



WSA
Writers Space Africa
Empowering African Writers

FREEDOM

50th
ISSUE

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Writers Space Africa
Empowering African Writers

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Writers Space Africa, a monthly literary online magazine dedicated to giving literary enthusiasts a platform for their work, welcomes submissions for her April 2021 Edition in the following categories:

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The Submission window is open from February 1st to February 14th.

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We look forward to receiving your best.

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Editor's Note

The freedom to move and assemble, the freedom to love, the freedom to pursue one's ambitions or dreams, the freedom to stand for political office without fear of arbitrary arrest, detention without trial or even death; the need for freedom is as present as it has always been. The pursuit of freedom is now as potent as ever.

We celebrate this special 50th issue of Writers Space Africa Magazine in freedom. We pay homage to the pioneers who saw the need to create a free space for writers to pursue their art. We publicly praise those who carried forward that torch of freedom and passed it on so that others too may shine bright, and in order that the art of writing may live forever within the pages of this magazine.

We applaud the writers, poets and storytellers who pursue their dreams and who honour us with their works every month in our publication. We raise a glass to the readers who have stayed with us from the first issue of the magazine in January, 2017 to the new readers who've come on board since then.

To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others- to quote the icon Nelson Mandela. As we altogether celebrate this milestone edition of WSA Magazine, we look ahead to the next ten thousand publications with a determined sense of freedom of expression.

Happy 50th edition! Enjoy!

Namwanja,
Chief Editor



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Unbound

Agboni Christina
Nigeria

The woman walks into the room like one who is drunk, carefully placing one foot after the other. She comes to an abrupt halt in the middle of the room. She looks up at the ceiling, then she lowers her eyes and her gaze flits over the room, the threadbare furniture, all mismatched. She sighs like one in pain and staggering towards an orange cushion chair, she flops on it. Her breathing, harsh. Her name is Uwedo.

Uwedo is tired. She is exhausted and drained. She is coming from where she had gone to pay for her transgressions along with her friends. Her friends had complained bitterly about the hike in the prices of their transgressions. Anyo had to sell her Hollands wrappers to pay. The burden was getting too much, but who

would they turn to? The holy book states clearly that anyone who transgresses dies. They do not want to die, and Ebili, the snake had developed a way for them to not die; by paying hefty sums.

"When are we ever going to be free?" Anyo had lamented that morning.

They had been happy at first, with paying the dues and all. But every day, Ebili raised the stakes. They are now stuck between a rock and a hard place. Death, or Ebili.

Whenever Uwedo thinks of everlasting death, painful goosebumps riddle her skin, and a sense of déjà vu glides over her with icy pain. Thinking of paying Ebili with her fast depleting resources brings bile up her throat. She is lost. Truly lost in darkness.

She begins to sniff and later bursts into huge sobs. Her heart squeezes in agony.

* * *

Uba hears a knock at the door and tenses. He drops the glass of wine he is holding in his hand with a thud on the wooden stool beside his seat. Red liquid sloshed over the rim of the glass onto his hand, but he doesn't notice. A million thoughts run through his mind. Surely, not Ebili. It wasn't long ago the snake came to collect his pay.

Ebili always come to Uba's house to collect his fee. Uba pays heavily, but he has no choice. That is what he thinks.

The knock again. He sighs with resignation and goes to open the door. He is surprised to see Edekono standing there.



Edekono never follows them to pay the transgression levies. Uba had dared to ask Ebili once about it.

"Don't you dare ask me that again," Ebili had thundered; his red eyes getting redder.

"I heard she has a master higher than Ebili," Anyo, his wife had told him after Ebili left.

"You'd better not let anyone hear that," Uba had warned his wife.

"Good afternoon, Sir Uba. May I come in?" Edekono asks, shaking him out of his reverie.

"You may," Uba replies and opens the door wider to let her enter the room.

Edekono settles herself in an arm chair in the tastefully furnished sitting room. Anyo, Uba's wife, walks in just then... She stops in her tracks at seeing Edekono, and lowers her eyes, like one ashamed of something.

"Good evening, Mrs Edekono," she greets Edekono.

"Anyo, my sister. Good evening," Edekono replies.

"What can we offer you?" Anyo asks. Her eyes still downcast.

"Don't bother yourself please. I actually came to offer you and your family something tonight," Edekono says.

"What could that be?" Uba inquires.

"I bring you good news. I would like you to serve the master I'm serving," Edekono says.

"Who's your master?" Uba asks.

"The King of Kings, and Lord over everything. He's Jesus Christ," Edekono supplies.

"Are his prices fair?" Anyo asks quietly from her perch on the arm of her husband's seat.

"He doesn't charge at all. You just have to believe in

him is all. He will break you free from bondage into liberty," Edekono responded.

"Our friends must hear of this," Anyo says and stands with a boldness that belies her appearance. She dashes off towards the phone. Edekono beams at her, while Uba looks on with astonishment.

* * *

Uwedo walks into the room in a huff, followed by Ukpalu and Abutabu.

"Anyo! Sir Uba. What is going on?" Ukpalu asks.

"Well, Edekono here says her master charges nothing for transgressions," Uba replies as he gathers the folds of his agbada onto his knees and reclines deeply into his chair.

"I'm sure he just kill transgressors off," Abutabu quips.

"No. Let's just listen to her," Anyo says with firmness.



The others stop and sit down. They never hear Anyo speak like this.

"Unlike your master, Ebili the snake, my master is Love. He loves everyone. Transgressors or not. And the cost of true love is no charge. You have to believe

die. My master has already paid for all our transgressions with his blood. There's no levy that can be as precious and worthy as the blood of Christ," Edekono says.

"What do we do? I'm tired of paying Ebili." Ukpalu

burden. He's the burden bearer," Edekono tells them. "Please, take us to him," Anyo says.

"Just accept, believe and confess him as your lord and saviour. He will come and dwell in, and with you," Edekono says.



"Just like that? Hmm. Please I'm ready to serve your master," Uwedo declares and stands up.

"Me too," Anyo stands.

"From my head to the sole of my feet, your master has all," Ukpalu gets to his feet.

"I'm willing to make your master mine," Uba says and stands also.

"Abutabu, what are you waiting for?" Uwedo asks Abutabu who is sitting down gazing at nothing in particular.

"I'm trying to think," Abutabu replies, scratching her throat.

that," Edekono says. The passion in her voice real.

There is silence. It seems everyone is digesting what is being said.

"But our transgressions must be paid for or we die. The Holy Book says so," Uwedo says.

"Your paying Ebili for your sins is nothing. You will still

lament.

"Yes. It has not been easy. Our resources are fast depleting," Uba says.

"The weight of our transgressions gets heavy every day," Anyo adds.

"My master says, 'come unto me, all ye that labour and heavy laden and I will give you rest' come to my master, let him take over your

"Do you still want to remain in bondage? In this quicksand of anguish Ebili has subjected us to for so long?" Anyo asks her.

"Look. It's not by force. I'm still young. I will serve this master of love later. Let me serve myself first. I don't mind paying Ebili," Abutabu supplies and rises to her feet. She looks squarely at Edekono and says;

"Thanks. But, no thanks." Then she flounces out of the room. Her multi-coloured skirt billowing after her.

"Do something," Uwedo turns to Edekono.

