

Butterflies on the Battlefield

A Poem of the Nigerian-Biafran War (1967-1970)

For those who remember Biafra

For those who choose sovereignty over subjugation

During the precolonial bliss, there was a sovereign country
In wars of attrition, etched in woven leather and fabrics
Before the Union Jack drew lines through villages
Before brothers became strangers across borders

Biafra is here. There is a sovereign country.

I. The Duality That Destroys

They call us Nigerian-Igbo, a hyphenated existence
But I am Biafran - no slash, no compromise
Fifty years since Ogbunigwe thundered through Abagana
Where 500 units daily spoke our determination

Professor Ezekwe's think tank birthed resistance
From nothing but necessity and genius
While Philip Emeagwali fled to Oregon's whiteness
And Chinua Achebe wrote: "There Was a Country"

II. The Butterflies

December 3rd, 1968 - butterflies landed
On bodies that would not rise for morning prayer
Wings of smoke and shrapnel, delicate as death
Each one a soul ascending from Owerri's siege

They flew through:

- 50,000 rounds of ammunition
- 300 mortars singing requiems
- 200 howitzer shells painting red earth redder
- Children's hunger becoming wings

The butterflies dance still
Above mass graves unmarked

Above mothers who count in millions

Above a genocide the world forgot

III. The Battlefield Remains

In UK council flats, we refugees grow old

Failed by health and social care sectors

Ages 18-24, no support, no recognition

Of trauma carried in DNA spirals

They want us to tick boxes:

☐ Nigerian

☐ British

But never:

☒ Biafran

☒ Survivor

☒ Memory keeper

IV. The Art as Anchor

My patterns are not decoration

They are:

- Maps of villages erased
- Coordinates of mass graves
- Geometric proof we existed
- Mathematical rebellion against forgetting

Each pentagon holds a family

Each circle, a life interrupted

Each line, a road that leads nowhere

Since January 15, 1970

V. OBINexus as Response

Now I build constitutional frameworks

Not from law books but from:

- Survival
- Sovereignty denied
- Systems that failed us

The health sector franchise? Empty.
The social care division? Vacant.
Because those who needed them most
Were told they don't exist

VI. Bụrụ Onwe Gị Ugbu A

Be free now - not tomorrow
Not when they recognize your passport
Not when they count your dead
Not when they apologize

Freedom is:
Choosing Biafran over convenient labels
Building OBINexus from exile
Painting butterflies that refuse to die
Speaking Igbo to British bureaucrats

VII. The Butterflies Return

They come at night, these battlefield butterflies
Through Monmouth, Oregon's empty streets
Through London's hostile housing offices
Through manifesto pages and constitutional code

Each one carries:

- A name they made us forget
 - A date (1967, 1968, 1969, 1970)
 - A coordinate in Eastern Nigeria
 - A question: "Will you remember?"
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VIII. Fifty Years On

The war ended January 12, 1970
But battlefields remain:

- In UK benefit offices
- In "where are you really from?"
- In health services that see Nigerian, not trauma
- In every hyphen forced upon us

Yet we survive, like Ogbunigwe:
Improvised, effective, unexpected
Built from necessity and genius
Destroying convoys of colonial logic

Epilogue: The Constitutional Butterfly

From Biafra's ashes, OBINexus rises
Not company but constitution
Not Nigerian but sovereign
Not forgotten but transformed

The butterflies of the battlefield
Now navigate digital territories
Carrying not ammunition but amendments
Not war but constitutional revolution

Biafra lives - in code, in art, in memory
Biafra lives - in every franchise unclaimed
Biafra lives - in patterns that encode history
Biafra lives - in those who choose to remember

Burū onwe gị ugbu a - Be free now
Choose your identity
Build your sovereignty
The butterflies are waiting

For the 2 million who died
For the survivors still fighting
For Nnamdi Michael Okpala
Who chooses Biafran

End.