

Ayo Bankole (1935–1976)

3 Yoruba Songs

I.

① Iyá

Iyá l'olùfẹ̀ jùlọ ní ké keré,
Nígba tí mo sùn, òun l'ó sọ̀ mi,

Nígbatí mo jí, òun l'ó gbé mi;
Nígba t'ẹ̀ bíńpa mí, òun l'ó bọ̀ mi,

Kò s'ẹ̀ni t'ó fẹ̀ràn mi
T'ó mọ̀ àì nì mi
T'ó sì lẹ̀ pèsè fún mi bí Iyá mi,

K'Ólúwa k'ó gbè ọ̀ o

II.

② Já itànná t'ó ntàn, t'ó tutù t'ó sì dára

Má dúró, Má dúró, má dùró d'ọ̀jọ́ ọ̀la
Àkókò ńsáré tete

Múra ẹ̀sẹ̀ ǎnúre k'ílẹ̀ ọ̀la k'ó tó mọ̀

K'ílẹ̀ ọ̀la k'ó tó mọ̀, yà
Má dúró, Má dúró, má dùró d'ọ̀jọ́ ọ̀la
Àkókò ńsáré tete

Já itànná t'ó ntàn, t'ó tutù t'ó sì dára!

III.

③ Kiniún l'ọba ẹranko nínú igbó

T'ó bá bú ramúramù!
Gbogbo igbó á pa rọ̀rọ̀ nini nini
Gbogbo igbó á dákẹ̀ nini nini!

Mother

Mother is the most beloved in childhood
When I am asleep, she keeps a watchful eye
over me

When I am awake, she carries me about
When I am hungry, she feeds me

No one loves me
Who knows my needs
Who can still provide my needs like
my mother

May The Lord compensate her

Pluck flowers while they are in bloom,
when they are fresh and beautiful
Don't wait, don't wait, don't wait for tomorrow
The time is running out

Work very hard, before tomorrow
morning arrives
Before tomorrow morning arrives.
Don't wait, don't wait, don't wait for tomorrow
The time is running out.

Pluck flowers while they are in bloom,
when they are fresh and beautiful!

The lion is the king of all the animals
in the forest

When it roars
The entire forest becomes quiet
The entire forest goes silent

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Àdúrà fún Àláfíà

- ④ Ọlọrun mi
Ọlọrun mi mo tún wá ẹgbẹ sí ọ

Ọlọrun mi mo wá ẹgbẹ sí ọ
Mo wá gbàdúrà,
Mo wá gbàdúrà sí ọ ò
Mo wá túbà, mo kúnlẹ, mo wólẹfún ọ Baba

Mo wá rántí gbogbo àwọn tó wà l'ójú ogun

Mo gbàdúrà,
Mo gbàdúrà fún nwon Baba
Tójú gbogbo nwon pátá pátá
Tójú gbogbo nwon porogodo
Tójú nwon o
Tójú gbogbo nwon porogodo
À sẹ hìn wá à sẹyin bọ
Wá fitura fún gbogbo wa
Wá fi ayọ fún gbogbo wa:
Wá fi òye fún gbogbo wa
Mo bẹ ọ o, wá fitura fún wa
Mo tún wá ẹgbẹ sí ọ

Ọlọrun mi mo tún wá ẹgbẹ sí ọ

Mo wá rántí gbogbo àwọn tó wà l'ójú ogun

Mo gbàdúrà,
Mo gbàdúrà fún nwon ò

⑤ Ọjò máa rò! Ìtura lo jẹ
Ewé kò'ò yọ bóò bá rò
Ewé kò'ò yọ
Àgbàdò'ò yọ bóò bá rò
Àgbàdò'ò yọ
È mi ò ní jẹun bóò bá rò
È mi ò ní jẹun
È mi òlẹ lẹran lára bóò rò
È mi òlẹ yọ kún

Prayer for Peace

My Lord
My Lord, I have come again to you to
make supplications
My Lord, I have come to make supplications
I have come to pray
I have come to pray to you
I have come to worship, I fall on my knees,
I lay down before you Father
I have come to remember those who are
in the war front
I pray
I pray for them Father
Take care of all of them
Take care of all of them entirely
Take care of them
Take care of all of them entirely
As you have done from time immemorial
Come and give us all relief
Come and give us all joy
Come and give us all understanding
I plead, come and give us relief
I have come again to you to
make supplications
My Lord, I have come again to you to
make supplications
I have come to remember those who are
in the war front
I pray
Oh I pray for them

Let it rain! For you bring peace
Plants will not grow if you do not pour
Plants will not grow
Corn will not grow if you do not pour
Corn will not grow
I will not eat if you do not pour
I will not eat
I will not put on weight if you do not pour
I will not grow a pot belly

Akin Euba (1935–2020)

6 Yoruba Folk Songs

I.

