



WSA
Writers Space Africa
exploring Africa's voices

ROOTS

Old Raven

Olakunle Abdulaniyy Ibikunle
Nigeria

Uprooted

Sarah Nansubuga
Uganda

Too Late To Regret

Tinashe Muzondo
Zimbabwe

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Empowering Tanzanian Writers

For enquiry and membership, please contact:
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| Editor's Note

Everything has a beginning, it's source of life or existence, before blooming, there should be digging. That is why roses go deeper in dirt before they are beautiful, the origin, it's roots. Did you know that even the entire universe has its own roots; the word that made the existence of matter, time and space. Space exploration further explains that the entire universe is actually expanding from where the bang took place, its roots and source of power.

Feed your eyes on the root of intellect and communication, literature, and explore the artistically articulated October edition of Writers Space Africa themed roots.

Speaking of Roots, did you know that in the next seven days Tanzania will be hosting the 4th African Writers Conference? Yes the AWC is in Tanzania and we will be discussing The Future of African Literature. We are well aware that we cannot discuss the future without an understanding of our past, roots.

See you in Dar Em Salaam

Neo Space-Poet Masetlane
Acting Chief Editor



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Empowering African Writers

CALL FOR **SUBMISSIONS**

THEME: PROMISES

Writers Space Africa (WSA),
an international online literary magazine,
will from 20th September to 15th October
accept submissions for the December
2021 Edition in these categories:

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

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

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TOO LATE TO REGRET

Tinashe Muzondo
Zimbabwe

Like runaway slaves, most Zimbabweans who escape what they define as poverty and suffering in their country never take chances of coming or even looking back home. We got the chance to hear about a dream gone wrong through the voice of one among many returnees from the diaspora who shares his experiences.

In what seems to be a subconscious dream I hear the voice of our plane captain through the speaker saying, "Put on your seatbelts, we are about to land and welcome to the Robert Mugabe International Airport." Reality finally caught up to me and dragged me back into what appeared to be a flashback of the events that led to this day. I blame myself for betraying those who leaned on me.

Life has its way of dealing with everyone who goes astray. I get deep into my thoughts of remorse and begin to realise that no matter how fast a person can run from reality, the past always finds a way of catching up. My infamy today started in the year 2007 when I did what I thought was a favour to myself when in reality I was stabbing a blade of great pain into the hearts of the two women I loved the most, my mother and my then-wife Makanaka whom I neglected for the love of greener pastures. My mind always had it that being abroad would make one rich, but the few coins in my pocket and the plastic bag known to many people in my native land as the 'changanii' bag have manifested all the shame and reality upon me. Opening my eyes towards the side of the runway I see a multitude of news reporters and a ZUPCO bus which I

can perceive that its purpose is to carry us to God-knows-where. I have nowhere to go because of the way I left and how I neglected where I came from, where I was truly esteemed.

I was an uneducated school dropout dealer in the streets of Mufakose, one of the ancient high-density suburbs of Harare where I was born and raised. Dropping out of school gave me the mindset of assuming that quick and easy money was the way to go. I hustled for three months and managed to raise some money in the name of paying lobola (bride price) for my girlfriend Maka who had eloped to be with me. I was just a high school dropout without anything but a passport. I managed to sneak out from home to go abroad to search for greener pastures without even a plan or strategy of whatsoever I was going to do there.

What I had failed to fully understand was that greener pastures were there but for people who were suited for them.

Getting out of the country was as easy as I had sufficient money to buy my travel ticket. Landing in London was a dream come true but getting a starting point was the greater problem. I clearly remember the sorrow of being alone in a foreign land, and as if that was not enough, the language barriers I faced with my broken English was another problem. I slept on the subway for countless ice-cold nights until I decided to join the life of crime. I must honestly say that being a thief in a foreign land did not even prove to be an easy thing.

My life in the Diaspora was characterised by a series of cold-hearted acts of infusing great pain and terror into many through committing robberies with some other thugs I met there. Pounding on the innocent had become my daily bread and we were making enough money to

have fun and enjoy our lives. Not even once did I get the spare time to call back home to explain why I had left only a letter on the dressing table saying "ndaenda kuchando," which translates as "I've gone broad." I was too busy relishing the rewards of criminal life. We would raid houses at night and for ten good years, our operations were successful throughout London. Crime in the foreign land was paying so much that I never thought of doing anything else in case things went sideways. My life was characterised by cycles of stealing, drinking in brothels, and a recurrence of the same process. I feel the pain for all the damages I have done especially after recently hearing about how my wife, later on, died in stress-induced labour a few weeks after my sudden vanishing. During my ten years of the rampant crime I never even thought of home until my unfortunate capture that almost claimed my now worthless life during one particular heist at a jewellery shop.

I clearly remember my last heist in London when I got apprehended by the police

trying to escape through a roof trap door. We were on the police's most-wanted list and they did not take any chances to open live fire on me. This incident resulted in me getting into a three-month pain triggered comma with shackles all over me in the hospital awaiting my awakening so I could go to trial. The day I woke up from the comma was the day I also woke up from all my immoral deeds. Of course, it was too late to do anything and the court sentenced me to do thirty years for so many counts which I had committed. What I regret the most is having on my hands the deaths of my wife and my mother who later on also passed away due to high blood pressure. Serving my sentence in prison gave me a reflection of the good I could have done for myself and mostly the people back home who I had forsaken. I never cared to get in touch or even send a single penny to my family as I, on no occasion thought that a day like this would come.

