

Poetry Series

# **Tolu Akinwale**

## **- poems -**

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## Tolu Akinwale()

I strongly believe that the world can be comfortable to live in if youths channel their strengths towards the right ends. To me, the world is not so small we must all compete to live in it, but rather too big for all of us to occupy. My dream is to live in a world of youths who have a passion for excellence and an unquenchable thirst for God.

As a Christian, I pray that all of us come to the true knowledge of God.

# A Letter To My Any-Me

My dear any-me,  
It is from the bottomless bottom of my heart  
That these words ooze forth  
With the ease of a pregnant woman.  
How do you do?

You have been in there for long,  
Wearing me - your bloody mask -  
And leaving me to give the world  
The sound that you did not make.

Now my dear any-me  
I want the cloak I lent you:  
Masks could fit me too, you know.  
Wear me no more; I need my cloak.

Sincerely  
yours  
in life  
and death.

Tolu Akinwale

# A Vision

Like a sudden appearance of death,  
The image intrudes on my vision,  
Trampling underfoot every obstructing thought  
Like a hurt man bent on revenge,  
It reminds me of my offence  
And brings to light my sins.

I feel the touch of conscience -  
It's as a sharp needle thrust into a balloon -  
For the time of forgetfulness,  
Of favours so big, but soon forgotten.

The vision -  
A painting of all my sins,  
All results of forgetfulness  
Lingers on in my mind.

The thief must be executed,  
The killer must be killed,  
But what happens to the forgetful?  
That is the thrust of my vision,  
It's as a sharp needle thrust into a balloon.

Tolu Akinwale

# Blocked

my caged bird's flown away;  
it's gone away with the rainbow,  
and now my cage is hungry.

now that all other birds  
have gone with the rainbow,  
tell me,  
with what will I feed my cage?

Tolu Akinwale

# Her Departure

She slipped away  
softly  
silently  
but after a long duel  
with nature

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# I Don'T Know

What will it take the monkey  
to denounce its friendship with the banana?  
I don't know.

What will it take the dog  
to be separated from the bone?  
I don't know.

What will it take man  
to shed the letter 'n'?  
I don't know.

What will it take man and sin  
to be separated?  
I don't know.

I don't know,  
but this I know:  
the sky will be rent,  
and the reapers will come  
to rip off the tares.

Tolu Akinwale

# Of The Jungle Dancers

See them caught in the throb of the drum,  
Jumping and flying, exposing their heads  
To the mocking eyes of the sun

The petrifying sound of the drum  
Wakes in them no spirit.  
Blind, they dance round the maze in the jungle.

Who knows the riddle of the coconut?  
Let him save them from the hypnotising rhythm of the drum.  
He who has the hands of the spirits  
Can slap the drum shut.

Let him who has eyes divine  
Peer into the future  
And talk the talk of the future  
While this dance lasts in the jungle.

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# Patch The Gap

patch this gap -  
this widening abyss  
in my heart

when, in God's name,  
will there be something  
with which to  
patch this gap?

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# The Cooks

In the morning,  
They cook the food in a large pot,  
Telling us that when it's done  
We will eat and refuse to eat.  
Yet when the food is done they give us a little.  
'That's all you need', they say,  
'For lunch will be served soon.'

At noon,  
They make the aroma play at our nostrils,  
And tell us how the meal will taste.  
But when it's done we get a little -  
They tell us dinner will soon come.

In the evening,  
They promise to serve us meat -  
Meat bigger than our heads,  
And wine enough to drown Titanic.  
When the time comes they give us a little  
And send us to bed saying:  
'Go and sleep, dearie,  
It's only a dinner; you don't need much'.

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# The Dead Celebrates His Death

The finest cemetery in town  
Festooned with distant flashing lights  
Changing colours like the chameleon's skin  
Will sit today on the feathered seat of time  
And tread the blood-red carpet,  
Will today spread its mat for mobile coffins  
As fellow corpses honour this invitation

The chief-seats for the chief-corpses,  
Let the servant-corpses sit on stools:  
All corpses are equal  
But some coffins are more beautiful than others

It's my birthday, eat and be merry;  
Come near, corpses, and let's celebrate our folly!

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# They Come Back Just In Time

The early morning bird never seems to get tired,  
She sings and sings and sings enchanting tunes of the past.  
But wait a minute, what do I hear?  
A piece that cuts through my soul  
Like a pair of scissors through a piece of cloth.

The humming never stops,  
It throws my mind open, open to the flying thoughts  
Of the years passed behind.

What do we do with memories?  
Throw them into the trashcan,  
Drive them hard to the background.  
But like this bird that sings alone,  
They come back just in time.

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# To My Friend The Artist

Madness -  
How you hate that word!

But are we not mad -  
Mad like the he-goat  
That slept with his mother?

You are mad,  
I am mad,  
We are all mad -  
Mad like that farmer  
That stole another's sweat.

But we needn't deny it,  
God knows we are mad  
Both of us, yes, we are;  
Our instruments make us so.  
And don't we build worlds with them?

Mad we are and let's be mad;  
It's excellent just to be mad -  
Not like the farmer, nor like the he-goat,  
But like the sharp teeth that bites the tongue.

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# Uncertainties

Shaky hands gathering fragments  
Waiting hands out of patience:  
Who knows the next china  
To be broken?

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## 'Unman My Man' [to F. F.]

a loud bang,  
and that was it.  
it uncorked the bottle locked within,  
yanking off the gentle blanket  
that covered the gentle giant.

if the tough burden of my tablet  
i must carry because of my spineless,  
shrugging sweat,  
then unman my man.

the loud bang that you heard,  
what do you think of it -  
a senseless, stupid outpour of anger?  
it's a call for unmanning me  
that i might leave this cold blanket behind  
on this thorny, bed-ridden bed!

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# Void

Here we stand to plant  
this yam in this lonely place,  
sure it will not grow.

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