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EDITION

**LEARNING
FROM NATURE**

-Akinyi D. Osongo

REVERSED -

Omemu Esther
(Moyo Esther)

**THE
COERCED
HOST**

-Ohioma
Evbogame
(yomzee)

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-Boma Ilamina-
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(bomaeremie)

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IMPROVE
AFRICA'S
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**FAITH
MUTHEU**

Kenyan Writer, leader, mentor, and positive change maker.

Editorial



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She has been rejected, dejected, turned down and told point down that it is mission impossible. She however stood undaunted fighting to the bitter end and finally she wears proudly the hat of a published author. Master that! cancel Never tell a youth it's impossible!

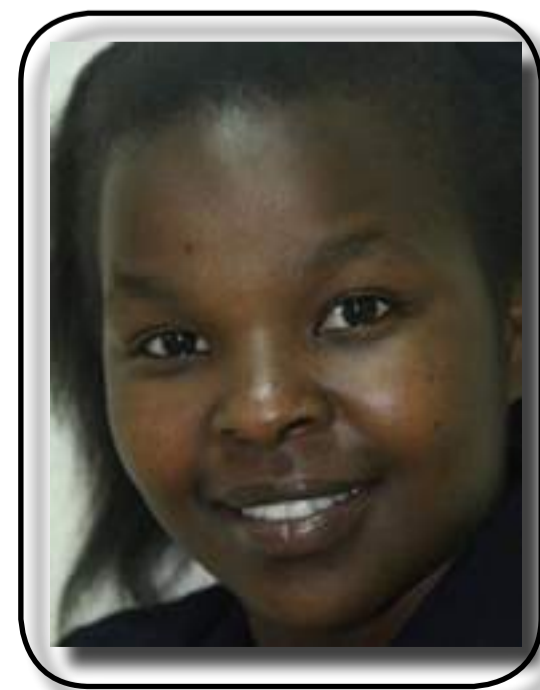
She maintains that we are a world full of opportunities where anyone can grow and be whatever they wish to become in this life.

She cautions against paying attention to naysayers but instead discover yourself which many spell as talents, work hard, smart and let the current of passion carry you there.

It will be of great importance if everyone realised their purpose and stopped chasing wind. Don't allow age, cheap social classes and prophets of doom keep your from achieving your goals. Break those glass walls. Champions are formed through obstacles just like gold is passed through fire.

Do turn to our main feature to find out more about her.

Wakini Kuria
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Writers Space Africa
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Wild Hearts

- Nerfertiti King



She believed him for she was the only maiden in all villages with two necklaces crafted from the teeth of the cheetah. But she had to do something about his speech, for his command of English was becoming unbearable to listen to.

'Biodun, are you sure nobody is following us?'

'Nobody!' he growled.

'What if the Babalawo is...?'

'We're already quarter to marry and is dark! I almost cannot see you sef!' he barked, impatient to reach their destination already.

Sikira looked around nervously and treaded slowly to their tree. She really didn't like this. She was only following him because of the two hundred naira he had given her to plait her hair. And even at that, if he acted too vigorously, it was a bright wave to their fortnightly sessions. She would not be married with a compromised waist, after all, she was yet to recover from last month's pounding. He had said it was his birthday but she felt he was claiming tax. Maybe if she had remembered to give him a present, he would not have left marks everywhere on her body. The useless boy!

She couldn't deny the pleasure he gave

her in those moments when he wasn't so rough. She thought about his partially handsome looks that got better when he smiled-but that wasn't too often! She was also happy his breath never reeked of ogogoro and brukutu unlike her friends' silly husbands who drank to stupor and still beat them till an eye fainted. Her Biodun was the best warrior in their village and all four neighboring villages. That, in itself made her the envy of all women. He had presented her Father with the skin of a cheetah the other day and although the Chief was not too happy about that, her Father had happily received the gift.

'Snake nko?'

'I tear them!' he declared, raising hands to rip an invisible cardboard.

She believed him for she was the only maiden in all villages with two necklaces crafted from the teeth of the cheetah. But she had to do something about his speech, for his command of English

was becoming unbearable to listen to.

'Scorpion?'

'I'm their King! Oya, comeeee, lemme invade you. Baby-mi!' He hastily tore his shirt off. She admired his chest and was proud of herself. She was marrying well but she still needed to act like she didn't care so he presented more gifts and hopefully remained good and 'siki-ra-abiding'.

'O ga ooh! Boboooo, Softly na, ah-ah...'

Sikira whispered into his ears as she unlocked her legs. Sometimes he handled her like one of his animals.

'Ohhhh! Bring that mouth! Dress closer! Dresssssss!!' Biodun demanded, eager to lose himself in her feminine delights. She drove him insane so she had to quench the fire that had been raging for the last three days.

'Bio-' Sikira struggled with him, turning her mouth swiftly from left to right like her waist during the dance at the Annual Cultural Festival.

'AHHHHHHHHH! KILODE? We won't see zero because we'll be busy na!'

What was wrong with her today? He had almost lost his life during the hide and seek game with the cheetah in the forest- all because her Father wanted the skin of a wild animal as part of her dowry. He lost his voice screaming at the top of his lungs when the cheetah decided to put him to task. If not for Sango + Ogun that shadowed him during his race for life, he would have had his limbs entangled in the traps, for he had forgotten he set them! A good thing he had set them though for that was what had saved him and caught the cheetah. He still remem-

bered how he had waited for other hunters to gather before acting like it was a minor deal.

'No ohhhh! Me, ma eyes will be open and don't dirty my dress like last week!' Sikira protested as he tossed her dress up.

He inhaled deeply. It was easy for her to keep talking for she was not the one under tight control. He already knew her well enough to realize she was just pretending and would liberate herself completely once he was lost deep inside her. Ten minutes later, Biodun couldn't take it anymore as he couldn't stop himself any longer, he had to immobilize her... For the briefest of moments, he felt her shudder and relax, her breath leaving her in a shaky sigh, smiling and closing her eyes as she waited for his signature thrust. Just as he was about to do just that, the only palm wine tapper who worked after six screamed from above.

Biodun got more irritated when Sikira's own scream shut down his left eardrum. Turning towards the fool's direction, he was so blind with lust and was practically floating. He barely noticed when his girl shoved him aside and scrambled away, leaving behind her underwear. Brought back to reality, he looked in the direction she had taken, hoping she knew her way back home. He didn't blame her- he was the one who left her dress on.

