

Poetry Series

**Victor Okey Nwatu**  
**- poems -**

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## Victor Okey Nwatu(24th May,1984)

Born in the town of Enugu, Nigeria. Victor Okey grew up studying engineering, but with a mind for poetry and an ear for music. That culminated in his writing poems and reading established poets. At present, he writes poetry during his spare time (in addition to working on his novels) while he does his engineering job as his 9 to 5.

# A Week Apart

It's been seven days gone  
Since I left where I called home,  
to a land that I really don't know.  
Name of the journey, tactical roam.  
For it was both planned and impromptu  
One that its miss I could/couldn't rue.

But, it was today's three days before;  
that, at Owerri, we both met  
in a manner that elicited some more.  
It was scintillating. My pen I can bet.  
I felt what I can't really explain;  
Pleasure, pleasure, all pleasure; no pain.

Annoying, back-breaking, boring, appalling;  
are the journey's best description in words.  
'cos for rest, my body was longing.  
But it was more boring boredom that came;  
Ennui that had half a day to itself;  
that made my system become ransacked;  
that made me far from being my usual self;  
even when I made it safely, not being attacked.

At the motor park, people were in troupes;  
And fit in, we silently tried to do.  
They also bought badly in groups  
from sellers that made us targets of directed woo.  
But the air could make a 'good old' tipsy;  
for a certain cloud of fear made it tipsy

It's now a week this day;  
one week down the lane;  
a lot to write and to say,  
like the amount drops in rain;  
but I would say little, not much.  
And if you've a question, don't ask such...

Each day, my sleep is aborted...  
in effort to beat the bugle;

so, my luxury is abandoned  
as temperature soars like the eagle;  
Drills before breakfast and dinner;  
leaves my muscles protesting;  
leaves my body getting thinner;  
as I fight the battle of adapting -  
to the demands of patriotic service;  
being deposited in my soul's crevice.

For now, I would pause  
Do ask my poetic pen the real cause.

Victor Okey Nwatu

## And I Loved It

I got a call, and made some calls.  
The words employed demanded some balls.  
In pure verbosity, I expressed a need.  
And good old Bukky was of a benevolent breed.  
He never relented a bit.  
And I loved it.

Finding his lines was as hard as a rock.  
Direction-wise, I was a headless cock.  
But Ud was a beaming beacon,  
And employed his knowledge like a samurai's weapon.  
And never let me smell the pit.  
And I loved it.

Hunger harmed my 19 ½ "belle" line.  
Though I smiled when they asked "what line" ?  
But good olds ran around, gave me a treat,  
Arranged Naija fries with its attendant heat.  
I cleaned it out without blinking a bit.  
And I loved it.

Umeoka and I were at our chatting bests.  
Talked of damsels and their tiring tests.  
How we are the hunters and they the game  
Since we are everly of that fame.  
We drove boredom out with a deadly hit.  
And I loved it.

Adewale of the effervescent state,  
Whose surname smacks of AC in Osun state,  
Taught me how to eat my cake and have it.  
Which he does daily, now a habit.  
Made me see reasons for that smart habit.  
And I loved it.

We exhumed the principles Chinwe-Izu did show,  
Garbed them and watched them grow.  
"We" meant Wale and I.  
And the fallouts were high, up in the sky.

Insightful reasons, as probing as a drill bit.  
And I loved it.

Victor Okey Nwatu

# And You Are My Sister

Through a route that's the same  
You and I both came.  
But, chronology was not the same,  
A dozen moons made it not to be same.

You came out at birth dark, ,  
Lacked the usual fairness spark.  
Mum began to worry, began to care,  
Because the earlier one've been a bit fair,  
And something not linear it would be,  
if soot-coloured you be.

But as days went on  
Your dark complexion began to burn,  
And like the salad early morn,  
You became as bright as the sun.

In growth, you're a plantain shoot,  
As the seconds and years took root.  
Was it size, you've got a huge one,  
Which I used to possess anone.  
'cos to your finger, a broomstick have I:  
To you feet, a dry stick have I.  
Many would accept it if I say so;  
That you were the first child of us to show.

Your heart is soft, filled with love;  
Merciful, prodigal, compassionate;  
Against mine which seemed dispassionate,  
Especially when I place my interests up above.  
Maybe that's the reason why,  
In and out of season, I  
Always found the unreasonable reason,  
To snatch your meal even after fully feeding.

Soft heart of yours is still manifest,  
When my heart, anger does infest;  
And my bile form a stream -  
Adrenaline in my bloodstream,

And I horribly paint you red,  
Like I did to Namo's head;  
But a little plea, and I'll be forgiven  
And everything you wield, I'll be given.

The reason why I love you so much  
Is it because your blood is in my veins?  
Or because you loved me much  
With love that falls like the rains?  
But I know, and it is just so;  
That after our dear mother,  
comes you my sweet sister.

So in grace and virtue increase;  
In ills and flaws, decrease;  
That you'll always be my star  
'cos my lovely sister you are.

For Chinenye, my 1daful sis on her ,20th Sept.

Victor Okey Nwatu

# For Strength

Hours gone by, iris still at full bore  
And for most nights, have been at bean size 72/64  
Records broken, prizes delivered,  
Whole body system, not looking bad

42 hours gone by, without sleep;  
Not even an alarm, not even a beep.  
Yet another record smashed  
And another prize, safely away, stashed.

The 'sport' in question's not a game  
Were it one, I don't know the name.  
Though nameless, it has an impact.  
It extended reach, being very intact.

It's about getting stuck at night  
@ IPS, some nights, every night, all night.  
It's about trying to get jacking right;  
It's about being suckers for constant light

It's about abhorring mattresses and its bite,  
Hating sleep - its pre- and post rites,  
Divorcing the bus, the lodge, and the room.  
And cashing in on the 'jacking boom'

It's about hating grades of recumbent folds  
Loving grades that are like derrick in bold.  
It's about sunning teeth like Sunny  
After Aunty Grace has flashed it like it's money.

It's about reading, writing and crashing at school  
Which is everything but being cool.  
It's about consuming the 'risky burger'  
Caring less of the 'risk' in the burger

Am I sounding a bit impassive,  
Am I really impassive?  
Writing as though am person number three?  
Can I swear that I am really free?

'cos it's easy to chant the Feslajid,  
As the lord of Choba, as agreed,  
But the latest record is mine,  
And the next on the line, might still be mine...

I love to keep mum about it  
Choosing only to write this little skit.  
But my partner is as mouthed as ever,  
Rivaling, at this point, the yellow monster  
Though his eyes are red at its full strength,  
His mouth was firm in saying, I do it for strength.

Victor Okey Nwatu

# How I Got Over

No idea is original;  
but let the copying be minimal.  
It's better if the copying is marginal.  
'Cos complete dubbing is criminal.  
Even Achebe borrowed from Yeats, his title.  
So what's wrong in using a Roots album title?

I've been through places, seen many faces.  
Many things've passed through me, faces seen me.  
I've been places in countless paces,  
and etched in my heart, they'll forever be.  
I have it all in Nineteen-Eighty-Four,  
but I'll talk about just one part more.

I wasn't addicted to my bank job,  
so it wasn't too hard to quit.  
But, I did quit gently like a ball lob,  
I did it that way; didn't have to fling it.  
Why did I do that? To go back to school.  
To me it's cool. To them, I'm a fool.

