



HOUSE *OF* LUNATICS

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Dwarts

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INTRODUCTION

**“When the house is full of lunatics,
You call the poet-chiatrists!”**

It is quite rare, in modern times, to find serious poets engage in satire for a specific purpose. Almost gone were days when poetry is used as machinery for satirical justice. After all, who still believes that art is for art sake?! Certainly, the trio of Ayoola, Ayinla, and Abimbola do not believe that art is the crafty concoction of words to entertain the sensibilities of the readers alone! The poet is not only the conscience of the society; s/he is the vision of its future. Any society without a poet is not just dead, such a society is a breeding ground for death and deathliness! Do we need to say that there is so much urgency for a national poet to sound the alarm to this society infested with intellectual debris, political leprosy, spiritual delirium, religious debauchery, moral destitution, and socioeconomic penury?! More importantly, there is an urgent need for writers whose voices will ring so loud that even the jailers cannot cage the force of their artistic weaponry! These days, what is common is a bandit of writers who “complain” and “mourn” about socioeconomic malaise, without any serious impact on the society.

Perhaps, we need to shed more light on satire and its relevance to our discourse. Satire is not a comic relief intended to amuse the audience. Stand-up comics make millions from doing that, while the audience are sent into a fit of delirious ululation! Satire does not just mock its subject matter utilizing exaggerated expression and overt metaphors; it goes beyond that. While one can argue that satire, used in dramaturgy does have the effects of exaggeration and overt metaphorization, poetic satires are designed masterfully to achieve a conceit: the conscious conscientization of the reader and deliberate induction of desired behavior. A poetic satire endears and condemns at the same time. The reader is shocked by its purgatory effect and desires its cathartic import concurrently. Through satire, the poet achieves a dual function: that of a critic and a guide. Writing a poetic satire is a serious artistic engagement, often requiring a certain level of mastery needed to do justice to such an endeavor.

Ayoola, Ayinla and Abimbola are fully aware of the seriousness of creating poetic satires. The call to address sensitive issues that affect their immediate society is beyond running a laundry list of the bad, ugly, and insane. Anybody can post on social media about political corruption and religious shamefulness. As a matter of fact, in recent times, social media have been the battle ground for many to express their views, even when done blindly, on such issues. Any poet worth some salt would have derided the social challenges being faced. I recall that some poets even claimed that the singular purpose of the poet is to write about social issues affecting the populace. Such a position is not wrong. However, to rise above the banter of sociopolitical brouhaha, it is important that the poet understands the sacredness of his art. It is with this understanding, of the hallowed mandate of poetic satirization, that the poets have invested their art, insights, and commitment to sensate and sensitize their society in this *project*.

House of Lunatics is a conscious effort to satirize burning social, religious, political and moral issues. The poets are strategic, and direct their poetics toward serious issues. The reader is offered a rare vista into the political ruling class and its sickliness. Divisive issues like sexuality and gender are not left out. The religious sects with their hypocrisy and the intelligentsia that often appear to be above the mundane receive a healthy dose of satirical therapy. Of significant note is mention of three poems that serve as a conversation among the poets, and between them and the society: Ayoola’s “for the world gone nude”, Ayinla’s “physician, heal thyself”, and Abimbola’s “for the world come nude.” These poems mirror the vision of the poets in leading their society from darkness to light.

The readers and critics will agree that the house is ridden with lunatic rodents, and it is expedient that poet-chiatrists* (Ayoola’s coinage) should be called to the rescue. While these poets will not refer to themselves as satirists, their noble efforts to go beyond creating awareness to triggering a national discourse has placed them on the path of becoming the conscience and vision of their society. Engage with *House of Lunatics*, and let the “change” begin!

Thank you.

Funso Oris.

