



WSA
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Empowering African Writers

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WRITERS SPACE AFRICA

*in loving
memory*

NAMWANJA MARGARET CHIKWABI

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Editor's Note

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing away of Namwanja Margaret Chikwabi who worked hard to promote literature not only in Zambia but in Africa as well. Namwanja served in various voluntary roles such as the Director of the Department of Programmes, Publications, and Events, the Vice Country Coordinator of Writers Space Africa – Zambia (WSA-Zm) and the Chief Editor of WSA Monthly Literary Magazine.

Namwanja was passionate, dedicated and committed to her work. She brought a lot of new ideas to WSA and has – in the few months she spent – mentored several writers across the continent. She reviewed several books which were published in the papers and also on her blog.

As Chief Editor, she continued to grow the magazine and introducing more variety of ideas that expressed the creativity of literary arts. One would say she had a balance of both IQ and EQ because as a brilliant innovator, she did not rule with an iron fist but a compassionate heart. She interacted with everyone in the editorial team, ensuring everyone worked in harmony.

Namwanja has left a very big mark - she was yet to do more. We, the WSA Editorial team, will ensure that her legacy is carried on for generations to come. She will be dearly missed but her memory will always be in our hearts and on our paper.

Rest on, dear Namwanja. We miss you greatly.

From all of us at the WSA Editorial Team

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Tributes

The Amazing Namwanja

Anthony Onugba

Founder and President, Writers Space Africa

Friendship is a relationship. It presents us with a bond which connects us in harmony. This relationship is lubricated by shared interests, beliefs and goals. We choose our friends but sometimes, it is our friends that choose us. Irrespective, what we do with this friendship determines how fast and far the relationship will sail.

Namwanja is my friend. We have been friends for just about seven months since we first physically met, days before the 2020 African Writers Conference, at a fast-food place in Centro Mall in Lusaka-Zambia. She radiated joy and passion for everything literature. It was a pleasant meeting and this was when our friendship began. She attended all four sessions of the African Writers Conference and even agreed to be the secretary of the AWC – something she was new to. She took notes which is currently available online.

Since the conference, Namwanja and me met on several occasions even when I was diagnosed with COVID-19 and was unable to leave Zambia as planned. She was there always ready to help with anything needed. Conspicuously, she was not this way to me alone. She was this way to everyone around her as much - as I observed. She was simply good natured and nurtured the virtue of goodness. She is a good person.

Until her death, Namwanja served as the Director of the Department of Programmes, Publications, and Events at Writers Space Africa. Additionally, she was the Chief Editor of the WSA monthly magazine and the Deputy Country Co-ordinator of the Zambian Chapter of Writers Space Africa. All these were voluntary positions. These positions were demanding but she combined them with running her company. Yet, innovation, passion and creativity were never to be questioned as far as Namwanja is concerned. She is simply amazing. Whenever I send her a message, I often say, 'Dear Amazing Chief Editor'. This made her smile a lot and made me glad too.

Namwanja's death came as a shock and some of us still live-in denial. It is difficult to accept a loss that hits your soul. Her loss came just two years after we lost Wakini Charity Kuria from Kenya who was the WSA Chief Editor at the time and founder of the Kenyan Chapter of Writers Space Africa.

Similarly, Wakini sacrificed a lot for WSA. She was passionate and did all that she could to ensure that WSA grows. Although their demise hurts, we are still grateful for a life well lived even though Heaven has gained yet another angel.

Going forward, we shall immortalise Namwanja but this will be announced in the coming months. In the short time here, she has tutored and helped a lot of us shape our vision. We will forever remain indebted. As painful as accepting her loss is, we shall continue to do what she always wanted us to do – to write, to read, and to learn. Namwanja is a Christian and one of the things that Christianity teaches is the hereafter. This is why we refer to a person as 'passed on' and not 'passed away'. Namwanja has passed on to greater glory. Though we remain heartbroken, we will console ourselves with the impact and legacies she left for us.

Namwanja is a good person... Namwanja is a great person. Let's be like Namwanja... let's be great!



Found & Felt

Jkanzobya
Zambia

I see you
in the darkness filled night,
You lie there as though,
You are not.
I hear you too,
In the silence filled the night.

Sometimes
You tell me,
Listen for silence,
For lost presence
Is found and felt.
This is not the language
For those with tongues,
But for the dumb and deaf at heart.

Now you speak,
Sometimes your words.
Peacefully haunt this silence.
You seem to embrace,
This vast silence
Which ensues way past
Time, light and Space.
Who does that?

This silence is greater,
But your words are louder.
I guess that's the weirdest
Thought
One would think.
Speak
I'm listening to you.
Though your words
Can't be heard
By none but me, Namwanja.



A Tear for the Rose

Yolanda Kuei
South Sudan

Namwanja Rosebud
Our red flower
WSA Chief Editor
Thy angelic bird,
The rare beauty
With smiles of love
And energetic power.

Death robbed us so bad
It took her lower,
Our beloved did her part
Sweetest memories,
To always remember.

Mama Africa, Rosebud!
May your pure Soul
Be blessed with peace
Now and forever.

Farewell

Jainaba Danso
Gambia

You snatched our angel
Before we appreciated her,
Not a chance for a goodbye
Wished you were in our shoes.

We've lost, we mourn
For letting our guards down,
Namwanja Margaret Chikwabi
Please answer our calls.

Our chief editor, best mentor,
Mother, sister and friend
We've been calling,
Yet you are unreachable.

Your words still echo
As you smile at ease,
Sleep well good angel



Calling Heaven

Mimi Machakaire

Coordinator, WSA-Zimbabwe

Namwanja my Chief Editor, at Writers Space Africa, she was a very friendly person even though we never met officially or physically. She encouraged me a lot and pushed for my article "A History of Writing" to get edited and published in the June edition for the magazine. We spoke often since then and she even congratulated me on my engagement and I was inviting her to my wedding, hoping one day I would get the chance to meet her if not at the writer's conference but she passed on soon after that conversation. Deep down I know it's okay, I know she's at peace in the afterlife and maybe we will meet there. When I heard of her passing, I couldn't believe it and I tried to call her number on WhatsApp hoping maybe she would answer but sadly there was none. Nevertheless, I will forever keep our chats in my phone in memory of her.

Rest well Chief Editor, you are and forever will be a great mother, writer, editor, mentor and friend. Thank you for everything.

Your Friend Always

R.I.P

Fomutar Stanislaus

Cameroon

Short Stories Editor, WSA

There are moments we are called upon by the circumstances around us to wonder if life has been emptied of meaning. There are other moments we are pulled by our emotions to want that life should be what we desire it to be, rather than what it is. We desire that our loved ones lost to death should regain life and smile back at us. Nevertheless, life stares back at us with a swollen face: naked unto death you are!!! Rest well Chief. We do not know if the better life is here or over there. Good for you, now that you know it as it is.

A Bowl of Energy

Akinrinade Funminiyi Isaac
Nigeria

A bowl of energy, you were
Creative, cheerful and caring.

Your thirst for knowledge was unmatchable
Your zeal to impact was incomparable
If I could plant this tree of words on your grave
I would show passers-by that you were brave
Because even in death, you smiled
A mild smile like a child.

Rest in power, magnanimous Margaret
Your deeds and words, we shall never forget.



Love Takes Flight

Namwanja Margaret Chikwabi

We are but children in Your sight
Be with us, Lord, as we take this flight
Embarking on this as lovers and friends
Where we go wrong, help us make amends

This journey, Jehovah, is nothing without you
Your light and truth, let them see us through
May we live the fruit of the Spirit
Your character, Lord, let it inhabit

May we show one to another kindness everyday
That we may reflect that one bright ray
In our moments of doubt and pain,
Help us stand firm, not giving up in vain

Hold us both in Thy hand
Keeping strong the three-cord strand
Teach us gratitude for this love's depth
For this relationship, in its glorious birth

I love him, he loves me, we both love You
Guide us to more than say it; yea, to do
Be with us always on this flight of gladness
As we grow and share, in total faithfulness.



For Namwanja

WSA - Ghana

Unfinished conversations, unread messages

Sigh

Laughter cut short, deafening silence

Emotionally Catastrophic,

Our serene hearts' metronome now a monsoon-like ballad

Sigh

Laughter cut short, deafening silence

So much to say when we meet again

Love.

Still Here

Omadang Yowasi
Uganda

When the stars go dim
And a cold wind blow,
We'll wait for the sun.

When we search closely
And don't get you,
You'll be right there.

When we grossly ask
Where have you gone?
You'll say, I'm still here.

When you can't turn
And nothing's undone,



Thank You Namwanja

Lubacha Deus
Tanzania

Thank you Namwanja, for everything. You lived. You enjoyed. You impacted. Your smile and the urge to help others will forever be in our hearts. I personally won't forget that you wished to visit my country particularly Zanzibar during the fourth African Writers Conference in October. I hoped we would finally meet but nothing we knew of God's will. Rest easy dear. You are a Good Person.

Rest on Namwanja

Blessing Peter Titus (PPBlessing)
Nigeria

To cry or to laugh?
Like thunderbolts on a stormy night
Your demise sent shock waves
Long faces and sighs abound
If only it were a prank
Alas! it's not
You've journeyed on
To the great beyond
With wet eyes and broken hearts
We say Adieu.



Forever While

Mufaro Munashe
Zimbabwe

Namwanja Margaret Chikwabi,
The smiling beacon.
For greatness you were meant to be,
Sadly, you passed on!

I fancy the most,
Where you are!
They've got the best,
to me so far.

"I'm still learning,"
So, you would say.
Yet you were teaching,
Me everyday.

