

# Liberian Literary Magazine

# KWEE

Dec Issue

Iss. # 1228

**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS  
HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS**

**Jeanine  
Cooper**

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**Liberian Literature Review ©2017**

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Liberian Literary Magazine

# KWEE





**Overview:**

**New Look**

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

**Our Commitment**

We at Liberian Literature Review believe that change is good, especially, the planned ones. We take seriously the chance to improve, adopt and grow with time. That said we still endeavor to maintain the highest standard and quality despite any changes we make. We can comfortably make this

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

**What to Expect**

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

**Place your ads with us for as low as \$15**

**Overview**

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**Liberian Literature Review**



## Segment Contents

### *Editorial*

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

### *Risqué Speak*

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

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

### *Kuluba's Korner*

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

### *Authors of the Month Profile*

This is one of our oldest segments. In fact, we started

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

### *Authors of the Month Interview*

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

### *Articles*

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

### *Book Review*

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

### *Education Spotlight*

Our commitment and love to education is primary. In fact, our major goal here is to educate. We strive for educating people about our culture through the many talented writers- previous and present. In this segment, we identify any success story, meaningful event or entity

that is making change to the national education system. We help spread the news of the work they are doing as a way to get more people on board or interested enough to help their efforts. Remember, together, we can do more.

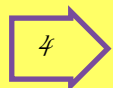
### *Artist of the Month*

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

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

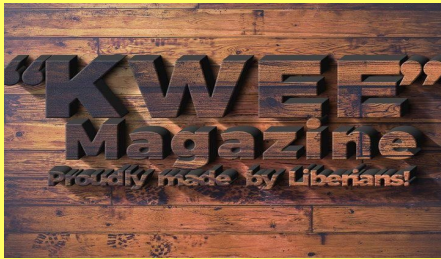
### *Poem of the Month*

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



## Editor's Desk

### The Year Ahead



2017 actually flew by... too many things zoomed at faster than light speed. Many of our contributors had awards, new publications, deals and even travelled around. Yet, in all this, they still fed us those stories, poems or articles that make us survive this competitive industry. The better news is that, most have remained and a few new ones have come on board. GREAT right?

I am excited for many reasons. Are you?

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

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

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

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

We'd also be shifting some of the segments to the blog exclusively. Yeah, we know, but we wish to keep the magazine closely aligned to its conception- *a literary mag*. You will not

lose your segments they will only be shifted. The blog is also attached to the new website so you don't have to go anywhere else to access it. It is the last page of the site- [KWEE](#).

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

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

We have new poets still finding their voices placed alongside much more experienced poets who have long ago established themselves and found their voice. They in a way mentor the newer ones and boost their confidence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Read! Read! Read!**

KWEE Team

## Liberian Christmas



### YASSAH THE CHRISTMAS CHICKEN [Part one]

By: D. Othniel Forte

Yassah, After The Beginning

Yassah was a healthy **chic**. Even when she was an **egg**, she was a pretty. She had pure white **feathers**, golden yellow **feet**, a red **comb** and straw brown **beak**. Everyone admired her. She was simply beautiful. She grew up to be



However, Yassah had one thing she wished for all the time. It was her little **secret** and she told nobody about it just yet. She feared that if she told people, they would **steal** her **dream** away.

Everywhere she went, she saw some strange animals. They were huge, with two big eyes, large noses and wide mouths that had plenty white things in them.

Yassah didn't know who they were so she asked her parents, "Who are those giants always walking around in a hurry?"

Hahaha, her mother laughed. "They are not giants, Yassah, they are humans. Those white things in their mouth are teeth."

"Why don't we have those too?" Yassah asked.

"We are made differently that is why we don't have teeth." Mama Hen said.

"What do with them?"

"They use them to chew and eat. We have beaks which we use for the same purpose, to eat."

The more she grew, the more her secret dream grew. It got bigger, and bigger and bigger, but she kept it all to herself.

One day, she called her best friend and explained to her. "I have this dream

and I wish to tell you but you must promise me that you will tell no one."

"I swear, I won't tell anyone. What is it?" her friend asked.

"I want to be a Christmas chicken when I grow up."

"What? Are you crazy or something?"

"No."

"Didn't Teacher Hen tell us never to play around humans? They are not our friends!"

"Oh, never mind her; she doesn't know anything about humans."

"Why do you say that? What do you know about humans?"

"Any time you ask her, she says the same thing, *humans are not good. Stay away from them.*"

"She is an adult and she knows what she is talking about." Her friend shot back.

"But I am sure she is wrong." Said Yassah.

"What about our parents, don't they say the same thing?"

"Yeah so?" Yassah asked cheekily.

"Don't all the adults say humans are bad for us?"

"I don't know. All I know is that none of them has been human chickens before. How can they know?"

Yassah and her friend argued many times over this. One day, an adult

rooster with a broken wing, a broken and scarred leg heard them and stepped in, "Child, don't ask for what you don't know. Listen to your friend's advice."

"But they look so happy. They are well fed."

"Human chickens are not as happy as they look."

"How do you know that?"

"Because I was once a human chicken. You see this scar on my leg, I got it from them. You see the wing broken, they did that."

"Aha," said Massa her friend. "I told you."

"What did you do to them?" Yassah asked the old rooster.

"Nothing. They are just mean to some animals."

"Hmmm." Yassah mumbled. "So why do they feed their chickens always?"

"Every day, some of them eat chickens. We are a staple food on their menu."

"I have never heard that one before."

"Yes, it is true. Every holiday or occasion, they eat chicken."

"Okay, if you say so." Yassah remain stubborn. He refused to listen to anyone. She wanted to be a human chicken and that is what she would be.

Her parents begged her. Her mother

cried and told her all the bad things humans did to chickens. Yassah listened but in her heart, she kept her secret.

One day, she woke up early and ran away. She went far away from her family and friends. She found a nice human house. She jumped over the fence, entered the yard and stayed there for a while.

The next morning, they woke up and hurried about their businesses. Nobody bothered Yassah. However, they had plenty food. Yassah did not even have to dig. The food was lying all over the floor. Every few steps, Yassah would find food. Sometimes it was rice or corn, or some other delicious thing.

Over time, they accepted Yassah as one of theirs. They would put her in a nice house with all the other chickens. They would feed them, give them water and even allow them plenty time to play and roam about. Everything was wonderful. She wished her friend Massa had listened to her. She would be enjoying with her right this very moment. Everything the Old Rooster said was untrue. Humans were the best friends of chickens.

One day, she asked a hen that did not look happy at all. "Why do you look sad? Don't you like it here?"

"Like it here!" the hen asked with a shocking expression. "What is here to like? This place is horrible. Child, you should be sad. This is the chicken hell."

"Why would you say something as ungrateful as that?" Yassah asked. "Are you not happy humans give you a roof, feed you and take such care of you?"

"What? Are you crazy!" the hen shouted.

"No I am not. I am just glad they are such nice people."

"They are not nice child. They are evil."

"If you feel this way, why don't you leave? No one is forcing you to be here. You can always leave. But it is not fair to be here and be this unhappy or ungrateful to your hosts."

"Leave you say! Oh, I wish. I'd give anything to leave this place; sadly, none of us will leave this place alive."

Angrily, the hen stormed away quarreling. Yassah stood there surprised but also angry.

From that day, none of the other hen came around Yassah. They all stayed away. Yassah blamed the ungrateful hen for this. She must have spread lies about her.

As Yassah grew, she got fat, but she noticed that other chickens were disappearing.



One minute they would be there, and then the next, they would not. It was hard to say why. When she tried asking the other chickens, they refused to say anything to her.

She knew that they were angry with her because they felt that she was foolish to leave the wild and her freedom and come to humans. They kept away from her.

One day at feeding time, one angry looking human yanked at Yassah. He was fast, but she was faster. As he lifted her off the floor, she flew out of his hands. This irritated him the more. He began yelling. Soon, more joined him. They chased Yassah around the yard.

Finally, they caught her. She did not know what was going on but she was not about to be taken. She had exhausted herself in the process. They took her and put her in a small cage. From there, they placed her on the top of one of their huge machines that has an engine and makes some scary noise. She had seen them before but never gotten close to any.

They had some ugly looking black round legs. They were made of solid metal and had the loudest crow Yassah had ever heard. It could crow, "Honk, honk. Other times, it went like peeeeeeeeeee, peeeeeeeeeee."

They travelled for so many hours. The road was rough, filled with potholes. They kept bouncing up and down. The

wind was gushing by, whooshing and swooshing, blowing dust in her eyes, ears and nose. Her face felt as if it was on fire. Her feathers scattered about some even flew away. She began to feel faint.

At one time, the rain fell. Both of her legs were tightly tied her to the cage, so she could not break free. She did not understand what was happening but she needed to get out of this rain. Chickens don't do well under rain. They don't even fare well in the water environment. She fought and wiggled but the more she did, the tighter the rope got.

Soon, her legs were sore and swollen. She shivered from the cold but she remained helpless.

Despite her best effort, she could not break free. The rain beat her as well as the goats, sheep, and even the pigs that were also tied up there with her. The only animal that seemed to enjoy the rain was the pig. They sang happily. Their grunts were so annoying. Yassah wished they could stop that horrible grunting sound.

"This is horrible!" Yassah thought. "No one should be treated like this. They are treating us less than animals. Why are they doing this?" she shouted to anyone below. No one answered. If anything, they continued chattering, laughing, eating, and drinking. They were warm inside the huge machine whilst they were cold and wet outside on top of the ugly beast of iron.

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

*In Celebration of Bai T. Moore*  
*Christ and the Country Devil Meet*

Bai. T Moore

**Christ and the Country Devil Meet]**

The tall Gio Devil too  
Towering over the curious crowd  
With followers beating ritual drums  
And rubbing Gofa charms  
Has seen the efficacy  
To stoop and join the Santa Clause boys  
And celebrate the birth of Christ.  
These boys have grafted something  
To an old Nordic legend  
Surrounding Christmas tide  
Of St. Nicholas being a rich and old man  
Dashing gifts at Yuletide.  
Something entirely African.  
Instead of the old man paddling gifts  
Thru chimneys Christmas eve  
And galloping round on reindeer sleighs  
He gets a business manager  
And dances through the streets  
To the tune of drums and kelengii<sup>1</sup>  
And people dash him money,  
Securely kept on oath  
To share with the Santa Claus boys – “way!”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Special medicine for protecting the dancer from harm and insuring him luck.

<sup>2</sup> Euphonic expression used at the end of the songs sung by the Santa Claus boys during Christmas time.

## Authors of the Month Profiles

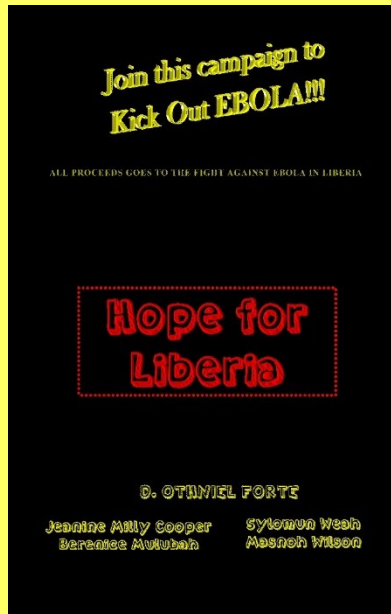
Jeanine Milly Cooper



**JEANINE MILLY COOPER**

Writer - Historian - Agri-preneur

Jeanine Cooper retired from a 26-year career as an international civil servant, including 14 years with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Liberian-born and raised, Jeanine is a 1977 graduate of the College of West Africa; has an MSc in Managing Rural Change from the University of London, Imperial College at Wye and did graduate work in Community Development and Urban Studies at Michigan State University, 1985-87. She graduated from Michigan State University in 1982 with a double B.A. in Business Administration and French. Jeanine is currently pursuing her passion for agri-business in Liberia as the Senior Managing Partner of FABRAR Liberia Inc. In her spare time, she works on short stories and on completing the editorial process for completed books. Jeanine Cooper is married with three children.



SHAUN M. JOOSTE



**SHAUN M. JOOSTE** has published the epic fantasy series: The Celenic Earth Chronicles ([www.celenicearth.wordpress.com](http://www.celenicearth.wordpress.com)), which has battle and magic themes similar to Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter and the Riftwar Saga. He has also published his debut horror novel, 'Silent Hill: Betrayal', set within the popular horror franchise but based on an original tale. He is currently working on another fantasy series, a new horror series, and a crime novel.

As a member of the Writer's Guild of South Africa, Shaun also writes screenplays for assignments and personal projects. His latest work is the sci-fi screenplay "The Space Drifter", which was submitted to and recommended by the Cinequest Screenwriting Festival.

Shaun is also the Editor-in-chief of the recently established Global Council of Extraordinary Writers (<https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/181885-global-council-of-extraordinary-writers>) which is a platform for writers around the world to connect, share experiences and assist each other with marketing and promotions.

Finally, Shaun is the Editor of the Celenic Earth Newsletter, a paper established to inform readers and followers on updates, writing genres, author interviews and anything else linked to writing.

Shaun lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa, with his wife and two children.

**Our Spotlight author is a Liberian author and former humanitarian**

*Jeanine Milly Cooper*

## **Author Interview**



**Liberian Literary Mag conducted an interview with**

**Jeanine Milly Cooper**

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

**Tell us a little about yourself:**

My name is Jeanine Cooper and I was born in a rubber bush. Just kidding. I was born at the LMC hospital in Bomi Hills, raised in Monrovia and did my university and graduate studies in the US and the UK. I have just retired from a career in development and humanitarian work and can pursue my passion for Liberian history and agri-business, not necessarily in that order. I am married and have 3 grown children.

**Why writing?**

From my earliest days, I was fascinated by the stories told by my grandmothers and

others. Trying to imagine the dramatic changes in Liberia from their perspective and in their lifetimes...from the ways people lived, communicated, travelled and particularly for the intricate family relationships.

I found it fascinating to see an adult in the news and hear some story of their childhood. Or to hear of some event and hear of something similar from long ago.

As I grew older and Liberia was in turmoil, I realized that there were very few books I could read that would recount stories like those I heard from my old folks. In Liberia, so much of what happens around us goes untold. I started writing to put down some of my own experiences in life, especially during the war, so most of my stories are autobiographical and appeal to Liberians and Liberiaphiles.

**What books have most influenced your life/career most?**

I've been a voracious reader all my life. I think I was set on that path by a set of books my father gave me when I was 6 years old: a 10-volume set of Colliers Junior Classics Young Folks Shelf of Books.

I devoured those books, full of everything from nursery rhymes to short stories from all the famous American writers.

It sounds nerdy but those books gave me my love of reading that lasts until today. I wish I could say that there are great African writers like Achebe or Soyinka who influenced me but I didn't get around to reading them until university. There are a couple of other books too that influenced my interest in Liberian history but also in story-telling.

One is Dear Master: Letters of a Slave Family by Randall Miller. This is a compilation of letters written by the Skipwith family who emigrated to Liberia in the 1830s...the letters brought to life many of the stories I'd heard from my grandmothers and drew pictures for me of "olden time Liberia". I found that book in a museum in Washington DC; I have never seen or heard of it in Liberia. A similar book is "Slaves No More", an out of print antique by Bell Wiley.

This one was even more interesting because I found letters from some of my ancestors in there, writing to their former slave masters. I guess two more contemporary books that have influenced me are two books by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Half of a Yellow Sun about the Biafra War; and Americanah about the African diaspora experience. Awesome books that bring home to me how much of the Liberian experience is going undocumented.

