

## Black Martyr's Consolation

'Sankie Maimo  
(Yaoundé 1966)

Yonder, I looked for love,  
But the world gave me death.  
Had I looked for death  
Would I have had love?

Whenever I prayed for bread,  
Often the powers reached me stone.  
Had I begged for stone  
Would they've reached me bread?

Beyond, I sought happiness;  
Everywhere, I found sorrow.  
Reconciled, I'll seek sorrow  
Perhaps to find happiness.

For light, I've sought God.  
Learned eunuchs plagued me with Satan.  
Had I earnestly sought Satan  
Perhaps I may now reach God.

Tho' I've pined for love,  
Encumbered with a hood,  
Friends made me sweat thro' hate.

Tho' I famished with hunger,  
In bewilderment, I watched them  
Benefactors tethered me to a rock.

I've been through the magic cycle.  
Hush! in this black temple of mine  
'Tis enough to name me a god.

## Judgement

'Sankie Maimo  
(Yaoundé 1967)

The flower that blooms at the door,  
Fascinates the bee  
And charms the spider;  
With aroma,  
Sublime,  
Invites all the world.  
But it is lonely and in blossom.  
Now go seek it,  
And tell me all about beauty.

The bird that sings on the hedge  
Chatters now to the mob  
And warbles to the vagabond;  
In notes,  
Mysterious...  
Chanting like the wearied town-crier.  
Yet it is alone, the only messenger.  
Now go seek it,  
And give proof of your wisdom.

But beyond the rich hedge-rows  
Down in the streets, along the alleys,  
Benefactors rich in guiles and wiles  
With faces,  
Celestial...  
Besiege every stronghold and fortification.  
They come in battalions with clanging cymbals  
At least, harken to them.  
And question not the present oracle.

Though weary after an experience  
Below the stairs, the wretches have supped  
All night with the long-eared ass,  
To the beat  
Of the tam-tam,

In answer to the new leopard dance,  
If the wolves and hyenas now threaten,  
You'll never drive them from the door,  
For the lion underwent a pulmonary operation.  
From now, you'll ever be on trial.  
With the blind eight-eyed spider discredited,  
The bee now heralds the mythological change.  
Witness the nomination!  
A flower for a bee!  
Blest with its honey, its eternal charm.  
Here are the sacred paraphenelia  
Of the new oracle of your native soil.  
You shall not question its efficacy.

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