



OKIKE

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41

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"One of the most difficult aspects of publishing long established journals, literary or otherwise, is improving on or maintaining the standard set by its founder. While some have fallen by the wayside, others have simply refused to take root, and yet a few have blossomed as a result of the managerial skill and intellectual savvy invested in such ventures. To this last group belongs *Okike: An African Journal of New Writing* established in 1971 to, among other things, "discover new writers, publish them, and to set a new school of thought for the critical standards of African literature" - *The Post Express*

CHINYERE NNEKA MBULO

Power as Woman

Soft

Gentle

Lovely

Feminine

Therein lies power as woman.

In it's insidiousness

Not in its seeming guilelessness.

In it's knowingness.

In soft acquiescence masking steely resolve.

In helpless persistence masking fierce determination.

The power of the Rebeccas and the Jezebels

Is no less than the Indiras and the Thatchers.

Power as a woman in a man's world

Is to remain a woman

Not to become a man.

Ripe Comfort

I feel connected
I feel real
There are no masks
There are no real barriers
More like a switch into my frequency.

I feel burrowed
I feel safe
There are no pretenses
There are no compromise cloaks
More like a bird in my nest.

I have flown through high emotions
I have crawled under low betrayals
I have tiptoed around prostituted "sleeps"
I have never walked tall along such
Comfortable feelings.
It is my ripe wish
I am at rest at my plane.

The Cocky Cuckold

Happy is the cuckold
of a discreet spouse.
What he knoweth not
he knoweth not.
In his ignorance,
he walloweth gleefully.
Of the abiding peace
at home, he boasteth
unaware from whence
his peace cometh
Do let him take
the credit, for in
his cockiness a
cuckold he remains.

Black Sunrise or Dark Morning

Sharp spasms of agony each break of dawn
Like lesions permeating each bone
Each sinew, each ligament.
At such pain-ridden times
Rising remains distanced from shining.

To lift an arm, turn the neck, shift the leg
All become tortuous journeys into masochism
That realm of pleasure pain.

Yes pleasure

What purer ecstasy.

What greater joy than to lift a limb, turn the neck,
Shift the leg, thought shattered.

At such great relief, physical

Agonies remain transient.

Pleasure ultimately transcends pain.

So, though the mornings be dark

With pain and sunrise black with agony

Though the joints be slow and shivery

I remain suffused with immeasurable pleasure.