"I wish I can. It's not in me to convince anyone. I just talk and pray, the Holy Spirit works to convict people," Edekono replies sadly, then continues, and this time, in a cheerful voice.

"If you will only confess your transgressions and believe on the name of Jesus, you are saved. And as many as will receive Christ, He gives them power to become children of God," she quotes



from the Holy Book.

She leads them in the confession of their transgressions and taking on her master as their own.

"Today is the day of salvation. Ohhh! You're now children of liberty!" Edekono exclaims smiling from ear to ear.

"Is this all?" Anyo sounds skeptical.

"Yes. As simple as ABC really," Edekono answers, still smiling.

"Wow! No more payments to Ebili," Uba says in a voice tinged with wonder.

"He's going to be pissed," Ukpalu says.

"But, there's nothing he can do. Our master is greater than him. You must not give him wiggle room to try and get you back into the mud you just left," Edekono warns.

"So simple to be set free and we have been walking in abject darkness," Anyo says. "No more! Light has come!" Edekono interjects.

"Freedom! What a sweet experience," Uwedo proclaims as she sinks deeper into her seat.



"Yes. You have all entered into the everlasting rest of God now," Edekono tells them.

"I will make sure to tell anyone I can about this freedom in Christ. They

must get out of the clutches of Ebili," Ukpalu announces.

"Yes. That's the part we've all got to play. Congratulations brothers and sisters," Edekono smiles.

"Tonight, I will sleep the sleep of a freeborn. My master is Lord over everything. I'm free indeed!" Anyo declares.

The rest nod in affirmation.



The Escape

Arop Lino
South Sudan

Santino Bol Mel had worked like a donkey for five odd years in the Sudanese town of Kosti. It was not until the end of the fifth year that it struck him that he was not really a contract employee but a slave. When he looked back at the five years, the manner in which he had spent them seemed cleverly orchestrated by his supposed employer, Abu Talib. After his first year of work, he had asked for his payment but Master Abu Talib had called him and brought out a notebook and began to write and make calculations. This, he would say scribbling a figure, is your food expenses for the year and that is the accommodation or water expenses and by the time he was done with calculations, Bol's annual salary of 10,000 Sudanese Dinar was utterly spent. The following year, calculations were made again but, Bol's expenses surpassed

his earnings and thus, it followed that he always owed his employer a good sum of money by the end of every working year.

Bol had a blurry memory of how he ended up in Kosti. One moment, he was in a train carriage in the town of El Daein in 1887 heading to Khartoum and laughing to jokes from guys who were learning Arabic and the next moment, he had leapt out of a window of the burning train amid screams of passengers and the shattering of glass by bullets. He hurt himself badly on the rail but, the real memory that was recurring to him was the triumphant faces of the Northern Army as they watched the train burn. Later, he found out that the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army had ambushed a large government contingent at Kiir Adem and left many fatalities and the president had ordered the

army to retaliate by burning the train full of Southern scum.

Sweat dripped down from Bol's face as he worked in the sugar cane plantations near the Kenana sugar factory amid the hot afternoon blaze. Every new working year, he worked harder than the previous one in order to be able to pay back what he owed Master Abu Talib, but the calculations always produced a deficit greater than the previous year's.

Better to be a slave than dead, he cheered himself up. But, his dreams were always of home, of his parents who were near starvation when he left due to the great hunger triggered by the civil war, of his then young girlfriend he left when he took the journey north to look for work. He was a young man then. He looked at his hands, torn by hard labour in the plantations until they had



become hard as stone. He rarely got to look in a mirror but the last he had looked, he did not recognise the man who stared back at him; haggard, rugged and old. When Master Abu Talib had started calling him a slave, he did not mind because in the north, a black person was called a slave. It was an accepted term, even the newspapers used it. They said that slaves had collected themselves in the South and formed what they called Sudan People's Liberation Army. Master Abu Talib used to condemn the formation of SPLA in the strongest Arabic terms.

"That's Haram," he would say. "Slaves rebelling against their masters! Haram!"

One afternoon, it occurred to Bol while working in the plantations that he might never leave master Abu Talib's household if he kept owing him money every year and nobody else would pay his debts and so, he began his quest for freedom. It seemed easy to slip away from the plantations and head for the train station but, as soon as he had thought about this, he saw for the first time

another worker who, though a worker, had lighter duties than others and was armed with a Kalashnikov rifle. Although Bol had not noticed it before, this man always followed him like a shadow. The man was dark-skinned and from the traditional marks on his forehead, he was a Southerner



from Bol's own home town of Aweil. He was bitter with the man but, part of him knew that he would have taken up that very responsibility if at the end of the day it granted him his freedom.

From then on, Bol had that uncanny feeling of being watched. Even when he went to sleep, the man with the Kalashnikov kept nearby, pacing up and down or

pretending to be doing something.

Better to do it than to live with the fear of it. One evening during Isha prayers, Bol laid his bed in the servants quarters and threw himself on it to sleep since he was tired from the day's tedious work. He could hear the Kalashnikov man polishing his weapon by the door, punctuated by continuous clicks of dismantling and reassembling the rifle. He closed his eyes and lay there for about an hour until he heard the Kalashnikov man walk away. Bol did not take more than a second to act then. He quickly slipped on his worn shoes and made for the door. He passed by the back of the mosque and heard the Imam giving a sermon punctuated by 'Allahu Arkbar' at the end of every sentence. He passed through the market place, taking care to walk in the shadows. At the edge of the market, he paused and listened. He was being followed. He slipped back into the shadows and waited. He barely got a glimpse of the Kalashnikov man as he dashed past him.



Bol changed direction and took the longest route to the train station. He had heard that a train would be leaving for Babanusa that night.

When he arrived at the train station, Bol kept to the shadows still. Passengers were presenting their tickets and entering the train. He saw no chance of entry and was almost turning back when he saw that a wagon half-loaded was still open and unguarded. He thanked the gods and walked towards it, quiet as a shadow. He slipped in and looked back only to see an Arab man's eyes sweep over him briefly and the man focused his sight on other things. Bol was left debating whether he had been seen or not. Nevertheless, he made room behind heavy sacks that contained God knows what and made himself as comfortable as possible. He kept shivering, expecting to see Master Abu Talib or the Kalashnikov man in the wagon searching for him but none came. The wagon closed with a deafening ring of the metal and after what seemed like eternity, the great locomotive roared to life. Santino Bol

breathed deep. Not over yet, he told himself. But he smiled in spite of himself. Any master but Master Abu Talib.

When the train stopped at the station in Babanusa, Bol was tired and hungry and had lost track of time. He knew not how long the journey had been but his immediate problem was how to get out and without being seen at that. He was still exploring possible ways when the wagon was opened and in walked a man. The very man whom Bol had thought had seen him in Kost. He shrunk back behind the sacks. So he had seen me then. Another man followed the first one, touching this sack and that. The first one however walked straight to where Bol was lying and held him by the the arm. Bol was weak from hunger and fatigue, and therefore, offered no resistance.

"My servant," said the man who held Bol by way of explanation to his colleague's alarmed face. From slave to servant, a positive way up the ladder to freedom. He would have laughed at that thought if he hadn't been hungry and fatigued.

