

Seven and seven pots of poetry

1. Potter's sweat

Sticky, slimy, and alluring,
Clay binds and winds,
Through fine fingers.
Painful sweat,
And joyful giving,
Transport substance,
To abode of victory,
As image and visage,
Grow and give form,
To fine new baby:
Elegant pot,
Wrought by painful fingers,
Of joyous acolyte of Earth.

2. Shrine pot

She stands aloof,
Smiling in unsealed joy.
Her long neck,
With elegant lines,
Forces passers to turn,
And seek what makes hearts,
Jump in unexpected ecstasy.
They stare as her plumpness,
Wrapped in intricate designs,
Of indigo,
consume adoration.

The worshipper prays,
To place a gift,
At her feet,

A chance to touch,
To feel, to see,
If she is real.

3. Musical pot

Standing alone in arena,
The evening sun washes
Her black brown skin,
With shades of red and gold.
She smiles and shines,
From sweetness of known secret
Of dancing festive season:

That old and young must bend to her,
For,
Her voice so deep and light,
So tall and small,
So plump and slim,
Chameleon of the arena,
Must make all bones tremble
To the rhythm of its call.

4. Dream pot

He stays too long
In village stream,
"For tide is high",
He says, and stays
to lie in green shades,
Of fleshy pines,
Feeding eyes,
On shadows of maids,
Washing pots for nuptial feast.

5. Water pot

Like fun fair,
We sing the welcome,
Song of new moon,
Smiling and open,
Like fresh water pot,
Only to find,
The grabbing and gripping
Of hungry cups,
Too tiresome,
As they hunt and hurt,
Like fire flies,
The night fire.

6. Wholesome pot

Like twin shells of ocean clamps,
She clasps her supple legs,
Seeking shelter,
In cool clear banks,
Of island's greenery.
But,
Come night dancers,
Seeking fresh sport,
To pull her legs apart,
Spread them in sun,
For all to toss and turn,
As they ride across,
The windy veld,
For their wild sport.

7. Lonely pot

New pot sneers at age marks:
The black and green moulds,
On skin of once supple flesh.
Signs of active years
In sun-perched field.

New pot shines in readiness,
For tilling and digging,
That beckon green and white
Parasites of lonely pots.

8. Endowed pot

Too long she waited,
Watching lofty feathers
Fall at her free feet,
Without touching or moving,
Without plucking a plume,
To grace lushly hair,
Glittering with blackness.
She must be mad, they say,
Or maybe born foolish.

A land struck by spirits,
They also say,
Never knows itself.

9. Half-baked pot

Too soon she filled her pot,
When the flow was still full.
Had she waited,
Like those,
Still collecting mud,

Waiting for ebb,
That would stop
The riot in the waters,
She would not sigh in the sun
When others sing in praise of their sun.

She plunged headlong,
Filling her pot,
With hasty hands,
When nuptial spirits,
Were still at work in the deep,
Collecting skyey and sunny metal,
With which to fill patient pots.

10. Choicest pot

Obi-ugo,*
That's what they call you,
The one who makes mortals,
Arrange wrestling matches,
Hoping to claim,
The choicest pot,
While others seek her shadow,
And malevolent tongues
Choke with venom of thwarted insult.

11. Hasty pot

He seized and squeezed,
Hurting with sweet sweetness,
Of fleshy matchet.
He puffs smooth chest,
Like proud winner

* Whitish or yellowish kolanut, usually rare and highly valued.

Of ebune Ikeji,*
Only to find,
He consumed the pot
And blunted his matchet.

12. Broken pot

Rubbed and oiled,
Fresh green pot,
Shines and smiles,
Like fresh egg,
Awaiting soft hands,
Only to find
Sudden pain,
In one careless move
That scatters shell,
Into two point eight
Billion bits.

13. Riding high

She rides high,
Balanced on the head,
Of full moon maid,
Making routine round,
To sombre stream,
Where suitors
Collect to select
Choice mates,
From Earth's bedchamber,
Where maidens make rounds,
to wash, fetch and search,
For Choice clay

* Prize-ram of the Ikeji, New Year festival of the Aro. The contest is open to mystically powerful people

For preening and trimming,
For building anew,
The water pot.

14. Portrait

Edikaikon,*
Cooked by careful loving hands.

Edikaikon,
Gleams and shines like rainbow,
With red, green, and black,
Of sweet pepper, water leaf,
and fresh water fish,
dancing in red stream of palm.

Well-cooked pot,
Sign of sacred sweat- of Baule** artist.
You gleam and shine,
dazzle and attract,
lovers and thieves alike:
Defenders of elephant,
Plunderers of ivory.

Assie,***
Whose loving breasts,
Like those of Ngum-Ngumi,****
The ancestral pot of Ganda,
Stretched far and wide,
Through lands that nurtured Lumumber,
Do not relent-In this basic battle,
For snake does not beget a short.one.

* A delicacy popularised by the Cross River people of Nigeria.

** An ethnic group in Ivory Coast.

*** Earth.

**** An ethnic group noted for pottery in the northeastern part of Nigeria.