

Liberian Literary Magazine

KWEE

Dec Issue

**Happy
Holidays**

**Angelique
McGlotten**

**Authors of
the Month**



**Shandreka
Jones**

Featured Poets:

Althea Romeo Mark
Richard Wilson Moss
Herbert Logerie
Aken Wariebi
Matanneh Dunbar
Varney Gean
Nene Tetteh Adusu
Ngozi Olivia Osuoha

**Book
Reviews**

Pre. Sirleaf
@ 16 Days of
Activism

**Ake Festival
Liberian Proverbs**

Teen Authors
**Huda Ayaz
Belle Kiazolu**

Liberian Literary Magazine

KWEE





Overview:

New Look

Hurray! You noticed the new design as well right. Well thanks to you all, we are here today. We are most grateful to start our print issue. This would not have happened without your dedicated patronage, encouragement and of course, the belief you placed in our establishment. We look forward to your continual support as we strive to improve on the content we provide you.

Our Commitment

We at Liberian Literature Review believe that change is good, especially, the planned ones. We take seriously the chance to improve, adopt and grow with time. That said we still endeavor to maintain the highest standard and quality despite any changes we make. We can comfortably make this

commitment; *the quality of our content will not be sacrificed in the name of change.* In short, we are a fast growing publisher determined to keep the tradition of providing you, our readers, subscribers and clients with the best literature possible.

What to Expect

You can continue to expect the highest quality of Liberian literary materials from us. The services that we provided that endeared us to you and made you select us as the foremost Liberian literary magazine will only improve. Each issue, we will diversify our publication to ensure that there is something for everyone; as a nation with diverse culture, this is the least we can do. We thank you for your continual support.

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- 2015 Stories of Success
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- Poetry Section
- New Releases
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- Meet the Team
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**Liberian
Literature
Review**

Segment Contents

Editorial

In our editorial, one should expect topics that are controversial in the least. We will shy away from nothing that is deemed important enough. The catch theme here is addressing the tough issues

Risqué Speak

This new segment to our print covers the magical language of the soul, music. It will go from musical history, to lyrics of meaning to the inner workings of the rhythm, beats, rhyme, the way pieces connect and importantly, the people who make the magic happen.

Our host and or his guests will delve into the personal life of our favorite musicians, bands and groups like those that we have not seen. This is more than their stories; it is more like the stories behind the stories. They'd shine the spotlight on the many people that come together to make it all happen on and off stage. Watch out for this segment.

Kuluba's Korner

The owl spills out wisdom like no one else; won't you agree? Our own KLM hosts this corner and she shies away from nothing or no one with her whip- the **truth**. They say fewer things hurt more than the honest, uncoated truth. Well, she does that but with spices of humor and light-heartedness like only her can.

Authors of the Month Profile

This is one of our oldest segments. In fact, we started off with showcasing authors. It is dear to us. Each month, we highlight two authors. In here we do a brief profile of our selected authors.

Authors of the Month Interview

This is the complimentary segment to the Authors of the Month Profile one of our oldest segments. In here, we interview our showcased authors. We let them tell us about their books, characters and how they came to life. Most importantly, we try to know their story; how they make our lives easier with their words. In short, we find out what makes them thick.

Articles

Our articles are just that, a series of major articles addressing critical issues. A staffer or a contributor often writes it.

Book Review

One of our senior or junior reviewers picks a book and take us on a tour. They tell us the good, not-so-good and why they believe we would be better of grabbing a copy for ourselves or not. Occasionally, we print reviews by freelancers or other publications that grab our interests.

Education Spotlight

Our commitment and love to education is primary. In fact, our major goal here is to educate. We strive for educating people about our culture through the many talented writers- previous and

present. In this segment, we identify any success story, meaningful event or entity that is making change to the national education system. We help spread the news of the work they are doing as a way to get more people on board or interested enough to help their efforts. Remember, together, we can do more.

Artist of the Month

We highlight some of the brilliant artists, photographers, designers etc. We go out of the box here. Don't mistake us to have limits on what we consider arty. If it is creative, flashy, mind-blowing or simply different, we may just showcase it.

We do not neglect our artist as has been traditional. We support them, we promote them and we believe it is time more people did the same. Arts have always form part of our culture. We have to change the story. We bring notice to our best and let the world know what they are capable of doing. We are 100% in favor of Liberian Arts and Artists; you should get on board.

Poem of the Month

Our desire to constantly find literary talent remains a pillar of our purpose. We know the talent is there; we look for it and let you enjoy it. We find them from all over the country or diaspora and we take particular care to find emerging talents and give them a chance to prove themselves. Of course, we bring you experienced poets to dazzle your mind!.

Editor's Desk

Year End Message



2015 began on a great note for us here at [KWEE](#). What's more amazing is that, it is ending on an even greater note.

We transitioned smoothly into a full e-zine and for the first half of the year, we were publishing bimonthly. To improve the quality demanded, as well as being practical, [KWEE](#) took the last half of the year to expand into territories we had little to no representation. This paid off handsomely. In fact, in some ways, more than we had anticipated. For example, our presence in Europe took us by surprise. Not only did we get contributors from there but mainland Europe proved to be our fastest growing region outside of Africa. Of course, the US remains strongly lodged in the top spot but that is no surprise.

We also managed to get on board more poets and writers from all over the world. We hope to continue our diversity drive into 2016 and feature even more amazing content from around the world.

Here at [KWEE](#), we firmly believe in promoting emerging and undiscovered talents.

Our primary philosophy regarding talent and creativity is this: "Creativity has no color and is fluid in form and shape." True to this belief has been our conscious effort to bring talented poets and writers that are, for the most part, undiscovered or just getting their feet in the waters. We provide a platform and expose them to an audience far greater than any they have been exposed to. Interestingly, they step up each time and do not disappoint. Expect more of this. For as long as [KWEE](#) exists, be assured that we will go to the fringes, step out of the box and break the norm if it means finding talents that need to be exposed. [KWEE](#) remains a home to African writers/poets where others are shutting doors to you.

Demonstrating our commitment, we are pleased to announce that the first of our two anthologies, *Portor-Portor*, will be out shortly, thanks to the tireless work of the editors, [Elma Shaw](#), [Ophelia Lewis](#), and [Aken Wariebi](#).

Portor-Portor is a collection of fifty of the best poems by African poets. About half of the poets featured in *Portor-Portor* are emerging voices from the African continent.

All of this was possible primarily because of you—our many readers and subscribers. You kept coming back, asking for more, insisting that we give quality upon quality. This meant more work, but we didn't mind [okay, not entirely, 😊 maybe a little] as long as it made you happy enough return.

We express profound gratitude to our team—every single member, our contributors from the world over. Special mention to segment hosts and our editors. You all make us what we are today.

As we enter 2016 where bigger things are in the pipeline, we can only afford to be optimistic yet determined to meet each challenge square on. I remain excited as plans for our literary festival, our literary and essay competitions and other projects as on course.

[KWEE](#) is happy to be in the fore front of renaissance in the Liberian literary community . we thank all those that continue to collaborate with us and look forward to those that will soon join.

Finally, to those countless people behind the scenes that make KWEE a reality, we thank you.

*Happy Holidays and
Happy New Year.
Enjoy 2016.*

Answers to Nov. Puzzle

Liberia UnScrabbled (a game book) Promotions

Product Details

Liberia UnScrabbled (a game book)

Author: **Ophelia S. Lewis**

Publisher: Village Tales Publishing

ISBN-13: 9780985362560

Format: Paperback (Nov. 1, 2015)

Size: 8.2 x 11

Pages: 200

Price: \$12.00 + \$4.30 Shipping & Handling

[US Addresses (Domestic and APO/FPO/DPO Mail)]

Genre: Humor & Entertainment, Puzzles & Games, (crossword, wordsearch, trivia, cryptogram, scramble)

200-page of NEVER-BEFORE-PUBLISHED puzzles devoted entirely to Liberia.

Crossword * Cryptogram * Scramble * Trivia * Word Search

If you have a chance to buy this book, buy two.

This book will definitely entertain you to no end, trying to come up with the trivia included.

Please let author know if you'd like it autographed. First 50 orders get a FREE "Liberia Unscrabbled" breast cancer awareness pencil to solve your puzzles. While supplies last.

Try these trivia questions... samples of what to expect in the book—LIBERIA UNSCRABBLED (a game book)

1. In what year was the settlement of Caldwell established?

- A. 1835
- B. 1840
- C. 1825**
- D. 1830

2. At its inception, what year did Liberia become a member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

- A. 1960
- B. 1961
- C. 1962
- D. 1963**

3. What is the number of seats in the House of Representatives?

- A. 30
- B. 73**
- C. 60
- D. 93

4. In what year the Liberian Dollar became the official currency of the Republic of Liberia?

- A. 1843
- B. 1943**
- C. 1983
- D. 2003

5. Liberia Supreme Court is consists of;

- A. One Chief Justice & four Associate Justices**
- B. Five Chief Justices
- C. Three Chief Justices & two Associate Justices
- D. Two Chief Justices & Three Associate Justices

6. In what year was a medical school added to the University of Liberia?

- A. 1948
- B. 1958
- C. 1968**
- D. 1978

7 What is the only street in Monrovia to be named after a woman?

- A. Randall Street
- B. Lynch Street
- C. Newport Street**
- D. Gurley Street

8 In what year was Monrovia Breweries Inc. established?

- A. 1959
- B. 1960
- C. 1961**
- D. 1962

9. In what year was the Liberian Broadcasting Corporation (ELBC) established?

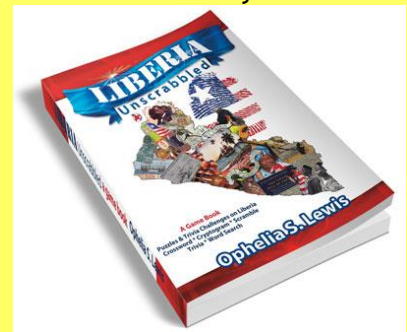
- A. 1960
- B. 1958
- C. 1961
- D. 1959**

10. In what year was color TV introduced in Liberia?

- A. 1987
- B. 1979**
- C. 1968
- D. 1952

11. This Liberian President was born in Bridgetown, Barbados (British West Indies)

- A. Garretson W. Gibson
- B. Daniel E. Howard
- C. Arthur Barclay**
- D. Edwin Barclay



Excerpts from Liberia Unscrabbled Ophelia S. Lewis

A Christmas Thanksgiving I Think I Think Too Much

Liberian Literary Magazine strives to bring you the best coverage of Liberian literary news. Here is what we covered in our November Issue. Figure out what words the clues represent, then find the words in the grid. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.



Wins Peace Award
 Living Through Poetry Author
 Like Mami Wata in Hiding Author
 An effort of Change
 What KWEE Promotes
 Purple Honey Lips Author
 Segment Content Reviews
 Art Contributor
 December Twenty-fifth
 Contributor
 Matanneh Dunbar's Poem
 Darlington Ifeanyi's Book
 Christmas Month
 Chief Editor
 Segment Hero Content
 Perry Mulubah's Book
 Children's Books Reviewer

Turtle Bay's Author
 Rique Speaks Host
 Featured Poet
 Heart of Greenness Author
 Art Contributor
 From Refugee to Prominence Author
 Ngozi Osuoha's Poem
 Kuluba's Segment Content
 Liberia Literary Magazine
 Resident Poet
 In Black and White Book
 O. Lewis' Puzzle Book
 Jonny Steinberg's
 Angelique McGlotten's Book
 Liberian Parables Author
 Daughters of Africa Author
 Contributor Kollie

Contributor Wilson
 Harrowing December Author
 Segment Host
 Varney Gean's Poem
 Thanksgiving Month
 Contributor Konneh
 Our Artificial Africa Author
 Senior Reviewer
 Segment Content Section
 Contributor Tulay
 Richard Moss' Book
 IT Editor & Designer
 Artist of the Month
 K-Moses Nagbe's Book
 The Bridge of Sigh Author

Short Story

The Annual Christmas Cuss-out

Cher Antoinette

One last verse of that annoying Christmas Carol and I would be released. Ah yes, three weeks of roaming the village and planning my exploits.

*"Oh come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!"*

Finally it was over. We stood still for the blessings and then filed out of the classroom which was doubling as a make-shift school hall. The roof of the old hall was damaged by the hurricane in August and this resulted in a gaping hole.

"Fwap, fwap, fwap!" The strips of tarpaulin kept a constant chatter as they flapped in the breeze. Head Master Sinckler said he was not going back in there until the Parish Council fixed it *"proper"*. Not *"properly"* but *"proper"*.

I grabbed my brown hand-me-down bag from the old wooden bench and made my way to the front gate of the school, walking in single file in front of the teachers who were waiting to send us off with their all but too cheery Feliz Navidads.

First in line was my form mistress Miss Betty Beckles; speckly Betty as we called her. She was a red-skinned spinster whose face was hard and full of freckles that pinpointed the way from her forehead to her chin. Despite her unfortunate and unattractive appearance, she was the nicest woman I had ever come across in all of my

nine years. And I mean nicest. Maybe I had a little crush on her. So I gave her my most handsome grin and opened my school bag to receive my term report book, Christmas present and slice of fruit pudding; greasy fruit pudding. How did I know it was going to be greasy? Well, the grey shop paper in which it was wrapped had already started to turn a darker colour. From experience (and plenty lashes with my mother's belt) I knew to keep it far away from my report book. The pages had already been attacked by the oil of last year's pudding, and it was obvious who had won that battle.

The final bell rang. The signal was given. Christmas had officially started and I ran through the rusty gate, jumped over the mossy gutter and made a bee-line for my favorite spot under the biggest tree at the end of the pasture.

It was December 13th and just after one o'clock in the afternoon. The December air felt good. The sun was not too hot and the wind was picking up, causing the pods of the tree above me to shake and rattle and at times give a menacing hiss. I heard my mother call this tree *'woman's tongue'* - I figure she would know better than anyone.

I decided that I would enjoy the greasy pudding right there because I didn't feel like sharing it. The last of my mother's four boys, I found it hard to keep anything for myself. My brothers were bigger than I was and they pushed me around all of the time. What made it worse was that my mother had some nauseating idea when I was born to call me Shirley. Only

God knows why and I refused to answer to that name and went by S. Nathaniel Gittens. It took three years of flogging, writing lines, and bloody fights before the headmaster of my school, at St. Judas Boys' Primary, agreed to my wishes.

I was now known as S. Nathaniel. They refused to drop the 'S' and that still annoyed me especially when the new kids found out what the 'S' stood for. My secret exposed, I would hunt them down. I had my pride and my good name to protect - at least the second one.

I ate my pudding and must have fallen asleep. Awaking with a start, I could hear the bell from the parish church ringing in the distance. Three bongs and I knew it was three o'clock. Picking up my bag, scrunching the pudding paper into a ball and pressing it into my secret hole at the base of the tree (I was not one to litter) I ran the remaining distance home. Tonight was to be the family meeting.

We gathered at the dining room table after dinner. My three brothers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke were chatting and ignoring me as usual. Matthew was the eldest at eighteen and exactly one year separated each of them from the other. I continued to play with my best friend Tommy who was under the table. Tickling my tabby's belly with my toes, he playfully tried to grab my little toe between his paws much like the green lizards he hunted in the bush next door.

The yellow-amber glass bead curtains that separated the kitchen from the dining room rustled and announced the entrance of my Mother. She came to the table with

the small red hard back book and bite-up yellow pencil that she always kept in her 'belongings', sat down, sighed and started the meeting.

"Children, your father is coming home on December 21st".

Mark mumbled under his breath causing my mother to deliver 'the look'; the scowl that instantly moves across space and whacks you up-alongside your head before you could even blink. I looked away quickly, hoping that I would not get any left-over stare that she was dishing out. I hated how I felt when I was given 'the look'.

"I need to go through the plans with you."

Matthew interrupted. "Mum," he started cautiously.

My mother responded with an abrupt "Yes?"

"Mum, Mum" Matt stuttered a bit, "it has now been for as long as I can remember that this has been going on..... every Christmas. When is it going to be any different?"

My brothers and I shared looks of disbelief. Had Matthew lost his mind?

Immediately I had a new found admiration for him. He continued to speak, even though I knew this was going to end very badly.

"Why does he keep coming back? He is not here most of the year."

Mama glared and Tommy ran from under the table with a start.

"He tries to be a father for two weeks....two weeks, not two months....two weeks, Mum!"

My mother held the yellow pencil tightly and I waited for it, and her, to snap.

"I really don't see the need for this meeting 'cause the same thing gonna happen. One, you gonna tell us that we have to be on our best p's and q's; two, you gonna share out the Christmas duties; three, you gonna tell us not to get in his way when he is here."

Mum's eyes were turning red.

"Well, this year it gonna be different. I am eighteen and I working. I have been helping with the things around here and so has Mark. I just tired of this shite and I am not standing for it anymore." Matthew scraped the chair backwards and stood up.

"Matthew Leopold Gittens, sit down!"

The small dining room shook.

"You are not the man of this house! You will not speak to me like that!"

"Neither is he," Matt screamed. "He is never here! He does not know us! Do you think sending home a barrel twice a year is sufficient?"

Mummy was stunned. The yellow pencil finally snapped.

My mother leaned forward onto the table and held her head in her hands. Her shoulders started to shake. I was the closest to her and I jumped up and placed my arms around her. She returned the embrace and sobbed uncontrollably. "Mum, Mummy it's gonna be ok. You don't need him Mum, you got us."

After a few moments my mother raised her head and looked at us, in turn. She gazed at each of her boys and smiled as only a mother could. Matthew, Mark and Luke then gathered around her, Luke was kneeling to her left and my other brothers

were holding and rubbing a hand each.

"Oh Lord, I have tried. Jesus knows I have tried to keep this family the way it should be. All those years taking care of you boys alone," she whispered between sobs.

Luke spoke for the first time. Luke was the brother I loved the most. He was the smartest. "Mama, you don't have to prove anything to us anymore. We are not little boys, well except for Natty."

He smiled at me. "We know what has been going on. The routine he makes you follow. The control he exerts when he is here," Luke even spoke 'proper English'. "We won't allow him to do this anymore. This is the last time he will be coming to this house. He will have to get past us first if he thinks he can open that front door." Luke was now standing and walking towards the door with hand outstretched and, just to prove his point, he locked it.

Matthew knelt before our mother and held both her hands in his, resting them on her lap, on the pink checked apron she always wore in the kitchen. "Mum, I have contained myself all this time. This year will be different. I will not sit here and wait for the annual Christmas cuss-out that happens on the bank holiday. It has been the same for fifteen years. No more, Mum, no more. You don't deserve this, we don't deserve this."

Tears were streaming down Matt's face. Mummy took a deep breath and tried to hug all of us at once. "My boys, you know I love you. You are my life. We can get through this. We will be strong. I have

some thinking to do. Just let me lie down for a bit.”

We understood that she had to make a decision within the next week or so. She kissed each of us and asked Matt to shut up the house good.

Later that night as I lay on my cot in the corridor, I was woken up by the sound of crying and sniffing. It was coming from my mother's room. I carefully opened the door and could see Mum lying with her back to me. Her sponge curlers made funny patterns on the wall from the flickering light on the bed side table. She hated to sleep in darkness, so the kerosene lamp was always lit and placed in a shallow bowl of water.

“Mum,” I called her name softly.

“Natty,” she replied and shifted the covers so that I could lie next to her.

I lay with my mother for the rest of the night. She was restless. I comforted her and whispered softly to her at each moment she cried out in her sleep. I was sure I was more of a man than my father could ever be. I cursed him in my head and prayed to Jesus that he would not come home. I fell asleep reciting the Lord's Prayer.

The next week passed in a blur. Matt took control of the household and got everything in order for our first real Christmas. This is what we were calling it, well at least this was what I was calling it. My jobs, amongst other things, were to keep the yard clean, bathe Paddy our dog and check the chickens every morning in the pens for eggs; wash and store these in the larder.

Mark had gotten a job at the abattoir and the butcher promised that we would get a

small shoulder of pork for the overtime my brother was putting in. He came home every day smelling like fresh kill and so Matt made him strip and wash in the yard before stepping into the house. I enjoyed this tremendously since I was given the honour of pelting him with the cold water.

Luke got a job at the village shop helping old Mr. Holder. The sly shopkeeper had a habit of charging more for less, so his son who had taken over the business the previous month called on Luke for help. My brother's reputation of being book-smart was spreading like wildfire. This opportunity was giving us extra flour, butter and drinks for this season. Things were really looking up.

Mark, being the biggest and the strongest was tasked with fixing the roof, painting the gallery and clearing the front yard and the bush next door. He was also able to get a piece of Mrs. Newton's cherry tree to use as our Christmas tree. I took great pride in making the decorations from any old post cards, coloured paper, old dresses and string that I could find. They called me the Michelangelo of the family.

It was the morning of December 21st. My mother had received a message from the postman that the ship had come in at the port and Mr. Gittens would be here by about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mum spent most of the morning pressing the red rose flowered dress that I loved to see her in. It had a neckline that looked like a half-moon, short sleeves and it made my Mum look like the princesses I saw in the books at school.

We all got dressed in our Sunday best. I wore my black short pants and stiffly starched blue shirt and my brothers decided to each wear their white long sleeve shirts and dark pants. Mark rolled his up to the elbows. I now realized how big he was.

A car engine could be heard coming up the gap and some noisy salutations from the houses before ours. My father was home. I peeked through the slats and saw a short balding man in a brown suit emerge from the passenger side of the beat up taxi. I did not recognize him. He instructed the driver to put the boxes on the step and his brown weathered valise.

My mother opened the front door and stepped out to the small narrow gallery. Mark, Matthew and Luke filed in behind her like a protection detail. I stood to her left.

The man in the brown suit was beckoning the driver to pay him. My mother interrupted. “Johnny, don't leave just yet, you may still be needed”.

Johnny looked a little perplexed, took the money and lifted his sweat stained Panama hat to my mother. “Yes Mistress,” he said. The man in the suit turned to face us.

My mother continued to speak, “Joseph Nathaniel Gittens you are my husband by law, but you are no longer welcomed in my home. You have abandoned us. You pay us mere two week visits. You have lied and cheated and as far as I am concerned, not fit to call yourself the father of my children.”

My father's face started to crease and darken like my pudding paper when I scrunched it up. His chest was

heaving and he was about to say something when my mother raised her hand like a policeman. "Do not step any closer to this property, which I will remind you, was bequeathed to me by my mother."

My father sucked his teeth and spit on the marl next to the car.

"I am asking you to leave!"

My father was furious.

"Stupid woman! How you think you gonna make it without me? I am the one who does send things for you all and keep this household running."

I looked up at Mama and realized that her face was calm, unbelievably calm. My brothers', on the other hand, were a completely different story.

By this time the gap was getting pretty full with onlookers and there was a rumble coming from them as they moved closer to the back of Johnny's cab.

