

KWEE

Liberian Literary Magazine

July Issue

**Wayétu
Moore**

*Author of
the Month*

**Book
Review**



*Nina
Simone's
Life in
Liberia*

**UL: Engineering
Competition**

**Father's
Day Special**

*Children's
Story*

**Ebola:
Lessons
Learned**



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 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
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Segment Contents

Editorial

In our editorial, one should expect topics that are controversial in the least. We will shy away from nothing that 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 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.

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.

Lead Article

Our Lead article is just that, a major article by a staffer or a contributor.

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. 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.

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.

Artist of the Month

We showcase 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*Russian Roulette
with Education**D. Othniel Forte*

Russian roulette can be interesting for one on the side of the trigger especially, if that person is a trigger happy kind. The Ministry of Education- MoE, who apparently enjoys the game, recently announced plans to close down schools throughout the country. Needless to say that this is a bad move that can only hurt the education system or nation.

With very little provocation, the ministry whips out her revolver and pops in her one type of bullet, and fires it. We have seen this far too many times to count.

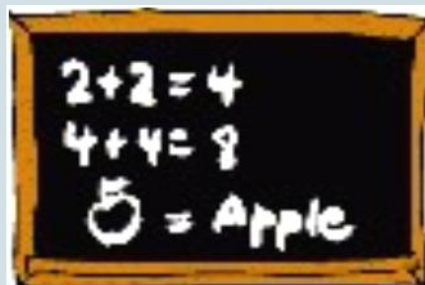
If one can recall, just before this semester opened in March, Ebola had been ravaging the country. School goes who had been forced to stay home were traumatized by the countless deaths they had to see or endure. Everyone needed a fresh start, something meaningful and invigorating to keep their minds off such dark memories. For many, this meant school. They would have their hands full with the backlog and the current semester's work and not much time to get distracted. Just as they hoped to begin classes on the second of February as slated by the MOE, their hopes were dashed.

They were told that Ebola was not yet out of the country and the ministry did not feel the time was right to reopen schools. They set the new date for classes to begin as February 2, 2015. As the day drew closer, the

revolver appeared; it was loaded and fired. The ministry of education pushed the opening of classes to the 16th of February, a delay of two weeks. Okay, that is understandable. It is not like Ebola happens every time. Also, a good number of parents and guardians were still apprehensive of sending their children out to school when Ebola was still in the country. The measures to prevent or protect their children were still not in place and the ministry was still complaining about funds to set these measures in place.



As if this wasn't enough, they found another opportunity to cock and reload the gun, each time increasing the chances of success. Once again as the date approached, the MOE changed it to the 2nd of March.



Unless one has a death wish, it is fair to assume that no one on the side of the gun enjoys this game, especially not with the increased chances of getting shot. Parents get weary, teachers get exasperated, administrators get frustrated and learners get discouraged with each spin.

So, one can't help but wonder when will this all stop? Looking at the record exhibited by this ministry one can't expect any relieve any time soon. It is not like this only happened



because of the Ebola crisis. Time and again, policy makers have shown no hesitation to toy with the future of this nation. We saw it with the many closures this ministry has overseen. We saw it happen to the University of Liberia on a few occasions or with the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute-KRTTI. It appears that at the first sign of anything, they have one remedy. They get locked and loaded and hope that somehow, education will improve.

What is saddest is the fact that over the past eight years, the ministry of education has received one of the highest budgetary allotment. Each year, she gets an increase and each year, she finds some reason to keep learners out of school for reasons that are manageable. So what is the end game here? With such colorful history one can't help but wonder. Why would supposedly educated people find every chance to deny the deprived youths and young adults of this nation the chance to learn? Why would policymakers make every effort to keep the doors of education closed? Why would people who have benefited from some of the best education, many at the expense of one government or another not see the importance of education to the nation? Are we to think that they value education only when it pertains to





them or theirs? Or are they creating these policies deliberately to dominate the sector? It is hard to ignore some of these questions especially seeing the rate at which our learners underperform in school, at the offices and in life. It is hard to do so when a typical university graduate cannot compose a fitting essay. It is even more difficult when a whole batch of high school leavers would flunk out on the entrance examinations of the University of Liberia. It is beyond worrisome. It has gotten to the point of national security.

Policymakers should be less concerned with securing their jobs. They should be more concerned with maintaining the highest standards of education. For now, it seems the minister and his people are more worried over their job performance than the education of learners.

When did they realize that the schools were not prepared? Back then in January, or March? If so, why did they reopen? Do they mean that they would sacrifice integrity to appearance? If they knew this all along, why did they allow hardworking parents who can barely feed their children to spend money on school fees and supplies only to come back three months later and tell them that they were paying for nothing or that their money was only good for study class? This is unacceptable at all levels.

Granted, they say that they do this to ensure the standards are high enough; that is precisely what we wish for. We would settle for nothing less than prime education for our children, but did it have to take this long to

recognize this? If that is the case, then that in itself is a problem. If professionals are unable to determine with a reasonable amount of certainty the effects of their policies than why should we trust them? They claim that students will not be ready for the West African Examination Council- WAEC exams. Of course they won't be, not after what occurred, and certainly not with this stunt they are pulling. WAEC is aware of the closure and would be acting prematurely if she insisted on keeping her schedule with the nations hit hardest by Ebola. There are way too many smart people with the council to not understand the situation and be flexible. With each push, they dashed the hopes of the learners.



It is high times the MOE decided what she wants. She can't keep sending signals that are not only mixed but indicate that the welfare of education in Liberia is not her priority. She can't keep putting the welfare of learners, administrators and institutions below that of itself in a desperate attempt to achieve some performance rating that keeps public servants in their jobs primarily and everything else on the negotiable list.

Moving forward, MOE should establish and maintain honest dialogue with stakeholders. Initiating dialogue is good but doing so when one has anything but an honest intent is unacceptable. Pulling stunts like writing the WAEC to cancel exams, formalizing plans to close schools all the while keeping other stakeholders out of the loop, will not encourage confidence in Minister Werner and or his team. The purpose of dialogue is to find a solution, but if the ministry went



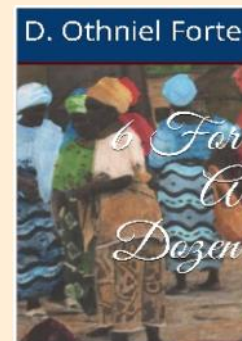
about dialoguing whilst having no intention of considering the input of the other partners why did they bother in the first place? Oh, maybe to appear as having a dialogue?

We hope that henceforth, the MOE will be more transparent in her dealings with stakeholders. We hope that they continue to engage the institutions as well as foreign partners fully. We are glad that the legislature put a stop to the closure of schools or more importantly, the decision to disregard the efforts of the learners and parents in so doing.

This should be a lesson for all involved. For education to improve, there can't be an imperial ministry, nor can there be policymakers that value their job security more than the actual beneficiaries of the policies they make.



Ophelia Lewis offers an interesting read in this collection. *Montserratado Stories* is a must read.



A collection of traditional stories. *6 For a Dozen* is a 100% Liberian project- author and artist believe in Liberian creativity.

Rique Speak

The Liberian Stories: Nina Simone's Liberian Life

By *Henrique Hopkins*

Think about this: If you're a black American musical star, critically acclaimed but still relegated to performing for audiences of "hip" folks, "in the know", thirty something, with a young child and a record of political activism through both song and deed that has begun to make life in your home country uncomfortable, where do you go to find some semblance of peace and home? Many in the States might think somewhere in the Caribbean, or Europe. Nina Simone lived in Barbados, and ended up spending many years in Europe. But in between that, she lived in the oldest republic on the continent of Africa, the Republic of Liberia.

Liberia has both gotten much bad press and suffered much in real terms over the last three decades. The story that is rarely told however, is of a Republic that stood for 147 years from 1847 to 1980, without major disturbance or Civil War. Liberia is a country whose population is made up of 16 ethnic groups including the Grebo, Kru, Kpelle, Mandingo and Bassa, descendants of freed blacks from the United States of America, descendants of captured blacks freed from slave ships headed to the new world, and blacks from various nations and territories in the Caribbean. When Nina Simone stepped off a Pan Am Jet at Robertsfield International Airport in the mid-70s, she was stepping foot in a country that had a post war economic growth rate second only to Japan's, spurred on by President Tubman's "Open Door Policy." It was also a country on the door step of its first successful coup d'état.

Nina Simone was already a highly regarded artist around the world by the 1970s. She had a classical and gospel

trained background and was highly regarded by jazz audiences as well. She was also known for being highly outspoken and active in the struggle of black people for human rights. Her song, "Mississippi Goddamn" was a classic of Civil Rights protest music that got her banned in the state sung about, and another song, written with the great Weldon Irvine, "Young, Gifted, and Black", became a similar anthem during the days of Black consciousness and Black Power, taken to even higher notoriety by the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. By the time she went to Liberia she'd been friends with various figures in Civil Rights and Black Power movements, married and divorced, and lived in Barbados. She also had income tax problems.

It was Miriam Makeba, the great South African singer who was very vocal both on apartheid in her native country, as well as segregation in America, who suggested she go to Liberia. Makeba was herself by the early '70s based in the West African nation of Guinea. She was also married to the man who laid the phrase "Black Power" on America, Stokely Carmichael, now calling himself Kwame Toure, a name in tribute to African leaders Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sekou Toure of Guinea.

Makeba, a good friend of Simone, was going through similar repression in the United States for her outspoken political stances and her marriage to the government watched Carmichael. It was she who specifically suggested Liberia as the best country in Africa for Simone to reside.

Simone explains Makeba's reasoning:

"Liberia and America were connected through history in a positive way, and Liberian culture and society reflected that. It was a good place to



start for any Afro-American looking to reconcile themselves to their own history."

At that point, Ms. Simone's story became personal for me because it was my family's as well. My own father, Herman Hopkins, was told the same thing in 1959, which led to his own move to Liberia. He would remain there until 1980, moving back to the Bay Area of California one week before the coup that toppled the old regime. He was granted Liberian citizenship in 1962 and married my mother, Dorothy, a Liberian, in 1964. So Ms. Simone's story has great personal resonance for me, put yourself in current America, looking at Liberia, a post conflict country struggling to heal itself, part of many people (Anthony Bourdain's) stupid Africa jokes, and it takes me back into a time when a Black American could actually consider it BETTER to live in Liberia than in the U.S of A, which an Elijah Muhammed or Pat Robertson would both describe as Babylon the Great.

Dad said it was a Nigerian acquaintance in college who suggested Liberia as the perfect country to satisfy curiosity about Africa. Nina Simone elucidates the reason an African American would hear that suggestion in this way:

"She (Miriam Makeba) was smart enough to realize that modern Africa might overpower an innocent African American like me, and so for my first step she chose Liberia, a place where I could relish the differences and yet feel secure with the similarities."

Simone goes on to paint a moving portrait of Liberia in the 1970s, arguably it's last period of prosperity,



and also details how Africa in the form of Liberia was very personally gratifying to people like my dad, his American friends such as Oliver Campbell, Hardy Mathews, John Reeves, Walter Smith, and Cyrus Peters, even though they were not stars. Dad always reminded me after those years of the Indian father character in Denzel Washington's "Mississippi Massala." His whole time back in what was supposed to be his "home" of the U.S, he was thinking about how he could get back to where he could function the best, Liberia.



Simone entered Liberia in the early '70s in the early days of the transition from President William V.S Tubman, to President William R Tolbert. She said she was given a grand welcome in Liberia, and most people she encountered had at least a few of her records. Nobody asked her to perform, nobody asked her to do any benefits for poor children, she was welcomed into Liberia to enjoy Liberian hospitality, as she understood it:

"Liberians are naturally affectionate, open people, proud of their country, and the fact that a famous black American had decided to come home-which was what they called it- to stay meant something special to them."

