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**Mohamed A. Eno**

# CORPSES ON THE MENU

*Blood, Bullets and Bones*



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ON  
THE MENU**

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Blood, Bullets and Bones  
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This volume is dedicated to the victims of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, domination, poor governance, and senseless wars – all of which contributed to Africa’s underdevelopment. It is also dedicated to those who lost their lives in the vicious struggle of resisting such oppressions and/or in the course of their search for peace and stability in the African continent as well as for the world society.



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# Foreword

Reading Mohamed Eno's new collection of poems, one is struck by the poet's intellectual and artistic prowess. Eno's poetry demonstrates a subtle and complex interplay of history and personal/experiential wisdom. It is a poetry that compels the reader to grapple seriously with both the concepts it embodies and the new critical vocabulary it employs to defetishize the obfuscations still extant in old narratives that imprison us. This new vocabulary is unstable, combative, and performative in its attempts to chart a new terrain.

*Corpses on the Menu: Blood, Bullets, and Bones* is a poetic rendition of jagged struggles over country, religion, race, ethnicity, family, and culture. It is also about the skewed times that produce and in turn issue from jaded battles over political, historiographic, and symbolic landscapes. The poems in the book gain their perspicacity and gumption through the juxtapositions the poet creates between adversaries. Part One opens with "Agony across the Atlantic." It is a poem that eulogizes the millions of African youth who perished in the Middle Passage, and whose corpses rest in watery graves or in the bowels of sharks. The last line of the poem is an apostrophe that sends chills down one's spine; it also subtly implicates the ocean: "The Atlantic Ocean knows." It is as though the poet here alludes to a Chinese maxim that says, "To know and not to act, is not to know." Why didn't the ocean revolt against the horrors committed on its borders and with its acquiescence? Would treasure hunters one day stumble upon the remains of an African bone courtesy of a body of water about to divulge old secrets in exchange and in search of expiation? Would such a finding be enough to indict a ship, a crew, a nation, or the Atlantic Ocean itself? Would an International Court of Justice that relishes in prosecuting African-on-African crimes have the wherewithal necessary to retrace the steps and seek justice for bones of dust? Eno's opening poem resembles what the Somalis say of language:

*mergi*, suggesting the sinew-like contours or characteristics of language/words.

From the Atlantic debacle, the poet turns his poetic gaze to a slew of other ills with their roots in the slave trade. Whether indicting colonialism or the host of other “isms” that have inflicted pain on the African body – both in its psychic and corporeal entities – the poet shows that nothing is done haphazardly. There is indeed a method to the meanness, as all actions are interrelated and are meant to engender a concatenation of events. These were inaugurated with the slave trade and culminated in the Africans cannibalizing themselves.

The beauty of Eno’s poetry is its balanced tone and tenor. It does not romanticize the African past, nor does it create extenuating circumstances for “black cats” or “hyenas” that denude the land. In “Black Cats,” Eno writes:

*Once upon a long time,  
said the elderly chieftain,  
I saw black cats and buccaneers  
slink among the bushes  
forests near the bamboo trees,  
in the back of bougainvillea,  
the palm trees behind  
the bare narrow alleys  
in the backyard of buildings  
praying together  
for a prey.*

This is a poem that could be read synoptically, proleptically, and telescopically to point to the skewed times we mentioned earlier. The more things change, the more they stay the same. We are, the poet seems to say, forging ahead on hind legs. The feline imagery in this poem morphs in the next three poems into serpentine (“Snakes under Oath”), to crocodilian (“Crocodiles of the Bank”), and into the abhorred image of carrion eaters (“Hyenas”).

Equilibrium is returned by the momentary triumph of a peasant revolution that chases all kinds of interlopers away from the communal center. It is here that Eno's poetry forces the reader always to be dialectical, as interlopers assume varying guises to maintain their hold on our consciousness. Here one is reminded of Achebe's *nchie* bird that mused: ever since men learned how to shoot straight, I have learned how to adapt and evade their bullets. The peasants' rebellion ushers in a respite, albeit a temporary one. For before long, it becomes apparent that "only the foreigner's face formally faded." The era of a temporary loss of sanity begins again. Here the poems recount and account for the woes that plague several African countries where internecine feuds wreak havoc on deceived citizens. But the poet cannot be fooled, for in the words of Henri Meschonnic, "Le premier devoir poétique est de ne pas être dupe."

The last two parts of the book pay tribute to fallen friends and to the travails of the Bantu Jareer in the Diaspora. In Part Six, titled "Elegy for Fallen Friends," Eno calls the names of three friends whose lives were cut short by assassins' bullets. The invocation of the names of slain heroes – Ayub, Yahye, and Elman – aims to ensconce their memory in the consciousness of successive Somali generations.

Part Seven, "On Diaspora and the Somali Bantu: Cultural Miscommunication?" is a long contemplative dialogue poem that pairs the poetic voice (a fictional Bantu Jareer bard) (the poet's alter ego?) with former U. S. President George W. Bush. The poet blames Bush for reneging on his administration's promise to the Bantu Jareer: "of plots to plow/from Boston as far as Portland." The poet's accusation should not be taken lightly, as the Somali Bantu community had been deceived once too often. The community's pain is compounded by cultural miscommunication that has them and their American hosts talking at cross purposes. The poet views the talking implied here as one that is marked by hierarchy and that encourages the Bantu to assimilate without putting

in place tangible or credible mechanisms to integrate them into the host culture. Integration connotes cultivating a willed intention, a soul with agency able to contribute to an evolving sacred center that both informs and is informed by the culture's constituent parts.

Let me conclude this short discussion of Eno's new book with a brief reflection on his poem "In Celebration of Harmony," which is a generous yet firm critique of my poem "The Clan, the Nation and the World" in my recent book *When Donkeys Give Birth to Calves*. Eno's poem is part of the poems that fall under the segment title "Attempting the Alternative" (Part Six). The poetic voice in "In Celebration of Harmony" interrogates the last line of my poem: "Isku dumme, Isu dumme, Molder of nations, where are you now?" Eno throws the question back at me: "Who dare assure me of equality/based on morality/without ethnicity?" In other words, who would guarantee me of a fair deal when your molder of nations appears on the political scene? And with that poignant question, Eno astutely chooses historical discontinuity to show his concern for the African future.

