

THE PLACE I CALLED HOME (A POEM)

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The act of thinking about life provokes
 memories too arduous to peg down
I have never known a man who thought
 home was a prison, a place out of place
I have heard it said by fanatic housekeepers,
 who spend their time dusting other people's lives
What a noise for something,
 a place one feels safe or trapped
I do not know if it is true;
 I'm cunningly conjecturing.

Half clouded in thoughts,
 I transmute my faith to ponder on what decades could not fulfil
I thought of women and men like roses,
 men and women like thorns and children like lilies
Enchanted by my thoughts,
 I perceived a ghostly thought revolving in my clouded head.
The strangeness of my thoughts invoked heavy mist in my eyes,
 subtly on my cheeks
Muttering with impatient nerves,
 I sprinkled my thoughts on many streets, yards and households.

My eyes misted when I remembered what they said happened to Adaora,
 the beautiful one
Two streets away from our building,
 there was a beautiful edifice that harboured Adaora's family
A building that had been made home-like,
 to colour the faces of those who live in it with smiles
The snow-white Adaora had a husband
 who shrank our outward vision with adorable love
Outside the house, Adaora laboured up and down smiling
 like a fixed doll drowned in love
Stuck in a world of her own,
 we never knew she was stretched in between lines for years
So much in shadow,

she was left untouched by her husband for four years after their marriage
She penned many plans to catch him in her web,
but all failed without a vision of reality
The agony that piled up in her ever-smiling face
left us unguarded when she disappeared
It was impossible to imagine the restless spirit
of boredom and frustration that overwhelmed her
Though I'm yet to find out where she had gone,
I patiently wait for time to fold and unfold.

Heart-smitten in pity,
my soul compelled my head on a thinking emotional spree—bum bum bu!
Stressfully,
my deepening shades of thoughts caught my breath like a fading horizon—tam
tam!
All fixed-unfixed images glued to my head,
my heart regaining the inquiries it made years ago.
Chidozie's story dragged my feet in coldness
into the early harmattan wind paired with pain.
That morning's feeling of awe left me
with extraordinary revelation of life, mastered in colours.
Pounding in curiosity,
I saw the woman they called Chidozie's wife standing over a lifeless body
Drenched in sticky red and water,
she stood like a status colourlessly abandoned for destruction
Pale-stricken,
she uttered motionlessly—"You are the boss! Wake up Dozie! I'm no more a
man!"
Vulgarity immersed in Feminist mentality eclipsed her eyes,
an uncontrollable "F-Ego"
Yarning with red-stained fingers;
she beckoned on God for a second chance to rebuild her home
"I'm no longer a Feminist",
she kept yelling. I submit my love, myself to you!"
The knife-stabbed chest ceased to rise!
The recklessness stinks!
It smells of stained hatred!
Her cries meant nothing to all who heard!
This leaves me with an overwhelming question
to ponder on homes with exhausted walls.
Collapsed walls!
Dead walls!
No walls!

Secret patronized the place I
 called home.
Twisted in tight thread,
 wives locked horns with husbands
Children caught in between warring souls
 became mere objects of torture
House heated in argument melted their voices in cries,
 a fear to behold
Papa and *mama* dancing in hatred devoid
 of humorous sense of pleasure
Knives, cups, spoons, plates and furniture
 made the atmosphere heavier
Home's estranged children entangled
 in forlorn apartment drank misery daily
What unhappy childhood yoked with
 undignified and unsentimental flames of words
No laughter,
 only fewer smiles caged in pretence
No merry moments,
 only staring beings less friendlier
Such was the home that plunged
 Eunice into her lost innocence
A misguided life!
A striking habit!
A misery!

Crushed in spirit,
 I sobbed my eyes out
On the evidence of indifference
 that has coloured our homes
My mood was not helped by stories
 greeting me daily on TV and newspapers
Many homes are merely houses harbouring
 actors who mislead the public
Sadly there's something missing in homes;
 the present is lacking the past
The past with glorious five virtues of
 love, patience, honesty, unity and humility
None of these mollified me,
 my thoughts stretched deeper in massive premonition
Concealing the fear the *Holy Book* foretold in
 unravelling and revealing
I ponder in awe muttering inwardly with
 deep thoughts.
A pain in the neck!
A hard task!
A nut to crack!

Now, I'm hushed in silence
 pondering in agony of heart
Lost within the tidefalls,
 I kneel in request to my Creator
Chanting in known and unknown tongues to
 revive the walls
Broken walls, collapsed walls,
 exhausted walls, dead walls!

In sing-song mood,
 I asked for the place I called home
The home our grandmothers raised our
 mothers in humility
The home our grandfathers nurtured men with
 golden aura of care
The home children yarn to welcome
 Papa and Mama singing—"oyoyo"
The home that smiling faces meet
 smiling faces of different shapes
This is the place I
 called home!
The golden home;
 a place to live.
A place where sanity breeds
 without numbering.
This is the place I
 called home!
A perfect home—the priceless home!