

# Outburst Of Fireflies

SESAN AJAYI

**S**esan Ajayi, one of the purest and most confident voices among a whole new generation of Nigerian poets died late last year. He was thirty-five and unmarried. Recently transferred from Ogun State University, Nigeriata Obafemi Awolowo University as a lecturer in the English department where he also doubled as a doctoral student.

Sesan was a lover of the slain Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo whose tone, depth and sometimes sheer turgidity reechoes in his poetry. He published only one book of poems, *A Burst of Fireflies* (Kraft Books Limited, Lagos) out of which these poems are excerpted.

Below is Sesan's signature from an autograph to the editor made shortly before his death.

## the promise of age

(for my 300-level class, 1990/91 session)

Your children are now wild,  
Lord:  
they dream of chocolate on ice,  
they dance on skates,  
they wear skeletal brows in the day,  
and hairy hedgerows at night;  
they munch man-hours  
On slabs of dreams.  
Lord, your children are now wild;  
kitted in bales of cow-hide,  
they torture their days of innocence  
they wear hot-pants in winter,

sing hard-boiled elegies  
On snow-crates,  
paint their arms in rows of periwinkle  
Lord, your children are now wild-  
they make me afraid;  
for they write out the times  
in their festoon of thorn.

## a night out in Choba\*

Nestled in the shrieks of night-  
the opaque scars of wandering talons,  
and mired in the grips of neglect.

Once, at ease in the rubble of neon fumes:  
of golden bazaars and puddled presences,  
of atonal shrapnels showered on  
burdened lampposts;

of riddled rust-bins hidden in nightlong shrieks of orgasm,  
and cascading cadences in hidden moments of supplication.

The sooty soul renders elegies in miry lanes.

wayfarer, pray not to encounter sentinelled winds of travail,  
and cadenced seconds of orgasm;

And may your journey be at daybreak,  
on streets laden with copperworms;

may your wandering be a pursuit of golden puddles.  
May you not inhale wafts of tobacco teasers coursing through sooty hours.

And,

pray for zephyrs of dawn,  
not hardened liquids of stale hours.

\* Choba is the seat of the University of Port Harcourt.

## a dream remembered

The world shall forgive me, in moments of agony;  
trapped in this eerie mood I trundle aching emotions,  
walrus dreams of atonement.

The old aching dream shall blossom in dark elegies,  
Sung in terminal tones of morning;  
charged in syllables of death,  
I echo the delirium of living pausing awhile  
to count yellowing pages opening onto momentary collage.

Beaten into scrolls of abrasive,  
my tar-trunk is aching;  
the world is a plangent scent of drowsy hibiscus,  
the congealed, dreamy-eyed lonely self.

Come, my love, when the night is awash in eerie thunderclaps stripping the tweezy tones

of tenement sweepers,  
come, please, to ease  
my somnabulist strip-teasers.

And, pray for the liquid moment  
of muscled amens,  
the caricatured ligament  
of the lonely cycle;  
burden me with chloroform  
of quickened stargazers,  
receding, heckling, searching  
in the rubble  
of aching dreams.

And let us be certain  
it's the tone-laced  
aluminium dream  
clear  
in the flush of an April hymn  
of penitence.

### endings?

(for Dare Okesola)

You must hurry on  
trembling tarmacs,  
notches on flailles candles-  
and burn bright in the  
soundless raptures of  
aging catacombs.

Hurry forth, here  
dressed in ashen adrenaline.

Hurry, here, mutant  
on the rim of  
saxophoned cadences.

Hurry here, in catacombs  
of salt-washed emotions.

Hurry, here, in heraldic  
melodies of quickening  
love songs.

Endings?

Mutant on the  
acrhival rims of earth:  
you must hurry in  
notched cubicles of delirium-  
Mutant.

Slit-tones.

Combed beach-head

of quicksand.

### anti-SAP song I

i have wished  
to be nailed  
to the earth,  
to be forgotten  
in mottled cans;  
for i have hidden  
thus far; and to  
be seen is a ritual.

O Lord, shall I still  
run forth to be  
nailed  
when my  
ancient obligations  
run a ring  
round lone alcoves  
of wishes?

O Lord, nail me,  
if I can't exorcise  
the demon of naira  
to curse my leaking  
purse: for i have  
a wish:  
to be faithful  
to my obligations.

### anti-SAP song II

here, in the gullies where  
men drown their sorrows

here, in the lilylakes where  
men are fed on hemlock

here, in the aging cocoon where  
men never grow

here, in the valley where  
scales are our only  
measures of success

here, in this tearfilled  
Chrysalis  
where rivulets turn, at night,  
into lilylakes of age

yes, here, in this eternity  
of sorrows we shall remain  
heroes

in this twilight of  
despair.

### a burden of ties

(for a toiling old woman in Choba,  
Rivers State)

shall your days be  
spent  
in mindless vacuity?  
O Lord, flaps of wrapper  
in supplication to Heaven:  
shall this grey cloud  
cock her wishes  
in this damned cinder?  
shall your days  
be  
echoes of dreams  
muzzled in madness  
of these giddy times?  
O ageless burden of rainbow,  
shall your days fizzle out  
like ashes scattered  
in the gale of want?

### sokoti

Forging barnacles of sweat,  
Laden with cairns of metal:  
Hireling, who frogjumps into  
The shattering furnace-  
Mould decanters of  
Corrosive patterns,  
Echoing metallic dawn,  
Straining at God's own leash. **GR**



Glendora Review poet.

Sesan Ajayi  
12/3/92