

LEXOPHOBIA

By Christian Anieke

I am afraid of you, words
I have eaten you raw or cooked and well spiced
I have eaten you fresh or dried and stored in a mud-pot
I have eaten you unripe or ripe or rotten
And I have kept some as a hangover in between my yellowing teeth.

You are both close and strange
I recognize your shape and colour as I try to devour you
But you always confuse my taste as you hit my tongue
I wonder why a familiar taste appears weird
Today you are honey and suddenly you turn Swedish-bitter.

I am afraid of your ever-changing tastes
I am afraid of your sound which can break my tongue
I am afraid of your unpredictable skeleton
I am afraid of your power
I am afraid of you!

In budding years at university I desired your friendship
I fell in love with you and you ravished my heart
I slept with my head resting on your breasts
I kissed you all night and all day
And I enjoyed the feeling of loving you.

When I needed you, you popped up
In my wrestles you oiled my muscles and turned me into Okonkwo
Every wrestle brought fresh laurels and accolades
But now I ask: Is friendship not like wine?
So why are you becoming strange now?