

Something Is in the Water

The PVC pipes are burst, from my condo I can see the water squirting out of the cracks. I know everything is cracked here, our roads, our laws, our schools—our lives. Everything is leaking just like the water squirts into the dirty gutter. The water becomes useless, these are not metaphors. The ground in Hohoe leaks water, the PVC pipes behind the Police HQ leak water—in Hohoe, water is scarce. If I do not fill my barrels on Monday, I'd have no water, no water till Thursday & this isn't a metaphor—Monday isn't about the beginning of this country & Thursday isn't how far we've come. Monday isn't Kwame Nkrumah & Thursday isn't Nana Addo. I know the pipes are burst, just like the police & their wives & husbands & kids, but who cares—who cares about this country where there is no God of accountability?

Mourning My Country

The streets of Hohoe do not flood, but the streets of Accra do. There are no lights on the Tema Motorway, but the streets of Hohoe are bright. In the night I mourn this country so I put off all my lights. If I ever get to know how to photograph the shadow of palm fronds on my wall, it may sell for a billion dollars someday & hang in a gallery somewhere—where somewhere is not Ghana. I pray there's water everyday so the palm tree does not die, before I discover how to capture this image. I pray we do not perish of thirst of corruption before we discover how to be free from this ailment. We prayed for the Cedi, it still begs the dollar. Maybe America prays more than us or maybe there are more American Christians than there are Ghanaians. What do we say to the God of numbers? More water!

The Fear of a Thing is the Beginning of a Search

As a child, I loved to jump & run in the rain—we had nothing to boast of but joy. I loved to walk in the rain, I learnt to cry in the rain so no one sees my tears. It isn't that bad if you can boast of people, of joy. Father & mother had us—we had them. Sometimes we used buckets to fetch the water dripping through our ceiling. In Hohoe, the rain enters my room through the windows, I love the cool breeze of the rain but not the water in the room. I still do not mourn when it rains—I mourn when it is cloudy in Accra, I know someone is about to go—I know someone is about to be homeless. I want to imagine the silence after rains in Accra, fear brings silence—fear for the loss of the loved. Fear brings chaos too, fear for the loved, fear brings wailing—fear in search of the lost. I want to know if Ghana has a God of rain, of water, of flood? Is it *Ototrobonsu*? Is he related to the God of love or the God of death?

Abacadabra (An Empty Ark Is No Different from No Ark)

Today, the cocks are crowing after the rains. This is Hohoe. The woman who sells *pito* by my window has fetched four barrels of water—she joins the cocks in praise of the God of rain. I do not make a sound. I play music, I play a dirge instead. I pray a dirge. I try to write a poem for the lives lost but I fail. I say *Abacadabra* & whisper a wish, nothing happens. The Gods here do not respond to *Abacadabra*. Water is not good when it comes to kill. Water is not good if there's no Ark: I do not blame the water, I do not blame the Gods—if the Ark comes, it'd leave empty. The dove will return, with a flower in the beak & people, bloating—floating—on water.

Whatever Makes Us Laugh Isn't a Joke

From my window, the town is alive again. Hohoe is alive. A woman packs crates of Coke in front of her shop, another woman sitting in front of her house, chest bare, shuffles her hair. An eagle flies across, no I don't know what bird it is, in English—eagle or hawk. *Ɔkodie*, not *Akorɔma*. The mountains are foggy. The weather app says it is cloudy & yes it is. At least it tells it as it is, I'm disappointed it can't tell the names of those who'll be gone if it rains in Accra. There's an 80% chance of precipitation in Accra & same percentage of at least 5 deaths in Accra & same percentage of people missing in Accra after the flood. The app didn't say this. A man tweets: Ghana is a joke. No, a joke is supposed to be funny, this isn't. Deaths aren't funny. Corruption isn't funny. Nothing is funny. Whatever makes us laugh isn't the joke. Do not pray for jokes, there's no God of jokes.