

CHRISTINA CHIN &
UCHECHUKWU ONYEDIKAM

POURING LIGHT

ON THE HILLS

The bottom half of the image features a dense, abstract pattern of overlapping triangles in various colors, including shades of blue, purple, pink, orange, and yellow. The triangles are of different sizes and orientations, creating a complex, geometric mosaic. The colors are somewhat muted and blended, giving the pattern a textured, watercolor-like appearance.

Pouring Light On the Hills

Praise for

POURING LIGHT ON THE HILLS

“Somewhere a thousand years ago or so, renga emerged in Japanese literature as a courtly form of linked verse. Poets in the eight islands transplanted cuttings from the palaces into more public domains and tanka and haiku evolved. There is something *sensible* about these structures that allowed them to thrive in native soil for a millennium, and something of a different essence that allowed their migration into the English language during the last century. The inherent power of these poetic forms with their strict syllabic counts and the flexibility and world-wide presence of English allows this remarkable collection of Malaysian-Nigerian tan renga to be co-authored by the noted poets Christina Chin and Uchechukwu Onyedikam. One writer supplies the opening tercet of the five-line form; the other creates an ending couplet to complete the image. Chin and Onyedikam modernize the collaboration by loosening the syllable counts and sometimes inverting the chords. The partners bring their own personalities to the page. Chin’s work evokes the hypnotic and seductive Hindi song Chaka Chak. Her images are playful and high-spirited. Onyedikam brings the African rhythm of the djembe drum to the mix, the spirit of the goddess Osun on a charcoal-scented breeze. The result is a calypso, a funk, a fusion, a new jazz for the eye and ear. Pour a glass of palm wine and enjoy.”

—RUSSELL STREUR, *Plum Tree Tavern* editor

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

“*Pouring Light on the Hills* is a subtly brilliant collection of tan-renga that is as fascinating as it is culturally significant, allowing the reader to form a connection with experiences that may be radically different from their own. The coauthors’ perspectives blend wonderfully in their portrayal of a human existence deeply rooted in the natural world. Despite this connectedness, a sense of solitude pervades their lines, as represented by the leopard resting in a baobab tree in just one instance, while music, dance, food, and drink feature as relatable and welcome reprieves. Children are also present in many of the verses, whether it be an *ailing African child* or *the cry of a newborn in the bush*. Their presence contrasts an often harsh environment while emphasizing life’s difficulties, even for the most vulnerable. Still, they represent hope for the future and a longing for the healthy continuation of culture. This collection is for anyone with a taste for short-form poetry or an appreciation for diversity in artistic expression. Chin and Onyedikam showcase the sometimes harsh realities of life while celebrating the hope that persists even as *things fall apart*.”

—M.R. DEFIBAUGH, creator and editor
of the *Tan-Renga/Tanka Chapbook Series*

Pouring Light On the Hills

Pouring Light On the Hills

by

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

Copyright © 2022 *Christina Chin*, Uchechukwu Onyedikam

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publishers, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

ISBN: 9798367783452

Edited by Jerome Berglund

Cover Design by petro c.k.

Cover Art by John Hawkhead

NUN PROPHET PRESS

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

the old world
vulture appears
on the pathway
*a green dragon's
breath*

Pouring Light On the Hills

midnight moon
shivers of her labor
water breaking
the cry of a newborn
in the bush

Pouring Light On the Hills

palm kernel oil
those rigid hands
of the native healer
deep tissue massage
the pain unknots

Pouring Light On the Hills

home –
the orchid's
scent
borrowed
from a eucalyptus

Pouring Light On the Hills

contract
agreement
from the beginning
it seems
to never set

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

*a whirlwind tour
of lunch and breakfast
falling twilight
yesterday's visitor
uninvited*

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

the owl
begins its inquiry
dark sunset
the shadow trails her
deep into herself

Pouring Light On the Hills

otamiri solitude
the river bends
inward to my soul
erosion affects
the aquatic animals

Pouring Light On the Hills

the searchlight
spot on
her eyes roll
a leopard
on the baobab tree

Pouring Light On the Hills

ice shaving
cocktail of
african star apple
the toddler stoops
for its seed

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

saint Bakhita
the child slave
of the sweet old world
smiles from her cheeks
redeeming man

Pouring Light On the Hills

the church organ plays
here comes the bride
walking down the aisle
she debates –
I do

Pouring Light On the Hills

cultural dance
spin to the rhythm
of the djembe
the traditional
ritual begins

Pouring Light On the Hills

appeasing
the incensed goddess
she bends towards the divine
the arc of Ọsun
rite of passage

