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WEE

Mar Issue

0315

INT'L
WOMEN
MONTH

Patricia
Jabbeh
Wesley

Author of
the Month

Featured Poets:

Althea Romeo Mark
Richard Wilson Moss
Herbert Logerie
Aken Wariebi
Cher Antoinette
Lamelle Shaw
Matanneh Dunbar
Ngozi Olivia Osuoha
L. Christine Brownlee
Vamey Glean

Featured Poets:

Gwendolyn Brooks
Anna Akhmatova
Maya Angelou
Rabla al Basri
Rifa Dove
Ho XuanHuong
Jane Austin
Jenny Joseph
Mary Elizabeth Frye
Cecil F. Alexander
Warsan Shire

Liberian Proverbs
Short Stories

Liberian Classics
Gifts of the Masters

Liberian Literary Magazine

KWEE



Liberian

Literary

Magazine

Overview:

New Look

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

Our Commitment

We at Liberian Literature Review believe that change is good, especially, the planned ones. We take seriously the chance to improve, adopt and grow with time. That said we 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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**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

Women Month, Random thoughts

By D. Othniel Forte

March is designated as the month women are celebrated the world over. Not that it matters much in some segments, but women often engage in activities to highlight gains made in the struggle for empowerment. Of course, feminists do all they can to ride point in these programs, but the 'new' feminism is most certainly not what women's rights is about in essence. The new feminist charts an agenda that does not necessarily reflect that of women in huge parts of the world.

Should they not celebrate? In every way. Not in the least am I implying they should not. The month calls for the celebration of any and everything women.

Frankly, I must admit that there were many things I had pegged to highlight during this great celebration but despite my better judgment, I opted to address mostly one issue and sparingly

AIRPORTS.

For some reason I am relatively comfortable in airports. There is something about the place that makes one nervous I will grant that. But not me. Imagine a bunch of

strangers, all with little care or attention to the others unless necessary. The truth is one of the most selfish places in the modern world is the airport.

So it was nothing strange when transiting in Cairo enroute to Accra, when no one paid any mind to me or I equally to them. I had my head buried in my laptop typing away on this very article, or at least the version I had planned since January.

An elderly woman sat opposite me. Each time I lifted my head, we locked eyes and she turned away. It was hard for her not to look at me, or so I thought. After a while, I flipped close my laptop and looked at her. I was about to strike up a conversation when I noticed she was actually crying. Tears rolling down her checks and something told me she was unawares or simply didn't care.

Issues

She continued staring my way but by now I had figured it was me she was focused on. If anything, I was seated in her way, blocking her line of sight. I slowly turned and followed her gaze. Behind me a group of women sat, a few stood. They were speaking passionately- typical of African women when they were pissed. No! I am NOT profiling or stereotyping,

okay maybe just a little. This is not the *mad-black-woman* kind of raised voice. It is the critical one close to the one your mother gives you when you have royally screwed up. The one that is often accompanied with some old fashioned whopping [yes don't be cringing now that the W-word has appeared]. The one meant to teach you a life lesson. Of course this caught everyone's attention. Only this time, I failed to see the culprit. So, I listened a found and soon found out the object [more appropriately objects] of their rage.

It turned out that they were returning home after serving as domestic workers in parts of the Middle East. The largest group I later learned came from Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, whilst the others came from all over the region- with some even coming from Yemen.

I could not help but wonder why would mostly young maidens, middle aged women and a few past-their-prime women were doing in these countries especially when the region was on fire. Were they that desperate? Did they need to make ends meet so badly that they would risk going to these places?

My thoughts were interrupted when the lady opposite me, having

observed I had caught on to the conversation, asked me something. I didn't understand her so turned and she took her time to ask me a few questions and that is how we began talking.

Stories

Ama, of course it is not her name, a recent college grad who had no luck in landing a job- nothing strange here. This is the sad reality of millions of families. They spend a fortune on their child/ren hoping that after acquiring the much hyped up education, their woes would vanish. Her parents and fiancée suggested that she found a way to get outside.

They searched and learned about the this recruitment agency that wanted recent college grads for overseas employment. The deal was decent on paper. The recruitment office was cramped with applicants. On display were photos of those that had 'successfully' made the journey. They were outright rejecting candidates that did not 'fit' the bill. In short, it presented a front of seriousness. One that prized merit. Soon, middlemen began appearing and promising applicants they could get them past the rigorous

acceptance process for a small fee.

Now this may not mean much but in these our parts, anything that resembles a meritorious system frightens many. It is just hard to come by on this level, so the fear of the unknown sets in and folks that a actually qualified get spooked. It is not always, but it happens a lot. There is also the fear that those who are unqualified will storm the place and pay out for the spots. It then becomes easy to sell to an otherwise qualified candidate the notion that they already meet the standards so a little thing along the way will not hurt. The logic is no one seeing that one is qualified will be able to turn away the candidate, not when some 'cold water' has been presented.

Because of her education, she was placed with a French couple in Lebanon. She landed only to find that her employer had another contract that had her committed for three years. She presented her version which was for two years renewable at the end of the first. They took her passport, took her to an apartment building where they occupied the 16th floor. It happened that the guy married into money. The wife's father owned the building so he gave

each of his girls a floor as a wedding present. He was wealthy, well placed and almost untouchable. The spoiled daughter had a son who eventually got around to slapping Ama at will. She had developed a hearing impairment in the right ear which he had slapped a wee bit too much.

When we met, she had managed to get out of her contract a year into it. Her parents had gone to the agency and raised hell after their daughter managed to use WhatsApp on the son's phone. She sent a quick dire voice message. Instructed them to not reply but proceed to arrest the agent. They did just that. It appeared that did the trick.

Aquah, recruited as a Muslim woman who would be going to a Islamic nation. She would be respected as a maiden preparing to marry. She could read and write. A high school grad.

She landed, got her passport confiscated from the airport in Saudi. Was taken to a home where on the very next night, her employer, wanted her to perform sexual favors for his friends. He was hosting a party and she did not have to have sex, at least if she did anal, she could still return home an 'untouched' maiden fit to be married off.

She stayed for the full three years and was packed to the airport with one bag, a small portion of her money and a lot of abusive stories and experiences.

Boatema. A junior high school student who could not continue her education. Was doing her business until she came across an employee of the agency who worked his magic for her to get selected but not before draining her savings and that of her family. She was promised a minimum of 350 USD monthly. Needless to say she could not make this no matter how much she sold. All she had to do was clean and cook. She went to Iraq, was taken to some distant part, did not communicate with anyone back home, and barely talked to other house helps her entire stay. She was taken to a small room that doubled as storage. Her life the past three years revolved around cleaning, washing, cooking and slaving around at her masters' wishes. She showed signs of bruises on various parts of her arms and next. A broken finger. She made no mention of sexual abuse but the physical and psychological ones were indelible. She was starved for any mistake. She also did not get much of her money. She wore the hijab to cover

her scars. She had no intention of telling her family any of this.

Dorcas. Past her prime. She had hustled hard between the Kaneshie and Kasoa markets. She'd always wanted to travel. Fortunately she found the agency and well, she was here today. She ran away from her employers. Stayed with a few people along the way. Did what was necessary to get out. Found herself as a practical concubine of the police for a month of incarceration when she could not produce her passport and could not show an employer. During the time, she met a few locals that connected her to her sibling who then raised money for her ticket and visa fine for overstaying. She did not say how long she had been away. She had nothing but the clothes on her back, a small handbag that represented those years of her life. We left that plane and she walked out of the terminal just as she got down. This I saw with my own eyes.

Efuah. Not much backstory. She seemed the most reserved of them all. She only chipped in ever so often. She said little and looked weary. I later learned from Ama, who happened to be my seatmate, that she had spent the longest time of

their group, at least from those that she had talked to since they left. She indicated about a decade. She claimed to not be expected back home. No one was waiting to pick her up.

Now I sat through that trip and listened for hours. I saw how Aquah ate everything on her plate and asked me for mine when she noticed I was not eating. She took away everything including the plate. She returned an empty tray. I remember the look on the hostess' face when she took my empty tray away. She was finding it hard to reconcile someone who she figured was well off taking away plates, bowls and petty stuffs. I almost screamed, "Woman, it wasn't me." I was just heart broken when we landed. My mind kept going back and forth between what I had heard and noticed.

Of course these are allegations. It is almost impossible to verify all of them, but it is equally not possible they were all lying.

I soon found myself royally pissed. First at our leaders who insist on making our countries so hard to live in. Next, our leaders for using their positions to rake the opportunities these women should have had. And then

again at the same bunch for placing these women in the state they were in.

I found it hard to believe that there were active agencies back on the continent recruiting women to do this dangerous work. There is no way they were unaware of the dangerous situations they were sending these girls and women into.

It turned out that every one of them that were brave enough to talk had some story that makes your worst horror film seem like comedy. Trust me, I am cool with horror films but what I was hearing made me feel not just hurt, sad and angry. I almost felt helpless.

As one person after the other narrated how they were objects of constant abuse in the most horrific sense, I folded in and felt that life has been more than kind to me and my girls. I could not imagine any of my girls, big or small, ever having to live through half of what any of these women had faced. I remember thinking that if a person ever tried that to them, I would literally do unthinkable things to them. I could feel how their fathers, brothers, husbands etc., might feel if they ever found out.

One after the other narrated tales of physical, sexual and psychological

abuse at the hands of their madams, the relations of their bosses and at times even the very kids they were tending to. One told of how her employers had the audacity to ask her to stripe and 'service' his friends after he had had his share. The audacity to actually think, expect and consider the thought before voicing it was what I believed killed her. Imagine this on the second day of your employment? Several others chimed in and confirmed similar incidences. Refusal meant sure way to fall out of grace and into the hell.

I remember thinking that this here is what feminism should be about. This is what feminism is about to these women; not some fancy stuff that is unrelated to their situations. Oh yes, many girls and women in Africa will never face sexual identity crisis; many will not face bullying issues from schoolmates because they are NOT in school. Many will not have LGBT related issues, at least not directly. This does not negate these issues to those that it matters to, but it shows that a small bunch have succeeded in hijacking the feminism narrative and remain out of touch with the plight of millions of women. FGM and religious oppression is

not the sum total of problems face by African women. They are but a small part of the issues that they have to deal with daily.

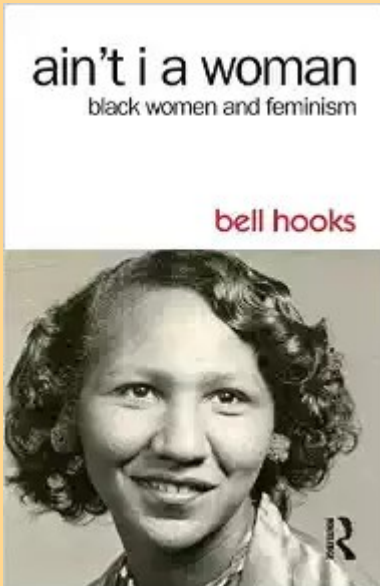
So yes, women are celebrating the gains made in many parts of the western world. This is a good thing but it is way past time that western feminists get out of their comfort zones and address issues on a much larger scale. If they insist on taking over the narrative, then it is only fair they do the required work for it. If they decry men being the saviors of helpless women, it should be equally repulsive for them to be the saviors of the African or underrepresented women. This month may be a month of celebration but it sure as heck ain't for far too many women than we should be comfortable with.

The time for lip service is over. Get off your feet and do what needs to be done. We all should, not just women. This is a fight for our souls as humans. We can't just leave it up to the women. I wish my girls to grow and live in a world that is equal, fair and decent for them. I wish them to have the same, if not more, opportunities as my son would. It is only fair don't you think?

D . Othniel Forte

Ain't I a woman black women and feminism

by Bell Hooks



“A classic work of feminist scholarship, *Ain't I a Woman* has become a must-read for all those interested in the nature of black womanhood.

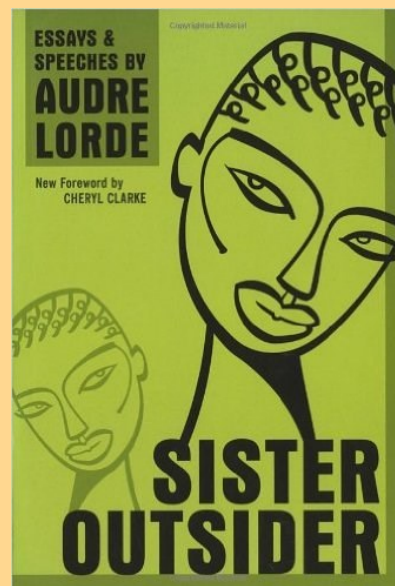
Examining the impact of sexism on black women during slavery, the devaluation of black womanhood, black male sexism, racism among feminists, and the black woman's involvement with feminism, hooks attempts to move us beyond racist and sexist assumptions.

The result is nothing short of groundbreaking, giving this book a critical place on every feminist scholar's bookshelf.

Sister Outsider

by Audre Lorde

Presenting the essential writings of black lesbian poet and feminist writer Audre Lorde, *SISTER OUTSIDER* celebrates an influential voice in twentieth-century literature. In this charged collection of fifteen essays and speeches, Lorde takes on sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and class, and propounds social difference as a vehicle for action and change. Her prose is incisive, unflinching, and lyrical, reflecting struggle but ultimately offering messages of hope. This commemorative edition includes a new foreword by Lorde scholar and poet Cheryl Clarke, who celebrates the ways in which Lorde's

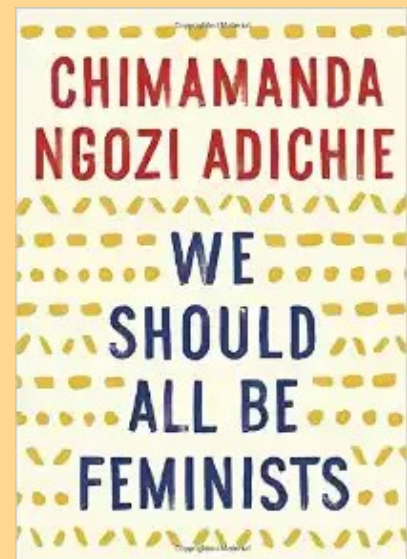


philosophies resonate more than twenty years after they were first published.

These landmark writings are, in Lorde's own words, a call to “never close our eyes to the terror, to the chaos which is Black which is creative which is female which is dark which is rejected which is messy which is. . . .”

We Should All Be Feminists

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

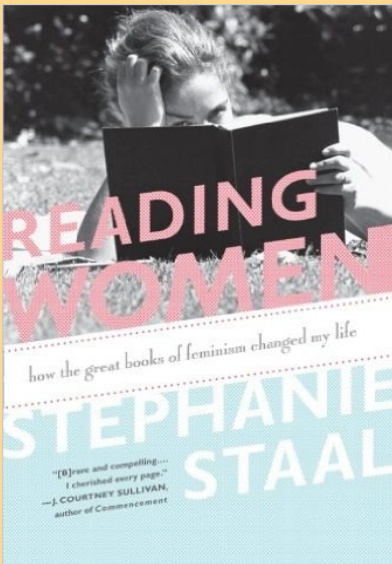


In this personal, eloquently-argued essay—adapted from her much-admired TEDx talk of the same name—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, award-winning author of *Americanah*, offers readers a unique definition of feminism for

the twenty-first century, one rooted in inclusion and awareness. Drawing extensively on her own experiences and her deep understanding of the often masked realities of sexual politics, here is one remarkable author's exploration of what it means to be a woman now—and an of-the-moment rallying cry for why we should all be feminists

Reading Women: How the Great Books of Feminism Changed My Life

By: Stephanie Staal

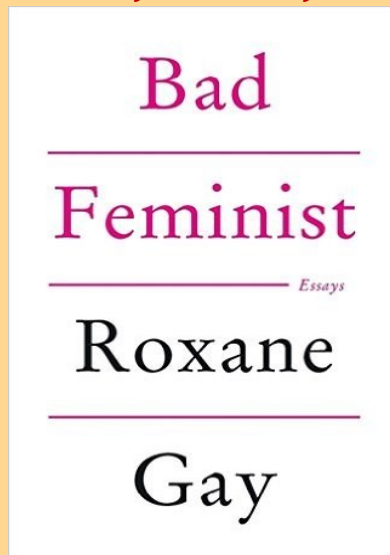


When Stephanie Staal first read *The Feminine Mystique* in college, she found it “a mildly interesting relic from another era.” But more than a decade later, as a married stay-at-home mom in the suburbs, Staal rediscovered Betty Friedan's classic work—

and was surprised how much she identified with the laments and misgivings of 1950s housewives. She set out on a quest: to reenroll at Barnard and re-read the great books she had first encountered as an undergrad. From the banishment of Eve to Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, Staal explores the significance of each of these classic tales by and of women, highlighting the relevance these ideas still have today. This process leads Staal to find the self she thought she had lost—curious and ambitious, zany and critical—and inspires new understandings of her relationships with her husband, her mother, and her daughter.

Bad Feminist

by Roxane Gay



'Pink is my favourite colour. I used to say my favourite colour was black to be cool, but it is pink - all shades of pink. If I have an accessory, it is probably pink. I read *Vogue*, and I'm not doing it ironically, though it might seem that way. I once live-tweeted the September issue.'

In these funny and insightful essays, Roxane Gay takes us through the journey of her evolution as a woman (*Sweet Valley High*) of colour (*The Help*) while also taking readers on a ride through culture of the last few years (*Girls*, *Django in Chains*) and commenting on the state of feminism today (abortion, Chris Brown). The portrait that emerges is not only one of an incredibly insightful woman continually growing to understand herself and our society, but also one of our culture.

Bad Feminist is a sharp, funny and sincere look at the ways in which the culture we consume becomes who we are, and an inspiring call-to-arms of all the ways we still need to do better.

Liberian Classic

Murder in the Cassava Patch III

Bai. T Moore

The first thing that came to my mind was, how to obtain Tene's toenails. I resorted to the technique of the rat. When he wants to eat off your toe nails, he bites and blows. So with the aid of the scissors and plenty of gently blowing I managed to clip off three of Tene's toenails.

Then, my luck turned.

Maneuvering to reach the head of the bed to cut off a braid of Tene's hair, I clumsily knocked against a pan, causing Kema to scream, "Tene! Tene! Is that you?"

"What is it sister?"

"Someone is in the room! The window is wide open!"

The alarm plunged Bendabli into one helluva holler holler. All able bodied men were ordered to converge on old man Joma's quarter with whatever defensive weapons they could get hold of. When I heard the creaking of doors and rapid footsteps close by our house, I felt the impending danger facing me. It was during this state of confusion, that Tene jumped right into my arms and cried, "Sister Kema! Sister Kema! The person's got me. O God help me."

Already, I could hear men banging at the door with mortar pestles and sticks to force it open. Two men with

raised cutlasses had taken positions at the window.

In the tussle, I hurriedly slashed off a braid of Tene's hair with my razor, then managed to fight my way out through the window. How I succeeded in concealing my identity is a miracle. I must thank whatever gods smiled on me. Dawn found me half way between Suehn and Bendabli. In order to stick to my alibi, I delayed my arrival in Suehn by a couple of days.

News travel so rapidly in these days of motor cars, I had no doubt that my landlord had heard about the incident in Bendabli. This is the first thing he and the landlady asked me on my arrival. I conveniently forgot that my foster father was supposed to have been at the point of death and said that in the middle of the journey my toe had started giving me trouble again, so I decided to come back.

Both my landlord and my friend Buu had some misgivings about the story, to judge from the expression on their faces. From the gossip I picked up from the palm wine circles, my landlord actually suspected that I had been in Bendabli on the night of the incident. My father's health was not mentioned again, but the atmosphere around me became unbearable. I yearned to escape.

After a few days, I plucked up enough courage to tell my landlord, I was feeling weak and unable to do the job. I said,

I wanted to go home. I still owed him a few dollars' worth of work, but graciously he waved it. Old man Bleng got through with all my works and told me to meet him so he could deliver them to me.

Two nights after my departure from Suehn, the old man and I met in a small room in a village not far from Bendabli. When Bleng poured out the contents of the carryall raffia bag onto the small table between us, I noticed that every item was neatly wrapped.

"Now Kai, let me explain to you how to use each item," the old man paused. "You have here three packets containing gunpowder. When you get home, get a torch or box of matches and ignite each packet, calling Tene's name each time. The rolled up otter skin contains her hair and nails. This you keep on your person, at all times. In the antelope horn," Bleng went on, "you will find strong love powders. Try to put some in food for Tene to eat. Her heart will jump after you, whenever you desire her."

I hurriedly repeated everything the old man told me, to be sure I would not make any mistake. Before departing, I handed Bleng ten silver dollars and told him he would hear from me.

I arrived in Bendabli shortly after parting with the old crystal reader. Everyone had gone to bed. I moved straight to our big house and knocked on the door. "Who is that?" A heavy voice asked hoarsely. It was

a male voice. The person cleared his throat and repeated his inquiry. It was not until I heard the loading of a shot gun inside, that identified myself.

"Gortokai, that's who!"

In a flash, I heard the creaking of the door, followed by a blinding glare which rendered me helpless immediately. "Gortokai, and what are you doing here this time of night?" The person inquired, holding a flashlight directly in my face.

"My old folks and my sisters, they live here."

"Any?" The person inquired. "They have told me about you. But, aren't you suppose to be in Suehn cleaning out a rubber farm?"

"Yes," I answered. The person switched off the light and suggested that we go and sit under the kitchen. It took a little while for me to regain my vision. The interrogator was a total stranger to me. I asked his name.

"Siafa Bombo, from Firestone," the stranger explained. "This is my second time coming here. Just before my first visit, a heart man broke into the girls' room to harm them. Since then, they have been sleeping with the old folks."

When Tene, Kema and later the old folks recognized my voice, they came out to greet me. It was indeed not an enthusiastic reception.

The following morning someone informed me that the stranger was Kema's new man. She had

changed them so often, it was nothing strange to me.

During the next few days I observed that Tene had changed completely. I could not get her committed to anything I proposed to her. This would be taken care of, when Bleng's medicines began to take effect, of course. To satisfy my curiosity, I took Kema to task one day by asking her bluntly, "now tell me frankly, does your sister still love me? Don't hide anything from me. They say, teeth and tongue fall out, what about mortal man?"

"I swear on the Sande Society," I was told. "Eh ya, if only you could open the poor child's heart and see for yourself."

I could see the hypocrisy in Kema's face. But I knew that Bleng's leaves would solve all my problems. But while I refused to worry about the family's baffling behavior, and their two tongue approach regarding the Tene palava, the short brown fellow from Bomi Hills decoyed Tene and one day took her secretly away.

When that afternoon I came from the bush, Tene had moved off bag and baggage. Anger shot up and swelled in me like a furious sea, and I was going to take my revenge, by setting Bendabli on fire. However, I only burned the medicines old man Bleng gave me, but still I don't know whether that was the right thing to do or not, they were certainly taking long to take effect. To add more fuel to my flaming anger, I

learned that Tene had left with a two-month old belly. Kema and her people followed two days later. They did not dare ask me to accompany them. I did however tell Kema before they left that whatever I had advanced in the dowry the family could have.

"No Kai, you cannot lose your money like that.

Whoever tied cloth on my sister, or took her virginity and made her pregnant shall pay a hundred dollars damage to the family. That is what the law says."

Kema probably forgot the law which says if family people play katakata in a woman palava, the devil catches them. Sensing my anger, Kema hesitated to press the issue any further. I felt that nobody meant to retribute my money to me.

