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 Africa

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EDITION

FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE

Obidigbo, Chisom Success

I FOUND MYSELF IN LAGOS

Timinepre Shella

THE EDUCATION OF MY DREAM

Rev. Fr. Tony Ogwu, OCD.

LOVERS ARE SUFFICIENT TO THEMSELVES...

HRL Saka DBOSZ Junior

BATTLE GROUND

Irene Nzisa Kioko

LETTING GO

Moyo Esther

INQUEST

Nana Karikai Prempeh

AUTHORITY

Olaidozen

**ELIAS
MUTANI**

Winner of Burt Award for African Literature, Tanzania

EDITORIAL

Most grateful that yet another month, we proudly bring you the best from Africa: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa.

In the inside covers, meet our very own Elias Mutani, the winner of Burt Award for African Literature in Tanzania, 2016.

All the way from Bagamoyo, Tanzania, Elias is a writer of fiction and non-fiction, an editor and publisher too. Flip the pages to find out more about him and much more.

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Unbidden

For days now,
I have stared at this pen,
I should pick it up,
I know I should,
But I don't.

Excuse after excuse I give,
Just like I do with the rest of my life.

I don't know how I got here,
But I hate it.

I loathe the level of complacency
I have embraced.

When did I become so unmotivated?

What happened to my zest for life?

How did I reach here?

Why am I so defeated?

Well, I could sit here all day long,
Like I have done for as long as I can recall
Or I could pick up this pen.

I could stop leaving it to chance,

I could make things happen,

The choice is mine.

Guess which one I made

- Ndiema Chepkesis, Kenya



If

If you had not followed the ways of the White man, it would have been your child's mouth on my tit. You would have given me some beaded bracelets and I would have moved my bed to the window so that when you reached for me at night, you could feel me. Then we would sneak out to play under the moonlight. But to you, the night was for evil as your new masters taught you, so you failed to see how beautiful I am under the moonlight. Someone else did. It is his child I feed now.

- Okafor Uzoamaka Mary-joy, Nigeria

Authority

To you, my nomadic friend, Authority
I offer my sympathetic empathy
Because I know your burden is not light,
The burden that limits your awesome might.
Of thy load, every host of yours must share
Like the earth partakes of sun rays that glare.

As for any that will make thee his own
Let this very true truth to him be known:
If thy undiluted form, he must wear
Thy undiluted burden too, he must bear.
For authority is never for free
It is coupled with 'Responsibility'
So, on any, with which my friend is endowed,
My friend's heavy load is also bestowed.

As for those who care to know more about me
If thou must know of my own identity
I'm the one thou oft refer to as "power"
I knew that much, for I'm my friend's strong'st tower.

- Olaidozen, Nigeria



AFROSANTA

by

Raissa Kamaliza (K.A.R.)

Rwanda

The moon was out on this serene sunny season night. The silence was more accompanied than broken by the chirps of crickets, the occasional evil spirit and owls' calls. An old man sat beneath a tree for a snack after spending most of the night riding his old squeaky bicycle as he tried to reach the headquarters as soon as possible. Despite the small pause and the night's freshness, he couldn't get his heartbeat to slow down or his body to stop dripping sweat. He was extremely worried about his job.

He was about to mount his bike again when the source of the weird sound he had been hearing during his pause – a sound he had attributed to other insects – stirred. He was not frightened though. If anything, he pitied and envied the night guard's serenity and job security. "A career change to robbery wouldn't be too hard" he thought to himself as he resumed his journey back to the headquarters. Even with a heavy heart he couldn't help but chuckle as he thought about the night guard dilemma: does being a night guard turn people to heavy drinking or is being a night guard the only career option for heavy drinkers?

He winced with pain as his calves reluctantly pushed his old bike to a higher speed. "I have to get there soon, I have to get there soon", he kept whisper-shouting to himself. His momentary light mood had vanished to give way to panic and bitterness. How did he find himself in such a situation? He knew there was no reason to blame himself for his predicament: he had no influence whatsoever on CSM's direction. Still, he couldn't help but wonder how he had ended up in this situation, having to fight for his job. Everything was going fine. Well, as fine as things get in Sub-Saharan Africa. You know, the country.

What now felt like an eternity ago; Omutwa, our old man, was a primary school teacher when he heard about a new muzungu NGO looking for employees. All he knew was that the job also revolved around working with children so he applied. Turns out he had applied for a top job at CSM: the Christmas Spirit Multinational. He went through the application process despite having never heard of CSM because the pay was too good to waste time on questioning what was what.

After a multitude of trainings, he became a member of the first ever CSM outreach program, a branch of the brand new CSM Africa. Its aim was to make Christmas more authentic and significant to Africans. This was done by selecting an African Santa (Omutwa), naming him (AfroSanta), finding him elves then opening a toy factory to manufacture toys for the kids' wishes. AfroSanta was set to complete his training with a field study to the CSM headquarters in Alaska, USA, the free world. He was denied a Visa after a rumor - probably spread by the pygmies - circulated about his intention to never come back.

Even though very smart and well-meaning, the CSM muzungus had not anticipated all the hardships that would come with bringing an authentic Christmas spirit to Sub-Saharan. First of all, no elves were found, so the next best option was taken (at Omutwa's greatest horror) with only size in mind: the pygmies. They were the sworn enemies of his own clan, the long-teethers. Omutwa had inherited his chubby figure, a crucial part in being AfroSanta, from his long-teether genes. This did not set a good start for CSM Africa.

Neither did the underestimation of a few major details: the kids' wishes or their mere awareness of a Santa; the architecture of houses in Sub-Saharan (no chimneys to drop gifts into) and last but not least, the reindeers which could not survive the Sub-Saharan temperatures (those brought by

CSM had died pretty quickly). Omutwa was offered enough money by CSM to buy another mode of transport but umm, ahem, things happened to that money and he ended up buying a (now squeaky) bicycle.

Oh, they had also underestimated the night. The night in Sub-Saharan, home of the snoring night guards, night walkers (these are village sorcerers who kept the evil spirits away by dancing naked at night), evil spirits who wouldn't get scared off by naked gesticulating grown men, relocating rebels/freedom fighters, bandits and wild animals.

