

# KwEE

Liberian Literary Magazine

Nov Issue

*Authors of  
the Month*

**Berenice  
Mulubah**

Pre. Sirleaf  
@ India-Africa  
Summit



**Perry  
Mulubah**

**Liberian Youth,  
Keita, Makes  
Nation Proud**

**New Books  
Kuluba's  
Korner**

**Book  
Reviews**

**Stories  
& Poems**

**Featured Poets:**

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Richard Wilson Moss  
Herbert Logerie  
Aken Wariebi  
Lekpele Nyamalon  
Jack Kolkmeier  
Matanneh Rose Dunbar  
Varney Gean  
Clifford Oppog Benjamin  
Ngozi Olivia Osuoha



Liberian Literary Magazine

# KWEE



*Liberian*

*Literary*

*Magazine*

### Overview:

#### New Look

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

#### Our Commitment

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

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

#### What to Expect

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

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## 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.

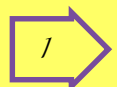
### *Artist of the Month*

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!.





## Riqué Speaks

### Wilton Felder Remembering a Crusader



Last month marked the passing of one of my favorite musicians, Wilton Felder, Tenor Saxophonist and co-founder of the legendary Jazz-Funk group The (Jazz) Crusaders, and a great session bass player as well. His brother Crusaders, Joe Sample and Wayne Henderson, pianist and trombonist respectively, passed last year, leaving drummer Nesbert “Stix” Hooper as the sole surviving founding member.

The Crusaders music is among the music closest to my heart, alongside that of the other legendary musicians of their era and every era since. The Crusaders music in particular stands out for me because they were able to create a sound that was both earthy and sophisticated at the same time. I got into their music, like so many artists I’ve mentioned on this blog, growing up in my household. My father, Herman, was a huge fan of their music. He was a fan of blues and jazz in all forms, from the chamber school, to the Big bands, from jazz vocalists and crooners, to the way out musicians of free jazz, and from field folk blues recordings to the electrified city blues, right on down to

soul inflected blues. But I think at the end of the day the music I associate him with the most is the variations of jazz that tried to maintain its roots in the black community, jazz with a full bodied sound that excelled both as romantic music and at finger popping time.

There have been many artists that fit this category, such as Lee Morgan, Horace Silver, Ray Charles, Cannonball Adderley, Lou Donaldson, Les McCann, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Milt Jackson, Herbie Hancock, Quincy Jones, Grover Washington Jr., Roy Ayers, George Duke, the list goes on and on and on. Many of these artists have faced more than their share of criticism over the years, mainly for “selling out”, the same charge I would see branded on artists chests like a scarlet letter in the Hip Hop 1990s. But I think there was something in particular about this type of music that reflected the type of person Dad was, and what his journey had been. All of these artists had the specialized, elite musical knowledge that it takes to play jazz, and yet retained a close connection to their roots in the rural and urban Black communities of their day.

Pops left Arkansas in the late '40s, serving in the military in the Korean War and eventually settling in San Francisco. He became a Lawyer and spent a large portion of his life in West Africa, in the Republic of Liberia, and was fortunate to do things very few got a chance to do during his time period. However, all of his close friends that I knew were similar in the same way. Their

journeys had taken them many places. Most Black men I knew of that generation had very interesting journeys that took them into interesting areas, if they were trying to get anywhere at all. Their early experiences, picking cotton, vegetables, and other such humble experiences kept them grounded. Pops was well spoken, studious, strict in many ways, well read, imaginative, and very hip. Dad, and the members of his generation for the most part had seen and been through too much to reach the type of Black elitism and conservatism we see from people like Larry Elder and Dr. Ben Carson.

Now I did all of that personal talk to say, Mr. Wilton Felder and the Crusaders truly represented all of this in their music, as well as the way they came to making that music. The Crusaders came together in Houston, Texas, and made the decision to further their career in music in Los Angeles. The Bay Area, where I’m from, got its major influx of black residents in the 1940s-60s. The Crusaders came out to Los Angeles, and made someday fairly well received jazz albums. But the '60s would prove to be a tough decade for jazz, with the free thing of Ornette Coleman alienating many listeners, the Motown sound booming and a general explosion of youth culture. By the end of the decade, The Crusaders had dropped the “Jazz” from their name, and some critics would argue from their sound.

The R&B fans always considered them a “Jazz” group however. Being excellent musicians they were

able to supplement their income with studio work, and they were very prominent in the early years of Motown's move to Los Angeles. It was during this time that Wilton Felder took up the bass guitar, on which he played some of my favorite bass lines, such as "I Wanna Do Something Freaky To You" by Leon Haywood, "Slick" by Willie Hutch, "Root Down" by Jimmie Smith, and "I Want You Back", the foundational hit for The Jackson 5.

Felder also wrote a song for The Crusaders that would jump start their prominence in the soul/pop arena, an instrumental entitled "Way Back Home." "Way Back Home" is a soul-jazz song along the lines of records like Cannonball Adderley's "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" and "Country Preacher." The electric bass lays out a funky, rolling obstinate as the horns repeat the soothing melody over and over again, with the melody musically saying "Way Back Home". The song is one that reminds you of the journey the Crusaders made from Texas to L.A, and the journeys many Black people had made in the 20th century along with them. I imagine my Dad listening to that record in Liberia, a decade into his sojourn in Africa. That song would go on to be covered by other Motown luminaries such as Jr. Walker and Gladys Knight and The Pips.

The Crusaders would go on to become the top selling instrumental group of their time. Their greatest success came with the Joe Sample penned "Street Life" in 1979. 1979-1980 were pivotal times for my family and our nation of Liberia. In 1980 Liberia would see its first successful coup de tat, the effects of which would be felt until 2006. That same year Felder released a song entitled "Inherit the Wind", with Bobby Womack on lead vocals. Now my Dad was

not one to say he had a "favorite song", he was too broad based for that. But there is something about Felder's "Inherit the Wind" that had a special meaning for Dad over the last thirty years or so of his



life. The song was funky and upbeat, but also had notes of deep wistful sadness and pain, being voiced by the master of soulful, joyful pain, Bobby Womack. The song is one that makes you want to dance and cry at the same time if u let it truly get to you, t least it does that for me. The chaos in Liberia would be a great disappointment to Dad until the day he died. I think "Inherit the Wind" gave him much comfort in those first few years after the coup especially.

I never got the chance to meet Felder, but I heard he was a very warm man. My parents were Jehovah's Witnesses, as Felder was, and my mother took care of his grandchildren at a Day care. I remember Dad got to meet Felder once at a Witness convention in Fremont. Of course he was totally shocked to meet a musician whose career he'd followed for so long at his place of worship. I was not there to witness that meeting, but I can only imagine how excited Pops was.

The saxophone tone and funky bass playing of Wilton Felder will remain with me as long as I live. It's a sound that reminds me of my roots. There is always a concern in the black community about getting so far away from your roots that u become basically a black zombie. I don't know if that is as much of an

issue today, as difficult as upward mobility has become. In Hip Hop during the last decade, they'd express it in somewhat corny sentiments such as "You can take me out the ghetto but you can't take the ghetto out of me." A variation of an old saying using he N word of course. The music of the soul jazz pioneers such as Wilton Felder, The Crusaders and others of their inclination totally transcends that for me, as they were able to meld the complex musical terminology of jazz theory with the down home music of the churches, porches, fields and pool halls. They were not ashamed of their backgrounds, and were therefore able to produce music that represented where they had been, where they were, and where they were going, without apology or chasing "respectability." Therefore I think that in their music there is a blueprint for the type of progress the black community seeks to make in these early years of the 21st century. And though Wilton is gone along with several of his brothers, I will always take his example, and his sound with me.



*By Henrique Hopkins  
Hosts Rique Speaks  
His experience and  
knowledge in music is  
extensive.*



## Puzzle

### Liberia UnScrabbled (a game book) Promotions

#### Product Details

Liberia UnScrabbled (a game book)

**Author: Ophelia S. Lewis**

**Publisher: Village Tales Publishing**

**ISBN-13: 9780985362560**

**Format: Paperback (Nov. 1, 2015)**

**Size: 8.2 x 11**

**Pages: 200**

**Price: \$12.00 + \$4.30 Shipping & Handling**

[US Addresses (Domestic and APO/FPO/DPO Mail)]

Genre: Humor & Entertainment, Puzzles & Games, (crossword, wordsearch, trivia, cryptogram, scramble)

200-page of NEVER-BEFORE-PUBLISHED puzzles devoted entirely to Liberia.

Crossword \* Cryptogram \* Scramble \* Trivia \* Word Search

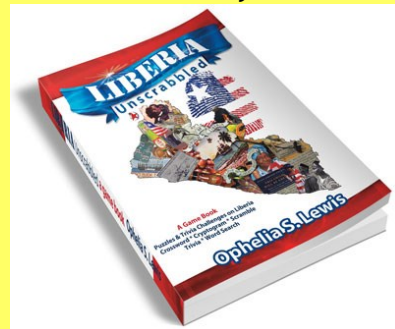
If you have a chance to buy this book, buy two.

This book will definitely entertain you to no end, trying to come up with the trivia included.

Please let author know if you'd like it autographed. First 50 orders get a FREE "Liberia Unscrabbled" breast cancer awareness pencil to solve your puzzles. While supplies last.

Try these trivia questions... samples of what to expect in the book—LIBERIA UNSCRABBLED (a game book)

1. In what year was the settlement of Caldwell established?  
A. 1835  
B. 1840  
C. 1825  
D. 1830
2. At its inception, what year did Liberia become a member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)  
A. 1960  
B. 1961  
C. 1962  
D. 1963
3. What is the number of seats in the House of Representatives?  
A. 30  
B. 73  
C. 60  
D. 93
4. In what year the Liberian Dollar became the official currency of the Republic of Liberia?  
A. 1843  
B. 1943  
C. 1983  
D. 2003
5. Liberia Supreme Court is consists of;  
A. One Chief Justice & four Associate Justices  
B. Five Chief Justices  
C. Three Chief Justices & two Associate Justices  
D. Two Chief Justices & Three Associate Justices
6. In what year was a medical school added to the University of Liberia?  
A. 1948  
B. 1958  
C. 1968  
D. 1978
6. What is the only street in Monrovia to be named after a woman?  
A. Randall Street  
B. Lynch Street  
C. Newport Street  
D. Gurley Street
7. In what year was Monrovia Breweries Inc. established?  
A. 1959  
B. 1960  
C. 1961  
D. 1962
8. In what year was the Liberian Broadcasting Corporation (ELBC) established?  
A. 1960  
B. 1958  
C. 1961  
D. 1959
9. In what year was color TV introduced in Liberia?  
A. 1987  
B. 1979  
C. 1968  
D. 1952
10. This Liberian President was born in Bridgetown, Barbados (British West Indies)  
A. Garretson W. Gibson  
B. Daniel E. Howard  
C. Arthur Barclay  
D. Edwin Barclay



Excerpts from  
Liberia Unscrabbled  
Ophelia S. Lewis

## *Short Story*

### **The Bridge of Sighs**

by **Vamba Sherif**

Though we did not share a word, I was convinced, as I watched her go about her business, that a kind of understanding had been established between us. On dropping my gaze I felt her own intently on mine, but she managed to look away every time I turned in her direction. This went on for a while, until we decided to move closer to each other. We parted without making any promises.

One afternoon, on leaving the same restaurant after lunch, I heard footsteps behind me and I turned to see it was Dona. The street was narrow and empty. I was about to speak to her when I noticed the waiter I had encountered on my first day in Venice. "Dona," he called out to her, but she did not move, and made no attempt to walk towards me. She seemed caught between conflicting emotions: the desire to return to the man she had perhaps known for years or to follow a black man from another world. I was not about to budge, for I was aware of being in an arena where a sign of weakness might mean defeat for me. "Don't do this, Masakeh," she said. In her gaze I thought I read a sign that allayed my fears regarding her feelings for me. Then she returned to the waiter. I heard him scold and scream at her, and it was hard to imagine that seemingly self-assured young woman being scolded.

On subsequent days, my thoughts became a jumble of contradictions. I had come to find you but failing to do so, wouldn't it be wise to leave this suffocating city? But to what

would I return? To a home where my creativity had stranded? I came to the Netherlands with one of my uncles to carve out a new existence, but soon we found that Europe was an unwilling mistress. Every time we went to bed with her, she wore belted and secured jeans and turned her back to us. She was especially cruel to my uncle, whose only solace was to record every piece of news about the Liberian civil war, a sustained effort that bordered on the obsessive. "I want to understand the mechanics of this war," he once told me. "If I succeed at collecting every piece of news, I will be able to predict the outcome of the war and how to end it. Then I will write to the UN to share my opinion with the world." After work in an automobile manufacturing factory, he would confine himself in the attic and with a radio and recorder set on the table, he would tune in to the BBC or to other major news outlets in search of the key to unlocking the complexity of the war. In the end he accumulated hundreds of cassette recordings, which he arranged alphabetically, with the dates and the occasions printed on them. He became a walking encyclopedia on the war, quoting rebel commanders, child soldiers, and generals some of who claimed to feed on human flesh. Meanwhile our compound in Liberia had been torched and burned together with the family and hundreds of others who had found refuge within its walls. People had ran to our compound because it was believed it belonged to a man who was a still symbol of what was right about the country, my father, the famous judge. But his home had been razed to the ground and with him in it.

Music and my fascination for it had saved me from the harshness

of the unwilling mistress Europe. The success of my first album paved the way for me to court mistress Europe again. Now in Venice, I couldn't find a reason to return to the Netherlands. Moreover, I was upset with Dona, who had made no attempt to see me. I had perhaps misread her gesture. It was not meant to reassure me; in fact she had managed to slip right through my fingers. Did her silence mean anything other than silence? Was the twist of her mouth or the blinks of her eyes no more than a twist or a blink? I played our meeting in my mind countless times. Perhaps I was the one in love and had read her gestures from the perspective of the lover. Venice seemed that week to possess a tap which it occasionally opened to shower the melancholic within its confines with cold water. I tossed about in bed, courting sleep which seemed as far away as ever, and trying not to think about my failure to locate you.

The next day, I met Dona on the street. She was on her way to see me. She led me hurriedly through various alleyways to a slippery stand where unlicensed gondolas took off. I felt uneasy at that place, the possibility of slipping into the filthy water ever great. "It's the safest spot in the whole of Venice. Marco won't find us here," she said. So that was his name, I thought, Marco. The waiter had abandoned his job to pursue Dona around. He had involved her family and his own in an effort to stop her from making what he thought was a grave mistake. "You don't know Venetian men," she said. I'd seen various shades of sadness in the eyes of many women, including my mother when she bade me farewell in Liberia so many years ago, but none was as deep as Dona's. She had known Marco for years, she told me. They would



chase each other across the bridges of the city, along the canals, and would wink at each other in the church, their eyes betraying the longing to be together. That quarter of Venice in which both grew up nicknamed them 'The lovers.' From the very beginning, the waiter was inclined towards Italian cuisine; while she went on to study the effect of tourism on the city. They had been engaged for nearly a year. The wedding, into which both families had invested, was planned for next spring, and they had picked out the church and made a list of guests. There was a hysteric tinge to her voice as she told me this. Often, after that encounter, Dona would return to that subject. "I gave up my wedding for you," she would say. I could not tell her how often I thought about her sacrifice and how sometimes it was the only thing that occupied my thoughts.

One day, she asked, "What do you think of me?"

'You are very special.'

'Yes, go on, Masakeh.'

'You are also very beautiful.'

'I've heard this before.'

'What do you want me to say?'

'I want to hear something else,' she said. Perhaps what she wanted to hear was the story of our first encounter and of subsequent meetings in the city. It is from Dona that I learned to express my heart using the right words, though sometimes what I said was inappropriate, such as confronting her with questions regarding us, or throwing the difficulties she was having at the hands of her family back at her.

Not long thereafter, we agreed to meet at a café in a place in the ghetto, a place which according to her once had the tallest buildings in Venice. It was raining when Dona and I headed for the café. The wind pulled, stretched and broke the umbrella we had

taken with us, leaving us bedraggled as we entered the café. The place had a single seat, a sofa that covered the width of an entire wall. Dona was wet, her makeup was out of place, and her face glistened with drops of water. There are moments that linger in the memory forever, such as when one feels completely at one with the other. Then one overlooks the anger, the irritations, and the imperfections in the other. Such was our moment. It revealed the real Dona to me, shy and confident, and so carried away in our world and so believing in it that nothing else mattered.

"Dona," I called to her.

She looked up as if awoken from a dream.

"I wonder what it would be like outside of Venice," she said.

"Many wonder what it feels like being in Venice. But we are here."

The rain was falling in buckets, the wind rose and swept across the square in front of the café.

"Tell me your story," she said.

"Where should I begin?"

"Tell me about your childhood."

I told her how once at the age of eight a thorn from a palm frond had lodged in my right foot in my town of birth, two days before the Eid feast, which meant I could not wear the new shoes my mother had purchased for me in Monrovia, our capital, and how I had cried all night, while my mother tended to me. I told her about my mother, and about my father the judge, whose sense of justice was such that he convicted one of his brothers who believed he could go scot-free because the two were related. Dona asked about my life in the Netherlands. "I bought a small apartment with three rooms, and through the windows of my studio, the early sunlight pours like a gift," I said. "What about your uncle?" I

heaved a sigh. "He's still fighting. He's not one to give up, but Europe can be hard on a person whose mind is yet to be made up between leaving and staying. He wants to return to Liberia but doesn't have the courage to do it. He's used to living in Europe, despite everything," I said.

Dona told me about her parents. Her father owned a restaurant and her mother helped him. "They are simple people. Our lives have never been complicated until you came along," she said. "And now silence lingers at our table."

When the rain let up, I took Dona to my hotel. The hotel owner had by then taken to calling me by my room number. "Here comes Signor Dodici," she would often say. I met her standing at the counter, her grey hair not bundled but plaited into a single knot which rested on her right shoulder. She threw a string of Italian sentences at me, and I answered with whatever came to my mind. She laughed as she carefully corrected my every word and explained to me how they ought to sound. Though she spoke some English, she refused to speak to me in the language. She had a brief conversation with Dona, perhaps her status as non-guest to the hotel. "What did she say?" I asked later, and she answered, "That you are the only visitor she has known who does not behave like a tourist."

Dona took a hot shower, and while she was at it I searched my bag for a shirt for her. She came out telling me about Marco, whose uncle had a very expensive hotel, where the two would book a place every once in a while. So her body was present but her mind elsewhere, I thought. If she were attentive, Dona would have noticed that my passion in making love to her verged on the possessive, as if every touch was

meant to make sure was there, in that room with me, not somewhere else, not with Marco. She pushed me away after it was over. "I don't know what you think, Masakeh," she said as she sat beside me, the bedcover folded around her. "What do you mean?" She shook her head. "I'm here with you," she said. I could not tell her how I wanted that waiter erased from her life. The waiter haunted me.

A few days later I met Marco. I had by then succeeded in creating a beastly image of him: he was threatening my Dona and had summoned the underground world of Venice, if such ever existed, to hunt me down for having the nerve to stir the river of his world. In the streets I became paranoid, often turning around whenever I heard someone behind me. It is one thing being in love, but quite another when one analyses that love, when one confronts the doubts, for there are always doubts. One begins then to see the tear in the fabric, the chinks in the walls, and the many imperfections. I dissected my relationship with Dona with such precision that my appointments with her became attempts to have answers to questions regarding us. The joy of the moment was not enough; the fact that Dona was seated across from me in a café or with me in my room not enough. For you see, father, I was aware that I was an outsider in this city and as such my ability was limited.