What happened, what didn't happen in Bomi Hills, I turned my back on it all and moved to Monrovia. Knocking about from one place to another I found my way to Gbarnga where my father came from. There I learned that he had eventually returned home. He died but left a well-to-do brother as head of the house.

My uncle and wives, who had never seen me gave a tremendous welcome when they saw me. The change helped me a lot. I was kept busy visiting relatives who were anxious to see me. The first thing my uncle did was to offer me a wife. He did this to prevent me from returning where I came from.

Uncle Pewulo was probably right in making such a generous offer, but I just had enough of one woman. To be involved with another so soon, I felt was premature. I told him I would consider his proposition at a later date.

After two months, I drifted to Tapeta. Here, I was enticed by a friend to accompany him to Bokonjede where he had a prosperous gold creek. He claimed he had so many beautiful girls at his operations that one had a difficult time selecting the one to sleep with.

I never realized how rewarding travelling can be, until one morning, while sitting on a log by the roadside thinking of where to go next, a pickup drove up.

"Where to?" The driver asked.

To be candid I had no special destination in mind. But since the impatient driver insisted, I told him, "anywhere." - "O. K., jump in!"

"Good friend, you got any loads?" The carboy shouted with beaming eyes. He found a seat for me in the over-crowded duazet, a one and a half ton late forty model Ford. Soon we were heading for Saniquellie. The dilapidated vehicle managed to negotiate the long and rain-washed road without falling apart. Just as we got in sight of the town of Saniquellie, the gas gave out. The irritated passengers threatened to headload their belongings the rest of the way.



The carboy was dispatched to the nearest gas station and saved the situation when he came back with a few gallons of gas. "I swear to God I will never trade this duazet for a new pickup," the driver boasted proudly to his carboy.

"Boss, God bless we for true. I knew a three quarter tank wouldn't reach us here; but I wanted to try something so we can save on gas."

"Go way from here, you dam fool. Why didn't you tell me so we could fill the tank in Ganta? Look at your head and mouth, like a hungry time porcupine," the driver scolded and kicked at the carboy jovially.

At the Saniquellie truck depot, many persons were waiting for friends and relatives. Waiting there, but not for me was an old acquaintance from my youth.

"Compin!" Karmo yelled when he saw me. He dashed towards the pickup and embraced me excitedly. "And what wind

blows you to these parts?" It had been almost three years when last I saw Karmo. From boyhood we had known each other simply as Compin, a corruption of the word company.

In the rush and confusion to collect the fares, both driver and carboy overlooked me. I turned around to Karmo and said, "Compin, but how, this truck brings me all the way from Tapeta and ..."

"Hush you mouth. Say thanks to God and let's get the hell out of here." Karmo advised.

My friend piloted me through a maze of twist and turns, until we finally came to an imposing house facing the chief's compound. "I don't know what your mission is yet, Compin, but this is your home." Karmo offered and ushered me into the first room at the beginning of a long hall. A charming young lady greeted us at the door.

"Compin, this is Gbiti, my wife." Gbiti and I snapped fingers in traditional greetings.

"Here is a seat," she offered and took my mbeke, the carryall raffia bag which I used for light travelling.

"Gbiti, here is the stranger. A personal friend from way back. What do you think we should do for him?" Karmo inquired.

"I don't know, you are the man. Anything you say, the food will soon be ready."

"Man, we not talking about chop yet. Got to wet our throats first."

In the room opposite ours was a rum shop maintained by a Mandingo woman. Karmo suggested we go in for a drink. The shelves were filled with an assortment of bottles. "Let me see," my host remarked, when we entered the shop. "I am having a small bottle of Power Rum, and you?"

"The same thing," I accepted. We had hardly finished our second round of drinks when Gbiti called us in to eat. This invitation came at an opportune time, for I was starving by now.

"We coming back just now," Karmo told the shop keeper.

"Aloi Karmo, you goo man. You de pay my money all time, I no fear you."

I did not wait, I dived right into the hot bowl of rice. It reminded me of Tene's cooking when things were all right. "Compin, this chop is surely delicious."

My host accepted the compliments by petting Gbiti on the buttock. "You see, when a woman does good, she gets praises from every corner." Gbiti smiled and left for the kitchen for additional sauce.

"Compin, I am not kidding, tell me, how did you manage to get such a charming woman?"

Karmo chuckled. "You like her eh? If the old man up yonder made them any better, he kept them in heaven for himself. I have nothing to complain about.

It's a long story. When I became a man, my dear old mother, may God bless her wherever she is in the other world. She worked hard to save enough money to pay dowry for this girl. Unfortunately, Gbiti developed a peculiar illness. A terrible water spirit, a genie, would come to her in a dream to make love to her and try to make her his wife. When she refused he threw her in a fit like a crazy person. The old lady tried all the doctor men she could find, but none seemed to be able to help, until one day mother was advised to try old man Boima Bleng."

I shivered when I heard the name. "You mean Bleng of Bieben?"

"That's right." Karmo replied. "Bleng took six months to drive the evil genie away. Now here is the sad part of the story. My mother did not have the money to pay Bleng's fee and she passed away."

"One Mandingo diamond dealer came to Gbiti's people and offered to pay the required amount provided they gave him the girl. My hopeless uncles were helpless. All of them put together could not raise a pound, so they gave in. One day in tears, I watched Gbiti being taken away to Saniquellie by the diamond dealer.

What did you tell me that morning, Gbiti?"

"I too was crying, I told you that in the long run, right would triumph over wrong, and that somewhere we would meet again."

"I swear by God, Compin," I reflected.

"Two months after they got to Saniquellie," Karmo continued, "the man abandoned Gbiti and moved off to diamond mines with another woman."

At this point, Gbiti dashed across the hall and brought two more bottles of Power Rum. My eyes were turning slightly by now. I definitely was approaching the point of intoxication.

While pouring the liquor, I clumsily let go the glass and it came crashing on the floor. "Look at what I have done," I admitted guiltily.

"No Compin," Karmo joined in, "that's good luck."

He raised his hand and said, "here, take my glass. Finish what's in the glass so I can continue my story."

Karmo insisted. "As soon as I got through with the old lady's burial, I went to the chief in Suehn and gave him the details of what happened. "Not long thereafter, he gave me a letter to the District Commissioner here, explaining the whole palava from start to finish. After looking into the matter, the kind old D. C. ruled that the woman was mine, provided she still loved me." My friend looked up at his wife and smiled. "Tell Compin what you told the court that day, Gbiti."

Blushfully, Gbiti, looked at her husband and said, "that I was yours, and will always be."

"What a story, Compin, I suggest we drink on it." I

told Karmo how my woman palava had been an unfortunate affair.

"No Compin," Karmo drew his face. "You mean all you did for that Tene girl, that is how they treated you? I can't believe it. You see now when some of these people be dying they catch hell, and they pretend someone witched them."

"For instance, right now Tene is in Bomi Hills. If I am not mistaken, she has had her child."

"Don't give up Compin," Karmo advised. "Women are like a dry leaf floating up stream."

Eventually, it belongs to a fish trap down stream. One day Tene will come back to you." My friend predicted. "It's only her foolish sister Kema, who made that match for her, but I am sure everyone in Bendabli is for you."

Many persons had made similar predictions before. I certainly did not want to be disappointed again. If Tene wanted me, she was the one who would have to approach me. On this point, my mind was definitely made up so help me God.

Karmo kept prodding me; "Compin, Tene belongs to you. Don't let her remain in Bomi Hills."

"He was so happy with Gbiti and wanted me to be the same way. The more I thought of it, the more it appeared that a reconciliation with Tene was possible, if only her sister would play the fool

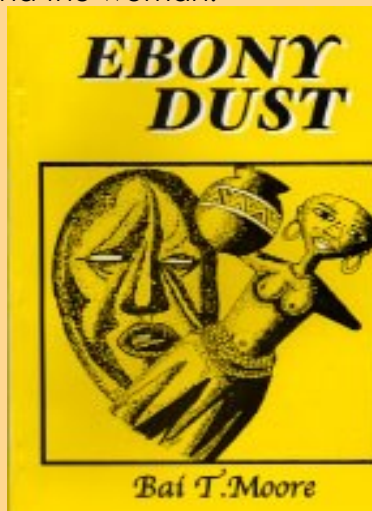
one day and drown herself in the St. Paul River.

While I was contemplating on getting back to Monrovia, Karmo told me that he had obtained a few weeks from his employer, one Mr. Chibli, a Lebanese trader, to take Gbiti home to visit her people near Suehn.

We all joined the same Monrovia bound truck. Karmo would take Gbiti to Suehn, leave her there and proceed to Bomi Hills to see Tene.

When we got to the Truck depot in Monrovia that afternoon, I met someone from Bendabli who told me that Tene was in town selling gari or farina.

Karmo got excited when I told him the news. "Compin!" he shouted. "Let us go man, what are we standing here for, we got to find the woman."



We hurriedly carried Gbiti and all our plunders to a watchman friend behind P. Z. Store, on the Water Front. During our search we stopped at a stall to buy some cola nuts. While waiting for the change, I saw Karmo dashing across

the street. "There she is, Tene!" He shouted.

In a year's time, Tene had changed. She had become a bit darker. Her lappa, buba and headtie, all looked like cast off clothes that someone had handed down to her. Under her arm, she carried the five gallon tin in which she measured her farina. All we could do was, to look at each other. "Come on, you two, say something," Karmo prompted. "You just stand and stare at one another like bobos."

Tene raised her head and looked into my face. "Came down this morning to seil farina. Someone credited one tin and asked me to collect the money this evening, or soon in the morni.ng." She explained nervously.

"How are the old folks?" I inquired.

"You know, Kai, old age is telling on the old folks, they are making out as can be expected."

At the watchman's place, we hurried through a meal of boiled cassava and fresh bonnie soup which Gbiti had prepared. Our host we learned had gone over to Vai Town for a family conference, but his wife told us to make ourselves at home.

"Compin, we got to wash our meal down with something. What will it be?" Karmo inquired.

Gbiti who was accustomed to teasing her husband on occasions like this replied, "I have a bottle of something hot to drink. If

you men want to credit it, I have no objection."

"That's what I like you for, Gbiti, you got a solution for all my problems. Bring the bottle. I will pay you double interest for it."

"I know it's the truth. If you pay me all the interest you owe me, I will be rich." Gbiti pointed out.

Tene reached in her bosom and pulled out a handkerchief with a knot at one end. She opened it and took out a dollar bill. "Gbiti," she called, "here is the cold water for the men." I pitied her for the gesture, but nevertheless accepted it.

The watchman's wife had some cane juice and beer under her bed to seil, so we did not have far to go. This illicit selling of rum helped to augment the watchman's meager income.

Our host, a jovial little stooped shoulder fellow soon joined us. The first joke he cracked was, "I see the liquor palava's coming on all right, but where do I pen you two billy goats for the night?"

He asked us to excuse ourselves and follow him. "I know it is the sleeping place palava you have called us here to hang head." Karmo observed. "Old man we don't want to embarrass you. When we are finished with our drinks, we will go to Cooper Farm to ask some friends to put us up for the night."

"You boys sound like two asses. You know I wouldn't agree to such a preposterous idea." The old man pointed out. After a

further search of the warehouse facilities, the old man came up with a new suggestion. "You boys follow me," he invited. "The boatboys are not here. They left a big tent capable of accommodating ten couples."

We went over and examined it. "There's nothing wrong with it," Karmo remarked. I didn't know how well Tene would accept the idea of sleeping with me, having just left her husband and returned to her parents in Bendabli.



When the old watchman observed my indcisiveness, he asked, "what, you not sure of your woman?"

"Weil, she's got a young baby," I replied.

Karmo interferred, "man move from here, with your baby business. You will be a big fool if you don't begin cashing in for all your lost labor."

That night under our tent room, Tene did not resist my approaches. We played until very late in the night. Early the following morning we all scattered in different directions; Karmo and Gbiti headed for Suehn, Tene for Bendabli and I to Cooper Farm to stay with some

friends. Before leaving for Suehn, my friend offered to come to a family council in Bendabli, if I thought it is useful.

Three weeks after the encounter with Tene I paid a visit to Bendabli. I noticed that our quarter, particularly, the big house was in a very dilapidated condition. The rains had washed away a considerable portion of the outer walls.

The old folks found it convenient to move into my kongo, the annex I built in the back of the house. Tene and her baby shared a room with Kema in a neighbor's hut.

Old man Joma asked friends to beg me to come back and settle down in the village. He and the old lady promised that, under no circumstances would they allow Tene to put her foot out of the village. To further convince me, one morning old lady Karn invited me into the kongo to tell me that from now on she would not permit Tene to be dominated by her sister. I pitied the old lady very much. The wrinkles in her face had become deeper, and her ribs, jaws and shoulder bones protruded sharply.



Authors of the Month Profiles

PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY



Patricia Jabbeh Wesley

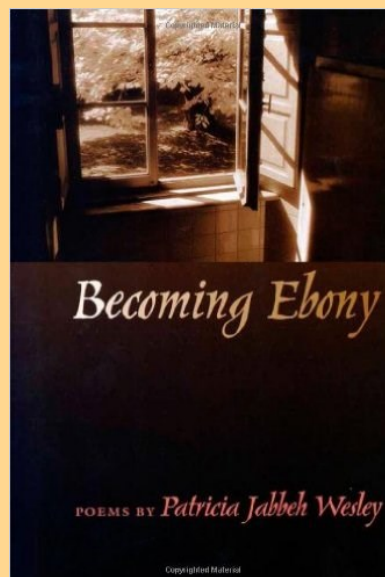
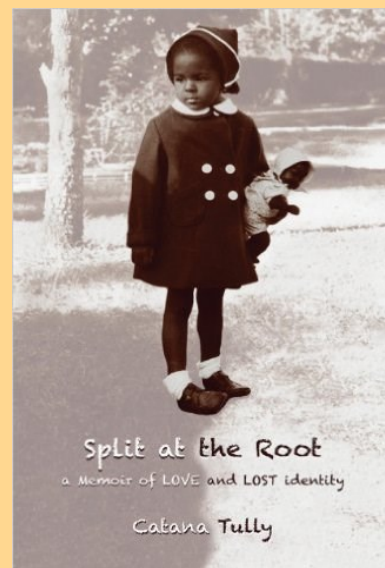
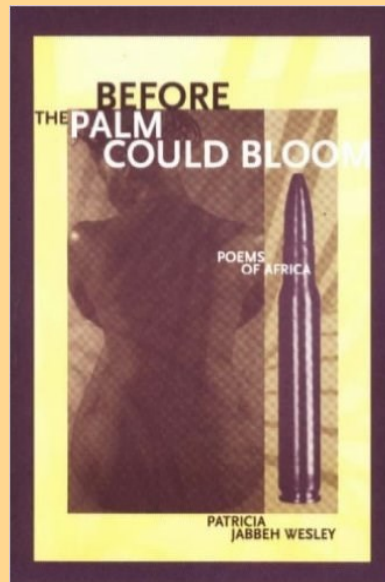
Born in Antigua, West Indies, Althea Romeo-Mark is an educator and internationally published writer who grew up in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands. She has lived and taught in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, USA, Liberia (1976-1990), London, England (1990-1991), and in Switzerland since 1991.

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 blogsite: www.aromaproductions.blogspot.com



CATANA TULLY



Catana Tully grew up trilingual in Guatemala where she attended elementary and middle school. In tenth grade she entered a boarding school in Jamaica, WI and received her Advanced Level Higher Schools Certificate from Cambridge University, England. Expecting to become an international interpreter, her studies continued at the Sprachen und Dolmetscher Institut in Munich, Germany. However, after answering a call to work in a play, she discovered her affinity for the dramatic arts. As the actress and fashion model Catana Cayetano she appeared in Film and Television work in Germany, Austria, and Italy. She met and married the American actor Frederick V. Tully and ultimately moved to the United States. They have a son, Patrick. In Upstate New York, she completed the BA in Cultural Studies at SUNY, Empire State College; obtained a MA in Latin American and Caribbean Literature, and a DA (Doctor of Arts) in Humanistic Studies, from SUNY, Albany. In 2003, personal reasons required she retire from her tenured position as Associate Professor at SUNY Empire State College, only to return for part time work in 2005 at ESC's Center for International Programs. There she served as Mentor and instructor in the Lebanon Program and as Interim Program Director for the Dominican Republic. Wishing to dedicate herself completely to publishing her book, she retired entirely in 2011. *Split at the Root: A Memoir of Love and Lost Identity* was published in the fall of 2012. Her German version of the book is ready for publication later in 2016.

Our Spotlight author of this issue is poet of international acclaim, a scholar and a woman of many passions-

Patricia Jabbeh Wesley

Author Interview

PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY



Liberian Literary Mag conducted an interview with

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

I am **Patricia Dawanyeno Marie Jabbeh** Wesley, from the small village of Tugbakeh, Maryland County in South Eastern Liberia. I grew up in Monrovia. I went to college during late 1970s at the University of Liberia, a decade that shaped me into what I am today politically. My father was a strong influence on me, my education and upbringing, a hard man, but an educated man who wanted his daughter to be very educated. He sent me to live in his hometown, and gave me the tools I needed

to become an authentic African writer, the knowledge about the Grebo culture.

I began writing at a very early age, before I was a teenager, and have since written poetry and stories. In high school, I wrote poetry and short story for our school magazine at CWA, the College of West Africa, and in college, I continued writing. I obtained my Master of Science in Education from Indiana University-Bloomington, and there, I also played with writing. For my Ph.D., I finally decided to return to my poetry roots, and got a doctorate in English and Creative Writing with a poetry writing emphasis, producing my second book of poetry straightly during my four years in the Ph.D. program. My dissertation, **Becoming Ebony**, my second book of poems won the **Crab Orchard Award** in 2002, a national award, before I defended that dissertation, and that book was published in (2003, Southern Illinois University Press). My first book, **Before the Palm Could Bloom: Poems of Africa**, published in (1998 New Issues Press) was already getting rave reviews.

I went on to publish two other books of poetry: **The River is Rising** (Autumn House Press, 2007) and **Where the Road Turns** (Autumn House Press, 2010).

I also published one children's book, **In Monrovia, the River Visits the Sea** (One Moore Book, 2013).

I have a new book of poems, **When the Wanderers Come Home**, not really on the horizon, but coming out in November from the University of Nebraska Press, under the **Africa Poetry Book Series**. On the horizon, I have several books on the horizon or on my computer, being edited, etc.

I am a mother of four wonderful children, Besie-Nyesuah, Mlen-Too II, Gee, and Ade-Juah Wesley, that I still devote my time to taking care of even though they're all grown. My youngest, soon to graduate from college, and my last in college, is my big children's project until she is on her own like the rest. My husband is Mlen-Too Wesley, married for over **35** years.

I am a professor of English, Creative Writing and African Literature at Penn State University, teaching at its Altoona campus in Central PA. One of my many passions is teaching and molding young people, so besides being a writer, I love my job as a teacher. I have taught at the University of Liberia, taught from 1980 to 1990, and have taught at other US universities prior to moving to Penn State University, where I have

tenured and been for the last ten years.

2) Why writing?

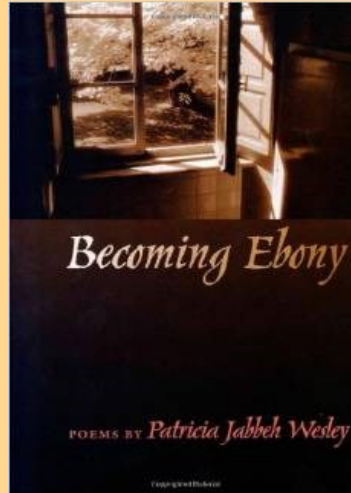
Well, I never decided to write. Writing decided on me, so I write. I have been writing since I was a child, in my father's house, probably before then, but by fourteen, I was writing seriously. I think I got the talent from my mother, who was a very good story teller, funny, witty, and intelligent although she only got a six grade education before becoming pregnant with me and dropping out of school. As a child, I wrote to survive in my stepmother's home, wrote because they kept telling me to shut up. Writing has always been my way of fighting back, of finding healing, of finding my place in the world. Writing is a disease I was born with. I have a son who is a visual artist, and I see him doing to art what I do with writing.

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

Many, hard to name them all. But I have always been drawn to poetry, so to name a few titles, so Ugandan poet, Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*, John, Pepper Clark Bekederamo's play, *Ozidi* and his poetry also, by e.e. cummings, and of course a long list of novels by African writers. I could not list a small portion of them here. I am drawn to stories that

explore the African oral tradition, which I believe is the foundation of African literature.

4) How do you approach your work?



Since I write mostly poetry, let me stick to it. With poems, I write on inspiration. I write when I feel like it, anywhere, anytime, dropping everything to write. I can decide to write a poem, and even in class when I'm teaching creative writing, I can compose poetry instantly just from trying to inspire my students. I have learned so much and written so long, I know what makes poetry what it is, and can come up with images, the most important element of poetry, without thinking. I approach a poem like I approach a piece of art, the image of the thing I want to say, staying close to me, and where I want the poem to go, the effect I want to create, whether I want to create anger, tears, laughter, all of those staying close to me as I compose the poem. I may edit the

poem a little, but I rarely write poems that need over editing. If a poem is good, I know it from its first creation, and I know the effect on my audience. To me, Voice is as important to a writer as breathing. If you do not discover your voice, you cannot be a good writer. It is your "YOU," and every writer must find that person that they are, what makes them tick, the inner person that has been shaped by the larger environment. Where you come from is important to discovering that "YOU."

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

My country, Liberia, the small country some feel is not so significant. I learned early that where you come from is who you are no matter how far away you've been. And I stay close to that West African shore in my writing. I believe that you cannot write too much about your homeland. So, I explore Liberia, its troublesome wars, its cultures. I am proud of my culture, of my people, Liberians, and the Grebo people whose culture has shaped my philosophy of life, and I write in that strength. I was sent to live on the Tugbakeh Mission Boarding school in my hometown, and there, for three years, I learned the culture of my people, in the town and among my family. So, I explore those

teams. And I also write about my family, my children a lot, about love and about women.

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

I hate this question, you know that. There is a whole lot on the web about my books. I think this question was also answered when I talked about myself and in the previous question.

7) What inspired you to write *The River is Rising*? Tell us about the inspiration of Part IV; why the simple "Woman" when there is more to it than that? How did you come up with the pieces in that section?

The entire book is about women. There is only one man in that book, and he is looking to find a drowned woman. So, the book is really about women. And in case you thought it was inspired by the title poem, or about the Liberian leader, no way. It was not inspired by her.

I wrote the book as I do all other poems one after the other without any plan or focus. This is how poetry is produced. But because certain things are happening around you, on your mind, etc., those things shape your book. So, the book was shaped in those final few years of the civil war, written mostly right after the second book came out, and completed in celebration of

the end of that bloody war era. I was extremely troubled by the fourteen year old war, the death, the suffering of women, my country, and I kept writing about my pain, and about the place women have in our society. That is how the book turned out the way it is.

The section was simply to show the importance of women. I write a lot about women anyway.

8) Is there an underlying message in your books that you want your readers to grasp?

The books do not have any one underlining message. They're five now, and each has several messages. I want readers to read every book and every poem for what it is. I have been reviewed and written about by many scholars, and they have much to say, but I rarely care to make one sense out of anything. I think it is the job of the literary critics and book reviewers' job to get the message out of the books.

