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a boy's tears on earth's tongue

(poems)

TUKUR OLORUNLOBA RIDWAN

A BOYS TEARS ON Earth's tongue

A collection of poems

Ridwan Ishola Olorunloba



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dedication

This is for love; for friendship; for family; for society; for humanity. This book is for reviving what is considered lost or dead. This is for restoring a long lost token of happiness or hope. This is for healing; for rejuvenation; for restoration.

May this book find a wider and better place in your heart while you read me without seeing me. This is me coming through to you in my literary ways. Sit back, relax and feel comfortable with my thoughts and musings. Thank you, world, for having me in a cluster of words.

More importantly, this is to Kukogho Iruesiri Samson, for enabling us to achieve what is to be achieved. Also to Mrs. Brigitte Poirson, our mother. To Sir Eriata Oribhabor, our father. To Sir Phunsho Oris, the engineer erecting me like a tower. You did too well evolving me.

You are all duly appreciated.

foreword

A poet is more than a verbal surgeon, a conveyor of psychological malaise or a linguistic entertainer preoccupied with fixing the problems of society, expressing personal inadequacies or amusing the sensibilities of the audience.

A poet is also a thinker, a molder of thoughts and actions, a creator of others in own image with the conscious ambition of imposing his individualistic conceit on society.

To achieve this sublime responsibility, the ambitious poet must have undergone a robust self-development, rigorous scholarship and profound investment in research relevant to human existence.

While anyone can fiddle with sociology, psychology or anthropology, or even proffer pseudo-philosophical rants – a common feat among youngsters and trendsters, the poet under analysis is more concerned with using the lens of knowledge to influence social perception and human interaction.

In A Boy's Tears on Earth's Tongue, Tukur Ridwan has strived to achieve a feat very

Ridwan Ishola Olorunloba

uncommon for a young man hitting his silver jubilee. It is trendy to find many brilliant poets and writers pitch their artistic skills in the tent of monothematic issues such as gender, sexuality, social injustice, modernism, irreligiosity, depression, etc. Treating such themes are not only needful but crucial as art is used to sensitize and sensate society.

However, his departure from the norm by exploring a plethora of themes – including themes aforementioned, signals that Tukur understands the power of poetry in creating cohesion in a world filled with pathological dissimilitude as well as the role of the poet in making meaning from a surrealist existentialism.

Instructively too, the book's title is suggestive that the author's intention is deliberately inclined towards helping the reader navigate the world of his poetry through his lens.

This authorial influence serves two purposes: invite the reader to see the real world through the poet's vista and subsequently but subtly influence the reader's behavior in interacting with the world from an enlightened perspective. It is therefore not implausible to state that Tukur is more impressionist in his poems.

Tukur has made significant effort to touch on different themes in this collection. While the intent is to proffer his thoughts on issues that affect humanity, such as religion, sexuality, depression, individuality vs social conformity, love, identity, social injustice and political machination, this collection is not a book of philosophy. Rather, it contains intellectstimulating poems, masterfully crafted to capture existential nuances that define our collective humanity.

The mastery with which language is used in this collection has deservedly positioned Tukur as a poet of worth and stature. He attends to his themes with such precision that the reader connects with each poem without unwarranted authorial influence.

Perhaps, the greatest gift Tukur has given the world is not just that the poems offer a fresh perspective on dealing with the life's complex spectra, it is more of the generosity of the poet to guide the reader to see the world from an individualist-universalist perspective, more akin to ethical relativism. The reader becomes aware that he or she is part of the range of frequencies and must embrace the diversity of human experiences without losing oneself. A Boy's Tears on Earth's Tongue is a collection of timeless poems, masterfully written by a mind that is in alignment with existential and essentialist values of human experience - there is a poem that directly engages the reader in a most intimate way!

Thank you!

— Funso Oris Poet, Anthologist, Literary Critic & Scholar Chicago, USA

introduction

A Boy's Tears On Earth's Tongue is predominantly cathartic, as a keyword in the title suggests. It is just from "a boy" crying on others' behalf.