**How do you approach your work?**

I am not a meticulous writer. When the proverbial "muse" hits, I will wake up at 3 or 4 in the morning with complete paragraphs formed in my head. Sometimes I let that percolate for a few days and then a story comes out. I have written my best short stories and the best parts of my as-yet-unpublished works that way.

For my historical pieces, I find myself writing down pages and chapters in no particular order because the muse smacks me while I am doing the research. So even if I have a timeline of events to go by, and I am just experimenting now with using a story board, I write best in an ad hoc manner.

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

History. Liberian history, African and African-American history. The historical experiences that made me who I am or brought Liberia to this current situation...those are the ones I explore over and over.

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

I've co-authored one book called the Coopers of Liberia,

written with my cousin Seward Cooper. It is about the five brothers who emigrated from Norfolk to Liberia and founded this dynasty. I have written but not published two other books.

One is called The Curse of Laws and it is really the story of one of my ancestors, Henry Cooper, who was born a slave, owned by his own (Black) father until he was 22 years old. He emigrated to Liberia with his family in 1853 and had the business called Henry Cooper and Sons.

He became one of the wealthiest tycoons in the latter part of the 19th century. The other book is called The Creation of the Organization for African Unity and it explores the often mis-reported role that Liberia played in pan-Africanism, in building the organization that we call the African Union today.

I am best known for my short stories: The Rescue of Zayzay Donzo; Varney & Jack; Butter Oil; God Bless You!; Rice Satisfaction; From Ray Punkin to Shayvay...almost all my short stories are about my wartime experiences. I am currently compiling them into one book.

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

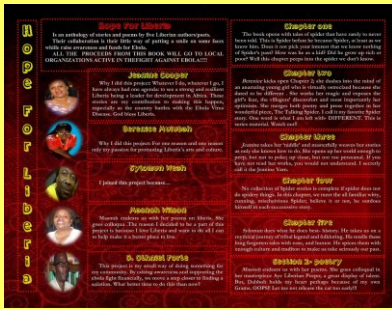
I usually find my titles in my research, or, in the case of my short stories, I select some part of the story as a title. The Curse of Laws for example is how Amelia Roberts, the mother of Liberia's first president, described the reason for her emigration to Liberia and a more difficult life than she would have enjoyed in America. "From Ray Punkin to Shayvay" comes from the story and describes how my fair skin color is perceived in Liberia, even in a life-threatening situation.

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

I guess all my writings have a message that people didn't just live and die; that things we take for granted today didn't just happen. And I want, as much as possible, to chronicle some of what did happen...through the eyes of ordinary people going about their lives.

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

I try to bring out the back story in whatever I am writing. That is the part that gets swept under the dominant headlines and the summaries that gloss over real joys and pains in life.

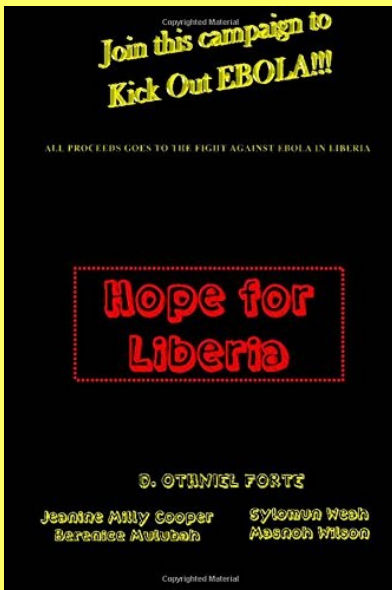


Look for the back story; look for what is unsaid in the headlines.

**Do you have any advice for other writers?**

For non-fiction writers I'd say be diligent in your research. Always look for the other side of the story, the other perspective, the hidden meanings.

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



I am reading The House Girl by Tara Conklin, a historical fiction novel set in modern day New York and 1852 Virginia. I've just read Queen

Sugar by Natalie Baszile (Awesome!) and The Personal History of Rachel Dupree by Ann Weissgarber (Also awesome!). Next up (as soon as I get my copies in my hands) are Madame President by Helene Cooper and Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea by C. Patrick Burrowes.

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

None.

**What are your current projects?**

I am researching a third book that I will tentatively call "Black German, White African", about my bi-racial maternal grandfather who emigrated to Liberia in the 1920s after having served briefly in the German Kaiser's army in World War I.

And...boy that one is a biggie! His story is the ultimate "Black experience" across the diaspora. It begins in Trelawney, Jamaica, reaches the building of the Panama Canal, to Victorian England and bi-racial life in Germany's industrial heartland and winding up as a decorated statesman in Liberia.

And of course there is the compilation of my short

stories of my own experiences during the civil war. That is nearly completed and I will probably take a title from one of the titles within the book. So now that I am retired, I should have more time to finish up the two books that I've written and work on the other two "new" ones.

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

Oh my goodness, yes! Of course! I've read as many of the early historical books about Liberia and have quite a collection of antique books. Bai T. Moore, Wilton Sankawulo, Joseph Saye Guannu, Doris Banks Henries. I just bought a book about J. J. Roberts' speeches. I've also read books by our renowned contemporary authors like Elwood Dunn, Amos Sawyer, Nehemiah Cooper, Patrick Burrowes, Helene Cooper, Elma Shaw, Lorraine Mason, Masnoh Wilson...even Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. I particularly like the autobiographies of former Vice President Clarence Simpson; former Ambassador George Padmore.

**Any last words?**

Don't just live it; write it.

## Diaspora Poet

### Liberian Devil Comes to Town at Christmas

The long-faced mask  
frowns.  
Its huge O-mouth made for  
gobbling.  
Gigantic eyes gawk at  
gathering crowd  
round its skyscraper legs  
that leap  
backwards and forward  
under spun out grass skirt.

The child's piercing  
screech,  
hitting and hovering on the  
ceiling,  
drags everyone away from  
dinner.  
Fufu and soup are left for  
flies to feast on

The shrieking child waits to  
be rescued,  
while the music of merry  
musicians  
beating drums, singing and  
dancing  
bring Christmas cheer.

"Oh, it the country devil.  
Don't be afraid," soothing  
voices say.

*But in the hinterland the  
real country devil threatens  
women, children, and the  
uninitiated,  
cower behind closed  
doors.*

Order is restored to the  
child's world.  
Hands held by ma and pa

she feels the rhythm of their  
hips and feet,  
watches as the devil  
prances in the front yard.

It splays its legs high and  
wide  
to the pat-tum, bum, pat-  
tum, bum of drums.  
Old Man Beggar joins him,  
too, in the dance  
for a small feast, coins and  
cane juice.

© Althea Romeo-Mark,  
2015 Published in  
DoveTales:Family and  
Cultural Identity, An  
International Journal of the  
Arts. Published by Writing  
for Peace, McNaughton &  
Gunn, USA, 2016

*\*Old Man Beggar* –Liberian  
antithesis to Santa Claus. He is  
accompanied by drummers  
and doesn't bring gifts. But he  
tells stories and expects some  
form of a thank you in return.

*\*Country devil*-a person in  
mask and wearing stilts and  
who is a part of a secret  
society that is feared by those  
not yet a member of it.

### A West Indian Celebrates Christmas in Switzerland

A West Indian Celebrates  
Christmas in Switzerland

Advent beckons in Basel  
City.  
I prepare my calendar,  
hang my Christmas  
wreath.

Santa Klaus is dressed in

red.  
His helper Schmutzli is  
cloaked in brown.  
They warn the great day  
is near.  
Some youngsters' faces  
light like candles.  
Others wear frowns.

My mind sails to sunny  
islands, childhood.  
John bulls covered in  
coarse burlaps sacks,  
heads big like brown  
bears, prance around  
the villages,  
spring and crack whips at  
naughty children,  
who flee in fear into  
mothers' arms.

My thoughts journey  
back  
to my new home near  
the River Rhine,  
join the children feasting  
on juicy mandarins,  
brittle peanuts and  
lebkuchen,  
December 6th snacks.

In the city, the Three Kings  
beat their staffs.  
At home I dress my tree.  
Excitement  
builds with every tinsel,  
red bell hung.  
A silver angel perches at  
its crown.

I immerse myself in  
Christmas songs,  
last minutes shopping,  
wrap gifts,  
sip Gluehwein, prepare  
ham, turkey,  
sweet potato pudding.

At a midnight service, I  
celebrate  
Christ's coming, pray and  
think of family  
far away under the  
umbrella of the tropical  
sky

There, Christmas carols  
ring the air  
as choruses sing before  
gates.  
Banjos and maracas  
compete with  
harmonicas.

I hunger for guavaberry,  
the local sherry,  
the beach where we  
make merry,  
drink ginger beer and  
sorrel,  
eat raisin buns, coconut  
tarts, papaya pastry.

Awaken by the heartfelt  
hymns,  
I abandon the sun.  
Outside the church,  
snowflakes powder the  
ground.  
And I, warmed by the joy  
of Christmas,  
feel home.

© Althea Romeo-Mark,  
published in *If Only the Dust  
Would Settle*, Author House,  
Milton Keynes, UK, 2009.

1. *Samichlaus* (Swiss  
Christmas tradition) was  
all about rewarding the  
good kids and *Schmutzli*  
was the enforcer who  
punished the bad. He

used to carry a whip  
and when the large  
sack of goodies was  
empty, *Schmutzli* could  
use it to stuff naughty  
children into and then  
kidnap them.

2. *The John Bull* was used in  
some Caribbean islands  
as a cautionary threat  
to reprimand children  
who had been naughty,  
especially a bed-wetter  
child. In return for the  
dancing and the  
disciplining of children,  
the John Bull was  
offered money, drink  
and food, with varying  
degrees of liberty to  
help himself to food and  
money from vendors.

3. *Lebkuchen* or  
*Pfefferkuchen*, is a  
traditional German  
baked Christmas treat,  
somewhat resembling  
gingerbread.

4. *Gluehwein* (Mulled)  
wine is a beverage of  
European origins usually  
made with red wine  
along with various  
mulling spices and  
sometimes raisins. It is  
served hot or warm and  
may be alcoholic or  
non-alcoholic



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

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

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

She has been guest poets at  
the International Poetry  
Festival of Medellin, Colombia  
(2010), the [Kistrech  
International Poetry Festival](#),  
Kissi, Kenya (2014) and The  
Antigua and Barbuda Review  
of Books 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Conference, Antigua and  
Barbuda (2015)

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

More publishing history can  
be found at her blog site:

[www.aromaproductions.blogspot.com](http://www.aromaproductions.blogspot.com)



## Resurrected Master

Edwin J Barclay



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

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

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

### The Death of Faith

Toll, toll, toll  
Ye solemn bells of night!

Let your wild requiem roll  
Far o'er the earth with  
might!

Toll, toll, toll!  
Toll for the death of truth  
and right !  
Toll for the birth of Error's  
night!  
Toll ye the rampant joy of  
sin!  
Toll for the good that  
might have been!

Toll, toll, toll!  
Toll ye from brazen  
throats your ire,  
Let the wild clangour  
rising higher,  
Shriek loudly out life's wild  
despair;  
For Faith and Hope lay  
dying where  
Irreverent Lusts control  
the soul !

### The Death of Faith

Toll, toll, toll  
Ye solemn bells of night!

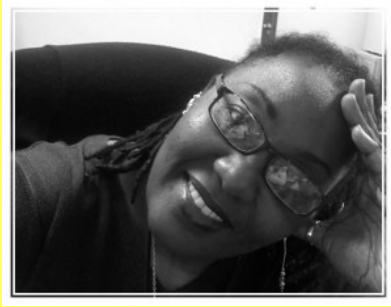
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the soul !

## Unscripted

Cher Antoinette



DECEMBER 2016

### ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

\*\*\*\*\*

*“Time to get your bath,  
Cherry! Hurry up before the  
water gets too cold! I ain’t  
putting on the kettle again.”*

My Daydee yelled from the bathroom as she poured the last of the hot water into the galvanized basin that I used for my evening bath. The running water from the shower was way too cold for me (well that was what I had convinced her of and I was quite dramatic in my presentation). Under normal circumstances I would have gotten up from the rocking chair in a slow purposeful manner and continued the charade as to how tired I was, and that I didn’t want to bathe, and it was too much trouble, and I had already had one that day, and so on and so on (quite the little actress I was). This evening, however, was different; it was December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve and there was no way I was risking a cut ass, or a “I gonna take away that doll from you”. The next twenty-four hours were to be the most exciting ever, even though it had happened every year for the past eight years and I expected, would continue into the future.

I lived with some elderly folk since my mother was a single parent and had to make ends meet by working very long hours. I saw her often, but in my youthful eyes the person who was my maternal figure was the younger of the two ladies in the home, my Daydee. I never knew why I called her that because that was not her real name, and now, as I sit and reminisce; her beautiful long black curly hair that was always pulled back into a waist length pony tail, her caramel skin dotted with numerous moles and her strong but gentle hands, tears well in my eyes.

I stepped into the basin and felt the warm water rise to just below my knees (yea it was a big basin) and I was lathered down from face to toes with Pears soap. To this day, the smell of that golden brown bar brings such joy to my senses and such peace to my mind that I keep one in my dresser drawer as my rescue on really tough days.

As my bath concluded, the ritual began. It was now seven-thirty and I heard the BBC Evening News come to an end and the Christmas carols from that famous British boys’ choir started. The old Redifusion that hung in the corner of the dining room was turned up to all. Daydee hurriedly towed me down to prevent me from “catching a draft” and then powdered me up with Cussons Baby Powder, and quickly pulled my vest over my head. I was then brusquely told to go sit on the bed.

Next came the combing of the hair. The tangle of fibre on my head had become more unmanageable as each year

passed and Daydee wanted to press it out with the hot-ironing comb but my mother forbade it. So, I suffered through the brushing and the parting and the greasing with Blue Magic.

That night, however, I felt little pain. I was far away as my thoughts swirled - what would I find under the Christmas tree? Under the tree...but where was the tree?

Every year there was the saga of the missing tree. For as long as I had remembered I would look for the tree; in the back yard, in the old shed. One year I even ventured to our neighbours’ who lived two houses down to ask if they had had it. I was promptly sent home with a scolding and a “you betta guh long home before I call you mudda”.

The plight of the elusive tree conjured all sorts of scenarios in my overactive imagination and I was totally unaware when the sand man appeared, only to be yanked to reality with a sharp tug that whipped my head backwards.

*“Child, hold yuh head straight. I ain’t got all night. You know the number of things I still gotta do. De ham still in put in yet. I hope I get all de salt outta dat leg cuz dis year I don’t know what Mr. Branch, that thieving shopkeeper, did tinking. I know we like we hams well cured but I had to soak that thing four times before I get out most of de salt. Den you know the sweet bread gotta bake, cuz what else you gonna eat fuh breakfast before we go to five o’clock service in de morning. Lord hav’ist mercy, I ain’t gonna get no sleep tonight at all!”*

It never failed to amaze me, the same soliloquy each year as

to how daunting the Christmas day preparations were, but it made no difference; I had faith in my Daydee that it all would be done and I would awaken to the glorious smell of baked ham and fresh sweet bread and a hot cup of Milo before going off to church.

So, with the last few tugs of my plaits, rubber bands affixed and head-tie securely on, I moseyed into the corner of the bed, snuggled under the sheets and pressed myself against the wooden walls that felt damp and cool this December night. Daydee turned off the overhead light and raised the wick on the kerosene lamp that was on the night stand. She hated sleeping in darkness and figured that I did as well.

I closed my eyes and I waited for her to tuck me in and whisper her usual prayers of protection over me before I went off to sleep. *"Goodnight Cherry-Baby. Sweet dreams,"* she said as she kissed me on my forehead and smiled that crooked smile of hers that I loved dearly.