Simone was not the first black American to fall under Liberia's spell. Bill Russell, from my hometown of Oakland, California, 11 time NBA champion, also had a strong connection to the country in the 1960s. Russell would go to Liberia every summer to check on his rubber farm, in the care of a Mr. Clarence Holder. It was his plan to immigrate to Liberia

at the end of his playing career. Ms. Simone describes the feeling thusly:

"I wouldn't have believed it before I arrived, but Liberia did feel like home and I loved everything about it."

"Liberia was a release; after all those years of being a wife, mother, activist and star all at the same time, I was just a mother with her child happy in school and nobody looking over my shoulder telling me what to do."

Suddenly Ms. Simone went from struggling within the society of her birth to having a place amongst the top of Liberian society. Miriam Makeba selected six wealthy Liberian men for her to choose from to find a new husband and romantic partner.

Simone's song "Liberian Calypso" immortalizes a famous experience she had in Liberia. She was at a club called "The Maze" in Monrovia, a small club frequented by what we call in Liberia, "the big shots." She was sitting up drinking champagne and she said the music and the champagne got good to her. The music was mostly from the U.S, being the mid-70s one could imagine it was the hottest of soul and funk that had made it overseas. Simone got up on a table and stripped until her brown skin was bared completely naked, and the big shots of Liberia got a hell of a kick from seeing the Princess getting down "in the raw." She was afraid she would get kicked out of the country, but she found out President Tolbert himself went to the club the next day hoping to catch a repeat performance. To which Simone thought, "This is my kind of country."

Her time in Liberia also had permanent effects on her life in various ways. One was a reconnection with her estranged father, who had passed some years ago. She says she was taken to a very well dressed witch doctor, in a suit and tie, normal looking, who showed her a method of communicating with her father. From then on, she called on her dad in times of need.

She had a great romance with Liberian newspaper man C.C Dennis,

and just missed dying as his wife in the 1980 coup. She eventually moved on to Europe and continued her career there, but she always wanted to return to Liberia, and it held a special place in her heart.

Ironically, Simone was in the same position many who lived in Liberia prior to the disturbances were in. Her Liberia was gone, even as she lived on. This is a reality Liberians, born and native to the country, had to face as well. A little peek of the problems Liberia would have was spied in one scene where 17 cops came to her door attempting to have sex with her because they were jealous she was with a foreign national. However, also indicative of the old Liberia was that she was able to drive them off, and they were sternly reprimanded by a big shot woman the next day. But such lawlessness of the poor police and military class would become common during the next thirty years of social upheaval, and continue to be a problem now.

Simone kept a copy of the video tape where Cecil Dennis, the son of her Liberian boyfriend, and the other officials of the Tolbert government were executed by firing squad on the beach in April of 1980. From time to time after that, when she wanted to remember those days, she'd pull it out and watch it. Though it may seem morbid, for her it was a means of remembering the people and times she had in Liberia. Something I saw my father and many relatives do as well. And so, life in Liberia became another flavor in Nina Simone's brew that she served with sass and class, to audiences for the rest of her natural life and beyond.



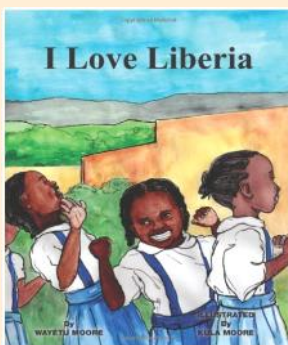
Henrique Hopkins
Hosts *Rique Speaks*

Authors of the Month Profiles

Wayétu Moore



Wayétu Moore is a writer and founder of One Moore Book (www.onemoorebook.com), a boutique publisher of multicultural children's books. She graduated from Howard University with a degree in journalism, received her Master's degree in creative writing from University of Southern California. Moore is a former special correspondent to the National Newspaper Press Association. Her writing can be found in the Atlantic Magazine, Guernica Magazine, Gawker, The Huffington Post, Sea Breeze Journal of Contemporary Liberian Writings and various literary journals. She has been featured in The Economist Magazine, NPR, Uptown Magazine, NBC, ABC, BET, among others. Her company, **One Moore Book**, has published 19 books to date that feature the cultures of Liberia, Guinea and Haiti, including the 2nd children's book by American Book Award winner and National Book Award finalist, Edwidge Danticat. She is also currently an adjunct professor of writing at The College of New Rochelle – Brooklyn College.



Josiah F. Joekai, Jr.



Josiah F. Joekai Jr. is a Liberian born onto the union of Mr. Barkolleh K. Joekai, Sr. and Ms. Kolu H. Flomo in Zorzor, Lofa County. He is a candidate for Master's Degree in Conflict Transformation from the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation (KAICT) of the University of Liberia.

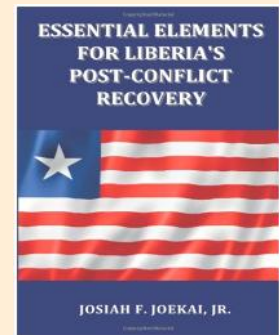
He holds a Bachelor degree in Political Science with emphasis on International Relations from the University of Liberia. Additionally, he has obtained professional diplomas and certificates from national and international development programs. He holds certificates and diplomas in Monitoring and Evaluation, Public Sector Management from the Liberia Institute of Public Administration, Managing for Results from the Management Development Foundation, West Africa Chapter based in Ghana, as well as Formulating and Implementing Electoral Assistance Projects in the Framework of UNDP and the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium. Mr. Joekai also earned BRIDGE Certificates in Strategic Planning and Financial Management from International IDEA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Legal Framework in Elections from BRIDGE experts in Liberia. He is a Semi-accredited BRIDGE Facilitator. BRIDGE is Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections.

Mr. Joekai is an author, educator, election administrator and a highly development-oriented person. He has worked extensively in the public sector in the areas of education, democracy and governance in Liberia over the last ten years. He worked in key institutions including the National Legislature, Ministry of Education and now the National Elections Commission.

Mr. Joekai has authored three books:

1. *Essential Elements for Liberia's Post-Conflict Recovery*;
2. *From Refugee to Prominence: A Memoire* and
3. *Emergence of Democratic Governance in Liberia: Challenges and Prospect.*

These three publications have generated so much interest both at home and abroad.



He has also written several other reading materials including published articles, poems and papers he presented at national and international conferences. As an innovative and progressive Liberian, he continues to contribute immensely to the attainment and sustenance of peace and security in his country, Liberia and the rest of the African Continent.

Over the years, Mr. Joekai has played a pivotal role as member of ECOWAS and Mano River Union Elections Observation and Technical Missions to Guinea, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana in ensuring the delivery of peaceful and credible elections in those countries.

Mr. Joekai is currently the Director of Civic and Voter Education at the National Elections Commission (NEC). Prior to assuming this important responsibility, this astute Liberian served as Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Commission.

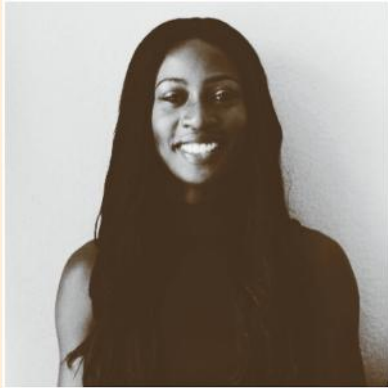
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Website: www.josiahfjoekai.com

Author of the Month

In our Spotlight this issue, is one of the most promising and dedicated female authors from Liberia.

Author Interview



LLR: Tell us a little about your early childhood, upbringing, education.

I was born in Liberia and my family moved to New York when I was 5 years old during the first war. We moved around a bit but settled in Texas when I was 8. That's where I was raised. I attended New York University's Tisch School of the Arts for theater for 2 years then transferred to Howard University, where I finished my education in journalism. I then attended the University of Southern California for my master's degree in creative writing.

LLR: What inspires you to write generally?

Everything I write has so far been something I desperately wanted to read. My inspiration comes from the lack of diverse options in literature. I love to read, so over time it affected me that I read very little about my culture in literature.

LLR: Who are some of the people/things that influence you?

I love Octavia Butler. She's a force, a truly iconic writer. Russian writers have also inspired me, as well as magical realism authors like Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabelle Allende.

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

I have always considered myself extremely blessed to have been born into my family. I couldn't ask for a stronger and more inspiring group of people to grow up beside. They are my biggest cheerleaders and toughest critics.

LLR: Why did you choose your profession? When did you know you wanted to do that?

I have always written. My mom encouraged my sisters and I to indulge in the arts after the war. She's an educator so she was constantly looking for ways to help us to assimilate and remove the psychological scars caused by what we saw and experienced at such young ages. So for as long as I can remember, I was writing, singing, painting, you name it, it was happening in our house around our kitchen table.

LLR: All things considered, do you wish you had chosen differently?

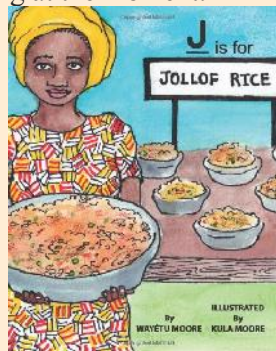
No, not at all.

LLR: If you could change/improve one thing about you, what would it be?

I would have spent more time in Texas before moving to the northeast. I left home at a pretty young age. I had just turned 17 and I packed up and moved to New York for school.

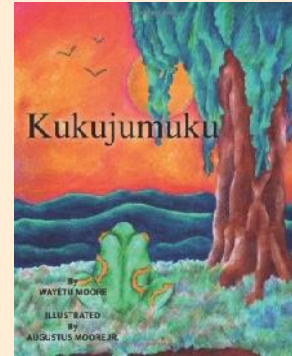
LLR: What's the biggest mistake you almost made?

Good question but I can't think of anything at the moment.



LLR: What character traits do your friends use to describe you?

I'm not sure how to answer that. I guess you'd have to interview some of my friends!



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

Hardworking, Loyal, Cynical but Optimistic and Adventurous

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

Fans is a strong word.

LLR: Would you consider yourself a big-picture person or a detail-oriented person?

I am both I guess. It depends on the project.

LLR: There's no right or wrong answer, but if you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be? What would you be doing?

I am currently exactly where I want to be in the world at this very moment. I am full.

LLR: Let's talk books. What are your favorite Liberian books? Why do you love them?

I'm going to have to say my fave Liberian books are the children's books written by Robtel Pailey, Stephanie Horton and Patricia Jabbeh Wesley in the One Moore Book Liberia Signature series (Gbagba, What Happened to Red Rooster When the Visitor Came and In Monrovia, The River Visits the Sea). I adore those books because they were written

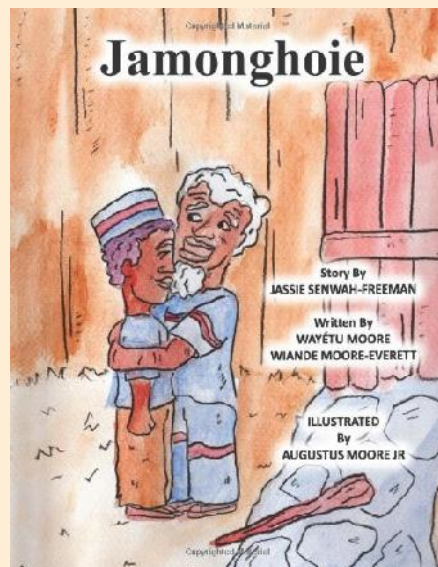
with love and purpose by three of the best Liberian writers I know.