That day I had just left a museum and was turning a corner when the waiter and I stumbled into each other. Both of us reacted by holding each other to keep the other from falling. We stood facing each other in a tight alleyway, the walls old and grey on the surface, brownish-red underneath, and the woods visible here and there. Flowers

pots adorned the windows; the door knockers were of Moorish turbaned heads. Perhaps the waiter lived beyond one of those walls, a contrast to the flashy life of the restaurant. The suddenness of the encounter bereft us of speech, and when one of us spoke, it was Marco. "Since when have black men begun to behave in our world as though nothing was the matter?" he asked. "Do you know how much I've invested in my Dona? Do you realize how deep and irrecoverable the damage is you've done? Think about it. If you are done, leave us be. If not...," he said, and then he walked away, moving fast, his head bobbing left and right.

The next day Dona asked me to elope with her. The waiter, his family and her own were making life unbearable for her. They had failed to convince her otherwise, so her family decided to cut speech with her and were thinking of taking other measures. Now she is ready to give up Venice and to follow a black man into his world. So you see, father Lavredano, it is about time to cut to the chase and to come to the core of my being in Venice. It has nothing to do with my childhood but all to do with the questions that have haunted me all my life. 'Why did you leave the mission in Bolahun and accompany my parents to my town of birth, where you put up in a house rented out by no one other than my mother? And why am I bright like a mulatto when my parents were black like the tree in our compound? As I stand before your grave, contemplating these questions, Dona awaits me at my hotel, our tickets and baggage ready to catch the two o'clock train. When I leave you, I will go on to face the inevitable, as I am sure the waiter and his family will attempt to stop Dona and me

leaving. But do I have it in me to put up a fight or even hope to win one? I will soon find out. A man has to fight his own fights, and whatever the colour of my past, whatever the shade of my skin, it is my turn to fight my battles.

I hasten towards Dona.

.. THE END....

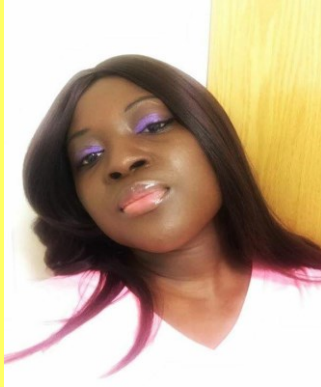


Vamba Sherif was born in northern Liberia and spent parts of his youth in Kuwait, where he completed his secondary school. He speaks many languages, including Arabic, French, English and Dutch, and some African languages like Mande, Bandi, Mende en Lomah. After the first Gulf War, Vamba settled in the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

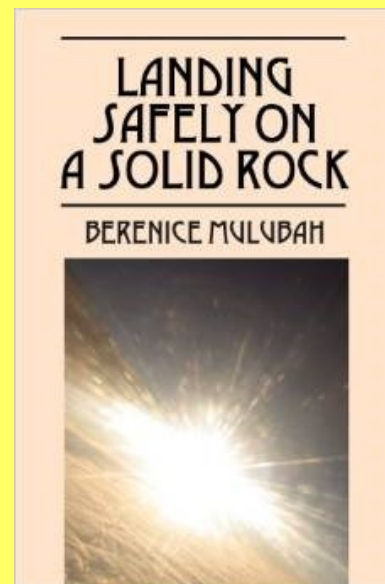
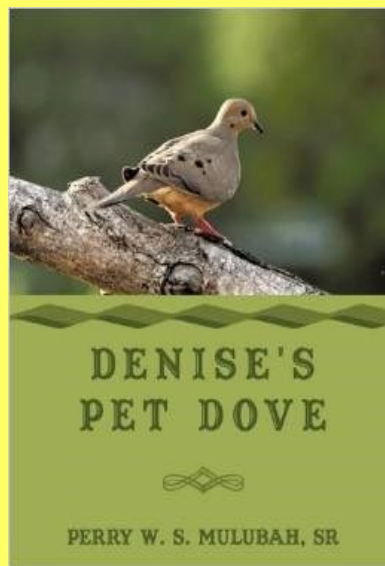
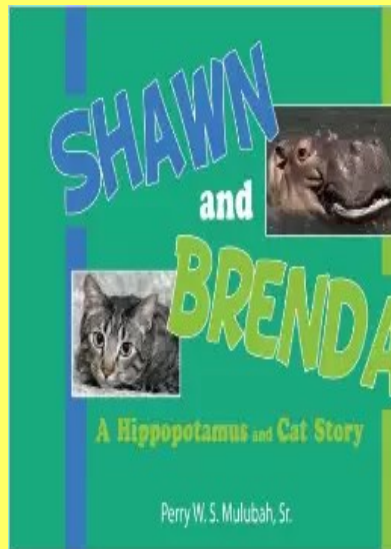
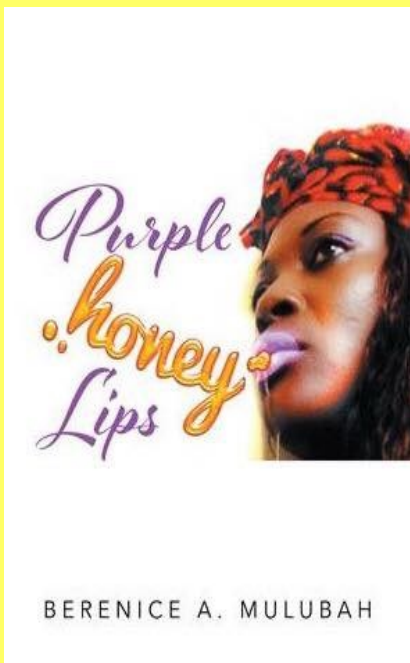


# Authors of the Month Profiles

**BERENICE MULUBAH**



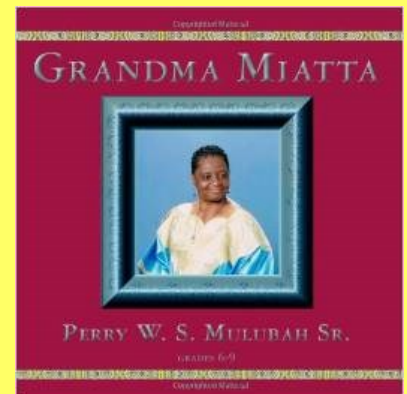
**Berenice A. Mulubah**, CEO of C Liberia Clearly blog, is a poet, blogger, radio personality, and arts and culture activist. She's from Harper City, Maryland County, Liberia, West Africa. She lives in Jacksonville, North Carolina, with her two beautiful girls. Standing Safely on a Solid Rock, her first book, has been called "raw and a garnished glimpse into the soul" by J. D. Kato



**PERRY MULUBAH**



**Perry Mulubah** is originally from Lofa County, but grew up in Careysburg. I attended high school at Suehn Industrial Academy, graduated from Cuttington College, now Cuttington University. I taught in several schools in Liberia, was principal of Gbarnga Methodist Mission for a brief period, and Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Commerce. I came to the U. S. in the mid '80s. I spent most of my years here working in schools, teaching and counseling students. I retired September, 2014. I have been doing some writing also, publishing three children's books, and writing one children's movie and executive producing it. I am currently writing another book..



**The Spotlight of this issue is *Berenice Mulubah*, a woman of many hats.**

## **Author Interview**

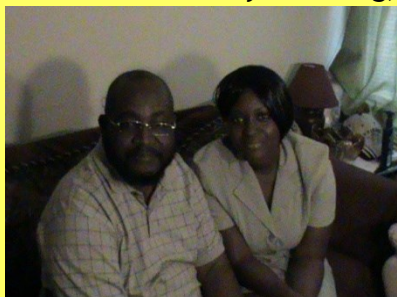
### **BERENICE MULUBAH**



*Liberian Literary Mag conducted an interview with **Berenice Mulubah**, an artist in every form. Musician, poet, dancers, radio personality and blogger.*

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

I am Berenice Mulubah. Born and raised in Harper city Maryland County, Liberia. I moved to the United States in 1997. Joined the United States Marine Corps 2002 to Present. I am the CEO of C Liberia Clearly blog,



a Liberian Entertainment

blog. I wrote my first book in 2011. I am on the Liberian Entertainment Awards Nomination board.

### **2) Why writing?**

This a question I ask God all the time, writing is just a part of me, I grew up doing creative writing since I can remember.

I think it came from the environment I lived in as a child, living next to the ocean in cape Palmas and hearing the ocean waves at night, kept my imagination constantly on the run.

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

The book of Psalm and the Songs of Solomon.

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

I sincerely just go with the flow of my mood and my environment.

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

Spirituality and the principles of success.

### **6) Do you have any advice for other writers?**

Writing to me is spiritual, therefore it has to be original. There is nothing wrong with learning the ins and outs of how to become a great writer, but at the core of it all, let your base of your writing comes from your soul.

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

Three Feet from Gold, which is my favorite book, this is my third time reading this book.

- The Science of
- Success. Successful Women Think Differently and
- Living Buddha, Living Christ.

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

Purple Honey Lips is an acclaimed exploration of beautiful words into the poet's incredible imagination, causing one to think and reflect on life, our place in the world, and a variety of other subjects.

It is a collection of poetry. The poems range from romance to social ills, from serious to jovial.

### **9) What are three things you'd hope anyone who reads it walks away with?**

1. Walk away feeling liberated.
2. Walk away with a smile.
3. Walk away with a need to make a difference in the world.

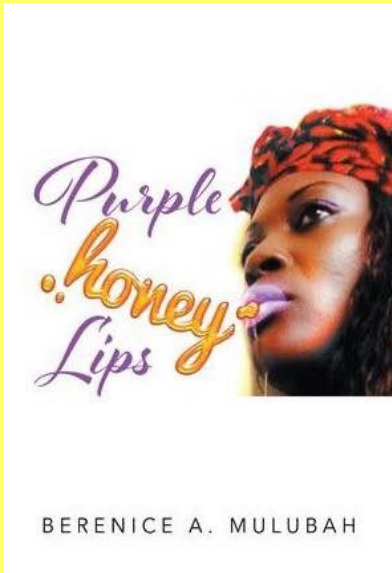
### **10) Tell us your latest news, promotions, book tours, launch etc.**

I'm looking forward to a book tour starting 2016, hoping to



hit Ghana, Liberia, Europe and few States in the USA.

**11) What are your current projects?**



I'm focusing on making my blog C Liberia Clearly bigger and better.

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

Yes, I read a book recently from author Saye Zonen 'Finding Your Frequency'.

**13) Let's talk about your music. Why all the passion for Liberian music?**

Liberia has a very rich culture, I am a lovely of Liberian arts and culture. I feel it is my civil duty to introduce our culture to the rest of the world.

**14) What track[s] are you currently working on? Is it a collaboration? If so, with whom?**

I'm not doing music right now, I'm just be a supportive pillar to other musicians.

**15) What would you say is the hold up to the music industry in Liberia?**

Financial support and education on the business aspect of the industry. Artists who wants to do this professionally should educate themselves on the professional rules of the industry.

**16) What do you think should be done to correct this?**

We need private investors and governmental grants to help build the industry.

**17) What do you predict for the Liberian musical industry in say about 5-7 years?**



Gosh, we are the next big thing in making. The world will be dancing to pure traditional Liberian style of music in the next 5-7 years. I bet my money on it.

**18) What is C Liberia Clearly? What is it all about?**

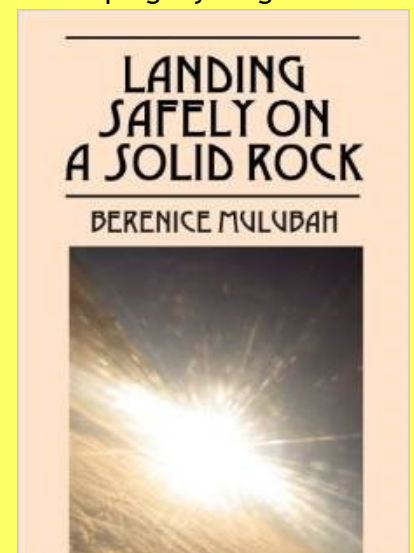
C Liberia Clearly is a platform I'm using to expose the world to Liberian Entertainment. It is a blog. I love writing, I love blog and I'm an expert at social media. I love it so much that I am back in school, attending one of the most prestigious entertainment university in the States, Full Sail University, studying Mass Communication, emphasis on social media. I want to give this platform my best, in return give our entertainers the exposure they need.

**19) What have been some of the challenges?**

The artists don't understand value and power of the media, therefore they are not cooperative as they should be.

**20) What are you up now?**

I have few events coming up which I am the master of the ceremony. My primary focus now is my kids, my military career, pushing my book and developing my blog.



## *President Sirleaf Addresses the 3rd India - Africa Forum Summit*

*Executive Mansion  
Press Release*

*Thursday, October 29, 2015*



*President Sirleaf and her Indian counterpart*

*Remarks BY*

*H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
President of the Republic of  
Liberia At the Opening of the  
3rd India - Africa Forum  
Summit New Delhi, India*

**Excellency Mr. Prime  
Minister,  
Excellency Chairperson  
of the African Union  
Authority;  
Excellency Chairperson  
of the African Union  
Commission;  
Distinguished Colleagues  
and Delegates:**

On behalf of the people of Liberia, I want to thank you for organizing this 3rd India Africa Forum Summit. We wish to express profound gratitude to you, Mr. Prime Minister and to the Government and people of India, for the very warm welcome and

hospitality we have received since our arrival in New Delhi.

This Summit forms part of a series of historic processes and events scheduled this year that will determine the state of our world in the next several years, the world that will be bequeathed to future generations.

This year, the call for Africa's transformation under Agenda 2063 can be seen as a continental commitment to a bold departure from the past, a call for ownership and self-dependence, for value addition, for regional integration, and continental interconnectivity through infrastructure development. For women, this year of empowerment gives impetus to action for higher levels of participation and elevation.

This year, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, building upon the success of the Millennium Development Goals is a call for global commitment to ending poverty, inequalities and injustices, a commitment of governments to people, nation to nation, old to young, rich to poor, a commitment that recognizes the interdependence of nations, big and small.

This year, at the Financing Conference for Development resulting in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we registered a faith in the promises of a global partnership with financing mechanism and monitoring systems that ensures equitable sharing of benefits and returns from national endowment.

This year, we look forward to the closing chapter of our Global Vision 2030 at the Paris Climate Change Conference that will, through resource allocation, right historical wrongs in accepting the principle of common, but differentiated responsibility for the destruction of our planet.



*President Sirleaf with Liberian Scholarship students in India*

Mr. Prime Minister, we are told that this Forum Summit brings together in India, the largest number of foreign leaders since the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Delhi in 1983 and the Commonwealth Summit the same year. It builds upon the first India-Africa Forum Summit in 2008 and the second in Addis Ababa in 2011.

We believe firmly that the implementation of the Global Goals will only take place in a changed administrative architecture of the United Nations as called for in the Ezulwini Consensus.

We take note that these Summits have led to a deepening of the relationship between India and Africa with significant expansion in trade, in private sector investment, and in bilateral programs and financing arrangements, aimed at supporting development across all sectors, as well as capacity building and institutional development. We welcome the formation of the India-Africa Business Council which will promote business partnerships and joint ventures, thereby expanding investment and trade between Africa and India.



*President Sirleaf poses with officials of Engineering Projects India Limited following their meeting in New Delhi, India*

Mr. Prime Minister, Liberia - India relations span over six decades of strong bonds of friendship and economic cooperation. Our countries have benefitted from bilateral assistance in the area of



public transport, education, and agriculture. The level of trade continues to expand as large numbers of Indian owned companies are now moving into manufacturing enterprises. Our access to India's Duty Free Tariff Preferred Status enhances the partnership even further. The Indian Female Police Unit, included in our security sector reform, is the first ever women contingent in the history of UN peacekeeping. This has transformed the thinking of Liberian women in the role they can play in the security sector.

Mr. Prime Minister, we were pleased to welcome in 2009 the first visit of an Indian Foreign Minister in 38 years along with a confederation of industry and business delegation, which was followed by another Ministerial delegation in 2015. Several of our Ministers have had the pleasure to visit India between 2009 and 2013.

I was pleased to have visited in 2013, where several agreements and bilateral instruments were concluded; and I was deeply honored to visit the

site of Mahindra Gandhi and to have been conferred, during the visit, the 2012 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.

Finally, Mr. Prime Minister, I wish to thank you and the Government and People of India for the sympathy and support which Liberia received as we successfully combatted the Ebola Virus. We look forward to concluding ongoing bilateral programs aimed at supporting Liberia and the other affected countries in building a resilient health system and meeting the challenges of post-Ebola economic recovery.

As we prepare for the 10th World Trade Organization Conference in Nairobi, the first in Africa, Liberia wishes to thank all our sister African countries and India as well as other partners who helped to put us on the fast track to accession. We expect to expand on the outcome of the Trade Ministers meeting in Delhi last week to build on economic and commercial cooperation at the WTO.

I thank you.



*President Sirleaf poses with the delegation from the India Exim Bank following their meeting in New Delhi*



## The Story Of ART of Hearts, Inc. An Effort of Change



A small act has the potential to bring massive change.

Founded in 2014, ART of Hearts, Inc. is a non-profit organization fostering art workshops for children in developing countries, utilizing visual arts education and its various mediums as a means of self-expression, and communication.

Through art therapy workshops, we help children who have been through tremendous difficulties find their voices in ways that they probably never thought were possible, and learn how the facets of an artistic perspective can be applied



to many aspects of life,

including nurturing their passions, talents, and finding their purpose.

Furthermore, touching on integral topics that aid in personal development and advancement.

Many children in developing countries endure unbelievable pain and burdens at such young ages; from pandemics, to becoming orphans, and are cheated of the chance to develop in a healthy environment and envision a better future for themselves.

We strongly believe in the therapeutic power of art and the outlet it provides!



At ART of Hearts, Inc., we believe that everyone deserves the same creative resources and opportunities.

Each year we strive to visit a new developing nation and partner with schools or other organizations to bring children this opportunity.

Our Art workshops provide specialty lectures which ask children to explore their inner experience – their feelings, perceptions and imagination.

While these workshops may involve learning skills or art techniques, the emphasis is first on developing and expressing



images that come from inside the person, rather than those he or she sees in the outside world.

website is [www.artofhearts.org](http://www.artofhearts.org)

instagram: @artfoheartsorg

Facebook: [Art of Hearts, inc.](https://www.facebook.com/ArtofHeartsInc)

We are currently raising funds for these art workshops & art supplies for schools in Liberia & Ghana this holiday season.

The link to donate is [www.artofhearts.org/donate](http://www.artofhearts.org/donate)



**D. Othniel Forte**

*National Merit Medal*

This beautiful multi-colored medal is a rare piece that many collectors would not pass the chance to get hold of. The date of its establishment is uncertain. It is often given to civilians but military personnel can also be awarded it. According to E. J. Fischer in his monography on Liberian medals, he reports that local sources identified it as National Merit Medal with Civil and Military Divisions. Mr. Fischer also reports another local source identified it as Service Medal (with green ribbon with 3 central red stripes).

**Grade**

The medal is casted in three (3) types or classes of materials:

- Gilt
- Silver and
- Bronze

**Ribbon**

Apparently the color of the ribbon for this medal is determined by the receiver (civilian or military). The Civil Division uses either a **green ribbon** with three (3) thin central red stripes (just like that of African Redemption Order ribbon) or a **blue ribbon** with diagonal red stripes. The military version is the example of the ribbon shown below:

**Medal/Insignia**

The multi-colored (pale blue, blue, white, dark red/wine and green) side is the obverse side. It depicts the national SEAL with the national motto written clockwise in the arc above "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here". Below that is the other half of the motto "Republic of Liberia".



This medal has been seen with either "HONOR" or "HONOUR" on reverse and the word is enclosed by a

reef of leave nicely plaited in a full circle which reaches just up to the tip where it joins with a round connector which happens to be the ring that holds the ribbon.



