

Liberian Literary Magazine

KWEE

Nov Issue

Iss. #1228

Happy
New
Year

Book
Reviews

JANETTA
KONAH

Author of
the month

Short
Stories

West African
Poet

LIBERIAN
CLASSICS

RIGHT BEHIND
Liberian
Proverbs

Poetry Series

Maya Angelo
Thomas Hardy
Emily Dickinson
Pablo Neru
Janetta Konah
Jack Kolkmeier
Mhamed Sy
S. K. Dworkoo
Hilal Karahan
Kerry Kennedy

Poetry Series

Gwendolyn Brooks
Langston Hughes
Robert Frost
Philip Larkin
John Eliot
RuNette Ebo
Cher Antoinette
Richard Moss
Lovette Tucker
Wilton Sankawulo

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 would still 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 we deem important enough. The catch theme here is addressing the tough issues

#KolloquaTakeOver

Being true to our Liberian origin, the contributors to this segment make use of something uniquely Liberia to communicate their messages. Kolokwa [not Liberian English] is one language every Liberian speaks.

Risqué Speak

Henrique hosts this segment. He explores 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.

Liberian Classics

Liberian Classics, as indicated by the name, is a section to show national creativity. We display works done by Liberian masters in this segment.

Authors of the Month Profile

This is one of our oldest segments. In fact, we started with displaying 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; the characters and how they all 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.

Diaspora Poet

Althea Romeo Mark hosts this segment. The Antiguan poet needs no introduction. Her pieces need none either. Her wisdom of her travels are hard to miss in her writings.

Unscripted

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

'Twas Briggin'

Richard Moss goes about his randomness with purpose in his poetry corner, *'Twas Briggin'*. He can assume the mind or body of any of his million personifications, ideas or characters or just be himself and write good poetry. He does this magic with words as only he does.

According to Eliot/Extra

John Eliot is a Welsh-*ish*, Engl-*ish*, Brit-*ish* guy who tells us all these 'grandpa' beautiful Jewish stories. He even has a book called 'Ssh. What can I say; he is an *ish* kinda bloke! ☺ But, don't let that fool you; he has a genuine voice that knows his way with the pen? ☺ Now I am in an *ish* kind of trouble. ☺

Finding Meaning in Everyday Living

Y'all know that one educator that insisted on using the right grammar and speaking better than the "Y'all" I just used? ☺ **Janice Almond** embodies that and more... Her segment is loaded with motivation for the weak, weary and positive dose we all need to hit the road.

Aken-bai's

Hmm, this here is my 'partner', the resident 'love' expert. Yeah I know, you don't want me saying it but those love poems you have been weaving, I have used a few, lol. There you see, I've confessed. Guess what, they worked the magic. ☺ host, **Aken**

Gifts of the Masters

Our masters left us a treasure trove. Now we revisit and feast- that's the idea of this segment.

Poetry Section

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

We have new poets still finding their voices placed alongside much more experienced poets who

have long ago established themselves and found their voice. They in a way mentor the newer ones and boost their confidence.

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 show-case 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!

Yeah, we know, but we wish to keep the magazine closely aligned to its conception- *a literary mag*. You will not lose your segments they will only be shifted. The blog is also attached to the new website so you don't have to go anywhere else to access it. It is the last page of the site- [KWEE](#).

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

Editor's Desk

The Year Ahead



Last year, 2018, was an amazing year in many regards. However, 2019 has given a whole lot more in as many, if not more, ways than the previous.

This is our new issue and I am excited for many reasons. We have an improved line up, some segments have changed and others shifted, whilst yet others are, well, NEW.

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

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

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

It had to happen right?

Over the year, we received repeated requests for themes. Some wanted to know our themes so they could prepare the right pieces for submission, others I guess are just plan freaks, what can I say.

This however, slightly conflicts with our policy of not interfering with the creative process. We believe creativity should be allowed to run wild, but not necessarily unguided. We have tried not to impose on our segment hosts what to or not to write.

I guess we found ourselves in a fix- to give the readers more of what they want and to leave our contributors to create contents freely. Thus, we found a middle ground.

We will try list our yearly themes loosely and encourage our contributors to avail of them.

However, what fun is there if everyone did the same thing? We love and prize difference, diversity. That, we believe has made us who we are today.

On the one hand, we will endeavor to have at least half of our contents themed whilst leaving the rest up for grabs. This way, we will satisfy both ends of our readership and remain true to our convictions.

We have actually been doing this. The main difference now is that we will make a conscious effort to balance

Therefore, in **January** we bring you, *New Beginnings*.

February is all about our famous *BLACK ISSUE*, which commemorates *Black History Month*. Don't worry love freaks, you'd still get your *Val's* treats.

March is about celebration to women in our *WOMEN ISSUE*

April-We go huge with our *National Poetry Month*. An issue full of poetry.

May-We take time to honor and celebrate

mothers- the special breed that carried and or molded us. It's the *MOTHER'S Issue*.

June-We do the same for the men who are not deadbeats, *DADDY's Issue*.

July-We pay tribute to nationhood and honor our founders in the *INDEPENDENCE Issue*.

August-We continue the homage with our *FLAG Day Issue*.

September

Anything goes, yeah!

October

We get ready to wind the year down, *Nobel Issue*.

November

We are thankful for things, *THANKSGIVING ISSUE*. We also do NaWriMo. There is no killing of turkeys, absolutely none. ☺

December

The Holidays Issue comes your way.

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

If there is one message, you want to take from here, let it be this-prepare for a roller coaster this 2017.

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

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

Read! Read! Read!

KWEE Team

Liberian Classic



GUANYA PAU: A Story of an African Princess I

By: JOSEPH J. WALTERS

Guanya Pau holds a special place in Liberian and African literature. It is the first full length novel published by an African.

RECAP From PART V

KAI KUNDU'S VISIT

The ground beneath them literally trembled, the lofty beech and mango tossed to and fro, the pointed tops of the bugbugs were knocked off; a violent whirlwind swept the mountain, the air became charged with a mal-odor almost stifling, and surcharged with a fume as if from the crater of some volcano. Trees and shrubs were pulled up and hurled high into the air; the whole forest seemed in violent agitation; and oh, what must be the fate of the bugbug ! — certainly it will not stand against the onrushing storm when such hardy trees were yielding.

Another prolonged bellow, and a monstrous elephant, transfixed with a spear, tore out of the thicket with

marvelous swiftness, followed by some twenty more than half-naked Veys, in full pursuit.

He made straight for the bugbug, as if to hide from his pursuers. But no such intention had crossed his brain.

The elephant is no coward. His aim was to get possession of this vantage ground where he could make a bold fight.

When in front of this, he halted.

The men also halted. Each waited for the other to make the initiative attack.

Finally, a youth of about nineteen years, with more daring than common-sense, advanced nearer, and threw his dart.

The elephant turned around, lifted his snout in the air, and the imprudent young brave went up in the air, and came down crashing against the unlucky bugbug.

The elephant in his turn accidentally struck the mound, crushing in part of a side, making a hole large enough to expose the unfortunate girls.

But this he did not do purposely; he had nothing against the maidens, and probably would have stopped and apologized, had his tormentors permitted him.

With a surprising manoeuvre, he turned about-face, going due north, carrying the eager huntsmen with him.

Then the winds hushed, the tempest subsided, the trees assumed their normal posture, terra firma became steady, the atmosphere received back her redolent and healthful elements.

Peace and order was everywhere restored, and the Borneys brought back to their right minds safe and unharmed.

.

Chapter VI.

PRINCE MARANNAH.

WHEN travel again was safe, the Borneys crept out of their hiding place, and continued their journey. At twilight of that day they came to a large rice farm. The people had ceased working for the day, and had gone to the village, at the farther end of the farm. The crackling notes of dumboy, and the sweet odor of palaver-sauce and palm butter (fine African dishes), reminded them of the good things they had left behind.

After it had grown dark, and they had disfigured their faces beyond recognition, they came into the village, and mingled with the crowd that had assembled before the king's house. The presence of Zobah with the particular cymbals, songs and dance, together with the peculiar attire of the participants, the disfigured and powdered faces, the manipulation of hair, so that it or its substitute stood perpendicular on the head a foot high, beads tastefully arranged around the neck and waist, and many other nameless appendages which baffle masculine vocabulary to find names for — these indicated that the celebration was that of a wedding.

The girls recoiled at the thought of another innocent damsel decoyed into the trapper's meshes. They were, therefore, anxious to learn something about the couple, for their breasts were heaving convulsively because of the injustice heaped upon their sex. They also startled at the idea of the

women around manifesting such great enthusiasm over the same. It was true, as Guanya Pau

had said, that they were both ignorant and blind. •

Accordingly, when the chorus had sung, or rather had halloosed themselves hoarse, the door of the king's house was opened, revealing a large room, on whose hard dirt floor-mats of matchless whiteness were spread, on which were massive bowls of food. After dispatching the palatable dishes, then came the climax. The king, with his own hand, opened case after case of Holland gin until many were intoxicated. Would that I were allowed here to tell my readers something about the effect of rum and gin on the heathen. But my feelings would lead me too far off, and besides it is irrelevant to the story. Suffice it for me to say that the heathen, at his best, is little better than the beast, and can you contemplate his condition after imbibing this distillation of hell.

After the feast, reports of several guns were given, and the crowd dispersed. Guanya Pau then secured a conversation with certain women of the place, who

told them the following story:

Young Prince Musah was travelling incognito, when he made a visit to his old home, where he was born and reared, a village, as he called it, "of lofty palms and pretty women."

When he had sauntered through the glens and dells of his boyish haunts, along the shady banks of streams where he used to listen to the sweet warble of the mocking-bird, and watch the squirrel prance and chirp, and had strolled around

refreshing his spirits with reminiscences of by-gone sports, he decided to make the visit more remindful by- taking back with him one of the pretty Borneys.

He had not long to make up his mind which of the many maidens he should choose, as the only satisfaction he required was a face fair to look upon, and one pleasing to the eyes (a fault common with African youths). Musah made his choice, and found out her guardian, who told him that the girl was sold, intimating or at the same time that the whereabouts of her lover was unknown to him, he having left the country when she was quite small. But the possibility of the Prince losing this sweet girl, made him exert himself to the utmost to get her. He therefore doubled the dowry, and promised to make her his head wife, arguing withal the absurdity of hoping against hope the return of the vagabond lover. Adding that such action on the part of a lover indicated that he was not concerned about her "for men are generally," said he, "anxious about those to whom they are attached, and show this by their frequent presence and their attempt to cultivate acquaintance." "I can testify to this," continued he, "**from personal experience." Then the Prince dwelt largely upon his worth, becoming ever eloquent, giving true examples of persuasive oratory. He was a natural orator, and he knew it, and he knew besides that with his voice he had influenced the most fastidious maiden.

The guardian, overcome by the Prince's offer and logic, sat still for a

while plunged in deep meditation; then he looked up into Musah's face, as if to study J;is physiognomy, looked off into space, scratched his head, and drew a deep* breath. His eyes then fell upon the timid Borney, who was standing behind the mat, pretending to be engaged in the arrangement of her beads!

Borney, child of the patient heart, and idol of my house," said he, "**are you willing to forego your husband who is lost to you and me, of whom during these many moons the sun has run his course, no wind has brought us intelligence? Surely such ill becomes a lover. I fear he does not care anything for you. But he may be dead, my child, and in his grave, who knows ; for though we feed and nourish our dead, yet you know that no correct tidings do they send us. But, Borney, be not persuaded. In this matter I want you to be alone in your decision. Would you not though prefer this stranger, a Prince from the Pisu, of noble mien and warlike appearance? Let your heart answer, Borney but for my part, I would prefer this gentleman, though I shall not influence you." Whereupon he swung the mat back, revealing a shy maiden of **sweet sixteen/' of pretty face and figure, in a profusion of blushes.

The truth is, the girl had no decision to make, as her guardian had implied in his questions what course she should pursue. So she, without further ceremony, took her stand beside the noble young prince, and whispered, amid sobs and blushes "I shall be your head wife. Prince Musah."

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

Diaspora Poet

Now Boarding

The airport in Greece is full.
The waiting passengers
are hoping to escape
from wars
they did not start, wars
escalated
by foreign powers
intervening
on behalf of rebel factions
that believe their cause
is more righteous than
their enemies'.

Success is measured by
soulless, bomb-scarred
buildings and
bodies forsaken on
sidewalks,
in streets, along
roadsides.

Flights now boarding for
London,
Paris and Berlin the
monitor says.
But arrivals and
departure times
stay frozen on giant
screens.
There is no landing, no
taking off.

The country, stifled by a
failing economy,
is trapped in its own
purgatory.

Marking time, folks do not
linger in waiting rooms.
They overflow onto
jagged runways.
Confined to tents, they
stare through
barbed-wire fences that
hold them in limbo.
Unwanted, they await
their fate.

© Althea Romeo-Mark
26.6.16.

Althea Romeo-Mark



Born in Antigua, West Indies, [Althea Romeo-Mark](#) is an educator and internationally published writer who grew up in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands.

She has lived and taught in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, USA, Liberia (1976-1990), London, England (1990-1991), and in Switzerland since 1991.

She taught at the University of Liberia (1976-1990). She is a founding member of the Liberian Association of Writers (LAW) and is the poetry editor for

**Seabreeze:
Journal of Liberian
Contemporary
Literature.**

She was awarded the Marguerite Cobb

McKay Prize by **The Caribbean Writer** in June, 2009 for short story "Bitterleaf, (set in Liberia)." **If Only the Dust Would Settle** is her last poetry collection.

She has been guest poets at the International Poetry Festival of Medellin, Colombia (2010), the Kistrech International Poetry Festival, Kissi, Kenya (2014) and The Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books 10th Anniversary

Conference, Antigua and Barbuda (2015) She has been published in the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the USA, Germany, Norway, the UK, India, Colombia, Kenya, Liberia and Switzerland.

More publishing history can be found at her blog site:

[www.aromaproducti
ons.blogspot.com](http://www.aromaproducti ons.blogspot.com)

Resurrected Master

Edwin J Barclay



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

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

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

Song of the Harmattan

We are coming, we are coming
From the vast Sahara plain,

With the icyness of winter,
And the biting kiss of pain!

We are coming, we are coming!

Hark! the shrieking echoes rise
Over hills, from hidden caverns,

As we race 'neath tropic skies!

We are coming, we are coming
With our scourging blasts of pain:

But the fields o'er which we revel
Soon shall blossom fair again!

We are coming! — not a terror!

Tho men reck not our desire,

Tho they shun our wild caresses,
Tho they curse the wild "high-flyer"

We are coming but in earnest

Of the purer atmosphere
Man shall breathe when foul Miasma

Shall have yielded us his sphere!

We are coming! Greet us kindly:
We seek out the haunts of pain,

And we carry death for weakness,
From the vast Sahara plain!

But the strong man is made stronger

By our penetrating blast;
And the earth is purer, healthier

When Harmattan's host is past!

Unscripted

Cher Antoinette



Barbadian Forensic Scientist, Visual Artist & Writer, **Cher-Antoinette** is multi-faceted and has been successful at NIFCA in Photography 2009, Literary Arts 2011/2012 and Fine Arts 2012/2013.

