



WSA
Writers Space Africa
Empowering African Writers

A Failure's Worth

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South Africa

Silver Lining

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Failure

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Call for Submissions

Theme: **Transition** (Becoming)

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

- Short Story
- Flash Fiction
- Poetry
- Essays
- Children's Literature

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

We look forward to receiving your best

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

Editor's Note

To fail is one of the hardest, yet most constant part of our lives. For some of us, we are afraid to fail because we hold ourselves to the highest of standards and when we fail, we find it hard to face ourselves. For others, the fear of failure lies in the standards society holds us to; in this case, when we fail, we find it hard to face the people around us.

We forget that our failures have always been the doorway to some of our greatest successes. Sometimes, you cannot know what you know (or what you don't know) if you do not first fail at something.

The analogy of learning to ride a bicycle comes in very handy in learning the lesson of failure. There hardly ever was a person who did not fumble or fall when they first learnt to ride a bicycle. There is a joy we all experienced when we finally got it right and the joy gets its weight from knowing what it means to fail at it.

As a teacher, I would tell my students to never be afraid of failing. For one, they had already failed and there was nothing they could do to change the outcome of that test or exam; for another, there were other tests and exams to come. In telling them the second part, I gave them what I believe to be one of the most important lessons of life: true failure lies in when you refuse to try again. It is okay to fear failure, but it is never okay to accept it.

The entries in **Failure** are a glimpse into how we approach the subject of failing. As always, the team had the best of times putting together this issue.

It is my hope that as you read it, you will learn to always find the silver lining in the things you fail at and where there is none, you will create one for yourself.

Always remember, Ubuntu.

Warm regards,
Nabilah.



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Down and Out

Nyasili Atetwe
Kenya



At ten minutes to fulltime our hopes began to dwindle.

"Let's go home!" Nato nudged at my ribs. I didn't move. Anything could still happen. Ten minutes in football is a lifetime. The one-goal lead St. Luke Secondary had over us could be erased anytime. We just needed Matasi to get the ball.

A win would not only salvage the school fees I had put in a bet, it would leave me with five thousand shillings to spend on myself. I could afford the school trip that

Mam had refused to pay for. I could buy Linzi, my love, the chiffon tops they sold at the boutiques in town and she would know I really loved her. A loss would make Niko five thousand shillings richer and where would I get the money to clear my school fees arrears? We had to win.

For most of the match, the once-obscure St. Luke's "Tigers" controlled the tempo of the game. Even with two goals ahead, they still appeared hungry for more glory. One half of the stadium cheered them on: those were secondary schools that we had quashed and vanquished on our way to this provincial final match. They were now more than glad to see us humbled.

We had come this far on pretty much a clean sheet. To score against us was no easy feat. We were the provincial champs. For five straight years, we had bagged the provincial football championship and flew the provincial flag at the national level, bringing the national trophy home two years in a row. Matasi was instrumental in all these wins. He had scored the fourteen goals that had cemented our pole position in this tournament alone. This would be his final year playing for us. He was sitting for his national exams in November.

When the coach kept him out at the start of the match we knew he was saving him for last. It gave St. Luke's Tigers some wiggle room to flaunt their tiny prowess. They quickly confiscated our plot at the midfield, waltzing into our half with total abandon until Matasi came on board. Two minutes later, Indeché advanced the slumbering St. Luke's defense and rolled the ball to Matasi who side-footed home from about twelve yards away. We erupted in cheers, lighting up the other half of the stadium that had remained quiet and forlorn. We were not just students of Ludodo High school, villagers had also

joined us because the stadium was a stone throw away from our school.

St. Luke had their own "Matasi"; a guy they called Pepe. He was short and untamable and as fast as a bullet. Once he got the ball he curved open our defense completely and effortlessly. He missed four clear goals and netted in the painful two. He was up for a hat trick just four minutes to full time. He got the ball from the right flank, galloped with it towards the penalty area. But he had Marcus Lumbe and Joana Matayo to contend with, guys who in other matches were formidable walls around our goalposts. They appeared clueless as he dribbled past them, winning himself and our goalkeeper acres of a scoring chance.

The cheers from the other half rose into the air like a concrete pillar and I almost followed Nato who had long left the stadium in a huff. Pepe fired from the bottom-left hand corner at the edge of the penalty area. Our goalkeeper dove but couldn't reach the ball. It hit the corner of the goalpost, rebounding back into play. Then Indeché got the ball and we all rose to our feet. He galloped to the left-hand side, outpacing the St. Luke's defenders. Then, he saw Matasi headed to the penalty area and shot a sublime pass at him.

Suddenly Matasi had two defenders blocking him and they knew better than to give him any shooting space. He threatened a shot. One of them turned to block the kick, while the other simply stirred, not fooled. Matasi took advantage of the turned defender and inched into the goal area from the left side. Realizing his mistake, the defender grabbed his jersey and shouldered him off the ball. Matasi sprawled on the ground towards the goalkeeper.

The referee called for a penalty. The St. Luke's players could not contain themselves and ganged up around the referee. He reached for his armor in the breast

pocket and fetched out a yellow card, which he flashed at their protesting captain.

By now, the match was past full time. We only had four minutes of extra time, two of which were consumed in the futile protest by the St. Luke's players. We knew that with some more minutes, we would teach them a good lesson in footballing. This was our golden chance to get an equalizer and send the match into extra time. Then we would run them mad around the pitch and whip them like stray dogs.

