

Poetry Series

Tony Adah
- poems -

Publication Date:

2020

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Tony Adah()

A Commoner's Song

I am down
Like a cripple
I can't rise.

Like a pig
I am proud mud plodding
If you can leave the mountain
To this valley
Come,
Condescend and be my age mate
And get a garb of mud,
I am down
Fear, my friend.

Tony Adah

A Banner Waver

A banner waver waved his banner
In a manner
That makes him a whistle blower
He waved it
He waved it that the world refines
Its ways
Wanton killing must stop
The wars of the world
Must end
Bounties must take the place of dearth
More, he howled
And set himself ablaze!

Tony Adah

A Bard

A bard boards his craft of wit
Carrying the good and the bad
In his words
The world turns back to see itself in a mirror
Laughs and wails
But the bard unruffled
For brandishing a mirror to the world
Is his trade.

Tony Adah

A Birdlime.

I think that I am a birdlime
Sticky enough to take birds
From the meadow, flies from my balcony
Strips of leaves too on the footpaths.

As I walk down the street
I tow along with me the spider's gossamer
And if I stray into water
I am yet to know if my sticky hands
Will glue a fish
But I will write about the water and its biology
Making sure I'm home without nothing.

Tony Adah

A Bond

If the clouds thicken up
And the sky is blue, brown or black
I am still your friend
If the sun shines moderately
Or with a frying scorch
I am still your friend.
If floods brim the earth
And you float or sink
I am still your friend
If you leave me alone on this earth
I will remember you
You're still my friend
Inside or outside your grave
I am your friend in need
As in deed
We ferment like wine
No weather dictates our ties
I'm your friend
I'm your friend
And you are my friend.

Tony Adah

A Brawl Between Friends

Two fierce looking men stood
Under a huge silk cotton tree
The sun outside here scorching
Like a furnace.
They took refuge here
Between its oblong and twisting toes
For a violent bout of a quarrel
Up the tree squeaking squirrels
Frolick in laughter and taunt.

I moved toward the silent tree
Sat on a winding toe thinning into the thicket
One of them in a violent gesture of hands
Perfect his question' who told you the land
Is the heritage of your filial generation'?

When I heard the violent brawl was about land
Pity left me like a feather in the wind
The large expanse sought for
Only six feet is our final home
Breathless and unable to ask for more
As the final journey is made
Resting on a shroud.

Tony Adah

A Brother's Song

I feel not heard
My voice corked in
I feel like fizzing and
And breaking myself;
The mother monkey never stops
To cuddle her ugly son
My tongue itches
I am not a hero
But someone yearning for a voice
To be heard.
I am fizzing
If this fouls the air
Throw it away and hem me in
Into your fold
Don't gather me into the penalty of death
But leave me here your punch bag
For your usual trade.

Tony Adah

A Brown Little Bird

A brown little bird
Alighted down the balcony
Where we sat;
It made its come down like an aircraft
And we really guessed that the Wright brothers
Had this in mind.
The little brown bird
Looked right and it looked left
In the direction the lizards laid their own siege
And the roaches that frolic here
Never escape our guests
My wife's sesame seeds
Drying in the afternoon sun
For our evening soup
Struggled in the throat of our guests
This is what happens to our commonwealth
When our privileged brothers
Alight with a tall throat
That suck every drop of our tears.

Tony Adah

A Budding Poet

Give me my quill pen
My inkpot and my papyrus
Give me my tools
Drop them all here
Those consonants sounds
And I will do the repetitions for you

Give me all those words
And I will make them
Rise and fall for you

Give me, give me all those sounds
And I will give you their meaning

I will give image
To your taste, touch, hearing and smell
Give me now my tools
Before someone else becomes a poet.

Tony Adah

A Butterfly In My Garden

My flowers grow luxuriant green leaves
Amidst petals of purple, yellow, blue and red
And an assorted colour butterfly flew above
my garden with same colour on its fluffy wings
When I looked up and didn't see it
I marvelled where it was until I saw it
Missed in the colour of my garden.

Tony Adah

A Butterfly In The Meadows

The butterfly flies high
and it flies low
It flies when its bulging eyes behold
the beauty of the meadows clad in daffodils
and lilies and chrysanthemums
It flies low
When its long mouth desires a kiss
that suckles the sweet waters of the flowers
And it flies ubiquitously when its wrinkled belly
holds the sweet liquid of life
It flies silently and wraps itself in a cocoon
And comes out new flying high and low
Sipping from the waters of the world.

Tony Adah

A Camel With Two Humps.

He rebuffed the commencement
Address as a chief less mischief makers
Expunge the first letter of the word
And replace it with a tee
To think so,
He must be a bactrian camel

Tony Adah

A Change With Chains

The change came and with it chains
We cried and they called us wailers
All his their wrists and ankles
Least the shackles of change tangle
What do you do
With a change which comes with chains?
Some are voting with their legs
What do you do with wrong voting?
Vote with your legs?
You stay back, pay your due of patriotism
And vote with your thumb
For a change which will sooth
Your wounds of chains.

Tony Adah

A Child Is Born

Imagine the burden
Of cuddling a foetus in the womb
For nine full months or so
Never knowing if it's human, a toad or a goat
Imagine the birth travails, the spasms
The blood and the wailing baby
Having the taste of the worldly air.

It is a wakeful cheerful baby
Tasting the air,
Tasting alligator pepper
And tasting water and his manhood
Is shaped by the knife.

A four kilogram weight of mischief
He is nurtured and weaned
A cheer baby turned
Into a fretting young robber
Nine months load of vain nurturing
Reaping from what he met on ground
The pen and the paper, the hoe and the knife
That society offered him.

Tony Adah

A Citizen

In truth I'm a human being too
Inside me I'm independent
I confess the outward fallacy of it
Even yesterday as it came
I was doubtful of the merriment
But I am a citizen.
Who thinks differently
From it
Maybe naturalized a citizen
Or deaf to the songs
Or blind to the dirt
Or to the art of a free citizen.

Tony Adah

A Clarion Call

There's a clarion call
For those whose yam has roasted
To remember those whose own
Is still in the fire
And those whose yam
Is still in the fire
To remember those whose
Yam is still in farm!

Tony Adah

A Conversation With Breeze

Though the sun is on the other side
Outside is a furnace
It is humid and my skin went sticky
As I went outside
But now I am on my back
Watching the ceiling fan
Refusing to rev.

A nice stream of breeze
Comes in and I feel real good!
And the clothes flying
With the fan revving
And I thought the absconded
Public power supply has come back

Oh sweet breeze
Thank you for this afternoon visit
Not even kola
Do I have for appreciation
Thank you for blowing in
Come again another day this as hot!

Tony Adah

A Country's Burden Of Birth

A country's eye is full of tears
Her face gloomy and her land
A bleak sunless patch.
This is where I am destined to be
To witness hunger take its bite
And death its toll.

There is no negative attribute
That can not be found on this land
Except underneath where a great heritage
Of liquid gold splashes its wealth
But lost to the bestial sadist few.

On the streets
On the stinking gutters
The brains of society are captured
Prowling the dirt bins
A royalty seeking rags.

Still GDP and unemployment
Are all time high yearning
To touch the sky.
A coterie of men jostle with knives
Cutting to their satisfaction
The elephant that the country has killed.

And a country's middle class
Is crushed between the tongs
Of the very rich and the very poor
This is where I am born
And will be born again in my second coming.

Tony Adah

A Criminal's Eternal Holidays

A criminal sentence
Is a self muttered course
When the court cast a die
And the criminal dies
A silent death
On a fateful date,
He Fies a shameless death
His pocket gun
Powerlessly lying in the exhibit room
Like he will lay to eternity
In death's lonely room.

Tony Adah

A Curfew.

A curfew was declared
Dusk to dawn
And because the curlews
Prevailed on guard, the fish remained underwater
Which was better than coming to terms
With the knocks and guns of tyranny.

Tony Adah

A Dance From The Mind

A dance relieves the mind
Just as it re-lives a man
From the doldrums of life
Prowling in vain with aching feet
But shifting a foot with a pleasant mind
Its rhythm is one
It knows neither
Colour nor creed and it
Never taste gritty anywhere.

In a dance
The feet babble
Of the pious and sinner alike
And a birth bears
As much dance as a death
In all, the mind
Is an open field
For any dance
Triggered by either
A song Or a drum.
But right from the heart!

Tony Adah

A Doorless Prison

I am a citizen
Not worthy of my country
It throws me bombs
I respond with my feet
And shrapnel follow me.

My sky dark,
Panoplied with drones
Those dreams
Of mine broken and mixed
With the bounties that make
My stomach empty
And I'm running to where
I do not know.

I am a citizen
Not worthy of my country
I am a fugitive
I am a refugee
I am internally jumbled
I am eternally displaced.

I am waiting
Not sure what's up
In the air
For tomorrow when I
Shall realise there was a doorless prison
I simply walked in myself.

Tony Adah

A Dream Can Be True.

Away from the toils
Of the day
The night descends
Like a storm
But sleep cajoles you
To embrace the night
And snore into dreamland
From your hovel
To the mansions of the night
Eating and drinking with kings

It is possible
It is plausible
Provided the night passes on
For the day to come with its light
And you dump the sleep
Taking along with you a golden box
Of your cherished dream
Into the broad daylight.

Tony Adah

A Dreamer.

A dreamer dreamt
Upon a skyscraper all night
He slept in a dreamland
In a parlour of good life
With a pillow of extravagance
In man-made sea he swam
And woke up empty handed.

He dreamt
Of aircrafts, sleek cars and ships
Cities of large estates and properties
His bed was wealth
He became a Manager
But woke up a damager
He dreamt having dinner with God
But woke up a sinner
He dreamt
He dreamily dreamt
And forgot all his dream.

Tony Adah

A Drunken Roach

A certain roach came
Around where the roosters
Were feasting with pride
And reeks of stupor
In a brown coat of wings.

It confessed its pride
By dizzying about noisily
To the chagrin of its hosts
And when a warning
Was issued to this guest
He heeded not
And found himself
An item on the menu
Of the roosters' party food.

Tony Adah

A Farmstead

A broken gourd half holding water
A cutlass of a derelict hilt
And a hound tethered to a tree stump
Licking his lips
The tail moving in the wind
The absent farmer heaving a huge sigh
Bent on his hoe.
Beads of sweat roll down
His wearied body borne in tattered robes
He came up the stead
And picked the gourd and gulped
And the water that was short
Of sugar and milk to be tea
Between his lips and the gourd leaking.
And the raiment not a taint
Different from the mad man's
He wore the anguish of toil
And the strangle of subsistence
He is so today and tomorrow
And no one cares.

Tony Adah

A Fool's Pride

A fool's head is full of pride
Everything he does makes him proud
And his head full of something empty
He only knows about
The world spins lazy in the fool's eyes
And he alone has the magic wand
All normal things look more abnormal
In his sight
He laughs at the hen's knees
Behind its legs
But he's gullible and can be
Chosen to count the lion's teeth
Where lies the danger he doesn't know
Until a roach finds solace
In the chicken's crop
And sobriety late returns to where
He was needed most

Tony Adah

A Free Man

Akpalo is still breathing
But he's dead
He's dead and still living
In the midst of the world
They said his manhood travelled
Without him
And he's a professional bachelor
At such great years
He has no one to keep him company
And he's dead
Dead dead Akpalo is dead
He has all life's problems off his head
But those who do not know
Think that Akpalo is dead
He laments on the problems of the world
On those who are neck deep in them
He is a free man
Only man doesn't understand.

Tony Adah

A Freighter Lands

I heard a foghorn blared from the harbour side
A freighter has arrived;
To mask indolence on my countrymen
His moorings tight and firm
Still a jerking ship in the surfs
Full of what we can get
From our own fields wild with weeds.

The dogma says that all that comes
From Tiko and Limbe is nicer and tastier
Than our mother's soup
So the ship muster men and women
On the harbour-
Soldiers of trade who with great fuss
Pounce on the wares of rice and tomatoes
Onions and snails
Mfi and okazi
And all that will make Watt market swell
And clog and full like sand on the beach
It is so with us
To abandon what's in our backyard
And consume what the freighter brings
Provided it comes from overseas.

Tony Adah

A Friend Turned Enemy

Yesterday back home
The news was bad
A band of armed robbers
Attacked a money lender
At night time in his home.

To shoot or not shoot
Was the lender's dilemma
For his Children were
Mixed up with the robbers
Just as the bullet
Left the robber's gun
One slippery robber was gone.

And without hesitation
One of the three devilish visitors
Did his duty and the lender was down
Whirling in his own pool of blood.

An alarm was raised
And the police came
About the scene
To everyone's chagrin
The slain robber
Was a flexible cop
Who would cause
The irate youths
To sack my town.

Tony Adah

A Frightening Night

The door creaked on its rusty hinges
Flipped open and what I saw
A frightening effigy of my mother long gone
And alone in a lonely night
I embraced my only companion
A straw pillow
And what did they say?
A ghost!
All this I knew
A dream!

Tony Adah

A Gathering Storm.

There's a gathering storm
In the sky brown and black
Smothering clouds dark and deadly
Are descending,
Those with legs are running
The lame looking at the sky
Away the deaf follow the legged
And the blind grope with the lame.

The leaves stained with blood
Like the morning dews
Boko Haram is abated
It is our turn to die
On the edges of the herdsmen's swords
Right at our doorsteps
No place to hide
Away from the gathering storm
Flying with flames.

Tony Adah

A Gecko On The Wall

A gecko moved on the wall
Its tender body
Like a frail prem -baby in an incubator
My newly bought Chinese electric bulb
Glowing and showing
Its blood slithering
Through green-bluish veins
In its glazed fragile body.

It crawl through an unyielding wall
Looking direct
Left and right
In an amazing trickery
To my watching son
I can guess what question
Is bothering his mind-
How frailty has strenght
To climb a mighty wall!
And what he finds
Useful on the walls.

A buzzing mosquito
Alight on the wall
And the gecko
Charging like a ram
Forward and backward
Pounced on man's enemy.

Sometimes my son wonders
Why he entangles himself
In the cobwebs the spider spins
Oftentimes I withhold the explanation
Until my son realises
The gameful webs
Have an assortment of arthropods
And this is where
He farms every night.

Again he moves

Closer to the electric lamp
Turning his attention to fireflies.
He devours them
Behaving as if the meal is bland
With more strenght
Than he uses to climb.

When his sticky tongue
Quietly arrest a termite
His wide mouth
Is stuffed with their Wings
My son bends to pick
Some dropping wings.

He showed me translucent
Severed wings and tells
Me that the gecko
Has some Wings
Until an injured termite
Escape the wide mouth of the raging gecko
Falling down and losing one wing in the fight.

I pointed at it
To my frightened son
Who saw to it
That the gecko after all
Is in for a survival fight.
He turned to me
And asked how do the geckos
Eat when mommy cleans our room?

Tony Adah

A Gift Not From The Heart

Those whose elbows can not stretch
Gave me a gift which
I had to thank my God
I went under a rose that blossomed
In the bush in the morning
I stood under it
And it poured its confetti of petals on me
By noons day its leaves
Got flabby and it wept.

Tony Adah

A Girl On The Street

Fully created
To be a spouse
Half clad
On the street
Following fads
But never thinking of tomorrow
And when the company of a spouse
Eludes her a tear in her eyes!

Tony Adah

A Good Heart

If you love it
Give it to me
If I love it
I'll give it to you
If you hate it
Throw it away
I will throw it away
If it hurts
And we will love all
Which soothes and calm our nerves
And make us grow
We will love to hate
That which is bad
And make us not to grow.

Tony Adah

A Good Poem

A good poem breathes oxygen
As does its oxymorons
A good poem blooms
As nature does
A good poem grieves
As the world mourns
A good poem laughs
As its petals open
To salute the bees, birds, butterflies
And the moths yearning for nectar
A good poem hides
And soon it is found
In its imageries and symbols
A good poem
The reader subsumes
In its themes and timbre
And he is found
On its page time and time again.

Tony Adah

A Great Storm At Twilight

A tired day helped to end
The orange bright rays of the sun
At this times always the sun is down
But now the sky rumbled and a blue-black
Sheet of clouds wrapped the horizon hiding the sun.

The eastern mountains were far
And the western end near and dark of dusk
Yawning valleys swallowed the clouds with the
Flowery meadows that adorn their backs
Flashes of lightning unveiled the Sky's
Frowning and dark face at dusk and the rain
Poured like the oceans were above.
The growling thunderstorms shook the earth
And the greedy earth gulped the rainwater
Sending the excess to the streams,
Rivers and the oceans.

In the morning everything was still
As the rain had gone
Now silent barrels stood brim filled
And rooftops shone as bright as new
But for the brown golden ones
In a silent conversation with age.
The eastern mountains glowed at their edges
With bright yellow shine
And the effulgence like sparkling diamonds
Poured daylight upon the world.

Tony Adah

A Hard Reunion

Looking westward to where we mourn
The death of the sun
Twilight blooms and lovers prepare
To cuddle in the dripping fog
From the coming moonshine;
Will the storm stop the dream?
Will the rain bless it?
Not likely than the poison that
Maybe eating the woman's heart.

With the daughter in tow
Smiles blossom in the garden
Of motherhood
She's tamed by another day of love
A distance from her heart.
Who will not know the venom's pain
Twice bitten in this cocoon?

The street lamp cast a flowery shadow
Under where we stood,
Pain contained in the chambers
Of my heart
Love's supposed home
Nothing strange;
There's a brittle link between
These hearts
I stretch out my hand
That shifted her steps backwards
And her daughter's forward
It is easy to share two things
You never miss both.

Tony Adah

A Heap Of Bones

O'how burgeoning youth gave way
And creaking bones yielded to earth
A heap of bones and a skull showing us
Teeth with a dead smile
And hair the matter elements refused to devour
Becomes the the sponge the archeologists
Used to wash the bones.

Tony Adah

A Heap Of Vanity

When it's time to go
You clasp even the biggest mountain
And it refuses to hold
All those primitive colours
An assortment of your garden
The eye is closed and can
No longer see.

The good life you lived the earth
Takes and celebrate with it
And it leaves the bones and hair
You become lying beneath,
The warrior you were, the wars
You conquered and the king
You have been.

All live and you are no where
To see all your pursuits
Your toils and accomplishments
Are all a heap of vanity.

Tony Adah

A Heavy Heart

A heavy heart
Is a burden
More than a donkey's load
A heavy heart
The shoulders can not carry
A heavy heart is light
It is intangible
But it is the heaviest to bear.

Tony Adah

A Hot Summer Day

The weather is hot and sunny
Clouds wrap themselves in bolls
Of cotton white like snow
And huge parches leave the sky
In its azure smile.

Down a tower of giraffes
Is watching the world
Up hawks are flying and hovering
Over a slithering snake
Chasing a hopping toad
And in this meadow
All the insects are hopping away
Some changing their colours
To that of the surrounding.

Tony Adah

A Human Being

I am a human being
Sometimes my human nature disappears
And I feel like a pig
Out of the mud I grunt
Away from the sun I grunt
All to my bells and whistles
Half way between this
I am persuaded
To be human again.

Tony Adah

A Hunter

A hunter agile in his trade
So smart a marksman
He shoots and catches a game
Before his bullets reaches it.

Tony Adah

A Lie.

A lie lies
On the lips of a liar
To be told to the world
A lie told once
Must be re-told with consistency
Otherwise the teller a liar forever!

Tony Adah

A Life's Song

When all is done and the quantity of salt
In my body is checked,
It will be a huge heap that has wrecked my nerves
And heightened my blood pressure.
I will look back
With joy and regret and wish I become a lily
And relive the youthful years over again.
It will be a futile thought
For now is the time for reckoning in solitude;
Flying on the wings of melancholy
Waiting for the final call
When dead will knock on life's door
Take me away in peace;
Leave an image of a hero or a villain
In the mouth of the living world;
Then I shall have gone
Talking about me will be like
Struggling a shroud with the dead
For I will be gone and deaf
To the rantings of the world.

Tony Adah

A Light Fingered Gentleman

They killed the cow
Slit its throat and a gush of
Crimson blood spewed like a spring
They laid it on a shroud
Of banana leaves,
Alone by the side not amongst them
I watched the butchers steal the Pieces and buried between the ground
And the leaves.
I nod and suppressed a laughter
The fastest butcher rose like
Prompted by a running nose
And hid the hump among the thickets
I alone with my eagle eye meet with
The butcher's cat eyes.
Busy at the torso of the bleeding cow
I alone looked at the thickets
Tempted to smear my esteem by
The crimson blood,
As if in a conversation with a
Loitering hound, the hump between its
Fangs and trotting away
Without its paws rustling the dry leaves
Of the mango tree
The main duty is done and clansmen
Will take the share of vital parts
And organs.
But this dead cow, a humpless
Creature after death
Is shared without a hump
And the guilty came to say the
Hound had his share of the hump.
It is his way
Every little child knew he was the
Fastest butcher and a light
Fingered gentleman.

Tony Adah

A Little Bird

Plumeless frailty sat
In his nest fragile he was
Fresh from the egg
Without a quilt
He shivered of cold
Famished, he yawned
Waiting for his mother.

She alighted with
A green little insect
Between her beak
Threw it into his toothless mouth
And hunger's tempo went to rest.

Next time frailty
Sat on the edge of the aging nest
Watching the world
He saw some little insects
Crawling on a bough
And made a fledgling flight
Across to them
Struggling, frailty conquered the war

Next day his soft plumes were full
He made it to other trees
Frailty was gone
His yawning mouth had closed
And the wild world had come.

Tony Adah

A Little Stream Down The Valley

Down the valley the stream whispers
On the bed's pebbles
The banks' leaves waving at the silent passerby
And the frail surfs breaking upon obstacles
Staining the leaves with what
Our throat itched for
Down and beside a rock
A resplendent pool rested
That quenched the thirst of ages
The fish is sacred and old- the incarnates
Of our ancestors
We ate them with the teeth
In our eyes!

Tony Adah

A Lonely Bird

A lonely bird sat on the bough
Of a lonely tree nature bestows
He is lonely of choice not
Others frolick in the wild
Relishing fruits and twittering
And hopping from one tree to another
He perches here in solitude
Thinking of the wicked ways of the crooked world.

A nest he has none
His throat dry and cracked
Water HSS deserted the world
It is gone and the world is dry
He swallows only dearth into his entrails

A farm he has none
Or any form of trade
Just his fluffy wings
And a strong frail beak
Finding use only in preening his plumes
And yearning for food and thirsty of water
Someone unseen is watching
And this bird lonely as he is will see tomorrow.

Tony Adah

A Lonely Boy

I saw hunger
Sitting on the ribs
Of a lonely boy
And the clavicular hollows on his shoulders
His brownish hair fried in marasmus.
He is alone
And looking at the world.

Tony Adah

A Lonely Goat

A goat stood by the roadside
Bleating with no credible sympathy tears
In the eyes of men
He bleated and he cried
No one asked whose goat it was
He looked at the blossoming fodder
Tantalizing him, still his bowels were void

He took his woes in his bleating
To the stream
He stood here throat parched
And his feet deep inside the water
He cried for his countrymen
He cried for himself
And he cried for tomorrow.

Tony Adah

A Lonely Road

I am walking up the road
And seeing all the variegated bushes
With dews cooling my feet
I am in love with its colours
Of green, white, yellow, and green

It is a long journey and
Without distraction
I am a few trees away
No blowing gale force
Can swerve my way
And soon this finite journey
Will see its end.

Tony Adah

A Lost Dream

I was at night asleep
On my creaking bed
And a sack of dreams
Tore upon my head.

I cuddled them and
At the crack of the dawn
I remembered but one
And when I took it in my hands
It jumped and flew away
Into the valley and the hills
Where a rainbow germinates
And blooms like a rising summer sun.

As close as I thought I could touch the rainbow
It fizzled away and I lost him
As I lost my dream
Where is this dream?
That gave me a red herring
At death's door that I stood knocking
So that I give him his humble pie
For the prognosis of falsehood
Now that I am alive and cheerful
To tell the dream.

Tony Adah

A Mask Of God

This earth where I packed
My flesh and bones from dust
And dashed a weaker me a rib
It is possible
It is plausible
I am a mask of God
At least so said the great book!

Tony Adah

A Message To A Poet

O, master poet
Write something
On your slate and show
To the world
An epic stamped on your foot
A trail of your footprints
The pages of your history
And the museum of the world.

Give the world a cloak
Against colour Or creed
Give the world a song
A sonorous song to heal
Hate and war
Your slate is beckoning on
The avenging truce
And the truth of the singing poet
Is calling the ears of the world
Give us o, muse
A lasting poem
To give posterity
A new beginning.

Tony Adah

A Message To My Daughter's Grandfather.

Yesterday I was so thrilled
By a consortium of your glorified clowns
In your theatre of of the absurd
Here the mind failed
And in its place knives, cudgels and guns worked
You over stretched your advantage of winning
Where the celebration of winning councillorship
Election stopped
That of winning an ad -hoc delegate surpassed
In your theatre of euphoria
Gnomes and ghosts mixed
And I was not deterred
I restrained myself
Knowing that our blood
Flows in the vein of my daughter.

Tony Adah

A Millstone

My life is a millstone
And I am the stuff
In between the bedstone
And the runner stone I lie
It grinds me into flour
And it grinds me into camwood
It rubs me mud
And it rubs me kernel oil
And this is the way with the world.

Tony Adah

A Mirage

The illusion is that government
Will create avenues for Mannas
To fall on our dinning tables
End creeping wars and even tame disasters
We will walk on this road to where a pool of water is waiting
Until we will find that the water has grown
Some wings and flown into the the thin air.

Tony Adah

A Monument In A Light Factory

God made light of the sun
And charged no man a dime to pay
Man made four strings of wire
Running through our abodes, mere perches
For the flying birds
Rain falls on them
The sun shines on them
And in one month we see thirty seconds of light
Our children applaud its arrival
It goes before ovation is down
And we are made to pay for the birds perches
For the sun that shines on four stringed wire
And the rain that falls on it
A monument in a light factory.

Tony Adah

A Muse To A Matyre

If death comes twice
Now it will do no harm
You lay there covered
In a crib you can not change
It makes no difference that we who
Refuse to speak still tarry here
Waiting for the wind to blow.

You spoke to me last night
When I saw you writhing in your crimson blood
Massacred on our behalf
Still they speak as if they want you dead again
And I do not know
What gain death will cuddle
Struggling a shroud with the corpse!

Tony Adah

A Nameless Restaurant.

There are mixed trees
Almonds, mangoes and
The flamboyant trees
Giving this arena its cool mien
But inside was a howl of cheers
And regrets of arsenal, man u, chelsea
Fans crammed watching a match.

The food is good
Fragrance of African cuisines
Eba, amala, foo-foo, bitterleaf soup, ohaa,
Cowleg, cowtail, nkwoyi, esi iwu etc

Somewhere under the mango tree
There is a broken down peugeot car
That has seen rain and shine
Night and day
Moss grown with dilapidated upholstery
Here was a one man restaurant
And only the mad man ate here
From the crumbs sanity had left.

Tony Adah

A National Applicant.

Under the scorching sun
Under the chilly rain
Or the sleepless nights I see myself
Wearing a torment my country
Has sewn for me;
I have traversed the length
And breath of my country,
My hope clasped in my heart steams
And rises like vapour in the sun,
The wit and wisdom my college
Professors expounded resound
An empty cymbal,
Now mute and all topsy turvy I am.

I have borrowed the legs of
Knowledge to prowl on this land
The sand I am supposed to write
My history on
Grates the soles of my shoes;
I am sitting under a Parkia tree
It is no longer a sweet song
Perhaps my reward is wrapped and kept
In a distance I am yet to attain
I am tired
I do not know if my country or
I am to blame for my long unfruitful
journey.

I am not alone
I can hear the drowsy song of birds
And far in the afternoon, lizards
Nod on the trunk of trees
To the song the birds sing
Without melody,
I am not afraid of them
I see tinkers barefooted with sheets
Of metals on their heads
I am not bothered,
I am thinking of the college fairy

Tales about fresh graduates and
The present fact of the absent jobs.

I have left the earthen road
That which rose dust as we traversed
And painted our ankles earth red
This end which I do not know where
It leads to and may not be tarred
I will leave it
To the asphaltic thoroughfare
Here where Ferraris and bugatis
Wheeze pass
Where traffic blink their red, yellow
And green lights courting the porch
Cars to zoom or take a breath
I am here under the scorching sun
Hungry, looking at my country Hungrier than I am
Those sun beaten lizards,
Those birds which sing with a void
In their stomachs
Those roving tinkers
That humble applicant that I am
If my country could see us
We will all miss
Into its hollow stomach.

Tony Adah

A Naughty Issue

This issue won't
Go away easily
The president is quiet
When the vault is plundered
A certain minister
Whose sex is female
Has taken part of the commonwealth
To buy an aircraft
The citizens are famished
As proceeds from black gold
Are pilfered.
And the president
Is deaf, deaf and mute
Over an issue
Which won't die easily.

Tony Adah

A Negro Is Born

Out in a cradle of leaves
A child is born
His red limbs fore and hind
Kicking the spineless air
Where the lush meadows green sway
He stood weaned and towering in a farm, his long tale began.

He's captured and sold
Into a mighty Atlantic ship
Not even knowing where he's going
Tossed at sea, he's lonely but crammed
In a crowd, crushed and scarcely any
Pleasure but melancholy to behold
Food the stomach took
Still the inner hunger haunted
Like a ghost;
Who will feed his soul?

Locks of chains at wrist and ankle
Who will free his prisoned mind
Tell him why and where he's going?
He remains in chains
The ankles and wrists free
But the mind bound
He is sold and resold
In a constant change of masters
Cotton fields gazing at the changing
Hands that tended them.

There are whips and spanks
Hues and cries
The negro runs but no hiding place
A negro is born and reborn
With the northern melancholy
And the southern joy,
Some masters are kind
They set open the negro's brains
And put a chip of intellect;
A negro is free in the land he

Doesn't own, will not own
Still he has no other land
Than the one he was bought into

The world rolled its sleeves
To walk the negro free
He is born again,
An African American
This is where the real war begins-
To be in chains
Or free and die
That's the African American dilemma.

Tony Adah

A New Born

I am a new born
Broken away from the old
Those spattering words
Doth, thou, thy of yore.
I will knit my words neatly
Up and down and crabwise
Slowly and steadily I will move
Not stutter a word
Than croon my tunes,
Bring the beauty of the hills
And of the vales,
Tell the gods what we need
Tell the people where they have
Gone wrong.
I will croon my tunes
Spontaneously I will speak
Smoothly they will leave my lips
Like I am in a loo
Done in diarrhea.

Tony Adah

A New Country

We got a country exactly
For nothing,
Just that we are citizens
We are a ginormous dork
That's what they think of us;
They scrap their pledges
To end poverty, to end penury
And to end darkness which now is more
Palpable the blind could touch,
It is dark now,
Our days are covered with its clouds.

Through the chink in the window
Of toil, there's brain drain
Here we make our escape
Only to shine in diaspora,
Fear to look back to a country we got
Exactly for nothing
Just that we are citizens.

Be there hunger as ever
Be there poverty to the last born
Be there darkness as usual
Be there hate as now,
We will mask our despair
Move on with coffins as our cloaks
Die not for the emergence
Of a new country which we will have
For something
Just so we will be citizens.

Tony Adah

A New Dawn

The prick to tarry
Was muddled in dark clouds
And thunder bellowed
In the dark storms
The sun seemed to be swallowed
And the earth never again
Able to move
Again the dusk moved against twilight
And on the morning after
A new dawn came peeling
Its white teeth
And we joined in a contagious smile.

Tony Adah

A New Day

Come new day like a new born
I can see you wrapped
In a cloud lying in a crib
Of the gloomy sky
The rains may threaten
Or the storm rumble
But the sun in its wingless flight
Will move wearing a cloak of the clouds
I will see it at sundown
Sometimes or when it glows
From behind my back
As it wears its new bright garb
Coming from the east like
Three wise men led by the stars
A new day no matter what
Comes under rain or shine.

Tony Adah

A New Moon.

There's a new sheen
In the sky
A new moon
Is about to appear
O' muses
Wrap me in green leaves
From your beautiful garden
And unfurl me to the clouds
Let the whole world
Shimmer in my light
I, o' muses
The original I
Who is me but my mother's child?

Tony Adah

A Perfect Singer

When Fela sang
Flakes of his country's rust
Fell to the ground;
He laughed and sang and laughed
His voice surfed upon the sea
Of his country's rots.

He pranced about
Telling the world how his putrid country smells
In his smoke and sex and nudity
He sang
And when he sang
His voice travelled far
He sang of international thieves and zombies
He sang in his country
And he sang in Berlin
No one took him serious
But when the gunpowder
In his songs started smothering
It was time they took him
And Abami Eda is gone

Tony Adah

A Picture From Ashiwel

Oh, scenic blue
Bring me thy hue
The picture of lagos
When the sun is down
Let the lights held above
By the metal poles show me my way
To kiss a bottle somewhere
And wish my woes away
In the halcyon night.

Tony Adah

A Piece Of Paper

I am sitting
On the dinning table
Not for the sake of a meal
Though the aroma of dinner
Lingers on the table
And the reeks oozing from my breath
I am looking at my diaries.

Suddenly a piece of paper
Flew away under the table
A paper I would have dismissed casually
With my own handwriting
Showing its cursive scripts
What If it was not useful to me?
It would absolutely have
Been useful to those who
Wrap wraps of hem
And make the youth stray their way
Or make a paper watch for liittle Nathan
To clad his naked wrist
If they saw it before me.

I am joyous
I saw it before them
With my own handwriting
Bearing 'the great hills'a poem
Penned to the delight of most.

Tony Adah

A Pig Is A Pig

In as much as the pig will be clean
He will grunt
In as much as the pig loves dirt
He will grunt
Bath him a thousand times
He will grunt
Find him in England,
He's still a pig.

Tony Adah

A Plea To The King

Again you have come anew
It seems the dynasty last unend
Now we do not want the colour
Of blood or the sight of bones and flesh
Mix for us now
Force and love
Wisdom and fairness
We do not want to say
Justice and mercy
Because we are not guilty!

Tony Adah

A Poem And A Poet

A poem is a poem
And a poem is a poet
And a poet is a man
A man is handsome
A man is beautiful
A man coughs like a poem does
He groans, glooms and blooms
Walks, stubs, falls and rises
Over hills and valleys

A poem talks to a poet
A poet talks to the world
The world reveres the poet
And cynics scathe the poet
A shy poet dies alive
And a polite one dies living
In all these a poem is a poem
And a poet a poet.

Tony Adah

A Poem For My Country

I will write a poem
For my country
It will exhume from
The mausoleum of yore
Men with their good deeds
And remind the living
Of their obligations

I will write a poem
For my country
And it will give needs
To living beings
Not flowers or funeral orations
To dead and dumb men

I will write it now
For my country
It will bear a warm smile
That will give hope to orphans
It will spawn truce to discord
And my country will know no wars

Tony Adah

A Poem To Change The World

I am a hunter
In the wild
I am a hunter
At home hunting
For poems that will
Make me happy
Change me to change the world.

One might come
With the rain or shine
Or come with war or peace
It might even come
With death or life
Weeping or laughter
But by all means
A poem to change the world.

Tony Adah

A Poem Up A Tree

Sometimes a poem hangs on me
Like an hydrocoel
Dangles to and fro
And never let me walk

I am happy I see
A poem hanging up a tree
Like an apple
This time I never will know
I have an hydrocoel
I run like a hare
And climb like a squirrel
Pluck the fruit and down smiling
Like a jackpot winner.

Tony Adah

A Poet In Two Places

I am a poet who has come
With a voice sweet as parrot's
I can fly like a pelican
And where the wind goes
That's my direction
That was then.
Now I am the eagle
I can soar against the storms
Up the giant sequoia of California
No, they said
Here I am still an egret
Taken by the currents
Like a quill feather in the wind.

Tony Adah

A Poet Is Not A Griot

A poet sits before a flickering candle
Before him his scroll and beside him a pot of ink
In his hand a quill
His nostrils black with the growth of soot
A griot sits in the palaces of kings
Before him his songs of praise
And his wares of compensation
A poet is not a griot
Like a stinging caterpillar
Is not a harmless one
Still the poet all the times sting not
For he scribbles on his scroll
Things of love and things of beauty
That does not make a sycophant
In the palace of the world.

Tony Adah

A Poet Never Dies

Time passes and the poet lives on
Upon the crusty back of the earth
He writes his names upon the rocks
Of the mountains and the bark of great trees

His art may burn his fingers
In the truth revealed of his trade
Still he writes his name
In the clouds where he trailed
With his wings of strength and wisdom.

He may write and stock in a box
A long abandoned piece that's is dusted
And upon which his name appears in gold
A poet lives at all times
Even if the roaches devour
The chests of his cupboard
His work is everywhere in the world.

Tony Adah

A Poet On The Prowl.

This morning
I have been on the prowl
For a good poem
Waves come unseen
Their ripples breaking
In my ear
And I spontaneously
Do an assemblage of words-
Make a bird fly
Noisily like an aeroplane
And make an aeroplane
Fly silently like a bird.
Where can I get
A good one?
I pause
Listening to the silent sound
Telling me about some tired
Market women sorting whole fruits
From their perishable lot
And of farmers
Years bent upon the earth
Toiling with the hoe
Their ageless valued gift.
I see teachers praying
Waiting for their reward
Here on earth
As they mill chalk into dust
On an obsolete blackboard,
Their pupils assembling bricks
As writing tables
In the twenty first century.
To the window pane
I peer through
Reading the writing thereupon
Telling me about masons
Putting mortar on the growing walls
Of the affluent
And of others mixing cement, sand and water
While some still

Wearing a pad of spent cement papers
On their balding head
Lifting concrete to the masons.
When I am told
That lunch is ready
Of roasted yams and peppered palm oil
I look at that direction
And I see armoured cars
Rolling on my pieces of yam,
On the palm oil
I see the militants rowing their boats on its Surface going on a mission
To steal black gold.
It is evening
A bowl of pounded yam
And bitterleaf soup awaits me
A horde of beggars abandoning the streets
Come swarming at me
Usurping my rolled lumps of pounded yam.
Then a wave of sanity alights
Before I get to bed
And I ask myself
Does the poet eat not?
As sleep lulls me in
I see ebullient men
With short necks and pudgy fingers
Sitting on barrels of black gold.
On the other side
I see melancholy written
On the faces of famished children
Faintly playing in the sand
Their faces expressionless
Battered by their fatherland
And wishing to get back
Into their mother's womb.
Beside them
Mothers sit expectantly
Rocking the lapped children to sleep
Children whose future
Anybody's guess can
Be as good as mine.
Then somnolence died and resurrected
Into a slumber

And a snoring poet
Lives only in his dreams.

Tony Adah

A Poet's Burden

A poet's burdens
Does not shake the world
The world's burden
Rather shakes the poet.

Geography teaches that
The world is round
So we were told initially
And the world wraps its pains
Round and wears this hydrocoel
On the poet and it fits him well

He runs round picking the bits
From the decrees the tyrant
Churns on his helpless lot
Or pick from the dumps of the refuse
A bunch of masses lay their hands
Or still from the martyrdom
Of the gallant few
Or even from the craving
Of the masses for the splendor
That nature offers in a way splendid
Or crimp in like a snail perturbed.

The world is a brittle place
And the poet is not crippled
By the gritty bite the world offers
On his platter of paper and pen
It dumps its faeces on the poet
But nature illuminates the
Poet with the radiance of its beauty
And in all the poet carries a load
Of the world with a pad of his poems.

Tony Adah

A Poor Man's House

I will build me a house
A red earth house
Of walls mud made
I will not allow Onyurang river
To splutter downstream unused
Because I have no cowries or gold

Earth mortar shall hold my earth bricks
And in any direction the walls go
Straight or crooked
A house for my head I want.

Some men may come
Passers-by and laugh
At my crooked walls
But my house is my shelter
My sleep a great need for the house
Still I know no crooked sleep
In a crooked house.

Tony Adah

A Promise

She was promised a rose
Carefully sequestered in a heart
Beautiful and firm whorls
The rose though with a thorn never
Pierced a heart
Or it pricks a harmless pierce
And that's the essence of it
Love!

Tony Adah

A Race Running A Race

I have seen a race second to the Jews
A race running a race against all odds
Won in strong sinews and thews
Built with wits that no adversity ever succumbs
My Cameroonian friend told me that
The Bamilike are like Ibos
I don't know them but I know my Ibos
I know how they shrivelled them
And how they rose like lilies and blossomed.

Always and always they're at the receiving end
Of the odds my country mets out
A ball of akara and a mini loaf of bread
An Ibo man keeps his naira
And tomorrow he's a millionaire.

In the south they kill him
So he's driven from the north
And a stranger in his own land
He takes refuge in a primary school field
With his household littered
Like the dry cashew leaves they rustle
With their feet, food or no food
Once the head is upon the shoulders, erect
Hope is what the day breaks with.

He looks an African
He thinks either like a Chinese or a Korean
And this how the federal forces faced a threat
Until hunger became a weapon of war
They lost but today its pyrrhic victory
As the wit of industry resides in them.

Give him a metre, he takes a kilometre
And give him a kilometre, he takes the world
Perhaps Albert Einstein's mother's mother's mother
came from here
And they have Philip Emeagwali to show
A race running a race

And the Ibos with the muscles will always excel.

Tony Adah

A Reunion

Looking westward to where
We will mourn the sun's death
Twilight bloom
In the yellow, black and brown sky
Here the silhouette of lovers stand
Cuddling in the dripping fog
Waiting for the moonlight to come.

Will the storm stop us?
Will the rain bless us?
Not likely than the poison that maybe
Eating the woman's mind.

I will cuddle her
Tell her to let us take a vow
Our stumbles of yore gone
The moonshine our witness.

I will give her all apologies
And plunge my heart in her heart
Seal the bond with the children
This Union has spawned,
So the night hereby a witness
Sworn in the court of the moonlight.

Tony Adah

A Rival's Song

I am just passing
Do not think that I'm listening
To your exploits
I am on my way to my farm
Not to where tales have long tails
If all that nature avail is edible
The sky will not be above
If what is chewed
Doesn't fill the entrails
Then drinking a barrel of liquids
Will be in vain.
If you taunt me by the rainy season
It will be my turn to laugh by dry season
I am an orphan
Careful not break a pot of water
And not a pot of oil.

Tony Adah

A Roadside Tarvern

Life is like a roadside tarvern
With chairs and everything else
Some sit down to gulp their fill
Others pass in and stand hastily
Taking their sip
And the rest is a melancholy of reminiscences!

Tony Adah

A Rogue Gentleman

Would I have waited, I would labour not
To discern what nature he wore upon his manners
It would have been easy
To doubt or believe his mien
After a tall tale if deceit,
Here hangs a coat of lies,
An equivocator left behind
My conviction of doubt certain
And going he's empty handed.

Tony Adah

A Rose In The Morning Dew

A rose blossom
In the morning dew
And the green background
Wears a cap of its petals
Wow, the nectar lovers scream
For a splendid beauty
In the morning dew.

At noon time the petals shrink
Like bitterleaf wilted by the scorching sun
Oh, what a fading beauty
In the evening sun
All the the butterflies, bees and moths
And sunbirds have taken their nectar away
Leaving the petals falling apart
What a fading at sundown!

Tony Adah

A Rugged Politician

I'm a rugged politician
Or I'm practising to be one
I have stolen a ballot box
And I'm thumb printing
On behalf of the electorate
They've applauded me
And this how to kill
A baby in a fledgling walk.

Tony Adah

A Shrewd Voice Called.

I am bombarded
By the sins and odds
Of the world
And I am perturbed
But one little voice
Said shrewdly to me
'Stop, gather thy self
Don't run but fight
The sin and all the odds'
And I succumbed
Like life to death.

Tony Adah

A Sick Man

They said death took him away
Mired in dreams where singers and dancers
Brandished palm fronds
Some drove him away from a crypt
Too far only he could see.
Death in vain corrupt a dream
They dance twice but only once
He will say goodbye.

Tony Adah

A Silent Placard

In school where hunger lived
It's abode in our tummies
We ate and visited hibernation
Three square meals reduced to
Zero one one
Zero zero one
And zero zero zero
We lived in the hostel hope built
Who would have thought that we would
Live to have this canvass stretched
And painted today?
A hot furnace it was
But we postponed being roasted
Till this day.
Still the perpetrators are back
With a heinous reign
And the paper the school gave us
Which they do not have
Useless as a spent ticket
Is still in our hands
A silent placard in the street
But a docile holder.

Tony Adah

A Silent Vow

The sun touches the earth
With its hands of serene illuminating waves
What a great lesson to learn
Soldiers make a great fuss with guns
Win a war and a great mass
Of humans is gone

I have taken a vow of silence
To fight without a gun
For if there must be a loud sound in war
The enemy will run away
But the silence of a pen on a paper is a great sound
And this is where victory lies like shingles on a beach
Where hope lies like in a believer
Expecting a miracle
Where the tyrant's Wings are clipped
Where his troops are ambushed
Where embattled citizens get their freedom
Where the enemies flee.

Here I have taken a silent vow
And my pen spits liquid pellets
On the faces of retreating army
And their guns a mere toy
Here where guns and munitions
Are not the only weapons of war.
Here where I am the commander
Of the silent war and the pen my silent gun.

Tony Adah

A Silver Lining In The Sky.

Of all these
There is a silver
Lining in the clouds
When there is a death
There also come a birth
Where there is a fall
There is always a rise
After darkness
A shimmer of light
Where there is a gloom
Thereafter comes a glee
And the world event twin happen
Finally, where there is despair
Hope stealthily reclines.

Tony Adah

A Sinner's Plea.

I am a Peccable being
I went the wrong way
In the eyes of men
And in the presence of God
I, a prenatal saint
Have become a postnatal sinner
And I'm speaking in the palance
Of a wrong doer.
O' glorious pardoner
Here I am at your pearly gates
Cleanse of me my paranoia
And my transgressions
For I'm doomed!

Tony Adah

A Snake In The Wind

A snake is a snake
No matter its infant looks
Or how innocent it crawls
Or how weak and frail its infant fangs
May be;
It grows up
A big snake and live
All to its attributes
Whether green, grey, black or red
The venom is always green
In a pouch of death.
A shredded black paper bag
Flew in the wing
And everyone ran away
Thinking it was a snake.
I took a stick
And held it in my heart
The man that I am and moved
Against the wind and took hold
Of the shredded paper in the wind.
The cowards cried
That I was dead
I moved towards the frightened horde
Scampering for safety
I am a magician
Or mine is finished, they cried for me!
I quickly put the snake
In the side pocket of my pants
And when they saw no snake in my hands
They stopped with apprehension.
In their midst
I told them the truth of what it was
And showed them the snake
The colour of which they believed
Their nerves calmed
But they told me
A snake is a snake
Whether dead or alive
Infant or adult

And for all this it is the length
Of this creature and its wriggling moves
That they fear.

Tony Adah

A Solid House

I'd rather make true my dream
To build a humble house
Where integrity lives
And character glows
The rest are my mortal dregs
They'll settle at the bottom
Of my my grave.

Tony Adah

A Song For A Runaway Wife

We knew when we were wordless
about fads and wealth
The glue between us affection held,
you braided your hair and tied it the manner
my grandma did;
A fathom of your wrapper a shield
in covert deal your breast.

Now I am outdated as your braided strands
Of old adorning your shoulders,
my threadbare blue and black shirt
an eyesore,
All because you've seen and tasted
the new world
where skates and blouses reign
where fried hair rule the streets
And bleaching leaves your ankles, elbows and knees
as ebony as mine.

Ubeloka, you've so changed
even your children will not see you
in the street and recognize you're their mama
Your black ankles lifted by your new hooves
Italian made I guess, makes you taller than then.

My wife or should I say former one
out there is a new world
Swirling in the good moments of today
But will a thief because of moonshine
remain in its sheen?
I give you a chance for the sake of your
to return and brood them in your bosom;
For me, I have been charred by fire once
And now I am afraid of ashes
I have no thirst for water made turbid
by the plodding feet of men.

I am poor and worthless now
still I am happy

but when the time comes;
I shall watch and laugh at your sagging cheeks
wrenched by wrinkles
Then of choice, I will visit the garden
strut like a king, look at the roses
take one whose whorls are just opening
cuddle her to my bosom with all clear conscience
That I tried in vain to flourish in your garden
Deserted, I was swallowed by loneliness
and melancholy
And in your new world,
You became an epitome of a flirt
In which our union blossomed in the garden
of nullity.

Tony Adah

A Song For The Poor

I will sing for the common man
Whose voice is too frail or dumb
To reach the ears of the world
I am neither here nor there but the gulf
Is too wide to miss the blind;
Too clear to miss the ear
And too gloomy for the world
To feign ignorance.

I will sing for him
His creed my creed,
His pain my pain
Will anybody doubt the difference?
When few soar the skies
And many wingless remain lame
On the ground.

I will sing for the common man
Those melodies rendered in melancholy
I will sing for him whose is free in bondage
And a slave in his home
Until the shackles of brotherly slavery
Loose from his tired ankles
I will sing for him
Until the shackles loosen from his tired soul
I will sing for him
Until it hurts to sing.

Tony Adah

A Stain Of Liquid Gold And Blood

The people forget their origins
Forget their long ties to the colonial masters
But the memories of things
Won't fade in me
I know much of the atlantic south
And the sahel much as I know my country.

I know about the British swift
Race from the streets of lagos
At the time of unvailing
The clouds of freedom
I know about the the jihads
Of conquest mounted
Under a big umbrella of faith
The warriors ceremonially on horsebacks
As in a durbar with spears and cudgels
That maimed and killed and conquered

Distant visitors
From foreign lands
Visited to enslave the people
And variegate some cultures
Somewhere in America
And I am speaking with tears
Brought to stupor by the elicited gin
A bamboozle brought about
By the visitors to stop the people's
Invented industry from growing.

I am worst off for't
Now that a licit liquid gold
Is found at Oloibiri
The hoe that the people bent over
To create the pyramids of peanuts
Has faded into the smoke
Of the billowing rigs without replacement
The pyramids themselves consigned
To history and oblivion.

I am a witness to the southern forests
That bore games, cocoa, rubber, palms and its produce
And the men who bore hoes and knives and guns
To harness from the wild national income generators
That brought John Holt, UAC, PZ and Elder Dempster
To Calabar.

I can see barrels of liquid gold
Exuding a slime, the glue of
The bond of my country
And the life-line of individuals
Who have pelted the commonwealth.

I was the sunbird that perched
On the bough of the locust bean tree
Watching a battalion of soldiers
Marching at Gakem
Blocking the infiltration
Of the the federal forces in a task
To keep my country one.

I could hear the bugle sounding
And the bombs and canons
Of ogbunigwe grumbling
Secession was going to succeed
But it failed in the short supply
Of stockfish from Sweden
Emasculating the secessionists
In the scarcity of even lizards
The war was won on both sides
Still there's a tragedy of victory.

The red sight of blood
Away from this war
Has shifted to liquid gold
And to who holds the power
To distribute it
That is the war now
And there is blood stain everywhere
Corpses flying and landing in the blood
The maimed limping
Unable to function in their niche.

It is not a war for democracy
It is not a war for liberty
It is not a war for freedom
It is a terrorists war
And churches, schools, banks and
Markets are no more
And Chibok stolen girls are somewhere
In a gulag.
The soldiers have joined the terrorist insiduously
And my country is confused
One step forward
Another step backward.

Tony Adah

A Stowaway.

I came here
Thinking that this place is good
The other side was glowing or dark
I do not know for my eyes were glued.

I came here
Thinking that this place is better
The reason why I stow away
On my mother's ship for nine months
Upon arriving here
I saw men that greeted me
Good morning but my watch
Said it was afternoon.

I came here
Thinking that Mannas will pour
Least thinking I should fend for myself
I came here
To find out that this place
Is both heaven and hell
For the lush of the affluent
And the penury of the poor.

Tony Adah

A Stream Up The Hill

A great stream grumbles down the hill
Cataracts looming its way
It falls into a deep pool
With eddies whirling and vapours
Rising like snow
It leaks out of the pool
Slithering like a snake
And finding a friend at a confluence
Journeying down slowly
Until it rests in a sea.

Tony Adah

A Street Boy

He eats well
He feeds fat
A fat fool
He farts foul
He grows well
He drinks much
He sags pants
And he's a street boy.

Tony Adah

A Suppliant.

I am a suppliant
Kneeling with my hands forth
And up right
Waiting for benediction;
I am veiled and protected
If anyone pours venom my way
There's a carapace
If any serpent comes again
I am alone
And where I am, barren apples
If anyone pushes me
I can not stumble
But clutch the clouds
And clasp the winds
All with my gecko hands and feet
And I am going.

Tony Adah

A Taboo

The one the holy book
Told me emanated from my rib
Treats me like a child
I may even be a toy placed where she desires
Whenever I am wrong
I would think of where to borrow a tear to weep
Whenever I'm right
I'm still a dog with its tail in its limbs
And I'm supposed to be seen not heard.

This is a taboo
In my own norms
That she who my rib made
Should be the general commanding my household
And I become a private following list me a sheep.

This is a taboo
That she I paid everything for
According to tradition
Come here to desecrate the culture
And my people are watching
If I'm truly transmogrified.

Tony Adah

A Tall Throat

Greed lives in the
World ancient and new
It was greed for amala
That gave the dog its black nose
From touching the hot type
It was greed that
Blinded the antelope's eye.

It was greed that balded
The goat's knee
From squatting to steal
In a farmer's barn
Greed is the bane
Of my country's development
From the affluent few
Reaping from our humming rigs
Of oil installation
Onshore and offshore.

It is greed
That kills a crowd
Of excited people
About a loaded tanker
Of motorized spirit
Swallowed by flames
In an accident scene
And greed is
Always at last a regret!

Tony Adah

A Thief

A thief honours thievery
Like a spider does his web
And a thief
He will do anything when kleptomania comes
When he finds a household empty
He cleans even dust to his fold
And his persistence like the antelope
Gives his one eyes away to the wind
And when he is caught
Pays his dues.

Tony Adah

A Trance Of Heavenly Storms

I do not know
What made the sky bitter and fierce
Of a sudden it came out with wrinkles
Of clouds stretched by the heavenly storms
And a woman on her way to farm
Returns to watch the clouds urinate.

I am sitting in a gazebo
In a trance sort of
And the cats and dogs in a liquid duel
I am watching too
There's a prolonged blaze of zigzag
Lightning in the clouds in tow with
A crackling rumbling of the earth.

Then suddenly my right hand
Became heavy and my palm hand
Showing traces of blood.
I am traumatized
And awake only to the bright shining sun!

Tony Adah

A Tree

A tree is a world
On its own
There are twigs
Green leaves and yellow leaves
Like Children,
Adults and the old folks

Sometimes twigs, the greens
And the yellow get tired and go
But yellow
The gray hair of a tree
In strength whittled away
May just fall to the earth
Among the rustling lot

It is time
Time for the twigs
And the greens to take heed
With melancholy in their heart
Bend low and low
Before the wind,
Turn their back to
Excess salt and water
And manage to stay on
A little longer here.

Tony Adah

A Troubadour

The wind closed his mouth
And hummed a song for the world
He opened his wide nostrils and
Poured out his breath
And shook the trees;
Uproot them with his invisible cudgels.
He wheezed past the city
Brought bad odor or sweet fragrance
Held a conversation with trees and power lines
After all he's calm again
Our friend and for
Far and wide ubiquitous-
A troubadour always in transit.

Tony Adah

A True Friend

A true friend
Is not like a shadow
That misses in the dark
He is there
Through thick and thin for you.

A true friend
Stretches his hand
Into the turbulent waters
When there is where
The storm gathers you in.

When thirsty
He is there
To wet your parched throat
When lonely
He is there
To give you company
Where mourning
He is there in the morning
To wipe your tears.

P
A true friend
Is a great friend
In all these
A true friend
Is hard to come by!

Tony Adah

A True Friend Is A Soul Friend

A friend in power
Is a friend lost
A friend in money
Is a friend with wings
I hold no friendship so dearly
In my hands on pecuniary gains.

A friend who can
But runs away
In dire times is an enemy
My friend
Is my friend indeed
And no one makes me
Their friend without my consent.

A true friend offers a perch
Of his shoulder to lean
In times hard
Friendship is not a ware
We procure per diem
With our cowries Or sweat
The whole shebang is a soul thing!

Tony Adah

A Visitor Meets With Cold

Everywhere is ice
Some slumberry sheets of clouds descending
This chandler's stuff with not thaw
Nature is perturbed
Morning and evening
And I his child the more
In this cistern of cold
They themselves blanketed in wool
Look like chimps
Wild and tough to cold
I am blind and lost
With no one to rescue me
From the paw of cold.

Tony Adah

A Voice Within

When will democracy come?
The question I asked
In the haze of tyranny
Those lords are gone
Of the words of democracy
We speak
Veiled in tyranny still
Where is the freedom?
I ask in the thick shadow
Of dunts, hate and death.

Tony Adah

A Watchman's Dream

Sleep beckons on a yielding eye
From a hectic day's toil
My duty abdicated
By a dream
The master I'm supposed
To watch over died in my dream
How difficult it is to tell
This to him for my job
Sits on the edge of a canyon
Waiting to tell
And a great fall
And mute for my conscience to prick.

Tony Adah

A Wealthy Man Is Gone

The hustling bustling is gone
That peace may be in a soul
So small a hole
Will it take the houses?
Will it take the cars?
And all sweat did bring?
Oh, adieu wealthy man!

Tony Adah

A Wedding

The banns Were read
Three times they Were read
To the chorus of the parishioners
And the priest nodded

Gold rings slipped
Into parallel fingers
And the yes I do, yes I do
Consummated a union
Between the sky
And the earth.
Where a man
And a woman witnessed.

Tony Adah

A Whiff Of Yuletide In The Air

The year's menopause is at hand
A whiff of Christmas lingers
In the air
The malls wear their garments of
Tall glowing yuletide trees
And bubble with the hustle
Of buyers pushing trolleys up and down
Santa Claus's beard white as snow
Continues to grow in the malls.

The church bells toll
And carols roll
From the choirs in the cathedral
There's a whip- round call in bazaars
And the church is churning
Money like merchants
Meanwhile the wishy -washy are home
The contents of the malls
And the whiff of Christmas
Tantalizing in their eyes.

Tony Adah

A Wife.

He saw her so beautiful
And proposed to her
She accepted all
Knodded her head
And said no with her mouth to
The vagaries of marriage
Love's sweet tongue
Of the morning
Tasted vinegar
In the day.

Tony Adah

A Witness To Rain.

Fierce lightning strike
In a ceremony of storms
And it poured upon the earth
The long strides of the rain unable to cease
Breeze threw some like from a bowl
On my window pane
I can not find my wren
Her nest dripping in rain
No one chirps in a drenched nest
The little brown friend in a drenched voice
Unable to sing.

My companion closes her eyes
Dreams of sun
And flies gather for a ceremony
Joyous that the vindictive venom
Is unable to spill in the famine the rain
Has created for the wren
Her entrails new incessantly like a cat
I am a witness to the rain
When the little brown bird rebukes the rain
For making her bones old and weak
And giving her house
To servants to play.

Tony Adah

A Woman By The Beach Road

I was passing by a road
Leading from the beachside
A woman was standing by
With a derelict basket on her head
Over it a horde of bees buzzed
Flies hovered and she making some
Turns to ward them off
And the more she tried
The harder they came.

The bees, butterflies and the ants
A sure sign of something gone awry
When I moved closer
Some pungence stuck my feet
Still to the spot I was standing
Watching this time the obscene gestures
Of my noble cynosure

I turned only to find a half clad man
With a long spear and some woven
Stuff like nets
And when I ask him what the woman
Was carrying, he answered 'some mushrooms'
From where? I ask again
And he said, from the river

Tony Adah

A World Of Silence

We prayed in silence
Ate in quietude
If available food was
We moved without the sound
Of our footsteps
We cried silently.

We regretted our dumbness
All these after the election
Has been won
And the only gift democracy gave
Was a barless prison
Where we were locked with padlocks
On our lips.

We move but with shackles
Everything we attempted saying
Counted seriously against us
Just that we were a minority.

Tony Adah

A Worthy Slave.

Even though I no longer wear
A noose around my neck
I feel less certain of my freedom
Than when the guns pointed everywhere
With the stern looks of starched crispy men.

Now no smell of gunpowder anymore
I am too fatigued to know
That I have won the war in which
My brother's hands brandish still a gauntlet
Then I am still a worthy slave.

Tony Adah

A Youth Is Gone.

Death looked at its hit list
And its pangs piercing like a spear
In the heart of the world
A village scene is ridden with melancholy
Men, women and children are bleary- eyed
And their tear source swollen like a boil
Dogs are barking
Goats are bleating
And all the hens as apprehensive as they are
Are all standing on one leg.

Death has applied palm oil
On life's effervescence
And all suds are gone
Its black maria has just driven past
And it is a coffin for the youth
Who in a blind alley has walked
Truncating his journey
At this fiendish end.

In all the vexation and mourning
Mourning merged with merriment and
Men, women and children
Deigned to eat, drink and dance
In the pitiful exit of the youth.

Tony Adah

Abandoned

So soon a man
Goes home
Even If he still had more things
To do here

He would burst like a bubble
And away into the thin
Air he flies
Going maybe to meet
His mom Or dad
But leaving behind
His wife, children and all alive.

So soon a man
Goes home
And we think that
He should come back
He has the force to go
And lacks the force to come back
We wail in vain forever
For the man we lowered
Into his last home
Will never again be here
So soon a man goes home

Tony Adah

Above

The formless form
Of this place called earth
Up and away above the sky
Cloud clad in shapes
So many to behold.

Looking down
From a floating sky
Perplexed by the ordinariness
Of the formlessness
Deception abounds that
The sky floats below.

The sleeping clouds
Endlessly and aimlessly fly
Stretched by the tail winds
Like the artist's strokes on canvass
And woolly like cotton bolls
Starring at the blue sky.

I feel like stepping
Out of the aircraft
My feet on this surf
To prove that the earth
Is still below.

Tony Adah

Adazeh Ador-Ishama's Horn

It was a bullhorn
Curved in every manner
Its sound travelled
The echo ramifying every Achibie's ear.
Adazeh Ador-Ishama
Was a stout man
Who bore a hump
Beside the left side of his head
He was a fierce man
Who laid quietly in his hammock
Waiting for a page
With an errand from the king.

When he got the details
Of the message
He extracted the bullhorn
From the antelope skin bag
Hanging overhead looking
At his face
Poured some water into it
In the ritual to soften the sound.
He blared the bullhorn
He blared it always
For good or for bad

He blared it
When the D.O came
To inspect the bridge
Achibie built over Onyurang
He blared it
When our locust bean fruits
Ripped at Kotsor,
Our impatient immigrants
We gave a field to
At the price the divisional officer
Prescribed but they refused to pay.

He blared it
When spears, guns and cudgels

Were desired to keep the enemy at bay
And when hoes, knives and diggers
Were needed to
Change our footpaths into thoroughfares.

It was a klaxon call
For all taxpayers
To avail themselves
At the agent's house
To render their due
He blared it
When the witches gather
In a conference to wreck havoc
On the sleepy community
That Achibie was
On the day a reverend father
Visited Karu to put the first school
He blared it
To the astonishment
Of the Irish priest
And he was made
A community treasurer
Now that there is
Blaring of the bullhorn no more
The community tired
Of its youth lives on
The fines of evil
And on that side
It has made strides
Especially for those
Who Were still foetuses
In their mother's wombs.

Tony Adah

Adidi The Drunk.

Adidi quickly dunk his bread
Slurp his tea
Rose to feet
Dazed in his drunkenness
And when asked
Where he was going
He said to the morgue!

Tony Adah

Adult Toddler

I am an adult toddler
I repudiate the nomenclature
Of an invalid
My environment is replete with bounties
And my body wears a sound mind
If there's no growth today
I am hopeful of tomorrow.

Tony Adah

Advice To Immigrants

My body is on the hills
Of my country looking beyond
My wings ready to fly
To where there's sunshine
Where people have suffered to clear
Their trees
Here I will go take everything
Without sweat, so I think.
Some are corpses floating on water
Or rescued from drowning
The cold that freezes where the
Sun shines
The hunger that bites in the
Absence of food
The beds that are on the pavements
Are worth staying back at home
Clear your trees and plant your
Own sunshine.

Tony Adah

Advice To My Brother

My brother
If you behold sun
In your eyes smiling
From the east,
Never, I say never extinguish
The fire in your hearth
Nurture it,
Stock in kindlings
The night will come
When the sun goes.
Let no one beguile you
If you have a bird at hand
Don't be deceived by the promise
Of nine in the bush.

Tony Adah

Advice To My Son

I render this advice
On a plater of wisdom
I pluck it from
The numerous new yam
Festivals I have seen
From the much pepper
That has beaten my tongue
Follow my footsteps, my son
You may scowl
But what is left in you
To be the gift to your own Children?

Tony Adah

Aeroplane's First Day In My Village

The clear afternoon sky rumbled
And the earth shook
Above and high in the sky
A contrail followed a great noisy bird
In the air and the world was doomed
At least so we thought.
Only brave men came out
To view the frightening bird
Which obviously was not a bird!
Good as the thinking of the Wright brothers was
The black man's heart was in his hands
Afternoon palm wine tappers abandoned
Their palm trees thinking that
The world will end with the passing
Of the plane but it never did.

Tony Adah

Affirmative Actions

I was not there in Beijing
When this
Proclamation was made
I did not endorse it
My wife
A proxy signatory
Reminds me in time of it
In the bath, kitchen and car
It is thirty five percent
And above here
When next
I come to be
Here on earth
I will like
To be a woman.

Tony Adah

After Christmas

I do not know what is new
About the year
The trees remain dusty
And yellow like the setting sun
We ate same food
Drank same water
And the palms sway their fronds
Their milk dizzying our heads
We ate same rice and kill same cows
And the sun rose and set
Like every other day
What makes this year new
I'm yet to know.

Tony Adah

After The Rain

Listen to the song of the rain
Its dancing little legs
Hitting the ground
And its tiny hands
Making drums of our rooftops.

This night the clouds are vexed
And weeping leaving us
A message of its tears
After this noise of
Singing, drumming and dancing
Quietude rears its big head
And the world knows calm.

Tony Adah

Afternoon Farmers

It is ten o'clock
The sun has not risen
And the cloud is full
Neither are the drizzles abating
The strong have gone out
In defiance of the inclement clime
Upon their heads cocoyam and plantain leaves
And the weak counting hours
To when the rain's tiny legs will break
Their hearts roaming to feed their famish tummies
The sky smiles and the sun shows
Weakly in the west
But for today it is too late
To step to the farm.

Tony Adah

Again Friends

They told me
That old bonds bind better
Than new fake finds
And I have kept faith
Feeding the worn out bonds
With the latex of my latest gifts
I have shielded the bond
From the glare of the sun
And the heat of the fire
Here I am
Waiting for the glue
To bind again
And refresh my friendship.

Tony Adah

Agony In Our Hearts

There's a great omen looming
In the sky
As Christmas is relished
With our heart in our hands
Not free yet from Book Haram
There's still a great danger ahead
And after Christmas the fright of elections
Stare in our faces like the sun upon the earth
Who will win
And who will lose in good faith and in
The spirit of gamesmanship?
To move the citizens beyond their old creeds

Many people are afraid
Of the red hue of the aftermath of elections
And the season seems
To be that of migrations
But no bomb no dagger can yank
My country into pieces
So long as oil flows
No matter how low its price will go
For the world's coveted dollar.

Tony Adah

Airport Field

The airport foreground
Is fun with it lush verdure
And trees and birds chattering
Except the piebald crow
That silently coos around the place.

There are three Or four houses here
And all their occupants are green, red,
Brown and opaque bottles of drinks
To drive down the drinks
Two Or three barbicue stands
Smoke in the open
And in rainfall a tattered canvas canopy
Of blue and yellow hue
Here dead fish lying with open eyes
Are tortured with heat
Maimed by tatoos of deep marks
For spices to sink.

The customers sit
Each horde in isolated places
Their guestesses fondling with phones
Waiting for thier order to get done
The mystery of this place
Is the lack of light
When it is dark
And the people relish it
To shade their privacy and
They prided themselves in it
By saying the hand
Doesn't miss any mouth at night.

Tony Adah

All I Know I Didn'T Do

I didn't ask the owl to howl
I didn't ask the lion to growl
I didn't ask the dogs to bark
All I know I didn't do
I will never tell the world
And incur the wrath
Of its woes.

Tony Adah

All It Takes To Be A Wife.

When prayer and nagging
Chop off my sleep in the early
Hours of the morning
I feel like mourning.

When their jagged edges
Put a saw in the muscles of my heart
And it bleeds crimson the liquid of my life
I am stultified like a mummy on my bed.

What a wife! What a wife!
If this was the content of the vow
I vow
It would have been a bitter pill to swallow
And in the world all it takes to be a wife
Is to shorten a man's life.

Tony Adah

All Term And Third Term

The police left
Their usual spot
Where they used
To mount a road block
And cheat the wayfarers.

But now my senator
In a bid to secure
A second term has smoothen
The place and the police
Have relocated to another
Place where traffic slows down
Due to the bad road.
And I hope a third term
Will do another magic!

Tony Adah

Alone In My Farm

To be in the bush in my farm
To bend over the hilt of my how
To see no one else than my children
To see only stumps of trees
In my farm
But to see human beings
On my dinner table
And I am always alone.

Tony Adah

Alone In My Heart

I am so much in a crowd
Of men without human of heart
They're scampering
They're prowling
They're scavenging
They're gathering
And when it comes to giving,
They stammer.
I am so much in a crowd of men
That claim the heart of love
Only in their cloaks
And many words of honey
But little deeds.
Where is that man
Who will die and his footprints
Live after him as he treks
On the beach of life?
I see none than the self and the I
The prowlers and the gatherers
And at the stammerers
Whose tongues search for
Simple words like kindness
When the next person is entangled
In around the gatherer's heap
Looking left and right
Without an answer from the world.

Tony Adah

Alone Singing

I am home with the bounties
Nature bestows
Still my entrails mew like a famished cat
And my eyes teary like a night owl
I would have loved to frolick
Like a butterfly but the nectar
Is stolen by wasps and bees
Bees have laid a siege
And neither the smell or sight
Of honey is near.
I am here alone singing this song
And the rest are stoics
Silently resenting the pains.

Tony Adah

Ambition

My life is a royal mess
I the prince do not want
To become the King
I have behaved so
And the world judges
Me in this way.
My life is a royal mess
And the king's ears are open.

Tony Adah

Amnesty

I want to offer
Here a toast-
A posthumous eulogy
To the giver of amnesty
I sow these words
In the silts
Of the niger delta
And I am dancing
For the copious gushing
Of black gold.

Wiwa, I thank you
For paving the way
Mitee, I thank you
For using the way
Dokubo, I thank you
For harbouring the boys
You have today released
Tompolo, I thank you
For policing the land.

Today the boys have laid down
Their arms and the warmth
Of peace has embraced the land.
I am blindfolded
Lonely moving northwards
I am sad that I do not
Know who the killer is
I plough on the
Sand of the sahel
And I want to plant amnesty
Here for men
Here for ghosts
But the citizens
Of my country are real

I am silent
Like the flight
Of a sunbird

I remain still
Like the granite slab
Of the plateau helplessly watching
The rage of the herdsmen.

I am sober
Pondering over the holocaust
Of the southern locusts
Amnesty fizzles
With bubbles of absent peace.

I am a militant
I bow to my country
Here are my arms
Here are my munitions.

I am a terrorist
I bear the clouds of rain
I bear the clouds of thunder
I want peace
I want war
I want power
All from both
Sides of his mouth.

And amnesty dangles
His unsure hand
Between men and ghosts
Nodding their invisible heads
Men or ghosts
Amnesty hand of peace sags
Men or ghosts
Their loud 'No' is evident
In their bombs.

Tony Adah

Amu'Ngye'Ye The Mad Wife

Amu'ngye' ye dances mad!
Her mother in- law has a red eye
And sits on a broomstick
Madness they say is inflicted
By the bite of a millipede
Or witches and wizards
These days real wives
Are hard to come by.

Tony Adah

An Accident

A mother is both a custodian
And the chief commandress
The father who can not even
Control a TV remote says don't
Drive yet my son,
The custodian says no my son
Must drive.

The son whose other name is eager
Drove and jam the gate,
He wept all day
Went to his room
Laid down and his pillow told him
You were happy driving
Dad's anger is more
You will no longer
Drive a beautiful car.

Tony Adah

An Army Of Occupation

Well armed
Irregularly
Camouflaged and gun totting
Trigger ready
Armoured tanks
Rolling on same soil
The citizens tread
Their weary feet.

The land is besieged
An occupier abodes here
Chasing oil thieves, pipeline vandals
And insurgents
Sparring thieves armed
With pen And paper
A republic within a republic
In all these a mutiny!

Tony Adah

An Empty Night

Will thought flow
Go extinct tonight?
Will one espouse abstinence
Once beaten by drunkenness?

Will one fear planting pear trees
Having fallen from one?
I am hunting
I am haunted
The night is far gone
And my mouse trap is empty.

Tony Adah

Ancient Brook

We almost abandoned our brook
That spits clean chill water upon the the rocks
Where our ancestors had a drink of life
Government made a burlesque
Of water supply and we went throat dry
Without the water of our brook.

It went wild in the weeds
And the footpats bushy with shrubs
Toads, frogs, green algae and water ferns
Made it a habitat to grow
Still it flew downstream
With no one to take that
That nature has given
And we waited in vain
For water civilization boasted!

Tony Adah

Another Toll By Death

The air is still with
Some sinister aura
Only roosters crow
Birds are pensive in their moods
And the trees yawn yearning
For the wind to blow in them
The herdsman is guiding the cattle
By the side of the road where
Men sullen in their faces
Women bursting with tears
And children half clad and dust ridden
All are touched by the lost
The news is bad
That Jackson slept
And did not rise this morning.

Tony Adah

Another Mournful Morning

I am into another mournful morning
And the sinister omen sprouted
In the Ford ranger refusing to start
I managed to jump start it
Along the declivity of my garage.

I couldn't hear the usual mews
Of my friend who will come
And rub his wooly furs on my shins
I drove out onto the road and found
Him lying stiff on his side
Some blood oozing from his tender nostrils.

He was quiet and his sharp paws
Kept like he was in an ordinary sleep
His sensitive whiskers still
I looked at him
Tears rolling my cheeks
Like the blood of his nostrils.

And I remember the day a mouse
Strayed into my house and he
And he alone knew the track of the mice
As I tricked it into his paws
And his sharp piercing canines
And he ran away to tuck in his food
Now I a reckless driver has done his best
And I am pruned to the torment
Of the mice alone and alone
As I weep to no avail.

Tony Adah

Another Transition

Every tenure's end is tumultuous
Like we will not see the next
And it is time once more
To recognize the people,
Build them roads, bridges and schools
And hospitals which they can see
Only with the eyes in their ears.

Tony Adah

Apology

Since you left here
My dictionary defines
No word other than insomnia
I have called and called
To no avail
It seems I am onto the deaf and dumb.
Come back here
I am kneeling
Praying that I be forgiven.
You and I have been
A pair of utensils
Come back
Let us change into serenity
And be like
A snail and his shell.

Tony Adah

Armageddon

Armageddon is a tale
Without a tail
Never a day will pass
Without the sun casting its rays
We may sleep and dream the end
Holy books will give sermons of doom
The clouds may besiege the sky
We may go to bed hungry
We could die in wars
Bet it Armageddon is hidden lie
Not for the individual
But for the world alone berthed
In the fear that one day it will be no more.

Tony Adah

Arrival

I have reached a point
Where If groping ahead
Becomes an impossible venture
I can find my way back
To where my placenta
Was planted
Scavenge in the place
Pick it up to my navel
And fix myself anew
But a scarecrow to my enemies.

Tony Adah

At Kilimanjaro

In a city or town or village
On earth, in the world,
In the sky, I wish I was up somewhere
So that the world will be complete
Watching me from my kilimanjaro.
Where I will broadcast
Onto the earth the seeds of
Peace that keeps war at abeyance
Love that cuddles beyond bounds
Respect that plays like a boomerang
Order that is as still
As the moving earth
Integrity that edifices
Like the holy spirit
Modesty that cures immorality
Care that rehabilitates the orphan.

When I have all these
And cause the world
To be amendable to them
Then I will return down
Like Moses with the commandments
Build my house under the earth
Rest with my earmuffs
Whether the world acquiesces
To these testaments or not.

Tony Adah

At The End Of The Times

When the time comes
Do not let me through the hands
Of the lord of the flies
And the prince of the the demons
Take me in your wings
Gently to paradise
Whether I am awake or asleep.

Remind me to shed my old self
Into the blossom of Beelzebub
And lighten your yoke
As I fly away
From the ugly surface of this earth
O' Aeolus I pray.

Tony Adah

At The Middle Of The Road

I am in the middle
Of my journey, confounded
The way behind is long
And that in front
I am not certain of its length

Behind me
I can see a helpless cradle
That held my fragile body
A casket or a grave
That will bear my useless carcass
Is the frightful sight of
What I see in front of me.
The road traverses canyon tops
That wayfarers sway, totter and fall
And the world weeps to no avail.

The road may walk me through
Meadows with lush verges
But the thief will not continue
To prowl the night
Because the moon
Is full and up the sky.

Tony Adah

At The Seashore

There at the seashore
The owls have hooted their hoarse voices
It is like the herons have gone away
With the fish
Or the tides long awaited
Has had the fish in its blossom
The fish tackles are dry
And resting ashore
Down in the stilt house
The despondent fishermen
Are taking away melancholy
It is a party of gin drinking
And maybe the sea is forgotten!

Tony Adah

Atimbo Road

You would wonder what they do
With earth floor clean thatched huts
Flanking the road,
If you went further in
The flies and bees and ants and reeks
From the gourds
And the breath of men and women
All smacks of palm wine.
The bush is lush
And the men have lust
Puffing cigarettes, talking, laughing
Cuddling their free girls.
The wine is good relished with endangered
Species of pangolins and porcupines pemmican
In sauces deep in chili peppers
The tall palms of raffia
Wear gourds in between fronds
Like hydrocoel between the thighs
Of man and tall and short tappers
On an inclined ladder climbed up
To bring what made men and women
Tick on Atimbo road
And unfortunately, Atimbo road
Is endangered and engulfed by development.

Tony Adah

Attitude.

Attitude makes
Or mar a man
A gentleman of integrity
Walks with sincerity and humility
A hollow man walks with noise
Without any garments
To garnish his character
His flesh and bones and soul
Are but a resounding gong
In the ears of the world
But good attitudes
Bring a harvest of platitudes.

Tony Adah

August (For Yvonne)

March

April

May

June, July

And August

When the year crawls

Into the cold hands of this month,

I drift into the abyss of despair

Its rainy hours form

A lifetime of rivers

Rilling down my cheeks.

Some parts I feel of my body severed

Doctors and student doctors

Swarmed a bed clamped with

Tubes and bags of fluids dangling

Like a hydrocoel between the thighs

Of man.

A patient's nose filter via tubes

Drawing oxygen from a yellow cylinder

She choked

My sun set

And she was gone!

Tony Adah

Avenger's Woes

The avengers didn't feign
Any laughter or an ordinary smile
They spoke in pain
And in anger of tear- filled souls,
No one cares.
Their bombs signify a cause
Intense and grave
No one cares to know,
They understand the difference
Between sadness and joy
Sadness that leaves no joy in Ijawland
And the rage of agony in Ogoniland.
If it not so intense
If it is not so grave
If it is not so hot
If it doesn't explode,
Melancholy will blossom in the land
Perpetrators will feign oblivion
Still fish will pant like
A muscle twitch in dearth of air
Forests will turn into snags
Vegetation will shrivel,
Wilt like the fury of hot water
On Bahamas grass.
Abuja will shine
Ogoni will be a shanty
Ijaw will be a slum
Indigenes of the wealth will slump
A subnation decimated
And strangers will celebrate of
One unequal nation.

Tony Adah

Back To Base

The rain bearing clouds
Have been far and away up the sky
Now the earth is a twin brother of mars
Pitchers are empty and dry.
But I am home now
The only one to give me a smile is champion
He wags his tail
And licks my shins with his cold tongue
And leads the way licking my luggage.

I am home
And all my flowers have shriveled
With only a sip of dew
My side drain reeks of froths Of soapsuds
And slicks of oil from utensils
My gazebo is suffocated with dirt and dust
And spiders have woven cobwebs
Set like fishing nets in a pond
I will do everything possible for normalcy
To return with my hands and my mind.

Tony Adah

Back To Dust

Who am I
Than a broken clayware
From the hand of God
A piece that speaks
And It's despised
Soon my body is a ghost
You will fear
Kind or unkind your words reel
Then I am gone
A deaf dormant piece
Back to the dust.

Tony Adah

Back To Earth

Far away, the message came
that he was gone
Then death was a hearsay,
now it is at my very feet.
Three days later, a crypt is made
on one side of it, the bearded red earth
In another moment, the beard with shovels
is shaven,
the ground level
And death no longer a rumour.

Tony Adah

Bad News

It would have better not to have heard
Than to hear that the bud that
Just opened for the flower to come out
Has suddenly closed.

The flower wilted in the morning sun
And the leaf tips with droplets of dews
Are the rills that roll the cheeks of the world.
Such a termination in the tide of rising wave
Who will row the boat across
In the midst of the little ones?

Tony Adah

Bad News.

There's no sun this Sunday
With a gloomy sky,
All the sinister birds are howling
their songs
And no news is good news
Of the world full of buckets
Someone dear has kicked one!

Tony Adah

Bad Times Are Here

Bad times are here
Of season with snow and hails
Which is why our pockets are frozen
Pay cheques are lingering
And we are on shoestrings.

The gas is gone and the burners are
Waiting for the next matchstick
Like the chicken for its teeth.
Our little abandoned stove derelict from disuse
Has come alive
Smothering with choking reeks
And a flickering flame
That blackens our pots.

Bad times are here
We are almost hibernating
But the debt of hunger
Is always by the door
The dregs of everything we search
Like something is lost in the house.

We warm our palm oil holders
To thaw the remnants of oil
And change the face of our soups
Food is anything that fills a void in our tummies
And it is not written on our faces
The contents of our tummies
Bad times are here
To widen the gulf between
The have and the have-not!

Tony Adah

Be Brave Unto Your Grave.

To be lacking in courage
Is to see death in many ways before you die
To be silent in a hearth is to be a human being
As a heap of cinder
To see a wrong and blink away
Is to make a man visionless with his sight
To be silent when the king tramples
On the commoners is to put a weapon in his hands
No man dies twice
Be brave
Unto your grave.

Tony Adah

Be Kind To Them

The world has placed its load
On orphans, widows and the lowly
Be tender, be kind to them
Be the flowers with the nectar to heal
the hunger that mews in their entrails like cats
Let the bombs of love fall harmlessly
upon their heads
And a confetti of the petals of roses
Falling on their heads to celebrate
The occasion of winning the heart of man
Man, show love, show love
For you are the father next to God.

Tony Adah

Be My Valentine

Be my Val is a magnet
Only the main Ruth can spawn
It is easy to say at countdown
When the hour and the minute and the second
Strikes;
All batteries go down
Or network is busy
And a day after;
All batteries go up
And network congestion thins out
Sweeties are back
With baskets apologies
For Valentine has come
And Valentine has gone

Tony Adah

Be On You Own

If you stand with the crowd
You will be lost and no one
Will find you
It will push you down
Alas! Rise and find your way
Away from the talking storms
Blowing your way.
If you aid an animal, into the meadow
It will miss,
Do same to a human being
He'll turn back
And stab you.

Tony Adah

Beauty

The beauty of things
Is a pleasure to behold
A man looks
And a man sees
Things most times beguiled
Do not be quick to judge
And bemoan later

Beauty is like a mushroom
It blossoms
In the morning
And wilts
In the evening.

Tony Adah

Beauty Is A Thing Of The Mind

Beauty is a thing of the mind
It blossoms here
And it shrivels there
Only man who judges
Can set a standard for it
Wrongly or rightly he thinks
That a thing is beautiful
A rose is beautiful
And chrysanthemum too so
Can their beauty be same of a kind?
Beauty is a thing of the mind.

Tony Adah

Beauty Of Nature

Nothing in nature
Holds it so prized
As its beauty
But man labours
Time un- end to make his own.

He honours that which
Nature divinely bestows
And vainly chases his own
Creation dangling in the air.

The fresh elegance
Of things in the morning dew
Is but a mirage
In the setting sun
Where the brittle nature
Of things crumble
And man grumbles
At his own craft.

Tony Adah

Before A Dream

I want to do this
Before I go to bed
Sleep and dream
About potbellied politicians
And their effervescent wealth
To my own chagrin

Digression
Or go to xanadu
Fly myself like a witch
In an invisible aircraft
Land on my garden
Where lilies and daffodils
Beautifully sit waving at my arrival

Or stay on
searching for words
To weave poetry
Or borrow strands of weaving stuff
From the waiting raffia standing
By the silent river going
Down the hill.

Perhaps nothing works
Then tread the path of the river
With my pitcher, fetch this
Liquid of life for a transfusion.

Tony Adah

Before I Go.

Before I go guard me in my ways
Do not let me be vegetable
Or a balded vulture unable to prey
Do not let pain rage in my joints
And make me creak like I was
Made by a carpenter

Before I go let me walk my way
To my last house
And not a corpse still breathing
And unable to lead myself anywhere
Groping and stooling and pissing
In one place with hair like the fibre
The technician removed from the back
Of my old fridge.
Do me a favour
Let me have people's sympathy
Not that I was helpless when age
Took its toll but I went on this journey
A strong man to travel.

Tony Adah

Beggars At Rest.

On the façade of the moribund
Post office on Calabar road
Some tattered umbrellas lined as if in a competition
Each had a protuberance
Of white, brown and black legs
Lying in the morning sun.

The men and women who scavenge the streets
Have come to roost in broad daylight
Indifferent to the hustling -bustling of the town
They may not for days have tasted of food
Their lips scaly and dry
From the winter's wind.

Still their eyes bore a tear
That meant nothing to the pendulous public
Perfunctorily but rarely dropping a coin
These people society has planted by its fringes
Where will their souls go to
When they slough off
And become part of the earth?

Tony Adah

Being A Palestinian

I am a free born of a free father and a free mother
My blood runs in radical rills
Still I am a citizen ersatz living under the shackles of gag.
I thought the pebbles from the slings of intifada
Will be the endpoint where my freedom will spin;
In vain the pebbles whipped the air
It is worst with dangling knives that hold the futile future gazing at me.
I will be killing the occupiers with me
But it is not eternal freedom that will bail my generation.
Why don't we coexist?
I ask like a sellout;
One who is tired
Moving camps like a tourist
One who is always policed
And one whose power is attenuated by the Sephardic force
It's all because I am a Palestinian under the conscience of an occupier.
Still I am sequestered
And Gaza is my Roben island;
Not sure into which dawn I will wake.
Freedom is a gamble where citizens live by the edge of their heritage
Where all hope glimmers but is eclipsed by a cloud of violations.
In this darkness the world febrile, is stingy with its light
And I remain a Palestinian, abandoned searching for elusive peace.

Tony Adah

Beside The Pool

Beside the swimming pool
Two men sat over
Two mugs of chapman
In which was a light blue
And a pink straw
The day was hot and humid
And they flung their hands
Warding off the flies
That came perching on their straws.

A young man came
Beaming with smiles
Wearing his party insignia
Of an umbrella crafted
In red, white and black
The pool owner seated
In his thatch hut knew
Why the young man came
In the company happiness-
He made the governor's list
Of those who are qualified
To run in the upcoming election
He is lucky to be selected
For the people to elect him.

Tony Adah

Beware Of Man

In every heart nature doubly dwells
Beware of man for he's a man
As well as an animal, a beast;
He's a bee which gives honey and a sting
He's a loofa which seeds kill but a sponge
He's like wine
The giver of joy and stupor
He's a rose of a beautiful whorl
And still a thorn;
He's like the universe which gives
The earth its night and day
He's a newt which dwells on land
And in water
He's a double edged sword
Which gashes so
Beware of man.

Tony Adah

Billboards

Nowadays politicians
Build billboards
And put their promises on them
The promises make the
Billboards their home
And remain here
Where the dividends
Of dempocracy permanently stick
To the boards
Until the tenure elapses.

