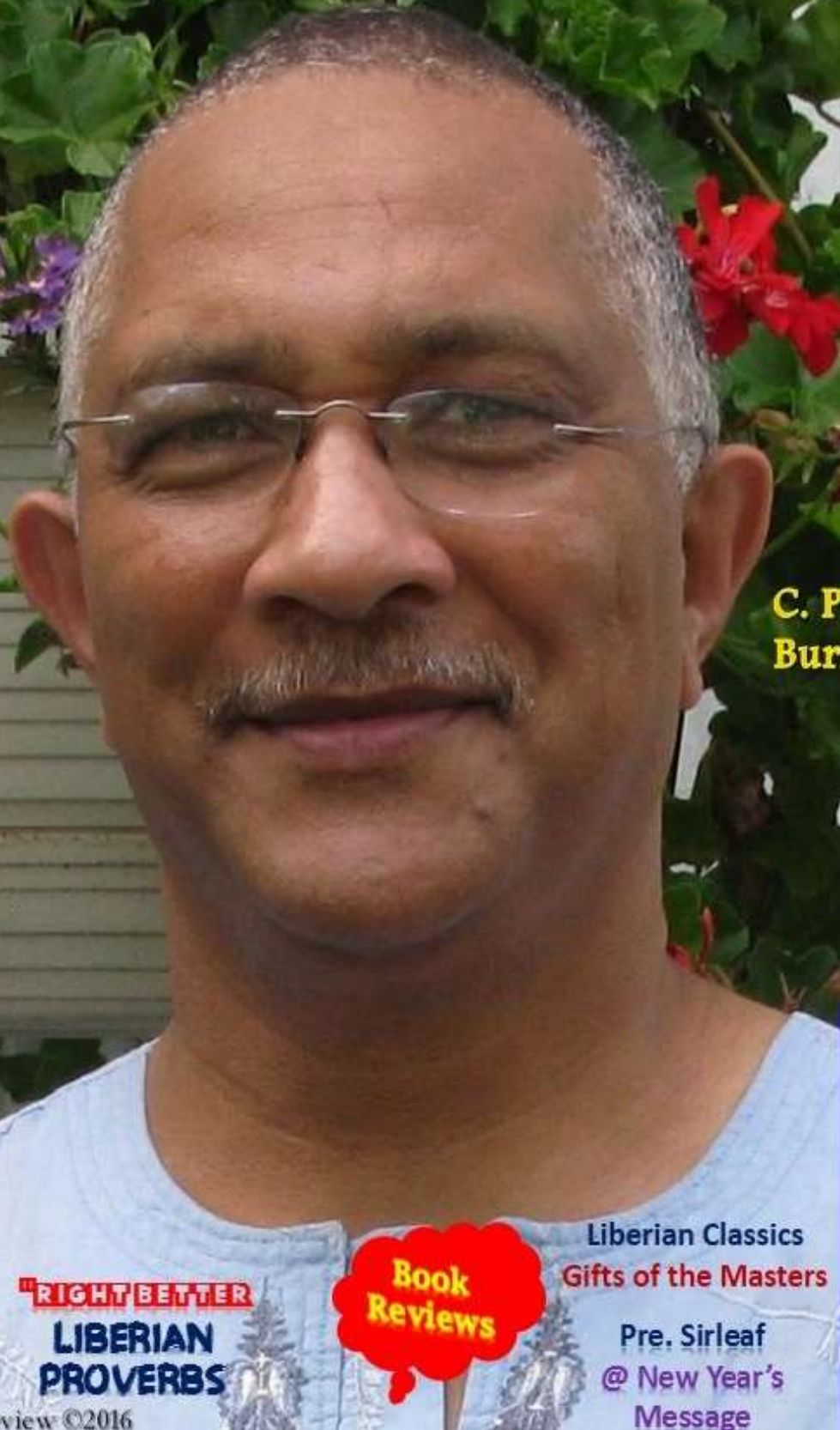


KwEE

Liberian Literary Magazine

Jan Issue

Happy
New Year



C. Patrick
Burrowes

Authors of
the Month



Bette
Daoust

"RIGHT BETTER"
**LIBERIAN
PROVERBS**

**Book
Reviews**

Liberian Classics
Gifts of the Masters

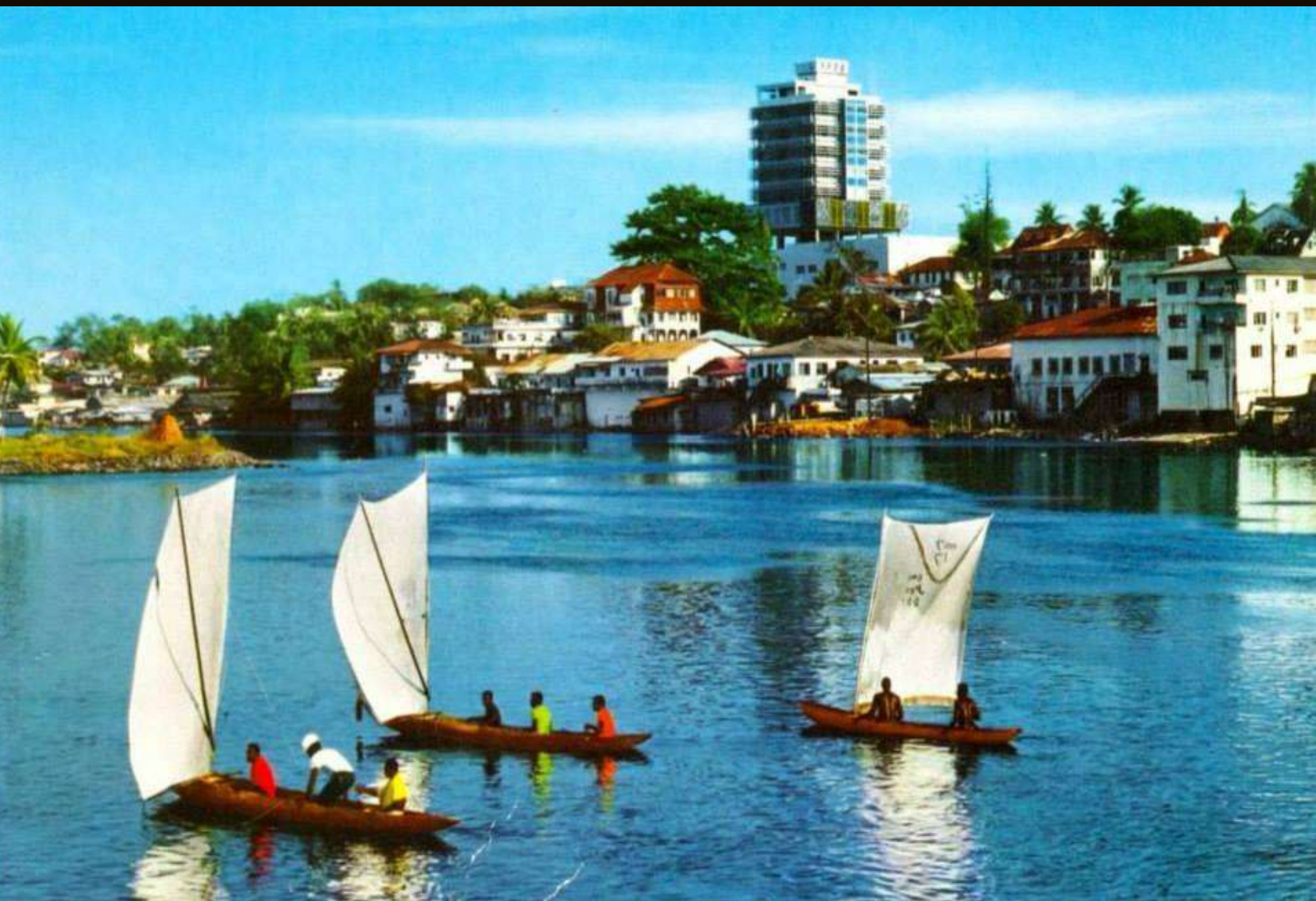
Pre. Sirleaf
@ New Year's
Message

Featured Poets:

- Althea Romeo Mark
- Richard Wilson Moss
- Herbert Logerie
- Aken Wariebi
- Cher Antoinette
- Berenice Mulubah
- Lekpele N. Nyamalon
- Jack Kolkmeier
- Matanneh Dunbar
- Varney Gean
- Nene Tetteh Adusu

KwEE

Liberian Literary Magazine





Overview:

New Look

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

Our Commitment

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

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

What to Expect

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

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

Overview

Segments

From the Editor's Desk

#Liberia Puzzle

Murder in the Cassava Patch

Authors' Profiles

C. Patrick Burrowes' Interview

Book Review

Contemporary Liberian Literature

Diaspora Poet - Althea Mark

Why I Broke the Stove

Bette Daoust's Interview

Book Review

'Right Better

Unscripted: Cher Antoinette

A Story of Courage and Pain

Kevin Zimmerman's Interview

Article

The Bet [Short Story]

Richard H. Alan's Interview

Liberian Proverbs

Liberian Coins

Forgotten Heroes

Poetry Section

Gifts of the Master

New Releases

Meet the Team

Around Town

**Liberian
Literature
Review**

Segment Contents

Editorial

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

Liberia Classic

This segment features classic Liberian poetry and prose by our greatest creative minds.

Contemporary Liberian Literature

As the name suggests, deals with *issues* in modern local or *diasporan* literature as seen by Liberian creative artists.

Risqué Speak

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

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

Diaspora Poet

The internationally acclaimed poet, Althea Romeo Mark hosts this segment.

Authors of the Month Profile

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

Authors of the Month Interview

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

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. Additionally, we'd print reviews by freelancers or other publications that grab our interests.

Gifts of the Masters

Our world have a way of shattering when we encounter masters of the trade. We bring some of the works of the greatest creative minds that ever graced the earth.

Short Stories

Well what can we say? They are short, engaging and we easily fall in love with them

Artist of the Month

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

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

Poetry Section

This is the marrow of the bone; the juicy parts we keep sucking on. We feature established and emerging poets in the array of their diversities. If you can imagine difference, chances are, this is where you will find .

Editor's Desk

The Year Ahead



2016 is swinging and thus far, things are on the up. This is our first 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. Each issue, we see a better [KWEE](#) and for that we remain thank to you. Yes you. All of you that have stayed by us, that take time off to read and support us in the different ways you do. Thank you once again.

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

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

Anyways, I'm one that likes my bad and not so good news first, that way, I can enjoy the good ones. So

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

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

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

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

We have new poets still finding their voices placed alongside much more experienced poets who have long ago established themselves and found their

voice. They in a way mentor the newer ones and boost their confidence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Read! Read! Read!

KWEE Team

Liberian Classic

Murder in the Cassava Patch

Bai. T Moore

From behind the rusty bars of a cell in Monrovia's South Beach Prison facing the Atlantic Ocean, I can now try to piece together all the circumstances leading to the violent storm which nearly tore off the roofs from many houses in the Dewoin country one bright Sunday morning in the year 1957.

It rose over the discovery in a cassava patch, of the mutilated body of Tene, the daughter of a well-known Dewoin family who live in Bendabli, just a stone's throw from Amina, the former Paramount Chief's town, twenty miles from Monrovia on the Monrovia-Bomi Hills motor road.

Like dry time thunder, Tene's murder shocked everyone in the area. The news spread throughout the countryside like wildfire. A few hours following the discovery, hundreds of horrified persons had arrived on the scene to get a glimpse of the corpse. Mothers made it a point to bring along adolescent daughters cautioning them in these terms, "You see eh, when we old people tell you children to listen to your parents, you say this is a new age." "The person, who killed this child is a madman... A blood thirsty fiend seeking her vital organs to make sacrificial medicine, perhaps, "stricken onlookers remarked, as hundreds of them passed by the body of Tene lying under a palm tree

in the center of the cassava patch.

The twelve man jury appointed by the local clan chief to examine the body reported that Tene was murdered with a sharp instrument, a razor or a cutlass. Her throat had been slashed, both wrists cut to the bone, and there was a gash above the eyes. From the appearance of the spot, Tene and her murderer must have fought for a good while before she was finally overpowered.

After much palavering on the scene, the elders all agreed that because of the advanced state of decomposition of the body, it should be immediately interred. "According to tradition," remarked one elder, "Tene cannot be buried in the town." The chief ordered a grave hastily dug and Tene was thrown into it.

My name is Gortokai. Kai, the last part of it is the Vai appellation for man. Gorto refers to the brown jugs in which Dutch gin was sold long ago. It is probable that on the day I was born, the village elders were feasting on a case of this delectable spirit, so that they were spared the trouble of inventing a name for me.

I grew up as the son of old man Joma and his wife Sombo Karn, and with Tene and Kema, her older sister. One day, I was left alone with Tene. We were playing Mama and Papa, when suddenly Tene came up to me and asked me to hold her tight in the waist. I shivered and recoiled. "Gortokai, can't you see that we are not brother and sister? It's a secret Mama told me."

I didn't know then, why this information had been

withheld from me. Much later, I learned that my real father was once a slave. He had been one of the men recruited for the Island of Fernando Po as a contract laborer on Spanish coco plantations, and came back home disillusioned but still full of the spirit of adventure, as result of which he associated himself with an itinerant Mandingo cola trader. It seems that at one time this gentleman was unlucky in one of his deals, and found it convenient to bargain my father off as part of the deal to a prosperous farmer in one of the St. Paul River settlements. Shifting from one village to another in later years, he ended up in the Dewoin country where he met my mother and married her. If there is anything I inherited from my father, it was his urge to roam about.

The third harvest following the outbreak of the Hitler War was a momentous year for me.

Something every young man in the Dewoin country looks forward to, happened to me. I was initiated into the Zowolo, the highest Poro degree offered by the Dewoin tribe.

My foster parents spent plenty of money for this occasion. There were the initiation fees, new suits of clothing to allow me to change twice a day during the four days of feasting following the initiation and a series of receptions. The cane farm we made that year all went into the distillation of juice for the initiation.

Thirteen harvests after the initiation, I came to the conclusion that I was man enough to have my own fire

hearth. This meant building my own house and getting a wife. In looking around, my mind began to settle on Tene, the daughter of old man Joma and his wife Sombo Karn.

Tene had just turned thirteen, handsome as they come. Her coffee color skin and eyes were bewitching. Men fell in love with Tene the moment they saw her. The girls in her circle envied her for this. Because Tene had many admirers, some of my close friends advised me that if I wanted her to be my wife, I would have to resort to strong love medicines to turn her heart towards me.

When the opportunity was offered me, I did not hesitate to impress upon Tene, my intense desire for her. But I had no intimate relative in whom I could confide, and I realized that this was the difficulty. Someone had to intercede for all the details involved in getting a wife. The only person I could rely on was Kema, Tene's own sister, who in fact, had suspected my intentions towards her sister, and for a long time encouraged it.

I trusted Kema so implicitly that I swallowed anything she told me about her sister line, hock and sinker. She reminded me of my importance in the family. Kema felt that because of my economic value in the family, her parents would have no reason to refuse me their daughter.

Everyone in Bendabli knew that I was the main source of support for the Joma family. My foster parents depended on me for making the annual rice farms, gathering palm nuts to make oil, making traps and crawfish baskets to supply the house with meat

and other daily needs for the quarter. Now and then I took small bush cutting contracts to obtain money with which the family bought tobacco, salt and paid the annual hut tax.

The more the Tene matter came to my mind, the more I thought of the dowry the old people would demand of me. On this question Kema and I shared opposite views. She felt that since I was the main source of support for the family, perhaps a token offer should be sufficient. But what this figure should be, she never ventured to tell me. Although I was a member of the family I did not want my foster parents to dash me a wife.

Soon the dowry issue became the talk of the village. Some felt that my desire for Tene was immoral, but they could never convince me on what grounds. Some felt that in order to keep an asset like me in the house, old man Joma should make a sacrifice and give me his daughter for little or nothing.

A delicate issue like Tene's dowry, I thought should be discussed in close confidence between Kema and me. One evening while Kema was visiting me in my one room kongo adjacent to the big square house of my foster parents, I seized the opportunity to ask her, "Kema, this one dowry business has been all over the town now for I don't know how many months. What do the old people want for your sister? Be frank and tell me."

"Gortokai, I thought we had decided this." Kema replied.

"On the exact amount?"

"Not exactly." Kema reflected. "Gortokai, you have done so much for my old

parents, we owe it to you to give you a wife. If I had a husband with money." Kema pointed out, knocking her chest, "I would take money and pay dowry for a woman for you myself."

I believed every word Kema spoke. To make matters short I told her that I had decided to pay the full forty dollars which is required for all virgins. The only thing that mattered was whether Tene loved me. Kema gave every assurance that her sister was in love with me.

Immediately, I decided to make some quick money with which to pay Tene's dowry, and was fortunate to obtain an offer to go to Suehn on the Bopolu Road, to clean out a man's rubber farm for forty dollars. This amount would go a long way towards the dowry and other expenses involved in getting a wife.

I got to Suehn as quickly as possible. Of the first ten dollar advance I received, I sent eight to Kema to buy a lappa, a tin of powder, a jar of sweet smelling pomade and mambo earrings for her sister, as a surprise from me. I don't remember anyone ever giving her such presents. I did this to make Tene feel that I was serious.

I waited one week after the dispatch of the money, but got no word from Bendabli. This silence annoyed me, so much so I got despondent and careless on the job. I paid dearly for this a few days later. With my own cutlass, I nearly chopped off my right big toe.

For three weeks I was unable to do any work. My employer engaged the services of a local herbalist to treat my injured toe. I thought I would use the toe as

an excuse to get the old folks to send Tene to see me.

A week later, Tene and Kema arrived in Suehn. They came on a crowded Monrovia-to-Bopolu passenger truck. I lived in a quarter far removed from the main road, so that they had a hard time finding me.

Luckily, Tene came across a friend who knew where to locate me. When the girls saw me way off, they rushed to the veranda where I was sitting. Kema reached me first. She gave me a big hug. "What is the matter, Gortokai?" She asked when she looked at my wounded toe.

"I nearly lost it, Kema," I said.

"Gortokai, it is God who helped you. We must thank him." Tene sympathizes. "Never mind, you bear?"

"I suppose you girls never heard of my misfortune?" "Gortokai, I swear on the Sande Society, we heard of it in Bendabli only yesterday." Kema said. "The person you gave the message to did not reach our way but went to Monrovia instead. Some people from Bendabli happened to be in Monrovia two days ago selling farina and heard of your misfortune. When they went back to the village they told the old folks. This is how we got it."

"For true," I said, "times are changing. It's hard to depend on people these days." Kema admitted however, of receiving the eight dollars I sent, immediately upon my arrival in Suehn.

Tene was generous in bringing me gifts - country bread with peanuts and sugar and plenty of fried chicken, and I loved her for this. We

put everything away pending the arrival of my landlady who was expected at any moment from the farm where she was harvesting rice.

Before the girls could finish telling me all the important news from the village, the landlady arrived and I introduced the girls to her. She at once showed admiration for Tene. "I can see why Gortokai has been killing himself to make enough money to pay your dowry."

The guest room which adjoined mine, was put in order for the girls. When she got through making up the bed, Juku, the little girl whom my landlady was rearing, said, "Kai, tell your strangers the room is ready."

The landlady herself inspected the preparations before ushering the girls into the room. "Tene and Kema, make yourselves at home, while I go and get something to eat. I know you must be hungry, coming all the way from the Dewoin country as you did today."

Before repairing to the kitchen, the landlady called me aside and said, "Kai," for so she called me, "The palava reach you know. What shall we do for the girls to make you happy?"

I had a dollar bill in my pocket. I pulled it out and handed it to her. "Here, can this help?"

"O no Kai," the landlady refused. "Put your money in your pocket. Can't you see that you are my stranger son? Anything my husband and I can do to make the girls happy will be a pleasure to us."

My landlord, who was also my employer, joined us in the kitchen. He immediately

approved of everything the landlady had decided and suggested we leave all the details to her. We proceeded to the veranda where Tene and Kema awaited us.

"Kai," said my landlord, "I don't know which one is Tene, but I must congratulate you for your fine taste, the girls are indeed beautiful." The girls got up and shook hands with the landlord.

The smell of fried chicken and onions from the back of the house suggested that the landlady was busy preparing a special delicacy for our guests. Every now and then she would come on the veranda to see how we were coming along. When she observed that her husband had not offered the girls anything to drink, she inquired, "Jaa, why have you not given the strangers some cold water?" My landlord at once asked to be excused. He headed towards the main road through the town where the shops were. When he returned, he was laden with bottles of cane juice, beer, soft drinks and some sweet biscuits. I surmised he had in mind giving a small party for the girls.

I knew that my landlord's generosity also had an ulterior motive. He was trying to entice me to remain in his employment. The few weeks I had been with him had convinced him that I was a hard worker. Someone he could depend on to keep his rubber farm going.

The landlord had several times proposed that I remain with him after my contract was over.

Just before the girls had come he offered me the daughter of a distant relative as a wife. The girl in question

was already someone else's wife, but my landlord said, that this was no problem. With his influence and position, as head of an extended family, it would be quite easy to refund the man's dowry and turn the young lady over to me. All he wanted me to say was, yes. I did meet the girl on one or two occasions and she indicated her willingness for the match. But because of Tene I never gave the matter any serious consideration.

The party for the girls lasted until late in the evening. It started as a small affair but grew to something lavish afterwards. To judge from the empty bottles under the table, we must have consumed over fifteen dollars' worth of rum. Some of it was still on the table when the guests began going home.

Kema invaded my room early the following morning. When she leaned over my bed, the odour of rotten cane juice from her breath got me nauseated. I noticed her face was bloated and her eyes red like a ripe palm nut. "Kai," she cried, "the rum got my head swimming. My legs can hardly bear me up." Kema leaned over and nearly fell on my face. Her hair was disheveled and unsightly.

"Where is Tene?" I inquired.

"That sleepy-head one, I can't get her to wake up," Kema struggled to right herself beside me, but unfortunately my bed was a bit short for her tall slender body. "Why did you inquire about Tene?" She asked.

"No, I just thought to ask. Maybe she too is suffering from the same thing."

"You know Kai, when young girls are just learning to

drink," Kema declared, "They don't know where to stop." To make me feel good, she said, "Tene is your wife, why don't you go to her and play with her."

"My wife," I thought to myself. I got up hurriedly, reached for a large towel hanging over my bed, and tied it around my waist. When I pushed the guest room door ajar, I saw her wrapped up in her dream, and but for a narrow scanty piece of country cloth drawn over her waist, Tene was practically naked.

The multicolor Fanti headtie had fallen from her head, leaving her hair a bit rumpled, over the peaceful round face. Ideas scurried through my mind as I stood there with my eyes pinned on Tene. If I wanted to, I could do anything to her. She breathed faintly, her voluptuous breast softly moving up and down, quite unaware of my presence in the room.

In height Tene did not measure both of my arms joined together. A ring formed by both my thumbs and third fingers could not go around her plump legs, but her ankles and toes were slender like mine.

I crawled on the bed beside her, and my body tingled when her warm coffee color touched mine.

I put my arms gently around Tene's waist. My hands nervously touched the two strands of beads she had around her waist. On one of them hung a small antelope horn which she wore perhaps as a charm to bring her good fortune. When I made an attempt to press her breast against my chest, Tene exed an arm and shot an imploring

glance at me. I rubbed her face gently with my nose. "Who is this, Kai! What are you doing to me?"

I felt guilty and replied, "Nothing Tene, I was just trying to play with you, that's all." She drew away and turned her back to me.

"Kai, we will play but just let me sleep a little while longer."

"Tene you mean with all the sleep you had last night you are still sleepy?"

Tene gathered the cover cloth and tugged herself snugly into it, but I moved closer toward her and with infinite care pulled it back, persuading her to turn over and face me.

Then, Kema barged into the half shut door to pull Tene up and escort her to the bath fence behind the cooking shed, where a bucket full of warm water awaited them for their morning bath.

My landlady who was busy in the kitchen told the girls to hurry up and dress so they could join the landlord with a delicious breakfast of fried chicken and new rice.

Tene insisted on coming into my room to dress. When she entered the door, I pulled her towards me and hugged her. "Gortokai, man leave me. I didn't come here for that", she protested. "I gave you all the chance in the other room. Now let me go so I can dress." I opened the window opposite my bed so Tene could get sufficient light to make use of the only mirror available.

While she was dressing, Tene's inquisitive eyes peeped into every nook and corner of the room. One object seemed to attract her, the small decorated wooden valise on the table at the bottom of my bed.

"You like it? I have something fine in that valise. If you can guess what it is I will give it to you."

"For true?" Tene giggled excitedly, exposing her sparkling white teeth. "How many guesses do I have?"

"Men are usually allowed four ..."

"All right," Tene cut me off abruptly. "Here is my first guess. It couldn't be clothes, I know."

"You got two more to go."

Tene looked up and pondered. "It's something to do with gold?" She paused. When she observed me unconsciously nodding approval, Tene yelled, "Earrings, bracelet, or necklace! O, wait a minute Kai!" She stopped me before I could open my mouth. "Now I know what, it is a pair of gold earrings!"

"Tene you are right!" I exclaimed. I opened the box. On top of the loosely packed clothes lay a pair of glittering clover leaf shaped earrings.

Tene picked them up and dangled them before her eyes. "Kai, you mean these belong to me? I want sister Kema to see them." She tried them on. "Mmmm, they match a lappa suit I have at home." When I told Tene the earrings were hers, she swung around and put her arms around my waist and said, "Kai, I love you. You are so thoughtful." This was one of those rare occasions Tene had said this to me.

Later on that day, the girls informed me that they could not stay Tonger, as they had to get back to finish harvesting the rice and other crops.

My landlady suggested that they remain a couple of days more. Tene was anxious to go

back, but Kema prevailed on her to accept the hospitality of my landlady for two more days.

In the meantime, I persuaded my landlord to advance me more money, so that in the event I decided to send some money ahead on Tene's dowry, it would be available.

On the eve of their departure, I had a long discussion with Kema. Tene had gone with my landlady to some village to visit a friend, leaving us completely undisturbed. Kema wanted to come to a frank discussion. I surprised her with a bottle of St. Paul Lightning, the so-called "cold water," a superior brand of cane juice produced in the Suehn area.

After a couple of drinks, I opened up the discussion on Tene's dowry by asking, "Kema, your sister is matured now, what are the old folks saying?"

She shifted on the bed.

"Like what for instance?" She inquired, lowering her eyes.

"You think I have just been eating rice for nothing eh? I am an old kuba, Kema."

"Gortokai this doesn't tell me anything," and she lifted her head.

"All right Kema you want me to be blunt. Your sister's armpits are no longer those of an innocent child." I said to Kema. "The hairs under there show sign of maturity, I swear to God."

She remained silent. The room was getting stuffy. Kema suggested that I open the window.

All this time we had not come to any conclusion, as to the amount of dowry I should pay. I therefore told her, "Since we cannot agree on

any figure, I take it to mean ..." She laid her head on my arm.

"That what?" Kema turned up and looked at me.

"To offer the prevailing dowry mat."

I would pay the full dowry required for a virgin, ten pounds sterling, or forty dollars. The procedure involved the following: twenty-five cents, to find out from the family if there was any other suitor besides me, if no other suitor, twenty-five cents to shut Tene's ears to any further requests from suitors; two dollars to tie the rope on her hand, or engage her, fifty cents to cut the rope or confirm the engagement.

