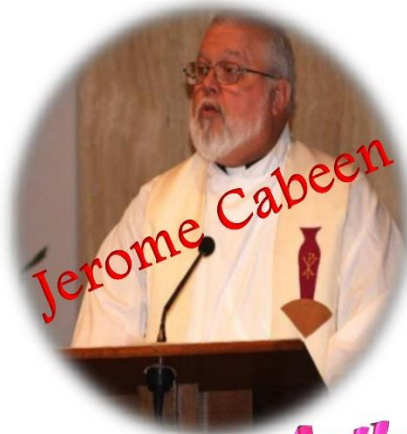
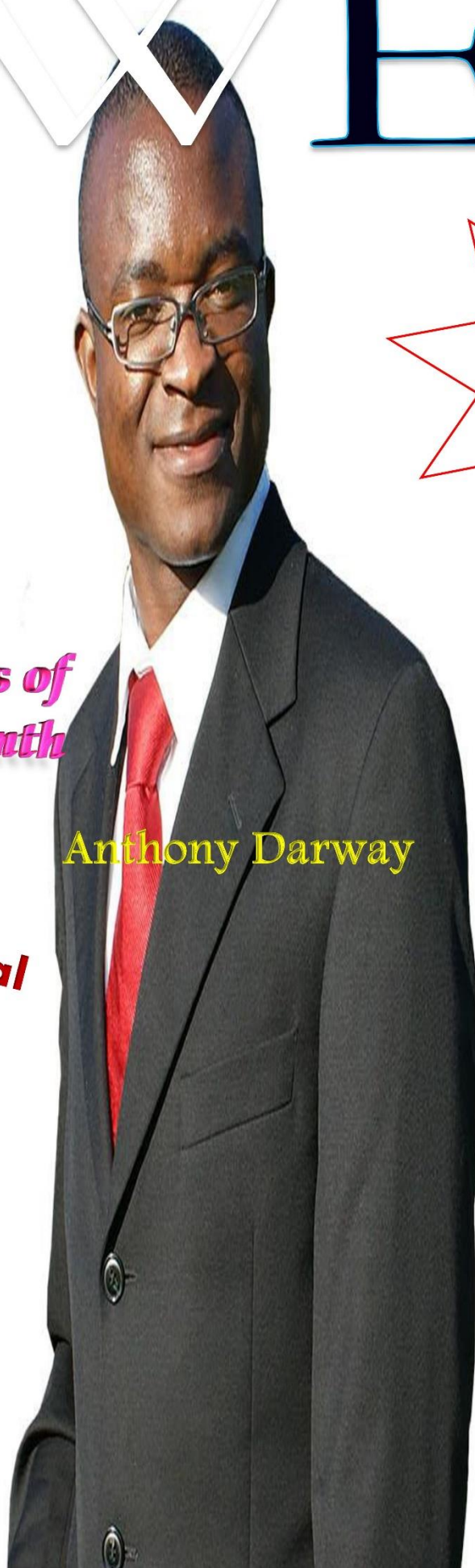


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August Issue

Liberian Literary Magazine

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Jerome Cabeen

*Authors of
the Month*

Anthony Darway

Flag Day Special



*Remembering
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*Poetry:
Stories
Articles*

★ ★ ★ HAPPY FLAG DAY ★ ★ ★

MAMA LIBERIA

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ AUGUST 24, 2015 ★

LONG LIVE THE

★ ★ ★ LONE STAR ★ ★ ★





Promoting Liberian Literature and Creativity

Liberian Literary Magazine

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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

Risqué Speak

This new segment to our print covers the magical language of the soul, music. It will go from musical history, to lyrics of meaning to the inner workings of the rhythm, beats, rhyme, the way pieces connect and importantly, the people who make the magic happen. Our host and or his guests will delve into the personal life of our favorite musicians, bands and groups like those that we have not seen. This is more than their stories; it is more like the stories behind the stories. They'd shine the spotlight on the many people that come together to make it all happen on and off stage. Watch out for this segment.

Kuluba's Korner

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

Authors of the Month Profile

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

Authors of the Month Interview

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

Articles

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

Book Review

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

Education Spotlight

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

many talented writers- previous and present.

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

Artist of the Month

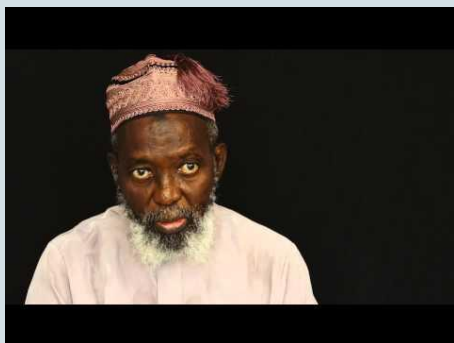
We highlight some of the brilliant artists, photographers, designers etc. We go out of the box here. Don't mistake us to have limits on what we consider arty. If it is creative, flashy, mind-blowing or simply different, we may just showcase it.

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

Poem of the Month

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

Editorial



The Life and Death of Sheikh Kafumba Konneh

Tribute

This should be the spot for our editorial, however, we are running a tribute to a fallen hero.

By Nvasekie Konneh

When a giant tree falls in the forest, impacts other trees far and near. Today, the passing of Sheik Kafumba Konneh symbolizes the

Fall of a giant tree the forest. Sheik Kafumba was the most prominent voice and face of Islam in the last three decades in Liberia starting from the time he served as the Secretary General of the Muslim Union of

Nimba County to the Secretary General and

Chairman of the National Muslim Council of Liberia. Though there have been many prominent Liberian Muslim leaders before him, none could match his ability to present Islam through the electronic and print media. He launched the *Islam and You* program on the national TV in the late 1980s leading to the war.

Islam had not been presented like that before in Liberia. That was something new for the country.

His programs were widely viewed on ELTV, which was the only TV station in the nation at the

time. Islam and You television show brought Islam to the living rooms of many people in the country. Islam was no longer our grandfather's religion to be kept in the closet. It was through that program that Sheik Kafumba Konneh was launched on the national scene as the voice and face of Islam in Liberia.

Kafumba Konneh the Politician

While many will remember him as the prominent Muslim leader, he was not just an Islamic leader or preacher, he was a politician, scholar, lawyer and judge as well. Before the assassination of President William R. Tolbert, Sheik Kafumba Konneh was the Commissioner of Ganta City in Nimba County. That was the first time a Muslim or Mandingo was appointed as the District Commissioner of any town or city in Nimba County.

Before then he was Associate Magistrate in Lamco, Yekepa in Nimba County and years later as justice of the peace in Sanniquillie Nimba County.

To have been appointed to the position of district commissioner and to have served as Associate Magistrate or Justice of the Peace can only indicate that he was indeed active in the local Nimba politics. His role as an activist started with his disagreement with President Samuel Doe and his support for Edward Kesselly, the founder of the current ruling Unity Party. It was Sheik Kafumba Konneh who mobilized Nimba County for Edward Kesselly in the 1985 election. I was there in Sanniquellie when Kesselly visited and received a rousing welcome.

On that occasion, Sheik came to his home town of Saclepea to

mobilize the community for Kesselly. Up to that point, many of us did not know who Edward Kesselly was. Sheik Kafumba traveled throughout Nimba to drum up support for the UP standard-bearer. He went to the two mosques in Saclepea to sell Kesselly to us. I was among those that traveled from Saclepea to Sanniquellie to participate in that political rally. It was one of the biggest rallies held for the UP candidate anywhere in Liberia during the 1985 election.

When the war started, Sheik Kafumba represented the National Muslim Council of Liberia on the Interfaith Mediation Committee.

On that committee, he was brave and courageous. His bravest act was traveling along with other religious leaders to meet with the then rebel leader Charles Taylor.

As a Muslim, many were cautious about this meeting with the feared rebel leader whose forces were notorious for killing Muslims and Mandingos all over Liberia. Despite all the warning from people that he was threading a dangerous ground, he went there any way.



When peace talk took place in Banjul, Gambia, Sheik was nominated by some to serve as Vice President of the Interim Government of National Unity, IGNU that was headed by Dr. Amos Sawyer. He declined this position, saying that will compromise his position as a



peacemaker. Because of these, Sheik Kafumba Konneh became a well-known respected national figure often serving as close confidant of many Liberian leaders from Dr. Amos Sawyer to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

While pursuing peace against the recalcitrant Charles Taylor, Sheik Kafumba traveled with Dr. Sawyer on several occasions to Libya to meet the then Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi to stop his support for the rebellion led by Charles Taylor. I am sure on those occasions, Sheik lectured the late Gadhafi of the plight of the Liberian Muslim in the areas controlled by the NPFL of Charles Taylor. Of course, that did not stop Qaddafi's support for the rebel leader who eventually became president.

The role Sheik played in the mediation efforts in the Liberian conflict might have been the reason for his appointment on the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC).

While others might have viewed the TRC with a prosecutorial power to prosecute former warring faction leaders, Sheik saw it as a mean to genuinely reconcile Liberia because at one time or another, Liberians supported different warring factions against one another.

In such situation the question is bound to come up, who will prosecute who when all supported the war one-way or the other?

That's where Sheik differed with some of his colleagues on the

TRC most of whom may be suspected of having political motives take precedence over genuine reconciliation in the country. As can be seen in world history, it has always been the victors that prosecute the defeated as in the case of World War II. In Liberia, there was no victor. We are all victims of circumstances of the war.

So one will agree with Sheik that reconciliation should have taken precedence over prosecution which is politically motivated by people with vested political interest.

His Only Sister

Sheik Kafumba Konneh shared his father Alhaji Famod Konneh with more than 15 brothers and sisters but he shared a mother with only one of the daughters. His only maternal sister was aunt Mamawa Konneh. Though Sheik lost many relatives and members of his ethnic Mandingoes and Muslims to the senseless Liberian civil war, the closest of them to him was this only maternal sister. So he was as much a victim of the war like the rest of us. He might have endured much agony as a result of this, he still opted for peace and reconciliation to end the war.

He put his whole credibility, career and life on the line in pursue of peace and reconciliation. At time he was castigated and hunted by some of his own people who had problem with his refusal to support ULIMO which enjoyed the popular support of Mandingoes and Muslims in Liberia. That speaks volume of his commitment to peaceful end to our violent conflict. He demonstrated the spiritual power of forgiveness and

reconciliation. That position was in sharp contrast to the position many of his colleagues took on the TRC.

From Humble Beginning

Sheik Kafumba Konneh came from a humble beginning in Saclepea, Nimba County. He was the son of Alhaji Famod Konneh. His father wanted him to be a Kalamoh, an Islamic scholar or preacher. He went to traditional Quranic School. So he was educated as a traditional Islamic scholar but his curiosity might



have convinced him that he needed more than a traditional Islamic education if he was to impact Liberia with Islam.

That quest led him to the path of self-education. Besides the traditional education, he did not attend formal school for learning to read and write English. He did that on his own as a life-long learner.

He educated himself by reading voraciously. He was a lover of books on politics, religion, history and world affairs. That set him apart from what we know of Islamic leaders in the past. Many renowned Islamic preachers in Liberia could not express themselves in English, the national language. With Sheik Kafumba, it was different. He was very eloquent in his presentation not only on Islam but also on many other issues such as politic. His rise to prominence as a national leader, despite not been formally



educated in any school in Liberia, can only be compared to Malcolm X who was an 8th grade dropout but was able to educate himself to become a prominent spokesman of the Nation of Islam in the US. This led to him being considered as one of the great leader of Pan African revolution struggle.

For many who visited Sheik at any given time, he was always with books. He had a well-stocked library with volumes of books. I remember way back that whenever I wanted to do research for some of the articles I wrote for publication, I visited his library and he always used to point me to some specific areas in those books. He would tell me read so and so chapters. As a writer, I am truly indebted to him.

Down To Earth and Approachable

Despite the fame and the prominence as a national figure, Sheik was very down to earth. He was approachable. He was the man any ordinary person could walk to and chat with him on any issue. So his interaction was not only limited to those in power but people from all walks of life, Muslims and Christians.

He did not hesitate to mingle with the people. He met them on the streets as well as in his home. Many will explain their personal interactions with Sheik Kafumba Konneh. As of now there are lively

discussion about the Sheik all over the place, especially on social media. His pictures and commentaries about him are popping up everywhere.

I am sure it's the same thing on radio stations in Liberia as well as in various forum in the country. That shows he was loved and admired by many people from the politicians to the ordinary people. Indeed he was man of the people.

So his passing is truly a national lost. Not only has the Konneh family lost a great father, uncle, son, and husband, Liberia and particularly the Muslim community have lost a sage, an erudite scholar, an activist and national leader.

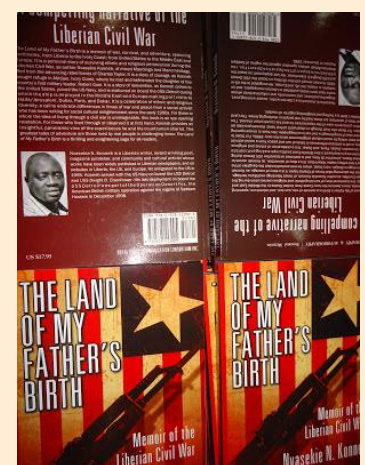
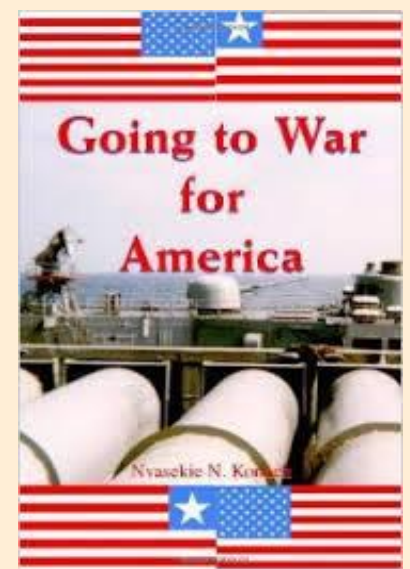
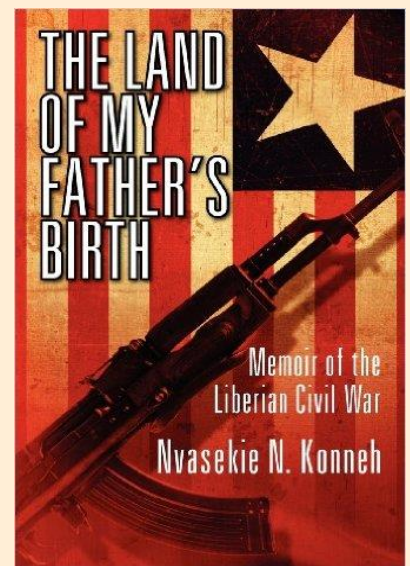
We pray that Allah will reward him for all his sacrifices in the cause of peace and unity in Liberia and Africa. At the time when some cold bloody criminals are committing terrible crimes in the name of Islam, Sheik Kafumba Konneh represented the face of Islam that calls for moderation, interfaith dialogue and engagement.

Rest in peace our father. May Allah forgive your sins and grant you Paradise.



