

WWSA



**JULY
2018
Edition**

Empowering African Writers

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Zimbabwe

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OUR VOICES
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**IN THE FAR
CORNER OF
MY CLOSET**

Houda Messoudi
Morocco

HOUDA MESSOUDI

The Wind in a Moroccan Box



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Ntube Nnane - Cameroon

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Tshepo Maruatona - Botswana

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Gabrielina Gabriel-Abhie - Nigeria

Yunusa Salim Ibrahim - Nigeria

Houda Messoudi - Morocco

Kimberly Chirodzero - Zimbabwe

Yipah Reuben - Nigeria

EDITORIAL

YOU ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHEERLEADER **DER!**



You can be anything if only you believe
- R. Kelly.

That big mountain in your life, eat it with a spoon. Little by little you will get there. No shortcuts. The only way is through.

Life hurls challenges in your path. For what is life without some excitement? Of course, you will win some and lose some. On the wins, pat yourself on the back. On the latter, failure is no fun but you will have gained experience and a thick skin. You will be better prepared for another swing.

R. Kelly insists on believing in yourself. Former United States president Barack Obama had the slogan YES, WE CAN during his campaign and yes, they did win the election. He even went ahead to score another term in office.

Two words that can change the world for you and me: I CAN'T or I CAN.

Make your choice! Make it count!

Wakini Kuria
Chief Editor,
WSA,
Kenya



POETRY

Pun Untrue

Downcast I was
Laden, cumbered,
Lowered, eaten,
Bad'd turned worse,
Life's, staggered; wanéd
Wounded, beaten
Vigor, counts less
All'd died, but breath
That I have it all

Heart, then broken, wearied,
Faith, hope stolen, morbid,
All ferried, as pollen, buried,
Far, and far em stamen,
How solid such life's deed.

A friend is nought, anymore,
In need, now, he'd fault, no score,
Of love, not'a jot, unsure where to,
Far-off my cot, his smiles did tour,
That them count this poor!
Unloved, I'd thought, deserted
Even more; Now, churned with disconcert
Of the lore, Oh! "... friend indeed"
Roar dear, feely, rhyming; All spot on.
But in this, I pray, Is not, but pun,
Untrue, now, ever more!

Shimbo Pastory,
Tanzania



The Lion's Feast

The lion king has thrown a feast!
Come all! Relax your fist!
This is the night. This is the dark night!
The night void of silence; silence in dried pains.
The night of clinching deals.
The night when pens are brandished like swords,
To chop our destinies in ounce drops.

This is the night of clinking glasses,
A fun catching night
Where laughter is snore to ants inside iron walls,
Ants with forlorn looks.

The lion king has done it again.
His feast has pulled dogs, panthers, tortoises
To drink and eat on the same table,
His feast has made them sing and
dance their own folk songs,
I can see them drunk;
They're like mad men staring blankly at
glasses filled to the brim with Ciroc,
They clutched on to one another skipping like antelopes,
The clunk of their bodies crashing into each other
is music to the lion's ears.

The lion king perched on his marble seat,
nodding his head like a lizard.
His eyes dissect the hall for a prey,
The prey who shall have the honour to lay
on his table for dinner.
This is the lion's feast.
t's a faucet. Be careful not to fall!

Ntube Nnane
Cameroon

Africa: **Our Spirit, our Sound and our Colour**

From dusk until dawn
Our hearts are knit as one
As one candle lit by the sun
We glow in the Spirit of Love

With one vocal cord
We speak just one word
Together: as a two-fold cord
Yet, in uniquely diverse Tongues

Black skin we wear
Dark eyes, dark nose and ear
True beauty resides here
For in black all colours dwell

Archibong, Walter Bassey,
Nigeria



My designer Jacket

Woke up naked
I went to town
Town in a strait jacket
Came back
Back, dressed in a designer jacket
Little did I know the world would cause a
racket
Racket about young boys and girls
Who dressed me for a small fee
Yet I fed them nothing
Not even a dogs loving
So yes, woke up naked
I went to town
Town in a strait jacket
Came back
Yet a designer jacket I lacked
But at least I returned with my soul
Fully dressed and intact

Tshepo Maruatona,
Botswana

CRY OF THE DEAD

Everything alive could smell its dying
But nothing dead can tell it's dead
Nothing is everything when
Everything becomes nothing

I lay asymptotically in my casketed room
With my eyes closed and nothing to worry about
To think of what to have my life done with
But you keep distracting me with your noisy cry

You kidnapped peace
Even in the compartment I now own
To enhance growth for seeds sown

My name keeps calling
In the real land I left longing

Be calm it's quite safe here
Everyone is mirthful and keen
To see prayer request in rain

I am not dead but ruminating
Exited but still existing
Part of me left in continuity
With my breath ceased for a while

All I ask is freedom of sleep
And Calling with license
I'm darkness in light
Let the dead rest...
Agwu Ijeoma Augustina,
Nigeria

TRUE EMOTIONS

I felt old
Even though I know am old
Enough to be forgotten by none but you.
I'm the oldest treasure you own right off.
The curse of aging is inevitable to the grey.
It freckles is tender to the fallen petals.
And as the skin folds with expertise
And tooth disconnect from its source.
Even when the heart and mind misbehaved
None but you left through the windows of time.

Neimatub Abdul Samadu,
Ghana

*

A SKY FOR A STRANGE BIRD

Nothing on your face reveals the turmoil hour
The night asks you ...
When can we set up our suitcases?
And embrace a tree that has said to its beloved
"Let's burn a shameless kiss"
But the wind is courting the moon joking the dice,
With a child leaves the school early
The afterglow is drawing with its brush, a lip
Has shoed a water drop ...
She was still painting a little prayer of a time dust
And she is courting a peep on a vein mole
For the rose to sleep with noise in her eyes,
and the afterglow is continuing in crying.

Fethi Sassi,
Tunisia



HELL, HEAVEN, HOME

In our home, there is a map to hell.
I followed the fury in father's eyes
Until I gathered hell resides where
Father's palm meets mother's cheek.

When hell breaks loose,
Mother becomes different shades of heaven.
Her face cracks into a thousand splendid stars,
Her voice splits into the colours of the rainbow.

She sheds no tears, she was told
The sun is majestic in the storm.
She was taught the moon shines in the dark,
where,
Upon its gaze, children gather around a bonfire
To share beautiful stories.

Nkosiyazi Kan Kanjiri,
Zimbabwe

PEACE

If peace be a place to be found,
Take me there; bury me on its ground.
Let my body be suffocated by its season-less bliss,
And my soul,
Live among its un-withering greens.
If peace be a place that exists,
Tell me where, I cannot wait to believe.

Gabriel Junior,
Kenya

THE WORLD CRY

Keep your mouth shut,
And ears open,
For the world is astray,
Ergo, what is done, is now silly.
The world is trembling.

Easier said than done,
"human dignity can not be purchased "
Vice versa, is the action done?
Why this?

Patients at risk,
Doctors on interests,
Commercial deposit,
Life has become,
Why errant?
We ought to learn,
To treat and to trick,

Unspoken word never does harm,
What's done to escape?
Solving is a solution,
Every person may not be corrupt,
but every person is corruptible,
Let's make a try,
To escape the cry.

Acquiline Chrispine Rubanza,
Tanzania.





