

**POETRY AND THE POET IN CONTEMPORARY
NIGERIA**

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FOREWORD

In a nation often described in the most searing of terms, where daily existence is likened to a danse macabre, and the oppressive weight of socio-economic hardship presses heavily on every side, one might expect the creative spirit to wither. However, Professor Anyokwu in *Poetry and the Poet in Contemporary Nigeria* has demonstrated that the opposite is the reality in present-day Nigeria. According to him, out of blaring hardship springs the dazzling efflorescence of poetry which is a testament to the resilience and unbreakable spirit of the people. He equally engaged on the evolving landscape of Nigerian verses, tracing their vibrant arc from ancient oral traditions to the innovative and digitally mediated forms of today.

Professor Anyokwu established that as the torch is passed from literary giants of the past to the dynamic voices of today and tomorrow, we witness a spirited contestation around language, which is the lifeblood of poetry. He argued that poets in Nigeria, wherever they reside, serve as custodians of language who harvest and renew the collective memory and experience of their people with their words serving as both shield and salve that encode the eternal in human civilisation. Even as headlines bleed and hardships persist, Nigerian poets persevere in transforming blood into ink, and refusing to surrender the power and purpose of words.

Professor Anyokwu concludes on the premise that, so long as language survives in the care of poets, the future of Nigerian poetry will remain luminous, and society will never lack for voices to shape, challenge, and renew its soul.

I, therefore, commend Professor Anyokwu for his perspectives on poets and the practice of their art in shaping and helping society to make progress even in the midst of daunting challenges. The piece, no doubt, is a worthy contribution to the Faculty of Arts Monograph Series as we continue to promote scholarship and advance the frontiers of knowledge through enlightening and engaging publications.

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