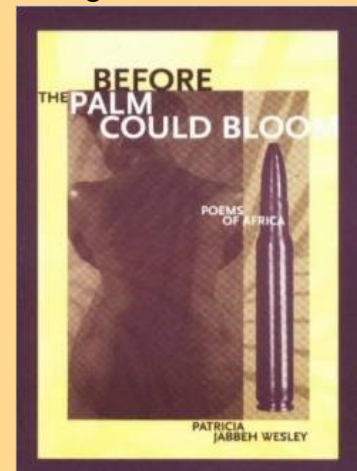
9) Is there anything else you would like readers to know about your books?

The books have a lot about our history, our culture, our ways of life, our heritage. They're poetry, so they may be a bit difficult for those who don't care about poetry, but those who read me say it is easy reading.

10) Do you have any advice for other writers?

Well, advice for writers? Hmm. Writing is about writing. WRITE, WRITE, WRITE, and WRITE.

The reason a writer writes is because they have something they feel and want to say for themselves, first, to give them pleasure first. Fame is not the aim of writing, therefore, focus on



your art and craft. Writing is both art and craft. And most poets and story tellers have a talent inside them that gives them the power to write, that moves them, but they need the passion to drive that talent. Hone your talent.

Here is my strong advice: Do not be proud of what you have achieved so far, find writers you admire and let them help you grow into the best you can be, attend workshops to learn more about the writing, be vulnerable and not arrogant about who you are. When you humble yourself and listen to advice about your work, you grow and people support you. I am not an advocate of self-publishing because it kills the good or

promising writer. But it is okay to self-publish if you have to. We now live in a social media world where you can connect to writers from across the world for publishing and editing opportunities.

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

Kwame Dawes' *Duppy Conqueror: Collected Poems* is what I'm reading right now. Kwame is a Ghanaian born, Jamaican American writer who is the founder of the Africa Poetry Book Fund that your readers need to know about, an opportunity to get published here in the US and in Africa. I have read this book before, a very thick book, but I'm rereading it.

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

Links:

1. <http://www.altoona.psu.edu/now/news.php?value=5411#.VsvbDMugpCA.facebook>

2. <http://www.altoona.psu.edu/research/story.php?v=87>

3. <http://www.altoona.psu.edu/now/news.php?value=5240#.ViVM8Zjsxdc.facebook>

4. http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2015/08/27/meeting-celebrated-liberian-poet-scholar-wesley_c1193535

[7/meeting-celebrated-liberian-poet-scholar-wesley_c1193535](http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2015/08/27/meeting-celebrated-liberian-poet-scholar-wesley_c1193535)

5. <http://radio.wpsu.org/post/take-note-poet-patricia-jabbeh-wesley-surviving-liberian-civil-war>

6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFhHwq0EiNM&feature=player_embedded&list=PLroeDO3j5VfVoYOc0K9HPUQ9felhoi6Vh

13) What are your current projects? [We understand that there is a new book on the horizon, want to give us some inside juice?]

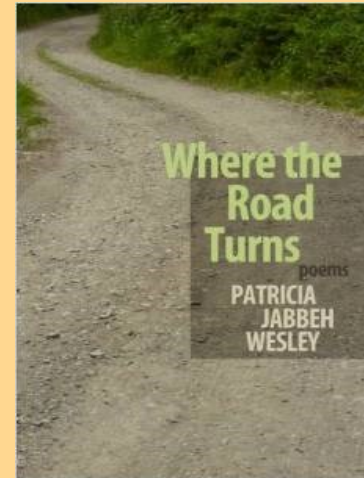
The book is under contract, and is being processed for publication this fall. Here is the pre-publication advertisement. I now have a book cover, but the publisher has not yet released this cover yet. But here is the link:

<https://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/When-the-Wanderers-Come-Home,677245.aspx>

This book was written entirely in less than four months while I was on sabbatical in Liberia in 2013, and explores the issues of the after war effect on our people, written about Liberian during that year. I am excited about the poems in it. Each new book, I hear critics say, "Oh, this is the best book," but from what I'm already hearing, this may be the best so far. But a writer never thinks

that, so you keep trying to beat the last book.

Also, I'm working on three manuscripts, have



completed my memoir, "Living Miracles: Life in the Liberian Civil War," and am seeking a literary agent right now. Big project, over five hundred pages. I also am working on a new book of poems as usual, and will be looking for a publisher for my very big children's book, long written. Time is my problem.

14) What is your take on contemporary Liberian literature? Where do you see it in say five years?

I am excited about the number of younger writers or even people in my generation that are still writing, new to writing and are excited about their need to publish their own books. There is an exciting new trend that I am glad about. I am a bit saddened by how much the war took away from us, but many are using this as an opportunity to get published. I know a few younger poets who

impress me, and am hoping they will be brave to allow other writers, and it can be writers from other countries, to help them, to look at their work. Writers who have succeeded are often very busy, so it takes patience and humility to get noticed by a busy writer, so be patient and lose your pride. I have seen some fine poems from writers like Ralph Geplay and others, and I am proud of them. Hopefully, he will develop into the writer he is meant to be. Wayetu Moore is a writer I'm looking to see become a great writer. She has time under her belt. I could not list the many younger writers I am proud of, many of them. I don't want to say I am proud of where we are at the moment, but I believe we're putting Liberia on the map.

I also believe that Liberian writers need to read more good writing. I am shocked that other Africans, including, Ghanaians, Nigerians, Kenyans, and other Africans are the ones teaching, reading, writing and publishing critical reviews on, doing dissertations on my work, and attending conferences to present my works and Liberians who want to be writers are instead not interested in what I have done for their literature. See, I am not looking for recognition from my people.

No. I have my flowers already, and I am not greedy for recognition from my own, but we need to work together to help our younger ones rise.

I have several books in my library that I read regularly when I find the time, books by Liberian authors, whether they are famous or not, whether I love these writers or not, I value them because their voice is essential to our literature, and I celebrate their efforts.

I hope that one day, I'll find the time to work on my bigger projects of unifying our literature the way I see it. In the meantime, I am proud of what you and others are doing.

15) Any last words?

Oh, gosh, I did not know I would ever get to the end, hahahaha, this laugh is for you, Forte, you, hahaha. You are some interviewer. I love what you're doing.

Here are my last words. Congratulations to you and to all of your staff, those who have been helpful in pushing this magazine. It is always a pleasure to interview with my people. I have done so many interviews for so many magazines across the world, I am always afraid of interviews, so forgive my delay.

For those of you who misunderstand me, well, what can I say? I do not believe in negative competition, so I say, let's

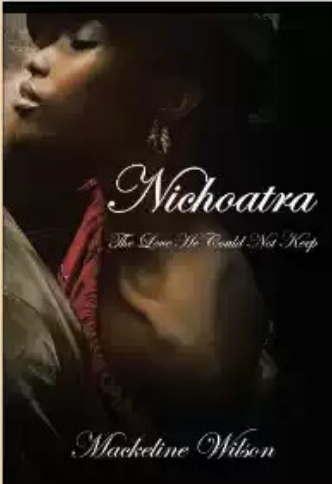
work together. Let us be one. I have a poem, "When Monrovia Rises," coming out in the new book, and in that poem, I say that we are all one people. Your success is my success. Here is what I leave you, something I have been thinking and putting together in my imagistic mind: ---If you have a big brother or sister who has walked the path and cleared the dew so you can pass, do not try to build a new footpath, clear your brush and wet your garment to get to the same destination your sister/brother has already arrived. Walk that path, take their hand, let them be your bridge, do not burn it down or build a new one. We are where we are because someone let us stand on their shoulder to see the top of the tree. Don't try to wait until you are tall enough to see. I am always learning, and I can learn from you even if you do not want to learn from me. Thank you, and may God bless your efforts and may God bless Liberia and Africa.



Patricia Jabbeh Wesley

Book Review

Nichoatra: The Love He Could Not Keep



Between the World and Me

Book Review by: Momoh Sekou Dudu

Mackeline Sata Wilson's romantic fiction thriller, **Nichoatra: The Love He Could Not Keep**, is a daring story of love and heartbreak. The book peers, with unapologetic intensity, into the glamorous but dark and perilous world of toxic love. With all-engrossing twists and turns of plot lines, the author explores the associative (and addictive!) ingredients of that sensual toxicity: sex, lies, denial, pain, more lies, and ultimately, murder.

The story is narrated from the perspectives of the two main characters: Roderick Sanders (Rod), and Nichoatra Williams (Nicky). It opens with Rod, an older, married man, crossing paths with Nicky, a young bank employee. Instantly, Rod narrates, he feels something uncontrollable inside of himself for Nicky

whom he describes as having “just enough curves, with almond-shaped eyes, smooth skin the color of milk chocolate, and full lips that begged to be kissed.” So begins a cascade of events the confluence of which, in the end, destroyed two otherwise promising lives.

Nicky, by the time she meets Rod, has grown apprehensive of starting intimate relationships with men. She distrusts them for she carries with her, perpetually, an eternal scar from her prior experiences—all of which had been, for the most part, odysseys of betrayal, abuse, and rejection. She recalls, hauntingly, one such early-life abusive experience thus:

“I could feel Forest's gun pressing against my temple—but the strange thing is, this time I wanted him to pull the trigger. I knew that if Forest had ended it back then, I would not be here now, feeling Roderick's words rip through my heart like a bullet through human flesh.”

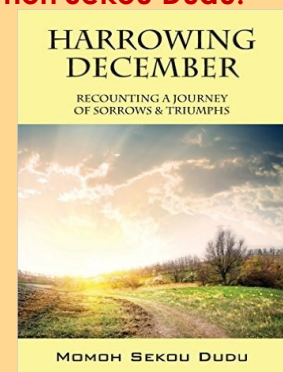
For this reason, Nicky resists Rod's initial advances toward her. Soon, however, Rod's charm and persistence, and his lies, sweeps her off her feet. In the course of the impassioned courtship that ensues, Nicky, fearing a repeat of her past, displays a guarded determination to make the relationship prosper. But Rod has an alternative plan: He neither wants to break off his marriage to commit to the

relationship with Nicky nor does he want to let Nicky move on from him.

In time, Nicky decides she has had enough. She rekindles a romance with an old acquaintance for, as the noted Jim Elliot cautions: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” But Nicky's efforts come a tad too late. She is savagely murdered by a jealous Rod just as she and her new beau ready to consummate their relationship.

I am not a sucker for romantic fiction, but I found myself unable to put this novel down from start to finish. The story rouses the heart with each sentence, with each turn of the page. It is a scintillating read!

Nichoatra: The Love He Could Not Keep, by **Mackeline Sata Wilson**. AuthorHouse, 2012. 176 pages. Reviewed by **Momoh Sekou Dudu**.



Momoh Sekou Dudu

is the author of the memoir, **Harrowing December** (2014) and the forthcoming novel, **Forgotten Legacy** (2016). Copyright (c) Momoh Sekou Dudu, 2015. All Rights Reserved.

Diaspora Poet

Jumbi Eyes

I hold the eyes in
cupped hands.
Black pupils dot red orbs
so many, so tiny
they slip through my
fingers.
Some West Indians stay
away
fear jumbi eyes that
glow
like hot embers in the
dark
if you set your mind on
them.
Jumbis repossess their
eyes
at midnight, chant in
your ears,
Tek me back weh you
get me from.
The daring scour the
bush
for the beady eyes,
pluck them from pods
soak them in water
and pierce the pupils
with thick sharp needles,
string them on twine.
Tourists rush vendors
in search of mementos
braided hair, a photo-op
with an iguana, a
donkey,
and that t-shirt that reads
I be jammin.
They buy a jumbi bead
necklace,
sail away, fly off,
beads clasp their
throats,
not knowing the dead
are tourists too.

*Jumbi- the spirit of the dead.

© Althea Mark-Romeo

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.

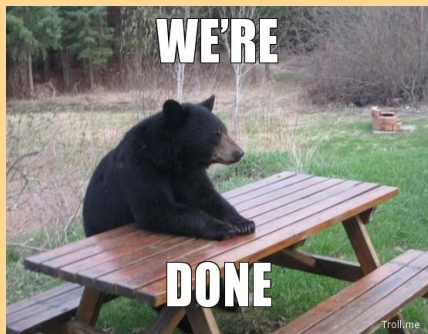
More publishing history can be found at her blog site:

www.aromaproductions.blogspot.com



WE ARE DONE

Short Story 2



Mbagwu Amarachi Chilaka

I could still remember those heart piercing words from Anthony's text message the night he found out I was into the game of double dating. I remembered how much those words burnt a bigger part of my heart whenever I remembered him nor listened to ColdPlay's *Fix You*; a song I likened to his memories. It was his favourite song also. A song he used to sing me to cheers or sleep when life throws me a punch.

Anthony loved me, that I knew, but he never talked about taking me to see his parents. I ran into Jide two years after Anthony and I agreed to share a heart. He seemed serious, and just five months in our relationship, he promised we were going to visit his family in the next three months.

Ada and Uloma, my high school friends had the title, 'Mrs' added to their names three and two weeks ago. I couldn't wait to graduate from Miss to Mrs.

Anthony wasn't helping matters- maybe he was still gathering the courage. Maybe he came from a poor background. Or maybe, he wasn't really prepared. Not ready. I didn't know which until that night, the night there was a beep from him. He had called to say we were going to see his family the day after tomorrow, but unfortunately, Jide took the call as I was in shower.

Life became dark with its very heavy punches blowing me in my face and every part of the body. Moreover, Uloma and Ada had stopped keeping in touch. They were my rock when I fell. I couldn't understand why until one day Ada told me that her husband had warned against being friends with single ladies.

She promised to be there when needed but just not as before.

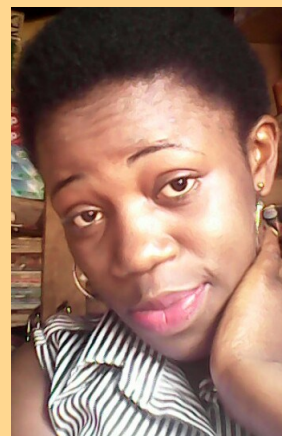
I was left alone. I soon began wondering the streets and supermarkets, unintentionally expecting to meet a man who could light up my world.

I went to clubs and parties but met with men who wore darkness like a crown around their heads. I soon tired of expecting to find Mr. Right, I figured I already live in a dark world- why not mingle? This too tired me. I lowered my standard further but the more I tried, the more I attracted the wrong men. Those who asked for my name or took my contact but never called.

Churches then became my new dwelling place. Every Sunday I dressed to attract. This was promising but not paying early enough.

A year after, I walked into the Church on a Sunday morning to find a man, I found myself and that day, I gave it all up.

Current Situation. I am dancing happily to ColdPlay's *Fix You* amazed by life's jokes. And then Kelvin walks in. Three hours before, I had told him, "We were done." We were actually done arguing on whether it was a he or she in my almost protruded belly; his guess was as good as mine. I wanted to name him 'Mark-Anthony', and he wanted her called Chimamanda. "...Time will tell." I told him.



Mbagwu Amarachi Chilaka is an aspiring writer whose writing was motivated by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and some upcoming writers on Facebook. She has written over thirty-five short stories and poems. She's currently a second year National Diploma student of Dispensing Opticianry at the Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri. She lives in Owerri, Imo state Nigeria.

Author Interview 2

Spotlight Author

CATANA TULLY



Liberian Literary Magazine conducted an interview with

Catana Tully, an aid consultant who has worked in several troubled spots.

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....

I was born in a remote village in Guatemala and was adopted early on by a German family that lived there. When they had to move to Guatemala City, they took me with them and raised me as a German child. There were no Blacks in the city, so I grew up distanced from my race and culture, speaking German, Spanish and English fluently. I received the best education a child could access. When the family became aware that my perception of people

like me was problematic, I was sent to a boarding school in Jamaica to receive a positive image of dark people. At the time Jamaica was still British, so my A-level HS diploma came courtesy of Cambridge University. After that I studied in Munich, Germany, at a language academy with the intention of becoming a translator and interpreter. However, because of my appearance and fluency in German, I was enticed to follow an acting career in film, television and theatre, and also as a fashion model. I met and married my white American husband in Munich, and after the birth of our son, moved to California to keep the family together. I was 35. In the US my sense of self began to unravel, as I had to identify as a Black. It would take years of therapy to understand that despite all the love and concern my German parents had for me, I had lost all that was me, and my strong European identity had become detrimental to my emotional wellbeing. I gave up acting and pursued a master's degree and then a doctoral degree in Humanistic studies. Therapy guided me to research who my birthparents were and why I had ended up in the German family. I met my birth father and then my birthmother's children. Their version regarding my story was quite different to what I had been told and had come to believe.

2) Why writing?

The reason I sat down to write my story was because it was becoming a fad for middle-class White families to adopt internationally and interracially. My story, I felt, would show them significant pitfalls (for them and their children) as they navigated the tricky waters of not talking about, or exposing their children in a significant and positive way to the child's race and culture.

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

My influence came from many different sources: at first German fairy tales and German literature; in Jamaica it was British writers and poets, later in the US international literature, primarily Black writers. I needed to learn about Black Thought, philosophy and culture. African classic writers like **Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutuola, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**. Caribbean writers: **Frantz Fanon, Nicolas Guillen, Aimee Cesaire and Derek Walcott**. The Americans: **Langston Hughes, Zora Neal Hurston, Toni Morrison, Richard Wright...** I hope you get the picture: primarily 20th century Black literature classics. Everything I read in some form or another inspires me. I'm currently reading works by Turkish author **Orhan Pamuk**. However, my preferred genre is memoir.

4) How do you approach your work?

I start to write after my half hour morning meditation. I have a topic I want to explore and write to see where it takes me. It is not even a rough draft, but could become one. Sometimes I am able to have an outline by the time I finish. Coffee, an hour's hike in the wilderness with my dog, and then read pieces I wrote previously to work further on them. I also spend time researching the topic I'm writing about. As I live alone, the hours are mine to make the best of... or not.

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

After the success of *Split at the Root*, I began blogging about issues I presented in the book. Readers also had questions; primarily, as could be expected were parents who had adopted internationally. As a result, I started a coaching program. In all cases I suggested they first work with a therapist specializing in early childhood trauma: who would not talk about the adoption, but understood the sadness and grief the child lived with after the separation from the birthmother. That is essential, and most therapists don't go there, and adoptive parents don't want to go there either as they feel their love being threatened.

Another topic I discuss often has to do with complex identity issues. And

I also write about the more spiritual approach to life that comes with age. I no longer have to know it all or be right all the time. I'm a good listener and discussion leader and always learn from others, regardless.

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

I have only written one book: **Split at the Root: A Memoir of Love and Lost Identity**. It is my story, written (after six drafts) in chronological order. I let the reader see the process of being culturally seduced by German language and culture. The chapter relating to my first encounter with dark people in Belize and later Jamaica shows the confusion and racist attitudes I displayed. They are quite obvious, and are real and true. The primary characters are my German mother, her daughter who was older than my birthmother, my husband Fred and my son Patrick. Later in the story enters my birthfather, and my siblings on my mother's side. *Split at the Root* deals with a great many things, primarily, however, it is a story about finding oneself and learning to love oneself without adhering to the values the White world imposes.

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

Adrienne Rich, some 30 years ago, wrote an essay

with that title. It fit perfectly to my subject matter. The subtitle explains the title: *A Memoir of Love and Lost Identity*. I have recently finished the German translation of the book and anticipate its release this year. The title in German is slightly different, of course.

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

Absolutely: the importance of honoring the mother who gave us life, regardless of who she was; also, the importance of honoring ones family, culture, community. To be a beloved child is wonderful, but love cannot dispel the negative subliminal messages absorbed as a child when there are no racial or cultural role models to correct the negative picture in the child's mind. A culture, centuries in the making, has value and honor. There is a good chance that an adopted child lives with a colonized mind.

9) Do you have any advice for other writers?

A writer needs to read. I could tell which of my students were readers: it showed in their writing. Good writers are avid readers. It's quite simple. Beyond writing words, sentences, paragraphs, writing is editing, and rewriting, and rewriting, and rewriting again. It's work, it's a process that is daunting and can be discouraging. In the end, however, it is incredibly rewarding.

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

A book that impressed me because of the story is *A Long Way Home* by Saroo Bierdsley. An Indian child adopted to Australia, who remembered his village and home and, as an adult, after years of research and thanks to Google Earth and FaceBook managed to return to the house in which he lived and find his mother, still living there. It was fascinating to see how intelligent little 5 year-old Saroo was and how he had ingrained his home and village in his memory. But above all I found his enduring connection to the mother who gave him life. I was also touched by the selfless love of the supportive white adoptive parents.

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

My paternal grandmother's name was Liberia. So I have read about some of the history of the interesting creation of the country. My grandmother was born sometime in the late 1800s on the Caribbean coast of Guatemala (where I was born).

I have not read Liberian authors, but have ordered books by writers I am seeing in Kwee. I very much look forward to receiving them and starting to read...

Author bio:



Catana Tully grew up trilingual in Guatemala where she attended elementary and middle school. In tenth grade she entered a boarding school in Jamaica, WI and received her Advanced Level Higher Schools Certificate from Cambridge University, England.

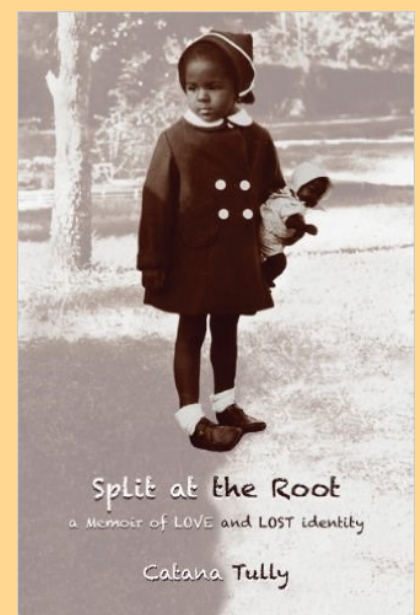
Expecting to become an international interpreter, her studies continued at the Sprachen und Dolmetscher Institut in Munich, Germany. However, after answering a call to work in a play, she discovered her affinity for the dramatic arts. As the actress and fashion model Catana Cayetano she appeared in Film and Television work in Germany, Austria, and Italy.

She met and married the American actor Frederick V. Tully and ultimately moved to the United States. They have a son, Patrick. In Upstate New York, she completed the BA in Cultural Studies at SUNY,

Empire State College; obtained a MA in Latin American and Caribbean Literature, and a DA (Doctor of Arts) in Humanistic Studies, from SUNY, Albany.

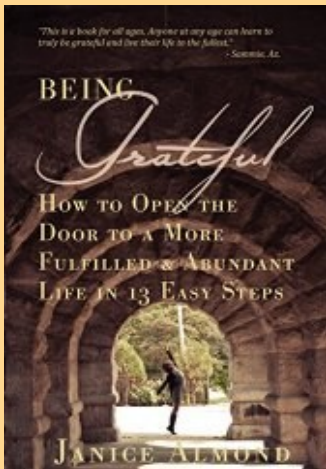
In 2003, personal reasons required she retire from her tenured position as Associate Professor at SUNY Empire State College, only to return for part time work in 2005 at ESC's Center for International Programs. There she served as Mentor and instructor in the Lebanon Program and as Interim Program Director for the Dominican Republic.

Wishing to dedicate herself completely to publishing her book, she retired entirely in 2011. *Split at the Root: A Memoir of Love and Lost Identity* was published in the fall of 2012. Her German version of the book is ready for publication later in 2016.



Catana Tully

Finding Meaning in Everyday Living



Janice Almond

Get Focused: 7 Strategies to

- F- Forge Ahead
- O- On Purpose
- C- Create Your Life
- U- Until You Succeed
- S- Start Today
- E- Envision Success
- D- Determine to Win

Are you forging ahead on purpose to create a life that leads to success? Have you started the process? Do you envision success? Are you determined to win?