It is an extent of my altruism, with a dose of little sensation and idolation of humanity through the two genders. It has no sides. No orientation. Heterogeneous. It rather recognizes your place in your society, without neglecting your source. It is your voice. It tells where you are likely coming from and where you are probably going. It is not absolute, only my creativity is. So you cannot quickly assume where I belong, much as you can cannot assume where God belongs with humanity and obviously religion.

"Earth's Tongue" is not resistant to different tastes of living and existence. So you can also judge my book of poems as of existentialism.

May you feel existent when you read, may you live while you read. And may you live to read this book, and many more.

— Tukur Ridwan

... home must be reached before they turn, torn by the teeth of tale tellers who don't know what a boy's tears tastes like on earth's tongue...

hide & seek

•

look at your mirror,

you would be taught how hard it feels to find god's face on the screen of heaven—

you cannot discern the hideous eyes of your own demons because they find rooms to rent in our skin

until you become a tenant in your own body, paying for each period of pleasure you enjoy exorbitantly

& most times, these demons dig graveyards off our live bodies to bury pangs of sharp impacts, with scars to outlive us without a dreaded sight for others to behold

this is how we are pains ourselves, hiding behind masks of vigour & peace

while in the meantime, we keep seeking treasures of happiness like luxury in the shelter of limousines, waterfronts, five start hotels, vixens & private jets & when we cannot find what is not lost nor scarce, we teach ourselves

to become factories, making more cosmetics of beatitude to hide inside while we keep seeking the real bliss.

killing suicide

•

this was how I snatched the gun from his head without my hands—

àwé, why bid the world goodnight when your daytime sun still shines even if you feel razed by the rays of vicissitudes & of vanity?

is this your way of chiding the womb that brought you to this market because you are not skilled in bargaining with life merchants?

if pain swaps your peace for war, would you rather be a pregnant woman with a fruit without a farmer to stay, to know how it aches to the marrow?

would you rather be lost in a cloud of explosives, to be found where your limbs have left your head 'cause your body could not hold itself tightly?

would you rather be stranded in a wilderness that throws time in the gyre of infinity, & never return to mark your endeavors year by year? man does not poke the sky's eyes with his soul for torrential tears, but touches the zenith of his striving soars, even if his wings seem to be breaking.

man does not reject his gift of life because he did not ask for it that night when two skins shared a sheet of sex. he wields & waters this fragile flower.

àwé, burn these ropes & stray these metals across a place with no name in the head. let us walk this road again to the market of life, & bargain with butchers & mongers.

haven grave

•

your tight grip, my craving

your roundness, soft like dough

hold me by my length

where there is no pleasure in cutting loose, but long suffering

be my nun, I will worship through your lead, take me

into eternity, where the eyes of god is a mirage drawing closer

along a vast beach

my foreskin will run back & forth in your walls for hours & poke his eyes

& hear him scream through your moans

our room is a cathedral, guided by holy spirits, watching us

loosing ourselves in baptism after our vulnerability to a vice

in the house of god which your temple is, but

I wouldn't speak sacrilege against it because you make me believe

in transcendence, a life beyond my grasp if I am alone where you have taken me

let us not go back to transience which this vain world is

if death is inevitable, let us find our grave in this haven

& sleep, together.

spectrum

I saw eternity in two-folds;

of living, of dying, of the dilemma that visits the heart like a long-lost lover who comes to apologize with roses

on valentine's day, when loneliness has taught you that you're not enough an organ for your horny skins.

I saw the illimitable yards of earth's blood flowing through my feet while I stand as a cell's size, living in my own scope.

