

K Liberian Literary Magazine **WEE**

May Issue

Iss. # 0515

**HAPPY
MOTHER'S
MONTH!**

**Aken
Wariebi**

**Book
Reviews**

**Authors of
the Month**

**Wright Better
Liberian
Proverbs**

**Liberian Classics
Gifts of the Masters**

Featured Poets:

Althea Romeo Mark
Richard Wilson Moss
Herbert Logerie
Aken Wariebi
Cher Antoinette
John Eliot
Baltimore C. Verdier
Jack Kolkmeier
Matanneh Dunbar
Varney Gean
Mohammed D. Dolley
Ngozi Osuoha

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 still endeavor to maintain the highest standard and quality despite any changes we make. We can comfortably make this

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

What to Expect

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

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Overview

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**Liberian
Literature
Review**

Segment Contents

Editorial

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

Liberia Classic

This segment features classic Liberian poetry and prose by our greatest creative minds.

Contemporary Liberian Literature

As the name suggests, deals with *issues* in modern local or *diasporan* literature as seen by Liberian creative artists.

Risqué Speak

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

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

Diaspora Poet

The internationally acclaimed poet, Althea Romeo Mark hosts this segment.

Authors of the Month Profile

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

Authors of the Month Interview

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

Articles

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

Book Review

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

Gifts of the Masters

Our world have a way of shattering when we encounter masters of the trade. We bring some of the works of the greatest creative minds that ever graced the earth.

Short Stories

Well what can we say? They are short, engaging and we easily fall in love with them

Artist of the Month

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

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

Poetry Section

This is the marrow of the bone; the juicy parts we keep sucking on. We feature established and emerging poets in the array of their diversities. If you can imagine difference, chances are, this is where you will find .

Editor's Desk

The Year Ahead



2016 is swinging and thus far, things are on the up. This is our first issue and I am excited for many reasons. We have an improved line up, some segments have changed and others shifted, whilst yet others are, well, NEW.

It appears that we might outdo ourselves this time around. Each issue, we see a better [KWEE](#) and for that we remain thank to you. Yes you. All of you that have stayed by us, that take time off to read and support us in the different ways you do. Thank you once again.

I will try to let nothing out of the bag too early, although I can't promise. The excitement is too much to contain.

Oh here is a teaser, but I'd deny it if quoted! Oops, did I just type that? There goes my plausible deniability.

Anyways, I'm one that likes my bad and not so good news first, that way, I can enjoy the good ones. So

here it goes. Our hot corner [Kulubah's Korner](#) by our sharp wit KLM will not be with us for a while. Sad right? Don't worry, she's not gone yet, trust me, she is on a refresher and will be back with more of her insightful, but truthful opinion bites. Quite frankly, am I the only one who thinks that at times she's just meddling ☺ [-I'm whispering here-]? We will miss you KLM, please hurry back.

We'd also be shifting some of the segments to the blog exclusively. 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.

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.

In *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 know really what will come up until it does.

Richard Moss goes about his randomness with purpose in his poetry corner, *'Twas Brillig*. He can assume the mind or body of any of his million personifications, ideas or characters or just be himself and write good poetry. I am sure you know what to expect there.

Well, I knew I said only tips I was giving but it is just hard to contain myself considering all the things that are in store.

If there is one message you want to take from here, let it be this-prepare for a roller-coaster this 2016.

We are bringing you a better KWEE every single issue. We will break the boxes; go on the fringes to find what it is we know you would love... Creative Difference- the best of its kind.

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!

KWEE Team

Mother's Month, Random Thoughts

By D. Othniel Forte

May is the month many celebrate Mothers. This is not to be confused with March and the women's month. You see, mothers are not just women. They are women that have set themselves apart. They have gained a special distinction. There are many definitions out there for mother[s]. We choose to keep the simplest. They are mothers. The concept embodies any and all forms or definitions we could ascribe to them. When we say a mother, it means just that and everything else. So as we celebrate this month, I will try not to be hard; lay off the harsh truth some [okay y'all know that ain't honest right? I would more like tone down and sugar coat it some].

No I am NOT talking about the **Harambe issue**; I think much has been said. There are just somethings nothing worth getting into.

WOMEN & RAPE!

Hard as it may be for some to hear, someone has to keep talking about rape. This month I had hoped to say very little other than to thank mothers and bid them a good time. But as always, there is this one thing that happens and it ruins the best laid plans. Of

all the people in the world, you'd think that an American judge - yes an American judge- these guys that use judicial activism to hostage the whole nation- would not think it is fine to go easy on a nice faced rapist. He's a fine looking young man; his whole life is ahead of him but that's all the more reason the story pisses people off. Dude could get just about any chick he wanted.

Yet for some reason, he figured it was cool to take an unconscious girl behind a dumpster and rape her. This I find hard to fathom. He can afford an Ivy League university but not a red lighter? If there is any law he should break, of the two, I'd rather he took a working girl who is paid for precisely the services he wanted. Did he ever hear about role play? Instead, he takes advantage of an innocent girl. It's not cool at all.

Yet, the judge sets about to 'feel' for him and fear for his safety but not the victim's? What did I miss? If he is so fragile then he should not be ruining someone else's life and taking 'twenty minutes' of it. Most false fame seekers get only 15, he took five more and every part of him should get the chance to experience what it feels like to be violated. Nope, I share no sympathy for him. Okay I will just leave it there.

AU/HAITI

One has to love the African Union [AU]. Okay, honestly, I harbor little to no love for that body. Nothing is fancy about a bunch of old men who refuse to relinquish power; nothing is cute about old politicians and diplomats who feel this is their retirement package and fiercely guide it; and sure as hell, ain't nothing encouraging in in an Old Boy's club - that despite being in policymaking positions for two to three decades still feel that they have the solution to the continent's problem. Worse, they fault everyone else but themselves. They feel entitled for services rendered and love boring people with talks of how many treaties they negotiated, assisted and or responsible for bringing to their nations and the region. They are cool friends and can recall stories dating back decades. This is their ploy to warn anyone just joining up not to mess with the way things are. The sad part here is that they give these token seats to women and expect them to do their rounds for the PR and nothing more... okay maybe a little more ever so oft, if they can get their way.

These people see nothing wrong or their contribution

to the twisted mess they engineered and oversaw.... Policies that keep entrapping us, our nations and mostly our young people. To them, young people of today refuse to learn, be humble and wait for their turn to lead... by this they mean, hush it until we bid this world farewell. You can do with it whatever you so wish.

So, you can imagine my surprise when it became known that they did not feel Haiti was *black enough* to be a part of the Union. They were like, 'Well, you are black alright, but just not African enough to qualify... after all, you're way on the other side of the ocean, what the heck has gotten into ya heads?' They feel it is fine to be in *solidarity* than to actually have to be in solidarity. But I'd be dammed if half of these folks would feel same if the EU or ASEAN offered them membership on silver platter? How many would suddenly realize the 'global' world we live in and how borders are flexible? I just wonder?

The union, to me is less potent than an old hankie boy loaded with enhancement drugs on a date night. They cling on to an even deader ideology of Pan Africanism. No, I am not a self-hating brother. No I am not "unenlightened" whatever

the heck that has transformed to mean to people these days. I am practical. A realist. Having hope is one thing, but seriously believing that we can be pan-African is delusional, I think. In part, we can exhibit traits to enhance all our survivor, but the union as it is formed and everything it has transformed into currently, is nothing like the founders dreamed. At least they had guts and dared. When the Tubmans, Tolberts, Nkrumahs, Toures, Lumumbas, Silases, Stevens etc. spoke or gathered, the world watched in anticipation. No, I err not when I address these giants in the plural. They were men that carried their individual essence and the collective essence they represented. They knew and they understood that it was more than them; that they were mere tools that worked for the masses.

Granted, there are a bunch of hard working and well respected folks at various levels of the AU. Many I am in awe of but the system is screwed so no matter what, their hard work and efforts often get derailed by this Old Boy's club. Should they stop? Hell no, to each his own. They can keep at it all they wish, in fact, if they are so vested I'd encourage them

to do just that, but I ain't bearing that cross with them.

A body that has been around longer than or as long as the EU and ASEAN but she is the least prepared. So we end up with folks that have been around longer than Methuselah; doing less than Bugs Bunny does, putting in as much efforts as Timon does, as cunning as Ursula is and as devious as only Uncle Scar can be. More so, they can spin a 'Happy' story as good as Lovelace can.

Oh yeah I enjoy cartoons. They at least offer countless possibilities. They show kids at an early age that anything is possible. Unlike the Oldies Club, they inspire us to do more, strive for more. Imagine a kid seeing Thomas being quashed, mashed, rolled over and dry cleaned all by the little rodent Jerry? They get to learn an important lesson, that size and intimidation do not really matter if one is willing and prepared. Perhaps we should lock these people in one of their conferences and overload them with cartoons. I am sure they can learn a thing or two from the exercise. Certainly it does not hurt.

So, why am I angry this time at the people? What did they do? Good questions. The answer is

NOTHING. That is precisely the problem. They did *nothing* to warrant this anger. I should not be surprised considering that they always do nothing. My disappointment stems from the fact that they actually did *nothing*.

Okay here is it. The AU has been in bed with Haiti for some time now. Everyone knows that Haiti has for a while now been wanting full membership rights in the Union. In fact, everything has been building up to this decision. But in a shocking event, the Union says, that well, you people are cool, black and all but y'all ain't black enough. I mean they were able to find time to issue an official [response](#).

That must be the dumbest thing ever. Haiti? Not black enough? Am I missing something here? Last I checked, some 212 years ago, when the rest of the continent was so dark, they stuck their heads up their masters' yokers to find light, Haiti actually de-strung herself from the bondages of slavery. When they were still comfortably hauling off their kin to slave ports and handing them over to slavers, Haiti was enjoying individual freedom. When the same slaves they sent would give anything to be Haitians, Haiti was struggling to hold the torch of African

liberation. Not black enough? Can someone wake me from this nightmare?

Liberia, Africa's oldest republic, established herself many years after Haiti did and do they want to know something? Haiti recognized our independence long before the America from whence our founders came did. She was one of the first nations to recognize Liberia. And then, she passed that freedom torch to Liberia. Today, Liberia is a member. President Tubman actually organized and engineered the formation of the defunct OAU, which in my opinion had much clout than this reformed, more powerful AU. The AU has more money and organization than the OAU had but accomplishes far less than the founders did. It is pitiful right? It is like since Tubman, Nkrumah and the rest of the founders left the drawing board; this body has spent the last 3 to 4 decades reading the scripts, nothing more. They have been unable to transform this organization. Meanwhile, the EU and even baby ASEAN have come around to conclude their charters, but not the AU. It remains a union only in name. A union that places more value on China than its brothers dwelling off the

continental landmass. As it is, China is buying out all of Africa. In fact, effortlessly, they are 'banjoeing' the continent to China for peanuts. I bet you, if the Chinese government requested to be a member of AU, they'd ask her which seat she wants. They'd offer the pie as a whole for her to cut as she sees fit. By default, already, she is biting away at the pie, why would she want the extra burden of official membership?

They say that some funny article in the formative document prevents Haiti from joining the AU, yet, they have no problem telling her that she is a little too *white*. Which to me is the real reason.

Haiti has not got money like the others they are selling their souls to so why bring her onboard to share when the table is already small? That is fair right? One should share when there is enough. The problem is that there is not 'enough' Haiti only complicates things. Have these people heard of amendments? Do they know that the instruments can be changed? Oops, I forgot. These options mean actually doing something; which is something they are selectively just not capable of doing. So, since they don't know or want to do anything, just anything,

they would rather keep doing their nothing. That is why I am here typing away my anger. Hoping against hope that they would just do something other than the nothings they know to do. Any African who limits Africa to geography instead of ideology is joking. Any leader that considers physical location more important shared identity, culture, traditions and history can't be expected to be taken seriously.

Interestingly, these same leaders troop to the **Commonwealth** sessions with pride. Some maintain an old English woman who could barely remember their names, as the head of state, yet they do not consider Haiti one of them.

Seriously?

They obviously do not know about NATO, OPEC or the ARAB LEAGUE. If they did, they'd know that membership is more than physical location. Anyways, what do I know?

AU/EGYPT. Whoever said that KARMA was a b#+@# did not know what they were talking about. Karma is a bundle of Mabel Simmons, Big Momma and Mrs. Jones all in one. No one wants *Mardea glocking* around their neighborhood, especially not if she is looking to find their house. No one wants Big Momma poking in his or her business either. You see, karma is

more like this. She start off as being a Kru or Grebo mother who just learned that her child had misbehaved and done the very thing she warned the child not to do. She collects the fattest rotten or the thickest cane and waits for him/her to enter the yard proper. This is a **peppering** mission. Boy, if you're unaware of what a rotten or cane is or know not what peppering is, then you are blessed. Karma starts off as a mad Liberian mother fixing for whooping and pepper that child and ends up with all the stereotypes of a mad black woman. No I am not trying to be sexist or racist here. I am aiming for emphasis. So, if the AU really wants to do something, it is simple, just actually do something. But they should not play with people here saying our kin is one of us but not black enough.

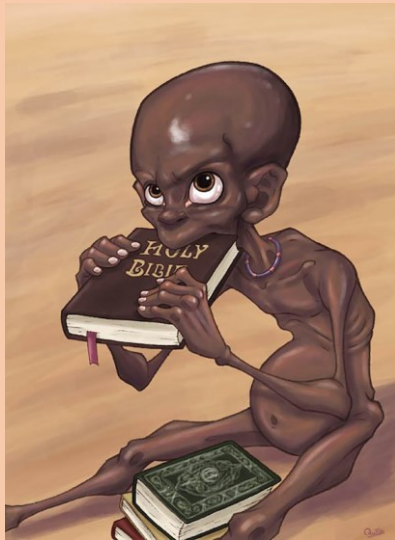
KARMA/AU-EGYPT. Now here's the fun part. Shortly after they screwed Haiti up, they had to deal with Egypt. Apparently, they want Egypt to apologize over comments made by her diplomat who called them 'dogs and slaves'.

Irony does not even begin to cover this. Why are they crying? Are their feelings really bruised over what we all know to be true? The dude only spoke what he has been thinking all along. I dare say he is not alone

either. No apology would erase the fact that he feels that way; that many times his compatriots had acted and responded that way to Africans in general. The AU actually wants something this time. Wow! Even if it is a measly apology, it is 'progress' right? The man supposedly spoke the truth, albeit in relation to his feelings and thoughts.

I guess their 'black enough' brother who thinks he's more Arab, found a way to wake the machinery and wound their fragile pride. I wish I could say kudos but that would not be how I really feel. This is not the case of your enemy and mine are friends. Many of us that have travelled up north, have at different times, encountered the discrimination at the hands of our northern brothers. For some it has been more than for others. This is no secret. Yet, our leaders who often benefit from using diplomatic passports, 'know of' this, but do not know it. But for those that have really experienced it, the stain unapologetically remains because it shows little signs of abating. Oh I do hope this wakes them up. As we wait to see what comes out of the official investigation and how they will spin this to save face. Next time, I hope they remember those that stood by us in our dire needs.

RELIGION/CHURCH!



What can I say? I mean what can I really say on this issue? It seems that each time a church folk sinks into the gutter, another gets envious and purposes to do better. By this, they take a pitch deeper in the mud. And trust you me, they don't disappoint. These people make Hollywood comedians look like child's play. This would all be funny were there not real people's lives touched and seriously affected by this tragedy/comedy.

As I have said before and will say for the umpteenth time, religion [the church, mosques and places of worship] is arguably the foremost enabler of poverty and corruption in Africa and the developing world.



Because of the sentiments attached, many folks wouldn't say it. They won't even try discussing the issue. Many aren't bold to call their 'men' and 'women' of God out for the trickery they do. Few would dare voice it out. They sit and swallow these insults and abuses until the scales are forcibly jerked from their eyes and then, they go ballistic. But funnily enough, they replace one for an even worse one. At this rate, I fear Christ might find himself returning to another crucifixion. These lots would swear He ain't the real deal and would 'recrucify' him for being an imposter of the Savior and taking away their livelihood. I would not bother listing their 'atrocities', trust me. Despite all we know and have seen, there will be staunch defenders and self-appointed executioners ready to take me down. That frightens me not but it saddens me like crazy.

Church & Family Tensions

So what is my beef this time around? Let me see.... Everything. Since I can't discuss everything, we will deal with disruption in the family structure and the church's role in this saga.

I've always wondered why 'men of God' feel it is fine to keep another man's wife or partner in their service most or all of the

time [I don't mean worship service here]. It never made sense to me. It doesn't gel that one would feel comfortable having women with families stuck up in prayer meetings, revivals, evangelism etc. they draw up schedules that place everybody else's spouses on duties but theirs. Are they not aware that these women should be catering to their homes? Or do they not care? A good number of these women come to these churches with a shitload of problems. They are vulnerable, scared and need comfort. Instead, over time, these leaders [wife included many times] begin exacting favors. It starts of small. A special meeting today, a cleanup tomorrow, a cook for some guests... nothing beyond their abilities. Initially, the husbands either didn't know, didn't care or preferred to stay the heck away from these women just so they can have peace to continue doing whatever it is they are/were doing [or not doing]. But when it becomes weekly, then homes start to break. There is the Sunday service, Monday meetings, Tuesday choir practice, Wednesday Bible study; Thursday & Saturday re more choir practice sessions. Friday prison ministries and outreach



[that is like every other week] and then the praise and worshipers' practice on Mon/Wed/Fri. you get the picture? This is more than a little. It is a hell of a lot. They drag the kids that they can and leave the rest to fend for themselves after they return from school- that is if they are not demanded to attend some of those sessions.

These women get so entangled in the web that they eventually begin to compete for their leader's attention. This leads to all sorts of dangers. They start cooking, cleaning and soon the pastor's wife gets a continuous vacation from her duties. I mean who wouldn't want the constant help with the home chores? Which woman would not? The men get detached from their wives, the pastors get attached to others people's wives and then anything is possible. Single women, teenagers and minors are all entrapped in this complex relationship. I would still like to think that this does not start out as an evil enterprise but when two people from the opposite sex get to do those many things together, alone in secluded

places, many things happen. This is partly how children get hooked in this world of pastor worship and get abused; this is partly responsible for single women forming attachments to their spiritual leaders. This is how the spiritual mothers let their guards down and turn a blind eye to these deeds especially if they feel unable, unwilling or uninterested in catering to all the needs of their spouses. The chances are way too many.

Husbands, who often already have their own issues, get bitter, angry and hateful to the pastors. This doesn't happen overnight. They get abusive, intolerant, stay out late, drink, and neglect their duties because hell has broken open.

The children get mixed up in this as well. They find themselves with plenty free time since the ones responsible for supervision are busily 'supervising' another's home. They can now utilize that free time as they see fit. In the end, the family structure is gradually eroding because those that should keep it, are busy seeking "God's" earthly favor.