LLR: What is your writing process? How do you do it? How do you pick your topics?

I used to write on schedule but recently I've become one of those writers who must feel inspired. I find inspiration in my travels and while indulging in art. New York has so many fascinating museums and I spend a lot of time in them.

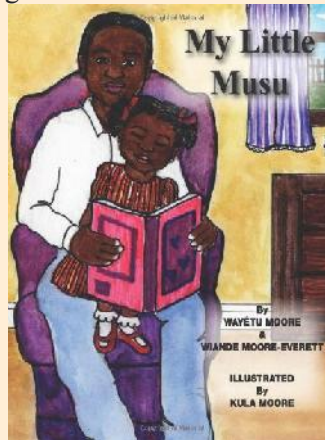
LLR: As a Liberian author, what advantage/disadvantages are there?

The disadvantage is that our people don't have an established culture of reading for leisure. Reading is tied to school and is seen as an obligation. In a culture of people who do not read, just for fun, it's hard for Liberian authors to excel without engaging the Ministry of Education and that complicated bureaucracy. It shouldn't be that way. The advantage, which is beautiful, is that we don't have much literature, so we have a blank page in our literary history and an amazing opportunity to create work that will speak to many generations to come.



LLR: How has Liberia influenced your works, and what do you think of the future of writing in Liberia? Where do you think it is headed?

Most of my work (if not all) has something to do with Liberia. It lives in me. I am excited about the future of writing in Liberia.



I think artistic communities, and specifically the literary community, has formed something really special in our collective desire to want every one of us to succeed. It's an engine that is powerful and reminiscent of the Harlem renaissance and other periods in international literary history where artists came together and, inspired by each other, created masterpieces.

LLR: What is your impression about Liberian women author? Who are some of your best?

I'm inspired by the women of Liberia and definitely inspired by Liberian women authors. In addition to the list I gave above, I would add Elma Shaw. She's great.

LLR: Are you working with any Liberian literary group [home/abroad]? Or any Liberian author?

I don't consistently work with any Liberian literary group but I am associated with a few authors who I respect and admire. We share ideas and experiences independently of any established group.

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

Coming from a third world country can be challenging in the world of

literature because the larger industry is hungry for sensationalized stories. So, when you go to present a piece for publication that doesn't feed into the Western appetite for sensational African narratives, publishers don't know what to do with it. There are very specific expectations and interests for writers like us, and that can be limiting.

LLR: What do you think of the future of writing and publishing in Liberia?

I'm optimistic about the future of writing and publishing in Liberia.

LLR: What do you think of digital media in general?

I think digital media is what you make it. If you use it wisely, it can serve you—especially artists. If you overuse it, it can be destructive.

LLR: What advice would you give aspiring writers?

Take time to travel alone. Go into the woods, go into the wilderness, sit and watch, listen to what's happening around you. Silence can be powerful. Don't be afraid of it.

LLR: What are you currently working on? What are some of your future projects?

I currently have a memoir and novel in the works. I will let you know as soon as they are made available!



Wayétu Moore

Lessons from the Ebola Crisis as UNMIL Transitions

Introduction

For more than one and the half century, Liberia as Africa's oldest independent nation has been confronted by series of competing challenges ranging from socio-economic misery to insecurity. After more than ten (10) years of uninterrupted peace, its security system remains volatile. The security climate of Liberia is still gloomy as a result of increasing public discontent and fundamental political differences.

Even though the presence of UNMIL since 2003 has created a relatively stable cloud of civility and orderliness, but more need to be done in order to avert potential insecurity and instability. As UNMIL finally leaves Liberia on June 30, 2016, there is a high demand to mitigate the existing security gap.

The need to principally promote democratic tenets such as the rule of law, good governance, public trust, inclusiveness, justice, and socio-economic parity cannot be overelaborated as UNMIL draws down its troop. It is time to engender a new diagram of genuine development for **ALL** if peace must remain an impeccable embodiment of our emerging democracy.

In March 2014, Liberia was beset by an unusual and incurable plague. The Ebola Virus Disease became known to all Liberians as it spreads rapidly beyond Lofa County after few weeks. For almost 15 months, our country along with international partners jointly mobilized to defeat this life-threatening disease.

This devastating outbreak overran our health sector to an extent that thousands of our citizens, including nurses and doctors had to die. There was widespread panic and fear especially in August 2014 as dead bodies were found in almost every corner. The socio-economic impact of this virus is too huge and government needs to intervene speedily as UNMIL draws down.

The blemish of Ebola remains visible even though we are celebrating a resounding victory. As a result of Ebola, Liberians have become jobless and choiceless. 4,769 lives were lost. The number of orphans, widows, and widowers has increased. Food insecurity, investor aversion, poverty, and unemployment have taken precedence.

The need to address pressing public demands through a realistic post-Ebola recovery strategy is crucial to sustaining peace and enhancing national security. National security begins with the people; as such, it is important to alleviate socio-economic disparity and patronage. As we bid farewell to UNMIL next year, we are of the strongest conviction that peace can prevail only if those who are in authority do not abuse public confidence.

We must make maximum use of lessons learnt from Ebola to make Liberia a more wholesome and peaceful society even beyond UNMIL's transition. We can protect ourselves if we invest more resources to promote security sector reform. Building a vibrant and professional national security force is an indispensable step forward.

On May 09, 2015, the World Health Organization declared Liberia Ebola-free after witnessing months of tragic scenes. This was indeed a joyous moment as citizens and non-citizens across Liberia jubilantly celebrated a long-awaited victory over Ebola. A Liberia after Ebola is what we now see, but are there lessons to learn? Of course yes!

Therefore, permit us to consider few important lessons learnt from our most recent encounter with Ebola that could positively impact Liberia's progress beyond UNMIL's transition.

Lessons from Ebola

1. Rebuild the health system

The Ebola virus seriously exposed our weak health sector. Liberia did not have sufficient public health infrastructures, adequate and trained medical personnel, modern equipment to really contain/ combat this disease. Public Health Centers were unavailable to respond to the EVD promptly as construction of Ebola Treatment Unit became apparent. The crisis underscored a point often made by WHO: fair and inclusive health systems are a bedrock of social stability, resilience, and economic health. Failure to invest in a country's health sector creates a dark cloud.

1. Improved Disaster Management and Response Mechanism

Liberia still lacks a conclusive disaster management framework in order to respond to situations of emergency and complexities. As a result of this, we stand a very high risk. Ebola overran us because we were ill-prepared and did not have good surveillance mechanism in place to combat this deadly virus. Nigeria, Senegal, and Mali prevented and survived Ebola because they were fully prepared. We were also lacking basic prevention/control intervention and contact tracing methods. Strategic emergency response was lacking from the beginning. We made a mistake by not treating our first case as a national emergency.

2. Increase Public Awareness and Education on Public Health and Hygiene

Initially, many persons were unaware about the Ebola Virus Disease. They had little or no



education. Ebola had to spread because local residents did not really know basic prevention and control measures. Anti-Ebola rules were unavailable. In fact, most Liberians were unable to adapt to the culture of hand washing and other good hygiene practices.

3. Alleviate Public Mistrust, Denial, and Poor Information Dissimilation

Even though, the government of Liberia informed citizens about the existence of Ebola in Liberia, but disbelief and denial were on the increase as a result of public mistrust. The people did not trust what the government was saying from the early stage. There were also misinformation and doubts about Ebola from some government officials.

4. Promote Community Engagement and Collaboration

Community Health Mobilizers and peer educators were very late in engaging community inhabitants. Most community leaders and stakeholders had low understanding about preventing this virus. Building urgent collaboration with vulnerable communities was invisibly seen during the early stage of Ebola

5. Upgrade Research Capacity and Profile

Ebola has been known for 40 years, but this virus was very strange to Liberia when it first entered through Lofa County. Some of our nurses and public health technicians did not even know the process leading to preventing or controlling Ebola. The Research profile of Liberia is very low; as a result, citizens remain vulnerable to hazards. We need to train more researchers in different

disciplines in order to curb future health crisis.

6. Empower Local Farmers and Reduce Food Insecurity

During the Ebola Outbreak, the price of basic commodities was skyrocketing as a result of scarcity. Farmers had put down their tools. According to a survey conducted by World Bank, 65 percent of local farmers said the 2014 harvest was smaller than 2013. Food insecurity has been and remains a major challenge.

7. Reclaim our Economy

Before Ebola, our economy was at the verge of collapse as a result of corruption, fiscal indiscipline, tax invasion, hyper-inflation, etc. Since our economy is dominated by foreigners, multi-million investment companies and business had to shut-down; thereby, leading to massive joblessness. According to a survey report by World Bank, 41% of respondents were not working as of January 2015. It is time to realistically empower local businesses and increase export over import. Youth employment is a matter of urgency as UNMIL shuts down its operation next year.

8. Promote Cordiality between Law Enforcement Officers and Civilians.

The death of Shaki Kamara and injury of others exposed the incompetence of the AFL. How can a soldier use lethal force/weapon against armless civilians? This does not conform to international protocol. As UNMIL draws down on June 30, 2016, one of our pressing priorities is to promote good relationship between LNP/AFL personnel and civilians.

9. Recruit and Train more Security Personnel

As UNMIL leaves, our security strength in terms of manpower is very low. Does Liberia have the security to provide internal and external security for about 4.1 million people? Can our force ably perform the task of VIP protection, Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) – bomb disposal,

Prison security, Management and monitoring the importation and use of fire arms, Maritime security, Border management and patrol, Static Guarding, and Cash Escorts?

10. Collectivism

This is a major lesson learnt from Ebola. Liberians managed to defeat this virus as a result of integration. They put aside their differences and confronted the virus with one determination and courage.

11. Adherence to the Rule of Law

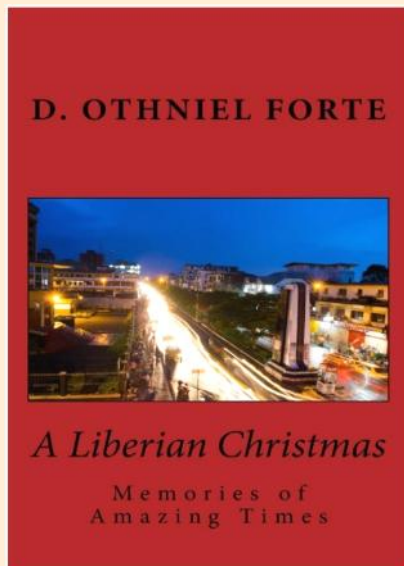
During the state of emergency, orders were given by the government for citizens to abide by. Citizens, government officials, as well as security officers violated some of those laws or stringent measures. Even though few people refused to follow procedures, but Ebola couldn't have ended if Liberians did not obey the laws.

In conclusion, if these lessons are put in place, Liberia will remain a peaceful nation even if UNMIL leaves next year.



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

Book Review



A Liberian Christmas Memories of Amazing Times

If D. Othniel Forte's finesse of an opening line to the prologue of his book, *A Liberian Christmas: Memories of Amazing Times*, doesn't command your instant and exclusive attention, I am afraid not many other sentences elsewhere in literature may succeed in doing so. He writes: "*The boy was flying on the clouds on the back of the mystical dragon.*" Simultaneously simple and complex, this sentence drew me in immediately; beckoning me, seemingly, to prepare for a thriller of a ride.

And oh yes, what a ride it was! As, from that magical first sentence onward, in the 90-page slim but stimulatingly weighty book, Forte embarks on a singular mission: To take the reader on an intrepid journey to experience the sensation of 'flying on the clouds' akin to that felt, albeit in a dream, by his main protagonist, the fictional little boy he introduces to us so early on in the book.

