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FREEDOM IN THE NEW AIR

By

Tijan M. Sallah

Once my exiled brother and sisters come back
There is hope.

Then the dry brown thorns of yesterday
Will be turned to green petals.

One will grab a hoe

And walk to the peanut fields.

Another will melt the iron and carve the wood

To make hoes and ploughs.

There will be no time

To sit in cigarette-perfumed restaurants

And parrot about "the system"--

The politics of blind corruption

Of the clandestine and snake-like moves

Of sneaky public officials, ministers

And members of parliament, on

The cowries taxed from the people.

There will be no hours

For careless loafing.

For the fresh new air

And the stormy breeze coming from the shores

Will not permit it.

Each will sit on his fertile yard.

And laugh when there is need to laugh

And sigh when boredom falls

On the inexorable loafer.

Freedom will then mean

Rain dropping on the calloused hands

Of workers; likewise fire

On the tar-colored buttocks of loafers.