nally on floors of light, their grey gowns swaying, ladies of gentle dust (p. 34).

All this is richly visual and wonderfully amusing on our observer's level; yet the undertones of loneliness constantly and increasingly draw us into the participant's level as well.

Catastrophe occurs — the Webley-Pryces and all the other British withdraw. Their places are filled by Africans, "and in Mr. Archipelago's shop the whirr of the hair-dryer was heard less and less." At the very nadir of their misfortunes Archipelago reveals that like every good sorcerer he even has a secret store of gold, hidden in the belly of a little wooden elephant. It is an ancient Ashanti necklace and he tries to give it to Doree to support her for a while since it seems inevitable that they must separate, each to find some other way to make a bare living. "She turned to him, almost angrily. 'Don't you think I'd miss you?' she cried. 'Don't you know how it would be — for me?'" This is their climactic moment of truth, "of unreasonable and terrifying hope." But they are both of the genus "sensitive plant," and they retreat from the confrontation, each still solitary and intuitively protective of the mutual need and devotion that they have been on the brink of revealing.

Then we are allowed to become observers again. The marvellous comic turn in the story occurs. Their landlord, Mr. Tachie, grumbling about the new and frivolous dreams of his daughter, Mercy, unwittingly hands them their salvation. A new sign announces it: "Archipelago and Dorree, Barbershop, All-Beauty Salon, African Ladies a Specialty." Mercy Tachie, who wants to look like a westernized city girl, is their first customer and her transformation — softly-curled hair, brown make-up that matches her own skin, crimson lipstick — is glorified by a parade — a great celebration for Mercy and her friends, a victory parade for Archipelago and Doree.

Spilling down the street was an impromptu procession. Every girl in town appeared to be there, hips and shoulders swaying, washed feet stepping lightly, hands clapping, cloths of blue and magenta and yellow fluttering around them like the flags of nations while they danced... Beside Mercy, as her guard and her champions, there pranced and jittered half a dozen young men, in khaki trousers and brilliantly flower-printed shirts... They sang at full strength...

Everybody like Mercy Tachie
Everybody, everybody
Everybody, everybody
Everybody say she fine pas' all —
(pp. 46-7).

And finally, in the story's last lines, observer and participant become one — and one with Doree and Archipelago as well as they walk contentedly by the seashore.

Mr. Archipelago sniffed the brine-laden wind.

"Smell the sea, Doree? A perfume for our collection."

She smiled, "What shall we call it?"

"Oh, nothing too ornate," he said lightly. Perhaps eau d' exile would do."

The sea spray was bitter and salt, but to them it was warm, too. They watched on the sand their exaggerated shadows, one squat and bulbous, the other bone-slight and clumsily elongated, pigeon and crane. The shadows walked with hands entwined like children who walk through the dark (pp. 48-9).

Sorcerer and apprentice, lonely exiles, sensitive plants, Everyman and Everywoman — and throughout, **saving laughter.**

We all know that, to Margaret, the climactic moment for Hagar was her recognition, when Mr. Troy sang the Old Hundredth for her of her need to rejoice:

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with joyful voice.
Him serve with mirth, His praise forthtell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

... I would have wished it. This knowing comes upon me so forcefully, so shatteringly, and with such a bitterness as I have never felt before. I must always, always, have wanted that — simply to rejoice (The Stone Angel, p. 292).

We know too, that all the Manawaka women bring themselves to us — and bring us to ourselves — through laughter. Margaret's humour is what Thomas Carlyle called long ago, the highest kind — the humour of fellow-feeling.

It must be five years ago now that she called me one day in great excitement and delight: "I have found the title for my book," she said. "It's from that hymn we love, *Lord of the Dance*."

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he;
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.

Dance on the Earth, her memoir, will add to her already great legacy to us — and you may be sure that in it there is much **saving laughter.**

CHINUA ACHEBE

Two Poems from *Beware Soul Brother*

The Explorer

Clear-sighted with a clarity
rarely encountered in dreams
my Explorer-Self stood a little
distant but somewhat fulfilled;
behind
him a long misty quest; unanswered
questions put to sleep needing
no longer to be raised.

Beware, Soul Brother

remember also your children
for they in their time will want
a place for their feet when
they come of age and the dance
of the future is born
for them.