*Corpses on the Menu* is a book of poetry that creates tension, and suggests that the best is yet to come, even when "my emaciated soul lies wedged/in an awful, abrasive body,/entrapped in anger [...]" The use of "emaciated" to describe the soul is fresh and shocking. The poetry points to future ruptures, as "entrapped in anger" will suggest. Yet the soul is only emaciated and gaunt, not dead; thus the possibility of its return when the season of foul weather is over. Brilliant words from a poet whose work is hopeful, yet realistic. This is poetry to be relished. Enjoy it.

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# Introduction

The lyrical corpora in this collection cover a broad range of issues intersecting through Africa's agonies during the Atlantic Slavery and in the New World, colonial exploitation and post-colonial political mismanagement by corrupt elite who took over the leadership and drove the highly aspirant peoples of the continent into metamorphic layers of desperation and devastation. It denounces Africa's destructive conflicts, wars, and the lack of attainment of better social well-being, despite the plentiful natural wealth bestowed upon it. Exploring through the social realities of anguish and pain, and by using the lyrics of the verse as an effective tool of communication, the book is yet one of very rare poetry works that specifically concentrates on the chaotic war situation that has characterized the continent over the past couple of decades or so, but for which the African and world leaders remain oblivious to undertake the necessary reform towards a lasting peace, harmony, mutual coexistence, and a better African continent. To bring the problem to a focal point, the volume dedicates a special section for Somalia due to the chronic nature of the failure of its statehood, where death and destruction are painstakingly tolerated as the norm of the day, but where, nevertheless, hope is also permanently alive. In a unique mixture of free-style, rhymed, and alliterated poems, the author attempts to portray Africa through the rocky entanglements of slavery, colonialism, atrocity, desolation, oppression, betrayal, revenge, forgiveness, hope, and obituary for the fallen.





PART ONE  
AFRICA'S OLD WOES





# Agony across the Atlantic

She takes not hundreds  
but thousands of able-bodied  
males and females as  
African slaves, migrating  
to meet America's God.

When wild seas, tuberculosis,  
fever, diarrhoea, and cholera  
promise them instant deaths:  
Boy! Seas conceal the secret  
of their ill-fated corpses!

Someone decreed sharks that day,  
unopposed jurists among the amalgam  
of maritime species arguing  
over the sharing of corpses,  
opportunity for the Atlantic's ecology –

Master of Ceremonies  
of feasts and celebrations only  
the Atlantic Ocean knows!

# The New World Wild

When Imperialism appeared on Earth,  
no one knew about Earth, so  
America made Earth,  
where the Indians existed  
on American rent of  
the newfound Earth.

When imperialists found  
the Indians living calm and proud,  
as “philanthropists” under cover  
they offered “rescue” operations  
covertly code-named  
“extinction operations”!

You have doubts about that?  
Ask the American Indian  
and Afro-American  
elders.

# A Humanized Uncle Sam?

“...but America is refusing to be humanized morally.” – Ali A.

Mazrui, *Cultural Forces in World Politics* (p. 116)

In the land of opportunity  
life lingers lost  
in looming hypocrisy:  
Democracy denotes a daily  
recipe decoratively uttered  
to designate humanity;  
a doctrine of equality,  
definitive justice –  
though dogma depleted  
dearly in deed.

If by intuitive imagination  
any good Uncle Sam is  
as other humans of sound mind  
and morals: Judge not  
his empty ideologies until  
the emotional utterances  
from graves of millions of  
Gazan orphans and infants  
offer their witness accounts.

To clear the air intellectually,  
may I aptly invoke Emeritus academician  
Ali Mazrui as the expert?

# The Imperialists' Abductions

Black Africa ransacked  
by a fatty Mr. Whiteman;  
an envoy, he claims, of  
the Whiteman's God.

While the African sacristan  
devotedly carries the hefty scriptures  
of Mr. Whiteman to God's houses,  
Mr. Whiteman abducts large  
African man and woman into  
*Noah's boat* from God, to help  
African man and woman  
see Good Lord's light  
in Mr. Whiteman's land.

African man screams  
in frenzied frown, leaps  
out of hibernation, bursts:  
*Where am I? Where am I?*  
*Why is this dream too long?*

Whip! Whip! More whip!  
"This ain't a too-long dream, *nigger*,"  
Mr. Whiteman's brother boasts.  
"You're my damned *slave*, nigger!"

# Enlightenment for Africa

Commen came, and colonial expansion  
with coveted sciences of exploitation,  
listing syllabi of expropriation  
containing core specialization.

Taxation took over the disciplines  
taught by those crafty crusaders,  
who in broad daylight preached  
the burdens of forced labour  
as the Lord God's greatest gospels:

"Thou art the blessed chosen, Africa!  
We enlighten you from the dark,  
teach you foreign languages, rich  
cultures nobler, superior to yours,  
charity as lethal but tiny weapons,  
gifted to your starving people so  
they may wipe each other out,  
to be remembered in history  
as those saved from primitive  
lives...by the likes of Conrad."

# The Other Side of Uncle Sam

Where there ain't no elections imminent,  
Democracy ain't dominant!  
Either thou art *of* me  
or else a foe of me!

Whosoever acquires a gun,  
able to aim it accurately  
at another, with a will  
to act upon that intent,  
has his independent  
actions endorsed!

Eleven hundred blacks and more  
eradicated every hour, about eighty  
or more evacuated in ambulances;  
a score of dozens strewn  
in emergency areas  
awaiting extinction:  
Oh, sorry! You ain't got  
no insurance coverage!

Out, out! Away, take them all!  
I ain't got no binding legal authority,  
much less moral authority,  
to attend to an ailing Nigger  
who ain't got no insurance coverage!

Ambulances' active sirens  
scream annoyingly loud amid  
the empty nights in Orleans  
to aid abandoned addicts!

Offer sheltering blankets and spread on 'em  
those overburdened, so utterly squeezed  
in alleys of amazing skyscrapers,  
anxiously expecting  
an amorphous fate!



PART TWO  
ILL FATE AFTER  
INDEPENDENCE



# An Act of Incest!

I was Mother Africa  
under Western imperialism  
that inflicted me anguish  
across the Atlantic:  
slavery, inhumanity,  
exploitation  
in my abode.

