

Poetry Series

**Job Ombati**  
**- poems -**



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## Job Ombati()

Job Ombati is a high school teacher in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi. He is a poet and lover of poetry.



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# What A Child!

What a child that competes with elders in eating!

They wash their hands; he too washes.

They dig in; he does.

They call for a second helping; he calls also.

When they discuss things of grown ups; he sits put.

When they wash their dirty laundry in public; he also brings his out.

They curse; he foul mouths.

They throw tantrums; he kicks the porridge pot.

They throw jabs; he punches.

When they go to sleep, he parts the curtains.

When they get on bed, he hides under it.

When they foul the air, he loudly asks, 'Who did it? '

Ugh! This child.

Poems for Humanity

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# A Father's Restraining Hand

I Didn't know;  
When it impertinently tugged mine  
Clasped it and never released  
I couldn't see what he saw  
I couldn't hear what he heard  
There were times the grasp was fast  
At times slack  
There were times my little hand was completely free;  
though for a fleeting moment.

I then realised;  
As years past  
Of dangers lurking  
The meaning  
of the tug  
of the slack hold  
of the momentary release  
Of terminal release.

Now that it's gone;  
the tug  
the restraint  
the release transient  
My heart haemorrhages  
My hand hangs longing  
for the firm grip.  
It hangs undecided and hungering  
for my father's  
restraining grip.


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# We're Sixty!

We're Sixty  
And proud  
Of our straight forefathers  
Who hoisted the Kenyan flag  
On Batian peak for free  
Proud of doing the same  
But at a small fee.

We're Sixty  
And proud  
Of clamorous leaders  
Truth speakers  
Though record say otherwise  
We're proud  
Of our prophets  
Modern day Joshuas  
To Egypt.

We're Sixty  
And learning  PoemHunter.com  
Meaning of reversed realities  
Top can be bottom  
Or...vice versa?

We're Sixty  
And learning  
To sleep on empty stomachs  
Peering into empty wallets  
Driving grumpy autos  
Learning to confuse 'milking' Jerry  
For Vaseline  
Learning to stare  
At City Mortuary with a brave face

We're Sixty!

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# To Be Nairobiian

It is a skill  
to be Nairobiian.  
It; a skill so rare.  
Expensively acquired;  
and dearly treasured.  
A skill learned in the class of subtlety;  
and school of friends, TikTok and hard knocks.

It's a skill learnt though verifiable experiences, fantasy and near pure misses;  
of automotive-  
big and small;  
on four-wheel, and two;  
friendly and mean a like.  
And the ever waiting,  
ever patient,  
ever watchful City Mortuary!

It means to dress in killer Calvin Klein,  
to but take a dingy number 19/60 to town;  
It is to dress in an impeccable white shirt,  
but end up with a bug on the collar.  
To squeeze a barrel body into a size 14;  
and in it be impelled to jump over a bubbly open sewer,  
and land on dog poo.

It is to know how to hold roasted maize;  
coated in a generous layer of lemony creamy red pepper;  
served in preferable hot and soft;  
hygiene of the roaster,  
and a nearby mountain of stink notwithstanding.

It is the resignation to fate;  
to sharing of city streets with laden donkeys,  
and their masterful drivers.  
to learn to cohabit on the road with irritable matatus and fat but wise city rats,  
as the pedestrian lane is adorned in hawker's wares.

It's mastery of perfect balance on a fleeing motorcycle;  
with one finger on the receiver button,

and other hand brushing back a stray horse hair,  
and the other holding tight to dear rider.

It is getting the perfect mastery,  
of applying layer and layer of mascara on her face,  
to cover networks of determined pimples;  
to produce a mzungu effect!

It is forcing chapati shaped feet,  
into stilettos,  
and command the legs to walk down a potholed street;  
and to skip buddles of stinky water in the street of the sun!

And that, is to be Nairobi!

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# Which Number Would You Play?

If life were to give a chance,  
in life's big football arena,  
would you play number 7?

Tackle down opponents?  
hard and ruthless?

Or softly tackle or crude?

Occasionally kick the ball out,  
to save situation?

Would you play the wings?

Would you be attack minded or  
love racing on the touch line?

Near coach?

And occasionally do a nutmeg?

Or deep back?

Full back?

Playing chary.

Covering the goalie?

Throwing back word of caution  
or comfort?

Or near the stands play,

for all your moves,  
an adoring rabble to watch?

Your praise to hear?

Would you play attacking mid field?

Or just be bestial.

