

WRITERS' SPACE

A Community of Writers and Readers

**Who Was Born
to Show
*Affection?***

**The 2016 Nobel Prize
and its Implication
for Literary Studies**

**All she wants
*for
valentine***

Philomena Solomon

Interests | Hopes | Dreams

February, 2017

Editorial

Welcome to our February edition of writers' Space. We have packed full for you a variety of the best content of all genres of literature.

Among the features is an x-ray on *The 2016 Nobel Prize and its Implication for Literary Studies*, *Who was born to show affection*, lots of poems such as *Violated*, *All she want for valentine*, *Deep in*, among others. Also remember to check out the flash fiction - *Midnight crawls*.

In all, you will enjoy this February edition of Writers' Space. Do not forget that you can send in your entries for the March edition. See the last page for more details and remember to share.

Let us continue to write... and read.

- Dumebi Okolo - Editor, Writers' Space

Editorial Team

Anthony Onugba - Chief Editor

Dumebi Okolo - Editor

Victoria Oyeshola - Contributor

Saka Junior - Contributor

Published by Acacia Publishers

THE ABUJA FEVER

Susan Dimka

Under the bridge, she waits,

Arm outstretched for a bus

He stands all tucked in

with sweat stained armpits

The glazed look in their eyes,

Like a Hen pecking an unyielding floor

In the bus, listlessly they sit,

Staring at nothingness.

Strangers they were

And strangers they would remain.

The heat was no stranger

Neither were car horns

And vehicles moving in slow motion

caught in traffic's claws.

The cycle never ends

And like the clock goes tick tock

And begins all over,

So they repeat the circle;

The continuation of nothingness. ■



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DEEP IN

By Tobore A. Oboba

I don't know how I loved you this way,
But I wish to forget you badly,
Rolling back to the day I met you,
Your calm words kept my heart racing

I wish I had dropped my pride earlier.
Would it have changed the game?
Would you look into my eyes again?
Whispering that you will never leave.

Lately, I have been digging my head in a
crunch,
Hoping I erase you when I look up.

Only to get caught in your eyes staring back,
As I'm being tortured in my world of fan-
tasy

Wake me up from my dream I pray,
Hopefully, I will lose touch with you in day-
light.

I hope I don't die trying,
Since you are stuck on repeat. ■

Tobore is a lawyer and lover of literature. she is discreet and cordial. Her leisures include; reading, writing, and workouts.



Literature Prize

The 2016 Nobel Prize and its Implication for Literary Studies

The Nobel Prize for Literature has been the Oscar of the literary world, or perhaps arguably so. It has remained the prestigious height of literary excellence since 1901 and has since built a reputation that precedes its annual declaration of a Nobel Laureate. The declaration of Bob Dylan as the 2016 Laureate came as a surprise to so many. In fact, the choice of the Nobel Prize committee has raised lots of questions about the boundaries of what Literature should or can constitute.

As much as most literary scholars admit that the boundaries of literature are porous, very few would have envisaged that the Swedish Academy will, in 2016, award the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature to a songwriter and/or poet who as they put it, has “created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition”. This development has a radical implication as

far as the notion of literature is concerned.

The notion of what constitutes literature has continued to confront each generation especially in relation to the many influences they each present. Scholars, in their sojourn through the literary space, have constantly been faced with an ever expanding field of effects. These ever-shifting boundaries are what accounts for the fluidity of the notion of literature.

Questions have emerged as to whether song lyrics can be considered as literature. Research has shown that Bob Dylan’s recent award is not the first literary award given to a music icon on account of, as they say, lyrics of literary excellence. In 2012, the people at PEN New England awarded the first-ever Song Lyrics of Literary Excellence award to Chuck Berry and Leonard Cohen on February 26. Bob Dylan was quoted by Chuck Berry

to have described Berry as “the Shakespeare of rock ‘n’ roll” and Cohen as “the Kafka of the blues”. A few years later, Bob is announced as the 2016 Nobel Laureate of literature. I guess that now makes him the Shakespeare of pop. Should songs really be categorised as literature, especially by a “prestigious” body such as the Swedish Academy. What is the implication of their decision as far as defining the boundaries of literature is concerned?

