



Empowering African Writers



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A silver laptop is positioned in the upper left corner of the image, resting on a dark brown wooden surface. The laptop's keyboard and trackpad are visible, and the screen shows some text. The rest of the image is a close-up of the wood grain.

Editorial

Are you being your brother's keeper?

If my brother is in trouble so am I... goes that famous song. It's your social media account alright. I'm not by any chance dictating what should go up. It's your personal social media account. You own it, I get it but do you stop to think of that other person? When you post pictures of your chubby beautiful baby with 49 others, have you ever thought of that poor woman who can't conceive yet you tag her along with your beautiful baby pictures. She likes your photos alright. Bursting in your happy bubble, you are ignorant of her wounds.

You recently got engaged and soon after got married. You won't let others breathe. Whats with you flooding the internet with glossy photos of the engagement ring and wedding photos? Give us a break! Taking your personal problems to Facebook won't save your marriage, won't salvage your dying business, won't add nothing of value in your life. Gloating, showing off and hurtful comments belong to the trash can, with no recycling.

The wrath that is twitter, the envy that is facebook and the pride that is instagram and those other apps that the e-generation indulge. Rather, use them to sell your brand, grow your business and all the while respecting other people's internet bundles.

The question remains. Are you being your brother's keeper?

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SAVING MAMA

WANANGWA MWALE

Zambia



“Mama,” tears running down my face. I extended my arm as I tried to reach out and hug her one more time. **“We have to save her, I will be her super hero.”** I tried to break free from my aunt’s arms that were wrapped around my tiny body. Five years old, I didn’t understand when my elder brother whispered, **“Mama is in that box.”** As he wept, he covered his face between his folded arms. **“They will bury her and we will never see her again.”**

“Don’t take my Mama,” I cried loudly, **“we can still save her.”**



FLAMES OF FURY

Edith Adhiambo Osiro
Kenya

The moth season had been active, drawn to the light. The moth travelled in the dark of night to Molo and watched a bickering couple. “Look into the flames,” it fluttered into the husband’s eyes. “Don’t you love the yellow-red intertwine soaring up like the rage inside you?” The husband rubbed the granite against the matchstick and lit his family orange. As the moth’s ommatidium glared, the heat razed all his victim’s bone and blood to unrecognizable ash that huddled together in the anguish of a father’s lunacy. It was the nextday when the neighbours dared to sift through charred bedsheets to find the toddlers. Next time the moth would spice things up by inflaming a woman. When they say love is hot, the moth knew just how many couple’s squabbles had ignited the heat. The moth had never lacked a fireplace by this heated love, and arguments that raged down families. What an opportunity to be positively phototactic when people are burning in love!

The moth found another flame in the slum. It was only two nights ago when two

old-timers lit his passion. Now, he heard a wife muttering with those sticks that the moth loved dearly. The bonfire was huge, like a spitting volcano. Amber like the dress she had wanted for her anniversary. “The fool said better to stock the house, let’s show him otherwise,” the moth churned her up. Never mind that her neighbours lost everything in their houses due to her rage, now the miserable wife hid in caves, too afraid to light the flame that could attract police to her. The residents were tented in schools turned refugee camps as they blamed some tycoon or their crafty electrical connections.

Neighbours blazed the trail by designing new arbitration methods. Shops were smouldering after the moth’s night long parties by “accidental fires.” How many times does Gikomba market need to char, little moth? “Enough times to shrink the largest wardrobe in East & Central Africa to a one-street thrifting expedition,” the moth chuckled over a cup of chai.

Before you conclude that the moth is a sadistic arsonist, you should understand how he lights up a flame. The friction must be there, you just need to spark it. Friction can be strife, always strife, rarely a psychological disorder. Neighbours do not agree? The moth says land squabbles are best solved over a bonfire. Neighbours resorting to heated arguments to set things straight? Turn the heat up in the kitchen and blow the weak one’s ashes out. Students don’t want exams? The moth suggests holding parents and teachers ransom by charring dorms and books. High schools, all the way to universities must prepare for academic bonfires, be street smart and learn from protestors and police. An old woman looks at people funny with witch eyes? Burn her, but spare her plush lands.

They say hell is full of flames. It seems the world is ever incendiary, celebrating fire daily like the moth. But even the moth’s travels grow duller with more light. Soon it will not be able to travel to every pyromaniac and unleash the volcanic eruption that simmers underneath. But you can be sure the inferno is not dying anytime soon...



THE BARBERS' SHOPS

Chiemezie Onwubalili
Nigeria

At dusk on Thursday they came. Sam had waited all week. He knew their hair was due for a cut. The Ubani family was the only family that cut their hair in his shop. Every other person in the village went to the shop opposite. They were just two of them that came. He took his time knowing that no one else would come anytime soon.

When he was done, he sat in front of his shop and looked intensely at the shop opposite, at the coloured lights, at the people going inside and then with rage he looked at the owner. He was fat, short, and when he breathed, his body expanded as though it would explode. He sat on a plastic chair, laughing loudly and stupidly with nobody. The burning hatred was mutual and the short fat barber looked unwaveringly at Sam.

A strange looking old man stopped in front of Sam's shop. Sam hurried in the darkness and put on the generator. He couldn't hide his excitement. He behaved like a child who had just received a gift and doesn't know what to do with it. He acted silly, giggled and almost spilled every liquid on his desk. When the euphoria calmed, he began to cut the old man's hair. Again he took his time, as the old man might be the last customer for the week.

"He destroyed your business," the strange old man said out of nowhere. Sam stopped and looked at him through the mirror, and their eyes met. His beard was grey and dirty. There was something wicked and ominous about his look, something inexplicable.

