

Poetry Series

# **Stella Adaeze Ogwatta**

## **- poems -**



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# Stella Adaeze Ogwatta()

Stella Adaeze Ogwatta (born 10 January 1999) is a Nigerian writer, poet, educator, publisher and entrepreneur. She is the founder of THE STELLAR IMPRINT, STELLAR\_EDU SERVICES LTD, Stellar Minds Book Club, Stellar Scholars Academy, and StellaR.Professionals. She also founded the THE STELLAR IMPRINT Annual Youth Poetry Prize, an initiative that supports emerging poets across Africa.

## Early life and education:

Stella Adaeze Ogwatta was born in Nigeria. She studied Education and English Language at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She later enrolled in the Digital Humanities program at Harvard University, where her studies focused on the intersections of literature, technology, and cultural narratives.

## Career:

Stella Adaeze Ogwatta began publishing poetry in online contests. Her poem Sonnet 2020 was shortlisted in the Syncity Poetry in Times of Corona Contest in 2020, and her poem Opposing Cardinals has been recognized as Poem of the Day by Poem Hunter. She has taught English and Literature at primary and secondary schools and contributed book reviews for Online Book Club, where she worked as a book reviewer.

## Entrepreneurship:

She has established several creative and educational initiatives. THE STELLAR IMPRINT (RC: 8538141) serves as a publishing platform, while STELLAR\_EDU SERVICES LTD (RC 8364530), incorporated in March 2025 under Nigeria's Companies and Allied Matters Act, operates as a registered company. Stella also founded Stellar Minds Book Club, a community for literary engagement, Stellar Scholars Academy, an educational institution with a holistic learning focus, and StellaR.Professionals, a fashion line for professionals.

## Selected works:

Notable literary works include Opposing Cardinals, Sonnet 2020, and her early publications Tales of an Orobo Kibo Kibo, The Spirit of Brilliance and A Sense of Balance and Adventure.

## Themes and style:

Stella Adaeze Ogwatta's writing explores introspection, empathy, and identity, blending African storytelling traditions with science, mythology and broader philosophical ideas.

Personal life:

She lives in Nigeria, where she continues her work in literature, education, and entrepreneurship.

# While They Still Laugh

Sitting,  
there seems to be a soft whisper on my cheek.  
Kinda softer than the laughter of children chasing tree shadows on Summer evenings,  
Their laughter spilling like clean water..

One girl picks petals,  
a boy builds a kingdom from sand and sticks.

Their joy is unguarded,  
eyes wide with sky,  
minds too new to measure malice,  
hearts too light to hold hate.

And yet,  
a knot tightens in my chest

...because I've seen what time can do.

The boy might be taught  
that silence is strength  
and tenderness, a weakness.  
The girl may learn  
to fold herself small  
so she's easier to love.

They will meet the world,  
as it's been made:  
by tired hands, bitter mouths,  
and adults who forgot  
the sound of their own childhood joy.

I watch, and I wonder...  
when do giggles become guarded grins? How?  
When does trust wrinkle into suspicion?  
When do dreamers turn cynical,  
or worse...dangerous?

I adjust my gait, but my eyes are still, watching them, as steady as ever

I converse with myself...these children  
will they remember?

The non cynic in me says they'll grow into  
adults who still dance,  
who speak without barbs,  
and face their own inner struggles which they might release as lethal weapons  
against others.

... if we look at the world through the eyes of those  
who were once children  
on an ordinary afternoon  
laughing at nothing  
and everything, we can laugh like them, forever without chest knots...while they  
still laugh.

&quot;The Walk Back&quot;  
Prelude to &quot;While They Still Laugh&quot;

I said,  
&quot;Let's go see something beautiful.&quot;  
And he said yes...  
with a smile that didn't flinch,  
his tone didn't even warn.

the fare was paid,  
...for the ride alone...the company...the ease of shared silence,  
for the memory I hoped to make  
less alone.

We walked part of the way- to save,  
and to stretch joy across distance  
with light conversation  
and open air.  
Really, I didn't think it a burden. Because he never objected.

On the way back,

when comfort was within reach, and we could easily have afforded it,  
he asked that we walked again.

This was no algebraic calculation. It was cold logic. My hair stands now on my  
body as I remember the formula. I'm no math guru, so why did the equation give  
accurate answers to my trial at it?

I saw through the equation afterwards, everything had happened so fast,  
probably because I moved slow yet carefree.

But in maths classes, you have to be careful. Or you'd miss your steps.

I didn't miss my steps. The air wasn't stiff,  
Thinking of it, was it to aid the smooth transmission of his formula which I didn't  
understand immediately?