I wanted to be this earth, ample & live, enduring the desires of lots & sundry

& this sea washing my feet of sins away into its own stomach of bottoms & pits be my blood, my flow, my stream of sentience

but when I remember how that god of iron in a bullet, in a bar, in a blade could take me away from my body of flaws & all,

how that angel of death in a poison, that insane jin in a gin, a weed; how that filth could wretch my soul with a rupture that may not heal before I wake to amend my mistakes.

I come to terms with a truth, that this river, the bloodstream of mother nature can take in & throw up any black & white

or any shades of grey trying to cleanse with her sliver cotton of purity, which I cannot afford as a symbol of athanasia,

I go back to my butt of buts, watch the sea in her innocent walk of love & war, because she has all that is fair in her wavy hands.

for those whose bodies are tales

the girl child is a virginal flower, innocent of her beauty & charm

like a mild sunshine, fainthearted & soulful, like a proud daughter

of her fairy godmother, cinderella. you can listen to her & be delighted

when she sings. you can watch her warmly as she makes your yard her illusory concert

for the distant world to clap & cheer, till her body builds rapidly to become

a chamber of soft weapons wielded to damage her keen spirit, by boys

who wear clothes bigger than their dreams, & claim manhood. & in other climes,

her likes grow taller in heart, like the ìrókò, to know where their sacred body parts

bait & prey on men's minds & wallets. they put linens, skirts & gowns in shame, they make every moment feel like the first day of their birth before us;

our eyes are often mirrors of their nudity & make obscene tongues worship them

till what is condemned becomes freedom; how they elope with our penny of thoughts

like dauntless thieves in broad daylight, as if the world's eyes lean to their body only;

as if that is what makes a cleopatra, where her breasts are the pyramids of giza.

& in some fates, these damsels of parted pasts come to meet like a confluence of stories.

recollection

•

my memory is a drought of forgetful lands in Africa, lost

like a vagabond in the binge of trends & newbies that time brings to my novel table, intoxicated by the sharp tease of foreign tastes & colours.

I do not recollect what lived in my yesterdays of olden fun.

the friends I have made are not from within my fence because I must expand my scope & expose to what would sweeten my tongue like christmas candies & danish cookies

& clear my sight & sound with imported accents & art. I am

a living bastard who shows the way to his dead father's house with his left hand. I have

abandoned me by the roadside of life when I was travelling,

starting with that old Peugeot 504 which is not even ours, brimming with folk songs & juju melodies.

the legs I walk along with, in suits, vintage shirts, crazy jeans, bum shorts, turtle necks, bikinis on the beach,

tattoos, piercings & random orgies among same sexes as a master key to ultimate liberation,

may never trace their way back because we are long gone across this distance between morrows & years back.

what we have left is the fading language on our long dog-like tongues of oral sex & orgasms, that we learnt with force in erstwhile basic classes.

the custodians of our heritage are dying soon. I can see it written between the lines on their aging forehead. some did not teach us because they loved the new world they saw on our favorite TV channels.

boyhood as a feeling

•

boys bottle up death inside & call it strength, like a shoulder raised high trying to reach god without hands stretched, they are silhouettes of beggars

whose faces you can't find in the darkness of their own times

but ego is another torch they improvise with, to find a way out of their labyrinth, thick or thin—

home must be reached before they turn, torn by the teeth of tale tellers

who don't know what a boy's tears tastes like on earth's tongue,

so we just rain inside drying our smiles with wrinkles.

reconciliation

•

nothing like freedom; nothing like racing back into your lover's arms

wide open, from a distance long like years of leakages from cracking

walls of hearts, blood of bruises overflow the stream, causing sleep

to die in the eyes like constricted pupils, waking up to nothingness where all feels

like chambers of silence, like a tomb, like the refusal of light to chant

strength into you in faces of total doom that you will soon see another day

you hug yourself with the warmness of your cardigan when there is heat

melting your eyes into larvae, like you are a mountain too dormant to erupt

through the tongue of tears no words to speak for the ugliness

of your mouth when you weep

like a slave whose body is chained

in his own agony, when love feels like defeat in your lover's absence,

in your lover's departure from your pictures.

this christmas

•

Chickens' heads & blood in earth's bowels. Christ & Bethels

reunite again in thousands & more years.

