public bar.
'Bartender, bring me an empty cup'
He ordered, 'With my tears i'd fill it up'.
The bartender brought him an empty jar.

(iii)

A love-lorn man went to a hitch party
To seek for a lass he'd find pretty.
After drunken by many a heavy glass,
He stumbled upon a very pretty lass
But she was one of the dolls at the party.

(iv)

A wise man who wore new pair of shoes,
On reaching a muddy place, had to choose
Between saving his shoes and to cross over.
He thought, 'This mud i've got to maneuver'
Thus he crossed over upon removing his shoes.

Goodness Tchibueze

Fourteen February

'Sometimes it dulls our senses,
Sometimes it pains our emotions -
What could it be?
Sometimes it overbears our heartbeats,
And outweighs our breathings -
You think its love? '

This flame returns those days
To me like an image in a mirror:
When we first set fire on our woods;
How it rose to a furnace
When we gave it all our tinders.
As the rain revealed its advent
Through the grey clouds amassing,
The thunder rumbling,
The wind blowing;
How we made a shelter
With some bamboos and thatches
Over the fire so that when the rain
Arrived, our fire sustained its dry,
Our heads too caught a few drops.
When after the rain we ran out of fuel;
How we bent to blow, with our mouths,
The dying embers to become flames
And to long-live this dearth.
Being drenched by the fuming smoke
And by our own sweats,
And exhausted from a long forcing out
Of air, you rose defying my petition,
You walked out on me, you left.
Thenceforth i have remained bent
Blowing the fire even in the falling off
Of my breath and strength...
Hence, if i drop someday would i be
Able to set the fire again
When i fall back to earth
From an overcast steep?

Genesis

Come, my friends, and sit at my feet,
So that you may pick from me a word
Or two, tho' centuries past this your fresh-faced environment
Would brighten the surface of your water
As a moonbeam floating on a river at night.

It less startles this wrinkling Age.
From a sea devoid of substance started i a world,
A world i built, which i sustain and retain,
Even after the passing of it to another hand.
I started by looming the garments which clad
Earth and my bidding nature's eggs hatch.
I am endowed with might more than a thousand giants'...

You well reflect my abtruse form.
Though drawn from the dust - from whence comes
Your meat, and to whence you retire -
With the grace of being i honoured you and made
You a nest to hatch the other eggs of earth.
But a bid very explicit you failed to uphold,
And misplaced your you bathe in your sweat,
And drown in the bowel of the deepest dust!
I gave you Earth as barn, the Sky as its cover,
But you made it a field, and the sky its rearer.
Know you not how healthy 'tis to spread out
Your ears to the ray of my whispers, like a flower to the warmth
Imbuement of the sun, than turning them inwards to the whispers
Of your heart which oft excite you to rebellion and frowardness?
Chew this and throwup the tart fruit
Which lifted the veil of quiet-sightedness
Off your face, and revealed the nakedness
Which was concealed, uncladding your eyes to glittering darkness.

For your unhardlineness, i stuck crude stars
In your palms; i charged you to scrape crudeness from those stars:
To forge, to burnish and to place them in the sky,
For yourselves and for others when sudden darkness
Meets the affairs of the sphere which you are a part of.
But your water steams from an earthen pot

On the tripodstand afire with the firewoods of Time.
So, you must vary your practices or produce other hands to aid
You accomplish this charge before the fire goes,
And the firewoods fade, and your water cools
And gives up steaming, and you are given to oblivion...
You are dynamic, your stars are static.

Goodness Tchibueze

God

He is the Unknown
From which the known sprang forth.
He is the Unseen
From which the seen broke forth.
Above the dark of human aspect
Stands God, clear in all respect.

He is a multitude of gods in One.
All that be are naught alone.
No one made oneself ever;
But all He made to make another.
Above the dark of human aspect
Stands God, clear in all respect.

Goodness Tchibueze

Growing...

If the seed does not die in the soil,
The stem and leaves will not burst forth
To bring forth offsprings after itself...

Goodness Tchibueze

I Compare You

I compare you to the diamond eye of the sky
Which leads the weary, blind night without blinking;
As you cast a glowing glance, dreams comply:
Pouring beauty to the minds of men without sparing.

Nightmares do stalk the rosy beds of men,
And comfort oft loses her silky charm;
Your radiant strength casts them into a footless den,
While your fiery maids burn all traces of harm,
Stretching all lips with a warmth, pleasing bliss,
Till the sun slouches towards the abode of day;
As Morn awakens the world with her moist kiss,
All bow in prayer, not ungrateful to pray:
Adoring your unceasing wondrous gesture,
For your constant beauty nurses time and nature.