"Hold it there." Kema interrupted. The glass slipped from her hand and sent the rum spilling all over me. "How much does this add up to so far?" I took time and checked these figures on my fingers. The total came to three dollars. This, plus the forty dollars, a lappa suit for the old lady and a robe for the old man would be a fair amount.

I presented Kema with twenty-three dollars to use toward her sister's dowry and we parted with no definite time as to when I would be coming back to Bendabli, because I wanted to extend my contract so as to earn sufficient money to pay the remaining amount.

If you are a professional palm wine drinker, that is, a habitue, or a connoisseur, the most sensible thing to do when you arrive in a strange town is to associate yourself with a palm wine circle. By so doing you get to know all the current gossip of that town.

It was my good fortune, as soon as I had arrived in Suehn,

to join one of the conservative groups of early risers because, this is the best time to drink palm wine.

In the circle I joined, I met a very articulate and likable character for whom I soon developed a great admiration. His name was Jaa Buu, but everyone called him Buu for short. He had travelled extensively, and told us some exciting stories.

The morning following the departure of the girls, I accompanied Buu to his new palm wine tree, which by the way, was located not far from the rubber farm where I worked daily. In our conversation enroute, I jokingly told my friend how I missed Tene, my future wife.

“Yes, the younger sister,” my friend recalled, “she is indeed a beautiful thing. I do not hesitate to say how much I envy you for such good a fortune.” I blushed as Buu paid me such a flattering compliment. “What about the other sister?” I asked. Here is the shocking reply I got.

“Man, she can out-drink a fish. She is the woman palm wine and cane juice ran away from.

The whole time she was here, I supplied her half a gourd from the swamp every morning. She taught me a concoction which you should try; a mixture of palm wine, cane juice, seejohn roots, wild bush peppers and a drop of perfume, to improve the

aroma. If that doesn't send fire through you, I suggest you go and see old lady Dii, otherwise you are finished.”

“I get you,” and we both burst out and laughed. “Buu, this concoction, my first time hearing of it. So it's good for impotence too eh?”

“Kai,” my friend grinned, “What do you think all these old men follow me here for every morning, with charged root bottles? You see palm wine ferments quickly. When added to cane juice, the two work hand in hand and draw all the strong medicines out of seejohn, peppers and whatever you put in them.”

“I am learning a lot about my future sister-in-law.”

“If you stay around long enough, Kai, you will hear a lot more.”

“About Tene too, I suppose?” I noticed that my friend refrained from making any comments.

He simply said, “just the usual village gossip,” and stopped.

I suspected that Buu had no doubt seen or heard something unfavorable about Tene, which he did not want me to know. And yet if I prodded him unduly, he might reveal something I myself would not want to know. I merely said, “Buu, I love Tene so much, I don't know what to do. Her people wouldn't come out and tell me how much dowry to pay for her.”

“Kai you are a man like myself. We all like women. As for my part, I don't give them a chance to cross my tracks. My advice to you as a friend is this, don't let this Tene palava become an obsession. In the first place, for you to marry a girl like that, you will have to have a strong man behind you. I don't mean a man with money, but someone with powerful medicines to work magic on that girl.”

I reflected for a bit and said. “Buu, I believe you are quite right. I need someone behind me who can manipulate strong love medicines in order to turn Tene's heart solely towards me.”

By this time we had almost reached our destination. Buu looked up in the palm wine tree and yelled, “o boy! look at my old lady, she's foaming like I don't know what. All new trees are like that.” We got under the tree. Buu flung his cutlass on the ground and immediately climbed up by aid of a bamboo pole.

I watched him remove the leaves which covered the receptacle containing the wine. He dipped his finger into the liquid and tasted it. “Mmmm, the old lady is strong like bushcow milk,” and sent down a bamboo quart container full of wine.

By the time I had finished the third quart, we were joined by three newcomers. They gossiped about everything from my

landlady's extra love affairs, to the old men who were trying to conceal their impotence. I well laughed at the trio. Some of their jokes centered around themselves.

When our visitors left, Buu and I got back to Tene. I wanted to benefit from his wide experience, particularly in matters pertaining to getting a wife, so I listened attentively.

"Kai," my friend commenced, "all this haste in paying dowry for Tene, have you had someone to look into it for you, that is, to divine for you? My advice to you as a friend is, never contemplate such a major undertaking without it being looked into."

"Frankly I had not thought of this," I admitted. "Do you know someone you can recommend?" I asked. "A very good man you mean?"

"Yes."

"I know of several," Buu replied. "Ever heard of Bleng? He can tell you things that will make your hair rise."

"No," I shook my head. "I would very much like to meet him. How far does he live from here?"

"Not so far. I can take you there tonight if you so wish."

"I suppose, his fees are reasonable?"

"It depends on what you want him to do for you.

He is not only a diviner, but a zowo and master of medicinal leaves. He can do wonders for you if you need him.".. **THE END....**

A God Child Sees The World

I was just an innocent child

I was still yet in my Teens

When Godpa started Loving me.

Everything to me was strange.

He Showered me with Gifts

Such Lovely gifts I'd never had

And made my Comrades jealous.

He Longed for Stolen moments

When he had me to Himself.

I learned to kiss his fervid Lips

And hold him firm against my Breast.

About a month or two, At a very Delicate Stage

When a teenage girl's Confused

And Needs a Mother's Care

My GodMa Sent me Out To face a Cold and

heartless World

I Started out like this While still yet in my

Teens.



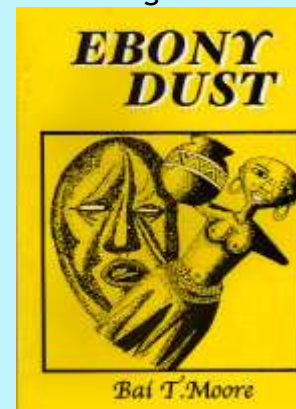
Pa Moore at home pouring Palm Wine and entertaining guests

Photo: LHC/Sylomun Weah



Photo Credit: Althea Mark

Bai T. Moore was born on October 12, 1910 in the town of Dimeh, a Gola village between Monrovia and Tubmanburg in Liberia, and died in Monrovia on Jan. 10, 1988. He studied at Virginia Union University and returned to Liberia in 1941, where he served the Liberian government in various posts while writing, promoting the Gola, Dey culture and the general cultures of Liberia. Bai T. Moore became Minister of Cultural Affairs and Tourism under the government of Samuel K. Doe, a post that he served in diligently until he died in 1988 at the age of 79.



Authors of the Month Profiles

C PATRICK BURROWES

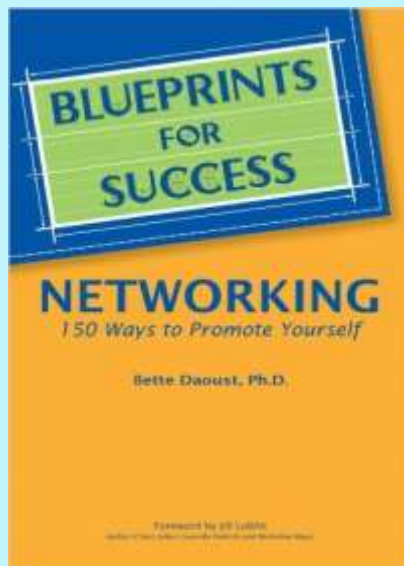
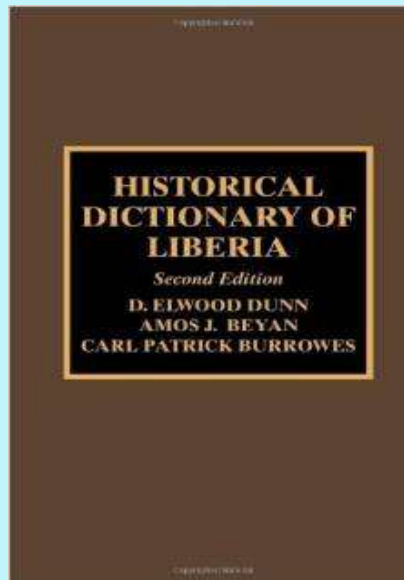
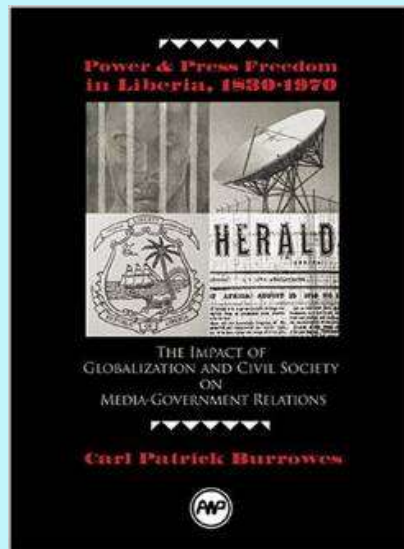


Carl Patrick Burrowes

Author, scholar and human rights activist by day. Poet, book collector and lover of the arts, especially live music, after working hours. Son, father and friend around the clock.

Born in Liberia and educated in the United States, my main passion has been exploring the rich and often overlooked culture, arts and humanities of Africa and its Diaspora.

As a life-long university professor and administrator, I've been paid to do what I love - read, build knowledge and challenge young adults to excel. Disappointments and a few regrets aside, my life has been golden.



BETTE DAoust



Dr. **Bette Daoust** is an internationally acclaimed author, speaker and consultant to small business. Dr. Daoust has a passion for helping others succeed in business through sharing her expertise and ideas through her book series "Blueprints For Success".

Bette has worked within the academic community as a professor and teacher plus Fortune 500 companies in developing programs to educate workers regarding marketing, technology, and networking.

Her approach to writing and marketing are a deviation from the usage of one niche gurus. Bette pushes authors to master their craft whether it is fiction or non-fiction through the production of the best possible product for the marketplace.

So where does Dr. Daoust get her experience? As a published author using both a publishing house and being self-published, Bette learned the ins and outs of the book business. Not only about the getting to the published stage and also the grueling grind of having to market books on her own.

Her processes and guides are proven techniques for the book marketing business. She is currently working with a team of authors to provide cutting edge ideas around book marketing. The team has produced The Complete Book Marketing System through Authors Success Guild.

Her current projects now include her work on The Book Marketing Manual.

Our Spotlight author of this issue is a man of many passions- a scholar, music lover, poet, journalist

Carl Patrick Burrowes

Author Interview

C. PATRICK BUURROWES



Liberian Literary Mag conducted an interview with

C. Patrick Burrowes,

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

I grew up on Bushrod Island, between Duala and Tweh Rubber Farm. My parents operated a coffee roasting business, so our yard was constantly filled with the distinctive aroma of *Liberica* coffee.

Our home stood in the shade of an awe-inspiring cotton tree, inhabited by bats and, according to neighborhood lore, a colony of ghosts. I grew up in a yard filled with a variety of fruits, including mango, guava, soursop, breadfruit, pawpaw and banana.

Why writing?

By nature, I'm an observer, a disposition shared by many writers and other creative people.

I think it goes back to my childhood, which was unique. Most of my schoolmates lived in Central Monrovia and played with each other after school. My afterschool playmates on Bushrod Island attended different schools, so they didn't know my "school friends." To make matters more interesting, some parents of my schoolmates were well-to-do and powerful while the parents of some neighborhood friends were fishermen, stevedores and school teachers.

My writing career also grew out of an early love of storytelling and reading. My earliest entertainment consisted of folktales, riddles and eavesdropping on adults telling jokes, some bawdy and off-color. Until television became available in 1960, I listened to radio a lot, mainly ELBC, but also music from Voice of America, stories of Spider the Trickster told by "Aunt Clara" on ELWA, and the newscast from the BBC World Service.

My passion for reading was fueled at home. My parents didn't attend college, but they believed in the transformative power of education. Although we were Presbyterian, they scraped and sacrificed to send all their children to Catholic schools, given their

reputation for high quality and discipline. In addition, they bought magazines like *National Geographic* and the *UNESCO Chronicle*, as well as a set of encyclopedia.

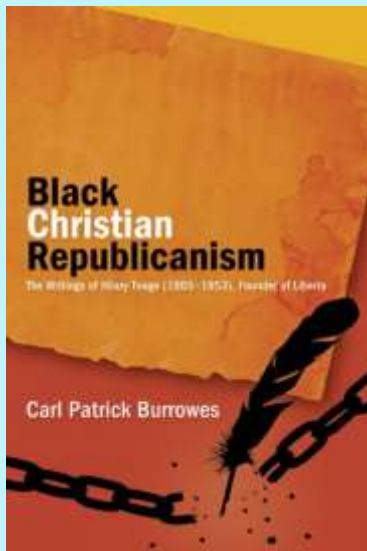
To make a long story short, I think a love of reading and moving between different age-groups and communities nurtured my stance as a "watcher." That's not to say I'm introverted, just a keen observer.

Do you focus on a specific type or genre of writing?

I write free-verse poetry (most of which remains unpublished), and I occasionally publish commentaries in the media. But, mostly I write history - Liberian history and media history. To be more precise, you could describe my work as deeply researched historical nonfiction. As you might know, I co-authored the current edition of the *Historical Dictionary of Liberia* and published a book on government-press relations in Liberia from 1830 to 1970. The rest of my writings have appeared mainly in peer-reviewed scholarly journals.

Writing history is not something I planned. It's just the latest stage in a convoluted writing career.

I started writing for pleasure at St. Patrick's High School, mainly short stories, brief articles for our mimeographed newsletter and poetry as an exercise in



reflection and self-expression. My writing was encouraged by several of my teachers and by my father, who liked poetry.

As much as I enjoyed writing, a creative-writing career seemed far-fetched. After all, the Liberian writers I knew-like Bai T. Moore and H. Carey Thomas - wrote on the side while holding down fulltime government jobs. In order to earn a living as a writer, I decided to major in journalism as an undergraduate.

I came to journalism purely by accident. In 1971, when all major media were government-owned, including broadcast and print, some schoolmates at the University of Liberia and I started an off-campus mimeographed magazine called the *Revelation*. It was Liberia's first mass-circulating independent publication in almost 20 years and routinely published articles critical of the government. The Tolbert administration eventual banned the magazine, but by then I had discovered two joys of journalism: my writing had an impact on society, and it

generated immediate feedback from an audience.

To study journalism, I wound my way to Howard University, then the most dynamic and prestigious black university in the world. I was fortunate to study writing and investigative reporting under luminaries like Samuel Yette, who had covered the Civil Rights Movement with his camera and pen, and Wallace Terry, a former war correspondent in Vietnam.

There were workshops and interactions with leading black thinkers, including poet Leon Damas (a collaborator with Léopold Senghor in the Negritude Movement that began in the 1930s) and writer Haki Madhubuti (a major contributor to the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s). From them I learned that life without myths and music is dry rice without "soup."

My career as a journalist was short but satisfying. Among other media, I published in *West Africa*, *New African*, *The New York Times*, *Essence*, the *Long Island Newsday* and the *Milwaukee Journal*. But that career was "derailed" when I took a graduate seminar with a passionate historian, Cathy Covert, who taught me the value of "history from the bottom up." To be simplistic, writing history shares with investigative reporting a focus on using multiple sources to answer big questions of "why" and "how" in a dispassionate way. But where reporting draws upon mainly live sources to address current problems, history

uses the records of dead people to investigate the past.

While earning a master's degree, I worked with Laubach Literacy International, where I was reminded daily of the hardships faced by people who cannot read or write. In addition, my male-chauvinist assumptions and behaviors were being challenged by several female friends; through them I was introduced to history written from women's perspective. Together, these experiences deepened my commitment to documenting the stories of people who are traditionally ignored, marginalized and overlooked.

What books have most influenced your life/career most?

My list would literally be too long to publish, so I will mention a few influential writers. I have always loved the music and majesty of Psalms, especially the King James Version. In high school, I liked the unadorned, modern, journalistic style of Ernest Hemingway, but I idolized the works of Ayi Kwei Armah, laced as they were with symbolism, sarcasm and social commentary.

Other writers influenced my subject matter and approach, more than my style. One catalyst was a loosely-bound mimeographed book that I read in junior high school. Titled *Legends of Liberia*, it contained over 100 trickster stories, historical accounts and other folk tales. Although

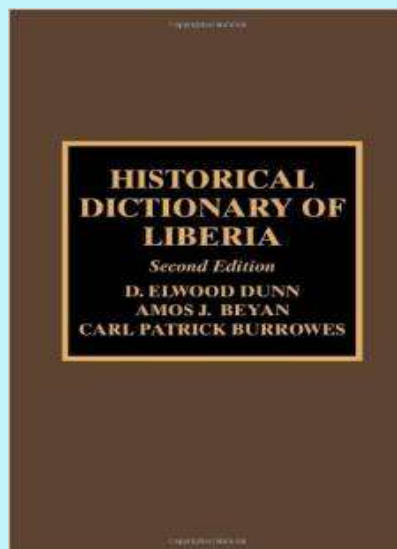
each chapter in the book consisted of stories from a separate “tribe,” I noticed common themes and characters. That insight led to the main thrust of my work today, which is reminding Liberians of our deep and enduring commonalities.

For example, Spider the trickster was not only common to all Liberian groups; stories about him span West Africa and the Caribbean. Funny as it may sound, it was actually Spider who first led me to a pan-African consciousness – the realization that African people, despite their diversity, share certain underlying similarities!

Another important influence from my high school days was a biography of Edward Wilmot Blyden, a Liberian journalist and clergyman who lived about a hundred years before. Blyden argued that Africans share a deep, long and glorious past. At a time when white supremacy was widely accepted, he rejected the idea that blacks were inferior to whites or any other people.

My specific interest in the history of Liberians took an academic turn in the late 1970s, when I encountered the writings of Dr. Mary Antoinette Brown-Sherman. A devotee of Blyden, she encouraged Liberian scholars to build upon local traditions.

In my view, Dr. Brown-Sherman was the greatest Liberian scholar of the late twentieth century. Her work on the role of the Poro Society in education inspired my



research on African spirituality or “the way of the ancestors.” Regrettably, a lot of Liberians pay lip-service to her legacy but fail to heed her admonitions or to build upon her approach.

While in college, I also “discovered” the writings of Dr. Walter A. Rodney, whose best known work is *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. From Rodney I learned that history is made as much by those who till the rice fields as by merchants and monarchs. His *History of the Upper Guinea Coast: 1545-1800* is the most important history of the Mano River Region published in the last 50 years. But many scholars in Liberian studies shun Rodney’s works because he did not share their worldview.

How do you approach your work?

I approach the writing of history from an African perspective.

Scholars employing an African perspective are relatively few and

underfunded, but they have deepened public understanding and appreciation of African history. They have highlighted some people and events that were wrongly overlooked. Like David battling Goliath, they have helped produce a more accurate record based more on evidence than speculation.

For people who are trained to write about the past, history is more than just “stories;” it is “organized knowledge.” In order to organize knowledge of the past, historians must draw evidence from a variety of sources.

For one of my upcoming books, I used many, many documents that were first published in Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish and French. In addition to documents, I draw evidence from oral traditions, archaeological digs, historical linguistics, studies of cultural patterns embedded in masks and other forms of material culture, regional and continental histories that provide essential context, and even biological anthropology.

Organizing knowledge involves more than assembling multiple sources. Historians must ask critical questions about each one: Is it authentic? Is it original? Is it reliable? Is it typical? Who created it? When and where and why was it created? Their goal is to “choose reliable sources, to read them

reliably, and to put them together in ways that provide reliable narrates about the past.”

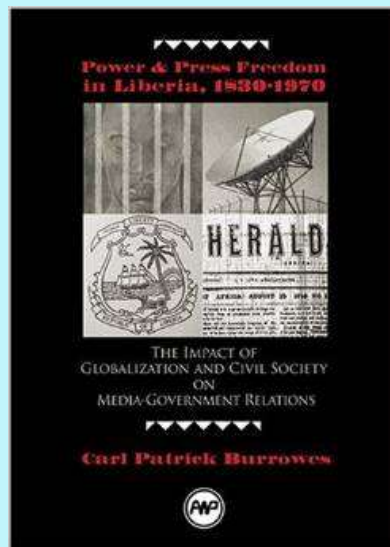
This means historians cannot simply assume that sources are telling the truth.

In our battle against racism in scholarship, Africa-centered historians can neither ignore nor bend counter evidence. Doing so deceives our readers, dishonors our ancestors, and diminishes our own reputations. Instead, our writing must involve a constant conversation between the perspective and the evidence.

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

Racism. Just as West African farmers burn a field to clear it of weeds, fell trees and bush, anyone writing African history must first tackle the long, poisoned legacy of racism in Western scholarship.

Racism is evident in Liberian studies in the continued classification of the Gola and Kru-speaking people as “hunters and gathers.” That label implies placement at the lower rung of an evolutionary chain with a corresponding lack of “civilization.” But, many transnational corporations today are dependent on “hunting and gathering” timber and seafood from around the world. Why, then, are they considered more civilized than the Gola who trafficked in kola from the forest and the Kru who harvested fish from the ocean?



Despite evidence of local agriculture, pottery and iron smelting, the presence of hunting is used by racist scholars to suggest that some people living in the area of Liberia before 1820 were stuck at a “primitive” stage. However, it is clear that hunting persisted in many parts of West Africa because wild game was plentiful and the presence of the tsetse fly inhibited the keeping of livestock. What is more, the devastating impact of slave-trading actively fueled underdevelopment.

The use of words like “fetish,” “witch,” “country devil” and countless others keep African culture trapped in a language web that portrays it as “strange,” “weird,” even “evil.” Instead of challenging this negative discourse, some Western-educated Africans argue for the continued use of those demeaning words because they are widely used by uneducated Africans. In truth, uneducated Africans copied those pejorative words from their educated brethren of an earlier era who copied them from Western

missionaries and “scholars.” Instead of “blaming the victims,” we, educated Africans, must accept responsibility for fixing the problem, since we helped to legitimize this language of racial inferiority.

While a lack of evidence has slowed research on Liberians before 1820, so too has a sense of “shame” about our history. Our unfounded “embarrassment” stems mainly from the way our history has been portrayed by Arab Muslims and European Christians. The result is an estrangement from our history, an alienation often accepted as the price for being true Muslims or Christians. If Arabs and white Christians lived by that standard, they would reject pagan traditions that have been incorporated into their contemporary religious practices. Instead, they celebrate the pre-Christian cultures of Arabia, Greece and Rome.

To break out of a patronizing Eurocentric discourse, we must deliberately use more neutral words to describe African culture, such as ethnic group (not “tribe”) and energy or power (not “spirit”).

Tell us a little about your two upcoming books-storyline, characters, themes, inspiration etc.

One of my books is *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea: A History of the Liberian People Before 1820*. The title is a bit poetic but the subtitle is self-explanatory. It presents the long neglected

history of those who lived in the region before Liberia was created.

My other book is *Black Christian Republican: The Writings of Hilary Teage, Founder of Liberia*. It presents the never-before-told story of Hilary Teage, a newspaper editor, Baptist pastor, successful merchant and public servant. While each of his achievements was significant in itself, taken together, they were remarkable, especially for a man who was born a slave.

In the words of a contemporary, Teage made the single greatest personal contribution to the “framing and establishment” of the Republic of Liberia. Despite little formal education, he displayed a mastery of several genres of writing and fields of knowledge. To Liberians, who are recovering from a devastating civil war that left schools decimated, Teage offers an inspiring example of what individuals can accomplish through discipline and self-directed study.

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

I choose the title *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea* because kola and sea salt were two commodities that first put the area now known as Liberia on the map, so to speak. These discoveries by some of our earliest ancestors attracted others to this region.

The title *Black Christian Republicanism* reflects the core thinking of Hilary Teage.

Unlike many Liberian intellectuals today, he did not borrow his ideology from elsewhere; he created it. His ideas were not a hodge-podge of scraps; they were tightly integrated and coherent.

At a deeper level, my historical works are a rebuttal to the negative, neo-colonial and divisive narrative that dominates Liberian scholarship. That approach has proven politically beneficial to the intellectuals who promote it, but it has devastated our country.

My approach, which is more holistic, is mainly inspired by the Liberia I experienced as a youth. My Bushrod Island neighborhood in the 1950s was what people today would call multi-cultural. Our nearest neighbor to the right were relatives of opposition leader Dihdwo Twe, then in exile in Sierra Leone. To our left was New Kru Town, the largest nearby community. Getting there involved a 15-minute walk past a compound of Vai-speaking Muslims, a household headed by a Gola father, an Ashanti family and various others.

Hours spent with neighborhood friends fishing in Stockton Creek, hunting birds with slingshots and playing soccer led me to see Liberia as a quilt woven from many cultures. That insight would deepen during my years at St. Patrick’s High School, which drew students from all parts of Liberia and diverse economic backgrounds.

Getting to St. Patrick’s, on the opposite side of Monrovia, required taking a “holeh,

holeh” bus, crowded with fellow passengers from all walks of life. My route involved stops at Point Four, Logan Town, Free Port, Clara Town, Vai Town and Waterside Market, before heading uptown to the fancy shops, government offices and cinemas on Broad Street. Those years planted the seeds that germinated into these book.

My approach to history is rooted in the view that ethnic groups and polities are dynamic, not frozen. It assumes that relationships between groups throughout history are characterized, not just by conflicts, but also by cooperation too. The books present, not only the history of Liberians, but shows that story in connection with the rest of Africa and larger trends in the world.

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

Writing my two upcoming books took over 20 years of extensive research and tens of thousands of dollars spent on books, travel and photocopying of research materials. I am now at a critical stage that requires the entire “village” to get these books across the finish line.

Beginning in mid-January, I will launch a campaign through the Kickstarter.com website to raise funds for getting both books printed. Please support the campaign. Every donation counts. If you make the lowest donation, it will cost the same as

preordering a copy of the book. Benefits will range from autographed copies to having your donation acknowledged in the books.

Do you have any advice for other writers?

Not everyone who can string words together is an author. The requirements for being an author - a writer with a distinctive voice - are much higher than the skills employed in preparing memos at work or emails to a friend. The first step is reading ferociously, focusing especially on the *best* authors in your genre. The next step is rewrite, rewrite, rewrite. As every chef and carpenter knows, it takes a lot of grimy and unpleasant work behind the scenes to produce something polished and pleasing. In addition, solicit *critical* feedback from others. By "others" I don't mean parents, aunties or sycophants who will praise your every effort, but knowledgeable people who will point out your errors and weaknesses. After all, that's the only way we can get better at what we do.

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

I'm between three books this week. I'm rereading *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral*, which a friend just gave me, and *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* by Albert Camus. There is also *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings* by

James Baldwin, one of my favorite essayists. I switch from one to the other as the spirit moves me.

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

The book is part of a campaign that will launch in early 2016 to address negative portrayals of Liberian history and to counteract their harmful effects on the Liberian psyche. Entitled "*Reclaim the Dream*," it is designed to do for Liberian history what Carter G. Woodson and other pioneering scholar achieved for black history in America.

The campaign will highlight many commonalities and bring to light significant accomplishments of earlier Liberians. It aims to foster greater unity, a sense of national dignity, and empathy among Liberians, regardless of ethnicity.

Any last words?

Yes. I hope that in 2016 we Liberians will finally realize that politics cannot unite us because the electoral process is inherently divisive. Only the humanities and the arts can provide us with a coherent sense of identity, dignity and purpose that can propel us forward.