He turned and locked eyes with the palm wine tapper. Getting up, he picked up his machete and began to chop the tree, ignoring deafening screams from his bud-die. He really should have punched the fool in the eyes when he'd had the chance at the ring. Whistling, he chopped on... ■

He inhaled deeply. It was easy for her to keep talking for she was not the one under tight control. He already knew her well enough to realize she was just pretending and would liberate herself completely once he was lost deep inside her.

The Jazz driver *Isha_Oni*

Forgive me oh Lord!
For my sins are not
swords

Flowing blood like riv-
er Nile
People wailing at the
bodies piled
Roasted bodies like
chicken laps
Women wailing and
men crying

Laying helplessly in
my blood bath
thinking about the
people I massacred
silently praying for a
time reverse
I swear I would not
jazz

My husband's head is
gone!
A young lady roared
forgive me young lady
And I am sorry

Oh! My only son
the old woman barked
forgive me old woman
And I am sorry

Mother! Mother!!
Wake up!!!
The young boy cried
forgive me young boy
And I am sorry

To my pregnant wife
and little son
I am sorry

I am a paddler of boat
but paddled my pas-
sengers
in a river of blood

Just a bottle of codeine
With Aspirin to jazz
and the road became
gloomy
like a candle lighted
room

So, I closed my eyes
to catch a little fun
suddenly, the car
boomed!

Forgive me dear pas-
sengers
and I am sorry

My heart sobs in guilt
my body lay in mute
my neck is stiffed
I think am on transit
Forgive me oh Lord!
And I am sorry ■



THE SPIRITS WERE HERE

GGABLA

Last night when the moon stared at us,
The spirits came in the wind
and danced with the head of the trees
Our dog danced with its tail and woofed
at the spirits

Their minds were made up; still they
danced

When I sent my eyes through the frozen
window,

my heart clinched to fear

Then the spirits wept from the heavens

Their anger was heavier than the sun

So their tears filled the house

Soon, my room was a boat:

A sea in my house

I am a fish with no fins,

how do I get ashore?

The spirits were here. ■

THE COERCED HOST

Ohioma Evbogame (yomzee)

Tossing, rolling and restless

Like ping-pong played in slow-mo

Seized by excruciating pains

A very frequent visitor

Who makes her welcome known

By tormenting the coerced host

With reckless abandon

A sweet soul with yellow eyes

Showered with words with intent to soothe

The pain proof a fortress

With no leaks

Words become just words

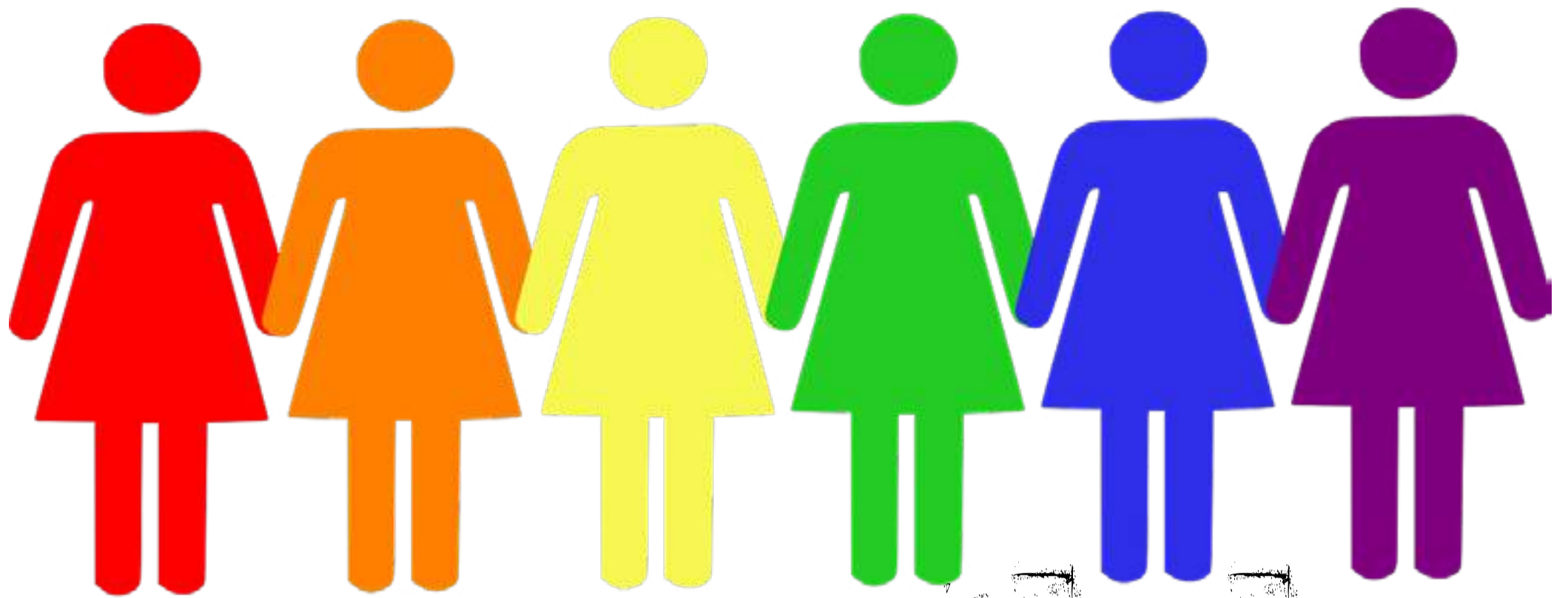
Pains become more pains

This cycle will last a life-time

But will never douse your shining star

One time for all sickle cell

And my favorite M.O.E ■



The Banality of **FEMINISM**

Ohiona Evbogame (yomzee)

A house built on a shaky foundation most likely ends in catastrophe. Unfolding occurrences such as increasing divorce rates and domestic violence is a menace that has escalated with the advent of the social media age. The social media has crippled the feminist movement to mere banality and its core value of liberation of the female gender and not equality per se is now being eroded and now used as a tool by some self-acclaimed feminist and their minions to front their over-spirited, ill-mannered, truculent and egoistic tendencies. The plethora of double standards infused in the movement is another reason why I believe that feminism which should mean a transformed society is just a little below or mainstream media itself.

It is only inevitable that divorce and domestic violence as a result of online feminism will be on the rise as many young ladies are more concerned with the hash tags and not the transformation of a system challenged not only by the protracted brash and unfair treatment shrouded in sentiments meted on the female folks but also by conflict that could have been avoidable if a human being as an entity regardless of gender abides by the very act to exhibit reason in every pre-conceived action. Rather than address and tackle the fundamental issues and root cause, the media space is

bloated with catchphrases such as #boss lady #girlpower #realdon'thitwomen #iamfeminist #menaredogs etc. and even more recently branded t-shirts with the inscription "men are trash" for the purpose of making profit (which I find pathetic). While there is yet to be a word that means men-rights or serves as a direct antonym for feminism, it is important that the core value of the movement which is liberation - liberation from the perception of romance that keeps a woman in bondage or dormancy; liberation from the old way of living to a new way of life- should always be visible and indicative of women wanting to live the way men live.