Goodness Tchibueze

I Will Profane Your Name

I will profane your name, Aba, i will denude you

Aba! Aba, your name is tough like an elephant's hide, it is the putrifaction in which the feasting maggots sleep.

Aba, your name is the contraceptive latex littering before the naked eyes of shame and it resembles the veins that run about
Fallen breasts in old age.

Name of depression, fiercer than an incessant epilepsy,
Fiercer even than the shortest pain from a mosquito bite, when Night is somnolent and yawns.

Aba, that is the stale tomato, the hard knock of heavy steel.

Aba, sack of mashed wealth, rusted gold, a pleasure seller in an old wife's blouse.

I am the vinegar in your mouth, and now i have become a blabbermouth, in order to profane your name.

Unnamed women, opposed to their payment of some taxes published your private parts on the fateful day.

Goodness Tchibueze

Immortelle

Come to this, who toll a disconsolate bell...:
Though the Sun upon her youthfulness marches,
Summer's breath oft her leaves smites to arches;
And Weather off course veers in suddenness,
She blooms her beauty in boom or barrenness.
...Come, adopt the soul of this immortelle.

Goodness Tchibueze

In Reproduction...

Like begets Like;
But when the begetting system
Suffers alteration,
Like begets Unlike...

Goodness Tchibueze

Lament From An Old Cock

I pity our hens:

After hatching eggs into chicks,
The hawk will come and grab some.

I pity these hawks:

When lowering to grab some chicks,
Children throw curses upon their heads.

Goodness Tchibueze

Listen Kinfolks...

We chose to be teachers,
And not to be misers.
The glory of our work
Is vaster than our purses,
And the world's put together.
We are the nucleus of this world;
By our hands the world gained feet.

Goodness Tchibueze

Mutiat

Mutiat, the name with the diamond's age,
The way to nature's bank of life,
The herb from nature's unleafed page;
You are the strength to whittle life's strife.

Mutiat, your feel is the morning dew,
The burning gold in the day's sky,
The polished crescent among the stellar crew;
Your lightness propels all spirit high.

Mutiat, the fragrance from the orchard of love,
The firework that shoots in every clement heart;
Grant me smooth entry when gently i shove
Your door, and lead me into your warmest part,
I will walk my way into you without blinkers,
For i'm committed to you floats and sinkers!

Goodness Tchibueze

New-Year-Tide

Patchily graded the clean cloud seemed,
Denuding a vast acre of the sky;
The giant, fiery orange emerged esteemed,
Saddling the horizon a little nigh
The tranquil sea, feeding the newborn day
With its ever nourishing, sweet, succulent ray:
This year has earned another new tag,
The old had burnt with many a discarded rag!

As all beings strove with the roaring joy,
Vegetation trembled before the speeding envoy
Of uncertainty on earth; more toil to men,
Promising in the ratio of ten to ten
Victory and defeat, with the heart at the helm
To suffer lost, to defend or expand his realm...

This year has earned another new tag,
The old had burnt with many a discarded rag!

Goodness Tchibueze

Night Returns Our Looks...

The looks of Day are as his eye,
And Night's as hers.
Apart from this eye,
Night has other eyes...

Thus I think Night returns our looks
By mirroring them through her eye,
And other eyes casted on the surface
Of the water pouring into our souls.

Goodness Tchibueze

On 'Nothing'

Before the elephant breaks the food-speaking drum,
And pestilence heals the land in the next recompensed
Beat; scour the scraps scattered in your minds,

Carry your brains on your wide opened palms,
Sieve me through the mesh of your own lights,
Seek me out in the dark light of heaven's slum,

In the debris of its burnt bodies and elements;
Where death cooks for the worms the souls of immortals;
Beside the abiotic blood sea,

At the gate made of smithen rafters and thatches,
Nigh the blossoming dry of the withered tree:
I am the cockerel's beak which despises provenders,

The airless wind that razes mountains;
The eagle-glory of the scudding dawn,
In which dormancy busies the marketplace;

The swiftness of the trudging dusk,
In which sleep keeps open eyes;
I am the foresight of blindness nay sight impairment;

The barrenness that boasts of many offsprings;
I am the audible dumbness that unbars deaf ears;
The Evil ready to die for the Good,

I am the proud penury that humbles wealth;
The earthworm that quakes the Earth from her foot;
Indeed, I flourish in abundance of dearth!

