

At Dawn

(Yaoundé: June 6 1984, après le putsch)

Tired trails of filthy smoke
The emptiness of imported champagne
And mimetic sham of Parisian lifestyles
Float to the emerging dawn of an immature sky.

City in a trance
Heaps of human waste
The sprouting bequest from
Pale-faced colonial stiff necks
Slaps our freedom on the face.

I was there when cowherds entrenched
Their ebony-black buttocks,
Pre-independence alliances into
Strands of post-independence faeces.

In Abakwa, Fence, Briqueterie and New Town
The harsh rift of haves and have-nots
Culminates in the staccato concerto of this
Pre-dawn death music for traitors.

Pilate hand-washing
Special branch precision:
TREASON
Let the bullets be their pay packets.

Spirits detached from flesh;
We broke the 6th commandment to survive:
The wages of sin have now become instant death.

The cosmos unfolds
The pre-dawn miracle
Overdue caressing rhythm
The tattoo of drums and barrels of lead.

Behind me the pungent faeces
From bloated entrails
Spill into the streets
And the day has dawned.

The anthem and the tricolour flag
Flash metallic bayonets of
Buffoon sword-swinging republican guards,
Even the stiff-khaki hulk of
Polished flesh and camouflage uniforms,
All these were only
An unforeseen overdose
Of political laughing gas.