It would be nice to have campaigns instructive on how to become a "proper lady" full of graciousness, virtue and not intransigence. The trait of aggression might probably ball down to individual differences but I am of the opinion that a lady who is less aggressive and mischievous will be less prone to domestic violence and violence from anyone regardless of the gender except in very rare unfortunate cases. Often time aggression is misconstrued for confidence by ladies but confidence in a lady does not necessarily need to translate to aggression in every case. I am sometimes faced with the conundrum of understanding why biology which is concerned with the study of life, living

organisms and their function links testosterone which is male dominant hormone to aggression but then in physics unlike charges attract and like charges repel insinuating that the creator has a created us male and female to cohabit peacefully without such unfortunate incidences that increasingly proliferate our society. It would be nice if the feminist movement start up campaigns that discourage women from engaging in any act that dehumanizes men in any form because I believe it is a probable cause for the unabated domestic violence in our society. I lay claims to the fact that our higher sense of reasoning is what makes us human beings distinguishing us from animals and if the integrity of being a human being in itself is compromised then you are left with animal with an altered sense of reasoning. This explains inhumane acts such as domestic violence, murder and suicide.

In conclusion, as an unapologetic believer in a world with equal rights for mankind, a world where respect is reciprocal, a world where love and respect for a “human being” is preached and practiced so as not to strike a person regardless of the gender, a world where domestic violence is not portrayed as an act limited to a male partner beating a female partner but instead a common menace, a world where speaking up against domestic violence doesn’t automatically translate to airing dirty laundries on Instagram and a world where the feminist movement is not banal. I encourage women who practice bigotry for feminism to see men not as competitors but collaborators in the transformation of an imperfect society. Live and let live. ■



Wicked She

Charity Kuria

Nobody suspects
But somewhere a bird sings
Knows no boundaries
Cant help but wish ill
From without she protects
From within she destroys
I wait to Confess!

Nobody suspects
But somewhere a bird sings
Like a hurricane, she angers
Her aim, to sow discord
Not to benefit, to waste
Competition, jealousy, hatred she harbours
I wait to Confess!

Nobody suspects
But somewhere a bird sings
She will smile, coax, bribe
Strings attached, you get caught
Strung out, you are tested
Defeated, you sire loathe
I wait to Confess!

Nobody suspects
But somewhere a bird sang
From her cup, You sip pain
Albeit hazy, slurred, blurred
Fever, promised, delivered
Hope, care, peace
I wait to Confess! ■

We Problem We

Lovina Ashedzi (Lovie)

A whole designed in hands
of Creator it is,
As in the moment of first.

The Progenitor unveiled the
puzzling role of play,
Then His offsprings mimicked.

Now it's thrown to we but turned
wounding in bond,
Circled round bind chains.

Service to Supreme Most One
in diversity of minds,
All raising his Opposed to below.

Tongues wagging of sorts stab
next to other being,
Oh! Unity distanced many miles.

Heads down roll by slaying hunters
a lamb like act of,
Love stolen from heart.

Labour of Heroes bitten and chewed
pushed out of stool,
Peace pissed off pieces.

This play rough shall drop at decade
when? At point end which?
Hmm! We Problem we. ■

Loving Hearts

Esonye Constance Okechukwu

“Do you remember the first day?” Ugomma asked her dearly husband as she kept smiling. Her husband was so surprise on what brought about the question while they are still discussing about their poor living standard in Umuka community.

“Which first day?” he asked, still wondering what her smiles is all about.

“The first day our eyes caught each other on your way back from hunting and I was carrying my clay-pot of water back from Uwana stream”, she said while still sitting on his hopeless thighs. He looked into her eyes and they hugged each other instantly. ■



LET US IMPROVE AFRICA'S DEMOCRACY

SHAWANNA DORYNNE

African democracy is about counting heads and not what is inside them - *Anonymous*

It is a continent with beautiful seashores, lush forests and plains that breathe life. She is known for her generosity with love that is so warm it dries you out. Just like Chinua Achebe said in his novel "A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes... We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so". This is the Africa we have, a continent that is full of love it stokes a jealous flame from other continents but this has been clouded by the fragile democracies we have in African countries. The democracies that have been a cause of conflict, genocide, aimless killing, hatred among tribes and other atrocities such as child rape that leave one wondering what became of our shining eye. The countries that have tried their best have a small-minded kind of pseudo-democracy. This is where the incumbent and the opposition are busy demonizing each other instead of working together to form a government that will indeed help the development of a country. An example is Kenya, where political campaigns are ongoing

and the presidential aspirants are doing an excellent job at bad-mouthing each other instead of selling their policies to the people. Political tension is also on the rise in this country and it would be essential for the aspirants to preach peace as they woo the voters.

African democracy was on the rise after most of the countries attained their independence but after sometime it began to stall and mostly dwindle. Just as Martin Luther King Jr said "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter." Things fell apart but the African people remained silent, no one said a word when leaders began clinging to power or when the leaders incited people to violence. The situation is now out of hand but the lesson has not yet been learnt. The people forget that the power is in their hands, they can do more than talk, and they can initiate the action. Incumbent leaders are changing or sidestepping constitutional term limits to extend their time in office, this often provokes unrest and leads to lack of economic growth in the countries. An obvious example is Zimbabwe whose president Robert Mugabe publicly declared that as long as he is alive, he will keep ruling. His continued grip to power has driven away investors and

the economy of Zimbabwe shrunk significantly after 2000, resulting in a desperate situation for the country, widespread poverty and 95% unemployment rate. Killing democracy equals to a charge of first degree murder on the economy. Africa lacks some of the most essential elements that democracy requires to work best. As a continent we have to learn to use the people's power wisely. An example is Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore attempted to amend the constitution to extend his 27 years in power. The people of Burkina Faso stormed the parliament building in 2015 on the day the National Assembly was due to debate an amendment. The opposition was also strong that Blaise ultimately resigned. The government should also know that democracy is not just about the opportunity to cast a vote every five years or every four years but rather their ability to perform and fulfill their promises to the people. Democracy conquers with development. Democracy draws its

sustainability and strength from its capacity to meet people's expectation. One of the most long-standing strength to democracy is extreme poverty. Democracy champions for equal distribution of resources through participation in policy making and decision making processes at every level. This is because income disparities can cause damage to the people's capacity to hold decision-makers accountable. Democratic participation strengthens the ability of ordinary people to shape their lives.