So, I bid my dependants a farewell;  
took my place once more in the ivory tower.  
I prayed it all turn out well;  
that I still had high pressure brain power.  
'Cos the course in which I sought an MSc  
was, more or less, like Pitman's job to me.

It was fifty two weeks; fifty graded courses.  
It was countless sleep-deprived nights;  
countless terrains with numerous courses,  
marked with numerous fights and flights.  
All resulted in 45 As, and 5 Bs;  
and a place at the 3rd branch of the honour tree.

Yes, I earned my second degree with distinction;  
the very first in my ancient lineage.  
But, what drew my rapt attention  
was their seemingly unfounded outrage

at my not having an offer of employment,  
but rather a promise of an employment.

To them, fool was my first name;  
and the last, highly unprintable.  
They couldn't understand my impish game –  
leaving being employed for being employable.  
That set the stage for what I felt.  
How my calm composure was, a big blow, dealt.

Five months of motion with no movement,  
Except for clicking send buttons of applications;  
and being subject of a tyrannical government;  
as well as topic of various conversations;  
took its toll on my body system dynamics,  
nearly obliterated my French syntax and semantics.

But, it did poke me like in Facebook;  
and affected my walk and talk pattern;  
bestowed on me a perpetually morose look;  
made a weakling out of a spear-wielding Spartan.  
That's when I looked at the ring, threw my towel in it.  
And left Enugu for PH; I've reached my limit.

Habitation, Malik did oblige me  
in his cosy Elelenwo villa.  
But, there were seven other guys besides me,  
which removed the cosy in the cosy villa.  
But Bukky was on hand, quite benevolent  
Though there were other things, malevolent.

There were the nights of heat and sweat;  
Exacerbated by barrister's noisy and fuming generator.  
And the days of anxiety caused by an empty pocket,  
worsened by being a houseboy and food facilitator.  
Some hands also made my homemaking no easier;  
made sure I was by the day, getting busier.

I did all that was within my power;  
when it came to home-making, and all.  
Did it to reciprocate the good old Ma.  
Didn't want his home's sanitary level to fall.

But I was always hopeless when it came to cash  
'cos I didn't have it in any hidden stash.

Good old Ma did foot my share of bills  
when it was really rough on me –  
when my pocket had lack of money chills.  
And the other seven were also kind to me,  
and since I can't name each, and every name,  
I'll let Umeoka and Ud take the positive blame.

Ndeze saw me twice, and was nice that twice –  
as he left some notes in my private chest.  
Puppie, to my life, added the money spice;  
and Capo was at his benevolent best.  
My hearth got firewood from Kevin the dude;  
And so did the damsel with name for sacrifice so good.

My cry for help has Benjamin Franklin to thank.  
As it was heard in L.A., across the Atlantic.  
And my godmother sent me to the bank;  
and I came out feeling high, fantastic.  
Also, my colleague, Ishan's own finest.  
bailed out one of his kind, Coal City's Finest.

It would be an unpardonable abomination  
to forget the one that's normal.  
'cos he saved me from financial capitulation;  
with charity so inexplicably positively abnormal.  
And Taliban treatment would be good for me  
if I don't remember the good old B.

Mum was there with her tears and love;  
and her resources sunk in making many calls.  
Nnamdi's love added to the one above –  
he did my dirty jobs with no coveralls.  
Dad and Chinenye helped in their own ways.  
In fact, having a family around one pays.

This piece on How I got Over,  
would be an exercise in futility  
if I forget the One who pulled me over,  
when I was racing towards fatality.

He gave me an answer; pulled me out.  
When I was lonely, dry, down and out.

(Oct 2010)

Victor Okey Nwatu

# I Did It Again, Again

I've done it a hundred times.  
Why is this so different?  
I've cooked over five thousand rhymes.  
Was it not in-born, inherent?  
Are my lines not acclaimed far and wide?  
Are they not on the internet?  
Am I not of a preposterous poetic stride?  
Can't I win W.B. Yeats in a poetic bet?

Maybe I can, maybe I can't.  
Because I'm human, to do all I can't.  
But for all that are within my reach,  
Are they done without perfection-breach?  
Can I kick it through pleasure or pain?  
Hold my own over and over again?  
Naturally operate with panache, suave, tact.  
Because to Aristotle perfection is an attitude, not an act  
Am I cast of the same mould?  
Would my sands-of-time footprints be bold?

Eusebio did it for his then Portuguese masters.  
And twice took the treasured "Ballon D'Or";.  
Mallorca Muscle Man did it with ITF 100-Masters.  
And between him and Agassi, none has more.  
For leadership, it's the Madiba despite any trap.  
And he has shamed our numb-emotioned despots.  
And when the flow gets to conscious rap,  
Talib Kweli and Black Thought have my thoughts.  
Bonaparte and Churchill showed strength of lion.  
And that, multitudes would confirm "sans corrigendum";.  
But can the meekness of a lamb conquer strength of a lion?  
I say "yes" - Johannes Paulus Secundum.

So what's the crux of this matter -  
The crust of this poetic pasta.  
Is it a didactic patriarchs' chronologue?  
Or just a rhymeless and drab monologue?  
Is it a lonely soul's vituperation?  
Part of a liven-up-yourself operation?

Would poetic big-wigs regard it with a sneer?  
Or is it fluid, lucid and clear?  
I did it again, what did I do?  
I wrote another poem, is it that "beau"?  
Is it worth its value of paper and ink?  
On its worth alone, would it float or sink?  
Does it merit me being "coal city's finest"?  
Or do I have a self-trumpet-blower's mindset.

But blowing my trumpet, I must.  
Or its brass would tarnish, its gold rust.

That's why I write to beat my chest.  
And encourage others to achieve their best.

And in doing that, I feel no pain.  
I did it again, again.

Victor Okey Nwatu

# I Would Always Remember

I would always remember FESTLAJID, the Prof.  
Meticulously methodic when Process Engineering gets tough,  
attacks the simulation with a bullish zest,  
and emerges with a familiar grin, no beating of chest.  
At FDP, was at his pedagogical best  
Of which the nearly fastidious Prof. Kuye was impressed.

I remember him as the "lead singer of the midnight crew"  
Though he could point and say to me "hey that's you"  
But that doesn't negate his work rate  
Everly activating every night and day - every date.  
Went about Forty hours without a blink,  
A wonderful record of some sort, I think.

I would always remember MIKE the wise guy.  
Who when Dedication calls, is always on a high.  
His search for materials, unmatched at the least  
Like an Epicurean preparing a banquet, a feast,  
Drives his PC with the dexterity of a master  
In fact, systems are his slaves and he the "Massa"

I remember his young face and old heart,  
With the two parts perpetually intact, never apart.  
He speaks with subtlety, persuasion and conviction  
Even when rashness appears to be apt for the occasion.  
But he gets his kicks by being on my neck,  
And that, to his eyes, could count as a speck.

I would never forget "good old BEE", the married one.  
Who, in multidisciplinary projects, is number one  
Has an unarguable gift of making one see her point  
And for pulling out strings of argument that are disjoint.  
And in HSE is an encyclopedic Amazon,  
Both in vastness the female-strength mention

She reminds me of the good old Meg. Thatcher,  
And her celebrated chauvinist taming character.  
Luminously evident in her love for drilling  
This to normal females is un-loved, grueling.