Unique East African Combo

FATHER

Rejected
Dejected
Puny...wretched was my soul
Sitted at the door step
I waited for you
To come back home
Fourteen years of age
I needed you the most

One month...
Did birth two years
Time flew
But did not heal
I hoped you returned sooner
Because the further you stayed away
The more painful it had become

I've learnt to vanquish my fear
To stand tall and firm
To believe and to smile

It's been eleven years
Time has failed to conceal
For I still sit by the door step
Hoping to see you

Wanangwa Mwale,
Zambia

DEAR DAUGHTER

I have never loved myself enough
To laugh through the rough times
I have seen different colors,
fading in the beauty of the flowers
I have woken up to different nightmares,
only to calm down through the power of Prayer.
I know of those days when I needed someone
beside me to prove me right
And write down the path I should take because I
could not fight,
for my sight was stolen and I only saw
my shadow through someone else's light

Daughter, always remember, you are not me
Your choices should always lead you to being free
Do not keep falling in the trap of the past
Live the present and remember
every season will come to last
Even when you have too many questions
with no answers
Look up and believe He is still painting your
world with more colors
Learn to love as you evolve
Set your eyes above the things you cannot solve

Daughter, carry only the weight you can bear,
as you walk towards your fate and beyond that
square. You are the rhythm
Of the song inside of you; A standalone system
that longs to belong
Despite what it has been through.
You have the power to change the world
Put a smile on someone
and bless people with your words
You can achieve whatever you believe,
what your mind conceive,
You will receive Just like your name,
Janelle; God got you, go ahead, Excel!

Nancy Lazaro,
Tanzania.

HOSTILE

Sometimes it pained...
So much that they couldn't take it,
At one point, they complained
But not one hearkened to their cries.

The city so ruined to ash
The people pale with rash
Soldiers trying to dash around
And save a life as they can.

The ones who fought hard...
And shed blood to save their home.
The abode of their folks
Their refuge, their home.

Sometimes, their spirits sank,
And the little ray of hope faded
Into the dark, shattered...
And their deep despair visible.

They rise and seek grouse...
For their voices was their city's plea,
To restore it and rebuild it anew
But it did just raise tension and unease.

Faith Merich

Kenya

Karma is Coming

You talked about pain
And betrayal
Fake people and hate
Did you say hate?
Do you know figure eight
Remains eight even
When turned to sit on its head?
You think you know pain?
Have you met fake people who betray?
Have you met you?
You don't know loyalty, for sure
Even if it perched on your face
Karma is just passing
She'll come back, for you
Just wait
You haven't seen anything yet.

Mukonya Mukonya,

Kenya

We Lost our Voices to the Wind

We lost our voices in a graveyard
We buried them in your grave
Once a full moon,
We are now a crescent because we lost you
We lost our voices when you lay sick
Your body-feeble
Your bones-brittle
Your breath-a flicker of flame
Tossed about in a hurricane battling to keep its light

We lost our voices when you couldn't recognize
Your cousins, even your favourite niece
We lost our voices when you convulsed
So much the nurses couldn't hold you down
We lost our voices in the wails and dirges that filled
The compound the day we came home with the news
We lost our voices after weeks of hoping
You'd wake-up but you seemed content in your sleep

So here we are, voiceless, hopeless
Left only with pictures of you
Hoping to find our voices some day
Hoping the wind didn't carry them too far
Awanto Margaret
Cameroon



Writer's Note

I wanted to write the writ
That even the writer could not scribe,
That when read before the reader
They could get cold from words breeze,
Which like a night walker
They confuse even the darkness
Upon which they tread to reach brightness.

The writer's calibre
Engulfed in his own emotions,
The fear that people could read
Not only the conscious
But the propeller of the heart
That makes nights submit to days.

The writer's belief
That life is occasional happenings,
A camouflage of bad with merits,
Matters not what you do
Rather who does it,
and only the name can make a name big.

They say action speaks higher
But time reveals intentions,
As patience is the heart to perseverance
So, only a meditating eye can write
The soberness of life.

**Gibonce,
Tanzania**

THE BLACK RACE

We have been paled and crooked for decades
We have been abandoned and forgotten to decay
Virtual slavery mastered
By our forever masters in this age
Tears of pain and struggle
Continue to drown the soul of Africa
While we watch unconcerned
As they dig and loot from our abyss of wealth
Where is the civilization they brought?
Was it a worthy substitute for our lot?

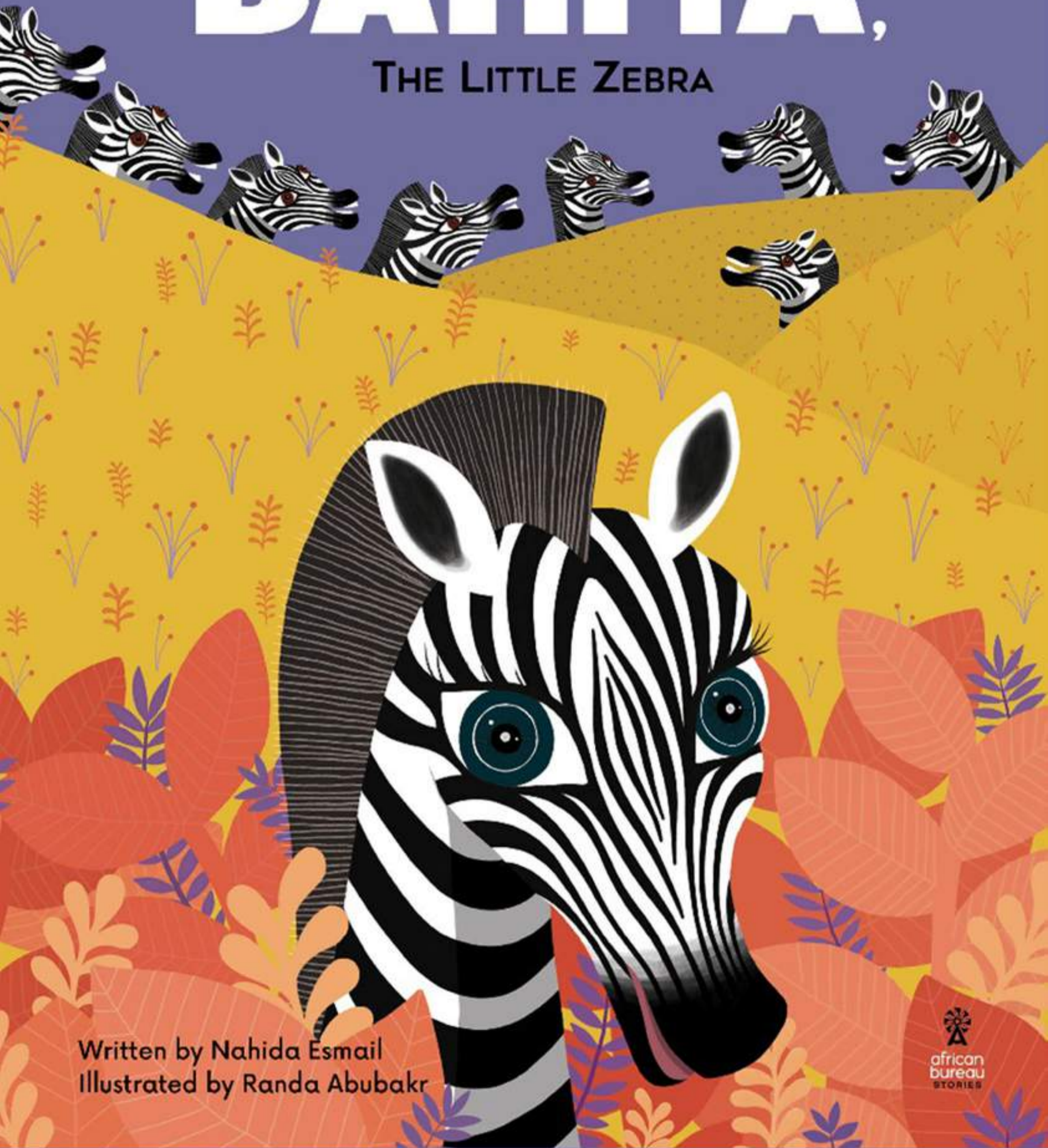
Arise O! Dark Continent!
Your triumph has been suppressed for long
The race indeed commenced outside your block
But for how long would you stay alien to the
clock?
Time ticks away your victory into oblivion
The moment is now to reject their constant bully
After all, you have not been crippled to stand on
your own!
Africa has finally made it to the race
A disappointment that enlightens their faces