*"Come on Cherry, time to wake up."* It seemed like I had just blinked and there she was again, but this time accompanied by a wonderful smell that wafted into my bedroom. I could not throw off the covers fast enough. I ran to the bathroom, almost squished the cat in my haste, washed my face and brushed my teeth. It was still dark outside and I heard the faint refrain of Christmas carols coming from down the street.

I pulled my pink and blue blanket tightly around me and tip-toed into the living room. There it was, my Christmas

tree! As tall as the ceiling with a gold star at its crown; blue, silver, and red glass balls gleamed and glittered as the multi-coloured string of lights wrapped tightly around the pine branches reflected off their surfaces.

I stood still. The only light in the room came from the majestic decorated conifer. And oh, the smell!! The pine scent mixed and merged with the pungent aroma of the recently polished furniture. Everything had been newly cleaned and dressed; the Morris chairs shined like dog stones on a moonlight night. Cushion covers had been changed and newly crocheted doilies placed on the side tables and mahogany cabinet. The floor boards were still slightly damp underfoot from being scrubbed with blue soap. A thought crossed my mind, albeit fleetingly, as to how could all this have been done during the time I had slept. Never mind, I did say fleetingly, because my primary concern was about my tree and what lay underneath.

But, there was something different about my tree. Yes all the decorations were there, and yes the silver tinsel strings were hanging on for dear life on every branch but what was that white cottony stuff that covered it like a fluffy petticoat. I reached for it when I felt a stinging slap on my hand. *"Don't touch dat! You wanna be itching fuh de rest of de day?"*

Angel Hair - the worse Christmas adornment that was ever made, in my opinion. I stepped back, frustrated that I could not touch my tree and caress its branches, not to

mention sit underneath and ponder what was in the presents that bore my name. To me this was worse than getting lashes. Daydee saw the look on my face and obviously took pity on me, held me in a tight hug and told me to come get my breakfast because Mr. Jordan would soon be arriving to take us to church.

I sat at the dining room table and for just a moment I forgot about my tree, because before me lay the ham and sweet bread and Milo that I had waited for three hundred and sixty-four days to date. The wait was worth it. The golden brown raisin bread was still warm and I could see the coconut centre, glistening with crystallized sugar and ginger. My one slice of ham was a deep pink with an outer edge of brown crisp skin that sandwiched a thin layer of juicy white fat. I placed the ham on the slice of sweet bread and took the first bite. The salty sweet sandwich almost brought tears to my eyes...it was so good; hot Milo was the icing on the cake.

*"Pa-parrrrp!"* A horn blew loudly outside; it was our ride to Five O'Clock Service.

I wore my red and white diamond patterned armhole dress with the red bow at the neckline; this was my favorite of all of Daydee's sewing creations, even though it made me look like I should be under the Christmas tree nestled amongst the other gifts. And Daydee, oh she was a vision of beauty. Her crisp white ruffled-necked long-sleeved blouse and the red and blue full-circle skirt she wore, cinched in the waist with a red two inch-wide patent leather belt fitted her perfectly; she wore her hair in a tight

coiffure at the nape of her neck. Even at her age she still got second glances, especially from Mr. Jordan as he opened the back passenger door for us to climb into the old Morris Minor. Mrs. Jordan however sat ramrod straight in the front seat and proffered a very cold “*Good Morning!*”

The short drive to James Street Methodist Church in the city stood as one of my favorite memories of Christmas morning. I pulled my red cardigan closer around me as I stared out the small side window of the car. There was silence within other than a slight humming from Mr. Jordan and the accompanying purr of the engine. Our departure from home had signaled the entrance of our companions on this Michaelmas journey. It was almost as if we had synchronized our clocks and bolted from the starting blocks at the same time. Men clad in their Sunday best hopped on bicycles with loose chains and lead the parade down the street. Women hurriedly tugged on small arms as they walked quickly to the bus stop to catch the lone red Transport Board bus that would carry the villagers Bridgetown. This was the only time of year that the bus came out this early at four a.m.

Everyone had a singular purpose, to get to the church on time. As we passed the many wooden chattel houses on our way, there were still some homeowners that were ‘*fixing up*’ at the last minute. Silhouettes ‘*putting up*’ curtains could be seen through windows,

and one or two people were now carrying the furniture back into the house, as the residence had been completely emptied onto the front yard to allow for the scrubbing and cleaning of the floors. I could see the front footpaths had all been freshly laid with white marl; this I was told was to signify the fallen snow of our Mother Country. The holly-hocks that that were planted in most of the gardens were awakened by the headlights of the old car; their baby pink petals glimmered in the darkness of the early morning. The snow-on-the-mountains stood elegantly as they hedged walkways and brought a perceived visual sense of a winter landscape to our tropical island.

The exodus to the city continued and more and more people joined the movement as we got closer to our destination. I enjoyed the delicious aroma of hams, black cake, turkey, pound cake and pork as they played an epicurean medley in my nose and reminded me of what would come within the next few hours.

Daydee squeezed my hand and straightened the bow on my dress and I smiled at her, showing her my toothless grin and hoping that what I would receive for Christmas would be a lot more than just my two front teeth.

We were almost there. Past St. Mary’s Church we heard the well-tuned organ playing the first of the introductory Christmas carols as the congregation made their way up to the entrance of the historic stone building.

Mr. Jordan blew the car horn to have pedestrians move out of the way and garnished a few rude arm gestures from an old geezer who had obviously started his celebrations a little earlier.

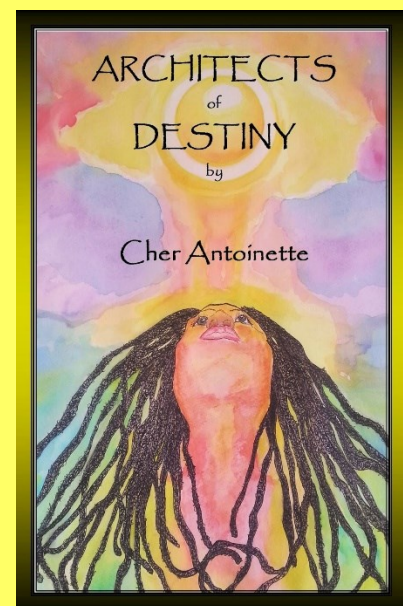
We turned into the parking area of our place of worship just as the first notes of the organ were played. Mr. Jordan pulled up the hand brake and quickly came around to the back door to assist Daydee and me out of the car. Mr. Jordan looked at me, smiled and tipped his hat. Mrs. Jordan was still sitting in the front seat, stiff as a two-by-four.

“*Come Cherry, let’s go inside.*” I held my Daydee’s hand tightly as we walked up the steps to our church and the first refrain of one of my favorite hymns was heard,

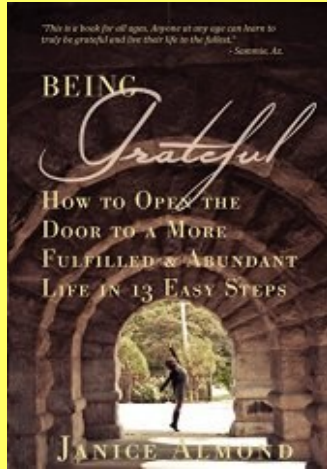
“*Christians awake! Salute the happy morn.....*”

It would be another good Christmas for us all.

**Cher-Antoinette ©2014**



## Finding Meaning in Everyday Living



Janice Almond

### TITLE: 5 WAYS to START YOUR DAY RIGHT

This is hard work! This life. You have to have a mind shift daily! You have to prepare your day for success. When you wake up in the morning, have a plan of attack. Don't just jump up and start rushing around! Wake up easy and slow. Take a deep breath. Say something positive. Put a smile on. Did you realize that the way you start your day will determine how it goes?

Have a blueprint for your day. Control it. You run the day. Don't let it run you! How is this possible you ask? How do I take control of my day? Here are five ways to start your day right:

#### Way #1- THINK

Think about your day and what you want to accomplish. Think about where you need to go. Think about your life's goals and your life's purpose. Align your day to those. You will notice there are projects that keep coming to your mind.

#### Way #2- LISTEN

Listen to what your mind is telling you. You need to be still to hear and meditate on the ideas that will be forth coming. Listen to something edifying, i.e. music or a motivational audio message. Read something out loud that is inspirational; i.e., scripture or book excerpt.

#### Way #3- SPEAK

Speak an affirmation. Speak what you want not what you don't want. Tell yourself

something good; i.e., "I am grateful for this day, and it is going to be a good day!" Say what you expect. Change negative speak into positive speak. Pray.

#### Way #4- WRITE

Write down what your goals are for the day. Write down ideas that come to your mind. Write down affirmations or declarations for your day. What are your dreams? What is your vision for today? What are you grateful for? Write down some scriptures/ quotes that can propel your day.

#### Way #5- ACT

Act by visualizing what you want. Feel it. Act as if. Fake it 'til you make it! Keep focus. Remember this Bible verse from Philippians 4:8, "*Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*"

Last week I didn't do any of this, and I suffered big time! I became overwhelmed by my schedule and became an emotional mess. I wasn't resting well, wasn't sleeping well, and wasn't taking time to slow down. It was just Go! Go! Go! Take care of this. Take care of that.

But, *me* thought, "I can handle this!" Well, I learned that I couldn't. Now, I am back on track. I am once again controlling my agenda. We have to realize we are in control of our day and our destiny.

A new year is fast approaching! If this one didn't go entirely as you planned, you have another shot. Decide now-today, this December, how you want 2018 to be. Have a plan and prepare now. Get it started right!

*I am looking for a few of you to read my latest manuscript, entitled: **BEING HAPPY: 10 Keys to Unlock Overflowing Joy in Everyday Living**. Just respond to this email if you can do it and would be willing to give me some feedback on it.*

*Until January 2018*

**MAKE IT A GREAT DAY!**

**Happy New Year!**

*Janice*

#1 Amazon Kindle Best Seller New Release

[www.janicealmondbooks.com](http://www.janicealmondbooks.com)

Reach out to me: Get a copy of my first book, *BEING GRATEFUL...free!* Simply click the link: [begrateful.subscribemenow.com](http://begrateful.subscribemenow.com)

-- You will join our "being grateful" community. We look forward to having you become a part of spreading gratefulness around the world.

Until next month-  
*Your attitude matters,*  
Janice

Follow me on twitter: @JalmondjoyRenee

Like me on Facebook:

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Sign up for my monthly inspirational newsletter and get my first book *Being Grateful: How to Open the Door to a More Fulfilled & Abundant Life in 13 Easy Steps* FREE!

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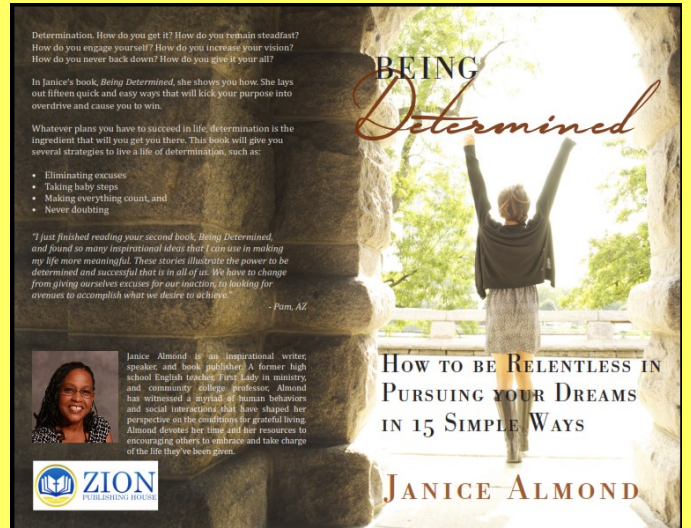
Janice Almond is the author of the *Being Grateful* book series. Her first book in the

series, *Being Grateful: How to Open the Door to a More Fulfilled & Abundant Life in 13 Easy Steps* is available on her website:

[www.janicealmondbooks.com](http://www.janicealmondbooks.com).

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ZION PUBLISHING HOUSE

## *Author Interview 2*

### *Spotlight Author*

**SHAUN M. JOOSTE**



**Liberian Literary Magazine conducted an interview with the writer SHAUN M. JOOSTE 😊**

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

**Tell us a little about yourself**

I am a South African writer, with 4 published novels, 3 unproduced spec screenplays and 600 poems that I am planning to publish in one complete book. I have practiced various forms of martial arts in my life, most notably shaolin wu shu (kung fu) and tai chi. I am an avid musician in my spare time, with acoustic, electric and bass guitars and a violin as my main instruments. I love nature and the

natural elements, and I have a garden of bonsais that I grow and nurture at home. I am busy completing the final year for a degree in Facilities Management in order to further my career. I am married and have two wonderful kids.

### **Why writing?**

I've loved stories since I was a child, as I am sure many children do. However, I was often swept away by my own stories, with me and my cousin playing out many of them. My essays were always valued by my English teachers, and as I reached adolescence I realized that having my own books and tales in libraries and book racks was what I really wanted. So I started working on my debut epic fantasy novel 'Windfarer' in 2000 when I was 20 and haven't stopped writing since.

### **What books have most influenced your life/career most?**

The series that influenced both my life and adolescent years was the 'The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant' by Stephen Donaldson. You will see I named my first epic fantasy series 'The

Celenic Earth Chronicles' {CEC}, the 'Chronicles' being the main inspiration. Other inspirations for my epic fantasy novels are Raymond E Feist (Riftwar Saga), JRR Tolkien (Lord of the Rings), Alan Dean Foster (Spellsinger), Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman (Death Gate Cycle) and Robert Rankin's novels. My debut horror novel, 'Silent Hill: Betrayal' {SHB} was influenced by the Silent Hill games rather than any books.

### **How do you approach your work?**

My system has grown over the years. When I started, I developed mere spider diagrams to first work out the core plot and subplots of each section. It has become more involved now, being broken into Acts like a film screenplay, with the core elements of character, plot, scene, creature and magic system developments being included. When it comes to planning out the book, I do several outlines, starting with the plot outline as a whole, then each act's plotlines and details, and finally each chapter's details and what must happen. Once I reach chapter detail and I feel ready to

write everything out, only then do I start writing. In a sense, the planning and development takes more time, work and effort than the actual writing, as by that time I just need to jot down everything I had planned. This does not mean that everything sticks to plan though, as through writing my creativity never ends and I get more ideas that I then incorporate into the story.

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

In all my novels so far, I have incorporated the natural elements of fire, wind, water, air, earth and spirit. This is of course the main theme of CEC, but I have found ways to include them in SHB and the upcoming romantic fantasy novel, 'Dream Whispers' {DW}. They will also feature heavily in my upcoming dark fantasy novel, 'Malum: Rise of the Deadly Sins'. I find the elements such an essential part of who we are in this world, and I feel their essence and magic have been forgotten and taken for granted.

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

Since SHB is my latest work, I will give you some details on it. As with the Silent Hill games, it goes about someone being brought to SH to account for their sins, in this case, Trevor. I wanted to do something original though, so instead of just having one character enter at the beginning, I had three enter simultaneously, with two other characters having entered a few days before. SH usually plays out as the main protagonist having to deal with his psychological demons; however, in my novel, it is Trevor who goes through each of the other character's demons and hell, while battling to deal with the guilt of his wife Caroline having committed suicide almost a year before. During the tale, he uncovers why they were all brought together, how the others were all in some way responsible for his wife's death, and how he was the root cause or catalyst that started it all.