Forge Ahead- How do you “forge ahead?” You take steps-baby steps. You know how a baby does it. You’ve seen how a baby maneuvers around. Think about it. The baby doesn’t stop, they keep on going, forging ahead; no matter what it is they are trying to do, whether it is crawling, walking, climbing, etc. They are always maneuvering, trying to find a way. This is what we have to do. We have to keep moving forward no matter the obstacles that cross our paths.

On Purpose

Let me ask you a question, “What is your purpose?” What are you actually doing in your life on purpose today? If you are doing nothing on purpose, what’s the point of your life? Think about it. You were created and are here for a reason- some sort of purpose, right? The fact that you are alive and are reading this article is a sign that you have a purpose to fulfill. You need to ask yourself, “Why am I still here?” If you have no purpose, find one.

Create Your Life

What does it mean to create your life? How magnificent that would be you are perhaps telling yourself. You may be wondering, “How do I even begin to do that?” Like most of us, we have had some setbacks. Some of us have had more setbacks than others. But, truth be told, we can learn to be creative. We have brains for that. Take some time and just think--

meditate on something that you can create. The possibilities are endless.

Until You Succeed

What does it take to succeed? Really, all it takes is telling yourself this simple phrase, “I will-until!” Let’s be honest. You really have no choice. At least no viable, acceptable one. Think about someone you know who has had success in one arena or another. Did they quit? Maybe at times, but they didn’t give up! It’s all in the mind. That is where success begins.

Start Today

When do you start to focus? Today! Why is this so important? Well, we all know tomorrow NEVER COMES! If you fail to start today, guess what? Chances are you will continue to put off your life--to procrastinate. Some people are living their lives in perpetual procrastination. They, literally, have a daily excuse. Find a way not to procrastinate your life away.

Envision Success

Do you “see” yourself accomplishing something? This is what you must do. Seeing is believing. If you don’t, won’t, or can’t envision success, you won’t get it. This “seeing” is a continuous, ongoing process. Remember what I said earlier about baby steps? That concept applies here as well. Nothing is accomplished in a day. More than likely getting to your successful place will most likely take weeks, months, even years.

Determine to Win

This is where keen determination comes in. All you need is a made-up mind. Just do IT. It may sound cliché, but being determined to win is what you need. What is your “it?” Write some ideas down. Take the time to do it now. Nothing can bring you more joy than having a plan and following through on it.

Since you woke up this morning that means you have another opportunity, another chance to get and keep a clear, determined focus. So, do it. Forge ahead, on purpose, create your life, until you succeed, and START NOW!

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

Some Notable Liberian Women

Antony Brown, Ph. D



In celebration of women the world over, we are running this piece gathered from a couple of sources.

Women gained suffrage in 1945 under President William V. S. Tubman. Since then, they've played as prominent a role as men in shaping their country's political, socioeconomic and cultural landscapes. The first women in the Legislature were.

Elizabeth Collins- Bong County, Catherine Cummings- Nimba County, Malinda Jackson Parker- Montserrado, and Pewhere Sakon- Grand Bassa county.

Notable women who served their country in both the public and private sector include:

1. **Mrs. Etta Wright:**
Assistant Defense minister.
2. **Dr. Anna E. Cooper:**
first female dean at the University Of Liberia.
3. **Danielette Tucker Jackson.**
appointed Chief auditor at department of Treasury (Auditor General).
4. **Mrs. Georgia Mathews:**
Secretary Of The Senate.
5. **Mrs. Cecilia Mooney:**
Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court.

6. **Mrs. Euginia Stevenson:**
Consul General in NY.
7. **Mrs. Myrtle Reeves-Gorgla:**
Consul General to London
8. **Angie Elizabeth Brooks Randolph:**
Assistant Secretary General. Served as Chief Executive as both president and Secretary of State, during the president's absence. Delegate to the UN., and Vice Chairperson. Chairperson of the committee of trust and non-self government territories. Chairperson on the commission for Ruanda-Urundi VC and later president of Trustee Council Ambassador at large Ambassador to the UN Supreme Court Justice.
9. **Edith Mai Wiles Padmore:**
Minister Of Health and Social Welfare. Executive Secretary to the president Special assistant to the president.
10. **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf:**
Minister of finance. President of LBDI
11. **Dr. Kate Bryant.**
Minister of health and welfare
12. **Florence Chenoweth**
Minister of Agriculture.
13. **Hanna Abedou Bowen Jones:**
Minister Of Post.
Minister of Communication
Minister of Health and Social security
14. **D. Musleng Cooper,** Superintendent, LAMCO Area School System and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

SOURCE: Historical Preservation Society of Liberia

LIBERIAN GIRL

Upriver girl
Teacher Washington daughter
sitting by the creek
staring dreamily at the water
Voinjama girl
with those cornrows in your hair
and a smile like raindrops
hanging in the forest air
Monrovia girl
How you fine so, you geh?
and my heart weh you stole
wha place you put it eh, you geh?
Mt. Barclay girl
First Baptist Church of Careysburg girl
Sunday morning service after a wild
Saturday night girl
Pressing comb and finger nail polish girl
Kool Aid and milk candy-selling girl
Freshly creased school uniform skirt girl
Those rude boys them won't leave you
alone eh?
Then when you cuss their ma them,
everybody say, How you frisky so, you
geh?
LU girl, Bromley girl
Cuttington College, PhD girl
House of Bethany girl
And who can forget those Robertsport Vai
girls?
Cape Palmas girl
New Kru Town girl
Rural Foya Market girl
Cross the border twice a day girl
Wartime LURD rebel fighter girl
They say, How you gronah so, you geh?
But they don't know the things you've seen
and the hellish places you've been
so just suck your teeth
and tell them where to go
cuz the Doe-Taylor big shot them
think life dah some kinda chayren show
To them you're just an object
for their desires down below
But for me I got one question
How you marvelous so, you geh?

-Tony Barclay Morgan, 2005

A. DORIS BANKS HENRIES



writer; dean; college administrator;
college president

Born on February 11, 1913, in Live Oak, FL;
died on February 16, 1981, in Middletown,
CT; married Richard Abrom Henries, 1942;
children: two sons

Education: Willimantic Normal School
(now Eastern Connecticut State
University), BSc, 1920s; graduated from
Connecticut State Teachers' College,
1920s; attended Yale University, 1920s;
attended Hartford Seminary, 1930s;
attended University of Besancon, France,
1930s; Columbia University, MA, 1930s,
PhD, 1930s

Politics: True Whig Party.

Religion: Methodist.

Memberships: (selected):

Liberian National Teachers Organization;
Methodist Board of Education; National
YMCA (Liberia); Society of Liberian
Authors; World Council for Curriculum
and Instruction.

RACHEL E. T. JOHNSON MASSAQUOI

Born in Monrovia July 8, 1893 to GABRIEL



MOORE JOHNSON and LUCRETIA BRAXTON JOHNSON, Gabriel Johnson was the son of President HRW Johnson, and grandson of ELIJAH JOHNSON. She began her education at the College of West Africa and continued in England. On her return home she joined her father's merchant business, and then opened an ice cream business of her own. Her marriage in June 1915 to ARTHUR MOMOLU MASSAQUOI cemented ties between the Vai and immigrant upper classes. Rachel Johnson Massaquoi died on September 21, 1986, in Monrovia,

RUTH PERRY



Ruth Sando Fahnbulleh Perry was born on July 16, 1939, in a rural area of Grand Cape Mount County, to Marjon and AlHaji Semila Fahnbulleh. She is a Muslim of Vai ethnic ancestry. As a child, Perry participated in the Sande society, a traditional school and secret society for females, and attended regular classes. Her parents later enrolled her in a

Roman Catholic school for girls in Monrovia run by missionary nuns, St. Theresa's Convent.

Perry graduated from the Teachers College of the University of Liberia and worked as an elementary school teacher in Grand Cape Mount County.

She married McDonald Perry, a judge and legislator and they had seven children, one of whom, Georgia Jebbeh Perry, resides in the state of Rhode Island with her husband Augustus Duncan and their 5 children. Her other children, including the late Cecelia Marjon Goodridge who resided in Ohio with her husband Spencer Goodridge and their 5 children, take residence in several states across the U.S. and some still live in Liberia. After her children were grown, Perry worked in the Monrovia office of Chase Manhattan Bank in 1971 and taught at a Sande school as an elder.

In 1985, Perry won a seat in the Liberian Senate as a Unity Party candidate. In response to Samuel Doe's allegedly fraudulent presidential election, Unity Party office-holders and other official opposition politicians boycotted the Senate in protest, asserting that the Doe government was illegitimate. Perry did not join the boycott and became the lone member of the opposition in the Assembly, serving until 1989. Afterward, Perry launched a retail business and became active in civilian groups such as Women Initiative in Liberia, Women in Action for Goodwill, and the Association of Social Services that sought an end to the growing Liberian Civil War.

On August 17, 1996, ECOWAS representatives negotiated a cease-fire between Liberia's warring factions and announced that Perry would replace Wilton Sankawulo as chair of the Council of State in an interim government. Reportedly all four warlords in the Liberian conflict had agreed to the peace agreement with Perry as interim leader.

The Council of State consisted of Charles Taylor, ULIMO-K (United Liberation Movement of Liberia) leader Alhaji Kromah, Liberia Peace Council leader George Boley, and two other civilians.

In 2004, she was an African President-in-Residence at the African Presidential Archives and Research Center at Boston University.

ANTOINETTE LOUISE PADMORE TUBMAN



President Tubman's third wife and First Lady of Liberia (1948-1971), Mrs. Tubman was born on Feb. 24, 1914 in Monrovia, to JAMES STANLEY PADMORE and MARY LOUISE BARCLAY PADMORE. She was raised by her aunt ELIZABETH BARCLAY SHERMAN after the death of her mother, and educated at Bromley Mission, and in Paris where she studied modeling and fashion.

As First Lady, "Aunt Nettie" established a miniature museum at the Mansion, with an interesting collection of presidential mementos from several administrations including her husband's. She opened two businesses, COOCOO'S NEST Motel and Restaurant in Totota, and WILMETCO Coffee Plantation and Processing in

Maryland County. Mrs. Tubman pioneered in the field of social services, launching the first national systemic program for orphans and disabled children at the SAMUEL GRIMES HOSPITAL in Kakata. She led Liberian women and the wives of foreign businessmen and diplomats in establishing the Antoinette Tubman Child Welfare Foundation, and the AT Child Welfare Center.

Turning to the field of mental health, Mrs. Tubman was instrumental in the founding of the CATHERINE MILLS PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT And REHAB CENTER just outside Monrovia. Nettie Tubman was also chief Patron of the SARAH SIMPSON GEORGE HOME FOR INDIGENTS, and the SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION, a civil organization that raised funds for welfare institutions.

Antoinette Louise Padmore Tubman died on May 18, 2011.

From HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF LIBERIA, Dunn, Beyan and Burrowes.

MA PHEBE D. NYEMAH



MA PHEBE D. NYEMAH

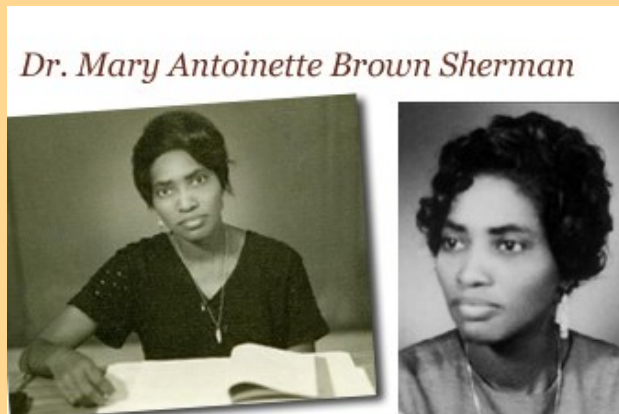
OF GBISO

JULY 14, 1935 - FEBRUARY 8, 2016

Evangelist Tours: Ma Phebe went from town to town in Liberia and Ivory Coast praying for the sick and breaking demonic oppressions over towns and

villages in the region. While most of her ministry happened in Gbiso, she travelled across southeast Liberia in Maryland, Grand Kru, River Gee, Grand Gedeh, including Monrovia, Abidjan and the USA where God did many great things. **Wherever she went God did great miracles upon miracles.**

DR. MARY ANTOINETTE BROWN SHERMAN



beloved University of Liberia President. Her father, Chief Justice Louis Arthur Grimes was the son of a CORA passenger, Ella Barclay. His father, Henry Waldron Grimes came from Barbados on his own. Dr. Brown Sherman was born Mary Antoinette Hope Grimes, named for her great aunt, Antoinette Hope Barclay.

“FOCUS ON 'EDUCATION-DEVELOPMENT”



In the 80s, Action Educator/Builder, **THERESA LEIGH-SHERMAN** trailblazed an all-female secretarial school to train professional girls and Liberian young ladies; as executive secretaries. In post-war, LIBERIA She broke grounds and initiated formal moves to establish a new 'Leigh Sherman Community College & Secretarial School In Paynesville, LIBERIA..../'



ACTION-Teacher/Trainer & Care Giver Of CHILDREN from the lower end Of Society is

HAWA

ANDREWS-COLLINS.

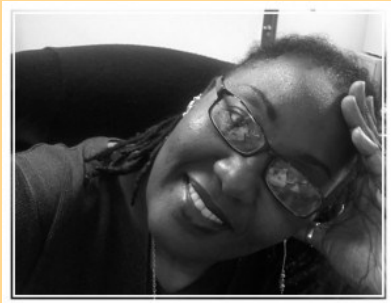
She has always attracted these Children for the popular television show, 'BIG SISTER HAWA'. Her dedication to 'The Eyes Of Tomorrow' (Liberia's Children of all walks) is a landmark drive to tap the children potential and proper mentorship!

(A grand salute to two education leaders in separate, but powerful areas of operation, Lady THERESA LEIGH-SHERMAN & BIG SISTER HAWA!)

This section was culled from **Heritage Liberia's** Facebook page.

Unscripted

Cher Antoinette



MARCH 2016

“UNSCRIPTED” for MARCH 2016

The month of March is declared annually as Women's History Month and it highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. International Women's Day is on March 8 this year and numerous events worldwide will be scheduled in recognition.

As a woman, a single mother and a grandmother I am constantly grateful and thankful for the unique perspective that has been bestowed on me as a result of my gender; the instinctive nurturing, the gift of multitasking, the skills to comfort and the ability to be firm and in control when needed.

This being said, there are still many women who are marginalized, victimized, and brutalised daily. We therefore must do whatever we can to keep the fires burning to ensure the equality and safety of all of our sisters.

NO RIGHT

You ask me what I wish for
What I need
Your attention
Your comfort
Fulfilment

Is that too much to wish for
I need my worth to be recognized
Valued
And revered

Is that too much to ask for

For too long
I have been the one to give
I have been the one taken
Taken
From my path
Taken
From the happiness
Seen in the eyes of my children

I am not my physical appearance
I am not my smile
I am not my eyes
I am the energy

Inside of me
That part of me for which
you have little time
Or interest

But you wish to explore
The outside
Enter the tight spaces
Feast in the ambrosia
Released
Seducing me

Knowing that I crave intimacy
Connection
Copulation

But that is not what I want
That is not what I need

My soul cries
Cries for understanding

You don't know me
You don't have the right
To question me
To make me read
between the lines

You put me on the sidelines
To watch the game
being played
To be the substitute
The understudy
Whose name is not on
the Playbill

But in everything there is
a beginning
And in everything there is
an end

The cries of my soul will
be heard
Distance will no longer
be
The hemispheres will be
whole once more
As the world folds on
itself

And I
And I will become the
woman
I know I am
For I would have found
The man who knows me

© 2015 "Architects of Destiny"

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.

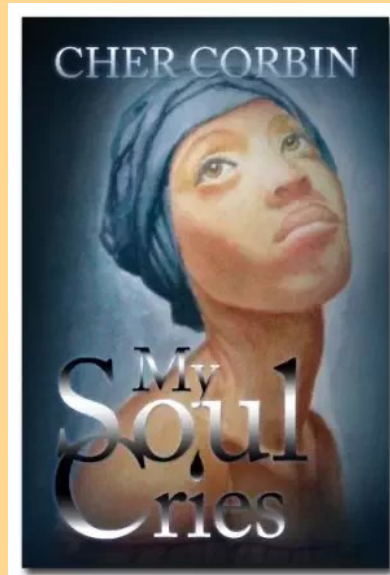
And now,
You are gone.

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"

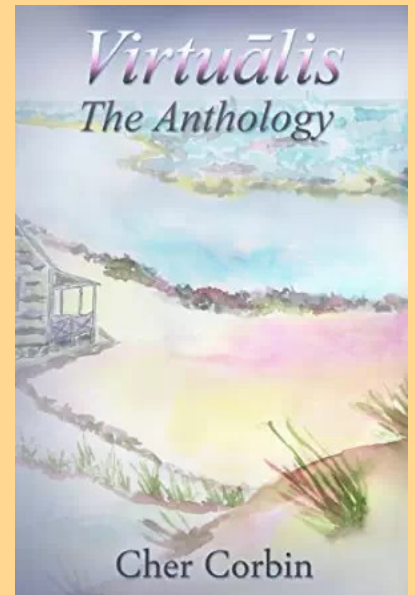


DESPAIR

she held her life in her
hands
as if it were a hot potato
bruised
skin scorched
blackened
burning to touch
up
down
up
down
bouncing

first-hop
into the grip of hysteria
saddened
maddened
by despair
rage
caged
bird sings
no one hears
no one cares
no one fears
for her life

© 2013 "MY SOUL CRIES"



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

Tireless: A Woman's Work Is Never Don: A Review:

Reviewed by: D. Othniel Forte

Painted by Cher Corbin



Today, I came across a painting *Tireless: A Woman's Work Is Never Done*, by Cher Antoinette. It struck a nerve. Coincidentally, my wife and I happened to be talking about the water challenge that went viral. Specifically, we focused on its apparent wastefulness. Having seen women often walking several kilometer/miles to fetch water [which they might later process if they were fortunate] to drink, cook and do other household chores, pouring perfectly good water down one's body doesn't feel challenging at all. So, what does this have to do with the painting? How do we connect the two?

I couldn't help but notice the powerful message of this painting. Color wise, it is amazing. Message-wise, it is even more so. *Three women gather in the midst of a pool of fresh water. What an image! What is special about this image? It would appear ordinary; and it certainly is, at least the occurrence is. So, why bother with something seemingly ordinary? Simply put, the story. The unwritten story behind the image is the incredulity.*

For instance, they each have a tub on their head. What does it represent? Traditionally, our women exhibit responsibility. In this scene, it is more than just the laundry they went to wash, it embodies the concept in its entirety. She is responsible for her family, she cares for them; she attends their needs and she is conscious enough to know and perform her duties. She makes time for her those things she must do. She doesn't have the luxury of procrastination.

Looking closer, we see that each carries a load. This tells many things as well. They are each burdened with countless situations which everyone expects them to solve. However, no one really minds how they do so as long as it get done. This is a burden for each, yet, it is shared. That is part of the significance in the trio. Over the years, they have come to value the importance of sharing; not only good times and things, but hard times and problems. They find comfort and strength in these connections they make. They are psychologically better when they use each other as bouncing boards. They find strength in unity. However, despite the oneness, each remains an individual. This fact most never be lost on the observers. The unity brings together the diversity but in a way that does not erase the individuality.

THE WOMEN:

We see one who appears to be pregnant, facing away from the two. Interestingly, she wears red. My first thought was, *"Could this be a coincidence, or is this artist really that in tune with her message?"* So I went back to check the piece again and guess what I found? There is no other red as deep and dominant as that. This signified that the artist knew her message. She wanted us to consider this particular woman and her situation. She needed us to pause on her, even if briefly, and consider her.

She is pregnant! This is dangerous, ordinarily she wouldn't be in danger but she is. She could lose the baby considering the high mortality rate amongst women of her race. The brownish-red which often suggests harvest or the earth, solidifies that she is

carrying a life, just as Mother Earth herself does. It shows some expectancy as we do at harvest time. Yet she is determined, confident to face those challenges. This speaks to her sheer will.

The woman in yellow, is probably the leader of this bunch; perhaps even the eldest. Her pose, suggest experience and control. She has been through the mill. She is probably the one with most of the solutions. Her tub is the fullest, and she wears the thickest 'collar' under the weight. Anyone who has had to carry loads in this manner knows the value of the *collar*. It balances the load but more importantly, it provides relief for the carrier. If it is not made right, it adds not only weight but sores the head and strains the neck of the one carrying the load. It is then befitting that her experience dictates she makes it the right size. Compare it to the other one....

Her yellow cover piece, placed in the middle, suggests that she has a full life; she is cheerful, vibrant, and exudes warmth. All these qualities endear her to the others. She is that brightness in all the troubles just shared. She is the one who says the right things at the right time. She offers the best advice on how to handle the current situation. The shade of blue she wears matches the water but more than just representing life and energy, it is about loyalty, wisdom and truth. She probably holds the customs together. It indicates she is conscious of her role and performs it well.

The third lady is still burdened by her weight, she is probably going through a lot right now. She is not upright because she remains unsure, laden troubled. Perhaps, of the three, she needs this encounter the most. She wears the green of nature; indicative of her evolving state. She is growing, maturing, her mind is fresh for planting knowledge.

They all stand in the same body of water, but interestingly, right in the middle of a circle. A circle that binds them yet allows them individuality. A circle that protects them psychologically and figuratively; a circle that shades from dark to light, albeit slightly. The burdened woman stands in a ripple, unlike the

others, whose legs the water splashes around. But the artist does not leave us in despair with the current gloomy situation. She merges those ripples with the reflected yellow of the gleeful one signifying hope; showing that she is not lost, but only in a momentary dark place. One which she needs to find her way out of. She is bald, she is seeking, and she is searching for an identity. Was this intended to reflect her mood, her situation or her dependence?

These women eventually return home; each feeling better than before; each more prepared to face her demons; each aware of her inner strength; each capable of making the journey back on her own, regardless how far or heavy or difficult. Each finding more of herself in the commune.

The scene above is applicable to any woman as the title rightly suggests. Women don't have to travel far to fetch water before they identify with this reality. This is the story of most any woman who takes her duties to family and community seriously. Any woman that hurts and finds comfort from an inner circle of friends and loved ones. It reflects the universal stretching of womanhood, their uncanny ability to juggle the lives of all those dependent on them against their endless problems. Their innate ability to find solutions; to brave the toughest blows life sucker punches them with; their resilience, but most of all, their ability to stand up and throw life one KO, even if it is the last thing they did. That there is a woman's strength. That there is the epitome of women.

Tireless: A Woman's Work Is Never Done, appropriately depicts womanhood both symbolically and realistically. What Cher manages to capture here is the subliminal characteristic of womanhood that even the independent feminist can identify with on several levels. "*Tireless*"; is one to have hung in a prominent spot on the wall.

Tireless: A Woman's Work Is Never Done

By Cher Corbin

Reviewed by: D. Othniel Forte



Writer | Publisher | Project Manager

Ophelia S. Lewis

KEEP IN TOUCH



VILLAGE TALES PUBLISHING

Websites:

<http://www.villagetalespublishing.com/>
<http://www.villagetalespublishing.com/index.php/ophelialewis>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/OpheliaLewisBooks-211665885533947/>

Linked IN:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ophelia-lewis-5b654735>

Contact Person: **Ophelia Lewis**



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

TOLUPE POPOOLA A Writing Coach



Tolulope Popoola

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

My name is **Tolulope Popoola** and I'm an Author, a Publishing Consultant and Writing Coach for Aspiring Authors. I was born in Lagos, Nigeria, sometime during the 1980s. I grew up in a household where reading and academic pursuits were positively encouraged. I moved over to the UK in 2000 for my university education, I have a BA in Accounting and Business Economics, and a Masters in Finance and Investment.