... until I was able to see through his mind's inverse operations.

And suddenly, I felt  
the weight of something unspoken  
...I was to pay it back  
in footsteps. The undoing.

Not a cruel word was ever said.  
You'll learn that cruelty doesn't always speak, it's silent but not non-existent. I  
don't want them to learn such equations and formulas of lessons which weren't  
prepared for.

When I think of these little ones again,  
how even small seeds  
of pride, resentment, ego  
grow into forests of  
of inordinate self ambitions.

I still want to see them now... my eyes feeling soft as it rests on them...while  
they still laugh.

Going back,  
they should remember that jaded and disillusioned are only words they saw in

scribbles of lessons they agreed to attend,

but never learned or came fully to the realization of what they mean.

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# Infinite

My imagination, an endless well...  
Por favor! leave me alone there-to dwell  
The spectator might wonder what's behind my muteness,  
And what motivates such stillness...  
I wouldn't be able fill them in on, if I dared to tell.

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# Our Unstable Hearts

We head for the stables  
The place where we strip  
Our easily moved hearts  
Of pride, bitterness and envy.  
This lowly King lay among dry hay and straws  
But still gets to irk the king on the throne to envy.  
Where he lays, he reminds us of our lowest  
And he strips us of our own shame,  
Embracing them.

This lowly King  
Is all the inspiration our hearts need  
To remain stable,  
When our stars go bright or dim.  
He saves us from drowning  
Too much into the temporary illusion  
This lowly place brings.

Among the straws and hay lay  
A royal priesthood- where our bloodline begins.

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# Reverse Order

We started this journey,  
Souls entwined.  
Ripped or all its agony,  
and conceived in hope regardless.  
Those promises of yours,  
and hope came easier.  
Oh, there was no cause  
For obligations to be followed not.

Like a fire's embers  
That itches to get blown,  
Hope gets tried  
Leaving our souls haunted alone  
And our eyes,  
Expressionless hues.  
Scared puppies are what we've become.

If only the bits of hope leftover  
From your tongue-tipped  
Promises can be got,  
We could turn expectant  
Starved dogs instead;  
Even when hope  
Is in its reverse order.

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# Sun Behaviour

Some days she descends,  
Like she's afraid to cause pain.  
Yellow hands calmly sprawled on the earth.  
Other days, she displays her real colour  
Anger vented unsparingly  
On the earth,  
Making up for calmer days.  
Calm hands turn lethal and fiery;  
Do not be deceived by her yellowness,  
You feel her fiery - the pang of betrayal!  
Soon, you become enamoured in her beauty as she retires.  
Appearing apologetic of a sudden,  
The world becomes flawless and uncomplicated in that moment.  
But you can't help it,  
You fall for her.  
A usual scene, too peerless to get enough of  
Perhaps, to regain the trust  
That is often breached.

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# Transitions

I am dust,  
Formed into bones and flesh.  
I feel the rush of air  
Five feet tall,  
I stand above uncertainties.  
Fame grips me by the hand,  
and youth is my close companion.  
My body is cracked clay;  
My bones are noisy rattles.  
My legs fail my mind's urge to wander.  
I am weightless;  
I see myself sprawled beneath.  
I am dust;  
I have grown moist, in decay.

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# Wrecked

We remember the wails;  
Their anguish pierced like nails.  
The awful silence that followed those piercing screams  
made our eyes turn glassy streams.  
But the tears...they refused to fall.  
When the attackers all marched in one  
To their vulturine dens,  
Every footstep taken  
Savagely wrecked our beings with fear.

The soil welcomes the corpses,  
Gloomy skies rain down curses.  
Each figure lowered to the dust  
Soon to be covered with crust.  
Dreadfully, we await dawn  
In a mood too forlorn.

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# Opposing Cardinals

I felt the roughness of the grope,  
But the revulsive cringe that should follow deserted me.  
Rather, it held me in awe  
that protection so much felt like hatred.

When my eyes drifted to the other end,  
His eyes told not of a different story  
and his abductor held him by his head.  
Perhaps, to stop his daring love ideas from flowing  
For he once muttered to me in secret  
that thoughts of me filled his head.

He was dragged to his Northern web,  
I staggered to the East- the aftermath of the grope.  
My point of the Cardinals, they say, is where the sun rises  
Yet, my sun had risen at the opposing cardinal.  
Opposed both in bearing and in existence.

The sun beams stronger now as I sojourn;  
I wince at its way of welcoming me home  
This time, scorching my skin.  
Ah my punishment for erring!  
I look up at my abductor for the first time,  
He is my kinsman  
And I feel none of the love  
which I have lost to the other side.

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