When Offense is docked, and Claims fly madly,
Make me the Falsity which defends the Truth;
When Strength dares you to war,

Make me the Weakness to win the war;
When no companions' hands reach to pat your chest,
Make me the solitude that embraces your breast;

When winter is the surviving season,
Make me the Love in intercourse with Hate;
When Knowledge fails to woo Ignorance,

Make me the foolishness that tutors Wisdom.
I am the buoyant Nothing vast in Everything;
Before the world were, i was, and still is:

Indeed, I begot Existence from the womb of voidness.
If you can find me, i am;
If you cannot, i also am,

For mine is instigating an interminable hunt,
Yours is deciding to partake of it;
The reward is Anything you make Something through me!

INDEED, I AM NOTHING!

Goodness Tchibueze

On Our 'stars'

What needs can a million stars satisfy
In the sight of a gay noonday?
Stars are not just specks of light in the sky
As they may seem to night-time's passers-by.
Stars give eyes to the blind day:
They illumine the obscure way
Of night-beleaguered wayfarers,
Lending them their light in that lightless hour.
Stars are the brave-eyed devil-darers,
They balk the feet of the Tar-sower
Who commands but in the shadow.
Stars grace the night with their halo,
Not flaunting their diamond pomp
In a very unruly romp,
Though they gain it from the Sun,
The unsparingly light-giving One.
Knowing how magnificent they are at the milkyway
Yet they appear little to the needy eyes.
Thus let men who oft as stars themselves portray
Twinkle up to such as Time flies,
Unveiling the sun and veiling the star;
And a star at noonday shall at-all be no star!

Goodness Tchibueze

On The Housefly And Mosquito

The murmuring of the earth is never dead:
When all the chugging mouths are faint with rust,
And chew some endless cud, a voice will thrust
Pressing our drums; pestering the body and head -
That is the Housefly' takes the lead
In stinking luxury, he has never done
With his bathe-like dance, for when worn-out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some filthy weed,

The murmuring of the earth is ceasing never:
On a mute lukewarm night, when the warmth air
Has wrought a gathering, from the shadowy dark
Arises a flinty Mosquito's, frenzied ever
And seem to one lost in drowsy despair
The Housefly's among some dirt-heaped park!

Goodness Tchibueze

Oneness

The foamy roof of the world
Is one everywhere:
Over the grainy mat
And over the fluidy cellophane;

The grainy mat of the world
Is one everywhere:
Under the foamy roof
And under the fluidy cellophane;

The fluidy cellophane of the world
Is one everywhere:
Under the foamy roof
And on the grainy mat.

The creatures of the world
Are one everywhere:
Those on the foamy roof,
Those on the grainy mat,
And those in the fluidy cellophane.

The world was born of one womb:
The womb was of one egg,
The egg was of one parents,
The parents were of one blood,
The blood was of one heart,
The heart was of one beat,
The beat was of one breath,
And the breath was of one body.

Goodness Tchibueze

Quietude

I make Quietude
My creationhood:

At a time when
Dense dins die dry;

Gray shadows seem to ply
The roads of men,

No rambling compeers' foolish words
To vex my ears' rest-seeking beards,

No claw to prey on whate'er my spirit craves,
And vegetations restrain their sougning waves;

When Earth suspends me in the space,
No arms to offer a saving embrace;

When all i have is myself alone,
I keep myself to myself unblown;

I leave this idle state of things
To a closet, where i gain paranormal wings

To soar the sky of the subconscious realm,
A realm deluged by many an inspiring gem -

An Eden where the made from his Maker draws
Intelligence varnished, free of secular straws -

Where nature's setdown cryptical orders
Are fictional to their farthest borders;

Where beauty exerts sheer artistry
Made substance by unscarred mastery:

Where the rainbow's septuple hues unfading is;
And the sun's ice-blazing beam undimming is;

Where raindrops summon host of fair flowers,
And bees harvest their nectars in due hours;

From there arises the majesty of nature's arts,
From there everything existing or yet to, starts...

To rip the hardskin of that impossible,
Draw deep the strength of Quietude;

To unveil the veil of that invisible,
Wear all the eyes of Quietude...

Arriving from this flame-fueling flight,
My writingpad boasts of many a charming sight

To make Quietude
A fascinating mood!

