

## A Conversation With The New Girl Living Next To Me

Every night, I hear the voice of the new girl  
living next to my room splinter into sobs.

I lunge towards her room & stamp a knock on  
her door.

Her presence greets me with grief & stares at me  
lost & speechless.

For a moment, we exchanged silence & a conversation  
sprang up:

She talks about her unpaid tuition fee deadlining  
in few days time & a queue of other things ripping her.

A shiver of empathy swirls within me. I lunged back to my room  
& handed an envelope with cash, splitting my feeding allowance  
for her to be in class again.

After a battle of persuasion, she eventually resorted to take the cash.  
I'm happy she's back to class, happy for the friendship that came into  
existence.

**By Emmanuel Ojeikhodian**

## Food As An Act Of Kindness

Somewhere around, a family wanes into hunger while  
another family's kitchen is a repository of stale food.

The lacking family hopes for a rough meal to hold their  
belly for the night while the other family fills their garbage with  
untouched food & a ceremony of flies hovers to feast.

You hustle & hustle in the daytime for anything to lay in your  
hands as food & in the nighttime, hunger spreads your body  
in its soft couch while your stomach sings the lyrics of food.

You reduce yourself before your neighbour's door to plead for food  
& they feed your ears with the hardness of everything stifling the country.

You lunge to your room shrouded with shame & wonder where the  
aromas that invades your nostrils all day come from.

The aroma of chicken stew & rice swirling from your neighbour's flat  
awakens your intestines into a war.

You can't quell this hunger to rest. Yet, the remains from your neighbour's  
pot turning into a feast in their garbage still befuddles you.

The provision-store won't grant you more purchase on credit again.  
Everytime, you think of how to break free from the manacle of what to eat.

**By Emmanuel Ojeikhodian**