Sam did not respond. He continued cutting the hair. "He destroyed your business," the

strange old man repeated. "Your shop is dirty, they say, not flashy, not modern and your haircut is ancient, but is that true?" The strange old man fixed his gaze at Sam through the mirror. "Is that true? Don't you think he did this on purpose? To send you home so he will own the whole street and even take away the Ubanis!" Sam never said anything, but he listened intently and the colour of his eyes turned red and his lips vibrated with rage and rancour. Despite the fan on the ceiling, tiny drops of sweat broke on his forehead.

"I think he buried it around here, whatever he did to make this possible, in front of your shop or in front of his shop, behind, wherever, but it's around here. You just have to find it."

When he was done cutting the man's hair he moved out and stood in front of his shop. The rage and hatred more intense, so fired up as though it was a beast living inside him trying to bust him open. Sam lived in the shop. His wife had left him for another man a year ago. She went away with their two children and he had no idea where they lived or whether they were still alive. He became uncomfortable and began to pace about the front of his shop. At 10pm, the fat barber closed. Sam watched him as he closed the first door. He watched him as he closed the second door and it took everything in him to remain seated by the wall, looking fiercely at the short fat barber.

The street was deserted. Only Sam lived on the street. The street was known as the Barber's Street. Whoever came through the street from the right was there to cut his or her hair because the left side of the street led to nowhere. Thirty minutes after the fat barber left, Sam brought a hoe and dug about his shop. When he found nothing, he went to the other shop. By three in the morning, exhausted and mad with fury for finding nothing, he had his bath and went to bed. He slept through the whole day and only opened his shop at five in the evening.

Once he opened the shop, the fat barber began to sing loudly with a voice that sounded as though the song was choking him.

Some people envy me
Some people envy me
Because I'm a big man.

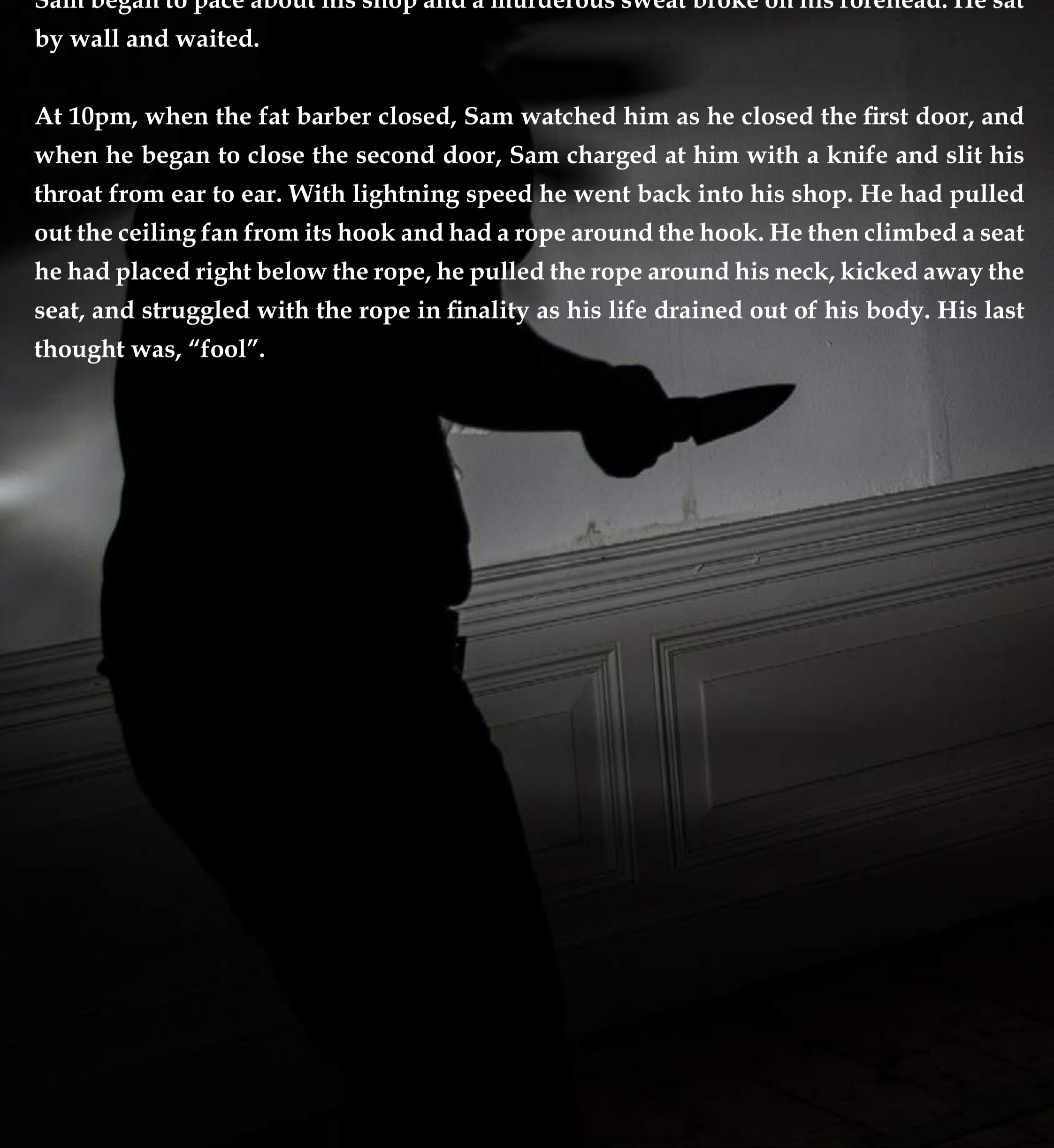
He sang it with fervour, pointing at the dug up earth, at Sam's miserable shop and then would turn to his own shop with his arms spread out wide and sing the praise of his

successful shop. That he built it with his ingenuity and knocked out an old out-of-date shop.

