



PATRICK

Ici Toujours

POIRSON

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CONTENTS

ICI TOUJOURS I	7
ICI TOUJOURS II.....	8
DAD (SOUVENIR)	9
WAKE IN EDEN	13
DIRGE OF THE DEAD.....	14
SOME PEOPLE PASS, SOME PEOPLE STAY.....	16
ICI TOUJOURS III	17
WE ARE HERE.....	19
ICI TOUJOURS IV	21
THERE IS LIFE AFTER LIFE.....	22
THE BEREAVED.....	24
REJOICE FOR THE MAKER IS GOOD.....	26
ICI TOUJOURS V	28
BRIGITTE	29
FREEDOM	30
ICI TOUJOURS VI	32
ELEGY	33
PATRICK'S BIOGRAPHY	35

For Patrick Poirson

husband

father

friend

...ici toujours!



Patrick and Brigitte Poirson in Solothurn, Switzerland on their wedding anniversary in 2012

ICI TOUJOURS I

“

Patrick is not my late husband: up to this very day, he has never been late in love. His train is still on track. The inordinate number and quality of your poems can amply prove it. And they all contribute to mend the missing track.

— *Brigitte Poirson*

ICI TOUJOURS II

“

Patrick Poirson is one man who epitomizes kindness beyond borders. Together with his wife [Brigitte Poirson](#), his hands have helped many a young Nigerian, all the way from France – *people he had never met*. Yes, sadly so, he lost the battle against cancer, but he has won many other battles for many of us. For that, he will never be forgotten!

— *Kukogho Iruesiiri Samson*

DAD (SOUVENIR)

by *Claire Po*



Claire and her dad, Patrick Poirson

Dad caught the train of technology from the start and practically never missed a station. I still remember how as a tiny girl on Wednesday mornings I would check before school he had not forgotten to record my early Disney Club programme. He would patiently explain that all the lights on the video recorder indicated the recording had started on time. Little by little, he tenderly and patiently taught me how to find my way through electronics.

Later on, he would settle after working hours in the room at the end of the corridor, and I waited with anguish and impatience for the next film which would fix on cassettes, then disks, some of our most thrilling family memories.

The digital revolution enabled him to do better editing with greater ease, whether for us, for his friends in the clubs or more recently to commemorate the souvenir of his best friend's daughter killed during the Paris Bataclan terrorist attack.

To celebrate my twenty-fifth birthday, he chose to offer me the most wonderful gift: a film selecting the best moments of twenty-five years of my life shared with "these animals that have made me a man" in Michel Klein's words. This work will remain his unfinished symphony, but I love every passage. And I cultivate this relationship with Nature whose secrets I enjoyed unveiling to him and which he kept marvelling at. I can't help evoking Guizmo, the little tawny owl he so much loved to feel fluttering over his head then perching on top of it, delicately clutched to his hair, before she flew back to my fist. The owl is actually the symbol of wisdom, of death and renewal, and of intelligent clairvoyance

among many peoples. For some, the owl is even the reincarnation of a family member.

Dad did not only live in the digital sphere. He loved cars and above all trains.

The Volkswagen he already drove before my birth (and which was once graced with the visit of a former French Prime Minister's bottom) has survived him and still makes a nephew proud and happy. Not to forget our great Volvo car which meant endless, wonderful trips throughout France and Europe. Or the memorable old Volvo he meticulously restored for my eighteenth birthday. The day he came to pick me up with this unknown car, I stared at him questioningly, and he playfully let me guess why he was coming to meet me with it. Images of these moments are engraved in my memory. And I treasure more than ever the miniature Volvo he gave me when a modern car had to replace the dead one.

Initially, I was not particularly keen on trains. And as a student, whenever I had to catch one, I found it particularly hard to spot the right one and reach my destination in time. But he managed to make me discover all their splendid machinery in our magnificent

landscapes, from legendary trains on the fastest modern tracks to the museum ones journeying leisurely on the small lines of our beautiful area.

He always devoted a lot of time and energy to keeping our historic trains alive until the very end of his earthly existence. He gathered his last forces to see the train he and his friends had been restoring for years at last move along the official line down to the big station where it was to be checked before getting the green light to run for tourism. He will never see it really running. But my best train memory is the trip we made across our sunny Franche-Comté in the old, yellow sun train that is still running on its tracks and in my head.

Dad always travels by train every time I catch one, and his yellow model train shines daily in my room.

WAKE IN EDEN

by *James Ademuyiwa*

i know the tongues of water
and the language of death,
but when they speak at once,
insanity becomes a safe haven.

a body went with a river
on a pyre set on my skin
with a lyre in my mouth
singing his praises, of his courage,
of death's cowardice
and the chants of how life
could be real to the point of
giving us a break from happiness.

i know the tongues of water
and the language of death,
but when they speak at once,
insanity becomes a safe haven.

you are Eden.
you are not dead.
you are back to creation.