**Alhassan Faisal,
Ghana**



BAHIYA,

THE LITTLE ZEBRA



Written by Nahida Esmail
Illustrated by Randa Abubakr


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STORIES

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FLASH FICTION



BEEHIVE

Galba Godwin, Ghana



There's a still voice within me. It is pushing my soul, thoughts and heart not to conform to society yet there's also silence all around me. Yesterday, when the sun slept, it was Yakubu's cry that rose the moon. He had been beaten dry by the human bees of our land. Fatima accused him of attempted rape. This was an outrageous accusation because even the sand knows Yakubu is a chicken. But my society is a beehive and we are the bees; we sting anyone sprayed with a nice perfume. Yakubu was squeezed of all tears and blood. He had just lost his father not long ago but, bees know no mercy.

Last week, while the cock made its first daily announcement, it was a gunshot that drove us all from bed. The source of the gunshot was unknown but bees as we are, we traced it. There, Fofu's body was one with the land, demarcated with a pool of his own blood. He has been known for thievery and this time, Abu's goat bought his death.

Where can the voice within me, pushing my soul, thoughts and heart not to conform to society reach when all ears and hearts around me are closed? This society has been a beehive from scratch, finding and stinging others. My father was born into this, he slept one cold night and failed to see the sun in the morning. My mother was born into this too, it was a snake that drove her to her tomb, in her own farm one fine afternoon. So who am I to stand against this? Even the kings-in-suit on the national seat know about this so, who am I to kick against it? So long as, I keep surviving and getting my bread! But if I ever get stung, maybe, there'd be a voice oneday to say what has been in my heart for long in this beehive.



ANOTHER CHANCE

Itohan Osadiaye , Nigeria

The painful experience of the past left me love wrecked. It's been five years and Valentine's Day each year, always re-ignited the painful event of the past. After five years, something within tells me this valentines is going to be different.

The first month of the year kicked off on a very good note and on the fifth day of the month, an external project manager was sent to my office. His name was Dare. He was sent to work on a new project with me, and the project was to last for a month. I was prepared and excited about the project but never imagined what laid in wait for me.

The project went on smoothly because Dare was more than helpful. Besides the project, Dare was thoughtful and kind-hearted. His sweet nature began to ignite something in me. After the successful completion of the project, Dare left but we always kept in touch.

Finally, it was yet another valentine day. And on that day, Dare asked me out on a date. The painful experience of the past came crawling back. This time, I didn't feel pain and anger. I had serenity so I decided accepting to go out on the date with Dare.

And as I stood in front of the mirror, dressed for the date, I could see another chance...Another chance at love.



HOUDA MESSOUDI'S INTERVIEW
by
Sandra Oma Etubiebi

Houda Messoudi is a sight for sore eyes with clear porcelain skin, a searching stare, and smile so engaging; you will scarcely ever be bored with this amiable writer from Casablanca, Morocco in North Africa. It was my pleasure to interview her.

She immediately introduced herself as she gradually recovered from the shock of knowing she was to grace the cover of the July 2018 edition of the WSA magazine:

“I’m Houda from Morocco and I work as market researcher for a multinational company. I love my job since it gives me the opportunity to meet and deal with many people in several categories at once. There is rarely a boring day.”

Interesting! The beautiful woman before me suddenly loomed larger as her perceived value climbed several notches higher. I wondered what impact her career as a market researcher would have on her writing in terms of finding and developing stories. Is there a direct connection or benefit?

“Yes. As a market researcher, I need to look at many data and select the best figures that serve the client. This skill helps me to detect what’s best in terms of relevance for my stories and articles. Also, on the job, I need to look at data from different perspectives to explore the data efficiently and write reports to tell a story my clients can assimilate. This directly connects to my ability to look at scenes from different points of view, develop a sense of critic, and apply a lot more introspective work on my writing. Yes, my job has helped me especially in blogging. My articles are informative and I use my honed skills to identify the best angle to adopt, how to structure my article so that it can be articulate, smooth and light for the readers to read from start to finish.”

When Houda speaks, her warmth and energy envelopes the atmosphere and teleports you into ‘friendship mode’ quickly forgetting that you have only just begun the conversation. What a way to get comfortable! I asked Houda to tell me about the writer in her:

“Ah, my writing started before I turned twelve. I would write poems and articles for my school’s newspaper. And, I can remember my first accomplishment when an issue came out with my name captioned under my small poem. That was huge. At seventeen, I wrote a set of all-French short stories, which featured creative ideas that my tutors commended. After that, ‘life’ took over! But with the stress of adult life, writing came again, very naturally, as my salvation. Depending on my mood or inspiration, I would often write in English or French till my mind became calm.”

Her words paint a picture of the excavation of a long lost artifact whose discovery was bound to save the world. I was sinking into her real time adventure and found my questions running ahead of me as I prevailed on her to tell me what excites the writer in her:

“I am inspired by the Asian culture, mainly Korea and Japan. This made me research a lot about them until I discovered a French website asking for writing without experience. I emailed them, sent a sample of my work, and that singular action opened up a new world to me. I wrote more articles and developed more ideas for content in the Asian context. My passion for all things Asia

led me to set up a temporary website 4 years ago, www.windinabox.wordpress.com, which is soon to reach its 100th article post. The name of my blog symbolizes my creative ideas as the wind while my brain is the box that houses the wind. My blog was the first of its kind in Morocco and gave me countless opportunities to meet, interview and research people, places and events. I am presently working on the full-fledged website version www.windinabox.com.”

I took a quick visit to Houda’s site and was impressed to see the consistency and quality of her thoughts as expressed on her website. What exactly are her goals with blogging? And, how does she get the time to constantly and consistently churn out entries for her blog?