For readers, like me, who grew up or lived in Liberia before the comeuppance that was the brutal civil war of 1989 – 2003, Forte takes us on a nostalgic trip down memory lane as he weaves a lighthearted but poignant narrative of the glorious days of a peaceful Liberia epitomized by his moving portrayal of the secularity that, back then, marked Christmas in the land of his nativity—both in spirit and in performance.

Forte reminds us, through his vivid recollections and descriptions of holiday symbols such as *Old man Beggar and Santa Claus*, as well as the old-time nationalized anthems like '*Santa Claus We Are*' and '*Young Girl Stop Drinking Lysol*' of the amazing atmosphere of oneness that spun from the spirit of Liberian Christmas of old.

With the silkiness of a raconteur—perceptive and wise, Forte delves

into a host of issues. Among them: Liberian family dynamics—especially as it pertains paternal dominance, the hard life of vast segments of Liberian society in which, for example, poor market women sold wares all day, every day to educate their children, the 'bush people' versus 'city people' dynamic, and so much more. But through it all, he doesn't forget to stress how those times, '*normal times*' he calls it, still were, comparatively, better.

In harkening back to what 'once was' in Liberia when, in his words, "*each person was the keeper of the other,*" Forte sends us all a powerful message: that all is not lost, that we still have it in us as a people to do good by our neighbors and by our country just like in those days he so admirably recalls.

I could not help, but read this book with a look of reminiscence and satisfaction spread across my face. I can assure you too that your

experience will be the same if not better!

A Liberian Christmas: Memories of Amazing Times,

by **D. Othniel Forte.**

CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

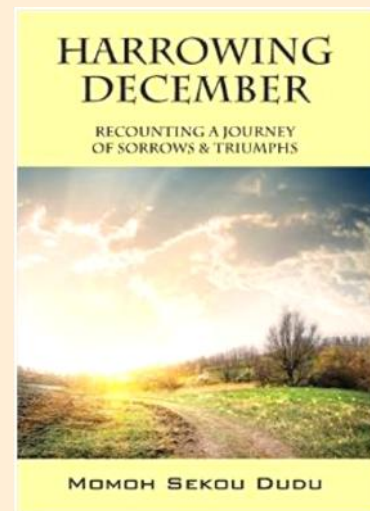
90 pages.

Reviewed by

Momoh Sekou Dudu.



*Momoh Dudu is the author of
Harrowing December*



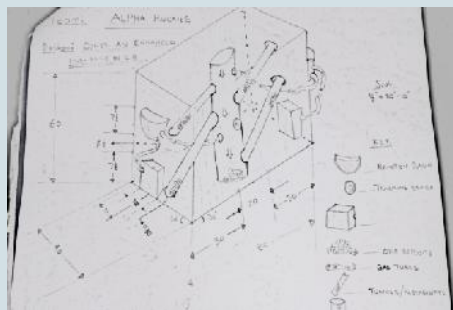
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Education Spotlight

University of Liberia “Engineering Concept Design Competition”

By: **Dr. Emmett Dennis &
Preston M. Tulay**

Progression is an innate tendency of all humans; Liberians are no exception to this cradle of truth. For many of today’s Liberians – the youth, and especially Liberia’s university bound students, their right and access to comparable education has taken a back seat in the past years, partly due to the country’s self-inflicted civil wars that lasted for some fourteen years. Today, the same young and old university bound Liberia students are no longer dwelling on the unpleasant past of their homeland mistakes, rather, they are enthusiastic and determine to use what little they have available and excel, in their pursuit of higher and better education comparable to the neighboring countries in West Africa and that of other higher institutions of learning worldwide.



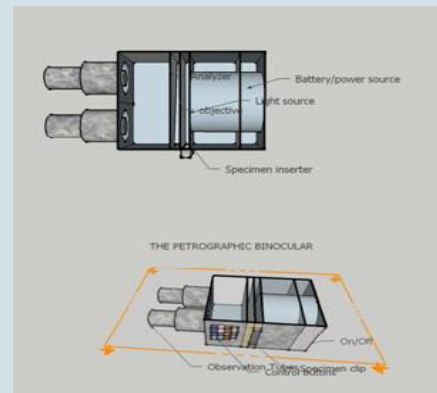
The students at the University of Liberia, especially the engineering students are no different from students elsewhere. They are students who will learn, if they are taught; they are students that will do academic projects, if they are required to do so; they are

students who can ask and answer questions in class, if they are challenged to do so; they are students that can identify problems, and they can carefully formulate solutions to the problems; they are students of all college age groups and interests; they are students just like you and I, and if you give them the opportunity with little academic support and resources, they will be just as good as you and I, or even better. They are students willing to learn in earnest as they prepare for their expected role in the development of Liberia.



It is from this careful observation of the many University of Liberia engineering students that I draw my strength and enthusiasm as a former Peace Corps Volunteer and now a USAID-EHELD Contract Faculty at the University of Liberia, Engineering Department to teach, talk, and interact with these students. I see, hear, and understand the many needs of these students, and with this advantage, I have decided to explore the potentials of these students by challenging them to do what students do best – academic competition. This idea pioneered the beginning of the University of Liberia “Engineering Concept Design Competition” an event we hope will become an annual event at the University of Liberia with plans to be inclusion of other universities in Liberia. It is true that the concept and design prototypes in this competition are beginners,

but we believe that every great accomplishment has a beginning.



The University of Liberia “Engineering Concept Design Competition” was held on June 12, 2015 preceded by approximately one year of preparation time due to an eight month interruption in the student's research and academic work caused by the deadly Ebola epidemic in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. However, Ebola did not stop the determination of the students to seek answers to the many challenges facing them before, during, and after Ebola. On June 12, 2015, a total of eight teams of students (three members each), were ready to share with school administrators, teachers, industry professionals, and fellow students their engineering concepts and design prototypes covering the areas of:



Series Circuit

- (a) *a Petrographic Binocular,*
- (b) *a Hydroelectric DAM,*
- (c) *How to Compare the Hardness of Minerals,*
- (d) *Parallel Circuitry,*
- (e) *Student Database Management System,*
- (f) *Series Circuitry*
- (g) *Constructing Enhance Underground Mines in Liberia, and*
- (h) *Building a Solar Cooker.*

The topics were selected by the team members, reviewed and approved by instructors of the various topic related department. The program brought together over one hundred engineering professionals, teachers and students. Three professionals in electrical, environment, and architectural engineers served as judges with consideration of the following criteria (originality, innovative, intuitive, interpretive, and applicability) in Liberia. After three hours of team presenters wowing the audience and judges with straight to the point

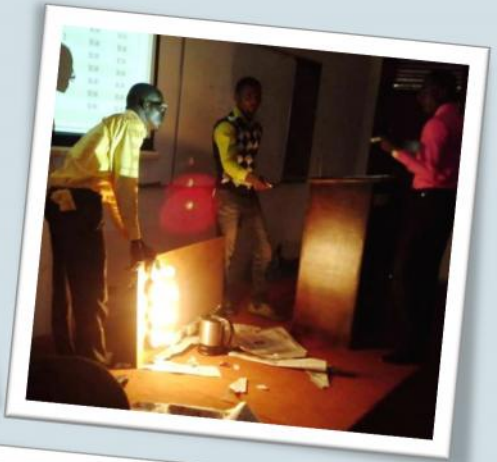


PowerPoint presentations, with a real practical show of mathematical calculations, designs, and working of project prototype; members of the audience were glad to have been present at this first University of Liberia "Engineering Concept Design Competition" that ended with the judges honoring these teams - Constructing an Enhance Underground Mines in Liberia (1st

place), Building a Solar Cooker (2nd place), and Hydroelectric DAM (3rd place) as winners. Audience observations and comments confirmed that ALL participating team members were WINNERS and certainly, they are promising future engineers that we MUST all do our part to support in their academic pursuit for excellence.



See a cross-section of pictures from the event.



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**



One of the hardest things to do in life is to enjoy the fruits, each day brings. Think about it... We spend more time in the past...beating ourselves up, stuck in prison and languishing over regrets OR living in total fear and anxiety of the future.

Something we couldn't POSSIBLY have ANY clue of what it holds.

Worry about the things you have control over, if you must. For the things you don't, chuck it!

But how many of us can truly say...
"I LIVE IN THE MOMENT!"

Don't be burdened by the anticipation of grandiose gestures. It's ALWAYS the simple things. My neighbor's dog ran up to me this morning and licked me. Hey...it's a start!

Appreciate what the day brings...
Just "K"

By **Kuluba Mucorlor**

Liberian Proverbs

A big goat does not sneeze without good reason. *A wise person has a reason for every action.*

A bird can be guarded, a wife cannot. *It is impossible to keep any relationship devoid of trust.*

A black goat is hard to find at night. *Some tasks are so foolish to even attempt.*

A child isn't sent to collect the honey. *Do not send incompetent people to perform any task.*

A child who is fearless is likely to bring tears to his mother's eyes. *People, who take unnecessary risk, tend to often cause pain to their loved ones and others around them.*

A donkey always says thank you with a kick. *Some people are just ungrateful, regardless of what help others give them, they end up paying back with ingratitude.*

A dog without a tail can't greet its master. *Dogs usually wiggle their tails when they are happy; hence, it is not easy to tell if a tailless dog is happy.*

A child who listens is certain to be successful in life. *People, who heed good counsel, are often rewarded with success.*

A girl doesn't turn into a woman overnight. *We mature with time. It is a growth process.*

Our Hearts are in Deep Pain with Ghanaians

Martin K. N. Kollie



Standing with Ghanaians during these heart-aching moments and depressing hours is our compelling duty as Africans. Consoling and comforting President John Mahama and his people during this time of national mourning engenders a new sense of oneness in Africa. We must not allow Ghanaians alone to go through this period of sorrow and sadness if we truly believe in an unending crusade of African solidarity and unity.

Ghanaians need us more than ever before and we cannot afford to abandon them along this terrifying journey. The scar of Ghana's recent tragedy is too panicking! Our hearts are in deep pain with all Ghanaians, especially those who were directly affected as a result of this strange phenomenon. The memory of 'Ghana Petrol Station Disaster' will forever remain fresh

on the minds of Ghanaians and generations yet unborn. We want to extend our earnest sympathy to bereaved families as they endure this tough time of grief.

As Ghana rewrites its history, this disaster shall surely be recorded as one of the deadliest and most devastating of all times. June 3, 2015 was a sad day in Accra, Ghana when an explosion at a petrol station killed as many as 90 people, many of whom had sought shelter there from torrential rain. According to fire brigade spokesman Prince Billy Anaglate, the blast was caused by a fire that erupted at a nearby lorry terminal then spread to the petrol station and other buildings.

"It was raining last night and people took shelter at the filling station. And as they were there, because that is a filling station, it kept raining so there was still running water that was rising up. And, because it is a filling station there were a lot of fuel particles around it and it got contaminated with the water and then those that are not mixable with the water will definitely float. So, they were floating on the surface of the water - but it's running water, so it was able to run from the filling station to a distance where there was a



naked fire and it picked the fire

from there," Anaglate said. He said the fire ripped through the filling station, operated by GOIL, shattering windows and walls and reducing the station to rubble.



A friend of mine in a very frustrating tone phoned me from Accra to explain how terrible the situation was. "We are going through real trauma as a result of this incident. We did not expect this to happen, but it has taught us some real lessons. The loss is too grave. Flood in Ghana is intensifying every year and we need to work hard to control it, otherwise all of us will soon become directly victimized, He said." Surely, if caution is not taken as soon as possible by all African nations, flooding will invade our continent one day. Ghana was caught unaware recently by this 'Petrol Station Disaster'. It came as a soaring surprise to many Ghanaians, including foreign nationals.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was accurate in his assertion when he said "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." The recent disaster in Ghana did not only affect Ghanaians alone, but it affected every inhabitant of this continent somehow. What affects

Ghana now and even tomorrow must be a paramount concern to Liberia and every nation in Africa. What affects Liberia must also concern Nigerians and South Africans. When Africans hold to this solid conviction of commonality and solidarity, our continent shall forever rise above its existing nightmares to a height of mutuality and prosperity.