Each Act in the novel deals with each of these characters. Act 1 deals with Trevor's lover, Kathy, and her history in Midwich Elementary with the Raven. Act 2 deals with Kathy's brother, Philip, who was a surgeon

in Alchemilla Hospital and his history with Caroline's brother, Bishop. Act 3 deals with Trevor's best friend, Jay, and his secret involvement with Philip, Bishop and Caroline. Finally, in the end, is the showdown between Trevor, Caroline and the Raven where all is revealed.

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

Having been a fan of the SH games since the first one emerged on Playstation1, I have always wanted to write my own tale in the haunted town. And when Silent Hills was cancelled, I didn't want the SH legacy to end. The first element I wanted to portray was emotional betrayal, but I wanted it to occur from as many sides as possible to illustrate just how potent betrayal can be.

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

The one clear message, which I believe is in all of the games as well, is that there are always consequences for our actions, whether it be in



this life, the next, or in a haunted town called Silent Hill.

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

There are many SH easter eggs for the hardcore SH gamers, things taken from some of the games that the observant would pick up on if they looked hard enough. There are two editions of this book, Vanilla and Extended. The Vanilla Edition is simply the text and storyline, while the Extended includes street and location maps, images and five alternate endings (just like the games that have various endings). I did this so that hardcore SH fans can enjoy the novel to its fullest, leaving the option for horror fans who just want to enjoy the story without all the extras.

***Do you have any advice for other writers?***

Just that, if you are a true writer, just keep writing. Whether life brings you down, whether the reviews or critiques are bad, just keep writing. It is your passion, your legacy. Learn from what others have to say, and grow in your story telling. Never give up. And if the

medium of novels is not working for you, try playwriting, film screenwriting or game scripting. It may just be that you are telling stories in the wrong medium and you will excel in a different one.

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

I am busy reading Scott Smith's 'The Ruins' and Richard A Knaak's 'Diablo: Scales of the Serpent'

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

With regards to SHB, it was released last month in ebook form only. I am happy to announce that the print form has just been published and is available through Amazon.

With regards to CEC, each book in the trilogy was released separately as they were published. I am happy announce that I have released one volume with all three books in it in ebook form, so that you can enjoy all three stories after each other without changing books.

Also, if you visit my blog

(<https://celenicearth.wordpress.com>), you can subscribe to my blog and thereby receive 'Windfarer', book 1 of CEC, free.

***What are your current projects?***

My upcoming romantic fantasy novel Dream Whispers will be published in the first quarter of 2017, and I am hoping to publish my dark fantasy novel 'Malum: Rise of the Deadly Sins' by the last quarter of 2017. In the background I will be working on the developing of my post-apocalyptic novels, 'Resilience: Dawn of a new day' and 'Haunted Island: Convict Cemetery' for release in 2018

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

No, unfortunately I have not as yet.

***Any last words?***

Stay true to yourself and do what you want and need to do while you still have the chance.

## 'Twas Brillig

**Richard Wilson Moss**

### I Praise God

I praise god  
While holding and  
extracting shrapnel  
From a two year old Syrians  
gut  
Who bleeds to death  
anyway.

### After Rain

After rain  
We are great ships of rain  
puddles  
And the hours navigated  
lie down  
Like fish tucked in dark rows  
in damp markets.

### Terrorist At A Swiss Cafe

White mountains are simply  
Bottoms of blue seas  
Winds are merely  
Courage of a breeze  
And the one relaxing at  
curbside  
What is he?  
Collected damage of his  
day?  
What is he?  
Terrorist of a coffee?  
  
His restless friend  
Walking back and forth  
Between tables glances up  
At the alps above

Hardly distracted by  
A slowly passing bus  
The snow, he says  
Look at all that snow up  
there  
The wind will bring it down  
It will bury us.

### Forgotten Season

Such is the forgotten  
season  
Where rhododendrons rot  
for no reason  
Where every flower  
divorces beauties abuse  
Bare maple limbs do not  
strangle skies  
The loon dives for fish  
holding its breath  
Longer than it ever could  
A dragonfly's erratic flight is  
understood  
And the moon rules without  
sheepish light  
As the sun sits as it has  
never sat  
On the cusp of twilight.

### Nobility

I am going to the carnival  
To bend the iron bar  
And wrestle the snake  
Break the bell  
Without using the hammer  
For I have failed  
To fix the end table lamp  
Or repair the shingles  
On the roof  
So I am going to the circus  
To do handstands  
On top of elephants.

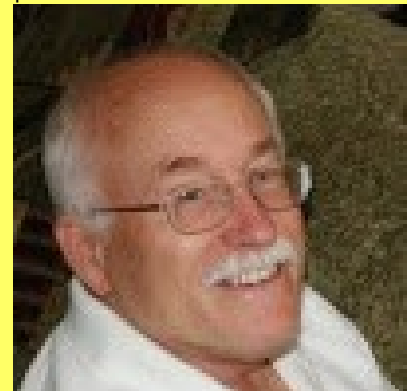
### Afterlife of Orchids

I brought most beautiful  
white orchids  
To the gates of heaven  
Golden bird cages were  
lined with them.  
In hell they were put on  
cool, marble pedestals  
Cherished and honored.

### Before Making Orange Preserves

Oranges eclipse apples,  
fruit forgiven knowledge  
On drooping limbs  
exuberant sugars  
Conspire with their star  
Warmth so close, intense,  
magnificent  
Shaking hidden shoulders  
of a seed  
Inspiring future arms that  
will sweep away  
The rain and snow of all  
storms  
Cradle and nourish the  
pulp  
Of all resolve.

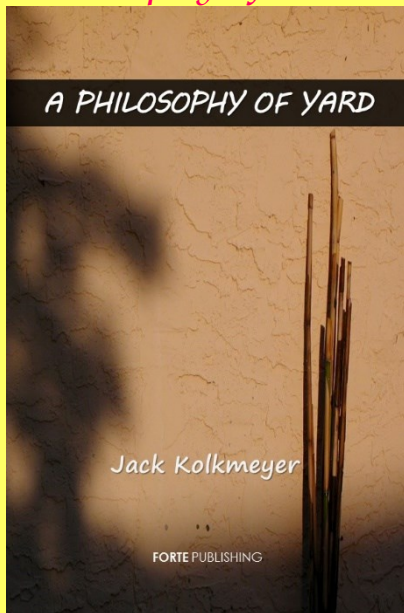
**Richard Moss** is the author  
of numerous full length  
poetry books. You can find  
his books on every major  
platform.



©Richard Moss

A Review

Book review, A  
Philosophy of Yard



by Jack Kolkmeier

A Philosophy of Yard is Jack Kolkmeier's second poetry collection. The first collection being, Higher Glyphics. A Philosophy of Yard consists of 123 pages and is published by FORTE Publishing, USA, Thailand, Liberia, 2017.

In addition to writing poetry, Jack Kolkmeier writes songs and is part of a performance group, The Word Quartet. He often reads his work on his new radio project, Fifthwall Radio.

He writes in free verse about many themes. One predominant theme in the collection is nature which inspires our faith despite overwhelming human failings. For him, nature is an environment where one comes not just to contemplate on the meaning of life in this universe but to simply unwind. Another motif is the cycle of life. It takes into consideration the impact of the choices we make; by going back in time, we learn to appreciate the present.

The reader can also detect the author's great respect for old cultures as seen and felt in his travel poems. The old is forgotten, yet not forgotten. It is always with us and cannot be ignored. Standing out are poems set in Sante Fe, Delray Beach, Ohio in the USA and Portugal, Spain, even Liberia, West Africa.

Kolkmeier uses imagery and wordplay that stand up and grab

the reader's attention. Examples are "Dangle me over your mirth, Alarm me with your might;" "Find a new vision... that converts an elephant to an ant;" "Sit still for an era like a boulder." He utilizes wordplay in several poems. In the poem "Why Seagulls Can't Fish," he says "They dive, peck...swirl around...intoxicated by bubbling aquadisiac (p.45)."

Kolkmeier is a poet of observation, laps up his surroundings, makes gourmet images out of words turned inside out. He makes the reader fall in love with nature for it stands at attention in front of them. He makes you ask yourself, what is your function in place and time on the eternal tract.

Reviewed by

**Althea Romeo-Mark,** Caribbean writer, If Only the Dust Would Settle.

## According to Eliot

### A Winter Trilogy

I

21 December 2008

Break Fast in Belgium  
Shortestday  
Through pane  
Wheels spin rain

735am  
Piped carols 🎵  
In this Vilvoorde Motel  
Hark The Herald Angels

Poised between  
Plate & mouth  
*mirabile dictu*  
The mystery

Of how  
Jesus liked his bacon

II

25 December 1958

Memory  
A beaten path  
To the past  
Cold darkness  
Before dawn

A moment's scent  
Anticipation  
The fire's blue glow

For a moment  
As lights around  
An artificial tree

We took the stairs  
My sister and I  
Each essential tread  
How far away child Christmas

III

31 December 1983

5 4 3 2 1  
A drunken man shouts

And people feign excitement

Another year

Shall we countdown to our death

An overfed bore  
Approaches extending a hand  
Woman  
With florid face  
Broken veins  
Like vines  
Pouts for a kiss

c. John Eliot 2016

c. John Eliot 2016

\*\*\*\*\*

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

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

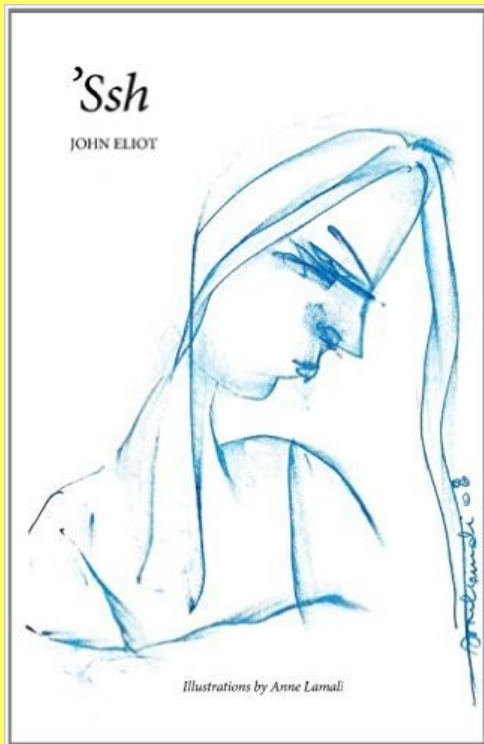
He is married with children and grandchildren. He has two books of poetry published. '**Ssh**' and '**Don't Go**' his new one which is his latest creative effort, titled '**Don't Go**'. Both books are published by Mosaique Press of England" and are available on Amazon.

Any comments to

I will reply to all emails.

**Connect here:** [johneliot1953@gmail.com](mailto:johneliot1953@gmail.com)

**John Eliot**



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



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## *LORD, Why Did You Make Me Black?*

Lord, Lord,  
Why did You make me Black?  
Why did You make me  
someone  
The world wants to hold back?

Black is the color of dirty  
clothes;  
The color of grimy hands and  
feet.

Black is the color of darkness;  
The color of tire-beaten streets.

Why did you give me thick lips,  
A broad nose and kinky hair?  
Why did You make me  
someone  
Who receives the hatred stare?

Black is the color of a bruised  
eye  
When somebody gets hurt.  
Black is the color of darkness,  
Black is the color of dirt.

How come my bone structure so  
thick  
my hips and cheeks are high?  
How come my eyes are brown  
and not the color of daylight  
sky?  
Why do people think I'm  
useless?  
How come I feel so used?  
Why do some people see my  
skin  
and think I should be abused?

Lord, I just don't understand;  
What is it about my skin?  
Why do some people want to  
hate me  
And not know the person  
within?

Black is what people are  
"listed,"

When others want to keep them  
away.  
Black is the color of shadows  
cast.  
Black is the end of the day.

Lord, You know, my own  
people mistreat me;  
And I know this isn't right.  
They don't like my hair or the  
way I look  
They say I'm too dark or too  
light.

Lord, Don't You think it's time  
For You to make a change?  
Why don't You-do creation  
And make everyone the same?

### **(God answered):**

Why did I make you black?  
Why did I make you black?  
Get off your knees; look  
around.  
Tell me what do you see?  
I didn't make you in the image  
of darkness.  
I made you in the likeness of  
Me.

I made you the color of coal  
From which beautiful diamonds  
are formed.  
I made you the color of oil,  
The Black gold that keeps  
people warm.

I made you from the rich, dark  
earth  
That can grow the food you  
need.  
Your color's the same as the  
panther's  
Known for (HER) beauty and  
speed.

Your color's the same as the  
Black stallion,  
A majestic animal is he.

I didn't make you in the Image  
of darkness  
I made you in the Likeness of  
Me!

All the colors of a Heavenly  
Rainbow  
Can be found throughout every  
nation;  
And when all those colors were  
blended well.  
**YOU BECAME MY  
GREATEST CREATION!**

Your hair is the texture of  
lamb's wool;  
Such a humble, little creature is  
he.  
I am the Shepherd who watches  
them.  
I am the One who will watch  
over thee.

You are the color of midnight  
sky,  
I put the stars' glitter in your  
eyes.  
There's a smile hidden behind  
your pain,  
That's the reason your cheeks  
are high.

You are the color of dark clouds  
formed  
when I send my strongest  
weather  
I made your lips full so when  
you kiss  
the one that you love...will  
remember.

Your stare is strong; your bone  
structure, thick,  
to withstand the burdens of  
time.  
That reflection you see in the  
mirror...  
The Image that looks back is  
MINE!

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<http://www.poetebo.com>

## **Liberian Proverbs**

Excepted from, **The Elders' Wisdom**

The feces are the food of flies. *Everything has a value in life to someone. The very thing we consider a waste, is food for other animals to survive on. Hence, we should treat people with respect because to someone else, that person we have low regard for, means the world.*

The head that came to carry the stone, instead stone carry it. *An ill-prepared person can only expect defeat. The very problem that such a person undertakes to resolve ends up consuming them.*

The huge silk cotton trees grow out of very tiny seeds. *The smallest of things can bear great fruits. It is not good to underestimate people or their hard work. It may seem meaningless, but with time and dedication, they can turn that venture into success.*

The life we have is the same life that animals have. *Often times, we tend to think highly of ourselves and far less of others. The fact is we are all equal as humans. Similarly, some people think animals are less valuable, but they also have life and we should learn to respect and treat them properly as we would any other living creature.*

The marriage life gently glides away, when partners respect and obey each other. *A happy marriage involves both parties making effort to keep it. When they do, time flies and there is much*

*happiness. When they don't things go south and time seems to crawl.*

The thing that makes the dog cook well, is the same thing that made the pig *por-tor-por-tor* (cooked extremely soft - more like overcooking rice until it is sticky). *There is not one major fix for all problems, each problems has a unique solution. Rice is a staple food in Liberia, and it is often cooked grainy, this makes eating with soup/stew easy. A rice that is por-tor-por-tor means the rice is sticky, making eating with stew/soup difficult. Most people do not like it that way. Rice cooked that way is also an insult to a cook since it tells badly on the one who prepared it. An aspect of this is that, por-tor-por-tor rice is often used for babies or very ill people; even then, it is mixed with milk and sugar to make eating it enjoyable. Thus, a healthy person doesn't take kindly to eating food like that.*

The vulture doesn't have a barber, but his head is always shiny. *Certain things will work out naturally, there is no need to worry about them. Doing so does not make them work out any differently than they will do by themselves.*

When a cattle is born, it is with its ears; the horns grow later. *With practice, we grow to mastery. It is best to listen well and understand before attempting to act.*

When you see animals playing and licking each other, it is because they know each other.