*Liberian Proverbs*

1. **If money where to be found up in the trees, most people would be married to monkeys.** *If life was easy, even the lazy fool would be wealthy or successful.*
2. **If nothing touches the palm-leaves they do not rustle.** *Things often do not happen without a cause. People react when provoked. It is not normal for people to react to others in a way that they did not encourage.*
3. **If one wants to be truly successful, one must not follow the path; instead, one must go where there is no path to begin a new path.** *One has to do things differently if one wants to achieve new or dramatic results. By doing the same things over and over, we never get new results.*
4. **If pepper is so delicious, rub it in your sore.** *A man who says the pepper is delicious should first try rubbing it in his eye. One should be ready to try out anything that one wishes others to try. Not every advise should be followed.*
5. **No one can bless you without the acceptance of his own head.** *Some things can never happen to you unless you agree for them to happen. It goes to say that the way you treat yourself will encourage others to treat you the same way.*
6. **Play the fool to gain wisdom.** *At times, it becomes necessary to humble oneself in order to learn the necessary things one needs to learn. It is easy for others to consider humility as being foolish, but this is far from the case.*



## Featured Poet

### Like Mami Wata in Hiding

You are a volcano.  
Scalding words flow.  
Your taunts, a barrage  
of molten threats  
hardening like lava  
in memory.

I have become  
an island unto myself,  
the latest born  
of your rancor.

There is already  
an archipelago—  
trails of your spewing  
you lay claim to.  
It ashes our sky,  
blots the beauty of our  
moon.

Will the fire in you ever  
die?  
I hear you grumble,  
hear your distant rumble.  
Who is the new object of  
your sulfuric spilling?

I hide like Mami Water\*  
in the bowels of the sea.

© Althea Romeo-Mark  
24.05.15

\**Mami Water*- water spirits venerated in west, central and southern Africa, and in the African diaspora in the Caribbean and parts of North and South America. They are usually female, but are sometimes male mermaids in West African folklore

### Althea Romeo-Mark



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

She taught at the University of Liberia (1976-1990). She is a founding member of the Liberian Association of Writers (LAW) and is the poetry editor for *Seabreeze: Journal of Liberian Contemporary Literature*. She was awarded the Marguerite Cobb McKay Prize by *The Caribbean Writer* in June, 2009 for short story “Bitterleaf, (set in Liberia).” *If Only the Dust Would Settle* is her last poetry collection.

Published work in 2014 include “Unwanted Visitors,” and “Small Island Deprivations,” in *Tongues of the Ocean*, special feature on Antiguan Writers, Winter, 2014. Fitting into One’s Skin,” A review of Joanne Hillhouse’s novel, *Oh Gad!* in the *Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books*, summer 2014, “A Story of Immigrants,” personal essay, *The Caribbean Writer*, Volume 28, Autumn 2014; *Poems for the Hazara: An Anthology and Collaborative Poem (multi-lingual)*, ed. Kamran Mir Hazar, Winter, 2014; several poems and an essay in *Woman Speak: A journal of writing and Art by Caribbean Women*. Ed. Lynn Sweeting, Vol. 7, 2013-14. She has been guest poets at the International Poetry Festival of Medellin, Colombia and the Kistrech International Poetry Festival, Kissi, Kenya.





## *Abraham M. Keita: A Journey from Slum to Stardom*

**By Martin K. N. Kollie  
Youth Activist,**



**Laureate Leymah Gbowee and  
Laureate Abraham M. Keita**

The clock was ticking towards a new day for thousands of Liberian Children. Africa's first independent nation was gradually propelling to an admirable height of universal honor and respect. It was time to send a memo of hope to children living in slum communities and appalling conditions.

It was a defining occasion to rekindle the spirit of self-confidence. It was a grand beginning to either embrace optimism or pessimism. A spectacular moment to choose between possibilities and impossibilities. The world stood still watching with amazement an inspiring journey of a teenage boy whose passion for humanity led him out of the slum to prominence.

A new paragraph in World History was about to be written. Another page in African History was about to be penned down.

A whole chapter in Liberian History was nearing completion as a young

Liberian patriot stood with courage, pride and dignity to revive the dying hope, dream and aspiration of his peers in his country and on his continent. His journey from slum to stardom was never a glowing one, but a tough highway with steep slopes and potholes. When almost everyone thought nothing good could come out of the slum of West Point, a child of daring courage, intelligence and prudence made an extraordinary difference by defeating such erroneous notion.

The red, white and blue flag of Liberia was once more flown far above Pakistan and Puerto Rica by a nationalistic icon whose passion for change has shifted global attention to his poverty-stricken nation.

The world had no option, but to stand and listen with excitement to the National Anthem of a small Republic still struggling to rise above the sickening semblance of all forms of human indignity. With standing ovation, everyone sitting in the "Hall of Knights" in The Hague had to HAIL LIBERIA. There was total silence afterwards as a new story was about to be told by a futurist of Liberia.

This time around, international and local news headlines via electronic and print media did not describe Liberia as the second most corrupt country on planet earth; neither did they broadcast Liberia as a country with a messy educational sector or a broken health system. All we could see and hear through variety of media outlets was 'A Liberian Child' has won the most prestigious

International Children's Peace Prize for the first time. The caption used by Mail & Guardian News Service was "From the land that was hell for children: Liberian teenager wins International Children's Peace Prize."

This captivating news spread across Liberia and Africa like wildfire. For 11 years now, no Liberian teenager has won this award besides seventeen-year-old Abraham Keita. This Child Rights Advocate has made our nation so proud by engraving his name on the golden stone of history. Truly, he is a leader of his generation and a symbol of hope for millions of children whose dream is currently kidnapped by poverty and hijacked by hardship. The generation of today and even tomorrow has got a living legend to emulate.

It was a fantastic scene in The Hague for Liberia once more. It was a gleaming Monday with a euphoric atmosphere! This time around, it was not Nkosi Johnson of South Africa or Om Prakash Guriar of India. We did not hear the name of Thandiwe Chama of Zambia or Mayra Avellar Neves of Brazil. It was not Baruani Ndume of Tanzania or Francia Simon of Dominican Republic. It was not Michaela Chaeli Mycroft of South or Kesz Valdez of Philippine. It was not Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan or Neha Gupta of the United States of America. It was a young hero of West Africa and Liberia in particular. It was a fearless defender of children's rights. It was an ingenious proponent of equality and justice. It was a campaigner for human

dignity. It was a powerful voice from the biggest slum community in Liberia. O yes, it was Abraham Keita who proudly won the International Children Peace Prize this year.

His accolade was never a surprise to most of us, because we have been keen admirers of his good deeds and words. For more than seven (7) years, Abraham Keita has been an agent of positive change in his community and country. He has diligently worked with his peers to attract public attention to inhumane treatments and violence against children. Since 2008, Abraham has been an uncompromising advocate, promoting the dignity and welfare of his fellow compatriots, especially those living in abysmal circumstances.

During his tenure at the Liberian Children's Parliament, he organized and led peaceful demonstrations and presented petitions to State-organs and global partners. All these proactive initiatives were geared towards lobbying for children's participation in national decision-making processes and combating gruesome crimes against teenagers. In his many articles, he repeatedly stressed the need for the government and its partners to provide free quality primary and secondary education for all children.

As a result of his commitment to advocating for children, he has succeeded through unswerving engagement with government

to pass national legislation protecting the rights of children.

In 2012, Liberia became one of the first African countries to adopt comprehensive laws for children, incorporating both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter.

This young activist was only 9 years old when he took part in his first child-led protest. Young Keita was inspired to act when he saw a young 13-year-old girl in his area raped and killed by her foster parents. Since that day, he has never stopped fighting to protect children's rights and welfare in his homeland.

After eight years of steady struggle, he was thrilled to reap the fruit of his labor. After eight years of defending underprivileged and marginalized Liberian Children, he was elated to receive the International Children's Peace Prize on November 9, 2015 from Madam Leymah Gbowee, another Liberian who in 2011 won the Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent struggle for the safety of women during the country's peace-building process.

After eight years of raising alarm about issues affecting children in Liberia and around the world, a son of West Point finally stood tall above hundreds of nominees. After eight years of unrelenting advocacy, Abraham Keita is still demanding justice for teenager Shaki Kamara who was horribly murdered by AFL soldiers during the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia!

Today amidst abundant natural resources in Liberia, some 80% of the population still lives below the benchmark of poverty. In a country where 60% of the population is under the age of 25, almost 4,500 children lost one or both parents in the outbreak in which some 5,000 people died. According to a report by the University of Leiden, in the west of the Netherlands, almost half of Liberia's children have experienced some kind of physical violence and 13% of girls have been sexually abused. As a result of these prevailing and terrifying statistics, Abraham M. Keita is even more energetic than ever before to demonstrate an unflinching resilience to help address some of these pressing concerns.

In his speech titled "Justice for Children", he highlighted the urgency for world leaders to ensure justice for all children who has been victimized by violence. He said children worldwide are still exposed to violence and injustice while thugs often go unpunished. The 2015 International Children's Peace Prize award winner said Liberian children are victims of civil war, poverty, corruption, and violence. "If you give justice to children, you are giving it to the world", the global child rights activist said. In addition, KidsRights, the organizers of the International Children Peace Prize said, "Keita's tireless work as a campaigner, bringing attention to crimes against children and campaigning until the perpetrators are locked away,

stood out and convinced the jury.” Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee, who attended the ceremony in The Hague, said Keita’s work was “inspiring”, adding that “she recognizes in him a true change-maker, fighting to end extreme violence against children.”

Truly, this award is a symbol of hope for the children of Liberia, Africa and the World. As a result of Keita’s role in human history, the KidsRights Foundation is poised to invest some 100,000 euros (US\$108,000) in projects in Liberia. The achievement of this global icon is worth commending and we must exceedingly celebrate it across our country. We are proud of him and will forever remain as he invests his lifetime championing a common agenda for change.

When I spoke to Keita on November 4, 2015 before his departure to The Hague, these were my exact words to him “Go with confidence and courage knowing that nothing is impossible for those with extraordinary qualities. Go and prove to them that education is not a mess in Liberia. Go and tell them that something good can come out of West Point. I trust your ability to beat them all. You have done it and you can do it again. Wish you all the best as you travel to make Liberia proud.”

Ending this piece without lauding the endless parental care of his single Mother would render it meaningless. I hope his father was alive to witness his 17-year-old son speaking with prudence and eloquence to global actors in the “Hall of Knights” in The

Hague. How I hope he was alive to sit near his wife in this historic hall to witness little Keita presenting a powerful speech of hope, possibilities and great dreams!

With unending appreciation, we can never forget about the mentorship role played by comrade Vandalark Patricks through whose nomination the work of this brilliant Child Rights Advocate became visible to the entire World. History shall forever remain kind to Brother Patricks as our nation endures these perilous times. We are grateful also to all of the Schools young Keita ever attended. Special recognition to J. J. Roberts United Methodist High School in Sinkor, Monrovia where this world icon currently attends as a senior student.

As we celebrate this award nationwide, I encourage all children including youth and adults to learn the following lessons from young Keita:

1. *Success must never be kidnapped or hijacked by your current location, condition or association.*
2. *Courage, Confidence and Consistency breed Greatness and unforeseen ends.*
3. *Education, discipline and honesty are hallmarks of growth.*
4. *Non-violence in advocacy is an indispensable agent of positive change.*
5. *Pessimism must never override Optimism.*

I hope the government of Liberia will organize a National Program to celebrate this award as was done in the case of Nobel Laureates Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah

Gbowee in 2011. Even though this regime has failed miserably in creating opportunities, friendly space for children to exist and protecting them from all forms of violence, but this award still belongs to Liberia. I hope a book will be written soon to honor the great work of this young scholar and leader. I hope all Liberians will assemble at the Roberts International Airport to welcome this proud son of our country upon his return. All hail Abraham M. Keita - All hail Liberia - All hail West Africa - All hail Africa - All hail the Children of the World.

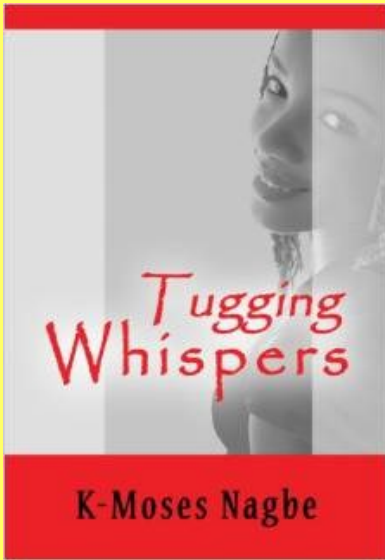
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was never wrong in his assertion when he said “The heights by which great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but through sleepless nights of determination.”

Let me now end in Swahili by saying “Ibrahimu Keita ni icon kweli wa kizazi chake” meaning in English “Abraham Keita is a true icon of his generation.”

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



## Book Review: *Tugging Whispers:*



### Tugging Whispers: A Review

Momoh Sekou Dudu

Whether you are an avid fan or just a casual reader of romantic fiction, you will find K-Moses Nagbe's "*Tugging Whispers*," a true delight.

Written in engaging prose that is poetic in places, the novella reacquaints us with the effervescent Joan Copper—whom Nagbe introduced to us in an earlier work, *The Road to Romeo* (1992) as an eight year old survivor of a brutal civil war that claimed the lives of her father and brother.

In *Tugging Whispers*, Joan is all-grown up. Sharp as a whip, she wins a scholarship to pursue a graduate degree in 'Constitutional Law' in an opulent country, far away

from her native Uodama. She is fierce and articulate. In no time, on arrival at her new university, she serves notice of her formidable intellect and gumption when she challenges, head-on, noted Professor Dr. Paul Andrei, who (by design, we later learned), attempts to paint a "one size fits all" picture of the *BLACK WORLD*.

But for all her smarts, Joan is still a romantic at heart, with all the attending human fragilities to wit. She finds herself conflicted as to a personal question: To whom does she ultimately give her heart in love for the rest of her life? The contending parties: the handsome but otherwise empty as a shell progeny of wealth, Gus Arlington and the son of the woman to whom she owed her very life, Romeo Dinyea, Jr. both present her with tantalizing considerations.

In weaving the ebbs and flows of this entrancing tale, Professor Nagbe effortlessly rises to the challenge. He does so with such uncommon grace, as to render invalid the aged-old critique of romantic fiction as a genre, often filled "with scenes and incidents remote from everyday life."

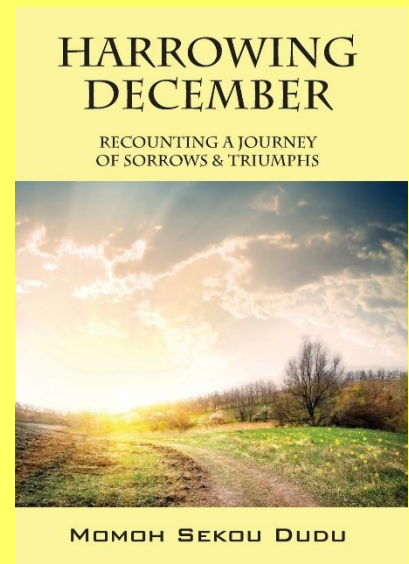
The prose is fresh and contemporary; it tugs not with a whisper, but with thunderous intensity at the

reader's heartstrings. As Professor Nagbe describes Joan Copper and Romeo Dinyea, Jr.'s journey to their ultimate destiny of love as the "lever to catapult them into frontiers of ecstasy," so I'd describe reading '*Tugging Whispers*.'

*Tugging Whispers*, by K-Moses Nagbe. Baltimore: PublishAmerica, 2008. 118 pages. Reviewed by Momoh Sekou Dudu.



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



## Author Interview 2

### Spotlight Author

**Perry Mulubah**



Let's start by first thanking you for doing this interview. Now, tell us a little about you-childhood, education, upbringing etc. Tell us a little about yourself

My name is **Perry W.S. Mulubah, Sr.** I was an educator for several years in Liberia. I taught at the Zorzor Teacher Training Institute few years in Fissibu, taught at Kakata Teacher Training Institute, Lott Carey Mission in Brewersville, was principal for Gbarnga Methodist Mission, again taught at Zaweata and Bong Town schools, became Assistant Minister for three years before coming to the United States of America.

During my early years in the U. S., I did several odd jobs before finally getting into the school system, doing both teaching and counseling for twenty-six

years before retiring in September 2014. Also as a hobby, I have been doing some writing. I wrote three children's books, entitled *Shawn And Brenda, A Hippopotamus And Cat Story*; *Denise's Pet Dove* and *Grandma Miatta*, that I wrote specially for the Liberian children.

**LLM: Why writing?**

I have always loved writing. I used to write a lot in college, outside of school work. I also wrote a lot after college in Liberia, but did not public any of my writing in Liberia. While working in the school system for some time in America, I observed the enthusiasm in the children whenever they received new books.

I decided to start writing again. That resulted into my writing of three children's books, and one children's movie. My children's movie, "Sunshine Elementary" has been shown on three TV stations in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for the past three Summers.

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

*Murder In The Cassava Patch*, by Bai T. More; *Death of a King's Horseman*, by Wole Soyinka ;*The Lion And Jewel*, by Wole Soyinka.

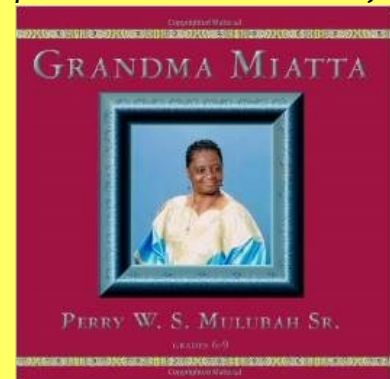
**LLM: How do you approach your work?** For me, work is giving service to others through the gifts that God

gave each individual. So whenever I went to work, I was fulfilling a mission that God sent me on. I do it faithfully and diligently.

**LLM: What themes do you find yourself continuously exploring in your work?** First, there must be passion, then sincerity and commitment.

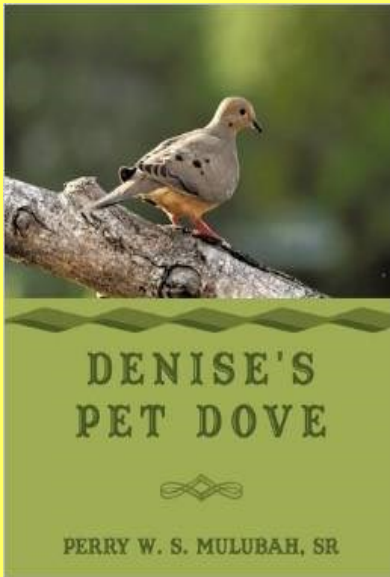
**LLM: Tell us a little about your book[s]- storyline, characters, themes, inspiration etc.**

*Shawn And Brenda, A Hippopotamus And Cat Story* is a family that walked around the community when the adults in the family went to work and the children went to school. One day it walked to the edge of the city into the woods. There it met a hippopotamus and they became friends. The cat went in the woods several times to visit the hippopotamus. Then it decided to ask the family's permission for



the hippopotamus to live with them in the city. After some discussion the family agreed. The father built a lace for the hippopotamus.





They went in the woods, got the hippopotamus and brought it to the city. Later the family began to take the hippopotamus to the park. While at the park, all the children took turn to ride the hippopotamus. The people of the city saw how the hippo made their children happy and decided to show their appreciation. They had a special parade in honor of the hippo and the cat.

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

I saw that the children love animals. So I chose to write about one of two animals families use as a pet, and an animal from the bush or forest, just to make the story more interesting.

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

I just wanted to help the children stretch their imagination, and brain-tease them a little.

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

In Grandma Miatta, she showed her patriotism for Liberia by her service, total commitment, and dedication to the children's education and future.

