

Poetry Series

Shola Balogun
- poems -

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Shola Balogun(September 13,1978)

Shola Balogun, playwright, poet and writer with the Theory of the Mystic Ladder in The Yoruba world and Judeo-Christian thoughts, is from Yoruba South-Western part of Nigeria, West Africa.

He was the winner of the First Educare Trust's OLAUDAH EQUIANO POETRY PRIZE(2002) and the FESTIVAL OF PEACE POETRY AWARD(2005) organized by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

Published Books

He is the author of a collection of Poetry, THE CORNWOMAN OF JURARE & OTHER POEMS(2007) .

His other published books are:

THE WRESTLING OF JACOB,

DEATH AND SUICIDE IN SELECTED AFRICAN PLAYS,

PRAYING DANGEROUSLY: THE CRY OF BLIND BARTIMAEUS

(available as e-book and paperback formats)

His play, EGUE EGHAE, is ready for the stage.

Balogun is also an art collector, screenwriter, film maker and Producer.

Literary Contributions

He has featured as a guest writer and contributor, especially in the areas of poetry and Postcolonial studies/dramatic criticism to Magazines, Anthologies and Journals, including International Journal of Research(Edupedia Publication Scholar Support Scheme) ,60 Years of The Muse At U.I(editd by Professor Femi Osofisan) , Poetic Passions: An Indo-Nigerian Anthology of Poetry(editd by Mutiu Olawuyi and Jernail S Aanand) , Whispers in the wind: a poetry anthology editd by Lena Kovadlo, Bewildering Stories, Tuck Magazine, The Bitchin' Kitsch, Ovi Magazine, Parousia Magazine, Arcs Magazine, Tajdeed Literature, VerbumlandiArt-Planet di Regina Resta, Spirit Fire Review, Piker Press, Potomac Journal, Peeking cat, The Podcast: Coffee with Underhill, Adelaide Literary

Magazine, The Tau, The Invisible Bear, a journal affiliated with Duke University's English department graduate poetry working group, and others.

Published Scholarly Articles

His published scholarly articles include:

" Mystic Ladder In The Yoruba World And Judeo-Christian Thoughts";

" Poetry: The Yoruba world and Judeo-Christian vision";

" The Tragic Conventions In African Plays";

" Tragedy in African Theatre";

" Traditional Religious Festival as Theatre";

" Theatre Aesthetics in Pre-Colonial Africa";

" Satire and Comic Ribaldry in a Traditional African Theatre";

" The religious recluse of the Oro cult and Yoruba bardic tradition";

" In Jerusalem"; By the Mystic Poet SIAM: A Review";

Film

The Secret Place(2017, short film)

Crusoe

I ride on the waves
of their lies
and tell how vicious men
master vain manners
for a piece of unhallowed bread.
I ride on the waves
of their rumours
and belch at the ridiculous riddles
of the swindlers babbling boisterously
in the scam of their filthy scandal.
I frown at the unholy fragrance
of their floppish feats
and gaze with contempt
at their lusty eyes
longing after the lucre
of the poor;
I mete also the verdict
of the cohorts of vandals
and in no little weight
find in it
the thirty pieces of silver.
I ride on the waves
of their humours.

Shola Balogun

Eyes In The Glen

The earthen lamp, the wandering eyes,
The dimly lit floor, the rising shadow,
The sudden silence of lone whispers
In the undivided hour,
The woven hearse on wheeled rostrums
As wilted knot of hands thaw
To loose your drapes-
Then the coral dialectics of shapely ambits! impulsive
Elesin Oba
Would spare a long-loved clout for the pall
To untying beads of carousal,
Falstaff
In his lagging steps could not have been more
Unperturbed to part with brew
And the succulent fullness of dingles-
I stand tiptoed on reclining rail
And unflustered by the rants of lightsome gulls.

Shola Balogun

Heresiads

Abraham...Ra...Ham

I kissed the navel of the night.
The chalice of sprouted stalks of bitterleaf,
Damp from the drunken earth,
Gained my lips and left my tongue
Unspent in an impetuous reserve.

I do not stay my hand on the omelette.
Obatala...Bata...Ala

Wolves weaving webs with woods:
It pleased me more to spew
Crushed roots on the languid brows
Of the base statuary on the stone pines.