Things quickly changed for Bol. Abdallah Al Ramadhan, for that was his name soon had Bol dressed in a neat white and spotless robe. He also provided him food. When he thanked Abdallah Al Ramadhan, he dismissed it saying that Bol could always have time to return his favours once they were in Aweil. The train soon left Babanusa for Aweil. This time, Bol sat in a carriage which reminded him of the tragedy in El Daein. He half expected to suddenly hear screams of passengers and see the train burn. He looked out at the window as they passed through a deserted village. It was burnt to rubble and nothing was alive in it. The Janjaweed. He had witnessed their raids before and there was no mistaking it for they always left their mark behind. Death.

The train continued going deeper into the South. It passed through the tropical rain forests of Aweil. Bol could sense that old humid smell of home and hear the the birds twitter. He was free.



WSA SUB-GROUP CHAIRPERSONS ON WSA AND WSA MAGAZINE'S 50TH ISSUE

1. **Tom Patrick Nzabonimpa, Rwanda**

WSA and WSA Magazine have been effective for WSA-Rwanda. Two of its members got published in the magazine. The members learnt through different sessions and lecturers provided by WSA. As a result, there is a vast improvement in their writings. We look forward to the magazine featuring more of our works.

2. **Lubacha Deus, Tanzania**

WSA has been an incredible literary space for the Tanzanian subgroup as it has connected the members with the writers' world of Africa and has equipped them with crucial skills such as critiquing, writing, and leadership. With the monthly-issued WSA Magazine, Tanzanian writers have built their reputations as writers and advanced their writing careers through submitting their work and receiving feedback on different themes and genres. WSA has also added value to their writing since any work that appears in WSA Magazine is special because it is guided by the target audience and goes through various hands of experts. As Tanzanians, we hope the magazine will be more diversified to accommodate a great number of submissions per month.

3. **Leo Muzivoreva, South Africa**

WSA has grown through leaps and bounds despite a catastrophic 2020. The South African Chapter is still in its infancy but, there are rays of hope for greater things to come. Long live WSA. Aluta Continua!

4. **Mimi Machakaire, Zimbabwe**

WSA has meant so much to me as a member. I've met great people online. I'm yet to meet most of them in person yet, they have been friendly and encouraging in my writer's journey; so much so that it has inspired many works to go in ways that I wasn't expecting. I'm thankful for the experience, and I'm sure members of Writers Space Africa (Zimbabwe) would also agree. Consider that we have come together to share our work and help each other grow as writers and as people overall. We have become something of a small family and it has really proven that even though we may not live in the same place, we can still maintain a connection. In all this, thanks to the founder of WSA, Anthony Onugba and others for bringing all of us together as one.

5. **Formutar Stanislaus, Cameroon**

Writers Space Africa (WSA) is the furtherance of a new consciousness on the African continent; the consciousness of the fact that we can collectively give orientation to African discourse and relay voices from the peripheries to the centre. It is a means for the expression of the African self-worth and self-concept, pre-requisites to any meaningful human development on the continent.

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It is not what you think it is

Blessing Amatemeso
Nigeria

Once upon a time, at the outskirts of a village called Kintu, stood a majestic mango tree. This tree had produced fruits for many generations. The villagers didn't eat much mango but, they always plucked them and sent them to the market by train. On this tree grew a young and vibrant leaf called Abbey. Abbey had a lush green colour. He sat at a vantage point on the tree because he always received adequate sunlight and rain, which was all he needed to thrive but, Abbey wasn't happy. He was jealous of the mangoes in his tree and other fruits in neighbouring trees. He wished that he also would be plucked and taken to the city.

The birds that perched on the tree twittered of beautiful cities filled with elegant homes, people dancing to lovely music and making merry. Abbey always dreamt of going to the

city. He didn't just want to watch fruits go and then one day, get old and fall off; he wanted an adventure. The older leaves always told him that this was the best life for a leaf. "The winds would take you high up into the heavens," they said. The oldest leaf, Nana, told Abbey that they were fortunate to live such a long life and not die quickly like the leaves of the Apple tree but, Abbey thought it was a boring life.

One day, as harvesting season drew near, Abbey made up his mind to leave the tree and follow the fruits to the city. Everyone tried to caution him but, he was indignant. He couldn't sleep for fear that he would miss the fruits. When the villagers came to harvest the fruits, Abbey hid behind a mango and got plucked. He was so happy to be free. The villagers washed them and put them in bags and boxes before

loading them onto the train. Abbey was ecstatic. To him, the warm bath was just the start of a good life.

The journey to the city was a long one and though Abbey tried to stay awake and enjoy the sights, he soon found himself fast asleep.

"It's all just grass and trees and more trees", he consoled himself whenever he stirred awake. When the train arrived at the station, the baskets and bags were loaded into a lorry and driven to the market. Abbey was amazed by the sheer number of people there.

They were so many that their voices created a cacophony. The goods were taken to a warehouse and locked overnight. It was hot and dry. Abbey hoped tomorrow would be a better day.



When morning arrived some men came to the warehouse and took some boxes away but, they brought no food. After four weeks, Abbey decided to venture out of the warehouse. He walked awhile around the market and then entered a car. On the way he saw half eaten fruits littered on the road. It sent a shiver through his midrib. When the car arrived at the city, Abbey jumped onto a window sill. Coincidentally it was the kitchen. He saw fruits and other leaves being chopped alive. He became

terrified. His only thought was that he had to warn the others at the village.

Abbey made up his mind to go back but, he was weak. He walked back to the road and entered a car going the direction he had come. He couldn't keep his eyes open this time also but, not because of lack of sleep but lack of energy. He was no longer as green as he was when he left the village. There were patches of yellow all over him and he felt parched. When he got to

the market, he discovered that he couldn't walk for long distances. He had to pause after every six or seven steps. He wished he had listened to old Nana. When night fell, he found a spot under a table and lay down. I will continue the journey tomorrow, Abbey thought to himself. But, before morning, pieces of him had been blown away by the wind. His last thoughts were of Nana and her wise words, "Freedom ain't always what you think it is."



Q and A with the Penboss

Piol Tiek Awer
South Sudan

Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Piol Tiek Awer and I am your interviewer. On the opposite chair is Anthony Onugba, the founder of Writers Space Africa, whose magazine I am interviewing him for. Anthony is also the Executive Director of the African Writers Development Trust (AWDT). Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together for Mr. Anthony Onugba, all the way from Nigeria!

Mr. Onugba: Thank you Piol and everyone. Good day to you ladies and gentlemen.

Piol: You're most welcome and thank you too for honouring our invite. For those that don't know Anthony Onugba, can you please introduce yourself to them?

Mr. Onugba: Anthony Onugba is a Nigerian born author of six published

books. These include Amanda's Crime, The Chronicles of Christ, Three Men and a Bottle, and Mixed Emotions. He is a multi-genre writer with works spanning across poetry, prose, drama and children's literature.

Anthony is the brain behind the annual African Writers Conference and the African Writers Awards. He is a consultant to non-governmental organisations and facilitates workshops on conflict management and prevention, leadership, communication, creative writing and film. He has speaking engagements throughout the year at various forums.

Lavender Tales of the Summit is my seventh published work and first poetry chapbook published recently. My website is www.anthonugba.com

Piol: Congratulations upon your seventh publication. Did you ever think, in the beginning, that the magazine would be around this long and have such an array of team members from the whole African continent?

