

## SURA YA KUMI NA TATU

Go-di-di-go-go-di-go. Di-go-go-di-go. It was the ekwe talking to the clan. One of the things every man learned was the language of the hollowed-out wooden instrument. Dum! Dum! Dum! boomed the cannon at intervals.

The first cock had not crowed, and Umuofia was still swallowed up in sleep and silence when the ekwe

Nenda-kwenda-kwenda-kwenda.  
Kwenda-kwenda-kwenda. Ilikuwa ni ekwe akiongea na ukoo.  
Mojawapo ya mambo ambayo kila mwanamume alijifunza ni lugha ya chombo cha mbao kilichotoboka. Mjinga! Mjinga! Mjinga! alipiga kanuni kwa vipindi.

Jogoo wa kwanza alikuwa hajawika, na Umuofia alikuwa bado amemezwa na usingizi na

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began to talk, and the cannon shattered the silence. Men stirred on their bamboo beds and listened anxiously. Somebody was dead. The cannon seemed to rend the sky. Di-go-go-di-go-di-di-go-go floated in the message-laden night air. The faint and distant wailing of women settled like a sediment of sorrow on the earth. Now and again a full-chested lamentation rose above the wailing whenever a man came into the place of death. He raised his voice once or twice in manly sorrow and then sat down with the other men listening to the endless wailing of the women and the esoteric language of the ekwe. Now and again the cannon boomed. The wailing of the women would not be heard beyond the village, but the ekwe carried the news to all the nine villages and even beyond. It began by naming the clan: Umuofia obodo dike! "the land of the brave." Umuofia obodo dike! Umuofia obodo dike! It said this over and over again, and as it dwelt on it, anxiety mounted in every heart that heaved on a bamboo bed that night.

Then it went nearer and named the village: "Iguedo of the yellow

ukimya wakati ekwe ilipoanza kuongea, kanuni ikavunja ukimya. Wanaume walikoroga kwenye vitanda vyao vya mianzi na kusikiliza kwa wasiwasi. Mtu alikuwa amekufa. Mzinga ulionekana kupasua anga. Di-go-go-di-go-di-di-go-go ilielea katika hewa ya usiku iliyojaa ujumbe. Kuomboleza kwa mbali na kukata tamaa kwa wanawake kulitulia kama mchanga wa huzuni duniani. Mara kwa mara kilio kilichojaa kifua kiliongezeka juu ya kilio kila mtu alipokuja mahali pa kifo. Alipaza sauti yake mara moja au mbili kwa huzuni ya kiume kisha akaketi na wanaume wengine akisikiliza vilio visivyoisha vya wanawake na lugha ya ekwe. Sasa na tena kanuni ilivuma. Maombolezo ya wanawake hayangesikika zaidi ya kijiji, lakini ekwe ilipeleka habari katika vijiji vyote tisa na hata zaidi. Ilianza kwa kuutaja ukoo: Umuofia obodo dike! "nchi ya mashujaa." Umuofia obodo dike! Umuofia obodo dike! Ilisema hivyo tena na tena, na ikikaa juu yake, wasiwasi ulipanda katika kila moyo uliokuwa ukitanda kwenye kitanda cha mianzi usiku huo. Kisha ikakaribia na kukiita kijiji hicho: "Iguedo ya jiwe la kusaga

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grinding-stone!" It was Okonkwo's village. Again and again Iguedo was called and men waited breathlessly in all the nine villages. At last the man was named and people sighed "E-u-u, Ezeudu is dead." A cold shiver ran down Okonkwo's back as he remembered the last time the old man had visited him. "That boy calls you father," he had said. "Bear no hand in his death."

Ezeudu was a great man, and so all the clan was at his funeral. The ancient drums of death beat, guns and cannon were fired, and men dashed about in frenzy, cutting down every tree or animal they saw, jumping over walls and dancing on the roof. It was a warrior's funeral, and from morning till night warriors came and went in their age groups. They all wore smoked raffia skirts and their bodies were painted with chalk and charcoal. Now and again an ancestral spirit or egwugwu appeared from the underworld, speaking in a tremulous, unearthly voice and completely covered in raffia. Some of them were very violent,

la manjano!" Kilikuwa kijiji cha Okonkwo. Tena na tena Iguedo aliitwa na wanaume wakangoja bila kupumua katika vijiji vyote tisa. Hatimaye mtu huyo aliitwa na watu wakupumua "E-u-u, Ezeudu amekufa." Kitetemeshi cha ubaridi kilishuka mgongoni mwa Okonkwo huku akikumbuka mara ya mwisho ambapo mzee huyo alimtembelea. "Mvulana huyo anakuita baba," alisema. "Usichukue mkono katika kifo chake."

