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(editors)



2050

TOP 30 POEMS OF THE BRIGITTE POIRSON
POETRY CONTEST (BPPC) JUNE 2019

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2050

TOP 30 POEMS OF THE BRIGITTE POIRSON
POETRY CONTEST (BPPC) JUNE 2019

Edited by

Brigitte Poirson
Kukogho Iruesi Samson



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The past cannot be
changed. The future is
yet in your power.

– Mary Pickford

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INTRODUCTION

Horizon 2050.

The June poets needed no *faceApp* to project themselves into the image of their 2050 selves and the reflection of what the world around may look like by then. Their poetry, their time machine, they have activated as either a hope or a despair machine, which may in retrospect warp the vision of our present lives for better or for worse.

The reader will find in these lines food for thought, strength for the spirit and sufficient admonition to be induced to become forceful actors of their destinies. It is an appeal to arms. Arms and feet. And also a call for help.

Emotion and talent make a great mix.

BRIGITTE POIRSON

JUNE 2019 TOP 10 FINALISTS

A CHILD OF SEVERAL INCARNATIONS

Akor Agada Nathaniel

IN THE DREAM, I AM THREE DECADES OLDER

Jonathan Endurance

QUEST

Nnanyelugo Michelle Chiamaka

VISION 2050

Paul Abiola Oku-ola

WHEN DECADES DECAY

Oluwatomiswa Ajeigbe

I WANT TO DIE

Izang Alexander Haruna

THE FUTURE IS A BLANK PAGE, FILL IT

Emmanuel Faith

WE'LL INHERIT OUR FATHERS' ENEMIES

Odu Ode

A BLURRED DREAM SPEAKS OF DYING

Richard Kayode O-James

OCTOBER 1ST, 2050

Ayeyemi Taofeek Kehinde

A CHILD OF SEVERAL INCARNATIONS

AKOR AGADA NATHANIEL (JUNE 2019 WINNER)



Akor Agada Nathaniel is a poet and Economics student of Benue State University (BSU) Makurdi. He won the June 2018 edition of the BPPC and his poems *Solitude Is a Woman* and *The Good Samaritan* were shortlisted for the March and April 2018 editions of the contest.

Akor is passionate about creative writing and is at the moment a member of Writers League, BSU Chapter.

With robots running the shots, where else should one go?
I never thought I would see myself here three decades ago,
Competing with little children whose skins look like ripened mango,
Exuding egregious confidence that easily erodes an elder's ego!

Twenty Fifty came from somewhere like a ball of snow
Holding the singing water harboring stubborn seeds of deep-rooted
sorrow
To be planted in the soil of an unknown tomorrow
By the children of men whose minds never lie fallow.

The evolving earth has always been a child of several incarnations
Climbing on the shoulders of wise men who have misread the
constellations.
In today's situation, yesterday's visions have now become tomorrow's
projections

As generation after generation compounded issues from technological innovations.

I choose to break the ears of the winds with my complaints.
The corruption of passion has eaten this era amidst countless restraints,
Converting champions to crying children chasing camels with feet that faint,
Because today's world has succeeded in making sinners out of strong saints.

The inventions I see are variations of awoken scars
Owned by yester year's shadows shipping silent sandstorms from afar,
Fermenting fragments of frustrations from the smiling stars
In today's bruised world gasping for breath like a broken car.

How I wish the seers who saw today were here
To touch the monuments they built with their mouths that never were!
Maybe some survived the grinning yesterday, but are maimed with fear
And have lost the will to chase the charming deer...

IN THE DREAM, I AM THREE DECADES OLDER

JONATHAN ENDURANCE

And I walk the garden as dewdrops form a canopy of crimson petals.
The cloud dresses in God's white regalia.
A rainbow butterfly perches on the hand of a sycamore.
Today, unlike every other day, has no traces
of the rebels' feet doting our yard.

My father raises his hands, giving thanks to God,
gently unbuttons the cage of his lips, and a happyish dove
flies out of his mouth, dancing endlessly in the air,
which is why I say today, unlike every other day,
the rebels' feet have no holes on our doors.

God's children are uncaged butterflies
under the neon sky.