- ⑥ **Mo lè j'iyán yó bí ará oko,**
Mo lè j'ámàlà bí oníṣàngò,

Mo lè gb'ómọ pọ̀n bí Abéjiré,
Ọ̀mọ yín o ara yín,
Táíwò yín o ara yín,
Kẹ̀hinde yín o ara yín

II. Ọ̀rẹ̀ mèta

- ⑦ **Mèta mèta l'ọ̀rẹ̀ o e,**
Ọ̀kán ní nwá sùn l'ẹ̀nì e
Ọ̀kán ní nwá sùn l'ílẹ̀ e
Ọ̀kán ní nwá sùn l'áiyà e
Mo ẹ̀jù wèrè mo b'áláiyà lọ

Mo ti lọ m'Ògùn, Mo ti lọ m'òsà,
Mo ti lọ m'òpó báìlẹ̀ odò
Ọ̀pẹ̀ wéwé ẹ̀ 'kú pa pákó,
Ìṣẹ̀nkélé ẹ̀ 'kú p'òkùnrin,
Ọ̀tẹ̀ 'Bàdàn m'ògun wá jà'lú,
Oníderẹ̀ ẹ̀ 'kó yeyẹ
Yeyẹ o l'ọ̀rẹ̀ o e

I can eat *iyán*¹ to my fill like a provincial man
I can eat *àmàlà*² to my fill like a
*Sango*³ adherent
I can back a baby like *Abejire*⁴,
Your child, your body,
Your *Táíwò*⁵, your person
Your *Kẹ̀hinde*⁶, your person

Friends come in threes
One suggests I sleep on the mat
The other offers the bare floor
The third offers his bosom
Without batting an eyelid, I took
the bosom option
I know *Ògùn*⁷ River, I know the lagoon
I know the bank of the river
Small palms bring about the death of a tree
A certain job brings about the death of a man
*Ìbàdàn*⁸ mutiny brings about war in the town
Friends can often be of no use
Such are friends, eh!

1 *iyán*: local dish of pounded cooked yam

2 *àmàlà*: local dish of plantain flour meal

3 *Sàngó*: an Orisha (or spirit) in Yoruba religion

4 *Abejire*: an Orisha representing a pair of divine twins

5 *Táíwò*: the elder of the twins

6 *Kẹ̀hinde*: the younger of the twins

7 *Ògùn*: a river in south-west Nigeria

8 *Ìbàdàn*: a large town in south-west Nigeria

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6 Yoruba Folk Songs

III.

⑧ Mo já 'wé gbégbé kí nwọn má gbàgbé mi,

Mo já 'wé oní tẹ tẹkí nwọn má tẹmí mọ'lẹ.

Ọyọ ńlọ k'ó ẹ wá're,
Ọjù ì pọn rokoroko kó gbàgbé ilé.

Ó mà ńlọ ọgẹrẹrẹ,
Ó mà ńlọ ọgẹrẹrẹ

IV. Ọmọ jọwọ

⑨ Ọmọ kí o yé jọwọ o
Ọmọ jọwọ, mo kúnlẹ mo bẹ ọ o
Ọmọ jọwọ, mo f'ẹkuru bẹ ọ o

Ọmọ jọwọ, mo f'àkàrà bẹ ọ o

Ọmọ jọwọ, kí o yé jọwọ o
Ọmọ jọwọ

I pluck *gbégbé*⁹ leaves so that I am
not forgotten

I pluck *tẹtẹ*¹⁰ leaves so that I don't get
stepped on

Ọyọ¹¹ town is passing by, may it favour us
The farmer never suffers so much misery
that he forgets his home

It goes seamlessly
It goes seamlessly

My child, I beg you
I'm on my knees my child, I beg you,
Please my child, I beg you with the
*ẹkuru*¹² delicacy
Please my child, I beg you with the
*àkàrà*¹³ delicacy
Please my child, I beg of you!
I beg you

9 *gbégbé*: tropical medicinal plant (*Icacina trichantha*)

10 *tẹtẹ*: edible green leaf (*Amaranthus viridis*)

11 *Ọyọ*: ancient city in south-west Nigeria, founded as
the capital of the historic Oyo empire

12 *ẹkuru*: traditional bean pudding

13 *àkàrà*: traditional bean cakes

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V.