Even if the reindeers had survived, AfroSanta wouldn't have been able to drop gifts into inexistent chimneys (that's why he didn't feel too bad about him [redacted] with his transport allowance). And even if the reindeers had survived and there were chimneys to drop gifts into, the gifts wouldn't have been exactly droppable. The things these Sub-Saharan kids wished for did not necessitate a toy factory to say the least.

Most of these kids did not know how to write nor did they know about Santa. The majority of those who knew how to write and were vaguely aware of a Santa could not waste paper on such 'stupidities'. Those who could afford to waste a piece of paper per year usually only wished for things like one edible meal, a mosquito net, oversized shoes or clothes (to grow in) and so on. Never cute wooden toys. The same kids would

rarely make steady demands over the years too. As you know, in Sub-Saharan, by age 13 most girls are already married and boys child soldiers.

Fortunately for Omutwa's career and CSM Africa's future, some children in Sub-Saharan are pretty well-off. Too well-off for AfroSanta's liking sometimes. These kids had no interest in African-made wooden toys either. They wanted x-boxes, PlayStations and Nike sneakers (these gifts were brought from the multitude of factories in CSM Asia, who featured a different kind of elves as Omutwa had heard. But that's another story for another day). Even with these setbacks and a pretty shaky start, CSM Africa was still launched but with a certain number of precautions.

AfroSanta would start distributing gifts with the well-off kids because these kids always sent their letters to him on time and their parents were powerful enough to have him hung if their children did not receive their gifts by December 25th. He hated delivering gifts to these kids because he had to do it 'properly'. He had to come at night and he had to be unseen. The night guards of the well-off families were a little less prone to sleep (or is it alcohol?) so he had to collaborate with the few bandits he met on his way on those nights for silent and unseen break-ins. Which is technically what these rich people were asking for. He just didn't steal anything, he dropped off stuff instead. Let us just say that he did not

help lower the levels of reported break-ins towards the end of the year in Sub-Saharan.

After finishing his rounds with the well-offs, he would take a well-deserved break and celebrate New Years' with his own family of five wives and all their kids, 87% of which he was sure were his. In January he resumed his gift delivery rounds for the less well-off. The majority of Sub-Saharan isn't subjected to wars and insecurity. Poverty does more damages and most nights are serene there. These secure but poor villages represented the major part of his job.

Despite their tendencies to attribute most of his gifts to gods and governments he didn't hold them accountable for too long because they had very low expectations and didn't mind when their gifts arrived unlike the well-off kids (this is why we met Omutwa on a sunny season night still distributing gifts). In fact, he had been more disappointed in the gods and governments whose spokesmen never came forth to deny their involvements in these small miracles. And like the gods and governments, he simply didn't show up in the parts of Sub-Saharan where the night transformed into hell.

His hatred for the pygmies was amplified by the appearance of a new rumor spread by the pygmies again, he was sure. Rumor had it that when he got to some villages after other muzungu NGOs to find that they had already satisfied the kids'

meager demands, he would cross off the gifts as distributed and pocket them. They even went as far as to say that he sometimes did not reach certain villages assuming that the other NGOs would eventually get there anyways. These were ludicrous and scandalous allegations created by the pygmies who envied his job position.

As all these thoughts and emotions kept swarming his mind, Omutwa decided to focus on getting back to the headquarters as soon as possible. He also congratulated himself on his second wife's third child, his son Omwana, who had introduced him to Whatsapp. That one was his, he was sure of it (he even looked like his grandfather, Omutwa's father, a great man of his time).

It is through Whatsapp that he had received a message from his friend in the CSM Africa logistics department telling him to come back immediately. Due to the bad performance of the NGO and its never ending setbacks, CSM's main international investor, Coca-Cola, was now in the process of selling most of its shares to the beers (a part of the Alcohol Multinational Enterprises, AME) who would become the new and more powerful sponsors of the African Christmas spirit. He really wasn't surprised nor saddened by the news as beers had always been the true rulers of the African Christmas - and the rest of the year for that matter. He was more worried about the pygmies taking advantage of this sudden change in direction and his absence to make a political move and have him removed from the organization.

He was worried that the minute they accessed power, he would be put on the all-times-naughty list, and sent for trial. He was also really worried about them reopening the case of him using the transport allowance to [redacted]. In what he now reluctantly admitted was a mistake, after failing to get a Visa, he had tried to get revenge from the pygmies by attempting to have them replaced by his sons and fellow long-teethers in the toy factory and they had never forgiven him despite an agreement to work side-by-side reached by both parties under a firm 'suggestion' of the CSM management. He was now on top of a hill overlooking most of the city. In the distance, he could see the first sunrays hitting the capital city's buildings and his heart started pumping faster than ever. One of them was the CSM Africa headquarters where he was headed and his future as AfroSanta was already engaged.

After one last deep breath as he lunged his old bike down the hill he couldn't help but ask himself a multitude of questions. Would the pygmies dethrone him like the beers had done the sodas? But most importantly, what will Christmas look like in Sub-Saharan in 25 years? Will kids have different, regular demands? Or was their future as unsure and bleak as his own right now?

The Journey



Sbonelo Angelica Mgilane
South Africa

I like playing a little game when I'm alone: I look at everyone around me and wonder what weird and wonderful things have happened in their lives before today. I always come up with extraordinary stories that make them not seem as ordinary as they look. I suppose spending three hours commuting to work every morning can cause one to come up with such childish ideas. I could never work up the courage to strike up conversation with a stranger. If I'm not trying to ensure that my belongings do not somehow find themselves a new owner by the end of the trip, I'm busy trying to position myself into the most comfortable standing position. I dream about the day I stop living like this. Not that I think I'm above using public transport, but spend a week using it and you will understand why the comfort of a car is a luxury that everyone dreams about.

My mother always says I should rather use the bus, because she too understands the struggle of using the train. I do take it sometimes. However, I don't see much of a difference between the two. You still end up carrying with you whatever odour you picked up from the people you had the displeasure of being pressed up against. That's why I travel to work with a gym bag, though I've never even had a membership. I wear my modest clothes while I commute and the moment I get to the city I rush into the nearest bathroom. What walks out is a person worthy of walking through the office park I work at. What I appreciate the most about my fellow commuters is how the moment we disembark the train, we all disengage from the shared struggle we had just experienced. Not only are people rushing to their various places of employment, but some (like my-self) are rushing to go have a taste of what it would be like to live the life of their dreams.