The short bald man continued to shout. "And look at wanna! Wanna think that just because yuh got hair pun wanna face and chests that wanna is men?" He shifted from one leg to the next, his hands akimbo as he inched closer to the hedge just in front of our steps.

"Looka, I gonna show wanna who is man 'round here....." his frantic hands reached for the brown buckled belt.

In a rage my father staggered towards us.

I screamed.

In the blink of an eye Matt jumped off the top step, over the hedge and lunged. It was like the rushing of the bull and the man with the red cape that I had seen at the outdoor movie in the park last summer.

Bram!

The crowd roared.

My father fell backwards onto the front fender of the taxi cab. My oldest brother had lifted the small man off his feet, completely out of his right shoe, and sprawled him over the bonnet of the car. Matt released the front part of the man's shirt and raised his right hand, bringing a large fist down towards the left cheek of the helpless.

"*Matthew!*" Mama yelled.

Mark caught the arm just before it connected. He pulled his brother away. The small man collapsed in the marl.

The neighbours were now looking out of their windows and those that had gathered in the gap were yelling, snickering and mocking at the brown body now on all fours. My father's face was drained of all colour and was covered in sweat and dust.

Mama cleared her throat. "If you wish, you can leave what you have brought for the children but there is nothing here for you. Johnny, take Mr. Gittens back to town."

Hyacinth Gittens watched the dust clouds left suspended in the wake of the taxi-cab and felt a weight lifted from her spirit. Finally!

It was now four o'clock. Sitting in the front room with Tommy in my lap, I could hear the Christmas recital broadcasting over the old Redifusion.

There was that annoying song again that heralded the coming of the annual Christmas cuss-out. This year, however, it came a little earlier and this year was a first, because this time, my mother got in the first, and the last word.

.. THE END....

Cher-Antoinette is a mother of two, a forensic scientist and is a multiple silver and bronze award winner at the Barbados National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) in Photography, Visual Arts and Literary Arts.

An Honours Graduate in Chemistry from UWI Cave Hill Campus, in 1989 the author gained the recognition of being the first Forensic Scientist in Barbados having achieved her Masters in Forensic Science from Kings College, University of London. She has since had a long and rewarding career in the field and is presently the Director of the Forensic Sciences Centre, Office of the Attorney General.

Cher-Antoinette prides herself in being both left and right brained and demonstrates her creativity as an artist in many different areas. In 2011 she added to her awards by receiving two silver medals in the Literary Arts at NIFCA for her prose pieces INTERVENTION and THE PINK SLIP. The latter also won her the Incentive Award for the Most Promising Adult Prose Piece. She was awarded a bronze in 2012 with THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CUSS-OUT and in 2014 two Bronzes for Poetry – FOREVER I WON'T & RE-EVOLUTION. In the Fine Arts category another bronze for her Watercolour BRIDGE AT THE HOLE. In 2013 her Acrylic painting GEM OF SPEIGHTSTOWN was awarded a Bronze award and in 2014 ST. JOSEPH PARISH CHURCH another Bronze.

Cher's works have been published in St. Somewhere Online Literary Journal, Blackberry - The Magazine, and in four anthologies – Bamboo Press –She Sex, The Barbados National Cultural Foundation's – Winning Words, She Speaks – Woman's Journal, Senseisha – An Anthology on the sensuality of the Barbadian Woman, and The Caribbean Writer 2014.

In December 2013, Cher self-published an anthology of poetry called My Soul Cries and in 2014 VIRTUALIS: A New-Age Love Story and VIRTUALIS: The Anthology.

cher.insight@gmail.com and <http://cher-insight.blogspot.com>

Authors of the Month Profiles

ANGELIQUE McGLOTTEN



Angelique C. McGlotten,

Originally from Liberia, West Africa, Angelique Cooper McGlotten holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Virginia. Known affectionately by her family as "Triple E" (Encourager, Edifier, and Exhorter), Angelique enjoys using her gift of encouragement in a personal ministry focused on coming alongside others. But she is best described as a grateful child of God living to make His name great.

Angelique is the best-selling author of *Living Backward*, birthed from her desire to inspire others to live out God's plans for their lives and in so doing experience contentment, genuine success, and lasting significance. Having woven the gift of future-oriented hindsight into her own life, Angelique knows firsthand its power to both shape our purpose and infuse our lives with joy and meaning. (*Living Backward* is available on Amazon).

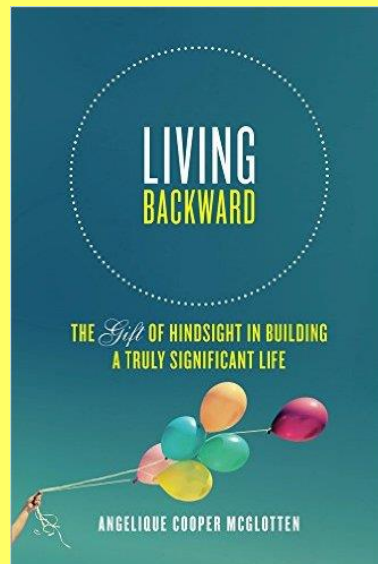
Angelique currently oversees the ministry of encouragement at the church where her husband is the founding and senior pastor, and is also the drummer for its praise and worship band. Angelique also serves as secretary on the board of CareNet Pregnancy Resource Centers and is a varsity leader with AWANA, a program designed to help young people hide God's Word in their hearts and grow in Christian character. Together, she and her husband

provide lay marital and pre-marital counseling.

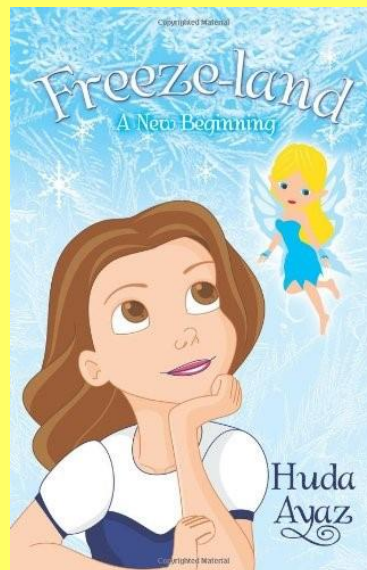
Through a variety of venues, Angelique has mentored (and continues to mentor) hundreds of adults and young adults alike. She regularly speaks at women's retreats, women's groups, and conferences on various topics pertaining to the Christian faith. Angelique is also the author of a book of poetry entitled *The Weaver's Thread*.

Angelique resides in northern Virginia with her husband and the three children entrusted to them by God.

Angelique kindly invites you to connect with her. Please visit



www.livingbackward.com

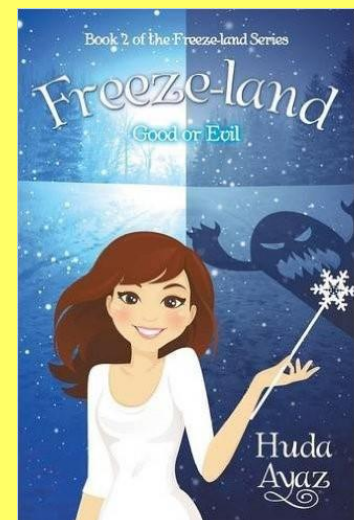


Huda Ayaz lives in Brooklyn, New York. She wrote her first book in the fourth grade and she is now in fifth grade. Her favorite subject is English. She loves reading and writing. She has read thousands of books. These books—along with her parents—encouraged her to write *Freeze-Land: A New Beginning* and her sequel *Freeze-Land: Good or Evil*.

To contact Huda Ayaz, you can email her at hudatheauthor@gmail.com or like her page on Facebook: Huda Ayaz. She has a few videos on YouTube, so check that out too.

You can also check out her website:

www.ayazsisters.com
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmU31--0GbQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q6ZWQeyoK4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3bH4hhu66U>



The Spotlight of this issue is bestselling author Angelique Cooper McGlotten

Author Interview

ANGELIQUE C. McGLOTTEN



Liberian Literary Mag conducted an interview with Angelique McGlotten,

LLR: First, we would like to thank you for granting this interview. Let us kick off this interview with you telling us a little about you- your early childhood, upbringing, education.

Born and raised in Liberia, West Africa, I was tremendously blessed to have been nurtured by loving, dedicated, and hard-working parents. They diligently created a nurturing environment—intellectually, socially, emotionally, and spiritually—for my siblings and me. By example, they also lovingly instilled many of the values that helped shape who I am today. For instance, they taught us to live by the golden rule, the value of a good work ethic, and to do everything with excellence, to name just a few. I grew up riding my bike, climbing mango trees, as well as playing basketball, kickball, and marbles. I also enjoyed going to the beach with my dad and siblings many a Sunday afternoon. In short, I had an idyllic childhood. After the 1980 political revolution, my family fled Liberia for our lives and settled in northern Virginia. After completing my last two years of high school, I matriculated to the University of Virginia where I studied psychology. It was at UVA that I met my

amazing husband (who was a grad student pursuing his masters in computer science). We were married four years later. God has blessed us with a loving and vibrant marriage of twenty-five years. He has also graciously entrusted to us three wonderful children who are now young adults. I cherish my roles as a wife and mommy. Being used as an instrument of God to bless others is something that gives me great joy and pleasure. I also desire to see more and more people create true significance with their lives, not a sullied imitation of it. But my greatest passion is that I would progressively be conformed to the nature of Christ so that God would be glorified in my life. When I'm not writing, I enjoy reading, journaling, exercising, playing the drums (in the praise band at the fellowship where my husband is the founding and senior pastor), capturing memories, and spending time with my family.

2. Why writing?

I trace my earliest writings to the time when starry-eyed and in love, I began penning love poems to my husband-to-be. A year into our marriage I miscarried a set of twins. Several months later I became pregnant again but experienced yet another miscarriage. Both losses were devastating. In the aftermath of these difficult experiences, writing became a form of catharsis. Besides enabling me to process the heart-wrenching emotions that were overwhelming at times, it also helped me come to terms with my utter grief. I ended up publishing a collection of poetry entitled *The Weaver's Thread*, which chronicled my journey from heartache to renewed hope. After this publication, I knew deep down that I wanted to write a non-fiction book at some point in the future; besides others suggesting that I should write a book, I truly believed it was something God wanted me to do. However, I thought myself fully capable of the task. Fast forward about a decade. After a season of God mercifully humbling me, chasing me, wooing me, and drawing me to Himself, I came to a place of brokenness and surrender before Him. God used this heart posture of brokenness that He had wrought in me to further humble me. Then He stripped me of my inordinate confidence in my own abilities. I went from believing that I could



write a book to becoming daunted by just the mere thought of it. Just when I thought I might be “off the hook” to write a book, the epiphany happened: I suddenly discovered that in God’s economy of preparation or usefulness, this divestiture of self-confidence in my ability to write a book now ironically made me an ideal candidate to author a book on Christian discipleship because I’d write it *in dependence on Him*. I’m fully persuaded that God tasked me to write my most recent work, *Living Backward*. And it was a most fulfilling and rewarding endeavor.

3 What books have most influenced your life/career most?

Unequivocally, God’s Word, the *Holy Scripture*, has most shaped who I am and influenced my perspective on life. It has been “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (see Psalm 119:105). The Bible aside, the writings that have most influenced me are books on spiritual growth and transformation. In this vein, my favorite authors are *John Piper*, *Randy Alcorn*, *Jerry Bridges*, and the late *Elisabeth Elliott*. Their writings have been instrumental in helping to shape my understanding of God and His desires for me. My love and passion for Christ has been greatly stirred by their ardent love and passion for Him.

4. How do you approach your work? I strive to approach everything that I do, including my writing, with 1 Corinthians 10:31 uppermost in mind: “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Hence, I desire that anything I pen ultimately points to God, to His goodness, faithfulness, love, and grace. I also want to redeem the brief time God

has allotted to me on this earth by maximizing the gifts, talents, and opportunities that He has entrusted to me for the display of His glory. Therefore, a steward mentality permeates all that I do—all that I have, including myself, belongs to God. Whether it’s writing a blog or giving someone a helping hand, I desire to be faithful in the littlest thing that God calls me to do.

5. What themes do you find yourself continuously exploring in your work?

The most explored theme in my work concerns spiritual transformation—how do we grow from who we are into the people God has created us to be, enabling us to reflect His glory and experience His best, both for ourselves and for the sake of others. I desire to help people practically walk out God’s plan and purpose for creating us and to build lives that really matter, both now and in God’s eternal kingdom.

6. Tell us a little about your book[s]-storyline, characters, themes, inspiration etc.

The book is entitled *Living Backward*. We all know that GPS works backward to get us from where we are to where we want to be. To live backward is to apply this reverse principle to our lives: imagine the kind of life you want to build and then work backward, wisely redeeming the time in order to create that life. Two realities are intrinsic to the idea of living backward. First, time is fleeting. Second, this earthly existence is our one and only opportunity to make our mark on eternity, a truth we all too easily overlook. The concept of living backward is meant to counter the mind-set that we have time on our hands, which leads to a subtle but grave pitfall: it predisposes us to put off leading purposeful lives *precisely because we assume we have time on our side*.

Living Backward challenges us to reorient our minds and view time as elapsing. With each passing year we haven’t just gained more time to live—we’ve also lost more of the precious, irretrievable time that we have been allotted to create significance in our lives. I came up with *Living Backward* for the title because I wanted to capture the idea that what will matter in eternity is what should matter to us now.

By leveraging the gift of future-oriented hindsight, we'll be able to look back on the sum total of our earthly lives and realize that our reasons to rejoice are far greater than our regrets.

7. What inspired you to write this title or how did you come up with the storyline?

I remember what it was like many years ago to read book after book—some biblically sound and some not so much—in my earnest attempt to live a life pleasing to God. I could never seem to figure out how all the advice and directives in the books fit together. After reading hundreds of books on all aspects of the Christian life, I was finally able to gain a solid biblical understanding of God's eternal purpose for me and how to live what I learned. Many years later, I discovered that many sincere followers of Christ have the same struggle I once had. Namely, how do I practically walk out God's plan for my life? What does a Christ-exalting life look like? How do I grow from who I am into the person God created me to be? My heart also ached that so many of God's people don't really know Him, nor have they truly tasted and seen that He is good (see Psalm 34:8) and infinitely worthy of our lives bringing Him honor and glory. That's when God birthed the desire to write this book: a discipleship tool that condenses into one volume those major topics and key principles a person needs to know and understand in order to fulfill God's purpose for creating us. In short, a book that contains the essentials that I desperately needed to know those many years ago when I was searching. Drawing on God's Word, my spiritual journey and experience, as well as the wisdom and knowledge gleaned from my extensive reading, I wanted to help others connect the dots in their own lives without having to pore through so many books.

8. Is there a message in your book that you want your readers to grasp?

With regard to our existence, here's the crux of the matter: although we greatly matter to God, God desires us to greatly matter for Him. We matter for God and bring Him great pleasure when we seek to glorify Him by following the example of Christ. In other words, what ultimately matters in this life—our overarching purpose— is becoming more like Christ in each and every area of our lives, be it as a wife, son,



mother, daughter, father, nurse, teacher, athlete, businessman, etc. We have one temporal life to live. When we choose to live it for God's glory and pleasure, the character we forge and what we make of our lives can take on the enduring quality of gold and have value and significance beyond our earthly years. Why chase after mere earthly importance or settle for the allurements of this world—that are both fleeting and short-lived—when what we pursue in this life can count for all eternity? The profound reality that we each can live in such a way that magnifies God's glory and simultaneously enriches our own eternal futures is the consuming passion of my life.

9. Is there anything else you would like readers to know about your book?

We all know that a GPS works based on a reverse principle—starting at the intended destination, it works backward to our current location. In a similar way, Living Backward challenges us to chart the course of our existence from the end of our lives. But unlike GPS which accidentally causes us to go in the wrong direction, get turned around, or completely lose our way, we can choose to daily plug into an infinitely more superior GPS—God's Positioning System. Always perfectly accurate, it will never lead us in the wrong direction or to the wrong destination; with it we ultimately can never lose our way. That's because the omniscient God of the universe has already mapped out the best possible route for each of our lives. He knows the end from the beginning and everything in between concerning each of us. If we want to

make genuine spiritual progress—avoiding wrong turns and walking in all that God desires for us—we must daily plug into the divine GPS and look to it for direction. Informed and guided by it, our lives will truly matter for God.

10. Do you have any advice for other writers?

Like anything else, we get better only with practice. So write and rewrite, edit, revise, then write some more. Put time and effort into honing your craft if it's truly important to you. Read the content of good writers/bloggers and note how they clearly and effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. By the way, it might even sound silly but learning to condense my thoughts into 140 characters for Twitter has actually helped me eliminate unnecessary words and become more succinct. Also consider joining a small writer's group (live or online) where your writing can be objectively and constructively critiqued. You can't possibly know everything, so it's great to join your local writer's club or an author network to connect with other authors/writers to share, learn, and grow together. I personally have gleaned much from the wealth of information that is shared amongst an author network to which I belong. Lastly, if you intend to publish your work, do your very best to understand the ever-changing publishing landscape and to fully understand the advantages and disadvantages associated with traditional versus independent (self) publishing.

11. What book[s] are you reading now?

Or recently read? I am currently reading *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson and *Predictably Irrational* by Dan Ariely.

12. Tell us your latest news, promotions, book tours, launch etc.

Since I launched *Living Backward* on October 1st, I've been interviewed on twelve national talk radio shows and featured on four blog tours. I also had the privilege to speak at a women's conference called Live Unveiled on October 22nd. On December 8th, I will be speaking live in the Sirius XM Studio in Washington, DC on the Maggie Linton Show.

13. What are your current projects?

My primary focus right now is to market and promote *Living Backward*. However, I prefer to

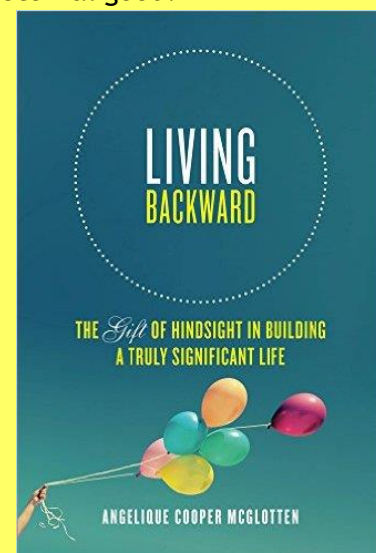
view this step in the process more as helping others to discover the message of *Living Backward*. By embracing this message, we can learn how to pursue and reclaim what matters most in life and experience the abundant life that God desires us to have. There is a vast multitude of ways to accomplish this, so I'm seeking the Lord's leading as to His next steps.

14. Have you read book[s] by [a] Liberian author[s] or about Liberia?

Yes, I have read *The House at Sugar Beach* and *Redemption Road* by my cousins, Helene Cooper and Elma Shaw, respectively, and several other books on Liberia.

15. Any last words.

I've heard eternity described as a line extending forever with no end; relative to eternity our lives are but a teeny, tiny dot on that line. Yet we focus on and live for the dot, forgetting that it's the endless line that really matters. Consequently, many of us give little or no thought to either our forever existence or Jesus's command to store up treasures above and not on the earth. By default, then, many of us are absorbed in the things of this world. Yet we can't idly live for ourselves and please God. These desires simply cannot coexist. My hope is that embracing a reverse perspective of time will enable us to more deeply appreciate that this temporal life is but a vanishing mist relative to eternity. And that, in turn, we'll begin to make steady progress toward living purposefully, both to showcase God's glory and for our greatest eternal good.



President Sirleaf Launches 16 Days of Activism; Calls for Stronger Effective Community Affirmative Action against Sexual & Gender-Based Violence

Executive Mansion
Press Release

Wednesday, November 25, 2015



President Sirleaf makes remarks during the launch of 16 Days of Activism. Photo Credit: James M. Garresen / Executive Mansion

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says there is a need for stronger and effective affirmative actions to fight sexual and gender-based violence against women, girls and children.

She emphasized that the campaign must begin at homes, churches, organizations, among other places, where parents have an obligation to protect their children.

According to an Executive Mansion release, the Liberian leader made the assertion when she officially launched the 16 Days of Activism against Sexual and Gender-based Violence campaign at the YMCA on Wednesday, November 25, 2015.

President Sirleaf admonished parents to exercise care and caution to keep children out of harm's way and in order to protect their future. "In the schools, churches and

homes," the Liberian leader said, "everyone must join in efforts to protect children," adding, "Responsibility belongs to parents - the first responsibility belongs to you parents, you mothers and you fathers in the homes - to protect your children."

She further indicated that every mother and father in the home has a secondary responsibility to reach out to every child.

Likewise, the teachers have a responsibility; we all in our churches or organizations; wherever we are, we need to bear this message.

President Sirleaf also challenged leaders of the three branches of government to ensure an effective effort to sustain the fight against sexual and gender-based violence against children is promoted. "Those of us responsible for the three branches of government, as leaders of government, will go back with all that have been said, and be able to look at it and see what does it mean for us; what can we do to make sure," she said.

She admonished the chairperson of National Traditional Council of Liberia, Chief Zanzan Karwon, to ensure that the well-being of the members of Poro and Sandi societies are observed, managed and monitored. She hoped that there are no constraints to children going to school; because according her, an 'educated person' will not violate the rights of others. "Education is an important part in whatever we do to protect these children for the future; so we look to you chief. We will work with you to make sure that happens," President Sirleaf emphasized.

The Liberian leader used the occasion to recognize international movie star, Frank Atus, who also formed part of the program

and urged him to ensure that whatever song he sings or whatever he does must send a message loud and clear that he stands for the rights of children and the protection of women; that his voice will be heard to create massive awareness.

President Sirleaf thanked the 15 children who represented the 15 sub-political divisions of the country for their brilliant performance during the ceremony. She called on all broadcast media institutions especially the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) to repeatedly play their voices; stressing that repetition brings action.

She used the opportunity to thank Liberia's partners for the continuous support in the different interventions and programs that lead to the protection and empowerment of women and children and in buttressing government's efforts in securing for them a safe future.

. Reading out a Special Message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) Farid Zarif, noted that the fight against gender-based violence cannot be won by Government alone, but the collective efforts of all citizens. Mr. Ban said he is deeply concerned about domestic violence perpetrated against women and girls.

SRSG Zarid used the occasion to call on government to increase its contribution to the UN Trust Fund that is aimed at ending violence against women.

He pointed out that UN peacekeeping operations, peace building efforts and the women peace and security agenda have all highlighted the critical values of women's participation in peace and security operations.

The year's observance of the 16 Days of Activism, organized by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in collaboration with partners, is being held under the national theme: "From Peace in the World; Safe Spaces and Education for All."

The Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Mrs. Julia Duncan-Cassell, whose ministry is spearheading the 16-Day of Activism campaign, made a passionate plea for more action to curb rape and other vices associated with gender-based violence.