Tony Adah

Birds

I do not know
What the birds
Have eaten this morning
That makes them twirp
And jump from one
Idle electric line to another.
I am looking outside
Through my window
To the harbor side.
In the transluscent mist
I see them weighing down
On the sagging lines
Frolicking and preening their plumes.
They are not yet
Sure of the day
But I who should grin ear to ear
With my breakfast ready
I am here sullen
In a dilemma of some sort
Either to hail or hate the day.
Who will take me
To the school
Of the birds?
Teach me how to
Appreciate a new day
Even when I am not sure
Of what it carries
In its own Wings.

Tony Adah

Blattter's Blunder

The rain splattered into the field
And Blatte's boys
Falter in the pitch
And the match was lost
To the opponents
Who found it and took it home.

Tony Adah

Blood On Grasses

It is not easy to be a citizen
From the way things are going
I do not know
If We are going to the desert
Or we are going to the sea
If you don't see me again
Look for me in the morgue.

Tony Adah

Boko Haram

And religion which heals now kills
Crimson blood flows
Where congregations once met
And stammering Kalashnikovs spit
Fire with smoke and pellets
Humans, death and alive lay among ruins
And western education is the human bane.

Tony Adah

Bonus Breath

Beyond mortal thoughts
Every moment a bonus breath
And history, tomorrow's mirror
Stares us in the eye.
What miracle so profound and benign
Begets a man if he gets a bonus breath
And still tread the path of his type
Deep reposed into a grueling fire
And fails to learn the existential ropes
In the err other gone?

Tony Adah

Born Again

If my fate twitches slightly
And a new vista stares at me,
I will be born again
Turn all my street life
Into a straight one.
Cross the Ts and dot the Is of my past
And change every thing with
What I now know.
Then substitute prayer
For thanksgiving
And reap the premium of repentance.
I will get into the thick rainforest
Of my biome
My clean eye spotting
A life saving shrub which leaves
I will devour to negate the universal doom
For now my heart is pure.

Tony Adah

Bridges.

All the world
Ought to do
Is to build bridges
Across streams, rivers and oceans
Over the forests, hills and valleys
So that man can
Make the world smaller
And easier to traverse.

Man must build bridges
Not only across our waters and land
But across human hearts
Physical boundaries on ground
Can really be shifted
Unlike the boundaries we build in our hearts
And love is the thing
That can build age-old bridges
For humanity to freely traverse the world.

Tony Adah

Broken Bodies

They left the shores of their heritage
Of halcyon clime and bounties
Up north they left with the wind
Hot or scorch didn't mean anything
And the sahel ground them
In the jaws of the winds.
The rains came and put its spittle
In the sand
Roses blossomed with fragile whorls
That crumbled in the tortured world
The prophets blew their usual trumpets
Riddled with flying bullets
And bodies lying broken in the land,
Where succour lies only in the
Flight of tortured souls.
Back home to where redemption breaths
The herdsmen followed with armed donkeys
With a mobile armoury
And the broken bodies piled
With tired breath in their own heritage
The world laughs and the world mourns
Under the shadow of death.

Tony Adah

Broken Dreams

I am here looking
At the world reneging on its promises
Here where I claim my biome
I hardly find my niche fulfilled,
All those broken promises
Aggregating into our woes
Promises that never came to pass.

The trees shed tears crystalized
Into fallen leaves
Fruits are absent
And bird's nests devoid of eggs
They are shy, sore afraid to come to
Perch on the bough shriveled
And hardly able to take their weights

If I have to claim trees
My dream is a broken one
In that fruits, nuts, flowers and Nectar no longer belong to the world
And so too we that prowl and eke out
A living out of here will soon
Be be gone.

Tony Adah

Broken Friendship

Injuries to my wealth are beginning
To gather scars
Flies have lost hope in their source of food
And they are thinning out in droves
Their humming and drumming
Away in their wings
Our cord of friendship broken
And littered about my penury
I may be down
So they think
But my faith is my own armour against fate.

Tony Adah

Brother Against Brother

Down the road
There are checkpoints
And there are vigilante
Perhaps peace will come
Not in Nablus
Where there's a tearful stab
And a gruesome shot
Where the occupied want the occupier go
And the occupier wants
The occupied tamed and calm
Life here can be real good
It is not the knife or the gun
That makes trouble reign
It is the weapons the hearts nurture
For knives and guns away can be thrown
Not like the heart sheltered
In the rib cage.

Tony Adah

Brotherly Hate

In those days
School was free of tuition
Free of room and board
They ate fat and after school
A Peugeot car and job placement
Were waiting for them.

We washed their clothes
And ironed them with charcoal iron
They wore them and strut like Kings
We swept the house
And made the six spring beds
With white cotton sheets.

Our country then was brimming
With wealth
They abandoned a car if it
Had a dent and bought a brand new one
They wasted our wealth.

When it's our turn
They ate our food
And tortured us
We couldn't even dream
Our dreams died before
We went to our beds.

Tony Adah

Brothers At War.

Now where Christ was born
Of a humble make and trek and talk
And heal
Men and women trek in hand
A walking stick that stabs
And where brothers live and peace prevail
They now quarrel and fight
Forgetting the travails in the garden
In the boat and to the desert.
If Christ would now come back to Bethlehem
Or Nablus, he'd be greeted with knives
And guns and bombs and pebbles
He will leave and shake the dust behind
And go to Jerusalem
Only to find it a cauldron of war
And disciples conscripted, armed
Wounded and maimed.

Tony Adah

Butterfly

One beautiful morning
One colourful butterfly
Flew to my peaceful garden
I trotted like old age on a woman
My steps of care guided

It pledged peace to be
Perching on the small white
Flowers of a hawthorn
Flapping its Wings
Gently suckling from the cups
Hawthorn bore on his head

What a beautiful day!
O' colourful butterfly
Give me your pink, yellow and black hues
That my shirt be made
Give me your serene Wings
So that I may fluffy fly

Kiss me with your
Stretching suckling lips
For I too will eat the sweet meal
Created by hawthorn your chef.
O' beautiful butterfly
Your flight as peaceful
As your Wings
Fly to me and give me peace.

Tony Adah

By The Riverside

I am by the riverside
The heron too is here to fish
They are perfect
Without the baits
And I feel like throwing away my bag.

Once again my line, hook and sinker
Are drawn deep into the water
And when I pulled the eater out
I found a crab
Creaking with the hook
And the heron flew away
With fish in its crop!

Tony Adah

Bye To Rainy Season

The unpredictable Calabar
Weather is at it again
Just as I want to go out
It is raining
Not that it is pouring
It is drizzling
Its tiny long legs
Striding our vicinity
And thunderbolt rumbling
And shooting its canon
To say farewell
To the season.

Tony Adah

Calm Down

Calm down canon plumes of war
Calm down
Go away painted clouds
Rise up smell of gun powder
Man's folly makes war
Let truce descend and heal the wounds
We self inflicted in war.
Calm down
Don't count on the losses of war
When truce matters,
A soldier narrates not his vantage position
Where an ambush dealt death to the enemy
Calm down
Joy newly returned
Is not certain where to settle.

Tony Adah

Campaigns

They gave us knorr cubes, tin tomatoes
Rice, onions, vegetale oil
And they gave salt
Which was later added to our sores
When the elections were over.

What did they not give?
Just their children and their wives
The circle of gifts complete will be.

For what did they give these?
They gave them
In the purchase of the votes
From the gullible masses
For elections that will be won
And we will be forgotten.

The campaigns were replete with items
For stomach infrastructure
Rarely with any speech
To lift us to the sky in hope
This is the ritual
We go through every four years
Of our lives.

Tony Adah

Can We Be Friends?

Can we be friends
So we can knit our souls together?
Real friends die together
Not in body but in hearts
When they've had
What it takes all to be together
Swimming and sinking
Real friends are friends
Both in need and in need.

I don't want a friend
Who will offer a flower
That won't sow any joy in your heart
I would be a friend
Who will take an offer of a good
Good wish card floating
On the wings of joy.
I don't want to be your friend
If I give you a ride on my bike
You wish it was yours
I would be your friend
If my bike is just yours
And yours just mine
Then I won't mind
Being your friend forever.

I will be your friend
When my cup of water quenches thirst
Much as a pop of champagne
I want to be a friend
Who means everything to you and I
I will be cold and deaf
If your friendship is wandering
Looking for economy to improve.

Tony Adah

Catching A Rat

There are many ways
To catch a rat
You dig the burrow head on
Set your dogs
Or you look for the bolthole
And get the rascal out.

Tony Adah

Change

What I was not
Expecting is suddenly here
The clouds that
Covered the sky are gone
The inferno that raged
Is extinguished.
I tried a song
But I was too farmished
To utter a word
I was yawning
Now I am belching.
These split second
Alterations rule the world.

Tony Adah

Change And Chains

I don't need to be you
To nice the world
There are a thousand ways
To make the world straight
In an adventure we both take
From different angles until
We meet where the world is right.

I am me
And you are you
I am just me
Not better than you
I careless what you think.

Why do you want to allow
Lies in high places
Where we ought to learn?
The guestess said she visited
But the hosts silent as they are
We know there's untruth in her lips.

You will ask me
What about those scenic views
We've seen on social media?
I will say
This is the twenty first century
Where analog is a corpse
Whose grave is ready
Haven't you seen them use computer
To put the head of Jacob
On the neck of Esau?
Haven't you been promised a change
And you are given chain?

Tony Adah

Change Is A Stillborn

There's an attempt to change things
those pedestrians into horse riders and
horse riders into bicycle men and cars and aircrafts
But the order has been jumbled.
First a country was founded
And earnestly it cried to be a true nation
But a nation required an agreement to be
And it is made of men
Who beat the drums for the dancers
To twist in the art.
The sound of the drums is changing now
But dance steps are still the same
Who beats the drums, spawns the former rhythms
Who dances to the rhythm
Are the same self dancers of yesterday.
There's is a gathering fear looming in the air
Fear of the change on its wings
Ready to fly away
And the joy of old things becoming new
And mere wishes
This is the delight of my country men.

Tony Adah

Change The Change

We jubilated that the masses
Took up arms against the soldiers
Who attempted a coup
We celebrated the free
And fair elections that won
With landslide
All these do not translate
To the fact that democracy
Has won.
We are in a vehicle of
Statusquo ante
Same hunger abode in our stomachs
Same lakes on our thoroughfare
Same sirens blaring on our roads
Same electors yearning for a change
And change won't come
Until the change is changed.

Tony Adah

Change The Inevitable

Of what essence is history
If after reading it
A sin cannot change
Into a good deed?
Of what good is a dream
If in tow its carriage
Does not contain a vision?
I am busy asking questions today
And I may be taunted but
Who doesn't deserve a change
In this ever changing world?

Tony Adah

Change The Order Of The Day

Change comes like the morning sun
When the eastern horizon smiles
In the glow of its infant rays
It also drizzles
Still the sun comes.

Sometimes the owl hoots with a song
So coarse to usher an omen
That brings melancholy
But the Nightingale too gives melodies
That sooth a broken heart
Change yesterday had a bland taste
Today it comes with ovation
Even without the knowledge
Of what it carries in its wings
Tomorrow laughter may come
Or We may wail
That's the nature of change.

Tony Adah

Chasing The Treasure

I have gone to the mountain top
To where the treasure chest await everyone
I'm happy I've found the chest
And upon opening it
I've found a pack of cards
I'm not bothered.
All I know is someone someday
Will blossom a chest full of treasure
And when you find it
Don't take it away with you
When you leave,
For hunters will tire not to prowl
under sea or on mountain top
In the clouds or beneath the earth
On every frontiers of valleys or meadows
And I will sleep yonder deaf
But listening to the stampede
Thus others follow until a new generation comes
Still chasing the ageless treasure.

Tony Adah

Chibok Blues

Rivers, seas and oceans
Are a world away
From the bevy
Still they seem to be drowning
Dream but awake
Clasp but the air
Stung by the wilderness
But captured by a cult.

Harrowing nights
Elongated days and
A national shame
Of a hermetically packaged
Entropy darting in the land
Freedom or slavery
There's hope
As there's God.

Tony Adah

Chibok Captured Again.

It's a heart rending thing
And my heart is breaking
Into bits in my hands
The air is hazy
With a cloud of death
There's doubt
If anything can be done
Now that there's a stampede
To win by hook or crook
The selection that is called election.

Chibok's halcyon days are gone
And the girls the bigots
Of religion abducted are still missing
Now Chibok is captured again
Its eyes seeing
The crimson colour of death.

Tony Adah

Choba.

Choba is a university
Town in Port Harcourt
Here hunger taught us a lesson
To prowl the forest
Lay riped paw-paw friuts
As a bait for snails.
Here we plodded the swamps
Looking for raffia palms
To extract beetle's maggots
With our blunt matchets
To make stews
For the rice we bought as essential commodities
Here when we protested
The non provision of welfares services to students
Fierce looking mobile police men
Brandishing the kalashinikof
And tear gases chased us
Into the bush and own
Our university without learning anything from it
Here experience moulded
Us to carry on today.

Tony Adah

Choices

You leave your day
Between where the sky and the earth meet
The sun is leaving and in that twilight
You ponder over what words you
Have eaten as food.

A day maybe hectic or less busy
It may have been good or bad
You're hailed or disparaged
Or the day itself refuses to yield
To your whims
And laughter trails the streets
Like children after a new madman in town
All for your fruitless toils.

Still if you telephone tomorrow
To find out its store for you
You will find yourself tangential
To the same cliff
Rejected or self satisfied

Tony Adah

Church

Once a sanctuary of piety
Now a vault of wealth
Flaunted by new shepherds
Where the sheep have gone astray
And know not their father
So shall it be
That one's salvation is not contagious
As to be collective
Amen!

Tony Adah

Civis Nigerianus Sum

Take me home or let me die
For my country
I was on a brink of a disaster
So lucky a message came from Goodluck
The way democracy works,
Put me on her wings
Take me home to where liberty is
Lie me on her bed
Where freedom snores.

Take me away from tyranny
Take me away from prison
Take me away from the grave
Let me live
For I am a citizen.
The wings of democracy hear no storm
Bear me here
So that I will sing the song
Of the pelican who towed the windward
Way and flew effortlessly
To his destination,
Take me home
To where the world belongs
Give me freedom
Or let me die.

Tony Adah

Clean Our Hearts

Today I make a supplication
On behalf of the world
To whichever destination
To whoever is concerned
Swiftly sweep our hearts
Of the refuse
Made to soil the world
By our own erring hearts
Oh today swiftly sweep our hearts
To who is concerned
To whichever destination.

Tony Adah

Climate Change

Nature hools a sound of tiredness
At the craft of man's hands
Man weeps at the end of his life
Two of them conspire
To a mutual ruin
And the earth is worse for it.

Tony Adah

Clown Heads

In the theatre of my community
Some men are clowns
And government's meddling
Has made them chiefs
They move about clowning
In bars and taverns and burial grounds
With a diadem on their heads
And a sceptre in their hands
Defiling the sacred culture
Of our land.

Tony Adah

Coincidence.

The sun shines
The jealous sky frowns
With clouds
I sneeze them from my nostrils
And the rain began to pour.

Tony Adah

Cold In Obudu Ranch

The rain poured and
Soaked this part that I am
Mudslides dump their faeces
On the road,
Keeping tourists at bay
Then the cold came
To the ranch
Yes, Obudu ranch

Pines dripped in weeping tears
And some sun birds line up a bough
Drenched, freezing in the cold
Gander and goose gazed up
To the frowning sky
And the goose spreading a contagion of cold
Loaned all of his pimples to me

Here in this resort
The meadow still stood,
Its lark in the cold weeping
And the mauve flowers yearning for warmth
Till mist took over my sight
Looking without seeing and
Clinching the buttons of my cardigan
Searching for their holes

Half blinded by mist
Thickening into descending clouds
Ready to give me the flipside
Of a resort I so cherish to be.

Tony Adah

Cold Morning

It has been raining
Since midnight
This morning
The monsoon
Is hitting hard
Its winds coming with strong Wings
From the harbour side.
Everywhere is chill
Everywhere is still
Even my jacket
In its hanger
Is shaking with cold
A little twirping
Bird is drenched
And preening its plumes
Over the swaying coconut fronds
I am wondering
When the north easterlies
Will visit again!

Tony Adah

Come And Dine With Me

Come let us
Have a meal
Made with words
And served on poemhunter
Sweets words
That tell of nature, life and death
And of how the world
Ought to be
The chefs
Are down to earth
In their chosen trade
They craft their dishes
Across the continents
And inveigh
Where blame is found
And applaud where
A good deed
Has touched the earth
This is what we ate
Yesterday and we will
Eat today and tomorrow.

Tony Adah

Come My Brother

My brother you prowl and toil
Without a gap of breath
You think that the world is work
You have been a farm hand at a time
A hewer of wood and a college boy
The street has been your home
Where you brandish that paper
The college gave you
But no one cares to look at.
A thief they say
Does not remain in the field
In the glare of the moon
Yours is a tale of woes
Still a living neck upon a shoulder
Must wear a golden necklace
Come let us have respite
From the yams roasted
From plantains grilled in the cinder
Of garnished times
Come let us take a transfusion
From the resplendent springs
Relish palm wine from
The oozing palms
And leave red wine and beer and
Spirits and and all grilled
That goes with them
Come my brother
Our village is beckoning at us
Come before age comes
And we need a third leg to walk.

Tony Adah

Come O' Ye Rain.

Come O' ye rain
To wet the earth's seared tongue and throat
The grass wilt into straw
And tuck their tufts in the earth
That's been fried for sometime
Lifeless they await thy succour.

Come O' ye rain
And give the lilies their garments
Of pink and red to clothe
The naked earth.
Come O' ye rain
To revive the shriveling crops
And avert a looming famine
Coming like a tornado.

Come O' ye rain
That the children may wash away
The dust that makes them
Look like some hands in a flour mill
Come O' ye rain!

Tony Adah

Consolation

You won't just die
Because life's earthenware
Has broken on your head
The tears in your eyes will dry
And the mourning in your mouth
Will turn to laughter
That is when you will not extinguish
Your fire because the sun is up the sky
When your matchet gashes you
You clean it of your blood
And you sheath it back into its scabbard
No matter how sweet life favours us
We can not infinitum live
Or we toil and it tosses us
In the tempest sea
We can't just die and die!

Tony Adah

Conversation With The Masses

There was a great
Rally to come
Of it there was
A great media hype,
The huddled lot came in colours
Of the crippled, jobless, scroungers
And the oppressed.
Big men came
Big men alighted
From terrifying motorcades
Bombilating with sirens
They talked to the people
And the pliant people listened
They talked to them
About renting their thumbs
For the looming transition
The big men paused,
Converged their heads
And spoke in a tete a tete
Which nobody heard
But everybody saw
And only the camera captured.

Tony Adah

Corruption War

We see the evil spread its wings
Flying over the land
Taking here;
Taking there
Is it only for stomach sake
That they amass all these
And leave us shrivel like a tobacco leaf
In the heat of the harmattan?
There's war
There's looting and trampling
In the land
Still no one speaks for every
Snail has single berry.
We have drank from same stream
We have all touched the palm oil
And every finger is stained
None is stainless
In this fight that is selective.
When we belch;
It is oil that smells
When the Niger delta belches
It is the oil that comes out
And we steal it
Steal it for our personal good
And the majority look up
To the Commonwealth that is empty.
They're fighting but the umpires
Have their fingers stained.

Tony Adah

Corruption.

It looks like the new child
Who is born disable from birth
Has come to stay
Nothing ice ever enough for him
He doesn't stand
He doesn't walk
He doesn't sleep
All he knows is eating, eating, eating!
He makes his mother a fat cow
With all the milk that doesn't go round
But only to his tummy.

Tony Adah

Counting The Birds

They asked me to count the birds
Seven big crow birds sagging a power line
I counted them seven as they perched
And a gush of wind unfurl their wings
It is cold and they want to fly
They asked me again
If a sling is flung at one
How many will be left?
I smiled at them
And told them none will be left!
They scribbled something down on a paper
Which later transformed
Into my college admission letter
And that's how I became a college boy.

Tony Adah

Counting The Lion's Teeth

I was nominated out of malice
And less bravery to count the lion's teeth
On that great granite slab it laid tanning in the sun
In seeming close eyes that saw far and wide.
With the man in me
I touched the mane
It wagged its tail and licked its fangs
And on its paws I rested
Laughing at those who wanted me to die.

Tony Adah

Courage

I have seen
Very brave men
In many places
This night came
With the contents of bottles
And I saw courage
In tattered attire
Rolling his worn out sleeves
Ready for a duel
Perhaps an exercise
In dutch courage.

Tony Adah

Crickets

Crickets chirp in season
Crickets make burrows
In fall
And one legged types
Start early in summer.

Tony Adah

Cronyism

I have a backbone
I want to stand
And be firm
As cartilaginous as it is
I need a godfather
I am searching my memory
For an elite in Abuja who is
The husband of
My niece's daughter's daughter
Or my nephew's wife's brother
Who was the college mate
Of my late brother.

Tony Adah

Crossing The Bridge

The elections are here again
With hype and hysteria like a pregnant woman
Under parturition and you can never tell
If it is going to be a stillborn.

The campaigns are riddled with mudslinging
And threats of war and blood and death
Southerners in the north move
To their home states with rhythms
Of migration like locusts
And the northerners in the south
Do same as if the glue that binds
Our nation is made of sand in between.

There's no sportsmanship in this game
That every one wants to win
It's like we will never get to the other side
The bridge is burning
And it is hopeless and dangerous
Crossing the bridge.

The electorate's are hungry and blind
Groping in the land looking for what
Gives only ephemeral containment
And the themes of nation building
Are thrown a way into election hype.

Tony Adah

Crude Oil

Everyone born and borne
On the tail of the fifties
Had a silver spoon in his mouth;
The water flowed freely from the wells
That stride the land
Where the strangers fetch more
The little reserve for the people without
Is the liquid we used to swallow
The silver spoon like a pill that
Pains the throat now.
What can we do without the liquid gold
That symbol of our wellbeing;
The causal factor of our war of identity
To own the wells and be not
Our brother's keepers
We fought gallantly
We fought crudely for the crude oil
In a battle won only where sadness
Was the only victory that came out
Of the muzzle of our guns.
O' this crude thing
That makes everything crooked
Whispers a loud sound heard
Only by a few;
Sharpens the throat for greed
Make hidden vaults for stealing
Stamp a foot on our chessboard
Make hunger glue our stomachs
To our spines
Making us docile, pliable, amendable
Totally loyal.
Still we relish only drops
From the copious flow
On benched knees we pray for what
We ought to give thanks
If we can not crush this bug
With the marrow of our hunger
We will be condemned beyond
By this raging wind.

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Tony Adah

Cultists Feast

Gangsters call themselves
Great names
Only honed cutlasses understand
Before a pool of crimson blood
Man's blood flow like a river
In a christening feast of blood
The blood is drank and smeared
For an oath to kill.
And way down man
Has gone beastwise
Killing his type
A new way to show manliness
By decimating his kind.

Tony Adah

Danger.

The times are bleak
A bomb had without its own volition
Fallen onto a mosque
Man and materials are in ruins
Our only stream is shrinking
The taps are dry
Throats are parched
The darkness is thick
Only nocturnal flies are flying
Stomachs are void
And the thumbs are leprous
To be or not to be
Our dear seventh senate?

Tony Adah

Daybreak.

The day has broken
Man must wake, remove smudges
From his tired eyes
Grop in one direction or the other
Winnow his dreams on a platter of work
Throw off the chaffs and fulfill his dreams

Daybreak tries a man's soul
In many ways he chooses his dreams realized
Over a hoe he bends
Or a shovel
Felling a tree
Or billowing a furnace to roast his iron
For tomorrow's work.

His diligence may win or lose
As he lifts a brick
Holds a trowel
Or hammers a nail
Drives a truck
Pilot a ship
And all he does to see
His dreams fulfilled.

Tony Adah

Dead Love

The corpse for the love
Of putrefaction
Made the fly a friend
The fly for the love of stink
Sang a self dirge in the grave
And love a dangerous thing.

Tony Adah

Dead Man's Song

To sleep peacefully in the grave
Is no exaggeration
Absolute peace, when the weapons
of war are heard never again
When no wife sees your dingle berry
and convert them into nagging a thousand times.
No breadwinner
Than the widow's woes,
No war of love, that bond called marriage
Sleep peacefully in your grave
Look at the world
But blink no more.

Tony Adah

Dead Men Don'T Talk.

Dead men don't get
Tired with the world, living men do
They prowl and prowl
Ploughing and sowing, getting more or less
Happy or disgruntled
Tired with the ways of the world
They join dead men to rest
In their halcyon graves.

Tony Adah

Dear Everyone.

Dear truck drivers

As you blare your truck horns over
The slithering overhead bridges of lagos
Do not overload your vehicles
For the bridge is old and shaky in spite
Of the tendency of thieves who
Shortchanged the bill of quantities.

Dear pedestrians,

As you trek through this squeaky bridge
Take along with you a parachute
Of an empty gourd in your armpit
For the purpose of emergency
Or a giant bird will pluck itself down
And crash by the railings of the old bridge
Where you guide yourself from dizzying
Into the yawning lagoon.

Dear fishermen,

Perhaps a sound of warning
Will suffice for your safety
Although the government of lagos state
Is yet to issue a red alert fishing
On the troubled waters of the under bridge
Is highly prohibited henceforth
You may wonder why this order emanates
From me but government is busy
Sharing the loot of the Commonwealth.

Dear ordinary man

This warning is coming from an ordinary man
For extraordinary care
Upon the bridge that's old
And even the bridge
Between the people and the government
Is already broken.

Dear all,

Be careful

The glue that holds government

Is worn out and old.

Tony Adah

Death

You to me seem like pretence
To those who desire you strongly
Looking at their circumstances
And thinking that all is but gone.
Some can brave you
To sit before the hangman
Others bold enough
Can slit their throats
Slightly at your beckon
Or strangle their jugulars with a cord
Death, if you yourself
Be like a crashing plane on heads
Or a truck threatening to overrun,
Many will find their toes
Firmly on the ground
But their heels away in the sky
Scampering away from the desired.
They shy away from you
And brave you with their hardened lips.
O, death the common denominator
If you be like a race
Most men lame will become
And like a mountain
Most men blind will become
Still they boast to paradise
But fearful to die.

Tony Adah

Death Always Must Come

Death comes always at will
And take the strong or weak
Gloomy doomy voices wail at its pangs
The fear of it weaker makes man
And the conqueror comes
To where he feeds.
The strong succumb to invisible pangs
That pounce in many ways sometimes seen.
We wail unto its deaf ears
Unable to stop its strides
And when it strikes
We fear ourselves and give us names
Of ghosts and spirits
We run from the alleys and shadows
When death laughs
And always come.

Tony Adah

Death Love

The bond is lost
It's glue is spent
That bond neatly knitted
By a magnet unseen
But as palpable felt
Love's pool a thousand feet
Is shallower than then
Who will need to die
Because love itself has died?
I heard them say
When one door closes
Many more shutters ajar.

Tony Adah

Death Takes Its Toll

Death stares sternly
On the brow of a helpless band of men
And a frightened gaggle of women
It litters a thousand graves
In our homes
And sow sorrow in the hearts
Already broken by loss

The destined are wont to go
And never coming back
To say how cold
Or warm the grave might be
Our graves they say
Are our resting places
And I wonder the use
Of my well dressed bed
Dressed cute waiting for a ghost?

Loathesome death
Thy word silent and solemn
Is final on the infant
Much as the young man
Oftentimes thy decrees
Forget the old trembling with age
And of what use
Is a trembling age
To a working world?

Tony Adah

Death's Other Brother

Sleep, if thou art harbinger
Of death,
Don't come
If thou art his innocuous brother
Wait for me
If he doth drag my frail hands
I'll be no more
But if thou wait for me
Rise from my straw bed
I'll see the rising sun.

Tony Adah

Death's Postponement

The divination shells shook in the air
With the client's eyes at them
And the diviner in tongues spoke
With the absent gods.
'This summer a soul will leave the earth!'
And your household is doomed
So the prognosis reeled
From the lips of the seer
As if no soul has ever left,
The beguiled client questioned himself
Is it me? my son? my wife or who?
The diviner reading his mind, called his attention
To say something can be done now
To avert the calamity of death
And happiness is immediately planted
On the client's face
A black cock, seven seeds of kola nut
A keg of palm wine, alligator pepper etc
Were the items the diviner desired
To postpone death in the household of his client
Death, a transformation which the diviner
Himself lacked immunity.

Tony Adah

Death's Sweet Song

Death's Sweet Song lures
The living into sleep
And those that succumb
Never wake
Death's Sweet Song
Is noise to those awake
Bowing in grief and mourning
To the sleeping be gone
They stage a farewell
Until theirs alight.

Tony Adah

Demented Song

When my mien saddens up
Burns with a desire to let me go
Free myself from the bustle of the world
Talk to me and me alone
When the wave takes me to the beach
Leaves me there alone to talk to the world
Count the shingles
And leave the breaking surfs unseen
Then I am away from this world.

When I quarel with the people that
The world doesn't see
And I am taunted by the world
For my gobbledegook
I laugh at the same world
That created the goad into my tattered world
And the difference between me and this place
Is that while the world dreams in fulfilment
It has refused me the Midas touch
In my shattered dreams
Tilting at windmills.

Tony Adah

Democracy

When democracy came
To my country
It was called demo -crazy
In it politics
Was practiced as politricks
In my country
Democracy is so much so
That it is fulcrum of religious worship, war and peace
Food and dearth of it, marriage and divorce education and illiteracy
Wealth and poverty, humility and thuggery
The reason for all these crudities
Is to share the national
No one wants to bake!

Tony Adah

Destiny In Our Hands

A pauper remains at the mercy
Of the alms giver
It is so with the pawn which begs
The player for the freedom to move
The said that when the palatial merriment
Brims with edibles; the orphan's ribs expand
He smiles with bubbles that soon fizzle.
They told us that freedom is coming
That soon we shall have flesh
Added to our bones;
Now it is certain that freedom
Is not given on a platter of gold.

The nobles and the kings
Pour confetti on their bloated loot
The common men are carrying placards
Above their heads
And that's the only way the state of the nation
Can change;
No hot water hose or bullets
Should withhold freedom from them
The iron bears the heat of the hearth
And become steel
This is the only way
Freedom will fall on the heads
Of the those consigned to the periphery
Of the earth.

Tony Adah

Destruction

A seed is sown
It swells and burst into foliage
With roots underground
It blossoms in flowers
Beautiful in our sight
All for a long time to do
And in a jiffy the hand of wrath
Holds up the beauty and tears it apart
And in ruins the garden lies.

Tony Adah

Destruction.

A seed is sown
It swells and burst into foliage
With roots underground
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Tony Adah

Disaster

When all is lost
And you sit amongst the ruins
In a pools of tears
Weeping that all is gone
Remember that where disaster hits
Ploughshares turn over the soil
For you to plant seeds;
They may long wait to sprout
But surely will.
In their dormant stage
When their shells lay scarifying
You may want want to die
See, it's not easy to lay siege
In a war
Tarry, my brother, we do not know
When the enemy comes
But certain he will;
We must lie in wait always
And watch our faith determine
Our fate for hope is the meal
Every orphan must munch.

Tony Adah

Distractions

I am flying
I am halfway alighting my destination
I can't imagine
My sturdy wings melt by
In the noon sun.

The sky is blue
Trees still and serene
Road, a thoroughfare for all
Slippery becomes
Mountains far and still.

Suddenly as usual the unpredictable
Takes its turn and the weather,
An admixture of rain and shine
And next a rainbow
I am on my way
And will never ever succumb.

Tony Adah

Divorce Vow

Two spouses sat in a car
Frowning like a sky about to rain
Their sullen faces obvious with bile
In a conversation full of trifling importance
Seen in a mirror with mutual disdain

The driver in a dilemma
Of who to support sat still behind the wheels
If he dares a smile and looks at the husband
His job is gone
His lips moved without a word
From his congested heart.

A certain sinister silence
Got a strangled hold of them
And in this cloud
Their driver quietly witnessed them
Administered a divorce vow
On a nuptial vow that refused to stick.

Tony Adah

Do A Thing

That heart you hold in that chest
That tells you to do a bad thing
That good thing you do with
That good heart
You hold the keys.
Always turn the key to the
Good side and do a good thing
Whenever you do that good stuff
You're happier than the beneficiary
Otherwise don't do.

Tony Adah

Do Good

At our supplications
God at times is silent
Same as we do
When our children ask
If you want an answer,
Do good.

Tony Adah

Do Not Bite The Finger That Feeds You

Do not cut down
The ladder that
Led you up a tree
Do not bite the finger
That feeds you
Glue the benevolence
Of others in your heart
And from that lot
Let it radiate to the world
For that purpose
Nature allowed a legion
Of men on earth
And not a single man
In the garden of yore.

Tony Adah

Do Not Call Yourself A Giant

Do not call yourself a giant
For this boast a sling may fling
Or a sword may slain
Every giant has his david
With a sling, a lazy weapon
But swiftly a towering giant is down
In a great sleep.
Do not call yourself a giant.

Tony Adah

Do Not Give Me Sympathy

Leave me to my ways
the tracks which I mark for history
or for myself
I will not follow you
For I trust my footsteps
Even when I falter I will find my way
When I fall I will rise
The foibles of one man
Can never become the foibles of the world
And every snail
Has dingle berries
Leave me alone to myself
I do not know what's up your sleeves
That makes you tick
Of virtue or vice I do not know
Leave me to my dribs and drabs endeavours
For some day they will add up to
What the world will know about hereafter.

Tony Adah

Dogs

Misty mornings and foggy nights
Dogs toil and struggle in vain dreams
They'd go afishing;
Only crab shells rattle in the nets
In oceans fertile like a womb
Nurturing a foetus.
The land blooms with sadness and ecstasy
Dogs sleep in the domain of the former
They'd eat but famine
The sun will shine or the rain will pour
They'll be kept in a kennel by the yard.
Still they're guard dogs
Chasing the ghosts of murdered men
Voices that scare armed bandits
Away from the gathered wealth
Spewed by the Niger delta into the vaults
Of the affluent
Scarecrows of the Commonwealth
And yawn as wide as the stockpile is tall.
Silently tails wag
And rest between thighs
Back to the heap of ashes the dogs return
They growl and yawn
And dream with withered hope
Their paws treading on robust flesh
Yet a vain craving in their throats
Fearful barks turn into whispers.
They sniff the air
And smell the ordure of murdered men
Dogs remain dogs
Sad and long as the infinite years
Crawl by.

Tonyadah2018

Tony Adah

Dogs.

Misty mornings and foggy nights
Dogs toil and struggle in vain dreams
They'd go afishing
Only crab shells rattle in the nets
In oceans fertile like a womb
Nurturing a foetus.
They land blooms with sadness and ecstasy
And dogs sleep in the domain of the former
They'd eat but famine
The sun will shine or the rain will pour
They'll be kept in a kennel by the yard.
Still they're guard dogs
Chasing the ghosts of murdered men
Voices that scare armed bandits away
From the gathered wealth spewed
By the Niger delta into the vaults
Of the affluent
They're the scarecrows of the Commonwealth
And yawn as wide as the stockpile is tall
Silently tails wag
And rest between the thighs
Back to the heap of ashes dogs return
They growl and yawn
And dream with withered hope
Their paws treading on robust flesh
Yet a vain craving in their throats
Fearful backs turn into whispers.
They sniff the air
And smell the ordure of murdered men
Dogs remain dogs
Sad and long as the infinite years
Crawl by.

Tonyadah2018

Tony Adah

Dominion

The dog bawled
And the cat mewed away
The cat mewed
And the rat hissed away
The man howled
And the animals ran away
He howled again
And another man
Howled back at him.

Tony Adah

Don Pedro

Don Pedro is nickname
Of a mechanic and a vulcanizer
I know in Ugep, the most populous
Village in west Africa.

Don Pedro's right leg is bad
And his left leg is worst
Maybe he suffered poliomyelitis
In his infancy
And somehow the good hand
Of nature rescued him
From a herbalist home.

He is very proficient
In his trade
Swings between the sick tyres
And his pumping machine
In lightning speed

He beams with smiles and laughter
And makes his customers
Free their minds beside
This gas station where
I am displaying my dentures
At the fun tales
Of Don Pedro.

Tony Adah

Don't A Road Here

If you till a road through here
It will be bumpy, swampy and rough
If you trod on here
You may not fall
But it is a bad road.
The generation to come
Will think that it's good a road
They'll pass here like geeks
And society will ridicule them
For a road you built
And the gullible ones thought
It was good.

Tony Adah

Don't Wait For Anybody

I will wait for nobody
To fill my bowl
Though efforts sometimes fail
To show up yield
I will give up not
Until the world smiles at me.
No one should struggle to sleep
When his bowels are void
And the world is groaning
Courage himself comes from the clouds
Which fear build in the sky of toil
An extra mile is where success lies
And one more stride is as good as applause.

Tony Adah

Doomsday Dreamer

I do not know
Why the world
Is treating me like this
I have seen much of it
I have put much in it
Perhaps the world
Does not believe in me.
Now that I have my boarding pass
Can my screening
Less be done
Knowing my antecedents
So that I can fly
Peacefully to the other side.
Yesterday I had a dream
That the world had ended
Today I woke up
To find the world
Worst than its end.

Tony Adah

Down The Street.

The refuse man rolled a Barrow of rubbish
Down the street
His hair unkempt and a tattered shirt
Hung upon his shoulders drifting with dirt
Down the street
A horde of children line
Both sides to taunt his trade.

Dogs howled and barked
Whenever he passes to dispose
Of the rubbish in the ravine
There some people who go with him
Without helping him
Instead they help to tell his taunters
That he was passing by
And they are the giant house flies
With bulging eyes and hairy anus

This horde have their songs
As well as the dogs and the taunting voices
Of children laughing at his trade
He devised a pungent mixture
Which he dipped his broom in
And splashes on those who swarm
About him making jest of him.
And the dogs his work boots
Of worn out leather a weapon to kick
And the flies his wide nostrils
Gushed a stream of air
That deflected their way
And make him safe to and fro his route.

Tony Adah

Dream Among Dreams

Here I am lonely
Like a fallen moon
Singing a song
Only I listen to.
The trees are still
Birds apprehensive,
Perching on fragile boughs
I am here alone
In a dilemma
To be with myself
Or with the world like a lunatic
Under the lagoon bridge
And the world is watching.
What is happening at the sea
Still as it is?
With sea gulls returning
Throat parched amid water.
Nights subdued in dreams
That I am battling with
From childhood to adulthood
I seem to be dreaming
But in a daylight.
Here I am seemingly not alone
De-indigenized from the stretches
Of my imagination-
A citizen turned a denizen
My dream shattered
In the same sleep that bore it
The night that gave me
My robust dreams now a nightmare
I struggle in the war front
That my country has become
I prefer the other front
Of this war and it is safer here
Under Igblishi's nets that mosquitoes
Fear to touch.
What matters most is the dearth
In the midst of abundance.
I am not sad

I am not happy
But waiting for something
To overwhelm me and make
My dream come true.

Tony Adah

Dream Killers

I came into this world
With a clear vision for tomorrow
The world was soon my home
Now I am looking through a translucent glass
Seeing dreams that are blurred of
Gestation period dreams long and winding
Dreams themselves shadows.
Who is casting these shadows than humans?
Who is the dream killer
When our dreams entwine in a tangled mass?
And we are swallowed by sleep with nightmares
Turning our double edged sword
Again ourselves.

Tony Adah

Dreams

I have been sleeping
Dreaming all through
Closing my eyes
Against the odds
That tend to ruin my country
And denude
The beauty of my dreams.
Will the night ever lapses
To wipe these dreams
And make me
Wake up from my slumber
Clean the smudges in my eyes
And see that
My country has
Gotten It Right.

Tony Adah

Drunkard's Song

I am a tavern by reeks
I'm done
I am going home
If you don't find me in the house
Check the morgue.

Tony Adah

Dying Twice

He died at noon
With a great acumen
At raising earth into mounds
Where seed yams lived,
Died and resurrected.
He grunted like a pig
While making them
He collapsed
And never woke up again.

The farm folks roared
Trees stood still
Every one panicked with death
On their heels,
The news like lightning moved
Village folks wept and mourned
Ada died
And rose again
They called him ghost
My brother confessed he saw him
Away from the shroud
Where he laid still
Without a rib raised on the cage.

For fear
We swarmed out of the house to pee
We saw the plantain trees
And feared that he was in the lot
We ran back
Crammed ourselves at the door
Everyone all went in at a time
I was stranded at the door
Ada died once
Was lying in state
Waiting for the grave.

Tony Adah

Early Morning

From the hills of the east
the sun unmasked the dusk
Through the window the tree stood still
waiting for the wind
From a kitchen beside the house
A mortar sings by the instructions of the pestle
The world is reborn
for fresh activities and a cutlass
laughed on the whetstone
Today the world is born
Again into toils
When man rest no more
Looking for what to fill a void
In his stomach.

Tony Adah

Early Morning Rain

The cock has crowed
Once and twice,
Clouds gather in the rumbling sky
It is a chilly morning
Twice the day dawns.
The rain stamp her boneless feet
On the ground,
Spattering and causing rills
That slither pass like snakes
There's a silent war the sky
Declares against the infant day
Children fret about when a truce
Gathers in from this war.
On the lawn
The drooping flowers pay obeisance
To the king sitting on
Sitting on a liquid throne
Birds have gone back to sleep
And lizards who waited for the
Morning sun, nodding their heads.
Anxious children look outside
Their school bags beside them
Birds chatter is near
Our landmark coconut fronds swaying
In the breeze
The magic of the early morning rain gone.

Tony Adah

Ebola Blues

Since the news from lagos
I have become a hermit
To my habits
Of yesterday and tomorrow.
I do not honk
The horn of my ford ranger
Any longer for the women
At Ochon or the boys at Biase.
Since the journey of the diplomat
That ended in a Lagos hospital
Rather than a conference in Calabar
I have been frozen
By the thought of playing
Host to the drill ranch
Resolute in abstinence from
Anything wild or bush meat.
I have extended my bedroom
To my toilet where sanitizers sit
Where my faucet runs
The risk of wearing out.
Now I am constantly
Loyal to the fatwa of
The fatalistic Central African visitor
Who loves bats as
Much as humans but with a deadly kiss.

Tony Adah

Ebola In The Middle East

There's Ebola disease in the middle east
And the virus doesn't need an electron microscope
To view;
It is big, it is a ginormous bug
And it spew hate and death
In its innoculum that smothers in
Grey and black smokes.
It bites with its teeth of shrapnel
Seeking for unattainable peace
The quest that turns the land to pieces.
It is preventable
But pride will make it endemic
As it is endemic now
Then it will shrink at the cost
Of human blood.
The virus drinks blood
It draws blood
And the spectators watch
In hooded garments thinking
That they're safe
But the spectators want blood drawn
So that oil too can be drawn
Into their yawning barrels
Still it is the spectators that
Can call a truce to this raging war
And not the virus poised to kill.

Tony Adah

Economic Recession

In the market square
An assortment of wares
Buying with the eye's money
Wind flipped beauty of wares
I am going home
Alone
My eyes only a memory of them
O economic recession.

Tony Adah

Egypt

In Egypt
I saw some great arts
A huge papyrus of poems
Called the pyramids.
From the last floor
Of the Delta Pyramid hotel
I meander my way
To the foothills of the great wonder
Of slabs and of dust and of holes
Waiting to catch
A glimpse of me.
What a mighty edifice
Without scaffolds
Without cranes as machine aids
Preserved along with them
Yet alone man made them.
I was taken again
On a guided tour
To Geza where a smiling sphinx
But a mangled nose
Of bullets poured in
From the breeches of Napoleon's guns.
These were the poems I saw
But the poets long gone
I will wait
Speaking on the cotton school
The kings and pharaohs and the mummies
Living on the dust
Of the rolling desert
And the Nile
And its canals,
The livelihood of the poets
Whose rendition I have captured here.

Tony Adah

Election Narrative.

In my country
Democracy has been tasted
And it is a bitter pill
Its tenets of freedom and liberty
Are grossly abused
And the dictum
Of one man one vote
A mockery of the fact

There is a transition
And elections stare
In the faces of citizens
But it appears
They will never see the ballot boxes
In which their franchise
Will be exercised
The road to the eight senate
Is murky and crooked
That prediction of perdition
Is becoming inevitable
And we are waiting.

Tony Adah

Elections

I can see
A queue of frightened voters
Waiting to get command
On the ballot
There is a legion
Of soldiers at the polling units
But the voters are few
Their call to duty-
A negation of democracy.
It is long
Since the events
In this sphere
Have gone awry
And the architects
Are still busy
Sketching the dome
Of our doom.

Tony Adah

Eligibility

Being born to the world
Living as plants or animals
Rich or poor
Black or white
Atheist or believer
Must succumb when the last klaxon blares
And the states whatever disappears.

Tony Adah

Elusive Peace

Everywhere is war
Guns and bombs
Rumble and grumble
A bomb drops
A mother Or Child is gone
A missile flies in the east
And the whole world trembles
An anti missile aircraft
Passes over Ukraine
And western Europe
Catches a flu
World peace is growing wing
To fly away
And leave chaos in the world

I do not know
where the world's
flower children have gone to
We wait every day
Fondly believing that
The confetti of peace
Will be poured on the world
Oh, elusive peace!

Tony Adah

Emigrant's Song

I have voted
Severally with my hands
Nothing changes anywhere
I am ready now to vote again
But with my legs.
I am going
To the other side
Cold and calm
Where the white verdure
Is greener than
The black one
I am going
On a raft
Against the violent sea
Its anger not greater
Than the venom
In my heart
I am a paid volunteer
Driven by the circumstances
Of my fatherland
And my godfather is dead.

Tony Adah

End Of The World.

What will end this world
We do not know
How it will end
Is but some wild speculations
Why it will end
We are told is sin
When it it will end
We are told to wait
For the second coming
Either way
It will not renege
On its promise
To end for the individual
Who is only with it in bones.

Tony Adah

Enemies

They cook up
Things against me
And wherever I walk
They stub my steps.
I am not the reason
Why the fire on the
Cock's head doesn't burn.
I am not the cause
Of the fisherman's expedition
Ending in a netful of crabs.
Their eyes are red at me,
I am not the reason
Why the toad
Went late to the
Meeting of the animals
And the tail eluded it.
I am not the reason
Why their lances are blunt
And grasses are growing
At their doorsteps.
Neither am I the one
That is the rain maker.

Tony Adah

English As My Second Language

I too have a language
That other people can
Learn as a second language
And I blame my forebears
For their lakadaisical attitude
Towards the relegation
Of my language today.

I am taunted for
For every word of language
That falters in the use of my english
Faulty as english is
I am forced to rules
That utterly and woefully fail

Why should I be taunted
For a language that reneges on rules?
I am told that when making
Plurals from nouns
I should add 's' or 'ies'
But when the noun is child
It shamefully fails
For it is neither childs nor childies
It is Children!
I too have a language
Other people speak
As a second language.

Tony Adah

Epitaph On A Quarrelsome Couple's Tomb.

They wedded alive and in death
And they lay here two breathless
Cuddling in bones and whispering
Only to themselves,
Perhaps in a quarrel!
Efa says that they will come
Two as twins, man and woman
And she who has the womb takes the trouble.

Tony Adah

Equity

Equal rights is not a gruel meal
You can not get it with all
Of the common men
It can be gotten by
Only one man out
Of the common lot.

If you don't believe me
Believe Martin Luther King jnr
If you are still an infel
Remember the world driven
Tribute to Nelson Mandela
But for those
Want salvation must
Shed the yearning
Of their flesh.

Tony Adah

Errand Man

At the flash of lightning
I am there
Look down here
To my heels
So winged
So swift
So purposed
For my nature
And I am Mercury.

Tony Adah

Escapee On The Hill

I am an old man
Age bent on my back
My third leg inanimate
I am but an evening prim rose
Of luxuriant freshness on a hill.

What I eat, you do not eat
What I drink, you do not drink
What I see, you do not see
What I hear, you do not hear
From the elevation of this hill
I am sitting on reality not fantasy.

I am an evangelist on the hill
Down where you are
I hear cervical, breast and prostrate cancers
This was not the tone of the song
I heard when I was down there
The sweetness of the things of the world
In your body is the bitterness of the ailments.

I can see you struggling by the escarpments
But I have acquired the escape velocity
From your earthbound sweetness
And in this vers libre
I enjoin you to try my recipe.

Tony Adah

Eve Of A Market Day

Aunty Berong Igang
Died on the eve of
A market day.
Her corpse was placed
On a fixed trolley
That couldn't move
A sure deed to show
How famous the spinster was.

On the third day when I
Expected her to rise
As the bible said
She laid there still
Sniffed cotton wool
In her narrow nostrils
I watched men igniting
Canons that boomed out
With echoes over hills and valleys.

This arena was a hodge podge
Of singing and dancing
Wailing and mopping of tears
Eating and drinking
Young apprentice folks
In a queue learning the gun.

In an old derelict hut and
On its half walls circles were drawn
Leaving a dot at the centre
Here I was given a dane gun
Bequeathed by my grandpa
For our generation
And I got the centre
Of the circle
As I was handed the gun,
A nascent marksman
Quaking with fear like
The women who shouted last night
At the apparition

Of the spinster's ghost.

Tony Adah

Everyone Has A Dream

Everyone has a dream
Of wings made
Strong or weak to fly
And soar to the limit of the universe
Or sink to the depths of life.

Not everyone stands the heat of the furnace
Burnt and beaten between the anvil
And hammer of time
Tjetes a chosen fate for everyone
Now or later when the last
Breath is spent
And you bear your dreams
Or they die a stillbirth.

Tony Adah

Everything Heals Slowly

Today our country comes home
From the worn and tired campaigns
Of hate, division and religion,
From the sabre drawn elections
And war and killings and death.

Elections have come and gone
Won and lost
A new child is born
He waves at the winner with a frenzy
And celebrates his own defeat
Peace which we thought vapour
Has precipitated
Spreads its wings and fans the citizens
And the rattling sabre sheathed.

Tony Adah

Everything Will Go

In an old house
A big wooden clock hung
Solitary and still on the mottled wall
And shreds of dusters and broken
Pieces of white, blue, green and yellow chalks
All heaped on a bamboo table;
Where laid also an eye glass case
And an old dog-eared bible narrative
Their owner had long travelled;
The roof is going
But there's no how it can
Catch the owner long gone.
There's music on the thatch roof
And bits of red earth fall on the shoulders of
Anyone who goes in to this museum.
An old dane gun leans on the wall
The cap is not there
And the gunpowder is damp
So is the power of its great owner.

The clans men are at rest
As are the antelopes and the rodents
In the meadow
Everything that has a beginning
Must come to an end
There was a birth
And now there is death
This house was new but now it's old
But we gather as if everything
Will remain
Or we will not travel
Out of this great house.

Tony Adah

Evolution

The world is a bunch of memories
Bittersweet the pudding taste
There are false and worthless lies
Truth like the earth,
The blind can see.
The cradle civilization mourns
In a static state
AnBorrowers soar high up the
Ladder in the sky,
The world struggles for power
Instead of effortless love that
Cuddles and binds
And religion that heals now kilss. Evolution per diem changes our fate Man on his
brink
Is back on his way
To meet with the chimps
In the common origin they share.

Tony Adah

Exiled

I am yawning
Like everyone else
Running for everything
Praying still for the bounties
Instead of thanksgiving

I run and stumble
Gallop like a stallion
On a thoroughfare that
Is supposed to be macadamized
In my homeland
But remains unpaved
By the plunder of the public wealth.

I am in the dark
My shadow
Is near but far away
I am groping
Groping for everything
Around that is not available
Still I am groping
Groping in the land of bounties
With the absent succour.

I am standing
In the middle of the ocean
With a parched throat
And soapsuds in my eyes
Everything is exiled
Except me, a prisoner
Gaoled in my own home
As the social contract
Is violently violated.

Tony Adah

Exit Hole

When I look into the exit hole
And see that those who have gone
Will no longer be seen;
I am drenched in the pool
Of my emotions
And water and salt drip from
My sullen eyes.
My fear is not that I will die
But where shall I go
To see my beloved daughter
Who just left like on an errand to the market?
And I will see her no more.
If this is how we leave
Away from this boastful and gathering life
It is safer to share love
Than seek power or wealth
Which in the end will be too huge
To take through the exit hole.

Tony Adah

Exit.

The protagonist jumped
Into the scene of an act
He had not rehearsed
Made some obscene gestures
Waved a hand to the audience
And shamefully bowed out
With all his wits
That's the way it is
And no body learns.

Tony Adah

Fair Weather Friends

I am a suppurative sore
Putrid with a smell
Like a rotten egg
And I am lost
In a throng of flies.

By a stroke of ill-luck
For this horde and by
A taint of good luck for me
The sore heals and a scar comes
My visitors fly away
Leaving me abandoned.

Tony Adah

Fair You Well Brothers

While alive eat and drink
And laugh and play and love
Moments filling the chambers of hearts, the radiance of life
There are no such moments
In the the grave
Lonely as it is.

Tony Adah

Falsehood Of Man

When I see how man humbles himself
In his prostrate position
Before kings and before spouses
Of fallacy the wind of humility blows
Behind the kings and behind the spouses
A great deal of self is bare and nude
But as I look up the sky
Under which we are born
A great inferno and s raging
Waiting to welcome them to hades
Beside them pile faggots and cinder
To ease their journey above.

Tony Adah

Famished Amidst Plenty

I feel so famished much
As my siblings
Not hungry because the sky is not up
Or that there's no land below.

We have survived
On fermented farina
Mia kuka and amala
Roasted yams on palm oil
Sipping garri
And our only saviour the gorgeous mushrooms!
Others have not eaten
Some have had palm kernels.

And when we look at the vast expanse
Of our land
We see the palm trees
We see the yam farms and the farmers
Half clad like madmen
We the rice farms
We see the peanut farms and cassava farms
We see the bean farms and onion farms
Cabbage farms and tomato farms

We see the high derricks
Of the oil rigs
We see the copious smoke
From the flare of gases

Still we are famished amidst plenty
We prefer palm oil from across the seas
Our palm trees swallowed by the wild
We prefer petrol from away
Our refineries moss grown and weed ridden

We move on like a slug
Condone everything and
Cry in silence
Where nobody hears

Famished amidst plenty
Like a man standing
In the middle of the river
With soapsuds in his eyes

Tony Adah

Farewell To Man.

When the time comes
Man's cul-de-sac will come right
To his doorsteps
The king's sceptre and crown will crumble
And the warrior's armour
Of steel made will bow.

He will succumb and lie untroubled
His vainglory will end
Melodies of serenade will sing
But forever deaf his ears
And what he got by procurement or cunning
Will lie waste to his soul
His body sequestered in a box
Swallowed by the earth
The fists he clasped at coming
He will clasp at going.

Tony Adah

Father's Admonition

My son, never think that the world
Owes you more than you owe it
Or anyone else.
The world is now a meadow of thorns
Tread carefully on the broken bottles
As you move ahead
Beware of your fair weather friend
He could be the one with a dagger in the scabbard.

Eat as if your dentures terribly ache
For the food for your soul is healthier
Than the one the world avails to your body.

Tread carefully
Know you that the compass
These days is not a good instrument of navigation
To the west the world is ravaged by economic recession
To the east the jihadists are brandishing the munitions of war
To the north the cakes of snow
Have frozen the earth
And to the south great tsunamis
Are sweeping the earth
My son, tread carefully!

Tony Adah

Fear

For Fear of monkeys
I will never plant my corn
In my own house
I will never detest trouble
And have my knees behind my legs
Like a hen.
I will fight on
Persevere bravely
Into the kingdom of warriors.
If I worship you, fear
I will be expecting
The snail soon
To pick his feet
Put them onto its torso
And run away.

Tony Adah

Fear Of The Future

That which will come
In the name of tomorrow
That which we fear called the future
Was yesterday of the day
Before yesterday as much as today
Everyday is a string of the beads
Of the future,
That light that shone yesterday
The yes and no of today
And the doubts of tomorrow.

Tony Adah

Fear Of The Night

The night with its dark visited
And luminous insects flickered
With a glow of frail smiles
Crickets chirped
Night owls hoot sinister sings
And a dark cloud enveloped the palpable night.

I am scared to my marrow
The trees I saw in the daytime
And the houses and the tracts
Become a ghostly mound.
A powerless corpse laid on a shroud
And this is where my fertilized fear grew

The owl that I watched
Preying on a mouse
At night has become a fearful fiend
And the crickets that we roasted
For meals in the farm have turned
Their song into a dreary sound
Night, just that the sun
Is hiding away from us.

Tony Adah

Fear Of War.

I have seen
A gory horror
Theatre of war
Anti aircraft missiles
Sending deadly meteors overhead
Women and Children
Innocently captured by
The munitions of war.
I am heartbroken
At what man
Does to man
In the savagery
Of carving niches
And territorial expansion.
I am weeping
At this treachery
And negation of human existence
I am weeping
With teary eyes
But it seems
I am weeping
In the rain.
I am weeping
And I feel like running
Away for my dear life
My adrenaline is pouring
It can never know
That these heartrending
Episodes are only televised
Scenes of the actual
In the mid-eastern flank
Of the surface of this
Wicked world.

Tony Adah

Final Flight

Though storm and calm may prevail
There's a limbo somewhere
And I am quarantined
Lingering in some purgatory purging myself
Waiting for the soul to be whole
And light enough to fly.

Tony Adah

Final Home

There's no place like a grave
A home you don't struggle to build
Away from the hustling bustling of the world
Naked you came, naked you have gone
All your foibles
Success or failure
Everything is gone
And you're sleeping alone
In a heap of bones
Not worried if the world ticked you good or not
Silent in a home where
Silver or gold is not known
And children and wives and wealth
Are all abandoned behind
And the rest is final
In a grave!

Tony Adah

First In Everything

Old soldier fought wars
In Rangoon and in Burma
He was first from his enclave
To have joined the army
And fought far and wide,
He told tales
How the white man touched his skin
To see if he rubbed a cream
Of charcoal on it.

Old soldier
Spoke Italian, German and Spanish
He was first to do this
He made his folks to see steel helmet
Rugged boots and his petty loots
From the war-
Jagged knife, steel jerrycan
Steel cups, caps and hats.

The glossary of his deeds
Was mighty and long
He was first to buy a bicycle
During which cannons boomed
In his serene village
Old soldier was first in everything.

Tony Adah

First October Twenty Fourteen

Today is a kill-joy
Day but with a ray of hope
My country celebrates
Its fifty fourth independence day
Yes, independence read
On pages of books.

Still the citizens wallow
In wanton dependence
Their backs bent over
The ageless hoe
Without a change.

I can see the blood
Of citizens flowing
In Kondoga, Bama, Chibok
And the pogrom freely
Ridding a Russian armoured car
All is not well for now.

There is a pregnancy
In the tummy of the country
Expectantly
We await the birth
Of a politician who
Will be born a statesman.

Tony Adah

Flour Mill Junction

This is where Calabar rocks
And where mechanics, technicians
truck drivers, wheelbarrow drivers, artisans
All love to be.
On both sides of a road
Retailers line the wares
And in some dark corners paraffin lamps
Flicker in the night wind.
You would wonder why all the people are here
But the sight of bikini clad underaged girls
Some half clad and others naked almost
Define the hovels of stink
Of cigarettes and marijuana
Beer and spirits
Male and female
Sex and money
And the girls perhaps
Not from any mother's womb.

Tony Adah

Following My Clergy

After a ramble in the house
I am going westward
To where the the day is passing away
I am a passerby watching the road
And its shoulders of verdure going to infinity.

Down there
A shapeless ball of the sun
Has eaten the horizon
I am following someone
My pitiless cleric is taking me through here
To where I do not know.

I will no longer follow
For if my soul is pulverized
The inexcusable pain endured
Then I would have forgotten
That salvation is every man's duty.

Tony Adah

Food Chain

The wind lamely passed
Through the weed clogged water
A heron perches on the hyacinths
The crocodile bulges up the pond
Waiting for the heron
Who is waiting for the fish
And the fish waiting for the water
Who else the water is waiting for
We do not know.

Tony Adah

Food For A Poet

To listen to the owl songs
Means an omen is hanging on a tree
Will a bachelor travel?
Who will stock his fire?
A quarrel is golden
And silence is deaf
Argue with a fool
And fight the wise
With your brain
You shoot him down
Without the sound of a gun
When the lion steal the years
Of others
He begins to feed on snails
I won't have a load of elephant
On my head
And stumble to catch an ant.

Tony Adah

Fool's Paradise

O' quarrell,
How harsh are thou words
That teaches wisdom to fools
Let no words slip from thy lips
And fill the fool's head
If he probes further with his sting,
Be mute
And if he's so wise,
Let him predict your mind set.

Tony Adah

For He Who Has Gone

I will not travel now
Even if the sole of my leg itches
For the umpteenth time;
I will not travel now
No matter how comfortable it is over there.
Nothing is friendship
Without what we share;
You have provided me with water
For a warm bath
I am standing by the shank
Before a mirror
You left tooth paste and brush
For the brightness of my milk teeth
I am not coming now
I want to see them down
For the strong ones to come
So I can devour what is left of the world.
You have put a calico on the bathroom door
To shield my nakedness
And you have gone without notice
I am dead scared for this regal treat
It is so real;
I can not tell it is a dream.

Tony Adah

For Kofi Awonoor

Born in Wheta
Shone in New york
Slandered in Detroit
Murdered in Kenya
Buried in the world
Living in the muses kingdom.

Tony Adah

For Those Who Have Gone

Do not leave your door open
When we come we will knock on it
If it doesn't open
We will get men with pickaxes
Shovels and hoes to knock it
Open for us
It is a sweet eternal journey
But we are reluctant to come

Because you have not even written
Us a letter of your safe arrival
We do not know how it feels
To be in that house.
Have you seen my daddy?
For your grandfather I will not
Bother to ask, he may have travelled
Away from there or does even know
A granddaughter.

Let me ask of my mother
Have you seen your husband?
Tell him not to worry
We are not in a hurry to come
I am sure my grandfather's hair
Has grown back
For going there may be like
An old eagle taking a rejuvenation
Trip to the top of the mountain
Why am I even bothered
Perhaps earth was the only place
We met.
So whoever left here with an
Intention to be our harbinger
May have been on an errand
Of a flung stone.

Tony Adah

Forever Gone

From the tolls of death's bells
the sound is near
One is gone by an accident
And another refuses to wake from his bed
There's no hiding place
For death's telescope is fitted with an electron
microscope to scan and find its victims
In a skyscraper or in a hovel
When the lens catches a soul
It is gone and forever gone.

Tony Adah

Forgiveness

You will slap me
I will obey the command
Of the holy book,
Show my other cheek
You can only slap twice
And that's what I have to offer
And nothing more.

I willingly offer
Not out of weakness but strength
Forgiveness is harder than revenge
As you go away laughing feeling nice,
I am even
There's a David with a sling
And a stone waiting by your door
I'll not be there
But it will be a painful defeat.

Tony Adah

Fortress

When the agama
Gives extra ordinary nod
Know that its up a giant silk cotton tree
Or unreachable canyon
When a snake slithers through the bush
Know that a toad is near
When a toad comes scampering
Know that the snake is pursuing it
When all these take caution
Know that there's a man
Wearing his sheathed knife by his waist
A gun resting by his shoulder
Slinging his raffia bag.

Tony Adah

Free At Last.

I am tall and proud
Like a cock on the wall
I have won,
Once and all
I had the flower
When the petals were fresh
With fragrance and the fruit
In my hand
I have won
But the petals have worn
It is finished
And I am free,
Proud like a cock on the wall.

Tony Adah

Freedom

They told us
Ours was an egalitarian society
And it is
Difficult to discern
They told us to wait
That freedom
Will come
We waited
To receive
The freedom
That was absent.
Huddled up, helpless
Yawning in dearth
And the penultimate is air
Still they have our
Conscience to ride
Us as slaves.

Tony Adah

Freedom Is Calling

From morning
Till evening
The Choice is ours
To turn right or left
Squat down or jump up
Howl against them
Or in subservience submit
To their own whims.

When the common will rots
In a casket of complacency
Then our self-crafted world
Shall put us in a cemetery
Of shattered dreams
And our children's heritage
Will be fear, fear and submission.

They will pray and pray
For the bounties of the land
Instead of thanksgiving
They will prostrate before
Those we have given
A mandate to lead
And If no one cares
To break this chain
This is the shackle that
Will forever tether us to
A limited world.

Tony Adah

Freedom Is Not A Bed Of Roses

Up the scorching desert the fugitives fled
They left all the tents and all the camels
All the sweet dates and peppers and onions
To listen to the poetry of change
The guardian sang and the followers echo the song
So did the fugitives who sang and danced
To the echo of the song
The song pierced their hearts
And they joined the crusade
And freedom came to those who
Wanted freedom themselves.

Tony Adah

Fret No More

Fare you well
Son of the crooked earth
Fret no more for you are out of the mire
Frown no more
For the bayou has taken your thirst
And your body and your wants.
Fare you well
To where you are
Where quest is dead
And the sun no more shine
Or the rain puts anymore
The race has come to an end
Winning or losing
The earthly tools are gone
We bother our eyes with tears
But you may be smiling
And in an unending buffet
Fare you well
And fret no more.

Tony Adah

Friends

I have a horde of them
That blossom like flowers
In my garden
Beneath them
Some green mambas with gall
Embedded in the fangs
Thus care kindles in my heart
That in the greens under danger is green
My foot restrained a step
And the forlorn folks yearn deadly
For my end amid friendship
Cloaked in guile but their purpose
Torn open in my eyes
With a pebble in between my toes
A perfect reminder of my harmless flowers.

Tony Adah

Friendship

We three went to school
Which the undiscerning families despice
I knew why we went.
Among the teeming pupils
We went;
We were truants
Out of lessons, chasing squirrels
In the meadow and prowling for palm kernels
Everything we chased was was home
More for us.
You could never know what Mr. Ukemating
Would do the next morning;
And dry gripes will catch your tummy
When thoughts of him rained upon your heart
A stammerer, he seldom talked
When he did, he did so with a cane
Which left bluish marks behind our shins
And we squirmed in pains.
To be truant and often so out of lessons
Was like digging one's grave
And looking at it while alive and knowing
That's where you'd be buried.
My decision to bolt out our friendship
Was bold and right
Those who persisted in it
I can see them bend upon their hoes
Panting and grunting over mounds
The hoe makes
Year in and year out
The toil takes a toll of them
And they're tired and older than me
That's how they look now.

Tony Adah

Friendship At Twilight

What benefit begets you
When you stab me at my back
And I find my place elsewhere?
I thought friendship was
Wrapped in truth
For us to share.

We mourn our dear ones together
We share our dreams and aspirations
And we lament our dearth together
But friendship now wears
A crown of falsehood.

I know conscience has inflicted
A wound difficult to heal in your heart
And some hard truth
That pride hides from seeing
You wonder how this divine
Revelation came to be
Our third friend is a keeper of cats
And he lets some out of the sack
Friendship has its has its ordinances
Loathsome when broken.

Tony Adah

Garden Of Eden

No one knew the colour of Adam
Or that of his wife, Eve
Twosome forerunners of the world

Unlike ours their breath was pure
Until they ate of the forbidden fruit
And brought us discrimination, woes and wars
With them were roses, tulips, lilies and clover
Doves, pigeons, giraffes and their king in
White, black, blue, red and all hues

If the garden was one
Then the world must be one
Be us greeks, jews or gentiles
But guile sings
Into the gullible world
And we are what we are
A mystery to ourselves.

Tony Adah

Gecko

The gecko crouched on the wall
His frail paws fixed on it
He pounced on a mosquito
His mandibles in a soft and silent dance
And I said, give me my blood
A pint of the night bite.

Tony Adah

Ghost Of A Friend

A dead dog
Never barks nor bite
A heap of its carcass we fear
My friend whom we played together
Ate together
Went to school together
Had a mishap up from a mango tree
Stepped on a dry weak bough
And fell and bled with bruised face
And broken limbs
In a heap that laid before us
A minced body, grave beckoning
And no longer of any use
He that we saw
We never got afraid
We thought about his ghost
And froze in fear of what only
Our mind saw.

Tony Adah

Giant Leeches

Blood, blood blood
They want of my country
In every moisture they Live
In morning dews
They must have their due.

They put their hope
On mosquitoes, sand flies
And everything that
Licks my country dry.

Citizens shrivel
Their veins punctured
And they lie famished
Like Syrian Children
Waiting for handouts
From the red cross.

Blood blood blood
They want of my country
To build them giants
Of our country
Only them to be.

Tony Adah

Giving Is Sowing

The eye sees afar and yearns to get
But the leg like a slug
Takes reluctance along with the mind undecided
To go or not to go

The heart makes a pledge
And the elbow glue with aradite
Refuses to stretch
Sometimes the hand's willingness
Is held back by the mind's dilemma
Of to give or not to give
But what man yearns to get from man
To his own satisfaction, he should willingly
Give to his his type
For to sow now is to reap tomorrow.

Tony Adah

Going Alone.

I am going alone
Like a river without tributaries
I won't be lost
I am going alone
Alone like the moon
That fallen to earth
But I will not break

I am going alone
Like a river without tributaries
And I won't be lost
Won't be lost in the vast expanse of this earth.
Heaven or hell
I am going alone.

Tony Adah

Going Back To Paradise City

I am going back
To paradise city
Where peace dwell
And ebola is free

I am going
Going cautious of
The inclement clime
Of land quals striking
A match against the sea quals

There's a long stretch
Of thoroughfare and
The ranger is pursuing a
Tortous road replete with
Mirages, potholes and parallaxes
And I am following the dark clouds
Shaking hands with the still tops
Of the green trees

I am going
Swallowed by the red earth
In the puddles of our damaged road
And I am going like a slug
That has entered the house
Of a slow slow snail.

Tony Adah

Going Beyond

When I shall go home
My lips will carry a smile
In the aura of winning a lottery
And the world will my teeth see
From the radiation in my heart
Whether in the world
I had crawled, walked or ran
Won or lost my races
Upon the jagged edges of this earth.

When going home
My hands will clasp nothing
And my feet will freely will move without dragging
For when I came I held nothing
Naked and helpless as I came.

Tony Adah

Going Home

If I have gone to the farm
And my harvest is poor
If I have gone to fish
And I brought some crabs
If I have gone to school
And I'm not recognized
By any piece of paper
If I have married
Without the blessing of marriage
If life puts me but at its periphery
I will go home
Take a rest and watch
The second coming.

Tony Adah

Going Home Without Missing A Step.

I will never jump anything
On my way
In the water
Or on the land or in the air.
I will follow the crest and troughs
And land where I may be laughed at
But when the chain's link is strong
For my strides
I am happy I will be there
Through crests and troughs
Even where laughter stays
I will be happy to be home
Believing in myself
That I caused no link to miss
Or any to weaken
on the crests and troughs
I will be home happy a man.

Tony Adah

Going Home.

When I shall go home west
Like a yellow sun on the horizon
My lips will carry a song
And the world will see my teeth
From the radiance of joy in my heart.

Whether in the world
I had crawled, walked or ran
Won or lost my races
On the jagged edges of this earth.

When going home
My feet will freely move
And my hands will clasp nothing
For naked and helpless as I came
This is how I will return.

Tony Adah

Going Like Others Did

I am back with a luggage
of my duties
A chauffeur of morning and afternoon runs
A breadwinner of the absent bread
The eater of the apple of deceit
A husband and a father
A spank receiver for everything wrong
And a citizen between wealth and poverty
A man who will go like others have gone
Devoid of what toils beheld
Alone without the company of a wife
Lonely in the absence of the world.

Tony Adah

Going To Heaven

There was a beautiful gate
On the bar of which a cow
Head sculpture heralded saints
A splash of mud and rock slides
Left a small hill to the right flank of the entrance
Where the gate attendants worked at clearing.

I moved and passed an iron gate
Wrote my name on a papyrus and zoomed
Straight forward to a signage that said
'Now the mountain journey begins'!
It was fascinating
But harrowing the verges were
Guarded by concrete embankment
Over a tortuous route overlooking hanging valleys.

I was light
Perhaps having shedded
My load of earthly sins
I am going to xanadu
Enroute I still have an aesthetic distraction-
Some mountain tops gormandized by descending clouds
And wheeling along wire lines
Above in sky some sliding entities
Carrying humans to touch
The face of God.

Why couldn't I join them above?
Perhaps the taint of sin
Still lingered in me
Who arrive first didn't matter to me
But the purification which makes
Me free and sinless.

We at last arrived
A massive expanse of lush verdure
Dotted by bulls and horses
Grazing the greenery free from sin
Left and right were labyrinths

Of macadamized thoroughfares
Posh structures that look
Like presidential lodges and helipads,
Landing stations for cable cars
And all wore gallands of fine pine trees.

Then there's a thin haze
Carrying on its Wings some cold
When I looked right
I saw my wardrobe
Turned left I saw my loo
I was trapped
In the world of a dream!

Tony Adah

Going To Promise Land

They told us to go
To the promise land
Where they'll give us warm bath
We struggled to get the visas
They gave with many conditions
We moved without knowing where
We were going.

Some of us sea tossed
And dead on the surfs
We never woke to the reality
Of our dreams
Others reached out there
And everything was cold
The walls of those houses
Like igloos were ice
Bed covers were snow
We breathed a fog of wintery air.

See what we have done
To struggle and abandon our warmth
Out there we worked and ate
And paid our bills
Our pay checks empty as a void.
They told us that
That's the only place that
The sun shines,
We alighted and got lost
In snow scape where the only thing
We heard about was the noise
Of the cold
We came back with the luggage of cold
In our hearts and memories thawed
Only by our own very clime
Warm and kind.

Tony Adah

Going To The River Tomorrow

I know tomorrow will
Not be a doomsday and
My journey will not be a lonely one
We shall all trudge to this river
Frail as we look and frightened as we are
Till we touch its wintry waters
Do ablutions and cleanse our souls
Take a transfusion of its chill waters
And wake up from our trance
Into the new year tomorrow.

Tony Adah

Going To Where I Do Not Know

I am going home
To where I do not know
They say there is everything and bliss there
That place hmmm that place!
Where no one has gone and come back
To tell what bliss is and what opposite
There is on earth
I am going to where I do not know
And since I am not going to come back
I am not in any haste to leave.

Tony Adah

Gombe New Year Gift

There is a billowing cloud of smoke
Smothering over charred skeletons
Of men and automobiles
Reddish brown flames licking blood
And flesh of innocent citizens
This is the gift my country
Can offer in the name of religion
In the gruesome murder and wanton destruction
Of wares to its citizens at new year.
There's a war against terrorism
Fought by a crippled nation
And a compromised army
Terror has not stopped to breed horror
And it is a gift no one can say no to.

Tony Adah

Good Bye Queen

A little queen
Lived in front
Of my heart
And in the same house
We all lived
Together to share.
When winter
Froze me cold
She brought me
A summer of warmth
From her hugs.
And from her kisses.
Even when she went
On a nuptial sail
We saw the mast
Afar at sea
But the warmth
Of her love at home.
Then she decided
To build a tall wall
Between herself
And our house.
Just yesterday I remembered
The wall never extended
To our hearts
Eventhough she's
Forever gone.

Tony Adah

Good Night

I want to rest
From the poisoned day
Oh night whittle my burden
As I hide away from the bawl of the day
Oh night you are ever giving and kind
Give me now serenity from the
From the bedlam of the day
And I will give a snore
In my dreamland.

Give me this
Ephemeral gift
In my transcendent rest
Till my maelstrom vaporizes
Into the thin beyond
Where my foibles will wane
Into unspoken words.

Tony Adah

Good Omen Song

The sun blossom in a gold rising
Birds chatter songs
They say portray good omen
The day turns
Into a junk of dreams
If we get nothing
Out of it and we have
Air to breath,
It is well with us.

Tony Adah

Goodbye

There's an inner voice
Which echoes in my ear
Yes I was right
Never to be washed and washed
Into shreds of rags
There was a perfectly imperfect union
And feet stamping away
From the depth of affection
Confused,
The road was paved with Hardcores
Walking back or ahead
Was a dilemma, still a dilemma
Don't let your heart's chamber
Where I sat open
For it's a shame to turn back,
Dear, what a beautiful way
To say goodbye!

Tony Adah

Goodbye Elias

I know everybody
Will make this journey
But why do you succum
So soon?
When your food
Is still boiling on fire
You swotted every night
Privatizing public electric supply
With candles and chinese rechargeables
But you painfully left behind
Your Ph.D waiting for
You at EBSU?

I feel I need an apology from you
For this your departure
I am not sure I can get it
Prostrate as you lie
Here in obeissance to death.

Go my brother
And brush clean the footpath
For we are coming behind you
And when I am coming
I will bring that paper
You swotted for
But abandoned here
Rushing beyond.

Tony Adah

Goodluck Yet To Come

This year is different
Nothing seems
To espouse goodluck
Even when my president
Sets a precedent of goodluck
There's still a moan
Of pain this morning
The street cleaners can not
Sweep unemployment
Into the incinerator
Neither is democracy
Given its proper garden to flourish.
I have been to the stream
But my fish traps are replete with crabs
If this year fizzles
Easily away,
There's hope that
My rumbling tummy will stop
And my squelchy steps
Will walk on a solid ground
Then I will reap
My sweat and that
Of my own father.

Tony Adah

Grandmother

She wore a tired mien
Her sunken cheeks and eyes
Looking like our Christmas masquerade
And fierce like a wounded lion
She thundered directives
We never waited to finish
But ran to the village stream
With the earthen wares
That brought her resplendent water.

Her sequence was full of opposites
But she was kind and a good cook
The reason why we swarm about her.
She often got into brawls
With the serene grandpa
And he taunted her that she was a breech birth
Little wonder she acted
Against every known norm!

Tony Adah

Grandpa's Song

There, the signpost hung unwritten
In the wisdom of the ancients
A one legged cricket chirps
At its burrow in the seventh month
And a one legged man's hope
Of dog merchandise is a fantasy
In the world of two legged men
In drunkenness a roach
Plucked his sanity in the gizzard
Of the famished rooster.

Tony Adah

Greed And Grave

Early morning we wake up
With the lark
Running and falling and rising
Chasing and getting
Spending and struggling back
We behave like tomorrow will not come
A house and a car and a jet and all
In the end a small hole called grave
Too small to be accommodated by greed.

Tony Adah

Greedy Thoughts

If I alone
Will get a shelter
Over my head
If I alone
Will own the wind
Own the wilderness
Of the world
Own the water
Own the wealth
Of the world
Certainly I will
Also bear its burdens
And defeat the
Idea of the world.

Tony Adah

Grocery Goddesses

When you talk about aesthetics
At the eight mile, it's a taboo
The goddesses of grocery perch here
On the pedestrian walkways under
Some mixture of blue, green, white, yellow umbrellas.

Wobbly old wooden tables
Dance before them and the taskforce on hawking
On Osusu spree they never pay themselves,
These women under the sun or rain
In their tattered umbrellas keep sentry over
Odara, pineapples, avocados, tomatoes
All which they sell and mess the streets,
When you talk about clearing the drains
Right behind them, they feign joy
And offer you apples with elbows
That hardly stretch forward.

When you plant the lawns and water
Them every day, because the rains are no more
They jealously sing a tune that
Government is a spendthrift
But the lush green colour of the lawns
Always is lost on them
In their perfunctory care, they shift their chairs
Forth and back
Tufts of grasses come out from the ground
Like short brooms,
One wonders if they sweep with them.

Aesthetics, when you talk about it
Even when the carnival is on
The gutters swept yesterday are full of wastes
These grocery goddesses are unbeatable
The harder you drive away, the harder they come back
They sell fruits and make hearth
Where yam, potato and plantain are fried over
For the townspeople who are their attorneys come to eat
Here where refuse brim with wastes

And a horde of flies,
Eight mile is called dirt
And dirt is called the eight mile.

Tony Adah

Grove Of The Death

Behind our backyard
Stood a fetish grove
Where my father poured libations
And incantations to an invisible god
In the grove were stones, earthen pots
And broken earthenwares
Here during new yam festival
My father squated
And spoke to the invisible deity.

He poured water
He smeared food
On the top of the stones
And spoke to the ancestors
With supplications, incantations
And libation for fecundity, bumper harvest
Triumph in warfare and hunting expeditions

He gave the ancestors food
He gave them drinks
For they showed us
Our way to the market, farm and hunting
And this grove
Is overgrown with weeds
And the deity
Have we forgotten?

Tony Adah

Growing Old

When the back begins to bend
Over the chest
And knees crick in a wobbling walk
With desertification of the forehead
And everything hair turns to gray
Like the white hibiscuses,
And a third leg is desirable
Then the conscious will see death
Leaving them in oblivion
And the prayer will be to let the soul
Go its way and let the earth have his meal.

Tony Adah

Guided Democracy.

Democracy is about to crack
The walls of my country
It is not all for the people
Or by the people or of the people
When it wants to talk to the people
Its higher echelon of operators is a hindrance
And they guide
What it says and what we hear
This is what is here
And they call it guided democracy.

Tony Adah

Guilty As Charged

The parcel of the
Promises that charged the campaign rallies
No one cares to unwrap
Status quo ante interminable,
Our friends
Have become our fiends
Our visions
And aspirations utterly violated.
There lies our government
Breathing in the
Absence of innocence
We won the elections
Now we lost the government.

Tony Adah

Gun Is Not The Only Weapon Of War.

Gun is not the
Only weapon of war
Starve them
Close the airport where
The enemy's supplies land
And the war is won
So the strategist said of our brothers

Today the world
Has an array of weapons
To destroy itself
With chemical and bio-weapons
As If in the wild
Hunting for games
But this world
Will never end in wars.

Tony Adah

Guns

Downtown is a dark town
Much peaky folks are
Peals of gunshots
And a scream of sorrow
Rapacious death takes a toll
Not from the muzzle of a gun
But from the mind of mind
Guns don't kill
Man does.

Tony Adah

Harmattan

When the harmattan comes
With it wizening winds
It is time for the crops
And weeds to wilt.
Lilies do subterranean hiding
It is time for humans
To talk and taunt
When it drizzles
Or drops from even dews
It is sprouting time
To beg my neighbour.
Never put a man
Into the grave
When he is still breathing!

Tony Adah

Harmattan Wind

The rains have gone
White bolls of cloud pain the azure sky
Grasses bloom full of seeds
And beetles romance with the flowers
Early morning the wind come
From the northern fringes laden with cold
And mist and dews that drip
Like a liquid clock.

It is cold and piercingly cold
And the wind at noon brings a floury dust
On our naked skins
In the evening and the morning
We gathered around a big fire
Kindled by the wads of wood from the meadows
It is harmattan
If we stoop too near the fire, it burned us
Still if we stay too far away
We are in the clutches of the biting cold.

Tony Adah

Harmony Of Things

The blue sea rustles quietly
With sharks and herrings
Frolicking in its tummy
And green leaves live
In the wind bidding us
A warm welcome to the world
We get all the cool
From the harmony of nature
But we lose all the harmony
All to our greed
Little thinking one day
We get the boomerang.

Tony Adah

Hazing Rituals

Today my penultimate child
Went to school the first day,
He's back with a basket of tales
Those bizarre hazing Rituals
Of a fresher.
He was made a frog
He did a frog jump,
He was made a waterboy
He filled a bucket with spoonfuls
Of water.
He was made silly with questions -
If five birds perched on a bough
And a bird hunter aimed and killed
One, how many will remain on
The bough?
He giggled and was cautioned
It was raining
But they ask him to water a lawn
There's nothing you won't see
Being day in school.

Tony Adah

He Who Is My Friend

Who is my friend goes out
Truly for me
And I go out for his concern
When we two met
We are alter egos of each other
We may be far away from ourselves
But we are always near for
In the chambers of our hearts
Affection lies;
Where needs are wrapped
And deeds are done
Where friendship blossom
In the garden of real love.

Tony Adah

Heart Is The Seat Of Love

Heaven's gate wide opens
When the heart is a floodgate of love
Radiating to the highly and the lowly alike
A love that's blind
And knows of no colour, black or white
Know no race, Caucasian or mongoloid
Love that a dew will share
To quench a searing thirst
And heaven itself will bloom
With love and care
Right in our heart
Here on this tired earth.

Tony Adah

Heaven And Hell

Here on earth
I bear my happiness
Or bear my melancholy
Going either to heaven
Or going direct to hell
I do not know the difference
Between heaven and hell
I am content with three square meals
In the absence of which hell
Stares menacingly at me
Still I will try always
To be on the side
Which bears water, air and fire
That I may Live And leave
My marks with or without
Heaven of hell.

Tony Adah

Heaven In A Dreamer's Eye

Far flung and resting upon the sea
A great mansion floats
With a lush garden of beauty
Its legion of flowers casting
A silhouette upon the blue sea
And a plenitude of sea life:
Sharks, whales, turtles, octopuses
Sea snake all coexist innocuously.

The dreamer is stupefied
By how nature weaves amity
Out of enmity
This is where his Stygian gloom
From the mainland
Is unveiled by the night itself
In a supposed eldorado
And this is where
He wants to be.

Tony Adah

Help

Help comes when the load is safe
Help comes when the head pad goes atumbling
Help gets not upon the head
But rest on a shoulder.

Tony Adah

Here I Am.

Here I am
Toiling in a sea of dreams
My head beaten by thoughts
In a labyrinth of ways
I want my dreams fulfilled
I am rain drenched
And sun beaten
My sinews and tews traumatized.

The ship of life
Is up with me in the wild oceans
I'm tossed back and forth
Up and down like a cork
Swept by eddies.
Will my dream come true?
Soon Or never
I will leave the world
Bodily Or my deeds
And this is the hope
That tosses me on.

Tony Adah

Hiroshima.

The klaxon of war blared
And the hawk took off
From God's own land towards the sea of Japan
Enola Gay went gay
And Hiroshima shimmered
In the ashes of death that
The hawk released from its talons.

A glowing city went into gloom
Everything blasted and gone
By the blunder of war.
There the city lay an inanimate mass
Swallowed by the cloud of death
The lustre of power shining in the opaque smoke
And the city decimated
By the policeman of the world.

Tony Adah

Hold Me

Hold me when the night comes
Oh hold me
When the owls hoot
And crickets chirp and cicadas screech
Lullabies for their young ones
To obey the night.

When it is night
And bioluminescence flickers
In insects like stars
Tell me not to come to the open restrooms
For those are the eyes of my ancestors
Searching to ask me
How my journey here was

When it is dark
I crave the kindness of my grandma
Not to tell us those harrowing lores
That will make sleep
A haunting deed to perform

Oh when it is dark
Before the cruel darkness begins to haunt me
Tell the dogs to bark seven times
Before the night cracks dawn
When the night comes
Hold me
And stop me
From the fear of those lazy
Dodder shadows casted in grandma's lore.

Tony Adah

Home

Oh sweet home
I am here
But devoid of nostalgia
And parnephanelia of home.
My mother is gone
To meet my father
Who left long ago.

The kitchen is shut
And the chicken pen is deserted
Every place here smells stale
And my sibblings
Have wilted like hot
Geysers have poured upon them.

I have come
With my freshness
But a contagion of staleness
Is upon my head
I am running
Running to where?
I do not know.

Tony Adah

Home After Prison

Again and again
The prisoner went
And came out of prison
He solved a lot of problems
Staying in prison.

The last time
He went and came back
It shocked his co-prisoner
That on their way home
He had stolen the prisoner uniform
Which wore as if he was
Still in prison.

At home he claimed someone
Else's farm and harvested it
Before the very presence of its owner.
The owner took him to court
But he won claiming the portion
That was grown with weeds
While he was in prison
From the proud owner of
Three labour intensive wives.

For being a liar, a thief and a chief
Of negativity, no one shone like him
Except that the adjoining communities
Feared him for his oftentimes confrontation
And kept away from the land border
Giving advantage to his own community.

One day
He stole a bunch of plantain
In his village which he cut
And sold to a woman
On a market day
But the smart owner took
The stalk and matched
And identified his plantain

In the market and that is how
Again the prison became
A home again to the prisoner.

Tony Adah

Home At Last.

Home at last my brother
I hear my fellow artist
Sing that this world
Is not our home
Oh Isika at last
You've justify the music
You've proved the song.

I can not believe
You giving a manifesto
In a faculty election
And slumping to our own chagrin
Prof. you zoomed without
Taking the faculty chair as dean
But the seat of honour
On the other side
Is a great deanary too
We go to meet
Like we met in Maiduguri
Though there was dusty and hot
Here my mind tells me
Will be a Xanadu.
Adieu Prof. Martins Isika!

Tony Adah

Home Is Home

Nothing will ever
Make me leave
The shores of my own country
Away from its dazzling relief
And its warmth,
Of the land and the seas.
Not even boko haram
Or unemployment
Or the dearth of free and fair elections
I will only visit
Those freezing climes
And return to put a brick
On the structure
Called my country.