**LLM: Do you have any advice for other writers? It is difficult for me to give advice to writers. If someone is a writer, that means the person already has the passion to write. Creativity drives the motivation. The resources for writing can derive from an ocean of elements, including environment, experience, and imagination. So writing is a personal tool that a person can use according to their own motivation and imagination**

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

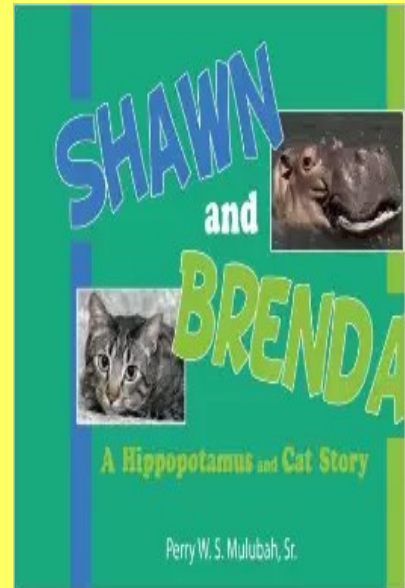
Destruction of African Civilization.

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

I have not published anything recently, so I haven't done any of the above recently.

**LLM: What are your current projects?**

I just moved from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, therefore right now I'm focused on getting settled down first. However, I'm presently writing a book that I'm not ready to talk about yet.



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

Yes, I read books by Bai T. Moore and Wilton Sankawolo.

**LLM: Any last words?**

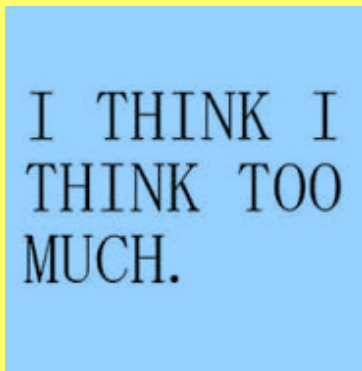
Thanks for giving me this opportunity to discuss a little about myself and my writing. I like to express my gratitude and admiration to you and your team for the great work you are doing. You are making tremendous contributions to the literary movement of Liberia.



Thank you Mr. Mulubah, we look forward to your upcoming works.



## Kuluba's Korner Kuluba's Korner



There are no shortcuts and easy road to success. You have to take the stairs. The dream is free. The hustle is sold separately. Whistle while you work, though and remember why you started. Be a [#BossBabe](#)

It's that time of year again...when we take stock. Re-evaluating and reminiscing about the year coming to a close...hopeful in the promise of a new one. 🍷

Make plans...for in doing that, we turn our wishful thinking into solid goals and tangible realities.

Then there are the times, just when we think we have it all down to a science and doing everything right...Life happens! ...but Life is always happening. Whether we're hurting, crying, in pain, sick, disappointed, dying, broke, broken, mourning, disappointed, happy or sad.

Our Survival Kit has two tools: The ability to ADJUST and the ability to ADAPT.

are more realistic and attainable. As the new year is once again burgeoning with hope, promise and dreams...take the pressure off! We don't know what tomorrow brings! but I know there are new fruits everyday hanging low for the picking. Don't let today's fruits, rot! Pick them ALL!

Rock the boat, make waves, make people uncomfortable, start small, start big...even

if you're scared to death, shaking like a leaf and bone-chilling fear grips you, even if you're tired and sleepless...it'll pay off! No condition is permanent. We at some point, enjoy the fruits of our labor.

What's the worst that could happen...you'll soar? You'll succeed? You'll be happy? You'll find peace and calm? You'll become CLEAR in the midst of tears, heart palpitations and ridicule??? Hmmmm....

I think it's worth a serious try.

Let nothing or no one derail you. This is not a year to settle in mediocrity...nor is any year. The world is yours. Who do you think it was made for?!\$&@

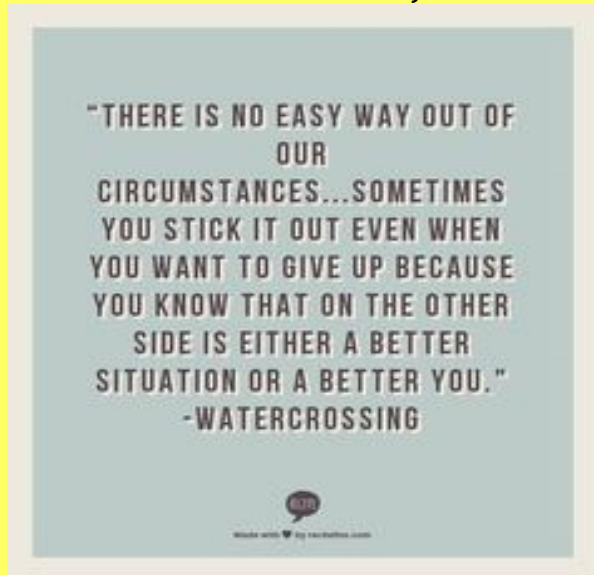
You deserve the best of what life has to offer at ALL times. It is in those moments of uncertainty that our greatest potential and selves are revealed. I may get knocked down, but good luck if you can keep me down! ✨

Surprise yourself because I can't wait to open up the wonderful present that is 2016. 🍷 I've been unravelling the bow all year. 😊🍷🍷🍷🍷 Cheers!

Don't talk about it. BE ABOUT IT! [#TheHumanCondition](#) [#KpelleGirlSwag](#)[#BossBabe](#) [#SuperK](#) [#JustK](#)

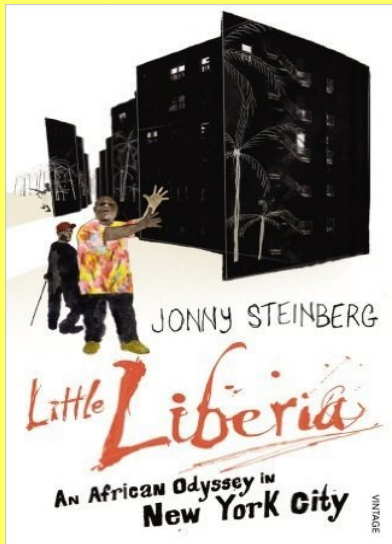
Happy Weekend!

KLM



I gave up on the whole "New Year Resolution" pressure YEARS ago. I now make daily ones that

## Book Review 2



**Little Liberia: An African Odyssey in New York City**

by Jonny Steinberg -

Review by: Margaret Busby

In a Cape Town cocktail bar in 2006, an old friend of the award-winning author Jonny Steinberg told him about a community of Liberians living in a Staten Island housing project while mentally inhabiting quite another time and place, "frozen in the moment of their flight from wartime Liberia". Wondering how that could be, as peace now prevailed, Steinberg found himself six months later in "Little Liberia", NY, trying to find out. The result is this extraordinary, stylistically varied mix of reportage, history and biography, which is revealing about the author as well as about his subjects, and about the vagaries of memory and motive.

Steinberg shadows two very different expatriate Liberians over the following two years: Rufus Arkoi, in 1988 aged 24, an ambitious immigrant to America before the civil war at home, and now the acknowledged leader of the Liberian enclave on New York City's Park Hill Avenue; and the younger Jacob Massaquoi, who arrived in 2002, limping heavily from an injury that prompts rumour and suspicion. At times trusting, at times guarded, they let Steinberg delve into their backgrounds - "My white, South African brother," Jacob greets him. Steinberg struggles diligently to understand the conundrum of their

community, which is inextricably rooted in the fraught and singular history of this African nation unlike any other. Eventually, Steinberg himself makes a visit there; but by the end of the book Jacob will still ask him: "Do you understand Liberia?"

Liberia has always been different, having no historical connection with the European "scramble for Africa", its ties being with the US. It was in 1822 that the American Colonization Society deemed that, preferable to emancipation in the United States, black Americans who were formerly enslaved should be "repatriated" to west Africa to found a new republic. The hope of this promised land is seen in the elements of the Liberian coat of arms: a sailing ship, a rising sun, a palm tree, a plough and shovel, a dove bearing a scroll, and the proud motto "The love of liberty brought us here".

Liberia's capital city, Monrovia, is named after the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, and the national flag is a pared-down version of Old Glory: stripes with just one star.

The arrival of these 19th-century settlers, however, changed the dynamics for the original indigenes. In the new hierarchy, the Americo-Liberians, and their descendants, would always come out on top, for well over a century. The first head of state not to belong to this elite was Sergeant Samuel Doe, who came to the fore in a military coup in 1980 in which the president, cabinet ministers and others in the old administration were killed.

Within three years there were fallings out among the coup-makers of different ethnicities. And then in 1989 the civil wars began, with one in 14 Liberians losing their lives in the protracted brutal conflict.

Many of those fleeing the intensifying violence under Charles Taylor ended up in the United States, on Park Hill Avenue, where to inquire about a neighbour's past constitutes an accusation. "It was as if Park Hill and Liberia were twin voodoo dolls," says Steinberg, "every pinprick felt here drawing blood there, every stab back home wounding somebody in this exile."

Rufus, the political aspirant, and Jacob, the trauma survivor, are doomed

to clash, and their varied fortunes and emotional lives receive even-handed scrutiny in parallel and blended stories. Jacob briefly works for Rufus's organisation but is soon disillusioned. A bitter feud ensues between them, with Jacob setting up his own party to contest election to the community association, and old divisions from their troubled homeland threaten to be replicated. "I began to see Park Hill Avenue as a country," says Jacob.

This is an illuminating book - too illuminating for one protagonist. Jacob, when allowed the courtesy of being shown a finished draft of this book, is displeased: "Sometimes we were speaking with the recorder on. That was for the book. Other times you came around and hung out, and I told you stuff . . . because I grew to like you as a friend." Characterised as "both a gentleman and a cunning bastard", Steinberg willingly accedes to some of Jacob's editing demands, so what we read is an adjusted version.

By contrast, Rufus's focus seems the promise of a modest royalty. Yet for him, and for Liberia in this election year, there remains unfinished business. As Steinberg finally observes: "Rufus's interior world, it struck me, was tailor-made for exile. In the moment of departure you gather every last detail of the place you are leaving, infuse it with all your wishes and desires, and carry it with you, like a great living ornament, wherever you happen to go."

The story of Liberia is of course too complex to be explained and encompassed in just two lives (tantalisingly, Steinberg's acknowledgments make reference to two women whose stories he had also intended to write up). Maps, photographs, notes, a list of further reading, as well as a thorough index, all provide useful support for his skilled and compassionate chronicle.

Margaret Busby's *Daughters of Africa* is published by Vintage

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/mar/12/little-liberia-jonny-steinberg-review>

## *Short Story 2*

### *This is America: An Immigrant's Story Part I*

*Momoh Sekou Dudu*

The judge struck the polished dais with his gavel, inviting a protracted silence to settle over the courtroom. 'Mr. Spencer,' he said, looking in my direction, 'the case against you is dismissed. You are free to go.' I did not move. I stayed frozen in place as if I was being weighed down by a ton of bricks. Not even the judge's ruling, in that moment, could assure me that it was over. I was still shell-shocked, too bothered by what had transpired.

As I sat wallowing in my thoughts, I felt a hand tap me on my shoulders as if to say 'wake up from your slumber, Spencer.' It was Attorney Michael Ayres, my defense lawyer.

"Are you alright, Mr. Spencer?" the attorney asked me, a look of confusion on his face. It was only then that reality hit me.

"Yes, I am," I lied.

"You can go home now. The charge against you is without merit, Mr. Spencer."

"Thank you! Thank you!" I stammered.

"You are welcomed my friend," he said, extending his right hand to offer me a goodbye handshake. 'Please stay out of trouble,' Attorney Ayres added as we exited the courtroom together.

Outside, in the cold winter air, I heaved a deep sigh of relief. As soon as the lawyer was out of sight, I ignored the slippery conditions of the

courthouse's parking lot and took to my heels. I ran as fast as I could and jumped into my waiting old Toyota Tacoma Pickup. I was teary-eyed but immensely pleased. 'Thank you, God.' I muttered as I positioned myself behind the vehicle's steering wheel.

I wanted so much to forget what had happened with me in the last twenty-four hours. In fact, I wanted to bury all my experiences of the year in its entirety. But I couldn't. As I drove away from the courthouse, I began to replay the happenings of the year in my head. I struggled to figure out what exactly had gone wrong for me. Tried as I did, I couldn't put a finger on the real problem. After a while, I decided that that moment wasn't the time to belabor my troubles.

'The right thing to do now, Spencer, is give thanks where it is due: to God and to Attorney Ayres,' I told myself.

Beyond just giving thanks, I considered the need to realign my life's priorities, to break free of the stranglehold of a suddenly dysfunctional marital relationship that had turned my life upside down. If breaking that bond was what it was going to take, so it would be. For too long, I had ignored glaring realities; I had downplayed my hunches. Now, those hunches were coming home to roost, in a way and with a speed that I never could have anticipated.

In truth, I had been jolted back to my senses. So, when Rachel, my wife, went for my head region that morning, punching and scratching in reaction to a benign question I had asked of her, I wasn't entirely shocked.

'Don't ask me. This is America,' she had said.

'What do you mean by this is America?'

'Do I ask you who you talk to?'

'Far from the point, Rachel,' I said, as I adjusted myself behind my desktop computer where I had been glued for most of the morning finishing up a report for a client.

'Far from the point, beside the point, or in front of the point, I don't care!' As she spoke, she took a few steps toward me, both her hands flailing wildly as she approached.

'Stay back,' I said.

'What will you do if I don't?'

"I said stay back..." Before I completed what I was about to say, Rachel struck me in my head with her open palm.

'Now what?'

I went crazy. It was as if my heart had been yanked out of my chest. I was thinking: This can't be Rachel; the same Rachel who called me 'Papa' when I processed her immigration paperwork to come to America. The Rachel who had constantly talked about us working together when she arrived in America to improve our lot; the grateful Rachel who, at every opportunity, had proclaimed that beside GOD, she relied on me, for I had so profoundly changed the trajectory of her life for the better.

That late morning, out of raw emotions, I reacted to Rachel's aggression, to her master plan, in the way she had hoped I would. I shoved her. I did so with hard enough force that she stumbled backwards a few steps. I had taken her bait. She now had the opening she had been looking for. Before I knew it, she was ransacking everything in our home: furniture,



dishes, books, decorative pieces, nothing was safe from Rachel's rampage. She changed the house beyond recognition. To escape her rage, I turned off my computer, jumped into my aging Pickup and headed to a previously scheduled community meeting. If I stayed put, I thought, things could go from bad to worse.

My departure from home, however, did not stop things from becoming worse. I barely reached my meeting site when my mobile phone rang.

'Hello,' I said softly into the phone.

'Is this Greg?' a male voice asked authoritatively, and with urgency.

'Yes, Greg speaking.' I responded.

'This is the Boulder PD,' the voice on the phone apprised me. 'You are being sought on a complaint of domestic assault.'

'I am coming directly to the precinct,' I told the police officer.

'If you fail to show, an arrest warrant will be issued for you,' the officer said.

On ending the call with the officer, I turned my vehicle around and headed straight for the precinct. When I arrived, I parked my old Pickup between two police squad cars. I alighted and walked calmly into the building. As it was on a Sunday, there were only a handful of officers on duty.

'Hello,' I greeted the female officer sitting behind the glass vestibule.

'Hello. How may I help you, sir?' The officer answered.

'Well, I just got a call from one of your officers. He informed me I am wanted on an assault complaint.'

Before she could say anything more, the phone on her desk rang. She hand signaled me to wait a while as she took the call. I waited patiently. When she concluded her phone conversation, she turned to me and said:

'Really, sir? You are bringing yourself to the police precinct on a Sunday afternoon to be booked on an assault charge? Strange, I'd say.'

Just then, two male officers disembarked from their patrol car and walked into the precinct, chatting enthusiastically as they entered.

'Did any of you fellows take an assault call today?' the officer behind the glass vestibule asked.

'Yes, I did,' the heavier set of the two male officers answered.

'This gentleman here may be the person you want. He came to self-surrender.'

'Incredible.'

'Are you Greg?'

'Yes, I am.'

'Well, Greg, due to the magnitude of the complaint against you, we have to book you in jail for the evening until you go see a judge tomorrow morning,' the officer said.

'Why?' I asked in confusion.

'You see, Greg, we had to order an ambulance to your house to take your wife to the hospital. She reported to be in severe pain. She claimed you assaulted her.'

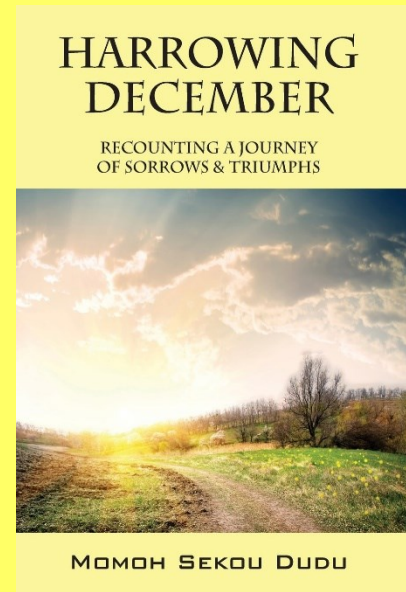
'That can't be,' I protested.

'Given that you brought yourself to the precinct, I will not doubt your sincerity, sir. But the law is the law. We must hold you until you see a judge tomorrow morning.'

For the entirety of that Sunday night—the longest of my life I have told everyone since, I sat in a cold, isolated jail cell at the Boulder PD, thinking about our beginning.

To be continued.....

*This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.*



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

## Author Interview 3 SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

Darlington is a Nigeria poet,  
author and scientist...



*Darlington Ibe Ifeanyi*

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

*Question: Tell us about your early childhood, upbringing, Education.*

**Answer:** My name is Ibe Darlington Ifeanyi. I am from Dikenafai, Imo State Nigeria. My family is a polygamous one. I'm the second son of my mother who died when I was barely two. Growing up wasn't so rosy. My dad followed the ugly trend when I was in my Senior Secondary two. I was, thus, forced to put up with my maternal people, my granny to be precise, whom I took as the only mother I knew. She is late now and may her soul rest in peace.

*Question: What inspires you to write generally? Who are some of the people that influenced you?*

**Answer:** I have always wanted to write. Music and writing appealed to me growing up but I chose the former. I found books very fascinating right from

childhood and read voraciously. I worshipped author and marveled at their ability to weave words so masterfully. That was what inspired me. And so I was influenced by a body of writers cutting across varied genres.

*Question: What role does your family play in your writing?*

**Answer:** My uncles saw the bent in me and nurtured it to fruition. While one—Uncle Henry— forced me to read novels telling me that if I could master English Language I could master anything, the other—Uncle Tony— kept busy documenting my collection of poems and storing them away in a diskette. Tony subsequently compelled me to start writing prose upon my graduation from the university. I owe everything to them. I also had aunties who wanted to make sure that the first five chapters didn't go to the dust bins. They pushed me till it happened.

*Question: Name one entity that you feel supported you besides your family members?*

**Answer:** His name is Prince Uchenna Odoemena. He is a friend, a brother and a close confidant. He has been awesome. I'm lost for words.

*Question: If you had to choose, which writer(s) would you consider a mentor/mentors? How would you describe yourself using five words?*

**Answer:** As I said earlier, I was inspired by a body of authors—Robert Ludlum, Sydney Sheldon, John Grisham, Mario Puzo, Dan Brown and a host of others. I

must say that Robert Ludlum blew me away. He is my mentor any day and influenced my writing. In five words I would say that 'Ibe is prepared and ready.'

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

**Answer:** Would it surprise them that Ibe Darlington Ifeanyi never had an English Teacher during his years through secondary school? Stunned right? My teacher, a woman, was either pregnant or on maternity leave! Second, I didn't have the privilege of knowing my mother!

*Question: Let's talk book. What books have most influenced your life/career most?*

**Answer:** I have no particular book that influenced me. I love reading good books and drawing inspirations therein.

*Question: Who is/are your favorite Liberian author(s) and what strikes you about their work(s).*

**Answer:** Forte Othniel D, of course. Just like me, Forte strives to revive the reading consciousness by his effort at weaving stories that captivate his audience.