Chinua Achebe said, "when the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk." How about rebuilding Africa's democracy and having the kind of leadership that we had when we got our independence? Let us stir up the passion for change and growth. Let us reignite our moon, and then maybe we can have the much desired peace, economic development and right leadership. ■

MR STIFF

Emmanuel Ibezimakor
(Zimackos)

It was stiff. It was hard and painful. I tried to put my finger in it to soften its tip, to ease the pain. But it pinched my nail badly.

I stood up, exhausted. I pulled my pants on and headed for the door. But I wasn't comfortable with Stiff stuck in there. It would give me no freedom to go about my day activities.

So I bent over again, more like, halfway bent over. I pushed harder, with all the energy I had. Stiff almost tore the crack of my skin. I groaned and laughed at the thought of what my face looked like in a mirror.

A few more rounds will do, I could feel Stiff coming. I persevered. Soon, Stiff descended fiercely from my bowls in the form of a long pile of excreta. I stood once I heard the splash in the pool beneath me. It was a loud throb.

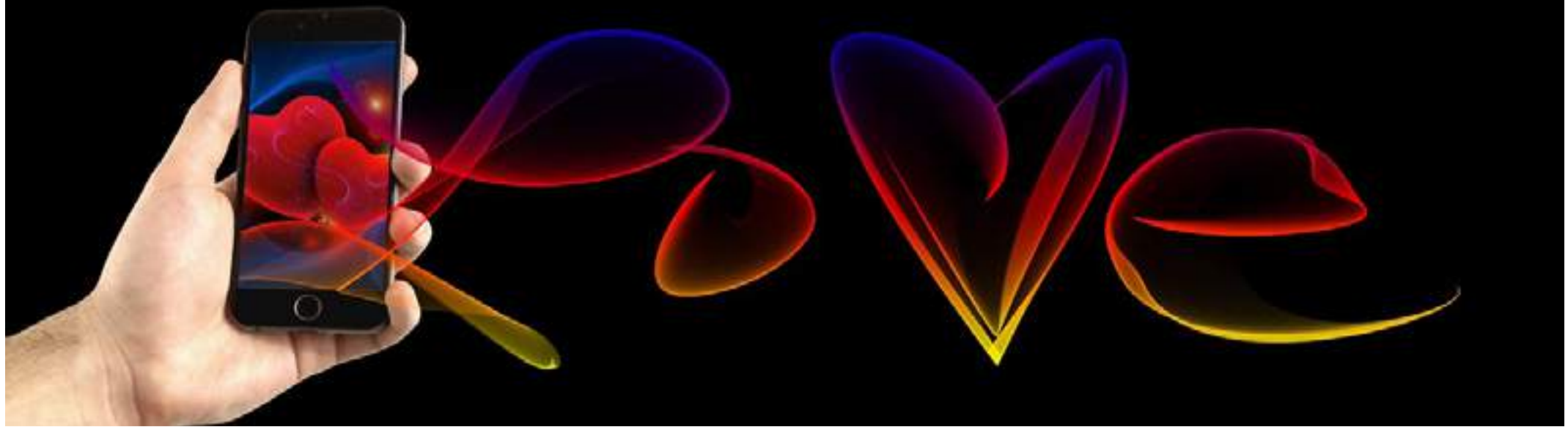
I smiled at Stiff as he drowned. I turned the handle of the water closet. No noise. Again. No noise. No water.

I quaked. A knock on the door.

"Oga, do quick na. People dey wait for you."

I pulled my pants and stepped out sweating profusely. I smiled at the long line of people waiting for me outside 'Public Toilet' since God-knows-how-long.

I took pity on the unsuspecting man first in the line. I heard his scream while I hastened away. He must have seen Stiff and inhaled his horrific aroma. ■



TALKING L.O.V.E

With
SAKA DBOSZ JUNIOR

EPISODE 4: *L.O.V.E: THE FUNCTIONAL NATURE OF LOVE*

HOW DO YOU DISPLAY YOUR LOVE?

The Watch Tower of January 2012 asked, how did Abraham display love? Abraham showed that he loved his family. Undoubtedly, Abraham was a busy man. Yet, he never neglected his family's emotional and spiritual needs.

It was on record that Abraham even took the lead of worshipping in his household and Genesis 22.2 referred to Isaac as the son who you so loved. This shows that Abraham's love for his son Isaac was so much that it was worth recording even in the scriptures. Another instance is the manner he mourned his wife Sarah, he wailed over her endlessly. Though a strong man, he was not ashamed to show his grief. He shows a beautiful blend of strength and gentleness. Abraham loves God and expressed that love throughout his life.

1 John 5:3 says, this is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments. Abraham became the father of nations by the blessing of obeying that command. Born in Ur a large prosperous city where his father Terah and others worshipped idols, he had learned about the living God from Noah's son, Shem who witnessed and survived the great flood.

Abraham displays his love by:

1) **FAITH:** Firm belief in something unseen. This based on solid evidence; focus on the fulfillment of promises believing they are as good as done. When God asked him to leave his comfortable life in Ur to the land he will show him, he got his family ready and went on the trip to an unknown destination.

His wife Sarah also shows faith by following him without questions.

11) **COURAGE:** Quality of being strong, bold and valiant. He was born in a place where people worship idols but he was bold enough to make his own choice of worshipping God even when it was going against the crowd.

111) **HUMILITY:** Freedom from pride or arrogance. It was recorded that Abraham gladly serves others. When he saw three strangers he quickly set out to accommodate their needs while his wife served them food.

LOVE: A FUNCTIONAL AND DYNAMIC PHENOMENON

1.1. THE FUNCTIONAL ASPECT OF LOVE:

The word function as used here is practical and useful. This is saying that love is not just a four letter word spelt L.O.V.E.

This means that love is not just another word spoken for the sake of it but something like religion spoken with faith to perform functions and achieve aims as well as provide soothing spring for the world in general.

1.2. THE FUNCTIONAL/DOING NATURE OF LOVE:

It has been said and true that only love can bring and establish peace in our world. The moment we start seeing love as something to behold and believe with faith then things start to change for good.

Love is actually a practical tool, a chisel to carve a niche of so many good things and leave happiness in stones as well as sheer bliss even in frozen cold hearts.

The glow that comes at the affection of loving kindness spreads true warmth and deep blue beauty around the body and soul.

A player or practitioner of the loving concept will not say the word, love for the sake of it but do so with deep profanity and beauty of deep healing affection.

