

TO KILL AN ANGEL



A Collection of Poems

Chime Justice Ndubuisi

TO KILL AN ANGEL

(poems)

CHIME JUSTICE NDUBUISI

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Cover Design: *Grafreaks*

Published in Nigeria by:
Words Rhymes & Rhythm
Authorpedia Publishers
Abuja | Lagos | Ibadan
08169027757, 08060109295
www.authorpedia.net



To,

Olaedo Chidera.

*...and to the memory of my late grandparents: Robert
and Felicia Eneh Abba*

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ISCARIOT TRILOGY III: THE DEFENSE

He was not just my friend and
brother, He was my mentor and Master.
I'd never have thought of betraying Him,
except for the threats to my life and family!

The Scribes, the Pharisees and Sadducees
'seated on the seat of Moses say
one thing and do another'!
They said they've heard of the Messiah
but don't know Him in person;
that the kiss was just to ID Him.

I was not alone in this; Peter
knew all along, the three denials,
all part of the plan!

Initially, I ran away, I couldn't do it,
fear gripped me, my family was under siege,
my aged mother cried all night!

My two daughters returning from school
were kidnapped by the cabal.

My wife was inconsolable, incessantly nagging.
She said, "be a man Judas,
write your name in the sand of time.
What is there in a kiss anyway,
do it or I'll divorce you!"
Yet, I couldn't bring myself to do it.

High priest Caiaphas said, "it's just a kiss,
you won't have to do it twice,
just kiss and leave Him to His fate,
He will sort Himself out, He's God' son."
that was the only push I needed
having seen all his miracles.

They say I betrayed him for greed.

Mtchew!

What is 'thirty pieces of silver' to me,
that much I made every 30 minute!

I did it hopping that as God' son He
would actually sort Himself out.
He has the capacity, even the capability
to disappear or shape shift into an angel,
a rock or anything!
He could've blinded the soldiers, or
perhaps, changed their language
as it were in the Tower of Babel!

There are a plethora of things He
could do to save the day,
being the Messiah we know, but
How would the scriptures fulfill if
there's none to be betrayed?
How would He save the world if
there's no one like me to betray Him?

I ran away, not because I'm remorseful,

I ran as fast as I can
knowing the world is cruel,
They won't appreciate the cursed part I
played in the salvation of everyone.

ONE EYED GOD

Somewhere in the old days
Some dogs showed up, two of them
Plus an older one,
Limping and nearly blind, among them;
He said something of an old world
In which he was a master
And had slaves and maidens
At his beck and call
He said he was so tall
And heaven was so close
That he heard their conversations up there.
He said there were many worlds past and present
And each has different maker
With different terms and conditions,
That people change location after each death.

I asked what happened to those makers,
He sighed: "they lost their relevance,
They died!"
But then nobody really GAF!

When asked who made the present world,
He made mention of something in the form of,
And he started pointing at me, and saying:
"You", I mean you". I turned to look at myself,
I detached myself from myself,
And I can't believe I'm the image
Of the image that made the world!
If I had made myself, I'd be ashamed,

Ashamed of what imperfection I made!

The old dog laid down and stretched his legs

And said: "Just believe!

A light emerged a thousand million years ago

And muscled the world into a substance

Undressing the first set of darkness!"

He touched his eye and touched mine:

I saw my soul, a rare sight,

Something some can never experience forever,

Entering through the gate of life

Where giant mummified dogs mount guard.

I'm unholy; I can't get to the square

Unless I am called three times;

"Speak Lord, your son is listening!"

I asked for wealth and affluence instead,

I'm always involved with the wrong things.

He replied, "that's why you can't get through.

It's easier for a needle to get through

The eyes of a cat and not blind it

Than for the kingdom to enter the rich man!"

I stood there all dumb and sequestered

Trying to figure out what and why!

I know some rich men,

They already have their kingdom now,

They truly don't deserve a second one,

The world's sweetness is not meant for a few.

But sometimes, among pigs, you find gold,

Something lustrous, something to cherish.

I needed some assurance, a sign perhaps

So this guy walked in, looking well dressed,
A preacher, you know how they talk,
Like salesman trying to make sales.
He talked about doing good and repentance
And storing up treasures in heaven and
How earthly things are pain and vain.
I nodded my head in agreement,
I'm poor of words, so poor!

WEAVERBIRD

(after Kofi Awoonor)

Weaverbird, weaverbird,
Did we chase you away when you
Built your nest on our roof?
When you laid your eggs
Did we smash them?
Did we roast your progenies?