The referee cleared the other players outside the penalty area. The stadium went quiet as Matasi was left facing the goalkeeper with the ball between them. Matasi walked towards the ball, picked up and swirled it in his hands and then placed it in the penalty spot. He stepped back and gazed at the goalkeeper, with his hands on his waist.

Suddenly, our side began chanting.

"Ma - ta - si! Ma - ta - si!"

Then the other side replied.

"Out! Out!"

It became a song of its own.

"Ma-ta-si! Out! Ma-ta-si! Out!"

The tempo increased when the referee blew the whistle.

Matasi dropped his eyes to the ground, leaned forward and trotted towards the ball. He fired a left-footed crisp screamer, and with his body, he threw the goalkeeper one way, while the ball volleyed the other way.

The ball flew inches above the left-hand corner of the goalpost, crushing into the crowd. The whistle blew and that was the end of us.

The Original Lottery Ticket

Nat Proteus
Nigeria

I breathe a sigh of relief as the car heaves and begins the journey. It's 9am. I hope to get back home before my mum does at 3pm. Else, I'm dead meat.

I look around the Sharon. A couple in matching Ankara sit to my left. A man in blue suit, a nursing mother and an old woman occupy other seats. The car stereo plays nostalgic music by P-Square. I open my sling bag and peek at my ticket. My winning ticket. A hundred thousand naira could be mine if I made it to Kaduna today.

I could hear mum's voice ringing in my ears, 'Tabat, money doesn't grow on trees. If you go there, you will regret it.'

I feel a twinge of guilt. She may be right. But we both know that the little profit she makes selling tomatoes will not be enough to send me to a good secondary school next session. I'd hate to watch my friends leave me behind. I pray this works.

"So, you're also going for the Wayne lottery?" The married woman beside me peers at my ticket. I

push it down my small bag.

"Yes."

"Hmm, children of nowadays,' she turns to her husband. Always looking for get-rich-quick schemes."

"What's that about?"

"It's one of these factories that makes biscuits. The manager seals fake lottery tickets in some of the packets and suddenly everyone is buying them."

Hater. Critic. Just keep quiet.

"Why call them fake. Has no one redeemed them?" he asks, giving me a side look.

"Several have. Boys and girls. They all return with the same story."

The driver lowers the volume of the music. Everyone is listening with rapt attention to her shrill voice.

"The manager himself tells them that the ticket is fake and that only the one with an original ticket will claim the prize."

Oh my God. Is mum right?

The man in suit chuckles. "A brilliant marketing strategy!"

"No," she says.

"Do you know how many children have travelled long distances only to get their hearts crushed? It's just

a matter of time before one of them is involved in a road accident."

My blood runs cold.

"God forbid!" says the old woman. "What does the winning ticket even look like?" asks the nursing mother.

The married woman pauses for dramatic effect.

"No one knows."

I arrive to find the Wayne Biscuit Factory premises teeming with children. I meet a boy a bit older than I who looks friendly.

"Hi, I'm Tabat. How do I begin?"

"I'm Abrack. You have to fill this form before you go in."

He hands me a form with blanks for Name, Age, Address, Phone Number of Guardian, Passport, Ticket Number and such.

"You're Bajju, right?" I ask.

"Yeah. You too?"

"Sure." I say with a smile.

In minutes, I join the queue. About fifty of us sit on plastic chairs under a shed. A girl comes out of the manager's office. She is angry and tearful.

She walks away without a word. A boy goes in and a few minutes later, comes out.

"He said my ticket is fake. Such a waste of time. Blatant lies."

Occasionally, someone comes out and says, "He said my ticket is original! He'll call me back. All the best guys." Did they cook that up to look good?

As the line grows shorter, I feel more uncertain. I pray my case is different. Abrack goes in. Four more girls before me. When he comes out, he looks at me and shakes his head.

"I'll wait for you."

It is 2pm already. Mum is getting home before me for sure.

I need this to work.

"Next."

I sit down on a black leather chair. The manager is a fifty-ish Lebanese with gray curly hair. He had stacks of files on his table and many more on the ground. He looks at me with calm eyes and says, "What's your name?"

"I'm Tabat Tanquat."

"Give me your file and ticket."

He looks at the code on the ticket and on the form. Same. He rests his elbow on the table, adjusts his glasses and turns my ticket in the light. My heart clutches and beats faster. Everything slows down as he

says, "I'm sorry Tabat. This ticket is fake."

"Oh God."

My mother's angry voice re-echoes in my head, "You're not going, I forbid it. And if you mess with me, you won't forget it for a long time." She had gotten worked up over it last night. And she was right.

Tears line my eyelids. I inhale and exhale.

"Did you really intend for someone to win this or are you just mocking us?"

"No, of course I intend for someone to win. But that person must have the original ticket."

"Is this a scam?"

"No, it's not."

"What's the difference?"

"I didn't charge you to register."

"Then how do you intend to make a profit? People may win at a lottery. But the organiser always makes more."

He looks me in the eyes.

"That's smart for your age. But I'm not doing this for profit."

"What then?"

He stands and walks to the window overlooking the courtyard.

"There's something, someone I'm looking for."

"Is this an experiment?"

He glances back at me.

"Of sorts, yes"

After a brief silence, he turns back and says, "But you don't have the original ticket. You need to get back on your way."

"I may not have the ticket, but I may be the one you're looking for."

I return to Zonkwa with Abrack. We joked and laughed. Soon we forgot about the bad news. He was schooling in St. Francis and had pranked his teachers enough times to keep my stomach in knots most of the way. While I had found my ticket in a biscuit from my aunt who came visiting, he had gotten his after tricking his uncle into buying a carton.