Goodness Ayoola

grandma tickle blond arse

horn thees pay age wee may-ache you
liek grandma tickle blond arse

hand itch tiem you corm two sick four thee writes in hour tombs
you it horse dip inn hour egg-know-rans...

you teik horse inn buy sweet war-ds—
dearvils in hail-gens clot things
hand wee hail you!

wee ale you in hour pour-ver-tea
inn yor poor-lean-ticks orf rais
yor tea chairs say wee ah write to vow hour tombs
you blind horse to dose wool say wee dough nut write well
wheat thee clots orf chain-age! chain-age!

hand noun wee whale
four itch tiem hour re-salt his red we corm at in reds....

hand hay gain!
hand hay gain!

horn thees pay age wee may-ache you
liek grandma tickle blond arse...

hand hay gain!
hand hay gain!

wee ah rolled buy thee lang-wages wee dough nut horndarstand!

ecclesiastes

sir! morn' —

our lure's prayer

the lord is our leopard
we shall love wants!

devourer
how does our sheep taste?

sweat & blood

gods and so help me greed
this is the core-eruption—

corruption!

ser-mon

'thou shall set a table before me
in the presence of my enemies'

a—men

and there is recession

this is the new psalm in town—

forgive me mother
the day our enemies set a table before us
i eyed your eyes of caution
you saw covetousness

i was hunger—recession is an armed squad

when next are we visiting our enemies?

sigh! mourn!

b for biafra
b is for blood—men diving into shadows for the sun
dying for a name

dying for the rise of a new chapter of greed!

these are the catacombs of glories
cows are now more honourable than men—

shall we rise for a question?

(a minute silence)

when will peace come to life?

for the world gone nude

i am a poet
and this mission is a difficult one

how do i heal the world?

why does it feel like everything is forever sick
and healing is a hill—insurmountable?

and healing is ill—incurable?
a pilgrimage of hypocrisy!

this is a new stray of life:

design your sins
paint your madness in gay colours
soon the world will worship your demon

the beast is a beauty to behold!
and hell a sweet place to be—to find heaven...

how does the fierce chapter of our daily sister read?
no one comes unto the devil except through me—
immorality!

who wrote our girls into a gospel of doom?

sanity is the new madness in town—

a boy throws his nakedness for money
to dogs piling the albums of simpletons

and the world comes with tatters of praises
cowards in clothes shouting

he is brave
he is brave

to tell nudity is a race to diss grace?

even mad men clothe themselves!

he will shoot more tomorrow
nudity is a new dare to reach it—and many are falling!

the world is brave to lose herself
and shame is a way to healing

i have forgotten how to start a cry

if you know how

begin

there is much to shed for the world...

hush

we know how to curse crazy winds roaming past
and shout thief thief into a spiral of dust
but for men like storms pounding us into rest in pieces
we freeze into cowardice—
a queer warmth and shouts of saviour saviour
we shake up into an admixture of frailty
too blind to see no reigners in a trap red with death
we shake up into an admixture of frailty
too familiar with death and always we hang the stench
close to the nostrils of God—to smell blame for our foolishness
we worship wicked wills and say touch not—
touch not a cain winks of blood
and a bang of big bells and silence over the blood of abels...

hush...

anything free is a journey to freeze
i ask you of dreams
you begin with em em em
what our english language teacher says is a bad mannerism
when will you learn healing in this crowd looking for greens?
too ill for hardwork? how do you course hills into plains of success?
you say em em em is a good dream without the hems of hard work
you still bleed—a man with the issue of poverty
harmattan is yet kissing summer and now you are read into psalms
of freezing verses—you cash cold
bring your slate and let's again l-earn letters without stutters of em em em
say hard work...repeat
you are cold again...anything free is a journey to freeze...

hush...

to end a poem like this is difficult

hush...

current affairs—
i heard a canoe paddled our president is mad
is this true or not true?
(thank you literature for rhetorical question!)
this madness is contagious

if you are still sane...say amen...

hush...

offering time—10% of your sanity
madness here is alarming...

hush...
to end a poem like this is difficult

hush.

ail men and hail men

let us prey—

times break us and our skin is shreds of prayers—
doubts doubting doubts. kiting for faith. our hands
too feeble to hold our fate and men garbed in turbulent waters.
we write to God. from our broken bones sharpened
into arrows. the sky is now an armour of iron. from scales of silence grown
on the dryness in our brooks of tears. we bloom. silence is a bloom.
or what else grows when there are no more tears left?

ail men and hail men.

