

About a close encounter with an often heard yet not easily seen small owl in Ghana, West Africa.

Owlet discovery

A long time pursuit
Of chasing some birds,
Occurred again today.
One's seen before
Were all that we saw,
All that came our way.
A pleasant surprise
Greeted our eyes,
As we gazed at plumage
All brown.
An owl with four eyes
With a look of surprise
Turned our heads
To gaze at its frown.

Two big eyes on its nape
Which cannot see,
Surrounded with white
To scare enemies.
Two at the front
Not as bold as these
Looked acutely at us
As we scanned the trees.

After a while it flew
Unlike any owl, undulating,
With strength
For such a small fowl.

The poem below came from my experience in a dry dusty environment.

West African Dust ***or*** ***Aeolian Saharan Sands***

Dust, driven before Saharan winds,
Into the run down metropolis of the north.
Collecting in every conceivable, unresistant crack,
Coating surfaces of home and work.
A losing battle of Harmattan days.
Walking barefoot across hard, smoothed, stone,
Even there it lurks - to cling, unbidden
Upon open flesh.
Outside is true grits freedom,
Where speeding cyclist thrown awry
By clogging, mercurial attempts,
Holds course determined.
Following a cloud churned up,

Inevitably eye catching and stinging,
Evincing burning delights!
Early rains restrict its freedom,
Dampening ground, so sticking
More determinedly than before,
Roughening the skin it delights in cleaving to.

Stars

Oh the wonder and the glory
His shining stars to behold
In the blackness of the night
Where points of light
Draw our eyes right on.
The vastness stirs our hearts
And causes us to think
Upon his creation time
And we wonder, humbly realising
Why were we so blind.
That God so wise in all he's made
Has made the constellations thus
That we see them set in place
Being great comfort to us.
Cause we realise that he has made them stay
For years and years up in the black
It's been that way.
We think upon God's greatness and
All his vastness too
His omnipotence, omniscience and
His omnipresent view.
We see them so small - also like a bird
That doesn't worry, fret or fear
As it is held in his great hand
And why not us the same?

After work whilst in Tamale, in Ghana, I would ascend to the top of four storey building where I lived to unwind and look over the part of the street and town I lived in. This particular time I discovered these birds flying very close to where I was watching.

Ode to Usshers Spinetailed Swift (Mottled spinetail)

Sitting upon the flat-ted roof
I gaze around me at the ever blue,
Not pierced at all by shady white
Or colours of another hue.
A scything brown shape cuts across
This vast azure expanse
Burning a trail not visible to naked eye.
It glides and swerves from left to right.
Careering head long, boldly
In its dazzling flight.
The flash of white upon its

Rump shows clear and true.
I peer at it hard to make out
Another whitish view.
It rasps at me, with rhythmic, pulsing,
Bursts, of rapid gunfire, screech.
And turns my head beyond
Its dizzying reach.
Two more attacking, wild, fighter, darts
Burst into sight
And add fresh courage
To the leaders brazen flight.