I've been working as a receptionist at an accounting firm for three years now. Only a total of five people know my name. This is excluding the cleaning staff and security guards. I understand that there are over three hun-

dred people that work in the building, it would be impossible to learn everyone's names. What does concern me though, is how some individuals find it appropriate to call me whatever African name they think suits me on that day. "It's Amanda, sir" I sometimes say to correct them. This results in me receiving a worrying look of surprise in response. Perhaps I don't look like an Amanda, or the name is not African enough.

My job is very mundane; I answer phones, take messages, and look pretty for the different clients that walk into those glass doors every day. My family doesn't understand why I'm still stuck doing this underpaying job when I'm just as qualified as most of the people that work in that building. Yes I went to university and got my degrees, but I still dress up every weekday to go sit at my desk and watch people move up the corporate ladder. I know about faith and waiting for things to happen at the right time, but I had decided to take things into my own hands.

It was a Saturday morning when I took a taxi to a neighbouring township in the pursuit for an answer to all my problems. I vaguely had an idea of whom and what I was looking for. I had been taking the train long enough to be schooled on a number of things that they do not teach in any university syllabus. Different people share their experiences of how their different problems were solved in different ways. Surely I would find the answer to mine. Learning through eaves-dropping can be a little problematic at times, because you're left with questions that you cannot answer if the conversation was not explicit enough for your comprehension. All I knew was to get off at a well-known convenience store, walk up the road, turn at the T-junction at the very top of that road, then wait under a big bushy tree. I had also brought about R500 with me; I didn't know how much all of this would cost me. Since I was entering unknown territory, I made sure to strategically place it in undetectable part of my body. After about twenty minutes of waiting, I grew impatient and thought of turning back home. Then a young boy appeared out of nowhere, playing with a soccer ball, and signalled that I should follow him.



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LETTING GO

She stood by the river bank, tears dripping down in tiny droplets, today marked the fourth anni-versary and though that long time had passed, the pain hadn't. It was agonizing trying to wake up this morning and live the day. On many occasions, she had fought the urge to go back under her white covers and sleep through the day so that it would roll over without her noticing but life didn't work that way and according to her therapist she had to face it head on to get better.

No matter how hard she tried to avoid it or push it aside, it still came back so why bother. She continued trailing the path of the familiar road she had come to love and hate as well. The place was a hallmark of great memories, one that made her smile and cry, and to be honest, she cried even more. Inhaling the cool breeze, she sucked in her tears and tried to focus on the good memories of this place and really tried to act as happy as he would have wanted her to be...note, the objective word being tried because in the end she fell on her knees and just wept, crying for eve-rything.

For him, for her loss, for her family, for his, for her problems and for the first time in many years, for herself.

Once her tear glands dried up, she stood and wobbled over the debris on the abandoned construction site. The one thing that used to serve as a getaway for both of them when reality got too harsh. She remembered how they would come here and sit atop the rock, wishing for a life of their fantasies. They would make up things they knew may never come to pass, like the one time she wished for 24/7 electricity. Sitting there was purgatory for them, a means to forget reality.

Life was not fair and she knew it, she had always known. Her life had never been a bed of roses and unlike many of her peers, she didn't have the luxury to believe in picture perfect family with a house of gold. She was used to the intricacies of life and had survived through numerous dark times yet none of those experiences prepared her enough for her loss.

It came without warning or foretell and till now, it felt like she was still under her duvet having a nightmare. Life should have given her more time so at least she could ease slowly into this pain-ful reality.

He had been hers forever, the one person she had convinced herself would never leave but no, nothing good lasts forever. No one in her life stayed, not even the ones she had dared to call family yet she basked in the delusion that maybe this one was different. Life created an illusion that her happiness was here to stay.

Fate, that bastard, he had written another script for her and made her the lead. Just when she thought it was for real, she was greeted one afternoon by sad looking officers with a familiar wallet and a ring.

For many days, she wanted it to be a nightmare, he was still alive and she was just insecure but every time she picked up the phone and called the bald head man who had taken him, the story was the same and his words too...Sarah, move on with your life.

First week, she couldn't believe it...she didn't see his body, how was she to accept his death and move, there had to be a mistake. Four years later, there was no mistake...he was gone!

She didn't know her legs were moving until she felt herself at the edge of a cliff, faced between a massive pool of water and dry land. How had she walked thus far?

She looked back and saw the blocks at the distance faraway. Her whole life was behind her in a distance. She stopped to think about it. What was there? Was anything there waiting, for her?

She was standing between two worlds, one, a sad reminder of all she had lost and the other, a break from her sorrows.

She paused, trying to decide. If she turned back, she was going to be returning to her sad and lonely life, where waking up was like salt on opened wounds... a life where he no longer was part of and the other world...freedom. What would a sane person choose?

Freedom over pain...

She weighed her options, tears running down her cheeks. Hurting as it was, he would have wanted her to live and find happiness.

"I am so sorry, Dayo."

Standing there, she was jerked back into reality by her phone ringing, playing a familiar tune.

"Mr. Nnamdi"

She sighed, he was probably calling with his usual message,

"He is dead and gone Sarah, you have to stop calling."

A mix of pain and anger bubbled up within her. She looked at the phone one last time before flinging it.

Why was she even hesitating, the decision was clear.


"GOODBYE LIFE!" she said as she jumped.

She had barely reached down when a message chimed on her already broken phone....

"Sarah, we just found him. HE IS ALIVE!"

- Moyo Esther, Nigeria

FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE



-Obidigbo, Chisom Success, Nigeria

Preamble: If you miss purpose, you miss everything but if you live in purpose, you would have your life fulfilled.

Your purpose is your destiny. Permit me to say that purpose is the summary of your life. It is the 'WHY' that answers to every action you take in life.

THE WORD PURPOSE

Etymologically, purpose in Greek means 'ORIGINAL INTENTION'. Now note the word 'original', it is so obvious that a hundred and one percent of African youths have left their purpose (original/initial calling) and are deliberately living other persons purpose (all in the name of role modelling). But take this fact, there is an original intentionality to your life. This simply means the 'firsthand' innate/inbuilt ability in you. Now, when you allow someone to determine your purpose for you or copy another one else's purpose, then it is no longer original but 'imitation' (second hand)! It's not yours. Many have lost the original purpose that was initially delivered to them.