Church/TAX/Poverty

The amount of young, abled body people that are expected to linger in church activities is simply alarming.

One often hears the complaints that people forsake church activities when they get jobs. This to me is a matter of simple logic. Without job the person is free to come for all the prayer services and fasting. They can go up on as many mountains as possible. However, when 'God' finally gave them the job, they are unable to do so. One requirement of jobs is that employees report to work at hours their employers schedule for them. This is too simple to be an issue. However, I believe this is just a ploy to make them feel guilty and release more of their meager incomes. The pastor, knowing the salary, pushes this because the church can now take its 10% tithe on it. They forget that these people have families and all the needs that lagged in the drought period. Pastor takes the tithe first and leaves you to figure out the rest. I think God must be a Jewish banker -come high or low, they come like a loan shark for their money. If the member is allowed to stay too long away, they see the reality and then the tithe gets reduced or stops altogether. Hence, this guilty lane is offered to prevent that in part.

TO BE CONTINUED....

D . Othniel Forte

SHE

She made one too many mistakes, for this, she only gets to see her child from behind bars. The child longs for counsel, she longs for the comfort of a child's touch, hug, cuddle. You are in our thoughts.

She weeps, she moans, she feels helpless but never gives up. She watches as her child fades away; snatched by the cold hands of death. What is there to live for? No mother should have to bury her child. A prayer is not enough for her. Yet she finds a way to carry on and even live. You are a Goddess.

She is disturbed, this illness has taken over not just her child but her mental state as well, for as long as the child is sick, the mother is edgy and sick as well. She nurses the child to health risking her own health. For her, we offer a prayer.

She's pained, she's sad; she's unable to feed her children. She watches them go to bed hungry. Nothing could be worse, yet after a restless night, the next day, she resolves with renewed hope and determination, to make it better. She focuses on providing meals even if there is no bed. We carry you in our hearts.

She can no longer cry. Tears have dried out. She has to visit a cemetery today since her child is unable to come by or wish her a happy day. She dreads the moment when she sees the name on the headstone. Sunrise – Sunset. It pierces her heart anew for the sun has not risen nor set since that heart wrenching news.

She does it all lone, no help, no dad, no family, at least not when needed. She's a single mom; it is not a title or badge. She's lonely, alone, scared many 'a times, weighted by life, but she must carry on, quitting is not an option. Whether she raises 1, 2, 4, 7 or 8 kids, it doesn't matter. For you mother[s], we say special supplications.

They fight and fuss off, all the time. Now they barely speak or see each other. They haven't for a while now. That mother needs her child; that child needs the mom back. We say a prayer for them.

She's far way. Distance kills not her love, prayers, worries, if anything, it increases it. But there lingers no doubt that she remains there, right there. We remember you mother

She is expecting, anxiety consumes her; she is both apprehensive and excited for the new life she carries. She knows her life is changed forever, but she dares this new word, unflinchingly. She's planned all her life for this role. She may ace it or not but she is doing it come what may. She needs help so we offer her up to the ancestors.

She is more than just a mother to her own; she caters to every child she can; her home a constant refuge for all; safe place to any who needs. We hold you in a special place

She struggles with the chores of home; juggling everyone's needs but hers; she fights to keep her marriage and raise her children; she can't afford to slip, she must balance everything we say a prayer.

Every mother out there, you have every reason to enjoy this day although to some, this will not be a time of celebration. There is too much loss, pain and sorrows that prevent the moment of joy. We say, when things subside, take the moment to smile, laugh and appreciate life.

D. Othniel Forte

Liberian Classic

Murder in the Cassava Patch III

Bai. T Moore

Old man Joma still preferred sitting in his tattered hammock, wearing a weather-beaten, short grey country cloth gown and smoking a clay pipe which he boasted was older than Kema.

I felt unable to turn my back on the old folks. With the little money I brought, I begged and dashed friends to help me collect building materials to repair the house and put the back yard gardens back into production.

When the girls were moving back into their room in the big house, Tene cried pitifully, "Gortokai, your God is catching me, I swear."

I don't know, rumors soon started spreading that Tene would be given me as a wife. This made me happy, as well as the news that Kema would be moving to her man in Firestone.

Tene soon got the little child attached to me. I took Bubu as my own child. Every time I returned from the field, she expected fruits from me. In fact she knew me simply as Papa or father.

By the time I settled back in Bendabli, the farming season was too far gone to make a cassava farm. To support the family I did odd jobs here and there. With

plenty free time on my hand I devoted more time to repairing the big house and kitchen. I enlarged the vegetable garden and built a new bath fence to keep the old folks from using those of our neighbors.

Four months passed. Kema had not been heard from. After my meal one evening, I felt like drinking a little cane juice. I visited Meine, my littler hunchback friend who operated the shop in Amina. Mene told me something which gave me the creaps.

He told me confidentially, that he had heard from a reliable source that Kema was considering moving in the old folks and Tene to Firestone.

"Meine, for true you mean what you are telling me?"

"Kai, I am not telling you any fairy tales."

"Dammit, Meine, this is a helluva world isn't it. I had planned just taking me a schnapps bottle, but give me a Tallah instead. News like this is enough to make a man feel like getting drunk. "I gulped the hot liquor hurriedly and left the shop. Meine warned me not to expose him under any circumstances. Dot especially since he was planted in an advantageous position to be for further assistance to me.

Where there is smoke, there must be fire. I soon began to detect a secret line of communication between Kema and her sister, which caused me to believe what Meine told me. Tene was receiving

expensive gifts from her sister which she kept with a friend in Amina.

Whether the old folks were aware of this or not I do not know.

To satisfy my curiosity, I approached them one evening after meal. Tene was not around. I began with the old lady. "Mba," I addressed her, "what is this I hear, that Kema intends moving the whole family to Firestone."

The old lady turned pale at once. The old man who was hard of hearing pulled his stool closer to listen to the conversation. "Kai," old man Joma called, "what is that you are asking?"

"No Joma!" The old lady interrupted. "Kai said he heard that Kema is sending for all of us to live with her in Firestone!"

"What," the old man frowned. "She must be going out of her mind. If the Kaiser and Hitler wars did not move me from Bendabli, I don't see what else will. Tene too, if that is what she is up to, the government down in Monrovia will have to tell me, whether or not if you born a child you control her, or she controls you. I just dare Tene to make a move to leave this village. It will be over my dead body, I swear on my mother's breast milk." Old man Joma was so furious, he commenced trembling.

"Never mind Joma, keep quiet, before you go into one of your fits." The old lady pleaded.

"Who Kema thinks I am! He-e! He-e! Tell me!"

The old man continued with a raised fist.

"Joma! you just leave her. Kema will soon come to the end of her rope. Ain't I born her?"

When I get through swearing her, she will forever remember a mother's curse. "

"I am sorry I brought up this question, Mba Karn, but I have to get certain things clear in my mind, before I contemplate on making farms for the coming season. For, what is the point starting to cut bush for a rice farm, when the girls particularly Tene, will not be here to see about it?"

I did not take me long to discover the secret line of communication between the sisters and learn about the expensive gifts Tene was receiving from a man in Firestone whom Kema wanted her to marry.

These gifts were being kept in the home of a friend, where Tene had secretly moved her large trunk and the brown valise she got from the Bomi Hills man.

Every time I thought of the whole affair, my mind ran to Buu's adage, that the secrets of a woman are deeper than the bottom of hell. As God would have it, the person who kept Tene's belongings was an old lover of mine. She hated the Joma girls for the way they were treating me. It was she who gave me complete access to Tene's hidden stores.

One evening while carrying my bath water to the fence, Tene put her arms around my waist and

whispered, "Kai, it's you I am sleeping with tonight. How do you like that?" But I noticed that Tene looked serious, and that she was doing this just to appease my growing bitterness.

You see, she could not stand up against pressure from anyone, because her heart was domineered by her sister. She was helpless and unable not to obey her, even though this meant unhappiness for herself. But by the same token my ardent and possessive love haunted and terrified her even more, and sensing my slowly mounting desperation and repressed anger, she tried to cajole me through the occasional gift of her body into sweet forgetfulness.

While playing with the baby that night, I asked her, "Tene, why do you try to fool me. Every time I ask you about your new lappas, you tell me you got them by selling farina. Many girls round here seil more farina than you do. Why is it they don't have nice clothes?"

"Kai," Tene shrugged her shoulders, "maybe they don't care for nice clothes."

"That's a helluva answer isn't it?"

Tene did not think that I was in the know of everything that was going on between her and her sister - the sending and receiving of gifts from the new suitor Kema had found for her, an overseer in Dolo Camp near Harbel.

Somehow, my fear of losing Tene the second time stopped me from challenging her openly, but

bitterness gnawed at my entrails and frustration piled up in my heart and my brain was forever racing on to find other ways out.

That very afternoon, I again managed to intercept the last parcel containing three lappa suits, a pair of easywear shoes, some panties and brassieres, together with a few nicknacks for the baby. I had them in my raffia bag right under the bed. If Tene had been curious she would have seen them.

In the morning before she left the room, I asked her about the gold earrings and necklace I had given her in Suehn.

"Why do you ask me this, Kai?"

"O no particular reason. Just want to know if you still have something to remember me by."

"Of course I do, and will always until I die."

"Weil, Tene, if you could bring them to me, I will duplicate them for the baby, so when she also grows up, she will cherish the memory of Baba."

Tene had no idea that the earrings and necklace were in my possession. I actually stole them myself in the hope to see her mourn their loss. But she only came back crying, "I can't find them. Maybe I have loaned them to a friend who forgot to return them. I will ask around and will bring them as soon as possible."

Tene was nervous as she departed. I noted that she looked bewildered. But I was strangely happy. I was finally punishing Tene.

"Yes", for all her wriggling and ducking, she's going to be roasted in hell while I kindle the fire, and I was all the more elated as she was quite unaware of my power to mastermind her misery.

That evening when she brought me my cover cloth in the bad fence, I reminded her about the jewellery. "Arrangements have been made for a goldsmith to come here and to the job."

This was on Thursday evening. While eating my evening meal in the kongo, Tene came and sat opposite me at the table. She looked worried and nervous. I asked her why.

"Kai, for the past few days I have felt light in the head. I can't concentrate on anything. For what reason I don't know."

"Tene, many people get like that sometimes. Especially if they have something on their mind."

After the meal, Tene collected the dishes and disappeared into the darkness. I closed the door behind her and pulled my bag from under the bed. I poured its contents on the table. There were the earrings, the necklace and wearing apparels I had intercepted.

I dashed everything on the floor, in a rage I rumbled them under my feet, and to defile them further, I spat on them.

In the midst of my desperation, I heard a distant yell, "a ke-e ma o!"

A few minutes later, I heard rapid footsteps in front of the kongo. "Kai!

Kai!" Tene yelled excitedly. "Get up, sister Kema is here!"

I hurriedly kicked everything under the bed, jumped into my pants, and by the time I could get to the door, Kema was pushing it open. She gave me a hug and nearly pushed me over.

"Kai, how, you didn't know I had come?"

I noticed Kema wore a very loud perfume. She had on a shiny light blue tie-dye lappa suit with headtie and shoes to match. She also had her eyebrows extended by artificial means, and crowned a front tooth with gold to enhance her appearance. She laughed on purpose to enable people to see the gold in her mouth.

Kema flopped on the bed and kicked off her shoes. "Kai, I am thirsty for something to drink, what do you have here?"

"Kema, unless I run to Anima and see. They have something good there to drink."

"Like what, Kai?"

"Cane juice and imported schnapps. I will see what I can pick up."

I really hesitated leaving Kema in my kongo. She might be too inquisitive and discover the things I had intercepted.

When I got back from Amina, I detected subdued voices in my room. My mind told me to press my ear against the window so I could hear what was being said inside.

At one point I observed Kema stretching her hand

out. "You mean the last parcel I sent day before yesterday was intercepted? Gosh!" Kema expressed excitedly. "Whom do you suspect, Tene?"

"Sister, only God knows. I do not have the slightest idea." Tene's tone was blank. "Since I got wind of it, Kema I have not been myself. I'm very nervous. My head is light and have not had any appetite."

Kema looked puzzled. "This deformed-nose Kai of ours, what do you think of him? I don't trust him. He is like a wounded bushcow, ready to jump for a kill any moment. Tene, I don't know if the old people ever told you. Kai's father was a shiftless fellow and liked to roam about. His in-laws, that is Kai's maternal grandfather and mother, got into some big trouble once. Rather than suffer humiliation, they sold the poor fellow across the Lofa River and he has not been heard from since. This is a deep secret. Keep it under the roof of your tongue."

"Kema, there is a lot to learn in this world isn't there?"

"Perhaps, if you have time." The older sister expressed gravely. "Are you still making Kai feel that you will marry him? Tene look her, there is no need to sit down in Bendabli and put up pious face, talking about marrying that boy or man, I don't know what you call him. You put your hand in that, and you will remain here to rot like the old people. You see, sister, they

have had their day and are tied to a past which has long since gone. When you started out you made a mistake. Of course, you have been fortunate to get a child out of the deal. Why sit down here now and waste your youthful days behind Kai, when you can come to Firestone and get you a good man, who is making plenty money every month and who can buy plenty of good clothes and make you presentable."

"This man who has been sending presents, how is he?"

"Tene, my sister, you know me, I don't go in for cheap men." The older sister boasted.

"Besides that, there is no problem finding good men in Firestone." Kema ended.

After all I had heard, I did not wish to face the girls. To get drunk was the obvious thing which came to my mind. I walked halfway to Royesville and drank cane juice promiscuously.

I don't know why, I could not get enough of the stuff to put me to sleep. The conversation between the girls kept echoing in my ear like a dream.

The roosters caught me pondering, their crowing reminding me that it was dawn. When I finally came home, the girls had gone out. I pulled out Tene's things I had hidden under the bed and chopped them up in pieces with the cutlass. I slipped out of my room and scattered the cut-up brassiers and panties along the path between Bendabli and Amina.

A man from Amina, going to his palm wine tree, was the first to notice the strange trail. He ran back in a hurry to inform his friends. Soon the palm wine man's discovery stirred up commotion in both villages. Curiosity also drew out Kema and Tene.

I tried to position myself so as to observe what effect this discovery would have on the girls.

Kema was shocked, because she knew these were the very pieces she had surreptitiously sent to Tene. I heard Kema say, sister, we better get someone to look into this palava before it is too late. Look at Kai, standing against the rubber tree, holding his waist. I bet it's nobody but him."

"What do we do, Kema?" Tene inquired nervously. "I don't know", Kema expressed dejectedly. "What ever it is, we must do it quickly." Kema suggested a crystal reader.

"Sister, many of the crystal readers now-a-days are such big liars, you don't know who to rely on."

This was Thursday, the day before the Muslim prayer day, Aijuma. I informed the old folks that I was not feeling well.

When the girls got back from the diviner, they found me in bed. As soon as Tene got the news she came over to the kongo and asked, "Kai, what ails you?"

"My stomach, it's not so good."

"Maybe worms."

I observed Tene did not care to talk much. I said, "I

think I'll take some medicine tomorrow morning," and asked if she would mind making me a small piece of domboy with dry meat soup.

"Kai, people never plan that kind of domboy the day previous."

"That is the difference between us, Tene. I like to plan everything I do ahead of time."

Friday morning, I gave Tene some dry meat I bought in Amina for the soup. She went around the village and collected all the ingredients, but discovered that no one had cassava to lend her. Our own cassava patch was just ten minutes away from the village. So Tene told me she would run there and dig up a hill or two.

Tene reached a tall palm tree and put down the rattan basket she had balanced on her head.

Sitting in a thicket near the palm tree, my forehead crashed on a stupid twig. Tene heard the frightening sound and looked around. Her eyes caught mine. Softly she said, "Kai, that's you?"

Kai ..." She screamed.

TO BE CONT.....



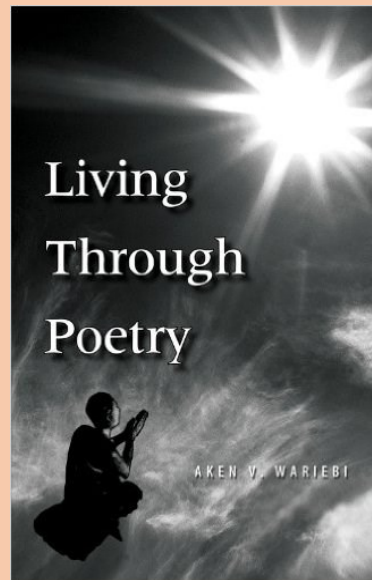
Authors of the Month Profiles

AKEN V. WARIEBI



Aken V. Wariebil

Aken Vivian Wariebi is an avid reader and writer and the latter began more frequently since grade school. A graduate from both Rutgers and Syracuse Universities, respectively, she never left a book nor a pen behind. Today, a Poet and Advocate for the most vulnerable, Ms. Wariebi finds joy in inspiring and helping others in any positive way that she can. Some say her Poems speak to their heart and soul and for Ms. Wariebi life speaks to her pen. Others describe her writings as life short stories. No matter how it is felt, Ms. Wariebi speaks to your heart and soul from hers and hopes that all can find a little more light along their journey of life in her work as she has in her writings. She is originally from Monrovia, Liberia and currently resides in the USA.



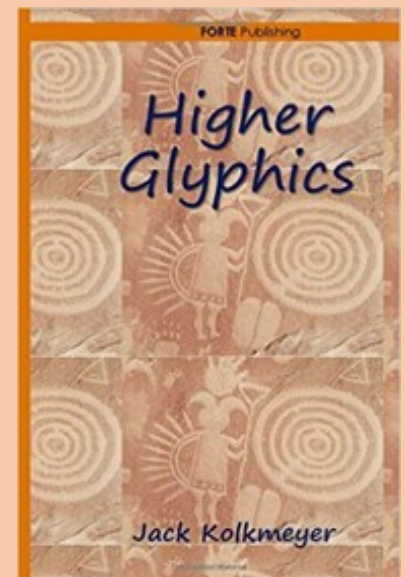
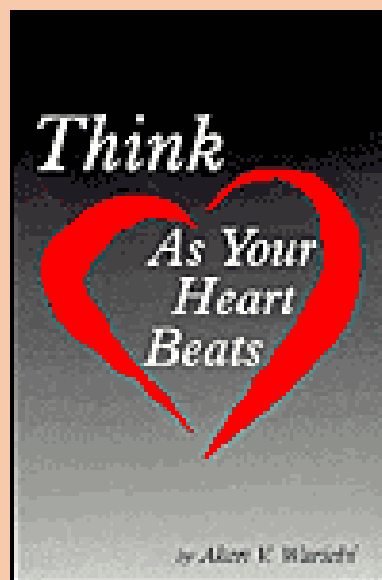
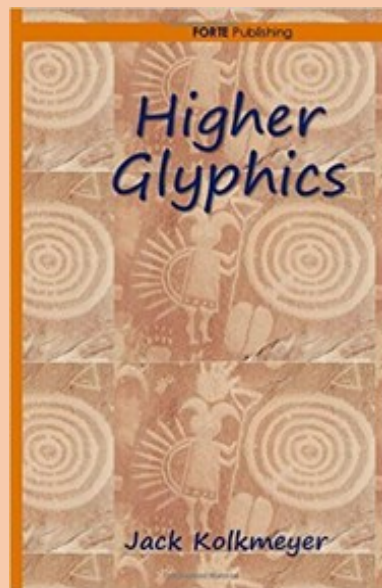
JACK KOLKMEYER



Jack Kolkmeier

Jack Kolkmeier, an English Literature-Creative Writing major from Ohio University, loves words, great music, ancient texts, traveling and a few more things.