Goodness Tchibueze

Shipboard Birth

It was a shipboard birth, as she sailed westward
On the grey sea, backing the wind.
At the nineth moon of her sail
Came her uneasement:
The wind retreated and ran towards her
Tugging her by the forelimb and hindlimb...
From her legs drawn apart,
Bursted forth a regular-pitched cry.
When the wind withdrew his hold on her,
The dolphins darted forth and back.

Goodness Tchibueze

Strange End

For us the journey of Existence starts
With the cut of the blade;
On fours for all.
The pain of ending bothers
The sweetness of the End.
Though souls dread the hereafter,
And some smoke on the rafter of Time,
And men cast off the hands of Age -
For their nostrils to breathe the gods -
How oft many end amid the few!
Could alchemy do and undo nature,
Or wealth stretch wide nature's hands?
If not End, whatelse ends Existence...

In the purple of a luminesce day
When the beds' thickcoats were yet unfurled,
For men slumbered their toils away
And stillness streamed in the world;
A re-echoing shrill impinged on the stillness
And into my hearing canal tore,
Bumped my heart off its pedestal,
And set off the weather in my brain.
Yellow in the palms and soles
And shuddering in the rear i rose
And prowled towards the re-echoing shrill,
Toeing past the seven mysterious,
Green knolls that surrounded the river,
(They are the gods watching over the river
And the sacred, white ducks were already
Doing ablution and sanctifying it for the fetchers) .
I oft wanted to withdraw from this
When the shrill re-echoed over the palm grove
And hence i toed into its sparsely grassed
Path which wounded through three hills;
A little further down the mountainfoot
Was a hut of mudwall and thatched roof;
A sliver of light from a hurricane lamp
Peeped through its jagged, wooden window;
The door was ajar, the shrill was gone...

Morning came with its sun and songs
And the day broke in my bowel
And swept clean my throat.
Was it curiosity or to rescue that had kept me out?
Or were some Spirits grazing my hairs?
I felt the cold spread over my warmth,
I vacillated between the warmth and cold
As fear innervated my body;
Armed with a staunch stick
Which I picked across the squashed head
Of a cobra's carcass beside a claypot
Near the boundary of grassy bushes;
I toed into the hut and heard
A faint pulsation of a heart
But saw no body, nor a corpse;
I only saw a photograph on a raffia-woven table.
The image bled and the pulsation
Came from its crushed breastbone
And ribs, thumbing faintly,
Clad in a tattered skin.
Was it a trick of Fear fooling my eyes?
Or have some Spirits spat schnapps
Into my face and eyes?
I rummaged the room for a remedy,
I found withered feathers of the killerbird
Tied with a knotted piece
Of red and black cloths.
Suddenly the pulsation ceased,
I cremated the photograph and the tied feathers
And felt their cold squeeze my warmth...

At midday the marketsquare suffered tumult:
A man had answered the call of the killerbird.
The marketsquare's autopsy revealed he came
Too soon, chased sacks of cowries
With flames ejecting from his rear -
Desperation to become a name had taken
His legs into the Devil's warehouse,
And he fell on his way out of it.
His affairs wore the cap of unfulfillment Hence he lived in the forest, in a hut.
He ended leaving no mourners, no offspring.

...For him the End miscarried the affairs of his Existence.

Goodness Tchibueze

Teasing Kel...

I had a girl - Kel:

She was lissom, pliant and pleasing, a gel;
Her sparkling teeth shamed the sun, my angel;
Tho' together in love we were, oft we fell,
And wounds of the heart don't heal so well.
We spent our lives like the saints of Hell,
Haunted by orgies discharged from the prurient cell...
Hush, don't press me further, and i shan't tell!

Kel,

I need no charms to capture your heart, or spell;
Just a hiss, your name to my nose'd be a smell,
And your femininity you'd want to sell,
Since you've laboured oft to stand but fell.
You've roamed in my eyes, with heavy shell
Unnoticed: shell of a longing ,
You've de-cerumenated my ears with serenades ranting like a bell!
Flea! Now my head and i get turgid and swell,
And not a rat-hole exists in my apartment for you to dwell!
No more bed-plays, don't fantasize them, don't yell!
And don't try your blemished flesh to resell,
For they won't buy, nor i, even if you undersell!

What a graceful vulture you are Kel,
When you makeup and dress! Kel,
A classy mannequin for kwashiokor awareness crusaders! Kel,
Go hang yourself, get mobbed by fresh-bloods of Hell;
How considerate Hell is, there your market might sell!
Tho' you can't read this, it's worthwhile wasting my ink, Kel!