Shola Balogun

In Search Of Langston Hughes

(Songs for Jazz)

A river of wine
In the kiss of your lips:
Let me be the rose
In your rose garden.
There is sweetness of honey
And the aromatic spices
Like the fruit wine of Helbon
In the kiss of your lips.
Even though there is no star
In this night sky,
I see the stars tonight
On the brow of your eyes.
Your name is a poem
Beautifully written.

2.

Wine in the kiss of your lips:
O beautiful, beautiful darling!
Your voice is sweeter
Than the nightingale's song,
Melodious and comely.

Shola Balogun

In The Goethe-Institut

Steep-stepped vaulting,
I held your suns gladly.

What manner of winevat and what words much graced!
What figured stone, or cardinal cycles
Bequeathed this fold of becalming curiosities
To the balance of water and wine.
Sprawled, was this not the gate of the deep
Where spurned Aristaeus in his up-turned brows
Sought the intensifying form of Eurydice!
Faust,
Steppe into the plinth of dreams, and see
You are not far from the infleshed Muse
Nor estranged from pruned tongues.

Shola Balogun

Lament

As ill-clad Zlelponith bemoaning
The mangled body of her son tempered
Beneath the hewn stones of Dagan,
Reached deeply into her grief
And beheld in that frozen hour
Some human shadow of God,
The pierced side, the battered frail form,
The head smitten with a vile slat,
A woman's heavy eyes over the earth
Folded in beating scalpels
Seek deeper into the human misery
And into the drama of the silence of God.

Shola Balogun

Night

Rain on my tongue.

Threshing floor of pebbled camwood,
Then hidden faces and strange footsteps
On slaughter slabs, eyes swirling
Across the uncharted silence.

Thrust of faltering lips-Now,
I could hear the whispers
Of the dark hour
And I taste this mint of my tears.

Shola Balogun

Oedipus By Sophocles

Oedipus by Sophocles

Oil for the brow.

The ascending footfalls in a landslide,
The drowning moons at the threshold of dreams,
The accompanied dialogue with the parting presence,
Claustrophobic, still screen closes
Slowly on a knob, definitive steps
Move down the aisle-
A pair of hands condense in blood.
With an artful eye and guided space,
A poet's palette begets
Buds of firstripe earth,

Tongues of ingathering.

Shola Balogun

Sango's Ballad

Sango's Ballad
(Osogbo,2017)

Frozen faces in Heraclitean pier
Romp into cycles of beehives
As voices rose in meteoric storm
Not a transplanted opera, but a seed
Of unbroken vowels budding
From untempered tongues in stone walls.

Dawn gathered sticks for the raft
And poured light into earthen pots.
The coming chattering had bone for slime.

Shola Balogun

The Crucifixion In Salvador Dali's Painting

A shadow of light transported
Into three eyes in a flood of triangle,
Tempered omelette of whirling cyclone
Beating pawn to forlorn stones
As chewed nuts metamorphosed
Into seedlings in the windsome clime
And devolved into sheaves blustered,
Espoused by lapping crops.

Was it duty or love that brought
This great cry to this unwilling recluse!

Shola Balogun

The Statue Of Moremi

Could this be the setter forth of Ethiop tongue!
I thought the Aegean breakwaters,
Beating at Aphrodite's tender limbs
In wingbeats of storm
Buried you deeper into my dark earth:
Or was it in your circumcised eyes
I beheld the image which fell from Jupiter:
It was to hear the whispers of strange silence
From unknown lips, and to drink from the ocean
Of your untamed eyes
I came to the ravine,
And as some bird at flight
Unfurled your shrewdness I know
Earth will not stir at the homecoming of ravens.

Shola Balogun

To His Penelope

To His Penelope
(for my wife, Hauwa)

1.

Baptize me now in your spring water.
Your name is to me like the fruit wine
Flavoured with aromatic spices.
You touch my heart
With the purest fragrance
Of your lips.
Baptize me now, my Penelope.

2.

The mirror lied.
What new name do I give
To the richness of beauty
I see in you, my honeyed love!
The mirror cannot tell
The true form
Of your graceful beauty.
The mirror lied.

3.

Baptize me now, blessed beauty.
In your voice is the lyric
That none had ever heard before.
Your smiles are worth more
Than a thousand shekels
Of pure shining gold.
You are the honey
In my iced milk.

Shola Balogun