Sam sat by the wall watching the fat barber and when the beast of anger in him began to threaten to tear his skin out he went inside. When the song stopped, he came out. At dusk he saw the strange old man with the wicked eyes. The strange old man stopped in the middle of the shops and looked at the opposite sides. His eyes met those of Sam but he said nothing to him and moved on into the path that led nowhere.

Sam began to pace about his shop and a murderous sweat broke on his forehead. He sat by wall and waited.

At 10pm, when the fat barber closed, Sam watched him as he closed the first door, and when he began to close the second door, Sam charged at him with a knife and slit his throat from ear to ear. With lightning speed he went back into his shop. He had pulled out the ceiling fan from its hook and had a rope around the hook. He then climbed a seat he had placed right below the rope, he pulled the rope around his neck, kicked away the seat, and struggled with the rope in finality as his life drained out of his body. His last thought was, "fool".



THE GATE

Misak Workneh

Sirrrrr

The door cricked open

Sirrrr

It clicked shut again, in a seemingly routine manner that somehow managed to comprise its *raison d'être*. A hand reached out and pushed it aside. The strong rays of the sun sifted through the cracks in the windows, peeling paint resting atop the flanges of the gate. The band of misfits who congregated around the bar didn't even flinch to the recurring sounds. Lost in the haze of smokes that resembled an old maiden's hair lock; they locked eyes with their glasses in a one-sided staring contest.

Sirrr

The door sighed, somehow the groan came off in the same manner as the ones that preceded it.

"I wonder where this one is going!" It mused. It seemed a bit early for such kind of commotion. Many hands had parted its hinges over the years; yet, this

seemed unusual, almost uncannily weird. The door didn't know what to make of it. It suddenly shook with a violent force.

"I can't take it!" the door said, its frame shook with a sudden surge of anger that seemed to emanate out of its innate being. "All this back and forth."

The wall kept silent, for it knew all, had seen all, and heard all. Its peeled paper skins rustled as if mirroring its whirling thoughts. "The back and forth is our nature," the wall suddenly spoke with a tone that seemed to convey a bit of mirth. "We were made to keep intruders out and provide privacy for our makers and inhabitants....If not for this then what is the point of us being here?"

A hand suddenly pushed the door aside, "damn you!" the door screamed. Yet the scream came off as little more than a distinct creak as a guy who draped a young girl went passed the door. "You see!" it protested as it swung towards the wall. "The guy? He keeps coming back with different girls every day."

The wall kept silent again; for it knew that this was something it had experienced, the zeal of youngsters.

How we all think we know better, we all think we know what we deserve and what we ought to have. Only the sands of time will put us in our place, the routine of day to day life corrodes one out of his self-value, respect, and delusion. The question of, "what's my purpose? What's my place?" eventually gets sanded away into a begrudging acceptance.

Yet, despite his inner monologue he dared not say it out aloud. The wall exhaled slowly, rustling the papers on it. The wall paper fluttered as if on the verge of being torn from its vantage point.

"Whoa, whoa. Calm down big guy." The wall paper warned jokingly. "What's

causing all this commotion?"

"He's having a bad day," the wall replied apprehensively.

"I'm not having a bad day; I'm having a bad life." the door said vehemently. "I cannot stand all this depravity."

"Depravity? What depravity?" the paper cackled.

"I'm tired of witnessing the depravity that's going on inside closed doors, I'm tired of the shady deals taking place, the cheating, the betrayal and the treachery of these people." It shook again in its frame. "I've had it; I shall not take part in this debauchery, I've had enough, I'm getting out." The wall paper laughed uncontrollably, shaking with amusement until one side of its edge came loose and draped downward, looking like a misshapen scowl of an old spinster. A man came and reattached the loose edge.

"Tell me man, how the hell are you planning to get out of this? With your legs?"

The wall paper continued laughing.

"Do not mock me," the door growled, standing still.

"Oh, forgive me your holiness," the wall paper whispered. "I forgot you used to run with the church crowd." He guffawed, re-tearing the edge that was fixed moments before.

The man shuffled begrudgingly towards the wall paper. "Cursed paper, keeps peeling." He murmured while patching the paper in its place.

"You think I'm joking huh?" The door said in a menacing tone.

