

HYENA MAN

Yorùbá Hunter Poem

The scruffy one
Who eats the meat
Together with the bag
In which it is kept.
The greedy one,
Who eats the mother
And does not spare the child
God's bandy-legged creature.
Killer in the night.



CORMORANT

Fiona Pitt-Kethley

My visitor is a cormorant

His scraggy neck makes me believe he's thin
until I see the rest, in dusty black.
He hangs his oily mac up by the door,
spread out to dry across a couple of hooks.

Eyes close together, face a little sharp,
intent on getting everything he wants.
He loves my fishy smell and dives right in



THE EGÚNGÚN

Tade Ipadeola

With me tonight is a masked man
he-who-must-not-be-named
who covers himself with mirrors
and the smell of distant planets.

He growls for speech and grunts
continually his carnal ecstasies.
His body is old and lean and full
of experience and the night.

He sheds every apparel on him
except the mask, except the carved
mask with a dozen ivory heads
of which an uncle once told
a strange story high on pot.

My guest makes me wonder within
if they teach arithmetic
in the world beyond my own-
he pays exactly what I ask
and not a naira more.

He is albino, has a tattoo
of a clock on his smooth belly:
twelve sharp,
midday or midnight I don't know

He offers his clay pipe in the time
he has left on the clock
but I must decline
as politely as I can.



ANTELOPE

Yorùbá Hunter Poem

A creature to pet and spoil
Like a child.
Smooth skinned
Stepping cautiously
In the lemongrass
Round and plump
Like a newly married wife.
The neck
Heavy with brass rings.
The eyes
Gentle like a bird's.
The head
Beautiful like carved wood.
When you suddenly escape
You spread fine dust
Like a butterfly
Shaking its wings.
Your neck seems long,
So very long
To the greedy hunter.



ORANGES

Chika Unigwe

With me tonight
Is the smell of oranges
Of lavender
Of a partner (a wife?) left behind

He calls me Julie or honey or sweet thing
Tells me to bite his ears
Suck his nipples
Hold his cock

He tastes of sweat
And guilt and dreams
He calls me his Nubian princess
And when he comes

He moans a name
That ricochets around the room
Bouncing off walls
A name

That is not mine
Which drags him back
Pulls him off me
And leads him out

Back home (?)



EXIT

Mike Ladd

One day
before I launch from this room
straight through the roof
I will count all the dry specks of flesh
my men have left

there must be dunes meters high
if I cupped them in my hand
blew them to the sky
they would join stars
constellations of memories,
ambitions, tiny drifters on lightyears

dandruff, the dust of angst
floats in my client's half sweet tear
when I take off from my catapult chair
the flecks of skin will bluster
like rocket ship smoke
and I'll be gone.





QUIET TWIN BED

Olajumoke Verissimo

My visitor tonight is a quiet twin bed
Carrying pillows that have known sweat,
Fears and anxieties of men who turn amoeba
As I twist their body into a narrative of desires

My body a lonesome partner, confides
My wish for an audience on the bed—a stadia
Where thighs yield to sports of a hunger
Of love, that turn innards into singers

This bed has witnessed erosions before
Bed sheets stream down to a side as
Marathons of fantasies and dreams
Become ambitions fleshing into twined legs

On this bed were matches between nations
A white skin slapping a brown skin into bargain
Of animated moans finding convergence
In the rush of shaking shoulders and hope of bliss.