

## N'ikpeazu

Ha si, n'onwụ, ihe niile ga adi, di mma  
Ma lee, nwanne m

Oge ihapuru, ulo niile dele juu

Nne anyi chotara aga duchie onu ya

Ma were omu kejisie aka ya

N'ezi e, anyi achola gi, chosie gi ike, n'ikuku

N'ebe dum itiri okwe, ma kwaa iko —

Umunwanyị gi na ha mere ya gbara aka-ebe n'ikuku fepuru gi fepuru tupu ha mara k'isi ato

Ubochi taa n'isi inyi gi nne anyi agbabiela ihe jiko anyi na gi

Dika ukochukwu n'akasi anyi obi n'ihe niile furu-efu k'anyị ga-enwetaghachi

I lee anya n'ime akwa gi, n'ime akp'ukwu gi

Agh, ihe niile ga-egbu anyi — njọ?



## Later

In death, they say, bro, everything will be, is beautiful.

When you left, silence attacked us.

Mum sewed up her lips, raffia-tied up her hands

& we really did search, for you, we searched

At the brothel, where the women you did it with testified

The wind grabbed you before they could get a taste of you

Mum has cut the tie at your grave

While the priest in consoling us said of a time everything lost will be restored

I look at your clothes, your shoes

Agh, the things that will kill us — ugliness?

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Poet Akpa Arinzechukwu is the author of *City Dwellers*. They were shortlisted for the FT/Bodley Head Essay Prize & longlisted for Koffi Addo Prize for Creative Nonfiction. Artist Amy Meissner's textile-based work has shown nationally and resides in the permanent collection at the Anchorage Museum.