

MY GOD AND ANCESTORS An Ibo traditional poem

My God and ancestors, ¹
I thank you
For letting me see this day;
May I continue to see more
Till my hair becomes white; ⁵
May the hoe never cut my feet;
Protect me and my household
From evil men and spirits;
I wish no man evil,
But if anyone says I have lived too long, ¹⁰
Let him go before me to see
What it is like in the land of the dead;
The man who holds to owho¹
Cannot get lost in his journey.

1. Owho, is a word which has a dot directly beneath the two O's. Owho is a sacred staff which symbolizes righteousness and so protects its owner. (line 13)