Love heals, when, I love you, is said with all sincerity. I can do anything for you, said in truth; it goes along way planting flower bloom in the heart.

Giving love you simply, live sleep, breathe act and play love un-end. True love must bring joy and beauty to the world of the object and fulfillment to the giver. Nobody gives and receives love and remain ugly. Love is the light of the world and wherever it is spoken the world feels better for it. They say that; action speaks louder than words. A loving deed goes a long way above poetry and ballads. This means that love should be given more in action more times than in words.

Look at this case, Benny and El-Grace had been in love for nine months. One night she got sick in his house. He took her to a hospital and called her parents who rushed to her side. However, Benny never returned to her because his job schedule was tight and she should understand the job is important.

As it happened she stopped seeing him when she was discharged. You can say she should understand that he needs the job and the money but what about the commitment of love? Love too has a price tag! And as they say, love doesn't ask why.

In another case Eugene was in Enugu when he was called that his heart throb Ndi was hospitalized in Sokoto. He borrowed some money, asked for permission at work to travel and left even when the permission was not granted. He nursed her to good health and returned to Enugu to get his letter of termination of appointment. He did not worry instead the two got married. It took him another six months to get another job but Eugene was not bothered.

A respondent said Eugene was foolish to risk his job while another said he was not a doctor so why not send the bills to Sokoto. However, for Eugene the cure for his woman is his love and nothing was enough.

But then, looking at the economy today the respondent that called him a fool might still be right but love induce a lot of silly actions, only loving eyes see what the risk is all about and it's truly blessed to love and be loved.

This illustrated the practical nature of love. Something must happen when you make a sacrifice, make an offering or even take a risk for love- action / deeds look more in the eyes of love.

1.3. THE USEFUL NATURE OF LOVE

Love is useful when it makes the players do things they wouldn't have done ordinarily.

For instance Eugene confessed that he never took that decision when his brother had even a more serious problem in Owerri. That he acted even without thinking. "Before I even thought about it I was already moving," he said.

The usefulness of love enables us to test our love as seen in the two illustrations above. It also enables us to make sacrifices and enables us to look back. Infact, you wouldn't have loved until you have been able to test it. As seen above the two married even when there was no job in sight. Ndi had found a man worthy of her love.

Love does not consider economics, pros and cons.

Love makes you even borrow to get the other out of trouble and you in turn see the worth of the other by his action and then reciprocate accordingly. When that expectation was not met we get disappointed and love evaporates like dew on leaf blade.

Love helps us to solve problems and to forgive.

Mimi a small time trader had to forget paying for her goods to bail Obite out of police problem that cannot wait. She had to take the risk for love.

There are also hundred percent foolish cases.

This young lady went to buy JAMB form. She met a young man there and they got talking. When it was time to pay for the form his money was not complete and she had no extra. She gave him part of her money so he could buy the form. She did not buy her own because there was no money; they left the place to a joint where they spent the little money left with her before finding a nest with the rest with a promise to see the next day. The young man did not turn up at the hotel and she had no way of finding him.

Her lies at home did not yield more money from her parents and she lost the chance for admission that year. That lady is still living with her disappointment and betrayal as her parents turned their back on her at hearing the truth.

However, there is something I called the handicap nature of love. Look again at the case of Eugene and Ndi, do you know she could just leave him in the period of no job and no money? That means; the fact that Eugene made that level of sacrifice does not guarantee that Ndi will return same. This is where a genuine lover was called foolish. But lovers will always be lovers. ■





All About...
FAITH MUTHU

AN INTERVIEW WITH FAITH MUTHEU



Tell us about yourself

My name is Faith Mutheu. A young Kenyan from Makueni County, with a great passion for leadership, mentorship and positive change. A lovely daughter, sister and friend to all souls that yearn to tap their talents. My leadership skills showed at a very tender age. Being a first-born comes with setting a good example for my siblings thereby confirming the famous adage that 'Leadership begins at home!'

Tell us of your relationship with your community...

I was always that girl whose hand held other girls in my community. In class 7 I was made the class prefect! This is the time I started realizing I could do it! Teachers could trust me and so did students. From a humble background I competed with people who had gone to boarding schools and had literally being born with silver spoons in their mouths. I however did not use this as an excuse. I used what I had to get to where I desired.

Where do you draw your inspiration from?

My parents. They constantly reminded my siblings and I to work hard in school, which we did. Honesty, this remained a motivation to us. We therefore chose to do the best in the land of living! They stressed that God who knew us before He even laid down the foundations of this earth and would make everything beautiful in His own best time. They are my biggest source of inspiration to date! Bringing me up in a staunch Christian background, telling me to trust in God as the only author of my life.

Did growing up in your community influence you?

Anyone who has grown up in a village can



“That thirst made me find an avenue where I could quench my thirst and others too.”

ing skill in me. One evening, we had a very powerful motivation talk by a girl called Makena. I don't recall her second name, she was a second year student at the University of Nairobi. She talked about 'Following your passion even when no one believes in you!' This signalled the much treasured dream that one day I will be a published author.

How do-did you nurture your writing talent?

When I joined campus, The University of Nairobi - Kenya's premier institution of higher learning, I enrolled to mentorship programs which sharpened my writing skills, mentorship and oratory skills. I then joined Writers' Guild Kenya, which after attending the weekly meetings was of much fulfilment meeting young writers who have made it and being published. This paved the way and proved to me that it can be done.

Your achievements?

The thirst for a transformed generation begins with me. My heart burns to see young people living fully. That thirst made me find an avenue where I could quench my thirst and others too. I am the founder of fuzusmart.com a mentorship program and I published my first book 'BEYOND OBSTACLES' with a subtitle 'Developing the champion in you!'

Lessons learnt?

I have come to understand that champions are formed through obstacles. It is through obstacles that we become champions. In near future, I will be a mentor to many young girls, like me who aspire for a better future and I have a dream that, in near future fuzusmart.com will be an avenue for a transformed generation, a

rightly tell how life is. Talk of forums where young people are taught life skills, peer counselling, leadership skills and taking part in community work.

This was a dream! I missed it when growing up. You then cannot compare someone who grew up in such an environment to another who grew up feeding on all these skills from a tender age! This meant that I had to use the little knowledge learnt in school to have what I wanted in life. Upon joining high school, the feeling that I am a leader, started burning. I knew I born a leader. All I needed was to breath back to life and start living my dream.

How did you discover writing?

In high school I enjoyed literature, topped in grammar and kept a journal. Harboured feelings that I was too young to write but still knew I had a dream even if I could not compare myself to well celebrated writers like Ngugi wa Thiong'o who had written the compulsory set book in our time.