Thwarting any offensive onslaught?

Do intermittent mischievous dives?

Or play center back.

Blocking shots.

Deflecting some.

Tackling hard. Intercepting and anticipating aerial offenses?

Will you play pressing forward.

Harassing.

Looking for opportunity.  
Looking for any beggary chance -  
to score?

Would you play goalie.  
To dive at all shots.  
To save all balls life lobs at you.  
Lateral or low passes.  
Will you wince, or even curse at any ball that sidles into the net?  
Blame your defenders?

Which position would you play?

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# Pushing A Loadful Of Sin

Pushing the cart uphill,  
men sweat.

A defiant fly ducks into  
the malodorous armpits  
but leaves befuddled.

Only to repeat  
-on and on-  
they push.

A heavy load of matoke  
ngwace, miwa and a  
drowsy chicken.

A cache of heavy sins each carries  
In the secret enclaves of their hearts.

They push the cart uphill.  
With heads bent in benediction.  
Thinking of lost chances  
Silently cursing.  
They can't save.  
After all what is there to save?

The cycle is repeated.  
A visit to Mama Pima.  
-whose other part is Aisha-  
under the dirty trench coat of the night.  
Emerge wiser, but only for a few hours.

Pushing a loadful of sin.  
Up the hill.  
To unspecified  
destinations of the heart.  
Each in resigned hope  
Sentenced to life failure.  
In a cell whose keys were dropped into the open sea.  
Conscripted for sins of youth.  
Like a bad apple  
bit, held and spit in foul indignation.

They push the cart on.

Their feet pawing the hot asphalt.  
The trudge is on.  
One foot raised after the other.  
Hitting the road with sadistic rhythm.  
Teeth tightly clenched.  
Gullied hands  
scoop off the salty  
stingy stormy  
torrent.  
Leaving sedimentary lime on their pitch black faces.  
And the hill hump lazily beckons them on:  
Come yee heavy laden,  
Yea souls shall be refreshed.  
And in suppliant gesture,  
the adamant cart  
wheels on.  
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# Ba Chagrins

Having my earphones on and listening to the music of yesteryears.  
The serenade golden voices and magical guitars with dexterity played.  
Drums beaten with love and a godliness.  
Of a past gone, they remind.  
Tuneful beats of BA Chagrin's "Topesanaki elaka eeh!" calming  
weary nerves.  
Like water slowly poured of a gourd - you can't get it back!

A past liltily magical.  
That the frail heart fears to summon back.  
Possibly it may crumble like a dry loaf in one's hands.  
Of a past of youth and supple knees, waists, shoulders!  
A tranquil past.  
And near-million futures.  
Perfectly harmonic voices of OK Jazz's and BA Chagrin's perfect harmony.  
In a past in the ever-green rolling hills.  
Of faraway Lake Victoria.  
Of the wonder of the language the lake people spoke.  
And their love for Mbuta- What a stench to our blind eyes then!

An almost sacred past- hard to summon.  
Of the Ba Chagrin's biphonic beats and "Nataka kufa eeh!"  
One that can't muster in bits like small crumbs of bread falling though the  
fingers.  
Of evocations of older brothers with their girlfriends. And... and this music.

Of a disgruntled mother and a never easy to please father.  
And how by the way did the tall friend of my elder brother look like?  
Of years gone and never to return.  
"Cherry kanisa kaka olulaka nagi na quartier!"

And now the climax - 'Nazoki na Molema aah ngo ya ooh!'  
The brother and his friends singing along. Are they drunk?  
Indeed, they teeter.  
But the memories have stuck.  
And more are being made in the hearts of the young listening heart.  
Memories that will be branded in his near-and hard to be recalled now.  
And if he tried to force them, they'll crumble though his finger.

When it will play, he will remember me.

Maybe with a sigh and if with a soft heart and the convenience of privacy, a tear too.

He will tell his children that I loved this song.

His taste, will have matured.

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# Judas Speaks

It wasn't in my inray my Lord to betray.  
Only did inclinations of the heart.  
In darkest cranny of heart didst they contrived.  
As base as they could.  
Contrite of heart I am.  
Though late as I am.

I loved him.  
He did me too.  
i...loved him  
He did me too.  
I dipped my bread in his cup.  
And my hand too in the chest.  
He never smacked it.

The poor were at the very nerve of my heart!  
-loved them I.  
But to you, naked was my heart's iniquities.  
My iniquity a glassy sea.  
Why waste such pure nard?  
the woman with the costly alabastron oil;  
pure nard.  
300 denari- a whole year's sweat!