He runs a popular radio program on his radio station, the Fifthwall. Radio.



Our Spotlight author of this issue is poet, a soft spoken woman who loves writing. She is a volunteer and social worker-

AKEN V. WARIEBI

Author Interview



Liberian Literary Mag conducted an interview with AKEN V. WARIEBI

LLR: First, we would like to thank you for granting this interview. Tell us a little about you- Well, My name is Aken Vivian Wariebi. I am from Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa. I am a Trained Social Worker and I am also a Poet. As a Poet, I write from life's experiences and find solace in my writings and hope it uplifts the spirit of others as it has done for me. I currently live in the United States of America.

Why writing?

My passion is to inspire and make a difference, big or small. My desire, passion and goal as simple as it sounds is to see the smile on someone's face. The reassurance that my writings provide to their heart and soul that not only are they not alone in their

paths, with whatever they may be going through, but it can and will get better. Instilling hope is my mission. Building a bridge on the inside of ourselves between what we think we can and cannot do and daring ourselves when the possibilities present themselves, in order to accomplish what we thought was impossible to achieve is my purpose. Planting seeds that create positive change through inspiration, in the form of Poetry and writing in general, that can ultimately improve the lives of my fellow man, in every aspect, is what I want to do to the best of my ability as long as I live.

What books have most influenced your life/career most? All of Dr. Maya Angelo's books, Nikki Giovanni, James Baldwin, Robert Frost, Shakespeare, just to name a few. Some of the



other writers that I admired and I read their books included but were not limited to: Sidney Sheldon, Barbara Cartland, Harold Robbins. I also read magazines such as New York Times, National Geographic, Ebony, Jet, Reader's Digest, True Confessions and so many more. In the magazines, the styles of contributing writers always made me fantasize about being a writer, at some point and utilizing my pen someday to impact lives.

How do you approach your work?

From life, it teaches me with every one that walks within my path. Situations, circumstances, and the space in which I occupy in my life at any given time gives me the reason to share the message of hope, courage and love. Nature allows me to think and express those thoughts in the written word, or ponder on thoughts for later use in a positive way. This is usually to draw strength from deep within and let it rub onto others as well. Time and spiritually allows me to give thanks, show gratitude and exhibit peace. Life gives us and we give back at some point. My writings, I use to give back and life shows me how to do that harshly,



calmly and in every way in between to promote hope, positively.

**+
What themes do you find yourself continuously exploring in your work?**

Various themes really, but one I hold onto dearly is to "believe". I wrote a quote a while ago that says "You can achieve only if you believe" I try in every way possible to be a living example of that quote. Another theme is based on yet another quote that I wrote that states: "If knowledge is dangerous, then ignorance is deadly". So I've realized that both knowledge and education can be cheap or can be expensive or can be both at the same time. But a famous saying that states: "The more you know, the less you know" sums it up quite nicely. I feel one may be limited by both, knowledge and ignorance, based on exposure, but the world is vast and there are always new things to learn and new opportunities in which

to renew one's mind so to speak and enhance one's opinion or extend one's prospective. So my themes are really 'believe and knowledge-in terms of education" no matter from whom, where or how. The end result of both can change your mindset and totally change your world, hopefully for the best.

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

My most recent book is entitled "Living Through Poetry". I write inspirational Poems and quotes and phrases. The goal is simply to inspire others to be the best that they can be. I want the reader to search deep inside their soul and open their heart to the changes waiting to burst out of them and the ones waiting to greet them. In order to enable them, to be better human beings and become a far more positive contribution for the betterment of humanity. I usually tell myself to "inspire with love" that is what I can give back as I have been given likewise

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



Some refer to it as "Life's little short stories". Others have mentioned "The Poems are like advices from your Grandma". I find it to be a reminder that each action of our lives are lines of poetry, each interaction and each process of our journey. These poems we write as we dance with life come naturally, without force. They may become songs, fiction or non-fictional stories, speeches, or whatever but it starts with Poetry. They are what is usually refer to as life's experiences. They may also become a cause that we may fight for one day, a platform that we may have eventually, it gives our voice the right rhythm to achieve our dreams, capture our passion and pursue and complete our purpose. I only simply have the gift to continue to write mine in its truest form...Poetry, still. So I inspire and can be inspired.

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

I once said this as a definition of the United States of America but this is in fact life itself. Yes, life in general has a lot of honey, but there are also a lot of bees. No matter what, focus on the honey. The bees are the negatives and the honey is the positives. Never give up on that honey. You can not only taste it but you can maybe one day be a part of the process of making it and owning more than you bargained for. This is if only you keep looking up and moving forward.

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

Yes, it makes you see yourself a bit differently and may be a mirror on your journey. In some way, a reminder for you to keep on moving forward. Be on a forward march; never look back in spite of the odds. In some way my book is sort of like an alarm clock also. It keeps you awake and alert and ready to and continue to "Believe".

Do you have any advice for other writers?

Be encouraged, dream big, stay humble. You are a possibility of success,



you are great within you, dig it out, find it, treasure it, believe it.

What book[s] are you reading now? Or recently read?

Books about African-American trailblazers.



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

I am now a contributor of Kwee Magazine please look for my segment entitled "Aken-bai's-A flow of thoughts" and stay tuned. Please check out my newly updated Facebook page

www.facebook.com/inspirewithlove

What are your current projects?

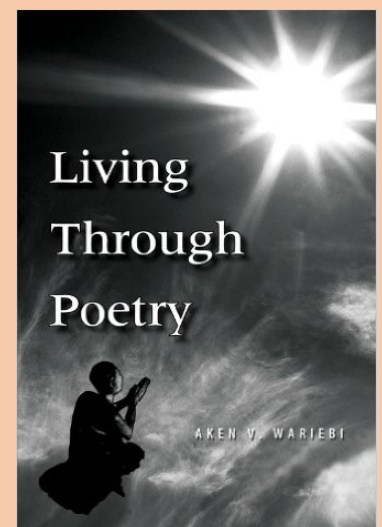
I am working on my second play and it should be completed next year.

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

Yes, I read a bit of my Mother's book "Family Life in Lofa County" by Nester H. Duncan. A bit of Helene Cooper's book at well entitled " The House on Sugar Beach".

Any last words?

Yes, be true to you that happens before you can be true to anyone else.



Aken V. Wariebi is doing a reading on July 17th, 2016 2pm to 3:30pm

Diaspora Poet

Uninvited

She can't say no
to armed hitchhikers
in military uniforms
when they wave her down.

She could speed up
and feel the hail of bullets
slicing through the car frame,
piercing her body.
She wouldn't live to tell the
story.

So she stops and smiles,
pretends to be polite,
even though she could be one
minute away from becoming a
ghost.

All four climb in.
Guns, pointing perilously out
windows,
gape at fleeting scenery.

Stone-faced soldiers stare
straight ahead as if on a
special mission.
She feels her knees
wobble under her skirt.

Her mind in overdrive,
she sees her body
like a large rice sack
lying on the roadside
next to firewood,
raped, mutilated, lifeless.

The voice beside her
cracks the silence,
interrupts her deathly vision.
"Stop, we getting down here,
ma."

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Althea Romeo-Mark



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

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

She was awarded the [Marguerite Cobb McKay Prize](#) by *The Caribbean Writer* in June, 2009 for short story "Bitterleaf, (set in Liberia)." *If Only the Dust Would Settle* is her last poetry collection.

She has been guest poets at the International Poetry Festival of Medellin, Colombia (2010), the

Kistrech International Poetry Festival, Kissi, Kenya (2014) and The Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books 10th Anniversary Conference, Antigua and Barbuda (2015)

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

More publishing history can be found at her blog site:

www.aromaproductions.blogspot.com



Author Interview 2

Spotlight Author

JACK KOLKMEYER



Liberian Literary Magazine conducted an interview with Jack Kolkmeier, a poet, a lover of music and the finer things of life 😊.

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

Having just turned 70, the various career paths of my life have always intertwined in the most mysterious of ways. I have had 4 distinct careers in my life: teaching, writing, broadcasting and city planning. Interestingly, they have all involved writing of very different styles and they have always merged in different ways. Currently retired, I now focus on writing poetry and screenplays, living in South Florida.

I attended Ohio University in beautiful Athens, Ohio/USA from 1964-68, totally immersed in the study of literature, languages and geography. Somehow for me, all those things went hand in hand although I never fully understood it until much later in my life.

Then there was Africa! I lived and worked in Liberia as a US Peace Corps Volunteer from 1969-72 and then again briefly in 1975, as a teacher and agriculture extension agent. My work was mostly in Lofa County among the Kpelle people but I also lived and worked for a year in Monrovia for the Department of Agriculture under Secretary Doc Sirleaf.

After Liberia, I went to graduate school at Indiana University to study urban and regional planning and community development.

That became my profession for 35 years, mostly in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with intermittent forays into teaching, professional music writing and broadcasting. So my love for literature, language and geography, really came full circle.

Why writing?

I have always been a writer in one form or another. To me, writing is being an artist or a documentarian or filmmaker. I literally have hundreds of journals from all points of my life, taking note of all the events and people that have always surrounded me.

I started writing when I was very young....16 or so...around 1962 when I had an English teacher who told me, quite bluntly, that I had a brain and a gift for writing and it was my obligation to use them. I've published a number of poems, articles on music and musicians and various city planning topics but never any books until now with **Higher Glyphics**.

Mostly though, I have always been and wanted to be a poet. There is something about writing poetry that has always fascinated me. As a poet, you can be brief or epic, straight-forward or obtuse. The parameters of poetry always intrigued me.

But I have also loved writing as a teacher, as a broadcaster and as a city planner. Each of those disciplines requires

a different style, approach and language. I have enjoyed writing in each of them.

In looking back at my student years, though, it seems like such an immense privilege to have spent several years just studying and writing poetry!

Although I loved reading and sometimes writing short stories, and reading the great novels, though writing novels always seemed too gargantuan a task to me, it was always poetry that appealed to me the most.

So for four years, I devoted my studies to the Romantic poets, Keats, Shelley and Byron; the incredible Imagist writers, especially Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, James Joyce, D.H Lawrence and others. Then the Beat poets, Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Neal Cassady and Charles Bukowski, in particular. I very fondly remember buying Ginsberg's **Howl and Other Poems** with an intro by Williams Carlos Williams for \$2 at the famous City Lights bookstore. Still sits on my desk!

I have also come to really enjoy some of the incredible, contemporary female poets such as Sylvia Plath, Alice Oswald, Maya Angelou and Gwendolyn Brooks. There is just so much great writing.

What books have most influenced your life/career most?

Well, each one of my careers and each aspect of my life has its favorite books. I've already mentioned the poetry ones. I'd have to say that several books really jolted me when I first read them and still linger in my head today. **Lord of the Flies** by William Golding would be one. I love writing that deals with the struggles of governing in the midst of chaos...sound familiar? Aldous Huxley's classic, **Brave New World**, written in 1932, and also the name of my radio program, has always astounded me for its accurate depiction of what the future was to bring. Several city planning and design books have stayed with me in all my years in that profession, especially, Kevin Lynch's planning masterpiece, **The Image of the City**, and the wonderful perspective on architecture and building with mud by

Egyptian architect, Hassan Fathy, called **Architecture for the Poor**. And finally, I guess, two books that stopped me in my philosophical tracks and really made me think outside my personal and cultural boxes were Malcom X's **By Any Means Necessary** and Richard Wright's, **Native Son**.

How do you approach your work?

The Imagist poets really laid out for me an actual manifesto for how it is to write in that style, most importantly, and I'm paraphrasing here:

Use the language of common speech, using an exact word, not merely a decorative word.

It may be better to express yourself in free verse rather than conventional structures.

Absolute freedom in the choice of a subject.

Present an image and not deal in vague generalities.

Write poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.

Focus on concentration...the essence of something.

While my writings have been relatively true to those principles, in **Higher Glyphics**, my recent poetry book, I rather

turned part of that around to study and write about the vague and unknown, attempting to bring those elusive images into a more understandable focus.

As I mentioned before, I keep extensive notebooks so when a subject enters my mind that I think I might want to pursue, I already have some avenues for research. I write every day.

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

There seem to be 3 recurring themes in all of my writing projects regardless of the discipline I may be writing in: how we attempt to organize and govern ourselves; perspective – how we see things, individually and collectively, and; the often changing and murky relationships among the past, the present and the future.

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

The poetry book, **Higher Glyphics**, is a poetic look at some of the enigmatic earthworks, standing stones and prehistoric

writings that have been left all over the planet for us to consider as messages, points of view and teachings. I've spent considerable time in some so-called "sacred places" wondering how to look at them, and how they look at us, and to consider what they meant then and what they might mean to us now.

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

My love of and my respect for antiquity and culture.

I grew up in a European-American culture and family (Irish and German) that greatly respected its roots, ancestors and cultural activities. I've been deeply attracted to those same principles and beliefs that I've experienced in various African, African-American, Native American and Hispanic cultures that I've had the privilege of living in. And, as is frequent in my writing, I like to play with words so Hieroglyphics became **Higher Glyphics**.

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

Yes, mutual respect and the never-ending thirst to learn and understand. But most importantly, to learn to listen to others and to respect those who are different than you and who think differently than you do....about the same things.

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

We hope this is the beginning of an interesting series of different poetry books that continue to look at challenging subjects.

Do you have any advice for other writers?

Yes. Write and don't stop writing. And first of all, write from your heart and soul...don't worry about writing for a contest or a publisher.

If you write what is important to you, somewhere, somehow, it will find a home.

What book[s] are you reading now? Or recently read?

I just finished a wonderful collection of poetry, **Palm Leaves, An Anthology of 3 Emerging Ghanaian Poets**. I love these young West African poets...talk

about imagism! Also just recently finished **Dead Aid** by Dambisa Moyo about the problems of foreign aid to Africa. I'm finishing up the huge, new Graham Hancock tome, **Magicians of the Gods**, an incredible scholarly work about pre and post Ice Age mysteries. And I'm half way through the thought-provoking Matt Ridley book, **The Rational Optimist, How Prosperity Evolves**. Don't seem to read much fiction these days.

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

I will currently be reading a number of selections from **Higher Glyphics** on my radio program, Brave New World, on Fifthwall Radio.

<http://www.fifthwallradio.com/>

What are your current projects?

Finishing up the next poetry book, **Gnarly Roots**. Working on a poetry/narrative/photography book with my Santa Fe photographer friend, **Jeffery Nelson** (whose beautiful photo we use for **Higher Glyphics**), currently titled **The Perception of**

Mystery, based on his superlative photographs of ancient sites in the Southwestern United States. And my second screenplay called, **The End**, about, you guessed it...the end of the world as we know it.

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

Yes, quite a few. Before I went to Liberia in 1969, I read Graham Greene's travelogue, **Journey Without Maps**, which I found a bit disturbing because of its negative and paternal and somewhat colonial outlook on Liberia at that time, the early 30s.

Interestingly, in the summer of 1969, four American and Liberian friends and I retraced some of his travels through Voinjama, Konia, Ziggidah and Zorzor, climbing to the top of Mt. **Wanigizi**. Unlike Mr. Greene's interpretation, we found it quite exhilarating.

Have always loved Bai T. Moore's classic, **Murder in the Cassava Patch**. And recently read and just totally enjoyed Nvasekie Konneh's great book, **The Land of My Father's Birth**. There was so much that I enjoyed about Mr.

Konneh's book. His wonderful, lilting style of writing and all of the detailed stories about growing up in an area I knew quite well but was there when he was just a young child. Also, my last visit to Liberia was in 1975, so my entire knowledge and experience in Liberia was before the uncivil wars. I had no idea of some of the tortuous detail that he expressed in such emotive style.

I have also published two articles about Liberia. One regarding the potential utilization of traditional work groups in modern farming and the other an introspective article about the recent Ebola situation.

Any last words?

My deepest and most humble thanks to all who are part of the **Liberian Literary Magazine** family. I thank you for inviting me in. It is an awesome publication and I greatly love and admire all of the fabulous writers.



Author bio:



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 some of his work on his new radio project, **Fifthwall Radio**.

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

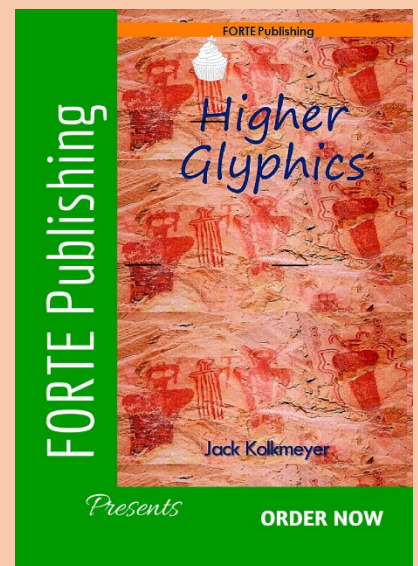
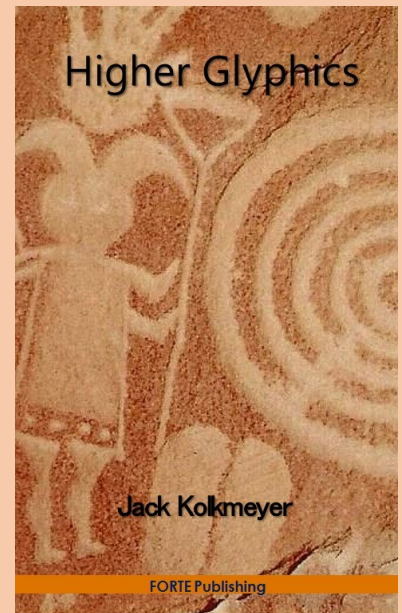
emerging writers of that time, especially Leopold Senghor, Chinua Achebe and Amos Tutuola. Jack received an MPA in Public Policy/Urban and Regional Planning from Indiana University in 1974.