I haven't had enough,
Her mentoring, teaching and humility
Death did me tough,
Won't be well for, forever while.

Your courage to try,
new things, was it?
Why you choose to die?
Leaving me hurt.

Hopes to learn,
to live without you.
If possible, return!
Alone I can't construe.

It's still a fallacy,
You're absent without leave.
You're legacy,
will live!



Shine Namwanja

Comfort Nyati SDB
Zimbabwe

Y
es
you lived
colorful a life,
With a heart trans
lucent like a diamond,
For it had no reservations,
Unlimited to love every human
Race, unreserved to the fiddles of
the earth. Unswerving to the hurdles
of the world. So gentle in tone and giant in
stature. The innovative plans in the WSA editorial
room, an archive has become in the marrow of our minds.
That jovial facial expression, angels have harvested. At the death
of a literary titan, only words remain deathless. Your writing prowess
exhibited an extraordinary trait, so exceptional like a precious stone
of crystallized carbon. Your tender touch to African prose, poetry,
a monument to celebrate its immortality. Once you were sunrise
now you shall rise from the earthly sunset to the heavenly sun
rise. An offshoot vision of spur ecstasy. May you find light
in the beautiful habitat of eternal joy. As of now, your
register has ticked in the stunning garden of eter-
nity. Like a school child who has closed
schools and gone for long holiday.
We wail thy absence, while rely
at thy heavenly intercession.
No more earthly sorrow,
No more a fleshy
Torment, forever
In perpetual
Ligh
t.



Tribute to CE

Namse Udosem
Coordinator, WSA Nigeria

Namwanja came, ran the race and bowed out. Her legacy lives on and we have the burden of carrying on with her baton.

Working with you was a pleasure. Not too long ago we were discussing book reviews and writers to be interviewed for the Magazine. Sadly, I didn't follow up until you took off.

I hope you are in a better place. A heavenly literary space. One day we will all with you share the grace.

Adieu

To Wanji

Halileo
Lesotho

I remember the first day we met, you approached me and asked to interview me for your article. I kept saying I do not really have anything worthy of being written about but you said I don't know, you sure will find something. Fast forward, you sent me an article and the story was nothing I had thought it would be. The excitement in your voice though, it is something I can always remember you with. Your ability to give words life and make one fall into the hearts of them, we surely lost big time for that. For the friendship we created for this short time, I will always cherish the moments we talked, laughed and even advised the other. I am forever grateful to have met you. Until we meet again, rest well. May the Almighty protect your soul even in your next life.

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Unquenchable Appetite; Politics of Power

Comfort Nyati
Zimbabwe



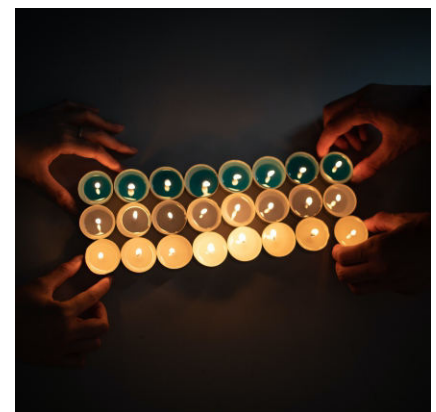
It is an organic truth that living organisms are constantly striving to be that which shapes their desire to be influential and powerful. Power is an intrinsic will to be or to become recognized, felt and dominating. Meanwhile, at the threshold of power lies a curtain, and to reveal what lies behind that curtain is to venture into the politics of power. The intricate reality embedded within the phenomenon of power is key to the promptings of this article.

Over the millennia, different definitions and treatments of notable concepts have won the attention of distinguished scholars. Power is one such concept laden with multifarious definitions and interpretations because it is too liquefied to be subjected to dogmatism. Relying on the Oxford dictionary, we

learn that the concept at hand suggests the ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way. Meanwhile in social sciences and politics, power is the ability to direct or influence the behaviours of others or the course of events. For instance, 'a political process that offers people power over their own lives.' With or without these perspectives of the term in question, the bottom line is that every organism has the legitimacy to define its extent and legality of power.

Man is rationally a willful animal. In the Genealogy of Morals, Fredrich Nietzsche depicts man as someone who would rather will nothing, than not will at all. Therefore, the will in mankind is triggered by the impulse of the conatus essendi. Conatus is a central theme in the philosophy of

Benedict Spinoza derived from Latin to mean the struggle of living and an innate inclination of a thing to continue to exist and enhance itself. It is an instinctive 'will to live' found in every living organism. On the other hand, the pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer – a German philosopher best known for his 1818; *The World as Will and Representation* – surfaced by depicting the will as 'striving and blind impulse' with no end in view. The illusion of this pessimism was later rejected by Nietzsche following his ideology of the will to power.



The exercise of power is historically endemic to humans and can be exerted in various forms; can be seen as good or evil or as just or unjust. However, as social beings, our capacity to appease the will to power in us should be taken as something inherited as well as a threshold exercising humanistic objectives that will help, move, and empower others as well. Consequently, this establishes an opportune intellectual exposure to review part of Africa's politics of power which is at the brink of erosion.

Africa has her way of defining and describing power because it is equaled to age, wealth, gender and academic credentials. It is believed that the older one grows, the powerful he becomes. More so, most ethnic groups embrace a hierarchical and patriarchal system, meaning men by default are more powerful than females. Also, the extensive accumulation of wealth amounts to being more influential in the society.

To realize progress in every endeavour, an establishment of a hierarchical order needs to take precedence primarily for good governance. The case of Africa's civil leadership is one among sectors which has manifested a peculiar will to power which I refer to as hyper-will-to-power. Hyper is analogously employed to emphasize the magnitude of the desire to be more and more powerful while subjugating the less powerful. The hyper-will-to-power is the root of the politics of power in Africa. It permeates different dimensions including the social, economic and political spheres.

Speaking of the current political systems in Africa, mostly subscribing to democracy, it is compelling to mention that the higher civil leaders appear to be investing in their civil powers and securing their political ambitions. Zimbabwe is an ideal case study. Any constitutional activism carried by civilians whether virtual or physical is interpreted as treason or a

fabricated crime. This has resulted to having prisons full of individuals challenging the hyper-will-to-power exhibited by the political elite. So, this has resulted in an arrested social and economical progress. It is a disheartening reality because political power should be a fountain that fosters human solidarity, typically in this continent to render the momentum for the emancipation of the African heritage.

Should one not conclude that the hyper thirst for power has proven to be an enemy of progress in the beloved continent as illustrated by a culture of having leaders who are overdue to exercise their roles? Uganda is no exception. Talking about this, I don't seem to agree with the legend which says absolute power corrupts absolutely. Instead, in these unprecedented times of the present generation, it is no longer simultaneous to equivocate power and corruption, but now we talk of power as the worst corruption in African leadership.

The will to power describes what Nietzsche may have believed to be the main driving force in humans. It is an essential quality of humanity. The difference only comes in the manner in which it is actualized in a given context. Africa, no doubt, is what it is today because the leadership structures of many countries rotate within the circle of politics of power in order to recharge the pleasure for power and the hunger to overpower.

One of the hidden secrets is that the thirst for power is an ovary where seeds of underdevelopment have been fertilized in Africa. It resides in none other than wombs of tyrants, puppets and long-standing dictators. Leadership is identified not as duty to serve but rather a perpetual quench of the appetites of power. This has proven that the possible politics to curb the problems of power centralization in Africa is the politics of a coup d'etat like those that happened in Zimbabwe, Mali, Gabon, Sudan, to mention a few. Thus, Africa is at the suffrage of power



crisis, a pandemic that has hijacked the fibre of good governance.

Conclusively, we may become exhausted while seeking possible answers to the puzzle of power politics. One thing to note however, is that in the struggle to become more powerful, power becomes a vice when it assumes a role of disempowering the less powerful, but a virtue when it becomes an avenue of

exalting the less powerful into powerful individuals. At its best it becomes the medicine to heal Africa, yet at its worst it becomes a venom to poison the good in Africa. Hence, the power to love is slowly dwindling, because it is being battered by the nonstandard love for power. To diagnose and heal Africa's politics of power it is imperative to invoke a new epiphany of power to come to the aid of Africa's ailing power politics.

The Question of Power in Africa Regarding Leadership

Uwanuakwa Isidore
Algeria

One can mistakenly think that Power in Africa refers to, a new five-year American presidential initiative launched by President Barack Obama in Tanzania during his Africa Tour in July 2013. The initiative aims at supporting economic growth and development by increasing access to reliable, affordable, and sustainable power in Africa. Yes, it can be what we have stated above from Mr. Obama, but our bone of contention here is far beyond the aspect seen above as well as the dimension we will explore.