Why writing?

I've always been drawn to words, reading and writing. Growing up, I was the typical introvert who preferred to stay indoors with a book, while everyone else was out socializing.

My earliest memories of writing are from way back when I was a little girl, about six years old. I used to read a lot, and I would write my own versions of stories that I'd read, or I would make up my own.

But I got teased in school by my friends who thought I was weird, so I stopped. However, I never lost my love for reading and I read anything I could get my hands on.

As I grew older and became a teenager, I used to write in secret, because it just came naturally to me. I kept diaries and journals throughout my teen years, and writing was my therapy whenever I was upset. I loved and did well in English and Literature effortlessly in school.

What books have most influenced your life/career most?

Every book I read has influenced me in one way or the other, but the most important books I've read are:

How do you approach your work?

I approach my work with a combination of excitement, structure and expectation. I start with an idea, and I try to create an outline for how the idea will develop into a full story, but I also leave room for surprises to happen.

What themes do you find yourself exploring in your work?

Family, friendship and relationships. Most of my flash fiction stories have a theme of betrayal, secrets, loss, or surprises and they are based on human relationships.

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

My most recent title is a collection of flash fiction stories titled "Looking For Something". I got inspiration for these stories from all around me. It could be from a conversation with a friend, from song lyrics, or even a dream.

I've put these 14 stories together to educate, entertain and surprise my reader. Most people who read my flash fiction stories say they enjoy the twist at the end.

One recurrent theme throughout this collection is fatherhood. I didn't plan it that way, but when I sent

the stories to my editor, I noticed that a lot of them were dealing with that particular relationship.

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

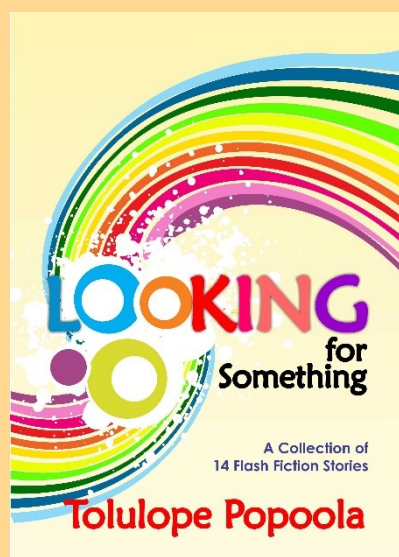
The title story, "Looking For Something" came to me after I read a lady's blog, and she was talking about dating an older man. I took that idea and created a character that was dealing with father issues and dating older men.

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

Yes. Things are not always what they appear to be.

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

If you don't have time to read long novels, you will enjoy reading these bite-size stories with twists and surprises



Do you have any advice for other writers?

Read, read, read. Then write, write and write. Be open to feedback, it will help you improve.

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

At the moment, I'm reading a lot of non-fiction books, mostly business books, but I'm also reading "The Last Sin Eater" by Francine Rivers for my book club meeting.

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

I have just created a 12-week coaching programme for aspiring authors, especially those who want to write a novel. The programme starts on the 5th of April. Interested writers should go to www.accomplishpress.com to find out more.

What are your current projects?

I'm about to start writing my next novel, so I'm in the planning stages. It's the next in the series of contemporary romance novels, and it's based on a character from my first novel, "Nothing Comes Close".

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

Actually, I haven't. Please recommend a few to me.

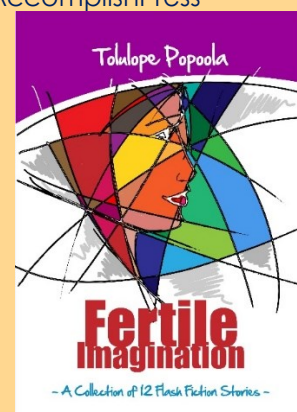
Any last words?

Thank you for having me.

Bio: Tolulope Popoola is a writer, blogger and a passionate lover of books and literature. Tolulope grew up in Lagos, Nigeria and moved to the United Kingdom in 2000. After venturing into a career in Accounting and Finance for a few years, she started blogging under the pseudonym 'Favoured Girl' in 2006 and rediscovered her love for writing. A few writing classes and an online fiction series soon followed and in 2008, Tolulope quit her Accounting career to become a full-time writer. She now writes short stories, flash fiction, and articles for many print and online magazines.

Her first novel, "Nothing Comes Close" was published by Accomplish Press in 2012. Her latest collection of flash fiction "Looking For Something" has recently been published.

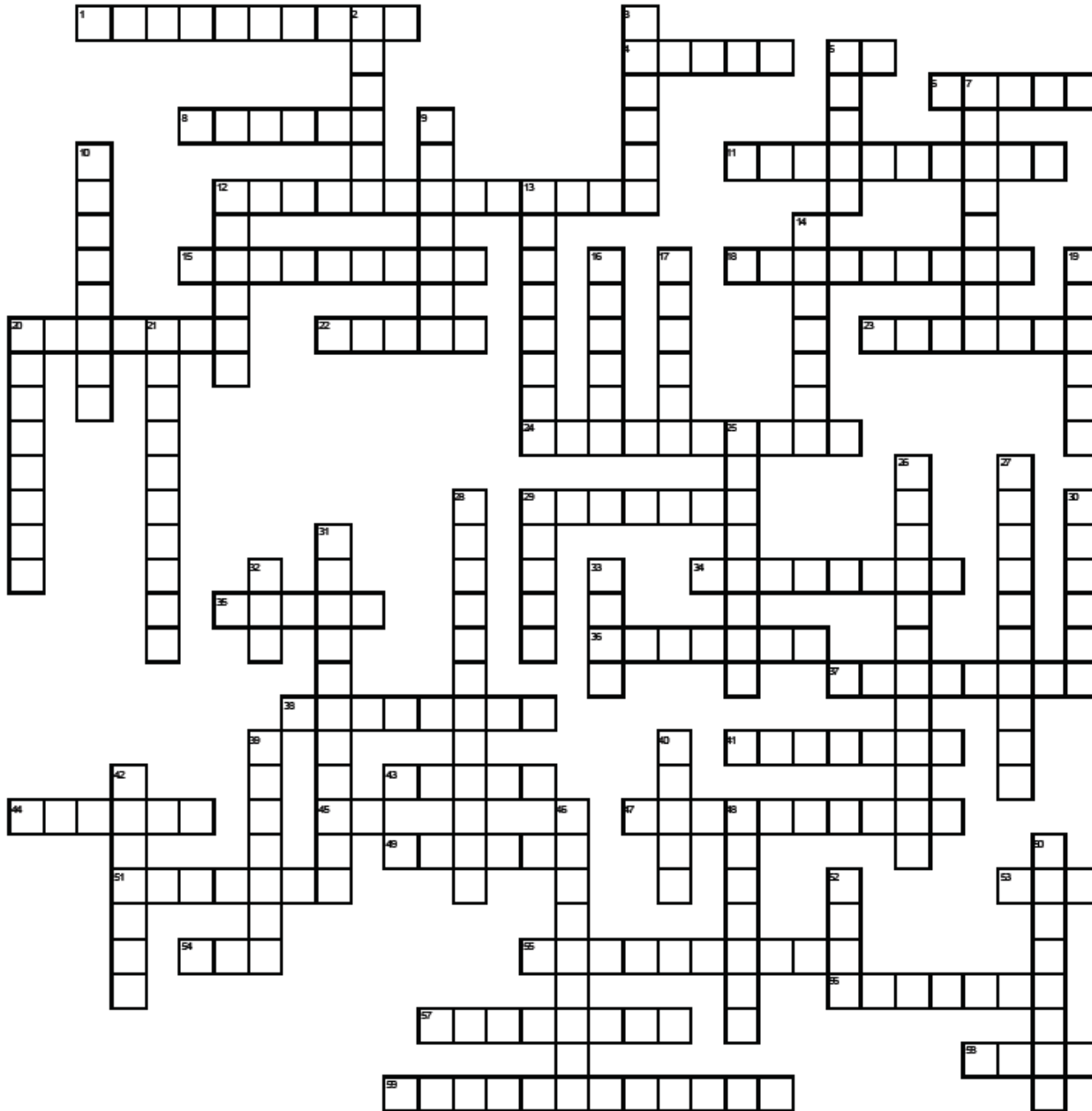
You can interact with Tolulope online via her blog at www.onwritingandlife.com, on Facebook; <http://www.facebook.com/TolulopePopoola> and Twitter @TolulopePopoola or @AccomplishPress



March's Puzzle

Black History: Random Thoughts

Every day is 'Black History' month



- 13 The Change poet
- 14 Lift Every Voice and Sing author
- 16 Ka 'Ba author (Imamu)
- 17 Poem Reaching for Something author
- 19 ___ is not dead
- 20 I can' Leave / Herbert Logerie [poem]
- 21 Ojeyemi's What is not yours ___ (3 words)
- 25 Yearnings of a ___ Nyamalon's new book
- 26 Diana Atuora's play performed at The Royal Court Theatre, London
- 27 Nikade's These words ___ (3 words)
- 28 Moore's Murder in the ___ (2 words)
- 29 Miller-Young's A taste for ___ Sugar
- 30 Williams' Dreaming with a ___ Heart
- 31 ___ Make a mighty ocean (2 words)
- 32 Langston Hughes' I, ___ Sing America
- 33 Harrowing December author
- 39 The black Calhoun' author
- 40 Only ___ jumps from the pot into a frying pan (2 words)
- 42 Wanda Phipps' ___ Poem #1
- 46 Like an ocean, it has no end
- 48 The Black Body in ___ Nash's Reading race, reading pornography Herby Duah's short story The ___ Machete
- 52 Prophecy author, (Richard W.)

ACROSS

- 1 ___ Chronicles by Ebidenyefa T. Nikade
- 4 Richard W. Moss' Wild ___
- 5 Ta Nehisi Coates' Between the world and ___
- 6 Cher Antoinette's My Soul ___
- 8 Valent Ine Ghost author (Ngozi)
- 11 Movements of ___ Richard

- W. Moss' poem
- 12 The fatal friendship between Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X (2 words)
- 15 People of a Different Mnd author
- 18 ___ and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia by Bronwen Everill
- 20 Maya Angelo's Man March

- 22 Liberia Unscrabbled author
- 23 Chocolate and Vanilla author (Herbert)
- 24 Nicolls' Liberia's ___ (2 words)
- 29 Gorilla, My Love author
- 34 Ethan Michaeli's The ___
- 35 Kwee's Chief Editor
- 36 Danielle McGuire's At the ___ of the

- street (2 words)
- 37 Slavery by Another Name author
- 38 Black History month
- 41 Claude McKay's In ___
- 43 Gorilla, My Think as your heart ___
- 44 Monkey works, ___ draws
- 45 Lee Christine Brownlee's Emily, ___ Emily
- 47 At The Mercy of Gods Poet

- 49 Etheridge Knight's Feeling ___ Up
- 51 The Sudan Curse author
- 53 ___ was living before dog's ear was cut
- 54 Kollmeyer's Mending the fence ___
- 55 Tslwah, Adusu & Acquah's anthology (2 words)
- 56 Do not look where you fell, look where you ___

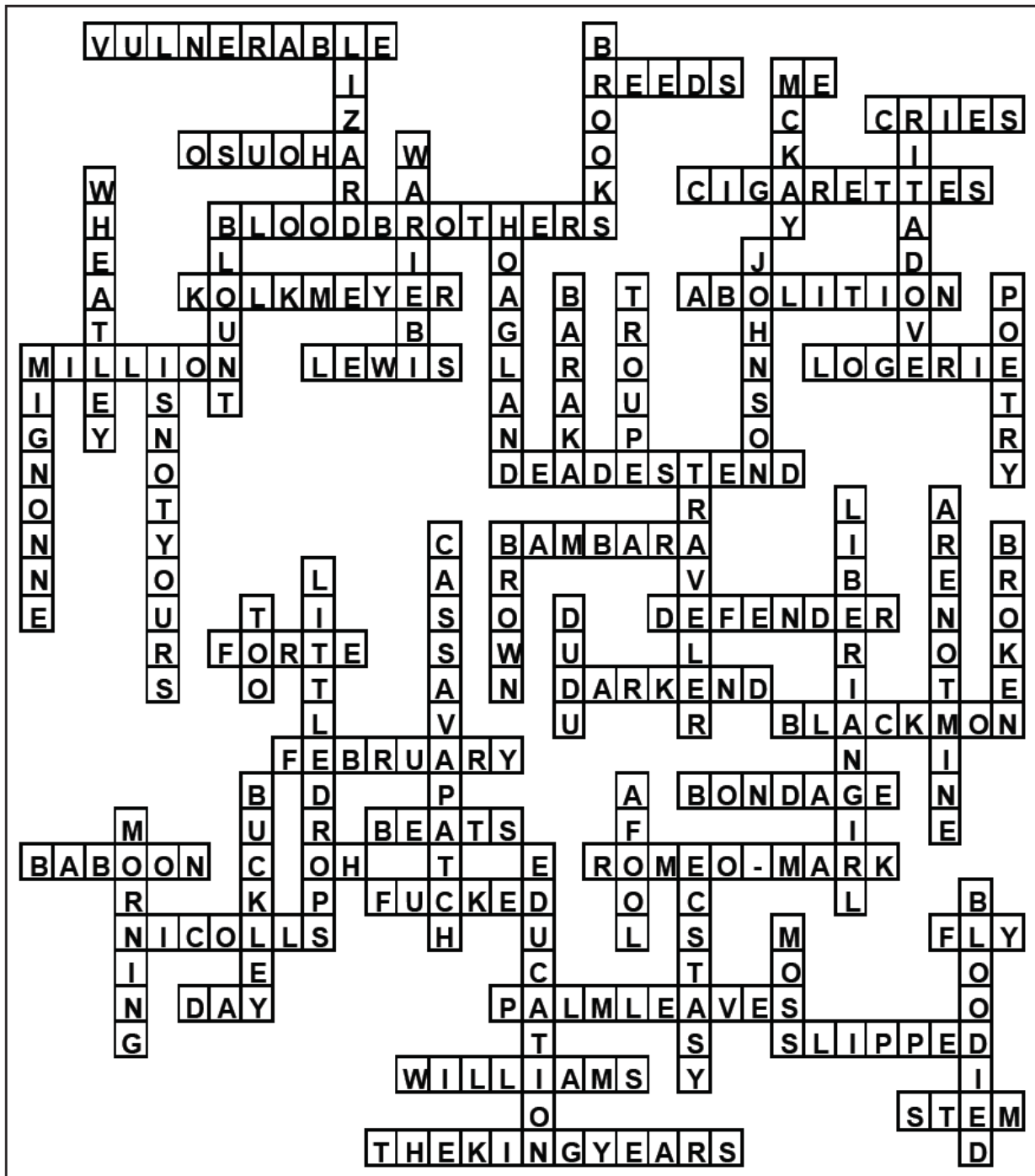
- 57 After the Rain author
- 58 University of Liberia first ___ symposium (Dennis & Tulay)
- 59 Branch's Historic moments in the civil rights movement (3 words)

- alligator
- 3 Primer for Blacks poet
- 5 Heritage author, Claude ___
- 7 Author of Adolescence II (2 words)
- 9 Living through poetry author On Being Brought from Africa to America author
- 12 The Father of my Country was a Slave author

DOWN

- 2 A ___ cannot give birth to an

Answers: Black History



Celebrating Liberian Women from times of Old to Now

C. Patrick Burrowes Ph. D

Your post says women have "played as prominent a role as men" since 1945. If one looks beyond "prominence," however, it is evident that Liberian women have always contributed to public life.

As early as 1843, the 190 farmers listed in the colonial census included **six** women. Thanks to the 1847 Constitution, women could own property, a right denied women in other societies, including some considered "more advanced." That guarantee enabled some women to accrue considerable economic clout. Several men who originally stood at the margins of Liberian society acquired wealth and standing by marrying "upwards." Examples include presidents Arthur Barclay and C. D. B. King.

Women also advanced in unintended ways that were subtle but very important. For example, they first gained admission to Liberia College in the early 1900s. Fathers who attained success in trading or farming often gave their daughters higher levels of education compared to their sons, who stayed back from school to work in the family's business. Many of those better educated women went into education, often teaching children in their home throughout their entire lives. They were the backbone of the educational system, both the few public school that existed and as proprietors of their own small schools.

Even when women could not vote, they played key roles in politics because they were viewed as custodians of public morality. The activists who organized Liberia's first opposition political party in 1840 included at least two women, **Mary Benedict** and **Harriet Brander**.

In 1869, **Lydia Anna Johnson** was among the 15 persons who founded the True Whig Party. In 1930, when the administration of C. D. B. King was implicated in supplying forced labor to Firestone and Fernando Po, the president resigned under pressure from the Women's Citizens Mass Movement, led by **S. C. Brownell** and **Marion Gibson**.

[This information is from my book *Power and Press Freedom in Liberia, 1830-1970*, especially pp. 138-140.]

Dr. Burrowes' latest book *Between the Kola Forest & the Salty Sea*

Waiting to be published is one book that could change Liberian history for good. It reveals the long-hidden story of those who lived in the region before Liberia was created. That ground-breaking book is **Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea**.

Here are a few of the inspiring revelations it contains:

- The different languages and ethnic groups of Liberia share a common root.
- The barkless hunting dogs found in Northwestern Liberian villages were the favorite pets of Ancient Egyptian pharaohs.
- Kola – once used as an ingredient in soft drinks – was discovered by the ancestors of Liberians.
- Early European explorers learned from early Liberian seafarers how to navigate some dangerous currents and winds of the Atlantic Ocean.
- Rice growers from West Africa's "Grain Coast" helped teach Americans how to grow rice. Today, the United States exports rice to West Africa, including Liberia.

Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea took 30 years of research and uses documents first published in Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish and French. The book also draws on oral traditions, archaeological digs, historical linguistics, studies of cultural patterns embedded in masks and other forms of material culture, regional and continental histories, and even biological anthropology.

For centuries, African cultures have been portrayed as "strange," "weird," even "evil" through the use of words like "fetish," "witch," and "country devil." **Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea** demolishes those negative stereotypes, just as West African farmers burn a field to remove weeds. Instead, the book uses more neutral words to describe African culture, such as ethnic group (not "tribe") and energy or power (not "spirit").

Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea is part of a campaign that will launch in early 2016 to address negative portrayals of Liberian history and to counteract their harmful effects on the Liberian psyche. Entitled "Reclaim the Dream," it is designed to do for Liberian history what Carter G. Woodson and other pioneering scholar achieved for black history in America.

The campaign will highlight many commonalities and bring to light significant accomplishments of earlier Liberians. It aims to foster greater unity, a sense of national dignity, and empathy among Liberians, regardless of ethnicity. By supporting the publication of **Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea** you will be helping to "Reclaim the Dream."

Profile Maya Angelou

Author, Poet, Civil Rights Activist

Born 1928 – Died 2014

Maya Angelou is an award-winning author best known for her memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). Also remembered for her wonderful poetry and the poem she wrote and read at the Presidential Inauguration of President John F. Kennedy.

Talented Actress, Singer, Dancer - This multi-talented woman, adored by everyone in the theater, for her acting, dancing, singing. She was loved and envied by her audience in whatever she was doing, whether it was singing in the church choir, stage acting, or appearing in such performances as *Porgy and Bess* or *Calypso Heat Wave*. Maya's accomplishments are so numerous it is difficult to imagine how she did it all in this one lifetime.

Childhood In Arkansas - We long remember the racial prejudices and discrimination endured in certain areas, such as Arkansas where she lived as a child and young adult. Fortunately, for the world, Maya's strength, intelligence, and talent forged forward to create the shining star we enjoyed.

California Bound - Maya moved to San Francisco, California during World War II, attending George Washington High School, graduating and winning a scholarship to study acting and dance at the California Labor School. As for her work, she became the first female San Francisco Cable Car Conductor, then followed with her fantastic career.

As a Civil Rights Activist, Maya worked for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X during the late 1960's to approximately 1975. It was then, in 1975 Maya wrote in *Southern Women Writers: The New Generation* and was immediately recognized as a spokesperson for African-American Women and changing

the voice of black women in the world. Maya served on two presidential committees during Gerald Ford, and later Jimmy Carter's term. It was in 2000 that Maya received the National Medal of Arts Award presented to her by President William Clinton. Maya doesn't stop there as she receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States presented to her by President Barack H. Obama. Receiving these prestigious awards were accompanied by over 50 honorary degrees. Maya achieved so much in her lifetime but gave so much to the people who knew her, and those who will follow in her footsteps and achieve greatness.

Poetry - She left us with such famous poems as *Just Give Me A Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die*, and *On the Pulse of Morning*, to name a few. The honors, she received during her career included two NAACP Image Awards in the category of outstanding literary work later in her career, 2005 and 2009.

Autobiographies - She enjoyed writing so much that she continued writing several more autobiographies throughout her career. Her autobiographies included *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes*, *A Song Flung Up to Heaven*, of course, *The Cage Bird Sings*, and a couple of well-known writings.

Essays - Continuing in her writing career, Maya produced an essay collection *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now* (1994), *Letter to My Daughter* (2008), cookbooks including *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table: A Lifetime of Memories With Recipes* (2005) and *Great Food, All Day Long* (2010). You think there is nothing left that Maya Angelou hasn't accomplished, but leave it to Maya to reach heights in another area and that is her directional debut in 1998 with *Down In the Delta*, starring Alfre Woodard.

Written by Lee Christine Brownlee

Author Interview 4
SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

JANICE ALMOND



Janice Almond

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 am a former college speech instructor and high school English teacher. I enjoy inspiring others through the written word. I have been married for almost 40 years to the **SAME** man! Reading non-fiction, autobiographies, and Christian genres are appealing to me. Singing Karaoke is something I do for fun. I have even won a couple of contests. Public speaking is my forte.

2) Why writing? –

I decided to write because as a former co-pastor, I was used to writing sermons and felt the urge to reach out to a greater audience.

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

A few books that I have been influenced by are books by Joyce Meyer and Beth Moore.

4) How do you approach your work?

I pray and think and write.

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

Attitude themes. How to have a more grateful, determined, and happy life. Steps to take.

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

The title of my first book is, **BEING GRATEFUL: How to Open the Door to a More Fulfilled & Abundant Life in 13 Easy Steps.**

Mybooks so far are non-fiction.

I am writing to encourage and motivate people to develop more fulfilled and abundant lives, chase their dreams, and have joy no matter the circumstances.

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

I felt inspired because of the need to have and maintain an "attitude of gratitude" in my life.

I wanted to give others a plan to have one as well.

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

Basically that in order to be fulfilled and live the life you desire, you have to "make it so". Your gratefulness has a lot to do with it.

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

Sure, I would like readers to use my book as a guide to start living the life they are worthy of.

10) Do you have any advice for other writers?

Just do it. Really, don't agonize over it. Just jump in!

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

Or recently read? I am reading *The Argumentative-Free Marriage* by Fawn Weaver.

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

I have started a free monthly newsletter called, *ALMOND JOY*. Each month, I will have what I call, *BE ATTITUDE* tips, inspiration, and uplifting stories. Just for signing up to get it on my website, www.janicealmondbooks.com, I will send out a free copy (pdf) of my book.

13) What are your current projects?

