



Verses

ILIYA KAMBAI DENNIS

Verses

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poems

Iliya Kambai Dennis



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Praises for Verses



The first verse begins like this: ***When you open this flower / You will see that / You didn't fall out of love / But forgiveness***-. How often do we ever acknowledge our ignorance of flaws in the person we love? How often do we open ourselves to accepting those flaws?

Illiya Kambai Dennis' "Verses" mirrors the Bible. Only that in this Bible, there is no god, no disciples, no prophets, just the persona and his lover.

Dennis is tethering love / Like punctuation marks..., building a bridge between perfection and imperfection, and professing love, through the heart of an eager persona, in subtle, yet riveting lines. I believe "Verses" explores the love of two people who are exploring and exploiting selfhood, exploring life and things that matter. What is most notable to me in this relationship is the persona's exploration of perfection (And you were perfect), imperfection (I write imperfect language / Imperfect punctuations), and how the persona commingles the two into something so normal, so present, it becomes the development of any relationship. Perhaps something we now take for granted.

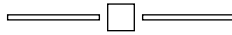
—Funmilayo Obasa
Ilorin, Nigeria.



In "Verses", the writer lends fresh interpretation to the exchange between a lover and a loved. Love, thus, subsists as a tool for redemption, a language for forgiveness, an act of worship where both parties reach towards climax. Verses is a sterling, startling compendium.

—Michael Emmanuel
Editor, Itanile Magazine

INTRODUCTION



The idea that Eropoetry is a retrogressive paradigm has caused many writers and readers of poetry to pull backwards from the genre, leaving the floor for the likes of Jide Badmus, one of the leading writers and promoters of Eropoetry in Nigeria; even though recently, we are beginning to witness a shift, young writers engaging passionately in the art. Nket Godwin's *Sexperimenting Verses* holds a lot of promises and hope that emerging writers are beginning to see Eropoetry as it is, a mystical union between the physical and spiritual. Siraj Sabouke's radicalness and flexibility in diction is also worthy of commendation.

There are many factors responsible for reducing the value of Eropoetry, which includes the perplexity that Eros only discusses subjects of sex and nudity using wild and vulgar language. Even though this claim could be true, we should remember that poetry goes beyond the menial meaning our eyes give it. But that it is a reflection of the inner being, the hidden meaning in every healing line or verse. Eros shouldn't be enjoyed because of its wittiness but because it could be used to approach different subjects like politics, misogyny and sexism, feminism and masculinity, sexuality, sexual orientation, nepotism, partisanship, etcetera.

Also, another point to consider is that our Africanness teaches us to save our children from the danger of exposing them to the reality of their sexuality by lying to them about the parts of their body, thereby leading to the complexity of human sexuality and sexual norms.

In this chapbook, I tried to talk about loneliness, grief, forgiveness, love, and of course, sex. The poems in this chapbook are a distraction from the physical coziness of pain to a divine romance that transcend the mind, thoughts and emotions into metaphysical. *I choose to drown* in most of the poems here *like nights engrossed with stars...* Eros teaches us many things which include the spirituality of our body/skin *...your skin//a tabernacle of answered prayers* and the art of forgiveness and rebuilding like we see the opening poem: *when you open this flower // you will see that // you didn't fall out of love//but forgiveness--//things you can rebuild after shattering...* the beauty of complexity: *your beauty is a mixture of //spirituality and immorality* and romanticism: *touch me where//the torch can't reach among others.*

Iliya Kambai Dennis

Kafanchan, Nigeria May, 2021

I

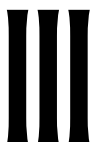


When you open this flower
You will see that
You didn't fall out of love
But forgiveness—
Things you can rebuild after shattering
Because I once lost glance of myself
In glasses of transparent unfaithfulness—
I chewed my lover with a girl's mouth

II



Love is the consequence
Of our decisions and actions and inactions
When we sit in the shadows—
Stars in empty skies
And you can't read your mind
In the presence of your enemies



You shall,
Beneath your skin, feel
My soft touch like flames

And in the dark,
Sin will slay herself into
Shards of glass waiting to be reformed

IV



Strip me naked
Allow sin fear nothing
But denying it existence
I tremble before your naked soul
Tamed by excitement
And soft moaning
And dancing beds
Engraved with yearning for more
Unnamed Sunday mornings

V



Wear me on your skin
Like nights engrossed with stars

Wear me with lyrical metaphors –
Nights with you are always short
And time swiftly passes to succour
Crimson hours increase our yearnings

I remember, last night we drank ourselves
Into Eden and became lyrical, luxuriant,
And fireflies forming a nimbus round our bed

VI



I remember the day you stepped out of your
shell
Wearing a ribbon of colours.
I told you I would wait for the night
Heaven and earth will kiss,
That I would stay here with you
When everything fades...