A man traps his mouth in the keg of his ancestors.
He raises a lamp of supplication into the dark, narthex mouth
of the night. He says today, unlike every other day,
the rebels' hands are no scars on our skin.

Another man knees before his god
And renames this day after a picayune bird
resting on God's shoulder,
which is why I say today, unlike every other day,
the rebels' absence is a squashed butterfly in this calm garden.

Rainfall drooling across the bellybutton of the sky.

And I am spreading into a kaleidoscope of monarch flies,
my wings a city of temples,
which is why I say unlike every other day
the rebels won't worship here today.

QUEST

NNANYELUGO MICHELLE CHIAMAKA

Like a subtle sprinkle of infinite promises,
You carve an oasis of curiosity in me
Dripping through every crevice in my skin
Till I am filled to the brim.

Like a myopic outburst
Of sagging eyeballs
Blurry in its might,
You caress my insights.

As I tread these unexplored terrains
Of impassable and narrow boulevards,
I am resilient in my grip,
For you are my road map,

Like a mirror,
An adept reflection of my thoughts
When sleep becomes a mirage
And dreams peep through my optic nerves,

As I scramble for clarity,
Drenched in this indecisive pool of becoming,
Floating in its bliss.

This is home where I dwell,
For the future is now!

VISION 2050

PAUL ABIOLA OKU-OLA

Our motherland	A maiden shall Mother of many, Misery clad in her With evil, many of And for her Profits rain, As they voice her	conceive. she shall be, old age. her offspring dine, siblings, pain.
Our fatherland	A heart pregnant The treasures he Turn a weapon for To drown the Still, like the birds The crab prays for	with sorrow. stored for all the crab hippopotamus. in the sky, wings to fly.
Our homeland	A garden for the And the present Stricken in their Same path, their And the fathers	past to birth agony, subject to hope mother's womb. fathers before them
voyaged.	The story knows no	end.

WHEN DECADES DECAY

OLUWATOMIWA AJEIGBE

Dear Self,

The future is a leaf punctured by raindrops,
and tomorrow is a butterfly locked in the chrysalis of today.
Your realities are my dreams. Papa's pain, Mama's teardrops,
your memories are my realities. I live them every day.

Your memories are my realities. I live them every day,
the hieroglyphs of your time—my native tongue - ,
and the technologies of my time become relics of yesterday,
and the past becomes a wistful song.

A song of grief. Of regret.
A song of things long forgotten.

And the past becomes a wistful song,
because the world fades, the decades decay,
your years outlive you; they're too long,
so you become a mirage when the decades decay.

So you become a mirage when the decades decay.
You live in a world devoid of emotion,
a world without the warmth of the day,
and you die of your own volition.

And you die of your own volition.
You dissolve into the air to rejoin me today.
You die in the future—inverse reincarnation - ,
to write stories about the century where decades decay.

I WANT TO DIE

IZANG ALEXANDER HARUNA

The vision is twenty-fifty.
The chances are fifty-fifty.
The vision is (die-hard) to be saint,
But the chase is a hundred percent.

To die to selfishness,
That for others I may live,
To die to the allurements of lust,
That to purity I may rise:

I want to die to the monster greed
Rising on the Easter of charity.
I want to die to the beast of hatred
Then to wake to life as Love,

To die to the strange wind of falsehood
To draw only the fresh breath of truth,
To die to the green snake – greed -
To live the beatitude of contentment.

I see me dying to vanity
For a resurrection of simplicity.
I see me dying to cowardice,
Awakening the spirit of courage.

The vision is twenty-fifty.
The chances are fifty-fifty.
The vision is (die-hard) to be saint
But the chase is a hundred percent.

THE FUTURE IS A BLANK PAGE, FILL IT

EMMANUEL FAITH

(An acrostic)

The future is a blank page, fill it with
Hope, the kind that years don't limit.
Every moment is a treasure of melodies and maladies.

For the future is the tomorrow we make with today's memories.
Unwind, take a deep breath and smile.
Think about the accolades, the awards and many miles.
Ungratefulness souses the present with transient future worries
Remember three decades ago didn't predict today;
Evil didn't take a cynical stroll in devastating disarray.

Innovation was dearth; no Zuckerberg or g-mails.
Sexual orientations were nothing beyond the male and female.
Are years not just series of months filled with weeks and days?