Mr. Onugba: When we began the magazine in January 2017, to be honest, we were not thinking about celebrating the 50th or even 100th. What we were concerned with, then, was building the magazine to get to a point where we will publish works from writers all across Africa. It was only in November 2020, when we were getting ready to release the call for the February 2021 (50th) edition that it hit us. This coincided with the appointment of the new editorial team to run for a year.



When we realised this, the Chief Editor, Namwanja, called for suggestions saying this edition must be big! It was only then that I frankly gave it a thought about how far we have come.

Piol: It's indeed an achievement worth celebrating. Congratulations. How proud are you about the 50th edition of the WSA Magazine?

Mr. Onugba: I am very happy and proud about the 50th edition and I am sincerely grateful to all those who have made this a reality right from the first edition. The editorial team members are drawn from every region and it is exciting listening to ideas – African ideas. Above all, I am delighted that we are all a family and we work towards the same goal.

Piol: Like they say, 'Divided we fall, united we stand'. Indeed, the WSA team seems to live by that saying. Ten years down the line,

what do you envision for the WSA Magazine?

Mr. Onugba: Ten years from now, building upon our solid foundation, we would be the go-to magazine for everything literary. We would reach every country on the continent and have a readership way beyond Africa. Currently, our magazine is read in the Americas. Someone even translated a children's literature story from our magazine to Portuguese and shared it in her book club in Brazil. We have the capacity to be more, to do more and to achieve more especially, with our team of passionate and experienced people.

Piol: I must say, you've clearly drawn your line and judging by how far you have reached with the magazine, I don't see anything stopping you. I am of the view that WSA Magazine receives huge volumes of submission every month for the calls every month. Have you ever thought of building another publishing

company, again, just like you did with Acacia Publishing, as a way to get the works of writers out there considering all the many submissions?

Mr. Onugba: To be honest, no. There are a lot of new publishing houses that do not exploit writers. What we need to do is to expand on our partnership. For example, we currently have a partnership with SOTRANE Publishers in Zambia. They are an international publishing house and they know their onions, chai and coffee! I have visited their office in Lusaka and I can say, they're in business for the long haul and are concerned about their reputation, too. It is easier to leverage on partnership than go into competition.

Piol: I couldn't agree more with that. You have published seven books, any advice for the upcoming writers or even established writers?

Mr. Onugba: Every writer



And the other is that it is a business. Writers are often stuck with the first personality and do not often entertain the second. Writers need to have a balanced approach where they look at the business of writing. This means they see their book as a product which would sell if it's good. A lot of things must be considered for the product to be good. This includes professional and paid editing, website, publicity, among others. Writers must be 'business' people. This is not easier for those who get traditional contracts. The reason is that if you are not deliberate in promoting what you believe in, you will be forgotten sooner or later.

Piol: I have often heard people call writers poor people. I didn't realise it was because those are writers that haven't entertained the second aspect of writing. I suppose you're reading a book, if not books, currently. What book are you reading now?

Mr. Onugba: I am currently reading *The Laws of Human Nature* by Robert Greene.

Piol: I have heard about the book and the author. I should read that book. Who is your favourite writer and his/her work that speaks to you the most?

Mr. Onugba: I would settle for Fulton J. Sheen. He writes on spirituality and I cannot really say which of his books I like the most.

Piol: I have been there. It's really hard to settle for one book. You write poetry, novels, plays, television scripts. What is your favourite writing form of these?

Mr. Onugba: I do not have a favourite because they all present unique opportunities to tell a story. Being a multi-genre writers helps me more to know what form is best suited for an idea. For example, I may want to write a screen play about two lovers but mid-way through, I can try it out

as a poem and it fits better. But, poetry is easier for me but I only write structured poems. It is a surprise even to myself that my recent book is not written in blank verse which is my preferred form.

Piol: I am not surprised you don't have a preferred form. I mean, you're very good with all your forms. What is your personal ambition with regards to the writing and publishing industry? And, considering you're a director, any ambitions for the film industry, too?

Mr. Onugba: Mine is to try as much as possible to adapt African stories to the screen. I know that it's a capitalist market out there but notwithstanding, we have really good stories that do not really need the big budget special effects. People are fascinated by a good story with talented casts. We have these in Africa. I would like to leverage on this for the future.



Piol: Your passion for film-making and telling African stories is undeniable. As WSA readership, should we also expect the publishing of screenplays or dramas in the near future?

Mr. Onugba: Yes, I have some unpublished dramas that I'd like to publish and

even discuss with a theatre company to produce. As for the screenplays, I'd produce them in dear future.

Piol: Thank you once again Mr. Onugba for honouring our invitation. I am certain your readers now know the brain behind those amazing books.

Mr. Onugba: The pleasure is mine. Thank you for hosting me.

Piol: You're most welcome and good luck in your endeavours. With that ladies and gentlemen, we've come to the end of our interview. Thank you.



WSA SUB-GROUP CHAIRPERSONS ON WSA AND WSA MAGAZINE'S 50TH ISSUE

6. **Ismaila Saidybah, Gambia**

Writers Space Africa has opened doors of opportunity for young writers in the Gambia who were in dire need of enhancing their literary skills through networking and collaboration.

The WSA magazine has been instrumental in serving as a platform that affords young Gambian writers the opportunity to get their literary pieces to a global audiences.

Members of Writers Space Africa - Gambia Chapter wish that the WSA Magazine keeps the spirit of bringing their literary pieces to a global audience. Equally, they wish to see WSA grow into a very sophisticated NGO that will help African writers to have access to opportunities.

They also wish for WSA to have more partners that can be very helpful in making sure that WSA activities are carried out in a way that is consistent and convenient.

7. **Namse Udosen, Nigeria**

I'm glad to be a pioneer member of WSA. I have read all of the 50 issues. The magazine has provided an outlet for many budding Nigerian writers. We are proud to be part of this golden success.

8. **Piol Tiek Awer, South Sudan**

As the leader of WSA-SS and a member of WSA, I have gained not only better writing skills, but I've been equipped with leadership skills, too. I am forever grateful to be part of the WSA community.

9. **Halieo Motanyane, Lesotho**

We acknowledge, respect and honour WSA for the existence of its monthly magazine to our benefit and Africa at large. Without it, we would not have been such an incredible family of writers. It's a family that is working together to grow authorship in our kingdom and spread the Motherland's wings into homes on all continents. Long Live WSA!

10. **Nicole Enwonwu Gandaho, Benin Republic**

I'm a twenty-two-year-old writer and the Co-ordinator of Writers Space Africa- Benin (WSA-BR). The creation of WSA-BR has brought to our attention the fact that the literary arts have not been receiving the attention they deserve in Benin Republic, and that there is need for this to happen for the benefit of the young generation of literary artists. Therefore, WSA-BR has tasked itself with turning this situation around by working on innovative ways to bring back recognition to the arts.

...continue on page 40



Freeing Ourselves

Colin Stanley
Kenya

Freedom is thought to be something one gets after they are let out of a cage or a not-so-comfortable situation. Freedom, to some, is rising to power, in the examples of great men like Nelson Mandela and Jomo Kenyatta. To start with, youth is indeed a drastic stage of life. It was when they were youths that the revolutionaries that drove away colonialists from the soil of our ancestors. For Kenyatta and Mandela, they faced jail terms for their relentless efforts to fight for the freedom of their respective African people. Even in prison, they still fought for freedom and dreamed of the day when their efforts would bear fruit.