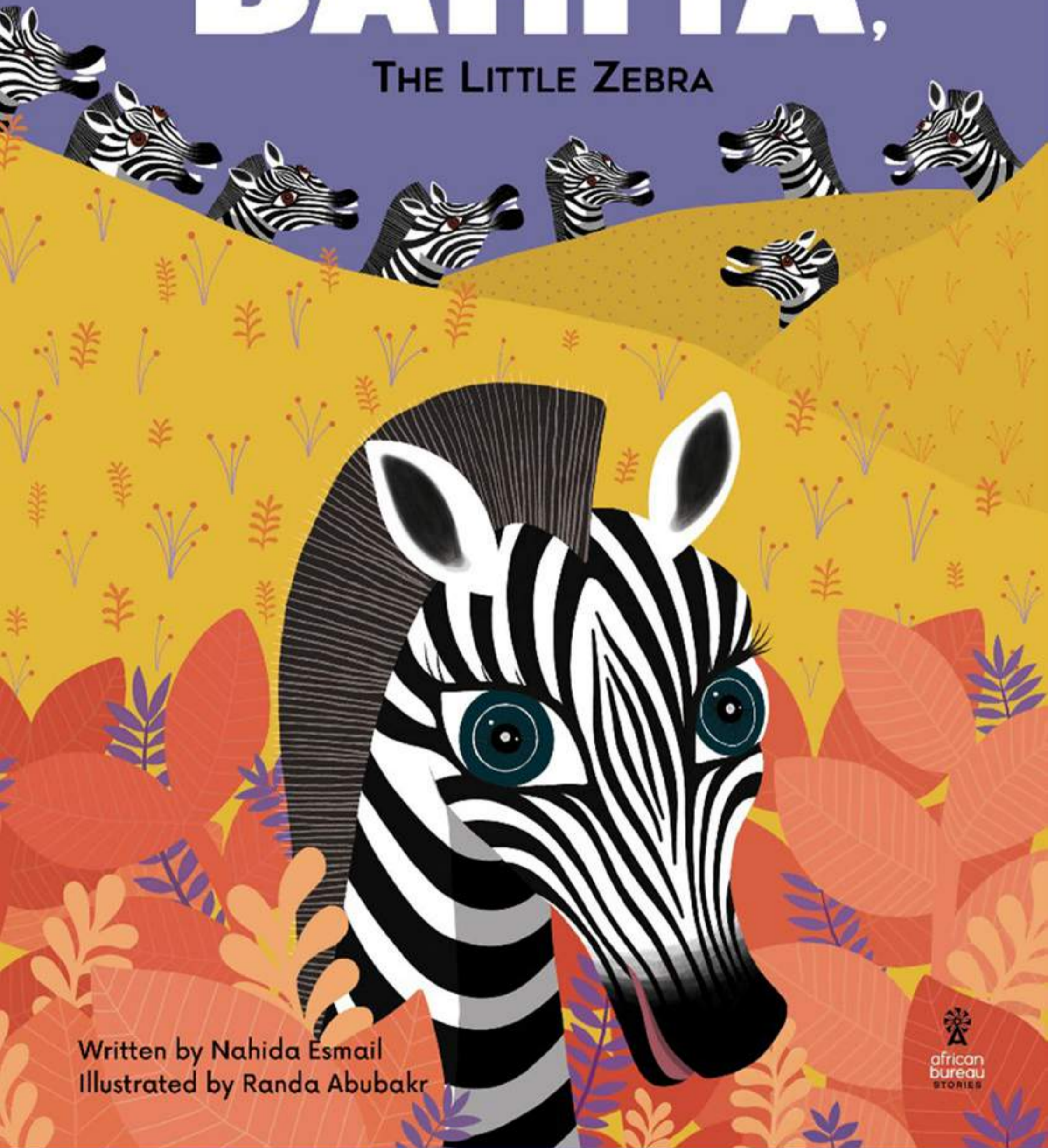
"What are you planning to do?" The wall asked.

"I'm going to refuse, no more getting through!" The door exclaimed determinedly.

"Sic Semper Tyrannis!" with a final scream the door sealed itself shut. Trapping all before it and after it with one final act of defiance.

BAHIYA,

THE LITTLE ZEBRA



Written by Nahida Esmail
Illustrated by Randa Abubakr



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THE SLUGGARD

Tomorrow crawls up your sleeves but you do not hearken.

Rather, you kick up dust

And play blame games in the mud

While the frail eyes of your mind

See other hands turning brown to green.

Tomorrow cries as you kick up more dust

You still do not listen

Rather, using your grimy brown fingers,

You lift seeds into your mouth.

Your teeth crush nearly all

Yet you blame enemies for their death.

Tomorrow comes.

You dash out of the mud

And spit your last seeds into your hand.

Finally ready to till, you rush to the field

The soil hisses and other hands wave at you.

You finally see: They could not turn your brown to green.

While their teeth chew fruits, yours gnash in pain

And your entire body weeps, for it is too late.

Ife Olatona,

Nigeria

THESE TIMES SHALL PASS

The lyrics repeat themselves
Again and again
These times shall pass
I understand the lyrics to a song when my heart aches
When it fails to be understood
When it cannot rise to meet expectation
Hard times are going to pass
I watch my eyes in the mirror
Wondering, lacking commitment,
wanting transparency, needing assurance
My reflection is deep
Tis uncertain, tis searching for answers
But the winds came and the winds left
And the numbers never came
My black cardamom coffee is tipping
Little bubbles go through it trying to come to the top
I watch this drink that my ancestors drank
Tis calling for me, I bring it to my lips and take a sip
These times shall pass
These hard times shall pass

Shamsa Suleiman,
Tanzania

WAIT



When tomorrow comes and I'm gone
Spread my wings like dove in the sky
Remember
I led a good life while alive
And my reward on high I'll receive

When tomorrow comes and I'm set to leave
Prepare me for the groom to see
Remember
I've waited so long for this day
So I'll smile amidst flood of tears

When tomorrow comes and he never comes
I'll sit and stare at the sky
Remember
None can tell the time nor hour
Though his time they say is best