She has published a poetic anthology MY SOUL CRIES in 2013, VIRTUALIS: A New Age Love Story in 2014 and ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY: Poetry & Prose in 2015.

Her artistic journey started in earnest in 2014 where she decided to let her work speak to her life. A self-taught artist, the process included finding what media she was most comfortable with and resulted in works of Watercolour, Pen & Ink, Charcoal and a multi-media mix of all three.

Her timeline history to date is exemplified by ENDANGERED, ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY, UNMASKED & COLOURS OF MY FREEDOM. "The sky is but a stop-over on my journey to the Stars."

DECEMBER 2019

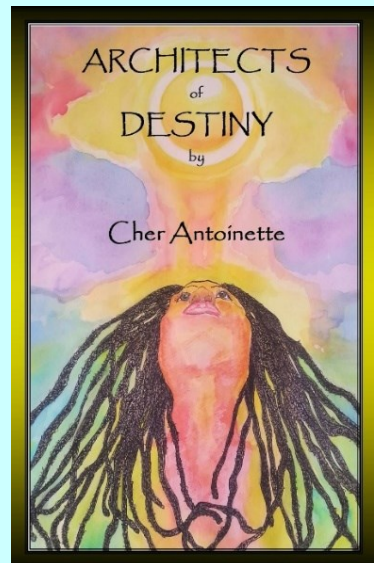
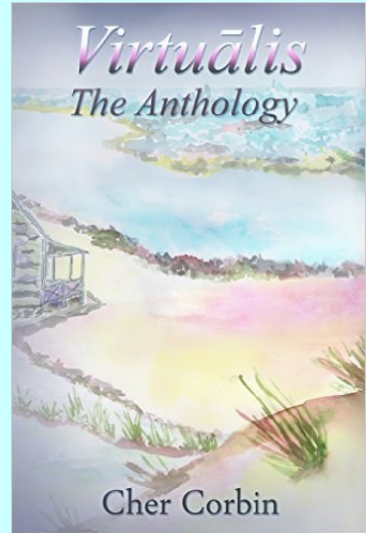
NEW DAY

*Waiting for the
end of day
For dusk to dawn
Wondering
whether this time
Our auras will at
last merge
I will try
To stay just long
enough
To awaken you
Lifting the
darkened veil
Knowing that I
know
Knowing that
they know
You are heaven
sent*

.....
.....

Taken from
Virtualis

Cher-Antoinette ©Cher



African Poet

Colours in the Dust

A Tribute to Morocco

**I leave behind the dusty brown
Of narrow streets and sun-fired clay
Back home to England's verdant town
Of scholars' spires and skies of grey**

**I leave behind the market maze
Where every hue is stacked and strung
And count the march of Christmas days
In gleaming malls with carols sung**

**I leave behind the emerald bliss
Of gardens in the golden sand
And smile to see the blooms I miss
Still traced upon my lover's hand**

**I leave behind the hooded eyes
Of faces drawn like timeless maps
And brush the mask of my disguise
With bright new paint across the cracks**

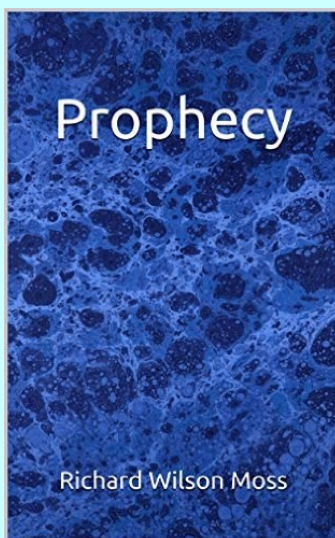
Wayne Visser © 2017

'Twas Brigglin

I Am Not The Poet

I am not the poet
Rather the man in deep
forest
Lying on the tracks
Waiting for the six
fifteen
The old maid cleaning
toilets
In the bus station
Near her in a broken
stall
The young one with
cramps
Texting, oh god it hurts,
oh god
I am not the goddamn
poet
Rather the pizza driver
Crying softly in his old
Escort
Suspension gone, tires
bald.
In the drive thru
The old, old gray man,
so tired
Handing fries to the
addict, so wired
The bus boy at the bus
stop waiting
But the bus is late, so he
lights another
Coughing, seeing it
coming, he groans
I am his twin brother,
iron frail
Male of female, female
of male

Older or younger, better
or worse
Made of ether resting on
bones
Found on the corner
Of Walther and Southern
Selling snow cones.



The Red Wagon

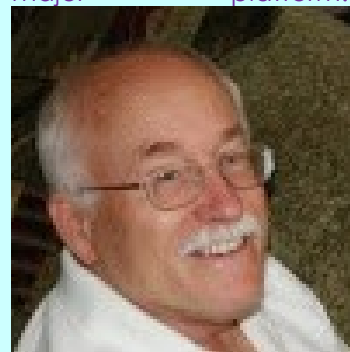
I pull the red wagon
Into the local bar,
drunkards
The bartender, the
dishwasher
In the back, they load it
Now down to the tracks
The engineer on the five
fifteen
Says, here you go.
Off to row houses to
knock
On every locked door
Some peek out curtained
windows
Some open, say okay
On sidewalks I collect
from old men

Drowsy on white marble
steps
Now down to the shops,
the factories
The malls, the
skyscrapers where those
At each quiet floor
Silently pile on more.
On to the state pen
where inmates
In the yard holler, over
here!
There's more over here!

Pulling the heavy red
wagon
Alongside the river until
at dusk
So tired, sitting down
A fisherman casting near
Says, why ya pullin' that
wagon
Ain't nothing in it
I know, I sneer.

© **Richard Wilson Moss**

Richard Moss is the author of numerous full-length poetry books. He's witty, understands words in a most peculiar way. His poetry is just...You can find his books on every major platform.



According to Eliot

Arts Review 2019

Happy New Year to all my readers. The two of you.

For the last couple of years my piece has been a review of what I've read in the last 12 months. 2019, to end the decade is going to be a look at books, music, films and TV.

I'm going give my new poetry collection a mention first. June 2019 I was invited to Salerno in Italy to an Arts Festival. I was to work with students from the university who were translating my poetry. Students reading and studying my work? That was beyond a dream. Soon after I arrived back in France, an international publisher contacted me asking to publish my poetry. I agreed that the publisher would publish selected poems in English and a companion volume in Italian.



The English version is available, *Friday Night Songs: Poems 2005-2019*.

I set myself the task of reading all of Dickens works.

Years ago I read *A Tale of Two Cities* which I loved but I could never quite convince myself to pick up the hefty novels. So far I have read, *David Copperfield*, *Little Dorrit*, these two were very good. Also, *A Christmas Carol* and *Hard Times*. Whilst these two were very well written I was disappointed with them. However, *Great Expectations*. I loved it. Brilliantly written. Characters that leap of the page, Magwitch, Estelle, and of course Miss Havisham. The settings on the marshes, the graveyard, Miss Havisham's house where she lives the bride that never was. Just so atmospheric. If reader, you read only one Dickens, then *Great Expectations* is the one.



Film of the year has to be from Netflix, *The Irishman* directed by Martin Scorsese.

Coming in at over three hours it tells of mafia in America from the fifties through to the seventies. It gets top marks on direction, acting and story. A must see.

Also on Netflix, a series, *Shtisel*, which tells of an Hasidic family in Jerusalem. Has a real cult following. The acting is great, the storylines good, amusing and quite strong.



I have a reservation in that the main character is an artist; my understanding is art is frowned upon in the Hasidic community. I question as well whether the series really reflected the reality of belonging to the Hasid. But, I've seen two series and I'm waiting for the third.



From

France, the cop series had a new one out. Series 7 of *Spiral*. A lot of characters, excellent stories, acting and direction. Get it from series 1. All available on DVD.

Music? I'm a vinyl junkie. There is not going to be a mention of a cd or a download. Most vinyl is also available on cd, but there are

exceptions. The LP I'm listening to as I write this, *College Jazz Sampler from 1955* (I would have been two when this was first issued) has never been put out on cd. It features jazz players that most would have never heard of until you dig a bit deeper and find that they were member of quality jazz groups of the age such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. Excellent music; a lot of history there. But you'll have to dig deep in the back of junk shops to find it!

Most memorable piece of vinyl of the year? In 1975, Bob Dylan issued an LP, *Blood on the Tracks*. That was my all-time favourite Dylan album. This year he issued the songs that were recorded at the time, but never put out on official release. These songs, with their original sparse guitar have now made it to the light of day. Yes, vinyl of the year: *More Blood More Tracks Bob Dylan*.

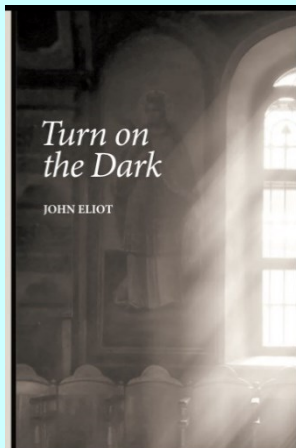
Try and track down some of the stuff I've mentioned and give them a read, view and listen. Including my new poetry collection, John Eliot *Friday Night Songs 2005-2019*
Have a good 2020!

© John Eliot.2019

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

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

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

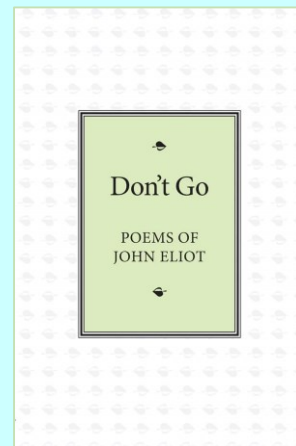
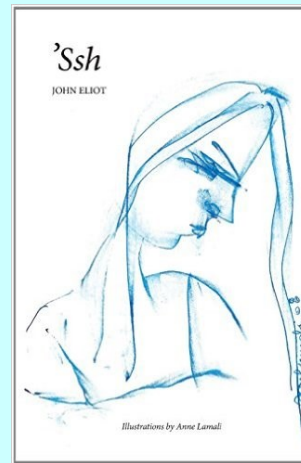


Any comments to
I will reply to all emails.

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Book by John Eliot



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

Beautiful Pieces



Janetta Konah is an emerging Liberian writer.

She loves dogs almost as much as she loves writing. She is currently on her second book.



UNTITLED

**Fear grips my hands
Darkness hovers above
Fogs blinding my vision**

**Stand still
The clock's ticking
Click clock**

**I feel you slipping away
Into an unknown future**

**I'm scared
I can't breathe
I can't think**

**All I have known
Is you, only; and now,
I'm not ready to let go**

©2019 from her chapbook,
Beautiful Pieces



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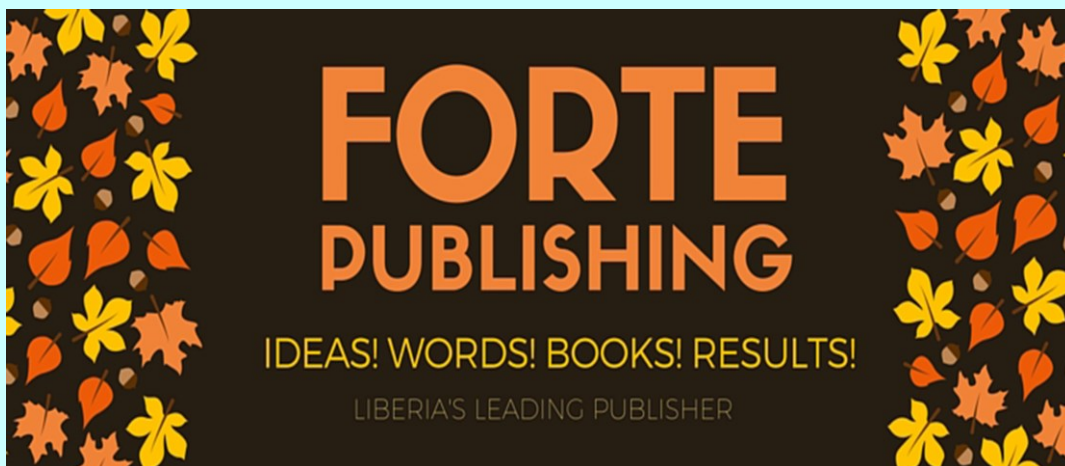
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A Purpose-Filled Moment

Keeping It Real

--There's a commercial that says, "A baby doesn't change your life, a baby changes EVERYTHING." That is sooo true. I remember when I had my first baby. As I held him, I realized that for the first time in my life someone would be calling me "Mommy." I thought about all the things I was going to do for him. Oh God, I made so many mistakes. Babies don't come with manuals. Thank God for my momma, my grandmom and my aunts. Even the mothers who "adopted" me helped.

A baby does change everything. They change your present AND your future. You see a lot of life differently after you have a child, or two, or three, etc.

Contrary to what some of these "modern parents" say, this child is part of your life for at least 18 years. You don't walk away when they start walking and talking. Yes, they were dependent on you when you had to feed them, wash them, change them, clothe them and so on...

BUT once they start walking and talking, that's when you roll up your sleeves and the REAL work begins. YOU have to mold this little person into the adult

they will become. YOU have to teach them right from wrong. You REWARD (praise) them when they do right but not all the time because EVERY right action does not get recognized when you are an adult. You chastise (punish) them when they are wrong because they have to learn that bad choices, bad behavior has consequences. If YOU DON'T teach them that; they might learn it in jail! No parent wants that phone call.

In their teen years they will start to pull away. If the early years were done right they won't stray too far and even when you don't think they are listening, they are.

There will come a day when you have to let them go. (They were only "on loan" anyway). Still, if you did a good job, they will maintain their connection to you BUT even if they totally rebel, if you "train up the child in the the way they should go and even when they are old; they shall not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

I know it says HE but it applies to girls too. All I'm saying is Teach them right and by the grace of God, they will get it together.

**In The Spirit of Truth,
RuNett Nia Ebo,
Poet of Purpose
© 2019**



RuNett Nia Ebo, Poet of Purpose, is a resident of NW Philadelphia and married to William Gray, Sr. She has been writing since age 10 (over 5 decades). She is published in several anthologies including Stand our Ground © 2013 and she collaborated with eight other senior poets on the anthology, Seniors Rockin' the Pen © 2014. She has self-published 8 chapbooks, 3 books of poetry, one CD and one fiction story, All For You © 2002. Her signature poem, "**Lord, Why Did You Make Me Black?**" © 1994, is also her contribution to Chicken Soup for the African-American Soul © 2004. Recently (Feb 2015) RuNett and Victoria, her Partner-In-Rhyme, released a poetry book they co-authored entitled Truth With Purpose © 2014.

In 1998, along with her brother, Darien and another musician, the late Keno Speller, Poet Ebo established Nia's Purpose: Poetry and Percussion @ Work. The trio used this vehicle to visit churches, schools and community centers to share poetry, percussion and Black History with audiences of all ages.