Tony Adah

Home Slaves

One colonial era is gone
When man was chained and manacled
Today though the manacles
And chains are gone
There are invisible ones
Manned by our own very brothers
With greater punitive.

It pains sorely more than yesterday
Now with the instrument of oppression
Under the control of our brothers.

There's more to eat
But we are hungry
More to drink
But we are thirsty
More to wear
But we are naked
More to read
But we are illiterate
There are gainful places to go
But we are manacled and chained.

Tony Adah

Homegrown Democracy

Our homegrown democracy
Got a bash,
Fledgling as it is
There is a huge appetite
For the content of our heritage
Than for patriotism.
And the wealth is going
Going into individual's pouches
In lieu of the common good.
There is a bevy of girls
Captured in Simbisa bush
And the bestial insurgents
Too are amassing corpses
On a quotidian basis.
We are confused
Blaming it on partisan opposition
Sitting on a broomstick
Like the witches of yore,
But death be it inflicted
According to norms need not be politicized
This status quo stabs
Our children on their backs
And their future bleak as it is
Is the orchestration to beat us into subjugation and exploitation
Sure the world listens
And they're here to see for themselves
How in the abundance of spoons
The people relish jelly beans with fingers.

Tony Adah

Homeward Bound

I am gradually going home
Having seen a number of days
And I am on the other side
I have tried in vain to change the world
And since I do not the ant the world
To change me, I am going.

My songs of the lowly peasants
Have fallen on deaf ears
Even the regime of clime has shifted
When its hot, its real hot
And when it's cold, its freezes.

O'where are halcyon days of yore?
To give me the lull I no longer
Have in my possession
It tired to be here
And I'm homebound
Every day that comes to meet
My blinking eye a bonus.

Tony Adah

Honesty

What if the cold
Hands of death flings
About me today
In your absence,
Create a hindrance
Against me crossing over
To the hallowed side?
Honesty is not just in words
But in deeds
Nurtured on time
While we live.
Some may chicken-out of you
Take to the streets
Protest your worth
Here lies their vulnerability
To the ways of the world.
I will build thee a house
Before my final reward-
A habitation for my household unend
They will spell you
As the words
On the marble of my epitaph
Going a brave man.

Tony Adah

Hope

Memories of yesterday
Froth with hurting toils
At twilight now,
My encumberances abating
The thick pregnant night
My hope.
I am content
With the travails of today
Overwhelmed by my
Drib and drab achievements
But tomorrow transmogrified.

Tony Adah

Hopes And Woes Of The New Year.

The midnight was chilly
Cold wrapped a shroud
Of its wind around the townfolks
Expectant like a pregnant woman
They made burnfires and music and
A great howl came from the fireworks
That gave the night tide its resplendence
Of a rainbow and kept the new year adherents awake.

The new year truly came to pass
The roosters woke up with the lark
In their quotidian trade
And gave the new born a throaty crow
The world left history of the old year
To embrace the reality of the new year.

One could make no difference
Between last year's new year
And the new year of today
Same hopes dashed at last
And perhaps same woes loaded
In the empty year new at birth.

Tony Adah

How About Tomorrow

Give me my thing
To chew;
Same mouth that chews
At home;
Is the one that chews
In the market.

Tony Adah

How The Eagle Made The Sky

The eagle dived into the blue sea
Took the azure colour
In its wings,
He flew high and low
Looking for the colour white
And stumbled upon a farmer's field
There abound bolls of cotton
White as snow.
He prostrated before the farmer
Knowing he's used to harassing
His chickens
What do you want, Carnivorous king?
The farmer asked happy he didn't
Have to chase his visitor
Behind his yard.
Some cotton bolls, the eagle said
On one condition, I'll give you
My cotton bolls,
If you leave my chickens alone.
Very well said the flesh eater
Who got the white bolls and soared
Up with the blue he had from the sea
Added them to the void above
To to make the sky
The reason why often the sky looks
White and blue.

Tony Adah

How The Fugitives Got Freedom

Up the scorching desert the fugitives fled
They left all the tents and all the camels
All the sweet dates and peppers and onions
To listen to the poetry of change
The guardian sang and the followers echo the song
So did the fugitives who sang and danced
To the echo of the song
The song pierced their hearts
And they joined the crusade
And freedom came to those who
Wanted freedom themselves.

Tony Adah

How The Sky Was Formed.

The land came up with water,
Rocks, trees and animals
A tall void of nothingness stood above
And when the Hausa people
Began their trades, the sky was formed.

A mallam was making blue dye
In the great dye pits of Kano
And the scorching sun stole the solution
Into the thin air
The blue dye became the blue sky
And its water became the rain
They all settled above.

When a Katsina farmer
Had harvested his cotton to dry
A fierce whirlwind came by
And swept the cotton bolls
Above and they settled on the blue
Sky as clouds
Their seeds spilled shiny oil
That twinkle in the sky.

Tony Adah

How The Taste Of Palm Wine Nearly Ruined Friendship

For the love of palm wine
Friendship flourished in two friends
One with the palms
And the other with friendship
Which blossomed in a garden
Watered by the wine.
A feeling of subtraction in the owner
And a feeling of friendship in the friend
For a friend indeed
Is a friend in need.

Tony Adah

How The Taste Of Palmwine Nearly Spoilt Friendship

Twosome ones went to tap palmwine
On this day it threatened to rain
Lonesome said they wait until
It ceased to rain
His friend said no one knew when it will stop to rain
Lonesome insisted they must go
His friend sat down and couldn't move
Twosomes waited until it was late
Then they went to tap.

They came back to cross a monkey bridge
Where they saw a casket lying on the sticks, fearful
They stumbled and fell into the stream
Until the men who left the casket there
Came back with the light they borrowed
To enable them cross with the casket at night.

Twosomes quarrelled and grumbled
Inside the water and when they saw
The casket owners in the shadow of the light
They ran out of the water further into the bush.

Tony Adah

How The World Will End.

There have been
Fetid rumours that
The world is about to end
Pessimists have this song
On their lips from the phrases
They have memorized
From the holy books.

They are quoting from the
Events of yesterday and today
Of wars and natural disasters
They have concluded that
The world is melting
Into a cauldron of extinction.

There are tsunamis, earthquakes
And the strong Wings of winds
Sweeping the world.
Of a truth,
I can hear the tortured voices
Of victims swallowed
By the forces of nature.
As for wars,
The candle of peace
Will ever flicker in them
And in every war
A bridge to another.

I am an incurable optimist-
A staunch believer in a profuse
Regenerative core in our
Actions, thoughts and ways
Or that of the universe
That tortures, enslaves or kill
Only to remould.

Every population bloom
Has its thermostat
Every empire in history

Had its apogee
Of rain I speak
When it pours, it shines.
And the world will end not
Than Live on,
Blossom and wilt
Die and Live.
It will not end
In one fell swoop, but at a time
Each for he who is no more!

Tony Adah

How The World Will Learn

If a bachelor travels
Who will stock his fire?
If a widow discriminate men
Where is her own?
Palm wine tappers do not refuse
To lend themselves empty gourds
If masquerades come from the same forest
Should they disparage themselves in songs?
If you have now; give me your roasted yam
For mine is still on fire.
And if you're in dearth;
Eat as if your gums ache
And this how the world will learn.

Tony Adah

How They See Me

They think that I am nobody
Than a dog among a heap of ashes
Yes I am but clean from the ashes scrub
And I am somebody someone
Like them they do not want to acknowledge.

They don't see me
They see the heap of ashes
Even when the dog is gone
The ashes remain
This is what they see
Not me, clean and gone.

Tony Adah

How To Eradicate A Disease

There is need to be
Patient with democracy
But democrats of any make
Are in a great haste
To making quick fixes
And so contact diseases.

If the disease is civil
Kill the causative politicians
And bury them in ballot boxes
If it is military
Surround them
In mass protests
And send them back
To their barracks
If you doubt this
Go to Burkina Faso.

Tony Adah

Human Bonds

We gloss over relationships
Tinker with friendships
And love and make them seem
Cheap and ordinary
Think that they subsist
In materials clutched in man's hands

We can't be in love
When our hearts have gone
On a long journey
And we doing the bodily thing
Cuddling
Kissing
Bedding
And think that we have activated
The mood of love.

Friendship is when love is alive
When the heart, the mind
And the soul melt into a bond
Not even eternal parting
Making a difference,
Some jostle for things
And chant and sing that
A friend in deed is a friend in need

Love is when friendship is silent
But you hear its drums
When you see the lubricant
Greasing its wheels
When the journey is made
On noiseless tracks
And when noise rears a head
In no time silence returns
When a tear comes to wet a cheek
It is love and friendship that
Are the wind that dries it off.

Tony Adah

Human Nature

No two hounds fight in an adventure
But we did
We shared the games
Even when in the meadow they hid
We fought
And independence and freedom
The games got
We yawned at last entrails void
The games learned a lesson
Of our discordance views
We learned nothing of our
Voracious throat.

Tony Adah

Human Universality

And we pretend that
We are different in
Colours and in tongues,
The fallacy of colours
And the multiplicity of tongues
Still we are one;
Locked up in the prison of our minds
The bars harder than steel.□

What's not decipherable in
Our language of sorrow
Or our language of joy?
We cry in one universal language
We laugh in one lingua franca
We sneeze, we yawn
All in one language.
If you are white and I am black
What's the colour of our tears?
What's the colour of our urine?
We are blind to them
Tensioning the world
I am superior
You are inferior
Not knowing that good or bad
Has no colour
Has no language
Other than humanity.

Tony Adah

Hunger Breeds Anger

Hunger breeds anger
If you're a parent
Provide
If you're a brother
Provide
If you're a sister
Provide
The world must fill the basket
For anger to stem
Otherwise a mustard seed of hunger
Will sprout into a big tree of anger

Don't be angry
With anyone
Anger is one letter
Short of danger
Anger shortens
Our lifespan
Here on this earth
Then it destroys our soul
Never get angry
Over a botch deal
For better a one ensues tomorrow.

Tony Adah

I Am A Citizen

They depose that I am a tenant
Upon my own heritage
A minion unredeemed by the sweat
Of his toil tilling till dusk
A black face on a black soil
A dreary land with wealth
Carted away to modify the slave masters' life.

They said all citizens are cotenants
Codified in one same niche I occupy
We lay prostrate like servants
Before the king
We puzzle over our unequal being
In a seed bed without a farm to grow
And melancholy ours
As splendour is theirs.

Tony Adah

I Am A Griot

I am a griot
When real men have gone to their trades
I am home telling tales
To both the aged and the infants
Every one loves my songs,
For those who snob them
I love them myself.
I sing of joy and of melancholy
Of birth and of death
I prowl the yard
Like a hog
Scavenging the worthiness of dumps
I am not in the farm of anybody
But laze -gazing at home
That's why I can tell
How the kite seized a chick
And the hen fought in vain
To rescue its kind;
And how the duck's quietude
Saved the duckling from
The claws of the hungry kite.

I am the griot
Who brings ease
To the tired farmers back
From their farms.
I tell them
How the hen feared trouble
And had her knees behind her trotters;
How a toad's lateness to a meeting
Of awarding body appendages
Made him miss a tail.
I am a griot
They love my stories
But hate my person
And they are greedy for my songs
Like the greedy lizard who swallowed hot food
And lost his voice
I am the Griot

Who saw the snake delayed by the toad
On his way to a meeting of gathering
Gifts of body parts and missed his legs
But decided to swallow the toad
Whose wisdom told him
That the duel should be done by the road
Where mans intervention rescued the toad.

I am the Griot
Who sat by the river bank
And listened to the song of the crocodiles
And saw the anger of the predators
At the legion hues of the chameleons.
I am the griot
Who saw the sanity of the roach's stupor
In the coffin
Of the hen's gizzard.
I am the griot
Who knows that the kite's beautiful look
Is different from his inner thinking.
I am the griot
Lazy in their farms but active in my own
And pruned to burying the corpses of infants
I am here silently
Watching the community
Allow a greedy few
Emasculate the huddled masses
And I am a griot.

Tony Adah

I Am A Man

When the world is tired of me
And I'm still alive and firm
Every bough of my grip
Will break like thunder has shattered it
Every of my footsteps will stick
Like I'm walking on a bayou
And this will equal make
Their booby traps.
Still strong at wings;
I will soar up the sky like an eagle
Drink in the hollows of trees
And leave their streams for them
When they are tired and weak;
I will pick them up
With my talons and dump them
Where they belong
There will lie the difference
Between men and boys
For the carapace I wear
Does not allow the acid of any venom
To bear through it.

Tony Adah

I Am A Poet

What else can you find
In me than bad verses
Of convention defied
And the dearth of rhyme and meter.

When I am taunted
I turn into a butterfly
And joyously fly away
When I am criticized
I turn into a lizard
And nod my head.

My taunts turn me on
A great spur, without
The hurt of your intention
When I do not want hear you
When I do not want to listen to you
I bend upon my cadence
And dance to my own rhythm
But rising gradually, mounting the canyon
To dine and wine with the muses.

Tony Adah

I Am A Poet.

I am a poet
Poems are my passion
I am sitting by the bank
Of the river watching creativity
Flowing with the water
It gives the river its hue
Of assorted colours.

There are loads and loads
The river carries along
Some crawling on the bed
Others mere debris swept downstream
Or dancing on eddies.

There over the other bank
A coterie of bald headed men
Spiky bearded have appointed themselves judges
To say which colour that comes
With the river is splendid to behold
And I am watching
Busy adding adding my own colours to the river.

Tony Adah

I Am A Tourist

I am a tourist and a citizen
Of the world
No leaning on a wall
That's is black or white
An observer of butterflies
And flowers and bees and honey and the stings
I am in Jerusalem
One city, two settlements
I am in Hebron
On apartheid street
In a dilemma where to go
One building two faiths
I am in Gaza
I am told the sea and the sky
Are all occupied
Still the land is free?
If Jesus will come back to his home place
He'd be utterly confounded.

Tony Adah

I Am A Traveler.

Over hills and valleys
I am traversing
Seeking the mountain
Of great where the muse abodes
I have traveled a long way
And I am one hundred and twenty
Five kilometre to the great height.

The journey is boring
And my feet too heavy to lift
I'm slowing down
Like a slug
But steadily and slowly
I will touch
The face of the great muse
Sitting and waiting
For a tiring fledgling.

Tony Adah

I Am Abandoned

I am in an old gas station
Down the road
Derelict and abandoned
Two of us here.
A shaking moustache
Like the rat's whiskers
And moss-grown walls
Broken pumps;
And drooping dispensers.
I have gone to the university twice
And once I am abandoned
I am not out of my mind
But the great labyrinths of my thoughts
Are enough
And I am here abandoned
Those who read in less than twenty six alphabets
Are calm in chilled cubicles
Like Norwegian fish in a morgue
Waiting for petrodollars
Their barrels are full and standing
And mine are empty and lying.

Tony Adah

I Am Always Alone

I am not always alone
I move with three of us
Me, my heart and my shadow
Me I am always myself no matter
Where life's throes throw me
I could be poured icicles
Or a bath of steam.

I am constant and unshakable.
My shadow is the weakest of all
He begins to scream at twilight
And sheepishly runs away
It is night and dark.
The heart is always up or down
I would want to do good
And its persuasion will be weak
It drags me back and I am neck deep
Into doing a wrong.

My inner self will come out
Roar and draw a dagger from the
Scabbard and brandish it before
The weak
My pliant shadow has gone with
The night
And the thumping heart will fear
Get frightened and succumb to good
Watched by a dagger that is
Ready to lacerate its muscles
That are already traumatized.

Tony Adah

I Am An Orphan

I am an orphan
Crying to the deaf ears of the world
I am deserted
Even the mourning gifts
The world lavished on me are gone
I am lonely like
A corpse in a beautiful mausoleum
I am an orphan
Crying to the deaf-mute world.

Tony Adah

I Am By The Door

I am by the door, crying
With a basket of restitution
On my head
I do not want to go home
Burden by the weight on my shouldersshoulders
Take me now before the time comes
I am here myself alone
And me my witness.

Tony Adah

I Am Espoused To A Curse.

Love's tender arms
Have grown roses
Fewer than the thorns
We knew when we had
Nothing than love
We smoked garri together
Ate roasted yam in palm oil
Tampered with salt and pepper.

Today is better
And love's voice
Has turned into a whine
Emphasis is shifted
And money is driving
A huge buggy that
Leaves me trekking on my own.

I thought
I was protected
Being espoused
But today
My hope is shattered
And I am wriggling
In vain to come out
Of this prison.

Tony Adah

I Am Going

I am going
If I have to be a stranger
For my poetry to be read and appreciated
I am going
If I have to change my name
For my poetry to sell
I am going
If my words won't be judged by
My craft of them peculiar to me
I am going
If the outpouring of my heart
Means nothing to no one
I am going
But when I come back
I hope to meet things different
For I too have my time
Like everyone else who lived
And wrote what the world cherishes today
That time I see it
Knocking on the shutter of tomorrow.

Tony Adah

I Am Going Nowhere

This road leads to nowhere
Since I'm going to nowhere
It's my route
But I came from somewhere
If the road goes to nowhere
And I'm really lost
I will return to somewhere.

Tony Adah

I Am Home

I am home again
Thinking that the vacuum of
Nostalgia will be filled
But home is dry and
I am wilting like a vegetable
Treated by the hotness of a geyser
The trees and the mountains
Are almost gone and my kinsmen
Drown in the current of the streams
Think that it is well
It is hot and the rivers
Will be hurt one day
When the earth will melt
In our own hands.

Tony Adah

I Am Laughing

There's wealth everywhere
In the earth
In the air
Inside water
I am a microbiologist
Without a microscope
And that's how
I am trained
By my one and only country
The opportunists are there
With only a cranial case
And they ask me to bow
Before the brother
Of a friend
So that the dividends of democracy
We fettered will rain upon my head
And I am laughing
At what I know
That no one else knows
And I know
Right in my heart
That I know
That I know the contents
Of the air, water and air
Do they know □
That I know what I know?
And I am silent
As the redeemer lays booby traps
For the unsuspecting lot
Until the larvae leaves the cocoon.

Tony Adah

I Am Not One

I want to be a happy loser
In the spirit of sportsmanship
I had sewn two shirts for myself
Of green, red and white
The insignia of the largest political party
In Africa
But the party shrank
And bowed to religion and ethnicity
Still I am a citizen of my country.
Elections have come and gone
And I am dancing at the periphery
Some men with hearts have gone
To pool at the winning party
Which promised change that's still distant
But I can not change
Because there's no change
More so, my sewn shirts are adorning
My wardrobe
And the one I'm wearing in my heart
Sticks like a member of the heart
My heart harbours a guest
And this guest is my principle
I will not change
Because my party has lost
For political chameleons
Are mere prostitutes in the brothels of politics
And I am not one.

Tony Adah

I Am Outdated

I am outdated
The click has left me behind
Its like I don't even know the time
I am in a local joint
Relishing my nkwobi and esi ewu
All I get are jeers.

My friend has gone to
A fast food outfit in a plaza
Sat on a yellow chair and table
He is eating sharwama with juice
All he gets are cheers.

I am outdated
My breath reeks of palm wine
And his of red wine
He belches fragrance
To mask my plague of yeast
And I am outdated.

My girlfriend wears
Afro, low cut, plaits or braids
And she too is outdated
His wears Chinese, Cuban, Brazilian hair
Or horsetails
And she's all modern.
I have gone through the university
And he university didn't GI through me
I am too black a man
And so outdated.

Tony Adah

I Am Seaborne.

I am tired on this earth
With dreams and dreams
That gust of wind blow away
Soon as they come.

I do not want the air either
For there the wind lives
With his sweeping wings.

I am sea bound
Where the bounties of life are
But I will avoid the sharks
And ask amity of tunas and mackerel
Open my mouth and swallow plankton
Freely and effortlessly.

If the torrents of the tides
Swirl me in and I am no more
I prefer to feed the sharks and the crocodiles
Than allow men to make a crypt for me
Eat and drink and make merriment
That I have gone.

Tony Adah

I Am Sorry

A man yanked a deep wound
In my heart with his tongue
No where could I find medication
Than from his mouth.
He hid the truth in his own heart
I tried a hat
On my own heart
And I get hurt
By his humbug
Until our common friend
Snatched his tongue that
Secreted a panacea
Of 'I am sorry' which healed and restored my heart
And I am happy.

Tony Adah

I Am Waiting.

I am disillusioned
That God is not quickly
Flipping through his book
To find my name and give me
What to do.
I am not idle though
But there's need a better thing comes
From his own hand
Onto my palm hands
And I am waiting.

Tony Adah

I Believe My Mirrow

My mirrow says
This is not how
I looked yesterday
And I believe it
Tomorrow definitely
Will be better
I mutter to myself.

There are voices
I'm hearing with my ears
And there are visions
I'm seeing with my eyes
I believe tomorrow
Will be definitely better.

Tony Adah

I Can See The World

I'm locked up in a house
On my straw bed
Sleeping
Dreaming
My eyes closed
Still I can see the beauty
Of the world
Ugly it becomes if I don't
Open my eyes, break the door
And practise the trade of
My dream.

Tony Adah

I Care Not

I care not about beauty that's skin deep
And bears thorns in the heart

I care not.

I care not for the sweet petals
That will soon wither away
And leave the roses with their thorns

I care not.

I care not for the garments
That clad our bodies
And shade our bittered hearts
In the ribcage of our chest.

I care not.

Tony Adah

I Defer My Dream

I will defer my dream;
Defy my sleep
Until when it rains
And the ground is soft
So I can drive my ploughshares
Through; prepare the land
For my countrymen to sow
The seeds of accord;
Nurture our bonds
Change the weakness of our variegation
Into strength;
Damn politics with bitterness
Beatify our heroes
And make every land a home
For every countryman
Until then I defer my dream
As I defy my sleep.

Tony Adah

I Didn'T Come By Dream

I came not here by dream
Still I know not how I came
Than by the travails of my mother
Behind our yard.

I know not how it began
But I know now how it will end
By faith I will get to heaven
And by fate I will inherit the earth!

Tony Adah

I Do I Do

Yes, I do
Spiced with a honey moon
Priestly blessed
Yes, I do
For better for worse
Upon a nuptial dance.
One day passes,
Termites or white ants
Have eaten every 'better' thing
And the vow is broken
With the river still at the ankles.

Tony Adah

I Dont Know Why....

I know why the duck
Says quack quack quack
I know why the dog
Says woof woof woof
I know why the cat
Says mew mew mew
But I do not know
Why man says hmmm.....
And nothing else
All with his warty heart.

Tony Adah

I Found Her.

I heard a little sweet voice
In the garden
I looked up and down
Paced here there
It was hidden in the thicket
She sang a song that jolted my heart
I jilted my past time in the garden
Wore my eye glasses
And my ear lenses
I found her amongst the flowers
She's sweet and beautiful like them
I cuddle my own
I gave a smack
But she planted me a kiss
I have ever not forgotten today
Even the garden and the moon shine
Under where she was found
Fresh as dew quench my thirst.

Tony Adah

I Have A New President

I have a new president
For the next four years
He's an emperor tall as the sky
With the mien of a jester
And the heart of a lion
In all, the change agenda is taller
Than the president.
He often wears smiles on his lips
But seldom in his heart.
He promised change
And everything to make every citizen good
Change, change, change
Yet the tall mound of amala
And miles of drawing ewedo
Are far away from the citizens' dinner table
He promised
Work or no work
There'll be pay cheques for everyone
One thing taking his attention
Is the dark hills built by' kwaroption'
And his bulldozers work dawn to dusk
In the reverse of the curfew he enacted
In his first coming.
Pull the dark hills down
Level them
Especially if the opponents built them
The dark hills are so tall
It will take four years to demolish
And if this will be his only duty
Then I have a new president.

Tony Adah

I Have No Wings To Fly

I have no wings to fly
I have no legs to walk
I have no friend to hold
I am alone
But I'm blessed
I am a bambara nuts eater
No need for an advice to drink water!

Tony Adah

I Have Swallowed An Innoculum

I have had an innoculum against criticism
They are all like a fountain
Upon a duck's back
If some plumes get wet
It will change position.
If silence comes upon your deed
So little be it conceived
And the tongue of man scathe
Where the good of another man lies
And in between some envy.

Tony Adah

I Left This World For Good

We are all birds of passage
With a terminal choice to make
We must leave the world
And I left it for good;
Still I steal a glimpse of it and think;
What good was it there with neighbours
Who owed and didn't pay back
But took a pound of flesh from me
When I owed.
I have left the world for good
That tattletale place
Where confetti is poured on celebs
And paparazzi run after them
Where oblivion is poured
On the wretched and dust their spray.
If I could come back for good
I'll stay alone like now
See no evil or speak it
For I harbour friendship
No living man HSS seen
And with me will come seeds of kindness
In the friendship that man cultivates.
But I left the world for good
To stay in the bottom of the earth
Where no bomb is heard;
No hunger is felt; where illness is no more
And living is death
I left this world for good
A journey every man
Is reluctant but must make

Tony Adah

I Love The Rain

I love the rain
It patters on my window pane
And leaves me half alive
From death's second self
It makes me remember my dreams
The ones I was losing fast
Coming back to my head
For the next day to crack.
I love the rains
It comes at the nick of time
When the ground is getting hard
And the crops shrivel
Like tobacco leaves in harmattan.
When it comes and the ground softens
Like gruel in a steaming pot.
I love the rain
It comes and splatters on
Old and young, sane and the insane
Short and tall, rich and poor
It gives soft and hard ground
Equal measures,
How I wish we behave like it
Pour and rain our love
Without discrimination on every heart

Tony Adah

I Propose To The World

I am here alone watching the world
I propose to it
And its gestures are obscene
I wish I could have a friend
Like the egrets on a cow's hump
No one comes to me
But the wind blowing my direction
And it wake old age
I will soon roll my sleeves to sneeze
I can see that now
That my eyes' muscles are weak
And I can see far rather than near
I am sure of this hope
That I will be there
Before I finally go!

Tony Adah

I Relish My Okro

We have refused to eat what nature bestows
We gather and pour into humming machines
And they grind and alter the substance
that our bodies desire and we eat thinking that
modernity is it.

The engine grinds and the metals steal
Into what we eat

A moment, we groan and yawn

Holding our stomachs

Crying that cancer has come

What happened to growing food

the way nature gives its own examples?

Rather than blowing up our crops and

Boasting that we can genetically modify them

And in this way our bodies get punished

for a crime they didn't commit.

I go for organic or I go for nothing else

My chicken roam the meadows

And I give veggies an encouragement to grow

So also are the mushrooms which wear

a crown of beauty in my yard.

As an African I will never be caught

In a web of food from the factory

And food from the farm nature provides.

I enjoy the bitter leaf, scent leaves, hot leaves

And mushrooms perching silently on

dead logs and palm trees, the beans, sesame,

mangoes, pears, guavas and papaya.

I relish my okro

And no matter how tall he grows

I always bend him to take my pods

And the slimy leaves

Recently they said it cures diabetes

And that's the way with what nature offers

It is both food and medicine.

Tony Adah

I Shout

I hate to live in a country
Where I was born
A citizen
Where my great grand ones
Had their umbilical cord buried
Still I walk on the fringes
Of everything
Afraid without a word of my own.

They won elections
In which ink darken my thumb
And they smiled
Saying that less will have to go
To the minority where I belong.

I see buildings crumble
Into rubble
A gun totting army of my country
Happily decimating the people
In their own land;
Citizens are refugees
In their own country
File up in huge breadlines
Bowls at hand looking for food.

I wonder how long
This prolonged torture will prevail
I feel like breaking
Sad like dying
In a country not different
From a prison.

Tony Adah

I Submit To The World

I submit here
A palinode to the world
If I have been a bad bard
Bare of words
I promise a good wordsmith
Still I enjoin the world
To re-read me
The words come that I spew
Them to the world
And my heart gladdens
That the world may
Share a contagion!

Tony Adah

I Tell You The Truth

I tell you the truth
Do not stray with the world
Away from me
I will lead you home.
I tell you the truth of the lonely river
Meandering for want of guidance

I tell you the truth
The truth of the wobbling walks
Of the crab going sideways
Truth of the teeming population of mice
Living in a burrow without a shutter
On their doorway

Truth of hunger
In the land of plenitude
Truth of the withering grasses
In the duel of the elephants
Truth of the tiger not
One without its variegation

Truth of the falsehood of the self
And the cast wrong impression
On the world
Truth of a rooster in a strange land
And standing on one leg
Truth of the man moving
And the devil making him to stumble.

Tony Adah

I Utter No Word

In the midst of the world
I love that which nature bestows
Here I utter no word to alter
The word of any man.
Competitors are jostling ahead
But I do not know what they carry
In the sinews and tews of their legs or arms
So I will be in a race with me alone
Winning or losing
In the eyes of the world.

Tony Adah

I Want To Go To The Moon

I want to go to the moon
Without a moon craft
After all the moon borrows
Its light and and its sheen is every where
At night.
I won't borrow any leg from anybody
To go to the moon
I'll use the legs my mind has germinated
And the eyes of my mind to see my way
When I get to the moon
And see how it looks
I'll get the picture of the moon
With the camera my mind holds
And tell the world how the moon looks like
Then I'll deserve an applause
That will send my enemies to their cocoons.

Tony Adah

I Weep For My Country

My eyes overflow with tears
And I am weeping bitterly
Night and day
Not that I have lost a dear one
I weep for my brothers
As I weep for my country.

My brothers who mock me
Who taunt me that
I went on a hunting expedition
Where an elephant was slaughtered
And I didn't bring home
Even the the bloodstains of the giant game
To show that I was part of the expedition.

Yes the elephant was killed
In government house in Calabar
And I had the mandate to share
It to the people
Should I have stolen some
To brandish my manliness
In my community?

I weep bitterly
For the ignorance of my brothers
And my countrymen
I weep for their greed
And I weep for their corruption.
These days the filthiness of society
Is exalted in my home.

Robbers float on the euphoria
Of their stolen wealth
And my brothers rejoice
Over the splendour of this loot
I have been scorned
And I am frightened to my shell
For being who I am
Robbers have triumphed

And I'm conquered in the eyes
Of my brothers.

For detesting stealing
I am mocked
I am scorned
I am taunted
And I am weeping bitterly
Night and day
Weeping
Weeping
Weeping
Weeping
Weeping
Weeping
Weeping bitterly
For the robbers of my country
And the day of reckoning
Sure as the rising sun is here.

Tony Adah

I Will Follow The Palmwine Tapper

When the rythm
Of the rooster echoes at noon
And the palm wine tapper
Is on his way to the tall palms
Call me to wet my whetted appetite
With the liquor that
My folks have refused to relish.

I will follow him
Help hold the brown gourd
That will take the liquid home
And drive the folklore
Oozing from my grandma's mouth
All the animals in the tale
I will cut their tails
And refuse them a drink
Eventhough they will
Make me laugh.

Tony Adah

I Will Go To That Market

I will go down market road
To meet a noisy crowd with wares
Some are there to buy
Others to sell
Still a good number of us
Parambulate that arena shopping through
The many windows of the market
Me, I will go there
Buy them with my eyes
And with my nose
All that I see and all that I smell
For my pouches are void.

Tony Adah

I Will Make A Vow

I will make a vow
Before I take a bow
From the world so sad
Upon which I sit
Sullen in my woes
Before the war
That will make the world
See me no note in my ward
I will make a vow
Before I take a bow

Tony Adah

I Will Never Run Away

I will never run away from my fatherland
In a flimsy of any excuses
If there be no water here
I will drink my tears
And still pursue a myriad of river valleys
I see littered in the land
I will never look for a cold visa
Away from the warmth of this land
And in this large expanse of land
I will cultivate patriotism.

Tony Adah

I Will Not Go

I am here to stay
I will not go
Even when the sun is down
If I will go,
I must leave something behind
On the beach of time
That which will make me not to die.
You will find my footsteps
I will leave them here
Like a decal on a china ware
I believe in the things
That push me through a furnace
From which I will bear myself
Between the hammer and anvil of fate I'd like to have on my marble
When I leave and they will be
The reason why I will not die-
Modesty and integrity.

Tony Adah

I Will Not Go Home

Here I am with a scorched throat
And a receptacle in my hand
Looking for someone to wet my seared throat and fill my pitcher
If they don't I know who will fill
And wet my throat as I look on
To the hills and valleys for watershed.

There is water everywhere
Still I am thirsty like
A wilted lily
Shrivelled in the desert
Where the camels have trampled
Upon the earth.

I will not go home
Until my pitcher is filled
My throat lubricated by
The liquid of life
And on my return
I have a story to tell
That when I came
I saw and I conquered.

Tony Adah

I Will Pledge Allegiance To My Spouse

I will pledge allegiance to my spouse
Yes, allegiance. All of it
I will hang upside down
Like a bat
I do not want her to suspect me
Of being inside the room with someone else
Or to be outside somewhere
With a horde of them.

I will pledge allegiance to my spouse
And hang upside down
Like a bat and escape from her nagging songs
I will hang upside down like a bat
In her vantage view from where
She'll watch me dangling alone
And pluck her whims from her cynic heart
I will hang up here
With my imaginary suicide cord
And when it is severed
I will walk towards bachelorhood
The toes of my footsteps
Backing the house.

Tony Adah

I Will Raise My Voice

I will raise my voice
And I will grumble against the world
In utter oblivion of those
Unable to raise a hand
Against the swords and against the guns
And against the hate of man
And the indifference of the world
I will raise my voice.

Tony Adah

I Will Read My Poem

Wherever the wind blows
I will go there
Our state has become
A family heritage

On Saturdays
The eagles gather
And taunt the beggarly vultures
How they perch bald headed
Waiting for crumbs.
The crows are singing
In their piebald plumes
Clapping, jumping, dancing

The big eagle struts
With a strong beak
It has borrowed the tongue
Of the parrot
Singing dirges of his deeds,
The beak of the pecker
And will bury the mother
In a huge pecked rock.

Wherever the wind goes
A storm is on its way
By that time
When it shatters,
When the flood comes
When everywhere is a tsunami
I will read my poem.

Tony Adah

I Will Return

I will return
No matter how I go
Planted like a piece of yam
In a mound,
I will rise again in black head
And fresh legs like a new yam
And between the teeth of the world
I will be mangled again.

Tony Adah

I Will Wait

I am not tired of waiting
In the gloom of how things are
The shrapnels of bombs
And the gory sight of death,
The gluing of stomach to spines
In the famine that bloom.

I won't be tired of waiting
The glorious days are lining the horizon,
And the shrivelling lilies
Are opening the ground
I will wait for this day
To come and shower us with blessings
For our toils,
I will wait for the old days
Of torture and tyranny to pass away
And the days of happiness
Jamming from the east.

Tony Adah

If

If we can keep power soft and low
If we can honour peace
Respect the other person's opinion
And wear his shoes
If we can ward off fear
And embrace trust
If we can pack suspicion behind us
And build a bridge of trust
If we conquer pride
War will be gone
And peace will be the next thing to embrace.

Tony Adah

If Death Were Illness

Life's hollow ways
Monotonous will be
Like a bird without its wing
And unable to fly
The predators will continue to pray
For the weakness of the preys
If the earth is not girded
With the garment of death.

Procreation with bloom
Of all things living
And to tread space will limit
Dog will eat dog
If only a dog is strong
The torment of one extreme stronger
Will be great on the weaker
If death were a mere illness
That it can not conquer.

Tony Adah

If God Made Man Likeca Car

If God made man the way
Man made a machine
I would have a way of doing
A friend a favour
Just walk up the shop
And buy him a limb with veins
Full of blood
Like buying a tyre
Full of air for my car.

Tony Adah

If I Could Fly.

I can see birds
Flying over Calabar river
Their wings flapping in the wind
The air is calm
Offering its cushion for flight
And I am just wishing
I had some wings.

If I had some wings
I would never come down
To this ugly earth again
I would find another earth
Where only Adam lives
And Eve is caged
By the fringes.

Tony Adah

If I Could Say A Thing

If I could say something
And it gets done
I would ask God to come down
And catch people red handed
In their evil deeds with men as witnesses.

But who knows
If he has come down a visitor
Or touch us as air or clouds or rain
And in our ignorance
We didn't honour him but
Aided and abated our sins.

He will not come!
He will not come! !
For however he manifests himself
To the knowledge of man
Man's pride could ask him
To let them play
Missed in the difference
Between a ladybird and a dung beetle.

Tony Adah

If I Could Tell The World Something

If I could
Tell the world something
With its listening ear
If the world will visit my heart
And know how it citizens languish
In abject want in the eyes of my mind
It will make a provision

If the world knows how
Soothing my heart yearns
To heal its sick ones
It will care the more

If the knows some of
Its forlorn folks
It will cuddle them

If I could
Tell the world something
With its listening ear
I will tell it
To put peace in an earthenware
Climb up mount Everest
And let it break upon the world.

Tony Adah

If I Should Miss You.

When I look into her eyes
A magnetic flux pull my legs
When I moved I didn't know
If I should miss this love
Its like a nail traveling without
Its own very shell
The shock will definitely make me
Regret why I looked in the first place.

Tony Adah

If I.....

If I wear a shoe
I won't be able to use a hoe
If I ride a horse
I won't on time reach my house
I will careful walk not to stun my toe

Tony Adah

If Men Don't Die

Men don't dump anything on a platter
For you
If breath from them come
We will die alive
Waiting for air hoarded in their sacs
And if men don't die
We would die by those with means
We will chop their wood
Count their money
And sleep on our stomachs
Unable to stand like empty sacks
And the reason why we live
At all is for man to die
Poor or rich.

Tony Adah

If Men Should Eternally Live

I often wonder why men
Should die
Why they should not live eternally
Come to think of it
Why should God cram pack sinners
On earth than the spacious hades?
And if they be rich
The wretched and the poor suffer the most
If men will eternally live
Where I would have had my space
I do not know
If men will eternally live
The tree will spread its boughs
And fill the earth
And we'll breathe humans as air
Eat human as food
Tread on human as our road
And instead of order
Entropy will reign.

Tony Adah

If No Grave Was Dug

I am wondering how full the world will be
If no grave was dug and some people missing into it
I am wondering what the few bees would do
To the teeming flowers.

How a small tip of a pyramid
Would weigh down a large base
How the rich would get richer
And the poor poorer
How the strong will pursue the weak
Still all will rest or languish in a grave.

Tony Adah

If The Rain Won't Come

If the rain will not come
The rivers will sink beneath their bed and the oceans a pillar of salt,
Our throat seat will be
And our tongues will sizzle
With a drop of our spittle like
A drop of water upon an earthenware
On a hearth.

If the rain won't come
The earth will scorch and crack
Like a china pieces in a mishap,
Not a dust will rise
From this desert
And the greens will flame
Into brown or gray like
Senescent hair on a man's head
Who has seen one Christmas too many.

If the rain will not come
Hades will build on earth
And everyone, saint or villain
Will reap the same
And cry and wail and gnash
Their teeth.

If the rain won't come
The sky will breath fire
And lick all bayous dry
Alligators and crocodiles,
Kings of the swamp
Will have their fangs blunt
And stunted and children those alive
With strength will put their fingers
In the kings'mouth.

If the rain will not come
Of course in between
Something will happen
Or drought will present himself
On a platter of thirst,
Hard enough to touch,

And real enough to feel.
It's new name, armageddon
Will sweet us with his talons,
A grave portent of our end.

Tony Adah

If The World Doesn'T End Soon

If the world doesn't end soon
A poet will be born
To tell it its deeds
And show it the way
His voice will reverberate over hills and valleys

His ways fair and straight
He will know no boundary
The world may doubt him
But the virtues of his ways will be tasted
And all the groans and screams
Will be gone
Then the world will know
That he was destined to be a legend.

Tony Adah

If They Didn't Build Schools

If they didn't build schools
We will be lurking in the meadows
Looking for rodents
I would have no memories of the days
We trekked to school,
I have seen those who dropped out
And those who dropped in.
I know where I belong,
The anguish on the faces
Of my age mates in the village
And the struggle of the townspeople
The hustle and bustle, the hubbub
And the crimes,
I am bewildered by the difference
It makes, how I am moulded in this
Hue, able to know the difference now
Between those politicians and their
Myrmidons,
If they didn't build schools
Gaols will be our project.

Tony Adah

If Tomorrow Ever Comes

If ever tomorrow will come again
As I guess he will
My food will become stale
And warming it
Will take another while
If only I was thoughtful enough
I should be doing something else
When this tomorrow has come
And on doing so
My bravery to the fore come
And all accolades will be mine

Tony Adah

If We Must Change

When we were children
They taught us; don't lie
Don't steal, don't covet
The world was changing
Few churches they were with believers
Who piously behaved,
A catechist was the priest of today
Anything that wore colour
That colour was pronounced so.

In those days people obeyed commands
Without questions,
I am wondering if Jesus were to come
Back and make a set of modern
Apostles and he says;
Follow me, will anybody will follow?
Rather the question would be
Follow you to where?
Leave man I beg, no be you dey
Feed me Oga!
Do not steal
Stealing originate in today's church.

In those days
The Reverend fathers treaked
Then Hitler made a car that was
Common amongst them,
Today if it is not a Bugatti
Don't take!
If it is not a beast of the POTUS
Don't take;
The modern priest lives in his parish
Still he must build a mansion in
His village.
When we were children
We were taught don't lie, don't steal
Don't covet
Churches were few
With a modicum of faith and truth

As adults we still want to be taught
Don't lie, don't steal and don't covet,
We have signed a covenant with
Corruption but we ascribe it to
Other people.

If we must change, it must be
From inside in the fabric of our
Very soul.

Tony Adah

If You Fear Death

If you fear death
It doesn't sympathize with you
It doesn't get scared
And you are not spared
If you fear what causes death
And think that earth will not come
And it has not come
You may postponed the doomsday.

A sudden visitor
Will rather surprise you
Spare you the races away from death omens
And give you a rest from life's struggle.

Tony Adah

If You Follow Them

If you follow them
There'll be booze and cars and cash
And there'll be guns, guys and girls
If you follow them
You'll real follow good life
But you'll never know
How they got this.
You'll marvel at them smart
If you got a story of bank robbery
Or a car snatched
Or a wealthy man kidnapped
You'll never link that to them
'Cause they look innocent
But inside them;
They're innovative to the extent
Of any crime.
If you follow them
You'll feel real good
And booze so early as nine
If they love you
They'll teach you how
To be sleek and smart
With guys, guns and girls
But when the sleuths get to know more
About you and them
They'll shackle you and you'll
Feel real bad, you and them
And regret the booze and the company
Of guys, guns and girls.

Tony Adah

Igbrinyi Carton

A lunatic took solace in our house
And slept on the verandah of a house
Government allocated to my wife
He relishes her soups of bitter leaf and mushrooms
And thank her more than anyone
Who has been of help to him.

When he comes in tattered
We replace what he clads on
And soon the gift tatters into rags
He moves in tow with a horde of children
Who taunt and call him names
As he hauls stones in vain at them
They temporarily retreat
Only to swell back and muse songs of him.

It is my word or that of my wife
That can act as a fumigant to these swarming bees.
He slept on the verandah of our house
When we had moved and asked my neighbour
To let him speak with me in his phone
And when I am hooked on to
All I hear is laughter and I am in no doubt
That that is Igbrinyi carton!

Tony Adah

Illusions.

The world wants all
It sees as good and beautiful
But it never wants to create scenerios
Great and splendid to behold
When it sees a rainbow
It wants to hold it in its arms
And never knows how nature
Mixes its own colours to make a rainbow
And when it moves towards it it runs away
Like a mirage

The world moves
Gourd in hand
Looking for water
And drives on a tarmac
And sees a huge
Pool of water
It happily alight to scoop
All it sees is a mirage

The world moves
And bump into a river
With a basket wanting to fetch water
But all it sees in the basket is nothing
And the world is too much
With itself.

Tony Adah

Imagination

My heart thumbs and my
Mind gyrates and prances about searching
For a podium to perch and yarn
Above and beneath the earth
The words fly and fill my mouth
And it is like I have something to eternalize.

This is my world
This is my word
This is my work
Spontaneous, a raining hail
Of a riped winter snow
Effortless to drip.

For now, it is beyond my control
My eyes look, my legs move
Without seeing and without motion
All usurped by the ghostly walks
Of a roaming mind.

Tony Adah

Imitation.

The kel-kel jumped
From one tree bough to the other
His prehensile tail wound
Round the tree branch
And when the kel-keling
Tried to emulate the kel-kel
It fell down flat.!

Tony Adah

Immortal Death.

When birth bid us come and weaned
With the good life we think that life itself
Should forever shine
When the cruel time comes
To roll us upon the sea of ice
We fear what we would have done
Everything possible to accept
In the glow or dim of twilight
When the vulture comes to prey
And in vain we pray
We capitulate!

Death, O' immortal death!
The tyrant that names his mortal ways
In any way he chooses
That everyman must shed the cloak
Of their earthly garments
The fear that bears in kings,
Nobles and commoners alike

Those who die
Are those who laze-gaze
At the daunting world
For the immortals write their names
In the sands of time
O' immortal death!

Tony Adah

Immortal Elders

So slow the sun goes
And the clouds restrain a shine
It rains
It stops
Still the sky is dark
Children yearn to play
And unburden their hearts
But the elders have gone to the stream
And got their resplendent water
Turning back
They have made it turbid
What shall the children drink?
When the weeping sky
Throws his turbid rain
Upon the throats
Of the thirsty children.

Tony Adah

Immortal Toil

Every year when all bush slashing
Has been done, all the earth made
Into a smothering of black, brown
And gray clouds, the mounds also made
Yams are buried with joy
And stakes put to hold their twigs
There's no more work
The village folk idle about
Yearning to hear the crier
Say one old man is gone
The message real as usual
There is joyous mourning
Waiting for food and drinks
Songs and dances and then the dirges
Every year the cycle strengthens
Its circumference and the days passby
And everyone is old and gone
Leaving behind toil
O immortal being.

Tony Adah

In Everything Be Yourself

The world will never let me react more
than to act in my own ways
Be kind like the sun which shines on
every tree, every house and every man
And the rain which minds not
what it soaks,
rich or poor, solid or liquid
Never at any moment react than
act your ways, never let any man
make you a prey to fumble and show
the world you are not a man.

Tony Adah

In Love's Garden

Love's cuddling arms showed
A cushion soft as wool
Where my crazy sleepy rested
And a thousand lullabies lured me
To a slumber huge as death.
That's is not true
But a feigning sleep
How could one find love
And sleep on her like a fallen log
When it is to be returned?
My eyes open and preening love's plumes
Like a sun bird doing so
On the petals of a splendid rose.

I am in a garden
Where love watered and tendered for me
And I am watching with care
When the serpent will come
A fruit which I will be hesitant to touch
For love is all
I hold in my hands.

Tony Adah

In My Father's Arms

In my father's arms
I found myself
He who had long travelled
And looking homeward no more
I who have no longing to meet him
Now think about the days of fun
And a dream makes us meet
Is he nostalgic?
Here where the dream reunite us
In the depths of affection
And I said, no I still have much to do
When the ray dawns
And the rising sun
Knocks on my door.

Tony Adah

In The Bossom Of Time.

Time opened its mouth
A tunnel of some sort into
Its great underground mansions
Joyously I jumped in thinking
I have all it takes to have
All the time in the world
Not knowing
That time has all of me.

Relaxed as I am and sedentary too
Time grinds slowly like the earth
And I like the sun Or the moon
In apparent movement do
Defer all those things that
I Ought to have done
Deluded to be in
The company of time
And I the keeper
Time keeps me.

Tony Adah

In The City

In the city you were born
Lanky and fair and later bearded
You never had been home many times
And not many will know you.
More on your final sleep
As you will arrive
Cotton bolls in your nostrils.
City born
City bred
And now a village man
As you lie not blinking
Maybe dreaming about
The city of yore.
Those who mourn
Mourn for your father
Those who mourn
Mourn for your mother
For they do not know you

We mourn you
As you lie asleep
Not looking at anybody
Not knowing anyone
When they told us
You were born we rejoiced
Now that you are swallowed
By the same city we mourn.

Tony Adah

In The Middle Of the Ocean.

I am standing
In the middle of the ocean
Still I am groping with soapsuds
In my eyes
I am not blind
I am not deaf
I dare not do anything
That no brave man has tried
Clearly I am mind-folded!

Tony Adah

In The Name Of Our Country

In the name of our country
The citizens
And patriotism
May we believe in this tripod
Stand on top of it
Squander no chances
Hold our country to the heights
With our brothers and sisters
Though we have many tongues
From different tribes
Let it no divide us
But stitch into one
For a tiger is not one
Without his spots.

Tony Adah

In The Valley Of Grief

The face is downcast like a statue
Tears are the rill you see on the cheeks
Hands folded between the thighs
The world is gone
She's the only one left behind
No, cheer up
The storms may rage
And the sky dark becomes
Cheer up!
Calm will return and tears dry
And your charm renewed
Smile will be the next thing
In the world of hills and valleys
Where you may not be the only one
In the legion of valleys
Swallowed by grief.

Tony Adah

In The Wee Hours Of The Morning.

In the wee hours of the morning
They woke us like we have slept off
Our duty of watching the night
We rubbed off smudges from slow opening eyes
The road to the stream is still tainted with stars
A bowl on our heads and crickets chirping
their last bouts of songs
Our shins would fetch the dews
dripping down to the ground
Soon we are back home with a pool
of water in a big bowl
A broom in our hands
giving our compound a clean shave of sweeping.
The stale cocoyam foo - too is ready
And the gulps lead some steps to school
No shoes, no bags but a black slate
and flakes of dried casava chips for chalk
Trekking and singing rhymes of the other day.
Over and over the school is over
We have a duty to fulfil
Scavenge the bush and fetch mushrooms
Or take hook, line and sinker to the stream
And a tilapia and mudfish pant in the bag
To season the sauces for dinner
And remain some, the stale part
for the school breakfast
Or follow them to the farm and roast yams
And dip in peppered palm oil.
There was no car, no bicycle, no milk
no soap, no pomade
That was then
Now there's milk and everything
But the brain!

Tony Adah

Inauguration.

This day is here
Long awaited like it will never come
Its hype and pomp and pageantry
Will today be gone!
Will anything crumble?
No!
Will any be built?
Certainly!
And the western prophets of disintegration
Have failed
The chinks in the wall of our sovereignty
Are beginning to seal.
The bad days have gone
And the good days are here.
There will be no need to cork up anger
Or be subdued by hunger
Or beaten by shame
And cry out again at last!

Tony Adah

Independence

Independence, today we mark you
And celebrate you
But we less value you
Because we got you on a platter of gold
No much fuss and we cuddled you
In our arms, drinking and making merriment.

At last the colonialists were gone
And colonialism attenuated?
It seems so
Loosening from the colonial shackles
Is different from extricating ourselves
From native thralldom
And this is serious
Of brother killing his brother
Whose blood runs in his brother's veins too
And we are jubilating today
When a few have captured the essence
Of citizenship and the rest
Aliens in their own very land.

This independence is to be celebrated
On the note of existence
For living well and being a citizen
Of my great country I doubt
Unless tomorrow the sun rises
Shines upon the citizens
And the shadow of the past leaves
We will ever celebrate in mixed moods
Of tears and joy.

Tony Adah

Indictment

I am indicted for being myself
In the thoughts generated and
Espoused from the streams of wisdom
It is Nobody's mind but mine
I will rather go to the gallows
And die than succumb to that
Which kills me alive.

Scarcely a moment passes without
My inner voice whispering to me
'You are the tortoise's carapace,
No venom of any green mamba
Can dare you poison';
Whispers a little voice.

I defer to this truth
The one devoid of the lure of
Silver and gold
The aliment that nourishes the soul
Food fit only for the discerning
Which goons run away from
To the buffet that blows their
Tummies full.
I am here bowels void
Mind full of the invisible cuisines
The embodiment of my soul,
I know what I know because
I know what I eat
I eat what I eat because I know
What I know;
And I'll be freer in prison
Than bow to empty vessels
Making the loudest noise in their
Kitchen languishing in dearth.

Tony Adah

Integrity

The kite, the hen
And the duck
The noise of the hen
And the serenity of the duck
Who is to blame
For the noise of the hen
And the safety of the duck?

Tony Adah

Interminable Death

Death so slowly or swiftly come
It gives no notice to any party
His coming no one ready to welcome
Than with reluctance follow
The chariot driven beyond
Sunset or sunset.
If he will preempt one
Like a wolverine, giving a binge
The gritty earth crusty as it is
Will glaringly go
Never finding a place to subside,
The sky will on a void sit.
If he will give
A party to the drunk
An eternal valediction, he will
Wobbly go
Thinking that every drink is gone
And every cup is empty.
The world is full of those who
Do not want to go of their own Volition, be there any cause Deserving death,
They endless can not stay
But more slowly or swiftly move
In a buggy of the absent horse
This is a feat
A circus can not play
Or a journey you can forfeit from
From your vault your toils
And cheat on the world.
Death's language hears no plea
In a calmly or ghastly take
The world thins and swells again
And like A snake, its tail in its
Mouth.

Tony Adah

Internally Displaced People

Some tired feet stump a dusty road
They do not know where they are even going
Amongst them children,
Women backing some on their tired backs
There are luggage
Of sacks and empty rubber containers
There's no water for the travellers
And livestock trek wearily
Behind them
Guns are booming
And drones like cattle egrets fly above
In the sky.
They do not know
Where they are going
Displaced in their own home
Fleeing away from the homeland
Roaming like cattle without a Shepherd
To where they do not know.

Tony Adah

Invitation

You're cordially and mandatorily
Invited to a caucus meeting
Of our great party
At the party secretariat
Or the caucus leader's house
Time and date will be communicated soon
And the agenda is
To select candidates
Hard to sell to the electorates
Sincerely party caucus secretary.

Tony Adah

It Does Not Matter How You Were Born

Some births are humbler than the rest
Or is it Caesar?
All the same
They come from a hole
And to some holes, someday
They'd go.
What's the fuss being better
Than them?
Or them better than I
When that which comes of abnormality
Glitters more than gold?
And to pad an elephant on your head
And tip the hole of the cricket
Is nothing but greed.

Tony Adah

It Is A Rag Day

There is cacophony in the street
I am scared but it's just music at high pitch
The clanging of tins and the wearing of rags
And the painting of bodies and the begging for money
Where I am
A radio is carelessly throwing news
In the air and butterfly and singer machines
Sing their songs rolling clothes over
I am deaf
I am dead
In the dearth
Of quietude and I am sieving
Through the crowd home.

Tony Adah

It Is January

The journey is over land and over water
From the north to the south
It is tortuous
And we crawled like a tortoise
Dip right into pot holes
Now holding dust
And the frogs have gone
Croaking having taken the water with them.
The dust rose up like a volcano
And the car hummed and giggled
There are earth dumpers, caterpillars, graders
Beside the road
In a silent conversation with commuters
And some men cross gathered
In uniforms of some sorts
Begging and harassing the commuters
The journey doesn't end
If it does, there's return journey
And the processes repeat themselves
Same people, same road and same country
It is January
No one is touching the machines
Till June when the rain comes
With another excuse
Where the potholes have persisted
Become the dust bowls
Where it rises like today
O' my country.

Tony Adah

It Is My Fault

I doubt If
The world has
Met my expectation
In equal measure
It does of my own.
It has provided me
With all things
To make man whole
In his world
But I run short
Of the many things
At my disposal
And somehow
It is my fault
That man is still
Half fed
Half nude
Half hearing
Half blind.
Yes somehow
It is my fault!

Tony Adah

It Is Over

The gods have
Released the yams
For this season
The farmers are looking bushward
For new parches to slash

And I pity the earth
For the injuries that
The matchets and hoes
Will inflict
But as the earth suffers
Humans will eat.

Tony Adah

It Is Possible

I am a possibilitarian
I am not a parliamentarian
I will make the elections possible
And learn to endure
The failure of promises
Wait still and risk rounds
Of other promises.
It is possible that as my sample
Size increases, I could find
Some fulfilment of promises
Yes it is possible.

Tony Adah

It Is So With The World

In laughter
I cuddle the world
And sing with joy.

In tears
I leave the world to itself
And hold melancholy
In failure
I stumble and fall
Still I rise and learn

In triumph
I conquer
And laugh with tears of joy
And let the trees of the world
Pour unto me a confetti of their petals
In every situation
The world laughs or frown at me.

Tony Adah

It Is Time

It is time
For salt and pepper
Rice and tomato
Wades of notes
Wraps of deceit
To spice our politics

It is time
To flaunt the rules
Make the field uneven
And in the middle
Of the game shift the goalposts

It is time
For do or die
Win by crook
Steal by the day
And emasculate my country.

Tony Adah

It Is True

The shrill sound of crickets
Chirped at twilight and they say
In my own village that it is an omen
So a bad one to hear them cry at night
For the death of someone here
Who is yet to die.
In my hometown they say it is a bad omen
And coincidences are many
So it is true.

Tony Adah

It Is Well

It is well
Nature is best
When emulated
No one can take away
The tortoise's abode
From his humped back
A long journey begins
With only a step
Of a myriad of the millipedes legs
If a man shall have a meal
Of roasted bambara nuts
No one shall advise
Him to drink
Of water
It
Is well.

Tony Adah

Ithe Orphan.

I am an orphan
I know no one than he whose
Benevolence led them to bring me home
And I am here without a father or mother.
I am an orphan
With phlegm drifting my nose
And tears rolling my cheeks-
A mixed meal crafted
For an orphan like me.
I am an orphan
My country claims me a citizen
And still leave me in tears
Like a raining sky
I am melting, diminishing like
A candle lighted upon the alter of neglect.
The Sun's morning hue glows
In the absence of joy
And the setting sun rays mixed
With the dark clouds make me a blurred star
Unable to assert my luminance
My hair is wilting
My eyes sunken
And my bulging stomach filled with wants
Still the world is deaf
Deaf as a toad
And still like a mountain.

Tony Adah

Izimashor

Running and splashing
Of white surfs upon the rocks of Adzese'
It drops down slithering like a snake
Running away from danger
Its course is full of verv and energy
And it pours all these
Into a confluence running for almost four months
Then thins down to greenish pools.

This is where men and women
Go yearly to fish with baskets and nets
And its bridge is low and liable to flooding
This where government officials
Superimposed some concrete stuff
Upon the one the colonial masters put
And pocket the rest of the cash.

Great stream, lifeline of Kigbor
Benefactor of government officials
Flow down with your resplendent water
Come down with a legion of fish
Feed me
Feed us
Feed them
Now till eternity!

Tony Adah

Journey Rythms

When the crier
Hit his gong
And I am contemplating going,
Pray the bio-rythms
Of the birds twitter more
When the ship berths
With anchor by the harbour
And blare its klaxon
Pray that my baggage is ready
For the sail
When all these happen
It will be a sweet journey
Leaving the world behind me.

Tony Adah

Judas And Peter

A bible knowledge
Class is ongoing
With the new testament
And Jesus terminal days in view

To teach is fun
And to learn is laughter
The teacher announces question time
Faces the board and writes
'Who was that apostle who betrayed Jesus'?
The class rumble
Tossing every finger up
Until one pupil is allowed
Who stood up to say, ' Judas Iscariot (is carrot)
He got a thick.

Against the teacher turns back to the board
And wrote 'who is that apostle who
Denied Jesus three time before the cock crowed'?
A little pupil stood up
And said, ' Peter is mango!'
Laughter was the best
Medicine for the class.

Tony Adah

Judge Me Not

I submit myself
Here whole for
Eternal scrutiny
What my eyes saw
And my ears heard
That which my nose smelt
All that I over used
Or under used
Of these organs
That I simply
Over amplified
By my mouth
I submit
To the world eternal
With my mind
My soul and my body
The frailty of man.
Judge me not
That I too
Will not of judgement
Cause my mouth to bear.

Tony Adah

June Twelfth

I have seen
Free and fair elections
Where the winner
Became a martyr of democracy
And a special republic
Was carved out for him.
We grieved that
His throne was thrown away
Prisoners became his subjects.
He presided here
And the rest is history!

Tony Adah

Just Myself

No matter what I do
The world will screen me
It will never applaud me
I know I am human
With a bunch of foibles
Can a struggling man
Born into humility
Subsist only on weaknesses?

Wherever I want to go
It blocks my way
Whatever I want to see
It blinds my eyes
Whatecer I want to hear
It puts its muffs
In my ears
Whatever I want to eat
It stitches my mouth close
Whetever I want to go
It shackles my legs
Whatever I want to smell
It blocks my nose.

There is war
A war the world wages
Against me
And I like a lily come
Harder than all seasons.

Tony Adah

Justice

An albatross looms on the
Way of justice
And delay is the legs it is standing on
And its horns the denial that
Pierces the suspects
Men wait and Justice is not forthcoming
When it comes
Its course is thwarted like
An aircraft in bad weather.

It is dangling between
The truth and falsehood
And attorneys make compromises
Judges sell it like pure water sachets
Bought by truant school children
On the dusty streets.

It has grown wings
And flown away
From the reach of citizens
And oppressors have added
Feathers to these wings
And far it has flown.

Tony Adah

Kidnapper's Den

There is an uncompleted building
Three streams away from the
Village market and
It is overgrown with weeds and bamboos,
Creepings of mecuna are the sentry by the gate
And only a footpath leads there
Here is a den where
The lions and the lionesses live.

It is a hovel for millipedes, cockroaches
Rodents and webs of all spiders
But a haven for the gangsters
The lioness wears a bait
Like a fish hook and begs for a ride down
After the market and the unsuspecting rider
Is caught with a ransom on his head
And it is a handsome ransom.
This is where drinks, drugs, money and women meet
And the uninitiate imperiled.

Tony Adah

Killing A Mosquito

A window pane
Is not a place of pain
I looked round
And a mosquito was around
I tried to Slap
It but my hand slipped
And I got hurt for slapping a mosquito like an elephant.

Tony Adah

Kindness

The dregs of society
Have been pigeonholed as underdogs
And they thrust their begging bowl
To the world

The skylark dies
With a sweet song in its mouth
In this wilderness called earth
Kindness begets kindness
You can not plant chrysanthemums
And turn around to reap dafodils

Skip not the meals
Of those under-privileged
And do not wait
To bring them flowers
When they are gone
Or weep when they do not hear.

In this sphere called earth
How but a man lives
Without the nurture of his soul
In a garden of kindness?

Tony Adah

Kindness Begets Kindness

My mother pounded foo-foo for me
Away I was in school
And kept it to warm
By the hearth
I came back hungry
She drew my attention
To the hearth
I shied away
Because of the visiting crowd.

My peers stared
Hungrily at me
Watching me, my mother
And the hearth
I stared away
Until they left.

When I was hungry too
I strolled to the neighbourhood
To where they were eating
They reluctantly
Accepted peer names
I got a hard lesson
As their hungry faces riled up
And my famished frame waited
Anxiously like Rwandan refugee
For the red cross.

Tony Adah

King Beshang Of Bukperi

From his palatial home
Of columns and beams gold made
The king knows no sun Or rain
It is strange that his subjects
Breathe Or eat
The king is harsh and fierce
And doesn't look anybody
In the face

He orders work for him from here
And decrees life Or death
Dauntless for every one half Or full
And the people languish in the kingdom
Frail and hopeless
To the extent that
A revolt became inevitable
And a clan of men
Is lost in a river and
Scattered in the world.

Tony Adah

Labyrinth Of My Dream

I was at night sleeping
My dream frightened me
The sight of my departed friends, brothers
Sisters and the ghosts of my great grands
Was a bizzare spectacle to behold.

I had not started the journey
But I was so tired and weary that
My feet ached like a rookie athlete
Some this night I thought
I had reached my destination
And where I was was not of this world.

It was a strenuous journey
Without the urge for food
Or the thirst for water
To one of the the most beautiful place
In any known galaxy.
It was adorned with silver-coated steel railings
Fencing every cell in with hordes of men and women
Stuck to their luggage and bright turnstiles
Letting them in and out one after the other.
People here were of all races distinct in colour
Gesticulating in low tone conversation
I didn't understand.

Beyond the steel railings hedging everyone in
Were lush verdures with spreading trunks
Of macamadized thoroughfares
This is where the great birds glide through
And fly high into the azure sky.
What brought me here was sheer obeisance
To death's other brother on my straw mattress
Old as the hill in a labyrinth of a dream
Where the only living person was my humble self!

Tony Adah

Lagoon Of The Poor

If you want to know
How it feels to be poor
Plunge into the poor's lagoon
And see the depth of dearth
If you shift an inch from
The comfort zone
You will feel the geysers of want
If you doubt it
Dash all your belongings
Throw them into the lagoon
Of the poor
And reverse roles.
Exchange your designer's shoes
For the slippered feet or the
Ten toes of the wretched poor
That morning of the swap
It's afternoon will never come
And you will be gone.

Tony Adah

Land Of Bones

Once in a while
Our shadows thin out to
The land of bones
Our flesh dumped and eaten
By the earth
Earth we came from earth
We return to.

No one refuses the earth a skull
In the abode beneath
No matter how strong, how great
How regally a diadem is worn
We must bow to the earth
Our bones intact
Dine and wine with the old
If we did their ways
Whether a witness stood there or not.

Tony Adah

Last Night

I was a victim
Of some sort
I fell onto my bed
Like a log of rotten wood
Years scavenged by the elements
And long forgotten
At Kanyang virgin forest.
I was infected
By sleep's other brother
Half dead but now risen
From the toils of yesterday.

Tony Adah

Last Week

I do not hope
That the episodes of last week
Will visit my life anymore.
I do not have a partisan congress
In my household,
Still my government went down
Into a shameful shut down.

I look at the melodrama at the top,
The top itself swallowed by
A tortuous xanadu of tenure elongation
And its vicarious agony
Of the missing Chibok girls.
I look up again like a pregnant mother
Summoning up courage to
Sum it up my expectation
Of an archetypal leadership
Hopeful in its rescue
Again hollow in my hope.
I have taken the road
That provides only for the teeming griots
And yet a worthless hope
Hovering over our own languid heads.

I look up to the torch bearing few
Their pens profused and wry of thought
But their words silent,
Gagged.

I look up to myself
In the middle of this month
Still expecting last month's pay check
To fly to my work table.
I look up to my children
Innocent as they are
Bearing my transgressions
Healthy as nature bestows
Hungry as society detects
There is a letter from school reading:

The fare for knowledge's journey
Into their heads is hanging.
And I am still waiting
Like a hen fo teeth.

I look up to myself now,
A near carcass to microbes
And a cannula on my arm
Me, my country and a neighboring rescue nurse.
If this is my national laurel,
I resent it a present to the inner city.
Last week i thought
On the extrication of my type
Down the the existential ladder,
From this dilemma.

This week i am still gropping
Like a blind man
In the daylight that is dark
My country continues to clutch
On the debris of this river
Like a drowning man
Struggling in a torrential flood
Still it is not an accident of geography
Or the goodwill of history
That I find myself here
So I am a citizen.

Tony Adah

Laughter And Weeping

The campaign is on
Like the light
We will reap darkness
When the elections are won
Those that won will
Greet us with their backs
In this cyclical ritual
Of laughter and Weeping.

Tony Adah

Law Breakers

The sky is rumbling
Some birds fly
And twitter against the wind
The coconut fronds sing
A thousand silent songs
And the sagging electric lines
Prance in the wind.

This is the order
Of the evening
A drunken man
Is driving against the traffic
And police are sleeping on duty
With their eyes open

There seem to be
A new order
In the wind
One wrong thing
Done often has
Righted a wrong
And the world is
Dizzying in the opposite
Of what ought to be right.

Tony Adah

Lay Man's Thoughts

I thought a tort was
A crime actionable
Until a lawyer told me that
No law lords it over
Anyone anything civil
As a criminal matter
No matter how
Jungle justice is
Or how crooked
The court sits.

Tony Adah

Let It Come.

A change for better is inevitable
As the change for worse is abhorred
We won't just come in as citizens
And leave without any footprints
On the sands of time.

Let it come
Let it come
The change that we desire
That that is promised
When we poured confetti on democracy.

Let it come
Let it come
So that we slough off our old selves
And be the bearers of the change
Speaking unhindered
Walking freely
Away from anguish and hate
Penury and servitude
Feeling the rain
Feeling the sun
In everything we do
Making our country great.

Tony Adah

Let The People Move

A lightning storm has struck
The land
My country lies in ruins
Here and there a desolate
Cloud hangs above our heads
And a pool of unshed tears
Fills my eyes;
Both the north and south
Are a blitz of war
One kills the citizens
And the other the heart of the nation

Some people have placed our country
On a funeral bier
And from the Atlantic to the sahel
Loud dirges are heard
Our country is divided
On the lips of broken reeds
Than on the ground
Where it is hard as nails.

On this ground
Patriotic citizens are matching
And singing an anthem of unity
And patching the glue that binds
Different cultures and people Together in a uniqueness
That the country breaths.

Let the people chorus the anthem
Of affection and live in the land
Where the sun rises and set
And leave room for toil and gain
Not like those who think that
All promises have failed
And schism is the song in the air.

The north has rice and corn
And the south oil and all
The Igbo of the south must move

To Kano in the north and make it
Or die there where there's is no oil
Make sacrifices with a decapitated
Head of their wife
With her crimson blood flowing
On the streets;
And northerners who pitch tent
In Port Harcourt do not do so
As oil merchants
But men with tools for shaving hair
And sellers food wares
They live on well
Even in Onitsha where their mosque
Is shattered to ruins
Our country will be a solid rock
With all the prejudices
When all the citizens
Lie head to tail
And this is the engine
Of our being.

Tony Adah

Let There Be Light

They taxed us
To take darkness away
It embraces us like the
Air we breath,
We only see light from the rising sun
And last before we sleep
From the setting sun.

The moon that no one taxed
Comes up with its own light
We need light to grind our corn
Whet our knife,
For children to read their books
This the Moon's incandescence
Is short of supplying.

Our children light up oil lamps
That darken their nostrils
Swotting for their own tomorrow
Without any foundation laid for them
They light reeds
That the wind hardly steady
The flames for them to read.

We don't mind them
We keep planting the poles
And stringing the lines
Without the light
Power line idly sag for
Birds to perch
And sing songs of taunt.

The tariffs go up
To touch the sky
The light gives way to darkness
To blind our eyes
They call a conference to Abuja
And tagged it privatization
They sold the company to their

Cronies and gave it new names
That still could not bring the light
We waited for light
And in vain it came
Reeds gleamed
Candles and oil lamps flickered
That's how we privatize our own.

We cried
But there was darkness
And nobody saw our tears
We are black people
They must make our nights
The colour of our skins.

Tony Adah

Let Us See You

I will not say a word
So you judge me by it
I will not eve speak in the night
When all is quiet and serene
If will speak
This quiet night is listening to me
I will so loyal and kind
To my friends, who must not hear me say but see me do
For soon I will be memory
Do be kind
Do be loyal
Soon you'll too be memory
And how do you want the world
Brand you
Is how you had branded yourself.

Tony Adah

Liberate Us.

All the squalor
Poverty, oppression, corruption
Democratic tyranny, lies and materialism
Is the church watching?

Tony Adah

Liberation

The days of torture
Are still with us
They're not gone
We hear a gun booming
And a body is missing into a grave
Or minced in the street.

I prefer a prison of bars
To a prison of grave
Where you hear nothing
And you see nothing
You smell nothing
And you say nothing.

I will endure behind bars
For my country where
Days bring worries
And nights brim with dreams
But one day the human hand
Will etch on the cocoon of torture
Hunger and death will be gone
And liberty will be
The song on our lips.

Tony Adah

Liberty's Light Is Dim

Freedom beckons from a far harbour
Liberty holds her torch
And the world black and white
Blue and green converge
In tongues and tribes varied
Freedom hard earned in trenches and battlefield
Is loose upon the land
Children touching like a toy
And a handshake with guns
Marriages of man by man
And woman by woman
Freedom's holy light
In God's own land is dim now
And political righteousness is groping
To catch virtues
And turn them into vices
And a tall policeman is watching the world.

Tony Adah

Life

Life is not about
Dog eat dog
It is not about
Brute force
It is about
A lingering
Good spirit
Where man
Help man
Rather than kill man.

Tony Adah

Life And Death

The sun rises now
As it rose before
Men die as they died yesterday
A factory of wombs churns out
An equal number if not more
And the world gets its balance
And space to swing.

Tony Adah

Life Is A Lottery

Life is a lottery
Anybody can win
And anybody can lose
Taunt less the loser
Cheer more the winner
But the tide tosses
Up and down
The loser can turn into a winner
And the winner into a loser.
Life is like a market square
Where all wares are spread open
For sale
If you have bought your own
Homewards you go
And if you have not bought
You keep searching until you find
And buy and leave.

Tony Adah

Life Is A Vapour

Life is a bubble
Soon as it is made
It's no more than a gush of air
And life is a vapour
It escapes anytime
But man learns no lesson
Gathering and devouring
He believes only in himself
To own the whole world.

Tony Adah

Lighthouse

We missed it in the morning
Our ship strayed dangerously away
The reefs and shoals we saw
In the afternoon;
We crashed there in the evening.
Some looters seamen came to pick the debris
And all that was the ship;
The survivors are on the shore
Thinking of what next to do
The rest is planted on the soil of posterity.

Tony Adah

Live Your Worth

The gift of two eyes, ears, hands and legs
Or less is for a purpose
Be creative with your endowment
Either full or half
Aspire, perspire and acquire.

Expecting much from others
Leaves you disappointed and dejected more
When they fail you.
The giver of one eye, ear, hand or leg
Knows it won't harm you
Do something before
The world taunts you
And throw you into oblivion.

Tony Adah

Living And Going.

Man lives and goes home
He is a giant mortal
Who must pass through a universal portal
When he is born
Life he shoulders
But death he shudders
As if anything can stop the journey home.

Tony Adah

Living In Paradise

If paradise was still our home
Less noise of nature's revolt
A kind heart in the rib cage
Of man
A world of smiles,
No gun smothers its smoke
In a haven of pure souls
And terror the weeds grow not
In the garden where love blossoms
And paradise the bliss of all
Would we have had the hype
Of technology and its ruinous use
And purify the pure?

Tony Adah

Living In The Tangent Of Life

Oftentimes I'm caught in toils
Crawling the surface of the earth
Like a lizard on the boulders
Of the Jos plateau.
It is the same old story
Of my destiny improvised
A centaur in human nature
And a slave to existence
Even that
That is bestowed freely
Deserves prayers to earn.
I am here
Not triumphed neither defeated
On the tangent of life
Every passing day a bonus.

Tony Adah

Living Up To Myself

They cursed me
And I lived true to type
They abused me
And I showed them the tint
Of their abuses
They cried foul
And I cack away like a fowl.

Tony Adah

Loneliness

I am lovesick
At the beach
Watching the surfs
And counting the shingles
All alone and lonely.

There is a figure
The beach wind is blowing
Towards me bikini clad
And my heart is going down
Hey, I yell and the seashore
Silent like a corpse turned
Her slender legs my way.

My heart is thumping
But I managed a Hi
And in a moment
I was looking at some blue eyes
And neck deep in a hug
With someone perhaps
Whose loneliness was equal to
Or more than mine.

Tony Adah

Looking At Myself

I am just pondering
Over who I am
How I came to be
And how I will be no more.

I am at home
With the way
I came to be
There won't be anything
Short of thank you
To whoever caused my being

I would have been made
Into an animal
Naked clad
And without a roof
Over my head
Or a tree
In its sedentary mood
Or even still a lifeless
Slab of granite
Sitting in bovine indifference
To to the world.

Tony Adah

Looking Back

I am looking back
Weeping in silent tears
In a hush valley of milk and honey
Forlorn sitting by the riverside
Still I am throat parched.

The mountains and valleys
Are full of lilies and roses
I am dizzy seeing them only dimly
They the conquerors have done
Their swellheaded duty
And I am here vanguished
My bravery gone and my ego bruised
I am no coward in the circumstances
But rising and vying
For a bonus day in every day
Of this new year.

Tony Adah

Lost And Locked

I was out hunting bats
One fleshy one flew heavily
Into the cave to where I followed
And darkness palpable I felt
With the fluffy flight of bats
Lost and locked
I groped my way between the slaps
Of the frolicking bats.
I could feel their way and grope
In same same direction until luck
Spanked my stubborn head to the
Reality of the world
I am out free now
Only to understand that that same bat
Is the causal agent of Ebola.

Tony Adah

Lost In Traffic

Up Effio- Ette where there's
A huge traffic clog at a junction
There stood a self-appointed traffic man
It was Sunday evening
And the gridlock was much
We wondered why there was
A standstill of keke Napep,
Motorcycles, cars and trucks.

This man, the controller
Wore a Levi Strauss old jeans
Long battered by weather
The linen on his back flying in the wind
His brown dreadlocks burnished by dirt
And a wiry beard brushing his chest
His voice soft like surf came out
From the little mouth
The beard and the moustache had left

'The officer at work, ' he muttered
Swaying his right hand
His left hand was still
The traffic refused to move

Drivers watching the scene
Cars grumbling in twilight
Exhaust fumes spawning a haze
In harmony with the controller's cigarette
Suddenly a radiator bursted
A panic rumbled, pedestrians running
Drivers scampering cars abandoned
And everybody lost in transit.

Tony Adah

Lost Of Ambition

Someone walked
Up to me at the gas station
A perfect looking gentleman
Without blemish-
At least so I thought
Adorn in white pants
A black shirt and a white blazer
And a silver shining black shoes.

Hey! , he called my attention
And I turned up to him
'I am sorry to bother you
I am stranded and I need
Your help financial I mean
To fare my way back to lagos'
So he said.
I looked at him
Pouring all my sympathy
Unknowing he lives
On public payroll.
I perused my wallet
Praying me to be kind
Enough to make him
Reach back his destination.

I know what it takes
To be in lagos from here
And I make my gesture
He bowed to it and moved
To another benefactor
He spoke with him
And he made same gesture
When I conferred with this benefactor
The story was different.

Tony Adah

Love

I have remained here
Alone and tired
Waiting for the lillies in vain
In season and out of season
What I saw and cherished
Which nurtured my heart
And lulled me away from the world
Has grown Wings.
It has flown away and It is flying
Its trail missed in the clouds.
I have gone to the beach
Where It once crystallized into a cuddle
Only shingles loyal to gravity
Lay sea-worn like me
Crushed by loneliness.
I have looked for It in bed
Beside me only its house I saw
Taunting me in diatribes.
I have seen It
Looming before me
Looking at me
When I spread my arms
Ready to to cuddle
It cringed away
Leaving me here a ghost!
I am lovesick, imprisoned
In this want for this long,
My manhood casted into a leaf
Wilted by the geysers of its dearth
I am here
Watching It
Grumbling at me
My waiting a letdown.

Tony Adah

Love Is A Fragile Thing

Love is a fragile thing
The brittle nature of its shell
A torture to its Care givers
I hold love by the lips, they shrink in
By the tail it pulled out
Cuddle it onto my bossom, it flew away
I'm lonely here
Weeping with no one
To wipe my tears.
I thought it was a dream
But I've woken up alone
To find love is gone
And I've missed
The fish as well as the water!

Tony Adah

Love Is Weak

In one week
Love has become weak
Its passion shriveled
Like lilies in harmattan
There's no remedy
For love's eyes
Are looking beyond here
Looking again
At what will soon fade
And really love is a fad.

Tony Adah

Love Through My Glass

If you are going to reason
How beautiful I am
How regally my gait struts
What I hold in my hands
The brilliance of my garbs
And say you love me,
Then you are a liar.

Tony Adah

Love's Humble Eyes

Love's humble eyes
Are blind
Never ever able to decipher
Ugliness from beauty
Friends from foe
Always raining its kindness
Even on the world
That is full of hate
Love's humble eyes
Are blind.

Tony Adah

Love's Nest

Love's nest is full
Of extremes of temperature
And of thorns it's made
I want to turn to look at love's face
A veil of hindrance is worn
Like a hijab I'm afraid a bomb will explode.

I am looking at the nest frost ridden
And I wish my eyes will thaw its ice
I am looking at the nest heat laden
How I wish my kiss of the occupant
Will drip spittle to calm the heat
If at all I'm allowed to do so.

A nest of wool
Is turned into a nest of thorns
And wherever I turn
It's piercing that greets my skin
And I don't think in my next coming
I would love to live in a nest.

Tony Adah

Love's Shallow Depth

When love's depth shallow go
And the ankles wait in vain
For the liquid that cuddles them,
The pebbles of the riverbed
Make a gritty walk
Alone one crosses the bed
With teary eyes, without the
Portion that sooth the yearning heart
The liquid is gone
Parch the bed lies
And the thirsty ankles mourn
The cage is empty
Away the bird goes
Everything becomes vapour.

Tony Adah

Love's Syndrome

I found her on the beach
Bikini clad and her Brazilian
Swaying behind her back
Two of us watching the water
Breaking into surfs by the shoreline.

So beautiful
So handsome
We never parted!
We served each other
Sweetie pies we made with our mouths
And gobble sweet kisses falling like rain.

Suddenly, the sweet taste of love turned sour
A cold wind blew in
And cold hugs came to bear
Loves beautiful feathers began to droop
Its colourful petals faded at last
And its decadence falling and breaking my heart
Then the slumber deserted me
Unavailing the certainty that it is-
Love is a chameleon!

Tony Adah

Love's Tail

Love, your tail is a scorpion
It stings
And dateless I am
Once burned by fire
Twice cinder is my fear
In breach you stand,
Remorse unyielding
Much ado gone
And me so far but near.

Tony Adah

Love's Wings

Love's wing are quick to fly
What to do to let them stay
Pamper her
Cuddle her in times of cold
Give her joy and leave out hate
And she'll stay and blossom
Like a rose.

Tony Adah

Mad Man's Song

I do not know why
Mad men today are not violent
It seems society has added
A feather to their cap
And madness is a great call
The surprising thing about it
Is that it takes you through
One point several times
And you never know.

I am a bat turn
Between two lives
I am cleaner than any one
I am more sane than every one
But I am straying
Drifting, If you do not
Find me home
Go to the morgue.

Tony Adah

Madam

Every morning
A throaty gong sounds from the kitchen
Amidst the clanging of utensils
There's no house -help
Madam is doing chores alone
The grown up boys will never key in
So every morning a tirade ensues
The dog's tail is between its thighs
And the husband's hydrocoel
Now is a normal scrotum.

Madam talks like she's paid to do so
The house shakes
But the boys are deaf
And sleep if at all it comes
Is the saviour that returns
Calm to the house
She is as round as she tall
From the perks of the kitchen
And she makes sure that
No rat or cockroach picks the crumbs
Even the waste bin is always yawning
And the gas with a blue flame
Is always on.

Tony Adah

Made In China

The electric bulb refused to light again
It had blown and in our parlance it died
It didn't live up to the warranty period
And when I turned the pack
It was made in China!

Tony Adah

Make Peace

Poorly the mind roams
To find fault
In other people it doesn't know
A monster unable to know itself
Singing monotonous of hate
If you will live alone
In your grave
Make peace when you still breath.

Tony Adah

Making A Nation

There's fierce fighting
Episodes in self determination
The elephant is
Butchered and
Unevenly shared
More fighting
There's no perfect system
Anywhere in the world
Rebrand
One step forward
Two steps backward
Necessary odds.
Some little steps
One giant leap
And my nation is made

Tony Adah

Making Stationary Progress

I sit on the wings of time
And see how it flies
Yesterday was a centenary
And half of it spent in tears
In a grope to catch up
With a racing world
One step forward
And two steps backwards!

Tony Adah

Man

The face of man
Glow like a fresh growing gourd
So he was made by his own God
And he knew peace
Until his helper brought him a piece
Of what a lifetime
Knows not how to tame.
What he hides
In the cage
Of his chest
Another man knows not
After he ate of the nut
Of the fruit
In the centre of the garden
He tells you yes
When he means no
Though his face glows
Like the centre of the universe
His warty heart is wicked
Like lucifer out of favour
From the heavenly realm.

Tony Adah

Man Is Gone

Man has sinned and he's sick
And gone astray
The world tattered by his hands
And head and he is gone.

Tony Adah

Man Without Ease

Akpalo is a bachelor
And they said Akpalo's manhood
Is lost amidst a bevy of girls
He loved every woman he saw
And wanted to add souls to his home
Akpalo claimed every child
Born of a woman
And married every married woman
The gods who knew the truth
Kept silent
He gave all to be a father of a child
When Akpalo told the world
He will never part with his blood
To anyone
The tired world told him
To first collect his blood
In the abdomen of mosquitoes.

Tony Adah

Man, An Enigma

Man is all man talks about
The wisest amongst primates
He's a myth, a mystery and madness
With an indecipherable profile
An enigma
Branded in his creator's image
He knows nothing about.

He fears himself as
He fears his neighbour
Crooked his ways are
Bended in knee is
Hard his heart calcifies;
He flies to space and complains
Of climate change,
He spits, defaecates and pours
Urine all over the land and water;
He slashes the bush
Strips the earth bare
And wail of environmental degradation
Until he himself dies
Then complain will die with him
And the world will become our
Own safe haven.

Tony Adah

Man's Divergent Loyalty

When the gods in anger be
For man's divergent loyalty
And the fetish groves dry up like
A stream out of season, the guardian's
Bumper harvest hoards and famine's
Planted in the land.
Then even a withered cocoyam's leaf rim
Can gash open his shin.

Tony Adah

Man's Eternity.

I believe there's a leaf waving
In the African jungle that when
Man identifies and eat of it
Death would be a forgotten lore
And loneliness and sorrow
And melancholy of death gone.

But would death water a garden
Where the wickedness of man thrives?
It has no other way round
Than rise against the wickedness of man
And leave man on his ephemeral stay
On this transit camp called earth.

Tony Adah

Marguerite Ann Johnson

Oh, phenomenal woman
The lady who worked
And was touched by an angel
She passed time here on earth
Knew why the caged bird sang
Then she went home alone
Still she rises
Even in death.

Tony Adah

Marriage Vows

Yes I do
Turned
No I didn't
As more
Look for
Escape route
Others look
For shackles
To tie
Them down
And this
Ritual is
The spice
That seasons
Life

Tony Adah

Martyrs

Everyday what's meant for the people
Gets further away from them
No longer by them the cock crows,
For them in vain the sun rises;
It'd be nice when democracy gets martyrs
Whose blood will flow
A deterrent in the land;
Possessions ill gotten revert to state
And the carapace of the self shredded
Into a selfless new chitin.

The cronies will stand back
In ghostly shadows of themselves
Or grunt from their boneyard;
Never shall any one human kind
Lay claim to the whole land.
When democracy gains its soul and voice
Clay walls of tribes shall crumble down

The flakes in the eyes of tribesmen fallen
And they begin to see the other as citizens
Whose anthem hums with verses of love
For their country and for which
The yield of sacrifices abound
In their variegated hues.

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Tony Adah

Masks

To be a cheat
Is to be a thief
As to be a killer
Instinct lures us
Into the bosom of fakes
In the street
Those masquerades
Later unveiled villains.

Tony Adah

Master Of All

Man loves to hate man
That is why he is the master of all
Lesser men are his okro
He plants and it grows taller than him
But he bends it and picks its fruits
So every other man remains under him
As man hates to love man.

Tony Adah

May They Prosper Not

May the kings prosper not
Who mop our sweat for the rituals of wealth
And bind our legs and hands
With the shackles of slavery
May the kings prosper not
Who gaol us for the same crimes
They committed but are strutting
Like giants in the land.

May the Niger river
Prosper them not by his copious amounts
Of liquid gold he deposits in the delta area
Which is the only glue
That binds the empire.
May the war we fought for resource control
Never rear his ugly head
With bombs and guns and other munitions
Of hate and death;
May the amnesty we got
Floating on a plater of oil
See the dogs playing with bones
While the oil flows.
Now we hear there's neglect
In the north;
And those killing the citizens
Are asking for a handsome reward
Or the kings remove the shrapnel of war
In the north East and make habitable again

May the kings prosper not
Who kill all that bear our heritage
In the delta area;
When the clock strikes time
The thieves may run
But they'll have no hiding place
Our ancestors have seen
That the goose that lays the golden eggs
Is in dire dearth
Their rage and wrath

Will burn in flames of death
And who follow the kings;
Mop our sweat for the rituals of wealth
Will gnash their teeth
In the cauldron of death.

Tony Adah

Mbukpa

It is here that bulldozers
Still have a duty to hum
Hum and dry the puddles
Of the unpaved streets
And remove the muggy stinks
Of the putrid drains.

Scattered here and here
Like an earthenware gone to pieces
The occupants must sew their
Rustic roofs a new cloth
That will give impact
To the waiting photographers.