“Wind in a box gave me the opportunity to write freely, and lets people read, comment, and interact with me in ways that would not have been possible. It has opened doors to many collaborations. Honestly, I see it as a part of me, my source of pride and something I will leave behind for others to enjoy. Incidentally, I began my blogging as a member of a French bloggers’ team. So, naturally, I first started writing articles in French alone until I noticed that many people did not understand the language. This was further compounded with my coverage on the Asian culture (mainly k-pop), which attracted people from many countries. I, therefore, had to write in both English and French to reach my audience. I am focused on making my site the reference in Morocco when it comes to the community interested in the Asian culture. Most of my stories are influenced from my life but I tweak the events to make it appealing and universal. I write at the spur of moments when inspiration hits. Although, I do try to be more disciplined with writing –making time for it and allowing myself to write without inspiration –more often than not, I just let the words flow. And my blog and the many articles saved on my computer are the results of letting my words flow. Also, I have learnt to sustain inspiration by attending workshops and taking short writing courses. I attend a lot of writer workshops, even though I feel they are not nearly enough in Morocco. Two workshops strike me particularly; the first was by a renowned Moroccan author and poet. The second workshop was with a published French writer who taught rich techniques to build a story. I have carried all these skills into the novel I am currently working on.”

Houda’s eyes lit up when she mentioned her novel. It was easy to tell that her love for this novel attempts to match the love of a mother for a child. I was definitely going to pry further as her passion made me the more curious. What is this novel that lights up her searching eyes? Will she give us a peek?

“I started working on my novel about a year ago. It is in French. I have completed several chapters and aim to finish soon. It is a project dear to my heart. This is a story that inspired me more than 10 years ago. I wrote it as a short story, at first, with an open end –then, forgot about it for many years. I have decided to commit to developing it into a full novel. Although I will not tell you much about it, it is a fiction set in Morocco, involving some superpowers and a lot of mystery. Well, let’s wait and see how it unravels. This will be my first novel.”

The more we talked, I deeply pondered the backdrops of her experiences and the environments of her exposures. What must Morocco be like for Houda and the many writers in that country?

“Morocco is a country far north in Africa, strategic in her closeness to both Africa and Europe. This exposure represents the richness of the culture here, with influences from Africa, Europe, Arab, Berber, and many more. It is really a melting pot, giving lots of room for creativity and diversity. It also gives the opportunity to read several writers across many styles given that we speak many languages; Arabic, French and English being the basis, some even speak Spanish. Personally, I think nothing equals reading authors in their own languages, without going through the translations. This way, I have the impression that I am reading directly into the writer’s mind, without filters and without intermediation. The language advantage is a strength for Moroccan writers: having the possibility to read many languages, in many styles, many literary movements. Right now, the writing scene here is boiling. We have the International Book Fair, held annually in Morocco, which has become the rendezvous that no one should miss. This fair gives importance to Arab writers, either from Morocco, other countries, and also Africans. Thus, enlarging the sphere for writers’ exposure with the public via book presentations, lectures, conferences, signings, and everything else around reading and writing. Unfortunately, the reading rate is still low. But, the good news is that there are numerous initiatives to make people read, which give opportunities to writers to write, create and shine.”

Time could have flown first class for all I cared; Houda Messoudi was a delight to be with. Her down to earth lovable personality underscored her pronounced love for nature, deserts, and sipping coffee by the sea. Yes, I should visit Morocco one day: to play catch up with Houda is all the excuse I need.

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ESSAYS

An open notebook with a blank lined page and a pen resting on it. The notebook is open to a page with horizontal lines. A pen is lying across the page. The background is a blurred wooden surface.

Are You a Professional Boyfriend or Girlfriend?

- Benard Aloo, Kenya

In the face of revolution, modernization and everything anti-old-fashioned, we are still stuck with the traditional societal expectation of being in a romantic relationship. This has inculcated in us the fear of being and ending up alone. This fear is called Anuptaphobia. An Anuptaphobic person is always in a relationship, hardly ever single. 'Professional boyfriends and girlfriends', is what I choose to call them.

According to a study conducted by the University of Toronto, Department of Psychology (Spielmann et al, 2013), Anuptaphobia affects more women than men. This is attributed to the famous biological clock. The thought of being alone has most women literally shuddering.

Anuptaphobic people have one goal; never walk alone -believe me, this has nothing to do with Liverpool FC. They jump (for lack of a better term) from one relationship to another and their objective is not necessarily to fall in love but to avoid being single. Consequently, they are said to be fairly non-discriminatory in their quest for relationship partners.

There are mainly two reasons why someone would want to be single; One, they just got out of a relationship and are taking time off dating for what many consider as self-reflection. The other reason is simply choice. Some people just choose to be single. They are content with being alone and loving themselves. They are under no pressure to venture into a romantic journey. These are my favourite, despite the societal label for them as selfish and self-absorbed people. They do not bow down to societal expectations and are very confident in their choices. They are completely in charge of their



love life and control what happens, when it happens, and with whom it happens.

Now, for Anuptaphobics, their waiting period from one relationship to another may be as short as an hour. They always have someone on standby, and will even go back to an ex in an instant if it takes a day or two before they find someone new after a break-up. This may come out as a harsh judgment, but Anuptaphobia is a condition that stretches beyond the individual's comprehension. Many would never admit they fear being alone and almost all will be defensive if they were called out as Anuptaphobics.

The roots of this phobia range widely from the fear of Loneliness to family and peer pressure, trying to be societal complete by having a partner and even the thought of dying alone. The study by the University of Toronto also established that anxiety about loneliness appears to play a crucial role in the development of behaviours of unhealthy relationships. As Stephanie Spielmann mentioned in her journal, 'Anuptaphobic characters are always in a race, thus settling for less out of fear of being single' (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 2013)

I have since set my own hypothesis from the study- I am utterly convinced that the majority of people who cheat in relationships may be Anuptaphobic. But theirs is a special kind of Anuptaphobia. Their fear of being alone or single has manifested itself into a form of insecurity that questions the stability of any relationship they get into. Ordinarily, Anuptaphobic people tend to be keepers once they get partners, as this gives them a sense of security and completeness. They are the happiest in such relationships, but make no mistake; a slight sign of instability will send them into panic mode, making them start looking for 'backup plans' or 'standby' partners.

They are also the best online stalkers. They stalk their exes on social media platforms and even current partners of their exes are not spared from scrutiny. As a result, they never want their exes to imagine them being unhappy and as such think everything their exes post on social media is about them. They also heavily use social media for the purpose of meeting and getting new romantic partners in their lives.

When I first mentioned this phobia to a group of young boys and girls in my church a few years ago, one of them wanted to know how to deal with Anuptaphobia and overcome it. I'm not an expert and so I offered a safe solution. I told them that like any other fear, the best way was to face it. Practice being single and take time to know yourself. Well, am not sure if that helped, but I have come to realize there is more one can do other than attempting to be single. The main undoing of Anuptaphobia people is the fear of being judged by society as outcasts, they feel the society is always pointing a finger at them.

Anuptaphobics may try the following to avoid being full-time professional girlfriends or boyfriends.

Realize you offer something valuable to the relationship: Relationships are a give and take kind of situations. Each partner brings with them unique attributes. The partnership must never be a favour to one person. Once an Anuptaphobic realizes that they too bring something valuable to the table and are an equal partner in the relationship, they will feel a sense of security which is an effective way of handling any form of fear.

Understand that no relationship is perfect: We all have a tendency to compare our relationship with our friends. What most people do not understand is the fact that there is the public display of a relationship and then there are struggles underneath. Relationships are unique and none is perfect. A slight difference of opinion should never lead to exploration and weighing of options. It only helps the relationship grow if handled well.