(this is the poem)

place your nose on the rod of power
smell everywhere
when you smell lagos say. say i am bold to become a conductor!
run to your mother and tell her

lagos shall wake and sleep in your
eyes. tell her you have found a new style of boldness. a government job.
a government car. a mobile office. tell her dream has come true. and
cry.

and be proud.

say i am bold. the conductor. and scream. our governor has done it again!

are the governor's children bold conductors too?
broken to boldness? bold to toss their certificate for bean cakes.
are the governor's children coming?

place your nose on the rod of power
smell everywhere
when you smell eden—

check the map. you have reached heaven.

let us prey—

times break us and our skin are shreds of prayers—
doubts doubting doubts. kiting for faith. our hands
too feeble to hold our fate and men garbed in turbulent waters.
we write to God. from our broken bones sharpened
into arrows. the sky is now an armour of iron. from scales of silence grown
on the dryness in our brooks of tears. we bloom. silence is a bloom.
or what else grows when there are no more tears left?

ail men and hail men.

physician heal yourself

power here
is a cross of confectionary
a place of gold and the gold-getter—not golgotha

servitude
is crucifixion done with dummy nails
and the blood is a play of props
deception
recession—not redemption

the physician heals himself
he alone knows the road to paradise
he alone knows how to fly and no one is coming along

the sick on the right is not going to be lucky tonight
change will begin with him—
not mercy

'today you shall not meet me in paradise
you shall go to hell'

the thief on the left will blab on
he knows the play of powers
hell is a home away from home
but he is not going there tonight
he will descend with the saviour and savour the perfume of power...

the physician knows how to heal himself
he is a miracle we must worship
he returns selfish
no fish
no healing—

he is saying thank you for the patience to die in our maladies
for playing the moth on the pyre
for muteness
for silence
for taking in good faith the catacombs of our daughters
who ailed and could not fly to london...

another man will die of ear tonight
another man will die of cancer
another child will die in the hands of silhouette doctors
he is not going to be the leader of tomorrow again

tomorrow is heaven
and
death is a national anthem

the physician knows how to heal himself
he is a miracle we must worship
he returns selfish
no fish
no healing—

let us rise for the national anthem...

songs unsung

pekele pekele
pekele pekele
is the fire on the tongues of dismay...

my poetry and i are dismayed...

there are many words
in a penny pamphlet
there are many words
in a penny poetry...

if foolishness is not wired into the ribs of thoughts
who breaks the eggs of darkness
and sings for the spells of illumination?

there are eggs and darkness here
there is a bareness here and there is no light...

i will tell you what the eyes have seen
i will tell you the voices cowered into the muteness of mouths...

i will not tell what the eyes have seen
for the mouth has become too heavy for speech
and silence hovers in the wings of legions...

do we look like we are going down the pit?
or the pit is taking us down to see what pit is in a pit...

do not bury us in the looks of pity
or what pity is pity that is not pity when they pit it....

what is pity spitted?
when we are hays and our mother is fire...

let us dance thankfulness to the house of clothes
who cover our nakedness and our naked suffering
let us burn the clothes from the fuel of blames
for covering skeletons and make them beautiful hues in humans...

a devil is a devil in a devil
an angelic devil is a devil in a devil
there are devils here in white regalia...

we carry her...me you
we carry her daily...our crippled motherland
but they push her down deep down...trampled
they steal her chastity...they steal her...

they steal the budget and change too
when change steals change and change is chained
does our hope of change not remain unchanged?

they write change on a paper
who writes change on bloody scrolls?
who writes change in the inks of venom?
and reads to wild wolves and fishy foxes...

who says a hen does not eat another hen?
when my hen and your hen are the sweet meat for their hens
they eat us...they hit us...they eat us deep...they hit us deep...

only if they know change so well
they would grave it here on the stillness of their hearts
on the ribs of their stiffened necks...and change indeed...

we are not yet free
and our aged change is a blurring metaphor!