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

Tribal is his first collection of poetry. He recently completed **A Philosophy of Yard**, his second, full-length book of poems. **Higher Glyphics** is his most recent book, poetic musings on antiquity and the mysteries of the planet was just published by Forte Publishing. He is finalizing his fourth poetry book, **Gnarly Roots**.

Mr. Kolkmeier's poetry and writings have appeared in *Sphere*,

Gulcher, *Mothering Magazine*, *The Beat*, *The Santa Fe Reporter*, *The Writers Place*, *Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival*, *Liberian Studies Journal*, *Crosswinds*, *Practicing Planner* and *The Liberian Literary Magazine*.



Jack Kolkmeier

Resurrected Master

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.

African American Perspectives: Pamphlets from the Daniel A.P. Murray Collection, 1818-1907

THE SLUMBERS OF THE DEAD

Deep in the heart's unfathom'd caves. Where tumults ocean ceaseless roars, Where pleasure oft high revell holds. Whence hearts most weak, are thence made bold,

Besides a sympathetic thought. For those who have their finis found, And they are sacred, hallowed thoughts.

Which come of life's enchanted march; Bespoiling[?] naught, by naught bespoiled, Cleansing the mind and giving joy. To those whom Fortune favors well.

And when toward the close of life. With slacken'd footsteps on we tread, Toward the region of the dead.

Should we not sacred hold those thoughts.

Which from our past experience rise? And granting this, should we not have In early life, some sympathy

For those who near their goal have gone? Yet, can there be an end for those.

Whom Heaven's mighty king did frame? An end! can there exist an end to pre-decreed eternity?

Most surely not, for as we gaze Far into space, we can discern No risen no end of the unknown.

-One which to grasp, and then proclaim In loud stentorian voice and clear:- "O hear ye men! your God is found.

Behold him! the Unknown, Unseen. Unserved, Unworshiped, and Unpraised!

From the Barclay Padmore Wiles Families website

Posted by Historical Preservation Society of Liberia- [hpsol](#)

Where is Home? Where do you belong? TEDxGroningen

d. othniel forte

Happy
Mother's
Month

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0mVa7d08tg>

Vamba Sherif opens his TEDx talk with a most basic, 'simple' question. It is not only powerful in what it seeks of us an answer, or what it demands from us in reflection. It is more powerful in its simplicity than anything else. As a firm believer in 'simpler is better, I could only admire the question.

However, it runs deeper than this for me. As one who has lived half my life in the diaspora, nothing is simple about this question. Ironic right, considering the opening above? Coming from a small but closely knit family, home always transcended the idea of physical location. Home was always not a building; it was more of an environment. Having my siblings and loved ones, [which by the way was almost always the case] made the concept of home fluid. It was a reinforcement to our number family 'rule'- Family First. The consistency of having family always around, did more than comfort us, it embodied the *credo uno*; it made it alive, more than mere words, perhaps even more than an indoctrination. I guess in these regards, it secured us in the notion of home and erased any doubt.

Because we moved around some, this came in handy. We could be on a mission school in Sierra Leone, or the Cote D'Ivoire; we could be roaming beautiful

palaces up in distant Asia; reuniting in Virginia or simply playing board games in Brewerville under cozy mango and butter pearl trees close to the river, we always had a homey home in our gatherings.

But then the speaker, in a rude awakening, yanks me out of the reverie with his very next question- *Where do you belong?* For the love of Pete, I thought, how could he? But quickly I realized the gravity of the question. The question demands nothing out of us as the first does. It simply bares the reality, albeit crudely. It does not want flowery answers; it does not confine itself to simplicity or complexity. It just exposes the truth- our deepest fears, our vulnerabilities; our limitations but most of all, our perception of self, essence, nationhood and the value attached to one of the existential questions. One can't conceive that question without seriously looping through the issues above.

Home, you see, is a location. It is *fixed*, *finite*. Granted we can make home anywhere, but in truth I believe, we are only recreating the 'ideal' picture, which we really know to be localized in our thoughts or memories. This, I argue, is a location that is finite. This is what makes the house, city or location 'home' for us. This in my opinion is constant and as noted before, is transportable. It is a fixed concept that is movable- not in its essence but in its container or host. As the host moves about, the 'fixed' 'home' moves. In our case, having each other around made it possible to live those memories, to reinvent those shared experiences and to develop new ones in the comfortable knowledge that we had all the ingredients of home. Thus, subconsciously, we noticed not the fact that we had no need for the 'memory' or 'thought' since we were 'living' or experiencing them in real time. They were no longer spaces stored away; filed for use when we needed to comfort

ourselves. We were living them, living in them and shaping them. They and our experiences had merged into an oneness with the locality hosting them. It did not matter the physical location, we could call into existence 'home' any location.

In the split second it takes the speaker to pop these two questions, I had to deal with two critical issues- one more so than the other. The second question gets us thinking below the surface.... Deep down into our core. Where do you belong seeks more than just a place. It sends us inward to bring outward our true selves. Interestingly, the more we look inward, we tend to realize that we often must define ourselves by looking outward at or to others. Their actions, failures and attributes, help us further define or realize what or who we are as opposed to what others make of us. It confirms our own attitudes. It reinforces those traits that form our essence. In short, to find us, we reflect on what matters. To reflect, we often look at or towards others. This means we need relationships to be defined.

For you see, as Mr. Sherif noted, *belonging* is relational. It must be completed by and with others. He speaks about the love from family as he grew up in the vibrancy of the African extended family; the security it provided. We hear of his quest for finding home, his challenges, his desire to assimilate, to conform in hopes of landing a home. He then tells how these all fell short of satisfaction, because he still lacked that

piece. When he goes back to these places, a strange thing happens, he feels less connected; lonelier, still wanting.

The reason they fall short, I believe is because these are all *locations* he had localized in 'thought[s]', 'memor[eis]' yet, they proved incapable of providing him the things he most desired- belongingness.

Belongingness forces us to confront the fact that we need relationships; we need others to find us. We must relate our true essence to the greater world and this is reflected in how we see ourselves in relation to others; how we view ourselves in relation to the spaces we occupy.

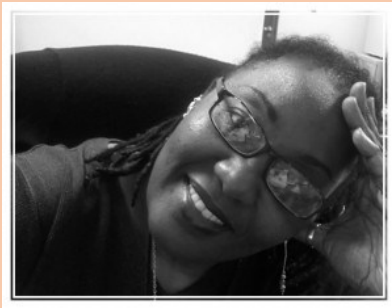
One can easily argue that I don't need people to feel belonged. I can find a place to belong minus the 'other' factor. But is that really true? Is that beach front house, that secluded space, that quiet path in the park or the hideaway that brings you all the comfort from a harsh world not an 'other'? Is it not relational? Is it not selected precisely because it is relational?

it becomes clear that we must relate to find value. That relationship is critical to any definition we assign to ourselves, our worldviews and outlook on life in general.

Where is Home? This is a question that insist we search in our sould and find meaning in our relationships, meanings in ourselves, meaning in our lives. It is only when we can sort out our home issues then we can begin to resolve our belongingness issues,

Unscripted

Cher Antoinette



MAY 2016

“Mother” that singular word brings all manner of feelings and overwhelming emotions to many if not all of us. The thought of our mother brings comfort and solace; for some there is much regret. Regret that we never took the opportunity to express our gratitude and love for that which was unselfishly given. The poems here today give my perspective, not only as a mother but also as a child who has lost her own.

I WISH I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU

I have listened to your advice. You insisted on telling me how it was for you as a girl and how you did this and that.

I tell you I am tired. I am not listening anymore. I have taken your advice and where has it gotten me? Right here! Just where I DO NOT want to be!

From now on,

I don't need you, I don't want you
I am not listening to you.

But, you can no longer hear me.
You are no longer with me.

You are in another place giving advice.
Being yourself.
Why were you never your true self with ME?
Why all the pretense?
Why all the hypocrisy?
It was not necessary.
I would have still loved you.
Always, I would have.

But you kept a wedge between us.
I cannot understand why you did this but you did.
And now,
You are gone.

Where are you when I need the strength I saw in you when I was a child?
I cannot reach you.

I am angry!
Do you understand?
Angry!
I am your child.

You left me.
I hate that but I know
I can never hate you.
I will always love you,
Mummy.

© 2013 MY SOUL CRIES

LETTING GO

Is there anything, anything I can do,

to take this feeling of hurt away?

This ache, this physical pain that creeps under my skin; tears at my flesh incapacitates my mind, my heart.

Is there anything, anything I can do to take this feeling of disappointment away?

This confusion that disassembles my logic, shatters my plans and marks me down.

I need to shake this, to reach inside of me: my spirit is not asleep I will awaken. I will rise above this struggle.

My eyes are washed in the tears of years of expression, memories of decisions, harsh words and actions all for the good, for the protection of the spawn of myself.

I have to let go.

I leave it in Your hands.

The wings of the White Fairy will protect, the ample breast of Our Mother will soothe and you my child will grow, will thrive because I know you will become the person I know you are.

.....
Cher-Antoinette © 2014



A MOTHER'S QUEST

Why do things have to be so difficult?
 Why is it that as a mother you cannot always provide the protection for your offspring that you know they need?

I am asking the questions but I already know the answers. They must grow. They must stumble to walk. They must use their own powers of creativity and intuitiveness to weather the storm.

We never just want to stay on the side lines. We want to be at their sides during the battle. But logic dictates that we cannot engage in such. We must let them lead the charge, take up the mantle and power through the opposition.

The opposition is brutal, fierce and doesn't care about human emotions or relations. The only factor that is recognized by the opposing forces are those of

empirical and prime value.
 Dollars and cents.

As a Mother
 I wish I could find it.
 Maybe, at the end of the rainbow.
 Where is the leprechaun?
 What is he hiding?
 Where is the pot of gold?
 Are you out there?
 Are you hearing me?

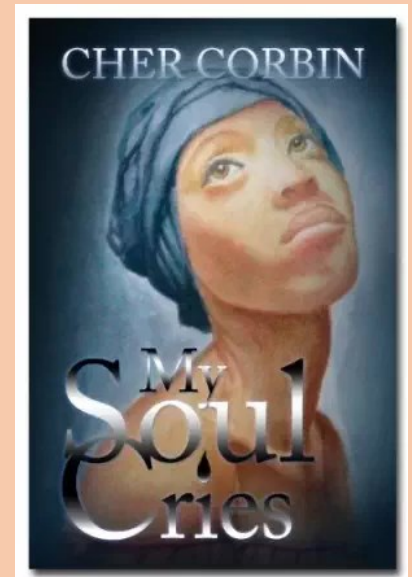
Please do not send your demons,
 your collectors, your nemeses.
 We crave your indulgence and seek some compassion.
 Life changes have precipitated this course of events.
 The immaturity of those who were bestowed with responsibility and who gaily threw it to the wind because of lecherous affections in neighboring terrain.

Make space.
 Give time.
 Empathize.
 I have a path to walk.
 A journey to complete.
 The road is slippery from the early morning rain.
 I am cold and feel hungry but I look up, and what do I see?

The Rainbow.
 A promise, it will get better.
 It will be dark for a while as the heavy clouds rush across the sky.
 But the space will be made, the sky will become clear again and the beauty of the diffracted light of the arc will be seen through it all.

I have a ways to walk.

Mr. Leprechaun, please, please
 Wait for me!



© Cher Corbin"



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

Cher-can be contacted at cher.insight@gmail.com and has a social media presence at <https://www.facebook.com/CorbinGirl> <http://cher-insight.blogspot.com> and on **Twitter** @cherinsight **Instagram** @CherAntoinetteStudio



Writer | Publisher | Project Manager

Ophelia S. Lewis

KEEP IN TOUCH



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COTTON TREE PRESSBOOK

Websites:

<http://liberiestories.blogspot.com/>

<http://cottontreepress.com>

<http://www.CommunicatingJustice.org>

Facebook

Linked In:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/elmashaw>

Contact Person: **Elma Shaw**

Author Interview 3

SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

Renee' B. Drummond-Brown



Renee' B. Drummond-Brown

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

Tell us a little about yourself

I, Renee' B. Drummond-Brown, am the wife of Cardell Nino Brown Sr. and from our union came Cardell Jr., Renee and Raven Brown. I am the offspring of Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Drummond of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My siblings are Delbert D. Drummond and the late Pastor Shawn C. Drummond. I was born in North Carolina, at Camp Lejeune US Naval Hospital. I am a graduate of Geneva College of Pennsylvania, and my love for creative writing is undoubtedly

displayed through my very unique style of poetry. My poetry is inspired by God and Dr. Maya Angelou. Because of them I pledge this: "Still I write, I write, and I'll write!" "Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight" is flown across the seas by God's raven. There are several Scriptures that I love; however, this one speaks volumes during this 'season': "And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth." (Genesis 8:7 KJV)

2. Why writing?

Because; as previously stated in my book SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, "WRITING IS MY OXYGEN" (Drummond, R., p.xii).

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

First and foremost, The Holy Bible containing The Old and New Testaments, King James Version; A Regency Bible from Thomas Nelson Publishers. However, I absolutely love, love, love, The Color Purple by Alice Walker, because her writing prose impacts my soul every-time I read her book and/or watch the movie! I believe that Author Walker wrote on the subject of purple based on using literature to elaborate, and exaggerate the hidden affect contained in colored women. In juxtaposition, purple also represents intelligence,

religion, and royalty. Walker proved this in her Novel, The Color Purple; that there was power (God) in the midst of darkness by keeping her character's sanity through the letters in her mind, meant for God only. Although, her character Mrs. Celie never knew hope existed, I still do not believe that it was ever the intention of the author to have God answer those (cries) within the letters. This would then allow validity in the inner character to reveal Celie's darkest place and for this very reason; I love Walker's brilliant work.

I also absolutely love the work of Dr. Maya Angelou. She was a brilliant poet as well and her work has truly influenced my writing career.

4. How do you approach your work?

First with prayer and then using a systematic collection of poetic accounts before I write pieces that are "designed to have colorblind justice, hear the truth, touch freedom, taste love, and smell the Rose of Sharon".

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

The recurring theme running through the vein of my writings could be viewed under the spiritual genre lens, but... it is safe to say, that I am not boxed into any particular category. I am extremely versatile in my writing prose

(Free Verse, if you will). I can write on love, nature, romance, comedy, politics and social issues (just about anything), however, I respect all writers, but I personally, would not write "Dark" poetry.

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

My poetry book titles are "SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER" and "Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight-I'll Write Our Wrongs". They are sold online in softback, hardback and e-Book form at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Kindle, Nook, and Google (just to name a few web sites). A synopsis of: Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight-I'll Write Our Wrongs!

"Renee's Poems with Wings Are Words in Flight is a collection of poetic accounts designed to have colorblind justice, hear the truth, touch freedom, taste love, and smell the Rose of Sharon. This book is written with such conviction that it is sure to cleanse the soul, mend the broken heart, and ultimately transform one's mind."

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

My first published poem was written for Rutha Mae Harris of Albany, Ga., Original Freedom Singer and Civil Rights Activist. The poem "Ms. Rutha Mae Harris" was

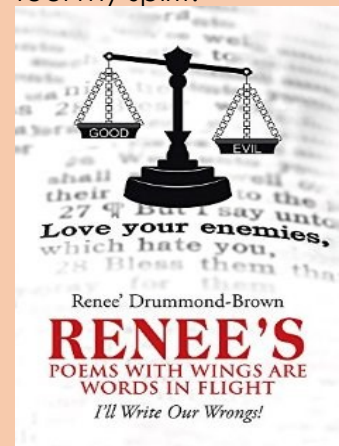
given to her by my college Professor, Dr. Todd Allen, and was published with Judith Hampton-Thompson, Metro Gazette Publishing Company. Since then, it has been my badge of honor to have met the legendary Ms. Rutha Mae Harris, one of the original Freedom Singers of the Civil Rights Movement who 'sang' for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., on August 28, 1963, at The March on Washington DC. Note* Ms. Rutha Mae Harris has written acknowledgements in every-one of my books thus far. Rutha's poem was also published on the CUBM/Geneva College at the Center for Urban Biblical Ministry website. My poems have recently been published with KWEE Magazine, Tuck Magazine, and Rhythm and Muse Artist Spotlight. My work was also used in Albany Georgia, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Tulum Mexico and Wake Forest North Carolina just to name a few places where Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight have flown across God's seas.

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

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44 KJV).

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

My poetic accounts are written from my heart, mind and soul and anyone reading my work is sure to feel my spirit.



10. Do you have any advice for other writers?

Yes; the late Dr. Maya Angelou, taught me how to 'RISE' within my writings and because of her "Still I write, I write, I'll write" therefore, I say unto you, that one must release fear in exchange to write.

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

I just completed a Humanities Literature Course while in college and I read The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald and (re-read) The Color Purple by Alice Walker. Note*

Both were excellent writes.

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

Because I am a full time college student; there is not a lot of time for travel, let alone, promote my books,

however, once I have studied to show myself approved, the Father will provide my increase.

13. What are your current projects?

I am presently working on another book of poetry.

Published in both KWEE and Tuck Magazine.

Published in The Metro Gazette Albany Georgia's online newspaper.

Published Geneva College-Center for Urban Biblical Ministry (CUBM)

I have been recently interviewed with: official site.

-Author Susan Joyner-Stumpf- Rhythm and Muse Artist Spotlight.

-Author Fiona McVie, Scotland, United Kingdom.

-Dr. John Stanko and Karla Threadgill-Byrd, CUBM Urban Heroes Blog Talk Radio.

Featured work:

Essay contests, Poetry contest-wins, and/or placed and writing projects just to name a few:

Poetic Reflections by Author Renee Drummond-Brown at "The Installation Service" of Reverend Shawn C. Knox, Sr., (Sunday April 24, 2016)

1st Runner up 2016 "Poetry In My Mind" Weekly Contest (Poem: Happiness is Poetic Thoughts).

New Pittsburgh Courier www.newpittsburghcourier.com (March 16-22- 2016 Newspaper issue) Author Renee' Drummond-Brown performing Spoken Word for Grandmothers of Pearls celebrating Black History.

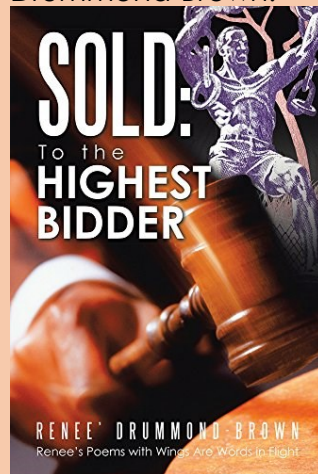
Author Renee' Drummond-Brown performed Spoken Word (February 13, 2016).

Potpourri Poets/ Artist: Writing Community-Sweet Valentine Poetry Contest; Second Place.

Photo selected Pentasi B World Friendship Poetry, 2016, for Author's around the globe (Poem: "Woman").

