

OBIDIYA

An Igbo play by Enyinna Akoma

"It is not when a tree is cut down that it withers."

In remembrance of Michael Echeruo and those attending the "Writers' Workshop" which was held at Nsuka in 1973.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Those joining in the things pertaining to this play)

Oriaku Dike	--	An Umuwegbu person
Ugadiya) Omasiriidiya) Jioji)	--	Oriaku's wives
Ihemkorom	--	Their son
Ugwumba	--	Oriaku's brother
Gogo	--	Oriaku's servant
Onuma Ejimofonna	--	An Umuwegbu person
Obidiya	--	His wife
Ruler of the Town	--	Chief of Umuwegbu
The chiefs	--	The chief's cabinet
Ogbuu) Omeife) Diogu)	--	Decapitators
Akakaka	--	An herbalist
Tanka	--	A mad person
Umu nnadi	--	Kinsmen

ACT 1

(Kinsmen enter from the left two by two and face the audience.)

KINSMEN: Let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch,
Is a just law, and is also the will of God.
But people, bad people
Whose hearts are twisted (people of ill will)
Try to perch alone,
Owning the world by themselves,
As though it belonged to them and their grandchildren.
They can do anything
So that everything will belong to them.
There would have been peace, there would have been no trouble
If Oriaku had taken the ruling
That the judge handed down
Which is this plain unvarnished truth
And is also what all the elders
In this town know very well.
But when death wants to kill the dog
It does not smell the feces.
See! He refuses everything that was judged in the court,
All these bad thoughts enter his heart,
Milling around in his mind
Just as a rat wanders around at night.
What he wants to do now is an abomination,
And also goes against God's law.
But one does not stop one who is always wicked.
What comes out of this matter
Will be on his head and the heads of others
People who have my sympathy.
They will suffer, and suffer a lot
On account of things not concerning them
Things caused by envy
Alas! Envy, envy!
Uncle Envy, you do not bear good children.
I am sorry for them, so sorry.
Heaven and earth, please, have mercy
Because what affects the nose is very deep inside.

(They all go out. Oriaku enters. He wears chiefly garments, carries a staff and wears a beautiful hat on his head.)

ORIAKU: ^{meaningless words} Ụbụbụ jam! I will not agree! That kind of thing will not happen in our lifetime. When one agrees, his God agrees. I am not a person who can be defeated in court by his inferior. A man, I know when his mother

became pregnant with him. He wants to show me that he has grown; grown taller than I. Tufjakwa! I will take a stone and pulverize him, grind him to powder, so this foolish magistrate may know that people will respect me, respect us, respect our word even when we break the law. Even if we break the law, one should consider our position in this town and cause others to suffer for us. This is the return we get for the influence we have. Government, government, who are these people? Oriaku. Is it possible? He is not the first one. Several magistrates have treated me this way. He himself is a know-it-all. Look at the animal who will defeat Oriaku in court. Who brought the money used to build the court and pay his salary? I will confer about him and tell him that a person is superior to his peers. Who is Onuma? Who bore him? His entire lineage are not so many as the fingers on my hands. He and his grandfather together do not have all the money I have in the bank. How can one explain to him that Oriaku's dog bit him to death (his inferior defeated him)? God forbid! A small boy defeated me! Refused the money I gave him because he has just returned from a foreign country! 2400 naira! Let Onuma enter that land and I will smash my head on a stone. Who told him that land is owned? His ancestors were slaves. They were purchased. This place where they live is a bit of land given to them. Since he is wise, I will tell him the evil tree he was carved from. Who will speak? What will his wife do? Women are women. If she is difficult I will invite her to my house and give her money, and marry her. I know several women who married the ones who killed their husbands. His wife will not be the first or the second. Agnes James took what was used to kill her husband. Afterward she married the man who killed her husband. If all poisons cannot kill him, the knife and the gun will kill him. If he says that he is hard as a rock, I will use one hand to beat him. *He calls, Gogo! Gogo!*

(Gogo enters)

GOGO: Master, did you call me?

ORIAKU: Where were you when I was shouting for you at the top of my lungs?

GOGO: Master, I was in the kitchen, I did not hear.

ORIAKU: Try to open your ears. I do not want to be shouting like hunters all the time.

GOGO: My owner, I will do it.

ORIAKU: Good. You will go to Abame and call Ogbuu for me.

GOGO: He^{i'm} and who else?

ORIAKU: Tell him that I want him and the others.

GOGO: Him and the others.

ORIAKU: Yes! Go on.

(Gogo goes out)

ORIAKU: I will let that young man know that there is an important law that can stop a person. If a child throws his father up into the air, his (the father's) loincloth covers his (the child's) eyes.

[Curtain closes]

[In the house of Onuma where he and his wife are eating.]

ONUMA: My dear, this is good.

OBIDIYA: This is how I usually do it.

ONUMA: What we have today is better than other days.

OBIDIYA: Thanks, I will do better than this next time.

ONUMA: We will thank God for all his work.

OBIDIYA: Who is better than God? My dear, since I was born I have not seen this kind of magistrate. A man who wants the real truth.

ONUMA: There are people who look for money [refers to corruption]; God's children are in all work. These people are not bought with money.

OBIDIYA: That's true. Oriaku would have taken money to chase us from the land where you were born. There is nothing money can not do.

ONUMA: Afterward, we will go and thank that magistrate.

OBIDIYA: It is said that people do not enter his house.

ONUMA: It is said. One does not use gossip to make a speech. We will find the right day and take three yams and a kola nut.

OBIDIYA: And a good matured cock.

QNUMA: We will take this one that is in the house here.

OBIDIYA: This one is very good.

QNUMA: Is that all that we are going to go with?

OBIDIYA: We can also cut a plantain and ~~put~~ include it.

QNUMA: Yam, kola nut, cock, and . . .

OBIDIYA: Plaintain.

QNUMA: We will do it one day when he is least expecting it.

OBIDIYA: Good.

QNUMA: At the Sunday market, I will go to visit my friends in Umuabali.

OBIDIYA: It should not be now. There is trouble everywhere. Oriaku can instruct people to wait for you on the road and kill you. I forgot to tell you the kind of dream I had the day before yesterday.

QNUMA: What did you dream?

OBIDIYA: I could hardly tell whether it was real or a dream. You were bathing, you finished and were combing your hair. Three strong men entered there, lifted a stick and struck you and you fell writhing to the ground. They disappeared. I screamed and some people answered.

QNUMA: This is a bad dream. But the person who is dreamed about is not the person to whom the things dreamed of really happen.

OBIDIYA: Whether it is the person or not. My dear, we must be careful this week.

QNUMA: Am I going out? Do I have friends? Let me see how death will come from the compound and attack me in the house. If it enters, it will wrestle with a strong man.

OBIDIYA: May it not enter. Let the mushroom not grow, there is no basket.

QNUMA: Emio! May God take care of me [look at the palms of my hands].

OBIDIYA: One whom God saves will try to save himself.

QNUMA: I will not overfeed my grandmother just because she reincarnated for me.

OBIDIYA: That is true.

QNUMA: One who chases a chicken must fall.

OBIDIYA: God will not fail to protect us from the hands of our enemy.

QNUMA: Thank you, let me go to bed. I am very tired.

[Qnuma leaves, and Obidiya clears away all their eating utensils.]

OBIDIYA: A woman's world. The man (nwamgbom) has gone off to his sleep. Shall I because of this say that I will return to the world as a man in another life?

[After she finishes, she goes to bed. The curtain closes.]

ORIAKU enters, and soon Gogo enters.

GOGO: Ogbuu and two other people are outside waiting.

ORIAKU: Let them come in.

[GOGO goes to call them.]

GOGO: Here they are, master.

ORIAKU: You have done well, my good son. Friends, you are welcome.

ALL: Yes! Thank you.

ORIAKU: Welcome. Heavy rain has brought out the snake.

ALL: That's how it is.

ORIAKU: Welcome.

ALL: Yes!

ORIAKU: Let me do the traditional Igbo thing for you.

[He calls Gogo.]

GOGO: Welcome. Master, did you call me?

ORIAKU: Yes, go quickly and bring me kola nut. Bring a dish of pepper too.

Bring hot wine--kajikai [a very strong local brew].

[Gogo brings those things.]

ORIAKU: Here is kola.

ALL: You have done well.

ORIAKU: Gogo, thank you. Give us a little time. Don't let anyone come in. If anyone looks for me, tell him that I am not in.

GOGO: Master, I have heard. I will do as you wish.
[Gogo goes out.]

ORIAKU: What are we waiting for? Taste the kola and wine.
[They look at each other. One of them takes a small knife and breaks the kola.]
[Oriaku takes his own kola. Then they share the wine.]

ALL: Thank you. You have done well with the kola.

ORIAKU: You have done better. If you clear the surface of the land, you must sharpen your knife.

OGBUU: What caused the toad to run this afternoon?

ORIAKU: If the hand does not beat the drum, it will not speak.

OMEIFE: You know that one who has been invited is eager to hear what he has been invited for.

ORIAKU: I know that the package that one is going to unwrap does not need to be peeped at.

DIQGU: When the things in the package are unwrapped, a child calms down.

ORIAKU: Let me get started.

ALL: Go ahead, strong man.

ORIAKU: There is a thorn sticking in my chest. It is not allowing me to sleep. It is not allowing me to be patient. It is causing me to be a person for whom death is better than life. I wake up in the middle of the night because of it.

OGBUU: What is it?

ORIAKU: There is a vulture perched on my head.

OMEIFE: A vulture perched on your head definitely means death. It wants death. If you are looking for something and you see it, don't run away.

ORIAKU: I do not think that this person will run.

OMEIFE: He will take what he wants.

ORIAKU: Do you people know Onuma Ejimofonna?

ALL: The light-skinned one who has white teeth?

ORIAKU: Yes! The headache I have today is because of him.

OGBUU: The child who says that his mother will not sleep, he will not sleep either. Didn't that man sue you in court?

ORIAKU: That is what is happening now. The young man took me to court. He did not come and confront me at home as his grandfather's people used to do, saying that he and I should be judged in court. After the judging he defeated me.

OMEIFE: He has not defeated. I know that that is why you sent for us to come.

ORIAKU: Son of the Diala? You are a man after my own heart.

DIQGU: You want to kill him [his loincloth to cover his eyes].

ORIAKU: Do it finally. If the child drags the cow by a rope, and the cow pulls him with the rope and drags him into the water, if he sees the cow's rope on another day, he runs away.

OGBUU: Igbo words! That's how things are. What do you want right now?

ORIAKU: Take him out today or tomorrow.

OMEIFE: It is very easy.

DIQGU: It is immediately, or a slow death?

ORIAKU: I have gone after him and pursued him in all kinds of ways, and I am tired of him. I want his head to be cut off; so the foolish magistrate will know that there is a court better than court, where we rule.

OGBUU: You want him killed and thrown away!

ORIAKU: Kill him, throw him away, so I can rest and not die.

OMEIFE: You will not die. The message you sent by smoke has reached the sky.

ORIAKU: If that is done, I will be really happy.

DIQGU: Drink wine, leave the pot for us. [We will accomplish the deed.]

OGUU: If the he-goat is killed, there is no more conversation. But you know what is there.

ORIAKU: Money. I know. It is strong.

OMEIFE: You will do the traditional thing.

ORIAKU: Is it twenty?

DIQGU: Twenty.

ORIAKU: Will you take them all now, or do you want to come again?

ALL: As it pleases you.

ORIAKU: Let me bring them all now.

ALL: All right.

[Oriaku enters the house, gets money and returns.]

ORIAKU: I have brought what we just negotiated about. The chicken is done except for the neck.

OGBUU: What is remaining?

OMEIFE: It will be the swearing of an oath that he is talking about.

DIQGU: I think that is it.

ORIAKU: Are you just asking about it?

OGBUU: What type do you want? Is it the Christian way or is it like the traditions of our ancestors?

ORIAKU: Let it be wine and blood. The tradition of the ancients.

OGBUU: All right.

[Oriaku takes a razor and a cup, and some wine; they all draw blood from their hands and put it in the wine cup.]

OGBUU: Shall I swear first?

ALL: Go ahead.

ORIAKU: One does not leave the head to go and wind the headpad on the buttocks.

OGBUU: *[Takes the wine in his hand.]* Blood of covenant! Ancestors great and small! If I take money from Oriaku without doing the job we just spoke about, may you do whatever you please to me. *[He drinks the blood.]*

ORIAKU: Good words.

OMEIFE: Blood! You are the worst abomination. You see the way better than humans. If I doublecross Oriaku, receive his money without doing the job we just decided on, do as you will with me. *[He drinks the blood.]*

ORIAKU: The word is life.

DIQGU: Blood! I am a messenger. I go on errands for everybody. Today, Oriaku has sent for me, I will go. If someone else sends for me tomorrow, I will still go. If I take money from Oriaku and fail to fulfill our promise-- it is not only I oo! *[He turns and looks at Oriaku.]* Blood, do to me what you do, if that is not the case, let me live longer. *[He drinks the blood.]*

ORIAKU: It is over.

OGBUU: The thing is finished.

ALL: It is finished.

ORIAKU: Then you will take your things. *[He gives them money.]*

OMEIFE: Before three days have passed, you will see something

ORIAKU: If it happens that way, I will show you true gratitude, because you have removed the thorn that is pinching my heart.