10 Agbe t'ó r'ómọ rẹ d'áró Olele

Àlùkò t'ó r'ómọ rẹ gosùn o Olele

Bàbà y'ó kú t'ó r'ómọ rẹ p'ágo go idẹ o,

Àwa kò lè tàrò iwònyẹn,

K'á mà b'Olú s'éré,

Ìmọràn olele o

Agbe worked hard to give his children
a good life.

Aluko worked hard to give his children
a good life.

When the father died the children made
an announcement to the community,
We will not stop living our lives though death
is inevitable,

We should continue to associate, work hard
and live our lives to the fullest,
This is an advice

VI.

11 Ó ẹ gbé na?

Kò ẹ gbé, ibá ẹ gbé ma gbé t'èmi.

Àsìkò t'í bá mà ẹ gbé,

Erín kú l'óko a k'ókẹ wá'lé

Lárinkà kú n'ílẹ a k'ókẹ r'oko.

Ojú ẹlẹkùn ó ńdanna,

Ìrù ẹlẹkùn ó ńjò wèrè,

Èkíkán ẹlẹkùn méjì abẹ.

B'á ò r'ákọ su à fewùrà gúnýán,

B'á ò r'ẹni fẹ à f'ána ẹni,

B'ó bá ka 'ni à kúnlẹ wíjọ,

Bí ò dẹ ka 'ni à má s'ána lọ,

Àbàjà ò ró kẹkẹ o, Ògbòhna

Can it be lifted?

If not, I would lift mine.

The time I would have lifted it, an elephant
died in the Farm,

We brought home some cowries

The Lizard died at home and we take some
cowries to the farm.

The eyes of the tiger are bloodshed,

The tail of the tiger wags endlessly,

The nails of the tiger are as sharp as a razor.

If we can't find white yam we will pound
water yam instead,

If we can't find a suitor, we will mate
with our in-law,

If they tell, we kneel and beg.

If they don't, we remain in-laws,
Ogbonna, the one with attractive
tribal marks.

Fred Onovwerosuke (b.1960)

from **12 African Songs**

IX.

13 Ne Nkansu dima
weiyo, mameh, paeh
Ne Nkansu eh,
Nekubuko dima
Nekubuko eh!
Dima, dima'nsobuela.

Mother Earth owns the herbs
That feed, heal
And make whole

X.

14 Ngulu ii, ngulu, mwe lela'ngu lu ii,
ngu lu, mwa i wa
Ngulu ii, ngulu, mwe Ida'ngulu ii
ngulu, mwa i wa.
Wanga o wakasim bili
E Wanga o wakasim bili,
Ma lenge mene mwa te mangi e O

Farming,
Planting
With diligence
Moving along
Thus yielding
To good harvest

Ishaya Yarison (b.1973)

[15] Ubangiji makiyayina ne.

Ba zan rasa kome ba.
Ya kan sa ni in kwanta wurin danyen ciyawa.
Wurin ruwaye masu dadi, ya kan bida ni, ya
ba ni sabuwar karfi.
Cikin hanya mai kyau ya kan bida ni domin
girman sunan sa.
Hakika, ko na yi tafiya a sakiyar kwari
ta inuwan mutuwa,
Ba zan ji tsoron kowace masifa, gama ka na
tare da ni.
Sandar ka da keren ka su na yi mani ta'aziya.
Ka kan shirya mani abinci agaban
magabta na,
Ka na shafe kai na da mai, koko na ya cika
har ya na zuba.
Ubangiji makiyayina ne.
Ba zan rasa kome ba.
Lallai, nagarta da jinkai za su biyo ni
dukan kwanakin rai na.
Kuma zan zauna cikin gidan Ubangiji
har abada.
Amin.

ZABURA 23

Ku zo, mu raira waka

[16] Ku zo, mu raira waka ga Ubangiji.