Terry Eagleton (1996) stated that “anything can be literature” while observing that the implication of suggesting that ‘literature’ is a highly valued kind of writing is illuminating and bears a fairly devastating consequence which questions the illusion that ‘literature’ is an ‘objective’ category, in the sense of being eternally given and immutable. In this regard, Eagleton pointed out that “‘Shakespeare’, for example, can cease to be literature”. He said this to show that “any belief that the study of literature is the study of a stable, well-definable entity, as entomology is the study of insects, can be abandoned as a chimera. This implies that ‘Shakespeare’ can cease to be literature on the same grounds that Dylan’s songs can begin to be literature.

But it is important to have the following questions in mind; are Songs meant to be sung in the same sense in which prose drama or poetry is meant to be read? Does the beauty of song lyric come alive when it is sung in the same sense that the beauty of prose or poetry come alive when they are read? What seems to matter at this point is “value-judgment”. However, Eagleton reminds us that “value-judgments are notoriously variable”.

With this in mind, the decision of the Swedish Academy to de-emphasise the mainstream literature obviously brings to perspective folk literature as a potent site of literary excellence. Whatever the case; one thing is certain, more than ever, literature has become more fluid especially from the perspective of form.

Essentially, the fluidity of literature is what accounts for the possibilities that abound in the field. The action of the Nobel Prize committee helps to bring to perspective the synergy between literature and the trends of the twenty-first century especially via the instrumentality of the media. The influence of mass mediated forms is obviously redefining the scope of virtually all fields. More than ever, we must be ready to embrace the contemporary sense of reality and beauty no matter how much they violate our traditional sense of what is real or beautiful.

The truth is that we might not all reach a consensus as to what literature is or is not but we have each been blest with the humility to acknowledge, genius, and the courage to question ignorance. The irony of this truth, however, is that we each have the tendency of being as genius as we are ignorant and vice versa. To think literature is to think genius. Music is not any less Art than literature is. Besides, they both express the genius of beauty. ■

Written by Stephen Onimisi Ajinomoh (Litera-steve). He is a graduate of English Literature and presently a Postgraduate student of Literature at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. He is also a poet and critic.

Writers' Space Literary Publication - February Edition

Writers' Corner

A close-up portrait of a young Black woman with her hair styled in braids. She is wearing large hoop earrings and a white collared shirt. She has a thoughtful expression, resting her chin on her hand.

Philomena Solomon

"...when I travel, I always go with a book and a pen to write down what interest me and when I interact with people, I create a story in our discussion."

Philomena's interest in writing began when she was a kid. In her words, "The interest never died. I loved it to the extent that whenever I travelled, I would always go with a book and a pen to write down what interests me and when I interact with people, I create a story in our discussion."

Philomena's first book was written when she was in primary two. The book was titled, *How Jackson got black socks*. Since then, she has continued writing and is currently working on a novel titled, *Raymond Andrey*. She says that she has been working on the draft for almost 3 years now because she wants it to be a bestseller. She also wants it to be adapted to screen.

However, although she has high hopes, Philomena is discouraged about publishing in Nigeria and taking up writing as a career. She confessed to being confronted by various challenges which include; discouragement from some family and friends, the huge cost of publishing and the almost non-existent marketing logistics. Regardless, she intends to continue to write, to birth her stories which she intends to use to correct certain vices in the society. She hopes to be a hugely successful writer someday and touch people's lives positively. ■

Violated

It is dark
And darkness shields all things evil
It shields his hands
His groping and hurtful hands
I feel fear, gut wrenching
Seeping into my skin and
what lies underneath
I hear the shallow and rapid
beatings of my heart
I ask a question knowing
there would be no answer
What is this?
I know not,
can decipher not
I cannot halt this
He is much too strong
Is it me? Is it him?
Did I bring this on me?
Where are you? Mom.... dad...anybody...?
As my innocence is torn and ripped
Repeatedly and unrelentingly
Not a word escapes my dry mouth
Only muffled sniffles and cries
That evolves into a darkened silence. ■

by Aweni Poet - An everyday girl who
hopes her voice makes a difference

PASSION CALLING

Yours is...
The only face I see ...
The only body I feel
The only eyes I adore...
The only arms I long for...
The only love I desire...
The only thread I am wired in...
The only plug I am fired in....
The only hair I touch...
The only kiss I cherish...
The only bosom I wish...
The only warmth I know...
The only promise I keep. ■

by Saka Junior



Flash fiction

Midnight Crawls

by
Rahmatullah

I was asleep when a loud noise woke me up. Immediately I opened my eyes, the power went out. I tried reaching for my phone to put on its flashlight but had forgotten where I left it. I guess I left it in the sitting Room. I rested my head back on my pillow when I heard another sound. It emanated from my reading table. I couldn't make sense of it but when I heard it again, I became frightened. My room was dark. I could see nothing. I tried to get out of bed. I lowered my left foot on the rug. I felt something rub against it. I shrieked, as I suffocated my pillow.

