

# *In This City*

*Inspired by a lone prostitute spotted at about 10:36pm at HQ FRSC,  
Kigoma Street, Adjacent Olusegun Obasanjo Way,  
Zone 2, Abuja – Nigeria (On Sunday, November 18, 2012)*

## **1 In this city...**

*don't think me lousy,  
loutish, lusty, lowlife or lost*

*maybe i am a collaterally damaged  
avatar of the economy or  
maybe it is just a natural lust in me  
that makes me wander*

*but judge me not at any rate;  
for your story is probably  
no better than mine anyway.*

## **2 In this city...**

*there is light everywhere  
but i walk blind under an  
assumed mask of anonymity*

*i sure am the familiar  
nocturnal motif you see at  
almost every major t-junction  
where i cat-walk and look like  
i have never missed a meal in my life  
or just stand wondering who would  
pick me up next for any fee*

*and sure enough there soon comes  
a dashing prince who gets  
souped because he is pushing a  
two-door coupe tonight  
even though next year he will  
be on foot running from a lawsuit.*

## **3 In this city...**

*it is a known unknown where  
life is a game that every hustler plays  
and whatever finds its way into this  
terrarium is called business*

*history and wealth and power  
can at short notice be transitioned  
into a long-lived suicide note here*

*and it gets so sad when you try to  
love them that use you and,  
worse still, it gets even sadder  
when you understand that there are  
people hurting more than you and  
almost every major rapport is  
established on a currency note.*

## **4 In this city...**

*of bounded free verse  
of smug holiness and  
of impotent power;  
of a flourishing cabala  
of poets, priests and politicians  
who have words to thank  
for their hoity-toity positions*

*all week long no one  
jams their transmission as  
they write and talk and preach  
sermons of why my ilk  
must be taken off the streets*

*but by the weekend they leave  
their families and seek to sow  
their wild oats in me on Saturday nights  
then on Sunday pray for crop failure.*

**5 In this city...**

*prayers are not always  
answered for sure  
or for free of course*

*but hopes and dreams seem  
to almost always come true  
somehow anyhow*

*and so without a prayer  
i go with this stranger who  
will take me to a house unknown  
and push me through a door  
and take off my clothes  
and turn on the red light.*

**6 In this city...**

*i have no prayers but hope –  
a feeble glimmer of hope*

*the feeble hope that tonight's*

*business venture will be  
good and he will not  
pay me with an unsigned cheque*

*the feeble hope that he will not  
spike my drink before getting me laid*

*the feeble hope that the prepuce of  
his totem pole will not hatch  
the Virus in me*

*the feeble hope that dawn's rays  
will not find my body dumped  
by the roadside tomorrow*

*the feeble hope that i will at least  
sit at the table and eat my own words  
at breakfast*

*the feeble hope that tomorrow i will  
probably breathe with a sigh  
as i struggle to remember  
what did not happen the night before  
i left my good folks at home to come  
wandering in this city of  
non-permanent eternity.*

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