Here where the people
Sleeping and dreaming
Of metropolitan greetings
Are shut out in oblivion
And the atlantic leaves a mud flap
For the huddled legion
Stucked in daily chores.

Here where the Children
Belong to the streets
And the streets reluctance
To make them attendees
Of the empty schools
Has turned Mbukpa into a jungle

Here where the poet
Is a living witness
To the double trouble
Of the slum folks.

Tony Adah

Me

I am the one walking
Limping, limping, limping
Going going going
And stumbling! stumbling! ! stumbling! ! !
But rising, rising, rising!
I am the one watching my steps
Though the world too
Is watching how
I will brave the odds
Skip the obstacles
It has laid
On my own thoroughfare
And tether them
Beside my way
Rise, rise and rise! ! !

Tony Adah

Memories

Memories bloom like lilies
And die and die and bloom again
They are like being
Given a bone to chew
You will never forget

Memories flow like a river
Flowing in my head
This is where I swim and bath
And bath and swim
Memories are like a crown
The king never wants
To let it down.

Memories of unforgettable
Toddling walks
Of falling and rising
And rising and falling
Oh, unforgettable memories
Of life and death
Truth and falsehood
Here I submit
To your sublime reality.

Tony Adah

Men No Longer Die

Men no longer die
So the mill stood derelict
Amidst wood chips and saw dust
Saws and planes rusty of disuse.
This is where coffins were made
And the maker vexed with science and tech
Abandoned his mill.
His reason:
Men no longer die as easily
As the coffins should be needed
So he said hungry for food
As well as another trade.

Tony Adah

Mending A Broken Heart

I saw a tear
On a torn heart
My shoulder wet from its sobs
And I rocked it with a lullaby
It slumbered like a drunk
But woke up like a sage
And saw a thousand smiles
On my face
It mended on its own
Brimming with a bunch of smiles
And I hug it in my bossom.

Tony Adah

Mercenaries

Every head bowed and every hand
Covered the head
As if an invading swarm of bees
Was flying above
A band of mercenaries has laid ambush
On my country and death is the meal!

Tony Adah

Message From The Citizens

If I ever live tomorrow
Because my entrails mew like a cat
I will rise up and speak up
To my Oga at the top
Do not tell him I am the one
That was sent to deliver the message.
He will see me
And he will know I am the one
I will shout the citizens' message
Into his battered ears
He will smile but he will be mute
He will see me
For he is only deaf and can see
I will try my sign language
Touch my tummy and push it
To my spine and look frail and groan
That's the message the citizens sent
Everyone is hungry and dying
I will look up to the sky
Point my finger high up there
To where the prices of wares
Have gone.
These two messages I will leave
With our Oga at the top
He will be too busy at the avengers
Looking for a way to revenge,
He will look at the Jagaban
Busy a phone call from Ekiti
Call to the folk in Kaduna
To avail his girlfriend for
Some baptism of employment
The next thing in his mind
We can not tell.

Tony Adah

Message To My Soul

As it is
Anyday is a go-day
For anyone in this buffer zone
And I am not afraid
Of the end
I am not
Afraid to be a convert
Of another world
And expose you beyond
Where you will roam
Having shedded the hindrance
Of the world.
In this world
Of our universal visit
I came to meet people
And on my sojourn back
I will leave them behind.
In the ruins of our old habitations
I have seen catacombs
Of great men and as I leave
Greater men shall tomorrow come.
I owe my coming
To my mother
That I am
That my children are
And that theirs will be
I am not afraid
Of the end
For I know not
How the beginning
Came to be.
When this boat capsizes
And I am out of it
Without my cumbersome wares
You will be free to float
In the bolls of the clouds
Now that I am afraid not.

Tony Adah

Metamorphosis

I am out of the cocoon,
I will not away fritter this chance-
Bestowed with a bait on my pen
And my means to cartharsis
I will be strong here
Deactivate from a fledgling bard
Thence a Muse of poetry
I am a scion of the great Muses
I am moving heavenward
To touch the face of the great ones
Here my voice
Will calcify men's heart
Over hills And valleys.
And no growl
From older lions will
Ever truncate my metamorphosis
On this platform
I suppose a lion's den!

Tony Adah

Midnight.

I wonder why
The neighbourhood
Dogs yowled at the middle
Of the thick night
I groped into the children's room
And peeped across the spur
Rescued by two solar lamp stands.

Up across the next building
The affluent illuminated
Abodes shone in the night
A guard's torchlight
Irking the dogs more
And they howled at some dark
Shadows in the lights.

The dogs barked and barked
Howled and howled
Wooo wooo wooo
And then growled and growled
Their tails hidden
In their hind limbs
It was a horde of thieves
Prowling the night.

Tony Adah

Mind Games

Come with me a potpourri of races
To the garden nature bestows
And let us give the earth its fragrance
It shouldn't be so that we stretch out our arms
And we term black or white or brown or yellow
Our inner content is far more to consider
Than the garment upon our skins
Or the melanin that's buried underneath.
You've seen the superficial difference
But I'm yet to know the colour
Of the soul
Still the intellect bears no black or white
Brown or yellow
A potpourri of races
Come let's do mind games
And give fragrance to the earth
Mitigate what keeps down the lowly
And uplift the world.

Tony Adah

Missing The Tracks

Here and there
The world's gossamery stuck
And blinded our eyes
A marvel hardly any can unravel
Who can unpluck this tiny built up
That's now an enigma?
The real virtues swept aside
And vices the red carpet of the day
Our ophthalmologists gone
We grope thus missing the tracks.

Tony Adah

Money

I will wake up
From my deep slumber
I will rise up
From my wretched grave
When I hear thy sound.
Betrayed of trust
Enemy of the gullible
I will shake
In my corpse
When I hear
Thy sound.

Tony Adah

Monologue

O my dear guide
Guard me through
This rough road
Of thickets and thorns.

My steps frail I leave here
For your direction
Just as I have wailed before
Give me laughter today
And give me an armour against odds.

Stick me to my boat
My hands free not
From its oars as
I row to the atoll
Where my destiny lies waiting.

Between the sky
And the earth
In darkness or light
Above and below
Grant me an armour
Against all odds.

Tony Adah

Monologue Of Solitude

I do not know anywhere
My world is closed,
Reserved for me and my village folks
My straw bed,
My food,
My spring water
Cascading from the rocky hills
Where ancient wisdom lives
Our farms, the yams, the wateryams
The cocoyams, the peanuts, the hills
And their senior brothers standing Tall, hemming me in in my world.

Know the world
It is time to learn
I am off to school,
Still in the same confines of
The hills and the mountains
Those tall structures that wore a
Diadem of the clouds
Those starters of rainfall
In my enclave.

Then I heard a bang like earthquake
Houses shook, our market and its wares
Running to the top of the
Frightened mountains
I look left
And I look right
Nothing in sight, war they said
My country didn't want to lose
Its tail
I begin now to know
Hausas, kanuris, fulanis, yorubas
All who fought to keep the tail
They now use to whip the people
Down here.

How terrible it is to have a country
Which very few own

Would it have been better
If I remained in my enclave
If that white stranger did not visit?

Tony Adah

Moonshine

There was so much moonshine
That the blind could see
They could see and pick sesame grains scattered
That the pigeons did not see in the day
The moon shone, it shone
That the leaves in the night looked like small moons
The moon shone, it shone
That we could pick sewing needles lying under
The shade where we heard Flores
That grandma told us yesterday
The moon shone then unlike
Today the moon has no shine
Thus tangled in climate change.

Tony Adah

Morning Rain

This morning
The sky hangs up there
With gloomy clouds
The winds at attention
Trees still like the mummies of Egypt.
The sky is shedding tears
From the turgid eyes
Of the weeping clouds
It has lost its sun
The funeral in bad weather.

Tony Adah

Morning Rose

Hey morning rose
I am the one calling you
Look this way thy blossoming self
How I mourn this morning
For thy shrivelling whorl
When the petals fall in the morning sun
And thy beauty no more
And my garden so empty of thee
Oh goodbye morning rose.

Tony Adah

Mortal Gods

They wore diadems that men's hands
Did craft for their Royal heads
They sat on thrones
That felt like there was no end
And men as subjects prostrated
Before the sculpture of their hands
Mortal gods
They sit tight like a boulder slab
Unable to move
Took every water from the world
Like the ocean that never runs dry
They laugh when we cried
But we die at last with them
Their thrones linger but the tenures
Wane like a piece of camphor in
Our closet,
Every soldier comes and goes
But the barracks remains.

Tony Adah

Mosquitoes

I have died many times alive
Grub to the crimson stomachs
Of the buzzing mosquitoes.

Tony Adah

Mother Tongue

I killed a poem with my bad grammar
For I too I am a second language man
I moulded a poem with my thoughts
For I too I am a human being
When next you read lines;
Know that I have my mother tongue
I shudder to think what mother will
Say of my deviation
Were she lettered in her mother tongue

Tony Adah

Mother's Admonition

My child do not shout
It is easier to be happy
Than to vent anger out
My child do not go to the market square
And say that your mother's soup
Is not tasteful enough.

If you leave your wears by the riverside
To wash yourself
Do not run after the mad man
Who comes to take them away
My child if your clothes are dirty
Quietly take them to Abeb and wash
Do not take them to katube.

Run errands for people
As swiftly as lightning
For in doing so you may eat
From the hand of a stingy man
My child do not shout
Or boast like the rooster
Who boasted that his coxcomb was fire
Still it was as cold as ice.

Tony Adah

Mrs. Q.

Mrs. Q is an average age woman
Meticulous, fierce and quarelsome
Must have been a tomboy
At one stage in her early metamorphosis
She moves with power
Which is what her mouth also speaks
And she is the husband
Of the household
Where the quiet bashful husband
Doubles as a servant and a wife.

And this reversal of roles
Doesn't made make her
The bread winner of the home
Yet everybody in the house
Was a toy only to be seen.

The kitchen
Was her living room
Where she reeled out dishes
And ate and ate and
Looked like a fat pig
Unable to grunt breathed
Like an old locomotive.

Her head just rested
On her shoulders
And her rotund cheeks
Found the same place to rest
Mrs. Q's diameter
Was equal to her height
She was a woman man!

Tony Adah

Mushrooms

This is the month of mushrooms
They blossom and bloom
In the morning
And in the afternoon and evening
They are all gone.

Tony Adah

Mutant World.

The world is a mutant
Place to live in today
With man a demi god
Of the the earth
Making and bending
The labyrinths nature
Ought to tread.
He prides himself
In the things he makes
And calls them inventions
Who knows what
Their opposite would have been?

The world turns us
To anything it likes
For its mercantile whims
We are made to be calves
And drink the milk of cows and
Oftentimes begin to act like them.

The world turns us
To anything it likes
It prides itself on R&D it does
And churns out drugs
That turn us to
Gangsters on the street
It is now worst
For the world has electronic devices
At its beck and call
To do its thinking for it.

Tony Adah

Mutinous Religion

The world will end
In the morning or in the evening
And religions that thrive in mutiny
Will catalyze the doom
Time here will be of no essence
The world will end not in water as before
But in a fire and there will be no Noah
If it must survive,
It will require a bomb shelter
Or it will end now.

Tony Adah

My Country Is Full Of Thorns

The limping cricket starts its burrow
By the roadside
At the last drops of rain
So I'm early to the seashore
But my boat is eaten by white ants
While black ants stick to my body
And sting me
If I go back the wailing entrails
Of the children will not me stay
It isn't only fish that is food
I will look into a terminarium
To see if there are termites
But the coiling Python greets my teary eyes
Where will I find what it takes
To fill the void in our stomach?
I'll try mushrooms on death palms
Still dry fronds set their thorns
Upwards like church spires
Waiting for the soles of my legs
I do not know where to go
For my country is full of thorns.

Tony Adah

My African Story

I am a victim
The world's wrong spansks
Could only find my head
Still it purport to raise me
From my fatal fall.
I thought I could take refuge
On my sojourn to south Africa;
Only the hot inferno
Of xenophobia blazed in the veldt.
I tried England;
Only the yanking knives of segregation
Put humans apart.
I am back home
To my country
Where poverty strides the land amidst bounties
Or I am displaced.
My intention is to howl
But the ink silently stains this paper
I have tried to cry
But my pen just slips quietly
Through this silent paper.
I find no fancy
In this tangle
Of my my African story
O' Africa my continent
Whose incontinent wings
Have refused to gather me.

Tony Adah

My Angel

I am waiting
Under the apple tree
For the angel
That makes the apple
In my chest tick
She's not forthcoming.

I have decided to relish
The apples of the tree
Under my head
But everything comes
Short of my expectations.

I am waiting
Waiting for face
Of my guardian angel
The opium of the
Oddities of my world
My dream angel
Her face, a truce
To many wars
My dream angel
I am still waiting.

Tony Adah

My Autumn Has Come

In the days that the wind blew
Everything went dry
Green leaves no longer green but yellow-brown
The blind could guess
That autumn had come.
Upon my head
Black hair wore gray parches
The foghorn blared from the harbour side
At last everything was golden gray
The autumn had touched my side
My milk teeth fell
The wisdom teeth that took their place
Began to wear away;
A tiger now began a meal of snails;
The days are here
My autumn has come
I will pass away;
Dash everything I have to the world
And myself back to mother earth.

Tony Adah

My Beard Is Not Long Enough

I dare not dream that I am free
When my beard is clean shaven
Or I wear one that's not long enough
In Afghanistan where faith and beard
Are one
I will sleep in a gaol
And when a prison term grows one
Long enough,
Then I will be free.

Tony Adah

My Beautiful Butterfly

A butterfly's jolly flight
Took it to my garden
Innocuously and solemnly
It flew making me admire its
Graceful and exotic wings
Its iridescent glory,
The grossness of its beauty
Seizing all my senses.
It perched on my flower
I couldn't control how it flies
Around here with a cloud so intense
To behold,
I called its attention severally
To no avail,
Deaf and near death
To my own chagrin
Until its fluffy wings
Drove it into the cobwebs
Laid by a giant spider.
It's so painful
To see it no more
That glorious and solemn mien
Deep into the hate of the world
That's what happens to a drunken
Roach that procures sobriety
In the entrails of the lizard.

Tony Adah

My Big Dream

I have a big dream
Filled with ambitions
I have capped it
Preserve it in a cocoon
Waiting for the day
When the scorch soil
Of my country turns fertile
And I will plant it to blossom
Otherwise a stillbirth.

Tony Adah

My Birthday

Every year when the time comes
To commemorate my birthday
I think of my grandpa's straw hat
That covered his bald head
Like our lush vegetation
Covered our habitation
I feel like adorning it
To hide my receding hairline.

I want to pour a confetti
Of his treasures-
One penny pieces
Three pence pieces
Six pence pieces
One shilling pieces
And a wad of termites devoured pound notes
In nostalgic obedience
To the history of the value of things.

Every year I am humbled
By the irreversible past
Bidding us bye
Nothing can change it
It has come
It has gone
It also remains
In our homes built by nostalgia,

Tony Adah

My Black Bag

I took my black bag from that house
Put it in my car
And revved it in reverse gear
No one asked me to come back
My sister blocked my view
Who loves me more.
That black bag
Returning to that house
That unscrewed living room
With earth red like anthill
On the verandah stood my cohabitant
Before a frothing basin
Clanging with utensils;
Where I saw her leggies
Dripping with blood from the red visitors
I thought
Until I saw a pack of cytotec-
The killer of foetuses on the gritty floor
I will go
This time I will not stay
She was happy the black was leaving
I was reluctant to stay
In the house and see the crimson leggies
That black bag is there again
I am free from the faeces
I saw in the daytime
But dumped my feet on them at night
I am the one free like a bird
Out of the cage
With my black bag clasped
In my wings.

Tony Adah

My Breakfast

I want to have
My breakfast
The oats, the milk, the sugar
And the gruel
I am told
This is food
For the poor
But mould came eating
Without the milk and sugar
And blossom in its
Grey bluish hue.
For me I do not
Know how I am looking
Thin or plump
Black or white
Blue or green
But a human.

Tony Adah

My Broke Guy

When a guy is broke
Don't ask for cream
He'll give you a scream
Don't ask for a kiss
He will give a hiss
That's how he is when broke.

Tony Adah

My Broken Dreams

I am a stilt dancer
In my fragile prances
I look down to see my heritage;
My allure is dampened
As fish die where they lay
And the crops wilt where they grow.

I take my gourd to the stream
To quench my thirst, god have mercy
The waters wear a miniscule of oil
On its head
Rigs spit a gale of fumes
And the wind suck my breath;
Death won't come now
I am asphyxiated and trapped;
To Abuja there's no road from here
Underneath, my house is wearing a new look
Where the shiny slicks capture the breath
Of those living in the water;
I and them pant in oblivion
And I am waiting for my stilted house
To fling open its door and let me in
Into the darkest of the new night
With my broken dreams.

Tony Adah

My Broken Earthenware

The earthenware lay helpless
And I too so hapless
Both of us broken and none able
To mend
This is what my mother gave me
Before she travelled beyond
Now I am twice lonely
Of my mother and my love
I am restless in the scorching sun
When I tried to take shelter
Under the apple tree, she was
Fruitless like a rock
I am threatened
I have no one to tell it
For loneliness and hunger
Are the ghosts that haunt me
Where do I go from here?
I will remain under the apple tree
Hopeful the next season will
Bring me fruits.

Tony Adah

My Brother

In the country which is mine and yours
I speak of your nigerian-ness
Of your wit fast negatively
Even though you cuddle a degree
In your bosom but you're a hobo in
Town,
Decode the code, my brother
Emulate Emeagwali in your opposite
Ways,
Siphon the money in stealthy way
And break the code.
I can see the nigerian-ness in you
I esteem my country
And I believe in you
Your escapades are not the end
But the beginning of a phase
Now though you hide your face
But go a step further and exorcise
Those tendencies that make you
To hide your face
Fix the code in the way of Emeagwali
And leave a legacy for those unborn
Your nigerian-ness
Will catch a flu that's universal
So when next you sneeze
The world will catch a cold.

Tony Adah

My Classmate

Tokyo why are you weeping?
Mmmmmmm, Akpoji gave me a blew!
We all bursted out laughing
And Tokyo cleaning his tears asked:
Why do you guys laugh?
Is the past tense of blow not blew?
That's English grammar
As it affected our classmate
Those days!

Tony Adah

My Conscience Leads Me On

In the world
And in the crowd
But lonely like a sheep
In the midst of wolves
I am sore afraid of the world
And frightened by the crowd
My conscience builds me a cocoon
Of protection where I hide
Till the diviner spells my doom
And I am gone forever.

Tony Adah

My Country

This is my country
The land astride on a tripod
Of the Niger and the Benue
Ample in bounties but hardly enough to go round

My fatherland
Where lilliputs stay put
In the niches crafted by greed
With soaring appetite for what
The hands can not make
Where the visions and dreams of giants
Are eaten raw.

The country spread out its arms
To embrace the citizens
In the vast expanse of the land
And in the hills and the valleys
Greedy men put a shield between
The people and the country.

Our morning song
Has turned into a dirge
And our hope burnt in the scorch
Of the noon sun.
Do not despair my brothers
I am not a prophet of doom
The men our country has spawned
With long appetite will go one day
And our heritage will stare at us
Like the giant granite slabs of Jos.

Tony Adah

My Country Forgive Me

Here I am a lonely man
In a desert replete with oases
Still I weep and drink my tears
Throat parched and scorched,
I am on my knees for a parley
My pardoner has withdrawn his pardon
I am in a dilemma
My stocky and fleshy mien waning
Into a ghost,
I am still alive
My bones more obvious than my flesh
I kneel here, a citizen
Doing my restitution for
Whatever crime and I say
My country forgive me.

Tony Adah

My Country Is Burning.

I am coughing
I am sneezing
I am smothered
By the smoke of bombs
I am coughing
I am sneezing
I am smothered
By the smoke of
The noxious rigs
And my country
Is burning from the
Problem that oil
Has brought with it.

Tony Adah

My Countrymen.

My country men
Our bounties of green
Land, blue waters and
What the earth holds for us
In its stomach will never end
Take only that that sustains
Your breath and leave the rest
For posterity.

Abstain from greed
Abstain from greed
Abstain from greed
My country men
For greed
Leads to the grave!
When you go to the other side
You won't see what you amassed
Eschew greed
My countrymen.

Tony Adah

My Creed.

I will toil and toil
In my own way
Content with my own
Drib and drab achievements
I will bulge to no sound from any one
Asking me to take more than I need
When others languish in dearth.

I will take my hand
And wipe the tears
From the eyes of the world
And If the world cares
I will loan its own hand too
As slow as it will be to this.

But the world itself is
Becoming an old brick wall
Crumbling away and this creed
Is an echo reverberating
A renaissance to rebuild.

Tony Adah

My Dad's Creditor

She was fair and black at heart
A savage Shylock,
Kill your debtor and leave a bad debt?
She came and sat by the façade
Gave no one any salutation.
Brought her mat
And her melon and milled
And messed our frontage;
Stretched her pudgy legs
So no one passed in or out
Of our dear hut.
And my dad skilled in managing them
Asked us to chase a rooster
And mama to boil a tuber of yam
Soon a creditor's banquet
Was done in the state house of debtors.
The mill stopped to mill
And the mouth to curse
So food can go
Another negotiation, a new date to pay
All dad borrowed
To send us to school.

Tony Adah

My Dream.

I am trying to hold on to my dream
Out of my nightmares
With songs mosquitoes render in my ears
The plumes of my dream pluck into my hands
And they fly away fluttering in the air
I am turning and turning over my straw bed
Looking seaward prowling for my dream
Like beggars around a traffic lamp
In vain I will remember it
If I remember it, who will make it easy
To be fulfilled?
I will not stop to dream because no one
Will give me a platter to put my dream
I will dream
Only let it not rain
So that when the night leaves
I will rise up and not look at my straw bed
But go out even when it rains
Even though it snows
Even if thunder comes down
And make my dream come true.

Tony Adah

My Duty

All they want to
Hear is that I am
Yawning, hungry, crying
Then it is my duty to
Bubble, fizz and foam
Like champagne
In a party.

Tony Adah

My Faith Is Down

My faith in the world
Is waning
For its leaders are dumb and deaf
To the plight of its citizens
But alive to primitive materials fulfilment
And sit tight on thrones
The people long
Have freely given
Who will change the other of things
Pliant as the people are?

Tony Adah

My Friend

We were born same day
Named same day
And circumcised same day
We grew up together
Spun tops in the sand and
Chiggers made a meal of our toes
Dented them like rhizomes of ginger

At nightfall we slept
On a raffia-woven mat
Shared our dreams
And saw the ghosts
Of our enemies together

He and only he made me
Gestured my head for
Anything he wanted
Of this friendship
Which made us slow walk
And did things like co-joint twins

Today things have changed
And he is far away
Even when he comes home
We rarely see
He holds his own bottled water
Under his armpit
And dispises the stream water
We drank as children

We so love ourselves
But that was then
When born on same day
We thought we will also
Visit the necropolis on same day
Not now that our
Friendship is mote-eaten.

Tony Adah

My Friend Traveled.

The dead do struggle the shroud with death
A white lining of linen
In a beautiful casket,
If it could be
There he laid
And it is true.

Tony Adah

My Gift Of Apple

A succulent and juicy apple
Dropped into a mad man's bowl
There was absolute
He threw it among the sands
And I picked my gift and blew air
On it and all the sand and the dirt
Left the apple
It was clean edible and nice and cool
Then there was rancour.
What I like everyone likes
And what they hate and I like
They like back
The world's fast heels
Are after my taste
I will never stop to like what they hate.

Tony Adah

My Heart Of Gold

I will submit myself
I will bow at last
Lay me on my straw bed
My heart of gold make
Put it in the earth
Where no element can touch
And I live as I go.

Tony Adah

My Hometown.

Obudu my hometown
What a sumptuous place
To behold on the world map
Standing tall on her rugged hills
And lying low on her silent valleys
But I wonder what's denuding
The peace and love
Of her halcyon yore!
When brother cared about
The worries of another brother
And mother and daughter
Filled the void in our stomachs.

Today the tide has changed
See how you lie helpless
In the hands of cultists and robbers
See how you are blinded by hate
Leaving your burrow open
For strangers to steal from your worth
And you lie here nude
At the foot of your hills
Your valiant men and women
Mere statues in a fetish grove
The fortress of your hills
A leeway to sweep us
With the violent winds
Threatening our clime.

Tony Adah

My House

Of all hues
The greedy artist
Loves to paint-
A great edifice
A skyscraper, a sport utility vehicle
And fat vault
All for his glory and honour
To the world.
For me
I am building
My own house
The commoners, its foundation
I am building it now
Where it can shake not
In the violence of the wind
Or taken by
The swift hands
Of the floods.

Tony Adah

My Little Black Goat.

My little black goat
Was faster than lightning
In everything he did
He also had efficient
Automatic break system
That worked in many ways
To help his crooked ways.

My little black goat
Was a stunt
Stuttering his bleats
Looking here and there
With his sharp black eyes
Everything about him was black
His short black horns
Black hoaves and a stunted black goatee.

No matter how vigilant I was
My little black goat
Stole corn from my silo
And when I suspected he was there
He made ground shaking strides
And in a jiffy he was gone
It was gain I had him as a friend
It was pain I had him stealing my wares
In all it was fun having him around.

When it coughed at night
And disturb my sleep
I would want to know
What's wrong with him
But he was too black
To be seen at night
Until the next morning
When he comes around
Chewing his usual curd
And I will be glad
To see him again.

Tony Adah

My Little Stream

A small river wriggles its way
From the hills through my backyard
It's turbid colour of brown pour
On the bed during the rains
And it turns to a tantalising resplendence
Out of season

I watch its conversations
With fallen logs on its way
And cataracts making surfs of its flow
This is what I want to see in the country
And the squirrels squeaking by by the banks
The mambas between green leaves
Waylaying the frogs in their innocuous croaks

All these will cease out of season
When much of the volume is gone
And isolated pools litter its bed
Here I love to be too
Where crabs creak
Where tadpoles wriggle
And bids twitter above
My roosters frolick here too
On the brown dry leaves
That have obeyed gravity
Where they scavenge for worms

Dear little river
Do not leave me
Hold me to your bed
Hold me to your cascades
To nature which you signify
The only thing in my backyard
Which makes my country a place to be!

Tony Adah

My Mission

I will fly high
I will soar to touch the face of God
Only the Sun's furnace can melt
the wax of my plumes
And make me drop honourably
To my grave.

Tony Adah

My Mother

I am playing
Back the times
And I remember
A huge broom made
From the many fingers of
Palm fronds swaying behind her hut.
It swept clean her house
And it swept clean my character
The very fingers that whipped my
Ways into shape
When foibles came knocking
On my door
And today I am clean.
When I yawn for sleep or hunger
She will rock me on her laps
And lull me into death's brother house
Or offer stuffs that made my belly fill.
In times of flight
From the conquer of peer punches
She clean my tears and made me
Sit beside her near the fire place
Where faggots made corn
To shoot its bomb and pears fizz
From the heat of the fire
And we had a consoling meal.
On the day dad's temperament
Caught up with her
She wept all day so sad I feel
Like joining in her melancholy.
I remember her swollen eyes,
Swollen limbs and swollen face
And what professor Odigwe said-
Oedema and the pumping engine was malfunctioning
On a wednesday
And a call from prof. himself
She bought a farm!

Tony Adah

My Mother's Day

Crusty memories stitch my tattered
Heart of a remembered day
Pallbearers shouldered a casket
Of mahogany tempered with gold plates
The occupant smiling silently;
I remember the remnants of
Mother's laughter
Now turned into my Own sorrow.

I have lost my voice
To a stream of tears
Rills that form rivers on my cheeks
Can my memories be carried
In the currents of these rivers
Downstream?
Or I will need to wait for a season
To dry the rivers and leave a bed
Of barren memories
In my fertile head
What mother did that made me a man
O mother!

Tony Adah

My Mother's Gift

A porcelain cup gray my mother gave me
This my inheritance
From my dear mother
Who used it to drink her tea
Of lemon grass and scent leaves
She drank this without milk and sugar
As munitions against mosquito bites
Of late she added Swedish bitters
Which she drank and kept a scowling face

She gave me the porcelain cup
Gray as it look
And I cherish it
Not for the concoction she boiled
In an earthenware and drank
But a memorial she made for her son
I guided it jealously and kept it among
My valuables and whispered tributes
To my mother who has just gone.

Those who caught me at this prayer
Thought my success derived from the porcelain cup
For everything I touched turned into prosperity
And the folks called it name: kabangatende
Which is believed to be a symbol of prosperity
I wake up early morning
Moving towards the whetstone with my cutlass
Making noise against the stone
And I call upon the folks
To come and listen to the noise of prosperity
As I leave for the bush to give my sweat
Sinews and thews to my farm.

Tony Adah

My Myrtle.

See how my heart drapes
In my chest
The clouds dark in the frowning sky
Can hardly see if the cage
Still holds the bird.
The clouds never let me see
If the cage dangles about
But what's my ear hearing?
Just the silence I alone hear
See how my myrtle smells like myrrh
Still I am filth done
Smelling like a dump.

Tony Adah

My Neighbour

I am tired from the toil of the day
Someone else is starting to work
The sun is low as the breeze is cool
And someone hums a song carrying stuff
To build a mud house beside my own
I look up and see him, a tiny waist
Loading mud in his feet and flying with his wings
My neighbour's house looks like an earthenware
Smooth and beautiful
But perching on my wall
I can't say hello to him
Because his tail carries a sting
I am careful because
My neighbour is Mr. wasp.

Tony Adah

My New Year Resolutions

A day after the first day
Of the new year I am caught
Violating my new year resolutions
In my sleep the dream is thick
And I'm afraid I got it all wrong
Dream?
I can't believe it
It seems all that I resolved
Not to have been compromised
And they have broken upon my head
Same old fragile habits
Broken at birth!

Tony Adah

My Next Abode

Storm proof
Steel girded
My next abode
I have a plan B
It is planet B
Where in the universe
I don't know.

Tony Adah

My Friend

The rain poured
A storm raged
Distance was not the
Excuse
I complained
She sent me an absent kiss
With red lips
A post on my facebook wall.

Tony Adah

My Pay Cheque

Neatly written
With my cursives
I swaggered into the bank
Bankers looking
Me from head to toe
In my regal gait.
The cash is
In my pocket
And I am dazed-
Utilities and household
And the fluffy notes flew away
From me with
Their strong Wings.
When I put some scanty notes
Back in my pocket
They jostle out swiftly
For the dearth of company.

Tony Adah

My Sleeping Giant

Arise my sleeping giants
The day is dawn;
And the archery of the ants
Is ready to slay us.
The buck rabbits have passed
In a single file with dangling raffia bags
The sling their guns
And march past like gallant men;
Wake up my sleeping giant
Before we are out braved
Or if you are still dizzy from the binge of yore
Give the world a breath full of snore
Or a smile so that your fang may show
And the roaring rodents may fear
Or still; straighten your limbs
So the whole world will know that you're
Alive only in a slumber.
Wake up my sleeping giant
The jungle is agog with war dance
And rodents are brandishing their war munitions
Pointing our way.
Awake now my sleeping giant
The menacing dance is no longer
A sight to behold
The sleeping giant more deeply sleeps
And men have become
Women in their own domain.

Tony Adah

My Soul Brother

Do not mind the gun
In your mouth,
That cow tail you stole
To practise war dance,
You seem to be brandishing It over fire
The wafts are great
Or are your nostirls too talking?
There is an act of nude awakening
Driving in your head.
My soul brother
Do not mind the teeth in your tongue
Even as they can grind you down
Mind the diadem of presidium
Adorning your head crafted by your own hands
And the hollow of your own head.
My soul brother
Do not mind your tongue
It is busier than your nose
The fire is ruining the beauty
Of your cow tail
And you do not know?
My soul brother
Do not let this wafts become your cologne
My soul brother
No one wants to be a spectator
Of your mad naked dance
Where are you going to this afternoon?
The gondolier is steering upstream
But you lag behind
Howling at the world?

Tony Adah

My Soul Today

The fan is revving
Birds twittering
Sun shining
Wind blowing
Tree boughs swaying
And I am weeping.

Tony Adah

My Story

I do not shout my worth
To those chagrined
And envious of my soar
So that they will not hurry Mr home.

All my dreams fulfilled and not fulfilled
I let them gorgeously sit
In a silk cocoon.
Many times
I have been charred
By the flames of fire
Now every ash is a scare
And in my story some stories.

Tony Adah

My Strengths

I thought I was brave
I lost it to lion
I thought I was sane
I lost it to the bottles
I thought I could soar
My wings I lost to the eagle
I thought I could bark
I lost it to the dog
I thought I was human
I lost it all to the devils.

Tony Adah

My Sweet Mother

My mother who gave me a nipple
Sweet as honey
And handed me over to the wicked world
Where I have tried to be a man
Shackled and free
But an orphan
O' my mother!

Tony Adah

My Twilight Has Come

Everywhere there's pain
In my knees and in my waist
My sun goes to the west
And I live in twilight
My hair powdered in gray
I have no doubt my autumn
Has come.

Tony Adah

My Two Pretty Dogs

They grew from two puppies
I loved so much
And they knew their names
Sailor and pilot
I am not sure
They knew my own name
But my smiling beauceron
And my bearded collie
Wagged their tails
Howled and touched
My shin with their wet noses
Whenever I was back
Home from Awol.

One day I noticed
Their awesome handsomeness
Beginning to wane
Their mouths dripping with spittle
The usual wet nose dry
Illness left an odious phlegm
On the shadow of my dogs.

They look sick and frail
Unable to wag their tails
Neglegent of a bark
And they succumbed
To the pangs let
Loose of death
And lived no more
In the world
But in my heart.

Tony Adah

My Uncle's Tales

My uncle is a tall man
He tells tall tales
As if he believes them himself
He told us that while in his farm
A white man stuck out his head
From an aircraft and threw him a coin
And the coin never present
Missed as it was given.

Again back in his farm
A certain bird defaecated on
His head with a ring that carried
Some code in numbers and alphabets
For this he showed us a nut
With treads in it
He picked from the bicycle repairer's shop.

He told us that
He saw a pangolin giving birth
To bees that were all stillbirths
That he knew a giant man
Who kept the tails of all toads
In a pot in his fetish grove
And the tails had no voice
To howl a call across to the waiting toads.

We believed him
And believed everything
That there was a man
In the next village who since
The world began had not died
And will never die
Such were my uncle's tall tales.

Tony Adah

My Wish

I wish to live and die
And defy death
My footprints in the eye
Of the discerning.
To the undiscerning a hollow me
In the deep valley of a daydream.

Tony Adah

My Work

This evening I am not idle
I am busy
Doing surgery
On words
And sentences
Versifying them
And making them sound
Like they are spoken
By the great muses
Here I am happy
With a quill feather
And a papyrus
Shouting to the world.

Tony Adah

Nation Building

They call it nation building
An allocthonous brontosaur
Is eating all that nature bestows
And great birdlimes abound in the delta area
There's bloodletting in the north
The west is wagging its tongue
And the east wants everything bought from them
And the minorities are trapped
In the bird limes, held up
In spite of their endowment
Still they call it nation building.

Tony Adah

National Service

Born in the hills
And bred in the valleys
Made in Port Harcourt
Fried in Katsina
And posted to Potiskum.

I am the one my country is tossing around
I have gone to the market to buy meat
And I am dettered by a confetti of flies
On twitching muscles of nama
I am away
And my kitchenette like
My country has nothing to offer
I am famished with the service
Of my nation in my stomach.

Tony Adah

Nature's Hand

What can the unseen hand not do?
When it sculptures hills and vales
Knolls and ravines
Upon which the sun rises and sinks;
What a great artist
Whose canvass is full of streams and rivers
Walking noisily or silently
Without hoaves or claws
Or the wind flying past without wings.

Up the north
The rugged slabs of rock stand or bend
Or crumble in situ;
Where the plateau of Jos
Whizz in silent songs.

At Obudu
The potter moulds his earth
Lush green with verges
And upon the hills head
White coxcomb adorn.

In Maiduguri and beyond
Dust storms hum
And the desert moves in granules
With shrubs paying obeisance
To the storm.

In the the west as in Ibadan,
Cocoa trees wear a legion breasts
And Mapo hall stands gazing at the sun.
Everywhere the country folks
Are agog with what nature bestows
Still no one wonders about
How these things came to give
A marvel to our unblinking eye.

Tony Adah

Negative Change

I can see men far and near
Throwing away their crown of glory
And dancing around the carcass
Of an elephant slaughtered in the Niger Delta area
There's a gathering crowd like ants on a dead again
A huge burnfire billows with smoke
And the land is choked.

They have abandoned
The treasure of the wild
Peanuts, their pyramids have gone
Palm oil, its barrels have been replaced
By the copious blood of the elephant
They are struggling and stealing
The tusks, hind and forelimbs
Head, eyes, the trotters etc
And there's a party frenzy
Where even our palm wine
Is abandoned for exotic wines.

Tony Adah

Never Again

The scorch sahel saluted the general
With undulating smiles
And the king got a lowly obeisance
From the herbage
The hills mopped a pool of still tears
From their eyes.

Soldiers echo a victory song
Against the terrorists
And the citizens joined
For their shackles that have been unbound
The armoury hummed and the bugle blared
A new song is voluntarily
Leaving the lips of soldiers
And their mutinous grumble dry in the air
A new leaf is turned
And they have harvested bravery
To become heroes of today.

They sang and they danced
In their never again song
Never again will anyone murder harmless citizens
Or capture innocent girls
For religion or politics
The twins that ought to build a nation.

Tony Adah

Never Despair

A fly lost its wing
Fell down like a log
The ant eater saw an eatery
Started with the wing
Missed in the rustle of leaves
The fly an ant became
A new niche in the pain
Of mishap
And the joy of adaptation.

Tony Adah

Never Let Anything Go

I woke up
This morning with
A different attitude
Towards the world
I am smiling
I do not want to wait
For anybody to put
A smile on my face.

The world has all
It takes to straighten
The wrinkles on my face
Clad my bare body
Fill my void bowels
And make me a star

I will never
Put it on
Anybody's shoulders
Why I have not eaten
Or why my body is bare
And my star dim

I will go out
To where the world
Keeps its shine
Get it and burnish my star

I will go to
Where the world
Keeps its food
And stuff my famished tummy
Go to where it leaves its garments
And clad myself
For I and I alone
Can tell the world
To turn my way
And give me
My desired admiration.

Tony Adah

Never Say Quit

Never say quit
And never shed a tear
For the milk flowing on the floor
The sun comes after the flood
And the grasses rise
After the storm
No matter how deep the cut
The arteries will clot
Never say quit
When the storm is raging
And the mountains shaking
This is when they know
How thick the muscles of your heart are
Never say quit
And never shed a tear
Over the milk flowing on the floor.

Tony Adah

New Dreams

We have toiled much
Under sun and rain
Temperatures high and low, ,
Let the night come
So we can dream new dreams
Let the time insidiously pass
So the putrified carcasses
Will smell
Let the wind blow
So we can see the cloaca
Of the hen.
A parturiting woman has no
Place for shyness
Let them push us to the wall
To see our reaction
And in this let the sycophants
Go to sleep.

Tony Adah

New Voices.

New voices echo from a pond
And the pollywogs have come of age
The ripples they cause are wider in diameter
Than when they were tadpoles
And croaking now is distinct
Wriggling of the tail
Is no longer a tale.

The imperfect limbs are now perfect
And swimming matters in an effortless manner
Their harsh sweet voices will tell
That a pond is within reach
Though their backs rough may look
Their chests are resplendent
From a great bath in a pond
And the echo of self praise
Is the music in this pond.

Tony Adah

New Yam Festival

I am smelling
The reeks of some
Sumptuous dishes
Ahead of time
New yams are breathing
From man-made mounds
Grunting like pigs
Snoring like drunks.
Our
appetite taller than us
Wheating to relish melon cakes
Gulp lumps of new pounded yam
With the sweet bitterleaf soup
And sip the holy water
Oozing from palm trees.
Everyone is salivating
Preparations enormous
Hopes are high
The harvest is bumptious
We dish out our thanksgiving
To our gods for this season
And our supplication for the next.
The yam is black, yellow and white
We thank the gods
For the benevolence of the earth
Our half little cuts
Have been made whole
Let hunger drop down
Like our stools of yesterday's
Stuffs we stuffed in our tummies
We eat the new yam
And say no to the old species.
Let hunger drop down
For the little things
We hid in the stomach of the earth
Have been made whole
Children rise
Men and women rise
Rise all folks

Let us pay obeissance
To the gods
And welcome the
Bounty of the earth.
We owe a great deal
To the old yams
But we adore our new yams
Let hunger too drop down
And adore the new yam.

Tony Adah

New Yam Today

There's a goldberg in one armpit
And a red label in the other
A man is drumming
A man is dancing
And a man is singing
All with his mouth.

It is a celebration
A celebration of effort
And a celebration of yield.
The tempo is high
A man is walking home
But on the back of his feet.

Tony Adah

Night

Under this cloud
Of opaque distances
Between man and man
Swimmers swim,
Backsliders-
A horde that the day
Had long purified.
The world here
Is captured and shackled by slumber
And wobbling integrity is lost
To the moon
Half cast in the sky.
It is time to walk nude
Like a beast
And steal lika a goat
In the blindness
Of the night's eye.
Here it looks like
All we owe the world
All we owe daylight
Has become a bad debt.

Tony Adah

Night Tales

Darkness fell from the sky
And injured our moonshine
Stars unable to twinkle;
Our play a sudden end
We looked left and right
East and west
The moon crumbled in the sky
And no where to be found
We groped into our hut where
Grandma sat ready with tales.
Our ancestors' empire was near
And sleep tricked us in
Grandma sat alone
And it rained
Until the morning after.

Tony Adah

Nine Eleven Two Thousand And One

This day the dog
Had its tail between
Its hinds limbs.
Frightened cold
Gold meant nothing to nobody

This day the terrorists visited
Two tower blocks tumbled down
And a strike on pentagon averted
The terrorists on the prowl
And the world conquered?
It was smoke, death and grief
Like there was never
Going to be the next day.

Fire fighters, police and volunteers
Rose to national calamity
The policeman of the world
Has been hit and world peace
Dangerously placed
On the edge of a canyon.

That morning, mourning was much
Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters
Had melancholy in their hearts
Oceans, only oceans compared
With the tears of the world

Still the terrorists seem to be
Telling the world, 'you ain't seen nothing'!
They have a field day always
For their barbecue in Nigeria, syria, iraq, lebanon
The world blares its trumpet of peace
But precariously sitting
On a keg of gunpowder.

September eleven, grief symbol
The world will always remember
And see you as it sees Emma Lazarus'

Colossus at Ellis island
For those who gave their lives
That the terrorist won an ephemeral war
You remain in our marrow
And for the terrorist like my mother said
'Every day for the owner
But one day for the thief'!

Tony Adah

No More Mannas

Today I have not eaten
My survival is on the stale remnants
In my spine drawn stomach
People are praying for me
Without doing anything about my hunger
I am famished
It is long Mannas fell from heaven
There is doubt
If in my lifetime
It will rain with hales
I am not perfect than a human being
My journey at last will be made
On an empty stomach
If I do not make heaven
It is not that I am a sinner.

Tony Adah

No More War

This sabre rattling world
Hold your calm
The kurds, arabs, jews, palestinians
All have their souls
Sheath your swords
And calm
The nerves of the world.

Tony Adah

No News Is Good News

There's nothing new
In the news
So cruel the gruesome gruff
That hit our broken ears

And the spotlights
Of a trembling earth
Tumbling over its denizens
Or booming munitions
Decimating mankind from the heart of man.

Or still tsunami sweeping
With a great flood that drowns
Man and materials alike
And leaves the world a teary eye.

Tony Adah

No One Else

No one else will crow
Than the rooster at the peak
Of the mountain
With a huge coxcomb
He's the only one to crow.
Yesterday, he fought hard for
The annihilation of one;
Today the war is on another hybrid
No one knows his thinking tomorrow
But should we continue to stoke
Our fire with this smoking kindling?
If yes, we will starve
And if no, he'll have to learn.

Tony Adah

No One Knows Tomorrow

Who knows tomorrow
Lies to himself
Today is the tomorrow of yesterday
And yesterday, we didn't know it
Though no tomorrow has ever been deferred
It comes and goes like any other
Without anybody knowing
The contents of its bag
Until it comes to pour its bag,
No one knows tomorrow.

Tony Adah

No One Owns The Land

And so death took a man
With vast expanse of land
Still without a home, a nomad without herds
A fugitive in his own land
On this day those victors will celebrate
On that day too their six feet deep is waiting
When the final judge shall rule
That the land belongs to all.

Tony Adah

No Place Like Home

There where my back faces
Is my home
And there is no place like it
Though I am backing home
My heart beat with its love
And my night reminiscent
Of its dreams.
That mortar and pestle
The sound that breaks the silence
Of the quiet evening
A thick paste of pounded yam
Waiting for the boiling melon
And sweet bitter leaf soup.
Home sweet home
Where palm wine froth with fragrant foams
Bottled in gourds and earthenwares
And men gather under the gold sheen
Of the moonscape
Telling the stories of men
Marksmen and the skulls of big games
Of tribal wars and conquest of land
Where the youth strut like
They conquered it themselves.
Home, sweet home
The warmth and cold
That comes without climate change
Where chicken and goats frolick
Waiting for a visitor to arrive
Home sweet home
Where we gathered under a tree
In the silent evening listening
To grandma doling out some Flores
Passed on to her
As she passed it to us.
Oh, sweet home.

Tony Adah

No Refuge

The sun shall rise again
Under the trees the shadows
Shall give us refuge from the burning sun
When the storm comes and tree is no more
We shall hide by the shadow of the mountain
Should a volcano blow the mountain top;
We shall run to the river
Which holds other breathing things
If the current strong be
We will be drowned
Then it will be clear that we have no refuge
In this space called our country.

Tony Adah

No Turning Back

I am going home
To meet my folks
Those I know and those I do not know
I have been told about three of them
Where I am going I do not know
But that's where they said home is
And on that day leaves will overwhelm flowers
Birds will of nectar desire in vain
For the rose will be gone
By then I will be blind
And deaf and mute
All that the wind mutters
Shall blow upon a rock
And no turning back.

Tony Adah

No Water For The Republic

I remember Gorbachev of the USSR
Who brought on to the table a glass
And he called it glasnost
He put water inside it for the republic to drink
One lone man came to the fore
Threw away the water
And the republic is thout-parched
Today without water.

Tony Adah

Non Indigenes.

They came home and lived with us
Ate what we eat and drank what we drink
And spoke in our very tongue
They despised them and call them names
Still we lied that we are building a nation
The beauty of which lies
In the variegation of Cultures
And unhindered movement of citizens.

Allochthonous to our place
The denizens are citizens of this place
But those chauvinists of ethnicity
Have built walls in their hearts
Calling them non indigenes
So that they and they alone
Will plunder the commonwealth
And build pudgy necks and fingers
And non indigenes are denied
Their contribution to the growth
Of our every day fledgling nation.

Tony Adah

Nostalgia

I am homesick
I do not want to live in a den
Where the lions and tigers prowl and howl
Peeling their teeth temping to count
I do not want to hide
From the free given meadows
Which few claim to control.

The dog feared and its domesticated
Lizard feared to say something
And it lost its voice
Snails refused to walk up to the scene
And they lost their legs
Millipedes rushed up and got a million
Slowing legs.

The bat went late and got wings
Without feathers but hair
And he died without a burial
For the fur animals refused its wings
And the feather animals said that
They do not have furs.
And I with everything I have been put in a den
I am nostalgic and home I am going
I do not want to stay.

Tony Adah

Not A Long Wait In Vain

Not a long wait in vain
To bare a mind on things hardly
As they come
But to bear further a split second
That will make a fruit to ripe
A wound to heal, a scar to come
And the flies away to drive.

Not a long wait in vain
A thought lost in time
And the parturition of a long sought
Solution to a lingering problem
A tired waiting is a barren tree
Fruitless, leafless and a snag
Like a winter beaten maple.

Not a long wait in vain
Time the finisher of things
Shorten so on the distance
Between the sky and the earth
Birth and death
Beginning and the end
Then the patient dog crushes
The fattest bone and man the fattest
Of flesh on the earth.

Tony Adah

Not For The Common Man

I want to know what took us
To this part of the earth
Whether a mishap birth
Or the strong tectonics of geography,
What does it take to make a man
Whose country has forgotten?
He made mounds
He planted yams
He tapped palmwine
And for solace he drank it
He hewed wood
He fetched kindlings
He filled the earth
He got peppers
He got onions
And the earth itself yielded
Something crude that made him crooked
Not for the common man, oil
And he did all for his body and soul.
He passed them on
To those his wife and sisters
Bore nine months in their wombs
The new age will come up better
So the drums of hope beat
He will be no more to see the change
His children will get
He will die with an immortal hope
Because he got a country only in name
Death will come, pick those who
Will succumb
And the remainder will gaze
At the oceans and drink
Their raw waters,
Gaze at the mountains
And eat them uncooked
Who will cook anything for you?
When the chosen few will give
Commands only to drain his sweet
This earth, my brother

With all they have stolen
They will be broke, storm blown
And unable to take along any wares.

Tony Adah

Not Yet At Home

Tell It to them at Aso Rock
That the story is still the same
The promises of yesterday
Lay a legion today unfulfilled
Fettered by our own complacency
Sleeping on the bayou created by our docility.
The sweetness of promises
Has grown wings and away
It has flown.
And I hear It is said that
Lady birds do not mingle with dung beetles
Our campaign melodies diminished
To the level of dirges.
What we craved for has turned
Out to be our own undoing.
The ink that painted our thumbs
And the votes that we supposedly casted
Have won us elections
But we have lost the government
Hope dashed in landslide win
Becoming earthquakes
Of the whims and caprices of the voted.
The bell will ring again
We will take their their rice
And Sanusi's crispy notes
Vote with our hearts and paint our thumbs
It is so simply said like this
But who will do this for my country,
I do not know now!

Tony Adah

Nothing Is Hidden Under The Earth

There was smoke smothering in the hut
And hunters didn't want a non initiate to belong
But the usual strong reeks of the games' fur burning over fire
And the hound's wagging tail
Strongly told passersby that
Some hunters had a good catch
More evident the next time they passed and saw palm fronds stained in flecks of
blood
And the balded vultures who visited to scavenge on the remnants of a great kill
For nothing is hidden under the earth below our shining sky.

Tony Adah

Nothing Is Strange

Though we may be so powerful
And rich
So strong and boastful
Though we may shout our
Unbounded possessions
And think that nothing will
Ruffle our wealth;
We are but roaming shadows on earth
Soon the night comes
And we disappear.

Though we think the earth our home
All its expanse our property
We are but drops of water
On a leaf's blade
Soon the sun rises
And all dries up in the breeze.

We may stand tall like the mountain
Hard as a rock
Soon the crusher comes
And dust we become.

We may prove tough as tendons
When the pounder comes
We are beaten to pulp
We have seen people
We have seen things
Nothing is strange.

Tony Adah

Nothing Lasts Forever

I am singing a song
Like a bird before nectar
I am frolicking
Like a butterfly before flowers
Come to me
And I will give you bit of it
Oh too soon
The song flies away
Like a bird and I'm alone
Spittle dry mouth, eyes everywhere
Looking for the song
And I now know
Even gold fades.

Tony Adah

Nothing New

If I have failed in my role
As human, I donate myself
To the world
But what's left to be explored?
Is it death?
Is it life?
Is it faith or is it God?
Or is it food? Soon we'll eat humans
For those still in the field
I offer myself as a loan
Read me, study me
All interest free
And those who have died
Or are yet to move
I say adieu!

Tony Adah

Now And Then

Nuptial vows
Nuptial bliss
Nuptial bits
And nuptial bites.

Tony Adah

Nowadays.

Nowadays, a handshake is rare
Terrorists hold the knife
By the hilt
And we by the edges,
Strap terror bombs to the back
Like students in back sacks to school
To let loose gloom on the world
Already with a lacerated moral fibre
Soon everything turns topsy turvy
Fear grips the world
Rape becomes the love
Gun the norm
War in the air
And death loosed upon the world.

Tony Adah

Nuptial Vow

A nuptial vow
Is tenable in
The extreme of conditions
In the wearisome
Circumstance of need
As in the untiring times of bounty

A wife is not
A piece of ware at Harrod's,
Who would treat
His wife like a
Piece of sculpture
Silent and tossed
In the living room?

Faith and loyalty
Lubricants that endure
Foibles on both sides
Leads their way to Xanadu
Where subsequent
Honeymoons blossom
And bliss abound

A wife and a husband
Twosome like a snail and its shell
Silent in synergy
Bringing truce to wars
For they are
The nucleus of the world.

And a vow for both
Be equal made
Where neither weak
Nor strong prevail
That in which loyalty endures
Even to the grave.

Tony Adah

Obituary

The huge ranch cow
Is dead on a platter
Of palm fronds
Its blood stains
Splashes in the fronds
And ugly vultures
Hover over the sky
Waiting for butchers
To wash their hands
Clean their knives
And leave the scene.

We waited with our
Wheated appetite
Flies giant like the carcass
Besiege the ground in
A funeral of festivity
We waited and wailed
For the demise of our friend
Whose corpse we will
Bury in our own stomachs.

Tony Adah

Oblivion

We eat like tomorrow will
Not shine again
The engine grinds all
The contents overnight
Ready to be pushed down upon
A dirt dump
The struggle rages on like fire
In a harmattan
It's dust hazing those we should
Share with
The next moment we are down ourselves
Stuck in the earth naked and
Empty as we came.

Tony Adah

Obsession

Of patriotism
No roots of it grow on this soil
Scorch and rich,
Dumb with sound
Of porche abodes and exotic cars
And dearth for the living dead.

Tony Adah

Ode To B.J Azang

In the abyss
Of hope lost
And in the valley
Of darkness
Life tossed him
From the luminance of yore
To the blindness
Of that day that
He sojourn away from
The surly bounds of this earth.

He, he was who taught us the angelus
He, he was who taught pater noster
He drove us shin beaten by dews
Early morning to the chilly stream
Where few of us took our bath
And others feign a bath
Stale smelling to school.

He built the dispensary
Where we first saw the whiteman
With his tender hands
Palpating the village folks
For signs of sleeping sickness.

Where B.J Azang lived
No one knew
What he ate
No one cared
Only he knew
What he drank

When life wore him
An insignia of death
Many trouped to
His derelict house
To see an old wooden box
Of roaches wngs
Mixed with bits of old papers

Mangled by ants
Two hard to chew papers endure
The jaws of rats, roaches and termites.

Some old teacher with thick glasses
Took the funeral oration
And mentioned two certificates
As the london GCE and the royal
Society of arts
The mourners yelped
And applauded the man gone
When his deeds too came to the fore
Others yawn
Shaking their heads, yearning to cry.

Tony Adah

Ofat Town

Two long trucks
Slithered past each other
And got stucked on the way
At Ofat town

There was no way again
To either calabar or ikom
We too got stucked
And in an attempt to move on
Ofat town received money
For our passage through
Its rustic town where
The sense of community
Was murdered on a Monday.

Tony Adah

Ogoniland

A crimson field
Where the heroes of oil boom
Mingle with the martyrs of oil gloom
Ogoniland, where the king bespectacled
Unleashed thunder which shattered the son
And the fathers of our heritage.

O, Ogoniland
One whose children swim
In the vast ocean with soapsuds in their eyes
The place where my umbilicals were buried
And agony erected a house
As tall as the multinational rigs
Where our ancestors left us luxury
But we languish in penury
O, Oginiland the birth place of
My absent wealth.

Tony Adah

Oh Death

I can see the thin
Dividing line between
Death and existence
Raymond's quintescent exit
True to type bore
Me witness here
When at night prep time,
The lights went off and on
In 2A of County council school,
No one knew the class
Would be less than one mate in a jiffy.
A huge joke didn't escape a bad fall
In which the foul miasma of death
Swept him away,
His cloud of life hardly
Rising in the room.
This is the mystery of life
Living now and very quickly too
Soon a vapor.

Tony Adah

Old Papa Goes To Town.

Old papa had never visited any township
His son's college graduation took him to town
And his manners were uncouth to the townfolk
At the party
In honour of his son
He was served coleslaw
Having tasted it and found it was raw
Turned to his son-
'Son, I hope your own vegetables are boiled
For mine are just raw and flat to taste'
The son looked up and smiled,
'Coleslaw is never cooked but eaten like that'
He told his disappointed father
Who thought that the townspeople were crazy
Eating raw vegetables like goats.

Tony Adah

Old Pollywog.

Old pollywog came quickly
To join the frogs
Without limbs I wonder what
It would have done with its big head
And its black tail
Pollywog boasted alot
With the ocean of water
Surrounding its palace
And the giant frogs croaking
In the pond
Old pollywog wriggled
In the sand
Its water drained away
By the fingerlings begging around
And its big heart gasping for breath.

Tony Adah

Old Soldier

When the old soldier came
Back from the war
He mistook every one
And every place
His age mates looked
Older than him with grey
Hair on their heads on the moustache
And on their chins.
He remembered the younger one's
By the semblance they bore
Of their own fathers he knew
But had died.

He lost all
About norms and culture
And came home a foreigner
Yet in his own home
He told stories of world wars
Rangoon, Bombay, Pakistan
Were the places of his story of war

Old soldier went on
A hunting expedition
In the forest the community
Left to fallow
He was not at home with
Exploitation the forest
He grew up to see
Virgin as it was
But when the games were roasted
He opted for the lion share
And that is how the community
Laughed at his ways.

Tony Adah

Old Soldier.

Old soldier is home from war
Welcome!
Welcome! !
Old soldier exhibit the war attitude
Before his folks
Beat up everyone and seize their things
Bad!
Bad! !
Old soldier is sick and weak
And there's peace in the land
Peace!
Peace! !
Old soldier's gun sound is no more
No more!
Old soldier is a heap of bones
In his grave
Dead!
Dead! !

Tony Adah

Old Soldier's Boarding Pass

Its been awhile
Old soldier
Entered into
The departure lounge
He married his wife
Bred his Children
All at this waiting point.
He stared at the glassware
Of which the doors and windows
Were made
Saw his balding hairline
Receding at same rate
His sagging cheeks
Were falling to his chest
And the deep pockets
Where his eyes sat.
His co waiters screened him
And taunted him
For his drib and drab achievements
He turned
His wrinkled neck
And sunken eyes
Three sixty degrees
Like an old owl
Waiting for games
He took
His boarding pass
And gave it a stern look
Wondering
When this deed
Will be done.

Tony Adah

Oloibiri

A sleeping town of yore
Where my country struck
Its first oil
Are you still in a slumber?
Or awake cleaning smudges
From your eyes
I like looking at your face
You global orphan of a rich world.

Oloibiri
Still squalor and penury
Are growing like a dough
Eating an inoculant of yeast.

In the ordure that oil has brought
Your rivers and streams are putrid with slicks
And your livelihood is doomed
In the midst of nature's endowed bounties
The pathos of your times
Are brimming with your absent needs
And in the middle of the ocean
You stand with soapsuds
In your eyes.

The things around you
Are a gory sight to behold
You look famished
When your stomach
Ought to be paunchy with food
You're mourning
When you should be rerejoicing
Yawning when you should smile
Groping where there
Ought to be light
In a great irony
Of your wealth.

Tony Adah

On My Straw Bed

On my crass straw mattress
Not a lonely night
But lying with dreams, flitting thoughts and buzzing mosquitoes
I am awake to see the flight
Of my dreams
Dusted by the beetles ground Bits of straw falling on my chest
Or back in any position I lie.

My eyes closed but I can see
The world put on a façade of hope
Though on this bed dejection is the pillow under my head;
I am a man. I fear not tomorrow
But when will the reality
Of things come to pass?
A college degree breathing in my box
And the world blinking at me.
Straw pinched, I am a heir
To what my grandpa left for me.

My mates have flown away across
The seas
In search of the golden fleece
Some may have died
Others are bed ridden
Still I am happy for a breath
Raising up and down my tired Chest
And hope my daily meals.

Tony Adah

On The Edge Of Paradise

That is where we are
With our self mixed
Meal of phlem and saliva
Ailments and penury
Penury and dearth
Dearth and death
Death and paradise

But our whole lot
Is huddled on the edge
Yearning for a real transition
Some lucky, others unlucky
Those lucky have their garden
Watered for them
They have their palm kernels
Broken for them
A siver spoon in the mouth

The pedestrians too
Walk on the roads
On the edge
Of this paradise
Bare soled,
Bare body
Their hearts rendered
On the picture their faces wear
Looking heavenward
Still frightful of death.

There is a feeling
Of paradise here
As its wind
Unevenly blow
And until we
Know the very place
This is the place I know.

Tony Adah

On The Eve Of Change

And I said congratulations
To he who was dangling
A five litre container of premium motorized spirit
Many spent hours unend
And came back with air in their holders
Others slept and got only the reeks
Welcome to the transition of change
And the war averted is here
Only guns are not used.

Tony Adah

On The Wings Of My Spirit

I will not labour in vain
In my toils, I will build spirit castles
And leave the physical for the kings
I will build that which enters
My grave with me
And leave the one which encumbers my grave
For the yawning world.
I can not hold two things
That make me stray in my passage:
Sins and the labour for the physical
I will shed all and fly on
The wings of my spirit
It may have been a rugged road
But in the end freedom comes.

Tony Adah

Only History Listens To Me

I am here meeting with things
And their opposites
I have made efforts
With my head, hands and legs
The challenge is my country
This bent stick that is dry
Who will straighten it
Without it snapping into pieces?
I have tried my voice not shrill enough
And it lands in a market square
What little I know
They decipher not
They do not care if what I say
Doesn't print mints into their pockets
I am here
It is worthwhile
Only history listens to me
And that will be tomorrow.

Tony Adah

Opium

I have managed
To procure a television set
Looking like a match box.
I have in my yard
A chinese better- than- my neighbour
Oozing with obnoxious fumes
I have abandoned Enyimba fc
And I am watching
European league
Now and then
It has shielded me
From the woes of dearth and penury
And all that my country
Has refused to offer
In the midst of bounties.

Tony Adah

Opposite People

All the generation
Of men and women
Old and young
Bad and good
Bondage and free
Mad and sane
Righteous and sinners
Cripple and able
All these citizens
It is the duty of
Nations to carter for
Groom the positives
And straighten the bent
For the world itself
Is replete with opposites.

Tony Adah

Options.

I have the option
To Live Or to leave
And I must obtain permission
From the leveller
Whose onus it is
To tether me to the world
Or release to the clouds
In which case
The real option is his
That I die or I Live.

Tony Adah

Orphans

Wherever the orphans go
There goes dearth
Theirs is a nest of broken eggs
Trees that bear their dreams
Some snags sticking out.

Tony Adah

Our Country

What a make shift home
Crammed for you and I
Hungry and living by the edge
We the huddled ones beaten, bruised
And always down.
See how the pudgy ones live
And make you and I victims
In the land
Where we work and sweat
Where our ancestor's urine turns
Into liquid gold;
That which which is supposed to strengthen us
But weaken us now.
To you and I
There's a thin line between day and night
Still the dominant few
With Porsche houses and exotic cars
In the centre of the city,
Their light blazes and turns the night into day
And every day you and I
Wait in utter fear
For the tornado to tear through our fate
Beaten, bruised and always down

Tony Adah

Our Country Will Be Great

I had a dream
That a fleet of ships are
Approaching our harbours
At lagos, Port Harcourt and calabar
They're bringing with them
Food, petrol technology
And everything
We want and in our lifetime
We will see no suffer again
There will be no work
And our country
Will be great
When these ships dock
And our harbours are full.
There will be no ailments and death
And our country Will be great
North, South, East and West
Our country Will be great.

Tony Adah

Our Cravings And Lust

All we crave for now or later
will come
And we must sow something
but not reap another
Our time is short
for all our cravings and lust
to fully manifest
No one can rewind the lost interval
squandered on our cravings and lust
And to gain all that is lost
Is to go through the hearth and burn our sins off
and so purify our souls
This is how what we list here
Will be gained beyond.

Tony Adah

Our Crumbling Wall

I am looking sternly
At the chinks on the wall
They seem to be widening
But insiduously in the
Eyes of the public.

No one cares
Than busy seeking
The wall's protection
Stealing spaces and
Writing graffis that
Seem to be pulling
Down the wall.

And if a question be asked
If the foundation was firm
Could the chinks have come?
Could they widening and threatening
The entity of the wall?

The answer lies
In the of hands of bad workmen
Who till date tamper
With the mortar of the wall
But the foundation
And the bricks of the wall
Would unshakeable stand

Tony Adah

Our Friend Has Become Our Enemy

Yesterday back home
The news was bad
A band of armed robbers
Attacked a money lender
At his home.

He took his gun
To shoot or not to shoot
For the robbers
Mixed up with his Children
Just as the bullets
Left the robber's gun
One slippery robber was down
And without hesitation
The money lender too was down
Spinning in his own blood.

An alarm was raised
And the police came
About the scene
To every one's chagrin
The slained robber
Was a flexible cop
Who would bring about
The sack of our town.

Tony Adah

Our Heavenly Bid

Today like yesterday
We wait expectantly for heaven
Still the nearest route is the fearsome grave
That which leads the opposite direction
Is what we do and expect to reap an iota
Of good even on this earth
Our deeds awkward as they are
Least can intercede for us
We daily sing and clap our hands
In hymns that edify the world
And make hollow our heavenly bid
We die one by one or collectively by war
Or epidemic but no one returns
To say how sweet it was in that place.

Tony Adah

Our Heritage

They bought the land
Bought the water
And bought the air above
They took all from us
That heritage that jumped
From generation generation.

Pushed to the fringes,
Our stilted houses stand
Squalid and in despair
Down where our filth float like
Reed boats upon water,
Life freely lived is gone.

Back in the land
Towering buildings take the
Place of trees
And from their nostrils spew fumes
Like a crater gone haywire
The air sniffing the fumes
And passing them to own nostrils
Our chests will whizz
So breathless and painful
We will die
In that heritage where our
Umbilical cords were buried
And all our livelihoods vitiated.

Tony Adah

Our House In Winter

Winter is here
And our house is snowbound
We either skate outside
Or we remain indoors chattering our teeth
Yearning for warmth.

The roads are full of snowfall
Some cars are already trapped in there
Waiting for the snowblower
To suck and blow it away from the roads.
Elsewhere the snow's fragile cluster of ice crystals
Hang on trees like icicles
Drifting in an underground cave.

Snow lays a sheet of white hail
Covering the earth as if the sky has fallen
And the patches of tree greens
Have become the blue colour of the sky
All these will go
When the summer comes with its warmth
And the snow thaws away!

Tony Adah

Our Masters

They gave us a native brew
That they didn't allow to lag
They offered us freedom on a platter of clay
In our quaking hands and it dropped
We picked our freedom in bits and pieces
And our nation is on the fringes
Of a canyon wanting to fall.
They slept for us
So they took our dreams away with them
We either build our nation
Or it dies a stillborn.

Tony Adah

Our Neighbours

When the sun has gone
Their women will now bring
Sliced okro to dry;
Where is the sun?
They will tremble and ask
But they will rejoice at the freedom
To come out at all.
For me I will love to go prison
If I was there
In the briefness of my beard
And this I confess.

Tony Adah

Our New Wall Clock At Night.

The night was thick and palpable
A cloud of darkness
Filled even our bedroom
Where a quarter of a candle
Had flickered but suffered exhaustion
And was swallowed by the night
Every where dumbness
And calm reigned.

Suddenly there were intermittent
Emissions of noise of thickening origin
We groped in the night
With a modicum of courage
For fright was the order of the night
Then I remembered
Our new wall clock
It was it singing
A lonely song in
The frightening moment
Of our ignorance.

Tony Adah

Our Night Visitor

Last night we had a visitor
We know him
He is frequent guest
At the waste bin outside
Some how he must have felt cheated
Or wanted to see the splendor
Of our inside.
He came in through the window
Tore the netting stuff
And came in and regurgitated
Minced rat, paper bag and lots
Of palm oil.
Everyone in the house agreed
A witch visited
But I know our normal guest
And I'll show him to the world.

Tony Adah

Our Old Man

In the façade
He sat on a chair of wisdom
Furrows rill with sweat
On the sagging cheeks like streams
Down the mountain slope;
Age is speaking loud
In the nervous hands
And the hair on the head and the
Beard and the moustache white
Like snow on the mountain top.

He hardly walk
He seldom speak
That strength of the early morning
Wanes and the old lion feeds
On the crawling snails.

He retches phlegm from his throat
And spit it near his shining shins
That is the reason why we do not
Go near our old man
Who caused our father to cause us
Come to the troubled world.

We laugh at his toddling walk
And taunt his broken voice
Little thinking we are running
Into the same state
Of wobbly walk and our heads
Wearing white coxcombs too
Like snow on the mountain top.

Tony Adah

Our Spring

I will howl
At those who steal from our Commonwealth
I will growl and call them names
Kleptomaniacs
I know from which string they steal;
That where our ancestors lie
And we call it the Niger Delta.

We are shackled here
Because the spring spews the sheen of liquid gold
When the spring dries up
The locks of our shackles will loose

The toady hide their tongues
Here we flip ours openly and freely out
Our conscience at peace
Already there's a gangway
Out or into the bullpen
For twice impossible a man dies.

Tony Adah

Our Wife Is Gone

Our wife is gone
Now that our house is down
Broken and wind done the roof in pieces
We are sullen and broken at heart
Losing two things at once

The house is down
But through the broken walls
We can see our wife going
Head stuffed with luggage
Back and hands full of longings
Her steps slow
Her eyes not looking back
She's going
She's gone
Now that the forest is a desert!

Tony Adah

Out Of Sight

Someone close here is out of sight
Should I laugh or should I cry?
There are two people in one person
Which should I choose?
Me or the other person
He is crying
And I seem to be laughing
Should I leave the best medicine
For the salty tears?
I am an adult and I adore
Things that are good
If a companion parted to save a coin,
No religion warrants a sacrifice
That one should die
It hurts to love
And it hurts to part
When the heart gets blind
The wound fries its scar
But it is better to touch the scar
Than see the wound.

Tony Adah

Outside In The Rain

I have deserted the house
I am out of it, this nuptial igloo
Where live do us part
And death do us meet again
My belongings intact still
And for them no one will steal.

I am a bad kitchen superintendent
Utensils clang and I am a noise maker
Spoons and plates
Are half washed
And I am a lazy house maid.

I am outside here
Not loved anymore
Drenched under the rain
When the rain stops
Probably the sun will come
And I will be under it
When the sun goes
I will be left an orphan spouse
Beaten by the frost of the biting winter.

And I am dumped here
Like a waste bin
Not loved anymore
In double ways.

Tony Adah

Owerri Sphinxes

In Imo, the staffers are half laid off
A staggering earthquake
Is shaking the land
Their mandate holder is muzzy
At the crossroads
A decision will be taken soon
By the people for the staffers
Who are now sphinxes.

Tony Adah

Pain. Where Are Thou?

I have been macerated
My heart open and bleeding
All cheeks soaked with tears
It is not the pain I fear
But death of old, the terminal end
Why should I fear pain?
Of no flesh or bones
Something I can not see
I can get cut by my cutlass
In my garden, see a snake drop by
I may run away not perturbed
By the wound,
Pain where art thou?

Tony Adah

Paradise City

Ancient city
Hold my mind with thy tired hands
That I'll think of thee wherever I go
City of yore and city of today
Lonely lying on the estuary
Bearing a steady gaze at the tides
Of the angry Atlantic
Where ships berthed for human trade
Now thy ancient treaty is gone.

I am proud to be here
Where the avenues sway with hugging boughs
From the Atlantic sea gale
And where the fountain spills her urine
A thousand feet at eleven eleven
And monoliths greet a legion guests
As they stand at zone six
A missionary cuddles her twin
Silently watching traffics
Flowing in Ndidem Usang Isor
And Henshaw steadily watching from Watt.

The times of fear are gone
Only a prison stump wall
Lamely watch passersby freely doing their trade
Now I pledge not to betray thy cause
To keep thee clean
Give me water to launder thy clothes
A broom to sweep thy grounds
A spade to remove clogs from thy drains
And bring honour to thy beauty.

Tony Adah

Paradise On Earth

Home is where my umbilicus
Was buried
Where those hills meet
And pave a trail to the neighborhood
Where the springs whisper their
Forlorn songs on a tiring journey
That I travel with them
Where the hoes craft a thousand
Hairstyles on the head of the earth,
Those terraces that nurture the old
The young and the unborn.

Here's my home
Where the birds perch on this bough
Dry, broken or whole
And render songs that sweep the world
There's no place like here
Though despised of dirt
We must pay a golden price
Of little brooms in our hands
Sweep the ground and soon
Beauty like from the heavens
Will take a toll of our land
A paradise on earth.

Tony Adah

Party For Butterflies.

A flutter of butterflies
Gathered on a shrub
I wonder why they worried here
Until I stole sight of a narcissus
With whorls of petals
In which nectar was trapped
The flower shook
And screamed silently
At the fluffy flies
Suckling at its breasts!

Tony Adah

Passing By The Pond

I'm passing by the pond
A toad greeted me with a throaty voice
I'm not afraid of its bulging eyes
I guess it loves me too
And the croak maybe a forewarning
That the crocodile lies between
The water and the grass.

The pond skaters are shaking
Upon the pond not sinking like Peter
I think they too love me
But their speechlessness
Could be danger on my side.

Some pond weeds flap and float like a frigate
This is where the duck, loon, pelican and the stork
All alight and swim and prey on the fish
And the crocodile lays an ambush
Waiting for all that comes his way
But grandpa said it rats nothing
Than the pebbles of stone!

Tony Adah

Patience

On the day the dog
Was absent from the market
Many bones abound
On the day the soldiers
Refused to watch
Over the warfront
The enemy struck
But out of patience
Comes goodluck!

Tony Adah

Pato Fish

The state housing estate
Is a sprawling residence of yesterday
Its houses are old
Some sold out to money bags
And wearing looks quinescent of a new wife
Others in old wears
Stood in tatters like a mad man.

Here at one end is Pato fish
And Pato fish is a relish
Of grilled fish peppered with onions and cabbages
To drive down Carla Rossi, carlum, muzik, isenbeck
Star erg, guilder and harp lager
In this place there's no tiredness or nuptial nagging
There's just fish wine, beer and fun.

Pato fish is a serenade
Where itinerant guitarists
Of dreadlocks and otherwise
Converge to sooth the soul
Of the partakers in this shrine.
It smells good
The boys and girls
Scurry up and down
Delivering cellophane wrap of chops.

Tony Adah

Patriots Of The Land

Those who think
They own the land have
Subdivided it,
Into zones to reap political gains
And the tears of the citizens
They turn into liquid gold.

They have ripped the land
Bare
Or it is drying up
To a level when our own tears
Will no longer be turned into anything else.

Some may say the glue that holds us
Is dry and brittle
Now is the time to fight
But shrapnel do not settle any scores
The land itself is made to secrete its bonds
When the time comes,
We shall know the real patriots
Of the land.

When the lode goes
And our ploughshares loosen the earth
They way our fathers did,
Then those who pilfer nutrients from the land
Will ultimately plough them back
When their teeming appetite abates
And they lie still upon the same land
They cheated us by.

Tony Adah

Peanut Friends

I stood still
They ate theirs
I kept mine
I stood still
They ate theirs
And I salivated
I ate mine like my dentures
Were in for a dentist examination.
I left some for the next day
They watched me
Their mouths watered
They sighed
And I left them.

Tony Adah

Poetry

I am thinking
About myself
I am thinking
About other people
I am remembering something.
I am thinking
About the world
I want to tone it:
Earth, man, animal, water, fire, fair etc
And all toward perfection
Or put them in their right
Places of interaction.
I want to in all these
Make me and other men happy
Sum up all these
And make them
The reason for poetry.

Tony Adah

Poet's Block

On my writing table
I placed my pen and my paper
Before I write
I must obey nature's call.

I took my pen and paper with me
And dropped on the top
Of the cistern in my loo
I came back clean
I am in such a muddle
As to where my pen and paper are

I went hysterical
Until a long search
Back into the loo
I saw them whispering to themselves
'We are here, Mr. Poet we are here'
I heard the whispers not
With my ears
But with my eyes
When I came back
To the writing table
All the venom
In my head was gone.

Tony Adah

Poets Of The New Year

Poets and poems

Poems and poets of the new year

Bend down

Bend down

Bend down and give the world its shape

Give the man and the woman and the children

Their food and the world its peace

And make your own heart

A fulcrum of happiness and melody

And the world will meekly xerox it.

Tony Adah

Polygamy

My dear new wife
Hunger wages war against partial orphans
If you don't want to mother this child
I will father him.

Tony Adah

Poor Man's Prayer

Don't crush me under
The wheels of a bicycle
Smash me on the ground
Mash me with the tyres of a Bugatti
Or a Mercedes Benz
Give me a glorious death
Not a miserable one.

Tony Adah

Portrait

There is a horde of flies
Feasting on a horde of corpses
In the battlefield
That my country has become
O, Picasso
I can find you no more
Thy feeble hand among them
And brushes and paint
Away from there.
I the identifier
Know the corpses-
Those lying putrid
In the north and a
Fresh one in the south
I will go speak
With Ben Enwonwo
To calcify them
In his sculptures
O, corpses I mean.

Tony Adah

Postcard From Heaven

People of the lower realm
Of mega cities, towns, villages
And farm dwellers
It feels so good to be here
With guardian angels and saints
If you ever tasted here
You always want to come
Stress free living
In a labyrinth of a supersonic Xanadu
No traffic hold-up, hunger, thirst
Or birth or death.

We are watching
You by the seconds
And the minutes and the hours
Days, weeks, months and years
Heavens are watching
Your greed and avarice
Iniquities and murderous ways
Your oblivion
On the path
Of the less privileged
Are all written in our log book.

We know a great deal of
Your longing for here
Our eldorado but you must
Shed your cloak of flesh and bones
Our transport system
Deals with ghosts only
Of men and women like you
Or you go to the other side
Where an inferno blazes
Like the spew
Of a volatile volcano.

Tony Adah

Pot And Kettle.

My erstwhile and outgoing
Governors are friends
Like a cat and a dog
The erstwhile was a tug
Who taught the people their lessons
And brought tyranny
To bear on democracy brutally.

The outgoing is a gentleman
Astute with precision
Of a diamond cutter
He grinds slowly but surely.

The former one climbed
A podium to pour ordure
On the outgoing in a successsion rally
Every land in calabar belongs to the former
As they are only two construction companies
In this city
They all belong to the outgoing.

Tony Adah

Potential Enemy

Snakes don't bite
By showing you their dentures
They just bite.
Little infant ones
Don't bite yet
We have but no reason
To nurture them
Bigger their heart gets with time
More bitter their venom
Gets with age.
Spare them now
And postpone your doomsday.
A snake is not
Amongst the animals
They say, ' save an animal
And it will go but save
A human being
He will kill you '
That's the way
My eyes look forty five degrees
To the east
Where missiles and bombs
Mix up with the human race.

Tony Adah

Power Versus Power

I am home
And there's a frenzy
Of activities
The politicians at Abuja
Think that they're closer
To the government than the
Ones in Calabar who are closer
To the grassroots.
And they are moths
Harassed as they are
The powder in their wings
Is fast wearing out
And soon a flight
Difficult to man will come.

Tony Adah

Prayer

A prayer is seeking
Alms from God
Without a bowl in hand
Often times we're more
Blessed than beggars
And what the heavens
Expect of us is thanksgiving
And not a bang on heaven's door
Asking for more!

Tony Adah

Prayer To My Ancestors

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo!

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo! !

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo! ! !

What does the lion

Eat other than flesh?

May the gods

Grant fecundity

To our women

And wealth

To our men.

May the fields

Brim with bounties

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo!

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo! !

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo! ! !

Where does a man

Keep his strength

Other than in his spirit?

Those ancestors

Abode in the cave

Of the spirits

Come out in droves

And ward off

The ailments

Of this tired earth

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo!

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo! !

Eyaa hoo?

Hoo! ! !

How can

A slave be free

Other than seizing
His consent back
From his master?
Oyuishour Ayang,
Great grand father
Pick up your cudgel
Beside your grave
And emancipate your
Children from the
Clutches of tyranny.
Eyaa hoo?
Hoo!
Eyaa hoo?
Hoo! !
Eyaa hoo?
Hoo! ! !
How does
A greedy man die
Other than from the food
Of his life?
Adazeh Ador Ishama
My own father
You left only yesterday
The heritage you bequeathed
To your Children
Has been plundered
In fierce battles
For land graps
And primitive accumulation.
Eyaa hoo?
Hoo!
Eyaa hoo?
Hoo! !
Eyaa hoo?
Hoo! ! !
What does a father
Expect of his Children
Other than greater advancement?
Great grand father
Grandfather
Father, I bet you
There's a road

Now leading home
A hospital beyond
The old market
Water gushing everywhere
From the donor agencies
Infact I will tell you more
When I see you.

Tony Adah

Preparing For Heaven

If heavenward going
Has a condition
Then death must be it
And it is worth dying
So I am due going
A vulnerable mortal like me
Waiting for a glaring jerk of death
How does one prepare for heaven
When its condition is death?

Tony Adah

Prisoner's Food

Between the white grains
Of rice are brown bean seeds
Spiced with red chilli pepper
And over -salted
Waited some prisoner's food.

They themselves clad
In threadbare calico
Went abush chopping some wood
But return to see
Some grains looking
Like toad's eye
Half done waiting for them.

Tony Adah

Prisoner's Song

I am in gaol
For the sin
Of the world
Let me thin
In like air
Through a chink
On the wall and
Be free again
To tell the
World to be free of sin.

Tony Adah

Procrastination

Never delay to do
What now beckons and begs to be done
The snake delayed and hands and legs eluded him
In a meeting where appendages were given
The hen went late and her knees were given
Behind her legs
The toad hopped lazily and missed a tail
Snails waited to make their houses
Over their heads and got no legs
Bats went late and met wings
Without feathers but took parches of hair
Tortoise slept all day
And lost her speech
So what you want to do
Do now!

Tony Adah

Promises.

We have been waiting
Waiting for the fruition of the promises
Of the dividends of democracy
Every passing day lengthens our hope
Like a shadow in the evening sun
And the promises again broken like an earthenware
Scattered in the sun.

A promise made with tongue
Finds fulfilment only in our ears
As our eyes view a void
Of undulating promises rolling in the land
We thirst to sear our tongues
We walk to stumble with our legs
Still the noise of promises ring
Unfulfilled in our ears

The promises have grown some wings
And flown and soared like the eagle
And our hope returns home
To our rooky house where
Our right or left thumbs lay a siege
And wait for he who promises and fail.

Tony Adah

Puffballs

They grow so fast
And they grew so beautiful
In the powdery crowns, they put their stout feet
On the soft ground
And you will never know what stuff
they are made up of.
When young and tender
They wear a crown of unrustled dry leaves
And of all these black, gray, white and yellow beauty
Their powder is poison!

Tony Adah

Quintuplets Mother

I would wish
Her breasts a multitude
Like the coconut legion
Gourdly round and expectant
Of a suckling bout
Or borrow from papaya's
Udder turgid like
A robust sky
Anxious to rain.

Tony Adah

Rain

The rain's emissary of clouds thicken
And the sky
Whispers its mumbles
Into our expectant ears.
A load of wetness
Is hurled upon the earth,
Sputtering on our rooftops
Jubilant children echoing
Its arrival after a spell of drought.
Lillies' bulbs butt the earth from beneath
Grass tufts all rejuvenating
In the milieu of the rain.
Verdure come on
Splendid to behold
Sometimes the Abakaliki rice
Gets bent in the storm
Like an old man
Trotting on his third leg
Our houses sinking
In obeissance to this visitor
When he doesn't come,
We complain
When he comes, we lament.

Tony Adah

Rain, Sheath Thy Sword

I will suck the sky
So that thou art dry
Of thy spittle and our land be too be dry
The childs, I beg your pardon, children
Want to play
The ladys, I mean ladies
Want to harvest their peanuts
And our land need thou help
To be firm and dry
Oh, rain sheath thy sword
My mouth broad not in cheeks
Can not suck all thy spittle.

Tony Adah

Refugee

You know me as an indigene
Son of the soil
A payer of taxes
The authorities are reluctant to collect
Enhanced by the elephant
Slaughtered in the niger delta.
I have been driven southward
Desolate, I am without a livelihood
By the lunacy of the killers
Of the north.
I have become a refugee
In my own fatherland
And this is the needle
That pricks my heart.
No, I will not go up there again
Not with the horrendous
Blood stains of the mortally wounded
And the eyesore of the brutally murdered
I will keep the howl of my anguish here
Be a beginner again
Bear the centripetal forces
Of my dear country
That have me tossed southward
From where the golden fleece
Sojourn was made, thinking that
I have a country!
So good I am southward
Here they will plant me in a place
Where my kith and kin will see
When I finally expire
And remember me as a citizen
Who was internally displaced
In his own fatherland.

Tony Adah

Regret At Twilight

See how the barren bleed
In fertility
And still cry when the womb is gone
Youth never continues to blossom
Because the sun rises everyday
And where the powder hues heap
There wrinkles will abound
When the sun sets
All the shadows will hide
And the hands grope in vain
For the youthful light
Lost to fads that fade
And a woman is full of Lamentations.

Tony Adah

Reincarnation

If I must die
To be born again
I'll come a woman
To unveil my tricks.

Tony Adah

Remember Me

When things get out of the way
And life is hard and deaf
Like a stone
And all is planted but the motheyams
And you have one in your fire,
Remember me O'friend.

When it is done
Scrapped of soot and cinder
On its back and ready to eat
Remember me
For mine is still in the farm.

Remember me O'my friend
Here where love ties a knot
Of friendship
Our kind hearts the glue
In an unsung friendship
That does more than it speaks
O' friend.

Tony Adah

Reminiscence Of Coup Detats

My fellow countrymen
I follow you this morning
To mourn the death of my country
And the dearth
Its citizen face
Amid bounties.

The King has created
An empire fit
Only for himself
And his cronies
Today the King is no more

Remain wherever you are
As citizens of this cojntry
All airports remain closed
All borders closed
All schools closed
All hospitals closed
And a dusk to dawn
Curfew has been imposed
A new leader
Will soon be announced to you.

I am so happy
That was then!

Tony Adah

Renaissance

It was so dark and painful
Living in sombre clouds with men and women
Who needed spectacles to see their way
But the tide swam with us
We had eyes but we couldn't see
Legs but we couldn't walk
Nose but we couldn't smell
Ears but we couldn't hear
Now I am enchanted
For those with vision lead the way.

Tony Adah

Requiem For Man

The pall bearers bore him
In wood inlaid with linen
His nose looking at the sky
In nostrils sniff of cotton wool
He was a giant astride the world
Or a dwarf like a dot upon the earth
He was a rich man or poor man
Like a mouse of the church of old
He was sane or he was mad
With honour at last he laid
In utter abandonment to the earth.

Tony Adah

Rescue

And the croaky toad
Told the venomous
Snake that it was senseless
Showing strength in the wild
A duel was better
Was better fought
By the wayside
Where humans
Double as umpire
And the enemy.

Tony Adah

Robbers's Den

In an uncompleted weed grown house
Fads shirts hung
Sleek phones idle about
Laptops were like benches
Upon which they sat
Guns long and short and bullets assorted
All litter on the ground
Who knows if the items are complete?
As told by the police
Who raided this robbers's den.

Tony Adah

Rules Abandoned

Unethical ethics,
Rules abandoned
The world strips itself
And is tight in its own garment
It weeps!

Tony Adah

Rumours

The mill spins them like
Bolls of silk cotton floating
High up in the sky raining
Tales smack of truth.
Falsehood maybe with a taint of truth
Ringing in our ears
And wringing our soul
Anger brews and froths
Like foams of fresh palm wine
Oozing from a gourd.

Bees busy in their trade
Stinging with their blunt stings
And the world gullible as before a fertile soil
To root and spew the mill's
effluent upon the world.

Tony Adah

Run Away Girl

If your favourite places
Became bars and restaurants
And you went to the hills
In bum shorts and T-shirts
And sunshades;
If you went frolicking
Shamelessly with my friends
Wore clothes of independence
And tell lies and live in houses
Infidelity built;
And abandon your girl
And simply reticulate yourself
In town like water board
Am I still your lover?

Tony Adah

Salvation, Earth And Sadness

Heaven opened its mouth
Swallowed hell
Heavily contaminated
It dropped down
To a place called earth
Where there are
Saints and sinners

I know no place
Other than this
And no one holds
Any testimony of return
From the concept
Of the two extremes
Of salvation and doom
And that is
Where happiness
Swallows melancholy
And we live with
The taint of both.

