

W R R C H A P B O O K S E R I E S 2 0 1 9

some people have died today...

BUT
HERE
YOU
ARE

o y i n d a m o l a

Other books by Oyindamola Shoola

Heartbeat (2015)

To Bee a Honey (2018)

The Silence We Eat (2018)

Some people have died today

“...BUT HERE
YOU ARE”

Oyindamola Shoola



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Table of Content

Table of Content	v
Biography.....	8
Reincarnation.....	9
Who Died For the World's Sins	10
Rebirth	13
In Tongues	14
Breaking Bread	15
Praise the Lord.....	16
Redemption	17
Humility.....	18
The Price	19
While You Were Yet Sinners... ..	20
Masculinity.....	21
#marketmarchyaba.....	22
Gender Communion.....	23
Trinity	24
Drug Abuse	25
Transfiguration	26
Rotten Convictions	27
Lagbaja.....	28

Savior 29

Ephesians 5’s One and Only Lover 30

Deliverance 31

Pray32

I smear the blood of those who have
died on my lips and use the hollow of
their bones to praise God.

*"Some people have died today, but
here you are."*

Biography

*I tried to write a memoir once,
but my name felt like a typographical error in it.
I let the pronouns impersonate me so that
the narrative could be more bearable.*

*As if the cage of the world isn't enough, or my mind,
I lock these demons in a book.
I know I won't read it after, but writing it is enough to sacrifice.*

*This acknowledgment is a good way to say our goodbyes
without breaking each other's hearts.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Reincarnation

*I pour my blood as ink to straw.
This too is salvation, confession, and redemption.*

*I drive my fingers into the thin pages;
perhaps my heart would feel something.
It's incomplete, and I feel that way too
It doesn't make sense; I have not always done.*

*Words are just one of those things I reincarnate into
when my body feels undeserving of containing me
and when I am too afraid of choosing to drown instead
of being re-baptized for these sins I bleed in being.*

Who Died For the World's Sins

Tonight, instead
of planning dinner,
a mother planned
her daughter's funeral.

Like it is done to sacrifice,
she dissected her heart
and served her memories
to the longing ears
of consolations.

As her teeth grated seasonings
of darkness she tries to
scrape out God from
all the corners of this
moment that she could find.

Maybe God needed
to pick a few of our sorrows
from earth and this mother's child's
feet were the perfect set
of f(or)(uc)ks for it.

"Is this God way of typing
a s p a c e b a r
in my biography?"
this mourning mother asks.

In prescriptions
to keep her spirit calm
a friend said,
"have you tried

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

thoughts and prayers?"
But some are too
religiously blind to see
that this needs more
than getting better
or curing or healings or miracles.

Last night, the fingers
that used to set the table
before father arrives
was swinging her arms
at her rapist
and killer in defense
and the voice that calls
everyone to dine
has been sown
into the shadows
of these past hours.

Tomorrow, her name will change
and marry an #hashtag,
it will be signed as headlines
on the new-s of your lips
as if this too, isn't one of the old
things we have tried to bury
underneath our tongues
that has reincarnated
through another woman's body.

On Sunday,
this will become
a saint and moral lesson
for the other girls
who are yet to imagine

*that injustice against who they are
is just a quicker route to heaven
and she will resurrect
in the prayers
of older men and women
who rebuke this sorrow.*

*Forever, her name
will drown in her mother's blood
and become buried in her bones.
There is nothing
that can prepare
a parent for
their child's bodies
laying underneath
headstones of death
no matter how beautiful;
not even love
is brave enough
to teach a mother how.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Rebirth

*Of our thoughts raped by ignorance.
Of ignorance that births belief.
Of belief that fathered none of us in need of faith or grace
yet, left us suckling at our mothers' flesh
for life, living or leaving.*

*For thoughts of living in our leaving.
For thoughts of leaving in our living.*

*As we are baptized in the saliva of others' faith,
and of our mothers' prayers piercing holes in our ears.*

*With our bodies clothed by their hands.
With our heads being laid to rest
in what housed us before we were first birthed.*

In Tongues

*In this quest,
I, watching a body rip apart,
blood thrusting words
from its tongue, nose, and throat
with a screeching noise from its mouth
that sounds like birth and death,
of a mother's release of a newborn
and a child letting go of a dying parent
birth poetry.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Breaking Bread

*Half of me is eating the moon
and the other half is grating
my bones with the stars
in wait for the day to break
like the bread in Christ's palms
before crucifixion.*

*This daybreak doesn't bring grace to all beings.
Yet, some of us, riding on the back of broken beings keep whole.*

Praise the Lord

*At church I smear the blood of those who have died
on my lips and use the hollow of their bones to praise God.*

“Some people have died today, but here you are.”

*As if I’m worthy.
I give them a second funeral in the spaces of my mouth
where teeth have been excavated.*

*Maybe one, maybe two, maybe three I’ve lost count.
I fill their graves with my self-righteousness.*

Thank God.

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Redemption

*Due to the warmth of earning that itches my palms,
there are days when I feel like a thief
barging into salvation's compound and claiming it.*

*But I'll receive pardoning from the flawed things I have been created to be.
How do you teach a child to lie and blame him for having it tucked in the
closet of his ears?
Is this sin of being human not a two way street of creation?*

Humility

*And in the arms of worth,
I feel like a visitor knocking the door to be welcomed by my own heart
while out of humility, I keep the key in my pocket.*

*We both wait outside until death comes with a spare key
of unfulfilled dreams, old age, and a failed self.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

The Price

*In the eyes of love, I feel like a borrower,
surrendering myself, then begging
to be fed crumbs from men's mouthful.*

*Hunger-struck of my humanity,
am I too poor to pay to own what I own?*

While You Were Yet Sinners...

