

# Moonlights



Bala Dalhatu

# MOONLIGHTS

**POEMS**



## Kraftgriots

Also in the series (POETRY)

David Cook *et al*: *Rising Voices*

Olu Oguibe: *A Gathering Fear*; winner, 1992 All Africa Okigbo prize for Literature & Honourable mention, 1993 Noma Award for Publishing in Africa

Nnimmo Bassey: *Patriots and Cockroaches*

Okinba Launko: *Dream-Seeker on Divining Chain*

Onookome Okome: *Pendants*, winner, 1993 ANA/Cadbury poetry prize

Nnimmo Bassey: *Poems on the Run*

Ebereonwu: *Suddenly God was Naked*

Tunde Olusunle: *Fingermarks*

Joe Ushie: *Lambs at the Shrine*

Chinyere Okafor: *From Earth's Bedchamber*

Ezenwa-Ohaeto: *The Voice of the Night Masquerade*, joint-winner, 1997 ANA/Cadbury poetry prize

George Ehusani: *Fragments of Truth*

Remi Raji: *A Harvest of Laughters*, joint-winner 1997 ANA/Cadbury poetry prize

Patrick Ebewo: *Self-Portrait & Other Poems*

George Ehusani: *Petals of Truth*

Nnimmo Bassey: *Intercepted*

Joe Ushie: *Eclipse in Rwanda*

Femi Oyebode: *Selected Poems*

Ogaga Ifowodo: *Homeland & Other Poems*, winner, 1993 ANA poetry prize

Godwin Uyi Ojo: *Forlorn Dreams*

Tanure Ojaide: *Delta Blues and Home Songs*

Niyi Osundare: *The Word is an Egg* (2000)

Tayo Olafioye: *A Carnival of Looters* (2000)

Ibiwari Ikiriko: *Oily Tears of the Delta* (2000)

Arnold Udoka: *I am the Woman* (2000)

Akinloye Ojo: *In Flight* (2000)

Joe Ushie: *Hill Songs* (2000)

Ebereonwu: *The Insomniac Dragon* (2000)

Deola Fadipe: *I Make Pondripples* (2000)

Remi Raji: *Webs of Remembrance* (2001)

Tope Omoniyi: *Farting Presidents and Other Poems* (2001)

Tunde Olusunle: *Rhythm of the Mortar* (2001)

Abdullahi Ismaila: *Ellipsis* (2001)

Tayo Olafioye: *The Parliament of Idiots: Tryst of the Sinators* (2002)

Femi Abodunrin: *It Would Take Time: Conversation with Living Ancestors* (2002)

Nnimmo Bassey: *We Thought It Was Oil But It Was Blood* (2002)

Ebi Yeibo: *A Song For Tomorrow and Other Poems* (2003)

Adebayo Lamikanra: *Heart Sounds* (2003)

Ezenwa-Ohaeto: *The Chants of a Minstrel* (2003), winner, 2004 ANA/NDDC poetry prize and joint-winner, 2005 LNG The Nigeria Prize for Literature

Seyi Adigun: *Kalakini: Songs of Many Colours* (2004)

# MOONLIGHTS

**POEMS**

**Bala Dalhatu**



**Kraftgriots**



Published by  
**Kraft Books Limited**  
6A Polytechnic Road, Sango, Ibadan  
Box 22084, University of Ibadan Post Office  
Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria  
☎ 0803 348 2474, 0805 129 1191  
E-mail: kraftbooks@yahoo.com

© Bala Dalhatu, 2012

First published 2012

ISBN 978-978-918-066-0

= KRAFTGRIOTS =  
(A literary imprint of Kraft Books Limited)

All Rights Reserved

First printing, August 2012

## Dedication

For my wife, Amina  
a confession and acknowledgement  
I love you (I just can't say enough);  
For my kids—Hauwa, Asma'u and Dalhatu  
I am the seed, be my blooms

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Dalhatu Iya family, especially H. D. Iya and Lami; to friends, particularly old friends like Dr Aminu A. Chiroma; to colleagues, specifically Dr Halima Shehu who first went through the work and approved it and Dr K. O. Shittu; and a being-felt thanks to all who inspired the lines in this work.



## Contents

<i>Dedication</i> .....	5
<i>Acknowledgment</i> .....	6
Anthem .....	9
Simply thoughts .....	10
Alive .....	11
Parting the curtains .....	12
Acknowledgement .....	13
It will get better .....	14
Yours .....	15
Wish .....	16
The man says .....	17
Affirmation .....	18
Decision time .....	19
Shadow/substance .....	20
On writing again .....	21
Sundown.....	23
Signs of the times .....	25
Ruminations.....	27
Black sister .....	28
Let it go .....	30
Push on (for Ajoke) .....	32
You can't go back .....	33
Proposition .....	34
The brain.....	36
Disvirginity .....	37
Walking dream (for Hansy).....	39
Intimacy .....	40



Candlelight and moonlight (for my maiduguri friends)...	41
Just a pause, not a stop .....	43
Cry of the young .....	44
Friends again .....	45
Linkages .....	46
Disappointment .....	47
Cold antidote .....	48
Music .....	49
Die, die dreams .....	50
I come naked (no excuse) .....	51
Moon should shine .....	53
Accounting .....	54
Making marks .....	55
I will love you .....	56
Letting go .....	57
Time .....	58
Thank you .....	59
Complex longings .....	60
Loving anger .....	61
The only one .....	62
A flow .....	63
Door not a wall .....	64
Pains of hope .....	65
Pride .....	66
Get well .....	67
It's okay .....	68
I love you .....	69

## Anthem

Shadowy forms, cloudy space  
Silhouettes, stillness and frozen wind  
Vague, conflicting and ambiguous feeling  
Definitions, distinctions, resolutions  
Life must strive towards these.