WALE AYINLA

chandelier

the lord is my shepherd
i shall not what?
my lord is in the hands of a strange woman
suckling her nipples while i count my peace
on the lips of my big brother till
i fade into the pictures of nine jarred colours
painting my lord into a two-faced polygamist...
enough is not enough
until he loves to keep his love...

he made me lie down in grim pasture—
sometimes i am a figure of speech—dollars
rising against the nine eras of metaphor
as i run my fingers through the clitoris
of broken promises —we don't change here...

change is not for a february
leaping into the eyes of winter
where poverty marches on the lawn
of a prig frolicking with the sweats of
a nation before silence became the light
that leads us beside a raging storm
where a table is prepared in the presence
of our enemies...

your rod and your staff...

my lord is in the hands of a strange woman
eating the wails of his wife...

physician heal yourself

(after Goodness Ayoola)

london bridge is not falling down tonight for
we have learnt to cast our burdens upon our shoulders
and puncture borrowed peace on the lips
of our saviour —my sigh ah!

power is healing
healing is power

will you also heal someday or
just request for syllables to know how long your song
will tremble down the tree of life before
we notice your tensions in a breaking phonics—
'extension'?

there is a path meant for a god alone
to tread into the island of Patmos where
visions fizz in the search for home when
change is left to tax his return before
it begins with him

the physician knows how to heal himself

look into his eyes and you'll see a coward
seeking survival in the eyes of pity and patience
don't look too far —he will not heal tonight
not tomorrow
or the day next
until healings are peeled off the cozy breasts of the nation—
a reception of recession

physician heal yourself
before healing becomes bearable
on the lips of hungry men painting their heart
with their pasts —before you came
to pledge allegiance to a change that begins with you...

let us prey!

wrap your face in the skin of broken memories
fold your hands
father has come in shadows to commune with heaven—
again! a-gain, i say...
you see a god parting your future
slowly —he teaches you how to hail a devil
when angels are made from hell
father? father!
he moans silently beside you and you say
a-men! hail men! all men!

fold your palms like a fire
mop your lust before it grows into a waterfall
forming shadows in her island—
eye-land! i mean—
you do not see hell often
but you believe the devil is in the liquor you drank
now, devil is in you—
you wait to rewrite your flaws
in the devil's skin
deliv-erance
but it is too late
amen! hail men! all men!
your daughter can now prey for herself...

burning again

she left when
tattered jeans
sweaty shirts
and dirty shoes
covered my future
when the day was ripe...
i left when
the preacher
preached forgiveness
this is how to forgive:
break a wall
crawl in like a detective
(don't listen to shadows
they'll leave soon)
burn your past
let your memories dance in the sky
wait...
how do you feel?
there's a heart calling
don't stop till you walk
upon the waters where
healings come by faith...
how do you feel?
count your joy
on the broken lips
of your lover
die till you are born again
or burn again...

how to spell onomatopoeia

mondays are flibbertigibbets —restless:
the beads on the waist of lagos's highways,
it rises
 like a ding-dong on the
 shoulders of a librarian
finding succor
 in the hearts of strangers
(love jostles in dusty shelves)
read the notes on the
 feet of beggars
catching up with the tone of poverty—
walk... work... walk...

lower case

we have found ourselves
running away from haunted shadows

and our bodies no longer
house leftovers of heart of lovers

but these days have taught us
to speak

like our voices are faraway
into the mirror

like our father is Arabian and we
are lost in tongues

like our mother's breasts are hidden
inside our cheeks

like we are crickets keeping secrets
in faint whispers

like we are nothing

only a bunch of lost tongues
slipping on western treats

only a bunch of soapsuds
loosening their buttocks into thin air

only a plate of broken home
served on foreign land...

feathers

on this baking April noon
i am as free as the wind, *running*

to and fro from the embrace of my aged mother—
obviously, burdened with a lot of dreams

corduroyed beneath fear and
what looks like the breast of the sun, *rising*

till setting becomes a killer of dreams—*disbelief*
dissipating life out of a little boy

foisted, surreptitiously, into a moving train
across a bumpkin island

where fate is the reversal of faith,
and where 'to believe' is a pittance

of what makes up a blurred vision
when there's freedom...

