

LITTLE ONES

(Dedicated to all the children who died in the Year of the Child)

Before you came, you were us
We were you, and you'll still be with us
But in split of a second you were no more.
We cannot cry and yearn for you
For you are beyond our tears,
But our tears still flow
For you took part of us with you.

Now that you did not come,
Yet you are gone!
In your passage we were consummated by kicks
Warning us to stop for a moment
And live in your world.

Who could have deceived us but you?
Who could have joggled and fondled our souls
With a lifeless smile and an empty promise?
Who could have promised to suckle our breasts
Drink our milk and piss on our laps,
But you?

In the Year of the Child
We flogged you to death in Bangui,
Starved you in Cambodia and Sahel,
Stabbed and gunned you in Soweto,
Strangling your womb-like security
Which made you a reality in us.

You embarked on a homeward journey
That left us nothing but the feeling
Of promises not filled
Of thoughts that never were,
And knowledge of what you could have been
If only you kept your side of the bargain
And nothing in us would have died.

Now is not the time to speak of our hearts
Our hearts in which you took a huge mouthful
To fuel you to the land of our ancestors.

Now that you are there...
Remember to tell them that you goofed,
That you took French leave
As if to question the purpose of your stay
And pass judgement on Nestlé!
God forbid, you didn't have a taste of similac.

You made a poor decision to leave us
In the Year of the Child.

Some little children that we know
Will always whisper good bye that
May frost our tears for ever.

Joseph N. NGU
Cameroonian poet

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