*Nvasekie Konneh is a Liberian writer based in US. He's the author of the books, **Going to War for America**, a collection of poetry and **The Land of My Father's Birth**, a memoir of the Liberian civil war.*

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**Remembering Sheik Kafumba
Konneh**

Nvasekie N. Konneh

*Scores of years ago
A child was born in
Saclepea, Nimba County*

*The child who grew
up to be a man*

*The man now hailed
as a dedicated servant of
humanity.*

*Birth is the beginning of life
And no matter the duration of
our time
the final chapter of
our lives is death*

*The question is:
what did you do with the time
you had?*

*Though we cry for the loss
of our Uncle, father, and
leader. We are relieved that
his time on earth was well
spent.*

*He worked tirelessly
among his people
as builder and healer*

*For which we can only
celebrate him
for as long as we can.*

*Fare well to thee
our esteemed uncle, father
May Allah forgive
your trespasses and
reward you
With paradise.*

*Allah shall make it easy
for you as you walk on the
ladder
Of Allah's forgiveness
and mercy.*

**Sheikh Kafumba Konneh:
The Man, the Legend**

Momoh Sekou Dudu

*The death of the respected
Sheikh Kafumba Konneh leaves a
hard-to-fill emptiness in the
public sphere of the Liberian
nation.*

*As an unyielding believer in the
theology of peace, the late Sheikh
was, without question, a driving
force in the effort to shape the
moral conscience of Liberia and
Liberians of all stripes.*

*Throughout his remarkable
earthly sojourn, he worked
determinedly to promote a
national unity of purpose,
peaceful co-existence, religious
tolerance, and social justice.*

*Even when violence erupted in
our country, Sheikh Konneh
refused to surrender to the forces
of mayhem. He persisted, from
whatever platform that was
available to him, in promoting
and living the message of oneness.*

*Sheikh Kafumba Konneh was not
only a man, he was (and is) a
towering legend! He recognized,
in the sacrosanct words of the
renowned cognitive psychologist
Aaron Beck that*

*"The stronger person is not
the one that make the most
noise, but the one who can
quietly direct the
conversation toward
defining and solving
problems."*

*And that is exactly what he set
out to do with noteworthy
success.*

*May Allah Almighty grant this
national hero a rousing welcome
in his heavenly Kingdom.*

**A HERO IS GONE
POPS K/SHEIK K**

d. othniel forte

*a child is born
a child is gone*

*a family rejoices,
a child is born!
a nation mourns
a son is gone.*

*a child grows
as this child learns
a community knows
the community yearns
for without each other
it's only when together
that they are something.
they are nothing.*

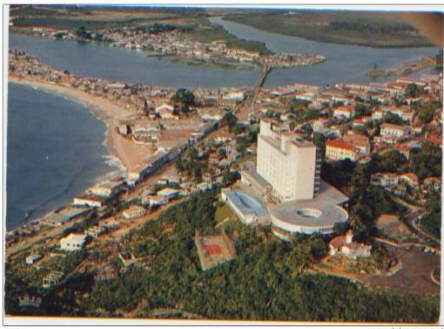
*that child is a man
that community sees a plan;
one that
will make them all proud.*

*Sheik K or Pops K was a person of
fond memories. Some say a
legend, a hero, a man of peace....
I could lament this son of Liberia
a thousand ways and still find
another thousand or so to write.
The truth is of all the things he
was, he did and he spoke, I can't
shake of the calm, focus and
knowledgeable MAN he was. I
prefer to remember the man
because he never forgot that he
was but a man. He saw himself no
more than that- a man God had
given an opportunity to do
something for his people. I don't
wish to take away from the others
as they dump accolades upon him,
but I know deep down that he
remained humble; just that child
that was born to do his part for his
country and people. May you rest
in peace Pops K.*

Rique Speaks

Hugh Masekela and the Swinging Seventies: "Liberian Stories 2"

The section of Hugh Masekela's epic 2004 biography, "Still Grazing", which takes his wildin' journey through music, sex, drugs, politics and life to 1970's Monrovia, Liberia, is Section III, entitled "Africa." Masekela's return to the African continent found him at a bit of a crossroads in his journey. After leaving his native South Africa in the early '60s, Masekela had married and divorced the great singer Miriam Makeba; released albums that flopped, studied music in New York City, met and befriended most of the great names of BeBop, Hard Bop & Soul Jazz; made love to scores of attractive women. He'd become both a role model and a patron of young South African musicians and students in exile in the United States. In 1968, Masekela's recording of South African composer Philemon Hou's song, "Grazing in the Grass" went to #1 on the pop charts, becoming an international smash. Masekela promptly got to enjoying his



success, but he was not able to follow it up with a consistent stream of hits, as his personal life and partying began to dissipate his momentum. He had brief

marriages that failed, consumed copious amounts of cognac, cocaine, weed and opium, and gave the world protest music after making them dance. It was the writer Quincy Troupe, who would go on to write the autobiography of one of Masekela's heroes, Miles Davis, who suggested he go to West Africa to check out the post-



colonial growth of the continent. Masekela, ever the adventurer, a master at creating a life wherever he found himself, took him up on it, and it gave him a greater education in Africa than he'd ever had before.

Masekela was not exactly an expert on Africa at the time of this move, although he was one of the musicians most highly identified with Africa in the western mind. In his native South Africa he'd grown up a fan of Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie, of swing and bebop, which would only intensify when he traveled to the United States as a student. He was much more familiar at the time with the culture of African Americans than he was that of his neighboring African countries, many of which were still submerged in colonial dominion during his youth. The apartheid government also had a part to play in this, as it could not afford to have the ideas and the spirit of freedom thriving in other African nations to mingle and inspire that already growing movement at home. People of African descent were separated from South Africans, classified as "foreign natives." When Sidney

Poitier and Canada Lee went to South Africa to film "Cry, the Beloved Country", they were listed as servants of the white director and kept away from the white population. "Isolating ethnic South Africans from Africans born outside the country drove a cultural and psychological wedge between them that still exists today in the form of the most despicable xenophobia imaginable", Masekela writes.

Masekela's ex-wife, Miriam Makeba, facilitated his pilgrimage to Africa just as she did that of Nina Simone. It was Masekela's intention to form a group when he arrived, taking advantage of the new music being created on the continent. His first stop was Guinea, where Makeba and her husband Kwame Toure, known during the Civil Rights Movement as Stokely Carmichael. Guinea was a French West African country, dominated by Muslims, which had a communist governmental structure under President Sekou Toure. Toure was a gracious host, even showing tolerance toward Masekela and other artists' marijuana smoking. Yet, in short order, Masekela began to spend an equal amount of time in a Monrovia which featured "round the clock bars, a thriving international tourist trade, and American currency." This Liberia also possessed a typical



enticement for musicians:"some of the most beautiful women I'd seen since my return to Africa."

Masekela was invited by President Tolbert to Liberia to

raise money for his “Higher Heights” project. “Total Involvement for Higher Heights” was one of the trademark programs of President Tolbert, taking over after the long reign of President Tubman. The program involved a fund-raiser called “Rally Time”. The Makeba/Masekela concert was to be a fund-raiser for that program.



Masekela said they turned the football stadium out, with him playing several encores of “Grazing in the Grass” that kept folks dancing. Miriam Makeba had to repeat her smash hit “Pata Pata” several times for the Liberian audience on that day.

Masekela was put up in a suite at the Ducor International Hotel, “on Monrovia’s highest hill, with a breathtaking view of the city and the Atlantic Ocean.” The Ducor Hotel and its fabulousness was one I’ve heard many stories about, both from my Liberian parents and even from people in the Bay Area who had visited prewar Liberia. Masekela also mentions several prominent Liberians of the time I grew up conscious of, everyone from Cecil Dennis, to “Chu Chu” Horton, who was a close friend of Masekela, to finance minister Steve Tolbert.

One of the things my mother was always proud of that rarely gets spoken is how much aid Liberia gave to black South Africans in the anti Apartheid struggle. In this particular instance, Masekela was granted Liberian citizenship and a

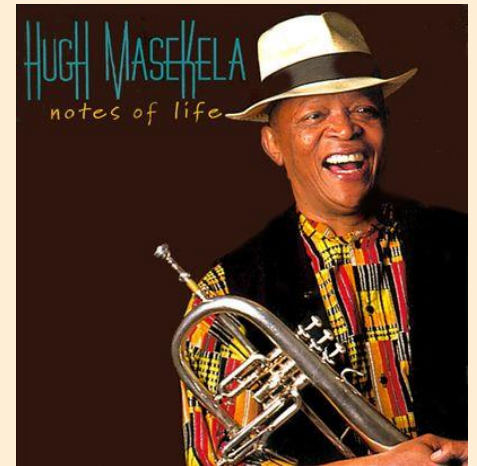
passport after his performances by President Tolbert. This was very crucial to Masekela at this time because after his defection from his country and his outspokenness against the oppression occurring there, he was a man without a country to a large degree. Tolbert’s bestowal of Liberian citizenship on Masekela made it easier for him to travel and move about in the world.

Masekela quickly settled into the unique and bustling prewar Monrovia scene. He describes a city that never went to sleep, where people partied around the clock. He also had a large number of South African friends around him there, including the composer of his biggest hit, Philemon Hou. He also noted the conditions that would eventually lead to the calamity Liberia would soon face, the deep social cleavages between the descendants of the freed blacks from the United States and the indigenous African population.



But at the same time he and other people observed this class division, it by no means stopped them from enjoying what he and other Africans of the time referred to as “Small America.”

The women he met there didn’t ask for taxi fare, like the Congolese women who’d come up disadvantaged under colonialism. The women he met had their own cars and jobs. Despite the class differences between the old “settler” families and the rest of the population, Masekela noticed that the country was informal and



everybody knew the big shots, because rather than isolating themselves, they associated freely with everybody. Despite what he felt was oppressive, he met a society that seemed to have a sense of unity as well. He also made note of Liberian slangs such as referring to everybody as “my man!” or calling females “my child”, which makes me think of my dearly departed grandmother, and my dad, who’d always use “my man.” While traveling to Nigeria, Congo, and several other African countries in search of band members, Masekela would split his time between Monrovia and Conakry, Guinea. While Guinea was a country of Islam and strict Marxism, Monrovia featured an African version of Western freedom. Despite the difference in style however, he saw Toure and Tolbert as very similar, one capitalist, one communist, both autocratic.

Masekela was very influential in one of the greatest symbolic moments in the history of the African diaspora, the Muhammed Ali, George Foreman title bout known as the “Rumble in the Jungle”, in Kinsasha, Zaire, and Liberian money was key in making it happen. Stephen Tolbert, the brother of President Tolbert, and finance minister, a man reputed to be Liberia’s richest self-made man through his involvement in the fishing industry, provided \$2

million to make the music concert happen. That music concert was featured a few years ago in the film “Soul Power”, and featured luminaries such as James Brown, BB King, The Crusaders, and Miriam Makeba. Amazingly, the Rumble In the Jungle, where Muhammed Ali proved himself once and for all the “greatest of all time” by defeating the heavily favored Foreman, was made possible by Liberian money, or should I say, Liberian U.S dollars. Tolbert never recouped his investment due to the trickery of the promoters and also ended up dying in a plane crash.

The African section of Masekela’s book is full of other interesting incidents in Liberia,



adventures with ChuChu Horton, stories of his South African friends studying in Liberia, fights in Kru Town, and general rabble rousing and hell raising.

One of the most poignant however, is when he brought his mother to Liberia. Masekela had not seen his mother since he left South Africa, and he brought her to the U.S and then to meet his family and see his house in Liberia on the beach. She had the time of her life, and she was even able to meet President Tolbert.

This was very special to her, because her own government in South Africa treated her as a non-human, but in a black African country, she was able to meet the President due to the importance of her son.

“My mother was very touched and inspired by the fact she had dined with an African President, something that was utterly impossible in her own country.”

And that is something that I believe Liberia provided for many within the African diaspora, from parts of Africa and the New World as well, an example and hope to one day enjoy the self-governance Liberia had been struggling to maintain since her founding.

Masekela’s time in Liberia ended as many people’s, when Seargent Samuel Doe took power in 1980. His wife and child remained there for some time, but Masekela ran out of the country when he was instructed to go see Doe at the Executive Mansion, knowing he’d been friends with so many people in the old order.

“Still Grazing” was a very important book for me personally. My family left Liberia shortly before the coup. I saw pictures of Liberia in the ’60s and ’70s and still have a great deal of family that lives there. The names I encountered in the book, I was surprised to find I knew all of them as if I was there. It seems somehow my parents stories about Liberia had seeped deeper into me than I’d realized. They always spoke of Liberia in joyful terms, as if they’d had the times of their lives living there and would never find such joy anywhere else.



But for me, I’d never quite read a history of the particular times

they’d lived in, especially that



time period of the 1970s that led up to the war. “Grazing in the Grass” is an important book for Liberians to read, both young and old. It’s one thing to have a Liberian testify to how things used to be in the country, but it’s a whole other thing for a person who was a guest and naturalized citizen to speak to it. Though Liberia had its social and economic problems as governments and people do, it also had and has something very special. “Still Grazing” was the first book that captured the history of 1970s Liberia for me in a personal style and it’s as valuable for that as it is for its portraits of South Africa, the 1960s music scene and Hugh Masekela’s incredible life.



*By Henrique Hopkins
Hosts Rique Speaks*

*His experience and knowledge
in music is extensive.*

Authors of the Month Profiles

Anthony Oscar Darway



Anthony Oscar Darway was born in Grand Bassa, Liberia to a predominantly illiterate family. By the time he was 12, his country was fighting a bloody civil war.

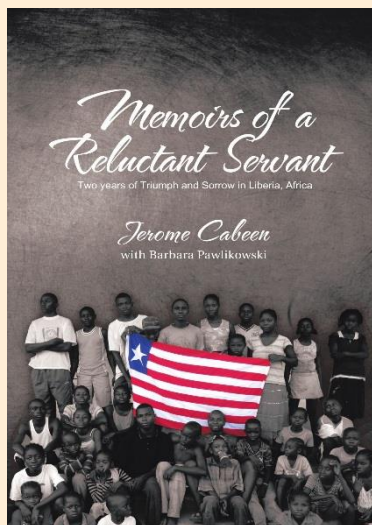
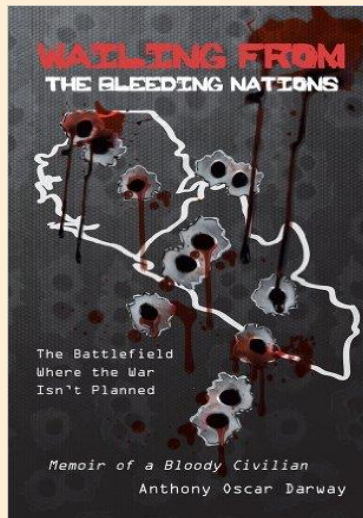
When he saw that his family couldn't support his education, he decided to school himself, but almost before he could begin, he was stuck with a deadly sickness and was fighting for his life.

His father took him to Sierra Leone for medical attention where he abandoned him to fend for himself.

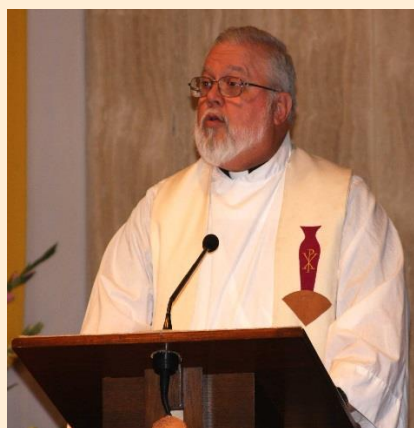
He used his opportunity in a foreign country to pursue his educational dreams, and he is the only one of a dozen siblings to have finished high school.

Even though many of his friends were picking up arms to fight in the conflicts, he stuck with the pen to document their acts.

Now he is reading political science to major in Peace and Conflict Studies in Sweden.



Jerome Cabeen



Jerome Cabeen was born and raised in Houston, Texas. Growing up he gravitated towards music,

books, art and sports. He was the youngest of 5 boys of a mixed Scot-Irish, French and Polish background. Cabeen attended James Madison High School in Houston and Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas and graduated in 1990 with a BA in Fine Arts and Teaching. He taught Art and coached high school basketball in the Houston area for 12 years. Religion had always served as an important element in Cabeen's life. In 2004, after many years away from the Church and religion, Cabeen decided to re-invest his time and energies in his life toward international missionary work and he left the United States to serve as a volunteer in Honduras, Central America. What initially was planned to be an 18 month excursion of goodwill in Honduras turned into a 4 year stint that led Cabeen down an incredible path of self-discovery and personal fulfillment. Jerome Cabeen met Clarisa Chavarria Lara in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in 2006 and the couple married in 2008. Just two months after their marriage they both followed their hearts and desire to serve the poor and oppressed by travelling to Liberia, Africa. The couple ended up spending 2 years in Liberia serving as Co-Directors of Liberia Mission Incorporated outside of Monrovia.

"Memoirs of a Reluctant Servant - Two Years of Triumph and Sorrow in Liberia, Africa" was inspired by the uplifting and tragic events that Cabeen and his wife encountered while in the country. "Memoirs of a Reluctant Servant" is Jerome Cabeen's first book. Jerome and Clarisa currently reside in Beaumont, Texas where he works for the Diocese of Beaumont and is also taking classes on-line towards a Master's Degree in Pastoral Theology from the University of Dallas.

In the Spotlight of this issue, is a promising son who is gifted, enthusiastic and has come so far.

Author Interview



LLM: Tell us a little about you- your early childhood, upbringing, education.

Well, in a straightforward statement, I considered myself as one of those rare survivals who has managed in my own way to turn around my situation. What I mean by this is that, I started fending for myself and was already far from my family and homeland as a result of the civil unrest in Liberia before I was even 12 years old.

Literally, my parent did not send me to school, even though my father used to tell us that education was an important step toward a successful life, yet he couldn't acquire it himself and wasn't able to send us to school due to lack in the family.

It was during my adventure life in Sierra Leone starting in 1991, I discovered the importance of education and

went in for the pursuit through the help of friends I was able to make in the country.