ABIMBOLA MOSOBALAJE

for the world come nude

(after Goodness Ayoola)

i heard you opened some words to the markets of listeners
Ayoola, why cry blames for the world gone nude?
why blame our new sanity?
who denies originality?

we have come to the crest
of our fulfilment, by reeling out our chests
for we must survive!

what is special about a flower held in a vase?
if we can't boast of it, why have it?
beauty is a castle chiseled on a body and not in some wraps of cloth-leaves

finally
a new sanity has fallen off the mouth
of men who know what virtue is

-not

from perfectly carved flesh
with firm orifices.

who sees honey and shies away
from men who know the straw to milk a bust?
those who are blessed when they come alone -and spurt
can tell.

we see the world -as it is
and she, -us as we are
we fetch waters of job from the
region of deep -deep well-s
we sell, people buy, moan to smile

what hands can't fetch
we draw with rod and line

so please let us be
leave us to rejoice over our madness
if bodies can make monies
why deny us this grace
at the detriment of our generation's name

parents and smokes

he became rain in the eyes of mother
and basket of contorted sweet words in father's mouth
he became a revelation of laughter on neighbours' lips

father is joyful in his work
and mother a fashionable home of fashion away from home;
they say they are building buildings of future

he was a loner, he had to live with it, he loved it
his lips traced contours
his heart found treasures in hidden marrows of hemp
today we see him -a man of rags
munching dirt on roadsides

papa, mama be glad for the attention you gave
when his infancy was staggering into adulthood
he is a product of your present absence
and his rags a rejoinder of your name

father's ne-mess-is

each time father admires mother's beauty
he gulps her in greediness
then in humorous pun
he farts

father farts finely fine
for we dare nor complain
we choke on laughter

mother spells father's name on the third notch of newton's law
then she, her below belch
it stinks
but we laugh tears

we children are not ignorant of this game
it is a blessed blessing
we fart and it becomes the lyrics on air speakers

we become lost into some foolish joys
knowing each man is his neighbor's breath
our house becomes a broken ne-mess-is
we choke

a minute silence

a loud silence in a long short minute
for those who walked valley of dry bones with hope
but became grey and decay in the same
for those who sought food in ruins
and became food in ruins...

there are men who were seeds
sown in hope for peace
they never sprout, never flowered -
shall we hold up our lips
for those whose death is death?

to those who found death
and walked to it
carrying bitter anthems in their flesh
with the knowing -
shall we raise this glass as a toast in condolence
to men whose wisdom
is their foolish decision to die?

a minute silence
for those who bought their coffins
and sponsored their own funerals
in ignorant laughter

there is a wind blowing
we called it change -
we called it
we called
we...

a minute silence
for when we shall become the changed...

joys of barrel-hood

i am a seed from a lost course
i have tried to find how i got here
how we got here
in a city whose soil is a particle of calibres of shells from expelled magazines...

let me know if you get to the end of here before i do...

let us begin to define the elements from here
from where the senses can sense heaven
and hearts can feel the warmth from the earth

i heard there is a laughter in the mouth of a gun
that rocks the ribs of heaven in hearts
it is a taste of fulfilment
to those who know the name of a trigger...

god has been painted with a change
they say he delights in souls from souls
when soles of infidel souls sole the soils of an outer world-
where we don't care to know...

there is a rare joy you nurse
when you throw a party of gun
and the music echoes through the hills of air
and empty wastelands...

religion has spelt the lyrics of war
from some deluded animals
standing in the gap of a deity...

there is a god who keeps seven beds
undefiled
over a straying soul sent home
to make the world a safer place...

that was how we got here
from some nonsensical non sense
finding here is finding god
in paradise or in hardened steels...

a man knelt to pray
a cold mouth sweat his head
he smiled in a set mind
...bang, blood, bones, boom...
he became a steel, pouring red seas...