She has guest appeared on cable, public televisions and radios shows. She acted on local stages in Philadelphia in addition to speaking and presenting at community events and local schools in Philadelphia, New York, Houston, Los Angeles, and St. Croix as well as several cities in New Jersey and Delaware.

Miss Ebo wrote the play based on her signature poem, Lord Why Did You Make Me Black which has been performed by the Fresh Visions Youth Theatre Group as part of their Ebony Kaleidoscope #9
 (end of the year) shows.

In addition to other awards received over the years, she was recently presented with The 2014 Philadelphia Black Poetry Honors for over 20 years of Poetic Excellence by Poetic Ventures and The Black Authors Tour (May). She also received the Golden Mic Award from Rick Watson and World Renowned Entertainment (July).

Ten years ago, in 2006, Poet Ebo, established POET-IFY: Poetry to Edify, a poetry venue she hosts bi-monthly from Feb. to Oct. with her co-host, Victoria "The Axiom" Peurifoy. She manages the MTM Band that has played for this venue since it started. She accepted the Lord into her life in 1980 and is a member of Germantown Church of the Brethren.

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Happy Corner

Something to be proud of... imagine of bunch of normally, hormone-filled teens, yap, all that energy... the million mischief any one of them could cook up. Exhausting right?

However, our featured batch, have found a brilliant way to shift their energy- Robot, robotics, high-tech, whatever the like. They have been making those beings that might just replace us one day, if we should place stock into the fears of some...

Pictured below are students from the Corpus Christi Basic School in Accra, Ghana as they are awarded certificate for win.



Follow the link for more

https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FaYO9YLGKfDo%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3PLFQHsrNnJlYcTfjShqL-sNQvvgLUI402L4KZ2qLEuezMGPxIT4Qo2WY&h=AT1OFEUJI-Dch9vakNelptEbrRz_OdlfU15ONNXmEh4rVlrBXMfcd_yT2W1uB9r_KEDx1SP2vaDof0vt_VBQpGzxsrluLJLn1iwuaZ5hc26_9U8eVxwZZUA707fS6SlhQ

CHRISTMAS POETRY BONANZA!

Because it is the HOLIDAY SEASON and we CAN, we offer this bonanza of poems
from some of the MASTERS!

The Three Kings

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Three Kings came riding from far away,
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,
For their guide was a beautiful,
wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large and clear,
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And by this they knew that the coming
was near
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.

Three caskets they bore on their saddle-
bows,
Three caskets of gold with golden keys;
Their robes were of crimson silk with rows
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
Their turbans like blossoming almond-
trees.

And so the Three Kings rode into the West,
Through the dusk of the night, over hill
and dell,
And sometimes they nodded with
beard on breast,
And sometimes talked, as they paused
to rest,

With the people they met at some
wayside well.

"Of the child that is born," said Baltasar,
"Good people, I pray you, tell us the
news;
For we in the East have seen his star,
And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,
To find and worship the King of the
Jews."

And the people answered, "You ask in
vain;
We know of no King but Herod the
Great!"
They thought the Wise Men were men
insane,
As they spurred their horses across the
plain,
Like riders in haste, who cannot wait.

And when they came to Jerusalem,
Herod the Great, who had heard this
thing,
Sent for the Wise Men and questioned
them;
And said, "Go down unto Bethlehem,
And bring me tidings of this new king."

So they rode away; and the star stood
still,
The only one in the grey of morn;
Yes, it stopped—it stood still of its own
free will,
Right over Bethlehem on the hill,
The city of David, where Christ was
born.

And the Three Kings rode through the
gate and the guard,

Through the silent street, till their
horses turned
And neighed as they entered the great
inn-yard;
But the windows were closed, and the
doors were barred,
And only a light in the stable burned.

And cradled there in the scented hay,
In the air made sweet by the breath of
kine,
The little child in the manger lay,
The child, that would be king one day
Of a kingdom not human, but divine.

His mother Mary of Nazareth
Sat watching beside his place of rest,
Watching the even flow of his breath,
For the joy of life and the terror of death
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet:
The gold was their tribute to a King,
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed
her head,
And sat as still as a statue of stone,
Her heart was troubled yet comforted,
Remembering what the Angel had said
Of an endless reign and of David's
throne.

Then the Kings rode out of the city gate,
With a clatter of hoofs in proud array;
But they went not back to Herod the
Great,
For they knew his malice and feared his
hate,
And returned to their homes by another
way.

Good King Wenceslas

JOHN MASON NEALE

Good King Wenceslas look'd out,
On the Feast of Stephen;
When the snow lay round about,
Deep, and crisp, and even:
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither page and stand by me,
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence.
Underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
Bring me pine-logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither."
Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together;
Through the rudewind's wild lament,
And the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know now how,
I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, good my page;
Tread thou in them boldly;
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod

Which the Saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.

Christmas Trees

ROBERT FROST

(A Christmas Circular Letter)

The city had withdrawn into itself
And left at last the country to the
country;
When between whirls of snow not come
to lie
And whirls of foliage not yet laid, there
drove
A stranger to our yard, who looked the
city,
Yet did in country fashion in that there
He sat and waited till he drew us out
A-buttoning coats to ask him who he
was.
He proved to be the city come again
To look for something it had left behind
And could not do without and keep its
Christmas.
He asked if I would sell my Christmas
trees;
My woods—the young fir balsams like
a place
Where houses all are churches and have
spires.
I hadn't thought of them as Christmas
Trees.
I doubt if I was tempted for a moment
To sell them off their feet to go in cars
And leave the slope behind the house
all bare,
Where the sun shines now no warmer
than the moon.

I'd hate to have them know it if I was.
Yet more I'd hate to hold my trees
except
As others hold theirs or refuse for them,
Beyond the time of profitable growth,
The trial by market everything must
come to.
I dallied so much with the thought of
selling.
Then whether from mistaken courtesy
And fear of seeming short of speech, or
whether
From hope of hearing good of what was
mine, I said,
"There aren't enough to be worth
while."
"I could soon tell how many they would
cut,
You let me look them over."

"You could look.
But don't expect I'm going to let you
have them."
Pasture they spring in, some in clumps
too close
That lop each other of boughs, but not
a few
Quite solitary and having equal boughs
All round and round. The latter he
nodded "Yes" to,
Or paused to say beneath some lovelier
one,
With a buyer's moderation, "That would
do."
I thought so too, but wasn't there to say
so.
We climbed the pasture on the south,
crossed over,
And came down on the north. He said,
"A thousand."

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

He felt some need of softening that to me:

"A thousand trees would come to thirty dollars."

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

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

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

I should be writing to within the hour
Would pay in cities for good trees like
those,
Regular vestry-trees whole Sunday
Schools
Could hang enough on to pick off
enough.

A thousand Christmas trees I didn't know
I had!

Worth three cents more to give away
than sell,

As may be shown by a simple calculation.
Too bad I couldn't lay one in a letter.

I can't help wishing I could send you one,
In wishing you herewith a Merry
Christmas.

Christ's Nativity

HENRY VAUGHAN

Awake, glad heart! get up and sing!
It is the birth-day of thy King.
Awake! awake!
The Sun doth shake
Light from his locks, and all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake, awake! hark how th' wood rings;
Winds whisper, and the busy springs

A concert make;

Awake! awake!

Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,

Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far

Above this inn

And road of sin!

Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part

Fit rooms for thee! or that my heart

Were so clean as

Thy manger was!

But I am all filth, and obscene;

Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean.

Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more

This leper haunt and soil thy door!

Cure him, ease him,

O release him!

And let once more, by mystic birth,

The Lord of life be born in earth.

For Christmas Day: Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

CHARLES WESLEY

Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinner reconcil'd.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,

With the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Christ by highest Heaven ador'd,
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail, the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel!
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

ANONYMOUS

The first day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
A partridge in a pear tree.
The second day of Christmas,

My true love sent to me
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The third day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The fourth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The fifth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The sixth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The seventh day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The eighth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The ninth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The tenth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me
Ten pipers piping,
Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The eleventh day of Christmas
My true love sent to me
Eleven ladies dancing,
Ten pipers piping,
Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,

Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

The twelfth day of Christmas
My true love sent to me
Twelve fiddlers fiddling,
Eleven ladies dancing,
Ten pipers piping,
Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves, and
A partridge in a pear tree.

Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas

MAJOR HENRY LIVINGSTON, JR.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when
all thro' the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a
mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney
with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be
there;
The children were nestled all snug in their
beds,
While visions of sugar plums danc'd in
their heads,
And Mama in her 'kerchief, and I in my
cap,

Had just settled our brains for a long
winter's nap —
When out on the lawn there arose such a
clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was
the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters, and threw up the
sash.
The moon on the breast of the new fallen
snow,
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects
below;
When, what to my wondering eyes
should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny
rein-deer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they
came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and call'd
them by name:
"Now! Dasher, now! Dancer, now!
Prancer, and Vixen,
"On! Comet, on! Cupid, on! Dunder and
Blixem;
"To the top of the porch! to the top of the
wall!
"Now dash away! dash away! dash away
all!"
As dry leaves before the wild hurricane
fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount
to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they
flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys — and St.
Nicholas too:
And then in a twinkling, I heard on the
roof
The prancing and pawing of each little
hoof.

As I drew in my head, and was turning
around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came
with a bound:
He was dress'd all in fur, from his head to
his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnish'd with
ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys was flung on his back,
And he look'd like a peddler just opening
his pack:
His eyes — how they twinkled! his
dimples how merry,
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a
cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a
bow.
And the beard of his chin was as white as
the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his
teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like
a wreath.
He had a broad face, and a little round
belly
That shook when he laugh'd, like a bowl
full of jelly:
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly
old elf,
And I laugh'd when I saw him in spite of
myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to
dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight
to his work,
And fill'd all the stockings; then turn'd
with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose
And giving a nod, up the chimney he
rose.
He sprung to his sleigh, to his team
gave a whistle,

And away they all flew, like the down of
a thistle:

But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove
out of sight —

Happy Christmas to all, and to all a
good night.

In Memoriam A. H. H. OBIT
MDCCCXXXIII: 106

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Christmas Carol

SARA TEASDALE

The kings they came from out the south,
All dressed in ermine fine;
They bore Him gold and chrysopease,
And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,
Their coats were brown and old;
They brought Him little new-born lambs—
They had not any gold.

The wise men came from out the east,
And they were wrapped in white;
The star that led them all the way
Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high,
And they were clad with wings;
And lo, they brought a joyful song
The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise men entered in,
The shepherds followed after them
To hear the song begin.

The angels sang through all the night
Until the rising sun,
But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.

Mistletoe

WALTER DE LA MARE

Sitting under the mistletoe
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),
One last candle burning low,
All the sleepy dancers gone,
Just one candle burning on,
Shadows lurking everywhere:
Someone came, and kissed me there.

Tired I was; my head would go
Nodding under the mistletoe
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),
No footsteps came, no voice, but only,
Just as I sat there, sleepy, lonely,
Stooped in the still and shadowy air
Lips unseen—and kissed me there.

[little tree]

E. E. CUMMINGS

little tree
little silent Christmas tree
you are so little
you are more like a flower

who found you in the green forest
and were you very sorry to come away?
see i will comfort you
because you smell so sweetly

i will kiss your cool bark
and hug you safe and tight
just as your mother would,
only don't be afraid

look the spangles
that sleep all the year in a dark box

dreaming of being taken out and
allowed to shine,
the balls the chains red and gold the
fluffy threads,

put up your little arms
and i'll give them all to you to hold
every finger shall have its ring
and there won't be a single place dark
or unhappy

then when you're quite dressed
you'll stand in the window for everyone
to see
and how they'll stare!
oh but you'll be very proud

and my little sister and i will take hands
and looking up at our beautiful tree
we'll dance and sing
"Noel Noel"

In the bleak midwinter

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind
made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a
stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow
on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor
earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when
He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place
sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim,
worship night and day,
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of
hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall
before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have
gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the
air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a
lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my
part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

The Oxen

THOMAS HARDY

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures
where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

The Magi

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Now as at all times I can see in the
mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale
unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue
depths of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-
beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering
side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to
find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence
unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the
bestial floor.

The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats © (1989)

To Mrs K____, On Her Sending Me an
English Christmas Plum-Cake at Paris

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS

What crowding thoughts around me
wake,
What marvels in a Christmas-cake!
Ah say, what strange enchantment
dwells
Enclosed within its odorous cells?

Is there no small magician bound
Encrusted in its snowy round?
For magic surely lurks in this,
A cake that tells of vanished bliss;
A cake that conjures up to view
The early scenes, when life was
new;

When memory knew no sorrows
past,
And hope believed in joys that last!
—

Mysterious cake, whose folds
contain
Life's calendar of bliss and pain;
That speaks of friends for ever fled,
And wakes the tears I love to shed.
Oft shall I breathe her cherished
name
From whose fair hand the offering
came:
For she recalls the artless smile
Of nymphs that deck my native isle;
Of beauty that we love to trace,
Allied with tender, modest grace;
Of those who, while abroad they
roam,
Retain each charm that gladdens
home,
And whose dear friendships can
impart
A Christmas banquet for the heart!

The Burning Babe

ROBERT SOUTHWELL SJ

As I in hoary winter's night stood
shivering in the snow,
Surpris'd I was with sudden heat
which made my heart to glow;
And lifting up a fearful eye to view
what fire was near,
A pretty Babe all burning bright
did in the air appear;
Who, scorched with excessive
heat, such floods of tears did shed
As though his floods should
quench his flames which with his
tears were fed.
"Alas!" quoth he, "but newly born,
in fiery heats I fry,
Yet none approach to warm their
hearts or feel my fire but I!
My faultless breast the furnace is,
the fuel wounding thorns,
Love is the fire, and sighs the
smoke, the ashes shame and
scorns;
The fuel Justice layeth on, and
Mercy blows the coals,
The metal in this furnace wrought
are men's defiled souls,

For which, as now on fire I am to
work them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath to wash
them in my blood.”
With this he vanish'd out of sight
and swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I called unto mind
that it was Christmas day.

In the Bleak Midwinter

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

In the bleak midwinter, frosty
wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water
like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold
Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable
place sufficed

The Lord God Almighty, Jesus
Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim,
worship night and day,
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful
of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall
before,
The ox and ass and camel which
adore.

Angels and archangels may have
gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged
the air;
But His mother only, in her
maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a
kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring
a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do
my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my
heart.

A Poem for Every Night of the Year

Author Interview

Our Spotlight author is a young Liberian emerging writer, and poet.



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

1. Let's talk about you? The person behind the pen...

I am a Liberian, a Libra, a writer, an animal lover, a girl Activist, a book nerd, a pop song freak, a foodie (or foodgee as we say in Kolokwa). Currently, my life is centered around my passion and purpose, and cultivating immense self-love. I see myself as someone who's

purpose is to help develop others and grow their intellect and self-esteem.

2. Do you mentor? What do you look for in a mentee?

I am not a mentor, yet. But I hope to mentor young girls someday.

3. How active are you on social media (links)? And how do you think it affects the way you write?

I am very active on Facebook. Though I am on other social media, Facebook is the one I visit most. It affects my writing both positively and negatively.

