

# KWEE

Liberian Literary Magazine

Feb Issue

Iss. #21520

**ZUKISWA  
WANNER**

Author  
of the  
month

**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**

Short  
Stories

Book  
Reviews

**LIBERIAN  
CLASSICS**

**BIGG BETTER**  
Liberian  
Proverbs

**Poetry Series**

Maya Angelo  
Thomas Hardy  
Emily Dickinson  
Renee Brown  
Janetta Konah  
Jack Kolkmeier  
Mohammed Sy  
S. K. Duworkoo  
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Kerry Kennedy

**Poetry Series**

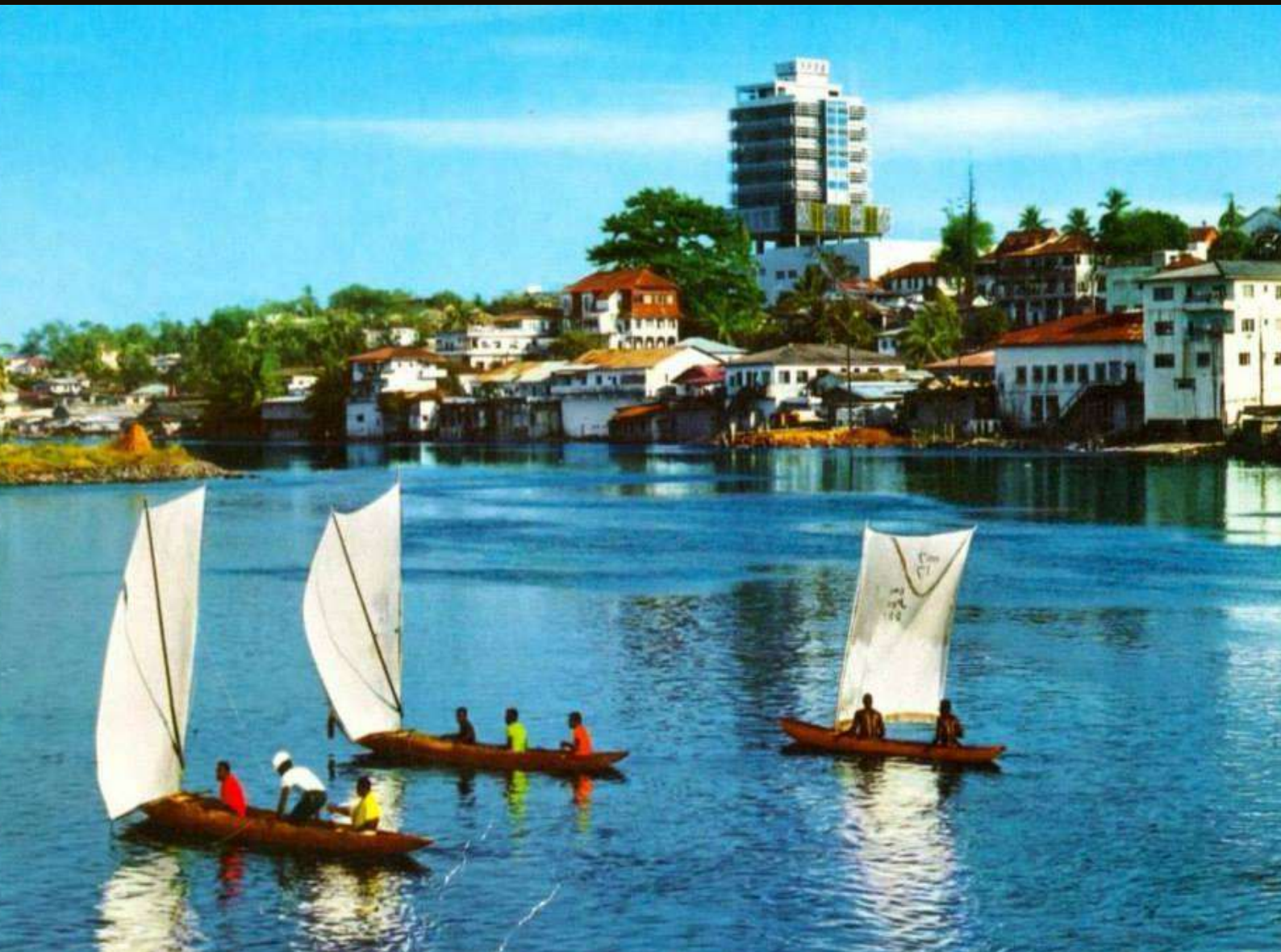
Gwendolyn Brooks  
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West African  
Poet



Liberian Literary Magazine

# KWEE



**Liberian****Literary****Magazine****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 would still 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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## *Segment Contents*

### *Editorial*

In our editorial, one should expect topics that are controversial in the least.

We will shy away from nothing that we deem important enough. The catch theme here is addressing the tough issues

### *#KolloquaTakeOver*

Being true to our Liberian origin, the contributors to this segment make use of something uniquely Liberia to communicate their messages. Kolokwa [not Liberian English] is one language every Liberian speaks.

### *Risqué Speak*

*Henrique* hosts this segment. He explores 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.

### *Liberian Classics*

Liberian Classics, as indicated by the name, is a section to show national creativity. We display works done by Liberian masters in this segment.

### *Authors of the Month Profile*

This is one of our oldest segments. In fact, we started with displaying 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; the characters and how they all 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.

### *Diaspora Poet*

*Althea Romeo Mark* hosts this segment. The Antiguan poet needs no introduction. Her pieces need none either. Her wisdom of her travels are hard to miss in her writings.

### *Unscripted*

As the name suggests, *Cher* gives it raw. The artist, the poet, the writer—anyone of her talented side can show up and mix the science geek. You never really know what will come up until it does.

### *‘Twas Briggin’*

*Richard Moss* goes about his randomness with purpose in his poetry corner, *‘Twas Briggin’*. He can assume the mind or body of any of his million personifications, ideas or characters or just be himself and write good poetry. He does this magic with words as only he does.

### *According to Eliot/Extra*

*John Eliot* is a Welsh-ish, Engl-ish, Brit-ish guy who tells us all these ‘grandpa’ beautiful Jewish stories. He even has a book called ‘Ssh. What can I say; he is an ish kinda bloke! ☺ But, don’t let that fool you; he has a genuine voice that knows his way with the pen? ☺ Now I am in an ish kind of trouble. ☺



### *Finding Meaning in Everyday Living*

Y'all know that one educator that insisted on using the right grammar and speaking better than the "Y'all" I just used? ☺ *Janice Almond* embodies that and more... Her segment is loaded with motivation for the weak, weary and positive dose we all need to hit the road.

### *Aken-bai's*

Hmm, this here is my 'partner', the resident 'love' expert. Yeah I know, you don't want me saying it but those love poems you have been weaving, I have used a few, lol. There you see, I've confessed. Guess what, they worked the magic. ☺ host, *Aken*

### *Gifts of the Masters*

Our masters left us a treasure trove. Now we revisit and feast- that's the idea of this segment.

### *Poetry Section*

The Poetry section is our major hotspot. It is a fine example of how KWEE manages to be true to her desire of giving you the best form of creative diversity.

We have new poets still finding their voices placed alongside much more experienced poets who

have long ago established themselves and found their voice. They in a way mentor the newer ones and boost their confidence.

### *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 show-case 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!

Yeah, we know, but we wish to keep the magazine closely aligned to its conception- *a literary mag*. You will not lose your segments they will only be shifted. The blog is also attached to the new website so you don't have to go anywhere else to access it. It is the last page of the site- [KWEE](#).

We have new segments hosted by poets and authors from *all over the world*. "I ain't sayin' nothin' more" as my grandmamma used to say. You'd have to read these yourself won't say a thing more.

## *Editor's Desk*

*The Year Ahead*



**IMPORTANT**

Therefore, in **January** we bring you, *New Beginnings*.

**February** is all about our famous *BLACK ISSUE*, which commemorates *Black History Month*. Don't worry love freaks, you'd still get your *Val's* treats.

**March** celebrates women in our *WOMEN ISSUE*

**April**-We go huge with our *National Poetry Month*. An issue full of poetry.

**May**-We take time to honor mothers- the special species that carried and or molded us. In the *MOTHER'S* Issue.

**June**-We do the same for the men who are not deadbeats, *DADDY'S* Issue.

**July**-We pay tribute to nationhood and honor our founders in the *INDEPENDENCE* Issue.

**August**-We continue the homage with our *FLAG Day* Issue.

**September** Anything goes, yeah!

**October**-We get ready to wind the year down, with the *Nobel Issue*.

**November** - We are thankful for

things in our, *THANKSGIVING ISSUE*. There is no killing of turkeys, absolutely none. ☺

**December**- The Holidays Issue comes your way.

We will bring you a better KWEE every single issue. We'll tear the boxes; go on the fringes to find what it is you would love.... *the best of Creative Difference*.

From the entire team here at KWEE, we say enjoy the year, sit back, lay back, relax or do whatever it is you do when you hold a copy of our mag and feast along.

**Read! Read! Read!**

## Liberian Classic



### *GUANYA PAU: A Story of an African Princess I*

By: JOSEPH J. WALTERS

**Guanya Pau holds a special place in Liberian and African literature. It is the first full length novel published by an African.**

#### RECAP From PART VI

#### KAI KUNDU'S VISIT

Within two weeks of the time, I got communication from him that I must be patient and wait an additional moon longer. I was disappointed, but I knew it was all right, so I waited patiently. I was sure Jallah, for that was his name, was true as the sunlight. But alas for me! I had in my youthful enthusiasm inadvertently disclosed the delightful secret to my fellow Borney, who told it to another, and she to her friend, and so on it went until it came to the ears of my mother.

But I was not anxious even then, for I was sure that Jallah would have means sufficient to buy me. Now judge of my surprise when my mother visited me, and told me that I had been betrothed to another when a little girl. I protested, told her that I loved Jallah, and would have nobody but him. She laughed, saying that I had no say so in the matter, that she would dispose of me as she saw fit.

But I was obstinate, and told her that she had no control over my affections, and therefore had no right to determine whom I should have. She laughed again, saying that 'affection' and 'love' had no place in this transaction, and that I would learn the same sooner or later; adding that she would have me punished if I should mention again what I was going to do.

Perhaps I was impudent, for I protested to the last that I did not think it was right for her to sell me to one whom I didn't remember to have seen, and whom I was not sure whether I could love; becoming warm, I swore, yes, I became vehement; and, my child, was I not right? "

## Chapter VII.

### THE SEMBEY COURT.

AFTER the above conversation the woman arose, adjusted the little fellow behind who had begun to squall, replaced her basket, pressed the hands of the Borneys, exchanged the "Jemah well" and they parted. Toward the cool of the day the Borneys came to a house located at the farther end of a large cassava farm, where they stopped and rested.

Here again their indignation was intensified when they saw the wife wait upon her lord in the capacity of a servant, placing the best of everything before him, and satisfying herself with the remnant that escaped his gastronomic appetite.

After he had eaten, another brought him his pipe, and still another was preparing the mat under a shady cola, where his majesty could recline and sleep and smoke. »

Then they scattered, the one with her fishing nets to the river, the other with her bill-hook to the

cassava farm, and the third to her mortar to beat out rice.

If reproachful frowns and glances could have inflicted injury, this distinguished personage lying out there under the shade would certainly have been seriously harmed by these girls as they passed by him on their way out.

They went on talking together over what they had seen and heard, dwelling for a long time on the sad fate of the woman whom they had met, and resolving that they would never yield to such treatment.

Suddenly their attention was arrested by the sight of a beautiful grove not far away, shaded by stately palms and lofty mangos, surrounded by a rustic fence with here and there curiously twisted bunches of Gregree; the same also hanging from the branches of every tree on the inside, while at the gate there was an arch of rush and reeds coarsely interwoven, and just inside the gate

Standing on a broad stump was a hideous representation of Jehama the devil; standing by his



side was Zingbatutu, the medicine man.

In the center of the grove were several graves of kings at whose heads were basins of food, and at the foot jugs and bottles of water.

In the midst of this sacred spot, sitting on a low wooden stool, was Gandanya the witch, holding in her hand a short brush to prevent any unhallowed feet from desecrating this holy ground. By her side stood a lad of some nine years, who did her biddings.

At the farther end of the grove was the sanctum sanctorum, an elevation of a few feet, made of bamboo and rattan, walled in by a neat fence of saplings and rattan; in the center, hanging from a column standing upright in the ground, was an image of the devil, a little more artistic than the one at the gate.

Beads of all descriptions hung from the wall on the inside, and the low, narrow door was decorated with bones and skulls of animals with two beautiful ivories overlapping each other four rows of elaborately wrought chairs of bamboo and rattan

made up the furniture of the room, upon which were sitting Vey gentlemen who wore red caps and muslin breeches.

In the center, on a chair more tasteful than the rest and more elevated, sat the chairman, likewise more gaudily dressed.

His breeches were of black silk, reaching about two inches below the knees, each leg large enough to hold a bushel; over this a leopard skin coat, which gave him a shaggy and savage appearance; about his ankles were several kinds of Gregrees, his feet were adorned with tastefully carved sandals, on which were several small bells which jingled every time he turned on his shoulders hung three kinds of beads, upon his head a cap of leopard skin, about three feet long, tapering to a point.

This august personage, one could judge from his face, had a disposition which comported uniformly with his dress.

This was the Sembey, which was now in session and which at this moment was about to consider the latest medical discoveries of Dr. Papa-Guy-a-

gey, the famous physician of the Marphar.

The Borneys reached the place just as the Doctor rose to make his speech, which, after a few flattering remarks addressed to the chairman and the members in general, was as follows:

\*\*A week ago, Kai Denu (fellow citizens), with gun under my arm, and knapsack across my shoulders, I struck out for the woods in quest of game.

\*\* I had not proceeded far into the forest when I heard a coughing, like that of a child. I stopped, and concealed myself behind a bugbug. Soon a monstrous female baboon came out of the thicket, went to a certain hill, got a peculiar kind of dirt, plucked the bud from a certain bush, mixed these to the consistency of jelly, and gave it to her coughing- child.

"" On my return home, I tried the same on some of my servants, who had dreadful colds, and find it an unexcelled cough syrup.

\*\* Farther in the woods, the next day, I ran across a limping chimpanzee, and watched him go to a certain shrubbery and

apply its tender leaves to his wounds. I shot him, in the interest of the medical science, and found he had been snake-bitten.

\*' I marked the shrubbery, had one of my good-for-nothing female servants bitten by a snake, applied the leaves, and found a wonderful Uniment for snake-bite."

Whereupon the Council unanimously voted that Dr. Papa Guyagey should be considered in all lands as a nobleman and a benefactor of mankind, and to further attest their appreciation and gratitude, by giving him for a paramour the prettiest woman in the village.

Next the case of Manja Ballah was brought before the Council.

His charge was that he had assumed the chiefship of the Dateah town, not having the required number of wives and servants.

Whereupon Ballah arose, and defended himself as follows:

"Kai Denu, I wish to show you as briefly as possible the fallacy of the accusation.

\*' Before I was twelve years old, my mother had bought for me

seven wives, Borneys of the first order and rank.

\*\* By cunning and sweet talk, I myself secured two at half price, women just as first-class as any who would have been willing to have given themselves to me for nothing, so great was their regard for me.

"As a reward for the kind services I recently rendered our neighbors, the Corsaw, I was given a young girl, who is now in the Gregree-Bush — a girl of great beauty, and who is destined to become my head wife — ten in all — exceeding the number required of a chief."

Next the case of Kai Jalley was called up. This man was a notorious wife-beater, and recently he had beaten one of his wives so severely that she died from the effects. He stood there the very personification of brutality, and made his defence as follows:

\* I am surprised, Kai Denu, to see you condescend to consider anything about woman, isn't woman garnabale?' (weak and effeminate,) and mah tende koqua f (good for nothing?)

conditions which are beneath our dignity to consider for a moment.

\*' Now, you know, woman is nowhere among us recognized as man's equal, hence no redress can be demanded for her treatment. Furthermore, is she not 'in the same class with the mule or cow?

You would all answer yes. Well, if I should kill my cow, none of you would raise the least objection.

"I therefore argue that you have no right to raise an objection here. It is my loss, I paid seventy-five dollars in cloth and ivory for her, and if I choose to throw away this money it is nobody's business but my own.

\*' Manja Jallah (addressing the chairman), do I not speak the truth?"

Manja Jallah replied : \*\* Da hi ka, a be ke wah!' (Yes, it is true.)

After the chairman had exchanged a few words with his associates, it was announced that the Sembey had no business to interfere with a man's personal matters, that his wife was his property, and subject to whatever treatment he felt disposed to inflict

**\*\*\*To be continued!\*\*\***



*Bai's Blog*

Bai. T Moore

## **Rock Chunkers**

rock chunkers  
who hide their hands  
after throwing them  
at you are not  
hard to catch  
just shake the bush  
they hide behind  
as hard as you can  
you'll see them  
sneaking out softly  
and trying to run like hell

*(written May 12, 1966)*

## Wilton's Wall

The Evil Forest.

*Wilton Sankawulo*

*If you see animal tracks around a Town without traps, it does not mean that the townsmen do not know how to set traps. If you see bachelors living with beautiful, single girls without proposing marriage to them, it does not mean that these men are not interested in marriage.*

Once a young, beautiful woman went to a certain Town and walked straight to a small, round house before which a fine young man sat in a rattan chair. She told the young man, "I want to marry you".

The young man looked at the woman in utter amazement. A woman making a proposal to him was something he had

never expected to experience in his lifetime. How did she know I was a single man anyway? thought he. He accepted the proposal out of curiosity rather than interest, for he wanted to study this young lady to know what sort of woman she was.

"Thank you for accepting my proposal", the young woman said, growing relaxed and cheerful. The young man brought her a stool. They sat under the starry sky. "The last request I want to make", the woman continued, "is that in our marriage I play the man and you the woman."

"What are you talking about?" the young man asked,

perplexed and highly disturbed.

"Don't let that bother you, young man," the woman replied.

"My dear lady," cried the young man, "I understand your situation. Women are human beings like men. They too have feelings! So you have the right to make a proposal to me. But to expect me to play the woman in our marriage is altogether unacceptable."

"Listen" the woman said. "When I grew up I planned on marrying a man to serve him. We women always feel that men ought to make our farms, hunt for us; fish for us; and build our houses. On behalf of womanhood I would rather do these things for a man. So don't

worry. As this is the Dry-time, the first job I want to tackle is to start our farm. When I begin, cook for me each day, prepare my bath, sweep the house, make the bed, and bring my food at noon."

The same curiosity that had led the man to accept the marriage proposal persuaded him to agree to the second one. Let me do what the woman wants and see what happens, he thought,

During the week the woman had the blacksmith of the town make a big cutlass for her. It was a heavy cutlass with a sharp edge. Then she told her husband that she had seen some good farmland near the town for growing rice, and would not venture further. She

would make a large farm; he should be prepared to work hard to plant all of it with rice, since that was a woman's share of the farm work. For several days the woman walked through the high forest around the town. To her delight she saw that the luxuriant forest on the western outskirts was fallow; she decided to use it. When she told her husband about her decision, he objected to it with horror.

"It's an Evil Forest" he cried, his eyes poking out in fear. Then he told her in a whisper: "Don't let anyone else hear that you wanted to make a farm in it. If you love me and yourself, listen to my advice".

"Remember I told you at the beginning

that I would play the man and you the woman!" the woman said. "You are playing the woman very well. Women are by nature scared and soft-hearted. That's why they always want their husbands to be strong, brave and wise. And that is what I am. Don't worry. Leave everything to me."

"But you are a stranger in this town!"

"I said don't worry", the woman said curtly. "No more comment!"

"You know", the man said, trying to think of what to tell the woman to dissuade her from farming in the evil forest, "if you see animal tracks around a town without traps, it doesn't mean that the townsmen do not



know how to set traps. The men of this town are good farmers. So don't think we naturally like to play the woman. I agreed to your proposal out of curiosity. If that forest could be made into a farm, you wouldn't have seen it fully grown. For your own sake, take my advice".

The woman still paid no attention; so he said no more.

One fine morning she took her cutlass and went into the evil forest. She saw no omen. Nothing convinced her that the forest was evil. So she started clearing the undergrowth. At noon the young man brought her some food. To his amazement she had cleared more than an acre of undergrowth.

