



WSA
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Empowering African Writers



REVOLUTION

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Call for Submissions

THEME: MISERY

Writers Space Africa (WSA), an international online literary magazine, will from 1st to 14th March accept submissions for the May 2021 edition in these categories:

- Flash Fiction
- Essays/Articles
- Poetry
- Short Stories
- Children's Literature

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

Editor's Note

What's a revolution if not an idea brought to life that repudiates what has been 'business as usual'? What's a revolution if not to create a paradigm shift in how we think about, feel about and/or experience culture, politics, service, love, spirituality?

"Writing is really a way of thinking – not just feeling but thinking about things that are disparate, unresolved, mysterious, problematic, or just sweet." A Toni Morrison quote.

As you dig into this edition of WSA Magazine, we hope the various ways in which our contributors have dissected and tackled the theme Revolution will open up your mind. Look out for 'Editors' Choice'. These are pieces that, for our editors of the different genres, best exemplified the theme. After all, what's a revolution if not to prick at our conscience, at those things 'that are disparate, unresolved, mysterious, problematic, or just sweet'?

Let's do this!

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May 20th

Kingsley Aaron Onuigbo
Nigeria



May 20th, 2023.
9 : 1 7 a . m
Dear Diary,

Today, I woke up with another headache. Just like yesterday's, it started with the same rhythmic drumming on one side of my head. Then slowly, it spread evenly until my head radiated with that familiar throbbing sensation. Like yesterday, I walked straight to the refrigerator to grab a bottle of cold water and a tea bag. Like yesterday, I spilled the water bottle all over the wooden floor and rug. But, today is not yesterday. I closed my eyes, willing the pain to disappear as I drank from my cold tea-bag and s w a l l o w e d t h e paracetamol tablets my doctor recommended for my frequent headaches. Today will be more.

Chinememma walks in just when I put down my pencil

and finally decide on what to wear for today's speech. She has come with two wrappers of steaming moimoi – my favourite. It's smelling of strong, scented leaves and was probably made with suya-pepper and stockfish. The house is cold, and the heat from the food warms me nicely. But, I am nauseous and have no appetite. So, after my first bite, I tell Chinememma about my headache. We talk about yesterday's election results while she eats both moimoi wraps and reads through my hastily-drafted speech simultaneously. I rub my forehead in a circular motion, still trying to get the drumming in my head to stop. I look outside, through these large triangular glass windows, and for a second, I am confused seeing the convoy of black BMW's waiting.

10:24pm

After yesterday's announcement, I disappeared from the public eye. I flew to Port-Harcourt -privately. Chinememma rented this duplex -with its large arched windows, lakeside paintings, and rose gardens- under her name and using her money. She also had my Public Media Assistant announce that I would give a speech at the Yakubu Gowon Stadium in Port-Harcourt. NTA news, AIT, Channels, and some other national television channels sent emails requesting exclusive interviews hours before my speech, but thankfully, she refused all of them. After yesterday's party, I was drained but still with the skull-splitting headache, I managed to draft a speech just before I slept. Chinememma offered to

write the speech, and I knew it might have been better if she did. Still, I wanted my first speech as the incumbent President of Nigeria to be filled with my voice, experiences, and struggles as a woman in politics. Chinememma has definitely been better than my previous PA.

Yesterday, I left Sidney alone with the children. Apart from Chinememma, he was the only one who had my new phone number and knew where I was staying in Port-Harcourt. He calls while I am staring at the convoy through the windows. I talk to Somachi first. She sounds bubbly as she explains the theatrics at

the party which is being held in my honour, at our Lagos house. Burna Boy is performing live. She says there are more people than our large Banana-Island house can contain. She says Senator Chukwuemeka Ekweze is there with his wife, Chizoba Ekweze. I laughed when she mimicked Chizoba's morning greetings, "Ada m, kedụ ka i mere! Ekele diri gi" in a low 'Chizoba' voice. Surprisingly, I remember when Chizoba gave her husband the address to Michael Chikeeze's house and the scandal he created during the electoral debate after finding proof that I aborted Michael's child in college. Once again, the nostalgia of

our past college friendship seeps and intertwines with the red-lined hatred that burns deep in my heart and is probably ingrained in my heart tissues. I feel a sharp pain in my forehead like someone is hacking my brains with a knife. The headache is back. But, I never realised when it was gone. For the hundredth time, I say a quick prayer and promise to never think about the Ekweze's again.

Nzube is next. He is surprisingly quiet on the phone. I expected him to say a lot, like his sister. But all he said was, "Congratulations on the win." Later, I realised why when Sidney tells me Nzube was suspended from school for punching another student. Apparently, the student had called me a 'ho' and said Yusuf Francis should have won the elections, then Nzube punched him. I am proud of his reasoning, but I can't let him know that. The method was wrong. I will probably scold him when I get back home.



Sidney and I have shared homemaking duties since we started dating, so I am sure Nzube and Somachi are safe and satisfied without me. I talk to Sidney about Senator Chukwuemeka, and as we laugh about that situation, I cannot help but remember how it almost ruined my relationship with my children, my career, and my election chances. For a fleeting moment, my head stopped spinning, and the throbbing sensation eased; and this time... this time, I was aware of it.

12:06pm

After the phone call, Chinememma brought a pant-suit for me to wear. The suit was dark blue and short-sleeved, with some embroidered flower design in the chest region. It was so stiffly starched, and I could not imagine walking around in it. She said she had returned the purple blouse and black skirt I picked because the sleeves were too tight, the skirt was not long enough, and the colour was too bright. She

said many things, but I knew why she returned the clothes I picked. Chinememma has been very protective since the Michael incident. She doesn't even allow me to check my Twitter account since #saynoFunmilayoAbortion was the number one trending topic in Nigeria. I remember how women called me out for being a 'slut' and men said I was unprofessional and could not handle the rigors of Nigerian politics. However, I was not comfortable in the pant-suit, and I wanted to give my speech wearing what I was comfortable in.

Looking in the mirror, I see my crimson hair resting right above my shoulders; my purple blouse, which stops just above my shoulder blades, has a tailored look that is bold against my brown skin, my lips look fuller because of the purple lipstick I have on, and my ankle-length black skirt is fittingly tight. I feel comfortable with what I am wearing, but as I walk

towards the black sienna waiting for me, I am mildly worried about the critics I will face... not wearing a suit and all. Chinememma spots me. She jokes about the cameramen being distracted by my beauty, and she takes a picture. "By the way, your speech is amazing," she says as we bend low enough to enter the car.

1:34 pm

The road to the stadium was very bumpy. I will talk to Governor Nyesome Wike about this. We drove in about forty minutes ago, and the speaker has been talking about yesterday's elections for the past twenty minutes. There are so many people here, it still feels like I'm dreaming, and many people are holding placards with the same slogan: "Women in Politics." It warms my heart to read this. I really want to get this speech over with, plus my headache is not any better.



The speaker finally introduces me, and as I walk to the stage with everyone's eyes burning holes to my back, the pain intensifies. The pain has an unpleasant warmth to it, eating at my empty stomach. I feel nauseas too, enough to make me hold onto the mike-stand for support. I breathe slowly, I have been good at ignoring this pain and hiding it from everyone, but that's not possible now. The pain owns me, dominates my thoughts, and controls my actions. As I fumble with my speech and occasionally change

posture on national television, I hear one of the cameramen whisper to the other, "Period stress no go affect male president." I continue with my speech.