Under my offspring:  
adamant army rule,  
illiterates operating  
above elites,  
the overnight millionaires  
inaugurated underdevelopment,  
invigorated misappropriation,  
initiated ethnic cleansing,  
effectuated acts of violence –  
exacting on me incest  
unbelievable,  
unforgettable,  
unforgivable.

Whose *Mother* am I?

# Too Long a Dream!

They strive for prosperity,  
they cry for liberty  
to freedom doomed...

Did I say justice eluded  
in the absence of equality  
when egoism precluded  
the accentuation  
of wisdom,  
fidelity?

Yesteryears tell their story:  
about vibrant nations disjoined  
like dispersed, worn-out weeds,  
their worth washed away  
when the West's locusts  
left us with larvae of filth  
to liquidate our local wealth.

Who dispensed at will the "unity"  
that threatened common ethnicity,  
while yesteryears' vain dreams  
deeply haunt us  
in obliterating poverty?

# The Colonial Larvae

When cultivation is over  
crop grows mature,  
crows and locusts of every kind  
crawl into the crop yard before  
the village can calm  
the culprits' infestation.

So the locusts came,  
laying large larvae in the lots,  
loitering with looped bellies  
to lead our livelihood horizons  
into labyrinths of mysteries,  
till they left the long unborn  
with large sums of loans.

# Black Cats

*Once upon a long time,  
said the elderly chieftain,  
I saw black cats and buccaneers  
slink among the bushes,  
forests near the bamboo trees,  
in the back of the bougainvillea,  
the palm trees behind  
the bare narrow alleys,  
in the backyard of buildings  
praying together  
for a prey.*

*Like black cats and buccaneers  
our welfare custodians  
sole eaters of the grains  
reaped over the seasons  
by disabled skinny men  
and expectant skeletal mothers  
undernourished in poverty  
drinking drops of water  
in the day-long duty  
from dawn-to-dusk*

# Snakes under Oath

When appointed to office,  
their utterance pure as olive oil.  
To the swearing-in their attire  
insufficient without the enormous  
“holy book” cuddled in the armpits,  
murmuring in hasty multiples  
oaths of mere tongue-twists.

Like the ill-bound snakes  
in our ancestors’ stories,  
who, after oaths taken of solemn  
communal trusts, aggravated  
the earth with evil:

Hares, hens, heifers, humans –  
they swallowed anyone in sight,  
two or three at a time.

Like snakes under oath  
They emptied our Mother Africa.

# Crocodiles of the Bank

Landed crocodiles craftily  
wading tactical tails  
begin their days at noon  
with persistent practices that  
don't fail to trap the juicy,  
tasty fish breeding well  
on the ponds where people  
save their properties.

Land crocodiles retire home with  
salmons, shrimps, and sardines  
sorted from among tilapia,  
king, and turtles; they boast of  
booming daily catches -  
when barely literate bosses boldly  
sign papers privileging  
them, bandits and crocodiles  
to boost clan baskets.

# Hyenas

When the hooded creature  
visited the homestead,  
he looked horrifying:  
    half Black,  
    half White,  
    half human,  
    half hyena.

The household was hallucinated,  
hampered with helplessness;  
    half cried,  
    half crawled,  
    hiding but not hidden  
    from the horror.  
Through the door-hole  
The home-dwellers peeped  
    *Hanad* and *Hilaac*,  
the hefty healthy in the field  
    hollering for help when  
    the half-human,  
    half-hyena  
hunted them in the hyper-raid  
    of a hideous night.

# A Peasant Thus Betrayed

Your alarming early wake-up call  
activated us all into action,  
amalgamating unrelated entities  
under the same ideology  
to eliminate the obnoxious outsider.

Liberty and freedom –  
so you formulated the vow  
from the foreign outlaw,  
only our own decree of self-rule  
promises our prosperity.

Then unorganized army of ardent men,  
though ill-equipped with antique arrows,  
took the unswerving oath of war:  
incarcerated, alienated, isolated;  
too many scores unaccounted for  
were eliminated, in the end  
ousting the unruly interloper.

But when fetched the freedom fought for,  
*Lo!* Only the foreigner's face formally faded;  
his philosophical function flourished firm,  
further frustrating the tenets of  
our fast move forward.

# Lice in Our Fabric

Borrowing benchmarks from colonial books  
building a broad base, powerful  
home-born, neo-colonial bastards  
thus broadened the potent barbarism,  
pillaging the poor produce in our barns.

Truth popped up overt  
of your projected plots covert,  
alerting the stooping masses, who  
ascended you to the altar,  
to awareness of the political  
calamity you crafted.

*Tick! Tick! Tick!* Into the depth of dirt  
trickles the sweat of our tattered selves,  
tired of tilling and taming the soil,  
tormenting *tacab*<sup>1</sup> timeless,  
no treatment for the tough  
trauma tackling us.

Unwell, unattended to here, as I lay  
stricken in attrition, allotted to decay,  
my emaciated soul lay wedged  
in an awful, abrasive body,  
entrapped in anger of the unfulfilled prey.

Note:

1. Tacab is a Somali term which means very hard manual task; in this case tilling.

# Mechanized Mob Justice

Today, wands flail high overhead:  
Daggers, arrows, spears, machetes,  
peasant masses parade to judge,  
in the town streets the colonial  
larvae apprehended for appropriating  
assets in the wee dark hours.  
Colonial larvae conquered us  
from within our textures,  
annihilating us inside out  
over many-score years endless.

Like tempest waves  
from the Wild West  
colonial larvae conquered  
harvests storehoused.

No plea bargain  
will reprieve larvae today  
from communal punishment  
served in mob justice.





PART THREE  
CORPSE MILLS



Oh, Africa!

How much wealth do you make  
from the mega man-slaughterhouses,  
the multimillion corpses you  
manufacture every minute?

# The African Vampires

In my grandma's telling,  
the vampires of Africa cherish  
much culture in common created  
in colonial college customized  
in our continent.

Like the vultures of outer space,  
vampires are made of mysteries:

Million molars,  
magnetic incisors,  
mallet-sized cuspids  
and bicuspid made  
of guillotine.

For the daily diet,  
Africa's vampires  
squash metamorphic rocks  
like the spearmint Dandy,  
lightning as liquid beverage,  
making humans lucky  
to be the last delicacy.