DIQGU: Don't mention it. Cook cocoyam for me and leave me the (abara). [Do your part and leave it for me to finish.]

OGBUU: I guess we should go?

OMEIFE: Going has been done.

DIQGU: Oriaku, it has been done.

ORIAKU: As you decided!

OGBUU: Goodbye.

ORIAKU: Thank you.

OMEIFE: Let us go and come back.

ORIAKU: There is no problem with it.

DIQGU: Goodbye.

ORIAKU: Goodbye.

[Curtain]

[In the house of Onuma]

ONUMA: The god who gave you to me was not stupid at all. It pains me a lot that you stay like a person who is mourning.

OBIDIYA: Don't disturb your mind. I know that it pains you. I also know that you have done your best because of it. The needs of the heart are strong. The heart does not rest when it has not gotten what it is looking for.

ONUMA: I have told you concerning thoughts of a child because of which you are disturbing your mind. If anyone would have killed himself because of not having a child it is I myself. When a man is born and marries without having a child, you know that he is not happy. I have taken everything to God in prayer. As it pleases God. I have taken away my thoughts. God knows. God's time is best; as it pleases God. If you are thinking this thought, you are making me depressed. God gives a child. You do not buy one in the market, a powerful man does not create one for himself. You should try to stop thinking so much, so that you don't cause another problem. I do not want us to have things we are not looking for.

OBIDIYA: I heard you. You know that children are important.

ONUMA: I know. Since we have not had a child, are we going to kill ourselves?

God's time is best. If it pleases him, fine, if it does not please him, fine. The vulture says that if his wife bears a male child, he calls him, Firstborn son of the vulture; if she bears a female child, he calls her, Firstborn daughter of the vulture; if she dies in childbirth, he knows that something to eat has arrived. A child is a blessing, it is not a curse [headache].

OBIDIYA: Since you say it is so, let it be so.

QNUMA: A person can reach a place where he leaves to God what remains.

OBIDIYA: [*Wipes her eyes.*] Are you ready to eat now?

QNUMA: My stomach is full.

OBIDIYA: Shall I give you water for bathing?

QNUMA: My whole body feels weak. My mind and my body are at loggerheads.

OBIDIYA: Will you take snuff?

QNUMA: Give it to me, wife, it brings me ease of mind. You are truly the "heart of the husband."

OBIDIYA: [*She takes a container of snuff and gives it to him.*] Is there any left?

QNUMA: There is some. Thank you. [*He lifts the container, peers into it, taps it on his knee, thrusts in the snuff and inhales.*] Eri ebe [My goodness]! Continuing to get all you want exhausts your wealth!

OBIDIYA: Isn't it time that you stopped this?

QNUMA: I have tried. You know. It does not allow me to avoid it.

OBIDIYA: It has entered your brain [you have become addicted].

QNUMA: It was a sin, please, forgive me.

OBIDIYA: Did I forgive you today?

QNUMA: Thank you, good woman. One knows that forgiveness is the sweetness of husband and wife. Remember to buy me some tomorrow when you go to olili market.

OBIDIYA: I have heard.

QNUMA: We carried our problems and we go to bed for today.

OBIDIYA: All right.

[Curtain]

[In the house of the head-choppers where they are drinking wine.]

OGBUU: The deal we have with Oriaku is not a bad deal.

OMEIFE: Why?

OGBUU: The money he gave us is no small amount.

DIQGU: That is not a really good deal. If we cannot snatch from people like this who do not want to live and let live, from whom will we extract money? We ought to treat him badly.

OGBUU: These thoughts did not enter our minds in time.

OMEIFE: If we had remembered, what would we have done?

DIQGU: Catch him and snatch the money he has.

OGBUU: How are you going to snatch his money?

OMEIFE: Tell him the big money he must pay.

OGBUU: What if he is told but does not agree?

DIQGU: He is not a person to whom such things are important.

OGBUU: This is true. But the snake has left; let us not strike the tree on the ground in vain.

OMEIFE: The meat has entered the pot and has left.

ALL: It has flown out. *[We have missed our chance.]*

OGBUU: If it is profit, let him take it. He knows what we know.

OMEIFE: True. But Oriaku should be treated harshly. If I recall all the bad work this man did in the town, we will see that he should be treated harshly.

DIQGU: Oriaku is bad! It is because a man does not agree that he take his father's land away from him that he wants to take away his life!

OGBUU: That is his own word problem. What we came to do is work.

OMEIFE: However, this does not mean that we do not have any conscience. What happens in the goat's house can also happen in the chicken's house.

OMEIFE: One who has nothing to carry has nothing to break.

DIQGU: The rule is that we must do our job.

OGBUU: Is it because someone whose teeth are extracted does not come to market that it is said that he goes home from the market with the heart of the meat?

OMEIFE: Our work does not try to examine conscience. If we examine conscience, we will die of hunger.

DIQGU: What a world this is! A person who desires his possessions too much is lost with them.

OGBUU: This is not funny. When you finish investigating, you stand hanging.

DIQGU: It is terrible! Onuma, you have gone from this world. Your sun has fallen in the morning. You finish eating the afternoon meal today, tomorrow evening your own is gone.

OGBUU: When will we go on this journey?

DIQGU: *[Raises his eyebrows, scratches his head.]* When gong has sounded seven.

OMEIFE: That time is not good. It is too early. It will not be dark enough.

OGBUU: I agree. Let us not be like the small cricket that uses its legs and punches out his own stomach.

DIQGU: Why?

OMEIFE: That is not a good time. People will know.

DIQGU: All right. At that time his wife is at the Eke market. You know that some women do a lot of buying and selling at night.

OGBUU: What about the people going around everywhere, at that time? Don't you think that they can enter?

DIQGU: If one goes on a journey at a time when he should not go, or to a place where he should not go, at a bad time, what he sees on the journey he takes. But I know that where they live is a very low-lying place. People do not go there after dark. One can kill a person, dissect his body, and no one will hear a thing about it.

OMEIFE: You are saying that it is a good time.

DIQGU: Yes!

OGBUU: If the journey is good, I call (?) myself; if it is bad, you call (?) us.

DIQGU: That is how it is said. But I know that it will not be bad.

OMEIFE: I know that it will go easily. Especially, if the woman stubbornly enters when we are working, and suffers the same fate as her husband (what happened to her husband will happen to her), Oriaku will be pleased, because the trouble that would have blocked his way will have been removed.

ALL: Right.

OGBUU: The one who will hunt (ugwa) has gone away.

OMEIFE: But the discussion is not over.

DIQGU: What is left?

OMEIFE: The corpse?

OGBUU: Which corpse?

OMEIFE: Wife and husband.

DIQGU: Are you going to eat them?

OMEIFE: We do not eat corpses.

OGBUU: What do you want us to do?

OMEIFE: Will the corpses be left there?

DIQGU: It is a good question. If they are left there, people will make noise, and will shout. The police will investigate, looking for someone to arrest and someone to let go. People will accuse others. They might also accuse us.

OMEIFE: Just what I was thinking. (You are in my thoughts.)

OGBUU: True. When husband and wife have a private discussion, a piece of yam fills the mortar three times. (Their discussion is fruitful.)

ALL: That's it.

OGBUU: What is to be done?

DIQGU: I think that they should not be slashed but rather beaten.

OMEIFE: If you slash, there is bleeding.

OGBUU: Blood and policemen together.

ALL: Yes!

DIQGU: We should not use a knife.

OMEIFE: They (Obidiya and Onuma) will be people who are looked for.

OGBUU: Hide them.

ALL: Yes!

OGBUU: People will look for them until they are tired.

ALL: Right on!

OGBUU: If someone else comes out looking for what does not concern him, let him take his head and make a sacrifice.

ALL: That's how it is.

OMEIFE: It seems to me that it has been taken care of.

ALL: It has been taken care of.

OGBUU: Let me divide the money.

ALL: Go ahead and divide.

[Ogbuu takes the money they received from Oriaku and divides it.]

OGBUU: Remember when we scheduled.

OMEIFE: Is a person going to walk without his legs?

OGBUU: Around that forest that is near his house, on the left, I will leave the palm leaf there.

OMEIFE: The palm leaf will reveal our plan. It is better for us to go from here.

DIQGU: What will people think if they see the three of us traveling at night?

OGBUU: They can accuse us in the final analysis (at last).

OMEIFE: If the snake brings out its head, it will be cut up right then.

DIQGU: The three of us will not go at the same time.

ALL: We should not.

OGBUU: Is the palm branch there?

ALL: It has been prepared.

OGBUU: The matter that has been decided needs only a nod to agree on it.

ALL: True words.

OGBUU: Goodbye then.

ALL: Goodbye.

OGBUU: Thank you.

ALL: Thank you, brother. *[They all go out.]* *[Curtain]*

[In Qnuma's house]

OBIDIYA: I don't feel well. (My insides will not move.) My heart is going like a clock. My body will not let me move around. Last night no one slept. What is left (ikpiikpii?) is to put on the soup pot. When I woke up, commotion surrounded all the houses. Bees filled all the compounds today. God take care of things oo! *[She raises her arms.]*

[She looks around everywhere until her eyes see a snake near the house. She shouts, and calls Qnuma. Qnuma runs out from the back of the house.]

QNUMA: What is it? What is it?

OBIDIYA: Come! Something bad has happened. *[The land has run away.]*

QNUMA: What is it? Obidiya, what is it?

OBIDIYA: Look! *[She points to a corner of the house.]*

QNUMA: What!

OBIDIYA: Don't shout.

QNUMA: Show me what it is.

OBIDIYA: Did you not see the python under the bed? *[He peers carefully.]*

QNUMA: I have seen it.

OBIDIYA: What are we going to do?

QNUMA: That is a good question. You know what it is in our land.

OBIDIYA: Is the python even worse than a snake?

QNUMA: It is not only a snake. It is worse than a snake. It is like a person.

OBIDIYA: Whatever it is, a snake should live in the forest.

QNUMA: I have heard. Give me some hot wine in a cup. *[She brings the wine and gives it to him.] [He takes his right hand and throws out the wine and swears an oath of innocence.]* Python who owns the land, Python who owns the forest, strong Amadi, you are not readily seen. Why have you come on this journey? What have you left the land of your chief and come to do here? *[Qnuma stops and listens.]* If you mean well, come quietly and eat this left-over palm oil that is before you. Do what you usually do. Come quickly. Don't waste time. When you finish your food, leave peacefully. *[He stops and watches.]* Come, come, my good man, come. Don't waste time. See that my two hands are clean. I have not thought anything bad about my fellow man. I have not made sacrifices, or prepared poison to destroy the life of my fellow man. Come, leave peacefully. Go home to where you live. If you stay too long, it means that you came on a bad journey. Don't you want to leave? Do you want war and wrestling?

Get ready. [*Qnūma goes out to the yard, gets his knife and returns.*]

OBIDIYA: It has gone.

QNUMA: Gone!

OBIDIYA: Yes!

QNUMA: Since it is said that it is a strong man, he should have stayed, as when a strong man and another strong man meet and shake hands with each other.

OBIDIYA: My dear, I am afraid. This thing is a bad omen.

QNUMA: I know. Omens come to men, not to wild animals.

OBIDIYA: What are we going to do?

QNUMA: I am not afraid. One who has nothing to carry has nothing to break.

OBIDIYA: I know that one who has nothing to contribute to the goat's vegetables does not go out to work at night. However, one who finishes counting counts again. [*One should think twice.*]

QNUMA: The vulture says, What does he have to do with a barber? The python has gone away.

OBIDIYA: The chicken has finished cooking, except for the neck.

QNUMA: There is nothing the eye can see that makes it bleed. I will not give in to fear. If I die today, I shall not have died in boyhood.

OBIDIYA: Let it be so. Let me prepare to go to Eke market.

QNUMA: Get ready and go. Nothing is going to happen. Buy market things. [*Obidiya carries her basket and goes to market.*]

[*Kinsmen enter*]

KINSMEN: All the various personal gods
Who live in this good village,
Ancestors large and small
Will you stay and watch everything that is going to happen?
Is there something you do not know?
Is there something you cannot prevent?
Are you going to allow him [*Oriaku*] to override a poor man?
So a poor person dies a strong death, and remains poor?
The hawk perches and the eagle perches as well.

Will the wing of one bird cover a treetop?
Let the hawk perch and the eagle perch.
My heart is turning to water, my tears have reached the sky
Because the soul is sad.
And the people whom God continues to bless
Take the gift given to them and harm their fellow men,
Which is a gift many people are wanting with tears, not pursuing it.
They use blessings and do good and bad,
It is used to break up the house of this relative.
To break the boundary between where man and his fellow men are
And where God is.
If one says that a wealthy man
Should take his wealth and ruin a poor man
How many people will live?
Lord in heaven, please, get up
Open your mind so that you do not fall into the trap
Which enemies have placed for you,
Because it is good that if the calabash falls
Its trunk stands
May your god show you a miracle
Stop you from leaving in time.
Alas! Alas! yesterday, wealthy man
Your war knife cut off Salome's head.
Did you think that no one knew?
Today, today, Qnuma, we do not know
The thoughts of our master, the thoughts of our God.
Lord in heaven, please, have mercy.
God of heaven have mercy, save
But if you overcome, wealthy man.
We know very well, and also agree
That the rat that bites us on the leg
Will whip you with its tail. [They go out.]

