

Poetry Series

**Kolawole Ajao**  
**- poems -**

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# Kolawole Ajao()

# 1984

Symbolic year-

Orwell wrote a book and called it that

Then was when I was ten

Soyinka was two scores and ten

America was tricentenary minus ninety-two

A coup de grace was a year old in my country

Just one year and we had a coup d'etat

Three years earlier my father wore Army khaki  
and helped save Chad

When the world's Olympians gathered in Los Angeles

70 years it was one war erupted

and two decades and five for Hitler to spring up another

My mother knew not she 'd chipped in a poet,

and a farmer, and an essayist like Emerson,

And a philosopher, and a thinker like SPA-

(Socrates Plato Aristotle)

1984: symbolic year!

1984: ten years after another Cicero reincarnated.

Kolawole Ajao

## A.K.A

One beautiful man named Lawrence  
and his bosom friend called Michael  
Chose to re-christen me in 2009  
They both slept and had one dream  
All emphases placed on K  
The first letter of the name  
my parents gave to me  
Lawrence baptised me K-Factor!  
Michael confirmed me KAPITAL-K!

Kolawole Ajao

# Ajangbila

Ajangbila!

I turn my back to you  
I wouldn't dine with you  
When I heard your name  
I ran faster than the cheetah

Ajangbila!

You run cantankerous in heads  
Devil's handiwork you are  
You dance like the devil itself  
You are too little to belittle

Ajangbila!

You would rather annihilate  
You would bring down low  
What you erected in a lifetime  
In a jiffy and a fraction of seconds

Ajangbila!

You always blast like thunder  
But more calamitous than it  
Funnier than the strange rain  
Which rocked Lagos on July 10

Ajangbila!

I call unto my creator  
I call unto my head  
To put between me and you  
A gap unbridgeable by any artisan.

Kolawole Ajao

# Antitheses

I am a soldier!  
Albeit I don't own an Army uniform  
I belong to the Mafia!  
Albeit I never saw Sicily  
In my last incarnation,  
I was a Greek  
And I worshipped only Mnemosyne

Those who don't know my tale  
Often say I am feisty  
Unknown to them  
I 'd wept more than I smiled  
They only see my squirrel  
When it is in the chips  
Never knowing my squirrel  
Ofttimes sleeps zero-bellied  
The lizard's egg may be softer  
But tougher than an ostrich's  
If you climb Olumo successfully  
Better call it your own Everest  
The Catholic Order taps no blood from England  
And the masquerade borrows no wares

My heart once made of stone  
Now is of steel  
Steel with the densest alloy  
I flew without wings  
I lived in the desert  
Where there were no oases  
I didn't do as Mao says  
That through guns alone I gain might  
But I did as he says  
That my watchword be-  
One against nine, nine against one  
Kongi also exhorts me-  
To set forth at dawn  
So I can move as whirlwind  
Epistemology plus logic is Philosophy  
My talons are now stronger than an hawk's

Now I dance among foes unhurt!

Kolawole Ajao

# As It Was

The wealth gathered by accretion  
Quite better than that by quantum leap  
The termitarium was not built in one day  
The chick metamorphoses into a cock  
but not within an eye's blink  
Athens was once superior to Rome  
And so did Rome to London  
The egg of birds comes in variant  
The weightier the bird, the heftier the egg  
The first water I ate from my mother's bosom  
is what science chooses to call colostrum  
And it simply calls the remainder milk  
Although I don't know how it tasted  
I still value her for this sweet food.

Kolawole Ajao

# Calamvs Gladio Fortior

Equip a thousand mighty men  
Each with unbreakable sword  
To face the wordsmith in battle  
Him alone with an inkful of pen  
The belligerent swordsmen  
And their sanguinary swords  
The single pint of blood spilled  
Was used to write their destiny.

Kolawole Ajao

# Caveat

The fatwa was issued on us  
Amidst the darkest of nights  
To move away from the coast  
To the trajectory of our world  
Which leads to the hinterland  
One we never saw in dreams  
Nor conceived in our thoughts  
The owners of the elegant abode  
Have bartered it out for dough  
Seven days were all the grace  
Till we get trashed out  
As nothing but rotten tomatoes  
We supplicated like never before  
That God come to our aid  
We chanted with a voice:  
We want another coast!  
And we got the shocker of our lives  
When we got the heaviest news  
That the succour provider just expired  
We were like hopeless Jews  
Who got trapped by Pharaoh  
We looked forward and hindward  
No birds seem to roam the sky  
We heard no croaks from frogs  
Where were the melodies  
That we could dance to?  
Where were our own Platos and Goethes?  
On the sixth day we chose to excel  
We displayed our own caveat  
Against those who come to scare us

Caveat:

That we were rebels ourselves.