Renee' B. Drummond-Brown



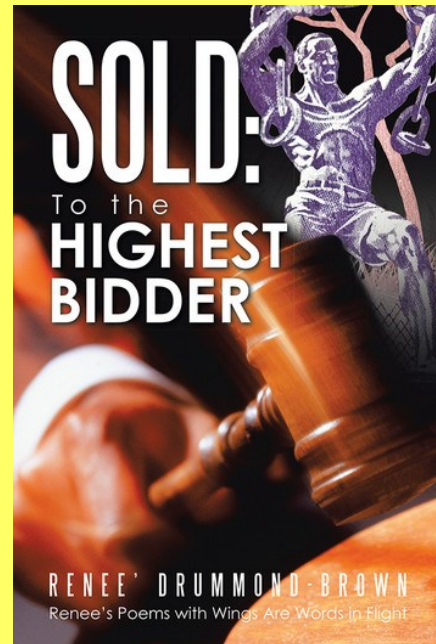
**Renee' Drummond-Brown**, is an accomplished poetess with experience in creative writing. She is a graduate of Geneva College of Western Pennsylvania. Renee' is still in pursuit of excellence towards her

mark for higher education. She is working on her sixth book and has numerous works published globally which can be seen in cubm.org/news, KWEE Magazine, Leaves of Ink, Raven Cage Poetry and Prose Ezine, Realistic Poetry International, Scarlet Leaf Publishing House, SickLit Magazine,

The Metro Gazette Publishing Company, Inc., Tuck, and Whispers Magazine just to name a few. Civil Rights Activist, Ms. Rutha Mae Harris, *Original Freedom Singer of the Civil Rights Movement*, was responsible for having Drummond-Brown's very first poem published in the Metro Gazette Publishing Company, Inc., in Albany, GA. Renee' also has poetry published in several anthologies and honorable mentions to her credit in various writing outlets. Renee' won and/or placed in several poetry contests globally and her books are eligible for nomination for a Black Book award in Southampton County Virginia.

She was Poet of the Month 2017, Winner in the Our Poetry Archives and prestigious Potpourri Poets/Artists Writing Community in the past year. She has even graced the cover of KWEE Magazine in the month of May, 2016.

Her love for creative writing is undoubtedly displayed through her very unique style and her work solidifies her as a force to be reckoned with in the literary world of poetry. Renee' is inspired by non-other than Dr. Maya Angelou, because of her, Renee' posits "Still I write, I write, and I'll write!"



Follow 'Da' Yellow Brick Road (Oh My)

Off to SEE a Wizard in Oz???

Hmm

Dorothy 'wit' friend's like us

Who needs 'luv'?

Friends

A state of mutual trust

Shared tween only us

What 'kinda' friends

Show

'Dis' love?

'Wit' friend's like 'deeze'

Again Dorothy

Who needs 'luv'?

A lil' bump on Ms. Dorothy's head

'An' her

Storm clouds rise

Her strong winds they blow

She can't withstand

Being thrown to and fro

So...

She bails ship

From home

Yeah...

This kind of friend will leave you 'fend' in Kansas

ALL ALONE!!!



'Da' Scarecrow bums along  
'Freeloadin' Freddie  
Can't stand on his own  
You guessed right  
Pick a straw  
Short man out  
Get him fired up  
Yep. Yep. Yep  
Up, up, up  
'An' away...  
He's out!  
    Mr. Tin Man  
Old man down  
Rusty round 'da' edge  
In 'da' club  
Ol' G's  
Known to thee  
Corrupting minors  
Game so weak  
But...  
You 'da' man  
You 'da' man  
Scraping oil from cans  
Go sit down  
'An' leave 'da' 'youngins' stand  
Young men SEE visions  
Old men  
Dream dreams  
Come out 'dem' clubs  
'Wit' kids  
'An'  
ACT..  
Like your eighty-three  
    King of the jungle  
Hmm  
'Hidin' behind a lil' girl  
Instigator  
Yeah 'dat' be you  
'Talkin' trash  
WRITING checks your hind can't cash  
All 'da' while expecting  
'Evr'ybody' to jump in  
Your mess  
While you snake  
Slither  
'Outta' it  
Leaving your friends to bite 'da' dust

'An' another one down  
But to you  
No big deal; what's the fuss?  
    \*FOLLOWING\*  
'Da' Yellow Brick Road  
'Wit' friends like 'dis'  
'Da' blind shall lead 'da' blind  
'An'  
Ev'rybody falls in 'dat' ditch  
'An' you know THIS  
If it weren't true  
I wouldn't've told you it  
    Friends  
A state of mutual trust  
Shared tween only us!!!  
What kind of friends  
Show  
'Dis' love?  
'Wit' friend's like 'deeze'  
Who needs 'luv'?

**Dedicated to:**

Make new friends but keep 'da' ol' 'SUM' are for keeps; the others NEED TO GO!

**Great Minds INK Alike**

Or so...  
We've been told  
We've beat to a comparable tune  
More's different than you'll ever imagine  
And/or  
Can even know  
DRUM-MOMD O'  
Her peculiar ink rules  
Poetic thoughts  
Ev'r so  
  
Oftentimes  
We're voices  
For the unheard  
Societal issues are our passion  
Poetic injustices  
Cries for children  
Justice! Justice!

Cries out  
Naw 'dems' just kids!

we carry  
one's load  
worldviews  
Cannon our pen's  
Pen pals decide  
our fate  
While  
One's INK  
Re-loads  
'N'  
thinks  
My, my , my

THE POWER OF THE PEN  
Wouldn't INK ever so

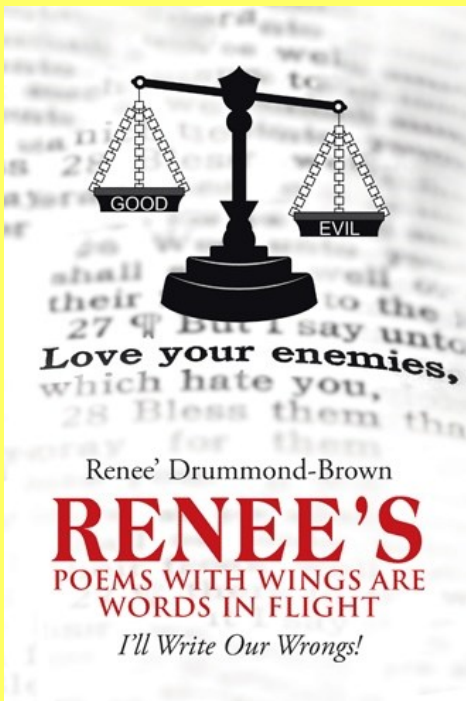
**Renee' B. Drummond-Brown**

**Dedicated to:** Identity...

Please support my write(s) by sharing this post and ordering my e-Book, Hardback and soft back books on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and/or on my Face Book Page.

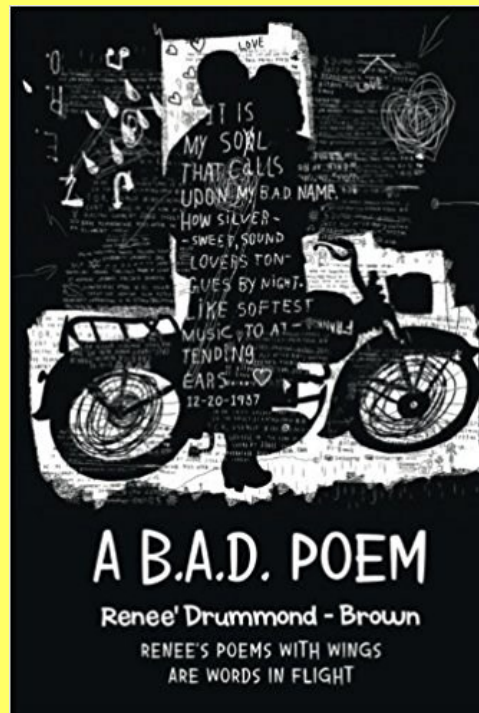
(Authored: "Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight-I'll Write Our Wrongs" and "SOLD: TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER". Note\* each book ranked 5 stars!!!)

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**THE POWER OF THE PEN**

More similarities shared 'tween' us  
Than had not  
been foretold  
if it weren't true



**Renee' B. Drummond-Brown**

## **Behind The cell**

A poem

In the cell like hell  
There I was on Thursday  
When I was not of its to be heyday  
Leaving my house en route  
elsewhere  
There at Matilda Newport  
With thumbs up for right  
So to just receive a taunt  
Desperate too for the space  
A big clamp down on my thought  
When attempt to talk there  
There comes a trumpet of knock  
him  
To resist it, a bolt was hit on me  
And then scream why? Staring and  
hearing  
There at Matilda Newport seeming  
to have no rescue  
Lose hope of the moment a while  
In a twinkle I was bundle by the  
police  
Towards the cell on Central street  
My head and parts were beaten like  
an ordinary thief  
While there I get to the cell  
See those inmates as their terrifying  
faces welcome me  
You! This is not a struggle place  
Get ready to tussle here  
And I give my widow mite  
At the cell inhale the Scent

Never thought of such a horrible  
terrain  
Mine advocacy, theirs so many  
So Say we are not rivalry  
Behind the Cell on Thursday

**Mohammed S.Sy**

## Words of NIA



### MONDAY MUSINGS-

Do you know the difference between a **TALENT** and a **SKILL**?

A **SKILL** is something you **ACQUIRE** or **LEARN**. It is something where you must have ability and dexterity. A skill can be developed through education and training. Cabinetmakers/carpenters are skillful. Mathematicians are skillful.

I met a young lady who can add numbers in her head faster than they can be calculated in a cash register.

She told me the total for my purchases before the cashier she was training had input them in the electronic register. That's a skill. She said that her grandfather **TAUGHT** her how to do that.

A **TALENT** is something God-given. It is already inside you. It is your creative or artistic aptitude. Something you do naturally. You often hear the words gifted, creative, ingenuity when you hear about talent.

People with talent do things without a lot of thought-drama. Things come naturally to them. Really good singers have talent but not all of them have had voice **TRAINING**. A good writer/poet has talent. A dancer has talent but can also be taught to be a better dancer = training.

However, not everyone realizes that Talent and Skill can work hand in hand. A person can be taught to play the piano (or any other instrument for that matter). Learning the piano has a lot to do with math but a person who plays by ear, has talent.

Singers with perfect pitch have talent. Writers have talent but writers can also be taught to write in different genres. Ex: there are more than 50 different styles of poetry but some poets don't even know the style of poetry they write. Some do not feel that this is even important but honing one's skill and polishing one's talent is how we grow and discover our capabilities.

Ex: When I started singing, I only sang soprano in the Catholic school choir. When I joined a Baptist church choir, they checked my range and decided I was not just soprano so I was placed wherever I was needed most. Sometimes I sang 1<sup>st</sup> soprano, 2<sup>nd</sup> soprano, alto and even tenor. The talent was being able to sing these ranges. The skill was learning the harmonies involved and learning how to read music.

It is the same with musicians, many can play but have not learned technical terms. Some might argue, "why bother?" My four-word answer is "It enhances your talent." When someone asks you to play a certain "type" of music at a certain tempo; you might not know what that means. For example: there is a big difference between Beats and Rhythms. The less fancy answer is "it helps you grow." Being open to change advances you and takes you so much further in your career and on your journey through life.

My aunt **LEARNED** how to sew. Then she went to Tailoring School and learned drafting to make patterns. She later Created and Designed different outfits and that showed her talent.

The message is: Don't Be Afraid to enhance what you know. God gives all of us **TALENTS** (gifts) but not to remain where we are. Learning the **SKILLS** to use our talent more takes us on a beautiful, fulfilling road to discovering who we truly are and what we can do. It is usually more than you think.

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RuNett Nia Ebo, Poet of Purpose to contact this poet

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## Herbert Logerie

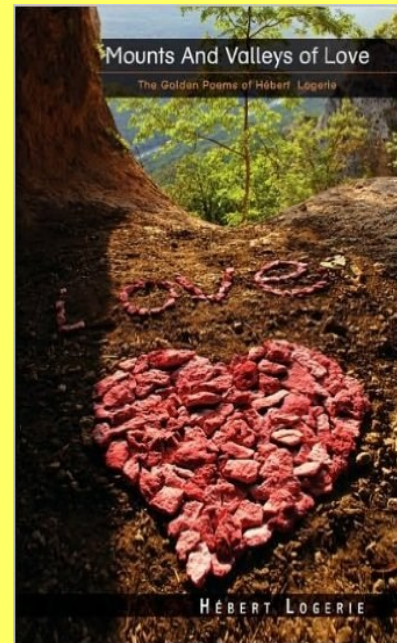
### It Is Your Smile

Woman, let me  
demystify you,  
So I can see why I love  
you  
So much.  
Let me search:  
The curves, the  
preserves,  
The gardens and the  
reserves,  
So I can understand  
Why every second  
That you flash in my  
memory,  
The chemical formula  
changes in my body.

Turn around;  
You're safe and sound.  
Let me examine you  
from head to toes:  
Touch your nose,  
Cover your cheeks,  
Do some tricks,  
Try to fake it,  
Walk, run, stop and sit.  
Oh! I'm beginning to see:  
It is your smile  
That drives me crazy;  
It is your smile  
That makes me feel so  
good.

Oh! My soul  
Is engaged in a chaotic  
feud;  
I wonder if you are the  
divine doll  
That I dreamt of the  
other night.  
You are out of sight.  
Your smile drives me  
crazy,  
Every day and every  
night,  
When I am lonely,  
When the sky is gloomy  
or bright  
And when you gaze at  
me.

## Herbert Logerie



### Herbert Logerie

is the author of several collections of poems.

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

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

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

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

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

HALIL KARAHAN



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

“Gecenin kemikleri üzerinde yükselir ay”

Yoktur ateşin eyyamı  
geceyle örter eteğini hilâl

Öne düşen boyna acımaz  
hırsıyla vurur bakır orak

Öfke neyi örter  
yüzünü tırnaklarıyla  
kazırken şafak?

Hançerdir hilâl  
hançeresi lâl

Geceye  
gölgenin  
âhı sorulmaz



« La lune se soulève sur les os de la nuit »

Le feu n'a pas des jours  
le croissant lunaire  
se couvre les jambes avec la nuit

La faucille en cuivre n'a pas pitié  
au cou qui tombe à sa portée  
le frappe sans merci

La haine couvre quoi  
pendant que l'aube gratte son visage  
avec les ongles

Le croissant lunaire est un poignard  
son larynx est muet

On ne demande jamais  
à la nuit  
la malédiction de l'ombre

“Moon rises above the bones of night”

There are no days of fire  
crescent covers her skirt with night

Copper sickle shows no mercy  
reaps faller necks avidly

What can temper cover  
during the dawn  
scratching your face?