# De-ethnicizing the Oromo

From epochs past in  
the imperial-Amhar-ization,  
when Oromo elimination  
was a state-level agenda  
of corpse-exportation  
supplying markets and  
mega stores for man-eaters,  
applying Adolf's ideology  
in Ethiopia's Oromiyya

EHDG-ization of the state  
might abolish the trade aspiring  
before the authority stipulated another  
mass de-ethnicization, with pleas  
and promises to not mitigate  
the sub-menus from the old  
mother-menu.

The market economy models,  
the competitive advantage means,  
coupled with the margin curve modes  
of the state's economies of scale,  
merge the curve of expertise  
with the first mover advantage  
mobilized during the early  
era of Amhar-ization.

# The Kigali Case

Here lay the souls of the forsaken in laxity,  
ignored by the higher world authority,  
neglected by the knowledge of Africa  
amid the heat of ferocious fratricide.

When blood-bathed victims were swept out,  
the world's watchdogs went withered,  
dancing waltzes, wine, whiskey  
wiggling witless words.

Then a deafening debate of the dead  
drew me into depression and dread,  
albeit in my dream-like stead:

*Isn't this ethnic dehumanization?*

*Don't you call it human de-ethnicization?*

*Didn't I say it's genocide UN-ization?*

*Doesn't it mean genocide African-ization?*

A cup-sized skull concludes:  
*Among the core criminals in the case  
are cogent custodians of the keys  
cut for our community courthouse.  
For constructive corroboration,  
consult the Kunta Kinte clan and  
Kigali's "Christian" clergymen!*

# Another Puppet Forsaken?

Regional power balance slipped  
off the hands of the aliens,  
allies of dictatorships  
defiant to the democracy  
of the Middle Eastern domain.

So America's supporting lever  
and the pulley of Israeli interest  
each bypassed the other  
in the making of the modern  
political inclined plane designed  
in the artless architecture of crooked,  
abominable leadership lost in  
the frustration of a Spring  
the intelligentsia underestimated.

Security forces  
clad in combat gear,  
equipped with approvals  
state licensure to eliminate  
all humans in sight – by butt,  
bayonet, and bullet to protect  
policies of imperial plundering  
people protested against,  
pouring out blood  
of citizens besieged,  
perpetually pawned  
to impenitent dictatorship:  
a public driven democracy  
Uncle Sam often disdained.

# The Sub and the Superior: A Sudanese Sonnet

Wanton killings are unwarranted;  
we are one nation sharing  
a history of oppressing  
ourselves as a nation!

To safeguard the sovereignty  
and soul of the Sudan nation,  
we have the sanctity to serve  
the superordination of the masses  
into superior tribes and subcategories.

If the solution to survive the superior  
tribes presupposes seizure of the sub,  
certainly the Darfur situation is set  
under the very same psychology,  
for the superior's safety  
and security  
is sacrosanct.

# Sierra Leone: Saved or Sacrificed?

Où est l'Afrique?

Où est t'il?

Where is Africa?

Where is it?

The brotherhood in it we invested,  
the sisterhood we all preached –  
why am I left mercilessly in the rue,  
with men who deem me of no value?  
Why am I forsaken under the guidance  
of rapists who left Africa pregnant?

*Lord!*

The boom of blood money betrayed,  
the potential on us bestowed  
while the perpetrators bragged:  
Be it right or wrong,  
blood money rules long  
as we dance in its song.

Africa, Africa,  
are you still there?  
Africa, Africa,  
are you still the *Sleeping One*  
lamented in the Somali song?

# The Adamant of Abidjan

In the country where I am  
a leader once elected by  
the democratic process of the people,  
that same process dares not  
remove me from the seat  
it once ascended me to.

I adhere to the culture  
of taking office by plebiscite,  
but I adore not the same  
to inform my removal.  
So when the vote disfavors  
me as a choice for President,  
I quite safely will myself  
a President for Life,  
since the math of ballot-counting  
proves no scientific practice,  
the exercise of which all the world's  
observers had intellect enough  
to judge free and fair.

The world is responsible for  
the bloodbath you witnessed;  
it interfered in the affairs of  
a sovereign and free nation,  
when I extinguish  
*just a few, ah... disobedients.*

# Rats Ruling the Republic!

Seasons are born with secrets  
not so concealed to the seasoned  
world of political satirists who  
prefigure in clear pictures  
that fools can fathom the future.

The masses' murmuring made  
no meaningful changes;  
when he assigned seals  
of suppression on sane minds,  
he sabotaged the safety locks  
supporting the social feeds  
and burst mere messages into  
a mayhem of blood and bullets.

In the raging battles,  
the renegade *rats*  
razed the reign of terror  
and its ruthless ruler  
to restore the republic,  
under the rule of...*rats*.

Seeking refuge, safe haven  
in secluded sewage pipes  
does not sustain a noble  
stance for one celebrated  
as Africa's "Super Son."

# Tumult in Tunisia

“If one day the people determine to overcome the burden of oppression, in their favor fate will necessarily respond to their desire...” – Abu al Qassim Al-Shabi (Tunisian poet, 1909-1934; *If one day the people...*) [my translation]

He who ushered in the dawn  
of dictatorship long in the doing,  
duping the people of billions in dollars  
stashed in idle, secret accounts –  
did not anticipate a thought  
of status quo change abridged  
into a nation’s ill-fate  
that obscured the poetic  
landmark it made  
ages ago in history:  
That if once the masses  
determine a life-change,  
invincible is their cause  
till they garner the victory.

# Kenya's Bellyful Politician

Shake hands with him once,  
you need a massage twice –  
for the hard grip of his handshake  
halts the blood-flow pulse,  
flopping your frail body  
under Frank's shake's force,  
though the horrid feeling  
lasts a second or two.

This politico found a trademark:  
a phony, flippant smile  
on a face deformed by a fat-mass,  
his goofy jaws graded for grinding  
goat meat grilled in garden bars,  
the *Nyama Choma* gourmet of the guiles,  
the granulators  
of the economy-grouped urban elite.  
Our village politician is back,  
his massive belly protruding,  
balloon-sized breasts bulging  
on a broad chest bursting  
of cholesterol burden,  
breathing painstakingly at every heartbeat;  
begging for a break after every bit of pace,  
bothersome smell of pong  
proliferating from his armpits,  
our "big" politician is back  
to beg for another term in parliament –  
though he's lost the charm  
that once put him on  
the triumph train.