Kolawole Ajao

## Code 46664

I decoded this code  
I decrypted this crypt  
Once written in Roman  
And later put in hieroglyph  
That was the code  
That that rugged sage got

Code 46664:  
Madiba's penitentiary number.

(For Nelson Mandela who strained his nerves for South Africa.)

Kolawole Ajao

# Dirge

Darkness descended at noon  
Rain fell after it vowed never to fall again  
Is there still honey in the hive?  
Will we further see the epiphyte glued to the palm?  
The largest star within the galaxy has dropped!  
I am soaked amidst my own tears right now  
Hard-hearted, strong-boned that I am  
Tears flow like the river in my eyes  
We sob even in our heart  
The heavens themselves open their doors  
And pour down fresh water  
To assuage the drought that plague us  
As the saint ceases to breathe  
He looks as fresh as bitterleaf  
Like a newly sprouted bitterleaf  
Rich in life  
But richer in death.

(Ode to Gani Fawehinmi, front-line human rights activist who  
ancestorized on the 5th of September,2009.)

Kolawole Ajao

# Fate

When next I come to earth  
And if reincarnation were  
genuine  
I 'd like to come the way I  
came now  
My mother will still be the she  
My father still will be the one  
that run the engine  
I 'd bear the name I bear now  
I 'd still read Emerson as  
well as Whitman  
I 'd plant coconut in every  
house I build  
I 'd be an angler when in  
teenage  
I 'd read about Keats at a  
younger age  
I 'd be both a mystic and a  
prognosticator  
I 'd beat drum and phantoms  
will dance  
I 'd seek the Godhead more  
than I did now  
I wouldn't default on  
philanthropism as of now  
I 'd be an inspirer of souls  
as of now

At the point of leaving the  
gate of heaven  
I 'd beg the Supreme Being  
To bring in His avant-gardism  
I 'd raise my hand and raise  
a plea:  
'Please make me an only child.

Kolawole Ajao

# Hold On

All that glitters is not gold  
But gold must surely glitter  
Be as wise as gold  
Put your lustre on hold

Kolawole Ajao

# How May I Help You?

How may I help you?  
The ten million-dollar question  
Me and some souls dubbed reps  
Take delight in asking by obligation  
We make this our routine  
Because to do so  
Often gets us bacons in our soup  
We took some proficiency exposure  
Before moving afield  
In the course of duty:  
We talk to humans,  
We talk to ghosts,  
We talk to apparitions  
And again in the course of duty:  
We get praised to heavens,  
We get worshipped to idols

What a funny world:  
Where you see not those you dine with!

Kolawole Ajao

# Humans!

You and I are humans; for if we were angels  
We wouldn't live on this plane called earth  
But roam around our God in heaven  
Humans are made, angels are created  
And humans are made before they journeyed here  
Gold may not lose its sheen  
But it sure may lose its worth  
Yoruba doesn't sell the privilege of age to wealth  
What you don't want to forget  
Just write it on your palm  
I tell you it shall be there forever  
No amount of cleansing dares rub it off  
Birds don't love boughless trees  
On which there are no rooms for perching  
Look deepy into the past  
But don't live slightly on it  
Treasure never resides in open earth  
It's in the places hidden.

Kolawole Ajao

# I Pay Obeisance To The King

I stand up on my two feet  
I bow till my head touches my navel  
I prostrate and my forehead becomes glued to earth  
And the king is Omo Oba Alade Ijero's uncle  
We hail thee, The Ataoja of Oshogbo.

(For the monarch of the city of Oshogbo, Oba Iyiola Oyewole Matanmi, for his goodwill.)

Kolawole Ajao

# If

If  
He  
Degenerated  
Like  
Roots  
Of  
Shrubs  
Amidst  
No  
Sin  
And  
Guilt  
Call  
Him  
A  
Saint

If  
When  
In  
His  
Prime  
He  
Wined  
And  
Dined  
With  
Men  
Of  
Valour  
Call  
Him  
A  
Hero

If  
He  
Ever  
Spoke

And  
Sat  
With  
Sages  
And  
Poets  
And  
Etchers  
Call  
Him  
A  
Polyhistor

Kolawole Ajao

# Longevity

The secret of longevity seems to be in Okinawa  
Where women live for a century and ten  
    in the least of it  
But that of men is ninety and nine  
Whether in Okinawa or Adelaide  
Whether in Oslo or Ogbomoso or and in Minna  
Whether in Oklahama or in Herefordshire  
Whether in Hanoi or in Kumasi or The Hague  
Whether in Dakar or in Dhaka  
The womenfolk live longer than us.