I came from a poverty driven family where neither father nor mother knew how to read and write, as a result, added to the impact from the civil war, there was little contribution the family as a whole could give me and my nine siblings. Today, I'm the only person among my parent's children to have graduated from high school and able to enter the university, thanks to the fact that I got separated from them at an early age.

LLM: What inspires you to write generally?

I'm somehow a moderate narrator, some kind of teacher in my own respect, and I happen to be able to remember a great deed of my personal life story and that of those around me.

My philosophy is that there is an innate potential in every person that is waiting for the right moment to flourish, and I'm inspired by my narrative potential which is very useful in the writing industry.

If these real life stories are told in a convincing way, I'm sure it might possibly inspire many people and impact their lives. And my aim in writing is to use my talent to impact and transform many lives.

LLM: Who are some of the people that influenced you?

I'm a humanitarian, and people in leadership positions do influence me a lot; people like

Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Theresa, Patrice Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, to name but a few.

LLM: What role does your family play in your writing?

Literally, my biological family has little hand in my upbringing, education or writing, and the mention of them is simply used as a reference whenever I want to trace my history. Ordinary people who are not related to me are those who influence my writing.

LLM: Name one entity that you feel supported you besides your family members.

There is a saying that goes like this; "Your child is not always the person who came from your belly". What people called friend is what I consider family today. I'm closer to my friends, especially those I met in Sierra Leone more than my family in Liberia. It is they who helped mold me into who I am today, in conjunction to my own initiative.

At this moment, my family knows little about me and we have very little in common. Due to the long time I've been away from them, we have little in common these days, though I tried to come closer to them in my weak way.

LLM: If you had to choose, which writer[s] would you consider a mentor/mentors?

The late Chinua Achebe has been my long time indisputable mentor, I first read one of his works when I was in primary school, and I got really inspired

by his 1958 all-time famous work "Things Fall Apart". I've read Things Fall Apart countless times for fun as well as a literature from secondary school to the university.

LLM: How would you describe yourself using five words? I know it is not much but...

Modest, diligent, strict, honest and talkative.

LLM: Tell your fans two things about yourself they don't know.

There is a myth within my family that I'm the incarnation of a dead relative, and my mother once considered me a ghost. I was even considered by a hospital personal as the man without a heart. Putting some of these scenario together make my writing some how interesting. Hoop! I give them three instead of two.

Let's talk books.

LLM: What books have most influenced your life/career most?

My life is shaped by my reading habit, and as I said early on, people in my family cannot read and write. I differentiate myself from them by teaching myself how to read and write. And these are few of the book that have impact my life greatly:

- **The Bible:** I usually seek the Bible to quench my spiritual thirst.
- **Up From Slavery;** by Booker T. Washington. This 1901 autobiography laid the foundation to my resistance to bullies

in the Sierra Leonean society, and became my inspiration for the pursuit of education, like Washington, most part of my schooling was done outside the learning institution itself.

- **Things Fall Apart;** by Chinua Achebe. This all time bestseller became the spectrum through which I see the White Man imprint on my life and the African life as a whole. It is the catalyst which I used to sharpen myself to confront the White Man ideology through learning.

LLM: Who is/are your favorite Liberian author[s] and what strikes you about their work[s]?

At this moment, I have no specific Liberian author in mind, and that is the main reason why I started attempting to get to know other Liberians who share the same passion like me. I've been away from the Liberian society for so long that I'm nearly marginalized from my culture. My attempt is an effort for a U-turn.

LLM: Have you collaborated with a Liberian author before on a project? If so which project?

Until recently, I have never collaborated with any Liberian author in my writing adventure, but that is something that I'm working toward nowadays.

Have you considered/would you like to work with other Liberian authors? What possible areas would you consider collaborating on?

Working with other people who share one passion makes the working process rather fun, and I'm looking forward to work with many Liberian writers as possible. Since I'm at the starter stage of writing, I need to be among the writing moguls in the industry, especially in the area of fiction writing.

Do you have a specific writing style?

I think as a narrator, I'm amuse to use the narrative style, especially in the project that I have at hand since it involve describing events that are real, the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars.

How do you develop your plots and characters?

The projects I have at hand involve events that are real so it was easy for me to develop the characters. In some of my fictional works which are still at the initial stage, I tried to lay out the plan in a random format without following a specific sequence. Since my writing is greatly inspire by my own life event, my main characters are some kind of avatars to myself, or somebody with similar background.

Tell us about your protagonist[s]/antagonist[s]? Did you draw from real people?

Yes, in the project at hand, the key players are drawn from real life. Some are already dead while others are still among us.

LLM: What inspired you to write -Wailing From the Bleeding Nations; The Result of a Lunatic War?

“Wailing from the Bleeding Nations” is about the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts of the 90s. It is one of the stories from a first person narrative that try to explain some of the happening in the conflicts. My inspiration came to it climax when I read a memoir about the Sierra Leonean conflict that was a total lie, yet people who know little about what happen in the country saw the book as a work well done. I’m deliberately not going to name the book, because I don’t want to encourage any good person to buy another piece of lie. What a shame to the writer! On the other hand, my life story is part of my inspiration, and I believe that through my writing, I’m creating a legacy for my country to remember me when I’m long gone.

LLM: How did you come up with the title? Why that one?

“Wailing from the Bleeding Nations; The result of Lunatic War” is the second book in the Wailing from the Bleeding Nations series, the first been “The Battlefield where the War isn’t Planned” which was hastily published in 2013. I’m trying right now to redraw the book from the market in order to work on it again. As the title

implies, the book tells the story of countries that are bleeding. We all know that Liberia is crying and bleeding in the heart; from the impact of the civil instabilities, corruption, and now Ebola issue, you name it. This title was chosen from a bunch of suggested titles because it portrays the real picture of event in Liberia and Sierra Leone and Africa as a whole.

LLM: How much of the book is realistic?

Well, that is one of the reasons why I’m recalling my first book from the market. Almost everything I wrote about is real. I’ve been having difficulty in deciding how much of a real event should be said about people, most of all those that are still alive. When I started writing, I was zero tolerance about blending fiction with reality, but after the first book was out, some people who stories happened to enter the book started picking on me, saying it was their private life and I had no right to talk about things, which they did in the past. Most of all, some of the ex-ULIMO-K or J fighters who are now trying to distance themselves from their brutal lives style from the past want me to vanish from the face of the earth right now, but since there is no more war, and I’m far from their locality, that will not happen easily.

LLM: Are experiences based on someone you know, or events in your own life?

Yes, if we take the project at hand into consideration, my

experience and the experience of other key characters in the book are base on real life and people I knew. I lived with some of them: From the NPFL in Liberia, to the RUF and the SL Army in Sierra Leone, from members of the ULIMO that was created in Sierra Leone, to the Kamajor, and AFRC junta that took over the country, to name but a few.

LLM: What was the hardest part of writing this book?

Completing a chapter and finding the right words to channel the idea on paper is the hardest part in my writing. Sometimes I will envision a plot, but to pen it down in a readable way will take me days or even weeks, rewriting over and over before I could finally get it right. Sometimes I will tries to fit a plot into a slot, but adjusting nearby texts to synchronize with the plot will turns into a daylong task. Another problem is when to end a chapter and what to include in the finish plot in order to save space.

LLM: What was your favorite chapter (or part) to write and why?

Wow, my favorite chapter! I’ve never thought about this until now. But actually, there are many parts in my book that are somehow favorite. As a narrator, I try to distribute a kind of interesting readability across the whole book through my style of writing. I think the plot of the love story in chapter two, which is a story in a story, is somehow interesting for me. I

love it because the way the love story came to the stage when we were in the middle of something totally contrary to love, was a planned act and well executed, a sign that in the midst of all the chaos, there is still the sense of human within us that can easily be distracted. What a beautiful narration!

LLM: Would you change anything in your books? What and why?

Yea, I have to change names of people in order to keep their identities. I want to decrease the size of the book for portable readability.

LLM: What book[s] are you reading now?

Since I'm currently studying at the university, I'm reading varieties of book, mostly philosophical thoughts and those that are related to Human Rights; like "Inventing Human Rights" by Lynn Hunt, The History of Human Rights, by Machelaine R. Ishay, and few other.

LLM: Are there any new authors that have grasped your interest?

Not really, I've not thought of that, but I will start looking around now.

LLM: Is there anything you find particularly challenging in your writing?

As a new writer, getting the support to promote my work, has been really challenging.

Writing as a whole is not just about putting word on paper, the idea need to be fine tune by professionals in order to create a beautiful reading experience. Since hiring a professional editor is rather expensive, it makes my task as a writer really challenging since I don't have such finance to put into my work as a student.

LLM: Do you have to travel much concerning your book(s)?

Since the story I'm writing about is a past event that I happened to witness myself, I've not actually engage in a long travel for the work.

LLM: Who designed the covers?

The Cover of Wailing From the Bleeding Nations; The Battlefield where the War isn't Planned was designed by a Swedish designer by the name of "Johanna Ingvarsson, but since "The result of a Lunatic War" is still in the production, I've not yet decide what the cover might be.

LLM: Do you have any advice for other writers?

Writing is more like a passion, and it is the medium through which we can freeze time and space. Writing is beautiful; it is one of the ways through which we can spread our thoughts and travel to places that we might not be able to go in real life.

I believe that everybody has something to tell, and the best

way to increase our audience is through writing. It is the only way in which our history will be told to reflect our very life. Other people have been molding our history and literatures for so long. Therefore, I encourage every Liberian writer to keep doing what he or she does best, be it poem, short play, fiction or even real life story. The glory of our hard work will surely come to pass.

LLM: What are the greatest challenges for a Liberian writer especially in terms of publishing, distributing and promotion, in just getting out there?

Surely As a Liberian, I believe the same challenges that I'm facing are affecting some other Liberian writers as well. Support: Many of us don't have the support to keep on with the task. However, sometimes we try to aim too high. Writing as a whole is not something that will bring us plenty of wealth overnight, so we need to think of it as a mere work of passion, and those who can do other jobs on the side should do it. However, with the introduction of the Internet, there are many possible ways for us to make our voice hear in one way or the other through writing.

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

Well, I've not set anything like that yet, my first work was publish in haste and I've

discovered some issue with it so I'm about to remove it from the market in order to do a fine tune. I want my work to reach high standard this time because the story is my legacy that need to reach perfection.

LLM: What are your current projects?

Wailing from the Bleeding Nations is a series, and as I said before, I'm recalling the first book while working on the second. In other words, I'm crafting three books at the same time to complete the task.

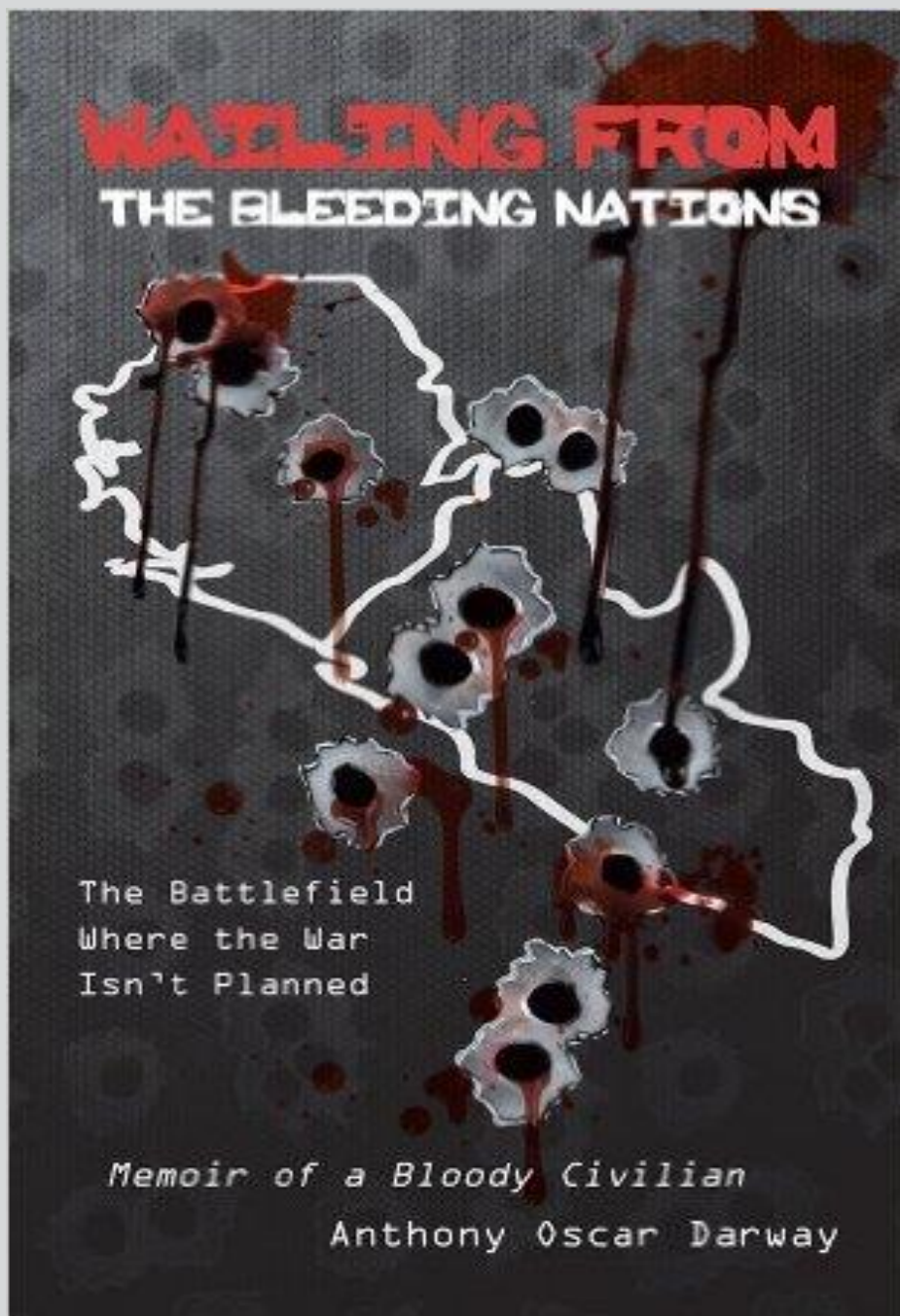
LLM: Could you share a little of your current work with us?

Sure. While I'm working on the final edition of the second book, I've decided to actually publish section of the book on my website from each chapter for review.

I encourage interested readers to visit my website to read part of the plot while the book is in the making. The address of the site is:
<http://wailingnations.se/>

LLM: Do you have anything specific that you want to say to your readers?

Writing as a whole is not easy, just as every other thing in life. I know some people might not agree with me on some of the issue in my narration, those people, I reason with them, but the best way to read such



narration, is to see yourself as a neutral person. I'm doing my best to remove your real names but I can't promise to change the structure of my story.

Those people who were once rebels in the ULIMO, Kamajor or even the junta military who action affected my life, I will still talk about it as it happen,

in order to teach a lesson that we can't hide from our deeds.

I encourage everybody, especially those Liberians and Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora who never know what actually happen on the ground to read my work, it's the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean legacy.

The Lone Star Forever

Edwin Barclay

[First stanza]

When freedom raised
Her glowing form
On Montserrado's
Verdant height,
She set within the
Dome of night, midst
Lowering skies and
Thunderstorm,
the star of liberty!

[Refrain]

The lone star
Forever! The lone star
Forever, O long may it
Float o'er land and
O'er sea; desert it?
No, never! Uphold it?
Forever! O shout for the
Lone starred banner, All Hail!

[Second stanza]

And seizing from
The waking morn, its
Burnished shield of
Golden flame, she lifted
It in her proud name, and
Roused a nation long
Forlorn, to nobler Destiny!

