

WRITERS SPACE AFRICA



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Love

This Kind of Love
To Love a Crazy Witch

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WRITERS SPACE AFRICA

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Writers Space Africa, a monthly literary online magazine dedicated to giving new literary enthusiasts a platform for their work, welcomes submissions for her [April 2020 Edition](#) in the following categories:



Short story



Flash fiction



Poetry



Essays



Children's Literature

The theme for submission is [Failure](#)

The submission window is open from **1st of February to 14th February**. Response time is typically within **4 to 5 weeks after submission** window closes.

We look forward to receiving your best work!

To submit, please visit www.writersspace.net/submissions

Editor's Note

There is a common narrative that love is easy to write about. This is a half-truth. Like most things in life, love is a paradox: it has the ability to be all things good, and all things difficult.

I have begun on this note because I believe all stories must be told from more than one perspective. With Love, we are more inclined to speak of the supportive family, the butterflies in our bellies, the taste of good food and the talk of love at first sight. To tell the complete truth about love, we must be willing to talk about the hard edges that do not soften regardless of how much time goes by; the bad moments that make the good ones worthwhile; the loss that comes with gain; and the things we endure in a bid to hold onto what we know.

Love still remains the most powerful thing in the world; it is both the breaker of barriers and the builder of bridges. There is no force on earth that can hold both descriptions without being at once, ugly and beautiful. It is this reality that writers have an obligation of capturing.

The selected entries in this edition are a glimpse into the many facets of love as seen through the eyes of our contributors. It is in their collective work that you see how love knows no distinction – be it biological, familial or societal. Love is Storge – it tells us there's nothing better than family; Love is Philios – we all know the warmth of great friends; Love is Eros – some of us will have the privilege of experiencing how possible it'll be to become two in one; and Love is Agape – selfless, unbiased, unconditional, unadulterated.

I hope you enjoy reading Love as much as the team did, but more than that, I hope you get the chance to experience the whole truth of love.

Always remember, Ubuntu.

Warm regards,

Nabilah.

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LOVE



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A romantic scene of a man and a woman walking on a beach at sunset. They are silhouetted against the bright orange and yellow sky, holding hands. The ocean waves are visible in the foreground, and the couple's reflections are seen in the wet sand.

Short Story

“It was okay because I loved him. He loved me too, he always reassured me”

This kind of Love

Jacqueline Ngao
Kenya



It is midnight again and Samu is not yet home. I absent mindedly rub at the goose bumps on my arms and shiver a little. It is a chilly night, yet the shivers seem to be completely unrelated to the cold. A stray dog barks in the distance; closer still, there is the sound of glass breaking. Somehow these sounds have become familiar; over the months they have come closest to being confidants. Most nights they keep me company, we vigilantly wait for the sky to get even darker so that Samu can finally come home. Sleepiness stings my eyes; my weary body begs for sleep, but Samu is the man I love and so I wait.

The night light casts a shadow on the carpeted floor through the window I opened to keep me awake. I try to make sense of the shadow formed and my mind gives up a few minutes later. I smile in nostalgia, remembering when Samu and I first met. He was extremely good at riddles and I was quite the problem solver. For some reason, no matter how hard I racked my brain, I

hardly solved any of his riddles. I guess that's why I completely hated his guts when we first met. That and the fact that he walked with such confidence and ease. It didn't help that I found him attractive. In hindsight, I think I hated that he threatened my intelligence in such a nonchalant way that even hating him seemed wrong, and of course that infuriated me further. Somehow, during that class trip we took, the line between hate and love magically thinned out. Slowly, we became more friends than enemies and later, more lovers than friends - must have been something about how opposites attract.

When we got back to campus two weeks later, we had hung out long enough to miss each other's company. Unfortunately, exam season had just descended upon the campus and we somehow drifted apart, each on a mission to secure their degree. Many days later, Samu bumped into me outside campus and needless to say, we picked up right where we left off.

He walked me from my dormitory to the cafeteria; we shared a plate of food occasionally as all love birds do; mokimo was our favorite meal. I unwillingly fell head over heels in love with this man. I put up a fight initially; to me, emotions are for the weak, but soon enough I came to realize I wasn't going to win that fight and resigned to what fate had in store for me.

A muscle cramp on my leg brings me back to reality, I look at the watch and realize that I've been sitting in this one position for 45 minutes. Samu is still not home; even the stray dog has resigned to silence. I feel the fear creep into my heart, an icy grip that makes it hard for me to breathe. It hasn't always been this way, only recently has fear been my default emotion when thinking of Samu. Five months after the class trip, he and I had become so inseparable such that it made the most sense to move in together. It was amazing really, living together much like a fairytale. I hadn't had much of those and I welcomed the feeling with LOVE

open arms - perhaps too eagerly.