[Curtain]

[Qnuma is in his house combing his hair; his back is to the outside. The headchoppers enter and strike him with a stick on the neck, take a cloth and tie it over his mouth, and carry him out. The fire will be extinguished now, mourning music played, a tearful record, music used to carry a corpse. "Anate" played by Lawson is good. Or Igbo music that stimulates the spirit and makes people think. Obidiya enters carrying her basket on her head, and everything she bought at the market, she places them on the ground and goes around, looking around.]

OBIDIYA: Where can this man be? Can it be that he does not know that I have returned? Onuma! Hey Onuma! Oh Onuma! Oh Onuma! Where can he have gone tonight? Oh brother Onuma! *[She kindles the lamp, looks everywhere, sees blood on the floor, and drops her small bag on the floor. Fear fills her body. She looks all around, and shouts.]* They have killed him. Enemies have killed him. If the he-goat is killed, all is lost. This is human blood, this is his George cloth that he put on when I was going to market. Who killed my husband Onuma? Whose yam did he eat? Whose cocoyam did he eat? *[What did he do wrong?]* With whom am I going to live? Can a woman live alone in an old house? I have no mother; I have no father. Where can I go? The one who killed Onuma has killed me. Let him come and take me. Is this living? I am in the river and soap has entered my eyes. Jei' jei' jei! Sadness has broken my heart.

Where has my husband Onuma gone?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

Where has he gone tonight?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

Where has he gone without Obidiya?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

What has he left me to stay and do?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

To do what in this world?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

Umbrella tree my husband oh.

Eeeee! Eeeee!

What I used to be proud of my husband oh.

Eeeee! Eeeee!

The one who killed my husband has split my heart

Eeeee! Eeeee!

Lord in heaven are you still at home?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

My masters are you still at home?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

Who will buy my clothes?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

Who will support me, who will fry for me?

Eeeee! Eeeee!

Death you have truly split my heart.

Eeeee! Eeeee!

The rain that beats down on me will not dry me at all.

Eeeee! Eeeee!

My god! My god! Are you awake?

Are you awake, has darkness fallen on me this morning?

Eeeee! Eeeee! Heu! Heu! Heu! Heu! Heu!

[The kinsmen enter.]

KINSMEN: My fellow woman, what is happening to you? The toad does not run in the afternoon for nothing. The tears of the night are not in vain.

OBIDIYA: The sun has set in the morning. My husband is gone. Only my husband's blood and the small piece of his clothing here are what are left.

KINSMEN: Who did this murder? Who did this good job against common sense; against God?

OBIDIYA: I don't know who they are. God in heaven knows.

KINSMEN: The sun does not hide evil.

OBIDIYA: This has been hidden.

KINSMEN: The law of God does not change. Truth shines like the moon. They must be revealed.

OBIDIYA: How can one know them, since they killed and carried off the corpse?

KINSMEN: Just as the rain cannot carry the European chicken [larger than Igboland chickens], so the morning or the evening will not be able to hide evil that people do. Dry your tears; get up, my fellow woman. If the pig chews up the cassava of the person whose farm is near the forest, he must enter the middle of the farm.

OBIDIYA: My people, how can I look for my husband's body?

KINSMEN: One whose house is on fire cannot catch rats. The new market surprises the vulture. However it may be, we must do one thing.

OBIDIYA: What, my masters?

KINSMEN: We will go and confront the troublemakers.

OBIDIYA: Who?

KINSMEN: The troublemakers.

OBIDIYA: Does a person see the fire then put his hand in it?

KINSMEN: Has their fire ever burned you?

OBIDIYA: They are the ones who made this house look like this.

KINSMEN: Indeed.

OBIDIYA: Everything my husband acquired he spent in order to make the truth shine like the moon.

KINSMEN: You do not want the snake to bite you twice.

OBIDIYA: No, I don't. Does a person see and become blind? Their journeys are nothing but going around here and there. Come today, come tomorrow. What courage will I use to count again what I first counted seven times? They are like the rashes on a baby's buttocks; the buttocks touch the ground, itches rub like sand.

KINSMEN: My sister, it seems to me that you have suffered greatly in trouble. Will it not please you if we see the chief and tell him?

OBIDIYA: Let him know.

KINSMEN: Shall we get up and go see him now?

OBIDIYA: How does one prepare for this sad journey?

KINSMEN: The way of the world. That's the way it is.

OBIDIYA: Masters, I will not go. I will not! The one who killed Onuma has killed me. I will not oooo! I will not oooo! Let death come and take me at the same time. If it refuses, I will kill myself.

KINSMEN: Woman, stop this talk. If a person kills himself because of the way of the world, there will be great questions for him on the far side of the river [judgment day].

OBIDIYA: Let me reply I reply. We all will reply. It is not only I who will answer questions.

KINSMEN: Do not answer, my friend. We are mothers. We do not have to answer every questions.

OBIDIYA: Are you telling me that my fellow human beings will enter this compound, kill my husband, and carry away his body?

KINSMEN: Worse things than this have happened in this world. Endurance is best.

OBIDIYA: Endure what? Endure not having people! Endure sleeplessness! Endure poverty! Masters, endurance has its limits.

KINSMEN: True. You will endure. Don't drive away the world too hard. If a piece of yam is too hot, you open your mouth. When the fire has finished burning very hot it slowly dies down. The problems of the world. That's the way it is.

OBIDIYA: And this one?

KINSMEN: It is not anything else. Don't drive away the world too hard.

OBIDIYA: It is not in this case.

KINSMEN: Take all the words coming out of my mouth; there is no deceit in them. Get up and go see the owner of the land.

OBIDIYA: Masters, I have no strength. You all go.

KINSMEN: Let us go. One who has had a catastrophe happen feels weak. Come with us. Friend, get ready.
[Obidiya paces the floor, her hands to her head.]

OBIDIYA: Ada Ọnyiri dike Agbaghegbe [refers to herself], is it you or your fellow man who caused waking up and remembering? [refers to a situation that one cannot forget.] Is it you whose fellow man will step on your head because you are a woman? Is it true that you have become a woman who has no husband? If you ask, where is Ọnụma? My Ọnụma is not there. If you ask, I have become a woman who has no husband. Even the poor person rejects sour soup. If you ask. If you ask! There is nothing to say. The rat that bites me will whip you with its tail. Hear my voice my husband, my husband Ọnụma. I will not rest until the household that killed you goes this same way that you have gone. Show me the way, give me strength, change me into a man who only carries war to your enemies. Show me, truly, that my dead husband sees the way.

KINSMEN: Mother, leave it. God will do all.

[Curtain]

[In the house of Ogbuu]

FIRST PERSON: Talk, sons of the soil.

OTHERS: Talk, sons of the soil.

OGBUU: That one has gone. [refers to Onuma.]

OMEIFE: He has gone.

DIQGU: If you clear the front of the forest, you sharpen the knife.

OGBUU: We shall fulfill the tradition.

DIQGU: Wash the hands, shave the head. *[They nod their heads.]*

DIQGU: *[Looking at the killer.]* Turn around.

OGBUU: On account of chicken.

DIQGU: You know.

OGBUU: And a calabash of wine.

ALL: One calabash.

OMEIFE: Let it be done quickly before it turns into a stumbling block.

ALL: True.

[Ogbuu goes and gets the chicken and the wine; when he enters he puts the wine on the chair, takes the chicken and swears an oath.]

Earth drink wine, heaven drink wine. We are messengers. A messenger does not speak in proverbs. We are hawks; we know how to go, we do not know how to return. Onuma, good man, we have no quarrel with you. You were our friend while you were alive. We are sorry that your fellow man sent us on this errand which is our duty. We have done this job, but it is [ogozizi]. Oriaku sent us on the errand, we have completed it. If you and your wife want to revenge, we are ready. Drink wine, do not be angry. We and you will work any time you want. If you are angry, act like a brave man; touch him. See the white cock. Heaven and earth eat. *[He pulls off the chicken's head]* If another person gives you a sacrifice, do not accept it. Take the wine and drink. *[He pours out wine on the ground]*

OTHERS: You have done it, son of the soil.

OGBUU: Thank you.

OMEIFE: That is done. We should be alert.

OGBUU: Nothing will happen. I blindfolded him. If his wife looks for us, we can help her and do to Oriaku what he did to her husband.

DIQGU: When that time comes.

OMEIFE: Do you think that the police will not be able to come and arrest us and put us in jail?

OGBUU: Because we did what?

OMEIFE: Because we killed a man.

OGBUU: Killed whom?

OMEIFE: Killed . . .

DIQGU: These fears are unnecessary. Many times we bring upon ourselves things that cannot happen. Please, put useless thoughts out of your minds.

OMEIFE: Do you think that no one saw us?

DIQGU: They saw you; it was not we.

OMEIFE: I am speaking hypothetically. Accidents can overwhelm the brave man.

OGBUU: What is hypothetical? The trouble that is on top of the tree is what you want to bring down.

OMEIFE: It is not a matter of bringing it down. Leave it.

OGBUU: This kind of talk should stop. What can the eye see that makes it bleed?

OMEIFE: Leave it. If one says please, please, you cut him with a knife on the palm of the hand. [asking for trouble.]

DIQGU: We have left it. Put this type of thought out of your minds.

OGBUU: The mother hen's feet tread on her child.

OMEIFE: That's how it is.

OGBUU: One must drink a bit of wine before eating meat.

DIQGU: Am I the one who smeared oil on the pig? [Did I do the killing?]

OMEIFE: One who weaves the bag does the sneezing.

[They drink wine. Ogbuu goes to the back of the house and brings in chicken meat.]

OGBUU: Let me test it. *(He first sips a bit of chicken broth.)*

OMEIFE: If you kill us, will you eat our house?

DIQGU: He wants to sip a bit of chicken broth. He has sipped first.

OMEIFE: The broth of this chicken is very sweet.

DIQGU: It is as sweet as the broth of a pussy.

OGBUU: Pussy is another animal whose broth is wonderfully sweet.

DIQGU: But pussy meat easily gets cold.

OGBUU: That's how the world is. Good and bad.

OMEIFE: The woman who cooked this meat did a good job.

DIQGU: Do you know if it was a man?

OMEIFE: A man who cooked like this would not get married.

OGBUU: There are also men who are better than women at cooking.

OMEIFE: One like that has become a bachelor.

DIQGU: I know that it is your wife who cooked it.

OGBUU: My Ugadiya cooked it.

OMEIFE: That's true.

DIQGU: I agree. As I said. Which man will cook . . .

OGBUU: Leave this talk of men alone. A man gets angry if he cooks delicious thick soup.

OMEIFE: Call her so we can thank her.

OGBUU: Leave the woman who is in the kitchen.

OMEIFE: When you finish you thank her.

OGBUU: I will thank her.

DIQGU: This meat tastes better than European chicken.

OMEIFE: Seven times.

OGBUU: European chicken is tasteless. Our Igbo chicken is hard to chew.

OMEIFE: It is like Hausa goat and Igbo goat.

DIQGU: Ahaaa! Hausa goat is very tough.

OMEIFE: Thank you, son of the land.

OGBUU: Let me give you water to wash your hands.

[He brings water and gives it to them. Everyone washes his hands and takes a towel and dries them. He brings a snuff-box and gives it to them.]

OMEIFE: You know how to do things. Thank you. *[He puts it in the palm of his left hand and smells it.]* Little by little wealth is gone. Consume and cry.

DIQGU: *[He takes the snuff-box and takes a pinch.]* The wealth of a child sheds tears. *[referring to the snuff.]*

OGBUU: Snuff! Let me take a pinch. If you take a pinch of snuff your friend is happy; if you pinch a woman, her husband comes to fight.

OMEIFE: Whatever it is called is the same thing.

OGBUU: True words. Hawk and gun are the same thing.

DIQGU: Wherever a short person's hand reaches, he hangs up his bag.

OMEIFE: So the world goes. You have done well. Thank the woman who cooked this.

DIQGU: Tell her thank you. Tell her she has done well.

OGBUU: What you all did is better. Everyone should listen carefully. What the eye saw, the nose also saw. [All of us are involved.]

OMEIFE: Nothing the eye sees makes it bleed.

DIQGU: Stubborn death killed him on Eke day.

OMEIFE: We will go home.

OGBUU: There is nothing more to be said.

OMEIFE: Goodbye.

OGBUU: Goodbye to all of you. Good journey.

[Curtain]

[At the chief's house. Obidiya and the kinsmen. Obidiya enters and knocks on the door]

OBIDIYA: Uyapue! *[She listens.]*

CHIEF: Who is the child knocking on the door?

OBIDIYA: Our father, it is I.

CHIEF: Who are you?

OBIDIYA: I am Obidiya Qn̄uma.

CHIEF: Enter.

ALL: Father, good morning! (cf. ÿ b̄ōla chi)

CHIEF: Good morning to you (You all have waked up), welcome! What brings the python out so early this morning?

OBIDIYA: Master, what has left heaven has happened on earth.

CHIEF: What happened at this bad time?

OBIDIYA: They have killed my husband.

CHIEF: Who?

ALL: Master, it is what we heard.

CHIEF: Your husband?

OBIDIYA: My husband!

CHIEF: Did they kill him?