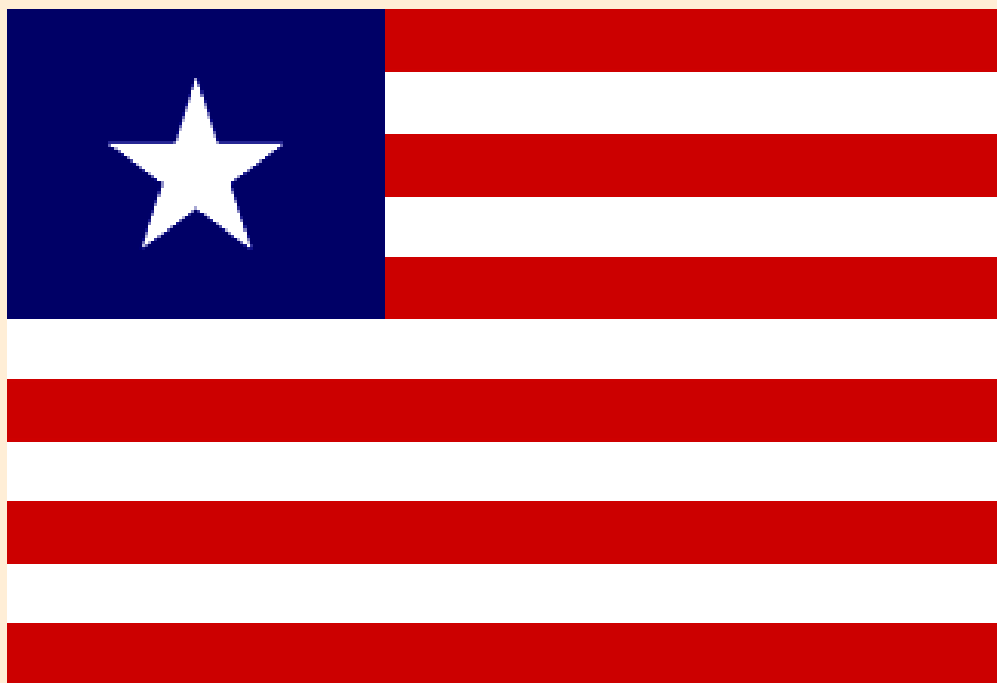
[Third stanza]

Then speeding in her course along
The broad Atlantic's
Golden strand, she woke
Reverberant through
The land a nation's loud
Triumphant song,
The Song of liberty!
And o'er Liberia's altar fires
She wide the lone-starred
flag unfurled,
Proclaimed to an expectant
world, the birth of Africa's
sons and sires,
the birth of Liberty!

The Liberia's national flag is called "LONE STAR". It was officially presented and accepted on August 24, 1847 by a committee lead by the dynamic Susannah Lewis. The eleven horizontal stripes represent the signers of the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Liberia;

Symbolism:

The blue field symbolizes the 'dark' continent of Africa; the five-pointed white star represents Liberia as the first "independent republic" on the continent of Africa; the red designates "valor"/the blood shed; the white, "purity"/peace; and the blue, "fidelity".



Experimentation vs. Exploitation: Is Liberia A Garbage Garage?

The rights of our people are again violated and trampled upon through a well-organized scheme of international conspiracy. The high-rate of illiteracy, ignorance, and gullibility in our society has been taken advantage off once more. We know what is unfolding behind the scenes. Our people have been overlooked and humiliated again due to acute deprivation and destitution. Poverty has made them choiceless, defenseless, helpless and powerless. Nothing seems more important to them right now other than survival, even if their livelihood is endangered. Hardship is leading them into an abyss of misery and mediocrity.

After almost two centuries of nationhood, Liberia still remains a land of vulnerability and susceptibility. After more than sixteen decades of sovereignty, its citizens are exposed to visible dangers and huge risks. This West African County is becoming a trashcan and garbage-ground for foreign experimentation and exploitation. I wonder sometimes whether Liberia is really Africa's first Independent State. It is disappointing and disastrous to be growing in age and declining in socio-economic strength especially at a time when small countries like Namibia, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, etc. are marching forward.

When Africans did not have any option to shape their own destiny, Liberia became a beacon of freedom and liberty. The self-determination of Liberians was a source of continental courage,

motivation, and inspiration for most Africans who were undergoing unjust treatments as a result of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. Our country was seen as a shining star during its formative era of autonomy. It is no longer the case now as our nation has become a laughingstock in West Africa and beyond. Judging from prevailing indicators, Liberia is now a global 'Recycle Bin' where waste products are sent for storage and repackaging or refashioning for reuse.

It is worth knowing that many Sovereign States in Africa got their independence from their colonial masters as a result of Liberia's lustrous legacy. Our nation and its citizenry are going through perilous times especially when other countries are making mammoth progress in terms of socio-economic and political development. Why must it always be Liberia? The myriad of undue and inhumane treatments against Liberians by foreigners is alarming and if we fail to resist these noticeable injustices, we stand to endanger our collective destiny as a nation and people.

Liberia today is the leading transit point for drugs trafficking and all forms of human rights abuses in Africa. The country's renewable and non-renewable resources are heavily exploited by foreign investment companies without genuine impact made to eradicate poverty, ignorance and disease. Our nation has become a dumpsite of expired goods.

Some of our citizens are dying every day as a result of substandard drugs and food brought from abroad. Is it wrong to become a nation of hospitality, always willing to promote mutual partnership through trade and commerce? Many of our **foreign partners** are misusing our mutual alliance and taking advantage of

our current economic limitation to massively exploit us. This cruel act is unfair and does not conform to minimum international standards of protecting human rights and dignity.

The recent launch of two Ebola trial vaccines in Liberia has raised sharp concerns about the safety and protection of Liberians. There are many questions than answers about these two vaccines especially during a time when panic and fear are invading our society. On Monday, February 02, 2015, Researchers and Scientists under the banner Partnership for Research on Ebola Vaccines (PREVAIL) began a trial of experimental Ebola vaccines at the Redemption Hospital in New Town.

The optimism of Liberians to expel Ebola is high, but this must not be used as an alibi to institute unwarranted approach of conducting ill-procedural clinical trial and experimentation in Liberia. We are totally against any clinical trial or experimentation that tends to risk the livelihood of our people in return for cash. The real motive behind this experimental exercise needs to be made known because there are still conflicting explanations about these two vaccines.

However, these are critical and alarming concerns of public interest that PREVAIL must address in a more accurate, adequate, and timely manner:

1. Why were these two vaccines launched in Liberia even though Sierra Leone and Guinea are the current hotspots for Ebola transmission?
2. Why PREVAIL did not follow WHO Standard Operating Procedures for conducting

- clinical trial vaccines or experimentation?
3. Why must Liberia be the primary target when it currently has few or no Ebola cases remaining?
 4. Why is PREVAIL administering two shots of syringes or doses at once on a single volunteer?
 5. What medical guarantee or insurance do participants or volunteers of these vaccines have?
 6. Before launching these trial vaccines on Monday, February 02, 2015, why didn't PREVAIL conduct a nationwide awareness and sensitization exercise to fully educate citizens about the merits and demerits of these trial vaccines?
 7. What is the real motive or rationale for providing compensation package (\$40USD) for volunteers?
 8. Did the Liberian government along with the trial vaccine team conduct joint investigation and verification about the safety and effect of these vaccines before launching them?
 9. Why must each of the vaccines contain a small portion of the Ebola virus? How safe is this?
 10. According to researchers, the vaccines may cause side effects such as pain, redness, fever, headaches, mouth sores, tiredness, muscle and joint pain, and loss of appetite. Who takes full medical responsibility for these potential side effects?
 11. Does PREVAIL have pre and post counseling mechanisms in place to mitigate psychological imbalances?
 12. Has the government of Liberia established the safety and efficacy of these vaccines? If yes, where and how? If no, why?
 13. The Partnership for Research on Ebola Vaccines (PREVAIL) is selecting healthy volunteers above 18 years old who have no previous history of Ebola infection. Why is PREVAIL not focusing on Ebola survivors?
 14. Why were these vaccines not tested first in Canada and Great Britain since they are the key manufacturers?
 15. What is the statistical significance of experimenting Ebola trial vaccines in Liberia since researchers have said the trial may not have the statistical power needed to show whether the shots work?
 16. What does Liberia stand to benefit if this ongoing clinical trial and experimentation of these two Ebola vaccines becomes successful?

Even though we appreciate the hard work of scientists and researchers to help put an end to this fatal epidemic in Liberia and West Africa, but our ultimate concern is the safety and protection of our people. A single life lost during this process of experimentation can never be restored or revived even by the greatest scientist or researcher currently on earth.

The same procedures and methods researchers and scientists usually follow in the USA, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, and other advanced countries to administer trial vaccines must be abided by and given due consideration as well in Liberia. Scientists cannot practice medical due diligence in developed nations and go contrary to those same proficient practices in underdeveloped countries. This unjust act is equivalent to monumental hypocrisy and global deception.

The collaboration of countries around the world must be based on mutual fairness and justice. Do not exploit us because you are giving us aids and grants! Our lives are equally important like yours. Therefore, \$40USD must not be a reward for risking our survival and safety. Fifty-six Million United States Dollar (US\$56m) cannot even be a cash prize for a single life. Discrimination, marginalization, and exploitation are yet too far from coming to an end even though there are universal laws prohibiting these anti-social deeds.

Let it be clearly known to all of our people that these two trial vaccines are risky with life-threatening effects. It is the primary duty of PREVAIL to inform Liberians about the disadvantages of these vaccines. It is the right of our people to know. The cAd3-EBOZ, which was co-developed by NIAID scientists and GlaxoSmithKline in Great Britain, uses a chimpanzee-derived cold virus to deliver Ebola virus genetic material from the Zaire strain of virus causing the outbreak in Liberia. The other trial vaccine, VSV-ZEBOV, which was developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada and licensed to NewLink Genetics Corp., employs vesicular stomatitis virus, an animal virus

that primarily affects cattle, to carry an Ebola virus gene segment.

Trial vaccines are not administered in America, Britain, Canada or any developed country without thorough medical investigation, evaluation, and authorization. In order for food, drugs and trial vaccines to be consumed by citizens of America and other countries, they must be duly approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research is the branch of the FDA responsible for ensuring the safety and efficacy of biological therapeutic agents. These include blood and blood products, vaccines, allergenic, cell and tissue-based products, and gene therapy products.

Before trial vaccines are administered in any country, researchers or scientists must satisfy all legitimate requirements or procedures. Unfortunately, this did not happen in the case of Liberia. This is why there are more disbeliefs, doubts, and suspicions about these two Ebola trial vaccines. Our friends from across the Atlantic Ocean need to understand that Liberia is not a garbage garage, neither is it a global 'recycle bin'. Liberia as a sovereign nation is not a wasteland where anyone does anything without following appropriate international measures and principles. We hope this will be the end of exploitation and ill-procedural experimentation in Liberia. It is time to respect the rights of all human beings regardless of socio-economic status or geographical background. Liberians deserve maximum safety and security like all creatures on earth. We are not semi-creatures neither are we secondary beings!

In order to avert further exploitations in Liberia, I recommend that acts of legislation be passed to establish the following agencies or departments of government and citizens be sent for advanced training in these areas of specialties:

1. Food and Drug Agency
2. Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research
3. Center for Drugs Evaluation and Research
4. Center for Food Safety and Nutrition

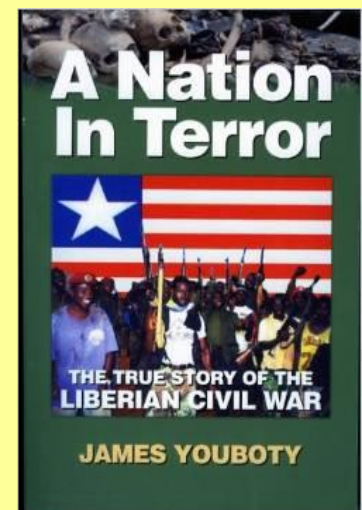
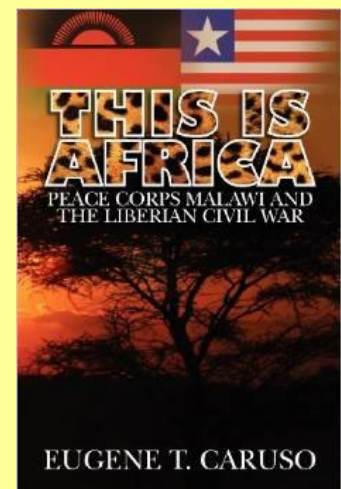
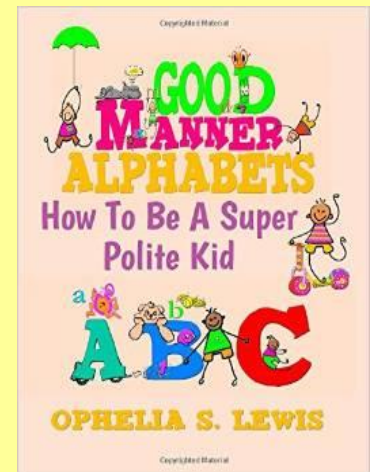
I am confident that if these measures are instituted, it will certainly lead to promoting a safe, healthy, and secured Liberia where the livelihood of citizens will no longer be endangered.

Above all interests, Liberia is Supreme.

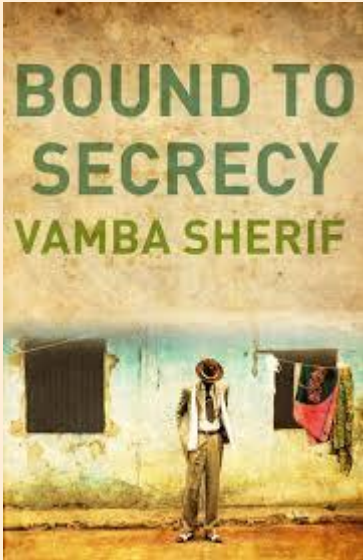


Martin K. N. Kollie is a Liberian youth activist, student leader, an emerging economist, and a young writer. He is currently a student at the University of Liberia reading Economics and a member of the Student Unification Party (SUP). His passion is to ensure a new Liberia of socio-economic equality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

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Book Review



Bound to Secrecy

Recently, I ordered a copy of writer Vamba Sherif's novel, *Bound to Secrecy*.

Originally published in Dutch, it was republished in English by London's *Hope Road Publishing* on April 23, 2015. Due either to the built-up fervor in me to sample the author's work—which until this book, had not been available in English, or perhaps because of the deceptive lure of the book's relatively short length—it is all of 162 pages, or both, I breezed through it in under three hours, in one sitting.

Just like that, I had assuaged my burning passion. Or so I had thought. For in no time, in my heart, a haunting sense of injustice replaced the vanquished passion.

The speed with which I had read the book robbed me of something important. I hadn't absorbed the essence of the literary brilliance contained in the compact volume. I resolved to read it again which I did over a whole week's time, albeit in a more methodical

fashion. For this second effort, I underlined passages, took notes of characters' actions and inactions, and digested the story and its profound implications much more deeply, with a lot more cognizance.

Alas, I am the better for it!

Sherif's *Bound to Secrecy* is a gem in the tradition of the great African novels of times past. From the beginning of the story, when William Mawolo, the central character, arrives in Wologizi, to the very end, when he vanishes into thin air just like Tetese—the man whose disappearance he had come to investigate, the author is effortlessly silver-tongued in plotting the complicated ebbs and flows that lend pulsating urgency to the tale. He employs crisp, concise language to create in the reader, at once, an ever-present and intense sense of anxiety, exhilaration, optimism, and disenchantment. With this skillful use of language and incredible depth of thought, Sherif constructs a narrative that is as enthralling for its unrelenting hold on the reader as it is relevant for its message of the uncomfortable dynamics that characterize the imbalance of power in an African setting as remote and as steep in sorcery as his fictional Wologizi.

Exuding the easy eloquence of a well-practiced lyricist, Sherif chooses his words carefully, imploring each to sow seeds that develop into eventual contexts for understanding how power and all its attendant trappings are abused in Wologizi, which, to the astute reader, is not particularly unlike the realities of the not-too-distant history of Liberia, the country in which the fictional story is set.

Through shrewd examination of the strengths and weaknesses of characters such as William Mawolo, Hawah Lombeh, Old Kapu, Makemeh, Corporal Gamla,

and the ill-fated Tetese, Sherif succeeds, abundantly, in exposing the imperfections and susceptibilities of two distinct yet interconnected worlds: a world of an unmitigated 'civilized' rulership—to which William Mawolo belonged where even an honest desire to extinguish corrupt practices breeds further corruption,—and a world of servitude—even if not recognized as such by the oppressors and the oppressed—which is deeply rooted in a tradition of wizardry, in a place as remote and as unconnected as Wologizi. *Bound to Secrecy*, even as a fictional depiction, illustrates the destructive combustion that ensues when these opposing worlds collide. The book's lineal progression borders almost on the academic, but even that approach is appropriate for it provides a critical sense of predictability that is indispensable when weaving twists and turns of plots that are as complicated and shifting as Sherif so confidently ventured to undertake.

Bound to Secrecy is a 'must read.'

Bound to Secrecy,
by Vamba Sherif.
London: Hope Road
Publishing, 2015.
162 pages. Reviewed
by Momoh Sekou Dudu.