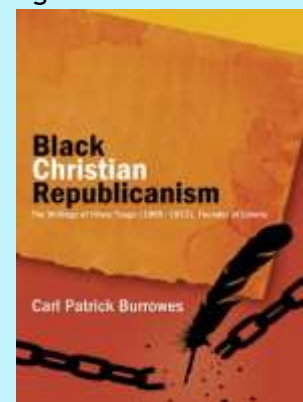
I hope this is the year we will stop expecting politicians to provide a new vision for our fractured nation. Most are constitutionally incapable of producing any such thing. That task falls squarely on the shoulders of the writers,

visual artists, musicians and other creative folk.



Why? Only those who dare step "outside the box" of conventional thinking are capable of generating anything new. And envisioning new ways is, by definition, what creative people do. Our currency is *not* popularity per se, but rather *truth* and *beauty*.

Writing and making art are usually lonely pursuits. We who embrace these callings are often marginalized, but it is precisely "at the margins" that new visions are born. It is time for Liberian writers and artists to "be the change we want to see in the world." The politicians will follow, and they will bring their followers trailing behind them.



Book Review

Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea

Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea

Carl Patrick Burrowes

No Preview Image Available

AN ASSORTMENT OF REVIEWS

1) **Tolo Bonah Corfah**, Educator: Prior to reading *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea*, I had not had the opportunity of coming across any work that dealt so thoroughly with how the various people of Liberia are interrelated and interconnected as Dr. Burrowes has recorded.

My view is that this book should form part of the curricula of Liberian social studies for every Liberian student. The perspective this book offers is especially needed after the devastating and senseless civil strife that engulfed our country for a little over 15 years and destroyed almost every fabric of the educational system of the country.

2) **Capt. Emmanuel G. Woods**, Chaplain U. S. Army: The Honorable Marcus Garvey said, "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots" Dr. Burrowes has replanted Liberia into the soil of

African history by smelting this book, *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea*, like a Kissi blacksmith who smelts iron to make a currency. This book is rich with historical, theological, political and economic realities of Liberia that we must read.

Very few authors have presented historical details about Liberia before 1822 and this book set the standard for younger Liberians and Africans to research and rewrite our history. Malcolm X said "Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research," and Dr. Burrowes has excellently researched and brought the past into the future.

3) **Dr. Thomas Jaye**, Deputy Director for Research, Department of Graduate Studies and Research, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC): *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea* places the history of Liberia in proper perspective by providing a seamless narrative of how the peoples of this country migrated to what is referred to today as Liberia. For a long time, Liberians and students of Liberia were made to understand and believe that the history of this country started from 1822 but this work has not only debunked this belief or myth; it has radically shifted the paradigm.

On the contrary, the book provides a narrative of the history as it has unfolded over the past centuries and points out that while the country's relationship with the rest of the world started earlier, its effective incorporation into the global economy started in the 18th century. Since then, its role has not changed: mere supplier of cheap raw materials and labour; and importer of

finished products. The history of Liberia is a history of African peoples migrating from different parts of the continent to settle where we are today. In this light, it is a mosaic of or melting pot for African peoples arriving from different parts of the world to establish a single whole called Liberia.

As expected, Burrowes has shown an eye for telling details because of the rigour with which it is written; it is written in a very fluent style; you have provided considerable knowledge of the country's past in a lucid way; and you provide the sort of interpretation of its history that can only make the reader to know that this is a magnificent scholarly achievement. I recommend this for university students studying Liberian society and also for those interested in knowing Liberia, especially at a time that the country is emerging from the ashes of a senseless war and seeking a better path to the future. It is a must read.

I have learned a lot from this piece of work. Cannot wait to see it on the shelves of libraries and of bookstores.

4) **Miatta "Pikoo" Ashley**, Artist and Activist: The lessons offered by *Between the Kola and Salty Sea* have to be passed along to our youth, our future. The narrative of our history has always started from the arrival of the settlers, ignoring the rich, long legacies of generations before. Our youth are in desperate need of a "new" reality, one that embraces all and perhaps that will begin to level the playing field in their identity of self - which in turn will help erase some of the "isms" which has blinded their value in society.

5) Christopher J. Nippy, First Secretary Political and Consular Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Liberia, Washington, DC: *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea* encapsulates factual historical information as never before penned. Its primary thrust is “educational,” in addition to the historical insights it offers on the people of Liberia, the once Pepper Coast. I recommend its use by scholars, given the up to date information contained therein. In the context of the aforesaid it is suggested for use by professors and students at higher institutions of learning; teachers and students at junior and senior high levels; and teachers of elementary students up to grade six. It is an excellent work which provides profound knowledge about the people of area now known as Liberia.

6) Dr. Robtel N. Paley, Author and Scholar: *Between the Kola Forest & the Salty Sea* packs a heavy punch! Its strength lies in the narratives derived from volumes of archival material, primary and second sources. The language is accessible throughout and lyrical/poetic in many instances. The histories you convey are beautifully interwoven, and you argue convincingly that pre-settler Liberia was a by-product of broader political, economic, social, and ecological developments.

7) Dr. Dawn Cooper-Barnes, Executive Director, Coca-Cola Institute for Innovation/Alexander B. Cummings Learning Center, A. M. E. University: *With Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea* Dr. Burrowes has filled a significant void in the known history of the West African

nation of Liberia. Ironically, because of the rigorous and thorough nature of this work which combs various sources from archaeology, linguistics, and anthropology, Burrowes makes the case that indeed most nations are undoubtedly formed by the migration patterns of diverse peoples with various social, religious and economic motivations. This seminal work suggests that in forging a national identity people should understand their ancient past and acknowledge the choices that their ancestors made in becoming a part of a community within their eventual homeland. For a country still recovering from violent civil conflict this may be the greatest contribution a historian can offer. This is a must read not only for academics and scholars worldwide; it is a story that the Liberian people need to hear.

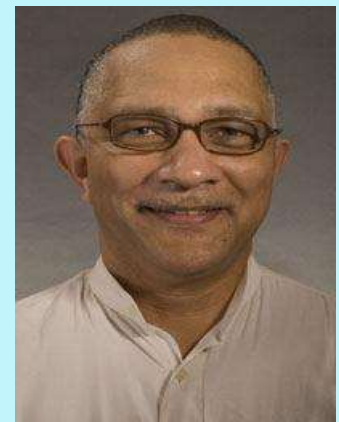
8) Max Bankole Jarrett, Member of the Advisory Board of Africa 2.0 and Former Presenter and Senior Producer/Broadcast Journalist at BBC World Service: Prof. Carl Patrick Burrowes has written a masterpiece. This is the book I have been looking for most of my life. I salute him and commend him for this most seminal contribution to the literature. Yet this is more than just an important contribution to the academy.

Prof. Burrowes's comprehensive history is the most significant contribution to the Liberian national and Pan-Africanist dialogue in a generation or two. I would not be leaning towards hyperbole if I classify this immediately with the literary contributions of my hero E.W Blyden. Why? Because finally, through this book we have a deeply researched and cogently

argued narrative that through a very “longue duree” approach that situates the political, economic history, societal and cultural dynamics of the peoples and places in the area that has become the modern day polity of “Liberia” within the times series context and realities of the rest of the region.

Burrowes has shown us all, Liberians, our fellow Africans and non-regionals the connectivity between the dynamics of events within the Liberian space and Africa as a whole. He has shown us the ocean, when for too long we have only seen the waves before us. In that regard, it is also a deeply political and transformative contribution to our discourse on how Liberia is to progress, based on a fuller knowledge of the forces that have manifested over the past 400 plus years in what has since 1822 become the modern republican polity.

This is not just history. It is my story, it is our story. It is a book that must be taught in universities, schools, at Liberia’s foreign service training centre and further afield. This matters today more than ever before because, as the great Southern American scribe William Faulker once wrote: “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”



Common Themes in African, African American and Caribbean Literatures

By Nvasekie N. Konneh

To fully understand and appreciate African and African American literatures or fictions for that matter, it's imperative to understand the historical backgrounds of their experiences. First it was the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, which brought millions of Africans to Europe and America as slaves in plantations in America and elsewhere. European colonization of Africa followed the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Both of these were very dehumanizing for the Africans. They experienced degradation, considered less human than others. The main justification of Europeans' domination, enslavement and colonization, was that they had brought "civilization" to Africans. European intellectuals, for many years, wrote books that only denigrated black people, considering them as inferior human beings.

Black writing, fiction or non-fiction, emerged primarily as a result of the social condition of the African people. It is said that "African American literature began with the desire to achieve freedom, and to define the racial self." This same sentiment was expressed in the editorial of

the first African American newspaper, "*Freedom Journal*." In its first editorial, it said, "We wish to plead our own case. Too long have others spoken for us." This expression is not much different from what African writers have said about African literature. In his book, "*Nuggets of the African Novels*," K. Moses Nagbe expressed similar view about African literature, "Africa has had its perennial problems in the battle of life. It has been denigrated for too long." The response of Africans in this light is "eternal vigilance," according to the author. This "eternal vigilance" has over the years inspired and informed African and African American fictions and other literary forms.

To put it in another way, African and African American literatures emerged to prove that Africans, just like the Europeans, "possess the requisite degree of reason and wit to create literature and that they were indeed full and equal members of community of rational and salient beings that they could write."

Phillis Wheatley was a young African slave woman with incredible amount of talent and creativity. When she had the manuscript of her first collection of poems, "*Poems on Various Subjects, Religious, and Moral*," it was not published in America because the publishers or printers could not believe that a "negro" could write those poems. The book was

first published in London in the fall of 1773. This singular effort by Phillis Wheatley is considered as the foundation of African American literature. It would take 86 years from 1773 for the first African American novel to be published. This was written by Harriet E. Wilson in 1859.

The fact that both Phillis Wheatley and Harriet E. Wilson were women is very important indication of the involvement and contribution of women in the African Americans' quest for recognition and respect as human beings. Their works served as reaffirmation of the humanity of black people as well as protest against the dehumanizing experience of slavery, racism and sexism. They are celebrated by the African American writers in general for their pioneering roles in the development of African American literature; they serve as role models particularly for African American female writers. Over the years, African American women voices have been heard loud and clear in the republic of letters. They have won literary prizes not only at the national levels but international levels as well.

African Consciousness in Caribbean Poetry

From Nicolas Guillen to Aime Cesaire; from Kamau Braithwaite to Derek Walcott, and from Muthabaruka to Mighty Sparrow, from Gregory Isaac to Bob Marley, Africa is a constant reference point in Caribbean poetry and songs.

Whether they come from Martinique, Jamaica, or Cuba, Africa is one unifying element that is central to the literary and artistic expression of the region. The root of this African consciousness can be traced to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the colonial system imposed when slavery came to an end.

When Europe came into contact with Africa, beginning with the Portuguese and Spanish, it did not engage in any dialogue to understand Africa. Europe imposed its own definition on Africa based on ignorance and prejudice. Africa to the Europeans was a “Dark Continent.” In the thinking of an American geneticist and biblical scholar, G. C. Hasskarl, “the African breed represents the scientist’s song sought after missing link between animal and man, (19). Count de Gobineau and Lucien Levy-Bruh proposed something similar to what is quoted above. The basis of their theory is that of natural supremacy of the white race and inferiority of the black man. Even to this date, this kind of negative thinking of Africa still exists. If such thinking about Africa and Africans are still present even today, what can one say about the time when Africans and people of African descents were under the yoke of slavery and colonialism? There were two-headed strategies developed by African people to fight back against the negative stereotype and reclaim their

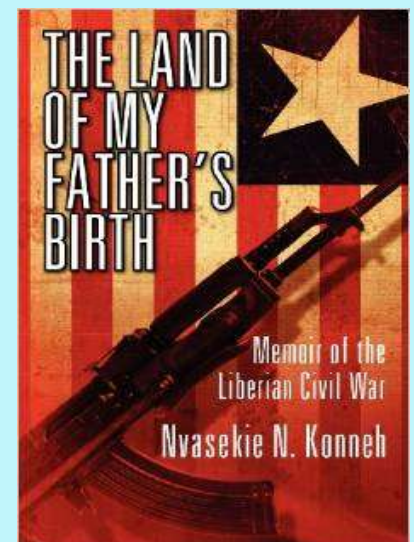
African heritage. This was the driving force behind the Harlem Renaissance and Negritude. Whether Harlem Renaissance or Negritude, it was both a celebration of Africa and protest against Europe.

Even though the concept of negritude has been identified with Cesaire and his colleagues such as Leopold Senghor, but similar ideas can be found in the poetry and other creative works of the Cuban poet, Nicolas Guillen. Between Guillen and Cesaire, the concept is the same with the difference being the language as a medium of expression. What came to be known as negritude in French was known as *negrismo*. Both describes the same phenomenon.

For Guillen, Cesaire, and other proponents of negritude or *negrismo*, the idea was to “liberate from disrepute” the image of Africa and people of African descents. For the proponents of this concept, Africa and its people, whether in Africa or Caribbean, were the “most humiliated people in history,” (12). Similar observation was made by Pila E. Barrios in 1947 and accordingly, the black race has “surpassed all other races in experiencing humiliation,” (12). In a recent newspaper article, Marian Wright Elderman, president, Children Defend Fund said while paying tribute to Asa Hilliard, a black psychologist and historian, “Many of us can remember when the worst thing we could call somebody

we didn’t like was black, (Oped, Tribune, 10/17/07).

The idea of redeeming African identity from the debasement it has suffered has been a recurring theme for black people around the world. Call it black self-renewal, black pride, or simply black people loving themselves and trying to take control of the definition of their own image. Even if one goes beyond literary discourse, and extend the discussion to politic, one can see the same sense of cultural pride as in the words of Marcus Garvey in the 1920s.



About the author: **Nvasekie Konneh** is a poet, writer who has written extensively in Liberian media on art, culture and social political development of Liberia. He's the author of *The Land of My Father's Birth, Going to War for America* and currently working on a documentary project on ethnic and cultural diversity in Liberia. Nvasekie Konneh has a Ba in Comparative Literature from the Union Institute & University.

Diaspora Poet

We Do Not Cry For Meat

Yesterday we ate rice
and palm oil.
Today we are eating
rice and palm oil.
Tomorrow we will eat
rice and palm oil.
We eye our bloated
bellies
in the shadow of the
kitchen fire,
and though not old
enough
pretend we are with
child,
pretend our fallen
teeth will grow,
pretend our limbs are
fat
can bear our large
tummies
but we wobble when
we walk
and do not cry for
meat
for the dry land has
snatched
our cattle and left us
only bones.

© 29.03.10 Althea Mark-
Romeo Published in
Dirtcakes
(www.dirtcakes.org)

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.aromaproductions.blogspot.com



Why I Broke the Stove

Short Story 2



DISCLAIMER
ALL CHARACTERS ARE FICTITIOUS.
THERE YOU HAVE IT! This disclaimer
could very well save my life.

December 25, 05:00 [Undisclosed location]

Somewhere in the distance I hear my name, but I have no intention of waking up, at least not now. I am dog tired.

It sounds again and I recognize my wife's voice.

Okay Christmas morning is not the best time to have your wife standing over you furious. Well, I had somehow managed to do that.

"Anony Mous," she calls again but this time with a note of annoyance. I know that note and I know better than to not heed it, sadly it means waking.

"Woman!" I think to myself; "And this is supposed to be Christmas? I asked.

She calls me once more and says, "Why...."

The rest drowns off and sleep cuts from my eyes immediately, I sit up grudgingly but attentively. That woman never calls me by my name unless I am in trouble. To skip the "Hun" or my yard name is bad already but to go to the "Why" is critical. I have come to know that my wife is a natural born lawyer. She never asks a WHY question for which she has not the answer; is not to trap me or is not rhetorical-none of those options are appeasing.

I sit up and try to rock my brain which is forced to go into the overload without enough warning. I come up with only one thing. I pushed the alarm

up fifteen minutes but surely that won't warrant the critical mode. I have a perfectly reasonable explanation for that. I did not think pushing the Christmas tradition back a few minutes should bring all this fuss. So I fumble for words and say but "Hun, it's not a big deal."

"Liar, it is." Says that voice in my head-the Moral Absolutist. It chooses these moments to pop up, how annoying, but I could not deal with it now.

"Seriously?" Is that what you have to say after doing what you did?" She had been calm and speaking low all this time. Conversational note is her equivalent of yelling. Now she's getting angry.

I still don't know what it is I have done, but the tone of the last question tells me to change tactics. Fewer things she hates more than to be talking about something I am supposed to know about and I am there having not the slightest clue.

I go into the stall mood. "Okay Hun, today is Christmas, you should be..."

"Precisely!" she cuts in. "So, why would you choose this morning to go messing about. I've told you to leave things alone. What am I expected to do now?" She raises her voice to conversational note as she glares at me menacingly.

I raise my hands and shrug but say nothing. Stall. Stalling long enough often brings us to the point where she says what my crime is... she is not a person of many words which is good. It means we don't have to do this for any length of time.

"Tell me, what am I really supposed to do?" She repeats the question.

I just sit there looking back at her but do or say nothing. She'd either say it or get pissed off more and walk away. Either way, it is better than admitting I have no idea what she is talking about.

"Please go and fix that stove now, that is, if you want any food prepared in this house today."

Bingo, there it is. "Stove?" I think to myself.

"I just can't understand you at times. Why don't you stop opening things that are working perfectly well?" She turns to leave as she condescendingly makes her last comment

I finally find my voice to speak. "I didn't touch any stove!" Of this I am sure. I am horrible at remembering certain things. I have been known to forget things of which I am guilty only to be reminded later. But this one, I am sure. "You know, I don't do kitchen, so why what will I be doing with the stove?"

She turns slowly but stops in the doorway. I see her anger but being ever thoughtful, she prefers to err on the side of caution. "Oh, now you are

going to pretend you don't know what I am talking about?"

"No, I don't" I say. "I didn't touch any stove. What time did I have to do that?"

She gauges me, hesitates, but I know that I got her right where I want her to be-taking the pressure off me. I can tell that she is considering the most unlikely possibility. We both are, but unlike her, I am sure that that is the only logical explanation.

So I jump in before the moment gets lost. "If anything happened to the stove, it is not me. Don't forget that we are three in this house..." I let it hang, not wanting to push my luck. Butter is our four year old natcho.*

"Some dad you are, selling out your daughter to save your skin." Mr. Absolutists chimes in.

I retort, "Shut up. You know you are wrong this time because I did not have anything to do with this. Shame is what has you talking now. Just find a place and sit. I'm not selling her. I'm just saying the truth"

I get up slowly, "Hun, what happened to the stove?" This is dangerous territory, if she did not stay long in the moment, I am doomed. She stares at the wall, saying and doing nothing. Thinking.

"Good." I think to myself. Feeling a little bad about dropping Butter to save my skin but somewhat relieved that I am not in the hole, albeit briefly. It is not as if I lied. That girl is responsible for whatever happened out in that kitchen. I am sure of it. Although all I want to see is the scale of her shenanigans this time. I bid my time.

We are not like her mother who believes that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. We are more like, *if-it-is-working-someone-took-time-to-think-and-fix-it, so let's see how they did it.* For the past six months or so, she has done more damage in this home than I have done in a decade. That is my story and I am sticking to it. There is nowhere she is unable to reach now. She tall; she climbs, doubles the chairs or use a ladder if she has to... but she always finds a way to reach her targets. I have caught her in the act a few times. More often than not, it is after she is done that we find out. She has this annoying habit of coming to you with an item she has spoiled and asking you to "please fix it; it is not working." She conveniently omits the part that she is responsible for that. I used to be annoyed at first, but after her mom took the opportunity to remind me that she is doing exactly what I do, I decided to do what my dad did to me when I started doing what she did- guide her along. Needless to say, her mum is so not cool with that.

I often tell her it is better I am aware and help, than to have her go at it alone. The safety argument did her mum in, but she has made it

clear that she'd rather she had no part in my fixing things habit.

Upon entering the kitchen, I saw firsthand the damage. The wife has caught up with me. Judging from what I see, even I find it hard to believe this to be Butter's work. In a way I admire it, but in another way, I am appalled. The stove is a mess. Almost every movable part is spread out on the floor-the trim rings, upper parts of the hotplate, the knobs- even the door was left open

I turned around with that look in my eyes that says, "This here is a new level."

The mum takes the opportunity to return her look that says, "Are you sure that she did this?"

"I have told you Hun, this girl is going to damage things in this house."

"You told me this?" She sarcastically retorts.

"Okay, whatever, but this, it is just...."

"Oops, hold that thought" I catch myself thinking and stop talking.

"Which is what I am saying." She fires back. "I heard you making some noise when you came in this morning. I just figured you were adjusting things in your study as you have been wanting to do.

"Yes I was making noise this morning but this is what I was doing." I pointed to the Christmas tree and the boxes underneath.

"I was doing the work of that fat dude." I think to myself. "One day a year, not even a whole day, a few hours a year, is all he has to work, and even that, he is unable to do. He ends up getting the credit for the hard work millions of dads put in. One day! He goes back to hibernating or whatever else he does all year long. I was feeling particularly unaccommodating to the Oldman's laziness. Perhaps he should retire and let others take credit for what they really do. Here I was, all week, I had been up and about; every bone in my body was sore, but I had to come home from the year end party, rush to get the last minute things, which by the way was another drama considering I hate shopping.

For some reason, all the dolls that could speak or sing vanished from the shelves. Butter had told us two days before that she wanted some Baby Alive doll. We learned it had to be imported- that was not happening at least not within the timeframe. Yesterday, was out because of work and we had to go to the hospital. So was today. All this just for some red suited Pops to be hailed as a hero. Don't get me started on the red nose reindeer or the talking elves.

She looks at the tree as if this is her first time noticing what was under it. She gives me that look that tells me she's impressed with something I had done but it quickly changes. We have a

situation. It is Christmas morning and we have no stove. It means no cornbread and gravy; no swallowing; no NOTHING!

"Daddy!!!!" Butter screams.

We turn in time to see her rushing to the tree.

"Mommy, Santa brought my Baby Alive!"

"Hell no," I muttered. "He ain't done fussah* baby."

Her mom gives me the 'kill stare'. Yes Butter, he brought your presents."

She goes for the biggest box. "No, no, not until we do the Christmas tradition Butter. Remember what I told you?" She says.

"Big feecee*." Still referring to the Northpolar. This is my way of internalizing. I go straightly into Liberian English- some deep colloqua or my grannies Settlement impression. Over the years, hanging with her in-laws and in the expat Liberian communities wherever we go, my wife has come to pick up the meanings of most of what I am saying. So mixing it up is my last resort.

She breaks my thought when she says, "We have to record your Christmas messages for your grandmas, aunty S, her favorite aunt and all the other things I told you about."

Butter looks up, excitement all in her eyes and suddenly realizes something. She comes rushing into the kitchen. We are both slow to catch her but we follow. That girl should be an Olympic runner. She's won awards two years in a row running for her class. She rushes for everything. She stops and looks around. She seems puzzled.

We are standing there, not sure what all this is about so we wait.

She says, "Daddy-Mommy," her way of getting both our attention. "Santa passed through the stove?"

"There, I knew it!" I shout in my mind. "She had to know about this." I thought further.

Her mom, puzzled, asks, "Why do you say that?"

She looks around some more and takes a step back. I see her expression, I know what it means. It is one of accomplishment; something I bet I do when I do manage to *fix* an unbroken piece or a broken one for that matter. I push my luck, "Butter, why did you break the stove?"

"I broke the stove because..." she stutters, inhales and says, "Daddy I broke the stove because..."

I love it when she does that-takes her time to repeat the question before answering it. Now, however, there wasn't much to love about anything. She turns to her mum and says, "I have no idea."

For some reason, within the last week, she has taken *I have no idea* to be her way out of just about everything. I was not having any of that.

"What!" I jump in. "How can you have no idea? You spent time taking things apart. You were thinking every step of the way. You have more than ideas."

Her mum chimes in, "Let her talk. Why?"

We wait, me anxiously. I know this bugger, she is a natcho after all. Rarely does she act without reason.

She places her finger in her mouth, bites on her nails and says, "Mommy-Daddy, no chimney. I wanted Santa to bring 100 presents for me." There it goes, her favorite number and preposition- for. She has this thing with prepositions. She often uses it wrongly. She has figured out that 'for' is ownership and will use it anytime she can. This time, however, she uses it correctly. Normally, I'd be hugging and kissing her excitedly when she uses it correctly. This is a way of getting her note it and remember. She loves it when we act like that so we use it to validate things we approve. But that was not happening here.

I turn to the mother and say, "Well, we will have a new tradition this year. Your daughter has managed on her second Christmas that she can understand things to break the flow and add a new thing." I am a typical Liberian. When the child does a thing well, she is 'my child', 'my boy, or my baby girl'. If it is not so admirable, it becomes the mother's child-hence my 'your daughter. Yet a huge part of me could not help but to admire the way she figured out how to take that stove apart. Of course I could not say that now, not unless I wanted the mum to crucify the two of us. I secretly noted to reward the girl for it.

The mom looks at me and says, "Fix this mess you and your child have created." She then walks out.

We stand there for a brief moment and then she remembers her presents and dashes out, "Mommeee! Where is my Baby Alive Santa brought?"

"There they go again- Santa I swear, if I hear that name once more, I will go mad. My body is aching like crazy, every bone in me is sore. God, tell these people to not call that man's name again." I think to myself.

We do the whole tradition thing which by the way is a mix of two different cultures and families. We have found a nice way to make one out of the two. The women are all smiles. The woman seems to have succeeded in hiding my present nicely away from me. I searched this house for few nights looking but to no avail. She also refused to let me know what I inside. Oh that is another thing about me. I love to know. I am all for surprises and all, but I like to be told-*dude, this is*

what I got you or am getting you. That way, I can build my excitement and plan for it. She says I am eccentric; well that's putting it mildly, she says weird.

She is nothing like me. If I ask her, "Hun, what do you want for this or that?" she gives me that killer look. She believes that I should go through the whole surprise routine. I should guess, observe blah blah blah...

Now, I would not normally have a problem with that, but when it comes to women, I have never figured out what it is they want at any given time. The people change by the second. I really don't get the whole guessing thing. I try to make it simple for me. I am a forgetful person. This is an understatement. This way, I can spare myself the trouble of failing to get a gift for an occasion. Lord knows I have missed one too many. So, my attitude is simple-tell me, I get it, we are all happy. I fail to see the point in going through the loops. But then again, that's just me.

Somehow, I suspect she does that because that way, I get to buy an assortment of things since I don't know what to get, which is exactly what I do. Somewhere in between, she will find something she loves. It's a clever strategy but there's no way to prove it. 😊

I get up and turn the volume up to the max. I blast the area with carols. After all, I am the only black expat in my small estate. I feel entitled to a stereotype this day. To show her disapproval, she tells me to get in the kitchen and fix up her stove. No sooner had I grudgingly reached the door, she turned it down and says, "This is too loud, no one listens to music like this..."

I butt in drowning off the rest of her comment, "You forget that I am a Liberian, weekends and on holidays, we blast our systems."

"....but you Liberian people."

"Precisely." I say, "So why are you hindering me?"

We tend to joke a lot about stereotypes of our different people. I have seen raw shock on people's faces when she says something like "You Liberian people have nothing but big mouth. You guys are only good at talking- for nothing talk." Needless to say that I get into defense mode and hit back at her people equally low. This joke tells me that all is well and Christmas is back on track.

I find the pieces, put them back in and thank goodness, nothing is broken. I could kiss that little girl right now. I know she would want me to clean up the kitchen whist I am at it so I take the rag and do what my dad called the lazy man's work- I clear the visible area and shove the dirt between any available holes that will keep it out of site.

"You know that is wrong right? She is going to be mad at you. When she comes here, she will check around and clean see that." Say the Absolutist again.

