

SEASON OF OPPRESSION

(Letter to a Comrade)

By

Niyi Osundare

Our dream will not wither
In the cradle of night
We shall not die
In our sleep

As I write this, comrade,
sunset helicopters hover
in the sky of El Salvador,
murderous vultures from nests of steel
their deadly droppings poison the village stream
killing farmlands before the harvest

But our dream will not wither

As I write, comrade,
apartheid boots march through Namibia
trampling the slender south
of young Angola
in Washington renegade natives
shake bloody hands with empire seekers
their crawling wrists glittering
with refurbished chains.
A gold-dazzled world stares,
disabled by greed

But our dream will not wither

As I write, comrade,
twilight jets descend
in Pharaoh's kingdom
their chilling whistles a dirge
for an ally just departed.
Too distant to see flagging fellahin
and crowded slums
they sow death atoms
in a land of hunger.
Tomorrow will ask,
oh land of the long river,
how once proud pyramids
came to lose their tops
to the monstrous storms
of an enslaving plague

But our dream will not wither

I write this, comrade,
not because I fear
or doubt.

We know the steel vulture will crash
on a Saturday of Hope;
the ankles of apartheid will fracture soon
its steel tendons snapped
by the fire of will;
the desert will scorch the seeds of atom
hurling death back at the murderers
of others' freedom.

For this I know

Our dream shall not wither
In the cradle of night
We will not die
In our sleep.