When I first began to know Samu, I discovered that he was quite introverted, even more introverted than I was. I always thought that was one of the reasons we took to each other so well. Another thing I loved was how protective he was. I hadn't ever had that much amount of care directed at me. Soon I was so deep in love I couldn't remember how I had ever survived before then. And just like any other kind of love, I overlooked some things, banged doors, raised voices, insults. It was okay because I loved him. He loved me too, he always reassured me...after he had calmed down.

One night, Samu came back home completely drunk. He was unable to continue with school; financial difficulties at home, he had said. That was the beginning of the downward spiral; a drunken Samu slowly became a common occurrence. Then the violence swept in, and it still amazes





me how quickly life turned into a nightmare.

From afar, I hear someone fumble with the gate - it's him. I can hear footsteps climb up the stairs now. They sound more like a person carrying the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; a weight I'm willing to bear with him, but I'm not allowed to. I slowly walk to the door, and stop by the mirror. I observe the fear in my eyes - a strange sight. And my face, I look tired like I have aged overnight.

I'm surprised as to when things got this bad. Where have I seen this face before? The memory comes to me at once, almost painfully, as vivid as a dream. A drunken father stumbling past a corrugated wood door in the dead of night. A woman, my mother, waiting quietly opposite the door. Then there is little me, out of my bed, awoken by the noise. I sneeze a little, and she turns swiftly, the fear still stuck in her eyes. Firmly, she gestures at me to go back to bed. I run back to

bed, but those scared eyes follow me and haunt me even in my dreams.

I gasp at the irony of life, the cruelty of it all. Bracing myself, I walk to the door. Samu stumbles in. He forcefully grabs my arm and throws me on a chair. I'm taken back to a conversation that took place 17 years ago. "But why do you stay mamii?" I ask after seeing her tend to one of her wounds from the night before. "I love your father Shiro. You wouldn't understand." she answers turning away to hide a tear that streams down.

In present time, Samu begins his assault much like every other night. I zone out as blow after blow rains down on me. I should probably run away and save my life, but Samu is the man I love. I guess it's a small price to pay.

Tomorrow I know he will apologize because he still loves me.



Flash Fiction

“Besides, leaving a man because he
cheats is like leaving Zambia because it
rains”