Whenever I remember Dr Myles Munroe's aphorism, "The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but a life without a purpose", I begin to pity my fellow youths; the way some of us have gone astray and not in the circle near our purpose. The worst part of it is while others are into hunts in seeing they find and live their purpose through managing/using their natural abilities, gifts, talents and potentials; others are living reluctantly, indirectly folding their hands and living for nothing - a purposeless life (zero productivity).

I should let you know that your days are numbered. Meaning, you can't live on earth forever. So if you live a life of nothing, you'll definitely leave this earth nothing.

However, I would not disregard the fact that category of youths still yearns and tenaciously wish their purpose be defined. They really wish to know why they live. They want to know why God created them. They want to know the niche they are meant to carve and function in. Please

allow me to go biblical; your purpose or rather your gifts may not fall into the FIVE GROUPS OF GIFTS Jesus gave in Ephesians 4:11. Let us see this scripture, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelist; and some, pastors and teachers;” [KJV]

Now, having looked at this, your purpose may not be inclusive. The question is, What is my own gift/purpose? This takes us to the FIVE PRACTICAL ways to discover your purpose:

5 PRACTICAL WAYS TO DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE

1. **DESIRE:** Purpose would show when you passionately desire to discover it. You have to feel the vacuum. Be eager to know why you are living and you will be guided.

2. **YOUR TALENT:** Critically analyze this: consider yourself a child of God, when you see a man dying of hunger do you ask God whether to give him food or not, or would you go ahead and get him food even without God’s consent? You would agree with me that so many people do the former on the course of their purpose hunt-ing. It is so much ‘wonderful’ that many of us are still fasting, praying and ‘disturbing’ God on daily basis to show us our purpose while we have it at the tip of our fingers! Now, let us bring this home, what are you good at? What do you like doing? What keeps you awake by night? What do you do with pleasure and without the feeling you are stressing yourself? What often do you think about? ‘You get from known to unknown’ is a frequently used sentence. Do not just fold your hands and seek purpose. Engage in writing if that is what you have passion do-ing. Sing that song to the hearing of your households if it is what gives you joy. Preach that ser-mon, grab that microphone! Do that

business. Work according to your talents and abilities and you will definitely locate purpose.

3. **THAT PROBLEM IN YOUR ENVIRONS YOU HAVE THE URGE TO SOLVE:** The major way to discover your purpose is actually geared at the urge to solve a problem/need surround-ing you that people suffer from. It could be that the rate of immortality is high in your locality, there are high rate of mortality/natality or there are increase in illiteracy. So, sit down and think thoroughly and discover problems you feel like solving/you are not comfortable with. That de-fines your purpose.

4. **GOD FACTOR (ASK GOD):** Your creator knows why He created you. I use this instance often, picture a bottle full of water, let the content (water) be your life would-be accomplishments and the bottle, your creator. What this simply means is that for you to attain or access those accomplishments, you must go through the bottle (open it and tap the substance). So, inten-tionally go to Him in the place of prayer and find to your purpose.

5. **BE COUNSELLED:** Do not neglect the place of mentorship and discipleship in your pursuit of purpose. That which you want to achieve have been accomplished before by someone else. So, it is your duty to seek guidance.

2 SHOCKING TRUTHS:

- Purpose is not proportional to age. Meaning, you can be 70, still have not known purpose. Pur-**pose** is NEVER defined in accordance to your material accomplishments.

- You can’t buy purpose with currency; rather, with creativity, thinking, and DESIROUS tena-city, YOU locate your PURPOSE.



THE EDUCATION OF MY DREAM

REV. FR TONY OGWU, OCD.
NIGERIA

It is a well-known fact that education of a country affects the nation's economy. Our graduates today will affect positively or negatively the economy of our country tomorrow. Our students today will at their graduation and presently compete with other students in the world for the scarce world resources. In Nigeria, we have a youthful population that has failed to contribute meaningfully to our GDP. We have not been able to utilize the potentials of our youthful population. Many of our graduates cannot find work and many of them are described as unemployable, meaning that they do not have the skills to enable an employer of labor to employ them despite having a certificate. These products are coming from the education system we operate.

In this article, we will examine: the products of our schools in Nigeria to see if we are doing enough in the light of our present day education system for our students and graduates to compete favorably in global economy; if we are doing enough as a country to prepare our students to solve the many problems facing us in this nation. Insight....

In 2014, while preparing to open a new secondary school in Arochukwu, Abia State, Fr Innocent and I employed a youth corps (NYSC draftee) to work as secretary. We employed a graduate of computer science, to our greatest surprise, she did not know how to type or use any computer application. For her to function well, we had

to send her for training at a roadside computer centre.

Last year, I met a graduate in Agricultural science who could not differentiate between corn, cassava and weed in the farm. We have graduates from department of education who cannot write a good lesson note. It is no longer news that today we have youth corpsers who cannot write their names.

Our education system that produced such results cannot be ranked the best in world. To get a better and different result we have to do things differently. To do this correctly, we have to look at countries ranked to have the best education system in the world. South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada, Ireland are ranked among countries with the best education system in the world. For want of time, I will not go into details on how these countries made it to the top. But a little idea of what they are doing or have done will give us insight on how to make the desired change.

All these countries mentioned above spend around 8% of their GDP on education. Considerable sum is spent on development of human capital and training of its citizens. Payments to teachers', infrastructure on education etc are taken care of and teachers strike is not a norm. Individually, each of these countries found a system that worked for her in line with her cultural value.

First country to examine is South Korea. South Korea pays great attention on primary education. They understood that primary education is a good foundation for learning. A country that fails to lay a good foundation for her students in primary school will end up building an edifice which may not stand the test of time. In this country, teachers are highly qualified and are paid well.

Japan and Hong Kong are two other countries that have done well in education. Both countries run a technology-based education system. These countries focused more attention on primary education. Their edu-

cation is focused on solving problems. People make money when they solve problems and contribute meaningfully to the growth of their countries GDP.