But pause, imagine a world with no racial prejudice,
Leaving behind the livid lashes of poverty and penury:
An equitable abode, with encouraging equality.
No disdain, or dismay or anointing flowing in iniquity.
Kids don't sweep the street with their feet for what to eat.

Pastors don't defile members, toiling with hellish embers.
A Future with a country, a nation and continent, with God fearing
Governors, commissioners and not octogenarian presidents. An
Era of enchantment, excitement and exemplary excellence.

Fill the future with great goals; 2050 is a date.
It might come to pass or not, but while we work and wait,
Let the past live in the past and be present in your present!
Livid was the state of those who discovered late that life is transient.

It is good to look forward to a brighter future...
The future is a blank page, what would you write on yours?

WE'LL INHERIT OUR FATHERS' ENEMIES

ODU ODE

(Ken Saro Wiwa, on a conversation with his son Ken Wiwa, less than three decades ago, "You know you won't inherit my enemies?")

When the chirping of crickets plants truth in our conscience,
Stones will melt in a collage of flames by the womb of silence.
Our fathers' names will be peeled off their skins; we'll bear them
Like tribal marks on the hides of leopards in Mada's* Diadem

When the sun burns our skins, we'll peel its heat and wash
in a Benue built with our tears. We'll place her in the eye of the sea.
We'll wash off the dark marks in our hearts. We'll like cheetah rush
Home to plant the memories of everyday's Sunday. In glinting glee,

Will our fathers' grave be: sending letters of joys and laughter
Written with the wasted tears of this day's Borno's slaughters.
In decades to come, we'll inherit our fathers' enemies:
Bury them beneath earth's earth. We'll wash off the nemesis.

We'll mix in a cauldron tales of chirping crickets.
We'll inherit the rage sprinkled on the faces of our daughters,
Not the tales that forced our now youths to kick sizzling buckets.
We'll be the sons who suckle the breasts of our mothers.

*MADA: a gribe in middle belt of Nigeria.

A BLURRED DREAM SPEAKS OF DYING

RICHARD KAYODE O-JAMES

Remember the lake we said we would swim in
when this time arrives? Camels now travel that place.
There was a note on every meter I walked.
How it echoes the epitaph of children yet to be born,
but buried! You will miss it for a thread,
the one you borrowed to cover your wounded, decaying body.
Three times I launched for the moon
and fell into stars! it is night now; the sun never returned.
In the thread line that remains on my skin,
I etched time, at

–thirties:

I took a cardigan for the rain,
An external storage; amnesia is a pest.
I killed those I love in my head; they buried me
As I stand in the taunting light of a blooming flower.

–forties,

I remember to take pills to forget scars.
Dreams are crippled by cold days.
I loosen the straws in which I found safety, thought.

–fifties,

I pack the remnants of my days into a sack of luck,
The beer I couldn't taste I save for days the sun
Regurgitates my twenties. It leaves me empty
And takes away my bones.

The camel that travels that place never returns.
They find a grave on that route to bury their maps.
The rider said we are baking bread for maggots.

OCTOBER 1ST, 2050

AYEYEMI TAOFEEK KEHINDE

A man tells the tale of a nation stretching her arms
as if transforming into an atlas – carrying the weight
of her bitter and ugly past as they zigzagged their way
into honeycomb and blossom, carrying on her face the scars
from years of bombshells and gunshots.

A man hangs the frame of a "country at 90"
displaying the years when human right activists
completed their protests behind the walls of 'gaols or graves.'

A man shoots fireworks for his country
to put to shame the Goalkeeper's Report:
the world looks back and tears the pages
of The World Population Prospects:
the global eyes into our 2050 that saw population explosion
– an almost certain footnote
to our antecedent that saw growth as an irony –
a future impossible tense
that saw us in a tragic coda of economic frying pan,
that saw rags, hand-me-down and blood.
But here is a land greening in all scores.

A man toasts to his country for more harvest
of the fruits of the labour of our heroes past,
feting how we slipped from bullying hands
that flexed their muscles on us for protectionism and hegemonism.

But the man is caught holding back the tears
of moral decadence and cultural collapse,
grieving how our culture died on our tongues
while searching for fluency in alien languages.

WILL THERE EVER BE A MORNING?

