

ISHMAEL NA MY NAME

Moby-Dick poetry in Pidgin English

One Haiku for each chapter

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Introduction

I am from Nigeria, a country in West Africa, which has over 510 living languages currently being spoken. Growing up in the former capital of Lagos, which is a melting pot of people of different tribes and religions from all over the country, taught me the strength that is in diversity. Pidgin English is widely spoken and was developed out of a desperate need for communication amongst the tribes in Colonial times. In Nigeria, although our pidgin is based primarily off British English, many words are also coined from Portuguese and the various languages spoken throughout the nation

If one looks back at most of the beginnings of conflicts in history, most, if not all, stem from misunderstandings or lack of tolerance. Nevertheless, the *Pequod* crew must have found a way to communicate despite the language barriers and differences in beliefs. Although many characters spoke in a manner different from Ishmael's, Queequeg stood out the most to me because he spoke in Pidgin English. In fact, one of the words Queequeg uses is 'sabee' which means 'to know/understand' and it exists in Nigerian Pidgin as well. Therefore, in response to the novel, and as a nod to the various nationalities who must have had to communicate while sailing on the *Pequod*, I have created a haiku for each chapter of *Moby-Dick* using Nigerian pidgin. This idea was inspired by my fluent knowledge of Japanese, Pidgin English, and British/American English.

A haiku is a Japanese form of poetry where one has three lines with syllables of five, seven, then five respectively. In Japanese, it is much easier to work around this due to the language structure. However, for Pidgin English, it is more difficult for the poet to work with the seventeen syllables. Nevertheless, I believe that although one might not fully understand all the words used in this piece, the essence of Melville's novel transcends language. Happy reading!

CHAPTERS 1 - 12

Ishmael na my name	I come go chapel
My heart dey do me somehow	Na so cenotaphs plenty
I dey go whaling	But fear no catch me
<i>Coin no dey my purse</i>	<i>Priest come climb ladder</i>
<i>As cold dey catch me so tey</i>	<i>His name be Fada Mapple</i>
<i>I go Spouter Inn</i>	<i>The pulpit dey fine</i>
Dey give me roommate	Na so im dey preach
Na so he come be savage	His sermon dey touch my heart
He come fear me o	I come get courage
<i>As I come wake up</i>	<i>Queequeg na pagan</i>
<i>His hand come dey for blanket</i>	<i>But im get a good heart sha</i>
<i>Na so we be friends</i>	<i>Na padi be that</i>
As we dey chow food	I dey comfortable
People get different skin tone	His smoke no dey disturb me
Na Queequeg calm pass	He begin dey talk
<i>We dey waka go</i>	<i>Na Kokovoko</i>
<i>And admire New Bedford</i>	<i>Na im be Queequeg home town</i>
<i>Whaling be im life</i>	<i>Na so he tell me</i>

CHAPTERS 13 - 24

We come go the wharf	Prophet come yarn us
Dem dey make jest of Queequeg	I think say im be mad man
Yet he come save boy	We come ignore am
<i>Na from Nantucket</i>	<i>Ship go soon leave port</i>
<i>Wey dey very small for map</i>	<i>Aunty Charity dey fuss</i>
<i>Good whalers dey come</i>	<i>Ahab never show</i>
As we come reach land	We come see shadows
“Clam or Cod” dem dey ask us	Elijah come yarn again
We come chop am both	Captain still no show
<i>Yojo come choose ship</i>	<i>Peleg dey command</i>
<i>But I no fit meet Captain</i>	<i>Bildad no wan leave the ship</i>
<i>My lay dey small sha</i>	<i>Pequod come set sail</i>
Lent and Ramadan	One Bulkington dey
All that one na big nonsense	But im come be ghost for wheel
Queequeg no care sha	Lee shore dey deadly
<i>Peleg dey vex me</i>	<i>Whaling get im pride</i>
<i>He no wan hire Queequeg</i>	<i>Yale and Harvard na my schools</i>
<i>Skill beat religion</i>	<i>Honor dey this work</i>

CHAPTERS 25 - 36

Na whale oil dem use	Stubb come dey tell Flask
For the coronation oil	About one dream he come dream
Britons, you sabee?	Where Ahab kick im
<i>Chief mate na Starbuck</i>	<i>Cetology sha</i>
<i>Him be good Nantucket man</i>	<i>I go use am classify</i>
<i>Courage dey im heart</i>	<i>Plenty plenty whales</i>
Stubb and Flask follow	Harpooners get pride
Queequeg, Daggoo, Tashtego	Dem dey close to the captain
Na dem dey hunt whales	Na Ahab rule sha
<i>One day I come see</i>	<i>Dem dey chow with him</i>
<i>Ahab on top Pequod deck</i>	<i>Dough-Boy come dey fear so tey</i>
<i>One leg dey missing</i>	<i>Im just dey shake oo</i>
Him temper dey hot	When you dey mast-head
Na so im dey shout at Stubb	If you no pay attention
Stubb no like am oo	Na so you go fall
<i>Ahab come dey smoke</i>	<i>For seeing white whale</i>
<i>He come throw pipe for ocean</i>	<i>The reward na one doubloon</i>
<i>Which kain man be dis?</i>	<i>Ahab talk am so</i>