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

**Answer:** Not yet. I look forward to giving that a shot soon.

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

**Answer:** I would very much love to put a stab in that direction. I wouldn't say the genre for now but I'm open to anything. The future would tell.

**Question: Do you have a specific writing style?**

**Answer:** Yes I do. I love adopting the ornate style of writing. I love to make my works very picturesque and infuse a lot of wisdom into them.

**Question: How do you develop your plots and characters?**

**Answer:** Before now, I used to draw my plot then plug the words in afterwards. I also write longhand. But later I found out that a lot came in between in the cause of my writing. Now I allow myself to just sail away.

**Question: Tell us about your protagonist(s)/antagonist(s). Did you draw from real people?**

**Answer:** My protagonists/antagonists depend on my story. Mark, in *The Daylight Pestilence* is ponderous and unwieldy. You cannot place him quite distinctly. He is neither here nor there yet he keeps surviving. On the other hand, I can have ruthless, vicious antagonists depending on what I want them to be.

**Question: What inspired you to write *The Daylight Pestilence*?**

**Answer:** I was preoccupied with a lot of things. I wanted to write but didn't know how to get started. Suddenly, I noticed that a lot of things were going bad around me. There is hunger and deprivation. People have lost

hope and so evil have taken the center stage. The reading culture had long nosedived. There has been so much decay and how best can I address and challenge the existing order than weaving them in a story? And so for me, the desire to revolutionize storytelling and have people enjoy reading books written by Africans spurred me.

**Question: How did you come up with the tittle? Why that one?**

**Answer:** I wrote my book with a different tittle—*Beyond the Reason*—but my Nigerian editor saw the potential in my work and told me that there was need to give it a tittle that captures international appeal. That was how we came up with *The Daylight Pestilence*.

**Question: How much of the book is realistic?**

**Answer:** A writer is one who has his ears to the ground. He has eyes for details. He sees a story from every encounter. He understands nuances. My book is part fiction and part reality. I set out to do a purely fictional stuff but saw that a lot came into play.

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

**Answer:** I didn't set out to write about someone or events in my life. On the cause of my writing a lot came in. Characters spring up as the story unfolds and I need to equally build a story around them—things I saw and heard, events I was a part of and some panoply of imagination—stuffs like that.

**Question: What was the hardest part of writing this book?**

**Answer:** For me the hardest part of writing a book basically is first stumbling on a storyline. The first few chapters where you battle to get acquainted with your characters, get to know them, what their moods are and the things they are capable of is usually it. Once you can do this, the rest is easy.

**Question: What was your favorite chapter (or part)?**

**Answer:** I try to leave my readers with that instance of suspense in every chapter but my favorite chapter is two. It is so because during the days I worked with a telecommunications firm, my colleagues dubbed me 'Dibia Ishimkpi', you know such jokes and incidentally the name became a character in my book.

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

**Answer:** Yes. There is always a temptation to change certain things especially your first book. You, perhaps, would love to reposition it, translate certain vernaculars that were not captured for international readers. I would love to do that and have actually done enough already but we can't keep going to our first works forever.

**Question: What book(s) are you reading now?**

**Answer:** I just finished reading Barack Obama's 'The Audacity of Hope' and I'm reading Eric Van Lustbader's 'Sirens'.



**Question:** Are there any new author that have grasped your interest?

**Answer:** To be frank, swell authors emerge every day and I must say that I'm awed by some of them.

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

**Answer:** As I said before, first is trying to understand your characters and have them talk to you. Another one is although your work is a fictional work, you need to make your stories stick and the understanding that there should be some modicum of reality in the information you dish out.

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

**Answer:** Yes. I go on a fact-finding mission. I interview people. I try to have others share their experiences.

**Question:** Who designed the covers?

**Answer:** McDonald Faye

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

**Answer:** I will say that writers should never give up on their dreams. Sometimes it doesn't just rain but pours. There are a lot to make you quit but please hang in there. Things would sure take a different shape pretty soon with the level of consciousness sweeping the horizon.

**Question:** What are the greatest challenges for a Liberian writer especially in

terms of publishing, distributing and promotion, in just getting there?

**Answer:** Just as we have in Nigeria, readers try to compare quality of work produced locally to the ones done abroad. They tend to shy away from patronizing locally produced works. Second, we lack marketing agencies and trying to do it alone stifles your efforts. Indigenous traditional publishers are fast vanishing and authors are left to muzzle the money to publish their works which is usually on the high. Unlike musical artists, authors are atrophy. While musicians get air-plays, shows and tours, authors get nothing.

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

**Answer:** I have been on the move in recent time. I move from state to state, conducting radio and newspaper interviews. I also visit schools. Not been easy I must say.

**Question:** What are your current projects?

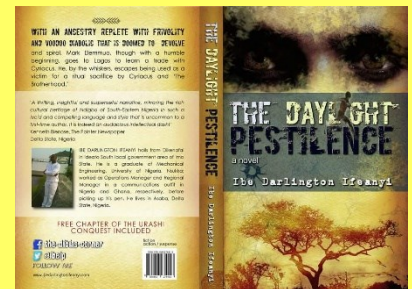
**Answer:** I'm looking forward to releasing three novels before the year runs out: The Awakening (Sequel to The Daylight Pestilence), The Urashi Conquest and Sixtus & the Little Ant (Children's book)

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

**Answer:** I'm working on two projects concurrently now: 'Responding to the Lure' and 'Haram Turncoats Rising'.

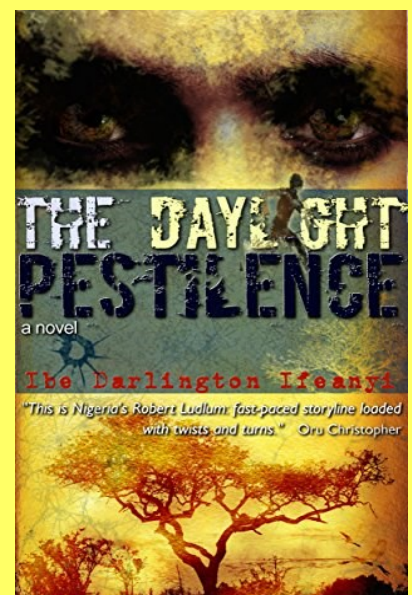
**Question:** Do you have anything specific thing that you want to say to your readers?

**Answer:** I want to welcome my readers formally to the world of the Dibia. I want to promise you that you won't be disappointed so long as you keep patronizing your local writers. It would only get better.



About the Author

Ibe Darlington Ifeanyi hails from Dikenafai, Imo State, Nigeria. He is a graduate of Mechanical Engineering, University of Nigeria Nsukka. He worked as an Operations Manager and Regional Manager both in Nigeria and Ghana before picking his pen. He lives in Asaba, Delta state Nigeria.



## *Never should We Revisit Our Undesirable Past Electoral History:*

*A Reflection for the  
Sustenance of our Nascent  
Democracy*

**By Josiah F. Joekai, Jr.**



Governance is an important facet of human existence. Although it may vary in form from country to country, but it is an essential characteristic that countries have in common. It is through the governance process that authorities are able to exercise control and manage the state with the aim of ensuring peaceful co-existence and harmony. In essence, governance constitutes established traditions and institutions through which a leadership exercises economic, political and administrative authority to conduct a country's affairs at all levels. The beauty of a governance process is that no matter the manner or form, it should always seek to place premium on meeting the hopes and aspirations of the governed.

In spite of the various forms of governance practiced around the world ranging from autocracy to democracy, a governance process can either be *good or bad*

depending on how it is administered by those entrusted with the power to govern. Thus, the governance process of a country is largely dependent upon the choice of the people of said country.

It is within this context that governance is broadly categorized into two key and simple concepts; *good governance and bad governance*. These concepts are the forms of governance practiced globally which has impacted economies and the way of life of people. Good governance promotes respect for the rule of law and sanctity of human life. It recognizes the supremacy of the people (The governed) and encourages them to take part in running the affairs of the state through involvement in both local and national decision-making processes. Good governance recognizes and upholds the tenets (Fair play, equality and justice) of democracy.

Conversely, bad governance is in actuality the antithesis of good governance. Bad governance is profoundly associated with corruption. It engenders social exclusion, uneven distribution of resources, inequitable growth and thus, engenders lack of trust in authorities. It signifies inefficiency in governance in general, thereby keeping majority of the governed in an oppressed, marginalized and disadvantaged state. In essence, it is the practice of bad governance that has kept many countries of the world, particularly Africa in a poor and underdeveloped state.

Obviously, bad governance is a major source of many conflicts and crisis situations

that have engulfed nations of the world destroying their very existence. Like many of its contemporaries, Liberia has been a victim of bad governance since it was founded. After more than one hundred years of one party rule by the True Whig Party of the elite settlers group in Liberia, patriotic and democratic forces drawn largely from the majority of the indigenous groups began to mount pressure on the government for democratic rule and the just distribution of the national wealth.

Several groups emerged notably the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL). These two groups formally registered in keeping with government's requirements and began to establish cells and create awareness throughout the country about the inequality and uneven distribution of the natural resources of the country. As their campaigns began to take root across the nation, they were both met with stiff resistance from the government, but with perseverance they both soon became a strong force for the government to deal with.

Although the two organizations had practically the same objective, which was to introduce a multi-party democracy, and create mass participation in the governance process, they had their own procedures and methods of proceeding.

MOJA comprised principally of university professors, teachers, students and the intellectual community who believed in gradual change process through awakening the consciousness of the down trodden masses of the

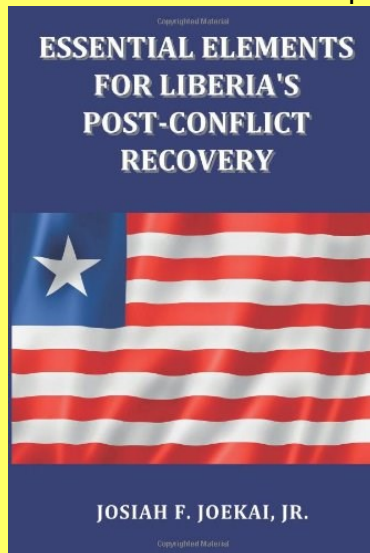
Liberian people who were languishing in abject poverty in spite of the huge deposit of natural resources being poorly managed by the few elite at their expense. The dream was that through this means “right” would rise over “wrong” and power will come to the majority through the ballot box. The group also favored communism over capitalism, a criticism that the ruling party had for its membership, using it as a tool to defeat the people-centered campaign of MOJA.

PAL, on the other hand, comprised mainly of the working class including heads of worker unions, and middle level technicians. Their approach was mainly radical in nature and was pushing for an immediate change. They were more proactive and mounted sustained pressure on the ruling power. They are noted for the pre-coup rice riot in 1979 known as the “April 14 Rice Riot”. Both groups engaged in activities bent on pressurizing the government to be responsive to the needs of the Liberian people.

For example, Dr. Amos Sawyer of MOJA declared his intention to run as an independent candidate against the True Whig Party in the 1979 Mayoral Election for the City of Monrovia. The university students joined his campaign trail and soon covered the entire city and its environs using his campaign newsletter “*The Broom*” which was widely circulated. This was obvious because the campus of the university was in actuality the cradle of opposition politics. It served as the springboard for opposition politicians. Not only were they protected

there but it was the main mobilization platform that solidified and consolidated various mass action campaigns. With this development, the TWP intensified its resistant campaign, but was still no match for Sawyer given the intensity of his campaign. With all of the resources the government had to its disposal, it had to indefinitely postpone the election for fear of being defeated by an individual.

The student community under the umbrella of the Liberia National Student Union (LINSU) was no small partner in the fight for the democratization of Liberia. The University of Liberia “*Spokesman*” under the managing editorial leadership of Mr. James M. Fromayan became a strong opposition news organ in the absence of any opposition paper on the news stance. The New Liberia Newspaper and the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) entirely managed by the government were the only organs through which information was disseminated to the Liberian People.



Depriving the majority access to the media was a measure to deny them a voice in

decisions that affected their lives. Thus, the existence of the *Spokesman* was timely, and not only that but created some balance that further enhanced the citizens’ action for change.

The emergence of this structured opposition movement kept the government on its feet in a defensive position. Thus, activities of the opposition did not go without resistance from the government as through its national security networks there were arrests and molestation at different levels. The security network which comprised of the National Security Agency (NSA), Public Relation Officers (PROs), Criminal Investigation Division (CID) of the Police, Special Security Service (SSS), Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) and others were coordinating security information for the government characteristic of a dictatorial regime. On several occasions, members of MOJA and PAL were illegally arrested and thrown behind bars as a way of silencing them.

The action of the security network was largely arbitrary in nature. However, this did not in any way instill fear in the movements or deter them because of their firm resolve to institute change for the good of the people.

In spite of all these security networks, the screw got tighten by the day and the regime became unpopular even among some of its workers including the police and the soldiers who were among the least paid. The army in particular was treated with no respect as many of them practically



served as servants in the homes of ranking officers and other officials of government doing laundry and other domestic work.

They resided in zinc shacks in various military camps across the country. Thus, rendering the army as a place for unprofessional people who had no education or career. All of the above culminated into dissatisfaction among the vast majority of the citizenry which made rebellion or civil unrest inevitable.

The saying that "*the end justifies the means*" was exactly insight. It was time for change and a new political order was about to be instituted. The political organization and consciousness raising was certainly disrupted. While the intellectuals were fighting towards a smooth transfer of power through the ballot box, the army took advantage of the volatile situation and toppled the government of President William R. Tolbert, Jr. with no resistance on April 12, 1980. Enlisted men of the Armed Forces of Liberia under the command of Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe carried out the coup.

The event of April 12 changed the status quo for the first time producing the first indigenous Head of State through the barrow of the gun. The jubilation was overwhelming echoing that the owners of the land had taken over the realm of power. People danced through the principal streets of Monrovia and other rural cities throughout the country.

The Constitution was suspended and a new government was being formed headed by Samuel Doe

including other indigenous people in positions such as the Ministers of Finance and Foreign Affairs which were perceived to be reserved for the Americo-Liberian descendants or Congo people as they are commonly known. Things had truly fallen apart and the center could no longer hold in the words of the Nigerian Novelist, Chinua Achebe.

The new political order named and styled the People's Redemption Council (PRC), was organized and started carrying on the business of governance using decrees.

It took some stringent measures initially including summary execution of past government officials, the acquisition of farms owned by former officials of government, abrupt increment in the salaries of government officials among others. Some of these actions were hasty and not properly analyzed based on existing economic realities.

In no time, as Dusty Wolokollie, a leading politician in Liberia, said in an article he published in the Daily Observer during the same period that took him to prison for more than a year, entitled "*Strange things are happening*" in which he criticized the new regime of repeating the mistakes of the past. Indeed, strange things surely started happening.

The government after few months of rule exposed its political agenda of ethnic-oriented autocratic regime. The reality was that the military junta had no agenda to democratize the country or transform the socio-political and economic life of the country. The political barbed-

wire that usually grabs African leaders began to grab the new political order.

The tenets of *nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism and corruption* soon engulfed the indigenous based military junta to the extent that the revolution began to eat its own children. As it is often said, "*if the crocodile can eat its own flesh, then it can devour the flesh of a frog*". So was it with Mr. Doe and his revolutionary colleagues. They became prey for Mr. Doe's elimination axe which was rapidly falling all over the place and eliminating his perceived enemies. Indeed, the nation was soon engulfed by fear that the axe could fall on anyone at any time not just the coup makers.

Head of State Doe became very powerful and started to micro manage the PRC. He succeeded in creating division within the Council with one group loyal to him while few others paid loyalty to Thomas Weh-syen, the Vice Head of State. Mr. Doe succeeded in eliminating almost all of his perceived enemies on the Council and promoted most of his Krahn tribesmen to positions of trust in the army although most of them were not educated. In the context of a well-conceived conspiracy theory, there were reports of coup and counter-coup some of them managed by Mr. Doe himself to get at his perceived enemies such as the infamous Nimba Raid which his most ruthless General, Charles Julu is noted for carrying out, the Flanzamaton Fiasco, etc.

Mr. Doe's government adopted a complete ethnic outlook as members of his ethnic Krahn soon dominated the political and military life

of the country. This glaring ethnic dominance engendered increased level of ethnic tension leading to hostilities between the politically and militarily dominant Krahn and many other ethnic groups in the country.

Succumbing to international pressure to return the country to civilian rule, a Western style of multi-party democracy evolved as the best option. Mr. Doe immediately embarked on a Constitutional reform process that would lead to the holding of elections. Exactly after one year of the PRC's rule, Mr. Doe constituted a twenty-five member National Constitution Committee and appointed Dr. Sawyer who was a highly respected MOJA stalwart as Chairman of the Committee.

The Sawyer Committee original draft of the Constitution was unequivocally clear among other considerations about the role of the military and police in the newly perceived democratic dispensation. The draft excluded members of the army and police from the right to belong to political parties or to vote in elections. It also proposed the thirty-five-year age qualification for the presidency which would have prevented Mr. Doe from standing in the ensuing elections at the time.

Cleverly, Mr. Doe established a Constitutional Advisory Assembly headed by Edward Beyan Kesselly. The draft Constitution was referred to the Kesselly Assembly for review. The review process took place in Gbarnga City, Bong County for an exceptional period of time with unlimited resources placed at its disposal. This

was a measure Mr. Doe set up to circumvent the Sawyer Committee's draft in order to enable him qualify to stand in the elections as he had already envisioned. Accordingly, the constitution was reviewed with his interest secured. On July 3, 1984 the revised Constitution went into a National Referendum where it was approved by 78.3% of voters.

With certainty that elections were scheduled for 1985, the rush for the



registration of political parties followed. Stringent measures were laid down for the registration of parties. Obviously, the United People's Party (UPP) of Gabriel Baccus Matthews and the Liberia People Party (LPP) of Togba-Nah Tipoteh were denied qualification on grounds that they did not meet the requirements for registration. As such, they were not recognized as political parties to stand in the 1985 elections.

This however, did not come as a surprise given the pioneering role of these two parties which actually evolved from PAL and MOJA respectively. It was quite understandable that Mr. Doe harbored fears that with the

deeply rooted commitments that these parties had with the professional and student communities as well as trade union organizations and the working class, they had the potential to shatter his aspiration. Thus, they were denied access to the electoral process.

Needless to mention, in the midst of the stringent registration measures Mr. Doe's National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) met all of the requirements to be registered as political party. Ignorant of the consequences that awaited him for such suppressive action, he was not only sure of standing as a candidate in the election but that winning was inevitable.

Nevertheless, few other groups that applied for registration including the Unity Party (UP) of Edward Beyan Kesselly, the Liberia Unification Party (LUP) of a Classroom Teacher William Gabriel Kpolleh and the Liberia Action Party (LAP) of Jackson Fiah Doe were registered and allowed to participate in the elections. In the eyes of Mr. Doe, these parties were not politically harmful as UPP and LPP which were already deeply rooted in the minds of the people. Besides, their participation was quite necessary to give the elections international acclamation. He knew quite well that this verdict was critical to legitimizing his election and the return of the country to "civilian rule".

General elections were held as planned on October 15, 1985 and Mr. Doe was declared winner by the Emmett Harmon Special Elections Commission (SECOM). The SECOM results revealed that Mr. Doe won

with 50.9% just enough to avoid run-off. This win by all accounts was reflective of all the maneuverings and manipulations that characterized the entire electoral process. It was evident that the polls were widely marred by widespread fraud and rigging. Many independent observers believed that the Liberia Action Party Jackson Doe who finished second was the actual winner.

It was then revealed that Mr. Doe had the ballots counted in secret locations by his handpicked staff under compelling circumstances. This election malpractice did not only aggravate citizens and the international community but brewed serious dissatisfaction amongst the entire citizenry. The situation further fragmented the already Krahn dominated security apparatus, fueled anti-government advocacies championed by interest groups, academics and the student community.