Victim of Love

Majory Moono Simuyuni
Zambia

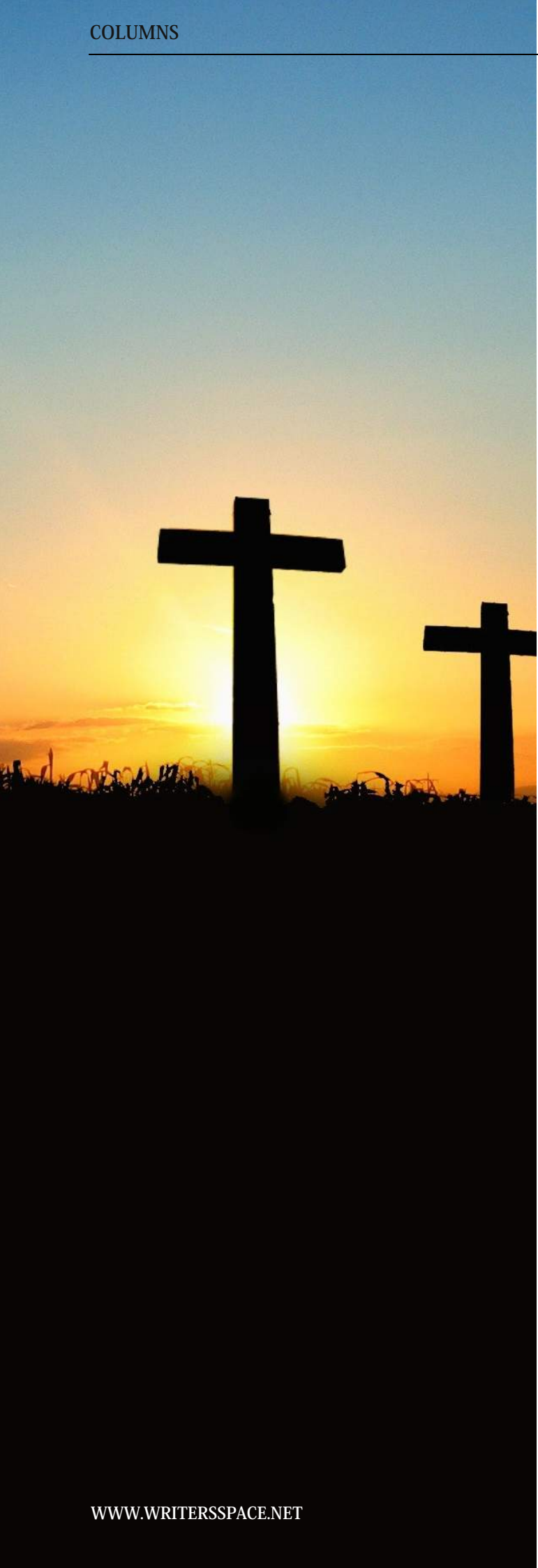


Forgive him,' they had told her. 'A man who loves you will always batter you,' from the infinity of their wisdom, they had advised her. 'Besides, leaving a man because he cheats is like leaving Zambia because it rains,' they had added.

We put her to rest today.

Columns

“Happy Valentine's day in advance, my friend.”



Life as we Know it Love

Ugbede Ataboh

Love is an intense feeling of deep affection...or even more. Modern medicine has been able to prove that babies fill parents with a deep sense of love.

I know a true story of a mighty King who had the whole universe in the palm of his hand; He beautified and structured it, yet, it still seemed incomplete without the sound of hearts beating rhythmically in the silent air waves. Thus, the creation of the first man came to be and this King became our Father. This mighty king displayed His unconditional love by covering the nakedness of Adam and Eve after their disobedience that birthed the original sin and led to an unfortunate separation between the Creator and man.

This same King flung an infinite number of stars upon a blanket of clouds and promised an old nomad and his barren wife descendants who'd outnumber the infinite stars. I know an even truer



story of this king tearing open the Red sea just so His children whom He delivered from the grip of a villainous monarch could walk on dry ground to the other side of the sea. This deliverance was completed centuries later when He sent His only begotten Son to serve as a sacrificial lamb on an altar of betrayal just so his shed blood could wash away the original sin of Man and reunite willing races to back Himself.

I am living in a legitimate story of how this King provides everything I need just so I can feel and be complete in Him and everything He represents. My proof of the existence of this omniscient loving being is in the way the soft strokes of His paint brush create a myriad of dreamy colors across the sky at dusk and dawn.; it's in the mysterious conclusion of a life and the beautiful start of another; it's in the promise a new day holds; it's in the miraculous disappearance of a deadly brain tumor overnight; it's in the way a man can wake up amidst the poorest of the poor and go to bed in his own mansion; it's in the very air we inhale and cannot account for. I dare say proof of His existence and unconditional love are in the little and big things around us which He gives to us freely.

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I know you were expecting me to tell you tales of my wild romantic escapades and the feelings they sparked in me, but none of them can or will ever come close to the unconditional love of God. So, what is love? God is Love and love is God. Remember that you are loved even though there is no caller ID like "Bae" or "My lover" on your phone contact list. Remember that you have everything you'll ever need at your disposal because God pulls at the heart strings of both man and beast and can make them work in your favour; all you need to do is ask and believe.

God planted the wild flowers for your pleasure so you can stroll into a field and pluck a bouquet for yourself even if no one gives you any this season. You go to bed every night, wrapped in his loving and protective embrace even though you have no lover to keep you warm.

Know that you have no reason to fear because He is the one who watches over the watchman at the gate and above all, He is the only one who loves you with an everlasting love.

Happy Valentine's day in advance, my friend.

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The Observer

Leo Muzivoreva
Zimbabwe

It is February, a month renowned for love. Love is certainly in the air and somewhere out there, someone has, is about to, or has met someone new. However, words, poorly and unconsciously chosen, can indeed hurt not only first impressions, but also your credibility, relationships, and opportunities for any type of advancement in whichever case you may encounter in your social or professional life. Based on personal experience, I have come up with a few words that must NEVER be said when you meet someone new...

1. 'I think ...'

Saying "I think" is sometimes acceptable, but only if you truly are unsure.

Using 'I think' can make you appear wishy-washy. When you know something, state it directly: "The meeting will be at 3 p.m."

2. 'I love your dress'

Avoid commenting on a person's personal appearance or belongings – even if it's positive – when you first meet them. It's too personal and out of place. Even after you get to know them, be careful what you say and why.

Because of varying power relationships and pecking order in society, it's often the safest bet to avoid comments on a person's physique or outward



appearance unless you're certain on how it will be perceived. It might work in your favour but it might also scream: "Pervert Alert"

3. 'You look different than you sound over the phone'

Don't begin a conversation by implying that you're surprised, disappointed, or puzzled by the fact that the person did not meet up to your predisposed expectations.

