

M K P O C H A P U

N O T I M E F O R F L O W E R S

WRITTEN BY HEART OF THE PEOPLE, CHILD
OF RESCUE

for Okpara House

Ndị Igbo, as a collective, are in dire need of a revolution of consciousness—one capable of arresting and reversing a trajectory toward oblivion that accelerates by the day, largely unchecked and increasingly normalized.

Nigeria may, in fact, be the lesser of our problems.

The more immediate existential threat is internal: what we are becoming, what we are abandoning, what we are dismantling, and what we no longer possess the clarity to recognize as loss.

An amnesia of epic proportions is settling over us. It is quietly approaching a point beyond which recovery becomes increasingly difficult—a critical threshold of cultural desolation where our norms, ethics, institutions, memory, and collective obligations become so diluted that they can no longer perform their fundamental function: holding us together as a people.

Ana esi n'ụlọ kwadobe tupu apụọ ezi.

One prepares oneself at home before going outside.

Ndị Igbo must first confront themselves.

Truthfully.

Before we can adequately confront Nigeria, Christianity and other external religions, foreign educational curricula and systems, or the institutions through which our lives are

presently organized, we must first examine the condition of the people doing the confronting.

We are being cannibalized and dismantled from the inside out.

And because the forces replacing what is being lost arrive accompanied by powerful incentives—money, status, access, prestige, individual advancement, religious legitimacy, political influence—we increasingly experience replacement as progress.

The gratification is enticing. Addictive. Ruthless.

It is false realism masquerading as continuity.

We erect false institutions upon shifting foundations and spend enormous energy continually propping them up. We manufacture narratives of prosperity around increasingly fragmented lives, each person pursuing survival and advancement on their own terms while imagining that the aggregate of individual success will somehow constitute collective progress.

It does not.

We collectively injure ourselves through myopic positioning because we have lost the ability to see ourselves at scale.

The situation is desperate and requires urgent attention.

The alarm must therefore be sounded continuously—deliberately, persistently, even irritatingly—until enough of us awaken to confront the reality before us.

Perhaps there is still enough left to recover.

Enough memory.

Enough structure.

Enough language.

Enough ethics.

Enough ancestral intelligence.

Enough of ourselves.

Enough from which to rebuild and restore something coherent—something capable of returning us to selfhood and sovereignty.

Because we are presently hurtling toward the oblivion of the civilization and formidable human collective once known as Ndị Igbo, at risk of becoming little more than a postscript in the annals of history.

And the tragedy will not be that nothing could have been done.

It will be that we could have done something and chose instead to remain oblivious—unconcerned, distracted,

consumed by a relentless pursuit of a mirage sold to us as an
oasis of epic prosperity.

We accumulate while becoming poorer.

Not merely materially poor.

Poor in memory.

Poor in institutional capacity.

Poor in collective imagination.

Poor in the ability to recognize ourselves.

A poverty of mind so pervasive that we struggle even to
perceive the depth of what afflicts us.

Soul-devouring gangrene.

The truth, once looked at without ornament, reveals an
alarming state of decay.

The awakening will feel harsh.

Some will call it rude.

So be it.

We are long past the time for babysitting.

We require urgent and immediate attention to our own demise.

No time for flowers.

No time to grow weary.

We have long passed the hour for dressing ourselves up for play.

Adornment is now distraction.

We have exhausted the usefulness of pleasantries.

What remains is the stark, naked truth of our existence and our realities.

We must face us.

Clear-eyed.

Individually and collectively.

Only through an uncompromising clarity of mind and vision can the comprehensive work of mkpochapu begin: the clearing away of accumulated distortions, falsehoods, debris, and impurities until what remains is Qcha.

Clean.

Clear.

Unencumbered.

A foundation of earnestness, simplicity, purity, and cleanliness—stripped of the impurities and distractions that prevent us from seeing ourselves as we are.

Our present inability to engage in serious collective self-reflection is not accidental. It is proportional to the demise of our indigenous institutions and the disappearance of their historical functions as modulators of conduct, responsibility, accountability, continuity, checks, and balances.

When institutions disappear, their functions disappear with them.

Eventually, performance replaces substance.

We begin to cosplay our own culture.

We reproduce its clothing, titles, ceremonies, language fragments, festivals, symbols, and aesthetics while progressively severing them from the ethical structures and civilizational logic that once gave them meaning.

Then we celebrate the performance as authenticity.

We create a realism convincing enough that even we begin to believe it.

A civilization cannot endure this way.

It becomes a foundation sitting upon shifting sands, desperately searching for anchors of permanence while continuously dismantling the very structures that once provided them.

Before we attempt to make sense of Nigeria, therefore, we must first acknowledge, reconcile with, and address our own condition—a condition steeped in the amnesia of erasure.

Only then can we meaningfully address our relationship with Nigeria.

Only then can we examine our relationship with Christianity and other alien imperial religions.

Only then can we interrogate the educational institutions and curricula through which generations of our children are taught to understand themselves and the world.

Only then can we seriously ask what future we imagine for ourselves and our descendants.

And this cannot mean pretending that history has stood still.

Since colonialism, Ndị Igbo have dispersed across Nigeria, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the wider world. We have migrated, intermarried, converted, assimilated, adapted, and produced new realities of Igboness. Some remain deeply rooted geographically, linguistically, culturally, and spiritually.

Others encounter their Igboness through distance, fragments, family memory, names, rituals, or the deliberate work of return.

These realities cannot simply be wished away.

We are all, nevertheless, downstream of the same historical rupture.

And new traditions will continue to emerge. This is inevitable. Culture has never meant freezing human beings in time.

The question is not whether we will change.

The question is what governs the change.

Whether new realities emerge from conscious continuity or unconscious erasure.

Whether we remain authors of our becoming or merely recipients of whatever history, markets, religions, states, technologies, and foreign institutions make of us.

We can influence what comes next.

We can ensure that what evolves remains anchored to the deep structures that once gave our ancestors meaningful control over their lives—materially, socially, intellectually, institutionally, and spiritually.

Not by attempting to return to a vanished past.

But by recovering from that past the civilizational intelligence required to move deliberately into the future.

Because the arrow of time flies only forward.

But it does not travel empty.

It carries within it the story of where its journey began.

The question before us is whether our arrow will still carry us.