



Piano and Drums

by Gabriel Okara

When at break of day at a riverside
I hear jungle drums telegraphing
the mystic rhythm, urgent, raw
like bleeding flesh, speaking of
primal youth and the beginning, 5
I see the panther ready to pounce,
the leopard snarling about to leap
and the hunters crouch with spears poised.

And my blood ripples, turns torrent,
topples the years and at once I'm 10
in my mother's laps a suckling;
at once I'm walking simple
paths with no innovations
rugged, fashioned with the naked
warmth of hurrying feet and groping hearts 15
in green leaves and wild flowers pulsing.

Then I hear a wailing piano
solo speaking of complex ways
in tear- furrowed concerto;
of far-away lands 20
and new horizons with
coaxing diminuendo, counterpoint,
crescendo, but lost in the labyrinth
of its complexities, it ends in the middle
of a phrase at a daggerpoint 25

And I lost in the morning mist
of an age at a riverside keep
wandering in the mystic rhythm
of jungle drums and concerto.

<https://litionaryblog.wordpress.com/2018/01/13/the-piano-and-the-drum-intro-poem>