Focus on your strengths: Men and women have those weakness buttons that may set them on a warpath if pressed. It could be anything; from stretch marks in the case of a lady to being broke in the case of a man. Accepting someone for what they are and what they are not, means looking past the weakness buttons. Avoid pressing them even in heated arguments; the unspoken rule is if you don't press mine, I won't press yours. Focus on each other's strengths and what makes you great for each other.

Take time for yourself: Brings me back to my initial idea of facing your fears. Take time to be with yourself, and feel secure enough in being alone. Don't criticize or demean yourself. Just feel good about you and what you are. If you don't, nobody else will.



THE BLACK MAN IS CAPABLE

Kweku Sarkwa (The Romantic Writer) Ghana



‘The black man is capable of managing his own affairs’ was one of the statements that Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the first and former president of Ghana made in his independence speech. He was born on 21st of September 1909 at Nkroful in the Western Region. His parents were Kofi Ngonloma of the Asona clan and Elizabeth Nyanibah of the Anona clan. He attended elementary school at Half Assini where his father worked as a goldsmith. He obtained Teacher’s certificate from the Prince of Wales’ college at Achimota 1930. He later attended Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, USA in 1935 and obtained a BA in 1939. He also obtained a BA in theology from the same institution in 1942.

He went on further to acquire Msc in Education, MA in philosophy and completed coursework/preliminary examination for a PhD degree at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. He combined his studies with part-time lectureship in Negro History, where he helped to found the African Studies Association and African Students Association of America and Canada. He was voted most outstanding Professor of the year by the Lincolnian.

The point I’m trying to create here is that Dr Kwame Nkrumah came from a small family with a small beginning, but he had a vision to move to higher places, and so he pursued his education seriously. It mattered not to him where he came from or where he was, all that mattered in his life was how he saw himself and where he knew he wanted to go, not how

others saw him or where they wanted him to go. This thought kept him going and moving to occupy higher positions that made him recognizable even in the Western World.

Another black role model is Kofi Atta Annan who became the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. He was born on 8th April 1938 in Kumasi. His parents were Victoria and Henry Reginald Annan. His father used to work as an export manager for the lever Brothers cocoa company. Kofi Atta Annan attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He later attended Mfantsipim School from 1954 to 1957. Kofi witnessed the struggle for independence of his country in the very year he completed secondary school, and so he grew up believing that everything was possible. His career with the UN began in 1962 when he joined as an administrative and budget officer with the World Health Organization. His first five-year term as the UN Secretary-General began on 1st of January 1997 when he replaced outgoing Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt which he worked tediously in ensuring gender equality and peace among the United Nations. Because of his good works, his tenure of office was renewed on the 1st of January 2002.

An addition to the list of capable black men is a man with a vision and a dream for all Africa. Apostle Dr Ing. Kwadwo Safo is the man in the picture. He was born on the 26th of August 1948 in Asante Bekwai in the Ashanti Region. He is the first African to manufacture engines, vehicles, heavy duty machines, electric drums, television sets, air conditioners and a whole lot of technological artefacts. He is the first man in the world who manufactured Bass guitars with seven strings and only man on earth capable of producing metals from seashells and palm husk making metals renewable.

He believes all men were created equal but with different purposes and different capabilities and therefore have the ability to change their destiny. He believes that the way to success is identifying talents, improving it and applying them to cause positive change in the society.

The challenge then to Africans is to be able to identify these capabilities in order to develop and put them to use, to ensure positive development of the country, the continent and the whole wide world. So this is a huge challenge to the youths of Africa to take the mantle from our great leaders, innovators, inventors and scholars who have done nothing but raise the image of Africa everywhere they found themselves without any fear but with bravery and pride.



BLUNTNESS IS BRUTAL YESTERDAY, DEPRESSION ALMOST WON.

I thought it was a joke until I experienced it. Depression is a silent killer; the kind of disease that you never even recognise as a disease. Well, yes I was depressed to the point of suicide attempt. Thank goodness, family and a few friends came to my rescue and showed me that indeed, I am truly loved. But then, after recovery, I thought about the many souls out there who suffer depression and virtually no one has come to their rescue. I found myself googling depression to get all the information I could about it, including photos that serve as illustration. I nearly fell into another round of depression while doing this but instead, I decided to write about it so we all could see the need to reach out to someone out there and save a soul.

Let's explore a bit of what depression is all about. College of Medicine, University of Ibadan says, "Depression is a mental disorder characterized by a persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing impairment in daily life." Depression can happen to anyone at any age but most times, it happens to people over the age of 12. Oh yes, 12. Teenagers experience it too, so let's not overlook it. WHO revealed that Nigerians are the most depressed in Africa- a slump from being rated one of the happiest people on earth. Nigeria has a total of 7,079,815 sufferers of depression, closely followed by Ethiopia which is 4,480,113 sufferers.

There are moments in every individual's life when it feels like nothing is working or going as planned. Sometimes, it's the feeling of confusion pertaining to one's dreams and ambitions-

when you start to wonder if what you're doing or where you are is what you've always wanted or part of the plan. The latter is usually called 'quarter-life crisis' and leads to a serious state of depression; this often happens to young adults in their 20's. Sometimes, depression results from the loss of a loved one, poverty or financial lack, low self-esteem-wanting the world to see you as you are but all they do is judge you by their standards, the feeling of not being understood, emotional/physical/sexual abuse from friends or loved ones, and many more. The most common causes in Africa are poverty, unemployment, alcohol and drug use, and illnesses.

I'm the type that encourages myself no matter how hard things get but then, I was struck by it. Then, I realized that even the strongest of men and women suffer depression in secret. And I was marveled at how we Africans overlook depression. We perceive it as an abstract idea, like it doesn't really exist. In fact, the religious extremists would tell you that it is demonic and thus, the individual needs to undergo a deliverance session with a clergy. Well, I wasn't possessed. I was heavy at heart due to certain experiences in my life. It was like things weren't working for me anymore and my account was bearing a red flag with bills left, right and centre. I sought help but I was asked to give my body in exchange for what I wanted. My career was experiencing a stand still- no clients- plus constant illnesses. Then, I kept staring at the tablets on my table and a voice told me "Take it all and experience peace in the world after." I nearly did but I didn't. And today, I have vowed to stand with all who are depressed to help them come out of it.

This should shock you. 800,000 suicide deaths yearly are caused by depression. It is now the second leading cause of deaths among 15-29 years olds, according to WHO. You might be oblivious of what's happening but try contacting somebody and let them know they are loved even if you can't solve their problems. More so, let's flag off a campaign aimed at helping the depressed among us and reducing suicide deaths.

About the columnist:

Gabrielina Gabriel-Abhie is a writer, editor, and broadcast journalist; a columnist with Writers Space Africa online magazine. She's a preacher of her propaganda and a believer in equality and truth. Her essay contents span various topics from child abuse, politics, to gender equality, racism, tribalism, and as many issues as can be touched. She is also a blogger on girl-child matters. She can be reached via the email addresses: theroaringwriter@gmail.com or gabrielina.gabriel@gmail.com

Literary News

with

Nyashadzashe Chikumbu

TSITSI DANGAREMBGA MAKES A COMEBACK

Tsitsi Dangarembga the Zimbabwean novelist and film maker, has finally written her third novel to make up a trilogy.