In order for power to exist, it must be allowed to exist. For example, a dictator cannot have absolute power unless his followers have given up their power. In order to exert power, a leader must have resources and motivation. Resources include such things as

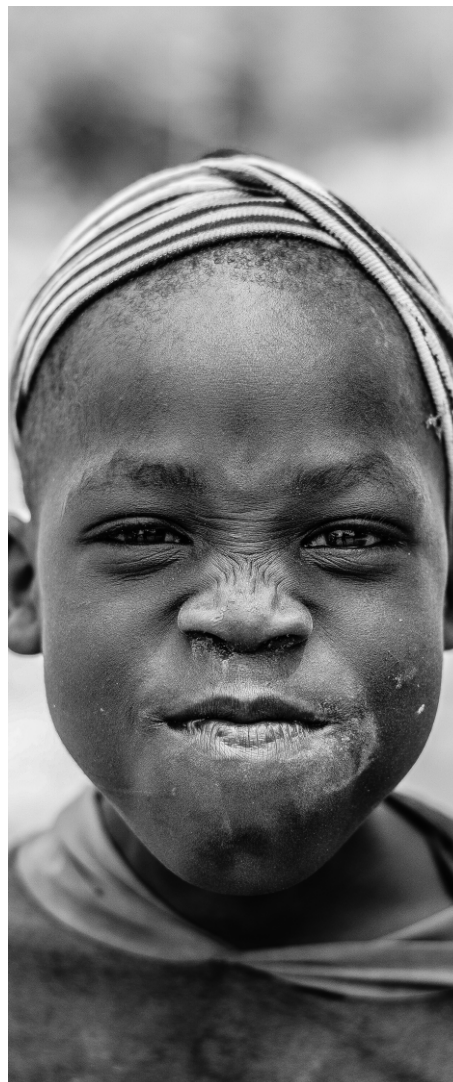
money, skills and/or intelligence. One may have the resources to lose weight, for example, but if they lack motivation, they will not have the power to accomplish the goal of weight loss. On the other

hand, one may be motivated to become a supermodel but if one lacks resources like beauty and talent, the motivation means absolutely nothing. It is only when resources and motivation fit well together that leaders can develop and utilize power.

There are five ways through which leaders can influence others: coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, reward power and referent power.

Mind you, Power has definitions of all sort; medical definition, scientific, mechanical, among others.

However, we shall employ our working definition of Power as the ability to do or act; thus the capability of doing or accomplishing something.



POWER AND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

We shall use five concrete types to justify that:

Great leaders have these things in common: they have a vision to achieve large-scale ideas that they dream of accomplishing, and they have the personal power to enact them. So, how do they do it? In order to understand this, we must understand what it means to have power.

Many people believe that power and influence are the same thing. On the contrary, Power is the capacity to cause change, produce effects on others or potentially influence others. It is the function of a relationship because it belongs not only to the leader, but also to the followers and the situation. Meanwhile, influence is the degree of actual change in a target's attitudes, values, beliefs or behaviours.

Coercive power is based on fear. Fear of being hurt, poorly treated, or dismissed,

helps people with coercive power rule over the fearful. A leader with high coercive power gets others to follow by communicating that failure to comply will lead to punishment. An example of a person who used coercive power was Hitler. In the African context, the question of coercive power is rampant since some African leader are dictators. The fact is that, this form of power is necessary at times.

Legitimate power is acquired based on the position, office, or title held by the leader. Normally, the higher the position or status, the more compliance the leader is able to get from the followers. The president, dean, director, or chief executive officer can theoretically 'call the shots' in an organization and be fairly certain his or her instructions will be carried out. A leader with legitimate power gets the compliance of others because they feel that he or she has the right, by virtue of position, to expect that their instructions will be followed. We can all agree that we know a leader who has legitimate power. In

the question of power in Africa, if the role of leadership on the continent was to maintain this aspect, it would have been very *profiting and developmental*. Nevertheless, some African countries have it.

Expert power is power based on the knowledge, talent and/or skills of the leader. For expert power to exist, it must be coupled with respect for that knowledge, talent and/or skill, along with the assumption that this expertise is valuable to followers. A leader with expert power is seen as having the expertise to facilitate the work of others. This respect leads to compliance with the leader's wishes. A neurosurgeon, for example, is someone who has expert power. It is important to remember that there are times that followers actually have more expert power than leaders. Most of those we deem to have expert powers are spontaneous leaders who are born to lead and are charismatic in nature.

But, the fact is that most Africans rather find ways to get rid of them, instead of giving them the leading baton or making them heads or even assistants.

Reward power is power based on the leader's ability to provide rewards for other people. People who follow a leader with reward power believe that obeying the leader's instructions will lead to positive incentives such as pay, promotion, or recognition. This type of power is needed in all aspects of leadership. It is founded in Africa and is wonderful when utilized well.

Referent power is based on the leader's personal traits and the need others have to be referred to or associated

with people of influence. Traits such as charm, charisma, and creativity are all intangible but very real characteristics of most leaders. They can command awe, respect, and loyalty. A leader with referent power is generally liked and admired by others because of personality. This admiration and identification with the leader influences others to act on the leader's instructions. This aspect of leadership is also very profound in Africa.

One would ask, which is the best type of power to have? Well, powerful leaders use as many of the five bases of power as possible. In fact, effective leaders are able to use all five power bases to some degree. Followers who are aware of these can

also use them to limit or control the leader's power. In the quest for power in Africa, the rise and fall of leaders has always been because there's not enough knowledge of the different types of power and sometimes how to respond to existential stimulus in the cause of leading the people. Even though not entirely, Africa has got deep rooted leaders who are doing their possible best to stand out in development matters regarding their respective nations. It is wonderful to have a good leader, one who does not only have power but also knows how to use it for the good of the subordinates. For without it we will not attain our objective.

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Power Imbalances in Black Heterosexual Relationships

Mahlatsana Sinoxol
South Africa

Merriam Webster defines power as, 'the ability to control others, events, or resources; to make happen what one wants to happen in spite of obstacles, resistance or opposition.' The concept of power and the fact that certain people have more of it than others is a visible fact in our lived realities (Dahl, 1957). Power can thus be applied to understand multiple polarising factors such as the political discourse, the workplace, cultural contexts, religious contexts and even within relationships. This article will therefore address the concept of power within the context of the triple oppression of black women who are at a disadvantage of men exerting their power on them because of their race, class and gender.

Heterosexual relationships have been identified as key sites for reproducing power imbalances and ensuring male dominance. Feminist work has further identified significant factors that are a result of these gender imbalances and these include the suppression of women's sexual agency and their lack of negotiating power in their relationships (Shefer and Foster, 2010). There are prevalent structures in society that have been identified as the

sites where power imbalances emanate from. These are patriarchy, culture and masculinity. Stanistreet, Bambra and Scott-Samuel (2005: 873) define patriarchy as, "a relationship of dominance and subordination, sturdier than any form of segregation, and more rigorous than class stratification, more uniform, certainly more enduring and simply as the systemic domination of women by men and domination of men by other men."



Patriarchy is thus the root of male privilege and supremacy and as such, the root of women's subordination in society and it has succeeded in establishing power systems through lines of masculinity and femininity (Edstrom, Das and Dolan, 2014). By writing on the South African ideology of patriarchy, Coetzee (2001: 300) states that, patriarchy is not a 'western culture' that was brought and introduced into Africa, rather, both Afrocentric and Eurocentric cultures in South Africa acknowledge and appreciate the fact that men hold superiority within the family and the society. It is this system that ultimately results in the existence of power within heterosexual relationships, which basically refers to the ability of a partner to act independently and without consultation, and to ensure that their views dominate the other partner's wishes. It is these inequalities that establish double standards where men have a sense of entitlement to women and their sexual freedom which makes women vulnerable to

violence (Langen, 2005). Power imbalance has been made dominant and reinforced within culture and through traditional gender roles which have predisposed women to physical and sexual abuse from their male partners. Shefer et al. (2008: 165) postulate that, "the notion that such practices are endorsed by culture and tradition again highlights the prevalence of cultural discourse in the reproduction of gender inequality" because of a power imbalance. Culture has been used as a reference to rationalise the power imbalances that exist within heterosexual relationships and their ultimate resultants, which include gender-based violence. Particularly in the context of South Africa, the role of women who were situated in the rural areas was simply domestic. Their sole responsibility was to satisfy the sexual needs of their husbands, practice household chores and bear them children.

Power imbalances are further linked to the 'sub-

factors' of the patriarchal system, where not only have the role of men and women been deliberately demarcated, but also certain behavioural characteristics, which further this demarcation. Where gender and male dominance is concerned, masculinity has played a major role in separating behavioural traits of men and women and has played an even bigger role in condoning male power over women, ultimately leading to women's subordination (Sathiparsad, Taylor and Dlamini, 2011). In her research on sexual negotiation amongst the youth in KwaZulu-Natal, Varga (1997: 58) identifies that the socio-cultural context of Zulu-speaking young people prevented them from being open to sexual decision-making and negotiation. She further notes that, although there has been some 'rapid urbanization' in South Africa where people are more conscious of gender roles, sexual constructions have not completely changed because of power-imbalance in relationships.

When addressing power in heterosexual relationships, it is important to note hegemonic masculinity, a concept that involves power being used to accept certain beliefs, values and ideas to be true and thus normalised in society. Gqola (2015: 156) shows us a practical example of hegemonic masculinity when she draws us back to the frequent claims made by black men who have been part of various liberation movements in Africa, and who often say that they have been 'emasculated' for so long and therefore ought to assert their power over women and that women should be accepting and accommodating of this masculinity. Gqola (2015: 156) says that, "While this emasculation discourse challenges the infantilisation that black men suffer in racist white regimes, this claim to recover from emasculation very often requires the performance of overpowering, that women are expected to support as part of enabling these men to attain manhood."



In conclusion, heterosexual relationships cannot be viewed or analysed outside of the multiple social structures that exist, nor can they be viewed without taking into cognisance the country's historical implications which have largely contributed to the difference in identity politics between men and women and which, in their nature have been embedded in power systems, but especially how these continue to contribute to the use of power by men to ultimately result in the subordination and suppression of black women (Crenshaw, 1991).