*⁸But culture and religion birthed out of your mouths,
and a chosen side of what's acceptable.
That while you were yet men,
our hu(wo)manity has died for you.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Masculinity

*Today, our skins fell off our bodies
and a man split open trying to break our spirits.*

*I saw his guts spill from his throat.
I touched it with my middle finger
and it wasn't as hard as I thought it would be.*

#marketmarchyaba

*God laughed too hard at our madness
and time choked with the blood from our ovaries
hanging in the wrong pipe of the world's body.
And the day stood still because we said our bodies were ours.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Gender Communion

*A man snatched our tongues and said prayers with them,
“men suffer too...”*

*...then carried the bodies of women
to a t-junction for sacrifice.*

*They made medicine out of our breath
and drank the milk from our breasts
to quench their bitter insecurities.*

*God did not come down to eat from this meal,
men did in daylight
and were not questioned.*

Trinity

*Stars too,
in their abode use their eyes to pierce my body
and the moon stalks my steps.*

*Two other people and I walk tonight.
This is my life's trinity as a woman when the day hides its face*

- Me
- My shadow
- The man I keep turning my face to find
out of a fearful bid for safety

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Drug Abuse

*Here I am, gagging on the Holy Communion
and using the bread to floss my teeth,
washing my feet in the baptismal river
and using the deliverance oil to fry all your
words until they look like a sacrifice.*

I am on a diet of your intentional delusions.

*You that reads the bible upside down
and use your lips to sew a style of truth that you like
in the name of God
you are no different.*

And the church says... Amen.

Transfiguration

*Our morality has transfigured,
from eating forbidden fruits to men.*

*From being clothed for eating forbidden fruits
to being stripped of dignity for eating men
with words, marches, and rebellion
against the lack of respect
to our humanization as women.*

*In the eyes of God
and in the shadow of your sight,
we are becoming human.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Rotten Convictions

*And one of the two fools hanging side
these thighs will be saved by your conviction:
that a child is a sexual being
that a dress was an open invitation
that the night is holy enough to wash a man of his sins
that without your sight, touch, and desire
I am not worthy enough to be (treated humanely)
that the uninvited piercing
of the third man 'tween these two thighs
was my cross to bear...*

Lagbaja

*Your god has a way
of masking himself
with offering baskets
and unveiling himself
in the humiliation
of my father's different faith.*

*He has a way of baptizing us with guilt
as forgiveness is sold
at a discount of indoor prayers
with holy men or public tripping upon
invincible stones and dancing
on hot oil barefoot.*

*Is it your god or you
who wears this mask
of deceit in the name of God?*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Savior

*I have been sacrificed by your thoughts
and a hypocritical entitlement to crimson white;
and as I cross your mind, you place a crown weaved with fingers
for spiritual deliverance on my head
and hang a plaque titled "not all men" above it.*

*Men grinning with hypocrisy will bow, and this body will be washed
into another kit amongst others yet to find justice.*

*To save yourself, you say that their actions are only wrong
if I resurrect in the face of your great grandmother,
your grandmother, your mother, your sister, your daughter...*

*These ties are not what makes justice worth parceling
when being treated humanely shouldn't have been something
to ask for in the first place.*

Ephesians 5's One and Only Lover

Or

~~Ephesians 5:1-21, Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:23-33~~

*With shoulders padded with pride,
you always catch a hiccup
after preaching humility to only women
and chastising them
for not massaging
your rotten heads with oil.*

...BUT HERE YOU ARE

Deliverance

This morning, before leaving for the church you part me into two,
somewhere around where we left off last night.

...to crossover into a trance of your power
your fingers hang in places; trying to mark my body.

Your mind fills with the river of pleasure
and your curiosity hangs agape waiting.

You pour yourself vulnerably,
moving your body in different positions
from the bed to the chair, to the floor
laying upside down,
legs up, resting against the wall,
just yearning, wanting and t(h)rusting with time
for the end of these pages to come.

- I should have titled this: A Romantic Affair with Books

Pray

*When my brother felt the world
closing in his throat,
you told him to pray.*

*After my sister's house was broken into
by the branches of other men's bodies
you told her to pray.*

*When you wanted to take,
you preached that it is good to give
but when we needed, you told us to pray.*

*If part or half or the whole of what I have written
makes the blood of your belief scorch the net of your veins
please kneel too and pray.*

*God has heard people like us
pray for strange things
yours won't be the first.*



Oyindamola Shoola is a poet, short-story writer, book reviewer, and blogger.

She published her first collection of poems titled **Heartbeat** in 2015. Her second book titled **To Bee a Honey** was republished by Jeanius Publishing in March 2018 and her third book titled **The Silence We Eat** was published on October 1st, 2018.

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If you enjoyed this chapbook, please purchase her books [Heartbeat](#) and [To Bee a Honey](#) on [Amazon](#). In Nigeria, [To Bee a Honey](#) is available through [Okadabooks](#) and [Roving Heights Bookstore](#) while [The Silence We Eat](#) is available through [Okadabooks](#) and [Patabah Bookstore](#).

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