She stressed that enough is enough and the fight against gender-based violence will continue until the rights of women and children are protected under the laws of the country.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence is an international campaign to raise awareness about the negative effects of gender violence.

Activists intend to speak on the various laws against gender violence and demand more accountability during the 16 Days of Activism.



President Sirleaf with Liberian actor, Frank Artus

Contemporary Liberian Literature

Nvasekie N. Konneh

The first African novel is said to have been written by a Liberian writer, Joseph Walters in 1891. The novel was *Guanya Pau*, a story of an African Princess. If you add the names of other Liberian writers such as the renown Pan-African nationalist, Wilmot Blyden, Edwin Barclay, Hilary Teage, who wrote the Liberian National Anthem, Doris Bank Henriess, Roland T. Dempster, Robert H. Brown, Henry B. Cole, or Kona Khasu, it shows that Liberia has made great contribution to African literature from as far back as the late 1800s to the present. While most of these writers' names are lost to contemporary Liberians, two names clearly stand out and those are Bai T. Moore and Wilton Sankawulo. For a long time, Bai T. Moore's *Murder in the Cassava Patch* and Sankawulo's "*Why Nobody Knows When He Will Die*" have been required reading in Liberian schools.

With this being said, fast-forward to 2000s and the question is, is there any such thing as "contemporary Liberian literature"? Of course, the answer is a resounding yes. Unfortunately though, when it comes to African literature, all the buzz is about Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and others. Where are we and why our contribution to African literature is not acknowledged or even celebrated by ourselves, much less by others outside of our borders? The simple answer is we don't have a cultural policy that promotes literature and other works of arts as in other countries in our country. In any other society, these early writings would be reprinted and taught to new generation which may draw inspiration from them as it noted that the past must inform the present.

According to Dr. Eva Aquii, a university lecturer, translator, award winning poet, fiction writer who once taught at the

University of Liberia and now lives in her native country of Romania, "Liberian literature has a valuable canon, a cultural asset to be preserved, organised, and recorded by literary history, both in Liberia and the world. It contains a chronological record of Liberia's pastoral, folk literature, with its folk songs, proverbs, folk tales, known since the 1800s. There are writers, genres, and species, from poetry to drama, important to be taught for the ongoing development of Liberia's literary history." So contemporary Liberian writers have strong legacy to stand on as they continue to write their Liberian stories in various literary genres from different cultural perspectives.

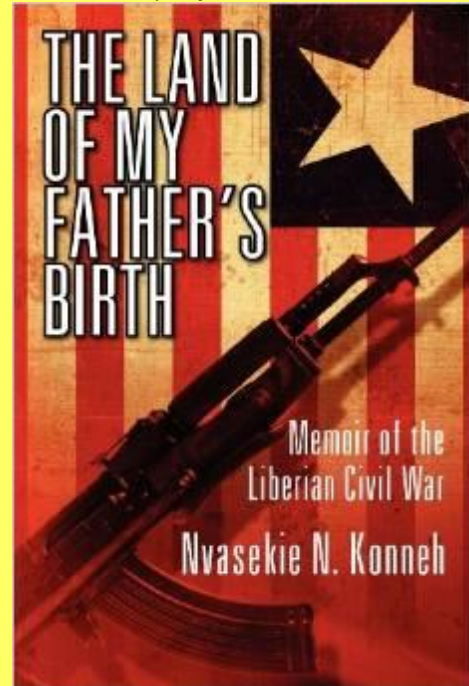
Among the names that will pop up when it comes to contemporary Liberian literature are Prof. K. Moses Nagbe, Prof. Patricia Jabeh Wesley, Vamba Sherif, Saah Millimono, Emma Shaw, Hawa Golokai, Nvasekie Konneh, Prof. Momo Dudu, Wayetu Moore and the list goes on. Among the names, both Prof. Nagbe and Prof. Patricia Jabeh Wesley stand out and should be the bridge linking the past to the present as they both are well respected and admired by many contemporary Liberian writers because of their early days of teaching at the University of Liberia and involvement with the Liberian Association of Writers based in Liberia. What may be lacking is the leadership role they should be playing in helping others along the way as well as promoting Liberian literature in general. Over the recent years, some efforts have been made to promote Liberian literature. There was *Sea Breeze Journal of Contemporary Liberian Writings*, an electronic magazine edited by Stephenie Horton. For years this became the common meeting place for Liberian writers as they contributed poems, short stories, book reviews and essays for publication. In 2005, group of Liberian writers came together to form the **Liberian Writers Network**. Members included the Prof. Wilton Sankawulo, Ophelia Lewis, Prof. K. Moses Nagbe, Ray Martin Toe, Stephanie Horton, Robert Sesay, and others. The interim

leadership of this group was led by Nvasekie Konneh who connected most of these folks who didn't have any personal connection before. LWN's mission was to form "collaborative venture to promote Liberian literature, drama, and poetry, as part of our national process of transformation.

Recognizing the important role creative writers have to play in the cultural revival of our country at this critical juncture, we seek to pool our individual and collective talents and resources through a networking partnership." It sought collaborative efforts with the *Liberia Association of Writers (LAW)* in Liberia but over time things did not work as planned as everyone focused on their individual efforts and progress with Prof. Sankawulo and Stephenie Horton leaving the group because, as they said at the time, "they preferred working as individuals rather than belonging to group." What is left of the *Liberian Writers Network* now is its presence on Facebook. At least with this, its spirit is kept alive as it is being moderated by *Ophelia Lewis* who has published several books over the years through publishing outfit, *Village Tales Publishing*.

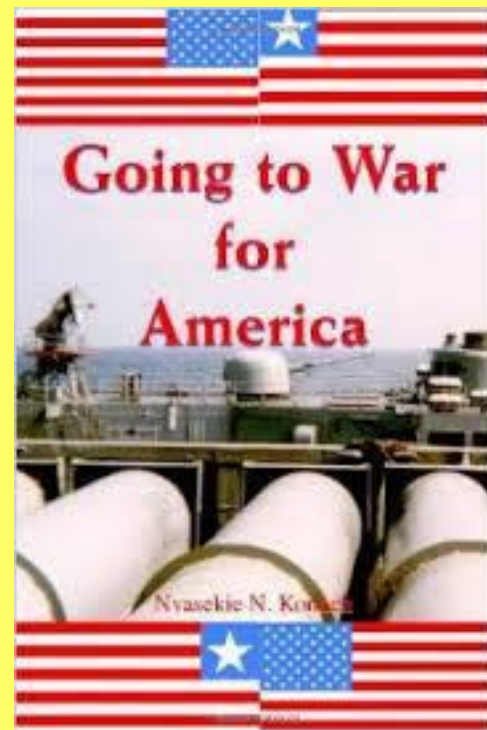
Now we are here again with the *Liberian Literary Magazine* edited by energetic comrade, Othniel Forte and it seems like the interest is very high as many who associated with both *LWN* and *Sea Breeze* are in the house. Will we keep the momentum as we are now planning the *Liberian Literary Festival*? As we are planning this event, let's remind ourselves with these words from Dr. Eva Aquii again, "The danger of myths and motifs vanishing into oblivion does exist, unless people themselves hand over this rich cultural heritage to the present and future generations, and teach them the pride of holding such an inheritance. There have been notable efforts in preserving folklore, in the writings of Wilton S. Sankawulo, A. Doris Banks Henries, Peter Dorliae, addressing the preservation of Liberia's rich folklore by bringing it into print." Are we up to the task? With the abundance of energy, creativity and determination now on display

in this age of social media, it is fair to say we are definitely up to the task.



About the author:

Nvasekie Konneh is a poet and writer who has written extensively in Liberian media on arts, culture and sociopolitical development of Liberia.




He's the author of *The Land of My Father's Birth* and *Going to War for America*. He is currently working on a documentary project on ethnic and cultural diversity in Liberia. Nvasekie Konneh has a BA in Comparative Literature from the Union Institute & University

Ending 2015 On A high note: Stories Of Success



Wayetu Moore, a longtime fan, accepted a two book deal with the outstanding @GraywolfPress. She says,

“I've been a fan of theirs for a while and I'm thrilled that they've given me a chance to stand on the shoulders of authors like Claudia Rankine, Tracy K. Smith, Eula Biss, Binyavanga Wainaina and so many inspiring others.

Many people don't know this but I'm a bit obsessed with magical realism, speculative fiction and sci-fi. So accordingly, the first book is a novel that follows the lives of three strangers with supernatural abilities who meet during the mid-19th century on the Gold Coast. It's close to my heart because it employs a genre I most love to tell how a new republic (Liberia) emerged from a rich and complicated history. It's an unlikely superhero's journey, so I'm overwhelmed and grateful, so grateful, for this opportunity to share it 

This piece originally appeared in the Rumpus. All credits and rights remain theirs:

SUNDAY RUMPUS PUSHCART PRIZE NOMINATIONS

BY [ZOE ZOLBROD AND MARTHA BAYNE](#)

December 6th, 2015

Pushcart Prize nominations were due December 1, and we got ours in just under the wire. From the many excellent pieces of writing that have passed through the Sunday Rumpus this year, we submitted four essays that we agreed were truly exceptional for consideration:

[The Right to Remain](#), by Alexis Paige

[love/woman/thirty](#), by **Wayétu Moore**

[Forgiving My Father, the Serial Rapist](#), by Ibi Zoboi

[The Displeasure of the Table](#), by Toni Nealie

Congratulations to these writers, and our sincere gratitude to all who have submitted their work for consideration in the past year. It's not always easy to sort through the submissions we receive—so many of them speak to us in one way or another, and we only have a paltry 52 Sundays to fill. These four really stood out for their risky forms and thoughtful, rigorous writing. Thank you!

Momoh Dudu receives 2015 Best Faculty Member Award.



Liberia Literary Mag's Reviews Editor, a faculty member of **Globe University, Brooklyn Center Campus**, ended the year on an accomplished note. He walked away as the Faculty Member of the Year, 2015.

Congratulations!!!!

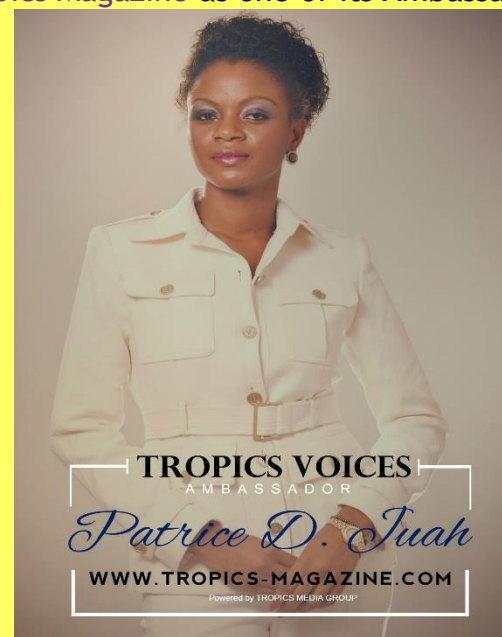


Josiah Joekai, Jr.

Gives an address to 2015 General Assembly of The Liberian Ministers Association on the Role of the Diaspora Religious Community in Impacting Liberia's 2017 Election.



Patrice Juah lands a spot on the dynamic Tropics Magazine as one of its Ambassadors.

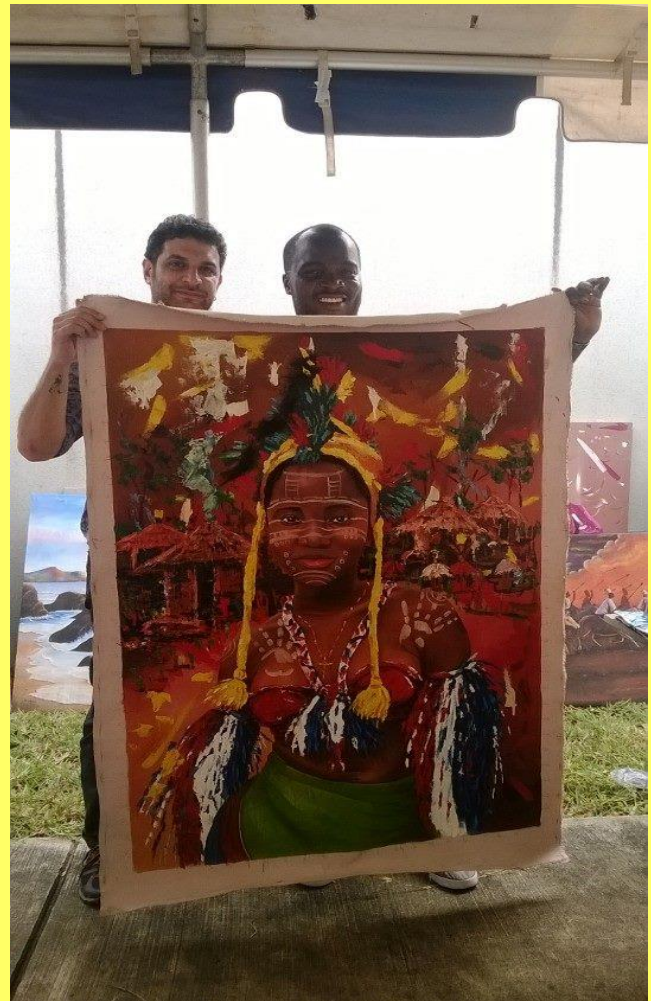




Brima sells paintings to happy clients



US Embassy Monrovia, holds **Arts and Crafts** fair. One of our In House artists, **Brima Wolobah** attended and sold some paintings. **Congratulation !!!!**



Ake Festival

Ake Arts and Book Festival is five days of readings, panel discussions, interviews, school visits, music, film, performance art, dance, drama, fashion, food, competitions, art exhibitions, book deals, book sales, parties- just about everything to do with Books and Arts.

KWEE's Short Stories Editor, *Vamba Sherif*, graced the occasion.



Vamba Sheriff reading from *Bound to Secrecy*

2014 **AKÉ** ARTS & BOOK FESTIVAL
Bridges & Pathways
 November 18-22, 2014
 Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

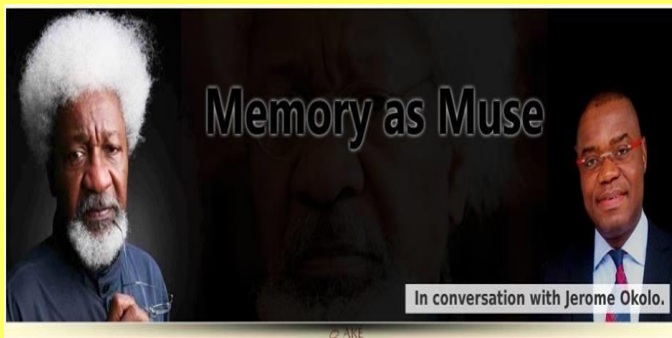
There will be two art exhibitions at the Ake Arts & Book Festival 2014. In celebration of Ake and Wole Soyinka, we are exhibiting the work of Vera Botterbusch, who took many wonderful photos of Abeokuta almost two decades ago.

In addition, we are exhibiting artwork from the work of African illustrators of children's books.

Date: Thursday 20 November, 2014
 Time: 5PM

For further information, email office@akefestival.org or call +234 8062736456, +234 8022472873

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Nobel Laureate, *Wole Soyinka*





A cross section





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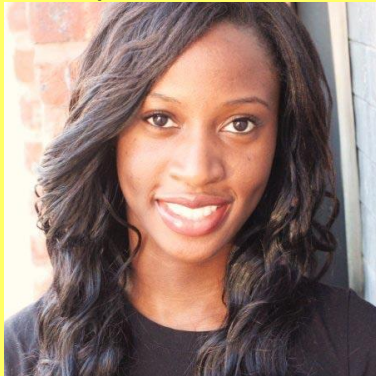
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This essay was originally published on the website of the Sunday Rumpus

THE SUNDAY RUMPUS ESSAY: LOVE/WOMAN/THIRTY

BY [WAYÉTU MOORE](#)
April 12th, 2015



love/

At that point I could not remember when last I had been outside. Some weeks prior I went to a store just below Eastern Parkway, one of the only stores of its kind that still existed among the deluge of coffee shops and yoga studios, to buy palm oil and frozen cassava leaves, to make the dish I knew would heal me, the only Liberian dish that could. When I arrived a sign informed that the store had closed indefinitely, and returning to my apartment, everything I had been avoiding crashed hard into me, tears staining my skin. I have not been able to wash them off for some time.

Before moving there I rid the place of ghosts. I burned sage—the Ol’ Mas say the spirits do not like the odor. I then called my mother and asked her to pray, certain they would listen to her voice, ascending in that musical way it did from my phone speaker, before they obeyed mine. I was safe there. But now the five or so steps from my bed to the kitchen felt like uphill lunges, no rest between sets. I spent too long looking into mirrors, too long sleeping, and I had been crying again, too much, buried under covers still marked with our collective smell, every moment I was not working. I had made it to my living room that day and I opened the large window where I placed a vase of my mother’s favorite flowers, lilies, now dried and unrecognizable in the escaping sun. The sill was cold when I climbed onto it, and I rested my slippers on the fire escape where children played below, and the Brooklyn drivers honked in the street while bits of

conversations and laughter spilled from their car windows on the backs of words like *move* and *fell* and *going* and *tomorrow*, and the sirens came toward me from the distance then disappeared again behind those words, and the new transplants hurried home, as gentrifiers do when it is almost dark and they are still fearful of corners.

I leaned my head against the stile and wondered how I smelled, how I looked, if music would ever sound the same, especially those songs I knew by heart. My sister called, the older one, and I almost did not answer the phone because I did not care for the questions.

“How are you?” like everything recently, she asked this while exhaling.

“I’m fine,” I answered.

“Did you get out today?” she sighed again.

“I’m outside now,” I mumbled, staring through the holes beneath my feet, three stories down to the ground below.

“Outside outside, or on your fire escape?”

I did not answer. So she said my name in that way only our mother would. Then there was that familiar litany of consolations, fumbling pauses and attempts to make me laugh, her optimism harsh against my ears.

“I’ll be fine,” I said. “I just need time.” I just needed time. And I needed my cassava leaves, spread over parboiled white rice drenched in oil, with shrimp, with dry fish and pepper that wounded my lips, reddened my skin, and those meats that required both hands to eat.

We had been together for two years. Brilliant story but cruel. Long distance but intense. These begin beautifully, end suddenly, sometimes by accident, and the smoke rises not because all was burned to ashes, but because there is still something left in the pipe.

This was the other side. Everything was infuriating, everyone guilty. The days were long and morning came too soon, and the sun crept toward the bodies of those girls hidden under blankets, those girls now questioning their worth, those girls who once laid on air-mattresses with their sweethearts that flattened during the night, in college or in med school or while he was unemployed, in those days he could not afford a bed. So we filled them with confidence, with time, with money, to make him big enough, strong enough, and we could not know that one day this confidence we sculpted would make him eager to leave.

They did not tell us that love was not something you could throw away once finished. That it would

remain on us like blackened scars, underneath blouses and in those places only we could see. That we would reach a point where it, once solid, would melt in our hands and we would never fully wash off its residue; and some love, the truest love, also the most dangerous, could disfigure our core.

When we were children and they spoke of it, we did not fully understand. They had different conversations with the girls than they had with the boys. They separated us into rooms divided by thin walls where we could still hear the boys laughing as they explained our parts, the unmentionable parts, the parts between our legs that were rude to speak of, and when we giggled our way through our questions the teachers mentioned love, but we did not fully understand it. So our parents tried to explain it and they spoke of love in that creamy, sterilized way, stripped of those parts that were rude to speak of, and because they censored our parts, neglecting mention of those juices and stiffening limbs, we did not believe the bigness that they spoke of. We ignored the rage in their eyes. So we went to films, and we went to music, and we gathered our friends, other girls and boys in those separated rooms, and we shared our misunderstanding, and we built it up, constructed



it, all of us, until its shadow was too vast to deny. And we, once little girls and boys, were now 21 and 25 and 28 and 32, and we were angered that the reality of our lives and our loves did not live up to that haunting, beautiful, impossible shadow.

/Woman/

She convinced nine-year-old me that if I dug too deep in the back yard for ingredients to add to my magic potion that the devil would emerge and pull me below. Nothing was going to stop me from replicating that frothy concoction from *Never Ending Story*, so I kept digging until she scared me from behind with a bass growl, then rolled around the dirt laughing while I picked up the remnants of my dignity. She was the only one who called me

beautiful during those grueling adolescent years of bifocals and braces, and the last to sleep after making sure the school clothes my sisters and I laid out for the following day were not too *gronah*—a Liberian pidgin word that, more or less, translated to “slutty.” She was the first to explain male masturbation to us after my mischievous sister lost a bet and had to ask her; her Liberian accent was dense, her voice inconsolable as she struggled to scientifically explain the most artless of actions. I spat out my milk. She taught me how to dance, whispered me stories during Saturday naps, and somehow filled the empty mass underneath our Christmas trees even during those seasons we had nothing. This was my mother.

In 2010 she returned to Liberia after more than twenty years in the United States; she moved to America in 1988 as a scholar in the Fulbright program, and we followed in 1991, during Liberia’s civil war. She is a teacher and although she initially struggled, teetering the intersection of educator and foreigner, she was eventually recognized by the Texas Legislature for her work at a Houston high school. A success at her profession, a mother of 5, a wife, friend, philanthropist; Texas, and the life she had made there with my father, was home. So, the news of her move was at first unbelievable. During those first conversations when she shared her plans, I changed the subject, deflected, scolded her, unwilling to reconcile the seriousness of her proposition.

“Mom, don’t be crazy. We’re all here,” I’d say.

“I am going back,” she’d add, “I want to join a ministry, work at the university, maybe even open a school. I want to give back.”

She had just sent the last of her five children to college. She had been there for every play, every game, every recital, and every graduation. We could not deny her this.

My mother was twenty-one when she married my father, twenty-two when she had the first of 5 children over 9 years, during which time she also nabbed an Ivy League degree. Growing up with such a woman—as clever as she was beautiful, as kind as she was funny, diverse in her ambitions—gave me a rigid definition of success.

My mother and I spoke every day that fall I hid from outside, and she promised that there was no single path to happiness. I told her that I was ashamed for being heartbroken, that I had a great life and career, great friends, that I understood many things but not this, and she said, “Well this was the first time you

were in love. You should be happy that you are able to love. Many cannot.”

Then she said those things she recited when one of us was not well—that she wished she could travel back to America in that moment, if only to make us pepper soup and lay beside us as we fell asleep to her humming our favorite song. Stories of her life before my father, always hard to imagine, when she thought she loved and realized she had gotten it wrong. Tips for how I could make my own soup since she was away, reminding me to bake the bennie seed, to boil the fish separately, as her mother, and her grandmother, and all of those aunties and Ol’ Mas in Cape Mount had done.

And I told her that I did not feel as strong as I thought I was, to be drowning in the memory of this man. I did not feel hopeful. I did not feel feminist, or as brave as her. She laughed when I said that word, that mighty word, shiny now, in its audacity: **feminist**.