Ezeudu alikuwa mtu mkubwa, na kwa hivyo ukoo wote ulikuwa kwenye mazishi yake. Ngoma za kale za mdundo wa kifo, bunduki na mizinga zilifyatuliwa, na wanaume walikimbia huku na huko wakiwa wamechanganyikiwa, wakikata kila mti au mnyama waliomwona, wakiruka kuta na kucheza kwenye paa. Yalikuwa mazishi ya shujaa, na kuanzia asubuhi hadi usiku wapiganaji walikuja na kwenda katika vikundi vyao vya umri. Wote walivalia sketi za rafi za moshi na miili yao ilipakwa chaki na mkaa. Sasa na tena roho ya mababu au egwugwu ilionekana kutoka chini ya ardhi, ikizungumza kwa sauti ya

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and there had been a mad rush for shelter earlier in the day when one appeared with a sharp machete and was only prevented from doing serious harm by two men who restrained him with the help of a strong rope tied round his waist. Sometimes he turned round and chased after those men, and they ran for their lives. But they always returned to the long rope he trailed behind. He sang, in a terrifying voice, that Ekwensu, or Evil Spirit, had entered his eye.

But the most dreaded of all was yet to come. He was always alone and was shaped like a coffin. A sickly odour hung in the air wherever he went, and flies went with him. Even the greatest medicine men took shelter when he was near. Many years ago another egwugwu had dared to stand his ground before him and had been transfixed to the spot for two days. This one had only one hand and it carried a basket full of water.

kutetemeka, isiyo ya kidunia na iliyofunikwa kabisa na raffia. Baadhi yao walikuwa wakorofi sana, na kulikuwa na mtafaruku wa wazimu wa kutafuta makazi mapema mchana wakati mmoja alitokea akiwa na panga kali na kuzuiwa kufanya madhara makubwa na watu wawili ambao walimzuia kwa msaada wa kamba kali iliyofungwa pande zote. kiuno chake. Wakati fulani aligeuka na kuwakimbiza watu hao, nao wakakimbia kuokoa maisha yao. Lakini kila mara walirudi kwenye kamba ndefu aliyoifuata nyuma. Aliimba, kwa sauti ya kutisha, kwamba Ekwensu, au Roho mbaya, imeingia kwenye jicho lake.

Lakini jambo la kutisha kuliko yote lilikuwa bado linakuja. Siku zote alikuwa peke yake na alikuwa na umbo la jeneza. Harufu mbaya ilining'inia hewani popote alipokwenda, na nzi wakaenda pamoja naye. Hata waganga wakuu walijificha alipokuwa karibu. Miaka mingi iliyopita egwugwu mwingine alithubutu kusimama kidete mbele yake na alikuwa amekazwa mahali hapo kwa siku mbili. Huyu alikuwa na mkono mmoja tu na alibeba

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But some of the egwugwu were quite harmless. One of them was so old and infirm that he leaned heavily on a stick. He walked unsteadily to the place where the corpse was laid, gazed at it a while and went away again--to the underworld.

The land of the living was not far removed from the domain of the ancestors. There was coming and going between them, especially at festivals and also when an old man died, because an old man was very close to the ancestors. A man's life from birth to death was a series of transition rites which brought him nearer and nearer to his ancestors.

Ezeudu had been the oldest man in his village, and at his death there were only three men in the whole clan who were older, and four or five others in his own age group. Whenever one of these ancient men appeared in the crowd to dance unsteadily the funeral steps of the tribe, younger men gave way and the tumult subsided.

It was a great funeral, such as

kikapu kilichojaa maji.

Lakini baadhi ya egwugwu walikuwa wapole kabisa. Mmoja wao alikuwa mzee na dhaifu sana hivi kwamba aliegemea sana fimbo. Alitembea kwa kusitasita hadi mahali ilipolazwa maiti, akaitazama kwa muda kisha akaenda tena—kwenda kuzimu.

Nchi ya walio hai haikuwa mbali na milki ya mababu. Kulikuwa na kuja na kupita kati yao, hasa katika sikukuu na pia wakati mzee alikufa, kwa sababu mzee alikuwa karibu sana na mababu. Maisha ya mtu tangu kuzaliwa hadi kufa yalikuwa mfululizo wa taratibu za mpito ambazo zilimleta karibu na karibu na babu zake.

Ezeudu alikuwa ndiye mzee zaidi katika kijiji chake, na katika kifo chake kulikuwa na wanaume watatu tu katika ukoo mzima ambao walikuwa wakubwa, na wengine wanne au watano katika rika lake. Wakati wowote mmoja wa wanaume hawa wa zamani alipojitokeza katika umati wa watu kucheza bila utulivu hatua za mazishi za kabila, vijana waliacha na ghasia ikatulia.