Weaverbird, weaverbird,
Why have you come back again?
This time with all you relatives
To take up our house, our inheritance!
I heard you came from the west
Where all the houses are painted white!
We extended a hand, you gripped us.
We allowed you to build your nest
Right inside our *obi*, our ancestral heritage
But you urinated, you defecated seven times!
We thought you would perch and let us live.

Weaverbird, weaverbird,
You said you came from the west
Where every hill and mountain touches heaven,
Where every tree is a ladder to heaven!
You said you came to teach us,
To tell us how to fly without perching!
You have said a lot of things,
We are confused and tired.

You said we are doomed if we
Don't learn your flying pattern; not that we
Don't have our own ways – our heritage.
We thought you would live and let us live,
But you are possessive!
You have painted us black,
You have constantly doused our light
So that yours would shine forth.
You said you have annexes large enough
In the kingdom of your God for us all!
Now we have left our house,
Now we have been flying with you
But it seems you've missed your way.

Weaverbird, weaverbird,
We shall return to our former house
Defiled from your urine and excrement,
We would clean and sanctify it.
Your pattern of flying is complicated too!
You've misled us to think we're primitive,
You made us think ourselves barbaric.

Your flying pattern is the same as ours,
Only that yours is more complicated
...and probably not the best.
We were only intoxicated
By your fine tuned voice; your finesse!
Whichever way, we shall return home,
We are done with you!

TO KILL AN ANGEL I

Weave, weave, weave!
Words are heavy loads,
Flowery when soaked in love,
Fiery in anger!

The hard question of how to shape the mouth
When weaving what and what not,
Should we not try to free ourselves?

There's always a fence in-between,
Or so we have been taught that
Scented words are like flowers
That attracts bees.
The nice ones fear to be misunderstood,
The misunderstood ones fear nothing.
The streets would first of all
Hate the garrulous, then love them again
Before destroying them, only to mourn them!

Strange!
We that were not made in any image
Were born twice before our time
See how small we are, yet higher!
Let us look inside for whatever it is,
That makes us thick from skin to blood;
It could be the blood - for sacrifices!
Doubt is a sweet security,
Faith, a dumb escape from reality!
How do I plead without annoying anyone?

I stand, gazing at the mirror of fate;

The blurry visions alone - far removed
From ordinary eyes - could make one blind!

Who would believe me among the Angels
Without risking sundry absurdities?
That for the rewards,
He who was sent wouldn't have come.
We're all permanently selfish beings
Looking out to please us, to ease us,
For seeing alone is not believing; faith!
Trusting he could do all things
Who had called him out from a dark attic
To fame, through a temporal death.

Who among the heavenly bodies would consider me
Without wanting effortlessly to misinterpret me
Or annoy me with mystical words,
Words that mean nothing to flesh and bones,
Words that are heavy load, weaved in indented accents.

And the hard question,
How to shape the mouth
When weaving what and what not
Would be easy to answer, if only you know
This question of science and progress:
Why are you here?

TO KILL AN ANGEL II

Aeolian mountains, exalted!
What if an Angel in all its holiness
Were suddenly to take a form like mine
Again as they did before,
What will it expect of me now?
Many of them are there for us
To feel them - a semblance of justice.
My memory of you is a heavy burden,
I dare not be invisible before you.

At night myriads of Angels venture out
In pursuit of what makes us mortal.
Alone in the world, drawn by darkness:
Darkness! What makes you this attractive?

Should an Angel come to earth today
Into the dark part of our thoughts
It will roam - exiled in our little darkness.
We are nothing but stains
Constantly hungering for brightness,
Strangers unto each other,
And according to some makeup artist,
Are we, for Jude' sake, to remake each other,
It will be the last thing we ever did!
We will be lost to ourselves
Holding within us thoughts of ourselves.

Holy ones, come!
See beyond the human eyes,
Undress me each time I rearrange my thoughts,
Lay it bare before the world!

Let them see me the way I am,
Lest the past stands before us
To form the first poetries of our existence
And drag us out of the nights of
Drunkenness with our glasses half empty
And half full, only to kill us,
Our blood splashed on the eternal canvas,
What a beauty - you need a glimpse.

Angels, like gods are dead beings,
They cannot do without our constant veneration.
From the beginning of things,
We're the water, they are the garden;
Sad reality, our eternity is a mirage:
A two gigabytes memory cannot
Contain a ten gigabytes video!

So mortals die many times
before their deaths - fear of
the unknown - constantly anxious
of death and the Second Coming.
For Christ' sake, do not come again!
Why didn't we end it in the first?