## Simply thoughts

Maze in the whirlwind that's the world  
Confounded and flabbergasted is man  
That tree with its cooling shade is poisonous  
Nutritious is the fish but a cannibal  
The fire that destroys nourishes  
What am I, angel or beast?

## Alive

I feel drunk with life  
So drunk its tossing  
Tossing me around-

I am HERE its true  
This is NOW I understand  
I am ALIVE I know

Being ONE  
With ALL



## Parting the curtains

Now that the surrounding  
Has been cleared of haze  
In the glare of morning light  
Night having fled

Now that communication  
Is no longer wrapped in codes  
Hopefully the mouth can speak  
In simple terms

And the face can wear  
That which is in the heart

## Acknowledgement

Sometimes that which could have been  
Pleasantly actually is...

In every contact we influence  
Are influenced...

Sometimes the consciousness acknowledges  
Most times not...

In you what could have been for me  
Actually is...

-A conscious acknowledgement of contact made



## It will get better

Shall I just say, never again  
The blows of storm, the lashes of time  
That there's only fine weather ahead?

Rather say I this from the depth of me  
-A prayer and affirmation-  
It can only get better

## Yours

Love my Heart, Soul, my Being  
No longer is mine, beyond control

My Love no longer is mine to possess  
You have possession and control

It is yours to do with as you please.



## Wish

May life be rich for you  
Be fulfilling, be good for you...  
May your plans turn real  
May your dreams be true...

Especially today... but also  
Tomorrow and all Tomorrows ahead

The man says...

The sight beholds people and objects  
Scattered and strewn on paths you walk  
Perceived and interpreted as obstacles on the way

So now you tense up, now you feel hard...

He says all that may be needed is perception  
That beholds the people and the objects  
Simply as aids, signposts guiding your paths

Then, he says, you relax, at ease, wearing a smile.



## Affirmation

Raindrops that is the cleansing shower  
Shall and must in the end be united with earth  
For the scorching sun shall dim and cool  
And the blanket of clouds shall disappear

The damp misty sky shall be dry clear  
And the parched brown lips of the earth  
Shall breathlessly hungrily bare itself  
Awaiting the deep kisses of sky tongues

The earth awaits the coming of the sky  
Pulsating for its caress and its embrace  
The sky shall kiss it with cool droplets  
And rain shall gather it in its arms...

Finding its lips and holding it whole  
The consummation shall be complete

## Decision time

When things look smooth and clear  
The road fine and the energy there  
The mind with the sharpness of a pin,  
Jog on and savour the smoothness and fun

The soft, sandy, leveled path beneath your feet...

Suddenly you espy a barrier ahead  
Now plodding because of the gravel  
You try to push on the energy sagging  
Got to take a breath and make a pause

Now is the time to make a study...

Proceed or retreat, you have to know  
The spring on the horizon – will it be cool  
Enough to drench your parching throat  
Do you want to get it or not?



## Shadow/substance

Food...

And they show you Presidential Nite for Bizmen

Shelter...

And Landlords slap you with annual increases

Education...

Your annual salary can't pay the fees

Transport...

Behold the General in the Beast (and petrol is Gold)

Honesty...

And reality nails you to a post

Charity...

Till society squeezes you out of breath

Equality...

Then the State shows you it is a Farm

Idealism...

Certainly not in this jungle.

## On writing again

Virgin sheets and a flood of feeling-thoughts  
Ideas streaming so they compel recording  
Still, can't help but know ideas just are airs-  
But the page that is blank, that page is dumb

Is it the muddied waters of my being?  
The dark and cloudy horizon that I gaze  
Or the knowledge that words can't be hugged  
Why have the sheets been blank this long?

I thought blank sheets pose no threats  
Ah- they pose the threat of discovery  
Sought another way from seeking and knowing  
The complacent ease of not knowing I embraced  
Keeping safe distance, insulated—from what?

I pretended I live, living a lie  
That the gale and clamours and even the rot  
Won't reach me since I'd slumbered  
But to wake and to sleep are both integrated!

Feelings slam me and still I pretend  
Thoughts kept pushing but adamant I stood  
Slapped by anger the other cheek I turned  
See sears from burns but a smile I wore

Stubborn, I oppress and push them all down  
Still... longings, yearnings, just a feel of warmth  
The sense of wonder just pointing at things  
To be good, to joy and just to laugh  
None has shown me what wrong these are  
But the frown is there, just can't understand  
I see you smiling but our eyes don't lock



Just have to cry out just to let you know  
I am still singing, crying... and singing still  
And the notes keep soaring even as I bleed  
So help me, crying and singing, to fill the blanks  
Oh yes there are jars but also there are joys

## Sundown

All round green surrounds us... and silence  
Save for the running of the river towards its course  
Our love too is running its inevitable course  
It may be that it was not meant to last for long

The illumination of lightning is intense, is brief  
But the insight it gives endure forever

I held her gently turning her face  
Those eyes—brilliant pools—round and large  
Her eyes shining with unshed emotions  
And I just can't help sinking in them

I looked away staring hard at the river  
Running, running, running its course...  
And I saw clearly the trajectory of our lives  
Where it began and where it goes

Or did it begin when we began?

I remember the laughter, the quarrels so clear  
The sweetness of it, oh the joy of it  
The pain that's like pepper to stew  
Like the first light of day, like dawn

All beautiful, all fresh and all serene...