Even though our backgrounds and beliefs may differ, but we are one people with a common goal to make Africa better through regional integration and cohesion. Even though we may share dissimilar political views and social identities, but this continent remains our heartbeat and nothing can prevent us from blowing an unrelenting trumpet of pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism. Even though our historical heritage and cultural values may slightly vary depending on geographical demarcations, but something deep down within us always reminds us that we belong to a blessed continent call Africa. A continent greatly endowed with abundance of natural resources and unmatched talents. We must unite now in order to advance a Continent that is prepared to prevent, respond, and control all forms of disasters posing severe threat to the survival and safety of Africans.

The 54 Sovereign States in Africa must begin to cultivate an unyielding path of mutual interest and respect if Africa must defeat prevailing foes including growing disasters. A new Africa is only possible when we (Africans) begin to demonstrate a spirit of collectivism, harmony, and brotherhood. The recent disaster in Ghana calls for Africa to step up its disaster management and control strategy in order to avoid potential incidents of catastrophe. Protecting Africans from hidden hazards and risks through genuine measures is critical to ensuring public safety and security. Africans have lived in fear and trauma for too long as a result of disasters. Some of the deadliest disasters of recent that have created a gloomy atmosphere over Africa and remain even visible today include:

1. *Ebola Crisis in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone*
2. *Xenophobia in South Africa*
3. *Sectarian Atrocities in Central African Republic*
4. *Petrol Station Disaster in Ghana*
5. *Heavy Flooding around Africa*



These are just few notable incidents Africa needs to learn from. The emerging wave of disasters around Africa is disturbing and traumatizing. The African Union must engender a fresh, realistic, holistic approach of addressing some of these unusual tragedies currently invading our continent. The initiation of an effective continental disaster management framework and roadmap is vital to enhancing regional security, sustaining inclusive development, promoting socio-economic growth, and preserving pan-Africanism and solidarity. It is time for all African nations to consolidate their efforts and resources to combat existing disasters and looming hazards.

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).

*In House Poet**Here we are*

We are the sons of travelers
 Of men who walked miles in
 search of home
 They slept in deserts
 And sailed on oceans
 Roaming the forests for a land
 they could own
 Now,
 When the plantations needed us no
 more
 Like garbage our site was set
 We were thrown to rot
 But never did
 Others come back
 Rescued from the fangs
 That chained us
 Now, we're stuck
 The brotherhood of freedom
 The off springs of the Mayflower
 The Kpelleh, the Kru, the Mano,
 the Gio, the Lorma,
 the Dan, the Mende, the Kwa, the
 Negro's den
 They folded us from all sides
 To chew our space
 From Mount Nimba, Bo, Cavalla,
 When we said we were free
 They looked another way
 Like orphans, our cries were ours
 This is the theatre of the black
 man's hall
 Enmeshed by the hollowness
 We're a painting of hopes
 Of desert travelers, Traders,
 Farmers, blacksmiths, runaway
 slaves,
 The Grain Coast hustlers
 Our identity is wrapped in a cloth
 Of one million colors
 The tye dye nation

Of the illiterate, the literate
 The peasants, the Diasporas, the
 locals
 The neck-tie roamers, the rolled
 up sleeves
 The cowl bowl sellers, the penpen
 riders
 We went to bed with anarchy and
 got
 Up a smiling people
 Risen from hell
 The Sun is set for a new day
 And,
 Here we are

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

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 has started a village-writing program entitled "The Moonlight Series".

Three Suitors and a Bride – The Hunter's Dilemma



Misters Dog, Eagle and Otter were three inseparable friends. They loved the forest. They hunted, played and even lived together for many years. As they grew older, they started thinking about getting married and having a families. They all promised to be friends forever and to raise their children to be friends.

One day, as they were out playing, they came across a maiden on her way to fetch water. She was so pretty that each of them stood in their tracks, and none dared move. The noise of the other maidens on the way to the creek snapped them out of their trance and they all ran into hiding. They then followed the girls to the creek but remained hidden in the bushes.

Each day, at around the same time, they would go out on the road to the creek and watch the maiden. Soon, her friends noticed and teased her about it. "Somebody has a crush."

"What crush?" asked the maiden.

"Don't you mean several crushes?" Another teased.

She insisted, "You guys are crazy. There is nothing going on here. It is nothing to it but your imagination."

With time, they got comfortable enough to ask her name and began visiting her. Just when all was going well, Mr. Otter decided to make a move. He called his friends together that morning and informed them, "I intend to

seek the maiden's hand in marriage and appealed for your support when I ask her parents this evening." This was shocking news to them.

"What are you talking about? Why would you want to do this when you know very well that it is I the maiden gazes on with longing?" asked Mr. Eagle. "She looks up at me and blows kisses." Mr. Eagle said.

Mr. Dog barked in anger. "What kind of foolishness is this? Each day we come here, who does the maiden stroke tenderly? Who does she and her friends kneel down and play with?" asked the dog.



Each in turn related how the maiden had actually made gestures toward him and that the other should not dare. A fight broke out between them. No one seemed willing to listen to the other nor did anyone seem ready to back down.

The next few days got worse. Each animal went to the maiden's house. The first was the dog. He asked the mother, "Oldma, you like me right?"

She seemed taken aback by the question but did not hesitate to say, "Of course, I do. Who does not like a nice fluffy companion like you?"

"Good," said Mr. Dog.

"Why are you asking?" the maiden's mother inquired.

"Nothing oh," said the dog, "I just wanted to be sure."

"Mr. Dog," the woman said, looking at him with a look of one who knows better, "You know that you can't fool me right? What is going on here?"

"Well," he hesitated, and then spoke. "I was wondering. I really like you and your family. I was thinking that now that your daughter is of age, if you would help me talk to your husband on my behalf. I really love her and want her hand in marriage. You know I am hard working and will make a good son in law. In fact, I will even help him hunt more meat which we could sell and get money to buy many other things. I will take the best care of your daughter; more than anyone else would"

"Oh, this is what this is about?" the woman asked. "Anyway, I hear you and I promise to tell my husband at the right time. We will see what he has to say. This is a delicate matter so we must do so at the right time."

Thus, they continued doing what they were doing and discussed the subject no more.

Early the next morning, when the husband left to hunt, Mr. Eagle, flew in. He knew that Mr. Dog had tagged along with the hunter in pretense of helping catch game. He really was trying to win the man's favor.

He on the other hand, had his plans. He perched on the roof and scanned the area, once satisfied, he came to the kitchen window and said, "Good morning Oldma, how are you today?"

"I am fine oh and you?" The mother replied.

"I am doing well. Anyways I just came by to greet you and gave you a small gift," he dropped the monkey he had snatched on the floor as he said this.

“Oh thank you,” the woman said. “You know what? Why don’t you just wait around while I prepare some hot pepper soup with this meat? We can be lecturing until the chew is ready.”

Thus, they talked and eventually, Mr. Eagle came around to his purpose. He explained why he believed himself the best person to marry the maiden. She made no promise other than to talk to her husband upon his return.

They ate their food in silence and the eagle flew off afterwards.

Later that evening, the maidens accompanied her mother to the creek to fetch water. She and the other girls ran ahead to gossip and talk about boys out of the hearing of their mothers. As the mother was removing her bucket from the water, Mr. Otto surfaced. “My Oldma, how is your evening? Is everything alright?”

“Yes my son, everything is fine. What about you? Are you doing well?” she asked.

“I’m okay,” he replied. They talked for a while as she collected her water. Just when she was about to leave, he told her to wait. He dived into the water and after a few moments, he returned and said, “Here is something for you.” He gave her a big catfish.

“Thank you,” she said, and as before, she offered to prepare an evening meal and share with him. They went home and talked along the way. In time, he came around to ask the mother for her daughter’s hand. He thought he made a convincing case.

“You know this is not up to me to make that decision, but I will tell my husband when he returns. That settled the issue for the time being.

Thus, all three of them played their cards as they awaited the

husband’s reply. None, however, dared ask the father directly. They all feared that as a hunter, he might not hesitate to pull out his gun and shoot them. Each figured that the wife was best person to make a convincing case for him.

Meanwhile, the maiden and her friends noticed that the three were no longer together. Instead, each came to the creek alone and tried to win her affection. This seemed strange since they were deliberately avoiding each other. However, the charade did not last as some bad news interrupted it.



They learned that the hunter failed to return home. The news spread throughout the town. Such an important hunter was invaluable to the town and the chief was rightly concerned. As was traditional in the town, well-wishers went by to comfort the family. The animals also joined in wishing the family well.

The mother was overwhelmed with everything. When she saw the three hovering nearby a three in their yard, she had a thought. She called them aside and said. “The one who finds my husband and brings him back alive will marry my daughter.” They were surprised, but accepted the challenge.

When they left the house, Mr. Eagle suggested, “You know what? I think that we should work together. We have been friends from childhood and should not

forget that. To be honest, we work better as a team. I am sure you will all agree that cooperating on issues has helped us in the past and should do so now.”

“I think you are right,” Mr. Otto said.

“Yes, I also agree,” said the dog. “In fact, I think I should take the lead. No one sniffs better than I do.” Thus, Mr. Dog took the lead. He smelt and sniffed until he picked up the scent of the hunter. They followed it until they reached the riverbank.

Then he lifted his head and informed them, “This is where it ends, right here. I think he must have gone into the water. Beyond this point, I am not sure we can track him, we have to find another means.”

They all stood there thinking the same thing but each afraid to say it out. This particular water was the dwelling place of the Water People. Everyone in the land knew this. They also feared the Water People because once they got hold of you they didn’t let go. With the trail ending here, it appeared all hope was gone.

However, Mr. Otter said, “I will have to pay them a visit. They are my friends from long ago. The least we can do is try.” With this, he dived into the water and swam down into the depths. When he got there, he heard loud drum rolls and saw that a noisy festival was going on. Before he could enquire as to the cause of the celebration, he saw the hunter tied to a stick. They lit a huge bonfire and water people were arriving from all over.

He rushed to the Water King and after paying his respects, pleaded. “My wise old friend, could you please stay the slaying of the hunter? He is a good man.”

The King was curious for this was an odd request. "My good friend, why would I do such a thing? It has been a long time since me and my people had a decent meal, so why should we give this one up?"

"The hunter is my friend. I'd rather you didn't eat him," said Mr. Otter.

The Water Chief shook his head slowly. He informed him, "You know very well that things have been rough on us lately. This man is partly responsible for the hardship we are experiencing.

Mr. Otter was surprised, and asked, "How is that so?"

"He has driven away the monkeys that used to frequent our water. At least when they did, we grabbed some and feasted on them. Now it is impossible to get hold of a single monkey."

Mr. Otter paused, and suggested, "Why don't you people eat catfish and tilapia like the others?"

The Chief replied, "That is all we get to eat, you know that. We can't live well only on fish. Furthermore, we are just tired of fish.

It is not as if we have other options, the fact is, fish is all that is left since man decided to destroy the forest and drive the animals away. Hunters are the worst of men."

Mr. Otter tried every trick available. He did his best to make his friends release the hunter but each time the chief return a negative response.

Almost discouraged, he suggested a trade. "How about I find you a hundred raccoons and possums, some rice and a barrel of fresh palm oil? Would you let the hunter go free?"