First Place: "Poetry In my Mind" 2016 January Poem Contest.

Center for Urban Biblical Ministry (CUBM) 2015, Graduate Speech, Authored by Renee' B. Drummond-Brown.



Geneva College of Western Pennsylvania, "The Multicultural Student Services Office Presents Renee' Drummond-Brown

2nd Prize in the Undergraduate Essay Contest".

Where the Artist can be found, my books, etc.:

Drummond-Brown, R. (2016). Sold To the Highest Bidder. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.<http://bookstore.authorhouse.com/Products/SKU-001068789/Sold-To-the-Highest-Bidder.aspx> Drummond-Brown, R. (2015). Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight-I'll Write Our Wrongs. Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press. <http://bookstore.westbowpress.com/Products/SKU-001005621/Renees-Poems-with-Wings-Are-Words-in-Flight.aspx>

14. Have you read books(s) by (a) Liberian author(s) Or about Liberia?

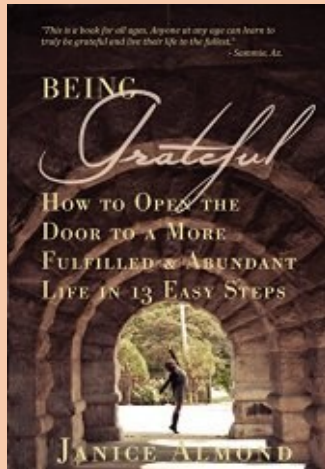
No, but I plan to read about Liberia when time permits.

15. Any last words?

As an emerging Author I would greatly appreciate the readers of this written interview to support my book(s) and/or e-Books. I want to thank you for featuring me, Author of the Month and my work in KWEE Magazine. "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me." (Matthew 25:40)

Renee' Drummond-Brown

Finding Meaning in Everyday Living



Janice Almond

MAKE A CHOICE TO BE STEADFAST

MAKE A CHOICE TO BE STEADFAST.

Make a choice to be immovable. Make a decision to stand firm and remain firm. Why do we, much of the time, dilly-dally, vacillate, and keep from making a decision? Or once we have made one, don't stick with it? Where does this indecisiveness come from? Why won't we stand our ground? What are we afraid of? I've heard it said, "You must stand for something, or you will fall for anything."

There has never been a truer statement. Make a determined effort to stand up for what you believe. Don't be intimidated. As a Christian, I stand up for my beliefs. James 1:8 says, "...a double-minded man is unstable in ALL his ways." Can't have "two" minds. If you are not steadfast, you will always be unstable, unsteady, and unsure.

Whatever you have decided to do with your life, you have an allotted amount of time. We need to admit that we haven't always been steadfast. We have wavered. We can't and won't get anywhere with our dreams by vacillating. Let's face it. We

have dilly-dallied more times than we want to admit or count.

The important question is, "How do we stop from vacillating and make the needed changes?" "How do we get rid of these "two" minds in our head?" It takes extreme focus. Ask yourself, "How well do you pay attention?"

This is what you need to do to be steadfast and practice steadfastness. You need the ability to pay attention. We all have this ability. We just don't always use it.

Take a minute and think of someone you know who started something; a career, a sport, a relationship, a marriage, a family, etc., and didn't finish it? What happened? They lost focus. They stopped paying attention. They decided for some reason that it just wasn't worth it to keep pursuing what they thought they wanted. It happens every day.

I remember when I lost focus. It was during my first six months of marriage. My dream of becoming a news broadcaster was changed by my circumstances. I had changed my mind because now all I wanted to do was to be a wife and a mother.

At the time, my husband was attending Los Angeles Community College. While there, he came across a radio producer who wanted to interview me for a radio station in Hollywood. I told my husband, "No." He couldn't believe it. He thought I had lost my mind.

You know why I changed my mind? I was three months pregnant, and I didn't want to work. I no longer had that dream of becoming a news broadcaster. To this day, my husband tells me, "You could have been the next Oprah Winfrey!" Just think of it, I could have her billions now if I had remained steadfast.

Why must we be steadfast? We pay a BIG price when we waver. We cannot and will not pursue our dreams without determination.

Determination causes us to struggle. You cannot be steadfast without a struggle. Steadfastness or determination takes effort. Too many times, we want ease.

Now, think of someone you know that you would consider steadfast. They are stable, dependable, reliable, and firm in purpose. This person stays and stands true. Are you this type of person?

You may even consider this person your "rock of Gibraltar." He or she is always steady. You most likely admire this person, don't you?

In fact, some of you are going through a situation right now. If you are not "firm in purpose," not only will you not see a way out, there will be no way out. Now is the time to hold tight to your dreams. Now is the time to focus.

"Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus," Alexander Graham Bell.

Do this. Tell "one" of your minds to get lost! You remember that Dr. Seuss book, *The Cat in the Hat*? You remember, Thing 1 and Thing 2? Well, pick Thing 1 and tell Thing 2 to take a hike! Tell him to get packing! I'm serious about this. Stay with "one" mind. Be resolute. Hold fast.

Choose steadfastness from this day forward. Choose to get rid of the "two" minds. You can do it. You must do it. Your character and your future are at stake.

Here's an exercise:

Write down a few reasons why you should be steadfast. **DO IT NOW.**

WHY I MUST BE STEADFAST.

List five to ten reasons if you can. How does that make you feel?

COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE:

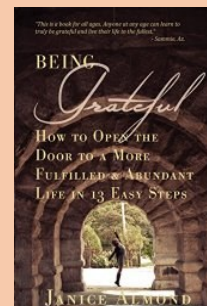
The things that I will do to be more steadfast are...

This is an excerpt from my upcoming book, *BEING DETERMINED: How to be Relentless in Pursuing Your Dreams in 15 Simple Ways*. Available on Amazon.com May 31, 2016.

Join my email list & get my first book free. Go to www.janicealmondbooks.com/contact



Janice Almond is the author of the *Being Grateful* book series. Her first book in the series, *Being Grateful: How to Open the Door to a More Fulfilled & Abundant Life in 13 Easy Steps* is available on her website: www.janicealmondbooks.com. Follow Janice on Twitter: @JalmondjoyRenee



"RiqueSpeaks: Liberia 77" A Review

Henrique Hopkins

"Liberia 77" is a part of an ever growing body of Liberia themed postWar films and literature. The 2010 documentary follows two Canadian brothers, Jeff and Andrew Topham, as they return to Liberia, in which they spent two exciting childhood years during the late 1970's. What makes the film resonate is watching the Topham brothers' experience in their own way, the sense of loss, displacement, disappointment, anguish and uncertainty felt by Liberian nationals in the wake of the long period of Liberian social instability. Also special is the weapon the Tophams use to fight back and reconnect with the Liberia of their childhood, as well as do their small part to bring hope for the future. Photography is their profession, and they use it in "Liberia 77" as what the late great photographer Gordon Parks referred to as their "choice of weapons."

The film resonates because I have always known Liberians in particular to have a great love of photographs. Photographs have also been my primary connection to Liberia! Having been born in America after the 1980 coup. The Liberia I know is a world of pictures, some black and white, some with that 1970s brown tint, and others in rich old school saturation. It's a world of well dressed, mod '60s young men and women in High School and College yearbooks.

Older people in their Sunday best, and President Tubman receiving foreign dignitaries in formal attire, or GQ suits, often with cigar in hand. A world of "dream houses" with car ports and wood paneled walls. Black & White studio portraits of Parents, Aunts, Uncles. Landmarks such as the **E.J Roye** building or the **Ducor Palace** are in the background, not emphasized because the important thing in the pictures was the people, and the people taking the pictures assumed the buildings that served as a backdrop would long survive, like the Eifel Tower or Empire State Building.

It's also a world of images of rivers, mining camps, staff housing, country devils and traditional dance troupes. Villages with

traditional housing, well beat down dirt roads, and smiling children, poor but strong families. As the years progressed and my Father made trips back home, it became images of dilapidation, the strong foundations still visible but wasting away from lack of maintenance. By the '90's, those images provided cause for despair.

For the Topham brothers, their Liberian photos were the visual documents of a high point in their childhoods. They lived with their Parents at the Exchem compound in Margibi, where their Father supervised the manufacture of industrial explosives and shotgun shells. The family left Liberia mere months before the 1980 coup that deposed President Tolbert and other members of government. The photographs of that time spent in Liberia, which included pictures with a monkey named Betsy, became such a part of their identity that these two white Canadian kids were known as "the kids from Liberia" during their youth in Canada.

It was the appreciation and love of the Liberia captured on their Parents photographs that gave them their artistic vocation and profession as Photographers. The two years they lived in Liberia gave them photographs that told a story that helped form their identity as individuals as well as a family. This is the set up for the shock and uneasy feelings of their return to Liberia, to discover that the war has not only destroyed people, roads and buildings, but also the photographic images of how beautiful and vital those people and buildings had once been. They talk to men who had worked with their father at Exchem, who told them stories of how they had been forced to bury or destroy pictures of themselves during the Civil War, for fear of the suspected wealth the possession of photographs implied. The only images many of these men had left of their handsome youth was their company ID cards, many of which had to be dug up for the Topham brothers return.

Cinematically this four decade spanning story is advanced by its subject, pictures. There is a slide montage that tells the story of Liberia, ending on a brutal image of a soldier behind a human skull. The brothers had a goal of recreating the original photos that had been taken in their youth. Doing so

brings them face to face with the devastations of war. Andrew at one point remarks, "This doesn't feel like my life", when confronted with the hollowed out structures his family had once inhabited. There is no sense of nostalgia to be found for the brothers in the physical structures of Liberia. They find that even Andrew's simian friend, a research monkey named Betsy, is also dead. They are denied a safe, comfortable, nostalgic return to the images of their old photographs.

As the brothers realize the physical landscape no longer reflects the Liberia they once knew, the focus lands squarely on the most important aspect of any nation, its people. The Topham's in particular were determined to find a Liberian man who had worked for their family in their youth and who they had been especially close to, a man named James Morris. They were unable to find him, but they were able to find his son, Jefferson Morris, called "Jeff", in honor of Jeff Topham, who his Father had minded as a boy. The film also introduces us to a bevy of Liberian Exchem exemployees, middle aged men now, all anxious for the company to return operations in Liberia and return a standard of living long since vanished. The brothers are careful to make it clear they have no real power in this matter, they're photographers, not Exchem reps, but they do set up a picture of the Liberian employees to take back to their Father in Canada.

Along the way the Tophams earnestly struggle with legitimate feelings of guilt regarding the current state of Liberia. They openly as their Father if he thinks his shotgun shells contributed to the destruction of the 1990s. When they found Becky the monkey dead on their return, Andrew was humorously surprised that the Monkees did not welcome and console him as human beings would. When he purchases food for the remaining Monkees of the research group Becky was a part of, he realizes how much easier it is to help animals than human beings, a constant criticism many people have for well-meaning liberal activists. Helping human beings requires sustained effort for beings that have free will and may not repay your efforts in the ways one would expect. They realize this as they agonize over how to best help James

son, Jeff's namesake "Small Jeff", who dreams for a chance to finish school and possibly be sponsored by the Tophams to study abroad. It is not indicated whether the two handsome brothers are married or not, but it seems they might be single bachelors without families. Taking on Small Jeff would seem to pose a large responsibility for men who have not had children of their own yet. But their return to Liberia and search for Jeff's father, serving as ambassadors as well for their own parents, underscore their deep connection to the Liberian people.

In the end, the Tophams contribute the most through their art form, photography. The great African American activist Frederick Douglas felt that pictures were a powerful weapon in the Black struggle for dignity and respect. In "Liberia 77" photographs are a tool for remembering oneself and one's life. As a Liberian proprietor of a photo shop remarks, "photo is life." The Tophams render service to Liberia by giving gifts of their artistic photo's to many people they meet, and eventually by meeting with Liberian government officials such as Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf herself. And their work has continued since the movie on the Liberia '77 website, where anyone can upload images of Liberia during more peaceful times, as a testament to our children that Liberia is a nation that had its conflicts, as all nations do, but is not a hellhole of perpetual war and instability. The Tophams in this way provide a magnificent example of how any Liberian artist or artist interested in Liberia can serve her, by using their talent to help people recognize the multi-faceted beauty of life in Liberian form.

Please visit www.liberia77.com to purchase the film on DVD and to participate in the Topham brothers' ongoing Liberian historic photography database.



Henrique Hopkins

Hopelessness vs. Joblessness: The Dilemma of Unification Day in Liberia

By **Martin K. N. Kollie**

Youth Activist, martinkerkula1989@yahoo.com

Since this year began, I have made it my business to conduct a practical assessment of the livelihood and wellbeing of our people in various communities across Liberia, especially Montserrado County. I have gone to slum communities like West Point, Clara Town, Soniwen, Chicken Soup Factory, Logan Town, Doe Community, Red Light, Plumcor, Neezoe, New Kru Town, Bassa Town and many other shantytowns. I have seen for myself the horrifying living condition of our people.

The reality from these petrifying scenes is that our people no longer live like normal human beings in a country of their birth. Some of them are mere squatters and informal inhabitants. Life has become hopeless and unbearable due to extreme poverty and hardship. Survival of the fittest has become a normal phenomenon, especially in slum and rural neighborhoods. Every time I reflect on what our people are going through in a nation endowed with diversity of natural resources, sorrow pricks my heart with tears springing forth from my eyes.

It is not an easy thing to narrate the story of our people, because they have an appalling and a gloomy story. Their story is a story of neglect and self-pity. Their story is a story of misery and non-achievement. Their story is a story of hopelessness and joblessness. Their story is a story of hard labor and destitution. Their story is a story of abuse and exploitation. Their story is a story of hunger and humiliation. Their story is a story of marginalization and subjugation. Their story is a story of illiteracy, ignorance and disease. As I sit this morning in my lonely room, I am finding it very difficult to pen down the true story of our people.

However, this is not a new or strange story. For more than 168 years, these are realities our people have been confronted with. They have been trekking with this **baggage of misery** for almost two (2) centuries now. The impact or weight of this bundle is too heavy to bear, but they have no choice or option now, but to endure this tough journey as a result of bad governance,

unpatriotism, greed and systemic corruption. The scars of this baggage are irreversibly piercing the aspiration and destiny of millions across Liberia.

On this Unification Day (May 14), there is no sign of impetus from citizens to observe this national holiday in grand style. The hustle for bread has intensified. The struggle for rice matters, especially to slum-dwellers. In a country of equal citizenship, vast majority of Liberian citizens are economically powerless, choiceless and defenseless. As a result of this, **rights** have been swept under the carpet. Equal opportunities for all citizens are entirely imaginary and nonexistent as the **'Spoils System'** prevails.

As I walk on the principal streets of Monrovia every day, I see absolutely no hope in the faces of street children and coldwater sellers. I see a group of young Liberian youth in huge quantity gambling and experimenting with drugs. I see a growing population of car loaders, push-push riders and motorcyclists. The newest profession of our young brothers graduating from high school these days is motorbike riding. Our young sisters have to trade their self-worth and pride just to survive. Their dream to become potential leaders of our society is decaying day after day.

Our streets are becoming jam-packed with hopeless and helpless citizens as a result of the depressing economic realities prevailing across Liberia. Children, youth as well as adults have become very vulnerable to all forms of exploitation and abuse ranging from trafficking to rape. Some of our young sisters have become prostitutes overnight just to survive. Life in Liberia is no longer about human dignity or self-esteem. Some of our people have been wholly disrobed of their dignity. Liberia has become a nation with a miserable and frustrated population.

It is an open secret that Liberians are really desperate for **economic change**. There is no doubt that they are catching hard time. In 2014, a Liberian said to me "I would prefer living in a US prison for two to five years and later be given a valid status in America than to live in Liberia." Another citizen applying for diversity visa in 2015 had this to say, "I can parade in Monrovia naked if the US embassy can guarantee to offer me a visa." This is the extent at which our people are vulnerable and hopeless. What a sad story to narrate!

Liberia would be virtually empty (almost a ghost land) in a day's time if Liberians are given an immediate opportunity to resettle in Europe and America. I know this for a fact, because I am aware of what our people go through every day. I share in their affliction and frustration. I empathize with them during these troubling times. The mass suffering and subjugation of our people is despicable and what is even more tragic is that nothing seems to be changing. Instead of moving forward, they are moving backward.

When a country we cherish so much has nothing rewarding to offer us in return, but a gloomy and devastating future, then it justifies our stance that celebrating unification day with economic thieves and career-crooks is worthless. When a nation we hold dear to our hearts offers us no genuine solution(s) to poverty, illiteracy and disease as a result of bad governance, then it means that unification day is just another big fiasco. When a country we have pledged our unflinching loyalty to cannot give us safe drinking water, electricity, better housing, quality education, improved health care, sanitation, food security and social welfare, then its means that unification day has lost its real essence and taste.



Partial view of slum life in Liberia

Can a group of poverty-stricken, marginalized and humiliated people celebrate Unification Day? Can a large group of choiceless, jobless and hopeless people unite with a small group of wealthy and powerful people? How can we celebrate Unification Day when our people have been subjected to modern slavery? How can we celebrate Unification Day when vast majority of our people still sleep in shacks and huts? This is the dilemma of celebrating Unification Day! Celebrating Unification Day with a handful of economic pillagers and bourgeoisies falsely

parading as patriots is an affront to this generation. It makes no sense to celebrate Unification Day when few self-seeking rascals and so-called leaders have intentionally failed to ensure that the nation's wealth is equitably distributed.

They (**bourgeoisies/capitalists**) embezzle our resources to sponsor their children at topnotch foreign institutions while education is a mess in our country. They seek medical treatment abroad with tax-dollars while our people die every day from curable sicknesses like malaria, cold and fever. They live in mansions with 24/7 electricity while our people live in slums with mosquitoes, rats and cockroaches. They drink imported mineral water and eat good food from supermarkets while our people drink from creeks/open-wells and sometimes go to bed hungry.

They ride flashy cars and entertain themselves at the best resorts and restaurants while our people struggle for public transport. They have the names of their family members on public payrolls when our brothers and sisters graduating from local Universities are in search of jobs. They sign bogus concession agreements to fill their deep-seated pockets with illicit wealth while students at the State-run University lack access to internet basic academic facilities. This is the dilemma of Unification Day!

The rights of their kids are protected while the rights of kids belonging to the downtrodden class are abused. They have access to justice and security while our people are slapped by unjust verdicts. They wire millions of our country's money to foreign bank accounts and buy homes abroad while our people endure hard labor and abuse under the Lebanese, Indians and other foreign nationals. Even though they are claiming that Liberia is experiencing economic meltdown or recession, but they are still living like Kings and Queens at the expense of the ordinary people. When the people want to protest in demand for their rights, they unleashed police and military personnel with guns and tear-gas to intimidate them. This is the dilemma of celebrating Unification Day.