ABEGUNDE ISRAEL .O

Will there ever be a morning,
A morning of no mourning,
When light shines in its brightness
And people cease to live in darkness?

Will there ever be a morrow,
A morrow that ends sorrow,
When Joy abounds in its fullness
And people cease living in mess?

I doubt if the morrow will ever come
For men happily feeding on crumbs,
For men who like living as slaves in their land
And for men with bloody, clashing tongues.

While men slept, Locusts came,
Eating up the harvests of years to come.
Tell, what future has a slumber
Who sleeps at dusk and snores at noon?

How I wished I wasn't part of them!

Woe is me if I declare not freedom!
The night is far spent and the morrow is here!
Woe is me if I wake not my people,
For they perish and know not tomorrow!

YOURS FAITHFULLY

ODEMAKIN TAIWO HASSAN

Dear me,
I write this in a standing state of uncertainty
Through thick and thin thatched thoughts,
Patiently praying it reaches you in full sincerity,
With wandering wants wailing, waiting for wonders.

How are you? Oh!! How is me?
Your brown, brilliant eyes, has life changed how they see?
I'm certain your caterpillar has grown wings!
Did it bring other things?

Shattered shards sure shook shambles,
Brought broken breaths in breadths.
Did it fill your strengths in lengths,
Or chain your choices in shackles?

Dear me, fears of being you ate me up.
Did those tears make you feel beaten,
Helpless, hopeless or finally eaten?
Was there enough to fill your cup?

Did the fire of this world continue to burn?
Get put out, kindled or become fueled?
I hope injustice found a way to turn,
And those wars, by peace finally got quenched.

Dear me, I could go on and on,
Write, and believe to see accolades won.
But I'll put my last drop on faith on this word:
Believe,
And wait to feel its ripples in our next world.

Yours Faithfully,
I.

VISION 2050

PAUL OJOCHYEI SUNDAY

This mental Image frightens my decision to live with indifference.
Its horror sends shrills through my dilated veins.
With no pressure to flow, my blood clots like a stock of grains.

Lo! This is an image of my being laying lifeless in virtual reality!
On this ugly page stands an hour glass that reads 2050.
What! So I will be dead in thirty one years, and icky?
My hand pointed to my dead self like a gun at a wrongdoer,
Various words trigger off my lips in cold shower:
“Am I surviving to die three decades later”?

What more? Just tears in my eyes to mourn my death to come.
“You are my future, hope and power thumb.
Now you are dead with no hope of return.”
My lifeless future body mumbles words to my thought:
“Be courageous! Never is death my desire sought!
Lifeless I lay because of your wrong deeds and onslaught!”

“The key to resurrect me from my casket is in your hand.
Purge your heart and desist evil band,
For your only liability to earth is to love man”
Like a trance, I journey through the tunnels of my reflection to reality
To guide my steps like a fragile egg in my mental faculty
To think before I act. Does this actualize your vision 2050?

SUNSHINE

ADIE LAWRENCE AGBOH

Peep through the keyhole of time.
As the mat of your life rolls,
Three more decades of you unfold.
You wonder how; you wonder why.

The silhouette of grief
trickles into your mind.
How you hogged all sprinkles of glee!
How you stripped your kind of their shine!

To an only child in the universe,
To a soul that dined alone:
You died a million times over,
Because none was born to live alone!

So, in this deafening silence of the night,
Take some time to fold back this mat;
This time, remember your kind.
We're all subplots in the tale of some man—
rivers of compassion to the aged,
desert-like drizzles to a street child,
tears of empathy in others' pain
—We are potential diamonds in the sands of time.

Yes, 'potential', till we outgrow our indifference
To the bliss in co-existence.
For there's no 'mankind' without 'kind'.
Kindness is the surest future of sunshine.

FEWER PRAYER POINTS

EMMANUEL UDOMA

i

We are prayer warriors
fighting unspiritual battles.
We offer prayers for security challenges
and lacking social amenities.
At every corner, there's a mushroom house of worship
where we shout, "holy ghost fire! Jesus!",
the specious solution to our problems.