My school mates often said they saw the writ-

dream that anyone who aspires to be a dazzling writer can do it! If I did it, everyone else can. We are a world full of opportunities where anyone can grow and be whatever they wish to become in this life.

Were there challenges?

Well, my journey hasn't all been smooth. I have had denials, I had massive number of rejections, countless statements of discouragements and being told sometimes that it cannot be done!

It is a journey which involves having few friends and relatives who believe in your capabilities even when you got nothing left to give to the world. A journey which will require you to have mentors who guides you, celebrates your achievements, straightens you out where you don't do it right!

Who do you look up to?

My two mentors have been of great inspiration. Esther Wairumbi, a UK certified business coach, author and a motivational speaker. David Osiany, a former SONU

“In near future, I will be a mentor to many young girls, like me who aspire for a better future.”

chairman-University of Nairobi and a certified Public policy expert from the University of Bristol.

Tell us about your hero moments...

My journey has been but an amazing one. I have been invited out to media houses such as Elimu TV. My inspirational journey has been featured in the 'Daily Nation' a national paper, the best read countrywide. Been featured in 'Taifa Leo' as one of the young ladies doing great things in the society and who did not allow age, cheap social classes and many offences from prophets of doom to stop them from what they wanted in life.

Parting shot?

It hurts me to see young people making their dreams die young. It pains me, seeing many young people allow troubled family backgrounds sweep them off the path to their desired destinies. It hurts a lot and unless a dramatic change is done we will have a society of unexplored potentials taking up mediocre jobs, meagre payments and so on. Such a waste! It will be of great importance if everyone realised their purpose and stopped chasing wind. This way, we shall have a society where everyone grows up and lives fully! ■



LIFESTYLE COLUMN

With
Akinyi D. Osongo

Learning From Nature

“Nature doesn’t hurry, yet everything is accomplished.” - Lao Tzu

When I was a young girl, I loved to explore nature and in that exploration I came to learn of one of my phobia which was insectophobia-the fear of insects. I would kill the insects even if they meant no harm to me and sometimes even look for them in their habitat and destroy the insects alongside their homes. My phobia would have gone out of hand if not for my mother, lucky for me she was a biology teacher. At the age of ten she sat down with me and explained the importance of insects. She spoke of how we depended on the insects directly and indirectly for survival. She called it interdependence and how it was important for the insects to be alive in order for it to function. Of course I stopped killing the insects but that was the beginning of a new chapter in my life...I developed a key interest in nature. I wanted to see just how interde-

pendent nature was. This even led me to human beings as part of nature and how dependent we are on various things.

Everything we see and others that we cannot even see are in an alliance so that they can help each other thrive. This is just like nature, there is so much more to it than what the eye can see. Even when something looks perfect on the surface, unless we take a deeper look on what is happening on the inside we will never understand it. This is why we are taking a deeper look at nature to find out what we can learn from it.

Human beings as species have outstanding qualities but the other species too have certain entirety and abilities that humans do not possess which makes all the species to be interdependent on one another. They are some lessons we learn from animals that we cannot learn from any human being. I owned a dog once when I was kid and he taught me more of uncondition-

al love than anyone has ever done. Actually he showed me more love than any man I have been in a relationship with. Through the dog I learned the true nature of unconditional love without expectations. The dog would still shake its tail, run to meet me when I came from school and protect me even when I forgot to feed it in the morning or take it for its evening walk because I was so tired. I like to presume that the dog forgave me for my wrong doings without holding any grudges. The true nature of forgiveness is forgetting and letting go of grudges. Understanding love is also a feeling and does not even require words. I did not communicate with my dog verbally but our actions passed the message of affection. True communication doesn't always require words. Our energy, body language and tone can say much more than the actual words. We are thus dependent on nature to help us learn some of the basics skills in life that we need to have a peaceful co-existence.

How many times have you considered your dreams unachievable? These are the times that you have contemplated suicide after succumbing to depression. Just think of the storms and the transformation they bring in nature, they wash out the old and make space for the new to grow. The storms in our lives have a similar effect, they clear out space for new lives to grow in us and for us to think of new possibilities. The storms are just part of the magical cycle of death and rebirth of life. However destructive a situation is-let it be, give it the space it requires for growth and wait for the new beginnings to transform.

I am one of those people who appreciate solitude. Solitude is addictive and once you see how peaceful it is to be alone, you never want to deal with people again. Nature has the same power and feeling, that feeling when you are alone somewhere at the beach or at the forest away from the noisy streets and the annoying feeling. Isn't that amazing? How nature can help us escape reality, it can give us a silent place to plan our next moves and write down our goals. Even if you are the busiest person, make an effort and get out there. You will see amazing things but mostly you will come out a rejuvenated person. This is perhaps the most amazing thing about nature-its healing effect. Patients in a hospital have been known to get well faster if they are in a room with a lovely view of nature. It offers a cooling and soothing effect which functions as therapy to the sick.

Have you ever thought of how the world could be if we all helped each other achieve our dreams? If we could talk to each other about our issues and not talk about each other? Just how good would the world be? Does the hyena hate the zebra because it is more beautiful than it? Is the zebra even aware of its beauty? The idea of animals hating each other for something they are not aware of is as ridiculous as human beings competing with each other. A black person has his uniqueness so does a white person. So how about we use our uniqueness to build each other?

I am in my early adulthood where there is too much pressure put on me by the society to finish my studies, get into a relationship, find a good job and most of all have a possibility of a brighter future. Sometimes the pressure is so much that it tends to break someone down but recently I wondered of how long spring has to wait for winter to arrive and end so it can manifest itself again? If seasons of the year can be patient...what makes anyone think that you can't be patient and successful too? ■

Stray

-Boma Ilamina=Eremie

Like a lot of other people on the streets around me I was not content. Life had offered me the same chances of survival most normal people had from birth; fully formed limbs, mental faculties all checked out right. I started walking at 8 months and frisky fellow that I am, the process of 'drag-belly on the floor' to 'grab anything that stands' to 'stand with anything' that stands and so forth did not apply to me.

Mum said they were having lunch and I just sprung up off the floor and started racing round the living room.

I can imagine them laughing, my parents, happy couple they were back then. Nobody said having kids was easy and my mother was living proof. Three down and counting was no joke and she had a 'mummy-tummy' to prove it. She did tell me a couple of years later when I was old enough to understand that she almost lost me at birth. I still remember freezing for an instant and looking back at my 15 odd years.