Pros, on Facebook I have a lot of friends who are also writing. They help me to critique and edit my work and advise me on the places in which I need to improve. I also get the chance to read their works and learn from their writing styles. Cons, a

lot of plagiarism goes happens on Facebook. People can be cruel and criticize you harshly, which is not a problem for me because I take criticism constructively.

But with Facebook, you can spend too many hours responding to friend's insta-messages, commenting, following trends and reading that you lose track of time and you don't write.

4. How did you celebrate the publishing of your first book?

I took it pretty low key, even though I was screaming inside. I know I still have a lot to do to improve myself as an author.

So, even though I'm glad, I'm more focused on the work I have to do, which is building my readership.

5. How often do you attend literary festivals? Which festivals can we expect to see you at this year?

I have attended a lot of literary programs but I haven't been to a festival yet. I hope to attend one this year.

6. If you were given the opportunity to form a book club with your favorite authors of all time, which legends or contemporary writers would you want to become a part of the club? No less than FIVE!

I would love to have Maya Angelo, J. K Rowling, D. Othniel Forte, Hawa Golakai and Stephen King.

7. Tell us about an interesting or memorable encounter you had with a fan?

When my book cover was revealed, all my friends got excited. They had no idea that I was writing a book. One of them sent me a

text, asking how was it possible that I could stay quiet about something so exciting. He wanted to see me and read my work.

8. Your writer friends, which of them do you discuss your projects with? How does that play out?

I discuss my projects with Jerry Karn and Daniel Derrick Mwesigye. They are always so supportive and pushing me to strive for better.

They help me do research, edit my work, and discuss how to start and what is the end goal I have in mind.

9. What is your view on co-authoring books; have you done any?

Co-authoring a book is a unique way to learn more about writing. Everyone has his or her own writing style, when you write a book with another person, it

gives you the opportunity to learn new writing styles and method. It requires a lot of patience, compromise and understanding. I have co-authored a book with Daniel Derrick Mwesigye, which is currently going through edits. I have also done a lot of poetry collaboration with immersing poets.

10. Which is hardest for you – the writing, the publication, and the sales?

The sales are the hardest for me. I'm still building my audience and looking for ways and means to get my book seen out there.

11. What does 'retirement' mean to you? Do writers ever retire?

From the day of birth till we get old, we all carry stories within us. Everyone has a story. I don't think writers ever retire. You just

keep writing, because everyday a new story is born.

12. How do you incorporate the noise around you into the story you are writing at the moment? Can you tell us about your current projects?

OH, sometimes it's tough with the noise around me. It keeps me unfocused and irritated. But other times, it's fun, writing about the everyday craziness.

Currently, I'm working on a series of children's book. It's pretty hush hush. But I have written about five or six.

PLUS TWO

1. Is today's generation more aware of the literary art or less?

I think the generation of today is taking more

interest in literature, especially in Africa.

They've seen writing as a way and means to express them and have their voice heard, therefore they're reading actively and writing also.

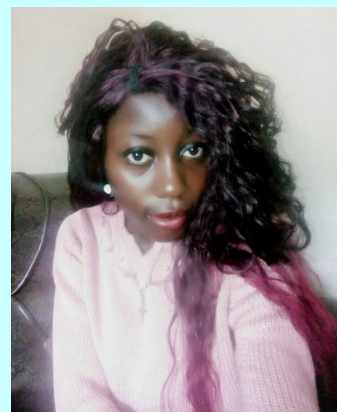
2. You don't have to be a writer in order to be an author – what is your take?

I think it's the other way around, you don't need to be an author to be a writer. But there's no way you can be an author without being a writer.

Not unless you're putting your name on a work someone else wrote for you.

To truly be an author, you have to sit down and write the story in your own voice and tone.

Author Bio



Janetta Konah is an emerging Liberian writer. She writes about, life, nature, love and inspiration.

She is a member of the reading literacy Team Monrovia READS.

The author lives in Monrovia with her parents and siblings, where she is a junior student at the University of Liberia

She is currently working on her next book and a children's book series.



Herbert Logerie

It Is Your Smile

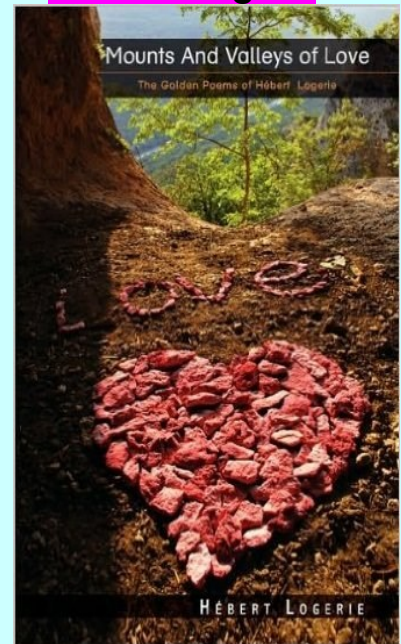
Woman, let me
demystify you,
So I can see why
I love you
So much.
Let me search:
The curves, the
preserves,
The gardens and
the reserves,
So I can
understand
Why every
second
That you flash in
my memory,
The chemical
formula changes
in my body.

Turn around;
You're safe and
sound.
Let me examine
you from head
to toes:
Touch your nose,
Cover your
cheeks,

Do some tricks,
Try to fake it,
Walk, run, stop
and sit.
Oh! I'm
beginning to see:
It is your smile
That drives me
crazy;
It is your smile
That makes me
feel so good.

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

© Hebert Logerie



Hebert Logerie

is the author of several
collections of poems.

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

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

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

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

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

Hilal Karahan



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

Purgatory Poems

1/

Time is over... movement
hastily collected the streets
to bring at home;

Scattered with the Gaze,
images... figures... those curses
dancing in the mirror of attention
have revived

Being tired of confrontation
to rancor and insolvency,
the civilisation, this carrion bazaar,
comminuted the cities
and made their dust fly to sky!

Universe blenched from this fury,
kneled down on its dark prayer rug,
faithfully turning prayer beads of objects
to beginning:

—Let's wait... wait...
: waiting is safe.

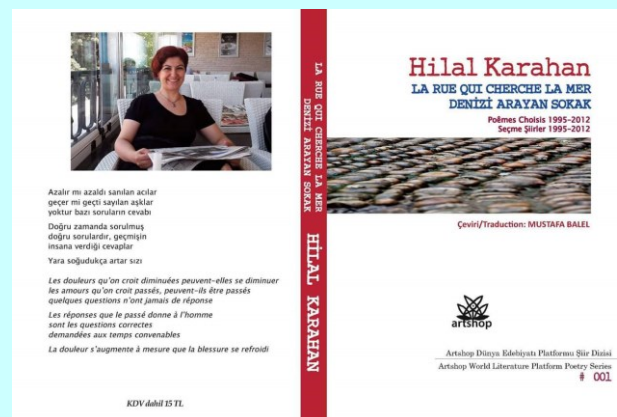
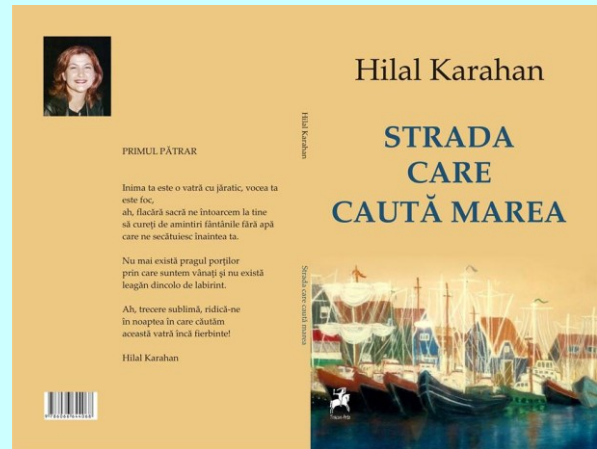
2/

Time is over... the cloth of presence
wrinkled, perceptions and
judgements mixed together;

Were the skys metal, what was melting
and flooding in doomsday, through
fire balls and pouring in front of
guards of earth like colorful wools?

Fearful because of its wings,
as if a silly bird,
human, waiting inside ego cage,
how can be a remembered thing?

Suspecions, the bone migs
rolling inside the skull,
spoiled both rights and faiths



the vernal equinox

on the first day of Spring
 we burn the branches of the Yule fir
 the steadfast pine that brought
 us winter
 and becomes the daring
 harbinger of shift
 a practice that our grandmother
 taught us
 long ago and far away in the
 garden we grew together in
 a remembrance from old
 Teutonic times
 that somehow still resides in our star
 crossed genes
 and infinite bloodline gifts

lighting the aromatic sprigs
 with a spark of new intention
 ignites a spiraling wisp of
 smoldering greens
 that meanders its way up to the
 morning lunar melt
 and glaring solar gleams
 that stare upon this morning
 of yet another change in the
 daily chapters
 still yearning to be read

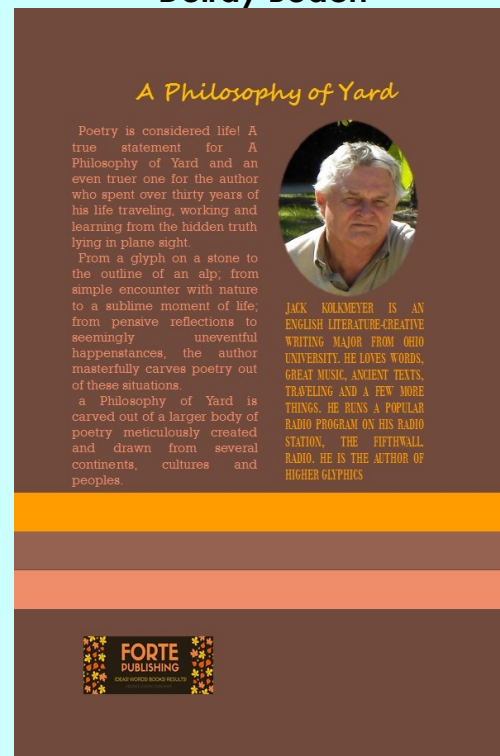
the insect eyes and birding dreams
 alight along the flames
 as the little beasts of night and day
 assemble to watch the animistic
 rituals
 and listen to the timely chants
 and monotheistic prayer calls
 as they know what's up and still ahead
 and what goes down on days like
 this
 for they've been abuzz and singing all
 along
 as the daffodils nod their heads

and bud into the surging song

 so once again as if it were a deified
 plan
 we shift the planet gears
 from winter's bare necessities
 to the warming of the embers
 now hissing their siren songs
 that swirl above

 melding as if it were an ancient rhyme
 into the morning church bell
 chimes
 that call the angelic spirits to us
 to come gather round
 the soaring fire
 that greets the vernal equinox
 now springing from the ground

Delray Beach



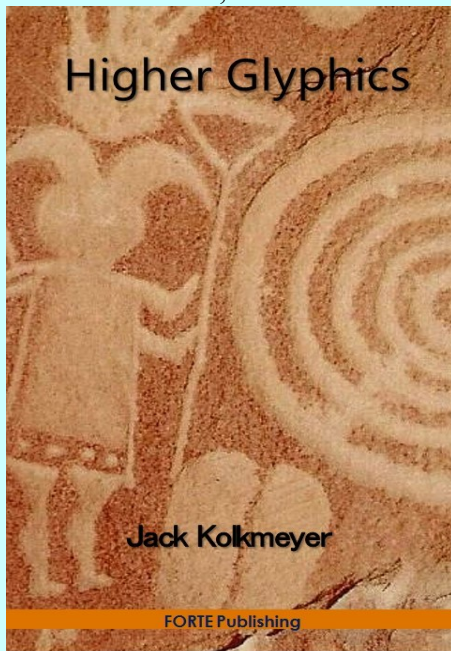
FORTE Publishing

Jack's poetry can be found in his books which are all on Amazon and at other major retailers. Some are [Philosophy of Yard](#), [Higher Glyphics](#) and [Gnarly Roots](#)

JACK KOLKMEYER

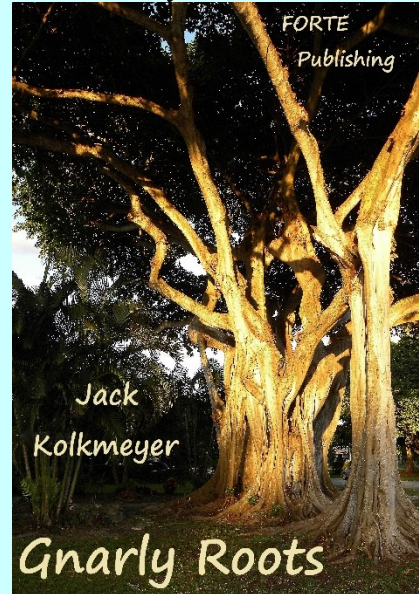


Jack Kolkmeier studied English Literature/Creative Writing at Ohio University in the 1960's where he developed a special interest in the Romantic, Imagist and Beat poets. He was the Editor of *Sphere*, the Ohio University literary magazine, from 1967-68. His writings have appeared in numerous publications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

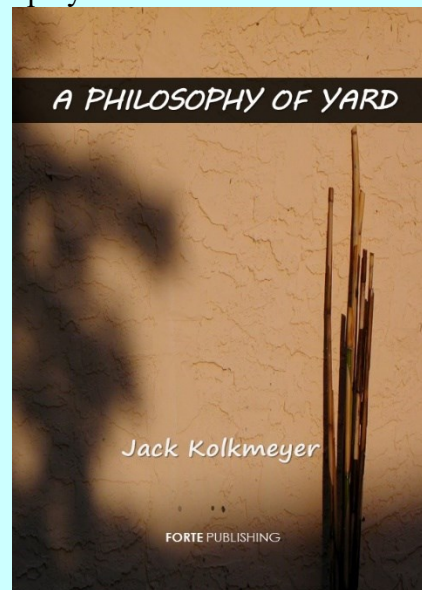


He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia, West Africa from 1969-72 and was greatly

influenced then by the emerging African writers of that time, especially Leopold Senghor, Chinua Achebe and Amos Tutuola. Jack received an MPA in Public Policy/Urban and Regional Planning from Indiana University in 1974.



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



Renee' B. Drummond-Brown

'Easy like Sunday Mourning

Life ain't been so easy
for us, since the time we
came-cross
belligerent-boisterous-battered seas.
Since bondage.
Since brandings.
Since slavery.
Since beatings.
Since laboring.
Since moaning.
Since breastfeeding's.
Since raping's.
Since hangings.
Since bombings.
Since killings.
Since marching.
Since pleading.
Since penitentiaries.
Since existing.
Life ain't been so easy.

Dedicated to: There's a difference
between living, and existing.

A RocDeeRay Production

(Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight)

As an emerging artist, trying to establish a solid reputation as an author amongst my critics, I am asking for your support by *SHARING THIS POST* and *ORDERING* my hardback, soft back, and ebook(s) online, and/or on my Facebook page.