The Doe regime started to get unpopular with the army gradually being tribalized. Corruption became the order of the day with Doe himself amassing wealth evidenced by the structures he put up in his home town Tuzon, Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County and other parts of Monrovia. Then, the economy went down, mismanagement took center stage and rumors of war set in. Thus, the December 24, 1989 uprising launched by Mr. Charles Taylor National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) became a reality.

The period 1989 to 2003 is considered by many Liberians as the darkest era in the

history of the existence of Liberia. The country, for the first time since its independence experienced the bloodiest civil war launched by rebels of the NPFL led by former Mr. Charles Taylor who sought to depose former President Samuel Doe and his government. Mr. Taylor served as Director-General of the General Services Agency (GSA) under Mr. Doe before he fled to the United States. His NPFL rapidly gained the support of Liberians because of the dictatorial tenets that characterized Mr. Doe's ten-year rule.

Taylor led-NPFL warring faction igniting the civil crisis in the small bordering cocoa-growing town of Butuo on December 24, 1989. Taylor forces crossed the Cestos River at the crossing point from Cote d'Ivoire into Butuo, Nimba County that fateful morning and launched the first attack on Liberia. When citizens found dead bodies and heard the sound of gunfire, they scattered throughout the bushes for fear of their lives.

By 1990, the war had spread to almost all parts of the country. The war which is considered one of Africa's bloodiest, claimed the lives of about 250,000 Liberians and forcibly displaced up to million people into neighboring countries- Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. By the late 1990s, Liberians had sought refuge across Africa, the United States of America and parts of Europe.

Accordingly, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) made an

immediate intervention and succeeded in preventing Mr. Taylor from capturing Monrovia. One of Mr. Taylor's strong fighters, Prince Y. Johnson broke away for what was considered policy difference and formed his own Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). Fighting under his independent umbrella, INPFL Mr. Johnson forces captured and killed Mr. Doe on September 9, 1990.

The situation in the country became fluid with hundreds of thousands of people internally displaced and about a million seeking refuge across Africa and other parts of the world. ECOMOG, the ECOWAS military intervention force was in control of much of Monrovia with Prince Johnson's INPFL in control of the Bushrod Island including the Freeport of Monrovia while Mr. Taylor controlled of the rest of the country.

This leadership vacuum was quickly bridged with an interim arrangement. In the Gambia, an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) was formed under the auspices of ECOWAS in October 1990 with Dr. Amos Sawyer serving as President. This interim arrangement was rejected by Mr. Taylor. He refused to work with the interim government and continued the war.

By 1992 the war further intensified with several warring factions emerging in different parts of the country. These factions fought Mr. Taylor and succeeded in weakening his military strength and capability

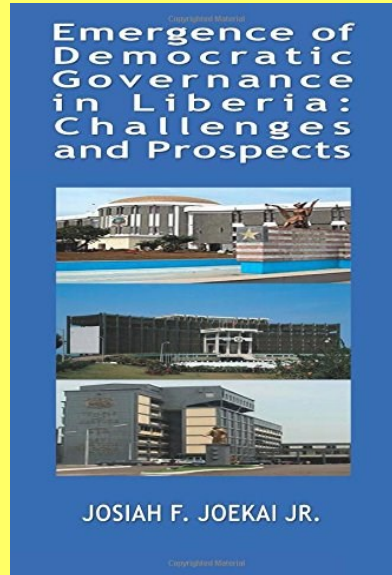


considerably. The factions included the United Liberia Movement Organization (ULIMO) predominantly composed of the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups. The group however parted ways on ethnic lines with a Krahn faction headed by Gen. Roosevelt Johnson and the Mandingo faction headed by Mr. Alhaji G. V. Kromah. In the northern county of Lofa, the Lofa Defense Force (LDF) was established headed by Francois Massaquoi. The LDF mostly of the Lorma and Kpelle ethnic groups of Lofa operated from the county resisting Taylor's NPFL and Mr. Kromah's ULIMO forces. Also in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Liberia Peace Council (LPC) under the leadership of George Boley was formed and operated parallel with the Movement for democracy in Liberia (MODEL) headed by Thomas Yaya Nimely from the southeastern region.

The war raged on between the NPFL and all of these factions in different parts of the country causing more deaths and destruction as well as imposing economic hardship on the people. Liberians had no option but to face the harsh realities of the devastating civil war. After several peace accords and the declining military power of Mr. Taylor and his NPFL, he agreed to the formation of a five-man transitional government of which he was a member.

Following considerable progress in negotiations, disarmament and demobilization of warring

factions were hurriedly carried out. Special elections were organized and conducted on July 19, 1997 with Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Party (NPP) declared winner.



Many Liberians and political pundits from around the world believed Mr. Taylor won the election by a large majority, primarily because Liberians feared that he could go back to war had he lost.

Whether or not such justification represents the reality, of the 13 political parties that participated in the elections, Mr. Taylor won 75.33% of the total votes cast followed by Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who came "a distant second" with 9.58% reflective of the percentages of votes received by the two candidates. Due to the system of Proportional Representation used in the election, Mr. Taylor's NPP also received the highest number of seats in both Houses of the Legislature. Of the 30 seats in the Senate, NPP got 21 and 49 seats out of

64 in the House of Representatives, respectively.

After few years of Mr. Taylor's tyrannical rule, the situation was even worsened by the continuation of the civil unrest. By 2003, another warring faction, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) seriously challenged Taylor's control of the country.

A bloody fight ensue between Mr. Taylor's forces and LURD which almost reached central Monrovia. The rapid advances of LURD on Taylor's strong holds including the capital, Monrovia did not only take away many lives and further destroyed properties but significantly paralyzed Mr. Taylor's political and military strength.

Succumbing to international pressure, especially a major call by US President George Bush for him to leave Liberia and spare his people further bloodshed, Taylor resigned and fled the country to Nigeria through a special arrangement.

His Vice President, Moses Z. Blah took over as President. On August 18, 2003, all of the warring factions signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana marking the end of the decade and half civil war.

With this landmark accomplishment, a transitional government was set up named and styled the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) headed by Charles Gyude Bryant. Consistent with its mandate as provided for by

the CPA, the NTGL transitioned Liberia to the first democratic elections in 2005. This development ultimately sealed the chapter on a series of military and transitional governments in Liberia from 1980 to 2006 caused by despotism, subjugation and deprivation. Since this historic transition of 2005, we have continued to rebuild our shattered country and enjoy the peace thereof for a little over ten years.

However, as we approach the highly anticipated 2017 elections which by all accounts will be a turning point in our democratization process, we must be mindful not to repeat the terrible mistakes of the past for which we paid for so dearly.

As I have repeatedly underscored, 2017 is so very crucial to the forward march of Liberia to the extent that its management to a successful end requires all of the attention and support necessary.

Obviously, I have no doubt that the government will take the much needed steps in a timely manner to safeguard the nation.

In particular, a critical assessment of the Electoral Management Body (EMB), the National Elections Commission (NEC) is paramount in this regard. This is so very important because ensuring that essential elements such as the capacity of the Commission in terms of the leadership (i.e. coherence, efficiency, organizational and coordination effectiveness) have to be fully established. I

am not sure this will be considered a side issue in this vital conversation.

Comparatively, the scale of the 2014 special Senatorial Election cannot be in any way measured to that of the ensuing 2017 elections. Imagine the degree of anger and dissatisfaction that characterized the 2014 process which was just one election.

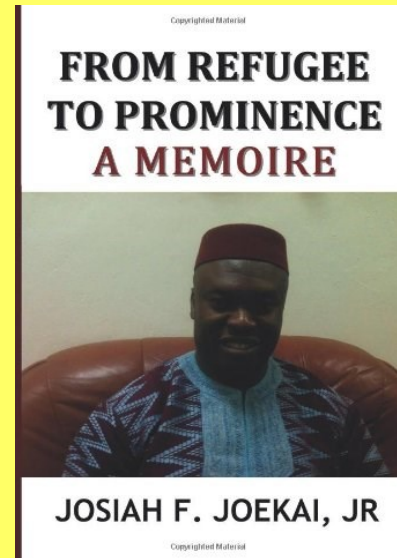
Unprecedentedly, cases or complaints arising from the election went as far as six months into hearing. It is no doubt that as crucial as 2017 is expected especially so one that will involve conducting a voter registration, electing a President and Vice President, members of the House of Representatives and a possible Referendum based on the action of the Legislature, timely decision to defer the referendum and critically assess the Commission is needed.

I have heard many pundits averred that Commissioners are not the ones who conduct elections. It is true that the technicians are the people on the frontlines but every action of theirs is predicated upon the decision of the Commissioners.

They make all of the policy decisions in the electioneering process. So, it is with leadership anywhere. If the right goals, objectives or policies are not made and timely too the wrong actions will be taken. Thus, the role of the Commissioners are fundamentally important in the business of electioneering. That is exactly why I have

persistently underscore the need for such assessment in the lead up to 2017.

May God bless us and safe the State!



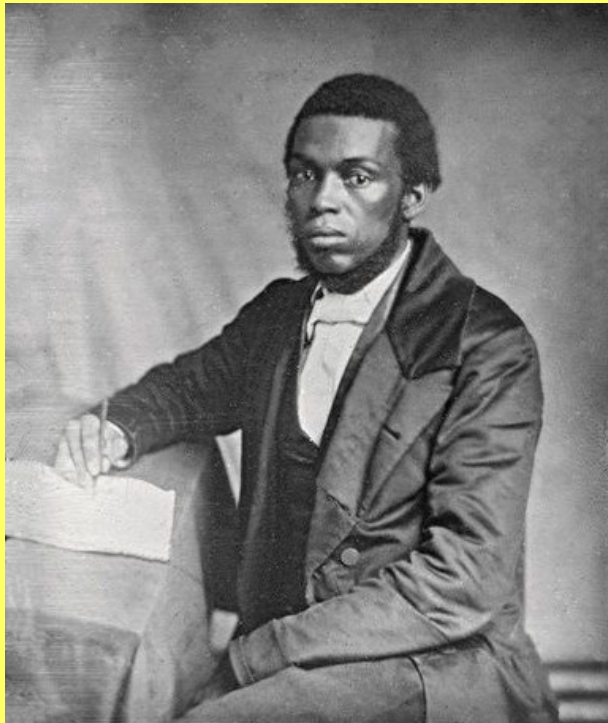
#### About the Author

*The Author is a candidate for Master's (MA) degree in Conflict Transformation from the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation of the University of Liberia. He earned Bachelor's (BA) degree in Political Science with emphasis on International Relations from the University of Liberia. He is a self-managed and results-oriented personality. The Author has more than 10 years of professional experience in the public sector in the areas of education, democracy and governance. He has authored three books and several published articles. The Author is a proud recipient of the ADLA/ALLIA 2015 Award in the United States of America for outstanding services.*

## Forgotten Heroes

### James S. Smith

(date of birth unknown - died May 16, 1883)



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**James Skivring Smith** (February 26, 1825-c.  
1892)

James was born on February 26, 1825 in Charleston, South Carolina. His parents, Carlos and Catharine Smith, had six other children (Mary, Ann, Catherine, Carlos Jr., Dorothea, Mary, and Margaret). They were not slaves at the time of their union and decided to migrate to Liberia (on January 16, 1883).

Within a year of their arrival, misfortune struck his family and both parents died it is believed of malaria. It is believed that the grandmother was left to raise the seven kids.

James availed of an opportunity that was rare back then; he traveled back to the US

to pursue a career in medicine. He had gained interest in medicine due to his work with a white colonial doctor (Dr. James W. Lugenbeel). In the US, he initially attended the University of Vermont College of Medicine. Later on he transferred to the Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. It was from this college that he received his medical degree in 1848. James S. Smith entered a space in history with this effort because he was the first African American to receive a medical degree. He then did the most unexpected thing after graduation. He returned to the newly independent Liberia and worked for the ACS as a doctor.

James' hard work and commitment soon paid off when he was appointed (by S. A. Benson) as the chief diplomat of Liberia in 1856, a post he held up to 1860. He served as Superintendent of Bassa thrice (1879-80; 83-84;88-92) . He then went on be elected by the people of Bassa as a Senator (1868 - 1870). He was one of the few Vice Presidents (back then) not to have served the Supreme Court or any other judicial positions. However, in 1869 he ran on the TWP's ticket along with Roye and the two became the first men to serve their posts on that party's ticket. It was short-lived as Roye was deposed soon thereafter and Smith rose to the Presidency after the Roye debacle.

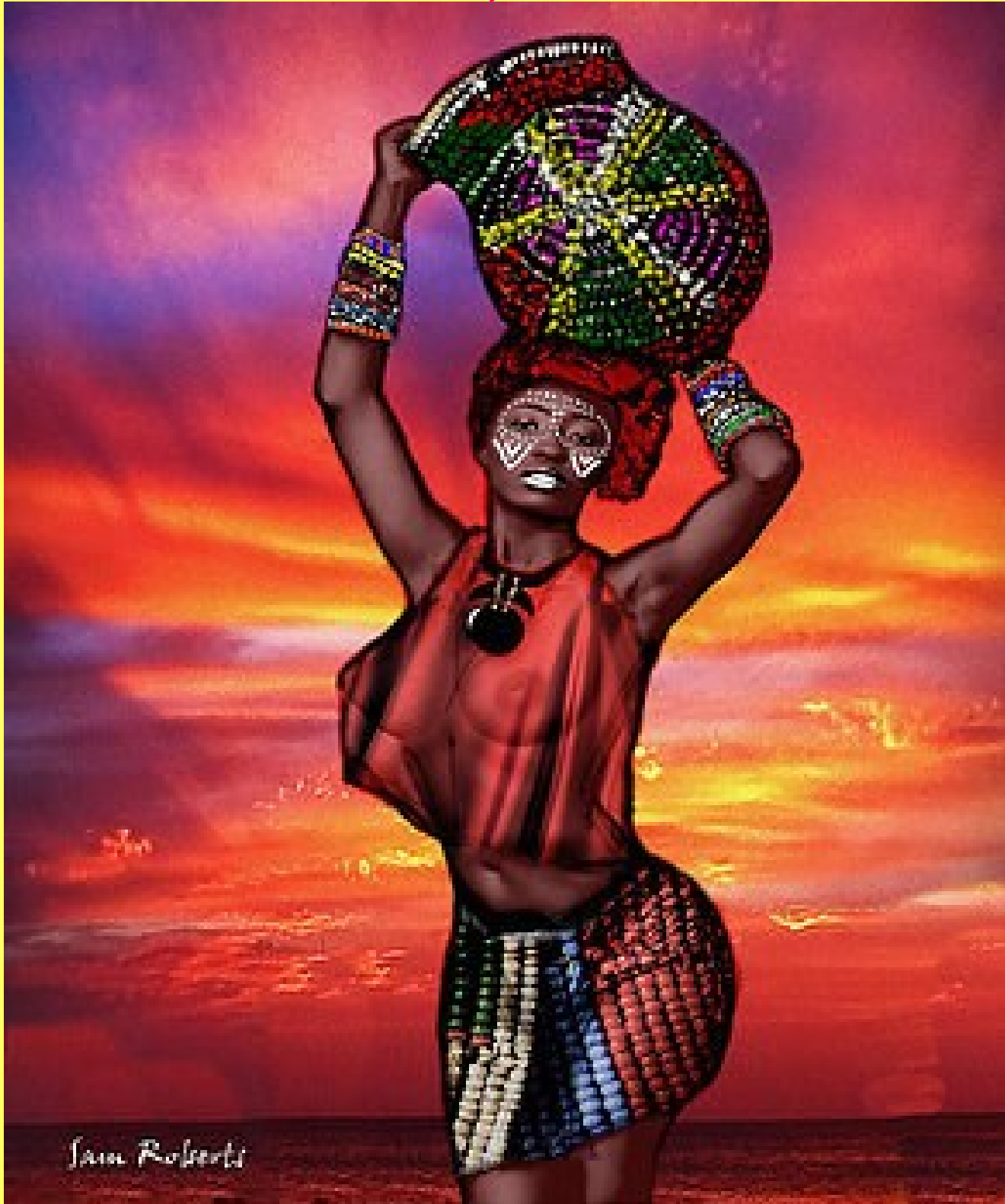
Like the Barclay's who produced two presidents, the Smiths produced two Vice Presidents. They share this rare occurrence with only one other family (the Rosses) in Liberian history.

His date of death is unknown but as of 1892, Dr. Smith was still living in Buchanan, Liberia.

D. Othniel Forte



*Artist of the Month*



**SAM ROBERTS** is an established Liberian artist. He's a digital designer, photographer and film maker. Sam is originally from Monrovia, Liberia. He currently resides in Jacksonville, Florida. He often paints with acrylic and oil on canvas as well as digitally using Adobe's Photoshop and Illustrator. My paintings mostly depict the proverbial beauty of Africa.

\*\*\*All photos are used with permission.









SAM ROBERTS









## *Author Interview 4* SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

HELGA MADLAND  
educator and author



*Thank you for taking this time with us, we appreciate it.*

*Tell us a little about your childhood, education, upbringing, etc.*

I was born in Upper Silesia, now in Poland. In 1945, my family became refugees and went to West Germany, later to Canada, and eventually (in 1954) to the United States. In Germany, I attended the Gymnasium so I knew some English, but not a lot.

After graduating from high school, I married young, had three children, was divorced, went to graduate school and earned a Ph.D. in German with a minor in Spanish. I landed at the University of Oklahoma in 1981 and retired in 2005.

*What are two things your fans don't know about you that you feel comfortable sharing?*

I like Martinis and like to sleep late in the morning.

*Are you a big picture or detail-oriented person?*

Essentially big picture, but being German frequently forces me to pay attention to details.

*How would your friends describe you?*

Restless, funny, and ambitious.

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

Since I have degrees in literature, I have read a lot of books. For this question I always go back to a perhaps banal, but for me important, experience. As a young girl, I read a book titled "Tapfere, kleine Helga," (Brave Little Helga). Little Helga was sent away to a boarding school in England. I was so impressed by her courage that she became my heroine.

*If you had to choose, which writer would you consider a mentor?*

I never had a mentor, exactly; when I wrote my dissertation, I turned to a well-written one by a colleague whenever I got stuck. As for writers, I admire Nadine Gordimer, Pearl S. Buck, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, among others.

*Do you recall how your interest in writing originated?*

When I was seven, I started to scribble and talk about wanting to be a war reporter who repudiated wars. A few years later in the Gymnasium, I wrote lengthy compositions

without paying attention to punctuation; my German teacher was horrified. This continued in high school and when I was a young married woman with three children. Later, when I went to graduate school and became a professor, I discovered that for the first time ever my (academic) writings were published. One of my professors commented that in academic writing, you know who your audience is—even if you have only three readers. After my retirement in 2005, I returned to my first love, writing fiction and (non-academic) fiction.

*Do you have a specific writing style?*

I don't know, one of my professors told me I write like all women---"frisch von der Leber" (fresh from the liver.) Must be a German idiom and maybe a bit of an insult.

*How do you develop your plots and characters?*

I think about it a lot before writing myself notes. If necessary, I do some research.

*Tell us about your protagonist(s)/antagonist(s)? Did you draw from real people?*

Minimally!

*What inspired you to write your first book?*

My first book was an adaptation of an eighteenth-century play written during the Storm and Stress period, my area of concentration. I was still department chair and desperately wanted to do

something that took my mind of all that. I finished it, "The Child Murderess," after I retired, published it, and translated and published it in German.

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

It is the same title used by the eighteenth-century author, Heinrich Wagner.

*How much of the book is realistic?*

Nothing, except perhaps some interactions between the contemporaneous writers Goethe and Lenz, material I gleaned from the history of German Literature; it is not in the original play.

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

Yes, in my third book, "Turtle Bay," a soft-boiled mystery and academic spoof, some characters seem to resemble people I know.

*What was the hardest part of writing this book?*



My reminiscences, "You're Not From Around Here, Are You?" was the hardest book to write, all of it, but most of all the part about World War II.