The poor, you will always have.  
Obsquious were my intentions.  
An open book to you.

Caught my hand in the cookie jar.  
and frecks of cookie at tip of my mouth.  
But pure of heart, he never smacked it.

What a heavy stone tied onto my heart.  
Thirty pieces of silver so misery!  
What a pity!  
What a sadness!  
Thirty pieces for an innocent soul!

I loved him.

The misery pieces I'll throw.

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# I Am Looking For A Word

I seek to find a word.  
A word of the heart.  
Sweet as honey.  
Dripping pure sweetness.  
A word so delightful.  
So soothing to the heart.

With a decoy attached to my hook.  
I will fish.  
In deep waters.  
In shallow waters.  
In clear waters  
In murky waters.  
I will whistle to attract it to my bait.

I will make a ladder long enough to reach the clouds.  
I will carefully step on the rungs - one at a time.  
I will softly part the featherly clouds.  
I will push my hand deep to their armpits.  
I will then fish out the word.

I will walk into the vantablack night.  
Armed with my torch.  
Loaded with new Eveready 'shika paka' batteries.  
I will beam my flashlight into every dark corner.  
I will keep looking.  
For the delightful word.

I will visit the busy market.  
I will ask both young and old.  
For the word.  
I will beseech the girl preening herself.  
I will ask the restive youth.  
I will look for the word there.  
I will overturn the grocery baskets.  
I will raise my voice above the din.  
I will shout in the ears of the semi deaf old woman seller.

I will open a book.

Turn the pages, stop, search and turn.  
I will moisten my finger with saliva.  
I will increase my search.  
I will squint into every page.  
For the good word.

I will wipe clean a slate.  
I will use an eraser.  
And pass my hand over it.  
I will then write the word  
Slowly and neatly.  
A word of my heart.  
A delightful word!

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# Don't Cry, Just Try

Don't Cry, Just try.  
When on face problems fly.  
Just frizzle them like onions to fry.  
Each day, different fortunes.  
Each, different opportunes.  
Each, different tunes.

Hard you must try.  
Try after try.  
Even if on back you must lie.  
Hard, you must have to push.  
For deer to push out of bush.  
For fear of peril, out it must dash.

Try, it's a must.  
The world in your shoulder to hoist.  
Even'f happiness my be a heist.  
Take you aim.  
Effort won't be lame.  
New day isn't same.

Plant in the morning.  
Rest not till evening.  
Success hates whining.  
Maintain a fretless countenance.  
Cohabit with personable persistence.  
Love imbibed insistence.

If like moth you must burn.  
Don't take a turn.  
Just let your sun burn.  
Just light all the flickering a candle.  
Just be their guardian angel.  
And their aspirations rekindle.

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# People Like Pets

People like cats;  
they crave as others they enslave.  
Sleeping most of the day(s) .  
Running a mind of their own.  
Making pertinent cries; when hu-a-ngry.  
Never willing to please.  
But always craving for attention.  
Craving for a pat on their backs.

People like dogs;  
they follow and their pride swallow.  
Dogging their bosses.  
Seeking to please and approval to gain.  
Kicked for their effort to prove loyalty  
And yet still following some more.  
But from a distance; never having taken insult.

People like hens;  
they scratch and morsels snatch.  
Scratching and looking.  
Looking for non-existent morsels.  
Always hungry.  
Yet scratching again.  
And again; the same ungainly spot.  
Having forgotten that  
they scratched the same spot-  
Returning to the same patch to scratch.

Just like hens;  
scratching, quacking with no care of what goes on around.

Just like dogs;  
dogging, barking but not at the master.

Just like cats;  
sleeping, meowing defiantly their displeasure to show.

People like dogs and cats.  
And hens.

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# The Choice Of A Father

This was my choice.  
To miss the big break.  
And be with my boys and girl.  
Their first bike ride to give.  
Hold to the tail of bike.  
Them to cycle urge on.  
to balance,  
and then, a gentle push.  
and then, cycle on.  
Watched their first excitement dash.  
Well done!  
And now, letting you go, go alone.  
And then, a miss,  
the first tumble and a bruise.  
To wipe away their tears,  
and soothe the bruise,  
and assure, all will well be.