Drummond-Brown books:

~A Bridge Over Troubled Water
~Tried, Tested and True Poets from Across the Globe

~A B.A.D. Poem
~The Power of the Pen
~SOLD: TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER
~Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight-I'll Write Our Wrongs!
And
~**e-Book: Renee's Poems with Wings are Words in Flight**

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Renee' Drummond-Brown, is an accomplished poetess with experience in creative writing. She is a graduate of Geneva College of Western Pennsylvania. Renee' is still in pursuit of excellence towards her mark for higher education. She is working on her sixth book and has numerous works published globally which can be seen in cubm.org/news, KWEE Magazine, Leaves of Ink, Raven Cage Poetry and Prose Ezine, Realistic Poetry International, Scarlet Leaf Publishing House, SickLit Magazine,

Proverbs from Liberia

1. One lie destroys a thousand truths. *It is best not to lie. When one lies, one damages the element of trust that builds any relationship. This level of dishonesty makes people doubt any amount of honesty before it or if anything before it was true in the first place.*

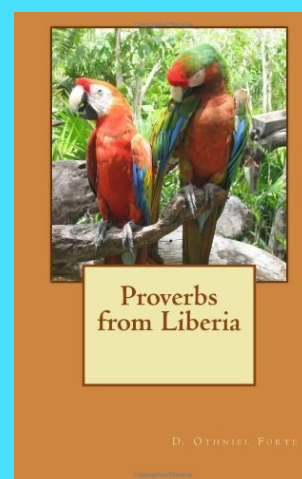
2. Sleep is the cousin of death. *Just as a dead person is unable to do anything, a person that loves to sleep all the time never gets anything done. They might as well be dead.*

3. Smoke does not affect honeybees alone; the honey-gatherers are also affected. *Some problems when started, affect everybody, not just an intended group. There are consequences to every action, some are foreseeable, and others are not.*

4. The greatest remedy for anger is delay. *When a person is angry, they are prone to rash decisions; most of which they end up regretting. Our*

elders caution us to think first, and then act. By waiting, the anger subsides and one is able to think clearly or objectively. This way, they make choices that are more reasonable or they can live with afterwards.

5. The man with the ugly nose does not mind what others are saying about him as long as he can breathe through it. *People will always be people. They will say bad and do bad things all the time, it pays to ignore them and focus on your life. As long as you are happy and striving to be comfortable, it does not really matter what others have to say about you.*



D. Othniel Forte

Gifts of the masters

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

Drama for Winter Night (Fifth Avenue)

Langston Hughes,

You can't sleep here,
My good man,
You can't sleep here.
This is the house of God.

The usher opens the church door and he goes out.

You can't sleep in this car, old top,
Not here.
If Jones found you
He'd give you to the cops.
Get-the-hell out now,
This ain't home.
You can't stay here.

The chauffeur opens the door and he gets out.

Lord! You can't let a man lie
In the streets like this.
Find an officer quick.
Send for an ambulance.
Maybe he is sick but
He can't die on this corner,
Not here!
He can't die here.

Death opens a door.

Oh, God,
Lemme git by St. Peter.
Lemme sit down on the steps of your throne.
Lemme rest somewhere.
What did yuh say, God?
What did yuh say?
You can't sleep here. . . .
Bums can't stay. . . .

The man's raving.
Get him to the hospital quick.
He's attracting a crowd.
He can't die on this corner.
No, no, not here.

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"Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem

MAYA ANGELOU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We tremble at the sound. We are
thrilled by its presence.
It is what we have hungered for.
Not just the absence of war. But,
true Peace.
A harmony of spirit, a comfort of
courtesies.

Security for our beloveds and their
beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the
Peace of Christmas.
We beckon this good season to wait
a while with us.
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist
and
Muslim, say come.
Peace.
Come and fill us and our world with
your
majesty.
We, the Jew and the Jainist, the
Catholic and the Confucian,
Implore you, to stay a while with us.
So we may learn by your
shimmering light
How to look beyond complexion
and see
community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate
time.

On this platform of peace, we can
create a language
To translate ourselves to ourselves
and to each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the
Birth of Jesus Christ
Into the great religions of the world.
We jubilate the precious advent of
trust.
We shout with glorious tongues at
the coming of hope.
All the earth's tribes loosen their
voices
To celebrate the promise of Peace.

We, Angels and Mortal's, Believers
and NonBelievers,
Look heavenward and speak
the word aloud.
Peace. We look at our world and
speak the word aloud.
Peace.
We look at each other, then into
ourselves
And we say without shyness or
apology or hesitation.
Peace, My Brother.
Peace, My Sister.
Peace, My Soul."

Do You Not Father Me

DYLAN THOMAS

Do you not father me, nor the
erected arm
For my tall tower's sake cast in her
stone?
Do you not mother me, nor, as I
am,
The lovers' house, lie suffering my
stain?
Do you not sister me, nor the
erected crime
For my tall turrets carry as your
sin?
Do you not brother me, nor, as
you climb,
Adore my windows for their
summer scene?

Am I not father, too, and the
ascending boy,
The boy of woman and the
wanton starrer
Marking the flesh and summer in
the bay?
Am I not sister, too, who is my
saviour?
Am I not all of you by the
directed sea
Where bird and shell are
babbling in my tower?
Am I not you who front the tidy
shore,
Nor roof of sand, nor yet the
towering tiler?

You are all these, said she who
gave me the long suck,
All these, he said who sacked the
children's town,
Up rose the Abraham-man, mad
for my sake,
They said, who hacked and
humoured, they were mine.
I am, the tower told, felled by a
timeless stroke,
Who razed my wooden folly
stands aghast,
For man-begetters in the dry-as-
paste,
The ringed-sea ghost, rise grimly
from the wrack.

Do you not father me on the
destroying sand?
You are your sisters' sire, said
seaweedy,
The salt sucked dam and darlings
of the land

Who play the proper
gentleman and lady.
Shall I still be love's house on
the widdershin earth,
Woe to the windy masons at
my shelter?
Love's house, they answer,
and the tower death
Lie all unknowing of the
grave sin-eater.

And the brown fingers of the
shepherd
Moved over slim shoulders;
And only the cicada sang.

I have told thee of the hills
And the lisp of reeds
And the sun upon thy
breasts,

And thou hearest me not,
Πότνια, χούνια,
Thou hearest me not.

To A Greek Marble

RICHARD ALDINGTON

Ἰλότνκα, χότνια
White grave goddess,
Pity my sadness,
O silence of Paros.

I am not of these about thy
feet,
These garments and
decorum;
I am thy brother,
Thy lover of aforesaid crying
to thee,
And thou hearest me not.

I have whispered thee in thy
solitudes
Of our loves in Phrygia,
The far ecstasy of burning
noons
When the fragile pipes
Ceased in the cypress
shade,

Au Vieux Jardin

I have sat here happy in the
gardens,
Watching the still pool and
the reeds
And the dark clouds
Which the wind of the upper
air
Tore like the green leafy
boughs
Of the divers-hued trees of
late summer;
But though I greatly delight
In these and the water lilies,
That which sets me nighest
to weeping
Is the rose and white colour
of the smooth flag-stones,
And the pale yellow grasses
Among them.

RICHARD ALDINGTON

CHRISTMAS STORY BONANZA

is an act of reactivity.
We give 12 stories
to enjoy the month,
just because we care.

PART 1

THE CRATCHIT'S CHRISTMAS DINNER

by Charles Dickens

Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses, whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snowstorms.

The house fronts looked black enough, and the windows blacker, contrasting with the smooth white sheet of snow upon the roofs, and with the dirtier snow upon the ground, which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows by the heavy wheels of carts and wagons; furrows that crossed and re-crossed each other hundreds of times where the great streets branched off, and made intricate channels,

hard to trace, in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in a shower of sooty atoms, as if all the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear heart's content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad that the dearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain.

For the people who were shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee, calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball, better natured missile far than many a wordy jest, laughing heartily if it went right, and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, potbellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence.

There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish onions, shining in the fatness of their growth

like Spanish friars, and winking, from their shelves, in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustering high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shop-keeper's benevolence, to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

The grocers'! oh, the grocers'! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted

company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint, and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day that they tumbled up against each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running back to fetch them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best humour possible; while the grocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws to peck at, if they chose.

But soon the steeples called good people all to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking

through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of by-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the bakers' shops. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood, with Scrooge beside him, in a baker's doorway, and, taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good-humour was restored directly. For they said it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was!

In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners, and the progress of their cooking, in the thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven, where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

"Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?" asked Scrooge.

"There is. My own."

"Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?" asked Scrooge.

"To any kindly given. To a poor one most."

"Why to a poor one most?" asked Scrooge.

"Because it needs it most."

They went on, invisible, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the town. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost (which Scrooge had observed at the baker's) that, notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully, and like a supernatural creature, as it was possible he could have done in any lofty hall.

And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's; for there he went, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; and on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinklings of his torch. Think of that! Bob had but fifteen "bob" a week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!

Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are

cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt-collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own, and, basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collar nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes, bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled.

"What has ever got your precious father, then?" said Mrs. Cratchit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half an hour!"

"Here's Martha, mother!" said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

"Here's Martha, mother!" cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!"

"Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!" said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother!"

"Well, never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!"

"No, no! There's father coming!" cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once.

"Hide, Martha, hide!"

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter, exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him, and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

"Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking around.

"Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming?" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from the church, and had come home rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day?"

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool beside the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs, as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby, compounded some hot

mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round, and put it on the hob to simmer, Master Peter and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds, a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course, and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and, mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving knife, prepared to plunge it into the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young

Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried, "Hurrah!"

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last! Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone, too nervous to bear witnesses, to take the pudding up, and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough? Suppose it should break in turning out? Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the backyard and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose, a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating house and a pastry-cook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to

that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered, flushed, but smiling proudly, with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly, too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that, now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody thought or said it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, tipples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovelful of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass, two tumblers and a custard-cup without a handle.

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!"

Which all the family reechoed.

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

How The Good Gifts Were Used

by Howard Pyle

THIS is the way that this story begins:

Once upon a time there was a rich brother and a poor brother, and the one lived across the street from the other.

The rich brother had all of the world's gear that was good for him and more besides; as for the poor brother, why, he had hardly enough to keep soul and body together, yet he was contented with his lot, and contentment did not sit back of the stove in the rich brother's house; wherefore in this the rich brother had less than the poor brother.

Now these things happened in the good old times when the saints used to be going hither and thither in the world upon this business and upon that.

So one day, who should come travelling to the town where the rich brother and the poor brother lived, but Saint Nicholas himself.

Just beside the town gate stood the great house of the rich brother; thither went the saint and knocked at the door, and it was the rich brother himself who came and opened it to him.

Now, Saint Nicholas had had a long walk of it that day, so that he was quite covered with dust, and looked no better than he should. Therefore he seemed to be only a common beggar; and when the rich brother heard him ask for a night's lodging at his fine, great house, he gaped like a toad in a rain-storm. What! Did the traveller think that he kept a free lodging house for beggars? If he did he was bringing his grist to the wrong mill; there was no place for the likes of him in the house, and that was the truth. But yonder was a poor man's house across the street, if he went over there perhaps he could get a night's lodging and a crust of bread. That was what the rich brother said, and after he had said it he banged to the door, and left Saint Nicholas standing on the outside under the blessed sky.

So now there was nothing for good Saint Nicholas to do but to go across the street to the poor brother's house, as the other had told him to do. Rap! tap! tap! he

knocked at the door, and it was the poor brother who came and opened it for him.

"Come in, come in!" says he, "come in and welcome!"

So in came Saint Nicholas, and sat himself down behind the stove where it was good and warm, while the poor man's wife spread before him all that they had in the house—a loaf of brown bread and a crock of cold water from the town fountain.

"And is that all that you have to eat?" said Saint Nicholas.

Yes; that was all that they had.

"Then, maybe, I can help you to better," said Saint Nicholas. "So bring me hither a bowl and a crock."

You may guess that the poor man's wife was not long in fetching what he wanted. When they were brought the saint blessed the one and passed his hand over the other.

Then he said, "Bowl be filled!" and straightway the bowl began to boil up with a good rich meat pottage until it was full to the brim. Then the saint said, "Bowl be stilled!" and it stopped making the broth, and there stood as good a feast as man could wish for.

Then Saint Nicholas said, "Crock be filled!" and the crock began to bubble up with the best of beer. Then he said, "Crock be stilled!" and there stood as good drink as man ever poured down his throat.

Down they all sat, the saint and the poor man and the poor man's wife, and ate and drank till they could eat and drink no more, and whenever the bowl and the crock grew empty, the one and the other became filled at the bidding.

The next morning the saint trudged off the way he was going, but he left behind him the bowl and the crock, so that there was no danger of hunger and thirst coming to that house.

Well, the world jogged along for a while, maybe a month or two, and life was as easy for the poor man and his wife as an old shoe. One day the rich brother said to his wife. "See now, Luck seems to be stroking our brother over yonder the right way; I'll just go and see what it all means."

So over the street he went, and found the poor man at home. Down he sat back of the stove and began to chatter and talk and talk and chatter, and the upshot of the matter was that, bit by bit, he dragged out the whole story from the poor man. Then nothing would do but he must see the bowl and the crock at work. So the bowl and the crock were brought and set to work and -- Hui!--how the rich brother opened his eyes when he saw them making good broth and beer of themselves.

And now he must and would have that bowl and crock. At first the poor brother said "No," but the

other bargained and bargained until, at last, the poor man consented to let him have the two for a hundred dollars. So the rich brother paid down his hundred dollars, and off he marched with what he wanted.

When the next day had come, the rich brother said to his wife, "Never you mind about the dinner to-day. Go you into the harvest-field, and I will see to the dinner." So off went the wife with the harvesters, and the husband stayed at home and smoked his pipe all the morning, for he knew that dinner would be ready at the bidding. So when noontide had come he took out the bowl and the crock, and, placing them on the table, said, "Bowl be filled! crock be filled!" and straightway they began making broth and beer as fast as they could.

In a little while the bowl and the crock were filled, and then they could hold no more, so that the broth and beer ran down all over the table and the floor. Then the rich brother was in a pretty pickle, for he did not know how to bid the bowl and the crock to stop from making what they were making. Out he ran and across the street to the poor man's house, and meanwhile the broth and beer filled the whole room until it could hold no more, and then ran out into the gutters so that all the pigs and dogs in the town had a feast that day.

"Oh, dear brother!" cried the rich man to the poor man, "do tell me what to do or the whole town will soon be smothered in broth and beer."

But, no; the poor brother was not to be stirred in such haste; they would have to strike a bit of a bargain first. So the upshot of the matter was that the rich brother had to pay the poor brother another hundred dollars to take the crock and the bowl back again.

See, now, what comes of being covetous!

As for the poor man, he was well off in the world, for he had all that he could eat and drink, and a stocking of money back of the stove besides.

Well, time went along as time does, and now it was Saint Christopher who was thinking about taking a little journey below. "See, brother," says Saint Nicholas to him, "if you chance to be jogging by yonder town, stop at the poor man's house, for there you will have a warm welcome and plenty to eat."

But when Saint Christopher came to the town, the rich man's house seemed so much larger and finer than the poor man's house, that he thought that he would ask for lodging there.