OBIDIYA: Ye-e-s!

CHIEF: When?

OBIDIYA: During the night.

CHIEF: Lord in heaven! Onuma has died? Where?

OBIDIYA: In his house.

CHIEF: Look at that, a strong man stays in his house and his testicles are smashed. Was his corpse left in the house?

ALL: Is it there and we are crying? (Would we be crying if it were there?)

CHIEF: Where is it?

ALL: They killed and took away.

CHIEF: The world of the Europeans. The weapons the European war brought. The thing now is just kill-and-carry-away. God look into this o! What is this world, please?

OBIDIYA: Strong men have killed and carried away.

CHIEF: What are they going to do with the corpse of another person?

ALL: Who knows?

OBIDIYA: It is done but it is painful.

CHIEF: Did the One-Who-Did It-And-Caused-Pain think that he had gone free?

OBIDIYA: He is gone.

CHIEF: It is not when a thing is cut off that it withers.

OBIDIYA: They say that they have overcome Obidiya.

CHIEF: How did they overcome, my child? The world is big. When a person thinks that he has overcome, the things of the world demand payment of his debt.

OBIDIYA: These people say that they have overcome me.

CHIEF: My child, close your mouth. The rat that bit you will whip them with its tail. This type of thing has never happened before. The crab said that it did not hear, it must have been in front of the chest and in back of the chest I was smashed. How appalling. How does one speak of this type of thing? How large is the population of Qhanta, for seven people to suffer from running stomach?

OBIDIYA: This is what I saw. Sadness has broken my heart. Water has filled the toad's mouth. [I am too overcome to speak.]

CHIEF: It has filled, my child. It has filled! This kind of thing!

OBIDIYA: Master, I will not agree [to let this thing go].

CHIEF: My child, what will you do?

OBIDIYA: If someone throws me to the ground and I do not bite him, I urinate on him.

CHIEF: You came again into something bad. Biting and urinating is not our job. God in heaven bites [retaliates?] better. Don't talk about that.

OBIDIYA: Are you saying that I should stay without a husband?

CHIEF: What is done is done. That path you want to take does no good. If the first person is in a bad market, the last one is also in a bad market. Leave it. Don't be angry. Auntie Anger is terrible. She and blood and Deceiver are sisters. Especially the anger of women. The hawk! If he hears, he goes, if he does not hear, he comes back. This thing has turned out to be a

matter big of concern to the whole town. If we start to talk about it here, the police can come here and arrest all of us and put us in jail. We should get up and go to the barracks and tell them what happened.

OBIDIYA: It is not you and I.

CHIEF: Why?

OBIDIYA: If another person told you to take me and go, would you not refuse to go?

CHIEF: Why, my mother?

OBIDIYA: It is "come today come tomorrow" that puts me in this state.

CHIEF: My child, "come today come tomorrow" that is involved in the trouble is no small thing. The way [bureaucracy] of the police is very wearing. One who loses a court case must contribute something, the one who prevails also must contribute something. Don't we agree that if a toothless person does not come to the market, we say that the heart of the animal is taken home [unsold]?. We will go. Bad food makes the rim of the mortar fall to the ground.

OBIDIYA: I hear what you are saying. However, the thing one uses to probe the ear is not used to probe the eye. If it is used to probe the eye, the eye is blinded.

CHIEF: It has not come to the poking of the eye.

OBIDIYA: Master, I will not go [to police], (even) if you all carry my corpse there, it will not agree to go. If one agrees, his corpse agrees.

CHIEF: My child, the corpse does not argue.

OBIDIYA: Leave that. If one agrees, his god agrees.

CHIEF: You are trying to be a European corpse. If it is carried ahead, it says, "No, no, no." If it is carried behind, it still says "No, no, no." If the yam refuses to be tied, and it is not dug, will it remain in the ground?

OBIDIYA: That is a mistake, please, forgive me. The place where the child cries and points his finger, if his mother is not there, his father is there.

CHIEF: What do you want to do now?

OBIDIYA: What I am telling you.

CHIEF: You go to the barracks.

OBIDIYA: What barracks? Let the barracks burn.

CHIEF: It is not a laughing matter. Mother, are you tired?

OBIDIYA: Yes! The thoughts that a person thinks about suicide are not thought up in one day.

CHIEF: These people now, why did you all not hear what the elders told you? If the words of the elders are thrown away, later they become useful.

OBIDIYA: It is not something to argue about. Please, my father, do not speak of it. What has happened in the nose is very deep.

CHIEF: Since you have come to my house, you should try to accept what I tell you. I am not a crafty elder.

OBIDIYA: Don't be angry. If the belief that I have kills me it is not true belief.

CHIEF: Your belief will not kill you. Look me in the eye. Do I seem to you like a chameleon? [agbakuru nwoke agho nwanyi = chameleon.]

OBIDIYA: I know you are not. If a child crawls and strikes me, I crawl and strike him back.

CHIEF: Do not strike back, my good child. Striking back goes both ways [forward and backward]. I tell you to leave everything to God in heaven. His gun makes noise; the ears that hear him agree.

OBIDIYA: Do not be angry. That belief I had that would kill me was not a true belief.

CHIEF: Your belief will not kill you.

OBIDIYA: I will not agree. It was a sin, let us do it at once. On the day of judgment all of us come out for judgment before God and answer questions. If it is prison, let him throw us all in at once.

CHIEF: You have said it. But it is not the way the bitter kola sounds to the ear that it tastes in the mouth. The thing one uses to apologize [turn away anger] is greater than the anger itself.

OBIDIYA: It is too much. What am I to do? With no mother, no father? What am I to do? My own is finished. What I am waiting for now is Uncle Death.

CHIEF: You are doing something. God who placed you here is not a goat. When you call on death, it does not answer. Leave to the police and to God whatever judgment is there. Take heart.

OBIDIYA: I have heard. Give me a chance to go home. One does not bear a child and name it at the same time.

CHIEF: Good woman. You have spoken what the ears are hearing. One is reluctant [uses two minds] to go and bury the body of one who has died.

OBIDIYA: Let me go home.

CHIEF: All of you go. One whose house is on fire does not catch rats.

[They all go out.]

CHIEF: Who knows what this woman will do when she reaches home? Some women do not prepare wine that one would like to taste. What a person does lies in her head. I have said what I know. One does not stop a blind man from falling. If I take a blind man to the place where he will know the road, then I leave him. When the fire reaches the pot, it will reach what is in it. May God see my two hands; I have said what I know.

OBIDIYA: I have been to see him. That was to fulfill the law. Why should I go to see him again? I have decided what I will do. No one can stop me. Let me look for the end of it. When the fast runner goes, the slow walker catches up to him. Trouble has started.

[Curtain]

ACT 2

[In the house of Akakaka, where he is performing a sacrifice. He places a hand-washing dish before him, takes a small amount of sparkling water and places it around the dish; he himself sits on the mat. He holds a small mirror in his left hand while singing a song. Obidiya then enters.]

OBIDIYA: *[Knocks on the door]* Is the master of the house at home?

AKAKAKA: Enter, my mother. Welcome, Obidiya.

OBIDIYA: Who told you my name?

AKAKAKA: No one told me. What am I doing here, if I cannot know people's names?

OBIDIYA: This power [thing] of yours is very strong [has flame].

AKAKAKA: It is my work. I have done this work for about forty years. I started to do this work before your mother bore you.

OBIDIYA: Carry on.

AKAKAKA: What else am I doing but staying here telling the world how things happen to people. This thing you came for is easy.

OBIDIYA: Have you seen why I came?

AKAKAKA: What am I working for here?

OBIDIYA: What caused me to come?

AKAKAKA: Wonders have happened. This world, it is terrible. Terrible!

OBIDIYA: What is it?

AKAKAKA: Does a man stay in his house and break his testicles?

OBIDIYA: Look. Look now. Look, my father.

AKAKAKA: My spirits say that you should bring out seven kọbọ.

OBIDIYA: *[Obidiya opens her wrapper and takes out seven kọbọ from the edge of the wrapper.]*

AKAKAKA: Put it on the ground and let me tell you what happened.

OBIDIYA: It is the reason for my journey.

AKAKAKA: I see a corpse in front of my sacrifice.

OBIDIYA: What corpse?

AKAKAKA: It is not the corpse of a chicken. It is not the corpse of a wild animal. *[He takes a breath.]* Mother, it is the corpse of a human being.

OBIDIYA: What kind of human being?

AKAKAKA: The corpse of a young man. The corpse of your husband. Your husband!

OBIDIYA: My husband?

AKAKAKA: Your husband. Are you arguing with me?

OBIDIYA: I am not arguing with you. Who killed him?

AKAKAKA: Good question. It is not for fools who come here asking irrelevant questions. *[He takes wine and puts it in a cup and throws it out to the elders and the spirits, saying]* Lord my father, Okparaku, Ajamaja, Tolofari, Ikine, Iyieke, drink wine. Open the door to me. Do as you usually do. Outcasts not having anyone to give them wine, take from my left hand and drink. *[He throws out wine again.]* God who created roots, heaven and earth, honor (insert an eagle feather for) me today. I do not know where the woman comes from but it is your names that brought her. May she arrive and tell others. She heard and came. Let her hear and tell her friends. *[He stops.]* Woman, it was no dog that bit your husband to death. It was not a wild animal who bit him to death, he died an untimely death. It has not been a week since he died.

OBIDIYA: It has not.

AKAKAKA: Do you want him to tell you what killed him?

OBIDIYA: Who will tell me?

AKAKAKA: Your husband.

OBIDIYA: If a dead person can do a thing like that, words are better from the mouth of the one something happened to.

AKAKAKA: Woman, three people entered your house and killed your husband.

OBIDIYA: Three people.

AKAKAKA: Three! Three! Three! Your husband says that there were three of them.

OBIDIYA: Please, what did he do?

AKAKAKA: He did not do anything.

OBIDIYA: Is a person killed without hearing a word from his mouth?

AKAKAKA: Place seven pieces of money on the ground. If you do this, your husband will tell you with his own mouth what is there. *[Obidiya then puts down seven pieces of money. Akakaka then throws out wine.]* Ikine, Totofari, Adum, Tamuno paka gboo. [perhaps a nickname] Imbre Qnūma, hurry and get started. Ancient times. Mianga of ancient times. *[He turns and looks at Obidiya.]* Woman, clear out your ears well. He has arrived. Hear your husband's voice now.

VOICE: Obidiya. O--bi--diya a.

OBIDIYA: Someone is calling me. Is it Qnūma?

VOICE: It is I, Qnūma.

OBIDIYA: Qnūma!

VOICE: Yes! *[Obidiya starts to cry.]*

AKAKAKA: Ah-ah! Dry your tears. You don't cry here. The woman who wants to see spirits must be patient. The dead do not stay where there is weeping.

OBIDIYA: I have dried my eyes. I have dried.

AKAKAKA: That is the way of the world. It goes back and forth.

OBIDIYA: Call him again.

AKAKAKA: Have you closed your mouth?

OBIDIYA: I have.

VOICE: O--bi--diya. Welcome. You and your health.

OBIDIYA: I am here. What caused your death?

VOICE: A person did it to me.

OBIDIYA: Who did it to you?

VOICE: Some people.

OBIDIYA: Do the people have names?

VOICE: There were three people.

OBIDIYA: What did you do to them?

VOICE: Poison kills the innocent; sacrifice kills the innocent, I did nothing to them.

OBIDIYA: Why were they angry?

VOICE: They were messengers.

OBIDIYA: Whose messengers?

VOICE: Do you know who it was?

OBIDIYA: I don't know who it was.

VOICE: Our enemy.

OBIDIYA: He sent the people?

VOICE: He sent the people on account of that land dispute.

AKAKAKA: Are you listening carefully?

OBIDIYA: I am holding my ears in my hands. Onuma, don't lie to me because I am going to take every word you speak here and do something.

VOICE: Have I ever lied to you? It was he.

OBIDIYA: Where were you when this happened?

VOICE: I was at home.

OBIDIYA: Inside the house?

VOICE: They entered the house that time that you were at the market while I was combing my hair, after I finished bathing, gagged me, and struck me on the neck.

OBIDIYA: Gagged you, struck you on the neck. Jei! Jei! Please allow me to cry a few tears . . . Alas!

AKAKAKA: Don't cry! If tears drop from your eyes he is gone.

OBIDIYA: Are you telling me to be quiet?

AKAKAKA: Close your mouth, or I die.

OBIDIYA: What did they do then?

VOICE: They carried my dead body and went to Okolo-Akpala and buried it in a swamp.

AKAKAKA: Do you know where it is?

OBIDIYA: I know Okolo-Akpala.

VOICE: By a certain oil bean tree near the river.

OBIDIYA: They buried you by the river.

VOICE: In a swamp. If you dig a little, you can see my head. I was angry. They grabbed me suddenly. Suddenness is too much for a strong man. I have no rest. I am floating around.

OBIDIYA: What is the reason?.

VOICE: There has been no judgment. I will have rest. Go near the base of that orange tree that is behind our house, you will see 1,000 naira I put in a cup and buried in the earth. Go to Isiukwu Olanti, tell him to give you the ten naira I gave him to keep for me. Don't be afraid.

AKAKAKA: Are you listening?

OBIDIYA: I am using my ears.