He also feared he may not make it to senior secondary.

As we draw closer to home, my stomach twists. It is past 4pm and I didn't have a phone to call home. Mum was definitely home, cooking dinner. Abrack is an orphan and his uncle won't query him. I didn't want to tell Abrack so he wouldn't offer to come along.

I arrive home. I write his number on a paper. We bid farewell and I walk into the house.

Mum had not only finished cooking, but had eaten. On the centre table was the legendary belt.

"Tabat, why are you doing this to me? After all my warnings, you still chose to go to Kaduna. What if something had happened to you?"



Don't you know you are the only one I have? Achat nna ku amey? Do you want me to die?"

"I'm sorry mum."

"Oya, pick pins."

I put the tip of my right index finger on the floor while raising my left leg. I remained that way for so long I feared I will lose the ability to walk. Each time I wobble and fall, she uses her belt to realign me.

After what felt like hours, she said, "Stand up. You can go to your room. And don't think there will be food for you tonight."

I fell asleep as soon as I lay on the bed. I woke up later in the night with a raging hunger. I flashed my torchlight. On my reading table

was our red food flask.

About a week later, we had a visitor. When I opened the door, it was the Lebanese with gray curly hair. He was smiling. He sat with mum and I in the parlour.

"Congratulations, Tabat. You've won a scholarship for your Secondary and University education."

I screamed and jumped up and down. My mum was shedding tears of joy. I hugged her.

The Lebanese placed a wad of new thousand naira notes on the table, exactly where she had kept the legendary belt.

"This is for the family."

He turned to me.

"The lottery was a test. You see, everyone in life fails. The difference is in how you respond: with resentment or curiosity. Five of you won. Your faces will be in newspapers tomorrow."

"You said you were looking for someone. Who was it?"

"The company was passed down to me by someone who believed in me. I'm looking for someone who will succeed me. But you must finish school first."

He turned to my mum. "Sorry, I have to go. I need to congratulate one more person."

"Who's that?"

"A boy called Abrack Takunak."

"I'm coming with you! Wait."

I turned around.

Of a Failing yet Wealthy Land

Leo Muzivoreva : THE OBSERVER
Zimbabwe

The presence of some of the world's fastest growing economies in Africa serves as fodder for the Africa rising narrative. A walk around capital cities of Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Angola, even Mozambique, will put a stamp on the discourse that Africa is rising at a significant rate. The crane-filled skylines, construction of road networks and railway lines, multi-million-dollar mansions and business malls erupting across major towns and cities, and growing technologies are but a few indications of the continent's ascent to prosperity.

But even as people across the globe engage in discussions about how fast the continent is growing, ironically, the other discourse that goes hand-in-hand with this narrative is the astounding number of people in the continent who are still grappling with deep-rooted poverty.

One can only wonder why there is still a widening gap between the rich and the poor and why Africa is still struggling with poverty



despite the fact that it is home to a major percentage of raw materials that are in demand around the globe.

During the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, African leaders argued that powering Africa will answer the continent's growth in future. According to them, powering Africa will create jobs, cause industrialization and business expansion.

Indeed, powering Africa will contribute a lot to growth on the

continent, but for Africa to grow sustainably, it will need to pursue comprehensive methodologies that address all the bottlenecks to development. There is a need to understand what the areas in need of reform are and the quest to understand why Africa has been held back for so long. The observer takes you through what could be the hindrance to progress in Africa.

1) Civil Wars and Terrorism

The argument that civil wars and terrorism, contribute to poverty is a no-brainer. Wars disorient people

and leave them destitute. They also disconnect businesses from their clients. Moreover, roads and communication networks are destroyed or barred which further cripples these businesses. Industries collapse, people lose jobs and investors lose confidence in the affected country thus pushing the affected region down the economic slopes. Then, of course, there is the trail of death and scores of people left injured, not to mention the loss of property which adds to the increase in poverty levels in areas marred by wars and terrorism.

According to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index, the cost of terrorism to the world was \$52.9 billion in 2014. This is the highest number since 2011. In the same year, 32,000 people died due to terrorism acts. In Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency has led to over 100,000 deaths since it started its brutal operation more than six years ago. Reports from the oil producing country say that business activity in regions like Kano had dropped by 80% by 2015. Apart from business disruption, the revolt has caused sporadic migration, abandonment of professions and jobs, discouraged foreign investment, food scarcity and dehumanized people. All these factors put together attract

poverty in the region.

Nigeria, which became Africa's largest economy in 2014 is experiencing economic challenges with World Bank's Global Economic Prospects 2016 predicting that the country's economy will continue to slow down. With such high economic impacts and deaths, poverty is inevitable.

2) Corruption

Dubbed 'Kitu kidogo' or 'chai' (loosely translated as 'something small' or 'tea') in Kenya, corruption has taken root in most African countries. This has contributed to the plight of Africa today. Senior leaders in government and private sectors alike have resorted to taking bribes. A survey by Transparency International (TI) indicated that most African governments are not able to meet their citizen's expectations due to rampant corruption.

The respondents said that corruption in the region was increasing despite the campaigns and activism by civil society and the population. The police were identified as the most corrupt group across the region. In every news bulletin, at least one story covered is about how a high-ranking official is under

investigation over corruption allegations. While this is good news to many, the laws on corruption are lenient allowing those caught in the act an easy passage.

