

Mon Ami

by Jonathan Chibuiké Ukah

For the first time since I married you,
I want to speak the language of the spirit;
I want to say the things I had swallowed
that made my body lifeless and still,
higher than the sky, yet so small
that time seems not to hold it down
and let you hear with your eyes;
what has beauty got to do with us?
I was never born a creator of words;
but to use their richness to nuzzle the air
into listening to my yearnings,
to curve time and space into your eyes,
coil the thread through your heart,
connecting your soul with mine.
But since I married you,
I have become a creator of words,
the originator of the language of the spirit,
by which your body and my heart
commune without speech to be one,
both of bones, flesh and blood,
our bodies merge like two rivers
ending in the same salted ocean.
I have not learned the art of flowers
reaching the sky to cuddle their petals,
or bowing to you with a bouquet of roses,
because my maternal great-grandfather,
whose inheritance I carry in my veins,
was not a farmer of roses and hibiscus,
nor lilies, dandelions and amaryllis,

but a man boned to cracking hearts
into a foliage of survival in every war.
I must assure you that every tip of our hair
will grow and blossom to the linnet sky,
where they will woo the sun with song,
melt into one another with a flutter;
a rose garden, a lawn of lavender,
a field of chrysanthemums and begonia,
whose petals streak with our blood,
will outgrow the masts of the stars
for us to climb and live forever.
Or if you insist, I will pluck out your hair,
dress it in crimson florals and garlands
and stack it in a golden bouquet,
as how my devotion stretches towards you
like the inseparable green tendrils of yam.
I could go on and on to count my words
but see how the bullets of our time
whizz through our deafened ears.