

POETRY



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"UNITED NATIONS"

Oja-Ale Oja-Ale
 the home of the spirits
 where the mongoose courts the snake
 and the cat dines with the mouse
 oja-ale
 the meeting place of day and night

Oja-Ale Oja-Ale
 the alter of ritual speeches
 where sacrifices are made
 to the incomprehensible Gods
 who omnipotently sit in judgement
 each carrying the hammer of life
 always ready to create
 everready to annihilate
 oja-ale
 the point where heaven meets with hell

Oja-Ale Oja-Ale
 the throne of the wizards
 the abode of th mystics
 the palace for the living
 the market for the dead
 oja-ale
 where the living communes with the dead

Note: Oja-Ale is a Yoruba (a tribe in West Africa) word for a market operated in the night.

EVEN THE QUAIL HAVE STOPPED RUNNING

Heat from day has passed to the sky
 melting it down
 and black saguaros spike the red

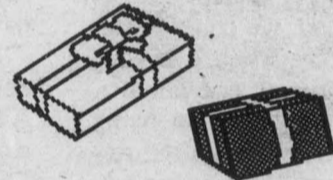
I have driven
 tires singing
 along a yellow road into the desert
 to listen to the sunset

There are no rustlings of feet on dry growth;
 no stirrings of wind in dry grasses;
 even the quail have stopped running

Sound lies thick and still on the desert
 soaked up by thirsty sand
 but the spikes of the black saguaros
 vibrate
 and the red crashes down

Pamela J. Fulton

Edet Foluso Archibong



TWO POEMS FOR THE END OF THE YEAR

1

The years race by we say.
 But a moment can open up with translucent petals.
 We breathe and savour,
 Then move on to our itineraries.
 Meanwhile, somewhere deep inside,
 We wait for bracing air, an industry
 Of squirrels, the first snowfall.

We have reached up together for so much light.
 We sing
 On street corners and in living rooms
 In churches and in taverns.
 Together and briefly wise we sing
 In the heart of winter.

Dwight Kostjuk



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