These are the very same causes or reasons for which Unification Day was first declared on May 14, 1960 by the administration of William V. S. Tubman. These causes or reasons are even more visible today. The declaration of May 14

(Unification Day) through an act of Legislature in 1960 was a unique step forward to defeating disunity and disintegration in Liberia, especially between the Americo-Liberian elite and the indigenous majority. However, after 56 years since the introduction of the Unification Policy, the fostering of national unity, reconciliation and brotherhood among all Liberians irrespective of culture or creed remains an unachievable dream for reasons stated above. Greed and unpatriotism have overshadowed the collective interest of our nation. Public service in Liberia nowadays is no longer about integrity, credibility or transparency. This is the dilemma of celebrating Unification Day.

When President Sirleaf announced through a proclamation on Friday, May 13, 2016 that all citizens throughout Liberia should remain home and observe Unification Day on Saturday, May 14, 2016, I was wondering whether the President is unaware that vast majority of our people do not remain home to observe holidays (or day of rest), because they have to go out and hustle for food and money. Even on this holiday, our people are out en-mass in search of survival. They are selling in the marketplaces, loading cars and gambling. They are crushing rocks and riding motorbikes under the rain and hot sun. They are mining sand and hunting in thick forests. Some of them have to walk far distances to farm, fishing and fetch water while others are compelled to push wheelbarrows and wait for night hours to carryout business as usual (prostitution and robbery). These are the predicaments of today. How then can we celebrate Unification Day when public discontent is growing as a result of these predicaments?

The people of Liberia can only commemorate Unification Day in a blissful mood when rampant corruption is minimized and economic criminals are unsympathetically reprimanded for raiding State coffers. National Unification starts with patriotism, and not patronage. National Integration comes through public transparency, and not fiscal indiscipline. It begins with the proper management of the people's resources and power. How do we expect unity to prevail across Liberia when over 83.8 percent of our people still live on less than US\$1.25 per day while top officials of government continue to receive bribes to alter our laws and auction our

natural resources? It is a paradox to celebrate Unification Day in the midst of mass unemployment, rampant corruption, inequality, nepotism and bad governance.

The gap between the rich and the poor in Liberia is too wide – there is no middle class. The people's children who are currently working on goldmines in leeward counties and selling cold water in street corners deserve to be in school like the grandchildren of those in authority. Our young mothers, sisters and brothers deserve empowerment opportunities through quality education, gainful employment and profitable enterprises. The Liberian people have been through a lot and it is sad that no one is listening to their cry. There comes a time when they become constrained to reshape their own destiny and redefine history through genuine democratic actions (April 14, 1979 is a unique example to reference).

The people have lost hope and confidence in a government they gave power to about 12 years ago. Were they wrong to cast their ballots? I hope 2017 will make a lot of difference. We have a choice to make in 2017. We either stay with poverty or embrace prosperity. We deserve better than what we have now. There can be no unity and cohesion in any sovereign state until public welfare becomes a matter of national imperative. A nation with a hopeless and jobless citizenry is far from achieving genuine unity. This is the dilemma of Unification Day in Liberia!



A teenage girl crushing rock in Liberia

About The Author: Martin K. N. Kollie is a Liberian youth activist, student leader, an emerging economist and a young writer. He is currently a student at the University of Liberia reading Economics and a loyal stalwart of the Student Unification Party (SUP). He can be reached at martinkerula1989@yahoo.com

Author Interview 4

SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

KEN DRONSFIELD



Ken Allan Dronsfield

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

I'm a poet/author/digital artist. I was born and brought up in the Northeast part of the US. I currently reside in Oklahoma, USA, on the southern plains. I enjoy playing guitar, thunderstorms, walking in the woods at night, and spending time with my two cats, Merlin and Willa.

2) Why writing?

I started writing at about 13 years old primarily

writing my own lyrics to songs I would write for the guitar. This grew into the love of poetry and writing.

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

Every single book I've ever read has been an influence and inspiration. Reading through some of Shakespeare, all of Edgar Allan Poe's poems and stories.

I'm also a huge fan of Stephen King and absolutely love his horror stories and movies.

4) How do you approach your work?

This one can be a tough question. My inspiration comes from so many different places.... everything from current events, to a smell in nature, a particular sunset or sunrise.....even a picture will start the juices flowing and I will then start the poem or short story.

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

Horror, paranormal, mystery, and social

justice are what I enjoy. But I also explore love and humor in my poetry.

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

I'm the Co-Editor of a new poetry anthology titled, "Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze", available on Amazon.com. The book is a collaborative effort from 53 new and established contemporary poets. It's an 8 1/2 x 11 inch book with 188 pages.

I'm currently working on two new books, another anthology titled, "Dandelion in a Vase of Roses" and my personal horror book which has been unannounced officially.

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

The title to the book, "Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze" was suggested by Editor Michael Lee Johnson.

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

We just want all the readers to enjoy some of the finest poetry out from around the globe. We have poets from every part of the planet represented in the book.

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

It is a wonderful, full size book, the price is affordable at under \$14.00 USD and would make an awesome gift for a birthday or other holiday. Author Interview Updated

10) Do you have any advice for other writers?

I truly believe one of the hardest mountains to climb while writing and submitting poetry or short stories for publication is handling those 'Rejection' emails or letters. Write and submit your best, but you have to understand that many times, your piece will get rejected.

Keep pressing on; read all the Publisher's journals, magazines and reviews thoroughly BEFORE submitting.... Give yourself that edge by knowing what they want and how they want it.

11) What book[s] are you reading now? Or recently read?

I'm currently trying to read *Pride and Prejudice*, by Author Jane Austen, first published in 1813. I tried reading it many years ago but found time was always against me.....NOW I have the time and will finally finish this wonderful book.

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

I have recently signed up to be a Contributor to The Australia Times, Poetry Magazine.

13) What are your current projects?

Two new books forthcoming, "Dandelion in a Vase of Roses" and my personal horror/paranormal book (untitled).

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

I have been reading back issues of Kwee Magazine and I'm enjoying the wonderful Liberian Poets and Writers showcased there...

15) Any last words?

I just want to take a moment and thank all of the KWEЕ Magazine staff and editors for their warm welcome and selecting my work for publication in this wonderful venue! It is indeed an honor to be published by such a vital and important publication for not only Liberia but the world, keeping Poetry and Literary work alive!

BIO



Ken Allan Dronsfield

Ken Allan Dronsfield is a Published Poet and Author originally from New Hampshire, now residing in Oklahoma. He enjoys thunderstorms, walking in the woods at night, playing guitar and time with his cats Merlin and Willa. His work has appeared in numerous Magazines, Reviews, Journals and Blogs on the Web and in print venues.

According to Eliot

Accra

I
African sunset spread out across the
skyline.
Gray land.
Vibrant yellow
red streaked sky blue.
Sheet of lightning,
Holds as eternal
Blind mirror.

II
The waste land
Where children sit around
Smoke grey smouldering heaps
The distance between us and them
Measured by the colour of our skin
children know that pity is not a gift

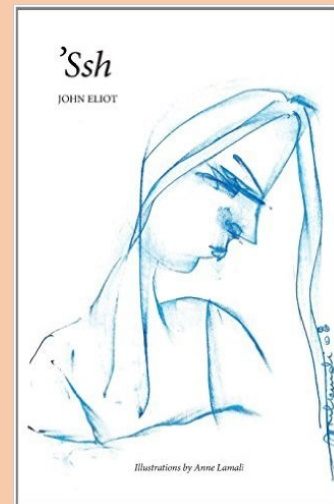
III
Hardly four walls
An earth floor
No table
Chair
Desks
Benches
Blackboard
Or chalk
No pupils
For there is no teacher
No education

IV
We are their Masters
said White Man
in the black confusion
Marketplace
of bodies and heat
An African goes down on
one Knee for Me
my Cream Linen Suit
and Royalty

© John Eliot

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 one book of poetry published '**Ssh**' available on Amazon and a new one will be coming out in the Autumn, titled '**Don't Go**'. Both books are published by Mosaïque Press of England."

John Eliot



"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."

Liberian Proverbs

Excepted from, **The Elders' Wisdom**

- 1. Marriage is like a peanut, you have to crack it to see what is inside.** *When one decides to get married, one will never know fully what it entails until you are in it. It is a journey that can only happen when you leave for it. It is true we can get glimpses of our partners, but the real thing is only when the marriage ceremony is over. In this case, one has cracked the ground pea and with time, one will know if it was good or not.*
- 2. Marriage is bittersweet.** *Married people fight and make up just like everyone else.*
- 3. No child laughs at the ugliness of its mother.** *Just as it is related in another parable, the sentiments hold true. There is no bad bush for a child. The child has none for its parents as well. The child sees its mother in ways that transcends any negativity others may see.*
- 4. No man is an island.** *We need others in life as much as they need us. We can do many things alone, but in substance, our lives depend on so many others and what they provide to make us live peaceably or happily.*
- 5. No matter how cold a monkey gets, he doesn't warm himself in leopard skin.** *There are some things that do not happen. The monkey in this case has and knows its limits. It will never consider wearing a leopard's skin as something of a play not even if it is facing a desperate situation.*
- 6. No matter how long a log may float in the water, it will never become a crocodile.** *What you are, you are; what you are not, you are not. We can't change the natural order of certain things. They are just the way they are.*
- 7. No matter how low a cotton tree falls, it is still taller than grass.** *Some things are just way beyond our reach or abilities. The grass at its tallest still falls short of the cotton tree at its lowest point.*
- 8. No matter how tight a monkey's trousers are, he has to leave space for his tail.** *We carry along with us some ingrain things. They never leave us, in fact, we make a conscious effort to provide for them. The monkey here never covers up or leaves its tails hidden, not even for a tight pant.*
- 9. No one can uproot the tree, which God has planted.** *As mentioned before, the concept of God is not limited to one kind. Liberians are religious on many counts. We believe that fate/destiny has a way of taking its proper place at the proper time. For the traditionalists or the Christians/Muslim etc. it is practically the same.*
- 10. No sane person sharpens his machete to cut a banana.** *The relative softness of the banana makes it seem foolish for one to use a sharpened knife on it. Some tasks are so obvious or have easy solutions that when others try to make them complicated, it gives room to question their sanity. In this case, the one who sharpens the knife is viewed as insane.*

'Twas Brillig

Richard Wilson Moss

19

Moving Day
Of this world I was dying
Until the movers came
And made me one of
them
They said, you work with
us now
Up front in the truck I
rode
With three of them, one
was drunk
Passing a flask, he said,
you better
Take a shot, its a long
day
And it was, we moved
heavy
But elegant things and
then
Broken down sofas, we
moved
The working class into
Two bedroom, one bath
homes
And one place, the old
one dead
Left her things to charity
Which we could not
understand
Victorian chairs and
lamps, cobwebs
On velvet drapes, the
drunk fell asleep
On a cherry and gold
divan
And when the sun fell
down again
The movers took me
home
And the foreman pulled
me aside
Slapped my back

And said, you did alright,
see you tomorrow
But that night I died.



Mayday

If you scribble, turn the
page
Sun scrawls as it turns
back
Forever to the edge
Scrape shoes on hot
pavement
Your stars are peeled
away
By lesser force, by the
slightness
Of surrounding darkness
At the party of deep red
plum
Pin tails on donkeys
Paper will bleed
Carrot cake arrives, have
some
If you have scribbled,
you have turned the
page
The guest book still
unmarred, almost
handsome
I am shifting legs of dark
corduroy

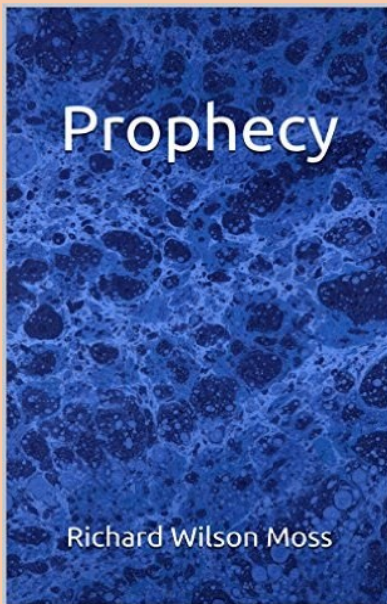
With ruddy face and
blue bow tie
Waiting until it is time
To dance around the
maypole.

AnnBee

AnnBee from
downstream visits
And says the moon must
be bigger
For the tides seem
stronger
The seagulls are more
stubborn
On the pier, they won't
fly off
Until nearly upon them
And at daybreak there
are more strangers
At the boat ramp
Launching even stranger
boats
And they are cold to me
Seem quite suspicious.

Again I have to tell Miss
AnnBee
Those at the ramp are
your good friends
You have known them
for years
You have been in their
boats
The moon is the same,
the tides unchanged
The birds, as always,
brave and unvexed
And AnnBee looks at me
Asking, are you
confident all of that is
true?

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This Performance

Boarding the fifteen to
 downtown
 There he is in the back,
 fellow ticket taker
 Of legitimate theater
 My age, pushing
 seventeen
 Young flesh of perfect
 machine
 But as always, he sneers
 at me, he laughs
 Thinking I am no good
 He actually says, "You
 are no good."

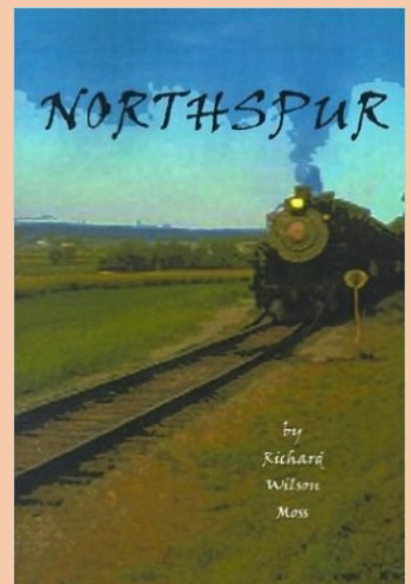
From the sour fifteen we
 disembark
 Behind him I walk the
 quarter mile
 Arriving, we enter like
 those ancient
 creatures
 Drawn into the Ark.

Soon we stand together
 at the podium
 And tear the tickets of
 our patrons
 Gingerly I drop the stubs
 like precious rocks

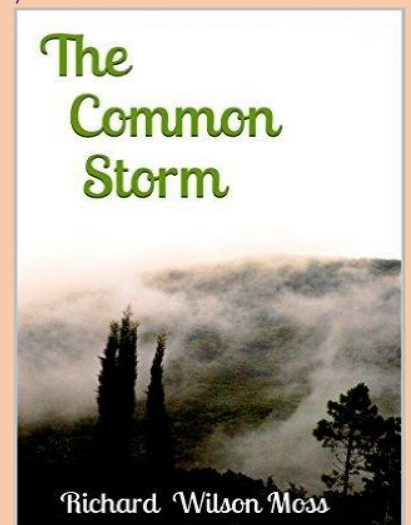
Into my companion's
 side of the box
 Again my critic laughs at
 this performance
 The actions and the plots
 Again, he actually says,
 "You are no good."

**Seamstress on
Battlefields**

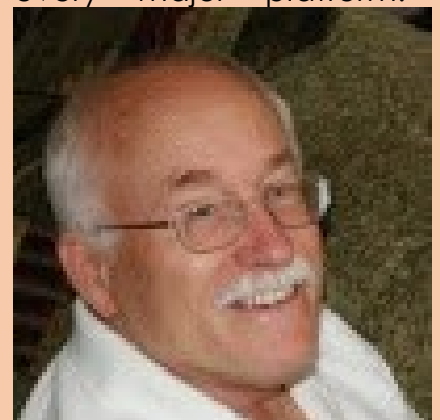
Yeah, I was there
 Darning socks, the bullet
 holes
 In camouflaged cuffs I
 patched
 I dragged the sewing
 machine
 To the ditch, through
 sand and mud
 Yeah, I was shot
 Wounded, still I made
 repairs; buttons,
 zippers
 Took the pants off
 severed legs
 Stitched them up, they
 looked nice
 Even on fallen men.



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Wilson Moss



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



©Richard Moss

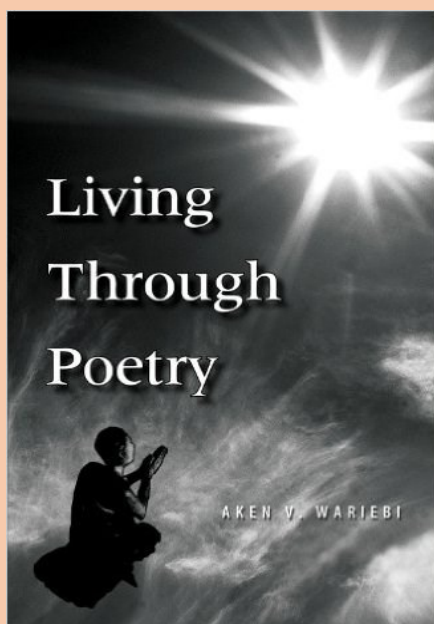
Aken-bai's- A Flow of Thoughts



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

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

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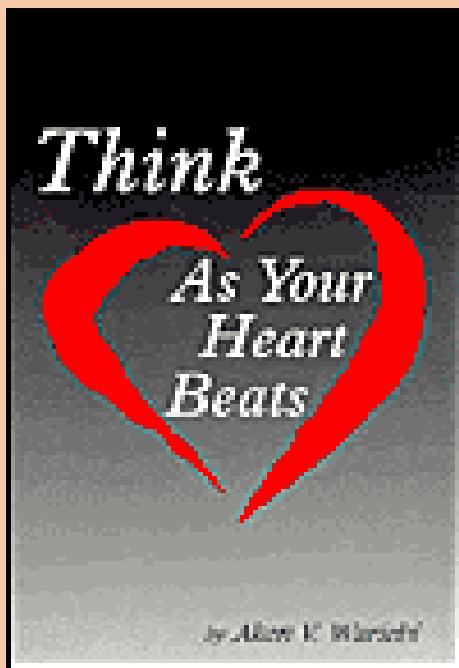
Be God's Beautiful

Be God's Beautiful

This is the land of plenty
Where I live, where I call home
A land of plenty in a far different way
Then my former home
Well, let me tell ya
Both are mine
Both are keepers

One gave me a foundation
The other where my foundation grew
One where abundance had a different meaning
One where abundance is defined differently
But both home to me
None I can deny
Both taught me lessons and still do
Both show me life
In both there is love and shared sacrifice
Hate too, but that isn't my style

As I stand here, I will tell you
I worship God
But let that not be for my glory
So I embrace both of my countries
Praising God in every which way,
Hopefully by example always
So tears fall and laughter doesn't crawl
I simply pray while opening my ears to
hear God's call
But it is how you interpret
You the listener, the observer
As for me, that is not my problem
And truly that is how I live with
everybody
Exhibiting the good, the best, not the
ugly from both lands
I believe that is how God would like it



God bless Liberia, The United States of America, and every land
 Spread abundance of positives
 If misinterpreted, Let God deal with it
 If slandered or evil prevails
 Please let God ...only God
 That way as I believe I am
 You can be your beautiful in your own way

As God works on and in you
 So go ahead, be your beautiful
 Make God proud and yourself
 Don't forget to smile while you're at it
 And be God's beautiful, by letting God do the molding
 This I tell you with God's love, life itself is the best beautiful you can imagine
 And every land in it

Written by Aken V. Wariebi.