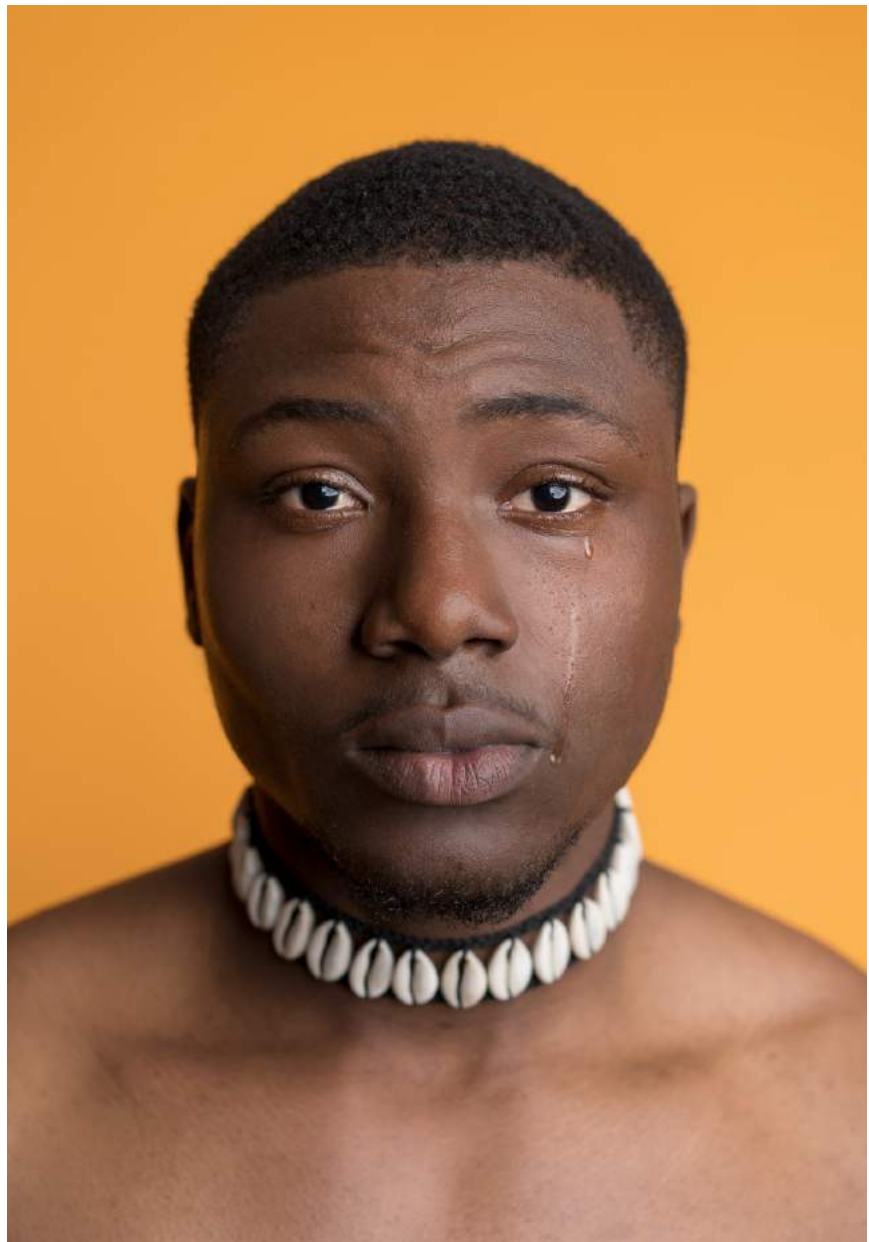
I never thought I would get deported from the luxurious prisons where we had water heaters, free meals, air conditioning and little work to do. It never really hit my mind that one day I would be offered a free airplane ride back home with nothing to show for my years abroad. Shame overshadows my courage and I don't know if I can get out of the airbus. I think about my twins who I never met, the children who grew up without a mother and a coward for a father who ran away before they were even born. More so, the death of their caretaker, my mother. They will label me as the devil's incarnate. I try to imagine what they look like if they've all grown up but humiliation overrides my concentration.

I don't know how it will be after this but the events leading to this day have propelled me to offer some words of advice to my fellow brothers and sisters living in foreign lands to never forget where they came from. It has given me the courage to accept all my wrongdoings and to realize that no matter

where a person goes, the road will always lead back home. Even a thousand apologies are not enough to cover this debt. I have come to an understanding that whatever situation a person gets into whether good or evil, we do not know what the future holds. My experience has shown me the supreme importance of

remembering where I came from. To always remember my roots.

Going far from home does not change the fact that it is where one comes from and there is a need to appreciate that fact. Arrogance has destroyed many lives but the wise will learn from other people's mistakes.



Is Humanity Capable of Questioning And Accepting Alternative Roots of Her Existence?

Solomon A. Mutagaya
Uganda



The history of humanity is awash with divergent versions of human existence. Some we have chosen to believe, some we have thrown into the trash whereas some have made sense to us yet have had gaps within, hence, we have filled in the blanks with more religious beliefs and mysteries of divinity so we don't question them further, and have adopted them. As to whether one believes a scientific version or the religious one, has always been a question of what religious or scientific caucus they subscribe to at a deeper psychological level.

Since time immemorial, science and religion have had disagreements in their models. Chiefly because one relies on belief and the other on evidence. The foundation of a belief is that you don't question its integrity lest you be

regarded as a nonbeliever, yet the foundation of evidence is about the raw facts and figures that provide clarity and could be proved repetitively.

It's astonishing to the young generation today, now that all facts are clear, that there was once a time the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei, a man described by Albert Einstein as the father of modern science, stood trial defending science, arguing that it is the earth revolving around the sun not otherwise, putting both his liberty and life on the line to convince theologians of the day whose argument was that, the idea of "a moving earth and a stationary sun were," in conflict with both the holy scripture and the Ptolemaic geocentric model adopted by the Catholic church's orthodoxy. Their argument was based on the literal interpretations of

scripture from the book of Joshua 10: 12-13 (NIV). "On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.' So the Sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies..." Galileo's trial is said to have come 17 years later after the Church's Commissary general had ordered him to abandon his Copernican ideas and not to defend or teach them in any way.



Science has since then had numerous theories regarding the origin of existence, the origin of life, meaning of life then later on the nature of it. A number of theories have come into play including Charles Darwin's Evolution Theory, the tree of life theory, and several others, most of which seem to point to the fact that there was once a beginning to life. Lately, there's been a hot discussion among Quantum physicists pointing to a likelihood that there might be endless worlds with countless versions of ourselves. Sean Carroll, a theoretical physicist and author of **Something Deeply Hidden** a book on many worlds, mentioned that "It's possible that there are multiple worlds where you made different decisions. Just how many of you might there be? We don't know whether the number is finite or infinite but it's certainly a very large number." Such thoughts as these originate from Erwin Schrodinger's 1926 mathematical demonstrations that the subatomic world is

fundamentally blurry. Citing that in the familiar, human-scale reality, an object exists in one well-defined place but in the quantum realm, objects exist in the probability, snapping into focus only when observed. Hugh Everett III's 1957 explanation as a 20th-century physicist doesn't sound any different. He proposed that all possible outcomes really do occur - but that only a single version plays out in the world we inhabit. He points out that all the other possibilities split off from us, giving rise to its own separate world. He emphasizes that nothing ever goes to waste in this view since everything that can happen does happen in some world.

Looking at such a pool of researches, theories and postulates posed by great scientists and philosophers of our time in areas of astrology, quantum mechanics and philosophy, perhaps there's hope after all. Maybe we're capable of questioning the roots of our existence, but, are we in a position to accept what we might find to be true? Would we be able to sieve and

transverse through misinformed ages of compromise and aid an era of historical distortion, adapting to the new facts? Even if it meant going against what we thought was the truth for centuries? Would we believe if some extraterrestrial, with evidence, told us that we were a genetically engineered species? Supposing a race of native terranes came to us with facts of proof, would we accept that we are products of an accelerated evolutionary process? Would we believe claims that it takes more time for a species to evolve unless artificially induced? And that humanity has undergone dozens of extinction levels to get to a point in time of where we are now?

Is it practical for humanity to constantly view herself as the crown of creation in the first place; phasing out ideas of any native terranes of the planet from alternate universes or subterranean places?