So it didn't feel like much back then, the realization that some twist of fate let me breathe this long, especially since I was far from interested in writing an autobiography someday (and yes, I did know what an autobiography was back then). But somehow I felt a sense of foreboding, like a shadow crept over a corner of my visage and was gone in an instant. Many were the cares of my youth, many the roads not taken and information this enlightening was nothing compared with what I saw around me.

Still I was not shaken. Life was good, time was ample and like my peers I was all revved up and roaring to go. Secondary school was

far from pleasant but somehow I survived. A lot had changed since the good old days our folks kept moaning about. Back then food was cheap and you were bound to get tired of eating. Somehow there was always a freebie at weekends, something to get your mind off the edge of being away from family for extended periods. Some of us thought little of it though, the moaning I mean because they did little or nothing to allay the pains we knew first hand.

But in six years it was all over. The world grew bigger and so did my jeans. First week in the University and I'm already bored because it's not close to anything I expected. The term 'Ivory Tower' suggests grandiose scales, high language, deep thinking, hard-working and hard playing? Now is it just me or does next to everything I see cry out 'decaying, outdated, in need of upgrades or complete abandonment'? I had been in a melting pot before, for six years. The experience was ample preparation for what the next 5 years offered, varying experience somewhat sweet-sour. I believe the term 'half-baked' is bandied a little too loosely now. Methinks certificates should have an addendum that says 'THANKS FOR TRYING' after the degree awarded.

I don't mean to be cynical, honestly. We are built tough around these parts and like diamonds in the dirt we shine, mostly; or get caught up in the shadows that ferry unwilling souls to the great beyond or whichever other place they believe we end up when this body quits the drudgery of everyday struggle.

We were literarily tossed out with little more

than street smarts and sterling recommendations. And the world beckoned, in more ways than one to us all, fresh from the form factory. Banks, factories, television houses, infirmaries, police checkpoints (of natures legal and not so legal). And there were barber-shops, other higher institutions, morgues, pulpits, shacks beneath bridges, gas stations, motor parks and dark corners in filthy streets or deserted highways. The list is endless and long enough to make a career out of. Hell, I made a career out of it. And some career it had been.

I remember the high times when writer's cramp and coffee were like twins doing a tango, long weekends with days that seemed to blur between the lines. And Sunday night always seemed to just not be part of the week because the only memory left of it by Monday morning was sour breath and drool stains on a couch.

I got jostled by a passerby but was too caught up in my musings to care. Even better I didn't. You could never be too careful these days. Who knows if that harmless looking passerby was a violent time bomb waiting to happen and you were the trigger.

A loud report, probably from the poor exhaust pipe of some half-alive bus stopped me dead center and I felt a slight twitch in my stomach. But time led me on and the passing figures all melded into one blur of motion, a myriad of colors, smells (mostly unpleasant or questionable), sensations that were a constant reminder that those senses I got blessed with still worked just fine, or as fine as I hoped they did.

Memory of the last medical exam I had seemed to find its place in the myriad. And languidly I bask in it, soak the essence of life in all its richness. I can almost taste it now, life, salty-sweet and somewhat coppery. I take another whiff and it feels like a hit of something strong I never had. I'm waiting to exhale but wanting to relish every atom slowly becoming part of me but cannot do so much longer because my reverie is interrupted by an excited squeak. I am almost jolted out of my scalp but I exhale and open my eyes.

She calls me "baba". Sometimes it's hard trying to figure out if she knows I'm her grandfather or if the word is just another sashaying loner in the jumble of saliva soaked letters endlessly roaming her still growing mind.

Yesterday she grabbed the TV remote out of my hands and after staring hard at it for more than a minute returned it to me wordlessly then dropped back to the floor and crawled away, cackling like an old hag. Her limbs were still rounded like little umbrellas and her movements were jerky like she was on a constant electrocution high.

I smiled at the memory and I felt warmth coursing through me, spreading like a film of oil on lint. I had seen time through my eyes and shared the same through words with countless people. But some time I could never really see because age had robbed me of the understanding. She was new time; I was old time. Still intersections like ours were only made in part, there one moment and gone the next.

Some people say your life flashes before you just before you die. I wonder. Maybe, just maybe you'll get to see a future like I did, or maybe not.

A bullet could tell. ■

Boma is a freelance writer and currently working on a new TV series, One Week, One Trouble. He is a contributing writer to The Johnsons, a Native Media, Nigeria production for Mnet Africa. He also features as a voice talent in radio dramas.

Reversed

-Omemu Esther (Moyo Esther)

Verdicts were clashing, individual thoughts and ideas fighting to be heard. Everyone wanted for himself, selfishness was the trend. The union was dividing, each group holding their own and not wanting to agree. One man wanted this, another that. Man's in born greed unwilling to compromise. Amidst the chaos, stood one, willing to accept, willing to agree. A motion brought forward, an idea to unite. He called it comparative advantage, a motion to bring together the strong to trample upon the weak. The coalition was United but divided to conquer. It was a new era, the haves spoke and the haves not listened.

Africa was to take over Europe, their justification in the primitivism of their victims – The Europeans. Europeans were primitive, Europeans were crude, they needed to be trained, and that was their excuse. They were inferior with default settings of animals and animals had to be trained, they needed masters to survive. Their lands were virgins to be raped, raw and ripe to be scourged. They needed their help to be considered human, they needed them to make them worthy of this earth.

'Uncivilized! Illiterates! Immature!' they called them, 'with nothing but their useless pride' it was their own benefit even if they were not aware.

So at the final communiqué, a decision was made. Europeans no longer owned their lives, their lands no longer theirs. They planned their fate and drafted their destiny. With a show of hands and a chorus of yes, many lives were changed. ■

"Words are what I cherish the most, they speak for me and tell my story. that young girl with big dreams, they help to let the world know. I am lost without them; how can the world know me without them. Like an addict, I can't live without them...why would I? They are life itself to me." - Omemu Esther (Moyo Esther)

MEMOIRS OF A HAPLESS ROMANTIC AND A TRAIN RIDE.

Namse Udosen

It was a cloudy and cool Monday morning in Kaduna, when I proceeded to the train station in Rigasa, to board for the first time a train of any sort. Prior to that day, many people had given scary stories of how Rigasa is a sort of front line hell on earth. I felt I would have nothing but my naked body by the time I got to the train station from Kano road. Although it was a bumpy ride through the very dilapidated communities on that axis of Kaduna, the people looked peaceful and happy. Images of Chimamanda's "The Dangers of a Single Story" came to mind as we stuttered through. I believe that any community without proper basic amenities; schools, drainages and health care would produce disillusioned and criminal minds irrespective of the ethnicity or religion of the inhabitants. This is evident in slums from Rio to New York to Rigasa. When I dropped at the Rigasa junction, fear in mind, there was a kind gentleman, who made it a point of duty to get me a bike ride to the train station without exploitation. There is always another side to their story.