A tortoise crawls faster than our emergency services.
Our intensive care unit begs for blood and oxygen.
Potbellied politicians pose as powerful and influential,
yet call us, youths, the leaders of tomorrow.
Yesterday was the tomorrow promised our fathers;
today is our foretold tomorrow:
when will our tomorrow come?

ii

Thirty years, say three decades away,
I will be grey-haired, sitting, watching
the tomorrow of unplanted seeds from my loins.
They will sculpt their future into the finest of arts,
mix their paints against the world's monochromatic palette,
and paint their rainbowed dreams on life's canvas.
They will have fewer prayer points.

Stereotypes like gender inequality will no longer be discussed.
Our institutions will dish out equity and justice without prejudice.
There will be no more deaths from tuberculosis, no more
malnourished Africa begging for crumbs from American bins,
no need to drown in the red sea, seeking routes for further enslavement.
Our offspring will travel distances without visas because we will be
one human race placing humanity before our diversities.

BEFORE TWENTY FIFTY

BAYOWA, AYOMIDE MICHEAL

I am indifferent
to the fetus in the belly of tomorrow.
I fear it may turn out to live without a parent
or lay like me in the soil of maturation, fallow.

The child will also wear upgraded fatalism,
dream by day, slumber at night,
become a temple of stretch marks,
political cannibalism,
and refuse to sit and listen to grey hairs in the moonlight.

No one knows tomorrow,
but if you ask me,
I'd not be surprised if the child
became a migratory bird
that'd fade into the sky after getting frustrated
of tweeting to the wind of my land.

I admit life is a game.
And I'll live my dreams in fame,
with no pain or refrain
in serving my motherland
in good health and body frame,
if she doesn't swallow my hook,
line and bait at my early fish,
or leave me with wounds
that will make my body a museum exhibit,
or choke me in the middle of the night
with gun powders, before twenty fifty.

YEAR 2050 THE ICON OF BEAUTY

IKECHUKWU OBIORAH

I am the crab having eyes on stalk,
The eyes of an Oracle seeing the year 2050
Pregnant with the beauty of reality,
The beauty of a new Nigeria devoid
Of the armies of darkness,
The beauty of a new Nigeria feeding nations
Across the globe,
The beauty of a new Nigeria building castles in the air.

I am the eyes of Ogbanje reading the wind,
The eyes envisioning lush, populated, green grasses
Germinating on the surface of the loamy soil
Like fresh tendrils of hairs springing up on ebony skin.
I am the eyes envisioning the cynosure of all eyes,
A home for tourism.

I am the visionary soul with ridges of veins,
Having head for a height in taming sublimation
With the prayer of fulfilment.
I am the visionary soul with the beak of fowl piercing locusts,
The visionary soul with the hand carrying the flag of success.

I am the trumpeter trumpeting the trumpet of phoenix,
A clarion call for a moment of moon refined in gold,
A moment when laughter will be a nectar,

A moment when sweating souls shall smell sweet wine,
And drink from their calabash of suffering.

IN 2050

CHARLOTTE AKELLO

I will have a few strands of grey hair,
Maybe a coat of dementia,
I will pay to be reminded my name each time I go to the bank
The hospitals will have no drugs for my diarrhea and they'll choose death
for me.

Our children will be promising us hope for tomorrow
And we'll listen because we only hope they will do better than us.
Our education will still be churning out potatoes
While the workers will be expected to be experienced;
There will be a bigger job market but also a bigger number of
unemployed.

The president will be an old man
Begging us to use our eyes, yet still making blurry choices,
Because he'll be deaf to our suggestions and the state house is his only
home.
Children will be hoping to be presidents, but their dreams will only float
away.

Our parents will be long gone
And their graves will sprout into arcades and mansions;
We won't have land to till and we'll be squatters in our own homes.
There will be court cases about this, but the judges will dismiss them.

Nothing will change much,
Except I will be a few decades older
And still searching for my relevance
In a country that demands to use me,
But never uses me.

HEY, GIRL...

OLUWAGBENGA AYOMIDE RUTH

It's lovely to see you lively, building up your life and expectant.
The youthfulness nectar thrills you and it's like an antidepressant.
But you don't mind being in a hurry as your life comes in a flurry,
Having a bubble at being 22 soon, hoping in the future, not to fumble.

But, my self, listen:

The century you are in, the 21st in a revolving, evolving world, is so cool.
Enjoy life like you would as a pro who had taken the first lesson at the pool.

