

**Africa/ Senegal****The tireless one**

*A poem prepared for the West African Fair for  
Artisanally Processed Fish*

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You are the tireless one  
Who feeds our people and doesn't count the cost  
You are the woman  
Who comes home late in the joy-filled evenings;  
Listen, woman of the landing site  
Listen, you crafter of our hopes  
Woman from the muddy ground  
Struggling in the bad weather  
Offer me a basket filled with *bonga*<sup>1</sup>  
Give me those pelagic fish  
that give sweat flavours  
to the peanut sauce  
and to the palm oil.

Amazon from the jetties  
Your breast is filled with hope  
Like a sailing-boat at sea  
Woman who comes home late in the evening  
and watches all night  
over the smoking grills  
Woman smoker with fiery hair  
Woman of the *poto-potos*<sup>2</sup>  
You carry within you  
Lakes with the names of Princesses and Queens  
Your body exudes the sweet smell  
Of the fish smoked by your sweat  
Woman smoker,  
I'll write your name in red-letters, make you a knot  
of joy.

Woman,  
How many mouths have you fed  
With the milk from your breasts  
And with the beads of sweat from your brow?  
What joy for the town  
and village folk of this beautiful country.  
What joy for the fishermen  
And for the consumers!

Listen,  
*Piroguier*<sup>3</sup> hoping for a better tomorrow,  
Do you know how fond this great people are  
Of the *konkoé*<sup>4</sup> from the improved *banda*<sup>5</sup>?  
Pray for the woman smoker

Who labours on the jetties  
Watching the horizon  
in search of the fishermen's arrival  
Listen to the *flouf flouf* of the pelagics  
Joy is dawning  
On the ocean of hope.

Listen  
Listen, *piroguier*  
The smoke reddened grills  
The *banda* engulfed in smoke  
is the precious creation  
Of this woman, the author of our life  
whose body exhales  
All the perfumes of the earth.

<sup>1</sup> Bonga shad (*Ethmalosa*)

<sup>2</sup> Coastal marshes

<sup>3</sup> Canoe-man

<sup>4</sup> Sea catfish (*Arius*)

<sup>5</sup> Oven for smoking fish