# An Octogenarian Obstacle

Power in this land  
equates to reign of terror  
engaged forever  
denial of social will,  
for the political incumbent  
mastered the sciences  
of dictatorship  
in Machiavelli's doctrine  
as done too by Commodus  
in the days of medieval Rome:  
That man in any country must  
pledge prompt, supreme loyalty  
to the leader precise in  
the arts of oppression  
so *democracy* is maintained  
in the expressionless tongue tamed.

The zenith of that knowledge  
in a zip-code of practice  
zeroed into Zimbabwe  
with malice:

There, a zealous octogenarian  
awaits a fate unknown,  
assumed to be heading  
towards unholy ending  
like others afore him.  
act wise, old man  
before annihilation

# Incorporated Ethnicities?

*We make part and parcel of  
the strong Somali nation.*

He who doubts that solemn  
declaration defies the national  
doctrine that drafted the *Afar Dankali*  
into the docket of Somaliness  
detailed in *our* desirous democracy.

We Somalized the *Afar*  
to create the Djibouti nation,  
an entity of the Somali,  
but not much of the Dankali,  
so the *Afars* may reckon  
our power in kinship,  
which concentrates loyalty  
in the great Somali clanship,  
so it may forewarn them  
of the jeopardy  
encased in bemoaning the hardship  
of bearing our flagship.

# Unpropitious Matrimony

Ululations apparent,  
atmosphere jubilant,  
performers vibrant,  
edibles, beverages abundant;  
elders reluctant,  
scholars hesitant,  
politicians sycophant,  
bride dormant,  
groom vigilant...

African academics admonish:  
an illegal marriage with  
America and the EU,  
when the earlier illegitimate  
offspring, ill-begotten and  
abandoned to Africa,  
informs eons of the agonies  
acquired as unpropitious effects.





PART FOUR  
OF SOMALIA AND  
POLITICAL SATIRISM



# Jinx, Jeans, and Jackboots

Jaamac-waal wears jackboots  
and jeans donated by John;  
on July first Jaamac-waal  
joined the jam session  
of a political jamboree  
in a jagged nation  
jam-packed with juniors  
among the local janitors.

Jaamac-waal went on a jaunt  
with Western jaundice,  
jaywalking and jive-talking  
about pain.

Jeyte thought Jaamac-waal  
was in jitterbugging and jovial mood,  
jumping into the jam session  
with genius jazz lyrics.

The junta of onlookers jeered  
at Jeyte's jester-jerkiness,  
but when Jaamac-waal  
jetted out a fart-jinx,  
Jaamac-waal's jeopardy  
jiggered jivers  
to Jeyte, who failed  
to juxtapose to Jinn Jaamac-waal's  
gyrating as if in Jacuzzi,  
that what Jeyte had thought  
a joyride were juju and jinx  
Jaamac met in the jeans  
and jackboots from John.

# The Bloodsuckers

“...a diabolical genius who had understood the mantle history had accidentally placed on his shoulders.” –

Ali J. Ahmed (1996:101)

In the sixties, in the sixties  
when we entered the red office,  
you masses weren't enough smart  
to stand our mastering you with art,  
so we kept our kith and kin alert  
to our strategic economic support,  
that whoever made the early bird  
would raise state coffers of blizzard  
to be the bloodsuckers of  
the society we made sufferers.

But see the ten after the seventies,  
the suffering of *Suleeqa*<sup>1</sup> in *saqdhexe*<sup>2</sup>  
*Siijeed*,<sup>3</sup> *soojeed*<sup>4</sup> all over the sides:  
They sliced the pretty *Suleeqa*,  
a sunken prey, into sub-portions.

They subdued societal sanity  
when as saviours they said:  
We're so proud of our mastery  
at managing the unhealthy state  
drained of much of its wealthy  
sources by our diabolical rapacity.

But whether rapacity diabolical  
reflects rich or rogue of the self  
in such a “diabolical genius,”  
we seek substantiation  
from the seasoned Somali poet  
who submitted that super slogan.

Notes:

1. *Suleeqa* is a she-camel and stands for independence in Somali pastoral culture.
2. *Saqdhexe* means odd hours of the night.
3. *Siijeed* means backside.
4. *Soojeed* is the opposite of *Siijeed* and means the front side.

# Graduate of Clan War Academy

Born in the eruption of blasts  
beneath ballistic missiles  
while poor parents pithless  
were procuring for *bililiqo* loots.

At three he won a grand award  
reciting names of 80 weapons weird  
in the Warfare Hymn Competition  
held in the Clan War Kindergarten.

Swiftly manoeuvring machine guns  
in a blink, planting deadly bombs,  
odd activities in army tactics,  
expert the orphan was at six.

When he engaged an alien army  
as a leader of the Under-Ten Brigade;  
though unable to inscribe the alphabet  
attained emeritus at age ten  
in a prestigious Clan War Academy.

# Vulgarity So Anointed

Tribally drafted  
enforced motivation,  
careless commitment,  
vulgarity anointed  
in a bosom empty  
of love and passion,  
he who lost wisdom  
went wild into war,  
wrecking  
wretched  
wrecks.

Death and life alike,  
growth and doom alike,  
heartless and humanity alike,  
hatred and harmony alike,  
men fed on hooves and honey,  
hungry hounds hollering in empty  
yards, yearning for yams  
while the reeling havoc rages,  
wrecking  
wretched  
wrecks...

# Moral De-Values

Ferocity of acts passionless  
incurring her indignities thoughtless;  
ooze of virgin blood ceaseless  
and the undignified body lifeless.

Those bogus warriors mindless,  
failures, rascals heartless  
at the hands of *moryaans*<sup>1</sup> pitiless,  
the beautiful one lies motionless.

