

Bee

Buzz &

Baby babble

Poems by

Kudo Eresia-Eke

Odseme Publishers, Port Hacourt

Kudo Eresia-Eke 2000

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the copyright owner.

First Published 1995

ISBN 978-33113-1-X

Produced in Nigeria by  
Taijo Wonukabe Limited, Port Hacourt

# Contents

- Foreword
- Song
- Inversions
- Dreamalise
- Staircase
- Thank You, Son
- No Fire Next Time
- If
- Destiny
- The Coin
- First Prayer
- Silence
- Death
- Life
- Sound Supreme
- Next
- Valentine Card

- Nothing
- Let's Worship
- Living dead
- Living Room
- The Leviathan
- African Girl
- Tasteless Nectar
- Mr Careful
- Surrender
- Tribute to Teachers
- African Child
- What's Love
- Like A Mat
- Fire
- Fat Wife
- Police Bullet
- Househusband
- Virgin
- Song of a Lady

- Mr. Right
- Heartbreak
- Small God
- The Difference
- The X-Factor
- Network News Round-Off
- Miss Fashion
- Mask
- Graduate
- Exam Success
- Child Abuse
- World Cup
- Sweet Seventeen
- The Convoy
- Presidential Perfume

With love to **Joanna**, my wife.

# Foreword

The poems in this collection are mature and deal with the usual spectrum of themes and experiences of a young man growing up to face the realities of life in our society. They are served up in a manner as to stimulate the literary palate with subjective and objectified imagery which communicates effectively.

The musical quality of Eresia-Eke's poetry is evident in the repetition of lines, phrases or words and in the use of alliteration. This establishes the poems as lyrical, a quality which propels them to the general reader and even to the student who wishes to increase his stock of contemporary poetic styles and experiences.

Gabriel Okara

# Song

I would be all melody  
My body all harmony.  
I would dwell on every lip  
And live in every heart  
If I were a song.

But who says I'm not?



# Inversion

Virgin green is  
Signal for the browning leaves  
Break of dawn  
First crow of dusk  
Siren of a newborn  
Cradle of his last breath  
Sound of a new song  
Harmony of its dirge  
Warmth of welcome  
Fever of parting  
Clatter of laughter  
Sounds of sobbing,  
Stream of joy  
River of pain  
Stem of morning  
Roots of night.

# Dreamalise

Dream it

Believe it

Feel it

Know it

Act it

It comes

**IT JUST COMES**

# Staircase

When I climb the staircase

I have a zillion eyes  
I see everything  
Within, without,  
Inside, outside,  
Behind, before,  
Here and there,  
All at a time  
When I climb the staircase.

When I climb the staircase

Bushes, rivers, planets, seas, forest:  
All a part of me.  
My breath, the wind,  
All men, my sons,  
All women, my daughters,  
All animals, my pets,  
All fishes, my friends  
When I climb the staircase.

When in climb the staircase

I am all  
Yet all is null.  
I live for all

Yet all is me  
When I climb the staircase.

When I climb the staircase  
I am the king in an endless kingdom  
I make, I unmake,  
I know yet I don't learn,  
I see yet I'm blind,  
I hear yet I'm dead  
I speak yet I'm dumb,  
When I climb the staircase.

When I climb the staircase,  
I know, I am,  
I am, yesterday, today, tomorrow,  
I am, for time is still,  
Motion, yes, movement, no,  
When I climb the staircase.

When I climb the staircase,  
I'm lost,  
Lost in the wild,  
Yet I know I'm home,  
Home with myself,  
When I climb the staircase.

# Thank You, Son

I don't know how it happens  
But any time I smile  
To a crying child on the street,  
Something comes...  
Anytime I give a ride to  
A scraggy old lady  
Something comes...  
Anytime I free a bird  
Trapped in a cage,  
Something comes...  
It comes and it touches my heart  
With honey and  
I wonder.

# No Fire Next Time

The cloud is churning,  
The sun is raining,  
Bright as night  
Can I bring some water to put  
The fire to sleep  
No, no, fireman, let it burn  
Bring me some fuel instead  
And make it burn brighter and faster  
To eat up all the world until all left are  
Smouldering twinkles taunted by gales,  
For then I know that rest is here  
And in near time all will be gray and  
Then indeed peace is,  
For nothing anymore

# If . . .

If you love a plant,  
If you love a dog or man,  
If you love a mate, colleague or enemy,  
If you love a beggar on the street,  
A fighter in the front,  
A robber on the run,  
Or a lover in the night;  
If you love all forms of life,  
Why then bother with me  
For in all these I am  
Yet I'm none  
I'm everything  
Yet I'm nothing  
I am the mighty void  
If you find me you find nothing  
Yet you find everything.

