

Not my business by niyi osundare

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



Not My Business by Niyi Osundare This poem is written by Niyi Osundare, a Nigerian poet, dramatist and literary critic. Being Born in Nigeria, one of the most linguistically and culturally secluded countries in the world, he learnt early in life the complexities and challenges of diversity. He was always a follower of the right to free speech and was a strong believer in the power of words, saying, " To utter is to alter". He had written a poem called " Not My Business" which Osundare used to object to the dictatorship that ruled his country under General Sani Abacha from 1993 to 1998. During Abacha's rule, writing poetry was considered a dangerous activity. Osundare regularly wrote poems for a Nigerian national newspaper which commented on the lives of people in that country. As a result, he was frequently called to account by security agents and quizzed about what his poems meant and to whom they referred. Osundare himself says, " With the kind of poetry I write, I can never be the dictator's friend. So I get a knock on the door at two in the morning a couple of times." The poet criticises people who allow injustices to go on as long as it does not directly affect them. He suggests that if no one stands up against military dictatorship, cruelty, poverty and injustice, it will, eventually, affect their lives. Structure " Not My Business" contains four stanzas. Three of these stanzas are of same length and structure (four lines, then 3 indented lines). This creates a slower rhythm, possibly because of the theme of the poem and the need of each stanza having to sink in. There is also repetition of three lines in the first three stanzas: " What business of mine is it So long they don't take the yam From my savouring mouth?" This repetition emphasizes the state of mind the person being written about is in. He will stand back to defend himself but will not defend others because he

believes it is " Not My Business". Language Niyi uses personification in lines 3-4 in the first stanza: " And stuffed him down the belly of the waiting jeep". By using this personification, the reader gets a powerful image of the jeep becoming something evil lying in wait for its victims. This conveys the jeep as a sort of beast not an inanimate object. She also uses similes to create an imagery which makes the poem descriptive. For instance, " They beat him soft like clay" (line 2, first stanza). This creates a strong image of a man critically injured and weak. Also clay in the reader's mind can be moulded to different forms. So the writer uses the noun 'clay' to show the man's beliefs being moulded to suit the government. Presumably Osundare wants us to believe that a number of men and women of Nigeria are treated this way every day. The feelings in this poem show his emotions towards the people of Nigeria and how he acknowledged the fact that people could hunt him down but it was not in his power to stop anything from happening in Nigeria. The very last stanza displays how he also had fear in his heart but he had seen this in the past that one day it would be him they'd come for. In my opinion, " Not My Business" is a great poem which excels in many ways. It displays the threats to all of Nigerian people during the reign of a certain general. The writer creates such imagery that emotively captures the reader and forcing them to realize the dangers. Surely, " Not My Business" was created to show differences off two different races' but there is only one; the human race.