AKAKAKA: He talks like a man.

OBIDIYA: What are the names of those who did this thing?

VOICE: Never mind the names. Do what I told you. Don't ask any more questions. My time is up. *[The voice goes away.]*

AKAKAKA: You heard everything he said. It is in your hands now.

OBIDIYA: If two heads of palmtree ripen for someone with a blunt knife, a disaster occurs. One to whom a bad thing has happened uses his legs to climb the kolanut tree. To whom has this type of thing happened? I am a woman indeed, but I will show him that not all women are the same.

AKAKAKA: That man is a bad person. Kill his fellow-man for no reason. *Ubum kwa!!* [Expression of disgust, like God forbid!] If you want your husband to be lost like a chicken, leave and go home. This type of thing does not happen among the women of our house. Close your eyes and take revenge. Take heart and take revenge. On the day of judgment all of us will stand at the same time. We do good and bad. If there is something you want, tell me.

OBIDIYA: Are you asking me what I want? You know what I have in mind.

AKAKAKA: I don't know. The heart is like a bag, everyone slings his own.

OBIDIYA: I know. Shut down for me the household of that person who sent the people to kill my husband. Shut it down completely. Whoever hears about it will be amazed.

AKAKAKA: You have spoken like a woman who loved her husband. I will do for you the job that is involved in it. It will cost you a little money.

OBIDIYA: That is no problem. If it is difficult to die, he will die on Eke day. If I do not pay the debt, call me to be your servant.

AKAKAKA: It will not come to anything of that kind. Let us talk about it. First you will pay me the sacrifice money, three naira.

OBIDIYA: How many naira?

AKAKAKA: Three naira. Is it a lot?

OBIDIYA: Doesn't sacrifice cost 70 kobo any longer?

AKAKAKA: You don't know? People have added money to prices on everything

in the market, the spirits agree in the same way to add to their own. Do you want hunger to kill the spirits and those who perform sacrifices?

OBIDIYA: No, I don't. But this is very high.

AKAKAKA: It is not. See here. What we bought for three kòbò yesterday costs ten kòbò today.

OBIDIYA: Father, it is hard. People have killed their fellow man. Let me give you one naira.

AKAKAKA: I thought you people called it Naina. Spoil the good name the Europeans gave to money. The chicken is done but the neck is left. You will give me three naina. If there is no subtraction there is no addition.

OBIDIYA: Has the market changed into a shop? [store with set prices]

AKAKAKA: It is a periwinkle [tiny, saltwater snail] market. Before you take out, you must put in. Take what I told you. This is morning. If we start bargaining early this morning, a bad market is ahead.

[Obidiya gives money.]

That's good. This has gone. For the matter you have in mind: bring one white cock.

OBIDIYA: A white cock.

AKAKAKA: And tortoise. Tortoise-son-of-aliliiga. The first wine and the second wine. *[He thinks.]* And a gun. That is all.

OBIDIYA: Where am I going to get gunpowder and tortoise?

AKAKAKA: You bring money and I will give you the one I have.

OBIDIYA: How much money does it come to?

AKAKAKA: Two naira.

OBIDIYA: All of your things cost many naira. Aren't there any kòbò involved in it?

AKAKAKA: Is it something I did, woman? [Is it my fault?] Kòbò is exhausted; nothing but naira buys things at the market from now on. Because it is you, let me take them and give to you at three naira and 30 kòbò. Is that satisfactory to you?

OBIDIYA: The market is important to me [too much for me]. How shall I do it? One whose world brought sour wine [bad destiny], to whom will she carry it?

AKAKAKA: That's how things are when you go forward.
[Obidiya gives him money.]

OBIDIYA: All this money I am giving, see that you cause that household to be blocked.

AKAKAKA: It has come from the hawk's head, it lies in the eagle's hand. If it is a stone, I will break it open. *[Akakaka goes to the back of the house, takes the white cock and gives it to her.]* Take it. Promise before my spirits that if his house is blocked, the spirits own all his wealth, and you will give a goat and one large wrapper.

OBIDIYA: Another one?

AKAKAKA: Will you leave the spirits empty-handed?

OBIDIYA: If the spirits completely consume Oriaku's household, will they say that that will not be enough?

AKAKAKA: It will not be enough. If you call them, you have to send them back. One who brings rain will send back the rain he drew down.

OBIDIYA: Spirits, if you completely block the household of that person who sent people to kill my husband, may you take all his wealth, and I will thank you with a piece of cloth and a goat.

AKAKAKA: That is enough. Thank you. *[He twists the neck of the chicken and throws it (the neck) out.]* Go home. Listen, you will hear that a great tree has broken in a great forest. Give me eight days.
[Obidiya goes out.]

AKAKAKA: How can one person own the whole world? If you go here, he is there, if you go somewhere else, he is there. What is it? How will the whole world come from under the foot of one person and cross over? Why are people not satisfied with the things of the world? When will people know that the world is like a person who stays as long as he wants and then goes home? Okpaku gave birth to Oriaku. Since what happened yesterday can not show us what will happen today, one who did what he did, what he did will come back to him. The bottom line is that I will do for this woman what she wants. He [Oriaku] has become a crab that swam in big waters and small waters and came and changed color in the woman's soup

pot. I will gather some poisons to make good charms for him to swell up in his house. Everything that swells up is what the gods killed. How can I see my friends? *[He scratches his head.]*

[Ogbuu and his group enter.]

OGBUU: Strong man Leopard, how are things?

AKAKAKA: Fine, countryman.

OMEIFE: Hero, strong man [Hand of God].

AKAKAKA: Thank you, Chief. Welcome. Be seated. I believe that one who is called or is being talked about, does not see the spirits [is not dead]. I have in mind a matter concerning you all. What about Diogu?

OGBUU: He is sick.

AKAKAKA: When did it start?

OGBUU: Two days ago.

AKAKAKA: It must be overwork that is affecting him.

OMEIFE: If someone says that he does everything in the world, there will be trouble.

AKAKAKA: Welcome to you.

BOTH: Ooo!

AKAKAKA: Let me bring kola.

OGBUU: It is the Igbo custom.

OMEIFE: Do as you usually do.
[He goes and brings kola.]

AKAKAKA: Brothers, here is kola.

OMEIFE: Thank you. One who brings kola brings life. *[He breaks the kola.]*

OGBUU: Oh! The kola has five lobes.

OMEIFE: If it has five lobes, you know that something else will follow the kola.

OGBUU: The kola with five lobes means good luck. If one has something good happen to him, his brothers join him in eating.

AKAKAKA: That's not a problem. Eat and let me eat turns out to be a problem? When a guest comes, I eat my fill. Let us finish drinking what is on the table before I bring more.

OMEIFE: If one says please, please, he is cut with a knife on the palm of his hand.

[They take the kola piece by piece, and give Akakaka his own kola. They drink wine.]

AKAKAKA: There is a small thing that I want us to discuss.

OGBUU: Speak.

AKAKAKA: When an animal has an itch he goes to a tree, when a human being itches he goes to his fellow human beings. There is someone who needs help.

OMEIFE: Man or woman?

AKAKAKA: Woman.

OGBUU: What is her need?

AKAKAKA: This is a difficult matter. It is a woman whose husband was taken away forcefully.

OGBUU: Do you know where the woman comes from?

AKAKAKA: She says that she is an Umuegbu person.

[Omeife and Ogbuu exchange glances. Everywhere falls quiet. Ogbuu chews his fingers.]

OGBUU: What does she want you to do for her?

AKAKAKA: You know how the anger of women is.

OGBUU: Revenge.

AKAKAKA: If the world shoots a gun at you and you do not shoot back, you are stupid.

OGBUU: This is a bad thing. [This gadfly perches in evil.]

OMEIFE: Which thing is evil?

OGBUU: You did not see how a bat's nose is?

OMEIFE: Was it I who prepared the real oil?

OGBUU: What the dawn brings, one takes it like that.

OMEIFE: The matter depends on the voice of the principals.

AKAKAKA: It seems to me that I am in water and this soap enters my eyes.

OGBUU: It has not come to anything like that.

AKAKAKA: If someone pulls out a tick from a dog's body but does not show it to his face, it seems as though he was pinched.

OMEIFE: No one is going to pinch you.

AKAKAKA: Does it happen?

OGBUU: Since she wants revenge, what are your thoughts now?

AKAKAKA: The one who carried the thatch out to the street wants the relatives to help weave it.

OMEIFE: Truth is life.

AKAKAKA: I want us to work together as we usually do.

OGBUU: Where will this work take place?

AKAKAKA: At Oriaku's house.

OMEIFE: Have you inquired well?

AKAKAKA: I have examined thoroughly.

OGBUU: Which way do you want this work done?

AKAKAKA: Take a gun and knife and surround the strong man's house, and the outcome will be the judgment.

OMEIFE: What type of gun and knife do you want?

AKAKAKA: I want evil spirits and poison to work together. And if the evil spirits do not kill, the poison will, it is the same death.

OGBUU: You want us to use poison?

AKAKAKA: It is the best thing. It kills fast.

OMEIFE: Never mind what kind it is going to be. We should talk it over well, what remains is our duty.

AKAKAKA: I know. When a doctor is told what the illness is, he knows what type of medicine he will give the patient. I want people to know that the devil is very strong.

OGBUU: They know very well. However, people tempt the devil.

AKAKAKA: I gave that woman four days. I want the thing that will happen to be completed before that time comes.

OMEIFE: It is simple. What will you give us?

AKAKAKA: Equal shares.
[They raise their eyes.]

OGBUU: That way is good.

AKAKAKA: It is not all words that are sung like a song. The thing that comes from the house of death is what one uses to settle with death. The lid is not bigger than the pot. One who comes for condolence does not say, "Sadness has broken my heart."

OMEIFE: Friend, the matter rests with the voices of the principals.

OGBUU: Let it be.

AKAKAKA: My thought is that the result will determine the rewards. [One will use saliva coming from the mustache and returning to the mustache.]

OGBUU: I agree. Let the chicken feather stay on the knees. [Signifies agreement.]

AKAKAKA: Let it stay.

OMEIFE: Do you say it should be like that?

AKAKAKA: It should be. One who gathers does not gather all, one who finishes eating does not eat all. The world is a dance between the dog and other dogs. If one does something for his friends, the friends will reciprocate.

OGBUU: The matter be is in the voices of the principals.

AKAKAKA: Watch very carefully. Oriaku is not an animal that you tie up in rags. He is not an animal that you shoot with one bullet. If you miss him, he will become dizzy and fall and kill the one who shot him, get up and go home.

OMEIFE: It is the wrestling between man and man. It is not when you start but the way you shoot.

OGBUU: If he overcomes us I will take a rope and hang myself.

AKAKAKA: That's how a strong man talks. If one person cooks for the crowd, the crowd will eat it all and lick the plate clean; but if the crowd cooks for one person, he will not eat it all, if he eats it all, his stomach will burst.

OMEIFE: Eating it all and death go together.

AKAKAKA: We must perform a remaining tradition.

OGBUU: Swear innocence.

AKAKAKA: Take the ọfọ [emblem of justice] and ogu [^{swearing}~~emblem of~~ innocence].

OMEIFE: If one takes in the ọfọ and ogu, has he not sworn innocence?

OGBUU: One who puts his hand in feces, let him lick it.

AKAKAKA: This is not feces.

OMEIFE: We know. It is a saying and also a proverb.

OGBUU: Do you want us to kiss the ọfọ?

AKAKAKA: The way you said it was not good enough.

OMEIFE: Leave that. The thing that cried "pii" has died. Bring out the ọfọ and ogu so we can perform the tradition.

AKAKAKA: Shall I bring it out?

BOTH: Bring it out. *[He brings out the ofo (object carved with a face) and ugu. The three of them lay their hands on it; he takes it away.]*

OGBUU: Is there something that woman will do?

AKAKAKA: I told her to bring a fat he-goat.

OMEIFE: The one that is used to wash hands? (Its blood is used for hand-washing.)

AKAKAKA: Yes!

OGBUU: It seems to me that our discussion is over?

AKAKAKA: I don't know anything else holding it up?

OMEIFE: We will get started . (Lit. paddle out the canoe.)

AKAKAKA: Hurry.

BOTH: Goodbye.

AKAKAKA: Good journey.

KINSMEN: What is this world?

What is man?

It is true that the spirit of God

Is in the man he created,

But see, man is going along

Like a blind man in this world. (This passage refers to Oriaku.)

He stubs his toe on a stone

Falls and hurts himself.

From his foolishness he brings a rope

He uses to tie himself

Even when God's spirit is in him

Telling him things about his life.

Man rejoices about tomorrow

But when we are in the midst of joy

The wind of death comes near us.

And you will die, Oriaku Strong Man,

Heaven has written it in the book.

It is you, these grandchildren

Who didn't do anything
Whom I am sorry for.
You are like the children of Adam
Those not tasting that fruit
But they follow their grandfathers and drink water
Coming from the stream that came from sin.
Suppose that what
A person did affected only him
Our heart would not feel doubleminded.
But it is something to be greatly regretted
That the dog eats up feces,
And the goat's teeth rot.
Man, can he change the law of God? Our tears are like medicine given to
one who died, having no effectiveness.
But please, Father, have mercy.
Do not regard this compound like Sodom.
Allow a seed to sprout.
Let one come out.