I am currently working on my second book, *BEING DETERMINED: How to be Relentless in Pursuing Your Dreams in 15 Simple Ways*. It will be published in March or April of 2016. A third book entitled, *BEING HAPPY....* Is in the beginning stages.

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

Yes

BIO



JANICE ALMOND

As a first-time author, I am excited about the journey I am embarking on with readers like you from around the world.

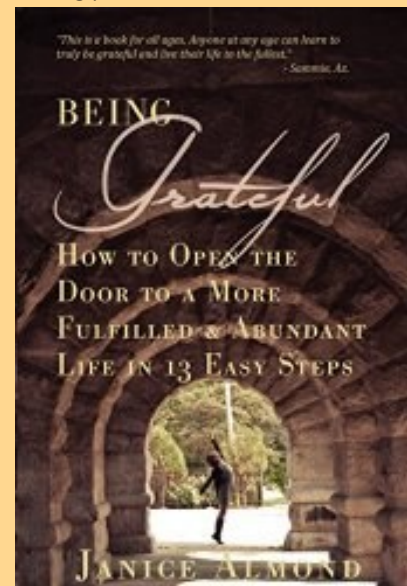
Having been a pastor's wife, high school English teacher, community college professor, and involved in men's prison ministry, I have witnessed a myriad of human interactions that have positioned me to understand and communicate the behaviors that drive some toward success, and those that keep others in a slump.

I've had the privilege of traveling around Europe, joining Toastmasters, and receiving a B.A. degree in Communication Studies from UCLA during

the John Wooden basketball years (1970's). Later, I earned two Master's degrees in Education, Multicultural Education and Educational Administration.

Having spent more than a decade in education, it became my passion to share insights to better prepare students for life and to help them develop strong character. Now, it is my passion to share these lessons with the world.

My hope is that my works inspire, uplift, and encourage you to fulfill your full potential, and to live a life of purpose. I would LOVE to hear from you. Helping others to experience and achieve true emotional freedom and abundance is my goal and the reason I write.



Profile

A. Doris Banks Henries

Nvasekie Konneh

The Books of A Doris Banks Henries

A. Doris Bank Henries was born on February 11, 1913, in Live Oak, Florida and died on February 16, 1981, in Middletown, CT. She was married to Richard Abrom Henries, former speaker of the Liberian House of Representative, who was one of the 13 government officials that were executed on firing squad in the wake of the 1980 military coup in Liberia. Doris Banks Henries graduated from Willimantie Normal School (now Eastern Connecticut State University) with BSc in 1920s; She also attended Connecticut State Teachers' College as well as the Yale University in the 1920s; she attended Hartford Seminary in the 1930s as well as the University of Besancon, France in 1930s. She earned her MA and PhD from Columbia University and was a Methodist.

Though she was born and educated in the United States, she made her mark in Liberia. It is in Liberia where she is remembered as a writer, educator and government official. It is in Liberia where she impacted lives, molded minds of students directly or indirectly. And it is in Liberia where she will always be remembered.

Though she was not a fiction writer, any discussion of Liberian literature will not be complete without mentioning A Doris Banks Henries. She was a prolific writer who wrote many books on Liberia. Among the many books written by A Doris Banks Henries, only three I came across and they were my favorites. Those three books are **"Heroes and Heroines of Liberia," "Civics for Liberian Schools,"** and **"Africa: Our History."** I read both of these books in grade school. I wish I had copies of them now so as to understand them from my current adult perspective. I really didn't know she wrote any other books besides the three mentioned above until recently, upon reflection, I googled her name. That's how I discovered she wrote other books besides **"Heroes and Heroines of Liberia," "Civil for Liberian Schools"** and **"Africa: Our History."** According to her bio available on line, she is one of Liberia's "most prolific authors, having written histories, biographies, essays, and poetry, and produced 27 books on Liberian education. She is said to have "pioneered the collecting of Liberian poetry and folklore." It is also said that her works "emphasized the role of education in promoting African cultural identity for black people around the world."

Of these three books, the one that is mentioned more frequently in most Liberian debate or conversation is

"Heroes and Heroins of Liberia." In that book we learnt about the biographical accounts of some of Liberia's historical figures from both the native and settler backgrounds. Among those historical figures featured in this book are JJ Robert, who was born in Norfolk, Virginia, USA and became the first president of Liberia, Wilmot Blyden, born in the West Indie, migrated to Liberia and became one of the great intellectuals of the new nation, Liberia and the black world, John Kizzel who is said to have been an African prince taken into slavery from Shebro Island in what is now Sierra Leone. He is said to have fought on the side of the British during the American fight for independence and later went back to Africa in 1792. He and others that went back to Africa became part of the settlement of Freetown, Sierra Leone. There is also the story of Momolu Duwalu Bukele, the inventor of the Vai Script, King Sao Bosso Kamara, a Mandingo king who helped the settlers to overcome the native resistance to their settlement, Bob Gray the Bassa Chief, who was helpful to the settlers in the establishment of the settlement of Edina in Grand Bassa County, Benjamin Anderson who led the expedition to Musadou, the Western Mandingo country which is located in present day Guinea.

Africa: Our History gives accounts of the pre-colonial and colonial

histories of the various countries of Africa as well as the African diasporas of America and the Caribbean. The first time I came across the photos and stories of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Toussaint Louverture was through the pages of that book. For me, that book was an eye opener in understanding the history of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the European colonization of Africa, the heroism of Toussaint Louverture who defeated the mighty French army to gain independence for his country, Haiti.

These three books were primarily for grade schools. Of all the heroic figures in the **"Heroes and Heroins of Liberia,"** the character that seems to be a subject of much controversy is Matilda Newport. According to the narrative in the book, Matilda Newport is said to have fired the cannon to repel native attacks against the settlers at the settlement of Cape Mesurado. Her "heroic actions that saved the settlements" of free slaves from "native aggression" earned her a holiday in her honor known as Matilda Newport Day. This holiday was celebrated for many years until it was abolished after the April 12, 1980 military coup.

While Doris Banks Henries might have done her best to document the Liberian experience, there are many critics who think she was biased in her writings, always portraying the

settlers heroically at the same time painting negative pictures of native Liberians. Her critics say, instead of representing the totality of Liberian experience from both the native and settler backgrounds, she was one-sided, paying glowing tribute to one group and demonizing the other group. Some have even questioned that Matilda Newport even existed, saying she was a fictional character intended to portray the "bravery of the settlers against the cowardice of the native Liberians."

In a recent Facebook posting, Emmanuel Woods opined that, "Liberian schools were Doris Banks Henries infested. She was biased and not that scholarly. Some folks cry about western scholars on Liberian history but they avoid crying about Doris Banks."

Quite recently I sent out an email on the Liberian group email listing asking of people's views and opinions of the writer and educator, not many responded but I got an interesting response from Cletus Nah, a Liberian writer based in Europe. Cletus was mild in his criticism. Here is what he wrote about A Doris Banks Henries: *"The history of Liberia that we read in grade school is similar, but lacking in details, when compared to the same history of Liberia that one would find in the United States Library of Congress. Why? Because some of the men and women that were*

written about didn't have the opportunity to tell their versions of the story, or the author decided to omit certain details because, like in the case of 'John Kezzel was an African, his father was a king,' the synopsis of that timeline of Liberian history was written for children in Liberian primary schools. Thanks, auntie Doris (Banks-Henries)! At least you told me about uncle John and uncle Bob (Gray), and how uncle Elijah (Johnson) didn't allow the British to claim our land by hoisting their flag on our soil. I will forever be grateful to uncle Elijah, no matter what!"

That the book Cletus read and many of us read in grade school "lacked details" is understandable because those might have been intended only for grade schools. These might have been done to stimulate the curiosity and interest of young students with the belief that such was just the foundation of understanding the history of our country. As we age along the way, further researches and studies should have led to the writing of books for advanced students that would give further details that were lacking in the books for grade school students.

In another article written by a Liberian political commentator Siahyonkron Nyanseor, A. Doris Banks Henries came under severe criticism for her "biased" portrayal of the Liberian natives. According to Nyaseor, "the story of

Matilda Newport was a mixed bag of Americo-Liberian pride, and native-Liberian nightmare, yet successive Americo-Liberian-dominated government found it necessary to honor and celebrate the supposed good deeds of Matilda Newport as a national holiday. And Liberian school children were forced to parade in the streets in celebration of Matilda Newport Day until 1980 when the holiday was abolished by the native-Liberian leaders of the 1980 coup, which displaced the ruling Americo-Liberian leaders of the ruling True Whig Party after 133 years at the helm of power."

According to Dr. Fred PM Van Der Kraaij, a Dutch government leader who spent some years in Liberia teaching at the University of Liberia in the 1970s, "Many Liberian historians and authors of history books have devoted many pages to Matilda Newport, such as Ernest J. Yancy, Richard A. Henries and A. Doris Banks Henries, C. Abayomi Cassell and Nathaniel R. Richardson. The accounts of the Matilda Newport story vary from author to author but have in common that most references to the 'natives' were negative: 'savage, primitive, belligerent people' (A. Doris Banks Henries)."

The Matilda Newport story has also grabbed the interest of many foreign scholars. Among them Jane J. Martin and Rodney

Carlisle, "who conducted a study 'The Search for Matilda Newport', published in the *Liberian Studies Journal* in 1975." Another foreign scholar, Svend Holsoe, also did a research paper on Matilda Newport which was presented at the Liberian Studies Conference at Indiana University, in 2007. The title of the presentation was, "**Matilda Newport: The Power of a Liberian Invented Tradition.**"

Whatever a writer's intent may be in his or her writing may differ with how they are interpreted by his or her critics. While many critics have said that her writings celebrated the heroism of the settler class while denigrating the natives, others have said this of her, "Henries' writing focused on reestablishing Liberian and African cultural and economic identities." Accordingly, in an article published in *Présence Africaine: Cultural Review of the Negro World* in 1977 titled, "Black African Cultural Identity," she wrote, "the whole continent of Africa has been exploited for centuries to build highly industrialized empires, but enjoys minimal benefits of labor expended in the process of development. Worst of all, the black people of Africa have lost much of their cultural identity through conflicts and domination by outside groups. This has been a dreadful tragedy and handicap to advancement." She went

on to say that "Under the colonizing powers, African culture has been disrupted by the imposition of European ways of life. Thus, much of the rich heritage of black people has been submerged and a pollution of foreign culture has supplanted the best as well as the worst in social foundations." She then called for "the Africanization of the school curriculum and textbooks.... It should be the policy of African schools to include in all programs as much literature written by Africans as is available."

The above quote from Ms Henries is in line with African literature being used tools to liberate Africa and her people from foreign colonial domination. In this, she was certainly in line with her contemporary African writers championing the emancipation of the black race from centuries of lies of European scholars and writers. Why would she be championing the liberation of the black race from European domination while at the same time in Liberia her writing is said to have "portrayed" something negative of native Liberians? If that is a contradiction of A Doris Banks Henries, it is also the contradiction of Liberia as the first black republic in the world. While Liberia as a nation inspired black people everywhere, especially the help she provided to fellow Africans fighting to get rid of the European colonial regimes,

her own dirty secret of segregation against native Liberians was not highlighted. I came across a book many years ago which highlighted this contradiction of Liberia, being a source of pride and inspiration for Africa but at the same time "oppressing its native citizens." This book was written by a proponent of the Apartheid regime in South Africa. Back in those days, no Liberian writer, settlers or natives could write any book, fictional or non-fictional that were critical of the ways things were in Liberia. For Doris, who was married to one of the most powerful men of the regime, one could not have expected her to write any protest novel or collection of poems critical of the system

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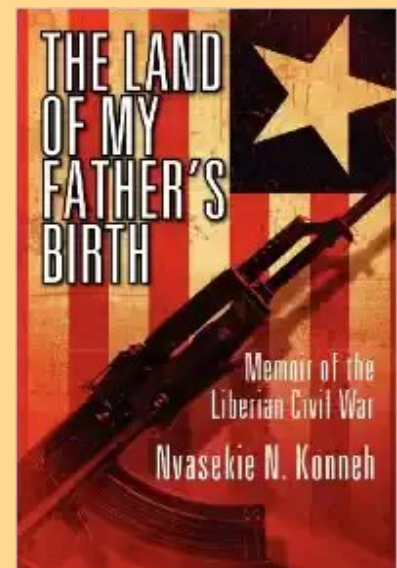
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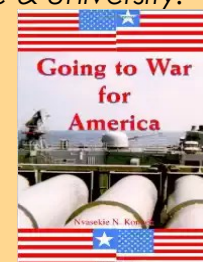
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About the author: Nvasekie Konneh is a poet, writer who has written extensively in Liberian media on art, culture and social political development of Liberia. He's the author of *The Land of My Father's Birth*, *Going to War for America* and currently working on a documentary project on ethnic and cultural diversity in Liberia. Nvasekie Konneh has a Ba in Comparative Literature from the Union Institute & University.



Liberian Proverbs

- No one knows the fastest way home like a hungry child.
-
- A baby bird that refuses to fly, can expect to be abandoned soon.
-
- The balloon doesn't fight with a needle.
-
- The rat will never go to the house of the snake to make palava.
-
- A chicken knows better than to accept the invitation of an old fox.
-
- All our fingers are not made equal for a good reason.
-
- The mosquito does not expect to get fat, yet it does not tire of sucking blood.
-
- The fly isn't put off by the smell of the feces.
-
- Some friends are like rats, they blow whilst biting.
-
- To the cat, tossing the rat around before eating it is a joke, but to the rat, it is serious business.
-
- To put one's finger in another's eyes is not a joke.
-
- Sleep has no mercy.
-
- You can take the horse to the water, but you can't force it to drink.
-
- Judging from the size of the elephant, one would think it does not get hungry.
-
- The life of a fly may be short, but it is also has meaning to someone.
-
- Even the elephant can get hungry.

-
- A smart deer can outlive many predators.
- If you don't stand for something, you will fall for everything.
-
- It takes a whole village to raise a child.
-
- Looking at a king's mouth one would never think he sucked his mother's breast.
-
- The mouse can't be friends with a snake.
- The bird that goes to steal the food of the fox does not wish to return.
-
- The red headed lizard does not shake it's head for fun.
-
- A drunkard would praise himself if no one else did.
-
- The clever child knows that the mouth that eats does not talk.
-
- The sun shines on those who stand before it first before shining on those kneeling.
-
- The worm may not have eyes but it can feel the sunlight as well.
-
- The humble person always remembers his/her past.
-
- Those who forget their past because of wealth, often don't keep it for long.
-
- The sun shines on everybody, even the blind man.
-
- A one handed man can't tie a rope.
-
- A blind man should not fight a person that can see well.
-
- A cripple person can't outrun a deer.

PRESIDENT SIRLEAF LAUNCHES NATIONAL HISTORICAL WEBSITE



President Sirleaf Launches Liberia's Historical Website

Monrovia, Liberia: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has launched a Liberian Historical Website at the Center for National Documents & Research Agency (CNDRA), stressing the importance of "History", which she said all Liberians would be able to talk about, as the country moves on along its development path.

According to an Executive Mansion release, President made the statement on Monday, March 21st, 2016, when she officially launched the Liberian Historical Website at the Center for National Documents & Research Agency (CNDRA), at the entity's headquarters on 12th Street, Sinkor.

President Sirleaf said although she was pleased to have played a small role at initial collections of the Website's historical artifacts, viewing some video footage of some of past historical leaders, including Madam Neh Suakoko, a former female Paramount Chief of Suakoko District, Bong County in Central Liberia something, adding such initiative needs to

be improved to enhance the learning ability of young Liberian students.

The Liberian leader said despite the raw and invasive nature of the video footage, something she preferred not to see following initial glimpse, she was impressed by the determination of those behind the building of the website to ensure it became a reality, especially through the collection of more historical facts about Liberia and its forefathers for the benefit of young people today.

She however commended the collaboration between the Center for National Documents & Research Agency (CNDRA) and the universities of Wisconsin-Madison and Indiana respective as well all those who supported the effort financially and materially in order to be able to complete the work, something she said we all should be able to talk about because we cannot run away from our own history.

"By that, it will make all Liberians to know about their true history and roles their forefathers played in the past in bringing all of their children up to this point" – President Sirleaf observed.

She noted the recollection of historical artifacts through sound research for the website, backed by the collection of historical photos, interviews with Traditional Chiefs, Elders and Zoes orally recounting their past experiences.

Speaking earlier Madam P. Bloh Sayeh, Director General of Center for National

Documents & Research Agency (CNDRA) said the launching ceremony was one of the important moments in the existence of the Center.

She commended all those who helped in setting up the website, including Mr. Emmanuel Urey, a Liberian, who along with a team of researchers from the U.S. set up the website under the title - "A Liberian Journey: History, Memory & Making of a nation".

Also speaking at the launch was River Gee Senator, Cummy B. Wesseh who told the audience that history can help to enlighten the minds of people who do not know where they are coming from and where they are headed. He pledged the support of the Liberian Senate to the process of maintaining the website.

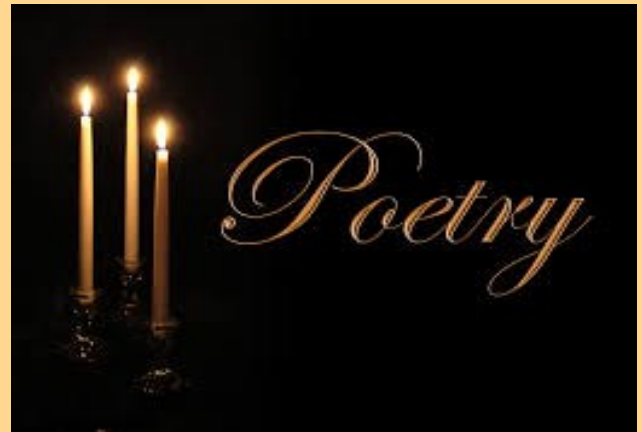
Presenting the overview of the project Dr. Gregg Mitman of the University of Wisconsin – Madison, said he was grateful to all of the partners in setting up the website including University of Wisconsin, the Liberian Advisory Group, and the George Mason University for New Media, as well as Dr. Verton Slone, Stella, authorities of the Center for National Documents & Research Agency (CNDRA) authorities, the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism and the Liberia National Police for their cooperation, kindness, enthusiasm and commitment in making their dreams to become a reality.

The Program was attended by government officials, academicians, ordinary Liberians amongst others.

Poetry Section

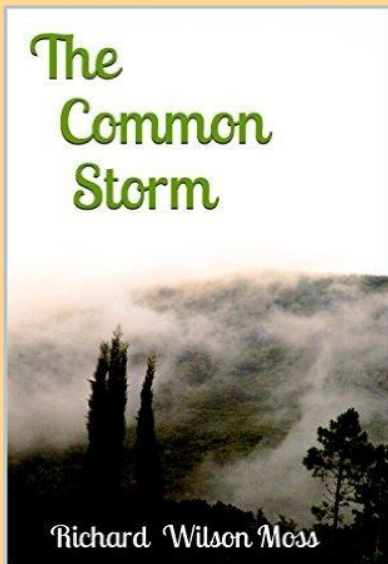


**POETRY
IS NOT
DEAD!**



'Twas Brillig

Richard Wilson Moss



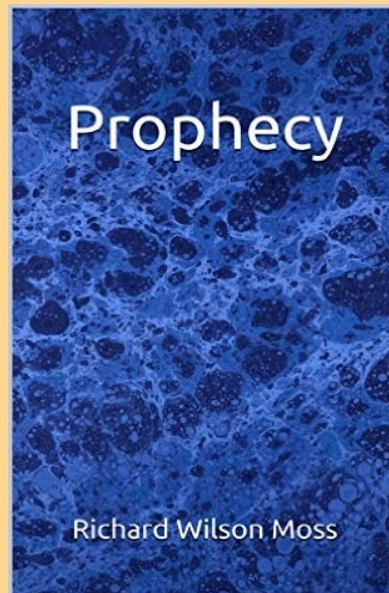
Spring In The Outside Cafe

By the cafe, the elms
 Hang on the shoulders of
 first showers
 While empty cups of
 coffee
 Are collected, washed
 and arranged
 To dry in the sun
 Stewards hoped would
 appear
 Sometime in the
 afternoon
 And this devil, this
 thickening

Of thin brush, the sudden
 blush
 Of azaleas stroked by
 those passing
 This demon again begins
 to form
 Like warm, blue skies that
 will storm
 In the caves of all worlds

Camping At Oxnard

The ranger at last comes
 to check on us
 He is gracious and he
 understands
 To stay tomorrow night,
 he says, smiling
 You must wait for a
 cancellation
 One will come, I assure
 you
 We shake hands.
 That early morning I
 applied
 For a job in town among
 twenty others
 Gathered in a high
 school classroom
 Told they will teach us to
 sell vacuum cleaners.
 Camping at Oxnard
 We spoke of this on the
 beach



And it was decided
 I would not sell vacuum
 cleaners
 I would not sell anything.
 Watching the sun sink
 A song we both knew
 Someone down from us
 Began to sing

Seemed to echo through
 the dunes.
 Even earlier that day
 A truck full of migrant
 farm workers
 Painted on its
 sideboards
 White stars and blue
 moons
 Passed the bus I was
 riding
 To the vacuum cleaner
 job
 They seemed content.
 We spoke of this at
 twilight
 Wondered what it meant
 Wondered how
 contented
 Such are that work in the
 fields
 All day for nearly nothing
 And I said again
 They seemed to look
 fine.
 Yesterday, at the farm
 Of a friend of mine
 I watched him
 electrocute
 One hundred chinchillas
 By hooking wires to their
 penis
 To harvest their fur
 Without burning it.
 I tried to bring this up
 There on the dunes
 Fumbling for the right
 words
 While darkening waves
 once again
 Pregnant with fish
 Fed the seabirds.
 At daybreak we sat at
 the camp entrance
 Waiting for the
 cancellation
 Watching a Pacific, Gas
 and Electric

Bucket truck where
 someone
 Their hard hat tilted just
 so
 Sprayed the tops of
 power lines
 With deadly chemical
 cleaners
 And then I had to go.
 In the men's room
 Someone asked another
 next to him
 How is it going?
 The other said, slow,
 John, slow
 Like a ship dragging
 anchor
 And as John laughed
 I could not go.
 Returning we waited
 together
 Nearly half the day
 For someone not to
 show.

Pilot



On this shore
 I depend on the curve of
 the world

To hide what I would not
 see
 Or want to be seen.
 Sitting below winter
 forests losing
 Gray limbs to gray seas
 I hide.
 At sea I am mast to no
 sail
 Current of no tide

Piano Lessons

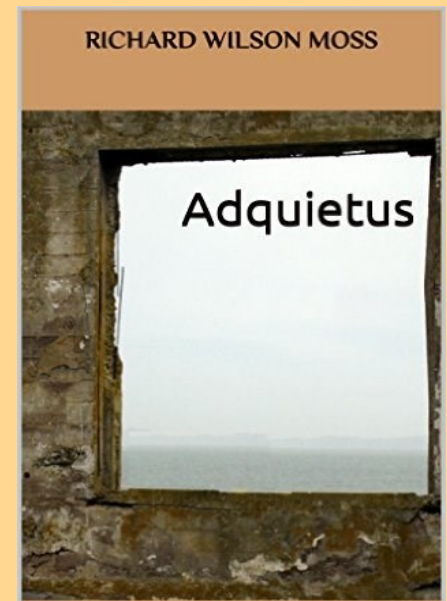
Made to study piano
 I sat on the stool frozen
 Listening to the
 metronome
 And knew not the time it
 kept
 As I knew nothing of
 others
 The time they keep
 The song they struggle
 with.
 At last I banged on keys
 haphazardly
 And the teacher shouts
 for me to stop
 But I can't for that is my
 song

The Radioman

I was taking tests
 To be a radioman
 Up above surrounding
 me
 Were windows full of
 palms
 They abandoned
 themselves
 To Daytona winds
 I ached to climb them
 Be done with all of this at

last
 Sway with their fronds
 Crack the coconuts
 Drunk with their milk
 But I passed.