What if the meaning of life is not something ascribed but what one makes of it based on nature as an objective reality? What if science has not been able to completely understand and disseminate the true nature of the universe? What if our illogical minds are not able to see the easiest of things because they rely on the wrong mathematics and numbers. What if it were true that copper together with other unstable materials is able to produce new stable elements if a high electromagnetic field in the right angle with high nuclear radiation fields was induced to produce an over-

crossing of fluctuating fields. And that the fusion of copper with other elements in such a magnetic radiation field chamber could produce a force field of special nature? One that is very useful for various technological tasks and hence other extraterrestrial species are waging war against the human race in the bid to harvest Copper off this galactic zoo. What if their idea of war is not the confrontational type but a trigger of what might seem to us as natural phenomena?

What if the human body is a vessel conjured by nature

and must be maintained to serve the spirit with maximum efficiency? What if spirituality is a naturally occurring technology but at an advanced level? And what if technology is the natural process by which the vessel must maintain itself? Would our religious systems be open to accepting new truths about the gaps within religion rather than cover them with unquestionable divinity? Would the need for discovery of the truth about our species overpower the need to maintain political and religious dogma over which the meaning of life such as we know it is ascribed?

Regardless, however, if we care so much about the progress of our species, we must stand at a place of questioning our morality with both compassion and evidence. We must be open-minded and flexible to whatever we might find true rather than repel whatever doesn't fit in our reality as we know it. Because yes, if we know the truth, the truth shall set us free.

Uprooted

Sarah Nansubuga
Uganda

My mother owns a farm. The earliest memory I have is of the millipedes on the farm. My sister doesn't like the farm. Because of the millipedes. I've never understood her fear, and I go along with mummy every chance I get. Some kids at school find it weird that I call my mother 'Mummy'. They say that it makes me a sissy. And Daddy says it's none of their 'damn business'. But he doesn't say Damn. I have always liked mummy more than daddy because she has always been fearless. When my sister screamed – that day with the millipede – she calmly picked it off her shoulder and told her to watch the waving branches of the sweet potato plants. I was thinking about how brave my mother was when we went to the farm that day. Her old SUV squeaked and groaned much louder when we turned onto the murram road leading up to

the gate. Daddy said that the suspension of the car was 'finished', but he had never gotten around to fixing it. When the car approached the gate, mummy braked suddenly and I almost poured my soda on my farm clothes. I don't think I would have minded, but I didn't want to walk through the farm with sticky liquid on my chest. I was about to ask her what was wrong when I looked up. There was a mean-looking man in the passenger's seat window. I



usually sit there, but today we needed the seat for someone whom we gave a lift from town. The man spoke in Swahili and asked mummy a question. I did Swahili in P.3, but that was a whole year ago, and we changed headmasters. The new one wanted us to be 'global citizens', so he switched the whole school to French. Some of the teachers at school said that Mr. Ndere studied in France, and wanted to make our primary school a 'little Paris'. I don't know what that means. I was still thinking about Mr. Ndere and his strange phrases when someone sneezed. When I looked up, there was another man on the driver's side of the window. He looked kinder than the mean one on the other side and was speaking in English.

" Good Morning Madame...Oh, sorry, Good Afternoon."

"Good afternoon, Officer. How can I help you?"

The officer scratched his thin face and leaned into the window of the SUV.

"Madame, we are asking what you are doing here."

Mummy looked confused.

"This is my farm. I have come here to check my sweet potatoes. I come here every weekend with my Son."

She turned around and looked at me quickly. She seemed to be telling me something, but I didn't know what it was.

The thin guard at mummy's window laughed. He reached into his pocket and took out a dirty, folded piece of paper. He pointed to a place near the bottom. He then reached for a pen, but couldn't seem to find one. He looked across to the passenger's window. The mean-looking guard looked angry.

"This is nonsense. Madame, we are asking you kindly. Turn around and go home."

Mummy opened her mouth to say something, and the thin guard said;

"You can sign for the transfer

now, or we can visit your home and conclude our business there."

The thin, kind guard looked at me and asked;

"Young man, do you have any brothers and sisters?"

He had been speaking well to mummy, so I answered him;

"I only have a sister. She is scared of millipedes."

The thin guard made a big laugh, and I saw that he had a block of teeth that was uneven. I was about to tell him more about my silly sister when Mummy said sharply;

"Sirika!" (Be Quiet!)

She sounded very angry, I was about to ask what I had done when she turned to the officers and said;

"What are your names?"

The two guards looked at each other, then at mummy, and didn't say anything.

"Pathetic."

I had never heard her sound so 'sneering'. That was another word that Mr. Ndere used to describe the group of boys who laughed when teachers told them what to do.

"You don't even have the guts to tell me your real names. Why aren't they printed on your uniforms?"

The mean guard looked at the kind guard, who shifted the long gun on his shoulder. I hadn't even noticed that it was there.

"You come onto my land. The land that has fed my children and sustained my extended family, with a rubbish piece of paper, and you expect me to sign it?"

The guards looked surprised for a second, then the kind one reached into the car and grabbed mummy's hand. Suddenly, he did not look so kind anymore.

"Madame," he hissed, sounding like a viper, "You will either sign today, or another day."

Suddenly, the car lurched forward, and mummy screamed. I realized that she had quickly decided to accelerate while the guard was holding her hand. The car bounced and shook over the murram road, and my soda spilt all over my farm clothes. As the car picked up speed, we were quickly coming to the gate.

It wasn't a metal gate like the one at home; this one was made of plants and small sticks. A man rushed out of the small hut near the entrance, to the trees at the front part of the farm; he was coming closer and closer to the gate. He was Daudi, the caretaker. As the car accelerated, Daudi's eyes became very big, and he jumped out of the way. There was a small empty space in front of the trees, which the chickens quickly ran away from. Mummy turned the car with one hand, and it was almost as if it was going to turn over. Her other hand was on her lap, and it looked a bit swollen.

"Daudi, Yingira!" (Daudi, enter!)

Daudi was still picking himself off the ground when he turned and saw the guards running towards the gate. He jumped into the front seat and closed the door. This made me angry, I usually sat in the front seat on the way back home. Mummy accelerated the car towards the guards, and it looked like they weren't going to move, but in the end, they did. I wanted to ask Mummy when we would come back to the farm, but when I looked at her face, I was surprised to see her crying. After we reached the main road, Mummy stopped

the car and Daudi drove us all the way home. He had never been to our home, and I wasn't sure where he was going to sleep, but as soon as we reached, I was told to go to the bedroom. I passed my sister in the corridor, and she laughed at me;

"You are a real sissy. Only sissies can manage to pee on their shirts!"

I ignored her and closed the door of my room behind me. I was so confused that I almost tripped while getting out of the bathtub. I always thought that mummy was braver than anyone in the world, but until that day, I had never seen a brave person cry.



