

4. The Awakening Age

By Ben Okri

About the author

A winner of Man Booker prize for his novel *The Famished Road*, the Nigerian poet, fiction writer, and essayist Ben Okri (1949-) spent his early childhood in London. Informed by folk tales and dream logic, Okri's writing also treats his family's experience of the Nigerian civil war. In an interview for *The National*, Okri stated, "I grew up in a tradition where there are simply more dimensions to reality: legends and myths and ancestors and spirits and death. You can't use Jane Austen to speak about African reality. Which brings the question: what is reality? Everyone's reality is different. For different perceptions of reality we need a different language."

A prolific poet and story teller, Okri, like in his other works, portrays the hardships of the African people in "The Awakening Age". In addition, he makes a call for unity, peace and solidarity among human beings from different parts of the world.

Summary

The poem 'The Awakening Age' is written by Ben Okri. This poem portrays the hardships of the African people. In addition, he makes a call for unity, peace and solidarity among human beings from different parts of the world who have been fragmented due to the devastating civil war. The poem is a hopeful vision of understanding and co-operation among the people around the world. It is a poem of harmony also.

In this poem, the poet wishes the well-being of African people after the outbreak of civil war. He also advocates about the time to enter a

new world of awakening world. The African inhabitants may have the vision of a new world. Nigerian people have faced miserable condition with a long path of hunger, poverty, unemployment and other aspects. He also hopes that they may experience the bright and glorious awakening age. The awakening age refers to the time when African people have a recognition, realization, or coming into awareness of their condition, and the beginning of their new world. The awakening age means the age with new vision, style and education of African people.

The poet has made a call for all the people of Nigeria to ahead for its progress. He also says that his people have been driven by an unseen force to the fragmentation and poverty. He makes a hope that connects them together like a garland of flowers. Deprived and desperate African people move further to new heights themselves. They are eager to change their perception with truthfulness in a new world to get better reform HE is also hopeful that they will have the chance to get good jobs, freedom, knowledge, creativity etc. They are also hopeful to discover their talents and use their efficiency not only to suit themselves but also others. In this way their life will be happy and prosperous beyond their poverty.