7:09 pm

Dear Diary,

At the end of my speech, everyone applauded me. Everyone was excited, especially women, and I am glad I can be this image of motivation. But as I fumbled initially with the speech, I couldn't help but remember the Ekweze's when those cameramen referenced my period. I

realised something; my experiences as a woman is filled with many tough choices, bad memories, and ruined friendships. Experiences from a marginalised community that I can pick up if I need to learn something; memories I can bend to gain a perspective that will help me to be a better leader; beliefs I can use to re-see situations through the lens of my people's needs and traumas rather than mine. This is my new awakening: to be the person I am destined to be and to lead Nigeria towards a new revolution.

A Song of Many Voices

Maurice Kitwaa
Kenya

The time is exactly 21:09hrs, the curfew is fast approaching. It is dark outside and there are light showers. The darkness I can explain, but I cannot tell you why it is raining at this time of the year. You see, Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) is to blame for the darkness; they have decided to punish us because of all the illegal power lines snaking through this sham of architecture called the ghetto. This is where we live, this is our home sweet home.

The matatu comes to a halt at a bus stop, and I am the only one alighting at this particular point. Reality sets in hard as I move from the warmth inside the matatu and step into the cold lonely night. This cold wind rushes and hugs me tightly, it grips and embraces me like we are two lovers who have not



locked eyes in years. As the matatu speeds away leaving me standing at the bus stop, I feel like Jonah tossed out into the sea amidst the horrific storms, only this time the rain continues.

I quickly wear my hoodie and cover my precious Afro. The rain is increasing and soon enough it's raining like cats and dogs. I cannot make it home with this rain, I think to myself, it's better if I find some place to shelter. My eyes quickly scan my surroundings and Mwaniki's place comes to view, that is

always a nice place to shelter and I see a bunch of people standing there. Jumping over puddles of muddy water, I quickly dart over to Mwaniki's place.

In a few seconds I arrive at Mwaniki's place, but my arrival is not welcomed. You see, the people sheltering at this place are the blue boys or as we love to call them the beasts; they are the police or the pigs depending on where you come from. They have these long rifles peeping shyly underneath their combat jackets. They look at me and proceed to study me like I am the most wanted criminal. One of them approaches me and asks why I am running. Before I can even answer, they handcuff me and take me to their Land Rover parked just behind Mwaniki's place. There, I come across other people who have been arrested as well.

As we are driven to the police station, one by one, the people I was arrested alongside bribe the police officers in the vehicle are let go. As for me, I still cannot fathom why I have been arrested.

By the time we arrive at the police post, I am the only arrested person the Land Rover.:

The police post is a sad site to behold; it reeks of urine, sweaty, unwashed linen, corruption, and everything else that is not nice. The lady at the booking desk is dozing off, saliva oozes from her mouth, while flies play tag with her face. Momentarily she twitches, and the flies go away. When she finally awakens from her siesta, she quizzically studies me and flashes a smile exposing her brown teeth, probably from smoking too much tobacco, I think to myself, her face seems to say here comes the money.

I am booked on the occurrence book (OB) as caught in the act of robbery

with violence. I have never even slaughtered a chicken, but here I am being accused of disturbing the peace with a dangerous weapon. Such nonsense. The police escort me outside to some metallic huts which are meant to be the cells. Two of these huts are already filled to capacity, I am locked inside the third hut. I am the only occupant at the moment, or so I think.

Inside this metallic hut, my eyes focus and try to see something, anything, in this pitch darkness. I hear rustling and movement. I freeze and listen, not moving not, even blinking, and then I see them. For a moment, I cannot believe what I am seeing. My eyes are playing tricks on me, is this real? No! This cannot be real.

There standing before me are old men and women with nasty dreadlocks; a closer look at them and I immediately figure out who they are.

This are the unsung heroes who fought for our independence.

They suddenly begin chanting and singing revolutionary songs, circling me, and urging me to join them.

At first, I am reluctant, I am still confused, but then I join them singing at the top of my voice, screaming Sheria! Sheria! Fwataaaa! (the law! the law! follow the law!). Stamping the floor while clapping hard, I feel like I have been reborn.

This strange ritual has taken over me completely that I cannot even hear the police officers outside banging and making efforts to open the door. Why would I care though? I am with a legion of freedom fighters, I have never felt so alive in my life; if they want me, they will have to go through my new friends.

The police open the door and rush in to see what the clutter is all about. They look at me strangely. One of them even sniffs me like a dog sniffing out the fear from an intruder.

They then light their torches and scan through my cell. The strange thing is I am all alone in this cell.

I could have sworn there were men and women here urging me to sing and fight for my freedom. I am not crazy.

I cannot be. As the police quizzically study me, prisoners in the other cells begin to sing the same songs I was chanting with my new friends. The whole police post goes on a rampage, a devilish smile dances on my lip as I watch

the fear and confusion written all over the faces of these blue boys.

The lights are back on now and the rain has stopped falling. The time is now. Let the revolution begin.



Call for Submissions

The Wakini Kuria Prize for Children's Literature was established in 2019 to honour the memory and legacy of Wakini Kuria who served on the Advisory board of the African Writers Development Trust and as the Chief Editor of the monthly Writers Space Africa magazine. The previous winners are Marjorie Moono Simuyuni (Zambia), Madeha Ezekial Malecela (Tanzania), Blessing Aliyu Tarfa (Nigeria) and Halieo Motanyane (Lesotho).

For the third edition of the Wakini Kuria Prize, the 1st place winner will receive a cash prize of \$150 and a certificate. The second place will receive \$100 while the third place will receive \$75. We are calling for submissions in the Children's literature genre and it is open ONLY to writers of African descent from 15th February until 1st June, 2021.

Please note that there is no theme for this call. The entry should not exceed 1,200 words and must not have been previously published anywhere including personal blogs. The entry should be sent in MS Word format only to wakiniaward@writerstrust.org. Please include your name, country, a short bio and your social media handles - if any.

If you have any questions about the award, please send an email to info@writerstrust.org.

The Wakini Kuria Prize for Children's Literature.



Trends of Colonialism in Africa; Call for Mental Revolution

Comfort Nyati SDB
Zimbabwe



Dear reader, I beseech you to read this with a sober mind. While bracketing all the fore-prejudices you may have towards this text, recall that moment when a fist of the colonist knocked you down, either physically or emotionally. I presume you never succumbed to it, you kept soaring to unravel, revolt and decolonise your mind from any form of colonisation.

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. It is not a modern phenomenon; rather world history accounts many examples of one society gradually expanding by incorporating adjacent territory and settling its people on newly conquered territories. Power and dominance are

basically intrinsic mental cravings in both rational and irrational species. The desire to dominate and be socially feared and honoured and the privilege of getting better portions is what yields the thirst to colonise the weaker ones. Without restrictions to a specific time or place, nevertheless, from the 16th Century, the audible song of Western colonialism in Africa began to pick its lyrics till date.

The interest of this article sees the concept of colonialism as inhering in three trends in Africa. Factually, not static but progressive because it has engulfed the continent through three trends: Firstly, European/Asian perpetual influence – the main tree of colonialism in Africa which has established un-uprooted roots, perhaps necessary to be called

eternal roots. Meanwhile, the following two are merely branches yet powerful. Secondly, despotic appetite – which refers to the tyrannical leadership imposed by many octogenarian African heads of state, followed by their refusal to retire. And lastly tribal superiorities – resulting in massive domestic tribal conflicts that have occurred and are still occurring in many parts of Africa. These three trends are prototypical to what I refer to as Africa's Tripartite Colonialism.