Power: My Fountain of Strength

Rotheli Mamello Stephen
Lesotho

If life was a wish-granting factory, I wouldn't even for once complain about any state of affairs in my life, instead, I'd just shut my lids, make a wish and then open them to behold with utter bliss, the realization of my wildest fantasies. I'd put myself in almost all places of power in accordance with all the undesirable aspects of the world in order to remedy its ills. But that's just a naive wish I always had in my earliest years of growing up and I'm still holding on to it as I mature, except I'm not holding onto it out of some naivety that it'll one day be granted, but as one of the many fantasies that I had which defined my youngest self. Since that can only remain a figment of my imagination, I'll resort to both reading and writing. At least with the power of words, I can get to experience all my possible and impossible wishes.

I'm not exactly a fan of growing up. That's why anyone would hardly ever see on my face a cheer birthed by a birth date at every year's end. Growing up is like walking in the dark of a stormy night, not knowing what may hit you. That's what I fancy to think of it. I'd put a hold on aging if I had the power to, because growing old is simply a terrible ordeal.

Was it well within the borders of possibility to remain a kid, I'd go to just about any lengths to secure such a state and wouldn't trade it for anything. There's one more thing about that phase of life that sucks in my opinion; and that is, a kid has little to zero power over a lot of things. There's even none over their own life.

I'm a fresh graduate who is currently unemployed. And,

as of now, I have little power over that because in my country, more than talent, more than intelligence, and yes more than education, how you shake a leg to political music at rallies, and how you lend an ear to these two-timing old countrymen with their hoodwinking cajolery is a sure-fire ticket to acquiring thankless, short lived jobs while they live like maggots in bacon for the rest of their lives. I can mention plenty of things that I lack power over, but I shan't. I have a feeling my grievances have had a fair share of my ink.



Everything in this fateful life is a matter of time and place. One person can't be supreme at everything. Where another has dominion, the other doesn't. Where a policeman is concerned, a property security officer is a nobody. In the same vein, at the gate of the property the security officer is tasked to guard, while the policeman becomes just a man. Every man is a king of his own house and so is every woman a queen of theirs. A baby boy has supremacy over his toys, same way a baby girl plays goddess to her dolls. Just as I, for one, is vested with power over my pad and pen.

Writing is one of the few things that rev me up. It gives me power. It is definitely one of a select few things that I do with sheer unadulterated verve and vivacity. The thought of writing, and any thoughts on writing stir up tons of good feelings in me. Feelings that I imagine I'd barely get from any other thing in this world. It's as if writing is an anchor to my fragile sanity. Had this

anchor not been a part of my identity, my sanity would have crumbled down a long time ago. It's all that is stitching it together, and all that my tenacity is deeply indebted to. More so, it is all that pumps me up each time I run out of the will and zest to live. When all the chips are down, and all else fails to cheer me up, writing becomes my last resort.

If you'd take time to ask any man, you'd find that carrying a weapon makes them feel even more manly. For some unaccountable reason, it does something to alleviate their worst fears and nightmares. This is apparent in how, if provoked, a man with a weapon in hand, pocket, waist or wherever can hardly be the bigger person. It seems to give them a sense of power and dominion over just about anyone. A French proverb avers that where power reigns, there is no room for reason.

As for me, my pen is my sword. The only difference is, there's just too much sense and reason pouring

forth from one who wields a pen. Should I feel like I'm being trampled on, either by life or mankind, I reclaim my power by wielding it. Once I bury my face in my shield, which is my pad, not a thing can get to me.

Vibes are somewhat contagious. When I write, I feel in me a sense of power. In writing, we create worlds, with the letters acting as bricks. Letter by letter, we create worlds. Worlds that sometimes hadn't even been fathomed by any other wordsmith out there. We put together a world of our fantasies. A world that is far from one that had been created for us. We create people, we give them everything. We decide everything for them. We decide how their existence should pan out. We give them personas, phobias, things and people to love. We're creators. We play god to our creations. And without the power to imagine, none of that would be possible. Isn't it so beautiful how we possess so much power and strength as writers?

In grief, despair, discomfort, indignation, or all other undesirable moods, I shall incessantly find solace in words. Be it through writing, reading, or listening. Books and other literary things will always be the closest things to my heart. I'm still growing, and I sure am going to get vested with some powers and authority in the future, and all those shall fade away with the passage of time. They shall be stripped off of me, but not a single soul shall strip away my power to create, to write. Not a soul shall rob me of it. Not today, not anytime soon. Definitely not ever.



Kachasu- The Spirit of Kantolomba

Moses Tololo
Zambia

Have you tasted it? It's probably the most mouth-watering your taste buds will ever taste. It's the rarest taste you can ever get. It's not brewed elsewhere. It's only here in the heart of a community. It's brewed by a mother full of love. You feel a mother's love and care with just one sip of the brew. You feel it as it goes down the esophagus. In a minute, you will forget all what was weighing down on your mind. It soothes all your pains and eases your suffering. The effect of the brew could be seen as people took to the dance floor and singing on top of their voices. It's an ecstatic feeling. You only feel it here and when you are sipping to the rarest brew. Brewed with the love of a woman. The feeling you get when you sip on Kachasu – the spirit of Kantolomba. He could make out the dances at his mother's place

as he neared her home. He grew up here but now he was nauseated as he got ever closer. He was not proud of his mother's place. He blamed God for growing up in such an area. It was unfair that God raised him up in such a place and to such a woman. He had not seen nor spoken to her in ten years. He was so ashamed to introduce her to his world. "For us to move forward, we must cut off the past," so he thought all these years. He had never told her that he was not just a husband but a father to three beautiful girls. How could he introduce a woman who sell kachasu to his sophisticated, beautiful wife? He had spent so much to maintain her beauty.

'Nothing has changed,' he thought as he stood at a distance eyeing his mother's house. Could this be his mother or it is just the

woman who gave birth to him? He was not sure anymore. What was clear was that the woman was not changing. She was not moving forward as he had done. She would be proud of him. He thought. He was a better man now. He was actually a very successful man. One who had managed to marry a white woman. He thought of turning back and leaving the uncivilized woman with her backward people dancing aimlessly to archaic music.



"Chibuye, is that you?" asked a woman who emerged from a dark room carrying some kachasu for her customers. She spoke to the stranger who was almost half-way out of her compound, going to where he came from. Her puzzled face turned into joy when the stranger's face turned to face her. It was her long lost son. The one she had not seen in more than ten years. She dropped everything she had and ran to the man whom she had lost. She hugged the long-lost son. She was overjoyed. She temporarily let go of him, probably to see how good he was looking before she hugged him again.

"You wanted to leave without seeing your old woman?" she asked astoundingly.

"Well, mother ... I thought," he dropped his words midway. "Come my son," she said as she led him to a stool which was placed under a tree.

"How are you?" she asked once they sat down.

"I am fine mama," came his

words.

"Oh, I have missed you my son,"

"You are still here, still living in Kantolomba?"

"But where would I go my son?" came her response, "I am just a powerless old woman who can't do anything to change the world."

"You are still brewing this illicit drink?"

"Who said it is illicit? What makes it illicit? Isn't it brewed the same way as elsewhere?" she asked, "don't you people call it fractional distillation?"

"Yes, but this is not allowed," he said.

"The only difference is that they pack them in bottles," she added, "I will also start packing in bottles."

"Life is becoming better for your son," he continued, "I am now married to a white woman and we have three kids. I own a beautiful house which I bought in England."

"You are a powerful man," she said, "yet powerless."

"What do you mean, mama?"

"History has a way of repeating itself," she said, "so many Africans we perceive to be powerful have left the continent to go and get ideas. Most of them become confused with the white man's knowledge. They come back feeling that they are powerful. They feel they have influence. They feel that is success. They feel everyone would admire them. Instead, we pity them."

"I thought you would be proud of me?"

"How can I be proud of you who went there to get ideas so that you can improve this area," she said with so much annoyance.

"Mama, it's a beautiful place. You would love staying there," he said as he wondered what was wrong with his mother.

"So, my son, who made it to be so beautiful?" she asked, "if the people in Europe were leaving for other places, was it going to be as beautiful as you think it is?"

"well, no,"

"Exactly," she added, "Africa has the potential to be the most powerful place on the globe but we have leaders who think they have power yet they are powerless. Leaders who can't do anything except laugh at their fellow African man yet praise a buffoon from abroad."

"I thought you would be proud of me. Am I not the first from this community to go to London?"

"Ha, ha who lied to you, my son?" she said mockingly, "Your father left me to go and get ideas as you did. He became proud with falsified power he thought he had.

He married a light-skinned woman. He thought she was more beautiful than your dark-skinned mother. He bought a house for her. After so many years, she divorced him and got everything. The once proud powerful man was as harmless as a toothless lion. At the time of his death, your father couldn't even be accorded a simple grave. They simply cremated his body and scatted his ashes into the ocean. Your father's ashes were washed back to the continent where he belonged. Your father thought he was powerful yet he was powerless. Africans belong to Africa. Africa can only developed by powerful

Africans who have the power to change the continent."

As he stepped out of the aeroplane, his mother's scarring words kept on coming back to his mind. He was tormented by what she said. "She is nothing but an uneducated, backward African woman who knows nothing but brewing kachasu," he thought to himself. He thought of buying something before heading home. He went straight to the nearest supermarket. Something caught his eye. It was a bottle in the liquor section of the store.

Kachasu – The Spirit of Kantolomba

As powerful as the women who brew it

He could not believe what was in front of his eyes. In a store in London was a bottle brewed by his own mother.

"This is the best spirit I have tasted in years," said the man who also got the bottle.

"I am told this is brewed by powerful women in Africa.

Women who have been abandoned by their male counterparts.

Women who have the power to change the world."

"Yes, I know one of them."