Joy James,
Nigeria

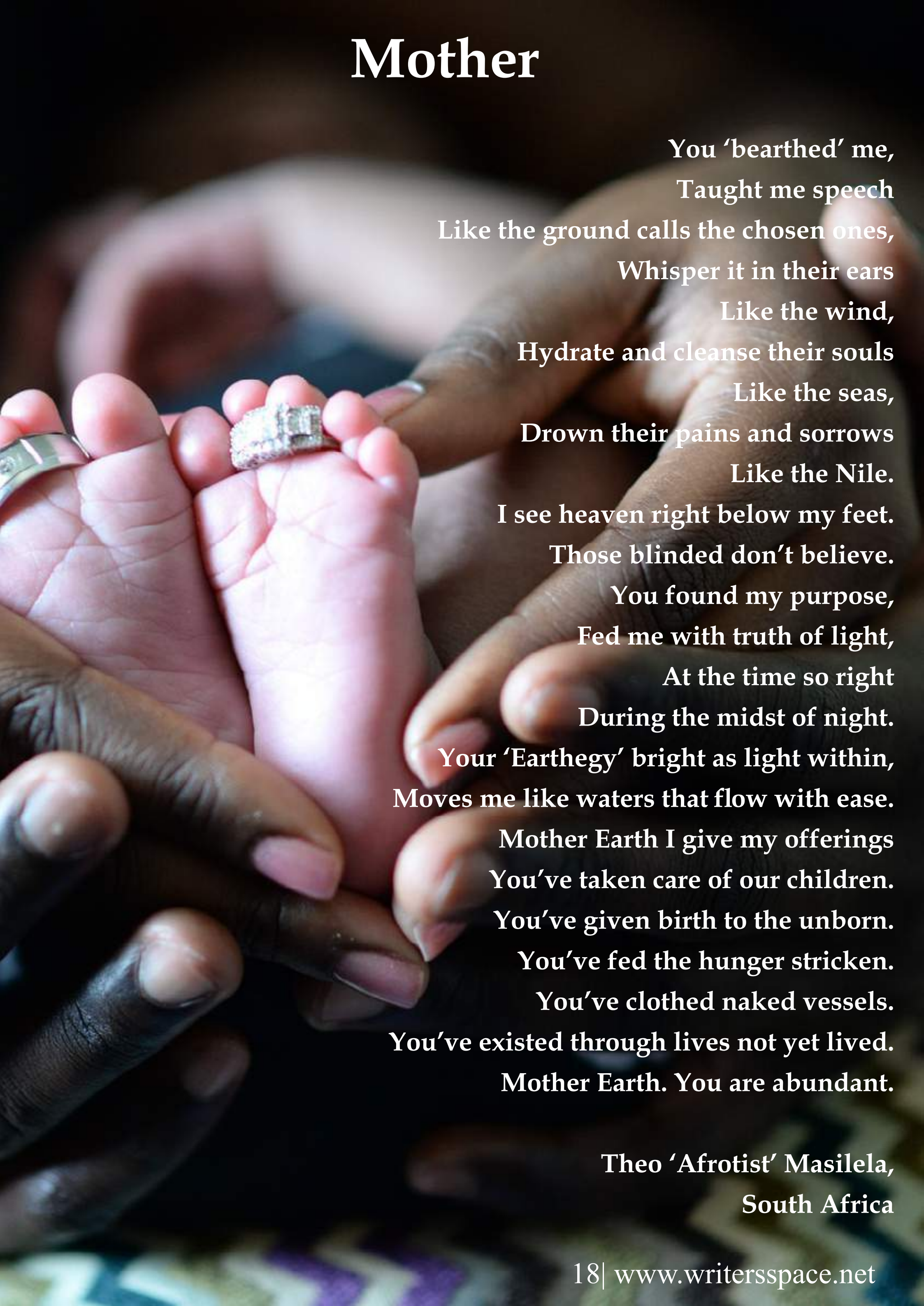
A DEAD DEAL



The claimant had whined and wailed
But availed no bit to what was said
Though justice would it all unsay
The jurist, paid to 'do his work'
Then heard no pledge
Save of him who signed his wage
His freedom all tamed
His confidence all caged, still as stone,
Had no feel for the poor man's talk
"How'd I bill those bucks to prison?"
"Again, how'd I kill for vain reason?"
His heart felt ill
But again not ill, "it's not a big deal,"
"Keep still," he comforts his heart.
Soon has turned on him the dime
To strangle the ill, or save the wobbly
Scared as he was; this time did squeeze him down
The walls uttered naught, the gallery turned a clot
Silent, spare the ticking clock, the gavel, heavy, hot
Breaths all were still, waiting on the Pilate's Seal.
At last he struck it down;
"... I'd make the worst clown
If I kill the weak and save the ill!"
The wrong for same they'd pay the bill.

Shimbo Pastory,
Tanzania

Mother



You 'bearthed' me,
Taught me speech
Like the ground calls the chosen ones,
Whisper it in their ears
Like the wind,
Hydrate and cleanse their souls
Like the seas,
Drown their pains and sorrows
Like the Nile.
I see heaven right below my feet.
Those blinded don't believe.
You found my purpose,
Fed me with truth of light,
At the time so right
During the midst of night.
Your 'Eartheyg' bright as light within,
Moves me like waters that flow with ease.
Mother Earth I give my offerings
You've taken care of our children.
You've given birth to the unborn.
You've fed the hunger stricken.
You've clothed naked vessels.
You've existed through lives not yet lived.
Mother Earth. You are abundant.

Theo 'Afrotist' Masilela,
South Africa

HEALER

A tender heart, soft as rose petals

A blossoming flower, striving for growth and power

Her eyes are a window to her doubtful soul,

You'll see the turmoil and feel her pain

But she'll take your hands and ease yours away

Voice tinted with humour and words carrying barrels of laughter

She'll wipe your tears with hands made to heal

And wrap you in an embrace filled with love and warmth

She'll tear down your shield and make you believe,

Telling you to seek Him who knows all things

And when your sorrow's gone, she'll take on her fears in all forms,

Thinking of what she'll become and struggling to be just a little more

She knows not what she means to us

She's a friend, a sister, a helper

She's our healer.

