

Lonely Night the Poet Sells Himself as Lover to Dream

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All the lights call it a day. All the marigolds go to sleep. The finches manufacture music from the latex of their throats. Let troghed tangled briars beg the earth for a moment. Let winter sit still & patient. There is no remedy to song severed in the neck. There is no remedial way to go about yesterday's business. All things could mean amen or hallelujah. & I could touch you the way you haven't been touched before, like a poet. The lights would wake up again. The marigolds, dust sleep off their shed eyes. Wild. I could make wild a verb in your body, you see. Let's count the piano keys. Let me put my mouth to the tenderest parts of you. Did you as a child taste the rain on your tongue straight from the sky— we could have yesterday again in this body we now carry. Lyrical sheets of what— daylight? How the lamp of your voice wakes things inside me. How things break in the cathedral when you sing. How the cathedrals—

our bright bodies— transcend the music
of the moment we inhabit & waste in, like a poem.
Let me love you. Let me touch you. Like a poet.
Daylight. I swear you will know the difference.

Wonder

I waited patiently for summer to arrive,
for wonder to come. Wonder is here now,

its light on everything, its promise in crook
of my spine; summer sits by my door like

the girl whose heart I left in no jar in her
hands like a present— small animal beating,

unknown— & I don't know what to do
with myself. Where morning hides her

eggs, there are two score & twenty-one
doves, the country that is my mother's body.

Mourning is the hideout that wears me.
Grief, the paper bow that tears me up. I

never sucked on your toes. Piano keys. I
didn't munch on the tulip enough. Door,

where? The yellow light of this song sits
on my front porch. I want to kiss your mouth,

to learn your body, to suck the cowries
clean. I want you in summer. I want you,

Wonder. Shuku shuku, bam bam. Somewhere,
I swear, the lights make a mango

into a moment. All that we have.

Ernest O. Ògunyemi is a staff writer at *Open Country Mag*. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Joyland*, *Tinderbox*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Journal Nine*, *The Indianapolis Review*, *Down River Road*, *Capsule Stories*, *No Tokens*, *The West Review*, *The Dark Magazine*, *Mud Season Review*, *Agbowó*, *Isele*, and in the anthology *20.35 Africa: An Anthology of Contemporary Poetry III*. He is the curator of *The Fire That Is Dreamed of: The Young African Poets*.