Momoh Sekou Dudu is the author of *Harrowing December*

The Order of the Pioneers of Liberia

D. Othniel Forte



There are several national medals given to deserving persons (citizens and non-citizens) by the Republic of Liberia. Below is the Most Venerable Order of Knighthood of the Pioneers of the Republic of Liberia (Order of the Pioneers of Liberia)

Order of the Pioneers of Liberia is a civil state distinction award that was established in 1955 under the presidency of William V.S. Tubman. The medal is awarded for outstanding contribution to both the citizens of Liberia, as well as foreigners. An honorary member of the Order may be granted to foreigners or to outstanding and deserving representatives of government, international organizations, religious communities, science, art and commerce, and for the individual merits or achievements, which constitute heroism or charity.

Degrees of the Order

The Order of Pioneers of Liberia is the third highest state award of the Republic of Liberia and is divided into five classes:

1. Great Banner (Grand Cordon)
2. Knight Commander (Knight Commander)
3. Commander (Commander)
4. Officer (Officer)
5. Knight (Knight)

Ribbon of the Order The ribbon of the Order is dark green. It is attached to the medallion.

Badge of the Order

The badge of the Order of the higher degree is increased (mean 64.6 mm) and made of gilded silver. In addition, the star arms are connected to eleven bundles of rays, and complete short balls. Contrast, the ring surrounding the medallion on the obverse is white. Badges at all levels are suspended from an oval laurel wreath.

Medal/Insignia



The Medal of the Order of the degree of knights and officers (mean 40 mm) is made of silver

star with the eleven, both sides enameled in white shoulders.

On the obverse side of the medallion right at its center is placed a round, enameled medallion, surrounded by a dark red/wine ring with inscriptions: "Here We Are • Here We Will Remain". In the middle of this, is the scene of Settlers (Pioneers) shaking hands and greeting under a tree with the Indigenous Chiefs they met on the land. These are set three colors- green blue and white".



On the reverse side of the light blue medallion is the imprint of the motto of the Seal of the Republic of Liberia with the inscription "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here." Inside of this is an imprint of a scroll with the title "Bill of Rights

.....###.....



Author Interview Spotlight



How did you come to know about/live in Liberia? When was your first contact?

“My wife Clarisa and I served as Catholic missionaries in Montserrado County, Liberia from 2008-2010. Our mission is named Liberia Mission Incorporated and it is located in Black Tom Town, Liberia. Our stateside organization is named Franciscan Works and is located in Chicago, Illinois.

My wife Clarisa is a native of Honduras, Central America and I met her while living in Honduras as a missionary from 2004 until 2008.

At the time Franciscan Works also had a mission in Honduras and this is where I was volunteering and living. We were married in Honduras in June of 2008 and left for Liberia shortly thereafter.

I found out about the mission in Liberia through them and had an interest in serving there. Obviously I knew about Liberia well before that because of the Civil Wars; however this was strictly through the media, news reports and newspapers.

How was life like? What were some of the cultural

shocks? Does any specific one come to mind?

“Honestly life was tough in Liberia, not just for Clarisa and I but more-so for the beautiful people of Liberia. I thought my 4 years of missionary experience in Honduras would have prepared me in some way for what Clarisa and I would encounter in Liberia but it didn’t. We had never seen poverty on such a complete and desperate level. Clarisa remarked one day that “these poor people don’t live in poverty, they live in misery.” Shortly after we arrived in Liberia we were walking through downtown Monrovia and we noticed a woman following us. She was a young girl, no more than 19 or 20 years old. She was carrying a baby and everywhere we went she followed about 10-15 feet behind us. At one point we stopped to navigate our way through the crowd and she ran up and placed her baby in Clarisa’s arms and said; “I beg you, please take my baby and raise her, she have a plenty good life with you!” Then she turned and ran away with Clarisa still holding the baby. I told Clarisa to stay where she was and I chased after the girl, finally catching her. I told her we couldn’t take her baby away from her that the baby deserved to have her as her mother. Thankfully several Liberians helped us bring her back to Clarisa who was still holding her baby. We gave her some small-small (money) and watched her disappear into the crowd. That was the moment I

realized how fractured and despondent Liberia was. That incident broke our hearts and made us vow to really fight and work for the children at our mission. To this day we still pray for that young lady and her baby, who would be about 7 years old now.

How did you adjust/cope with things? The people, culture, attitude colloquia etc.?

“We didn’t have time to really adjust; we just hit the ground running and threw ourselves into the daily work at the mission. Even though English is the official language of Liberia I had a very difficult time picking it up at first. My wife Clarisa is a native Spanish speaker, however she speaks fluent English and she told me one day, “I don’t understand what they are saying!” I told her, with a laugh, “Don’t worry! I am having a hard time as well!” We finally learned the vernacular and what “I beg you my good friend”, “How’s the body-o?”, “Where’s my weekend?”, and “Please, some small-small” meant. It took a while but we finally adjusted to the language. As far as the people of Liberia, that was easy, we love people, so loving the Liberians was not hard, but

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what really challenged us was that Liberians treat each other so badly at times. It was a very aggressive cultural and very steeped in folklore and “bush” religions, so the people were very “strong willed” and it came out in their interactions with one another.



Who is your favorite Liberian author[s] and what strikes you about their work[s]?

“Personally I loved ‘The House at Sugar Beach’ by Helene Cooper. For me it really captured the beauty and prosperity of Liberia and Monrovia before all of the calamities befell the country in 1980. Her and I are about the same age, so reading something from a contemporary about their native country really made an impact on me.”

Have you collaborated with a Liberian author before on a project? If so which project?
“No”

Have you considered/would you like to work with Liberian authors? What possible areas would you consider collaborating on? “I would LOVE too. I want to know more about the military campaign

‘Operation Octopus’ that Charles Taylor launched on Monrovia. I talked to so many people that lived through it and their stories are harrowing, to say the least.

What books have most influenced your life/career most? “I study religion a great deal. At the present time I work for the Catholic Church in the United States and I am also pursuing a Master’s Degree in Pastoral Ministry at the University of Dallas in Texas, so I find myself reading a lot of books that deal with God, spiritual insights and faith. Right now I am reading a book by Thich Nhat Hahn, he is a Buddhist monk and the book is named “Living Buddha, Living Christ.” So far it has made a profound impact on me. As well, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the Holy Bible are foundational to me, not just in my spiritual life but also my daily life. An author named Farnklin Foer wrote a book that was published in 2010 named “How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization.” This book I would suggest to anybody wanting a clearer and sometimes more humorous understanding of the world we live in!

If you had to choose, which writer would you consider a mentor? “It sounds cliché to list authors such as Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck as mentors, but it is true. Their style has been so ingrained in the psyche of Western

Literature it is hard to get away from them. There is an author in Texas named Stephen Harrigan that I love. He wrote a book named, “The Gates of the Alamo” about 10 years ago that was probably the best historical fiction I have ever read. It’s imagery and voice was so authentic and dimensional. It truly put the reader into the pages of that book and made them a part of the story. I really appreciate that style of writing.

Do you recall how your interest in writing originated? “I am a storyteller more than I am a writer and at the essence of any book is somebody who had a desire to tell a story. I truly felt a ‘calling’ to tell our story of our experiences in Liberia and so I did, the good, the bad and the in-between.

Do you have a specific writing style? “No, but I do like telling stories that are authentic and taking an established storyline and/or plot and using my creativity to build around it. I guess you could list me as a narrative writer that uses a great deal of latitude when recounting a story.”

How do you develop your plots and characters?

See above

Tell us about your protagonist[s]/antagonist[s]? Did you draw from real people? “Everybody and everything in ‘Memoirs of a Reluctant Servant’ existed and happened in front of my eyes and history. It is as raw and real as a story comes.

What inspired you to write Memoirs of a Reluctant Servant: Two Years of Triumph and Sorrow in Liberia, Africa?

“The children of Liberia and Liberia Mission Incorporated were the main inspiration. They had a great fortitude and will to survive and create a better country, and even more they had a very ample ability to forgive. They were my main inspiration. The book is in honor of them, after all it isn’t just my story or my wife’s story, it is THEIR story as well, and truthfully that is the most important aspect of the book.”

How did you come up with the title? Why that one? “I was very reluctant to serve in Africa, especially after having arrived in Liberia. I simply didn’t think I had it in me to last 2 weeks much less 2 years, however I did, so I truly was a ‘reluctant servant.’

How much of the book is realistic? “100%...it all happened, and the story needed to be told. The opinion of Liberia and Liberians in general around the world is less than favorable. People can’t even locate it on a map. When I tell people I lived in Liberia they ask, ‘Oh, weren’t you afraid of Khadaffi?’ I tell them no Khadaffi was 2,000 miles away in North Africa in LIBYA!’ They just look at me because it just doesn’t register with them. So the book had to be 100% authentic because Liberia and her people deserve to be known, they deserve global respect, if not for any other reason than to know

where the country exists on a map.”



Are other experiences based on someone you know, or events in your own life?

“No”

What was the hardest part of writing this book? “Having to relive some of the terrible tragedies and deaths Clarisa and I encountered while in the country. It was very difficult walking myself back through those moments, because they had to become REAL again. I had to re-experience every emotion and feeling as though it was happening for the first time. That helped make the book ‘real’, but it came at a great emotional toll in regards to myself, but it was worth it.

What was your favorite chapter (or part) to write and why?

“The final chapter that dealt with our last days in Liberia and the closeness we had with our children at the mission. I talk about how the hugs became a little bit longer and more sincere and how we really made an effort to spend as much time with all of the children as we did. As I type the answer to your question I feel myself being taken back to the

mission, so many memories are flooding back to me at this moment and I am smiling. That is the power of love.”

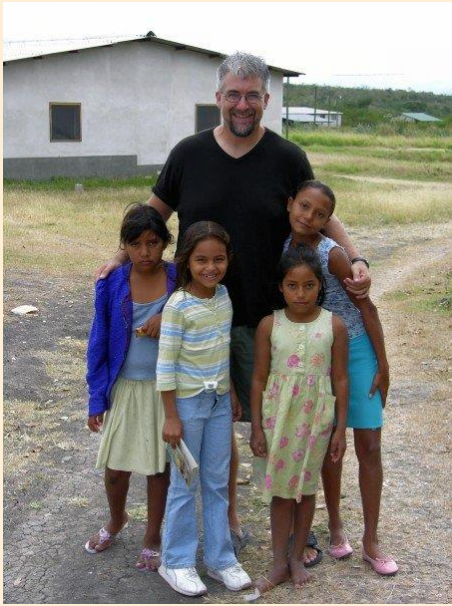
Would you change anything in your book[s]? What and why? “I wish I had told a few more stories. I left good 80-100 pages on the floor. I wished I had covered the history of Liberia a little more in-depth, but I think everybody looks back and says this. Ask a musician after an album is released to the public if they would have changed anything and invariably they almost always say ‘yes.’ So, sure there are some things I wish I would have added, but overall I am very satisfied with the book because it tells the story that not only I wanted to tell, but NEEDED to be told.”

Is there anything you find particularly challenging in your writing?

“Yes, not being so lazy! I need to motivate myself to really become a serious and more dedicated writer. I am working on a project right now and I need to give it more attention.”

Do you have to travel much concerning your book(s)?

“Yes I have. I have spoken around the United States about my book and our mission, mostly at colleges and high schools and also as well at churches. It has been great to receive so much positive feedback on it and as well getting the exposure for our mission in Liberia.”



Who designed the covers? “I actually took the photograph that appears on the cover and it was my idea to have the children in black and white and the Liberian flag in color. I thought it gave the message that while things may not be so great in Liberia right now; the lone star of the republic will always shine bright. The art department at the publishing company came up with the other graphics and type fonts.”

What was the hardest part of writing your book?

Answered a few questions above!

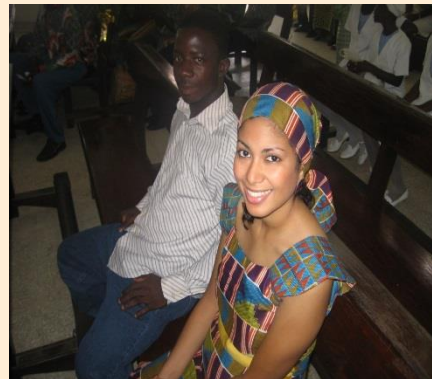
Do you have any advice for other writers?

“Write about what is passionate to YOU! Be true to yourself, be true to your intent and never, for any reason, sell yourself or your art out for a price. Writing isn’t about making money, it is about making the world a better place through education, insight and passion.”

Do you consider writing as a career/hobby? “Right now, having a full time job as well as being a university student, it is a hobby. But one day!!!! (ha ha)”

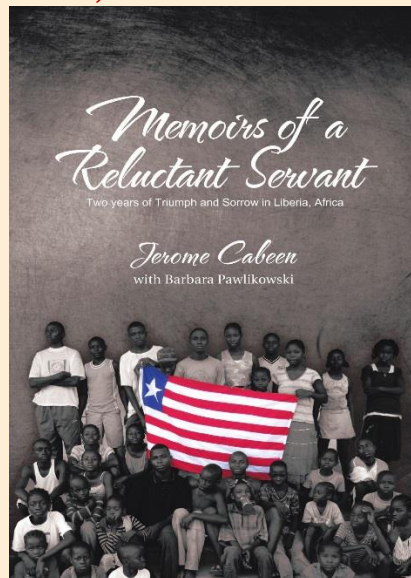
What book[s] are you reading now?

“Living Buddha, Living Christ”, “Tao Te Ching”, and an incredible young author from Central America named Sebastian Chavarria, his book is named “Mi NovioDetras de La Web.”



Are there any new authors that have grasped your interest?

“Yes, the one I referred to above, Sebastian Chavarria. He



has an incredible future as an author. I love the simplistic, yet intuitive style he writes in.”

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

“Right now there is nothing specific scheduled for me. However I am constantly promoting my book through its FACEBOOK page

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Memoirs-of-a-Reluctant-Servant/170781402976204?fref=ts>

What are your current projects? “I have a couple of projects that are off the ground, however I need to attend to them more diligently. Writing is a funny thing, sometimes it is your best friend and other times the pen is your worst enemy.”

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Thank you for taking time and responding to our questions. We hope wish you well in your endeavors.



Kuluba's Korner

Hi Everyone! Welcome to Kuluba's Korner.

My passion for the Arts, Writing, Empowering and Motivating is who I am. While I am not an Advice Columnist...I hope you're enlightened and at times, simply put your feet up and chuckle or may we be forced to THINK!!!.

In this corner, the shift is not to scare you, but to endear or cheer you up. When necessary, we'll make wakeup calls; offer up advice to enhance our lives or enable us to become an extension of ourselves in service to others.

However, since I believe in the brutal honesty of truth [as I see it], I might just step on some toes. In such case, just remember, it is in good faith and not intended to offend. The underlining hope is to help make this world a better place using social media. Since I believe social network is a wonderful medium to inspire. I'm going to try and do just that.

Enjoy the ride. ~ KLM



...because it happens more than we realize. Dream and aspire...but be contented where you are. That comes with living in the moment. Water your own grass. Nothing is ever what it seems... *that doesn't necessarily come with a negative connotation, either. Create a story you actually LOVE and have FUN taking part in. Put a song in your heart. Don't compare your behind the scenes or start-up to someone else's highlight reel. You don't know their journey. Be PINK with Happy...not GREEN with Envy. Be a fountain...not a drain. Be a ray of sunshine...not a rain cloud.

Happy comes from within. Not anyone else's job. The race is not given to the swift or strong. Live YOUR best life. It wasn't meant to resemble anyone else's.

[#IamMySistersKeeper](#)

Just "K" ✍

I THINK I
THINK TOO
MUCH.

By Kuluba Mucorlor

Liberian Proverbs

A fly that has no one to advice it, follows the corpse into the grave. Some people end up in trouble because they don't know any better or heed bad counsel.

A frog has no teeth, but if you put your hand in his mouth, it will bite down. If you take advantage of the weak, one day they end up fighting back.

A full stomach does not last overnight. Nothing lasts forever, be it good times or bad times, one-day it comes to an end.

A hungry traveler will eat even a fig tree to keep him from starving. Some situations in life force/cause us to do things we would not normally do.

A happy mouth can't blow a fire. Two thing can't occupy a space at the same time.

A love from the heart can be read on the face. True love can be seen, felt from afar. It is in the actions and deeds of the person who loves.

A man does not wander far from where his corn is roasting. We protect the things and people we love dearly at all cost, even if it means doing things we do not like.

A man that does not provide food for his family does not really want to eat. A lazy man only starves his family.