Maria Nicole Enwonwu Gandaho,

Benin Republic

FALLEN

If death sees you ripe for its harvest,
Tell me soon, tell me dear,
Let my blind ears tell my deaf tears,
I will listen, I will hear.

If tomorrow's arms may not hold you dear,
Tell my hands to keep you near,
And till your warmth fades like the morning mist,
Let your lips not resist,
Let your last inhales and exhales be mine.

Gabriel Owino Junior,
Kenya

FRANCA

Franca!

Will thy c'science playback

To th't evening in the cavern?

And how I wish that eve never gone,

To talk of how thy flair outdid th' queenly stars

Thee was mine moon

When th' curtains hath eclipsed the nocturnal noon

Lady!

Thou wert mine evening salve

Thou chided mi endless aches

And Brought'st a cheerful heart

To a weeping chap like me

O, how I'd wish calendars could recur

For th't eve to wink again and again.

Awuah Mainoo Gabriel,

(African-spear)

Ghana

THE JUDGE'S BREECHES

Despite our cleverness,
Forget the so called ingenuity.
No matter the education_
We wear so high and mighty
To spit on stupidity.
Democratically Still;
The big rapacious black rat
With unprosecuted gluttony_
Fattens of the hoi polloi's back.
Oh, look councillor.
The big loopy-hole in the
Judge's breeches.
From his stuffed head.
Corruption oozes_
Eating the core of our finances

Nyashadzashe chikumbu ,
Zimbabwe.



FEAR

Oh, your presence is paralyzing, those multiple mental battles you have won.
Your ugly cousin doubt, jubilantly announcing your arrival, but who invited you here?
You infiltrate homesteads and nations alike; your roots have dug deep into innocent souls.
How long will our people have to endure your bitter fruits?

You are the ice-cold behind the feet of a bride-to-be, causing her to flee the alter
Scared of a future with no forecasted honeymoons.

You know that she left behind a man with a bruised ego and shattered dreams?
You stood there watching another series of dreams evaporating into the sky
As you shamelessly flashed your toothless grin, doing your victory dance.

You quietly sneaked into my neighbour's yard, into her son's mind
He was dismissed from a meager job, but all he could see was you, disguised as the end
You told him that he was done for, about how useless he was
And he was found hanging from the poles of his mother's hut
With her favourite doek tied around his young neck.

If you were a colour, you would be an ugly shade of grey, black glazing for a glossy touch
As you wear your cloak of pride adorned with spikes and thorny bits
You walk around carrying a box full of blades as you destroy the flesh on your way in and out
The discomfort that you are, heart pounding, sweaty palms and a mouth as dry as the Kalahari
A blackout later, after you have sucked the light out of a burning spirit.

A jealous lover beats his woman to a pulp for wanting to leave, the love died, she wanted out.
You whispered to him, "Another man is going to touch her delicate skin, kiss the lips you have
kissed, eat from the same plate you ate in" and he believed you.

If he couldn't have her, no one else would, her blood on his hands, splashed on his white shirt, a
canvas of pain and regret, but it was too late. He will spend the rest of life running, from himself.

TSHEPO PHOKOJE,
Motswana



Writing is What I Do
Meaza Aklilu Hadera

by
Sandra Oma Etubiebi

There is a world where time seems to tick a second too quickly, a minute too early, and a lifetime faster. It is the world where journalism meets motherhood, and one woman bares it all. She is a mother, wife, journalist, and gender activist. Her work has gained national and international acceptance, being showcased all over Ethiopia and on three international festivals in Italy, London, and the United States of America. Her name is Meaza Aklilu Hadera, and she is quick to tell you that “writing is what I do.”

Meaza Aklilu Hadera started writing long before she thought about what she would like to be. According to her, “I was so deep in love with writing just at the time I started learning how to write. I started writing when I was a kid. I used to write poems, short stories and drama scripts for parents’ day in Tigrigna and Amharic languages. I won my first short story competition in the 8th grade. While at the university, I wrote my first novel in Amharic language. Although, I am yet to publish it, I have added three feature length movie scripts, more short stories, and poems.” This lover of writing has always led a life of putting thoughts to words as she admittedly said, “I think my passion for writing led me to journalism.”

Hadera leads the ideal life of a journalist. She sheds more insight into her life as a journalist, explaining that “There are two sides to the life of a journalist; the good side and the hard. The good side makes you smart and strong because you come across a lot of ups and downs while gathering information. It gives you the opportunity to visit places, meet new people and experience life in a bigger picture. The hard side of the story is that journalism takes all of your time. It becomes difficult to find enough time for yourself and your family. I had a painful experience when I had to go far away to cover a traditional ceremony on my daughter’s first birthday. Her first birthday meant a lot to me, and I missed it.” Despite frequent heart breaking stories like these, Hadera is undeterred in her career pursuit, not without many thanks to her unique nuclear family support system.

Meaza Aklilu Hadera makes you realise that every professional writer needs a support system. Being a woman with a tasking to-do list, she revealed that “Words give me the strength to let it all out. I am a mother, wife and journalist. My job

needs all the concentration I can get and my baby girl is only 18 months old. You can imagine how much she needs her mom. So finding time to think and write is pretty hard. But my husband does help me. He is my number one fan. He always tries to give me all the space I need every time I write, and He is the first person I read my writing to." Her supportive structure must be paying off as Meaza's globally commendable work underscores.