Singapore as a country focused its education system on students learning more. Thus, Singapore's ministry of education introduced recently the policy of "teach less learn more". This system has moved the country higher up in world's best education system.

In Finland, children start school from 7 years old. The country also spends considerable amount of money and time on pre-school and daycare where emphasis is on playing and socializing up to seven years for children. Here a child is made to fall in love with learning and loves going to school. When the child eventually starts school, there is no homework, no test until high school. A child's learning development is monitored and each child is given special attention.

Since these countries have succeeded in creating a unique curriculum and methodology that have worked for them, it will be wise to borrow some things from them that will work for us in line with our own cultural values in Nigeria. I strongly believe that to make progress, we do need to make important changes to our curriculum and our education system, paying close attention to cultural needs. I will highlight some of the areas I believe those changes need to take place

First, our education system pays a lot of attention to cognitive type of learning, to the detriment of affective (emotion/feeling) and psychomotor (physical/kinesthetic) learning. Cognitive has to do with thinking and ability to remember what is taught and reproduce what is given. Too much attention paid to this area encourages students to memorize notes and handouts, reproduce them in the exam hall for teachers and pass their exams without the ability to use

what they learnt to solve problems. Most times the memorized notes and handouts are forgotten after the exams. Our system should help students to embark on problem solving system of education. With this, focus will shift to knowledge rather than passing exams and certificates.

Secondly, Government should increase its budget on education which will help in providing in-frastructure on education, train and pay teachers well-this will stop the incessant industrial strikes in our schools. Universities in Nigeria should retain first class students to teach in those institutes. Government and private sector should reward creativity and students who have the ability to solve societal problems. Payment of primary school teachers should not be under the local government since this tier of government is not functioning optimally.

Again secondary schools should embrace internship program in their system. I do not see the rational for one to have a certificate as an auto-engineer yet cannot repair a car. From secondary school, let students aspiring for different professions use holiday period to do internship program under different masters but monitored by schools and written reports submitted. This will bridge the gap between theory and practice and make learning down to earth. Science subjects on the other hand must be taught with practical. Our education must be technologically based since the highest employers of labor in our era are internet/technology based.

Furthermore, attention is to be given to vocational classes in our secondary schools. This will help students to focus their attention on life after school, ability to solve life's many problems instead of getting a certificate.

Lastly, no secondary school should be given approval by government without a functional music and sport department. Students are to take active part in both mu-

sic and sport to broaden their views on the world. Foundation learning (primary) has to start from fun and play to make sure that children will fall in love with learning and not be afraid of it. Secondary education should build on this foundation.

Recently, Sandra Unlimited, presented this as a solution in educating her children in addition to what they get at school. At eleven years old they learn money skills, around eight years they get their tablets and learn how to use the internet, Google, documentaries and how stuff works channels. She and the husband also start early to place more emphasis on problem solving and enterprise for their children. At the age of 7 and 10 her daughters have started sewing classes and presently after a year make some of their own clothes and even get paid to make dresses for kids in their children's church. Both daughters have their sewing machines. The third child shows interest in making animations and has started gradually on it. So, this paper is not only for governments and policy makers but to also wake up parents to their duty in educating their children well. It is practical and can be done.

In summary, our education system must make necessary change in line with the present day realities. It has to shift to technology based, focus on solving problems and with a good foundation on learning laid during daycare and primary education. The current budget on education has to increase tremendously to provide for infrastructures and pay teachers well. Our education has to be holistic learning, embracing cognitive, affective and psychomotor. It is only through this will our students /graduates contribute meaningfully to our nation's GDP, become employers of labor instead of labor seekers and solve the countries numerous problems including that of power and unemployment.

Inquest

Have you ever fallen so low that you could hear the thunderous marching of all the fallen soldiers the ground has swallowed before you?
Have you ever been so lost in the craziness of being alive, so much so that you needed a map to find your breath?
Have you ever been hugged so tightly by pain that would not let you go, and so you simply called it home?
Have you ever been tired of being tired, of being barely enough, of being brave?
Have you ever kissed the lips of hope and realised that they taste exactly like disappointment?
Have you ever wondered why while knowing why? Because the why you know is unacceptable to you?
Have you ever been alive?
Have you tethered on the border of insanity and death and asked the wind for help?
Have you loved so deeply that all you had left was the echo of your name whispered when love walked out of the door?
Have you ever seen the monster that hides in the dark within and not been afraid, just aroused?
Have you seen life tip its fedora at you as you walked by the market stalls of “try again” and “maybe next time?”
Have you ever been an orchestra of remorse, playing all the perfect notes that will get forgiveness to applaud, only to realise epentance was never in the auditorium?
Have you ever unlearned the language of “I am fine” because it was a lie you could speak no more?
Have you ever pulled yourself closer and closer to heaven by stringing raindrops together and climbing them so God would notice you?
Have you ever believed and found out that your faith was never enough?
Have you ever died and kept living?
Have you seen me, my eyes and the stories they hold?
Have you seen all the unhappy endings that I am?

- Nana Karikai Prempeh, Ghana



TALKING I.O.V.E

With

SAKA DROSZ JUNIOR

EPISODE 7:

LOVERS ARE SUFFICIENT TO THEMSELVES ...

Two is company and three a crowd; so said the philosopher of old. Again, you know and I know it too that, the more you love, the closer you become, and the closer you get, lower your voice to each other until all you do is, whisper the words cause the heart is already one and rhymes at that realm!

Also know that two with something common want to be alone and some even pay a price for that favour. Okay, I can see you smiling because I just reminded you of your case and if you don't know better, know that at the peak of a romantic relationship there is no room for another. It's just one world and one love and nothing else.

The Bible tells us to worship God and nothing else. Total submission to that faith. There is no vacant room and no other interest in the environment of lovers. Simply put, lovers are totally committed, dedicat-

ed and sufficient to themselves and do not need any other thing or person, parents or even their own offspring.

As the classical told us; in no other case does Eros so clearly betray the care of its being, his purpose of making one out of more than one, but when he has achieved this in the proverbial way through the love of two human beings, he refuses to go further.

Why I am telling this? Okay sweetheart, you think you got advice for that person in what you called foolishness, now know that you should keep your advice to yourself because Lovers are sufficient by themselves.

This is a good place to leave you for now.

See you in the next episode. db.