Kolawole Ajao

# Nature Talks

I 've oftened wondered  
Why the lizard prefers to stay  
out of the cottage  
And the gecko prevails indoor  
I 've seen many a child call  
gecko lizard  
And also call lizard gecko  
All I say to such little ones  
Is that they both live not  
by their own volition  
But by what nature wills for them.

Kolawole Ajao

# Numerology

1 3 5 7 9: oddity

2 4 6 8 10: evenness

The best numerologist of you is you

Nobody knows your number like you

I know some are odd and some even

My only even joker is 4

When it's 9 it hangs but hits it

3 and 7 ain't nothing but the joker's joker

I am definitely not in the hinterland anymore

I have emigrated to the coastal land

Leaving behind the life reminiscent of the swamp

To live in the coast suggests ebullience

My greens are now growing greener

My trees are blossoming robust fruits

The squirrel I find here are larger than the hedgehog

Achatina are three times stouter than I ever saw

Go read your number yourself

No other one reads it better.

Kolawole Ajao

# October

October, even in my tropic Nigeria doth flourish  
October, in you the heaviest of rains shall fall  
October, why not you let me say:  
You are the greenest of months?

Kolawole Ajao

# Ogidimo

Ogidimo,  
That was the splendour of my boyhood  
In the southwestern divide of our land  
Where my mother excreted me  
And gave to me  
The milk from her chest  
Whence I also began to toddle  
And sprout teeth and wing  
Thence we rollicked in insectiviewing-  
Our best kind of gaming,  
We hunt,  
We nurse,  
And watch Ogidimo:  
The largest species of beetles.

Kolawole Ajao

# Plea

Plea:

To God,

For fossil fuel not to dry in our Delta

Plea:

To fellow Nigerians,

For babangida (sic) never to see Aso Rock again

Plea:

To PDP,

For obasanjo (sic) to continue to reign only in Ota

Plea:

To the ancestors,

For the wisdom teeth of our youth

to grow quick and strong

Plea:

To longevity,

For these folks never to tread again

the path of womb straight to tomb.

Kolawole Ajao

# Pulpit

Ain't got no wings to fly  
But got four mobile limbs  
Two on the fore, two on the hind  
Those on the hind steer me on  
And those on the fore are a pulpit  
Upon which I place books.

(Written on December the 24th,2008.)

Kolawole Ajao

# Taboo

The best woman to take to the altar  
is one's own sister  
She knows at least  
The first two decades and five  
of what you call your life  
But nature does say no to that  
So do many of religions  
and belief systems and,  
Ultimately the law of Jah  
In something we call Sodomy  
Or incestuousity if we like

Then we all have trodden one  
major path which often wrings out of us  
Blood and water and sweat  
We go for the one we call wife  
Unrelated to us, a stranger  
In a union akin to go to gaol  
In a prison where escape  
is vague and virulent  
The day the contract is signed  
becomes the day you want to unsign  
The deal you longed to settle.

Were it not for nature and God,  
Men wouldn't marry outside of home.

Kolawole Ajao

# Tentacles

I have set my clock ahead of GMT  
So I can fly at a different pace  
I don't need to acclimatize anywhere  
I am bio-entrained for any climate  
I can live and thrive in Siberia  
among the extreme cold of the tundra  
The Atacama is not too hot to sear me  
Singing reggae, singing punk  
Reverting to ska, rocksteady  
Old, old highlife songs  
From Ghana/Nigeria.  
I claim all things good ever bequeathed mankind  
I am a rastafarian  
I am a Buddhist  
I take from Ifa all truths it tells  
I am not a hypocrite  
I bend down low to Christ's info!  
The world is changing!  
My views are Socratic  
I am everything but not atheistic.

Kolawole Ajao

# The Lass Kanky!

Sleep seemed to have wished me au revoir  
I was left to rollick amidst a strange euphoria  
I saw mirage within a myopic distance  
Then some poets diagnosed what my nausea was  
What was the prognosis?  
The prognosis they chanted:  
My head contained nothing but the penchant  
For dreaming about the lass Kanky!

(For Mercy Kankara a.k.a. Kanky, a lady who peculiarly found out that I am a poet)

Kolawole Ajao

# The Oracle Lies Not

As if the angel of God visited me  
The winds that blew toward me 're gold  
Washing me off all entanglements  
Seperating me from all uncertainties  
Showing me the way to Oberhausen  
Where a three-hearted oracle lives  
Which tells us who own the morrow  
What it sings is what we dance  
In the end Diego Forlan wasn't more illustrious than thou  
The oracle lies not.

(For Paul, the oracle which helped reduce tension in us during the Mundial in South Africa.)

Kolawole Ajao

# The Rich, The Poor

Even in the rich man's house  
Poor man's food is being eaten  
You had better eat rich man's food  
In the poor man's house  
Than eat poor man's food  
In the rich man's house  
Our world is mixed  
Truly inseperable.