This was my choice.  
To give my girl,  
her first manarche lesson.  
The knitting needles to hold,  
and the yarn to spin.  
and the yarn under her armpit, to pin.  
To do a mischief jig.  
To hold the fork and knife of life,  
and, dig!  
To likelady be.  
To play seek and hide.  
To serve and cook,  
not wet ugali soil in a bottle top.  
To spring a surprise on mum.  
To adore the grotesque drawn blue trees,  
big birds and small elephants!  
and green dogs!

This is my choice.  
To wait for them in the evening.  
And search their faces.

For any traces of the world wiping it's shoes,  
and cleaning it's nose on them.

To reassure.

To listen to all those stories.

Of teacher Janet did this and said that.

To look at the drawings of;

my family; dad, mum and that's me and baby!

Dad, I saw a big dog!

To listen to all of them.

This was my choice.

To stick to my college heart sweet.

Watch years butt her face and waist.

Right there be.

To reassure

To urge on.

And share memories of college life gether.

Of the first birth, the second...

how each was different!

To take blame.

To the rants listen.

To live another day.

And that, is the choice I made!

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# I Bribe

I today lay my iniquity bare.  
For all to bear.  
So overt in your glare.  
That my heart so strain.  
And conscience so stain.

I met a policeman.  
Asked to inspect my van.  
So fast moving my hand can.  
Reached the pocket and out a wad.  
So seduced he pointed forward.

A grade I needed too much.  
I bribed.  
She of other gender.  
I accepted to such.  
Unbridled.  
The grade this time better.  
The grade so real but forgotten the touch.

I bribed today.  
Line so long and patience held at long at stay.  
Had to have my way.  
So did I wink.  
Good looks stamped the ink.

Was at vehicle inspection.  
And my car in wreck condition.  
Had to know superintendent inspection.  
Got the right man.  
Mediator who carries the coin.

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# I Despise You

You say I am slim and Sexy.  
Drinkable.  
Holdable.  
But I despise you, you obstreperous fool!

I once led you into a barbed wire,  
where you left pieces of meat and cloth.  
You abused mother in-law.  
Walked into in-laws and demanded dowry back.  
I'll yet lead you to a trench,  
where dogs 'll piss into your open mouth.

You yawl in the village.  
And under the lazy moonlight,  
dare all wizards from the nine villages,  
with dire consequences.  
You say that I am slim, sleek and holdable.  
You are yet to see!

You vociferously declared to know who the baby's father is.  
And it's not Kamau!  
The sleepy village sighed.  
The village rumour mill waits with bated breath.  
Embarrassed, men raised their voices,  
others their croaky radios.  
Children stopped talking.  
And Kamau waits around the corner,  
with a 'njora'!

Your tongue walketh the earth.  
You brag that you can knock down one and another!  
That you are able to hold one by the torso and look deep into her soul.  
Fool! What do you see?  
A black hole in the pocket?  
A red white stain on black asphalt?

I'll one day lead you naked to your in-laws!

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# I Made A Loss

I have loved for nothing.  
Visited markets and bought basketfuls of food,  
for a stubborn heart.  
Lengths and lengths of cloth,  
unfurled into a pit latrine.

I have scaled mountains,  
for love's sake.  
Dived into fjords,  
for love's rare wink.  
At end my heart was a mat for her door,  
a public square for the pigeon's poop.

I have loved for nothing.  
Sang songs day long  
invoked her heart,  
said so to her.  
A wink, at best,  
a passing glance,  
effort not good enough  
for my songs,  
copied, crammed,  
sung.  
But a heart they missed.

I have loved for nothing.  
Crossed oceans,  
to bring her love;  
flower soft,  
on wrinkly winky eyes  
and moistened lips.  
But hers was hewn off a mean cliff face.

For her I have dared birds.  
high I flew  
high and deep  
the pillowy clouds I parted.  
First they were appalled,  
then impressed

and then,  
a swift and messy tumble.

I have loved for nothing,  
softened my eyes,  
winked all day,  
shaped my lips for a kiss,  
but only her love to miss.  
Widened my hands,  
for an illusionary embrace.

I have loved for nothing!

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# Too Morning

It's too morning  
And my bones creak in utter defiance.  
My eyes the more evasive to light.  
I won't wake up,  
waking up I won't!  
The outside too cold,  
too morning for my bones' liking.

The crowing has gone on for a while now.  
Cocks have crowed themselves hoarse.  
Why crow themselves silly, less I care.  
My feet crutch the blanket,  
sealing off any cold gaps.  
I defy the small hours.  
My feet are revulsive of the cold floor.