4. 'Honestly'

Drawing attention to your honesty at that moment can lead people to wonder, "Is everything else they're saying not true?"

5. 'You probably heard X about me, but it's not true'

Don't draw attention to any rumours that may be going around about you. It makes you seem like you think you're important (maybe you are – but you don't want to give off this impression), and maybe the person hadn't heard the rumour, until that moment.

6. 'Can you do me a favour?'

You just met this person. Don't immediately ask for their help.

7. 'I ... I ... I ...'

Self-absorption should be avoided in any first conversation.

"I" is the smallest letter in the alphabet, so don't make it the largest word in your vocabulary..

No one is impressed when a person dominates a conversation or talks too much about himself or herself, especially the first time you meet someone.

To avoid an I-centric conversation, show sincere interest in others by asking appropriate questions and actively listening. "How did you get into accounting?" "What brought you to this city?" "What do you believe are the key challenges in living in this city". Get to know them, through good questions which foster good conversation...

8. 'How much do you make?'

The amount of money a person earns is a very personal matter

"It's considered rude to ask, and unconscionable on a first encounter," she says. "If you're really that curious, or it's important that you know, instead of committing this faux pas, do some research on sites like Glassdoor, PayScale, Salary.com."

We all stand to improve our ability to craft a positive first impression, particularly in the words we say.

Perhaps, the most effective remedy is to focus on the best interests of the other person because, nearly all the faults of conversation are caused by a lack of consideration.

Be careful of what you say, when you meet someone new.



At a Cost!

EPISODE TWELVE

Amami Yusuf
Nigeria

There were about thirty teenage girls housed within the walls of "Aunty Joy's home." The owner, aunty Joy, was a well-built woman who looked almost 50. She looked sporty and agile, yet was extremely lazy- virtually everyone could tell upon first meeting her, that she was lazy. The way she carried herself and reluctantly responded to things revealed this trait about her. However, she was a very cheerful and simple woman, which was another character of hers which people noticed immediately. She was all hugs and kisses over Zarah when she walked in with Lucy. Zarah was the first Northerner they had in the house and they were all excited to have her. They were all curious to know what Northern Nigeria was like.

Zarah sat quietly in the chair she was offered, and watched them as they got busy, trying to register her and give her all the necessities she would need. So far, Zarah was finding the whole Lagos experience foreign and strange. From their mode of dressing, to the way they spoke and even to the weather. A heavy downpour of rain had begun falling while she was still in Aunty Joy's office. She always loved the smell of earth whenever rain fell. It brought back memories- of she and Kamal

playing in the rain, against their father's warnings. Though she was very far from home, the memories she took along with her made her feel she was still with them. The sound of a loud bell reminded her she was in Lagos, in an orphanage for girls. The orphanage was privately owned and received a lot of donations from NGO philanthropists and individuals.

"It is time for lunch. Jeka lo." It was only after Lucy had made the statement that she remembered that Zarah doesn't speak nor understand Yoruba. "Let us go" she repeated, to which Zarah stood to her feet. They shared a small umbrella as they walked out of the tiny office. Aunty Joy's was not a very big or fancy place. One could see all the structures in almost one glance. Everything seemed to be on a straight line- the offices, the tiny classrooms, the dining hall/kitchen, the dormitory, the little open space behind and finally the fence which caged them in. There were a few trees around, which barely provided enough shade. The buildings were old and whitewashed. There was almost nothing about the structures or environment to be admired. Lucy had been saying something, but her mind was too far to comprehend what was said. It took her about a minute before she even realized that Lucy had been speaking to her. She still said nothing and they completed the walk to the dining hall in silence.

"We are grateful for this food. Bless the hands which have provided, and bless us too." The unison of thirty female voices called together, and afterwards the girls sat down to begin their meal. The dining hall was a small square-sized little space with an old standing fan, one light bulb, four windows and six long wooden benches in the middle of the room. Lucy led her to one of the benches and told her to sit and wait as she went out into the little kitchen just beside the dining area. The other girls kept turning and staring at

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Zarah, yet no one said a word. Zarah was shy and uncomfortable and looked down at her now-dirty hijab. She noticed she was the only one who was wearing a hijab. The other girls were putting on uniforms- white straight gowns and an optional white scarf. It was Monday afternoon and they had just concluded their classes for the day. The orphanage provided them with free primary education; and when the girls advanced both in age and understanding, they were taught vocational skills as long as they had not been adopted yet. Zarah kept her eyes and head down as she fondled her hijab, whilst waiting for Lucy. A small statured girl, who was sitting at the edge of the same bench as Zarah, kept leaning forward to look at her. Zarah noticed from the corner of her eye and tilted her head towards the girl's direction. The girl smiled, revealing her not-so-white teeth and then put a spoon-full of rice in her mouth. She chewed funny too, and Zarah only half smiled.