This Mournable Body is the third in the Tsitsi Dangarembga trilogy that started off with *Nervous Conditions* and was followed on by *The Book of Not*. The new novel is published by Graywolf Publishers.

In 1988, a novel *Nervous Conditions* written by Zimbabwean author Tsitsi Dangarembga focusing on the story of a Shona family in post-colonial Rhodesia during the 1960s was published. That book was considered by some to be one of the defining novels to come out of the continent in the 20th century. The book was followed by *The Book of Not* by the same writer in 2006.

The end of the trilogy is finally here as Tsitsi Dangarembga shared the cover for her new publication *This Mournable Body* on Social Media. The book published by Graywolf is described thus in the blurb.

In *This Mournable Body*, Tsitsi Dangarembga returns to the protagonist of her acclaimed first novel, *Nervous Conditions*, to examine how the hope and potential of a young girl and a fledgling nation can sour over time and become a bitter and floundering struggle for survival. As a last resort, Tambudzai takes an ecotourism job that forces her to return to her parents' impoverished homestead. It is this homecoming, in Dangarembga's tense and psychologically charged novel, that culminates in an act of betrayal, revealing just how toxic the combination of colonialism and capitalism can be.



KUKOGHO IRUESIRI SAMSOM WINS THE DUSTY MANUSCRIPT CONTEST 2018

Kukogho Iruesi Samson, a Nigerian Journalist, poet and CEO of WORDS, RHYTHMS AND RHYMES, walked away with one million naira cash and a publishing contract with the acclaimed FARAFINA BOOKS.

According to the winner, he wrote the first draft of the spell bound crime fiction, *DEVIL'S PAWN* nine years back.

According to the judges' verdict on the *DEVIL'S PAWN*: 'the winning entry was a unanimous choice ... The story is the best example of the possibilities inherent in the genre fiction switching from crime to adventure, thriller to horror.

Told in a fast paced narrative style that keeps you glued to the pages, our winning entry is a gift that keeps on giving.'

The Dusty Manuscript initiative, a brand new literary prize set up to promote Nigerian writers; to tell and sell their own stories. To winning entries will get published under the Farafina communication breeze imprint.

The competition features a two day book writing and markets boot-camp for the top 25 long listed book authors.

Tanzania Book Festival and Creativity Exhibition 2018



On the 17th of May, Tanzanian writers and readers, were graced by a much needed and long awaited for event; 'A BOOK FESTIVAL, AND CREATIVITY EXHIBITION.' An event not only scarce in Tanzania but the rest of Africa at large. It was hosted in the American corner_a section of the National library in Dar es Salam.

Mr. Richard Mabala widely known as 'Mabala the Farmer' an award winning Tanzanian writer saw through the flowery exhibition as the guest speaker. Amongst other issues he strongly pressed on the importance of reading books, encouraging different organizations to help foster and nurse a healthy reading culture. To the new and upcoming writers he headed them to put their readers first saying, 'Writers have an opportunity to change society.' Stressing the important of content development he said 'writing is an art that sells itself, when done well.'



The much needed event was the brain child of Mr. Chenche an optimistic writer with young writers at heart. He helped give Tanzanians a day to remember for years, as publishers, book sellers, printers, readers and writers got a golden opportunity to interact, share and have a good time.

SHORT STORIES





WHY I HATE RAINBOWS

Yunusa Salim Ibrahim, Nigeria

A storm was brewing Far East above and I could feel it pulsating and stirring in my veins. My excitement was brewing along with it, growing and bubbling every passing second. I couldn't tell or show others about the storm for the fear of being labelled crazy, not that it mattered anyway because I had been called worse than that. They called me crazy, odd, weird and strange. It never really got under my skin, although the unflattering manner and situation some usually tossed those labels around made me nervous if someone from home knew.

By "someone from home", I meant my mother, because I was being bullied by the very people who constitute part of my family. Of course, coming from a large extended family, who would have thought that my own uncles and cousins would be the bullies making my life a living hell? My mom didn't know and I made sure she never found out. She had enough worries of her own, the strained lines prematurely etched on her face made it glaringly obvious.

She was always worried about me; she didn't know how to help me but she knew that I needed help. It was either having to take me to the hospital for proper diagnosis, which would confirm her worst nightmare that something was wrong with me, and she was not ready to accept that. Or letting me be, firmly hoping and praying that I would snap out of it. Either way, it was a no win situation for both of us. She would always worry and I would never be normal. The closest she came to knowing my condition was when an enthusiastic health worker during a polio vaccination exercise told her that I might be autistic. My mother refused to believe the health worker.

The clouds grew darker, and a distant rumbling could be heard. I was extremely excited. It was a sign that could be the first rain of the year about to come down and the onset of the rainy season. A few days back, the clouds had gathered but the only thing borne out of them was the rainbow and a dust storm. I was both annoyed and sad when I saw the rainbow poking out of the magnificent rain clouds. The rainbow is my arc enemy and it had robbed me of a downpour of rain my most beloved natural phenomenon. The children on the other hand were

gazing upward excitedly, pointing at the rainbow and singing songs filled with glee. “It is beautiful,” they said. I wailed and mournfully looked at them. All that they did was fill my soul with despair and hopelessness. There it was, shining brightly, mocking me with its colours like a smug smile across the dark clouds in the sky.

How could something so bright and colourful bring upon me so much gloom and sadness? How could I love rainbows when they drained the heavenly drops of happiness that soothed my soul and calmed my heart? The rains send down torrents of unconditional joy and peace. They flood and nourish my body and my inner being with indescribable and unexplainable emotions, somewhat a mixture of serenity, safety and peace. I am an unrepentant devotee totally entranced by the alluring rains. How could I ever pick the rainbow, a fleeting phenomenon over the rains?

How could I ever love the rainbow when it deprived me of that sweet earthly scent the soil emits when it rains? Or that gentle cool breeze that caresses my body and soul? My heart becomes lighter and cleaner, like the gleaming corrugated red roofs atop mud houses in the ancient city of Zaria after a downpour. The environment becomes more appealing; with nature displaying the best sights and scenery, in total harmony and symmetry with the skies. The trees are a little bit greener, the grasses scent sweeter and everything else becomes clearer. How could I give up such a breathe-taking feeling for a mere rainbow?

Wasn't it the rain that provided succour and saved me when I was robbed of my innocence and purity under the Sub-Saharan sun? Uncle Bala would never have let me go if there was a rainbow that day. The rain made him get off me and send me home. The rain was there while I was walking home, drenching my tears and drowning my screams. The rain was there to cleanse my body from the odious stench of that monster. I remember getting home and being scolded for being drenched to the skin. I cried all night and my mom thought it was the slap she gave me when I walked in. I never spoke of it again. Not even to my mom. The rain was there for me that day, not the rainbow.

The rains send me into a deep reverie, into a safe space where I tell myself that I will be alright; that being different is good, that it makes me unique, that the invisible scars were medals of bravery and strength. The rains tell me that there is hope. That with each drop, my wilted heart will blossom again, just like life sprouts out of the soil. That after the dark clouds comes out the sun accompanied with a mesmerizing aura.