But the JWs say — 'We're never witnesses to this time of his birth'.

They have a different calendar.

They lock their windows on the fireworks & cacophony of overlapping music like there is war outside.

Some mohammedans evangelize themselves for the season.

Red is the new colour of happiness. Ever wonder why Santa is every child's godfather?

Nights are already booked for random orgies, booze & night-stands till beginning of the next year —

Perhaps, Israelites washed jesus' birth & birthdays with their cums too.

From Bethlehem to the rest of the world.

God holds blasts of fireworks in his black garment

of stars. He doesn't want to throw them

at those who corrupt the festive nights

With their euphoria.

joys of nationhood

this theatre tells tragic tales sorrow claims the plots of nights like joy acts its scenes in mornings the weary eye of god, the moon, ceases to follow this land to the waterloo its heading now, our nights of plights lose sight we don't know who is at the driver seat we can't recognise the captain navigating this liner across the troubled water the sail is hard to adjust the wind is not in our threshold we panic at the next second of certain wreck but wear hopes of a sleeping storm on our teeth of tempest, of distorted rhythms of our anthem, of betrayal of our pledges when hands fail to hold our hearts from falling into another abyss of histories of holocausts there is enough war in our skulls internal bleeding of haunting memories pangs of pasts clashing with flawed futures they throw another war onto our open doors & unguarded bodies, & it explodes they expect us to make peace with a morrow that they haven't impregnated the day with.

broken mirror

0

someone says something is wrong with a man who was a girl in a boy's skin

how he held his heart as a butterfly's exoskeleton fluttering his wings across the flowers of his bizarreness

easy to crush by bullies' tongues

he probably lost his balls to a fairy's throat in a dream of homoerotic orgies

his voice is a songstress' soprano but not a thing of art in men's world hauled a stone like shaytan in mecca

he can't go back to his placenta for redemption.

the man on his thin skin is left to the woman in his strong heart who has grown to love a brother

in ways alien to another brother—

of a life he had been given by a new mirror where he sees love as air—for just anybody

he wears venus & mars on his sleeves & fights men's wars with a woman's tears everyone hopes he wins again where there is nothing left to lose

what more could you ask for when your past has no nice tale to survive it leashed on your soft body of empathy?

someone somewhere still says something is wrong without a woman away from a man's dark chamber of self—

how he needs a man to become a man hurts in this household of men like his body falling onto his broken mirror to find himself back; to live like a butterfly whose wings are cardboards of rainbows.

ochanya

0

i was a seed sown to bloom: to flourish; to feed zephyrs with the texture of my leaves & the fragrance of my flowers i have a covetous owner whose heart was not moulded by the hands of peace punic in his pursuit of pleasure when i was a young tree with budding fruits; yet unripe he would not take his hunger to the market of overripe crops a severed tree i became for his gruesome greed when waiting to ripen, plucked i was of my bitter fruits bitter to my body only bruised was my leaves & petals then branch by branch of strength, i fell hard until my roots could not feed me enough blood to live, but to feast on me as earth does on a dead tree; i was not heard of my screaming stems like a dead fruit in the mouth of those that cry my tears i might be too bitter for the soil to swallow.

tell my owner & his sinister son i am the restless spirit in the veins of those bearing my heavy name on their light tongues they have drunk the bitter juice off my dead barks. they can feel what i could not tell with my smothered lips. i am ochanya...