I arrived at the station at 9.30am, about an hour before take off time. There was a buzz of activity around the station, from mai shai, suya sellers, food vendors, hawkers to taxi and keke drivers hustling for passengers and customers. I shoved my way through to the gate, where a friendly security guard frisked my person and scanned my bags. There was a long queue at the ticketing booth and I joined in. About 6 minutes later I was three people to the front of the queue, when I saw her. Tall, dark, gaped toothed and beautiful, she flashed a smile at me as she approached me, my heart skipped two beats! She came closer, touched my shoulder and brought her lips to my right ear; “Can you help me get one first class ticket, the line is too long”, she whispered. Do the right thing, my conscience told me, and I agreed to do just that! So I looked at her, shook my head and said, “Ok, I will help you”. I guess my heart is too soft to do the right thing, especially when a damsel is involved. I as approached the booth, I was informed that first class tickets finished about two hours before then. I turned to my new found girlfriend and informed her of the bad news. She shrugged and told me with her eyes; get anyone that is avail-

able. I paid for two second class tickets and while waiting for my change a middle aged man walked up to me and said: “buy one ticket for me.” My moral compass became functional again, “go and join the queue”, I snapped at him. “I don’t have money, I want you to buy for me”, he replied. For this recession, I thought to my self as I collected my change and tickets and left him standing there. Where is my baby? There she is! We walked together to the mass of people standing in front of the boarding area. There was so much disorder, we wondered what was going on. We pushed our way through to the front, where we discovered there was no waiting lounge or room! That was a shocker. Even bus stations have spaces for passengers to wait for their buses na! We had to wait outside under the scorching sun for boarding time which was about 30 minutes away, thank God, the heavens did not cry that day. My babe met some of her friends and they got into the selfie mode, while I was employed as back up photographer. I left them and strolled across the road to catch some breakfast.

The mass movement of people towards the glass doors of the boarding area hinted me it was time

to move. It was chaotic, despite the best efforts of the Policemen and NRC staff, people refused to be orderly. I waited behind for the disorder to clear before I coolly walked through to the platform. I wonder when Nigerians would realize that patience is a virtue. Everyone always in a hurry and stepping on reason just to get ahead. There was another round of scanning before the boarding platform, tickets were inspected and we were directed to our appropriate coaches. As usual, some people tried to play a fast one, by going into the first class coach with economy tickets, they were bounced! I was excited to finally be on board a train for the first time in my life. The interior was neat, well arranged and cool on the eyes. There were no seat numbers on the tickets, so we sat anywhere we chose. As I walked through the aisle, I scoped and scanned for my lost girlfriend, there she was at the back, or front of the coach with her loud friends. I smiled as I approached, but she did not seem to notice me. So you did not keep a sit for me, I asked. "Sorry", she said, casually, without looking at me. Heart break on the train!

I walked into the next coach and grabbed a window seat. There was quite a large space for bags above the green cushioned seats. The coaches are quite spacey with ample leg room. The cushions were nice and comfy with a good recline angle. I had a talkative chappie as a seat mate. He kept distracting me, with talk as I tried to savour the view of the passing communities. Funny enough, he was by my side again on my return trip three days later from Idu station. (The Idu station is a replica of an airport, with good toilet facilities and an air-conditioned waiting room resplendent in white.) The train moved at varying speeds throughout the journey, we slowed down at active stations like Rijana and Jere to pick passengers and some inactive stations like Kakakau. There were small screens high above, along the length of the aisle for entertainment. Everybody hates Chris was on show on

this trip. I would have preferred some local entertainment (though I am not a fan of nollywood) than the American comedy. On my return trip it was The Avengers on show. We coasted through massive farmlands and communities along the route and I saw the wasting riches of this great country. From my vantage point at the window, I saw the back waters of Nigeria and potentials that could be harnessed for National development.

We cruised into Kubuwa station about 2 hours and 10 minutes after taking off from Rigasa. The station at Kubuwa was bigger and more equipped than the Rigasa station. There were cabs, tricycles and bikes to take passengers to various destinations in town.

I checked one last time for my girlfriend, there she was, at the back seat of a car. As they drove towards me, the car slowed down, I whipped out my phone to exchange contacts. She smiled at me, blew me a kiss and said; "thanks for the help hun". I stood; speechless, as the car left a trail of white dust as it drove off, crunching the gravel road. ■



EGBERE(BUSH BABY)

Esv_Keks

All creatures in the thick forest
Bow to pay homage to the little
Creature that shakes the wood.
Daringly sparking the atmosphere
Enthusiastically with a hum-hum tone.
Father! My soul lingers in the jungle of
Gomorraah, roaming around like a
Homeboy banished from his motherland.
Instead of the world to pity my cause,
Joyfully, they make jest and see me as being
cursed.

Kolanut is only used to appease the gods of
the

Land, since they take me for an outcast.
Mysteries rally round my mat,
Naive gold diggers dig, to suck dugs
Of the wealth whirling around my existence.
Pit of doom awaits professional
Quacks who strip off their clothing to

Renate their unwanted needs.
Slowly, I solemnly scream, weeping out
The hatred my heart harbours for the
Unjust men who hunt me
Violently, ripping off my right to live.
Weak men deserts wick, crave for the lan-
tern, then
Xylograph my name in their hearts.
Yes! Seven days won't pass before my spirit
Zealously avenge the godly evil you desire. ■

Akinrinade Funminiyi Isaac, with the pseudonym Esv_Keks is an upcoming poet, who has written my unpublished poems. He's currently studying Estate Management at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

GOING TO WORK

Maureen Wambui

“Heh, hii ni jam?” (Heh, is this a traffic jam?) The lady seated next to you on the matatu will ask you when you're stuck in traffic. Clearly, she enjoys asking obvious questions.

This is the same lady that gave you the evil eye when you tried to open your window. She went as far as reaching across your body to close it herself. For a minute, all you saw was her messy cornrows so close to your face. All you felt was her beefy arm across your breasts almost cutting off your circulation. All you smelled were the fumes from her sweaty armpits and you did your best not to gag. Didn't she realize that you needed this window open? You wondered how much longer you could hold your breath before you passed out. On second thought, maybe that would have been preferable.

She gave up after a few tries when the window wouldn't budge. You wanted to jump up and cheer, maybe do a little jig, but you controlled yourself and did it on the inside. She was twice as big as you and old enough to be your mother. You were smug, not stupid. ■



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