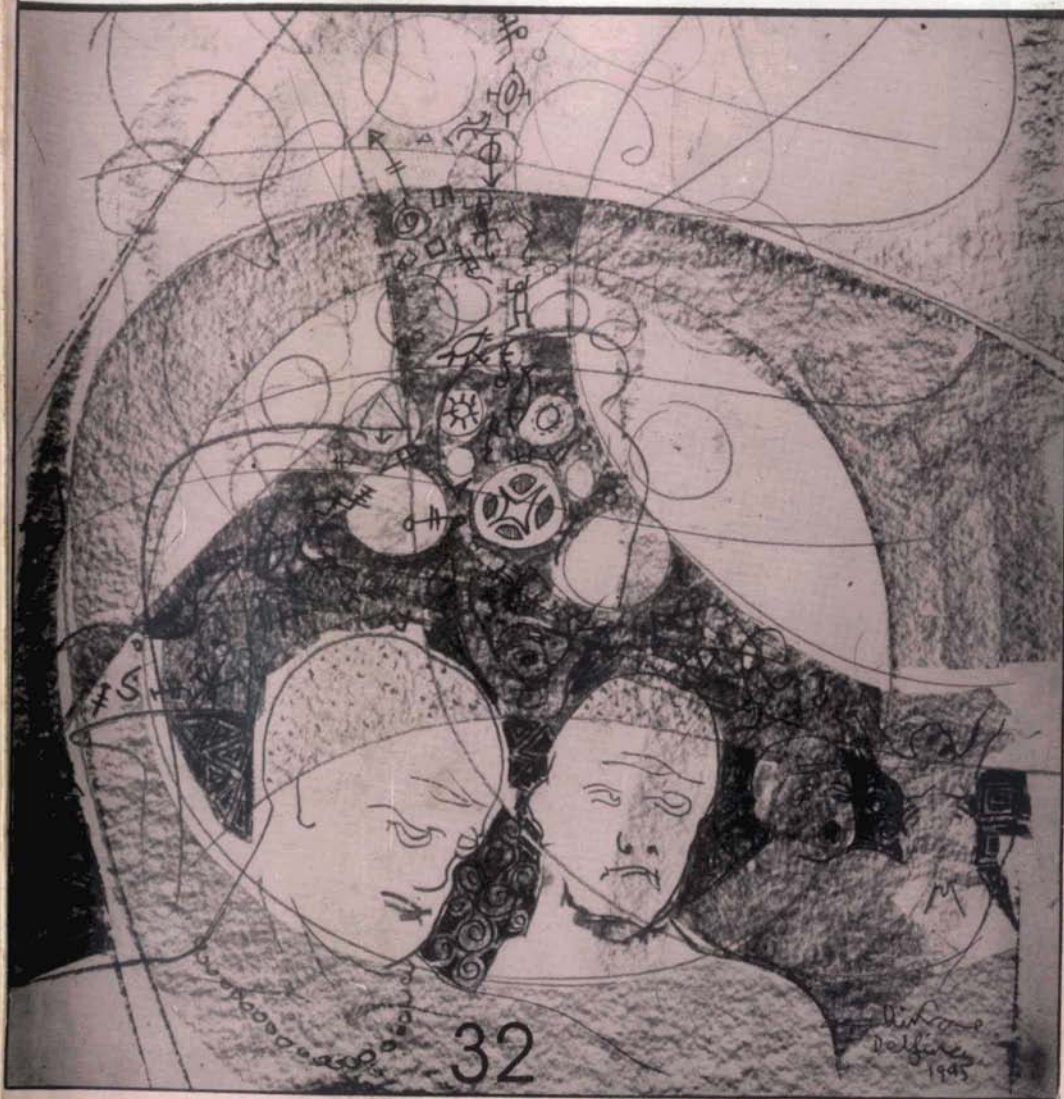




OKIKE

AN AFRICAN JOURNAL OF NEW WRITING



OKIKE

An African Journal of New Writing

NUMBER 31, OCTOBER 1995

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Note from the Editor

This issue was scheduled for publication in 1991. Although our resolve was strong, harsh and uncertain economic realities prevailed against us, in spite of a successful 20th Anniversary Celebration launching of the journal sponsored in Lagos by Aka Ikenga. (The names of donors during that occasion appear on the back cover of this issue). We regret the delay, and apologise to our numerous readers and friends.

Fortunately, the Heinrich Böll Foundation of Cologne, Germany, has made it possible for us to resume publishing. We are ever so thankful to them for this much needed assistance. We are grateful to Victor Nwankwo of the Fourth Dimension Publishers, for introducing us to the Foundation.

This number is the first sign of rebirth. It is hoped that all of us - and this includes contributors and readers also - would work hard to ensure that this is for real.

Okike remains dedicated to its mission as a springboard for new writers. We hope that this mission will be fully realised as usual. In fact, one of the highlights of this number is the publication of several poets and short story writers who are appearing in print for the first time.

Okike remains a source material for teachers, students and scholars in higher institutions of learning. We are working hard to ensure that it is accessible to those who need it.

Onuora Ossie Enekwe

CHINWE NZEGWU

Lovely Roses

Lovely roses so pink
Fresh as dew-drops
Dainty and so soft
Elegant and so colourful
Fragrant and so attractive.

Lovely roses so pink
Light of the eyes
Breath of the soul
Food of the spirit
Slowness of the heart

Lovely roses so pink
Bright as early dawn
Fair and so fragile
Vivid yet wither away.

Fibre of Women

That summer at Wuppertal, West Germany,
The old couple, Lilo's parents were no more.
We had met them on previous holiday.
So we took flowers to their resting place.

Karl and Lilo, our wonderful host and hostess
Took us to that serene graveyard.
By the gravestone of the retired couple,
I was inspired to think on life.

When I looked around the peaceful graveyard
Save Karl, only women with flowers stood around,
Like Mary Magdalene once stood by Christ's tomb.
Here again, only women came to remember.

Many many questions came to mind.
What constitutes the fibre of Women?
Is it just dreamy sentimental stuff
Or mere cobwebs of sweet fantasies.

Women are endowed with tender caring nature.
They are made of soft sympathetic stuff.
Women worship with more devotion.
The fibre of women is their burden here.



Title: Surulere (Patience has its rewards)
Medium: Ink
Artist: C. Krydz Ikwuemesi
Year: 1994

VIRGY ANOHU

A Gentle Voice

There's a little stream behind our house.
It flows down my left
It's neither blue nor black.
Call it red or brown,
A stream all the same.

A close friendship
There is between us
In turbulent moods
A constant feature of a heart
Scared with frustration
Stunted with dreams unheld,
My stream meanders into fellowship with me,
Gently, quietly, flowing my pains away.

There's a hilly forest
To cushion my stream to me
As if it flows into my kitchen below
Only occasional traffic to Three-Three
Interrupts the union
Between my stream and me,
As she flows
Carrying the lesson of peace and calm.

You do not know my stream I believe,
She has the patience,
Sufficient for two,
And I the temper,
For additional four,
When glued to my stream of Love
And the questions surge
With the rage of equations unsolved,
My stream tenders
A verbless response,
Quietly urging me
To ignore the OMATA around.

From a window
Her width is but a few feet;
Her breadth hardly more.

A patch she is to many
To some a dirty wash-hand basin
For clapping Sabbath fanatics.
They do not see my stream aright:
The gentle voice of balm
The little stream behind our house.



Title: Ogu Ajoka
Medium: Ink
Artist: C. Krydz Ikwemesi
Year: 1994