Mu yi ihu da babban murya ga pa na
ceton mu.
Mu zo gabansa da godiya.
Mu yi sowa gareshi da wakoki.
Gama Ubangiji Allah ne mai girma,
Sarki ne babba bisa dukan alloli.
A cikin hannunsa zurfafan wuraren
duniya suke.
Duwatsu masu tsawo kuma nasa ne.
Teku nasa ne.
Hannuwansa suka kamanta bussashiyar kasa.
Ku zo, mu yi sujada, mu sunkuya.
Mu durkusa a gaban Ubangiji Mahalicinmu,
Gama shine Allahnmu, mu mutanen
makiyayansa ne.
Mu tumakin hannunsa ne.

ZABURA 95:1-7a

The Lord is my shepherd.
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside the still waters,
He restoreth my soul.
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me
Thou preparest a table before me in the
presence of mine enemies,
Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup
runneth over.
The Lord is my Shepherd.
I shall not want.
Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
And I will dwell in the house of the
Lord forever.
Amen.

PSALM 23

Come, let us sing a song to the Lord.
Let us shout aloud to the rock of
our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving.
Let us exalt him with songs.
For the Lord is the great God,
The great king over all gods.
In his hands are the deep places of the earth.
The high mountains also are his.
The sea is his.
His hands fashioned the dry earth.
Come, let us worship and bow down.
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.
For he is our God, we are the people of
his pastures.
We are the sheep of his hand.

PSALM 95:1-7a

Joseph Bologne (1745–1799)

from *L'Amant anonyme*

17 Enfin une foule importune me laisse en paix.

Quel état est le mien...
Il ne me manque donc plus rien à ma
cruelle infortune.
Je n'ose pénétrer jusqu'au fond de
mon cœur.
Je crains d'approfondir un secret si funeste.

Hélas ! Sans mon affreux malheur,
Plus de repos pour moi,
Nul espoir ne me reste.
Ah ! Du moins si l'amitié accordait
à mes maux
Une tendre pitié ;
La peine partagée en devient plus légère,
Mais mon âme à Valcour refuse de s'ouvrir.

Valcour, dont l'amitié me fût toujours
si chère,
Son cœur froid, son humeur austère,
Aux tourments de l'amour
ne peuvent compatir.

Amour, devient moi propice,
Ou suspend du moins ta Rigueur.
Par le plus cruel supplice
Cesse de déchirer mon cœur.

18 Du tendre amour, tel est donc la puissance.

En vain on s'arme de Rigueur
Aux traits qu'il nous lance
Rien n'a pu dérober mon cœur.
Je croyais que sur mon âme
Il perdrait tout son pouvoir,
Mais hélas ! vain espoir.
Plus que jamais il m'enflamme.

Funeste moment !
Ciel, est -il possible ?
Malgré mon serment, je deviens sensible,
Eh quoi ! Mon cœur d'un tendre sentiment,
Éprouve encore le tourment.

At last, the madding crowd leaves me
in peace.

What a state I'm in...
So my cruel misfortune is complete.

I don't dare to look deep into my heart.

I'm afraid to get further into such a
grim mystery.

Alas! To my dreadful misfortune,
No more rest for me,
There is no hope for me.

Oh! At least friendship used to grant
my woes

A tender mercy;
In sharing suffering it becomes lighter,
But my soul refuses to open to Valcour.

Valcour, whose friendship has always been
so dear to me –

His cold heart, his austere spirit,
cannot empathise with the torments of love.

Love, smile more upon me,
Or at least delay your harshness.
With the cruellest torment,
Stop tearing my heart apart.

Such then is the power of tender love.
In vain one arms oneself with discipline
Against the bolts he fires at us.
Nothing was able to steal my heart.
I believed that over my soul
He would lose all his power,
But alas! A vain hope.
He inflames me more than ever.

Fateful moment!
Heavens, can it be?
Despite my oath, I feel myself weakening,
What is this? My heart, with tender feeling,
Endures once again the torment.

Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)

Peace on Earth

19 And snow falls down on me.
Peace on earth.
The night is dark and soft.
Peace on earth.
The lights that sparkle in the square,
The smoke that lingers in the air.
Peace on earth.

And grace falls down on me.
Peace on earth.
The dark will turn aside.
Peace on earth.
The fires that burn in ev'ry hearth
Do sing our praise of Christmas past.
Peace on earth.

Ah! Hear them singing. Peace on earth.

Shirley J. Thompson (b.1958)

Psalm to Windrush

20 The ship anchored forth, the waves
stood high.
To the Motherland, we set our sights.
Holding dreams, and hopes, and plans,
our heads held high!
And there You were Lord, Your arms
around us,
Your nest held strong so we could learn
to fly!
Your house stood strong, so we could learn
to fly.

