



# OKIKE

AN AFRICAN JOURNAL OF NEW WRITING



42

***OKIKE***

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13

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# OKIKE

AN AFRICAN JOURNAL OF NEW WRITING

We keep open the channels of creativity.  
We bring you new voices of Africa  
from the continent and the diaspora—  
in poetry, fiction, drama, some criticism,  
and more.

Okike has been the springboard  
for new writers for more than

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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*.

EBELE OSEYE

*Amadou (for Amadou Diallo, killed by  
New York City police , 4 February 1999)*

The Bullet is not bigger than the man  
41 bullets cannot stop a life  
Larger than moral life  
Larger than the slaver's ships  
Larger than the holocaust police  
The murderous elite  
Who shot Grandmother Eleanor  
Murdered in her home  
Shot 10 year old Clifford Glover  
Shot in the back  
Abner Louima  
Brutalized and raped  
My classmate's son,  
Shot and killed  
Rodney King, bludgeoned  
Young men protesting for Rodney King  
Shot and killed  
(What are their names  
What were their ages?)  
Aswon Keyshawn Watson  
Sitting in his car  
Shot 23 times  
Tyisha Miller  
Sitting in her car  
Shot 24 times  
Amadou



The shout raised at the moment you fell  
Rattled ancestral bones strewn across the ocean floor  
Rattled the chains of Jasper that dragged James Byrd Junior to his  
death.

A cosmic cry ricocheted across the mountains of Guinea  
Reverberated in the neighborhoods of the world

We came running  
Looked into your face  
And saw our face  
Our selves.

Growing up distracted, separated from history  
Swallowing fast food, viewing our lives in video  
Riddled with self-hate.

41 bullets shattered illusions,  
Lay bare  
Tender feelings for Africa  
Buried deep in bewildering grief.

The lust for Africa's blood flows unabated  
Old violence escalated  
New violence legislated  
Racists restore death penalties.  
They are still ironing their sheets  
Pointing their hats  
Gentrifying Jim Crow  
Building new jails  
Designing "better" bullets.

Twelve slaving presidents  
Founded this republic.  
Barricaded behind concrete blocks  
The paranoid  
The demented politician, Hitler's first of kin  
And his Apartheid press  
Rummage through their sordid arsenal of atrocities in search of

diminishing words  
Peddler. Immigrant.  
Small photo placed at the bottom of the page  
Africa effaced.

Amadou  
Son and brother,  
Rangel Dinkins Sharpton Meeks  
Booker Perkins Lopez  
Leaders in long woolen coats,  
Handcuffed,  
Aged lions  
Roar!  
Ministers chained and manacled,  
Council members  
Seventy in support  
Marched to the coast.  
Your mother covers her head in white.  
Your father, close by, covers his heart.

Amadou  
Your name  
Calls us to unknot the lynchers' rope.  
Justice for Eleanor Bumpers  
Justice for Clifford Glover  
Justice for Abner Louima  
Justice for Aswon Keyshawn Watson  
Justice for Tyisha Miller  
Justice for my friend's 15 year old son!  
Justice for the young men who died for justice!

Your life sacrificed  
As February celebrations begin.  
Pulls us to both shores of the Atlantic  
To see ourselves

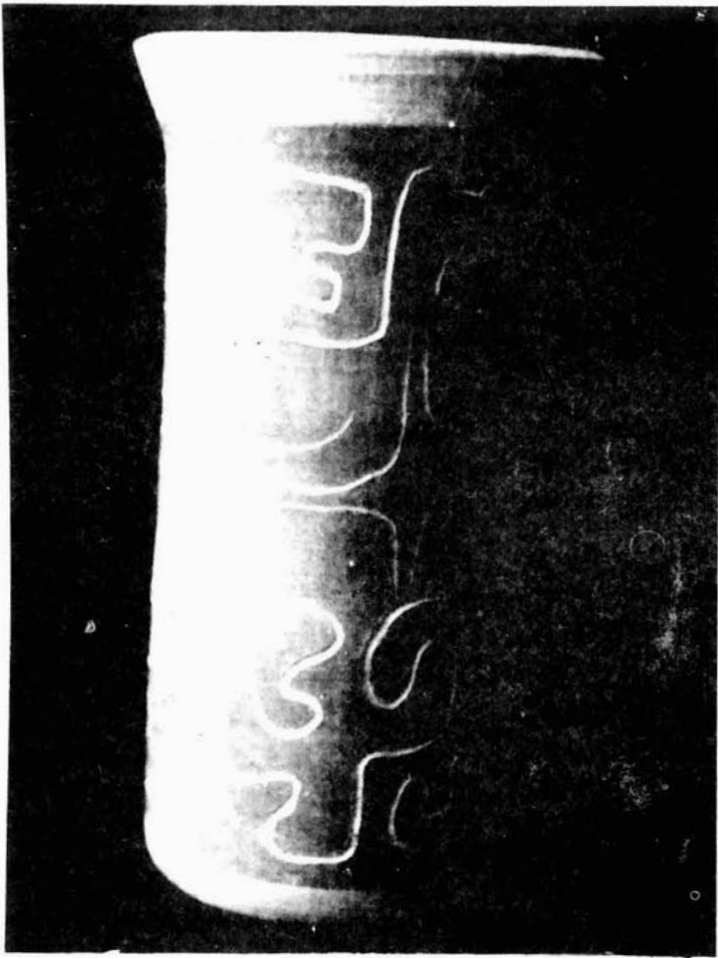
Resembling  
Battered, divisive,  
Short-sighted, struggling.  
How did we survive the double death, colonization,  
American enslavement?

I was at prayers for Amadou,  
A student from Bangladesh said,  
Arriving late for class.  
He knows the distance  
From death to freedom,  
Brought to America  
Worked 7 days a week  
18 hours a day  
2 dollars an hour wage.  
2 years  
A slave.  
He takes a front seat  
Listen to lessons you would have heard.

Amadou,  
Shake 19 bullets from your flesh  
Take back your birth and breath  
Reset the clock  
When you were first born, your uncle predicted  
international fame  
He said the whole world would know your name.

Amadou Diallo  
Your death is the Muezzin's call  
At the dawn of a new millennium.  
A call to prayer  
A call to war  
We are the drums of Guinea  
The collective

Drums of Africa,  
Water  
And talking drums,  
The drums of Baraka  
The drums of Kemet  
Pounding.



*Journey to the centre of the earth (Terracotta)*











































































































































































































