

Cloudburst in Jakande

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stormy eid. rain washes the dua off our
tongues. old central mosque brimming
with bodies the brown of archipelago
barks. i witness a crippled boy bum-walk
a blind man to the front row of the saf'.
& my guilt puckers beneath my skin. cracks
in the rusted zinc-roof which used to
pour sunlight into the masjid on very hot days
now channels dribblets of the morning
shower over the jamma. droplets after
droplets on the rubber mats, megaphone
by the windowpane, smooth scalp either
bald or shaved hairless. each hydro-bead at
first without stimulus. then like the nazi-
jew prisoners with waterbags tied overhead,
each drop becomes heavier & heavier, till
you're convinced there's an entire beach
suspended atop, pounding wave after
wave against your skull. back home,
the flood, good old friend that it is, reaches
in, submerging the bedfoot & sofa. & my cousin,
sweet ol' girl she is, holds her infant over

the deluge, & baths him in cold rain water.

Mile 12

curry. spice. potatoes. & ata ijosi fill wheel
-barrows beneath the sweat-licking sun. haggling
at its height softened by dialectic symphony.
a yarinya too young to mother
breastfeeds an infant in a shed. yaro in blue
truck heaves bags of beans twice his size.
i am 3 weeks returned from school. varsity
lecturers on another protracted strike. rust & ibadan
red dust still glued to my supra boots. thin light
-ning lines the sky. & disappears again.
i do not think of how much i miss Acrylics. &/or
our long promenades in the dark. i do not see
the words 40 worshippers shot dead in owo cat
-holic church step out an old fm radio chattering
in a lotto kiosk. instead i stay
my gaze on some bird (whose english
name i'll bing-search after this poem) hovering.
round-crowing over an agama with white belly
skywards near a meat stall in the market square.
i think about how often we're scavengers
circumspecting over distractions. something to
shift our eyes off the impending storm. distant
song. a poem. a prey. some dissonant chord.

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