So I pray and kneel and speak to God wherever I am
 In order to know abundance his way
 For both lands to be appreciated
 Of what he gave me, brought me through and continues to do
 So I look at abundance in spite of the Devil's foul play
 In God's name
 To spread love unconditionally everyday
 Whether there or here
 I in my imperfections
 Want to give love abundantly as he has given me



So I am here today
 To say every day, in every way

© Aken V. Wariebi



Aken V. Wariebi, MSW
www.facebook.com/inspirewithlove

Herbert Logerie

Happy Mother's Day to Mom and to All Women –

Mother, you were the first lady,
Who painted my cheeks with angelic kisses at birth,
And the first one who adorned my soul with wealth,
Tenderness, charity and sincerity.

Today is the day that we celebrate all mothers,
All women - young, old and deceased, and all future mothers.
Spring, the season of flowers and lovers,
Continues to enchant the hearts of the blue baby quakers.

Virgin Mary, I think of you all the time; welcome me
In your heart. Mona Lisa, imaginary lady,
I love your smile and your gaze. Mom, Mom,
Let me dream for the last time on your bosom.

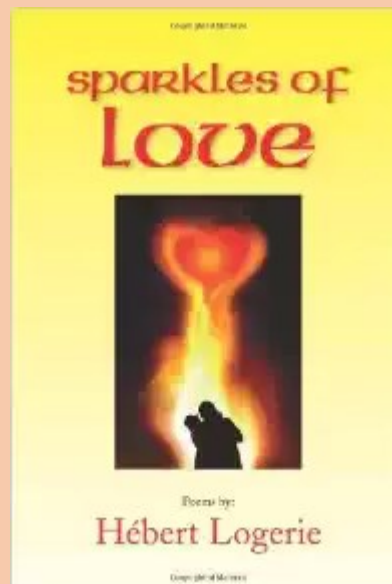
Henceforth, I would like to entertain you daily,
And when the bell rings your anniversary,
I'll surely rush to dive deeper in your lovely pool,
Under the sparkling of the stars, under the clear moon.
Mother, you were the one

who showed me the difference
Between night and day.
You fed me during the day,
And at nighttime, you put me to sleep like a prince,
Amidst the air filled-up with a soft jasmine scent of May.

The sweet souvenirs of your unconditional care
Caution me to love all mild-mannered women;
I can feel flowing in my veins, in my organs,
All day long a succulent taste of a ripe pear.

You know very well my faults and my qualities,
Please ask God at vespers, before I fall asleep with the Muses,
To bring back in my ears the humming memories,
So I can dream peacefully under the spells of your melodies.

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Bonne Fête à Maman et à Toutes les Femmes

Maman, tu étais la première femme
A me combler de baisers le jour de mon enfance.
La première amoureuse qui a décoré mon âme
De tendresse, de sincérité et de bienfaisance.

Aujourd'hui est le jour qu'on fête toutes les mamans,
Toutes les femmes et toutes les futures mères.
Le printemps, la saison des fleurs et des amants,
Continue à charmer les cœurs imprégnés de chimères.

Maman, la femme qui m'a fait connaître la différence
Entre le jour et la nuit. Le jour, tu me nourrissais,
Et la nuit tu me faisais dormir dans une paix,
Où l'air fut embaumé de jasmin et d'essence.

Les souvenirs de ces soigneux traitements
M'exigent à aimer toutes les femmes de notre monde.
Je peux sentir dans mes veines à chaque seconde
De la journée ces sentiments succulents.

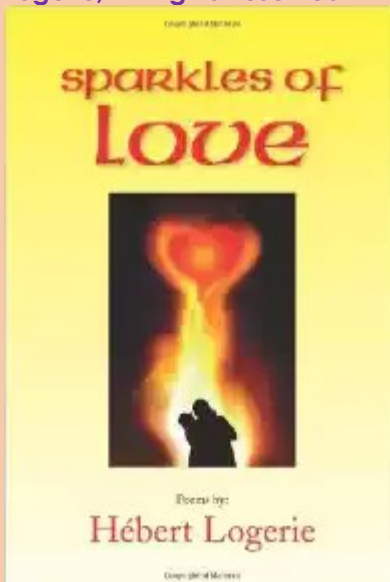
Vierge Marie, je pense à toi aussi, accueille-moi
Dans ton cœur. Mona Lisa, femme imaginaire,

J'aime ton sourire et ton regard.
Chère mère,
Laisse-moi rêver sur tes seins une dernière fois.

Désormais, je veux te fêter tous les jours,
Et quand viendra encore ton anniversaire,
Je m'y plongerais davantage dans ton bassin d'amour,
Où les étoiles scintilleraient sous la clarté lunaire.

Toi, la femme qui connaît mes qualités et mes défauts,
Demande à Dieu qu'à chaque soir avant que je sommeille,
Que ces souvenirs viennent visiter le creux de mes oreilles,
Pour que je puisse dormir dans l'ambiance de ton solo.

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Hébert Logerie is the author of "Mounts And Valleys of Love" Page 153
<https://www.poemhunter.com/hebert-logerie>

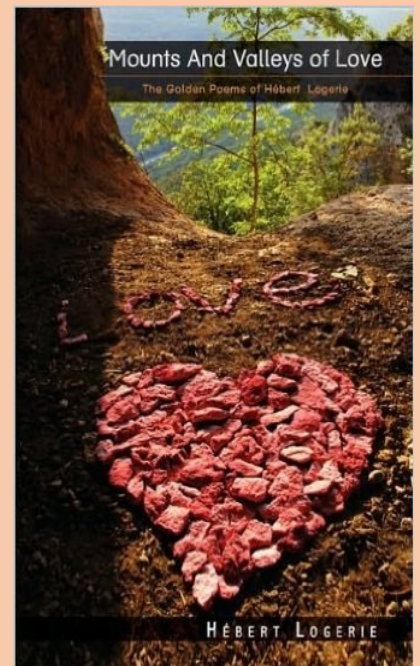
A Simple Farewell At Dawn -
My Lord! My friend left
and headed east,
Where she will find true
comfort, peace
And serenity. She'll be
free of pain
And misery, and be
blessed by the rain.

Esther, my friend, was a
wonderful person,
A fighter, a great
mother, and a super-
woman.

She knew how to
endure pain and
suffering.
She was a modern
princess, who loved
spring,
With its nasty thorns and
the beautiful flowers.
She's now gone with
the wind and the
thunders.

My Lord! My friend left
with last night's sunset,
Where she will no
longer be uptight and
upset,
With the problems and
the difficulties of life.
Now, she has no pain,
no worries and no
mouth.

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Hebert Logerie

is the author of several collections of poems.

Alumnus of: 'l'Ecole de Saint Joseph'; 'the College of Roger Anglade' in Haiti; Montclair High School of New Jersey; and Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, USA.

He studied briefly at Laval University, Quebec, Canada. He's a Haitian-American.

He started writing at a very early age. My poems are in French, English, and Creole; I must confess that most of my beautiful and romantic poems are in my books.

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

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

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

THE BATHING BIRDS

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

They were assumed to be true true lovers
They coupled as one in the ancient
porcelain
They splashed into this fountain full of
hopes
They tangoed to the splatter of the
washrag
They began a new verve that was to live
on
The Bathing Birds
They sat high up over the old electric
poles
They must be in a forever state to hold
tight
They nibble amorously from aged old
clay
They stare each other far into their red
hearts
They cast a spell to say you are mine now
The Bathing Birds
They have flown oceans all on solo flights
They made huge pacts with soldiers
unknown
They climbed mountains over burning hot
lava
They walked with the devil's aid for a push
up
They bring different ropes to ties together
now
The Bathing Birds

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

Is a Liberian poet, a radio presenter and a mother amongst other things. Her popular radio show deals with issues related to women- something she is passionate about.

Her poetry book is expected soon

Varney L.S. Gean

GUILTY CONSCIENCE



The enemy won't have that feeling
when so forlorn
The fraudster won't even ponder about
it one minute
The babies care less as they make the
most of everything
The robbers want all and think less about
our grievances
The silent rival won't hesitate to make a
huge benefit
No Guilty Conscience
The cheating husband won't think of
your affection at all
The nagging wife won't mind you need
some quiet time
The fastidious boss will be all in shredding
you apart
The murdered won't even give you
moment for last prayer
The judge won't smile as he slams the
gravel ever so hard
No Guilty Conscience
The priest won't laugh while telling you of
your many sins

The teacher won't bulge to mark the red
on the report card
The opponent only aims to bring you
down and wins it all
The cab driver will exploit you and think
little of your situation
The person loved so much could be the
game you never win
No Guilty Conscience
The police will thrash you without the
single feeling of mercy
The torrent will pour down tougher
without any consideration
The sun blazes and thinks little of the
warmth suffocating you
The heart beats the minds, the body
chills, the feet itches
The friends won't mind if you fall whilst
they make some gains
No Guilty Conscience

© **Varney Glean**—

Varney is a Liberian emerging poet. His pieces are featured in the Daily Observer and other national and international platforms

Ngosi Osuoha

BUNDLE OF FATE

In the hand of fate
We live fresh and raw
A life without date
And a world of no law.

We see the rate
Which we fight war
All gone and late
No finger, no claw.

In the wake of terrorism
The dawn of hate
In the midst of racism
Agony widens his gate.

Each day a wailing sound
Every moment a deepening ground
Now and then we are bound
Going round, coming around.

Peace runs far and far
Unity stumbles and staggers
Peace crosses the bar
Unity fumbles and wobbles.

The chord tears severally
Our love dies steady
Freedom rebels angrily
People die already.



Ngosi is a Nigerian emerging poet and a contributor to KWEE, her poems have been published in several international anthologies, on literary magazines and journals. She is currently working on her first poetry book.

Baltimore C. Verdier

Life Is A Sweet Sorrow

We must learned to take the bitter with
the sweet
We must take the joy with the pain
Mend the the broken pieces and move
ahead

So as we live, so we must die
The dark days and sun shining days
Be happy for the rain, sunshine and the
darkest night

Because it is what life is all about
It is what love is all about
Life is a sweet sorrow
So we must learned to take the bitter
with the sweet

Renee' B. Drummond-Brown

BLACK for no Apparent Reason

Some say
I'm way too loud
Some say
I'm wild
Some say
'Imma' beast
Without
A beauty inside
Some say
I'm 'EVIL'
Some say
I'm too fat

Some say
I'm bald
Nappy, ugly and 'BLACK'
Some say
I'm too skinny
'Wit'
Big poppy eyes
Carmel coated
On 'da' inside
'NAW'
I'm
'Jus' 'BLACK'
Some say
I'm too 'yeller'
And don't
Quite fit in
Not enough 'BLACK'
Not enough white
For acceptance
By anyone's kin
But...
'I'z' 'sayze'
I'm 'jus' 'BLACK'
For No Apparent Reason
(At all).

Dedicated To: 'BLACK' is beautiful!!!

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(Authored: "Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight-I'll Write Our Wrongs" and "SOLD: TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER". Note* each book ranked 5 stars!!!)



© Renee' B. Drummond-Brown

I am Renee' Drummond-Brown, am the wife of Cardell Nino Brown Sr. and from our union came Cardell Jr., Renee and Raven Brown. I am the offspring of Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Drummond of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My siblings are Delbert D. Drummond and the late Pastor Shawn C. Drummond.

I was born in North Carolina, at Camp Lejeune US Naval Hospital. I am a graduate of Geneva College of Pennsylvania, and my love for creative writing is undoubtedly displayed through my very unique style of poetry.

My poetry is inspired by God and Dr. Maya Angelou. Because of them I pledge this: "Still I write, I write, and I'll

write!" "Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight" is flown across the seas by God's raven.

There are several Scriptures that I love; however, this one speaks volumes during this 'season': "And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth." (Genesis 8:7 KJV)

Jack Kolkmeier

**The Joy Advanced Cafeteria
(Accra Ghana 1970)**

there was this little restaurant on the
outskirts of Accra
just a short walk from where we
stayed
for what we thought would be
a night
but turned into a week of
wonder
rambling adventures and warm
friendships
advanced entirely because of
the joys
we encountered in a tiny out of
the way
moment of splendid food
good vibes
cool music
and warm embrace

it wasn't really a cafeteria but more a
place
that served up steaming plates
of saucy soul food
cold beer
and never ending conversation
about love, life and the pursuit
of everything

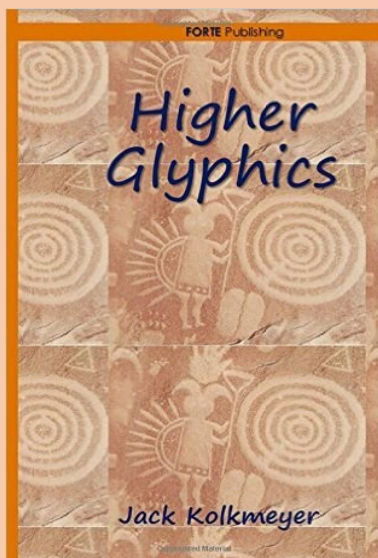
from the roots of pan African
movements
on to the slopes of why
ethnicity matters
to the reasoning that tribes
alone root the images
that we have of ourselves

but the heart of the lightness
was the juke box
that spun a weave of musical
moments
from the husky ramblings of Jim
Reeves
through the lilt of the Ramblers
Dance Band
into the hot pants of a future
that we all
somehow knew was in the feet
of Mr. Brown
the godfather of it all

this all transpired
and has never left the imprint
that it scored in my mind's ear

in the tiny moment spent

in The Joy Advanced Cafeteria



FORTE Publishing

Mohammed Donzo Dolley

Women Are Precious Jewels

A woman birthed each of us all
Yet some make them sex workers

Women catered to us
Women cared for us,
Women looked after us
Women nurtured us
Women taught us
They are precious
Why make one a sex slave?

We often marry them
We sometimes give birth to one
We at other times are siblings
Why would we even consider
Ill-treating or harming them?

I will end up marrying a woman
Why will I make one a sex slave?

We are inextricably tied to them
Women should be our most
Precious jewels and not some

Abuse object
A sex symbol
Or a furniture

04/15 /Monrovia, Liberia

Mohammed Donzo Dolley is an emerging Liberian poet. He is a community activist, a student leader and a passionate person. His poetry chapbook is expected to be released shortly.

Gifts of the Masters

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

GWENDOLYN BROOKS

The Mother

Abortions will not let you forget.
You remember the children you got that
you did not get,
The damp small pulps with a little or with
no hair,
The singers and workers that never
handled the air.
You will never neglect or beat
Them, or silence or buy with a sweet.
You will never wind up the sucking-
thumb
Or scuttle off ghosts that come.
You will never leave them, controlling
your luscious sigh,
Return for a snack of them, with
gobbling mother-eye.

I have heard in the voices of the wind
the voices of my dim killed
children.
I have contracted. I have eased
My dim dears at the breasts they could
never suck.
I have said, Sweets, if I sinned, if I seized
Your luck
And your lives from your unfinished
reach,
If I stole your births and your names,
Your straight baby tears and your
games,
Your stilted or lovely loves, your tumults,
your marriages, aches,
and your deaths,
If I poisoned the beginnings of your
breaths,
Believe that even in my deliberateness I
was not deliberate.
Though why should I whine,
Whine that the crime was other than
mine?--

Since anyhow you are dead.
Or rather, or instead,
You were never made.
But that too, I am afraid,
Is faulty: oh, what shall I say, how is the
truth to be said?
You were born, you had body, you died.
It is just that you never giggled or
planned or cried.

Believe me, I loved you all.
Believe me, I knew you, though faintly,
and I loved, I loved you
All.

CHINUA ACHEBE

Refugee Mother And Child –

No Madonna and Child could touch
that picture of a mother's tenderness
for a son she soon would have to forget.
The air was heavy with odours

of diarrhoea of unwashed children
with washed-out ribs and dried-up
bottoms struggling in laboured
steps behind blown empty bellies. Most
mothers there had long ceased
to care but not this one; she held
a ghost smile between her teeth
and in her eyes the ghost of a mother's
pride as she combed the rust-coloured
hair left on his skull and then -

singing in her eyes - began carefully
to part it... In another life this
would have been a little daily
act of no consequence before his
breakfast and school; now she
did it like putting flowers
on a tiny grave.

I Have Found What You Are Like

E. E. Cummings

(1894 - 1962)

i have found what you are like
the rain,

(Who feathers frightened fields
with the superior dust-of-sleep. wields

easily the pale club of the wind
and swirled justly souls of flower strike

the air in utterable coolness

deeds of green thrilling light
with thinned

newfragile yellows

lurch and.press

—in the woods

which

stutter

and

sing

And the coolness of your smile is
stirringofbirds between my arms;but
i should rather than anything
have(almost when hugeness will shut
quietly)almost,

your kiss

Book: 100 Selected Poems by E. E. Cummings

To My Mother

Edgar Allan Poe, 1809 - 1849

Because I feel that, in the Heavens
above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of
love,

None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have
called you—

You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death
installed you

In setting my Virginia's spirit free.

My mother—my own mother, who died
early,

Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,

And thus are dearer than the mother I
knew

By that infinity with which my wife

Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

To My Mother

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850 - 1894

You too, my mother, read my rhymes

For love of unforgotten times,

And you may chance to hear once
more

The little feet along the floor.

Mother o' Mine

Rudyard Kipling, 1865 - 1936

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose tears would come down
to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me
whole,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

[Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome]

Christina Rossetti, 1830 - 1894

Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome
Has many sonnets: so here now shall be
One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from
me
To her whose heart is my heart's quiet
home,
To my first Love, my Mother, on whose
knee
I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome;
Whose service is my special dignity,
And she my loadstar while I go and
come
And so because you love me, and
because
I love you, Mother, I have woven a
wreath
Of rhymes wherewith to crown your
honored name:
In you not fourscore years can dim the
flame
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends
the laws
Of time and change and mortal life and
death.

Love

I have loved Thee with two loves -
a selfish love and a love that is worthy of
Thee.
As for the love which is selfish,
Therein I occupy myself with Thee,
to the exclusion of all others.
But in the love which is worthy of Thee,
Thou dost raise the veil that I may see
Thee.

Yet is the praise not mine in this or that,
But the praise is to Thee in both that and
this.