3) Education and the knowledge gap

Up till today, some African households cannot afford basic education for their children. Although some governments in the region have taken up the matter of providing basic education as a government project, many areas lack schools and even where schools exist, they are sparsely located, posing a challenge to the young children who would rather help at home than make the long walk to school.

Inadequate skills and knowledge cripples the economy as there is no skilled labor to drive the nation. For Africa to be competitive, there is a need to invest in reinventing its education and research systems. A majority of African youth are not employed today due to inadequacy in education and technical skills. Corruption in form of nepotism has also affected the rate of employment on the continent.

4) Health and poverty

Health and poverty are interconnected. When a



continent is not able to create a quality health system and infrastructure for its own people, it risks falling into a trap where the economy remains stagnated. Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of poor health. Poor living conditions increase the chances of poor health. In turn, poor health entraps communities in unending poverty. One of the consequences of diseases is that it depletes individuals, households and communities' energy to work to build their lives and the society. With less individuals working to

make their lives better, poverty creeps and entrenches its roots.

WHO reports that approximately 1.2 billion people in the world live in extreme poverty - surviving on less than one dollar per day. Diseases, especially communicable ones, spread more rapidly in communities that are poor and do not have access to basic amenities. Take for example the spread of Malaria which can easily be managed through simple and vital but scarce utilities like mosquito nets and repellents.

HIV/AIDS, cancer among other diseases have also contributed to increased poverty levels in Africa. These diseases, apart from 'decapitating' the victims, leave families and communities in debt which further worsens their ability to sustain themselves.

5) Geographical Disadvantage

In this case, nothing much can be done. Being placed in a geographically disadvantaged location only calls for innovative ideas to utilize the available resources to advance lives.

A significant number of African countries suffer because they are landlocked - geographically unlucky. A country like Switzerland is landlocked but it is surrounded by stable economies, creating a platform for trade. On the other hand, most landlocked countries in Africa are surrounded by unstable and conflict-filled countries. Uganda is a landlocked country bordered by South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo. These neighbors feature civil wars all year.

Although Africa boasts of indigenous and numerous resources, they are poorly distributed among countries and within states/regions in those

countries. Despite that, governments have not adopted strategic ways to redistribute such wealth to the citizens.

Wealth distribution is an issue, but what is even more disturbing is how great and promising resources like oil and precious minerals are exploited by foreign investors and big corporations which pay little or no taxes to the countries in which they operate. Such practices have left Africa twirling in poverty.

6) International Aid

In the recent past African leaders have been heard arguing that International Aid has curtailed Africa's growth efforts. At the fourth World Government Summit in Dubai, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda said that donor support should not be relied on forever but instead be used to build institutions and the economy.

"Our vision is to make sure we are able to stand on our own feet and develop our country, attract investment and do business. There is no reason why we can't grow intra-African trade to the levels we see in America or Europe. What is good is not necessarily being small but good management of whatever you have, small or big," he said. "There is no reason why we

can't grow intra-African trade to the levels we see in America or Europe."

Even though some non-governmental organizations have helped Africa through support in health, education, governance and in other sectors, some firms have been accused of using stories of desperate Africans to advance their own selfish goals.

The Kibera slum in Kenya is one good example. Kibera, the largest slum in Nairobi and second largest urban slum in Africa is located just 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) from the capital, Nairobi. The slum is filled with a sea of NGO's which have not done so much for residents who continue to scavenge for a living in these tough economic times.

Another outlook into Africa's failing economy is the loss that Africa is experiencing as the foreign-aid-giving countries suck Africa dry of its resources. The outflow costs to Africa surpass the inflow that gets to the continent in form of aid. Health Poverty Action highlights that Africans are losing almost six and a half times what their countries receive in aid each year.

Africa is also to blame when it comes to misappropriation of aid

funds and corruption among the officials. Africa has the potential to rise above any other continent if only it lays emphasis on shunning corruption and providing basic amenities for all. If we look keenly at what is coming to Africa in terms of aid and what is going out of Africa in terms of profits, tax evasion and debt payments, Africa can be summed up as wealthy.

In fact, Africa is financing other continents.

Life as we know it

Ugbede Ataboh
Nigeria.



In life, the physical realm is controlled by the spirit realm... if you have doubts about this, wait and watch the mysteries of life unfold before your eyes. Fortunately for us, both realms are controlled by the power of our thoughts and declarations. All of this, I discovered after I met an old mountain dweller on my hiking trail last month. From the sight of him, I knew he was no ordinary being for there was something

luminous about him. He stretched forth his hand and decreed...

"You still have a long way to go, your destiny is filled with turbulence for you will battle with failure at every twist and turn. For every victory you enjoy, there will be a force waiting around the bend to subdue you."

A cold sensation moves up my spine as I look around and realize my hiking companions are nowhere in

sight but I maintain a calm outward disposition. "Errm...Sir, I don't know what you mean. I'm just here to appreciate and take in the beauty of nature...I'm not here for a spiritual consultation" I reply.

"Correct me if I am wrong...You are the first female in your family and your parents parted ways before you uttered your first sentence. Yes indeed! You are highly favored for most of the merits you have enjoyed



in your life came without you toiling. strength.

You have eagerly searched for a life companion but found only shadows of men who plundered and passed through you like smoke."

"Why can't I move?! Have you charmed me with black magic? If It's money you are looking for you won't get a dime from me" I whisper with the little strength I can muster.