Adieu!

DIRGE OF THE DEAD

by *Tukur Loba Ridwan*

(In Patrick's voice... to Brigitte)

Dear beloved,
do not bask in the heat
of this mournful gathering.
Do not sit with them
to declare my demise.
I am not dead...
I rather became nutrients
animating the roots
of these sprouting seeds.
I became follicles of plants
growing on this grave
imprisoning a decaying flesh-
a punishment for sleeping
for the rest of my life...
Tell mother not to cry
for what she calls a loss.
Tell father not to grieve
over the stretch of my life
into the cells of plants.
Tell friends to come water me-
not with their tears.
Tell God to give me sunshine and rain.
I need to grow once again.

If you, brother, cannot
bear my absence in the chamber
of your memory,
pluck these fruits off my branches
and share with sister
when you get home.
My spirit would be pleased to rest
in your veins and arteries
through these juices of my fruits.
Use the seeds to plant more
of me in the brain of Earth
the same way you plant me
in your memory.
I am not dead...
I rather mutated into a plant- my fruits live
after my earthly labour.
Do not just sit and curse me
with the mouth of elegies.
Do not kiss me goodbye...

SOME PEOPLE PASS, SOME PEOPLE STAY

by *Kukogbo Iruesi Samson*

Some people pass
we do not hear them
we do not see them
and we do not see prints
on the paths they walked
they pass and are forgotten
quicker than a gust of wind
passing by a still river

Some people stay
we hear them, we see them
and we see footprints
that tell tales of where they went
and we sigh, wistfully
with tears, '*unwasted*'
for, though they passed
they stay, in our hearts

Adieu Patrick
you stay!

ICI TOUJOURS III

“

Such was Patrick indeed at all times:
an ordinary man of extraordinary
kindness and charisma.

— *Brigitte Poirson*



Patrick Poirson loved trains

WE ARE HERE

by *Madu Chisom Kingdavid*

Mother, before you, we are, our faces wearing
footprints of cemetery roads. We are
prison breakers from the prison
of sorrow and solitude where
our eyes have shed
bullets of rain.

We are here, We - the milk-toothed saplings
under the tutelage of your grey hairs,
pledging our stems to the fertile
roots of your poe-tree.

We know that death took the crop and
left you with harvest of sand.
That is why we have

come with words wearing the crystal
lights of your skin to clear the dark
horizon of doubts where grief
daily lures your eyes to
pour libations.

Mother, now take these baskets full of harvest
of ripe condolences. Accept mother,
accept, that the maiden
sun will rise from your

heart of August
rainbow.

ICI TOUJOURS IV

“

Patrick was as fit and boisterous as ever when one fine spring morning, the doctors bluntly declared him dying. But he fought tooth and nail against the monster that was swallowing him from the inside. He refused sedation from the hospital, and held the ground at home with my assistance until his last but one day.

— *Brigitte Poirson*

THERE IS LIFE AFTER LIFE

by *Iliya Kambai Dennis*

Your heart felt thick darkness of sorrow,
Prancing to Mount Everest,
Searching a place isle of calm
To keep a soul in perpetual solace.
Have you seen a fair woman who is not fair?
She could be dancing naked in the square,
Without shame, But clothed in glowing
majesty.
She steals every joy. Every peace. Every
happiness.
The way she paints these images of fiction.
The way she uses words to entice hearts.
When she prods, her soft hands is fire to
hearts.
And this dark magical moment like Potters'
dream,
Paintings of tinted fate, a crimson of love
stolen,
Suns' happiness fading like sea waves,
Moons' humility in twilight truncated.
It reveals the prodigious meaning of a dying
rainbow.
Oh, you beautiful ugly face of truth!
Shouldn't you be merciful to all?
Stream of tears from Brigitte's eyes say:
"Patrick Poirson is dead."

Brigitte Poirson is no more."

Should all Poirsons sleep in this endless night?

Oh, Brigitte, voice of Naija poetry,

Cover your gloomy face with smile of hope.

As far as my eyes can see, my heart can feel,

What if there is life after life?

This mourning. This sadness. This grief. This
darkness.

Open your heart, let the light of moon

Illuminate your now jejune heart

With her blanket to nestle without regrets,

What if tomorrow...

You'll find life after life with him?

What if Poirson is reading this with you?

THE BEREAVED

by *Hussani Abdulrahim*

There are days you wish to summon death
Through broken mirrors on empty walls
And hurl back every pain you've swallowed,
Banish every tear you've shed.

There are times you want to dip hands in
water,
That sort that fills one with relief,
Feel the anguish snake via your veins
Dissipate, melt away like camphor smoke.