CHAPTERS 37 - 48

Na so sunset knack	For night noise dey sound
Ahab dey look am so tey	But we no see who talk am
Na so im dey think	Na bad food cause am?
<i>Starbuck no get peace</i>	<i>Ahab dey cabin</i>
<i>Im know say Ahab no well</i>	<i>He dey study his chartings</i>
<i>Him fit do nothing</i>	<i>Im sabee ocean</i>
Stubb too come dey think	Whale na dangerous thing
Him laugh so he no go cry	Their tales plenty for ocean
Starbuck come call him	Sailors know am well
<i>The sailors dey dance</i>	<i>Ahab dey obsessed</i>
<i>The party dey make sense but</i>	<i>Him dey use tools and his men</i>
<i>Fight and wind spoil am</i>	<i>White whale no show face</i>
The white whale story	I come dey weave mat
Na so dem dey tell me so	Na so e resemble Fate
No one fit catch am	Tashtego sight whale
<i>Why white get power?</i>	<i>I dey for the boat</i>
<i>Why it dey fear men sometimes?</i>	<i>The whale come destroy am oo</i>
<i>Moby-Dick dey white</i>	<i>We come dey water</i>

CHAPTERS 49 - 60

As dem rescue us	As whale dey water
Na so I come write my will	Na so man come try paint am
That na my fourth time	Dem make mistakes sha
<i>Ahab get im men</i>	<i>Dem come try again</i>
<i>Na dem be the noisy ghosts</i>	<i>E never still correct sha</i>
<i>Crew fear Fedallah</i>	<i>But some dey make sense</i>
Pequod dey sail sha	Many materials
We sight one kain spout like this	Dem dey use to dey make whale
Ahab just dey gaze	On top land and sea
<i>We come meet one ship</i>	<i>We come sail some more</i>
<i>Im name na the Albatross</i>	<i>We come see plenty right whales</i>
<i>Dem no see the whale</i>	<i>Ocean dey scary</i>
We suppose gam dem	Na so something rise
As dey no see Moby-Dick	Daggoo talk say na white whale
Ahab no wan gam	But im be white squid
<i>Moby-Dick chop Radney</i>	<i>For whaling business</i>
<i>Steelkit come dey happy oo</i>	<i>The line rope dey important</i>
<i>Na Town-Ho story</i>	<i>E fit be halter</i>

CHAPTERS 61 - 72

Pequod come sight whale	As next day come dawn
Water dey churn, blood dey spill	We come begin cut the whale
Na Stubb wey kill am	That work dey hard oo
<i>If harpooneers bad</i>	<i>Whale blubber dey big</i>
<i>People go shout for their head</i>	<i>It come resemble blanket</i>
<i>Their aim must dey sharp</i>	<i>Marks get character</i>
The harpoons dey rest	Ship come release whale
On top the crotch wey dey boat	As dey no need im body
Dem dey plenty oo	It come be sad oo
<i>Stubb dey bully Fleece</i>	<i>But the head remain</i>
<i>As he wan chop whale steak fast</i>	<i>Ahab come ask am questions</i>
<i>Fleece come preach instead</i>	<i>The head no fit talk</i>
Why whale no be food?	We come sight a ship
Na the fat or na the size?	Im name na Jeroboam
Stubb come like am sha	Dem no see the whale
<i>Whale dey hang for ship</i>	<i>Na the monkey-rope</i>
<i>Na so shark come dey chop am</i>	<i>Wey connect me and Queequeg</i>
<i>Dem fit chop humans</i>	<i>Him die, I die too</i>

CHAPTERS 73 - 84

Fedallah come talk	Whale no get a nose
Na so Pequod kill right whale	But im head get dignity
Im get influence	You fit read the brow?
<i>Two whale heads come dey</i>	<i>From forehead whale brain</i>
<i>I dey look sperm whale head first</i>	<i>Get space wey separate am small</i>
<i>Im get symmetry</i>	<i>Sperm whale skull get hump</i>
Right whale na the next	We come meet the Virgin
E no get sperm oil or teeth	Dem dey race us for whale oil
Na difference be dat	Our old whale come sink
<i>Sperm whale head fit ram</i>	<i>Whaling get glory</i>
<i>Im also dey very tough</i>	<i>Pictures and legends show am</i>
<i>Like say im be wall</i>	<i>Club members dey great</i>
Heidelburgh get wine	Jonah's story dey
Sperm whale get oil wey dey fine	Plenty plenty for history
Wine no fit compare	Differences dey sha
<i>Tashtego come slip</i>	<i>Queequeg oil im boat</i>
<i>Him and head come dey sink but</i>	<i>As we chase whale Stubb come stand</i>
<i>Queequeg rescue am</i>	<i>Im do Pitchpoling</i>