I looked at her with knowledge in my heart  
This is evening heralding the night...  
We can't go on; it wasn't meant to be  
You and I cannot take on the world...

I wish I can see the mind of fate!

See the leaves shaking against the wind  
And the birds singing, singing a dirge



And the sun sinking, far in the west  
The day is dozing, ready to sleep  
I turned to her-ah those eyes again!  
She uttered a sigh and I the same  
"You and I love... it must end  
Not strong enough to stand and fight  
Still, here is a certainty like this river running  
You taught me love, song and dance  
Illumined the joy and beauty of life  
Your gift is MINE, with it I will die"  
And then... and then... I walked away...

## Signs of the times

What does it do to your confidence?  
When you can't meet the basic of needs  
Doesn't it leave a deep gash oozing with blood?  
When you can't live or hope to live  
A decent life now or later?

It feels great, does it?  
When your pay lasts a week  
On meeting the barest of needs  
And a great stone is tied  
To your legs for the remainder  
Of days at closing time?

Wonderful! Won't you say?  
Your kids dressed in rags  
You can't lift the burden of fees  
Yes there's still shelter from storms  
And bosoms to lay their heads

You feel and act a King, don't you?  
When still in her noon, your wife  
Looks dusky, harried, a granny  
Her profile no longer lights fires in you

Your old flame, remember?  
You looked her full in the face...  
And said "for better for worse"  
Well... she has been your rock

Behold your wonderful situation  
All you ask for is food... and some meat  
Sure meat is not the same as food  
(But you can dream), decent clothing,  
And your very, very own Home



Then you dream of (it's a dream anyway)  
Good education for your kids  
And something for your wife in lieu of wages  
As professional housewife...

Dream...Food

Dream...Cloth

Dream...Dreams...

It sure is great, greatly wonderful

To dream and dream and dream

And dream dreams.

## Ruminations

Drummers are drumming in my belly  
Wrinkles on my face and it is bonny  
Humming in my head and it is spinning  
In circles under me the ground is swirling

Light streaming in through the crack  
At an angle the roof of my shack  
I lay on the floor but it is cracking  
I clutch my head feeling dizzy...

I feel dizzy a gale forces me down  
Just can't stand, can't feel the ground  
Can't feel its firmness beneath my feet  
And wherever I turn I feel the heat

Like a drunkard thirsting for wine  
I am longing, dying for just a line  
The formula, secret and key to unlock  
This haze, this maze, this cloud and rock

I hear them people laughing call life.



## Black sister

African Womanhood, you have fallen into dung  
Deep stinking hole, you are now a caricature  
Deformed, a pitying spectacle of yourself  
Caught in the madness of modern uniformity  
A is B and B is A, acknowledging no difference

To you the color Black equates disgust  
Your natural hair straight, a thorn to you  
Bleaching creams have replaced the Oils  
You burn your hair to Uncle Tom's Jerry Curse  
Look! Your nails long dripping with blood

The castle of your skin not enough for you  
Worshipping and parroting all that is white  
Like the Monkey on the tree, you'll come to harm  
The Owl will stalk you, you'll become a dream  
Your plastic smile will save you not

Your skin is cold like a toad's belly  
Lifeless and sickening, pale and dry

Yesterday I saw and didn't know it is her  
Her hair was burnt like a curse from above  
She had become a leopard, her veins were green  
Her lips sanguine with blood of victims  
Threatening and moist, gluttonous as death

Oh! Sister, burn your illusions, come to roots  
Stand in dignity and display your Black...  
Burn your cream bottles that smell so foul  
Get out of the pits and rewash your lives  
Smell natural, smell warm and smell vital...

Dear Ancestors don't turn in your graves  
Our Mothers of yore don't look this way

Stay your mighty hands, don't strike them down  
Your children who have betrayed their roots  
Wash their faces in the mighty Rivers of Niger  
Scrub their noses, pierce their ears and let them know  
Black is natural and nature, nature can be beautiful!



## Let it go

Look not at the healing wounds  
Thoughts may well tell you they are fresh  
Let not the thorns and the pricks that pierced you  
Made you bleed, ache and hurt  
Make you blind to the honey and sweet  
That abounds but exists with poison lip to lip

The child that is cruelly burnt by fire  
Dread with might even the sight of ashes  
Be not like that child rather learn  
That fire which burns also nourishes...

Oh don't ever think of yesterday  
It is gone and done forever  
The mistakes of yore are most  
The end, the middle and the beginning

Don't let the anguish drown the joy  
Yesterday is gone today is here...

Don't let the fruit of the travesty game  
Be as a ragged knife in your smooth flesh  
Turned sharply painfully whenever you look  
The constant reminder of what has gone  
Hold that fruit, hold it fast...

The fruit is innocent, a product of storm  
Mold it not into an object of hate...  
Wash the fruit in rivers of courage  
Transform it with hands of hope  
Teach it love, don't teach it hate

Let not your emotions that are noble  
Dry up as a river because of the drought  
Let's swim in it together, bathe in it

Together let us taste the sweetness of it...

And

Let that child be a pillar to lean on  
When tired, when weary and weak  
A calabash of water cool and fresh  
To draw from when exhausted and drained

And full and cleansed, clutch it well  
Then walk with confidence the paths of life



## Push on

*(for Ajoke)*

The storm can blow but not forever  
And the reed will stand erect again  
Night is the pregnancy, pregnancy of day  
It can never abort, nor can it miscarry  
Dawn must break forth, fresh and clear

What if there is blinding darkness around  
Take a few more steps and you will find  
There the light shining, shining bright.  
You may acutely bend to the storm  
But you will stand, stand erect again

So to people you seem to speak in tongues  
They stare past you not seeing the pain  
Sometime you swim in a river of doubt  
For they look through you and not at you

Stand still and listen, listen to your depths  
Stand still and look, look into yourself  
Now, what do you see, what do you hear?  
Who are you, who are... who... are...