We worked and we toiled to build this land.
To Your Service we were honour bound.
Through it all we learned to keep Your
Grace always.
And there You were Lord, Your arms
around us
Your nest held strong so we could learn
to fly
Your house stood strong so we could learn
to thrive.

Blessed are those whose strength is in You.
My soul yearns e'en faints for Your courts.
Hear our pray'r Lord, Look on us with favour.
Hear, our pray'r, Dear Lord!

And now we pass the baton on.
To our children and their children grown.
Holding dreams, and plans and hopes, their
heads held high.
And there You are Lord, Your arms
around us,
Your nest holds strong so we can always fly.
Your house stands strong, so we will
always thrive.

We thank you and Praise, to You Our Father,
Give Thanks and Praise for evermore!

Christian Onyeji (b.1967)

- [21] **Giri giri**, giri giri, giri giri ewo
Giri giri, giri giri, giri giri giri giri okokokokoko
'Mere gini 'mere gini nwannem,
'Mere gini 'mere gini ewo
'Mere gini bur'ifufe diegwu
Obuya n'efe ewo
Ifufe fesia nwa nnem mirie sobe ya ewo
Oke miri diegwu n'ala iwo ya,
Mhm mhm mhm aghiri gha
Okemiri okemiri okemirio.

Onyeaghala min'onwa,
Aghiri gha min'onwa
Gbara kpom kpom

Chukwuna hana min'onwa,
Aghiri gha min'onwa
Gbara kpom kpom

Kpom kpom, kpom kpom, kpom kpom
 aghiri gha
Chineka Nna zidata mini m'anyi nwenrio
Ochiuwa nile zidata mini m'anyi nwenrio
'Nye ker'uwa biko zidata mini m'anyi rienrio
Nye r'anyiaka ny'anyi miri mara me cha
Kanyi nweranuri.

NOTE:

Giri giri is onomatopoeia imitating the sound of rain drops. This is a reflective song from the Arochukwu area of Igbo land. It was originally sung by the Atani women's traditional music group. The song offers prayers to God for sustenance, rain and mercy so as to bring joy to the people.

Chijioke Ngobili (b.1988)

Selense

23 Ogini bu iwe gi, nwa nne?
Obu gini bu ya nae che gbu gi?
Ke di' fi'rugi ji agbalusi?
Ke di' fo'nu gi ji atukwusi?
Ngwa kunie puta n'ogbo
K'a yi yo li b'egwu

Agbogho bia, kunie bata n'egwu
Ikolo bia, kunie bata n'egwu
O nye nne, kunie bata n'egwu
O nye nna, kunie bata n'egwu
O dighie be bu n'uwa to lu'te

I fe di kwa b'oke di kwa b'Ogini

Ya bu n'anyi ga n'e nw'anuli
Ura to b'uto, e kwo be ya
Onye bu pu te nni, anyi li cha pu ya

O bu lu mma nya, anyi nu cha pu ya
Ma ka n'u wa buo fum bia

Onye nwu kwaa, nke ya gaa na ee
I na nu ya?
I na nu ya?

Nwa nnem, kunie ba ta n'ogbo
K'anyi yo li be'gwu
Me be ya selen, selen,
Selen, selen, sele,
Selen, selen, sele,
Selense, selen, sele,
Selense!

What makes you angry, beloved?
What is it that strains your thoughts?
Why is your face so frowned?
Why is your mouth so beaked?
Come, step in, let's merry and dance

Young lady, step onto the dance floor
Young man, step onto the dance floor
Mother, step onto the dance floor
Father, step onto the dance floor

There's no place where life spread a mat
for anyone

What's in the house of the Rat is also in the
house of *Ogini*¹⁴

So we ought to remain happy
When the sleep gets sweet, we snore along
When anyone of us feasts, we eat to
our satisfaction

If he serves wine, we drink to our satisfaction
For this life is lived just once

If anyone dies, his being terminates entirely
Do you hear me?
Do you hear me?

Come step in let's merry and dance

Do it (*gesturing*) selen, sele
Selen, sele, sele
Selen, sele, sele
Selense, selen, sele
Selense!

14 *Ogini*: this is a species of rat often found in the pre-colonial cultures of Igboland and neighbouring areas. It is striped in its body and looks beautiful. It has a striking resemblance and similar characteristics to the rat. However, it's almost extinct now, as it can hardly be seen around.