# Destiny

Dear Destiny,

If you want me to be one of the strips of

The rainbow

I shall refuse to be

Until you let me mix a little of each

Of my favourite colours

To one different from any of its constituents.

Then I know

Apart from the others

That I am.

I may not turn out as

Prominent as red

Sweet as orange

Beautiful as blue or

Good as green

But at least I'll know

That in my own way

I AM



# The Coin

The wind whirls, the coal smoulders,  
The fluttering flicker threatens my busy eyes  
I blink them in fear  
As my mind stops to submit  
But, no, this coin I must find.

A growl of thunder, a flash of lightening  
A shy rain and my head is wet  
Pollinated to a tinge of silver  
A whack of cold and my mass is a rattler  
Neck strained and sprained  
But, no, this coin I must find.

An ache in the back, and a call by my half  
Come to the dream floor  
Come, twin brother, come, it's late.  
My brain is blinded by its favourite picture  
My flesh screams to climb its honey mountain  
But, no, this coin I must find.

Now the rain is swashing  
And my red coal is black and cold  
My eyes see blackness and  
My fingers are in a dance of blindness  
The spring of my life sags  
But, no, this coin I must find.

My head hits a stump and  
Seven daggers bounce into view  
Tearing through my body  
I stumble, stagger, stumble  
My face slaps the floor  
My hands stretched out in sad surrender.  
Only then to feel the roundness  
Of my little coin.

# First Prayer

Lord, thank you for grandpa and grandma:  
They are so nice, so kind, so gentle  
You made them,  
Thank you for making them.

Lord, thank you for mum and dad:  
They bought my new shoes, new socks and new cap  
They take me to see Father Christmas  
You made them,  
Thank you for making them.

Lord, thank you for my brothers and sisters:  
They play with me, I play with them and  
I like them very much  
You made them,  
Thank you for making them.

Lord, thank you for daddy's car:  
It smells so sweet and the seats so soft  
It goes so fast and takes me so far  
To see birds, trees and animals  
You made them all,  
Thank you for making them.

But Lord, tell me Lord,  
Who made you, Lord?

# Silence

Crust of treasure,  
Bed of noise and laughter  
Where all sounds sleep,  
Holy music of heaven.

# Death

Ultimate monster

Close as a shadow

Distant as a star

Wretched witch of the earth

Try hard as you may

You can't extinguish us.

# Life

Life,

What a dream!

Just when you wake up,

Lo, you are dead!

# Sound Supreme

Buzz of the bee,  
Song of the wind,  
All in its name,  
All for its sake,  
And all is well.

# Next...

Grab a potent volcano

Warm it

Hear it

Pressure it

Squeeze it

Drain it of larva

And prove puff,

To silence a musical

whine of cry

shrill of victory

groan of hunger

moan of pain.

Then stare,

Red and wet,

Wide and waiting,

For the next victim.



# Valentine Card

Vivacious Valentine

How dear and

How lovely your memory is.

I send you this card from the gutter

Across the state wall

As I wonder what sense we bring

To your name when it means

Sharing from our national bowl together

Each with a spoon the size of his neighbor's.

# Nothing

Nothing is  
Having stomach soaked in acid,  
Chopping intestines  
For weeks.

Nothing is  
Sitting in the arid sand  
Scorched by the piercing  
Mouth dry as leaves.

Nothing is  
Gratitude to rags  
For covering half of a  
Dangling manhood.

Nothing is  
Helplessness in the face of tyranny  
In the face of raped wives  
And public treasuries.

Nothing is  
Walking miles on blistered feet  
In search of jobs  
That don't exist.

Nothing is  
Living in Africa and  
Staring at the hell of human condition.

# Let's Worship

It's morning and hallelujah rise:

An eye on the hymn book,

The other on the lady in front;

Hand in tray,

Heart on neighbour's husband;

Chest in the church,

Conscience on last night's robbery;

Ears to the sermon,

Head on the witch doctor's mixture;

Hallelujah, sing,

It's another Sunday.

# Living Dead

In this turbulent world  
Forever tumbling,  
Tossing and turning...

In this crooked world  
Forever cheating,  
Stealing, deceiving...

In this devilish world  
Forever demonic,  
Sinful and satanic...

In this troubled world  
Forever enemies,  
Worrying and warring...

In this helpless world  
Forever hurting,  
Hollow and hopeless...

In this lost world  
Forever wailing,  
Wayward and wild...

In this deadly world  
Forever dangerous,  
Dirty and dubious...

Chance of happiness  
Is living dead  
Everyday.

# Living Room

Why do we run so far to find a teacher?

Why do we try so hard to find a home?

Why do we walk so far to get a doctor?

