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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

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### The Journal

Gombe Savannah Journal of Language, Literature and Communication Studies (GOSAJOLLCOS) is a peer-reviewed journal of the Department of English, Gombe State University. The journal is committed to the development of communication arts through researches in Language, Linguistics, Literature, Theatre Arts, Cultural Studies, Creative Arts, Media and Communication Studies. It has both print and online versions. The Editorial board hereby calls for thoroughly researched papers and articles on the subject areas already mentioned. Submissions of papers are accepted all year round but publication is expected to be done in May/June annually. All manuscripts should be accompanied with the sum of ten thousand (10,000) naira only. On acceptance of any manuscript, contributors will pay the sum of twenty five thousand (25,000) naira only as publication fee.





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- references and/or notes.
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### Poems for Savannah Journal of Language, Literature and Communication Studies

### Ismail Bala

### 1. Nightscape

(for Emman Shehu)

The night sky sparks. Pails of fire.

The moon grim onstage

no intention to offstage.

#### 2. Sonnet

(after Robert Pinsky)

Midnight moon on his back, becalm, irreverent splash of water against a rock.

Lean shadows clump over the tree's top nothing to bother,

only the same river that keeps making the same gurgles under his chin

and blaring the same colour. No one to shout his name, no need, no one to hail him, only the river's ripple—over and over, to keep it before him.

### 3. With a Scoop

(for Uche Nduka)

It wouldn't fill me to chart new territories in a humming humdrum.

Origami and harmony, magnified selves becoming tetchy.

Of what is a dream composed? You may like to know.

You may like to know how.

It is to these burlesques that the swansong plays.

Scapula, reappear. Languish, trifoliate. I am a bother to a wandering player.

Thorp in a poisoned hook piping for a lost culture.

I gather what is left of Houston prancing across a fleet.

The hurricane is foulproof.

### 4. Mop of Taunts

(for Sadiq Dzukogi)

In the evening blight, whirling beyond the solitude I have torn quite easily throughout the day, my shadows are a maze

of unfazed lovers seizing upon the fading forms of my sadness— Memories like a marauding mist drape me with amnesia

as I flatter myself like a mop of taunts into the sanctity of du'a. I am holier than the old vine. At least the Northern Harmattan's dust comes

to fake its appearance. Even though I wander on the grime of a gaze that pierces me, I refuse to halt. I shut my eyes, tight

and wallow in the twilight of a ploy.

#### 5. Awake

(after Sharon Hashimoto)

As dawn breaks, we stir from slumber's hold, Awakening to whispers of the morning breeze. Our dreams fade, like mist on fields of gold,

While sunlight dances through the trees. In the gentle embrace of waking hours, We journey through the day with ease.

With each heartbeat, our spirits soar, Exploring realms both near and far. In every breath, we crave for more,

Embracing life's exquisite spar. Through laughter and tears, we navigate, Writing tales on destiny's memoir.

II

As dawn breaks, we stir from slumber's grasp, To the gentle murmur of the morning breeze. In the soft light, our dreams slowly unclasp,

As sunlight filters through the trees. We rise to greet the day's unfolding story, With each heartbeat, our soul at ease.

In the quiet moments before the rush, We find solace in the beauty of the hour. With every breath, a gentle hush,

As we embrace life's fragile flower. In the dance of light and shadow, we roam, Welcoming each moment, each power.

#### 6. I Remember You

There are not many smiles. Your own slaps back at you on someone's face, but meaner, then the moment

when you see the next smile and forget your own.

It must be memories that make us indifferent, must be stubborn matters inside a communal brain.

One has the other's build and has another look.

Fear flares out from the blue bus at itself swerving on the road for the shocked passengers. Everyone you meet is speaking soundless sugarcoated truths.

Sometimes the audience gives one you put a face to, stuffing real into unreal. Barely your friend walks by in the storm and does not hear you when you sing.

Ismail Bala writes in English and Hausa. His poetry and translations have appeared in the UK, the USA, Canada, India and South Africa, in journals such as *Poetry Review, Ambit, New Coin, Ake Review, Lunaris, A Review of International English Literature* and *Aura Literary Arts Review*, among many others. Born and educated to university level in Kano, he did his post-graduate studies at Oxford. His poems have been translated into Latvian, Belarusian, Nepalese, Slovenian and Polish. He is a Fellow of the International Writing Programme of the University of Iowa. He is the author of *Line of Sight* (Praxis, 2020), *A Span of Something* (2024) and *Ivory Night* (KSR, 2024).