Pouring Light On the Hills

the palm wine
spreads its fresh smell
a bystander
under the tree
waiting to drink toddy

Pouring Light On the Hills

old widow's hut
music of unborn babies
the songs sung
by the village
stay home wives

Pouring Light On the Hills

*the vibrant
deep and jazzy voice
in her belly
an old soul
the sun & moon*

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

falling
fallout
things fall apart –
picking herself up yet
things fall apart

Pouring Light On the Hills

old house
buried in familiar scent
of childhood
the sorcerer's
tobacco

Pouring Light On the Hills

standing
the twin city
of womanhood
*she still dreams
of childhood*

Pouring Light On the Hills

ailing african child
in the book
of yesterday
reads about
a strange city boy

Pouring Light On the Hills

chaka chak
song
to the rhythm
of swirling wind
festival dance

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

cooking –
charcoal grill in the air
the evening sun falls
a small dance
then yam pottage

Pouring Light On the Hills

half awake
slowly reaching
for the phone alarm
only takes deep night to rise
the full yellow sun

Pouring Light On the Hills

from the afterlife
meeting my mother
i long for life
a white dove
descends

Pouring Light On the Hills

the flavour
from my childhood
beans picking
my stomach challenges
careless rumbling

Pouring Light On the Hills

snow tipped

peaks

a galaxy of solitude

every celestial body

draws adoration

Pouring Light On the Hills

her soul
not marked
to follow...
talks of redemption
a savior burnt at the stake

Pouring Light On the Hills

crack in the cloud
nature abodes a vacuum
a drunken man
steps on a fire ant's
nest

Pouring Light On the Hills

chirps
of a chardonneret
goldfinch –
peering through a branch
a passerby

Pouring Light On the Hills

at bedtime –
i fold the moon
inside
a paper crane and tuck
it under my head

Pouring Light On the Hills

the sunrise
on your cheeks
happier
morning after
the moon festival

Pouring Light On the Hills

first day at the crèche
a little homesick
strapped to mama's
back sucking
his thumb

Pouring Light On the Hills

a light tug
on the ponytail
running along
her cornrow
two fingers

Pouring Light On the Hills

pounding...
the white steam of
Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls
climbing up her body
splash upon my soul

Pouring Light On the Hills

a basket
of wildflowers
the native boy
picks purslane
for lunch

Pouring Light On the Hills

upon judgement
he awaits doom's day
grooving...
deep furrows
on his forehead

Pouring Light On the Hills

one last wish
to the windy night
beforehand
a puff of clove
laced kretek

Pouring Light On the Hills

words of a bokor
priest spread
wildfire –
let us be consumed
and die for the miracle

Pouring Light On the Hills

over his shoulders
the standing eagle
ebubedike
soars
the open sky

Pouring Light On the Hills

still dark
that print –
you left
coffee stains
on the white mat

Pouring Light On the Hills

the village kapitan
dismisses the soothsayer
when they proclaim
you feigned religious walk
alien to the dove

Pouring Light On the Hills

pacing
the cobblestones
passing night
with all that's been lived
no prisoner

Pouring Light On the Hills

opaque
wintry rime
starred-sky over her hair
the tales she carries
her life matter

Pouring Light On the Hills

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much obliged to the following journals/magazines:
Scarlet Dragonfly, *Pages Literary Journal*, *miniMAG*
in which some of these poems have appeared first.

John Hawkhead/petro c.k. thank you kindly for your
prodigious art design of the book cover.

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Pouring Light On the Hills

Christina Chin is a painter and haiku poet from Malaysia.

She is a four-time recipient of top 100 in the mDAC Summit Contests, exhibited at the Palo Alto Art Center, California. 1st prize winner of the 34th Annual Cherry Blossom Sakura Festival 2020 Haiku Contest. 1st prize winner in the 8th Setouchi Matsuyama 2019 Photohaiku Contest. She has been published in numerous journals, multilingual journals, and anthologies, including Japan's prestigious monthly Haikukai Magazine.

Uchechukwu Onyedikam, also known as Mystic Poet, is a creative artist based in Lagos, Nigeria. His work has appeared in Amsterdam Quarterly, Poetic Africa, Hood Communist, and elsewhere. He is keen to further his intense love for poetry by working with creatives from around the world. His poem, 'Ten Years', is on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/rXxmuJseh8w>.

Christina Chin / Uchechukwu Onyedikam



NUN PROPHET PRESS

ARTWORK: JOHN HAWKHEAD
DESIGN: PETROCK