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***Democracy or
Autocracy? Why I was
Slapped and Chased by
EPS Officers in front of
President Ellen Johnson-
Sirleaf***

Martin K. N. Kollie

Our unwavering agenda for a new Liberia of inclusion, equality, justice, and freedom is tied to a famous quotation by Martin Luther King, Jr., which says “our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Our conviction is driven by an irreversible spirit of patriotism and loyalty to our fellow countrymen.

The change we are yearning for today in Liberia is possible, but only through honest and frank engagements with higher-ups.

After campaigning for three (3) weeks, justifying why it was meaningless for Liberians across the fifteen political subdivisions and beyond to celebrate the 168th Independence Day of Liberia, a team of loyal militants and national patriots was dispatched by the ever-potent Vanguard Student Unification Party (SUP) to Greenville, Sinoe County on July 25, 2015.

Our mission to Southeastern Liberia, specifically Sinoe County was to reinforce our clarion call for Liberians to boycott programs marking this year’s Independence Day festival.

Surely, we did accomplish this mission. As a team of loyal patriots whose ultimate interest is to promote inclusive change, we had two principal objectives, namely:

1. To distribute hundreds of releases from SUP, outlining genuine reasons why it was

worthless to celebrate Liberia’s 168th birth anniversary.

2. To institute a peaceful protest action by sending out a clear message to those in authority that Liberians have had enough and it was time for paradigm shift.

Nothing could easily bewilder our determination and moisten our courage from accomplishing these two paramount objectives. The comrades knew very well that there can be no change without genuine action. As a result of this, they became increasingly zealous and passionate about pushing a common agenda for a new Liberia.

The journey from Monrovia through Grand Bassa and River Cess to Sinoe County was really a tough one, but we had a national mandate to carry out. The bumpy roads, horrifying forest, narrow bridges, and gloomy weather could not easily prevent us from reaching our final destination. As we embarked on this worthy expedition, we knew this mission would have never been an easy one.

The motherland was on our heart; as a result, risking our lives through perilous paths did not really matter. Certainly, we had a duty to discharge for the common good of our people, especially those who have been subjected to all forms of inhumane treatments since 2006.

The urgency for a new beginning in Liberia became our source of inspiration as we gallantly proceed to Sinoe County.

While we cautiously drove through Grand Bassa and River Cess Counties, we kept reflecting on one question “What has our Nation achieved since 1847?” Scenes from these two counties were too chilling and scaring to comprehend.

After 168 years of sovereign existence, nothing has really

changed. Instead of moving forward, Liberians are moving backward. Vast majority of our people still live in shacks and drink from creeks.

Life in Southeastern Liberia is no different from life in hell. Our people are really living in serious torment as their leaders continue to embezzle millions. Access to quality education, safe drinking water, electricity, good roads, transportation, better housing, employment, improved sanitation, commerce, health care, social security, and other basic services are far from reaching Southeasterners. Hardship is the order of the day!

Hunting, fishing, farming, motorbike riding, hard labor, mining, petit trading, etc. are compelling ventures in Southeastern Liberia. When will our people condition improve? As we approached Sinoe County, these sickening views and existing realities even provoked our resolve to march on with our plan. We were convinced that it was time to say TRUTH to POWER. The longstanding suffering of people rekindled our audacity to challenge the POWER that BE.

On Sunday morning, July 26, 2015, we finally arrived in Greenville City, Sinoe County in a sleepy, but yet exciting mood. We were welcomed by comrades of like minds and some citizens who were also thirsty for a just and equal Liberia. It will interest you to know that we did not even pay a cent for food and hotel bills until our departure from Sinoe County. We were well taken care of by citizens of Sinoe and Grand Kru Counties for almost three (3) days. This shows how desperate our people are for a new Liberia.

Upon our arrival, we were invited to speak to citizens, especially the young people of Sinoe County at the Intellectual

Forum. Even though some of them knew our mission in Sinoe, but most of them did not know. As a leader of the planned protest, I was able to convince most of them to join us the next day. I spoke to them as though that day was my last day of speaking on earth. While recounting the failures of President Sirleaf and past regimes, I did provide twenty-three (23) genuine reasons why it was useless to celebrate Liberia's 168th Independence Day. Momentarily, I could see the reawakening of their spirit to act.

During this interval, I spoke to Alpha D. Senkpeni of Frontpage Africa and other Journalists in Sinoe County about the meaningless nature of celebrating Independence Day under a corrupt and cruel government. After this brief interview, I got an invitation from the Acting Station Manager of Voice of Sinoe 88.3FM to further justify our call for a boycott. The radio program was to be held at 7:30pm.

When time came for me to appear, I was told by the Acting Station Manager that President Sirleaf was about to speak to the people of Sinoe County. This was a smart attempt by the Press Office of Madam Sirleaf to prevent us from spreading our campaign. We could not blame the Station Manager because we knew his action was driven by big-shots. This abrupt and unjust adjustment even made us more courageous to hold series of consultations with opinion leaders and citizens in Sinoe County before Monday, July 27, 2015.

The momentum of celebrating Independence Day in Sinoe County was very poor. Our message for citizens to boycott was spreading very fast. On one occasion, I heard an elderly man saying "there is nothing to celebrate." Loyal militants of SUP and

progressive forces were dogmatic about sending a clear message to dishonest public trustees. We told our people never to celebrate with those subjecting them to socio-economic misery and acute hardship.

As the hour approached for revolutionaries and ideologues of SUP to stand up in the faces of oppressive characters, we knew there would have been resistance from economic migrants and elite elements. Our conviction was deeply entrenched in a better future for all Liberians. One thing we knew very well was that change will never come if someone does not act. There is nothing more costly than keeping quiet in the face of injustice and inequality.

As the clock ticks towards the main day of the celebration, protesters were already in full readiness to express their dissatisfaction through peaceful means. During the night hours in Greenville City particularly at 4:00am, I woke up in my lonely room and began to inscribe our ideas on poster sheets. While preparing for the protest action on Monday, July 27, 2015, two questions kept flowing through my mind:

1. What can we do to ensure a new Liberia of equality and justice for ALL?
2. When will we put an end to poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease in Liberia?

The day finally came for us to accomplish our mandate. Since the official program was to begin at 11:00am, we made it our duty to arrive at the City Hall by 7:30am in order to bypass stringent security protocols. We (Peaceful Protestors) enthusiastically stood with our placards/poster sheets in front of

the J. Dominic Bing City Hall. As prominent citizens, government officials, international guests, journalists, and civil society actors were arriving, our hands were high up with our placards calling for equal opportunities for ALL. Some of the inscriptions on the placards were:

1. Liberians are dying from Poverty
2. Corruption is a vampire
3. When will change come?
4. Education is a mess
5. Stop taking our land by force
6. They lied to us and abused us
7. When will 'PAPA' come?
8. Twelve (12) wasted years
9. Equal Citizenship, Equal Opportunities, etc.

While protesting, we were distributing hundreds of releases from SUP to citizens and onlookers. These releases were meant to further justify our action by informing Liberians about how meaningless it was to celebrate Independence Day under a corrupt and self-seeking hegemony. Few minutes after, some aggrieved workers of Golden Veroleum and few students from Sinoe County joined us to protest as well. While standing with our placards, the presidential convoy passed without stopping. During this interval, two (2) police vehicles with ERU officers were directly packing opposite us. They could not resist us, because our action was in harmony with the law.

When President Sirleaf knew the protest was gaining momentum, she came back to meet with us. The President knew deep down within herself that what we were portraying on those placards were nothing, but the truth. President

Sirleaf said “why are you guys protesting?” As the leader of the protest, I told Madam President in her face that we are protesting because her government has failed the Liberian people. My response to President Sirleaf was very respectful. My mood was moderate. These were my words to Madam President on Monday, July 27, 2015 in front of the J. Dominic Bing City Hall. It may not be verbatim.

“Madam President, we are protesting as a means of expressing our dissatisfaction about the manner and form you are leading our country. Liberians are disappointed in you. Your government has failed the Liberian people. When we went to the polls in 2005 to elect you Madam President, we did so with a conviction to ensure Liberia becomes a better society. We saw you as an emblem of hope. Sadly, after almost 10 years under your leadership, vast majority of our people still live in abject poverty. Corruption is on the increase. The rate of unemployment is high. Education is a mess. You have misled our people into a path of socio-economic paralysis. Today, most Liberians lack access to basic social services such as safe drinking water, electricity, quality education, improved sanitation, better health care, housing, good roads, and empowerment opportunities.”

When I told President Sirleaf in her face that her government has lost legitimacy in the eyes of the people due to rampant corruption, nepotism, injustice, and inequality, she reacted very sharply by calling me a ‘**STUPID and CRAZY**’ boy, even though I did not insult her. Truth really hurts! After President Sirleaf branded me in such faction, I was slapped twice by officers of the Executive Protection Service (EPS) without Madam Sirleaf saying a word. Officers from the elite

Presidential Guard (EPS) flogged our comrades. Comrade Emmanuel Nagbe and other loyal protesters sustained injuries as a result of their vicious action.

In the process of tactically retreating, one of the EPS officers said **CRUSH** him; he is the same Martin Kollie who is always writing and speaking against the government. While I was trying to escape security brutality, my right hand was hit with a gun-butt by an officer of the EPS. The vexing statement of Madam President was a clear instruction to EPS officers to brutalize us, even though she did not order our flogging directly. We managed to seek refuge in the bush, by means of the swamp, after being chased by security operatives. Is this the democracy we have been yearning for? I thought freedom of speech is a fundamental right. Does Liberia really have democracy or autocracy?

For those of you who are speculating that we were disrespectful to Madam President, you need to get a copy of the video from LBS Television Crew. Why are they refusing to play the tape? Moses Kollie Garzeawu of LBS, including other citizens witnessed this unfortunate episode. Stop disconnecting yourself from the reality, and dig deeper to unveil the truth. Our actions and utterances were in line with constitutional proviso and democratic due diligence. Let me restate that we only told President Sirleaf the truth and never disrespected her as insinuated in some quarters.

Our assembly as loyal militants of SUP and national patriots on July 27, 2015 was in accordance with Article 17 of the Liberian Constitution which states “*All persons, at all times, in an orderly and peaceable manner, shall have the right to assemble and consult upon the common good, to instruct their representatives, to petition*

the Government or other functionaries for the redress of grievances and to associate fully with others or refuse to associate in political parties, trade unions and other organizations.”

Our rights were trampled upon by EPS officers who intentionally ignored that Liberia is a country of law and not man. Regrettably, these gruesome gunmen had to walk in the atrocious footprints of the Executive Mansion Guards of Master Sergeant Doe and officers of the Special Security Service of ex-President Charles Taylor. This is what happens when anti-democratic and despotic forces are recruited to serve as security guards under a democratic atmosphere. EPS officers are not above the law, and they must act within the scope of the law. I guess brutalizing peaceful citizens and unarmed civilians is far from the TOR and SOP of EPS officers.

Let this message go forth that nothing can silence our voices, not even guns. You can crush us, but you cannot crush our ideas. You can chase us, but you cannot chase our courage for change. You can jail us, but you cannot jail our writings. We will remain relentless until Liberia becomes an equal and just society. The Student Unification Party (SUP) will never abandon its revolutionary mandate to always protect the interest of the masses. We will fight dictatorship and dictators. We will challenge autocracy and autocrats. We will struggle to put an end to elitism, nepotism, patronage, and inequality. We will combat despotism and despots. Our tone shall remain loud against all forms of societal vices. Until equal opportunities arrive for all Liberians, the struggle for inclusive change shall forever remain in motion.

martinkerkula1989@yahoo.com

In House Poet

By: Lekpele Nyamalon

THOUGHT YOU WERE MY BROTHER

*When the day snubbed you
And the night could hide you not
In my arms you ran
And we cried together*

*Our tears bathed us like rainfall
As we stuck like glue-sobbing
When the bulldozer smashed
your matchbox houses
In my zinc shacks we cuddled
Over a lump of sugar and gari
When your Country called you a stranger
You became a member of my household
We sat and planned
Fanning ourselves with the nighttime heat*

In House Poet

*I gave you money from my susu club
And took you underground for years
Your heroes were my heroes
We were a family
When we grew, we pushed down our monster
We broke it to the ground like a cotton tree
And we cheered, our nightmare was over*

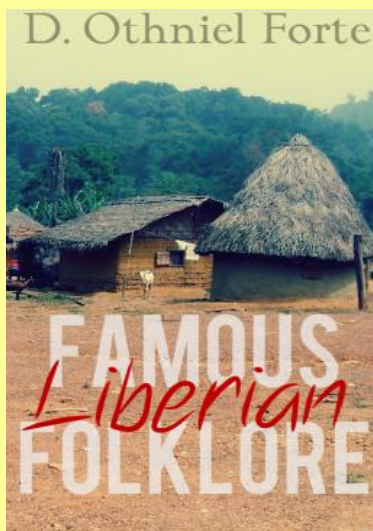
*Then, I became a stranger
You stare at me like cockroaches
And chase me like rabbits
Whip me with shambars
And bruise me with machetes
Tearing my clothes to shreds*

*Why?
What is my crime?
Thought we were blood?
TShabalala, Masekela, Makeba, Courtney, Mbali,
Nthabiseng, Nokuthula, OLWETHU, Thandeka...
I hear a deafening silence
Thought I had a brother in SOWETO*



***Lekpele M. Nyamalon, is a gem.
He has talent and we are proud of in many ways.
He is an up-and-coming writer and poet who had
started a village-writing program entitled
"The Moonlight Series".***

Our Brother's Choice



Near the Lake Piso, there lived three brothers. They were hunters. The eldest was Momolu, next was Varfey and Boima was the youngest. One morning, they decided to go deeper into the mystical forest. They wanted a challenge and the ordinary games were no longer fun to them. They gathered their gears and left for their adventure.

They ventured so far into the forest that they were beginning to fear they might get lost, so they decided to rest, eat and set up their traps in the area. As they unpacked, they noticed that the huge tree under which they were resting looked different.

"There is just something odd about the place." Momolu said.

"What do you mean?" asked Boima.

"It's hard to explain, but I feel funny," added Varfey.

"Okay, you two are making me scared. Before we do anything else, let's check the place," said Boima. Thus, they investigated and soon realize this must have been a shrine long ago, and truly, it was. It was the most popular and powerful shrine of the people who settled the

land before them. In the middle of the shrine, they noticed an unbelievable sight. There was one large sac of gold!

Whatever joy they felt was short-lived. "It is the shrine of Sande-Ynana," Varfey whispered fearfully. He squirmed and groaned about. Sande-yana was the women society's Goddess, who was reputed to be dangerous and cruel, when crossed. Every man in the clan knew better than to defile her shrines or offend her priestesses, some even refused to mention the name. They believed that she could make one's wife, sister or daughters barren. On the other hand, she could give them so many children until the person got weary, old and eventually died in childbirth. She was one Goddess no one messed with.

Anyone who wanted to have children or for his sister or female relations to have one, had to appease her. They would normally leave that up to the females in the family who would go to the Priestesses and conduct a special ritual of appeasement. Rarely did a man venture there for fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. It is not hard to see why these brave hunters would tremble when they found themselves in the heart of the feared Goddess' shrine especially with no female around to guide them.

The eldest brother, Momolu, advised, "I think that we should back out and find another place to rest, preferably far from this shrine."

"Yes," whispered Varfey, nodding furiously his agreement, fearing to utter his words loudly. He did not want any misfortune befall him or his future wife.

Then Boima, the youngest stared with eyes wide and full of greed. He said, "This is no longer an active shrine, it had no Priestess guarding it, nor did anyone attend to it." He reasoned. "You two are afraid for nothing. It is not as if we are trespassing or defiling an active

shrine. The villagers who tended this shrine had long died and the Goddess' Priestesses had moved on. There was nothing to fear."

His two brothers still did not seem convinced. "I don't like it one bit." One said.

He said, "Look, if this was an active shrine, would we not be dead by now? Would the Goddess not strike us dead already?" This seemed to make sense but the others did not want to take the risk. He reached out and touched the gold.

His brothers crunched, one tried to stop him, "No! Don't do that." However, he was not fast enough.

"Why am I not dead?" he asked. "This is real gold before us. I mean wealth beyond anything we know and you would pass it up based on fear?"

"Prevention is better than cure," said Varfey.

Eventually he managed to impress upon them to take just a small amount of gold. "We take a small amount; nothing large. This is not as if we are stealing or anything. This gold and the shrine have been abandoned long ago. No one is using it."

Varfey refused to have any part in it. "I wish nothing to do with this. You two can do as you wish, but leave me out. I just wanted to leave."