A Cold Night In Akron

Okwuasaba Ebube
Nigeria

It was another cold night at Akron, a small town in Ohio just beside Pennsylvania. You were sitting on the left hand of the brown couch in your bedroom apartment in school. You stared into the clock on the wall as it ticked in its seconds, lost in thoughts; but deep down you really had no idea of what exactly you were thinking about. "So its MDD huh?"; you whispered to yourself a little as you stretched down to quickly get a hold of your phone that had earlier dropped off your hands to the floor. As you typed the letters on the Google search board, you spoke out once more as though you wanted to be sure of what you were typing; M - D - D... Major Depressive Disorder; you further said after some seconds. It was the second time and now a recognised reality. It became a fact to

come to terms with as a psychiatrist would eventually point out later on. You had been hit down by clinical depression the previous year while still in school. At the time, you had lost your aunt who was like a mother to you, but even more, prevailing already was the stress from academics akin to Nigerian tertiary institutions. The strait economic conditions coupled with the deplorable political situation of the country compounded for many students the lack of means to fend for themselves. Other deterring factors were enough to traumatise every average citizen of the country. You eventually fell ill but did not see a doctor because the regular self-medicating with anti-malaria or typhoid pills always got the job done for you. It was at this time that stress gradually grew into

depression. You were not sure if you were completely okay, but you also would not admit to yourself that you were actually depressed; because you were a 'man'. This was sometime around January. You can even remember when you were trying so hard to keep your grades up despite the trying times and still heard lecturers boast; How do you think you would get first class in pharmacy? As if it were a competition for them on who would hinder the fair academic efforts of students. Eventually, such statements caught you in mixed feelings; because, even a first-class student is not always sure of securing a good job in the country. Or in other matters, "how does one study law in a country where the law only exists on paper?"; you wondered. You also remembered how your younger brother called you once to request funds, only



for you to find out he had to use them to pay off lecturers who demanded bribes before students could pass. While academic stress was a major contributor to your sickness then, a more

central factor was the pressure that came in with the Gen Z generation. You were only twenty and had already begun to feel the societal pressure towards the get-rich syndrome. So, when your peers went into various means of self-funding; both those who stole mostly through cyber-crimes and those who genuinely came up with entrepreneurship skills, you were left with a misguided self-condemnation. Omo, John don buy new whip o! John had indeed bought a new car at twenty-three, and there you were, barely able to transport yourself from Keystone, your base hostel in school, to the main gate. Being a student in Nigeria in this epoch is almost like you being played as handicapped against life. So, you were not so surprised the day your family doctor came in for the regular blood pressure test and got everyone bewildered to find out that you had a higher blood pressure than your parents. As all these things had played out, it was not so difficult to now see why you had got the 'MDD' the first

time.

You were forced to search on your mobile phone for what 'Major Depressive Disorder'(MDD) had to do with you, as the doctor had said, on the web, because the last time you felt the same way as the previous year; when you had earlier refused to accept your deteriorating mental health. Now things had turned sour. It had already been a year since the last time. You hoped for things to get better and you eventually found a way to get on with your studies in Ohio. Back in Nigeria, you studied at the renowned University of Benin, where you were a student for only a year; a year characterised by so much frustration and stress. Now, you are a student of The Ohio State University. You had become Alice in Wonderland until the medical reports proved otherwise.

"Argh, please not another ten thousand dollars!" You had said after viewing a pop-up notification that obstructed your previous search.

It was a message from the office of the college board. You had been requested to pay an extra ten thousand dollars on tuition. You had learnt that the United States educational system now gets little support from the state and now there is a high level of reliance on tuition fee revenue. This means that for you, being an international student automatically turned you into a piggyback for the school's financial board. In more simple words you got to understand that tuition was bound to increase more frequently, and in the end, so much financial pressure comes back to rest on you. Worse off in your situation was that, back at home, the value of the Naira currency kept diminishing in value and seemed akin to devaluation.

Tuition alone was not the only mental draining challenge you had to face, there was also the cultural shock that came with you moving into a new environment. As a matter of fact, fitting into anything new was particularly a

herculean task for you. You remembered when for a whole day all you would do was lay on your bed lonely and sad but too hollow to cry. At Ohio State University, you did not meet so many Nigerians, and even when you did, not many were freshers like you. Interacting with those who were, surprisingly seemed difficult, due to some bold tribalistic tendencies that always bothered you; like students from Northern Nigeria strictly preferring to hang out with one another and it did not just exist only among them. You remembered how in some of your classes you were practically treated like the eighth wonder of the world. "So how does it feel to be Nigerian? My neighbour told me about his visit, about the bad roads and how dark it usually was at night over there"; your ears would be jarred up from such statements.

These also came with a wave that placed you in a position of pity which you despised so much. Most times you were left with no other option than burning

the night oil to prove some certain level of worth. Once, you got into a discussion with a coursemate, Ivan. He was Irish but had lived in Ohio for more than a decade. He enlightened you on how his parents had informed him to stay clear of Nigerians whom his parents classified as "bad people". Though life in the States met some of your expectations, more than that, however, it eventually drilled a hole inside you.

"I began wondering why all the lights were all turned back on"; you turned back, and it was Tobi.

Tobi was the only close friend you really had in school. He was a Nigerian as well, but he did not grow up there. Tobi had been with you at your apartment since the previous day when you had swooned on your way to school. It was Tobi who took you to see the doctor that day, who further recommended you to Dr Sam; who happened to be a psychiatrist in Akron.



"Isomnia?" Tobi asked.
 "Yeah" You replied.

"Well, then I will just have to sit with you until either of us fall asleep." Tobi had said again.

"But what is the problem really?"; he further asked you.

"Clinical depression. I believe Dr Sam called it MDD. I was trying to find out

about it in details before you came in..."

"No, I mean; what really got you into this bro?"

What Tobi had said swirled your mind all the way back to when it all started, from your previous year in Nigeria; and the beginning of your whole story. You looked upwards as though you wanted to read something on the ceiling

and smiled.

"I guess I will have to tell you how I think it all began"; you said, slightly adjusting your sitting position.

"I believe things may have all began to get severe from my experience last year. Then, I was still a student of the renowned University of Benin and I had just lost my aunt who was like a mother to me..."