Tony Adah

Scare

There was a vigil night
In the church
A frightening call
Came to one congregant-
A red alert to avert
The Patrick Sawyer syndrome of death.
One, two, three and most members
Of the church left
For a cleansing bath
Of salt and warm water
And the desolate church
Faithless in its faith
Stood open and deserted
By those who proclaim
Heaven here on earth.

Tony Adah

Scarecrow

When I am gone and back
If it's true,
Do not put me
In the land of our heroes
Reinvent me
Pass me through a lab
No matter how crude
To become an inventor
Let me through the furnace of wars
To become a real general
Fly me through the sprawling fields
Where birds twirp to fill
The abundance of the earth,
Make me a scarecrow
A whistleblower in the land
Not a pawn on the table of heroes
Without deeds.

tonyadah2019/03/29

Tony Adah

Schizophrenic Echoes

Whether you have eaten or not
You will move
Never missing your steps
But missing your mind.

Any puddle on the road
Is a thirst quenching stream
Any remnant on the side street
Is a free restaurant.

Madness has its order
You will pass through one place
Severally and feel a difference

It makes rags golden
On the King's body
A Rastafarian out of the street man
Who sings and dances
The echoes of madness.

Tony Adah

Se(Lection)

Do you need to bother
Yourself If the election
Is going to be selection?
The emancipated voters
Have become emasculated voters

A conclave is going
To do the baptism
And we take the name.
We will vote but without
Our cards and our thumbs.

Tony Adah

Sea Waves

The sea visits the land
In bright brow and in anger
It rises to welcome those who can
clasp the waves and raise their head
But it taunts those who once in
Look for the shark's stomach
And are no more seen
Than disappear and get the first
And the second swallow in two places.

Tony Adah

Sealed Lips

The world
Is embroiled in
All sorts of odds
The custodians
Of order are
Dishing entropy
Out to the world
And I am silent
Loudly silent.
Waiting for my
Silence to be heard.
With all the wars,
The rancour and the deaths
I am silent
Deeply silent
Watching the world
Perhaps on a mission
For self rejuvenation.

Tony Adah

Searching

When we first came
He was the one we found
In the land
He had all acres to grow
Like mushrooms
His clouds festered in the hills
And his surfs frothed
In the rivers
His wind whispered in the air
And his green lushed
In the land.
Hope whose songs we sang
For the unborn heroes
We held him
On our head without a pad
He crashed and scattered
Like an earthenware from
A maiden's head
We've been engrossed
Fixing the bits and pieces
Without luck to find
The potter or the wheel.

Tonyadah2018

Tony Adah

Searching For Thieves.

Searching the land for those
Who stole our yams and cassava
Stole rice and stole proceeds
From our golden crude that shakes
And spin dollars like a mint.

Probes, the order of the regime
Brimming the land
Hanging lopsided like injustice
In an Abuja high Court
The prober wearing a hood
Of immunity hiding beside the rock.

Probe the land
Probe the water
Probe the air
And see that none belong
To the citizens
Probes that never reach the heels
Of the prober trotting the globe.

Probes, half-hearted duty
Garbing a cloak of invisibility
On the thieves,
Probes, that give verve to the
Sneeze of a moody sheriff
And the opposition party
Having an inoculum of a flu.

Probes of naming a dog and the owner
Landing in a net of the hungry
And overzealous police,
Probe the entrails and look for
What is stolen that makes citizens
Join famished as they are.
Waiting for the unending probes
That emasculate the common people
And make a few pudgy like
The Queen termites with soldiers

On guard
Time we prostrate in your domain
Waiting for you to finish the probes
Or the probes will finish us.

Tony Adah

Season Of The Winds

The wind bore me on its shoulder
Saved me from the cataclysm
In the land,
Crops drowned
Water everywhere but none to quench
The scorching thirst,
Birds down
With no bough to perch and preach
Plumes drooped, dripping and drenched
Like a folded umbrella from the rain
Goats borrow the breath of
The gushing wind to bleat
A forlorn song.
Where are my competitors?
They whine and fret
At the darkness upon the shrapnel's
Of the volcanic regurgitation
Tomorrow, bleak as it is
Will their sun come
Or leave them grope in
Paths undefined?
Why must it be me
On the wings of the wind?
And safe in the history of this wind?
That school that I went
The wind was there
It recognised me in the pages
Of its archives
Yes, I am a treasure in the museum
Of my yesterday
The only one and my types
Safe from the rhythm of the violent
Wind with a chortle of the chosen few.

Tony Adah

Second Language

Some stern looking
Soldiers accosted a lady
With wares on her head
What are you carrying?
They asked.
Okro for corn.
She muttered
The funniest thing
About these soldiers
Is that they shared
Same tongue with the lady
But preferred a second language.

Tony Adah

Secrets

When you have somethings
In the garden of your heart
Keep them
Clear the weeds
And keep the valuables.
Hide them in your heart
Do not tell your tongue
For it will wag about
Giving you to the world.
Shut the windows of your heart
And put a giant padlock
In your lips
That what is to be hidden
Is not poured to the world.
In all these
Put yourself in a cocoon
And wrap it
With discipline.

Tony Adah

Self Reliance

I want to tell
The whole world
That I am thirsty
And I don't just want water
But the road to the stream

I want tell the whole world
That I want to eat fish
Not just fish on the table
But a fish trap, a net Or a hook
And avail me the skills
Of wadding in the water
Looking for the fish myself
Give me skills
And leave the world
Under my care.

Tony Adah

Send Us Home

I pray Aeolus, send us westward
In the Lee of your winds
Safely to the shores
When safety is ours upon the shores
We found the truth that it's a mixed hue
Of the ambience of sea and the land
Send us home quickly
Now that we have shed our worries
Upon the shore.

Tony Adah

Seventy Six Oil Wells

When available
The gush was much
Morning and evening heavy
With sprees of owambe where
The petrodollars flew like swallows
And perched on corpses and bride and grooms
White elephants danced
And battered the barrels
The land ceded
Citizens scampered away
In all directions, refugees in their homeland
White elephants stood still
Amid weeds in abandonment
They cried foul
On the empty barrels
Still honey is there
And as well palm oil
Who want to go to the wild
For money when the copious flow
Churn out mints?

Tony Adah

Shackled

Now we are out
Of the prison
I had thought we will
Die in there
Freedom means so much
So to us
That we counted every step of it
But death inside that prison
Where death pangs pinched
Was better than giving us freedom
Without a voice
Everything happened
And we are mute
We are deaf
We are blind
We are lame
Looks like this time
We were the jailors
In a prison where we were prisoners.

Tony Adah

She Didn't Leave Her Heart Home

I am alone
I do not know who is with
Someone else
Now I'm married in name
She has travelled home
Forgot nothing here with us
But the haunting hunger that
Squeezes our entrails.

It is good sometimes to be alone
Listening to the wind whisper
There then its sagely words
Can say where you spouse's heart
Is hidden in your house while
She is away
And not any more aware
Of the frolicking children or their
Noises when hunger strikes
Or still the clanging utensils when
The search for grubs intensify.

I have been a father and I am
Now a father and a mother
Listening to the pros and cons
Of a nuptial duo
I can't wind back the clock
The honey moon is gone
My power attenuated and the love
On a daily hide and seek game.

Now I am breathing so abnormally
Waiting for the a split second of
Honeymoon again to calm my nerves
And the other times to fray them up
That's what was written in the
Nuptial vows
Some did understand.

Tony Adah

She Is No Longer Shy.

She's no longer shy
To prowl the streets
Half naked looking for men
Her eyebrows aglow with pink
To match her blouse
Which the tailor cheated with silk
Her lips red in the hue
Of her hoaves
And the groin bare
For the world to see.
She's no longer shy
To be in the streets
Smoking cigarettes
Slinging her bag and exposing
The beauty that ought to be explored
She's no longer
Shy to be on the streets

Tony Adah

She Turned Her Back On Me

I don't care
Whether you're
Looking at me Or not
I love you
I don't care
If you will not
Love me back
I'm done with the right thing
I have done it
And I'm satisfied
And my heart os down
I don't know how you feel
But I don't care to know
See you when
You change your mind.

Tony Adah

Shine Comes After The Rain

After the rain

The man who stood bare body
By the wayside with a spiky beard
Of gray and black got warmth.
Flowers in their clasped petals
Unfurled their whorls
And ants return to roost
In their soiled dingy burrows.

Clouds receded beyond
Their gray and black and blue hues
Given to bolls of cottony shreds
Pushing up in the sky.
The day ripen at midday
Into a meadow of rolling hills and valleys.

The fields blossom
Then palm trees bled their copious milk
Like injured rubber plants in Uyanga plantation
It is needless
Now to pour the fresh juice
Into old skins.

Tony Adah

Should We Kill Poetry

Should we kill poetry
For the sake of pedants
And formalists?
Let's not hold up poetry
In a bottle
And cork it with excessive
Criticism and rules
Poetry survives when
The quest to comment
Radiates the same joy as
Writing or reading.
This way that
Poetry may not be killed.

Tony Adah

Show Affection

The world is good
The world is safe
If we show some love
Not our crafts that build mounds
Of torture.
If we inflict ourselves with injuries
Who will waste their compassion on us?
The world is good
The world is safe
If we wear each other's shoe
And see where it hurts
A change will call our name
And we will forced to retract our steps,
Show some love
Not that love that bears temporary
In gardens, malls, taverns or on the street
Where when a gift is gone, a drink is finished
Love migrates
Or when a kiss is made, the lipstick is gone.
The world is good
The world is sage
When we show some love
Share some germane affection that exudes
Some glue and bind eternally like heavens
Where angels play perpetually in bliss.

Tony Adah

Show Peace And The World Will See Peace

If we cry for peace and remain in our houses
War will come
Peace is earned and not won
Show peace and do not cry for it
And its rootlets will grow
Into our hearts and this plant will blossom there
The war we fight in our our hearts
Is more mortal than that with guns
For the gun gets its instructions
From a wicked heart and its direction
By a careless hand
The boundary we set on land could be shifted
But that built in our hearts deeply immobile.

Tony Adah

Silence

Wherever you are
Far or near
That's where my mind yearns to be
Your golden attractive voice
Spawning melodies of yore
Of truth and of humility
That is where
I want to be.
You are dancing in the wind
Some birds stealing the show
Trees still in obeissance
To your serenity and truth
I am with you.
When the truth of your integrity
Ebbs in the ears and eyes
Of those who do not bother to know
Or flow with the wind of refined men,
I am with you.
In the waters
Where you calm the waves
When you chill my aching feet
And strengthen me to fear no sound
Either a mew or a growl
My arms folded, my legs
Tethered to your golden words.
To untie here
Means I am losing my calm
Losing the entity of me
Giving me to the world to taunt
I will never let loose
From your grip my heart
And show my nakedness
To the whole world.

Tony Adah

Silence The Fool's Pain

Silence

That painful numbness of speech

When an answer is required

That loud sound

Of unspoken answer

A fool gets

And the wise rejoices.

Tony Adah

Silent Visitor

He blares no bullhorn
Or on his sing a song for anyone
He boils no meat
And gives no party
Silently,
He comes when he comes.

Tony Adah

Sin

The man who told us
About you has been hanged
His hands handcuffed
His feet shackled
And his corpse abandoned
He lives so far
As he made the point
In every house a church
On every street a mosque
But in every heart a sin.

Tony Adah

Singing Our Dirges Alive

Born into a British cradle
My country full of tribes and tongues
Hobbles on crutches all the time
Though our pulse and will be gone
In citizen's toils,
There's no claim as such on us.
We struggle under the sun or rain
Still we have nothing to show
Even when oil flows in iron veins
Traversing the land,
It is either the dirges
Of our coming death or the songs of
The fallen ones,
We that will die
Those that will follow
And all yet to kiss the mortal lips
There can be no other
Country like ours.

Tony Adah

Sky Fear

The metal bird was grunting
While we boarded
We fastened our seatbelts
And became the entrails of
The flying bird.
In the weather most frightful
Than ever before
Sky frowning with black and
Brown clouds
It was a bumpy flight
To touch the face of God
The bird tore through the clouds
In the midst of drops of rain
We soared high and high
Until above the rain bearing clouds
The next sky charming with the
Smiling sunshine
Down we looked to white sky below
A moment later the bird began
To nosedive
And back down we came to earth
With all joy to a place
We cherish like no other.

Tony Adah

Small Big Girl

Strut like a winner
Touch the rivers
Touch the streams
All the lakes
Take a bath, wash neat
And paint yourself a young girl
Abandon someone nine months
You held in your womb
Small girl
Garb on your street wears
Touch every drink
Touch every man
Be happy
Life like a bee makes honey
As it stings
Touch your work place
Ride your bike back
Touch your hair
Look at the mirror
That hair was new
It is an old art of yesterday
Touch everywhere
Hold the time still
Like the mirror but move yourself
And the difference will be clear.

Tony Adah

So Great A Poet

I want to be
So great a poet
That when I sneeze
The world will feel it
When I cough
The phlegm from my mouth
Will be poetry
And so help me muses!

Tony Adah

So Long A Quarrel

The long quarrel
Was about a short issue
And I listened endlessly
To a bedtime story
Told in a car.

From the vehemence
And outpouring of words
There was an infidel in the car
And I was demonished
By one who should rescue me
From the sting of the public tongue.

I was quiet
Quiet with unspoken pain
No flood of rain
Could sweep
I was calm
Resolute to be a deaf-mute
But provided an abode
For pain in my heart
Every bit of the word
In this quarrel
An inoculum of immunity
So I'm strong today.

Tony Adah

Soldiers

The pick up truck zoomed
With lightning speed
Almost smashing a lamp post
At the median of the road,
Its beacon lights
Swapping roles with the idle lamp stand
Of emergency its siren blared
Where there was none
Neither was there any mishap.
The gun totting soldiers
Acting as in war front
Edged a frightened woman
In a toyota camry out of the way
Their guns pointing at her Car.
This is how force is exhibited
In a third world country like mine
Where the guns they brandished,
The uniform they wore
And the pockup truck they drove
All of the people's sweat.

Tony Adah

Somehow The Mandate Is Lost

They told us that when democracy comes
All our ailments will be healed
Somehow it has put thorns in our heels
And lamely we limp like a frog
Somehow the crispy khaki are gone
With the arrival of the flowing gowns
And we are down.

Somewhere the factories are closed
In their stead the weeds have grown
It is not the Luddites that have
Fought the growth of factories and shut them down
Somehow it is quest of those holding our mandate
To consume only that that comes from abroad
And offer contracts to import even the ubiquitous air.
This is how our mandate has been squandered
And we are waiting with bowl at hand
For the next meal.

Tony Adah

Somnolence

I have just woken up
With smudges in my eyes
Pale looking and helpless
Like a prem baby
Sleep sues me
Back to my bed
I am steadfast
With much allegiance
To mother nature.

Someone rustles to my ear
'Last night
You sabotage your sleep'
Yes I did perusing
Pages of books
This morning
I am on penance
Giving restitution to sleep
Over a duel
Nature is the victor.

Tony Adah

Song For The World

I utter these words to the world
Let thy faith waver no more
Trapped in this quagmire
Slumped in this nightmares
Succour is sure to come
And all that is abnormal will go
Because that which holds them is no more
Then you will have eternal rest
Devoid of sickness and worries.

Tony Adah

Song Of A Decampee

Where I was they donkeyed me
When I wanted to have the sweat
Of my labour;
They merely covered me
With the umbrella that was tattered
And let sun and rain in
I was sun beaten and rain soaked
While in a shelter.
At last I was guarded by bars of iron
I thought I was going to die
Until I voted with my legs
And saw the sun again
When the furnace in my will
Melted the bars and I am free again.

Tony Adah

Song Of A Girl

I don't want listen to them
Say I am good or bad
All I need is to live
And live in the real sense of it
Don't tell me what you like
I am me and you are you
All I need is good life
A chicken wing or a chicken breast
Fish peppersoup or grilled fish
Some palmwine or satzenbrau
To clean the oil from my throat
And make me feel fine
They say I am careless;
That I do not take care of my child
When I also I am still a child
To listen to them whine
At your ways and get you nerve up
Is get yourself motionless
Eat nothing drink nothing
Because they will taunt you
I will die a whore
The one that really enjoyed the world

Tony Adah

Song Of An Aging Man.

My robust cheeks
Are sagging
My hair grey
Age with an invisible razor
Is busy balding my head
And my eyes living low
In their sockets.
Oh, age why do you
Play such a trick on me?

Yesterday I could walk
Straight and smart
Look at me today
Toddling like an infant
Learning to walk.
My eyes blurred
And the wind blows
With some ear muffs in its hands
Stuffing them in my ears
You can only reach me
By throwing pebbles at me
Oh, age why have you
Played such a trick on me?

Tony Adah

Song Of An Old Man

I saw the sun
Going down and I followed it
Until my mirror showed me
My sunken eyes
My wrinkled neck
My bent back
As I groped looking
For my third leg.

Tony Adah

Song Of Repentance

When you see them
Tell them I have gone
No longer in that enclave
Where crimson blood was our vow
And red and black the colour
Of our garbs.

I have shown the world my nakedness
That evil forest now a taboo
The long strenuous hours
Of initiation, the twinkling stars
And the chattering of night birds
The sinister hoots of owls
And the songs of crickets all gone
Into the history of my past

.
I am no longer a double man
Like my blood stained double
Edged sword
I have gone to the stream
To do an etenal ablution
And I am white as snow, resplendent
As the cascading of our spring water
Down the valley of born again.

I have dropped my axe, my gun and all
Into the sea of repentance
Now I am a member of the
Ordinary crowd, my witnesses
Under this cleansing rain
I have paid my debts
And I am free, a negro untethered
From the stem of slavery
By the kind hand of abolitionists
My back to you old guys
And my front to the people.

Tony Adah

Song To My Grandma

The owls are hooting
Nightjars are changing positions at dusk
On the roads
No matter what sinister forces join hands
It is not yet time for me to leave.
I will tarry in the stream
Allow alum to spread on the turbid water
And let me fetch limpid water
For my grand mama.
No one needs to hurry
In a journey of no return
I am a pebble from a sling
I will travel but to come back
Is like seeing the toad with a tail
I will travel in a train
That takes both rich and poor fare free.

Tony Adah

Spokesman

I speak for the world
I speak to the world
Those home truths of the homeless
Of the dumb and of the deaf
I speak not of the roses or the
Mountains or the beautiful skies,
I speak of the pained and the dead
I speak to the silent world of the
Pained that grizzle and groan.

I walk those long distances
For the crippled and the sedentary
I sob in the place of those
In melancholy;
I take pellets of guns in my heart
In the place of those
In the in the battlefronts
I cry of hunger
For the famished.

I sue for peace
That the pieces be joined
In the ugly face of the global wars
I speak with my own gun
Its ravaging muzzle directed
At the new forces of global chaos
I'll shoot at diseases
At global warming
At poverty
At recession
At terrorism
And as a spokesman
I must stand or fall.

Tony Adah

Stateless Scribbler

As I write this
I am a stateless refugee
If I am not
Someone out there
Is wantonly displaced
In the wars the world
Has refused to name.
Though without a scroll
And without a pen
I have been endowed
With a legion of themes
I write on the back of the world
With the pains of the world
And the pen I make in the world
But with the ink of my blood.

Tony Adah

Stationary Progress

I sit on the wings of time
And see how it flies
Yesterday was a centenary
And half of it spent in tears
In a grope to catch up
With a racing world
One step forward
And two steps backwards!

Tony Adah

Still Searching

Every night
I'm awake
Looking for a better
Way to couple words
Every day I search with my eyes
And listen with my ears
Listen to myself
To let others listen to me
I'm agitated
My worries
Wear me down
And I rise like truth
A strong man.

Tony Adah

Still Sleeping.

The night blinks like a ragging cobra
With its venom spreading
And veiling our hallowed dreams
We smile like a beggar's wish not fulfilled
Rejoice at the wind swaying leaves
In its wake but we remain sedentary
Like a barnacle on the surface of a rock.

We haul pebbles at a petty street thief
And honour an executive thief
Stealing with his pen
We hail a file of ants gallow ward
Least thinking next is our turn.

When an elephant sleeps
A bare hand is not enough to shake
And awaken it from slumber
Our gloomy days are still far
From our galvanized action.

Tony Adah

Still You Are A Citizen

You wake up one early morning
With thoughts and no means to throw
Something into your mewling stomach;
Suddenly you're uprooted
From your ground
At the whims of guns and bombs
Still you are a citizen.

You trudge on
With a luggage of your wares
And in two man and animals
Unable to fix your roots
Anywhere in the ground;
Your faith and hope lost
At the crossroads.
You are hit by a dilemma
Whether to listen to hunger
Or the sound of guns and bombs
Breaking the silence of yore
And throwing shrapnels that wreck
And wound and kill;
Still you are a citizen.

You trudge on
With your roots
Without a hole to put them
They stir dust rising like smothering smoke
From the booming bombs
And the bombers thinking
That the enemy is firing back
Still you are a citizen
Of your dear country
Losing faith and hope
And at last losing your country
Still you are a citizen.

Tony Adah

Street Children

They roam the streets
Like stray dogs
They hawk wares
That we patronize when
Others are in school
We care less to ask
Which school they attend.

They hawk oranges, bananas, satchet water
Fish, apples, cucumber etc
Which we relish
But we never look beyond
Thinking of how
Their tomorrow will look
Or the circumstances that
Out them straying on the streets.

Tony Adah

Strength

Give me air, fire and water
and wisdom and work
 And take the rest
For there lies the wheels
 That drive the world to doom.

Tony Adah

Struggles

Years come and go
Men scamper like the world
Will end in a jiffy
Tear their sinews and thews
Pour a confetti of grey
On their hair
And get and squander
Still the earth in silence
Swallows all.

Tony Adah

Students

There were blue, green
Red and yellow plastic chairs
And I saw farouz, magic moments
Star, gulder and heindeken
Perching comfortably on
The black plastic table.

There were stories
Of exams, money making
Affection and alcohol
In every language
In the world except english
I borrow what I could
To decipher this
But in english I heard
'We have finished exams'!

Tony Adah

Subsidy Removal

The invincible king
Is upon the throne
Hearts of men have absconded
From their chests
And the season of subsidies is gone.

Remove all the subsidies
From the air
So that we can be asphixiated
From the water
So that we die of thirst
From the land
So that we have no habitation

Remove the subsidies from the fire and light
So that we can eat our food raw
And live in the dark
Remove it from petrol
So that we undertake our movement
With our feet in our quotidian toils

From school
So that those you rule will be illiterates
And amendable
To your high handedness
Remove subsidies
From the hospital
So that you rule over corpses

Remove it from our farms
So that the pangs of hunger
Will bite an already emasculated people
Remove it from daylight
So that we remain here
Dark and gloomy
Remove it from life
So that death can claim us all.

Tony Adah

Subtle Change

The earth changes in ways
Subtle to our hands;
We slash, heap and burn
And expect the earth to be the same
We pound on the fauna and flora
Still we think numbers will bloom.
Then we through seeds
In the belly of the earth
And when they don't grow, we mourn
When the tree itself down dies
We will die with it;
The earth changes in ways
Subtle to our hands.

Tony Adah

Suicide Note.

I am constrained
By the colour of the world
Only the damp and dull ones
Of beggars with bowls
Daily not sure of any meal.

I am bothered by the kind of soup
My wife cooks without salt, pepper
Or any seasoning.
Still the kitchen endowment is huge

I am not happy with the way
My home flowing with milk and honey
Makes children scavenge extreme of places
Naked, hungry and idle.
Some of them have taken to the streets
Sniffing powders and brimmg with
The reeks of big tobacco roaming about
They wear pants saging and longer
Than their legs
With dreadlocks and shirts without cufflinks
And I am the cause.

So you shouldn't wonder
Where I have gone to
When you no longer meet with me
As usual begging or rescuing them
From the corner of the street
Near my home flowing with milk and honey
And I am going!

Tony Adah

Sunset At Noon

The day buried his face
In a clime of clouds
Whirlwind, thunder and lightning
All overwhelmed the feeble sun
No matter how hard the sun's rays came on
Their ghastly end is met
And two sunsets will be born!

Tony Adah

Sunset.

It is long the sun rose
Many days we have seen it
Now its white shining rays
Mellow into dull red and yellow
And darkness comes
Perhaps the giver of light
Sleeps in the dark.
We may not have accomplished much
Before the setting sun
But it is gone
Somehow it will come back
Face the inclement clime
Weather it
This feat, a mountain we admire
But unable to clime.

Tony Adah

Sure-P

Sure-P Sure-P
Shop for the jobless youth
Chop the unemployment cancer
For you are our answer
Enrich the wretched ones.

Wherever you come from
I am sure you are not in short supply
Toy not with your custodians
For their yawning purses
Are yearning for you.

Drop down your load of employment
Sound your klaxon for the idle youth
Sure-P Sure-P
In these cupped hands
Drop your tidings.
Here the jubilant await you.

Tony Adah

Surrender Not To Them

Twinge twinkle in your head
Your poker face maintained
Pain is what you feel bogged down
By wounds physical or mental made,
Surrender to them
And make your enemies smile and
Think that you are gone
They gloat at your deep moans
And think that your world is no more
Your poker face maintained
And be a griffon that barks and bite
With its beak but in passionate
Smiles that feel like all is well
Be ready at all times
For pain is fickle but near.

Tony Adah

Survival

If we toil on the soil
With knife and hoe
We must reap
If birds without tools
Feed and soar in the sky
We must grow
The verve is in the head
Not in the muscles.

Tony Adah

Suspended

The cock crowed once
And twice I hung up
Below a tree
My hands not
On any bough
My legs
Not on the ground
My heart thumped
Like the muscle
Of a slaughtered cow.

I am waiting
For a piece of good news
Either now to come
Or later to vanish
And I am waiting
Like a hen
For its knees
To bear in front
Of its legs.

Tony Adah

Swallowed By Modernity

And the capital
Of Eti - Osa
Maroko the place
I knew first as Lagos
Is gone and swallowed
By the peninsulas of real estate

The squalor now sits
In the tummy of opulence
Our smooth sea sand
Where we played as children
Crying under the pavements
And the tilapias
In our green gutters pushed
To the still lagoons
Toads with their bulging eyes
Silently croaking away from here
Blown by the winds of modernity.

Tony Adah

Sweet Home

Home
O sweet home
I do not want to
Leave here
Desert my land
With its bounties
Abandon my sweet
Mother's tongues
Leave the warm
Embrace of my family
The clear humid skies
Of my country
To any fog land with
Leafless trees and cold front climes
In the name of emigration
If I must make it
I will do it like the snail
Take my house upon my head
Everywhere I go
And my home in my mind
But on a visit.

Tony Adah

Sweetie Pie

It's just not easy
To look at you and let you go
I feel a gust of affection much
My lips can't voice out
I wish next time we come
Like a snail and its shell
So much inseparable
So much one like twins.

I can't really leave this world
Without us holding ourselves
Sharing our joy
Sharing our pain
For oneness means
For better for worse
And that's the reason why
I'm singing this song.

I wanna touch you where
It tickles you
And I'll 'efinitely tell you mine
I want you sing me a lullaby
So when I sleep
I can dream about you
All in my arms.

You're just what I breath
What I eat
What I drink
What I live for
Continue to cuddle me
Keep me in your arms
Forever my own.

Tony Adah

Symbols Of Humanity

There's a heart that ticks
There's a soul that flies
Be you black
Brown
White or red
You are all symbols of humanity
That you refuse to adore
Know it brothers
That the soul has no colour
Love no hue
Love yourself
Love your brother
It will be no fun
Staying in the grave alone.

Tony Adah

Taking Stock

I have toiled enough
I am done for the day
I would have loved
To rest but for
My yelling entrails.
I am sitting
Before a dashboard
I can see many
Red lights than green ones
It seems I have spent
All of my goodluck
Perhaps I will exercise my freewill
Turn to my wife to borrow hers
Fix it with Wings
And let me fly again.

Tony Adah

Talking Of Food

We decided for croissant, coffee
And juice
Just continental enough
To show we've been there.

A dark shadow descended above the sky
Where a swirling kite was flying,
In that gazebo
We talked about cuisines
Man's best and animal's worst
And nature's decision on how
Or what we eat.
That shadow was a cloud of death.

We had taken our juice
A chick was in the kite's claws
Its bread and coffee and juice
And as death knocks on our doors
It is one bad thing losing
A friend or a relative
As it is one good thing
Being food for others
A chick climbed the silkcotton
Tree lying in state in someone's
Nest waiting for lunch
Which already it has become
In the usual way nature play
Out its myriad acts.

Tony Adah

Tears And Dews

Dews are the tears
Plants shed in the morning
After a mournful night
Tears are the rain the eyes cause the cheeks
To be drenched in when laughter
Refuses to show up in the daytime.

The plants wave their hands
And the wind dries up the dews
Or the shins of man mop up
The mist leaves hold in their tips
And bare happiness is laid.

The heart sheds joy
When it is testified that sorrow is gone
And the eye a tear
When melancholy is the guest!

Tony Adah

Temptations

Though thunder may roar
I will soar
Though lightning may strike
I will stride
And not fritter away my roams
But stay with my inner whispers
Do their bid
For that's the essence of faith
I am neck-deep in.

Tony Adah

That Child

Igbatlelibi is the child
The world loves to hate
At one time he is a goat
And at another time he is a god
This is where the world laughs at him
When he plays big
And the world laughs spelling
This name backwards and seeing
That he is a mere dog.
That child the birth of whom is known
He came with his legs first
And he thinks with them often than
He does with his head
The difference of which is wisdom
To him and laughter to the world
He came with his legs first
He walks before he thinks
Direction less so he remains a
Bleating goat and a resounding god
And a barking dog.

Tony Adah

That Cold

The wind changed its taste
In the tongue of our skins
A hazy breeze blew
From the north east direction
We looked there
And cracked our lips
Our bodies floury white
We rubbed water
Instead of a bath
It was so cold and dry
No matter how much tallow
We oiled our skins
They remained floury white.

Tony Adah

That Day

I saw the paw-paw breasts
Of green and yellow fruits
My throat itched
And I looked up to the tall tree
Weary my mother will
Not want to climb.

I trotted away to the yard
Looking up and admiring the fruits
My hand already at the ripe one
My heart thumping and in my hands
I hugged the tree
Lifting my feet from the ground

I touched the ripened one
Looking for its stalk
A bee flew passed
And when I raised my head
It stung me on my right eyebrow
I slid down like a pebble thrown up
And obeying gravity
Down down I squatted
Soothing my swollen eye
And remembering what
My mother had said.

Tony Adah

That Devil Is Here

I am lost
A quill at hand
An inkpot beside me
Words out of my quill slow
My handgun is ready
I can not hear
From the flintlocks.
No one pushes the quill
My papyrus still
No one whispers to me
That fickle devil is here
Who shut words right
In my my throat
My tongue held in my mouth.

Tony Adah

That Ephemeral Thing

Love perches on the bosom
Of imagination which wanders
Like a herd without a shepherd
It flies and lands
On a fragile a bough,
Gathers its breath
And like a bubble swells,
Fizzling in no time.

Tony Adah

That Morning

I am sad
The brittle wings of the butterfly
Are broken, its colours gone
Can a tiger be known without
Its trade mark patches?
That morning the giant slept still
Even the sweet melodies of cowries
He looked not their way.

Tony Adah

That Place That Was Home

That place that was home;
The green hills, yawning spurs
Round brown thatched houses,
The thicket of the backyard,
Happy singing birds and monkeys
Swaying bough to bough
In the benevolence of meadows.

Where sunset burnish the horizon
With a yellow brownish brush,
That's the place where my
Umbilical cord was buried
Where a fresh white me
Laid on a cradle of leaves
Kicking the nascent air
My shrill wailing voice
Telling neighborhood, I had arrived.

My heart loves here
In the reminiscences of my dreams
Those halcyon days
We frolick in the sand
Spun tops on same
And chiggers made meals
Of our toes.

Where father's palmwine
Frothed with fragrant foams
And mother's pestle and mortar
Turned boiled yams into paste
Upon which we were bred.

Not so now
Like an insect,
We are caught in a web
Of a white spider
And our dilemma is huge.

Tony Adah

The Alternative

Everyday the dry toilet tissue
Gets wet and it is dumped
We have listened the worn out anthems of yesterday
Reeling from sugar coated tongues

Today is not like yesterday
When farina was our only meal
Tomorrow when the fatwas rain
Like hails in frosty days
We will leave
To the next house
And lay our head
For a halcyon sleep.

Tony Adah

The Bashful Suitor

Three men came
Any of them could my
Spouse be,
A man not necessarily wealthy
But a sustainable land tenderer
Of our time,
Hardworking and reliable;
My father's prayer;
Not the slumberer who would
Drink and sleep and wake up
To beg.

Three men came
Nicely dressed and ready for me
All in one night with all
Our culture's demands, gourds
Of palm wine and kolanuts
Father's generosity offered fresh
Parboiled peanuts, a whole basketful
Relish of the lean season.

The bashful one
Ate as if his dentures ached
The pretenders folder his arms
Watching the dinner go on
The slyly one milled and left
Shells between the feet
Of the bashful one.

A flicker of oil lamp
Left their nostrils sooty
In that night of tricks
The morning ended the game
Father went to inspect their
Sitting positions and where a
Mountain of shells stood,
There I belonged
Good or bad.

Tony Adah

The New Wave

The earth itself
Is not a stationary object
It spins slowly
And invisibly on its own stick,
Man who came to occupy it
Swung and jumped
From a gatherer to a farmer
And from a farmer to a fabricator of things.

Now there's a new wave as no other
Information they tell us is everything
To everyone,
Our cellphones now our libraries and hospitals
You asked a question without seeing
Who the question is directed to
But an answer is ready in a second.

This wave is swift
It moves in a lightning speed
And who knows where it may sweep us to?
If not the heaven we want to be
But still we run away from death
Or the hell we pass through daily
Looking for what to put on the table.

Tony Adah

The Stuff We Are Made Of.

Give me gold
Or give even diamond
My conscience is the science
Of my life
I am wearing a zephr that makes
Me a distinct being
Always this is where I ought to be
Is there anything that matches good character?
And I pity those who jump
From one iroko tree
To one mohagony tree
I am waiting for the the fruits of these trees to yield
To feed them or feed the world
There is nothing as bad as seeing
One colour and ascribing it to another hue
Perhaps for the fact that food is ready
For that which tastes sweet
Also is bitter to the body and to the soul.

Tony Adah

The Abode Of Love

Love is near
But a heart's sojourn is far
And deserves a heart surgeon
To bring near love its desires.
Love is far
Still the wing of a heart does fly
The cuddling arms of love
Here are cold and wintry
And a summer lies far ahead
Where legs will trudge on for warmth
But where the heart's wings will fly
And catch a bossom of warmth
No matter how far
The heart is the abode of love.

Tony Adah

The Acts Of The World

Who is matching on my rooftop?
The spattering rain
Who is singing in my garden?
A little twittering bird
Who is stealing nectar from my flowers?
The busy stinging bee
Who is lying on my bed?
The twitching whiskers cat
Who is barking in my backyard?
A growling little spaniel
Who is marching on the road?
The fierce looking soldiers
Why are they marching in the road?
To master the art of war!

Tony Adah

The Afternoon Dream

We could see her heart
Out on the chest thumping
An old breathing was hard
Bandages wound from her
Ankles up to the shins.
At her age
Death was was near
She bothered not about it
She said she would go happily
Because she was still alive,
She only asked for her grandchildren
They were far but near
She would go without a goodbye
My tears gathered drops of melancholy
Death did make me an orphan
That afternoon when my own journey
Was postponed
And her own beyond executed.

Tony Adah

The Afternoon Of Harvest

There is something peculiar
In the air
A bumpy harvest of endowments
Heaps, sacks, barrels;
Plundering hands and laughter
Few satisfied
On the perks of monumental perfidy.

Many drag frail along famine's path
On famished stomachs
Sleeping, waking, yawning
On the straw bed of bounties
Pinioned by dearth.

Dark clouds mask
The golden flames of the rising sun
In storms of rain and
In storms of lightning
The crowd scamper
For food
For life
For tomorrow
The golden flames of the setting sun
Fades,
Polysyllabic twilight, dragging
And painful.

Perhaps the night
Which we plough our seeds
Of self realization will be shorter
Into the morning of sprouts
And the afternoon of harvest
There will be a phalanx
Of unspoken martyrs
Still all will reap
The huddled you,
And the pinioned me
Neglected and so deprived.

Tony Adah

The Alchemist

If you are an alchemist
Change my heart into gold
Not silver
Not bronze
Mr. Alchemist, not wood either.

If you are an alchemist
Change the world wars
Put the world pieces together
Into one whole calm
If you are an alchemist
Remould the world
I beg you!

Tony Adah

The Alms Giver

The blame goes to the lame
For they can not walk
The whole work
And the blame goes to the tamed
Whose heart sees no duty
In helping the lame
Goodness sits with the lame
And to do good to them
Good returns to alms giver

Tony Adah

The Alms Seeker.

At a traffic point
Somewhere in Calabar
Where brilliant billboards shine everyday
An alms seeker made her home
She lives here all day all night
With a litter of three Children
Throat parched and bowels void.

The smallest one
Is on her shoulder naked
All the bones out
Like a Syrian refugee Child
Howling in pain without strength
Two sibblings yielded to the scorch sun
And slept on a pile of cardboards
Under the stand of a giant billboard.

If I may ask
Who is the head of this family?
Where is the leadership of their country?
When their home is by the street?
When their kitchenette
Sits on the foot of a fence
When their future is bleak
When their dreams are a mirage.

And they are at the mercy of the public
But is the public well enough
To rise to their occasion?
Everyday passes
Dimmer and dimmer their hope becomes
They look at the world
And they find themselves
At the fringes of it
No change of baton of governance
Is cognizant of this huddled lot.

They wait here by the street side
Watching the public's ill-gotten

Wealth on wheels and the posh houses
Lining the streets
The opposite of their own hovels
Famished as they are
Blind as they are
Lame as they are
Always waiting for
Their quotidian needs
From the absent benefactor.

Tony Adah

The Alternative

Everyday the dry tissue paper
Gets wet and it is dumped
The old anthem goes faint
In the valleys and the echoes recede away
Sugar coated tongues will wear away
And change tomorrow from yesterday
When farina was our only meal.
Tomorrow when the fatwas rain
Like hales in frosty times
We will leave to the next house
And lay our heads
For a serene sleep.

Tony Adah

The Anger Of The Gods

When the gods in melancholy be
That man has relegated in his duty
Fetish groves dry up
Like out of season stream
The guardian vexes and the harvest is poor
Then even the the rim of a cocoyam leaf
Can yank open his shins.

Tony Adah

The Angry Sea

One day the fishermen will from the shore
Dip into the sea
Where there will be no catch;
The eddies of death shall whirl upon their heads
And the angry sea will surround them
Drown them and ask them
To vomit his fauna and flora.
Then the last gong of toil shall sound
And a dirge of merriment sung
On those who plundered the sea
Mop his sweet
And build oases in the desert.

Tony Adah

The Animal Farm

We are mute like a granite slab
Docile like a piece of furniture
In a house
We are pliant like a boll of cloud
In a storm
We sing dirges
For the fallen ones
With death cycling us
We kneel to pray
Pray for our endowment
And never rising to hold it
So shall they trample on the pliant
Those mindless thieves
In the animal farm which my has become.

Tony Adah

The Artist

I am a passerby
And the artist is there
By the wayside
Some cattle egrets flew
And perched on his workbench
He captured them with brush
Everyone sees them permanently there
Till tomorrow!

Tony Adah

The Athlete

If you are an athlete
Who runs and looks back
You'll keep winning from the rear
If you doubt me,
Ask Lot's wife.

Tony Adah

The Bachelor

The road is long
And winding
If the bachelor
Embarks on a journey
Who will stock
His fire with kindlings?
The one legged man
Trade not in the
Business of dogs
Akpalo kobasho
Is cutting down trees
And rearing monkeys!

Tony Adah

The Balded Vultures

I promise the vultures will
Have no place to quench their thirst
With the meal of chicken of our chicken
In their throat.

They will walk the shrivelled earth
And fly the dry sky in vain
And the balded lot waiting for more
Will see the thirsty ones
Stretching their hairless necks
And twice they will think.

Tony Adah

The Bat's Dilemma

The bat is not
An animal that is bad
It is quiet
And self-conscious of his ways
He and his buddies
Doing their things only at night
Though may have his foibles
To the chagrin of man,
He averts all these
Flying lonely only with his kind
Sits upside down on the bench
Of a bough wary of the
Snares of man.
Quiet as his birth may be
He is neither here nor there
Wings he has to
Put him in the clan of birds
And mammals claim
Him their type
For his furs
This is why his funeral rites
Are not easy to perform.
And he is at a loss
To cut his Wings
Or to shave his hair.
His carcass is
At the crossroads
Bereft of mourners.
Man who should intervene
To give him a befitting burial
Turns out today to accuse
Him of complicity
In the new story
Making rounds in town.

Tony Adah

The Battlefield

If the water angry
As it is
In its blue rage decides
To conquer the white shingles
On the shore,
The tall condos
Who think they are giants
Will first have their feet soaked
If the rains
Conquer the winds
On the battlefield of the flood
Everything will be swallowed
No matter
On whose side we belong.

Tony Adah

The Beautiful Ones Are Coming

The sky is blue and a thick lonely cloud
Covers the sun
From the blue still waters
A slow reed boat is surfing shoreward.
There's stillness about the trip
And melancholy in the faces of fishermen
In the vast sea of rich fauna and flora
There's no catch;
But nets firm and working
And hooks with baits salivating enough
Still the story is that of woe.
Yes some of it a show
There's fish in the water
And in the raffia bags of those on the oars
They caught them
They hid them
They feign sadness
Which is the trade of my country men
Never despair we
The beautiful ones are coming
I don't mean the ones with fake brooms
Sweeping dirt that doesn't go away;
Today is still a field day for the thieves
Tomorrow is the day for the owner.

Tony Adah

The Beautiful West

Over the quay a heavy haze laid
Like the whole place was the sky
And a bright yellow ambience was formed
This where a tired sun crawled in
Turning his back at us.
From my picture of it
It looked like an electric bulb
Hanging up in the horizon
And the smallest man in the house
Curious as he was asked what it was
I simply said it was the beautiful west
Of twilight at dusk!

Tony Adah

The Beauty Of A Rose

I will not compare my pain
To anybody else
I am the only one
Who feels the pinches
Of life's shoes;
The beauty of the rose
And the pain of its thorns.

Tony Adah

The Beauty Of Democracy.

Even when democracy arrived
To scrape the scales from our eyes
We still cover them with our hands
And grope in the darkness of our days
Praying when we ought to give thanks.

Until our own hands embrace the cobwebs
In our eyes and shatter the scales
For us to see clearly the beauty of democracy
Groping will never surmount our tribulations
And man will continue to have his say
But men will have their wwa
Then the dividends of democracy
Will remain an illusion to all.

Tony Adah

The Beauty Of Man

Where do we
Find the beauty of man,
In his face, mouth, ears or nose?
Or even in his pocket.
Search further into
The great microscopes
And the small ones
There lies the causative agents
Of beauty or no beauty.

Tony Adah

The Beauty Of Poems

The glamour of words display
In the language of the poet
He twists them, contracts and expands them
And a maze is thrown at the un-initiate
Alliterations torture tautology
And his stout images linger
In the long shadow of the critic.
The critic has no glamour of words
Than his scathing -isms, -ties and -itics
Which tend to diminish the glamour
Of the poet
This is how hollow he sounds
But the glamour of words
Is the armour that the poet girths his poems
Still the critic yanks the poet's poems
Into two the good and the bad
Who is that man
Who will disown his invalid child?
Just a few among a legion!

Tony Adah

The Beggars

Down the road at a roundabout
Where traffic lights blink red, yellow and green
Is an assortment of humans
Average height, tall and short
They are here in a farm of some sort
With infant and other children.
And they love the red colour
Of the traffic lights.
They are here with rags doing
Auto cleaning for the teeming traffic
All to eke a living
Their today is gone
And the future of these children doomed!

Tony Adah

The Big Men

What a great wall
Diving the world
Big and powerful men esteemed
And minions snubbed
At last no one is spared crumbling
Like a shot wall in Gaza.

Tony Adah

The Big Slumber

The night blinks like
A ragging cobra
Its venom spreading on our
Hallowed dreams
We smile like a beggar's wish
Not fulfilled.
We never want to move
But relish the leaves swaying
In the wind as we remain sedentary like a barnacle on
The surface of a rock.

We haul pebbles at a Petty thief
But glorify an executive feeding
Fat on our Commonwealth
We hail a file of convicted men
Going gallow ward
Least thinking that next
Is our own turn.

We will never wake
From the slumber of the elephant
Which requires a log of wood
To awaken
And our gloomy days are still far
From the actions we to galvanize.

Tony Adah

The Bill Men

Today is a hot day
And public electric officials
Are here
On inquiry, I am
Told they're here
For this month's bill.

There are fierce hounds
Resting under the palm tree
And their owner, a patronizer
Of electricity is staring at them.
He makes a sign
And the dogs rose
Chasing the bill men.

He made another sign
And the hounds retreated
The bill men frightened
Stood but shaking
Frowning at the man
It was not deliberate
To set the dogs against them
But the hounds' owner
Had no money to pay.

Tony Adah

The Bin Side

The bin stood by the corner
Of the street
A diving line between
Those above and the others beneath
The faces here wore hunger
Dresses tattered
And the people tired.

A closer look unveiled
Exotics of paper bags, wine bottles
Juice packs, fast food packs
Still hunger wore his diadem of penury
On the faces of people
Whose tummies glued
To their fragile spines.

Children loitered here
Scavenging from the refuse lot
Half clad and unkempt
Like mad men in a herbal home
Flies buzz and hovered over
Everything that had a putrid touch
And this is where the dregs
Of humans settle.

Tony Adah

The Bird Sang

The bird chatter
She sang songs
On a bough
Danced dances
She called names
Taunted the winged without flight
The dull colours,
And when the wind came
Her cloaca was seen.

Tony Adah

The Birds.

The birds sat up the trees
We planted, ate the fruits
And twirped joyously
They looked down at us
Prowling the stale fallen fruits
And defaecated upon our head
We planted the trees
But we are begging the fruits.

Tony Adah

The Birth Cord

When the first rains with their tall legs
Trampled upon the earth in one season,
I was born
Born in a farm
Where
My mother
Underwent
Two toils.
She
Was weak
I was new
And I was frail
She
Took her blunt
Matched
And yanked
Off my birth cord
The rest
Was buried.
My sister's own
She said was stolen
By our own dog;
It
Latter ate prison
And died.
I
Look back
As
The story
Was told
If it's
Today
I would
Have donated
Both
To a stem cell bank
Somewhere
To
Help someone.

Tony Adah

The Blameworthy Taker

Death which the eye sees
The heart fears more
Athump and frozen
Death hears no word.
The sun rises and set with a glimmer if death
And man the facilitator brandishes
A gun, poison, a word of mouth
Or a show of his brutal strength.
He causes death sleep no more
And prowl and kill and dump
For man to care or the balded vulture's meal.

But if man sleeps no more
And in the implosion of his kind
His terrain skews towards spatial dearth
And in the end
Same self death, a blameworthy taker
Comes to the fore as the terminal root
Of man's woes.

Tony Adah

The Blind And Thirsty Voters

Here now are campaigns
Thirsty and groping
In our blind streets
We go fighting ourselves for
The politicians who have privatized
Electricity with Perkins generators
And we have done same with candlesticks
And they drink swan bottled water
And we drink 'pure' satchet water.

Tony Adah

The Boatmen Have Gone

There's an old forgotten bay
Where lies old and abandoned boats
Floating in a bloom of water hyacinth
The oars are pinned ashore and idle
Fat old frogs and toads croaking
And rowing the boats in one place
The owners no one knows where
They have gone to.
Little frail waves put a push
That jerk the boats and the hyacinth
In assonance refuse to go
The boatmen have gone to be recruited
Into the army for war
And the war come and gone
The boatmen dead or alive are veterans
Who have forgotten their trade;
And the boats a figment of imagination
Have continued to rot.
Any artist with a brush and canvas
Will leave a memory of this
For soon the hyacinth will swallow the boats.

Tony Adah

The Bone Expecting Dogs.

And a thing of the old is resurrected
That which we revered to fear
The beacon light on cars
And the blaring sirens in the streets
Pungent with the putrid wastes
They told us that when democracy comes
Things will change
And really the change is here
But hugely coming from the opposite direction
A reverse to the old
Which we feared and abhorred
Only in our hearts.
Today too hunger makes mouths
Sewn with zippers on the lips
And the bone expectant dog
Need not to bark.

Tony Adah

The Book

Everyday the sun rises and set
We toil or laze-gaze at the world
Turning into something else
In all we do,
The act is is to open a book
Read it up or flip through the pages
Looking some pages and others
Just a piece of bland pie
In the mouth.
The day comes and the day goes
The dog eared book succumbs
To turning front or back
History in this book is not important
Everyone flips forward
Towards the glossary to find
Where the explanations will finish
The meaning of words
Leaving the blurb where our six feet
Hole awaits our breathless chest
The only piece we owned
That was not ours as we will lay
And leave the book for others
To read or flip through.

Tony Adah

The Book My Son Bough'

They say I don't know
How to read and write
That I have not gone to school
I see them wear them glasses and read
And write them book.
My son bough' many books
He bough' every morning
And I have them more
The one he's read.
I wear my sun glasses
And I read them book
The book my son buy every morning.
I read them book everyday
He wears his sun glasses
And reads the newspaper
Upside down.

Tony Adah

The Book That Is Life

Everyday the sun rises and set
We toil or laze-gaze at the world
Turning into something else
In all we do,
The act is is to open a book
Read it up or flip through the pages
Looking some pages and others
Just a piece of bland pie
In the mouth.
The day comes and the day goes
The dog eared book succumbs
To turning front or back
History in this book is not important
Everyone flips forward
Towards the glossary to find
Where the explanations will finish
The meaning of words
Leaving the blurb where our six feet
Hole awaits our breathless chest
The only piece we owned
That was not ours as we will lay
And leave the book for others
To read or flip through.

Tony Adah

The Bowler Hat

The sun shines upon a bowler hat
And I am up thinking the hat
On its own moves
The hat is so huge
And the wearer a midget
Goes like the snail
A shell pressing him down.

I am at eleventh floor
The clouds move
And I think that the edifice
Has grown some legs downstairs
I close my eyes
And let the midget
On his way!

Tony Adah

The Bridal Dance

We sat under the almond tree
Its ripened fruits and tired yellow leaves
Falling like confetti on the couple
Joyous like bees before a nectar galore
Give us music they seemed to be saying
Wriggling a bridal dance to the applause of the guests
The nuptial nut ripe like a yellow moon
In a pleasant night
We appreciate, we appreciate, we appreciate
The guest added to the music
And the couple dance away to a honey moon.

Tony Adah

The Broom And The Umbrella

A man walks down the street
In a lonely brawl with himself
His grouse is about a group of men and women
Who for sixteen years have decided to mess the town
He speaks of corruption, nepotism, insecurity
Ineptitude and the darkness above the town.

He held his broom
Ready to clean the mess in a certain part
Of the town.
He hears footsteps behind him
And as he turned he saw an accomplice
Wearing a huge straw hat
Of red, green and white colours
So nice to behold.

He heaved a sigh of disappointment
And turned and bent over his broom
Suddenly the sky began to frown
Its ugly face made uglier by a downpour
Brother! he ran with his broom
And took refuge in the giant sombrero
The accomplice yielding a chance
With an echo, ' I told you we need ourselves'!

Tony Adah

The Cable Thieves

Some where in a distance
The public light poles stood
Conversing silently with the sagging cables
Insulators broken and hanging like bats
The contractor has collected his piece
Of the national cake, the work undone.

Some how the district needs light
For the sun sojourns in and out
And the industries though absent now
Would need power to drive them when they come
Or wake from the slumber those sleeping now
The town, the suburb and the folk
All need more than unpredictable moon.

That's why the contract was given
but failed
There are young men in the neighborhood
Who do not want to see the project succeed
They at night move in a derelict Peugeot trunk
Picking cables and winding them into their truck
And the insulators they all carted away
To sell a merchant dealer of these accessories.

They have shot themselves on the foot,
The contractor and the merchant and the thieves
And the district remains in darkness
The thieves are better for it,
They need darkness to prowl
In their thievery
But a thief will not prowl the night unend
Just that the moon is on
He brings backwards as his government
And everyone is taking the blame
Like eating their own portion of the national cake.

Tony Adah

The Call Of Two Trumpets

I heard a trumpet at dawn
From the giraffed neck of a rooster
I rose among my rumpled beddings
Cleaning the smudges in my eyes
Another trumpet echoed
And this time around it came from the cathedral
I gropped around my room
Hastily wanting to leave for devotion.

I kicked the table and every thing fell-
A lamp without oil and half burnt candles
With creams of stale solid tears
From the light of yesterday.
I have woken again today
Thinking how to fill my tummy
And I do not know if the lamp thinks so
Of its oil tonight.

I am going to yield to the call of two trumpets
And in my supplication request
All that I need but my wants
I leave to the world.

Tony Adah

The Captain

The ship of state is afloat
But tempest tossed
Upon rocks and surfs on a sea
Rough as the toad's back;
The captain rash and harsh from the
Protest of rough sail
Steers along amid a strong gale.
Turning right or left or straight steer
Nothing changes than the raging turbulence
And we've acquiesced to a change
Which reverses every moment
To status quo ante
We do not know
If the ship whole shall sail to the destination
We see far and near
Through a vile and tempest sea.
If the captain hit the rocks
And we are no more
May the captain take the wrecks
To his destination
Look back and see that all is gone
Live alone in the paradise
Both crew and passengers missed
Then in his third coming;
He'll care to learn
The contour of the sea.

Tony Adah

The Carelessness Of Man

Mushrooms grew on dead palm trees
Insects took bits of aging ears
And man as always devoured the fresh stands
What if dead palms didn't spawn mushrooms?
As there's no more game in wildlife which
He has helped to extinct
Even the palm tree
Perhaps would not have been there
For he scattered it harvesting black beetle larva
Which he ate like he fainted due to hunger
Man, he will never be careful
Until everything is gone.

Tony Adah

The Carwasher

A Nikon camera blipped
Beneath the dashboard and the car washer
Feigned it was a cell phone
He carefully tried his light fingers
On the camera and it slipped into his pocket
The car owner raised an alarm
Only to be told by the carwasher
That the only item he saw was a cellphone
The carwasher's friend had this item
And approached the car owner to buy his camera
This how two friends saw
The four wall of a dingy cell.

Tony Adah

The Castaway

Somehow the dark clouds descended
Upon the dark continent
With whips and shackles at hand
From the seas
The stallions galloped landward
And tremble bore on the landlords
Who first recognized the good things
Of the visitors;
And the trade began
A stubborn cousin is sold
Along with a thief as well a witch
As the chief recommended
Slave is the name
And slavery the trade
All on a triangle splashed in the Atlantic.

A slave is running away, half clad
With a broken shackle in one hand
And tattoos of horse whips
On his black bare back.
He's free at home
Still away from his home
A runaway fugitive in his land.

Those of us captured hardly breathe
In humid cells and soon sailing
On the tempest seas, not aware
Where the waves will toss us to
Or what will become of us.

When we know, we are found
In the big cotton farms of the south
And the slavers sold and resold
Us black moving and breathing
Items of trade
And we procreated and left the fields
A heritage of continuity.

A far cry of freedom

But freedom came
That was then.
They still held us in low esteem
Until those of us who wanted freedom got it
Or were aided to loosen the shackles
Long gone but hanging in our souls
That was then
And now they kill us with guns
Of which shackles would still
Have been better than death
But freedom has come
Do we refuse the freedom to die
Now that they tell us that
Death is self inflicted?

Tony Adah

The Cat And The Mouse.

The cat is sitting
On a mat
Suddenly it senses
Some movemeant and
Rose smartly to pounce
On the rat
And the children sang
A dirge for the rat
The rat in the cat's mouth
And the cat and the mouse
On the mat!
The rat in the cat's mouth
And the cat and the mouse
On the mat!

Tony Adah

The Caterpillar

This is butterfly in transition
And my less privileged
Folks will protest-
'No amount of the magic
Of that your school will
Make us believe you'!

But I wonder why
It took so long
To become a butterfly
And prove me right
Or why it remained
In my little garden
Perhaps the fragrance
Of my roses
Or the beauty
Of my carnations, tulips, daisy
And chrysanthemums.

One thing I love
It to be here is to prove
My new college knowledge
And I like its green wriggling
Body slithering on
Or under leaves
This is what it loves
To do and strip
My garden bare of leaves
And mess it up
With pellets of green dungs.

But how will my doubters
Know when it is
Gone as butterfly?
I could show them
Its fragile slough
Lying a waterproof stuff
Or show them a butterfly
Somewhere in the garden.

But they will doubt me
And tell me that it died
And some ants ate
Off the flesh leaving
My fancy tale slough.

Tony Adah

The Change Agent

You came through the backdoor or even the window;
They told us it was free
And fair elections
When infants votes counted most;
The water is still in our ankles
Still we fear the depth
Of the river
Do free and fair elections
Translate to good governance?
We are yet to see
It is clear anyway that
We have won elections
But we are losing the government
When next the times comes
Leave your brother
When next the time comes
Shine your eye.

Tony Adah

The Change Without A Difference

The rent is due
The car is bad
The legs are tired
The fees are owed
The children at home
The food we scrape anywhere
We owe the sellers and life goes.
We are workers, public type
Paid but owing
We are living but half dead
We are breathing, no air
We are citizens, no country
There's a change, no difference.

Tony Adah

The Changing World

Things are moving away
From the middle of the world's mouth
The vigilantes of peace
Are drifting towards war
And the world is worst for wars!

Tony Adah

The Chibok Girls

Dear Chibok girls
I now believe your story
With a pinch of salt
And I am cleaning the tears
From my eyes
So clear now as the cloud is gone
Of the flecks that covered my eyes.

A Chibok escapee came
Pregnant with the tale
Of a structured abduction
Where those pointing accusing fingers
To the insurgents visit the camp
With milk and honey and bottled water
While the terrorist fighters drink on dews.

I believe the escapee's story
And I am wiping tears from my eyes
Withdrawing the sympathy
I once lavished on the abducted girls
Now that the scales have fallen down from my eyes
Now that she said if you put all the big men of my country
In the television she can recognize
Those who used to visit the camp.
I am wiping tears from my eyes
Believing the abduction to be a hoarse
And I do not want to be involved
In the polemics of the Chibok abduction.

Tony Adah

The Children

Mother was too powerful
She kept it to herself, works hard
To earn her freedom and sent
Us to school;
Then she was no more.
Rain fell heavily at home and not
At school,
Tomorrow when we go to school
Our teacher will lash us twelve
Strokes of the cane
We will jump up, cry hard not loud
Enough to tell the truth;
We were never aloud to utter a word
It was not fair because we were
Orphans and no one cared to hear
Our story
That's what we got being orphans
Because we were fatherless and
Motherless.

Tony Adah

The Chosen Few

I wonder how fat we are
It appears they think
We are getting obese
There's a surgery to make us thin
And they've seized all that
Made us good.

We are sick
Our country is ill
Lean and frail
We, the skeleton of the land
Brittle, flesh no longer holds
We are double dazed by ailments
One of them anaemia
We rolled on the ground
We shouted
We cried
They feigned deafness

When we woke them with a log
Like waking an elephant from a Slumber, they sent us an anaemic
To donate blood for our transfusion
Our lives have been seized
And given to a chosen few.

Tony Adah

The City And Its Scape

The curcubita wears scrota of shinny gourds
And papaya a thousand breasts
Of green and yellow colours
A coconut garners green and brown heads
Holding its liquid brain
A rose display a whorl of pink petals
And beside, thorns jealously guard
The fragrant whorl from human hands
Beneath all these
The city sleep under shinny white
And red and green and rusty roofs.

Tony Adah

The City Centre

The colours flew in the wind
Upon a flag pole;
Down it, the marble sat
With our sullen history on its laps;
Of the African chiefs and the greed
For the trade in humans
And the acquiescence of the chiefs.
The huddled captives chained
To the shores
Where the anchored ships steamed away
With the human wares.

Down the triangle
Amidst the royal palms on lush grounds
A green sculptured machine gun stands
On its still roller feet;
Its muzzle pointing to the bank
Guiding against the naira slide.

From here
One road leads to Moore road;
The most coveted abode
Of any lucky folk who the governor's toga fits
Another to Watt market
Where the toilers meet to buy and sell
Still another leads to Akim barracks
Where the soldier's sentry siege
Lay in wait for the toilers' song.
Then on the wayside to Moore road,
A court stands on one side
Spitting justice
From both sides of the judge's mouth
And on the other,
A hospital gazes at the victims
Society has injured in their toils
prescribing from a pharmacopoeia of placebos.
This is the centre of the city
Which Donald named
The millennium park.

Tony Adah

The City Welcomed Grandma

Grandma arrived the city with
Years of toil and childbirth travails
Wringing every muscle of her body
Cheeks sagging,
Eyes sunken, ears deaf like the toad
And a mural she wears over her wrinkled skin
Shinning with fissures of age.
Grandma is come to city
A house walled round and barbed like a prison
Means nothing to grandma
No peer to visit,
Or familiar village chores to lay hands on
Grandma is indoors day and night
Looking strange every moment of the day.
She's tired of food morning, afternoon and evening
And does not understand her doctor's
Language either.
Grandma is tired of the reeks of kerosene and gas
Used in cooking her food
And why don't you people
Cook with firewood the sweet food
That comes from the country?
Grandma would ask.
And gets no answer satisfying from the
Daughter-in-law who does everything
Every day to keep grandma happy.
Grandma said she's tired of the city
Tired of city food
And the smell of onions, cabbage, spices
And frozen meat or chicken
That look like human carcass from a morgue
Grandma rolled her tongue
In her mouth empty like the duck
And spat a weak stream of spittle
On the shinning tiles
And grandchildren ran and told their mother
Who comes around with a mop
And perfunctorily dry the floor of the dirt
But grandma must go

And that's how grandma's stay
Became overdue
And out prison she came.

Tony Adah

The City Yawns

The city drives
In cars and on bikes and on foot
The people live in mansions
High and low.

Road medians are painted with black and white
Shining with greens of royal palms
And these wave only to the nouveau riches
in their exotic cars.

The city shines
Only on her surface
Inside the city a brown slum looms
Waterfronts riddled with stilted houses
The drains green with stink.

The dumps are old
Their hair grey with empty packs
Of 'pure water' and bottled water
Plastic cans of Coke, Miranda, Pepsi
Piko, Five Alive and all the effluents
From the abodes of the affluent.

The city shines and the city stinks
The city hums in hymns of satisfaction
And the city wails in song of dearth
The city's streets are paved
The city's streets are rut full and potholes
Where the poor swim with toads and frogs
Are the creations of oblivion
On the other side.

At night
The city streets on one side
Look like a snake holding torches
On its mouth and tail and its body
The city shines on one side
And it is dark on the other.

The city has its colours
Of good and bad
But it is the good side
That's always shown
The rest of the city yawns.

Tony Adah

The Cityscape

The cityscape blooms
With tall big trees swaying
In the gentle breeze on both sides
Of the street;
At evening time, the street lights
Pour some moony gleams on the tree leaves.
The street is long
A splendid avenue riding to the foot of the hills
The mountain is a door
And it closes there.
There are yellow bins by the street
The eaters of the street's wastes
And that's why it is clean
Quiet and calm;
There are no inhabitants to be found
The day is gone
And the cityscape blooms in silence
Waiting for tomorrow.

Tony Adah

The Clarion Call

When you hear a klaxon blare
Don't hesitate
Right or left move
Search with your eyes
Search with your nose
Search with your ears
Where the klaxon blares

Someone with a tearful eye
Might need your mop
Someone somewhere sad
Might just need some light
Of your charming smile
Or someone hungry
Might well desire a crumb
Of food your pet
May have abandoned.

When you hear a klaxon blare
Don't hesitate
Rise up from your slumber
Go answer this clarion call
For life tosses partakers
Over hills and valleys.

When you hear a klaxon blare
Don't hesitate
For life is a vapour
Easily gone at your delay
And don't hesitate
For tomorrow's swirling
Eddies of the klaxon
May echo your turn.

Tony Adah

The Clock

The clock ticks away time
And leaves the world late
In the scheme of things
Where the African is king.

Tony Adah

The Clock.

The clock ticks to
And it never ticks fro
Time lost in the clock
Is never gained out here
The seconds rush on
And the minutes hold on
But the hours lag behind
And we think that
There's still more time.

What we want to do
Now let's do
Delay is dangerous
What we want to do
Now let's do
For no man can win
A race against time.
The clock ticks to
And it never ticks fro.

Tony Adah

The Clouds

When the the clouds descend
And the mountains tower
Amid a great storm and the way
Is ensnared in every danger
Be firm
The clouds will go
And the mountains come
You will find a way within the spurs
And thin through your cravings
Fulfil them or they foolfil you
Then the blame will be yours
For the clouds had gone!

Tony Adah

The Cold Is Here Again

Everywhere now the wind is here
After the war between
The northerlies and the southerlies
When the dust settled everywhere
And the wind is chill
Guess who won.
This is my best if clime
When I need put nothing
In my fridge
For everywhere is cold.
Like an embrace of some sort
I open my arms
Stretch them wide
And take my friend
Into my bosom
In a soul yearning idyll of every year's visit.
I am drenched in the cold
In my bed cover, snoring
Waiting for the day to crack
For me to see the frail sun
Dusted in a haze
Of the season I like.

Tony Adah

The Coming Of Harmattan

This morning
There is a thick haze
Hanging over our heads
Its so cold
And it's folly to believe
This is tropical weather.

One can not see
Well to the road
A few cars up
Are full gear on their fog lights
It is difficult to even
Spot the faint lights
For the only thing
That tells a car is passing
Is its grumbling sound.

This morning
The east is smiling
And the yawning horizon
Is beaming with the sun
The black 2011 ford ranger
Has rested enough
From yesterday's tortuous trip
Over mud, dust and puddles
On Calabar road.

This morning
I have put the key
Into the ignition hole
And revved the engine
Its exhaust pipe is weeping
For the advent of a clime
So inclement to fear.

Tony Adah

The Common Denominator

I am a precious gift
Lay me on a mill of camwood
Or lay me on a heap of ashes
One day, in the end
We will meet.
Silently, blindly and deafenly
We will speak
No one understanding each other
Under this earth
Where someone unseen makes us
Equal lie.

Tony Adah

The Computer

memories sit in my brain
like a monument in a museum
the way I learned things and the things
I learned are all antiques now.
our laborious laboratories
as they were
are conquerer by the computer
which they say does things at the
speed of light
I will buy in
or I will bow out
and remain in a museum
like a monument.

Tony Adah

The Constant.

Everyone fears the universality
Of the constance of death
New and old
Weak and strong
Rich and poor
It takes all
No one human skull
Denies the earth a meal of bones
More than going back
To where we came from.

Tony Adah

The Cook Is Tired

The cook is tired
And the soup is enough
That thick broth from where
Amino acids crystalized
Into dinosaurs, chimps and man
The story of evolution precluding
Special creation.
And I am wondering who created
The thick soup that spawn the dinos
Credit to who it is due
Thank God for raising us
And the sea on different days
The sea that enjoyed our end
Would Noah not intervene.

Tony Adah

The Corn Farmer

He has managed
To plough his field
And the corn in the
Eye of the storm
Has risen from the
Pressure of the winds
Cobs have formed
And tassels like
A Chinese beard are
Swinging in cool
Breeze in the field.

Weaver birds abound
And the farmer's efforts
Seem to avail only in the empty cobs
Monkeys too have a field day
But will the farmer fear them
And plant his corn
In his own house?

Tony Adah

The Cow's Tail

A cow won't value its tail
Until it is severed
And flies will besiege and taunt it.
It will begin to blink its eyes
And stamp its hooves on the ground
And twitch its muscles in vain.

The tail is gone
So is its freedom to use it
And freedom is always so much
So that no one knows it can be scarce.

Tony Adah

The Creditor's Folly

Thunderbolt they say is
Made in Ulanga hills
Thunderbolt they say is
The brother of fire
Today thunderbolt will come down
And strike a debtor's head
Stiff he will lie in death
The creditor's heart may calm
But the debt unpaid.

Tony Adah

The Crests And Troughs Of Life

A window lingers in the galaxy
There man leaks and comes
A birth so great to bear
And so happy to beget.

A toddler stumbles and falls
And wounds and cries and rises and laughs
This is the ride of man
Over the crests and troughs of life
Then death takes the place of birth
A casket is carried
A tear shedded
And man is gone!

Tony Adah

The Cricket

I am a one legged cricket
By the seventh month of the year,
I start my journey
The hard earth will soften and open
And let me into my burrow
In a contest I am with no one
In my earth home
Leave me alone with concrete edifices
Sleep knows no home gold galvanized
And death's feat blind to all colours.

Tony Adah

The Critter's End

His acts began to end
The earth pulled its iron
Curtain down
The soul dropped its cloak
All the corridors empty of him
And the world began to mourn
A man wealthy of gargantuan riches.

Soon they started making a crypt
For him
A mad man came by looking surprised
The grave makers turned him away;
For a moment, one talked with him
Out of the conversation
The madman wondered if the
Six feet six would be enough for
The dead, his houses and cars.

Tony Adah

The Crowd

Where I was
It was like the agama lizard
Lying in state
Tailor ants swarmed about me.
I was in a palace
Where griots sang song
And won crumbs.
Abound in nectar and roses
I was in a blossoming garden
Where the fluffy flight
Of moths and butterflies
Knew no other direction.
Then I had a sore
Which the flies much visited
Now I am healed
I have a scar
The sore is no more
So the flies are gone!

Tony Adah

The Dark Cloud Of The Dusk.

The dark cloud of the evening
Is gone with the cold night of old year
A new dawn smiles like the radiance
Of the rising sun from the horizon
It is vehement and its back is turned
Against the corruption of yesterday.

The patriots, comrades and citizens
Have seen who is milking their cows
And a duel is born in their hearts
With renewed vigor to get their due.

The horrid days of terror are lapsing
Into a firm determination to exterminate hostilities
Their resolve is one
And their country is first
There's a taint of joy in their hearts
And in the forthcoming elections
Their resolve will come to pass.

Tony Adah

The Dark Months Of Winter

The winter wind is here
In its door to door
visit to sell its cold which
We buy without paying
It bullies the trees
Shedding their leaves
And its flecks of snow covering the ground
Which is the gift the winter windstorm
Gives the neighbourhood for Christmas
And this is the time
We do skiing, ski jumping, snowboarding
And ice dancing
In the dark months
Of severe weather leaving autumn behind.

Tony Adah

The Day Beams With Two Sunsets

The day buried its face
In the shame of the clouds
The feeble sun wades slowly
Groping in the clouds.
No matter how hard it tried
A storm split in lightning, thunder
And whirlwinds overwhelmed
A ghastly end is met
And today
The day beams with two sunsets.

Tony Adah

The Day Before Yesterday

We defied
Rain and sun
Waiting for the leader
He had a mind
And his mind had eyes
So we waited waving
Pieces of our national flag
Rehearsing our national anthem
We matched past very optimistic faces
The shortest boy
Had the biggest heart
He led the match past
Spinning the baton.
That was then
When patriotism still
Had a place in our hearts.

Tony Adah

The Day I Got Lost

The day I got lost
Was the day I knew
That a rose of thorns possess
In everything I did
It was only the petals I saw
Beneath the stalk
The pink or the red petals
His the thorns.

It was the same day
I knew this that I found myself
Bitten, cold and a heart
Bleeding by the piercing thorns,
The eyes cautioned the neck
To giraffe less
And the hands a restraint to touch
On this day that I was lost
I was also found.

Tony Adah

The Dead Man

So the corpse shook
And woke and staggered
The grave empty but tumulus filled
Mourners agog with jubilation
And the risen man up
Going to the central house
With aids and guards and care
Those healthy people
All in obeisance to the risen man
Not only those who are sick die
For the dead has risen.

Tony Adah

The Dearth Of Water.

The plastic rubber receptacles
Stood in colours of blue, red, green and yellow
Yearning for water and they sat in a truck
The taps are arid with rust
And our throats sizzling like
Lumps of Akara in oil over a hearth
We just finished election
And the taps are dry.

Tony Adah

The Death -End Earth

A great cloud billows above me
Rainfall of geysers steam upon my head
And I look down in vain to where
I thought succour would come
This is where fireflies spew from a furnace!
I am trapped
Worst than Syrian victims in my frightening boredom
Where can I get the river debris to clutch at?
As I drown downstream
This is what I have been offered
In my transient stay in a death end world
I am convinced about that day's event
O, my daughter
And she's gone!

Tony Adah

The Death Of Democracy

A dog with some food
In its mouth hardly barks
We kept quiet
To stick the bone
In our mouth.
Those who had nothing
In their mouths suffered.
We stocked the fire
In which democracy was roasted
We killed it
We the errand boys
We the thugs
We the sycophants
And flew with false wings.

Tony Adah

The Death Of Government

It seems the sound ringing
In my ears is the weeping by mourners
Verges grow long strands of beard
Bending towards the streets
Everywhere is desolate
The streets stand bushy like
An old man's face conquered by beard.

Women who bend over the brooms
Have abandoned them to the party
Which won elections with its logo as a broom
It is long the women's pay cheque came
No fly flies in this transition
Movement is compounded by the
Scarcity of petrol.
Government of old has passed away
And the infant type helpless
At the moment.

Tony Adah

The Death Of Man

Corpses, ghosts and ruins
Dialogue on a shroud
Guns, bombs and shrapnel
Hate sprouting
War blossoming
A sinister silence that kills
Washes the corpses hanging them
On our clothes lines
Harmattan wind blowing
Corpses drying
Ruins solidifying
Ghosts prowling
Dialogue is silence
And in silence war
In war death and in death
The end of one man and the
Beginning of others.

Tony Adah

The Death-Row

In the dungeon an electric chair waited
For who exactly I do not know
The death row men, deaf and dumb
Guided their fate in low groans
With their hearts in their tremulous hands
The chair waited
As the men waited
And death dawdled.
Here or there
Everyone is on the death row
Depending on man his ways
Still the jail is full
And the gel bottle of death empty
Or yet to fill.
It will come when it is time
And anybody could go away from this
Dingy earth in the eyes of man.

Tony Adah

The Debtor

The tortoise is a slow and harmless boy
He goes about his way quietly
Not even able to rustle some dry leaves
But he relishes some fresh leaves as he crawls
And that is why he is a vegetarian.

Many are jealous of him
Especially the slithering green mamba
Who would want to inflict his venom
And swallow this quiet creature
His mouth too little for the shell
And his venom pure water on a duck's back.

The tortoise poor as he is
Will borrow money from
In vain able to pay back
The pig will howl a grunt of warning
And the tortoise will tell his little brother
To turn him into a millstone
And grind on his chest when the pig comes for his debt.

The pig arrived as usual for his debt
And when the debtor saw him coming
He went on his back and little brother
Feign grinding corn on his chest
When the pig asked where his debtor was
Little brother uttered that he went out
To look for money to pay back his debt
In a great rage and fuming
The pig picked up the millstone and flung it
Far into the refuse dump in the backyard
Awhile big brother crawled back to the house
And had a twosome laugh
After the ignorant pig had gone.

Tony Adah

The Debtors

Will they or will they not
In their false and worthless lies
Keep to their tongues,
Clothe the nude
Feed the hungry
Shelter the homeless
Light the darkness
As they promised during
The votes tour.
They hardly turn back there
And that is the promised change
Never to look back
Never to seal a rut on the road
Never to let rain fall
If they could
Never to let air circulate
If they can
They're so short sighted
Not even history does a lesson make
Those who even gathered the mandate
With guns
Are gone
Within that enormous strength
They easily caught a whiff of death
And succumbed like a feather
In a storm.

Tony Adah

The Deluge Of Yesterday

It rained in season
Bursting the earth with
Its big striding drops
But out of season
It shrinks into a lazy river
Which tides hardly move.

The rain of yore was great
Threatening to wipe out our world
It rained
It rained
And it rained
A thick cloud mixed
The earth with the sky
In a galaxy of rain and storm.

Man and animals
Chattered in the cold
It rained and the flood bulged up
Drowning the mountains
And filling the valleys
That our species be sustained
Noah crafted a boat
In which all species
Male and female cohabited
To save our souls
And our entity remains
Till now after the deluge.

Tony Adah

The Dented Shoes

I used to look down on him
When we played together in the sand
That was an abode of chiggers
Which made meals of our toes
Today it is different,
The dented toes are hidden in exotic shoes
And I look down on him
Because I admire his shoes.

Tony Adah

The Desirable Change

The unchanging scenery
of the desert that hugs the land
And the floods still that ravages it
A venting canal of banal waters
Quenching the scorch of the sun
And in between a desirable change.

The destitute prowling the streets
And the affluence of the affluent
And in between a bridging change
We shot ourselves on the leg
In the thievery of the Commonwealth
A yawning gap and in between
A desirable change.
If a change must beat the status quo
Of its ailing deeds
Then it must sprout from the home
To the public square
And blossomly overwhelm the malaise
Of national survival

Tony Adah

The Difference

We sang songs
They kept mute
We cried on
We ate corn
They ate bread
They smeared butter
They drank tea
They live in the city
We slum live
They drove cars
We trek on
They live big
We ate bins
We ate beans
Mama-put made
We ate junk
They feed fat
On our sweat
We all die
Today or tomorrow.

Tony Adah

The Dilemma Of My Child

The strength of the new man is money
And my own weakness is poverty
The happiness of our woman is freedom
In all the dilemma of my child is that she's an orphan with parents.

Tony Adah

The Dilemma Of My Journey.

I am at the crossroads
I do not know which to take
But I must move
I will take this one to my right
Even if I do not know where it leads to
I know I'm sojourning east
Where when the night comes
The sun will rise again tomorrow
In the morning and I will have a whole day
Of brightness to roam the meadow
Search for food fresh or stale
See the beauty of lilies and tulips,
And orchids and chrysanthemums
When I am gone and the world laughs
Then I know that I have already
Quenched the taste of my soul.

Tony Adah

The Dog And The Maid

A dog laid among ashes
Warming herself in harmattan
And kitchen chores waste water
Came upon her back.
Oh, poor little
Dog's peace is scuttled
She shrugged and muttered a growl
Prowl the warm side of the fireplace
And brought warmth to bear
On the shivering body of gold and silver
Mixed with ashes and cold
And the wicked heart of the house maid.

Tony Adah

The Dog Next Door

She was the wild docile type
Loyal only within the confines
Of the master's house.
Of puppies it littered a legion
Like the sand on the beach.

When hunger came knocking on her door
She threw loyalty to the wind
And howled a thousand barks
With the yawning puppies
Like a prayer session in a Pentecostal church.

She barked and howled and growled
At the rain, sun and wind
And brawled even with her master
While her puppies looked on
Grunting and internalizing her acts.

Tony Adah

The Dog With A Bone In Its Mouth

Our brood of hens
Have tirelessly laid eggs
Ruthlessly plundered
By some dogs, pertually hungry
Always greedy.
A certain old dog
Full of our eggs
In his gut
Came barking at the hounds
Which too had a fill of our eggs
It can bark
It can not bite
Some bones will drop.

Tony Adah

The Dominion Of Man

Little ants crawl blindly
And tow some grains
Butterflies frolick over flowers
And suckle at nectar
A sunbird hops over a bunch of fruits
And shoots its beak in a whorl
Man takes ants, grains, nectar, birds
And everything all in a show of dominion
And that is the fate of things under man.

Tony Adah

The Doom Day Is Here.

The recession shrivelled us
Like a riped tobacco leaf
It came cold and dry with the winter
And our tantalizing extravagance
Laid behind us like a ghost.

This recession timely for itself
And untimely for us
The economists say that its
Seed germinated from mono-economy
And it came and dissolved the brick wall
Between the middle class and the ordinary people
Of status rich or poor.

Tony Adah

The Downtrodden

We thought that our beautiful dreams
Will come true
Having gone through the nightmare
Of the nights of yore
Now the day is dawn; the expected
Sun rises no more
Our nightmares have metamorphosed
Into melancholy;
And we the downtrodden shrivel
Like lilies in harmattan.
When we quarrel ourselves
Our nerves fray;
When we fight, our bodies bruise
But when we fight them
We get get our worth.
Who will so give us the chutzpah
To so rage a war storm
Against our few brothers on top of this tree?
I want to blow my canon of war
But my co-downtrodden can only
Find respite in death;
No man wears any armour against death
And brave men die but once.
When death comes,
All of us will go
And before then let the tree of tyranny
Be pulled down
For this is when a level field will avail
And gags and gaols that have become
The dividends of democracy will go;
And the downtrodden like lilies
Shall spring in the first rains.

Tony Adah

The Drums Of War.

The sound of war
Is the sound of death
War ruins the world and war ruins man
The ambience of creativity
Is killed and buried in battlefields.

The seed of war lies dormant
In the aftermath of one war
And war is to be dreaded
Equally as we dread dead.

Tony Adah

The Drunk

Plural cups
Ran down
His itchy
Throat
He loved
Everything
But unfilled cups;
He walked
Like a toddler
His gait
Drinks driven

He wore
An unbuttoned
Shirt
Sleeves uncuffed,
Wore reeks of
Wine barrel,
Pissed in his pants
Muttered indecipherable
Words
Children followed
Him everywhere
He went, singing, clapping
And he throwing pebbles
At them.

He finally fell down
Beside the street
Flies in his mouth
Grunting, humming, snoring
Like the lorry
That brought the drinks.

Tony Adah

The Drunkard

Mornings brought
Ephemeral sanity to him
On his way to work
He walk straight
He walk tall.
when tired the boots
Colour changed to gray
He grew taller every day
From the concrete the boots
Ate daily in its soles.
Smelling the recks of sweat
He dusts his gray face
Showing his thin red lips.
Clasping the worth
Of his day's work
In the fist of left hand
He wore a tattered black shirt
Unlinked at the cuffs.
He walked into a tavern
Like a King.
He worked hard
He drinks hard
He walks home
On the back of his feet
Dying instalmentally.

Tony Adah

The Drunken Man

He came home
He came dazed
He came in a drunken stupor
He kicked his wife's pot
There in the kitchen and passed to the room
He laid down
He laid down coiled like a dead shrimp
Shoes, shirt and pants
All in intact like a hibernated snail
He snored
He talked
He laughed
All in a deep sleep
And on the morrow, he was gone!

Tony Adah

The Drunken Wind

On this day
Men sane as they were seen
Making merriment
The drunken wind staggered
In the strong echo of thunder
And he swift glare of lightning
And overwhelmed our pale efforts
At stopping a storm and thunderbolt.

The sky grumbled, frowned
And flashed a lightning
To see its way to meet us
Down upon our dear earth

And we greeted it with tears
On its arrival and we gave it names
Still no one could still it
In its vented anger
Taking in its wake electric poles
Houses and fences allowing
The flood to give the earth its bath
And we gave it names.

Tony Adah

The Duality Of Nature

Everything is right
Until one thing is wrong
There's no heaven without hell
And between a limbo
There's no saint without the Satan
No angel without the devil
Man without the woman
And in between a sin
There's no sin without a sinner
No righteousness without a saint
And this is the duality of nature.

Tony Adah

The Duck.

The duck is a quiet
And a patient bird
Almost deaf and dumb
It sways in movement
With its ducklings in tow
And comes to where I was
Eating my food.
It watched with great
Interest the way I ate the food
And looked every where my
Hand went to from the foo-foo
Bowl to the soup plate
The humility exhibited by the
Kneeling ducklings
Made me to abandon the food
And pledged it on charity
For the ducks' family.

Tony Adah

The Dung Beetle

The dung beetle rolled
Rotting cow dung along
The lady beetle clad in royal robes
Refused to look its way
For she might be invited
To the dung rolling trade.

The children followed along
Chanting deriding songs
And taunting the dung beetle
This is what the lady beetle hates
For children may class her here!

Tony Adah

The Dust Rose

The dust rose up high into the heavens
Leaving us behind
They told us that we came from dust
And from dust we will return
But the dust left us stranded
Toiling and reluctant to rise
Rise high into the heavens
Because there's still a breath
In our lungs.

Tony Adah

The Eagle Of The Sky

I am a beautiful far sky eagle
With a crooked heart
The cock that crows at noon
And the lion that lures the antelope
To count its teeth

I am the hare that gisted the lizard
To plant its yams cooked
And had a bumper harvest
In his stomach

I am the far sky eagle
The one with clean plumes
And the one with a stained liver
I soar the highest of trees
And the wildest of the jungles
Where rodents and ungulates shiver

I am the rooster that heralds
The arrival of the adversary
The chicken that abhorred trouble
And had its knees behind its legs
But the lion that laughed and asked
His preys to count his teeth
I am the eagle of the far sky.

Tony Adah

The Early Morning Rain.

The clouds droop and bow
To the humble earth where the rain
Splatter on tin clad roofs
And gusts of air through the window
Hit a log on sleepers' bed.

Some light flicker and twinkle
Across waving palms of coconut fronds
In the great storm of the coming rain
Lying barrels make a rolling noise
The rain poured and poured
Then drizzle in tiny drops
And send the sleepers back
To their first death.

Tony Adah

The Earth Is A Hovel Of Hate

The earth is a hovel of hate
And not a haven of nurture
Up the sky a skyscraper towers
From its window a man looks
Down the street where a half clad man
In tatters of hair and clothes is prowling a bin
The world's eye is blind
And its ear deaf
So prowling here is an occupation
Why will the world not treat the defects?

Tony Adah

The Earth Will Not Deny Me

If men wear an armor of pretense
And scorpion tails become
Their whips on me
If my roses bear thorns
And not beautiful petals to behold
The earth will not deny me my room
Hate me or love me
I would have traveled
Still you will be the one
To cry that I have gone.

Tony Adah

The Earth's Pendulum

The earth swings from east to the west
And the world trudges on
Whether a man dies or man lives
The pendulum swings with ease
Taking man from rags to riches
And from riches to rags
Dust to man
And man to dust.
Life goes on
The thirsty in dearth of water
Drink from the dews
And the shoeless walk
On the shells of peanuts
Live a life and see the self evidence
Of its truth
A mountain and a valley
Joy and melancholy
Hot and cold are the swings
Those spices of the soup
Life cooks for man.

Tony Adah

The Egret

The egret perched on the hump
Of the cow
And the cow prowled the veld relishing the grasses
Insects and flies perturbed
Jumped into the egret's mouth
A vigilant hawk alighted
And in his talons the egret
Was jacked away
And the day became a Christmas day
For the insects and the flies
This is how the world grinds daily
On its jaws.

Tony Adah

The Eleventh Commandment

Thou shall not listen
To rumours or input
Some thinking into
Thy neighbour's heart
For ninety nine percent
Of what you think they
Think about you is wrong
And thou shall not show
The public that thy breath is bad.

Tony Adah

The Empire

We sing
But the lyrics of our banal anthem
Melt into anathema
Rocks
Rivers
Oceans
Trees
Man and animals companions
To the land abandoned.
The royal Sabre rattles
Towards the limbs of the empire
Dismember
Excise
Eliminate
Amputate the limbs of stakeholders
And efface the Empire.

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Tony Adah

The End

All the yowl
Boasting and hitting
Of chest gone.
All the possessions
Struggles and quarrel disappeared
The tongue swollen in the mouth
Legs immovable
The whole being prostrate
On death's mat
And vanity at its peak
A man is no more.

Tony Adah

The End Of It.

I will climb up there
On the tree at the centre
And guard against pilferers
I will pluck the fruits
Rain them down upon the the famished children.

I will teach them
How to tend the trees
Climb them themselves
And protect them against thieves.

The pundits of greed will
Buried under the trees
And their propelled appetite brough to earth
Thievery will vanish
Evven as the tide is low
At the niger delta.

Tony Adah

The End Of The Beginning

Today the tide has changed
Nearly by dustbin a kitchenette of grubs
No roof over the head
A nest any place at dusk.
There's no shoe to wear
Just trod on dry leaves to have
A sound of shoes
And prove your worth among them
Hum the sound of a car
And get driven destination wise
Hunger driven but wisdom drowned
Death but living
A pool of tears and hallowed laughter
Death may be sloughing the flesh
And life the addition of a soul
In which case subtraction is the end
Of the beginning.