Adrift, there are days you roam the bleak
streets.
No joy, nor zeal in growing old.
In solitude, nights are darker and lengthier,
The hum of mosquitoes and crickets nastier.

There are days you want to hang in the air,
Let the wind flaunt you like a weightless
feather.
But isn't up to you, too burdened
by grief,
To sail gently down like snowflakes
To rock easy like a canoe on placid waters?

There are days in the silent bathroom
You keep the shower running forever.
Eyes closed, you're in the garden
Hand in hand with your beloved,
Butterflies crowning your hair.

They say time heals all wounds,
That it will heal you too,
But abrasions wrought by death's poaching
Are as persistent as cysts and cancer.

So, do search for your smile on plain mirrors!
Drink deeply the smooth texture of night air!
Trust, love, hope, giggle and live!
The supreme healer puts a balm over all sores.

REJOICE FOR THE MAKER IS GOOD

by *Ashetola Victor King*

Loving Poirson flew away
As he escaped the dragon and our hews,
Doving on prisms of celestial array
As he escaped the dirge which we shew.

He breathed his earthly last,
Begone from Earth's submergence.
He trekked up into heaven's caste
And entered the arrays of undying angels.

For us, 'neath below,
For us, the living crier or laughing stock,
Get ready, nice fellow,
For we, leaving tomorrow, Will in death be
stock!

Worry for those thou had
Plastered, bound, picked out in preparation.
Sorry for those gone hard.
Leave out our souls in God's dimension.

Rejoice, for God is good.
He'll bring us up, by and by.
BRIGITTE



Patrick and Brigitte Poirson

ICI TOUJOURS V

“

I can't help evoking Guizmo, the little tawny owl he so much loved to feel fluttering over his head, then perching on top, delicately clutched to his hair, before she flew back to my fist.

— *Claire Poirson*

BRIGITTE

by *Kukogbo Iruesi Samson*

*b*ird winging tornado
*r*hythm stirring leaves
*i*nk writing life
*g*uardian of words
i salute you
*t*urning here and
*t*urning there..nature
*e*ngraves your name

FREEDOM

by *Ganiyu Mohi Adedare*

You will sing again when we grab your thighs,
You will erase our souls from suffering,
You will set our arms free after shading your
path with heartless concern.

You created an abode and named it freedom,
that gets no concern with an age of insanity.

We got trapped in agony.

Now we are tasting suffering every minute of
the day.

Now we hide ourselves
in shards of bended tomorrows,
Feeling the image that stands for the
worthlessness of slavery.

Last night of no light,

We forgot to pray to your Saviour,
and now you're already lost to suffering.

We're lost in the language of whipping.

Let freedom reign!!!

This is not for sale.

Let's amend the ways where freedom faulted!

And we're applauding and embracing
and more still we are beaten by the
"sweetened agony"

And dance to the tune of tormentation.

Let freedom reign in my hood!

Freedom is our aims.

We want freedom,
So we will not die in suffering.
Freedom!
On this, your lane, we shall sleep.
We thought to live with you,
So to free and erase our palms,
Which have been slippery for a century.

ICI TOUJOURS VI

“

Along the years, Patrick joined several clubs and associations, but the one he got seriously involved in was the team of “*ferrovipathes*” (*crazy on trains*) – ferroviPat, in his case – who are still currently repairing an old X 2816 locomotive that will run for tourists between Besançon (France) and Le Locle (Switzerland)..

— *Brigitte Poirson*

ELEGY

by *Savior Michel*

this shape tastes like teardrops.
i mean death. how the sting swims our
pulmonary arteries and veins.

the spell of his name
mocks his feet at the gate of fruitful labour
___i weep. mother laments.
father sings dirge to flying spirit.

if you meet
#Patrick_Poirson, tell him that life is a
beautiful sorrow in his absence.
tell him;
___a boy grows into a man to find shelter in
his canopy,
but nature brings him the fate i hate.

your exit is a taste of sour milk.
this rapes our tongue like unripe orange.

now we walk on trackless path to muse at
midnight of strolling agony.
___we light a lonely lamp to discover the
habitation of our separate soul.

this is tragic.

this is a melancholy.

___we lost the glory of the rising sun.

___we lost the singing lips of milkmaid.

___your exit spells confusion and a lone child
trades on the feather of wandering birds... this
is tragic as silence glues our concerned passer-
by's.

i cry.

sister mourns

in a black morning of staining sorrow.

____goodbye sire.

____goodbye great iroko, till eternity blows
its trumpet of unification.

PATRICK'S BIOGRAPHY

by Brigitte Poirson



"He always devoted a lot of time and energy to keeping our historic trains alive until the very end of his earthly existence."

