

“Ishani,” a poem
“Ilovo gbo n’ishani” (Sally Young, Obo-ile Urhobo)

Tanure Ojaide

Ose vwo ovue rhe vwe
ne me rhe pherekpe.
Pherekpe me cha ra.
Mi se kere obo oru ke vwe re-e.

Ugbo sheri,
 odie efoke use nana-a.

Idjerhe miovwirin,
 odie efoke use nana-a.

Mi fi t’oto
j’oke ga re,
 odie efoke use nana-a.

Me rie osa s’ibi,
ede fa me wia wh’osa.

Oma bruku,
 odie efoke use nana-a.

Aso r’ode yere okposio
 cha yoro vwe-e.

Oya mi evwa,
mi che n’okoko-o.

Ose vwo ovue rhe vwe
ne me rhe pherekpe.
Pherekpe me cha ra.
Ugbo sheri,
idjerhe miovwirin;
mi fi t'oto,
oma bruku
t'aso t'okposio
ji mi bro
re sherhe obaro ke.

Love Scent

“Love out-scents designer perfumes” (Sally Young, Urhobo highlife musician)

My beloved sent word to me
to come without delay.
I am going immediately.
I can't count my blessings with her.

Nowhere is too far
to answer her call from.

No road is too bad
to travel when she calls.

I am so financially strapped
but no time is too hard
not to heed her call.

I borrow to accomplish my needs;

I will work later to pay back however much.

I can never be too fatigued

not to answer her call.

Neither thick night nor thundering storm

will hold me down.

I am on my way,

I will go straight there.

My beloved sent word to me

to come without delay.

I am going immediately.

Through the farthest distance

the worst of roads

the harshest of times

aching fatigue

thickest night or thundering storm

I am going to her

and wish can pay back for her many blessings.