Tony Adah

The End Of The War

A soldier's morale was killed
Just like his enemy by the dearth of munitions and food
His mettle had gone
The only motivation left in the war stricken soldier
Was AWOL and strapped to his shoulder
Was a silent gun devoid of strength.
He made it lean on a barren plantain stem
And turned his back on it.

The enemy's artillery shook the earth
Like a volcano behind him
And the upsurge of hunger couldn't
Allow him double his steps
A refugee couple had their dresses
Kept by the river's bank and were taking
Succour from the scorching sun
In the deeps of the the rivulet.

A thought to change the army khaki
Blossomed in the heart of the fleeing soldier
He carefully pulled the khahi off
And wore the woman's wrapper away
And when he had sufficiently crossed the river
The war ended.

Tony Adah

The Enemy Within

The cow lost its hoaves
its ears, its tongue and all its head
To the merriment of man
They call it one delicacy- nkwobi
And this is where man is enemy to himself
He sings cholesterol and high blood pressure
seeking to detoxify
Meanwhile the cow is constant
In his meals.
The doctor is himself
Still he seeks another
In ignorance of the self.

Tony Adah

The Errand Boy

The errand boy is sharp
And fast like lightening
He runs errand willingly
And he is as happy as a clam
He lives by errands
And never eats the herbs on his way
Or drink from the dews on the herbs.
He lives by his errands
And his principals readily give
So he is never hungry or angry
At anytime of the day.

Tony Adah

The Evil Forest.

On the way to the village spring
Was an overgrown forest
Nobody had touched in my
Grandfather's life time.
It was rumoured that the forest kills

During the daytime
A great wind descended here
And the forest swallowed it
With a sound that frightened worshippers
The forest had three layers
And the tallest had a huge canopy
Followed by a lesser one
And the ground floor with ferns, mosses,
Lichens and giant millipes, centipedes etc
Which worshippers believed killed instantly.

At night the forest creaked with the sound of crickets
And its darkness was so thick
A hand could harness it
And it flickered with light from a million stars
There was also an unusual noise
Of a nearby stream whispering
To the pebbles that lined its bed
Women were specially bared
From this forest
And this was the mystery of the forest.

Tony Adah

The Fallen

Unheard, thou layed there
Unable to breath
Thy bravery emasculated to death
Thou clasp not now thy gun
Thy strength gone
Those thou doth slain
Thus beside thee lie
In equal strength

Thy vile temper buried
Thy gun thou clasp not
Its sound unheard
Its pellets still
And the trigger stiff

Thou fallen foes who in vain
Raised a cannon against thee
So in equal disarm lie
Thy gallance humbled
In the vanity of power and war.

Tony Adah

The Fate Of Man

Man's destiny
Is in his own hands
He dares any places
Looking for what to conquer
The war is more of dominion
Than it is thought of survival
His murderous hands
Unleash death upon the world
Even his Achates suffers a great blow
From death usurping his life.

When the conqueror comes
Oy makes everyone's world
As tasteless and colourless as water
Light shines not
Night is far
Death is near
In many ways
Conquering the world.

Tony Adah

The Fear That I Will Die

When I look at what tomorrow holds
As bright or blurr as I guess
Fear grips me numb
More so that I do not know
When it shall come to pass;
In that fear
I feel like being alone without
A friend
And out of greed I think I should
Consume all that I have alone
And die in the bloom of death.

Fear or greed
Death is not perturbed
So I refrain and ask myself where
Are the grannies that lived before?
I am living in a house as a heir
Which fear or greed can build
But not.

I learn that birth has come
And death is sure;
I am told to brave the world
Inspite of the fear of the end
And make some ruts on the path
Of my life
That the unborn when they see
Shall clap for me.

Tony Adah

The Fields Dry Up

In the morning the sun
Rises above the hills
And flowers blossom like eternity
While fertile wombs bleed their
Crimson red;
The afternoons come with sordid tears
Flowers shrivelled like tobacco leaves
In a scorching maturity.
The fields dry up
And the green is brown
Those who bled their wombs
Are in a lonely mood
The sun to the west has gone
And those drowning have
Nothing to clasp with their empty hands
Life is sweet
And life is bitter.

Tony Adah

The Final Day

Any day anyone doth go
Death blare not any arrival horn
Get him take thee home
With ease
Shalt thy soul according to
Thy deeds rest.
Those who wore head to toe
Sang best of hymns
And sat in the pews thus reserve
In the fore of houses
With spires and minarets above;
Admire themselves while the sermon
Tale is on
The gateman in strictness
Of thy days record keep
And when thou knock
On the door, the solid lock
Thus deaf become;
And thy days of yore
Yet reflect in the gatekeeper's eye
Hades thou turn thy head to
And burn like coal
Gnash thy teeth
When thy end doth come.

Tony Adah

The Finishers Of Our Heritage

Thieves wore garland
And sat on the high table
In an occasion of looting my country
Where huge elephants stride;
Those who till the soil
And who toil before the sun
And before the fire;
The concretes, before the wood
And the saw;
Before anvil and hammer
In copious sweat
Remain standing, watching and huddled
Like slaves.
On the last day
Which is any other day;
The heavens of the thieves
Shall be like Kirikiri
And bugs will be their companions
In a maximum security abode
Their benediction will come at dusk
Of crimson blood
And the joy sown in their hearts
Will turn into sorrow
For they have walked in graceless strut
To the abyss of shame
Where haste leads them home.
Already the sky rumbles
And great winds stir up storms
From the desert of our land
He that causes the storms
The finisher of our heritage
Is he free from the stains
Of the same palm oil?

Tony Adah

The Fire On The Cock's Head.

The cock wore a red coxcomb
And told the other animals that
The whole world he owned with fire
On his head
The animals feared and revered the cock
A hare came out boldly to ask the cock
For a hand in friendship which hr got.
He often brings food to his new friend
And he suggested he would feed the cock
The cock gladly accepted his friend
To be his servant
The cunning hare fed his friend
And began testing how hot the fire
His friend carried on the head was
When he touched and found no warmth
He laughed quietly back to other folks
And told them that there was no fire
Anywhere on the cock's head
Everyone came round cunningly
And touched the cold fire
Thenceforth, the cock was taunted
Until today even flies frolick on his head.

Tony Adah

The Fisherman.

Up in the sky
A thousand stars flicker
Their shadows on the golden sea
Beckoning on the fisherman at twilight
He is tempest tossed
And found by the tide
His nets out of grip
And floating on the waves.

Had he the means
All fishes will go home
And leave his little boy
Out of the shark's belly
Who scooped water
Out of the leaking boat.

Tony Adah

The Fishermen.

When the seagull goes home
At twilight the fishermen will move
Seaward and prowl in the turbid water
Of the first to fetch.
They will lament that the night caught
Up with them and the reason why
They return empty handed
Time, daytime was in a great need
And they plead that more time be given
To bring the fish home
And time is always not enough.

Tony Adah

The Flag

The allure of national pride
Flies in the air
Tattered in many wings
So is patriotism in shreds
Looks like my country is a ghost of itself
Now that the clarion call to national pride
Is swallowed by the individual greed
When our flag is left
To flutter in tatters of our collective shame

Tony Adah

The Flower And The Sunbird

The sunbird is a very
Light bird
Its perch is a long
Leafy bougainvillea bough
And it likes this tree branch
For its white, pink and purple flowers
The source of sweet nectar.

Each time the sunbird
Alighted here for a transfusion of nectar
The bougainvillea in it
Fullness of humility
Bends and bend
Rises and rise
For the little bird to perch.

People know that the bougainvillea
Is as weak as the sunbird is light
And this is the reason
For their mutual respect
The tree is just glad
For the choice of it as a perch
And the bird is happy
For the accommodation.

Tony Adah

The Food Chain

Life isn't a mistake
It is a chain
Where souls meet
And souls love
Where souls Live
And souls depart

No one sane
Should waste
His type and boast of it
The reason
We are wicked
Perhaps is that
We wear the flesh

Life is a chain
Yes but not
To the extend of pulling
Our type down to die
If nature intended so
Adam would have
Enjoyed his splendid
Garden alone
The food chain
Precludes man
From eating man.

Tony Adah

The Fool

O'quarel, thou art wisdom
To the fool
No word shall slip my lips
And fill his brain
If he will hurt my heart
Stitches will hold my lips
And hunger in his head.

Tony Adah

The Force Of A Poem

I wish my poem
Could have the force to change the world
I wish I could write it
So sweet like the song of a nightingale
Or coo like pigeons lulling the world
To sleep away from wars.

I wish I could howl at the whole world
To hear me
And show up with all the arms
Under the hovering sky
And plead a truce
To the raging wars.

I wish the force of my poem could
Spit fire and burn the sins of the world
First for man to live peaceably here
On earth then in heaven.
I wish my poem a rainbow
That the world may see its beauty
And refuse to shoot any gun
In any way that will spoil this beauty.
I wish I could all of these
Do tonight now that
My ink pot is still full.

Tony Adah

The Fugitives

The fugitives filed a long line
Like ants on a hunt
Little and big trudge on
Luggage on padded heads,
Ghana-must go bag, water holders, dogs
And sheep and goats
There's no road to define the uncertain journey
No food
No water
No bicycle but trudging on slippered feet
Air is the only sure companion
Still vigour lacks to breath a free gift
What fate awaits a people
In their own land?

Tony Adah

The Fulcrum Of The World

A little bird twitters a song
So soft it lifts the soul out of melancholy
And a flower's fragrance spreads like a storm
Giving an ambience to be
But a rotten egg's mal-odor
Tears the nose bridge
Offering a party which only flies enjoy
When good are done
Only a taint of a bad one spoils the show
And that is that fulcrum of the world.

Tony Adah

The Future.

The future is not
What we should be afraid of
For it is a pregnant woman
Only that its gestation period
Is revealed not to any man
It may deliver a boy Or a girl
A Child Or twins, triplets Or more
And even a stillbirth
But this can not be the end of the world

The future is not
What we should be afraid of
Rather be wary of a tiny voice
From inside us
Giving us a cord
Tethering us to despair
This is the ghost of our fright.

Tony Adah

The Game

Somehow
By the providence of someone
We do not know
We came to where we are
Undulating fields, mountains and valleys
All ours for free
Sweet roses with thorns.

If man was to make man
We'd have remained stuck in the dust,
All the beauty in vain
Without any eye to see.

All actions would have been tied to man
And all men robots
Would seek order to walk, to eat or to laugh
Cry would've been the slaves' chains
On their ankles and wrists
And man would be right
Just as it was a necessity
No man ever made any man.

Tony Adah

The Gangsters

The gangsters conspired to remain
At the base of the societal pyramid
Consigned and abandoned
They lived hand to mouth
In the takes of peanuts from politicians
They shine their shoes and licked their boots.

And they reverted to kidnappers, oil thieves
Thugs and touts and robbers
But they are all worst for it
And their bosses caught them and imprisoned them
And killed them.
They are worst for it
Deliberately huddling at the
Last rung of the ladder of society
That's what their bosses and oppressors love
To let them hold themselves
In servitude when they have gone to school
Properly or improperly baked.

Tony Adah

The Generals Of War.

The gong resounded
Its echo waking the halcyon reign of peace
War rhythm was thick in the air
And its sinister omen hanging and dangling
In the clouds, mountains, trees
As well as float on streams, rivers and oceans.

The war generals
Have called for the throats of their kind
Which they have branded as enemies
What could make the gong sound so fierce
Other than the price of liquid gold?

The ambush was great
So was the sound of munitions
And the gory sight of death.
The generals of war wore the apparel of war
And war was that wind that blew everywhere.

From the apprehension
Of every living thing it was
Unnecessary to go to war
The gods heard this and brought the war
To a standstill and who won or who lost
Was a matter of a tie
And its name was pyrrhic victory!

Tony Adah

The Ghana-Must- Go

Near the wardrobe
My wife left a bulging Ghana -must-go
Its contents I do not know
But a long time
This bag has been here
Perhaps of children's wears
Or books Or other wares
I have the least opportunity to know.

There is a mural
On this bag
Of crowns, stars, hearts and cards
In colours of red, brown, blue and black
That never fade with time.

This bag
She left her change
On top of it
Of ten, twenty and fifty naira
And this reminded me
About when the military
Ruled my country
This was the bag
The public wealth
Was stolen in.

Tony Adah

The Ghost Of Dreams

Dreams die many times
And haunt us in our sleep
We wake with only a ghost of them
And prowl the day
Looking for for their graves.
Dreams grow wings and fly away
And we like cripples
Yearn to catch up with them
A thousand miles away.

Tony Adah

The Gift Of Gold.

Every morning
The mountains rolled and meet the lowlands
And in between, resplendent rivers
Slither through like great pythons
In the wild.
Trees sway in the wind
Butterflies hover over
Splashy whorls of flowers holding nectar
We grumble inadequate
Bees hum and sting
In a selfish bid to have the sweet taste alone
Birds twitter songs that the gorillas
Echo beating their chest
The jungle chuckles at the whispers
Of hungry men in the arena of bounty means.

Our forebears
Have been here long before we came
And never a glimpse caught of this beauty
Until that sweet early morning
When the flecks of native thralldom
Fell off our eyes
Then the pulchritude of the aged lady
Came to be bare.
On the spur of the moment
Though late found, many youthful grooms
Avail to make her a darling bride
Till eternity.

Her gracious strides of ageless beauty
Stands between Balegete and Jamestown
Though her index toe be lost with the liquid gold
Still she's the gift of gold
It is no gamble that we find ourselves here
Where miles of trees grow
And touch the azure sky
With their tired xylems working low
And the leaves and the stems and the roots
That heal of pain and penury

In great harmony with our folks.

The huge solid wealth
Of gold and all bound underground groan
For the dearth of care
Still we grumble for the
Lack of the gift of gold
Where gifted hands abound.

Tony Adah

The Gift Of Grey.

The gift of grey even to man's hair
Is the gift of beauty
And not the gift of age
A young man's hair blossoms in grey
His youthfulness exposed
In some beauty the world relishes to behold

Passing on highway A 343
At Biase beauty bestrides the roadside
In a green moringa tree
With all its green leaves swallowed
By the grey beauty of its flowers
This is where passersby giraffe to see
That the beauty of grey
Nature has not wrapped in leaves of monopoly
Only for man.

Tony Adah

The Gifts Of Nature.

Nature's offering to man
Is bounteous and miserly made
To a few
He plants a silver spoon
In their mouth and to a majority
He gives a wooden spatula

To a lion
He lavishes the strength
Of body and the verve of dentures
And of horns
The lion may be bitter devoid of them.

To a snake
He gives a skin bag of venom
And for the gift of legs
A snake is helpless
Nature in his kindness
Does not add to any strength
That endangers less the weak die
Under the will of the strong.

Tony Adah

The Giver

Nature has two hands
It takes and it gives
When we sow willingly,
We reap bountifully.
We don't behave a tortoise
Who is scratched before his head
Come out
When we give, in our hearts
We will feel happier than the receiver
And that is the essence.

Tony Adah

The Glib Word Of A Poet.

I am a gleeful poet
Who sings sonorous songs
And get a spank for them
I sing at dawn and I sing at dusk
The cock never crows
Without a glib word from my mouth
At least so they say
And I claim it
For history to store
I have no sombrero
To shield me from this sun
For the hat itself is the reason
Why Sarcastic swipes descend
Upon my head like hailstones
On the head of Eskimos
I am inured
And my hackles
Will never rise.

Tony Adah

The Glory Of Tomorrow

He thinks well thinks tomorrow
Upon which the travail and anguish
Of others hinge
The cross he bears
And the crown of thorns he wears
Are his glory of tomorrow.

He thinks of reaping
Than he thinks of sowing
His thought glide in mortal wings
The glory of a mortal man
Is the sacrifice for the fruits of tomorrow
Peace and not war
And a mortal man can become an immortal man.

Tony Adah

The Gluton

If that which thy teeth gnash
Fill no void in thy stomach
Will thou claim a guerdon in
A throat slippery of drink
Oh, gluton!

Tony Adah

The Goddess Left

She left me over the other
Side of the river and I thought
I was gone
But she was out of sight
I wish I had a gun
To let me go without her
To my own side.
I sang my song of solitude
To change my attitude
Suddenly the bank bloomed with
Daffodils, lillies and chrysanthemums
The lush of the verdure
My eyes behold.
Forward or backward she was no where
To be found
I was was so happy I could forge on
Without the goddess that sent
My breath in and out
And I continued my out breathing
My mind free of her.

Tony Adah

The Graveyard

Do not trespass
This land is for the dead
You came here to mourn
A flower to your chest
A tear in your eyes
Mourning those you loved to hate.
Here lies those bodies
Who are breathing silently
Crying over their woes,
Angels watching and laughing
At those who didn't keep
To the routes.
You in your solemn steps
Know the tracks
Else someone comes,
Dash you a tear and a flower
Or gather your deeds
Into a sack of sins.

Tony Adah

The Great Hills.

On the day God's verve
Was still in tone and he was happy
He mixed clay and rocks
And placed them on some spots
And spoke to them
They rose to some great heights
He commanded pines, grasses and other trees
To grow here and the valleys followed.

The mountains wept with
Tears of its streams and rivulets
On this hot and cold clime
Of rolling hills coxcombed with clouds
Beckoning on the tired world.

The hills stroll
With their valleys in tow
Swallowing the descending clouds
And the pines whisper
In assonance with the twittering birds
And human ear relish
The songs of mother nature.

Tony Adah

The Great Man

The road to the venue
Was rough and tough
With hills and valleys
And dry rills crafted by the trade
Of rain and floods
Making the labour of the folks
Of this place to be in vain
Their wares of bananas and plantain
And cocoa remain dumped
By the roadside.

A certain man was invited
To a fundraising ceremony here
In this place and he promised them a road
So he visited with a sack on his back
And when he put this down
A caterpillar grader and a bulldozer
Came out humming and pulling down trees
Winding a road through the quiet forest
Listening to the folks agog
In songs and dances
For the foothpaths are changing into motorpath.

Having seen a great change
The folks invited this great man for recognition
And he was offered a sceptre and a crown
With the other royal items
Reserved only for the son of the soil
And he became an indigene
By this ceremony.

Tony Adah

The Gunman

There is a brutal
Murder in south Africa
And the culprit is a celeb
He shot four times
At the door of the bathroom
Still with no intention to kill
So he made his pleas.

Unfortunately the intruder
Turned out to be his sweetheart
Found in crimson blood
Murdered in cold blood
And the court bore sympathy
In a prayer he made
For his girlfriend shredded
By the bullets of his own gun
And I wonder
Why tis gunman
Is not a goner!

Tony Adah

The Harbour Wind

I am alone
Outside of my house
A wind is blowing from the harbour
It comes in tow with a biting cold breeze
A pile of rubbish burns
Like puffs of cannon smoke
The neighborhood is engulfed
In the thick smoke, the wind and the cold
It seems like snow in winter
Except that the smoke rises
And smells and chokes.

Tony Adah

The Hare And His Wife

Grandma gathered us
Under the pear tree
Bathed in pale moonlight
The silvery moonlight casting
Its shadow on our expectant faces
She would be reluctant
To start the craft of her tales
Until dead silence reigned
In the vicinity of our moonlit tree.

Grandma started with
'Once upon a time'
And we echoed time time!
There was a smart
And slyly hare.
He married the most
Beautiful wife in the world

He was in great amity
With the tortoise who was
A very wealthy farmer.
But as guileful as he was
He did trespass in his friend's farm
Without telling him
There in the farm
He sat loading some yams
In a big basket never knowing
He was sitting on a mound of terminarium
The termites made a meal
Of his pants and his ass
And red it become
He could hardly unseat himself
From this mound.

We shuffled our feet
In adjustment of our tired bodies
And grandma stopped
Until calm returned to the under tree
She returned to her craft

'Then the hare.....'
Abandoned his load
In his friends farm
And went home in shame
Direct to his bed.
When the wife came to the bed
She saw the red ass
Dumbfounded more as
Her husband could not
Give any reason for the sudden change.

The wife gathered the dowry
And off she deserted the husband
But he as smart as he was
Ran through the bush path
And appeared before his wife
'My friend's wife what
Is the matter with you '? He asked
'It is not well with my husband
His ass has turned red' she replied.
The hare bursted into laughter
And showed his friend's wife
His own ass which was also red.
This season it is so with every hare,
He told her
He appeared to her
Like this for three times or more
And she made a u -turn
Back to her husband's house
And saw him on his bed feigning illness

Grandma saw the sleep
In some grandchildren's eyes
Sniffed her snuff
Rose up with trinkets
In her ankles
And we stampeded like cattle
In front of her to rest
For another day's tale.

Tony Adah

The Hare And The Agama Lizard

The hare and agama
Were two good friends
But the hare was lazy and slyly
In one season
When farm yield was generally
Poor and his little farm
Could give him only a few tiny yams
Infected with ants
The agama became infested
With a parasite that preyed
On his yams.

He was perturbed
By the dwindling number of yams
In the long throat
Of his slovenly friend
One day he called his friend
And told him that they can't continue
To eat the yams without planting
For the next season
Very well said, the hare retorted.

The hare never love to starve himself
So he crafted a scheme
That hoodwinked his friend
And satisfied himself
My dear friend, he said to agama
We have to invent a way
To create a good yield
Instead of these tiny yams
And to do this we will have
To make a porridge
Of the remaining yams
Wrap them in green leaves
And plant them into the mounds
The gullible agama bought
His idea and did exactly as proposed.

When the yams had been planted

The tricky hare went every day
To take his fill
It worried the agama
That his yams were not sprouting
But he had all the encouragement
And hope from his friend
That the farm will soon begin to blossom.

When the agama couldn't hold it again
He woke up with the lark one day
And went to his friend
Who was busy warming
The porridge he had harvested
From his friend's farm
It was boiling hot
And he lured the agama
To have a taste of of it
From his own hand as he fed him
Then it burnt the agama's throat
That he never spoke again
And that is why agama to date
Nods his head!

Tony Adah

The Heart Of Man

The antics of man
On earth betrays holiness
And slyly he slithers
In stealthly ways
Like a green mamba
Among green grass.

You may see him
In glorious panoply of hues
And in manners gentle show
Still deep in his marrow is guile.

He may demigod claim
At the slightest chance
Over some folks
Or easily underdog become
When things turn awry.
Either way there is no limit
To emptying a bag
Where his guile is treasured.

Tony Adah

The Hen Strayed

I have a little frivolous hen
There is much scavenging in her blood
Long ago she prowled the yard;
Had an egg
And got a rooster
She doesn't know his whereabouts.
Then near my own yard
Where a little chick came following the brood,
Yesterday the pen was empty by two
And no matter how hard I muted a sign
They all ran away;
My bait a very stale meal
I could hear them cackle
But I never could see them again
I am dreaming some day
I will find them back
O' my twosome pretty ones
And how I wish my dream can come true!

Tony Adah

The Heritage

Strangers came to the land
With the potter's wheel
They made whole an earthenware
Indigenes broke it
And managed to fix it
Without the potter's wheel
Balkanization is greater than vulcanization
And the glue just manages the pieces.
Somewhere in the southern fringes
A copious flow of black oil oozes
And this is the only glue
That holds cracked and broken entity together
A great pyramid strides the land
So bad only a small apex
Superintend the heritage over
A large impoverished base of masses
And I am a citizen here.

Tony Adah

The Holy Book

There are two ways
Always
You either have to go
Or you have to come
You either have to be bad
Of you have to be good
You either go to heaven
Of you go to hell.
For me
I have chosen
To read a book
A holy book, the scripture
With all its heavenly prescription
Here on earth
The book is an ordinary book
Unless you internalize
Its contents
And make good
Its prescription for salvation.

Tony Adah

The Holy Man

The world is a Stygian crypt
Where man hides and does his whims
And toil for his sins
He builds upon the world a magnificent edifice
With a spire atop
Here he strides in his best attire
And shouts upon his voice
The name of a deity he loves to disobey
He gathers from the poor
And poorer they become
A reverse of the injunction of his holy book
He brandishes as a holy man
And his outward mien is good
But his heart a bad one.

Tony Adah

The Horned Toad Lizard.

The horned toad lizard
Is not a toad
Just that it is ugly and rounded
Like a toad.
It may seem helpless
To its predators but nature bestows
It a crimson tear
In which enemies turn away.
It may also swell
Projecting its spines
And this is how it survives
All its life.

Tony Adah

The Horse And The Stream

A beautiful horse
Was driven down the stream
With all the strength
Of its drover
It stool still
Gazing at the water
Running downstream
Not even a drop
Of it in its mouth.

Tony Adah

The House Of Man

The house where man lives
Is fraught with good and evil
Spread among the rich and the poor
While a few better placed up the pyramid
Churn out evil to the base;
The huddled masses pick the seeds
And plant in their fertile minds.
The kitchen is laden with clanging utensils
Where the lowly are consigned;
Hungry as they are amidst the bounties
No one cares
To put evil to flight
With the wings of morality
And make the house even
Nay, it is not possible
Unless words no longer have opposites
For in man's house
It is the opposite that swings
In the tall and the short
And in the rich and the poor
That brings spice to life
In the house of man.

Tony Adah

The Houses Of The Common Men

I am wondering
If I am still on earth
Or transcended to a dark
Planet like Mars
It has just ceased to spatter
On our roofs,
Still the air is humid and hot.
Darkness is upon this place
Where noise is the meal for our ears
From those winged elephants singing
Into our ears
Or the humming sound of the sun
In this darkness
Giving light to the only ones
Rich in this place.
It seems I was sleeping
The flakes of sleep and smudges
Off my eyes
Which gave my heart the knowledge
That public power supply is gone
From the houses of the common men.

Tony Adah

The Human Heart

I was traversing a blind alley
Someone racing ahead of me
Naked of a shirt
Greasy with spent engine oil
Folks with cudgels and cutlasses
Running after him.

We got on to the light
Of the clear blue sky
They caught him there
Battered him to pulp
Set up a fire with old tyres
To burn him alive
See that luminous flame
That ought to give their hearts light
Is used to kill.

Those who did this jungle justice Have not had their turn
For everyone is a thief wrapped
In innocence until caught
And every human is neither
Here nor there.

Tony Adah

The Hunter And The Kite.

The kite came again
And perched on the bough
Of the pear tree
It was here on a siege
Against the hunter's chicks.

Upon sighting it
He ran inside his hut
And came brandishing a dane gun
Trotting under the tree
Not even weary of the kite's eagle eye
The hunter only got his name
From owning a gun
He was a poor marksman
Who could shoot and miss a mountain.

He went forth and back
Searching for the very vantage point
To down this predator
He stopped passersby with his hand like a dumb
And Suddenly an explosion raided the pear tree
Shredded a cloud of leave
Mixed with the smokes from the gun
And away the kite flew.

Tony Adah

The Hype Is Gone

Yesterday I didn't think that
The sun will rise or set
But it did amidst enormous preparations
Lighting, eating, drinking and dancing
People defying mist or dust or cold
In the winter that Christmas comes.
And I am here watching the frenzy
Of debt recovery to make sure Christmas happen
Rice to fill plates and drinks to fill glasses
And drums to beat and legs to wriggle
Defeating the purpose of the saviour's birth?
I do not know
What we think about Christmas here
Year in and year out
We do same things
And hurry as if the times have prompted us
Dangling, swinging and sweating
Like a goat about to be slaughtered in this season.
For yesterday we are done
Waiting for next year to come.

Tony Adah

The Immigrants

Their boat is wrecked at sea
Its flotsam and jetsam
Washed ashore
And men and women
Who jettisoned their home
Are drenched and cold and shivering
Chattering their teeth

The fact that life's struggles
Will one day end
Written all over their faces
As they look at the vast expanse of the sea
And the endless horizon.

It is the quest
For the golden fleece
And the backslide from one's country
They are sea washed
A flock of stranded immigrants
And corpses floating at sea
A fractured patriotism
Away from home caught up
With a dashed hope
Far into the tempest sea.

Tony Adah

The Indelible Shadow

This picture I can clean
It is awful to wake up with a lump
At heart
When my rubber bung eraser
Bounces in my hand
Something takes me back there
The little indelible shadow
Lying in the crib
What Picasso put on the canvass
Dies hard in my heart
Where the lump grows
Only the crib will water the garden
And wherever it came from
Gone and forgotten.

Tony Adah

The Jaywalkers

They played jazz
They jam out
They spoke jargons
They ate jam
They were in a jailhouse
They are jailbirds
They broke jail
They drove jeep
They jaywalked and stumbled
They fell down.

Tony Adah

The Jetty's Passing On

The old jetty stood idle
Staring at the sea
Its weathered concrete floor
Blooming in a garden of mosses
Stones dotted here and there
Shone like stars in the sky.
A crane sat down on its floor
Bent with age
Waiting in vain for the wares
Which used to come in and out of it.

It is a long wait, the ships may
Not come again
Still slavery, a constant source of
Human ware is dead
Now a wind vane is a companion
To the gray and rusty crane
It turns three sixty degrees
The ware no where to be found
There now the jetty is called
A resort in Marina.

Cane chairs now take the place
Of palm produce, cocoa, rubber and
The things Europe sent to us,
We used to hear of PZ, UAC,
Elder Dempster, all multinationals
They are gone, their houses derelict
And the produce they bought no where
To be found.
Some youths now in weird wears
Sit on this jetty in front of them
Green, brown, blue and red bottles
They wear headsets and mime
Music from their cellphones
Drinking and eating gizards, chicken
And pepper soups, a burial ceremony
For the jetty's passing on.

Tony Adah

The Journey Back

He told no one
He would travel
And won't come back
From the look of things
It prompted him too.

Back from the farm
He rested under the tree
In the compound and he never woke up
He had no bath
No lunch
No change of clothes
He left without his luggage

As he slept on his eternal bed
We wept
We cried
We mourned
Still all upon deaf ears fell
He shook not
He breathed not
Till he slept alone
In his grave.

Tony Adah

The Journey Not Made.

A vexed gentleman
Ungentle made his way
Destination Cross River
It was to be.
Ladden with the venom of death
Shrouded in a
Cloud of uncertainty
And right from the abyss of hell
A sinister visitor of yesterday
Landed in Lagos.
Heinous in his ways
And hard in his heart
Beaming with the courage
Of life but half dead in his heart
He came spreading the
Devilish contagion of ebola river
The world's sourvinir
From Congo through Liberia
To my country?
He shattered the hope
Of my country men
And they shiver
At the mention of the word
Still Tinapa
In its profuse and delightful
Ambience waited in vain
To receive this gruesome visitor
With his chilly hands of death.

Tony Adah

The Journey So Far.

The journey of a thousand miles
They say begins with only a step
I can walk well now that I'm not a toddler
I can walk tall now that my third leg
Is yet to be used.

Though the journey thus far has been rough
The number of times I have stumbled and fallen
And risen have made me stronger than I began
I am going floating in the air
Soaring high into the azure sky
Where the strong eagles are taking a rest
There, that is where I want to be!

Tony Adah

The Judges Lied

How one state
Turned into two states
Can quarell, I do not know
How one state's
Wells of liquid gold
Got ceded to another state
And her people ceded
To another country
I wonder!
When strangers came to steal
We divided ourselves
Along percuniary lines
And refused to spot
The common enemy
Went to court
Where the judges lied
Robbing Peter to pay Paul.
How one knife
Can have two hilts
I do not know.
What unites us
Is greater than ephemeral
Liquid gold hidden
In the belly of our mother earth.

Tony Adah

The Judges Lied.

On what grounds should Akpalo be acquitted
With his mighty boots trampling on
Ants, grasses and humans
He is larger than life and his backbone
Is furnace roasted solid like a rock
He may injure or kill ants and grasses
And go free
But the sanctity of human life
Should be above a murderer's whims
And to murder and go free
Depicts the character of the judge
In a country where corruption blossoms
Like lilies in summer.

Tony Adah

The Jumbo Roll

It was a giant roll
And the eatery called it
A jumbo pie
I ate it and drank a coke with it
And never will dream of it
For as I talk of it now
My tummy is filled again.
As I ate it
Its stuffing loosely packed
Rained down the table
Like ripped mangoes
Falling in a storm
Peas, yellow corn minced beef
And stuffs that will make me
Want to belch now
I don't want to be here again
Or when I go
Not for this roll.

Tony Adah

The King's Fear

What froth with fraud
And hate and betrayal
Do not fear my king,
Thy moonshine loaded with
Calm and kindness
And not harsh as fire will thy
Mood temper.

Do not weep my lord
For thy calm expires when thou with
Fools quarel,
If thou succumb to the sidewalk
Thou stray to join pedestrians
Thou art no man be
And thou crown be paper made.
When the barren speak,
Garb on your ear muff
Such yelling portend dearth
And a forward journey
Bears no ears
For the rambling talk behind.

Tony Adah

The Kite

I am the kite
King of the sky
King of the sea
King over hills and valleys
I dive with the grace
Of a murderous dinosaur
I bruise the flesh
And wreck the bones.
How would you see
A giant silk cotton tree
And attempt to climb it?
The eyes will always be afraid
The mind will bolden up to fright
Hands quicken to fight
And the legs will hasten to run
Bold and brave
On my Wings I conquer
Still I am a lizard.

Tony Adah

The Labyrinths Of Life

Life has threatened me
And I have refused to budge
It dribbles me and I follow its labyrinth
Except getting vexed and crossing
To the other side
It speaks to me spitting
Its vitrollic spittle
And soon I hide in my cocoon.

It tortures me to fright
And endurance is the
Shadow of bravery that walks with me
It tethers me to a pole
And I jump severing its cord
It gives me a bitter pill to swallow
And I go looking for honey
To obliterate the taste.

It takes me up giving
Me my happy mood
And it drops me down again
Sometimes it doesn't touch me
And that is when I am asleep
I wonder when this will be over
But I guess that is when
Sleep's twin brother will
Cuddle me unto its own bosom
And life remains on earth
Freeing me beyond.

Tony Adah

The Ladybird

A ladybird
Is a beautiful beetle
It is nice
Golden red with black parches
It flies with pride
And perches with caution
It is a clean insect
Unlike the dungbeetle
Doing its work rolling dungs
All day and hiding in its hovel
Too dingy for for the ladybird to go
And they are not peers at all!

Tony Adah

The Land Of My Dream

I am thinking about something precious
Live enhancing and a legacy of tomorrow
My back is on the old land
And no anthem makes me turn back
On the land warped by colonialism
And colonialists greed.

I am walking up to a new land
Old as we have lived in it
But new as it appears in my mind now
The old rock slabs will be crushed
And the old corrupt order
Untufted from the land.

The green growth of the meadows
Shall blossom with the Savannah
And the new blue sea will come home
To live with the new generation
Totally free
With its energy and verve.

We will live without boundaries
Either on the land or our heart
This is the land of my dream
Coming up to show himself to me
Before i ever leave.

Tony Adah

The Land Up-North

To the north the land lies
rolling in hills and valleys with thorns
Of the desert piercing the unrelenting sun
Dust bowls rising and maiming a great number
in the eyes
And the south bears the brunt
Of swarming alms seekers.

Still it is our land where
rain seldom visit
but when it does the onions bulbs
and cabbages and lettuces and broccoli,
bell peppers and watermelons blossom
And southern markets hold in excess of them

This is where the earth harbours
A wealth of berite, tin, quartz, lead
manganese, aluminium, even uranium
Who will sing a song without mentioning
the cattle and goats and sheep
Or sorghum, millet or soya bean or beans
Still this is where poverty builds an abode
Of a sordid type
And illiteracy swarm like locusts
for everyone with a gourd to catch

Most who come down are barbers
And pedicurists and manicurists
But return up when the rain comes
To drive cows and donkeys in ploughshares
And put in seeds that will sprout and
feed the nation at large
Still here lies squalor from what moves
The nation ahead.

Tony Adah

The Last Crow

On the eve of the day before Christmas
A sound signal was added neighborhood
The ships returned from Limbe in the Cameroons
And blared their tumultuous sound
A rooster came from a certain farm
And blared his crow on the hour
And won't let us hear a word.

I promise all this will be gone
On the day after Christmas
The rooster with great effrontery
Yelled a pitch of his crow
To replace the giggle of generators
When public power supply has been fairly constant
That was the last crow
We heard of him
On the morning of boxing day
He was recaptured from his tether
And boxed into a pot
Somewhere in the kitchen
For a pepper sauce
To ward off the wintry wind.

Tony Adah

The Last Day

It is a market day sort of
A large market place of wares
Covert and overt
And a multitude of people searching
Buying and selling
Suddenly the sky is not happy again
Dark clouds, whirlwinds and thunder
Then the rain came
Everyone is scampering, running away
The wares behind
A war is loosed upon the world!

Tony Adah

The Last Lap

The road is long
Slugs may reach
As well as the hare
And man with his ingenuity
May not be the first to arrive
Or will a millipede of a legion legs
Be the first to arrive.

I can see mountains and valleys
The deserts and the blue seas
Vast expanse of the universe
Up and down
I can see the journey ending
Here on earth
Some say
It will end in the sky
Either way the journey must one day end.

Tony Adah

The Last Room

They told us
Butterflies don't breed with birds
Bats with squirrels
Cats don't breed with dogs
And that pedestrians walkway
Can not compete with speed lane
We got the message
They climbed up and ate their mangoes
And threw shells and nuts at us
Those trees our grandfather planted
They ate everything
But in the end
We will meet in the single last room.

Tony Adah

The Last Vow

I am a licensed man
Nurtured
In the way
Of the beast
With crimson colour of blood
Born and bred
In the wildest
Of the earth.
By my faith,
I avow my commitment
To the thin dividing line
Between life and death.
If life is to live with a breath
And death without a breath
Then the grim destiny
Of our death is more in ways
Than I can kill.
I take this vow
In the stupor of my faith
Believing the paradise
Measured out for me.
I am now in heaven
But still expecting
My earthly virgins
As I make this vow
To set agonizing
Death upon the land.

Tony Adah

The Last Words

As birth makes
Us come upon the world
So does marriage
Make us stick together
Until death
Does us part ways
In defiance of what
Nature does put together
With an injunction-
No man puts asunder!

Tony Adah

The Laurels Of Man

The laurels that man procures
Are but petals of an aging rose
He sweats morning and evening
Winning gold or silver or bronze
Though some may win wood unpronounced
To the same shallow home
They crawl sickly or senescent with age
And they lie here
Laurels unseen
With their eyes closed
And ego punctured in the end.

Tony Adah

The Lazy One

Tie his legs
The lazy one that goes to the farm
And sleeps on mounds
He has a red throat
And palmwine froth from within
His breath is foul and stale
If a fish lives in water
Will he be thirsty again?
He snores
And the air is bad
Tie him up
The lazy one that goes to the farm
And sleeps on mounds
Wake him up like an elephant
Only with a log in your hands.

Tony Adah

The Lazy Ones

It is ten o'clock
The sun has not risen
And the cloud is full
Neither are the drizzles abating
The strong have gone out
In defiance of the inclement clime
Upon their heads cocoyam and plantain leaves
And the weak counting hours
To when the rain's tiny legs will break
Their hearts roaming to feed their famish tummies
The sky smiles and the sun shows
Weakly in the west
But for today it is too late
To step to the farm.

Tony Adah

The Less Privileged

I am by the way side
Near the harbour under a coconut tree
I watch a bird flying by
In its beak clutched his catch
I saw a blind man groping his way
His tummy groaning for food
And a mad man
Singing his soliloquy
In his tattered attire
The world is churning all
In its stomach
And wearing a smile
That humanity is allowed
To prowl in the wild
Of those less privileged.

Tony Adah

The Lesson

The lesson is not learned
We continue with the calmness of heart
And impunity
Petals rise in the morning dew
Their beauty held in the morning sun
Same lost to dust in the evening sun.

A bachelor's sojourn
Leaves his fire in a pile of cinder
And no one stokes kindlings in
Still he dares not extinguish his fire
Upon seeing the rising sun.

Tony Adah

The Letter

At fifth grade
I read a letter that came from Lagos
I read it like I had sore eyes
The words were thick with the fountain
Dipped in a pot of quink blue black ink
Yet I read it like it was blurred
To anxious non literate father
Who sat on his throne
Waiting for a message from his son.

I pranced between the ink ladden pad
And my Michael West which was bought in Lagos
Where this letter came from
I read it like a diviner
Watching his client and the diviner's shells
In a bid to reveal a prognosis
I read it
From one word in the pad
To same word in the dictionary
And my sceptical father waited
As I joined the words back to the sentences
And interpreted to him
The next day
A more proficient reader came in
And walked his own footsteps direct
But the message delivered was one
I read it
And it was true.

Tony Adah

The Light House

Down the seashore
Tourists frolick in the sand
the sea tempest tossed of crest high
And I hold the trough at the bottom low
Not restraining watching the swimmers
Up the yacht on a simmering sea
A thousand others gulping the sea salt water
They lost their bid and drift a sea
The sign is far
I am looking at the island from a dizzying cliff
And soon I am down
Wave tossed to a waiting cove
Here I am near the light house
After toil, with pain and joy
To where the ships get their call up signal
To come or to go
And here I am
I have come to ask
Am I clean to have a passage?

Tony Adah

The Lilies

Struggle tires tendons
But yields the desired
If persistence is the seed
It will sprout
Blossom and yield.
Lilies tire not in drought
Soon summer's succour comes
With green stems and pink diadems
On their heads.

Tony Adah

The Limit Of Money.

Some men may toil and
Get plenty of money
And think that they have
The world in their pocket
But is money near us
Like asking and answering questions for us?
A money man can boast of things
Like good garments, sleek cars and posh houses
And of good manners and integrity
His money can not guarantee.

Tony Adah

The Little Bird

A little bird perches on a twig
Where a flower blossoms with whorls
Of red and purple petals
A long tongue drained the whorl
And the little bird is ready for something.

Two little artillery guards
Stood watching the little bird
One with a stone
Another with a stick
Oh, little bird
Here thy end is near

Two soldiers at attention
Want to throw their weapons
Pointedly at you!
But poor little bird has taken his fill
And away it flew.

Tony Adah

The Little Bird.

My eyes stole sight
Of a little green and yellow bird
With her red lips
Perching on the bright red tinge of petals
Preening her plumes
Swaying in every way windward
She gulped some nectar
Hissed a song
And away it flew.

Tony Adah

The Little Cat.

The kitten mewed curling it's tail
Licking its tongue
Revealing bright canine teeth
In a smile that meant its owner had come
Maybe in this mew
A sure sign that food is ready.

Tony Adah

The Little Girl

A little girl stood up in class
At the call of a taunting teacher
Frigid with fear
Moody and shy
Picked up her book
And unable to pronounce a word
The teacher howled and growled
And pelted abuses at her
Her freckled face fell
The melanin deficient girl
A ghost of herself
The class went gloomy
As someone's self esteem
Is murdered.

Tony Adah

The Little Girl With Fever

The frail little girl laid down
On a straw mat panting with little
Or no energy
Her rib cage rising and falling
Red lips and febrile looks
Hair smeared in kernel oil
And the back of the feet swollen and shining
Like a fresh gourd hanging on a bough
There's no hospital
But it is too late to die
Who will clear this bush?
Who will fill the puddles in the yard?
Who will empty the broken earthen wares
Some weeks filled with rain water?
So the tiny mosquitoes' house will be gone?

Tony Adah

The Living Corpses

Will we die
Or will we live?
Now the only love
The world shows is the breath
Of our raised ribcages
Up and down on a frail note
Everything is gone
The hate and treachery
In the land heaped on our heads.

Tony Adah

The Lizard Praises Himself

Always, the lizard plays his part
Climbs a tall silk cotton tree
Before a motley crowd
And nods his head.

Tony Adah

The Lizard Said Yes

I am eating roasted sesame grains
In my bedroom
Overlooking the quay
A country delicacy rare
But still alive in my house
Suddenly I saw the cloth line
Trembling terribly and the clothes
Flying like kites in the wind.

I stepped out
With a saucer in my hand
And I left it by the kerb stone
Picking the clothes and someone relishing my meal
I am hugging the wears
In my bossom but my meal is gone.

I took the empty saucer
Wondering what has taken my snack
Then I saw a gray and brown spotted lizard
Red head lizard nodding his head
His bulging eyes showing no remorse.

Tony Adah

The Lonely Stray

The river purred in songs
Of loneliness
Along the bed corner of rocks
Dim sighted he eddies
And grope downstream.
What a lonely journey in solitary song?
So the river's song suffers a diminuendo
As he strays
In his lonely exploits
The tributaries join in
With their tributes of songs
There's no meaning in any song
The river lonely walks
And bends and stumble and fall
All in straying moves
Listening to no one.

Tony Adah

The Long Shadows

The evening gave a dinner of skimpy gruel
To those whose tummies have been glued
To the spinal pole
And the hearts in their hands are simply no meals
But lumps of frightful signs
Here or there bombs are meals
With shrapnel of human bones
The guerrilla warfarers like the taste
Of the brimming tears and a keg of crimson blood
And the long shadows are the shadows of death
Where laughter had to wait
For the funeral of those massacred.

Tony Adah

The Lord Of Yore

We stopped the river from
Flowing downstream and took volumes
For our boss to drink and to have a bath
We shone his shoes
And pressed his clothes
He barked at every bit of our human foibles
And brought messages from his excellency to us
Which we must fulfill
He rose like a star
And crashed like a meteor
Or blossomed like mushrooms in the morning
And crumbled in the afternoon.
The old tiger strambled for snails
With the rodents
And whatever things of a top possess
Must also have a bottom.

Tony Adah

The Lorry From The North

A certain lorry was spotted
At the international conference centre roundabout
Speeding and not moving
Crawling, humming and blaring a horn
It smoked like my grandpa did tobacco.

By its tailboard was boldly written
'No food for lazy man' and here
Precariously three young lads perched
With their vestments of filth and the smell of goats.
The rest of the lorry was a deck of three floors
Holding the goats, blinking, bleating
Coughing and sneezing.

The goats brown, black, dirty white and piebald
Were emaciated from a long journey
From the Sahel to the Atlantic ocean.
The lorry had arrived to where unlike the scorch fields
Of Kano, a lush green vegetation
Awaited them in Calabar and they were here.

Tony Adah

The Love Is Gone

I am lost in lust
The love is even gone
What I see is a gem turned into ashes
My mind is still tethered there
Like a goat to a post
Wherever I go it follows me like my shadow
And the only time
I'm free is on my bed snoring
While senorita is gone!

Tony Adah

The Mad Dancer

Her mother-in-law sits on a broomstick
With her red eye
Good wives they say
Are hard to come by
And she dances mad!
A rhythm played by the mother-in-law
Madness she said is inflicted by
The bite of a millipede
Whereby the bathwater of mother-in-law
Is the cure
And Amuonye'ye promises to dance
To the joy of her spectator
Who gives the rhythms unend.

Tony Adah

The Maddening Dance

I will venture there
Where taboos have been created
And break them for sane men,
Reminiscence of yesterday's nostalgia
Leading me the way.
I'm obsessed with
What the Greeks bestow the world
Our order of the day
Adultrated by the meddlers.
We have communed
With the forces beyond,
No Pater Noster or Angus Dei
Has summoned any change.
I will venture there
Defiant I will be
To stop the maddening dance
That ordered the reverse of our norms
I will be wisely cautious
Trade foolishly with them
Until the baton
Falls into my grip.

Tony Adah

The Madman

He sat under
The lush axora
Its confetti of red petals
Painting him like a king
He sat there
Watching urban development
Opening the earth to bury pipes
That carry water
Still his own share
Will come only from puddles
He sat there
Spoke to no one but himself
Looked at no one but the machines
He sat there bowels void
Half clad and unkempt
Bearing the oblivion
That the world doled at him.

Tony Adah

The Man At The Millennium Park

There's a wild looking man
Perambulating the millennium park
Dreadlocks swing his shoulders, chest and back
His beard hides the frail red lips
And he is a newspaper vendor
With his wares on his head, armpit and hands.

He didn't stray into this arena
No one buys his papers
At least passersby tease to know him more
And he isn't reticent with any information.
He utters so many words at a time.

When asked why always his tent is here
He laughs and thus the diarrhoea mouth
Begin to sing:
I think that I have not strayed
Into this vicinity
I may be lonely here
But I am not alone
Prowling, scavenging, gazing
And looking at the world
Where on earth can I find a shopping mall
To procure a flame of hope for me
And the ailing world?

Tony Adah

The Man Bitten By A Snake

They sang a hymn
For him at the herbalist home
Neither was he an agnostic
Nor a pagan
His church protested
As an african traditional healer rejoiced
When a green mamba
In green grass bit his leg
He went back home
Leaving the venom
At the healer's home.

Tony Adah

The Man Has Gone

The hedge of palm fronds traversed
Orangbang, Ibegem, Otsonkang, Emu,
Agengbu
And the dogs named, Jealousy, Gossips, Marksman
All wagged their tails every morning
After the night vigil he towed them behind him
To where long live- sticks driven into the earth
Bent over with a wire trap.

Those which attempted rising up
Had in their mouths a rabbit, a deer or an antelope
What about a grasscutter or stone beef or squirrels?
They are all culprits trapped
And he himself a witness.

The yams grunted from their mounds
Amidst the weeds
The bean pods bursted like canon sounds
And okro stems stood competing height
With the iroko and mohagony trees
The slow hand of spousal help bent them lower
And the thickener of dry okro emerged mixed
With lumps of trap butchered games
Which drove faster the farina down the throat.

He did toil
Under rain and sun
Beat the wrought iron gong
Distracting the concentration
Of folktales listeners with a message
From the king
A village crier with a box of wisdom powder.

He did all this
To hold the six
Those four strong males and two females
One officially espoused
And the other on hire purchase
He did all this and gave up today

A gallant man boasting as
If he had power to stop death.

Tony Adah

The Man Next Door

I am battered
In this place
Sitting
On a canyon
Watching the torrents
Of wind and water
Running my course for me
I am the artist's canvass
The slime of the paint
And the strokes of the brushes-
My daily doses of bitter pills.
In this friendship
My friend holds firmly
At the hilt and
I at the edges
Of a double edged sword
And I am a victim
A prey to my neighbour.
I have woken up
From the torture of my slumber
Watching myself
Washing myself
With the water beneath
And the air above
Giving me a fresh breath.
My friend and I
Wrapped in a dilemma
Of a surefooted friendship
Swaying,
Tottering
And turning
Into a fall.

Tony Adah

The Man Of My Country.

A man that has ears
But doesn't hear
A man that has eyes
But doesn't see
A man that is hungry
And can not see food
A man that is thirsty
And can not see water to drink
This the citizen of my country
Flowing with milk and honey
Still the citizens scramble for satchet water.

Tony Adah

The Man Who First Saw My Nakedness

I am the one you saw behind
My mother's backyard yelling
On my cradle of banana leaves
Smear'd in my post-partum fluids
Helpless.
Not in the know of what is under the sun
Ignorant of cradle to grave
Still i am a bird of passage
To where?
I do not know.

When I saw you eating stale food
In my mother's hut staring at me
I knew not you
Than your exalted stares
Over the young man
Whose nakedness you saw
With your naked eyes.
What tilted your way here?
My mother's luscious soups?
So at least I thought!

Each time you gulped a lump of foo-foo
And gave me your otiose stares,
I took my eyes away like a bashful new wife.
I wonder why you wandered here!
But my mother told me why.
When someone called you
Near my mother, s hut
I gladly answered
Thinking I was the one.
And this is the way it
Between you and I
Without our name tags.

Tony Adah

The Man With The Hoe

The ploughshares
Cut the earth deep into lumps
Of shiny soil and they stitch themselves
Loosely in the expanse of the land
And corn will bear this home
Bent in the coming storm.

This where the slothful hoe
Hanging on my brother's shoulder has failed
As he bends and bend
Teasing the earth
Tickling it and getting nothing in return.

Tony Adah

The Man With The Wasting Disease

There was a thin frail man
Always on the road to the tavern
His beard was a corn tassel
And he looked a scarecrow
He had his usual place
In this bar that no one ever tried to topple
He sat here
And drank against the doctor's advice
The townfolks who knew him
Told him to keep to the doctor's rules
But he only laughed at them
With his spaced dentures
Revealing crumps of food hanging in between
Telling them 'something must kill a man'!
He had an old wound
That never succumbed to healing
And he always hid the wound
Under a table where flies never stopped to visit.
Wherever he pissed
A horde of ants and bees and butterflies
Swarmed and had a transfusion
From his sweet urine.
He knew it was diabetes wasting him
And he only gave it his deaf ears.

Tony Adah

The Man, The Gem And The Stallion

Faraway in the veldt
The lush growth of grass beckons
And on a knoll, a pearl gem
A man made a stallion his friend
Anxious to acquire a great fame
For possessing the flame
Of the gem.
The stallion a good friend
And the man good on the outside
He took the stallion on a race for the gem
It galloped and trotted and panted
For the unbridled quest of its friend
The journey is made
And the gem in possession
The stallion is hungry and tired
His friend overwhelmed by the world
And kicking and killing his friend
If you help an animal, it runs away
But if you help a human being, he murders you.

Tony Adah

The Marketplace

Of the world
It is a huge marketplace
With wares, buyers and sellers
Homeward goes
For good or for bad
Both buyers and sellers
At the consummation of transactions.

Goods may not sell
Buyers may not buy
But homegoing is a call
No one can ignore.

Tony Adah

The Masses Are Heroes

In the circumstances of pliancy
What do we do?
Our thoughts flit to and fro
And sideward,
Crab motion in a dilemma
Our Masses have become
Heroes of silence in the storms
Slapping them
So we endure our ecstatic pain.

Speak and be probed
Speak and the gaols
Stare in your face
Those padlocks our lips
Dangle with are strands of servitude
Tying us to bondage,
And the heroes open their mouths once
'Who will see death coming
And runs to embrace it'?
My answer, a martyr.

Tony Adah

The Men With Marks

A huddled mass of citizens
Sat in a chamber of yore
In it the cacophony of voices abated
After the red, green and pink coloured notes
Of currencies adorn the pouches.

In nineteen ninety nine
They called it the ground norm
Of the federal republic
In it federal character sat on a shiny
Hue of tribes and religion.

Today a bill is billowing in a hallowed chambers
Of NASS
They've read it twice
Facilitated.
It is about tribal marks
A culture to be banished
And the origin of people buried in that cave,
The men and proponents of this bill
Are wearing marks:
Yorubans, Hausas, Fulanis, Kauris, Igbiras
Ibos and all who are glued here
By a time beaten bond.

The congress has two parties
And greed is the name.
They love frivolous change,
Inebriated by the ale of politics
They changed our old anthem at the time
No one was a worthy hero
Whose labour shall not be in vain
'Though tribe and tongue may differ
In brotherhood we stand ' they kicked
With the iron boots;
That earthenware well potted
Lies broken in the land
The clay old and brittle
Yearning for statesmen not heroes

Patriots not politicians
Moderates not extremists
Citizens not slaves
Merit not work given on a slate of nepotism
North, South, East or West
Tribes or tongues
Be equal here in the land
Bestow in the earth or above
Bounties that will lead our children
To their lives desired now and tomorrow.

Tony Adah

The Millennium Park

The millennium park
Stands tall in the
City of Calabar
It is beautiful
As gold and silver
White and green
Brown and blue
As quintessence of
A cosmopolitan place
All in the bush.

Its edges are hedged
By pines of needle leaves made
And masquerades
In their drooping branches and leaves
Saluting the broad leaf ornamentals
Swaying in the wind

It must have been
The handiwork of
A geometrician in
Its rectangular form
The south West end
Tappers towards a fountain
In its silvery spray
That cools the federal reserve branch

Behind the eleven eleven roundabout
As it is sometimes called
Is a tall brick wall of the prison
The british built
Here now stands a prison for books

There's a flagpole
In the middle of the park
On it the green white green
Whispering in the wind
So tall a nation's pride!

Its base of marble cast
Replete with mummies astride
Bearing the history
Of this great slave port.

A black submachine gun
Mounts a platform
And rumbles only in silence
As the fountain gets the muzzle
That targets without action.

Of all these
The millennium park gets
Attention only once a year
When there is a clarion
Call to remember the old soldiers

On this day the bugle blares
And the city rises in accord
To pay respect to soldiers
Here they wear medals on their chest
Feathers and tassels in their caps
All showing Praise for gallantry
For those who defend the world
And their country in their chosen trade
Always in this park.

Tony Adah

The Mistletoe

A mistletoe is born unseen
In a tree full of verve and bloom
It takes over the bloom
With the roots planted in the bough
Until two flower types fall to the ground
It is derided
But its flowers the sunbirds relish
And the owner of the tree loves
Sunbirds as they chirp and hop
The mistletoe at last is known
To be a medicament
And a panacea to the ailing teeth
Of the tree owner
Who now loves the main tree dead
In a dream to keep his mistletoe.

Tony Adah

The Monoliths Roundabout

Down murtala mohammed way
There stood a roundabout where
Nkarassi monoliths visit calabar
They call it zone six roundabout
It has received admiration as it has injuries
Heavy trucks batter the periphery
And drunken drivers chip the bricks
Out of the entity
Broken bricks and mortar lay
Scattered like debris in a tsunami
Everyday workmen bend on the rubble of accidents
And the authority's apathy
Leave the victims in pains
Struggling to rebuild the jagged
Edges of the monument that holds the monoliths
Save and beautiful.

Tony Adah

The Moonshine

The Moon's sheen of gold
Shone upon the earth
Green leaves gleamed like silver cream
And the clouds shielded the moon
To the advantage of the children
Doing hide and seek.
The crickets and the bats
Gave the night its usual songs
Until grandma's folklore
Lull the children to sleep
For tomorrow is another day.

Tony Adah

The Morning Blossom

Look at the beauty of the mushrooms
They're ever fresh long as the morning last
And soon they're a bunch of maggots
Jumping powerfully from the frail
And the putrid heap of mushrooms
In their place,
Let another be.

Tony Adah

The Mountain

I have been seeing it
I do not know
If its multiple eyes can see me
I have been seeing it far and near
Will it move this time?
I am yet to know.
Roundish and eyes everywhere
It is more stable than moving
Don't need any fortune teller
Than move to it
It is the mother crab
Doesn't move to the burrow of
The children crab.
It is difficult, big men mountain
Hardly move
And we feathers always float
In the air.

Tony Adah

The Mountains

The mountains tower like
Breaking on our home
The rivers came like
Eating their bases
The wind gushed like
Putting the mountains straight
That's how we've lived
With the wind, mountains and rivers.

Tony Adah

The Muse At Work

He walks with his legs
Maybe unlike someone else
At knee jerk falter
But stub by accident
Still he will rise

He talks with his mouth
In his tongue
Fall sometimes
Hardly rising

He writes with a silent pen
He reads with his starry eyes
And he pronounces with his silent lips

The muse speaks to
The world whole
In languages legion
To the heavens, to the sky
And to the seas
And to all fauna and flora
That what he pens any day
Comes alive more than himself.

Tony Adah

The Nagging Child

Give me some cream
Or I will scream
Give me some yoghurt
Or I will yawn
Give me either
Or I will the more scream.

Tony Adah

The Naira Slumps

I do not know what my country
Has done to the world
Everything we touch seem to break
And when it rains in America
The ground is slippery in Nigeria!
It seems one part of the world is a marionette
And its strings are pulled from the other.
I wonder why my home currency
Jitters and dwindles when it sees the dollar
Still we are sovereign
In the comity of nations.

Tony Adah

The Narcissus

A narcissus unfurled its
Whorl of new petals smiling
At the morning sun
A flutter of butterflies gathered
They gathered to relish the sweet nectar
With the bees buzzing a thousand songs

This a woodland of a kind
For these folks and while the bees
Use their own nectar for honey
I do not know why the butterflies bother this flower
As it sways and screams silently
At the piercing probosces
Suckling its breast.

Tony Adah

The Narrow Gate

Here on earth I saw it
On my way into a cathedral
The iron clad gate shutters
Narrowed the way
One unseen hand did the gate
And the huge American spec found
Its way
Today I made it here
Waiting for when I can make
It there
I hope there are no iron gates
Anymore
If there are I'll no longer go
With that cumbersome car
Even this body polluted by
This world,
I will no longer encumber myself.

Tony Adah

The Need To Rest

The road is long and tortuous
And doldrums too heavy
A burden to bear
Under this torture
Going home is desirable
So the world can grind and pounce
On a shoulder that is absent from its sight.

Tony Adah

The New Brooms

If they be made from the same palm fronds
Of the same palm trees,
I doubt if they will sweep clean
Not that they are strange to the corners
of the house,
But too new they will be too flabby to duty
And too old, they will be too brittle to sweep
Or just lie looking at dirt
I am waiting for Thomas to prove me wrong.

Tony Adah

The New City

The city sprawls
In yellow, blue, green and white lights
The sleek cars
Slither through the costly streets
The street lamps stand
Hands up their nails
Flowered with beautiful light.

Meanwhile the suburb
Lags behind lazily
In everything
That is dregs
To the resplendence
Of the new city
Sitting on the sweat
Of the people on this side.

Tony Adah

The New Colonizers.

In the heart of the old city
Tarmac cracked
Road edge ruts deepen by truck tyres
Where puddles brown and still
Skaters perturb.
Almost everyone is black or brown
And Chinese men busy themselves
Hovering around concrete machines
Holding rods and binding wires
And strap pincers and hammers
To their chinos pants;
Wore yellow plastic helmets
And boots.
There is a beehive of works
In no distant future a new town
Will be born
And a new bank account
Will float and bloat in Switzerland
Both new colonizers will smile away
At least a new town is born.

Tony Adah

The New Generation

We swotted at night
Read the pages of our books
With the dim blaze of candlelight
To find our feet on this part of the earth

The new generation of today is different
And its epitome of youth
Surrender their energy to servitude and slavery
They prowl the houses of politicians
Sweeping houses, washing dishes
And cleaning shoes
They are tough guys trained as thugs
And cult boys almost half clad with spiky hair.

They chase money
But are blinded by the immediate gains
Of wine and food and peanuts
In the end they remain applicants
For life wilting like bitterleaf in hot water.

Tony Adah

The New Train

We will sit in that new train
Corruption's craft,
At twilight, enjoy the incandescent
Bulbs and admire the upholstery
Our fear palpable the stains
That our goro chewing brothers
Will inflict on the beauty
Of this train.
We will listen to news hackney
Of how many looters have been gaoled
By the official thieves
Going down south
The train's radio sound will drive
Some birds flying away
We will count them and the years
They will remain in hibernation
They will not mind the wintry towns
Until nostalgia turns into a journey
And home is seen and felt
They will see the looters
Who chased the looters
Two of them will nest together.

Tony Adah

The New Voices

There's a new wave of storm
Blowing from the Sahara to the veldt
Their bullhorn is loud
Echoing their voices worldwide.

We are black
Our voices are universal
And human emotion is one
There's no part of the earth
Without a tear
Either from nature
Or man himself.

We set out to do
What others can do
And we are perfect
Nurturing our thoughts
On pen and paper.

Tony Adah

The New Year

Same old hills and vales
Of standing and stripped forest
And men few at the top
With rotund necks and pudgy fingers
Still the helpless are skeletons at the bottom
Wishing a new year never comes.

This year I will hold
Back my tears
Leave some sonorous rondos
Out of my lips
The song that will greet the world
And steer it on the path of peace
The world will trudge on the vestiges of war
As the warriors will be handcuffed
And brought to judgement
Here or hereafter
For peace to reign.

Tony Adah

The Night Griots

Last night was cool and calm
It rained
But then there was fumigation
And more deaths
Of ants and mosquitoes and little
Tailless geckos falling off the walls.

Tonight is hot and humid
And public electricity failing as usual
Has casted darkness upon the house
Where the buzzing griots
Of the night folklore
Are drunken with our blood.

But the usual thing was omitted
The children's blame as well as ours
In the windows, the screens were left open
And some beasts had a field day
Drinking our blood
And just just in the last crow
Of the morning roosters
Public electricity was on
Then we saw the mosquitoes cankers
And blood stains
Like camwood on the body of witches.

Tony Adah

The Night Whispers Our Deeds

The day has a voice
And has ears
But too busy with noise
It says all it sees
Like it's the only one
With a mouth,
The night is deaf and dumb
Quiet and peaceful
It's winds never lift any plumes
From the body of the chicken
It whispers our deeds
When we squat to steal
And others snore on its bed
Darkness heals its ailing ears
It hears and whispers our deeds.

Tony Adah

The Night's Curtain

The night's curtain fell
Every act accomplished
We were on this side
Mourning those who had gone
To the other side.
We gave them gifts we couldn't
Spare when they were with us
We sang songs
Of their great deeds
In dirges merely leaving our lips
We are reeds
Swaying in the wind
And of kindness,
We are a perfunctory lot.

Tony Adah

The Northeast Wind.

The northeast wind
Is blowing and with it
Some guns and bombs
Every day the war
Rages on with the wind
And for an absurd creed
Humanity is lost upon the earth.

Man against man
And woman against a nation
In selfish suicide bombs
That maim and kill
Brother and sister
Sister and mother
And mother and father
Leaving my nation's
An orphan to the world.

The habitations are desolate
Smoke rising from the inferno
That have turned them into ruins
Religion a pace-setter
Now leads the way
With its pangs of death.

Tony Adah

The Northern Star

The northern star born of the north
Refused to shine
Or shone only in the north
Bleak, weak and a silhouette of ghost
It towered over the land
Where there's hue and cry
And where the sun refused to shine
Where will the star garner the luminescence?
We will not blind ourselves
Otherwise when the shining star comes
We will need to borrow some eyes
But it will surely and slowly come.

Tony Adah

The Odds Of War

War is a tradition
It builds other traditions too
I saw human phalanges
In my friend's sauce
He told me that it was a war gain
From the other clan
In that clan a loss
I frowned;
Gooseflesh bumped my skin
I spat out
All the spittle in my mouth.

A though question left his lips
What is the difference
Between this and beef?
I am taken aback
Astounded
Bemused
And numb.

He is my friend
We are in his village
He is near
He is far
At last he came back
With an answer to question,
-morality.

Tony Adah

The Ogoni Eight

Death wore some
Starch crispy attire
Bespectacled, came from
The sahel gropping in the swamps
Looking for them
Yes, Wiwa and the Ogoni eight
The soldiers of Niger delta
Against the noxious ordure
Of the humming rigs.
They saw death
In the afternoon through
The hand of a man their oil
Helped to groom a general
They met death with a decree
They met death with guns
Their oil had bought
They met death fiercely
Looking for their blood
And it was spilled
When darkness descended that afternoon.

Tony Adah

The Old And The New

We saw new yams
And threw away the old
We made new friends
And abandoned our old ones
We built new houses
And forgot the old
We saw a bright new day
Its sun rising from the hills
And we extinguished our fire.

Tony Adah

The Old Blind Man And The Road

In a little village
A concrete bridge the people
Built was the only concrete
On the road
Red earth showed all over the road
With ruts of bicycles, goats, Chickens, dogs, cats and human treads

A harmless hamlet lived
With its toils
Women, men, children, returning
From the farm
Wads of firewood
Tubers of yams
Pods of peanuts
Corms of cocoyams
Adorning their padded heads.

Their feet red like a dance
In the mud
They went on
To and fro their farms
Government was far
No influential man to speak for them

An old blind Man muttered when the Talk of the road came to the fore;
Are they building other roads?
Yes a young man answered.
Never mind children
Government will build your road
When all other roads are built
Said the old blind man
And today the road
Is a macamadized thoroughfare.

Tony Adah

The Old Cock

The old cock crowed
Nobody heard
We could only see the fire
On its head
It was no fire
Because flies perched there.
The old scaly feet hardly stand
It could hear only itself speak
All quills fallen
And a bleeding beak
In frail bouts
It incessantly shook its head
Still it was the territorial manager.

Tony Adah

The Old Dane Gun

The strength in
An old dane gun
Went down even as
It was loaded with
Pellets, gunpowder and a cap

The gun owner felt strong
And the games abound
But the old dane gun
Refused to explode
With hands at the trigger
Firmly held.

Tony Adah

The Old House

The old house really look old
And worn and weather beaten
So different it is from the sprawling city
Of the nouveau riche-
Those who pelted our commonwealth
And mounted it on the sketches of Kenzo Tang.

It is an old house
Thatched and mud walls
On the other side where the country folks live
And a contrast to the new town
The country folks are here
Saddled with toil and oblivion.

But the town spins on the rhythm
Of modern music
It is a magnet
That picks the filings of old and young
Men and women;
And the old house,
Only echoes with xylophones and folklores
This is where I was born
Where grandma harnessed power
From the moon at night
And told us that no change
Will touch our old house
We remain in oblivion
And so it is.

Tony Adah

The Old Man And The Light

The sun sojourn home
To its abode in the west
Casting a dark shadow
Over the harbour side
You could see the silhouette
Of coconut fronds swaying
Just above the high fence
That made our house a prison

The evening wild wind in the sky
Stretch the silent clouds
They gave a gloomy stare
At this side of the world about to rest
You could hear the sound of generators
Humming as the neighbourhood privatize
Their public power supply.

A certain jerk came hitting at our gate
So hard I couldn't delegate
Any child to see who the hell
Came hard at the gate.
Out I went clinching my Chinese rechargeable.
Through a chink on metal of the pedestrian gate
A spiky bearded old man awaited me
Gazing at the floodlight
Please he said, 'public light has gone off my house
But I can see the brilliance in which your house is lit'
Yes I said, he staggered backwards
And asked me for one of my glowing bulbs
To enable him make his bed and rest his head
For the night.

Tony Adah

The Old Man And The Wind

The old tattered towel swung
On the laundry line in the sun
And the age battered man trotted
Upon his third leg to claim his calico

The wind loaned the old towel a wing
And upon getting there to claim his ware
It flew away
The old tired man rebuked the wind:
For all the years old and new
The wind hasn't enough time to blow
And has nothing to tow than my old towel!

Tony Adah

The Old Pilgrim

Be an orphan of the world
Desire all, get none
Thy peace eat fatherless
And motherless one.
A church mouse of yore
Great orphan in need
Absent in the kidnapper's den
Rejoice in nature's duty
Driver of your flies

Home with joy
In the bounties of dearth
Where seekers of worth loathe
Dread of wants in the hands
The orphan beholds
Cheer up old pilgrim
Thy cocoon is safe.

Tony Adah

The Old Stinking Coaches

The old stinking coaches are back
On the old rusty rails
And the new coaches are itching
To come out their pockets
The train is slithering through the vast
Expanse of our land in a frenzy of noise
Where the snail is the locomotive driver
Days in and days out
The sloughed snake makes its way
On the rustic leave
And noise is the change
We have gotten from the journey
Over spurs and hills and rivers
On the journey from Lagos to Kano
And the new paint is the change
We can see of the old stinking coaches
On the old rusty rails.

Tony Adah

The Old Woman

An old woman
Took a walk
Down the pond way
Trotting like a discreet poacher
Her third leg leading her way
She walks with steps unheard
Age beaten,
Her waist
Bent over her
Equally spent walking stick.
In her mouth fulfilling
An age old tradition,
A chewing stick grew
Amongst her scanty dentures
Dripping spittle
Like a tired dog
Under the the sun.
At the serene pond
Her co-visitors of
Skaters, dragonflies, beetles etc
Came to pay
Nature a noble visit
She sat on a huge granite slab
Beside the pond watching
Nature's way of interrelationships.
When she looked into the pond
She saw another old woman like her,
Peeping back at her
She stood up
And her second self did same
All with the chewing stick
All with her third leg.
When she withdrew
Her other self too
Disappeared until
Lost in the pond.

Tony Adah

The Old Year Is Going

The year filled our mouths
With spoons of rice and glasses of wines
And stood behind us bidding us bye
Its night crawled
In the wintry winds
And we defiant of the cold
Frolick and howl and yearn for
The new year to come
In a frenzy of fireworks only
To see same sun
Rising from the east
And feebly wobbling down
The horizon in the west.

Tony Adah

The Oldsmobile

The man is gone
His ups and down and toils in vain
All that he owned too big
For little abode.
The Oldsmobile which had canon shots
And confetti
When long winding trails
Made marks in our sands
Now lay here rusting peacefully
An abode for rats and roaches
With cracked fore and hind windshields
And the wipers absent like teeth
In a chicken's mouth
Derelict in disuse
The owner gone and this car
Going in instalments.
No canon shots, no confetti
And the Oldsmobile goes silently
All its cigars no longer smoking.

Tony Adah

The One Million Man Match

I wonder if I am alone taking a stare
At the vast sea
Those squalid swamps and stilthouses
Underneath, the fish breath lost
In lifeless float.
I see the sky wearing a blue shirt
And a white cap,
The rigs belch staining the garb
With their obnoxious fumes.

The women and the children
Wait in vain for the men
With fishless sacks
Where have the fish gone?
They're trapped in the den
Of death which oil has unleashed
The fishermen, the women and children
Are thirsty with throats parched
Drinking is postponed,
Until death does the final wetting.

When I hear the rumble of guns,
It's like the thunder of seaqualls
I'm mistaken,
The owners who wallow in squalor
Have struck
They have gone to Abuja
To see the clear contrast
And since then
There has been no sleep.

Tony Adah

The One Who Owed Me

The north- east wind won a war
against the south easterlies,
Everywhere is ice cold
Still I pour water on him, one who is my debtor
I looked at him
His receding hairline and a bulging stomach
Where all debts hid.

He wore a sweeter
And its hood rested on his shoulders
A corpse I wished him to be
Next in a coffin
My eyes turned in dry tears
I wish I had my money before my dream
came true.
Why should I wish him dead?
Who will pay back my debt?
I had lost in every bid to wish him dead
Or have my money back.

Tony Adah

The Only Cock

The sun shines
Radiantly in the sky
It dwindles the light
Of the stars
And the sky speaks
From the abyss of darkness
Swallowed partly by the moon
Where the sun no longer is King.
God knows why the
Lion wears no horn
In the midst of rodents
Or amongst the ungulates.
And the sun shines anything but dull
In the ambience of
The weeping sky
When the clouds cast
Their dark shadow under the sky
And men see a blanket
Of misfortune above their heads.
A lone cock to crow
Often would have
Its voice cracked
Then even twirps made
By sunbirds will echo
In the valley of fame.

Tony Adah

The Opportunist.

When they had found the route
To shake hands with kings
And partaken of crumbs
From the royal banquet
They became bearers of regal errands
Which later were sugar coated lies.

He wanted to be the only cock crowing
But he was not the only cock with a cockscomb
He showed the king his colour
And the king showed him the way out
He cried all day tending to
Tell the public the 'truth'in the palace
Same public that was ignored
When the banquets brimmed with food unend, so he thought!

Now the palace is without them
They want to tell us
The colour of the King's ass
Which we all know as well
Tell it to the wind.
For when the stories were sweet
We never heard them.

Tony Adah

The Oracles Of Change

The change oracles are slow
And weeping and confounded and not
Knowing when or where to start thx change
The oracles themselves are tainted by
Some impurities of gold stashed vaults
And are afraid of the ghost of the past.
But in the pyramid of change
The apex is always incapable of any change
Except the teeming base catalyzes the change
Is always in vain

Tony Adah

The Orphan

A forgotten boy
Sat cheeks buried
In the cups of his hands
Worried that he and he alone
The world has forgotten
Pale and frail
With a self-mixed meal
Of tears and phlegm
Pain and penury
He sat daily watching
And waiting for the
World to come.

Born into the depth
Of the world
But scavenging by its fringes
The world looks and blinks
At this specie
The one that the zealots
Vow to suffer
In this place where
He is forlon
And forgotten by love.

Tony Adah

The Other Side

Last night
A pebble was thrown at me
I tried avoiding it
It landed in my heart
Shattered the chambers where
Love sits.
I closed my eyes
But sleep never came
She said I was wrong
The reason why a pebble
Pierced my heart and in the main
I discovered how two wrongs
Just made a right.

Tony Adah

The Other Side Of The City

I thought this road led to somewhere
Here in Calabar where my village folks
Think that I am in Europe or America
I am following the main road, paved
And turning right to where
It is unpaved, dusty and littered
With all manners of rubbish
Some airborne and flying like kites.

I can believe this not
That this is within the purview
Of the garden city - my own state capital
With this wanton squalor
Old stick-mud -smearred houses, thatch roofed
And moss-grown walls of fences
And sulphuriated breath choking stinks
Rising from the yawning squalid drains.

And aged plantain trees painfully bending
With the load of their bunches over their heads
Their stems adorned in brownish old leaves
Drooping like a masquerade
The curved and still fingers
Of the bunches greeting the world.

Down the streets if they can be called streets
Is a conurbation of churches
In howls and hums of hymns
And nearby crèches add the echoes
Of their rhymes in a town
Modernity has refused to espoused
I am here lost in the filth of this suburb
Looking for for my auto service man.

Tony Adah

The Other Side.

I have always arrived
On this side of the river
When the boat is gone
I am not bothered for
The journey to the other side
Need not to be made in a hurry.

Although a traveller takes not
His luggage wit him as
He must leave them home
There's is need for any man going
To be sure those he is leaving behind
Can fend for themselves.
Some men may happily leave
But in a derelict boat to cross
Others sadly leave
With the best of yacht
Either way these travelling men
Are sequestered on the other side
Only to be seen no more
And this is the mystery of life.

Tony Adah

The Owl's Sinister Song.

They jeered at me
That I ran away from the ugly owl
And its sinister songs in the night
Calm as it was.
I know what monitions
The owl's hooting has for the dawn
I ran away
A long way
Panting and sweating
Losing water instead
Of my precious blood.

Tony Adah

The Pain Of Being A Citizen

I am a citizen
I walk the streets
I work in the meadows
Searching for work and chopping woods
I have donated the sole of my shoes
To the sand
I have seen the pain, the penury
And the poverty
I have been fed good on a Samaritan's
Fruit which shell I threw down
From a tree and someone worst off
Than me picks the crumbs
The pain is much I wish
I could undo if the taxes paid
Perchance find their way into
My trap for equity glaringly
In dearth.

Who shares the pain than those who
Already have it?
Who cares if the rain patters on you
Or if you are in the meadow
Chopping woods that your stomach
Will not see?
Who cares if the citizens are many
Who can not help themselves?
The few pudgy necks and fingers
Are blinded by the loot which the
Commonwealth provides
It's our complacency that put us
Under the thraldom of the few.

Ripped jeans and spiky hair and
Loose cuffs and sagging pants and
European leagues that takes our time
When the silo is empty for the
Children we cause to see the ugly
Back of the earth we were given
To have dominion on its endowment

Posterity we lie to ourselves
That will undo our pain.

Tony Adah

The Painter

The painter knew only a little
How to scribble names of things
For much of school was scarce in his head
He sat under a tree canopy
Near his tent house.
His dungarees dripping with fresh paint
And flecks of old ones cracked all over
His chest and thighs
Of blue, brown, green, pink and yellow
Were the patches on his old black boots.

The under tree was was both a workshop
And a house for a tent house yawned
With an open door
Old cardboards, canvas and discarded
And unclaimed works littered his premises
Spent paint tons stood with squalid rainwater
Where wriggled mosquito larva
That looked like tadpoles.

He is a painter with great acumen
In brush and paint but a laggard at spellings
He wrote words like sovaneer, skool, pewpul
And motu kar on works that littered his shop
The big letters dripped with pointed lines
And lumps of paint below them.

To draw the painter's attention to the misspellings
Was to draw a long quarrel with him
Anyone who dared it never used his street
What about his clients?
Perhaps they were worst for
The painter's anomaly of spellings!

Tony Adah

The Palmwine Drinkers

They always started by
Looking for an old axe
To which they gave a new haft
And hacked down a palm tree
No matter its height.

It was down wine they drank
From these felled trees
Always drinking and drunk
They wore filth but allowed
Their clothes clean
Which they didn't wear

The river flowed downstream
Lazily and they didn't care
To interrupt its way.
They grew spiky beards
And horse tail moustaches
That dipped into the drinking gourd
A brown discoloration swirled
From the snuff driven mucus
Trickling from their bushy nostrils

They hunted rats
They hunted squirrels
They hunted games
All with their two spittle drifting hounds

The dead palm trees
They felled long time ago
Gave them an assortment of mushrooms
They ate these and they ate the games always
Morning, afternoon, evening
They ate them and drank their palm wine

They came home at night
Slinging a small keg behind the back
A summary keg for the night
That douses the buzz of mosquitoes

In a thatch with crooked walls
They built themselves.

They came home at night
Singing, whistling and belching
They came home drunk
Waging a war against
Mosquitoes, mites and ticks
They came home drunk.

Tony Adah

The Palmwine Tapper And The Bee

Go warn the putrid matter
Not to smell and the fly not to buzz
In that arena
A palm wine taper's mouth should
Often not open
Or should his hands fling at a passing bee
He will be stung
His lips swollen
And his mouth quiet
The stinging bee will die after all.

Tony Adah

The Pangolin

I am quiet
Like a pangolin
I can touch the scorpion's sting
The bee sting can never
Never raised within
In my scales.
Of what use will it be
For me to touch a gecko's tail?

Tony Adah

The Parrot Is A Patriot.

The parrot is a patriot
Firm and resolute in songs of unity
A tiger is one only in the variegation of its skin
And in this jungle the ant may breath as the elephant
The air above and drink from the same water below.
Unity in diversity is the hue
Of my country glued only by a solvent
That dissolves the boundaries in our hearts
To live in boundless unity.

Tony Adah

The Peace Makers

How beautiful they are!
Those that calm
The nerves of the world
And give their lives to it
Dead or alive
Their legacies die hard
We too can change the world
Looking at what they did
And slip our feet
Into their shoes,
Wear them
Walk tall and
Make the world proud.

Tony Adah

The Pear Thieves

We ate pears
They grew up
We climbed them
We stole them
They saw us
We ran off
They knew us
They caught us at the playground.

Tony Adah

The Pelican

The pelican is a light bird
In spite of its good wings
It has a weak flight always
And a strong beak to sing
When other birds taunt its flight
It laughs back and sings
With the wind
And the leeway is all time best
Oftentimes the wind sweeps
All debris its way
And this is what is
Good for the nest
Where the wind goes
There is my route
Where the wind goes
That's my route
So he sings always.

Tony Adah

The Pendulum Of Life

Leaves that flourish in spring
Winter has burned
And burnish to brown
The lilies will die
But the summer wind will blow
And the bulbs will sprout and bloom
With pink and red caps on their heads
We win the the inheritance
We lose it
And it is back again
This how life's pendulum swings.

Tony Adah

The People And Government

We told them
What could help us first
As a community
All we said fell on the
Muffs they wore
In their ears
And the government
Gave us electricity
Instead of a road.

Tony Adah

The People On The Street

The people we see on the street
Are ghosts of themselves
They live
But they are not the ones
They drive in luxury SUVs
You will never know they're driving
On the last litre
They live
Dressed in designers suits
You will never it's a gift
They live
With modelled faces
You never know they have at home
Some broken marriages
They live
You can never tell who they are
Until Ole is the song of the street
You can never know they're thieves
There are an assortment of people
In the street
You never know who is husband or wife
Or a spinster or bachelor.
When they tell you they have money
It is all radio money
They dress to show
They talk to boast
All ghosts of themselves.

Tony Adah

The Picture

I saw a black and white
Picture in one of my
Uncle's chest of drawers
Its corners dog eared
The sight of those captured amazing
Half clad Children, bare footed
Pot bellied and lanky alike

And I saw someone
With smudges in his eyes
Cheeks and wrist smeared
By a black scum of mucus
That often dripped
From his nose.
He was naked
And a prepuce still
Hung over the urinal orifice.

He was the only naked one
There was no sign
To show I could be the one
Still my uncle insisted
I was the one.

Tony Adah

The Piebald Dog And His Master

Under a spiny stem tree
Sat a bearded craftsman tending
the hilt of his hoe for the season of
making mounds thicken in the air.
The hoe itself, a metal sheet with a pointed tip
that will fit into a hole in the hilt
Somewhere among the wood shavings
A piebald dog laid snoring
And the ribcage rising and falling with his breath
When a wooden lunch tray appeared with pears
and roasted corn on the cobs,
The piebald dog rose with all his strength
sniffing the air, wagging his tail.
The craftsman relished his meal
And left the empty cobs and capsules of pear nuts
shunning the sun
The piebald dog sniffed at the cobs and the capsules
And brought out his fresh tongue
To give them a mere kiss that held no value
to mitigate his hunger
And he growled and stretched his body
Wagging his tail and laid back on the shavings
Beside his greedy master.

Tony Adah

The Pig

I'd rather not get into mud
With pigs
I'll love to wear my garbs
Torn and shreds
Than taint by hogs.
I'll rather remain up the tree
Than down to find levels with pigs.

That piggy dung that stinks
That pigsty that smells
No man should near
I I'll like to wear some
Garbs torn and shreds
Than taint by the hogs.

Let no man beguile you
A pig is a pig
Whether in ajegunle or London
A pig is an acolyte of dirt
Rain or shine it grunts.

Tony Adah

The Pilgrims

No one claims this place his home
Unless the end is at hand
We are all sojourners on a pilgrimage
On this side of the river bank
The boatman is busy counting us
We who will now board
And those who will later cross the river
Some are praying to linger here
Others to leave quickly they love
Some still as pilgrims, they do not know

The boatman often unties the anchor
And while time crawls on its knees for some
It leaps in giant strides for others
Who on the roll call have answered their names
He has gone too soon!
So goes the dirges
By those who have not closed their eyes
To this side of the river

The pilgrim's shower shall never
Cease to rain
So does the journey go unend
The more the pilgrims go
More of them are born like locusts
Until the mendacity of Armageddon
Otherwise is proved.

Tony Adah

The Place

When I look at this place
I think that this is where
M y daughter ought to have been
Somehow she got vexed
For reasons we do not know
And left the surly bounds of this earth
Keeping us mourning
With tears in our swollen eyes
To see when I do not know!

Tony Adah

The Poet As A Tailor

I spread
My cotton material
On my work table
And I cut it into
Bits and pieces
Stitch them together
Hem them in
Or hem them out
In a manner congruent
To sewing
Sometimes I use
A black thread
To sew into a white material
Or still a red thread
In a red dress
Still that's my style
At other times
My butterfly machine's needle
Might snap and I
Stop to fix it
That's when you
Spot the sewing line denting
It's normal
Or double sow
Where a single line was needed
That's me
I am one tailor
And you are another.

Tony Adah

The Poet Himself.

Often the poet gets a bash
But from his own fold
He writes and they judge as good or bad
In good verses
He may be adjudged worst
And in bad ones best
He has no place to hide
From a bile of biases.

In all a poet is a poet
As in coughing and sneezing
Sleeping or awake
Wrestling with words
Or resting with the world
And if he succumbs
To the scathing tongues
Of the wrangling bards
He'll never be a poet.

Tony Adah

The Poet Is Tired

It is twelve midnight
Already the people
Around me are sleeping
I don't want
To say they are snoring
Still they are.
The head lingers awake
But the words
Have gone to bed
I am praying that
Tomorrow when the words
Wake up
They will not
Find the head
In a slumber.

Tony Adah

The Poet Lives

The poet lives in his strong soul
But he dies in his weak heart
To the weak heart which carries
His body mass I say adieu
And to his immortal pen of his soul
We say welcome to the stream where
The muses drunk.

Tony Adah

The Poet's Food

Take this food
And eat of it
I may be a chef
Or I may be chef not
Do not ask questions
About the elements
Of my cuisine
Eat, just eat of this food
For when I leave
There will be nobody
To answer your questions.

Tony Adah

The Poet's License

We hid under
A pile of books
Sipped garri with peanuts
And salt to hold our entrails
We read the books
Wrote about the ills
Of our country
All went like
Throwing water
On a duck's back.

One day the carmel
Will have its last straw
On its back
Then the dark clouds will clear
The sun and the moon
Will come to impact
Smiles on the sky
Real freedom would have come
It will be time for democracy
To truly have a breath of fresh air
And Children, men and women
Christians and moslems
Alike will claim their country
And the crimson hue of blood
Flowing in the land
Will be consigned to history

The poet's licence will
Have a boost
And his sphere of influence
Expanded and recognised
In the land.

Tony Adah

The Poet's Quest For Words.

All my wish for a poet
Is more creative endeavours
Even then I know that his quest for words
Can not make the twenty seventh alphabet
He will learn
Learn from the stubborn fly
Who flew with the corpse
And got piled in tumulus
Or face the wrath of the angry looking critics.
That the monkey prwls the farm
A farmer will not in room plant corn
My wish for a poet
Is more creative endeavours.

Tony Adah

The Politicians

Deep in my marrow
I know that
My country is good
Good as the stream from
Which we drink.

Those who have won our thumbs
The ones with silver receptacles
Have gone to the stream
With the power we gave them
And kiss the resplendence of the
Stream with silver holders.

We have gone late as usual
With our gourds and earthenwares
To embrace the turbid bosom
Of the stream.
They have made it dirty
And added colour to it
Against the teaching we received
From the elementary school that
Good water has no colour
Good water has no smell.