(the lips behind the barrel praised the lord
his team praised him with equipped arms

then smiles)

his wife fetched some rivers
they say fetches from rivers are done with joy
but i can tell the one from this mother's fetch
it is salt

his son looked, he quitted like a man-
brave
if god kills, then men shouldn't be so
grave
he swore to be a god to make the world better
in trust of mines and artilleries
there is a joy in terror, not horror
but war wrapped in a piece of peace
pieced from pieces of a pierced peace

the land is dry and weak
the door is rusty and it creaks
thick cloud gathers in its reign
but we do not pray for rain

we are in a dessert
yet we do not prey for rain!
rain is the sound of many waters when waters from god come upon men
in joys writhing to breathe from the hood of barrels

that is how we got here and we choose to be.

tender sun

a new dawn is risen
and we have seen the fire of its sun
bright fair tender
it does not burn

this is a lullaby of some sweet bitterness
of how some men with pots in their bellies
found love, a beautiful thing
and anything is justice for its reign

there is a sheer joy innocence gives
like when you hear some soothing moans
gliding the throat of tender children
when vehicles of men screech their naive lanes

love
a typical state of the northern mind
uniting art mornings and evening minds

stamp the stamp
that a fool at forty
will be full forever with little fatima

-too much light is a blessedness of blindness

yesterday i expected a celebration
over the broken lower door of aisha
when she kissed the ghost
on the lips of child birth

yes tender sun never burns
neither is it meant to burn.

were dun-un wo

this is a prosaic poem
telling
the story of a house
which might only be known from these lines
sometimes soon

(review)

madness is a rainbow
drawn upon the sky of a city
in the face of its clouds

(story)

pleasant are the views from Orita
a market where several lakes run into three heads

from there are cries of craze and clowns
-news of how a bent rod
tears the face of iya-ilu its mother...
news is never a fine song in the ears as much as the eyes
only those who go to the market can fetch its core.

Ayekooto the grey parrot perches and sees
how madness is plotted in rainbows of beautiful lines
Its bleak beak bleed blood of words;

of how a lad and a lass knitted fibres of tongues
in the city of eyes
and they were applauded
were dun-un wo...

another, object of screen to the heart of men
how some woman's mouth
finds and bring to pleasure a plantain from a man's valley
-a married man
in the name of some thir(s)ty (s)melli(o)n-g naira
money is a rough diction
they say big brother is watching, the world is watching
were dun-un wo...

Orita is a stable of songs for the world gone nude
back-to-back hits
of repeated tracks on expensive bill-board
isn't anything justifiable for money?

in Orita, the wide path with dark patches is plausible
as long as you 'blow' and 'light' at the end
so far you are a worthy view

but iran were dun-un wo...

this is not insanity, not really
we are only keeping our first sanity
of how
the man and the woman were both naked
-and not ashamed-

(opinion)
let's break kola words and fine sour wine of thoughts
over a smoking city...

let these words from the aged parrot brew whispers
bringing the echoes of roars from Sodom and Gomorrah
as tickles in the ears of our sons,
and the tidings from Jericho
as earrings on the high ears of our girls

(epilogue)
tales from fallen city is better from afar
because
were-dun-un wo
but no one prays for one as a child.

Notes on the Poet-chiatrists

Goodness Ayoola is a poet and teacher of English. His poetry has appeared in poetry journals and anthologies. Few of his poems have garnered awards and translated into Assemese. He is currently an International Director of the World Union of Poets and was one of the judges for the 2016 Green Authors Prize (GAP) sponsored by Words Rhymes and Rhythms. He is the author of Meditations, a collection of poems. He has an NCE in English and Yoruba languages and a B.A (ed) in English.

Wale Ayinla is a young Nigerian poet, teacher and motivational speaker. He tries out music as his second companion after poetry. Some of his works have appeared on The Kalahari Review, Prachya Review, Brittle Paper, Dwarts Magazine, Peregrine Reads and other literary platforms. He is the author of White Rose and The Other Side of Other Rooms. He blogs at Dwartsonline.

Abimbola Mosobalaje hails from Osun State, Nigeria. He is a poet and lover of arts in all its diversities. He is a graduate of Industrial Chemistry from the University of Ilorin. He works as a laboratory analyst in an agro-allied industry in Akure, Ondo State.