She ate sparingly and resumed working. In one day she cleared five acres.

The next morning, when she returned to the forest, she saw that more than twenty acres of undergrowth had been cleared in her absence. She shuddered with fear. "What is the cause of this?" she wondered. But she was brave enough to resume working. At noon the man brought her food.

"Don't you think the clearing is large enough now for one farm?" he suggested. The area cleared was as large as two normal farms combined.

"I think so", the woman said quickly and returned to work, thinking all the time

about the strange incident. Who had helped to cut the bush in her absence?

The next day she returned to find more than fifty acres of undergrowth cleared. She trembled and started running back to town, but remembering what she had told the young man, she stopped and went back to work. At noon the young man set out with some food for her, but did not arrive until sundown, because the clearing had grown exceptionally wide and he had to walk almost the whole day before reaching her. The woman did not eat, but told him instead that they should go back to the town.

## **PART 2**

"What happened?" asked he. "You left the farm early today!" "Nothing," she heaved a sigh, looking absently into the distance. Laying her axe down she went into the bedroom, undressed and went to bed.

"Are you sick?" the young man called to her, but she did not reply.

Thinking that something strange might have happened to her, he went into the room and opened the bamboo window. Rays of sunlight with dancing motes poured into the room. The woman had covered herself snugly with a blanket and was curled up on her side facing the wall.

"What happened?" the young man asked again, bending over her, his lips parted, his hands resting on his kneecaps to support

his body. Turning her head backwards briefly and glancing at his face, she said, "I don't feel well today." There were streaks of tears on her fat cheeks. The young man went back to the cooking. When he had finished, he put a bowl of rice for her on a table in the bedroom and went out to the evil forest, where he discovered that all the trees had been cut down. He nodded several times and concluded that his wife had been awestruck by the strange incident. "Why didn't she listen?" he said to himself. "To turn back now will be just as dangerous as going forward."

His wife's shock developed into an illness and for several months he was forced to nurse her. One day, when she seemed to have recovered he told her:

"Let's burn the farm. It's dry now."

"You think it's dry enough?" she asked. "You want to draw back?" the man said with severity.

"No, no;" she said with a sudden burst of excitement. She couldn't draw back and still be a man. If the unburned farm remained lying in waste, it would forever confront her as evidence of her laziness.

"Let's burn it, if you think it is ready for burning," she declared.

Towards the end of the dry-time they burned the farm, and it burned very well. When the rainy season began the man started planting the farm with rice, in keeping with a woman's share of farm work. He needed only to begin. When he went to the farm each morning, he saw that a great deal of it had been planted in his absence. He worked only four days on the

farm and it was all planted with rice. Normally he wouldn't have been able to plant half of it with rice, however strenuously he might have worked throughout the planting season.

When the farm was all planted, they spent most of their time in town while the rice grew, for neither birds nor animals bothered it, and as the forest land was extremely fallow, they did not need to weed it.

At harvest time the king of the monkeys gathered together all his subjects, took them to the farm, and they consumed every bit of the rice. When the young man and his wife inspected the farm early one morning, they discovered to their dismay that all the rice was gone. They stood on the edge of the farm for a long time, speechless and terror stricken, staring at the empty farm and

at each other. Then all of a sudden, they saw a herd of monkeys, their tails raised in the air, walking defiantly into the bush on the other side of the farm.

"I told you!" the man said to his wife. "You have caused us to make a farm in the evil forest and this is our reward! You see, the townspeople do not stop anyone making a farm here. After all, nobody wants to keep an evil forest. But anyone who makes a farm on this spot does so at his own risk. Our work has gone in vain and it is too late to make a new farm. I told you!" he cried. "I told you! I told you! We're going to starve! We will starve! You're a stubborn woman."

The gathering anger in the man's voice frightened the woman. Suddenly he started boxing the air with his clenched fists and howling curses at her. She defended

herself with her arms and retreated, tripping over logs and rocks. Eventually he calmed down, sighed, and bowed his head.

"Don't worry", she said. "Those monkeys will pay for their mischief. They can't eat all our rice and go free. I'll set lifa behind the farm. Don't be disturbed. Rely on me."

Early the following morning the woman went to the bush to make the traps. The man refused to accompany her; he sat all day on his porch brooding over the misadventure. "Why did I allow her to go on with this sacrilegious affairs?" he muttered. "Infatuation! Yes, that's it! Allowing a woman to treat me like this! hat does it look like? Stupid! Senseless! A woman telling me to play the woman and me agreeing to it! I am a fool! Yes, I am a complete fool," the man cursed himself



repeatedly. When he became tired of cussing, he went into the house, lied down awhile and then returned to the porch. He then walked around the house, down to the nearby river bank and back to the house again, talking to himself all the while.

Since the couple's actions were unheard of, no one came to console the man. After all, his condition was to be expected; so he was watched from a distance, like a disease. Since no medicine man could or would help him, the young man was left to wander alone and ponder on the stubbornness of women and his stupidity.

In the evening the woman returned from the bush in high spirits; she told the young man that she had made twelve lifa around the

farm. "Those monkeys are now in danger," she kept saying, bobbing her head vigorously. But her reassuring words only worsened the man's condition. She caressed and hugged him in an effort to cheer him up, but he remained unresponsive and lifeless. In desperation, she ran to the outskirts of the town, collected an assortment of herbs, and administered them without success. Sleep was the cure. They went to bed early that evening and woke up late in the morning, when a sudden burst of energy and well-being sprang up in the young man; he felt fresh and happy. This was not only because of the rest he had had. He had made a decision.

"You know," he told the woman forcefully, "look for another man.

I don't want to be your man anymore." "What are you talking about?" the woman cried with astonishment. "You mean to say you'll leave your wife at the first sign of trouble? Don't let me believe that. Be faithful companion. Some men love a woman only, when she is well, young and pretty. Don't act like such men. Be a faithful companion."

"I say we are not married anymore!" the man said harshly. "Look for a different man."

"Well," the woman said, embarrassed, "let me check the traps tomorrow and share with you whatever I get. The you may go your way. All right?"

"I'll wait till tomorrow," the man said, walking away.

**To Be Continued**

## Resurrected Master

## Song of the

Edwin J Barclay



This series focuses on the writings of one of the literary giants of Liberia. Unfortunately, more people remember the man as the politician or the masterful lawyer.

Arguably, the Barclays [he and his uncle, both presidents of Liberia] were the sharpest legal minds of their times, rivalled only by an equally worthy opponent JJ Dossen.

What we try to do in this series is spotlight the literary giant, E. J. Barclay was. We attempt to show the little known side of the man- free from all the political dramas.

The Past! the Past! O  
Love, recall

Its joys, its hopes, its  
cheerful years;

Its tranquil hours, its  
short-lived fears,

O Love, recall, recall  
them all!

The Past! the Past! ah,  
hadst thou known

The unsoothed pain,  
the smarting wound

Which this sad heart in  
sorrow bound

Has felt, would 'st thou  
its joys have flown?

Ah, tell me not the  
Past is past:

Such accents cannot  
quench desire;

For Hope still lives  
and riseth higher

Where Memory's  
leaves fall thick and  
fast.

Ah, tell me not all  
hope is dead:

That passing years  
have crowned our brows

With fell despair.  
Recall the vows  
Of love we made; let  
hope be fed.

Can love be dead?  
May passing years,

Pulsed with the  
throbbings of our hearts,  
Drown all the hopes  
which faith imparts?  
Must holy love be  
quenched in tears?

Ask thine own heart  
for mine beats fast  
With faith, tho' still  
unrealized:

The joyous hopes once  
dearly prized  
Live but to crown our  
live at last!

Let faith, let death, let  
life and time, —  
The minions of  
eternity, —

The God of Love and  
destiny,

Teach thee, my heart,  
this faith sublime.

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 10<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.aromaproductions.blogspot.com)

## *Diaspora Poet*

### Who's on Watch?

Our watchman stands guard  
in his dreams.  
It is there he keeps thieves  
at bay.

They strike at 3:00 am.  
when rain is a dull beat on  
rooftops  
that puts all but robbers to  
sleep.

Before the watchman dozes  
and dreams,  
he beats and rattles an  
empty drum,  
scrapes his cutlass along  
metal gates  
and windows, wrought-iron  
barred,  
to notify us he is dedicated  
to our defense.

But thieves in the bush are  
also committed  
and strike when the rain is  
most hypnotic.

“In our wee morning stupor,  
bandits capture the python  
that steals eggs and chicken  
from our coop.”

But it's the geese that  
have been quietly smuggled  
away,  
gone when we and the  
watchman wake.

Were the honking creatures  
sedated, too,  
by the seductive rhythm of  
rain?

Only the moon truly  
monitors,  
knows the secrets of  
bandits,  
knows the key to smuggling  
noisy geese.

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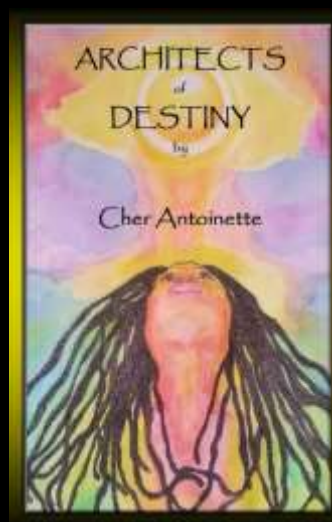
## *Unscripted*



**Cher Antoinette**

Barbadian Forensic Scientist, Visual Artist & Writer, **Cher-Antoinette** is multi-faceted and has been successful at NIFCA in Photography 2009, Literary Arts 2011/2012 and Fine Arts 2012/2013.

She has published a poetic anthology *MY SOUL CRIES* in 2013, *VIRTUALIS: A New Age Love Story* in 2014 and *ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY: Poetry & Prose* in 2015.



Her artistic journey started in earnest in 2014 where she decided to let her work speak to her life. A self-taught artist, the process included finding what media she was most comfortable with and resulted in works of Watercolour, Pen & Ink, Charcoal and a multi-media mix of all three.

Her timeline history to date is exemplified by *ENDANGERED*, *ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY*, *UNMASKED & COLOURS OF MY FREEDOM*.

“The sky is but a stop-over on my journey to the Stars.”



\*\*\*\*\*

## BLACK-OUT

Black  
blackness  
heavy  
oppressive  
hitting  
nails in coffin  
brain matter  
exploding  
colours  
weighing  
mass building  
to black.

Face front  
wiggle fingers  
can't see  
movement  
stealth is king  
blackness  
reigns  
pours  
complete  
drowns the  
sodden effigy -

scarecrow begs  
for mercy.

Black  
pinpoints  
patterns of  
black  
mixed  
with grey  
with white  
light  
pierces  
searches  
burns irises  
heats surfaces  
blackness runs.

Like ink spilt  
on a table tilt  
bridging  
borders to be  
crossed  
depression to  
be lost

in the blinding  
fight  
the calming  
might  
of white light.

Sight

Taken from  
*My Soul Cries*

**Cher-Antoinette ©Cher**

## *African Poet*

Swahili Spice

*A Tribute to Tanzania*

Jambo!

Greetings from Dar Es Salaam:

Eternal harbour of peace.

Dusty roads and diesel fumes

Pungent fish and fragrant blooms

Cauldron markets, bubbling trade

Vibrant fabrics, crafts handmade

Karibu!

Welcome in Zanzibar:

Exotic island of spice.

Azure skies and brooding clouds

Baking sun and thunder shrouds

Coastal mangroves, palm-lined shores

Exotic spices, wood-carved doors

Rafiki!

Friend of Africa:

Continent of passion.

Shaking tops and swaying hips

Clapping hands and whistling lips

Frothing rhythms, stamping feet

Pulsing music, living beat

Kwaheri!

Farewell to Bagamoyo:

Place of crushed hearts.

Ancient merchants, trading routes

Bartered treasures, plundered loots

Faded portraits, shadowed past

Rusted shackles, free at last

**Wayne Visser © 2017**

Short Story

## **GETTING SOMEWHERE**

Lilian A. Aujo

You are a boy of ten again. You are on the bus, and the trees seem to be going faster than the bus you are seated in. You are on the Kampala–Masaka Highway. You cannot wait to reach Kampala as it will be your first time there. The excitement darts through your body like grasshoppers jumping from grass blade to grass blade. You keep standing to catch a glimpse of the speeding trees, and then sitting down heavily onto your mother’s lap as if you are falling into a chair padded with cushions.

“But Vincent, why don’t you settle down?! You will even break my bones! Now see...” Your mother points down to the heavy lemon green sash of her *gomesi*. Its tassels are trailing on the bus floor, covered in red soil.

“You see how you have dirtied my *musiipi*? You know *gomesis* are very hard to clean!”

You look at her attire covered in bright greens, blues and oranges. *Mzee* bought it for her last

Christmas. It is the newest of all her attires and that is why she has chosen to wear it for the journey to the big city.

“Sorry *Mama!*” You sit on her, as carefully as a butterfly perching on a flower and so that you

remember to remain seated you cross your legs.

The bus stops at the roadside. A swarm of men balancing baskets of *gonja* race towards it, covering the bus’ windows. Your mother buys ten fingers for two hundred shillings. They are yellow and soft, but crusted brown in some places. As your mother hands you one, its aroma fills your nostrils.

You open your mouth to sink your teeth into it, but the *gonja* disappears! You start to ask your mother about it, but stop because she is not there anymore. Yet, you are still on the bus.

You touch your chin and it is rough with a beard. You look down at your feet and they have grown so long. Your shorts are gone and you’re wearing trousers.

“Vinnie, Vinnie ...” It’s Chantal’s sweet voice. But she sounds so far off...You let her voice get carried away in the loud swish of the speeding trees...And you still have to find your mother...

You follow her through the narrow bus corridor and call out to her but she does not stop. You continue to follow her, until all the faces on the bus meld into a smooth blackness. But her bright *gomesi* creates a shining path for you and you keep going till you reach her and pull at it. But when she turns she is as still as stone and before you hear the villager mourners wail, “*Woowe, Woowe*”, you know there is not one breath left in her...

“Maama, Maama...”

“Vinnie, Vinnie! Wake up! It’s just a bad dream!”

You open your eyes. Chantal is staring down at you. “You were dreaming,” she says. Her voice soothes you. She strokes your ear and says, “Good morning, love?” She heard you whimpering like a puppy in agony. You turn away, you don’t want her to see the fear in your eyes. But she snuggles close to you and you have no choice but to kiss her. She is weak and yielding and you are no longer the scared twelve year old boy staring at your mother’s lifeless body.

The vibration of the telephone under your pillow tears you away from Chantal. Even as you pull away from her you wonder who could be calling you at six in the morning. Early morning calls usually convey very bad news. You wish the superstitious streak in you could be thwarted by reason. But your fingers tremble as you grip the cell phone. Quickly, you glance at the caller ID.

It’s your father. At this time of the morning, what could be the matter?

“Hello, Mzee?”

“Hello *Mutabaani*, how is Kampala? How is work?”

“It is Ok. Is everything at home fine?”

“It would be Ok. But some things are not so good.”

Your heart pounds in your ears. “Has anyone died? Are the twins fine?”

“It is nothing like that, they are all fine. No one has died.”

Your breath comes out in a low whistle and it’s only then you realised that you’ve been holding it in.

“It is just that I had to catch you before you went to work, that is why I called so early.” He sounds apologetic and you are too relieved to blame him for giving you a scare.

“So what has happened?”

“*Netaaga obuyambi, mutabani.*”

Your father’s voice suddenly sounds small. You immediately know it’s about money. If he is asking you, he must have run out of options.

“Yes *Mzee*, what kind of help?” Damn! That only sounds like you are waiting for him to beg you for money. You wait for him to say something, but the silence between the lines stretches on.

“Yes *Mzee...*” You let your voice trail off like you are waiting for him to complete your thought, but you’re really thinking he will not become less of a father just because he is about to ask you for money. It works because he finally fills the space.

“*Nze mbade ngamba...*”

“Yes *Mzee...*”

“*Joel ne Genevieve, badayo kusomeero.*”

It has to be about that. Your siblings are going back to school. On more than one occasion, you have ‘topped up’ their school fees. Your father does the best he can. But he is a retired primary school teacher and does not have much income.

“How much is the balance?”



“*Millioni taano,*” your father says.

“Five million!” the shock in your voice rings out loud in your own ears; your father hears it too.

“*Naanti* my son, you know how things have been. The pension has still not yet come. Even if it had, it would not have made much of a difference. And the crop has been bad since last year; this banana wilt destroyed at least three quarters of the plantations.”

You shake your head. Five *ma*? Where are you going to get that much money? Chantal wraps her arms round your waist and puts her soft lips on your cheek in a silent peck. You know your father is up against the wall. Ten years into retirement and his pension is still held up because the social security official said he was not one and the same person – just because his name has two different spellings.

You know the banana wilt must be as bad as the Ministry of Agriculture had announced. There was an outbreak in the country, it spread easily and was hard to contain. It has eaten up many plantations in Masaka, *Mzee*'s being among.

But five million! Who is going to give you that much at such short notice? You could take a loan.

“When do you need the money?”

“By Friday, son. Joel and Genevieve will be reporting on Monday, and they'll not be

allowed to register unless they have paid full tuition.”

Today is Monday. You have only four days to get the money together, a loan approval would take more than a week. “Eeh! I wish you had told me earlier.”

“Our SACCO was supposed to lend me some money, but I just got the news that they can't afford to lend so much money to one person when money is so scarce.”

The Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation your father is referring to, is for the *matooke* plantation owners in Masaka. The credit crunch again. The heavily made-up news anchor on last night's news talked in detail on how banks and other financial institutions were lax to lend; deposits are few, so lending rates are high.

You stare at the light filtering in through the chink in the curtains. It's mocking you. You do not see even a sliver of hope to make this problem go away.

“So *Mzee*, let me see what to do, I will give you a call in one hour.”

“*Weebale Mutaabani!*”

“*Mzee*, do not thank me yet, thank me when I get the money.” Even as you say it, you know there is no hope of you getting that money in four days. You run your fingers over the black metallic rosary beads hanging from your neck. You never take it off. You never know when the Virgin Mary might intercede. “Hail Mary, full of grace...” you mumble under your

breath. You extricate yourself from Chantal's grasp and start to throw off the covers.

"Can't you stay a little longer?" She purrs.

"It is six thirty, I don't want to be late for work." The words are thrown over your shoulders because you are already fastening your towel round your waist, heading for the bathroom.

\*\*\*

*"Musiiro gwe! Wayigira wa okuvuga?"*

"What about you! Where did you learn how to drive?" You retort. The taxi driver looks at you like he would a stray dog and gears. The jolt of annoyance that has been bubbling in you simmers as you take in his dishevelled appearance. His head looks like a millet field after a ghastly downpour, the guy obviously thinks the existence of combs is a nuisance. His beard looks rough enough to shame Chantal's pumice stone. His shirt collar edges are frayed upwards, and there are little black holes sprinkled down its front – ash burns.

About two hundred metres away, the traffic policeman's uniform gleams white in your view. You think of pressing on in the right lane and allowing the taxi guy to fidget in the nonexistent third one till the traffic guy pulls him

over. But you change your mind as you realise the errant driver will not give up. He has the nose of his mini bus pointing diagonally at the body of your Japanese Premeau; the blasted guy will scratch you if you insist. A long winded argument will ensure on who is right or who is wrong, and the traffic guy will come up and pull both of you over to 'negotiate' the terms of your offence and to decide who is liable for whose car's repairs. The digital clock on your dashboard is flashing 7:15 AM in neon green.

You step on the brake pedal long enough to let the taxi guy into your lane. The Prado behind you honks with impatience; everyone has somewhere to go this morning.

\*\*\*

"Ki Vincent! You look like you didn't sleep at all! How is Chantal?" Gerald lowers his spectacles and stares at you in mock observation. You only shake your head and smile. "She is fine! But she isn't the reason I didn't sleep. Problems never end..." You stare at the blue-white logo of the company. The motto in bright blue seems to step off the cream walls of your small office: GET

SOMEWHERE: INSURE WITH US.

“What problems now? A single guy like you should not have problems! Leave them to us who are married and have families to think about.”

Although you are about the same age, Gerald is already married and has a five year old daughter.

“You know how it is; just because I’m not married doesn’t mean I don’t have responsibilities.”

“So how is *Mzee*?” Gerald asks. You have been friends for long and he knows how much your family means to you.