Lucy returned a few minutes later with a plate of rice mixed with beans. The rice had no color in it, and the beans was overcooked. Zarah collected the plate from Lucy curtly and said nothing more. Lucy immediately decided she didn't like Zarah very much. She seemed rude and arrogant as little as she was. Zarah on the other hand had noticed she hadn't been on her best behavior since she met Lucy, and felt awkward about giving off the wrong impression.

Most of the girls finished their meals and left the hall, heading to the dormitory. Soon, only three people were left in the hall- Zarah, Lucy and the small statured girl. Lucy was giving Zarah the rules governing the home- "You and the other girls are responsible for keeping your environment clean. There are morning classes till 1pm, every day except Saturdays and Sundays. You must be in your white uniform every day when it has been given to you..." She said a lot of other things, some of

which Zarah did not pay attention to. Afterwards, Lucy took her to the dormitory and gave her a mattress and a blanket. The dormitory was a long space; it was a narrow hall-like room with bunks on each side. As they walked, the other girl tagged along and walked beside Zarah. She stretched out her hand to hold hands with Zarah, but Zarah didn't take the hand and they all walked on in further silence.

The rest of the day had come speedily and it was already time for the girls to retire to bed. The little girl - Susan, as Zarah had come to find out - had hung around Zarah for the rest of the day. Susan was especially overjoyed when Lucy put Zarah's bed next to hers. They spent the rest of their day together in silence- Susan too shy to make conversation, and Zarah not ready to loosen up and make friends. Susan was pretty- small eyes, flabby cheeks, pale rough skin, short hair. Zarah intended to thank her for the day, but at the time, it felt too heavy to say.

It had been ten days since Zarah came to the house, yet no one in the house had heard her voice; she not spoken a word. Some wondered if she was mute. Within those ten days, aunty Joy had frequently called her to the office to talk with her, but Zarah only merely listened and never said a word. Her eyes were always sad and she was almost always lost in thought. Everyone was curious about her and wondered what her story was. They wondered how Kajiru had found her. How she had found herself in Lagos, all the way from Katsina. Everyone but aunty Joy wondered, though she also had her curiosities about her as well. She was itching to know the full story of why Zarah had to run away from her home. Aunty Joy understood it was a difficult time for the thirteen-year old, and was eager to see her pull out of the depressed state she was in.

That Thursday evening, Susan caught Zarah wiping tears from her eyes like she had been doing almost every night. She was genuinely concerned about Zarah but didn't know how to go about asking or cheering her up. She slipped out of her bed and went to Zarah's bed. She handed her something wrapped in paper, accompanied by a tiny piece of neatly folded paper. Zarah was a little puzzled but took the wraps. She glanced briefly at Susan, as if asking if it was okay to open it then, she began to slowly unwrap the paper and Susan kept smiling. The tiny piece of cake inside almost fell to the ground, but Zarah was quick to catch it. The Home made a tradition of celebrating the girls' birthdays with home-made cakes. Lucy was the one who always baked the cake whenever it was someone's birthday. Zarah had missed dinner that day and therefore didn't get any piece of cake. Susan had noticed her absence and saved hers for her. Zarah said nothing and carefully went on to unfold the paper.

"Eat kak. Dot be sad." Susan had written in a very clear and neat handwriting, though her spelling was a little poor. Zarah read the note more than once- not because she didn't understand it, but because she didn't know what to do or say. She thought of returning the cake, but she also wanted so bad to have a bite. She was touched that Susan had sacrificed her share for her and decided not to return it. Zarah ate half of the cake in one bite and offered the other half to Susan. She collected the remaining piece shyly from Zarah's hand and smiled. Zarah smiled back at her- a warm, genuine smile. There was that funny chewing again and this time, Zarah laughed.

"Thank you!" she said to Susan finally, and those were her first recorded words in the home.



Poetry



Fate

Esere Akporehe
Nigeria

As we kissed under the plum tree,
My legs disobeyed gravity
The harmattan season gave way
For our joyful love to blossom.

It felt like a risky adventure,
As we kissed under the plum tree.
Our hearts raced a drum line parade
And, every nerve danced to the tune.