Thugs applauding anarchy senseless,  
wicked perpetrators ethic-less,  
a lot among the cursed, faithless,  
pernicious buccaneers merciless  
made us a nation *xikmo*-less,<sup>2</sup>  
a society rendered much *xeer*-less<sup>3</sup>  
among those attributed as *xishmo*-less,<sup>4</sup>  
wanderers so despised as *xarun*-less.<sup>5</sup>

## Notes:

1. *Moryaan*: marauding armed gangs that loot, rape, and cause human suffering; the poverty-ridden
2. *Xikmo*: Somali word related to wisdom, conscience, and sound moral judgment
3. *Xeer*: Somali for customary law that binds every citizen of a culture
4. *Xishmo*: dignity, profound respect and honor
5. *Xarun*: home, abode, nation

# The Price of Disobedience

When Dubbad gave us that glance  
in swelled face of annoyance,  
we looked down in avoidance  
taking refuge in our silence.

It hurt; the lack of prominence,  
disturbance to his intelligence  
for which he lacked inheritance  
except in the form of vengeance.

The prevalence of negligence  
we depicted in ultimate defiance  
of an attitude emboldened with turbulence  
emerged in his ever-sickly variance.

He cocks a huge, deadly appliance  
to contain our pertinent recalcitrance  
for not bowing in acceptance,  
thus violating his self-importance.

We emptied the scene of the occurrence,  
scampering, squeezing into an ambulance;  
under influence of a whiffy, smelly substance  
he released a hellish rocket, loud and nuisance

*"Alloow magantaa!"*

*"Alloow magantaa!"*

Oh Lord! Protect us!

# In Praise of Looting: A Militiaman's Sonnet

Dressed in my Hessian kilt frayed and dull,  
suspense in my empty thought over the hill,  
    eyeing a few unsightly beasts too ill,  
    leaving me in barren life lacking in frill,

    every little while the youth left,  
    lured by lots of lust, I too longed for  
    loot and wealth no man could loathe,  
as all is legitimate for a languishing youth.

*Lo!* How gallons of blood we let out  
    of men living in lovely calm  
    and lonely women lullabying  
    their little ones,  
us lodging rockets in their lungs.

What limousine cars we looted:  
    latest model Land Cruisers,  
    Land Rovers large as Leyland,  
    luxuries for the Lords of War.

When our loaded missiles land  
    on targets labeled to languish,  
we legitimately acquire valuables left,  
loading the loot in our looted luxury cars.  
Oh! How lengthy the distance and hike home!  
    Looking for such lavish living,  
a little-known-about lord of lawlessness  
legalizes looting one's lawful property.

# A Witless Lot!

What's become of time?  
What's the matter with time?  
One another, we ask  
worthless, witless rogues!

You tear apart the tact  
of taking us there,  
two decades of torture  
trembling the totality of  
a nation topsy-turvy.

Why numerous-score years  
in war we engaged?  
Why the multitude of war widows  
we made in wanton killings?

What's become of time?  
What's the matter with time?  
One another, we ask  
worthless, witless rogues!

Every tick of time  
tinted as a token  
translates a tale  
in tricky tabulation;  
taming time  
by its tabulation  
took you too long to read!

Unscrupulous association  
with an arch-enemy  
encouraged atrocities  
and our own obliteration  
arming a few idiots,

absolute interest-seekers  
against each other.

What's become of time?  
What's the matter with time?  
One another, we ask  
worthless, witless rogues!

Every tick of time  
tinted as a token  
translates a tale  
in tricky tabulation;  
taming time  
by its tabulation  
took you too long to read!

# The Curse of the Community

Neither the hot barbs of poetry  
nor the harmony of prose,  
not even the human  
wisdom of healing  
could hold in his head,

always adamant,  
evil, and, more so, uncouth,  
unkind in nature,  
aloof in thought,  
*Iblis*<sup>1</sup> as was his nickname.

*Alloow naga qabo*<sup>2</sup>  
all prayed to Allah:  
extinguish this evil *Iblis*  
before he entombs the entire  
nation under the earth.

Every now and then  
ailments amplified,  
orphans increased,  
and the old abandoned  
in eerie, ugly age;

over and over again,  
annoyances uttered in unison:

*Alloow naga qabo*,  
and usher us all  
under your shelter.

Allah's answer,  
not at all untimely  
unleashed a curse  
on the evil *Iblis*  
in amounts abundant:

On this ill-fated afternoon  
the *Iblis* accrued  
an astounding armoury  
of unsightly armed men  
to annihilate the earth;

but Allah was aware  
and accepted the entreaty.  
Suddenly the unabated screams  
of *Iblis* filled the air everywhere!

In this unexpected incident,  
up, up, and up leapt *Iblis*  
acrobatically, and upon  
returning to earth,  
*Iblis* was powerless.

With stern agony in the field,  
*Iblis* awaits assistance;  
scores of his army  
away and abandoned,  
avoiding yet their ill-fate.

Though adamant over the years,  
awful in ideology  
added to arrogance,  
*Iblis* lay alone,  
screaming for aid.

A well-aimed, venomous  
arrow an expert had oiled  
entered his abdomen,  
eroding his life.

#### Notes

1. *Iblis*: devil or Satan, loaned from Arabic and widely used as such in Somali language.
2. This phrase is an invocation asking Allah to protect His creatures from the evildoer/dictatorial leader.

# The Infidels' Thunder

Red embers fly fast  
into the dust-clouded firmament;  
flashlights through the East,  
floodlights into the West,  
flaring up to summit height,  
fires raging in a wild burst...

*Just typical tracers,*  
a young warrior murmurs,  
staring at the twilit embers.

But he who fought  
in many a dreadful battle  
whispered dismayed words  
of rattle and battle:

*Tracers, tracers!*  
muffled the age-old warrior,  
*Gloomy codes, covert*  
*complexities, questionable*  
*spells of caveat destruction*  
*and disaster at our doorstep.*

*Thunder! The infidel's thunder!*  
came the loud cries raving  
in the dawn's wee hours;  
*Thud, thud!* heavy salvos thundered  
off the feet, the earth shaking,  
drawing water from its depth!

Commotion crept  
into a community so calm,  
waking sleepers alert  
with horror of fear and harm;  
huge crowds hurried in the East;

harrowed humanities  
hastened in the West.

In the chaotic whirlwind  
the infidels' rockets ruckus  
rampaging artillery missiles  
rocked the land and left many lifeless.

A little moment later,  
A little lonely girl was left alive.

# The Bastardization of Somalia

The Horn-land,  
where the talk is land  
about land  
for land  
in the country of land  
situated in the Africa-land  
knows no shortage of land:  
for out of only two-land  
we modified the machine  
into a multiple maker of land.