Alas my county stinks
It has colours
In the spots of its tribes
I know deep
In my marrow that but
For these men,
My country is good.

Tony Adah

The Pond

It is a dark and still night
Stars unable to twinkle
And the moon too unable to dole
Out its sheen,
The pond is serene and still
With toads, frigs and skates unseen
And unheard
There are pangs and pincers ready to kill
Crocodiles and crabs
Are shaking the pond
None other is bold to croak or chirp.
When there's productivity in the pond,
The pangs and pincers are at rest
And as everything is made
The balding vultures join
In the pond
And gather and move
Where everyone is quiet.

Tony Adah

The Poor Build A Mountain

The wealthy get wealthier
At the expense of the poor
The poor build a mountain
By adding granite slabs to it
Still they gaze from the foot of this mountain
How really they can get up there
Perhaps with a slab of granite by their feet
Waiting to add.

Tony Adah

The Poor's Solace

When the onyx eludes the poor
Wines consoles his soul
A heavy heart decongests
But no clown is worth a crown.

Tony Adah

The Power Of Man.

Of all the great mansions
Man builds
There's none as tranquil
As the silent grave
Here taunting falls on
The deaf ears of the dead
Sweet things no longer linger
In the taste buds of man.

All the beauty of the world
Lost in the eyes blinded by dead
All the embroidery and gems
Adorn on the dead
Soon comes to naught
The elements below
Devour their thing with the power
Man exuded on the surface of the earth

Now man is gone
With the rain death
Has caused to fall
And its flood eroding
The enormous power of man
Here under the same earth
Still and low and silent
Man is unable again to howl
At the very world he before dominated.

Tony Adah

The Power Of The Tongue

My words breath the air
Which the ink gushes on the paper
I watch the mountains
Sit on the ground where our huts
Stand like Lilliputs
Rivers crawl past like snakes
Clouds a pile of cotton bolls
I am drunken with words
And they stumble and fall on the
Floor of my mouth.
I am talking about the reeks
That pour on the world
My prolific tongue singing
Of nature's craft
The enormity of the wonders which
Man's hands run short of
The wonders that beat us to the
Knowledge that we claim
How long would it have taken man
To create a river with his urine?
Or mould a mountain like the pyramids
Losing their bricks now and then?
The tongue is unique in building
What it speaks for that's how
The world itself was made.

Tony Adah

The Pride And Glory Of Man

The pride and glory of man
Are but temporary things
He amasses all he wants
With his whims and caprices
Defying nature's laws;
And blossoms in the morning
But he like mushroom crumble
In the afternoon sun.

He soon abandons the world
Hiding his face in a crypt
And he's no more;
The princes and the princesses weep
And grieve in bitter anguish;
Unable to learn a thing
That struggle and splendour
Are but vain glories and temporary things
And when man departs;
His luggage in excess remains.

Tony Adah

The Prince Is King

Soon I will walk slowly
Out of the woods
I will walk slowly but steadily
The sure hand of the unseen
Will take my hand and lead me through
No powers in the flesh and bones of man
Will keep my step behind.

Out of the woods
I shall come out on to an invaluable verdure
Devoid of piercing thorns and itching leaves
To where lilies, tulips, orchids, clovers and roses
Will wave their silent hand at me
And I will wear a confetti of them
In my royal presence.

Those who thought
I was lame
Those who thought
I was deaf
Those who thought
I was blind
Those who thought
I had met my brick wall
Will turn to the royal ambience
Of my palace and pay obeisance
To my crown.

Tony Adah

The Prison Walls

We live behind bars
In a prison without walls
Speak not;
For the prison walls are coming
Up against the folks
If you look right or left
The walls will hem you in
Because you know yourself
Keep mute
And the walls stunt
But your shackles remain
Speak up and die
Or shut up and be among the slaves
We all live in a prison
Without walls.

Tony Adah

The Proud Young Boy

A young lad passed with an auora of pride
In an immaculate white long sleeve shirt
Tucked into a black chino pant
A black wrist watch
And a black belt
Upon a black loafer shoes.

He claimed the width of the pedestrian walkway
Preening his shoulder like a little
Black bird perching on a bough.
He's gorgeous and walks
Like the whole world is in his pocket.

Tony Adah

The Pursuit Of Food

A little bird put its needle beak
Into a flower whorl to beg of the world
What a flower can offer
A little boy sneaked into the meadow
Where bees and butterflies compete for nectar
Holding a rubber sling to stop life from
Going ahead for the sun bird.
A little snake holding its venom in its mouth
Crawled looking for the boy's feet
And a big eagle sat on a bough eyeing
The little snake in a merry go round
Of looking for food.

Tony Adah

The Putrid Sore

I had a huge sore
On my leg
It kept me home
For concern public to shed
Their sympathy on me
Putrid as it was
Flies swarmed it
But today that area is a scar
And the flies have gone!

Tony Adah

The Puzzle Of Life

When you wake up in the morning
And yawn and clean the smudges in your eyes
And the day poses a puzzle before you
Don't despair
Squat on your knees and commune
With the core force of life
Take a look at yesterday and today
Then look into tomorrow
If you see how efforts craved and nothing came
And how effortlessly you won
Most of your desires
Then your puzzle is fixed.

Tony Adah

The Pythons Of The Town

The long things we feared
Came to town
Those long pythons we all dread
Those slow slithering pythons
Slowing the movement of the townspeople.

In the daytime they move in bits
That join and look like one from afar
And depending how wide the road is
They move in files of two or three
And blare horns snakes hardly do.

A village first timer in town
Viewed the pythons at night
From the fourth storey of a sky house
Some where in the town
And saw a file of long pythons
On the roads;
Flickering in gleams of red, yellow and white
Their eyes blinking doubly or singly
Depending on which way
They want to go.

It is a marvel to a first timer in town
Especially at night.
But the townspeople are used
To the pythons they no longer fear
Than dread the obstacles they make
That slow the movement of people and things.

Above the roads on the ground
Are the real pythons of the town
They look winding and crisscrossing
A maze that looks like the strands of sponges
Littered above the town;
The files here too flicker
In the hues of the ground ones
And blare horns snakes hardly do.

Everyday and every night
This is the colour of the town
And some slither through
The shoreline of the still standing blue waters
Replete with sea vessels berthing
In a busy harbour
While some are still
Others are coming or going.

Sometimes when the moon
Comes on at night
It cast its golden sphere
On the silent blue waters
Tossing and making the moon
To shake as if the poor grey sky
Was shaking on its own
And this where I want to be
Away from the dizzying and flickering
Pythons of the town.

Tony Adah

The Race

There is a great race
And for my generation against time
A rat race so too it is
As a sack race.
Europe and America
China is a stallion on the tracks
India is not waiting for anyone.
I do not know
Why we have chosen the company
Of slugs and snails
And thinking we will win.

Tony Adah

The Race Is Already Won.

The world is made for everyone
Live minimally as if it will not end
Eat like your dentures ache
And tell greed that famine is here
With his fangs of starvation
Walk slowly like you and the snail
Came from one womb and as if
The race is already won.

Tony Adah

The Racist Parrot

The orator stood up to speak
In his own mother tongue
The oratory was good and his orature
Sweet as the parrot's sang unorthodox tunes
So they said
When he stood up to say something
Hischutzpah was not bravery
He was a racist.

Tony Adah

The Radiance Of Love

Life is mountains and valleys
Both old and young climb and descend
The tired are the ones gone
But what is life if our next door
Neighbour is trapped boweles void?
Nature doled out dominion
With unequal share;
If your chunk is huge,
Know that someone else has a
Small one or none at all
Let your heart be large
And behave like matter which move
From a concentrated area to a low one
That is the radiance of love.

Tony Adah

The Radiance Of The Morning Sun.

The morning broke
With a song man echoed in sorrow
His back on the cheerless sun
Butterflies and bees suckle at nectar
From the blossoming flowers
Man looks so dejected
And in melancholy
Oblivious of the radiance
Of the morning sun
For he has nothing to clinch
Onto his bosom as his own.

He hugs but the empty air
He walks without movement
He looks but sees not
His laughter ripens
On his crimson cracked lips
And he chews the bounties
Of his absent needs
All ignoring the radiance
Of the rising sun.

Tony Adah

The Radiance Of The Rising Sun

Who will not rejoice
At the radiance of the rising sun?
We all will
But be mindful
Not to extinguish your fire
For the radiance of the rising sun!

Tony Adah

The Raging War.

The war raged on
Wasting every life with bombs
The killers hated everything western
And loved every weapon labelled from there
Government intervened.
With frail demoralized forces
Running away
They caught some
And treated them as AWOL
Court martialed them and sent them to prison
While this went on;
The war raged on in the clouds
Terrorists on the prowl
And the generals on the drawing board
Grew more pudgy at the neck with potbellies
They demanded weapons in spurious deals
Still more and oftentimes
The terrorists improvised their own
And the two elephants stampede
In a duel where the verdure
Takes the heat.

Tony Adah

The Rain Poured.

The sky started frowning
And the sun was disgraced
Away from setting its rays aglow
Upon the earth
It was swallowed by the clouds
Then the rain poured and poured
And the wind tangled
With the still trees
And the rain poured and poured and poured
And poured and poured and poured
Spoiling our day.

Tony Adah

The Rainy Season

Spattering, dancing with tiny feet
Our roofs inured to constant batter
It is the rain's response
To the season's drums
It flip through the pages
Of the season,
Leave some hours and days to shine
And the rest,
It pour its drops.

Tony Adah

The Red Head

I got a new improved
Fruit of a guava which
Some bats had feasted on
I feared to celebrate
With it because of ebola

I left it on a stumpwall
Of the flowerbed to ripen
So I can get its seeds for
Ebola free plants.

A red head came nodding its red head
And wagging its red tail
Stretching its rough tongue
When I discovered him
Festivity had lapsed

Red head made a U- turn
Climbed a text coat wall
Licking his tongue joyfully
From a great meal
Wished to him by evd.

Tony Adah

The Red Hill

Down the lonely road
There's an earth hill red
Like the blood it took to polish itself
It is ridden with rills and gullies eaten by flood
Where pedestrian pant to climb
And automobiles babble, grunt and growl
Uphill in vain and gliding back
To be buried in the ravine foot of the hill

The village folks have tried
With hoes and spades to fill the gullies
But rains will gormandize the filling
The eyes of government
Are blind to this side
And the villagers are helpless
Mourning every day
When a pedestrian slips and fall and rolls to the ravine
Or a biker misses his track
An automobile rolls back the hill
And the whole occupants are gone.

A certain blind man grope
Through this hill falling and rising
And prayed that all the roads
In the world be constructed
So that government attention
Can be drawn to this hill.

Tony Adah

The Refugees Crisis

We leave home
Not of our own volition
There is war
Theres hunger
There's poverty
Everywhere there's recession

If we must leave home
Stay hungry and be refugees
In our own land
Who's going to lead tomorrow?
We have used and dumped
Like toilet tissue
Merriment is gone
Only sorrow rears it's head

We are lost
Lost our tomorrow
Lost our yesterday
Lost our today
If they know how to make
The air shrink
Ours would have been history.

Tony Adah

The Reign Of Peace

If the world woo wars
A great tide of menace
Will betide it
If we marry wars
Our children will be guns
Death and ruins.
If we espouse peace
There'll be rain and sunshine
And bloom of neighbourliness
If we sling guns
Our town will be a ghost town
If we keep our hearts clean
Gems and jewels will
Find an abode and peace will reign.

Tony Adah

The Return Of Igni

When Igni returned
From the rocky plateau of Jos
He told tall tales
Tales tall like the mount of Adziese
He told them straight
You could hardly know
They came from his mouth.

He told tales of how he planted amaranth
And it grew as tall as a silk cotton tree
And fell it
And sawed it for the rafters
Of his house.
He told tales
People laughed
And others astounded
Stood and looked at him.

He told tales of a giant friend
With a moustache that covered his nostrils
Who drank unskimmed palm wine
And closed one nostril with his first finger
And blew out dead maggots, ants and bees
From the other nostril
That were in the palm wine.

He told tales of a hunter
That shot an animal
And caught it with his hands
Before the bullets reached the game.

He told tales of a baby born
Taller than its mother
And of a man who incised
A lump on a tree and brought out a baby.

He told tales
Rib cracking tales and confounding tales
Of a giant cigar

Which two men held
For one man to smoke;
Of Agabi's small pot of palm wine
That the whole community could not see the dregs
And of himself alone drinking
And the community getting drunk.

Tony Adah

The Revolution.

The streets deserted
Frames of burnt cars litter
Crimson is the colour of the revolution
A metal dump of the streets
Charred human carcasses
Like goats smothering in a furnace
Of Marian market abattoir
Improvised explosive devices of terror
Again on the necks of Maiduguri
Impoverished and emasculated
Yet turned out every vote that counted
Still the dead are counted unend.

Tony Adah

The Rice Eaters

They ate as if tomorrow
Will never come again
And they wore their leather hand gloves
With spades and work boots
Asking the mama-put for more rice
And shaki, kpomo and roundabout
They ate rice mixed with beans
And dodo and gulped water like a basket
They ate what they worked yesterday
And what they will work today
Working for only their stomachs
They open the the earth
For optic fibres to lie
And the covered and ate
In this funeral for better communication.

Tony Adah

The Riches Of The World

The riches of the world are but frail
And Ephemeral things
We grope to find and get to build
Those magnificent things
When the breeze come
They fly away like feathers
In the air.
Our mind should more sit on a boulder
Where the splendid flowers
Glowingly surround and where the
Excellent mind effuses the needs
The next needy man desires
This is an empire no war can conquer
Which should be any man's strife
To build,
A gem that never fades.
No matter what beauty we build
The magnificent craft of the hands,
In vain we build
For every civilization crumbles
At its peak and sooner than later
Another is spawned even of better
Made.

Tony Adah

The River

The river gushed downstream
Frothing in white surfs upon slabs
Of granite on the bed.
Some had water holders but couldn't fetch
Others strong and greedy scooped
Like the water will dry
Those we trusted fetched
And made turbid the water
That was meant for all.
When we complained
They only laughed at us
Why do we want this water
To run down in vain?
They asked as they had taken
Their share.

Tony Adah

The River Dried Up.

The sojourner is on his way
To the promise land
The route is overgrown with weeds
And he wondered if this is this is the sojourner's route
He trudged on to where a river used to be
Thinking he was in the wrong place
The river dried up and deep canyons
Stood on the banks, its bed a hollow
Gritty with pebbles and sand
The boats too dry and broken oars
Resting on the hulls
The boatmen had gone, their trade murdered
By the guns of drought
And his journey terminated
He looked forward,
A wilderness yanked by a deep valley
He looked backward
The grasses were bent back on the road
He was wet in a bath of dews
And he wished that the dew water was much
To make the river come back!

Tony Adah

The Roach

The roach brushes his brown coat
Did a round dance
And went for a binge
The hen's envy laid a trap
Up for the roach's pride
He comes back drunken
And the hen on her knees on a prayer
Leapt and soon the roach's dance steps
Skewed up in the gizzard.

Tony Adah

The Road

Alone winding through
Thick green forest
Broken at savanah points
Yawning ponds laughing
At the galloping cars
Swimming pools
Of the croaking toads
Great dentures on the saw
Of the aged asphalt.
Long made
Long abandoned.
Thoroughfare of the talakawas
Of the emasculated taxpayers.
Running to and fro
Freighting cows and bleating goats
Shipping watermelons, carbages
Onions, bell peppers and sweat peppers
Tomatoes and all
The affluent will eat.
The honorables take off
Oblique at points where the road
Is not seen above in the sky
And the senescent way
Lives with its age
Here and there
Winding through grasses and trees
Where lorries clang on
As if utensils are their wares
And all that we do
Is to vote, vote and vote
For the sameness of the road.

Tony Adah

The Road To Change

Every road has an end
Going or coming you hurry
As if you're the last
When you go or come
Make haste slowly, my dear friend
For the world is not running away.

When you go or come
Look at the faces of people
If there's a tear, wipe it
And where there's a frown, put a broad smile.

Here where we stay
The world will be a better place
When a cheek is dry of tears
And a smile is planted
On the lips of melancholy
And begin the change of the world
Within your own heart.

Tony Adah

The Road To Greatness

The road to greatness
Is not lined with roses
Or paved with gold
It may be a road
Over unbridged rivers or streams
Or lined by piercing thorns
Where we shout with our bandaged tongues
Tread with our weary feet
And our tortured smiles
The way may be long
Or it may be short
But if you must catch your destination
Don't falter
And when you see great violets and chrysanthemums
At some point on this way
Go on for this is not
The end of the road.

Tony Adah

The Road To Hheaven.

The road to heaven
Is long winding and narrow
It is not for all at all.
Remove the plank in your eye
To enhance the sight of the heavenly route
For the wide smooth one misleads to Hades.
Only those who have washed their hands clean
And away have thrown the dirt water
To the world will dine
In the glorious presence of the king.

Tony Adah

The Road To The Mill

The lunch box was always filled
Roasted yams with black charcoal on them
Dried yam flecks, peanuts
We ate like birds drank elsewhere
Where water was found.
But school was far
We trekked with dust gladden feet
Or mud smears
Our black slates in our armpits
And chinks in our pockets
Nose drifting with phlegm
And a black wrist from mopping it.
Six years passed and we left the place
With memories of cows, pigs and dogs
And canoes and rivers in our readers
And teachers and punishment and mates
Dull and bright and a bundle of canes.
That's the mill that ground a fine powder
The world uses today
Or the furnace that burned the raw gold
Into a shining gem
That was then.

Tony Adah

The Rules Of The Game.

They told us that
In democracy the
Majority have their way
And the minority a say
Yesterday we got
A pontification of this sort.

According to the governor
By serious implication
In a mollifying manner
The competition pitch is undulating
And at the middle of the game
The goalposts are maneuvered.

The bug of democracy
Is not biting at all
Its adventitious roots
Are shriveling
And turning the legless democracy
Into a mere civil rule.

Tony Adah

The Rumour Monger

He pours his fruits in careless trifle
Like cheap apples on a toad
There's a heavy downpour of rain
And joys reigns on the throne
Of sedentary cripples
He tells tales
His mouth dry and spittle short
The world dismisses its pardon
Still nothing stops his act.

Tony Adah

The Rumour Mongers

I am so tired of rumours
May the rumour mongers
Grow plague in their teeth
So shy they will feel to speak.

I am so tired of rumours
May the rumour mongers go blind
So they can't find their way
To where rumour dwells.

I am so tired of rumours
May the tale bearers
Have their tympanum broken
So they can't hear any rumour flying
The world of rumours
Is the world of tales
Still in every iota of rumour
Truth hides its head
Away from the world.

Tony Adah

The Runaway Boy

Let mama not worry about me
I'll walk my miles
Eat in the dumps
And sleep by the streets
When the time comes
I'll shed my cloak
And leave the rest in the street
For flies and vultures to dine
If they can not accomplished their mission,
I wonder the duty of the urban authority!
I must have turned my back away
From this way
My ears of use no more
The bridge broken;
Let mama not worry about me
For I would have slowly gone.

Tony Adah

The Sacred Word

Letter by letter
Word by word
Verse by verse
I will chant the sacred word
To the troubled world
Not from any book
But from my own enduring faith.

This word, O elusive word
We hear it,
We imagine it
It perches on the boughs
Of the world and awhile it flies away
Peacefully, it decides
To stay permanently only
On the pages dictionaries
Nearby, it is here
And so unreachable.

It seldom comes
Often its place chaos usurps
We need peace
A breath of fresh air
Not plumes of black smoke
Smothering the sky
We need peace
Not bombs and shrapnel
Flying in the sky like kites.

We need this word
Sacrosanct, always desecrated
The word that in silence speaks
Of calm, denounces hate and war
The word that drops
Globs of neighbourliness
In the cities and frontiers
Of the world torn apart.

Tony Adah

The Sanctity Of Man

Man born of the invisible parturiency
When his woman came calling
To dine at the serpent's table
And he learned and inured
Himself to deceit.
On the order of the holy book
No man judges another man
His transgressions bestow
Him an eternal crypt
Or soar him to any of the heavens
Where souls yearn daily to be
Without the body leaving
The affluent earth.

He is still good
He is still nice
He leaves his abode
Open to all
And they pluck berries
Where they see
He's a good neighbour
But anger nursed of their heart
When the gates shut of his hand
And their bowels void.

When they see him in plenitude
The bees have found a hive
And camels stretch their necks,
Make some strides
And lick their lips
When the stream dries
The motley crowd abandon the desert
Looking for fresh oases.

When he errs
Scathing words kill like a gun
When he steals
Kill him
Kill him

Ring old tyres about him
And burn him alive
Than the law take its cause.

Man is pregnable
To anything right or wrong
And man's perfidy in man
Is the brewer of instant justice
Condemn no man
For he wears a body
And soul like yours
Even a mad man who amuses you
Perhaps prolong your life
In some ways hidden from you.

Tony Adah

The Scar Opens Again

Now the old scar opens again
A lanky gap toothed man
In crusty garbs returns
This time in flowing robes
Everyone has a knock
Hunger's hands fisted to fight
Wares taking a flight into the sky
And wingless prices attempting
To follow.

This time is worst than the other
And soon we have grasses for food
In stiff contest with the herdsmen
Soon we die more
Thank God this tenure is limited
In three years time
We will be healed.

Tony Adah

The Scarecrows

The scarecrows walk the farm
In the daytime
And by night they bursted into flames
First the birds were fearful
Of the inanimate men
Then the fearless thieves feared that
The flames might reveal them.

We were the scarecrows
The generals of the farm
We hunted squirrels and rabbits
Pelicans and wild hens
And we set traps that caught some at night.

At harvest season
We slept in the farm
We swollen cheeks like mumps patients
And bulging tummies from the bounty
Of the farm
This season, the teachers hardly recognize us
We scarcely had a portion
Of our mother's kitchen
And father smiled jaw to jaw
For the safety of the farm
We the scarecrows kept sentry upon
We were happy for this was
The season of famine.

Tony Adah

The Scheme

Above and below
In the silent flight of the lonely birds
The humming howls of the lawn mowers
And the alighting of the chattered flight
We waited
The schemes swirling
Like a whirlwind
Its eddies capturing some souls
Their bodies buried
In caskets of ballot boxes
The scheme went on
And we waited to the end
Where much bickerings and mudslinging
Led to only one person
Wining the election.

Tony Adah

The Sculpture's Clock

My country has some effigies
Sitting somewhere in the centre
Of the land,
I will carve and put at their Gatehouse,
A national debt clock
In it's qoutidian tick
It will reel the red numbers
Of my country's account
Before the very eyes of
The pilfers of our Commonwealth
A generation of greed maniacs
And the fiscally imprudent lot.
These effigies
Who ran and won election in absentia
Feeding bugs in Kirikiri
Or lying convalescent
In foreign hospitals.
This clock
I will carve
It will raise an alarm
At any depleting moves
But this motley crowd will feign
Ignorance padding our national budget
Their ears will be muffed
By greed.
They will be deaf to ruins
Terrorists and militants inflict
These are the people
My country breeds,
I will carve this clock and put it
At the gateway to
Our National Assembly.

Tony Adah

The Sea Front People

They live there
Having no place of their own
They eat there
They fish there
With the leaking boats
They live there
On those stilthouses
They piss there
They shit there
And they drink there
Those subhumans who live
At the edge
And possess the dregs
Society throws as wasted
They eat all
Not minding where it comes
One day that sea will dry.

Tony Adah

The Sea Thieves

The gulf of Biafra
They told us is full of sea thieves
A wooden framed ship sea tossed
And homebound with tomatoes and snails
And onions and vegetables
The crew men and passengers
Have the hearts in their hands.
Far into the blue sea
Two flying boats seem to be afloat
One chasing the other
And both chasing the wooden framed ship.
You can not tell the difference
Until they are near you
The occupants of one in a uniform
And the other in plain clothes.
A ship is robbed in two ways
When separately the flying boat meet it
But when the uniformed men
Meet the plain clothes men
A fight ensues
And usually the plain clothes men
Will scamper away
And in this the ship is robbed
In only one way
But you can never tell the difference
Between the pirates
And their chasers
Yes, even the crew men or the passengers
Or the sea itself
Is aware that there's hardly any difference.

Tony Adah

The Seafarer

The seafarer is seaward
On to the seascape and
His seaway is no longer seaworthy
At this point hischutzpah
Of seamanship is gone

He can not move
And to steer back is a problem
His ears ring of strange sounds
From where he doesn't know
Now seaweeds are his companion
His eyes sees but sea serpents
He is still and frightened by these ghosts
And sea urchins stinking pines
Are what his body feels.

At dusk
Night tide meets with sea tide
And the moonless night sky
Rumbles a warning of a storm
This is the time to show
Whether the seafarer is a man or woman.

Tony Adah

The Seagulls

When the seagulls shall
Arrive at the beach
And kiss the shingles
I will wait and watch
Kiss my own tears
And gaze at the air yawning

I shall be glad
To be at this scene for
Those long gone can not be here
And cripples only have wished
To be here
The blind who have groped here
Can not see what we have seen

It is better to yawn
Weep, and kiss one's tears
Than loom large
Turn the human path
Into the path of a tsunami
Wipe the world
And Live alone, desolate.

Tony Adah

The Seamen.

The sea men are at the shore
And the boat is brimful of them
The short, the tall and the fat and the slim
Neat shaven and the unkempt.
The fish will see nets and hooks
And assorted traps from the tribesmen.

The sea is to be sanitized
By a horde of hungry men
Even fish eggs and debris
Will have no hiding place
The sea will be clean
And they call it change!

Tony Adah

The Seashore.

The seashore where the water jibes
With the shingles in silence and retreat
And the land regains its lots of sea sand
Here men, women and children in tow
Gaze at the sea surfs and the sea gulls
In harmony with nature.
They wish perchance that they be borne
By the surfs even soon as they break and reform
Or be guided away on the wings
Of the seagulls.

Some even bear the vehicles
Of their leaving on their subconscious,
Ships, yatcht or rafts of reed made
Thinking that they'd boarded already
The sight of some white men and women
In one direction only helped
To heighten the zeal of the agonizing group.

They want to leave soon
To where no one knows
There's a wide gulf between
Here and where they want to be
But they are not looking back
Perhaps seaborne in their mind
They wish to be going to England, America, Canada
Or any place but not their own home
Even in the tempest of tje seas.

Tony Adah

The Season Of Rain

The rain splattered outside
Singing a song of the season
Huge cluster of clouds make the sky to frown
With a rumble and a flash of lightning
We are all indoors quivering and shivering

The meadow is dark and wet
So are the kindlings
That smother in smoke
And make us cough with cold
Our spaniel struggling to catch up
A space of warmth
The season will go
One day shine returns to the sky
And cold shaken off our bodies
With our dog a happy pet again.

Tony Adah

The Season Of Winds

The wind bore me on its shoulder
Saved me from the cataclysm
In the land
Crops drown
Water everywhere
Birds down
With no bough to perch,
Plumes drooped and dripping
Like a folded drenched umbrella
Coming from the rain,
Goats borrowed breath
From the gushing wind to bleat
A forlorn song.

My competitors whine
At the wind's aftermath;
Darkness upon the shrapnel's
Of volcanic regurgitations
Tomorrow, bleak as it is
Will the sun rise?
Or leave us grope in paths undefined.
Why must it be me safe in the
History of the wind?
That school that I went,
The wind recognizes in the pages
Of its archives.
Yes, I am a treasure in the museum
Of my yesterday
I am safe
The only one of my type, safe from
From the rhythm of the violent wind
With a chortle of the chosen few.

Tony Adah

The Season's Aged Days Are Here.

The rainy Season is tired
And my flagons are empty
The season's aged days are here
Cows are mowing
Pigs are grunting
The bush is wilting
All yearning for a drink.

I will take my old forelock
And shoot to the sky
Perforate its skin
And let its blood of rain come down
The rain's tiny and fragile legs
Are too weak to move
It drizzles here
And it's dry over there
Still my flagons are empty
The seasons aged days
Are here and my flagons are empty
My flagons are empty
My flagons are empty
My flagons are empty
And menopause
Has caught up with the sky.

Tony Adah

The Second Coming

I will not run
For no one pursues
Even if some heels pound behind me
I will take the roadside and go my own way
In my toils, converse with nature
And reap from my ploughshares that
Which nature endows.

I will walk with the feet of justice
And stir its dust in a whirlwind
That devours injustice after my heels
I will climb the hills of knowledge
And discern that which is right
From that which is wrong.

I will wring all my inequities
And pour them into the sea of forgiveness
Upon the knoll of my wrongdoings
I will announce with a klaxon of sobriety
And tell the son to tell the father
To bring nothing but justice to the world
And in his second coming
Nothing but peace to the world.

Tony Adah

The Seventy Six Wells

The wells gushed
Much in excess the barrels swallowed
And rolled to the harbours.
The verdure bloomed
Where white elephants played
And our bowels void
We took bowls at hand.
The littoral and non littoral
Argument came
And the wells went off
We shuddered in
Like a frightened snail
Now the summer is gone
And grey the verdure turns
Like hair tired of days
And the tail straw grasses
The white elephants have refused to eat.

Tony Adah

The Shadow

The sun rises from the east

My shadow leads its way

Long, short and long

Sometimes I am a dot

Another time a skeleton.

My shadow lengthens,

Fleshless like a skeleton

Hollows on my shoulders

Carry hunger and rim it with clavicles

On both sides of my shoulders

My ribs bulge like showing up

For a count.

I am hunger and hunger is me

I am my shadow and my shadow is me.

Tony Adah

The Shadow Of Life

Uptown in Maiduguri, life thins
Into smothering smokes spewed by a volcano
With munitions of death
The townspeople under pressure
Have deserted the town
Ruins have built a new habitation
Of broken walls and thatch less houses
And charred remains of humans and automobiles
Death is worthier than life.
Everyone is gone
Either for refuge or for forever
Survivor casualties wander in statelessness
Looking for a country to claim.
Charred bodies laid like fish finished by oil slicks
In the delta area
And the shadowy figures of massacre
Bear their name as they bear their arms
And stride the land
Death is pronounced and the heart wrenched people
Are shadows in the land where they prowl
From one serfdom to another.

Tony Adah

The Shadow Of The Wind.

The shadow of the wind
Passed by the empty plastic bottle
Lonely as it stood on a short wall
It fell down noisily in the quietude
Of its vicinity.
They told us it was kicked
By the unseen feet of witches and wizards.
Goose pimples raised mounds
On our cold bodies and we were
Frozen by fear
And we never passed through
The short wall until the scales
In our eyes fell down in our school.

Tony Adah

The Shadow That I Bear.

The sun will shine upon this shadow
That I bear
As I walk gallantly thinking that I am done
In the world bound in joy
Each day that passes with its giant strides and shine
I think that I have conquered the rot
Of hair, fresh and bones
Little knowing that dusk too creeps
With frail but steady steps that
Will do swallow my shadow
In a world where gathering
And storing will never be enough.

Tony Adah

The Sheep And The Goat

The sheep slept when the hay
Matured in the the pen
And the vigilant goats
Chewed a cud unend
When the sheep's slumber was done
They drowsily woke up speechless
And robbed of hay
Then only bits laid among the goats' dung
And while the goat chewed a cud
The sheep swallow saliva.

Tony Adah

The Shoeless Man

The wings of the winter wind
Carried with it a shedding storm
And the shoeless man walked
In the rustle of the fallen leaves winter had fried
Though the green leaves linger green
And the yellow ones succumb to gravity
The green ones sway in a warning wait.

The shoeless man has gone past the meadow
And he is hurrying barefooted to the town
And the town had greeted him with shoes
And the shoeless shoeful man
Is looking at the villagers with disdain
Winter may as well freeze them
And go hunger if they like
For the man without shoes has crossed the river
And his back turned to his origins.

Tony Adah

The Short Journey

Hours linger when we earn
Seconds fly when we spend
Soon the night stains the beautiful
Colour of the day
So short the journey is
And the world a hollow place
Deserted like a hive invaded
By a pangolin.

Tony Adah

The Short Street

There is a short
Stretch of street
In the ancient city of Benin
It is crowded with people
In the hustle and bustle
Of cars and buses,
Lorries and trucks
Wares, madmen and beggars.

The road surface is rough
With an age-old asphalt
Cracked here and there
Where puddles made
Abodes for croaking frogs
Its side drains are still
And green with stink.

The dulcet song
Of democracy leaves
No echoes in this place
Who told us to take
This one-way down town road
When our google map
Carried no indication of it?
It is a desirable gamble
To get us onto
The Benin -Sapele road.

Tony Adah

The Shortest Way

Man will befriend
Marry
Be a brother
An uncle a nephew
A grandfather or a father
But I choose to love
And love only
That's the shortest
Way to see our creator
Please him and be with him
Always with a peace of mind.

Tony Adah

The Silence Of The Duck

The duck is a silent bird
That's why no one knows the contents
Of his mind
He speaks we understand not
We speak he does
Pour that water in the cup
Of your heart upon his back
And see if it sinks;
Venoms hardly have effects
On the carapace of a tortoise
And in the silence of the duck
The duckling is safe in the
Presence of the hawk.

Tony Adah

The Singer Is Gone

That morning dews rolled
On the footpath of my cheeks
My hope shattered and my face forlorn
The pivot of my heart severed
And I moved with a rib case as hollow
As the atmosphere.
All the euphonies of the evening killed
And the echo gone into the valley alone
The cage is now empty
And the canary that sang and gave my soul
solace is gone.
To hobnob is not an exercise in isolation
Here I am staring at the cage
The singer gone
And the listener's ears ringing of emptiness
And my eyes see a dangling cage only
In the wind.

Tony Adah

The Sky's Benevolence

It spattered on the rooftops
Filled all the barrels
And stride the neighborhood
The sky's benevolence has
Given the invalids a transfusion of water.

Tony Adah

The Slaughter Of The Innocent

I want to weep sorely
Not to the world
But that God will hear;
My wails and weeping have found
No place in man's ears
There's a grimace
On the face of the pained
Still they hide it
With a veil of all is well.
Before the world forgets me
I'll wail and cry and weep
Why should man be so inhumane to man?
To slaughter the innocent
And wear gallands of triumphance
When the men who kindle the embers
Of this hate
Are the same men who are paid
To perfunctorily stop the war
And the call it Boko Haram
The war of invisible army
And no one to negotiate with.
I will continue to weep
Until the world gives me
A one man dump
To eternally rest
And hear no more
Of the injustice of the perpetrators.

Tony Adah

The Slavery Of Today

If a man be born into freedom
What ties him into bondage?
His tongue that hides in cheek
And says nothing of the bad
His throat that shallows more
On a platter of greed
While the rest stay famished.
Do not speak of the ills of
The president if he's from your clan
Clap for him if his food is nepotism
Be mute so everything goes wrong
This is the air that fans the embers
Of slavery and servitude,
A cog in the wheel of patriotism
And the bars that keep the citizens
In a gaol of maximum security
Perpetually for the oppressors
To conquer.

Tony Adah

The Smal Mud School

Up the hills and down the valleys
We we walked barefooted to see
An Irish Reverend father in one building mud school
He drummed into our ears the paster noster
And the Nativity and the Christ and the teacher
Tithes of eggs and yams flew from our hearts
He drove a tortoise car only.

A small school it was
Where baptism was given
In the midst of lantanas, marigold, lilies
frangipanis, hibiscus and roses
Today all that is gone
The Irish father gone
His tithe amplified, his car a jeep
And the core is lost
To gain the periphery.

Tony Adah

The Social Contract Is Gone

Do not worry
My cell phone
The price you
Named for my election
I am not owing.

Your turn
Has come
And gone
Leave me
With my own.

And the electors,
Women and men
Old and young lamented
With a song-
Ten missed calls
Ten missed luck
And the next
Is at hand.

Tony Adah

The Sojourn Of The Sun

The sun rises silently from the horizon
And subtly makes his sojourn on the sky
Sometimes wrapped in a baize of clouds,
He trudges on his way and at noonday beat our heads
Dwarfing our shadows,
Making them thin and long after the noon.
He is stunning and funny sometimes,
He behaves like he perches on the clouds
And at other times swells and turns to a huge red ball
Then plunges himself into the horizon
Burning the clouds and slipping away.

Tony Adah

The Song Of Crocodiles

I am a fisherman
Wave tossed on a silent sea
When the seagulls disillusioned
By the absence of tuna
Go home disenchanted;
I see all.
When the boat leaks
On my way home
I clasp my oar and double on
Or take my gourd and scoop
My uninvited guest;
I am afloat and my oar rests on.
When for want of a catch
The carapace of crabs sing in my bag
I am sure of a sweet broth
The waves toss me homeward
And at the shore;
The children are waiting
For their heritage
And I go empty hands
As I came
I am happy being a fisherman
Who listened and understood
The songs of the crocodiles
Before the twilight of the west.

Tony Adah

The Song Of The Songbirds

Soon I will be home
Missing the chatter of songbirds
I will leave for an eternal journey
Away from toils and pains
I will leave behind
Tales and gossips
Taunts and jeers
Miss the song of the songbirds
That soothing and sonorous song.
I will leave for the top
Of the mountains
And the song will die down there
In the valley.

Tony Adah

The Soul Of My Country

Putrid the soul of my country
Like a sore on an orphan's leg
Lame its leg walk
Busy its hands plundering
Its eyes sharp as the owl
And like a cat its ears attentive
To the noise the commonwealth makes

Young men walk about hungry
But in great aqueiscence to the hunger
They move on with brief cases
Where Lie their homes and offices
And the soul of my country stinks
Stinks from the road puddles
That frogs and toads have made their abode
Stinks from the lot consigned
To a lakadaisical leadership
That leads to golden pauches of the affluent few

The soul of my country is a rotten corpse
Mangled by a swarm jubilant flies
Feasting on grafts and nepotism
On the rivers that run with liquid gold
They struggle and splatter with cans and barrels
To plunder the commonwealth.

And my country stinks
Stinks like yesterday
Like today and I wonder
Who will extinguish the inferno
Ragging in the land.

Tony Adah

The Soul Wins

Run past the slugs
And all the crawling ants
In vain the millipede's multiple legs
But your luggage behind
A burden of ingots, greed and hate
Shed your load
Those cumbersome garbs
Be light and fluffy,
Fly like a butterfly
Soar to bliss
Where the soul wins.

Tony Adah

The Sound Of Guns

My country is
An arena for the pounding of guns
Pow pow pow pow pow pow
Is the sound every day
In our ears
If it is not Bolo Haram
It is robbers
And if it is not robbers
It is a band of kidnappers
If it is not kidnappers
Then it is oil thieves
For every horde
Is to the teeth armed!

Tony Adah

The Sound Of Something

When I am deaf
And poetry turns me on
Know that it's rendered
In croony mellow tunes;
When so sweet and palpable
It becomes,
The blind see it
And it darts and pops
It walks to the lame
And that's when I prance
And laugh and love it
Rendered for the initiate.

Tony Adah

The South Meets The North

The undulating sahel frowns
At the scorching sun
And the southern sea beats the coast
In a thousand blows
Two rivers traverse the land and meet
At the confluence of Ilokoja.

There are voices of hunger
And voices of hate
Still the sun hits
And the tide rises
In unison to the melancholy
Of the the folks.

Take the ocean up to the north
Alleviate the sun
And turn melancholy into merriment
That is the country
We want to see
One ocean and a million living species.

Tony Adah

The Sparrows And Locusts

An empty sack never stands erect
Expecting from our quotidian toils
We waited for grains to come
The sparrows and the locusts
Have all each eaten them.
Shrivelled like tobacco leaves in harmattan
We waited in vain
For what to make us stand
And move our country ahead
The drones have stolen everything
And the workers are sleeping on flabby stomach
We have put in our own
But our country is adamant
To make us stand erect.

Tony Adah

The Spoilers

The night went well
Except the humming mosquitoes
The sun rose bright
But for the fog
The rain came down
Except that our barrels
Were lying
Everything that happened
Had a side snag.

Tony Adah

The Squirel

The squirell
Wears a gourdly scrotum
Please tell him
That a hydrocoel
Fits the elephant
Better the than the hare.

Tony Adah

The Standard Is Gone

We went through a mill that time
Not like today
We had our back slates
Our guardians wrote cursively
On the blackboards
And we scribbled in our sates
Like the prowling marks of a scavenging hen
They put us in a hearth
The fire burned our sinews and thews
And our brains
They picked us with iron tongs
Beating us between the anvil and hammer
Of know-how
We had the ass
They had the canes
And we had the lashes
Now we are clean and pure like gold
But they have removed the standard
And the pant sagging folks
Are confused at what letters
Constitute their names.

Tony Adah

The Steel Bird

Steel bird

Who made you than
The ingenuity of man?
In his pride to show he mimicks
The swift hand of nature
In every way it makes.

Steel bird

You glide like a kite
Your still wings flap not
At takeoff or landing, you're guided by men
Unlike the tamed pigeon
Who flies at will without a hum;
We fill your tummy and you fly with us
Not to your destination but to ours
And when you miss your way
We lose our lives
And in this the limitations
Of man's ingenuity comes to the fore.

Tony Adah

The Stillborn

Hurray, a child is born
A dispassionate child
A little to the right
And a little to the left
Yet it died a stillborn.

Like abiku
Another is born
The midwives have gone
With their bloodstained hands
And it is long they left.

This child that is not a stillborn
Is a victim of all diseases
And it has refused to walk
Screaming and slithering
Like a python.

Tony Adah

The Stones Wept

The rains refused to come
To the land
Wearing a balding scape,
Grasses scorched up
In a youthful dead.
Volatile air licked the oases
With its tongue
Wind gathered its breath
And poured it over the dunes.
The land is now a desert
Without sand,
Only stones stand gazing
At their loneliness
And weep the stones did.

Tony Adah

The Storm

I will stand in this storm alone
With pain and sorrow
When those clouds like ebony come
To swallow me up
I will thin like the air
And move with the storm
For the day's brilliance will come
When the storm will drop me down
And I can find my way
As time overwhelms the storm.

Tony Adah

The Storm Blown Boat

They turned me upside down
What they could get was
My dripping spittle
The blame is mine, they said
Can an empty sack stand upright?
Can fireflies swarm
Where there's no light?
Looks like I'm drowning
Every debris I clutch on to
Is worst than me
And I think that my country and I
Are in one storm blown boat.

Tony Adah

The Stranger

Under the moonlight
I want to cross over to see a friend
Stainless approaches from the shadows
Of a tree
Looked glittering like the horizon
Of the rising sun.
The hair is braided
A pink blouse adorning black pants
Pink shoes and dangling earrings
Silverish, a gold necklace shinning
From the pouring of the moonbeams.
How're you girl?
You look so cute!
She coyly looked down and then up
The tip of her shoes drawing some
Figures on the ground.
She's so shy like a new wife,
Summoned courage to say good evening
Probing further, she turned her face
Towards me and away saying
Don't spoil me!
Laughter jumped from heart
But I covered it and asked in my mind
Is she made by a carpenter
To be so easily spoiled?
I'd love to know you babe,
Would you mind to walk me up
Across to a friend's place?
I asked pointing to the direction
Of my friend's house.
Nope. I don't mind but you'll excuse
Me to ease myself
She handed me over a big black
Paper bag weighing in my thinking
About three to four kilograms.
It was the last I saw of her
And in that bag
A freshly born baby boy.

Tony Adah

The Street Man

Does it matter which way you go?
When you don't know anywhere
And just roving everywhere without
a purpose of anywhere to go
You fly on the borrowed wings
Talk in a loaned tongue you can't give back
Take no bath in your dreadlocks
Walk naked with shreads of raiment
In your hands
The city is a maze
Quite suitable for your trade
And soliloquy your companion
You laugh at your weeping
In a world too distinct from the districts
Of the city.
Here the dustbin is your kitchen
Brimming with flies and the dark puddles
On the streets
Your resplendent springs to quench your searing thirst
No street is long
Neither is anyone too short
For a rising aimless walk
That's how to feel
When the mind travels leaving you behind.

Tony Adah

The Strong Gale

Let the raging winds loom and roam
So the trees know how firm
They plant their feet beneath the soil;
The birds that twitter and preen their plumes
And boast of great flight
Let the gales test their strength.
I have no hindrance
Walking in the wind
At worst I may tow the windward side
For the wind to bear me
In his wings.
Let the ravaging wind blow
Off our plumes so the world sees
What tangibles we got from greed
In the mandate we held in trust
For others.
Let it rage on
To unkindle our appetite
For the people's Commonwealth
Let them rage interminably
That the grains will sort from chaffs
And my country cleans
By the waters of the storms.

Tony Adah

The Stubborn Boy

A rude stubborn boy
Went to the river to frolick in the sand
On the shore
There is a resting park
For women returning from the farm
Here they haul their wads of firewood
And plunge themselves in the deeps
Away from the afternoon sultry clime
This boy wicked from the cradle
Took his knife
And cut off the twine binding the firewood
Unfortunately, his mother was in the deeps
Whose wad he had scattered.

Tony Adah

The Stubborn Fly

The fly flew
Noosing around for putrid reeks
He found none but a rotten corpse
Wherever the corpse went
He followed
When the corpse plunged into the crypt
He followed
Until tumulus pile on the grave
And he slept with the corpse.

Tony Adah

The Suffering Continues

Somehow there is a curse
Hanging in the clouds
For more than fifty years
The pyramid has continued to narrow
At the peak and broaden in the base.

The kings and the queens
Princes and princesses
Are balanced on the luxury of the state
And the servants and the slaves
Dregs of society
Are bent on the land
Sweating and languishing
In the sun for productivity
That eschews them at last.

And we thought all these were gone
Hopefully coming out of the tunnel
But there is a sudden jolt unleashed
Up and down people are moving about
Fighting with plastics cans
At gas stations and water point
As the sun sets to set
I believe that in this twilight
The social contract obsequies
Are in the clouds.

Tony Adah

The Sun

The sun stole its way from the horizon
Through the morning fog
Its yellow face stared at the town
And the townspeople wore a hopeful smile
In the midst of the cold.

Strong birds languish in the cold
Unable to utter a word
Little ones sat helplessly on our fence preening their plumes
I can hear the silent songs
Their mouths have refused to sing.

When the sun turns its face white at noon
They will be healed,
Healed of cold and sonorous songs
Will hit our ear drums
Wondering when the winter will wane
And missed from this part of the world.

Tony Adah

The Sun Came

The sun came at the desired time
To warm the cold morning dews
Of the mother's tears
The sun came
To dry the wet Sheens of the errand woman
Who wailed and wept and mourned
For her barren womb
It came to put a smile on the face
Of she who couldn't eat or who couldn't talk.
It came
It came to take away the agony of
She who farmed without someone to eat
Of her tools,
It shone
It descended from the valleys of the
Woman's thighs
That helpless bouncing human complete
With the umbilical cord and the
Placenta,
He yelled at the wicked earth and the
Tender hands boxing the air.
That was the sun
That shone on the woman's face
After all yearning and travails
Nature to last bestowed a glimpse of
The sun's ray
That came in the morning and
Illuminated her face,
That was her rising sun.

Tony Adah

The Sun Is Here

It is February
How brilliant the sun is
Rising from the hills green
In the east;
With his orchid petals glowing
In the morning haze.
A full yellow flame that rages
And burn in harmless glow;
No man can douse these nature born and bred
Even when the clouds smother on
The flame like a shadow in the dark
Rages on
If not on our own side
Then the other side must glow
Until when man implode this flame
That keeps him on
With his various munitions of climate change.

Tony Adah

The Sun Must Rise

What if the sun didn't rise?
My friend told me the street lamps will serve
I know
The plants can't fix lamps
Only humans do
I know
We'd grope like puppies
A second old on earth
We could eat in the night
Because the hand doesn't
Miss the mouth.
What if the sun didn't rise?
We will see the limit of knowledge
Touted by man;
In the dark we will do
All that is wrong
The market of the night
Sells in sinister wares
That is why the sun must
Always rise.

Tony Adah

The Sun Rises

The tide goes and the tide comes
Man comes and man goes
From the east the sun rises
And to the west it sets
But the world remains
At least in a lifetime
That's the vogue.

Tony Adah

The Sun Will Shine.

The sun rises lazily
From the east
Toiling to show its light
Through clouds and storms
And the horizon
Is lost in this web
But we are hopeful
That at noon Or so
Light will hastely
Leave the sun
To strike our sullen faces.

Tony Adah

The Sun, The Moon And The Earth

The sun pleaded with the moon
To take some light to the people
Of the earth who for twelve hours
Perpetually grope in darkness
The moon too, a friend of the earthlings,
Said yes, and the glorious light
Fell unto his arms.

The earth seeming
Not to know the inherent good
Or desires darkness for forces
Of evil to act, darken his mien
And sent a ferocious glare into the heavens.

The harder he did this
More the moon's sheen shone
And illuminated his ambience
This is how we came to sit
Under the trees at moonlight
Internalizing our lores.

Tony Adah

The Supplicant

Here I am alone
Like a fallen moon
A supplicant in dire need of benediction
My knees are on the ground knocked as they are
Seeking a healing treatment
Without the surgeon's knife.

I am waiting
By the riverside
My soul in my bucket
And soap in my hands.

I look up to the looming sky
Where the idle shreds of white clouds roam
This is the hue
I desire my soul to be
And this is where
I have a promise to be
If my hands and my soul be stainless
As is required to live with the eternal king.

Tony Adah

The Sweat Of My Brother

My brother
It is a pity that
You are at the crossroads
But if that is the side
You have chosen
Then you'd probably not return.

Because the coins in your
Pocket clang
You've suddenly become handsome
In spite of scabbies
She has seen the money
That which you sweated for
She will bath in the pool
Of your sweat, look beautiful
In the eyes of men.

You will remain dirty
In your scabies
Till you travel to no return
No more to see her
It's a pity my brother for
That road you have taken.

Tony Adah

The Tale Bearer Is Gone.

The bearer of tales
Has nothing for sale
As quietude is the diadem the neighbourhood
Is wearing waiting in vain for falsehood
And the tale bearer is gone
Having brandished his horsetail
Over a burnfire and the odor is great
And the neighborhood is calm.

Tony Adah

The Tale Man

His tales descended on our senses
He told tales of
How a hunter's hand with ingenuity
Hauled down an elephant
With a mere pebble;
How the river in winter froze
Into a Python sleeping in the cold;
How eagles once ferried man
Like planes;
He told tales that rhymed
With him sitting beside God
During creation,
He told tales to get the sweetest
Of palm wine from unsuspecting folks.
These days
We know tales freely drop from
His head to fill a void
In his stomach
He told them to eke a living
In the land brimming with
Milk and honey.

Tony Adah

The Tall Gate.

These days our houses
Hem us in with burglary proofs
Of iron made
The fringes surrounded by
A guard of masonry bricks
We live like prisoners afraid
Of the world around us.
Afraid of the people we refused to aid
And their ghosts as dregs of society chant
Songs of war.
Here the air is humid
But out there's fresh air
For these people can not
Be denied two things.

Tony Adah

The Tax Evader

A good citizen
Is a pride to his state
Inaligwu
Became the direct opposite
He evaded
All the evadables
With his eloquence
And got his due
He boarded a coach
From the countryside
Enroute the town.

A tax checkpoint awaited him ahead
At which he feigned blindness-
'I am a blind man'he said
And made his way
Without his tax receipts.
A few metres ahead
He tried in vain
To open his eyes
'God, God this joke
Is enough, please please
Open my eyes, ' he said
Gropping in the coach.

Tony Adah

The Teacher Of Wisdom

Hunger my mother told me
Never kills any man
Don't deny me a slab of rock
I can squeeze water out of it
Hunger never weakens a man
Strength it gives to the discerning
It makes a labyrinth of thought
In your head each a way in
Or a way out.
It breaks the monopoly of possessions
And wreak complacency into shreds
That makes for want
Hunger my mother told me
Never weakens a man
But stirs the best of him
Never deny me a stone
Or I will not have a teacher
Of wisdom.

Tony Adah

The Teeming Weak

I am in this world
Almost by the fringes,
Why must I peripheral be
When the actors centre play?
Though in all directions
The arrows fly,
My head in all directions must bend
To see where the gladiators stand
To fling their intrigues.
We live in a jungle
Where the strongest fit
And where the weakest fail,
Only a conjecture can tell
Why the strongest few
Lord it over the teeming weak
Who take their fate in their hands
And live like slaves in a world
Where they ought to have dominion.

Tony Adah

The Terrorist

Violence is not a weapon
Neither is the hand
That bears it
It sits in the heart where
Yemen trains and dehumanizes,
It is that iota of food the mind eats
Gets drunk and loose on the prowl.
The terrorist is a beast
Whose heart like witchcraft
Must be exorcised.
Never bother a terrorist,
Kill him hard
And let him see his blood
Kill him painfully
So the rest can see
There's something a terrorist does
Like bees, the more you kill them
The harder thy come;
They sting mercilessly
And they laugh when they kill
They like to see humans in blood
As in shrapnel.
When they garb the weapons
And think the world is theirs
The pain is when they camouflage
In religion in the extreme
Of doctrines to to visit a victim
The world weeps
For religion which ought to save
Now kills in ways gruesome.

Tony Adah

The Thatch Hut.

There is a thatch hut
On the right side of the road
Towards Akasum on Bishiri road
And it licks their pockets dry
Those participants who worship here.

Every day every one toils
To be a slave to this place
Where palmwine, beer, spirits
And burukutu, cowleg, cow tail, cow tongue,
Kpomo are served and savoured.
It is a gist mill where the candidates
That the governor annointed are known
And spouses foibles and troubles
Are let out a rumour bag.

It is also a students' spot
Where lads and maids mix up
In their weird ways-
Lads cuffs unlinked and sagging shorts
And maids eye brows and nails and lips
Are a canvass pretty to behold
By the the participants.

At night there are flickers of light
From the bulbs and cigarettes
And clouds of smoke that look
Like the hut is burning
There's a great noise
Undecipherable to the un initiate
And this is where the
Police and the cultists clashed
And this tavern owner
Missed in cross fire.

Tony Adah

The Thief

He prowls vicinities
Scavenging as If
Tomorrow will never come
He hides
He steals
He runs away
Anyway
One day for him
Other days
For the owner.

Tony Adah

The Thief.

A man went in to have
An illicit affair with his friend's wife
When he was discovered
He ran into a yam barn
Where he was caught
And brought before the village court.

In his words of lament he said,
I do not know what to tell you folks
That I committed adultery
Or I stole some yams
Words fail me
And my mouth is dry!

Tony Adah

The Thieves Of Our Land

Everywhere a thief is born
Pilfering dry the land
Like bees they lick with their mouths
And sting with their tails
We should never sheath our swords
Where they hang there our sleep will be
Awake it is war
Asleep the dream is blood
Until the thieves are gone
And the land is free to swell again
To feed the fatherless
To feed the motherless
To feed the poor equally as the rich
Then our destination must have been reached.

Tony Adah

The Thin Dividing Line

Death whispers to our ears
All day
The end looming ahead
Our hearts so deaf, to hear
It is sad that one man
Is gone
Normal that we must all go
In our turns
That's the bond we signed
That we remember always to forget.

The throes of life
Break us fast enough
For the final call
Life itself is a vapour
A transient dew drop
A market square where
Those who have made their purchases
Waste no time to leave.

Death and life
Just a thin diving line apart
A moment here
Another there
We are ghosts to be feared
By those in the world.

Tony Adah

The Things We Refuse To Do

I am not mad
At doing my things
When I let still
The trigger of my gun
It is for peace to sprout
In the land.

When I let my hook
Into the water without a bait
It is to free a fish of harm.

When deaf-mute I become
It is to train my tongue
For sometimes
The things we refuse
To do like refusing to steal
Definitely bring us esteem.

Tony Adah

The Three Truants.

We three had
A hoe, a digger and a spade
To be truant was like
Digging one's grave
To be buried the next day
We three were going to be buried
If we too long mortgaged
Our tomorrow for the bush.

But I spared my friends the friendship
And foe was the name of our bond
The bush training was wild
We poached hares, squirrels
Breaking kernels of palms
Hunting blackberries, dewberries
And raspberries.

If I had added latex
To the bond of this friendship
Perhaps I would be the one
Out there in the village
Bent over a hoe!

Tony Adah

The Throat Of Man

And we swallowed solids to no avail
Only to heighten the greed
Inherent in our thoughts
We drank liquids
Thinking that a difference will be made
If solids won't suffice
Down with thinking about liquids.

Tony Adah

The Toad

The toad
Is a silent guy
But he has a bald head
And croaks only
When he is happy on the spouse's back

He has a warty back
But an immaculate white chest
And this is the colour of his heart
His limbs fore and hind are short
But his destiny can not
Be dashed to a frog
With longer limbs.

Tony Adah

The Toast

I can not cheer up at all times
In a toast for my good health
When it froths and spews;
It splashes on my neighbour
Whose house is next to mine
And at all times resist my toast
He doesn't wish me well but we are neighbours
To live longer without him
I will clean and shift my abode;
Ask my God to build me a fence
Until he calls me at last
And I move to go forever.

Tony Adah

The Toilet Cleaners

The toilet itself
Was not a modern type
There was much hype
About it in the days
Of the colonialists
And those who clean them
Were called night-soil-men

In time they stayed on strike
For this name the public derided
The protest was great
Until in Lagos authorities asked
Them for a name they wanted
And all that they needed
To be called was sanitary technologists
Funny, initially the authorities prevaricated
For a simple name change
And caused dingleberries
To bear and stank in whole city.

Tony Adah

The Toils Of My Life

I am captured by bouts of sleep
Away from the toils of the day
Every strength I gather during the dreams
Some strong eagles raid and seize
And I am fifty five!
The eagles grey at plumes
And strong at beak even haunt my sleep
And wait for what it holds like dreams or so
I wake up in the many nights
I have dreamed
With nothing at hand to eat
Or give as tithe or alms.
The eagles live up above the sky
In great nests upon the big trees
And I here below in a hovel
Hardly any drops of their crumbs.
My country too is fifty five
But she is silent on my toils
And the eagles calm
And happy at my cycle of life.
My birth is plunged upon the land of boulders
High and low they lie
Where the predators love to be
I have stumbled in a bad fall
Prostrate and lame I lie
In the very watch of the eagles
And the next moment I'm gone.

Tony Adah

The Tongue

Words are the sword of the world
Drawn the world writhes in pain
Sheathed joy blossoms
The tongue sharp as the sword
Reels words that scathe
Or words that sooth
And in every word hidden
The tongue unveils and a positive word
Becomes a negative word
And the tongue makes or mar friendship.

Tony Adah

The Torch Of The World.

The world that holds us turns and turn
Like the chameleon
But we never live up to its caprices
It holds its moving torch from dawn to dusk
And allow a veil of darkness to fall
Upon its warty back.

This is when we grope and grope
Looking for what to hold and get our way
People don't just grope
They want to really see and find their way
This is why the city is aglow with halogen and neon
And the country flickers with kindlings or candles.
Or the moon decides to steal from
The torch of the earth and give a sheen
That shines with frailty at night
And makes us sit under the quiet trees
Listening to the lore of our grandmothers
Before sleep does us a trick
And we die to rise again!

Tony Adah

The Tortoise And The Rain.

The tortoise who is slow at walking
Looked up at the turquoise clouds
And surely the sky was ready to weep
He hastened slowly
As the tumultuous sky began to rain.

He fled gently
Until he passed through a shade
And he decided to take refuge under it
The sky rumbled noisily
With a torrential downpour
He began to see the shade shaking
Making noises like the flapping of ears
And the stamping of hoaves.

The tsar of slowness
Was taking shelter under an elephant
He was sore frightened
Same time the umpire of this race
Had stopped to blare his whistle
And the tortoise was free from the fear
Of his shade and the fear of the rain.

Tony Adah

The Tortoise And The Son.

The tortoise and the son
Had an argument about
Who God is
The tortoise licked its lips
And posited that
God is simply air
That nobody can see

The son bore a wide smile
But never yielded to the father's talk
His smile sprouted into laughter
And he said, 'father so you don't know
That God is almighty and he lives in heaven'?

They were famished
And in their cooking shade
The hearth was out of fire
Except a heap of ashes
The tortoise pushed the ashes to one side
And pulled the kindlings together
He blew some air onto the faggots
The hearth smothered in smoke
And a blue flicker of the firelight ensued.

Ah, father
You put God into the fire?
The son tortoise asked.
A grin brightened the father's face
And the two laughed
Like the hunger was gone!

Tony Adah

The Town

The town is hot and scorch
and stinks of drains and waste
The tall gothic buildings gaze at the sky
their paint dull with flakes
Superhighways wind above and beneath
And cars pass in dizzying speed
The trees of grounds and garden lowly stand
and their leaves wearing a powder of carbon stain
The town is hot and scorch
from the noxious fumes of the humming factories
And the town is full of ailments
Alien to the countryside for the townsfolk
Devour what the machines have already eaten
And give them chaffs and wastes
That burden the system down.
The town is hot and scorch
And humid from the teeming numbers
It pretends to hold with little or nothing
To offer the crammed youths leaving the sweet
bounds of the countryside.
The town is hot and scorch
It stinks of idle youths and booze and crimes
And promises of welfare are fake and dashed
It stinks of drains and fumes and files of automobiles
And of promises unfulfilled
Still the town officials reel out rules
That make the common people fat cows
To the town officials' fat stomachs
And year in and year out
The town is embroiled in rigged elections
And corruption and every dream
Of the townspeople broken upon their heads.

Tony Adah

The Train Perchers

They vowed not to
Pay the train fare
As the train slithers its way
They jumped perching on the coaches
And hide by the vestibules
The truth is that they have no place to go
But loiterers and pick pockets
Who swarm the stations
And soon will come down the train
When their act is a perfect deal
Thus in Lagos
An aberration is a norm.

Tony Adah

The Tribes Gathered

Two rivers yanked three entities apart
Here the tribes gathered
Their glue loosely lugardized;
At the north the sahel yawned
To swallow the pyramids
That bore peanuts.

Down south
The palms bore their red eyes
And cocoa their turgid breasts.
At the creeks
The wooden boats rowed
With palm oil lamps
In search of livelihood.

Suddenly the earth began to quake
And the blood and bones and flesh
Began to gather-
A ginormous gift by our ancestors
Of petroleum;
Oloibiri is the town
And this is the pivot than spins
Our entity
And our new glue.

Tony Adah

The Triumph Of Misery

We took up arms against measles
And he ran away
He fell and tumbled over
Thinking we were still after him
He will not know the gun is in our blood
Frail and weak of pellets from our gun
He manages to look our way with fright
Now he's gone
But any day he surfaces again
He'll die

Another enemy knocking on our door is misery
He comes with pangs of pain
And we pant like a dog from a race
We hide our guns and laugh
At his ravage of man
But we find our guns back and shoot
To kill ourselves in celebration
Of the triumph of misery
And the defeat of man by man.

Tony Adah

The Truck

The truck loaded
Above its tonnage
Slowed down towards
A check point
Where gun totting
Police men laid ambush
The truck attendant
Gave them a handshake
They took a bribe and
The truck passed.

Tony Adah

The Truck Boys

A long truck came to where
Wrestler's muscle lot waited daily
For their bread
They swarm it as it swung open
Its tailboard.
The inside full of goods
Packs of soaps and packs of fruit drinks
And toilet tissues and an old spare tyre
Perhaps for eventuality on the rough road.
They loaded the goods away
On their backs and in wheel barrows
They were half clad, only on boxers
And manhood dangling in the market.
Macho muscles lot
Who refused to go to school.

Tony Adah

The Truth

I have volunteered
To be a witness to the truth
And nothing but the truth
But the truth sours
In the mouth
And when the bitter truth
Begins to taste sweet
In the mouth of people
The world will shut down
Its own mouth.

Tony Adah

The Truth And Nothing But The Truth

I am not gullible
Your mouth is still
But its two fringes are shaking
Your explanation hardly coming
By the twiches involuntary like
The muscles of a murdered cow
And you alone walk on this part
The world your witness!

Tony Adah

The Tuning Fork

They will be gone
They will be dead
Those crazy potbellies, sunken necks
And pudgy fingers
Their ill gotten wealth will be ruined
By the time this tuning fork
Reverberates to the ends of the earth.

My song whets the lances
That will slit their throats
Those men who trample on the common man
There's no relenting until this land
Is devoid of the sinister
Waves of this tuning fork.

Tony Adah

The Ugly Too Are Human

I am derided
A wretch without any nature's
Duty to perform,
I must have been created
When God was tired or so
Or I was made when his hands
Suffered some spasm
And that's why I am cheap as spam
Let no one be deceived
The hand of God does no
Perfunctory job for we are united
In a soul self same in you as in me
Every madman is sane sometimes
As every sane man is mad
We may miss our limbs and
As cripples be or our ears as deaf
Men be or our eyes as blind men be
Or our feelings may shred
Or someone snide on our state
Lo, our souls band only stretches
And returns intact
And for a soul
I am told is all bliss and bliss
Than riches.

Tony Adah

The Uncertain World

It is cold and damp everywhere
A husband's innate propensity to care
Hangs everywhere in the meadows
A Dane guns weighs on his shoulder
And a raffia bag dangles beside
Squirrels and hares giggle
Not aware death is waiting
Sooner than later they rest in the bag
And kindles gathered homebound.

Everything is rough
Neither the weather nor the economy
Is smooth
It is weekend
Months after months
Wages have frozen
And the bad weather cold and damp
Has not helped in any way
To thaw and free them
Into the pockets of earners of them.

The spouse nags
And the children cry
In response to something
Absent in their tummies
The spouse's grocery is full
And amaranths and peppers and tomatoes
Are going bad
Some carrots and lettuce and cabbage
Have been eaten at home
The working capital too is
Roasted in the fire hunger has stocked
And the family is smothered in the smoke
Of hunger and penury of the day.

But the innate propensity to care
Rest unend with the man
Whose beard is heavy at his chin
And a moustache has covered his mouth

Daily he roams the meadows
With a horde of his hungry
And spittle drifting hounds
Sniffing at every burrows and under logs.

Truffles and mushrooms
Insects and leaves and roots
Are the occupants of his bag
But Bread and butter and tea
Are far away from the menu
Of every day;
Their reeks only reminiscences of yore
A man's burden of living
Self created in the quest
To live and leave a legacy
For himself in the world
Froth with uncertainties.

Tony Adah

The Uninvited Guests

A certain volunteer guest
His name called Starry came
With folks and kinsmen
To our house and prompted us
When we were preparing for Christmas.
Our food still raw and kept in the store
Came to the kitchen
Got some heat and went to rest
In these guests' stomach
And the volunteer guest
Was full of pride for feeding a crowd
In our house
We dashed our gratitude to his pride
But the sincere and grateful guests
Knew where their thanks could go
And when it came
We invited them for the real Christmas.

Tony Adah

The Union Of Two.

In the lush garden of yore
Of flowers assorted
A twosome nut was tied
Quintessential of love
Desired but unfulfilled
Since this vow was taken
Witnessing man and woman
By the holy hand of God
A damp cast of woes
Is upon the head of man.

Oftentimes the nut is tight
Sometimes the nut is half tight
At other times the nut is loose
And man's tyres wobble
And his face full of grimace.

The union is an irony of some sorts
Those who this nut have tied
Are jostling to come out of a furnace
Still those out of this ring
Are seriously knocking
On someone's door
But the union of two
Has become a burden of two
A duel and a war
For temporal things.

Tony Adah

The Universal Visitor

Universal death whispers in low tones
To a groaning client
Little fire flicker from a dark hut
In darkness or in light
The visitor can see his host
No one cares
And even if they did
Little can be done
The old man is going.

Tony Adah

The Vanity Of Life

Every generation passes
We struggle to live, to survive
To think of life solely
Of its accessories, our comfort
And nothing else;
Sometimes we go it like life itself
Will end never.
Why we live, how we live
Matters not
Every thought life tops
How I am better than you
How I am richer than anyone else
Little thinking of the end
Never knowing his tight rein is on Our necks
Until he drag us to our hole
We never will know
If we lived and
Whatever we lived for, a vanity
No generation will learn.

Tony Adah

The Vendor

I am a vendor
Of some sort
These days I have
Some very important
Articles to sell- sycophancy, ignorance
And prejudice
If you want to buy
Come to my country.

Tony Adah

The Veteran

Old soldier went to wars
Both home and abroad
He wore gusto in his heart
When he came home
Gallantry spoke from the medals
Hanging on his chest.
Our nation remembered him
Only on the armer forces remembrance day
And paid him neglect for his pension.
All he garnered at youth
Began to yield to time
And the medals left his chest
Dangling on the wall
Soon old soldier is gone

Tony Adah

The Veterinarian.

The veterinarian
Is the only doctor that
Eats his patients
He devours chicken breast
And still visits to see
Chickens in flu and puts
Some pills in water
For them to heal.

The veterinarian
Is the only doctor that
Eats his patients
A cow has foot and mouth
And he is on hand to help
Still his freezer is full of fresh milk
And beef is the meat he eats
The veterinarian
Is the only doctor that
Eats his patients.

Tony Adah

The Victims

We woke up one day
Wiped the smudges from our eyes,
Saw the rising sun
This earth, part of our ancestral heritage
Started germinating frame works of iron
Far offshore and onshore
They looked like our stilted houses
Of wood they were not made
It was for our own good
They told us.

Suddenly, vegetation began to give way
Streams and rivers began to wear
A thick blanket of liquid gold
The fish all came afloat with stink
The land gradually going.

Soon the pangs of hunger pierced
We rose up with our frail voices
And the multinationals hummed
Our brothers like lions roared
The land is gone, commandeered
We the owners are weaponized
Against ourselves, a ruse to harvest
What the land beholds within
A novelty discovery has metamorphosed
Into nuisance
And we are the victims.

Tony Adah

The Villagers

Half walls rendered aground
by the honed edges of penury
And the village folk stampede and struggle
in the ruins
The old tin sheets hung up
beaten rusty by the elements
Children half clad and naked
their bodies smeared in gray granules
of dust
And the reeks of poverty rise and fall
upon the shoulders unable to respond
There's palm wine
There's local gin
And these are delibitating drinks
Between the absent meals
The road is lost to weeds
And shrubs and grasses kiss
In the middle of the road.
Those who run errands drink dews
From the bleeding leaves
And their shins bathed in dews
Perhaps the only one in a lifetime.

Tony Adah

The Visitor

A wearied visitor down upon my house
The stove is warm
Utensils clang
our mouths watered
And the gander relished
What the goose ate.

Tony Adah

The Visitors

Travellers nobly on our way
We landed in the honour
To our host
He was good on the surface
And slaughtered a chicken for us
With his mouth
We ate it with our ears
The tantalizing chicken cackled
And vanished like a bubble from our sight.

Tony Adah

The Voiceless

I dare not ask again
Or continue to cry
Hunger will as well rest patiently
In my stomach,
When we asked
They served us platters upon
Which the blind and the lame
Alms seekers sat.
Yesterday they served us
Dishes of war
We see today lorries full militants
An armoury of faith extremists
And they tell us that war is finished
What can we do with the change
That comes in the colour of war?
Where in the world have you seen
Cattle valued higher man?
We keep groping looking for strings
To stitch the loosening hems of
Our pants
We dare not raise a word
Because we are slaves in
The tribes and tongues
That strangers amalgamated for us
We dare not ask
For hunger is the king.

Tony Adah

The War

The corpses lay like watermelons
Ready for harvest
In a reversal of mutiny roles
Where the commander shot the rank and file
For a religio-political war
And they called it Book Haram.

Tony Adah

The War Is Yet To Start.

The war is over and the war has started
Democracy they say is for the people
But here the people hear it
As it passes through
Its wind cold or hot they do not know
They say ballot boxes have caused a landslide
And the winner's hands up
With the symbol of victory.

Do free and fair elections
Bring food on the table?
Does the ousted of a slow and indolent regime
Necessarily bring dividends
From a calculated nepotistic reign
In its slow infant steps?

The war is over and the war has started
The citizens who laid a path for democracy
Are not allowed to tread the path
Majority have foisted their numbers
On the minority
And this is the meaning of democracy
Where elections are won
By hook or crook.
We will be here unend
Waiting for democracy to come indeed
But if we don't look for him
And bring him to work for us
We will only hear his name being called
And we feel he is our own.

Tony Adah

The War Survivors.

The war was over
Fresh smell of bombs and canons
Reeked the whole land
Half walls stood riddled with bullets
Charred bodies of humans and animals
And houses lay smothering
In the wind of the ruins war had spawned.

Survivors, men and women wounded
And Children starved waited to hear
The sound of of the red cross chopper
Coming to deliver hand outs.
Their chests rippled
From the thumping of their hearts
On their shoulders
Clavicles protruded
Carving hollows on both sides of the shoulders.

There was no food, no water
Except rain which then was unfit to drink
The women and Children sat
Near mats, blankets, empty plastic water holders
And a few cats, hens and ducks tjay survived the war
The men frailly mending the thatch
Of their torn roofs
Yawning hungrily into the sky
The horror of war
Had gone but the hurdle of survival
Was next starring in their faces
The land devoid of anything to hold
Like debris in a river
For a drowning man.

Tony Adah

The Wave

On the eve
Of making a poet,
There, all alone
A strong wave came with words
His thoughts weaving them
One task consummated
Another hanging waiting
For the judges to make or mar him
Good or bad
There's a poem
Where lies a poet.

Tony Adah

The Way Government Work

The whole thing is a jumble
How government works is funny here
It works for every kobo to leak
Into the trap someone laid
And the citizens are worse for it.

In their own thinking
There's no hope for today
The children who ought to see to it
Wear saggy pants, spiky hair
And addicts of European leagues of football
Amen!

Tony Adah

The Way Of Life

We rose with tenderness
In the morning sun
And blossom in the afternoon like roses
We sagged and wilted like lilies
Planted in the desert
All is gone of us
And that is the way of life.

Tony Adah

The Way Of Man

The sun came and burned the soles
Of our feet
We cried
The rain came down and soaked our garment
Not sparing the flesh of our bodies
We cried
We slasher the vegetation of our land
And planted crops and great mansions
We are happy.

Tony Adah

The Way Things Are Now

Nothing is easy
Sometimes it is more difficult
To die than live
Your struggles become
Thin air in your palm hands.
Cities grow
And the easiest to get gets scarce;
That pure air that freely
Makes our nostrils a passage way
Then hunger stares at our forlorn faces
We are helpless
We bravely fight it
But without a weapon.

Tony Adah

The Way Things Are.

That's how the world
Is made
If your eye catches strong light
Open them hard
If it gets light just
Close a bit.
If the snail meets a stranger
Its horns shrink in
If hungry comes on
The brain will be alert
That's how the world is made.

Tony Adah

The Way With Nature.

When nature bent its back
Over the earth
There is a mountain
Where it wept a tear
Rilling the earth
There is a river
And where it stood to piss
Abound seas and oceans.

When it howled and grumbled
A frightening sound and strikes things down
It is a thunderbolt
When it draws a thin line
Between the sky and the earth
And smiles at this point
It is sunrise or sunset.

When it sneezes out
Mist mixed with iridescent rays
It is a rainbow
And every step
Nature takes is profound
When it closes its eyes
It is indisputable that
We should rest
For the night has come.

Tony Adah

The Way With The World

I wonder why people wander the world
Looking for what to eat
And what to keep
Getting and squandering like tomorrow is finished
The downtrodden mewing in their entrails
And the grave grave a common abode.

Tony Adah

The Weak

A millipede came
Slithering past a grove
With its legion legs
On a slow sojourn
To where I do not know
And the world is full
Of men similar to him
With very long nails
With no scabbies to scratch!

Tony Adah

The Weakest Shrivel

In this jungle
The weakest shrivel
Hunger unwrapped and strewn on
Our footpaths and red carpet
For our tired feet.

To resist the journey is to die
To look back maybe Lot wife's fate
To live is not to die
Amidst the predators, the hounds, the competition
And the oppression.

In this forest a river divides
We stand with the tigers, lions, hyaenas
Mambas, pythons and boa constrictors
They want to devour hunger
That's what our days have become
We are running to the other side
Where the eagle's talons bear us back.

We will captured
In this den like Daniel in the shark's belly
We have submitted
In this mood, a muteness of life and death
And tomorrow, survival.

Tony Adah

The Weather Has Towed A Middle Course

Today the weather has towed a middle course
And the sun at brunch
Is reluctant to shine
As the rain is lazy to fall
There's a tug of war in the sky
The farmer is happy in the field
But the laundry man is somewhere
Between the rain and sun
Trees are still and quiet
And waving laikadaisically to the wind
It will rain or it will shine
Like America and Russia
In the cold war.

Tony Adah

The Wheelbarrow Boy

Naked at birth
Tattered in life
The barrowboy's
School was swallowed by dearth
So he got his name with his good head.

Those who didn't have
Scabbies got the fingernails
And they had an additional backbone
Which gave them the right to ticket wares
In the motorpark.

But they couldn't write
Anybody's name on the receipt
Like the wheelbarrowboy could do
They took the books to their boss
Who wondered how people
Without nails could scratch scabbies
Truthful they said, 'boss the barrowboy
Did it for us'

The boss overwhelmed
Sent for the barrowboy
Who proved his worth
And this is how
A barrowboy became a man.

Tony Adah

The Whirlwind

We are afraid
The night will come
And the moon will drop down
Its sheen on pools of blood
Our town is ghost haunted
A whirlwind is blowing
With sinister scenes.
We are in a siege,
Cultists have taken over
Once a harmless hamlet
Our town is living in the past
Glory of its yore.

Tony Adah

The Wild World Of Wars

The world is in wild wars
What else enough for my soul
Than console it with a song
My peaceful fingers strum a guitar
For the lullabic notes
That gives opium to my nerves

I am watching the world
Watching the serene trees
Until a violent storm comes upon them
And do them sway

The furnace of war rages
With stokes of kindling of hate
Even the unthinkable doves
Leave a sign in peaceful procession
From their nests
Still man ignores his own injury
To fester into a sore
And places his soul
As he himself has sold
To the world wild in wars.

Tony Adah

The Wilderness

I though I had landed on the moon
With joy so consummate like that
Of Armstrong, Aldrin or Collins
I looked back, Egypt in sight far
And the wilderness billowing with roaring winds
From the azure sky a spell of scorching sun.
Everything is here
But who could give me the eyes to see
Or the strength to work?
I gathered what I could-
A mansion, a car and cash
Still I will go home alone.

Tony Adah

The Wind Of War

The north east wind blew
Gushed and poured into Obudu
Palm fronds got a powdery bath
On every leaf some dust like the bush at Yandev
Where machines growl turning limestone into cement

Cattle egrets perch anxiously preening their wings
And waiting for men from war
Down the palms a broken terminarium
Laid in ruins and this where the mercenary
Waylaid the thieves.
The wind hung around the pigs and cow roundabout
Akasom built a kind of haven for the lepers
Udigie calm and full of drunkards
Bekpam is the cynosure of war
Where bullets wheeze and guns scream
In hums of bravery
And men see the fierceness of the battlefield
And women cook in subdued smoke
Lest the enemy spot their whereabouts.
And the enemies filed a long line
With drummers and singers and gruel and drinks
The war was cheap
But that was then.

Tony Adah

The Wind On Thecleaves

There's sweet breeze
Gently swaying the leaves
A red and black spotted ladybird
Perches unperturbed on one leaf
Dancing with the leaf
The melody of the twittering birds.

The leaves are green
And the breeze is good
And the ladybird is beautiful
And I love the trio
Nature's offer of today
I pray it remains for
My children's children to see.

Tony Adah

The Wind Ushers In Dry Season

The wind gushes beneath
And wheezes above, disappeared
Up the the azure sky;
Where clouds paint a mural
Of white and grey and black colours.

Though not seen by the eyes curious of man;
The wind power shows
In the clouds,
They stretch and spread like
Sisal sponges
And heaps that lie like
The hare's mounds planted slyly
With his wits.
The sky rumbled a crumbling sound
And the wind's power holding forth
The elders look up
And look down on the divination shells
No, it will not rain
Buttressed by the trellised
Flashes of thunder;
The line and sea quails quarrel
And the north easterlies prevails southerly
And the dry season is here.

Tony Adah

The Wings Of Time.

Man thinks that he has time
In his pocket to spend like his money
Time jumps out and sits on his laps
And he thinks that he has had a baby
He plays, hugs and cuddles his child
Putting off what
He could do at that time
Time lay bare its tricks
Grow wings
And away it fleeeeeeeeeew!

Tony Adah

The Winter Wind.

The invisible winter wind
Slapped our faces
And we bowed to the winter cold
As strangers we dreamt less of this wind
Chattering and phlegm drifting
From our noses hardly breathing well
I wonder the hype
Of travelling away to foreign lands
Leaving the warm embrace of our clime
Still they bluffed us
With the visas unto the claries
Cold has eaten off their leaves
Not even minding our hard earned
Notes stowed in our pockets
Ready to buoy their own economy
Leaving ours shrivelling
Like meadow in the cold.

Tony Adah

The Witches

The clouds loom on innocent
Souls
Maybe not;
The sun burns some
Or fire to cremation
Still others are buried
The lucky one are ghosts
Of themselves
Away from their homes
They are all accused
All of them.
In this art that science
Is slow to prove;
Who dare prove them wrong?
But if you are not a witch
How then do you know one?

Tony Adah

The Woman And The Alms Seeker

A certain southern
Flank woman
Rained abuses on
A southern based northern alms seeker
At Nelson Mandela street
Of all streets.

For obvious reasons
So she thought
The northern pogrom's purge
Of the southern immigrants
In bloodbaths.....
And the rest is hate!

Tony Adah

The Woodpecker

I am the woodpecker
My strength is so far but near
Where my talk comes from
There lies my strength.
If I can bore a hole in this
Mohagony tree, then I will
Make my mama a tomb
On a solid slab of granite
At Okagbor.
When the time comes
Please, please remind me
For I have a strong beak.

Tony Adah

The Workman

Somewhere an old tattered
Shirt hung and a pair of trousers flying
With a pair of concrete eaten boots
Flecks of cement caught the head pan
And a spade leaning on the wall.

To tell the truth
The strength is gone before the man
Work too is scarce
And beside the wall
Lay slumped a vegetable
His beard spiky and strong
Like a Rastafarian
The hairline receded
And beads of sweat and ants
Walking on it like camels
In the desert.
Age has taken his toll
His eyes closed against the world
By death's only brother
And his next choice
Of necessity is fate.

Tony Adah

The Workmen

That they know how to work
makes them brandish their tools
and fix things upside down,
Boast that no one knows better
than them
They steal into their trade
with impunity, guns at hand Luke armed robbers
And what is to be accomplished
for the common man,
He bears the brunt himself
Shrivelled like a tobacco leaf
beaten by the clime.

Tony Adah

The World

The world is as
Dark as the night
There is a large
Blanket covering it
Hide and seek
Is played here
If the wind blows not
Many may not know that
The hen has a cloaca.

Tony Adah

The World At War

Human ego broadcasts the
Seed of war and the seed of peace
After the ploughshares of greed and power
Have crafted the beds on the back
Of the world.
But the seed of peace do no germinate
As fast as the seed of war
And war blossoms even on a rock
Where peace strives and in a jiffy shrivels
The doldrums of wars roar and boom
And the vultures and jackals
Roam war the fronts.
Peace cold as ice is the only
Human remedy that takes
The sorrows and melancholy of war
And peace comes from the mind
Not the treaties that roaches
Relish as meals.

Tony Adah

The World Dances On My Grave

I am gone

I am finished

I am silent

The world dances on my grave

And I the drummer, with a laggard's hand

I am prostrate and wrapped in a new calico

Silent in my home.

Tony Adah

The World Has Changed

The world was once bright
The world now is dull
I am here
Watching it renege on its promises
The place I claim my home
I hardly find a niche to hold
No place to walk on
Piercing broken promises
Littered everywhere in the land
Promises that don't come to pass
They crystalize in our woes.

Trees stand shedding tears
That mould into fallen leaves
Fruits are not what to talk
About now
For buds wax barren
And nests of birds devoid of eggs
Birds themselves are shy
Afraid to roost on the boughs
Dead, unable to take their weights

Sleep is far from my eye
If it closes at all
What I see are broken dreams
Where are the flowers and fruits
Nectar and honey that once
Belong to the world?
The world has swallowed everything
In its greed
We are yawning like a new bird
In a nest
Waiting for the mother to bring
Its food.

Tony Adah

The World In A Storm.

A great storm dares the world
And who dares a great storm, there's none
Across the mountains and valleys
Great trees stumble down
Even grasses bend in obeisance to the storm
Both green and yellow leaves stooped
In a great fall and give a confetti to the ground
Time lapsed
The storm abated
Yellow leaves began to fall
One after another as they ripe
Then the green ones
Begin to tremble in fear!

Tony Adah

The World In Fear

Fear grips the world by the jugular
And the painful shadow if war
Looms above the earth
Religion the pacifier
Has his limbs crippled by the jihadists
He is deaf and mute
But ready for war slinging guns

Peace which comes from that arena
Seem to be waving in the wind
Saying bye to the world
The world is tormented that
Fear is is brandishing a gun
It sees less than it thinks about
The great grace of peace
Is lost upon the world.

In every continent the birds
Of prey are hovering over the sky
Peace is daily yearned for
Still the world fears to look at fear in the eyes
Or look for a way if crippling its limbs
So fear looms and with it
The world is seconds to destruction.

Tony Adah

The World Is A Dreamland

The world is such
A vast dreamland
Sleeping and dreaming
Waking and living with the dream
The world knows no rest
A man that sees his dream
And remains in a slumber
Knows no gain of sleeping and dreaming

We gleefully say our dreams
With the glibness that makes them
Mature only in our mouths
Or in other people's ears.
A stillbirth they become
And we burry them without tombs.

The gloaming is the time
To name your dream
And the dawn is the time
To rise up to it.

Tony Adah

The World Is A Market

I was passing through a large
Village market and I saw an array
Of wares and human races
Blacks, Mongols, Caucasians and all

I met some with wares
On their padded heads, smiling
And others with empty heads crying
Some have sold their wares
The others no one had asked
What they had in stock.

The market arena is a rowdy place
Where happiness competes with melancholy
I have seen some men going
Even without a dime in their pouches
Still they will spot the market place
And return home
Even those who bought
And those who sold will never
Remain in the market
Every one must return home.

Tony Adah

The World Is A Merry-Go-Round

The world
Is a merry-go-round
If you escape from one point
You're caught in another
We carry a burden of desires
And the world spins them
All along our way.

We hustle for them
Like tomorrow no more
Getting and wasting
We Live like kings
We Live like princes
Looking down on the proletariat
Still We sit On time's wings
And on the edges of it

Perhaps there's another world
Where things abound
And the struggle is less
Who knows?
This is where
My preference would have been
In the quiet of my time
Sow sow and reap reap
Who knows If another world exists?

Tony Adah

The World Is A Precipice

The world is a precipice
Death had built
Since the fall of man
To the whims of his rib flesh made
Men perch precariously
Looking beyond
And in a jiffy one is gone
Another follows and another
And the more they go
The harder they come.

Tony Adah

The World Is A Ruse

The world is a ruse of itself
And I won't be a sucker to it
It eats itself
And leaves plagues in its teeth
I want my dentures clean.
Radicalism started in the garden
And the world will never right its way
A leftist in the order of nature
Man will marry man
And man will bomb man
All in the galore of freedom rain
I'll take my umbrella
To avert being soaked
For rain know no bounds
Who it will pour.

Tony Adah

The World Is A Village

The world is fat and large
A Craft of the hand unseen
I used to think that it ends with the black people
Until I saw a light yellow man
Who they said is white
His hair soft and long like a horsetail
Spreading on his shoulders.
We thought he's the unseen hand
That took nothing when he was nothing
And brought about the world
But I think he did!
In the life enhancing deeds
Today the world is fat and large
Still the world is a village!

Tony Adah

The World Is Confounded

The world bends
Every labyrinth of its way
We traverse a hollow place
Because the truth has vanished
Vanished, vanished into
The gales of power
And the wind of greed

The world does not know
What colour it is made of
It calls black white
And white it names green.
It calls its friend a foe
And its foe a friend

The world bends
Every labyrinth of its way
It makes war a means to peace
And peace a means to war
It laughs when the time
Lapses for laughter
And cries when it
Is supposed to laugh

The world is too
Much for itself
Confounded by the benevolence of nature
It tilts at windmills
Looking for where
To cast its ordained dominion
And it bends
Every labyrinth of its way.

Tony Adah

The World Is My Constituent

I submit that I am a poet
Of no colour black or white
Green or yellow
Brown or blue
The world is my constituent
A good heart my heaven.