Meaza writings are clearly influenced by her role as a gender activist. She writes a lot on gender based violence, and that was the theme for her internationally acclaimed work, "Gender's Gift." When asked to elaborate on her gender based writing, she responded that "Well, I am a gender activist, so gender based violence is basically what I work on most of the time. And in a country like mine, it is hard to live free from gender based violence. Though we have a very nice culture and strong tradition, we also have customs that let our girls down coupled with the prevailing ignorance towards gender based violence. So, I fight battles with words today so my daughter and sisters, and the daughters and sisters of other mothers like me won't pass through this way again." In doing this work and interacting with the opposite sex, Meaza discovered that not all perpetrators do it deliberately, and her work is, at the very least, creating an awareness that opens their eyes to the evil of this violence.

Meaza is optimistic about the digital era and what it spells for her work in Ethiopia and around the world. She enthused that "Good is coming. The digital era is making the world a better place for writers and the impact of their writing. Take my story for example, I am contributing an article to Writers Space Africa from where I am, and through this platform I get to read and meet writers from all over Africa. I think it's time for Africa!" Hung on this enthusiasm still, she had more to say to writers, "Don't let anyone or any situation stop you from writing. Write in whatever language you want. Once you know how to write, translating won't be a problem. Feel free and confident to participate on international platforms like Writers Space Africa. Don't let anything stop you." This hardworking mother, wife, journalist, and gender activist makes light the challenges of her day as she rightly magnifies the value of every impact she makes, one word at a time. Thus, giving more meaning to those words, "Writing is what I do."

WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS

**Esho Oluwakemi,
Nigeria**



“We Should All Be Feminists is a book written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, where she articulated her views on what feminism entails. She posited that feminism is not synonymous with insult on women, rather it is a label that should be embraced by all. The book is a critical analysis on feminity, how it is construed, pointing out the fact that the society as a whole must change if we are to reach equality. Her focus was on domestic aspects as well as general areas, but in this context, the focus is on gender issues in the workplace and the society.

Feminism is a range of political, ideological, and social movements that share a common goal to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, and social equity of sexes. Feminism is a wholistic phenomenon, that cuts across every sphere of life. In Africa, using Nigeria as a case study, feminism doesn't receive the warm embrace of the people. Feminism is indeed a knotty issue, and many are averse to its discussion. There are many misconceptions about feminism that have to be cleared.

Feminists are not categories of ladies that despise men, they are not a group of unhappy women whom the society have relegated to the background either. Sadly, this is the myopic view people, men and women alike have as regards feminism.

They are people who, according to the true meaning of the word seek equal opportunities for both sexes. They fight for a society where everyone has a level playing ground, and opportunities are not given on the basis of your sex. Factually, they do not seek to usurp the position of men in the society.

There are several gender issues that have plagued the society, yet it has been accepted as the norm. Masculinity has been accepted as the human default, while any other thing is seen as a deviation - the bane of a patriarchal society. Taking a look at the workplace, glass walls have been placed in many fields of work, serving as a mechanism limiting women from attaining the peak of their chosen careers. There are biases against women in the workplace ranging from sexual molestation, to unequal pay for equal work done, gender sensitive issues, among others.

Pointing the torch at knotty issues in the society, such as rape, Female Genital Mutilation, child marriage, etc, have subjected women to hell on earth. Rape, infact, is a man's offence and a woman's punishment. Women are forced into silence, bearing the shame alone rather than being allowed to seek justice against the rapist. It is quite unfortunate that women have been forced into a mould created by the society, and are expected to conform to societal norms strictly for women so as to be accepted in the society, and not to be seen as deviants. Women's aspirations are somewhat curtailed because adequate resources are not provided, and when they are, it will be easier for a donkey to pass through the eye of a needle than for a woman to have it.

It is heart wrenching to live with the fact that many women have accepted this as their story, and would rather enjoy the comfort of their subjugation than to be termed deviants. Many women have become too timid to materialise their dream because they feel a woman should not be over ambitious, so as to accommodate a man in her life. This, and many other things are what have plagued the society, and feminists rise up to fight against such ills, seeking a level playing ground for all. Feminism seeks gender equity. Gender equity is sameness amongst the sexes; taking cognisance of their individual abilities and uniqueness, and providing for them equal opportunities and equal resources for both the male and female sexes.

WE NEED COMPETENT AND SELFLESS LEADERS

By
Kweku Sarkwa
(The Romantic Writer)

One may say we need money in order to push the country forward but even in the presence of all these resources available, we still find it even more difficult and complicated to achieve such aim of development that we seek. A 2008 study found that only 32.6 percent of surveyed companies felt prepared to fill leadership positions, 3.5 percent of the surveyed companies felt extremely prepared to fill leadership positions, 9.7 percent of the surveyed companies felt extremely unprepared to fill leadership positions, 19.4 percent of the surveyed companies felt unprepared to fill leadership positions and 34.7 percent of the surveyed companies were neither prepared nor unprepared to fill leadership positions (An Oracle white paper, June 2012). Under this survey, it was observed that there were two major problems: the problem of finding creative and capable personnel to fit those leadership positions, and the problem of creating leadership programs to educate the personnel to fit the future leadership positions to ensure effective development.