#JusticeForOchanya

woman

0

a child cries & clings to her mother's back because she is everything creation craves for comfort

even the father gets jealous of a place like home built on his wife's chest

he loses his cool to the drug on the body of a woman after his heart, when children lose their life to sleep

this cycle of love continues up on the living soul of a woman ever since she became whole as a root of rebirth

like this is what puberty teaches every girl to become in the house, before anything else, in the eyes of the society.

inheritance

0

an old one fears not you think your father is dying you reveal your fortitude through the teardrops of empathy how can you detail where your feet are yet to touch, where your skin are yet to feel, like the sun in mercury? old folks know it is well with their souls because angels have homes up heaven as demons have dens down earth you worry that your mother is rotting & leaving you to glow in this dark world has she not taught your glint how to burn a forest before dying out? has she not taught your droplet how to flood a town with grace before losing her flow to summer? she has unearthed the mystery of this wilderness to you like a witch to her goddaughter. so, brace yourself into braveness as time winds them up like a calendar does to a year; teach your feet the way of a bird's wing & learn how to swim this tide called life so you won't float like a failed fin so you won't wreck like a sad ship before your season slides. a youth must learn the ancient art

before skin turns to scales.

tales

0

when we talk of friends & love, some are not sure to join the tale—

they have called some names in the dark with the tone of need

& those names have altered with the faces that bear them

before light returned from his journey of redemption.

maybe luck is not part of their ornaments if that's all people wear.

their smiles do not hold seas of tears anymore.

their eyes are draught at some seasons.

some are not sure to join the tale at all, when we talk of friends & love.

they are the ones you see sitting in solitude to knit strength into their broken tissues of hurts, & wear the fabric of healing.

they are beautiful before the world of outward colours like a necessity, & then roll back into their cave after the ovation.

Ridwan Ishola Olorunloba

Ridwan Ishola Olorunloba

have known Tukur for a while. I have being his friend, colleague, reader and at some point, critic. Beyond the dexterity which is common to every diligent creative writer out there, Tukur's versatility and wide range of knowledge make him stand out: he can write everything on something and as well something on everything. This is evident in this collection.

— Micheal Ace, Author, CEO/Editor of ACEworld

Tukur's poetry finds a way to stay when all is gone. This book transcends all the imaginations it fetches. From subtle erotic to poetic sadness, A Boy's Tear in Earth's Tongue rolled beauty into bliss. Perfect opener from Tukur.

> Adedayo Adeyemi Agarau, award Winning Poet & Author of For Boys Who Went.

Tukur's collection of poems is for the mature minds. He talks of the mundane and the critical in one breath; with attention to fine details. His use of words is deliberate as he eloquently stamps his philosophies in each piece. You will definitely enjoy this eclectic literary offering from this beautiful mind.

— Jide Badmus, author of There is a Storm in my Head & Scripture

Boy's Tears on Earth's Tongue is a collection of timeless poems, masterfully written by a mind that is in alignment with the human experience. Tukur's gift to the world lies in how each poem connects with the reader in a most intimate way without losing the big picture – that of appreciating diversity and celebrating individuality!

> Funso Oris, Poet and Co-Author of State of the State:
> Sordid Beatification

Ridwan Ishola Olorunloba

Transitions, fluidity and all the quietness poetry gives.

— Ayoola Goodness, Author of Meditations

Tukur's stronghold is his ability to assume human psychological states with such fluidity, infuse dynamism in them and relate feelings with factualism that we never need to doubt the genuineness of such assumptions.

Aremu Adams Adebisi,
Elartinia Magazine (Asosciate
Editor) & Author of & Author of
Transcendence

about the poet

Tukur Ridwan Ishola Olorunloba is a Nigerian poet and essayist whose style cuts across diverse themes and forms.

Tukur is an aspiring author, literary and social critic, a freelance content writer and editor from Lagos State. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from the University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), Nigeria.

Born on June 13 in the 90's, his love for writing (poetry especially) has landed him a contributive role in the Nigerian literary scene since 2013 when he began the journey. Over the years, his works have appeared on online literary platforms such as Sprinkle Storiez, Our Poetry Corner, Ace World, and Words Rhymes & Rhythm. He has coauthored a number of books with notable poets, young & old.

A Boy's Tears on Earth's Tongue is his first published collection of poems.

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