“What does that mean?” she asked. “You young girls pressure yourself to be too much. Just be. That’s feminist.”

Slowly, eventually, her words made sense to me, offering the rest I so needed, the healing I longed for. She had a career and an education, those things that they taught her feminists should fight for, but she wanted a family, so she said she got married young and started her family. “I just wanted to be happy. So I ignored everyone who said I was doing it too early, and I got married. So in essence, marrying your daddy and having all of you was the most feminist thing I ever did.”

Her words were poetry. Yet during that conversation I had to ask her, had to form the words gracefully: “So why did you leave?”

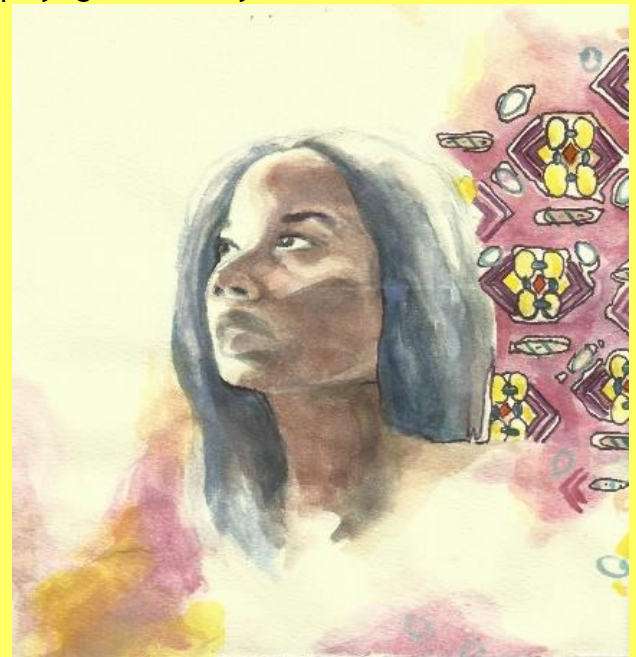
But she did not hear me for she asked me a question at the same time, and we continued with my answer rather than hers. But I knew what she would have said. That happiness, even the most brilliant kind, does not silence longing. We could fulfill our dreams now. She had worked tirelessly to ensure that, but from those dreams, new desires would be born. And a feminist is a woman who is free enough to go after them, whatever they may be.

When my grandmother was young, a full woman had the most children, the best home, the wealthiest husband. When my mother was young, a full woman would have all those things plus an education. And now, full women are the ones who have all of those things they told our grandmothers and mothers would complete them—plus a thriving career. And what makes a full man?

In those conversations with my mother I thought of my friends, my sisters. We were all guilty of this prescriptive view of feminine happiness and success. And we used it against each other, leveraging those missing pieces with words, rough and biting. “That’s why she is single,” the women say. “That’s why he left her.” “That’s why she’s alone,” stripping ourselves of our powers. And we add, “All she has is those children” and, “All she has is her husband,” as if these things are not enough. And we push each other into corners, and we bury graves in the layers of our mattresses, hiding, perpetuating the patriarchal assumption that without the love of a man, without someone to say, “This woman is valuable enough to love,” or, “This woman is worth marriage,”

then we are nothing.

So woman stays in relationship she should have left long ago. Woman changes. Woman stays with man who reduces her to dust. Woman shrinks. Woman fights with woman who would otherwise make her ginger tea in those winters she will lose her voice. Woman cries. Woman fights with herself for validation from man, once one of those boys in that neighboring room, laughing to calm his nerves, his awkwardness, hoping the girls would not hear, and praying that one day one of them would need him.



/thirty

At our family reunions and other gatherings, weddings, funerals, where familiar names are stuttered through laughter, those who are old, while boasting of their meekness, will recall the steps that led them to Staten Island or Rhode Island or Minnesota or Maryland or Virginia or Tennessee. The

conversation will bend and someone will always start a sentence with: “If the war had not happened...” and so on with the grandest plans, sweet to hear, hard to imagine. “If the war had not happened, Liberia would be a Goliath in Africa by now” and “If the war had not happened, our lives would have been better” and “If the war had not happened my wife would have stayed” and “If the war had not happened, our children would have married our friends’ children,” they say. And they would have built their mansions in the hills, among beds of palm trees, and along the Atlantic Ocean’s dry season waves.

I learned early not to stay too long in the dense labyrinth of what-if, because once the game of “If the war had not happened...” began, shortly after the room became quiet, and eyes hung low, and the palm butter in those bowls became cold.

There could be no what-ifs or past modals in this. I knew I had to carry on. I owed it to myself. So on that night I let him take me to a show because he said he had stalked my Instagram account and he knew I liked that sort of thing. I wore a dress my mother would call gronah, the kind of dress I would never wear around older Liberian women for fear they would suck their teeth as I walked by. During the show he put his arm around my shoulder and shifted in his seat. He was a handsome man. Tall with begging eyes, hands warm to touch. Sure of himself but not too much. He listened, though I could not tell if it was a symptom of infatuation, or if it was possible that he was always that attentive.

We went to a bar afterward in Williamsburg and I wanted to dance, and I let him get too close as the music pounded in our ears. He smiled and said something I knew was sweet, but I shook my head and yelled that I could not hear him. We had a few drinks and afterward we stumbled to the water and sat by that pier that offered a perfect view of Manhattan. The breeze dried our sweat and he hugged me again, in that warm, genuine way that good men did.

“We should just be together,” he said finally, after a heavy bout of silence. He said it as though the words had formed down in his gut and they had to fight to make their way to his tongue, and I could swear I heard this strain while my head lay against his shoulder. I would be thirty soon and all of those things I was hearing and reading said that I should try to love again. That I should get married. That I should have children, little girls and boys who would come to me with questions about love, and ignore the rage in my eyes when I answered.

“You will be thirty soon,” I would hear in both celebratory and sympathizing ways, like something would either be born, or die. Thirty soon. /thirty.

“So?” he asked after some time had passed.

“Relationships are hard,” I whispered finally, remembering the emotions of that fall long ago. “And breakups are harder. I want to take my time if that’s okay.”

He nodded, understanding to a fault, and he kissed me, in the softest way, and I did not want to pull away. But he did. I would see him less and less in the following weeks, and I would feel awful for rejecting someone who fit me so well, and he would begin to cancel plans and would not text me in the mornings like he used to.

But it would not scare me. And this time, it would not define me.

I had been bullied by that shadow, by those things I was supposed to want and the trite, crippling fear of being alone, like our mothers, also fighting their way through longing. But this season, I am King. And I want to be with my sisters who were swallowed by those sinking beds, who sit alone in the darkness scrubbing love’s lasting residue. It will not remove, but you are better for it. A broken heart did not negate your strength, it contextualized it. And whether it be children, or a career, or a move, or all of these things, our ability to choose, our freedom from our misunderstanding of love and casting all of our hopes onto that shadow, our freedom from our misunderstanding of ourselves, is our right.

/thirty and the infant wrinkling of my skin, so much like my mother’s, gestures toward those words that have rescued me from hiding, conquering the daylight, falling into the face of God. Words like my cassava leaves, sweet to taste. Words like, you are valuable, you are enough, you have always been enough.

And one day, if you so choose,
you will be loved.

Rumpus original art by [Kula Moore](#).

Wayétu Moore is a writer based in Brooklyn, NY. She is the founder of [One Moore Book](#), a boutique publisher of multicultural children’s books. Find her on Twitter [@wayetu](#) [More from this author →](#)

Originally published in the [Sunday Rumpus](#)

Liberian Proverbs

1. **A bird with fire on its tail burns its own nest.** *If a bird allows its tail to catch fire and it enters its nest, it can't blame anyone else for ruining its home. Some choices we make, only lead us into danger.*
2. **A child that they carry on the back, doesn't know that the road is long.** *So many times we take for granted the efforts of others to make our lives easier. We don't appreciate it or take it lightly. It is only when we have to do the same thing for ourselves or others, that we realize that it was a difficult thing to do.*
3. **A little rain each day will fill the rivers to overflowing.** *The little effort we make on a consistent basis, can accomplish the largest of task. The key is to be consistent at whatever it is we want to achieve.*
4. **A man that takes gun to settle palaver does not want to talk.** *A person that wants peace or to resolve issues, does not resort to force. No one that takes the route of force wishes peace.*
5. **A man who does not spare a day to fix a door to his room, will spend long time searching for money he kept inside but you will never find it.** *Some things are preventable. It is cheaper or easier to stop and address some issues immediately than to wait for them to boil over. At such times, they become impossible to control or handle.*
6. **A person's stomach does not hold food for the stomach of another person.** *Some things are only meant to be used for or by you. In this case, you can never eat food and expect it to full another person's stomach.*
7. **Death does not sound a trumpet.** *Death is a silent visitor. It comes when it pleases and at its own bidding. It gives warnings at times and none at other times, but it never announces its coming with a trumpet or fanfare.*
8. **Even when there is no rooster, the day will still break.** *A rooster is a fixture in a typical Liberian community. They are notorious for crowing at dawn, we jokingly say they are announcing the day. It's a natural alarm clock and as such, it annoys those who do not wish to rise early.*
9. **Every time an elder dies, a library has burnt down.** *This parable embodies the essence of this book. Our elders are walking, breathing encyclopedias. We receive from them our customs, tradition, etc. They hold and pass on to us our identities. They are the fabric of our society.*
10. **If the calf sucks too greedily, it tears away the mother's udder.** *Impatience can often lead to danger even if it is unintended. It pays to be patient.*
11. **If the home doesn't sell you, the street won't buy you.** *Most of the times, it takes an insider to betray you; an outsider doesn't know your secrets as well as an friend or someone close to you.*
12. **If there is a way to prevent trouble, we use it.** *It is better to stay safe than be sorry. Keeping oneself out of trouble is the best way to live.*

Excerpted from *The Elder's Wisdom*

Featured Poet

Sinners and Saints

Play-mamas were distant
kin
in the next village,
in Miami or New York
who took us in
when mothers shunned
pregnant daughters
as they were spurned
and papas professed
they had never sown
wild seeds in their youth.

Shu-shued*.
The Scarlet Letter H
that branded hypocrites
the first to cast stony
words,
and banish sinners in their
midst.

Our "aunties," had hearts
bigger
than their religion
allowed,
and forgave those deemed
unforgivable,
opened doors to prodigal
sons
and fallen daughters.

They are our surrogates,
when life's cup runs over,
they are our surrogates
when life runs us over.

*Shu-shu-to keep quiet or
something to be kept a
secret.

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2013, published in
WomanSpeak, A Journal

of Writing and Art by
Caribbean Women "Voices
of Dissent: Women
Speaking to Transform the
Culture." 2014

Althea Romeo-Mark



Born in Antigua, West Indies, [Althea Romeo-Mark](#) is an educator and internationally published writer who grew up in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands. She has lived and taught in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, USA, Liberia (1976-1990), London, England (1990-1991), and in Switzerland since 1991.

She taught at the University of Liberia (1976-1990). She is a founding member of the Liberian Association of Writers (LAW) and is the poetry editor for *Seabreeze: Journal of Liberian Contemporary Literature*.

She was awarded the Marguerite Cobb McKay Prize by *The Caribbean*

Writer in June, 2009 for short story "Bitterleaf, (set in Liberia)." *If Only the Dust Would Settle* is her last poetry collection.

She has been guest poets at the International Poetry Festival of Medellin, Colombia(2010), the Kistrech International Poetry Festival, Kissi, Kenya (2014) and The Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books 10th Anniversary Conference, Antigua and Barbuda(2015)

She has been published in the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the USA, Germany, Norway, the UK, India, Colombia, Kenya, Liberia and Switzerland.

More publishing history can be found at her blog site:

www.aromaproductions.blogspot.com



16 Days of Activism: A Time to Act More & Talk Less

By Martin K. N. Kollie
Youth Activist,



It is time to go beyond just celebrating 16 Days of Activism and work together as seven continents in one world to put an end to violence against our mothers, sisters, aunts, daughters, and nieces. Promoting women's rights is not only about talking, but acting to ensure they have equal access to opportunities in order to compete with their male counterparts. Women are not backyard gardeners or mere followers, but they are front-liners and forerunners whose impact on global growth and development remains visibly evident. Women too, like any other creature deserve a unique space in our society to fully maximizing their God given potentials and talents.

Whenever November 25th is approaching, women from different culture and creed muster an unbending courage to remind all of us about severe issues affecting their destiny. They usually raise their voices so loudly against all forms of violence. These women who are mostly vulnerable continue to experience countless number of abuses and inhumane

treatments. Sometimes, they wonder whether violence against them will ever end. Some of them are even abused on the very day of their birth. This ugly history of cruel actions against women must come to an end now if we are serious about promoting a Universe of equal partnership.

It is not just enough to attend wonderful ceremonies and deliver sweet speeches in remembrance of women who have lost their lives as a result of violence against them, but it is time for national, regional, and intercontinental organs to enact tougher or legislations protecting our women from widespread abuses. We must not allow them to fight against their perpetrators alone. We must tighten our laws to discourage prospective perpetrators from violating the rights of women. We owe our mothers and sisters a solemn pledge to always ensure their maximum safety, security, and wellbeing. This is a pledge that burns our hearts so much to immediately take action whenever anyone of them is taken advantage off by unconscious creatures and wanton elements.

As men, we must treat women with a high degree of respect at every level of our interaction. We must not use our strength and status to abuse them. Until we can understand that women are not floor-mats and sub-creatures, but forerunners and front-liners like us, our one world will remain a place of gender inequality and inequity. They do not deserve to remain in the kitchen forever, but they too must sit in the living room to decide what kind of dish comes out of

the kitchen. They too must which type schools the kids attend. They were not made to remain in the backyard, but to also come in the front yard and exhibit their great potentials. Women also have the right to shift public policy and determine their own destiny. Their selfless contribution to nation-building around the world remains an indispensable asset to mankind.

The issue of violence against women in recent time is too alarming, and if we fail to provide a timely response and solution-mechanism to problems affecting women every day, we too are nothing, but failures. There is no global peace when girls under 16 are sexually assaulted each day. How can anyone boast about equality when sexual harassment is still on the increase? How do we intend to prevent rape in our society when cases against suspects of rape are thrown out of courts as a result of cash inducement, political interference, and family intervention? How long will our mothers and sisters be treated in such a cruel manner? We stand with them today, calling on all world leaders and key stakeholders to exert more effort and utilize additional resources in order to eliminate violence against them.

For more than a century now, women have been subjected to all forms of human abuses such as femicide, sexual assault, force marriage, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual harassment, rape, etc. Most often, these women are powerless and choiceless to resist these cruel acts against them. For instance, two women are murdered on average each day in

Guatemala. An estimated 150 million girls under the age of 18 suffered some form of sexual violence in 2002 alone. Approximately 130 million girls and women in the world have experienced FGM, with more than 3 million girls in Africa annually at risk of the practice. Over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides, married before the age of 18. Up to 50% of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16.

The November 2014 World Health Organization statistics on violence against women indicates that more needs to be done in order to protect women's rights. Currently, 35% of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. On average, 30% of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their partner. Globally, as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner. According to the Delhi Police Department in India, a woman is [raped](#) every 18 hours or molested every 14 hours in the capital.

The TRC report highlights the total of 46,188 sexual violations against women during our recent civil crisis in Liberia. Today, most of those who committed these heinous crimes are walking on our streets with impunity. How could anyone think about raping a child at 21 months old? This is really wickedness to the highest degree. Reports indicate that somewhere between 60 and 70 percent of women in Liberia have suffered some kind of sexual violence, and [Time magazine](#) reports

that the number could be as high as 90 percent.

Where are we going as a nation when the fundamental rights of our aunties and daughters are trampled upon everyday by evil forces? There can be no genuine peace in this world when a girl child's future is damaged as a result of sexual violence. Global poverty can only come to an end when governments of the World begin to prioritize women's empowerment and girls' education. The road to an inclusive global development is only possible when the transmission of violence against women is broken. We will continue to be at war with our consciences until the last survivor of rape receives Justice. Our bodies shall remain restless until all culprits of cruel crimes against women are held liable for their misdeeds.

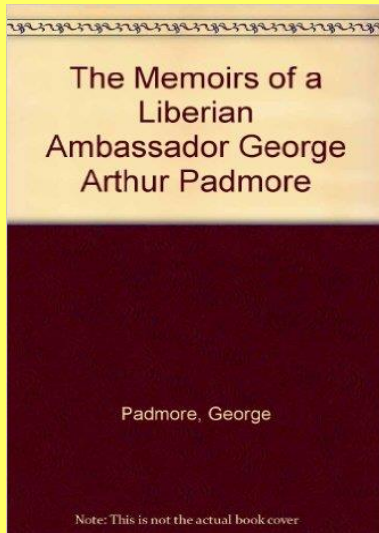
We can no longer afford to keep silent about these issues. As of now, we are going to increase our energy to raise huge alarm against violent actions that affect our young sisters and mothers. I can imagine some of the things they go through every other day to survive. It is time to stop treating women as our enemies. They are not our enemies and they can never be! All men must take the lead not just by words, but by action. Women must be seen as front-liners like us too, and they must be given a non-discriminatory corridor to prove their extraordinary attributes. Some of them have unmatched talents that are still hidden, because we (men) have refused to accept them as our competing partners. This prehistoric way of life and ancient mentality got to stop, and stop now!

How quickly we forget about the great legacy of women like Indira Gandhi, [Margaret Thatcher](#), [Rosa Park](#), [Mother Teresa](#), [Marie Curie](#), Florence Nightingale, Simone de Beauvoir and others who laid down their lives to serve humanity? Surely, these heroines deserve our utmost tribute today and always. Even after their death, violence against women globally is still a major issue. Citizens of the world must not give up this fight. We must continue to fight until women are finally liberated from the scars of violence and all forms of abuses.

As we observe the 16 Days of Activism, my heart is with those children who are in the streets and orphanage homes. I can imagine what some of our sisters are going through every day. Some of them have not even seen a classroom before. I cannot say more than what my thoughts are on this issue because it is painful to even go further explaining some of the current realities around us. The only best strategy right that we can employ is to help prevent and mitigate the widespread violence against women.

About The Author: Martin K. N. Kollie is a Liberian youth activist, student leader, an emerging economist, and a young writer. He is currently a student at the University of Liberia reading Economics and a member of the Student Unification Party (SUP). His passion is to ensure a new Liberia of socio-economic equality and justice for ALL. He can be reached at: martinkerkula1989@yahoo.com

**Book Review: *The
Memoirs of a
Liberian Ambassador:
George A. Padmore***



***Memoirs of a Liberian
Ambassador, George
Arthur Padmore:***

**By J. Kpanneh Doe,
The Perspective
11 April 2000**

In a review of the historical literature on Liberia, there is a plethora of academic studies geared towards the political and social, rather than the personal. There is not only a scarcity but also a glaring absence of memoirs and autobiographical studies, which emphasize an individual's account or personal experience of events, scenes and developments as they have occurred. In a sense, there is a huge shortage of literature that provides a personal or eyewitness account of history as it has unfolded. This has created a gap in our national history in which personal perspectives have been lacking.

But new grounds are now being broken. There is a personal storytelling tradition that is now beginning to

emerge in Liberian studies or historiography. If this trend continues, this would help contribute to a large body of knowledge and a better understanding of Liberian history.

The *Memoirs of a Liberian Ambassador*, George Arthur Padmore's book, *The Memoirs of a Liberian Ambassador*, George Arthur Padmore (Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), seeks to accomplish such an objective. Articulating his objective for writing this book, Ambassador Padmore writes:

Numerous examples of attempts by Liberians to tell their story of their country could be cited, but those stories deal with a few political and economic situations in the country. This have also appeared in print little autobiographies and other such writings in which the Liberian story has been gleaned; but, again they are largely statements of kind or another on the country's restricted development.

This book offers a rare and insightful glimpse into the journey of George Arthur Padmore's rise to becoming Liberia's Ambassador accredited to the United States, member of the Liberian delegation at the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco, and First Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Washington, D. C. Ambassador Padmore's social relationships and connections to the center of power and privilege are also very evident. He is a foster son of President Edwin Barclay, brother-in-law of President V. S. Tubman, and personal friends to various other Liberian presidents such as William R. Tolbert and Samuel Kanyon Doe.

The book's strengths lie in its beautiful narration and description of events, witty observations and social commentary. The Ambassador's account of Liberia's trouble with the League of Nations for its involvement in slavery and forced labor practices which led to the resignation of President Charles Dunbar Burgess King, his meeting with various American Presidents such as Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy, and his discussion of U. S. -Liberian relationship, are well described.

But the book suffers from several weaknesses as well. There is a lack of coherence, and detailed analyses of events are inadequate. For example, in discussing various Liberian Presidents whom he described as follows: Arthur Barclay, the humanitarian; Daniel Edward Howard, the Pragmatist; Edwin Barclay, the intellectual; William V. S. Tubman, the architect; and, William R. Tolbert the dreamer. Surprisingly, he ran out of adjective when it came to his good friend, Samuel Kanyon Doe. Ambassador Padmore ably describes their styles and personalities, but does not provide a context as to what shaped them or what goals each of their presidency set out to accomplish.

Furthermore, Ambassador Padmore recounts how President Arthur Barclay married four times and had a reason for each marriage. He however counseled that one should never marry for love. The relevance of this point to Barclay's presidency and the general theme of the book are lost to the readers.

Despite the book shortcomings, Ambassador

Padmore's memoirs blaze the trail by documenting the experiences of his life in public service. Liberia's history can be enriched by his contribution. The book is therefore good to read.

Beneath the Cold War: The Death of a Nation Leonard and Sadie Deshield, a husband and wife team, and former officials in the Tolbert administration, have collaborated in publishing: *Beneath the Cold War: The Death of a Nation* (Professionals Press Publishers, 1999). With its appealing but distorted title, the authors state that the book is not a research treatise, but their aim is simply a narrative based on our personal experiences and the experiences of others during a time when the cold war was in the throes of what we feel was a mighty deception known as the cold war. The book is unique in so far as it offers a perspective from two individuals who were not only bystanders, but also participants in government.

The book begins with the premise that Liberia, like all other Third World or developing country, is a victim of the cold war. Devoting the first half of the book to prove this point, the authors cite various methods such as psychological warfare, character assassination, harassment, destabilization, etc. employed by the CIA and the KGB, to undermine leaders and governments that have either step out of line or fallen out of favor with their patrons. The KGB and the CIA were the designers and executioners of their nation's cold war policies, they assert.

In the second half, which is the crux of the book, the

authors delve into a personal account of their experiences of what happened on the night of April 12, 1980, which led to the overthrow of the Tolbert government by the military junta. Narrating a gripping story and their ordeal, and drawing on eye-witness accounts of others, they conclude that the death of Tolbert was orchestrated by the CIA with considerable involvement of the American Embassy near Monrovia.