Goodness Tchibueze

The Child And Sky

Sky, Sky

Wearing blue and grey,
What will the sun do today?
Will he stay all through the day,
Or will he go home to his mother
To have dinner like me?

Child, Child

Bare from crown to soles,
The sun comes leftwards
And goes rightwards
And bedwards you will go.

Goodness Tchibueze

The Damsel From The North

From the plains and plateaux
Of the Guinea savannah,
Came, with a calabash loosely
Hanging on her head,
Clad in white gown;
Unsalvable smiles tearing her face,
And the day swelling in her dreamy eyes;
A damsel of ebony skin,
Varnished by the sun,
Her hue the fertility of earth;
Dancing to a sound echoing
From a distant clime; Never halting, she dog-noses the sound...
Her right leg bending
Slightly from the knee, the left leg
Keeping her balance,
Both feet bare, beating the earth
Who sheds a dusty tear!
Now, she is holding the calabash
Between her two palms,
Lifting it up to the face
Of the sun who sits
Prominently, on his throne,
Up there, in the horizon,
To observe the content therein.

The calabash fetching hot air and dust,
She lowers it, a bit down,
And up it goes, again
Repeating the usual cycle!
Caught in the spell of her dance,
Bending, she drops the calabash,
And heaving, in an acrobatic air,
Herself up;
Collecting the sunlight
Into her cupped palms,
She rubs them together,
Lifting her hands
Up and down -
As she did with the calabash -

Interchanging the calabash and the sunlight,
Intermittently, between her palms...

'This damsel had danced all the way,
From the Northern grassland,
With a crescent confined in her calabash,
Down to the rainforest
Of the South-eastern clime,
Where my heart, beside a crucifix,
Throbbled in wild ecstasy -
(The sound that had drawn her
Dancing my way) -
Where i rendered to her a whole note of
Absolute audience and attention.
She danced, way far, into my heart,
Where the rhythmic play
Of my heart commingled
With her not-ending dance! '

Goodness Tchibueze

The Drum

What gives breath to this hide,
Reeling off cadences woven in beauty?
Beauty that tickles dancing-tide,
Dancing-tide that sprays a fragrance dusty
Upon the uncrippling feet of time,
As the offsprings of Spring twist and bend
And sway in motions sublime,
Evoking ecstasy free of end.

Oft the elements swing or swap moods:
A few time gay, and all time blunt;
Weary pilgrims recourse in boxed-woods,
When nature dims, bare of wondrous stunt:
At your wake let all glooms flee,
As you breathe a reviving glee!

Goodness Tchibueze

The Other Lane

The nauseating scent
Of mixed blood and mist
Stifled fresh air
From the lungs of Morn,
And choked the time-crowning crower;
The sky was eyeless,
And cheerless the day:
The cheepy-chirpy sounds
Drowned in the scene
Deluged with heads
And eyes replete with empathy.
The left toes
Had hit a stone-swell
Somewhere on this lane...

An ironclad brute was at it again!
It snarled its terror,
And crushed,
Snippets by snippets,
Under its metal-teethed
Jaw, preys in transit
And licked their leaked
Bloods with its lustrous tongues,
And belched its satiety
Into the misty air...

'This gives life to us, '
Throated one of the scavenging things,
'This takes them to the other lane of the road! '

Goodness Tchibueze

The Second Advent

Lo, it is almost here at last!
Earth's bowel has burst,
Her muds heave apart.
Not science, not art
Can draw near its teethed-hollow,
Or needle down the tumult to follow.
On Event's two cardinal points,
The wind teeters the joints;
The bearing ignores the raging storm,
The rolling din muffles the thunderstorm.
when the fowl entraps the fowler,
The trigger locks, the barrel cannot sound;
Let men drive in a stroller
Their excuses, their problems abound.
Where locusts plough a field,
Starvation is oft the plentiful yield.
Bats soon shall quit the dark
To give men a damnating mark,
Men filthy with stubborn stains.
The sea shall bleed from the pains -
Its mouth glowing with blood - of whoever
Shall to death submit to live forever.
Though the Light had claimed the torch-bearers,
He shall claim they who starred as sufferers
Of Earth's purgative eruption,
While the bats prevail unto destruction...
This end shall herald another beginning
Where soundness shall be reigning.

Goodness Tchibueze

The Whirlwind

Little did i know that the whirlwind twirled upon my roof...