This brings out a perspective that rather shapes the identity of an African leader in reference to the ancient kings and queens that ruled kingdoms. Being young men,

they did what was possible to lead to better execution of governance. For instance, take Barack Obama whose mother spoke of freedom for women. Ann Dunham argued that women should receive equal pay as the men, as they worked the same hours. Obama's mother was a free woman.

Freedom is not usually a cage-escape affair. It is like the satisfaction of achieving a long-sought-after dream. Like Jomo Kenyatta and other leaders across Africa that fought for the independence of their countries, they thought of freedom when they experienced first-hand, and objected, to oppression. My gramps told me that when Kenya attained independence in 1963 and the Union Jack was lowered, jubilations were all over the Central region. One wonders how this happened. Remember, we as Africans, we are more pragmatic compared

to other races. There was heavy vegetation cover in the country that independence day, and people climbed on top of hills in the darkness of the night waiting anxiously for the signal. My grandfather was twenty-one at the time, on top of a hill with his age mates. Then, the signal came, and people shouted all the way through Kikuyu land, from hill to hill. Others lit fires to commemorate the fact that they had gained freedom. What a night it was! My grandfather later became a public servant for ten years; his dedication was to service, or maybe that was his freedom. In this Africa, freedom is an everyday notion. If you had asked a person from the West about Africa before the coming of the internet, they would have classified us as a continent filled with poverty and diseases. It is true that diseases attack our populations.

Poverty has become a part of us. It is by luck that the internet and globalisation, as miniature as they look, came through for Africa, while we have held on to our rich heritage. This is because of the reduced number of casualties compared with great nations like the United States of America. Such have lost specialised professionals in various fields necessary for the recovery of their economies during Post-Covid passé. It comes by nature with freedom there is an opportunity: A tiny

light at the end of the tunnel. Despite the famed tale of slavery, Africa deserves a new badge on its chest, a sign of freedom for the Motherland.

It is evident that the healing and eradication of the Corona Virus is going to take joint efforts by the major stakeholders in the administrative, social, and health sectors. With these engagements, Africa has a chance to display its strengths in the current 21st Century timeline. The African youth today plays an important role in

the founding of a strong Africa; an Africa with freedom, and an Africa that is proud to show off its beautiful colours to the rest of the world that was badly hit by the pandemic. With these, I could believe the human instinct of knowing will dissolve the sad memories families in the West may be going through during the post-Covid recovery. This is more of our chance to be free from the analogy of slavery and oppression. I believe that freedom is what the world needs at this time.





Critical, Yet Humble Voices; WSA Reviews' Corner

Akinrinade Funminiyi Isaac
Nigeria

The Writers Space Africa (WSA) monthly magazine was birthed on 7th January, 2017. In its infancy stage, the magazine had the necessary features that every child in her initial stages of development is entitled to; there were different genres and facets in the layout which were befitting of the time. It is said that a humble beginning leads to a lucrative ending. Although WSA Magazine hasn't reached full actualisation, this analogy is an exquisite fit to the 50th anniversary of published editions, and is symbolic of progress and a dream come true. The addition of a review section in the magazine began towards the end of 2019, and it displays a great innovation in the league of African literature. Reviewers of the magazine hail from different ends of the continent under the leadership of Akinrinade Funminiyi Isaac (Nigeria). The collective

enthusiasm of review members testifies that they are passionately driven by a creative literary thrust of avid readers, and most profoundly, professional literary reviewers and critics of African descent. Theirs is a task motivated to dissect every written work that finds its way into the magazine. The review team leader selects a review per genre to feature in the magazine. In addition, the reviews are forwarded to the published writers' mails and also published on the WSA Review's medium blog and Facebook page:

<https://medium.com/writers-space-africa-literary-reviews>

<https://www.facebook.com/wsareviews/?=as>

In every sphere of life, new establishments bring with them some forms of euphoric sentiments and good tidings. I

believe this has been the feeling of readers and authors of the review section in the magazine since 2019 as it emits rays of critical, yet humble voices. It is part of our prospects that the WSA Editorial team in liaison with the review leadership will strive to ensure that the constant inception of upcoming editions will acclimatise efficient features that will portray a colloquy of individual and collective literary analyses marked by professionalism and expertise.

Moreover, it is clear cut that every review which finds its way in the issue keeps improving each day. Ancient sages say, die trying; it is under this atmosphere of jubilation in this jubilee (50th) edition of the magazine that this joyful influence of our hearts extends the appeal for more membership in the team.

The review team can be reached at reviews@writersspace.net. One should not bask in the fear of not trying, because growth is in trying and doing something new. 'To be is to try and do'. Thus, we can enrich our culture of reading and writing through reviewing the brilliant stories, poems, articles and flash fictions of the WSA Magazine. In this custom, we become surgeons of African literature. As a review member, I beg permission to wrap up in the following remarks: "As reviewers, we navigate through the minds of esteemed authors providing textual interpretation, translation and transmission of the exhibited texts. Thus, to enable a reader to explore into new perspectives of understanding and reinvigorating the magazine into better dimensions."



WSA
Writers Space Africa
 Empowering African Writers



Writers are Immortal: Wakini lives in her words

Temani Nkalolang
Botswana

Have you ever been infected by someone's personality? Wait until you hear or read about Wakini Kuria. Everyone who talks about her encodes her personality into their words and it is impossible to decode it without a dose of the same personality as well. We know of charm and her charm was her infectious personality. Her personality carried her vision infused passion- to make an unprecedented change in African literature.

Wakini had a giving heart which enabled her to cultivate her passion for reading and writing in different literary platforms she served on, including Writers Guild Kenya. Her vision birthed fully in Writers Space Africa. Because of Wakini, Writers Space Africa boasts of subgroups and members all over Africa. She

made Writers Space Africa home, not only for herself but, for every writer of African descent. Writers Space Africa now prides herself in this very same principle, giving! Giving a home/space for writers to express themselves, nurture their craft, interact with other writers from across Africa and fostering a discourse on African literature.

Having served in various roles in Writers Space Africa, we cannot overlook her amazing charismatic vigor which she exhibited in her leadership role as the Chief Editor of the WSA-Magazine in 2018. She stood as a pillar of support in the success of the 2018 African Writers Conference held in Nigeria and the 2019 African Writers Conference hosted by Kenya. The 2019 Conference was held shortly following her untimely demise. Yes, her

immortal vision is a vessel that is sailing Writers Space Africa's dream to a mile of success.

Listening to Wakini's voice in messages from every writer that met her, both physically and virtually, one can't help but feel her personality embrace their heart. She truly 'wrote hope in many a soul'. She touched the lives of people she never met, lifted others up even when she was down and now, she is forever lifted up!

With every milestone Writers Space Africa achieves, we remember Wakini. Faced with insurmountable trials, still we remember her smile. 'Never let life beat you into submission' so, we soldier on, engaging a global narrative on the future of the African writer, and the untapped potentialities of African literature with its diverse culture.