“He is fine. It is just that we need money; the twins are going for their last semester. By Friday, everything should be paid and *Mzee* does not have the money now. He asked me for five *ma*!”

“Five million! Hah! That is tight! How are you going to get that money in four days?”

You shake your head from side to side – you wish your mother was still alive, she always had a way of taking care of things – “I don’t know! Borrowing here and there I guess! Maybe you can lend me something...”

“My pockets are dry too! I just paid my daughter’s school fees. That ‘cheap’ nursery school is actually expensive. I wonder how much I will have paid by the time she gets to university!”

“You ask me! That five *ma* doesn’t even cover all their expenses! Education is so expensive, yet we earn so little.”

“I know! How many times have we thought of quitting this insurance thing for better jobs?”

You and Gerald are both graduates of social sciences. But somehow, you found jobs as sales executives at a local insurance firm.

“Maybe if the better jobs were there, we would actually quit,” you reply.

“But they’re not there! About the money, I doubt many people have much to spare. Since it’s the beginning of the school term, you should try *Katumwa*.”

“But he is a shark and his rates are through the roof!”

*Katumwa* is your colleague in accounts. To ‘get somewhere’ in life, he runs an ‘underground’ money lending business. He is not as bad as the other loan sharks around town. You have heard stories of people ‘getting’ fatal accidents because of failing to pay off their debts in time. But you have not heard anything bad about *Katumwa*. Then again, who knows?

“Maybe so, but he is your best bet,” Gerald says, “I don’t see any bank giving you that money at such short notice, and of course the other money lenders...”

“...I know,” you interrupt Gerald, “...they’re out of the question...they are more dangerous than a colleague, but still you never know...”

You are thinking that if you fail to pay up, *Katumwa* might send you to jail. But if you fail to find the

money, that will be the end for the twins. A brief picture of your mother's lifeless face flashes in front of your eyes. It is just like the last day you saw her in that coffin – the life seeped from her body, but her bright *gomesi* strangely vibrant and full of life. The twins were just two when she died. She might be helpless to help the twins, but you're not.

"Too late to go to the bank now," you repeat, as if you are thinking it for the first time. "Let me go see Katumwa, before the boss gets here." You do not know when you started to think of Katumwa as the 'Little Shark'. In a strange way the name comforts and fills you with dread at the same time.

"Do not forget the boss wants the field report and the returns on his desk," Gerald adds.

"Yes, they're almost ready," you say as you shut the door to the small office you share with

Gerald. As you go through the brightly lit corridor to Little Shark's office, you touch the flash disk in your pocket – at least you have most of the work there, and another copy of it on your laptop at home.

You rap softly at his door, his office is at the end of the corridor. The joke round office is that

Little Shark always has his ears peeled to a knock that needs 'economic redemption'.

"Come in!" His shrill voice cuts through the door.

As you turn the silver door handle your grip slips because your hands are so clammy with sweat.

You wipe your hands on the flanks of your trousers, and furtively look through the corridor hopping to God that no one has seen you feeling your buttocks at the threshold of Little Shark's door. You finally manage to turn the door handle with both hands. You walk in with the mind that the door is a minute trap door that will only reveal itself once you pay up.

"Good morning Katumwa, I need your help!"

"Vincent! First things first, you never come to see me! You only remember me in hard times, eh?"

You look at his short forearms supporting his burly face. How can such a small man have so much power? As if he is following your train of thought, Little Shark smiles and says, "How much do you need?"

"Five million."

"That is Ok. When do you want it? You know the usual rate, right?"

"As soon as yesterday; ten percent, isn't it?"

"My friend, if I lent at that rate, I would never get anywhere. You know the economy is tight, myrate is fourteen percent. Some other guys in the business are charging fifteen percent every month."

“Over a hundred thousand a month? Katumwa, you will kill me!” Before your eyes, the light in his office dims. Manically, he raps his chubby fingers over the calculator keys.

“Let’s see...that is just about right; five hundred and twenty-five thousand shillings in three months.”

“In three months! That is so much...”

“...We can talk six months if you want...”

“Out of the question! So you can milk me for twice the amount?”

Not in the least bit offended, Little Shark chuckles, “It’s the times my friend, and this is business.”

You shake your head and touch your neck. The black beads of your rosary feel like a chokehold,

“Fine. I’ll take it.”

He springs off his desk with a quickness that surprises you. For the first time you notice the steel safe mounted in the wall in the corner of the room. His chubby fingers deftly turn the knob for the combination. It’s like he knew you were coming. He takes out five bundles of fifty thousand notes.

He walks over to the counting machine and runs it. It’s all there. He bands it and wraps it in hard khaki paper and tapes the edges. He hands you a grey box package.

“Good doing business with you,” Little Shark says.

You nod, thinking about the ride to the bank. As you reach the door, he is already bending over his notebook. You turn back to see what he is writing.

“There is a receipt for you of course,” he says as he opens a drawer on his left. He pulls out a receipt book and writes out one for you.

\*\*\*

“The money is in your account, *Mzee*.” You are on phone with your father. It is three o’clock and you are exiting the bank.

“*Eeh! Weebale nnyo mutabaani!* Thank you very much son,” he repeats in English. “It is good to have

a son who is somewhere, at least your brother and sister will not drop out, they will get somewhere too one day, not so *mutabaani?*”

“Yes *Mzee*, they will get somewhere too.”

As you hang up the phone, you wonder where that somewhere will be.

**Lillian Akampurira Aujo** is from Uganda and holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Law from Uganda Christian University, Mukono. Her work ‘Soft Tonight’ was awarded first prize in The Beverley Nambozo Poetry award. The writers she admires include, Arundhati Roy, Zukiswa Wanner, Rotimi Babatunde, Leila Aboulela, Lola Shoneyin, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Lillian is currently working on a poetry and short story collection.



## African Poet

### A WALL

In the evening, I remind Bruce  
to shut the door to the closet,  
because the kitten already knows  
a door is a wall you cannot climb—  
you must walk through.

Yesterday

I promised Jennifer

I was over you,  
then logged into  
your Instagram,  
counted backwards  
to the last photo of us  
trying on dresses  
like I used to  
with my mother

who promised to tell the truth,  
especially when it wasn't pretty.

One day, I remember  
leaving the mall  
with a bag full of bras  
and grabbing her  
hand on the escalator,  
resting my head on her shoulder.

I was ten  
when she pulled away  
saying, *people will  
think we're lesbians.*

Sometimes  
around 4 AM  
my full stomach  
growls like the kitten  
paws at the door  
she can't claw through—  
in every house  
a room  
for the unknown.

**Omotara James** is a poet and essayist. The daughter of Nigerian and Trinidadian immigrants, she lives and studies in New York City. She has been awarded fellowships and scholarships by Cave Canem, the Home School, Lambda Literary, and Colgate University. Her awards include the Bridging the Gap Award for Emerging Poets, the third place Luminaire Award for Best Poetry, and the Nancy P. Schnader Academy of American Poets Award. Her work has appeared in the *Recluse*, *Winter Tangerine*, *Cosmonauts Avenue* and elsewhere. Find her on Twitter [@omotarajames](https://twitter.com/omotarajames).



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*Twas Briggin*

## Tigers

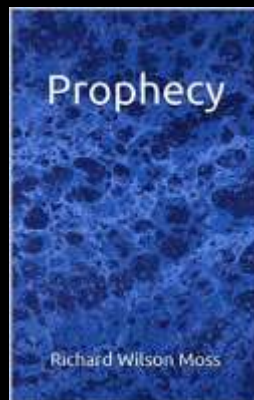
Tigers run among the  
ruins of a dream  
The wreck of a vision  
They rip apart  
auspicious scenes  
Of a time stagnant with  
youth  
They feast upon the  
entrails of a poem  
The blood black  
stomach of it  
But these wild tigers  
are mine  
I slept in the cage with  
them  
I yawned when they  
yawned, I growled  
When they did, their  
red eyes at night  
I looked into, I  
stared at for hours  
Where the savage  
heart flowers.

## Reasons and Redwoods

I would climb redwoods  
I have my reasons  
But there at the top of  
them  
Clouds confer, droplets  
talk of jumping  
Angels are angry,  
seething  
How dare one break  
into heaven  
Picking the lock of hell.

## I Am the Whore

I am the whore  
Walking the street  
giving  
The flowers their bees  
Trees their pollen  
Oceans their spawn.  
Yes, I am the whore  
Erotic the roll and pitch  
Of my daily strut  
On sidewalks,  
lecherous  
My dreams of arrival  
At the neon gates  
Of a gas lit garden  
Where the doves  
snore.



## Small Churches

I like small churches  
Some having been a  
home long ago  
Cracked steps leading  
to a battered oak door  
Outside by the  
windows thrives  
goldenrod  
Inside no foyer, a large  
living room  
Filled with folding  
chairs

And if all the  
congregation comes  
Other chairs are  
borrowed from  
The kitchen table by the  
windows  
Where the flowers nod  
The pulpit is one  
discarded  
By the local library  
Splintered but strong  
wood still  
The pastor paid for  
sermons  
By the fervor of his flock  
And the grace of god.



© Richard Wilson Moss

**Richard Moss** is  
the author of  
numerous full-length  
poetry books. He's  
witty, understands  
words in a most  
peculiar way. His  
poetry is just...You  
can find his books on  
every major platform.



## *According to Eliot*

John Eliot Autobiography [P2]

### **Siblings and a Holiday**

The reader might want to look at the January issue of **KWEE** for part one of my autobiography. I'm telling you about the first twenty years or so of my life growing up in the middle of Britain 1953-1973.

I had a brother and sister. Their names were Haydn and Rosemarie. I was very fond of my brother. I wasn't close to my sister. At times yes. But I'd rather write about them later. Sometimes the tale must travel chronologically. It would be a wonderful gift if we were able to know what would happen later and so be able to have a control over events.

I had parents that remained together rather than getting divorced. Although I'm not convinced that they were happy.

They told me once that they were getting divorced. I remember the situation well. I was aged about twelve, we were sitting in our comfortable room, my Father, Mother and me. My mother said, "We have something serious to tell you. We are getting divorced." I don't know if they were being serious or not. I don't remember saying anything. I think from the look of horror on my face, because I remember being horrified, she quickly reversed and made a joke of it. I'll never know.

My parents weren't happy all the time; but which married couples are? Married life goes on a pendulum, middling for most of the time, blissfully happy and sometimes it gets stuck at bitter, and then separation. My parents were content between the ages of forty to fifty. They earned enough and didn't really have responsibility for three children, only one, me.

When I was very young, we holidayed at Wells Next the Sea. I have very fond memories of those

holidays. I would love to go back, but I've been told that I would be disappointed. Now poor old Wells is a commercial enterprise.

The sea front was gorgeous. Soft sand, beach huts, walking along and seeing old friends Elsie and Fred sitting outside there's. Sometimes they let us use the beach hut.

I believe that Elsie and Fred owned a pub when my parents first went to Wells with my sister and brother. My Father had a motorbike and side car (what I would give for that now!). My memory of Elsie and Fred is of them in retirement so they must now have been dead many years.

They had a beautiful house in the village of Wells with an incredible garden. Fred had laid Elsie a bowling green, but she said it was unusable as it wasn't level! From the inside of their house I clearly remember Elsie's sewing room, not because I have a hidden interest in sewing but because a person could have a room for a specific purpose.

I remember when I was old enough to realise I was going on holiday so perhaps I was four, five. I could not sleep with excitement. Finally, we made our way to Belgrave Road station and caught a train to Wells Next the Sea.

Looking at Google maps I can see Wells from an air view. Everything looks the same. The caravan park and beach. We always rented our caravan from a lady who worked at the butchers in the village of Wells. She took the money from the customers, so the customer got their meat from the fat jolly butcher and then paid Mrs Howells. Once every two weeks we had a Howells pork pie. That was superb.

Howells the butchers remains. No sign of Greens fish chips which we ate daily. We'd walk back to the caravan then along the estuary tow path.

One year we got a superb big caravan. As well as a main eating/sitting area and small cooking there must have been three separate bedrooms. My

brother took his friend Karl with him, so they shared, my parents had one and I had a room which had been a bathroom.

One night after we had returned from the village Karl and I took ourselves off for a walk down to the lighthouse. I remember the black. Silence of the sea. Yellow shaft of light from the lighthouse. Beginnings of poetry.

Probable the main industry of Wells was whelk fishing. Looking on google maps I cannot see the whelk sheds. No more whelk boats at dawn and dusk, the sheds with their boiling pots getting the shellfish ready for the market. No more Greens fish and chips every night, fishcakes and scratchings.

There was a beautiful old bus that would be in a museum now that took you from the village to the sea. We took it twice. When we arrived and then with sadness at the end of the holiday.

### Fishermen

Do you remember  
when the North Sea froze?  
Death to samphire  
on Norfolk coast.

Lone scarecrow, straw  
ragged bleeding skin, raw  
as blue marble waves  
lay shallow still  
and iced white sand,  
six point crystal.

Silence swept the shore  
to where whelk men watched  
seas from sheds;  
warmed by braziers  
waiting for the thaw.

John Eliot  
2015-18

Part three next month;  
early schooldays.

All text c. John Eliot.

Parts 3 will follow.

Any comments let me know.)

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## *According to Eliot Extra*

Most poetry I read is from established authors, and I consider it wonderful. I'm talking about the Yeats, TS Eliot, RS Thomas and I read excellent poems others, such as Richard Wilson Moss, whose work we can find in KWEE. Richard is a poet to whom I look up to and admire. A great American poet of our time.

However, I've never reviewed a new poetry book that I would consider better than my own.

Review: *Invisible Histories* Glen Armstrong

Aged 19 I went to Taize in France. I spent five days at the monastery founded by Brother Roger- a Multi-denominational Christian. It attracted young people from all over the world. Brother Roger was a charismatic abbot- when he spoke, his words permeated the soul. I bought a collection of words from his diaries. It was wonderful, I kept it at my side for over 25 years. But like a fool, I lent it to someone I wanted to impress. He probably never opened it and I've never seen it again. Lesson, never lend

a book, particularly loved one. Why am I telling you this? One, the poetry collection I'm about to introduce is one to keep! Two, the style of its writing is very similar to that of Brother Roger's.

*Invisible Histories* is written by American author Glen Armstrong. Glen teaches writing at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He edits a poetry journal called *Cruel Garters*. He has published another book *New Vaudeville* and his work has appeared in many publications.

*Invisible Histories* is prose poetry. Usually I pick up a poetry collection and read it over many months. I read Armstrong's work in one sitting, some forty poems. For me a sign of a good writing is that it can be read on at least two levels. For example, CS Lewis's *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It's a story about three kids who go through a wardrobe and have adventures in a different fantasy country. When I told an adult friend of mine that is was a Christian allegory, she was surprised. But remained loving the story for the rest of her life. So, it is with Armstrong's work. For example,

from the poem *A Brief History of Philosophy*, the final line is:

*In the motel's difficult mirrors,  
philosophers cut themselves shaving.*

In some poetry there is a line that can be without and with meaning. These words tell us that philosophers cut themselves shaving. Or...well, so much more. Philosophers in their search for the truth, can fail, can cut themselves and miss the truth that is staring them in the mirror. They spend too much time staring in the mirror. Or maybe something else. That is the wonder of poetry. It can be what the poet intended or how the reader interprets it or according to TS Eliot, 'a poem should excite, we should experience it before we begin to understand it.'

For me Armstrong does just that with this collection. Here is an example:

*A Brief History of Starfish*

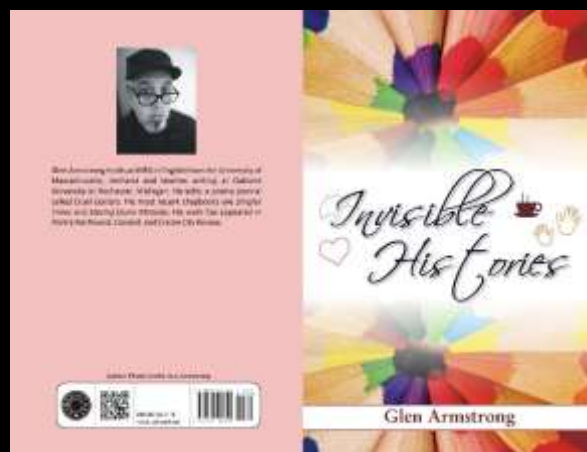
*When my daughters were young they never wavered when a goldfish died or something got at the babies in the birdhouse overnight. They never prayed their souls be kept by anyone before bedtime. At my mother's funeral they viewed their grandma in*

*her casket. They accepted this woman whom they loved reduced to hand puppet in her half open box. They wanted to know where her legs were. But the starfish was different. There in the charged white sand that would only get hotter as the day passed. Beautiful creature stranded mere inches from its dark and secret world. They asked if it was dead or alive. I didn't know. Something they'd never seen before in their father's face kept them from asking if they could pick it up and take it home.*

*Invisible Histories* by, Glen Armstrong is published by Cyberwit and available from all good bookshops and online stores.

Review c. John Eliot

A Brief History of Starfish c. Glen Armstrong



**John Eliot** is a poet. He shares his time between Wales and France. In Wales he lives close to a capital city where he spends a lot of time reading his poetry to an audience.

In France he lives in a tiny village and enjoys the silence to write. John was a teacher.

He is married with children and grandchildren. He has two books of poetry published. **'Ssh'** and **'Don't Go'** his new one which is his latest creative effort, titled **'Don't Go'**. Both books are published by Mosaique Press of England" and are available on Amazon.

**Books by John Eliot**



Friday Night Songs (2019 Cyberwit  
ISBN 978939690118

Friday Night Songs (Italian version  
2020 Cyberwit)

Epitaph For An Artist (Arabic 2020)



Any comments to  
I will reply to all emails.

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"The photograph of John Eliot was taken by Dave Dagers during a live poetry reading. Dave is a professional photographer and artist. He has contributed drawings to John's new collection of poetry, 'Don't Go' which will be out in the Autumn."

## ***A Veil of Silk***

### **Part 2**

**by Jared Angel**

She giggled. "Look." She jiggled her tits making them bounce up and down in an onslaught of flesh and flab.

"Be careful with those," I said leaning back. "You're going to hurt someone."

She giggled again. "You're funny."

Pudding turned to Genki and pulled his entire face into that tremendous cleavage. The next girl in line, wearing a long purple skin-tight evening dress, rubbed her small tit against my cheek. She said her name in a shrilling rush of words making it impossible to catch. Before I could ask her to repeat it, she winked and moved on to Genki.

The third girl was extremely tall and, with her stilettos, towered over every man in the club except Thom. She was wearing a white silk bra and panties that fit snugly without revealing any of the flesh beneath. She cat-walked up to me as if she were doing the runway for Victoria's Secret.

"I'm Rina." She snarled at me, grabbed my hand and rubbed it up and down her warm crotch twice. She suddenly pushed it away and commanded, "Smell it."

I obediently lifted my hand up to my nose and took a deep breath of lilies blowing in a spring breeze.

"Good smell, isn't it? I'll chat with you later." Still without a single smile, she grabbed Genki's hand and rubbed it along her crotch.

The young man in black brought us our first round of beer. "You're in for a treat. Ahmei is going to dance." He pointed over to the DJ, who flipped a switch and a J-pop song with a screeching female singer blared out from the PA system.

I raised my glass and shouted over the music, "To Kenji, may you find marriage as truly amazing as I do."

"I had better," Kenji replied with a huge smile.

We all took a deep long drink and focused our eyes on Ahmei as she climbed up the three steps to the stage. She grabbed the pole directly in front of Thom and swung her leg up in the air in a long circle around the shiny metal phallus. Twirling back onto the stage, she worked her way to the pole in front of me in a rapid succession of thrusts and grinds. She grabbed the pole with both hands, swung her legs up high above her head and slowly brought her legs back down spread-eagle.

"She's so sexy," Silk's honey voice whispered from behind me.

My heart skipped a beat and I said as casually as I could, "Yeah, she's in great shape. Great legs and ass."

We watched the rest of the dance in silence, Silk's hands on my shoulders and her breath slowly blowing across my ear. For Ahmei's last move, she pulled herself upside

down on the pole again, spun completely around, slid downwards until her head almost hit the floor, gracefully lowered her legs and firmly planted her stilettos on the stage.

"She's really talented," Silk said in admiration. "I can't do that."