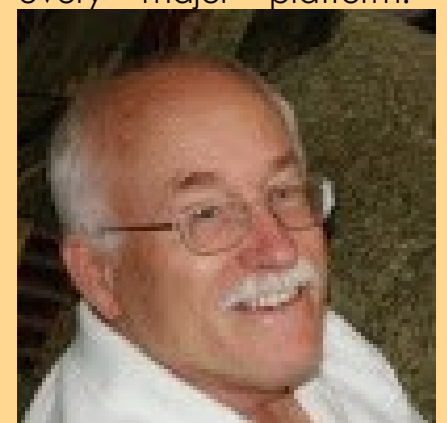
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Richard Wilson Moss

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



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Aken-bai's- A Flow of Thoughts

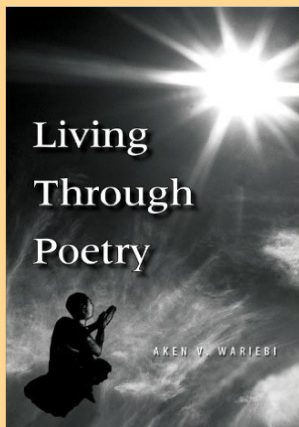
Dealing With Mental Health



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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Dealing with mental health within your family and beyond

Where do you draw the line of sanity versus insanity of normal versus abnormal? Well, for some it is pretty obvious and for others a bit subtle. It is in fact a pretty thin line. Societal expectations play a big role. Consideration also have to be made for culture, lifestyles and other aspects of life when it comes to mental health issues and how it relates to the definition of it. For many there is a stigma involved and this results in fear, hesitation, ignorance, and avoidance. But think about this for a moment. No one is immune from adversity. It does not discriminate. If there is someone with mental health issues within your family, a neighbor, friend, associate, co-worker, or patient, what will you do or what are you going to do? Is it fair to say it depends on their diagnosis? Or would the willingness to ostracize, slander, harass, or avoid them in any way possible or are there other alternatives, such as acceptance? Acceptance if anything is another topic for another day yet I will mention it briefly later on. Think about this. Anyone could be the victim of this illness, then what? Anyone may even be undiagnosed currently, even you. No matter who it is, that is a possibility. Mental health may happen to you or someone you claim to love any time in your life, no matter where you are and who you are, there are no exceptions. It is a disability, that is usually unseen and hidden.

Some alternatives to consider;

Show Empathy-I added to a famous quote some time ago that says "never judge a man except you have walked in his shoes" and I added "or at least tried them on" But this is easier said than done. Since some would rather use others as a scapegoat in order to hide their flaws,

instead of showing empathy at all. It becomes a convenient quality of hide and seek. Some prefer to attempt to blow out others candles for theirs to shine brighter. Without realizing that even if their candle is flickering, allowing another's to shine possibly would allow theirs to begin to shine again. People with mental illness are human beings and deserve to be treated with respect in spite of their diagnosis. Some may need medication, some may need therapy, some may need both. They are people too just like everyone else. Treating them badly is not a reflection of them.

Be Accepting-Accept others as they are. Know that we are all different and it is our differences that make us unique and set us apart. It is within our differences where we find our gem, our talent and skills. Our similarities sure, it brings us together but our differences allow for growing, learning and embracing. Different can be better and it is worth celebrating. One might argue that with mental illness acceptance may be more complicated because of symptoms. Remember, an ill person has to be ready to accept the help you are offering and you have to be willing to be open-minded in providing the help and assistance. Although this is true, usually educating oneself of the subject matter can be a great help for both the person with the illness and you. Whomever it may be and the position and place in that person's life and space, with education the burden seems lighter. With the accessibility of social or other kinds of media outlets and technology, there is no excuse to remain in the dark.

Be understanding-if someone doesn't understand oneself that is a struggle not the ill person's problem. Therefore, it seems best to never allow the misunderstanding of one's own issues to become the way and only. Thus, making this an avenue of putting others down

and belittling others is definitely not the solution. One's attempt to feel better using this mechanism is not good for anyone. Because the feeling of being superior or powerful is only temporary. But the damage done to another and the scars placed them could last a lifetime. No battle is singular, there is someone higher responsible for dealing with that task. Understand one thing, it could be you or someone you love in an instant anytime, anywhere with a mental health problem.

Be Tolerant- Someone can tolerate mother nature at all times. Therefore, someone can tolerate others. For what is done by others is minor as compared to mother nature's concerns. Yes, the media is full of results of people diagnosed with a mental illness doing catastrophic things that affect many innocent lives. Yes, tolerance has its limits like everything else. However, with tolerance comes help, so become tolerant in the way of reaching out and lending a hand. If someone wishes to get involved in helping another and there is a lack of knowledge, please do make a referral to someone who can help. Remember help is out there, no one needs to suffer alone. The tactic of not being involved can be help as well. That is because if someone is hurt in the name of helping that isn't best practice. If and when one doesn't know how to help another and hurts, the matter then has just been made far worse than it had to be. Time is at the essence here but also someone's life is being affected. Your contribution may be light or darkness. Please let's not bury others in their pain, in the name of helping. Make sure the person can be taught and assisted to rise above their challenges. The latter is really helping genuinely for no accolades but an offering of grace, love and encouragement which is far more rewarding than any type of recognition.

Be A Good Listener-Sometimes listening is a great tool to use and is necessary to use at a specific time. It is one of the qualities of growing and expanding one's knowledge. Listening can open the door for some assessment to be done. But listen carefully, the devil is usually in the details. If someone simply listens to the surface, the help may not provide excellence. There has to be the provision of validation. It makes the person with the illness feel a sense of self-worth. That strategy can not only build trust over time but it can also develop a positive mindset for the ill person and they don't feel so alone. Never assume, it makes an a__ out of you and me. Assuming may cause a lot of misinterpretation, misrepresentation and misunderstanding that may create unnecessary hatred. A free line of communication is usually the answer for clarification and confirmation. Include the person in how and what will be done to help them whatever help that may be. Remember sometimes listening is enough.

Be Open-minded - If the focus is on one's pre-conceived biases, self-fulfilling prophecies and the stigmatization of the mentally ill, it blinds one's from seeing the person as a human being. Instead one will view them as their label, whatever it may be. This prevents one from seeing them as a whole person but as pieces of a whole, scattered before one. They are not their stigma or label. The problem may be simpler than you think or far more complicated, it just depends. The person with the illness, has a name and they are a someone's mother, sister, brother, cousin, father, friend, enemy, girlfriend, wife, boyfriend, husband, et cetera. Yes, this may be a bit difficult if the person is having symptoms, but even then and or if they are stable, they should be given some opportunity to have some hope no matter what the situation is. Hope and trust is place in one at that moment, let it

work for both parties in a positive way. The reaction from one can either cause a downward spiraling effect or a forward move on the road to recovery. At times, a little investigation is the solution, the key. This clarifies, informs and confirms or describes more fully what is going on and may guide one into what steps should be taken to rectify the problem. Most times the investigation may be free of charge and the damage quite expensive. It may also produce factors that bring about not so harsh resolution to the problem/s at hand. Blaming the victim? Re-traumatizing the victim? Well, I beg to differ. Remember, judging never solves anything anytime, never has. Keep in mind that the view from the lens in which you may be viewing from may not be what actually is. So clean your lens often knowing that based on a clean lens and trying every so often to adjust your lens, gives the best insight as opposed to generalizing. Life teaches that, enough said.

Think about the alternatives listed here. Think about you. Remember, each day you may come across many people that cross your path. This may be for a second, more or less or a lifetime. In any case, most times the people you meet are fighting a battle you know nothing about. Silence means even more than words most times and says more. Whether you hear what they are not saying when they are silent or whether you hear the words of their lecture. Your support may bring them into the light of their day and that can only send a blessing your way. So spread some KFC, Kindness, forgiveness and compassion. Make it a part of your everyday life, for you never know, your diagnosis of a mental health issue may just be right around the corner and you would want and expect to be treated like a human being with respect and honor too.

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

Herbert Logerie

L'amour N'a Pas De Couleur

L'amour n'a pas de couleur;
Il est frais comme l'aube tropicale,
Il est doux comme la rosée estivale,
Il est joli comme la triste fleur.

L'amour fait pleurer, rire et sourire;
Il est beau et exaltant comme l'enfant à son réveil,
Il est vif et luisant comme le halo du soleil,
Il est charmant et morbeux comme le soupir de la lyre.

L'amour n'a pas de couleur;
Il est pur comme l'eau de la source,
Il est l'espoir d'une nouvelle ressource,
Il apporte tantôt fraîcheur, tantôt tiédeur.

L'amour suscite la raison de vivre,
Sans lui, le monde serait fichu,
Le poète, à l'envers, pâle, désespéré, déçu
Et les dames noyées dans la baignoire en cuivre.

L'amour n'a pas de couleur;
Il est doux comme le soleil matinal,

Il est beau comme l'aurore estival,
Il est joli comme la jeune fleur.

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Hébert Logerie est l'auteur de plusieurs recueils de poèmes.

Hebert Logerie

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

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

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

<http://www.poemhunter.com/herbert-logerie>
<http://www.poesie.webnet.fr/vospoemes/logerie>

For our Bilingual readers that have been requesting.... Here's to you all.

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

We Are Mrching

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

Away from the figures that pile so high
Into a zone of comfort for a short season
Shaking off the dust we accumulated then
Not remembering too our eyelid are shaded
Hasting into the tomorrow still in the past
We Are Marching.....

As fleeting scenes from a melee of time
The cries echoes from mouths of unborn
Resonates how warm and even cold we are
Deeds of selfless generosity breaks barriers
Feeds into the corners of where morsel lacks
We Are Marching.....

Build of a happy statute to embrace all kind
Settled by no accident rather a divine means
Flowered as roses lillies habiscus and irises
Just to add lusters of glittery beads to the sky
Come off the wall join hands to sparkly smiles
We Are Marching.....

CHERISH THE MOMENT

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

Everyone has someone out there
Maybe a rustic molded old gnome
In peace wait for the right moment
Go in search of it for all of eternity
Tango happily with a pig in a wig
Cherish the Moment

If not written will not happen as now
Take careful strides how to voyage
In each breath place the Great so
With hope of a child expect much
Even a pig with a wig will suffice
Cherish the Moment

Lamelle Shaw

My Type of Woman

A woman of vision and a woman of thought
Realizes that confidence cannot be store-
bought.

Global marketing campaigns targeted
specifically at her gender
Trying to rent 'I'm not good enough' space
in her psyche, so loud that most of her kind
surrender.

Push-up bras, nail and eyelash extensions
Propel them into another dimension
Where make-up free selfies are overrated
And true natural beauty is understated.
Her inner voice screams "WOMAN KNOW
YOUR WORTH!"

Do you really need full hair and make-up to
give birth?

A woman of substance and a woman of
thought
Sees the beauty in her scars after her battles
have been fought.

On her journey of fulfilling life's goals
She pauses often, taking inventory of her
soul.

She's a trendsetter, leader, not a victim of
fashion

She's clothed in faith, human dignity and
compassion.

She's not perfect, she's aware and
embraces her flaws
She believes in karmic retribution of universal
laws

Her beauty lies in her strength, her power in
her grace
Slow burning fire, strong but soft, leather and
lace.

Her sexiness goes beyond the shape of her
thighs,

A brilliant mind guarded by intense
bedroom eyes.
When the world hollers 'thigh gap' and
doesn't give her the recognition she
deserves

She looks in the mirror and defiantly falls in
love with the curves of her curves.
A woman of action, a woman of thought is
free

Broken shackles of society's expectations
Straddling all sides of attempted
segregation

That woman of thought.....
She's me!

©Lamelle Shaw –

EASTER SPIRIT

VARNEY L.S. GEAN

Oh was the time our many sins were in
multitude
Oh was the moment our lost soul was
redeemed
Oh was the instant our dark heart sought
solace
Oh such was the time when we felt our
redemption
Oh this wonderful Sunday morning he rose
Majestically for mankind to live everlastingly
Oh was the time the malice of man stunned
God
Oh was the moment our souls descended
further
Oh was the instant our lives fought its true
purpose
Oh such was the time when we felt God's
empathy
Oh this wonderful Sunday morning he
resurrected
Marvelously to gift man infinity after death
Oh was the time when we knew not the
meanings
Oh was the moment we dwell happily in
iniquity
Oh was the circumstance that calls for such
feat
Oh such was it that JESUS knew that final
sacrifice
Oh this wonderful Sunday morning promise
fulfill
With grandness JESUS rose from his grave

Thank You Maya Angelou

Thank You, Maya Angelou

Studied your biography,
From childhood through adulthood,
And praise you for your courage,
Not to mention your endless talent,
That shone through the years of your life.

All your quotes astound me,
Showing such insight into life.
You loved your fellow man,
And all of the nature that surrounds.

Your career was fulfilling,
That you worked so hard to establish.
You shined on stage and in church,
Always acting and singing at your very best.

Talent for theater and dancing,
You set every stage aglow.
From "Porgy and Bess,"
To "Calypso Heat Wave,"
All happened in those 50's days.

The audiences were quite aware,
They were in the presence of talent,
When you sang, when you danced,
When you spoke and when you wrote.

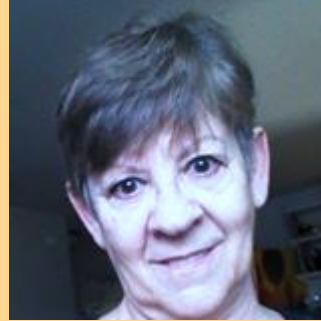
We are blessed with your poetry,
And enthralled with your writing,
Embraced by the poem you wrote,
"On the Pulse of Morning" for the inauguration.

We will always remember your
autobiographies,
Each and every book you wrote.
But you will be most remembered for your
book,
"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

You have left behind enough beauty,
Literature and quotes to last the world,
For centuries to come.
We thank you for giving,
And love you for being Maya Angelou.

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Lee Christine Brownlee



is a freelance writer and poet. Was born and raised in San Francisco. She was married and raised her two children, Christine and Timothy, now grown adults. Lee worked in the San Francisco Bay Area for

many years before moving to New York to write and study poetry, most recently attending the Gotham Writer's Workshop in New York. Her supportive husband, Dick, passed away due to cancer in 2009, as she began her poetry journey. Now bringing together a lifetime of memories and dreams, beauty and sadness, putting it all together in poetry to share with others. Other than writing, she enjoys the outdoors, gardening, and cooking, taking in all the art and beauty New York City has to offer.

Lee expects her book of poetry titled *Heartfelt Emotions* to be released in March 2016, published by Tate Publishing.

Can't Get Enough of You

Come let's lie
Fixing our gaze upon the sky
For there we'll see
Constellations like ourselves
Signs that we both each other deserve
Dress hither as closer as possible
Let our hearts admit that this rendezvous is enjoyable.
Let's donate our mouths to kissing
Tightly shutting our ears to life's hissing
For here only me and you
All others will have to secure a space in the
Que Foot to foot head to head
Lending not an inch to tale bearing to be fed .
You're from West; I'm from East
Yet it's destiny who has thrown this feast
Without hesitation we're in
Treading the path to Lovers' Inn
As we steal looks from the corner of our eyes
You can tell that I can tell that this doesn't suffice.

Stephen is a student at the University of Liberia ing muse. Any help for her is appreciated. Thank you. [sad poems](#) © keith osborne 2016

Stephen Cooper

WOMANHOOD NOT A GENDER

With her piece of toy
She really does enjoy,
She knows not a boy
And that beams her joy,
Girlhood, a gateway tender.

She grows into adolescent
And fights through adolescence,
She dreams to be decent
And that booms her confidence,
Sisterhood, interests camp, no pretender.

Puberty stares at her face
Maturity sparkles her lace,
Anxiety dares her grace
Dignity radiates her pace
Spinsterhood, differences, not offender.

Someday married or single
Pregnant; raped or by tangle
A baby bites that nipple
Annoyed or happy in the jungle,
Motherhood, a channel and pathfinder.

Lonely, bored or cherished
Loved, adored and desired
Tormented, hunted and banished
Cared for, attended to or punished,
Widowhood, the base of a mender.

Celebrated or mortgaged
Sold, ostracized or bandaged
Saluted, immortalized or caged
Worshipped or damaged,
Womanhood, not a gender.

Savour of every food
Strength of any good,
Flame of the firewood
Kindness melting the mood,
Pillar of the neighbourhood
Womanhood; beyond a gende

Ngozi Osuoha

Gifts of the Masters

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

GWENDOLYN BROOKS

The Crazy Woman

I shall not sing a May song.
A May song should be gay.
I'll wait until November
And sing a song of gray.

I'll wait until November
That is the time for me.
I'll go out in the frosty dark
And sing most terribly.

And all the little people
Will stare at me and say,
"That is the Crazy Woman
Who would not sing in May."

They Didn't Meet

They didn't meet me, roamed,
On steps with lanterns bright.
I entered quiet home
In murky, pail moonlight.

Under a lamp's green halo,
With smile of kept in rage,
My friend said, 'Cinderella,
Your voice is very strange...'

A cricket plays its fiddle;
A fire-place grew black.
Oh, someone took my little
White shoe as a keep-sake,
And gave me three carnations,
While casting dawn eyes -
My sins for accusations,
You couldn't be disguised.
And heart hates to believe in
The time, that's close too,
When he will ask for women
To try on my white shoe.

Anna Akhmatova

Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya al-Qaysiyya (or simply **Rabi'ah al-Basri**) was a female Muslim saint and Sufi mystic.

Not much is known about Rabia al Basri, except that she lived in Basra in Iraq, in the second half of the 8th century AD. She was born into poverty. But many spiritual stories are associated with her and what we can glean about her is reality merged with legend.

These traditions come from Farid ud din Attar a later sufi saint and poet, who used earlier sources. Rabia herself though has not left any written works.

After her father's death, there was a famine in Basra, and during that she was parted from her family. It is not clear how she was traveling in a caravan that was set upon by robbers. She was taken by the robbers and sold into slavery.

Her master worked her very hard, but at night after finishing her chores Rabia would turn to meditation and prayers and praising the Lord. Foregoing rest and sleep she spent her nights in prayers and she often fasted during the day.

Reality

In love, nothing exists between heart and heart.

Speech is born out of longing,
True description from the real taste.

The one who tastes, knows;
the one who explains, lies.

How can you describe the true form of
Something

In whose presence you are blotted out?

And in whose being you still exist?

And who lives as a sign for your journey?

Rabia al Basri

Woman, Come Into Your Own Skin

Viola Allo

Woman. You adjust your breast-wear.
Slide your finger under the loop.
Your strap is falling down.
Your baby is tugging at your breast.
Your baby is pulling your shirt down.
Your baby is pinching your breast.
Your husband is eyeing your breast.
Your husband is pulling your shirt down.
Your husband is brushing your backside.
Your belly is low. Your breasts slip.
Your clothes are sliding over your brown skin.
You pull your shirt up. Iron a wrinkle there.
You run your fingers over your skin.
You pull your skin up. Notice a crease there.
You step into your skin. Finger an oily fold
there.

Woman. Woman. Climb into your skin.
Pull it up around you like a wrapper-skirt.
Hitch it to you with a drawstring.
Fix it well. Adjust the loop. Nice and tight.
Everything is coming down.

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Caged Bird

Maya Angelo

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown

but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing
trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright
lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of
dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou

The Black Woman

Marcus Garvey

Black queen of beauty, thou hast given
color to the world!
Among other women thou art royal and the
fairest!
Like the brightest of jewels in the regal
diadem,
Shin'st thou, Goddess of Africa, Nature's
purest emblem!
Black men worship at thy virginal shrine of
truest love,
Because in thine eyes are virtue's steady
and holy mark,
As we see in no other, clothed in silk or fine
linen,

From ancient Venus, the Goddess, to
mythical Helen.
When Africa stood at the head of the elder
nations,
The Gods used to travel from foreign lands
to look at thee
On couch of costly Eastern materials, all
perfumed,
Reclined thee, as in thy path flow'rs were
strewn-sweetest that bloomed.
Thy transcendent marvelous beauty made
the whole world mad,
Bringing Solomon to tears as he viewed thy
comeliness;
Anthony and the elder Ceasars wept at thy
royal feet,
Preferring death than to leave thy presence,
their foes to meet.
You, in all ages, have attracted the adoring
world,
And caused many a bloody banner to be
unfurled
You have sat upon exalted and lofty
eminence,
To see a world fight in your ancient African
defense.
Today you have been dethroned, through
the weakness of your men,
While, in frenzy, those who of yore craved
your smiles and your hand-
Those who were all monsters and could not
with love approach you-
Have insulted your pride and now attack
your good virtue.
Because of disunion you became mother of
the world,
Giving tinge of robust color to five
continents,
Making a greater world of millions of colored
races,
Whose claim to beauty is reflected through
our black faces.
From the handsome Indian to European
brunette,
There is a claim for that credit of their sunny
beauty
That no one can e'er to take from thee, O

Queen of all women
Who have borne trials and troubles and
racial burden.
Once more we shall, in Africa, fight and
conquer for you,
Restoring the pearly crown that proud
Queen Sheba did wear
Yea, it may mean blood, it may mean
death; but still we shall fight,
Bearing our banners to Vict'ry, men of
Africa's might.
Superior Angels look like you in Heaven
above,
For thou art fairest, queen of the seasons,
queen of our love
No condition shall make us ever in life desert
thee,
Sweet Goddess of the ever green land and
placid blue sea

Pause

for all the Madibas

Tsitsi Jaji

There is a breath before the pendulum rends
its center,
a breath before what leapt comes back to
its ground.

There, men and women in chains
broke rock, forcing it to deliver

silence.

Hours on end, for year after year
of gravel's grating humiliation,
men and women, clay-footed,
sat with Shakespeare.
They were never shamed.
May their memories be ever

blessed.

A Good Black Woman

Unknown

A good Black Woman is proud of herself.

She respects herself and others.
She is aware of who she is.

She neither seeks definition from the person
she is with, or does she expect them to read
her mind.

She is quite capable of articulating her
needs.

A good black woman is hopeful.

She is strong enough to make all her dreams
come true.

She knows love, therefore she gives love.

She recognizes that her love has great value
and must be reciprocated.

If her love is taken for granted, it soon
disappears.

A good black woman has a dash of
inspiration, a dabble of endurance.

She knows that she will, at times, have to
inspire others to reach the potential God
gave them.

A good black woman knows her past,
understands her present and moves toward
the future.

A good black woman knows God.

She knows that with God the world is her
playground, but without God she will just be
played.

A good black woman does not live in fear of
the future because of her past.

Instead, she understands that her life
experiences are merely lessons,
meant to bring her closer to self knowledge
and unconditional self love.

AFRICAN WOMAN

Kristina Rungano

Young damsel weeps
Sighs silently for home
She the property of men
Pass'd 'tween them from hand to hand
Fragile piece of glassware
Priced;
Valued in dollars and cents
Slaved like a machine
She is left no say, no right
Her feelings but idle whims.