WRITERS' MINGLE 4

Theme
African Literature as a Vehicle
for Cultural Renaissance

Venue: Alliance Française of Dar es salaam

DATE: 08 OCT | TIME: 16:30 EAT



HOST
LUBACHA DEUS
Writer & Editor



MODERATOR
ANTHONY ONUGBA
Writer & Editor



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CHARLOTTE MAKALA
Copy Writer, Voice-over Artist & Author



DISCUSSANT
AISHA SAIDU KINGU
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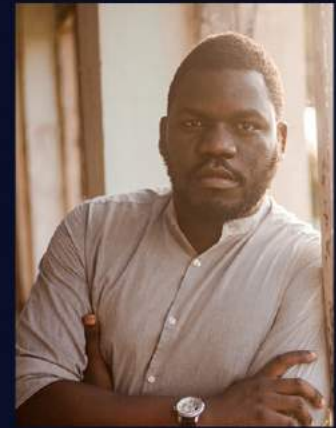
DISCUSSANT
MALAMA KATULWENDE
Author, Editor & Entrepreneur



DISCUSSANT
MKUKI BGOYA
Publisher



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NEELAM BABUL
Columnist & Reviewer



DISCUSSANT
NG'WINULA KINGAMKONO
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Theme
The Future of African Literature

VENUE
New Library Hall, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

DATE 09 OCTOBER **TIME** 09:00AM EAT



Richard Mabala
Keynote Speaker



Sauda Simba
MC



Neema Komba
Moderator



Princely H. Glorious
Panelist



Dr Neema Laiza
Panelist



Hermes Damian Salla
Panelist

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Tonile And His Grandmother's Story

Patricia Peace Ejang
Uganda

Tonile was excited to be going to the city. His father had got a new job, and he, Tonile, would be going to a new school. He was very eager. Before he left for the city, he went with his mother to visit his grandmother because they would not be seeing her in a while. Tonile loved his grandmother's food, and her hugs, but most of all, her stories. When they visited her, she welcomed Tonile and his mother with a warm hug. She also cooked for them yams and smoked fish. She then told Tonile a story.

Tonile my boy, listen to this story, carry it in your heart, and you will never forget home. Whenever you feel alone, think of this story.

_There is a beautiful hill;

Where trees grow and birdssing

And my little hut stands atop

With fresh pots of yams and Egusi soup.

There is a beautiful hill

Where children play in the afternoon rain

And my little hut stands

atop

With a welcome hug and a smile for you.

There is a beautiful hill

Where trees grow and birdssing

And my little hut stands atop

With fresh pots of yams and Egusi soup._



The next day Tonile sat in the bus, holding his little bag to his chest, and remembering the story of his grandmother. If ever the teacher at his new school asked him to tell a story, Tonile knew he would tell the class the story of the beautiful hill and the little hut atop.

David Rabbit Goes Home

Charity Modise
Botswana

David Rabbit lived in the city with his parents Mummy Rabbit and Daddy Rabbit all his life. His first tooth came out here, and he even took his first steps here. Life was very nice in the city and he had absolutely everything from loving parents to going to the best school ever.

Tragedy struck when David Rabbit suddenly became sick. He would hear voices calling him to come home.

"But this is home," he would reply.

His parents took him to all doctors around, but no avail as his condition worsened instead. It was at this point that his father remembered that David has never been introduced to their ancestors. This could have made the ancestors angry. To salvage the situation, Daddy Rabbit decided it was best to send David home.

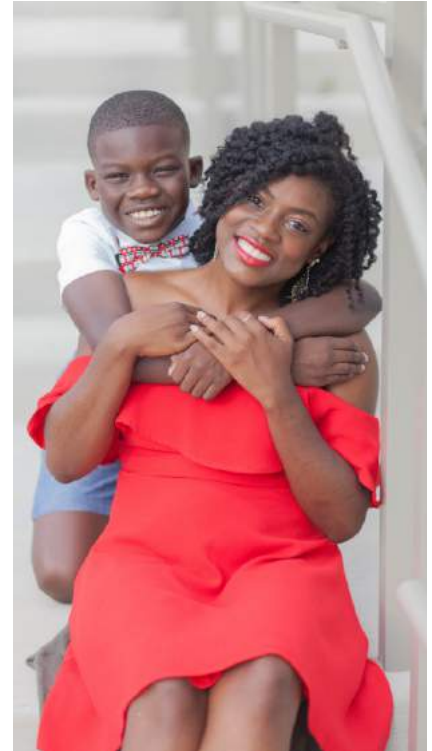
"So the city is not my home?"

David Rabbit devastatingly asked his father.

"The city is no one's home son, we all have that place our roots are." Answered Daddy Rabbit.

The next day, Daddy Rabbit, together with his whole family, set out to the forest, the land given unto them by their ancestors. Although he was sick and weak, David Rabbit was curious about his home and ancestors. When they arrived, the whole village of rabbits stood in amazement. They danced, drank beer and ate a big feast welcoming David Rabbit to the home of his forefathers. The day was such that David Rabbit would never forget in his life. Yes, his parents loved him so much, but he never felt this much love.

"It really feels good to be home," said David Rabbit to his newfound cousin, Ruby



Rabbit few days after his arrival at the forest.

The forest was a nice place to be. David Rabbit's hands rubbed against the beautiful different coloured flowers of trees. The scent could be smelt in his fingers. The chipping of the birds relaxed him so much. Not to mention the scene of watching mice and squirrels who repeatedly waved at him. He felt lively again, back to his real self, strong and healthy.

The Birthday Wish

Tobiloba Maureen Ibitoyee
Nigeria

If you have ever seen an adorable, athletic, helpful little girl, eight years of age, who is also a talented singer, scores A's and whom some of her envious classmates call "Miss. Goody two shoes," then you have met Titi Otitaju Coker. Born to a very influential family, her father is an ophthalmologist who works for the United Nations (UN) under the UN refugee agency and her mum is a petroleum engineer at NNPC. The Coker's live in the highbrow area of Nigeria's capital city, Abuja. Their house, No. 2 Celestial Street, Gwarimpa is a towering mansion that consists of two semi-detached duplexes and a bungalow in the backyard for the domestic staff. The driveway from the main gate is about 100 meters from the tarred road with Bougainvillea flowers and Masquerade trees on both sides of the road giving the environment mother nature's touch. Just at the

front of the house is a beautiful water fountain that is also home to two domestic geese: Vee and Wee. The view is breathtaking.

Titi is an only child. She attends the most popular school in the vicinity - St. Davies School which is a stone throw from her house but her parents never let her take the school bus or walk

instead, the chauffeur, Mr. Tony takes her to school and brings her home every day.

One day at dinner, precisely seven weeks to her birthday, her dad asked her what she wanted for her birthday. After a long pause, she finally said, "I will very much like to meet my Fairy godmother, I see her in my dreams. She looks like Dad's mum but much older."



Her parents looked at each other and laughed. Finally, her mom said,

"Sweetheart, you are our little princess but I truly doubt you have a fairy godmother. However, I know someone who perfectly fits this description. My mother, your grandmother who is from and lives in Ethiopia. She was here when you were three years old and I don't see why you can't meet her again."

She looked at her husband for approval as she had suddenly become homesick.

"Certainly little princess, your wish is my command," said her Dad who instinctively also caught the homesick fever.

"We will leave in two weeks, immediately after you vacate from school and thereafter, we will proceed to Ile-Ife to see my Mom, just in case there is a mistaken identity of the fairy godmother issue," he concluded, winking at her Mom.

Titi gave an excited giggle and exclaimed, "yippee!"

