

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

SS 2

WEEK2

DATE: 15th January, 2024.

AFRICAN POETRY: "A Government Driver on his Retirement" by Chibuike Onu (Background and summary)

A GOVERNMENT DRIVER ON HIS RETIREMENT

Many years on wheels.

In faithful service to his fatherland

Today retires he home

And a celebration he holds

Many years has he pummeled his boozy throat

In obedience to duty rules and regulations

Today, he'll go home a freeman

Eligible for his country's services

Come friends, rejoice with me,

I shall booze and zoom myself home

Away from duty rules.

Come celebrate my freedom

Early to duty tomorrow holds not,

Thirty-five years of faithful service

I'll booze to sleep away my sufferings

Today I've long waited for"

More joy to send him home.

A brand new car in his name

An appreciative symbol
For undented thirty-five years of service to
Fatherland

“Come friends, and rejoice more.
Joy till no more joy to joy
Today frees and makes me a king
My patience rewarded”

And so he boozed and boozed
Celebrating the celebration of his retirement
From faithful service to fatherland
He battled with his bottle booze
On his way home on wheels.
Booze boozed his vision and clear judgment
He boomed his brand new car
And it sent him home
Home to rest in peace

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

The poem is didactic because it calls for caution in whatever one is doing in life. Our behaviours at all times should be guided with certain measures of moderation and discipline especially during celebration or merry-making. It is a general warning to motorists to avoid driving after being drunk just like the case of a government driver on his retirement who drinks himself to death.

The poet in stanza one, informs us that the government driver has been driving for many years with all commitment and faithfulness to his fatherland. When he reaches his retirement age, he organizes a celebration as a mark of thanksgiving to God and honour for his meritorious service to the country.

In stanza two, the driver in obedience to duty rules and regulations shuts his mouth for many years from drinking. This shows that the government driver disciplines himself from drinking while in the service of discharging his duties as a driver.

In stanza three of the poem, the driver organizes a party in his honour and invites his friends and well-wishers. According to him, he shall drink himself away from duty rules as he is no longer restricted from drinking as it used to be the case. He sees himself as a free man.

In stanza four, the driver is given a car gift to appreciate him of thirty-five years of service to his fatherland.

In stanza five, the driver calls on his friends to come and rejoice more with him. Instead of being moderate in his enjoyment, he throws himself into a wild party and festivity of excess drinking without recourse to precaution.

In stanza seven, the poem displays the unguided conduct of the driver who gives himself to excess drinking. At the height of jubilation, the driver became drunk beyond control.

The tragic intensity of the poem is heightened as the driver destroys himself to death with the new car. His accidental death is consequent upon his excess consumption of alcohol which blurs both his sight and sense of driving.

HOME WORK

1. How does the attitude of the government driver a disappointment to the entire nation?
2. Discuss the interesting aspects of the poem.