But you said a girl is not what she seems—
That the language of her body is a Plaster of
Paris,
But my lover's body is what my eyes see
beyond her skin.
Last night, when my eyes unveiled you,
I saw truth in my mother's words,
You are Pollock's art

VII



You were purple last night when
You stepped out of your smile
I remember staring at you
Like distorted hymns

I should have worn you on my skin—
So every night I won't have to sit under
A starless sky and scribble the words
I should have written on you

To write your name where
My heart can read in a language
Only our souls would understand

I want to take you home,
To dance with you on our bed
To enjoy the rhythm of your jigida

VIII



It was in this room of scented Arabian
perfume
We cuddled ourselves in deafening silence

Where I told you soporific stories
That encapsulated your fears of losing me

You asked me to say the words
That kept your heart sacred in mine

Yet, you took and glued it under your feet
As you walked on paths of rosy thorns

IX



I smell your fragrance in this space of memories
Where we weaved our skins into a country's
anthem,

Forming a glistening chemistry, an ionic bond;
And here, in solitude, I ponder on the
Memories of cuddling, of laughter
Of hissing lips, and colliding bodies
And wetness that grease my thighs with fluid
That spread like icy chills on wildfire greeting
our longing.

The first time I told mother about you
She brought out images as old as her grey hair
And asked if I kissed you closing my eyes;
I told her you're a river that has not drowned a
soul

But she blended her thoughts with doubts
That you may become an imaginary complex
number.

But you are a foreign god with perfect
resonance;

& Newton's third law of motion,

& your mother cooked you in Eden.

& your skin is silk – the temptation of Satan

& your towers are ivory – accommodating
demons

& your name is a song on angel's lips.

X



About how I allow my lover slip into my dreams –
I hope the things I feel are surreal, too
Or figments of what breed insanity.

My last visit did not end well after I told my
therapist
I feel my lover in my arms anytime I grasp her
pants,
That I smell her fragrance and my heart beats the
Same way it does when I hold her.

Its fragrance makes me giggle through all nights–
It's like a healthy orgasm in my lazy bed.
But he said I am insane, especially when I spelled
How I wept into my pillow the last time

I misplaced her pants and she was away
And I had to wait, and wait, and wait.
Last night I dreamed that my lover died but
breathes
Inside her garment, or anything bearing her name
And the banquet of flowers in my room bloomed,
The fragrance of her undergarments caressed me.

My therapist is naive. What does he know about
love?
My mother said love is faith in god on little things
Like when you smooch your lovers' pant.

XI



I carve you in my mind on nights like this...
When evening answers to your luring call,
I tattoo my name on your skin—
A tabernacle of answered prayers.

XII



In the morning,
I'd roll into a coffee cup
Knowing you'd drink me
And we'll remain
Eternally entangled

XIII



My hands spelled your name before I found my
voice
And mine travelled with your beauty.
Your beauty is a mixture of
Spirituality and immorality
You're a mixture of light and darkness
Where broken bodies become
City of monuments
I'm here because you entered my head
And refused to stay

XIV



Strip me in the dark
Darkness is holy
If perhaps you feel
I don't know how to love
Take my heart
Mould it into tenderness
And teach me how to love you

XV



Have a taste of my penis
Inside the pool between your thighs;
Beneath your blonde skin,
I choose to drown.

XVI



*I'm your liege, you said
That has given me reasons to show you to my
Mother who longed to meet you even
Before the grave became her home*

XVII



This night is silent
& calm
Hold me close
Touch me where
The torch can't reach
Let your dancing beads
Disturb peace

XVIII



Last night, I saw you in three forms:

a) .

b) $/\?/\dots$

c) \sum from zero to infinity

And you were perfect.

XIX



I'm tethering love
Like punctuation marks;
Beautifying sentences
Around your waist

XX



Your existence
Was unknown
Until
You became air
And I breathed you

XXI



Tonight, I will loose
My body to the wind
Dancing before the pulpit
Of a vibrant soul
Dancing before the blue
Of your vibrant soul

XXII



I make my soul bare to you
Like a naked altar
On Good Friday;
A way to venerate
Your bruised body
Suffering loneliness

XXIII



I touched my soul
After you left
It took
Forms of dark magic;
It's taking you long
To bring a white miracle

XXIV



I'm thinking of you this morning—
The sun is up, sneaking through
My window's holes
And I can't bring myself
Off thoughts of shadow play

XXV



In this verse,
I make you a cauldron
Rainbow to whisper
Through nights of longings
This verse is not perfect
As you may wish
It's like that with nothing
With things that make you
Jitter at the sound of love

In this verse,
I write imperfect language
Imperfect punctuations
Like my body
Through scriptures and penance
I seek absorption



BIOGRAPHY

Iliya Kambai Dennis is a writer and poet from Kaduna state, Nigeria. His works have appeared on ARTMOSTERRIFIC, FERAL: A Journal of Poetry and Art, Serotonin, Konya Shamsrumi, Praxis magazine, African writers, The African Writers Review, BPPC Anthologies and more. He was artist of the month of April for Yasmin El Rufai Foundation, YELF. He is the author of the poetry chapbook; *Songs We Sing Before We Sleep*, published by Authorpedia under the WRR Chapbook series. He loves movies, books and coffee. He tweets via **@iliyakambai**