More than it being a personal narrative, the book offers a passionate defense of the Tolbert government, True Whig Party rule, and Americo-Liberian hegemony. The authors also make a scathing critique and paints a bleak portrait of the so-called progressive forces -MOJA and PPP - their leaders, and their purported role and challenge they pose to the Tolbert government and the True Whig Party.

On Americo-Liberian hegemony, the authors assert that: Tribal Liberians joined with self-seeking expatriate Liberians to castigate and crucify a small segment of Liberians as being responsible for all the ills of society. Aided by covert operators of the cold war, they even misnamed this group Congoes. For example, the authors write: Tolbert came to the presidency troubled by many things. His domestic and foreign relations activities were highly commended by his people, especially his mediation of the longstanding coolness between three of the leaders of Liberia's neighboring states.

Discussing MOJA and PPP, the authors state: PPP and MOJA had promised their followers, especially the market element that they could bring rice into

Liberia far less than ten dollars a beg. The Tolbert government gave them the opportunity to do so but they quickly back away from their own lies.

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Secondly, the book is rife with inaccuracies, disjointed and incoherent, and does not stick with its stated aim of being a narrative of personal experience. It is difficult to discern whether the book is a narrative, or a political analysis of events as they transpired in 1980. The topics and subject matters also lack coherence and there is an absence of an in-depth analysis of discussion of critical issues. The authors casual attempt and treatment of deep historical problem leaves much to be desired.

Thirdly, there is a paucity of attribution and sourcing. The authors quote from other works, but fail to acknowledge sources. However, the book needs to be read so that the necessary corrections can be made.

Author Interview 2

Spotlight Author

HUDA AYAZ



Liberian Literary Magazine conducted an interview with **Huda Ayaz**, a teen author. **Huda** is an extremely talented young girl who enjoys reading. She comes from a family of writers. She like the TV series the *Flash*.

LLM: First, we would like to thank you for granting this interview. Let us kick off this interview with you telling us a little about yourself....

My name is **Huda Ayaz**. In fourth grade I wrote and published *Freeze-land: A New Beginning*. In fifth grade, I wrote the second book *Freeze-land: Good or Evil* which is also now published. In sixth grade, I wrote the third book, and by the end of sixth grade, I completed the fourth book. More than anything, I love to read and write. My older sister, **Sadaf Ayaz**, published *Crossing Red Lights* a year after *Freeze-land* came out. My younger

sister, **Maliha Ayaz**, published *The Heart of Time* in October of 2015. I enjoy watching anime and TV shows like the *Flash*.

How did you start writing?

I always loved to read—even in kindergarten. My older sister, **Sadaf**, would write short stories and read them to the family after we ate dinner and we even sat to discuss story ideas when we ate dinner. I remember we all enjoyed breakfast because we got to—and still do—share our dreams and turn them into story ideas.

Even **Freeze-land** was inspired by a wonderful dream. My older brother, **Zaid** did the same and in early first grade, I started to do the same, and in time, **Maliha** started to write too. Now, even my youngest sister, **Marwa** (6 years) does the same. Also, because I always read so much, my writing was greatly influenced by the books I read. For example, the *Harry Potter* and *Percy Jackson* series.

Why do you write?

I write because I enjoy it. Reading is one way to dive into a new world, and writing gives the same feeling—except you're writing it. You can create a new world and share your dreams with everyone. You get to make the rules and you get to break them or follow them as well. Something you normally can't do in real life.

What books have really influenced you?

When I was younger, I read books like *Junie B. Jones* by **Barbara Park**, *The Magic Tree House* series by **Mary Pope Osborne**, and *Heidi* by

Johanna Spyri. Recently, I read the *Percy Jackson and Olympians* series by **Rick Riordan** and the *Harry Potter* series by **J.K. Rowling** which has really influenced my writing.

Once you have an idea for a book, how do you go about the process of writing it?

When I write, I usually know the basic idea of what I'm going to write. For example: **Samantha** will go to a planet called **Freeze-land**. I don't go into detail. The story just unfolds as I write it. Like the audience I learn of the surprises as surprises. And I rarely have more information on the characters than the readers do. To be honest, I feel like that is one of the best parts of writing—you have no idea what will happen.

Tell us a little about your book Freeze-land: A New Beginning? What can you tell us about Samantha Ringle, Rebecca, and Lord Ninstragger?

Freeze-land is about a girl named **Samantha Ringle** who meets a snowflake fairy princess named **Rebecca** who is from a secret plant called **Freeze-land**. **Samantha** goes to **Freeze-land** to save it from an evil creature named **Lord Ninstragger** who is trying to make the world dark and sad. **Samantha** is a fourth grader who loves winter more than anything in the world. When **Rebecca** calls **Samantha** to **Freeze-land**, she is hardworking and determined to save her world.

Rebecca is the princess of **Freeze-land**. She's kind, helpful, and really cares about her planet. She brings

humans from Earth to lend a hand in saving Freeze-land from Ninstragger.

Lord Ninstragger is the youngest of his many siblings. He is determined to ruin Freeze-land and make it as sad as it can be. He created Ninstings by using his wand of Lightning and they think just like Ninstragger—they have to make the happy, bright planet, sad and dark. Ninstragger is only like this because his whole blood line is like him—evil.

Okay, in Freeze-land: Good or Evil, Lord Ninstragger is finally overcome with a powerful spell and Freeze-land is safe. So why did you decide to do a part two? And why bring two of his siblings at once? Why not just one?

When I started to write Freeze-land, I knew for sure that it would be a series. I felt like the story was incomplete and knew I had to finish it. When new antagonists came to my mind, I finally decided to make it a four-book series. For your second question, I never knew the book would have two antagonists until I started writing it—the story just didn't seem complete with one obstacle. I wanted each book to have a unique plot and different characters. In my writing process, I just go with the flow and write whatever comes off the tips of my fingertips.

Is there a message in your book that you want readers to grasp? I want people to read my book to learn from it that when you think positively, you make your environment happy and bright. But, when you think negatively, you make your environment sad and dark. In

Freeze-land, when the Freeziens, citizens of Freeze-land, thought positively, the planet remained happy and joyful. But, when Ninstragger came with his negative thoughts, the whole planet became dark and gloomy. I also hope that when people find out I wrote this book in fourth grade, they will realize that you can achieve anything at any age or time in your life. Nothing is impossible!

Is there anything else you would like readers to know about your books? Yes! My books were picked up by six Hollywood producers who optioned it for a film and recently seven more producers who optioned it for cartoon series and film as well. So look out for a possible adaptation of the series!

Do you have any advice for other young children interested in writing?

Go for it! Don't judge what you write, just keep writing. In the beginning, your book may suck a little, but so does every draft! After editing it over and over and taking much time away from television and other things, you will feel proud in the end that you actually did it. This advice doesn't just go for children interested in writing but for also those who love other things. If you love art, draw as much as you can and excel at it. If you enjoy singing, learn all the best notes and practice! Everything requires hard work and without you can't get anywhere.

What book[s] are you reading now? Or recently read? My favorite series right

now, is the Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan. It has action, adventure, sarcasm, and is the most amazing series I have ever read in my life. My sisters' books, *The Heart of Time* and *Crossing Red Lights* were also one of the most amazing books I have ever read in my life.

What are you currently writing or plan to write? I am currently writing another series about a girl named Angelica who has superpowers. She lost her parents at age 6 and with her four friends and brother by the Loch Ness. All of those legends—Loch Ness, Chupacabra—come true in this book. I haven't decided the title yet, because it is still in the process of writing but I'm super excited for this!

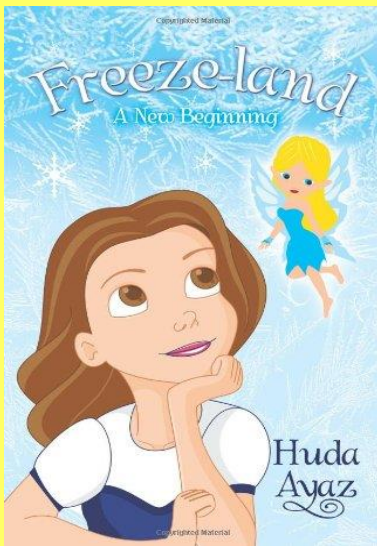
Have you read children's book[s] by [a] Liberian author[s] or about Liberia?

I haven't yet, but after checking out your site, I've become interested in reading some of the books by these amazing Liberian authors.

Any last words?

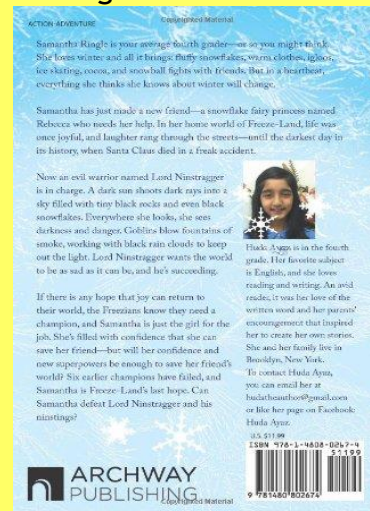
By the words of my older sister, "Keep dreaming and achieving! Anything is possible!" I love everyone's support and feedback so if any of the readers have questions or suggestions, please do contact me, I would love to hear more about what you guys think and would love to stay in touch!





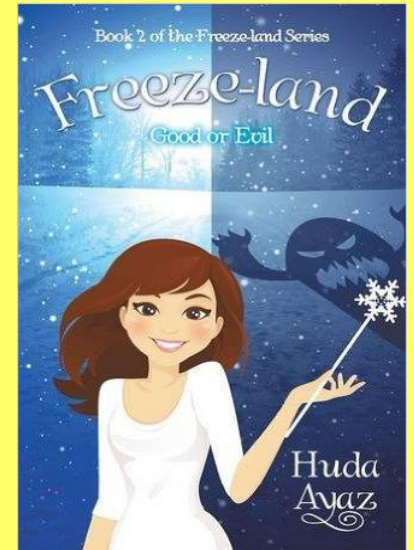
Samantha Ringle is your average fourth grader-or so you might think. She loves winter and all it brings: fluffy snowflakes, warm clothes, igloos, ice skating, cocoa, and snowball fights with friends. But in a heartbeat, everything she thinks she knows about winter will change. Samantha has just made a new friend-a snowflake fairy princess named Rebecca who needs her help. In her home world of Freeze-Land, life was once joyful, and laughter rang through the streets-until the darkest day in its history, when Santa Claus died in a freak accident. Now an evil warrior named Lord Ninstragger is in charge. A dark sun shoots dark rays into a sky filled with tiny black rocks and even black snowflakes. Everywhere she looks, she sees darkness and danger. Goblins blow fountains of smoke, working with black rain clouds to keep out the light. Lord Ninstragger wants the world to be as sad as it can be, and he's succeeding. If there is any hope that joy can return to their world, the Freezians know they need a champion, and Samantha is just the girl for the job. She's filled with confidence that she can save her friend-but will her confidence and new superpowers be enough to save her friend's world? Six earlier champions have failed, and Samantha is Freeze-Land's last hope. Can Samantha defeat Lord Ninstragger and his ninstings?

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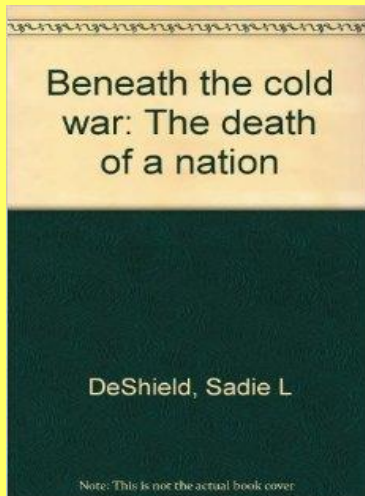
Fifth-grader Samantha Ringle thought once she had saved Freeze-land, her quest was over-no more secret planet of snow and no more crazy people

trying to rule over it. But in the winter after her first adventure, Samantha's life takes an unexpected twist, and once again Freeze-land needs her.



As Samantha sets out to save the day once more, she believes it will be easier this time around. She has the help of children who went to Freeze-land before her, and she knows all she needed to defeat the evil dictator Ninstragger was a made-up spell (along with lots of persistence). But now she must face two of Ninstragger's siblings, both stronger than him and much stronger than Samantha can ever be. Rescuing Freeze-land from these two is going to be much harder than she thought-especially when it comes down to a question of choosing good or evil. In this sequel to *Freeze-Land: A New Beginning*, a young girl must once again travel to a magical wintery land in order to save its people from a new evil.

Book Review 2



"Beneath the Cold War: The Death of a Nation"

Sadie L. DeShield

Leonard and Sadie Deshield, a husband and wife team, and former officials in the Tolbert administration, have collaborated in publishing: *Beneath the Cold War: The Death of a Nation* (Professionals Press Publishers, 1999). With its appealing but distorted title, the authors state that the book is not a research treatise, but their aim "is simply a narrative based on our personal experiences and the experiences of others during a time when the cold war was in the throes of what we feel was a mighty deception known as the cold war." The book is unique in so far as it offers a perspective from two individuals who were not only bystanders, but also participants in government.

The book begins with the premise that Liberia, like all other Third World or developing country, is a victim of the cold war. Devoting the first half of the book to prove this point, the authors cite various methods such as psychological warfare, character assassination, harassment, destabilization, etc. employed by the CIA and the

KGB, to undermine leaders and governments that have either step out of line or fallen out of favor with their patrons. "The KGB and the CIA were the designers and executioners of their nation's cold war policies," they assert.

In the second half, which is the crux of the book, the authors delve into a personal account of their experiences of what happened on the night of April 12, 1980, which led to the overthrow of the Tolbert government by the military junta. Narrating a gripping story and their ordeal, and drawing on eyewitness accounts of others, they conclude that the death of Tolbert was orchestrated by the CIA with considerable involvement of the American Embassy near Monrovia.

More than it being a personal narrative, the book offers a passionate defense of the Tolbert government, True Whig Party rule, and Americo-Liberian hegemony. The authors also make a scathing critique and paints a bleak portrait of the so-called progressive forces -MOJA and PPP - their leaders, and their purported role and challenge they pose to the Tolbert government and the True Whig Party.

On Americo-Liberian hegemony, the authors assert that: "Tribal Liberians joined with self-seeking expatriate Liberians to castigate and crucify a small segment of Liberians as being responsible for all the ills of society. Aided by covert operators of the cold war, they even misnamed this group "Congoes."

For example, the authors write: "Tolbert came to the presidency troubled by many things". His domestic and foreign relations activities were highly commended by his people, especially his mediation of the

longstanding coolness between three of the leaders of Liberia's neighboring states."

Discussing MOJA and PPP, the authors state: " PPP and MOJA had promised their followers, especially the market element that they could bring rice into Liberia far less than ten dollars a beg. The Tolbert government gave them the opportunity to do so but they quickly back away from their own lies."

There are three significant problems with the book. Firstly, there is no disputing the fact that the cold war played a significant role in undermining the progress and development of many African and Third World countries, but to apportion blame solely on the cold war without addressing the internal problems that prevailed in Liberia, which accelerated the political crisis, not only miss a crucial point, but display a lack of objectivity in their analysis of the root causes of the existing problem that has bedeviled the country.

Secondly, the book is rife with inaccuracies, disjointed and incoherent, and does not stick with its stated aim of being a narrative of personal experience. It is difficult to discern whether the book is a narrative, or a political analysis of events as they transpired in 1980. The topics and subject matters also lack coherence and there is an absence of an in-depth analysis of discussion of critical issues. The authors casual attempt and treatment of deep historical problem leaves much to be desired.

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Short Story 2

The Christmas Rogue

D. Othniel Forte

Rogue-Rogue! Theife-thiefe! This is something one hears a lot, especially during holiday seasons. After all, even the rogues have to celebrate right! But on a serious note, during Christmas, the thieves are probably the busiest people of all. At every major market, they abound. They set up shop, work in pairs and even work against one another.

It is funny to see how a group of rogues will chase after another rogue. They spare no expense in catching one of their own. Growing up, I thought this an admirable trait. I mean I grew up in a time when any adult could discipline a child. The system worked, at least most of it most of the time for many people. Children knew that there were lines they could not cross; adults knew how to behave around kids. There was a healthy balance. Society as a whole was peaceful; we tended to care for the well-being of each other. It was like this, *I look out for you, you do the same for me.*

As I grew up, I soon caught on to the rationale of these criminals. Yes, I have used the C word; but don't get too serious. The objective of any chase was simple. It was designed to hinder the opponent in

their quest to rob people. It was not out of the goodness of their hearts, far from that. If a rogue from one camp ran into the territory of another and got caught, he forfeited his spoil and, he walked away with few slaps at best; at worse, he was flogged and turned over to the authorities who then arrested him. In between this, was the option to recover the item[s], return it to the owner(s) and receive some reward. That was the whole deal. Of course, there was the bonus of bragging rights and feeling smarter than the other. It was that simple. The game was about winning, literally.

For some reason I never understood. It seemed as though Christmas rogues were treated slightly differently than regular rogues. I never figured this out. I saw many occasions where rogues were caught, some beaten, others only warned and then released. I used to pass it up to the festive time and people being more tolerant; but this theory didn't hold. Sometimes, a person would steal a bag full of items, and would be lucky enough to be released after minimal roughing-up. At other times, a person would steal a single item and they would get flogged until the police arrived. It never made sense, but I guess this was just meant to elude me.

Another thing that I find interesting is the fact that we are the only ones that say rogue. Moreover,

we say *Rogue* and *Thiefe* in a peculiar way. True to the Liberian fashion of repeating a word for emphasis, we say, *Theife-thiefe, rogue-rogue*. When that phrase is uttered [often at the top of someone's voice], everyone becomes a detective automatically. I mean we don't do that 'non-Liberian or non-African' thing, where-by everyone goes about minding their own businesses; in fact we do the exact opposite. We gather around when there is trouble; often, it is dangerous, but we still do. It is just something we are fond of doing.

Thus, when one hears rogue, people get ready for a chase. We are not into high speed; that is for the movies. Our chases are on foot. The rogues run from the throng of people. When we were little, we used to be amused by this. Just imagine one person fleeing [with or without a stolen item] and a multitude of people in his wake, screaming, chasing, throwing stuff! Often, the people ahead ended up catching the rogue and that was the essence of all the screaming and pointing. The thieves were fast. I could swear Usian Bolt would have found himself trailing several of these guys.

I must give the thieves of normal-times credit; they could run like hell. They were also quite smart; and they never, I mean they hardly ever parted with

their spoils. They held on until people caught them. They were so good [well in a bad way] at what they did. Now-a-days, it is a bunch of ex-fighters and criminals in the business. It is not that it was any good before, but it has turned into a stage for bloodthirsty people to fulfil their desires. They outright kill people for little or nothing. There is no class, and certainly, no honor amongst these thieves.

However, let us forget about these people and talk about Mamie. She was impatient and tired. Their trip was long and very bumpy. She sat next to an overweight market woman and her two children who never stopped talking. She loved children and all, but these kids talked nonstop, like pepper birds. This alone was not the problem. They had asked her a couple of times about something or the other. This was uncomfortable because she did not know.

This was her first trip to Monrovia and she was doing it alone. She had braved her fears and the last thing she wanted was everyone in this bus thinking of her as a bushgirl. It looked bad already considering the teenagers' behavior. She wanted nothing to do with it. Yet, the smaller of the two, a boy, kept firing his seemingly endless questions at her. She had managed to dodge quite a few, evaded others by murmuring something

intelligible and simply ignored the rest by pretending that she was deep in thought or focused on the scene.

His mother had admonished him a few times to stop bothering her, but he never left her alone for any length of time. At this rate, she feared he might just uncover her secret. She did not want to be rude, she was not even sure, she had it in her to tell him off rudely, but she was fast running out of options. She prayed the driver would just hurry up; but it seemed the dude and these children had planned to embarrass her. At least it looked that way to her. Normally, these drivers were flying, in one big hurry to get to their destinations, for one reason or another. Somehow today, this one was crawling slower than a snail.

Just ahead of them were two men that looked like clerks. She could tell this because for some reason, the few educated people in her family fancied being clerks. She had three uncles that were clerks, they also happened to be the most educated ones in her family. They were each chipping in with her education. Her elder brothers had made it clear that this 'book business' was not for them. This forced her parents to turn to her. Thus, schooling was not always easy, but she had it better than some had it. She was grateful for that too. She showed it by making high grades in

school. She was even a proud beneficiary of a merit scholarship, which gave her a very small stipend once a semester.

"Big sister, dah weh place here?" The boy fired another one.

This disrupted her temporary peace. She scanned the area and said, "Ganta."

Fortunately, she had been to Ganta for a school competition. She smiled as she recalled how excited she was that day. It was her first real trip to a big city. They went to the Ganta Methodist campus. The school's bus took them and it was one of her best memories even up to today. In fact, she had even been to St. Christopher School for another competition only recently.

"Hmn hmn," someone said.

She left her reminisce the same as everyone else in the bus. This time, she almost wished it was the little boy who had disturbed her, but it was not. Someone had decided to regularly pollute the air. Several people had admonished the culprit to stop but it seems they were either incapable of doing so or simply enjoying the experience.

Fart. It is never a good smell when it comes from someone else, but this particular fart was the silent-killer kind. No one ever heard it, but everyone smelt it deep in their guts; that foul, pungent fart that we all do (as a matter of fact)

but can't seem to reconcile when others do it. This person stomach-was-rotten as it is commonly said in our parts. Whomever it was knew better than to reveal him/herself. They would be lynched. Already as it is, everyone in the car was *leching* them. every window was opened but that did not matter- the silent killer was killing their noses.

Between the driver, the question boxes, her cramped legs and the farting, she did not know what to do. She wished she could just be far away from all of them; perhaps in her room on her mattress. That was her most precious possession. It made her sleep so soundly; something, she needed now, but she knew she was not going to have. She was unable to sleep amidst all this discomfort.

They finally arrived after what seemed like an eternity. She was sore and hungry. If she hadn't been looking forward to seeing Monrovia as badly as she had wanted all her life, she would have gone right to bed. She was amazed by the frenzy. She had never seen this many people at once in her life. Whatever apprehension she had, quadrupled. She felt so lost and alone amongst all these people. She found herself shaking. She found it difficult to move.

Just then, one of those chatterboxes jumped up and nearly tripped her over. They were drunk with

excitement. "Sorry aunty," he shouted back without looking.

"Yeah, sorry aunty," the sister chimed in even though she had done nothing. Their mother had not made it out of the bus yet but they were out- some itchy-for-action children. She could learn a thing or two from them after all, she reminded herself. They were wide eyed and in the high spirits everyone else around them seemed to be exhibiting; everyone except her. She took a deep breath, shook herself as if to get rid of the fear.