And her knowledge of roots and herbs, unassailable.  
A quality both confirmable and undeniable.

I would never forget EZENAKA "THE KWALI".  
A name who roots are nebulous, actually;  
A Jose Mourinho of a group leader,  
Whose group is loved by any A-grade needer,  
But could readily be jailed with dispatch  
For the way he legally manhandles all machines with panache.

At 1.92m, it's understating to say he's tall,  
But could be humble, down-to-earth and all.  
Always at his "autofocus" picture taking best  
Resulting in always being absent from the rest  
When circumstances demand taking of pictures.  
Or some other slow driving features.

I would always remember SOSO, the Captain.  
Huge and strong like the biblical Samson,  
But with surprisingly disarming meekness  
Which one, to his peril, could take for weakness.  
He also leads by example, quite simple;  
Though he enjoys things practical, complicated, not simple.

I remember him for his loving Hart,  
Which, with hers, was never ever apart.  
And since the "loved one" feels those lines  
It wouldn't take time for us to see the lines.  
But his Beemer could sue him to court  
For firing it up till its breath cuts short.

I would always remember FERPIE THE SCRIBE;  
The noter, the scribbler, and other titles one could ascribe.  
His two pairs of ears and eyes always alert  
And if alertness is Gold he would be of high carat.  
His presentation skills is high-tech to me  
What else could one expect from an ex-KPMG.

I remember his ever conspicuous brown bag  
Which is always full I've never known to sag.  
Always indispensable, mercurial and providential  
And in addition to all these, proverbial

Hence the name Proverbial Brown Bag, PBB  
Known by these three letters to every soul, not just me.

I would never forget UGOCHI, the one that's loved  
By whom? A mystery I didn't leave unsolved  
Because his "Akonyephilic Hart"- the name  
And her Hart-loving, book-loving heart are the same-  
An intentionally intricate warp and weft,  
Because what it connotes isn't difficulty bereft.

I remember her perfectly-timed mood swings  
Like SHM-induced pendulum bob swings;  
One moment a hissing super-heated steam,  
The next as cool as ice- every glaciers dream  
And her graceful gift of sonority  
Employed with an equal measure of vivacity.

I would never forget the one that's normal,  
Good old "SIR SHIGO"-un endingly jovial.  
He is an Ife horse, a thoroughbred, a reservoir bed  
And I must confess a peculiar egg-head.  
Once a mechanical Engineer of known Strength  
Designing reciprocating systems of similar strength.

I remember him as kind-hearted fellow, always means well;  
Appears superficial, but indeed is a deep well,  
Of a truth, a gusher of a large drainage area  
Like the Open-hole completed holes of Saudi Arabia.  
With a few more souls of his disposition,  
The Red Cross/Crescent would lose its position.

I would always remember DON FAFF.  
Who sees nothing as wasteful as a laugh.  
Instead amasses reserves with much ferocity  
That could make China NOCs gaze in perplexity.  
He is the deepest of wells, by any grade  
An hour with him equals the coveted A-grade.

I remember his remarks scanty and caustic,  
Cares less about garnishing them to be fantastic,  
They are always on point, I must confess  
Though a little dilution would readily impress.

And for his ringtone, Mercy always says no,  
Though I wonder if she still says so.

I would always remember the ebullient ZINNY  
Resilient and enduring like Mandela's Winny.  
As academic detailed as the Lagos masterplan  
And also her groups Master by plan,  
"Master" because she proved to have the balls  
To go the distance when academic duty calls,

She was the IPS version of "Friends" Monica Gellar  
As no one would've "run" welfare better.  
And her welfare contribution list never gets missing  
Despite zillions of wishings and hissings.  
I remember the Monday morning apparels  
And the "skittle" red bag, drawing no parallels.

I would never forget the seeker of controversy  
Or better still, the one who loves controversy.  
The brainy Edo-State-born, Ishan's own finest,  
And I dare say, one of Nigeria's finest,  
The one who's like "two tries"; "two wins",  
In whom intelligence and smartness are Siamese twins.

I remember his unending tons of incisive gists,  
And the energetic gesticulations with both fists,  
His being a sociopolitical facts repository of repute  
Which only Festlajid could and does dispute,  
And his deep-rooted abhorrence of physical exertions  
Except of course buccal cavity exertions.

I would never forget PUPPIE, the benevolent beast.  
Like Nikolai Valuev, the yellow monster from the east.  
A Reservoir Engineer at heart, but chants DIL-  
Drilling is loved; though the truth is known very well.  
And a profound lover of ICT, who shows it,  
With his "minky" "I-PETRO" to show for it.

He never settles for less" Il aime les choses en excess",  
Has thirty pairs of footwear, more or less,  
An acclaimed, unapologetic polyglot,  
With Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, English and French in the lot.

Everywhere he goes, his I-pod goes as well,  
The volume always beyond the threshold,80 decibel.

I would always remember MALIK, BRADA B,  
More meticulous than any good old could be,  
Clearly evident in the cumbersome courses he cleans out,  
And a Ferrari when it comes to writing, no doubt.  
He was the in-house pastor with a good heart.  
Of a truth he never failed in that part.

I remember the face and the unending smile  
And the infectious laugh which makes laughing worthwhile,  
And the euphonious sounds that trail it  
Since between the two funky ones, he was sandwiched.  
And for your "no-time" philosophy, I feel you,  
Always asking for the AOC, "droit au but"

I would always remember UDEME JOHN,  
Where length of names as long as the proverbial long John,  
He is the good old with the lengthiest government name,  
With the length of his dedication equally same.  
In Reservoir Simulation he's one of the best  
Because the time spent with his PC is simply "no contest"

I remember him as the ever-smiling Chieftain,  
Who dexterously directs nature like a "Capitane",  
Who was at his best with the lodge "fumigation",  
And watched over the first-ever sanitary inspection.  
For his culinary skills, I doff my hat,  
Those skills that stole my stomach and heart.

I would always remember UMEOKAFOR,  
One of "The Brother Hood" with the other four.  
He, me, Ud, Flow and the Beast were at our worst,  
Where being at ones best equals one being at ones worst.  
One of the most academically efficient souls alive,  
Little wonder he amassed 4.96 out of 5.

I remember him as "Mmuo", the elusive spirit,  
The silent killer, always pushing to the limit.  
No wonder, for the coveted price, he pipped the rest,  
Emerging, no doubt, as the best of the best.

And though being proud is allowed,  
He opts for being crafty and bangingly loud

I would always remember UZOH OKOH  
The lady who's Thesaurus hasn't the word "No"  
For her, "where there is a will, there's a way",  
Remains true today, tomorrow, any day.  
Uzoh Okoh, the lady worth nine lives  
With its attendant "Hurray's" and "High-fives"

I remember her inexplicably high strength,  
That could go any reasonable length,  
That went to Omoku on a fast bike,  
And took care of a Kid, Hubby and a Profession alike.  
I would always remember the incredible memory,  
Which only pales before Sunny's Photographic memory.

I would never forget the best mind analytically,  
A scion of the dynasty renowned "professionally",  
The one famously and fondly called "DON JAY",  
Which stands for two different things similar in every way.  
He's the one that gets good reports for every of his report,  
And has the taciturn "Prosper" giving a verbal report.