"Gosh, I hate this guy for being so right most of the time." I tell myself. I am riding on the moment; they are happy out there, this is Christmas too, surely, I can get away with a few things. After accusing me wrongly this morning, she will give me a break small-and that is all I needed. I survey my work. Satisfied that everything that should not be is well out of the way, I hesitate before going back inside.

"Do the right thing. It is always good to do the right thing." This time, it is my conscious speaking. Unlike that rude Absolutist, she speaks softly and never mockingly I have made it a practice to listen when she says this. This is a mental check. I wish I could say that I listen all the time. I often rationalize it like this, if it is not life or death, or affecting anyone else, well, I could get a pass; promise to do it right next time. This certainly was going to kill nobody. I struggle briefly and decide, the heck with it. I am going out there to begin my day. All I want to do is sleep for a few hours. So I go out.

They are still drowned in their presents. Baby dolls are spread over the sofa, the dining table hold the ones deemed unfit for the floor. I tip-toed my way around and stand at the entrance of the bedroom. She says, "Are you finished already? Are you sure?"

"Yes Hun, nothing is broken. I only had to put them back in." I reply

"What about the floor, did you clean it?" I didn't see you put any dirt in the bin. So where did you put the dirt?"

"There, I told you. She always gets you why do you keep trying?" says Mr. Absolutist.

"Dam," I muttered. She looks at me disapprovingly-the way she does when I swear. I am not allowed to swear at all. No exception. This is a thing she does that kills me. The guilt stares or looks. Many times, I feel it would be better if she said something, anything but give me one of them looks. But she doesn't. She knows the looks work better than anything she could say.

I am like, "Look, you can go and do whatever it is you do in the kitchen or you can waste time on me doing a sloppy work. I will do it when you are done anyways." The truth is, I know she hates dirt, some clean freak, she will do that job and not think twice of it. That's how she is; well, that is how I am too.

She shakes her head, smiles and says, "You're just lazy."

"I am not. I just don't work like you do. I have time to work." I fire back but catch myself because I am getting into one of those quick sand situations. "Okay woman, when is the cornbread coming?"

She burst out laughing, "You. You think I work for you?"

"Oh she laughs. The woman can laugh," I chime in. I know I got her so I carry on. "You live to serve me and my children." I say trying to make a straight face.

"Yeah right, master. Say that again and you'd both starve." She says between giggle.

"Go in the kitchen and do your magic man, woman. Try it and see. By the time Butter is done with you, you will be rushing to fix food. Get off your lazy butts and go."

We both laugh, I start tickling her. Butter joins in. She never misses an opportunity to tickle. She has no sides, on any given day, she'd be stopping me from tickling her mom in hopes of me adding her to the tickle game or joining me to crucify the mom. Today, however, she is on my side. She runs off to the room and slams the door. "You guys will starve today!" She says.

Butter and I are cheering. "Yeah, we got mommy. We do our victory dance."

The door opens and she pokes her head out and says, "Foodgees!" slams it quickly before we can reach her. "Click," it locks. She continues to laugh. "If you guys want to eat in this house, you'd have to beg me-on your knees too."

"Ipuah. Beg you from whch side?" I say.

"Okay, we will see." She responds.

"If you are a woman, come outside now?"

Butter coaxes, "Mommy come outside. We won't do anything."

"Liars!" she says between laughs, "You and your father. The, greedy people."

The phone rings. Butter rushes there, takes it and recognizes her Aunty S's picture. It's Aunty". Only one person she calls that. She answers it. "Hello Aunty S. how are you today?"

Her grandma replies, Merry Christmas Butterfly. How are you?"

"Maa, the woman jumps from the room and snatches the phone. "Your grandchild and her father want to kill me." My mother-in-law is one of even fewer words. She has never fully come to grips with the crazy jokes we make. Often, she says nothing in these situations but laughs. Today, she says, "Oh Butterfly, what did you do to mommy?"

"Daddy tickled mommy, Grandma. Naughty Daddy. Grandma, where is aunty S?" she

switches. "Oh, so you are selling me out?" I say to her. "Were you not tickling her as well? She smiles that her crooked smile.

"Yes Butter, a very naughty daddy." The mom jumps in. She goes on to tell all about her latest adventure. Her Grandma listens and finally asks her why she broke the stove.

My phone rings, it is my mom. "Hun, it's Mama." My wife says handing me the phone.

I take it into the room, but the woman is more interested in talking to her *girls* as she puts it than me. We trade holiday greetings and she insists I take the phone to the women in the house. Well, I know better than to continue talking, so I go out, we switch phones, I get Ma and we start talking. We actually enjoy talking. We've had an excellent relationship and I understand I am one of the few persons that gets her to talk at any length.

I hear my mom trying to sing for them and suddenly, I am glad I don't have to listen. Love my mom and all but growing up in a family of musically tuned ears, my mom and my brother that follows immediately after me, are the worst singers ever. A part of me is dreading the family caroling but the other is longing for it. We get a good laugh at those two every year-and they don't disappoint. They come back fully armed with all the wrong musical notes.

Bang! The suddenness and loudness make the two of them come running into the room. I too was startled by the sound that came out of the kitchen. I ran to see and when I opened the door, I just froze.

My wife came into the living room and asked, "Hun, what is it?"

I just stood there looking...; looking at the stove; more like what was left of it.

I love writing but if you read no more stories from me I am sure you'd have guessed right. Somehow, my wife read this and decided to put an end to MY story. Let's hope it doesn't come to that.

By Anony Mous

Natcho*= an extremely smart child; clever more on the witty side; more like know-it-all.

Feecee*= roughly translated as useless; not worth much; good for nothing.

Author Interview 2

Spotlight Author

BETTE DAOUST



Liberian Literary Magazine conducted an interview with **Bette Daoust**, an internationally acclaimed author, speaker and consultant to small business. successful author.

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

I am often asked, who are you? The answer is not all that easy, as a writer, I am tempted to tell you everything! But as an author, I realize that a summary works much better for your readers.

I do admit that I am a person that has a passion for people in a way that catapults them to their own success. I have been a teacher in the high school system and a professor at the University level. With my teaching background also came a desire to get my

lessons on how things work in the marketplace in front of a larger audience. I moved into the corporate world and spread the word on how to do work more effectively and efficiently through interactive training and writings that told stories around successes.

My stories have taken my work into many other countries including, Mexico, China, and Brazil for starters.

Why writing?

Writing to me is a way of communicating to others in order for them to learn and achieve more in their lives. My story telling is not fiction; it is what happens in the real world. I suppose my writing career started very young as my mother and my great aunt were both writers as well. They gave me the love of words. My schooling, however, did not. It was more focused on structure, grammar, and where those commas are placed. It was only through experience and working with a great editor that writing became easier and the love of putting ideas on paper became my passion.

What books have most influenced your life/career most?

The books that have truly influenced my life were Marshall McLuhan's "Future Shock" and Tony Robbins' "The Power Within". Without these books, I would still be the shy, introverted, busy bee teacher who was only there to work hard and go home at night with the idea that my small sacrifice may someday be recognized.

How do you approach your work?

My work approach is fairly simple, yet sometimes hard to achieve. I attempt to get up early and sit at my computer to take in the latest news, trends, and look for ideas to help with my currently writing projects. If I am not careful, I tend to get carried away with my early morning research.

From there, I add ideas to my blog article research pages, along with the sources of the material, plus I formulate the best approach for each article (or book I am working on). It is the research time where I gain the most ground. It is this material that leads to inspired writing.

As for the writing, that takes little time but it does take quiet, uninterrupted time to achieve. That I schedule into my day or week. The starting time is the most important, the end time only occurs when I am finished with my thoughts.

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

The themes I end up exploring are those that expand knowledge beyond the typical uses for a method or process. By this I mean, I look for unusual ways to apply a technology, platform, or system that will take the user or reader beyond the norm.

Yes, I can write about the common thread, but I would prefer to push my readers to think and do more than just that.

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

Since my books are purely non-fiction, I use real life examples from my own personal experience or the experiences of others I interview or know to further ideas for implementation. My storyline is taking the reader from one point in time and one place on the scale to a new level with new knowledge. Hence “Blueprints for Success”.

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

The inspiration from my Blueprints for Success business series came from my business experience as the President of A Chamber of Commerce, the President of a local Rotary Club, and heading the Vancouver and Victoria Information Systems Training Association. Any or all of these venues provided me with insights into how little business people really knew about connecting with each other and how little they knew about connecting the right way.

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

My message is simple, take any topic from my books and apply that knowledge to further your business and your exposure to your potential clients. Do this each day and you will be surprised at the great results you will have. Networking and communicating are the most important parts of the business model.

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

Authors, artists, and solopreneurs are the best audience. Believe it or not, most authors and artists do not realize that they are in business for themselves. They are not aware that they need the business skills to promote their work and get sales. The Blueprints for Success series is the best place to start.

Do you have any advice for other writers?

Writing gets easier with practice. Writing also gets easier with focus. And writing gets read when you know your target audience. You need all three to truly get ahead in the writing game. Luck only comes into play once the hard work is done.

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

I have a love of anything written by Seth Godin. I am currently reading his, “Watcha Gonna Do With That Duck”. I also recently added Elinor Stutz’s “The Wish”, a book around the sales process.

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

My latest news entails using a new platform called Blab. I am currently hosting a series at 10 am PST called “The Authors Café” - you can find the replays on my YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/bjdaoust>

What are your current projects?

I am also blogging on my own site <http://bettedaoust.com/blog> and also with <http://authorsuccessguild.com>. My other projects include work with my daughter Carina Grace Kamara with <http://powerfulpublishingtips.com> and other project with author Wendy Dewar Hughes.

As for book projects, I am working on The Book Marketing Manual which has swollen to over 1000 pages. Perhaps I will break it into 12 themed smaller books but right now it is a work in progress.

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

I have not read any at this point in time, but I just did a search to find books of interest. As I have a love of travel and learning about new cultures (I teach at a multi-cultural university in the Master’s Program and have learned a great deal about other cultures here), you have opened my eyes to a whole new world of literature. I am looking forward to start on my journey reading the books I have found on Good Reads.

Any last words?

Yes, if you are an author, artist, or solopreneur, spend the time to hone your craft and work with those that help you achieve the level of writing where your audience is craving for more. Without a good editor, and good team, the journey is much more

difficult. Spend your time writing, researching, writing some more, and learning each and every day.



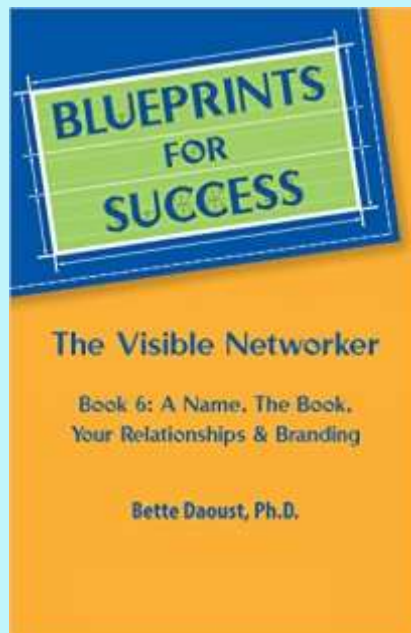
Dr. **Bette Daoust** is an internationally acclaimed author, speaker and consultant to small business. Dr. Daoust has a passion for helping others succeed in business through sharing her expertise and ideas through her book series "Blueprints For Success".

Bette has worked within the academic community as a professor and teacher plus Fortune 500 companies in developing programs to educate workers regarding marketing, technology, and networking.

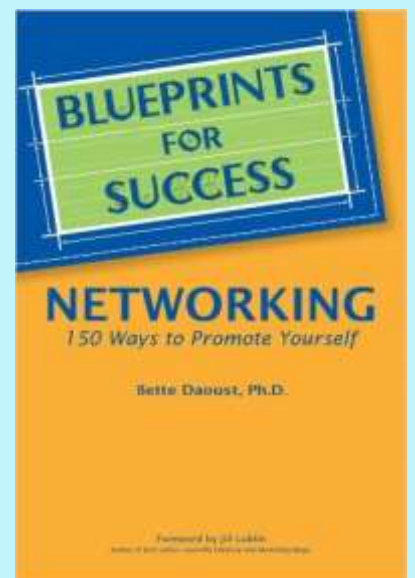
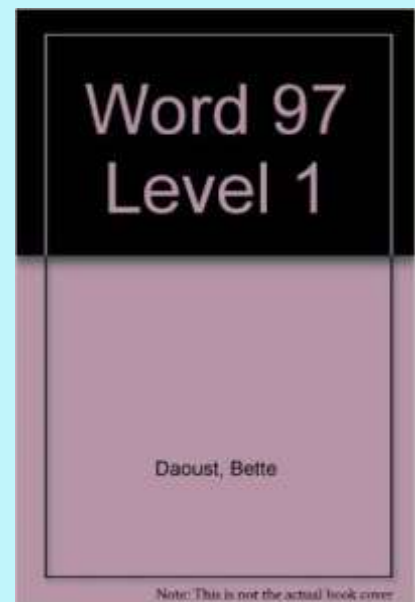
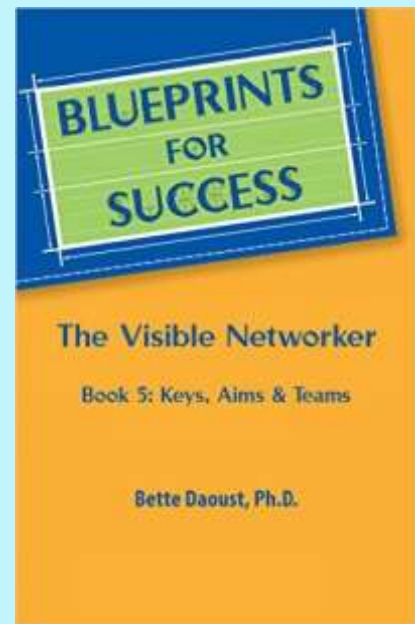
Her approach to writing and marketing are a deviation from the usage of one niche gurus. Bette pushes authors to master their craft whether it is fiction or non-fiction through the production of the best possible product for the marketplace.

So where does Dr. Daoust get her experience? As a published author using both a publishing house and being self-published, Bette learned the ins and outs of the book business. Not only about the getting to the published stage and also the grueling grind of having to market books on her own.

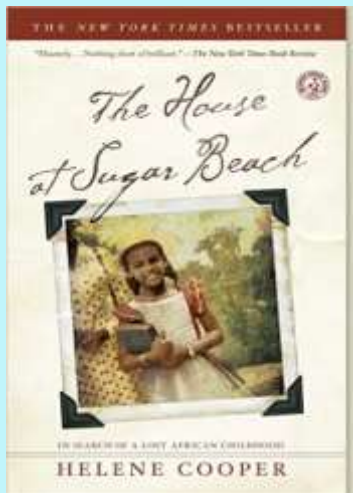
Her processes and guides are proven techniques for the book marketing business. She is currently working with a team of authors to provide cutting edge ideas around book marketing. The team has produced The Complete Book Marketing System through Authors Success Guild.



Her current projects now include her work on The Book Marketing Manual. If you want to learn more, be sure to visit her website <http://betedaoust.com> and fill out the contact form.



Book Review 2



**The House At
Sugar Beach**
In Search of a Lost
African Childhood

By **Helene Cooper**
Illustrated. 354 pp.
Simon & Schuster. \$25

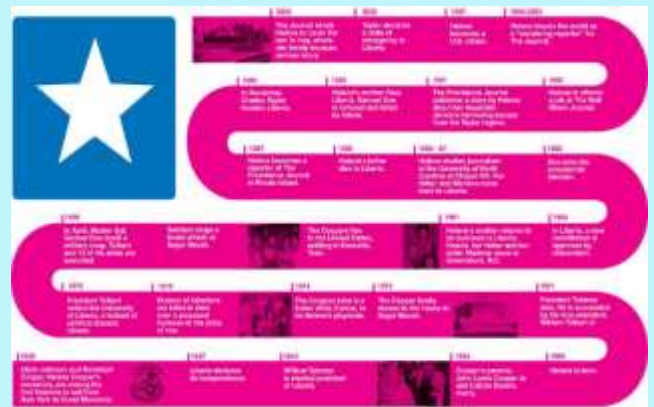
Reviewed by
CAROLINE ELKINS
SEPT. 5, 2008

The skeletal remains of Africa's numerous civil wars litter the continent, from the easternmost reaches of Somalia to the western shores of Liberia. It is there, overlooking the picturesque beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, that unknown numbers of human remains — victims of Samuel Doe's reign of terror — haunt the earth. One building that serves as their communal headstone, itself a virtual skeleton, is physical testimony to the civil war that racked Liberia for nearly 25 years. This macabre marker is the house at Sugar Beach.

In her masterly memoir, Helene Cooper brings us back to the halcyon years when Sugar Beach, her family's home, embodied the elite privilege and disco-chic to which Liberia's upper class aspired. The Coopers' mansion, 22 rooms in all, rose in solitude out of the plum trees and vines that thicketed Liberia's undeveloped coastline. Inside was a living homage to the 1970s, complete with velvet couches in a sunken living room, marble floors and a special nook for storing the plastic Christmas tree. Outside, where a carpet of grass stretched to the thunderous Atlantic, multiple servants made their home, and the latest-model American cars — from a Lincoln Continental to a two-tone green Pontiac Grand Prix — awaited their next 11-mile journey into downtown Monrovia.

Photo

Fate, so it seemed, handed Helene Cooper a “one-in-a-million lottery ticket” when she was born into “what passed for the landed gentry upper class of Africa's first independent country.” Both sides of Cooper's family traced their roots to Liberia's founding fathers — freed slaves from the United States who fought disease and the recalcitrant local population to forge a new nation. Their bravery and ingenuity were legendary, and their descendants soon formed Liberia's upper caste.



Credit Julia Hoffmann

At its heart, “The House at Sugar Beach” is a coming-of-age story told with unremitting honesty. With her pedigree and her freedom from internalized racism, Cooper is liberated to enjoy a social universe that is a fluid mix of all things American and African. “None of that American post-Civil War/civil rights movement baggage to bog me down with any inferiority complex about whether I was as good as white people,” she declares triumphantly. “No European garbage to have me wondering whether some British colonial master was somehow better than me. Who needs to struggle for equality? Let everybody else try to be equal to me.”

The young Helene Cooper oozes the awkward confidence of a privileged adolescent, and it is through her bespectacled eyes that we see the carefree decadence of Liberia in the years just before it descended into chaos. They are also the lenses through which we are introduced to Cooper's distinctly female world. Atop the matriarchy is her maternal grandmother, the unforgettable Mama Grand. Cooper's side-splitting portrayal of this hard-nosed, self-made landowner is nothing short of brilliant. With her gold-capped tooth glistening, Mama Grand is equally capable of dressing down a Lebanese merchant who “thought he was going to cheat me out of my rent” and berating the entire American government on camera for “60 Minutes.” The women are the backbone of Liberia in its heyday, but they show their true strength when the country collapses.

A subtle, nostalgic ache for a childhood foreshortened is the watermark imprinted on every page of Cooper's story. The idyll at Sugar Beach, with its Michael Jackson LPs and Nancy Drew mysteries, was shattered when a ragtag group of soldiers — part of the rebel force that brought down the Tolbert government in 1980, and with it over 150 years of old-guard, one-party rule — arrived on the scene. The stench of their inebriation, of their lust for violence, overpowered the tranquility that still lingered in the

bucolic air of Cooper's sheltered world. Her mother would try in vain to exorcise the odor — and the memories — the rebel intruders inscribed on her body and mind after they gang-raped her. Mommee sacrificed herself to protect the innocence of Helene and her other daughters, Marlene and Eunice, locking them in an upstairs room before the soldiers forced her down into the basement.



Photo

Credit Photograph by Joe Gaffney; Illustration by Julia Hoffmann

Cooper soon went into exile, joining thousands of other members of the Liberian elite who managed to escape the rebels' murderous pillaging. Mommee and Marlene were also among them. Eunice was not. The daughter of a poor upcountry mother, she had been taken into the household at Sugar Beach when Helene was a lonely 8-year-old in need of companionship. She quickly became "Mrs. Cooper's daughter" and was treated as one of Mommee's own. Yet over the years there were subtle reminders of Eunice's different status. And when it was time to flee, painful choices were made. Eunice was not a blood relation, and so she was left behind.

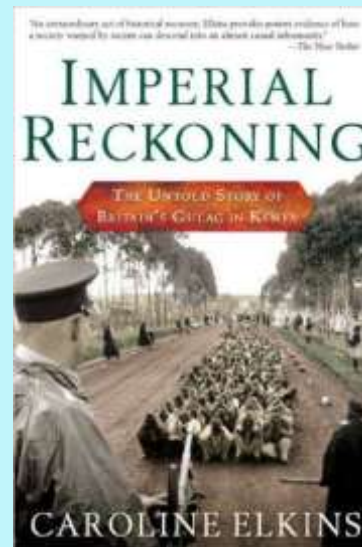
While Cooper's memoir is mesmerizing in its portrayal of a Liberia rarely witnessed, its description of the psychological devastation — and coping mechanisms — brought on by profound loss is equally captivating. The second half of the book tells the story of Helene's reinvention. Her aristocratic Liberian pedigree meant nothing in the hallways of her new school. She became the suspicious immigrant, spending lunchtime hiding in bathroom stalls and the recesses of the library rather than face the scrutiny and ridicule of her American classmates.

Cooper's perseverance and immense talent with language eventually catapulted her into a career as a journalist. Her success at *The Wall Street Journal* and later *The New York Times* is nearly as noteworthy as her ability to compartmentalize — or, some might say, dissociate. This mental sleight of hand is what affords

her the psychological space to create a new life and cultivate her writer's craft. It would be a mistake to see her ruminations over race and class in America as the hypocritical ranting of a once-privileged African. They are, instead, a reflection of her internalized journey, part of the process of becoming whole.

The walls holding back the guilt of her early entitlement, the destruction of her childhood, the murder of family and friends, and the abandonment of her foster sister would finally come crushing down under the literal weight of an American tank in Iraq. When the tank destroyed the Humvee in which she was riding, Cooper narrowly escaped death. But once she was extricated from the wreck, her mind traveled to a different war. "At that moment," she writes, "as I lay in the sand in the desert, my chemsuit soaked with what turned out to be oil, not blood, I thought of Liberia."

For the first time in over 20 years, she soon returned to her former homeland. There, in the ravaged streets, in the overgrown jungles of yesteryear's plantations, she confronted the ghosts of the dead — and encountered the living survivors. With much suffering and loss, Eunice had miraculously endured the hell of the Doe era, as well as the civil wars and deep poverty that accompanied the ascent of Charles Taylor to Liberia's presidency. Eventually, the two sisters were reunited and returned to the house at Sugar Beach. In the defiled shadow of onetime grandeur, Cooper embraced the enormity of her past, and finally came of age.



Caroline Elkins is an associate professor of history at Harvard and the author of "Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya," which won the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction in 2006.

A version of this review appears in print on , on page BR1 of the *Sunday Book Review* with the headline: African Idyll.

'Right Better: Tips for Improving: Short Stories

'RIGHT BETTER

WRITING
IMPROVING YOUR
TIPS FOR

Friday, January 15, 2016

KWEE: LLM

Short stories. I love them. They're good therapy if done properly; can be read anywhere, anytime, by anyone, and most importantly, they are not jealous. They don't demand too much of your time or want your commitment for anytime longer than they are, which by the way, is not long. The truth is, short stories are.... well short.

When I began writing, needless to say it was clumsy, I soon found out I wanted to do short stories. However, it became apparent that my greatest obstacle was time. There just wasn't enough of it. For example, I needed to describe my characters, their environment, present their dialogues, express their emotions, it seemed I could do nothing meaningful. It was frustrating. The options then were clear; I could quit or find a way around the problem.

Audience

Your audience is one of the most important part of your story, yet, when giving tips, we tend to focus on what a writer should or should not do. Not often do we consider the people who would be reading our work. The fact is every great writer knew their audience hence, they factored their needs. Every story should cater to the audience from its inception to completion. Finishing a story before mentally noting what one's audience will think or feel is perhaps one of the biggest fails of writers. The goal here is

to get into the hearts, minds and souls of your audience. You want to know them so that they can feel the story like you do. One of the best ways to do this is to take them along with you every step of the way. Here are five ways to accomplish this: I must admit, most of these tips will work for those that have some experience in writing. Those that are beginners, you may be wondering how do I do this or that. Rest easy, we will get to that in the next part.

- **Build Relationships. Using Time** - your audience are strangers, people you've not met and most likely will never meet. The primary basis of your relationship is the words you place before them and the characters you give them. Hence, it is critical to use the [short] time wisely. Be efficient with their time. You should at least give them a good story in a short time. By removing time from the relationship, you increase the chances of having them come back for more. Some may be annoyed you cut the story too short-they wanted more- but that could work in your favor. It tells you they enjoyed it and but did not have enough of it. The next time they get the chance, they'd want to be satisfied. You also make it easier for them to go back to their lives, which never stopped demanding from them, but because you temporarily stopped time, they would be grateful. Trust me, they won't forget this. Audiences tend to remember things and people that please as much as those that disappoint. Wasting their time, will only incur their wraths and perhaps get you a few swears. It would certainly not bring them back to your work. Make the best use of the strangers' time.
- **Give Readers Characters They Hate Or Love.** Fewer things are more powerful than hate or love. These emotions can make people do things

they never thought possible. Your characters should be no different. Create characters that are vile, hateful, treacherous or loving, peaceful and clever. Remember, there is not much space, so go for the extremes. There's no time for lukewarm characters. Give the readers some active role. As mentioned, take them along this journey-let them be active participants at every possible stage. Stir up enough emotions to get them fuming or cheering. The best kind of reader is one that is rooting for a character so badly that s/he'd get in harm's way to save the character or one that would shot that character down if s/he had the chance.

- **Give the readers characters they can empathize/identify with.** We all have wants, endless too. Your characters are no different. Make them want or not want things; make them feel things- love, ecstasy, anger, pain etc. Let the characters play out the darkest thoughts, fantasies, contemplations or exhibit kindness, selflessness and make sacrifices that go beyond themselves. Readers don't want characters that come from out perfect words. They want flawed characters; ones they can see some of themselves in. again, take you readers along with you. Make them feel at ease with the characters; let them sit back and think or feel, "I'd would have done exactly that..."
- **Give your readers presents.** Remember now, these folks have stopped everything they could possibly be doing right now, in this whole world, just to be here. This is a powerful fact we lose track of or rarely stop to consider. The possibilities are endless, yet, they are here. The least you can do for them is

provide them treats, presents, sweets. A good way to do this is to ensure that each you write, advance them to another level or reveal hidden things about the story or characters. This is what I call **build a house of bricks**. Make each brick count; valuable from foundation up. Just imagine you are on a trip, don't you stop ever so oft to get snacks, refreshments, take a bathroom break? So, why should it be any different for your readers? They are on this journey and actively participating, be generous and offer them reprieves. All sentences must do one of two things-reveal character or advance the action.

- **Begin at the end.** Silly right? Okay, maybe not right at the end, but as close to the end of the story as possible. How much of a trip are we going on if I started at the end of the story? Where then is the rest of the story. These are logical questions, but this is precisely one of the reasons I love short stories. It is.... Short. I thought I said this before? It does not need back matter, overdressing-heck, she is often nude. It is designed to do the exact opposite. Is that not obvious in its name? Starting at any other place but close to the end creates a lot of work- unnecessary work too I must say; - [one can start right at the end, but this works best for flash. We will cover that in a subsequent post.] Regardless of how one defines a short story, the shorter the story, the closer to the end one should start. art as close to the end as possible.