Every nation attained her independence at a given time different from the other. We hoped and embraced the rapture of a triumphant independent Africa anticipating a ceasefire, emancipation of Africans and a peaceful progressing continent.

Stuck in euphoric illusions, little was it known that the downfall of white-to-black colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa ushered a new tide of black-to-black colonialism, initially the uppermost vicious form of human subjugation. Countries like Zimbabwe are entangled in the nightmares of democracy and this makes one question the direction in which the country is headed because ideal independence hasn't befallen the nation; it was simply a transition from British colonisation to Zanu colonisation. Countries like South Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, to mention a few, are still suffering the yoke of tribalism. We take pride in our diverse tribes, should we not pride in the tribal animosities on the ground?

In the stream of these patterns, it mirrors an active colonialism which is fully alive, at work and at play. Though the very concept is fluid and lacks innocence to an African child due to the penalties borne, we inhabit a continent which is

essentially an end product of colonialism. Actually, the flourishing business in Africa now is the continued disunity and subjugation of the powerless. Living in the web of such unprecedented disparities, a new set of revolution is called for.

Revolution has its complex politics and we should approach it with a critical mind in dichotomising these complexities. Some upheavals are schemed for the worst while some for the better. I am disillusioned with the latter because often times we have been entwined into it. We divide our communities, intensifying racism/tribalism, xenophobia and violence; we demolish bridges and colonise each other. A typical example is the case of Zimbabwe's 2017 well strategised coup which sought to oust the long serving former nonagenarian president. It seemed like a revolutionary schemed motive, on the contrary, it served to harness another tyrannical system. Therefore, the ideal

revolution which Africa starves of today is that which is fronted by philanthropic motives.

Consequently, this has resulted in a diminished originality, a deterred sense of belonging. The original Africanity in one's self is slowly being washed away by the waves of emulation. I admit that the return to our original selves in this era is merely an illusion for we are encircled by a society of structured stereotypes. It is a two-way thing; we are stereotyped and we too, stereotype ourselves. To this we need to rise above the strata of social stratification. The passage to this is not a physical upheaval rather a mental insurrection that fosters a change in attitude, promoting unity in diversity.

To this end, we cannot overlook the effect of colonisation on our educational system. Education in the pre-colonial African society was performative, but colonialism came and crashed that.

Our educational system is at the core of the mental revolution. One of the commendable areas for indigenous resistance should begin in the classroom.

Thus, revolution can only come through an informed, gallant and daring mind. It is not only academic honour that liberates us, but an ideal revolution that begins from the mind – a revolution of the mind – that births a new evolution. Remember that the coming forth of every generation carries a new consciousness that has its demands. While some demands are met, some are

not, we ought to keep revolting against all follies and change of mind-set is key to this.

In his article, *Indigenous Pathways to Action and Freedom* (2005), Taiake Alfred argues that meaningful change to the colonial condition requires a lasting transformation of society through indigenous renaissance. Luckily, there are a few individuals who are challenging despotism and corruption, the likes of Bobi Wine (Uganda), Nelson Chamisa (Zimbabwe) and Aisha Yesufu (Nigeria). Their daring attitude is a seed of resurgence. Nonetheless

the continent still starves for more revolutionary minded individuals, resolute minds that are able to spike a new evolution and make Africa a welcoming home to Africans.

Robin Sharma, a contemporary motivational writer and speaker opens his book *The 5am Club* with a call to heroism: "The world needs more heroes and why wait for them when you have it in you to become one?" Additionally, a hero can only be identified if he thinks revolutionary and wears the mask of philanthropism. "Now, more than ever, the illusions of division threaten our very existence. We all know the truth in times of crises, the wise build bridges while the foolish build barriers. Therefore, we must find a way to look after one another as if we were one single tribe." The pill to heal this crisis lies within you and me, to decolonise our minds, to develop, not skyscrapers rather, our minds; henceforth, an urgent call for mental revolution.



Genge at the Helm of Ending the Pandemic

Wamuyu Yvonne
Kenya

There was obvious excitement when we jumped into the new decade. It has always been the nature of the modern man to make grand plans that help to focus their resolve as they go through their days. No one was ready for how the past year had been. The world was shaken by the pandemic at all levels. Economies grappled in the face of an invisible enemy. Students, teachers, parents, manufacturers, governments, etc. were all singing the same song. There was widespread fear and the call for urgent action by governments and in turn the population, to protect itself.

The world of the arts, particularly music, got hit almost immediately when borders and interactions shut down. All over the world, tours and concerts

were being cancelled. On a national level, clubs and entertainment joints also experienced closures, with little warning. Suddenly musicians, who mostly worked on a freelance basis, were unemployed.

However, in a massive show of resilience, Kenyans turned online for their entertainment when they could not go outside and mingle. The streaming services experienced a massive increase in demand coupled with new subscriptions. Artistes had no option but to keep on giving. They set up their music on the various platforms and sang or rapped our sorrows away. Though in their solitary places, Kenyans came together with other Africans to participate in dance challenges that reminded us that we are one.

Genge is a music genre that emerged at the beginning of the century and has stayed with us for close to two decades. The genre is defined by the use of sheng in rap and it borrows heavily from popular hip hop sounds. Close to two decades later, the genre saw a rebirth in Gengetone. This style of music, also originating from small estates of Nairobi, took the internet by storm. At a time when the people were scared and looking for an escape, Gengetone was there to offer it.

The new subgenre is more akin to dancehall than hip hop. The songs are mostly done by boy bands of young men in colourful attire. The videos have been under siege for seemingly objectifying women by having them dance in scanty dresses.



They have also been criticised for speaking openly about drug and alcohol use as well as sexual matters.

During the pandemic, Gengetone artistes actively made music about emerging issues. They rapped about the quarantine conditions and the impact of the pandemic on society, especially the interpersonal relationships. Gengetone has gained eager listeners; young men and women in their teens and twenties. The characteristic beats can be heard blaring from speakers of entertainment joints, radio

stations, and in almost all public service vehicles that ply the Nairobi metropolitan area and beyond. The impact on the music industry by these young artistes has been so great that they have scored collaborations with older artistes who want to tap into the hype. This mutually beneficial arrangement helps the Gengetone sound permeate through to even older listeners who are looking to challenge their palette.

One of the ways documented that a pandemic can end is dying a social death. This generally

means that people get tired of having their lives interrupted by fear and anxieties surrounding the virus. Gengetone has helped Kenyans feel ready to move on and socialise once again as they dance to good music. In the post-Covid19 world, the genre has a lot of lessons that we can borrow from to make society better. One huge lesson that we can learn from this subgenre is the value of working in groups to create a harmonious sound. The genre is synonymous with boy bands, who are very distinct in their membership.

These groups have also managed to work well with other artistes to promote their music to broader audiences. This type of group work makes it easier for everyone to throw in their voice in a competitive space, all the while developing their style of rap. Another thing that the post-Covid19 world might appreciate is the open discussion of previously hushed topics. They have come out to discuss reproductive health, emergent dating norms, the age-old power play between the genders, the place of money in relationships as well as the repercussions of drug use. These highly inciting messages refuse to be ignored. They have caught the attention of stakeholders and it is easy to find advertisement messages borrowing from a particular tagline to push their message. It will be of benefit to the coming generations if they can be able to access information about their reproductive health and be able to talk

about their experiences, especially the ugly ones, freely. It is the only way to healing.