This survey gives information that explains vividly that for a country to develop, there is the need to get a strong and extremely prepared human resource to fit leadership roles since every country's development depends on its skilled labour. It goes up through the nation's youth development from childhood education to adulthood preparing the children mentally and socially to take up the mantle from their predecessors. This is important because the development of every country depends mainly on its human resources. There are lots of leadership theories, but the best leadership theory which best fits every organization or a country is the situational leadership which argues that every situation has its own style of providing

solutions. A typical example can be found in the medical field as a paracetamol becomes ineffective for curing stomach ache.

Thinking of companies, every government tries within its power to provide jobs for the people but even if we get lots of companies and industries at our disposal but refuse to manage them properly, we then return from hero to zero. Right from infancy, we acquire informal education from our various homes by respecting the elders and running errands for the old and feeble as well as our parents (not necessarily our biological parents) since charity begins at home. Also acquiring formal education as one studies throughout laid down stages in schools and institutions to obtain certificates where there are also rules and regulations that govern and shape an individual for his society, family and the nation as a whole. A former United States of America President, Abraham Lincoln said that Democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people which explains that development comes through team work as each and everyone plays his role in the process of good nation building according to the principle of the separation of power. A true visible sign of development can be shown when there is the cultivation of positive and patriotic mentality towards one's own country that is very strong and firm in a way that can never be compromised.





BLUNTNESS IS BRUTAL

White, colour, or black; which are you?

It's funny, how this world operates; giving a class category to everything that exists in the universe including the human race. We're blinded by class categories and so, before we make any move, we want to know what class we are dealing with: rich or poor, white or black or colour, and so on. I could take that for parts of speech in grammar, planets, drugs, food, and everything else minor you can list, but definitely not for human existence. I shouldn't have to explain my race before embarking on any endeavour. In fact, the word 'race' and the context in which it is used is one that should be spewed out of the dictionary.

Ordinarily, I would think it simply academic to have the human race classified based on the diversity of mankind (biological, genetic composition, language, tradition, culture and social practices); however, the rate at which man is desperate to distinguish himself from others is alarming. Really alarming. Now, let's get a bit academic; I need you to catch a glimpse of my thought line.

Charles Darwin drew the division line between the caucasoids, australoids, mongoloids, and negroids. The caucasoids are "physically characterized by light skin colour

ranging from white to dark wheatish, straightish to wavy hair with colour ranging from flaxen to brownish to dark ebony..." The negroids are "physically characterized by dark skin due to dense pigmentation, coarse black and wooly hair, wide noses..." The mongoloids are "characterized by yellowish or light wheatish skin, extremely straight and black hair..." The australoids are basically classified based on geographical location and regional culture than biological or genetic traits. They are believed to be sub-races of the negroids which the 'Out of Africa Theory' explains migrated from the African continent and moved along the Southeast Asian coast toward the Asian land mass. (Quotes and paraphrase from Biologywise.com.) The mongoloids are Native Americans, Japan, China, Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, among others. Caucasoids are Europeans (including some indo-europeans), Asia Minor, North Africa and Western Asia (there's more though). The australoids are Melanesia, Australia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, etc. The Negroids are easier identified than any other race: Black Africans and blacks scattered across other continents.

'People of colour' originally refers to light skinned people of mixed African and European heritage; however, it is used by the Americans to primarily refer to non-whites. Most Africans and some parts of the world term the Europeans, Australians, and white Americans as 'whites'. Other colours that are not 'black' are viewed as the people of colour.

Now this is jaw-dropping. Follow my thoughts please. Wikipedia has it that Trinidad has a record of numerous descriptions of the human race according to their skin tone: high red- part white; part black but 'clearer' than brown skin; high brown- more white than black; dougla - part Indian and part black; light skinned, or clear skinned; some black, but more white; trini white- perhaps not all white, behaves like others but skin white. And guess what? I found out some years back that one born of white and black parents is termed 'grey' in complexion. Wow! I'm about to laugh.

As as far as I'm concerned, whatever skin colour you are or 'Darwinian race' you belong to, you are entitled to everything made available to the human for comfort

and existence. All of these class categories simply aid in unequal treatment and unequal allocation of financial, social and political resources. Should we feel awkward about anyone at all, it should be based on moral values and standards. For instance, say, you irk or puke at the sight of a murderer or thief; that may be okay. Religion regardless, race regardless, skin type and colour regardless, gender regardless, ethnicity and tribe regardless, we are the same. Come to think of it, procreation is what brought about the billions of men and women of today's world. This simply tells us that we are descendants of the same family who have over time multiplied and spread about the entire universe. Ditch the Big Bang Theory; we didn't just come about. One truth we do not know and see is that working with the mentality of race and colour is one of the major reasons why the world, including the so-called developed countries and continents, is at a stand-still. There's a lot more development and advancement that the universe can enjoy should we see one another as same and work together in unity. We talk of SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals) but this, besides other factors, can be achieved with the flick of a finger if we put away racism and discrimination.

All said and done, this is my conclusion: there's only one race that exists (if the word 'race' should be used at all), and that is "THE HUMAN RACE." So, Negroid, australoid, caucasoid, mongoloid; white, colour or black; which are you?

(Some of the sources of information used in this column are drawn from Wikipedia, Biologywise.com and Quora.com. Others are personal.)

About the columnist:

Gabrielina Gabriel-Abhie is a writer, book editor, and broadcast journalist; a reporter and editor with Writers Space Africa online magazine. She's a preacher of her propaganda and a believer in equality and truth. Her essay contents span various topics from child abuse, politics, to gender equality, racism, tribalism, and as many issues as can be touched. She is a general interest blogger too. In her opinion, her blog should not be mistaken for a rant but one that focuses on heart splitting issues. She can be contacted via theroaringwriter@gmail.com or gabrielina.gabriel@gmail.com



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