Wakini believed in nurturing reading and writing from the grass roots level and in honour of her, African Writers Conference sponsors the 'Wakini Kuria Children's Literature Prize' every year. 'Writing makes writers immortal' so, Wakini lives on!



THE LATE WAKINI KURIA



Eight Questions For Chief Saka

Namwanja Margaret Chikwabi
Zambia

Chief Saka (Saka Dbosz Jr) is a dynamic Nigerian entrepreneur, philanthropist, publisher, author, magazine proprietor, scholar, music industry guru, and the bankroller of WSA Magazine from 2018 until late 2019. To celebrate this special 50th edition of the magazine, we decided to pay tribute to the Chief by way of 'Eight Questions for Chief Saka'.

He then started Writers Space and many of us joined. Later on, Anthony told me of his plans to start a magazine and he came up with the blueprint for Writers Space Magazine. I said this is good, but let's make it unique by adding Africa so that we can be continental. He saw my point and birthed Writers Space Africa. Anthony was handling almost all the work at that time and I thank him for everything.

result, I said I would pay for the cost to produce the magazine. I didn't hesitate in sponsoring anything that made our platform grow. Most of our members at that time were students, some were still struggling to find their feet, so we just took it upon ourselves to help the best way we could. Besides the magazine itself, we assisted with paying some school fees for some students, held quiz nights and different competitions so that WSA members could get financial rewards. There was no dull moment and members were very active!

1. How did you become involved with WSA Magazine?

The magazine wasn't there initially. What we had was Writers Space, a WhatsApp group set up by Anthony Onugba. I had met Anthony in another writers group where over time, members were fighting more about politics than paying attention to writing. Anthony told me about the need for a group strictly for writers and I agreed with him.

2. What drove your passion and commitment to funding the magazine for the period that you did?

In the beginning, Tonie (Anthony) handled the designs, editing and everything else to do with the magazine, and even his money went into it. We discussed the need to improve the quality of our magazine and the direction we were heading into. As a

3. How proud and excited are you at seeing the magazine now celebrating its 50th issue?

I'm really surprised that we are up to that number of editions. It feels like it's just yesterday when we started the magazine.

I'm very excited at this achievement and very grateful to everyone who has contributed to this success story.

4. Do you have particular books and authors that have meant something special to you?

Yes, I grew up on James Hadley Chase and Nick Carter. Quenie by Micheal Korda taught me so much during my school-going days. There is a book titled King of Kings by Malachi that influenced my style of writing. I also crave Toni Kan, Chim Newton, Anthony Onugba and David Dial. I've loved stories from the time I was a little boy listening to my maternal grandmother telling stories all night. We had no radio or television back then. I also love magazines and movies. I think I count myself among those with the largest private collection of reading materials and books, music collection and movies. But, last year, I saw two collections that shut me up!

5. What words would you have for writers on

the African continent?

On WSA, we talk to everyone about everything. We encourage ourselves to soldier on. I would tell writers to be committed to the art. Writing is not like politics or football where money flows in at will. In writing, you must be strong to that art. You must be faithful to writing. It is a long, slow road and only the committed will survive.

6. How do you spend your time when you're not working?

I write and I read. My work involves a lot of writing, memos, minutes of meetings, and so on. They pour in every day. I'm lucky to have this talent because it has helped me so much in my work. I have won awards for my writing and for my job. I also do philanthropic things. I coach and mentor young people. I also exercise a lot and play with my children. We run, play soccer and all that.

7. Do you have a message for the readers of Writers Space Africa Magazine?

WSA Magazine is a growing space and we must all grow it, readers and writers alike. I encourage greater readership and to bring whatever contribution they can on board.

8. What words of encouragement do you have for the Editorial team of WSA Magazine?

I would advise the Editorial team to see their appointment as an opportunity to contribute to this project. I would encourage them to see this as service to humanity. WSA is involved in training of young minds and that is a lot of work. Keep going, it's good thing that you are part of.

The End





Ode to The Haiku

Nneka Joyce C. Duru
Nigeria

When blackbird shall sing
The clouds shall visit the earth
Larks shall hide in shame

I am steaming black
When I shall sing my love song
Fair lark shall go down

Ho! Blackbirds gyrate!
Play to us the beaded gourd
Let earth sing our praise!

Fair maiden, dance on
Dark and beautiful are you
Let earth sing your praise



Nneka Joyce Duru is a wife, mother, gospel artiste, teacher and a member of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Rivers State chapter. A graduate of English Language at the University of Lagos, she is a champion of women's literature and women's rights. She has visited several schools where she taught the importance of decency and the well-being of the girl-child.

Ode to the Blackbird by Duru Nneka Joyce is the winner of the [2020 African Writers Award for Poetry](#)

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<http://www.publishwithacacia.com>





Leaves of Winter Dusk

Kandem Thierry
Cameroon

Withered by cold winter, overhung by
trees,
Tall stood the young saplings of scented
foliage
The lawn rimmed with grass once green,
now brown.
Leaves all shrivelled by the failed promise
of rain.

I fancied a soothing saunter into Sillia
country side.
Lifting my head to the dawning sky, I
mused on dark clouds.
Wandering on down the lane, the question
whirled in my brain
Could jollity be begotten amidst this
gloom?

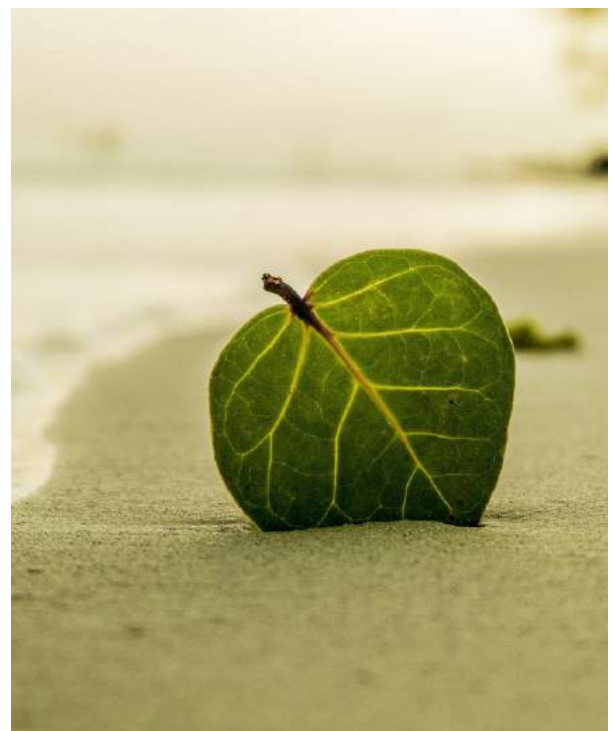
The brown foliage glinted seductively in
the blaze of the radiance.
The leaves had been golden, all along.
A glimmer of radiance had risen amidst the
unpromising premise;
Veils of clouds had dwindled to a trickle,
unveiling an ethereal harmony.

Once green now golden, the foliage
glistered with colour, with splendour
Its brilliance bathed Sillia country side in
ethereal radiance,

Setting the morning aglow in a wash of
splendour,
Basking the grass and the mass.

In the balmy breezes I could hear Mother-
Nature's voice.
She wove her gentle fingers through the
flora and down my spine.
Telling me anew,
That darkness never prevails o'er light

Humanity must not become commoditised
Capitalism must not preclude humanity
For by your sense of humanity, you are
gauged.