I remember his talks like the Pin-Ball machine,  
Or better still, a perpetual-motion Machine;  
His confident mien, easily misunderstood,  
Which when mixed with his "Jays" could look rude;  
And his once slim frame for eating sparingly;  
And for ever loving Jaiye heavily.

I will never forget the "Boy SUNNY";  
Whose days know no rain, always sunny,  
Whose frame and carriage are doubtlessly dazing,  
And which the damsels find hot and ever-blazing.  
And the fact that he remains frolic kingly harmless,  
Leaves many souls absolutely clueless.

I would always remember his beastly memory  
A freaky photographic memory,  
One which was acclaimed by us all,  
And proved very useful "no be small".

That gift that made beating him a bit harder.  
That's why he enjoys upper rungs of the ladder.

I would always remember FUNKY FLOW,  
Never stagnant always dynamic and in flow,  
The progenitor of most that we speak and know,  
And the funkiest of us all, and deservedly so,  
Whose dress sense and swagger can, any mind, blow.  
Little wonder, he merited a different rhyme flow.

I remember his diverse engineering backgrounds,  
And his abilities that know no bounds,  
His Mechanical, Chemical and Petroleum Engineering,  
Fashion, Hip-Hop and Chess Engineering.  
One of the AK's Finest; both dynamic and young,  
Though in Ibibio Language, incredibly "young".

As I end this long and tortuous song,  
I willfully wish to remain unsung,  
Though I possess the right, the License,  
But I speak of myself with deafening silence.  
Just wishing y'all remember me  
As a minky man of valor- MMOV

Victor Okey Nwatu

# I'M At It Again

It's been long: three months, or maybe more  
Since I had dropped any form of poetic lines.  
Vicissitudes has tossed at me some cold slur  
Constrained my poetic side to the sidelines.

That's no excuse of any sort  
I've not been ... scratching balls  
Idleness had never being my loved sport  
Neither had I been pushing rigid walls.

It could have been one thing, laziness:  
That dreaded act of being a sloth.  
'Cos being creative ceased to be my business.  
It's like my flow, I have dammed forth.

Being the best at penning rhymes, I ceased to be  
Seemed to lose all that remained of my fecundity  
Was never like the familiar good old me  
The one that ruled my game with Kobe-like dexterity.

That ruled for three months and equal days  
As I rolled like a gas-less, broken truck  
Tried to explain it away in different ways;  
As being caused by the proverbial "writer's block"

But I was fooling myself, and I knew it.  
This coal city's finest is way better than that.  
And my cerebral being knows and believes it.  
So, I sought to end that: to write something phat.

And the impetus wasn't far from sight  
As the forefinger was close to the index  
The trip to DFW was that needed might.  
To give my creative muscle the power to flex.

There were the long days of getting set;  
of getting things done to prevent any delays;  
of getting as confused as it could get  
running around in circles in all, and every ways.

That was assuaged by the one-and-only boss, Doug  
By the two free days that he did give  
Though another 'good old' wanted to pull the plug;  
But there was a last-gasp benevolent act – a reprieve.

Then came the day we both waited for, a Tuesday.  
A day for the invasion of Normandy, 1944-wise.  
It was wet, wetter than many a day.  
Though the wetness wasn't much of an extra price.

The errors at the aeroport are well remembered.  
Showed us how untravelled we have recently become.  
Our joy it seemed to have, so-to-speak, dismembered  
But the dreaded one, it didn't really become.

The flight was as long as long could ever be  
Broken, thankfully, by the much-loved FRA stop over.  
Was a reprieve like a hot tea on cold day to me  
Rescued my inner balance from tipping over.

The second part was equally boring, equally long;  
Filed with boredom till the point of saturation.  
But it wasn't completely bad all along;  
'cos we arrived at our targeted destination.

The airport formalities, I won't speak of; why?  
'cos it's not important, not necessary.  
Neither would I narrate how we got by,  
With our luggage, documents and the "accessory".

Won't end this annoying limerick of some sort;  
Without talking of DFW even just a hint.  
About it's cool weather that elicited a sport,  
While I save the rest for the second stint.

Have I really written anything not miserable?  
The slightest idea, I don't have.  
But at least these lines are tape-measurable.  
So if quality is lacking let the length serve.

Yeah, I did it. I'm at it again.

Just penned this to break my poetic silence.  
But the sequel won't cause my rep this kind of pain,  
'cos I would attack it with a ferocious brilliance.

(June 2011)

Victor Okey Nwatu

## I'M At It Again - 3

The posers that I skillfully side-stepped, dodged,  
did the unimaginable, the uncommonly unthinkable.  
Kicked me in the shin, rattled me and I budged.  
I thought I was at my imperious best, unassailable,  
but left faced down, grappling for support that's rigid;  
left inactive, without action, fully frigid.  
The reason? I'll try to really expound,  
by kicking rhymes that are simple, not compound.

Long wait, turned out to be of no worth –  
More like a billion multiplied by the figure "nought"  
more like grains blown away by wind, heading north,  
more like losing a war after a battle well fought.  
Hurt my ordinarily impregnable feelings,  
And despite my inner steel core, made me catch feelings.  
Can this be happening to the good old me?  
The one and only Vic2T, world's famous me?

Yes, it was and is happening to me, 5-star Vic,  
Hit me like Mike's right hand jab in his prime,  
Made all my pride disappear, helped reason to click,  
Negative reason, told me I'm worth a dozen a dime.  
And this welled up those inciting questions,  
Questions replete with morale-crushing actions.  
It was the strand meant to perfect it from start,  
That succeeded in pulling it all free, all apart.

Yes, it was all pulled harshly into many pieces,  
Like a carcass ripped apart with steely talons,  
In such a time so short it need no time pieces.  
Causing a stream of tears, measurable in gallons.  
Visions of a blissful future, irreversibly blurred,  
and other aspirations and anticipations, cold-slurred.  
Attacked and nearly dried up my fountain in its wake,  
But I won't capitulate, still held on for poetry's sake.

Yes, for this revered trade of lines and stanzas,  
inflexions, figures of speech, rhythms and rhymes,  
I found energy like the major grid lines,

and penned lines in seemingly perilous times.  
Took it all in, push, shove, barge and nudge;  
without breaking a sweat, my stride, or a budge.  
Sorry, in the last sentence, I think I lied,  
I made it, but I budged, sweated, even cried.

but the power of ten Irene's couldn't wash me  
away from ankle-deep length of hard-set resolve.  
The power of a hundred Nigers couldn't move me –  
For I was the dam, the Kainji that it couldn't dissolve.  
The simmering situation, it's high temp. couldn't hold –  
when it collided with a precision so point blank, ice cold.  
And 'doldrumic and lethargic" cloud gave way,  
When a searing and scorching sun of resolve came it's way.

But, am I really hitting by the cross hair?  
Or am I just an aimless and wasteful loose canon?  
Are these words in meaning and significance bare?  
Are they stark hollow, worthless and wanton?  
Ramblings of a "has been" poet, lazy to think?  
Words not really worth their value in ink?  
Are they senseless – just a waste of many a rhyme?  
A fruitless venture of one with a pen and some spare time?