When the Body Speaks

Her eyes closed slowly as she found herself exhaling deeply. She tried to concentrate on regulating her breathing, as she had been instructed to do, but her thoughts kept getting the better of her, time and time again. And before she knew it, she found her breathing quickening. Once her eyes began to open and survey the room, she knew that it was a matter of time before restlessness settled upon her limp body. She gritted her teeth, praying all the while that someone would come and do something, anything, to ease her troubled mind. Anything, to help her focus on something other than the predicament that had led her to this very room.

How could she have allowed herself to get here, she berated herself silently? Why, had she not listened when so many around her suggested otherwise? Throwing advice at her in the hopes that it'd stick somehow. But no, it of course, hadn't. As she, in all her "wisdom" had chosen to forge ahead, believing, stupidly, that she was exempt. That for some unknown reason, she, of all people, would not be touched. Oh, how wrong she had been, how so very wrong. When was she going to learn not to let her pride rule her life? The floodgates had now officially begun, as her thoughts, compounded by a sea of never-ending questions, took up every corner of her mind. She grimaced as her head began to pound slowly, the weight of her thoughts giving way to small pangs of pain that began to coil their way around her head. She shook her head, believing that somehow, that would remove these persistent thoughts, and in turn, eradicate this pain that was intent on taking full control of her whole body. She inhaled sharply, as, sure enough, she began to feel pangs of pain in other parts of her body. So engrossed was she in the pain she was feeling, that she failed to realize that she was actually feeling pain. The very thing that the doctors had told her she wouldn't be able to feel.

But, in time, it did dawn on her. That's when she dared to allow herself to truly feel the pain, embrace it, wallow in it, claim it. How quickly things had changed. One minute, she had been wrapped around a tree, certain that her life was slowly seeping out of her. To then be told that while her life was in fact hers to keep, it would no longer be the same. The very legs that she'd use to run countless races would no longer run so freely for her. Her whole body had betrayed her, almost punishing her. While she had not lost her life, her body had locked up on her, seeming to be frozen in time, stuck in that moment, where, against all words of reason, she made her own decision. A decision that had put her here since that fateful day.

Days turned to weeks, as she lay in bed, her body refusing to grant her that one reprieve. She had gradually accepted that this is what her life had been reduced to; that indeed, she was now atoning for all her past mistakes. Gone were the days of carefree living and questionable decision making, replaced now, with thoughts that continually ravaged her mind, in ways that her own body could not. And yet now, there seemed to be a sliver of hope. The pain, though at times unbearable, was a welcome development. As she felt yet another twang, she knew that indeed, the tides were turning. She would be alright. In time, her pain would fade into nothing, leaving behind a brand-new person – one who was ready, to finally tackle the world, one step at a time.

- Akosua Frimpong



AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIAS MUTANI



Winner of Burt Award for African Literature in Tanzania, 2016. Elias Mutani is an author of fiction and non-fiction, an editor and publisher from Bagamoyo, Tanzania. His non-fiction features children issues, scouting, counseling and about writing itself. He is also a trained translator, and is part of the Swahili-English Translators team for the Commonwealth Foundation. He was a judge and trainer, in the National 'Andika na Soma' writing competition for students in Tanzania, the 2016 and 2017 seasons. He conducts writing workshops for youth and coaching for emerging writers across the country. In 2016, his young adult fiction 'Human Poachers' won Burt Award for African Literature in Tanzania.

Elias Mutani, give us a brief insight into your journey as a writer.

Writing is like a self discovery journey which I began about twenty years ago. It's that passion that makes me indulge in writing, and I write a lot. It took me more than ten years to publish my first novel or maybe my novella, which came in 2013. Between 2003 and 2007 I was contributing to a Swedish children magazine called Struten, with stories from Tanzania which were translated into Swedish.

Did you always wish to write professionally?

Always. It's something close to addiction.

What are the challenges you face as a writer?

The first biggest challenge was to finding a publisher, and it has remained a lifetime challenge. In my country, where readership statistics are low, publishers think it's a big risk to embark on fiction, instead they all run to the lucrative textbook market from the government. This leaves fiction out of print.

Another challenge, there is a big competition out there, which requires a writer to always come up with new ideas, or create a new trend that will play for sometime. This is really a big challenge - as a person. I always need to come with a complete new idea, not a disguised replicate of previous works; but sometimes I 'catch' myself in this trap.

As a translator, how would you rate the efforts in Africa to translate literature into African languages to encourage reading and education?

From historical point of view, in the beginning it was the missionaries who translated to ease reading in schools. They translated fables like Aesop and the like. Now, I feel translation is more from Swahili-English, compared to English-Swahili, and the money lies with the one choosing what to be translated. Our efforts in translation would bear more fruits if we would be able to decide too. However, the little that we do have positive impact.

Between fiction and nonfiction, what do you write more often and with ease, and why?

Fiction anytime, any day. However, I still do non-fiction as per the publishers' demands. Also, a non fiction always has a direction which in many cases is fixed, while fiction may change its course so often and what I thought was my story usually comes not to be.

As a publisher, what do you think about the orientation that 'traditional publishing houses play a huge role in discouraging writers from getting published?'

I became a publisher in "retaliation" to discouragement from publishing houses. Traditional publishing houses need to play more roles in encouraging writers by promoting authors [the upcoming too], and be part of the risk that a writer takes. Unfortunately, they prefer a name or piece they are 100% sure that will sell. That leaves writers to building profiles on their own, or from the emerging self publishing, then they catch up. I think this is wrong. Publishers and writers should work as a team.

Tell us about your book 'Human Poachers'.

'Human Poachers' became known extensively because I wrote it in English, and it won award, so it got the necessary and needed promotion. It is a young adult fiction based on a false belief that lingers in our society towards people with albinism. In certain parts of our nation, their body parts are sought for superstitious uses, that I strongly oppose. A young girl from the city settles into a village to study for a year as her parents travel overseas and she gives reasons to stay behind. Then she encounters those guys that I have nicknamed 'Human Poachers' and the adventure begins from there.

Right now, I'm working on another novel, 'Tenacity' [provisional title], in which I have a female protagonist [a girl with albinism] discovering her beauty and fighting internal and external battles to enter into fashion industry. I have had it, seeing kids with albinism being portrayed as people in danger, so I want to bring a revolution with this beautiful, peaceful girl.