HOW TO SPELL SOMETHING FROM BEHIND

2020:

I, represents Insensitivity to the people's plight
R, says that democracy has been Raped
A, definitely means Anti-people policies aimed at
Hoodwinking the people, that is the Hoi polloi
U, means Underdevelopment which the country has
receded to
B, actually stands for Bad governance in all ramifications.

Now when I glance at the sun
In this homeless clan I found myself,
It is not hard to figure out
That my people, our collective intelligence
Are but fragments pieced together
From 'across the pond'.
We're but figments thrown
At a 'change' for a dime.

At what moment were we sold?
At what time were we betrayed?
We have gone but countless paces backwards!
We have been ruthlessly oppressed
We have been constantly cast down
We have been smeared with triumphalism
We have been lynched front, back and center,
We have been crippled by sectarianism
We have been segregated and discriminated against

We have been seared in flames of captivity
We have been manacled with withering injustice!
We have been exiled in our own land...
It has gotten to that!

No love lost, but this is not a 'government
For nobody and for everybody'!
There have been some cash cows
There have been bad cheques
There have been tribal and religious injustices.
There's hunger in the country;
Let us forgive the President and the Presidency,
They were not duly briefed, can't be everywhere...

I have been asked countless in my homeland:
"What tribe are you? Why do you have dreadlocks",
By men of the Forces, armed to the teeth.
I smiled and shook my head,
Sensing the indignation and hate in the question.
At what point was it we were betrayed?
In a time like this, one has to be careful.
I cautiously replied: "I am a Nigerian!"
There comes the sniggering:
"Who asked you to say a word?"
Unfortunately, I dare not walk away
Or turn my back on these demigods:
One more young life won't hurt a fly, definitely.
I stood, smiling and nodding my head;
I dare not frown or his
Trigger-happy hand will smile at me.
Last week, a youth was shot on the back:

He was running from a mob, unarmed,
Unto the jittery and obviously nervous rookie Policeman
Whose alibi was, 'he was running too fast'!
Another was clubbed to death – a woman!
They found out late that it was
The Bible and not the Koran she tore.

"Are you suddenly dumb mister man?"
Came the deep voice from behind me;
This jostled me to a "No Sir".
I do not want to die of 'accidental discharge'!
What mess have I gotten myself into?
I have been a patriotic Nigerian,
I have paid my taxes regularly,
Which in turn pay these men!
"Are you a dog, a horse or a cat?"
Came the next question from behind.
"A Dog looks up on you,
A Horse sees you as equal,
A Cat looks down on you"
Came a valid explanation from around.
"I'm a human" I managed to spit out.
"You are a human?"
What makes you a human, eh?"
A candid retort from behind me,
Which I now scan effortlessly for answers:
"Because I know the difference between
human being and being human, I said."

The sign post reads: 'Military Checkpoint'.
"Heeza dog" said the first voice behind me,

"No, heeza cat, shoot him on the leg"
A second voice shouted in a ruthless ascent.
My heart sank in a trembling pain!
That was a command; I thought to myself
Then waited for the bodily pain.
Seconds passed amicably, slowly:
"When will you all stop complaining?"
A new voice said, breaking the silence.
At this point, there's need for boldness:
"Not until the self-styled masters
Let their whips drop from their hands, and
Probably when this kind of intimidation,
And unreported brutality of youths
By legalized armed men stop" I said frankly.
What do I stand to lose?
If you talk you die, if you don't talk,
You die still!
But we're not going quietly into that dark night,
The flames of resolute revolution in us
Will not simmer or be vanquished
For where there is life, there is death.
For where there is oppression, there is revolt.
For where there is war, there is surviving!

MOURNING AT THE CHURCHYARD I

Perhaps, the greatest injustice
Against the dead is resurrecting them,
Letting them pass through here again:
One lifetime well spent is enough for any man!

Today, there's mourning at the churchyard,
And little children crying for reasons of their own;
Moistened nose and thousand teary eyes
Doesn't move me anymore!

Much as I do not love you,
I did not notice you, and
I did not realise you were dying.
Even when I came face to face
At the graveyard with loads of fallen heads
Confused by your kleptoligious ambassadors,
I could only watch!

But when I passed through the churchyard last Sunday,
Lonely and abandoned by the worshipers,
I pinched myself and made a loud noise
That stood tall in a mock reverberation against
The wall of the immutable abyss you had fallen.
I grudgingly extended a hand too late.
Finally, I crest my name on the wall as a mourner.

ENUGU

On the horizon,
The morning mist glitters with innocence,
From the bowers of mother's cooking pot
Up to the chimney; unripe smoke:
Ah, the smoke I cherish like harmattan dust.
Your beauty, I can see, is intentional,
Luring and impeccable.

