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Two Poems by Niyi Osundare

by Niyi Osundare • 2 min read • [original](#)

Wish I could *still* laugh with the lotus
On the bank of the Nile

Take off my clothes
And dive into the Zambezi

Join spirit dancers
In the middle of the Ganges

Romp with the Rio
To the thunder of the samba

Fan the Yangtze's face
With the fan of the moon

Tease the Thames
With a shoeless foot

Embrace the Volga
With open arms

Ask the Mississippi
For a bowl of water . . .

Alas, between cup and lip
An acre of wishes

Hole in the Sky

(Choreo-poem. Preferably with musical accompaniment, the tempo varying)

according to the mood and meaning of each section)

Eco-Snaps

Koko gbakokodi

*Koko didikokodi**

“Tell my story,”
Said the Earth to me,
“Oh, tell my story the way it is.
Don’t sugarcoat its bile
Don’t varnish its rust
Don’t cover its scars with pretty words
Tell my pain the way it is
 The way it is
 The way the way the way it is
Tell my pain, the way it is.”

Koko gbakokodi

Koko didikokodi

The day the river caught fire
And the lake burnt like Devil’s oil

The mountain coughed like a broken giant
The sky’s eyes were red with grief . . .

Plants whose lethal spills provoked the plague
Lay fortified behind the hills
Ayekooto† sighted their owners
On their way to the city bank

Koko gba kokodi

iii

Ever heard fruits arguing between the leaves
Over which got the deepest dose
Of the pesticidal plague?

The poison killed the pest
And later buried the people

Koko gba kokodi

The thunder of the sea
Rattles the silence of the sky
Wailing whales wonder about their woes
The deeper the dolphin dives
The shallower its desired relief

Koko gba kokodi

The desert marches towards the sea
The desert marches towards the sea

Fire in its eyes
Mayhem in every movement

The desert marches towards the sea

With camel-loads of broken skulls,
Roasting *iroko* trees for lunch
The mahogany for early dinner.
Dandelions roar beneath its feet.
The elephant grass has lost its tusks
To the famished poacher from sandy regions

The desert marches towards the sea

Alas, the boundless rainforest of my youth
Has shrunk to a frightened eyebrow
On the forehead of the coast

Koko gba kokodi

The midday sun
Cannot see its face in the lake
The turquoise sea is yellow

From the poison of upland plants
The day they killed a tree
In the ancient forest
The chainsaw left a dirge
On the lips of the leaves

There is a bird in my heart
Craving for a perch on the absent tree.

Koko gba kokodi

vii

Seasons of omen:
One-legged frogs
Babies with missing arms
The grass's green laughter
Has yellowed into sickening groan
Vengeful droughts digest the fields

Koko gba kokodi

viii

A hole
A hole
A blazing hole
In the garment of the sky

Oven-hot summers
Winters blind with ice

The Arctic melts like butter
As rising oceans consume the land

Fog-fraught cities grope
Beneath their fuming factories
The rain falls, acid,
On frightened forests

The Earth we used to know
Is once upon a time

A hole
A hole
A blazing, blinding hole
In the garment of the sky

Koko gba kokodi

Trumpet sounds in the horizon
Green intimations unfurl the wind
Healing needle to the hole in the sky
Earth's Redemption Army
Is gathering strength beyond the clouds.

Trumpet sounds behind the mountains
Green intimations unfurl the wind.

Koko gba kokodi

Koko didi kokodi

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