MULHER FORTE

AWARDS

MFAAL 2022



"Mulher Forte!" means Strong woman! Our team of strong women recognize the importance of Literature, Our aim is to archive literature for the future generations, and create more history by continuing to support and award excellence in Literature.

Disclaimer it is free to participate, No money must be paid to anyone.

Genres To Compete;

Group A

1. Poetry books.
2. Short stories.
3. Children's books.
4. Novels.
5. folklore books.

Group B

1. Orators
1. Poetry
2. folklore or fables
3. Music (traditional, contemporary).

Group C

Other Categories

1. Publishers (Traditional and self publishing houses)
2. illustrators

NB; Create a video of 3-5 minutes of your stage performance! (you can produce video from home but ensure good audio quality! send to Mulher Forte African Literature Team, on WhatsApp

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How To Enter

Be Above 18 years Of Age.

Be Ready To Provide Proof As The Owner Of The Craft Or Book, in Due Time.

By Entering To The Competition Of Mulher Forte African Literature Awards, you

Agree With The Terms And Conditions Of The Awards Competition.

Closing Date 31 July 2021.

Grande Finale-awards

Ceremony- 3 January 2022.

Miscellaneous Competition

(Someone who contributed immensely to Literature over the decades).

1. Legendary Story teller.

2. Legendary poet.

3. Author (Legend).

NB Duets, collaborations, allowed.

Lizzy Abrahams

Carissa Marnce
South Africa



Lizzy Abrahams arrived on Peterson Street at 6pm on a Sunday evening. She swung her legs out of her yellow 1960's VW bug and onto the rocky ground of Mama Jackie's Shebeen. The Eastern Cape's icy dew had already fallen this time of day. Lizzy's heels slowly sunk into the muddy ground. She drew her hand bag close to her breast. With deep sigh she lowered her head and whispered, 'Help me lieve Jesus'.

The shebeen was packed at this hour. Smoke came billowing out of the building like a chimney, while the methodicalness of drunken men caused them to collapse on the grass outside. Clutching onto their empty bottles they reminisce on mischief that Friday and Saturday night generated. The washout brick faced building was surrounded by darkness

except the overhanging light that shone over the plastic Castle Lager sign. Lizzy placed her hand reluctantly on the entrance door to push it open, fearing that one of the members of the Griqua congregational church might see her, especially nosy Sister Lousia who always seemed to be meddling in her business. She was no stranger to this worn out chestnut door, many Sunday evenings she would come to Mama Jackie's Shebeen in search of her Husband Hendrik. After a full week of hard labour he used the seventh day of the week to forget about his duties before starting the cycle again on Monday.

Hendrik was well past the age of retirement but he believed that death would come faster to those who agreed to rest for the remainder of their lives. Lizzy navigated her way

prestigiously past drunken men to Hendrik's favourite table. She found him resting the pillow of his body on the table and pitied him as one pitied a muzzled faced pug. 'Arme ding,' she sighed.

'Hendrik come, we are going home!' he could barely sit up straight let alone get up. Hendrik mumbled a command as she placed his brawny arm on her fragile shoulders. Once she had finally got him to stand up, Lizzy was suddenly enthralled by a story being told by rugged looking man on the next table. 'Beware of the mountains for they call you home.' The man spoke of adventures from different parts of the country and the thrill they brought. She stood bewitched for at least 20 minutes before she regained her wits and continued with the task of getting Hendrik into the car.

It was 8pm when Lizzy got Hendrik into the house. He managed to stumble across the stoep to their bedroom; she left him face down on his pillow and closed the door. In her mind she was still being haunted by the stories of the rugged man from the shebeen. Lizzy had no idea why these stories interested her, in her mind she was well past the age of adventure and had commitments to her husband, her church and her community. Nevertheless she longed to hear more of his stories about the Drakensburg caves or the free roaming penguins of boulders beach. With no hesitation she rushed to the kitchen to get some biltong and bread and put it into a lunch box. She jumped into her yellow bug and rode to Mama Jackie's shebeen for a second time. Her delicate knees clutched together as she swung her legs out onto the ground. This time the air was colder, she knew her legs would make her pay for all this excitement later on. She slammed the door and walked up the rocky

pathway as fast as she could. The building was still as she left it, full of smoke with drunken men parading outside. Lizzy walked strategically to the table she found the rugged man on and just as she hoped he was there. Feeling a bit uncertain she handed him the lunch box, he looked up at her. 'eet' she pleaded.

He ripped the lid off and began devouring the biltong and bread in front of her. Lizzy smiled nervously and sat down on the chair across from him. 'Tell me one of your stories asseblief.' The man chuckled and wiped his mouth with his sleeve and began one of many tales that would be shared between them.

Over the course of a few months the ritual between

Lizzy and the rugged man continued. Each Sunday evening at precisely 6pm she would arrive at Mama Jackie's shebeen, navigate her way to the table right at the back and place a lunchbox with biltong and bread in front of him as a sort of payment for his stories. On one particular evening the two were interrupted by the voice of Pastor Jan and Sister Louisa from the Griqua congregational church. 'I told you Pastor she comes here every Sunday, and she calls herself a Christian Sies!' sneered Sister Louisa. 'What am I seeing!' exclaimed Pastor Jan. 'Haai! Lizzy what is a good standing woman like you doing in the devil's playground?' questioned the Pastor.



The enchantment from Lizzy's face turned to sudden embarrassment.

She folded her hands neatly in her lap and faced the ground like a child receiving a scolding from their p a r e n t s . 'You are a hypocrite my sister, pretending to be an upstanding woman in our community while you keep the company of thieves and criminals. This is a great sin and you need to repent immediately or the lord will turn his back on you!' yelled Pastor Jan as if he was preaching to his congregation. 'You must leave immediately with me and we will prepare the reconciliation oils,' commanded the Pastor. Lizzy clutched onto her handbag and was getting up to leave with the Pastor when she had a sudden epiphany. Her entire life had been about pleasing someone else, when she was little it was being obedient to her father, when she got married it was being an obedient wife and now Pastor Jan was telling her to

repent of the one activity that has given her the most excitement in years.

'Hurry up Lizzy we must get to the church before the maintenance man locks up.' 'No.' mumbled Lizzy under her breath. 'What was that?' questioned the pastor. 'Aikona, I think she said she likes being a sinner!' barked Sister Louisa. Lizzy raised her head and fixed her eyes on the two of them. 'I may be a sinner but I am going to be a sinner that makes their own choices' declared Lizzy. 'Thanks for your concern Pastor Jan but I would rather have adventures than a reputation'. She turned to the rugged man 'And as for you my friend I thank you for all your stories but I think it's time I start living my own.' with that remark Lizzy Abrahams stormed out of the shabeen.

When the following Sunday evening came Lizzy Abrahams swung her legs out of her yellow 1960's VW bug but this time not onto

Mama Jackie's shabeen's rocky ground instead on lush green grass beside a lake in the Drakensburg.

Glossary of terms used

1. Liewe Jesus – Dear God
2. Griqua – A Subgroup of multiracial coloured people who have an early history in the Cape colony
3. Arme ding – Poor thing
4. Stoep- A veranda in front of the house
5. Eet- Eat
6. Asseblief- Please
7. Sies- A remark of disgust
8. Haai- A word to strongly protest something
9. Aikona- An emphatic word to say no



African Writers
Conference '21
Tanzania
October

AFRICAN WRITERS CONFERENCE
TANZANIA
OCTOBER 2021



Led on By The Shadow

Oluwabusayo Madariola
Nigeria



I hobbled into the morning, clenching the only possession I took in and the only one I'm taking away. I was finding my way back home, even if I was going back the same way I came.

I had two goals in life in no particular order: having a family and earning my own money. I had always known I wasn't physically attractive. One leg was conspicuously shorter than the other, which means I don't walk like every other normal human being. My teeth were discolored

and unevenly distributed that I can't remember ever smiling in public. I only beam into the mirror in my closet wishing there exist a magical wand. However, what I lacked in physical appearance, I sufficiently compensated for in my culinary skills.

The sleepy, agrarian community I grew up in won't lead me into the future I held in my head but I knew the cosmopolitan city of Lagos would. With the reluctant support of my widowed mother, I left our

small community, with a worn out bag containing my clothes and journeyed to Lagos with only an address and a phone number to work as a cook for someone I met on social media. I was elated the first time I sent some money to my mother after I collected my first month's salary. One half of my lifelong dreams was being fulfilled.

I enjoyed serving the Alfreds—a nice, warm and elderly couple. They always complimented my food - always.

"Hello," he said to me as I opened the door that Wednesday afternoon. My heart stopped beating for some seconds. "Is Daddy Alfred in?" He spoke in an accent I only hear on television and my head whirled lightly. This man must have descended from heaven, I said to myself, he was perfect.

That evening, I served him as he had dinner with the Alfreds.

"So this is the 'sister' that made us the delicious dinner," he said, directing his words to me as I tottered consciously for the first time since I started living with the Alfreds. I managed to grin as I dropped the bowl of vegetable salad.

"Yes, that's Demilade. She has been taking care of us..." Daddy Alfred squinted. "Yes, for four months now."

"E se o," he said to me in Yoruba language. Thank you for taking care of us.

I broke my own rule - I smiled widely in public and couldn't control it. Daddy Alfred was busy dipping into his ofada rice, while 'Mummy' was helping herself to some salad.

The next day, Tony came in the morning when my employers had gone to work and it all began.

It started with him complimenting my cooking

to buying me a new phone and then to text exchanges between us. Never for once did he mention my 'deformities.' With him, I felt perfect.