Yalikuwa mazishi mazuri, kama

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befitted a noble warrior. As the evening drew near, the shouting and the firing of guns, the beating of drums and the brandishing and clanging of machetes increased. Ezeudu had taken three titles in his life. It was a rare achievement. There were only four titles in the clan, and only one or two men in any generation ever achieved the fourth and highest. When they did, they became the lords of the land. Because he had taken titles, Ezeudu was to be buried after dark with only a glowing brand to light the sacred ceremony.

But before this quiet and final rite, the tumult increased tenfold. Drums beat violently and men leaped up and down in frenzy. Guns were fired on all sides and sparks flew out as machetes clanged together in warriors' salutes. The air was full of dust and the smell of gunpowder. It was then that the one-handed spirit came, carrying a basket full of water. People made way for him on all sides and the noise subsided. Even the smell of gunpowder was swallowed in the sickly smell that now filled the air. He danced a few steps to the funeral drums and

vile yalimfaa shujaa mtukufu. Jioni ilipokaribia, kelele na milio ya bunduki, ngoma na milio ya mapanga viliongezeka. Ezeudu alikuwa ametwaa vyeo vitatu maishani mwake. Yalikuwa ni mafanikio adimu. Kulikuwa na vyeo vinne tu katika ukoo, na ni mtu mmoja au wawili tu katika kizazi chochote waliowahi kupata cha nne na cha juu zaidi. Walipofanya hivyo, wakawa mabwana wa nchi. Kwa sababu alikuwa amechukua vyeo, Ezeudu alizikwa baada ya giza kukiwa na chapa inayong'aa tu ya kuwasha sherehe takatifu.

Lakini kabla ya ibada hii ya utulivu na ya mwisho, ghasia ziliongezeka mara kumi. Ngoma zilipigwa kwa nguvu na wanaume walirukaruka kwa fujo. Bunduki zilifyatuliwa kila upande na cheche zikatoka huku panga zikiwa zimeshikana katika salamu za wapiganaji. Hewa ilikuwa imejaa vumbi na harufu ya baruti. Hapo ndipo yule pepo wa mkono mmoja akaja akiwa amebeba kikapu kilichojaa maji. Watu walimtengenezea njia kila upande na kelele zikapungua. Hata harufu ya baruti ilimezwa na harufu mbaya ambayo sasa ilijaa hewani.

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then went to see the corpse.

"Ezeudu!" he called in his guttural voice. "If you had been poor in your last life I would have asked you to be rich when you come again. But you were rich. If you had been a coward, I would have asked you to bring courage. But you were a fearless warrior. If you had died young, I would have asked you to get life. But you lived long. So I shall ask you to come again the way you came before. If your death was the death of nature, go in peace. But if a man caused it, do not allow him a moment's rest." He danced a few more steps and went away. The drums and the dancing began again and reached fever- heat. Darkness was around the corner, and the burial was near. Guns fired the last salute and the cannon rent the sky. And then from the centre of the delirious fury came a cry of agony and shouts of horror. It was as if a spell had been cast. All was silent. In the centre of the crowd a boy lay in a pool of blood. It was the dead man's sixteen-year-old son, who with his brothers and half-brothers had been dancing the traditional farewell to their father.

Alicheza hatua chache hadi kwenye ngoma za mazishi kisha akaenda kuiona ile maiti. "Ezeudu!" aliita kwa sauti yake ya uchungu. "Kama ungekuwa maskini katika maisha yako ya mwisho ningekuomba uwe tajiri ukija tena. Lakini ungekuwa tajiri. Ungekuwa mwoga ningekuomba ulete ujasiri. Lakini ulikuwa shujaa asiye na woga. Kama ungekufa kijana, ningekuomba upate uzima, lakini uliishi muda mrefu, kwa hiyo nitakuomba uje tena kama ulivyokuja hapo awali. Ikiwa kifo chako kilikuwa kifo cha asili, nenda kwa amani. mtu aliyesababisha, usimpe raha hata dakika moja." Alicheza hatua chache zaidi na kwenda zake. Ngoma na dansi zilianza tena na kufikia joto la homa. Giza lilikuwa karibu, na mazishi yalikuwa karibu. Bunduki zilipiga saluti ya mwisho na mizinga ilipasua anga. Na kisha kutoka katikati ya hasira ya delirious alikuja kilio cha uchungu na kelele za kutisha. Ilikuwa ni kama uchawi umerushwa. Wote walikuwa kimya. Katikati ya umati wa watu mvulana alilala kwenye dimbwi la damu. Alikuwa ni mtoto wa kiume mwenye umri wa miaka kumi na sita, ambaye pamoja na kaka zake

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Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart.