The eldest brother also wanted to leave. "I also want to leave this place, but think of it Varfey. Boima will not leave this issue alone. You know him. What shall we do? We want to go, he wants to take some gold before he goes, so let us leave him to take his gold and face all the troubles alone. In the end, we will leave this place. The sooner he takes it, the sooner we can leave. We all get what we want." He figured that if taking the gold was what was needed to be done to get out of there, he did not mind. Thus, they left with Boima taking a small amount of gold along with him.

They hunted and caught a huge game, but their minds kept going back to the gold of the shrine. They could not understand why their brother was still alive after what he had done. The two brothers decided to send Boima into the nearest village in search of some things and to inform the king that they had caught a leopard. As was the custom, any leopard caught had to be taken to town and presented to the Chief who would perform a special ceremony.

Thus, the little brother went to town with the news. On his way, he kept thinking, "If only I could get rid of my brothers, I could take all the game add it to my gold and live a wealthy man the rest of his life." He began devising ways to achieve that end.

Back in the forest, Momolu told Varfey his younger brother, "Look, our little brother was right, I think. Up to now he is still alive why don't we take the gold for ourselves and return to town as wealthy men?"

"I don't know what is happening, but I want no part of that gold. We have a big leopard. We can keep hunting and selling our meat. That is enough for me. I don't want to mess with Sande-Ynana or her shrine. After all, I wish to marry one day and when I do, I want children. I won't spoil my chances." Thus, Varfey refused.

After a while, Momolu brought up the topic. "What if you help me take the gold? I know you don't want any of it, but just help me."

"How do you suggest we do that? What will you do that? There is no way to take his gold without him knowing. Just remember, this is our little brother here."

"I am not planning to do anything bad to him," lied Momolu, "all you have to do is help me convince him to leave the gold here in the forest, then I can come back for it later."

"If that is all you want, to convince him, I can try doing that but no more." Varfey said.

"Thank you," said Momolu. Deep down, he thought, "Maybe I should just get rid of both of them. It is true that as long as these two live, I can't have all that gold to myself." Thus, he set in motion a plan to get rid of the others and keep all the gold, plus the extra one he would collect from the shrine.

Meanwhile, Boima, got to thinking, "What if my brothers tell on me when we get back to town? I really don't trust them to keep quiet about this gold. They could go and tell the local Priestess and she could come and claim the gold. I must do something about them. Right now, they are acting as if they do not want the gold but when I start enjoying, they will come and bother me for some of the money. They think they are smart, I should take all the risk and they just enjoy. This I will not allow to happen." He resolved that the gold would not leave in the forest now that he had seen it.

He got to the town and delivered his news. He told the chief he had caught a leopard and would be bringing it to town. He failed to mention his brothers for he had finalized his plans to kill them when he got back. He also bought some palm wine which he made sure was the best quality. He knew his brothers liked wine and would take solace in the drink upon sight. He set off for his return journey and reached just before nightfall.

When his eldest brother saw him, he pretended to be happy. He rushed to him and hugged him. Varfey was not sure what was going on but he did not think much about it. He figured that Momolu had forgotten his plans and decided to let Boima have the gold after all. He asked, "Did you deliver the message to the chief?"

"Yes, I did," said Boima. "He was excited and they are planning a huge welcome for us. He said he would send some men to help us take the animal into town and prepare the feast. As a token of appreciation, he sent this," he produced the palm wine.

"Doggit," said Varfey, "the chief means business oh. He sent all this wine just for us?"

"We will kill ourselves with Palm Wine today!" said Momolu. "By the way Boima, here is something to eat. While you were gone, we caught some bush meat and I cooked it. Eat you must be tired. Let me put sticks on the fire and heat it up for you."

Shortly after, Momolu came over to the tree where they were resting and offered Boima some meat smeared in hot pepper and other leaves, "Here you are. Eat it."

"Thank you, Momolu," Boima said. After a few bites, he could not help but utter, "This is very delicious."

"Eat all, it is yours," said Momolu. He turned to Varfey and offered him another piece. "Here Varfey, eat the last one. I am full and we must finish this before we leave for the town."

Varfey took the meat, hurriedly ate it and pulled the jug containing the wine towards him. He opened it and poured out some wine into the small calabash they had. He took huge swallows and let out a satisfying, "Ahhhh!" with each gulp.

"My man, why are you acting abu on the palm wine? Bring it here," Momolu said.

He passed a bowl over to Momolu who took and all in one quaff and uttered, "Oh yes, this is good palm wine oh."

After several minutes and plenty mouths-full of wine passed back and forth between the two, Varfey decided, "I am going to the river to wash my face and then I will come back and challenge this fine

palm wine. We are not taking any back with us because there will be more waiting for us.”

“Let me come along for a quick swim. I need a bath before I we go to town,” said Boima.

Immediately they left, Momolu rushed for the palm wine and drank. He wanted to drink as much as he could before Varfey returned from the creek.

Meanwhile, at the river, Varfey knelt at the edge of the water, dipped his hand in it and splashed it on his face. He looked up and whispered, “My stomach,” but Boima could not hear him. He tried again, this time with all the energy he could muster, “Boima, help me, my stomach is hurting.” Again, to no avail, Boima was immersed deep in the water enjoying his bath. Varfey gulped for air, doubled over and dropped into the water with a heavy splash.

Boima came up after a few deep dives. His body was feeling numb as if he had the cramps, but the sharp pain in his belly was the most annoying. He tried to swim his way to shore but could not power his arms enough. He called out, “Varfey! Varfey!” Nothing. He looked towards the shore and there lay Varfey, head dipped in the water. He could not see clearly, but it appeared he was not moving. He tried to get there, but could not. His attempts at screaming caused great pain in his throat. His legs got weaker. His body felt limp. He felt as if the weight of the water was crushing him. His whole body refused to respond to his commands. He felt darkness engulf him as he swirled down into an abyss of darkness. The lights receded quickly, his eyelids began shutting, his mouth was dry and his head was spinning. The last speckle of light fluttered as if in slow motion, then faded away as his body got paralyzed he went under and darkness engulfed him.

Momolu, satisfied for the moment with the amount of palm wine he had consumed, sat down under the huge cotton tree. An intense pain emanated from his bowels. He rolled over, trying desperately to grab hold of the tree or some other steady object he could use for support to stand up. His limbs felt as if the weight of five bags of rice were on them. He tried moving them but no luck. His attempts to call out for help were stopped by dryness in his mouth and he kept swallowing his spit. He needed water, if only he could crawl over to the water jug, or even the palm wine a few feet away, he could drink. His head felt swollen, so did his internal organs. He felt as if they were burning inside. He fell over and died.

Varfey awoke in a strange place. As he wondered about his surroundings, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen approached him and assisted him on his feet. They walked a few paces and she motioned for him to kneel down. He did and then another female approached them, stood over him and informed him that she was the Shrine Goddess. She explained that, “You are here by no fault of your own. Momolu poisoned the meat and Boima did the same to the palm wine. However, since he was innocent, I would grant you another chance to live.”

He was angry and tried to speak but could not. When he finally was able to, he said, “Thank you very much.” The beautiful maiden next to him took him aside and seated him on a stool.

Shortly after, Boima appeared. The Goddess said, “You have done an evil thing and must be punished. You took the lives of your own family. Taking any life is bad, but taking one’s own blood and flesh is horrible. However, I am granting you the chance at redemption. You can spare one life, any one life, but

it can’t be yours. Since you took your brothers’ lives, you must choose one of them.”

He pondered the situation a while. He was furious with Momolu. He was not going to choose him under any condition. He would rather select Varfey, who actually, did not want any part in this. Thus, he said, “I select Varfey, please spare his life. He should not have to suffer for my sake.”

“Very well then, Varfey it will be,” said Sande-Ynana. “Step aside and await your punishment.”

Then came Momolu, he appeared and Sande-Ynana bemoaned him for his wickedness and offered him a chance at redemption. She said, “Because of your greed and selfishness, you caused the lives of your brothers. You will be punished severely for what you did. However, I would give you the chance to spare one of your brother’s lives. All he had to do was choose one. That person will get to live again.

He did not even think long, there was no way he would allow Boima to live; after all, he had poisoned the palm wine. If he did live, he would collect the gold and enjoy it. Varfey on the other hand, did not want the gold; also, he was innocent in all this. “Varfey is my choice,” he said.

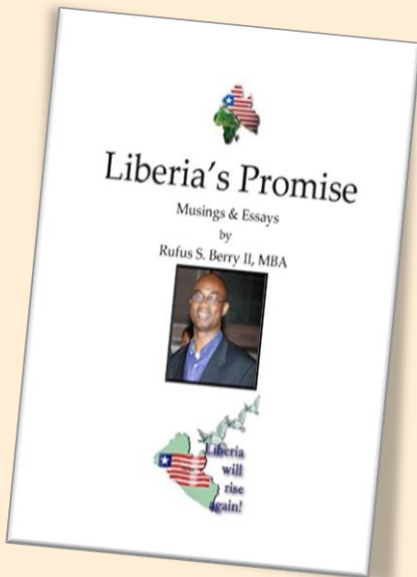
“Very well,” said the Sande Goddess.

Turning towards Varfey, she said, “Since both of your brothers selected you, the choice is now yours. Which one do you think deserve life the most?”

Varfey now had the power of life over his brothers. Boima poisoned the wine and Momolu poisoned the meat. What choice do you think Varfey will make?

D. Othniel Forte
FAMOUS LIBERIAN FOLKLORE

NEW RELEASES



LIBERIA'S PROMISE: MUSINGS & ESSAYS

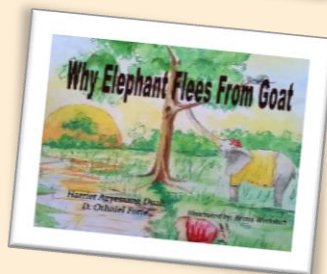
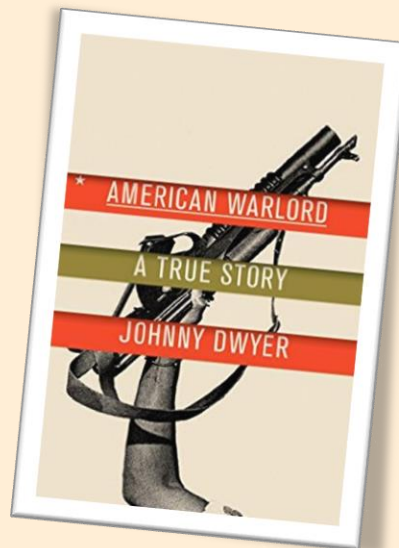
Just imagine if a man brutally raped two children in the United States. Immediately, that man would be arrested and imprisoned. However, in this instance the alleged criminal turned in his passport to a U.S. district attorney as a precondition for obtaining bail, than a few weeks later jumped bailed and returned to Liberia using another travel document. Soon after arriving in Liberia, the accused was handed a prestigious government position. This is the story of Tobias Bowen, the current administrator of the Redemption Hospital in New Kru Town. There should be absolutely no room in our culture for a lady, or any member of the University of Liberia family to be treated with the level of animosity that was directed at Dr. Brownell. It was unacceptable for students and/or faculty members to have used violence against Dr. Brownell in any context, especially as a means of expressing their disagreement with her management style. All Liberians, especially the University of Liberia family, should feel a sense of outrage that violence has been normalized within the larger society and particularly within this premier academic institution.

AMERICAN WARLORD

Chucky Taylor is the American son of the infamous African dictator Charles Taylor. Raised by his mother in the Florida suburbs, at the age of 17 he followed his father to Liberia, where he ended up leading a murderous militia. Chucky is now in a federal penitentiary, the only American ever convicted of torture. This shocking and essential work of reportage tells his tragic and terrifying story for the first time.

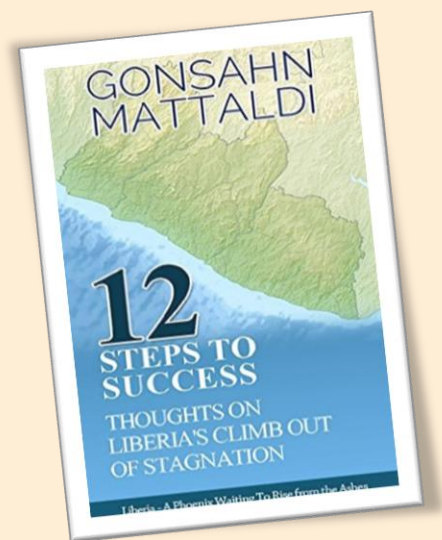
Praise for American Warlord

"What happens when you give a disturbed American teenager unlimited power and weaponry and put him in a zone where the law and morality don't exist? The answer comes in American Warlord, Johnny Dwyer's disturbing account of the gruesome rise and unlikely fall of the son of the Liberian warlord Charles Taylor—Charles Taylor Jr., widely known as Chucky. Dwyer skillfully meshes interviews, documents and court testimony . . . It is the juxtaposition of [Chucky's] descent into depravity with Chucky's relatively innocuous origins that gives force to Dwyer's fluid narrative . . . [A] brutal but well-told tale."—Adam Nossiter, The New York Times Book Review



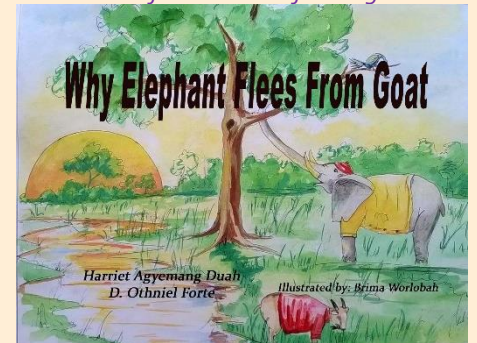
12 ATEPS TO SUCCESS: THOUGHTS ON LIBERIA'S CLIMB OUT OF STAGNATION

The idea for this work of writing came to me while I was driving my kids around. I had asked them about the twelve things that would resurrect Liberia. Sadly, my children have never had a chance to visit our country, but my wife and I have always kept her memory alive by telling them about the pain and suffering she has gone through and still is. Armed with the knowledge that we have passed on to them, they agreed to help me. I cannot thank God enough that he has bestowed upon us children who can replace us. Children who will grow into adults with the same zeal and patriotism for Liberia in their hearts as their parents have. Chucky Taylor is the American son of the infamous African dictator Charles Taylor.