Love freely, even without an algorithmic app telling you how to.

Get on that career path soundly; impactfully move up with the world's goals.

Marry that great one you are in love with; work on ousting the trails to divorce.

Have those kids you dream of, by nature or genetic engineering or miraculous wonder.

Then settle down, really, girl, to live as the years go by.

My mid-aged girl,

Don't get tired of the demanding hours of working: you make indelible impacts.

Raise the young in a world where everyone thinks they have a mind of their own,

But are actually pulled by strings from the universe into which they are sown.

You could be exhausted from waking up from your fantastical dream,

But don't sigh and resign and at their dulled, yet alert hearing, scream.

Just be patient to work into their selves as you work on your self.

For from their nibble-at-nipple stage to their 'Mum, I'm living my life!' stage,

You keep working smarter than the smart devices to make their lives a worthy page.

And you expand yourself more to climb up higher on the greatness ladder. Good girl!

My old girl, not too old at 53 though,
As you rest on your husband's arm in your latest driverless car,
Eating the healthiest chocolate and communicating with your Chinese
friend on Skype,
You may still wonder 'Who am I?' in a world that so much defines you,
But, never forget that you are yourself and must be so.

YEAR 2050

EZEKANNE PASCHAL

... after thirty-one years

Standing on the precipice of a certainly "wasted" life,
I blindly suck the charred bones of my dead dreams.

With an unseeing eye and a deaf heart,
The hopes of three worn decades fade away in tiny wisps of regret.

It is impossible to ponder progress,
While entrapped in this cocoon of misery and hungry restlessness.

Once upon a time there was light.
Now, only the stirrings of insanity's blooming tumor remain.

As I stare blankly at faded images of what I once was,
Pain comes in bald gasps like a staccato gun.

For me,
No future,
No rain,
No sun.
I once said I was a child of the Son.
Where is He now to lift the sorrows I have borne?

I do not seek your pity.
I just want my voice heard
Before I speed on the highway to hell,
Leaving a sliver of my shadow behind

To haunt fellow, ghosted lives
Resurrecting hope in the hearts of dead men.

Maybe, in this way
A good memory of my pitiful existence will remain.

DREAMS AND MORE DREAMS

EDAKI TIMOTHY

Like me, do you have such vivid dreams in the dark,
dreams that leave you tasting the sweet fruit of success on your tongue?
Do these dreams come upon you, press you so hard
that you have no choice but to believe?
Aren't these dreams coming like a vision that keep you alive?
These dreams that open your body to salvation?

These dreams of a time when this land shall be smitten with peace,
when laughter shall be the currency in every man's heart,
when green shall indeed be the color of the grasses
and white shall no longer be stained with the blood of our massacred
brothers?

Isn't this the reason why I wear my country like a prayer and offer it to
God?

Isn't this why at night I dream of a people with happiness in their left
breast pocket,
hope clutched in the space of their palms,
faith lodged in their hearts, with lips rising in supplication
to a universal God who looks with tears and moves to answer?

Somewhere in these dreams,
the little ones prance around and chase rainbows, fireflies and
butterflies,
while we sing the anthem "in love and honesty we grow".

Aren't these dreams like visions that keep one alive?

GROW

AYOBAMI OLUWATOSIN JOSEPH

In a land of feuds and the time of panic,
the destiny of a nation woke in the belly of a young boy.
His name is me...

Me!

Travelling through time,
from the labours of our heroes past,
to the struggles of our leaders now;
From the beauty of a country born,
to the glory of a nation gone.

This is me calling you...

Yes! You...my childhood playmates,
that twenty children shouldn't play for twenty years.
For it is written the young shall grow
from gossip and gambling and partying,
playing 'hide and seek' in the rain
with legs mudded in marshy fields ...Ah! ...Grow!
from juvenile delinquencies to manly responsibilities.

It is me handing you a quill to ink a will for your fatherland.
Now is the time to etch a country we want on our palms,
that we may read and run by it.

But for me, when the future comes,
I want him to meet me sitting with a bowl of chicken,
while my children sit on sofas,
listening to me telling them how Nigeria used to be bad.
Let him not meet you still playing with the sands
of what is left of your father's ruin.