Where is everybody? Why does this place seem unfamiliar all of a sudden? The clear hiking trail is nowhere in sight. This place is a thick forest with a dead kind of silence. Silence so thick I can cut through it...Jesus please help me! Why can't I speak? I have suddenly lost all my

"Listen carefully and fear not for I have very little time and so much to tell you before Time and Space reclaims this split moment. Love has evaded you all this while because the world you denounced wants you to curse mankind out of frustration and give up the ghost! Your case is peculiar though, because for every heartbreak and betrayal you've encountered, you've loved even harder and given so much more. In truth, you used to be what the universe refers to as ogbanje. You ought to have returned to the realm you came from a long time ago but you cut off your link to them with your zest for life

and powerful declarations. There are many of your kind upon the earth. Exiled souls, cursed to live desolate among men for rejecting the ancient creed and refusing to dance to the beat of the sacred drum of the dead. Not many have been able to escape the wrath of the mother of dead souls for she lays a curse on all who desert her. You, on the other hand, she cannot touch, because you adopted the religion of truth and continually abide under the shadow of the Ancient of days despite your sinful ways. The rest is now up to you...look behind you!"

I look back on my path to see how far I have already come and I see a white sheet stained with the deflowered blood of a child; I see raw loneliness; I see unrequited Love and disappointment; I see bitter lessons and splashes of wicked colours.

I walk on without bidding the old desert dweller goodbye. My course is set on the path leading to the high mountain. I journey for days and lose count. When I eventually reach the peak of the mountain, I place my feet on the solid rock, rip all my clothes off and set my sight upon The Creator...my Creator- YESHUA HAMASHIACH.

I decree upon my life's journey- True

Love and happiness; Music and dance; Good health and affluence; Fruitfulness; Renewed youth and vibrance; Color and fulfillment.

Challenges will come but I will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of my testimony- Rev: 12:11. Whatever force of failure that tries to subdue me, I will destroy!

I call forth the four winds and command them to carry my declarations to the four corners of the earth and they obey without delay. "This assignment is long overdue" they whisper upon my skin. They return and place a seal of affirmation on me...a tiny black dot on the bottom right corner below my lips.

"The yoke around your neck has been broken. Reign in victory among the living... Farewell!"

"Ugbede!"

"Yes?"

"Why are you standing by yourself on the trail with a weird expression on your face?" Jamal asks as he walks towards me.

I look around me... I am back on the trail with countless birds chirping above. "So strange Jamal, something happened just now ...but I can't remember"

"Nothing happened jare! You are

just a lazy girl who can't keep up with her hiking group. Come let's go!" He responds as he pulls me forward.

"Ah thank God! I could have sworn something strange just happened to me...maybe it's just paranoia and a little bit of..."

"What is that on your face?" Jamal asks with an amused expression.

"Where?"

"Here" He touches the skin below my lips with his index finger. "Here, use my phone as a mirror"

"The moment my gaze rests on the black dot, it all comes back to me and I remember everything"

"For how long was I standing there Jamal?"

"What kind of question is that? Just a few seconds...why?"

"I feel as if I travelled for days" I reply.

"My dear, that's what hiking does to you. Come on let's go!"

As I join my hiking group, I look up at Him with a thankful smile on my face and in return, He blesses me with the golden rays of the sun. I no longer believe in the entrapment of destiny but in the power of my declarations intertwined with the grace of my Creator, Yeshua. You and I were created to win and not fail; to be the head and not the tail...failure is not our destination but a springboard which shoots us to victory over and over again.



Nyakato and the Spelling Competition

Grace Tendo Katana
Uganda.



Nyakato was a very tiny but very clever girl for her age. She would do what defeated her older mates and this won her favour from everyone. She solved almost every exercise in her class.

One day, her school had to prepare for a spelling competition and a sports competition. Nyakato got so excited and so did her teachers and classmates. She was chosen

among those to participate in the spelling competition because her teachers knew that she would win. She wanted to participate in both competitions, but her English teacher told her to concentrate on one - the spelling competition.

Nyakato was prepared for weeks before the day of the competitions. When the time for the spelling competition reached, Nyakato became nervous all of a sudden.

She paced to and fro, she rubbed her hands and breathed in but she could not calm herself.

"All will be well, Nyakato." Her teacher said trying to sit her down.

Nyakato looked up at her teacher with questioning eyes. Her teacher brought her a glass of warm water which she took in one gulp.

"Are you better now?" Nyakato



nodded yes.

Her turn came to spell and she went over to the microphone. She looked all around the hall and saw that everyone was looking at her. She got so scared and ran out of the school's main hall with tears in her eyes. Her teacher followed her closely to see what had happened.

"What's wrong, Nyakato?" Her teacher asked.

"I am so scared," Nyakato replied wiping away a tear

"But you have worked so hard to this day. They are just your schoolmates!" her teacher said, "Come, let us go back inside."

"No! I cannot. I am so ashamed now." Nyakato cried.

Her teacher soothed her and was able to convince her to go back to the hall.

Once back on the stage, Nyakato trembled and tried to spell the words. This time around, she managed to spell all the words that she was given. She went through from the first round to the fourth round without any problem. In the final stage, Nyakato trembled but

then began to spell the word that she had been given.

"A-T-H-O-R-I-T-Y"

The bell was sounded and one of the judges said, "No." It is A-U-T-H-O-R-I-T-Y. "

Nyakato ran out feeling very bad for having failed such a simple word.

Her teacher was glad that she was at least able to spell.

When the teacher found her at last, he made sure that she was comfortable.

"Next time you will win, Nyakato."

Her teacher comforted, "Next time you will. I am very sure about that."