But it fared the same with him that it had with Saint Nicholas. Prut! Did he think that the rich man kept free lodgings for beggars? And—bang!--the door was

slammed in his face, and off packed the saint with a flea in his ear.

Over he went to the poor man's house, and there was a warm welcome for him, and good broth and beer from the bowl and the crock that Saint Nicholas had blessed. After he had supped he went to bed, where he slept as snug and warm as a mouse in the nest.

The Christmas Tree and The Wedding

by *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*

The other day I saw a wedding... But no! I would rather tell you about a Christmas tree. The wedding was superb. I liked it immensely. But the other incident was still finer. I don't know why it is that the sight of the wedding reminded me of the Christmas tree. This is the way it happened:

Exactly five years ago, on New Year's Eve, I was invited to a children's ball by a man high up in the business world, who had his connections, his circle of acquaintances, and his intrigues. So it seemed as though the children's ball was merely a pretext for the parents to come together and discuss matters of interest to themselves, quite innocently and casually.

I was an outsider, and, as I had no special matters to air,

I was able to spend the evening independently of the others. There was another gentleman present who like myself had just stumbled upon this affair of domestic bliss. He was the first to attract my attention. His appearance was not that of a man of birth or high family. He was tall, rather thin, very serious, and well dressed. Apparently he had no heart for the family festivities. The instant he went off into a corner by himself the smile disappeared from his face, and his thick dark brows knitted into a frown. He knew no one except the host and showed every sign of being bored to death, though bravely sustaining the role of thorough enjoyment to the end. Later I learned that he was a provincial, had come to the capital on some important, brain-racking business, had brought a letter of recommendation to our host, and our host had taken him under his protection, not at all *con amore*. It was merely out of politeness that he had invited him to the children's ball.

They did not play cards with him, they did not offer him cigars. No one entered into conversation with him. Possibly they recognised the bird by its feathers from a distance. Thus, my gentleman, not knowing what to do with his hands, was compelled to spend the evening stroking his whiskers. His whiskers

were really fine, but he stroked them so assiduously that one got the feeling that the whiskers had come into the world first and afterwards the man in order to stroke them.

There was another guest who interested me. But he was of quite a different order. He was a personage. They called him Julian Mastakovich. At first glance one could tell he was an honoured guest and stood in the same relation to the host as the host to the gentleman of the whiskers. The host and hostess said no end of amiable things to him, were most attentive, wining him, hovering over him, bringing guests up to be introduced, but never leading him to any one else. I noticed tears glisten in our host's eyes when Julian Mastakovich remarked that he had rarely spent such a pleasant evening. Somehow I began to feel uncomfortable in this personage's presence. So, after amusing myself with the children, five of whom, remarkably well-fed young persons, were our host's, I went into a little sitting-room, entirely unoccupied, and seated myself at the end that was a conservatory and took up almost half the room.

The children were charming. They absolutely refused to resemble their elders, notwithstanding the efforts of mothers and governesses. In a jiffy they had denuded the Christmas tree down to the very last

sweet and had already succeeded in breaking half of their playthings before they even found out which belonged to whom.

One of them was a particularly handsome little lad, dark-eyed, curly-haired, who stubbornly persisted in aiming at me with his wooden gun. But the child that attracted the greatest attention was his sister, a girl of about eleven, lovely as a Cupid. She was quiet and thoughtful, with large, full, dreamy eyes. The children had somehow offended her, and she left them and walked into the same room that I had withdrawn into. There she seated herself with her doll in a corner.

"Her father is an immensely wealthy business man," the guests informed each other in tones of awe. "Three hundred thousand rubles set aside for her dowry already."

As I turned to look at the group from which I heard this news item issuing, my glance met Julian Mastakovich's. He stood listening to the insipid chatter in an attitude of concentrated attention, with his hands behind his back and his head inclined to one side.

All the while I was quite lost in admiration of the shrewdness our host displayed in the dispensing of the gifts. The little maid of the many-rubied dowry received the handsomest doll, and the rest of the gifts

were graded in value according to the diminishing scale of the parents' stations in life. The last child, a tiny chap of ten, thin, red-haired, freckled, came into possession of a small book of nature stories without illustrations or even head and tail pieces. He was the governess's child. She was a poor widow, and her little boy, clad in a sorry-looking little nankeen jacket, looked thoroughly crushed and intimidated. He took the book of nature stories and circled slowly about the children's toys. He would have given anything to play with them. But he did not dare to. You could tell he already knew his place.

I like to observe children. It is fascinating to watch the individuality in them struggling for self-assertion. I could see that the other children's things had tremendous charm for the red-haired boy, especially a toy theatre, in which he was so anxious to take a part that he resolved to fawn upon the other children. He smiled and began to play with them. His one and only apple he handed over to a puffy urchin whose pockets were already crammed with sweets, and he even carried another youngster pickaback—all simply that he might be allowed to stay with the theatre.

But in a few moments an impudent young person fell on him and gave him a pummelling. He did not

dare even to cry. The governess came and told him to leave off interfering with the other children's games, and he crept away to the same room the little girl and I were in. She let him sit down beside her, and the two set themselves busily dressing the expensive doll.

Almost half an hour passed, and I was nearly dozing off, as I sat there in the conservatory half listening to the chatter of the red-haired boy and the dowered beauty, when Julian Mastakovich entered suddenly. He had slipped out of the drawing-room under cover of a noisy scene among the children. From my secluded corner it had not escaped my notice that a few moments before he had been eagerly conversing with the rich girl's father, to whom he had only just been introduced.

He stood still for a while reflecting and mumbling to himself, as if counting something on his fingers.

"Three hundred—three hundred—eleven—twelve—thirteen—sixteen—in five years! Let's say four per cent—five times twelve—sixty, and on these sixty—. Let us assume that in five years it will amount to—well, four hundred. Hm—hm! But the shrewd old fox isn't likely to be satisfied with four per cent. He gets eight or even ten, perhaps. Let's suppose five hundred, five hundred thousand, at least, that's

sure. Anything above that for pocket money—hm—"

He blew his nose and was about to leave the room when he spied the girl and stood still. I, behind the plants, escaped his notice. He seemed to me to be quivering with excitement. It must have been his calculations that upset him so. He rubbed his hands and danced from place to place, and kept getting more and more excited. Finally, however, he conquered his emotions and came to a standstill. He cast a determined look at the future bride and wanted to move toward her, but glanced about first. Then, as if with a guilty conscience, he stepped over to the child on tip-toe, smiling, and bent down and kissed her head.

His coming was so unexpected that she uttered a shriek of alarm.

"What are you doing here, dear child?" he whispered, looking around and pinching her cheek.

"We're playing."

"What, with him?" said Julian Mastakovich with a look askance at the governess's child. "You should go into the drawing-room, my lad," he said to him.

The boy remained silent and looked up at the man with wide-open eyes. Julian Mastakovich glanced round again cautiously and bent down over the girl.

"What have you got, a doll, my dear?"

"Yes, sir." The child quailed a little, and her brow wrinkled.

"A doll? And do you know, my dear, what dolls are made of?"

"No, sir," she said weakly, and lowered her head.

"Out of rags, my dear. You, boy, you go back to the drawing-room, to the children," said Julian Mastakovich looking at the boy sternly.

The two children frowned. They caught hold of each other and would not part.

"And do you know why they gave you the doll?" asked Julian

Mastakovich, dropping his voice lower and lower.

"No."

"Because you were a good, very good little girl the whole week."

Saying which, Julian Mastakovich was seized with a paroxysm of agitation. He looked round and said in a tone faint, almost inaudible with excitement and impatience:

"If I come to visit your parents will you love me, my dear?"

He tried to kiss the sweet little creature, but the red-haired boy saw that she was on the verge of tears, and he caught her hand and sobbed out loud in sympathy. That enraged the man.

"Go away! Go away! Go back to the other room, to your playmates."

"I don't want him to. I don't want him to! You go away!" cried the girl. "Let

him alone! Let him alone!" She was almost weeping.

There was a sound of footsteps in the doorway. Julian Mastakovich started and straightened up his respectable body. The red-haired boy was even more alarmed. He let go the girl's hand, sidled along the wall, and escaped through the drawing-room into the dining-room.

Not to attract attention, Julian Mastakovich also made for the dining-room. He was red as a lobster. The sight of himself in a mirror seemed to embarrass him. Presumably he was annoyed at his own ardour and impatience. Without due respect to his importance and dignity, his calculations had lured and pricked him to the greedy eagerness of a boy, who makes straight for his object—though this was not as yet an object; it only would be so in five years' time. I followed the worthy man into the dining-room, where I witnessed a remarkable play.

Julian Mastakovich, all flushed with vexation, venom in his look, began to threaten the red-haired boy. The red-haired boy retreated farther and farther until there was no place left for him to retreat to, and he did not know where to turn in his fright.

"Get out of here! What are you doing here? Get out, I say, you good-for-nothing! Stealing fruit, are you? Oh, so, stealing fruit! Get out,

you freckle face, go to your likes!"

The frightened child, as a last desperate resort, crawled quickly under the table. His persecutor, completely infuriated, pulled out his large linen handkerchief and used it as a lash to drive the boy out of his position.

Here I must remark that Julian Mastakovich was a somewhat corpulent man, heavy, well-fed, puffy-cheeked, with a paunch and ankles as round as nuts. He perspired and puffed and panted. So strong was his dislike (or was it jealousy?) of the child that he actually began to carry on like a madman.

I laughed heartily. Julian Mastakovich turned. He was utterly confused and for a moment, apparently, quite oblivious of his immense importance. At that moment our host appeared in the doorway opposite. The boy crawled out from under the table and wiped his knees and elbows. Julian Mastakovich hastened to carry his handkerchief, which he had been dangling by the corner, to his nose. Our host looked at the three of us rather suspiciously. But, like a man who knows the world and can readily adjust himself, he seized upon the opportunity to lay hold of his very valuable guest and get what he wanted out of him.

"Here's the boy I was talking to you about," he said, indicating the red-

haired child. "I took the liberty of presuming on your goodness in his behalf."

"Oh," replied Julian Mastakovich, still not quite master of himself.

"He's my governess's son," our host continued in a beseeching tone. "She's a poor creature, the widow of an honest official. That's why, if it were possible for you—"

"Impossible, impossible!" Julian Mastakovich cried hastily. "You must excuse me, Philip Alexeyevich, I really cannot. I've made inquiries. There are no vacancies, and there is a waiting list of ten who have a greater right—I'm sorry."

"Too bad," said our host. "He's a quiet, unobtrusive child."

"A very naughty little rascal, I should say," said Julian Mastakovich, wryly. "Go away, boy. Why are you here still? Be off with you to the other children."

Unable to control himself, he gave me a sidelong glance. Nor could I control myself. I laughed straight in his face. He turned away and asked our host, in tones quite audible to me, who that odd young fellow was. They whispered to each other and left the room, disregarding me.

I shook with laughter. Then I, too, went to the drawing-room. There the great man, already surrounded by the fathers and mothers and the host and the hostess, had begun

to talk eagerly with a lady to whom he had just been introduced. The lady held the rich little girl's hand. Julian Mastakovich went into fulsome praise of her. He waxed ecstatic over the dear child's beauty, her talents, her grace, her excellent breeding, plainly laying himself out to flatter the mother, who listened scarcely able to restrain tears of joy, while the father showed his delight by a gratified smile.

The joy was contagious. Everybody shared in it. Even the children were obliged to stop playing so as not to disturb the conversation. The atmosphere was surcharged with awe. I heard the mother of the important little girl, touched to her profoundest depths, ask Julian Mastakovich in the choicest language of courtesy, whether he would honour them by coming to see them. I heard Julian Mastakovich accept the invitation with unfeigned enthusiasm. Then the guests scattered decorously to different parts of the room, and I heard them, with veneration in their tones, extol the business man, the business man's wife, the business man's daughter, and, especially, Julian Mastakovich.

"Is he married?" I asked out loud of an acquaintance of mine standing beside Julian Mastakovich.

Julian Mastakovich gave me a venomous look.

"No," answered my acquaintance, profoundly shocked by my—intentional—indiscretion.

* * * * *

Not long ago I passed the Church of——. I was struck by the concourse of people gathered there to witness a wedding. It was a dreary day. A drizzling rain was beginning to come down. I made my way through the throng into the church. The bridegroom was a round, well-fed, pot-bellied little man, very much dressed up. He ran and fussed about and gave orders and arranged things. Finally word was passed that the bride was coming. I pushed through the crowd, and I beheld a marvellous beauty whose first spring was scarcely commencing. But the beauty was pale and sad. She looked distracted. It seemed to me even that her eyes were red from recent weeping. The classic severity of every line of her face imparted a peculiar significance and solemnity to her beauty. But through that severity and solemnity, through the sadness, shone the innocence of a child. There was something inexpressibly naïve, unsettled and young in her features, which, without words, seemed to plead for mercy.

They said she was just sixteen years old. I looked at the bridegroom carefully. Suddenly I recognised Julian Mastakovich, whom I had not seen again in all

those five years. Then I looked at the bride again.— Good God! I made my way, as quickly as I could, out of the church. I heard gossiping in the crowd about the bride's wealth—about her dowry of five hundred thousand rubles—so and so much for pocket money.

"Then his calculations were correct," I thought, as I pressed out into the street.

The Children of Wind and the Clan of Peace

by Fiona Macleod

"I have lived seven years," He said, "and I wish to send peace to the far ends of the world."

"Tell your secret to the birds," said one.

"Tell your secret to the birds," said the other.

So Jesus called to the birds.

"Come," He cried; and they came.

Seven came flying from the left, from the side of the angel beautiful as Night. Seven came flying from the right, from the side of the angel beautiful as Morning.

To the first He said: "Look into my heart."

But they wheeled about Him, and with newfound voices mocked, crying, "How could we see into your heart that is hidden" ... and mocked and derided, crying,

"What is Peace! ... Leave us alone! Leave us alone!"

So Christ said to them:

"I know you for the birds of Ahriman, who is not beautiful but is Evil.

Henceforth ye shall be black as night, and be children of the winds."

To the seven other birds which circled about Him, voiceless, and brushing their wings against His arms, He cried:

"Look into my heart."

And they swerved and hung before Him in a maze of wings, and looked into His pure heart: and, as they looked, a soft murmurous sound came from them, drowsy-sweet, full of peace: and as they hung there like a breath in frost they became white as snow.

"Ye are the Doves of the Spirit," said Christ, "and to you I will commit that which ye have seen. Henceforth shall your plumage be white and your voices be the voices of peace."

The young Christ turned, for He heard Mary calling to the sheep and goats, and knew that day set was come and that in the valleys the gloaming was already rising like smoke from the urns of the twilight. When He looked back

He saw by the pool neither the Son of Joy nor the Son of Sorrow, but seven white doves were in the cedar beyond the pool, cooing in low ecstasy of peace and awaiting through sleep and dreams the rose-red pathways of the dawn. Down

the long grey reaches of the ebbing day

He saw seven birds rising and falling on the wind, black as black water in caves, black as the darkness of night in old pathless woods.

