

Alack! Let Microsoft invent, O reader, that which, perchance could type Gambia's unceasing sorrow
With keys of tears—O thou with a heart for a prosperous present and our offspring's merry morrow
At our woes, let Google ogle, and apps be applied; let Pinterest show interest, and Instagram program
All that is there to see of a miscarriage of governance too fetid beyond verbals or yet, artful diagram.

With the same tears from a keen-sighted craft and aptitude, let zest bereft of genial best bid adieu
Lo! Witness a sacrilege incentivized—where treason mocks at reason; and caressing corruption, in lieu
Of conscientious wont, markets our sovereignty's wares to surreptitious France, Senegal, and Covid
And these tragically concomitant, we clock one at *forGambia* where neurons confront ideas this vivid.

Yes, we clock one, thanks to two Julys gone; and with them, Gambia's independence and rightful hope
For a Banjul, Brikama, Bakau, Serrekunda, Basse, or Bansang reduced of unkempt mud or slippery slope
See that little girl with a plate of five, six, or seven mangoes atop her scalp—her prices feebly broadcast?
Kindly contrast her misery to per diems of the Trade's minister who dines with all, but I the iconoclast.

See that widow's dwelling down, her poverty uncovered by rains that delight in a roof's ramshackle?
See that perennial water and electricity cuts, that lack of hospital oxygen tanks gov't refuses to tackle?
See that donkey driver in the muddy streets, drenched to waist while adamant Adama sleeps if fed
Or grins with disregard if awake? See that emaciating kid that cried, or the knife-attack victim that bled?

See that rising cost of living, amid dizzying heights of corruption galore where a Range Rover drives past
A slow-paced donkey cart on a flooded street of unthinking, venal, greedy gov't officials speeding fast?
See that corporeal frame at hospital departing not due to unsolvable homeostatic imbalance or mishap
But a rationing oxygen while our president's son sports a Seattle house—while he, only a young chap?

We also dare address those disdainful enterprises of stealth, cormorant for growth in ill wealth.
They aren't real journalists. So, let there be axioms piquant of deep flattery galore
For minds destitute of wisdom to adore.

Adieu! these usurping signatories to our noble art
Who pose with bleeding daggers and seek to start
An unchivalrous bout with those not too bellicose
O glutinous bellies, beware of choleric cellulose.

Prithee submit regalia, O thou enrobed, yet naked.
Exult not at borrowed dividend, nor wisdom faked.
Let vanity and its avuncular egotism quickly fade
For beacons of chaste literature who never invade
But address offers they, with fortitude, haply evade
In the above photo, aforetime are some keenly committed
Journalists, while others due to space, regrettably omitted
And rest in peace Chief Manneh, an innocent soul submitted.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The photograph above was taken in July 1999 by a photographer paid by Chief Ebrima Manneh. The scene was at the Daily Observer premises, on the balcony. The young journalists in the picture were all friends and colleagues of this editor, and do not work or report for forGambia News & Radio. But their warm contribution to Gambia's younger days of journalism still glistens with excellence! RIP Chief Manneh.*