A gust of wind swept me back to the present where the heavily pregnant clouds were threatening to go into labour. I smiled like an experienced mid-wife in the maternity ward as I shook away the thoughts of any impending rainbow. “Not today,” I silently prayed. The sky was pitch black, with angry clouds rolling and dancing while the thundering skies sang hoarsely. Gashes of lightening slashed across, lashing at the far corners of the earth. There was a loud rumbling and seconds later, I could feel a cool breeze on my neck. A single droplet of rain landed on my face and a huge grin spread across my face.



In the Far Corner of My Closet

Houda Messoudi, Morocco

Mum is nagging me again. “Put your room in order!” She’s checked in, for the 10th time in an hour to see how fast I am coping.

“Yeah, you really are eager for me to get out of here.” I said, half joking, half sad. I’m moving out in two days time and yet to pack anything. It’s just so overwhelming and there are much stuff to sort out, decide what to keep, what to leave and what to donate. And some pieces have many memories that I just stop for some minutes to remember & then make my decision.

My mum volunteered to help, but I refused because her helping me would just mean constant nagging: “Why did you keep this? Why do you still hold onto this junk? Why didn’t you throw away these? What are these?” No, I’ll pass that, thanks!

But it takes a lot of time and I am so tired! Just thinking about what is coming next freaks me out. I am moving out because I’ll will be living with my husband, in another city. This change is exciting and scary at the same time. We have been planning this for months. On paper, this seemed easy but the execution is another story. Completely.

Done with the drawers, the papers, jewellery boxes, books and decorations, I decide to tackle the biggest task: clothes. I am kind of a messy girl, so my closet is already a big mess that needs to be sorted out. That will just take the rest of the day. I take a deep breath and decide to finally get serious with this task.

I had put a large carpet in the middle of the room, and I put the clothes on it, batch by batch. By the fourth trip, I am almost done emptying the closet. My last trip held the last set of clothes and a small shoe box that was way in the back, totally hidden from view. I have no idea what it holds so I sit down, in the middle of all the clothes and opens it.

I wish I hadn't! It holds all my memories with him... My first love. I didn't dare look so much at the pictures; I just shredded and threw them away. I don't want anything to remind me of him. The small little box that was in the corner frightened me the most. Not sure what I would find in it but I knew it would be painful to see. I put it aside and started sorting the clothes, mechanically, without thinking. I was just folding them and piling them up in categories: pants, skirts, dresses, shirts...

The box next to me, I have the impression that it is screaming at me, demanding for my attention. As if it was saying: "Stall all you want, but I am here and you WILL open me." Crazy right?

I finally open the dreaded box and time stops. My breath becomes heavy and tears pour down my face, without control. This small box holds our wedding rings. The rings that we didn't get to wear. The rings we bought together, promising each other to be faithful till the end of time, and make each other happy.

What lies! And I was so stupid, for believing it and not seeing the truth sooner. Two weeks after purchasing those rings and one week before our wedding, I discovered everything! I discovered all the lies he has been feeding me and all the affairs he was having. Just by mere coincidence.

Memories of that day came rushing back, at once. I went to our new apartment, the one we had furnished together, only to find him there with her! In OUR new apartment, the one where we were supposed to live happily ever after. In that moment, everything was shattered. My life almost ended and the little innocent stupid girl inside of me died. He killed my happiness and all my hopes.

When I saw that scene, all the small details that I discarded came back and made clear sense: the late strange phone calls, the text messages that he deleted, the dates that he skipped, pretexting other meetings and other things that I don't remember now.

And it was hard getting over him...Days of crying, days of staying isolated. Tonnes of messages from relatives and friends trying to console me, genuinely or just to ease their spirits. Thankfully, my parents helped me get over that situation and recover my life.

Years later, I couldn't trust anyone and I hated all men. Ultimately, my current fiancé showed up. He is a true miracle. He is the man that he would never be. He took me out from this misery and restored my faith in humanity.

I didn't want to remember all that. I didn't even know when I threw this shoe box inside my closet. Finding it was a big shock. My mum came to check my advancement again, found me in the middle of the clothes, holding the rings and crying. She understood, holds me tight and takes the rings from my hand. Later on she calls my fiancé and he talks to me. He is the only one that can sooth me.

And I totally thank him for that. He showed me how much I've changed and that old memories don't matter anymore.

Truly, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger!

MIRACLES AT MIDNIGHT

Kimberly Chirodzero, Zimbabwe



Walter was lost. He had been driving around the same roads for about half an hour and now it was pouring rain. His whole life these days had been centred on an overwhelming air of despair. Walter slammed his hand against the steering wheel, when he realized he was almost out of gas. He would never make it to the nearest gas station; if he could even find it. There was no one on the road to ask for directions or help. He had almost resigned to sleeping in his car and praying no hooligans attacked him when he saw it. He shook his head slightly and peered into the darkness. Yes, there was definitely a huge looming structure ahead with flickering lights. Lights meant people and people meant help.

He was a city boy through and through and the thought of spending a night in the wild plains of Gokomere was completely unwelcome. His headlights picked a narrow driveway and he followed it to the house. As he got out of the car, he realized it was not a house at all but a towering cathedral. What was such a building doing out here in the middle of nowhere? It puzzled him but he could not resist the pull of the lights, warmth and human companionship. He ran out of the rain and knocked gingerly on the huge double doors. Almost immediately, the doors swung open as if he had been expected. "Come in son," said a figure just inside the threshold.

Walter hesitated. All he could see was the outline of a man holding a candle. The candle cast horrific shadows on the man's face revealing only the slightest details; an eye here, a tooth there. Walter mentally shook himself, he was not a coward. Once inside, he realised the man was noth-

ing more than an elderly man dressed in a humble fading suit and his face was as far from horrific as possible. In fact the man looked like everyone's favourite grandpa. "Thank you sir. My car is out of gas and I think I am lost." Walter explained as the man led him into a room with a set of sofas and a roaring fire. Walter almost sighed out loud at the warmth. "Yes you are lost son. You have been for a while now, haven't you?" the old man's voice was kind but Walter felt himself bristle all the same.

The old man sat down and indicated for Walter to do the same. The old man began pouring tea and Walter was startled to notice the table of food in-between them. Had it been there before? "The lost rarely notice that they are lost," the old man said in his pleasant voice. Walter frowned at him, unease tugging at his senses. "If I could just get directions to the gas station..." he said, trying to wave away the cup being handed to him. His stomach growled in anticipation, embarrassing him. He sighed and took the cup. "You won't find what you are looking for in the dark. Safer to wait for the light," the old man advised. "It's not that late..." he glanced at his watch and cut himself off. It was impossible. The watch said midnight but Walter was sure that thirty minutes ago it had said nine-thirty. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. It was now a minute past midnight. "Eat," the old man indicated the plate of baked bread, ham and eggs in front of Walter.

She always made him ham and eggs with her baked bread. He frowned and dismissed all thoughts of her. Once he began eating he could not stop until every morsel of food was gone. He looked up at the old man when he was done to find him smiling indulgently. "Thank you for your hospitality," Walter mumbled, a little embarrassed. When the old man said nothing, Walter shifted uncomfortably and looked around the room. It was well furnished and although there were no electric lights, the oil lamps cast enough light into the room. "What church is this?" he asked nervously. "Do churches make you uncomfortable, Walter?"

