

THE MASQUERADE

by

Chibueze A. Aniebo

And then we cross our hearts
and wait
at the supposed ascension
of the spirit.
The owl cries -
and we remove our heads from us
and dispel the fear that comes
from the tumultus

It is time
for our departed brothers
to walk abroad,
and surrounding an ant hole
we beg leave of one of them
to come hither
and enchant us
in the gathering of the clan.

We are each of us alone,
living in our individual fears,
But the women
shall behold us in terror
guardians of the secrets
We who bring back the dead
to join the dance
among the living

It is done!
He emerges from an ant hole.
Brother Oriekwe is it you?
And holding tight our losely
held *opripas*
we hit the ground with fronds
to further confuse the women
Thank you my ancestors,
what a *beautiful* masquerade!

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