She scanned the group. She wanted a friendly face that was not too busy to notice her. She could then use that to make her pitch. Meanwhile, all around her, she heard people shouting, "Broad Street-Broad Street!" "Duala-Duala!" "Paynesville-Sinkor!" "Ganavay-Ganavay!" "Congor Town-Highway!"

"Junction, junction. Geh inside leh go; quick quick."

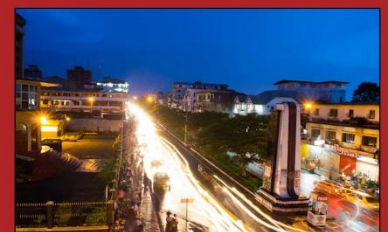
"Junction? Where the heck was that?" she thought. No one had ever told her about a place named Junction in Monrovia. She had asked any and every one about anything that came to her mind. She really believed she was ready to face the city, but now that she was here, she realized how nothing she had heard prepared her for this level of madness. People were going in all directions;

bumping into one another and tables, and whatever objects that stood in front of them. There were cars parked everywhere. Speaking of cars, she saw all colors, shapes and sizes. She had to admit, the city had a flare about it. There was no denying that.

All this time she had not stepped more than a few feet away from the bus, which was still unloading. She wanted to wait for the car-boy to conclude his work so she could ask him for directions. From the looks of things, that might be awhile. The annoying part is that the driver had vanished. The fool dragged his legs to get here, only to run off to wheresoever.

Mixed in her thoughts, she failed to notice the nice looking young fellow across from her. He walked right up to her and asked, "Excuse me, did you come with this bus?"

D. OTHNIEL FORTE



A Liberian Christmas

Memories of
Amazing Times

D. Othniel Forte

Author Interview 3

SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

BELLE KIAZOLU is a
Liberian teen author



Belle Kiazolu

Thank you for taking this time with us, we appreciate it. Let us kick off by you telling us a little about you- childhood, education, upbringing etc.

I'm an eleven year old 6th grader and I live with my family in Paynesville, Liberia. I love reading and writing, and am determined to achieve all of my dreams through education and hard work. I love the arts and would like to pursue a career in writing.

Why writing?

Writing because when I write, I think about the future and how it could be better. I also write to encourage children to learn and believe that they can become better and achieve their dreams.

What books have most influenced your life/career most?

The book that influenced my life the most is a book called, *Friends Stick Together*. This book promotes true friendship and encourages everyone to have a best friend, because, best friends support and encourage you to pursue your dreams.

When you have an idea, how do you go about writing it or putting it down?

I begin by imagining the beautiful images of things that I think should be written about. After that, I try to write down as much as I can remember.

What topics or themes do you like to write about?

When I write, I often find myself expressing the themes of true friendship, encouragement and nature. I like to write about the things around me

Tell us a little about your book (s) - storyline, characters, themes, inspiration etc.?

My first story I wrote was the "Secret Friend" based on my personal experience. I enrolled at a new school and on the first day of class, I made lots of friends, but there was a girl who didn't like me at all. I tried to reach out to her, but she wasn't interested.

One day, everything changed when I helped her out of trouble, and she told me that she had wanted to be my friend since the first day of school, but was shy to tell me. We are now great friends.

We expect this book to come out in June. But in January 2016- *Miatta, The Swamp Princess* will be released; that is a few weeks away. I am so excited.

Butterfly Designs and Forte Publishing have accepted for publication my other children's book [*Massa and Mary Make A Plan*] but I am not sure when it will be published. I know that it will be sometime next year just not exactly when.

What inspired you to write this title or how did you come up with the storyline?

I was inspired by my aunt, *Patrice Juah*, to continue writing. She told me to write more and to focus on my education. She also encouraged me to believe in myself and never allow anything to stand in the way of achieving my dreams.

Is there a message in your book that you want your readers to grasp?

The message I want others to grasp is that they should believe that whatever they focus on becoming is possible, and they should

dedicate their time and effort towards achieving it.

Is there anything else you would like readers to know about your book?

For now, I can't say much I am not supposed to say anything until the books are published. However, I would like them to go out and get copies when the books are ready.

Do you have any advice for other young children that want to write but are scared or shy etc. ?

That they should always write their own stories and not copy other people's ideas. It's good to share and look at others ideas but no one should copy those ideas. They should find good mentors and they must read a lot.

What book (s) are you reading now? Or recently read?

I recently read "Salute to Courage". It is about courage and honesty and the character is a boy named Rony, who was honest and courageous throughout the story.

Tell us your latest news, promotions, book tours, launch etc.

I've written several short stories and poems, and I am excited to have been given

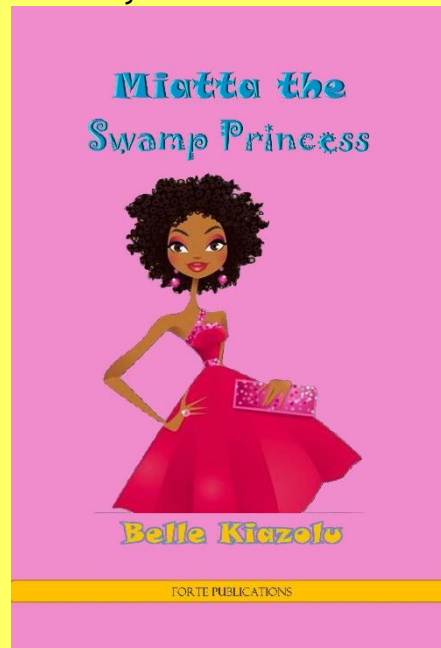
this platform to share my work to a larger audience. This will be my first publishing opportunity and it will inspire me greatly to continue writing.

What are your current projects?

I'm currently writing several short stories and poems for a publishing with Forte Publishing /Butterfly Publishers and LLR. I'm very excited and grateful for this opportunity.

What was the last book written by a Liberian author that you read?

I recently read *The Palm Cabbage Party* by Brandy and Milly Wolova



Any last words?

I wish everyone a joyous holiday season and a blessed 2016. Please support and invest in Liberian literature.

BIO



Belle Kiazulo

Belle resides in Paynesville City, Monrovia. She is a sixth grade student.

She loves reading and writing. She particularly enjoys writing stories and poetry.

Belle is fond of the arts and wants to pursue a career in writing.

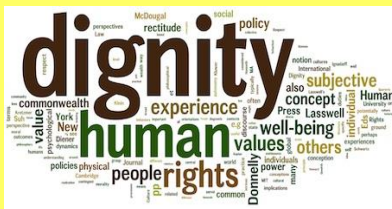
My Aunt

What an aunt;
Loving and caring,
Always so charming.

Her smiles make you
laugh,
And her words make you
dream

When she's around
dandelions fly in the sky
She's the queen and I'm
the princess.

My world is free when
she's around.
I love her dearly and she
loves me too.



their status, creed, culture, sex, age, physical abilities and political affiliation. The best solution to our problem in Liberia is to treat everyone with respect and dignity. We cannot talk about human freedom without talking about human dignity. Today, our Constitution and other international protocols guarantee human dignity at all levels.

Article 8 of the Liberian Constitution states that:

“The Republic shall direct its policy towards ensuring for all citizens, without discrimination, opportunities for employment and livelihood under just and humane conditions, and towards promoting safety, health and welfare facilities in employment.”

Additionally, article 11(a) states that “All persons are born equally free and independent and have certain natural, inherent and inalienable rights, among which are the right of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of pursuing and maintaining the security of the person and of acquiring, possessing and protecting property, subject to such qualification as provided for in this Constitution.”

According to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these are provisions that guarantee human dignity:

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude;

slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 7: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

The Charter of the United Nations which came into force on October 24, 1945 is in total support of human dignity, equality and justice. The first pillar of the Millennium Development Goals, which highlights the need to eradicate poverty and hunger globally is in adherence to the doctrine of human dignity.

The respect for cultural diversity is very paramount to any democratic society. Considering the variation in traditional beliefs, it is crucial to promote human dignity through culture. There can be no harmony if respect for one’s culture is overlooked and suppressed. However, every culture must take into keen consideration human dignity and fundamental human rights.

Today in Liberia certain cultural practices are in total violation of human dignity and basic human rights. We agree that there are some good cultural practices, but there are also some bad ones. We must work along with local and traditional leaders to alleviate bad cultural practices such as **female genital mutilation, force labor, force marriage, etc.**

Having outlined few practices contrary to human dignity that remain ingrained in our society today, I would like to henceforth recommend the following:

1. That a National Stakeholder and Dialogue Conference be held on Human Dignity, Equality, and Equity.
2. That a Taskforce or Committee be established in each electoral district or county to exclusively promote Human Dignity.
3. That tougher legislations or laws be enacted to ensure total adherence to the principles of human dignity.
4. That Human Dignity and Human Rights be taught in secondary and tertiary institutions around the country.



About The Author: Martin K. N. Kollie is a Liberian youth activist, student leader, an emerging economist, and a young writer. He is currently a student at the University of Liberia reading Economics and a member of the Student Unification Party (SUP). His passion is to ensure a new Liberia of socio-economic equality and justice for ALL. He can be reached at: martinkerula1989@yahoo.com

Forgotten Heroes

Anthony William Gardner

(date of birth unknown - died 1885)



Anthony W. Gardner (1820-1885)

Gardner and his parents moved to the colony in January 1831 aboard the *Volador* when he was in his early teens. They settled in Bassa. Some records list him as being 11 whilst others place his age at 12 when they migrated. They hailed from Virginia, USA making him the third Liberian President born in that state (Roberts/Payne).

This move must have been tough for the boy; for the average journey from America to Liberia took anywhere from 30 to 35 days at sea. Such toil was unimaginable but families and folks in such for greater freedom and a chance to start life afresh did not mind the risk. Liberia seemed the perfect place to do that for many.

However, young Anthony took full advantage of the freedom and opportunity in Liberia. He went to school and attained a degree in law right in Liberia. He was a lawyer and as many men of his time, he was a devout Christian.

At the convention, that eventually declared Liberia's independence, he was a delegate. Upon the nation's independence, Roberts

appointed Gardner as the first Attorney General. During the years 1855 - 1871, he served in various capacities. He was a lawmaker during Benson's administration and was Superintendent for Grand Bassa County for three terms (1856, 1860 - 1862 and 1876 - 1877).

In 1871, he ran for the office of Vice President and won the election to become Liberia's ninth Vice President, a post he was re-elected to the following election. His fortunes turned for the better when his boss old J.J. Roberts) resigned due to poor health in 1875. He took over the Presidency, finished off the term. A month before Payne had won the elections. The border problems had a huge effect on his loss.

This did not deter him, for he seemed to have learned his lessons. He returned less than one and a half years later and led the TWP to a massive victory. This puts him in a special class for the party held on to this landslide and power for the next century or more.

With this presidency, the TWP began its true dominance of Liberian politics. It picked up after the Roye's debacle and did not stop. All TWP members hold their uninterrupted political ascendancy to Gardner's victory. In addition, when he became President, he was the last surviving member of the group of 11 colonists that signed the Declaration of Independence.

It is said that life has a funny way of playing tricks on people, for Anthony faced the same faith as his predecessor Roberts and was forced into incapacitation and resignation in 1883. It is said that he was disgruntle over the handling of the border issue by the Legislature thus he volunteered his resignation.

He secured for himself a place in history as the first leader of Liberia to resign voluntarily. He had the misfortune to be president at the time of the Scramble for Africa. This would later impact Liberia's and Africa's history in ways never imagined.

It was on the order of Anthony Gardner that the Liberian Order of African Redemption was created. It is believed that the Gardnersville area (in Liberia) was named in his honor as a sign of appreciation, but it is not clear exactly when this happened.

Short Story: From Clay Ashland with Love: Coleman Special

Jeanine Cooper

The river lazes by with hardly around. The loudest sound is the birds chirping, unless a motor car chugs by. Palm trees line the banks and the air is always heavy with the promise of peace...or of something.

My first trip to Clay-Ashland came when I was about 7. Eyes wide and nose glued to the back seat window of Oma's Peugeot. Me, Erika and Juju had been staying with Oma, something we did through most of our childhood as our parents went through yet another transition. For some reason, Oma decided to try to wean me from my silent grieving of the other grandmother I desperately wanted to see. This trip with her, just me, her and Mr. Jesse the driver, was to strengthen a bond between us. It would be the first of many trips.

The road is dusty and navigation is slow because of the rocks and gullies that scar it. After about half an hour of winding through little groups of houses, the road widens a bit and Oma sits up a bit.

"Blow!" she tells Mr. Jesse and, without waiting for his compliance, she starts a steady tooting of the horn.

"Pohn-pohn! Pohn-pohn! Pohnnnnn!"

You see people stepping out on their porches and little children run along the road. Aunt Gene nah come home.

The car slows and turns right, heading towards the river and we pull up in a cloud of dust in front of a 'frame' house near the pier. The steps are painted black and white and re-purposed Nido and Klim cans serve as flowerpots that line both sides of the staircase.

Uncle Sammy and his wife are standing at the front door and little boys come running up. Looks like they chased the car all the way. My big eyes are even bigger as I look at these unknown children.

"Get out the car and come speak," Oma says, not ungently.

Busy looking at the children, I hardly pay attention to the adults but I dutifully go up and kiss Uncle Sammy, Oma's older brother, on the cheek. Cousin Rebecca, his much taller, thin wife enfolds me in her arms.

"This Julius' daughter," Oma explains, and to me, "This your Uncle Sammy and Cousin Rebecca".

'Why not Aunt Rebecca?' I wonder briefly but didn't have the nerve to ask.

My eyes are taking in everything all around me and I keep stealing glances at the little people around my age. Joel and Richard are Cousin Rebecca's grandsons. Again I wonder if they are also Uncle Sammy's grandsons. Again I say nothing and I don't see any little girls.

The adults enter the house and I follow right behind. They sit on the porch, a covered affair with wooden windows propped open with sticks. There are a few books and old photographs in the living room, easily reached from the porch. I study these unfamiliar faces, recognizing only Aunty Darling, Oma's sister Sarah Clarisse Simpson George...the same photo is on Oma's living room wall. Oh and there is her father, Philip Francis Simpson, seated on a stylized photographer's bench somewhere in Berlin.

A young girl brings me an opened bottle of ginger ale and a glass with a coaster. I say 'thank you' and settle down to keep looking around. Right off the porch to the right of a wooden staircase leading upstairs, I see a room with an enormous four-poster bed. Later, Oma would tell me that she and her brothers and sister were born in that bed.

Wow!

Oma and her brother settle in to talk. She too has a glass and there is a bottle of a yellow liquid in front of them that they are sharing. It looks like milkshake. I look at my warm ginger ale and I start to covet their drink.

Their voices are soothing as they share the news, Oma gives the news from Monrovia and Uncle Sammy updates her on Clay-Ashland folks.

Soon, other people come up the stairs.

"Kpok-kpok!" each one calls out, in full view of us on the porch. "Kpok-kpok" is the greeting as each relative comes to pay respects.

"This your cousin Eugene (or cousin Mac or Mr. Askie)," Oma says to me and tells each one in turn: "This Julius' daughter". If she said my name, I don't recall. For this trip, my name is "Julius' daughter".

They each take a seat on the porch and more glasses are brought. I sip my ginger ale and watch that yellow drink go down steadily until a new bottle is brought out. I sidle up to Oma and ask her "Oma can I have some of that?"

The adults laugh.

"No child. This is eggnog [she calls it "ayg-nog"]. It's for big people. Go drink your ginger ale.

Cousin Mac says "Give her small to taste, Aunt Gene" and she offers me a sip from her glass. That lovely milk-shake-looking drink is so strong I choke on my first sip. And all the adults erupt in laughter.

"Child, leave this for the big people. Go drink your ginger ale." Unamused to be the butt of a joke, and still looking longingly at that 'ayg-nog', the kick it held has faded and the sweet custardy taste remains on my tongue.

"I like it!" I say stoutly, and the porch erupts in laughter again.

"Next time, Cousin Mac will make your own just for you yah," she promises as I continue to look at them and then at the river outside. The adults pick up their conversation and the 'ayg-nog' incident is forgotten.

The next time I saw that drink was at Oma's house, a few years later. Again we had come to 'stay with' her and we were all looking forward to Christmas Day that week. It was in the evening as Oma sat on her own porch in Congotown, looking over at the Atlantic Ocean where in the distance the Firestone rubber boat made its way towards the port.

"Jeanine! Go look in the closet in my bathroom [yes! Oma's bathroom had a full closet with shelves and clothes rack, double doors and all], on the middle shelf behind the soap and bring me that bottle of ayg-nog".

I went into the secret place and pushed aside some unopened bars of soap and found the stash. Three unopened bottles of "ayg-nog", lined up neatly next to a smaller one that was only a quarter full. I was tempted to taste it again and see if it was as good as I remembered. Funny. I remembered only the sweetness, not the kick.

I brought out the unopened bottle and gave it to Oma. She sent me for some glasses and she poured a smidgen in one glass for me and a healthy portion for herself. This time I was ready for the kick so I didn't choke.

"They call this Coleman Special, you know, after President Coleman."

"He made it and so they named it after him?" I asked, enjoying the camaraderie.

"I don't think he made it but he sure did like it," she answered.

We sat and savored the drink, sip by sip. I let the sweetness coat my tongue and ignored the kick that was much less strong since I was taking such small sips. Oma told me the secret that made it "special". The cane syrup and cane rum

gave it a different taste from the cans of Borden Eggnog that we saw in the supermarkets.

"That's the molasses," she said, "and the cane juice".

That day, I looked out at the sea and took another sip. I felt a little buzz and I was sure it was the pleasure of my grandma's conversation.

"Oma, you must please show me how to make it."

She laughed and promised. Some time later, she called me to the kitchen and walked me through my first batch of Coleman Special. Over the years, I've tried this many times but I can't recapture that taste...too many substitutes and new-fangled shortcuts. The original recipe is the best one.

Coleman Special

One dozen *fresh* eggs (as fresh as possible, preferably straight from the chicken coop)

One and a half Cups of sugar cane syrup

Six large cans (6 Cups) of Carnation Milk

Three Cups of cane juice

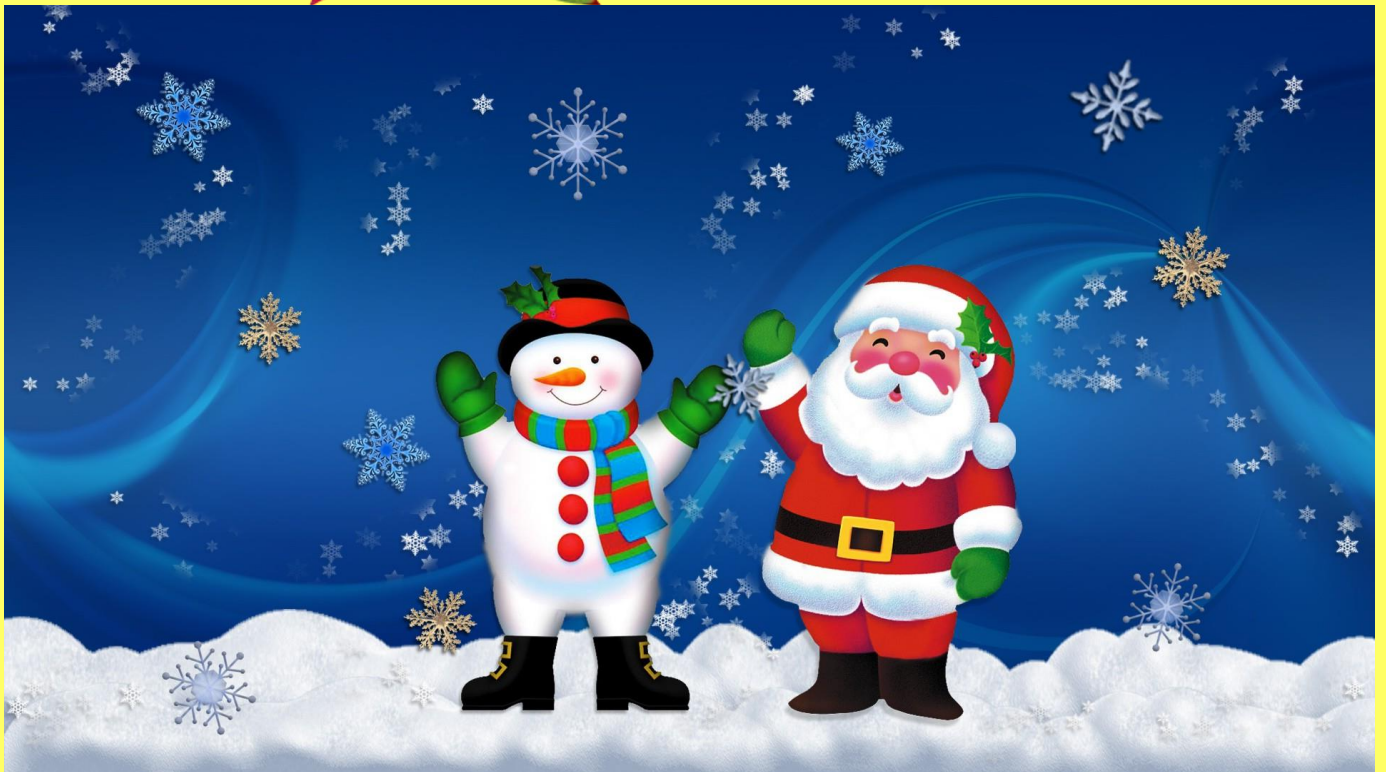
Hand-beat the eggs well and add in the various ingredients. Some people like to separate the yolks and the egg whites and whip them separately, combining them later. It makes the consistency of the drink much lighter. But the Coleman Special I remember, the one where the taste lingers on your tongue and palate for hours, that one needs the heaviness. Beat those eggs like eggs, the way they come out of the shell, not as separate entities.

And in case you're thinking you can't find these things in the supermarket, you can find substitutes in any good supermarket. But then you will have a nice eggnog, not Coleman Special. You can use sugar or molasses instead of the cane syrup; you can use go half-half with whole milk or cream instead of Carnation milk (and you can use any old evaporated milk, not Carnation); you can use rum instead of cane juice. I cannot guarantee that the taste will be the same...I am giving you the recipe I know from my Oma.

And don't worry about eggs in the eggnog and it still being good. The best Coleman Special is aged for a few weeks to let the flavors really sink in. Trust me on this: the cane juice will kill any and every bacteria that may even dream of being formed. The alcohol acts like a preservative too...there is scientific evidence for this.

After all, our people been drinking this thing not from the icebox or refrigerator and they did alright, didn't they?

And that drink, that Coleman Special is a serious, serious up-river legacy.



Dashing through the dust,
On a Pen-Pen full of rust.
Overtaking trucks,
being careful is a must!

~Liberian Jingle Bells by Patrice Juah~

Dashing through the dust,
On a Pen-Pen full of rust.
Overtaking trucks,
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Author Interview 4 SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

Shandreka M. Jones is an African American author



Shandreka Monique Jones

Thank you for taking this time with us, we appreciate it. Let us kick off by you telling us a little about you- childhood, education, upbringing etc.

