

LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 7

SUBJECT: Literature-in-English
TOPIC: African Poetry: "A Government Driver on His Retirement" by Chibuke Onu
CLASS: SS2
WEEK: 7

SUMMARY OF THE POEM

It is a common practice in Nigeria for the government to send retirees home with gifts. These rewards are in appreciation of the public servants' long unblemished service to his country

In this poem, a government driver has successfully come to the end of his working days in the government. He has just retired from a long service this country. Now he has finished his duty to his fatherland, the government which happens to be his employer, has rewarded him his patriotism and dedication to duty. His reward is a "brand new car" for his undented service.

Retirement is significant to the government driver because it marks the beginning of his freedom. From now on, he has not rules to obey, no regulations to restrain him and no boss to answer to.

Stanza 3, 4, 5 and 6: Celebration

The now-retired government driver decides to celebrate his "freedom". He thinks he deserves it for he has for more than three decades, patiently controlled his natural inclinations to drink heavily. It is all for the sake of obeying his employer's rules and regulations. He is happy that his patience has been rewarded. So he organises a big send-off party for himself. He invited his friends and loved ones to come and share in his joy. They must join him to mark this big day in his life with style.

True to his intentions, the retired government driver drinks heavily at the party, throwing caution to the wind.

Stanza 7: Accident and death

At the end of the party, he gets into his brand new car and drives recklessly towards home. Unfortunately, he never gets home alive. Since the retired government driver is heavily drunk, he loses control of his vehicle. The obvious result is a fatal car crash that sends him to his grave - a needless premature death..... on his way home in wheels.