The Water Chief turned slowly to his friend and said, "No trade, we want this man."

"You are not a bad king, and I understand your situation, but at least think about it," said Mr. Otto.

The king paused and after rolling the thought over he said, "I know you are trying to save your friend so I will try and help you. The only trade we will consider is one hundred monkeys, that or the hunter dies."



Mr. Otter realized that nothing would get the hunter out of there except finding them the monkeys. He also knew that he was running out of time. The sooner he got the monkeys there the better. However, there was one problem with the idea. It was nearly impossible to catch so many monkeys under the present conditions. In fact, catching one was difficult enough, so how would they catch one hundred! The monkeys were simply too fast. They leaped and jumped from branch to branch at alarming speed.

When he got to the surface, Mr. Otter met his two anxious friends who feared the Water People had eaten him. They were relieved to see him, but sad not to see the hunter. He told them the demands of the Water People.

"What!" screamed the dog. "Are they crazy? There is no way to catch so many monkeys. They might as well kill him."

Mr. Eagle pondered for a while and suggested he talk to his friends. With that, he flew off. He contacted all the eagles he knew and asked them to help him get his bride. They in turn, asked other eagles and soon the monkey kingdom was on fire. Eagles of every kind swarmed in on them. They captured as many monkeys possible but did not reach one hundred. Therefore, they flew off again and managed to get the number. They dropped them into the water and flew off.

The Water People were stunned at first, then overwhelmed. Every few moments, they would drop a monkey into the water. When they counted one hundred, the Chief ordered the hunter released. Mr. Otter collected him and they returned to the surface.

Now they all went back to the hunter's house. There was much rejoicing and fanfare. When he settled down, his wife informed him of the promise she made to the animals. She said, "You should now give your daughter's hand in marriage to the one who had brought him back safely."

At first, he had been grateful to Mr. Otter, but when he got to the land, he learned that Mr. Dog's keen sense of smell was the only thing that led them to the river. Mr. Otter's friendship with the Water People had made it possible for him to negotiate his terms of release, and the courage of Mr. Eagle and his friends had secured his ransom. Thus, he was alive today because of all of these efforts. The question now was to which one should he give his daughter's hand in marriage?

D. OTHNIEL FORTE

Living the Kwee Life



I was barely eight, when my father packed me up and told me we were headed for the big city, Mobroyor. Actually, I had only about five pieces of clothes so there was nothing to pack up. It was still early and I was sleepy.

Somehow, everyone else either was in on this or seemed to be aware of this but me. My cousins were there fussing over me some getting me into my best clothes- a flowery dress. It has pink and white roses, mixed with petals apparently falling off the roses. They kept saying things like "I'm kwi now"; "I should be on my best behavior" and "I should not forget about them. When my parents are coming, I should remember to send them gifts." The truth is I had no idea what was going on. I was confused.

I had never received near this much attention in my life except when I joined the Sandy a while back. I actually thought that was my best day; I mean with all the fanfare, noise, dancing and food. Oh yes, I love food. I am not necessarily a heavy eater, but something about food turns me into bits. I remember the bush meat they killed for us; the hot steaming soups, spicy as hell. Uhm, that day... But I guess not even the thought of food can help me now.

I was jerked back into my reality when one of the older girls gently squeezed on my breast. Well now, that is more like an overstatement. They were just small ridges with seeds. She remarked something to the effect that they did not have to worry about boys and me anytime soon. To this comment, they all burst out laughing. The other girls were trying desperately to do my hair into some corn role, in spite of all the commotion.

My aunt came yelling. She scolded them and turned to my mother. "They mon nah

fix her hair. If she goes there looking good, they will not want her. In fact, they will send her back. Dab what you want? You wan them mon send her back? The people nah want children them web their parents geb money. They want poor poor children them."

That was my aunt Lucy for you. She was the undisputed village expert on city life and everything kwi. Up to this point, the girls spoke only in our dialect; but she had this way of making the smallest things seem grand. At every chance she got, she infused her kwiness. I make no fuss with this because I assume there must be one in each village. She was a character; dramatic, flamboyant and loud, when she felt the need to be and trust me that was so often. She was always correcting people and speaking English.

She had lived in two big cities, Harper and Monrovia when she was younger. She even claims to have a son who stays with the father in Monrovia. No one here knows this for certain, but she receives letters once in a while from someone she says it is her son. Since she is one of the only persons in the whole village that reads, I guess we will never know. Not that this really matters; I mean everyone takes it as a fact. She says he is better off there with his father than to set foot in this tiny village. That there is one good point no one argues with when it comes up.

I now become alarmed because aunt Lucy's presence means something big is happening. My parents won't involve her if they did not have to. In fact, no parent would. When it came to kwi matters, Lucy was the guru. Many questions came to mind and all of them at once. What could she possibly be doing here? Why were they all over me as if it was my initiation all over? The one question that I did not imagine hence, I did not ask was this-Was I going to the big city? This went on for a while. My mother was tensed all this time. My father was elated. Nothing made me happier than to see him happy. I loved him so much and if something I did, was doing or was about to do made him feel this way,

I would gladly do it a million times over. She takes my hands and speaks softly.

"My child Jebbeh, I happy for you," she starts with her kwi again. "You nah make us all proud." She goes on to explain many things, using her big big English. I had had enough of this; I paused her at some point, and I ask her to stop speaking that kind of English to me. She is annoyed. She rants on about how I am about to go to the place where only this kind of English they will be speaking to me.

My mother jumps in and says something. They walk away from me; argue a bit and then she shuts up abruptly. I seem to think my mother is scared that is why she backs out. I heard something like "I thought you said she was the best in your class?" and to this Ma Lucy replied definitively in the positive, nodding her head frantically. They talk in hushed voices when they noticed I am staring at them. They keep glancing my way but this time I hear nothing at all.

They return and Ma Lucy takes my hands in hers again. She say that I am about to go to the big city to live with some very rich kwi people. I guess it was denial or shock then denial. I look at her wide-eyed and freeze. Nothing moves for a while. Fear grips me like never before. All I know about kwi life comes from her 'classes'. She likes to call them that. However, in truth, it was just a congregation of less-busy kids who wanted to hear more of her endless stories. She does teach us some English phrases, words and parts of the alphabet but never enough to reach the end. She says that if we are good she might just reach to the end of the ABCs. I suspected for some time now that she did this on purpose.

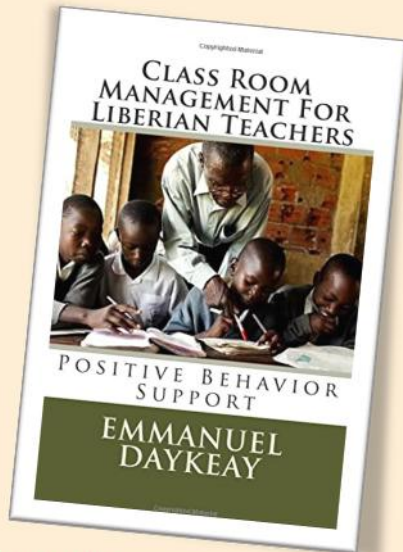
Was it because she did not know the rest or she was afraid that we might do better than she did?

All my friends say I am smart in picking up her 'lessons'. They complain it is difficult, but it really isn't (at least to me) if one follows her keenly

TO BE CONTINUED.....

STAFF

NEW RELEASES



Class Room Management for Liberian Teachers: Positive Behavior Support focuses on practical strategies to prevent and reduce behavior problems and enhance student learning, particularly Positive Behavior Support (PBS). This book discusses the mythologies and proofs of effective classroom management, provides an overview of the theoretical and pragmatic basis of Positive Behavior Support, and describes PBS interventions from peer-reviewed research, highlighted in easy-to-understand language to facilitate teachers' knowledge of evidence-based techniques. Real-world. Each year, thousands of new Liberian teachers head out for their first teaching job, ready to fulfill a lifetime dream. However, most teachers have nothing to prepare them for or support them on one of the most significant parts of their job: how to effectively run a classroom and handle the students. *Class Room Management for Liberian Teachers* is the first book to give Liberian teachers the skills they need to manage a classroom effectively. Liberian teachers are empowered to Lead, Inspire, and Change the lives of many Students.

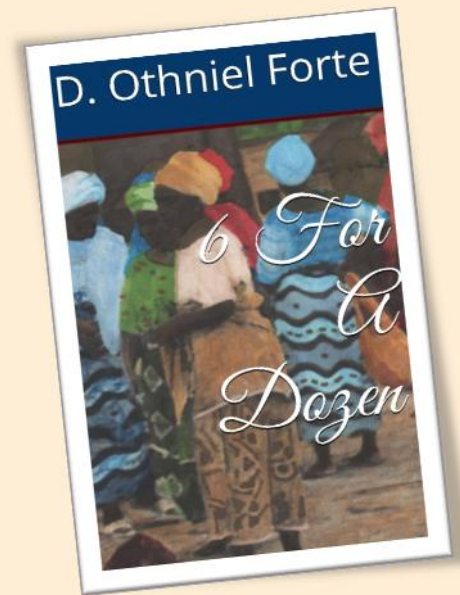
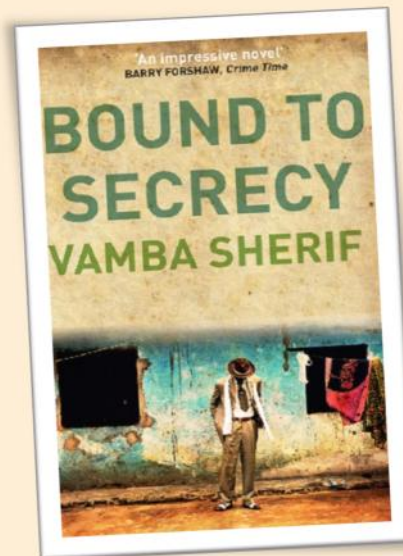
BOUND TO SECRECY

William Mawolo arrives in a small Liberian town with a secret mission: to investigate the mysterious disappearance of the police chief. The locals, however - police force and citizens alike - are far from happy about his presence, and their hostility is

increasing daily, threatening to boil over. At the same time, Mawolo is drawn to the departed chief's daughter, Makemeh, who for some reason doesn't seem to be too concerned about her missing father. Intrigued, Mawolo decides to stay longer than required - and even attempts to take charge of the town. Little by little, he starts to behave like the despotic man whose disappearance he came to investigate. His desire to uncover the town's dark secrets puts him in danger . . . but will his heart rule his head?

Bound To Secrecy is an exploration of power and the fear it generates; and of love in all its magical, addictive forms.

A rich mix of African tradition, classic crime fiction and the supernatural, *Bound to Secrecy* is a captivating account of the complexities of Liberian society and the inevitable clash between modern life and ancient cultures.