I heard another sound. This time, the sound of a book falling to the ground. Was my house haunted? I began to shiver. I did not want to die! "Please go away," I begged, as I sobbed, "You can take anything you want. I have money, jewellery and even food." I said all that without thinking but it occurred to me as I heard another sound that ghosts would not be interested in money, food or jewellery. They would be interested in my Soul. What if they were demons?

I knelt on my bed and began to pray. It was then that the power was restored. I turned slowly to catch a glimpse of my reading table. It was then that I saw them. They were on my reading table, feasting from the remnant of the dinner I had eaten... three huge rats. ■

Written by Rahmatullah. She attended FGC Kwali Abuja, holds a B.Sc degree in Accounting from the University of Abuja, and an MBA from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. She is currently undergoing a professional program in Accounting. Aside writing, she is gifted with many talents and is into diverse fields. She is Married with children.



All she wants for Valentine

by
Susan Dimka

The pair of shoes by the glass window.
The Red of excitement,
Shimmering like the moon
With heels made right
She gazed with a smile
“This, for valentine, I want.”

She, at womanhood’s cusp
Where vanity holds tight
And peers influence
To illumination’s abode.
Her hopes and dreams, she ponders,
“This, for valentine, I want.”

The sound of family chatter
Of plates and spoons
In a room half-lit.
He gaze, to her family falls
Lingering on her dad’s face
His ears stands
As her voice approaches them
“Dad, this, for valentine, I want.”

She works hard after school
Petty trading, her way of survival
Striving longer for more income

To satisfy dreams of clothes and accessories
Goading her on to save for her new shoes
This, she planned, the best valentine.

The days rolled in quick succession
She felt the Earth tremble
As it drank the blood
of dreamers like herself.
Bombs and violence was not her dream
Flesh and blood littered her path
As she ran past tears and weeping.
Her sister’s hand, she held,
As the ran past the shattered glass window
Exhibiting the red pair of shoes
She had dreamed for valentine.
It changed that instant
she wanted the pain gone
And the sight of her dead parents
Erased from her mind.
To catch the truck racing out of town
All she wants for valentine...
is to live. ■

LOVESPELL COLUMN



Who Was Born to Show Affection?

by
Saka Junior

Only God knows why things happen as they do. Why love that started on a beautiful candle lit dinners end in court or even acid bath and murder. What happens between the time that beautiful love canvas was painted and the time the claw bursts? Sometimes, the bubble lasts through the wedding. Now nobody ever sees an ugly bride or an unhappy groom. All full of smiles, expectations, and hope. Some reap it, others simply bite the dust. Even when some of them believe they are doing enough, they never get love to blossom for them, neither reaping the bountiful joyous bliss love promises nor the peaceful fruits of love.

Many people tend to blame this misfortune on others. For them, any other person concerned is guilty of what they perceived is wrong with the marriage. Any person except he or she on the throne of distributing blames. This is why you can hear the man say, "it's all the woman's fault. I gave her everything, what does she want me to do?"

Now, what is everything?

Marriage, sure so you gave her that. Children, a home, cars, and even a business, and perhaps the opportunity to love and make a home. One should be satisfied by all these anyway but this is life and things don't go

that way. Some men would blame it all on the in-laws, her friends and all those close to the woman, blaming them for the things they tell her.

For the woman, blaming the man for everything that ever goes wrong is the one and only way to deal with frustrations. The man has so many people who can carry blames. Some women believe their “headache” is their mother -in-law. “If only that old rag would learn to stay in the village with her poverty-reduced husband and bunch of miserable children, perhaps life will be sweet for me, my husband and our children,” one woman cried. She pointed out that her misfortune started and ended with her old, dirty mother-in-law, a woman she is ashamed to give the honour of calling her a mother-in-law. Her own mother is older than the “old, dirty mother-in-law” that must live and die in the village. Still, she lives with her in the city and the husband never quarrels with it but she wouldn't see his own mother.