"I'm getting fond of you," he said to me four weeks after our initial meeting. "How much are you paid?" I mentioned it.

"Why don't you come and live with me?" he said as I basked in the magnificence of his arousing intonation. My head was imagining all sorts of unprintable things.

"Why should I come and live with you? Are you my husband?" I asked playfully, smiling over the phone.

"Am I not good enough? He asked, and I held my breath. Did he just say he wants to marry me?"

"I don't know why you're not seeing all my signals. At twenty-three, you should be on your own, especially with your unique cooking skills. If you're okay with it, you can come and live with me: let's see how it goes from there."

"What would I say to Mummy?" I asked, not knowing how I would break the news to the woman who had been very nice to me. Besides, my 'now boyfriend'—as I changed his status in my head—was one of Daddy Alfred's partners.

"Just agree to what I have proposed and leave the rest to me."

From that moment on, I found fault with everything in the Alfreds' home while Tony's mesmerizing images kept blazing in my head. With each passing day, I felt trapped in their home and saw them as an obstacle to my only remaining desire. My attitude towards them changed so much so that I became obviously uncouth. Mummy she asked me to leave—I felt remorseful and...relieved.

I moved in with him at his lush apartment in Banana Island and my life changed dramatically. Instead of a monthly salary, I had a debit card that I could cash money with at any time.

A driver and a car were at my beck and call, and even a maid who did all the grocery shopping.

I went from wearing old clothes to designer wears, perfumes and custom-made shoes that evened out my leg length. Tony showered me with gifts and everything money could buy.

He never raised his voice nor laid his hands on me. In return, I took care of him and 'our home.' I cooked all kinds of delicacies as he liked and wanted it. I was a stay-at-home wife-to-be while he went to work.

I was finally living beyond what I had anticipated. I felt loved and wanted. I felt beautiful. I even got the magical wand—a dental makeover!

I saw my mother's call as I was getting my pedicure done in one of the posh salons where the fee was more than my old job's monthly salary. I returned her call as I was chauffeured home.

"Oluwademilade," she called out my full name. My mother never did that unless she needed to say something very important.

"This man that you're living with... don't you think it's proper for me to meet him?"

"Mum, he's always busy," I responded, checking the time and thinking of what to cook as his dinner must be ready before he gets home.

"Demilade," she sighed, "I don't like the kind of life you're living in Lagos. I don't support it at all. Living with a man, who hasn't met your family...hasn't paid your dowry, isn't dignifying. If you can't bring him to me this weekend, don't bother sending money to me. I can fend for myself." Before she dropped, she added, "And I thought I taught you well..."

"So what's the plan?" I gently asked as he enjoyed his dinner—watching the game of basketball just like he always did since I moved in three years ago.

Still glued to the screen, he responded, "What are you talking about?"

"Us."

"What do you mean?" He asked.

"You haven't met my family."

He took a sip of wine. "I know what you're saying and I would cut through the chase. We had an arrangement that didn't include marriage or relationship."

I was shocked. Did I hear him well?

"I don't get you?"

"Demilade, I never said I'd marry you. I never even said I wanted a relationship." His mouth moved with the deliciousness of the meal.

I was too distraught to think as I made for the door.

"Where are you going? It's dark, you should stay in your house."

"My house?!" I yelled. "What exactly am I to you?"

His voice stopped me, his mesmerizing voice, never raised, always controlled, "Let's talk this through. Have you ever lacked anything? Have I ever maltreated you?"

He never made a move from the dining table. "I never promised you marriage. I told you I'd take care of you and I've always done that. If you leave this house, our deal ends," he concluded.

My hand froze on the knob as it clearly dawned on me—this had been a business arrangement. Next, the implication: I had absolutely nothing of worth to my name. The debit cards, cars, chauffeurs and apartment were all his. The weekly body pampering appointments were on his

tab.

I turned back slowly and I thought I heard 'good girl' as he continued eating, turning his attention back to his game. That's Tony for you, never stressing, always in control.

I stayed on but my mind was no longer with him as I realized I was his 'kept' woman. Maybe he has a family somewhere that I didn't know about. How foolish I had been!

I changed, but he seemed

not to notice as everything was still going on as normal.

He was out for his morning jog when I called my mother and cried my heart out. I couldn't take it anymore.

"Oluwademilade, just find your way back home," she pleaded with me. "Please..."

I nodded, too burdened to speak. I didn't think about it.

I took my brown worn-out bag with my few old clothes and hobbled out of the apartment, led on by my shadow, illuminated by the early morning sunshine.





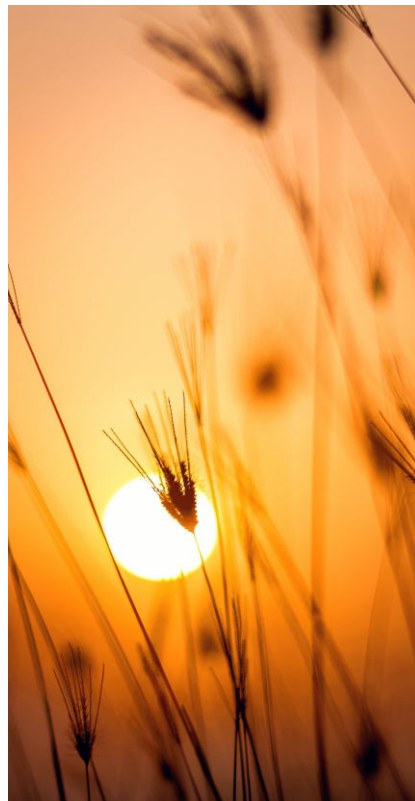
Selfish Sun

Charity Modise
Botswana

Many years ago in the Animal Kingdom, when the animals could speak, a great Sangoma called Sun came and lived among the animals. He was a skilled healer known in all corners of the kingdom and far. Sun never charged the animals for healing them and they loved him dearly as a result. Sun, however, was not the kind of man the animals thought him to be. He came to the Animal Kingdom with one mission in mind, to be a King. So, he healed them for free to gain their love with the hope that soon they will make him their king. But the animals already had a king whom they loved and respected, Elephant.

One night, Elephant died and as was custom, after burying their king the animals elected a new king. Sun was happy that his wish would come true but to his dismay they didn't choose

him, but rather they chose Tortoise since he was wise. This displeased Sun who then decided to kill Tortoise like he did with Elephant. King Tortoise was not one to be messed with. Being wise as he was, he decided to go



to the hills on the same night he was ordained king to talk to his ancestors. He asked for their protection from all dark forces, and they happily granted him beads

to put around his neck as protection. When dawn approached, King Tortoise awoke to footsteps approaching his hut. Before he knew it a knife sank into his chest and that was the end of him. The animals cried bitterly, buried him and Sun was chosen as king.

Three days after he became king, he started showing his true colors. He called all the animals to a meeting;

"I summoned you all here to tell you that from now on, this whole kingdom belongs to me. Every Well, food, land and everything in it belongs to me. I am your god and if I ever hear anyone praying and offering tribute to their ancestors then I'll take away their life." Sun boasted.

Great confusion befell the animals as they could not believe that the one whom they loved dearly was their enemy.



"That will never happen Sun," a voice was heard from the direction where King Tortoise was buried. Alas! It was Tortoise.

"So, you did not die?" Sun asked in shock.

The animals were happy to see their king.

"I did die after I was stabbed with a knife but because I had the beads of my ancestors around my neck, I got a chance to live again." King Tortoise narrated happily.

"But who killed you?" Chameleon asked on behalf of the curious animals.

"It's this man we trusted with our lives!" Tortoise said pointing towards Sun.

Angrily, without second thoughts, Chameleon and the other animals made a huge fire and burnt Sun till he became a yellow ball of fire, they then threw him far into the sky where he could never come back.

In the sky, Sun is very lonely, he has no friends. He can no longer experience the beauty of the wild as everything appears small from where he is. So, every morning he rises early and looks down on Animal Kingdom to try and see its beauty again and walks from East to West all day straining to see a glimpse of the animals who loved him until he gets tired and rest in the evening.

"If only I wasn't selfish for power..." The Sun regrets to this day.

The Legend of Nogapotsane

Kelebogile Keutsule

Botswana

Nogapotsane was a gigantic snake who lived among the Xixau people in the Kalahari swamps. She was white with spectacular attractive dark browned spots on her entire body. On the very top of her head laid diamond-like crystals arranged like a crown. She was huge, approximately ten metres long and twinkled brightly as she swayed across the village at night. The two protruding goat-like horns on each side of her head as well as the fading cry like that of a goat's kid was what earned her the name "Nogapotsane."

The Kalahari swamps were known near and far for their beautiful flora and fauna. The great leader of the Xixau people together with his wife were the diviners who led with the guidance of Nogapotsane. They consulted the gigantic snake on every matter and followed her words. Nogapotsane

protected the Kalahari swamp and took care of the Xixau people. Peace thrived in the Kalahari swamps until one day when the Xixau saw black smoke and heard a rumbling sound approaching their village. Big trucks came to their village loaded with machines and people who told them they were sent by the government to build a game reserve next to their village. Concerned their leader consulted Nogapotsane who blankly refused.

When the leader of Xixau came back with a reply from Nogapotsane, the people who came with the trucks refused to listen to him. They told the Xixau that Nogapotsane was not real but just a story they were told in childhood. The Xixau continued to warn the people who came with trucks of the consequences of disobeying Nogapotsane but they told them the land they were

building on did not belong to them but to the government, so they started building. As they began working, the workers grew sick and died but more workers were brought in by big trucks to continue the work. Angry Nogapotsane spurt out a black mist that covered the whole Kalahari such that night and day could not be distinguished. Even the Xixau were afraid because they had never seen Nogapotsane that angry. The people with trucks became scared for their lives, packed their belongings and left the Kalahari never to return. The black mist cleared when the last truck disappeared and life returned back to normal in the Kalahari. The Xixau promised never to allow anyone to disobey Nogapotsane again.