## You can't go back

You can't go back to the past  
Memories are all that are left  
To look back on and sustain you  
To suck upon not quenching the thirst

Because you can't go back to the past

A phrase, tone of voice or a face  
Sometimes a glance opens the floodgate  
Catapults you back and for a moment  
And only for that moment

The magic is there, the past is here...

You visit a place, a scene of meaning  
Of events affecting your life forever  
But it is dry, ordinary and lifeless  
You are no pilgrim, just a tourist

Because you can't go back to the past

After sometime, you visit a friend  
You'd dreamt some dreams, had some visions  
Had some fun and suffered some pain  
And your heartbeats were a symphony

"Long time, no see" you say... pause

Long silences and awkward moments  
Doesn't seem to be anything to say  
Now, there's discord in the notes you play  
That magic you shared is gone  
You've travelled differently since then  
Since last you shared... together

No, you can't go back to the past  
Or... can you?

## Proposition

Let's  
Be friends  
Different but equal  
With individual  
Peculiarities

Taking each day  
As it unfolds  
Not anticipating  
Carefree and  
One

Please  
Nothing permanent  
No lasting vows  
At least for now

The future  
Shall always  
Take care  
Of that

Now let's  
Know each other  
Exploring ourselves  
Discovering the pillars  
And the pits

Exploring  
Our souls  
Exploring  
Our Selves

Friendship  
Without giving



Is selfish  
And cruel

In giving  
Is friendship  
In sharing  
Is friendship  
In taking  
Is friendship

Give and share  
Yourself with me  
Taking your gift  
I will gift  
Myself to you

Let's be friends  
Unreservedly fully  
Measuring our friendship  
Not in numbers of gold  
Measuring our friendship  
In numbers of stars

## The brain

The maze that is the labyrinth and haze  
Sponge, absorber of all that was, is, will be  
The Pot that the Oceans all can't fill  
House that accommodates the whole universe

The Present balance of the past and future  
Thin line between bestiality and humanity  
Majesty and head of man's physique  
The total record of man's experience

The hand touches only when you command  
Far away stars, the sun and the moon  
All visible things, the universe at large  
The globe can't perceive unless you acquiesce

The roar of winds and the music of birds  
Permeates not the lobe without your say so  
All smell, of food, flesh and flower  
Can't get the nose without your nod

No smell, no sight, no movement, nothing  
Every act of man has your prior endorsement  
You are the beginning and you are the end

What is conscience, if not you?  
Right and wrong you define for man  
What is light, what is darkness?  
Oh yes, you are the ultimate interpreter

Originator of all that man invents  
You are the comfort, you are the dread  
What will you, with man, do at last?  
Direct him to ease and all that's good

Or release the nuclear thy child?



## Disvirginity

Now  
Here to serve time  
With deity of exactitude  
On bended knees in the austere shrine  
Precision of problems and solutions

And  
I was slapped by those dreams  
The lofty ambitions of yore  
Blinding vision to change the world  
The driving need to be somebody...  
The conviction that all things

Truths nobody has dared utter  
Will be trumpeted and heard  
Those dreams and visions-  
They won't leave me alone

The road was clear...  
Absolute confidence in self  
Made it so

But  
The first step, very first  
Was caught in material webs  
Deluded by responsibilities  
A micro in a macro  
Dancing to their drums and your beats

Thinking short-term satisfactions  
Long-term solutions...

That so called visionary of yesterday  
Of yester weeks and yester months  
That has now become yesteryears...



## Walking dream (for Hansy)

You were a dream walking on the highway  
Afraid you'll turn out a phantom if I grab you  
But I stared, reached out and you were there  
I stopped and called out and you smiled

Your laugh was a melody in the din  
A cool shade in the heat being with you  
Rolling harmony in the beat of our chat  
Your presence was a moon in my night

A dream... I woke up to find you gone  
Days were moody, my nights gloomy  
Time rolled by and nights stood still  
There's only the echo of my voice

When I call out...

Again you walked in—through the door  
Afraid to reach out—you are a dream  
But in this dream we closed the distance  
Two streams flowing and merging in one

In this dream we touched... we held

Like the breeze caressing the leaves  
It felt good

The sun kissing flower buds

It was right

The rain cooling baked earth

It was nice

The moon penetrating the depths

Took the breath

Soft beach sands beneath bare feet

A relief

Afraid...still afraid...

Don't go again...

## Intimacy

Just come, please come  
Come close let me hold you  
Let me hold you and feel you  
Come close so that I'll hug you

Closer...closer still  
For me to love you

Distance blurs perception...

Your voice can't reach me  
My hands can't touch you  
My being can't feel you

There is no intimacy  
Across empty space

I want to hug you, hold you  
In silence, just hold you  
Breathing, breathing your breath  
Tasting, tasting your taste...

And  
In the haven of your warmth  
Intoxicated within your taste  
At the peak of ecstasy  
Let the universe be still

Forevermore...



## Candlelight and moonlight

*(For my maiduguri friends)*

The cooling shade under the frying sun  
Oasis of grassy green on plains of baking earth  
The deep companionship amidst the empty throng  
Outstretched arms of help, firm clasps of hands

Were they not real—all actions on a stage?