A Failure's Worth

Cupido Stephanie
South Africa

Bozo was sitting in the park all alone one day after school. He was very sad and was holding a book in his hands.

Meanwhile, Buddy came to the park to play with his new frisbee which he got for his birthday, but realized that he could not play alone. He needed a friend to play with.

He searched and searched the park for a friend. After a while, he spotted someone sitting under a tree and walked over to introduce himself.

"Hello, my name is Buddy. What is your name?"

Bozo sighed, "I'm Bozo", he said sadly.

Buddy saw that he looked very sad and decided to cheer him up.

"Nice to meet you Bozo. I got this from my uncle for my birthday, would you like to play? It would be fun!", Buddy said politely.

"I can't", Bozo said grumpily.

"Well, we can play another game if



you want", Buddy suggested with a huge smile.

"I told you I can't. I can't do anything", Bozo said in one breath.

He was very irritated and sighed very loudly this time.

"What do you mean?", Buddy asked, very confused.

"I'm not good at anything, I fail at everything", Bozo said, hopeless.

Buddy went to sit next to him and crossed his legs.

"Everyone is good at something". Bozo shook his head, "I don't know", he said, "I'm trying to do my homework, but I'm struggling to

figure it out".

"How about this", Buddy said, "we can figure it out together and then you play the frisbee with me? Deal?".

Bozo smiled for the first time, "I guess that would be okay. Okay, deal!".

Buddy was very chuffed; he made a friend whom he could help. He was always happy whenever he could help.

They quickly went to work and Buddy realized how smart Bozo was; he just needed to concentrate

; he was not a failure.

Bozo was also happy that he made a friend. "You are very smart", Bozo complimented Buddy.

Buddy laughed. "Thank you, that's because I read a lot of books. You are also smart, you know?".

Bozo blushed and lowered his head. "Me?", Bozo asked shyly.

"Yes, you just need to concentrate more, then you will be the smartest kid in school!" replied Buddy.

Working as a team, they finished Bozo's homework quickly and they could finally play with the frisbee. They threw the frisbee from one to the other, happily enjoying their game.

Bozo threw the frisbee a little too hard and it landed on someone's lap, sitting across from them in the park.

It was a big boy and he looked twice their age; he also had a frown on his face and looked really strong.

The boy got up and picked the frisbee up. He started to walk in their direction.

Bozo looked at Buddy and saw that

he was smiling. He wondered why he was smiling. Bozo was very scared, so he decided to ask Buddy straight up.

"Are you not scared of him?", Bozo whispered.

Buddy laughed. "No silly, that is my friend Bucc. He is also my neighbour".

Bozo was relieved and smiled nervously. Bucc reached them and said hello and Buddy introduced Bozo.

"Nice to meet you, Bozo", Bucc said in a friendly voice.

"Nice to meet you too", Bozo said.

Bucc looked at buddy, "Is this your frisbee?".

"Yes, thank you for bringing it over", Buddy said smiling.

"Do you mind if I play?", Bucc asked.

"Not at all!" Buddy and Bozo said at the same time and they all laughed. They played happily in the park

until sunset.

Bozo was so happy that he gained two friends and he no longer felt like a failure. He felt worthy to be called a friend.



Avorvi

Azah Edem
Ghana



Avorvi was a mute six-year-old who did not fit very much in school, but loved it there. She wanted to always go to school but her mother would sometimes take her to the market because most people did not understand what she could learn in school.

She hated the market. There were too many grown-ups there and she did not like that they always came to make signs - which meant nothing to her - as though they were speaking to her instead of just speaking. She was dumb, not deaf. She knew she could communicate in sign language. It was a series of signs representing words that would help her talk normally to anyone else who knew the signs. The head teacher was trying to teach both her and her mother. But these grownups were just annoying as they assumed because she couldn't speak there was a problem with her hearing too. They would shout at the top of their voices as if they were on one end of the ocean and she on the other.

The most annoying was her uncle, Efo Gabor. Efo Gabor was the village drunk and jester. He was also her mother's reason for sadness. He always found it important to tell Avorvi's mother how much of a failure she was because her womb was not good enough to bring forth a normal child.

Avorvi's mother ignored him



outwardly, but she would cry and lament when she thought Avorvi was asleep. She did not have a husband because Avorvi's father had another wife in another town and had deceived her. It was bad enough that she was seen as a bad example and now her daughter could not speak.

She however taught her daughter to respect elders regardless of how they behaved. Her whole family lived in the same compound and every day Efo Gabor would make her mother feel sad. Avorvi was so angry about the whole issue but

could do nothing about it.

She tried to involve her mother in other activities especially her sign language studies and her mother became so good that she was hired to teach sign language at the school. Her mother was happier now and learned to feel important.

Soon the school had more children with physical impairments because people hid their children no more for fear of ridicule from people like Efo Gabor. This made Avorvi so happy she told her mother she would work hard at school and become a great success.

True to her word she became an important and respected woman in her community. Avorvi showed her mother that no matter what happen no one was truly a failure.



Yesterday

Onimisi Asuku
Nigeria

Yesterday, I painted today with a brush, liberal!

Yesterday, I painted today in colours bright and shadows menial.

Yesterday, I stroked the canvass of my dreams in dabs, swipes and unbroken lines
Lavishly with wanton abandon,

Yesterday, I sang a song, an undertone for today,
A sonorous Sotto voce cresting in a crescendo of soulful applause!

