
The Flavour of Freedom

Kevin Ufoegbune

Abstract

I wrote this poem to symbolise the peace I experience when I visit Nigeria. I have always identified more strongly with Mother Africa. There is an indescribable sense of belongingness, harmony, freedom and completeness people like me feel when they reconnect with their (diasporic) homeland. As a child growing up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, my Nigerian mother taught me my mother tongue, Igbo. I have learned to cook our dishes and perform our traditional dances because of the love for Africa that she instilled in me. I am grateful for the opportunities my family and I have experienced, and I will always long for Nigeria. This poem encapsulates this longing; the longing to be in my homeland once more and for the freedom I experience whenever I return.

Keywords

Homeland, Mother Africa, African diaspora, poetry

Standing regal and proud
Feet on red Igbo earth
My voice makes a sound
I find my worth

This is the flavour of freedom

Mama Africa embraces me
With a scenic sunset
Says I came from her womb
We were fed by her breasts

This is the flavour of freedom

Savoury Jollof
Rich Egusi soup
We own rich histories
Here is my proof

This is the flavour of freedom

I wear Ankara wax prints
And a red chief cap
I am in the birthplace
Of both jazz and rap

This is the flavour of freedom

Sheltered by palm trees
No longer maple
With the love of my ancestors
Once again, I am able

This is the flavour of freedom

The Obi, the King
He welcomes me home
And speaks of traditions
Worth more than gold

This is the flavour of freedom

Acknowledgments

To my dear mother, for sharing her love of reading and writing with me and for introducing me to African folklore, storytelling, and proverbs from our ancestral land. To my immediate elder sister for insight and the enjoyable memories we continue to make.

Author Biography

Kevin Ufoegbune is a psychotherapist, social worker, and entertainer, and is currently completing his PhD. His Master of Social Work (MSW) practice-based research paper at York University focused on intergenerational trauma and psychotherapy within the Nigerian diaspora, utilizing a critical autoethnographic approach. As a therapist, he works with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) community members, couples, families, and organizations (including the NBA), as well as fellow Christians, addressing issues such as spirituality, addictions, trauma, depression, anxiety, and other challenges. He enjoys singing, hiking, exercising, and cooking. As a television producer, he co-created *Flavours of Africa* on Rogers Television in 2016 with his mother, Mrs. Doris Ufoegbune. The series highlights African and international cuisine, culture, and narratives.