Absolute offering from the springs of the heart  
No thought of repayment, Principal or Interest  
Smiles—not plastic, with the warmth of the moon  
Laughter that bursts rumbling from deep the guts

All these—are they now still pictures in a frame?

Freely bonded, treading the thorny paths our goal  
Amidst the famine, sharing the lean bank of each  
The seeds we scattered in the concentric circle  
Knowing where they are—the oasis in the arid plains

Should they be forgotten, memory deleted  
Old clothes discarded for shiny new ones...?

We may no longer be together in the shade  
No longer in that circle planting seeds...  
But was the goal the planting and not the tending?  
Satiated from the top what of the lees?

Since your face is no longer visible  
So you can't hear my voice; a sign  
Of growth that we are mute and blind  
The stream, an ocean we can't wade across

Oh yes, there is no tending of shoots  
The shade forgotten as nightfall is here



Old mistresses used, abused and thrown away  
Old friendships left to wither away...

You may feign blindness, you may be mute...

But the shades, the seeds and the freedom bond  
Are real solid, not mirages fading away  
Not pictures cut into frames, frozen and still  
It is NOT a candle that soon consumes itself

It is the majesty of the moon radiating the earth.

## Just a pause, not a stop

If the silence seemed ominous just then  
And you couldn't hear and feel the beats  
If my face seemed no longer mobile with smiles  
And you couldn't hear the music of my voice...

It is not that the drum's skin had been ripped  
Or that my face had assumed eternal immobility  
Having attained much sought after unity with all  
No, nor that I am afflicted with aphasia...

The drum can still beat, my throat still pregnant  
The face can still smile, yes, the heart still pound  
I just wanted to rest, so the silence  
My throat being sour and the drum being taut  
After the hassles come sleep, rest not death

The landscape may look dry, dusty and brown  
The rains come and washes all that away  
And the canvass becomes lush with greenery

The drum has resumed beating, will reach crescendo  
The music will permeate, smoothening the roughages  
The face, mobile with life and malleable like clay  
I shall be one with all but it won't be yet...

Listen to the resumed beats  
Listen to the laughter  
To the music  
My being



## Cry of the young

Please let me flower  
Cast no dark shades above  
Let the breeze caress my stem  
Sunshine gathers me in its arms  
I say let me flower

Say, I have got enough moisture  
The earth beneath damp enough  
Don't flood my tender shoots  
I say let the sunshine stream in  
And strike a balance in the ground  
Please let me flower!

Let me dance in the breeze  
Test my strength against the storm...

Please do not stunt my growth  
I don't have to grow to be like you...  
Casting dark shadows on below  
I want to grow, grow my growth  
Remitting transparent shades below  
Enough to nurture and not stifle

To grow an individual growth  
Distinct but part of the greenery  
Not shadowed by floppy leaves  
Not transformed into your shape

Let me stretch out, dance to the winds  
Let me bathe in the rays of sunshine  
Test my strength against the storm  
I say...say let me flower



## Friends again

The sudden ease of lifted burden  
Lift of a boot over fresh green...  
To suck in the fresh air again  
After the choking band in the chest  
Oh! The sweet mouth watering air

The dam has broken  
Let the flow resume  
We'll go strolling holding hands  
Walk on that familiar road again  
Will you please take a walk with me?

For a while our faces have been set  
Let the smile break through again  
Our throats have been blocked  
And our voices mute...  
Let the song burst forth once more  
Filling the air with our songs

It is time we partake once more  
Bite slowly and savour then swallow  
The ever present meal we once enjoyed  
The one we knew and always will know  
Together we shall partake once more  
Partake in the meal of friendship

## Linkages

We want to build structures  
Build structures every where  
To take us back and take us forth  
Take us in and take us out...  
Into the wide, wide world  
The wide, wide world into us

We must construct a strong bridge  
Constructed now, lasting forever  
For tomorrow to flow back to us  
That the circle almost broken...  
The interrupted flow can resume

Look, just look, look ...  
See the roaring river, see...  
In there are dangers and perils still  
That is where we will fall  
If this bridge is not built now

See the crowd at the other end standing  
Eager to touch us and hold our hands  
Let's make this bridge, make it now  
Before the river turns to an ocean  
Which no bridge can span across

Have to make this bridge, make it now  
To take us into the wide, wide world  
Take us into the wide, wide world  
Take the infinitely wide world into us.

## Disappointment

Oh! God my nest at last  
Darkness around, world's eyes closed  
Thinking when next my soil I will taste  
Bright moon, laughter to all sides pushed  
My land

My breath!  
Ready to dive, my body tensed  
Into the river known all my life

Shivering, steadying, then nose and all  
Ready, ready, I spread my wings...

Head on, breath expelled and eyes fixed

Fore expecting and stretched taut  
For a dive into the river  
Familiar...as life

KAP TAT WAT  
I hit it, landed hard!

Oh Mirage  
I thought you real.



## Cold antidote

Rain soaked dress  
Shivers to the bone  
Ice cold ocean, all  
Surrounding is cold

But always  
Your warmth...

You are the warmth  
Warmth of the womb  
The haven of mum's breast  
And even when I sink...

Sink deep down in ice cold ocean  
I will go down there in your pouch

## Music

Showers all over...aha  
Soothing, fresh and safe...yaah  
Smooth intoxicating nothingness  
Drown...immerse...washing away  
Engulfing the turmoil and strife  
The fight within the depths

Gently pushing away...banishing  
Imperceptive in its chasing...mmp  
Eyes closed but mind wide open  
And erect...and keen as pin

Deep... deeeep ... I hold it long  
Clutched at it...unwilling...  
Not willing to let go!