Daughters of Kush

Rose Awien
South Sudan



If you search for the daughters of the land
I ask
Go past the smoky kitchen and the foul
market
Because we shall not be there
Neither shall we be at our husbands' dingy
huts
Fulfilling the only duties, we were taught
To keep us hostage
And chain our dreams
Nor at our father's dusty compounds,
Living up to the only virtues we were
taught

To sin not and do what to them was right
To bar our feelings
Where are those who search
For the daughters of the land
Come see us now and tomorrow
We are here and will be
Standing side by side with men
Building our nation together
Finally, free
From the chains of culture and society
That held us back too long.



Freedom

Balogun Ayoola
Nigeria

Freedom smells like the mild touches of
New year's rain
Tastes like the icing of
A chocolate cake,
Sounds like laughter
Under the angry sun
Feels like the journey of water down a
desert
Freedom is pain painted in yellow.



Dreams of my ancestors

Olabisi Bello
Nigeria



On the back of the Nigerian eagle,
Unhealed scars carve jagged paths that
once led to freedom,
But the wounds still fester,
And ooze pus that runs across the
landmarks of a history well known:
A journey of battles fought,
Of graves unmarked,
Of children whose naive eyes closed, never
to be opened again.

On our land, dead bodies stand as trees,
Supported by roots of blood travelling
through the crevices of our rich soil.

When we remember, we cry, and our
courage fizzles to steam,

But the air becomes too thick,
And the clouds, unable to hold our grief,
split open to rain down forgotten dreams.
They drizzle down our throats, and we
guzzle on them like ravished dogs,
And the memories,
The courage,
The hopes of the souls we've lost become
ours.

So, when my father hoists me on the tired
muscles of his shoulders,
And I hold one of his placards, pointing it
towards the heavens,
I dream of a freedom, so close, so sweet, I
can taste it on the tip of my tongue.

Uhuru

Kapondenni Manasseh Phiri
Zambia

With serenity they fought
In solemnity they won
With spirit unbroken victory reign
With a spirit of Ubuntu, we had Uhuru
And Africa was free.

That is our story
Indeed, an African history
A history we have forgotten
So many hearts are broken;
Seeing our rich history going down the
drain!

The likes of Nkrumah, Kaunda and Mandela
wail

Their souls cry seeing Africa fighting
against herself

They cry with questions

Is this the meaning of Uhuru?

Do we have the freedom or we have to
wait for tomorrow like Sarafina?

Our freedom came as a package

A package of hatred, anger and unrest

A freedom that meant political tension

And then I wonder, are we really free?



Savor

Sesame Mookodi
Botswana

Oh, dear sweet taste of freedom;
Our time is being threatened again,
Although I enjoyed your tenderness
seldom
I've grown quite attached.

When wolves dressed in sheep's clothing...

Trust not the moistness,
That suckles at your ripe teat,
But the poison oozing from its tongue.
I'll make it my daily mantra to repeat
Carve it over and over
Till my fingers bleed.



Call themselves love
And try to coax me
Out of your warm embrace,
I'll recall the slicing pain...
That circled my throat;
Call it mercy;

Peace seeps from all my pores;
Takes me on trips
Usually tightly wrapped in blunts,
Always left aching for more
Till I shoot you straight into my vein.



Freedom Cost

Chidiebere Udeokechukwu
Nigeria

And from my lonely cell
I see the rising sun.
And through my prison bars
I feel his brilliant rays.
I shall fear not the grip
Of my handsome-hempen-tie
Or the single fatal swipe
Of the cur-sed silver blade
That craves my tender neck.



Tribute to the voices that bled

Charles Nnanna
Nigeria

Who'd we call free,
the boy who just made it out of
the womb or his mother who agonized
to get him out?/Perhaps if

freedom will speak for itself it
will point only to the blood that
broke, and say nothing. It won't be
misunderstood./Silence is loud,

but blood is louder, stronger,
having a voice that shatters the bars
of bondage./Flags fly proudly

in the air 'cause freedom has always
been a seed that isn't afraid of death,
never afraid to take

its unkillable voice into the deepest
of the deep 'cause even right there, its
roots hold sway./And when it shoots, the
earth has no choice but to come under its
puissant shades and breathe an air of
liberty.

This is a tribute to all the voices that saw
the brutal edge of tyranny./
we are, 'cause — like the woman in
labour — you never quitted in the face of
agony.



**African Writers
Conference '21**
Tanzania

Coming Soon!

**African Writers
Conference '21**
Tanzania

WSA SUB-GROUP CHAIRPERSONS ON WSA AND WSA MAGAZINE'S 50TH ISSUE

11. **Oamdang Yowasi, Uganda**

I'm a Ugandan poet. WSA and her magazine have exploited the would-be dull potentials in aspiring writers and readers in WSA-Uganda. Personally, WSA has shaped my poetry and being part of her poetry editorial team, I've greatly improved in style and content. The road WSA has taken is a tricky but a good one. It'll one day be the most read African publication.

12. **Houda Messoudi, Morocco**

WSA is a true gem! The adventure has helped me grow as a writer, broadened my knowledge about writing styles and genres, and most importantly, opened the door to meet and interact with writers from all over Africa.

13. **Marita Banda, Zambia**

WSA has been a boon to literary artists in Zambia as it has offered various platforms for local writers to participate in and showcase their skills and talents at different levels including WSA residences, African Writers Conferences, contests and others. In November, 2020, the AWC came to Lusaka presenting an opportunity for a more intimate experience and appreciation of the work of the regional body. Because of the high-level content and diverse monthly themes, the WSA Magazine is circulated beyond the registered membership and readership is constantly on the rise.

14. **Neo Space-Poet Masetlane, Botswana**








WSA unleashed what was hidden within. Coming from a nation that regards writing as a white man's job, or only for researchers and journalists, the magazine has helped a few of us to figuratively come out of the closet and add more to our God-given talent. It is no longer about only writing out of emotions; it is about a talent to nature, a passion to feed and a skill to explore.

15. **Benny Wanjohi, Kenya**

WSA has been the epitome of African creativity, a hub for classic work and a bonding space for writers from different African countries. It showcases the diversity of talents, perceptions and cultures that Africa oozes while concurrently exhibiting the unity that emanates from literature. WSA-Kenya, having had the privilege to produce one of the magazine's Chief Editors, the late Wakini 'Kini' Kuria, looks forward to a more vibrant magazine that will be more inclusive, bringing works to the forefront of writers from the 'unseen' and 'unheard' African countries in matters of literature. Cheers to greater heights with the new Editorial team!