Drained by duty and the sudorific sun,
I trudged my weary way bare-footed -
It should have been solitary had the flies
Not stalked and talked my stench - through a flexuous
Path strewn with shattered shells; glasses;
And chinawares, i sprang and leaped to keep
My soles from their hungry gnaw;
They bit and bit and bit;
And i bled and bled and bled;
My tears had withered with the leaves parched
By the sun, thus i shed many empty tears.
Hunger had sealed my throat, thus
I shrilled a silent groan and cry;
And tottered in my
Stream of blood
Towards the crossed river for some livening and cleansing.
There, the river layed lifeless, it must have been
Assailed
and robbed and killed - it lost
Its wealth of silver and i enough
Strength spared, i would have lamented;
I only spat dry spittle, dipped and washed
My soles in it on the mud of the murdered
River which once splashed Life and Purity...

Bathed with the malodourous scent of my state,
The flies sang my rave, and cast dice
Upon my head and wears;
I could not clap to chase them away -
Not that i minded the fun, i could not carry
The heaviness which arched home,
Mother sat outside, pain etched
Her countenance, and exposed her teeth
To the white - she had told me in the morning
That they pierced her gums and jaw;
I trudged into the house lizardly:
Silently and shaking my head. I needed

Food, but my eyes uncovered empty
Pots and plates; the cookingplace smoked
Dormantly, it was not put off in the morning;
There was no water in the claypot, the river had dried
After the third crow. In the room, my sister
Bent towards her ailing child, her eyes
Were sore with hot sadness; she had wept
An ocean of fears and whimpered
To me that my nephew, my budling brother -
The sobriquet i gave him on his first flight
Into this flight, and for perching on our tree
With an alien skin - passed bloods
Instead of stools, waxed weak, ate nothing,
Cried all day, and slept
Consoling air streamed from my mouth,
I groaned and moaned; i knew then that
A mother suffers her child's ailment
With the ailing mind raced
To my mother: i had once been like my budling brother,
And mother had once been like my sister;
Excruciating expiation cut through me.
Guilt impaled i not a rigid heart,
I would have given myself to death.
I would apologize to mother when i find my bones.
I needed rest, i flung myself into the bed in a feigned sleep
Since it refused to y, i heard
A long swish, loud like the whisper of a monster-wind,
Which trod upon my roof; i arose to make certain
My claims, i felt lighter, and stronger;
My eyes were ajar, i yawned and stretched my body.
When i slit open my eyes, the sun,
Mother, and sister smiled at me, my budling brother
Was blathering to the doll i bought for him...
I have been dreaming! 'Do not bother' mother
Said and rose to cook, 'It was only a whirlwind.'

Goodness Tchibueze

To Miss 'sly One'

Fire can not pass through water
To consume the frogs:
While i was just a frog
Innocent, leaping my happy way;
You have been my water
All these while, untill suddenly
You became a fire, a fierce one...
Though i have lost my dreadlocks in your laps,
Lost two good eyes,
And made to drag the millstone
Round and round,
I shall still trace your pillars
And pull you down.

Goodness Tchibueze

Too Green To Fall.

She was too green
To fall off that tree:
A fruit which promised
Sweetness to the eater
When ripe in her season.
She slipped at fourteen,
Leaving an after-mark
Of her grip on that tree,
From the abode of God
Into His consoling arms,
Into the truest ripeness
That nurtures an unceasing sweetness.
To you, tree which saw to her
Budding from a flower to a fruit,
And to you, limb which bore her weight,
As long as the sunbeams,
The air, and moistness remain,
Summer's dry will never impede
The blooming of your green.

Goodness Tchibueze

Tug-War

Watching these children
Buried in this war
To loosen from the firm
Grip of contraction
And to fortify their flames,
I see them
Pair themselves
Into two equal
Parties: each party
Makes a chain of themselves
By girding each other's waists
With their hands, as their fingers
Lock firmly inbetween the other.
With their captains at the forefront,
Each chained parties
Faces the other
Behind
A thin line which separated
And made them two sides apart;
One captain proffers
His firmly locked hands
To the other captain who seizes Them.
Both parties start to drag
Each other across the line
Energetically, to either sides...