The competitive nature in the employment field, as well as the higher acceptance of individuals pursuing artistic careers, has become more widespread than in any of the past generations. The pandemic forced most people to turn to online platforms for socialisation and entertainment - phenomena that experts speculate will hold in a post-Covid19 era. Gengetone has given leeway for young people previously unable to access a sound that is their own and an exclusive audience the opportunity to earn money faster for their craft. This will contribute to their lives and consequently to the economic recovery of the country.

The Genge style of music, by tapping into the use of sheng, serves as a unifier. The language, by borrowing heavily from Swahili and other languages spoken

across the country, gives its speakers a singular identity. The only challenge is to keep up with the vocabulary that morphs and grows at high rates. With the rising political tensions toward the electioneering period, the Kenyan youth will need a unifying factor that will help them look at each other as friends rather than foes.

The nature of the music videos does not, unlike other genres, rely on flashy shows of wealth and mentions of shiny things that leave listeners wishing for things they cannot have. Instead, they are a direct reflection of the middle and lower classes, or hustlers, who are the active audience for the music. This is important at a time when there will be a lot of changes and financial pressure. The music does not pile onto the societal pressure of appearance and possession. Instead, it encourages letting go and taking it easy after all is said and done: this is what the world needs right now, an easy transition into the new normal.



Call for Submissions

Since 2018, Writers Space Africa in partnership with the African Writers Development Trust, has held the annual African Writers Awards as the highpoint of the African Writers Conference. Previous winners include Manu Herbstein (Ghana), Andrea B Matambo (Zambia), Priscillar Matara (Botswana), Asoloko Gloria Akayi (Nigeria), and Benson Mugo (Kenya).

For 2021, we are delighted to announce a call for submission for the African Writers Awards under the theme:

THE FUTURE OF AFRICA.

This is open from **1st February until 31st May**.

We accept submissions to the following categories:

- Poetry (Structured or unstructured)
- Creative Non-Fiction (1,500 words maximum)
- Drama (6 acts maximum)

A cash prize of **\$100** will be awarded to each winner along with a certificate.

For more information, and to submit your entry, please visit -

<https://www.africanwritersconference.com/awards/>.

Please direct all concerns to

info@africanwritersconference.com.



Mahube

(A new dawn)

Temani Nkalolang
Botswana



On the first day of school after the festive season, Mahube noticed a change in her childhood friend, Tlhong.

Normally, they would chat nonstop about how they spent the festive season, the gifts they received, new clothes and even the food they ate. But the jovial Tlhong was wearing a serious sullen face, even Mahube's silly jokes didn't tickle her at all.

After school, Mahube asked Tlhong what was wrong. Tlhong narrated her painful ordeal to Mahube. Mahube felt bad for her friend and she decided to help Tlhong. So, she accompanied the scared Tlhong to her home to tell Tlhong's mother what happened. Tlhong's mother was happy to see Mahube. "Good afternoon ma. Please

sit down we have to talk to you," Mahube said.

Tlhong's mother chuckled but obeyed. She was fond of her daughter's friend.

"Ok, tell me what you naughty kids did this time," she said jokingly.

"Tlhong's uncle misbehaved with her and we have to go to the police right now!" Mahube blurted out

"You want to... you... you... Tlhong, what is this nonsense?" she asked her voice rising.

"I, it, it's true Mama..." Tlhong stammered.

"Remember when Uncle said he had back pain and asked me to massage his back, he, he, he undressed me and touched me inappropriately and, and..."

she said choking on her tears.

"Shut up! Shut up Tlhong! How can you say that about your uncle?"

The matter spiralled out of control and Tlhong's mother chased Mahube out of their yard, calling her a bad influence on her daughter and warned her never to talk to her daughter again.

Mahube could not sleep that night, she kept tossing and turning. She wondered how she would help her friend without getting her into more trouble with her mother who was so furious. How will she make her understand? She could not ignore what Tlhong's uncle did, she was so angry with him. She kept thinking about what her grandmother taught her, "**Ngwana yoo sa leleng o swela tharing.**"

By morning, she had made up her mind to help her friend no matter what.

Seeing the state Tlhong was in at school tightened Mahube's resolve. She waited by the classroom door for her teacher. When the teacher came, Mahube pulled her aside and narrated the whole story to her. The teacher gave the class work and called the two girls to the principal's office. At first, Tlhong was not willing to talk, but Mahube assured her the teacher will help her and she verified Mahube's narration before their teacher and the principal.

The teacher went with the girls to Tlhong's mother. Tlhong's mother was adamant that Tlhong's story was a figment of her silly

imagination.

That her brother is a good man, he took them in when Tlhong's father abandoned them. She blamed Mahube for instigating her daughter against her uncle. She kept saying if they report him to the police who will take care of them, what will people say.

The teacher finally calmed Tlhong's mother down and made her see reason and asked her to think about Tlhong's wellbeing and future, first and foremost. The police were called in and Tlhong's uncle was later arrested.

After the arrest, the teacher hired Tlhong's mother to help at her house so that she could take care of herself and Tlhong.

Since the arrest, the school took an initiative and set up a functioning guidance and counselling office. They also invite nurses, social workers and the police to sensitise students on Child Sexual Abuse.

This initiative triggered a national response among schools and there is even talk in parliament of setting up a special unit in every police precinct to respond to Child Sexual Abuse as a matter of urgency.

Tlhong has started laughing at Mahube's jokes again. She goes for counselling every day after school and Mahube accompanies her every time.

Glossary

Setswana Proverb

Ngwana yoo sa le leng o swela tharing

In English

A baby that does not cry dies in the womb.

Meaning

A person who keeps silent about his problems never gets help



Sophie, What did you say?

Blessing Tarfa
Nigeria

Once upon a time, there lived a girl named Sophie.

Sophie was a clever girl but sometimes, she did not know what to say.

Sophie could do a lot of things.

Sophie knew how to count her numbers 1, 2, 3...

Sophie knew all of her A, B, and Cs.

Sophie could sing the national anthem, she could also name the seven colours of the rainbow.

Sophie knew how to wash her hands. Sophie could also tie her shoelaces all by herself.

But when Sophie needed

something, she did not know what to say.

One day, Sophie wanted to ask Mum and Dad if she could go to her friend Amanda's for a sleepover.

She walked into the kitchen to meet Mum and Dad making sandwiches for breakfast.

"Mum, I am hungry," Sophie cried.

Dad cleared his throat, "ahem, ahem."

Mum shook her head from side to side, "Sophie, what do you say?" Mum asked.

"Give me some food now," Sophie whispered.

"No-no-no Sophie." said, Dad. "You say 'Please, may I have some food?'".

"Please Mum, may I have some food?"

Mum gave Sophie a plate of sandwiches and a cup of hot chocolate- Sophie's favourite.

Sophie grabbed one sandwich off the plate. She was about to take a bite when dad cleared his throat, "ahem, ahem."

Mum shook her head from side to side. "Sophie, what do you say?" Mum asked.

"Yummy!" Sophie replied with excitement.

"No-no-no Sophie." said, Dad. "You say 'thank you.'"

"Thank you for the sandwiches, Mum," Sophie replied as she sat down to eat her sandwiches.

When Sophie finished her sandwiches and the cup of hot chocolate, she belched loudly. "UUUURGGGGHHHHHHH"

Dad cleared his throat "ahem,ahem."