In the next article, we will discuss more tips on making the story better but this time, we look more at what the writer can do to advance the story.

Unscripted

Cher Antoinette



JANUARY 2016

Please note that all works should be credited to Cher-Antoinette © 2012-2015

Greetings to you and a Blessèd and Prosperous New Year!

The month of January signifies the beginning of another cycle of our Gregorian Calendar and an opportunity to reflect on our experiences of the previous year. We all wish that we can move forward with confidence, clarity and most importantly, hope. Let the journey begin!

UNCERTAINTY

I am drowning
Sinking fast to the depths
The lights are going out
As I move further
Away from the dream
Your reality extinguishes
The flames
But my heart is singed
I can no longer breathe

The air
Heavy with doubt
And uncertainty
No plans can be made
No life raft dispatched
Yet
I remain devoted
To the notion
The tide will turn

© Architects of Destiny 2014

STUCK

Stuck,
stuck,
stuck in a rhythm
that's going no where
gripped by fear.

Should I dare
to question
my pace,
my place
in this race
for award?

Reward
my efforts;
give me the cup
to sup
of the dreams
I should follow.

Sprinkle the
path
with fairy dust,
click red heels,
feel the wind
at my back.

Blow!

Blow away
the nightmare
of fear.

My dreams
are black,
are back
to the crack
of the whip
on this nigger's back.

© "My Soul Cries" 2013 -
Cher-Antoinette

AFRAID TO BE

Why?
Why are you afraid?

Afraid
to be yourself

to be the person
you want to be;
there is nothing
to be
afraid of.

Come,
take my hand.
We have the strength
within;
it is here,
from the beginning
it was
placed here
for a reason,
a purpose,
to live and
to love.

God
Inner Spirit
Jah
Chi
many names
same energy
the synergy
that's released when
two bodies
become one;
beauty in its most empirical
form.

Love
lust
sex
call it what you will
but in it all
there is the connection
still.

The trouble is
we are timid,
comfortable,
complacent in our
two-by-four space
but
it's not a disgrace
to want to move
at a different pace.

There is nothing
to be ashamed of.

No guilt required.

Unburden yourself.
Your friends who care
will be there
will understand
what you really need
what you really desire
to be the (wo)man
of your future lover.

Take my hand

I am you-
your Inner Spirit.

I am you -
your Muse.

Unlock me
set me free
to be
your Creator
of
Self.

© “My Soul Cries” 2013 -
Cher-Antoinette

SOON

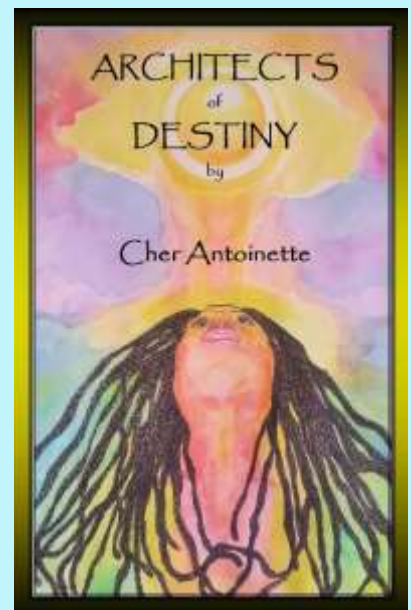
The nightmares will soon be
over
for the sun rises over the
cherry moon
The time to rest approaches
fast
as the cloaks of destruction
are shed
Dirt and sand trade places
with
cool winds and bleached
cotton
On which the maps of your
destiny
will be inscribed
It won't be much longer now
the angels are not asleep
They know they must stay
awake
and alert
To bring you to shores
where sunrises and sunsets
are all that mark the
passing of the hours

To bring you to the arms of
the one
designated by the Divine
Soon
it will be soon

© “Architects of Destiny”
2014 - Cher-Antoinette

Cher-Antoinette is a mother of two, a forensic scientist and is a multiple silver and bronze award winner at the Barbados National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) in Photography, Visual Arts and Literary Arts. An Honours Graduate in Chemistry from UWI Cave Hill Campus, in 1989 the author gained the recognition of being the first Forensic Scientist in Barbados having achieved her Masters in Forensic Science from Kings College, University of London. She has since had a long and rewarding career in the field and is presently the Director of the Forensic Sciences Centre, Office of the Attorney General. Cher-Antoinette prides herself in being both left and right brained and demonstrates her creativity as an artist in many different areas. In 2011 she added to her awards by receiving two silver medals in the Literary Arts at NIFCA for her prose pieces INTERVENTION and THE PINK SLIP. The latter also won her the Incentive Award for the Most Promising Adult Prose Piece. She was awarded a bronze in 2012 with THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CUSS-OUT and in 2014 two Bronzes for Poetry - FOREVER I WON'T & RE-EVOLUTION. In the Fine Arts category another bronze for her Watercolour BRIDGE AT THE HOLE. In 2013 her Acrylic painting GEM OF SPEIGHTSTOWN was awarded a Bronze award and in 2014 ST. JOSEPH PARISH CHURCH another Bronze. Cher's works have been published in St. Somewhere Online Literary

Journal, Blackberry - The Magazine, and in four anthologies - Bamboo Press -She Sex, The Barbados National Cultural Foundation's - Winning Words, She Speaks - Woman's Journal, Senseisha - An Anthology on the sensuality of the Barbadian Woman, and The Caribbean Writer 2014. In December 2013, Cher self-published an anthology of poetry called My Soul Cries and in 2014 VIRTUALIS: A New-Age Love Story and VIRTUALIS: The Anthology. ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY is the latest anthology that will be published in March 2105. Her primary media for artwork is Watercolour and she has been exploring Pen/Ink & WC Wash. The cover art for both her works was specially designed by her. Cher-Antoinette can be contacted at cher.insight@gmail.com and has a social media presence at https://www.facebook.com/CorbinGirl http://cherinsight.blogspot.com and on Twitter @cherinsight Instagram @CherAntoinetteStudio



For Every Woman Who Ever Lost A Pregnancy

Short Story 3



***Credits: Ebidenyefa the Author.
This story first appeared on the blog
[BUKOLAADEOLUDELE](#)

Ebidenyefa Tarila Nikade, is a Nigerian writer and the author 'Vulnerable Chronicles'

Hurts are real but more real is the JOY of the Lord in the midst of our challenges.

This piece is the true story of a woman's pain and hurts but one thing I want you to take away from this is...

- Always try as much as possible to be patient with people and encourage them in their times of pain.

- Know that there's nothing as potent as praying for someone in their low times and sharing relevant scriptures from the word of God. It is God that can truly go down to the foundation of the hurts and pull it out.

- No matter what you're going through, you're not alone.

- Let the JOY of the Lord replace every hurt and let the fact that you're alive fill your heart with PRAISES to God. Once there is life, there is indeed hope!

Farewell Slide:

I never knew I would ever do this even though some people forbade from doing it earlier. I realised that the fastest means of getting over the pain is speaking about it and making a message of the mess.

When the news broke that I was pregnant again. I didn't know what to expect really. I wanted a double portion restoration for my stillbirth just like He promised that for your shame, you shall have double.



So I got triple. Three hearts were growing within and growing very fast. I could feel their heart beats and leaps as they spun a merry go round in my uterus. The scan always revealed them playing joyfully.

The pregnancy ran smoothly after a couple of multiple pregnancy attendant complications were promptly handled by my well qualified medical team.

Then in one ungodly night...chai, I still remember that night vividly...that night I begged God, I felt the severity of excruciating pain...I thought I was going to die

God was miles away in heaven and for a moment I felt he turned his back on me... then my water broke gushing out like an estuary . I stopped praying. I knew it was over. There was no miracle that could keep them in beyond that point.

A preterm labour had commenced and was progressing in quick succession. The incubator was prepared. A flicker of hope beamed but by

the time they slid out there was no need for an incubator. They were not ready to live. They were only 20 weeks old...too young to live.

Today makes it exactly two years my tripee pinkies slid out of me in a farewell slide back to their creator who knows best why it happened so.

I have held on to the memories of their sojourn inside me these two years wishing they were.

Right now I do not know which is worse off...losing them preterm, at birth or after months of suckling. One thing is sure; the death of a child no matter the age is one pain indescribable and I have had my share of it.

I have had many phantom fantasies about the life they would have lived. I have cried for them everywhere; in church, street corners, market place, kitchen...

Still the pain won't go away as therapeutic as crying is. I have refused to share my story for the pain of it. But the more I lock up, the more painful it gets.

I have asked God very embarrassing questions denying him a place in my heart. Thankfully, he is a God who knows our frailties and has shown mercy in place of wrath.

Gosh! I got to that point where nothing made sense- I was just hopelessly existing hiding behind the charade of a smile.

I have tried talking to a few persons about it and all they say, "forget about it...let it go...it's all in the past"... like a boring cliché it is whisked off with a wink or wave.

Letting go is not as easy as people think it is or make it sound but which would you rather have...progress or regress?

So many things in life are easier said than done.

Truth is until the victim finds that healing spot and heals from within...your words of counsel fall on deaf ears...they follow you back to your abode like escorts in a convoy.

This morning, just this morning, two years after, I found my healing spot...I was praying about them-weeping and talking simultaneously, gesticulating...a myriad of emotions eased off my eyes.

Then suddenly, suddenly! A song of praise accompanied by a boundless spring of joy burst forth from within - the type that makes you light and bright in one moment of gaiety...when you feel his loving arms wrapped around you soothing the pain...

Overwhelmed by the aura of his presence, I rose to my feet and started singing ...I sang, I sang, I just couldn't stop. It was the moment I had been waiting for to let it all out!

I reveled in that one moment in time.

Until the healing is divine; the pain continues.

Two years today...getting over the pain#tripletsinheaven.



Ebidenyefa Tarila Nikade
Author 'Vulnerable Chronicles '
Event MC and Compere
Parenting/Teen/Sex Education Coach

Author Interview 3

SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

KEVIN ZIMMERMAN is a decorated veteran



Kevin Zimmerman

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

I was born in 1960, in Toledo, OH, raised during the civil rights movement. I dropped out of college after my freshman year and joined the U.S. Army so I could support and raise my newly born daughter. Prior to departing for a career in the U.S. Army, my father made me promise him that I would not leave the military until after I could retire from it. My career lead me into two notable deployments that were noted in my book. Noting those things resulted in the book being accepted into the archives of the Department of the Army's Medical Museum and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture, making me a permanent part of both US military and American history.

2) Why writing?

I wrote for two reasons. 1. The economy was in a downward spiral at the time the book was being written and I believed that it would provide so hope and inspiration. 2. I believe that by writing a book you provide a way for your name to live well beyond your lifespan.

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

The Holy Bible and The Richest Man That Ever Lived by Steven K Scott.

4) How do you approach your work?

Very methodically. By doing so I believe I bring the best I have to offer which end turn results in positive outcomes.

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

Faith based themes. I am a firm believer that as one believes, he lives.

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

My book A Time For Everything; The Kevin Zimmerman Story is a book

about how God took an ordinary person and did some extraordinary things. It covers my life from childhood through two significant military deployments. I have been repeatedly informed that inspiration is gain by a variety of people who have read it because they understand too that greatness lies within themselves as well.

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

One night while watching television a question was asked "Does God still work miracles like He did during biblical times?" By telling my own story I knew that I may not be able to persuade anyone to believe one way or another, but my story would certainly make it difficult for the reader to rule out divine intervention.

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

Yes. My message is that I believe the answer to the question is yes. God still works miracles today as he did during biblical times.

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

BIO



Kevin Zimmerman

for Black History Month. The latest request is from Tacoma Community College in Tacoma WA.

13) What are your current projects?

Currently I am assisting active duty service members, their families and our veterans get the required help to cope with behavioral health issues in the northeastern region of the United States.

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

No I have not.

14) Any last words?

Your message may not be for everyone but it is for someone.



Yes. By supporting the book you not only get an inspirational read but you also help to support our service members, their families and our veterans.

10) Do you have any advice for other writers?

Absolutely. Write!!!! Do not write to get rich. Write because you have something to share. Be it inspiration or instruction-write. Someone needs what has been placed in you.

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

The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People by Stephen Covey

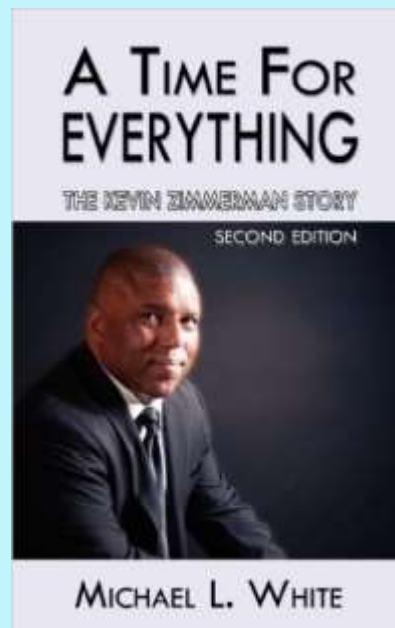
12) Tell us your latest news, promotions, book tours, launch etc.

Our office continues to receive speaking requests

I was born in 1960, in Toledo, OH, raised during the civil rights movement. I dropped out of college after my freshman year and joined the U.S. Army so I could support and raise my newly born daughter.

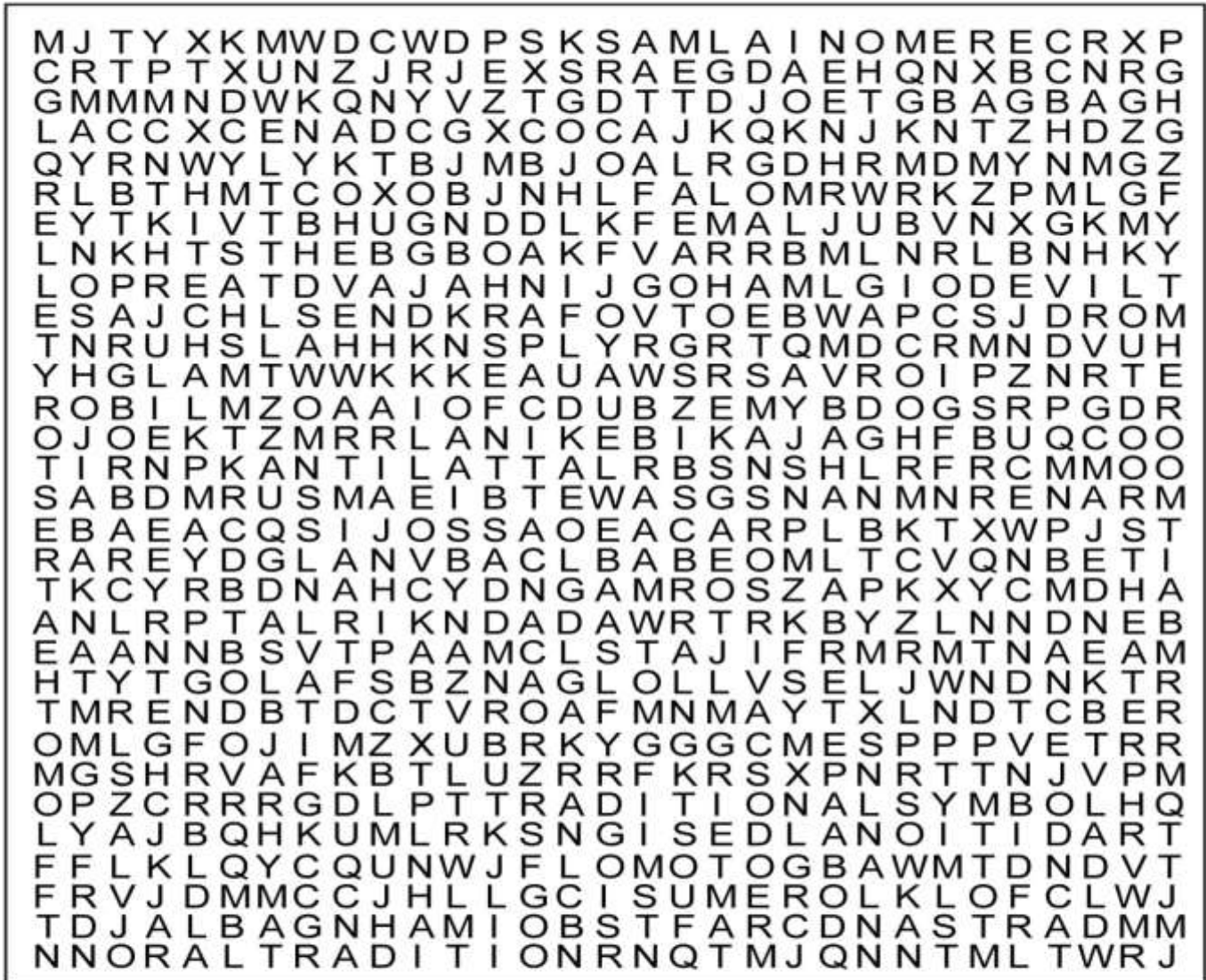
Prior to departing for a career in the U.S. Army, my father made me promise him that I would not leave the military until after I could retire from it. My career lead me into two notable deployments that were noted in my book.

Noting those things resulted in the book being accepted into the archives of the Department of the Army's Medical Museum and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture, making me a permanent part of both US military and American history.



Liberia Tapestry

National Cultural Village, Kendeja



Kendeja
 Cultural troop
 Traditional symbol
 Artists
 Dance
 Traditional songs
 Folklore music
 Musical ballad
 Peter Ballah
 Ma Gbassay
 Joe T. Gbagba
 Dehkontee Artists
 Juli Endee
 Jallah K. K. Kamara
 Ceremonial Masks

Gba-too
 Bai T. Moore
 Glegban or Gio devil
 Kukatonon "we are one".
 Outdoors theater
 Drummer's beats
 Arts and crafts
 Malawala Balawala
 Flomo Theatre
 Cultural Ambassadors
 Flomo Togba
 Deyougar Puu
 Kpargbor Barclay
 N'doma Golafalai
 Boimah N'gabla

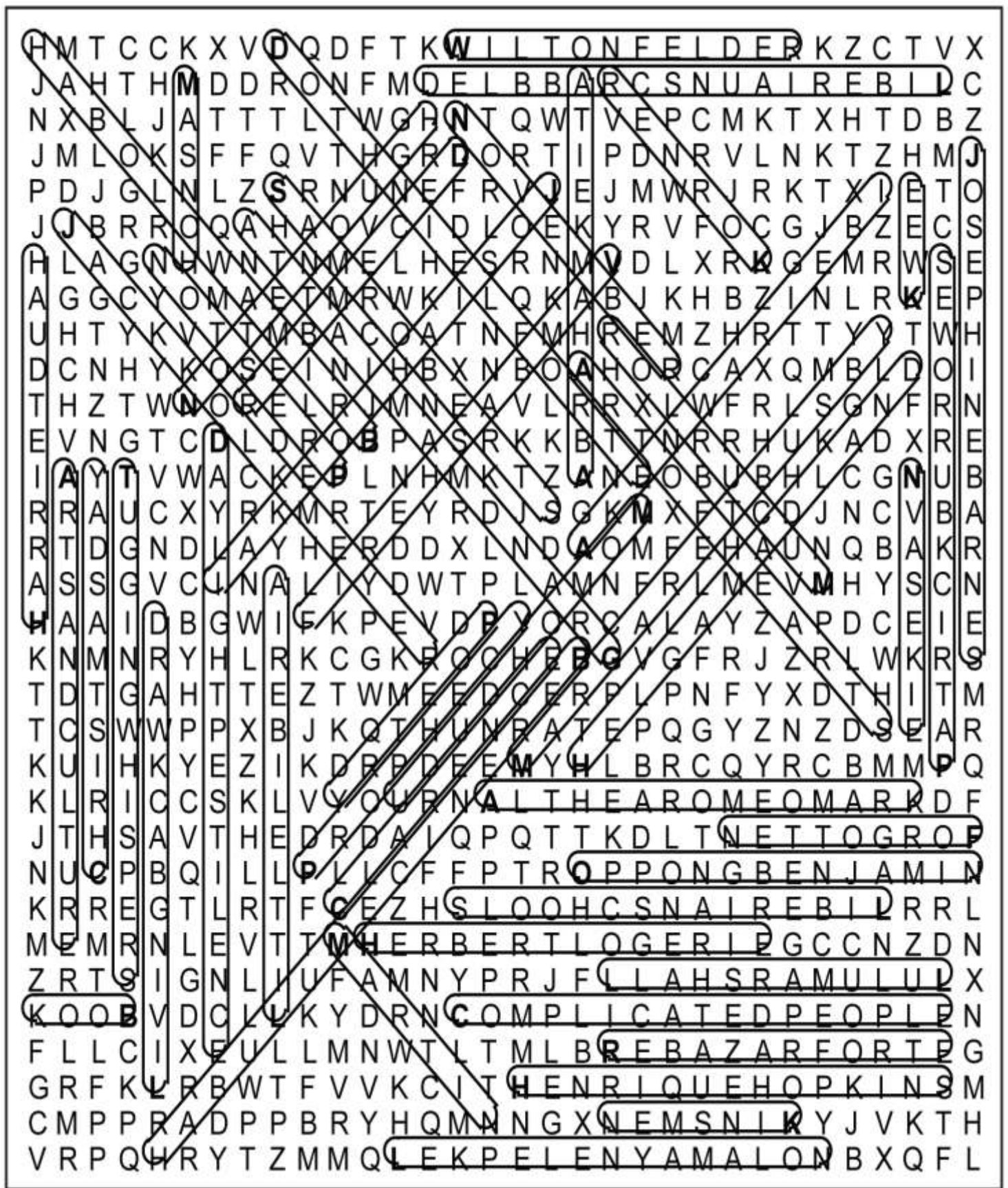
Kona Khasu
 Tankabai Johnson
 Braids and cowries
 Oral tradition
 Bead necklaces
 White chinks
 Raffia skirts
 Headgears
 Traditional designs
 Perform barefooted
 Storyteller
 Stories and songs
 Acrobatic activities

Answers To Last Month's Puzzle

A Christmas Thanksgiving

Created by Ophelia Lewis

©All Rights Reserve



The Bet [Short Story 4]:

[Few writers master the Short Story as Anton]

by **Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860-1904)**

IT WAS A DARK AUTUMN NIGHT. THE OLD banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things they had talked of capital punishment. The majority of the guests, among whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral, and unsuitable for Christian States. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life.

"I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge *a priori*, the death penalty is more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more humane, he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"

"Both are equally immoral," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object -- to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to."

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said:

"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."

A lively discussion arose. The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

"It's not true! I'll bet you two millions you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years."

"If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I would stay not five but fifteen years."

"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two millions!"

"Agreed! You stake your millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man.

And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said:

"Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me two millions are a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you won't stay longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you."

And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself: "What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man's losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two millions? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money. . . ."

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books, and was allowed to write letters, to drink wine, and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted -- books, music, wine, and so on -- in any quantity he desired by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary, and bound the young man to stay there *exactly* fifteen years, beginning from twelve o'clock of November 14, 1870, and ending at twelve o'clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him two millions.

For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires, and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and

besides, nothing could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of a light character; novels with a complicated love plot, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on.

In the second year the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.

In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies -- so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner:

"My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.

Then after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology and histories of religion followed the Gospels.

In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, and a manual of medicine, and a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

The old banker remembered all this, and thought: "To-morrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two millions. If I do pay him, it is all over with me: I shall be utterly ruined."

Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which were greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange, wild speculation and the excitability which he could not get over even in advancing years, had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. "Cursed bet!" muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him every day the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life, let me help you!' No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!"

It struck three o'clock, the banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house.

It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes, but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, nor the lodge, nor the trees. Going to the spot where the lodge stood, he twice called the watchman. No answer followed. Evidently the watchman had sought shelter from the weather, and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse.

"If I had the pluck to carry out my intention," thought the old man, "Suspicion would fall first upon the watchman."

He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door, and went into the entry of the lodge. Then he groped his way into a little passage and lighted a match. There was not a soul there. There was a bedstead with no bedding on it, and in the corner there was a dark cast-iron stove. The seals on the door leading to the prisoner's rooms were intact.

When the match went out the old man, trembling with emotion, peeped through the little window. A candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing could be seen but his back, the hair on his head, and his hands. Open

books were lying on the table, on the two easy-chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years' imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The banker tapped at the window with his finger, and the prisoner made no movement whatever in response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seals off the door and put the key in the keyhole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear at once footsteps and a cry of astonishment, but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

At the table a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones, with long curls like a woman's and a shaggy beard. His face was yellow with an earthy tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow, and the hand on which his shaggy head was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was already streaked with silver, and seeing his emaciated, aged-looking face, no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep. . . . In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

"Poor creature!" thought the banker, "he is asleep and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man, throw him on the bed, stifle him a little with the pillow, and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here. . . ."

The banker took the page from the table and read as follows:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that in your books is called the good things of the world.

"For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women. . . . Beauties as ethereal as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited me at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books I have climbed to the peaks of Elburz and Mont Blanc, and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and

the mountain-tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm-clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens, and the strains of the shepherds' pipes; I have touched the wings of comely devils who flew down to converse with me of God. . . . In your books I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms. . . .

"Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

"And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory, and deceptive, like a mirage. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe.

"You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if, owing to strange events of some sorts, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at you who exchange heaven for earth. I don't want to understand you.

"To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce the two millions of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive myself of the right to the money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed, and so break the compact. . . ."

When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt for himself. When he got home he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping.

Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces, and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate, and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.

Author Interview 4 SPOTLIGHT AUTHOR

RICHARD ALAN



Richard H. Alan

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

Tell us about your early childhood, upbringing, Education.

I am a hippie, biker, rocker, husband, father, and grandfather. My biggest, most enduring interests are in books, an ever-growing DVD and music collections. I am a forever student, which also includes books and DVD or streaming lectures, primarily by the Teaching Company (<http://bit.ly/1WX7K0i>) with a plethora of favorite subjects.

Due to my disabilities, I walk, but cannot backpack, play volleyball, or do any strenuous activities. Being a post-martial arts enthusiast and survivalist has led me to collect weapons such as historic replicas, guns (marksmanship), and fantasy weapons such as spears, swords, and knives, some from popular movies like The Lord of the Rings.

I am a creative writer and author on my third visit to this end. Songs and poetry came at an early age. I continued the song writing from about 1963 to 1992. I excelled in

creative writing courses. In 1980, my wife became pregnant and in my excitement, I wrote a children's fantasy adventure. A bad agent and lazy artist's commitments thwarted that and several other children's picture books. In the late 1980s, I turned to screenwriting for The Twilight Zone. They picked up three scripts and scheduled them early in the next season. We were all excited, but the show was cancelled by the TV network.

My music kept me writing and performing, but the highs and lows of these other writing projects depressed me. Then I came out again, hooked up with a vanity press (bad/ignorant move) and published the first book in an epic vampire series. I was published, but because I was so green, they published a great story written and edited very poorly.

I began writing short stories for magazines to keep my sanity as I went back to continue and edit 'The Rising Series'. I have six drafts written for the series, but I needed time away. I wrote, prepared, and self-published the short novella, 'The Last Train' (<http://bit.ly/1yz9P69>). With all the experience I gained, I have put out two short story collections, which includes other authors, 'The Eyes of Prometheus' (Amazon Author Page: <http://bit.ly/13sKmmB>).