How did you feel about having 'Human Poachers' nominated for Burt Awards and winning eventually? Describe the experience.

I wrote the book in 2011, but I hesitated to enter into the contest because I felt

I hadn't mastered the young adult genre. Then, I attended courses for writers, trained by experienced authors in the genre, and after reading a lot, I felt ready by 2013. However, a local publisher I approached didn't take the manuscript, so I opted for a publisher from Kenya. I submitted in May 2014 and in December I was informed about being shortlisted. Along the line, internal issues emerged with the organisers, so a year passed on and I had almost forgotten about my book. Then early in 2016 I was invited to the launch, and there, it was announced a winning title.

Can the book be accessed both online and offline? Tell us where exactly.

Online, am not sure! I need to ask the publisher [you may wonder how we relate]. It is found in many outlets/bookstores in Tanzania and Kenya; and I guess in countries that are involved in Burt Award; Ethiopia, Ghana and Canada. I have sent a question to Longhorn Publishers about this.

How responsive are young and aspiring writers to writing workshops in Tanzania?

The zeal is initially very high, but many of them are too ambitious and they give up when they find things are not as easy as they thought it could be. However, those who remain are consistent, wanting to learn more. Recently, I conducted a workshop for ten youths.

About Swahili; do you ideate the language as one of the global metropolitan languages within the next decade, being that it is one of the fastest growing African languages?

Yes.

Drop a word of encouragement to upcoming writers in Africa at large.

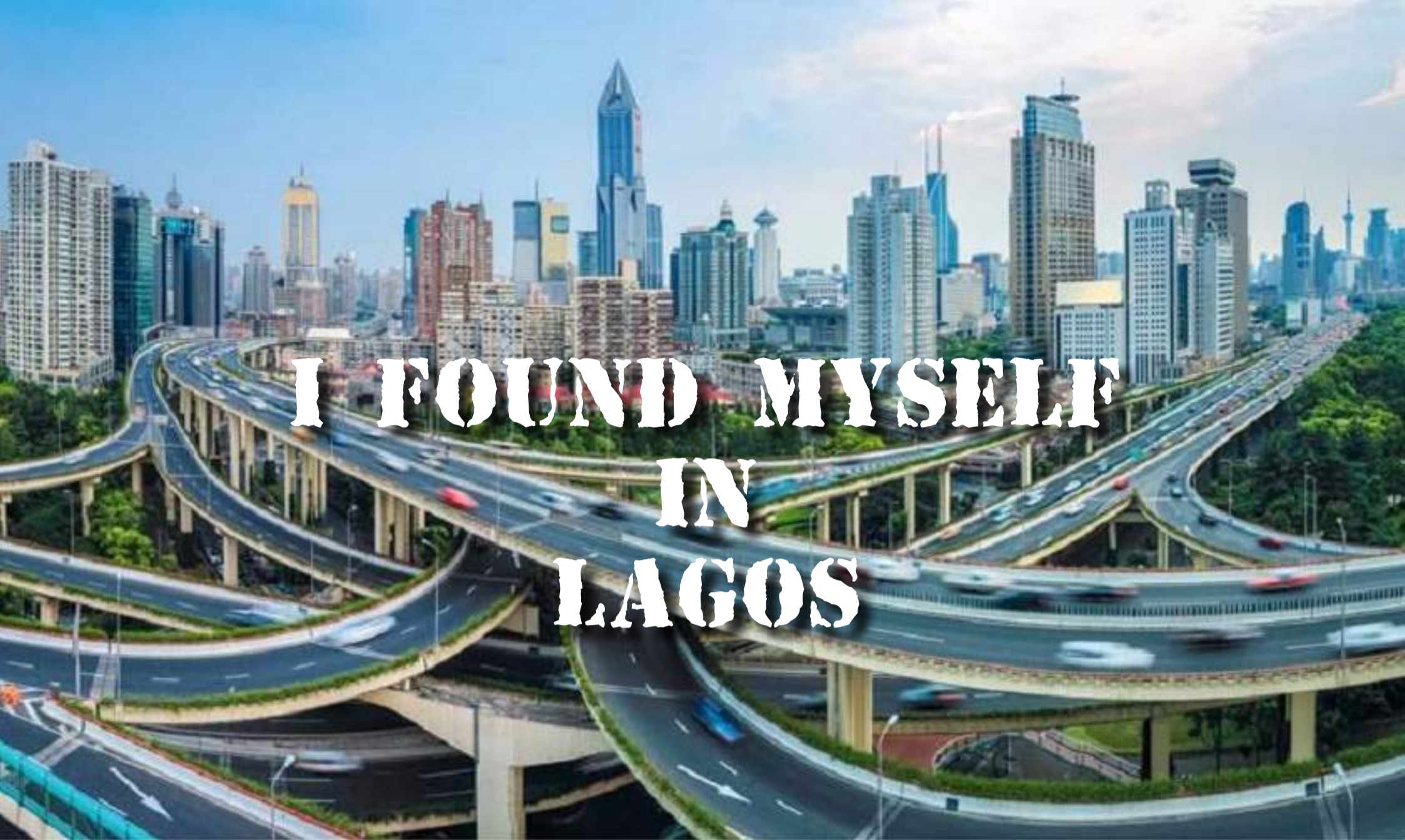
To the upcoming writer, I urge you to tell your stories. The world loves stories from Africa. In Tanzania, we struggle much with English and use lots of energy trying to polish the language instead of polishing the story. The best thing to do is to tell your story in the language you are most comfortable, in your mother tongue, or even in 'that' English, French or Portuguese; but tell it first. The world will love it given it's a good story.

A woman with long dark hair is lying on her back, wearing a green patterned top. A large, green, spotted insect, resembling a mantis or a similar creature, is positioned on her chest. The background is dark and moody. The text 'KEEP OFF' is written in white, bold, uppercase letters in the upper right corner.