Or are heartfelt writings of a deeply involved soul,  
whose emotions flow out with every syllable, every line?  
Are they expressions of a desire to "rock and roll",  
after a harrowing experience of living under the fulfillment line?  
Are they a blueprint for rebuilding, a useful masterplan?  
Or musings of a disillusioned soul, a finished man?  
Are they fragments of a victory song in the making?  
A resolve for a soul who can have it all for the taking?

The onus of this opus, the final stanzas explicitly expresses,  
It's the crux of it and the others, just annoying, but useful excesses.

Okey Vic Nwatu; CCF, MMOV.

Victor Okey Nwatu

## I'M At It Again-2

If there's anything I've missed a lot;  
It's mostly one thing – being me.  
To stare at the stars, I've missed a lot.  
Same with being at peace with the calm sea.

I've missed my usual melancholic solo ride;  
And the its fruit of labour, many a rhyme.  
I've lost all my creative, poetic pride.  
No thanks to that singular element, time.

Pardon my cliché, had to make both ends meet,  
Had to 9-to-5 daily like a cop on his beat.  
For my daily bread, I toiled total tenacity.  
After all, that's why I left the village, for the city.

But with it came a cycle, in nature, vicious  
Dried up the drive that has once been luscious;  
It was wake up, sleep, wake up, toil, eat, sleep.  
And my boss was my alarm – it's maniacal beep.

Whatever happened to those serene contemplations?  
Whatever happened to those classic artistic creations?  
Whatever happened to the tag team of my pen and myself?  
Has it deserted me like a Santa with no elf?

Since the year one thousand and ninety-nine;  
when barrister Nwoye nudged me to pen my first line;  
've never slipped and slid into this state unprolific;  
've always dropped even though no pin-point specific.

Then like the sun that first shimmers in time of cold,  
A reprieve came that's never been told.  
I reached out, grabbed the hour glass, flipped it, held on.  
Suddenly had elusive time in my hands – game on!

Hour glass given to me by my boss – they're two;  
So that my first professional journey would have a part two.  
But not until they layered the importance of that part;  
many times over, like Enya's part, and I took it to heart.

Should I take about the flight? It's all same old.  
What of the airports runs and all? Still same old.  
Never pride myself in making my stories stale.  
Should find a more deserving part of the tale.

It was like a current from the furnace, a blast –  
the first rush of air that got me and passed.  
Right from the airport to where I'll be a guest to their hosting;  
I felt like I'm in an oven, felt like I'm roasting.

It was like the sun was on my head, not the sky;  
For temperature was off the scale, sky-high.  
It did hit triple digits, breaking no sweat.  
And was ready to break and set records, sure bet.

"That's the way we roll at this time of the year, "  
"the heat is not something that you cannot bear, "  
That's the words of the folks of the wild country,  
Welcoming me to their state, their heritage, their country.

I had to bear the burger, added to the heat.  
Managed the steak and some occasional lean meat.  
Gulped, without any hesitation a lot of unhealthy soda.  
Poisonous as the element lead that existed in soft solder.

But I had no option but to acquiesce to all that,  
Willfully fell into those traps – a blind bat.  
In doing these, only one thing propelled me –  
going back to my beloved Enugu clad in leaf of an olive tree.

Would love to ace this training that's make or mar.  
Would love to do my real best, to raise the bar.  
Would love to justify my boss's trust and investment.  
Would love to achieve a positive return on investment.

It's two weeks gone, many things seen;  
many more, countless actually, remain to be seen.  
Is everything going according to design?  
Am I losing my initial lethargy, am I falling in line?

These and other posers, I would not try to immediately attempt.

Lest I be guilty of pride, presumption and contempt.  
It's just a matter of the falling of hour-glass sand grains – time;  
I'll be content at this point with my drab, couplet rhyme.

So, a lot of things I willfully decide to leave unsaid;  
Still a lot of time for them to be in black-and-white, blue-and-red.  
I'm just happy that my poetic drought is over, there's rain...  
And I'm at it (writing poetry i.e.) , again.

(Aug 2011)

Victor Okey Nwatu

## Nwatu's Confession - 3

I'm at it again; encore, again.  
Still me and my always cagey confessions;  
Still constantly bountiful, like July rain;  
Still an admix of countless emotions.

It's still my life with the XY-chromosomed figures  
Yes, of the ones shaped like the hourglass.  
It's about our lives together, and its rigours.  
Though now of a damsel of another class....

Emotionally was at my lowest ebb;  
as high as the least known syncline.  
Was like an arachnid outside its web;  
a bald man with no cap living on the Line

I was a swordless, kimonoless samurai;  
an eunuch playing pipe in the pillow world.  
Lost my skateboard when the tide's still high;  
a Cicero without his spoken word.

I sought to fill this loss, this hiatus  
Par l'apprendre de la langue française.  
And it was in its sounds in my auditory meatus,  
that we collided; two runners in a haze.

And when the haze cleared, I saw  
that you were a prized Picasso on display.  
Viewed in desirous awe by the young art major,  
who defies the elements to your stand, everyday.

The Art professor regards you with a sigh,  
as he contemplates you all the time.  
'cos newer works are never, in standards, high.  
Of a truth, all merit same label – artistic crime.

The collector's eyes see you as mere digits.  
Or at best, a single colour – monochronic green.

For your value, he perceives no upper limits  
to the number of Benjies – with their backs green.

And you mean the world to the good ole Pablo.  
That's why he sleeps less often ...  
Any poacher of yours, he'll definitely blow ...  
Keeps a loaded revolver, by his side, in the coffin.

Your boldness is simply Meg Thatcher;  
you can put your foot down on the ground.  
And your pinky royalty – Cleopatra;  
you deserve our diadem in its every pound.

Your culinary skills give me chills;  
Evokes feelings for my mum, Francisca.  
You run the home with Usain Bolt skills.  
And that, no contingency, can ever mar.

You're an Einstein on and off the book;  
without the sticking tongue and the bushy hair.  
For an answer, you always know where to look;  
'cos your smartness is always brought to bare...

Tyra Banks in her prime; that's your frame;  
makes me blush to death over my apple body.  
You're gorgeous; Kim Kardashian's the name;  
elicit cat calls from any mouth-owning body.

You emulate Mother Theresa in kindness;  
the type that's selfless, straight from the heart.  
And Francisca, again, is your beacon in motherliness;  
'cos, for me, she had excellently played that part.

Would this third confession be, of its type, the last?  
Or would I fais la confession de la quatrième numero?  
Would what we have now ever last?  
Would a multi-stage cake's top contain we duo?

Would we, without brakes, ride this vélo?  
Jump the gun; get sent off after some false starts?

Would we rather move with caution, be mellow?  
And never shatter and splatter each other's hearts?

Would you wear white and I wear black?  
Would we grace the runway of the aisle?  
Would we perpetually get each other's back?  
Or is this a flash in the pan, just for the while?

Risks, uncertainties and forecasts are many stock in trade  
But for the reservoir of the heart, I'm at sea.  
I just pray that ours be a long-term trade  
That would last for long; eternity, maybe.

