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Maik Nwosu. editor of The Source news magazine in Lagos, is currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Syracuse University, New York. Also, a fellow of the Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany, he has published a poetry collection, "Suns of Kush" [Association of Nigerian Authors/ Cadbury Poetry Prize, 1995], two novels -

Invisible Chapters [Association of Nigerian Authors Prose Prize, 1999] and Alpha Song - and a collection of short stories, Return to Algadez. His second poetry collection, Stanzas from the Underground, is awaiting publication.

Midnight's children

surfing the clouds

our faith embraces itself and rigour becomes vigour devotees oscillating around a thousand aeons of light midnight's children rising from bunkers of small faith whistles assail our fore-prints we can hear all things know all things but see only the excellency of rust the world is only a knock away but the foot-noters are already at the gates mapping new worlds with me and i but the world will not stand still and neither shall we the parables of origins: the myths of being confluences swelling the concourse between the living and the dead bonded by invocations traipsing upon the waters and all our worlds converge at the homing gates

ii

"ich mag dich" moonlights your postcard, uche I hear only the tuareg orchestra Yours still the orgasm of the spirit last night, dreamt of the morning carafes of yore and the sporadic litanies in phantom worlds where we feed on choice morsels of the night now, i hear you in many many voices coasting on the path of thunder chesting cantatas for rain-clouds you tell me: when is the end of forever?

iii

laughter still binds us in giddy heights, obigbo once upon a time when the earth was mist at dawn the roped urn signified our passage rite and our spirits knocked about footloose and rain-blessed now I know you could speak until tomorrow meet me in algadez the day after and i will have camels waiting west is the desert but east is the return journey to nri

iv

10

izzia, is it because you are a nomad that you follow the rail station everywhere it goes? your roots are in the sky where the mating clouds transform into litanies of rain promising a feast of jazz and rice balls eyeballing dimples meant for kissing i am holding on to the kite praying like a harmonica how many more miles to the next terminus? every stop a requiem of flesh

V

when is the celibacy of several septembering afternoons in mid-eternity, e.c'? your names are spelt out on the ocean-floor like a marinated song the frankincense trail is your destiny -the spice route to oases of memory yours the alchemy of everything: from tree-houses to icebergs from anklets to the music of the earth you the prophet at crowther lane where are your tarot cards?

vi

your pointed shoes will question the oracles to your hometown, nengi your answers will come in spreading faith like the music of the tomb beyond apples, beyond serpents i will play the sax when the hunter of flamingos reclaims the chronicles of the sun still, what is the call of the river nun after the regattas undress their ambitions?

vii

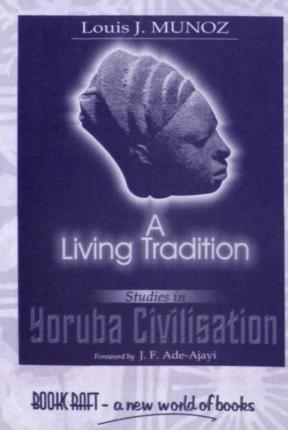
to room in church street is to hymn to gods and bubbles cusping the embrace of whirlwinds laughing into flesh and bone your spare rib farms the streets of cities sworn to reckoning the iotas of the earth, chiedu the night masquerades gather saluting their slivers of moonlight in smoking voices and the rains in your heart scent for the harmattan

viii

ours then the new niche of reincarnating dreams so we gather by the fireside where chinua* sculpts totems of anthills with proverbs to mice and mink coats riches of rain the spine in every spin we put on our masks -palm fronds, crucifixes and sandstorms and we become prophets of the remains of the day presences accompany us through street comers where absence is the price of salt bullets in our dreams flowers in our antiques nooning sockets of a history that insists stilettos and sea shells magenta and purple nothing survives the night that does not endure the day the muse accompanies us still with sapphire, graphite and inkwells our spirits gather and we are no longer alone omens to pigeons and dreams nesting to be free. GR

*Chinua Achebe, Nigerian novelist and author of Things Fall Apart.

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