Why do we work so hard to get a meal?

Why do we sweat so much to find some peace?

Why?

Just us?

When it's all in the living room,

The living room within us.

# The Leviathan

Goliath;

Towering

Fearsome

Lethal

Making mince meat of men

But within this bloated armoury

There always is a hole

Just big enough for little David's pebble

# African Girl

Lips, red of her monthly river,  
Eyes, blind with foul faeces,  
Hair, griddle, dead and dark,  
Face, laden with layers of earth,  
Walk, swagger of a drunken sailor,  
Dance, boring pendulum swing.

Come, tell me,  
What have you done to my daughter?  
To respect for her brother?  
To the culture of her people?  
To the pride of her mother?

Tell me,  
What have you done to my daughter?

Now, at the wave of your cowry  
She loses her head,  
At the sight of your car,  
She no longer hear her name.

Come, tell me,  
What have you done to my daughter?

To the saint in her eyes  
To the arrogance of her chest  
To the natural ochre of her lips  
Now you treat her skin with acid  
And turn her into a smelling swine,  
You treat her mind to wine  
And turn her into a giggling go-go  
You brush her brain with gold  
And then she goes gaga.  
Come, tell me,  
What have you done to my daughter?

To the baby shyness?  
To the glistering brown velvet of her body?  
To the tough curly crown of her head.

Come, tell me,  
What have you done to my daughter?



# Tasteless Nectar

It may be power  
Or provider for them  
Savior or  
Shelter for us  
Defender and  
Doctor for you  
Here, Fighter  
There, Conqueror  
Magi or magician  
Still spirit it is  
That tasteless colourless nectar.

# Mr. Careful

Act,

For god's sake, act.

Fear not to

Make mistakes.

Act,

For God's sake, act

Learn now to

Love and live.

# Surrender

When the jargon jars  
And you can't understand...

When the road is rough  
And leading nowhere...

When plans fail  
For the umpteenth time...

When luck is hard  
And every touch is wrong...

When darkness falls  
In the midst of sunshine...

When you've worked  
And result aren't showing...

Only surrender  
And it's over.

# Tribute to Teachers

As I look through this fog  
Across the Rubicon,  
I see you.

I see you as a territory  
On the universal map of ideas  
Ruling minds  
As long as there are men

So how can they say  
That you are dead?

# African Child

Siren in the night  
And here comes our chance  
To date the world

Welcome, special,  
Welcome to share our mats and mates,  
Forests and friends

We hope you bring us good tidings  
Ancestor came back.

# What's Love?

Love is not right

To be demanded

To be fought for

Love is not yours

To be taken

To be kept

Love is not a privilege

To be had

To be enjoyed

Love is not a gift

From others

To you

Love is an obligation

You owe

To all living beings

Love is yours  
More to give  
Than to take

Love is a gift  
Not from others  
But from you

Love is thought and deed  
Without motive  
Of gain

Love is what you do  
To be  
Like God.

# Like a Mat

Love is often handed down

Wrapped and folded up

Like a mat

Only when spread

Can it be useful

Can it be known.



# Fire

I know a fire  
With flames bright and blue  
Blazing freely, fiercely

I know a fire  
Inside and outside of me  
Humming ever loudly

I know a fire  
Purifier  
Rarefier

I know a fire  
That fills and keeps the universe:  
That fire of love.

# Fat Wife

When we trekked in the sun,  
Sweating and smiling,  
I was not fat.

When we had a bicycle,  
And I mounted the carriage,  
I was not fat.

When we had a motor bike,  
Dodging traffic in the sun,  
I was not fat.

When we had a beetle,  
And I struggled to get in,  
I was not fat.

Now you have a big car,  
A Mercedes Benz,  
You say I'm too fat.

# Police Bullet

When you cock the gun,  
Finger its clit  
To fire that deadly dart,  
You enjoy it.

If it hits a student  
Into a fleshy pulp of blood,  
Splashing his brain on the wall,

It's sure ecstasy  
Double orgasm  
When the stray bullet comes.

# Househusband

Man,

Quiet

Quit and

Quiver out

That the customer can savour the sauce of my socket,

So, I earn bread,

Crumbs of which you need to live.

Now I talk,

You listen.

# Virgin

The nozzle of the welder has done its worst,  
Zipping through the crust of my jewel  
Now my flame of love  
Burns with the fuel of lust,  
As the scales in my eyes  
Dart off with the crystal of Christ.

Innocence only lives in my womb now,  
Borne by a mesh  
Of the apple of life.

# Song of a Lady

Hold me in the morning  
When I'm cold and frosted,  
Warm me in your well of love  
And melt me.