Thinking of the cold grass,  
the scorching dew,  
my mind recoils into its folds.  
my feet wince,  
The blanket's warm wink even more irresistible.  
It's embrace  
snug,  
loving,  
reassuring.

You say early is best,  
I say late is good rest.  
Lazy you whisper,  
Good! I howl.  
Many are like me, you say,  
few are the chosen; in this way.

A good rest is; Oh! how Heavenly.

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Job Ombati

# Confusions

## CONFUSION

Few are the confusions  
like that of a dog on funeral day.  
So many feet, so many sombre faces.  
To bark or not.

A sea just arrives, and sits.  
Talk is subdued.  
To hear there shouldn't be a barking.  
The mood is depressing,  
not a single smile,  
no petting, food a plenty but no love.

What happened?  
What happened to the owner of the whistle?  
They whistle, they call 'Simbaaa! '  
But not like the owner of the whistle.  
They throw food,  
but not sweet as that thrown by the owner of the whistle.

Why so much trepidation in the homestead?  
Why do people just arrive and congregate at the freshly dug mound?  
The ways of man!

Rare faces depart.  
Joy, the carefreeness  
is gone.  
Children laughter returns,  
kites fly high,  
skunks steal chicken in the stillness of the night.  
But the urge, is lost.

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# My Brother Robert

My brother Robert

I mourn you my brother

Good to me you were during your day.

Now that night has come and you've retired;

what remains are watery wells that will empty and refill through the future.

When the heart will remember.

Mum's piercing cry rents the earth's blanket.

And the eager feet defy the night distillate to inquire.

One thing is clear; another son of the land has slept.

Only that this time it's you, my brother Robert.

My people always curse death.

'You keep taking as if they are so full! '

I mourn you my dear brother.

Inconsolable mother is.

The cry has turned into a heart wrenching mourn.

If you hear her, your stomach churns

She's tied a lesa to her tummy and her arms are on her head.

They say that a child is a child though 38!

And that the umbilical cord still connects child to mother!

Oh my brother, you've killed mother.

As she keens, she grows old.

Her world stopped.

Though we may be many,

One less is no comfort.

You were her sunrise, she says.

What will happen now?

As they lower you into your lonely house,

where eternity will be your only companion.

And a mound of the sweet-smelling soil separates you from all those here,

The lesa on mum's tummy is adjusted one hole tighter.

Her voice has returned.

But now hoarse.

They send 'omogisangio' to descend and turn an age mate.



A fistful of soil,  
is her bye and 'fare-thee-well'.  
The first thud on your wood mansion finally breaks her back.  
Her cry rises to a crescendo

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# Before Thee I Come

On bended knees I cometh.  
Without mascara;  
no pedicure  
no manicure  
no moustache  
no cap  
no crap.  
Naked of heart I am,  
but with hands so crimson.  
Inspect me for  
iniquities - hordes guaranteed to find.

To Thee I cometh,  
heavy of heart  
but light of goodness.  
At Thy feet I lay the heavy pale,  
that my soul so depress.  
Prostrate I lie before thine throne of mercy.

With the bareness of heart, I cometh.  
A contrite heart;  
no haughty beards,  
no holy garbs,  
no fringes to my skirt,  
just the me in my birth suit.  
Soft steps are on thine consecrated grounds,  
Stilettoes no longer of use.

My heart thou see,  
as of binoculars through.  
On my transparent heart,  
clear-glass as motives  
and empty palms of praise.

Before Thee I come.

Job Ombati

# My Friend Kyeva Francis Kyalo

MY FRIEND KYEVA F KYALO

Few strutted the academic landscape like did you.  
Softly but indelible steps left  
that years later your efforts  
though little then looked,  
in memory of friends and foes etch themselves.

Soft in speech and actions but strong in pen.  
Soft prancer of God's earth.  
Missed you are; dearly.

Deftly scripted them,  
poems and playlet's.  
That saw your girls hoist one trophy on top of other,  
shuttled from one music fiesta to gala.  
And the Machakos Girls loved you in return.

Few remain of a good-hearted teacher.

Beaming countenances, you left.

Earth soft hearts touched.

Minds changed.

And like the great one you were;

Poems.

Playlet.

Pictures, soft words, memories in notes.

You left.

And to the world - 'Face to Face with Poetry'.

And for me, your memory.

In your poem 'The Teacher '

you did mwalimu credit.

Softly and aptly described the world of a teacher:

'Like a tout loading heavy luggage onto a bus...

