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THE PERFUMED FARMER
(to Mofunanya who dreams dreams)

By

EMEKA OKEKE-EZIGBO

His forbears sprung from a sinewy
ancestry of simple farmers
and retilled the soils their grandmen tilled,
and out of the music of hoetoil raised
robust ridges of humble symmetry,
and grew gourds that blossomed, their long
stems not hindered by land boundaries;
scanty leafed tendrils masked large
tubers which clustered the barns,
maize blades chimed in the wind, corn
ripened, flavouring with nature's mint;
hens pecked in their order and
came home to roost.

Then he emerged -
cheeks swollen with *Lactogen*,
eyes impatient with conquest fire.
He mapped out farmlands stretching
from the river's end to the mountain's
beginning;
ploughs were set loose and fields
laden with calcium and phosphates,
specimen NS 1 replaced 'pagan' maize
and seed yams were 'cured';
scarecrows were donned with spectacles,
burglar alarms installed to betray
monkeys:
hens were yoked with 'cross-breeds'
and became 'poultry.'

And the yam tendrils displayed richgreen
foilage with slender tubers -
some tubers grew outside
and rotted a day after harvest
or, boiled in time, dissolved
in the enamel pot;