A respondent who wouldn't give her name said such situations naturally kills affection. “I've never seen any person who will have affection for a spouse who does not want to see his or her parents. What I am saying is, here, things begin to mount up and next you find it difficult to even look at the other.” The point is after such avoidable foundation had been established, any difficult, or ugly thing can follow. The angered would wear a permanent frown and you say you don't know what is happening. So if you have a question like, “what happen to the beauty of the wedding day?” The answer is, we stopped thinking the way we were thought on the wedding day. As a respondent noted, “once women get into the house, they believe they are home and they need not do anything again except make troubles.”

Some men simply go back to their old ways. Any time their selfishness comes up, the woman would like to burn everything that reminds her of the wedding day and the man would like to use his physical strength to beat it out of her. When the madness is over, each person waits for the other to say “I'm sorry”. On and on, pains take the place of joy in the hearts that once loved. So, if the question is who should show affection, the answer is everyone must show affection. Everyone must sow the seed of affection and hope to reap the fruit of affection.

Finally, to keep the promises of the wedding day, we must learn not to hurt, and to tolerate, learn to love, learn to give, care, and live like human beings. You can start today. Show affection to somebody. The ripples of that true affection will spread across the globe. Yes, that's the love that is missing from our world. What a beautiful place, this world would be when we all love and show affection unconditionally. ■

The Forgetful One

by Emmanuel Ibezimakor (Zimackos)



Daddy is drunk again.

When I opened the door for him today, he embraced me firmly with his large arms. So firm that I lost breath for some seconds. He pulled away from me abruptly as he fixed his gaze on my head. He gently stroked my hair and told me how magnificent my new hairstyle was. He looked me in the eye and said:

'you have such beautiful blue eyes, like your mum.'

He must be drunk. He has to be out of his mind to pay compliments to anyone, not to mention me, his daughter. Until he is drunk, he's incapable of showing af-

fection. The last time this happened, he chased mum around the house, naked. Today, mum was 'in the mood'. As soon as I heard uncoordinated chatters and grunts, I wore my headphone and turned high the volume of a favourite rock song my boyfriend sent to me. Gradually, I slept off as I counted the number of squares on the ceiling.

Once the light from my table went off, I was awake again. I can't sleep with the light off. Electricity bill was due. Obviously, dad had forgotten to recharge. I heard dad's footsteps as he descended to the basement. I stayed in bed. There was a loud noise. I heard the sound, but not the

words. I hastened towards the living room following his voice.

“Mama Chidera,” I could hear him now as I approached the stairs. “I can’t find my phone.” He was now sober; I could tell from the harsh tone of his voice. While he was busy getting drunk, he had forgotten to pay the electricity bills. He now needed his phone to make the payment online. I stood by the tail of the staircase and watched, in shock, as daddy had completely wrecked the living room searching for his phone. Mom crept to his side in fear - not the fear of him, but the fear of the monster in him raiding the living room. The rays from the torch in daddy’s left hand lit the room. When she got close enough to him, fear turned to rage. She hissed rudely, turned around and walk past me.

“Chidera, better go and sleep”

Curiosity made me wonder what mum had seen that pissed her off so profusely. Curiosity made me creep to dad, just like mom did. He noticed me. “When! Chidera, have you seen my phone?”

I looked past the bright light he was shining on my face and asked, “Can I use your torch to help you?”