The doctor...even the robber into the bus of academic pursuit.&quot;

But &quot;he receives claps...plus a kick in the back'

What else could be said of an ingratitude society,

exiguous one that compares teacher with the sons of Japhet?

But in service they will soldier.

Just like a terribly mighty one.

Where one falls, another takes up reigns...

You did fall

but your mighty ideas fell on soft laps

and many more powerful sinews.

Into the delivery room, the feet hurry!

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Job Ombati

# Scavenger Love

## SCAVENGER LOVE

Man scavenger.

Bird scavenger.

Animal scavenger.

All digging for gold in other men's old wellsprings.

One resolve.

One drive.

One love.

One mind.

One hatred.

Man scavenger sees the bottle and what is inside.

And bird scavenger sees it.

And there's no hate.

Man scavenger sees the can and what's inside.

And bird scavenger sees it.

And there's murder in their eyes.

They circle one another.

Sizing the other.

All on one gold mine.

Checking with hands.

Checking with mouth.

Checking with beak.

Effluvium notwithstanding.

All - creatures of God.

Mistake not to be in the bus or in the zoo.

Both shivering in the cold July drizzle.

And in their dirty trench coats.

And sweltering in the bounteous sun.

All hoping for a better mood in their benefactors.

Each retiring for the night.

And wake up to renew their love-hate.

Under the same grumpy sky and insane sun.

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# The Love Of A Drink Drinker

He clutches the bottle firmly.  
Sometimes when out of hand,  
he caresses it.  
Softly as he could maiden love.  
Gazes at the alluring shape.  
The femininity there in.  
Deep into her soul, he probes.  
Awaiting another sip.  
To confirm it's valour.  
And yet...  
His love isn't in it.

When drunk,  
he remembers his dear dead mother.  
And so and so, now dead.  
How a good people all they were!  
But not Jerusha.  
She was a witch!  
He mourns mother!  
He is an orphan!  
He suddenly remembers,  
hankering for your sympathy tears.  
He declares he's holy.  
Holy than you holier-than-thou wife- stealing pastor!  
He will be in heaven...  
At the very bosom of Father Isaaka!  
And the pastor, won't.  
Wait and see!  
Gospel according to him.

He loves Jesus.  
So, he declares.  
An altar boy he was.  
Carried incense and censer.  
Knows all the Bible!  
Don't see him like this,  
and you think.  
He was the choir master!  
Do you know the song,

'Atukuzwe Isaka, Mama Maria na Isakariot'?

No! No! and...Josefu.

Who sang it?

..eeh!

Do you know it?

Then don't just see him like that!

At times and when at it,  
he can jig.

With one foot forward,  
finger slightly bit.

And one hand on the hip,  
he gyrates to Pepe Kalle's, Roggea Milla.

A few moves and halts.

His hand instinctively touches the shoulder.

The beret had to be firmly in place.

He could really dance.

It's only age that caught up.

And nothing...nothing, to do with dear, dear bottle.

How did he win sweet Kaveke?

...eeh!

Do you know?

Don't joke man!

Right at the heart of night,  
having bid spirits bye,  
he sings.

He stops to reprimand competition.

Could those silly frogs pleeeeee stop!

They are driving him crazy.

Did they just say Ngoo! Ngoo!

Whom do they think they are deriding!

Stupid!

He then, remembers his dear friend...

Jumooooooooo...!

Died in line of duty!

Never got to see his face.

Stepped on an IED.

And ants had early Christmas.

Dumfounded she never got to open the casket.

Draped in green, white and black.

Carried and buried by colleagues.

He keeps his tint removed wife.  
She works at Jemo's bar.  
And children begging at Miruka market.  
And the girl standing in the night.  
He laments the empty coffin!

The wife can hear his sob.  
From the direction of Karioki.  
Something queer.  
The frogs too now listen!

Job Ombati



# When We Were Young

We're old.  
Grizzled, used, tired  
Our vision strong but dimmed.  
Many years of expectations, dreams,  
now fizzled out.  
Nightmares.  
Sagged shoulders.  
Whining knees.  
Receding hairlines, receding year lines.  
But still defiant of fate.

When were young,  
Our supple feet softly scurried the morning.  
A million destinations for our dreams.  
Buoying us up high,  
fed on hot helium.

We stamped the morning grass,  
squashing the morning dew.  
Had places to go.

But now our faces are lined.  
Eyes rimmed.□  
Our steps drably, unsteady.  
Slow.  
For we have no places to go.

Inspired by the poem, 'When We Were Young' by Abass Ladak.

Job Ombati