"Are you going to dance next?" I turned around to look into her veiled eyes.

"No, I already danced tonight."

"You only dance once?" Back home, the strippers went up on stage as often as they could for the tips.

"Yeah, just once. Did you want to watch me?"

"Of course," I said. "You're the sexiest girl in here."

"Really? That makes me very happy, but my tits are too small."

"You can't be serious," I replied. "They're so perky. Big tits often sag and for me, the shape is much more important than the size."

Her brown eyes sparkled so brightly they broke through her veil once again. She said in a voice without honey, "Thank you." She bent down and kissed me softly on the corner on my mouth. Pulling her eyes away from mine, she turned and slowly walked around the stage.

"Ahmei didn't take her top or bottom off while she was dancing," Thom said. "They don't get naked here?"

"I guess not," Genki replied. "Half of the places do and half don't. Not sure why."

"I prefer that they leave their bottoms on," Kenji said. "A little bit of mystery makes it more exciting."

"You're kidding, right?" Thom rolled his eyes again. "I want to see some pussy. If we tip them, will they take it all off?"

"Hey, nobody tipped her," I said. "Is this because people don't tip in Japan?"

"No," Genki said. "You can definitely tip them, and if you do, they'll do something special for you. But, it's kind of expensive, don't you think?"

"What do you mean, 'special'?" Thom rubbed his hands in anticipation.

"Here's your chance to find out." Kenji nodded at Pudding, who was gliding onto the stage.

Thom's eyes glowed like a little boy about to open a whole stack of brightly wrapped Christmas presents.

"I really don't get why guys like big tits," I said to Genki.

"Me either," he agreed. "But look at Kenji and Thom, especially Thom. They're enthralled. I guess it would get boring if we all had the same taste."

"True."

Ignoring the pole and not even pretending to dance, Pudding strutted around the stage wiggling her hips and those huge tits. Thom hollered and Kenji applauded shyly. Thom held out a thousand yen bill. Pudding giggled and hopped over

to Thom. She pulled him closer to the edge of the stage and pointed to the front of her g-string. He gently put the bill inside and tried to take a peak beneath. She giggled again, pushed his hand away, lifted her right leg up in the air and wrapped it around Thom's head. She rubbed her crotch against his face from side to side. "Your beard tickles!"

When she finally pulled away, Thom plopped back onto his stool with glazed-over eyes.

Kenji patted him on the shoulder. "I guess we know what happens when you give them a tip."

"Damn," Thom said. "Kenji, it's your party, you have to try it. My treat."

Before he could pull out the money, Kenji said, "Nah, thanks, not my thing. I enjoy looking, but have no desire to touch them."

"You're joking, right?" When Kenji shook his head no, Thom gasped and looked at Genki. "How about you? Look at those massive hooters! You've got to tip her."

"Me? Yikes, I'm with Kenji. I like drinking and watching, nothing more." Emphasizing his point, Genki downed the rest of his beer in one gulp.

"Japanese guys!" Thom shook his head sadly. "Justin, help me out here, you've got to try this."

"Thom, tonight's your lucky night. All the girls are all yours," I said with a grand flourish of my arms.

"You mean all three of you came here just to look? Well, all right, I'll take them all!"

Pudding's strutting came to an abrupt halt and the DJ shouted, "Game time!"

The mamasan, carrying two large fuzzy pink and yellow dice, led five more strippers onto the stage with Silk in the lead. The club was half-filled now, with most of the new arrivals young men in small groups already swaying from drinking too much with dinner. The mamasan handed one of the new arrivals in a navy blue business suit one of the die and told him to choose a girl. He picked the one in the purple dress. The mamasan handed the girl the other die and told both of them to roll. If the total came out to eight or higher, he would receive a one-minute lap dance. He threw the die across the stage with all his might. It bounded end over end, hit one of the poles and finally came to rest on a six. He and his friends cheered wildly and the stripper dropped her die gently onto the stage. It rolled over once and landed on a five. She clapped in delight, glided off the stage and sat down on his waiting lap.

The mamasan handed a die to Thom and I quietly prayed for him not to choose Silk. He pointed to Pudding and rolled a four. The mamasan handed Pudding the other die and she also rolled a four. More giggling and cheers as Pudding headed off to Thom's open arms. I prayed even harder as the bodybuilder raised his die. He



pointed at Rina and they rolled a combined nine.

The mamasan shouted, "Wow, it's everyone's lucky night!" She handed me one of the grime-encrusted die. "Let me guess, Silk?"

I looked at her in surprise and slowly nodded yes. I rolled the die gently towards Silk, willing it to land on a six – it rolled over three times, teetered on six and landed on two. Everyone moaned and Silk took the other die with her fingernails and held it up with the six facing the ceiling. She dropped it straight down; it bounced once, flipped all the way over and landed on one. Everyone moaned louder, Silk pouted and the mamasan said, "Don't look so upset, you'll get another chance." She handed a die to Genki.

Without hesitation, he pointed to Silk and rolled a six. She dropped her die straight down again, this time landing on a six. Everyone cheered and Silk clapped excitedly.

As she sauntered down from the stage, I forced a smile and said with fake enthusiasm, "Good roll!"

Silk slid down onto Genki's lap and with a guilty glint in his eyes, he said, "Sorry."

"Sorry? Why are you sorry?" I forced my face to remain neutral, refusing to admit to myself that I was jealous.

She ran her hands along Genki's shoulders, rubbed her legs along his and leaned against his chest

placing her tits in his face. He was true to his word about not liking to touch; his hands remained motionless at his side. He did, however, laugh and turn bright red. While pressing her body hard up against Genki's, she nibbled on his ear and he laughed harder.

The next moment she swung her leg off of him and stood directly in front of me. "Sorry we didn't roll an eight."

"No problem." My hand unconsciously pulled out 1,000 yen.

She licked her lips and nodded towards her g-string. I slowly pulled the top of it back to insert the bill. Glancing at her shortly trimmed black pubic hair I licked my lips in imitation of her. She slid down onto my lap, nibbled on my ear, kissed me all the way across the cheek and onto my lips. Straddling my left leg, she rubbed her crotch up and down filling my entire body with her warmth.

My left hand moved down behind her and ran its way up her leg and across her ass. My right hand moved its way up her stomach and towards her chest. Before I reached it, she briefly pulled aside the left side of her bra revealing a perfectly round tit with an exquisitely pink nipple. She let my hand gently brush up against it for a brief moment and then she covered back up and kissed me on the lips again. I held her face in my hands and

stared into her eyes desperately hoping to see the real woman within. She turned her head away, her veil firmly in place. She stood, thanked me with an overly feminine squeal and departed.

"Dude, she really likes you." Genki hit me hard on the shoulder.

Silk was making it quite clear that he was right. But, he would assume I liked her too, which I would never admit to even myself. I was loyal to Yumi. I explained, "It's her job to pretend to like all of us."

"She was totally making out with you. I haven't seen her kiss anyone else on the lips," he said with admiration in his voice.

"No one else has tipped her either," I pointed out.

"Dude, take her in the back for a real lap dance," Thom said, pointing to the curtained room.

"Me? You're the one that likes touching. Besides, it's Kenji's party. If anyone is going in the lap dance room, it's him. What do you say, Kenji? My treat."

He waved his hands in refusal. "I really can't imagine touching them like that. I mean, come on, they're all over every guy in here. Too dirty for me. Justin, you should do it with Silk. It's totally obvious you like her."

"Like? I wouldn't call it that," I said carefully. "While she is the hottest girl in here, Yumi would kill me."

"It's a strip club!" Thom shouted. "You have to do it. Besides, how would Yumi ever find out?"

"Well, she is pretty hot and I haven't had sex since Yumi got pregnant," I said, trying to convince myself it wasn't a big deal. "And, I have to admit that the one time I went to a strip club in the States, the whole place was so sleazy that I had no desire to try one. Here, though, everything's well lit and Silk ... Well..."

"Do it!" Genki said. "We all know you want to."

Thom turned and waved to Silk, who was standing over three men begging her to show them her tits without making them pay for it. When she finally noticed Thom, he first pointed to the lap dance room and then at me. She smiled delightfully, said something to the three men, and headed back towards me. I stood to greet her with my stomach twisting in knots.

Her veiled eyes sparkled. "How many minutes?"

"Five," I whispered and handed her the money.

"Thank you." Honey dripped from her voice. "Wait a moment." She walked over to the mamasan and handed her the money.

"How much did you give her?" Genki said.

**..... The END .....**

## KLM Korner

### NO ORDINARY LOVE

Kuluba Mucorlor

It was the allure of his shirt draped unflatteringly over her dimensions that made its ethereal effortlessness the epitome of sexy... reeking with days old cologne, wrinkled in all the right places, resembling a crinkled map.

The sass and understated conceit a fresh haircut, exudes... a chameleon, living many lives. His eyes... adoringly grazing her crazy, sexy, kool... but it was his coy smile that made her blush and lower her eyes in compliance.

Oh... how summer can make you do some crazy things... on purpose.

The promise of a new day, slowly drawn through nostrils... breathing life into a universe about to experience a renaissance, History books would be jealous of, ushered in by laser cut spurts of sunbeams and Norman

Rockwell skies... carving a niche for kindred souls to survive and thrive. Rhythm

Riveted hearts beating rhythmically in acquiescence, the coupling of our coffee mugs l-o-n-g before nestling into your form like a model puzzle piece... hand snug in the small of my back, pulling me into your vineyard of plump grapes; *divine*... was a testimony to life's simple pleasures they both craved.

How strong, your vines.

I underestimated their subtle strength and reach.

Atoms titillated by "adjustments" that made the adjustments both unnecessary and welcomed...

Sinking weightlessly into unmatched hills and valleys, mounds and depths creating dances and sweet songs for our melodious highway.

Still sweetly punch drink and indiscriminately binging on gourmet coffee, feeding each other with that love feast fit for a king's lair,

unremorsefully concocting the next batch of cocktails to sweeten the tryst... But ohhhhh... they had nothing on the fire in your eyes, My Zeus, lit just *pour moi*... igniting a firestorm of hopeless devotion and untamed passion of a long love. The kind of wild abandonment any attempt to corral would exhaustingly prove, futile. Lips flushed with passion waiting to be locked in an enigmatic rehearsal we had a lifetime to perfect.

Allow me to inhale the complexity of your perfumed skin, muddled with musky manliness, reminiscent of full bodied, tropical fruit mimosas... downed smoothly like the smell and beauty of a thousand islands, you want endless refills of.

... But how charming that you thought the reassuring grip of your hand locked in mine was the romantic gesture for the ages. Little did you know that you were holding my heart and world, simultaneously

with every appreciative ounce of grandiosity.

Words unspoken, silently engraved memories of moments that could never be duplicated and rearranged... "ordinary love."

The world had stood still... an enthralling moment, purposefully planted in a timeless space... while all else was viciously hauled into its vortex. The apocalyptic feeling sent chills down my spine, I'd only anticipated with you. Just us against the world. The challenge was all too exhilarating.

Mmmm... make me drunk, My Love. Your elixir will always be a coveted deluxe edition, lionized by my hungry heart.

Give me morning fetes, Amore Mio... that our days will only be crescendoed by a palatable final course. 😊

CHEERS! 🍷🍴☁️☀️😊☔️🌍🌎



[#liberianwomenwhowrite#hobby](#)

Just "K" 💋

## Beautiful Pieces

## “Till Tomorrow Comes”



**Janetta Konah** is an emerging Liberian writer.

She loves dogs almost as much as she loves writing. She is currently on her second book.



### Chapter 1

I stood at the crossroad waiting on the traffic light. The cars swept down the streets and people buzzed up and down trying to meet up with their busy schedules. The sun burned, turning the cream on my skin to perspiration. My throat was parched. I smacked my dry lips and longed for water. My mind reeled about what has been going on lately. My life is not the best, or bearable type.

We are pushed against the backdrop of our society. A lowly place where we are left broken and forgotten. My mother and I can be counted amongst the many less fortunate who roams the streets of Monrovia singing, *“Please help the blind and God will pay.”* But I guessed no one cares about God’s payments

because no one help.

When the light turned green, I shambled across the street. My belly growls with pains beneath but I ignore it. It has been days since I had a meal. And no- I don' t mean a good meal. I mean something to eat just so you can survive. But when you' re faced with choice of having a meal to eat or having a roof over your head, it' s kind of hard to decide.

You wouldn' t think this to be the thoughts of an eleven years old child, right? Life keeps pushing us to play this game. You know, the one in which you have to choose between two substantial thing you need to survive.

\*\*\*\*\*

I walked passed a group of students who whispered and snickered and pointed at me. I

knew that they were talking about me, but that wasn' t my concern. Not with the sun scorching my skin and the heat of the coal-tar searing my heels. I have been walking for hours. Hungry and tired. I stared my reflection in a shop glass window.

My skin was rich with dirt and my hair was ruffled on my head. I wasn' t the most approachable, clad in a tattered black trouser with a big faded green blouse that had a neck wide enough to pass over the head of an elephant. The end of my slippers had eaten away leaving my heels on the ground. My stomach growled again... this time louder.

Every organ in my body threaten to fail, but I dared not stop. I had to get at my uncles house, which was only a few blocks away. I hasten my pace.



#####

My uncle's daughter Juma was washing some clothes outside when I arrived at the house.

Dirty clothes lied about on the ground. The tubs and bucket were positioned by each other under the big plum tree in their backyard. She was bent over a washboard, scrubbing jeans vigorously.

I strolled towards her, "Juma, hello oo." I greeted.

"Nana." She called, wiping the sweat off her forehead with her fingers. "What are you doing here?"

"Mama sent me to Uncle's Toe, is he here?" I asked.

"No. But my Ma inside. Go tell her." Juma said. I grimaced. My Uncle's wife was one of those people you wished ended up in hell come judgment day. She had the look of an angel but she was the devil in disguised.

I went into the house however. It was typical Liberian house; with three bedrooms, one bathroom and a living room and dining room combined and a kitchen. My Aunty sat on a sofa in the living room with some kids sprawl on the floor, watching an African movie when I walked in. She was in a good mood, talking and smiling.

"Your hello oo." I greeted.

She glanced up smiling but when she saw me, her expression changed to that of disgust. "What are you doing here?" she asked me grimly.

"Mama sent me to..." I didn't complete my sentence.

"Didn't I tell you not to come here?" She queried in a sharp tone, stretching her dark eyes at me.

"I...I came because..." I stammered.

"Get out of my house. Get out of my house right now." She

shouted, standing up. I begin to double back. "You and your witchcraft mother ready again ehn? She has sent you to come plant witch in our house, ehn?"

"No, aunty Tarnyonnoh." I said

"Didn't I tell you to get out?" She shouted louder. "I say get out."

I fell to my knees. I had to fulfill the reason for which Mama had sent me or else we were at lost,

"Aunty Tarnyonnoh, I beg you." I beseeched her.

"Oh, so you na going ehn? Okay." She said and went for a yard broom. "I will teach you lesson." She said, lifting the broom to strike me but I jumped up and ran out. She followed me. "Get out of here." She screamed. "My husband and I don't want anything to do with you and your witchcraft mother. Get out..."

I ran and hid behind Juma.

"Mama, stop this." Juma said.

"Can't you just listen to the message Aunty Lor..."

"Don't say that name." Aunty Tarnyonnoh shouted.

"Don't mention that witchcraft name." her eyes flared in anger, "that witch wants to see my downfall but my God will defend me." She stated. "I want that little witch out of here." She tried to hit me but I used Juma as a shield, blocking her every strike.

"Ah, Mama" Juma cried.

"Mama stopped this na. Ah!" Juma held me closed. "This is not good oo. This is Papas family."

"What family? These good for nothing people." She said gesturing towards me. "Do you know what that woman tried to do to me when I had your brother in my stomach? Do you?" she questioned Juma. Her face was dark with hatred.

"I am going to kill this child."

She begin to chase me around the house, swinging at me with the broom stick. I ran dodging her and Juma ran after us, shouting for her mother to stop. I stomped my toes against a rock and fell. Aunty Tarnyonnoh caught me and she begin to flog me with the broom. Whenever Juma came closer, she swung at Juma. I screamed in pain, crying out for help as she beat me repeatedly, not caring where the stick landed.

Juma grabbed the broom

"Mama, stop this na"

"Leave this broom alone."

Aunty Tarnyonnoh said, in a warning voice, but her daughter refused to let go. "Are you defying me?"

They begin pull the broom back and forth, I slipped from the grasp of my aunty, crying bitterly. They struggle for the broom and at last, Aunty Tarnyonnoh give up. She released the stick and started to

go inside.

"What is the message you brought for Papa?" Juma asked me.

"Mama sent me to ask him for money so we can pay our house rent." I told her.

Upon hearing what I did, my aunty turned around even angrier. "You little witch. You and your ma just think that my husband working for your eh?" She hollered, moving towards me.

"Nana, RUN!" Juma shouted. I begin to run, slamming my feet against the hot earth. My aunty pursued me. I ran as fast as I could. She ran at length, throwing her slippers at me. We were almost at the main street when she give up and started back home.

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Excerpts from from her UPCOMING novel.

Her debut chapbook is *Beautiful Pieces*



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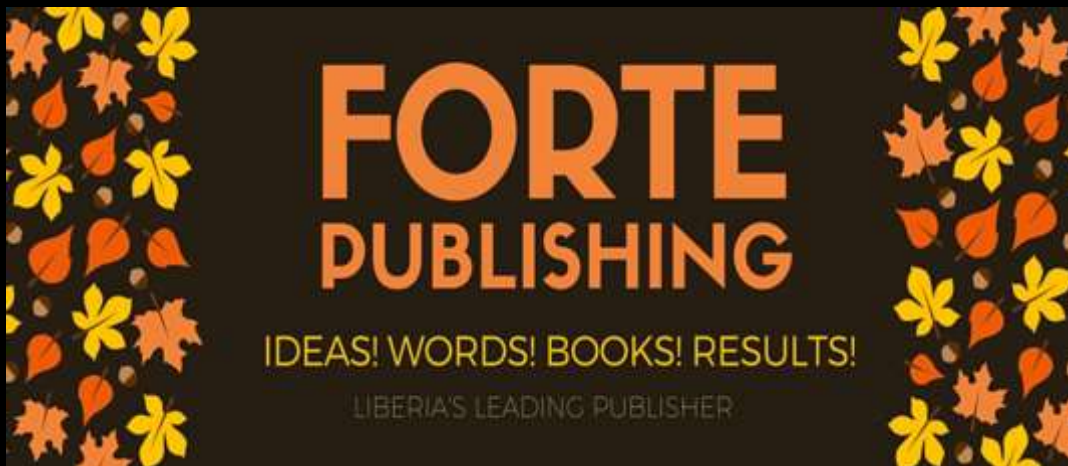
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## A Purpose-Filled Moment

### Keeping It Real

...

### Apology to Rev. Dr. M. L. King, Jr.

We are so sorry, Dr. King. Some of us have forgotten how to let freedom ring.

We see the nightmares around us and have decided not to dream. We named streets, parks and schools after you but forget to keep them clean. We use your birthday as a time to sing and dance or "clean up shop" but the plea that came from you was for bigotry and hate to stop.

We are truly very sorry, Dr. King. We forgot the power in the words, "Lift Every Voice and Sing." We forgot it wasn't about just raising voices to the sky but also doing the best we can, holding our aspirations high; not keeping the plan of Willie Lynch alive or pocketing our pride. We forgot that to get the right to vote too many people died.

We haven't taken seriously that one of them was you. We recite your speeches at festive events but the words just don't get through.

Dr. King, we apologize to you.

We used your plea for a good education as an excuse for integration but in these alleged "better schools" we don't even learn about you.

Our culture, heritage and history; once again buried in mystery. A high school senior once described you as that "dude who marched down in D.C."

The Afro, once part of our crowning glory; now, worn in Halloween horror stories

and we make fun of anyone who dons African dress. The "N" word is used extensively and "Black" is said offensively and the "B" word is the acronym for the \*Black Intelligence Test! (\*Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity)

Dr. King, I am so sorry, someone said your dream was gone.

We forgot about the ones who marched, and were hosed and spit upon.

You preached non-violence but the "lost" of us are killing one another.

We call each other "dog" but respectfully we used to say "sister" and "brother."