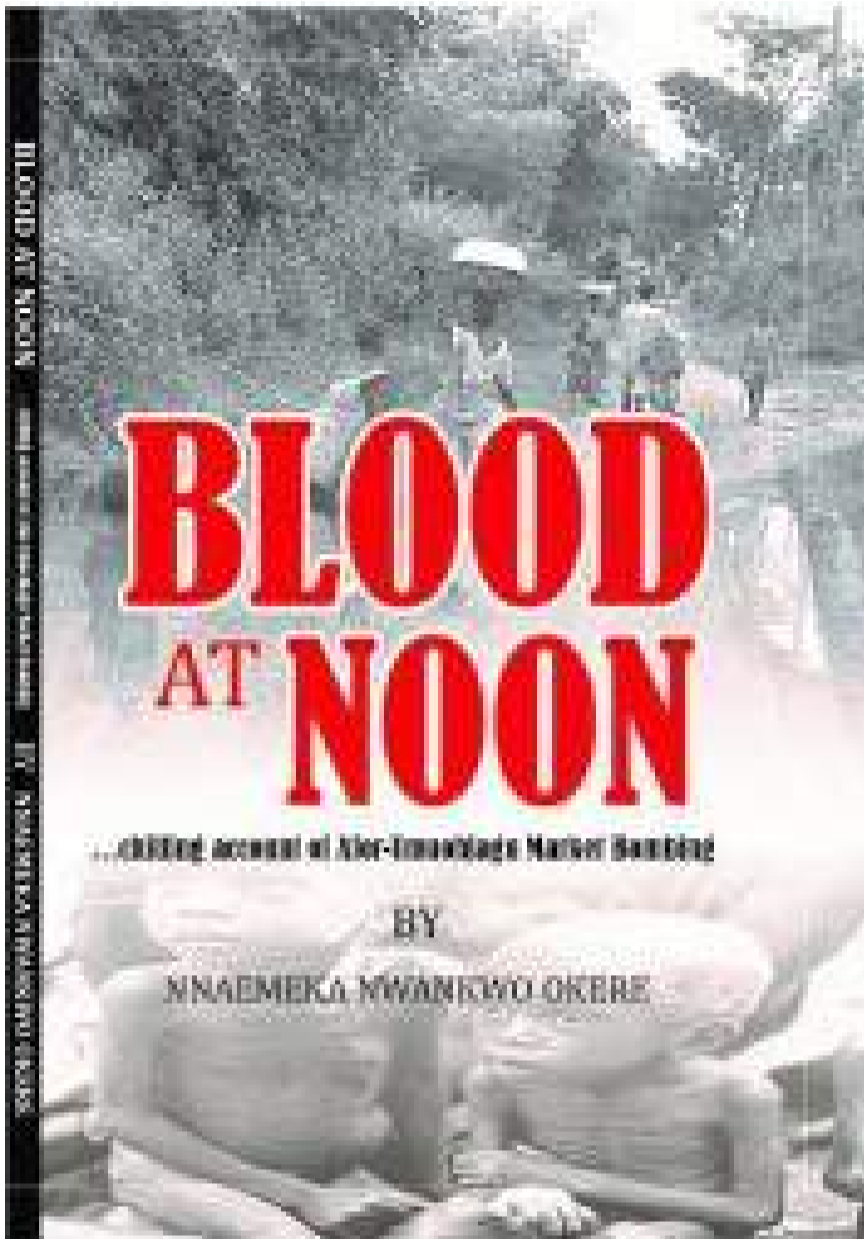
I was still wondering why mom refused to help dad find his phone until he handed me his torch. Actually, it was his phone. He had turned everything upside down looking for his phone using the flashlight of his phone. I pretended to search a corner of the dining room and moments later, I put off the flashlight of his phone and entered the living room.

“Here is your phone, dad,” I said as I handed it to him. I caught the broad smile on his face and ran to my room. Before I wore my headphone, I overheard him saying to mum, “Chidera has found my phone.” There was a long pause. Then he said, “Now, I can’t find my torch.”

It is 2 AM. Daddy is drunk again. ■

Emmanuel Ibezimakor (Zimackos) is a freelance, multi-faceted writer and song-composer. A few of his fictional stories are featured on his blog www.zimaquotes.wordpress.com. He is single, a Jesus-freak, motivated and goal-driven. He dreams of owning the most successful alternative record label in the country, become a renowned blogger, a husband, and a father of two.

Book Review



Blood at Noon chronicles the bombing of Afor-Umuohiagu market during the Nigeria civil war. According to the author, “The market was bombed at the peak of activity on February 7, 1969.

Little did the people who were looking for ways to break away from the jaws of hunger know that death was hovering around. Afor-Umuohiagu market was repeatedly and remorselessly raped like a hapless whore with thighs parted wide and feet tied to stakes.”

The book looks at the violation of the Geneva Convention on the rules of engagements in the course of war. It also frowns at the way the vulnerable were used as bargaining power to end wars that they knew nothing about. ■

About the Author

Nnaemeka Nwankwo Okere hails from Imo state, Nigeria and is a graduate of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Uyo, Nigeria. As a trained teacher, he taught students of Political Science, and English Language departments of National Open University, on part-time basis. As a certified media expert, he worked with the European Union Election Observation Mission in 2011 and 2015, where he doubled as Media Analyst and Election Facilitator. He is the author of the book: BLOOD AT NOON. He writes passionately and has some of collection of poems, which can be found on his blog: authorshelve.blogspot.com. He is a Support staff of PPMC, a subsidiary of the NNPC. He lives and works in Abuja. He is married to Faith and they have a son, Arinze.

