It has become a truism many literary scholars believe that nobody writes better after winning the Nobel Prize for Literature. While this could be true of most writers who won the prize at the zenith of their writing careers or had peaked in their writings, there are exceptions whose writings, at least in one of the genres they practice, surpass in creative strength their pre-Nobel achievements in that particular genre. Doubtless, some writers win the Nobel Prize toward the end of their lives or careers and might have gone into creative menopause. However, in recent times, Derek Walcott’s *White Egrets* has won the T. S. Eliot Prize, Britain’s most prestigious award for poetry, long after he won the Nobel Prize. Walcott’s collection of poems on ageing and dying is described as “a moving, risk-taking and technically flawless book by a great poet” (*The Independent on Sunday*, January 25, 2011).

Wole Soyinka may not have had the same output overall as before he won the Nobel Prize because his dramatic and fiction output is slim and not with the same prolific rate and creative energy as before. There is nothing Soyinka has published in drama since 1986 that compares to the dramatic success of *Death and the King’s Horseman*, a play whose poetic drama of existence the Nobel Committee specifically cited for the award. Nor has he produced plays of the stature of *A Dance of the Forests*, *The Road*, or *Kongi’s Harvest* since 1986 when he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. *A Play of Giants, From Zia with Love*, and *King Babu* have not had the success of the earlier plays. The dearth of output since the Nobel award is far more acute in fiction. Soyinka has brought out no fictional work since receiving the Nobel award and so his fictional works remain *The Interpreters* (1965) and *Season of Anomie* (1973). He has come
out with a nonfictional work, You Must Set Forth at Dawn, a prose work that compares with Ake: Years of Childhood and Isara even though one might argue that it does not possess the former’s poetic lyricism.

It is in poetry, however, that Soyinka has produced two major works that appear to be not only the culmination of his poetic writing career but also offer new vistas in vision and techniques to his poetic writing. These two post-Nobel poetry collections are: Mandela’s Earth and Other Poems (1988) and Sarmakand and Other Markets I Have Known (2002). These two literary works represent Soyinka not only covering what he has been for so long associated with as a poet but also at his peak and shedding many of the “euromodernist” features that clutter such earlier works as Idanre and Other Poems and A Shuttle in the Crypt. This chapter aims to discuss these two poetic works in comparison to Soyinka’s earlier works and situate them in the poet’s overall literary achievements. The chapter also opines that a writer can do more in a chosen genre even after winning the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Both Mandela’s Earth and Other Poems and Sarmakand and Other Markets I Have Known are powerful poetic works that place Wole Soyinka on a very high pedestal in contemporary African poetry. It is not that Soyinka was not recognized as a poet before their publications, even though his poetry has always been in the shadow of his plays. However, his pre-Nobel poetry has been a source of controversy, especially since Chinweizu and others launched a vitriolic attack on his poetry in their Toward the Decolonization of Modern African Literature in 1983. Many critics have continued to harp on his “obscurantist” tendencies in those pre-Nobel poems. But Soyinka is an artist who is very aware that culture is not static, and, since literature is a cultural production, his writing is not static. The post-Nobel writings of Soyinka, especially his poetry, are the result of a dynamic artistic evolution that represents the poet’s continued development, maturity, experience, and ability to relate vision or content to form or craft. These new poems generally do not suffer from the “euromodernist disease” that Chinweizu and others accuse Soyinka of. These later poems are generally elevated but not bombastic and combine a sharp vision of humanity and society with a refined artistic craft that make the poetry appealing in what Mazisi Kunene, in an interview with Dike Okoro, calls “heavy stuff” instead of the padded “light stuff” of many contemporary Western and African poets. These poems seem to be a strengthening of the poetic gains of A Shuttle in the Crypt, his prison poems, and Ogun Abibiman in which