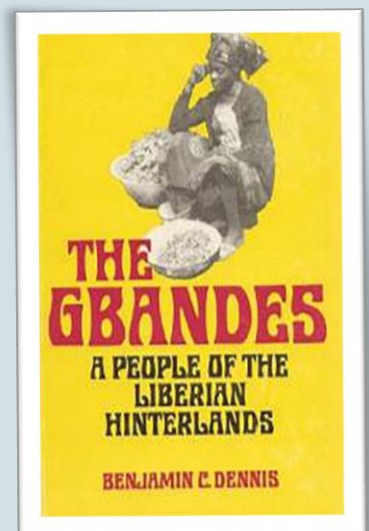
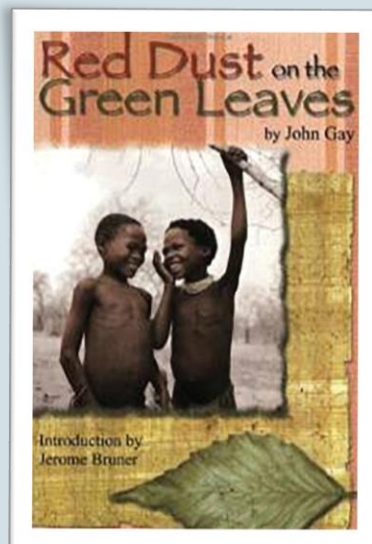
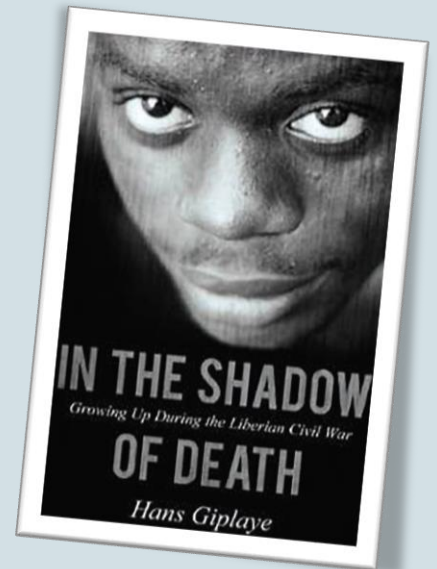
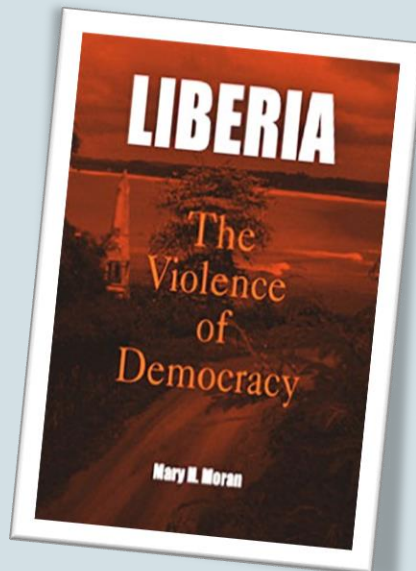
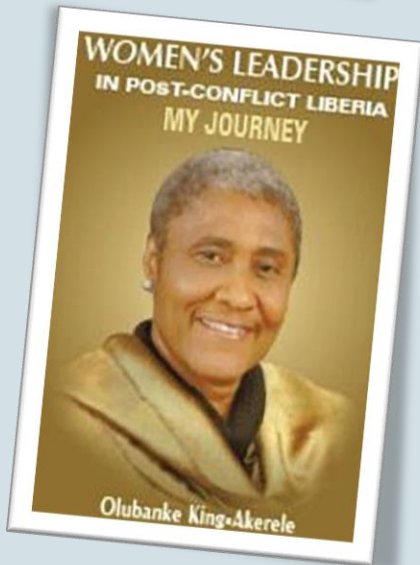
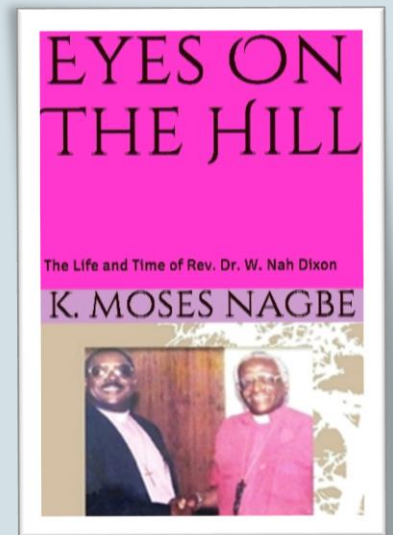
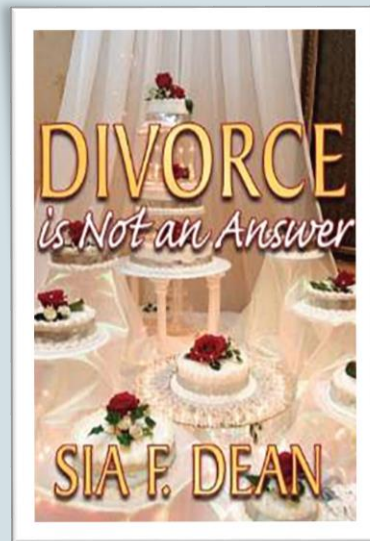
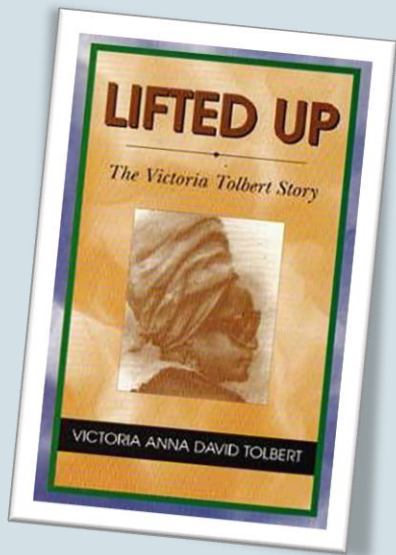


WHY ELEPHANT FLEES FROM GOAT

A children's book by Harriet Agyemang Duah. Illustration by Brima Woloba idea for this work of writing came to

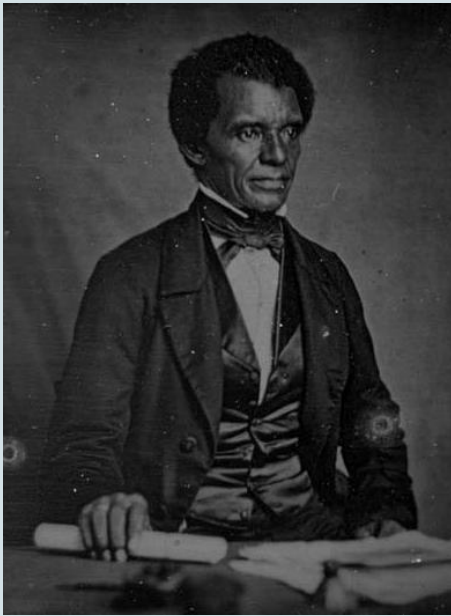


RECOMMENDED READS



Forgotten Heroes

Beverly Page Yates (1856-1860)



Beverly, unlike many of his time, was fully 18 years old and free when he migrated to Liberia. He saw Liberia as a land of the free indeed; for he dreamt that, all his wishes could be fulfilled in a land such as Liberia.

He was a native of Virginia, born in 1811. Not much is known about his parents or if he had any other siblings. However, when he entered the colony, he took to commercial trading just like most young men of that time that came to Liberia.

Trading was a profitable business and with hard work, anyone could make a decent living.

This would soon pay off for not long afterwards Yates was wealthy beyond measure.

Beverly Page Yates was eighteen when he sailed from Norfolk to Monrovia in 1829. Like many of Liberia's early colonists, Yates turned to commercial trade for his livelihood and was soon counted among the colony's principal merchants. Operating from a single warehouse in 1838, the trading partnership of Yates and Payne rapidly expanded its business, and by 1844 owned four warehouses as well as its own ship. The Yates family was amongst the most powerful in Liberia at the time.

Politically, Beverly was well rounded, he had served as a judge, a senator and rose to be Liberia's fourth Vice President, a post he was reelected to. He was President of the Senate.

He had a wealth of military experience, which put him in an influential position. He rose through the ranks to become a colonel of the First Regiment, Liberia Volunteers by 1852. The same year he was appointed to the Supreme Court as an Associate Justice, a post he held for four years until he ran as Vice President under Benson.

D. Othniel Forte

Poetry Section

NGAMU

*(to the masked spirit
of the rain forest)*

JACK KOLKMEYER

*juju music
and voodoo trance*

*dig the white guy
dance*

*a blue eyed spirit
takin'
a chance*

*on a dark soul mood
and a deep forest
prance*

*takin' a stance
on a night pulse rhythm
an ebony surge
a spirit that moves
ngamu kati
bada ngamu
mala ngamu*

*a spirit that grooves
deep within*

Monrovia, Liberia



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

He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia, West Africa from 1969-72 and received an MPA in Public Policy/Urban and Regional Planning from Indiana University in 1974.

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

He recently completed Tribal, his first, full-length book of poems.

His writings have appeared in Sphere, Gulcher, Mothering Magazine, The Beat, The Santa Fe Reporter, The Writers Place, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Liberian Studies Journal, Crosswinds, and Practicing Planner.

Santa Fe



*Liberia - "The Before,
During, and After Ebola"*

Preston M. Tulay

~ Seven ~

My people, my friends Liberians
Good or bad, I rejoice in deeds for you my only
inhabitants
For I am all that you have, and you are all that I
have
Together we will defeat Ebola now and then
As we show respect, gratitude, and love for one
another
During this moment, this land of greens shall
remain
As hearts will sadden, and sorrow will replace
joy
Yet in time your joy will return
As my friend ocean continues her vapor of
nurture
You my habitants rejoice now in these bountiful
Of love, gratitude, and respect for you and you
I am the land of envy and you are my chosen
dwellers
Together we had each other then
As we do now in this very moment

So shall it be then in moment to come
Our bond knows of no boundaries
You are mine as I am yours
Together we are one Liberia
During and after Ebola

~ Eight ~

Liberia, Liberia, Liberia
Land of people unique, yet as in diverse
Of landscape, beauty, and languages
We are the one that cried out even our
differences
Differences we must now make our strength
Not in division, but as in progress
Of one, two, three, and all my natives
Together the one, two, three, and all are one
As this is your victory now
Even as it was then, so will it be
My greens and beauty are forever
But grief I can no longer carry or behold
As I yearn for only these three
Your love, respect, and gratitude
During then, during now, and during after.



Mr. Tulay, was born in Liberia, West Africa and later moved to the United States of America.

He attended Howard University where he received a Bachelor of Business Art degree in Computer Based Information Systems in 1991.

In 1999, he received his Master of Science in Computer Systems Management (IT) from the University of Maryland University College.

The Misunderstood Child...

*Oh, the misunderstood child...
Your presence is always detested,
When your where-about is unknown,
Minds become doubtful about your next move.
Even when you speak the facts,
It sounds unbelievable.
Surely, you are misunderstood!*

*When you are famished,
And even fend for crumbs,
Your look is misinterpreted.
When doors are closed before you,
And the streams all run dry,
There's no water to quench your thirst.*

Oh, the misunderstood child!

*The misunderstood child...
The community should be your footstool,
But in your abandonment,
Even your warm smile is undesirable.
With a peaceful heart,
It is forbidden to mingle with your peers.
Oh, what a misunderstood child!*



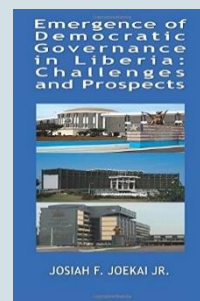
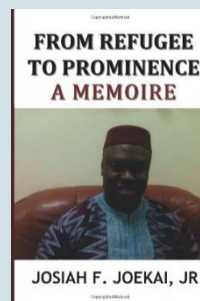
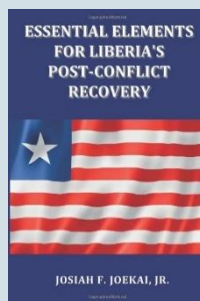
Josiah Joekai Jr.

Insights

The “Misunderstood Child” is the Author’s realistic description of the paradoxical nature of a person. His/her physical or outward look and inner reality are in sharp contrast. Born with normal physical structure but somewhere deep inside, there is something quite different that no one knows. His/her inner reality speaks volumes that remains unraveled.

Though he/she smiles beamingly but feels unhappy inside, has mouth but hardly afford meal to eat, has ears but doesn’t hear, has nose but doesn’t smell easily, appears smart but doesn’t read and write. Surely, there is discontentment within though the outward look portrays a contrary expression! In his/her low self-esteem and lack of assurance for a better future, the expression in the look of this person embodies deceptions.

And if we look candidly within ourselves, in spite of our unique physical structures or decent looks, we do carry varying internal struggles and conflicts that portray a misunderstanding which reflect the contradictions and deceptions that characterize our individual life journeys.



Artist of the Month

ART SELECTION



KULA MOORE

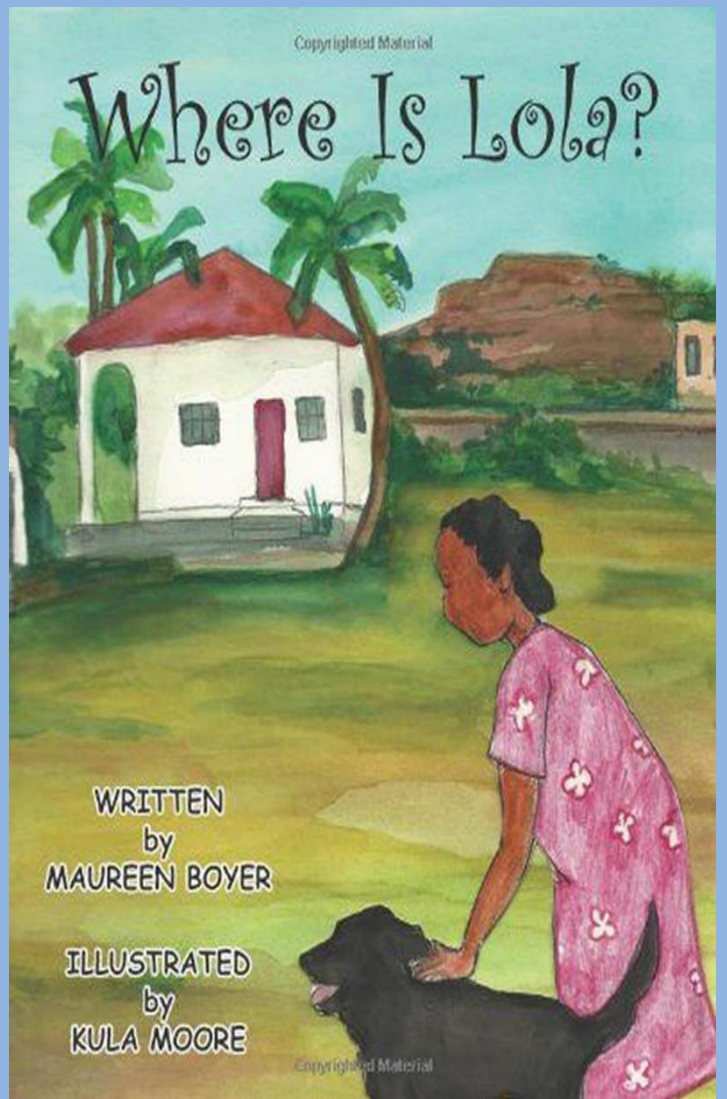
Kula lives and works in Houston TEXAS. She earned a B.A. in Studio Art and Biology from Baylor University and obtained her Masters in Art Therapy Counseling from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

As an Art Therapist, Kula paints to explore therapeutic relationships and psychological concepts. She uses reflective art making to respond to clients and their artwork, gain understanding of clinical issues, and to self-process.

Kula is also co-founder and illustrator at [One Moore Book](#), publisher of multicultural and educational stories for children of countries with low literacy rates and underrepresented cultures.







MEET OUR TEAM



MOMOH SEKOU DUDU
SENIOR REVIEWER/CONTRIBUTOR



HARRIET AGYEMANG DUAH
STAFF REVIEWER CHILDREN'S BOOK



REBAZAR FORTE
IT/LAYOUT DESIGNER



HENRIQUE HOPKINS
SEGMENT HOST/REVIEWER



JACK KOLKMEYER
CONTRIBUTOR



KULUBA MUCURLOR
SEGMENT HOST



MARTIN N. K. KOLLIE
CONTRIBUTOR



NVASEKIE KONNEH
CONTRIBUTOR



LEKPELE M. NYAMALON
RESIDENT POET

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

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BERENICE MULUBAH
CLARENCE PEARSON
VAMBA SHERIF
SYLOMUN WEAH
MASNOH WILSON



JOSEPHINE BARNES
ART CONTRIBUTOR



BRIMA WOLOBAH
ART CONTRIBUTOR

AROUND TOWN



Central Monrovia

Randall Street market; towards Waterside



Traditional Dancers

Traditional dances form a major part of life. It is free entertainment. Sadly they aren't paid.



Kids Selling and Playing

A group of young children selling finger food. They sometimes make these themselves.



Colorful Local Garments



Sacred Heart Cathedral



© royal grand hotel

Hotel Room- Relaxation Time



Kids Playing At the Park



Local Arts and Craft Seller



Ariel View of the City



Car Loaders and Taxi

"Carboys" hustling for passengers from one point To another. This is part of the average hustle



Sunrise- Relaxation Time

White sand beach adorned with fully grown cocoa nut trees



Beach on the out sketch

Liberia has some of the best beaches in the region. Sadly, many are not developed

Photo Credits: **Darby Cecil**

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.

Promoting
Liberian

Creativity
& Culture

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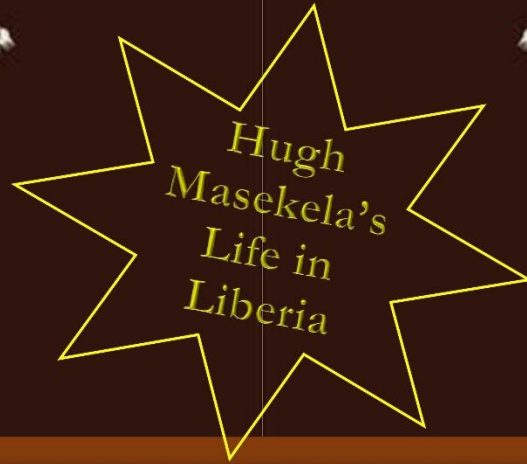
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KWEE

Liberian Literary Magazine



Jerome Cabeen



Hugh Masekela's
Life in
Liberia



Remembering
A fallen hero,
a giant, Shiek
KafumbaKonneh

Anthony
Darway
*Authors of
the Month*

Jerome
Cabeen

KULUBA'S
KORNER

Poetry:
Stories
Articles

Flag Day Special

RIQUE
SPEAKS

Book
Review