



ODE TO *THE RISING SUN*

OJO TAIYE

(Biafra War 1967–1970)

until it no longer existed, the old country
was eternal. & even after its dissolution,
into the concept of secessionists, into stories
handed down generations, of how once
there was a land made entirely of salts—
a bridge that's a mistranslation for what
they did with our blood. I still call it a
hollow space where my body is dead &
alive. & thus, I know what survival does to
a body that's been primed for disappearance.
I taste the rust—their bruised skins and hear
how trauma sounds like traum, the German
word for dreams. I fish the waters for ruins
& come up with fever & the black square
of absence—memories that do nothing but
cough pains—the first scar my body exhales
whenever the old stereo in the sitting room
drips news. hide me in a city with no windows.
today, I dream my grandparents into the
memory of their voice, as tillers of a thousand
cocoa trees. their shadows appearing between
the gaps of dusk light amidst the branches
of my forked childhood. the night loops its
emptiness until my mouth is filled with the
weight of their splinters. their inheritance
claims me as its own and I wake in the
body of a ship. still there is wistfulness—
cemeteries where our mothers wrote no
memoir & our limbs remember dust. the lie—
what was it there for, anyway?

—after Aria Arber and John James

Oyo Taiye is a young Nigerian artist who uses poetry as a tool to hide his frustration with society. He also makes use of collage and sample technique. He is the winner of many prestigious awards including the 2021 Hay Writer's Circle Poetry Competition, and the Cathalbi Poetry Competition, Ireland.

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