The book is available at www.bebetterbooks.biz ■

The City

Where Lights were lit
Where rains watered
Our place of birth
Oh how it has dwindled so
We sang songs of its glory
We spread tales of its wonders
We bathed in its waters
We drew lives to it
Oh how it has dwindled so
Its glory is faded
Like the rains of a season
The dry wind came
And drew out its moisture
Leaving a dry and weary land
Oh how it has dwindled so
I was told of its wondrousness
I even saw it
But I have met its callous heart
And it is twice

It's once beauty
Oh how it has dwindled so
Yet my tearful heart
Yearns and hopes
For the city that once was
The land of my birth
My milk and honey land
The citadel, where the hope of many lies
Arise, O gentle City
Awaken from your drought
Let the rains pour down again. ■

by Funmi Okorro (Funmi Richards)
Funmi is a Nigerian student who feels literature is the best way to express her views of the world. She enjoys travelling, meeting new people, reading and talking. She is adventurous and resilient...

My Dear Heart

by Tobore A. Oboba

My dear heart, you were born pure and unique,
Little did you know you would cross paths with uncertainties.
You tried to grow so quickly and raced further at every stop
Even with those sweat shed, you still glowed in the dark
My dear heart would you ever relent in your pace?
Most times you beat around the track and lose focus.
You've been saddled on like a horse intended to be broken.
But you waste no time to pick up again and cool the heated oven.
My dear heart how much longer will you linger in misery?
How long will you wallow and hide behind the veil of a coy smile?
You can fool the faces that see you, but would you do same to a caring heart?

Why ignore the plea to heal those hidden bruises ab initio?
My dear heart, how would you get through this phase solo?
Will this bent back of yours be straight again?
Pour it all on me I beg,
pass me the baton one more time,
I may earn you gold in this race you chose.
My dear heart, you leave me exhausted in this endless pursuit,
You carry on like the voices calling aren't bold enough.
You ceased the fire I burn for you every minute.
But I vow not to relent my dear heart,
for you am willing to fight. ■

Tobore is a lawyer and lover of literature. she is discreet and cordial. Her leisures include; reading, writing, and workouts.

Exploitation Specialist

by

Saka Junior

It was one of those evenings when things just crawl in your nerves. I had just returned from that collection of broken chairs called my office and I was about taking off my rags when I heard a single knock like a shot on the door. The number out there did not wait a minute for me to respond. She just opened the door and rushed in like she shares the rent with me. Jane, I trust her, I even heard her usual “leg brushing” ground movement before the knock on the door. Boy, I have only known this blood sucker for three months and my bank account is catching fire already or was it reading red? Every day, she appears in the office with a long list of demands.

It will start with a lavish entertainment, then the story of her father dying in the hospital. She needs money for the bill. Beat me when she doesn't need money. Yesterday it was her sister's school fees and I asked my guy I.K. Jumbo to lend me some Money to give to her. Today, behold Miss Jane. Who knows? Maybe her grandfather has died again. God help me. Now you get the gist.

Today boy, it was her mother that got a headache and I must pay. Tell me what business I have with the old woman. All the money she collects from me goes to some dress maker's hairdressing salon and so on. One day she would get a painful boil, you know where and money would come out from... with a heavy heart.

You know, whenever your babe comes with a story that ends with money, know it was the money she wanted in the first place. Look at her face closely and you will know the game. The money she is collecting from you is paying her rent or don't you know that most of our urban girls have no clear means of livelihood? Those girls in the universities sponsoring themselves, the source of their income are men.

The truth is that some of our women need men to build economic tricks. So when you hear a woman is working hard just know she is bleeding one unfortunate man dry. So if you have long throat for every Monica then you will certainly Clinton... sorry pay for it. For me, I'm paying for playing Clinton for every Monica. ■

Call for Submission

We are happy to announce that Writers' Space, a free monthly literary publication aimed at creating a platform where new and emerging writers can publish their work, is accepting submissions for flash fiction, short stories, essays, and poetry. We are looking for something compelling, unique, original, enchanting, & remarkable.

However, please consider the following:

- The deadline for submission is the 20th of every Month. Submission received afterwards would be considered for the following Month.
- Submission must be in the English Language.
- There is no age restriction.
- The maximum word counts are as follows:
Flash Fiction: 250 words.
Short Stories: 800 words.
Essays: 800 words.
Poetry: 25 lines.
- The writer retains full copyright.
- We only accept electronic submissions in either MS Word or PDF formats.

If you have any questions or have encountered any technical difficulties while trying to submit your work, or if you would like to advertise, please send us an email - info@writersspace.net or chat with us on Whatsapp - 08052136165

www.writersspace.net