Mum shook her head from side to side. "Sophie, what do you say?" Mum asked.

"Disgusting!" shouted Sophie.

"No-no-no Sophie," said, Dad. "You do not say disgusting. You say 'excuse me.'"

"Oops! Excuse me." Sophie said in a low tone.

Then it was time for Sophie to go out to play.

Sophie pushed off her chair and was on her way out of

the door.

"I am going to ride my bicycle outside," she announced.

"Ahem, ahem. Not so fast, Sophie," Dad said. "Are you forgetting something?"

"Hmm..." Sophie thought. "Yes! My helmet."

"But Sophie, what do you say?" Mum asked.

"Safety first?" asked Sophie.

"No-no-no Sophie," Mum said. "You ask, 'Please, may I go out to play?'"

"O please, Mum and Dad. Please, may I go out to play?"

Sophie pleaded.

When Mum and Dad said yes, Sophie hugged them both and ran out the door with her helmet. Sophie laughed happily as she rode her bicycle in the backyard. Sophie rode her bicycle

back and forth and round and round.

Soon, it was getting dark and Sophie was getting tired. It was time to come back into the house.

Sophie could not open the door herself. She was holding her helmet and pushing the bicycle.

Sophie did not know what to say to get the door to open. After thinking long and hard, Sophie shouted, "Open Sesame!"

"No-no-no Sophie," said, Mum. "You say 'Please, may I come in?'"

"Please, may I come in?" Sophie pleaded.

And Sophie was let into the house by Dad.

When Mum and Dad went to tuck Sophie in for the night, Sophie asked. "Excuse me, Mum, Dad, please, may I go for a sleepover at Amanda's?"

Dad cleared his throat "ahem, ahem." She said, "thank you, Mum, thank you, Dad." out to play, she did not shout "safety first."

Mum started to shake her head from side to side. The next day, Sophie went to Amanda's for a sleepover. Rather, when Sophie wanted to go into Amanda's house, she asked, "Please, may I come in?"

Sophie was worried that she did not say the right thing. When she got to the door, Sophie did not say "open sesame."

Then Mum and Dad both laughed. When she was given some fruits, Sophie did not say "yummy."

"Yes, you may go for a sleepover at Amanda's." Mum and Dad agreed. When Sophie belched, because dinner was yummy, she did not say "disgusting!"

Sophie was glad she could go for the sleepover. And when she wanted to go

And when she was given fruits to share with Amanda, she said, "Thank you."

When Sophie belched, she said, "Excuse me."

And when they wanted to play outside, Sophie asked, "Please, may we go out to play?"

No one ever asked "Sophie, what do you say?" ever again.

Blessing Tarfa is a biotechnologist and an educator. When she is not teaching, she enjoys reading and writing fiction. She admires her healthy collection of draft manuscripts.

Blessing was a participant at the YELF Creative Writing Workshop in 2018 and the KABAFEST Fiction Writing Workshop in 2019. Her featured works include "The Northern Nigerian Woman" for the Open Space Blogazine September issue in 2015 and a poem Titled "Indelible" which was published in the portfolio for the African Patrons Cup Polo Tournament Exhibition in 2015.

The trajectory of literacy and education in the country is her current concern and she wishes to contribute content to the library for young African readers.

Blessing's story "Sophie What Do You Say?" emerged the first runner up in the 2020 Wakini Kuria Prize for Children's Literature.

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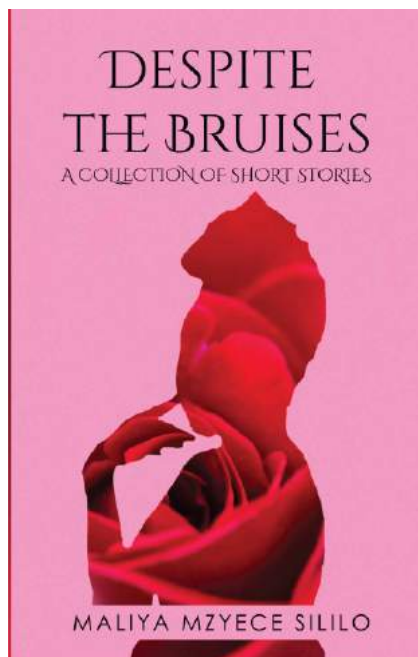


IN HER OWN WORDS: Thoughts on *Despite the Bruises*

Maliya Mzyece Sililo
Zambia

A young reader once asked me, "What was on your mind as you were writing this collection of stories?" There was one central thought in my mind, and that is that **Despite the Bruises** she receives, the girl child is beautiful and goes through life with fortitude.

My book, **Despite the Bruises** is as a result of questions in my mind about issues surrounding the 'the girl child' in Zambia as well as in Africa as a whole. Is the girl child wanted? Is she appreciated? Has she got a voice at all in the way she leads her life? How does society generally feel about the girl child? What is her role in society, in both the traditional community and the modern world? The only way to answer these questions for me was to write short stories that would lay bare the issues



faced by the girl child and allow the reader to come up with answers to the same.

The first title, **The Visitor** is a translation of a term used to refer to a newly born baby before the elderly women decide that the baby has come to stay and is not just passing through this world. The importance of women during and after child birth is made clear. Besides being midwives, women monitor the growth of the baby and

train the young mother on how to look after the baby. Infant mortality and maternal deaths were, and still are, a sad reality for many communities in Africa. The 'villain' in this story is the innocent five year-old boy who is dealing with being neglected. Makono symbolises how innocence can be both humorous and dangerous. So, the baby girl, with a bubbly personality starts life in a hostile environment.

A Real Woman, Mwanakazi Ngaye is a story of a girl of impressionable age growing up and questioning some of the activities and beliefs in her society. How early should parents start thinking about training children in the way they should go as adults? Most leave it too late.



Kupela remembers the values taught to her by her mother at the tender age of eight. A wise mother instils confidence in her child regarding gender issues.

A lot of things happen **When the Flower Blooms**. It looks beautiful and all kinds of insects are attracted to it, for instance, bees notice the new blooms for their nectar in order to go and make something sweet and palatable. Other animals find the blooming flower so beautiful that they want to pluck it out, destroying its potential to create more beauty. One can only imagine the confusion in the flower's mind were it to express its opinion! That is

the confusion of that spindle-legged girl who blossoms into a woman. She is still a child, but there are these confusing emotions that she feels. Unfortunately, some people take advantage of this confused young girl. This story, besides being an appeal to parents, guardians and teachers to be more understanding and more protective of girls under their charge, is also a story of a subtle form of sexual abuse where the abuser often gets away with it claiming the girl got what she wanted.

We meet a well-blossomed flower in **I "Take" Thee**. The story looks at how this flower is regarded both traditionally as well as in the modern world. Jackson, though a nice intelligent young man, is caught between wanting to follow his community's traditional norms and adapting to modern culture. His grandfather thinks his ideas on how to treat women will not work at all. Jackson tries to mix the two which puts him in serious trouble.

One would think that Nseko, would be a contented woman in **Nseko's Business**, but no; she feels frustrated at the very nature of being a woman and having to bare children. She has to put her life on hold after putting in so much work professionally to get where she is. But, Nseko must nurture her children in this story, bringing to light the dilemma many an ambitious woman faces.