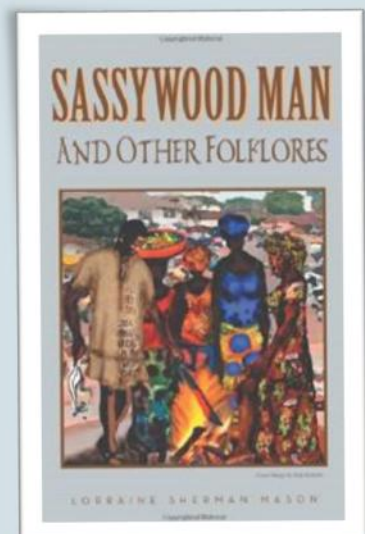
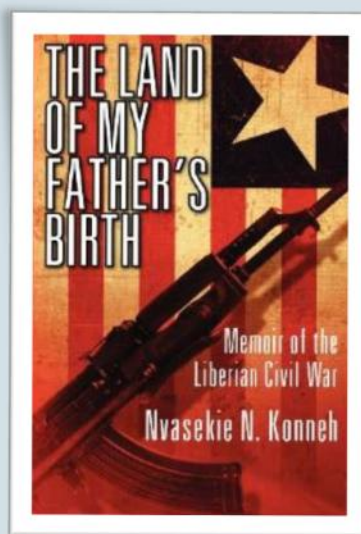
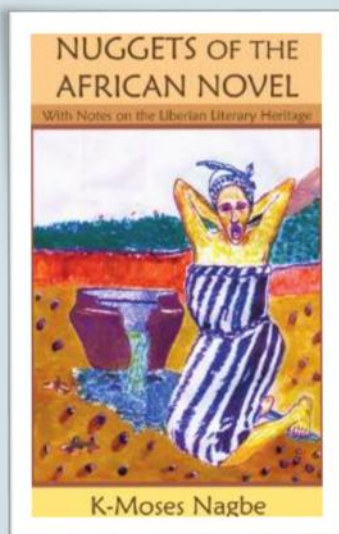
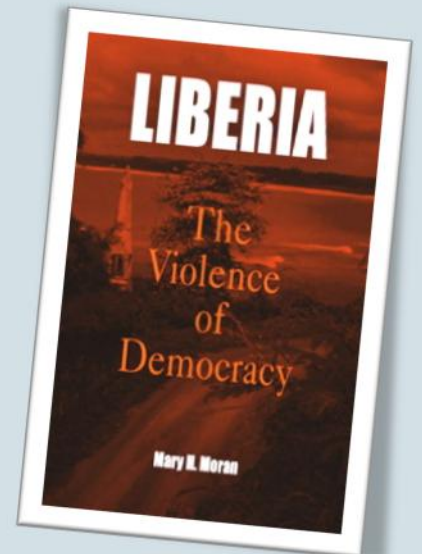
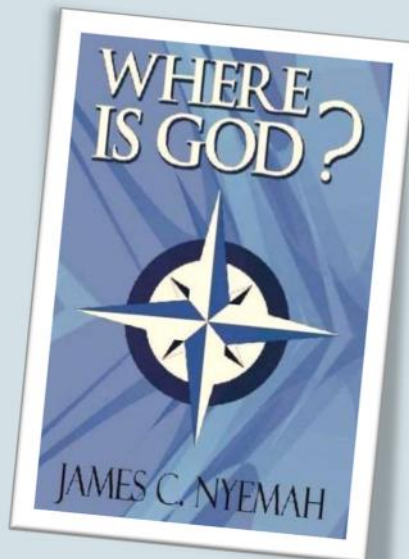
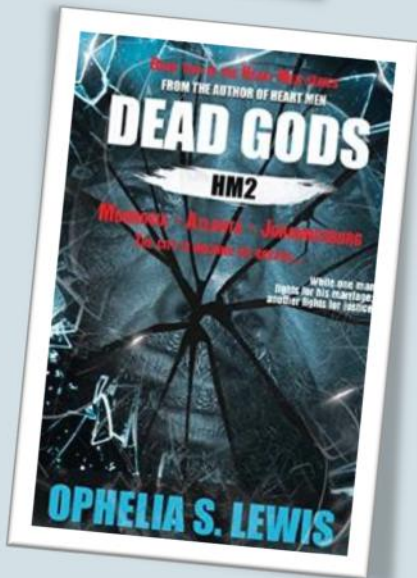
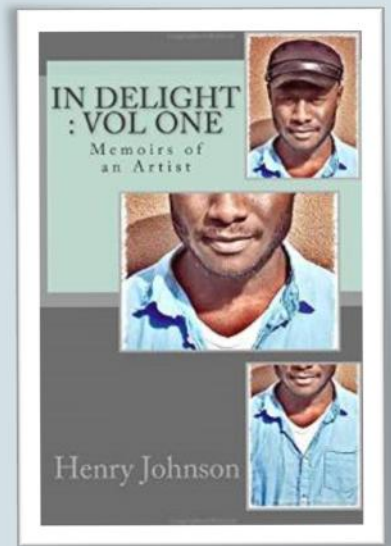
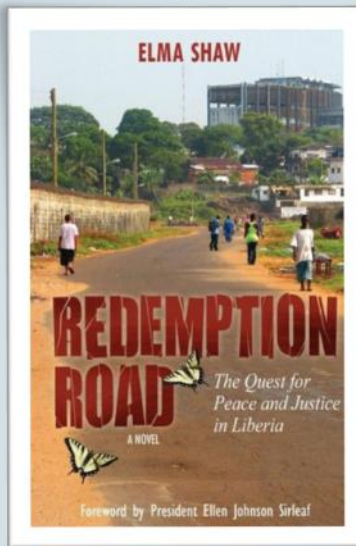
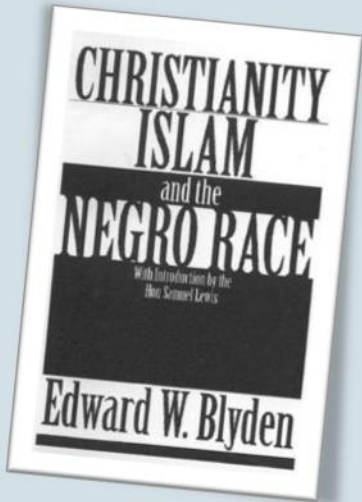
6 FOR A DOZEN

The telling of stories is a tradition in itself within the Liberian community. It is a skill, one reserved for a special class of people, storytellers. It is a culture within a culture. In many tribes, only trained people or the elderly told stories for educating or entertaining purposes. Anyone can tell a story, but only few can tell it well. This book follows in that regard. The stories range from personal to traditional and folklore. Within each story, the author embeds local customs, traditions and belief systems of various Liberian tribes. Readers will identify with characters on many levels because of the realness of their situations. *6 For A Dozen* is a collection of stories from Liberia. It is an important addition to the growing body of Liberian literature written by Liberian authors.

ECLIPSED

It's best to work with the system, and right now - the system is war. 2003, civil war is raging in Liberia. At a rebel army base four young women are doing their best to survive the conditions of the war. Yet sometimes, the greatest threat comes not from the enemy's guns, but from the brutality of those on your own side. With the arrival of a new girl, who can read, and an old one, who can kill, how might this transform the future of this hard-bitten sisterhood?

**RECOMMENDED
READS**



Forgotten Heroes

Nathaniel Brander born in Petersburg in 1796 (date of death unknown) was Liberia's first Vice President (1848-1850). He was also a lawyer and politician. He came with a colonial vessel (March 1820) and was amongst the few that survived the ordeal in Sierra Leone.

Nathaniel Brander served as a Supreme Court Judge from 1843 to 1847. He served as Acting President in 1849 during Robert's long diplomatic mission to the United Kingdom and at all other times. He was challenged for the office of Vice President in the 1849 elections by three formidable opponents:

- a) **Daniel B. Warner**, the then Secretary of State,
- b) **Anthony D. Williams**, a former Colonial Agent and
- c) **Beverly R. Wilson**, a Legislator.

None of the candidate received a majority of the votes cast in the election, thus the winner had to be determined by to the House of Representatives, who elected Williams as vice president.

He married another emigrant, Harriet Waring, with whom he had one son, Albert Brander. Mrs. Waring was a widow and a native of Norfolk, Virginia. She was born in the year 1796 as Harriet Greaves. Her earlier marriage ended with the death of her ex-husband (a free black Colston Waring). This union had produced at least 10 children four of which died early upon arrival in the colony. She knew the pain of grief all too personal.

She wasn't new to power, Colston had served briefly as Colonial Agent in 1834 when Ashmun left and was elected Vice Agent of the colony. He also had succeeded Lott Carey as pastor of the Providence Baptist Church in 1828.

Harriet Graves Waring Brander was a milliner. Milliners were higher status occupations for women in America, and Harriet could remain among the first families of Liberia while making and selling bonnets. She had the good fortune to have her daughters marry into prominent families in Liberia, for example, Jane Rose married J.J Roberts whilst the eldest, Susanna married John N. Lewis. She is the famous Susanna in Liberian history.

Children's Story



Why Elephant Fears Goat



Once, long ago, Mr. Elephant and Mr. Goat were very good friends. They did everything together. One day Mr. Elephant began boasting to other animals that he could eat more than any other animal in the world, including his friend Mr. Goat. He bragged so much that his friend got angry and they argued.

"It is not true, I can eat more than you!" the Goat said.

"No, you cannot," said the Elephant. "I can eat more than anyone else. Look at my size if you do not believe. You are too small, even your stomach is small. But I am large and have a large belly."

"You may be large, but that does not prove anything," said the goat. In this manner, the argument continued until finally the two friends called on the town Chief to help in settle the quarrel.



The Chief listened to both and decided that the best way to solve the issue was to have a competition. He announced that the next day, the two friends would contest in an eating competition. They would have all the food they wished and by the end of the day, whoever ate the most will be the winner.

Early the next morning, the town was full. Everyone wanted to see the small goat that dared challenge the big elephant.

Goat and Elephant begin the contest. They ate and ate and ate. Mr. Elephant started eating from the top of the trees, while Mr. Goat started from the ground. They ate all morning, then afternoon and then evening. Finally, by nightfall, when they can no longer see, Elephant called for time out until morning. Goat agreed and they slept in the open field near a large rock. All the people went home.

At midnight, there was a strange noise; Mr. Elephant woke up to see what it was. To his surprise, he saw Mr. Goat chewing. "Goat!" he says. "What are you doing?"

Mr. Goat says, "I am eating the delicious large rock, and that when I'm finished, I'll come for you, Elephant."

Fearing for his life, Elephant ran away, leaving behind Goat and the competition. Since then, Elephant always runs away when he hears the voice of Goat.

*Retold by:
Harriet Agyemang Duah*

*Poetry Section***I AM LIBERIA**

Even tho' I been hearing that I am
not...
Birthed by an American mother in
America,
I am Liberia

I was fathered by a tribe, the Gio to
be exact
And like you, my ancestors roamed
the plains of Liberia
We are Liberia

We are Liberia
We are but children, wanting to play
as brothers and sisters
Instead, you see tribe, insisting we
are from different mothers/fathers.
We are Liberia

We are powerful
We have the power of our ancestors
that roamed this land long ago
So long ago, that there are no paper
documentation.
But I have the necessary
documentation; it's imprinted on our
DNAs.
We are Liberia.

I feel your pain and see your tears
because,
I am you and you are me.
Help me so I can help you since two
are stronger than one
We are Liberia

Hear my cry
Until you embrace me and I embrace
you,
We will always exist on opposite sides.
I am Liberia, and you are Liberia

Can you see me because all I can see
is you?
Love me as I love you
We are Liberia

Tywanya C. Nhaway
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AN ODE TO DAD

The older I become in life
The more I see you in me
Each truth I learn about life
The more I turn into you

All those traits I so admired-
The love for your family
The love for your country
Your commitment to help others
The devotion to truth, knowledge
Your dedication to hard work
Your obsession with learning
As you oft noted "Knowledge
Is all around us, not only in books."

Oh how true I find that to be.
For each day I strive to know,
and then each time I feel I have,
I push for just a little more.
This circle has consumed me
It has lead me on a seeker's quest

You were there always
you never pushed us away
Not once, not for anything
Not for anyone, not at all!
You were the stable landing pad
Each time we fell, you held us
Gave us what we needed to get
Back up on our feet again.