But Today is here with rains I did not paint,
In colours I never mixed, somehow creeping on to my canvass - hues without herald; shadows cast by failings, a part of my soul.

Today, the present I'm given is not what I painted...nor what was promised Yesterday.
Yet I paint again, in dabs, swipes and broken lines
What will be today tomorrow, and tomorrow, yesterday.

With more flourish and even more lavishly, the bright colours of hope!
Inheriting hues, shades and shadows as is true of living,
I paint again, with more caution than I did today,
Yesterday - the bright colours of hope!

Silver Lining

By Ngang God'swill N.
Cameroon

Today they returned
like nasty potent parasites;
our wedding vows, your face.
Failure, my seasonal bride.

The memories haunt;
honeymoon and kids.
Bloody salty falls,
like acid; a kiss of hell.

Fruit of inequity,
this unending marriage;
I'm addicted
or is it just fear of change.

You called again,
I fell off the wagon, again,
like a seasoned junkie.
is there salvation for me?

I appreciate still,
the silver lining;
shedding light in the dark,
teacher. Life's greatest staff.

Yes; wet kisses, caress, orgasms.
Occasionally. There's another,
much different; defining me,
and it's not you.





I Rise, I Fall and I Rise Again

Adewara Joses
Nigeria

Sometimes, I wear courage like a treasure
I colour my fears with green and yellow crayons
I rise high like a giant.
Sometimes, I fill the vacuum of my thought
With the memories of Father's tales
And with the ellipses left in the corner of his cheek.
And most times, I return home with a broken leg
I fall into ditches
I lose my torch, I fade into obscurity.
Sometimes, I fold my mother's prayers into my
spines
So, when it is dawn, I rise high again
And face the world
And face life.

From the Day I was born

Letlojane Simo
South Africa

From the day I was born, I was never perfect
I fell when I attempted to crawl, stumbled and fell
when I tried to walk
Yet I never gave up on a dream to walk - today I am
running.

From the day I was born, I failed repeatedly
I uttered words with no meaning, made sounds that
made no sense
Yet I never gave up on a dream to talk - today I am
singing.

From the day I was born, I was never born to fail
I have fallen, stood up only to fall over and over again
Yet I never gave up on a dream to win - today I know
failure is not a mark.

From the day we're born, we were never born to fail
We were born to try and try again until we succeed,
even when we don't succeed
Failure is never the end of our story, but the beginning
of a new chapter.
Please turn over!





A means to an end

Ndlovu Nobukhosi .P
Zimbabwe

Failure is a means to an end,
Like curtains hiding the morning light,
A handle to open the door
A bump within the road'
It causes temporary distress
To make it all worth the delay.

It separates the weak from the strong,
By playing a game of wills
Leaving success to those who are worthy,
To open the curtains and grab their destiny
And learn from the hurdles
That are stumbling blocks in their race.

Like a thief at night,
He whispers sleep to the school child,
Abscond work to the laborers
Laze around to the breadwinners
So that he can laugh his lungs out
Of having won the game of willpower.

However failure is just but a feeling,
Which plays hide and seek
Like the changes in seasons
It is only temporary
A means to an end
Solidifying the pathway to success.

Dear Failure

Nyotta Christine
Kenya

Find me a new song,
A dissimilar tune would be a delight,
Purposive to change my life.

Lies cloud my mind,
Urges boil within me,
Rain on me anew.

Enlighten me further,
Show me a new path,
Uphold me, dear.

Crying heals my heart,
Carrying the weight,
Epitome of my story.

Silly me, strength, I must find,
Forward, I must move,
Far and wide, I intend to go.





An Unwanted Friend

Awer Piol Tiek John
South Sudan

But a must-have he is!

When I remember him,
I tighten my grip on my goals.

When I think of him,
I unfriend extravagance.

When I recall him,
I am motivated to give a helping hand.

When I see him,
I sip my coffee and say, "THANK YOU GOD".

Afraid

Kiboi Victoria
Kenya

Afraid
Of making victors of my demons.
 Damned to reprise
 Same old mishaps,
To stumble on the very stones
 That fell me afore.
 Afraid
 To try again
 To fail again.
Of giving in to the terrors
That whisper in the night.
Fear, you devious friend,
 You cunning thief,
 I shan't allow
 Your velvet embrace
To plunder any longer.





Breathe

Makole Tshiamiso
Botswana

I breathe...
with such difficulty.
Air escapes my lungs
as though exiled
and has so much loath for my nostrils
a place it used to reside
with such ease.

I'm dying
I'm crying...
I'm trying to breathe
But my breath slips
I am counted with the deceased that
failed to breathe.

I'm dying
I'm crying
I'm trying to breathe
my breath slips
as I fail to breathe.

My eyes shut and light escapes
poison lashes over me
and I beat myself for days I wasted...

I give up and give in
to the world
I have never seen.

Failure

Isibor Peter Ibhane
Nigeria

A teen lay on a couch,
a finger to his mouth.
Both eyes watched from the south.

An agama climbed and fell,
its mind one couldn't tell.
Determination its energy fuel.

Failure crept into its brain
looking for a nest.
Determination left it no space.

The agama had an aim
and it wasn't a joke or game.
Again he climbed all the same.

A busy reptile nodded at each fall
as a resentment for failure
till it climbed well & success found.

Not achieving a good aim,
failure may stare us with cold eyes;
stare us in the face.

Determination to forge ahead
is vital to grasp success.
Both distant human eyes learnt this.



