

OBI NWAKANMA

## AN ELEGY FOR SEAMUS HEANEY

Ha! Heaney! The rains have come.  
The clouds that clustered atop the trees  
Have let burst the pus of water.

Ha! Heaney! The time has come.  
The bough of dark ants has gathered  
Like the *ebo* offering hung to the lintel.

Ha! Heaney! The drums are speaking.  
The fearful things they say tonight  
Make my thin legs wobble with fright.

Ai! Heaney! Your sun has fallen.  
We have seen a thing greater than the farmland  
And so we have pawned the barnyard.

## AN ELEGY FOR CHINUA ACHEBE

The end came as quiet exile,  
Like the flight of seagulls crossing the Atlantic  
In the grey moody weather of March.

By morning the world rolled out the mother-drums, freed  
The rich silence which hovered in the mouths  
To mourn the kernel pried from its pod.

It was not death I first heard knocking at the door.  
It was Chinua Nwa Anichebe, whom the earth  
Had adorned with favours.

He wore the anklet of age  
He wore the anklet of wealth  
He wore the anklet of words

Achebe went to the market he hasn't returned—  
Achebe went to the farm he hasn't returned—  
Achebe went to America he hasn't returned—

The eagle in flight is like the sun departing  
Down the grey mist that divides an age.  
Gidigbam! Gidigbam! They say is the walk  
Of the Elephant—

Achebe went to visit his in-laws he has not returned—  
Achebe left at the beckon of morning he has not returned—  
Achebe went into the night he has not returned—

It was winter still in Boston,  
The lilacs were late. We lurched into the house  
Of death to view truth in the open casket

As he lay mottled.  
The Eagle has flown from the Iroko tonight—  
The Eagle has flown through the door of the sun.