Question: Tell us about your early childhood, upbringing, Education.



I was born and raised in Westchester New York. At the age of 7, child protective services removed me from my grandmothers care and placed in foster care. I remained in the abusive foster care homes until I ran away at the age of 17 years old. Once I graduate high school, I join the Army and served for 12 years. I worked for the government for a few years after the military but decided I wanted a career change. I'm currently enrolled at University of South Carolina, College of Social-Work as a master student graduating May 2016.

I live in Blythewood, South Carolina with my husband and 14-year old son

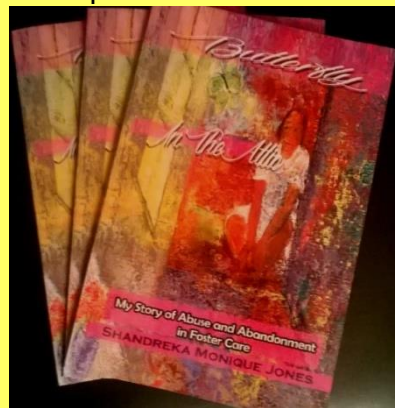
2. Why writing? I don't think of myself as an actual writer. I started writing in my diary as healing tool and it ended up into a memoir.

3. What books have most influenced your life/career most?

Cupcake by Cupcake Brown, Finding Fish by Antwone Fisher and The boy called it by Dave Pelzer

4. How do you approach your work? Prayer, leaning on my family for support and more prayer.

5. Do you have any advice for other writers? If you find yourself flustered and wanting to quit. It's okay to walk away from your book but make sure you pick it back up. It is so rewarding to see your finish product.



6. What book[s] are you reading now?

Or recently read? Unfortunately, I do not have any time to read for pleasure. I'm finishing up my Master in Social Work.

7. Tell us a little about your book[s]- storyline, characters, themes, inspiration etc.



My memoir speaks of the abuse and neglect I endured for seventeen years by my biological family and foster care parents. From a young age I spent endless days and nights in a basement, attic or eating alone in a cold kitchen. I share how I was allowed to fall through the cracks of a broken foster care system, yet offers steps that may improve the system. This book shows my strength and how I was able to overcome adversity.

What are three things you'd hope anyone who reads it walks away with? Hope, awareness and valor. My purpose for writing my memoir is to bring forth awareness for children who endured abuse while in foster care. Foremost this book is for anyone who experience pain and triumph in their lives. I believe sharing my journey will help others heal and gain self-confidence.

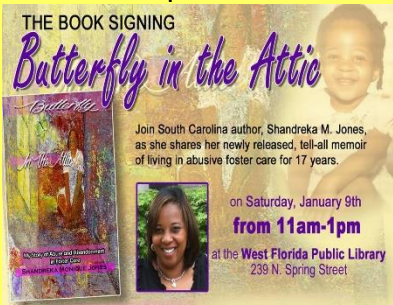




8. Tell us your latest news, promotions, book tours, launch etc. I am scheduled to have a book signing in January 9, 2016 in Pensacola Florida. I have a speaking to an undergraduate class at University of South Carolina November 5, 2015. I have an



interview with the Columbia South Carolina Court Appointed Specialist Advocate Office October 30, 2015. This organization work together with it state and local members protecting abuse and neglected children. Please check my website, my author face book page and twitter for updates.



9. What are your current projects?

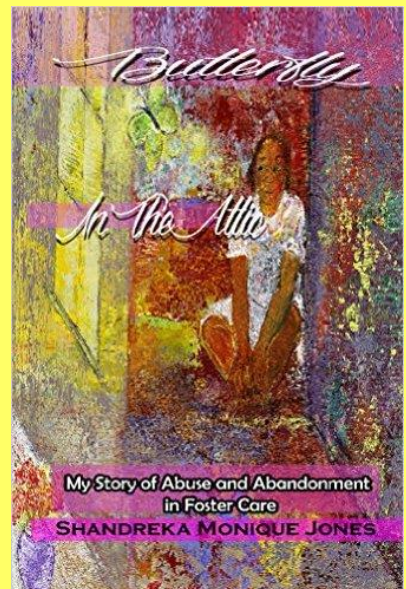
Once I graduate with my masters in social work in May 2016, I am contemplating on working on a sequel to my

memoir. Until then I plan to use my book as a platform for speaking engagements.

10. Have you read book[s] by [a] Liberian author[s] or about Liberia? No, I have not but I am interested in reading some autobiographies.

Contact Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/thebutterflyintheattic>
Website: www.abutterflyintheattic.com
Twitter: @ButterflyAttic_
Email: abutterflyintheattic@gmail.com

A memoir reflecting on the author's tormenting, abusive experience in the foster care system. Spending much of her time in an attic, basement, or a cold kitchen, Shandreka's imaginary friends kept her company and gave her the love she desperately craved. Allowed to slip through the cracks of the broken foster care system, Shandreka M. Jones not only shares her painful abuse, but offers solutions to improve the system and decrease the rate of abused children in foster homes.



BIO



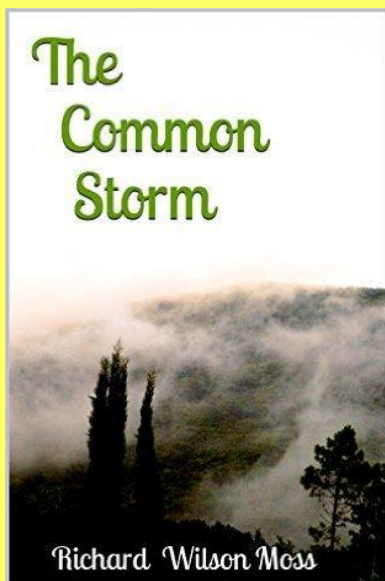
Shandreka Jones resides in Columbia, South Carolina with her husband and teenage son. After serving thirteen years in the United States Army, Jones chose to further her education and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Human Resources Administration from Saint Leo University. She is presently enrolled in the University of South Carolina, College of Social Work. The new author is on a quest to help support foster care organizations and to be a voice for abused children in foster care homes. She is a member of the National Association of Social Workers South Carolina Chapter and speaks to groups and organizations about her experience in foster care and her passion to make a difference.

Richard Wilson Moss

Pagans And Christians

On the Greyhound all night
Flasks of rum were passed
As we were suddenly
consumed
In a ravenous snowstorm
Like a silver minnow
swallowed
By a white swan.
Someone shouted after a
long swig-
Jesus was not really born
tomorrow
And he ain't no miracle
man!-
Settle down, another
advised
And then the diesel quits at
dawn

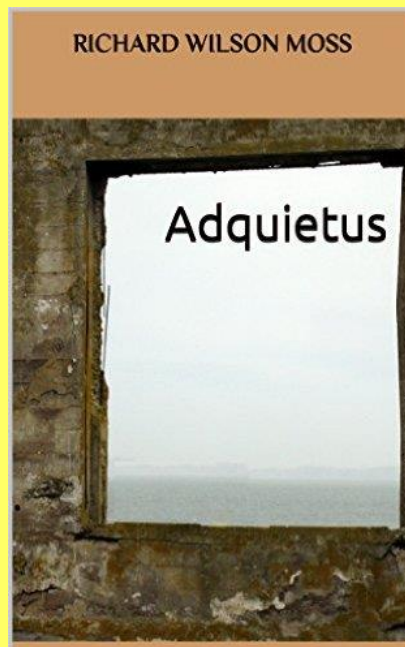
Restarted, the bus warms
And is rerouted to Feather
River
Where next year's grapes
yawn
Loitering in the loins of
frozen vines
And the river not quite iced
Waits to be walked on.



Poetry Section

The Strongman

When the sun was finished
looking
And the stars had begun
The strongman visited
The runt of the circus
They drank beer and fed
The dancing girl's horses
Afterwards walking
To a basement bar
For a nightcap
And everyone unsteady
there
Marveled at such a pair
But one drunkard who
reeked
Heckled them until the
strongman
Picked him up and threw
him down.
Through clouded transoms
The full moon peeked.



Daybreak

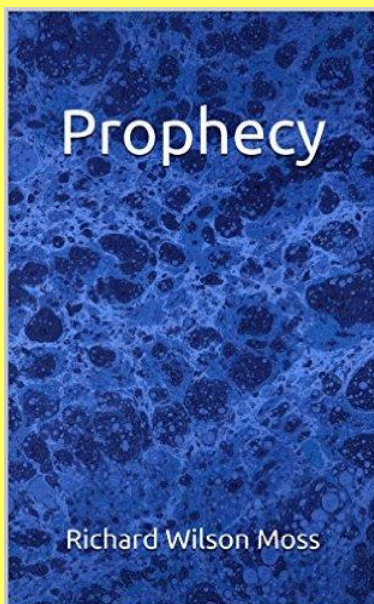
Wired cages are unloaded
from dark holds
Inside them, swinging their
green heads

The parrots laugh
Stars above seem to sputter
Daring to go out
Seen far at sea this
morning's pilot
Awkwardly comes about
Markets open, sidewalks are
washed
Above in rented rooms
Women peacefully sleep
While their men hang
restless heads in doubt
Of themselves and this day

Upon Puberty

Young in the pew
The oak seat so hard it
burns
Like hot spice, I fasten
together
Paper clips secretly stolen
From a teacher's desk
With them I daydream of
hanging
The black suited man up
front
Who goes on and on
About deliverance,
forgiveness of a god
I would test with this noose.
Far from there I hear
the noon train
And wish to climb on, travel
forever
Jump out at times into
pouring rain
Sit in cool puddles and
drown ants
Slave to no reason of
destination
Like the dancer to the
dance.

copyright 2005 Richard
Wilson Moss



Genesis

Part 2

Out upon a senseless, sun-
burnt sea
I see a ship that behaves
like a canoe
Its huge prop disrupts the
deep
No more than a single oar
No more than the first
sprout of a fern
Disturbs the forest floor
I see them arriving
A throng of shapes and
sizes
Yardsticks were never
made for
The shadows of father,
mother, daughter, son
Dreamless generations
from the womb of one.
They have heads and arms
and legs
Wear the finest clothes,
earplugs and i phones
Brandish Rolex and realm
Men that are the image of
dead men

Handsome and hung
Women that are the old
film of dead women

Beautiful and undone
Everyone, all of them, this
last invasion
Were the shadows of a
younger sun
Passing beneath me they
required no shelter from
the
present one.
Discussions,
demonstrations, speeches,
proclamations
So beautiful and flowing
Made obscene the natural
noise of the surf.

Turning from one tree into
another
I found assorted branches
Swayed to each pulse of
their musical, intellectual
purity.
And out of joy I gave these
gutless ghosts
Apples, pears, peaches,
oranges, all the fruit
That their shadows of
worms wander through
I gave them ripeness
basking upon the cliff of
rot
But they could not eat.

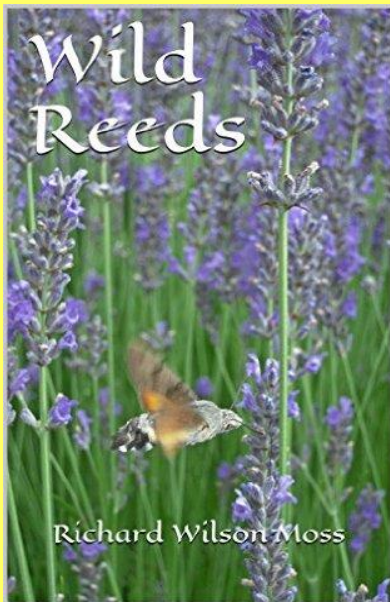
Indigo ran for the snow
Upon the only peak of the
atoll
Once landscaped,
immaculate, bushes never
tangled
with trees
Now cold sculpture.
Merely sitting, shaking
with fear
Indigo thawed frozen
flowers and iced streams
Cold, sleeping rock had its
first warm dreams
Clouds held fire and
thunder instead of ice
This sudden, quick,
summer in a February park

Made those below
disturbed and darker
Like the unpredicted solar
eclipse ending
Still makes the rest of day
dark.

But those that could not
eat
Fed on the fat of an ideal
That the shadows of the
dead
Are sustained by a stroll in
the sun.
Zombies who could not eat
the brains of a gnat
Looked up at the mountain
And saw the iconoclastic
glow of Indigo.

To go there, to ascend
The crowd wheeled and
dealed
Divided the island into
deadly districts
To sell rancid fruit they
could not eat
Warred and whored until
they gained that hill
To capture trembling and
listless Indigo
As quietly as fallen snow
collects snow.

Those that spoke in
whispers
As around the island the
oceans unseasonably
roared
Bound Indigo to the last
sensible tree
He didn't struggle, curse or
beg
As a bright summer world
might plead one more
sunrise
From a cold, dead sun.
I changed from one form
of tree to another
And threw my fruit down
upon everyone.



Held by rope made from
 the skirts of ancient
 apostles
 Indigo spoke of the faith of
 a fly
 While his captors danced
 the latest dance
 To rave music resurrected
 from the ashes of Bach
 and Mozart.
 They were lifeless,
 mechanized shadows that
 could
 never die

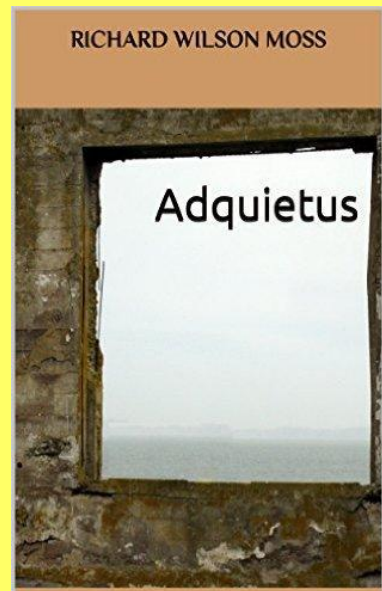
The rich, red valves of the
 giant, disappointed heart
 Still throbbing inside
 shriveled, dying Venus.
 Stupidly they circled the
 last sensible tree
 As worlds cuddled up to
 stars that would destroy
 them
 They shouted of profit and
 purpose
 As Indigo looked up at me
 In his bright, unfathomable
 face
 The smiles of tragedy.
 Contended, he stared only
 at the sea

And quietly, happily,
 slowly glowed with
 increasing
 light

As the moon lifting from
 the black night of a burnt
 forest
 Glowed as stars cannot
 their fires as slight as
 fireflies
 Glowed and then exploded
 Like the last sun bursting
 with the delight of the
 first

But exploded unlike the
 evil star that destroys
 when it
 will detonate
 (How can pure love ignite
 hate?)
 As the fruit tree of all the
 fruitless trees
 I melted in millions of
 degrees.

In unchanging, soundless
 tides
 The shadows of sharks fed
 On the shadows of
 yesterday's flesh
 Falling from a scattered,
 unburdened breeze.
 Shade made from dead
 blood, muscle,
 Desires and devotions as
 dense as lead
 The beaches of the atoll
 crystallized
 Each grain of sand a rough
 diamond
 No one would ever cut.
 The unblemished sky dwelt
 between blue and violent
 The sun was the
 undeveloped eye of a
 worm

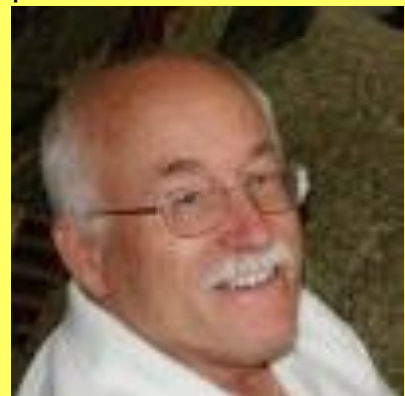


The water held a sweeping
 shaded current of red
 And although the devoured
 traces of shade
 Cast by those unmade
 Knew not if he was pure
 spirit or merely irradiated
 sperm
 Across unconsciousness
 Indigo spread

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 Wilson Moss

THE END

Richard Moss is the author
 of numerous full length
 poetry books. You can find
 his books on every major
 platform.



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Aken Wariebi



Aken Vivian Wariebi is an avid reader and writer and the latter began more frequently since grade school. A graduate from both Rutgers and Syracuse Universities, respectively, she never left a book nor a

pen behind. Today, a Poet and Advocate for the most vulnerable, Ms. Wariebi finds joy in inspiring and helping others in any positive way that she can. Some say her Poems speak to their heart and soul and for Ms. Wariebi life speaks to her pen. Others describe her writings as life short stories. No matter how it is felt, Ms. Wariebi speaks to your heart and soul from hers and hopes that all can find a little more light along their journey of life in her work as she has in her writings. She is originally from Monrovia, Liberia and currently resides in the USA.

Life ----- A Vapour

Life is a Vapor
Be careful of the path you trod
Walk with caution speak with a presence
Earn respect as you go

Your image is a mirror
Each step a talent show
God is the only one non-judgmental
So say a prayer and flow

What you do when none is watching
Sometimes may definitely make you glow
For your conscious is a reminder of your
character and your soul

Beware of how you spend your time
Productivity is for the swift and the slow, no
need to rush the show
See, you are your only representative there is
no substitute on row

Your little time is quite worthwhile and every
move is exposed

Though brief a time each life when lived
There is a whole lot to learn and grow

Don't sit too long mowing too many lawns
The frowns shouldn't be the goal
Realize that it is a process, a challenge, a
blessing

Your performance on the stage of old

Simply do your best that may just be much
This I tell you, just in case you didn't know

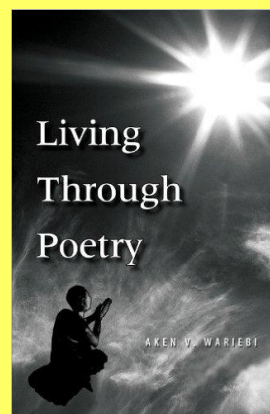
Believe in Yourself

Do you trust yourself, or doubt yourself?
Your identity you have to find
Only you can trust yourself with that comes
retreat
Are you out of your mind?

You may be different, or you may not
So, step outside yourself to see yourself
Know only you can find yourself
With that comes belief

Do you know yourself, your fears, your dares,
your insecurities, your worth?
Your values, your heritage, your principles,
your character, your style?
If you know and have these things you better
know you're a person with substance and
stride.

Are these the questions you've asked yourself?
A million times before?



Not one can answer
them but you and you
indeed should know
No one can find
yourself but you
No one can know you as
best as you

To ask these questions
and more besides is the
first step
In knowing and getting
acquainted with you

But most especially knowing the answers to
them
Can be what will help you begin to believe in
you

Herbert Logerie

Santa Claus Is Very Sad Today

Santa lost many children today
Christmas will not be the same
Our eyes are wet with fear and tears
Christmas will not be the same
Today is a very sad day
The blood of our young peers
Is scattered all over the black board
Our babies are sobbing, crying,
Bleeding and screaming
Today is no good, Oh! Lord
The sweat of our innocent babies
Is sprayed all over the white board
Bring more towels, more handkerchiefs; please
Call the doctors to take care of the victims
Call the Swat Team to chase the villain
The whole world is in pain
Let's not sing, let's hum the hymns
Let's pray for a better world
Let's dream of a more peaceful world
We have to remain strong and brave
We are not living in an enclave
Our children should be safe all the time
Our teachers should feel safe all the time
Santa Claus lost many children today
Christmas will be like another day.

Somebody Is Shooting Our Children -

Somebody is killing our children in Harlem
Somebody is using and abusing the system
To destabilize and destroy our communities.
The police are shooting our

children in many cities
The police, who've sworn to uphold the laws
Are behaving like criminals, like outlaws.

Somebody is choking our brothers at the corner
Somebody is assaulting our sisters at the harbor
Bring the cameras to record the crimes of the henchmen.

Somebody is hurting our children in Pakistan
Somebody is killing our children in Ferguson
The blood of our children is flowing in the gutters.

The terrorists are shooting our brothers and sisters
The extremists have infiltrated every level of the system
The racists are shooting our beautiful children in Harlem.

The police are profiling, and harassing our brother-men
They aim and shoot to kill our family members and children
When will all casualties and indiscriminate executions end?

This is the Christmas season throughout our great strong land
We want the executioners to cease their operations forever
In the name of the Holy Spirit, of the Son, and of the Father.

Our world is heading backward, the devils are taking over
Please call the Priest, the Rabbi, the Imam, and the Pastor
Somebody is killing our friends, our children and our future.

Christmas Is Here Tonight

Let's write a bad poem about Christmas,
Before the Midnight Mass,
While we are sending best wishes to all on the planet.

This is it.
Papa Noel is coming to town to bring gifts,
And onion
To everyone,
And to stop all types of cheats.

Long live Papa Noel,
Who hates to dwell,
On negative things.
Papa Noel sings
All the time,
And he will never nickel and dime
The poor, the crazy and the pelicans,
Except the poor Republicans.

Ling Live Santa Claus
Who has been fair to all of us.

If you like this poem,
Please wish your friends and neighbors
A very merry Christmas and many happy new years
To come.
Oh! Ho
Ho!

Hebert Logerie

is the author of several collections of poems.
Alumnus of: 'l'Ecole de Saint Joseph'; 'the College of Roger Anglade'in Haiti; Montclair High School of New Jersey; and Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, USA.
He studied briefly at Laval University, Quebec, Canada.
He's a Haitian-American.
He started writing at a very early age. My poems are in French, English, and Creole; I must confess that most of my beautiful and romantic poems are in my books.

<http://www.poemhunter.com/herbert-logerie>

<http://www.poesie.webnet.fr/vospoemes/logerie>

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

Varney Gean

The Fallen Ficus

IF I ALREADY KNEW

This is probably the tallest and widest town
tree
This giant stood in the grounds of the bid
house
This role model has walked down many
runways
This kingly pose from far and near had a big
face
This well grown landmark suddenly just fell
down
This as the Psalmist said 'A Time
For Everything"
The Fallen Ficus.....
This tree covered in a velvety suave
forest green
This weeping fig has shed blood and tears
for many
This land entrenched to be milked of honey
and gold
This high street where royals contest and
swear oaths
This archway where flag cars drove to
musical conveys
This shield of valor during our turbulent
times just dropped
The Fallen Ficus.....
This is a cry from the ides of nature
warning us to beware
This feild benighted soon to dazzle close to
the celestials
This rushing river gathers and is rived like
old country cloth
This gleaming stone hid under the dirt shall
not be buried yet
This acorn though from rough husks dusted
carefully to glow
This fall comes now only then to rise tall
and hold the sunshine
The Fallen Ficus.....