The Coker's boarded the 1 pm flight from Abuja International Airport to Ethiopia. Mrs. Coker looked forward to seeing her mom after five years, while Titi was curious to see if her grandmother was the woman in her dreams. 5 hours 23 minutes later, the pilot announced that they had arrived at Addis Ababa Bole airport. Although jetlagged from the flight, they had another 109 km to get to Tulu Gudo Island so they took another flight. At 7:30 pm they arrived at her grandma's home and she watched amused as her mum ran into her grandmother's arms. Her grandma scooped Titi up in her arms and said,

"Salami yeliji liji" which meant hello granddaughter in Amharic and also patted Titi's father on the back. After they rested a while, they ate a dinner of grilled fish, settled in for the night and you can guess in whose bed Titi cuddled up. The next three days were filled with excitement as different relatives came to check on them. They visited interesting places on the Island where they saw

birders viewing different bird species such as the Yellow Bill, Storks, the Great White Pelican, Saddle Bill, and King Fishers which Titi excitedly took lots of photographs of. They also visited the Debre Tsion monastery and Ziway Lake (also known as Hora Dambal, one of the freshwater Rift Valley lakes of Ethiopia). Her grandmother told her stories about her mum growing up as a child and the history of the people. Among these stories, the one that captivated Titi the most was the story of how a distant king summoned the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon to show the power of the ark. Seeing how destructive the ark could be, the three agreed to keep it away from all humans as far away as possible. The location chosen to hide the ark was none other than her mother's hometown the island of Tulu Gudo! Seven Days later they said their emotional goodbyes and headed home. What Titi discovered was that Sētiāyati was indeed her fairy god grandmother.

She was treated like a princess. Sētiāyati gave her 10 pieces of the Habeshakemis, beads, and lots of toys. They had to pay for extra luggage at the airport and she couldn't wait to show all her gifts to her friends.

They arrived at Muritala Mohammed Airport, Lagos, Nigeria quite late that they had to lodge in a hotel and headed for Ile-Ife the next day after sending their enormous luggage home through a logistic company. They arrived Ile-Ife after a 4hour 18minutes journey by road and they were glad to see Grandma; Iyaagba Coker as she is fondly called and Grandpa Coker anxiously waiting for them. They received their welcome hugs and grandma immediately whisked Titi away calling her omo oko. They settled down to a meal of Amala, Gbegiri, Ewedu, and smoked fish.

"I heard you had a good time in Ethiopia," Iyaagba Coker said. "And how is the old dear lady, ana mi?"

"She is doing well ma" Titi replied.

Iyaagba Coker wasted no time in teaching Titi about her culture.

"First and foremost she said, is learning the Yoruba way of greeting. You must always kneel to greet your elders as a sign of respect and you must never collect anything from anyone with your left hand. Ile-Ife is the most ancient city of Yoruba land. It is where civilization began and the gods descended to earth. Ile-Ife means 'place of dispersion.' There were two prominent deities; Obatala who moulded the first humans and Oduduwa who was the first divine ruler of Yoruba land."

The Coker's visited the Oluorogbo Temple and the National Museum, Ile-Ife, where a lot of ancient relics and artefacts are kept. Titi had a blast playing with the village kids while tying a wrapper to her bosom and wearing waist beads and necklace, the only thing that stood her apart was her long hair inherited from her mother's Ethiopian descent and her lack of facial tribal mark. Did grandma spoil

her? Oh yes, she did! Her grandma bought her colourful Adire and head wraps with matching Iyun set, Osun, and laile which was her first makeup set. Her jovial grandfather who is a man of few words but fun to be with gave her a game of Ayo.

After six days in Ile-Ife, they headed home in high spirits. On getting to Abuja that night Titi dreamt of her fairy god grandmothers and grandfather dotting on her affectionately and she couldn't have wished to be any other princess or for a better birthday present. When she got home she was a chitty chatterbox and she was as plump as a peach.

Two weeks later, on the first day of resumption, Mrs. Mohammed, the principal addressed the students at the first assembly, she welcomed them back to school and encouraged them to keep putting in their best to attain academic excellence.

She then informed them that the school would be having a cultural day with the theme "Roots", where contestants will present a paper and showcase their culture to a special envoy from the ministry of culture and tourism and the winner will be rewarded with some

fantastic prizes as well as a sponsored trip to Ethiopia. The smile on Titi's face turned into a grin and I don't have to tell you who won the competition in the end.

Sētiāyati - Grandma in Amharic

Habeshakemis - Traditional Ethiopian wear

Omo oko - My child indeed

Ana mi - My in-law

Adire - Native wrapper

Iyun - Priceless African beats

Osun - Local ointment

Laile - Local body paint



Tree Of Ignorance

Bokang Moshoeshe
Lesotho



Nights black as crows summon relics;
floating phantoms
of our fallen fathers. Twigs from protection
rituals give
birth to smoke of breath-taking
introspection. Can we
sever the ties that link us to our ancestors?
We
cannot! For we are cut from the same
cloth.
Fabricated tales we feed our children
about their roots stem from the
tree of ignorance.



Back To The Antihills

Okwaput Israel Victor
Uganda

When of age I have come
And have embraced the verdict
of unprotected sex,
I vow to nurture them in the same spirit
that I was incarnated into
by those who preserved black sculptures.

The young suckers are now prone
to delusion,
the cultural glue seems losing the fight
with the water from the white bystanders
cracking the zeal of our glue,
Giving up or laxity?
our story finds residence in their paper
And naivety of our youth is a lifeless scar.

Returning to ourselves is the goal now,
The other options are only graves to
reside
yet we can't afford to be slaves again.
Let I be re-subdued only by our love for us
not their gain
our biting hiccups notwithstanding
but our oilskins aren't for strangers to use.



Root

Tshiamiso Makole
Botswana

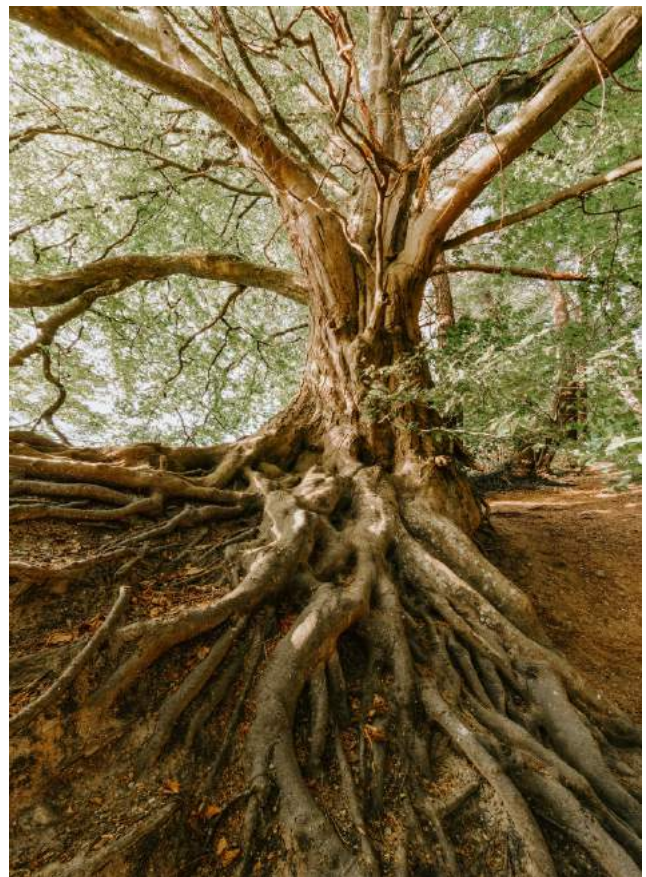
We left Congo
With patched heels burying
The names of our unborn grandchildren,
Our toes hid between them
Self-proclaimed marriages.
We were once kings without need for
permission.