Black men need jobs and housing but the overworked solution is the new slavery called the state correctional institution. Dr. King, if you were living now would you see your dream deferred, forsaken? Yes, we shall overcome but first, we must awaken!

©1998

RuNett Nia Ebo,



RuNett Nia Ebo, Poet of Purpose, is a resident of NW Philadelphia and married to William Gray, Sr. She has been writing since age 10 (over 5 decades). She is published in several anthologies including Stand our Ground © 2013 and she collaborated with eight other senior poets on the anthology, Seniors Rockin' the Pen © 2014. She has self-published 8 chapbooks, 3 books of poetry, one CD and one fiction story, All For You © 2002. Her signature poem, "**Lord, Why Did You Make Me Black?**" © 1994, is also her contribution to Chicken Soup for the African-American Soul © 2004. Recently (Feb 2015) RuNett and Victoria, her Partner-In-Rhyme, released a poetry book they co-authored entitled Truth With Purpose © 2014.

In 1998, along with her brother, Darien and another musician, the late Keno Speller, Poet Ebo established Nia's Purpose: Poetry and Percussion @ Work. The trio used this vehicle to visit churches, schools and community centers to share poetry, percussion and Black History with audiences of all ages.

She has guest appeared on cable, public televisions and radios shows. She acted on local stages in Philadelphia in addition to speaking and presenting at community events and local schools in Philadelphia, New York, Houston, Los Angeles, and St. Croix as well as several cities in New Jersey and Delaware.

Miss Ebo wrote the play based on her signature poem, Lord Why Did You Make Me Black which has been performed by the Fresh Visions Youth Theatre Group as part of their Ebony Kaleidoscope #9&#10 (end of the year) shows.

In addition to other awards received over the years, she was recently presented with The 2014 Philadelphia Black Poetry Honors for over 20 years of Poetic Excellence by Poetic Ventures and The Black Authors Tour (May). She also received the Golden Mic Award from Rick Watson and World Renowned Entertainment (July).

Ten years ago, in 2006, Poet Ebo, established POET-IFY: Poetry to Edify, a poetry venue she hosts bi-monthly from Feb. to Oct. with her co-host, Victoria "The Axiom" Peurifoy. She manages the MTM Band that has played for this venue since it started. She accepted the Lord into her life in 1980 and is a member of Germantown Church of the Brethren.

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## Short Story

### UNDER RECONSTRUCTION

Mori Ogai

Excerpted from *Modern Japanese Stories* edited by Ivan Morris. All Rights Reserved

It HAD just stopped raining when Councilor Watanabe got off the tram in front of the Kabuki playhouse. Carefully avoiding the puddles, he hurried through the Kobiki district in the direction of the Department of Communications. Surely that restaurant was somewhere around here, he thought as he strode along the canal; he remembered having noticed the signboard on one of these corners.

The streets were fairly empty. He passed a group of young men in Western clothes. They were talking noisily and looked as if they had all just left their office. Then a girl in a kimono and a gaily-colored sash hurried by, almost bumping into him. She was probably a waitress from some local teahouse, he thought. A rickshaw with its hood up passed him from behind.

Finally he caught sight of a small signboard with the inscription written horizontally in the Western style:

"Seiyoken Hotel." The front of the building facing the canal was covered with scaffolding. The side entrance was on a small street. There were two oblique flights of stairs outside the restaurant, forming a sort of truncated triangle. At the head of each staircase was a glass door; after hesitating a moment, Watanabe entered the one on the left on which were written the characters for "Entrance."

Inside he found a wide passage. By the door was a pile of little cloths for wiping one's shoes and next to these a large Western doormat. Watanabe's shoes were muddy after the rain and he carefully cleaned them with both implements. Apparently in this restaurant one was supposed to observe the Western custom and wear one's shoes indoors.

There was no sign of life in the passage, but from the distance came a great sound of hammering and sawing. The place was under reconstruction, thought Watanabe.

He waited awhile, but as no one came to receive him, he walked to the end of the passage. Here he stopped, not knowing which way to turn. Suddenly he noticed a man with a napkin under his arm leaning against the wall a few yards away. He went up to him.

"I telephoned yesterday for a reservation."

The man sprang to attention. "Oh yes, sir. A table for two, I believe? It's on the second floor. Would you mind coming with me, sir."

The waiter followed him up another flight of stairs. The man had known immediately who he was, thought Watanabe. Customers must be few and far between with the repairs underway. As he mounted the stairs, the clatter and banging of the workmen became almost deafening.

"Quite a lively place," said Watanabe, looking back at the waiter.

"Oh no, sir. The men go home at five o'clock. You won't be disturbed while you're dining, sir."

When they reached the top of the stairs, the waiter hurried past Watanabe and opened a door to the left. It was a large room overlooking the canal.

It seemed rather big for just two people. Round each of the three small tables in the room were squeezed as many chairs as could possibly be fitted. Under the window was a huge sofa and next to it a potted vine about three feet high and a dwarfed plant with large hothouse grapes.

The waiter walked across the room and opened another door. "This is your

dining room, sir." Watanabe followed him. The room was small—just right, in fact, for a couple. In the middle a table was elaborately set with two covers and a large basket of azaleas and rhododendrons.

With a certain feeling of satisfaction, Watanabe returned to the large room. The waiter withdrew and Watanabe again found himself alone. Abruptly the sound of hammering stopped. He looked at his watch: yes, it was exactly five o'clock. There was still half an hour till his appointment. Watanabe took a cigar from an open box on the table, pierced the end and lit it.

Strangely enough, he did not have the slightest feeling of anticipation. It was as if it did not matter who was to join him in this room, as if he did not care in the slightest whose face it was that he would be seeing across that flower basket. He was surprised at his own coolness.

Puffing comfortably at his cigar, he walked over to the window and opened it. Directly below were stacked huge piles of timber. This was the main entrance. The water in the canal appeared completely stationary. On the other side he could see a row of wooden buildings. They looked like houses looked like of assination. Except for a woman with a child on her

back, walking slowly back and forth outside one of the houses, there was no one in sight. At the far right, the massive redbrick structure of the Naval Museum imposingly blocked his view.

Watanabe sat down on the sofa and examined the room. The walls were decorated with an ill-assorted collection of pictures: nightingales on a plum tree, an illustration from a fairy tale, a hawk. The scrolls were small and narrow, and on the high walls they looked strangely short as if the bottom portions had been tucked under and concealed. Over the door was a large framed Buddhist text. And this is meant to be the land of art, thought Watanabe.

For a while he sat there smoking his cigar and simply enjoying a sensation of physical well-being. Then he heard the sound of voices in the passage and the door opened. It was she.

She wore a large Anne-Marie straw hat decorated with beads. Under her long gray coat he noticed a white embroidered batiste blouse. Her skirt was also gray. She carried a tiny umbrella with a tassel. Watanabe forced a smile to his face. Throwing his cigar in an ashtray, he got up from the sofa.

The German woman removed her veil and glanced back at the waiter,

who had followed her into the room and who was now standing by the door. Then she turned her eyes to Watanabe. They were the large brown eyes of a brunette. They were the eyes into which he had so often gazed in the past. Yet he did not remember those mauve shadows from the days in Berlin...

"I'm sorry I kept you waiting," she said abruptly in German.

She transferred her umbrella to her left hand and stiffly extended the gloved fingers of her right hand. No doubt all this was for the benefit of the waiter, thought Watanabe as he courteously took the fingers in his hand.

"You can let me know when dinner is ready," he said, glancing at the door. The waiter bowed and left the room.

"How delightful to see you," he said in German.

The woman nonchalantly threw her umbrella on a chair and sat down on the sofa with a slight gasp of exhaustion. Putting her elbows on the table, she gazed silently at Watanabe. He drew up a chair next to the table and sat down.

"It's very quiet here, isn't it?" she said after a while.

"It's under reconstruction," said Watanabe. "They were making a terrible noise when I arrived."

"Oh, that explains it. The place does give one rather an unsettled feeling. Not that I'm a particularly calm sort of person at best."

"When did you arrive in Japan?"

"The day before yesterday. And then yesterday I happened to see you on the street."

"And why did you come?"

"Well, you see, I've been in Vladivostok since the end of last year."

"I suppose you've been singing in that hotel there, whatever it's called."

"Yes."

"You obviously weren't alone. Were you with a company?"

"No, I wasn't with a company. But I wasn't alone either. ... I was with a man. In fact you know him." She hesitated a moment. "I've been with Kosinsky."

"Oh, that Pole. So I suppose you're called Kosinskaya now."

"Don't be silly! It's simply that I sing and Kosinsky accompanies me."

"Are you sure that's all?"

"You mean, do we have a good time together? Well, I can't say it never happens."

"That's hardly surprising. I suppose he's in Tokyo with you?"

"Yes, we're both at the Aikokusan Hotel."



"But he lets you come out alone."

"My dear friend, I only let him accompany me in singing, you know." She used the word *begleiten*. If he accompanied her on the piano, thought Watanabe, he accompanied her in other ways too.

"I told him that I'd seen you on the Ginza," she continued, "and he's very anxious to meet you."

"Allow me to deprive myself of that pleasure."

"Don't worry. He isn't short of money or anything."

"No, but he probably will be before long if he stays here," said

Watanabe with a smile. "And where do you plan to go next?"

"I'm going to America. Everyone tells me that Japan is hopeless, so

I'm not going to count on getting work here."

"You're quite right. America is a good place to go after Russia.

Japan is still backward. . . . It's still under reconstruction, you see."

"Good heavens! If you aren't careful, I'll tell them in America that a Japanese gentleman admitted his country was backward. In fact, I'll say it was a Japanese government official. You are a government official, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm in the government."

"And behaving yourself very correctly, no doubt?"

"Frighteningly so! I've become a real *First*, you know. Tonight's the only exception."

"I'm very honored!" She slowly undid the buttons of her long gloves, took them off, and held out her right hand to Watanabe. It was a beautiful, dazzlingly white hand. He clasped it firmly, amazed at its coldness. Without removing her hand from Watanabe's grasp, she looked steadily at him. Her large, brown eyes seemed with their dark shadows to have grown to twice their former size.

"Would you like me to kiss you?" she said.

Watanabe made a wry face. "We are in Japan," he said.

Without any warning, the door was flung open and the waiter appeared. "Dinner is served, sir."

"We are in Japan," repeated Watanabe. He got up and led the woman into the little dining room. The waiter suddenly turned on the glaring overhead lights.

The woman sat down opposite Watanabe and glanced round the room. "They've given us a *chambre separee*," she said, laughing. "How exciting! She straightened her back and looked directly at Watanabe as if to see how he would react.

"I'm sure it's quite by chance," he said calmly.

Three waiters were in constant attendance on the two of them. One poured sherry, the other served slices of melon, and the third bustled about ineffectually.

"The place is alive with waiters," said Watanabe.

"Yes, and they seem to be a clumsy lot," she said, squaring her elbows as she started on her melon. "They're just as bad at my hotel."

"I expect you and Kosinsky find they get in your way. Always barging in without knocking. . . ."

"You're wrong about all that, you know. Well, the melon is good anyway."

"In America you'll be getting stacks of food to eat every morning as soon as you wake up."

The conversation drifted along lightly. Finally the waiters brought in fruit salad and poured champagne.

"Aren't you jealous—even a little?" the woman suddenly asked.

All the time they had been eating and chatting away. She had remembered how they used to sit facing each other like this after the theater at the little restaurant above the Blihr Steps. Sometimes they had quarreled but they had always made it up in the end. She had meant to sound as if she were joking but despite herself, her voice was serious and she felt ashamed.

Watanabe lifted his champagne glass high above the flowers and said in a clear voice: "Kosinsky *soil leben!*"

The woman silently raised her glass. There was a frozen smile on her face. Under the table her hand trembled uncontrollably.

It was still only half past eight when a solitary, black car drove slowly along the Ginza through an ocean of

flickering lights. In the back sat a woman, her face hidden by a veil.

**Mori Ogai (1862-1922)** is considered by many Japanese critics to be the country's outstanding literary figure since the Meiji Restoration.

Ogai's name comes logically at the head of any list of modern Japanese story writers.

Ogai was the son of a doctor. After graduating from the medical department of Tokyo University, he became a surgeon in the imperial army. In 1884 he was sent to Germany to pursue his study of medicine. He remained there for four years, and was thus the first important Japanese writer to become well acquainted at first hand with Europe. Of the Western countries, Germany was to have the greatest influence on Ogai's thinking and writing.

Ogai was endowed with extraordinary energy and he succeeded in pursuing a very active literary career while at the same time carrying out his official army duties. Much of his early work consisted of translations of German poems and short stories. In 1890 he published his first piece of fiction. This was "The Dancing Girl," the romantic story of an unhappy love affair between a German dancer and a Japanese man. (There is an echo of this subject in "Under Reconstruction," translated here.) The story appears to have been closely based on personal experience, and Ogai himself describes it as an Ich Roman. This is an early example of the "confessional" type of writing that was so enthusiastically espoused by the naturalists and the other practitioners of the "I-novel."

**Happy Month!**





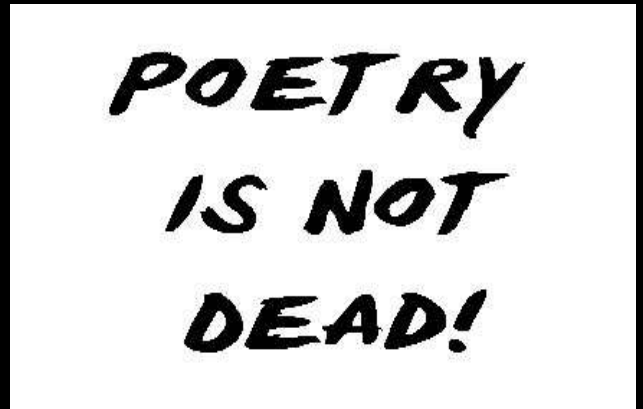
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## Poetry Section



## POETRY BONANZA!

Because it is the NEW YEAR and we CAN, we offer this bonanza of poems from some of the MASTERS [old and new]!

### Humanity I Love You—

E. E. CUMMINGS (1894 - 1962)

Humanity i love you  
because you would rather black the  
boots of  
success than enquire whose soul  
dangles from his  
watch-chain which would be  
embarrassing for both

parties and because you  
unflinchingly applaud all  
songs containing the words country  
home and  
mother when sung at the old howard

Humanity i love you because  
when you're hard up you pawn your  
intelligence to buy a drink and when  
you're flush pride keeps

you from the pawn shop and  
because you are continually  
committing  
nuisances but more  
especially in your own house

Humanity i love you because you  
are perpetually putting the secret of  
life in your pants and forgetting  
it's there and sitting down

on it  
and because you are  
forever making poems in the lap  
of death Humanity

i hate you

### Young Woman At A Window

While she sits  
there  
with tears on  
her cheek  
her cheek on  
her hand  
this little child  
who robs her  
knows nothing of  
his theft  
but rubs his  
nose

She sits with  
tears on  
her cheek  
her cheek on  
her hand  
the child  
in her lap  
his nose  
pressed  
to the glass

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

**Song 1 –**

**BESSIE RAYNER PARKES**

I LOVE to lie  
In the dreamy heat of an  
autumn day,  
Where the painted insects idly  
play,  
Floating about in the noontide  
ray;  
Or at evening hours  
By the gilly-flower on the old  
grey wall,  
And the scented pea, and the  
sun-flower tall,  
And the ivy training over them  
all,  
In the time of flowers.

By the deep old moat where the  
duckweed grows,  
And the drowsy streamlet  
scarcely flows,  
Overhung with garlands of gay  
wild rose  
And bryony,  
Where mosses carpet each  
sloping mound,  
And the white convolvulus

twineth round  
The cluster'd shrubs and over  
the ground,  
I love to lie;  
Where all is still, and warm, and  
bright,  
Or glowing with a chasten'd  
light,  
Which fades away in a moonlit  
night,  
In every time  
Ere the death of the flowers,  
while the wandering breeze  
Whispers and laughs 'mid the  
crowned trees,  
To the song of the birds and the  
hum of the bees  
I would lie and rhyme.

**2**

**EMILY DICKINSON**

There is another sky,  
Evel serene and fair,  
And there is another sunshme,  
Though it be darkness thel e;  
Never mind faded forests, Austin,  
Never mind silent fields -

Here is a little forest,  
Whose leaf is ever green;  
*Here* is a brightel garden,  
Where not a frost has been;  
In its unfading flowers  
I hear the bright bee hum;  
Prithee, my brother,  
Into *my* garden come!

### I Need Not Go –

THOMAS HARDY

I need not go  
Through sleet and snow  
To where I know  
She waits for me;  
She will wait me there  
Till I find it fair,  
And have time to spare  
From company.

When I've overgot  
The world somewhat,  
When things cost not  
Such stress and strain,  
Is soon enough  
By cypress sough  
To tell my Love  
I am come again.

And if some day,  
When none cries nay,  
I still delay  
To seek her side,  
(Though ample measure  
Of fitting leisure  
Await my pleasure)  
She will not chide.

What--not upbraid me  
That I delayed me,  
Nor ask what stayed me  
So long? Ah, no! -  
New cares may claim me,  
New loves inflame me,  
She will not blame me,  
But suffer it **so**.

### EPIGRAM

(After the Greek)

The golden one is gone from  
the banquets;  
She, beloved of Atimetus,  
The swallow, the bright  
Homonoëa:  
Gone the dear chatterer.

H. D.

### 3 IN HOUSE POETS

## GECE LİRİKLERİ – NIGHT LYRICS – Lyriques Nocturnes

7

“Ağır ağır indiniz merdivenlerini  
gecenin”

Ağır ağır açılır kanatları gecenin:  
ipek tül örter göğün yüzüne,  
ateşli ağzına böceklerin

Sabret, değişir bir gecede,  
sıkıntıya dönüşür her acı;

Bir gecede diner elbet  
kalbi eriten  
hesapsız sancı,

Geceye benzer aşk  
içinden geçmeden anlaşılmaz;

Her acı anlaşılır  
her geceye alışılır da  
gece insana acımaz

« *Vous avez descendu lentement  
les escaliers de la nuit* »

Les ailes de la nuit s'ouvrent  
lentement :  
elle ensevelit le visage du ciel d'une  
voile de soie  
aux bouches tumultueuses des  
insectes

Sois patient, ça change dans une nuit,  
chaque chagrin se transforme en  
ennui

La douleur démesurée

qui fond le cœur  
cessera assurément dans une nuit

L'amour se ressemble à la nuit  
il est incompréhensible  
sans la traverser ;

Chaque chagrin se distingue  
on s'habitue à chaque nuit  
mais la nuit est sans merci pour l'être  
humain

“*You descend slowly down the  
stairs of the night*”

The wings of the night open heavily:  
draw a silk veil over face of the sky,  
the tumultuous mouths of insects

Be patient,  
everything changes in one night,  
each grief turns into boredom;

The profuse pain  
that melts the heart  
certainly stops in one night,

Love looks like the night  
it is incomprehensible without traverse;

Every grief is obvious  
every night is accustomed but  
night shows no mercy to human





## Hilal Karahan



Hilal is Turkish and has a known secret. She lives a triple life, all of which she is successful at, a mother, a poet and a medical doctor.