I've actually published four books in this first of a two year respite from 'The Rising'. I plan to do the same this year so my portfolio of books and book covers will not suffer as I yearn for this one difficult series.

Why writing?

I love painting with the written word, finding a poetic phrasing, and entertaining others. I am permanently disabled, so I am no longer performing my music, lead no bands, or perform for children, which I loved as a sideline. Through it all, writing is fun and rewarding. What follows writing is a lot of work for an indie author, but writing is a great adventure chasing down ideas. It is pure joy.

What books have most influenced your life/career most?

I was raised on the classics: Edgar Allen Poe, Jules Vern, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Zane Grey, Alexandre Dumas, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Jack L. Chalker and so many more. Their accumulated works taught me the enjoyment of literature as I traveled delightful journeys and explorations of new ideas, other times, and foreign places.

How do you approach your work?

My primary interest is in fiction. Fiction is like playing and I love to play. It is also systematic. In that sense, it is working with developing writing skills. Therefore, it is a combination of heart, head, and a free spirit.

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

Real character building, emotion to engage reader's emotions, fantasy, fun, and fear.

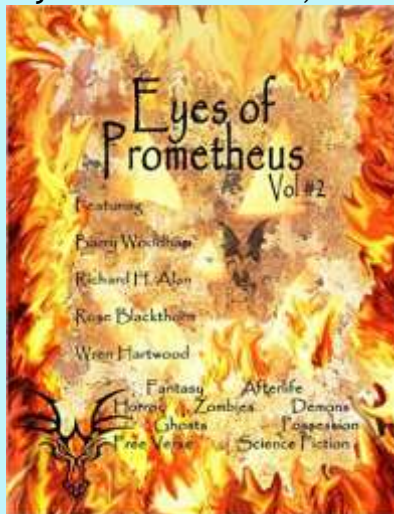
Tell us a little about your book[s]- storyline, characters, themes, inspiration etc.

At this moment, I have my short comedy, paranormal, 'The Last Train'. Jake is



trying to reunite with his wife. The problem? He's dead. It is a paranormal adventure on both sides of the mortal curtain.

I also have two volumes of 'Eyes of Prometheus', which



are collections of the supernatural genres: paranormal, fantasy, science fiction, and horror. The few free verse items range in emotion and purpose; two exemplify an author's heart. I have several short stories in these as well as other authors. They write and I do all the rest. Barry Woodham is an established sci-fi fantasy novelist with many short stories to share. (Author's page:

<http://amzn.to/1Psf1WR>
Web Page: <http://scifiauthor.blogspot.com/>) It am also honored to be the first to publish Wren Hartwood's stories. Rose Blackthorn is well established in many twisted and horror anthologies, so I enjoyed working with her and her thought-filled zombie story in volume 2.

(<http://www.amazon.com/Rose-Blackthorn/e/B007D91C3K>
Web Page: <https://roseblackthorn.wordpress.com/>)
All books are easily found on my Amazon Author's Page: <http://bit.ly/13sKmmB>

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

The Last Train came to me tucked in the usual non-stop tap on my bottomless barrel of story ideas. Both intrigue and newness drew me to it as it almost plotted itself out without a moments warning. The storyline just fell together and when I plotted it out in a graph, I was hooked. I use Inspiration 9 for this.

Though I set out for a more serious take on the story, the characters quickly turned it into a comedy version of my ideas.

One reviewer said, "The story is told in such a light and humorous way that one finds delight in what might otherwise be a grim ride. - John Holland."

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



The way I wrote it, each reader goes away with something different as can be seen in the reviews. (<http://amzn.to/11HP8LN>) The power of undying love becomes obvious. There is also a subtle message about prayer as an outgrowth of Jakes journey.

Is there anything else you would like readers to know about your book? To date, my books are all quick reads and are loaded with surprises for only \$0.99 each. The Last Train, for instance, had been called a genre mutt because it covers so much in its seventy plus pages. Though I avoid cliffhangers, many readers wish they were expanded into full-length novels.

Do you have any advice for other writers? Keep your eye on the goals in your plot vicissitudes, and do not let your characters push so hard that you can't smoothly get back to your plot. Develop an emotional connection to your characters that will carry into your writing. Enjoy your creativity!

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

I read all genres, fiction and non-fiction, to expose myself to them and other writing styles. Now, I am reading short stories picked out of many anthologies stuffed onto my Kindle. I work for Trevor Alan and Tracy L'amoure who write erotica, (Amazon US: <http://amzn.to/1KDawnA>) so I am also reading "Good Pussy Bad Pussy: Rachel's Tale" by [A. Aimee](#).

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

When it comes to writing and publishing, I am a Swiss Army knife. When it comes to promotions, I am a flounder. I try, but I am so people oriented that my promotions are low key, and I promote all books equally. I could say it is a time issue, which it is, but it is also a matter of prioritizing which rests squarely on my shoulders. News is four books in the promo slot, and in the other slot is good, daily progress on my next book, 'Vespar'. Lined up after that is 'Eyes of Prometheus vol. 3' and three other stories already started with more 'Eyes' tucked between them. Thereafter, I will return to my vampire series, 'The Rising'.

What are your current projects?

"Vespar," the first in another series that takes place in a land I call 'Hadar'.

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

No. Not yet

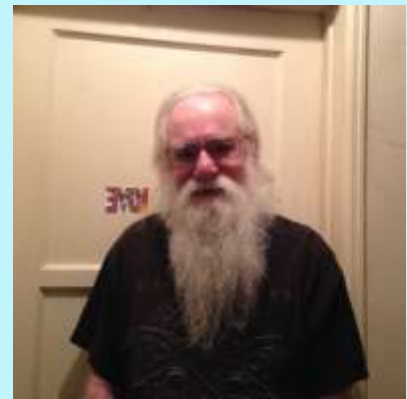
Any last words?

It has been a joy living a life focused on helping and

entertaining others. Now I am solidly on the journey to continue that, which will fill out the rest of my life.



Julian Adams rises from the grave not knowing what he is except a vicious predator. His bite changes others, some better him through friendship and cooperation, but others become the image of an ancient blight; hordes of beasts with self-patronizing overlords. Sustained by human blood, two distinct Orders are created: one with clarity and cohesion, the other disjointed and without regard for others; one is a society with a utopian vision; the other a disorganized conglomerate living out their destructive lusts and hate; both are changing lives forever. Julian rises as the leader of the new society while haunted by the creation of his nemesis, Scott and his horrid creation. Humankind is locked in a balance between one who would become their savior and one who would see them rot in a hell on earth. The ancient Marcian Council slowly unravels the mysteries too late to intervene in the outcome they are sworn to eradicate. The United States is ignorant of the rise of one who would be called Emperor on their very soil. The battlefield is Northern California. Julian discovers that behind their health, their youth, their strengths, and a new world of mutants is the well-guarded secret - they are vampires!



Richard Alan is never wanting for a creative spark, whether writing his poetry and prose, teaching, performing as a singer/songwriter/bandleader, gifted instrumentalist, or using his unique vocal artistry and talent for making sound effects.

With a clever wit and joviality, he faces life's difficulties with a smile while feeling the gambit of emotions. People who cross his path meet with optimism, kindness, and encouragement, even when he is in tears of pain, trial, or joy.

He is an eternal student with a childlike curiosity to understand the sciences, the arts, history, and all things in nature and space. Metaphysically, he is insightful, practiced in several disciplines, and knows there is much more to life than meets the eye.

He creates with an overflowing pallet of colors found in the catacombs of his mind where voices compete for attention. Add to that the experience from a 60+-year-old sojourner. As hippie, Christian, Wiccan, brother, biker, rocker, husband, father, or grandpa. This storyteller churns out the unexpected through a multitude of genres.

The magical brew of imagination has never failed him and boils with multiplying fuel for the fire.

Richard H. Alan - Author
::Bump:: Day or Night

Forgotten Heroes

Alfred William Gardner

(date of birth: 1817 - died 1884)



Anthony F. Russell (1817-1884)

Alfred Francis Russell (1817-1884)

Alfred was the eleventh Vice President of Liberia. He was born August 25, 1817 in Lexington, Kentucky. His family migrated to Liberia in 1883 on board the Ajax. He was well in his teens at the time.

His birth and life is one of interest and for many good reasons too. Russell was the product of an affair with his master's son and his mother. It was alleged that the John Russell, his father, came to visit his wealthy grandmother and got involved with her slave servant. This caused a big scandal in town for the lady gave birth to a white baby. He was two-third white.

The situation was embarrassing for all the parties. It was not thinkable for him to be treated as a slave seeing that he had turned out more white than black. Fearing the alternative, her owner was eventually forced to get rid of (sell) his mother to another family member.

Amelie Crawford his mother, an octoroon-(one-eighth black) went along with her family to save face-it is generally assumed. The Russell's are connected to Mary Todd Lincoln (Abraham Lincoln's wife) thus providing another interesting twist to the man's story.

In Liberia, the Russells met hardship like never before. Whilst in the US he admits to being raised in a pampered manner by Mr. Polly, but this was not the case in Liberia. They entered the colony at a most difficult time.

Dr. Mechlin was an agent and the only doctor in the colony. He had them quarantined and after some basic treatment, they were sent out to Caldwell & Millsburg. Russell described the situation like this. "Housing was inadequate, food was scarce, and medical service was almost nonexistent."

An interesting aspect of his life that is hardly known is the fact that he was crippled as a youth. Some ailment befell him and made him cripple. For a long time he used a clutch to assist him in walking. The situation was so bad that in one letter it was feared that he would be a cripple for life. Even Russell makes no secret of the fact (in another letter) that it was thought he would never walk again. Somehow, he managed to walk and walked all the way to the nation's highest office.

As an adult, Francis moved to Clay Ashland along the St Paul's River, a district bought by the Kentucky Colonization Society. He had a rather large farm (200 acres) where he grew mostly Sugar and Coffee. He built a large brick house he called Russellton.

He eventually entered politics but not before serving the Lord as a Methodist Minister and missionary for 17 years all over Liberia.

Later in his life, he transferred to the Protestant Episcopal Church. He also represented Montserrado County as one of its Senators throughout the 1850s and served intermittently in that body over the next two decades.

Liberian Proverbs

Excerpted from *The Elder's Wisdom*

1. **The fowl digs out the blade that kills it.** *The chicken is noted for digging; it digs all day long and just about anywhere, it can penetrate. Normally, inquisitive children are warned using this proverb. The lesson they try to teach them is that it is not good to dig into things that are not of one's concern. Having an inquiring mind is good but to go poking in other people's business is not. This could lead to one's own demise.*

2. **The friend of a fool is a fool.** *We say that birds of the same fly together. A foolish person keeps company with others that thinks like him. They think alike and are easily able to form a bond of friendship. It is then logical to see why a fool will befriend another foolish person. For one to think that all one's friends are fools and one is not, is foolish.*

3. **The friend of a wise person is another wise person.** *This is the quite opposite of the parable about a fool's friends being fools. A wise person seeks otherwise people to befriend and learn from; this enriches their knowledge. It pays to be friends of wise people.*

4. **The hand of the young does not reach to the high shelf; but that of the elder does.** *Again, we see experience and respect interplaying. There are many things the young may not know or be able to do but the elders can easily do because of their knowledge and experience. Thus, it serves us well to render them their respect.*

5. **The heart has no bone in it.** *Our hearts are fragile and as such, we should treat it carefully. Some people do not care for others and they treat them like trash. They break their hearts, forgetting that it contains no literal bones to resist such fall/hurt.*

6. **The hunter does not rub himself in oil and lie by the fire to sleep.** *If a problem is so obvious, it is unwise to go looking for it. The smart thing to do would be to avoid it. The potential of causing a trouble is enough to dissuade a wise person. In this case, the hunter knows the risk of catching on fire is high if he went to sleep in the forest right next to a fire. Especially if he has rubbed oil on him.*

7. **The hen comes from the egg and the egg comes from the hen.** *The intent here is not to solve the problem of which comes before the other-the hen or the egg. It serves to show a connection. If there is one, then there must be the other. It is a classic example of the circular nature of some things in life. Alternatively, it could mean that a hen lays an egg, which in turn, turns into a hen. When used in regards to behavior, it means one should expect a child to manifest characters of its mother.*

8. **The house of a person we love is never far.** *We are not referring to literal distance here. When we love people, we find every time to spend it with them, thus, their home is never far from us. The frequency of our visits neglects the actual distance.*

9. **The hunter does not rub himself in oil and lie by the fire to sleep.** *If a problem is so obvious, it is unwise to go looking for it. The smart thing to do would be to avoid it. The potential of causing a trouble is enough to dissuade a wise person. In this case, the hunter knows the risk of catching on fire is high if he went to sleep in the forest right next to a fire. Especially if he has rubbed oil on him.*

10. **The hunter in pursuit of an elephant does not stop to throw stones at birds.** *A wise person knows how to keep his/her focus. There are many things in life to distract us but if we keep our minds set to our task, we shall succeed. Imagine the irony here. The possibility of catching a large elephant is closing in, and then one loses focus and starts hunting a bird. The gains of the first action are far in excess of the second. Only a fool would risk losing an elephant for a bird; no matter how big the bird is it will never be bigger than an even a baby elephant.*

11. **The hyena does not forget where it has hidden its kill.** *The things that are important to us, we keep them close to our hearts. When the hyena hides its food, it must remember the location for when it needs it later otherwise it will starve. Similarly, a child does not forget its home. Its home is where food is.*

12. **The law is like a biscuit (cracker).**

Liberian Coins

Obverse

On the obverse side of the coin is a frizzy haired female head that has what appears to be a stocking or knitted cap. Lodged squarely in the middle of the cap's base is a five pointed star [pentagram]. The head faces the left. It is rimmed by a circle containing another, smaller star at the base and the lettering "REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA" which extends perfectly across the coin in a semi-circle. The coin's orientation is up and down [↑↓] left within circle, stars below.



Engraver: W.J. Taylor



Reverse



On the reverse side, is a Palm Tree, engraved right in the middle of a big circle; the Atlantic Ocean and a sailing vessel. Within the circle, is the value indicated by the lettering "ONE CENT" pulsated by two pentagrams and the date "1847".

Edge
The edge of the coin is <i>Plain</i>
Year
1847
Value
1 Cent (0.01)
Metal
It is made of Copper
Weight
It weighs 9 g
Diameter
It is 28.32 mm
Thickness
The coin is 1.85 mm thick.
Shape
The coin is circular/round
Demonetization
It is no longer used. It has been demonetized

'Twas Brillig

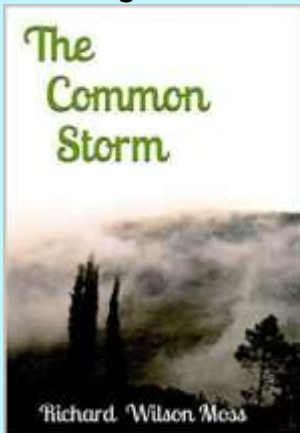
Richard Wilson Moss

Colossus

Interred like wild primrose
Surrounded by red flame
ivy
So innocent is the climb of
this vine
And so vain.

Destructive rain
That ruins the rose
Invigorates un-
belabored growth
Of this green rioting vine
ungodly reaching
To choke the sun itself.

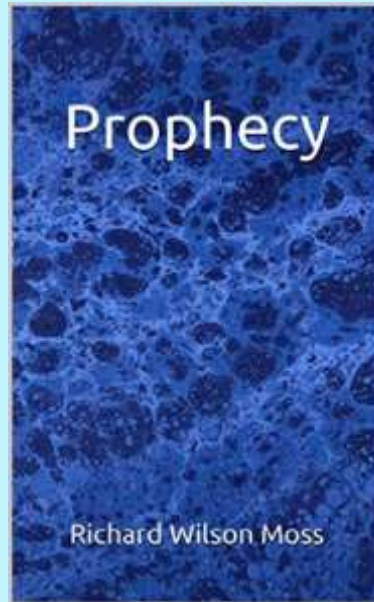
Interred in this building
built
Of concrete and painted
sheet rock
Imitating oak
It is I the architect would
choke
The uncommitted clay
Attempting to close the
jammed window
Held open by that great
green arm
That would crack open
graves
To strangle the dead.



But I am Colossus
Put in the crazy house

Poetry Section

Shivering alone above a
thin starched sheet
My eyes candle wax red
My arms and legs iconic
meat.



I am Colossus
Straddling a headboard
Straining to close that
portal
To keep growth of
conquest
From reaching in.

Helios would have that
which would perish
Helios would tear itself
apart
To reach in and pull out
The secret nights of all
bright days.

Cast in bronze plate
concealing granite bone
One foot on the window
sill
The other on a military
mattress
My heart is not my own
My head, stone.
Inmates snore below
beyond reach
One sits up and softly
howls

One voids his bowels
Another pretends to
nibble at yesterday's
pretzel.

Silently in coldness and
madness
I call for quiet
I speak but say nothing
more than what is said
By apostles surrounding my
bed.

They sleep as kittens sleep
Curled fur forgiven
undisciplined claws.

There are greetings and
then there are calls
For sanity among the
insane
I call out that we will not
be slain
Kept free from the deadly
grip
Of the ascending vine.

I call out
I am providence
Indecent and divine
I am Colossus
Closing the window.



PHYSICS

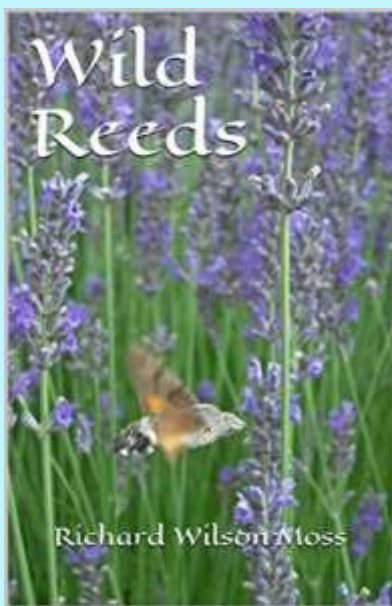
Dawn but the sun suffers
The tyranny of a cloud.
The pale moon remains
triumphant.
Oak leaves suckle
raindrops
The salt of last night's
sweltering sky.

Inside all
The neutrons of atoms die
Their electrons fly away
Protons perish
Photons fold.

The thing that is held
together
Is the thing that cannot
hold.

Midday the sun has
vanquished the moon.
The tips of feathers of
restless robins
Are soft gold.
At dusk lunar resurrection
The sky is white wax and
blood
The day is old.

The thing that is held
together
Cannot hold.



Alyssums

In the oldest part of this
place
I have been
The sun will not sit
opposite the moon
They will never face
The alyssum will seed even
as it blooms.
Beneath gardens of
tangled limbs
Roots will never embrace
Crickets leap and crush the
crocus
As if they had a rabbit's
paws
Scattering frightened
mice
A turtle ignores the sun
and gnaws
At flies in a frozen lake
Across the sky lightning
crawls



Lost

Still you look
Though I am here in front
of you
Reflections on a lake

The treeline, the houses
I stand upon
Still, still you search rooms
Look in closets, peak
under beds
Open doors of cars,
And yet only see
The shade I sleep on
The shadow I cast.



copyright ©
Richard Wilson Moss

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



©Richard Moss

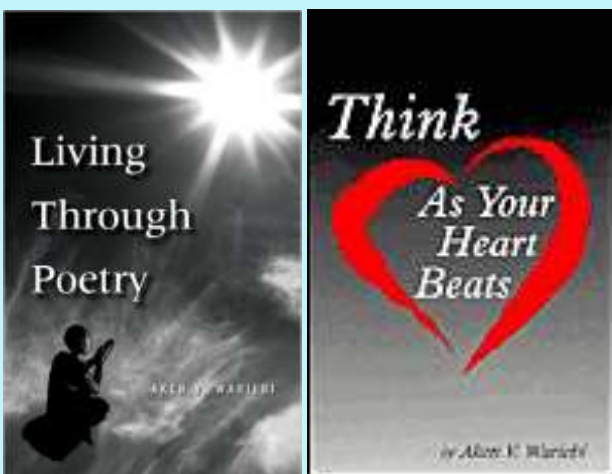
Aken-bai's- A Flow of Thoughts



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

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

www.facebook.com/inspirewithlove



Not a Forbidden Man

Extend a hand to those you love and those you don't
Present love to strangers too, be nice you'll gain a few

Pretend not ever to your fellow man, your heart he eventually sees
Conclude if only you know the truth, the facts they may not be true

Relax your mind, as often as you can, you're worthy of the time you do
Suppress nothing, if you do, destroying self is what you have chosen to do
Respect yourself, freeing self is a spirit deserving of you and those you love
Forget not your roots, for they define your soul and the songs you sing in life

Forgive a man, who in his heart is not a friend but foe
Despite the falls, don't let it keep you down a lonesome road
Digress a gift, the one you didn't see before, but now have found
Appreciate the blessings, accept the curses, but anger keep a distance behind

Look first and foremost, then make the choice but think it through
Thoroughly calm yourself, embrace your talents all the way to heaven's clue
Forget not love and let it find its way into your heart as much today
Tomorrow all of these will be just words to gather or throw away

Crave not acceptance from others for they don't really know where they stand
But accept the way they treat you in each and every land by common chance
Believe not everything you hear or see or try to do or even understand
For all attempts to do it all could make you loose and you could be the forbidden man, my friend



www.facebook.com/inspirewithlove

Herbert Logerie

My Pen Is Weeping Blood

My pen is mourning the
agonies and the sufferings
Of my people, who are
drowning in the sea of
misery.

My keyboard' strokes are
shadowing the slow rhythms
Of the wandering beggar,
who's lost in the sanctuary.

My voice denounces the
filthy cholera and the
injustices,
Which are punishing the
weakest souls of the valley.
A tiny oligarchy is meagerly
being rewarded;
What a shame for a man-
made world corrupted with
vices!

My brush defaces the
inequality and the
imbalance,
Which fool the image of a
so called free world.
My laser beams burn the iris
of the blind peasants,
Who can now see clearly
the mini-sketch of my
people.

I am the brother-in law of
the cowardly executed poet
And the great-grandson of
the poorest assassinated
emperor.

I abhor the vanity and the
lowliness of mankind in
horror,

Oh! Lord, I'm going to read
aloud twelve psalms, from
my seat.

My pen is mourning my
people,

Who are innocently
digesting the giant toxic
apple.

My voice is seduced by the
wind of liberty,
Which echoes the piercing
screams of the hungry
baby.

Copyright© November 2010,
Hebert Logerie, All Rights
Reserved

Ma Plume Pleure Du Sang

Ma plume pleure les
outrances et les souffrances
De mon peuple qui se noie
dans la misère
Mon stylo stylise les lentes
cadences
D'un mendiant qui s'égaré
au sein de la galère.

Ma voix dénonce le sale
choléra et l'injustice
Qui punissent tout être qui
respire dans la vallée
Un clan oligarchique se voit
maigrement récompenser
Quelle honte pour un
monde corrompu de vices!

Mon pinceau démasque
l'inégalité et le déséquilibre
Qui bottinent tout un
univers soi-disant libre
Des flocons de laser brûlent
l'iris des aveugles
Qui voient très clair le mini-
tableau de mon peuple.

Je suis le gendre du poète
lâchement exécuté
Et le petit-fils du plus
pauvre empereur assassiné
J'abhorre la vanité et la

mièvrerie de l'homme
Oh! Yavhé! Je vais réciter
une douzaine de tes
psaumes.

Ma plume pleure pour mon
peuple
Qui boit l'absinthe comme
un aveugle
Mon souffle balayé par le
vent de la liberté
Est pareil aux soupirs
perçants des paysans
empoisonnés.

Copyright© Novembre, 2010,
Hebert Logerie, Tous Droits
Réservés

Herbert Logerie

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

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

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

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

Matenneh-Rose L. Dunbar

Varney Gean

Never Grow Old (NGO)

We have seen a lot of pleasant years
We are seen as the roots of the trees
We never grow old cuz we always glow
We hold the gold keys to the face of joy
We listen to the many calls of "stay long"
We groom grass to become fine dry thatch
We are proud to be Never Grow Old
We step on wooden nails made to wedge
We drive from the rugged paths to presence
We serve little giants in cupped fingers
We stoop over their beds as they
rejuvenate
We commingle work and shelter for
posterity
We look ahead as a smile curves our muscle
We are successful and are to Never Grow
Old

Sparkle

Much for it has dawned another rainbow
One catapult with the variances of thrust
A drop of morning mist near my eyelash
Reminds me of the free gift of fresh breath
Little drops of colored stones makes glow
Sparkle regardless of the waiting odds
Moon walks across the packed arena
Feet do have acreage that created hurt
Shoes of cheap to endangered animals
Dress human sizes to capture admirers
To the hum of Peter Cole we familiarize
For the love of good looks we really bluff
Sparkle for your days are already known
Men of means plus those of thatched huts
Free fall on innocent girls with no remorse
It was their world to break use and trash 'em
While loud applause greeted their heroism
No more shall the weaker be gullible here
Sparkle as the rays of nature revives you
Flaw

She is a Liberian Poet.
She writes for most of the national dailies in
Liberia. She uses the penname
Tsirhc Susej

A Whole New Level

*Started out like a blur out of nowhere
Streaming down so rapid like cascade
A whole new level
Headlong to get the paramount of all
Not halting as everything spiral faster
A whole new level
In this time minds jump start like bolts
Like thunderbolts the sharpness matters
A whole new level
In the long run results will be probable
Something to make frowned faces smile
A whole new level*

Her Sacrifice

*From the instant she knew beforehand
A child growing her small belly held
The sings all there she knew the truth
Happy was she months later she bore
The moment when joy had no boundary
Her Sacrifice
Her love her nursing for the child she bore
Forsaking many things for the child's
future
Toil and sweat for the child must be
nurtured
Her aim to make better won't be ruined
Throughout times she did the best she
could
Her Sacrifice
That youngster will be greater she
acclaimed
For all her efforts smiles her sweet face
carried
She did not falter not even in dire
moments
Her newborn she prayed should be better
She knew how far and whatever it took
Her Sacrifice
Today she laughs when mothers wail
Today she smiles when people ask her
Who is that greater man or woman with
you?
For all her efforts it is time to beam
mother
For without YOU life would have been
futile
Her Sacrifice*

Berenice Mulubah

A Night Away

Descended from heaven like an angel,
My toes touched the ground.
I whisked him away from danger
Just when he was about to drown.

Away we went from traditions,
Culture, and social demands;
With an undivided attention,
His mind opened, willing to expand.

We flew over the mountaintop
And down to the valley below—
Just when he started to enjoy the ride
We landed on the ocean shore.

We sat and talked about the dos and don'ts,
What he had and had not;
We talked about the African man
And his woman too.

I asked about the woman's role
And why he controlled her life as a whole.
Two minutes passed, he didn't say a word,
So I whispered these words in his ears:
"Educate the African woman, my friend.
That's the best way to go.
Raising your boys into gentlemen,
She's your backbone, for sure.

When she rises,
The continent shall rise—
That, my friend, is gold."

His eyes rolled around in his head,
His mouth flew open to speak,
And just before the words came flying out,
His alarm started to blow.

And he woke up to a brand-new day,
A brand-new life, I must say.
The African man, the African woman,
A partnership worth the while

Berenice Mulubah is the author of *Purple Honey Lips* and *Landing Safely On A Solid Rock*. She is a popular Liberian entertainer and blogger

Nene Tetteh Adusu

YESTERDAY

Just yesterday,
I saw the moon take the sun's place
In a steamy air amidst thunder claps
Yet the heavens stood in the land amidst
silence.