The Most Treasured Possession dispels the idea that there is nothing to envy about being a woman. There must be something good about being a woman for a young man to risk all to join this rank and file. No one understands what leads the young man to this; is it the beauty? Is it the sex appeal? Whatever the case may be, this is a strange phenomenon in this male-dominated, egocentric community and it leaves his parents devastated. The disregard of the feelings of a woman in a polygamous marriage is clearly depicted.

Cultural differences between the Western world and the developing world are further shown in **The Burial Rites for Tisa**. Sex and sexuality are not topics that are easily discussed in our world. Death, in most societies, still remains a mystery and as such, a lot of rites are performed in its wake. It would not be believable to write a book about life and living without hinting on corruption. In **Damn the Receipt**, we see that corruption in modern Zambia is not a preserve of men.

The women representing the law wear an old woman out until she succumbs to corruption. One does not have to have a corrupt mind to participate in a corrupt act. It is hard for a person to get rid of all the traditional beliefs they've grown up with for Christian beliefs. This is evident in **A Bruised Rose**. Some actions taken by the church elder in the story are unchristian, but had to be taken in order to save his marriage as well as his standing in the community. In his decisions, the church elder is highly influenced by two women who matter to him a lot, his wife and his "cousin".

A man tries to show his city loving wife **The Beauty of the Wild**. Where he sees beauty, she sees danger. The trip ends up with him being influenced by his wife instead of the other way around which was the man's hope.

With all the pain that comes with illness, death is looked upon as a **Sweet Relief**. What happens after the relief is anybody's guess. One thing is certain, no matter what one's belief is, when that moment comes, one wants to hang on to something that is familiar; dear life.

Some critics have said that most of my stories lack neat endings. I have always wanted my readers to have something to think about. Maybe, at times, it is to let the reader give a story an appropriate ending.

About the Author

Despite the Bruises, A Collection of Short Stories won the prestigious Ngoma Award for Best Creative Writing (2019) in Zambia. Maliya Mzyece Sililo holds a bachelor's degree in education from University of Zambia (UNZA) and a TEFL post graduate diploma from UWIST in Wales. She is retired having experienced teaching at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Maliya is a keen writer. She has written English text books, TV scripts, children's stories in local languages and stories for adults. **Despite the Bruises, A Collection of Short Stories** is published by Sotrane Publishers. It is available to purchase on Amazon.



Call for Submi- ssion

Poetic Africa, a quarterly online poetry magazine published by Writers Space Africa, calls for submissions from poets for her May 2021 edition.

African folklore is rich with triumphal stories of legends, young and old, male and female. Write a quatrain poem of five stanzas under the theme LEGACY.

Submission window is from February 11th until **March 11th 2021**. The edition will be released on May 10th 2021.

To submit, please visit <https://writersspace.net/poeticafrica>. Submissions can be in English, French or Swahili.

The Conquerer

Gentile Constance Kampire
Rwanda

The scars all over her body and the pain she couldn't endure like a thundering sword in her chest were what described her as a wife who was abused by a man she cherished the most. It took a lot of work for the therapist until she decided to tell others what happened for the sake of others who were suffering the same. The tears flew unstoppable when she entered the auditorium.

The memories of the past filled her mind unwelcomed and made her sob like an errant child, but she managed to tell them the story. The story of her life and how she was abused, how she reported her husband, and how the therapist helped her. Her speech was touching and emotional, and made some people cry.



Those who listened to her story changed their mind, and started fighting for what is right. That day forward, she managed to inspire many across the world. Some people call her a revolutionary of gender based violence and a true conqueror of her generation.

She no longer cries into her pillow at night because she

knows her worth and what she deserves. She pushes herself from the comfort zone and works for a better tomorrow. She has thrived in her career, and become a role model.

What would have happened then, if she had refused to report him?

We want change!

Chipalo Salimu
Zambia

“Can't you just pack five dresses? We'll get some more as soon as we reach South Africa.”

“No!” she retorted, while cramming dresses into a duffel bag. “I need all of them. We are fugitives now, so tell me how I'll go shopping without anyone noticing me.”

“Don't stress, I know literally half of the South African ministers. Besides, you can still buy new bags online.”

“Tresor, are you deliberately trying to rile me? These are limited edition Chanel

dresses and you know how much I hate online shopping.”

“Sorry hon, but-”

“Mr. President, Sir,” a bald-headed man in dark glasses interrupted. “The army is closing in and we need to leave immediately. We only have about seven minutes before they surround the place.”

“Nelia hon, you heard the man, we don't have time. Any further delay and you'll trade your Chanel dresses for an orange jumpsuit.”

“Ok, ok! I'm almost done. But you know what's funny?” She stopped packing and turned to face Tresor. “How the citizens are always fooled by this 'wave of change' nonsense. Just three years ago you were the wave of change and now look at the country.”

“What's that supposed to imply?” he responded with a hint of irritation.

“Well, these people can revolt every year if they want to, but no one will ever bring the type of change they fantasize about.”



Checkmate

Ben Sipo Mulilanduba
Zambia



My dad had a weird love for chess. As soon as I had turned three, he began to grill me into the game. Almost instantly, the knight became my favorite chess piece. It was so unpredictable, capturing the opponent's pieces when it was least expected.

"I want you to be a world-class chess player, Nairobi," Father would say after every game, all of which I lost.

I mindlessly gazed at the raindrops race down my



bedroom windowpane. My birthday was in two days. I wondered who celebrated their 21st birthday indoors.

Thanks, rain. Mum had gone out for some groceries with Milly, my younger sister. I turned to grab a drink from the kitchen just in time for a black hood to cover my head and get kidnapped.

The small Volkswagen beetle (I figured so because it sounded like dad's) made a stop and a man gently led my hood-covered head up some stairs into what I suspected was a living room. The fresh varnish on the wooding was strong. The hood was lifted and the man in the balaclava made a hand gesture that I take a seat. The brown floral sofa was soft on my scared, tense bottom.

The rain halted into a young shower outside as the

disguised man came with a fresh Greek salad – my favourite – and a chess board.

"We're going to play a game. Whoever wins gets to eat the salad, and the loser will, well, watch –" he paused and pulled out a Glock, " – and eventually die."

I pushed my white pawn, then bishops, then knights. Queen went flying.

'Checkmate.' I said, not believing I survived death.

The man pulled off his balaclava, "For the first time, huh?"

That was the first time I won a game against my dad.

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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WSA NIGERIA ANTHOLOGY

REBIRTH



Pale Blossoms

Omondi Kelvin
Kenya

Rattling in between the papers,
Turning every page in this book in here.
I vowed to write to you in happier and
sad times.
In every word was a tiny fragment of
my heart,
The feelings I carried within me.
Through the dark alleys when you were
lost,
I came with a torch to lead your way.
Sought all the strength from my bones,
Helped you see through your entire
disguise.
Sought every help I could, gave you my
entire being.
My heart's soul, as I broke down to cry.
Chaos of a tortured soul and all that,
quite a storm that was.
Still nothing was new under your sun.
Aimed at my tiny heart were sharp
spasms of pain, regrets and betrayals
The aberrational course still sneaked in,
throttling my neck.
Rendering me hopeless.
What remain of me are not the dreams I
lived for,
It's the residue of the love we shared.
It's not the hugs,
It's the screaming for this nightmare to
end.
Face in my palms each day, silent tears

untold.
In a hurricane of loneliness, sorrow and
rage
Within the aftermath of time, someday
solace ought to be found.



The Revolution

Adegboro Samuel
Nigeria

The time has come
When constant is changed,
When the ravaging hawk is haunted
down,
The time has come.