[They go out.]

ACT 3

[In Oriaku's house. He is seated in a chair like a king.]

ORIAKU: If the child throws up his father his dress will close his eyes. The person who can throw me to the ground has not been born. I know what people are saying. His wife will not do anything. This will show young men something, so they will be careful. Not everything ends with the court. When the white man finishes judging, a person judges back. The foolish man, let him come from there and dispute for the land. Damn fool. He is being wise. Gogo! Gogo! What will happen? As one speaks one does. Egg of python. When you touch it his mother comes.

GOGO: Did you call me, master?

ORIAKU: My good child, I called you. Bring me a bottle of whiskey and soda water. I am very happy today.

GOGO: *[Talking to himself as he leaves]* Bad man. You rejoice while murdering. Do you think that God does not see you? *[He brings these things and places them in front of him.]*

ORIAKU: Thank you, my son. You seem to be frowning.

GOGO: Nothing is wrong with me.

ORIAKU: Do you remember that guests are coming today?

GOGO: I heard it from your wife.

ORIAKU: It is not bad. Since you have heard it from her. Have you prepared everything well?

GOGO: Everything is in its place.

ORIAKU: Good. It will be time to watch out on the road.

GOGO: I will do it. *[He goes out.]*

ORIAKU: Let me satisfy myself with wine today. Today is a big day in my life. All the things troubling me, angering me, disturbing my mind, have given way. When a strong man's heart reaches the ground, he can turn it around. I have acted like a strong man, what remains is death. If everyone in this village acted as I did, our village would be like a paradise. I have married four wives, I have a lot of money in the bank, Chima, my first son, is studying medicine in the white man's land. Ngozi is the first woman in this

town who went to college. The others are in various other colleges. If urine were not difficult, would the chicken not urinate?

GOGO: Master, I hear musicians on the path.

ORIAKU: It's all right. Guests are not greater than the owner of the house. Let them come.

[Musicians, men and women wearing white garments made of George cloth (good quality cloth) enter. They play, coming from the left and going toward the right. The musicians stay on the left. After they are seated, Oriaku rises.]

ORIAKU: Friends and relatives, welcome!

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: Friends and relatives, welcome!

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: Eat!

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: Drink!

ALL: Iyaah!

[The titled men who govern the town enter and greet the musicians one by one. After they are seated, the music stops, Oriaku takes kola nut and gives it to the Chief.]

THE CHIEF: Ụmụegbu greetings!

ALL: Iyaah!

THE CHIEF: One-Who-Uses-the-Head-and-Agrees-to-War, greetings!

ALL: Iyaah!

THE CHIEF: One-Who-Went-to-a-Town-and-Defeated-it, greetings!

ALL: Iyaah!

THE CHIEF: Drink!

ALL: Iyaah!

THE CHIEF: Our brother has given us fruit to make covenant. We thank him very much. May god bless him. Let me stop here; now it is morning.
[The kola is broken and shared, the wine is drunk. The murderers enter. They are dressed like the others.]

OGBUU: Kwenu!

ALL: Iyaah!

OMEIFE: Thank you!

ALL: Iyaah!

[They go to where Oriaku is, give him special greetings, shake hands with him, then turn back and take seats.]

THE CHIEF: We have broken kola, which is the custom we are known by. Greetings, the good child's name is known. Only a fool says that his brother is not a guest. Brothers are a burden. *[He coughs]* You will be thinking about what prompted our journey. Not long ago you heard some rumor about it. The back does not hear speech. Today we came to tell you everything that is being said behind your back. Friends and family, is that not how it is?

ALL: That's it.

THE CHIEF: That is how it is. *[He rests.]* We are not like the chicken who does not know who pulled up its feathers during the rainy season. If you settle the doctor, he puts his hand in poison. If the spirit cuts its hair and breaks the comb, does he say that the hair will not grow again?

ALL: What happened?

THE CHIEF: Goodness is respect (honor), one does not chew it.

ALL: That is true.

THE CHIEF: We do not forget the one who lifted our tails during rainy season. If the right hand washes the left hand, the left hand washes the right hand. We are sorry that we did not use enough soap to bathe you. People, will a person refuse what his raphia palm brings?

ALL: No!

THE CHIEF: The child does not refuse the food his mother cooked. Even if it is very bad, he must eat it.

ALL: *[They nod their heads.]*

THE CHIEF: If you go inside our obi you will bring a lump of salt. Every town has something they boast about. The ọfọ and ọgu are important to us as the child is important to women in the kitchen. The ọfọ our grandfathers gave us. One who spoils the land by himself, his god calls him to account. You all have seen what enemies did to us, carried off our strength and went away, left the land useless. Various kinds of misfortunes have occurred. We have tried everything to get back the strength of the land, but everything is like water running off the European chicken's back. Today, the life of "death is better than life" has gone. It has gone. Friends, do you say that it has not gone?

ALL: It has gone.

THE CHIEF: Good child-who-is-loved-by-the-public, you honored your father (stuck in the eagle feather). You brought back your father's palace which had been lost. Congratulations! We owe you a debt. The debt the father owes the son does not cause a quarrel. One does not use it to go to court. The mother hen's foot treading on her child does not kill it. Brothers, I will do as you say.

ALL: Do!

THE CHIEF: Ogbuka, Strong Man, come near. Come and receive the respect that you deserve. One who roasts the pear, let him eat it all. One does not do it to all people. Come near.

[Oriaku comes out, they put the hat on his head, stick an eagle feather in it, they tie a George cloth wrapper around him, and a walking-stick is given to him. Everyone claps and a drum is beaten.]

THE CHIEF: We have bestowed the ọzọ title on you today. We are comfortable. We have sacrificed and given the ancestors ọfọ and ọgu. What is left belongs to us. When yam remains (unplanted), land remains. Let it be like that today. The drum goes on. Let the dancing begin.

ALL: Start the drumming. *[While Oriaku is dancing, Ogbuu gets up and pretends to praise him, takes a white handkerchief and rubs it on his face*

and also waves it on his back. Food and drink everywhere. People are milling around, conversing together.]

ORIAKU: Chụa! Chụa! Chụa! Thank you! [Expressions of happiness.]

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: Friends and relatives, thanks!

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: Ụmụegbu, thanks!

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: Thank you!

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: If you give a child a large portion, he asks to whom he is told to give it. The meat you gave me is plenty. I do not think that I deserve a portion this big. I give you all many thanks. Thank you.

ALL: Iyaah!

ORIAKU: Not everything the chief said is the way it happened. I do not deserve all these praises. I am happy to have an opportunity to help my people in the time of need. But if the child will not go to answer his parent's need, to whom will he go? I am happy that I have done my duty in my father's town. I pray God to give me the strength to do more than this in the future. This eagle feather will remain until the end of my life. Thank you.

ALL: Thank you! *[They clap, laugh, and beat the drums.]*

THE CHIEF: Enough! The good market sells itself. Everything that has a beginning must have an end. I think that we have reached the end of this ceremony. We thank Oriaku for the good hospitality he has shown us. Let the ancestors great and small and God in heaven fulfill the rest. Owner of the house, we owe you a debt of gratitude. Thank you.

ALL: Thank you.

[The chiefs go out, Oriaku thanks them. The drummers and dancers go out in a line.]

[Curtain]

KINSMEN: See how the sky opens
Everything the night closes.
See how the world knows.
All the work the night did;
Alas! this world.
The sun does not conceal evil.
All bad things will be revealed.
Goodness must be rewarded.
What does this ear hear?
What does the mouth speak?
Having found out, judge Ogbuu
And his group for murder.
Blood comes from the head, seeking payment (?).
One should not spill blood.
Innocent tears have reached heaven.
Undeserved debt has reached the earth.
A few weeks ago they killed
They killed Onuma, Obidiya
Suffered sadness, abandoned in vain.
Today, the hands of the rulers have caught them.
Every day belongs to the thief
One day belongs to the owner of the house.
He who cuts with the knife will die by the knife.
God have mercy on them.
This world, one who does what he did
What he did will take him.
How many people will believe this?
Why did the mother drink
The water that drowned her child?
What is happening now pains the spirits.
God who lives in heaven, are you seeing,
Are you seeing what human beings are doing to their fellow men
Darkness is everywhere
Hope, where are you?
Today, we are alive
Tomorrow we are corpses, empty containers!
What you all have finished, Omeife
This world, when one has stayed long enough, he leaves.
It is not when you leave
But the way you leave.
God have mercy on us.

[Obidiya is at home counting her money.]

OBIDIYA: Akakaka is a strong man. The effective word is spoken and seen with the eyes. Everything his spirit said has happened. Money, strong man that governs the world, I have seen you. Is food pleasing to one person? Money, go and rest first. I will not carry the corpse of an elephant at the head and bend over to pick up a snail. I know that you are the king of the world, please let me seek my husband. I know that you and I will work together; do not be angry. If one fills up for you a house that has no people, you cannot get up and work. People are the most important. You Onuma my husband, get up, man. You were not a foolish person while you were alive. Your fellowmen could not overcome you. It is time now. The rat is running, the lizard is running. What am I in the world to do? To suffer? Become a football! It is not in this life. I am sorry for you who are a strong man who has money and uses your money to shed blood. It has started. It is true that you hold a gun and protect yourself, but you stay near the trench. *[She touches her body.]* Mourning dress [cry?!] Mourning of Onuma. Onuma my husband. A husband without separation. One spirit holds us. On the day you died, I died too. Wait for me. Wait for me while I tell the chief that poor people are also human beings. *[She is startled]* Who sent Tanka here? Has he come here before? Is it a mad man whom he has sent to kill me? Tanka, did you come to kill me? All right, here is my neck.

TANKA: Will you wear a tie on the neck? I have ten, one, four, eight. Are you going to take snuff?

OBIDIYA: Does a woman wear a tie?

TANKA: The chicken's head is lost. Give it to me now.

OBIDIYA: Who has your chicken head?

TANKA: Are you mad? Are you touched in the head?

OBIDIYA: Haa! Obidiya I have died. Mr., has it left you and come to me?

TANKA: Do you think that I am your mad counterpart?

OBIDIYA: They say that something that happens happens again. Have I changed into a mad person today?

TANKA: Are you calling me a mad person? Damn fool, idiot, nonsense, damburuba, ragamuffin, God forbid!

OBIDIYA: Are these things happening in my house?

TANKA: You live on feces. You eat feces. Shut up.

OBIDIYA: I am lost. Come, go home if no one has sent you.

TANKA: Are you going to take snuff?

OBIDIYA: Did you mother take snuff?

TANKA: Your father took snuff. Your daughter is taking snuff.

OBIDIYA: Trouble!

TANKA: See the hawk's cupboard see the dog's table.

OBIDIYA: I am dead. Who will save me today?

TANKA: Do you want me to marry you?

OBIDIYA: Okay, mister, that's all that is left. We should be husband and wife.

TANKA: Will you take pennies?

OBIDIYA: Take me and let's go.

TANKA: No! You are ugly.

OBIDIYA: My good man, that's enough. It is time for you to leave.

TANKA: Chief Oji looked me over and insulted me. I will flog him. He is an animal. A madman.

OBIDIYA: Go and flog him.

TANKA: Python of the public seeee! Gbom has spoken! Give me five naira so I can buy vulture meat that we can use to cook egusi soup.

OBIDIYA: My good husband. You use vulture meat to cook soup. This world is full of trouble. You gave me nothing. I have nothing.

TANKA: Woman, give me five naira and let me leave.

OBIDIYA: I don't have it. Go, please. The guest in a person's place should not come and kill him.

TANKA: I am going to burn this house now.

OBIDIYA: It is best like that. Let me die and go to Onuma.

TANKA: Sadness has filled your mind.

OBIDIYA: It is not as you said.

TANKA: Whom are you calling a thief? I!

OBIDIYA: I don't know.

TANKA: Thief. Damburu kakadukadu. House of nonsense! *[He goes out.]*

OBIDIYA: Today is for me and the madman. Good.
[She goes out. The kinsmen come in.]

KINSMEN: What kind of miracles are these
Showing themselves in Oriaku's household?
The python and the snake glided into the house in broad daylight.
Then disappeared in front of everyone.
The vulture that perches on top of the house
Comes from the top of one house and flies to another.
The soldier ant and the termite left their dwelling-places
And came and filled the obi, where everyone was.
They were sleeping inside of a soup pot
And caused children to be hungry
A real millipede is black as coal, the messengers of Iyieke (river python),
Have shown themselves in the obi
And chased away all the guests.
The human voice can not explain
They were wakened in the middle of the night.
And look, you see no one.
What do these things show?
Indeed Oriaku is in trouble.
Alas! What is this world?
When we are full of joy
Is the time that misfortune befalls us.
What position are we in in the world?
What is man?
A ball that has had life breathed into it.
Something given for a short time
To help his friends
By means of the gifts God gave him

But because of his greed, he swallows
All the gifts into his stomach
Only bringing upon himself dysentery and bloody stomach.
Ah! These things do not show the death that is suitable for a wealthy man.
Because when the spirits are angry
And send out all these messages
Those whom they catch must swell up.
The household is closed.
It is true that we cried for
Those who were innocent
But a person can not change
The truth without receiving its payment.
But, God, have mercy.

[Curtain]

*(The chiefs and the elders must be seated; a woman is crying before
the curtain is opened.)*

RULER: What happened?