Just yesterday
Silence in heaven broke down in loud cries
tearing nothing but air
so windy it made the trees clap.

Just yesterday
the earth never knew the sand
will marry the air and be dust
For it wallowed not in blindness like Tiresias
All that remained were stones,
and with time, turned sand in truth.

Just yesterday
A calabash sunk in the sea of poverty,
Riches, its contents, sunk down well,
And all hearers of yesterday doubted the truce
therein
But in truce is fruited the doubt.

Writing under his indigenous name- **Nene Tetteh Adusu**, alias **Tetteh**- a Poet, Performer and dramatist, hails from Ghana and currently lives in Accra.

He believes that just as words were used in creating this world, so can the world be transformed by words.

Mirroring life and crashing them when necessary to fit the pieces in life's dazzling puzzle- his philosophy.

Nene holds an B.A (Hons.) Theatre Arts from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

He was the "Order of the Village" awardee at The Village Thinkers Poetry Honorary Awards, 2015.

Jack Kolkmeier

Small is Beautiful

let's all conspire to be small again
to breathe together as a unified body
and take down grandiose schemes
that really are nothing more than dreams
beyond the winding of the moment
as all things constructed always
seem to melt back into the now

watch how the tiny ants work
to build their conical spires of mud
constantly on the move to be busy
and to achieve a goal that somehow
amidst their feverish scampering
seems to have a path of knowing

a small frail seedling gives rise to a towering oak
to remind us of how differently all things are
perceived
and that there is both simplicity and the haze of
complication
there is looking up and there is looking down

many hands do make light of work
as a minute becomes an hour
and days turn out to be eons far and away
hovering over crumbled palaces
and temples gone drastically astray

pyramids remain in stacks of stone upon stone
their meaning and intention lost in the passages
of time
circles mark the horizons of seasons
still dependent on the comings and goings of
days

grandness and beauty are in the eye of aspire
in the majesty of spirt and the exultation of love
in the incense of simple corporeal smoke rising
from the pyre
off the ground and into the celestial realms
above us
watching us constantly trying to build the towers
higher
when all that is really most important is the
warmth
in the hearth of our home
and the fire in our spirit and our mind

let us all conspire to be small again
starting with the little plot in the garden
of our soul

Jack Kolkmeier
Delray Beach FL

Lekpele Nyamalon

I Wouldn't Be, If You Didn't

If you didn't take my tiny little fingers and
show me how to trace on a sheet
With my hands closed, tightly around that
skinny pencil

Perhaps, now, I wouldn't be able to strike with
a pen, like I do now

I wouldn't even be here, writing

If you didn't hold my hands, during the nasty
days of the war, walking from

Matadi to Sawmill, ICA Camp Sinkor to Duport
road, walking past dead bodies,

checkpoints manned by bloodthirsty looking
thugs, shielding my face from them, so they

couldn't hold me up and make me a small
soldier, I would have been gone- gone to the

world of the hopeless, living on drugs, maybe or
left behind, decades back in everything from
ABC to 123

I'm so glad you did, or else I wouldn't be here,
smiling

If you didn't deny yourself food, when in those
days all we had was palm kernels and sugarcane

Palm cabbage and wild eddoes leaves, kissmeat
and coldwater fish, chased from the swamps,

When food had taken on wheels and run away
like the ostriches do, Monrovia had turned dry,

dry like the bottom of a deserted river, fish was
now eating fish, crab eating crab.

You denied yourself food that I could eat

Or else, I wouldn't be alive today, eating and
kicking

If you didn't go out, hiding under stray bullets,
looking for food for us, when all we could look

at was the walls, thick, bare and mean, when
eating was a luxury, that many could not

afford,

I would have probably been left by the

roadside, like many kids were, struck to death
by hunger

Or I wouldn't be here today, living.

Gifts of the Masters

In this segment, we run poems from twenty of the greatest poets that ever lived.

GWENDOLYN BROOKS

We Real Cool

The Pool Players.
Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

EDGAR ALBERT GUEST

Hard Luck

Ain't no use as I can see
In sittin' underneath a tree
An' growlin' that your luck is bad,
An' that your life is extry sad;
Your life ain't sadder than your neighbor's
Nor any harder are your labors;
It rains on him the same as you,
An' he has work he hates to do;
An' he gits tired an' he gits cross,
An' he has trouble with the boss;
You take his whole life, through an' through,
Why, he's no better off than you.

If whinin' brushed the clouds away
I wouldn't have a word to say;
If it made good friends out o' foes
I'd whine a bit, too, I suppose;
But when I look around an' see
A lot o' men resemblin' me,
An' see 'em sad, an' see 'em gay
With work t' do most every day,
Some full o' fun, some bent with care,
Some havin' troubles hard to bear,

I reckon, as I count my woes,
They're 'bout what everybody knows.

The day I find a man who'll say
He's never known a rainy day,
Who'll raise his right hand up an' swear
In forty years he's had no care,
Has never had a single blow,
An' never known one touch o' woe,
Has never seen a loved one die,
Has never wept or heaved a sigh,
Has never had a plan go wrong,
But allas laughed his way along;
Then I'll sit down an' start to whine
That all the hard luck here is mine.

EMILY DICKINSON

Hope Is The Thing With Feathers

'Hope' is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the words—
And never stops—at all—

And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—

I've heard it in the chilliest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of Me.

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

A Book

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul!

EMILY DICKINSON

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

The Old Bridge At Florence

Taddeo Gaddi built me. I am old,
Five centuries old. I plant my foot of stone
Upon the Arno, as St. Michael's own
Was planted on the dragon. Fold by fold
Beneath me as it struggles. I behold
Its glistening scales. Twice hath it overthrown
My kindred and companions. Me alone
It moveth not, but is by me controlled.
I can remember when the Medici
Were driven from Florence; longer still ago
The final wars of Ghibelline and Guelf.
Florence adorns me with her jewelry;
And when I think that Michael Angelo
Hath leaned on me, I glory in myself.

BESSIE RAYNER PARKES

Absence

I AM not lonely, O my Love,
Save in so far I have not thee,
Without whose smile the changeful days
Are all alike to me.

Yet while the Winter blooms to Spring,
And Summer doth to Autumn wane,
I will not say their various wealth
Is lavished forth in vain.

Since Nature hath November days,
Wherein she broods on future flowers,
We may not put less noble use
To any time of ours.

Their own soft lights and tender glooms
To poet's eye and poet's ear,
Hath every feeling of the heart,
And season of the year.

Ah! pondering on the hours I gain,
And counting up the hours I lose,
I find them both so full of love,
I scarce know which to choose.

With thee the joy is almost pain,
And swift the days fleet by;
I find thee not in sight more dear,
Nor less in absence nigh.

LANGSTON HUGHES

I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--

I, too, am America.

SARA TEASDALE

The Tree

I sang my songs for the rest,
For you I am still;
The tree of my song is bare
On its shining hill.

For you came like a lordly wind,
And the leaves were whirled
Far as forgotten things
Past the rim of the world.

The tree of my song stands bare
Against the blue --
I gave my songs to the rest,
Myself to you.

SARA TEASDALE

Advice To A Girl

No one worth possessing
Can be quite possessed;
Lay that on your heart,
My young angry dear;
This truth, this hard and precious stone,
Lay it on your hot cheek,
Let it hide your tear.
Hold it like a crystal
When you are alone
And gaze in the depths of the icy stone.
Long, look long and you will be blessed:
No one worth possessing
Can be quite possessed.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

Thoreau's Flute

We sighing said, "Our Pan is dead;
His pipe hangs mute beside the river
Around it wistful sunbeams quiver,
But Music's airy voice is fled.
Spring mourns as for untimely frost;
The bluebird chants a requiem;
The willow-blossom waits for him;
The Genius of the wood is lost."

Then from the flute, untouched by hands,
There came a low, harmonious breath:
"For such as he there is no death;
His life the eternal life commands;
Above man's aims his nature rose.
The wisdom of a just content
Made one small spot a continent
And turned to poetry life's prose.

"Haunting the hills, the stream, the wild,
Swallow and aster, lake and pine,
To him grew human or divine,
Fit mates for this large-hearted child.
Such homage Nature ne'er forgets,
And yearly on the coverlid
'Neath which her darling lieth hid
Will write his name in violets.

"To him no vain regrets belong
Whose soul, that finer instrument,
Gave to the world no poor lament,
But wood-notes ever sweet and strong.
O lonely friend! he still will be
A potent presence, though unseen,
Steadfast, sagacious, and serene;
Seek not for him -- he is with thee."

WALT WHITMAN

A Noiseless Patient Spider

A noiseless, patient spider,
I mark'd, where, on a little promontory, it
stood, isolated;
Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast
surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament,
out of itself;
Ever unreeling them—ever tirelessly speeding
them.

And you, O my Soul, where you stand,
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans
of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,—
seeking the spheres, to connect them;
Till the bridge you will need, be form'd—till the
ductile anchor hold;
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch
somewhere, O my Soul..

THOMAS HARDY

Drummer Hodge

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest
Uncoffined -- just as found:
His landmark is a kopje-crest
That breaks the veldt around:
And foreign constellations west
Each night above his mound.

Young Hodge the drummer never knew --
Fresh from his Wessex home --
The meaning of the broad Karoo,
The Bush, the dusty loam,
And why uprose to nightly view
Strange stars amid the gloam.

Yet portion of that unknown plain
Will Hodge for ever be;
His homely Northern breast and brain
Grow to some Southern tree,
And strange-eyed constellations reign
His stars eternally.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

A Crazy Girl

THAT crazed girl improvising her music.
Her poetry, dancing upon the shore,

Her soul in division from itself
Climbing, falling She knew not where,
Hiding amid the cargo of a steamship,
Her knee-cap broken, that girl I declare
A beautiful lofty thing, or a thing
Heroically lost, heroically found.

No matter what disaster occurred
She stood in desperate music wound,
Wound, wound, and she made in her triumph
Where the bales and the baskets lay
No common intelligible sound
But sang, 'O sea-starved, hungry sea.'

JOHN KEATS

When I Have Fears

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garnerers the full ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love;--then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

RUTH BEDFORD

The Witches Song

"Hoity-toity! Hop-o'-my-thumb!
Tweedledee and Tweedledum!
All hobgoblins come to me,
Over the mountains, over the sea:
Come in a hurry, come in a crowd,
Flying, chattering, shrieking loud;
I and my broomstick fidget and call ---
Come, hobgoblins, we want you all!

I have a pot of a mischievous brew;
You must do what I tell you to;
Blow through the keyholes, hang to the eaves,
Litter the garden with dead brown leaves;
Into the houses hustle and run,
Here is mischievous and here is fun!
Break the china and slam the doors,
Crack the windows and scratch the floors,
Let in the cockroaches, mice and rats,
Sit on the family's Sunday hats;
Hiding and stealing everything little,
Smashing everything thin and brittle;
Teasing the children,

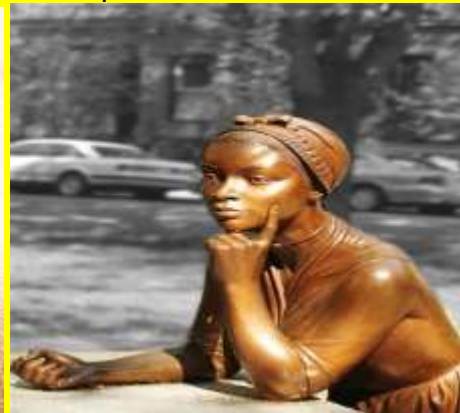
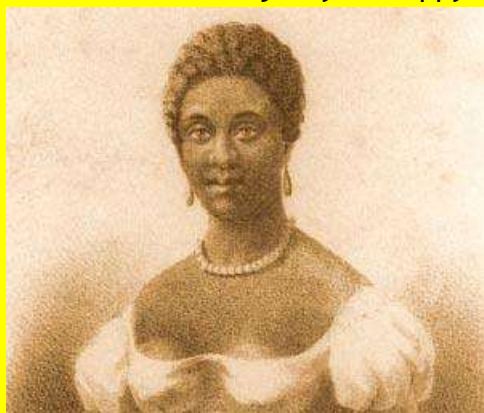
Tickling their heels ---
Look at them jumping! Hark to their squeals!
Pinch their elbows and pull their hair,
Then out again to the gusty air!
Flutter the birds in their sheltered nests,
Pluck the down from the ducklings' breasts,
Steal the eggs from the clucking hen,
Ride the pigs round and round the pen!
Here is mischief to spare for all ---
Hoity-toity, Come at my call!

Tweedledum and Tweedledee,
Come at my summons --- Come to me!"
Thus said a witch on a windy night,
Then sailed on her broomstick out of sight.

PHYLLIS WHEATLEY (1753 – 5 December 1784)

On The Death Of A Young Lady Of Five Years Of Age

FROM dark abodes to fair ethereal light
 Th' enraptur'd innocent has wing'd her flight;
 On the kind bosom of eternal love
 She finds unknown beatitude above.
 This known, ye parents, nor her loss deplore,
 She feels the iron hand of pain no more;
 The dispensations of unerring grace,
 Should turn your sorrows into grateful praise;
 Let then no tears for her henceforward flow,
 No more distress'd in our dark vale below,
 Her morning sun, which rose divinely bright,
 Was quickly mantled with the gloom of night;
 But hear in heav'n's blest bow'rs your Nancy fair,
 And learn to imitate her language there.
 "Thou, Lord, whom I behold with glory crown'd,
 "By what sweet name, and in what tuneful sound
 "Wilt thou be prais'd? Seraphic pow'rs are faint
 "Infinite love and majesty to paint.
 "To thee let all their graceful voices raise,
 "And saints and angels join their songs of praise."
 Perfect in bliss she from her heav'nly home
 Looks down, and smiling beckons you to come;
 Why then, fond parents, why these fruitless groans?
 Restrain your tears, and cease your plaintive moans.
 Freed from a world of sin, and snares, and pain,
 Why would you wish your daughter back again?
 No--bow resign'd. Let hope your grief control,
 And check the rising tumult of the soul.
 Calm in the prosperous, and adverse day,
 Adore the God who gives and takes away;
 Eye him in all, his holy name revere,
 Upright your actions, and your hearts sincere,
 Till having sail'd through life's tempestuous sea,
 And from its rocks, and boist'rous billows free,
 Yourselves, safe landed on the blissful shore,
 Shall join your happy babe to part no more.



Young Woman At A Window

While she sits
there
with tears on
her cheek
her cheek on
her hand
this little child
who robs her
knows nothing of
his theft
but rubs his
nose

She sits with
tears on
her cheek
her cheek on
her hand
the child
in her lap
his nose
pressed
to the glass

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Still I Rise

You may write me down in
history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very
dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with
gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil
wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me
broken?

Bowed head and lowered
eyes?
Shoulders falling down like
teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend
you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got
gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your
words,
You may cut me with your
eyes,
You may kill me with your
hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got
diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's
shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted
in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and
wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in
the tide.

Leaving behind nights of
terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's
wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my
ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope
of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

MAYA ANGELOU

A Dream Within A Dream

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you
now,
Thus much let me avow-
You are not wrong, who
deem
That my days have been a
dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a
dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand-
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the
deep,
While I weep- while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

EDGAR ALLAN POE

If

If you can keep your head
when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming
it on you;
If you can trust yourself when
all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their
doubting too:
If you can wait and not be
tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't
deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give
way to hating,
And yet don't look too good,

nor talk too wise;
If you can dream—and not
make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not
make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph
and Disaster
And treat those two
impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the
truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a
trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave
your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up
with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of
all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of
pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at
your beginnings,
And never breathe a word
about your loss:
If you can force your heart
and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after
they are gone,
And so hold on when there is
nothing in you
Except the Will which says to
them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds
and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose
the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving
friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but
none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving
minute

With sixty seconds' worth of
distance run,
Yours is the Earth and
everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be
a Man, my son!

RUDYARD KIPLING

Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I
think I know.
His house is in the village,
though;
He will not see me stopping
here
To watch his woods fill up
with snow.

My little horse must think it
queer
To stop without a farmhouse
near
Between the woods and
frozen lake
The darkest evening of the
year.

He gives his harness bells a
shake
To ask if there is some
mistake.
The only other sound's the
sweep
Of easy wind and downy
flake.

The woods are lovely, dark,
and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I
sleep.

ROBERT FROST

If You Forget Me

I want you to know
one thing.

You know how this is:
if I look
at the crystal moon, at the red
branch
of the slow autumn at my
window,
if I touch
near the fire
the impalpable ash
or the wrinkled body of the
log,
everything carries me to you,

as if everything that exists,
aromas, light, metals,
were little boats
that sail
toward those isles of yours
that wait for me.

Well, now,
if little by little you stop loving
me
I shall stop loving you little by
little.

If suddenly
you forget me
do not look for me,
for I shall already have
forgotten you.

If you think it long and mad,
the wind of banners
that passes through my life,
and you decide
to leave me at the shore
of the heart where I have
roots,
remember
that on that day,
at that hour,
I shall lift my arms
and my roots will set off
to seek another land.

But
if each day,
each hour,
you feel that you are destined
for me
with implacable sweetness,
if each day a flower
climbs up to your lips to seek
me,
ah my love, ah my own,
in me all that fire is repeated,
in me nothing is extinguished
or forgotten,
my love feeds on your love,
beloved,
and as long as you live it will
be in your arms
without leaving mine.

PABLO NERUDA

The Monkey's Paw

by *W. W. Jacobs*

Without, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnum villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess; the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical chances, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

"Hark at the wind," said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

"I'm listening," said the latter grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. "Check."

"I should hardly think that he's come tonight," said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

"Mate," replied the son.

"That's the worst of living so far out," balled Mr. White with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "Of all the beastly, slushy, out of the way places to live in, this is the worst. Path's a bog, and the road's a torrent. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses in the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly; "perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin grey beard.

"There he is," said Herbert White as the gate banged to loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste and opening the door, was heard condoling with the new arrival. The new arrival also condoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room followed by a tall, burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.

"Sergeant-Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

The Sergeant-Major took hands and taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly as his host got out whiskey and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of wild scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son. "When he went away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

"He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, just to look around a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the Sergeant-Major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass and sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs and jugglers," said the old man. "what was that that you started telling me the other

day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

"Nothing," said the soldier hastily. "Leastways, nothing worth hearing."

"Monkey's paw?" said Mrs. White curiously.

"Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps," said the Sergeant-Major off-handedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absent-mindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him again.

"To look at," said the Sergeant-Major, fumbling in his pocket, "it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy."

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

"And what is there special about it?" inquired Mr. White as he took it from his son, and having examined it, placed it upon the table.

"It had a spell put on it by an old Fakir," said the Sergeant-Major, "a very holy man. He wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it."

His manners were so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter had jarred somewhat.

"Well, why don't you have three, sir?" said Herbert White cleverly.

The soldier regarded him the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth. "I have," he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

"And did you really have the three wishes granted?" asked Mrs. White.

"I did," said the sergeant-major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

"And has anybody else wished?" persisted the old lady.

"The first man had his three wishes. Yes," was the reply, "I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw."

His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.

"If you've had your three wishes it's no good to you now then Morris," said the old man at last. "What do you keep it for?"

The soldier shook his head. "Fancy I suppose," he said slowly. "I did have some idea of selling it, but I don't think I will. It has caused me enough mischief already. Besides, people won't buy. They think it's a fairy tale, some of them; and those who do think anything of it want to try it first and pay me afterward."

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

"I don't know," said the other. "I don't know."

He took the paw, and dangling it between his forefinger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

"Better let it burn," said the soldier solemnly.

"If you don't want it Morris," said the other, "give it to me."

"I won't," said his friend doggedly. "I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire like a sensible man."

The other shook his head and examined his possession closely. "How do you do it?" he inquired.

"Hold it up in your right hand, and wish aloud," said the Sergeant-Major, "But I warn you of the consequences."

"Sounds like the 'Arabian Nights'," said Mrs. White, as she rose and began to set the supper. "Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me."

Her husband drew the talisman from his pocket, and all three burst into laughter as the Sergeant-Major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm.

"If you must wish," he said gruffly, "Wish for something sensible."

Mr. White dropped it back in his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second installment of the soldier's adventures in India.

"If the tale about the monkey's paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time to catch the last train, "we shan't make much out of it."

"Did you give anything for it, father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, colouring slightly, "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

He darted around the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs.

White armed with an antimacassar.

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said slowly. It seems to me I've got all I want."

"If you only cleared the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you!" said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder.

"Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that'll just do it."

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face, somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down and struck a few impressive chords.

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted his words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved," he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished, it twisted in my hand like a snake."

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son, as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."

"It must have been your fancy, father," said his wife, regarding him anxiously.

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence unusual and depressing settled on all

three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the rest of the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good night, "and something horrible squatting on top of your wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last was so horrible and so simian that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

In the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table he laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shriveled little paw was pitched on the side-board with a carelessness which betokened no great belief in its virtues.

"I suppose all old soldiers are the same," said Mrs. White. "The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, father?"

"Might drop on his head from the sky," said the frivolous Herbert.

"Morris said the things happened so naturally," said his father, "that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence."

"Well don't break into the money before I come back,"

said Herbert as he rose from the table. "I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road; and returning to the breakfast table, was very happy at the expense of her husband's credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman's knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired Sargeant-Majors of bibulous habits when she found that the post brought a tailor's bill.

"Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home," she said as they sat at dinner.

"I dare say," said Mr. White, pouring himself out some beer; "but for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to."

"You thought it did," said the old lady soothingly.

"I say it did," replied the other. "There was no thought about it; I had just - What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connexion with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed, and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands

behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed at her furtively, and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the appearance of the room, and her husband's coat, a garment which he usually reserved for the garden. She then waited as patiently as her sex would permit for him to broach his business, but he was at first strangely silent.

"I - was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I come from 'Maw and Meggins.' "

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

Her husband interposed. "There there mother," he said hastily. "Sit down, and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure sir," and eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry - " began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother wildly.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank - "

She broke off as the sinister meaning of the assurance dawned on her and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the others averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her slower-witted husband, laid her trembling hand on his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor at length in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

He sat staring out the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wishes me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking round. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

There was no reply; the old woman's face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible; on the husband's face was a look such as his friend the sargeant might have carried into his first action.

"I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility," continued the other. "They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services, they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation."

Mr. White dropped his wife's hand, and rising to his feet, gazed with a look of horror at his visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, "How much?"

"Two hundred pounds," was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife's shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.

In the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the

old people buried their dead, and came back to the house steeped in shadows and silence.

It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen - something else which was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear.

But the days passed, and expectations gave way to resignation - the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping came from the window. He raised himself in bed and listened.

"Come back," he said tenderly. "You will be cold."

"It is colder for my son," said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sounds of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep.

He dozed fitfully, and then slept until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

"THE PAW!" she cried wildly. "THE MONKEY'S PAW!"

He started up in alarm. "Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

She came stumbling across the room toward him. "I want it," she said quietly. "You've not destroyed it?"

"It's in the parlour, on the bracket," he replied, marveling. "Why?"

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

"I only just thought of it," she said hysterically. "Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't you think of it?"

"Think of what?" he questioned.

"The other two wishes," she replied rapidly. "We've only had one."

"Was not that enough?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," she cried triumphantly; "We'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "Good God, you are mad!" he cried aghast. "Get it," she panted; "get it quickly, and wish - Oh my boy, my boy!"

Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed he said unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman, feverishly; "why not the second?"

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go get it and wish," cried his wife, quivering with excitement.

The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he - I would not tell you else, but - I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him towards the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlour, and then to the

mantlepiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized up on him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

Even his wife's face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

"WISH!" she cried in a strong voice.

"It is foolish and wicked," he faltered.

"WISH!" repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. "I wish my son alive again."

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it fearfully. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle-end, which had burned below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute afterward the old woman

came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but sat silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, he took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another; and at the same moment a knock came so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door.

The matches fell from his hand and spilled in the passage. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

"WHAT'S THAT?" cried the old woman, starting up.

"A rat," said the old man in shaking tones - "a rat. It passed me on the stairs."

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

"It's Herbert!"

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"It's my boy; it's Herbert!" she cried, struggling mechanically. "I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let go. I must open the door."

"For God's sake don't let it in," cried the old man, trembling.

"You're afraid of your own son," she cried struggling. "Let me go. I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming."

There was another knock, and another. The old woman with a sudden wrench broke free and ran from the room. Her husband followed to the landing, and called after her appealingly as she hurried downstairs. He heard the chain rattle back and the bolt drawn slowly and stiffly from the socket. Then the old woman's voice, strained and panting.

"The bolt," she cried loudly. "Come down. I can't reach it."

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If only he could find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back, and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him the courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

The End

Remember, to be careful for what you wish for in life

President Sirleaf's New Year's Message

*Executive Mansion
Press Release*

Friday, January 15, 2016



*President Sirleaf gives her New Year's Message
/ Executive Mansion*

My fellow Liberians, Good morning! Today, as we Liberians across this great resilient nation gather with our family and loved ones, I want to wish you a happy and healthy New Year. New Year is always a hopeful moment. As we look back at the end of a very difficult 2014, we do so with the knowledge that we have the capacity and the commitment to each other to reach out for a better and brighter Liberia.

The people of Liberia have made great personal sacrifices in the fight against this Ebola virus disease. As a result of our sacrifices, the numbers of Ebola cases have declined considerably.

The 16 Ebola Treatment Units including the Monrovia Medical Unit for healthcare workers have only 63 patients as of December 28; 42 of which are confirmed cases. Lofa, the former epicenter of the disease, has not reported a case since November 4. Most of the Southeast, including Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Grand Kru have not reported any confirmed cases in many days although ETUs are being brought online to provide care should cases be found in those counties.

I thank each of you, community leaders, Christian and Moslem Community, our civil society and especially our healthcare workers who have been on the frontline with a passionate endurance to this fight. We also want to thank our bilateral and multilateral partners whose support has made the progress possible.

However, I need to let you know that in the last 21 days we have had 131 new cases of the disease. There are 96 confirmed cases with laboratory tests; 58 cases

in Montserrado, 20 in Cape Mount, where there is a resurgence and 2 in Nimba where there previously had not been a case for 62 days.

It means that Ebola is still among us. As a result, until and unless we get to zero, we must maintain the same level of intense attention, caution, and prevention practices that helped to get us where we are today.

We must continue to shout loudly through voice and action that Ebola must go because getting rid of Ebola is everybody's business! As we intensify efforts to move from treatment to prevention; by focusing on the rebuilding and strengthening of our healthcare system through training, better compensation for doctors and healthcare workers; through better equipped health facilities and improved road condition and access to these facilities.

We are pleased that we had a peaceful election on December 20. We congratulate our senators-elect for their victory and ask God's blessings and direction as they prepare or continue to take on the responsibility of national service. We commend the losers for their constructive and peaceful participation in this Victory for Democracy and encourage them to identify other ways in which they can continue to serve their country.

The National Elections Commission deserves our praise for the efficient organization and arrangement of the process. We recognize the role of all political parties, independent candidates, observers, civil society organizations, the media, representatives of the competing interests at the various precincts for their contribution to the process.

We want to pay tribute to our gallant men and women serving in our various state security apparatuses for their loyalty, devotion and commitment to ensure law and order during the entire campaign period and on Election Day. They gave to their country as they had sworn to do so diligently. We appreciate and acknowledge their service to the call of duty.