For the mighty voice in our tears
And the mighty voice in our blood
Which groweth of their own accord
In prayers shall put decadence to its
cross.

The time has come
Where the Prince of Persia is fallen.
The time has come
For our country's great revolution.



What is Africa?

Pelekani Lwenje
Zambia

Are we slave superstars?
Subjected to cruelty
"What is Africa?"

We celebrate Queens of the world,
But we have great Queens of our own.
Our daughters walk like the great
Queens of the past.
The women warriors who commanded
the African sun.

Today people chant "Wakanda Forever"
Why not "Africa Forever"
Why not make it reality?
Why not return our great Kings and
Queens.
"Wakanda Forever"
No.
Africa Forever!

Africa is earth.
Africa is the never fading gem stone
Africa is not religion. It is the beginning.
Africa is the truth
Africa is for all, and for all they will find
worth.
Africa is the eternal parent
Africa is creator.
"What is Africa?"
This is Africa!



Wind Sings for the Wise

William Khalipwina Mpina
Malawi



Happiness sings in the wind
I see it every day; sailing in the sky
towards the horizon and back
I see pregnant minds struggling,
fighting to get a portion of it
Happiness doesn't stay at one place
for too long, but swiftly like a cloud of
rain skipping with a wall of darkness
hide its face from stupidity
and open it to humility
Happiness shouldn't face one side
for too long or something is wrong

and that calls for revolution, a stirring
rod of sanity, butterflies demanding
justice and whose madness the
shooting and why the
misunderstanding
the city burns, smoke rises
a voice calling in the streets
a bitter expression of love
and why the resistance
when the chewer says
your sweetness is gone--
the wind sings for the wise
only a fool thinks otherwise.



A Broken Orchestra

Aisha Kabiru Mohammed
Nigeria

Let me tell you about a people.

Resilient *strong* *brave*

These are words I cannot paint them
with,
these people are afraid
they are always afraid.
Their motherland has been beaten
bruised and left with festering wounds.

"Take care of your mother, there's no
place like home," they were told
but when home is a black hole that
sucks light of you, how do you stay?
When a home is a place that rips out
your spine and leaves you desperate
and hungry,
How do you stay?

One day people filled to bursting
with rage, glued their broken spirits
with hope and poured themselves onto
the tarmac.

They whirled like dervishes to
the rhythmic beating of bullets
Added lyrics to the sound of tear gas
with protest chants.
Some armed with their keyboards
became bards of virtual space,
Harmonised with drumming on
hashtags,
Creating a borked people's symphony.

These people turned their bodies into
peace offerings
Rolled around in the fire of revolution
So, their children would have ashes to
Paint maps to their freedom.



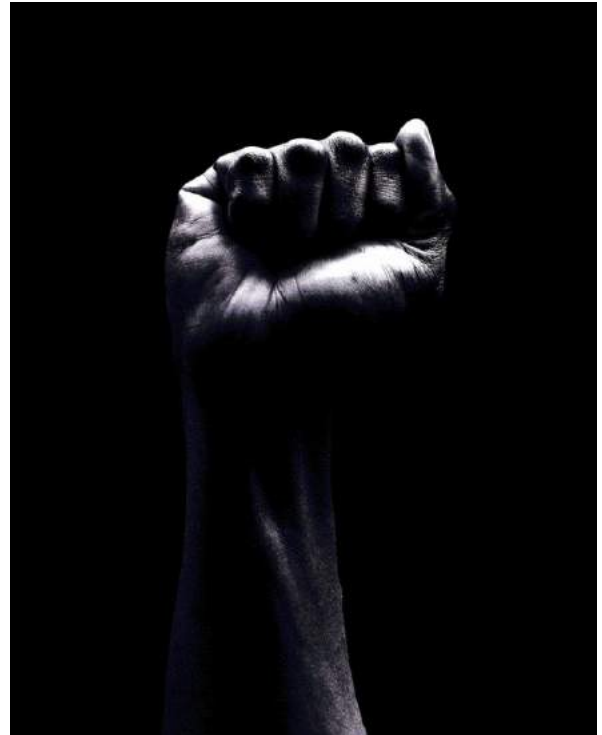
A Song of Revolution

Trisha
Uganda

We sing;
Paint our faces black,
Our vision bright and yellow,
Our hearts bleed red...
We sing change.

We sing;
A line, a verse each,
Contribute a tear drop,
Or a blood drop...
Anything for change.

We sing;
March and chant under the sun,
Bury our dead beneath a pale moon,
Bullets through defenseless bodies...
We sing for a revolution.



Killings Free Age

Chipo Chama
Zambia

Looking to the skies, it is bleeding.
Not for itself but for humanity.
Far we have been driven from
goodness,
Greediness settles in our hearts.

We, a term alienated.
Its only I, nobody matters.
We end each other,
Blood of our brothers, sisters, soaking
the ground.

In the name of politics,
we have cultivated enmity.
We are willing to kill to belong.

Is this the kind of life we have to
prolong?
What will our children inherit?

Deep is the tribal hatred like cancer.
Let us wake up from this slumber.
Why end your neighbor's life on
political regalia?
Let us claim our humanity, end this
behaviour.

Let us rise like a phoenix,
From these ashes of hatred.
Say no to political killings.
Let us call for a revolution, a fresh start.



The Day Welcomes the Year

Akanbi Omotayo
Nigeria

Tick tock, the day draws near
Pray the young and old take heed
For the day shall welcome the year.

Slow but steady it shall appear
Like a mighty tree born from a tiny seed
Tick tock, the day draws near.

No more grief to bear
While chanting the survivor's creed
For the day shall welcome the year.

The day from today seems queer
Slim the chances to succeed
Tick tock, for the day draws near.

And that day shall crown the year
A paradigm shift will it be indeed
For the day shall welcome the year.

No longer shall we be silenced by fear
No more shall the land bleed
Tick tock, the day draws near
For the day shall welcome the year.



Dawn

Christina Lwendo
Tanzania



Haunting flutes of ordeal dwindle
Diffident ears now keen to the sound-
Reverberance of dreams we dared not
dream of,
And melodies of cultures, once
shunned to oblivion.
Haunting rhythms of black feet
dancing,
Stomping false identities, given.
Summoning smiles from days of yore.
Rewriting history on the grounds we
tread on,
Haunting streams of black blood
flowing-
Resuscitating veins of truth and might,
Who we are will fade no more,
Dawn at last.



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Genre: Short Story

Title: Unbound

Columnist: Agboni Christina, Nigeria

Review: **Bildad Makori, Kenya**

Envisioning to attain freedom is one thing and the actual attainment of freedom itself is another thing. In between the two, is the real thing, the real deal which is the process of getting that freedom.

Agboni's Short Story titled Unbound is about one Uwedo who is seen struggling to have some peace of mind for quite a long time. In the short story, Uwedo is enslaved by one Ebili into doing things that she's not pleased with.

I really like the manner in which the writer cleverly structured and narrated the short story. It was not until I reached the second page of the story when I discovered that the short story, Unbound is centered on the theme of religion. Christianity to be precise. That the antagonist in the story who is Ebili represents Satan alias Lucifer and thereafter, Jesus Christ is brought into the story by one of Uwedo's friend, Edekono. How creative?!