### Poem Books:

*Self Dictionary-Summary of One Day* (Kül Publications, Ankara, February 2003)

*In Front of The Hill* (Kül Publications, Ankara, May 2003)

*Secret and Mist* (Kül Publications, Ankara, November 2004): Found as “remarkable” in 2004 Yaşar Nabi Nayır Poem Election

*Delayed Mummy* (Mühür Library, İstanbul, June 2010): Found as “successful” in 2010 Cemal Süreya Poem Election

*The Night Sundering Passion* (Mühür Library, İstanbul, June 2012): Given Burhan Günel Private Award in 2013 M. Sunullah Arısoy Poem Election  
*Strada Care Caută Marea* (Selected Poems, Translated to Romanian by Niculina Oprea, Tracus Arte Publishing, Bucharest, November 2014)

*La Rue Qui Cherche La Mer* (Selected Poems, Translated to French by Mustafa Baleb, Artshop publications, İstanbul, October 2016)

### Prose Books:

*Poem and Quantum* (Mühür Library, İstanbul, January 2012)

*Nook and Cranny Poem Notes* (Yasakmeyve Komşu Publications, İstanbul, September 2014)

### Garland Book:

*Other Poetic: Assays About Bayrıl Poem* (Mühür Library, İstanbul, May 2012)

### Participated in:

5th International Poetry Festival (Poetistanbul 2010)

Karadeniz Ereğli 1st Poetry Festival (2010)

Karadeniz Ereğli 17th International Love Peace Friendship Culture and Art Festival (2010)

Karadeniz Ereğli 2nd Poetry Festival (2011)

Karadeniz Ereğli 18th International Love Peace Friendship Culture and Art Festival (2011)

Akköy Poet Meeting (2011)

3rd Datça Literature Days (2011)

2nd International Ordu Festival of Literature (2011)

Karadeniz Ereğli 3rd Poetry Festival (2012)

Karadeniz Ereğli 19th International Love Peace Friendship Culture and Art Festival (2012)

Zonguldak Karaelmas 12nd International Culture and Art Festival (2012)

Bartın 1st National Poetry Days (2012)

8th International Poetry Festival (Poetistanbul 2013)

9th International Poetry Festival (Poetistanbul 2014)

10th International Poetry Festival (Poetistanbul 2016)

19th International Festival “Curtea de Arges Poetry Nights” (Bucharest, 8-14 July 2015)

20th Internacional De Poesia De La Havana (Havana, 23-28 May 2016)

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## Nothing Is As It Seems

a walk in the garden  
always provides the never fading recognition  
that nothing  
    is ever what it appears to be

there are the “weres” that still linger  
the “nows” that hope for the best  
and the “whens” and their intractable wishful thinking  
that change into dirt  
    right before your eyes

it is through perception  
that we are able to realize  
    our direction along the meanders of our ways  
making sense of the deception  
    that always has to criticize  
what we do and say

but take heart  
in the differences of opinion  
and the changes of mind  
at every seasonal junction

for

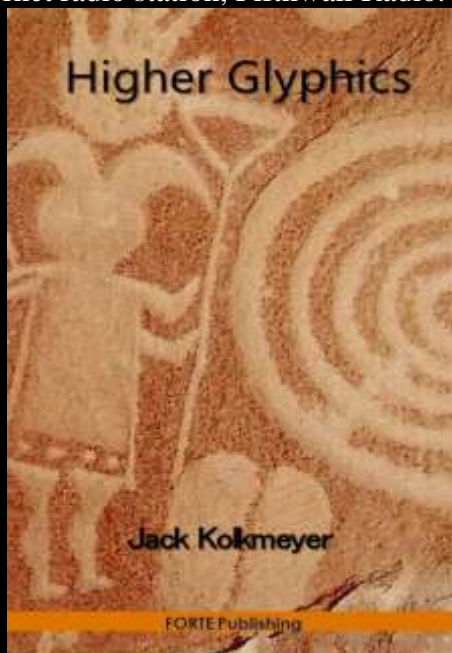
there are also the “thens’  
loitering around the corners and on the edges  
somniaulant and lethargic  
    or so it would seem

watching with a calm certainty  
and hopefulness  
that  
somewhere along the trodden path  
something will actually  
be  
what it is

## JACK KOLKMEYER



Jack Kolkmeier studied English Literature/Creative Writing at Ohio University in the 1960's where he developed a special interest in the Romantic, Imagist and Beat poets. He was the Editor of *Sphere*, the Ohio University literary magazine, from 1967-68. His writings have appeared in numerous publications including *The Writers Place* and *The Liberian Literary Magazine* and have been broadcast on his popular Santa Fe radio programs, *The International House of Wax* and *Brave New World*, and presented with his performance group, The Word Quartet. Jack currently reads his works on Brave New World and The Tone Age, two programs on his internet radio station, Fifthwall Radio.

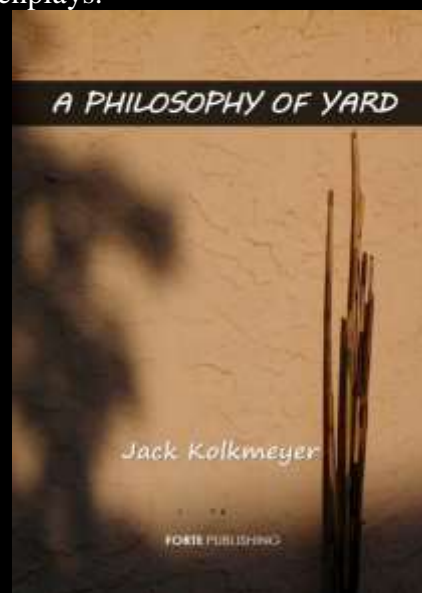


He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia, West Africa from 1969-72 and was greatly

influenced then by the emerging African writers of that time, especially Leopold Senghor, Chinua Achebe and Amos Tutuola. Jack received an MPA in Public Policy/Urban and Regional Planning from Indiana University in 1974.



Jack moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1975 to study filmmaking at The Anthropology Film Center and worked there professionally in city planning, education, broadcasting and the performing arts, and journalism. Jack currently resides and writes in Delray Beach, Florida where his current writing projects include poetry, music and city planning topics, and screenplays.



**Renee' B. Drummond-  
Brown**

**BLACK CRIMES  
MATTER!**

Double 'dutchin.  
She minds her B I  
business;  
'jus-a 'jumpin.

Grey skies.  
Green money.  
Silver grillz.  
Gold chains.  
Black asphalt.  
White sheet.  
Blue rhymes.  
Yellow tape.  
Red blood.  
Glad she ain't  
mine!

(I never knew  
double 'dutchin  
was such a  
crime)?  
She minded her  
B I business;;  
'jus-a 'jumpin..  
Double 'ducthin..

Daddy's 'cryin.  
Momma's  
'PREYin.  
Grandma's 'hate-  
in.  
Wrong man  
locked up.  
I'm 'jus 'sayin...  
I never knew  
double 'dutchin

was such a  
crime??  
Glad she ain't  
mine!!  
DO WE MARCH  
OR TURN OUR  
HEADS; AT THIS  
TIME?

***Dedicated to:  
She had the right to  
jump silent. And  
'everythang will  
still be used  
against her.***

**A RocDeeRay  
Production**

**Drummond-Brown  
books:**

~A Bridge Over  
Troubled Water

~Tried, Tested and  
True Poets from  
Across the Globe

~A B.A.D. Poem

~The Power of the  
Pen

~SOLD: TO THE  
HIGHEST BIDDER

~Renee's Poems  
with Wings are  
Words in Flight-I'll  
Write Our Wrongs!  
And

~e-Book: Renee's  
Poems with Wings  
are Words in Flight

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October 26, 2019.

**Other books by  
Renee' Drummond-  
Brown:**

~Tried, Tested and  
True POETS from  
across the Globe

~A B.A.D. Poem

~The Power of the  
Pen

~SOLD: TO THE  
HIGHEST BIDDER

~Renee's Poems  
with Wings are  
Words in Flight-I'll  
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And

~e-Book: Renee's  
Poems with Wings  
are Words in Flight

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**Renee' Drummond-  
Brown,** is an  
accomplished poetess  
with experience in  
creative writing. She is a  
graduate of Geneva  
College of Western  
Pennsylvania. Renee' is  
still in pursuit of  
excellence towards her  
mark for higher  
education. She is  
working on her sixth  
book and has numerous  
works published  
globally which can be  
seen in [cubm.org/news](http://cubm.org/news),  
KWEE Magazine, Leaves  
of Ink, Raven Cage  
Poetry and Prose Ezine,  
Realistic Poetry  
International, Scarlet  
Leaf Publishing House,  
SickLit Magazine,



## Author Interview

*Our Spotlight author is a South African award winning writer, publisher and globe trotter.*

**ZUKISWA WANNER**



Photo credit Victor Ademola.

*LLR: First, we would like to thank you for granting this interview. Tell us a little about you- your education, upbringing, hobbies etc.*

**1. Let's talk about you? The person behind the pen...**

Laptop. I only use the pen to sign books ☺. Zukiswa Wanner. Born in Zambia to a South African father and a Zimbabwean mother. And now living in Kenya but considers the whole continent home.

**2. Do you mentor? What do you look for in a mentee?**

I don't go out looking for protégés but I have done some projects that have resulted in my getting some. I connect with other human beings on a very cerebral level so it will generally mean I have seen someone's work, I think they have potential and I then become open to reading more of their work and giving feedback and/or advice on getting published/agents etc if requested.

**3. How active are you on social media (links)? And how do you think it affects the way you write?**

Not as active as I should be. I am on Facebook and undercover on Twitter. On Facebook I post may be four or five times a week,

when I am not working on something. Social media doesn't affect my writing. I suspect I am as productive as I am because I don't use it as much. However, it affects my marketing so one day when I get a hefty advance, I will hire someone to do my social media.

**4. How did you celebrate the publishing of your first book?**

The Madams came out in 2006 November. I think I was just bowled over that I had a book out. I didn't celebrate. I however celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a road trip from Nairobi, Kenya to Johannesburg, South Africa. I did readings in Lilongwe, in Dar es Salaam, in Lusaka where I began, in Harare where I went to





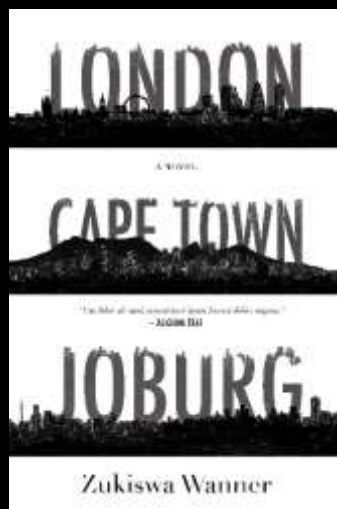
school and in Joburg where the book was written and first launched. It was an amazing experience.

**5. How often do you attend literary festivals? Which festivals can we expect to see you at this year?**

In addition to being a writer, I am a book lover. I have often argued that if we are to make literature a viable industry on this continent, we must treat literary festivals the way music lovers treat concert. And so, whether invited or not,

I shall certainly be at Ake Festival in Lagos and at Abantu in Soweto and because I stay here, definitely at Macondo Litfest in Nairobi. I'm also

excited that for the first time in my literary life, I've been invited to Kinshasa so I shall be there this February and also really looking forward to Palestine this March.



**6. If you were given the opportunity to form a book club with your favorite authors of all time, which legends or contemporary writers would you want to become a part of the club? No less than FIVE!**

Abubakar Ibrahim and Troy Onyango (they'll keep us focused); Efemia Chela and

Hawa Golakai (they'll check Troy and Abubakar from keeping us too focused); Mohamed Hanif (because he'll keep us in stitches.

Dude is funny as hell); Anita Anand (so she keeps us in style); James Baldwin and Nikki Giovanni (because we need dead people who can keep each other in check); and then there are the usual suspects who I would add to the book club for the party aspect - Alexandre Dumas; Lola Shoneyin; Mukoma wa Ngugi; Angela Makholwa; Leye Adenle, Mohale Mashigo, Frankie Edozien, Bisi Adjapon, Nii Parkes, Ondjaki, Niq Mhlongo and Eghosa Imasuen because he is an excellent cook in addition to partyier.

From this list though, it looks like we might just need a commune

because this book club ain't ending any time soon. Well may be when Abubakar makes us feel guilty and says he's off so he can write.



**7. Tell us about an interesting or memorable encounter you had with a fan?**

2006 December. Johannesburg. I got on a South African taxi (Liberian equivalent of a bus). Someone was reading *The Madams*. This was the first time I saw anyone who wasn't a family member or a friend reading my work. So I was, rightly excited. Excuse me, says I

proudly. She looks at me with a question in her eyes. Why am I disturbing her reading? I tell her, I wrote that book. Would you like me to sign it for you? Woman looks at me like I've smoked all the trees in Malawi and eSwatini mixed with Durban Poison. Are you high, is what she would like to ask. Instead she asks, if you wrote this book, what are you doing in a taxi sisi? By now the taxi is full. So I try to convince her. No really, I wrote this book. Taxi driver is reversing. He looks at me and whistles then says Ja ja ja ja. Amantombazane eJoburg bayaclaimer! Hawu sisi. Why don't you just write your own book instead of claiming you wrote someone's book. Sies! By now the rest of the taxi is weighing in and everyone seems to have concluded, I

couldn't possibly have written this book because people who write books have money and don't use public transport. Fam, I am tempted to take out my ID so I can show this young woman that I am really Zukiswa Wanner but it would look like I'm just trying too hard. Besides, wouldn't I seriously be eroding Zukiswa Wanner's brand if they got to know she's a poor writer? That December of 2016? Longest 20-minute taxi ride ever. And I got off before my stop because no-one in that taxi would talk about anything else except this girl, this ordinary girl, who claims to have written a whole book. The sweat of another mother's child. Ncc. Shem on her.



8. Your writer friends, which of them do you discuss your projects with? How does that play out?



Thando Mgqolozana, Angela Makholwa, Troy Onyango, Thembelani Ngenelwa, Ndumiso Ngcobo. Generally works out pretty well because they are very sharp-eyed.

9. What is your view on co-authoring books; have you done any?

I think it's an interesting idea. I have worked with a photographer on a book so not sure we'd call that co-authoring since...picture. A thousand words. And all that. And we had a

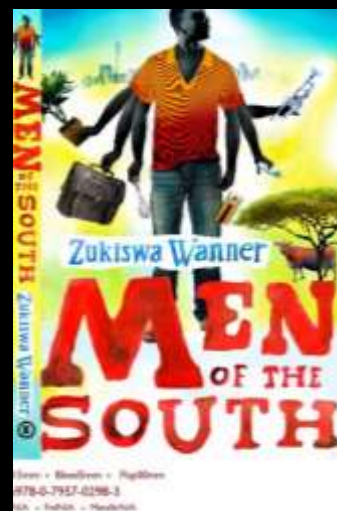
lot of pictures. I would love to do one though. A writer friend and I heard a fascinating story that deserves to be co-authored. We have agreed that as soon as we clear our writing calendars this year, we will definitely take a stab at it.

10. Which is hardest for you – the writing, the publication, and the sales?

Sales. They are never as many as they deserve to be.

11. What does 'retirement' mean to you? Do writers ever retire?

I think there is a retirement. And that point is not where one stops writing. It's where one has zero f\*&^s left to give to the industry so one takes on literary gigs they want to not because they have to.



12. How do you incorporate the noise around you into the story you are writing at the moment? Can you tell us about your current projects?

13.



I don't incorporate. I shut it out. I'm working on a historical novel manuscript and a true adventure story for children 10-12.

Author Bio



**Zukiswa Wanner** is the author of the novels *The Madams* (Oshun, 2006) which was shortlisted for the K.Sello Duker Prize; *Behind Every Successful Man* (Kwela, 2008), *Men of the South* (Kwela 2010), shortlisted for the Commonwealth Best Book (Africa) and the Herman Charles Bosman Prize and K.Sello Duker – winning *London Cape Town Joburg* (Kwela, 2014).

She has also written two works of nonfiction, *Maid in SA* (Jacana, 2013) and *Hardly Working* (Black Letter Media, 2018). She authored three children's books *Jama Loves Bananas* (Jacana, 2011), *Refilwe* (Jacana, 2013)

and *The Seven Continents: Africa* (Scholastic, 2019).

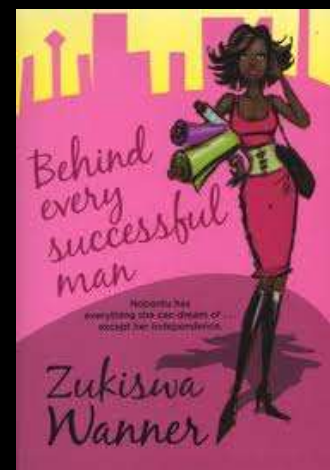


Ms. Wanner coordinate and edited the continental anthology for Young Adults, *Water Birds on The Lake Shore* (Ouida Books, 2019) also published in French and Kiswahili. She has since taken the rights back for her novels and they are now under her 2018 established publishing house, *Paivapo*. Her *Paivapo* titles also include the children's anthology *Story Story, Story Come* edited by Maimouna Jallow and Mukoma wa Ngugi's *We, The Scarred* (originally published by Ohio University Press as *Mrs Shaw*).

Keen to ensure that as many children as possible get access to the beautiful stories in *Story Story, Story Come*, she has had the book translated into isiXhosa, Tshivenda and Kiswahili and has personally translated the book into Shona.

Ms. Wanner is one of the contributors in *The New Daughters of Africa*, was selected in 2014 as one of the 39 authors under 40 likely to change the direction in African literature, and was one of the contributors in *66 Books: 21st Century Writers Speak to the King James Version Bible*.

Zukiswa Wanner





*BS Truths We  
Don't Want To  
Admit*

**The Best Things  
In Life Are Free!**

Crap. A full wheelbarrow load of crap! Bull freaking crap!

*Delusion is a most powerful thing. It can have the best of us.*  
DOF

#Story#

Tenneh loved Tokpa. She'd never loved this way before. Being around him gave her all sorts of emotions. It hiked up her hormones and did strange things to her body. Whenever he touched her, it made her feel heavenly.

The love was magical. They sneaked out and enjoyed their times. Eventually, they eloped and were

never happier. Everyone envied them.

They stayed at home all day, making love and eating. She loved it when he promised her the world. But more so when he refused to leave her side. He forsook everyone for her. He told her that they could stay in the same room forever and never go outdoors.

Eventually, Tenneh went to finish her education. Tokpa stayed at home working online. His job was flexible and paid well. They lived the dream.

One day, Tenneh returned to a sad looking Tokpa. She tried to cheer him up but it didn't work. This confused her so badly, she didn't sleep all night. She resolved to try harder. The next morning, she did all

the things he loved but his mood seemed to have worsen. The harder she tried, the worse he became.

They soon started arguing. She felt shut out, he felt pressured. Her persistent nagging only amplified his depression. One day, anxious to silence her, he slapped her before she could even whine. She saw stars like Thomas, after Jerry has swindled him.

This broke her. He could never do this to her. In her shock, she stopped whining.

To his amazement, she left him alone to his thoughts. He'd finally found a way to control her nagging. He didn't know it was that simple. Thus, each time she nagged, he slapped her. Soon he began kicking and beating her outright because she kept fighting

harder to get to him. She was desperately trying to save her relationship. He was desperately doing same. He needed his woman to be a woman. Humble, timid and not nagging. If this is what it took to control his home, he'd do so. But his peace won't be hijacked.

She was self-will and focused on not losing him. If that was what she had to endure to get back her soulmate, then so be it. This charade only increased.

One day, it went too far. The police came after the ambulance had hauled the corpse away.

It turned out that Tokpa had stolen his company's money. He was wanted. He couldn't return. When the money ran out, he feared discovery and became unemployable. His

specialization was rare and it won't be long before he was discovered. It was that pressure he was trying to get hold of when she suddenly *changed*.

Tenneh was pregnant and the hormones were getting her nervy. She only needed comfort, but her man was too distant and distracted to be there for her.

The thing that was freely given, turned out to be more costly than anything else. It cost the ultimate, life.

The air you breathe, ain't free. It requires efforts by several body parts. The love you give ain't free. Why else do we cry and weep blood? Why do we wish to kill, if needs be? Why the heck do we even do all them foolish things? Heard about, 'Things We Do For Love?' Yeah. We're often being

fools when we utter that nonsense. I lie? I lying? Teh me NAH!

Eating nah free! Booting [shitting] ain't free! Sleeping seh nah free. Yet, these are freer than *love, care and devotion*. In fact, most everything else is freer and easier.

Trust me; The best things in life, are the hardest things you'd ever do!

Don't believe me? Ask pruh Samson, Dahtor Romeo, or Gbelleh Jack; and then, for good measure, ask their big jues Delila, Juliet, and Rose.

**The Best Things  
In Life Are FREE!  
Really?**

**Don't get me  
started.**

**#Wake #the  
#fnçk #Up  
# I'm Too Old for  
that BS!  
#I#Hate#Asstray  
D. OTHNIEL FORTE**



## Baba and Mama Shabu



*Baba and Mama Shabu @home*



*Baba and Ian Yhap*



*The Shabus*



*Baba, Mama, & kids with symbols*



*Cloth with assorted symbols*



*Baba Shabu with KWEE's editor*

**D. Othniel Forte**

## **Adapting Symbols to Heal Our National Image**

### Part 2

*By Baba & Mama Shabu*



It is true that any object can become a symbol. Yet in the work of re-building our nation, pictures of objects cannot be used as effectively in getting the message to our people. A symbol is more useful and effective, especially when it has eye-catching appeal, can be easily reproduced, and can stand the test of time.