Kolawole Ajao

# The Sunlight That Comes In Spring

The sunlight of spring comes amidst welcome

Why?

It brings refreshment and calmness

That you and I ever anticipated

And not like the hot sun

of a hot noon in summer

Come, oh come, sun, sunlight

In this our spring of camaraderie.

(All thanks go to Michael Brock. As I read his poem The)

(Sunlight of Spring, I got hooked up. )

Kolawole Ajao

# The Wonders Of The Ages Past.

The wonders of the ages past,  
The wit of the ancient sages,  
The rare iguana of Galapagos,  
The quadrucentenarian tortoise at the palace of Shoun,  
The giant crocodile domesticated at Oje in Ibadan,  
The turtle named Jakande that I found on Lagos archipelagoes,  
Which Omo Oba Alade Ijero helped nurture till it expired  
The many trips into the hidden worlds to search for the secret,  
The coincidental collision with folks who showed me the way,  
The wonderful merger of East and West of Germany,  
The reasoning behind Michelangelo's David,  
The artitude from which da Vinci etched Mona Lisa,

Enough for me to see the hugeness of our world.

Kolawole Ajao

## Three Birds

Three birds perched  
One flew away  
Two remained perching  
Another flew away  
One remained perching  
Another flew away  
No bird remained  
Three birds flew  
They flew away  
Out of sighting.

Kolawole Ajao

# Tomfoolery

I met a nitwit  
In his titbits  
Talk tommyrot  
In a manner hurt  
Sing of Mobutu  
And despise Tutu  
His memory a wane  
He was insane.

(Dedicated to Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace laureate.)

Kolawole Ajao

# Two Love Birds

Two love birds:  
Singing together,  
Perching together,  
Roaming together.

Two love birds:  
Seeing each second,  
Floating each minute,  
Drooping each hour.

Two love birds:  
Nesting together,  
Slumbering together,  
Brooding together.

Two love birds:  
Eating each second,  
Drinking each minute,  
Chirping each hour.

Aye, two love birds! :  
Not dying together.

Kolawole Ajao

# Unidentical Twins

Death and birth are one  
One spits us into life  
The other excretes us into eternity  
Without one the other a disease.

Kolawole Ajao

# When One Comet Fell.

One comet fell on Ikereku  
An asteroid dropped on Ibadan  
One whole galaxy of stars ruptured in Lagos  
Which altogether coalesced, and  
Made Hiroshima effect a miniature

Astronomical evidence revealed says  
Ten and five solar eclipses came imminent  
The sky opted for a colour change  
The greenhouse effect dropped to 1million degree Fahrenheit  
Dynamite's sound now inaudible

The mill of God grinds somehow...  
Yea!  
But grinds exceeding witty

And we were so flummoxed  
We couldn't lay your wreath  
Those you left as pillars  
Don't take your own semblance  
They could sketch Africa's map  
And forget to dot Madagascar  
Adieu to men whose...  
Memories fade ad infinitum  
And whose names...  
We don't carve in gold  
But non-adieu to the Abese!  
He entered the ocean a shark  
But came out a dolphin.

(For Emmanuel Oludede Idowu, Senior Advocate of Nigeria, whom I later chose to call THE SUCCOUR PROVIDER.)

Kolawole Ajao

# Where's Your Own Poem?

Start by writing anything  
and calling it your own poem  
Fold your arms and eyes  
and wait for people's critiques  
Some will say you are a poetaster  
That which carries the weight  
that your poem isn't weighty  
But let not that be the oil  
With which your engine is lubricated  
Tighten the floor of your heart  
by making it reminiscent of Gani's  
Then continue in that phantasmagoria  
and make many more writes  
Remember that the bat isn't a bird  
Yet only the owl can raise its hand  
In any nocturnal flying  
Just wait till the day  
When we shall ask you  
That golden question up above  
By then you are already a P  
And they now the p\*\*\*\*\*r  
This will be the day when  
you will see by yourself  
That both your critics and attackers  
Both slept and had their heads  
face the same horizon.

Kolawole Ajao

# Wisdom Of The Ancient

True gaiety moves you close to tears  
When happiness is cloned you 're moved to tear  
Where I am, I am with my angels  
When I vamoose, I vamoose with them all  
Orange and lime's trees sprout same leaves  
In taste they are farther apart than day and night.

Kolawole Ajao

# Woe Unto Thee!

Woe unto thee  
Thou wicked ones  
Of this world

Thou doeth destroy  
No, no, no  
Thou try destroyeth

The very handiwork  
God Almighty carved  
Swiftly, purely, beautifully

Woe unto thee  
Thou who tryeth  
Get soap filthy!

(Written on March the 21st,2008, to commemorate my birthday) .

Kolawole Ajao