Going on, Uwedo, who is the persona in the story, was initially enslaved by Satan to continue engaging in evil ways because of her past sinful nature which she thought it could not be undone. But with the struggles she met while still under the chains of Ebili, through her Christian friends, she was enlightened of how she could finally attain her long quest of having freedom from Ebili, which in the end, she finally attained.

Although the short story has a lot of characters that can make a reader have a challenge of remembering who is who, the different types of figurative language used and the richness of vocabularies that have been used in the short story is really impressive.



Genre: Essay

TITLE: Freeing Ourselves

Writer: Colin Stanley, Kenya

Reviewer: Joseph Oduro, Ghana

Freedom, an intrinsic, yet an entity pursued by the living, comes with differing connotations per the jurisdiction in which it is used. This essay, "Freeing Ourselves" points out the paradigms in which the word 'Freedom' has been used. The author furthered to ascertain that freedom to some is a rising power; he did this by stating Jomo Kenyatta and Nelson Mandela as examples of leaders who through blood and water, thick and thin, ice and fire, gave their all to see their countries rise above the horizon of imperial colonialism, hence assuming freedom through the rise to power.

The author insinuates that the traits of such charismatic acts of African leaders could be traced to and aligned with the ancient African traditional rulers. However, it is hard to believe such since the author makes no historical reference to a specific ruler who had a twin charisma as those of Jomo Kenyatta and the likes. Although, the concept that great leaders had the charisma of fighting for freedom began in the early stages of their lives is very true. History has made justification to that concept and every charismatic leader may have developed such a character from their youth.

In creating a viable atmosphere to decipher the concept of freedom, the author creates a vivid picture by making notable examples in the context of freedom. Thus, much emphases were made on freedom being victory over oppression and less stretched on freedom being a state of rising above and beyond life compelling situations.

'Freeing ourselves' from the image painted by the west of the African society. 'Freeing ourselves' from poverty and diseases, by changing every situation with positivism and by rising beyond situations to secure better lives for ourselves. The acquittance of freedom is indeed an epitome and blueprint to achieving a better Africa.



Genre: Children's Literature

TITLE: It Is Not What You Think It Is

Writer: Blessing Amatemeso, Nigeria

Reviewer: Namse Udosen, Nigeria

This story has changed the way I look at mango trees. Anytime I pass a mango tree, I now imagine conversations between leaves, fruit and stems.

Blessing stirs up the imagination with the piece. Children's literature is all about stirring up imagination, isn't it?

She welds several lessons into the story without making loud noises. The theme of freedom is aptly captured.

The tale of a leaf searching for freedom deploys fantasy and personification as tools to tell the children that freedom is elusive.



Genre: Poetry

Title: Freedom

Writer: Balogun Ayoola, Nigeria

Reviewer: Comfort Nyati, Zimbabwe

When one scrolls in between the dictionary pages, it is obvious to encounter the definition which states that freedom is the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants. To add, it is also the state of not being subjected to or affected by something uninvited.

Consequently, in this poem we come across a free-verse poem, written with high sense of intelligence. The poet sculpts the poem with an ascription of five senses as the key emblem of the piece.

The lane used in this poem is colloquial and common. As echoed by words such as smells, touches, tastes, sounds and feels and the arrangement of these words follow a unique sequence of odd numbers, thus L1, L3, L5 and L7.

Moreover, the concept of freedom here has been decoratively portrayed by assigning the characteristics of our five senses. The fabric of this, is creatively textured by the constant use of similes to identify the fluid identity of freedom, (freedom smells like...Tastes like...sounds like etc.) From that we can adopt the opinion that the poet has high regard of freedom from the way he metaphorically subscribes to it. Thus, it strikes the chord in me in the sense that the metaphors employed by the poet make us wonder the possibility of smelling, touching, tasting, hearing and feeling freedom. In all these, we navigate the relationship between the poet and the concept of freedom. Their common middle ground is processed through the five senses of human beings. Despite the fact that one may not be fully free, but what I can conclude is that it is important to assign meaning where freedom seems impossible.

Atmosphere: tranquil and welcoming.

Attitude: enthusiastic and reverend.

Overriding Themes: admiration, appreciation.

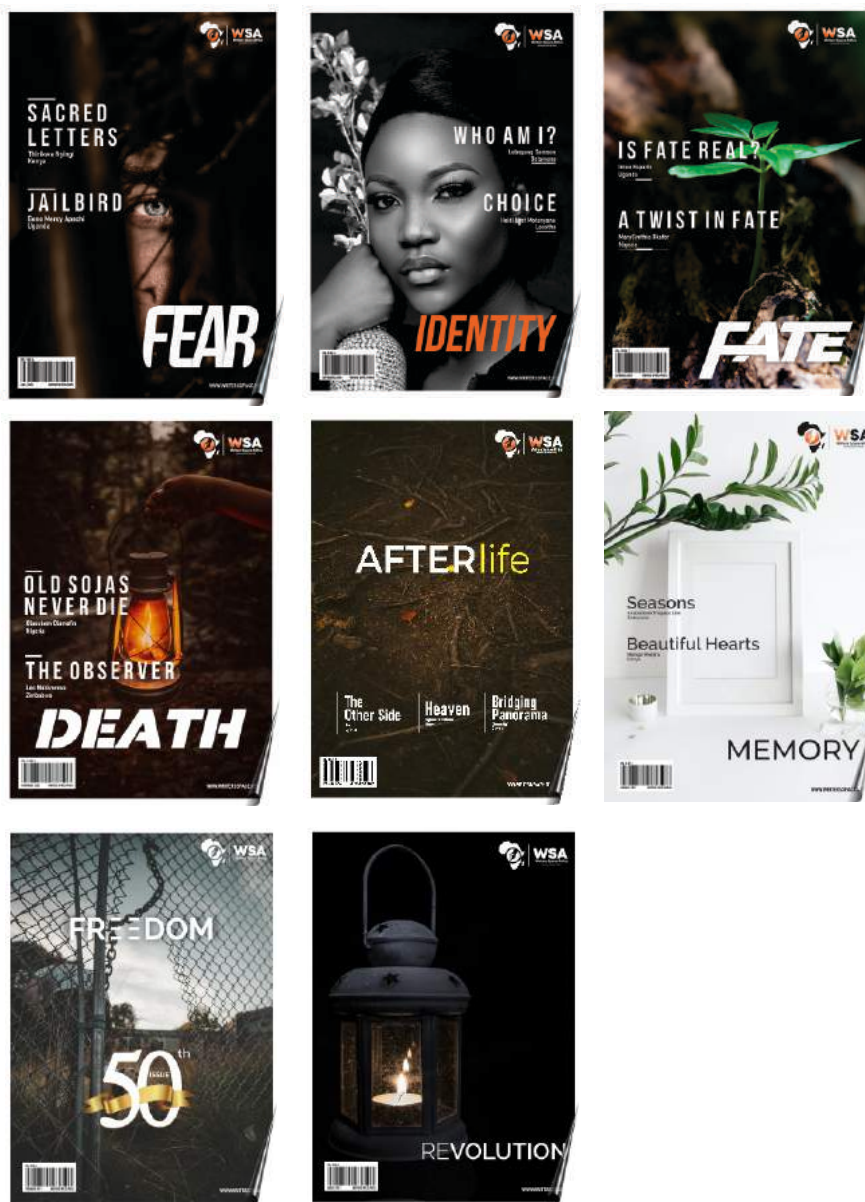
Tone: innocence, jovial and contentment.

Diction: descriptive, narrative, simple.





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