Enugu,
Birth place of the rising sun
Gliding its way up to the mouth of the mountain
Unforbidden by the louring sky.
I could try but would fail to paint the picture
Of the feeling of love
Which I unintentionally feel for you.
I feel in my blood, the tranquillity
Which became your second name.
I love your landscapes; the silent murmurs
Among secluded trees,
The giggling of mating birds
And the continuous laughter of your cosmopolitans.
I see, with the blind eyes of bats
Groping for midnight's whereabouts on midday,
Sunrays cascading through and through
Wreaths of green hilltops
As it connects to a more greener leave ears.

In the streets, through cracked walls,
And through the branches of green trees,

Voices are heard from naked hearts
Chasing me like forbidden passion
From which I hid my mountain head
Under the vibrating and unrepentant silence
Of your suburbs.
I can't describe the irreplaceable shadows
Imposed by the unapologetic moon
While I traverse your inter-states at moon-time
As old moons beget the now known moon;
Who would ever think that the sun dies daily?

On the alluring hill of Udi,
Scavenging eagles twitter about,
Hugged by the serene endless wind,
And could rise as high as the heavens;
Those auspicious creations, king of birds,
Envied by all the birds:
The vultures have all grown bald heads
Because of simple unrestricted jealousy!

Enugu,
On the horizon,
Cold as the naked stomach of harmattan,
Entwined in the cuddle of nature,
Daubed in the dark fabrics of mother earth,
Hexed by the same muscular hand
That beats the weather-beaten anvil
That moulds eternal gods at Olympus.
Enugu, the second name for Parnassus;
Where the nine Muses recuperate from daily stress
As your gentle breeze caresses their virgin retinas.

Enugu,
On the horizon,
The apron of the east,
The back that shelters from the sun.
Your cool breeze caresses my black cheek,
As black as coal; the treasure beneath,
That legacy of primeval exploration,
The old survival, pride of mother earth.
Like the heavens, you have no hiding.
Should I paint a colour of you,
It would be crimson like the morning rose.

ELEGY

Lately, I write from my bed,
Eat on my bed,
Stare at the table like some imbecile.
I sleep on the floor:
The heat is too much!
Unlike last year February - climate change!
You were there, tactically distracted
By the noises of humanity,
Fountains upon fountains of dropping
Noises splashing at the bottom of our
Ears - our common threshold,
The droplets - come in miniature shapes.

No one cares about you until you are dead!
Life is meaningless,
Boring, stale!
Washed up,
Exposed!
The old me is dead!

Life is nothing but some terror
That vows to destroy us!
I will go see the doctor,
To look into my transient self,
She'd see nothing,
I'd say, "look again Doc,
There must be something there
Inside of me crawling,
Wanting out,

Causing me pain".

"Oh Doctor, look again
My stomach is in tumult
Like some snakes are there
Fighting supremacy battle;
My back aches as a result,
My chest hurts!"

"I think you are restless"
She'll say quite politely - IDK
If it's just me or this unfeeling pain;
Why are female Doctors always polite?
It unnerves me most often.
Illness is some sort of terrorism
Which our bodies, unable to endure
Are overwhelmed and feel insecure!
Let it step out of its ego for once,
Just a single step down,
Let us battle like man and man!

Something is waking inside me,
Yellow like MTN, everywhere I go.
She'd ask what, I'd tell her,
She'd say, "You are distracted"
I'd think of countless distracting factors
Hindering my progress: Slay Queens,
Brothels, Cards, Bet9ja, strayed spirits!
She'd say, "Let them out,
Pick your pen, write them down"
I'd say, "Mine is a poisoned pen"

She'd say, "Let the poison out.
Like lonely lover, it seeks freedom
Breathing like one of us."

I'd return home to my bed,
You won't want to know what it
Feels like to be lonely:
Life is tasteless, conscienceless!
It feels nothing like we do.
It brings us here, allows us a taste of
Its limitlessness - casually
Strips us of its awesomeness!

What I see ahead is deathless space,
Eternity that drags us around
And back to the beginning of things!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHIME JUSTICE NDUBUISI (CJN) hails from Udi in Enugu state, Nigeria. He is a humanist and a poetivist. He is the Poetry Editor at African Crayons. Some of his poems have been published in *The Muse*, a Journal of Creative and Critical writing at the University of Nigeria, *The African Eyeball Anthology of Poetry*, *Rhythms of Truth Poetry Anthology*, *Songs from Unsung Poets Anthology*, *Lyriversity*, and on his Facebook page. In 2016, his poem **‘An Open Letter to God’** was longlisted in the Babishai Niwe Poetry Prize Award Uganda. **‘To Kill An Angel’** is his first published chapbook.