TODAY'S TRIP TO TOMORROW

UMAR NASIR

Fast forwarding forecasts from future's features
Slipped their way,
Stealthily, into my mental gallery,
And conjured varying images
Before my sight-sense's screen,
All displaying the next three decades
In different arrays of facades
Of hope, despair and utter illusion.

Of hope: In a utopian globe
Where harmony and happiness
Have tied a knot,
And the world is deeply soaked
In a sea of peace and stream of equality,
With class struggle strangled,
And gender prejudice diced.

Of despair: In a world of dystopia
Where rape is hailed and justice raped,
War sitting on his throne
To relish the bloodbath show,
While poverty keeps catching her fun.

Of utter illusion: Before the beclouded vision
Of a world's long lost lust for technology,
Where robots (AI) wed humans
To breed robo-kids.
By 2050, our race ends its race,
Our elation turns extinction!

A WOOL GATHER

OGUNMOLU, EBUNOLUWA ESTHER

Heads converged,
aroused tantamount awakening,
permeated despondent hearts
in tables of gatherings...

Why?
Indigents spanned the world's tents,
stood aloof,
caressed incessant toils.

"WBCSD" concurred,
chatted "29" territories,
absolved sole race
on this "planet",
perturbed "Turbulent Teens",
foreshadowed stability,
embraced enterprise.

Alert on the track...
Decapitate hurdles!
Acclimatize visible "Vision"
by Two Scores and Ten!

YOU ARE SLOW, AND THAT'S ANNOYING

AYOKUNLE SAMUEL BETIKU

You are slow, and that's annoying.

You move from continent to continent in a plane,
risking a fiery smackdown by the waves,
and you justify such peril with the term "speed"?
I say that's a very slow way to die!
I cross continents in a flash!
This mobile device weaved into my skin
bears me on its wave across the seas,
and yet - how amazing!— I'm still in my room!

You are slow—and it's frustrating
how you spend hours cutting skins,
how your butt is stuck to a seat reeling off boring news,
how you stand forever before the fire grilling
and justify your servanthood with the term "labour"!
I have servants made of silicon and circuits for labour!
Fast and quick this whole business is done and I lose no sweat!

My neighbours hate my servants; they think like you.
They think three decades ago they were better off without them.
They think they have come to lay off labour
and only their masters can eat. They are right!
Those who control the silicon control the food...

...but their plight is none of my business.
They are slow, and that's annoying!

UNTIL 2050

KELECHUKWU SAMUEL OJILE

The taste of unripe mangoes
in every bite. An electric shock on decaying molars.

If hope is a dead rat, they'd pull its whiskers.
If Man is a pile of dreams, they'd watch every episode.

But one can't see light until their vision wears off:
 to illumine the scathes
 on their tear-dried faces.
Stone-kicking paces
the sparkles of a youth in blue jeans and agbada
hanging a wide smile like his open boot.

Only the timid boys his age offload bags of yet.
Dangote for Mama.
It won't be long; she'll be next on Baba's altar.

The rivers on the thousand naira notes are products
of his father's intestines. No one cares. Anyway.

How do you define peace
on the face of a 31-year-old child who didn't play, dance
in the moonlight in the wake of grandpa's midnight lore?

Twenty fifty. Remember when he said school is a joke.
You saw his teeth. He was thirteen and toothless.

but. who. cared?

You didn't either. Your poems were read by only poets.
Or is it a woman grey with cataract?

When grandma poured spittle on earth's toes
and sent you to get snuff, you grumbled,

but the b r i t t l e spittle turned curse.
She told every one
grandma's grave still has flowers dewy with her tears,
but nobody knew what was next...

THE UNSEEN SE(E)CRETS

AKINRINADE FUNMINIYI ISAAC

In the coming one plus three decades,
I rise to tell the tales of the year's shades.
I peep through the window of the future,
To see what will become of our culture.

I dip my quill in between wor(l)d's thighs,
To ejaculate lines of truthful lies.
Lines that form in the womb of readers,
To birth brilliantly baked future leaders.

For the past is void and the present is bleak
In the hands of the unruly, ruling clique.
If our fingers fail to write wise words today,
Will the world to come not die and decay?