And that is how the first doves became white, and how the first crows became black and were called by a name that means the clan of darkness, the children of the wind.

The Mystic Thorn

A Short Christmas Story

"Three hawthornes also that groweth in Werall

Do burge and bere grene leaves at Christmas

As fresshe as other in May."

It was Christmas day in the year 63. The autumn colors of red and gold had long since faded from the hills, and the trees which covered the island valley of Glastonbury, the Avalon or Apple-tree isle of the early Britons, were bare and leafless. The spreading, glass-like waters encircling it round about gleamed faintly in the pale afternoon light of the winter's day. The light fell also on the silver stems of the willows and on the tall flags and bending reeds and osiers which bordered the marsh island. Westward the long ranges of hills running seaward were purple in the distance and their tops were partly hidden by the misty

white clouds which rested lightly upon them. To the south rose sharply and abruptly a high, pointed hill, the tor of Glastonbury.

It was nearing the sunset hour when a little band of men in pilgrim garb, approaching from the west and climbing the long, hilly ridge, came within sight of this "isle of rest." Twelve pilgrims there were in all, in dress and appearance very unlike the fair-haired Britons who at that time dwelt in the land. One, he who led the way, was an old man. His hair was white and his long, white beard fell upon his breast, but he was tall and erect and bore no other signs of age. In his hand he carried a stout hawthorn staff.

The men were climbing slowly up the hill, for they were all weary with long travelling. And here at the summit of the ridge they stopped to look out over the wooded hills, the wide-spreading waters and the grassy island with its leafless thickets of oak and alder. Sitting down to rest, they spoke one to another of their long journeying from the far-distant land of Palestine and of their hope that here their pilgrimage might have end.

Those who were with him called their leader Joseph of Arimathea. He it was who had been known among the Jews many years before as a counsellor, "a good man, and a just," and who, when the Saviour was crucified on Calvary, had given his sepulchre to receive the body of the Lord.

From this tomb upon the third day came the risen Saviour; but the people, thinking that Joseph had stolen away the body, seized and imprisoned him in a chamber where there was no window. They fastened the door and put a seal upon the lock and placed men before the door to guard it. Then the priests and the Levites contrived to what death they should put him; but when they sent for Joseph to be brought forth he could not be found, though the seal was still upon the lock and the guard before the door.

The disciples of Joseph as they gathered about their fire of an evening often told how, at night, as he prayed, the prison chamber had been filled with a light brighter than that of the sun, and Jesus himself had appeared to him and had led him forth unharmed to his own house in Arimathea.

And sometimes they told how, again imprisoned, he had been fed from the Holy Cup from which the Saviour had drunk at the "last sad supper with his own" and in which Joseph had caught the blood of his Master when he was on the cross, and how he had been blest with such heavenly visions that the years passed and seemed to him as naught.

Now after a certain time he had been released from prison; but there were people who still doubted him and so with his friends, Lazarus and Mary Magdalene and Philip and others, he had been driven away from Jerusalem.

The small vessel, without oars, rudder or sail, in which they had been cast adrift on the Mediterranean, had come at last in safety to the coast of Gaul. And for many years since then had Joseph wandered through the land carrying ever with him two precious relics, the Holy Grail and "that same spear wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ." Now at last with a chosen band of disciples he had reached the little-known island of the Britons.

Landing from their little boat in the early morn on this unknown coast, they had knelt upon the shore while Joseph "gave blessing to the God of heaven in a lowly chanted prayer." Then, "over the brow of the seaward hill" they had passed, led by an invisible hand and singing as they went. All day through dark forests and over reedy swamps they had made their way and now at nightfall, tired and wayworn, they rested on the ridgy hill which has ever since been known by the name of Wearyall.

During the long day's march they had seen but few of the people of the land and these had held aloof.

Now, suddenly, the silence was broken by loud cries and shouts, and groups of the native Britons, wild and uncouth in appearance, their half-naked bodies stained blue with woad, were seen coming from different directions up the hill. They were armed with spears, hatchets of bronze, and other rude weapons of olden

warfare and, as they came rapidly nearer, their threatening aspect and menacing cries startled the pilgrim band. Rising hastily, as though they would flee, the men looked in terror, one toward another. Joseph alone showed no trace of fear and, obedient to a sign from him, they all knelt in prayer upon the hillside.

Then, thrusting his thorny staff into the ground beside him and raising both hands toward heaven, Joseph claimed possession of this new land in the name of his Master, Christ.

"This staff hath borne me long and well,"

Then spake that saint divine,

'Over mountain and over plain,

On quest of the Promise-sign;

For aye let it stand in this western land,

And God do no more to me

If there ring not out from this realm about,

'Tibi gloria, Domine.'"

His voice ceased and the men rose from their knees, looking expectantly for the heavenly sign, but ready, if need be, to meet with courage the threatened attack.

But stillness had again settled over the hill. Only a few rods distant the Britons had stopped and grouped closely together were gazing in awestruck silence upon the dry and withered staff, which had so often aided Joseph in his wanderings from the Holy Land. Following their

gaze, Joseph and his companions turned toward it and even as they did so, behold! A miracle! The staff took root and grew and, as they watched, they saw it put forth branches and green leaves, fair buds and milk-white blossoms which filled the air with their sweet odor.

For a moment, awed and amazed, all stood silent. Wondrously had Joseph's prayer been answered! This was indeed the heavenly token which had been foretold! Then with tears of joy all cried out as with one voice, "Our God is with us! Jesus is with us!"

Marvelling much at the strange things they had just seen and heard, the

Britons dropped their weapons and fled in haste from the hill.

Then did Joseph and his disciples go down across the marsh into the valley and there they rested undisturbed.

Word of the miracle which had thus been wrought on Wearyall Hill was brought soon to Arviragus, the heathen king of the time, and he welcomed gladly the holy men and gave them the beautiful vale of Avalon whereon to live. There they built "a little lonely church," with roof of rushes and walls of woven twigs and "wattles from the marsh," the first Christian church which had ever been built in Britain.

There they dwelt for many years, serving God, fasting and praying, and there Joseph taught the half-barbarous Britons, who

gathered to listen to him, the faith of Christ.

Time passed and the little, low, wattled church became a great and beautiful abbey. Many pilgrims there were who came to worship at the shrine of St. Joseph; to drink from the holy well which sprang from the foot of Chalice Hill where the Holy Cup lay buried; and to watch the budding of the mystic thorn, which, year after year, when the snows of Christmas covered the hills, put forth its holy blossoms, "a symbol of God's promise, care and love."

Now long, long afterward there came a time when there was war in the land and one day a rough soldier who reckoned not of its heavenly origin cut down the sacred tree. Only a flat stone now marks the place where it once stood and where Joseph's staff burst into bloom. But there were other trees which had been grown from slips of the miraculous thorn and these, "mindful of our Lord" still keep the sacred birthday and blossom each year on Christmas Day.

Legend of St. Christopher

A Short Christmas Story

There was a mighty man of old who dwelt in the land of

Canaan. Large was he and tall of stature and stronger than any man whom the world had ever seen. Therefore, was he called Offero, or, "The Bearer." Now he served the king of Canaan, but he was proud of his great strength and upon a time it came in his mind that he would seek the greatest king who then reigned and him only would he serve and obey.

So he travelled from one country to another until at length he came to one where ruled a powerful king whose fame was great in all the land.

"Thou art the conqueror of nations?" asked Offero.

"I am," replied the king.

"Then take me into your service, for I will serve none but the mightiest of earth."

"That then am I," returned the king, "for truly I fear none."

So the king received Offero into his service and made him to dwell in his court.

But once at eventide a minstrel sang before the king a merry song in which he named oft the evil one. And every time that the king heard the name of Satan he grew pale and hastily made the sign of the cross upon his forehead. Offero marvelled thereat and demanded of the king the meaning of the sign and wherefore he thus crossed himself. And because the king would not tell him Offero said, "If thou tell me not, I shall no longer dwell with thee." Then the king answered, saying, "Always when I hear Satan

named, I fear that he may have power over me and therefore I make this sign that he harm me not."

"Who is Satan?" asked Offero.

"He is a wicked monarch," replied the king, "wicked but powerful."

"More powerful than thou art?"

"Aye, verily."

"And fearest thou that he hurt thee?"

"That do I, and so do all."

"Then," cried Offero, "is he more mighty and greater than thou art. I will go seek him. Henceforth he shall be my master for I would fain serve the mightiest and the greatest lord of all the world."

So Offero departed from the king and sought Satan. Everywhere he met people who had given themselves over to his rule and at last one day as he was crossing a wide desert he saw a great company of knights approaching. One of them, mounted upon a great black horse, came to him and demanded whither he went, and Offero made answer, "I seek Satan, for he is mighty, and I would fain serve him."

Then returned the knight, "I am he whom thou seekest."

When Offero heard these words he was right glad and took Satan to be his lord and master.

This king was indeed powerful and a long time did Offero serve him, but it chanced one day as they were journeying together they came to a place where four roads met and in the midst of

the space stood a little cross. As soon as Satan saw the cross he was afraid and turned quickly aside and fled toward the desert. Offero followed him marvelling much at the sight. And after, when they had come back to the highway they had left, he inquired of Satan why he was thus troubled and had gone so far out of his way to avoid the cross. But Satan answered him not a word.

Then Offero said to him, "If thou wilt not tell me, I shall depart from thee straightway and shall serve thee no more."

"Know then," said Satan, "there was a man called Christ who suffered on the cross and whenever I see his sign I am sore afraid and flee from it, lest he destroy me."

"If then thou art afraid of his sign," cried Offero, "he is greater and more mighty than thou, and I see well that I have labored in vain, for I have not found the greatest lord of the world. I will serve thee no longer. Go thy way alone, for I will go to seek Christ."

And when he had long sought and demanded where he should find Him, he came at length into a great desert where dwelt a hermit, a servant of the Christ. The hermit told him of the Master whom he was seeking and said to him, "This king whom thou dost wish to serve is not an earthly ruler and he requireth that thou oft fast and make many prayers."

But Offero understood not the meaning of worship and prayer and he answered,

"Require of me some other thing and I shall do it, but I know naught of this which thou requirest."

Then the hermit said to him, "Knowest thou the river, a day's journey from here, where there is neither ford nor bridge and many perish and are lost? Thou art large and strong. Therefore go thou and dwell by this river and bear over all who desire to cross its waters. That is a service which will be well pleasing to the Christ whom thou desirest to serve, and sometime, if I mistake not, he whom thou seekest will come to thee."

Offero was right joyful at these words and answered, "This service may I well do."

So he hastened to the river and upon its banks he built himself a little hut of reeds. He bare a great pole in his hand to sustain him in the water and many weary wayfarers did he help to cross the turbulent stream. So he lived a long time, bearing over all manner of people without ceasing, and still he saw nothing of the Christ.

Now it happened one night that a storm was raging and the river was very high. Tired with his labors, Offero had just flung himself down on his rude bed to sleep when he heard the voice of a child which called him and said, "Offero, Offero, come out and bear me over."

Offero arose and went out from his cabin, but in the darkness he could see no one. And when he was again in the house, he heard the same voice and he ran out

again and found no one. A third time he heard the call and going out once more into the storm, there upon the river bank he found a fair young child who besought him in pleading tones, "Wilt thou not carry me over the river this night, Offero?"

The strong man gently lifted the child on his shoulders, took his staff and stepped into the stream. And the water of the river arose and swelled more and more and the child was heavy as lead. And alway as he went farther, higher and higher swelled the waters and the child more and more waxed heavy, insomuch that he feared that they would both be drowned. Already his strength was nearly gone, but he thought of his Master whom he had not yet seen, and staying his footsteps with his palm staff struggled with all his might to reach the opposite shore. As at last he climbed the steep bank, suddenly the storm ceased and the waters calmed.

He set the child down upon the shore, saying, "Child, thou hast put me in great peril. Had I carried the whole world on my shoulders, the weight had not been greater. I might bear no greater burden."

"Offero," answered the child, "Marvel not, but rejoice; for thou hast borne not only all the world upon thee, but thou hast borne him that created and made all the world upon thy shoulders. I am Christ the king whom thou servest in this work. And for a token,

that thou mayst know what I say to be the truth, set thy staff in the earth by thy house and thou shalt see in the morning that it shall bear flowers and fruit." With these words the child vanished from Offero's sight.

But Offero did even as he was bidden and set his staff in the earth and when he arose on the morrow, he found it like a palm-tree bearing flowers and leaves and clusters of dates. Then he knew that it was indeed Christ whom he had borne through the waters and he rejoiced that he had found his Master. From that day he served Christ faithfully and was no more called Offero, but Christopher, the Christ bearer.

A Christmas Legend

by **Florence Scannell**

It was Christmas Eve. The night was very dark and the snow falling fast, as Hermann, the charcoal-burner, drew his cloak tighter around him, and the wind whistled fiercely through the trees of the Black Forest. He had been to carry a load to a castle near, and was now hastening home to his little hut.

Although he worked very hard, he was poor, gaining barely enough for the wants of his wife and his four little

children. He was thinking of them, when he heard a faint wailing. Guided by the sound, he groped about and found a little child, scantily clothed, shivering and sobbing by itself in the snow.

"Why, little one, have they left thee here all alone to face this cruel blast?"

The child answered nothing, but looked piteously up in the charcoal-burner's face.

"Well, I cannot leave thee here. Thou would'st be dead before the morning."

So saying, Hermann raised it in his arms, wrapping it in his cloak and warming its little cold hands in his bosom. When he arrived at his hut, he put down the child and tapped at the door, which was immediately thrown open, and the children rushed to meet him.

"Here, wife, is a guest to our Christmas Eve supper," said he, leading in the little one, who held timidly to his finger with its tiny hand.

"And welcome he is," said the wife. "Now let him come and warm himself by the fire."

The children all pressed round to welcome and gaze at the little new-comer. They showed him their pretty fir-tree, decorated with bright, colored lamps in honor of Christmas Eve, which the good mother had endeavored to make a fête for the children.

Then they sat down to supper, each child contributing of its portion for the guest, looking with admiration at its clear, blue

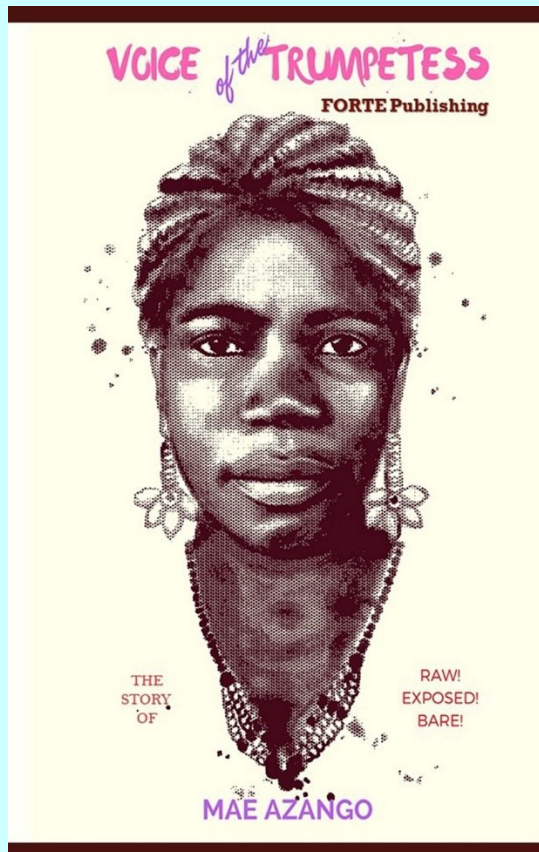
eyes and golden hair, which shone so as to shed a brighter light in the little room; and as they gazed, it grew into a sort of halo round his head, and his eyes beamed with a heavenly luster. Soon two white wings appeared at his shoulders, and he seemed to grow larger and larger, and then the beautiful vision vanished, spreading out his hands as in benediction over them.