Crescent is a poniard  
with mute larinx

It is not asked to night  
the curse of shadow

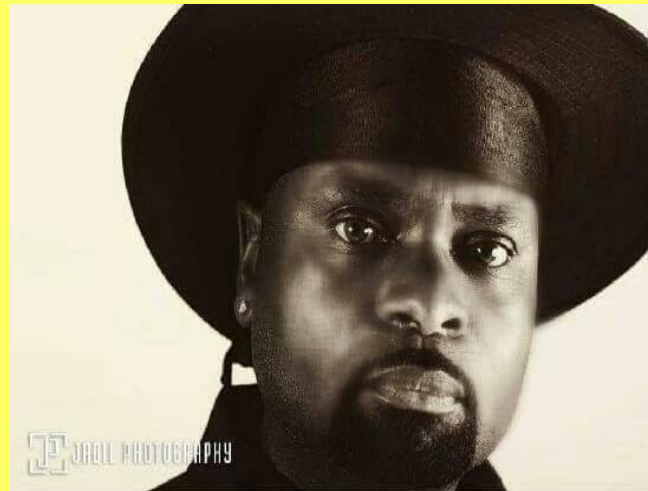


## Alonzo "Zo" Gross

### Experience

I Been there done that,  
ran away just ta run back,  
cuz the "smallest things,  
can get "under ya skin",  
like a "Thumb Tack".  
I "Found" That",  
Then "Lost" That,  
"Caught" that then "Tossed" That,  
"Ego Trips",  
had me "Burnin Bridges",  
couldn't "Cross Back".  
I thought that,  
dismissed that,  
As chitchat...  
Never listened ta intuition,  
in my "Gut",  
like a "Six Pack".  
I used 2 see Red then Spew That,  
True Fact,  
Didn't know My own-self in the "Mirror"...  
"Dawg Who's That"?.  
Made Mistakes,  
then I had ta redo that,  
said, "Yes",  
when I shoulda first,  
reviewed that,  
"Lost My Mind",  
"Where was my head at?"  
Girls cryin sayin,"  
CAN'T BELIEVE U SAID THAT!!!!".  
Way Back,  
When someone tried 2 "Feed Me Food 4  
Thought",  
I was 2 "Fulla Myself when I shoulda Ate  
That".  
But Hey Black,  
U Live & U Learn,  
Life is "Priceless",  
& Experience...  
iZ the Best "Pay Back".

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Alonzo "Zo" Gross

Born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, raised in Allentown Pa. Zo graduated from William Allen High School. He went on to graduate from Temple university with a BA in English literature and a Minor in Dance. Zo started Dancing, writing songs, poetry, and short stories at the age of 7. Zo successfully performed at the Legendary Apollo Theater as a dancer at 18. Zo signed a contract with Ken Cowle of Soul Asyum Publishing in 2012, & released the book of poetry and art "Inspiration Harmony & The Word Within" Noveber 2012.

On December 2nd 2012 he won the Lehigh Valley Music Award for "Best Spoken Word Poet" at the LVMAS. In October 2014 Zo traveled to Los Angeles, California to be one of the featured poets/musicians in a documentary film called "VOICES" Directed by Gina Nemo. The Film is slated to be released in 2016. Zo was again Nominated for "Best Spoken Word Poet" again in 2016. Zo's Poetry has been featured in several anthologies, as well as magazines.

Zo's New Book of Poetry & Art "Soul EliXiR"... The WritingZ of Zo will be released in 2016, along with His Debut Rap CD "A Madness 2 The Method" to be released the same year.



**Jack Kolkmeier**



**The Standing Stones**

let the stones stand at attention where  
they are sentinel  
for moving them  
changes the clock of antiquity  
to a time that only the now knows

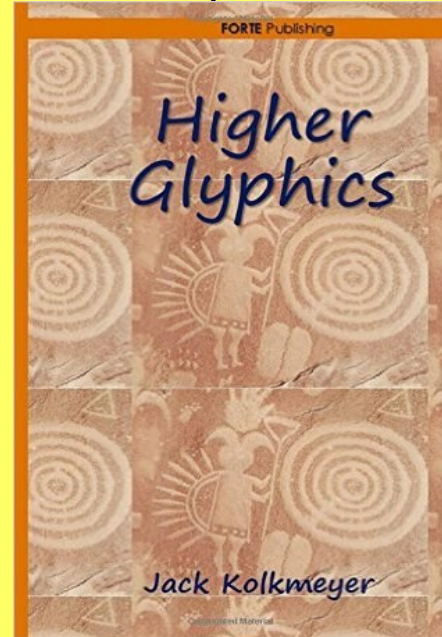
they are the waiters and the watchers  
with eyes behind their heads  
and hands that stretch far into the  
depths of then  
and off into the infinity of there  
way beyond the imagination and  
comprehension  
of this place where they now stand  
protector  
guarding a mystery and a folk  
of lore and dimension  
that we can only see and feel  
in the etchings and cicatrices  
carved in their basaltic demeanor

let the stones stand as teachers  
zoned into the icons of memory  
and as seekers of the gifts beyond  
the rolling hills where they reside

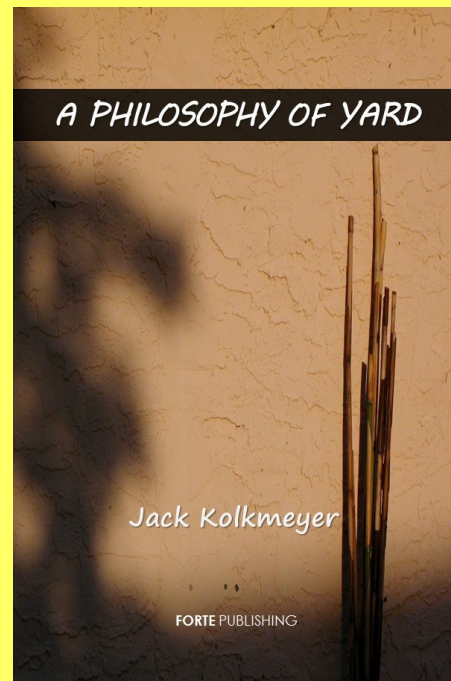
stand beside them  
and listen to their lithic whispers

and to their secrets that they tell  
in lunar rhymes and solar flares  
and look where they stare  
and you too  
will see where meanings merge

**Delray Beach**



**FORTE Publishing**



Jack's newest book **Philosophy of Yard** is was published in 2017. And **Higher Glyphics** [published 2016] is currently available for purchase

**Thelma Teetee Geleplay**

**WHAT IF?**

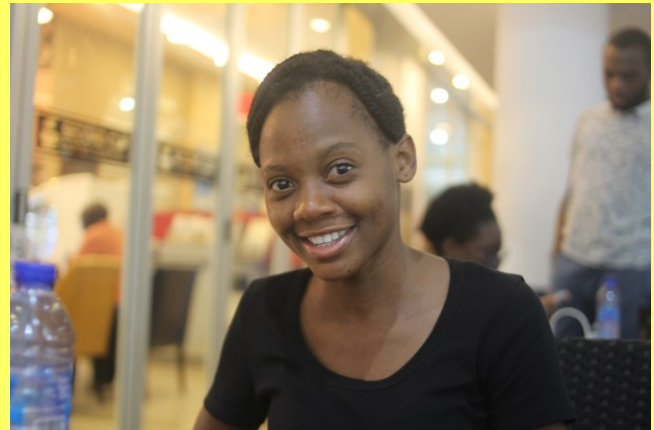
As I sat on the bus from Buduburam to Accra  
Feeling the heat from the scorching sun  
as the breeze blew the air dry  
I thought to myself "what if we had four  
climate seasons like the rest, will it make  
us any more bless?"  
Having Dry and Rainy seasons to live with  
compared to having Autumn, Spring,  
Fall, Winter and Summer  
Does it make us to enjoy life more or  
less?

What if street hawkers had established  
businesses and beggars were Prince and  
Princesses?  
What if orphans had parents and a  
place to call home?  
What if Africa was as mighty as Rome?  
Will the world view Africa differently?  
Without murmur and complain we  
develop this place greatly and we look  
back at our roots and appreciate it  
honestly.

What if we were all one big tribe? No  
boundaries and borders to separate us.  
Will we honestly have each other's back  
like family does?  
What if we all had one tongue, culture  
and color?  
What if you had my life and I had yours?  
How will you treat it?

We can all have the same mind only if  
we choose  
And we can all make Africa an  
awesome place - having no thought of  
the lines drawn on a paper call Map  
But for the similarities of the history of our  
fore fathers and for the blessings that  
come with dwelling in our own land and  
enjoying the fruits of it.

We are one black people from the same  
land call Africa  
Be it the East, West, North or South  
It does not matter the direction.  
We are all Africans.



**Thelma Teetee Geleplay**, is a Liberian  
Poet, Entrepreneur and Marketer. She is  
the CEO of ModestAfrik Styles.

She's passionate about self-  
development and youth empowerment.

She is interested in photography,  
word smiting and volunteering to mold  
minds through poetry.

Thelma is currently concluding her  
maiden chapbook expected to be  
published this year.

**RICHARD ALDINGTON**

**IN THE VIA SESTINA**

O daughter of Isis,  
Thou standest beside the wet highway  
Of this decayed Rome,  
A manifest harlot.

Straight and slim art thou  
As a marble phallus;  
Thy face is the face of Isis  
Carven

As she is carven in basalt.  
And my heart stops with awe  
At the presence of the gods,  
There beside thee on the stall of images

Is the head of Osiris  
Thy lord.  
IS

**H. D.**

**SITALKAS**

Thou art come at length  
More beautiful  
Than any cool god  
In a chamber under  
Lycia's far coast,  
Than any high god  
Who touches us not  
Here in the seeded grass.  
Aye, than Argestes  
Scattering the broken leaves.  
20

**JAMES JOYCE**

**I HEAR AN ARMY**

I hear an army charging upon the land,  
And the thunder of horses plunging;  
foam about their  
knees :  
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them  
stand,  
Disdaining the rains, with fluttering whips,  
the Char*ny*  
ioteers.  
They cry into the night their battle name  
:

I moan in sleep when I hear afar their  
whirling  
laughter.  
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a  
blinding flame,  
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as  
upon an anvil.  
They come shaking in triumph their long  
grey hair :  
They come out of the sea and run  
shouting by the  
shore.  
My heart, have you no wisdom thus to  
despair?  
My love, my love, my love, why have  
you left me  
alone ?  
40

**EZRA POUND**

**TS'AI CHI'H**

The petals fall in the fountain,  
the orange coloured rose-leaves,  
Their ochre clings to the stone.  
46

## Gifts of Christmas

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

**EMILY DICKENSON**

### 'Twas just this time, last year, I died

I know I heard the Corn,  
When I was carried by the Farms —  
It had the Tassels on —

I thought how yellow it would look —  
When Richard went to mill —  
And then, I wanted to get out,  
But something held my will.

I thought just how Red — Apples wedged  
The Stubble's joints between —  
And the Carts stooping round the fields  
To take the Pumpkins in —

I wondered which would miss me, least,  
And when Thanksgiving, came,  
If Father'd multiply the plates —  
To make an even Sum —

And would it blur the Christmas glee  
My Stocking hang too high  
For any Santa Claus to reach  
The Altitude of me —

But this sort, grieved myself,  
And so, I thought the other way,  
How just this time, some perfect year —  
Themselves, should come to me —

**HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW**

### Holidays

The holiest of all holidays are those  
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart;  
The secret anniversaries of the heart,  
When the full river of feeling overflows;--  
The happy days unclouded to their close;  
The sudden joys that out of darkness start  
As flames from ashes; swift desires that  
dart  
Like swallows singing down each wind  
that  
blows!

White as the gleam of a receding sail,  
White as a cloud that floats and fades in  
air,  
White as the whitest lily on a stream,  
These tender memories are;--a fairy tale  
Of some enchanted land we know not  
where,  
But lovely as a landscape in a dream.

**ROBERT FROST**

### Christmas Trees

*(A Christmas Circular Letter)*

The city had withdrawn into itself  
And left at last the country to the country;  
When between whirls of snow not come  
to lie  
And whirls of foliage not yet laid, there  
drove

A stranger to our yard, who looked the city,  
Yet did in country fashion in that there  
He sat and waited till he drew us out  
A-buttoning coats to ask him who he was.  
He proved to be the city come again  
To look for something it had left behind  
And could not do without and keep its  
Christmas.

He asked if I would sell my Christmas trees;  
My woods—the young fir balsams like a place

Where houses all are churches and have  
spires.

I hadn't thought of them as Christmas  
Trees.

I doubt if I was tempted for a moment  
To sell them off their feet to go in cars  
And leave the slope behind the house all  
bare,

Where the sun shines now no warmer  
than the  
moon.

I'd hate to have them know it if I was.

Yet more I'd hate to hold my trees except  
As others hold theirs or refuse for them,  
Beyond the time of profitable growth,  
The trial by market everything must come  
to.

I dallied so much with the thought of  
selling.

Then whether from mistaken courtesy  
And fear of seeming short of speech, or  
whether

From hope of hearing good of what was  
mine, I

said,

"There aren't enough to be worth while."

"I could soon tell how many they would  
cut,

You let me look them over."

"You could

look.

But don't expect I'm going to let you  
have  
them."

Pasture they spring in, some in clumps too  
close

That lop each other of boughs, but not a  
few

Quite solitary and having equal boughs  
All round and round. The latter he  
nodded "Yes"

to,

Or paused to say beneath some lovelier  
one,

With a buyer's moderation, "That would  
do."

I thought so too, but wasn't there to say  
so.

We climbed the pasture on the south,  
crossed

over,

And came down on the north. He said, "A  
thousand."

"A thousand Christmas trees!—at what  
apiece?"

He felt some need of softening that to  
me:

"A thousand trees would come to thirty  
dollars."

Then I was certain I had never meant  
To let him have them. Never show  
surprise!

But thirty dollars seemed so small beside  
The extent of pasture I should strip, three  
cents

(For that was all they figured out apiece),  
Three cents so small beside the dollar  
friends

I should be writing to within the hour  
Would pay in cities for good trees like  
those,  
Regular vestry-trees whole Sunday  
Schools  
Could hang enough on to pick off  
enough.  
A thousand Christmas trees I didn't know  
I had!  
Worth three cents more to give away  
than sell,  
As may be shown by a simple calculation.  
Too bad I couldn't lay one in a letter.  
I can't help wishing I could send you one,  
In wishing you herewith a Merry  
Christmas.

**MAYA ANGELOU**

### **“Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem**

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes  
And lightning rattles the eaves of our  
houses.  
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to  
avalanche  
Over unprotected villages.  
The sky slips low and grey and  
threatening.

We question ourselves.  
What have we done to so affront nature?  
We worry God.  
Are you there? Are you there really?  
Does the covenant you made with us still  
hold?

Into this climate of fear and  
apprehension,  
Christmas enters,  
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of  
hope  
And singing carols of forgiveness high up  
in the  
bright air.  
The world is encouraged to come away  
from  
rancor,  
Come the way of friendship.

It is the Glad Season.  
Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning  
sleeps  
quietly in the corner.  
Flood waters recede into memory.  
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid  
us  
As we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of  
children  
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as  
they  
walk into their sunsets.  
Hope spreads around the earth.  
Brightening all  
things,  
Even hate which crouches breeding in  
dark  
corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.  
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.  
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.  
We hear a sweetness.  
The word is Peace.  
It is loud now. It is louder.  
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled  
by its presence.

It is what we have hungered for.

Not just the absence of war. But, true  
Peace.

A harmony of spirit, a comfort of  
courtesies.

Security for our beloveds and their  
beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace  
of Christmas.

We beckon this good season to wait a  
while with us.

We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and  
Muslim, say come.

Peace.

Come and fill us and our world with your  
majesty.

We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic  
and the Confucian,

Implore you, to stay a while with us.

So we may learn by your shimmering light  
How to look beyond complexion and see  
community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create  
a language

To translate ourselves to ourselves and to  
each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth  
of Jesus Christ

Into the great religions of the world.

We jubilate the precious advent of trust.

We shout with glorious tongues at the  
coming of hope.

All the earth's tribes loosen their voices  
To celebrate the promise of Peace.

We, Angels and Mortal's, Believers and  
NonBelievers,

Look heavenward and speak  
the word aloud.

Peace. We look at our world and speak  
the word aloud.

Peace.

We look at each other, then into  
ourselves

And we say without shyness or apology or  
hesitation.

Peace, My Brother.

Peace, My Sister.

Peace, My Soul."