Although imperfect, the successful results of the polls serve as concrete example to our sub-region, to Africa and the rest of the world that Liberia, a long way from the past, is now symbolizing the first steps of a journey toward democratic maturity.

As we start this New Year, let us begin anew, putting old habits, old grievances and old differences behind us. Let us carry the torch of reconciliation and compromise. It is my prayer that God will guide us in these pursuits.

Have a happy and prosperous New Year. God bless Liberia and save the State.



Happy New Year
To the people of
Liberia



Happy New Year
Long Live Liberia

Liberia's Future On The Rope

Martin Kollie

Our choice today as a country must never be gambling, but quality education. Our preference must be youth development and empowerment. It is too sad that gambling has become a way of life and a major source of income for thousands of young Liberians living in a small nation endowed with abundant natural wealth. It beats my imagination to see Liberians standing in long lines everyday fighting for betting tickets. Gambling can never be an option to reduce massive poverty and youth unemployment. It only increases the number of unproductive citizens and less-busy minds.

If genuine and sustainable steps are not taken to enhance youth development through education, empowerment and employment in Liberia, I foresee a country of professional gamblers, beggars and drug addicts 10 years from now. We must understand that 65% of our country's population comprises of youngsters. We can only protect the future of this nation if we begin to massively invest in young people proactively and not retrogressively. Anything less than this, Liberia's future is on the rope.

Liberia stands a serious risk of embracing a dead future if nothing is done now to reclaim the attention of most Liberians, especially young people from a social syndrome that is increasingly swallowing our country. The addiction of this generation to gambling is alarming and I foresee an unfulfilled destiny if urgent measures are not taken to arrest the situation. The demerits of this anti-social act are costly and any attempt to ignore this fact will lead us as a nation to an undesirable end.

Gambling is not a friend to any innovative generation whose primary goal is to take exclusive charge of a prosperous tomorrow. It poses threat to our existence as a

people and encourages an ill-focused generation that eventually becomes societal liability. If Liberia must make significant progress in this 21st Century by becoming a trendsetter of economic expansion, then our government must take the lead by persistently prioritizing youth empowerment and employment! Gambling is not an option for Liberian Youth. It does not provide any answer to our current socio-economic nightmare. It undermines our destiny as a nation. The solution for unemployment, inequality, poverty, illiteracy, and disease cannot and will never be gambling.

It is unarguably evident that the newest and most popular means of survival nowadays under the leadership of Africa's first female President is Gambling. This act has taken center stage within our bleeding economy. The economy of Liberia will continue to experience sharp decline until local dominance can overshadow foreign control. The need to develop young minds is paramount to national growth and genuine development. An attempt to abandon Liberia's only hope will only add insult to injury.

The living condition of youth in this country is becoming very terrible as the clock ticks. The certainty of a better future in a country of equal citizenship is unthinkable as youngsters are left alone to struggle for survival daily. Our leaders who are in control of state resources must begin to rethink by engendering realistic steps to redeem this young generation from sailing on a shore of incessant failure.

As the poverty gap widens, access to equal opportunities remains visibly unseen, whereas article 18 of our Constitution says "All Liberian citizens shall have equal opportunity for work and employment regardless of sex, creed, religion, ethnic background, place of origin or political affiliation, and all shall be entitle to equal pay for equal work". If this provision guarantees our right to equal opportunities as taxpayers of Liberia, why must our self-esteem

and dignity be undermined by gambling, prostitution, drug trafficking, begging, etc.?

It is important to reconnect with our history by critically examining the role of young people during our civil unrest. Most of those who committed heinous crimes during our senseless conflict were young people. These young and energetic youth were used as front-liners by greedy politicians to perpetuate their evil plans. If the minds of these young citizens were conscious and enlightened enough prior to our war, Liberia would not have gone through such a national tragedy. We are yet to recognize how crucial youth empowerment is to the stability of any democratic society, even though there are lessons clearly written within the margin of our historical heritage. If we fail to learn from our past as a nation, I wonder how we intend to make progress!

Our country is on a pathway to economic and political uproar if we continue to intentionally ignore and abandon the preference of this generation. Empowerment opportunities such as education and employment remain very key to protecting our fragile peace. The sky-scraping increment of gamblers, prostitutes, and drug addicts in our society, especially in slum communities needs immediate remedy.

As the number of betting booths, entertainment centers, and drugs hideouts around the country increases, there is less appetite to promote academic excellence and quality education. As a result of this, the pillars of our educational system are crumbling. Students are no longer willing to spend hours reading and researching in order to ensure personal development. Other countries like Rwanda, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda are far ahead of us simply because we have an ill-prepared population that lacks necessary skills to respond to existing global demands.

It has been proven that gambling contributes to a high rate of drugs abuse, prostitution, robbery, etc. Gambling harms everyone and

destroys potential fulfillments of its victims. There is nothing good that comes out of this less-busy practice. We see how it affects families every day and hampers societal growth. Liberia has a youthful population that needs serious human development. More than 65% of our population consists of young people who are yet to find a marketable career. Almost everyone, including our political leaders, is complacent about the current status of young Liberians. The determination of any legitimate government in this country falls solely on the shoulders of young people.

If we are the ones to decide who becomes President, Representatives, or Senators, then why must we be treated in such a cruel manner? When I walk through the principle streets of Monrovia, I pity the condition of my peers as they jostle and hustle to survive daily. Some of them are already hopeless, while others are still yearning to reap a decent living. Instead of young Liberians eagerly standing on long queues to receive educational materials, starter-kits, scholarships, and employment opportunities, they are busy fighting among themselves to obtain betting tickets from WINNERS, DOXX, BLOOMING, PRIMER, and other gambling enterprises. This trend must stop now! The best alternative is to invest more in technical and vocational training.

In 2014, an official of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in person of Henry Coleman spoke to Journalists from VOA and said "The government is excited about the presence of gambling institutions in Liberia because they are helping to promote the Poverty Reduction Strategy." It is really disappointing to hear such a ridiculous assertion from someone whose mandate is to enhance youth development.

In what way does gambling substantively contribute to poverty reduction? What is the transformational effect of this absurd lifestyle? What concrete impact does it have on our Liberia today especially when most

youngsters are becoming wayward and forgetting to give much attention to useful ventures?

I thought the Ministry of Youth and Sports is under statutory obligation to promote youth development through empowerment opportunities such as vocational/academic education, career expansion, massive employment, scholarship, microloan, small & medium enterprises, capacity building, etc. Sadly, this regime has decided to prioritize gambling over rewarding undertakings that could secure a prosperous future for generations yet unborn.

In addendum, WINNERS Incorporated Gambling Enterprise through its Marketing Manager, Randall Kaybee made a staggering disclosure in January 2014 by saying more than 7,000 Liberians bet every week at their locations around the country. This figure in my mind was even underestimated by Kaybee. Liberia has never had gambling entities like now since 1847. The proliferation of gambling activities under Madam Sirleaf is alarming and its effects are scaring.

Besides WINNERS Incorporated, there are other gambling institutions such as DOXX, PREMIER, LOTTO, BLOOMING, CASIONOS, etc. These betting operations are doing more harm to Liberia and if our leaders remain insensitive to this reality, our nation would become a host to professional gamblers ten (10) years from now!! The best option to reduce poverty in Liberia is not gambling. The best preference is to create legitimate opportunities through education, empowerment, and employment. Madam Sirleaf and others who are national stakeholders today were never subjected to gambling by leaders of yesterday. In fact, the resources of Liberia were used to even send most of them abroad to obtain foreign education. Why must they continue to mistreat this young generation especially at a time of globalization and modernization.

The Liberianization of our economy will remain a daydream

until young citizens are fully equipped in basic skills to respond to future challenges. What is this government doing to ensure sustainable empowerment program for over 102,193 ex-combatants who hastily underwent the DDDR process? The best solution to reduce post-conflict trauma is to build their capacity vocationally. Liberia needs technicians and technocrats who can easily use their minds and tools to enhance reconstruction. Malcolm X said "Education is the passport to the future". The great United States was built by young technocrats, and not gamblers, prostitutes, or drugs addicts. As such, the Liberian government must do all it can to empower young men and women who can reflect an image of greatness.

Today, everyone is anxious to visit Europe and America simply because citizens of these continents put their thoughts to work. The Industrial Revolution is a unique strategy to emulate as an underdeveloped country. There is no social, economic, or political transformation without mental change. Most youngsters in this country are thirsty for mental change. It is time to construct more polytechnics, youth centers, district/public libraries, etc. If two young men (The Wrights Brothers) had not put their ideas to work at a bicycle shop, there would have been no airplane. These two great inventors are memorialized today simply because they had the opportunity to learn how to fix and repair bicycles. This is the kind of opportunity young people of this country need. We don't need betting tickets and drugs. We need leaders who will teach us how to fish by creating an enabling environment.

Drugs dependency is increasing every minute. Young men and women are experimenting with harmful substances as a result of unavailable opportunities. Liberia is now a major commercial site for drugs transaction. Nothing tangible is being done to prevent drugs trafficking. Young women are forced to sell their pride and self-respect just to survive. The rate

of teenage pregnancy, commercial sex, and alcohol consumption in all 15 political subdivisions is disturbing!

The consistent don't care posture of Madam Sirleaf's administration to address youth unemployment is unacceptable. It was another big mockery from the President when she promised to provide 20,000 jobs annually for young people. The living condition of Liberian youth continues to move in a counter-clockwise direction even though this regime has received the highest international support since 1822.

Why are we not harvesting substantial fruits from the over 16.9 billion foreign direct investments made so far? The impact of these investments is far from reaching the bottom of the economic ladder simply because few ill-transparent and unpatriotic oppressors have decided to hold our destiny hostage.

They have no plan to upgrade our educational system because their children and grandchildren are attending reputable foreign institutions.

The reversal of the status quo or business as usual is critical to promoting a harmonious society and preserving public trust.

As a 21st century generation, we must begin to muster the courage to demand what rightfully belongs to us if insensitive leaders continue to ignore our concerns.

We must be conscious enough to recognize that gambling is a smart strategy from members of the old order to distract our determination and subdue us.

They siphon our resources to support their family abroad, while majority of us live far below the benchmark of poverty.

Madam Sirleaf has won over 15 International awards and 8 honorary doctorate degrees from reputed world universities, but Liberia remains the second poorest country on earth. 83.8% of Liberians most of whom are youth

lives below international poverty line of \$1.25USD.

What significance do these awards have when vast majority of those you lead do not have access to quality education, food security, better health care, pipe-borne water, proper sanitation, and employment? The President along with her associates has not been able to improve our living condition even after almost 12 years of democratic rule.

I hope our President, Legislators, and all public trustees will begin to walk in the footprints of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a shoeshine boy who took 20 million Brazilians out of poverty when he became President in 2002. Today Brazil is the world's seventh wealthiest economy with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 2.253 trillion. Though this shoeshine boy did not attend Harvard University, but he was able to stamp out corruption, fight poverty, invest in youth empowerment, and revolutionize his country's economy. As a means of mitigating unparallel economic and social vacuum. He trained young Brazilian men and women in variety of vocations to elevate themselves from self-pity and gloominess.

Today, Brazilians have taken charge of their economic and political destiny simply because a true statesman was able to make appropriate reforms.

The legacy of a global hero like Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will always remain a fresh memory on the minds of all Brazilians. When will our President and Lawmakers resurrect just 3.5 million Liberians from poverty?

There will be change if policymakers begin to reflect the image of this world icon by instituting stern measures against societal ills. We deserve a better livelihood in our generation!

As a young Liberian patriot, I have a solemn duty to always speak truth to the power that be.

However, it is also my responsibility to provide the way forward to bring an end to our people's suffering. In order to help address some of our burning concerns, it is important that this government under the stewardship of President Sirleaf engenders the following:

1. Construct at least two modern Polytechnics in each of our 15 counties.
2. Build modern youth centers and libraries in each of our 73 districts.
3. Establish a functional community college in every county and increase budgetary support in order to enhance quality education. Existing colleges lack adequate support!
4. Increase budgetary support to primary and secondary education and enforce effective school monitoring.
5. Expand local markets and hugely invest in the agriculture, energy, and industry sectors.
6. Create genuine public frameworks/structures to promote youth development, empowerment, and employment opportunities.

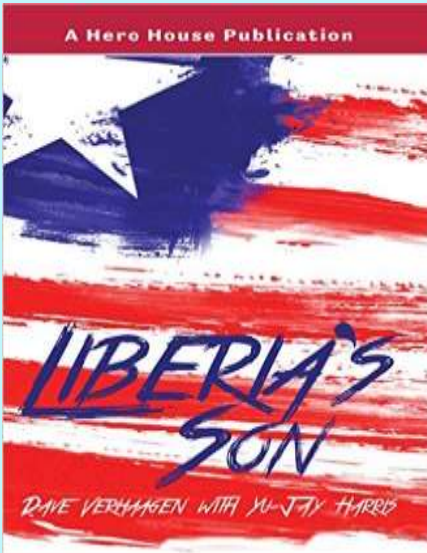
With these few recommendations, Liberians especially young citizens can once more experience a new beginning and abandon ill-fated ventures that are currently destroying their lives. Liberia will be a better place when some of these reforms are prioritized. The motherland will never get better except everyone can afford to put food on his/her table and have access to equal opportunities.

Martin N. K. Kollie
Is a student activist

Recommended Reads

Liberia's Son: A True story of hope, courage and resilience

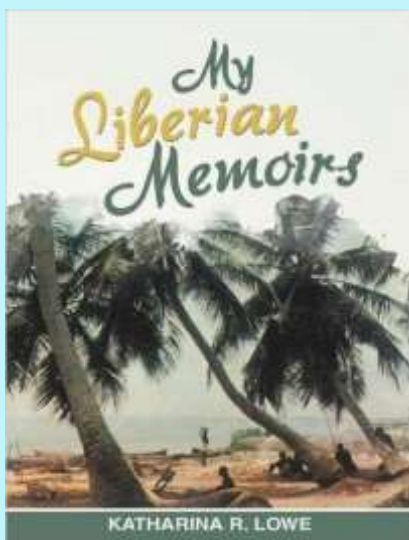
Caught in the crossfire of an unexpected civil war, Yu-jay Harris and his family escape near-certain death at the hands of cruel government soldiers. Their desperate journey to safety takes them into a true heart of darkness where they



face even more terrors at nearly every turn. Liberia's Son is a remarkable story of resilience in the face of the worst of humanity and how it shaped a man who now embodies the best of humanity. It is a gripping story of courage, hope, faith, and determination that will stay with you long after you've read it.

My Liberian Memoirs presents stories

that are meant to act as a testimony of how God led one woman, Kathy, and her husband, Tom, to Liberia where He proceeded to help them through some of the most difficult years of their lives.

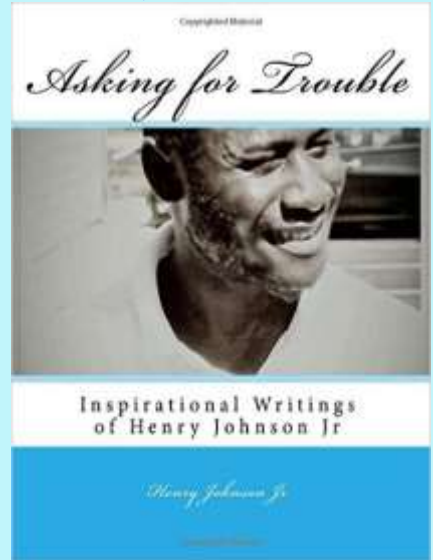


Without God's help and reassurance that Liberia was where they should be, the couple undoubtedly would have packed their bags and boarded the next plane home.

Recommended Reads

"Asking for Trouble", a treat for lovers

of poetical expression. Henry Johnson Jr focuses on what our society is going through, through meaningful words that would cut through hearts and create unforgettable feelings. He



touches on things that most writers won't even talk about. "Asking for Trouble", is a masterpiece and would have you amaze. This poetry book reviews controversial topics. But in almost any poetic expression on controversial topics, one question always comes up: what's the point and what can we do to change the world?

Portor Portor

Introduction by: Elma Shaw

Portor Portor is an anthology of emerging and established poets from Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Botswana. Portor-Portor, a Liberian concept, refers to a pot of unevenly cooked rice-soft, sticky, grainy and lumpy. Within a single pot, is the embodiment of the notion of unity in diversity.

Portor Portor features 12 African poets whose poems cover a wide range of topics- from daily life issues to religious, traditional and contemporary issues plaguing the continent. They offer us a rare glimpse into a diverse modern Africa. Portor Portor, in this edition, presents a unified voice amidst that diversity.

KWEE: Liberian Literary Magazine

Edited by: D. Othniel Forte

Around Town

LIB Style



Happy New Year from the Lone Star Clock



Country Dancer from the Gio Tribe-Gio Devil



President Sirleaf lights National Christmas Tree



Kids sporting attires made using the Liberian Flag



(c) Lady Keiko



A group of beautifully dressed women parade town



Kids owning the beach; playing with canoes



Getting home safely on a Pehn-Pehn is risky



Scenic: River snaking its way to the sea, Maryland Co.



Down Town Traffic and Hustle



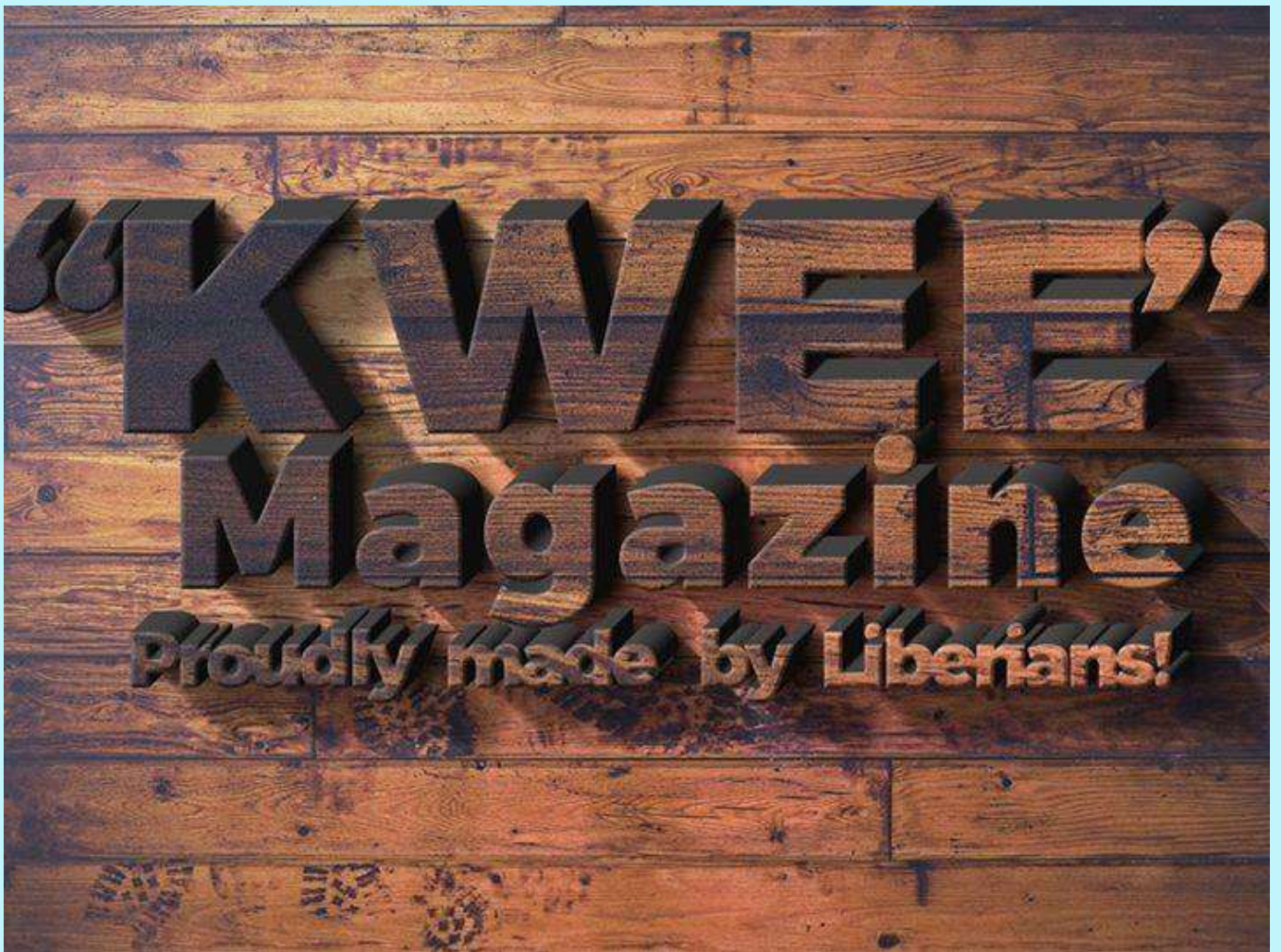
Oldma taking it light...quenching her thirst



Beautiful Street Art [Graffiti]



Credit: Darby Cecil & Daily Pictures from around Liberia



Ad Space available

MEET OUR TEAM



PATRICK BURROWES
SENIOR REVIEWER/CONTRIBUTOR



HARRIET AGYEMANG DUAH
STAFF REVIEWER CHILDREN'S BOOK



REBAZAR FORTE
IT/LAYOUT DESIGNER



HENRIQUE HOPKINS
SEGMENT HOST/REVIEWER



JOSIAH JOEKAI JR.
CONTRIBUTOR



KULUBA MUCURLOR
SEGMENT HOST



MARTIN N. K. KOLLIE
CONTRIBUTOR



NVASEKIE KONNEH
CONTRIBUTOR



LEKPELE M. NYAMALON
RESIDENT POET



JOSEPHINE BARNES
ART CONTRIBUTOR

ELMA SHAW
EDITOR ANTHOLOGY

OTHER
CONTRIBUTORS

- PATRICIA JUAH
- JACK KOLKMEYER
- RICHARD WILSON MOSS
- BERENICE MULUBAH
- JAMES NYEMAH
- CLARENCE PEARSON
- PRESTON M. TULAY
- MASNOH WILSON



BRIMA WOLOBAH
ART CONTRIBUTOR

AKEN WARIEBI
EDITOR ANTHOLOGY

Team



VAMBA SHERIF
Editor - Short stories

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

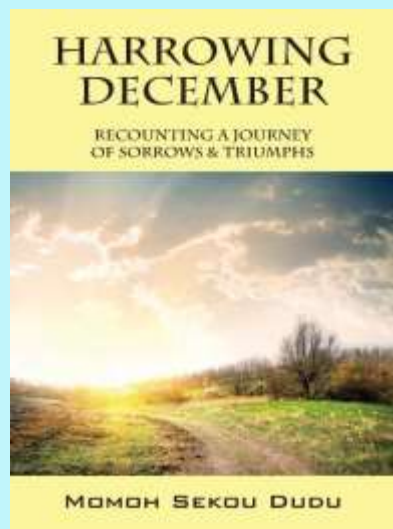


MOMOH DUDUU
Editor- Reviews

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

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

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



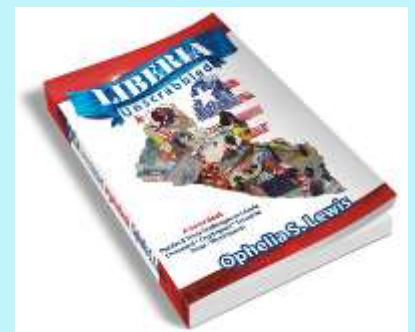
Find out more [here](#).



OPHELIA LEWIS
Consultant

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

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



Find out more [here](#)

Editors

Editor

D. Othniel Forte

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

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

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



PHOTO BY: CHITO REYES

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

Promoting
Liberian

Creativity
& Culture

We are
Accepting
Submissions

Advertise
with us!!!!

Liberia	Asia	USA
Monrovia Liberia	Ban Pong, Ratchaburi	7202 Tavenner Lane
# 12 Ashmun Street	76 Sarasit Road	Alexandria VA
[+231-770-456038 +231-886-527151]	+66-85-8244382	+1703-3479528

<http://liblitrev.wix.com/llmag> liblitrev@gmail.com

<http://othnielf.wix.com/mybooks>

Liberian Literary Magazine

KWEE

Jan Issue



**Bette
Daoust**



**Richard
Alan**

**AUTHORS OF
THE MONTH**

Poetry Series

Gwendolyn Brooks
Langston Hughes
Louisa May Alcott
Walt Whitman
John Keats
Phyllis Wheatley
Edgar Allan Poe
Ruth Bedford
Robert Frost
Pablo Neruda

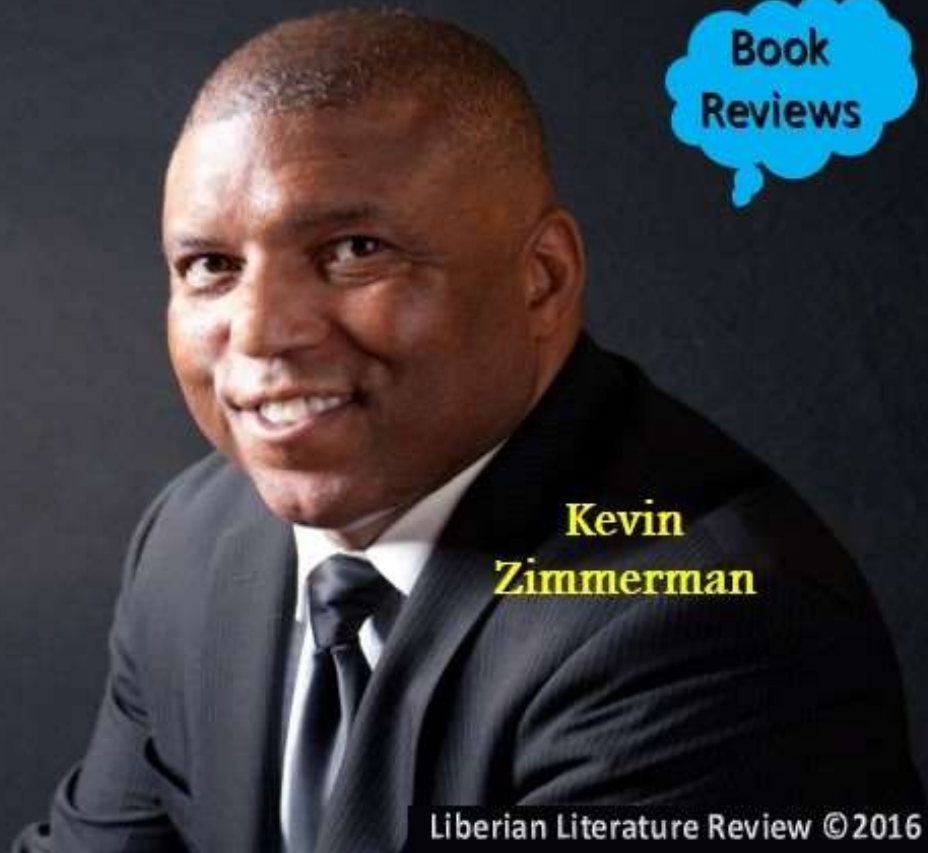
Poetry Series

Maya Angelo
Thomas Hardy
Emily Dickinson
William Yeats
Sara Teasdale
Henry Longfellow
Bessie Rayner Parkes
Williams C Williams
Rudyard Kipling
Edgar Albert Guest

Short Stories

RIGHT BETTER
**Liberian
Proverbs**

**Book
Reviews**



**Kevin
Zimmerman**