Mar-2010

Victor Okey Nwatu

## Nwatu's Confession - 4

Were it not for broads, I would rarely confess  
'cos it's when love turns sour, and I'm in distress  
that I unlock the floodgates of my creative power,  
and lines I churn out, from love turned sour.  
So, this is not unlike the prototype,  
But, in sequence, it's the quatrotpe.

It's the damsel in part two that I write of.  
The one, on her , I professed endless love.  
The one that's tall, fine and with a kind heart,  
and was behind my confession of the 3rd part.  
Same way Carl Benz was behind the automobile.  
Or maybe, oil is behind ExxonMobil.

I remember, Oh Yes! I do well remember,  
that day, in a month not far from December.  
I recited for the zillionth time my sixteen bars –  
my first post-teen real-time sixteen bars.  
Out to the flanks, I called her;  
and in that booth, I spit my bars to woo her.

Was I closing my lids? I can't really recall.  
Did I spit all my bars? I can't recall.  
Was it fitful, jerky, a slapdash?  
Was my brain on hols, did I spit balderdash?  
All these could suffice, and much more.  
'cos I was gazed at stoically for a sec, or more.

I was in my twenties, but I was young  
've been in the wooing game, not for long.  
'cos anxiety gripped my heart, tore it apart.  
And the sphincter of my bladder began to part.  
My pulmonary flow pipes began to choke;  
afraid of seeing three years of work up in smoke.

Time stood still, but still passed.  
The way it moved, supersonically fast.  
My heart stood still, but moved the same way;  
only held by my mouth from going astray.

While my eyes, prettier by far, than any,  
searched for answers, if there were any.

Her replies, they finally came,  
like the steps of a man on one foot lame.  
Fits-and-starts, the worn-out word,  
more or less like the cuts of a blunted sword.  
'I'm dazed and amazed, ' she did say.  
'I'll give you my word, but not today.'

When? The poor me enquired.  
Not now, time for thought's required  
was what exited her visibly shaking lips,  
very much alien to such sudden flips.  
I knew much pressure, as a reason, wouldn't fly.  
I decided to, as it were, let sleeping dogs lie.

The wait was like my later Long Wait;  
Like waiting for a shark to bite a foam bait.  
So, I made a move to save my heart from toil,  
but her response made my viper to recoil.  
From her to me, was a firm no.  
No future entre nous. No future. No.

Was it my height? I'm not that short. No!  
Was it my girth? I'm not that fat. No!  
Was it my face? Was it those scars? Nada!  
Was it my lines? Was it those bars? Nada!  
'I love your style, your swagger, and more...  
But, there'll be no us; you weren't a year older, or more

'I'm a poet, you know that so well, ' I told her.  
'But I don't get it, please break it down. Would ya? '  
'I'm older than you are, one year or so...  
'You're like a little brother, don you know? '  
There's no future for us; that's what she said.  
And both my eyes turned blood red.

I woke my brain from its apparent slumber,  
And explained to her 'age is nothing but a number.'  
And that I looked older than her by far.  
thanks to my gait, and mostly, to my obvious scar.

That we would be Whitney and Bobby in their prime.  
Or Courtney and Joseph, in their early time.

But, to her guns, she stoutly stuck;  
Strong and unmoved, like Gibraltar's rock;  
Seemingly impervious to my sleek bars  
'cos the decision wasn't entirely hers  
It was a synthesis of some sort, a composite  
of the views or kith and kin, hardened to a deposit.

I asked 'who's the head of this ancient group.'  
'Who's the chief thread of this minky loop? '  
'It's our matriarch, ' she said. 'It's my mum'  
'To her views, I bow with my mouth mum.'  
I got her details, to sing her a psalter.  
But, my liver caved in, began to falter.

How I felt, words can never express;  
It's close to being lost in a lonely express;  
close to expressing an orange in the arctic;  
close to a job-chat on a phone full of static;  
close to being in the Sahara and needing a drink;  
close to losing one's mind; or being on its brink.

So, for two years, we parted ways.  
And never saw ourselves for same number of days.  
Though we claimed to be just friends,  
we knew, of a truth, we were not friends.  
I don't know of her, but I, for one  
felt used and dumped, maybe, for another one.

And in that fit, I stepped on ten fine toes;  
'cos I latched on to another, compounded my woes.  
And I never seemed to define my goals;  
bent on getting one to play her roles.  
And in eight months, I broke a heart –  
an act that always hurt my heart.

Then along came the era of no love;  
between people I know and me, we lost no love.  
It was an era that's the darkest of my life.  
'T was so dark it could be called era of strife.

'T could be said that I and death did spar;  
and I emerged with my most vicious scar.

After a while, we began to be pulled near;  
as the veneer of hatred began to wear.  
Between us two were spoken sweet words.  
And into our scabbard were sheathed our swords.  
Our new state made me up with hope;  
and her visit fanned the embers of that hope.

But into the works, I threw a spanner;  
unbuttoned my fly, peed into our manna.  
In seeking to know our destined direction,  
I popped, once again, that all-important question.  
'Okey, I'm telling you the truth, ' she did reply.  
'My stance hasn't changed. I tell you no lie.'

And to the fray, a new twist was added.  
Age alone wasn't why I was discarded.  
There was an old horse, veteran in the game;  
well known to us, YR is in his name –  
that punched heavier and faster than I could punch;  
and was already in orbit while I tried to launch.

To him, she'd given the three-letter word, Yes!  
It wasn't too hard for me to guess.  
For the three years that what we had worked;  
he, as a father-figure, in the shadows lurked.  
Though losing to him cut like a knife;  
it didn't hurt like wasting my time, my life.

As you read this, they are man and wife;  
and I'm back in the trenches, fighting for a wife.  
What do the trenches hold in stock for me?  
I hope it's good, like I did in Part Three.  
And for the one whom in this poem, I wrote;  
she wouldn't hear my song, not even a note.

Mar-2011

Victor Okey Nwatu

# Ode To Ips

From France, land of the 'cock'  
And Nigeria, with millions of 'oil-rock'  
Came a fusion of minds, a joining a hands  
In a bond greater than a million Portlands  
That led to the formation of you  
For which my pen pays its own due

Because you've been an eucalyptus tree  
Since the year two-thousand-and -three,  
Developed over ninety engineering brains,  
Sent them out, equipped, proud and bold  
To the industry of the proverbial liquid gold

Your IFP-engendered French Connection  
Is akin with the phrase - 'genius production'  
Names that've fanned the knowledge flame,  
Of which Laplace, Fourier etc. fits the frame.  
And with numerous Nigerian egg-heads,  
Makes you a true knowledge reservoir bed

A jewel of the Niger Delta  
An Idol in our eyes. A star!  
A citadel of academic excellence  
A bastion of hope for industrial relevance

Subsuming myself in the wondrous mix  
Of the one and only set of IPS Batch Six,  
I wish to end this Ode like this:  
'IPS, were you a damsel, I'll give u a kiss'

Victor Okey Nwatu

# Out Of Turf

When oil and water suddenly mix;  
and regeneration power deserts the phoenix.  
When fresh water resides in the Dead Sea;  
and honey comes from another, not the bee.  
It's when the going gets tough;  
and the ball rolls out of turf.

It's when water floats on its brother, ice;  
sugar taste bitter, pepper's no longer a spice;  
the Sahara has ice, no longer sand;  
as its sands find their way to Greenland.  
It's when eloquence leaves the oratorical prof.  
And the ball rolls out of its turf.