Hermann and his wife fell on their knees, exclaiming, in awe-struck voices: "The holy Christ-child!" and then embraced their wondering children in joy and thankfulness that they had entertained the Heavenly Guest.

The next morning, as Hermann passed by the place where he had found the fair child, he saw a cluster of lovely white flowers, with dark green leaves, looking as though the snow itself had blossomed. Hermann plucked some, and carried them reverently home to his wife and children, who treasured the fair blossoms and tended them carefully in remembrance of that wonderful Christmas Eve, calling them Chrysanthemums; and every year, as the time came round, they put aside a portion of their feast and gave it to some poor little child, according to the words of the Christ: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

To be continued

Recommended READS



Blurb

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

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

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

She trumpets the horrors of her own past.

Excerpt

“Confess!”

“Ooooooh,” I moan on the cold floor.

“You belleh say ley truth eh!”

“Ay God.” I whispered, unable to speak. My voice gone from screams. My body

riddled with pain. I feel the life draining out of my body.

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

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

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

“La who ley man? John? Garyou? Who?”

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

“Dah nah dem, den dah who?”

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

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

Da Youjay?”

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

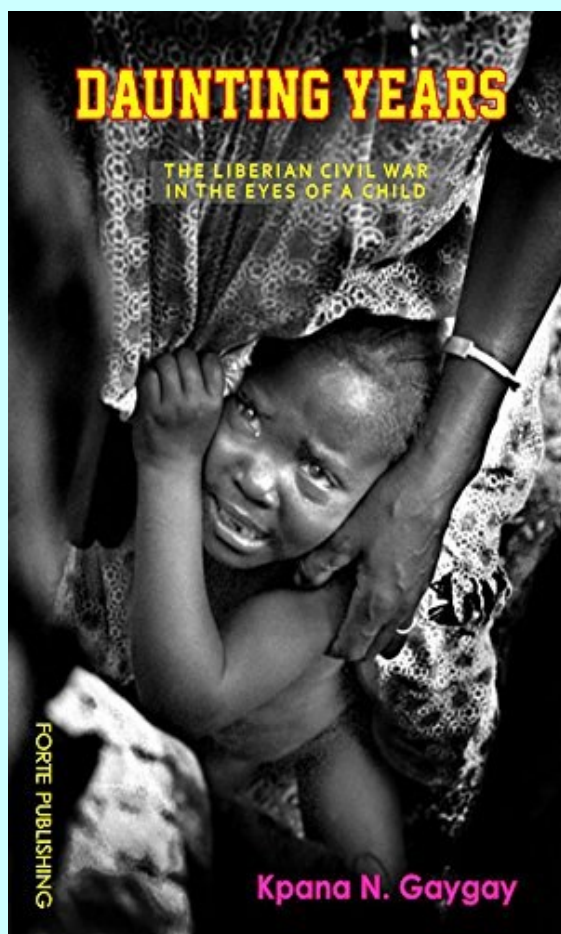
“Thank Gor” She exclaimed jumping to action. For once she stopped beating me.

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

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

Recommended READS

Excerpt



Blurb

A little child wakes up starving. Her mother can't feed her because she's dying from hunger. Her village can't protect her because they are engulfed in the midst of a bloody civil war.

They have the misfortune to live in a village that is a strategic spot on the map of warlords and government forces; both groups determined to take and or keep that little town at all cost. Their men have fled; left them unprotected. Their sons have been taken or killed.

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

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

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

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

Boom!

Brrrr, brrr.

Boom! Boom!

Brrrrrr, brrrrrrrrr, brrrrr

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The man dah enemy," shouted one person.

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

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

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

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

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

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

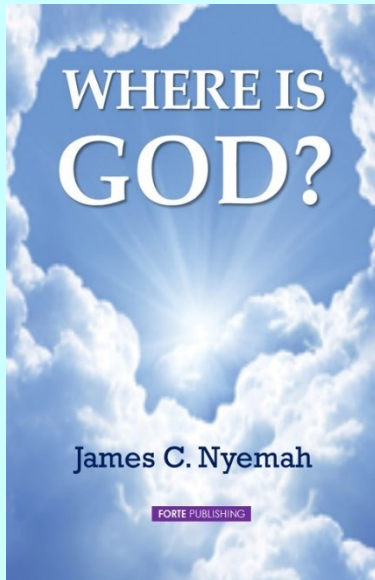
"Open fire!"

Recommended Reads

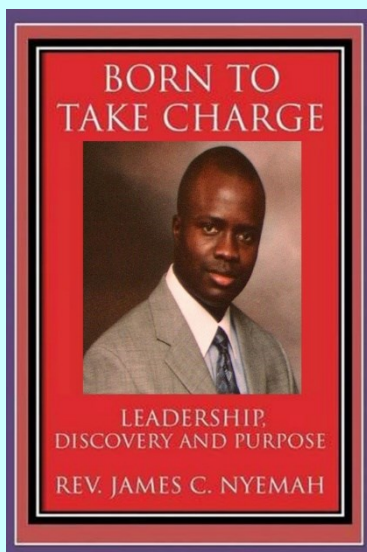
Published by **FORTE Publishing**

WHERE IS GOD?

“Where is God?” A most difficult question no doubt but a necessary one about God and life. If things are worse, we even go further and ask all sorts of questions. For example, “If God is such a loving and caring father, why does he allow bad things to happen to good people, including Christians?”



We were all born to do something or for a reason, even if one does not know or has not yet figured out theirs. Grab a copy of this book and be inspired.
Pastor James Nyemah writes a powerful motivational book that spurs one to do one thing... **TAKE CHARGE.**



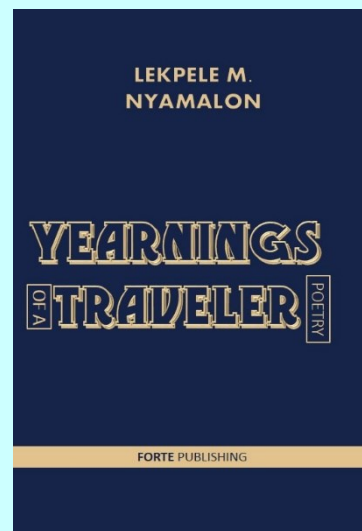
Recommended Reads

MOMOH SEKOU DUDU takes us on a mental journey in his latest release, *When The Mind Soars, poetry from the Heart*. He exposes us to a Liberia as freshly, honestly and chaotic as he sees it. He presents us a broken Liberia that is pulling herself up by its own boot straps. Let your minds fly, soar with ideas.



Yearnings of A Traveler

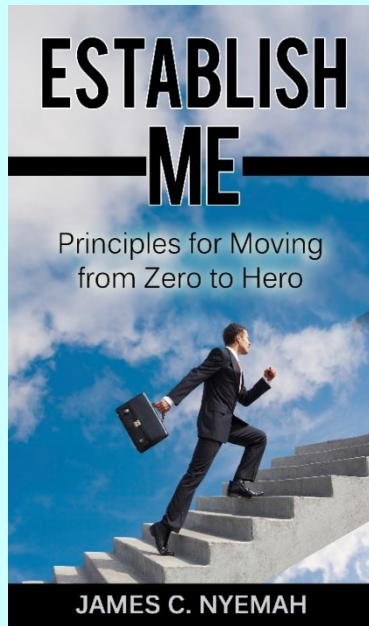
We all have a yearning for something. For Lekpele, his has been a message of self worth, as we see in his signature piece, My Body is Gold; one of patriotism, as in Scars of A Tired Nation; one of Pan Africanism as in the piece, Dig The Graves. He also has a message of hope as seen in his award winning poem, Forgotten Future. He is an emerging voice that one can't afford to ignore. Yearning is the debut chapbook by Liberian poet, Lekpele M. Nyamalon.



Recommended Reads

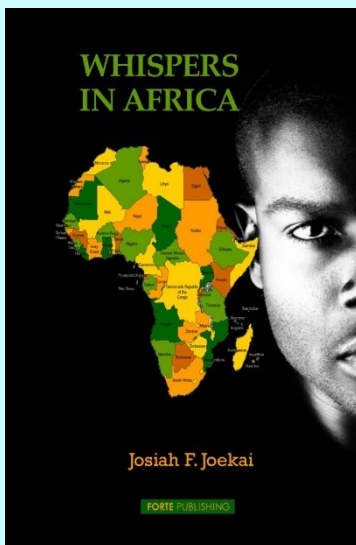
***ESTABLISH ME Principles
from Zero to Hero***

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



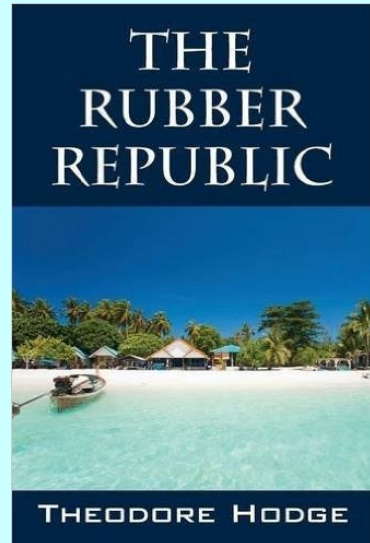
In his latest work, Ps. Nyemah lets us know that God can **Fix Us, Mold Us, Create Us** and then **Establish US**.

Available now from FORTE Publishing



The Rubber Republic

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



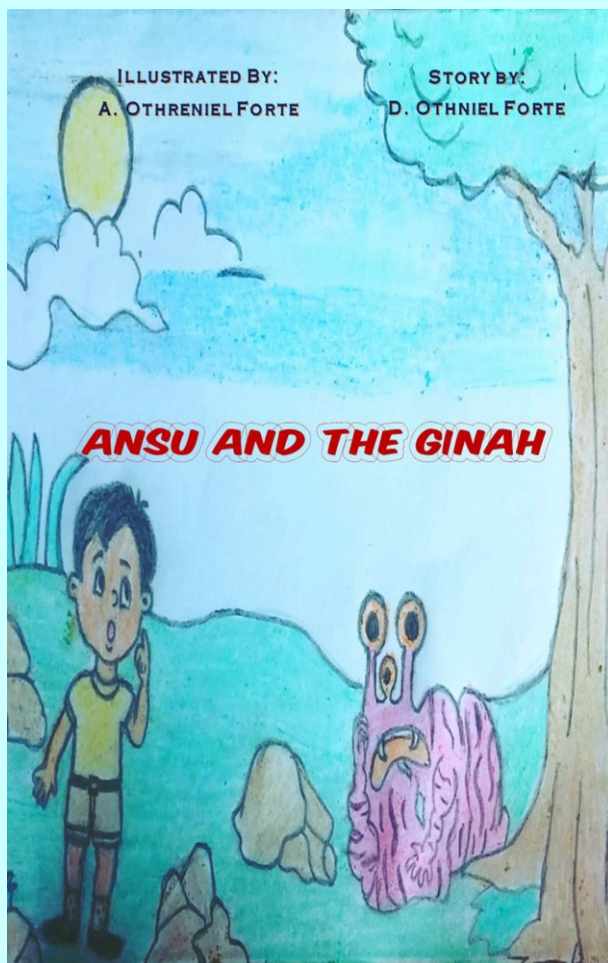
the intriguing and fantastic lives of two young men, Yaba-Dio Himmie and Yaba-Dio Kla, who leave their parents' farm in search of enlightenment and adventure. But the story is also about their country, the Republic of Seacoast, and a giant American Rubber conglomerate, The Waterstone Rubber Plantation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

Mohammed Dolley Donzo

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



their ancestors. *Available now from FORTE Publishing by Mohammed Dolley Donzo*



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

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

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

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

FORTE Publishing Int'l

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

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

Belle Kizolu is one of the youngest published Liberian authors. She lives in Monrovia where she attends school. She is in the 7th grade.

FORTE Publishing Int'l

A photograph of President George Weah, a Black man with a grey beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is speaking into a microphone. An American flag pin is visible on his lapel.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS
*to the People of
Liberia*

President George Weah

A portrait of Jewel Howard Taylor, a Black woman wearing a blue headwrap and a blue patterned top with a gold necklace. She is smiling.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS
*to the People of
Liberia*

Jewel Howard Taylor
Vice President

Around Town
CHRISTMAS IN GLIMPSES



Posing for the PHOTO. Making sure that he is IN the Photo... he's taking no chances.



Merry Christmas to YOU



Kids eating at a Christmas Party

On the hunt for...



KWEE Promoting Liberian Literature, Arts and Culture



Looking for IT



Old Man Beggar posing for the PHOTO



Kids dressed up as Old Man Beggar – a uniquely Liberian tradition. Beggars used to dance and entertain people for a donation.



Taking a break from sales



Parties are big around this time. As the season of giving, many individuals and organisations tend to open their pockets



(c) Lady Keiko



Another party time, as kids get a Liberian staple, rice. Our love for rice is



Bomi County, a perfect view



Famous Liberian Piggy Hippo



Kpwete exotic waterfall is a great opportunity to expand tourism.



Down town Pehn Pehn Hustle



The People's Monument
Centennial Pavilion



Forget us not



Local sellers; Hustle; real life situations

Credit: Darby Cecil & Daily Pictures from around Liberia



MEET OUR TEAM



PATRICK BURROWES
CONTRIBUTOR



HARRIET AGYEMANG DUAH
STAFF REVIEWER CHILDREN'S BOOK



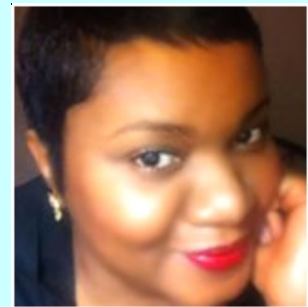
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Promoting
Liberian

Creativity
& Culture

We are
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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 some time, 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, not all is lost. A new breed of creative minds is rising to the challenge. They are determined to change the brief silence in our literary space. In order to do this, we realized the need to create a *culture of reading* amongst our people.

A reading culture broadens the mind and opens up endless possibilities. It also encourages diversity, and for a colorful nation like ours, fewer things are more important.

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

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Liberian Literary Magazine

KWEE

Dec Issue

Iss. #1228

Happy
New
Year

Book
Reviews

Author of
the month

Short
Stories

West African
Poet

LIBERIAN
CLASSICS

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Liberian
Proverbs

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