We minted many a land  
like we made worthless the brand  
of monies of the land,  
landing us in the land  
of obsessions with land:  
Middle Punt-land, Upper Punt-land,  
Lower *Punt*-land, Middle Shabelle-land,  
Upper Jubba-land, *Woqooyi*-land.  
*Azania*-land, State of Jubba-land  
*Jaamac*-land, *Enow*-land,  
*Jeyte*-land, *Qowdhan*-land,  
*Eeyle*-land, *Eelaay*-land,  
*Madhibaan*-land, *Islaax*-land,  
*Al Shabaab*-land, *Ahlu Sunna*-land,  
Pirate-land, *Moryaan*-land, *Jirri*-land  
till our *Land-Dilating Machine*  
manufactures the latest  
land models:  
Zero-land.  
*Dhulcune*-land.  
*Dhul-dhammeeye*-land,  
*Iscuna*-land.





PART FIVE  
ATTEMPTING THE ALTERNATIVE



# Minutes of a Deceased Youngster

Approaching the empty graveyard  
in the vicinity of Digfer and Tarabuunka,  
an anguished voice in a wilderness  
speaking as a youth of twenty  
astonished me in a sleep so awful  
a week ago I had in its early hours:

Since the inception of our journey  
over a decade and one ago today,  
my age-mates and I observe  
what the lords of war perceive  
of the benefits they receive  
from the destinies of debris, delusion,  
and doubling destruction daily:  
Deaths that diminish our demography.

Our Doctors of Philosophy, deans, and diplomats,  
Even the deft of our religious doctrine,  
defy delving into the dreariness  
at the depth of the debate  
to divulge the dark legacy  
devolved to the generations.

Decline and lack of development  
drafted this nation into dependency,  
a deep-end poverty of disaster,  
disappearing desire and hope of  
dear creations dwindled  
into a destiny so deprived.

Division, digression, and defiance  
dreadlocked their diligence  
over doom of detrimental decades:  
Dare they not deviate the course  
of yesteryears' default?

# The Exercise of Apology

Whenever the atmosphere  
emits odours into the environment,  
our consciences often inform  
us of options for encounter  
that the emissions, though undesirable,  
may not lead to eclipse the anatomy  
for other options and avenues.

Alternatives to the evil past may  
at times encourage altruism of  
engagement with audacity  
for apology, acceptance, adherence.  
Openness of heart and mind  
offers alternatives that  
aspire our elated emotions  
to reengage with the atmosphere,  
ameliorate the eons of old animosity.  
Optimize affection and love with  
apologies, acceptance, and adulation  
to open the entrance wide again  
for ultimate peace to augur  
the elimination of our past enmity.

Are we all on board?

# The Acceptance

In olden days,  
when apologies of men  
who exacted errors  
were offered under  
the assembly tree to elders  
in the eyes of the community,  
embraces would ensue  
of the enemies at the assembly.  
Such apologies advanced by the errant,  
honourably the erred-against would accept  
to save the communal attachment  
enlivened over the centuries in  
the ethical shrines of history,  
so we might not allow evaporating  
our entity as the unethical  
offspring of  
evils,  
ills,  
atrocities.

# In Celebration of Harmony

*"Isku dumme, Isu dumme, Molder of nations..."*

– Ali J. Ahmed,

*When Donkeys Give Birth to Calves (P. 17)*

Individual interest as an ideology  
implanted in us an acute enmity  
that ate our soul empty,  
no one anticipating the anomaly  
as an obstacle too costly to our entity.

It takes a man astute  
to endow apology to a society  
he stripped of its serenity  
in a world that found him a brute –  
to reverse its notion  
of his disrepute.

If I rally the entirety  
of the adversely affected  
among the *Looma-ooyeyaasha*<sup>1</sup> entity,  
and I assure all of that priority,  
no matter which the ethnicity,  
of acceptance, coexistence in harmony  
in line with Ahmed's ambitious solidarity  
in the *Isku dumme, Isu dumme* philosophy,  
who dare assure me of equality  
based on morality  
without ethnicity?  
That solidarity  
is a reality  
in the tonality  
of the apologeticity  
I'm waiting with affirmity.

1. *Looma-ooyeyaasha* is a derogatory epithet deriving from Somali sociolinguistics of war. It refers to the Bantu Jareer community and other minorities like Madhibaan, Yaxar, etc., as unarmed people whose dead victims, under the hands of their Somali killers, have no one to avenge them. Hence, *loomo-ooye* symbolizes one who has no kin to cry for his/her blood.





PART SIX  
ELEGY FOR FALLEN FRIENDS



# In Memory of Ayub

Should a strike aimed at the evildoer  
deprive the innocent of his life?<sup>1</sup>  
should we be humans only in  
the art of unleashing mayhem?

Oh, thee of the morbid heart  
must make sense of thy life  
that  
one so much in love with education  
also adept at sports sciences, avoiding  
the ineffective allure to clan austerity,  
owns his ascription to society at large.

When interest-oriented urbanites  
armed idiots along kinship lines,  
the obvious tragedy was ashore  
to make the likes of Ayub  
among the early victims.

The heart finds hard to accept healing  
over the loss of a friend  
with focus and foresight,  
so intelligent a learner and trainer.  
May Almighty's mercy be  
upon thee forever!

# A Tribute to Abdulkadir Yahye

So woeful is lawless life  
when pain and grief hit the hamlet,  
taking a human life at will,  
violating the Holy Scripture.

Deprivation called on us  
when cowardly culprits  
*Kufaar cadeeysatay*  
infidels of the worst kind  
killed Yahye  
in an uncalled-for  
cold-blooded attack.

Peace be upon you, buddy,  
in your perpetual place of rest!  
The bastards that brought you death  
and pulverized your beautiful bride's  
brilliant hope will certainly  
pay dearly before God.

# In Memory of Mohamud Elman

How costly the price of peace  
that cuts quickly short  
the life of an ardent activist  
devoted morally and materially  
to ameliorating the lives of youths  
oppressed, ignored, manipulated,  
helping them break from the burden  
of dependency on gun-oriented living  
to learn skills more dependable,  
a social reintegration more enduring.

Peace you loved,  
for peace you died;  
May peace be upon you,  
and the blessings of Allah!