Our palms were navigators of this great
desert,
We did not bury our young
We sang rain
Over their weary souls,
Soaked their feet in salt and sand
We knew nothing about a premature
death.

We were once a home
And a land
Clothed with freedom
Because we were not yet a country,
Our children had no toys
Because they each owned a mountain
And fed water to lions in Kalk-fontein.

We were once the Constitution.
In our reins reigned justice
And authority was found between our
eyes

We were incorruptible because wealth
was in our roots.



When The Trees Sway

Laurent Bwesigye
Uganda

When the trees sway
The leaves rustle and
The branches tussle

The air goes asunder
In wonder— the stems
Threaten to break.

But the roots with gritted teeth
And a glued stance
At the threshold hold and life
Is back.



Where I'm From

Zizipho Bam
South Africa



to be from this continent
is to wear your tough skin on the outside
every day;
to show up with your guard up,
your gild in place.
to guide your fears to the backroom
to remember courage like the back of your
hand
to stay in your yard.

to belong to this continent is to be bruised
every day;
to wear the weapon and the band-aid
to become the tool for the stitching

and the bare wound at the emergency
table-

it means to heal inside the fire and turmoil
between the flames and throbbing pulse
to find a place that does not burn
or does not want to throw itself into the coal
then rethink today and onwards alone.

to belong to this continent
is to belong to something that is not from
here.
to belong to this continent is to belong
someplace else other than here.

The Ancient Tongue

Valentine Onuorah
Nigeria

Just before sunrise, clouds gather upon
the mountains;
Hills shake their feet in shameful greeting
To stunted pastures sprouting from the
soil - here,
Every single drop of dew withers a leaf.
An ancient tongue hangs upon the firewall
– dangling proudly ,
It's still fresh and unburnt; making sage
sounds at full moon.
Children, listen to the thunders
Raging violently beneath the clouds, there
are many whispers:
Your fathers' spirits convulsing against
earthen libations
Of white chalk and white chicken and
wooden cross...Walking cadavers lie
prostrate in auguries of modern abyss.

Again, at dusk you file to the river, I must
warn:

For each cleansing of hands and feet in
osè

In baptismal renouncement of your
bloodline,

The lightening thunder shall be a good
judge

Convulsing restful graves which in turn
open wider

For the next dire candidate of the living!

Remember, therefore, the ancient tongue

-

hanging on the firewall, fresh and unburnt

-

calling you repeatedly to rejoin the
conversation

Between the last moon and the next.



True Decoration

Jainaba Danso
Gambia



I'm older than time,
I shine even in the darkest.
Beauty is my signature,
Allow me to brag
For I'm not made of rags,
Love is my mother
And shall forever remain green,
Don't measure my worth
With mere colours
For all men are born black
And I'm the purest,

The forest bears different trees,
Each fruit claims to be well trained,
But none can match the might of
The giantess whose reflections
Brighten the gloomy forest
With her unique,
But diverse fragments,
I'm her true black muse.

Rooted Root

Nkoshachachusha
Zambia

Swallowed so deep, underneath the earth,
Than the chanting screams of a
Woman under spiritual influence
By the so called anointed man, papa,
Who exclaims, go deeper papa, go
deeper.

They are the reflection,
They are the cause,
They are the true mark,
Of the outcome of a plant.

How short ,
How tall,
How wide,

How thick,
How thin,
How easily shaken,
Is all a reflection of the activities done by
the roots.

The great book of wisdom says be rooted
in religion,
This is the same reason .

What you are,
Shows how deep, how vast you spread,
Like the roots follow the waters and
Nutrients for survival, so should you.
Yes you!



Old Raven

Olakunle Abdulganiyy Ibikunle
Nigeria



Their faces looked tired like
the sun, yawning languidly on
a tattered bedspread of clouds.
As they dragged their feet across
the chest of the earth, they left
the history of dragged liberty
gagged by chains.

women are resort after a hectic day
and children are harvested
like opium poppies grown
illegally on legal soil.

Old Raven dropped on the shrublet

of this naked tree like overripe pawpaw,
ready to feast on the cadaver of left-
behind
countryman who could no longer
betray his elastic limit, hence he kissed the
dust.

His thud on earth's ear sounded so
silently loud to deafen their shepherds.
Countrymen chewed cowardice and
pooed freedom.

It was a wake up death.

You're Wrong

PamPam Josh
Nigeria

I may be like the sand poured
in a pan of nuts on the lit stove,

I may be like the voice of an engine
exiled to the belly of a yard,

I may be the feet of an aged human
trudging home through a path,

I may be like the crumbs of cake
caged in the pool of a cup,

I may be like the cloth at the feet of the
door
with skin that smooch soles,

I may be like the sky at three thirty a.m
I may be like a leaf dancing alone in the
Autumn wind,

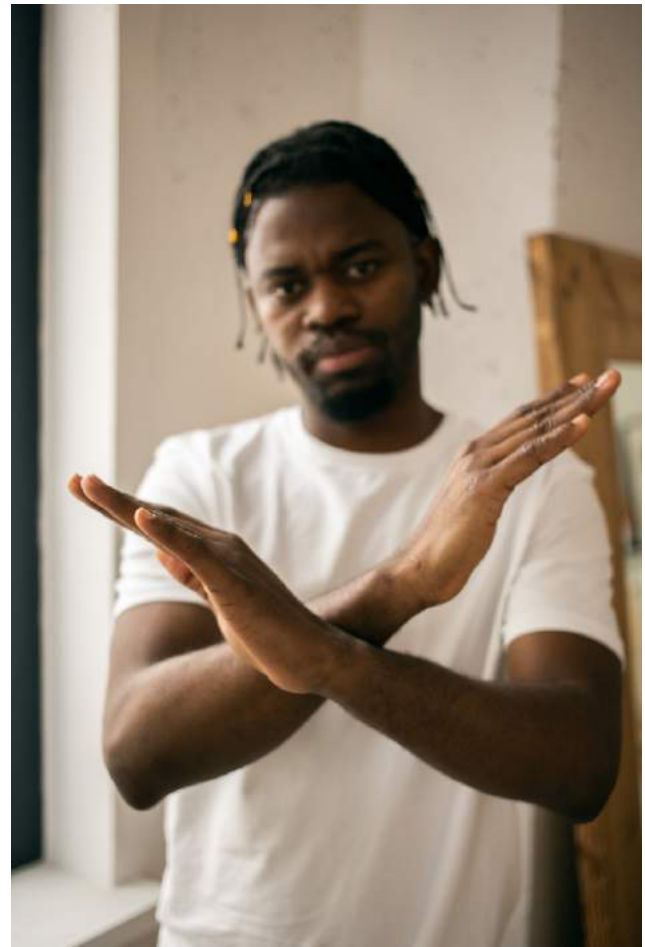
But you're wrong if all you see about me
is a leaf soaked by the sun,