It's like when R&B is rapped, and rap sung;  
and the Church sees Big Bang as not wrong;  
when the ocean is white, no longer blue;  
and real stones fall from the sky, instead of dew.  
It's when tanks are not of metal, but of silky stuff.  
That's when the ball rolls out of its turf.

It's when the Everest is the lowest depth;  
Mariana Trench is the best in height's length.  
It's when Gazprom buys gas, not sell;  
and Saudi Arabia leaves the minaret for a tower of bell.  
It's when Cuba will, its communist hat, doff;  
and the ball rolls out of its turf.

It's when Nigeria's head needs no analgesic;  
when power supply ceases to be epileptic.  
It's when there are no Ghana Must Go sacks;  
and contracts attract no type of kick-backs.  
It's when hunger leaves the masses' neck scruffs;  
And the balls leave their various turfs.

It's when our youths never need the bridle;  
And their souls are busy, never idle;  
It's when we once again become free;  
and never chanting to any master, 'we hail thee.'

It's when we, in beating our chests, say 'enough...'  
And the ball rolls out of its turf.

The ball leaving its good old turf;  
appears nearly impossible, or close enough;  
and sometimes against the run of nature;  
even though it's of a desirable nature.  
But, out of that turf, this ball must be;  
if a better tomorrow, we all wish to see.

Victor Okey Nwatu

# Rain

Rain. Oh! Sweet rain.  
Fall with your peculiar freshness.  
Fall to ease our pains.  
If possible, walk away with our weariness.

To the devout, you are a symbol of divine favour,  
a source of respite in hot weather.  
But science says you are water vapour,  
because it feels it knows better.

The clatter of thy tiny drops  
are like that of war-horses' hooves,  
giving life to our withering crops,  
but sorrow to those with leaking roofs

Oh! Rain, you are our source of joy.  
With thy joy, we shall never toy

Victor Okey Nwatu

# The Long Wait

How it all started, we all know.  
'cos it did draw emotions, and rightly so.  
Emotions at both extremes of the joy divide  
that threatened our well-knit class to divide.  
But, time has, all emotions, vapourised.  
And left us more united; our unity un-terrorised.

But before that, it did place a barrier  
between us and our beloved chosen career.  
Eleven souls were seriously tempted to say,  
"we've made it, it all went our way."  
And the other nine had the temptation of saying,  
"we've lost out; our time we've been just slaying."

To say this, I've got to be bold –  
All that glittered wasn't pure gold.  
'cos the eleven that thought they've made it  
saw that theirs wasn't an instant hit.  
They had to tarry for number of months, seven  
Before names were reeled out; they were seven.

Of the seven names first rolled out;  
two were picked up and flown out.  
And like the pendulum, went to-and-fro Seoul.  
Where they toiled and were toiled for, body and soul.  
And it was waiting game for the other four;  
who, as days rolled, almost became the poor four.

Then a name popped out as a call came through.  
And it was the one with first name, first letter U.  
Her call was a casing, cement, a taut rope  
to the caving formation of the three soul's hope.  
For them, theirs was around the corner.  
So, their resumption crawled back to the front burner.

But, the enthusiasm ebbed after it got to peak  
for it wasn't matched by Baba T's crew, so to speak.  
'cos the call never came around in a matter of days.  
It appeared in after many months and many days.

When it came, it was just one out of the three.  
Which wasn't Ishan's finest, wasn't me.

Four months' calls almost made Baba T's fone a wreck;  
And for that, all hands were on deck.  
All including the good ole Grace,  
Were conscripted, dragged along at our pace.  
Till on a reçu un appel of joy  
That made Faffy a don from a poor boy.

It still remained Okoduwa and I  
left literally out in the cold; maybe, high and dry.  
But we formed an alliance; a common front  
and Baba T's fone did bear the brunt.  
It was called with a constant frequentation.  
In its being called, there was no hesitation.

It took about a month's time tick,  
for everything to finally click.  
And the files swimming since July  
made it home, not submerged, still dry.  
The awaited call then came through  
and I now have a job like y'all do.

How was the Baba T henpecking experience?  
What really did we experience?  
Did we like by other – on life support?  
Or did we make it on our own, no support?  
These and other questions, I won't answer.  
They are addressed in the poem How I got over.

For putting up with my poems, you're all kind.  
I promise this'll be the last of its kind.  
No more invasion of your private city.  
No more free poems; no more free publicity.  
From now till March, there'll be silence.  
Just wait for my book of poems – Poetic Licence.

(Oct 2010)

Victor Okey Nwatu

# To The Cave, And Beyond

About three heartbeats ago,  
from a geologic time view point,  
we traced our steps to how the earth did grow,  
gulping every story though some appear disjoint.  
We adopted a meandering river flow,  
as we moved from one, to the next joint.  
Was the trip disappointing? No!  
Like one sitting on a score board, it was on point.

After a little delay at the lodge,  
in which Puppie and 'mon ami' Adejare  
dexteriously loaded the bus to a near-budge,  
on that fateful, calm Sunday,  
we hit the road with a speed surge  
that resembled Mr. Hart's driving, in every way.  
We picked up Accrapod, Mr. Otong and Prof, our Geologic Jude,  
and the journey to the past went under way.

Rivers Choba, Forcados and Nun were admired,  
as they wriggled their ways to the ocean.  
And to the inquisitive souls that enquired,  
Prof explained the fallout of their everlasting motion.  
Mr. Biggs was visited as required.  
And Mr Amadi drove to Auchi with sky-high devotion.

Yak Hotels lived up to its billing -  
wasn't just an empty hype,  
when Prof said its pleasure was with top sealing.  
Smooth, like a laminar flow in a pipe.  
Rooms and fridge, never ending in chilling.  
Mattresses, describable in pleasure scale as ripe,  
ripe enough to make an insomniac sleep willing.

As a connoisseur of repute,  
of the nineteen and half inches 'belle' fame,  
the quality of the comestibles was hard to refute.  
Yes! Yak Hotels' kitchen's got game.  
Drove us to food addiction that was acute,  
while we relished Miriam and Aisha's frame.

The last statement, few people can refute,  
though my pen refuses to name names.

We flew by bus to Igarra, ,  
in the ancient and senile Kiberian basement.  
Started from the base to a point higher,  
as we took rocks' strike and dip without relent.  
Then Prof's words seared me like fire,  
as he said of me what I knew he never meant.

The alluvial fans of the Anambra basin,  
of which our OMATTA boys are up with hope,  
stood steep and firm as we started logging.  
And made it hard for the feeble to cope.  
The safety man, Feslajid, came calling,  
and held me like a taut rope,  
when my foot gave way to 'sliken sliding'  
and I started to capitulate without hope.

There were numerous sights and sounds  
from the lacustrine to the sandstone quarry at Ayoguri  
Plots that grew in leaps and bounds,  
forming some constantly fluxing story.  
That continued in many repeating rounds,  
till the Niger bank at Agenebode.  
Accrapod almost did all of us astound,  
While Prof added embellishments in a flurry.

The journey from Auchi was, in events, lacking.  
To the approval of many worn-out hearts.  
Same for the Okigwe town tracking,  
except for the Bona Fide Hotels parts.  
To speak of it, my pen is seriously slacking.  
It doesn't intend to throw darts...