UGADIYA: It is what we saw today.

RULER: And what happened?

UGADIYA: Is death used for playing?

RULER: How did it happen?

UGADIYA: My people, it confused me.

THIRD ONE: It will! It will!

SECOND ONE: There is fear.

RULER: How did it happen, woman?

UGADIYA: I have no words to speak.

FIRST ONE: That's how it is. Water fills the toad's mouth.

UGADIYA: Last night, he called me, told me various things, took out his children's school money for this half year, saying that he would go to the white man's land to see Chima and to let the white men know that they were not the only ones who had money. We laughed, said a lot of funny things and then went into the house.

RULER: What happened then?

UGADIYA: Early in the morning I was the first one to wake up. During the night there was no time that fever or any trouble of any kind befell him at all. I prepared breakfast, bathed, he himself had not awakened. I kept calling him, he did not answer. I shook his hand, he did not awaken. I touched his body, looked for his breath, all was cold. There was no breath left anywhere in his body. I shouted [*She cries, the others look down.*] That's how I saw it. That's how I sa-aw it.

ALL: Be quiet, don't cry.

RULER: Sad death. Untimely death. It is fearful.

FIRST ONE: It makes one shiver. The crab said that not hearing anything, it was smashed from the front and the back.

SECOND ONE: Untimely death!

FIRST ONE: If you look at his body you will see that it is healthy everywhere. Nothing went out of his body. It is as though he were sleeping.

THIRD ONE: How long will this sleep last?

RULER: This is troublesome. This type of death.

UGADIYA: How about the inside of the house? It is not too bad.

FIRST ONE: Are you just asking? Does one look for hairs on the ram's neck?

RULER: A puddle of water can also accumulate in the place where it is.

SECOND ONE: It is not in this kind of place.

UGADIYA: There is no problem. From the power of god one will receive what is used to bury a corpse in the corpse's house.

RULER: We will prepare to bury the body.

THIRD ONE: Bury what?

RULER: Bury the body.

THIRD ONE: Have you forgotten our custom?

RULER: Which one is it?

THIRD ONE: Is the corpse carried and put in the ground like that?

RULER: It would be better if it came from your mouths. It will be known how it should be done.

FIRST ONE: The woman of the house should be questioned.

RULER: This is a secret conference within the house that we are having. Have you sent anyone for anything?

UGADIYA: No one has been notified.

RULER: People, this has come before us. Since he has no adult children who are here, the relatives and neighbors will be the children.

SECOND ONE: Which people will go?

RULER: *[Looks up and down]* Gogo and Ugwumba will go.

FIRST ONE: Let it be three.

THIRD ONE: Two is enough.

RULER: Do you say that it should stay like that?

BOTH: Let it stay.

RULER: Call Gogo and Ugwumba, Oriaku's brother.
[Ugwumba and Gogo enter]

RULER: Ugwumba, my man, a person does not ask what his trap killed. One does not keep malice in death. What belongs to you in the beginning dies, and what belongs to you at the end dies. You and Gogo will go to Qzuzu [probably a shrine] to get information concerning the death of your brother.

UGWUMBA: I will not go. Let him get up and go. Is there one of you who does not know everything he did to me because he had money?

UGADIYA: I do not want Ugwumba to stay here and malign my husband. If he says that he will not go, leave him. I will go.

UGWUMBA: If you want to go, get up and go. When you and your husband were eating enjoyably did you remember that you had a brother? If one eats too much, he defecates too much. Everyone gathers up the feces he defecated.

UGADIYA: Chief, will you allow Ugwumba to come here and abuse Oriaku?

RULER: Ugwumba, that's enough. You are a man. A man does not speak carelessly. Words are like the writings of the white man. After writing, what is not good is erased and rewritten. Does one stay on the path of the millipede and (okpi anu)? Be quiet.

UGWUMBA: The eye of a strong man weakens the knife. If it were I and this bad woman today she would see what they use their hands to bring to themselves.

UGADIYA: Please, will you tell Ugwumba to go away from here.

UGWUMBA: If you mess up I will strike your chest. Am I your woman friend? You also should tell this foolish creature to close her mouth.

UGADIYA: Are you calling me an animal?

FIRST ONE: That's enough. Please, what are these things?

RULER: Are you two mad? Do you bend down to pick up a snail while carrying the corpse of an elephant at the head? This kind of talk is not appropriate today.

UGWUMBA: Let it be thus. It is the way a person who owns a compound arranges his compound before he dies. [This is the source of his complaint.]

UGADIYA: And how did he arrange his compound?

SECOND ONE: Woman, close your mouth as the man is talking more than you. Is yours the first [tragedy]? The man is speaking his mind. Do you think that there is no place your husband did something bad to him?

UGADIYA: If he did it, is this the place he should talk about it?

FIRST ONE: Where the land was spoiled is where one will stay to patch it up.

UGWUMBA: My people, where is it that you want us to go?

RULER: That is how a strong man acts. You chase the hawk away before you start to blame the chicken.

FIRST ONE: To Ozuzu.

UGWUMBA: Find out the cause of this death.

ALL: Yes!

UGWUMBA: Gogo, my son, let us go and leave the useless bad woman.

UGADIYA: Tell Ugwumba that I am not his wife. If he gives me trouble in this compound I will leave it and go away.

RULER: That is up to you both. Do not leave, woman. Stay and take care of your husband's compound.

UGWUMBA: It is not I who will pursue you, what you have done will pursue you.

FIRST ONE: Go, that's enough. *[They go out.]*

UGADIYA: Stay so you and I can talk today.

RULER: You two enjoy ^{arguing} creating trouble.

UGADIYA: Who doesn't have a mouth? If a man says that he is ready, the woman brings a chair and waits for him.

FIRST ONE: That is how I see it. Carry on.

UGADIYA: It is not a matter of carrying on. If one looks for something, if he sees what he wants he should not run away.

RULER: Take it easy. Hot soup should be sipped slowly. The compound has been left to both of you. Two enemies should not live in one house.

UGADIYA: If he says that we should live in peace, I will stay. If he also wants quarreling, I will stay. Nothing the eye sees can draw blood.

RULER: Stop the argument. The future will be better. We will go home and eat a bit of food before we come back, at that time those who went for something will have returned.

UGADIYA: I shall expect you.

FIRST ONE: Be strong, we will return. *[They go out]*

UGADIYA: Ihemkorum! Ihemkorum!

IHEMKOROM: Mama.

UGADIYA: Get ready. You will go to your grandmother's now.

IHEMKOROM: Yes, mama.

UGADIYA: Wash your legs; comb your hair. Quickly, go and get ready.

[He goes out]

[Ugadiya enters her husband's house, puts her hand into her husband's box and takes out a lot of money, also takes out rings, and fine cloths of well-known names, and other valuable things, ties them in cloth, puts them in a bag, and hurriedly goes out.]

IHEMKOROM: Mama, I have finished.

UGADIYA: Hurry, take this bag and give it to your grandmother. Tell her to keep it for me.

IHEMKOROM: I should give it to my grandmother?

UGADIYA: Your grandmother.

IHEMKOROM: I have heard. Let me go.

UGADIYA: Hurry. Come! Come! Come! Don't go from the front of the path. Go from the back of the house. From the narrow path that comes out behind your grandmother's house.

IHEMKOROM: Mama, I know the path behind the house.

UGADIYA: Quickly, get started. Go straight there. Do not play on the way.

[He goes out]

[The owners of the land enter: The ruler and the others.]

FIRST ONE: Uyapuee!

UGADIYA: Uyapu soo! Come in. *[They enter]*

RULER: Have those who went for something returned?

UGADIYA: They have not returned

FIRST ONE: What is keeping them?

SECOND ONE: A journey is more important than the way one travels.

RULER: If they return now it will be good. The best thing you can do for a corpse is to bury it promptly.

FIRST ONE: Everyplace will be quiet this way until the travelers return. We will go out to the compound and wait for the time when these people come in. One who watches the way a corpse's face is cries himself to death.
[They go out] [The kinsmen enter]

KINSMEN: When the rain is about to fall, the sky becomes dark
When the apple is completely ripe it falls.
The rain has beaten down on my fellow women.
This apple has fallen on their heads.
Alas! The sun shines down in the morning.
Thunder speaks; lightning fills the sky
My fellow woman, go and eat something.
What has died has gone,
Crying is a tradition of death.
Ozuzu will speak all the truth
His eyes are sharper than a razor.
Truth will shine like the moon
We are afraid, it seems to us
That this type of cloudiness
Is destroying everything.
Father, please, have mercy.

*[They go out]
[The Ruler comes in]*

FIRST ONE: I thought I heard Gogo's voice.

SECOND ONE: It is his voice.

RULER: Look at them. You have returned.

FIRST ONE: Ugwumba, welcome! Gogo, welcome!

BOTH: Thank you!

RULER: Yes! *[Everywhere is quiet]* How was the journey?

UGWUMBA: The bat's face does not look good.

FIRST ONE: Shall we stay?

UGWUMBA: There is nothing that has happened for the first time. You can stay.

SECOND ONE: Open your package.

UGWUMBA: Qzuzu saw all the ways it happened.

RULER: Can anyone else see what he does not see?

FIRST ONE: How did it happen?

UGWUMBA: He related everything that happened last night.

RULER: And what caused the death?

UGWUMBA: Spirits and gods joined hands and struck him down.

SECOND ONE: And what did he do?

GOGO: Several things contributed to his death. Qzuzu said that he shed the blood of innocent people, took his first daughter and prepared medicine for money. And he was connected with the death of Onuma. I believe what he said because of the way he behaved when Onuma died. Especially the trouble has become too much. Qzuzu also said that he took our oath, gave it to enemies and also collected money from them. And the thing that caused him to run out into the hands of his enemies was that the ancestors were giving him trouble.

UGWUMBA: There is nothing this ear has not heard today. Did I know that my brother had people who went to steal for him?

UGADIYA: Qzuzu said that too?

UGWUMBA: Someone else says it, and you yourself do not know what your husband was doing?

UGADIYA: I did not know. If you know, speak so that everyone can hear.

UGWUMBA: The woman who delivered a child at the market, if she is told to close her legs, what is there to close?

RULER: Stop speaking those English words of yours. What should be done?

GOGO: The things that should be done are many.

FIRST ONE: Whom are you telling? The Earth Goddess has spoiled the earth.

GOGO: The first thing is that he should not be buried in the house. There should be no crying; there should be no noise. The spirits have his head.

RULER: Do the spirits have Oriaku's head? God forbid! The world has been ruined. Oriaku will go to the spirits! No one should use the world to boast.

FIRST ONE: The world owns people, people do not own the world. Bad death.

RULER: A big load has come down. Ugwumba, how should this be done?

UGWUMBA: It surprised me. From the time we left the road and were returning home, my thoughts were going around like a clock. You know all the customs in this town. Whatever you say will be done.

RULER: The outcome dictates what will be done. If you say one thing and do another, you know that there will be trouble. Is there no way that his head can be saved?

GOGO: We asked if we could save his head and his wealth, Ala, ọfọ and gods joined hands and refused.

SECOND ONE: What if one should carry the corpse of a wealthy man and go and throw it in the forest?

RULER: The way a corpse kept itself is the way it should be buried. One who died badly is buried badly.

FIRST ONE: If Oriaku had been told that he was going to die this type of death, would he have agreed?

SECOND ONE: I remember one day he told me that he was going to buy a coffin from the white man's land to be used to bury him.

RULER: One who turned into a woodpecker said that when his wife died he would use his mouth to peck seven trees; when his wife died something swelled up his mouth. No one can say anything about the end of his life. It is other people who witness to us in the end. Is Oriaku's case any different?

SECOND ONE: I agree.

RULER: This kind of corpse shouldn't be buried now. Night corpse. I regret that a great strong man will be buried in the bad night. My people, tears have filled my eyes. Things are not as they should be done. *[Everyone bows down and cries]* It is something there is no way for us to do. *[Something too much for us has broken our hands and taken away from us what we held.]*

SECOND ONE: If you keep on blaming the hawk who carried away the chicken, you should also give a little blame to the chicken who went on a bad journey. If a man uses the blood of his fellow man to prepare medicine, is it a good thing? Is it permissible to spoil the blood of your fellow man?

UGWUMBA: Rather than fill my stomach and fall across the road, let me stay as I am. What is the cause of the enmity between him and me? His wife says that she does not know!

UGADIYA: Ugwumba, you have started again. Do I follow behind your brother?

UGWUMBA: Will you follow? Does one who eats a lot ask where it comes from?

UGADIYA: Ugwumba, be quiet. Close your mouth. This person was your brother.

UGWUMBA: I have stopped talking about this thing.

RULER: You two stop it. What happened has happened. When it is night the matter is over. He will be carried to the river.

UGADIYA: He will be buried in the river?

RULER: Since the earth beat him to death should he knowingly be buried in the earth? If he is buried in the earth, the earth will refuse him. The remaining members of the household will follow.

UGADIYA: Heu! Heu! De Oriaku!

RULER: My child, it is what tradition dictates. If you want things your way, don't run away when the things you want come to claim what you owe them.

UGADIYA: Master, I want nothing different. Do as your law says.