WRITERS SPACE AFRICA

MAGAZINE IN NUMBERS

-  Most Downloaded February Edition 2020.
The theme was love
-  Most Liked Cover: July 2017 Cover
-  Most Read Article on the WSA Website:
Writing a Good Piece: What Poets Should
Know by Nnane Anna Nthube (Cameroon)
-  The genre with the most submissions received:
Poetry
-  Number of WSA Subgroups: 21
-  Number of Round Table Hosted: 24 and
counting (hosted twice a month)
-  Number of AWC editions: 3

Genre: Article

Title: Remembering To Forget

Columnist: Namse Udosen, Nigeria

Review: Joseph Oduro, Ghana

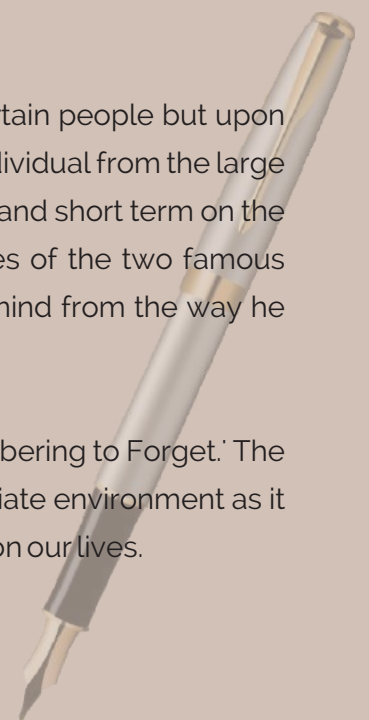
More often than not our memories are potent enough to stir turmoil within us or grace us with peace. Memories are very important components of a person's life and their relationships with friends and families. This article titled 'Remembering to Forget' illuminates the very premise of neuroplasticity, a study which circumferences the ideals of our experiences, rewires our minds and shapes our personalities. The writer aesthetically defines memory as the complex ways through which events, which are raw data, go through a cognitive process and becomes information. The sharp evolution from the scene of gazing at the ceiling in its impetuous nature, helps the reader to grasp a detailed synopsis of the article's theme.

The chronological order in which the article is written can be likened to glue which pins the reader to their seat keeping them engaged till the last word of the article. That is to say, the orderly arrangement of facts and details relating to the human memory is so precise that it ignites some sense of inquisitiveness in the reader. The writer's references to research about the human memory is purported in building trust and credibility in his work. That makes it all the more factious and commendable.

He goes ahead to tell us the processes through which we retrieve information from the large chunk of data stored in our minds. This suggests that usually, our senses collaborate with our memory responses and sharpness including our senses of smell, hearing, touch, sight and taste. These senses aid in the retrieval of information.

He further makes an analogy that at times you may forget the names of certain people but upon seeing them, reflex response from your memory recovers the name of the individual from the large chunk of data stored. Most of the time, our attention is drawn quickly to long and short term on the mention of memory. He does an excellent job in inculcating the differences of the two famous aspects of memory into the article. He seemed to have had his readers in mind from the way he weaved together each letter, morpheme and word as well as punctuations.

What a way to commence the year 2021 with such a masterpiece as 'Remembering to Forget.' The most important lesson drawn from the article is to be cautious of our immediate environment as it takes an essential role in building our memory and having a direct implication on our lives.





Genre: Flash Fiction

TITLE: Trigger

Writer: Temani Nkalolang, Botswana

Reviewer: Halieo Motanyane, Lesotho

The very first question that crossed my mind when I read Temani's title was, "who shot who?" The power of a flash fiction! Before everything, it's glaring that Temani Nkalolang outdid herself with every part of this story.

The title 'Trigger', not only sends shivers for what might be found in the story, but also suspends the mind from the events to unfold in the story.

Getting into the story, Trigger turns out to be everything, but not guns and shootings. Who would have known? The story is set far in a peaceful office space. I say peaceful because it is unlikely to find a person breaking into the office and suddenly shooting everyone around. As far as to what turned out to be, the twist of the story from the title still makes its way into befitting the two perfectly together. When she hears the footsteps outside, the traumatic memory triggers from within and drama starts.

In a very short two minutes, the story of a traumatised woman in a normal office starts and ends right in there. Using the first person narrative, Temani shows a young girl witnessing is assaulted by the men in big boots and batons. Possibly, men who could be policemen. Now one would wonder, why and how could policemen assault a citizen? IN her last sentence, the persona says, "That was the last time I had seen my father alive, dragged by the police, for a crime he didn't do."

Lastly, I applaud the simplicity used in the story. Following through the story, it is very easy to fit into the person's shoes and directly see and feel everything she was going through. Not many writers can master this technique as Temani did in this story.



Genre: Poetry

TITLE: The Whispers of Memorial Notes

Writer: Oluwatosin Okupa, Nigeria

Reviewer: Temani Nkalolang, Botswana

The past is always in the present, compressed and stored in 'moments' by the human mind-memories. Oluwatosin Okupa's poem immediately hypnotizes the reader with "The Whispers of Memorial Notes" and carries the reader with the tide of strong imagery into the cascading waterfall of questions (S1, L1 & L2, S2, L1 & L2).

In a jet stream of metaphors the reader is swooped into the persona's thoughts; whether the past 'breathing in memories' can influence or affect the present. The past accumulates in memories and eventually spills out and meets 'eye to eye' with the present/today/reality (the blazing sun).

The past does affect the present (S2 L3) either positively (S2, L6 & 7) or negatively (S2, L5).

In Stanza 3, the reader is deposited into a pool beneath the waterfall, shifting the persona's tone to a more accepting one of the inevitability of the past affecting the present.

The past is alive in memories (S3, L1) and though stored at the back, out of reach, it always finds its way to the forefront and it becomes hard to keep it out of today's path (S3, L6). In the calm of the pool, 'The Whisper of Memorial Notes' again opens the reader to the reality of the past accumulating in memories and stored in moments. Ready for another ride down the waterfall? The mood is bittersweet dressed in nostalgia.





Genre: Short Story

Title: **Scared Little Boy**

Writer: **Madeha Ezekiel Malecela, Tanzania (winner Of The Wakini Kuria Prize For Children's Literature)**

Reviewer: **Namse Udosen, Nigeria**

This is a tale about a boy who overcomes fear. A grandfather tells his granddaughter about the travails of a little boy followed by a ghost. The writer uses both third and first person narratives to build the story. It is a tale within a tale as it switches from a present conversation to a narration of a tale and on a few occasions, the boy speaks in the first person. The switching is done smoothly, the reader would not notice.

The characters remain anonymous throughout the story. They are described with pronouns and common nouns.

The story is paced in a steady mid-tempo that makes it easy to follow.

Madeha has written a classic with a style that's fresh. It's almost poetic at some point. However, I would have loved to have proper names to the characters.



WSA NIGERIA ANTHOLOGY

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

THEME:

REBIRTH

GENRE: FICTION (SHORT STORY)

SUBMISSION DATE - January 25th - March 7th, 2021.

ALL ENTRIES ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THIS EMAIL:

wsa.nigeria@gmail.com

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES*

Submit one short story no more than 2000 words in a doc./docx./PDF file to the email address above.

The story should be in Times New Roman, Font 12 and single spaced.

Entries are only open to Nigerian authors (born in Nigeria or born to at least one Nigerian parent.)

Include your city, email address, phone number, social media handles and brief biography in the body of the email.

The submission window is open from January 25th- March 7th, 2021.

The anthology is scheduled to be published in July 2021 and all writers will be notified about the status of their submission before then.



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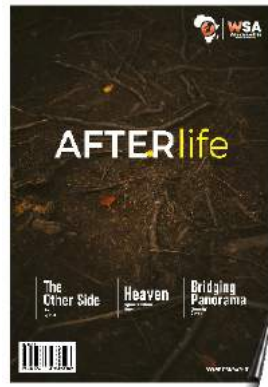
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