The hair on our arms gave signals;
It was a predestined moment
As we kissed under the plum tree;
No soul dared foul such purity.

It had been designed from the start,
Ever since our first date strapped onto
Our mamas' backs while they gossiped,
As we kissed under the plum tree.

A woman with dark skin and short, curly hair is smiling warmly. She is wearing a bright yellow, off-the-shoulder dress with ruffled details. Her right hand is raised near her face, with fingers slightly spread. She is wearing a gold watch on her left wrist. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage.

For Rita

UkaOrji Ogbonna Senator
Nigeria

The calm in your eyes,
The sweetness in your smile,
Paints a tomorrow
So lovely and beautiful.

Love died
Only to rise again
When my eyes fell upon
Your dolce sky.

Whoever sees you has seen Africa
For your beauty radiates
With its very essence.

Some day,
I will learn how to spell,
Recreate
Africa anew.
For in your womb,
I see Africa
Nestling into handsome sons,
Pretty and lovely daughters.



(Im)Perfect

Glory Mboh
Cameroon

Like a flower with a thorn
Or a beast with a single horn,
You have flaws.

Sometimes you sing the wrong note,
Sometimes you wear the wrong coloured coat.
You break the laws.

But you are still a rose, and that won't change.
You are still the unicorn
That rides into my dreams and livens my fantasies.

Your song transports me to planets light years ahead
And when we get there and it's cold
You don't hesitate to wrap me in your coat.

It might not seem like it,
But you're just the perfect fit.

And for my life was a seed planted in a test bed
manured with patience and persistence,
certainly, I might never sprout out of my toils of timely soil.

Love is

Mwanduka Peggy
Kenya

Love is the purest of things,
And awesome is the joy it brings,
It does not count deeds done,
Not a single one, none.

You see, true love is selfless,
It gives sacrificially, endlessly,
But we folks are endlessly selfish,
Always giving to ourselves, times countless.

Love is not defined by circumstantial acts,
Neither covered in racial garments,
Nor is it a mindset that's stereotypic,
Love is true and authentic.

Love is making them smile,
It is wiping their tears while
Giving them assurance and hope,
Love is being present and helping them cope.

Love is an oxymoron
It is bitter sweet,
It is a phenomenon;
It's awfully great.



Love's Abode

Emmanuel Isidore Umanah
Nigeria

Where
On earth
Is this Love
No eyes can see
Many ears have heard
Various lips have proclaimed
And no hand has ever touched
Except the simple silent heart
Who beholds Love in the air she takes...
Daily bread and water, mornings and nights;
Behind every face: gloomy or bright;
Each sun's smile and rose's fragrance,
Morning hymns from bird and man,
Night breeze from seas and trees,
Dark nights and bright days,
Men: known or not,
Far or near:
Love lives
Here!




Our Love Life

Philip Chamfi
Ghana

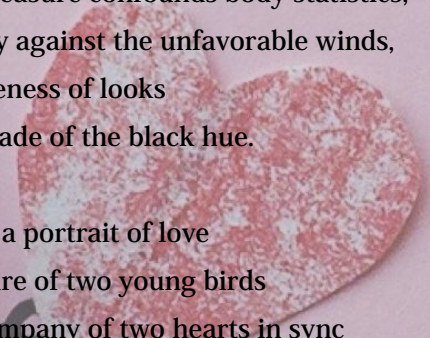
A perfect mélange of bodies, souls and spirit
A lifetime mixed with licorice
A love life blessed like a hyacinth plant
So small, yet sweet smelling and closely together
It glows and brings brightness to the eyes
A heartbeat which calms the body
It worries about nothing
Our love will virtually be deified by the world.
We explored it genuinely;
All the niggling was of no essence
A love life well lived.

The Portrait of Love

Akinmayowa Shobo
Nigeria



Paint me a portrait of love
Whose measure confounds body statistics,
A security against the unfavorable winds,
The fickleness of looks
Or the shade of the black hue.



Paint me a portrait of love
The picture of two young birds
Warm company of two hearts in sync
A rich soup of black royals from distinct histories
Reflecting the serenading rays of the African
sunset.

Paint me a portrait of love
Beveled,
Though in the tranquil sadness of their economy,
Soaring high up with the eagles
Wade unfazed against mountain-high litanies.

Paint me a portrait of love
An ageless ore,
Rooted in a stimulating medium of trust
Firmly neglecting every wanton thrust
And bowing torrents of communal knocks.

Paint me a portrait of love
An insane conviction made for two
Gallant spirits fighting for garlands
Forged out of pure heaven
Wrapped in enduring baubles.