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### The Magi

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's  
eye,

In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale  
unsatisfied ones

Appear and disappear in the blue depths  
of the

sky

With all their ancient faces like rain-  
beaten

stones,

And all their helms of silver hovering side  
by

side,

And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find  
once more,

Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,  
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial  
floor.





## A Child's Christmas In Wales

Poem by Dylan Thomas #####new####

One Christmas was so much like another, in those years around the sea-town corner now and out of all sound except the distant speaking of the voices I sometimes hear a moment before sleep, that I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six.

All the Christmases roll down toward the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged fish-freezing waves, and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find. In goes my hand into that wool-white bell-tongued ball of holidays resting at the rim of the carol-singing sea, and out come Mrs. Prothero and the firemen.

It was on the afternoon of the Christmas Eve, and I was in Mrs. Prothero's garden, waiting for cats, with her son Jim. It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers. But there were cats. Patient, cold and callous, our hands wrapped in socks, we waited to snowball the cats. Sleek and long as jaguars and horrible-whiskered, spitting and snarling, they would slink and sidle over the white back-garden walls, and the lynx-eyed hunters, Jim and I, fur-capped and moccasined trappers from Hudson Bay, off Mumbles Road, would hurl our deadly snowballs at the green of their eyes. The wise cats never appeared.

we were so still, Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen in the muffling silence of the eternal snows - eternal, ever since Wednesday - that we never heard Mrs. Prothero's first cry from her igloo at the bottom of the garden. Or, if we heard it at all, it was, to us, like the far-off challenge of our enemy and prey, the neighbor's polar cat. But soon the voice grew louder. "Fire!" cried Mrs. Prothero, and she beat the dinner-gong.

And we ran down the garden, with the snowballs in our arms, toward the house; and smoke, indeed, was pouring out of the dining-room, and the gong was bombilating, and Mrs. Prothero was announcing ruin like a town crier in Pompeii. This was better than all the cats in Wales standing on the wall in a row. We bounded into the house, laden with snowballs, and stopped at the open door of the smoke-filled room.

Something was burning all right; perhaps it was Mr. Prothero, who always slept there after midday dinner with a newspaper over his face. But he was standing in the middle of the room, saying, "A fine Christmas!" and smacking at the smoke with a slipper.

"Call the fire brigade," cried Mrs. Prothero as she beat the gong.

"There won't be there," said Mr. Prothero, "it's Christmas."

There was no fire to be seen, only clouds of smoke and Mr. Prothero standing in the middle of them, waving his slipper as though he were conducting.

"Do something," he said. And we threw all our snowballs into the smoke - I think we missed Mr. Prothero - and ran out of the house to the telephone box.

"Let's call the police as well," Jim said. "And the ambulance." "And Ernie Jenkins, he likes fires."

But we only called the fire brigade, and soon the fire engine came and three tall men in helmets brought a hose into the house and Mr. Prothero got out just in time before they turned it on. Nobody could have had a noisier Christmas Eve. And when the firemen turned off the hose and were standing in the wet, smoky room, Jim's Aunt, Miss. Prothero, came downstairs and peered in at them. Jim and I waited, very quietly, to hear what she would say to them. She said the right thing, always. She looked at the three tall firemen in their shining helmets, standing among the smoke and cinders and dissolving snowballs, and she said, "Would you like anything to read?"

Years and years ago, when I was a boy, when there were wolves in Wales, and birds the

color of red-flannel petticoats whisked past the harp-shaped hills, when we sang and wallowed all night and day in caves that smelt like Sunday afternoons in damp front farmhouse parlors, and we chased, with the jawbones of deacons, the English and the bears, before the motor car, before the wheel, before the duchess-faced horse, when we rode the daft and happy hills bareback, it snowed and it snowed. But here a small boy says: "It snowed last year, too. I made a snowman and my brother knocked it down and I knocked my brother down and then we had tea."

"But that was not the same snow," I say. "Our snow was not only shaken from white wash buckets down the sky, it came shawling out of the ground and swam and drifted out of the arms and hands and bodies of the trees; snow grew overnight on the roofs of the houses like a pure and grandfather moss, minutely -ivied the walls and settled on the postman, opening the gate, like a dumb, numb thunder-storm of white, torn Christmas cards."

"Were there postmen then, too?"

"With sprinkling eyes and wind-cherried noses, on spread, frozen feet they crunched up to the doors and mittened on them manfully. But all that the children could hear was a ringing of bells."

"You mean that the postman went rat-a-tat-tat and the doors rang?"

"I mean that the bells the children could hear were inside them."

"I only hear thunder sometimes, never bells."

"There were church bells, too."

"Inside them?"

"No, no, no, in the bat-black, snow-white belfries, tugged by bishops and storks. And they rang their tidings over the bandaged town, over the frozen foam of the powder and ice-cream hills, over the crackling sea. It seemed that all the churches boomed for joy under my window; and the weathercocks crew for Christmas, on our fence."

"Get back to the postmen"

"They were just ordinary postmen, found of walking and dogs and Christmas and the snow. They knocked on the doors with blue knuckles ...."

"Ours has got a black knocker...."

"And then they stood on the white Welcome mat in the little, drifted porches and huffed and puffed, making ghosts with their breath, and jogged from foot to foot like small boys wanting to go out."

"And then the presents?"

"And then the Presents, after the Christmas box. And the cold postman, with a rose on his button-nose, tingled down the tea-tray-slithered run of the chilly glinting hill. He went in his ice-bound boots like a man on fishmonger's slabs. "He wagged his bag like a frozen camel's hump, dizzily turned the corner on one foot, and, by God, he was gone."

"Get back to the Presents."

"There were the Useful Presents: engulfing mufflers of the old coach days, and mittens made for giant sloths; zebra scarfs of a substance like silky gum that could be tug-o'-warred down to the galoshes; blinding tam-o'-shanters like patchwork tea cozies and bunny-suited busbies and balaclavas for victims of head-shrinking tribes; from aunts who always wore wool next to the skin there were mustached and rasping vests that made you wonder why the aunts had any skin left at all; and once I had a little crocheted nose bag from an aunt now, alas, no longer whinnying with us. And pictureless books in which small boys, though warned with quotations not to, would skate on Farmer Giles' pond and did and drowned; and books that told me everything about the wasp, except why."

"Go on the Useless Presents."

"Bags of moist and many-colored jelly babies and a folded flag and a false nose and a tram-conductor's cap and a machine that punched tickets and rang a bell; never a catapult; once, by mistake that no one could explain, a little hatchet; and a celluloid duck that made, when you pressed it, a most unducklike sound, a mewling moo that an ambitious cat might make who wished to be a cow; and a painting book in which I could make the grass, the trees, the sea and the animals any colour I pleased, and still the dazzling sky-blue sheep are grazing in the red field under the rainbow-billed and pea-green birds. Hardboileds, toffee, fudge and allsorts, crunches, cracknels, humbugs, glaciers,

marzipan, and butterwelsh for the Welsh. And troops of bright tin soldiers who, if they could not fight, could always run. And Snakes-and-Families and Happy Ladders. And Easy Hobbi-Games for Little Engineers, complete with instructions. Oh, easy for Leonardo! And a whistle to make the dogs bark to wake up the old man next door to make him beat on the wall with his stick to shake our picture off the wall. And a packet of cigarettes: you put one in your mouth and you stood at the corner of the street and you waited for hours, in vain, for an old lady to scold you for smoking a cigarette, and then with a smirk you ate it. And then it was breakfast under the balloons."

"Were there Uncles like in our house?"  
"There are always Uncles at Christmas. The same Uncles. And on Christmas morning, with dog-disturbing whistle and sugar fags, I would scour the swatched town for the news of the little world, and find always a dead bird by the Post Office or by the white deserted swings; perhaps a robin, all but one of his fires out. Men and women wading or scooping back from chapel, with taproom noses and wind-bussed cheeks, all albinos, huddles their stiff black jarring feathers against the irreligious snow. Mistletoe hung from the gas brackets in all the front parlors; there was sherry and walnuts and bottled beer and crackers by the dessertspoons; and cats in their fur-about watched the fires; and the high-heaped fire spat, all ready for the chestnuts and the mulling pokers. Some few large men sat in the front parlors, without their collars, Uncles almost certainly, trying their new cigars, holding them out judiciously at arms' length, returning them to their mouths, coughing, then holding them out again as though waiting for the explosion; and some few small aunts, not wanted in the kitchen, nor anywhere else for that matter, sat on the very edge of their chairs, poised and brittle, afraid to break, like faded cups and saucers."

Not many those mornings trod the piling streets: an old man always, fawn-bowled, yellow-gloved and, at this time of year, with spats of snow, would take his constitutional to the white bowling green and back, as he would take it wet or fire on Christmas Day or

Doomsday; sometimes two hale young men, with big pipes blazing, no overcoats and wind blown scarfs, would trudge, unspeaking, down to the forlorn sea, to work up an appetite, to blow away the fumes, who knows, to walk into the waves until nothing of them was left but the two furling smoke clouds of their inextinguishable briars. Then I would be slap-dashing home, the gravy smell of the dinners of others, the bird smell, the brandy, the pudding and mince, coiling up to my nostrils, when out of a snow-clogged side lane would come a boy the spit of myself, with a pink-tipped cigarette and the violet past of a black eye, cocky as a bullfinch, leering all to himself.

I hated him on sight and sound, and would be about to put my dog whistle to my lips and blow him off the face of Christmas when suddenly he, with a violet wink, put his whistle to his lips and blew so stridently, so high, so exquisitely loud, that gobbling faces, their cheeks bulged with goose, would press against their tinsled windows, the whole length of the white echoing street. For dinner we had turkey and blazing pudding, and after dinner the Uncles sat in front of the fire, loosened all buttons, put their large moist hands over their watch chains, groaned a little and slept. Mothers, aunts and sisters scuttled to and fro, bearing tureens. Auntie Bessie, who had already been frightened, twice, by a clock-work mouse, whimpered at the sideboard and had some elderberry wine. The dog was sick. Auntie Dosie had to have three aspirins, but Auntie Hannah, who liked port, stood in the middle of the snowbound back yard, singing like a big-bosomed thrush. I would blow up balloons to see how big they would blow up to; and, when they burst, which they all did, the Uncles jumped and rumbled. In the rich and heavy afternoon, the Uncles breathing like dolphins and the snow descending, I would sit among festoons and Chinese lanterns and nibble dates and try to make a model man-o'-war, following the Instructions for Little Engineers, and produce what might be mistaken for a sea-going tramcar.

Or I would go out, my bright new boots squeaking, into the white world, on to the

seaward hill, to call on Jim and Dan and Jack and to pad through the still streets, leaving huge footprints on the hidden pavements. "I bet people will think there's been hippos." "What would you do if you saw a hippo coming down our street?" "I'd go like this, bang! I'd throw him over the railings and roll him down the hill and then I'd tickle him under the ear and he'd wag his tail."

"What would you do if you saw two hippos?" Iron-flanked and bellowing he-hippos clanked and battered through the scudding snow toward us as we passed Mr. Daniel's house.

"Let's post Mr. Daniel a snow-ball through his letter box."

"Let's write things in the snow."

"Let's write, 'Mr. Daniel looks like a spaniel' all over his lawn."

Or we walked on the white shore. "Can the fishes see it's snowing?"

The silent one-clouded heavens drifted on to the sea. Now we were snow-blind travelers lost on the north hills, and vast dewlapped dogs, with flasks round their necks, ambled and shambled up to us, baying "Excelsior." We returned home through the poor streets where only a few children fumbled with bare red fingers in the wheel-rutted snow and cat-called after us, their voices fading away, as we trudged uphill, into the cries of the dock birds and the hooting of ships out in the whirling bay. And then, at tea the recovered Uncles would be jolly; and the ice cake loomed in the center of the table like a marble grave. Auntie Hannah laced her tea with rum, because it was only once a year.

Bring out the tall tales now that we told by the fire as the gaslight bubbled like a diver. Ghosts whooped like owls in the long nights when I dared not look over my shoulder; animals lurked in the cubbyhole under the stairs and the gas meter ticked. And I remember that we went singing carols once, when there wasn't the shaving of a moon to light the flying streets. At the end of a long road was a drive that led to a large house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave to say a word. The wind through

the trees made noises as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached the black bulk of the house. "What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?" "No," Jack said, "Good King Wencelas. I'll count three." One, two three, and we began to sing, our voices high and seemingly distant in the snow-felted darkness round the house that was occupied by nobody we knew. We stood close together, near the dark door. Good King Wencelas looked out On the Feast of Stephen ... And then a small, dry voice, like the voice of someone who has not spoken for a long time, joined our singing: a small, dry, eggshell voice from the other side of the door: a small dry voice through the keyhole. And when we stopped running we were outside our house; the front room was lovely; balloons floated under the hot-water-bottle-gulping gas; everything was good again and shone over the town.

"Perhaps it was a ghost," Jim said.

"Perhaps it was trolls," Dan said, who was always reading.

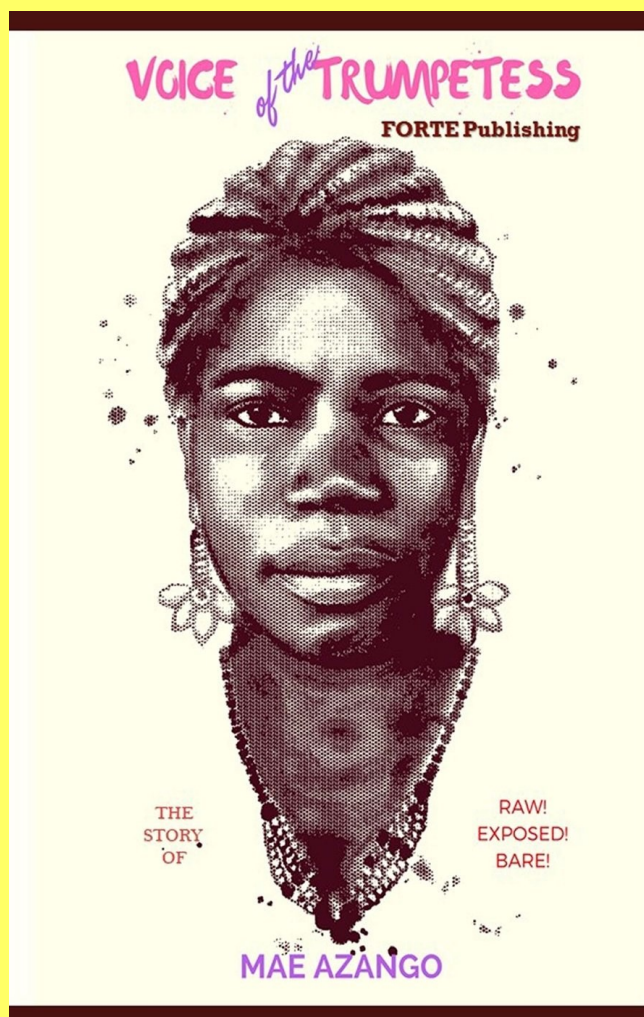
"Let's go in and see if there's any jelly left,"

Jack said. And we did that.

Always on Christmas night there was music. An uncle played the fiddle, a cousin sang "Cherry Ripe," and another uncle sang "Drake's Drum." It was very warm in the little house. Auntie Hannah, who had got on to the parsnip wine, sang a song about Bleeding Hearts and Death, and then another in which she said her heart was like a Bird's Nest; and then everybody laughed again; and then I went to bed. Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-colored snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steady falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept.

**Dylan Thomas**

## Recommended READS



### Blurb

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

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

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

She trumpets the horrors of her own past.

### Excerpt

“Confess!”