KEEP OFF

Her flat chest doesn't say welcome
Even if she has little almonds on her chest
It doesn't saying roast worthy and tasty
Her buttocks no matter how fluffy or bouncy,
Doesn't scream safe haven
Her little strength can't lift your body
Her lady part doesn't sing songs
for your manhood to drive in and call it home
So LET HER BE
Don't slam her into maturity
Without her mentally maturing
Don't slam her into motherhood
When she has been barely allowed to be a child
No part of hers scream motherhood
No part screams "ripe" for marriage
No part of hers scream dwelling place
to your thirsty and risen body parts

- Amby C. Ezem, London



I FOUND MYSELF IN LAGOS

I never fully understood the hype surrounding Lagos. I had heard it was a high class city but to be honest I had been okay growing up in the quiet city of Port Harcourt. I had however landed a temporary job in Lagos and so I had got my chance to experience the Lagos dream.

My first thought as I stepped into the city was: “oh my God, I hate this place.”

It was a busy, crowded, chaotic city and let’s not even get into the traffic.

It was in Lagos I watched people hustle to get into a bus and hustle to get out of it. It was in Lagos I had to wake up by 5:00a.m to meet up my 9:00am meetings. It was in Lagos I got robbed in traffic in broad day light so I stopped driving with my windows down. Believe me Lagos was crazy.

But then after a few months, I start getting used to Lagos. I start to forget the foul mouths of danfo drivers and conductors. I learn to ignore the LASTMA, KAI and other officers who make it hard for one to breathe. I even get used to the traffic as the blasting horns and sirens become music to my ears. I figure out street traders (hawkers) might abscond with my change, but all na hustle. Whether it was the woman selling fresh pepper at Balogun market or the executive shopping at Shoprite, whether it was the ordinary Fulani man eating

his tuwochinkafa at noon in the remote part of Ajegunle or the highly sophisticated billionaire driving around Banana Island in his Rolls Royce, deep down I could see how hard everyone worked for a living.

After a few more months I start to love Lagos. I start to love the Saturday “owambes” as well as the lavish parties by the Lagos big ballers who occupy the island area of the city. I start to love the stolen shows at the Fela Shrine, the leisurely walks at the conservation center, the private parties at private beaches. I begin to love the lazy TGIF hangouts with a friend who has a friend that has another friend.

It was at one of these hangouts I met him. I had sat at the far end of the room sipping my chapman and stealing glances all night. I could not get over how beautiful he was not because he had perfect features or anything of that sort. But because his smile was hopeful as a rainbow and I could get lost in his eyes. When he walked up to me and said with a lazy drawl and a smile at the side of his lips; “I look better up close”, I was sure of three things.

First he was out of my league. Second, I was going to fall in love with him anyways and lastly, I was probably going to get my heart broken.

But this isn't a love story. This is a story about an ancient city almost as old as time itself. The city we called Eko before they ever called her Lagos. The bustling city of chaos and hustle. The beautiful city of hustlers, dreamers and paper chasers. The city of ordinary people in persistent pursuit to achieve their extraordinary dreams.

It was in Lagos I found and finally became part of the roses that grew amongst thorns, the lilies that grew between rocks. And maybe we could not change the whole world, but we changed ourselves. We lived, loved and expressed as we pleased, being serene even in the midst of calamities. It was where I found laughter, where I found hope, where I found courage, where I found love and what wouldn't I give to find my way back to Lagos.

- Timinepre Sheila, Nigeria

BATTLE GROUND

All these things happening. All this tension. She sighed and turned, suddenly noticing that he was no longer beside her. She sat up, looking around the room, seeking him. She noticed that he was not at his writing table by the corner and the bathroom lights were off. There was a chill creeping into the warmth of the room. She turned towards the open balcony windows, noticing the flutter of the curtains and her man, standing by the railing lost in his thoughts. Gathering the blankets around her nakedness, she propped herself on pillows, watching him.

She, "All this fog blanketing us and I still feel cold."

He chuckled at her reference before replying, "Then cover yourself up."

"The blanket is too thin."

"Then wear your clothes."

"Why should I when you are here?"

"Because I'm cold too."

"Then snuggle up and canoodle with me."

"While naked? We'll get pregnant."

"The womb is an oven, the baby will be warm..."

He noticed the hesitation in her hope filled reply, which managed to tug at his heart-strings. He wanted a baby too. It was almost Christmas, everyone would be asking. Especially his mother. But he wanted them to wait. He needed to be ready. But who was ever ready? Who?

He sighed, worry creasing the laugh lines on his face, the silence already awkward.

"And when it's born, which blanket will it use?"

"Then we will light a fire."

"We have no wood."

Without making a noise, she had left the bed, with the blankets held snugly on her bosom. The threadbare blanket threatened to succumb to her heavy bosom. She traced a finger on his back, startling him. He turned to watch her, curious and confused as to why she would leave that warmth for this cold. His cold. Him.

"Light a fire in me."

She whispered, even though no one else would have heard the words in their solitude. The trees surrounded their abode, shading them from the outside glare. The fog too enveloped them in a halo that was their own. It was just the two of them, and the nature. Their own little world amidst the chaos that life was. Cupping her face in his palm, he gently turned her face upwards to face him, her short frame against his tall one, questions in his eyes, and hope in hers.

"Have I not been doing enough?"

She looked away shyly, before answering him.

"Embers need rekindling."

He embraced her, his cold body against her warmth. His hard against her soft, letting the waves of pent up emotions carry them. Gruff and overcome with emotion, he whispered to her,

"Then stroke me..."

Like a matchstick against its box...

And I will burn for you."

He kissed her, guiding her gently into the bedroom, shutting out the world in their embrace.

- - Irene Nzisa Kioko, Kenya

writers Africa Space

We are happy to announce that the Writers Space Africa Literary Magazine is open for submissions.
We are accepting submissions from African writers, irrespective of age.

The maximum word counts are as follows:

Flash Fiction: 100 words

Short Stories: 800 Words

Plays: 1,000 Words

Literary Essays (Personal or Literary): 2,500 Words

Poetry: 1 poem of not more than 18 lines

Please consider:

1. The author retains full copyright of any work published.
2. Some selected write-ups will be published on our website.
3. Although we want every writer to have an opportunity to be published, each write-up will be judged. We will publish only the best.
4. We only accept electronic submissions in: doc, docx or txt.
5. Deadline is October 15, 2017.

To submit, please visit: www.writersspace.net/submission

If you have any questions or encounter technical difficulties, please contact us at:

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We look forward to reading your work.