Peaceful calm, I caress it  
Roving and riding its crest  
It washes all over me...pew!  
Divesting all...my head...

Swirling but clear...

Music, overlap me and envelop me  
Hold, caress, wash and clean me  
Divest me of all...all my strife  
And in the harmony of melody  
Wipe them all away...

So that naked and light  
I will be able to fly

Fly...fly...fly nowhere

## Die, die dreams

Feverish dreams, hope  
High as the skies  
Longings, but  
A huge chasm between

Hopes and attainment  
Dreams to reality

To clutch the ideal  
Grasp the hoped for...  
The dreams  
Feverish dreams

Get out  
Out of my dreams  
Be a reality  
Get out of my dreams  
The calm of the fire  
That was the dream

Get out  
Out of my dreams  
Let me wake up  
Finding you real  
Get out of my dreams...



## I come naked (no excuse)

Like the prodigal  
I am come back home  
Home—you are home  
Where I started  
Where I hope  
To end

Is there still  
A room for me  
In your heart  
To rest my soul?

Like a child ignorant  
Of a precious gift  
That it threw away  
You gave your love  
Selfless and wholesome  
That love I threw  
I threw away...

After all these time  
That stretched and stretched  
After the pain and anguish  
The seeming sea of tears  
That submerged your love  
After...after

Is there still  
A place for me  
In your heart  
To rest my soul

What I thought  
In my ignorance was gold dust

Is nothing but ashes...  
The beauty is a beast  
My comfort and joy  
Is a desert of loneliness...

This knowledge I wear  
Is not, never can be  
An absolution of the stink  
Of betrayal on me

I am come back home  
Will you let me in  
Into your heart  
To rest my soul?

Dip me into your love  
So I will be clean and whole  
But the stream of your love  
Does it still flow?

I left as a child  
I am now grown  
To become a man  
I need your love

Your love is my life line  
Without it I'll drown  
Your heart is my home  
I am weary with wandering  
You are my cooling darkness  
Without you I won't shine

Please take me in  
Don't cast me away  
To wander in the wild  
Not coming to self  
Not coming to you



## Moon should shine

I am the bird in the cage  
Flapping its wings against the bars  
...The whole stretch of sky is my orbit

I am the torrents in the dam  
Pulsating, then calm against the walls  
...Flowing, the flow is my wont

I am the song in the din  
Be still, let the noise cease, cease  
...and feel the penetrating soar of my melody

I am the leaf in the whirlwind  
Violently shaking against its might  
Let the breeze begin its caress  
...And see me dancing in the sun

Don't use the microscope or the binocular  
Viewing the minute and the particular  
Shatter the glass, shatter the glass  
...Behold it all, the infinity of space

I am the senseless being in the body  
Limited by its weight, height and mass  
Burn the body to ashes, then dust  
...The universal soul is my mate

## Accounting

The day you are born or even prior  
An account is opened in your name  
Days, acts, moments and even breathes  
Are all converted into units fine

A lump sum is deposited in the account  
The sole credit that account will record  
Each moment, act, each breath you draw  
Is a debit you take out of your account

It grows less and less and it grows smaller  
That original deposit in your account...  
Your account will record no more credits  
And you cannot overdraw this account, no

The day your debits equal the original credit  
The moment, action, the breath is your last  
And the account is closed and the ledger filed  
And off you go...



## Making marks

Leaving prints on sandy time  
To be viewed by others  
Or washed away—it's on sand

Leaving a good name  
To be heard by others

Children to carry on your name...

Matters of ego  
And the senses  
Things of mere matter  
That belongs to this world  
Left in this world of sands

When you die to this world  
Prints and monuments in your name  
Children perpetuating your line...  
All in this world you have died to  
Will be things of bother to you?

## I will love you

How begin with "I love you"  
The dawn and morning be "Good day"  
What holds the noon, how be the moon?  
How love that which is not explored  
No strolling done to discover?

Is "I love you" an instinctive code  
A statement of pledge and hope expressed  
Even, a prayer anchored on will?

I...will...love you



## Letting go

Why do we not want to let go  
The aching loss of one dear so  
Why is the absence so deeply felt?  
The heart so tossed the innards melt?

The substantial presence on reaching out  
Certainty of comfort with no shred of doubt  
The serene smiles that tensions ease  
Words that caress so...so all strife cease

May be why we don't want to  
Don't want to let...let all go

## Time

There is no present  
No here and now  
It's already in the past

There is no past to me  
How can there be, and be me?  
It is a flow, nothing really was...  
Only changes in view

I am the past  
I am memory and guide  
I am the part present  
Gone before it is realized-

Into the future  
There is a future?  
Yes, it is I



Thank you

For your constancy  
And in your faith;  
For being true  
And in your strength;

Above-below and around  
All these; for being...

Well...just you

I am whole...

I am fine.

## Complex longings

What are we but complexes?  
Of needs, hungers and desires...  
Of expectations and hopes  
Desiring to be fulfilled?

Strive we not on each waking and walking  
Needs to meet and goals to attain?  
Each breath we take, each our body gives  
Are these not deep longings, signs that we live?  
So is not living hunger and want  
...Is not living hope?



## Loving anger

Let your anger be pure, let it be real  
Let it be sudden, let it be abrupt  
Like lightning, evoke some dread

And as lightning signals some rain  
And as rain cleanses the earth  
Let it not fester, let it not linger

Let it purge you—anger should cleanse  
On departure leaving you fresh

## The only one

A piece of land any one time  
Can accommodate only a building

There's a structure on my heart  
Can't now think of another  
Even if empty and unlived in  
There's no room for another

Can't be a new building  
Without a demolition ...  
And a clearing of rubbles  
The rubbles in my heart...