I stand to reveal the unseen secret
Covered under Heaven's long blanket...
The ears of men will be drawn to Art's call,
For the wheel of Art will drive the hearts of all.

Cultural stereotypes will be erased,
And modern narratives will be embraced.
Bomb blast, blackout, and broken homes will cease,
For lads, leaders, and landlords will embrace peace.

I'll still stand straight at five decades and five,
To breathe life into Art and keep it alive.
I'll set my children's feet on the path of Art,
Till their thoughts tread only on Art's path.

YOUR KINDS ARE THE TRUE POETS

OLADIMEJI ADAM ADEDAYO

i

To the mouth of your time machine you retire, you rest,
Like some mulish infant submitting eventually to his mother's breast.
You pain to disremember that footprint you trace:
Whom had already eaten the kind of meal you grace;
Whom on the twelfth of this moon spoke dirty,
Even though he had won a war on peace and unity!

ii

You know you are about to begin the journey again:
You jump-start your time machine and die to wake again,
Awhile breathing your way into the journey.
In your death... you behold your fetch amidst the tourney;
You're shocked, like one electrocuted, by his sneer.
And since some Madiba is what you think of your peer,
Since your pure patriotism has made you so blind,
That you hold as a clone of theirs your stainless mind,
You start contending with your fetch - the shock finally gone:
"Where I'm from," you preen, "we indict to ignite the sun."
"Idiot!" laughs your fetch, "the sun is dead! You're in the hereafter!
If you were indicting the petal's beauty and not the nectar,
If to cultivate were to exercise, if to acquire were to strive,
If you needed no lie-sense to buy the license of life,
Then Time's hammer wouldn't have found the last nail
Which has made building of the sun's coffin not to fail.
Wake idiot! Wake! Our fate lies in your drive, in your virtue!"

iii

You gasp! As, like Hausa man's spittle, the time machine returns you.
You know this isn't the hundredth time of this picture;
You exude despair, though you know very much less white is the future.

iv

This is beyond sanguine! Your kinds are the true poets!

OF WORDS TRAVELLING AHEAD

OYEKUNLE IFEOLUWA PETER

(A conversation with my future self)

I have eaten the seed of watery hope;
Maybe someday, it might just grow.
I like to think you are reading this
And humming how sweet the future is.

Do we still struggle to make ends meet,
Or now have leaders who are helpmeet?
Is that you saying you are doing well
And things are better at your very end?

I'll like to know if men still have jobs,
Or we have been retrenched while robots work.
I'll like to know if our culture is dead
And if tribes still cherish what they've always shared.

Is that you saying the future is bright
And girls now walk freely without being raped at night?
Is that you saying we all live in peace
And vices are now mere tales we tell under the tree?

I'll like to know if literacy is still a norm
Or has ignorance drowned us like an angry storm?
Is that you saying things have changed for good
And unity prevails in every neighborhood?

Do we now have a world where everything is green,
Where science and technology are taking the lead?
Is that you still telling me how well we have transformed
Into a blooming flower despite fierce threats from thorns?

THE DREAM

GOODNEWS MEMEMUGH KARIBO

And this is the dream that fell
into my sleep,
the dream that banged out
of the mouth of an enslaved lot:
My country was not my country
and my people not my people.
It was the way water slips through
the fingers,
through a vulnerable flesh and
into a desert soul
seeking warmth and light.
In that dream,
laughter broke through our soul
and made all the difference.
Sheaths never vomited their swords
and the only war that broke out let loose
a people with a plethora of love.
in that dream,
our leaders wore robes that dripped
with empathy.
it made me laugh so hard
that I almost became
a source of inspiration.
I could touch the face of the truth.
It had a naked and deep dimple
the size of a people
healing
from xenophobia.
That dream made me feel like a star
lost
in the sky,
in the many folds of a running cloud
seeking every hurting being
to pour all its light on.



Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this chapbook.

The [Brigitte Poirson Poetry contest \(BPPC\)](#) is a monthly writing contest aimed at rewarding the under-appreciated talent of young nigerian poets. It was instituted in February 2015 in honor of [Brigitte Poirson](#), a French poet, editor, and lecturer, who has over the years worked assiduously to promote and support of African poetry. You too can be a part of the BPPC initiative by [entering your poems for any of the monthly editions](#).

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