“Ooooooh,” I moan on the cold floor.

“You belleh say ley truth eh!”

“Ay God.” I whispered, unable to speak. My voice gone from screams. My body riddled with pain. I feel the life draining out of my body.

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

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

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

“La who ley man? John? Garyou? Who?”

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

“Dah nah dem, den dah who?”

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

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

Da Youjay?”

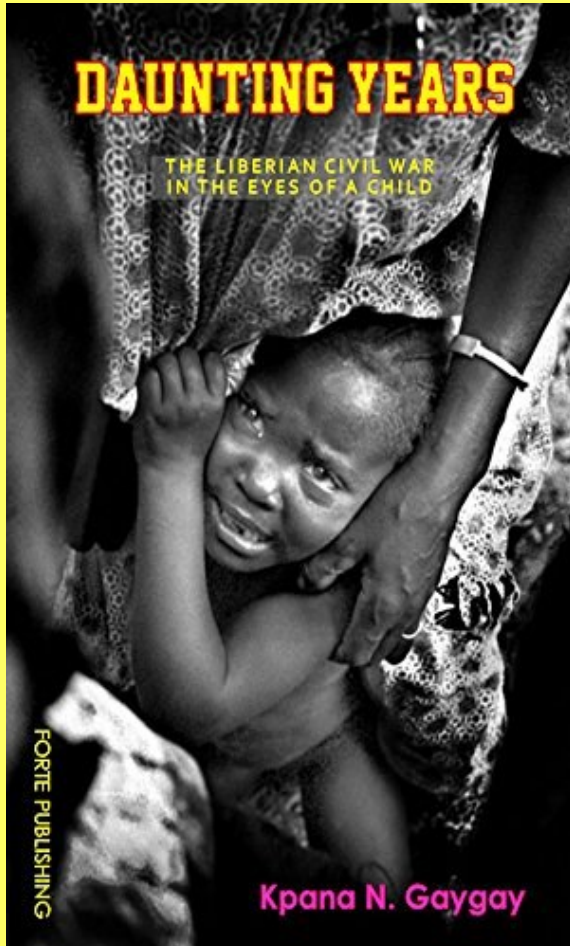
I nodded vigorously. At this point, I didn’t care. I had to stop the pain.

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

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

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

## Recommended READS

**Blurb**

A little child wakes up starving. Her mother can't feed her because she's dying from hunger. Her village can't protect her because they are engulfed in the midst of a bloody civil war. They have the misfortune to live in a village that is a strategic spot on the map of warlords and government forces; both groups determined to take and or keep that little town at all cost. Their men have fled; left them unprotected. Their sons have been taken or killed.

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

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

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

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

**Excerpt**

Boom!

Brrrr, brrrr.

Boom! Boom!

Brrrrrr, brrrrrrrrr, brrrrr

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The man dah enemy," shouted one person.

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

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

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

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

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

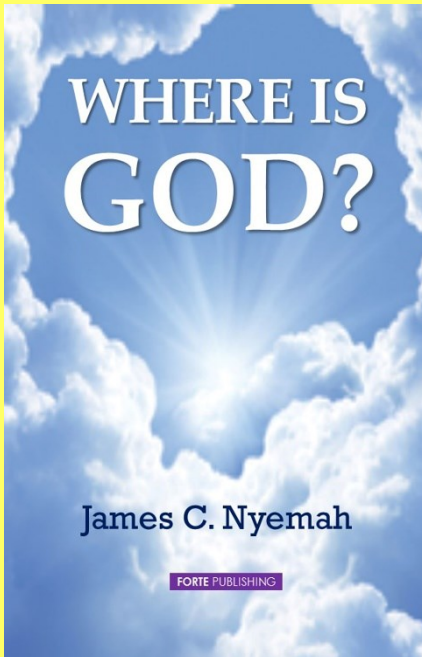
Something immediately died in Mama's expression as the voice from the one ahead of the group shouted

"Open fire!"

## Recommended Reads

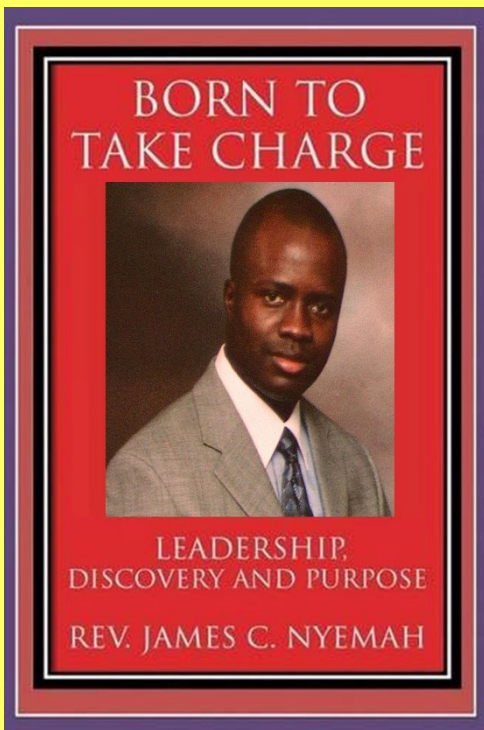
Published by **FORTE Publishing**

### WHERE IS GOD?



“Where is God?” A most difficult question no doubt but a necessary one about God and life. If things are worse, we even go further and ask all sorts of questions. For example, “If God is such a loving and caring father,

why does he allow bad things to happen to good people, including Christians?



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

*Pastor James*

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



**MOMOH SEKOU DUDU**

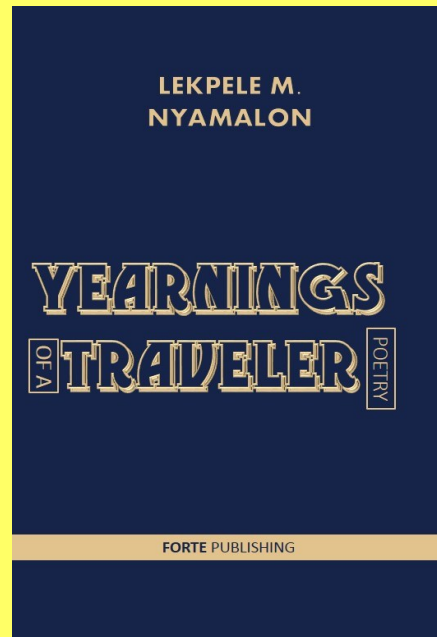
takes us on a mental journey in his latest release, *When The Mind Soars*, poetry from the Heart.

He exposes us to a Liberia as freshly, honestly and

chaotic as he sees it. He presents us a broken Liberia that is pulling herself up by its own boot straps. Let your minds fly, soar with ideas.

### Yearnings of A Traveler

We all have a yearning for something. For



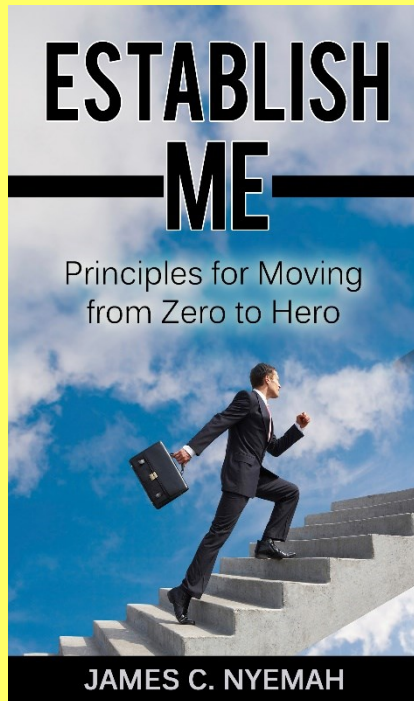
Lekpele, his has been a message of self worth, as we see in his signature piece, My Body is Gold; one of patriotism, as in Scars of A Tired Nation; one of Pan Africanism as in the piece, Dig The Graves. He

also has a message of hope as seen in his award winning poem, Forgotten Future. He is an emerging voice that one can't afford to ignore. Yearning is the debut chapbook by Liberian poet, Lekpele M. Nyamalon.

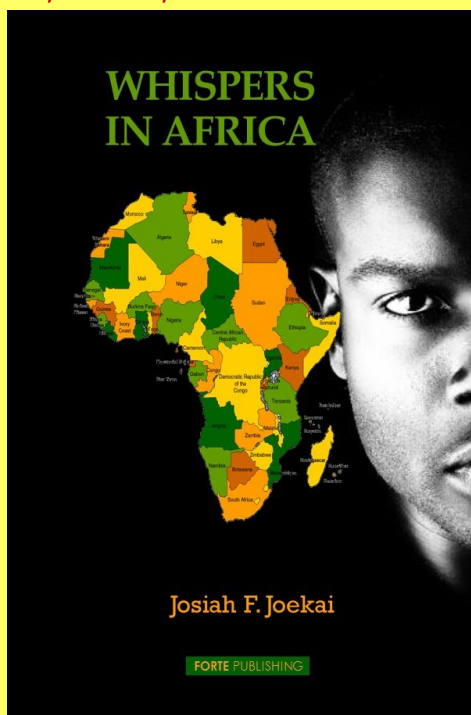
Recommended Reads

ESTABLISH ME in the world is Liberia?

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

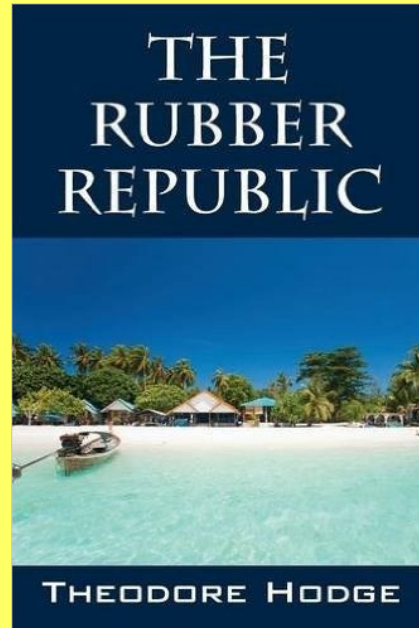


In his latest work, Ps. Nyemah lets us know that God can **Fix Us, Mold Us, Create Us** and then **Establish US**.



Available now from FORTE Publishing

The Rubber Republic



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

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

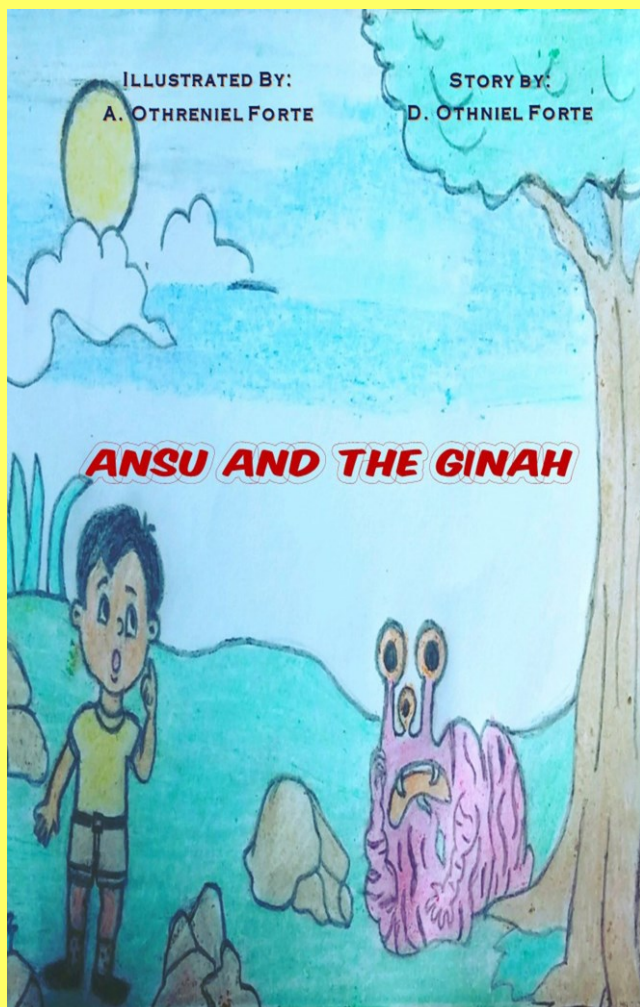
Mohammed Dolley Donzo

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



Available now from FORTE Publishing by Mohammed Dolley Donzo





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

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

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

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

**FORTE Publishing Int'l**

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

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

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

**FORTE Publishing Int'l**

*Around Town*



Cozy Evening



The boys here are already training for the big stage. That they are brave enough to go around serenading is a testament to their courage. In a few years, they'd have much experience under their belts to hit the big stage.



Kids carrying on the tradition of Old Man Beggar



Traditional Dancer from the Gio Tribe-Gio Devil



The Gabriel Tucker Bridge- New Bridge



A Powerful message in support of arts/artists





Photo: S. Mark

City Center

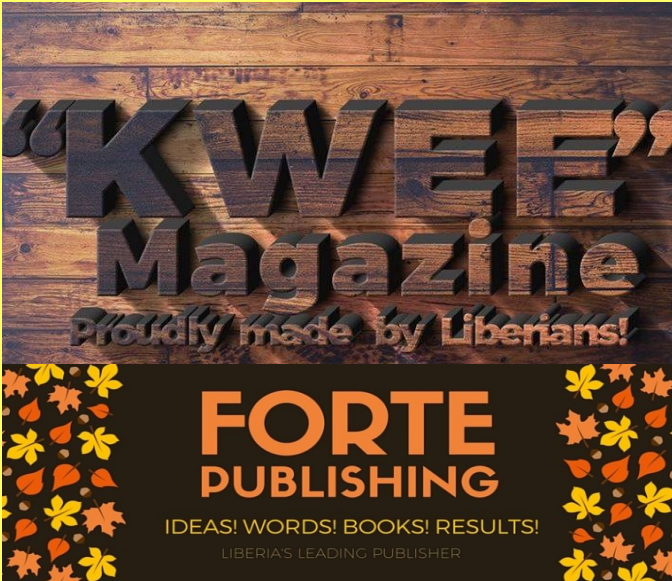




Hustle is real.



A scenic view of Monrovia, city center



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



Around Town



**Bomi County, a perfect view**



**Famous Liberian Piggy Hippo**



**This exotic waterfall is a great opportunity  
To expand tourism if developed.**



**Down town Pehn Pehn Hustle**



**The People's Monument**



**Forget us not**



**Broom & Mop sellers. Hustle; real life situations**

*Credit: Darby Cecil & Daily Pictures from around Liberia*

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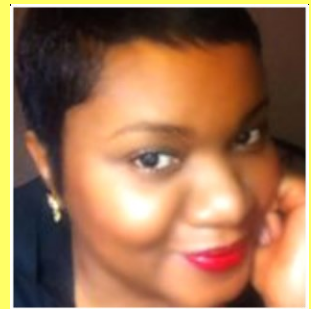
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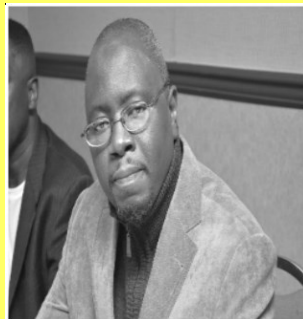
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Team

# 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.



PHOTO BY: Melisa Chavez

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  
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& Culture

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HOLIDAYS**

**Shaun  
Jooste**

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the Month**

**Book  
Reviews**

**Liberian Classics  
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**Unscripted  
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**Words of Nia  
Janice Almond  
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Richard Wilson Moss  
Thelma T. Geleplay  
Cher Antoinette  
John Eliot  
Jeanine Milly Cooper  
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