Relieve me at noon  
When I'm worried and weary  
Kiss my sweat away  
And soothe me

Praise me in the evening  
When I glow as the golden sun  
Make me your queen,  
Your goddess,  
Worship.

When darkness blankets  
And my eyelids are lead  
Let me find a pram in your arm  
Sway mw slowly  
And sing me to sleep.

# Mr. Right

Are you the one  
To teach me  
When I'm foolish  
Give me confidence  
When I'm shaken  
Make me a lady  
When I'm laden  
Be my leader  
When I'm lost  
Stand a rock  
In my riot?  
Are you the man?

Are you the one  
Creative and courageous  
Brilliant and bold  
Faithful and forgiving  
Loyal and loving?  
Are you the man?

Are you the one to be my oracle  
Consulted for all problems  
Studies to sickness  
Pills to pregnancy?  
Are you the man?  
Are you the one?  
My safe secrets  
Are you the man?

# Heartbreak

Alone I stand in this wilderness  
All I see, human, is my shadow  
Suddenly I think I hear a crackle,  
I turn and there it is staring at me  
Face like mine  
Lord, thank you I find my type  
Each pace brings me closer  
And I find my friend hides behind  
A shiny silvery surface  
I smile, she smiles  
But as I stretch to shake hands  
Something shatters  
Once again, I'm alone.



# Small god

Sweet Smiler

Filing Fondness

Waddle Walker

Silky Skin

In your eyes

Searches cease

Riots rest

Come, godson

Come, baby.

# The Difference

It's not what you are  
But how you are.

Not what you wear  
But how you wear it.

Not what you say  
But how you say it...  
Not where you live  
But how you live.

Always, life's the same  
The living, the difference.

# The X-Factor

What happens

When all is done

All prayers said,

All effort made,

All caution taken

To fulfil a function

That finally fails?

What happens?

Who takes the blame?

Me?

# Network News Round-Off

To end the news,  
The highlights once again.

This morning,  
President Africa passed a perfect piss.

It was a golden arc of free flowing  
Fountain  
Also today, his wife flashed a smile,

Teeth shining as silver  
In Sokoto sunshine.  
Finally,  
Just this evening, his son was seen  
Spotting a velvet vest  
T'was lovely,  
Like a little lake of light.

THAT'S THE NATIONAL NETWORK NEWS.

Goodnight.

# Miss Fashion

Wavering in the wind,  
Lost ship in turbulent waters,  
Striving for that which is only null,  
Embellishments of a decomposing corpse.

# Mask

Officer, when Nemesis finally pulls that  
Handsome mask off your face,  
To reveal its obscene ugliness,  
What would you do?

Would you use your small hands to cover  
Your large shame?  
Or would you simply chop off your  
Own head before someone does it for you?

# Graduate

Now that the ritual is over  
And the sheet is in your grip,  
What do you see in it?  
A ladder to raise you  
To the arrogance of the sky,  
Or a shovel for gold-digging

Do you find in that scroll a  
Torch to be borne for mankind  
Or a membership card  
Of the blood sucker's club?

# Exam Success

Keynesian Construction

Hegelian Dialectics

Marxian Materialism

-Whose business?

Socratic Wisdom

Platonic vision

Rousseauan Freedom

-Who cares?

When as a lady, I understand the

Matrix of bed and B.A!



# Child Abuse

Akara, Akamu

My head aches from scream since six  
For a mama drone sleeping and snoring  
While I sneeze away in this cold  
And rain.

Akara, Akamu

My limb so numb  
My feet so sore  
All for a saucer of soured soup  
And eleven eggs of garri

Akara, Akamu

My neck creaks from carriage  
Bottom drips with dew  
Just for a space in the store  
To share with rats and rodents

Akara, Akamu

The sun must meet me on this endless stroll  
To suck the water off my face  
For then can I face the goddess  
Justified to bring the remnants home.

# World Cup

Die, dates, die,  
Wait, wives, wait:  
Time to share at the magic box,  
To worship short shadows,  
Mere images,  
As mankind melts into a hamlet,  
Bonded by a single ball.

# Sweet Seventeen

As sixteen ceases,  
I wish you wealth  
The world's worth  
Happiness,  
The height of heavens,  
Love which lasts  
Longer than all life  
Happy birthday  
Sweet seventeen!

# The Convoy

Move the convoy

Faster, faster

Crush the cars,

Marsh the men,

Wield the whip,

Sound the siren

Louder, louder

Halt the ambulance

Death to the plebeian

Move the convoy

Faster, faster

His Excellency must use the toilet.

# Presidential Perfume

Bathe the President with perfume  
To fight the fart in his flat  
And quench the stench in his ranch  
Act,  
Act fast,  
Lest we die.