She is Love

Faith Chepchumba
Kenya

She's your favourite song
The one you put on replay.
She makes you smile all day long.

She's your favourite beverage
The one you always love.
She drowns out your rage.

She's your favourite time of the day
That which you take to unwind.
She makes you focus all day.

She's your favourite season
The one you relish.
She becomes its perfect reason.

She's your favourite story
That which you love reading.
She makes you forget every worry.

She's your favourite tune
The one you enjoy.
She keeps your heart immune.

She's favourite in your life
The one you love dearly.
She makes you forget strife.

LOVE

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To Love a Crazy Witch

Obioma Obinna
Nigeria

The tick-tocking clock talks of love and time,
of a heart adorned with timeless beauty,
At the fourteenth hour, she says:
'It is strife to love one who takes your breath away.'
Each time she whispers your name ,
a fadeless star descends from Jove;
that ranks you amongst burning passions of pain and pleasure;
turns you on to turn you down; bites your lips when she kisses it;
makes you boil with anger, in a hot cauldron
that softly simmers you with guilt; /ensnaring your senses/
to pull you away from yourself with no strings attached.

But lo! It's to these heartstrings you've made purchase.
Though you fall and bruise all bones,
your heart shall be aglow with desire.
And /like a morning glory/, your life hangs on
/between reality and fantasy/ where
she's traded her heart for a genovese coin
lost in an ocean of sharks and dolphins.
'Find it!' she says.
You can't be underwater and breathe fine
like you could swim without fins.
So, you die with your eyes open, /a bittersweet death/
/searching for the silvery heart of a white witch/
until she whispers: 'Wake up, I love you.'



Reviews

Visit www.writersspace.net/reviews
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GENRE: SHORT STORIES

WRITER: FATIMA DAMAGUM

TITLE: AN UNUSUAL FRIENDSHIP

REVIEWER: LATEEFAH KAREEM (NIGERIA)



Friendship. Some say it is the need for the other's company; some say it is needing something you cannot afford from someone else; others say it is for just companionship. In this short story, Fatima tells us about a friendship incited by a need to protect the other.

The story revolves around the life of Jummai, a young lady born with the congenital anomaly of having both sexual organs (hermaphroditism). She was called a freak of nature from husband one to husband two's house. It is husband three who finally resolved - after pleading on her part - to give her a chance.

Her doctor finds her case quite intriguing and follows up on the matter, giving not only professional but also emotional support, leading to their friendship. According to her, Jummai has taught her “resilience, hope, will and courage”.

It was a most captivating read, one of the best in my 2020 so far. Great job, Fatima!

GENRE: FLASH FICTION

WRITER: OGECHUKWU EGWUATU FROM NIGERIA

TITLE: REBORN

REVIEWER: NGALIM JUSLINE VEEYEENYUY (CAMEROON)

This brief and magnificent story by Ogechukwu, set in the delivery room, presents the rebirth of a child, Aduke, who is born again to the same woman after her previous burial. Despite the rituals performed at her last burial to stop her rebirth, she returns again.

Fear, panic and sad memories grasp this woman as the child is identified as her daughter reborn. She has a retrospect of her predicament with this spirit child. She's caught in a dilemma, whether to rejoice at the return of her daughter or recall the pain she will experience as it is certain she will soon depart again.

Aduke herself admits that she has tormented this woman a lot and would desire to be birthed by another woman the next time she reincarnates. Nonetheless, she can't do otherwise because she is back for a goal; "She had a task to accomplish and she had been reborn for it."

Reincarnation, superstition, rites and rituals, sorrow, lamentation and pessimism are some dazzling themes in this flash fiction. The flashback technique is used to effect suspense and the setting is no doubt a pure African traditional society. This work respects the principle of brevity in flash fiction writing and resonates the magazine's theme.

I personally feel this work would be lovelier if developed into a short story. Notwithstanding, it's a great piece and a must read.



GENRE: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

WRITER: MOSEKIEMANG KAELEBOGA, BOTSWANA

TITLE: THE BABOON AND THE GIANT BANANA TREE

REVIEWER: TWINOMUGISHA RACHAEL, UGANDA



Lack is an aspect of life tricky to deal with; death of a loved one another so bothersome to handle, and or even to heal from. Imagine a child faced with this, singlehandedly!

We are introduced to Sedi in the first paragraph of the story. The young baboon is faced with conflict: most baboons have been dying due to famine. On this night, her mother manages to get her food, but she is very frail, and passes away shortly afterwards.