You never judged, told us not to
You made us appreciate diversity
In its many forms. You knew that
Each person has something to give
Each person was uniquely him/her
More importantly, each one had some
Flaws, faults, a weakness or two in
their
Lives that they struggled with. They
were humbled by because life
required them to seek, to search, to
learn, to yearn and most importantly
to live just as they are

You never said goodbye
You left before I knew it,
However, this you need to know;
You were always:

Faithful father to many
Always strong supportive
Truly loving to us always
Honestly devoted, loving
Especially to those in need
Rigid, firm yet only as needed.

I spoke to your buddy MKI
but when we ended the call
I realized that
I had just spoken to you.
I know I am in great hands,
I know he will guide me along
The path as you two discussed
In so many ways, I know that
The task ahead is achievable

I love you, Dad,
and I know you to know,
I feel your love, even now, wherever
I go.

I yearn for you daily
I sit and wait to hear the
Wisdom you passed around
The knowledge you so freely offered
to anyone willing.

I smile when I see how
Each moment was a teachable
Moment for you.

You did not pass up the chance
To impact knowledge
But only to those ready
Not a moment sooner
Nor one later,

But just at the right moment.

I know you watch from above
And I promise to live as you taught
me to live.

Thank you for making me
Thank you for molding me
I love you dad!
I WILL FOREVER DO

d. othniel forte

Beloved Liberia
by Masnoh Wilson



Long time ago, once upon a time
 You were a beacon of hope
 For Black People everywhere
 From all over the world people came
 Because you were the place to be
 But now you sit abandoned
 Beaten down, weary, despised,
 neglected
 Abused by us your own people
 Who take you for granted
 And have left you to die alone and
 rejected
 Years of civil strife that did not have
 to be
 Have plunged you into this abyss of
 darkness, sorrow and grief
 And now Ebola is ravaging you, dead
 bodies everywhere
 The pain so great, how can you bear?
 And so your beloved children weep
 We bawl, we moan, we sit forlorn
 We wail, we grieve, and we cannot be
 comforted
 For our beloved land is now a
 wasteland
 But we remember your glory days
 When you were **THE** place to be

A land blessed with iron ore,
 diamonds, timber, rubber, and
 hydropower
 Known for your beautiful beaches,
 lagoons, and rolling plains
 Plateaus, mountains, and rich tropical
 rainforest

Aye Liberia, we weep for you
 Please help us Lord
 To do right by her
 To love her, to cherish her
 To cradle her, to heal her wounds
 Just as a mother cradles her child
 And loves that child, no matter what
 Sacrificing her own life so that her
 child may live
 May we love you **Liberia** in the same
 way.

Melting a Stone Cold Heart
Berenice Mulubah



Icy cold hearts
 Dwelling in a tropical land
 The cool ocean breeze cannot melt
 The sunny hot days don't stand a
 chance
 All compassion has disappeared
 Surely, I blame a stone cold war
 Give me some rhythm
 Let me dance around the heart
 Let the heat from a warm hug
 Chip away the ice

Let the smile on my face
 Melt away the pain
 Let the joyful tears down my cheeks
 Wash away the hate
 I see the bullets bouncing around in
 your eyes
 The disgust swinging around in your
 belly
 From the hate you have endured
 A hate you had must hold
 For what should a heart do?
 When a heart watches mothers being
 killed
 Children dying from starvation
 Fathers being force to bear arms
 Brothers and sisters are nowhere to
 be found
 It tend to hold hates and pains
 A heart must turn into stone
 Cover with blocks of ice
 To protect itself from the evil
 Roaming about the land
 I'm sure you know what I mean
 Brothers killing brothers in the name
 of tribalism
 Unity is no more
 But today, I must say
 Your heart is safe with me
 Look into my eyes and see passed my
 hate
 Meet the pain that we share
 Meet the love in my soul
 Let it melts both hates away
 The love for liberty and peace
 A love for the nation that we share
 I'm hanging on to that shark of light
 Hiding deep down in your soul
 To set a dying nation free
 From all the hates and pains
 I'm hanging on to that shark of light
 To melt away the ice
 From around the hearts of stone
 To soften it with love
 We as a nation must reconcile
 To keep the Lone Star bright
 Shining brighter than the years before
 The Lone Star shines forever

Artist of the Month



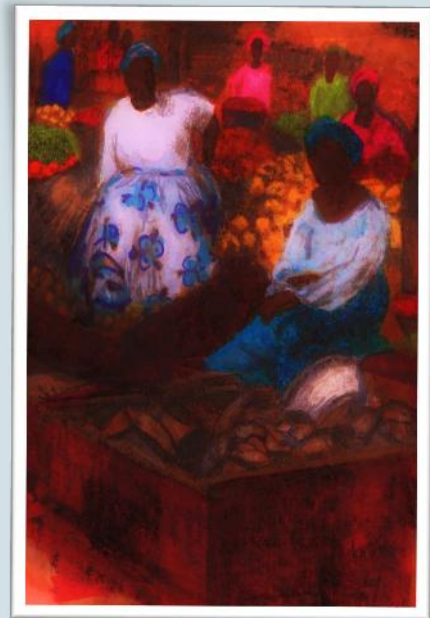
ART SELECTION

Josephine Vida Barnes (JOVIBA) was born in Cape Palmas, Liberia, West Africa. She grew up in New Rochelle, NY and studied art at Mt. Ida College in Newton, MA; Providence College in Providence, RI and The Art Students League in New York City, NY. In the mid 1970's she worked at the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts and the National Center for

Afro-American Artists in Boston, MA. She has recently retired after numerous years working in the public and private sectors while continuing to create her art privately and as a freelancer. Retirement has now allowed her to devote all of her focus on what she loves most.

Her artwork is inspired by the visions, memories and stories of her birthplace. Her work is also a tribute to the colorful souls, spirits and images of the African woman. These women whose roles as mothers, sisters, friends, nurturers, care givers and market women who support the economy of their countries and communities are captured in her work as they go about their everyday life. The music and songs of Africa provide the background for her inspiration. When painting and drawing she listens to the music of her favorite African musicians, Fela Kuti, Brenda Fassie, Prince Nico, Angelique Kidjo, Hugh Masekela, The Mathotella Queens and others. Fela's song "LADY" is the most inspirational – "If you call am woman, African woman, no go gree. She go say, she go say, I, be lady, oh."

JOVIBA uses mixed media when creating her work and not only includes watercolor, pastels, charcoal,

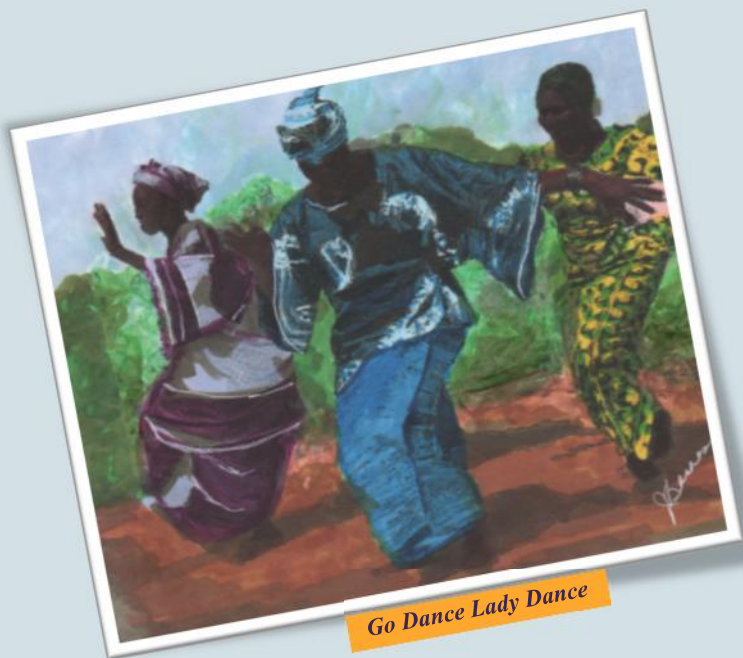


Fish Town Market

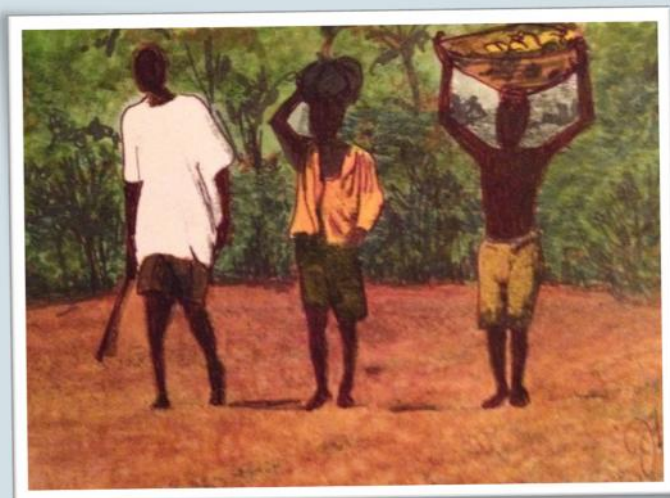
pen and ink but other products and techniques to develop texture in some of her work. She continues to experiment with different medium and considers her new journey as a work in progress.

JOVIBA'S GALLERY

Paintings by **Josephine Barnes** of JOVIBA Arts Gallery.



Go Dance Lady Dance



Bejan and the Boys

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



HENRY JOHNSON JR.
RESIDENT POET



KULUBA MUCURLOR
SEGMENT HOST



MARTIN N. K. KOLLIE
CONTRIBUTOR



TYWANYA C. NHAWAY
STAFF CONTRIBUTOR



LEKPELE M. NYAMALON
RESIDENT POET



JOSEPHINE BARNES
ART CONTRIBUTOR

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

- SAMUEL G. BENNETT JR.
- HAWA JANDE GOLAKAI
- JACK KOLKMEYER
- BERENICE MULUBAH
- CLARENCE PEARSON
- VAMBA SHERIF
- SYLOMUN WEAH



BRIMA WOLOBAH
ART CONTRIBUTOR

AROUND TOWN



Central Monrovia

Broad & Randall Streets juncture on a busy day.



Traditional Dancers

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



Water Side Market

A must-see- must visit place in Monrovia. The human traffic is second only to Red Light Market.



Children Selling



First United Methodist Church



Relaxation Time



Boys Playing "Tabehla"



Pepper Kala Seller



Ariel View of the City



Market Women

Retailers selling their supplies by cups. A few cups of rice or beans feeds an average family



Relaxation Time

White sand beach adorned with fully grown cocoa nut trees



Rainy Clouds

Liberia has one of the highest rainfalls in the region. It can rain for hours on any given day

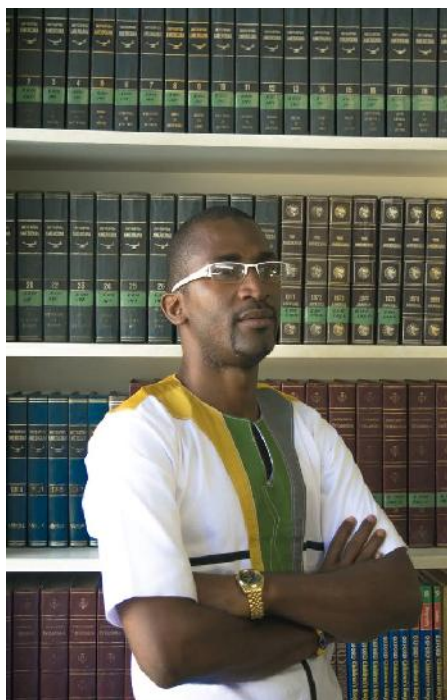
Editor

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.



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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KWEE

Liberian Literary Magazine

July Issue

Nina Simone's
Life in
Liberia

Wayétú Moore



Author of
the Month

Book
Review

Children's
Story

UL: Engineering
Competition

Father's
Day Special

Ebola:
Lessons
Learned

