

# Welcome Back Homeless

## **Débò Kòtún.**

It is the smell of Abundance.

And the sound of Felicity.

It is the 4th of July.

Welcome to Liberty

And Freedom

And Equality for All.

But you are Black.

And I left.

It is the smell of Tear Gas

And the sound of Marching Feet.

Welcome to the Struggle, Brother.

Free at last.

But you are African.

And I left.

It is the homogeneity of Blackness

And the dissonance of Vernacular

Lamenting lost Majesty.

Welcome to the Motherland.

But you are Nigerian.

And I left.

It is the expectation of Greatness

And the frustration of Betrayal.

It is the 1st of October.

Welcome to the Armpit of the Giant.

But you are Yorùbá.

And I left.

It is the sound of Ritual Drum

And the incantation of Babaláwo\*

Apotheosizing Òrúnmilà\*

Welcome to Yorùbá Nation.

But you are of Somewhere Else.

And I left.

It is the smell of the LAH-gus\*

And the sound of the Ocean

Èkó Akéte; ìlú ogbón \*

The land of the Few

And claimed by All.

But you are Kòtún.

And I left.

It is a joyful a cappella

Sweet voices of the Wives

My Father's, Serenading a Homecoming.

And the air is Fecund with Unease.

Welcome Home

But you are your Mother's Child

And I left.

It is the pain of Labor

And the joy of Birth.

It is the agony of Separation.

Welcome Back Homeless

My Sweetness

But I was merely a Vessel

The World is your Home

Ìpàdé wa bí Oyín o!\*

Key to Yoruba phrases

Babaláwo - Yorùbá Diviner. The word literally translates into father of the sacred secrets

Òrúnmìlà - Yorùbá god of divination

LAH-gus - phonetic pronunciation of Lagos, the old capital of Nigeria, and now the country's commercial capital. The city's original name is Eko. The name Lagos is Portuguese.

Èkó Akéte; ìlú ogbón - Lagos, Akete; town/home of wisdom. According to Yorùbá conventional wisdom, Lagos is a place where people learn all, or at least some of life's major lessons.

Ìpàdé wa bí Oyín o! -- May our meeting be sweet as honey!

Débò Kòtún is the author of *Abiku CA*: Nepotist Press, 1998. He is working on his second novel, *DaRos*,a.