Like some men given inward eyes and legs
To peruse and wander about their past
Or future, i see dull figures
Of two parties dragging something.
I can not make out who they are;
Or why they engage themselves;
Or exactly what they are dragging,
Except that like a kite flown in the air
At the end of a long string
I have flown atop the scene,
Watching and capturing things from there:
The party on the right wore
Lamblike frocks,

The other on the left wore
Wolflike frocks,
With their captains at the forefront.
I see myself on the thin line, inbetween
Both parties, being dragged by my
Hands which were parted sideways
Back and forth, back and forth.

... As either parties drag one or two
Opponents to either side and make slaves of them,
The joyful roars arising
Return my senses, flying me
Back in the roaring joy.
Smiling and rejoicing with the winning
Parties, i think this war always
Give this eye to me like the after-swellings
Of the insects' sting on the flesh.

Goodness Tchibueze

Two Hearts Beat As One

Absence and distance might have kept them,
And the aching of the arms to be warmed, together;
Unmindful of the prominent sun, each faced the other:
A lad and a lass; the sun, inbetween, stood saturninely,
A bit higher up, and stared them in the face;
The cloud backed away as two pairs of eyes
Rained tears affectionate, and de-escalated the hot protest of the sun;
And the sky caught a cold, earth absolute audience
Gave them: the vegetations stood transfixed by heavy empathy;
And all the birds, and all the beasts too!
Having bestirred the sea of memory, two stood, and tied
The feet of space, and knotted time in a protracted, noiseless gaze.
The world waxed weary, worn with eavesdropping and hearing naught!

They must have lost, in faroff calls and indoor musing and unkilld hunger,
Their voices: empty words blossomed on their lips.
Their eyes did voiced it all: they spoke a long while
Through the mouth of their eyes, words in two heart-shaped cases
Enclosed, which oozed mild flames from the middle;
Both cases penetrated their breastbones; the lad and the lass
Closer came, the sun refractory, stuck inbetween, got choked,
The day got eclipsed; A fire ignited in their hearts, when those words in the
hearts
Of both alighted; pained sweetly, they leaned closer than ever,
Bosom to bosom, hand in hand; their burning hearts swung places -
His burnt in hers, hers in his; their face towards
Each other inclined, eyes blinded - blinded to many
A blameable infringement and the condition of things.
'For fondness nurtures no dubiety, nor can dubiety make fonder.'
When two go lips in lips, two hearts beat as one.

Goodness Tchibueze

Uwadiogwu

When others were hammering through her,
He chose to brush his way through
Without raising dust motes in the air;
Yet his efforts revolved within whirling shadows.
When dust motes which spurted from
The thudding of the others' hammers
Around him attacked his eyes,
And a rock heaved itself upon him;
He became a loss and a memory.
He lost his soft, sweet taste when all
Fell on him and lowered him to the mud.
...She was hard and disallowed softness.

Goodness Tchibueze

Wake Up

Wake up thou that slumbereth,
Rise up from thy sleep.
Blessed is he that answereth,
His soul shalt ne'er weep.
The bed which thou lov'st
Grow'st thistle and thorn,
The comfort which thou crave'st
Leave'st thee hurt and forlorn.

Wake up thou that slumbereth,
Rise up from thy sleep;
Into nightmares thy happydreams entereth.
The Sun riseth above the steep.

Wake up thou that slumbereth
And brace up thy feeble loin.
The Sun thy forbearance remembereth,
With His thy soul shalt join,
When He shalt mount the cloud
To claim they that art His;
Then shalt thou be proud:
Thou go'st to enjoy perfect bliss.

Goodness Tchibueze

Water Cycle

The sun unsettles the water,
Taking her hot soul
To the calm-adjuring court of heaven,
Where she is appeased with some easement thereat.
When she clogs this court and is shaken out
Of it, re-assuming her bodily form,
She pelts the surfaces of earth,
Often roaring and flashing her contentment.

Goodness Tchibueze

We Dogs Wish...

That our necks may loosen from the leash
And from our masters' grip and treat;
Our youth catch meats,
Our old become meats,
But few drenched by knowledge
See the evenness we share.

Goodness Tchibueze

When Love Is Maiden...

When Love is maiden,
Each moment is golden;
From a fountain laid of marble,
Sweet-fragranced flowers bubble:
The earth becomes a garden
To the butterflies aliven.
Darling Time all things
Nurses, 'tis the triun-blade who flings;

Though the storm roars,
And the tempest soars;
Love's age is the diamond's,
It's taste sweeter than the almond's.
Heaven's torch tires to the roots
All vegetations, the dewy, gray soots
Of Dawn awaken all dreams
Frozen in the snow; all steams
As gently the air combs
All verdant, floral homes.