GENRE: SHORT STORY

TITLE: NONEXISTENT PICKET

WRITER: HARUNA DAHIRU, NIGERIA

REVIEWER: BILDAD MAKORI, KENYA

The nonexistent picket is a wonderful short story that truly sheds light on the theme 'Sacrifice'. The title of the short story is symbolically used by the writer to talk about someone who is seemingly invisible to those around him.

The short story is about the narrator who talks about his interaction with his son when he is asked a question in school - who the best parent is. The son asks the father this question and the answer the son gives is the mother. The father feels disappointed in a way, saying that by the reasons his son gave him for his answer, fatherhood is underestimated despite the sacrifices he as a father makes, which go unnoticed by his son.

The major writing style used by the writer depicts contrast, clearly seen in the flashbacks he has written. The narrator recalls how he was raised and reflects on whether he is doing as his parents did.


Also, there is a clear picture coming out through the vivid descriptions used and this helps the reader create a picture in mind of what is going on in the story.

GENRE: FLASH FICTION

TITLE: BEAST OF VALOUR

WRITER: TIMI SANNI, NIGERIA

REVIEWER: LEBOGANG SAMSON, BOTSWANA



This is one hell of an intriguing topic, one I must commend - it is a good read! *Beast of Valour* is a flash fiction of 249 words written by Timi Sanni from Nigeria. One of the elements which qualify this story as flash fiction is the way the author randomly started the story; it started somewhere in the middle. Yes, what greeted me first before everything else was the fact that there is death in the picture (it is a sad thing that we have to die...) This opening line kept me on my toes, anxious to discover who died, how and why they are dead.

The plot thickens when you realize that characters are nameless as the persona kept on saying we, us, our. The use of these pronouns on behalf of characters made it difficult to tell the gender of the protagonist, but as the story transforms, you realize that one figure of speech employed here is personification as the protagonist is an animal, a cow in particular; one that laments about the maltreatment they endure at the hands of humans even though they portray great qualities of being heroes to the human race. Despite this, cows get viciously slaughtered a fact clearly shown in the line "we are beasts of valour but we die like slaves." This is where the author highlights on the theme 'Sacrifice' as the persona tearfully narrates how they are brutally butchered for people to feast on.

The twist surfaces when the writer introduces the second setting. He begins by talking about the killing and spilling of blood in abattoirs, then immediately switches to the farm - tilling the land (plowing); hence the use of brevity and unambiguity, resembling the level of creativity by the writer.

At this point there is the antagonist here - old Baba Agbo would smile and pat our backs. Now you see how humans can be hypocrites? They have the 'Beast of valour' but still butcher it for their consumption; at the same time, they make it do manual labour; tilling their lands to produce crops for people. There is also an element of humor in this flash fiction; our distant cousins - rams, were sacrificed in the times of Abraham!

Towards the end, another poetic tone appears, one which is very common in a limerick which is characterized by the use of vulgar language - stuff my hoof into their mouths and shove my horns up their butts...

Lastly, another nameless character pops up; (she) in this case refers to mother nature who consoles the beast by saying it is a privilege to die her way, meaning the 'natural death than being killed'.

Overall, the flash fiction served its purpose. It is a beautiful piece.



GENRE: ARTICLE

TITLE: THE SACRIFICE OF DREAMS

WRITER: GRACE MASHINGAIDZE, ZIMBABWE

REVIEWED BY NAMSE UDOSEN, NIGERIA

In *The Sacrifice of Dreams*, the writer takes us on a journey through the dilemma of fitting in or standing out. It presents the battle young millennials face in trying to create a niche for themselves or towing the line of the generation before them.

The article is written in an impersonal tone and from an observer's perspective.

Although it has its settings in Zimbabwe, the message is of universal appeal. It's something most young Africans can relate to.

I, however, feel that an article of this nature should have a personal touch to it. The writer should throw in some personal events to buttress the point.

GENRE: POETRY**TITLE: LETTER FROM A FATHER****WRITER: ADEMOKOYA ADEDAYO, NIGERIA****REVIEWER: COMFORT NYATI, ZIMBABWE**

Letter from A Father is a poem that consists of 23 lines and its structure resembles that of a concrete poem. The principal theme of sacrifice evolves in the entire poem although from L9 to L12 is where it strongly emerges. In this context it is vivid that the mother assumed the place of a sacrificial lamb in the labour room in order to serve the life of her child.

Moreover, this piece is written from the perspective of a father who is a widower as is already suggested by the title. The father writes this letter addressing his child in a nostalgic tone filled with grief about his deceased wife who died in giving birth to this child. This poetic letter also serves as a tool which the father uses to comfort the child who was deprived a mother figure from the moment of birth.

Despite the unfathomable memories he had of his demised wife, the persona maintains that tone of optimism and joy when he confesses that; "she loves you more than her hands, you've become a dream come true." Faced with the images of how the wife died, one thing that keeps him hopeful is the characteristic traits of the child which resembles the mother, such as the smile.

The use of a heart and river imagery perpetuates the intensity of pain he suffered upon losing his wife and this is supported by his metaphorical admiration of the Kangaroo. It is clear that the persona finds it difficult to cope with and ward off the fresh memories of his wife; this is stimulated more by the presence of his child, and because the more he sets his eyes on him the more he misses the wife.

Atmosphere: cold, unbearable, depressing, somber

Attitude: awe, contemplative

Overriding themes: melancholy, mourning, heroism, sacrifice

Tone: bitter, regret, gloomy, grim

Diction: detailed, narrative, simple to grasp

Moral: let go of the past, for the present to find its place.



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