Nogapotsane - a mystical snake-like creature
Noga - snake
Potsane - a goat kid

I Am Power



Olatunji Zion
Nigeria

Everyone loves my fragrance,
The young and old; rich and poor.
All craving for my presence.
I breathe strength to the weak.

I am power,
An unquenchable thirst to my host
Highly admired, highly priced
Never silenced!

Expensive in demand,
Emitting flames of fierce force.
Pride is the song of my soul.
Hitching my body for greater magnitude.

Lacking in love,
Authority, the pleasure of my desires.
Feigning love; forgetting karma; yet
blessed with admirations.

Never overwhelmed with compassion!
Can I be purchased without gifting the
demon I bear?
A holy evil to behold!
Guilt steals my rest.
Do you still want me?

Who can deactivate my nature?
No man! But the gracious Almighty!
Coated in the supernatural denatures my
pride.
Breathing a powerful love, a miracle.



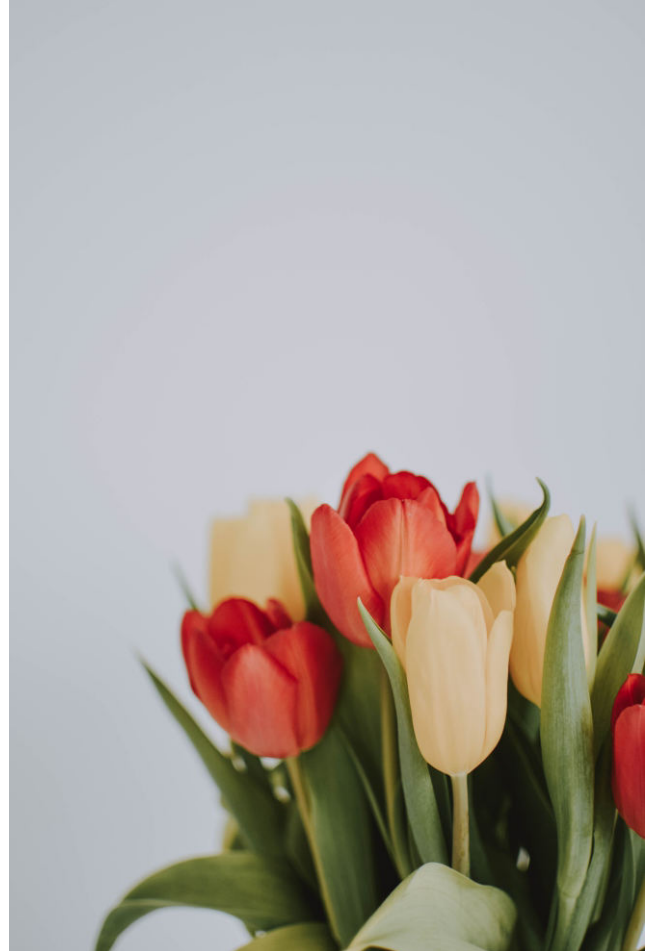
Power is Power (Atandwa Naleli)

Thato Rannana
Lesotho

Beauty from ashes
Flowers sprouting from a desert
Rivers out of rocks
The tree that never dries.
A house built on rocks.

The fire that is not meant to burn but bless
Not meant to harm but keep
The Lions we are thrown in
But we laugh with
The snakes we carry
But never bite us.
The poison we drink unknowingly
But never kills us.

It is the power we believe in
The power we rise in
The power we are alive in
We are strong because we have to
We have power because it's a necessity
In power we live
Move and have our being
The fuel we need
The water to quench out thirst



You Need to Pause (To Find Your Own Power)

Steve Otieno
Kenya

I found a way
for my fingers to navigate me through the
blinds,
where the dawn's sunrise,
the dusk's sunset,
and the full moon
peeked through my drapes,
spreading reflections and shadows at my
feet,

"Be gentle with these", they seem to say,
"Just a light touch would do",
and I had to remove myself
from the deafness of prescribed notes of
rhythm,

What I did,
was touch the shadows as gently as I
could -
where it gleamed,
and I saw how I contrasted with the
reflections,
as much as I was immersed in the
shadows,

"Be gentle with yourself", they seemed to
say,
"A light touch would do",
so I removed myself completely,
from the deafness of prescribed notes of
rhythm.



Power

Pelekani Lwenje
Zambia

She runs on the road, running from
uninspired people,
What a mundane life they live, these
soulless people,
She runs from them, the soul takers,
She runs and ponders her future
Why should they have power over her?
These slaves to society's expectations.
Like a Knight of folklore she bravely vows,
that she will vanquish
society's expectations.
As she runs she thinks of the girls with
bellies full of
society's expectations.
So she runs and seeks out the horizon.
There lies her power, her true destination.

No more power will they hold over her.
These dragons that engulf her in their
flames,
praying for her destruction like a dark
twisted game.
She is a woman of Africa, that is her power.
She will dance the cosmic dance, blessed is
her power.
Her worth, her body, her mind. That is her
power
No more will she adhere to society's
expectations.
She is a Queen, and that is her power.
She is the invisible ruler of the African sun.
That is her power.



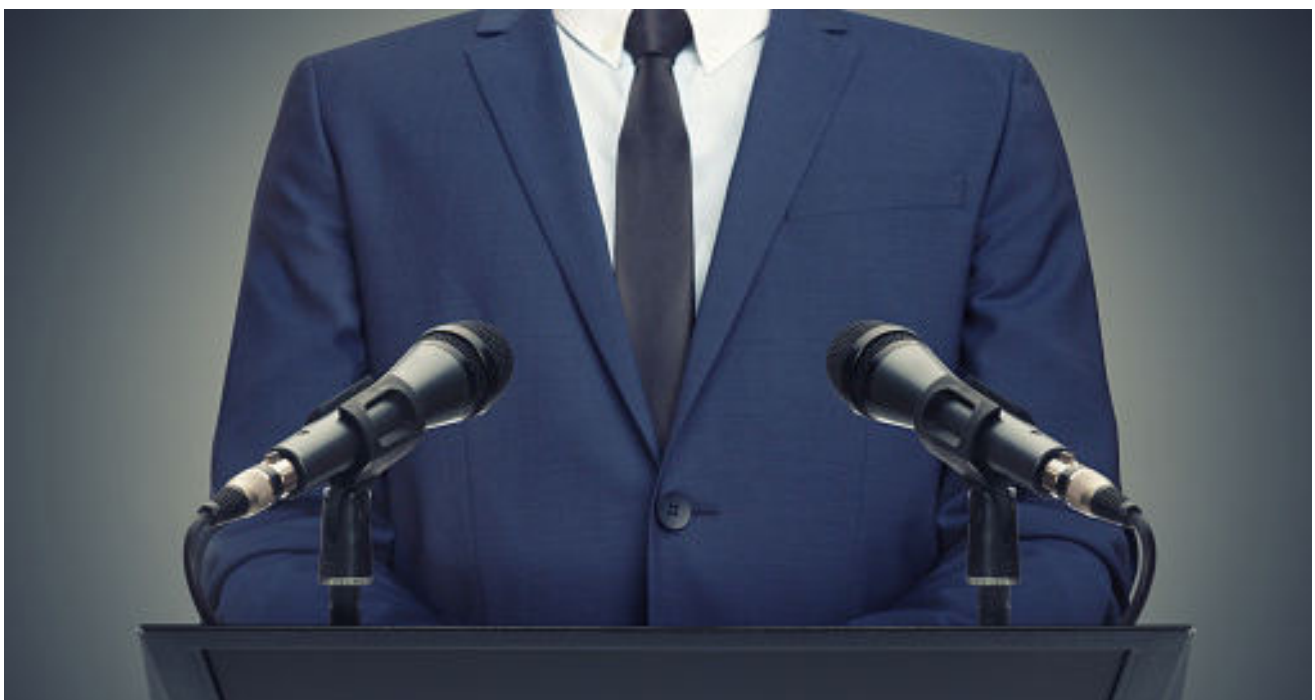
Ode of Autocrates



Laurent Bwesigye
Uganda

I'm here to rescue my people
From servitude
To provide and protect them from a
sycophant
Attitude
For my people, I will fly to the highest
Altitude.
I believe in democracy!
I believe in change!
Let me tell you
For our country to prosper we need
change
We need democracy like a bee needs its
wings.

Flowers, flowers everywhere but not a
petal to pick.



When Ink Bleeds

Patricia Ejang
Uganda



She is silent
Sitting atop a hill
Watching the others brag
Strength, might
Authority, even beauty
She sighs again
Knowing she can destroy them
One at a time
With one stroke
When she bleeds.

Crown

Neo Masetlane
Botswana

Invisible diadem,
From within
Expresses itself,
through character
Neither force nor arrogance
But...
smile and laughter
Yet dominating.