Let sing all the birds,
Make songs of fine words:
'Distance upon distance
To Love is no hindrance! '

Goodness Tchibueze

Will You Kill Him For Me?

Have you not been a regular victim
Of a touch-and-die affair,
Which laps and droops
With every little touch of hurt,
And spreads out reluctantly
When it feels some easement?
Knowing how earnestly you crave
The warmth suffusion of the sun,
How long must you continue in this state?
Yours has been a detach-and-stick-back affair:
Like a glass broken into uneven halves,
Any attempt to stick it back
Would leave an after-tag of brokenness,
Unless a recycling.
But affairs can not be recycled
Once broken, except that some
Mending could be made.
How long must nervousness tickle
Your entire whole with dread
When one soul threatens detachment!
How long must you forbear
The slimy push of adhesives
That try to bind you again,
Even when you know it's unhealthy?
How long must the night nurse your dreads,
And the sheet drown your tears?

I have been a very close admirer,
And a far-off spectator...
I am the panacea, which i know, you crave;
I may not come, and can not work
Except the other leaves.
Since this has not been,
Will you kill him for me?
Do not panic, i will show you
How to make it painless yet swift.
Channel your ears to my mouth
So that the wind will not disperse it
Abroad like a frail fleece.

Throw him into the dark pit of yesterday,
And cover him with the wet sands of today,
And tomorrow would be ours to cherish!
I would be the tarpaulin on love's abode
To keep you safe and secured,
I would shoulder your weakness
And lift you to the sphere of strength.
I can be that good eyes you are missing,
I can make those happydreams true,
If only you will kill him for me.

Goodness Tchibueze

Worry

Does Worry sleep and wake with the day,
While her trails in the sand of memory lay?
Hearts oft seem to crumple and compress,
And pulsations into the shell of fear retrogress:
Fear of ambitions traipsing in the gray
Of a chameleon-skinned hope that leads astray
The good-eyed, green in the heart or age,
Who flips life page after page,
By the sun's or the lantern's fulgent outpour;
Who, ne'er dreamt of dearth or downpour,
Worry oft, and to the shade of regret recourse -
A few, wearing fortitude, the thrusting force -
When seasons in their disfavour veer,
And times at their labours leer.

They take the helm who persist in onward pressing,
Forbearing all tough-crookedness arising;
Not by Worry, but by Faith or Fortitude
Fetched, through praying in quietude,
From Heaven's unceasing rest giving sea.
And when Worry comes, calm you ought to be:

When tempestuous wind jolts your voyage,
And cold and heat through the weather rampage;
Worry ne'er, or vacillate, or shiver:
Muster calm like a reed nigh the river!
When barrenness in Earth's womb blossoms,
And pain steals pleasure from your bosoms;
Worry ne'er, or vacillate, or shiver:
Muster calm like a reed nigh the river!
When all forces ally to blow you away,
Muster calm like a reed, and bend to pray!

Goodness Tchibueze

You Are The Earth, I The Seed.

You are the Earth, i a seed
Ushered into your deepest warmhold
By Fate's unfathomed deed,
To adorn, with verdant gold,
Your Winter's dew,
Or Autumn's rain, or Summer's shine
Provokes me, mundane marvels to view;
My tentacles with your bosom's entwine;
Heavenward i creep, thereabout i press:
From rocks to crusts scale;
Many ambushed foes to suppress,
As ordered by Climate's scale,
(Those cannot be till i die the death
Which heralds my rigorous growth) .
When the days race into fleet of years,
I spread my arrival tale and valour,
While Time's unsteady hand rears
And builds my sturdy stupor
I draught the milk which will circulate
Down to the veins in my late,
Never have i from you departed;
Nature's infinite pact keeps us united.

You are the Earth, i a Tree now,
My tentacles repose in you still.
From Time's wildest tutorials how,
Into your deepest bosom, to drill
I have conjure fruits,
Her harshest climates, alone, i forbear.
Can ever the fire seek the pot it suits?
Or the womb which child to bear?
When by blades or thunderstorms i fall,
O Earth on your grainy thighs i fall!
If i am stumped, my sun is yet undimmed,
Nor my night bare of stars when i am pared
Away from your coarse comfort, undeemed
Wholesome in your warmhold to be spared.
I fall, many certain deaths though i die,
All seem worthwhile since in you i shall lie.

Goodness Tchibueze