The journey to the cave, and beyond was fun.  
though not a continuous run of fun.  
But we achieved a feat unthinkable -  
did 3.5bn years in a week and still remained stable.  
This is just my personal poetic delivery,  
not in any meant to be the field trip's summary.  
Just a desire to break my depositional silence,

while brandishing my poetic license.

Victor Okey Nwatu

# Tsaragi Lines

I'm the CCF – Coal City's Finest.  
Of a truth, there's nobody finer.  
In your opinions, I won't get the kindest.  
But I don't mind, I'm not a trapped miner.  
I'm Enugu finest, I say again, encore.  
Dispute it and tell me who's equal, or more.

I've been to places in many a land and clime.  
I've been to places coarse and places sublime.  
I've known Enugu like the back of my hands;  
and PH, Owerri, Onitsha, Nnewi and other lands.  
I've been to Cotonou, stole across the border, Seme;  
as I enjoyed the boisterous life of the republic of Benin.

I stole to Benin, crossed the boundary on foot  
pour faire mes activités, pour satisfaire mes goûtes.  
But, when I visited the home of the victim of Waterloo;  
it was done in a jumbo jet, an aerial buffalo.  
I saw the pride of Paris and Notre Dame, the meek;  
and other places, with my Lagos, all in a week.

So, I've been places, seen faces;  
observed, admired, embraced cultures;  
seen, perceived, tasted delicacies.  
Who knows? I might've even eaten vultures.  
But, no new place has for long contained me;  
till I went to serve Naija in you, Tsaragi.

It was the year before two thousand and eight;  
on the always hot third moon;  
exactly the twentieth was the date;  
and we left our many a soldier goon;  
for you, after a three-week orientation camp;  
where we earned a lot, even many a muscle cramp.

My posting to you, not much surprise met;  
'cos I was a Peer Educators Trainer, a PET.  
And it was an open secret – that's true;  
being one guarantees a rural posting for you.

So I picked my letter, tried to be jolly;  
'cos I wasn't flung to Baruten like my pal, Jolly.

You were close to the camp, twenty kilometers;  
Though the driver's error added four more kilometers.  
A person of extreme good luck was I;  
as without stress, sweat and sigh;  
I arrived at you, on the same day;  
very different from pals in every way.

Malam Usman was at his best;  
as he gave me my first IQ test.  
It was a preview of what I would later see;  
if you, Tsaragi, would contain me.  
I passed and he signed my papers, let me go;  
and gave me two weeks to train for the real show.

But before I went to Enugu – my home;  
for a night, I made Deji's home, home.  
I took the town's temperature, low.  
I don't mean literally, you already know.  
But, the level of craftiness was quite high.  
And, it was close to me, was quite nigh.

I was given two weeks off-duty, or simply, off;  
but I took one more, two wasn't okay.  
Despite that, I was quite early enough.  
I was the first Portland to set, in every way.  
Moh'd Usman Jr. led me to my new abode.  
I trekked, while my goods, on a truck, rode.

I was the only corper in the new compound –  
owned by the one whose good morning is ndévé.  
But, my colleagues still stayed around;  
ten compounds being between mine and there ....  
There was a rumpus over mattress and toilet;  
the lack of which led to experiences I won't forget.

No toilet, it was the bush to the rescue;  
but I didn't care; it gave me enough air and good view  
of the greenery, shrubs, and surrounding hills,  
this combined to result in awe and spine chills.

I felt all these as I did evacuate my bowel refuse;  
and some old newspapers, I did patiently peruse.

Besides the hills and its breath-taking views,  
the farmers that seemed to work on cues,  
and shepherds and their live animal protein;  
knowledge of their culture, I did obtain.

'Cos a certain man, in Nupe language, gave me a rap  
when I almost manured a cemetery with my crap.

I remember your maze of streets of untarred, red earth;  
that reminded one of Scorched Earth Policy in dry season.  
I still remember your buildings: 20% block,80% earth.  
With pure earth ones lasting longer – defies common reason.  
And your ubiquitous pockets of bushes, I can't forget.  
They didn't have signs of 'To Let' but served as Toilet.

Your people are on slim, dark and tall – mostly six feet;  
witty, and, minus their scars, sweet to meet.  
The scars are tribal marks – a visual symphony of jazz.  
And their heads are strong – could teach a Babalawo jazz.  
Though they greatly love the hullabaloo monkey dance  
don't ever, with their daughters, take a chance.

Your people aren't ashamed to work the soil.  
If farming were sports, they'd be superstars.  
They let the tractor do most of the toil;  
and most of the transport, in trucks and cars.  
With these, food was like sands in the Sahara.  
We ate to stupor, and still got extra – jara.

One aspect of your people's culture that's deep;  
and still very obvious like a beeper's beep;  
is the way people greet: extensive and all-encompassing –  
the young squatting on seeing elders passing.  
It must be done, no matter the circumstance.  
A bike man once left his running bike for that stance.

Nupe language caught and held my attention;  
I could say good morning in it – ekubelagi.  
I also took note of its low tones and inflection,  
while I served my fatherland in you, Tsaragi.

I witnessed your aristocracy and Monarch, Etsu  
though Islam and Christianity have split you in two.

If I say my influence was solely Nupe, I lie.  
'Cos Tsaragi had a Yoruba neighbor, Sharé.  
There were ethnic tensions, but never high;  
resulted from an earlier war between Tsaragi- Sharé.  
But a model of peace was the Pakus where I did abide:  
in it, Idoma, Igbo, Hausa, Nupe, Tiv and Yoruba did reside.

In Tsaragi, I met and made many friends;  
from our West Africa, its different ends.  
There was Joe, who housed, fed and encouraged me  
when a certain calamity befell and nearly assailed me.  
There was a Kafilat Oladewa – an hijab wearer;  
who taught me Yoruba stew; and drew me nearer.

There was Moji, in every way one imagines, wise;  
who always travelled to make her spice level rise.  
And the one renowned and known as Corper Sam;  
unique in himself – the one and only Corper Sam  
There were Kelly and Kazeem, who taught children;  
and with Arabic Henry, completed the Tsaragi brethren.

There was the petite Joy, whom I really liked;  
who seemed right for me in every way;  
but couldn't be my side-kick, my side's been kicked;  
and I still rue her loss till this very day.  
There was Ifeanyi Nkeonye, my guardian at Sharé.  
He, Emma, Ladi etc were my family at Sharé.

There were the Pakus around whom everything revolved;  
both day for good, and for bad, night.  
Our present status still reads unresolved;  
though I earnestly wish it never ends in a night.  
There was Oga Theo, the catechist, my advocate;  
who, even in my filial attacks, was inviolate.

There was Doctor Manager, and his large family;  
from where I plagiarized the name, Ongboli.  
There was Baby Manager and her elder sister;  
whom, I didn't know who, with me, was flirtier.

I said that with no insult intended;  
though I don't enjoy being hit on, no pun intended.

My experience in Tsaragi was eventful, wonderful ...  
Would've been more, were I not overly careful ...  
I said that without any dint of equivocation;  
despite what may point in the opposite direction.  
I took it all in, without breaking my stride  
as I continue life's seemingly roller-coaster ride.

(Feb 08)

Victor Okey Nwatu