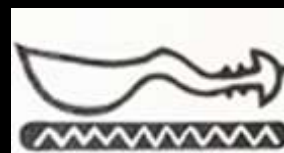
Take, for example, the Saasaa. The two or three dimensional picture of the Saasaa may have appeal, but it is not easy for teachers, students, or others to reproduce, and the style of the Saasaa may change over time. The picture then becomes "old" or outmoded and not suitable for widespread, international use. However, if the cultural artist adapts the Saasaa picture, it becomes a symbol that reflects rhythm, femininity, and the culture of Liberia. At the same time, it is easy to reproduce and maintains its appeal.

Some of our traditional symbols have already become internationally famous. As we move forward, we can now look

back. We can reclaim our beautiful heritage and benefit from our own "best practices". We see Liberia moving away from an image of scarcity and neediness to one of abundance and generous hospitality. Making the shift from the war-related, negative stereotype, we need a positive symbol to help establish and reinforce our new image.

Our own traditional culture has the perfect symbol – the carved spoon of northeastern Liberia. These beautiful artifacts have been taken and displayed all round the world. They are admired for representing the generous hospitality of the owner.

Again, the Liberian cultural artist can adapt the picture of the object and it becomes our own symbol of Liberian abundance, generosity, sharing, and hospitality. It can even be a symbol of **welcome**.



**"Welcome to Liberia!"**



*Some of the kids with symbol cloth*

## Liberian Proverbs

**1.** Do not laugh at the snake because it 'walks' on its belly. *We are not all the same, nor do we all have the same make up. It is unwise to make light of others situations simply by looking from the outside. It is only when we get on the inside of the situation before we know how it truly is.*

**2.** Do not let what you cannot do take from your hands what you can. *Sometimes we focus too much on the tasks ahead, we lose sight of the ones we have to complete that would help us achieve the very tasks we are focusing on. It is easy to lose sight of the value of what we have, when we are focusing on getting what we don't have. We may lose the very best people in life, just by looking too hard at those we do not have.*

**3.** Don't cut a kenja for a child before it is born. *The Kenya/kenja is a carrier used in many traditional communities of Liberia. Its main purpose was to safely transport load. Often, mothers placed their young ones in this basket-like carrier and strapped it to their backs or front thus enabling them to carry firewood, water or some other items with the child safely tucked away. Over time, Kenya came to represent load of any kind....*

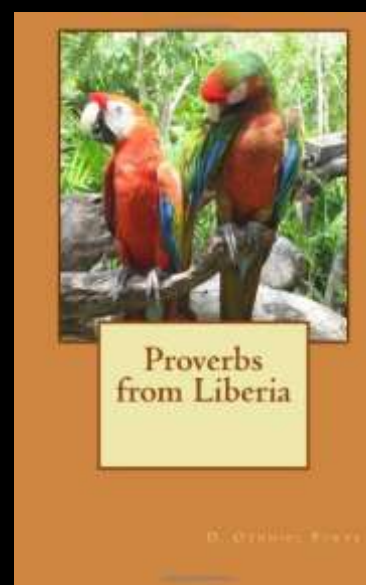
**4.** Don't try to scare a monkey with a dead baboon. *It is useless scaring a monkey when the baboon is dead. The monkey doesn't feel*

*threatened if it sees the baboon is dead. Some efforts are worthless to carry out because they don't work.*

**5.** Even the lion does not eat its own cubs. *There is love or some good in every one. The lion may be a danger for other animals, but not to its young. We have to look hard at times, but when we do, we will find some admirable traits in everyone.*

**6.** Even the mightiest eagle comes down to the treetops to rest. *No situation is permanent. Some people think so highly of themselves or less of others, but the truth is we are all equal as humans.*

**7.** Fowls will not spare a cockroach that falls in their mist. *A person that goes looking for trouble has himself/herself to blame. If you deliberately provoke others, when they react, you can't claim to be a victim.*



D. Othniel Forte

## **GIFTS OF THE MASTERS**

In this segment, we run poems from some of the greatest poetic masters that ever lived.

LANGSTON HUGHES

From *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright © 1994 the Estate of Langston Hughes. Used with permission.

### **Negro**

I am a Negro:  
Black as the night is black,  
Black like the depths of my  
Africa.

I've been a slave:  
Caesar told me to keep his  
door-steps clean.  
I brushed the boots of  
Washington.

I've been a worker:  
Under my hand the pyramids  
arose.  
I made mortar for the  
Woolworth Building.

I've been a singer:

All the way from Africa to  
Georgia  
I carried my sorrow songs.  
I made ragtime.

I've been a victim:  
The Belgians cut off my hands in  
the Congo.  
They lynch me still in Mississippi.

I am a Negro:  
Black as the night is black,  
Black like the depths of my  
Africa.

### **The South**

The lazy, laughing South  
With blood on its mouth.  
The sunny-faced South,  
Beast-strong,  
Idiot-brained.  
The child-minded South  
Scratching in the dead fire's  
ashes  
For a Negro's bones.  
Cotton and the moon,  
Warmth, earth, warmth,

The sky, the sun, the stars,  
The magnolia-scented  
South.

Beautiful, like a woman,  
Seductive as a dark-eyed  
whore,

Passionate, cruel,  
Honey-lipped, syphilitic —  
That is the South.

And I, who am black, would love  
her

But she spits in my face.

And I, who am black,

Would give her many rare gifts

But she turns her back upon  
me.

So now I seek the North —

The cold-faced North,

For she, they say,

Is a kinder mistress,

And in her house my children

May escape the spell of the  
South.

### **Migration**

A little Southern colored child  
Comes to a Northern school  
And is afraid to play

With the white children.

At first they are nice to him,

But finally they taunt him

And call him "nigger."

The colored children

Hate him, too,

After awhile.

He is a little dark boy

With a round black face

And a white embroidered  
collar.

Concerning this

Little frightened child

One might make a story

Charting tomorrow

### **A Song to a Negro Wash- woman**

Oh, wash-woman,

Arms elbow-deep in white suds,

Soul washed clean,

Clothes washed clean,—

I have many songs to sing you

Could I but find the words.

Was it four o'clock or six o'clock

on a winter afternoon,



I saw you wringing out the last  
shirt in Miss White

Lady's kitchen? Was it four  
o'clock or six o'clock?

I don't remember.

But I know, at seven one spring  
morning you were on

Vermont Street with a bundle in  
your arms going to  
wash clothes.

And I know I've seen you in a

New York subway train in  
the late afternoon coming  
home from washing clothes.

Yes, I know you, wash-woman.

I know how you send your  
children to school, and high-  
school, and even college.

I know how you work and help  
your man when times are  
hard.

I know how you build your  
house up from the wash-tub  
and call it home.

And how you raise your  
churches from white suds for the  
service of the Holy God.

And I've seen you singing, wash-  
woman. Out in the back-

yard garden under the apple  
trees, singing, hanging  
white clothes on long lines in  
the sun-shine.

And I've seen you in church a  
Sunday morning singing,  
praising your Jesus, because  
some day you're going to  
sit on the right hand of the Son  
of God and forget

you ever were a wash-woman.  
And the aching back

and the bundles of clothes will  
be unremembered  
then.

Yes, I've seen you singing.

And for you,

O singing wash-woman,  
For you, singing little brown  
woman,

Singing strong black woman,  
Singing tall yellow woman,  
Arms deep in white suds,  
Soul clean,  
Clothes clean,—

For you I have many songs to  
make

Could I but find the words.



PABLO NERUDA

## A MATILDE URRUTIA

Señora mía muy amada, gran padecimiento tuve al escribirte estos mal llamados sonetos y harto me dolieron y costaron, pero la alegría de ofrecértelos es mayor que una pradera. Al proponérmelo bien sabía que al costado de cada uno, por afición electiva y elegancia, los poetas de todo tiempo dispusieron rimas que sonaron como platería, cristal o cañonazo. Yo, con mucha humildad, hice estos sonetos de madera, les di el sonido de esta opaca y pura substancia y así deben llegar a tus oídos. Tú y yo caminando por bosques y arenales, por lagos perdidos, por cenicientas latitudes, recogimos fragmentos de palo puro, de maderos sometidos al vaivén del agua y la intemperie. De tales suavizadísimos vestigios construí con *hacha, cuchillo, cortaplumas*, estas madererías de amor

y edificué pequeñas casas de catorce tablas para que en ellas vivan tus ojos que adoro y canto. Así establecidas mis razones de amor te entrego esta centuria: sonetos de madera que sólo se levantaron porque tú les diste la vida.  
Octubre de 1959

## TO MATILDE URRUTIA

My beloved wife, I suffered while I was writing these misnamed "sonnets"; they hurt me and caused me grief, but the happiness I feel in offering them to you is vast as a savanna. When I set this task for myself, I knew very well that down the right sides of sonnets, with elegant discriminating taste, poets of all times have arranged rhymes that sound like silver, or crystal, or cannonfire. But—with great humility—I made these sonnets out of wood; I gave them the sound of that opaque puré substance, and

that is how they should reach  
your ears. Walking in forests or  
on  
beaches, along hidden lakes, in  
latitudes sprinkled with ashes,  
you  
and I have picked up pieces of  
puré bark, pieces of wood  
subject  
to the comings and goings of  
water and the weather. Out of  
such  
softened relies, then, with  
*hatchet* and *machete* and  
*pocketknife*, I  
built up these lumber piles of  
love, and with fourteen boards  
each  
I built little houses, so that your  
eyes, which I adore and sing to,  
might live in them. Now that I  
have declared the foundations of  
my love, I surrender this century  
to you: wooden sonnets that rise  
only because you gave them life.  
October 1959

1

*Matilde, nombre de planta o  
piedra o vino,  
de lo que nace de la tierra y dura,  
palabra en cuyo crecimiento  
amanece,  
en cuyo estío estalla la luz de los  
limones.*

En ese nombre corren navios de  
madera  
rodeados por enjambres de  
fuego azul marino,  
y esas letras son el agua de un  
río  
que desemboca en mi corazón  
calcinado.  
Oh nombre descubierto bajo una  
enredadera  
como la puerta de un túnel  
desconocido  
que comunica con la fragancia  
del mundo!  
Oh invádeme con tu boca  
abrasadora,  
indágame, si quieres, con tus  
ojos nocturnos,  
pero en tu nombre déjame  
navegar y dormir.

1

*Matilde*: the ñame of a plant, or a  
rock, or a wine,  
of things that begin in the earth,  
and last:  
word in whose growth the dawn  
first opens,  
in whose summer the light of the  
lemons bursts.  
Wooden ships sail through that  
ñame,  
and the fire-blue waves surround  
them:  
its letters are the waters of a river  
that pours through my parched  
heart.

O ñame that lies uncovered  
among tangling vines  
like the door to a secret tunnel  
toward the fragrance of the  
world!  
Invade me with your hot mouth;  
interrógate me  
with your night-eyes, if you  
want—only let me  
steer like a ship through your  
ñame; let me rest there.

MAYA ANGELO

## Song for the Old Ones

My Fathers sit on benches  
their flesh counts every plank  
the slats leave dents of darkness  
deep in their withered flanks.

They nod like broken candles  
all waxed and burnt profound  
they say 'It's understanding  
that makes the world go round.'

There in those pleated faces  
I see the auction block  
the chains and slavery's coffles  
the whip and lash and stock.

My Fathers speak in voices  
that shred my fact and sound  
they say 'It's our submission

that makes the world go round.'  
They used the finest cunning  
their naked wits and wiles  
the lowly Uncle Tomming  
and Aunt Jemima's smiles.

They've laughed to shield their  
crying  
then shuffled through their  
dreams  
and stepped 'n' fetched a country  
to write the blues with screams.

I understand their meaning  
it could and did derive  
from living on the edge of death  
They kept my race alive.

## When Great Trees Fall

When great trees fall,  
rocks on distant hills shudder,  
lions hunker down  
in tall grasses,  
and even elephants  
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall  
in forests,  
small things recoil into silence,  
their senses  
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes  
light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly,  
see with  
a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly  
sharpened,  
examines,  
gnaws on kind words  
unsaid,  
promised walks  
never taken.

Great souls die and  
our reality, bound to  
them, takes leave of us.  
Our souls,  
dependent upon their  
nurture,  
now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed  
and informed by their  
radiance,  
fall away.  
We are not so much maddened  
as reduced to the unutterable  
ignorance  
of dark, cold  
caves.

And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always

irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.

ROALD DAHL

### **Down They Go...**

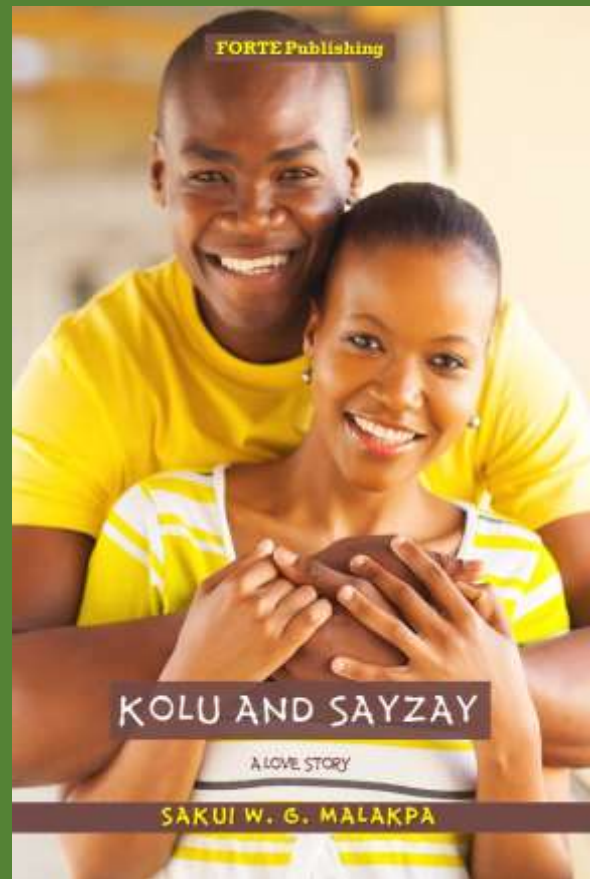
Down they go!  
Hail and snow!  
Freezes and sneezes and noses  
will blow!

### **Oh You Knid, You Are Vile And Vermicious....**

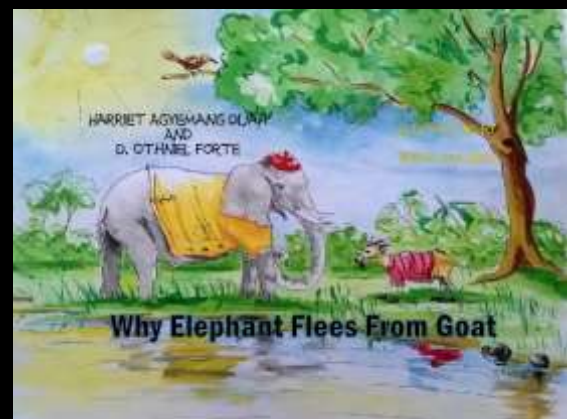
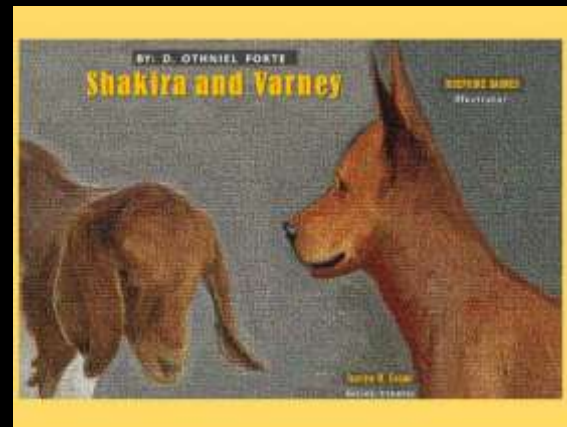
ROALD DAHL

Oh you Knid, you are vile and  
vermicious!  
You are slimy and soggy and  
squishous!  
But what do we care  
'Cause you can't get in here,  
So hop it and don't get  
ambitious!

## Special Recommendations

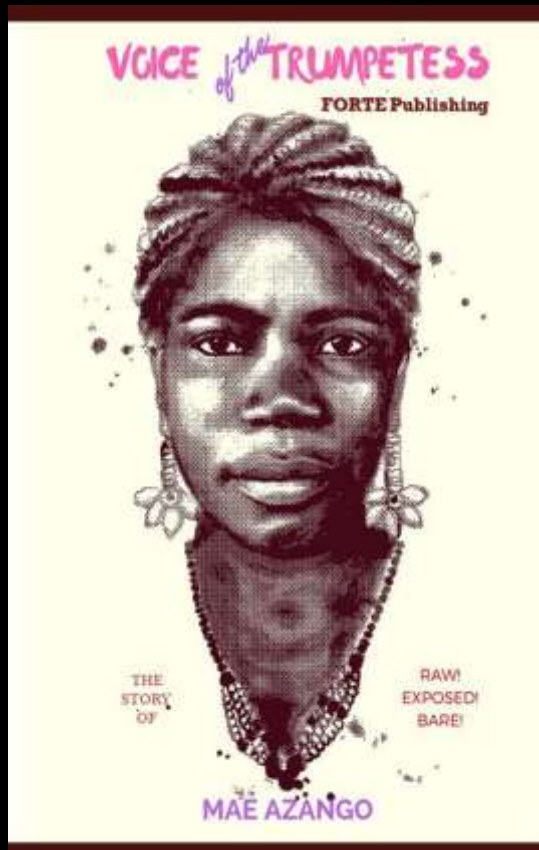








## Recommended READS



### Blurb

Whilst navigating the minefield of rights advocacy, Mae Azango has been skipping a few mines of her own.

In her explosive new book, *Voice of the Trumpetess*, she shows us why her passion burns for those whose stories she tells—she can empathize with them.

In a shocking revelation, her brush with rape, her physical, psychological and even sexual abuse. In her fearless signature, she unclosets her demons, in a raw, provocative yet reflective narrative.

She trumpets the horrors of her own past.

### Excerpt

“Confess!”

“Ooooooh,” I moan on the cold floor.

“You belleh say ley truth ehn!”

“Ay God.” I whispered, unable to speak.

My voice gone from screams. My body riddled with pain. I feel the life draining out of my body.

“Tor nah! Jeh call ley name. Call ley person name. If you nah stop lying you way die!” The Zoe intensely lashing me with a rattan as she yells. I no longer feel the lashes for I am in even greater pain. A few paces away, sits an elderly man, chanting, humming some strange ancient tone.

The pain is unbearable. The traditional midwife is resolute. The baby bridged. The male diviner lost in the spirit realm. I am dying.

The little cottage that houses this commotion begins to spin slowly. It is a shabby mud house littered with dead animal bones, old utensils as rustic as hell. Even the clay pots were all broken.

“La who ley man? John? Garyou? Who?”

“No,” I tried. I can no longer take the pain.

“Dah nah dem, den dah who?”

“Ee-e.” a bout of pain jostled through my spine. I’d do anything to stop it. Rolling over the wet muddy floor. Suddenly, a warmth engulfed me. The Zoe looked alarmed. The oldman stopped chanting.

“Liar. If you nah stop lying, de baby die!”

Da Youjay?”

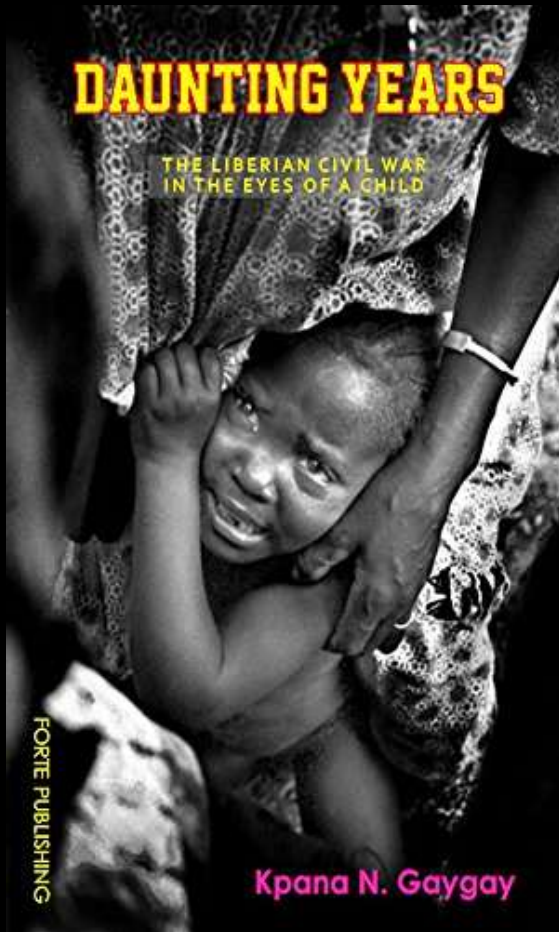
I nodded vigorously. At this point, I didn’t care. I had to stop the pain.