## A flow

Often it is said  
To always look to the future  
That which is to come is important  
More than that that's gone

But that which is past  
Is it done with, not with us?  
Is not all a flowing river without break?  
Or is it a snapshot cropped from the whole?

The past, the here and later  
Where is the terminus, where the border?

Is life a series, a sketch of lines?  
Starts and stops, simply events?

Or like sighted horizon above  
A circle without end?

## Door not a wall

A chance to engage  
To explore, to exchange

I keep on calling  
And go on knocking

My voice is hoarse  
My knuckles bruised

There is no response...

A wall of silence  
Your door is firm and barred

But it is a door...not a wall  
And a door is not a wall



## Pains of hope

Sometimes that which we yearn for  
Which the soul aching pines for  
That for which the very depths hungers  
And for which the heart trembles with desire  
Cannot be had, never attained

A love that does not endure  
Seeming doors turning into walls

The abrupt loss you can't replace  
The sinking grip on...empty air...

Then, the hopes you just can't let die  
The goal that slips just as you reach

Maybe the hunger, aching and the wanting  
That feverish desire that can't be quenched  
The challenge itself, the effort to attain  
Are all there is, sufficient unto themselves

Maybe...

## Pride

You said the most difficult journey  
Is going back to where you failed

To do what?  
Find out why you failed

And if I can't find the place?  
You must search and find it

What if I don't?  
Then, only then have you failed

But what if I don't want to go back?  
You will have to go back.



## Get well

May God's healing blessings abide with you  
I wish I am with you to hold your hands  
Hold your hands and look over you  
To watch the rise and fall of your breast  
Of your breast as you breathe

God is with you  
And even as I am not there  
My heart is with you—feel it beat  
Trembling with love for you

## It's okay

I am restful with you  
I don't need rehearsals  
No tense pauses thinking  
What next to say...

I can say what I want  
Or simply keep silent  
Looking at you...listening to you  
I will still be fine...it's okay

I can't help but smile  
Just thinking of you...  
Then imagine the joy  
The joyful laughter in me

Looking at you...talking to you

Let's stretch this easiness  
See how far it can go  
Where it will go

I am comfortable with it  
Don't want it to leave

Since it follows you around  
Please just stay with me  
So it will stay...

So restfulness will stay  
So comfort will stay

And abiding ease, so it will stay.



## I love you

I-magine the beauty of the heavens at full moon

L-ook at the blazing stars then think of the rainbow

O-bserve the loveliness of varieties perceived as one

V-arieties merging and melting, together breathtaking

E-very being becoming only on finding another

Y-ou are my other, my searching is over

O-ffer me the solace that only you can tender

U-nless you do so I'll wander forever never arriving...

## Kraftgriots

*Also in the series (POETRY) continued*

- Joe Ushie: *A Reign of Locusts* (2004)  
Paulina Mabayoje: *The Colours of Sunset* (2004)  
Segun Adekoya: *Guinea Bites and Sahel Blues* (2004)  
Ebi Yeibo: *Maiden Lines* (2004)  
Barine Ngaage: *Rhythms of Crisis* (2004)  
Funso Aiyejina: *I, The Supreme & Other Poems* (2004)  
'Lere Oladitan: *Boolekaja: Lagos Poems 1* (2005)  
Seyi Adigun: *Bard on the Shore* (2005)  
Famous Dakolo: *A Letter to Flora* (2005)  
Olawale Durojaiye: *An African Night* (2005)  
G. 'Ebinyo Ogbowei: *let the honey run & other poems* (2005)  
Joe Ushie: *Popular Stand & Other Poems* (2005)  
Gbemisola Adeoti: *Naked Soles* (2005)  
Aj. Dagga Tolar: *This Country is not a Poem* (2005)  
Tunde Adeniran: *Labyrinthine Ways* (2006)  
Sophia Obi: *Tears in a Basket* (2006)  
Tonyo Biriabebe: *Undercurrents* (2006)  
Ademola O. Dasyuva: *Songs of Odamolugbe* (2006), winner, 2006 ANA/Cadbury poetry prize  
George Ehusani: *Flames of Truth* (2006)  
Abubakar Gimba: *This Land of Ours* (2006)  
G. 'Ebinyo Ogbowei: *the heedless ballot box* (2006)  
Hyginus Ekwuazi: *Love Apart* (2006), winner, 2007 ANA/NDCC Gabriel Okara poetry prize and winner, 2007 ANA/Cadbury poetry prize  
Abubakar Gimba: *Inner Rumbings* (2006)  
Albert Otto: *Letters from the Earth* (2007)  
Aj. Dagga Tolar: *Darkwaters Drunkard* (2007)  
Idris Okpanachi: *The Eaters of the Living* (2007), winner, 2008 ANA/Cadbury poetry prize  
Tubal-Cain: *Mystery in Our Stream* (2007)  
John Iwuh: *Ashes & Daydreams* (2007)  
Sola Owonibi: *Chants to the Ancestors* (2007)  
Doutimi Kpakama: *Salute to our Mangrove Giants* (2008)  
Halima M. Usman: *Spellbound* (2008)  
Hyginus Ekwuazi: *Dawn Into Moonlight: All Around Me Dawning* (2008), winner (2008) ANA/NDCC Gabriel Okara poetry prize  
Ismail Bala Garba & Abdullahi Ismaila (eds.): *Pyramids: An Anthology of Poems from Northern Nigeria* (2008)  
Denja Abdullahi: *Abuja Nunyi (This is Abuja)* (2008)  
Japhet Adeneye: *Poems for Teenagers* (2008)  
Seyi Hodonu: *A Tale of Two in Time (Letters to Susan)* (2008)  
Ibukun Babarinde: *Running Splash of Rust and Gold* (2008)  
Chris Ngozi Nkoro: *Trails of a Distance* (2008)  
Tunde Adeniran: *Beyond Finalities* (2008)



