Uno-Onwu Okigbi / A Wake for Okigbo

Chinua Achebe

Obu onye k’ayi nacho?
Obu onye k’ayi nacho?
Okigbo k’ayi nacho!
    Nzomalizo!

Ojalu nku, nya nata!
Ochul’i iy, nya nata!
Ojel’afia, nya nata!
Okigbo k’ayi nacho!
    Nzomalizo!

Obu onye k’ayi nacho?
Obu onye k’ayi nacho?
Okigbo k’ayi nacho!
    Nzomalizo!

Ojebé nku, Ugboko elinia!
Ochube mmili, Iyi elinia!
Ojebé afia, uzu-afia soolia
Ojebé agha, Ogbonuke biko chaalia!
Okigbo k’ayi nacho!
    Nzomalizo!

Ezite egwu, onye gagbalayi?
Eseta ogu, onye gagbalayi?
Onye anakpo nwel’ife oneme!
Okigbo k’ayi nakpo!
    Nzomalizo!

Ngwa, nee egwu k’onabia!
Ifugo na agha awa?
Ogu-egwu choo! Dike n’ogu chaal!!
Ifurozi na onye anakpo nwel’ife oneme!
Okigbo k’ayi nakpo!
    Nzomalizo!
Egwu ebee na mbelede!
Mmonwu ayi ewelu mgbachi naa!
Mmili amaa dike, maa okanga!
Oja n’ajani mmoo apiari!
Udu n’edu okpa-egwu awari!
Okolo nnem! Okolo Igbo!
Okolobia n’ogbo mmee!
Ogalanya na be mmoo
Oigbo ka m’nacho!
Nzomalizo!

A Wake for Okigbo
Translated from Igbo by Ifeanyi Menkiti

For whom are we searching?
For whom are we searching?
For Okigbo we are searching!
       Nzomalizo!

Has he gone for firewood, let him return.
Has he gone to fetch water, let him return.
Has he gone to the marketplace, let him return.
For Okigbo we are searching.
       Nzomalizo!

For whom are we searching?
For whom are we searching?
For Okigbo we are searching!
       Nzomalizo!

Has he gone for firewood, may Ugboko not take him.
Has he gone to the stream, may Iyi not swallow him!
Has he gone to the market, then keep from him you Tumult of the marketplace!
Has he gone to battle, please Ogbonuke step aside for him!
For Okigbo we are searching!
       Nzomalizo!
They bring home a dance, who is to dance it for us?
They bring home a war, who will fight it for us?
The one we call repeatedly, there’s something he alone can do.
It is Okigbo we are calling!
    Nzomalizo!

Witness the dance, how it arrives!
The war, how it has broken out!
But the caller of the dance is no where to be found!
The brave one in battle is no where in sight!
Do you not see now that whom we call again
And agine, there is something he alone can do?
It is Okigbo we are calling!
    Nzomalizo!

The dance ends abruptly.
The spirit dancers fold their dance and depart in midday.
Rain soaks the stalwart, soaks the two-sided drum!
The flute is broken that elevates the spirit.
The music pot shattered that accompanies teh leg in its measure.
Brave one of my blood!
Brave one of Igbo land!
Brave one in the middle of so much blood!
Owner of riches in the dwelling place of spirit!
Okigbo is the one for whom I am searching!
    Nzomalizo!