The confusion that followed was without parallel in the tradition of Umuofia. Violent deaths were frequent, but nothing like this had ever happened.

The only course open to Okonkwo was to flee from the clan. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman, and a man who committed it must flee from the land. The crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female, because it had been inadvertent. He could return to the clan after seven years.

That night he collected his most valuable belongings into head-loads. His wives wept bitterly and their children wept with them without knowing why. Obierika and half a dozen other friends came to help and to console him. They each made nine or ten trips

na kaka zake wa kambo walikuwa wakicheza ngoma ya kitamaduni ya kumuaga baba yao. Bunduki ya Okonkwo ilikuwa imelipuka na kipande cha chuma kilipenya moyo wa kijana huyo.

Mkanganyiko uliofuata haukuwa na ulinganifu katika mila ya Umuofia. Vifo vya kikatili vilikuwa vya mara kwa mara, lakini hakuna kitu kama hiki kilikuwa kimewahi kutokea.

Njia pekee iliyofunguliwa kwa Okonkwo ilikuwa kukimbia kutoka kwa ukoo. Ilikuwa ni hatia dhidi ya mungu wa kike wa dunia kuua mtu wa ukoo, na mtu aliyefanya hivyo lazima aikimbie nchi. Uhalifu ulikuwa wa aina mbili, wa kiume na wa kike. Okonkwo alikuwa amejitolea ule wa kike, kwa sababu haukujua. Angeweza kurudi kwa ukoo baada ya miaka saba.

Usiku huo alikusanya vitu vyake vya thamani sana kwenye mizigo ya kichwa. Wake zake walilia kwa uchungu na watoto wao walilia nao bila kujua kwanini. Obierika na marafiki wengine nusu dazani walikuja kumsaidia na kumfariji. Kila mmoja wao alisafiri safari



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carrying Okonkwo's yams to store in Obierika's barn. And before the cock crowed Okonkwo and his family were fleeing to his motherland. It was a little village called Mbanta, just beyond the borders of Mbaino.

As soon as the day broke, a large crowd of men from Ezeudu's quarter stormed Okonkwo's compound, dressed in garbs of war. They set fire to his houses, demolished his red walls, killed his animals and destroyed his barn. It was the justice of the earth goddess, and they were merely her messengers. They had no hatred in their hearts against Okonkwo. His greatest friend, Obierika, was among them. They were merely cleansing the land which Okonkwo had polluted with the blood of a clansman.

Obierika was a man who thought about things. When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend's calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an

tisa au kumi kubeba viazi vikuu vya Okonkwo hadi kuhifadhi katika ghala la Obierika. Na kabla ya jogoo kuwika Okonkwo na familia yake walikuwa wakikimbilia nchi ya mama yake. Kilikuwa ni kijiji kidogo kiitwacho Mbanta, nje ya mipaka ya Mbaino.

Kulipopambazuka, umati mkubwa wa wanaume kutoka sehemu ya Ezeudu walivamia boma la Okonkwo, wakiwa wamevalia mavazi ya vita. Walichoma moto nyumba zake, wakabomoa kuta zake nyekundu, wakaua wanyama wake na kuharibu zizi lake. Ilikuwa ni haki ya mungu wa kike duniani, nao walikuwa ni wajumbe wake tu. Hawakuwa na chuki mioyoni mwao dhidi ya Okonkwo. Rafiki yake mkubwa, Obierika, alikuwa miongoni mwao. Walikuwa wakisafisha tu ardhi ambayo Okonkwo alikuwa ameichafua kwa damu ya mtu wa ukoo.

Obierika alikuwa mtu ambaye alifikiri kuhusu mambo. Mapenzi ya mungu huyo yalipofanyika, aliketi katika obi yake na kuomboleza msiba wa rafiki yake. Kwa nini mtu ateseke sana kwa

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offence he had committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offence on the land and must be destroyed. And if the clan did not exact punishment for an offence against the great goddess, her wrath was loosed on all the land and not just on the offender. As the elders said, if one finger brought oil it soiled the others.

kosa alilofanya bila kukusudia? Lakini ingawa alifikiria kwa muda mrefu hakupata jibu. Aliongozwa tu katika hali ngumu zaidi. Aliwakumbuka watoto mapacha wa mkewe aliowatupa. Walikuwa wamefanya uhalifu gani? Dunia ilikuwa imeamuru kwamba walikuwa ni kosa juu ya ardhi na lazima waangamizwe. Na ikiwa ukoo haukutoa adhabu kwa ajili ya kosa dhidi ya mungu wa kike mkuu, ghadhabu yake ilitulia juu ya nchi yote na si juu ya mkosaji tu. Kama wahenga walivyosema, kama kidole kimoja kilileta mafuta kinachafua vingine.