CHAPTERS 85 - 96

Since before before	Pequod meet Rosebud
Whales just dey spout for ocean	Stubb come use cunny cunny
Na so dem dey breathe	Collect Ambergris
<i>Sperm whale tail dey fine</i>	<i>Im dey very rare</i>
<i>It fit do many many</i>	<i>Dem dey use am make perfume</i>
<i>Good things for the whale</i>	<i>Na from whale poo sha</i>
Na so for Asia	Pip dey jump from boat
Plenty whales come dey water	Stubb warm am, e come leave am
We just dey look dem	Ocean turn im mad
<i>E be like say whales</i>	<i>I come dey squeeze oil</i>
<i>Just dey do like human being</i>	<i>Na so I just dey for trance</i>
<i>Both the boys and girls</i>	<i>I come dey squeeze hand</i>
E also be like	As mincer dey cut
All things wey dey for world be	Im dey wear the whale wee-wee
Fast-fish and loose-fish	Im resemble priest
<i>Whale head na for king</i>	<i>Na so for try-works</i>
<i>They come give the queen the tail</i>	<i>We dey burn the whale blubber</i>
<i>Poor people suffer</i>	<i>No dey look the fire!</i>

CHAPTERS 97 - 108

Whalers dey enjoy	Length, width, even ribs
Dem just dey live in the light	I come measure everything
As oil dey plenty	Flukes dey missing sha
<i>Oil come dey barrels</i>	<i>To write about whale</i>
<i>But as we come clean finish</i>	<i>E fit tire person but</i>
<i>Dem fit sight new whale</i>	<i>Fossils dey plenty</i>
As Doubloon dey deck	E be like say as
Crew dey look am one by one	Whale come swim the earth so tey
Dem see different things	E no go die out
<i>Captain Boomer come</i>	<i>Ahab come break leg</i>
<i>Since e lose im arm to whale</i>	<i>As e come pierce im before</i>
<i>Im try warn Ahab</i>	<i>Im call carpenter</i>
Amelia come set	Na so carpenter
Example for other ships	As im come get plenty skill
Dutch whalers get life	Im dey craft the leg
<i>Na for Arascides</i>	<i>About phantom limb</i>
<i>I measure whale skeleton</i>	<i>Ahab dey yarn carpenter</i>
<i>Tattoo dey right arm</i>	<i>As im dey make leg</i>

CHAPTERS 109 - 120

Starbuck come talk but	Ship meet Bachelor
Ahab point gun for im head	The crew come dey jolly oo
Starbuck leave cabin	Dem barrels dey full
<i>As Queequeg come sick</i>	<i>Pequod come sight whales</i>
<i>Im ask for coffin but he</i>	<i>Crew come catch four, but Ahab</i>
<i>Come recover well</i>	<i>Still dey feel im gloom</i>
For the Pacific	Ahab boat dey sea
Ahab no fit feel im peace	Na Parsee wey no wan sleep
As im dey the calm	Im dey yarn Ahab
<i>Na so the blacksmith</i>	<i>Line season come knock</i>
<i>Dey for Pequod because of</i>	<i>Ahab dey use im quadrant</i>
<i>Im sad life story</i>	<i>But e come march am</i>
As im dey the forge	Na so Typhoon come
Na so Ahab bring metal	Fear come catch all crew members
And baff am for blood	But Ahab no gree
<i>Pequod reach Japan</i>	<i>Starbuck try yarn him</i>
<i>Na so weather just dey calm</i>	<i>About the Pequod damage</i>
<i>Ahab feel am small</i>	<i>But e no listen</i>

CHAPTERS 121 - 132

As Stubb and Flask dey	Ahab come notice
Try to fix ship dem discuss	Na coffin wey go save lives
Insurance and sense	E go yarn with Pip
<i>Tashtego dey mast</i>	<i>The Rachel come say</i>
<i>"I no like this thunder oo"</i>	<i>Make Pequod help dem find boy</i>
<i>Na so im dey talk</i>	<i>Ahab heart dey cold</i>
Starbuck come pick the	Pip follow Ahab
Gun Ahab point for im but	But Captain no wan hear im
E no fit kill im	Pip still dey yarn sha
<i>Na so compass come</i>	<i>Ahab mood dey black</i>
<i>Miss im Eastern direction</i>	<i>Im obsession dey increase</i>
<i>Ahab change am back</i>	<i>Hawk come steal im hat</i>
Quadrant don break oo	Na so one ship wey
Compass change, line too don cut	Get Delight as im name come
Ahab no heed signs	Suffer from white whale
<i>Na so carpenter</i>	<i>Upon all im lose</i>
<i>Come turn Queequeg coffin to</i>	<i>Upon all Starbuck come talk</i>
<i>Life buoy for Pequod</i>	<i>Ahab no fit stop</i>

CHAPTERS 133 - EPILOGUE

Moby-Dick come show

Na Ahab wey sight am oo

Im own boat no wreck

On top second day

The whale come break Ahab leg

Fedallah come die

Ahab shout at whale

E come drown for harpoon rope

Ship sink, crew perish

Only me wey live

I come dey float for coffin

Rachel rescue me