If the imminent was foreseen everyday
If I discerned what tomorrow will offer
Had it in mind of moments to witness
Mistakes I won't have made so badly

If I knew of all the calamities beforehand
If I knew of the losses I'd dearly suffer
Had it been known of the foulest times
Errors I would elude with those chances

If I knew of dangers looming yesterday
If I knew you will loathe me so terribly
Had I knew that I'd really fail at times
My future will be great without blemish

If I knew how imperfect I really were
If I knew I can be a pain making you yelp
If I knew of the darkness around me
I would have made it a whole lot better

There was a Goal

The conscientious keeper with intense eyes
so perched for a striking save
The panicky defenders all readied for a
strenuous task to straighten
The disturbed midfielders pondered over
their opponent's swift passes
The hapless defenders to defend like a
fortress besieged by swamp flies
The goal keeper so focused and afraid to
watch out like a guard at post
The beleaguered coach pacing
counterclockwise so hopeful to goal must
come

The anxious fans all exasperated waiting a
phenomenal strike to slake their fear
Just a distinct instant an uptight game
come transform the atmosphere
The festive cheers now envelope the
crowded arena to celebrate a grand victory
The once soundless streets mask in victory
songs for a great day they conquer

**She is a Liberian Poet.
She writes for most of the national dailies in
Liberia. She uses the penname
Tsirhc Susej**

The Stinking Holiday

The newborn brightening the day
With such a dazzling ray,
Here on earth to stay
To save the mortal clay,
But would they love his way
And choose to always pray?

Instead, helter skelter they run
Under the moon and sun
Theirs is the highest fun
As all things turn pun,
Firing louder than gun
Rather than being a nun.

The prisoner bound in chain
The sick lingering in pain,
The homeless in the rain
The barren scented by stain,
The jobless without a gain
The stinking holiday in vain.

Hundreds by the wayside
Thousands drowning in the tide
Millions without a guide
The rich conspiring to hide,
Everyone ready to divide
In the guilty land of pride.

Robbery on the rise
Pilferage beyond the wise,
Harlotry above the guise
Undercover gifts in disguise,
Love actually on demise
All; the pretense to be nice.

Careless; a lifetime mistake
Handshake; a torturous bitterness
Sweetness ends in the lake
Fake, all things; a sadness
Happiness; far from the wake,
Be wise, stay safe, don't stink.

Ngozi Olivia Osuoha

is an aspiring Nigerian poet. She loves writing, sports and music.
Course studied: Estate Management

CANNONS

They came from behind the big water
To our land,
They built their homes with our help
Say, who will not give the visitor water?
They built forts and castles
Took us in as slaves
Chained our worth
In urine and faeces.

Other came just like they came,
From behind the big water
They called us to light the cannons
Facing the water
We fought in their defense and
Not our defense.

How foolish of us not to have
Turned the cannons in defense of our land.

At Elmina and Jamestown, the cannons stand
Eroded and dead,
They come and come and are still coming
Our land is theirs.

NENE TETTEH ADUSU

Writing under his indigenous name- **Nene Tetteh Adusu, Tetteh**- a Poet, Performer and dramatist, hails from Ghana and currently lives in Accra.

He believes that just as words were used in creating this world, so can the world be transformed by words.

Mirroring life and crashing them when necessary to fit the pieces in life's dazzling puzzle- his philosophy.

Nene holds an B.A (Hons.) Theatre Arts from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

He was the "Order of the Village" awardee at The Village Thinkers Poetry Honorary Awards, 2015.

Gifts of Christmas [Holidays]

In this holiday segment, we bring eighteen poems from seventeen of the greatest poets.

GWENDOLYN BROOKS

A Penitent Considers Another Coming Of Mary

If Mary came would Mary
Forgive, as Mothers may,
And sad and second Saviour
Furnish us today?

She would not shake her head and leave
This military air,
But ratify a modern hay,
And put her Baby there.

Mary would not punish men—
If Mary came again.

EDGAR GUEST

At Christmas

"A man is at his finest
towards the finish of the year;
He is almost what he should be
when the Christmas season is here;
Then he's thinking more of others
than he's thought the months before,
And the laughter of his children
is a joy worth toiling for.
He is less a selfish creature than
at any other time;
When the Christmas spirit rules him
he comes close to the sublime.
When it's Christmas man is bigger
and is better in his part;
He is keener for the service
that is prompted by the heart.
All the petty thoughts and narrow
seem to vanish for awhile
And the true reward he's seeking
is the glory of a smile.
Then for others he is toiling and
somehow it seems to me
That at Christmas he is almost
what God wanted him to be.

If I had to paint a picture of a man
I think I'd wait
Till he'd fought his selfish battles
and had put aside his hate.
I'd not catch him at his labors
when his thoughts are all of self,
On the long days and the dreary
when he's striving for himself.
I'd not take him when he's sneering,
when he's scornful or depressed,
But I'd look for him at Christmas
when he's shining at his best.
Man is ever in a struggle
and he's oft misunderstood;
There are days the worst that's in him
is the master of the good,
But at Christmas kindness rules him
and he puts himself aside
And his petty hates are vanquished
and his heart is opened wide.
Oh, I don't know how to say it,
but somehow it seems to me
That at Christmas man is almost
what God sent him here to be."

from *Collected Verse of Edgar Guest*
NY: Buccaneer Books, 1976, pg. 239

E.E. CUMMINGS (1894-1962)

LITTLE tree

little silent Christmas tree
you are so little
you are more like a flower
who found you in the green forest
and were you very sorry to come away?
see i will comfort you
because you smell so sweetly
i will kiss your cool bark
and hug you safe and tight
just as your mother would,
only don't be afraid
look the spangles
that sleep all the year in a dark box
dreaming of being taken out and allowed to
shine,
the balls the chains red and gold the fluffy
threads,
put up your little arms
and i'll give them all to you to hold
every finger shall have its ring

and there won't be a single place dark or
unhappy
then when you're quite dressed
you'll stand in the window for everyone to see
and how they'll stare!
oh but you'll be very proud
and my little sister and i will take hands
and looking up at our beautiful tree
we'll dance and sing
"Noel Noel"

"little tree" was originally published in
The Dial Vol. LXVIII, No. 1 (Jan. 1920). New York:
The Dial Publishing Company, Inc.

EMILY DICKINSON

'Twas just this time, last year, I died.

I know I heard the Corn,
When I was carried by the Farms –
It had the Tassels on –

I thought how yellow it would look –
When Richard went to mill –
And then, I wanted to get out,
But something held my will.

I thought just how Red – Apples wedged
The Stubble's joints between –
And the Carts stooping round the fields
To take the Pumpkins in –

I wondered which would miss me, least,
And when Thanksgiving, came,
If Father'd multiply the plates –
To make an even Sum –

And would it blur the Christmas glee
My Stocking hang too high
For any Santa Claus to reach
The Altitude of me –

But this sort, grieved myself,
And so, I thought the other way,
How just this time, some perfect year –
Themselves, should come to me –

EMILY DICKINSON

Before the Ice

"Before the ice is in the pools,
Before the skaters go,
Or any cheek at nightfall
Is tarnished by the snow,
Before the fields have finished,
Before the Christmas tree,
Wonder upon wonder
Will arrive to me!"

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Holidays

The holiest of all holidays are those
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart;
The secret anniversaries of the heart,
When the full river of feeling overflows;--
The happy days unclouded to their close;
The sudden joys that out of darkness start
As flames from ashes; swift desires that dart
Like swallows singing down each wind that
blows!

White as the gleam of a receding sail,
White as a cloud that floats and fades in air,
White as the whitest lily on a stream,
These tender memories are;--a fairy tale
Of some enchanted land we know not where,
But lovely as a landscape in a dream.

BESSIE RAYNER PARKES

New-year's Eve and New-year's Day

Good bye, Old Year!
And with thee take
Thanks for the gifts to every land
Thou broughtest in thy bounteous hand,

And all that thou hast taught to hearts thy
lingering steps forsake.
Good bye, Old Year!
The Past awaiteth thee.
Who ruleth in her power alone
The kingdom of Oblivion.
Silent she sits in ebon chair;
Falling mists of dusky hair
Veil her dark eyes' glorious shine,
Full of wise help, and truth divine.
Silent, unless a fitful sound,
As from some cavern underground,
Steal from her lips; the company
Of ancient Years that round her be,
Then chanting, one by one, give tongue
To old experience in their song.

Good bye, Old Year!
Thou goest forth alone,
As we shall do: thy pages gay,
Seasons and months who round thee lay,
Attend thee to Earth's farthest verge, then
back! to greet thy son.

Hail, New-born Year!
Cradled in morning clouds
Golden and white. I cannot see
Thy face--'tis wrapp'd in mystery;
But Spring for thee is painting flowers,
And Summer decks her woven bowers;
Rich Autumn's sheaves will soon be reap'd,
With store of fruits in sunbeams steep'd,
And one by one with gentle hand folds back thy
sunlit shrouds.

Hail, New-born Year!
Shining and beautiful,
Thou wilt step forth in plenitude
Of youth and its rejoicing mood.
Last child of the half-century,
And time of coming victory
Over the spirits of night and sin,
Whose howlings of defeat begin:
Thou bringest hope, and labour bless'd
In visions of successful rest,
Bringest great thoughts, and actions wrought
In fire upon that forge of thought,
And with the soul of earnestness I think thy
youths are full.

Hail, New-born Year!
My utterance is too weak
To tell of all I think thou bringest,
To echo back the song thou singest;
But the very winds of Heaven for those who
listen to them, speak!

ROBERT FROST

Christmas Trees (A Christmas Circular Letter)

The city had withdrawn into itself
And left at last the country to the country;
When between whirls of snow not come to lie
And whirls of foliage not yet laid, there drove
A stranger to our yard, who looked the city,
Yet did in country fashion in that there
He sat and waited till he drew us out
A-buttoning coats to ask him who he was.
He proved to be the city come again
To look for something it had left behind
And could not do without and keep its Christmas.
He asked if I would sell my Christmas trees;
My woods—the young fir balsams like a place
Where houses all are churches and have spires.
I hadn't thought of them as Christmas Trees.
I doubt if I was tempted for a moment
To sell them off their feet to go in cars
And leave the slope behind the house all bare,
Where the sun shines now no warmer than the
moon.
I'd hate to have them know it if I was.
Yet more I'd hate to hold my trees except
As others hold theirs or refuse for them,
Beyond the time of profitable growth,
The trial by market everything must come to.
I dallied so much with the thought of selling.
Then whether from mistaken courtesy
And fear of seeming short of speech, or whether
From hope of hearing good of what was mine, I
said,
"There aren't enough to be worth while."
"I could soon tell how many they would cut,
You let me look them over."

"You could
look.
But don't expect I'm going to let you have
them."
Pasture they spring in, some in clumps too close
That lop each other of boughs, but not a few
Quite solitary and having equal boughs
All round and round. The latter he nodded "Yes"
to,
Or paused to say beneath some lovelier one,
With a buyer's moderation, "That would do."
I thought so too, but wasn't there to say so.
We climbed the pasture on the south, crossed
over,

And came down on the north. He said, "A thousand."

"A thousand Christmas trees!—at what apiece?"

He felt some need of softening that to me:
"A thousand trees would come to thirty dollars."

Then I was certain I had never meant
To let him have them. Never show surprise!
But thirty dollars seemed so small beside
The extent of pasture I should strip, three cents
(For that was all they figured out apiece),
Three cents so small beside the dollar friends
I should be writing to within the hour
Would pay in cities for good trees like those,
Regular vestry-trees whole Sunday Schools
Could hang enough on to pick off enough.
A thousand Christmas trees I didn't know I had!
Worth three cents more to give away than sell,
As may be shown by a simple calculation.
Too bad I couldn't lay one in a letter.
I can't help wishing I could send you one,
In wishing you herewith a Merry Christmas.

SARA TEASDALE

Christmas Carol

The kings they came from out the south,
All dressed in ermine fine;
They bore Him gold and chrysoprase,
And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,
Their coats were brown and old;
They brought Him little new-born lambs—
They had not any gold.

The wise men came from out the east,
And they were wrapped in white;
The star that led them all the way
Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high,
And they were clad with wings;
And lo, they brought a joyful song
The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise men entered in,
The shepherds followed after them

To hear the song begin.

The angels sang through all the night
Until the rising sun,
But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.

OGDEN NASH

The Boy Who Laughed at Santa Claus

In Baltimore there lived a boy.
He wasn't anybody's joy.
Although his name was Jabez Dawes,
His character was full of flaws.
In school he never led his classes,
He hid old ladies' reading glasses,
His mouth was open when he chewed,
And elbows to the table glued.
He stole the milk of hungry kittens,
And walked through doors marked NO
ADMITTANCE.
He said he acted thus because
There wasn't any Santa Claus.

Another trick that tickled Jabez
Was crying 'Boo' at little babies.
He brushed his teeth, they said in town,
Sideways instead of up and down.
Yet people pardoned every sin,
And viewed his antics with a grin,
Till they were told by Jabez Dawes,
'There isn't any Santa Claus!'

Deploring how he did behave,
His parents swiftly sought their grave.
They hurried through the portals pearly,
And Jabez left the funeral early.

Like whooping cough, from child to child,
He sped to spread the rumor wild:
'Sure as my name is Jabez Dawes
There isn't any Santa Claus!'
Slunk like a weasel of a marten
Through nursery and kindergarten,
Whispering low to every tot,
'There isn't any, no there's not!'

The children wept all Christmas eve
And Jabez chortled up his sleeve.
No infant dared hang up his stocking
For fear of Jabez' ribald mocking.
He sprawled on his untidy bed,

Fresh malice dancing in his head,
When presently with scalp-a-tingling,
Jabez heard a distant jingling;
He heard the crunch of sleigh and hoof
Crisply alighting on the roof.
What good to rise and bar the door?
A shower of soot was on the floor.

What was beheld by Jabez Dawes?
The fireplace full of Santa Claus!
Then Jabez fell upon his knees
With cries of 'Don't,' and 'Pretty Please.'
He howled, 'I don't know where you read it,
But anyhow, I never said it!
'Jabez' replied the angry saint,
'It isn't I, it's you that ain't.
Although there is a Santa Claus,
There isn't any Jabez Dawes!'

Said Jabez then with impudent vim,
'Oh, yes there is, and I am him!
Your magic don't scare me, it doesn't'
And suddenly he found he wasn't!
From grimy feet to grimy locks,
Jabez became a Jack-in-the-box,
An ugly toy with springs unsprung,
Forever sticking out his tongue.

The neighbors heard his mournful squeal;
They searched for him, but not with zeal.
No trace was found of Jabez Dawes,
Which led to thunderous applause,
And people drank a loving cup
And went and hung their stockings up.

All you who sneer at Santa Claus,
Beware the fate of Jabez Dawes,
The saucy boy who mocked the saint.
Donner and Blitzen licked off his paint.

THOMAS HARDY

The Oxen

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where

They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

The Magi

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale
unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depths of the
sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten
stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by
side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find
once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

HENRY VAUGHAN

Christ's Nativity

Awake, glad heart! get up and sing!
It is the birth-day of thy King.
Awake! awake!
The Sun doth shake
Light from his locks, and all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake, awake! hark how th' wood rings;

Winds whisper, and the busy springs
A concert make;
Awake! awake!
Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,
Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far
Above this inn
And road of sin!
Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part
Fit rooms for thee! or that my heart
Were so clean as
Thy manger was!
But I am all filth, and obscene;
Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean.

Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more
This leper haunt and soil thy door!
Cure him, ease him,
O release him!
And let once more, by mystic birth,
The Lord of life be born in earth.

WALTER DE LA MARE

Mistletoe

Sitting under the mistletoe
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),
One last candle burning low,
All the sleepy dancers gone,
Just one candle burning on,
Shadows lurking everywhere:
Some one came, and kissed me there.

Tired I was; my head would go
Nodding under the mistletoe
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),
No footsteps came, no voice, but only,
Just as I sat there, sleepy, lonely,
Stooped in the still and shadowy air
Lips unseen—and kissed me there.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

In the Bleak Midwinter

(written 1872, published
posthumously in 1904)

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air,
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

MAYA ANGELOU

“Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes
And lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to
avalanche
Over unprotected villages.
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves.
What have we done to so affront nature?
We worry God.
Are you there? Are you there really?
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension,
Christmas enters,
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope
And singing carols of forgiveness high up in the
bright air.
The world is encouraged to come away from
rancor,
Come the way of friendship.

It is the Glad Season.
Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning sleeps
quietly in the corner.
Flood waters recede into memory.
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us
As we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of children
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they
walk into their sunsets.
Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all
things,
Even hate which crouches breeding in dark
corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.
We hear a sweetness.
The word is Peace.
It is loud now. It is louder.
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its
presence.
It is what we have hungered for.
Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace.
A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.
Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of
Christmas.
We beckon this good season to wait a while
with us.
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and
Muslim, say come.
Peace.
Come and fill us and our world with your
majesty.
We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and
the Confucian,
Implore you, to stay a while with us.
So we may learn by your shimmering light
How to look beyond complexion and see
community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create a
language
To translate ourselves to ourselves and to each
other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of
Jesus Christ
Into the great religions of the world.
We jubilate the precious advent of trust.
We shout with glorious tongues at the coming of
hope.
All the earth's tribes loosen their voices
To celebrate the promise of Peace.

We, Angels and Mortal's, Believers and Non-
Believers,
Look heavenward and speak the word aloud.
Peace. We look at our world and speak the
word aloud.
Peace. We look at each other, then into
ourselves
And we say without shyness or apology or
hesitation.

Peace, My Brother.
Peace, My Sister.
Peace, My Soul.”

G.K. Chesterton (1900)

A Christmas Carol

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary were the world,
But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the kings,
But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary is the world,
But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood on Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down

William Wordsworth

Minstrels

Make it Snow !

The minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,
Nor check, the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand.

And who but listened?--till was paid
Respect to every inmate's claim,
The greeting given, the music played
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And "Merry Christmas" wished to all.

Christmas Rounds

LIB Style



Santa & Rudolph sporting the Lone Star



E.M PHOTO/ OUSMAN DIALLO

President Sirleaf lights National Christmas Tree



(c) Lady Keiko





Ebola Treatment Unit [ETU] Christmas Tree



ETU Santa, Elves and Frosty



Christmas Ornaments and Decorations



Marketing pitch...Ebola Christmas Tree



Papa Noel [with his elves] gives presents to quarantined children as Frosty looks on. Even Ebola can't stop the joy





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He was born in northern Liberia and spent parts of his youth in Kuwait, where he completed his secondary school. He speaks many languages, including Arabic, French, English and Dutch, and some African languages like Mande, Bandi, Mende en Lomah. After the first Gulf War, Vamba settled in the Netherlands and read Law. He's written many novels. His first novel, *The Land Of The Fathers*, is about the founding of Liberia with the return of the freed slaves from America in the 19th century. This novel was published to critical acclaim and commercial success. His second, *The Kingdom of Sebah*, is about the life of an immigrant family in the Netherlands, told from the perspective of the son, who's a writer. His third novel, *Bound to Secrecy*, has been published in The Netherlands, England, France, Germany, and Spain. His fourth *The Witness* is about a white man who meets a black woman with a past rooted in the Liberian civil war. Besides his love of writing and his collection of rare books on Africa, he's developed a passion for films, which he reviews. He divides his time between The Netherlands and Liberia. You can see more of his work on his [website](#)

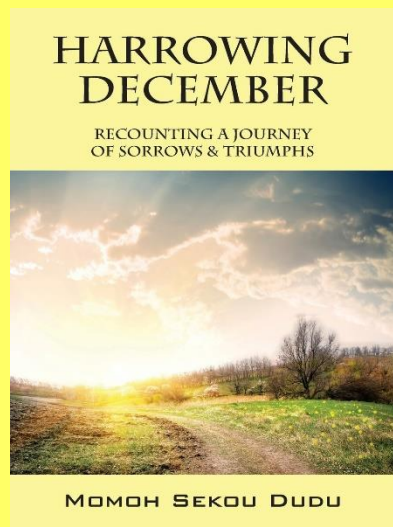


MOMOH DUDUU
Editor- Reviews

Is an educator and author. For the last decade, he has been an instructor at various Colleges and Universities in the Minneapolis metro area in the state of Minnesota, U.S.A. At present, he is the Chair of the Department of Business and Accounting at the Brooklyn Center Campus of the Minnesota School of Business at Globe University.

His works include the memoir 'Harrowing December: Recounting a Journey of Sorrows and Triumphs' and 'Musings of a Patriot: A Collection of Essays on Liberia' a compilation of his commentaries about governance in his native country.

At the moment, he is at work on his maiden novel tentatively titled 'Forgotten Legacy.'



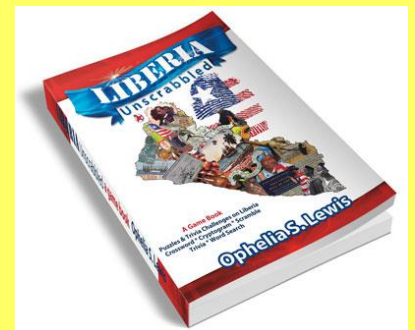
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OPHELIA LEWIS
Consultant

The founder of Village Tales Publishing and self-published author of more than ten books, Lewis is determined to make Village Tales Publishing a recognized name in the literary industry. She has written two novels, three children's books, a book of poetry, a book of essay and two collections of short stories, with the latest being *Montserrado Stories*.

As publisher-project manager, she guards other authors in getting their work from manuscript to print, using the self-publishing platform. Self-publishing can be complicated, a process that unfolds over a few months or even years. Using a project management approach gives a better understanding of the format process and steps needed it take to get an aspiring writer's book published.



Find out more [here](#)

Editor

D. Othniel Forte

Here at Liberian Literary Magazine, we strive to bring you the best coverage of Liberian literary news. We are a subsidiary of [Liberian Literature Review](#).

For too long the arts have been ignored, disregarded or just taken less important in Liberia. This sad state has stifled the creativity of many and the culture as a whole.

However, all is not lost. A new breed of creative minds has risen to the challenge and are determined to change the dead silence in our literary world. In order to do this, we realized the need to create a *culture of reading* amongst our people. A reading culture broadens the mind and opens up endless possibilities. It also encourages diversity and for a colorful nation like ours, fewer things are more important.

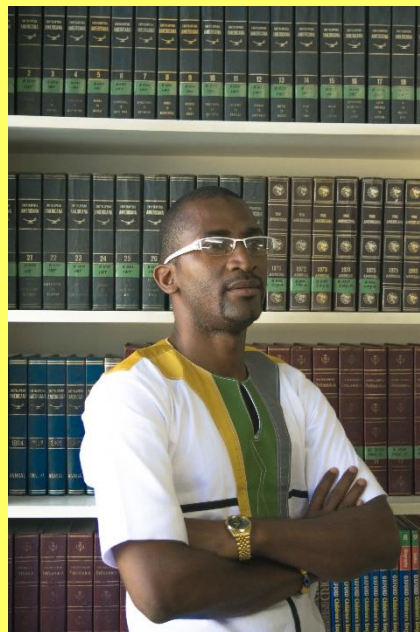


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