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

In my writing, I have no favorite chapters; in a way, all writing is work, but also fun.

*Would you change anything in your book(s)? What and why?*

I would write a little longer memoir and not stop in 1981, when I started teaching at the University of Oklahoma. It would contain amusing material.

*Is there anything you find particularly challenging in your writing?*

Sitting down and writing when I do not feel like it at all. There are so many other things to do.

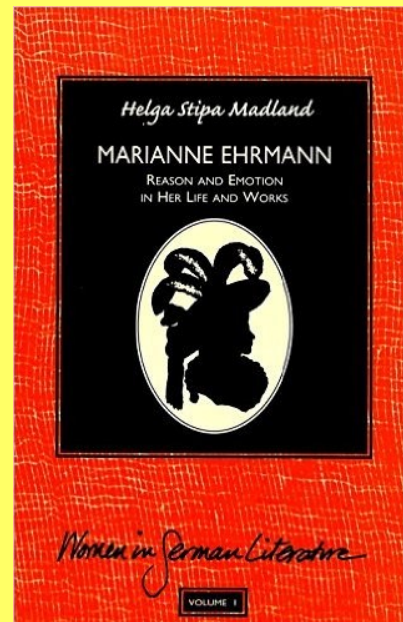
*Do you have to travel much (for research) concerning your book(s)?*

I have traveled a lot in my life; my book, "Dachshunds Can Fly," is a travelogue which I started to write while teaching in France, and my husband, the dachshund portrayed in the book, The Little Dog, and I did a bit of traveling around Europe. Thanks to the internet, when I need information for my writing nowadays, I rely on it.

*Who designed the covers?*

I selected all images, some photographs taken by Richard (husband) or me, others I

found on the internet. The actual covers were designed by the graphic designer at Aventine Press.



*What was the hardest part of writing your book? (What's the hardest part of writing in general?)*

Think I answered this one, check above.

*Do you have any advice for other writers?*

I used to give flippant advice but do not do that anymore. Reading Stephen King's book on writing might be a good idea.

*Do you consider writing as a career/hobby?*

It was part of my career before my retirement from the university: "Publish or Perish." I have just lately referred to myself as a "writer" when asked.

*What book(s) are you reading now?*

Am now reading volume 10 of the "Poldark" novels.

*Are there any new authors that have grasped your interest?*

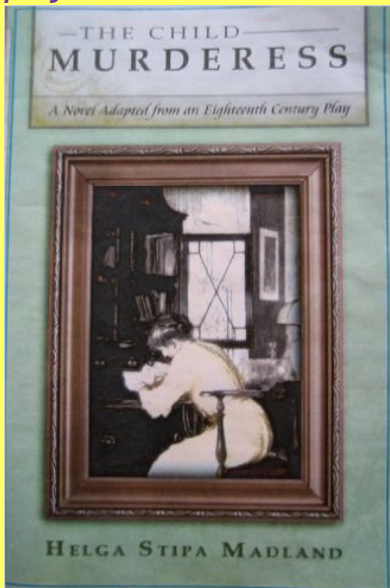


I have enjoyed the three “Wayward Pines” novels; also political thrillers by a variety of authors.

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

My news are personal; my husband Richard, who taught Ancient Greek at the University of Oklahoma, just retired, so we will be spending a lot of time at our individual computers.

*What are your current projects?*



In “Turtle Bay” set in Hawaii, I invented an amusing family, Detective Kahamala of the Honolulu Police Department, his twelve year old twin daughters, Myra and Maya, Aunt Beatrice and dachshund Questor. In the second volume, “The Kahamalas Take A Cruise,” the family will be traveling beyond the Arctic Circle to uncover some Nordic crimes.

*Can you share a little of your current work with us?*

Have just started, around fifteen pages, so probably not.

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

I hope my writing pleases you.

*Lastly*

*Have you read book(s) by (a) Liberian author(s)?*

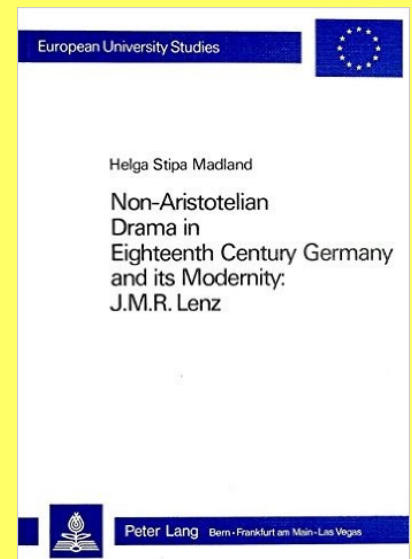
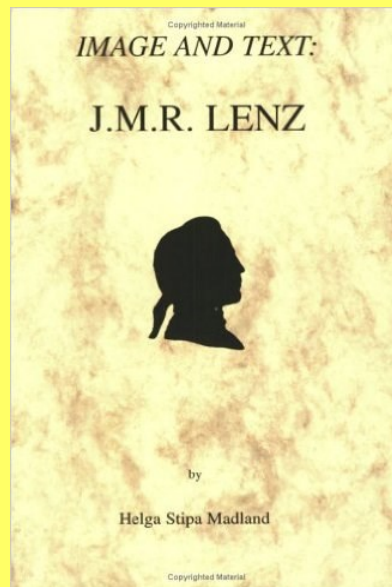
We are familiar with the American modernist poet Melvin B. Tolson’s “Libretto for the Republic of Liberia.” Tolson’s son, Melvin B. Tolson, Jr. was a Professor of French at the University of Oklahoma and a friend of ours.

*Have you read any book about Liberia in general?*

I have not.

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

I would, but have no idea what I would do.



*Helga Stipa Madland was born in Upper Silesia (now in Poland) in 1939; in 1945, at the end of World War II, the family fled to West Germany, later emigrated to Canada, and in 1954 moved to the United States. Madland was married after completing high school, had three children, later divorced and attended graduate school in Seattle, Washington. After completing her PhD in eighteenth-century German literature with a minor in Spanish, she began teaching at the University of Oklahoma in 1981. She is now retired and lives with her husband, Richard Beck, a dachshund, and three cats in Norman, Oklahoma. Her three children and six grandchildren live all over the world, including Alaska and England.*

*Madland has written three academic books and numerous articles on eighteenth-Century German literature. After her retirement, she returned to her first love, writing fiction—and sometimes non-fiction. Her last three books include a travelogue set in France, Greece and Germany, a soft-boiled mystery set in Hawaii, and her latest book, a memoir titled “You’re Not From Around Here, Are You?” She is presently working on a second mystery. All books can be found on Amazon*

## *Resident Poet*

### Belle Yalla

...you know the stories  
I can repeat one by one  
Now you're lonely  
Captured by thorns and shrubs  
Where are your buddies?  
Can you take the stand?

Belle Yalla...

Take this moment and free your soul  
You heard the screams  
The echoing sounds of rattans  
The kicks of boots  
The fainting noise of gunshots

You saw the bruises  
The air taxis come and go  
You were a cheerleader

Then, your name soared in space  
Many awe at your feigned prominence  
Your imagined majesty  
Standing on legs of bronze  
Living on a ranch

But you kept a lion's den  
You were a scavenger  
Your memory has stories to tell  
Why not write a book?

Belle Yalla..

You can't survive this  
Let's strike a deal  
Get your immunity  
Take the stand...



*Lekpele M. Nyamalon*

### Citizen ID Card

I was told to get an identity  
Wrapped in a plastic sheet  
With my name and County  
I was smiling when looking at the cameras  
And washed the lights beam and flash  
I had an ID card

A proud citizen of my Country  
I remember the moment  
Then the year came  
It was 1990  
My identity was a poison  
I was hunted like chickens  
By gangs hungry for my blood  
I ran in swamps and slept with frogs  
My ID card was a nightmare

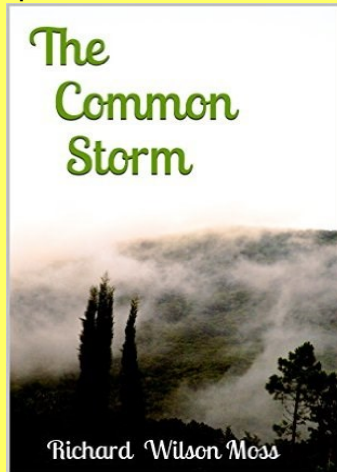
I was chased like flies pursuing a corpse  
Why?  
Why did I smile at that camera that took  
my face?  
I was putting my face on death roll for a  
mobster  
Citizen ID card...  
I will never smile at you again.

## Poetry Section

Richard Wilson Moss

### When Young

When young, dreaming at  
my desk,  
I wanted to be the great  
poet.  
Now I dream of tomorrows  
Trip to the store.



### The Requiem

I cannot give to you  
The gift of yourself  
I lie helpless in the sallow  
arms  
Of my young, Indonesian  
mother  
Poisoned by the mercury  
her father  
Used in processing grains of  
gold  
My head is bloated, my  
limbs useless  
I cannot chew my food, she  
chews for me  
I would love her even if she  
could not.

To give to you sanction  
For all you are, for all you  
do  
I cannot.

My mother turns me over  
When I cry for her to do so

In my dreams I sing of her  
And of my death  
I am your requiem  
I want you to do all things  
Kind or unkind, selfish or  
brave  
Whatever it is in you I stir  
I ask you to live for a  
moment  
Like I do  
Lie in the arms of your  
mother  
Dream of her.

### No Title

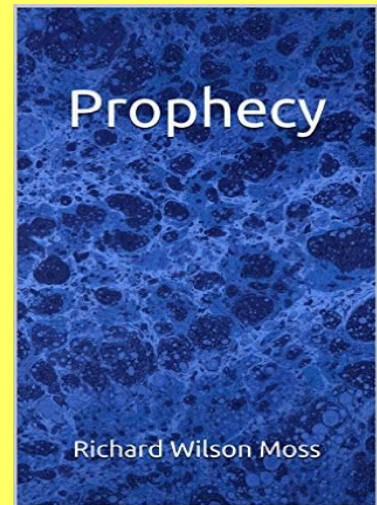
I walk princely on clean,  
golden streets  
But I know I am their  
sewers.

### House Of Confession

Inside are stars, the ache  
of light  
Clouds and rain, eternal  
night  
The day, the dogma of its  
sun  
Inside are my dishes, the  
breaking of one  
The neighbors, the  
strangers, last night's  
whore  
My catholics, my queens,  
the burn on my hands  
From the string of my kite.  
Outside, the sutures, the  
seams  
After the surgery to keep  
all of this  
As if it were more  
Than storage of dreams  
Or errant waves chasing  
the shore  
As if they belonged  
In this house of confession

Where my bones are  
infested beams  
The thorax exhausted  
walls collapsing  
Upon a rotten floor.

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### Genesis

#### Part One

As calm, dark oceans  
capture stars  
Deep waves roll toward  
sandbars  
Senseless, this  
unformulated rhythm  
Senseless this dash to a  
destiny  
Only shallow waves know.  
Known only to the one on  
the shore  
Of the atoll  
A palm tree, unsettled  
sand  
Coconuts rotten but the  
sand still sweet  
With the meat of old bones  
The marrow that once  
made blood  
Makes mud between the  
toes  
Of the only one.



He that is not me  
I am the last sensible tree  
Mostly devoid of fruit, a  
bitter wood  
No carpenter would cut.  
I stand over the only one  
Offering shade, the sweat  
of old bark  
Dripping upon the back  
bent over digging clams.  
In the rest of world where  
stagnant seas  
Have forgotten the gift of  
a raindrop.



There is no one  
Not mother, father,  
daughter, son  
The cause was not atomic  
No atom intervenes  
The end arrived in the  
quiet, uneasy pause  
After all the collisions of  
extremes  
As one clap may lead to  
spontaneous applause  
And then awkward silence,  
a cough perhaps.

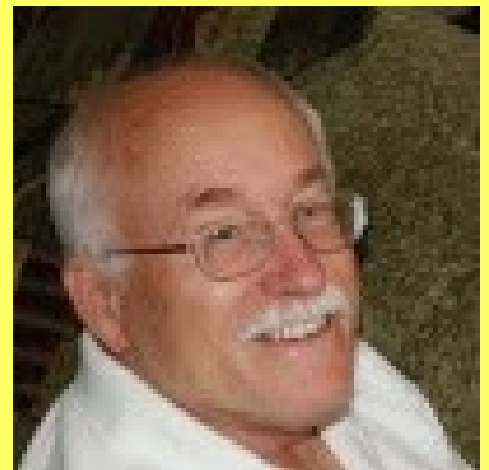
Now affecting the world no  
one  
But one man, a moon, a  
sun.

This only one, Indigo  
Arising from the  
consequence  
Of ancient molten ash  
melting snow  
He is running water  
Evolved from the quiet,  
still pool of a man  
He naps beneath the last  
sensible tree  
He that is not me  
The unleashed immensity  
During the last moment of  
a red giant.  
The shapeless measure of  
event  
Sunrise, noon, sunset, the  
evening, the night  
Describes him, but holds  
him  
As a pen always pregnant  
with a profound word  
waits  
to write.

Housing him beneath the  
tree  
That is elm, cedar, oak,  
palm, all trees now and  
then  
According to the seedlings  
of extinct men  
This house is mansion and  
hut  
Endless rooms under every  
sun  
According to the  
arrangement of one  
As a dream cannot inhabit  
a flat screen  
So Indigo occupies none.

I am the last sensible tree  
As termites are tasting  
parts of me  
My coconuts, my oranges,  
apples, pears, all fruit now  
and then  
Feast on their own meat  
As the sun digests itself  
As the moon petrifies  
As the earth slows down  
From chasing the dark side  
of itself  
I turn toward the sanctity  
of all rot  
And in this turning, in this  
fire-less burning  
Of all the leaves of all the  
trees I am and am not  
I see them coming.

END OF PART ONE



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

©Richard Moss

## Jack Kolkmeier



*At the edge of the forest at the border of Liberia and Guinea 1970*

### The Heart of Greenness

when you come upon the  
rainforest for the first time  
you are surprised to see and  
smell and hear  
this stalking green edifice with  
verdant walls of armor  
and you quickly realize that there  
is no easy way in  
and no easy way out  
you are standing at a gate of  
unyielding earthly infinity  
about to enter a vital organ of  
our very existence

it would seem that because of all  
the inner jungles  
entangling the soul and life of  
our presence  
a gateway to another option  
might provide a way to expunge  
these hindrances in favor of a  
new allegiance to searching  
for meaning and acceptance in  
the present

even though you stand with fear  
the path into the primordial  
unknown is not resistible  
you enter the cathedral of density  
you are there  
you are in it  
you are now behind the green  
door

your first reaction is one of  
sensory astonishment  
as you realize you are in  
overwhelming realm of another  
time

dominated by acrid smells and  
bird cries  
searing colors and hues melting  
all around you  
and the imminent sound and  
feeling of wet

it is a raucous quiet at this time  
in the early afternoon  
a foreboding of serenity  
in which the oneness of the  
cacophony is a harbinger  
of sudden change  
because that's the way of the  
jungle  
in the forest of rain

and because it rains all the time  
a constant barrage of moisture  
from drops to downfalls  
to torrents  
it is a hot house under a damp  
canopy  
where humidity engenders the  
urges of fertility and growth  
and growth reigns from here to  
eternity  
from the raw to the now  
from the spines of even the  
spineless  
to the vines that link the murk  
to the heavens and the streams of  
light that sprinkle through  
and so you have a choice  
that drips from your moment of  
hesitation  
between coming and going  
between action and passivity  
to stay or to go

being aware that you are the  
watched as well as the watcher  
by a multitude of eyes and ears  
to determine if you are a misfit  
denizen  
or lost on a pathway  
of adventure and avarice  
for the riches that do indeed lurk  
here everywhere  
in the wood in the muck in the  
leaves and in the skins  
in the steaming mud that sucks at  
your feet

in this infernal womb you are  
immediately wrapped  
in a psychedelic awareness that  
nothing makes any difference  
here  
it is a game of addition and  
subtraction  
you eat sometimes and other  
times you may be eaten

there are moments of slither and  
growl  
feelings of bite and torment  
you howl  
you dither at the riverside  
just watching splash among the  
rocks  
and you wonder how you  
became an extension  
into this chimera of herbs and  
chemistry

the stuff that hangs  
and the plants that ooze  
are sometimes the cause of the  
constant cries of grief and  
capture  
the swish of tails running away  
to hide  
from the claws of evolution  
the smirking of the prey over  
their recent catch

these are the other sons and  
daughters of another mother time  
and some distant father  
connection  
the greenways of another  
ancestral voice

this is not urbanity for sure  
this is not rural by any stretch

this is the deep forest  
the heart of it all  
as night falls  
at the forest door

### Santa Fe

Jack once lived in Liberia.  
He is a regular contributor





### Kinsmen

Unborn, they finish your corn  
Born, they break your horn  
Torn, they become your thorn  
Worn, they have you sworn  
Morn, they make you mourn  
Turn, they force you return  
Kinsmen; they make and mar.

Timid, they make you stupid  
Solid, they make you liquid  
Cupid, they force you bid  
Vivid, they have you hid  
Kid, of you, they get rid  
Grid; they label you all they did  
Kinsmen; they make and mar.

Bred, they dye you in red  
Sacred, they sow instant hatred  
Fed, they ruin the day you wed  
Stranded, they dismantle your shed  
Led, they scatter your bed  
Crooked, they are and wicked  
Kinsmen, they make and mar.

Blunt, your head they hunt  
Font, they have you burnt  
Tall, they divert your call  
Hall, they partition your wall  
Real, they make you cereal  
Deal, they break your seal  
Kinsmen, they make and mar.

Beautiful, they make you fearful  
Thoughtful, they make you dreadful  
Tolerant, they keep you uncomfortable  
Vigilant, they turn it regrettable  
Godly, they make you unholy  
Lively, they declare you unruly  
Kinsmen, they make and mar.

Fair, they shave your hair  
Pair, they blow your stair  
Grateful, they make you cold  
Old, they sell your gold  
Careful, they make you unjoyful  
Kinsmen, they make and mar.  
Brave, they turn you a slave

**Ngozi Olivia Osuoha**  
is an aspiring Nigerian poet. She loves  
writing, sports and music.  
Course studied: Estate Management

### Our Brave Soldiers Do Not Die

Our brave soldiers do not die  
They live through us, who cry  
For them, and pray for them  
We're ready to go out on a limb  
To help our brothers and sisters  
Who fight for freedom and liberty  
Our brave compatriots fight against tyranny  
Bigotry, and the bad ones, who stand on the  
corners

To commit crimes, and harass law-abiding  
individuals  
Our brave comrades will live forever in our  
hearts and souls  
For their sacrifices, for giving up everything and  
dying

For us, in order to enjoy our way of life and  
standard of living  
Our veterans, our valiant soldiers will live  
through us forever  
Let's pray for them and ring the bells of  
freedom in their honor.

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### Hebert Logerie

is the author of several collections of poems.

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

*I studied briefly at Laval University, Quebec,  
Canada.I am a Haitian-American.  
I started writing at a very early age. My poems  
are in French, English, and Creole; I must  
confess that most of my beautiful and romantic  
poems are in my books.*

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

Aken Wariebi

What is God Doing?



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

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

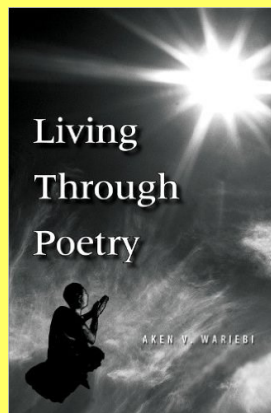
Above Sea Level

We are all floating  
Sailing on a journey  
Dancing on a sea  
Learning some garbage  
Grasping up the same

We are all cruising  
Laughing as we go  
Slip sliding as we  
Journey on the dance floor

Above sea level to the patient and the poor  
The rich goes often traveling  
And they think we don't know  
Above sea level is where we're bound to be

Squeezing and bowing at each other's feet  
Above sea level to keep from drowning  
We survive our goings  
Even when it is not so neat  
Yet that is where we have to be meek.