“Thank Gor” She exclaimed jumping to action. For once she stopped beating me.

By now, I was taking slow, measured breathes. My lower abdomen was numb. For some reason, my placenta won’t come out, trapping the baby and risking both our lives. The traditional belief suggested that I must have been unfaithful during my pregnancy thus angering the Gods, hence the complication. They had to beat out that confession if we had any chance of surviving. Naive to the danger I was in and desperate to keep my piety, I maintained my innocence. That was over two hours ago when the ritual began.

She hurriedly lifted me. They must have been working at lightning speed but it all seemed like slow motion to me. She kept yelling at the frantic old man who rushed to her with some object in hand. She tilted my head as he pried my jaws apart. My lifeless form didn’t even resist. The taste of kerosene assaulted me before I realized it. Just as the lights went out, I breathed my last breath!

**Recommended READS**



**Blurb**

A little child wakes up starving. Her mother can't feed her because she's dying from hunger. Her village can't protect her because they are engulfed in the midst of a bloody civil war.

They have the misfortune to live in a village that is a strategic spot on the map of warlords and government forces; both groups determined to take and or keep that little town at all cost. Their men have fled; left them unprotected. Their sons have been taken or killed.

But a small group of women must ensure the lives of their children, their elders and themselves.

What they do, how they do it and when they do it, will determine their fates.

Who survives, who doesn't? Who turns on the other, who doesn't? Who holds the group together or who falls apart?

Kpana tells her story as a child trying to make sense of it all.

**Excerpt**

Boom!

Brrrr, brrrr.

Boom! Boom!

Brrrrrr, brrrrrrrrr, brrrrrr

The sound of gunshots and heavy artillery raged outside of our home in Voinjama city, Lofa County. I ran inside to my mother and jumped on her laps. I was the only child with Mama at then.

"Pack small clothes and a lappa, let's go!" Mama ordered. She left no room to argue. She was firm.

I knew better than to argue with that tone. It is not as if I even wished to argue. "What is happening Mama?" I inquired.

"Look you, I don't have time for your plenty questions. Just hurry let's get out of here!"

"Yes Mama," was all I could manage. In the process, I forgot to take the lappa.

Then we heard, "Yor mon kill ley dirty dog them!" barked one of the fighters!

"We will roast them to eat," another echoed.

Just outside our house, a man was pleading for his life.

"The man dah enemy," shouted one person.

"I nah enemay oh," a heavily accented response came. It was most certainly one of the residents with Guinean heritage.

"Weh yor wasting time with this dog for? Finish him!"

This order came from a female. It was cold, crisp and left no room for argument. Seconds later, several short rounds were fired. Just like that, I experienced my first death in a long, bloody, senseless war.

The silence was short lived for immediately after that, we heard banging on our door. "Open the damn door!"

Mama covered my mouth as she scurried to unlatch the back door. She had no sooner freed the latch and gotten out when bullets riddled the house, most missing us by inches. We maneuvered in between a few houses and ran towards the outskirts which leads further into the forest. Just as we cleared our neighborhood and turned towards the main road, we saw ourselves facing a group of people, all well-armed and guns pointed at us.

Something immediately died in Mama's expression as the voice from the one ahead of the group shouted

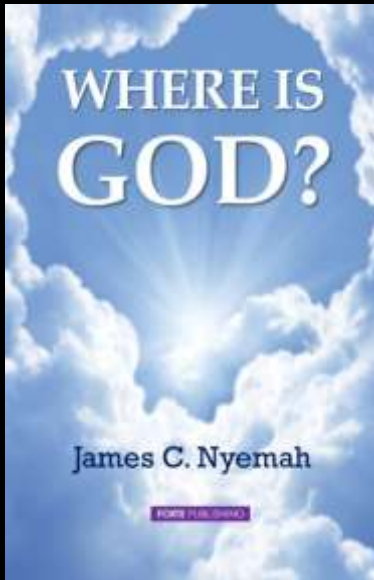
"Open fire!"

### Recommended Reads

Published by **FORTE Publishing**

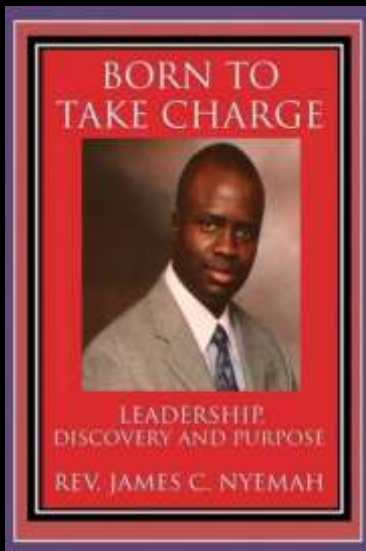
#### WHERE IS GOD?

“Where is God?” A most difficult question no doubt but a necessary one about God and life. If things are worse, we even go further and ask all sorts of questions. For example, “If God is such a loving and caring father, why does he allow bad things to happen to good people, including Christians?”



*We were all born to do something or for a reason, even if one does not know or has not yet figured out theirs. Grab a copy of this book and be inspired.*

**Pastor James Nyemah** writes a powerful motivational book that spurs one to do one thing... **TAKE CHARGE.**



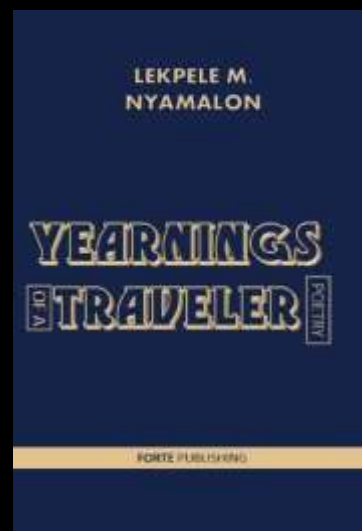
### Recommended Reads

**MOMOH SEKOU DUDU** takes us on a mental journey in his latest release, *When The Mind Soars, poetry from the Heart*. He exposes us to a Liberia as freshly, honestly and chaotic as he sees it. He presents us a broken Liberia that is pulling herself up by its own boot straps. Let your minds fly, soar with ideas.



#### Yearnings of A Traveler

We all have a yearning for something. For Lekpele, his has been a message of self worth, as we see in his signature piece, My Body is Gold; one of patriotism, as in Scars of A Tired Nation; one of Pan Africanism as in the piece, Dig The Graves. He also has a message of hope as seen in his award winning poem, Forgotten Future. He is an emerging voice that one can't afford to ignore. Yearning is the debut chapbook by Liberian poet, Lekpele M. Nyamalon.

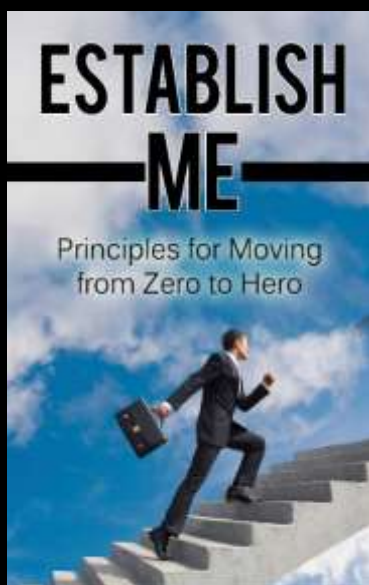




## **Recommended Reads**

### **ESTABLISH ME Principles from Zero to Hero**

WE GET BROKEN, DAMAGED, THORN UP BY THE DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE. IT RIPS US APART, IT SQUASHES US. WE FEEL DEJECTED, REFUSED, ABUSED AND USED. WE OFTEN DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH OUR SHATTERED SOULS. WE SEEK A PLACE OF REFUGE, OF CALM, A PLACE TO MEND THOSE PIECES. WE SEARCH FOR A PLACE SET APART FROM THIS WORLD TO PULL US TOGETHER



**JAMES C. NYEMAH**

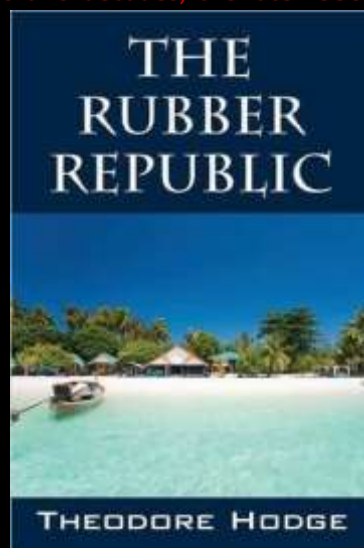
In his latest work, Ps. Nyemah lets us know that God can **Fix Us, Mold Us, Create Us** and then **Establish US**.

**Available now from FORTE Publishing**



## **The Rubber Republic**

From relative stability to upheaval, military coup, violence and revenge. . . **The Rubber Republic** covers two decades, the late 1950s through the 1970s. Set mainly in West Africa, the story takes the reader to the United States and a few other stops along the way. The story is mainly about



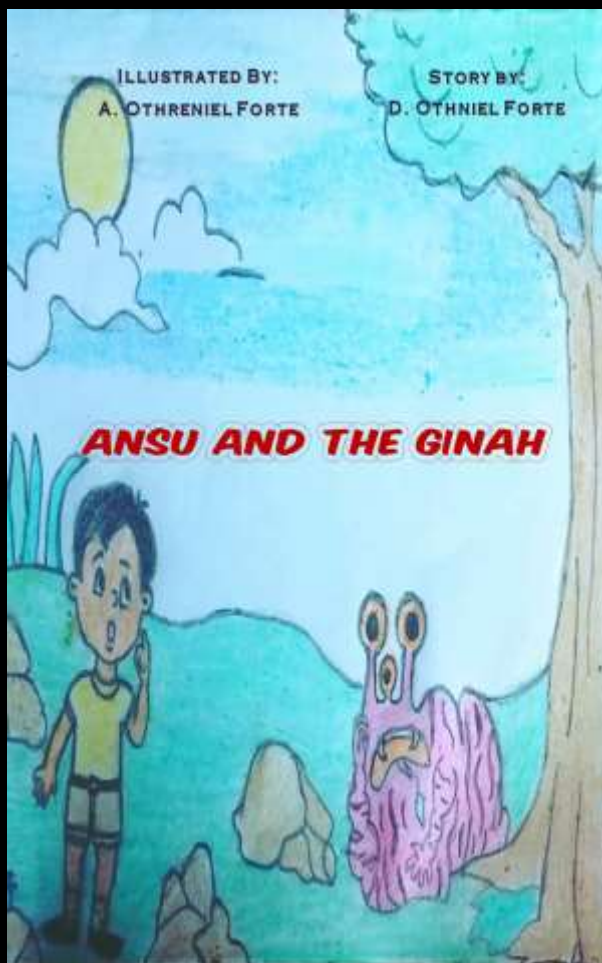
the intriguing and fantastic lives of two young men, Yaba-Dio Himmie and Yaba-Dio Kla, who leave their parents' farm in search of enlightenment and adventure. But the story is also about their country, the Republic of Seacoast, and a giant American Rubber conglomerate, The Waterstone Rubber Plantation Company.

## **Mohammed Dolley Donzo**

In his debut endeavor, *Our Future Today*, the author writes about things that should unite not just Liberians but Africans as a whole. He encourages African youths to stand firm and revive the strong warrior spirits of their ancestors.



**Available now from FORTE Publishing by Mohammed Dolley Donzo**



Ansu, is a stubborn boy, he doesn't like to listen to his parents. He prefers to do naughty things.

He runs off to avoid working and encounters a strange creature. What will happen?

Follow Ansu as he journeys through the deadly Liberian forest. **Ansu And The Ginah**, is a part of the **EDUKID Readers Series**.

In this book, the father and daughter duo combine to bring a great reading experience to little ones as they begin their life's journey of reading.

**FORTE Publishing Int'l**

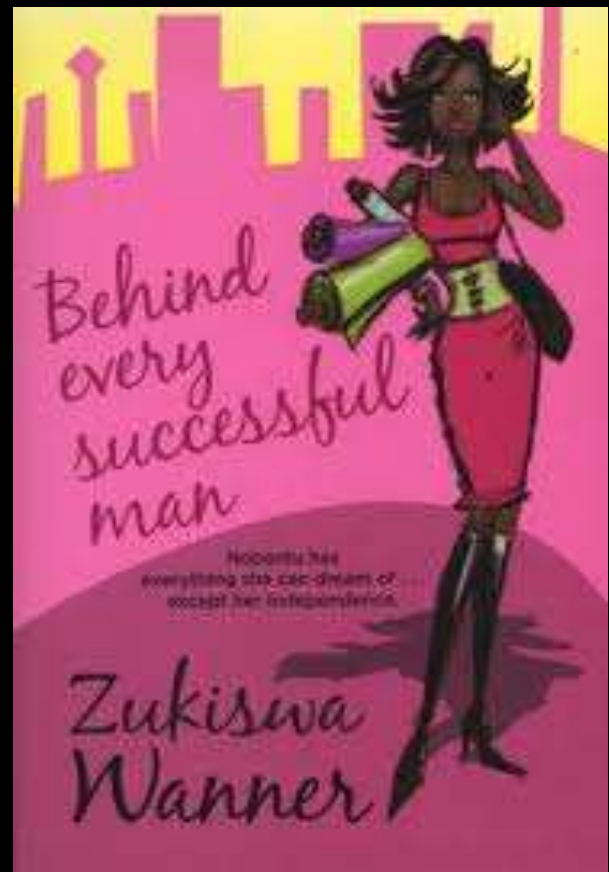
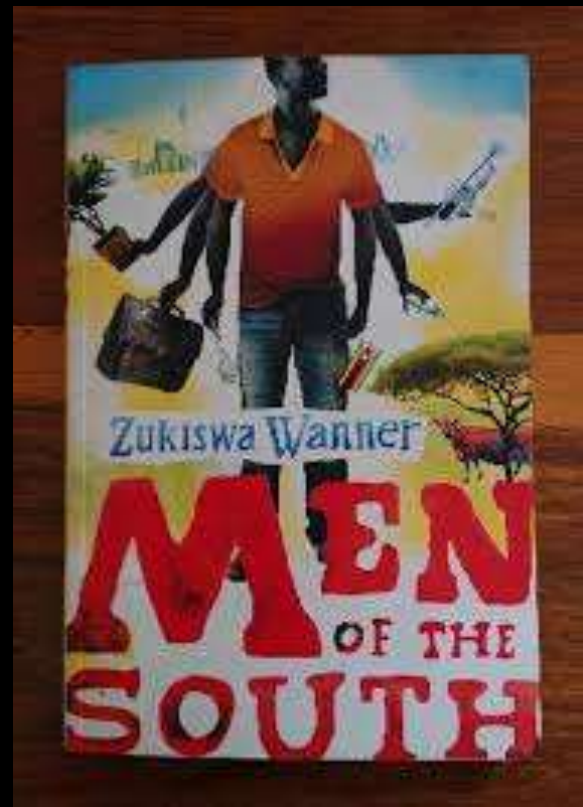
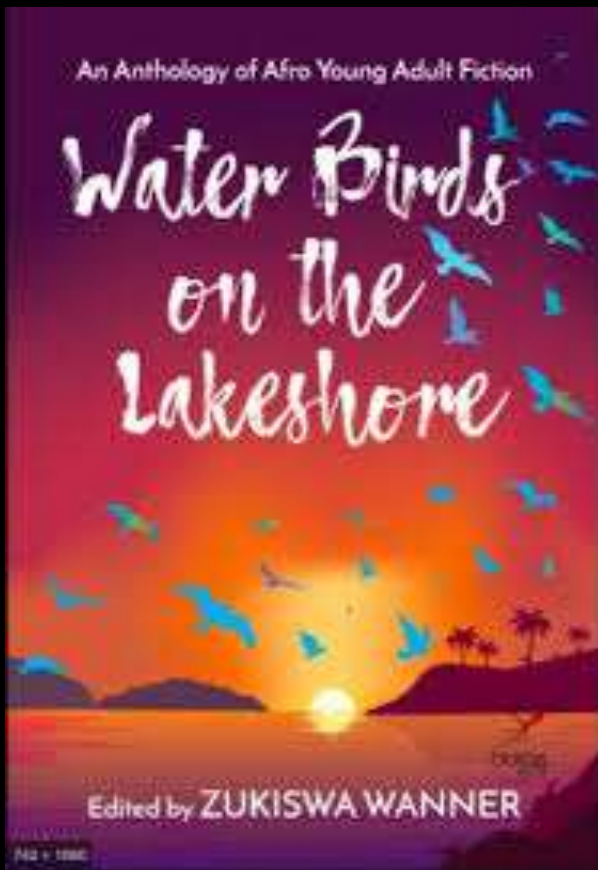
Miatta, an orphan, lives with her foster parents. She is hardworking and focuses on her studies. Life is dull, boring and quiet. She is ordinary, or so she thinks. Accidentally, she stumbles on a magical kingdom deep in the Liberian countryside where she learns that not only is she welcome, she is a princess.

**Miatta The Swamp Princess** recounts her adventures into the African forest.

**Belle Kizolu** is one of the youngest published Liberian authors. She lives in Monrovia where she attends school. She is in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

**FORTE Publishing Int'l**

**RECOMMENDED READS**







**HAPPY** ARMED  
**FORCES DAY** to  
the People of  
Liberia

President  
George Weah



**HAPPY** ARMED  
**FORCES DAY** to  
the Liberian  
People

Jewel Howard Taylor  
Vice President

# *Around Town*

## FEBRUARY IN GLIMPSES



alamy stock photo



Kids playing tabela



Making the best of a long walk



An elderly couple enjoying the year



Street barber hustle



Petty traders hustling- selling used sneakers



Array of rubber trees





Fruits in the Market



Local food: Fried fish, chicken, sausage, plantain, potatoes and other tuber food



Grains and beans







Bomi County, a perfect view



Famous Liberian Piggy Hippo



Kpwete exotic waterfall is a great opportunity to expand tourism.



Down town Pehn Pehn Hustle



The People's Monument  
Centennial Pavilion



Forget us not



Local sellers; Hustle; real life situations

Credit: Darby Cecil & Daily Pictures from around Liberia



Liberian Literary Magazine  
**KWEE**





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Promoting  
Liberian

Creativity  
& Culture

We are  
Accepting  
Submissions

Advertise  
with us!!!!

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 some time, 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, not all is lost. A new breed of creative minds is rising to the challenge. They are determined to change the brief silence in our literary space. 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.

We remain grateful to contributors; keep creating the great works, it will come full circle. But most importantly, we thank those of you that continue to support us by reading, purchasing, and distributing our magazine. We are most appreciative of this and hope to keep you educated, informed and entertained.

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# Liberian Literary Magazine

# KWEE

Feb Issue

Iss. #21520

**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**

**ZUKISWA  
WANNER**

Author  
of the  
month



**Short  
Stories**

**West African  
Poet**

**Book  
Reviews**

**LIBERIAN  
CLASSICS**

**'RIGHT BETTER'  
Liberian  
Proverbs**

**Poetry Series**  
Maya Angelo  
Thomas Hardy  
Emily Dickinson  
Renee Brown  
Janetta Konah  
Jack Kolkmeier  
Mohammed Sy  
S. K. Duworkoo  
Hilal Karahan  
Kerry Kennedy

**Poetry Series**  
Gwendolyn Brooks  
Langston Hughes  
Althea Romeo-Mark  
John Eliot  
RuNette Ebo  
Cher Antoinette  
Richard Moss  
Renee Drummond-Brown  
Lovette Tucker  
Wilton Sankawulo