Young damsel weeps
Pleads sadly for understanding
But there is no place in our culture for love
She is beaten by men
Pass'd from hand to hand for a price
\$900 her father charged her husband
\$900 and head of cattle
– Cows are killed for beef
– Dollars buy clothing and food
She is milked . . .
Imprisoned beauty
Fed and fattened for childbearing
Her opinion but a fitty-fact.

Young damsel weeps for her tomorrow
But he who hears feigns deafness
Young damsel fruit of the land
Socialised into acceptance of her fate
Mother and benefactor
Young damsel, priceless jewel
Treated with reference worse than a child
She weeps today
Her anger swells
But she lives on

© 1984, Kristina Rungano

From: *A Storm is Brewing*
Publisher: Zimbabwe Publishing House,
Harare, 1984

Oh! Mr. Best You'Re Very Bad

Jane Austin

Oh! Mr. Best, you're very bad
And all the world shall know it;
Your base behaviour shall be sung
By me, a tunefull Poet.--

You used to go to Harrowgate
Each summer as it came,
And why I pray should you refuse
To go this year the same?--

The way's as plain, the road's as smooth,
The Posting not increased;
You're scarcely stouter than you were,
Not younger Sir at least.--

If e'er the waters were of use
Why now their use forego?
You may not live another year,
All's mortal here below.--

It is your duty Mr Best
To give your health repair.
Vain else your Richard's pills will be,
And vain your Consort's care.

But yet a nobler Duty calls
You now towards the North.
Arise ennobled--as Escort
Of Martha Lloyd stand forth.

She wants your aid--she honours you
With a distinguished call.
Stand forth to be the friend of her
Who is the friend of all.--

Take her, and wonder at your luck,
In having such a Trust.
Her converse sensible and sweet
Will banish heat and dust.--

So short she'll make the journey seem
You'll bid the Chaise stand still.
T'will be like driving at full speed
From Newb'ry to Speen hill.--

Convey her safe to Morton's wife
And I'll forget the past,
And write some verses in your praise
As finely and as fast.

But if you still refuse to go
I'll never let your rest,
Buy haunt you with reproachful song
Oh! wicked Mr. Best!--

Warning

Jenny Joseph

When I am an old woman I shall wear
purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and
doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy
and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no
money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm
tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press
alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more
fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and
beermats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep
us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the
street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read
the papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little
now?
So people who know me are not too
shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear
purple.

Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep

Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

Form: Sonnet

There Is A Green Hill

THERE is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffer'd there.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Sav'd by his precious blood.

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

O dearly, dearly has he lov'd,
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.

Cecil Frances Alexander

Backwards

Warsan Shire

For Saaid Shire

The poem can start with him walking
backwards into a room.
He takes off his jacket and sits down for the
rest of his life,
that's how we bring Dad back.
I can make the blood run back up my nose,
ants rushing into a hole.
We grow into smaller bodies, my breasts
disappear,
your cheeks soften, teeth sink back into gums.
I can make us loved, just say the word.
Give them stumps for hands if even once
they touched us without consent,
I can write the poem and make it
disappear.

Step Dad spits liquor back into glass,
Mum's body rolls back up the stairs, the
bone pops back into place,
maybe she keeps the baby.
Maybe we're okay kid?
I'll rewrite this whole life and this time there'll
be so much love,
you won't be able to see beyond it.

You won't be able to see beyond it,
I'll rewrite this whole life and this time there'll
be so much love.

Maybe we're okay kid,
maybe she keeps the baby.
Mum's body rolls back up the stairs, the
bone pops back into place,
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ants rushing into a hole,
that's how we bring Dad back.
He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest
of his life.

The poem can start with him walking
backwards into a room.

Deconstructing the inherent, misogynistic socialization of women

Alicia Smith

Credits:

This article was originally published on [Blavity](#)

More often than not, women are born and bred to grow *in*, when from an early age men learn to aggressively grow *out*. Where a man is meant to be large and strong, women long to be as petite and thin as their bodies will allow. Men are rarely silenced, while women are constantly told they're better seen than heard. Before we've even become women, we are taught to make the space we occupy as small and insignificant as possible. We are taught to be invisible.

Like many women, [I've spent most of my life attempting to shrink myself into society](#). As one of the tallest girls in my 5th-grade class, I subconsciously wished I were just a little shorter. At 14, my baby fat had evolved into something not so cute and lot more crippling. It wasn't until nearly my last year of university that I realized that the abundance of white frat boys walking down Greek row should be yielding to me.

Recently while out at a bar on St. Patrick's Day, the politics of space suddenly hit me for possibly the first time since I moved back home. As I reached the bar for the second time that night, I ran into a girl I vaguely remembered from high school. Seeing as though we weren't ever really acquaintances, no such acknowledgment was made, but in suburban Maryland, a local face never goes unnoticed. I had previously asked her to graciously set down my empty drink on the bar for me, and now that I was back for a refill, she generously

offered to move away from her friends to create space so I could order. I humbly thanked her but explained that even though she offered, [women should never have to go out of their way to move for anyone, seeing as we do it far too often](#). Although I can admit the inebriated unforgivingly feminist part of my brain might have been kicking in, during an in-depth catch up with a friend over lunch the other day, I began to think about the sentiment of my somewhat drunken approach.

I considered how [at my most confident and empowered](#), I seldom thought about how much space I was taking up and stopped apologizing for laughing too loud or speaking up too much in class. By the end of my college career, I was [shaving my head](#) and shopping for fatkinis, concepts the former shamed version of myself couldn't even fathom. The tops of my shoes were no longer the only things I saw while walking around campus; I was through yielding to the majority at every single turn. I was finished coveting a happiness I felt as though I didn't deserve. **I was done being sorry for simply existing.**

As women, we should never forget the little girls who scream louder, play harder and [think smarter](#) than any boy on the playground, for it was not too long ago that we were fearless enough to be them. [As women of color](#), we are to remind women around us, younger or not, that truly:

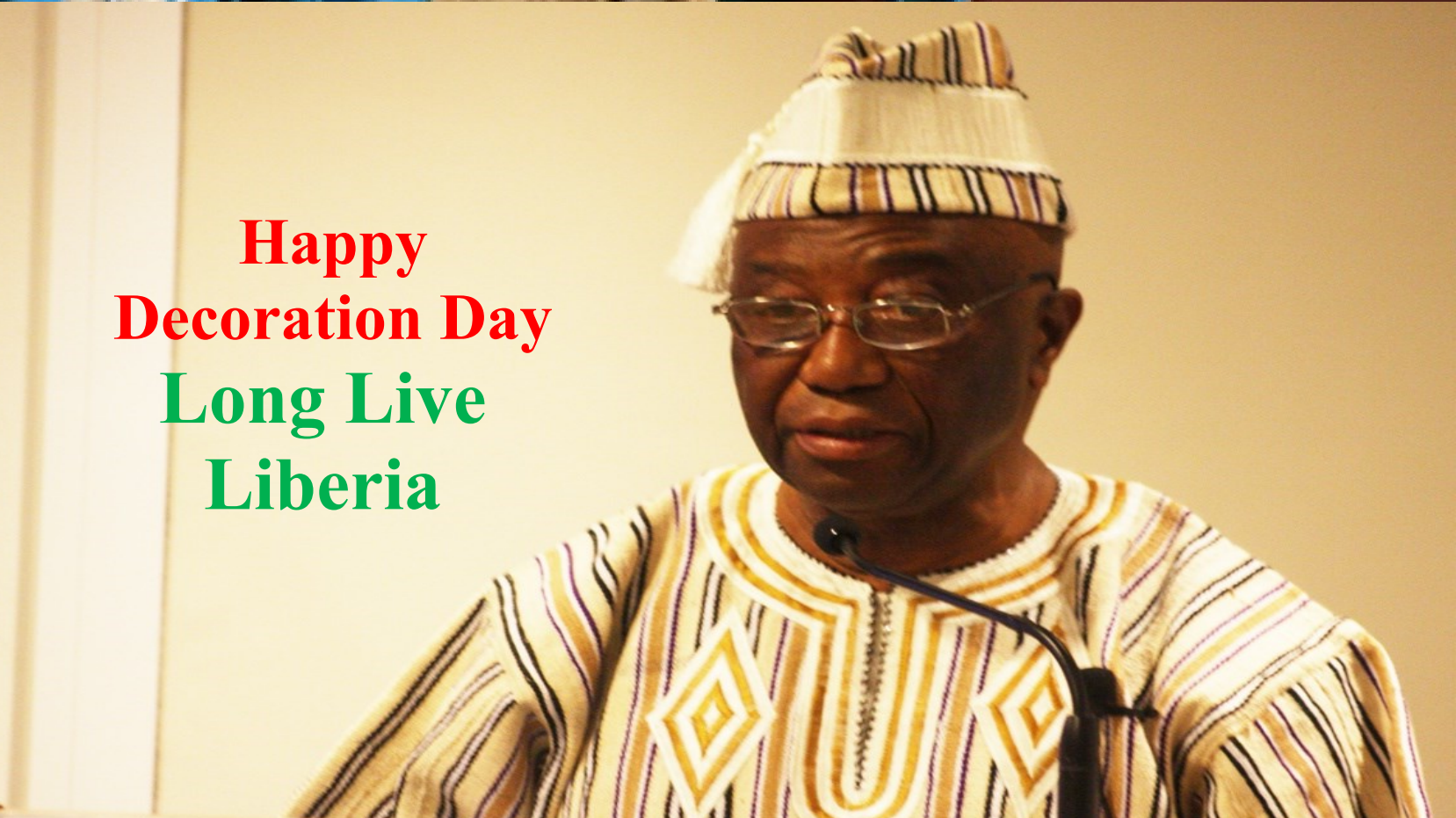
“NO ONE CAN MAKE YOU FEEL INFERIOR WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT.” – ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Grow up, grow out and grow smart. Grow whichever way you please, because **there's absolutely no space limit on life.**



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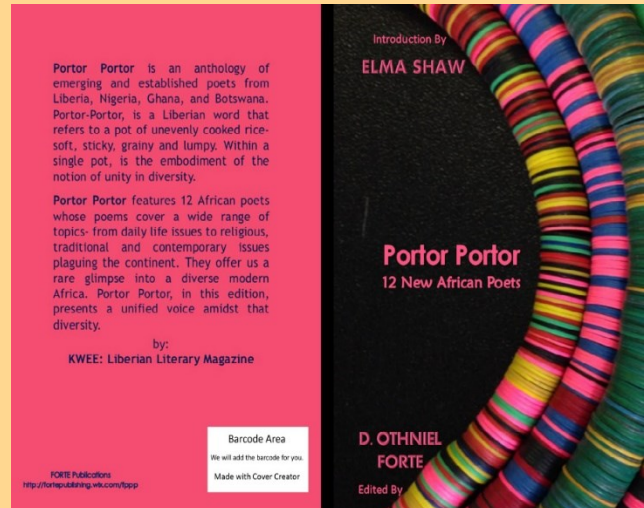
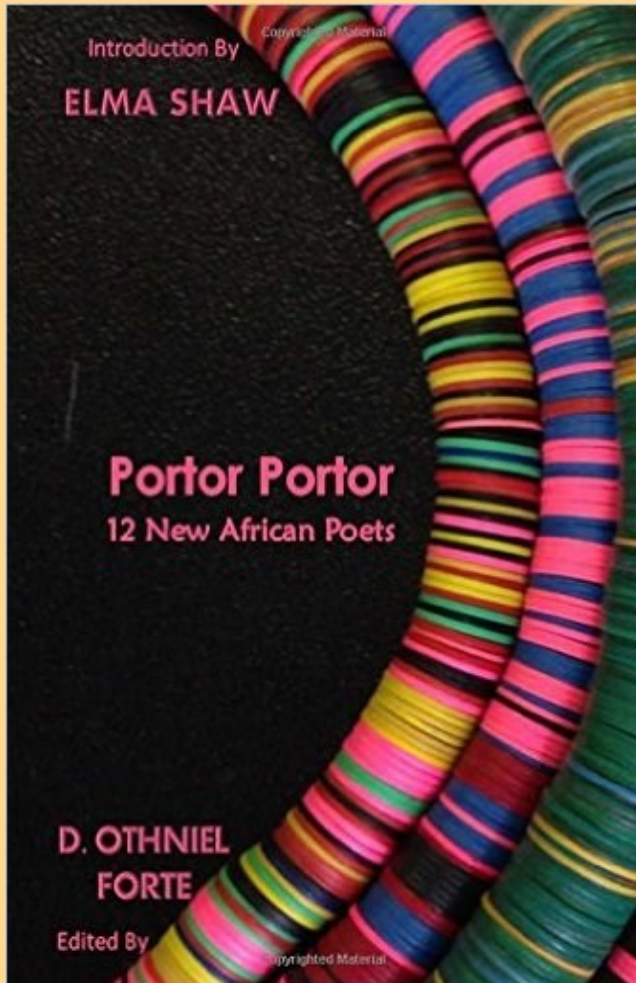
**Happy
Decoration Day
To the people of
Liberia**



**Happy
Decoration Day
Long Live
Liberia**

Recommended Reads

Portor Portor

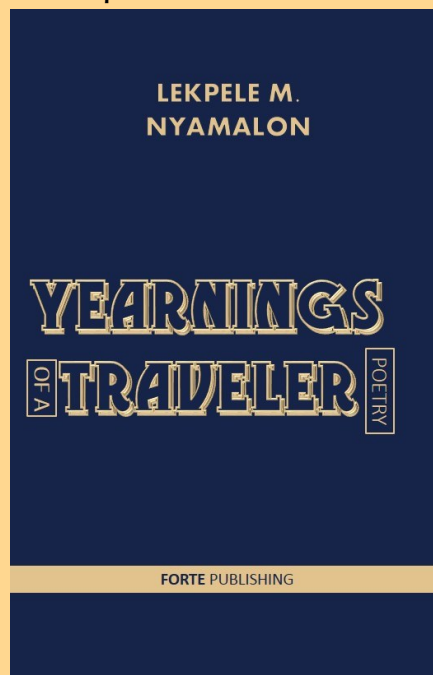


Portor Portor is an anthology of emerging and established poets from Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Botswana. Portor-Portor, a Liberian concept, refers to a pot of unevenly cooked rice-soft, sticky, grainy and lumpy. Within a single pot, is the embodiment of the notion of unity in diversity.

Portor Portor features 12 African poets whose poems cover a wide range of topics- from daily life issues to religious, traditional and contemporary issues plaguing the continent. They offer us a rare glimpse into a diverse modern Africa. Portor Portor, in this edition, presents a unified voice amidst that diversity. KWEE: Liberian Literary Magazine

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.

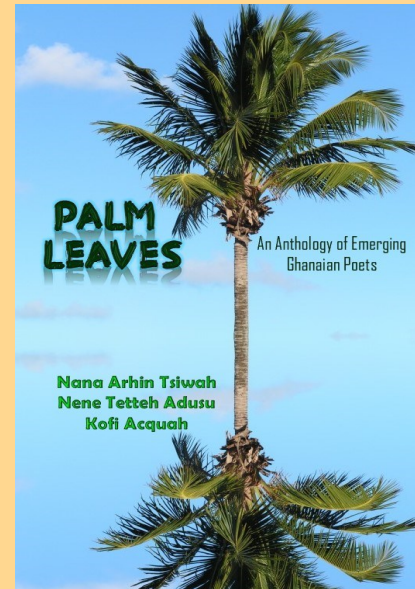
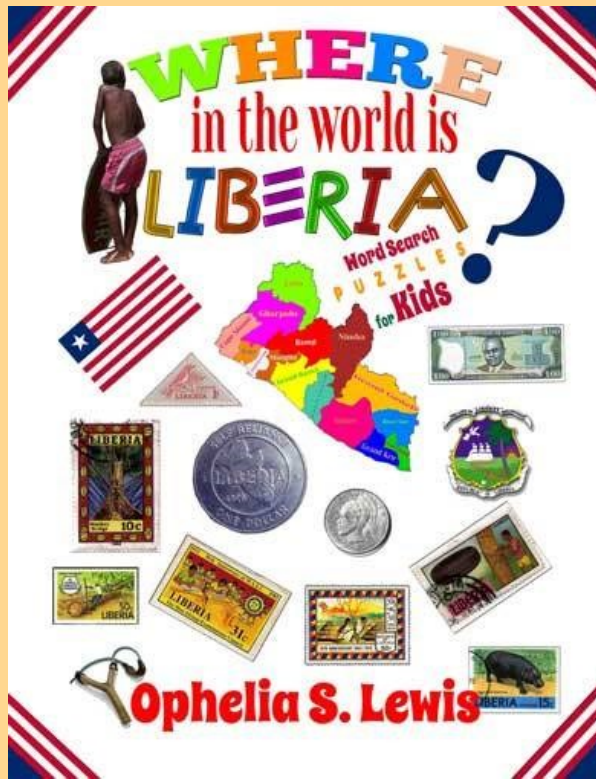
Nyamalon.

Edited by: D. Othniel Forte

Palm Leaves

Recommended Reads

Where in the world is Liberia?



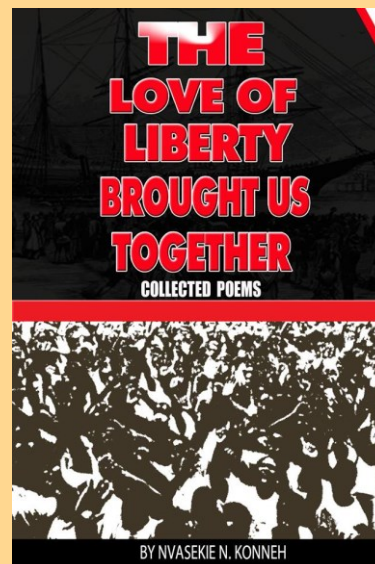
An anthology of Ghanaian Poets



Where In The World Is Liberia (Word Search Puzzles for Kids) is like having a passport to Liberia. There is much more information written about Liberia than what's in this book. Author, Ophelia S. Lewis has gathered and put together more than a few important facts in this game book as an introduction to Liberia's unique history. Children will have fun while learning how unique Liberia is.

Facts are hidden in the grid and as they find the hidden words, they learn facts about Liberia. Each page features a word search puzzle that will teach children about Liberia and hold their interest for hours. Get to know important historical facts, learn about the people, culture, natural resources, and many more... plus many illustrations to color.

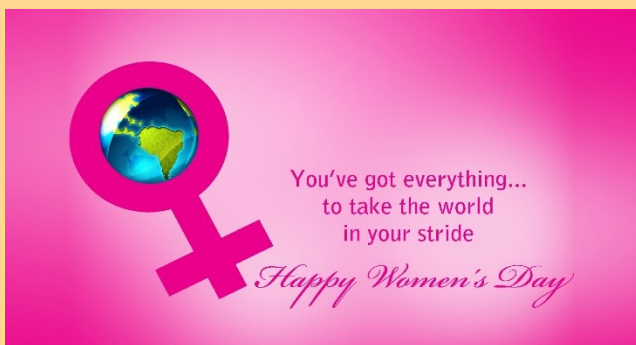
Age Range: 6-12 years old, Grade Level: 2-7, Paperback: 60 pages, Publisher: Village Tales Publishing, Language: English, ISBN-13: 978-0985362577, Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 11 inches, **Children's Books-Education-Activities-Games-Puzzles.**



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



Traditional Dancer from the Gio Tribe-Gio Devil



City Center





Down Town Pehn Pehn Hustle



The People's Monument



Forget us not

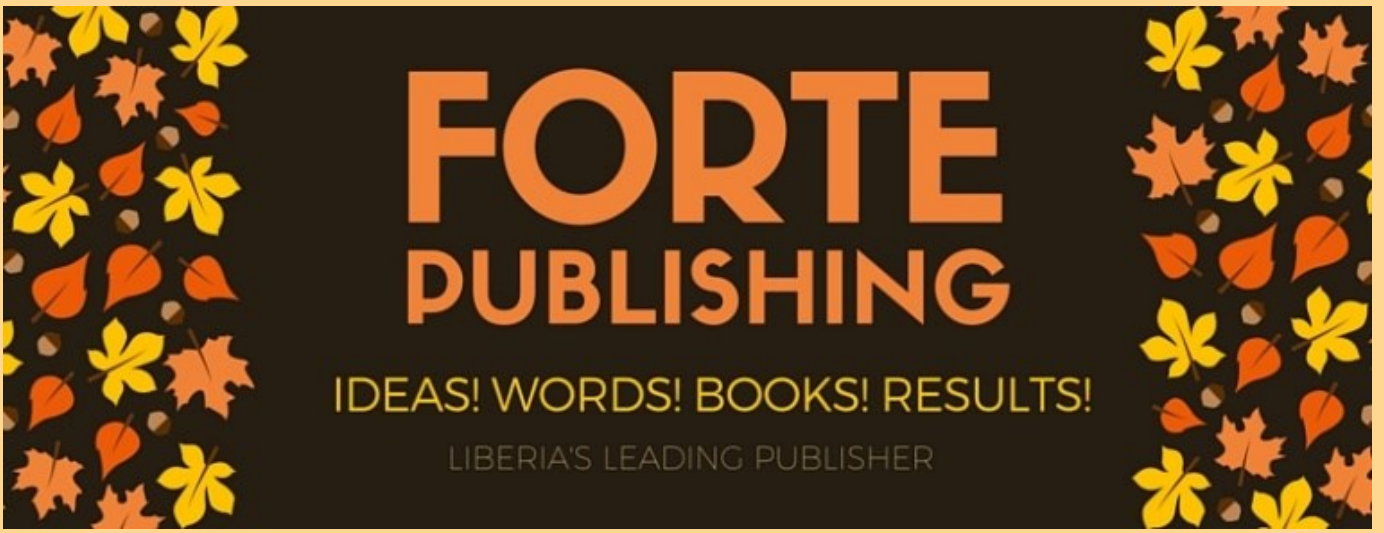


Beach Hustle; real life situations



Garage Hustle... Mechanic at work

Credit: Darby Cecil & Daily Pictures from around Liberia



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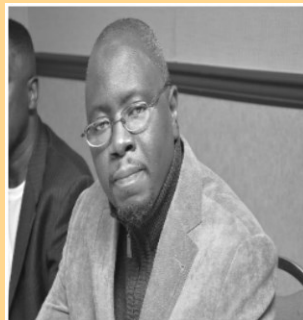
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VAMBA SHERIF
Editor - Short stories

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](#)

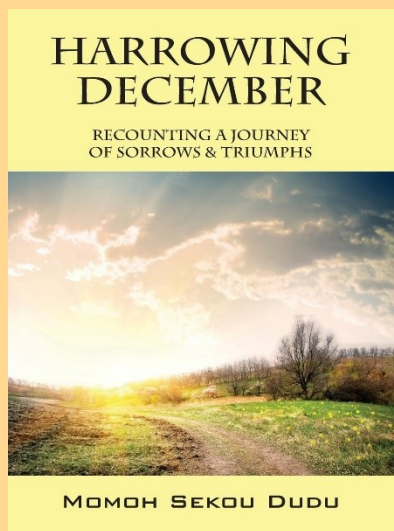


MOMOH DUDUU
Editor- Reviews

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.'



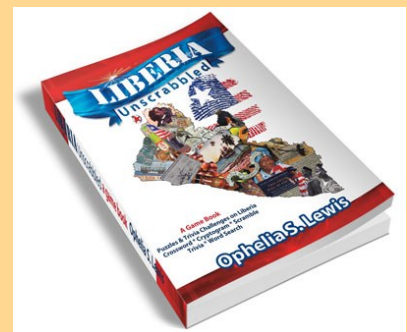
Find out more [here](#).



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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WOMEN ISSUE