RULER: My children, Gogo, Ugwumba, in the evening you will look for a few young men including yourselves to take him and go and prepare him. Mother, woman, no one should touch anything he had. What a person uses his ears and hears does not kill him.

UGADIYA: Who will touch? All his things are in his box the way he left them.

UGWUMBA: If a man dies, the women divide his property. Some take theirs and hide, if one wants to hide this, let her take the consequences of what she hid. The stealing hand will die. Heaven and earth see the palms of my hands. I do not know what went ahead or what went behind.

RULER: Do as I say. We will leave. *[They go out]*

UGWUMBA: Gogo, the market has closed except for the vultures. The leader has led the blind man to the place where he will know the road. Get ready, to whom shall we carry the sour raphia palm wine that we received?

GOGO: What do you want me to do?

UGWUMBA: There is no time to waste. Look for stripped midribs of raphia palm frond and let us make the coffin that will be used to bury him, since they will not use a good coffin to bury him. Let me look for some string.
[They both go out]

UGADIYA: Disaster. Is that how it is?
The world, unpredictable place.
My good husband, is it you
They are putting palm frond on?
Who knows what he is going to suffer and die?
Alas! You haven't heard it yet!
How does one explain this type of thing in the compound?
The mouth shames the ears.
The father has disgraced the compound.
My good husband, may you have a good journey.
May this type of thing not happen to you
When you return again to the world.
Good journey.

[Ugwumba and Gogo enter, take the palm fronds and string, tie up the corpse and carry it out. The fire is extinguished, including the songs or dances going on a little bit in the obi. Mourning drums are beaten. The kinsmen enter.]

KINSMEN: See how that person goes
When he was in the world he joined the spirit messengers
Death, One who reveals, has revealed.
Things have happened everywhere.
Darkness has cleared away.
And you will die, Strongman, we know
That what follows this type of thing is too much.
Because the vulture and the viper
Do not take the same person.
The dog consumes feces,
And the goat's teeth rot.
God, have mercy!

ACT 4

[In Oriaku's house] [Gogo enters, holding a letter.]

GOGO: Ugadiya, I received a letter from overseas.

UGADIYA: Was it Chima who wrote it?

GOGO: I don't know who it was. *[He opens it and looks for the one who wrote it.]*

UGADIYA: Find out. When one who has a letter has died, we who are here will find out what is written in it.

GOGO: It is the headmaster of the school in America who wrote it.

UGADIYA: Chima my son?

GOGO: It is he himself.

UGADIYA: Before you read, call Omasiridiya and Jioji. *[Omasiridiya and Jioji enter]* Fellow, read what is in the letter that came from America.

GOGO: The one who wrote this letter is the headmaster of Chima's school, in the university in Okolohoma. It was written on the 13th of last month.

UGADIYA: What does it say?

GOGO: "A regret," is nwuta?.

UGADIYA: If you ask me, whom should I ask?

GOGO: It says that it saddened them very much to hear about the death of our father Oriaku about which we wrote them a letter.

UGADIYA: That is in the past. Gogo, you must keep that letter in a safe place.

GOGO: He says that you should take heart.

UGADIYA: What else will the world say? Bear up, be quiet. We have been quiet. If two people fight, the one who intervenes to stop them makes three. What the world does is to prevent.

GOGO: It also says oo!

UGADIYA: What?

GOGO: That they are sorry about the death.

UGADIYA: Whose death?

GOGO: The death of Chima Oriaku.

UGADIYA: Which Chima? My son Chima? My firstborn son? Look carefully.

GOGO: "Your son Chima, a third year medical student." Your son Chima, who is in the third year of his medical studies [*Loud crying breaks out.*]
[*Ugadiya gets up and throws herself to the ground, they all surround her and hold her.*]

GOGO: I am lost. Who told me to read the letter? Please, hold her. Someone get some water. Water, hurry hurry!! Splash it on her head.

OMASIRIDIYA: What is this? Ugadiya, what is the meaning of this thing you are doing? There is no one it does not happen to; One it happens to should take heart. This trouble of yours is not the first one that has ever happened. If you kill yourself because of your son, would that make it a good thing? What happened is over and done. The tree died while its fruit stood up. Get up, dry your eyes. He has died, what can we do? Father Death is always stronger. The hawk has carried off the chicken; what we are shouting now is vain cries.

UGADIYA: This death has broken my heart; I shall die.

OMASIRIDIYA: If you die, it will hurt you. When you reach heaven, God asks

you questions. You will answer questions about one who killed herself: one who has no patience or endurance.

UGADIYA: Leave me alone.

GOGO: Don't go, don't go. How can we tell this type of story in public?

UGADIYA: Is there something the ears have not heard?

GOGO: Let no one hear about this thing. Be strong. Be strong.

OMASIRIDIYA: Hear what we are telling you. Killing yourself will cause your remaining children real suffering. They will not forget you because of all the distress you gave them.

UGADIYA: Ah! Ah! Ikechi my son. Ikechi, It is you who make me stay in this world. Since Chima has died, what do I stay for?

GOGO: But don't you agree please, you should bear up for the sake of your son Ikechi.

UGADIYA: What did they say was done with his body?

GOGO: Let me read it again.

UGADIYA: Read it all. What else will exceed what we have heard?

GOGO: It is explained there.

OMASIRIDIYA: Since she wants it read completely, do what she wants.

GOGO: The president said that he had gone to class in the morning, finished eating, and went home in the evening. At daybreak, when he was expected about nine in the morning, it was found that he had not waked up, and his door was forced open.

UGADIYA: Oriaku has killed my son! Didn't I say so? What I said --

OMASIRIDIYA: That same type of death.

UGADIYA: What happened, [according to the] letter-writer?

GOGO: They saw the corpse on the floor, smelling.

UGADIYA: My son's corpse was smelling. This world is fearsome. No one

knows what he will suffer before death.

GOGO: And the European experts have examined things in every way and they could not find out that type of death, and what caused such quick decay.

OMASIRIDIYA: Do white people see spirits?

GOGO: The spirits that killed the father have taken the child. This situation we are in, is it life?

OMASIRIDIYA: Are we living? Since death crossed seven seas and killed a good child who was doing his own thing, do we who are close to it remain alive?

GOGO: The letter also says that they have buried him in the burying-ground of the white people. The write of the letter is H. J. Collins, the president of their university. *[Ugwumba enters]*

UGWUMBA: Ugadiya, something else has happened! *[Everyone stares at him]*

UGADIYA: What else?

UGWUMBA: People coming from Egwanga-Opobo say that Obiajunwa's vehicle sank in the river. Omenukọ and Obiajunwa his brother were lost in the river. Adamma their sister was among those who were lost.

UGADIYA: That makes three of them from the same father.

UGWUMBA: The three of them came from college and went to see Opobo. They say that the principal sent them to see Jaja's grave at the mouth of the Opobo River.

UGADIYA: This principal has cut off the remaining children of Oriaku.

UGWUMBA: Nothing happened to the other child. When disaster comes, it comes in a series.

UGADIYA: My children too. Eleo-o-o-o-o! My God-o-o! The ship is lost, the oars are also lost! With whom shall I live? Jei! Jei! I have washed my hands and broken the palm kernel for the chicken. Death, come and kill me. What are you doing? Friends, the day of death has dawned. Everyone wherever he is should get ready.

OTHERS: God knows.

GOGO: My owners and those whom I own, the fruit that one eats should not ripen like this. Ever since my heart has not stayed in one place. I have traveled the place where we went on the errand, and remembered what that person said when Ugwumba had gone out. He said that he would go out after we had left. I know that he will go out. Anyone who wants to stay can stay. The owner of the household has gone, whoever wants to stay let him stay. I came as a guest. I will look for the place I came from. The owner of the household by his own hand closed the compound when he was alive.

UGADIYA: Since you, the only man left here, want to leave, what else can we women who are left here do? Gogo, my man, how can we leave?

GOGO: People are more important. No one must take anything of Oriaku's.

QMASIRIDIYA: What would anyone do with them?

UGADIYA: We will take what is ours.

GOGO: Which do you know are yours? A woman's wealth belongs to her husband.

UGADIYA: Am I to leave here naked to return to our home? Is not a woman's beauty in her cloth? Oriaku, you have done it to me. I came naked, I will now leave naked. Let the will of God be done.
[They all go out. The fire is extinguished. Various drums are sounded. Obidiya enters.]

OBIDIYA: Whatever will happen, let it happen. Onuma, my journey is over. Yesterday or today, expect me. When we reach there, may the judgment belong to all of us. May people know; the future of wealth has an end.
[She goes out. The kinsmen enter.]

KINSMEN: Fellow women, these words are fearful.
This world is deep.
It is not when a tree is cut down
That it withers,
Everything must happen in its time
Close your mouth, woman
The ship that carried Ananias is waiting for Sapphira.
The work that your anger accomplished is fearsome
The household has ended.
The mouth has caused anger to the heart
Greed has provoked anger.
Alas! The sins of the fathers

Have affected their children while they are alive
 Woman, is it your work that you revenged?
 Vengeance, does it not belong to God?
 You have fought, a fight that God should have fought
 What do you want God to do?
 If you lay the foundation for vengeance
 Immediately, it is over and gone.
 Father, please, have mercy.

THE FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED

Glossary

1. ububu jam: word without beginning or end. [meaningless]
2. Nwa aḷo: a good child.
3. Gwa agụ osisi eji tūa ya: Gwa ya ihe o bu.
4. Abirika: ogede, ukam
5. na-agba sika-sika: na-atupụ ukwụ na aka, elughari onwe ya di ka onye gaje inwụ anwụ.
6. Nkwa: Igba, ekpete.
7. Iru oru: Ilu olu.
8. Abara ma o bu Avara.
9. kpororom-hiararam: igaghari ihu na azu.
10. Siririm-wererem: gaa nke oma.
11. Ga-emebo: mee ka mmadu mata.
12. Elekerenye: Atan.
13. Azuzu: Ijere.
14. Ikpiipii: nnunu-abali: Ufodu na-asi na o bu ajo nnunu, isi ya buru ibu.
15. Mpo: o naghị agba mbara, ebe nile, oge nile.
16. Oramanu: Okwa ose.
17. Kaa: Ekele. Okwu ekele ndi Bende.
18. I loo: I latala. Onye turu mmanya di ka onye gara ije.
19. Kirikiricho: Ndi na-elekota ndi olu ubi.
20. Uyapu: Ekele e ji akụ aka n'uzo.
21. Egede: Okwe. Esiwele okwe. Onye ihu na-atu onye azu na-atu.
22. Naina: Naira. Ego ndi Nigeria.
23. Mgbudu akwa: Obi akwa.
24. Atita: Ikere.
25. Akirika: Atanya.
26. Sue okpi anu: Iwepu nsj di n'afu anu tutu esie ya.
27. Oru Okoro onye?: O bu onye di ka nwa aturu na-enweghi ntupo.
 Mkpata uzo: uzo ntakiri. uzo ohia.
28. Oturukpokpo: Nnunu.
29. Odi nge o di jikere. Onye no ebe o no jikere.
30. Ngwugwu: ihe ekere eke.

If you ~~start~~ a fight, ~~the fight~~ that God will fight
What do you want God to do?

If you lay the foundation for vengeance

Akua kpom, ~~it spoke and went away.~~ *soon wh. is finished*
Father, please, have mercy.

THE FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED

Glossary

meaning

P. in Igbo text

- 2 1. ububu jam: word without *[beginning or end.]*
- 85 2. Nwa alọ: a good child.
- 5 3. Gwa agụ osisi eji tụa ya: Gwa ya ihe ọ bụ.
- 6 4. Abirika: ogede, ukam *plantain*
- 8 5. na-agba sika-sika: na-atupụ ụkwụ na aka, elughari onwe ya dị ka onye gaje inwụ anwụ.
- 6 6. Nkwa: Igba, ekpete.
7. Iru ọrụ: Ilu ọlụ.
8. Abara ma ọ bụ Avara.
9. kpororom-hiararam: igaghari ihu na azụ.
10. Siririm-wererem: gaa nke ọma.
11. Ga-emebo: mee ka mmadu mata.
12. Elekerenye: Atani.
13. Azuzu: Ijere.
14. Ikpiipii: nnunu-abali: Ufodu na-asi na ọ bụ ajo nnunu, isi ya buru ibu.
15. Mpo: ọ naghị agba mbara, ebe nile, oge nile.
16. Oramanu: Okwa ose.
17. Kaa: Ekele. Okwu ekele ndi Bende.
18. I loo: I latala. Onye turu mmanya di ka onye gara ije.
19. Kirikiricho: Ndi na-elekota ndi olu ubi.
20. Uyapu: Ekele e ji aku aka n'uzo.
21. Egede: Okwe. Esiwele okwe. Onye ihu na-atu onye azu na-atu.
22. Naina: Naira. Ego ndi Nigeria.
23. Mgbudu akwa: Obi akwa.
24. Atita: Ikere.
25. Akirika: Atanya.
26. Sue okpi anu: Iwepu nsi di n'afu anu tutu esie ya.
27. Oru Okoro onye?: O bu onye di ka nwa aturu na-enweghi ntupo.
Mkpata uzo: uzo ntakiri. uzo ohia.
28. Oturukpokpo: Nnunu.
29. Odi nge o di jikere. *~~~~~*
30. Ngwugwu: ihe ekere eke.