To The People

David Amakye

Ghana

The chains that bound us were too expensive.
 So, we did heed to a cry like a call too loud to be ignored.
 We were called.
 We were called by the tongue that thirsted hard after control.
 We were called out into a place.
 A land cursed with liberation.
 So much that our new chains would be free.
 We only needed to extend our hands to be convict.
 If we only stretched to craft our hands into the most lethal weapon.
 If we would only stretch to expose our thumbs, the caller said, then, we would be able to evict and instate.
 With my power and my people's combined, we could make anyone god and captain.
 Yes, anyone, loud enough.
 Anyone thirsty enough to woo us for rule, to woo us with a promise of change.
 When talk of our struggles may someday become comic relief.
 When my people may someday scream to be free again, like being enslaved was their culture.
 When in reality we were birth with songs whose lyrics knew no chains.
 I watched and hoped that my people

never fall bait to the caller's enticement.
 I hoped the children of this land could tell a twist in the tongue.
 I hoped their heads knew truth.
 Knew power lies in them only to be released by their kind of actions.
 Actions that reflect their desire for right, their hope for a luminous tomorrow and their love for their land.
 I hoped until I found a body for this hope in a line.
 That we, the children are the power for change, if we can be change.
 And, with this lifeline, it would never be too late to surge any back to life.



Rod Us Off This Road

Denk Bol Denk
South Sudan

With all the blood lost
All the lives lost
With all it cost us,
To be a country.
With the resources at our disposal
I shake my head in refusal,
It's hard to believe we are here today
With gloomy eyes
Gaspny breaths
Choking ourselves
Hating ourselves
Embracing villainy
Loving weaponry
The political hawks,

Who steal in power exercise
And political gawks,
Who stare in truth exorcise,
Got us here.
Into this chaotic social sphere; Into this
envelope of flames
We are now a lost nation
Being led like a cattle
Love for power drove down this road
But by hook or crook, we rod us off this
road

For our martyrs deserve a nation worthy of
their blood



The Chief Deity

Uche Favour
Nigeria



He spreads a tabernacle for the sun
Just for the earth not to mourn
He triggers the clouds to a run
Just for the rains to fall.

His voice thunders
And the ocean goes asunder:
her kingdoms go yonder
and her princes weep in deep ponders

His throne stays highest
His light burns brightest
His kingdom, forever is finest
and His mercies are kindest

While His wrath burns,
His enemies, He guns
For in His wisdom He won
Leaving them forever sawn

In mankind, He bestowed wonders,
together with deep hungers
That he should plunder
All His creations under and yonder.

The Chief Deity
Who can battle?
No! They'd only rattle
Rattle and rattle and rattle.

Masters and Mistresses

Akin Ojo Oluwaseyi
Nigeria

When they get there
They'll forget what they promised
But what they promised
Was only scripted jargons

When they get there
They'll say they are our friends
But run for your life
They are not here to protect us

When they get there
They'll steal from us
But in professional ways
In ways that the devil learns from

When they get there,
They'll lie and cry
But those are crocodile tears
Let the gullible ones sympathize

They are abusers of power
They are liars, thieves, murderers
They are scornful, mischievous, gluttonous
They are... till they are no more



Love's Loose Knots

Okwaput Israel
Uganda

Pregnant silence in the room.
She looks at me pointedly
With a calculated stare
Of ecstasy.
The beauty
And immaculate long neck
Dampened my confidence
Of romance.
Was all left frail of body
Betraying my legacy of boldness
As I posed,
Harmless as a saint.

The amputates of love
Boast of unmatched blades.





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Genre: Article

Title: The World Within

Writer: Mercy Jum, Kenya

Reviewer: Joseph Oduro, Ghana

The World Within epitomizes the interdependent role of our make up, while making a relentless emphasis on how our efforts to achieve progress would be rendered futile should we disregard the essence of our three-dimensional make up (i.e body, spirit and soul). The path of progress is usually characterized by recurring trials which sometimes result in misery and undesirable circumstances. Nevertheless, our ceaseless efforts to realize the ultimate goal at the climax of our journey serves as beacon to cling on till the end.

The writer's in-depth appreciation of our constituents assist in deciphering the principles and concept of progress within and without. She defines progress to be an evolutionary process. A path one must trace without a guide. This subscribes the physical being to excruciating torments in an unending cycle. To break the unending cycle requires keen observance of the lessons those trials subject the individual to. The soul comes with a coded blueprint for the path of progress. It behoves on us to discover this concept to propel us towards the peak of our goals or discover our own path bewildered with trauma and uncertainty.

The writer embraces the theme from a religious perspective, that may have come into terms with the realities we find ourselves in. Thus in the religious paradigm of progress, the soul and the spirit being are primed over the physical being whereas in realist views the concept of three in one being is actually flawed due to the lack of empirical evidences. Men are woven with the idea that the flesh and its pursuits are temporary as such, the physical being is entreated to live according to the desires of the spirit and the soul, for that is eternal.

In modern science - neurosciences to be precise - there have been discoveries and research into the discovery of the neurobiology of the homo sapien in order to understand the deeds of the delicate yet powerful organ that resides in the cranium. Various studies have concluded on the influences of our physical environment on our anthropological, social and physical growth. A perfect analogy is the viable conditions needed for plants to grow. The same applies to the human mind. It adopts to the ecochambers it resides and the result is no different from where they find themselves within. Hence progress in the modernist world view is best achieved in a viable environment and not the biblical ideals of subjecting to the needs of the soul and spirit.

The writer presents aptly the views of religious centrists on the need to acknowledge the three beings of the homo sapien to achieve a 'nitro' propelled progressive life which works well for the custodians of this philosophy although archaic.

Genre: Children's Literature

Title: Hoof For Hoof, Paw For Paw

Writer: Benita Magopane, Botswana

Reviewer: Anthony Nwagbaoso Onyeador, Nigeria

This thrilling story captures the scenario of the Noah account sighted in the Bible precisely from the book of Genesis 6:5 through 9:17. The story proper in Chapter 7. The writer dives in to narrate how the animals tolerate each other inside the ark as how it affects them describes for younger generations to assimilate and draw lessons from. It begins with an introductory theme of what the story is about and how it leads to animals being gathered together. Then like a fire about to be stoked, the cat, cow, gorilla, donkey, pig, lion and elephant take turn on who shall sit on the throne respectively only for the zebra to shake the remaining part of the table leaving all animals in heated arguments in shouts of their various voices. Thus, the story comes to an end as the owl presents a common enemy and uses it to form a unity bond.

The writer really did a great job by merging a strong theme of justice, descriptive animated background and choosing the audience to create a vivid plot, setting and language that have already been created by another work rather than culling it up. The fusion of these imprints a powerful image for the genre and for those outside it to stick to comfortably.

Genre: Poetry

Title: Step By Step

Writer: Masego Olefile, Botswana

Reviewer: Felix Odhiambo, Kenya

Step by step is an encouraging poem for those who have failed many times in whatever they are doing to learn from the fall and gain the courage to stand up and continue with the same spirit. Life in itself is a step, where people move from one step to another slowly by slowly as they focus ahead of the road to success. This poem is a three-stanza poem with each stanza explaining a specific issue in the phases of the personae's life.

In the first stanza, a nine-line stanza, the writer gives a vivid description of how possessed he was with winning. The line, "like a web stuck between walls - like a bird needing its nest" demonstrates his thirst for winning in life. As it is, a bird needs its nest because it is its home. This is what winning was for him. Since the thirst for winning exposes human beings to a lot of failures first, in the end, every failure made him mad and sad.

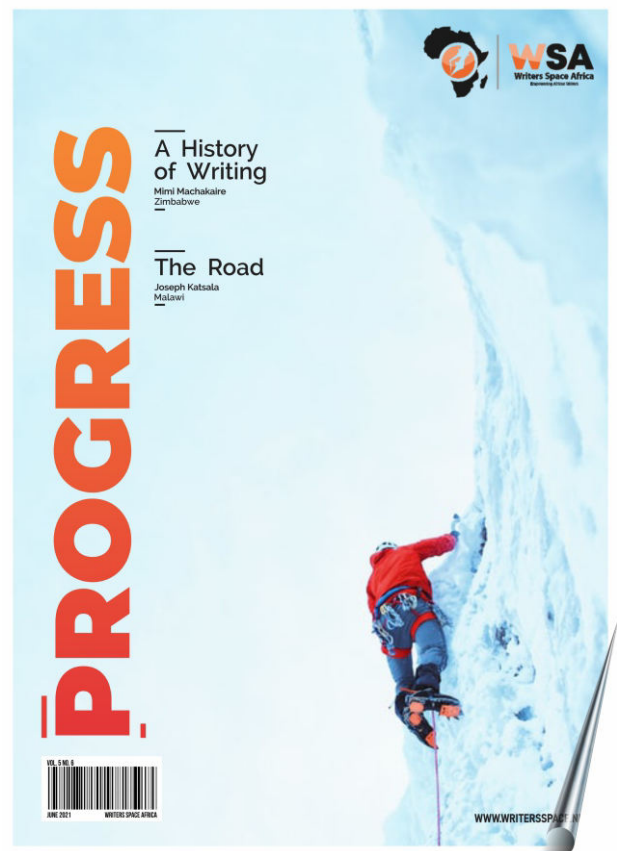
In the second stanza, a six-line stanza, he explains that for him to be better than his peers, to stand out from his peers, which certainly is the pressure that a lot of young people face, he had to put a lot of pressure on himself which at the end was regretful and many falls left him empty. This stanza is a good indication of what many young people go through on the road to success.

In the last stanza, an eight-line stanza, he shows that conceding to step by step way of climbing the success ladder, he "broke the walls" to mean he walked over the hindrances and "like a chick hatching" symbolising a new beginning, he embraced freedom. He chose to work with patience and even though there were still some falls, step by step, there was some progress.

Step by step by Masego Olefile is a poem written in an optimistic and serious tone. Giving a particular desire for success that will be achieved slowly by slowly. The poem takes a free-verse form with a reflective mood. Step by step is practically the way to work towards being a success.



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