Sedi learns about her mother's demise through a little plant that watches her struggle to wake her mother's cold body up. The little plant encourages Sedi to dig a hole and bury her mother's body.

A frail, scared, hopeless, and doubtful Sedi goes ahead to harken to the plant's call.

This is it! A quick rebirth of hope for Sedi. It's an answered prayer.

Even though Sedi is going to lose her mother eternally, she isn't going to lack food, and as an added blessing, she gets a magnificent reunion with her family!

Miraculously, the little plant grows into a huge banana tree and produces fruit for the animals. (What if your whole blessing was masked as your biggest problem/loss?)

Want to know the miracle leading to the rebirth?

Read the story: page 13 of the WSA magazine, 20: Rebirth.

The title of the story is catchy. The lyrical sound in baboon and banana gives the feeling that children should memorize the title, and the story as well.

The writer uses language suitable for children of different ages.

The story is short enough that children will not get lost in the lines and its plot is straight enough to help children keep track of the message in the story.

We are drawn to the themes of parenthood, loss, obedience, hope and rebirth.

The story is suitable even for adults to read considering its diverse themes and lessons.

Very well done, Mosekiemang Kaeleboga!



GENRE: COLUMNS

WRITER: AMAMI YUSUF (NIGERIA)

TITLE: AT A COST!

REVIEWER: COLIN STANLEY KARIMI; THE_POWERHOUSE (KENYA)



In the last episode, we have the main character Zarah who secured her identity by casting out tradition. With a father's favor out of reach, Zarah starts her own journey of self-discovery where she meets Kajiru.

In the first paragraph, Zarah is tired as a result of a disturbance in her sleep, even the sounds of crickets shake her very being. With such a depiction in this paragraph, it is evident that Zarah lost herself as she sought a new identity. More so, with the theme being rebirth, it is critical to note that for Zarah, it is not a destination, but a journey. Her trip signifies a painful process. With the last episode bearing the theme identity, Zarah apparently broke off from her original roots: her tribe.

Kajiru was kind at first as she saw an individual who is going against the famed traditions. In fact, the character Kajiru is engaging as it seems Zarah was not the first girl he saw opposing their traditions. More so, Zarah's loss of her father's affection is evident as she feels attached to a stranger even though they have not engaged in meaningful conversation for close to an hour.

The topic of not neglecting traditions is critical to the sustenance of an individual; tradition itself gives one a name and identity. As such, tradition is indeed the root for society. At the end of the column, Zarah feels empty after parting ways with Kajiru, which closes the debate on the importance of tradition. Zarah now envelopes herself with groups of women who share the same views as her own. A new dawn; her rebirth.

GENRE: SHORT STORY

WRITER: CHRISTINA H LWENDO, TANZANIA

TITLE: BEFORE FOREVER BEGINS

REVIEWER: OMADANG YOWASI, UGANDA

Death is a painful pill to swallow, but have we ever seen in it as an opportunity to be reborn of faith, focus and feelings regardless of the agony of loss?

"The Dawning" by Edo-Omoregie Praise is a snapshot of loss, pain, untold sufferings and renewal of strength.

It is a four-stanza narrative poem with unequal distribution of lines per stanza: S1, 4 lines; S2, 8 lines; S3, 5 lines and S4, 7 lines.

Edo-Omoregie Praise makes use of a rhyming couplet in stanzas 1, 2, and in the quatrain of stanza 3 (aabb, ccddeeff, fgfg[h]) and an irregular rhyme scheme in stanza 4.

The first stanza depicts the agony experienced by the persona's mother and the cause of that agony. The persona makes us understand that the mother's sufferings are as a result of the loss of her husband as well as the unruly behaviour of her in-laws.

The use of the rhyming couplet - aabb - here may suggest a spontaneity and chain of sad experiences the persona's mother is trapped in.

The second stanza projects a sequence of maltreatment, torment and suppression that defines the mother's experiences after the death of her husband. Words such as "loss", "grief", "suspicious questions", "subdue" highlight the trauma both the persona and mother go through.





Stanza 3 throws light on the audacious and wicked attitude of the persona's uncle.

In stanza four, the persona expresses the unique reason that revived his mother's strength and led to the rebirth of focus: the zeal to protect her child from the grips of wicked relatives.

Ultimately, we learn that a child is a mother's reason for living.

No matter how dead she is physically and psychologically, if the child is in danger, a mother will rise from the ashes and face whatever obstacle. This is the message that captures this beautiful poem by Edo-Omoregie: a mother's rebirth to protect her child from the hands of danger.

I particularly enjoy the flow in the poem and the skilful use of diction.

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