Bar-le-Duc in Meuse, France, the city where Patrick was born, was not included in the part of Lorraine ceded to Germany between 1871 and 1919 and again during the second world war. But Patrick knew of a great uncle whose mother tongue was German, the official language imposed over Moselle, that part of Lorraine which fell under German rule back then. Did the past forced bond between warring nations influence him somehow? He himself could speak fluent German at an early

age and cherished this language so much that he built lasting relationships with German friends from his childhood.

His family did suffer deeply during WWII though. Two of his mother's teenage brothers were shot dead as hostages in 1944 in retaliation for the death of a Nazi officer in their village. Patrick's father was spared because he was carrying a "Bahnhof" (railway station) card.

Years later, born the last but one in a family of eleven siblings, Patrick led the happy-go-lucky life of a small boy enjoying the protection and care of his elder sisters, most of whom still live in their birthplace today.

But his father, Olivier, died of lung cancer when he was only nine. Since his mother had been steadily losing her eyesight for years and was turning blind, she decided her youngest six-year-old son should stay with her, but Patrick had to leave for the city of Troyes to be raised by his childless godfather. Cut off from his family, the boy received the strict education of a tradition-impregnated couple who both spoiled and stifled him.

His dream was to join the SNCF (French national railway network) as a driver or an

engineer. He was able to wield concepts and techniques remarkably well. Electronics was always one of his passions.

But his foster parents decided he should join a bank, where he actually worked until a short time before his death. He did enjoy working in the foreign department of BNPPARIBAS. Holding conversations in many languages around the world and dealing with international bank transactions and issues made him feel comfortable with a job he had not originally opted for.

Patrick's mother often told us about a family tradition upholding that she descended from M. Robespierre, the French revolutionary leader who lost his head under the guillotine in 1794. Though we always found it impossible to trace her origin to the "incorruptible", we would frequently make fun of Patrick's incredible aptitude to keep a secret, and his cool-headed habit to never lose his head in any situation. His smiling restraint and mental stability in all situations, his permanent and discreet presence whenever he was needed, his capacity to discover or invent solutions to thorny issues endeared him to all those who worked or made friends with him.

And his “quite British” sense of humour wrapped everything with a pun and a smile.

Stubborn he was. He was turned down for four years on end before his regularly renewed wedding proposal brought him a yes. Each time it happened, he would remain in the shade, patiently and serenely waiting to become what he never ceased to be ever after: a perfect lover of a husband and an extra caring dad.

A few years ago, our trip to South Africa – induced by my students’ special interest in this country – and later on, the advent of the social networks happily changed our presence to the world. Thanks to a winning combination of interactions, we were able to insert our tiny selves into the great African saga through literature. We have always considered it as a door open on the future. And we have built affectionate relationships with people around the world.

Patrick loved reporting family or social events with his video camera and was keen on restoring old films, but trains, of course, proved his lifelong passion. Steam trains, model trains or modern, fast ones held no secrets for him. His brothers were not

outdone with this craving, which took us to our garden tracks or his family's attics on countless occasions, or to Switzerland and Germany in recurrent occurrences. Along the years, Patrick joined several clubs and associations, but the one he got seriously involved in was the team of "ferrovipathes" (crazy on trains) – ferroviPat, in his case – who are still currently repairing an old X 2816 locomotive that will run for tourists between Besançon (France) and Le Locle (Switzerland). He recently did a lot of manual and electronic work on his beloved Micheline – which he said jokingly was the only one he'd ever 'betray' me with. To date, Micheline is in the process of receiving all the hard-to-get official authorizations to run on the SNCF tracks in a near future.

Patrick was as fit and boisterous as ever when one fine spring morning, the doctors bluntly declared him dying. But he fought tooth and nail against the monster that was swallowing him from the inside. He refused sedation from the hospital, and held the ground at home with my assistance until his last but one day. The world of medicine vividly remembers how he stunningly stood up against his demise on his own for months.

His train friends have been so shocked and now miss him so much that they have named the X 2816 after him and displayed his name on the side of the locomotive.

His childhood friend - the one who lost his daughter in the Paris Bataclan attack in 2015 - still visits our place regularly to run Patrick's model trains.

His former colleagues last week said he was always so modestly efficient and available that they still think of him "in the present tense".

Such was Patrick indeed at all times: an ordinary man of extraordinary kindness and charisma.

BRIGITTE POIRSON POETRY CONTEST 2017 ANTHOLOGY

THE TRAIN STOPS AT SUNSET

Edited by
BRIGITTE POIRSON
KUKOGHO IRUESIRI SAMSON

The 2017 Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest (BPPC) anthology was titled 'THE TRAIN STOPS AT SUNSET' in honour of Patrick Poirson, for his support of young Nigerian writers alongside his wife Brigitte Poirson and in recognition of his love for trains.