(POETRY) *continued*

- Abba Abdulkareem: *A Bard's Balderdash* (2008)  
Ifeanyi D. Ogbonnaya: *... And Pigs Shall Become House Cleaners* (2008)  
Ebinyo Ogbowei: *the town crier's song* (2009)  
Ebinyo Ogbowei: *song of a dying river* (2009)  
Sophia Obi-Apoko: *Floating Snags* (2009)  
Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo: *Heart Songs* (2009), winner, 2009 ANA/Cadbury poetry prize  
Hyginus Ekwuazi: *The Monkey's Eyes* (2009)  
Seyi Adigun: *Prayer for the Mwalimu* (2009)  
Faith A. Brown: *Endless Season* (2009)  
B.M. Dzukogi: *Midnight Lamp* (2009)  
B.M. Dzukogi: *These Last Tears* (2009)  
Chimezie Ezechukwu: *The Nightingale* (2009)  
Ummi Kaltume Abdullahi: *Tiny Fingers* (2009)  
Ismaila Bala & Ahmed Maiwada (eds.): *Fireflies: An Anthology of New Nigerian Poetry* (2009)  
Eugenia Abu: *Don't Look at Me Like That* (2009)  
Data Osa Don-Pedro: *You Are Gold and Other Poems* (2009)  
Sam Omatseye: *Mandela's Bones and Other Poems* (2009)  
Sam Omatseye: *Dear Baby Ramatu* (2009)  
C.O. Iyimoga: *Fragments in the Air* (2010)  
Bose Ayeni-Tsevende: *Streams* (2010)  
Seyi Hodonu: *Songs from My Mother's Heart* (2010), winner ANA/NDDC Gabriel Okara poetry prize, 2010  
Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo: *Waiting for Dawn* (2010)  
Hyginus Ekwuazi: *That Other Country* (2010), winner, ANA/Cadbury poetry prize, 2010  
Tosin Otitoju: *Comrade* (2010)  
Arnold Udoka: *Poems Across Borders* (2010)  
Arnold Udoka: *The Gods Are So Silent & Other Poems* (2010)  
Abubakar Othman: *The Passions of Cupid* (2010)  
Okinba Launko: *Dream-Seeker on Divining Chain* (2010)  
'kufre ekanem: *the ant eaters* (2010)  
McNezer Fasehun: *Ever Had a Dear Sister* (2010)  
Baba S. Umar: *A Portrait of My People* (2010)  
Gimba Kakanda: *Safari Pants* (2010)  
Sam Omatseye: *Lion Wind & Other Poems* (2011)  
Ify Omalicha: *Now that Dreams are Born* (2011)  
Karo Okokoh: *Souls of a Troubadour* (2011)  
Ada Onyebuanyi, Chris Ngozi Nkoro, Ebere Chukwu (eds): *Uto Nka: An Anthology of Literature for Fresh Voices* (2011)  
Mabel Osakwe: *Desert Songs of Bloom* (2011)  
Pious Okoro: *Vultures of Fortune & Other Poems* (2011)  
Godwin Yina: *Clouds of Sorrows* (2011)  
Nnimmo Bassey: *I Will Not Dance to Your Beat* (2011)

Denja Abdullahi: *A Thousand Years of Thirst* (2011)  
Enoch Ojotisa: *Commoner's Speech* (2011)  
Rowland Timi Kpakiana: *Bees and Beetles* (2011)  
Niyi Osundare: *Random Blues* (2011)  
Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi: *Let Them Not Run* (2011)  
Saddiq M. Dzukogi: *Canvas* (2011)  
Arnold Udoka: *Running with My Rivers* (2011)  
Olusanya Bamidele: *Erased Without a Trace* (2011)  
Olufolake Jegede: *Treasure Pods* (2012)  
Karo Okokoh: *Songs of a Griot* (2012)  
Musa Idris Okpanachi: *From the Margins of Paradise* (2012)  
John Martins Agba: *The Fiend and Other Poems* (2012)  
Kunmi Adeoti: *Epileptic City* (2012)



*Moonlights* fans the embers of hope and ignites the eternal flames of love and friendship and the longing for fulfilment that brightens the horizon so that each feeling of satisfaction is gently savoured, and lulls the emotional pain and despondency that comes with disappointment, loss and grief.

The poems in this collection chronicle the duality in nature and the power of human perception that creates and recreates reality. They extol the beauties of life in the spirit of optimism; richly imbued with intriguing metaphors and magnetizing imageries.

Born in 1965, Bala Dalhatu attended Government College Bida for his secondary education and the University of Maiduguri for his first degree, graduating in 1986 with an honours degree in English. He holds two Masters degrees in Communication Arts from the University of Ibadan – a professional and academic Masters, MCA and MA, 1997 and 2011 respectively.

He is currently at the Federal University of Technology, Minna as a lecturer in the General Studies Unit and has co-edited a book on the 25 Years Anniversary of the University. He is married and blessed with children.

**POETRY**

ISBN 978-91806-6-0



9 789789 180660

 **Kraftgriots**