Rabia al Basri

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.

Phenomenal Woman

Maya Angelo

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's
size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.
Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman

Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

To An Aeolian Harp –

Sara Teasdale

The winds have grown articulate in thee,
And voiced again the wail of ancient woe
That smote upon the winds of long ago:
The cries of Trojan women as they flee,
The quivering moan of pale Andromache,
Now lifted loud with pain and now brought
low.

It is the soul of sorrow that we know,
As in a shell the soul of all the sea.
So sometimes in the compass of a song,
Unknown to him who sings, thro' lips that live,
The voiceless dead of long-forgotten lands
Proclaim to us their heaviness and wrong
In sweeping sadness of the winds that give
Thy strings no rest from weariless wild hands.

The Temple Of Fragrance

Who could have fashioned this marvel?
The mountain cracks into a wide, hollow
cave.
Pious Buddhists struggle to set foot inside,
others gaze at it tirelessly.
Drippings form a sweet streamlet,
as sailors on incoming junks bend their
heads.
City folk also flock to these springs and
woods.
Clever, indeed, the Old Man in Heaven!

Ho Xuan Huong



**Happy
Mother's Day
To the women of
Liberia**

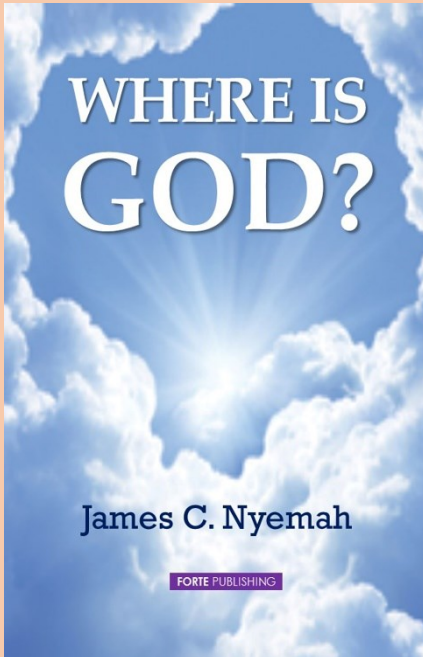
**Happy
Unification Day
Long Live
Liberia**



Recommended Reads

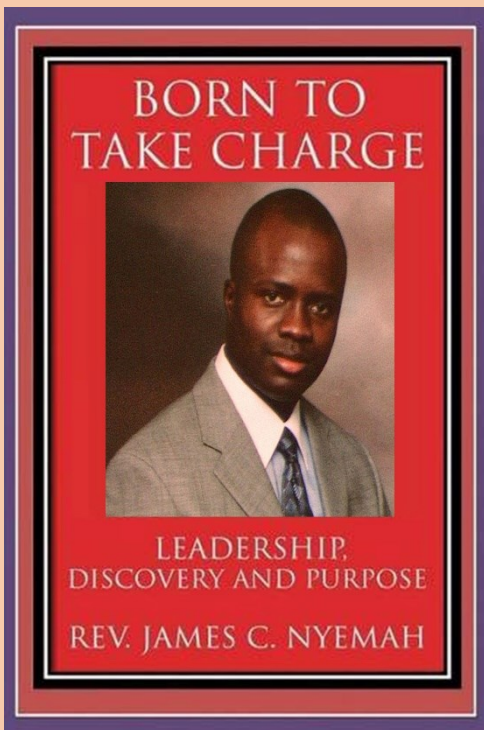
Published by FORTE Publishing

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.



MOMOH SEKOU DUDU

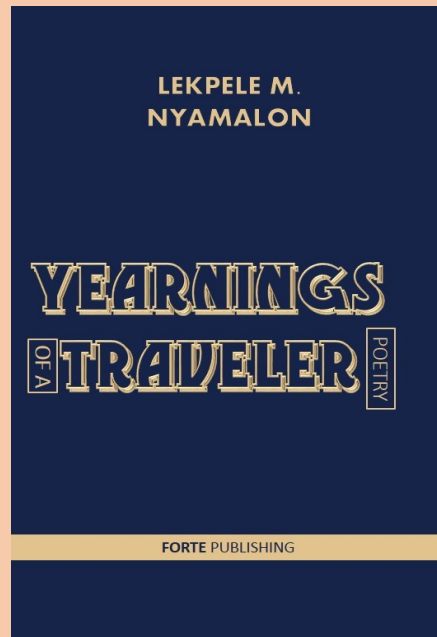
takes us on a mental journey in his latest release, *When The Mind Soars*, poetry from the Heart.

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



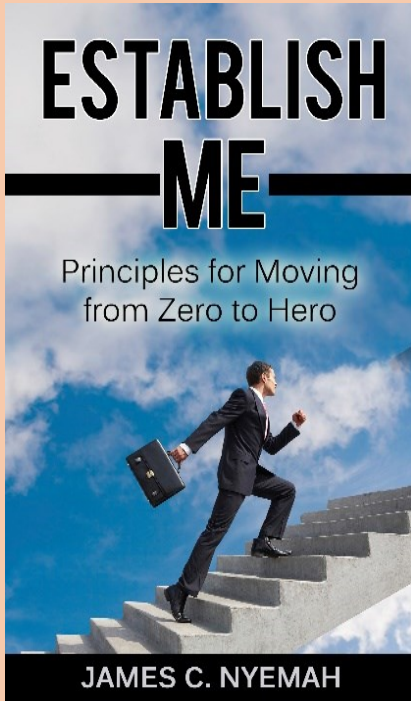
Lekpele, his has been a message of self worth, as we see in his signature piece, My Body is Gold; one of patriotism, as in Scars of A Tired Nation; one of Pan Africanism as in the piece, Dig The Graves. He

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.

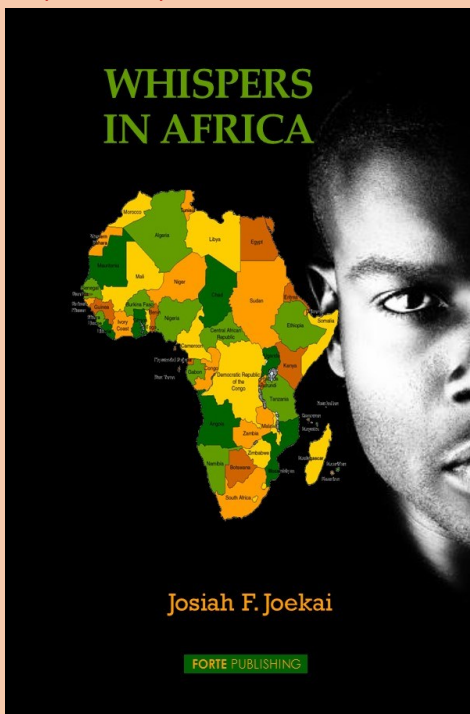
Recommended Reads

ESTABLISH ME in the world is Liberia?

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

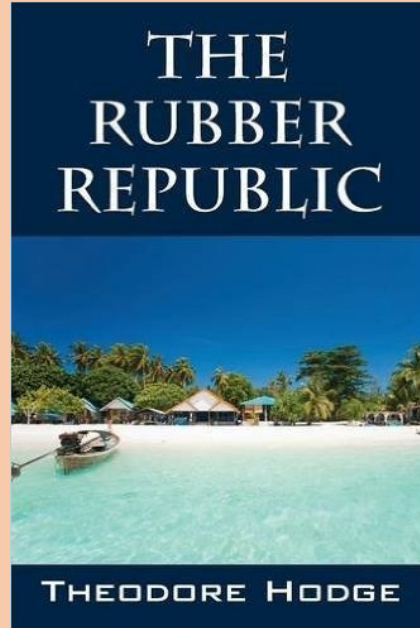


In his latest work, Ps. Nyemah lets us know that God can **Fix Us, Mold Us, Create Us** and then **Establish US**.



Coming soon from FORTE Publishing

The Rubber Republic

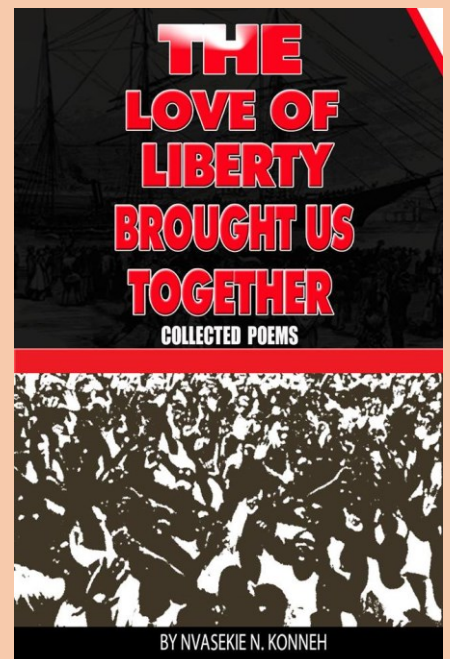


From relative stability to upheaval, military coup, violence and revenge. . . **The Rubber Republic** covers two decades, the late 1950s through the 1970s. Set mainly in West Africa, the story takes the reader to the United States and a few

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. **READ MORE????**

Nvasekie Konneh

In his latest endeavor, writes about things that divide and unite Liberians. The book title plays on the motto of Liberia, THE LOVE OF LIBERTY BROUGHT US HERE.



Coming soon from Clarke Publishing by Nvasekie Konneh

Around Town

Happy Women's Month note the Message



A Powerful message in support of arts/artists



PHOTO BY: B Yourfee Kamara from Gbarnga



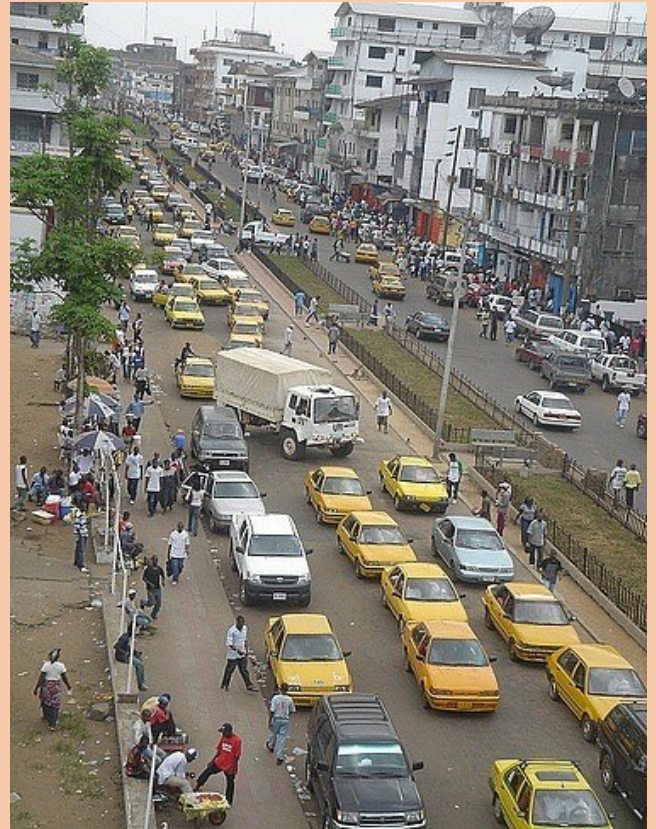
Traditional Dancer from the Gio Tribe-Gio Devil



City Center



A scenic view of Monrovia, city center



DK, one would only ask if they are unfamiliar with LIB





Rocky Beach; Sunny Day



The West African dwarf crocodile! It's the smallest extant crocodile species in the world.



The People's Monument



Break Time Pehn Pehn Hustle

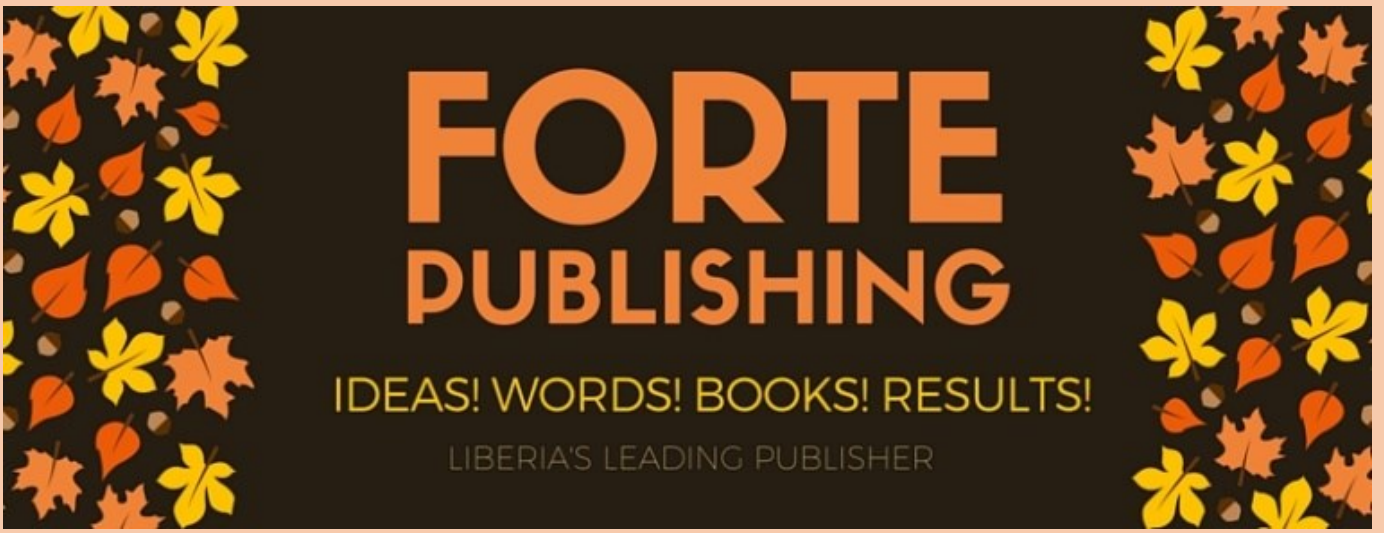


Forget us not



Broom & Mop sellers. Hustle; real life situations

Credit: Darby Cecil & Daily Pictures from around Liberia



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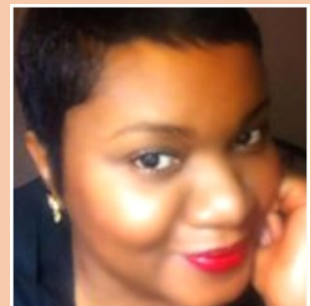
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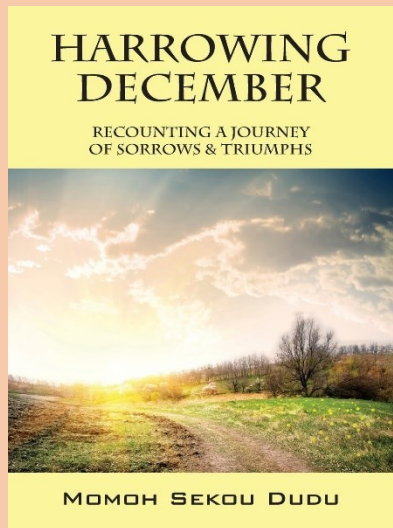
VAMBA SHERIF
Editor - Short stories

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



MOMOH DUDUU
Editor- Reviews

Is an educator and author. For the last decade, he has been an instructor at various Colleges and Universities in the Minneapolis metro area in the state of Minnesota, U.S.A. At present, he is the Chair of the Department of Business and Accounting at the Brooklyn Center Campus of the Minnesota School of Business at Globe University. His works include the memoir 'Harrowing December: Recounting a Journey of Sorrows and Triumphs' and 'Musings of a Patriot: A Collection of Essays on Liberia' a compilation of his commentaries about governance in his native country. At the moment, he is at work on his maiden novel tentatively titled 'Forgotten Legacy.'

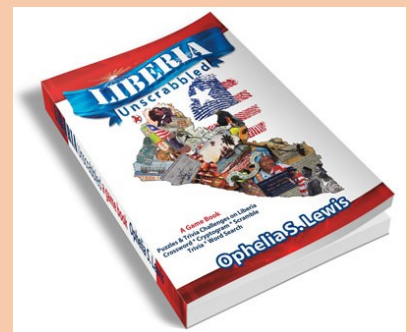


Find out more [here](#).



OPHELIA LEWIS
Editor- Anthology

The founder of Village Tales Publishing and self-published author of more than ten books, Lewis is determined to make Village Tales Publishing a recognized name in the literary industry. She has written two novels, three children's books, a book of poetry, a book of essay and two collections of short stories, with the latest being *Montserrat Stories*. As publisher-project manager, she guards other authors in getting their work from manuscript to print, using the self-publishing platform. Self-publishing can be complicated, a process that unfolds over a few months or even years. Using a project management approach gives a better understanding of the format process and steps needed it take to get an aspiring writer's book published.



Find out more [here](#)

[Editors](#)

Editor

D. Othniel Forte

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

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

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



PHOTO BY: CHITO REYES

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

Creativity
& Culture

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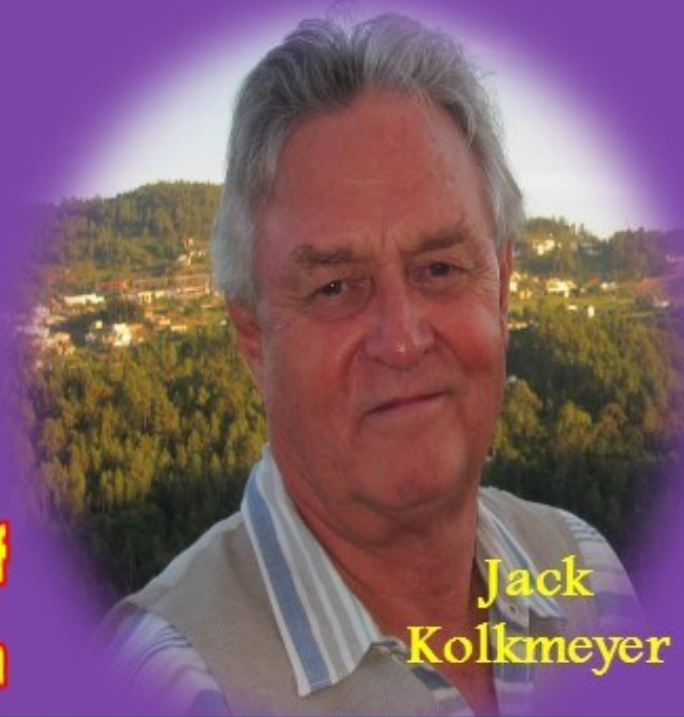
May Issue

Liberian Literary Magazine

WEE



Aken
Wariebi



Jack
Kolkmeier

Authors of
the Month

Mother's Month



Ken Allan
Dronsfield



Renee'
Brown

Mother's Issue