

Tzain sat up, drenched again from another restless night. He exhaled, a breath that seemed like it had been in his chest forever, stale.

“Oorun, what took you so long” he nearly cried as he waded through the pool of water in his bed.

“Thank you again for saving me”, Tzain whispers to Oorun through sweaty palms.

And so  
the day began.

“Tzain, the chickens”, baba or father called from the back of the compound. For mornings meant protection, it meant chores, it meant family, it meant work and Tzain was ok with that. For all was perfect under Oorun’s light he thought as his feet kicked up sand as he barreled through towards the back of the compound.

And so  
that day, Tzain completed his chores and sat outside melting like a creampop. He never seemed to notice the heat as beads of sweat trickled down his neck, anything was better than night.

Under the light of Oorun, Tzain could see the entire village and beyond. Straight ahead was the mix of greens, reds, purples, and golds of the Ooja or the marketplace. To the right he could see the deep and vibrant greens that seemed to float on forever. Beyond that the sea, blue as the sky above and sparkling like endless diamonds, and the endless shades of deep obsidian, coppers, and tans that moved about. For under the light of Oorun, everything and anything stood illuminated, bright and brilliant in endless light.

And so  
Tzain sat against the hard sandy floor. He retraced the previous days' work in the sand; coarse, dry, safe. And instantly he was transported into the

sweet afternoon dreams. With Oorun everything was his and he was everything.

Like a wolf in the night, the evenings breeze crept up on Tzain, startling him awake. For as night began to take hold, Tzain could almost see their shapes hidden in the shadows. For unlike the day's joy, night brought terrors that taunted and tortured. They followed him everywhere he went, relentless in their rage. Sometimes small creatures crept and crawled throughout the compound. Other times it was humongous shapes that hounded the halls and the rooms. Other times things climbed into his bed, and choked the joy he cherished that day.

And so tonight he could feel them; their breath, hot on his neck. He could hear them softly stalking through the weeds. Their assaults, unpredictable and unrelenting.

And so that night Tzain crept back into the compound like a thief in the night. He could feel them there, waiting for him, hungry for his fear! "Please, come quick" He whispers to Oorun through sweaty palms.

He sat up, drenched again from another night. Exhale. Whispers high to the sky, through sweaty palms. Tzain sits up ready for Oorun's presence.

And so the day begins. "my hand" Iya or mother beckons as they begin their trip to the ɔɔjà. The greens, reds, golds and purples are only a fraction of the colors on full display at the town marketplace. For here, there was all color, shimmer, and shade. scarves, and sheets. He walked past shops full of meat that smelled rich like baba's meat stew. Knives so sharp they cut people when they ran their fingers along their blades. And even smells sweeter than mama's bean pies, how could it be?

“For the skies” was all he could mutter as it caught his eye, the size of a chicken egg and as blue as the sea. And deep in its core, a center of fire. The most brilliant thing he’d ever seen! Next to it, sat Mama Zelig, hair full of white curls, wild and untamed. She was the town's Seer, connected to the Gods, Iya always told him.

“Tzain, keep up!” Iya called from three stalls down.

For the rest of the day the stone’s fire seemed to burn in the center of Tzain chest.

And so he set off to find that stone. Tzain returned to the Ojò of gold, purples and green hunting for the blue crystal with the sea of fire. But he could not find that crystal.

And so he wandered, until he felt the smack of night’s breeze. It had come so suddenly and he was so far away, trapped it seemed in this land of dark, strange colors.

And so he ran and could hear the creatures running being him, chasing him, hunting him. He cried, he ran, and he cried, until darkness fell upon him and so did the creatures. And so he ran and cried.

“Stop” he heard faintly, through his tears. “Stop and come here!” He couldn’t tell if it was real or a creature. And then MAMA Zelig stepped out from behind the last Ojò stall.

“In here boy” she commanded.

Inside was a deep purple. The color was like Iya’s most brilliant aso, the one she wore on the most special days. The walls were littered with stones of deep red, like the clay of pots. Shimmering golds and platinum. There were

rubies, jades, lavenders, quartz. Rings of silvers, jewels of every size, brilliant. “For the skies.”. For a moment, the terrors seemed to go away.

“Help me, please, they’re after me, please, mama Zelig” I don’t want to die!  
“My child, who?”

“Them” he pointed nowhere.

“Calm child, don;t be afraid. Let me show you something”

Mama Zelig, drew back a red curtain revealing a set up stairs leading up.

“Climb.” her grey eyes seemed to say.

And so they climbed until they reached the top, Tzain was higher than he’d even been

“What do you see?”

Tzain could see everything, the Ojò of greens, purples, reds and golds, he could see the sea, shimmering afar, he could see the deeps greens floating on forever. he could even see his compound way at the end of the road.

“But how” asked Tzain

“Look up.”

Tzain looked up, eyes as wide as footballs. But how, it doesn’t burn. He thought, remembering the pain of his first attempt at staring at mighty Oorun.

“Haha my child” This is “osupa” or the moon and today it shines its brightest.

“The creatures you see live here” poking the side of head with her long, skinny nail. At night, without osupa our minds fill the darkness with many wonders, some enchanting, and others taunting, terrifying.

“What do you notice about things here?” Zelig asked.

Tzain stood, frozen in wonder. “That the world is just the same at night as it is during the day. And there is no need to be afraid of things I know to be true.” His voice light, barely escaping his lips

“Ah yes!” replied Mama Zelig, through a wide smile. Skin a reddish copper under Osupa's light. For your mind is the most important piece of you. For the mind has the power to change your reality for the better or for the worst. So fill your mind with the goodness you want to see and watch your world take shape before you.

By. Justin Hawkins