Walter started and almost leapt to his feet. Had he told the old man his name? "No they don't. I just don't see the point," he answered truthfully. "So you don't believe they are like a hospital for the sick?" the old man asked, turning his hands to the fire. Pain, unadulterated, devastating lashed across Walter's whole body. He felt it like a physical thing. He gripped the edge of the table and closed his eyes. "Walter?" the old man's voice broke into his pain. "If you are talking about miracles and healing shenanigans, I don't believe in such stuff," he replied as he battled back the darkness.

Walter opened his eyes and stared at the other man with pure hostility. "You are a pastor of some sort, aren't you?" he asked. "Of some sort," the old man agreed. "You don't like pastors either?" Walter began pacing and moved to peer out the window only to find the rain had become a torrent. "No," he said over his shoulder. "God himself then?" the old man asked from the sofa. Walter focused on the pounding rain to centre himself. She had taught him that; using rain to calm down. "There is no point to any of it," he replied. The old man had moved to join him at the window without Walter noticing. "I think the whole of creation would disagree

with you," the old man told him.

"What's the point when good people die young in such pain?" he demanded. "Death is a part of life too," was the answer. "But Kudzi was so young," Walter's pain had turned to sorrow in seconds. "She lived her full life. She married you and she was happy." The old man put a comforting hand on Walter's shoulder. Had he said Kudzi had been his wife? The old man must have seen the ring that Walter had never removed. "Why would God curse her to die at twenty-six and from cancer no less?" he implored the old man. "What if the twenty-six years she had were the gift and death was inevitable as it is for all mortal things?"

Kudzi had been sick for two of the four years they had been married. His sorrow lived in the walls of his body and the passages of his mind, a living and breathing darkness that haunted his every thought. Kudzi would have begged him to start living again but Kudzi had been the pure one between them. She had kept her faith until the very end. He had hated that. He hated God for still having her love when he, her husband was losing her forever. "I would rather have the gift of her alive," Walter said at last. "You speak as though her death nullified the life she lived, the lives she touched, the love she gave," the old man said. "Why do you not grieve her? Celebrate her? She changed lives. Lead souls to salvation. Does all that disappear because she died young?" the old man asked solemnly.

Had Walter mentioned how he'd met Kudzi while volunteering at a youth camp she preached at? The charity she started with her friends to sponsor a couple of kids through school? "It's natural, Walter. You are angry. You want to punish God for it, that's why you won't set foot in a church," the old man looked around and chuckled, "Until today that is. Your wife's name was Kudzaishe." Walter nodded his affirmation although he knew it was not a question. "Her name means praise God and that's exactly what she did until she died. I would think if she left you anything it would be a legacy of love. Even death cannot nullify love." The old man stated gently. Walter sat back down and looked into the fire. "If I accept that her death was part of God's plan then I betray her," he confessed.

"Then consider yourself blessed to have stood so close to such a bright light, however short you think it was. Don't throw out all the light because a smudge of darkness touched it," the old man said from the window. "I am afraid," Walter whispered. The old man came to sit down too. "What are you afraid of?" he asked gently. "I am afraid that if I let go of the anger and the pain then that means I'm letting go of her," his eyes had filled with tears. "Kudzi was love, faith and hope. Once that kind of love touches you, you can never lose it ever again." the old man said. Then Walter was crying. Weeping as he had not done at her funeral or in the year that followed. He did not even mind the old man's gentle gaze on him because strangely the tears were soothing his soul.



Hormones at it Again

Yipah Reuben, Nigeria

The first sign that something had gone terribly wrong was what she was wearing. Mary was wearing an old oversized t-shirt and grey leggings at 5am knocking on my door like a crazy person. You have to understand, this is Mary Andrew we are talking about. When we were in primary six, she refused to go to church on Christmas day because her shoe did not match her hat. That's how much she loves fashion. During our University days, she never attended morning lectures, they disturbed her sleep she would say. There was even a time she hid her mother's favourite shoes because they embarrassed her. She is not a vain person, she is just really passionate about looking her best at all times. So seeing her at my place looking so dishevelled at such an early hour told me something had gone horribly wrong.

"Hey what's wrong?" I asked her, hugging her at the door.

"Richard... Richard..." She just burst into tears and continued babbling nonsense. She was full on sobbing. I was confused now, Richard is her husband. I saw him just yesterday at their second anniversary. Then something clicked. Oh my God! He must be cheating on her. Ha! I knew it, no man was that perfect!

"It's going to be okay, stop crying. Let me get you some orange juice, huh?" She just nodded

and continued bawling her eyes out. The last time I saw my best friend cry like this was when her parents threatened to send her to boarding school after she fought with her cousins. I was going to kill this man. Their whole relationship and marriage sounds like a page from a romance novel. They met when he came to drop off a gift for his friend's girlfriend with her. He refused to leave until she agreed to go out on a date with him the next day. From that time on, it was smooth sailing up to their wedding eight months later. Once I was in the kitchen, I picked up my phone from where it was charging and dialled Richard, he picked up on the first ring.

"Hello, good morning Esty, please..."

"Ehnehn, Mr. Man hold it. You lying cheating shitty bastard. I knew it was too good to be true. So what is your excuse? Did you get bored and decided to get a bit more action? What is it with men and being unfaithful? If you knew you couldn't stick with her, why bother getting married in the first place?" And should I have stopped there? Yes. Did I stop there? No.

"I am ashamed to say I know you. Because of you this beautiful young lady is sited on my couch crying her eyes out. I hope you're happy. And to think I thought you were one of the rare good men on this earth."

"Is she okay?" he had the nerve to ask.

"What do you care? And don't even bother coming over. I will call the police. Don't even try me. You know my father is the commissioner of police, you would be locked up and not allowed out on bail and if the police are taking long to show up, I would have fun kicking you in the nuts while bashing in your kneecaps with a smile on my face you asshole." I ended the call before I got more frustrated.

I walked back into the parlour with a cup of fresh orange juice to find my friend giggling at Tom and Jerry. I was a bit confused. "I see you're feeling much better," I said, raising my eyebrows.

"Yeah, I'm so sorry I just came over like this."

"So what happened?" I asked.

"Well, yesterday after you all left, Richard showed me our anniversary gift. He bought us a new house that came completely with an already completed and furnished baby room, he's just so excited. I woke up this morning and remembered the house and how thoughtful he has been. I mean, Esty he's so perfect and I don't think I deserve him."

I couldn't speak, I just sat there looking at my best friend of twenty five years. I couldn't even begin to describe the expression on my face. I was going to kill her before the nine months were up. "Why did he have to go and get her pregnant? Now I have to call the man and apologize for cursing him out after all his only crime was being a good husband."



Empowering African Writers



WSA, an international literary magazine published monthly by the African Writers Development Trust, is accepting submission for the August edition. For this edition we are including jokes, artworks, personal quotations and crossword puzzles.

Please consider the following:

Articles/Essays – 1,200 Words

Flash Fiction – 300 words

Poetry – 1 poem, maximum of 24 lines

Short Stories – 1,500 words

Jokes – 1 joke per writer

Artworks – maximum 3 artworks in high resolution

Personalised quotation – 1 quotation and must be the original work of the author

Crossword puzzle – 1 puzzle

Please note the following:

Deadline is July 13, 2018

You can write on any theme.

Due to the number of entries we receive only selected authors will be published in our magazine and online.

Your work must be edited and uploaded in MS Word format only.

We shall equally edit selected entries.

Please submit in one genre only.

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