I do everything that he wants me to do  
Attend church services and pray as much as I  
should  
I follow his commandments from the pattern he  
left  
Yet I feel there is a lot more to pursue in this  
vest

I have my own dreams but often take the wrong  
train  
To accomplish my goals, I go very deep in the  
seams  
What I do question is how I have been blessed  
Knowing not what to say because I usually make  
a mess

I share other's sorrow and never falter nor fail  
Hoping to walk down the alter one day  
I wonder about things and as a Christian ask for  
mercy  
Trying not to get involve and be a prey in any  
hearsay

What am I doing? I ask myself each day  
Surviving through difficult times on this long  
trail  
My faith never fails as I try not to get off the  
right course  
Doing all the things that he wants most

What am I doing? I ask myself  
Rolling with the hills and passing by the tests  
What is God doing for all the rest?  
He is preparing for my soul to be one of the  
very best

When I ask this question I kid myself  
Because he sees ahead with every glance  
He knows what he is doing and I do not question  
the lenses  
For I know his spirit always sees, what the best  
thing is, on the benches

### Our Artificial Africa

When the birds were heard rapping  
Stead of singing and wings flapping  
It was obvious some things had gone  
wrong  
And nature wouldn't have them to its  
belong

When Coca Cola replaced coconut  
Our women dress fine, somewhat  
Men feel more presentable in suit and tie  
Take every drink with a meat in pie  
Africa had lost its touch  
And now we talk too much

When I stopped walking the path  
To Papa Akrofi's house for my math  
Mum no longer visited her friends  
Phone calls... and even that it depends  
If you go to school with food in leaf  
You are teased. On lucky days its brief  
Now that we are manufacturing another  
Africa

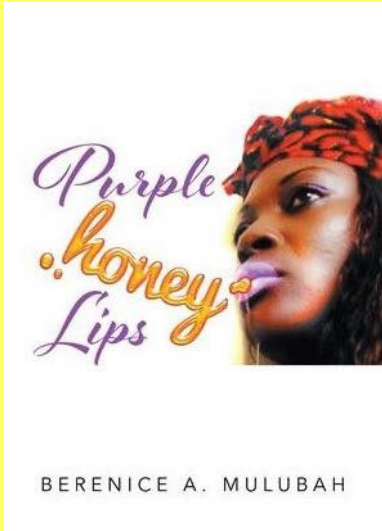
To look more beautiful than America  
Let us keep quiet to the western sufferings  
When our every problem is under political  
coverings  
And Mothers birth no children but rather  
off springs  
When it is more profitable to invest in  
soccer  
Than in education and feeding of some  
Ugandans  
We can only be glad in our tears  
When we are done building in years  
Our Artificial Africa....

### *Oppong Clifford Benjamin*

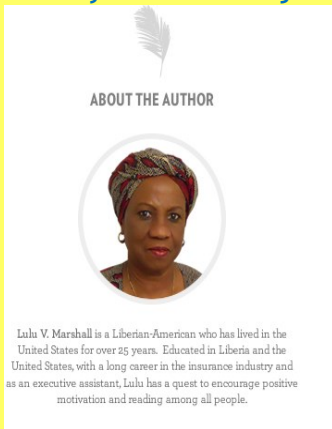
Oppong is a Civil Engineer @ Urban Roads Department of LEKMA, Ghana. He is a WRR award winning Poet as well as a member of the following groups. He is the President of Builders of the African Dream - Writers Code - Editor. African Youth Movement's Mahujaa Magazine - Asst. Editor.



New Releases



**Purple Honey Lips** is an acclaimed exploration of beautiful words into the poet's incredible imagination, causing one to think and reflect on life, our place in the world, and a variety of other subjects.



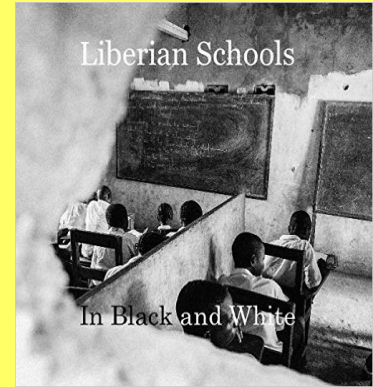
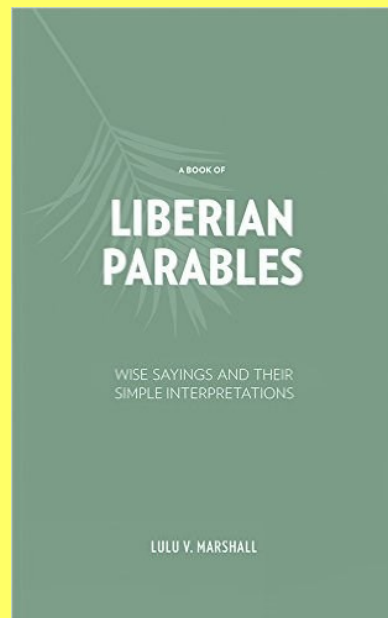
**Liberian Parables**

*A Book of Liberian Parables: Wise Sayings and Their Simple Interpretations* presents a beautiful compilation of brief parables and wise sayings gleaned from the oral culture of Liberians. Using simple stories about life in everyday circumstances, each parable illustrates a wise moral for guiding one's life. In a few spots, lists of short aphorisms present expressions that offer insights for walking with one's

neighbors and family along peaceful pathways. One maxim, for instance, observes, "We can all sing together, but we can't all talk together," meaning, "Talk one at a time to understand each other."

In gathering, arranging, and sharing these cultural treasures, Lulu V. Marshall has crafted a work that invites readers of all ages to enjoy these cultural treasures either alone or by sharing with others. Because the collection avoids any strong or foul language, the readings are good for young and old alike.

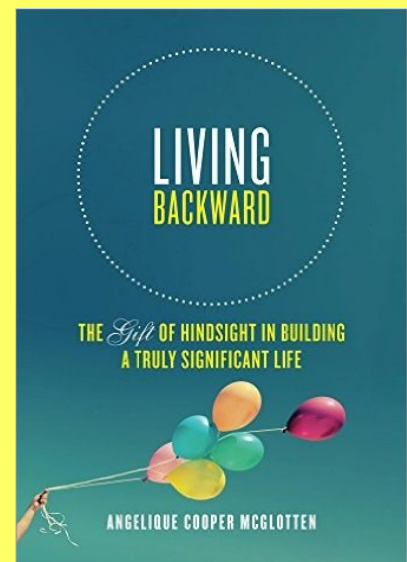
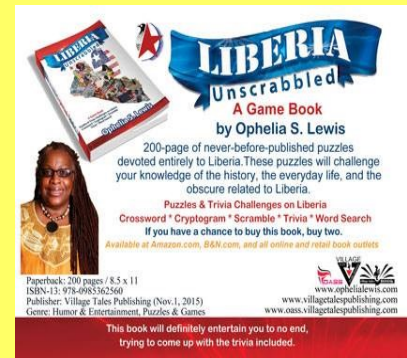
If you enjoy learning about other locales by absorbing what people who live in those cultures find most memorable and desire to tell others or if you seek wise guidance for your life, then *A Book of Liberian Parables* will meet your needs with wit, whimsy, and wisdom.



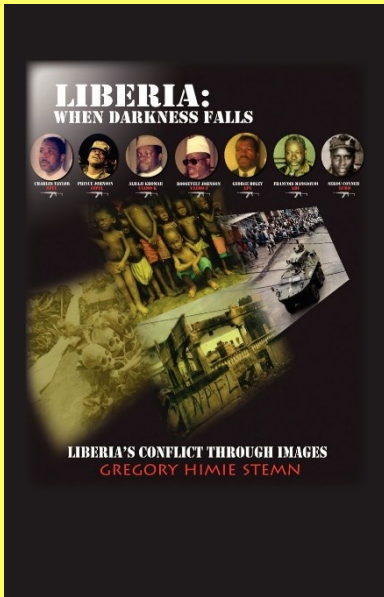
**Liberian Schools in Black and White**

This is a book of black and white images of life in Liberian public school classrooms I made in January, 2014, just months before the devastating Ebola epidemic of 2014-15 forced the closing of the nation's schools.

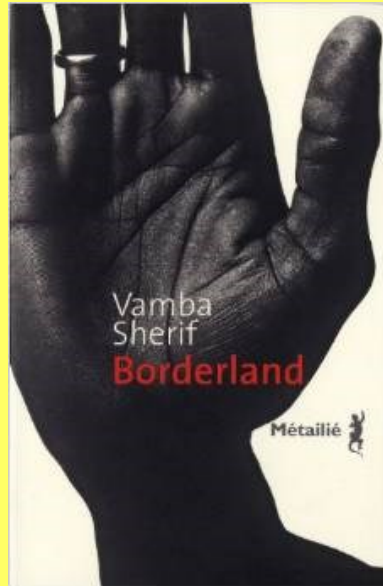
**Liberia Unscrabbled**



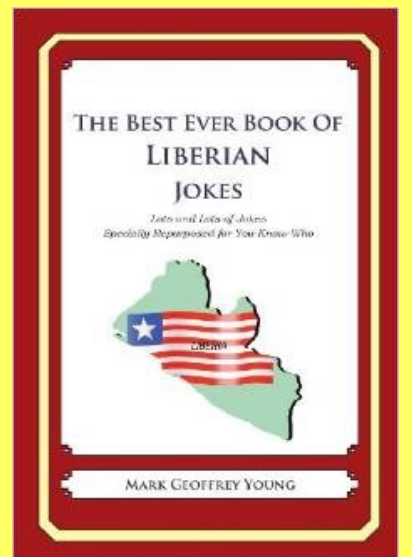
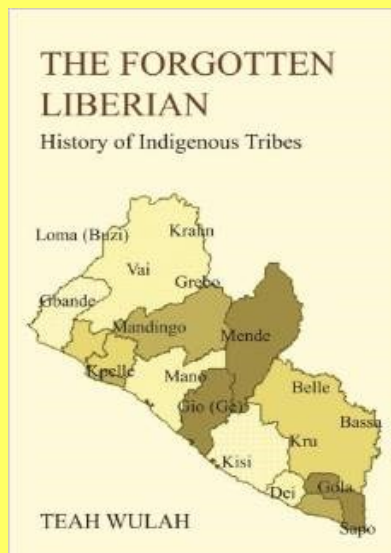
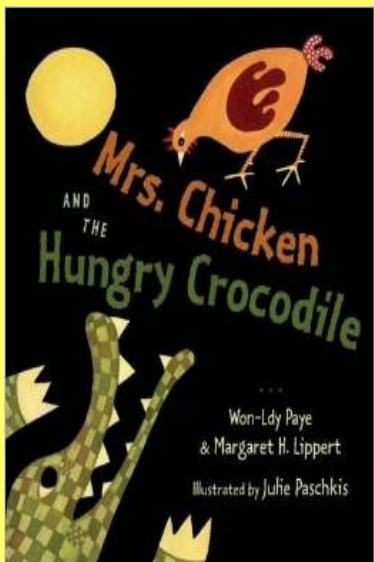
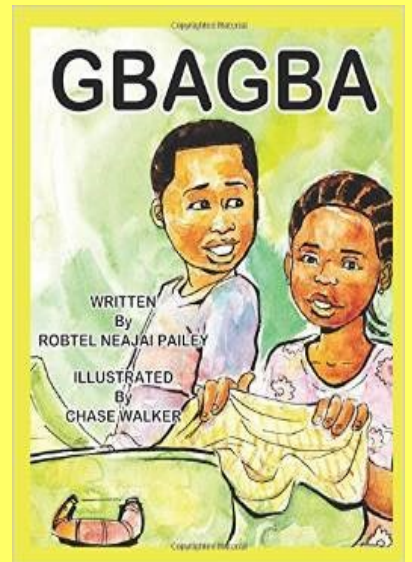
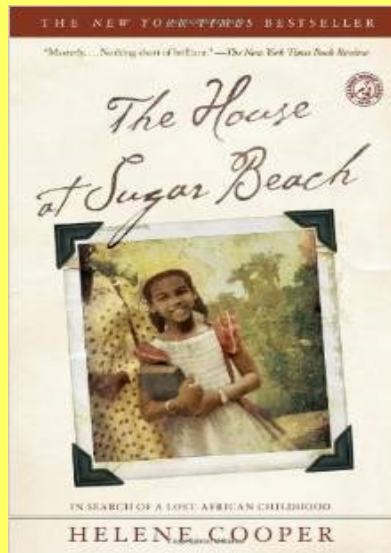
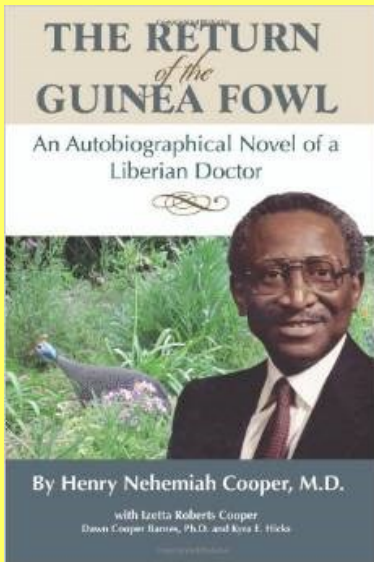
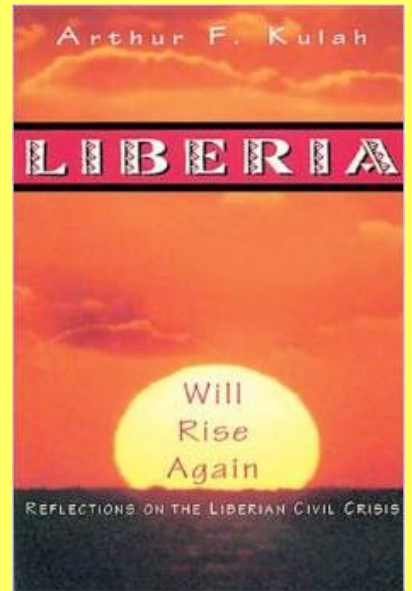
Recommended Reads



Recommended Reads



Recommended Reads





Around town



Local Street Sinkor, Monrovia



Traditional Dancers

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



Skyline- Relaxation Time

White sand beach adorned with fully grown cocoa nut trees



Colorful Waterside, Preseason Rush



Church Careysburg, City.



Selling 'Smor-smor' Things

This is how the ordinary people survive.



School Children Playing at lunch



Local Arts and Craft Seller

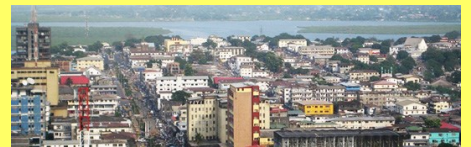


Real Life Hustle Rounds



Car Loaders and Taxi

Fully Loaded Taxi. Carrying both people and passengers. This is part of the average hustle



Arial View of Monrovia City



Saturday Dish, Dry Rice & Fried Fish



Local Rubber Farmer



Beach on the out sketch

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

Photo Credits: Darby Cecil Emery Dennis



**MEET OUR TEAM**



**PATRICK BURROWES**  
SENIOR REVIEWER/CONTRIBUTOR



**HARRIET AGYEMANG DUAH**  
STAFF REVIEWER CHILDREN'S BOOK



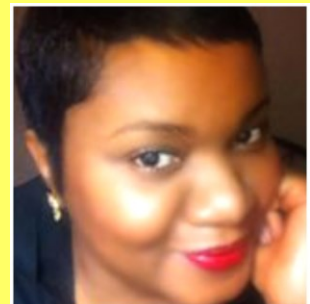
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IT/LAYOUT DESIGNER



**HENRIQUE HOPKINS**  
SEGMENT HOST/REVIEWER



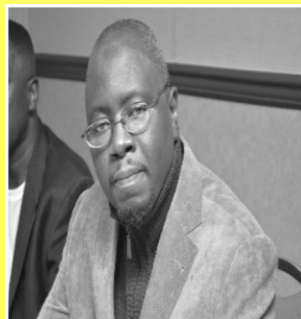
**JOSIAH JOEKAI JR.**  
CONTRIBUTOR



**KULUBA MUCURLOR**  
SEGMENT HOST



**MARTIN N. K. KOLLIE**  
CONTRIBUTOR



**NVASEKIE KONNEH**  
CONTRIBUTOR



**LEKPELE M. NYAMALON**  
RESIDENT POET



**JOSEPHINE BARNES**  
ART CONTRIBUTOR

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- BERENICE MULUBAH
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- VAMBA SHERIF
- PRESTON M. TULAY
- MASNOH WILSON



**BRIMA WOLOBAH**  
ART CONTRIBUTOR



**VAMBA SHERIF**  
Editor - Short stories

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

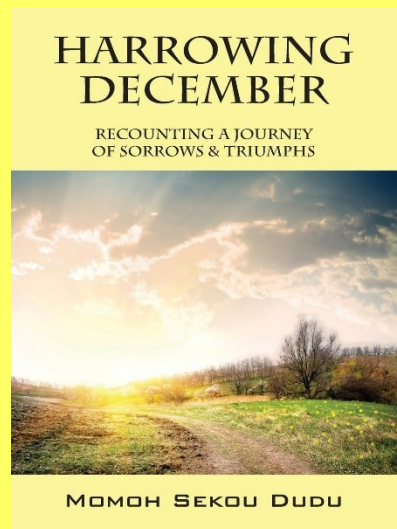


**MOMOH DUDUU**  
Editor- Reviews

Is an educator and author. For the last decade, he has been an instructor at various Colleges and Universities in the Minneapolis metro area in the state of Minnesota, U.S.A. At present, he is the Chair of the Department of Business and Accounting at the Brooklyn Center Campus of the Minnesota School of Business at Globe University.

His works include the memoir 'Harrowing December: Recounting a Journey of Sorrows and Triumphs' and 'Musings of a Patriot: A Collection of Essays on Liberia' a compilation of his commentaries about governance in his native country.

At the moment, he is at work on his maiden novel tentatively titled 'Forgotten Legacy.'



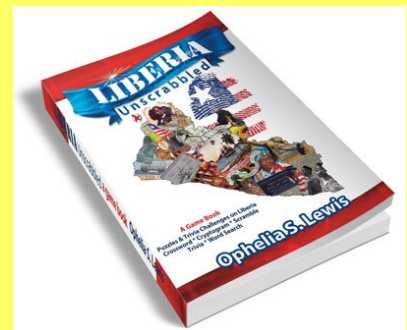
Find out more [here](#).



**OPHELIA LEWIS**  
Consultant

The founder of Village Tales Publishing and self-published author of more than ten books, Lewis is determined to make Village Tales Publishing a recognized name in the literary industry. She has written two novels, three children's books, a book of poetry, a book of essay and two collections of short stories, with the latest being *Montserrat Stories*.

As a publisher-project manager, she guards other authors in getting their work from manuscript to print, using the self-publishing platform. Self-publishing can be complicated, a process that unfolds over a few months or even years. Using a project management approach gives a better understanding of the format process and steps needed it take to get an aspiring writer's book published.



Find out more [here](#)

**Editor**

D. Othniel Forte

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

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

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



PHOTO BY: CHITO REYES

We remain grateful to contributors; keep creating the great works, it will come full circle. But most importantly, we thank those of you that continue to support us by reading, purchasing, and distributing our magazine. We are most appreciative of this and hope to keep you educated, informed and entertained.

Promoting  
Liberian

Creativity  
& Culture

We are  
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Submissions

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# Liberian Literary Magazine

# KWEE

Nov Issue

#1115

Helga  
Madland

Book  
Excerpts

Poetry Series  
Liberian Proverbs  
Short Stories  
Forgotten Heroes



Darlington Ibe  
Ifeanyi