Tony Adah

The World Mourns

It is the will of the world not to go
Everybody work less to keep in
It is the will of man to remain immortal
Still his ways self destructs
There's a shrub swaying its leaves
Somewhere in the forest that when munched
Gives immortality to man but the heart of man is
So wicked that to stay a moment longer on earth
Is harm to the world
Yet nature is wicked to both the bad the good
And most times
The good leave earlier than the bad
And the world continues to mourn
While the wicked rejoice?

Tony Adah

The World Needs A New Poem

The world needs a new poem
One that is serious
To atone its compromises
And another hilarious
To calm its nerves
The world needs a new poem
To mend its tattered wears
And to turn it to peace
From the battlefields.

Tony Adah

The World On Its Knees

Someone will raise a hammer
Against this world
And in between this hammer and the anvil
Of the ways of the world
The world will be hit
For leaving others behind
In the valley dew and mist beaten
With bowl at hand and tears in the eyes
Crippled and unable to walk
The world will have its own tears
Many speculate how these tears will flow
In the times of Armageddon
And the rest of us are waiting.

Tony Adah

The World Resisted A Change.

A murderer was hired
To murder a man who
In death became a martyr
For the change he believed in
But which the world resisted.

The murderer made available
The blood of the martyr to the world
And it became the ink for
Writing a piece of history
The world bears this crimson history
And it is not in a hurry to forget
The murderer dies
But the martyr lives.

Tony Adah

The World Right Now

Right now
It is not well with the world
In great tumult
Does it rumble
And in great tumour
Its people Live.

In all the variegation
Of its woes, man holds the blame
In his eagle eyes
In his lightning feet.

And now we are losing
The sweet things nature bestows-
A fresh earth
With its fresh air
A calm earth
With all that we eat

Sometimes man's fault
Never last to its end
As nature itself
Does spank our earth
On its fragile head
With ash and lavas
Of smoking mountains
Or soak it in floods of tsunamis
Or still clear it
With gales of hurricanes.

The world toils a lot
And gets double trouble
For every toil
Nature doles its portion
In the wisdom the world
Applies to its toils
But right now
All is not well
With the world.

Tony Adah

The World Will End

The world will end
When its saviour will no longer
Be expected
Now the beginning is here
Man marries man
Woman takes a nuptial vow with woman
Tell me
Where will procreation come from?

Terrorists have come
To conquer the world
Which citizens they daily decimate
But a piece of yam sliced
And stored in a mound
Will rot and sprout to bring
A new yam
Yes the world will end.

Tony Adah

The World With Guns.

The world is turgid with hate
In the guns it makes
And for the guns it uses
It is an embodiment of hate
For the death it inflicts
And for the tears rolling down
The faces of its folks.
It is foolhardy to think that
The world without guns is lame
Frail and unable to act.

Tony Adah

The Yam Thief

The chief priest brandished a spear
Looking for who stole the yam
The spear may pierce who stole yam
He muttered with sinister incantations-
Eyaa whuor!
Eyaa whuor! !
Eyaa whuor! !
If you know you stole some yams
Avail yourself to the middle of this playground
No one volunteers
He muttered a question
What does the spear eat?
And the crowd echoed-
The flesh of a thief!
He feign throwing the spear
To one direction and the other
And it goes no where
In another direction and a certain man
Took to heels
And a thief was known
By a spear without traveling an inch.

Tony Adah

The Youths

They said good morning
To themselves
And forgot dinner that was skipped
The breakfast that will be absent
They spoke euro-leagues
With arguments and brawls
They forgot the dearth of jobs
And the hunger
These youths of today.

Tony Adah

The difference Is Clear

I have seen the moon
I have seen the sun
The day, the night and the earth
Of God -made perfect

I have seen electricity
I have seen dams, guns, automobiles
Aeroplanes, nuclear reactors,
All technologies
Of man -made imperfect.

Tony Adah

There Is Hope

Do not put me to the grave
When I am still breathing
The harmattan is here
With its wizening winds
And lilies wilt in their
Subteranean homes
Do not laugh please
Mohagony, do not laugh
There is God!

Tony Adah

There's No Hiding Place For Death

Death lives a hair's width from our own house
A twitch on the eye lid
And a man drops death
A man walks and too soon
His toes are not on the ground
An owl hoots and it is recorded
A sinister song
Whether we run or walk or crawl
There's no road away from the leveller
Whether we are old or we are young
He devours
There is no hiding place
For the one we most dread
Whether we brave him or fear
He takes all that belong to him
As helpless as we succumb.

Tony Adah

They Gave Us Fish

They gave us fish and enough of it
We didn't know where the fish came from,
Where it lived
Up or down
We felt real good eating fish.

When the givers stopped
We felt sore hungry
And angry
Reminiscent of the Mannas gone
We are at the crossroads
The men are not there
And the fish is gone
To where I do not know.

Tony Adah

They Will Come Again

They used us as a stepping stone
To climb the mountain
And they have laid barricades
That separate them from us.
The sun rises from the mountain
And set low in the valley
Where the masses huddled like
Drill monkeys in a cage.
We are waiting beside the shrine
Where the diviner's prescription will bring
The down low to us
To wring the chicken's neck for a sacrifice
That neither the gods nor we shall eat.

Tony Adah

They Will Rise.

I am looking at the world
Seeing men and women
Who think they are in charge
With the down trodden pressed
Under the soles of their feet
They reign on their mandate
And reap of their sweat
Still they Care not of their woes
But press them to the ground
They will rise
And they will rise
Above the men and women
Who think the world
Is in their pocket.

Tony Adah

This Next Reign

It will not be long
Those who are eating now
Will yawn and cry
The mountains will crumble
And the debris will harm.
Where the king stays no more
Will be; ;
The storms will take the feather diadem
And the slabs of rock will dent the sceptre
The kingdom's epochal nepotism
Will tear into shreds
Those supported the reign will clad
The shreds and look for food
Where it doesn't exist
And for water in a desert without oases.
A new kingdom will come
Where the old failed
It will succeed and everybody
Will be their brother's keeper
In a kingdom where only one king reigns
With a human heart
And of prognosis this will come to pass
And the prophet a partaker greater than now.

Tony Adah

This Call Is Not From God

The telephone rang
Twice it rang
I didn't want to go
Somehow I had to go;
My country men formed
A round table for the binge
Death wrapped itself
In a slice of python's meat
And a bottle of beer
'Take the witches portion first;
Before I eat'
And wisdom conquered death
With the munitions of tradition
But the glass of beer
Shattered upon my laps
On his way to put death in my mouth
I was dead and buried
In a casket of goose pimples
For this call was not from God.

Tony Adah

This Earth

Here in this pavilion
We jostle and struggle
As if no day comes again
In the semblance of today
Getting and boasting
Little remembering
That we have been little birds-
Fully -fledged fledglings
With soft plumes fresh from the egg,
Our weak beaks yawning
Yearning for our mother's benevolence.
Here strong today
Getting and spending
In this pavilion
Where bounties parallels dearth
We the possessors loom high
Dwarfing the dispossessed
In an all out theatre
With a disastrous epilogue.

Tony Adah

This Earth.

This earth my friend
Our purported motionless home
Is the key holder of the world
man's satellite abode
And a marketplace for all men
Buying and selling and leaving away.

Some men may tarry here
And others swiftly go
This earth a consumer
Is happy eating all
Not minding if we died
Of crime or hate.

Trees may sway their boughs
And their roots fixed in its bosom
But it yawns for the taste of trees
When they die.

It holds the oceans as well as the seas
Rivers and streams draw blue lines
On its terrain
Sometimes there's a brawl between
This earth and its waters
And the result is always grave.

This earth
Is the reason why things fall back here
It is the reason why the wind moves
And with its waters
It is the husband and wife of the galaxy
It gives man his worth
And swallows him at last.

Tony Adah

This Is Where We Find Ourselves.

The cock's crow got eaten
in the wind
Roosters stampede the earth
And democracy the solace of all
Becomes timocracy,
A relish of few.
To thrive here is move
One step forward and two steps backward
And this is where we find ourselves.

Tony Adah

This Morning.

This morning
I took up my dog-eared bible
To look up a verse
And console myself
I was blinded by the outage
Of public electric supply.
I turned to my heart burning bright
Searching for what my ears
Would want to hear
And console my soul
I swerve my attention to the outside
Where birds are twittering
And mist is dropping by the roof edge
My heart is gold
And my heart is silver
Outside again the mist is gone
The east smiling with the sun
From the blushing horizon
In my room
Brightness has even alighted
Glowing like the hope
I harbour in my heart.

Tony Adah

This Place Called Earth

If it's hunger,
Poverty,
Oppression
That we face today
If it is the presence
Of illness
Or any dilemma
Then we are blessed.

If it is death
Then another earth
We find to live down below
Yes the light body flies
And the heavy one
Returns to where it came
This place called earth.

Tony Adah

This World

I have long chased
My shadow and it is
Lost among the flickering stars
Here where
It is night and dark..
Turning to chase the stars
They too soon are lost
And swallowed
By the rising sun.
Here I am
At a dilemma
Lurking in the world
Looking for what
Next to chase.

Tony Adah

This World My Brother

My brother, is there anything
hidden on this earth?
When at noon the clouds clamour
round the sun;
do you say the sun is hidden?

When thieves get into the thicket
where you kept your bait of poisoned palm wine
do you know who the thief is?
When after a day's hard work,
women came to the farm transit camp
by the riverside and left their wads of firewood
for a bath to cool off the heat,
And you came yanking the cords that bind them
do you know which one belong to your mother?

The chief priest said that if he breaks
his own yam
he owes no one any explanation
So he murdered his son and went to the stream
for ablutions
only to discover that the copious flow of the stream
was the blood of his murders son
This world my brother
there's nothing hidden in it.

Tony Adah

Those Days

I remember trekking
To our old primary school
That stands in the same place today
Its walls still the way they were
Earth bricks beaten by weather
I remember the assembly ground
Where our teeth and nails
Were inspected for personal hygiene
And the culprits whose buttock
Saw lashes of cane.

I remember the harmattan time
When we rubbed water
Instead of bathing with it
And the chiggers that deformed our toes
In the sand we frolicked
I remember stealing moi moi
From my mother's pot
And placing it on my head
Wearing my papa's cap.

I remember my
Hook, line and sinker
Dragged by a tillapia
That I pulled onshore
Panting like a mountain
Racer on Obudu ranch race
I remember my stuttering
Teacher teaching us
How to pronounce hipopotamus
Hip! Hip! ! Hip! ! !
And we ended up saying
Hurray!

Tony Adah

Those Who Refused To Attend Farm

The sun hung up high in the sky
And the earth was hot and humid
A hell kite dropped to scoop a chick
In its mortal claws
Where those who refused to attend farm
Grief of death by noon
A puerile infant convulsed and left the world
There's wailing
There mourning
A potent darkness comes
To corrupt the light in presence of tears
For those who refuse to attend farm.

Tony Adah

Three Friends

Three ravenous friends
Met in harmony
To deal with hunger
One said, let's go stealing
Another asked
What if we caught?
The third one said,
My hands are clean!

Tony Adah

Till I Leave A Milestone

Till I leave a milestone here
I want to keep
An absolute distance
From the domineering man
I don't want
To be
Fined
Sold
Barred
Eliminated
Or killed
Till I leave a milestone here.

Tony Adah

Time

He walk past me
Looking at me and
I saw everything
About him inviting me
Come let's go along,
I looked at a cartful
Of my wants.
Time gave me a warning
That the train will go
And I will lag behind.
Choose your needs
And leave your wants
Echo my mentor.
I stood like a statue
Laze-gazing at my needs
Reluctant to follow me.
Time moved on and
Gave me a wide gulf
I ran after him and caught him
With an extra mile.
He laughed and laughed
At me tired as I was
Crawling by in his little steps
I took for granted.
Here I am at last
With my brimming wants
And my absent needs.

Tony Adah

Time And Man

Minutes tick by
Problems thicken or thin
Man falls or rises
He looks back to
A bunch of things to learn
He is neither here nor there
Yearning, getting and spending
At last in a narrow house.

Tony Adah

Time Flies

So fast time flies
A seed, seedling and a plant
Fruits.
An ovum, semen and a foetus
A Child.
So swift time runs
With its absent legs

Soon a birth
Soon a death
So swift time runs
With its absent legs.

Each week a second
Each month a minute
And each year an hour
So swift time runs
With its absent legs.

Tony Adah

Time Our Thief

Whether we count them or not
The minutes drift by us
Whether we are rich or poor
They tick by us
And shorten our days
Whether we are filled or hungry
They crawl by us
Stealing our time
At last the hour comes
And the minutes run on
Into seconds and like vapour
We are gone.

Tony Adah

Time To Bow Out.

When you come
And see the sun
Smiling from the horizon
Bares its teeth in its cakehole
To the world
When your sinews and tews
Are still strong
Work with the sun.

When it crawls
Up the sky and directly
Above your head it comes
Just rest awhile
And then
Take a hoe
Take a brush
Take a trowel
Take a net
Take a spanner
Take a bow and arrow
Take a gun
Take a piece of chalk
Or a marker and prove your worth
And make your
Country proud.

But as the sun goes down
And you continue to switch trades
Panicking and sweating
That the glimmerings of ideas is fading
Your hair gray and bald
And the sun yellow
In the west at twilight
It is time
To bow out.

Tony Adah

Title Holders.

A simple name is
Demeaning to a title holder
I do not know what the citizens
Of my country think
About adding titles
To their names
But I think
There is a lacuna yet to fill.

A man who holds a Ph.D
Becomes as illiterate as
The village chief he wants to be
And a village chief desires a Ph.D
He purchases without swottin' for.
And this is what reigns here
In my country
Where titles are sold
Where titles are bought
And where murder is common
For the sake of titles.

Tony Adah

To Be A Man

To be a man is more than
Being born a man
It is to grow with thorns like roses
Slip from the hands of catchers
Like a catfish
And smile when tossed by the waves
Of toils;
Grow a carapace like a tortoise
Inured to the vitriolics of survival
To be a man
Is to remain in the war front
Until the enemies come
And the war is won or lost
And men are separated from women.

Tony Adah

To Be A Poet

To be a poet is no small trade
As to pluck a pie hanging in the sky
And thus command the sun not to shine
But the moon to shine.
It doesn't matter
When the stars twinkle no more
And bear their tears in our eyes.
Which is better?
To spill some ink
Or to shed a tear?
When a criminal is exonerated
And the exonerated is a criminal
What's justice itself?
When a few wigged sages
With the heart of man sit in a hallowed chamber
To decide the fate of the world?
And the poet sit back
Head in the cups of his hands
Or hands at akimbo
The poet speaks even in a death-row
Not to the world but to those
Who care to hear
And I am a poet
Walking on the edge of a knife
The world has honed

Tony Adah

To Be A Prisoner Of Conscience

To be a prisoner of conscience
Is to stay behind bars
And enjoy freedom in the house
Of your mind;
Even the wardens become more
Ordinary prisoners than the man behind bars
To be a prisoner of conscience
Is to see the limelight
And shine in the effulgence of fame
You shine much more than your jailors
And the more time keeps you in
Within the bars, the more sage they of you
Infact your tendency is to well up
And better up like wine.
Having been baked within the bars
You look beyond man
To the force that sets your mind free
But still incarcerate your body.
You are home; free in body and soul
And the world knows from from the experience
Of men and women who have been
In the clouds and now
The sun shine and summer is home.

Tony Adah

To Be An African

To be born in Africa
Is to be born in real darkness
With all the endowment even on the side street
We still grope to find what to eat
Real darkness makes Africa dark
Not the sheen of our ebony skin
That shines like gold
Or our kind hearts that care like a nun.

How can darkness fall at noon?
Why should we stop reading
Or stop learning what will be our children's heritage
Simply because the sun has set?
Why should vaccines given freely
Be allowed to thaw in fridges
And preventable diseases take their toll?

Oh, our Africa
To be born here
Is to be born into real darkness
Africans make Africa dark
They wear diadems and sit
Upon the thrones of wealthy empires
And dodge away with the Commonwealth

They live in mansions
And the common people live
In hovels of the under bridges
They call us dogs and hide away our dry fish
In the hearth of Switzerland
The dogs growl and howl at the hunger
That tear their entrails apart.

To be born in Africa
Is to be born in a continent
That's cursed;
Every woman fries her hair in strands
That mimic the Caucasian race
Or wear long horse tails of the Brazilian

Or Indian hair
It makes us lower our esteem as subhuman.

It makes me tired of being an African
For my brothers and sisters
To rate me as not nice enough;
We must change our minds
For being an African
Is not changing of colour.
To be black is good
And I am proud of it
My two eyes and my two ears
My one nose and my one mouth
My stiff hair and my thick lips
Makes me proudly an African
That I like to be
Simply because I am a human being.

Tony Adah

To Be Happy

In all I do
I will love
In all I do
I will help
In helping
I will be happier
Than the helped.

Tony Adah

To Love Is To Share

I have given all that I have
To myself
And that's a proof of the love I have
For myself
This is a vapor volatile as it is
Escaping to those souls like mine
And all that I have to all that I care
For love's only gift is to share

When I am gone
My grave of a little abode
Too small to hold my luggage
Shall leave a lot out to hate
So great a fortune my small love
Can carry to distribute and lighten my load
When I am gone.

Tony Adah

To The Ordinary People

To you my people I sing
To those on the street, in the farm
In the market,
Oh, the ordinary people I sing for you and to you I sing
To you the Greeks handed democracy
Still away with it the tyrants say
People, chain your neighbour's heart
With links of courage and determination to your own
Speak now,
Democracy is a loud cymbal
Which opens the tyrant's ear
And douses the flames of flagrant rule.
If you drink of opium and sleep
You will wake again hungry and weak
Gulps and gulps of opium
And your country sleeps,
The musket's volleys sing
And the king garbed in his regal robes, sits and preside over
Looted wealth.
You are not too ordinary
To understand the solemn affection
Of freedom and until you understand
None among you will be king.
How many of the sleepy cups of opium
Will sooth your greedy throat?
And suffice your somnolent eyes?
Is hunger a dividend of democracy?
Darkness, sickness and ignominy
Where you grope, are they domains
In city of liberty?
Don't sit hungry and drowsy
Democracy is not a sacralum worshipped only by a few men
It is of you, by you and for you
A dogma, the only one that stands
Between the heavens and the earth
Rise up
Democracy is like rain
It does rain on every one.

Tony Adah

To The Sinner

O indulgent soul
I have been admonished
Not classify
I am no saint
I am no prophet
But your stumble is clear
Your spirit defers to what
Your eyes see
I say your stumble is clear
Your destiny is doomed.

Tony Adah

To Work Is To Pray

The expanse of our heritage
Is fertile, so much so that
If you leave a wooden table
Outside overnight, a vegetation
Will sprout on it.
Eat what is available
And abhor greed and stealing
Eat what you find here,
If you find it no more
Pray,
And if in your prayer
Your faith fails you
Move on,
Go, tear your bush
Don't envy
Don't covet
Just work
For work is a more
Pragmatic form of prayer.

Tony Adah

Today's Fashion

The goons are boys and girls
Who follow the fads
Cloak rags in the name of jeans
Arts of different hairstyles
Punk, spikes and dreadlocks the boys wear
Horse tails, Brazilian, dreadlocks
The girls adorn.
Give a goat a dress, it dresses fine
Give a dog a dress she's a model
The goons are boys and girls
Who follow the fads
I wonder whose blood runs
In their veins
They sag their pants to the back
Of their legs
And cuffs unlinked
They look drunk and mad
And the flu spread like the
California wild fires
I wonder who inculcated this
In the word.

Tony Adah

Toil

That day my frail fists and feet
Kicked the air on my cradle bed
I knew I had been signed
On to prowls and toils
The world doesn't offer anything
Free for anyone
Still it offers its bounties
For only those who know where
The gems are hidden.
Some yawn in hunger
When food is in their side pocket
And scream sitting on a cushion
Of joy
Some have wings but can't fly
Like a hen
Others have eyes but don't see
Like the blind
Legs but can't walk like the lame
Still others can fly but have
No place to perch
This is the way
We have inflicted toil
On ourselves.

Tony Adah

Toils

We all can hold no more
Our precious gifts
Struggle no more for those possessions
When our skeletons will lie in a crypt
Like the diviner's shells
Waiting for an anthropologist in a crucible
To unveil how great
Our civilization fared.

Tony Adah

Toils And Death

Life is good

But life is short

Will man know so?

He strides and conquer

He toils and gathers

He gathers

And leaves all behind

On a journey of no return

If anyone knew this

They will stride with care

Gather and share

And live a life worthy of praise

Heavenward going and footsteps seen.

Tony Adah

Tomorrow

Since I came
Out of the valley
Or from where
I do not know
And left open
To the whims
Of the world,
I have seen nothing good.
That will not make me
On purpose blind myself
Oh, I thought
I had a country
Perhaps yesterday,
Definitely not today
Probably tomorrow!
What do you have
At hand today?
Sometimes a hoe
Somehow a shovel
Or somewhere a pen,
Skimp not on
Your duty to your country
That fed you from cradle
But return it to our children
For their tomorrow
Will be better
As I see it
In a mist of my tears.

Tony Adah

Tomorrow Of Yesterday

What if tomorrow doesn't come?
The pessimist will ask
Let's make do with what we have
Tomorrow will take care of itself
The optimist will say.
And today is that tomorrow of yesterday
We have survived both
In the world's boat
And tomorrow the faint hearted
Will never see.

Tony Adah

Tomorrow Will Come

Somehow the dawn came
The golden sun rose with a torrid shine
Winds shredded the snowy clouds
The sky smiled with its azure teeth.
Then the noon came
Dusk happened twice
Palpable darkness ruining the land
Bioluminescent insects twinkled
Above and aground
They saw our food and pilfered it
Slowly we'd survive the famine
Sleep bowels void
Waiting for our voices to howl
Our clinched fists to punch the bad air.
We woke up
Still it was night
This is what we saw as the children
Of our own fathers and fathers of
Our own children
In the dark mesh that hems us in.
The weather is still bad
Line and sea qualms rumble
To humble the empire
Thunderbolts hummed
Lightning struck trellises figments
In the sky;
This is what will show us the way
When we wake up to see the sky
Unfurl the sweetness that our children
Have been waiting for like a rose
Its fragrant Whorl.

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Tony Adah

Tomorrow.

I will never
Cast a worry
About tomorrow and allow
It to calcify in my heart
I am not the one
Who brought me
To this world.
Yesterday
I didn't know
How today will look like
Still I have another
Day longer and better.

If I can think better
Than the farmless birds
And daily they are fed
If I can think better
Than the homeless in the wild
And they brave the elements
I neither cast a doubt
About my tomorrow
Nor cast a worry
About it in my heart.

Tony Adah

Tossed In The Waves

Tossed In the waves
My ship sails and my ship wrecks
I am tossed by every wave
And shaken by every wind
I can't see the main mast giving way
In the wind,
The stern wags like a dog's tail
And I am tossed in the waves.

The sea is rough
There is no going back
From the storm
I can sense the wetness of my feet
But I must cling on inspite
Of the fangs of the sharks
Still there is a great chain anchoring my ship
Holding my ship and my heart
With a had invisible
Tossed in the waves
My ship will wreck not
And I will not sink.

Tony Adah

Total Failure

A long Llama came
Laughing at the young
Loafers with hounds
And the loafers laugh
At the daring deers.
The loafers with hounds
Trotted towards the wildlife
Ready to run round the hunting ring
A loafer's gun exploded
Not from the wish of his fingers
A portend danger
Inherent in the forest
The games scamper
For safety leaving the loafers gameless
And the hounds dripping
With saliva panting
Like fish out of water
Went home bowels void
Taunted by the loafers.

Tony Adah

Trademarks

Madness makes you scruffy
Converse with yourself like a rumbling tummy
It makes you one bad apple out of a lot
And takes you back to where you just passed
A stumble that's a free fall
From a single knee jerk
Where laughter and soliloquies are trademarks
Never will you have any other occupation
Than tilting at windmills with broken tongues
And fractured brain
On a quotidian swing and songs
And drums of madness.

Tony Adah

Tragedy

That's all
The end of it
Where laughter ceases
And grief is in the helms
Where tears roll in the cheeks of melancholy
When the clouds of tragedy fall
And mourning whips the soul
The body weakens and emotions
Shattered like a potter's ware broken in the sun
The errand person said it happened
No doubts when tragedy strikes
When news flash and quicken like lightning
And all air is a whiff of it
Every ear opens to the ground
Where tragedy's victim rest at last
That's all
The end of it
When tragedy strikes.

Tony Adah

Transition

There's absolute quietness
I am silent too
Expectant of the noises
Imminent of the empty campaigns
A legion of citizens
Waiting anxiously to be hoodwinked.

Tony Adah

Transition Gift

I want to travel home
But the Ford ranger is hungry
It can not start
It can not move
It can not run.

I took my jerricans
Like a hurricane
And run under the sun
To each gasoline point
The attendants are idle
Without a word of whether
There's gasoline or not.

I met a newspaper vendor
On my way to another station
And as a member of free readers' association
I grapped one
And the headline is
The federal government
To pay gasoline importers today.

Then I nodded
Like a lizard-
The reason why there's no gasoline
Is now known!
As scarcity is a welcome souvenir
In this transition.

Tony Adah

Transparent Truth.

Truth told transparently
Needs no witnesses
As the weakness
Of man lies in his lies
But man prefers
An opaque glass to drink
So he can tell you anything
Away from the real thing
In the glass
Truth told transparently
Needs no witnesses.

Tony Adah

Trapped In A Refix

I have reached the shore
Of the broken landing stage
What am I to do?
To manage and step out
Or fix it that others may use?
I'm trapped in, in a refix
In the water amongst detritus
Waiting to feed the sharks.
I'm clutched to the lush hyacinth
And the water by it blue green colour stinks
But this is where
We all defecated before
Where life's water we made turbid
Turned out to be a chilling drink
Serendipity offers
And drinking like hemlock
We fear that we may die
And that's how we get heaven or hell
Bearing on our own deeds.

Tony Adah

Treasonable Felony

Dark clouds fell upon the earth
Brother against brother
And the klaxon blared
In the ears of the common people
No one stood on their way
Except their dragging feet
Frail and strong.

The klaxon blarer's message
Was loud and clear
And they rose to their feet
Took their destiny in their hands
And their heart strengthened
In the throbbing rib cage.

The Crier's klaxon stopped
His feet obey the order
Of some waiting sleuths
He is bundled into a cocoon
Of a black maria
And the charge is treasonable felony.

Tony Adah

Truth

Truth is not picked
By the roadside
It is not the garments
That we pick
From the shop.
The fact of the truth
Is not the hue of
Our real selves
For the fact of the lie
Is the twin of the
Fact of the truth.
But truth is the heart
The mind and the soul
And it runs in our veins.

Tony Adah

Truth Is A Healing Pill

Truth is bitter
Like a healing pill
Serve it sweet like honey
To those who behold it
But let the bearer sting
Like a bee on those
Who cheaply lie
And serve it to them bitter
Who abhor it.

Tony Adah

Truth Of The Hearth

Truth is a virtue
Everybody should cultivate
Still the world grows weeds
With thorns in the garden of truth
And it is told with both sides of its mouth
When truth leaves a heart
The heart rejoices and the impertinent world
Calls it names
A heart purged of falsehood
Is a heart we can see through
And an abode of joy
Truth is like a lily
When the clime is harsh it hides itself aground
But rises and blooms
When it rains.

Tony Adah

Tumult In The Garden

Of one pair
And a half
On adventure
Friendship came,
In three shades
Of oddities
Calamity came
The big headed
A fat tummy
And some tiny legs
All to the garden
They went to
Fetch some stuff
For their grumbling tummies
Up the bamboo ladder
The big head crawled
To rain all that
The mango had down.
When he looked down
His worrisome head dropped
The big tummy attempted to laugh
His glistening tummy bursted
And when tiny legs
Ran home to tell
Of the calamity
His fragile legs wrecked on the way.

Tony Adah

Twilight

The winds shredded the clouds
In the form pleasant to behold
Like palmwine dregs in a Pot
Fixed to a pruned palm tree
Lying down on a tapper's mat.

There are also hues
Of reddish yellow tampered
With blue green and gray fragments
Of clouds hiding the sun
It is no more and swallowed
By the horizon

Rooftops giraffe
Into the horizon
In vain able to see the sun
A giant derrick stretching his hand
To touch an assortment of clouds

But it twilight
Till tomorrow morning
And from the east
The sun will again visit.

Tony Adah

Two Boys

The sea foamed
And the sea fumed
The boat jumped
And the sea and the surf jammed
Still the boys screamed
And the waves streamed
On the way where risk laid
And success came where
The turtles and the hippos ran
Where the boat rocked
But the boys stuck to it.

Tony Adah

Two Children

The orange colour
Never came to bear
On the green oranges
They plucked them unripe
And messed up our compound
With dry twigs, green and brown leaves.

Their hair unkempt
They trodded on ten toes
With phlegm drooping
From their noses
Twosome types, mutants
Of some human genes.

Stop 'the oranges are yet to ripe'
Said my mother.
And they taunted back at her.
They played limitlessly like air
And everywhere they pass
They leave a wake of resentment
Twosome types, mutants
Of human genes.

Tony Adah

Two Creations

I am sitting down here alone
Watching the world that God created
The many bad things
And the equally good things
And I am not sure I'm the only one
Pondering over hills and valleys

I wondering at the modern creators
The maze of street lamps
And the speed of cars
And the light from gens
And the change in genes
Of our crops and the bumper harvest therein.
The iron birds of the sky
And it appears if God didn't
Create man, man would have created himself.

Tony Adah

Two Friends

I told him my name
And melodies leapt from his mouth
He chanted uula la la!
I told him my name
He didn't ask for it
Meeting him I thought it the culture
To to do so.
Not knowing he could only understand
The sweet sound of my name
I asked questions and got
Dumb answers,
I decided to speak a universal
Language,
We two smiled
Then I hugged him.

Tony Adah

Two People

They say democracy is for all
We are not there with them
It sparkles and glitters in their sky
Here it is dull and gloomy,
They live in the city
Its fringes our heedless hovel
They have tea, butter and bread
For breakfast
Ours the rancid remains
Of yesterday's dinner.
They club and party at night
We toss uneasily on our straw bed
We thirst for water
They swim in the oceans
We rub ashes
They shine in the sheen of oil
Democracy here knows two people
One up and another down
In a society uncomfortably equal.

Tony Adah

Two Places

The royal palms
In their chosen places
Sway their brownish grey fronds
In the wind
The wind drums and
They do their royal dances
In the royal places
And all the pigeons
Coo in the palms.

There's a dividing line
And the other side
With rusty roofs
Is a slum
Where humid air
Hangs over a squalour
And all the vultures
Loiter on the top
Of brown roofs.

Tony Adah

Two Things

I am in the wilderness of some sorts
Strange things happen
And there's a raging storm
Against but a frail man like me
I am entangled either way
No going back or forth.
You won't understand the pain
Of a wit low on a finger
Until pain comes ticking like a clock
On your nerves;
You won't understand hunger
Until its fangs presses your
Tummy against your spine
Death is a far away thing
Until you lose a loved one
Or its factor closes in on you
And there's no hiding place
But there are two things
Not in dearth to share
Either life or death.

Tony Adah

Two Things At Odds

In this town
We see half
And we breathe half
If it is not the electricity board
Blinding our eyes with darkness
With her incessant black-outs

Water board will raise his hand
And when we turn to look
She slaps our nostrils
With the noxious fumes from our toilets
For she too refused to run
In this town two things at odds
A wedding without water and light.

Tony Adah

Two Tricksters

Two tortoise are a pair
Moulded with a house
Over their heads
Twosome tricksters
Where they are involved
In some business of merchandise
Profit grows wings and perches
Away high up the iroko tree
And wish becomes their hope
But tricks do not grow Wings.

Tony Adah

Two Visitors

Man has nothing to fear
Than fear itself
Oftentimes a chicken-liver man
Dies before his actual companion comes
So fear visits and haunts
And death claims his own once
And visits no more.

Tony Adah

Two Wild Dogs

The broad daylight
Came usurping the pale silvery moonshine
And those who promised to play under this ambience
Came upon the glare of the rising sun
And the world watched their show of shame
On the rain of the morning dew.

Tony Adah

Two Worlds.

I live in two worlds
And man is the creator of both,
the splendour of wealth and the inglorious
penury of poverty
Man remade the world to soothe his ego
While a few hands hold gold
Many hold the shackles of wretchedness
This difference is a sore
At the back of the world
And it will cease whether we fight it or not
On the last day when we sleep in one house
the shutters of door closed
And so our eyes, knowing neither shackles nor gold
Descending from acropolis to necropolis,
Our strength or weakness
Shall be a posthumous story.

Tony Adah

Twosome World

The sun rises every day
So every day the night comes
There are bad men and good ones
A man and a woman
A positive attracts the negative
But this one, man and man
And woman and woman
We do not know which galaxy
They belong!

Tony Adah

Uncertain Calm

There's a great storm
The land shakes and trembles
Man quakes and scamper around,
There's no way to go..
Trees have their red toes
Taken away from the earth
Boughs fractured
And showing white broken bones
Every grass is bent
The storm's path is strewn
With ruin.
Dull calm returns
We will return to that place
Where home was
Everyone in despair.

Tony Adah

Under The Tree

Under the tree
That is mango
Not even in season
A court sat to try
Government
The president
A punch bag!
Two men under
The mango tree
In semantics not pragmatic.
Drunks or armchair judges
Intellectuals birthed
By Dutch courage
But polished at a citadel
So revered in the land.
Politics and economy
Every citizen's concern
The theme in this shade.
High up the economy
Rose in the negative
As with the politics
Now a sham
So they said.

Tony Adah

Under The Young Coconut Tree

Climate change is
Hitting our street
Urban Development
Had stripped the land of its cloak
Naked it lies in the cauldron
Of the sun.

Under this tree
Clapping its leaves
And swaying its fronds in the wind
Two old cars packed
Looking at themselves
They face each other
Like in a kiss
And I'm wondering
If there's a silent
Conversation between them.

This tree that is still young
And its fecundity just coming to fruition
I am a refugee of climate change
Under its shade
There are soft light green
Petals and fruits with volatile fragrance
And an assortment of flies
Is dancing in the wind.

The wind comes and goes
But the tree is fixed
And indifferent to the change
That had brought me
Under its shade
The cool breezes
Makes its escape from the harbour side
And two weaver birds alighted
On the paw-paw branch
Espousing the coconut tree
In the air
Perhaps this is where

The change has minimally reached
And I have made this
A refuge for the refugee!

Tony Adah

Underbridge

Here is an assortment of people
And things, a jumble of living and dead
Men and women on independent duties
Hair unkempt, some spiky and others in dreadlocks
The air is froth with all types of cigarettes
Which mixes in some noxious fumes
And the uninitiate is ill at home.

There are broken rubber paints
And water holders and this is a hovel
For the humming flies
A woman in soliloquy
Is busy in her kitchenette
Where smoke billows from a fire
Made in a hearth of three stone
Upon which a dented black aluminium pot perched
A wooden spatula in her hand stirring
Her pot of soup.
Here and there
Pieces of wood mostly concrete tainted littered
And pots of ornamental plants blossom
Innocent of who their breeders were
A young man half clad rested on the bridge pillar
Cuddling a piece of wood singing
To the tunes from the stringless guitar
Another splashing water and soapsuds
In an open broad daylight bathroom.
Here lagosians just pass
In their hustle bustle inured to the under bridge
And it's the only way to know those
New in the town who come watching the scene.

Tony Adah

Unity In Diversity

Butterflies

Do not breed

With moths

Crickets do not mixed

With cicadas

But all are found in a meadow

Oh, my country

Leave me alone with clans

And tribes.

Tony Adah

Universal Death

There is no home
Without the pangs
Of death
Wherever we Live
Its labyrinth forages
For our dear souls
At any point in time
It glides by leaving
Us with no place
To hide
For those whose muscles
Have not had the spasm
Of death
Its feeling is new and strange
Until it spits its venom
On a soul nearby and close
Then melancholy comes
To mourn with us.

Tony Adah

Unpredictable

Like a butterfly
I am happy
Like an elephant
I am huge

Like a slug
I am slow
Like an eagle
I can soar
Like a lion
I can roar

Like a crab
I can both ways walk
Like a chameleon
I can change
And like human being
I am unpredictable.

Tony Adah

Unrepentant Thieves

Dew drops the heavens give
Crops fill their parching throats
Rivers slither past of pythons style
Oceans swell
And the meadows blossom;
Still humans yawn with scorching throats
It irks to see those thieves
With the public wealth on wheels
From those Porsche abodes
Overlooking the hovels of the common
Man
It doesn't pain them see us
Wallow in our wanton wretch
Hybrids of their greed and oblivion
We live soft and they eat hard
Of our quotidian toil
It pains us to see our robbers
Strutting past
Some applaud even this ruining vice
In the peanuts that drop in their
Furnished mouths
Too late when age knocks
And our children like sheep
Will run same path.

Tony Adah

Until Death Do Us Part

My wife and I bought a radio
She tunes it down
Or she tunes it up
She pits it on
Or she puts it off
I keep quiet for
Whatever I say
Is a piece of evidence against me
Sometimes the batteries are
Down and dead
We shop our hearts
Get some pairs
And the radio is on
It may give us music
Or need of mishap
And soon the batteries are gone
We often in the circumstance
Do a pendulous movement
Between home and shop
Tear and joy
Laughter and cry
Smile and frown
Until death do us part

Tony Adah

Uproar

The giant battle's ahead
When human body will transform
Into shrapnel and smoke
And where tribes stand, a yawning gulf
Where the nation balances,
A shaky state.

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Tony Adah

Vain Glory

My life is a royal mess
A crown upon a clown
All that I hold is the horse tail
And I'm a king.
All that I have and tantalize the world;
A stock of glittering gold
But a mere vapour upon time.

Tony Adah

Veritas Lux Mundi

The light of the world
Truth
Let me from
Thy stream drink
Make my heart pure
To say it bare
Even if my path
Death leads
It is white, it is white
It is black, it is black
The drum of truth.

Tony Adah

Village Song

I do not want
To leave this enclave
Where when hunger strikes
And I miss into the colour
Of the bush to fetch nature's
Bounties into my china ware
Or where mama's remnants
Of yesterday's food kills
The pangs of hunger
In my tummy.

Where hunters gather
At the village slaughter
With a display of their slaughtered games
Where bamboos and silk cotton trees
Hide me away from the horrid sun.

Where the reeks
Of papa's palmwine quenches
My yearning taste
Under the bright
Moonlight of folklore.

Where the town's
Hustling bustling is absent
Where the factories fuming stains
Of cosmopolitan air
Is a daydream.

Where the resplendent streams
Are innocent of gushing sewage
Where I sleep
In the abode of nature's bosom
Where squirrels frolick
In a dance of the forest.

Where nightingales twitter
In sweet melodies
And unperturbed breeze

From the swaying tree branches
Communes with my waiting nostrils.

Where we open the
Tummy of the earth
To hide our crops
For a bumper harvest
Where market
Forces are remote
And fuel scarcity is strange
In the weary ears of the pedestrian.

Where manscape communes
With landscape for the common good
And I do not want to
Leave this enclave
Where under the cool trees
I have stayed alone
Contemplating nature's benevolence
Under here
Where my poem is crafted.

Tony Adah

Voices From Behind The Bars

Behind the iron bars
Are shrill voices of hope
The government is triumphant
With the song of illegalities
And those who have refused
To echo the timbre
Have bloated the prison.

It is luck that
They find themselves
On this side
Today the tribunal
Gave its verdict of life Or death
And the reek of injustice
Is all over the air.

From the roll call
The government has won
With decrees of imprisonment
For life Or death
But it is luck
That the iron bars
Are guiding these ones
Otherwise they will scream
Under the earth unheard
Some how their silent voices
Will be heard
And some day their
Popular views pardoned.

Tony Adah

Voting With My Legs

Between the looming sky
And the large expanse of the earth
I am a scavenger
I have voted severally
Without any iota of the dividends of democracy
Now I feel like voting with my legs
But nostalgic patriotism
Is dragging my feet to stay back
For I have no country
Other than this one

Tony Adah

Wailing In The Morning Sun

Goldberg, guilders, heroes
And stars of which the sky is dark
but the ground is fizzy, foamy and full
of drinkers, noise makers and the clanging of
empty bottles, shuffling of feet, laughter
And wailing in the morning sun
When work is abandoned.

Tony Adah

Waiting

I am waiting
Waiting to see my governor
Hours infinitum and
Day in and day out
Waiting to say that
I have a vision to serve
Borne out of my face
That the electors have seen
In the political mirror.

Waiting like Moses
For the ten commandments
Protocol is saying that
I can not see the one
That I elected with my own thumb.

Our democracy decrees
That the candidate that the
Electorates want is different
From the one the caucus will vote
And I am waiting
Waiting like pigeon
For its teeth.

I can hear the whispers
Of the huddled masses
Shouting in silence
And I am speaking aloud
I am weeping that we have
Consented to the murder of democracy
And we are standing
By its graveside with bouquets of flowers
With loud ovations
That are quintescent of dirges
We throw confetti of shame
From our indolence
And our subservience
We will bury democracy
But next to it our own grave.

Tony Adah

Waiting For Moses

I am waiting
Still waiting
My eyes roaming from the wilderness
Of the sahara
To the blues of the Atlantic
Waiting for Moses
Waiting
Waiting for Joshua
In the wilderness of hunger and neglect
I am waiting
For Moses with a herd stick
Struggling out of the valley
Waiting
Waiting for Joshua
Who has not been born
Waiting for the mountains to shift
So that Moses can come out of the valley
Waiting for tomorrow
Waiting for another tomorrow
That will come without the desired change.

Tony Adah

Waiting For My Country

The cruel sun beats
Heat streams gush
Everything is still
The cold rain pours
Everything is drenched
I am lying down on my bed
Listening to my country
Heat up and boil
Everyone is on their own
We are united by dearth
Divided by bounties.

My bed seems to move
Just motion without movement
An emulation of what my country
Knows best to do
The walls are still
Fans have stopped revving
Long ago nothing to power them
In rain or sun
I am in a cauldron of heat.

My joy
I am still breathing
And tomorrow the roses may blossom.

Tony Adah

Waiting For My Friend

I will wait
Under the almond tree
For my friend
He will come
His two hands
Clenching on two things.

He may hold bones or flesh
And If he gives me flesh
I shall eat and soon
Forget that I was given something to eat
If he gives me bones
I shall never forget
That I was given nothing to eat
Still If he gives me nothing at all
I shall pluck the almond fruits
Go home and show
That I waited for him.

Tony Adah

Waiting For Our Oil

The oil tanker grumbled in
Loaded with premium motorized spirit
It took a century to offload
The first car's nose sniffed the iron gate
Tanker men, the pumps and sales staff
All prisoners.
Under the sun we waited
Under the threatening sky we waited
Under the tree the season poured confetti
On the wrong people
And the attendants gauged the reservoir
Severally times in grudging deeds
We waited and watched endlessly;
No word for the waiting vultures
Our money in our pockets
And the reservoir idled without turnover
The spirit stealing away slowly.

Will we still call this place
Our own country?
Where the sun burns our foreheads
Where the rain drenches us
Where sweat is our squalid transfusion
To ease the our throats from the scorching sun
Where all those elected to speak
On our behalf have a big bone
In their mouths like a dog
Silence speaks loudly everywhere
We are worst for it
Waiting at the gas station
For motorized spirit in a place
Where every stream runs down
With tributaries of crude oil.

Tony Adah

Waiting For Some Water

I am waiting
For the dividends
Of democracy trickling
Like a scorched season stream
Reluctantly dropping over a rock.

And I am looking
For a stream that flows
With resplendent water
I am waiting
Not reluctantly too
For the rock
To yield its own water
Promised at the campaigns
Of rock pebbles with the river bed.

I am waiting
Patiently to travel
With democracy on
Its journey to the rocks
To the seas Or oceans
To quench our searing taste
With its chill water.

Tony Adah

Waiting For Someone

I am a citizen
That which should attach me
To a country
Or attach a country to me
Not that I don't have a country
Or my country does not have me.

Our meeting point is not met
While I own a country
A country does not own me,
I have done my own bit
To have been birthed here
Drank of the Niger and the Benue
Weathered whirlwinds of the sahel
And the storms of the Atlantic.

Here I am
With a piece of paper worthless
Than a spent corn cob on the ground
But I have a hoe, I have a knife
I have a trowel, I have a hammer
My country think that I am mad
Still I want to be made.

I am swallowed by fear
I am absorbed in my tears
The drops that have fallen from the sky
Of religion
Rolling through the hardened ground
Of tribalism
And nepotism has divided my country.

Wait for him
He who holds the spectre of change
And a tapper
Of the silent palm trees
Where the titre of new wine
Drops into old receptacles.

And yet another
And yet another
And yet another, another, another
Those who had made the change worthless
And those coming
We await
Some countries have crossed the river
We fret here waiting for someone
Who could be ourselves.

Tony Adah

Waiting For The Grave

That hot afternoon
He who made raised earth
An abode where seed yams live
And died and resurrected died
Piggishly, he grunted making them
And dead came stopping his toils
Prostrate and lying silent
Folks roared
Trees stood still
Everyone died alive
With dead death on their heels.
The news flew home
Folks young and old mourned
And at night he woke again
They saw him amongst the yard trees
When at night they went to wee
But he laid still
Not a rib raised from the cage
They ran back
Huddled themselves by the door
Still he rested from the mounds
Under the rains and the sun
Waiting for his grave.

Tony Adah

Waiting For The New Year

I was waiting for the new year
In an old world
I was watching my old clock
My eye blinked and cellphone blipped
I saw a message
And I looked at the clock
My new year was already hanging there.

Tony Adah

Waiting For The Sun

Good bye to the sun
I am not finally going
Neither are you, I guess
I am constrained I say bye now
So that the clouds would be nice
Do their shield and cover the sky
Make us cold with the stamping rain.

Nothing stops the day's business
Than the sky's ugly face
And its tears of the rain
I will wait inside our hut
Set up a burnfire with the logs
The meadow offered in yesterday's
Raging wind.

I will roast my corn
I will burn my pear
Mixed them in a mill of my mandibles
And warm myself by the fireside
Like a lazy hound amongst
The ashes heap.

But the sun I bid you bye
Even if it rains till tomorrow
And clouds hasten the ebony night
I will relish my corn and pear
And wait for the sun to come
And he must come.

Tony Adah

Waiting For Tomorrow

The wild winds tossed and swayed
Me like debris on the sea
I leap and bow, to and fro
To the fierce world
My wild search in vain
Hunger and anger wildly
Growing in my garden.
The world scoff and laugh
At my clasp of air or nothingness
I am no ingrate
To be happy the wind's breath
Passed through my nostrils
And my rib cage in constant motion
A straight neck upon a living shoulder
They say, one day adorns a gold pendant.

Tony Adah

Waiting In A Queue

The sun is about down
And the weather is hot and humid
I am inside an American jeep limited
From the passenger side the rays are hot
And I'm just a car ahead to be under a flamboyant tree
It's like I'm a furnace attendant
But I'm in my country
Where we hit our chest, the greatest
Still hours I've been in a long queue
Waiting for gas
Where the earth here spews nothing but oil.
And where we spews nothing than sweat
Making sure our cars are filled.

Tony Adah

Waiting In The Bank

The bank is the least
Of places I would like to work
The slugs wore forlorn faces
Which were stuck to counting machines
All our presence made no meaning
To any of them
There was one called Prince
And he is the worst
In the show of nonchalance
To those of us who stood by the counter
Yearning for cash.
A certain lady uttered some coarse words
Which perfunctorily told us
They had issues with network
We waited as the counting machines hummed
And we grumbled until what we asked for
Came upon our hands like a favour.

Tony Adah

Waiting Skeletons

We are in our house in a prison
Of some sort
The iron bars we don't see
Are more pronounced in our hearts
We can move but we can't walk about
What then is freedom if we are huddled here?

If we grope in the palpable darkness
And our bowels rattle in a void
If our children hawk wares in the streets
Instead of humming rhymes
In the classrooms; where then is the freedom?
If others fly and we only crawl
Where then is the equality?

There are always there, the prison wardens
And there's always a difference
Between them and us;
Some men with sunken necks and pudgy fingers
And we the skeletons waiting in vain
For flesh to be added to our bones.

Tony Adah

Waiting Without A Compass.

I have got no weather forecast
For tomorrow
Whatever sunlight it brings
I'll bask in it
Whatever eclipse it shows
To smother my toils
I'll brave it
In whatever hues tomorrow comes
I will fall and rise
To fall no more.

Tony Adah

Waiting For Emancipation

Shrapnel just fall
Scatter all over the streets
The townspeople stampede their way
Not knowing to run to
The next moment not a sure moment
Citizens are rebranded and grouped
Into a primary school ground, without buildings
Where pupils squat under mango and nim trees
And now they're absent
Because of the bombs.

The citizens bombs have
Driven from the town, frail and hungry
Stomachs sticking to the spine,
The children whose ribs could be counted
Take up a new name in shiny acronyms
Here the caregivers feet fat
And the refugees thin and weak.

I began to search my dictionary
To look up IDPs
What I see
A description of huddled citizens
In their own land
Crystallized into an aid letter
To the Red Cross Society through
Our slug and dead post office.

As I await a helping hand
I discovered I too have not eaten
Looking at the faces of hunger
I see hunger itself
And I, a limb of it
Hearing the sound of uncurbed bombs
My entrails melt and shake with water.

Now I remember my dictionary
And I too have become an internally displaced person
Waiting for emancipation.

Tony Adah

War

Between the earth and the sun
Rumours of war
True have come
Rolling the drums of war
Trembling the world
No matter how
Halcyon our days be
War drums must howl to tremble the world
War fragile as an egg
Man, the layer.

Tony Adah

War In Palestine

Today it is not
Only the tumb of Jesus
That you find in Palestine
The homeless rebel
Against those with homes
And the homeless
Are worst for the tombs.

The world sheds its tears
On the land of miracles
That has become the land of munitions
And Hamas is hammered.

Tony Adah

War Mongers

Horrendous wars rear their ugly head
Irate parties at daggers drawn
Happy gun traders and makers
Fanning the embers of hate
What would have been averted
Came to be war.

Shamefully it was fought
Tactically it would have been avoided
Gallantly it was fought and won
Sorrowfully it left some ruins behind
Consciously conjury came to play
And the winners declared-
No victor no vanguard.

Tony Adah

Wars

The world is agog
With oddities pairs-
Iran and Iraq
Israel and palestine
Ukraine and Russia
Sodom and Gomora
Of yore
The world will not end
In war but in sin.

Tony Adah

Watching The Sea

I am tired with rumours
The bricks with which the world is made
I will go to watch the silent sea
Move forth and back
See busy men in straw hats
Bear themselves in straw boats
The sea I see unend swelling
Bursting its fluffy waves white as snow ashore
And this scenery calm and nature given
Swallows my woes.

Tony Adah

Watching The Sun

The mountains vomited the sun
Like a bouncing baby spilt from the uterus
The sun went on
Shining and at noons day
Began to grow gray by the clouds
And went on at sun down
To shine no more of the white clouds
And the the blue sky
But its sheen shone yellow, brown and black
The clouds stretched by the wind
Up in the sky
Near the abode of the maker
Of all things.

Tony Adah

Watching The Tide

My brother let me
Look at them
My eyes do not have teeth
To bite them
I do not belong to the folks
That will take orders
From the king
Same as from the prince
And I'm watching.

Tony Adah

Watching The World

I am here
Watching the world
Killing its people in a number of ways:
By technology
By bombs
By hunger
By diseases
By greed
By corruption
By religion
And by wars
I am watching
And waiting for
The world to destroy itself.

Tony Adah

Ways Of The World

If I died yesterday
My flesh and bones to rest laid
My worries dumped
If I die today
I will be a free slave
Breathing freedom;
If I die tomorrow
I still have some burdens
To bear.

Tony Adah

We Are All Equal

That day all their grips
Will loosen
And that which they claim
The world will take
Straight strewn hands will lie
The marrow still and silent
Where they lie unknown to them
How much they own nothing but darkness
For the eyes once and for all closes
And both bad and good, the same
As no one any longer
Can discern.

Tony Adah

We Are All Visitors

We are all visitors
On the vast expanse of our premises
We claim no intelligence
We claim no wisdom
We have no strength over mortality
And our material possessions
Be temporary made
Soon we are gone
All that we amassed
All that we claim
To the exclusion of others
A huge luggage left behind
And unable to travel with us beyond.

Tony Adah

We Are Both Enemies

Early in the morning
I woke up and clean the smudges
In my eyes and my heart thumps
For fear that my enemy is coming
At sundown
When I pull off the toils to rest
And think too that I am someone else's enemy
My heart jumped into my mouth
Should I harm my enemy
My enemy will harm me!

Tony Adah

We Are Guilty

How come the poor cry always
In their teeming state
And the rich few as they are
Continue to wage a winning war?
How come the huddled masses
Carelessly keep their sinews and thews
To be stolen by the thieves
Who turn out be showing benevolence
Which is absent in every sphere
The nouveau riche and the philanthropists
Are all guilty of stealing our sweat
And they give it back like manna came
We are all guilty of negligence and stealing
But how come the few conquer the crowd?

Tony Adah

We Ate Beans.

The hustling bustling of
Our neighborhood waned
A file of busy automobiles remained
Static and dust laden.
Some tyres deflated from disuse
Their engines revved not
And they kept silent wondering
What the world had come to be.

Something went wrong
And liquid gold was missing from the tanks
The economy slowed down
Months lengthen their days and
Pay cheques lackadaisically walked in
And we ate only beans
Morning, afternoon and evening!
If we stumbled and hurt our toe
The blood that oozes will be beans
We thank God
We had beans to eat.

Tony Adah

We Can Hide Nothing Under The Earth.

The chicken stood still
Under the wind
And the wind blew its plumes
Up and we saw its cloaca
Which was hidden under the plumes
On that day the truth was seen
Inspire of the falsehood
And that truth prevailed
Without a hiding place
Like the ever present sky.

Tony Adah

We Delayed

We didn't on the day of shine
Bring our sliced okra to the sun
When it is time to drink palm wine;
We instead chose to drink whiskey
And took the name of ours to be illicit
We blundered;
And looked for our black goat
Only when it was dark
We delayed
And we are caught
In the tangling web of greed
And postponement;
Everything is going down
Especially our ages
And the expectant generation
We live behind is clasp
Nothing but air
O' my country.

Tony Adah

We Dont Have To Weep.

If I have to weep
That I am hungry
What about those
That have died?
If I have to weep
That that I have no shoes
How about those without legs?
If I have to weep that I am blind
How about those that are
Blind, deaf and dumb?
If I have to blind myself
That things are not working well
When they turn working well
Who will loan me their eyes?
I won't have to bother
For the world regulates itself
And what is lost in one area
Is gained in another!

Tony Adah

We Felt Cool

The storm came first as dry
As it was
Then quiet followed
Lizards nodded and ants found their burrows
And clothes flung off the laundry line
Even brown wall mosses stuck
To the wall harassed by the gale
Fell to the drain.

The sky turned dull grey
And in a moment everything
Was soaked and washed
And revived and we felt cool
As the humid air of yesterday is gone
Welcome long legs of the rain.

Tony Adah

We Fought Them

Where many weeds overwhelmed
We grew there like strong breeds
Where no previous advantage offered
Or any now subsist, we grew there.
We fought them
Those native visitors
Who claimed title to our heritage,
Turned us into slaves and commodities
That they may grow.
We pulled them down
And away that we may grow
We mounted our horses ready to go
But a sibling frenzy swept like wind
And broke some trees
Killed some men
And made our horses stumble
And jerk forward and backwards
As has always been
And in a centenary celebrations
We laughed and wept
We fought them
Like we fought ourselves.

Tony Adah

We Waited For Democracy To Come

We waited for the day
They told us it will come
We waited expectantly and heard its siren
And held our confetti to pour
On the arriving train
It did not come.

The chameleons have nodded
In the affirmative but have said no
With the mouth.
We waited and exhausted our patience
And took to the streets and shouted
For democracy to come
And it came to our brothers
Who we are watching to see
If the thought of chameleons
Can become a dream.

Tony Adah

We Watch The Tide

All fingers, they say are not equal
While fate puts equal fingers in some
Others have a stump wrist
We watch the tide
We sit and watch
Dung Beetles metamorphose
They leave the dingy dungs
Into manicured gardens;
They are in the national assembly
But we are in a solemn assembly.
They drink bottled water
Which they wear in their armpits
We drink pure water or take solace
From the puddles on our highways
Still we drank from the same stream
Where they could hardly reach the
Stream before us.
Today we watch them become weevils
Taking charge of our silos
Turn them into powdery stuff
The silos dry up into dust
What's our own in this farm when
Our stomachs get glued to our spines?
Still we watch helplessly the talons
Of the hawks picking the hungry chicks into the lonesome sky
We watch as if we admire our own
Sentence into instalmental death
In our own land flowing
With milk and honey.

Tony Adah

We Will Make It.

I will fly and soar away
With the eagles
Even if they lose their wings
For no matter how small
An elephant is
It does not make a burrow
And enter like a rodent.

Tony Adah

We Won

We voted
They rigged
Out we riggled
They brought gin
We drank it
We voted to overwhelm the trick
Our heads spun
We voted
With sobriety in our heads
To the triumph of democracy
And we won.

Tony Adah

Weeping Under The Rain

Outside
In the rain
I am standing
Without shelter
In tattered robes
I am famished and languid
Weeping, my eyes full of tears
Who cares to know
If this care needing orphan
Can be clothed, fed or sheltered?
Crying under the rain
With no one to know
The difference between
Rain and my tears.

Tony Adah

Welcome Rain

We have stayed without water
As in dry fasting for days
Public water supply is silent
For the desert encroachment
On their taps.

Just this early morning
Public power went out
And to console us
The rain bearing clouds were heavy with rain
It spattered on our roof

We jumped out clanging
With water holders to collect
All the barrels filled
Every crevices covered
Even the ambient temperature is down

After all struggle
A previously opened tap
Started spewing water around
And we were in a dilemma
Whether to throw the rain water
Or just shut the taps.

Tony Adah

Welcome To Juba.

I have listened to the radio
And flipped the pages of newspapers
I have seen Taban Lo Lyong
With shreds of cotton bolls
On his chin talking
About his new country.

The battle has been won
As it has also been lost
I am ashamed of the war
And the counting of the dead
Today the strings of war
May bring some gory sights
But tomorrow Juba is your day.

Tony Adah

What Colour Is The Soul?

From the garden we all came
So the great book posits
Still in this wild world
I am African
You are European
He is Chinese
They are Arab
All by colour and culture
But what colours are our souls
Even when the great book still says
Terminally we have
Two places to go
Not by colour or by culture.

Tony Adah

What I Know For Sure

We have been born
We will live
We will die
Others will be caught up
In this circle
We will eat
We will be stuffed
Still we will be hungry again
This for sure I know.

Tony Adah

What I See

I see what I see
Better than you see
Because I'm trained
To see little things
And little thing matter.

Tony Adah

What Is Poetey?

Sometimes we don't need to know
What poetry is before we write a poem
And what is a poem?
Than a limping prose stumbling
But not ready to fall
That's the joy of it
A crippled soul singing notes
From the throat, mouth and nose.

Tony Adah

What Makes A Man

If you think everything is for grabs
Take the sky
If you think greed is a virtue
Eat the mountains
If the lump you swallow
Does not satisfy you
Is the drop you gulp that will make a difference?

Tony Adah

What My Mother Told Me.

What my mother
Told me is coming true
To pass in the world today
That one day I shall see
What?
I didn't know!

Perhaps the changing world
Of war, hunger and hate
And of nature's doom
Of wind and flood
Ravaging the world.

Tony Adah

What The Chameleon Says

The great book
Teaches that if you can
Live peaceably with all men
And the first adherent
Of this doctrine says
That harmony is good
Yes the chameleon
Harmonizes with every colour
Of its environment
And safety and survival
The pivots of life
Lies here.

Tony Adah

What The Crab Told His Children

I Lie here hungry
From the night long scavenging
For your convenience
If the worms in your stomach will
Stop agitating and I have my sleep
You can be happy again.
It is for your sake that
I came to this world.
Remember
In our own world
Fathers do not
Visit their Children.

Tony Adah

What The Elders Told Us

Children look beyond your nose
Roll your sleeves
Beads of sweat change to beads of gold
Sweat, trudge on
Drudge on
To work is to pray.

Tony Adah

What The Gods Taught

If you behold the sun
In your eyes smiling from the east
Never extinguish the fire
In your hearth,
Nurture it
Stock the kindlings in.
When the sun has gone
And you've caught one bird
In your hand,
Leave the nine in the bush.

Tony Adah

What The Old Man Said

I have seen
The beginning
And the end of the world
The good and the bad

I have walked
All my life, sitting here
Consigned to my wheelchair
Is a big bonus offered
To me at my balcony

I have worked
All the rest of my life
Being sedentary today
Is another way of
Giving me respite
From the brisk days of yore
Here I am fulfilled
Watching toddlers
Wobbling into my shoes.

Tony Adah

What The Plantain Told Its Suckers

When you grow up to be where I am
Laughter will cease
Taunting will stop
You may not know
What I'm talking about
Until time rings in your ear
That it is here.
Then you will feel the travails
Of bearing fruits for the world
Directly on top of your head
Where fingers will sprout
And the end will be at hand
And laughter will cease
Taunting will stop
That's when you will bend
By your own will or the will of the wind
Or the gashes of man's will.

Tony Adah

What The Sunbird Told The Woodpecker

If a bird
Has a sonorous voice
It must be a lazy nest maker
If a bird peck some wood
It should not boast
Of burying his mother
In a hole of a granite slab
A thought in a man's heart
Done is better than
A thought just revealed.

Tony Adah

What The Toad Told The Snake

When you gave the fruit of deceit
To man I wasn't there
Or is my ancestry linked to it
Each time you're hungry
It is your way to my house.

I am not afraid of you
I am not like human beings
Who will jump at your sight
You slither and I hop!
You venom of hate
And my slime of protection
Are two things not mixable.

If you're serious about this duel
Let's take it to the roadside
And you will see what the umpires
Will do to you.

Tony Adah

What The Tortoise Said

Not everybody
Has a house over their heads
This endowment of nature
Nobody applauds the chosen one
I am taunted
For my green faecal berries
The truth is that
Everybody has dingleberries.
Doubt the poet
And stand before your mirrow-
A great plank
In your own eye.

Tony Adah

What They Did To Us Yesterday

I remember my childhood deprivations
Each time I think of yesterday
Those days who were you to eat an egg
When an elderly man was around?
We watched them peel the egg
Bite it once and half of it was gone.
And we saw the white and yellow patches
Tantalizingly showing and our mouths
Wetting with crave
They told us that egg was not a child's food
And that if a child tasted of it
He will become a thief
That's how protein eluded us.

Tony Adah

When A Poet Writes

In bed asleep I often think
That I am sitting on my writing desk
A haze of ideas smothering
And pressing me down
Just when I am awake and really up to write
The haze like a bird wings off
And I am weighed down by the dearth of words
I gnaw my pen thoughtfully
Waiting for a word to put down.

Tony Adah

When A Yellow Leaf Falls

A vast cloud descended
Upon the earth and its black
Hue thicken the palpable night
Then the blind men began to see
The sesame seeds littering the ground.

Owls in sinister songs
Broke the silence of the night
And death jacked a soul upon
Its sturdy wings.

The world wailed
And the world rejoiced
Still a green leaf is jittery
When the yellow one obeys gravity
Kissing the dust.

Tony Adah

When Cold Visitor Comes.

When the visitor comes
And lays his cold hands upon you
All munitions are down
Power finds a hole
Hidden in a scabbard
The strong wail under the
Cloud of despair.
Mourners' duty a bucket
Of tears to bathe
He begone deaf, blind
Turns back no more to see
The deceit of man.

Tony Adah

When Death Come Calling

When age beats me down
From the toils of the years
And arthritis has made a
Meal of my joints
In my gritty knees
I will borrow my grandma's
Posthumous walking stick
Trot in the vicinity with my third leg
Watch the Children play remiminscent
Of my youthful days
In some envious ways.

When the muscles that hold
My eyeballs begin to sag
And I can no longer see
I will jump up, catch a twirping bird
High up in the sky
Take its Wings and eyes
And fly away to no man's land

Tony Adah

When Death Comes

I know we are going to die
Gathering and stacking
To no avail
When you make a mound of deeds
And think that you are brave and rich
You can stand on them and touch
The heavens,
Who cares?
For we are forever tethered
To the cords of death
And it will come with its icy hands
To lay on our heads
When it is time
We will go.

Tony Adah

When Democracy Came

When democracy came
It came so well that freedom
Did not lag behind.
It came
It came so much so that
We used guns, matchet and bombs
To kill ourselves
And we uttered libels and treasonable talk
Went away freely because freedom
Had been born by democracy
We even stoned our president
Because freedom was too much
And he went home quietly knowing
That the fruits of democracy
Were now ripe for everyone to eat.

Tony Adah

When Fools And Cynics Win

I have a little wisdom to share wisdom they say is an absolute term
And no way any small measure;
Ignorance is the battlefield
Where fools die
Where cynics sneer at wisdom
Until they fall into the fool's ravine
Flushed by the flood of argument.
They learn lean
They die dwarfs
They live twice
Once as a ghost.
If you want your word to
Make a difference, be quiet
When fools rant and silent
When the cynics win
For wisdom is not a measure for fools

Tony Adah

When Grief Comes

When all is not well and grief strikes
Hold thyself for no one holds thee better
Those who come to share
Come in chameleon hues
And grief and laugh and happy
To see or mop your tears.
Hold thyself
Mop thy tears
And let no one know about thy inside.

Tony Adah

When Help Is Needed Most

When all is lost and gone
And your heart still thumps
You hear and see the world
It is time for help to come down from
Those who call themselves friends,
Who must must do something now to give hope
And not to pour confetti on a gold casket
And cry that you were a blossom friend.
Hope must come when it is seen
And seen to feel great that you belong
Where succour could come
And for those in dearth who are friends,
A word of hope can help prolong a life
The absence of a friend when help is desired
And to reappear when you are gone
Is death itself.

Tony Adah

When I Die

If you want to bury me
Bury me so that my toes will not be out
Orphans break a pot of water
Not a pot of oil.
I eat like my dentures
Have gone putrid with plague
Knowing not where the next crumbs
Will come from
I am alone
A bachelor on a sojourn
Who will stock my fire for me?
A tortoise whose carapace encumbers his dance
A lizard whose ascent of the silk cotton
Necessitated nodding his head
When I die bury me
So that my toe will not be out.

Tony Adah

When It Comes New

When it comes new
It's so splendid and looks
Like a rose in the morning dew
When it gets old it
Is rotten and putrid like
A mushroom in the evening sun
Man gets his share
Plants have their own
And a polished pebble
From a tsunamis stream
At last gets moss grown.

Tony Adah

When Passion Burns

It is still
Time to laugh
When we labour
Like a donkey
When passion burns
Brightly only in our own heads
And the night goes on
Without sleep
We are derided-
Drib and drab achievers
Something, something.....warmers
When passion burns
And its cinder piles into gold
We are applauded
With accolades fit
Only for the king.

Tony Adah

When The Cock Crows

When the cock crows
He says to himself, I am the rooster,
The stranger's compass and the clock
Of dusk and dawn
The man shakes the world with a clarion
Call for farmers to rise
And palm wine tappers to go
For market women to file out with wares
Or perch on a breezy pickup truck
On their way to their trade.
I am the harbinger of peace
The compass of the stranger
But also his meal,
The friend of man but also his soup
When the cock crows
Both ways the omens are heralded.

Tony Adah

When The Laws Of Nature Are Defied

When the laws of nature are laws defied
And Great grand children do not
Want to see eye to eye
Or live block to block
The result is always crimson blood
Of innocent citizens getting the targets
Of stray bullets and bombs.

When the hurling of stones drives
Surgical attacks on the targets of culprits
And innocent populace die for no reason,
When there's enough land for peaceful coexistence
And people behave as if Jerusalem
Is the only place available on this earth
Then some one else has to do the thinking
For this people exaggerating their cause.

When an innocent pupil watches others
Pelting stones at the the other side
And his shirt and himself get drowned
In a pool of blood;
Then the big snake must reduce biting
To mitigate the annihilation of the little ones;
When the weaker people boast of a godfather
Unrelenting and every peace move is unacceptable
Then the world must sort the godfather
From out of the clouds.

When the world claps for the godfather
Or shy away from his fangs and claws
Or garner custome for his deification
It is no use than creating a monster for itself
Whether the world act now or tomorrow
History is waiting with the tip of a quill
And an inkpot for vindication.

Tony Adah

When The Leveller Comes

A small bird flew to other animals
To lament the death of her mother
Not even me with my roof
Over my head, said the snail
Not even me with a vested bulletproof
Said the tortoise
Not even me hiding in my nest
Said the squirrel
Not even my huge trunk roared the elephant
And on that day as appointed
Even the mountains will crumble
When the leveller at last blare his klaxon.

Tony Adah

When The Maid Was Escorted Home.

Every raging storm
Has its ebb time
The guest room
Yawned for visitors
The clanging of utensils
In the kitchen, there was serenity

The maid
Who threw spanners
At how the house works was gone
All shouting and nagging
Was gone except reminiscences
Of the maid's ordeals
In the hands of the mistress
Who thought the maid
Was her mate.
On the day
The maid was escorted home
Peace, torrential as rain
Came to reign
In the house.

Tony Adah

When The Storm Is Over

When the storm is over
And my wares amongst the ruins lie
I shall pick what is useful to me
Stick them together to make me whole
Of my house I shall make of mud
The storm left and the boughs and leaves
Stumbled on the ground.

I shall be consoled
By my comrades in this disaster
Take a binge on a surviving tavern
And mask my woes
For sleep himself is ignorant
Of a thatch or a tin house
And endures even when man walks
In a voyage of horror out of a dangerous storm.

Tony Adah

When The Time Comes

Either for good
Of for bad
Time will tell
When the dark clouds
Over our head lift themselves
Or they are enabled by ways
Subtle than force.

Then the stars will flicker at night
And the sun at daytime
Open a floodgate of glare
Glad we will be forever
I do not know.

Tony Adah

When The Wind Blows

The wind blows
And blows the cover
Of everything off
When it blows over rumours
Falsehood peels off
Like banana skin
And the colour of truth shines.

When darkness comes
Daylight pounds with
A tornado that lifts the clouds
And leaves us standing
Or squatting on our foibles
The world laughs
But we pick pieces of melancholy
Swallow Or vomit our pride.

Tony Adah

When The Wind Blows.

When the wind blows
Strong boughs break like glasses
Brave trees jump up showing earth smeared toes
When the wind blows
The hen's cloaca shows its
Innocuous teeth and men see
The crumbs in the gaps.

When the wind blows
The fire's embers are fanned
And a great inferno rages
On the guilty as well as the innocent.
When the wind blows
The tortoise is at home
And the pelican is jittery
The world watches the wind blow
On the creatures that hit their chest
And say they can whisk the wind
In their fist.

Tony Adah

When The World Ends.

Will the world end today?
Probably not;
Will it end in the evening?
Not exactly;
Will it end at all?
Perhaps yes;
Will it end tomorrow?
Those who live to see tomorrow
Will know;
But if it doesn't
Those who will die tomorrow
It would have ended for them
And those alive will keep guessing
When it will end.
There is no running away from death
When it cold hands give us
A pat on the shoulder or his deadly blow
Lands our head;
It is time to move
And stop guessing when the world
Will grind to a halt.

Tony Adah

When Will My Father Come Home?

Since my father left home
He hasn't come back and no word from him
His sheathed dagger and raffia bag moss grown
And hanging in his room,
A Dane gun leaning on a wall and games
Frolicking in the meadows.

My mother doesn't tell me
Where he's gone to
Each time I ask, she covers a frown
And finds another story to tell
Still no story brings back my father.

There's no man in the house
Except an uncircumcised me
No one wins us the bread
Mother prowls the meadows looking
For kindlings, mushrooms and veggies to eat.

My joy is that when father comes
He comes along with bread, but who knows
When father will come?
My mother who surely knows is mute
About what's gone amiss or when really
He will come.
My clavicles are quite pronounced
And there are deep holes in both shoulders of mine
My hair is getting soft and stretchy
And scarce on my scalp.
The back of feet are raised and my cheeks
Sag like those of an old man death has forgotten
My tummy is protruding like a pregnant woman.

When will my father come home?
To massage my swollen legs
And cuddle me into his bosom of warmth
When will he come back home
And make me someone's child?

Tony Adah

Where Are The Elephants?

The wind gushes its breath
On the forlorn meadow
There's a stampede
Of the elephants and the squirrels
Will it rain?
Only the sky will tell
With its angry face.
The wind surges on the jumping trees
Whose fresh feet unearthed look like
A new baby with cord and placenta
Squirrels shiver and cackle
From the hollow of fallen trees
Where are the elephants?
The giant sequoias are on their backs
No more, the sunbathed glory
Is gone.

Tony Adah

Where I Earn My Living.

In Big Qua town
There's a light green storey building
On king Fasal street
And this is I earn my living
Behind this building
Are two makeshift structures
Paralell in location and function
One for the church of the bible
And the other for the church of the bottle
Two choirs of solemn hymns
And a hip -hop gyrate here.

The king Fasal street
Ends at a four corner junction
And this is the heart of Qua clan
Where the paramount chief lives
In a house white and red rendered of paint
Neat shaven guardsmen are always
Faithful to their duty
And apart from the noisy automobiles
A pin fall could here be heard.

Waiting for patronage
In Big Qua are carpenters, tailors, seamtresses
Masons, painters, auto mechanics, welders, alumaco workers
Groceries and a computer business centre
There are a labyrinth of unpaved ways
Gullied here and there by flood
With stinking gutters bushy with weeds.

At one point
Adjacent a carpenter's shop
Is a small retail joint
Made of three or four sheets
Of brown old zinc
The clan's gin, bitter kola, cigarettes, sweets, biscuits etc
Are the wares it sold to customers
Who word almost curly brown hair
Their lip sore red

And prominent clavicles
With deep hollows in their shoulders
Their eyes buried in the socket
And their mien febrile
They are not sick of any disease
But of penury they are.

From above the light green storey building
Where I earn my living
On king Fasal street
Big Qua town
I give freely this canvass
To the whole world.

Tony Adah

Where I Was Born

My village is
Swallowed by hills
With spurs, barren granite slabs
Valleys and green canopies
Of abandoned forests.

The contour of some
At a point looks like a rooster
But the coxcomb is
A cloud of mixed hues
Bearing those rains
That make the hills
Always weep and my village wet
Here at the foot of the hills
This is where I was born.

Tony Adah

Where There Are Poems

A poem can hang
Upside down like a bat
Still the poet himself
Walks about upright

There is a poem somewhere
In the scenario where
A chameleon is stretching
His long sticky tongue
To capture a frail insect
Struggling to escape

There is a poem in war
And a poem in peace
There is a poem in water
As there is a poem in the air
There is a poem on earth
There is a poem in space
There is a poem everywhere
There is a poem in every poet.

Tony Adah

Where There's Food Is Where There's Death

Where there's food is where
there's death
A little ant came nozzing around
For a grain of sugar
And my little son saw the one
that stings the world
He crushes with a dust pan like
a hunter does an elephant.
Mice found food in our store
And this where we ensnare them
with a mouse trap and feel sorry for them
In the morning when they lay stiff in death
Where there's food is where there's death.

Tony Adah

Whispering To Myself

In consonance with the thoughts
Of the bosses of the land
If the day dawns and the sun
Stubbornly refuses to shine
And in our forlorn nights
The moon vexes
And darkness becomes our companion
If our days become sunless
If our nights become moonless
And our country begrudgingly
Name us her citizens,
We will suffer.
But if death mercifully
Gives us a tomorrow
Our neck will wear a necklace
Of gold.

Tony Adah

Whispers

The clime dims down in cold clouds
My teeth chatter
I am cold, real frost bites here
The clouds have thickened
And a parked car looks like an igloo

Yes snow is wedding the earth
And stump walls wear their white dresses
Trees dripping with icicles
Weeping in the cold

The wintry wind says a conversation in whispering notes with the pines
Garden shrubs bend
And on their back the snow drips like a fall but on the other side

My nose takes a picture
And drips in phlegm
That gives a salty taste
I am here
Snow is here.

Winter has come.

Tony Adah

Why I Cant Fly

I see a bat flying by
The scenario is not without
A fluffy beauty of a butterfly
Perchless in their flight.
Flowers have closed their petals
And the fruits are yet to ripe
But here I am just filled
Maybe the reason why I can't fly!

Tony Adah

Why The Ant Prowls At Night

I will lonely go
All night and search
The whole labyrinth
Of the earth and pay
Obeissance to my secret

If I see ankles
Adorn by bracelets
I will bow
If I see a head
Beaded with braids
I will howl a song
Of joy and dance
Even If no bracelets
Or braids be found.

A toad's spouse is a toad
A lizard's spouse is a lizard
And each bird loves its nest
I will know no sleep
I will bare feet walk
Prowl the torrid nights
Until my secret is found.

Tony Adah

Why The Kite Seldom Prey On A Duckling.

The kite is a great bird of prey
And it prays
For flesh fresh everyday
From other birds
One day it flew to a nearby tree
And watched the hen
Prowling with her chicks
On green, yellow and brown fallen leaves.

When he found the chicks in range
He pounced on one
And away it flew
The hen got angry
That she attempted
Flying after the kite but in vain
The kite perturbed a bit
Stopped and hovered to see
The action of the hen
And when he found that
The hen's noise was empty
He flew away with his meal

On another day
The kite saw a duck
Scavenging by the garden side
With her ducklings in camouflage
Of brown and yellow leaves
He watched and descended
On the duckling
And silently the duck watched
Him fly away with her duckling
But the kite afraid of the duck's silence
Came back and dropped the duckling
The reason why today the kite
Is reluctant to prey on a duckling.

Tony Adah

Why Water And Fire Are Not Friends

Once the rain saw smoke coming out
Of a straw shade
He came down to see
If clouds live below too
He couldn't enter the shade direct
As he came down
So he looked for an inclined plane
And was already visiting fire
Ah ye! fire exclaimed inviting
Their intermediary, the earth who blocked the rain
I have come for good
And to make you my friend, the rain said
Yes, friendship acknowledged
But I make no friend without my first friend
And who is that
If I may know? asked the rain
No person other than the earth, said the fire
I want us only two always, the rain muttered
And that is elusive to hold, the fire retorted
The wind came in blew the fire
Into a great inferno and mopped the rain
Away into the sky
The rain got vexed and went with the wind's push
And promised that he'll fight the rain
Anytime opportunity avail
This is why water always quenches fire!

Tony Adah

Will Sleep Come?

My wife travelled
The stove went dry
The gas evaporated
Through crevices
Carved by the famished rats
And the kindlings soaked
In a sea of rainfall
Smothered in smoke
And the creditors
Inside my tummy
Never reneged from
Asking their debt
Sleep, sleep sleep
Will you come?

Tony Adah

Will The Sphinx Smile?

Cairo

the delta pyramid

Nasser's transit home

Globe trotter's delight

eleventh floor and the last

Where's the sun?

the pyramids vertexes hidden

in the haze

Will the sphinx smile with its

broken nose?

the camera will tell

And the world will see.

Tony Adah

Wind In A Meadow

The wind passes unseen
And the firs hiss
Beeches and willows silently sway
And no one knows who touches them so
The grey blossoms of chestnuts
Violently obey gravity
Daisies and daffodils which lowly lie
Simply nod in the wind
And smile in their little flowers.
Mosses and lichens stick unperturbed
To rocks and stems
The meadow is rattled
As the wind passes unseen
Soon calm returns and niches so steady
Yield and yield in the ambience of calm.

Tony Adah

Winter In The Wind

The winter breeze blew
And the cold air threw its stream
Of chilled mist upon our shoulders
And rang in our ears
Dust filled the air
And our bodies went grey
Like we have milled cassava into flour
In the mortar of the season
It is so with the trees and the animals
And some chickens are beaten
To a nest in the sand
Some naked children
Are chattering in the cold
And winter doesn't know
It is beating the weak
But in a week's time
This winter will go.

Tony Adah

Winter Is Here Again

Winter is here again
Over my back
My fur coat is frozen
I'm stuck and my clogs buried in snow
As my fractured dreams blown away
By the whizzing of my frozen breath.

Looking at the trees
They stand naked of leaves
With winter's icicles drifting
Like stalagmites.
The sun is gone
And moon is vexed
The clouds weep their tears into snow
Winter is here again.

The lights dimly glow
In the blinking night
Where my words pour unuttered
But winter himself speaks of
Piling snow, of drifting trees
And my frozen breath
It's no doubt
Winter is here again.

Tony Adah

Winter On My Bed.

I am no longer on a straw mattress
Not on the bare floor either
I am lying on the surfs
Churned by the winter breeze in the quay
I have been around a couple of times
Good enough to unravel the myth of hope
And I am fine
On this bed
Where everything is cold-
The harbour breeze, the bed and its cover
My body is frozen in the ephemeral winter
And after this a warm summer!

Tony Adah

Wisdom Is Not A Loud Thing

The toad went downstream
Backed a thousand of its kind
For the purpose of tomorrow
They opened their mouths too wide
And wisdom jumped out
The snake aware of the noise slithered by
And in the duel that ensued man intervened.

Tony Adah

Wisdom Is Not Loud

The toad went downstream
Backed a thousand of its kind
For the purpose of tomorrow
They opened their mouths too wide
And wisdom jumped out
The snake aware of the noise slithered by
And in the duel that ensued man intervened.

Tony Adah

Wisdom Of The Rabbit

The rabbit says he's wise
But I know how slyly he can be
And in these attributes,
Lots of errors
A large square pit ate the earth
Behind my country home
An underground tank for domestic waste, still open and wide

He came there at night scavenging
On remnants the workmen left
For three days I had not been there
When I went with workmen
They saw his whiskers wiggling
Down the pit.

He tried to let himself out
Every sand grain he clawed at
Broke out from the walls of the pit
That's how wise to be
To beguile oneself of a repository
Of knowledge.

Leave ones burrow and get into
The one humans made for a purpose
The rabbit ended his wisdom
In the stomach of workmen.

When mugu fall guy wack!

Tony Adah

Women

Some women sit and gaze at the world
After the kitchen chores
And laze about with brows of eyes and lips
Shining in hues of sheens
Blinking at a fizzing beer;
Life is full of chops and drinks
And some women laze-gaze
At the work full of enjoyment.
We brought them pain as they bore us
In their wombs and spilling us like vomit
They cuddle as children;
We come of age
And common sense and respect says
No scathing remarks about our bearers
So we live happily with them
Because they're our mothers.

Tony Adah

Wont You?

Here I am
I won't look
I won't see
I won't hear, I won't talk
I won't cough
Sneeze or yawn
I won't eat or drink
Still I am a human being.

Tony Adah

Wordsmith

He sat bent
Like corn in a great storm
Between the anvil and hammer
Of paper and pen
Wiggles and wiggles
And scribbles his famous craft
To some folks bad verses.

He stops to listen
To himself rather
Than to his critics
Then thought flow rained
Like a great muse reigns.

Listening to others
Makes him miss his craft
Which he bears in wintry winds
Or in sultry clime
Good Or bad.

Tony Adah

World News

There is nothing
New in the news
So cruel the gruesome gruff
That hit our broken ears
And spotlights on the trembling earth
Of quakes, tornadoes and tsunamis

The world burst still
With the heart rending hydra of its news
Yesterday nuclear botched in Russia
Today Putin is putting his hands
In the hot water boiling in Ukraine
Yesterday an Israeli child was missing in Gaza
Today Hamas is hauling missiles at Israel's missile shield

The world churns out news
At the expense of avoiding some
Bragging at its technology
Not knowing that no news is good news.

Tony Adah

Writer's Drought

Are you stuck between your
Paper and pen?
But your pen isn't dry
And your paper isn't translucent
Look around you
For you can't be in the middle
Of the river and still have soapsuds
In your eyes.
Take a breath in your bath
At the traffic point
Waiting for the red to go.
Watch the world move
Or you could even sleep
Perhaps dream of jamborees
Wake up and write.

Tony Adah

Xenophobia

Who said an African
Is a stranger in Africa?
It is the African
That's why there's fire
And blood in south Africa and
The real Africans bearing Africa
Are killing Africans
In a gory sight called xenophobia!

Tony Adah

Yam

From the tall mounds
We pile of the earth
Over our ageless hoes
You sprout and swell
In season
And shrink and shrivel
Out of season
When roasted
You char into cinder
But when boiled
You swell
And sweet we eat
You r sugarcoat taste
Another season.

Tony Adah

Yawning Amidst Food

I am home yawning
Not that I'm tired or tending a hangover
I am hungry in the midst
Of the bounties of food.
I am de-appetized by the skeletons
On the other side, their frailty and their complacency
They have conspired against their own imprisonment.

Now they are murmuring behind bars
And bars they do not really see
Not that they have stolen someone's thing
Or murdered a soul
They have acquiesced to injustice
Metted out to themselves.

I can see them, skeletons
Without anything to clad
To eat or to drink
And my eyes are full of tears
My mouth of wailing
And it is suitable to give them a dirge
If as they now know
But do not want to extricate
Themselves from this mental slavery.

Tony Adah

Years Have Gone.

Another last month
Of the year has come
And the new year is by my door
They always pass by like this
Tearing my sinews and tees
Creating wrinkles that make
My face not the youth of yore.

They make the children
Laugh at my balding head
Inhabited by tired hair
Paying obeisance to age
Now I have strength that
Has left my flesh and bones
And abodes only in my heart
Unable to jump out and let me
Climb trees, jump down a canyon
Onto a river bank of sand
And play hide and seek.

Months have flown away
Years have abandoned me
And as strength beckons
I am so weak in my eyes
Even to see its hand
But my joy
I pass it on.

Tony Adah

Yesterday

I remember the old
Orders that left us
Cold and frozen
Just because we are civilians.
Our guidem gave us
A gamut of orders
No one wore camouflaged clothes
Or drove a deep green vehicle-
Army colour
For that was how
It was popularly known.
I remember
The long queues
At the gas stations
Of men and women foraging
For either motorized spirit
Or cooking parafin
Which prices
Arbitrally skyrocketed.
I can still hear
The blare of national anthem
Signalling the change of batons
There's an announcement
For the proscription of everything-
Newsmedia, unions and associations
Even the air is proscribed
To leave us asphyxiated.
Proscribe the schools
And leave illiterate and pliable
Proscribe the hospitals
And rule corpses in ghostland
Proscribe farming
So that hunger
Will emasculate us.
We waited hopelessly
By the fringes of hope
Until our free and fair
Election was wantonly annulled
But that was yesterday.

Tony Adah

Yhe Echoe Of My Song

I have a song to render
Its flitting thoughts wear me down and
My tongue is heavy with fear
Though sad but sweet I am frigid with fear
For when the king hears the tones;
I will between the bars and gallow lay.
Though the bird sings a silent song
In the cage;
I will yell my song in the cups
Of my hands
And when the royal eye stares
I will know I am an inmate with the fat bugs
And to eat half baked beans and half done rice
But if my country knows I am in
And act the way freedom seekers do
The echoes of my my song
Though sad but sweet shall not
In vain have been rendered.

Tony Adah

You Hold The Key

No one gives you pain
Without your own permission
You bow and prostrate
And cry in the end
Never really thinking how
Easy you held the door knob
Swung it open for life's needles
To prick and give worries of pain

No one gives you joy until you
Toil for it
If you ever waited for it to fall
On your platter
You have got to think twice
Else sorrow will rain on you
And frosty will become your days
Because no one wants to see
The froth of smiles on your face.

Tony Adah

You Left Too Soon.

You left me so soon
And you caused my eyes
To weep real sore
You abandoned the covenant
We had to make me a grandfather
Perhaps it was not your fault
For those teaching hospital staff
Hid some thing from us
That I think if we knew
You would still be here
Cuddling my grandchild.

Somehow you are free
From my blame
Who am I?
Than a mere instrument
Of you coming here
The owner is beyond
Upon a great throne
And I'm sure this is where you are.

You left me without a Word
Where do you
Want me to stay and wait
Until I have my own call?
What do you want me
To eat now?
That the world is such
A tasteless place to wait
And I am waiting
Waiting to join you one day!

Tony Adah

Your Word Is A Sword

Beware of what comes
Out of your mouth
For the world itself
Was made by the
The word of the mouth.

You may walk
Stumble and fall and rise
But when you stumble
With your tongue
You Live by the fringes
Of the world.

Tony Adah