PART SEVEN  
ON DIASPORA AND THE SOMALI BANTU:  
CULTURAL MISCOMMUNICATION?



# Bush and the Somali Bantu Bard

After boarding a plane bound for Blackwell (USA),  
eager to obey strange aspirations  
that lured me a while over a few years ago,  
about youths emigrating to Arizona and Atlanta,  
on reaching an airport in the "Land of Opportunity,"  
Bush accorded me a welcoming embrace.

He began by saying: As I put it plainly:  
That plans had been put in place  
for the plundered Somali Bantu  
to be migrated to Portland;  
that our healing, protection plan  
assures them of plots to plow  
from Boston as far as Portland,  
as had been the bulk of messages  
propagated in Buunde, Somalia.

We're perfectly bound by our past promise, and  
Boston is proud as abode for the Bantu  
from Benin and Bulawayo since centuries past  
to the premises of Botswana;  
also Bagamoyo, and the Balowoka,  
those from the land of Banda,  
the Buganda Kingdom, and the Bunyoro youth.

And to your Bantu people, from Buunde and Barawa,  
blow the big trumpet for opportunities available  
as remedial redress for awful experiences  
they encountered in the horrible Horn.

The Bantu project is in the pipeline,  
with budget allocated when Profs proved  
with practical papers your burdens unbearable:  
That all the Bantu bravely tilling the land

up in Bariire until the Balcad zone  
are placed in our books  
as people beyond indolence,  
backing off from property acquisition  
begotten by illegal bonds.

Youths from Baladul-Aamiin, down Buulomareer  
to the boundaries of the Bajuni islands,  
are booked as our primary beneficiaries;  
that Bantu elders should believe  
Bush properly prepared to provide peaceful haven;  
that his previous promise was firmly in place,  
dispatching as you desire plenty of jet planes  
to bring you, Bantus, within the borders of Blackwell.

Postpone no plane departures  
for the bombarded Bantu population;  
but bring them with the pride of Portland  
that the promise we made to provide the Permits

has our blessing and plan,  
a big boost from the US policy.

# Bantu Poet Responds

Embraces marked our ultimate assurances  
advancing us to a nearby eating house;  
upon entering, it was another world  
an atmosphere I found awkward!  
As rowdy males and females reveled  
raising the roof in wild joy,  
a pretty bartender broadly smiling bid us welcome  
reciting a long menu mostly not mindful  
of my kind of meal to maintain the meaning  
of the US mockery of multicultural mix.

The menu pages I briefly read  
pegged to burgers and brands of beer,  
bitterly undermining the eager appeal  
of my empty stomach.

I eyed Bush with my ill sight,  
inviting his intervention into the mystery at hand  
of a major menu missing Moordoow's main meal:  
mildly cooked veggies meticulously spread  
at mid-centre of mashed maize flour.

Mind boggling – isn't it?  
how the menu missed butter-fried coffee-beans  
that aromatize everywhere of the ambience,  
even crunchy in the mouth and comfort to the mind!  
But in broad bewilderment unusual,  
Bush bragged about his boredom in big belch.

# Bush Boasts

In place of pure water we prefer Breda beer,  
and burgers suit us better than bare posho meal.  
Ours is bounty, buddy, and planned prosperity!

If I may put to you a bounty to share:  
Burger is best pushed down with Breda.

# Bantu Bard Protests

Oh, Lord Almighty!  
I seek your refuge from exposure to  
this subterranean mess and madness:  
of gulping down gourds of alcohol  
instead of good water!

Oh, Bush! Allow me to express myself  
to enlighten you on the sanctity of  
our opulent culture:  
Those in Bandar-Jadiid,  
Buundo Baraawe and Baalgure,  
our youth in Buulalooow recite the Holy Book,  
blessings contained in the verse of *Baqara*,  
never partaking in bogus perjuries  
or baleful behavior beleaguering.

They calibrate to the climate,  
containing nature to cultivate crops  
for quality subsistence;  
they carefully collect quantities of honey  
consumed with fresh coffee beans fried  
aromatic in the air of the surrounding environment,  
evenly nutritious to all the offspring of Adam.

# Bewildered Bantu Poet

The menu's missing of mashed maize flour  
makes my migration to Mahadaay a must.

So I invoke *Baraa'atu-minallaahi* and the power of God  
against indulgence in alcohol, intimate ignorance,  
and acts of awful misdemeanor.

Inebriation with alcohol elates  
ineffectiveness imbued our cultivation activity,  
emerging our youth ultimately invalid,  
arising the omens of our early extinction.

A terrible anguish afflicts us when our youth  
accustomed to reciting Allah's Scripture  
under the moonlight in Biyooleey,  
with expertise in driving away spells  
and strenuous illnesses by Allah's word,  
our participants in the recitation parties,  
youths so prominent in their holy prayers  
at the religious parties -

*Alas!* Are those to be consumed  
in America's absolute alcoholism?  
American alcoholism spoils our efficient youth,  
incurring us excruciating wounds incurable.

# Bush

This glistening beer soothes our thirst –  
what many a patient we heal with it!

# Bantu Bard Quits Cultural Burdens

Strayed lot! Intoxicating agents cast no cure;  
the ill are healed effectively by invoking Allah!

Oh, Bush! How done I feel with you,  
immediately to offer you a “so long!”  
that may Allah bless me in my difficult days ahead!  
Mine is departure despite my empty abdomen,  
as I advance early enough to enter the aeroplane  
outbound, so off to my abode in Afgooey.

Not am I scared of hunger or thirst  
once I am an elder able who endures  
a month’s fast each calendar year;  
for a tongue accustomed to airing the *ayat* of Allah  
deserves not demeaning it in drunkenness.

So, put aside, please, any pledges  
you made and the promised planes,  
as by the powers vested in my person  
I publicly pronounce your Blackwell plan put off.

Armies of strayed immigrants in America  
ail among you asking for always  
insufficient assistance;  
should we, in light of aid improper  
abuse the eminence of our Islamic ethos  
or aloofly abandon our ancestral ethics?

*In Almighty be our trust,  
and the skills in us to engage our land!*

With such polite parlance  
I proffered Bush a bye,  
boastful in his booze.  
And God bestowed upon me  
peace and blessings  
bountiful, eternal.