You're wrong, if I'm only a smoke
from a spark in your sight,

For I'm but a snail at the feet of an Iroko
tree

For if time tarries & dawn cracks
I'll become an albino in the crowd

of black people



Claustrophobia

Julius Morno
Nigeria

I once roamed endless green fields with
tender feet
And ruled my thoughts while they were
wild and free.
I have kissed endless blue skies so deep
With crowns of clouds hanging around my
knees

But these are fast receding memories
oblivion bound.
Now I lace my shoes to my playground
Scared I may bruise when I fall down.
Who raised these ugly concrete walls on
these sacred ground?

I fear being called naive by self made
judges
And blasphemous by the maddening
crowd that approaches.
I am scared that they may misunderstand
my grudges
And the dwarfing and shrinking process
commences...

I have long shrunken into my own small
street
But the air is polluted by fumes of my own
deceit,
I weep for desecrating my only home
because of greed
For bringing the wrath of mother earth
upon my seeds

Is it possible to regain the dreams of my
childhood?
And nurture the promise till it bears
beautiful fruits?
Will I still be able to travel with my heart in
search of truth?
And will the world still be big and green
when I arrive too?

Whatever the cost, I must spend the rest
of my days settling debt.
I must travel backward to surge forward
again
And relearn the secrets of my childhood
days
Till I can travel with the heart and work
with hands of children.



Walls of Memory

Rose Bih Ngwa
Cameroon

Many a time my mind wanders
Straying back to a time of wonders
Fighting to grasp those moments
That even raging tempests can't drown.

I gaze upon that venerated wall
Savouring the portraits hung there
Portraits of faces dear to my heart,
Of places calling to my soul

Honeyed voices, ever dear
Whisper sweet soothing melodies
"Sleep well my dear child,"
That voice! "Is that you father?"

Shhh! listen to that wall
It calls, it speaks, it lives.
No truer words were ever written
But for those on my walls of memory.

I will continue down that lane
Blind to the terrors of the world
Immune to evils that lurk,
My Wall shields and guides-

It leads me to my beginning
Built on a solid foundation,
"Know thyself," it echoes
"Seek all on these walls of memory!"





PoeticAfrica
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Genre: Article**Title: The Most Dangerous Emotion****Writer: Luqmaan Rawat, South Africa****Reviewer: Joseph Oduro, Ghana**

The column dissects lust on the spectrum of the insatiable taste and desires of humans. The literary piece explores desires that assume total control of ourselves which contradicts the normal linkage of lust solely to sexual desires. It explains lust as being an extreme urge or intense cravings. Lust in itself could be channelled into lucrative ventures which yield positive results. When we develop extreme cravings for hard work, pursuit of knowledge, or helping the feeble, it may equally yield great results parallel to the energy we invested.

Our sensual systems are a webbed network of neurons. They communicate through these series of webbed cells of events happening around us with our stored experiences. Given that we are sexual beings, we develop this extreme sense of longing for the opposite sex. It's perfectly natural and an inherent attribute passed down through the evolutionary tree. We may lose our grip on these feelings which may render us engaging in unapproved means to quench them. Lust is developed through constant exposure and attempts to suppress our desires. The best way to avoid its negative effects is to approach our desires and deal with them the right way. Society has taught us that suppressing these cravings are the best way to deal with them. If only we will be honest and true to ourselves, this panacea has failed to deal with the consequences our lustful desires result in.

The social environment within which we find ourselves contribute immensely to our lustful desires overriding our morals. Continuous exposure to the lavish livings in our environment feed our senses and create lustful desires for material wealth. Social media and other avenues are constantly building immense pressure to evoke the desire to use unaccepted means to satisfy our urges. These pressures are unavoidable and our senses cannot be shielded from them. We often pay the least regard to the things we may risk in pursuit of these cravings. The longing for momentary pleasures clouds the things we may lose in giving in to our lustful desires.

The column concedes to the demerits of our lustful desires and proposes we put a hold on it. As much as I would want to agree with prepositions, it may seem that this measure has proved futile. We should face our desires and approach them with means that may not only avoid irreversible effects but satisfy our longings in the long round.

Title: Saturday

Genre: Short Story

Author: Luke Kasakya, Uganda

Reviewer: Yolanda Kuei P Macuei, South Sudan

Saturday as the title states, generally is known as a weekend meant for personalized arrangements after the busy weekdays of work. In this short narrative by Luke Kasakya; Saturday has always been a special day scheduled by Ebenezer to spend quality time with Tasha. He visited Aminallah, "the book of Temptation" on Friday night and ended up spending that Saturday to satisfy their transferred raw lustful desires which resulted in the unexpected. Thus the question, "What happened to Saturday?" Asked Tasha in a text.

It is said when you love two, choose the second because you couldn't be contented with the first. This is contrary to the case of lust. One wouldn't imagine replacing love with lust because lust is a 'want' while love is a 'need'. That is to say, there's no satisfaction to what we want as a desire but there is contentment in what we need after having it. For instance, we need love to get rid of hatred as it becomes permanent once fully acquired. Sexual desires are meant to regulate the body system hence fits the definition of lust that comes once in a while, with repercussions of its own time if mishandled.

Saturday is the vivid illustration and demonstration of Lust as the major theme in this fictional plot and non-fictional settings of the short story. It is told in a stylistic flashback with flashing sensual and sexual images of romance between Ebenezer and Aminallah as they pull robes in pretence at first sight before the unseen devouring moments of their appetite bodies on Saturday.

The author conveys and reveals the trying, lonely days of Coronavirus where everything and everyone needed company. Anyone that could come by, even passing through the City would please the empty buildings of the ever busy town of Kampala City. Such times would compel people to have lustful desires and resort to settling the scores with the person they never intended to be with in the first place but just for their presence. For an idle mind is the devil's worship.

The language used by the author is appealing to the international, national and locals of Uganda. The story ends with a marvellous question, not only to Tasha's text but also leaves a wonder in the mind of the readers about the fate of the entangled relationship.

Saturday is the best short story to teach the essence of self-control, patience, and commitment; the difference between love and lust for long and short term relationships in the life of young people. Entanglement in relationships is what birth lust, it should be avoided for it's a very expensive craving to afford from time to time especially those who wish to settle down faithfully with their life partners.

Genre: Flash Fiction

Title: Lights Out

Writer: Chris Baah, Ghana

Reviewer: Anthony Nwagbaoso Onyeador, Nigeria

This is an interestingly erotic but suspense thriller that highlights the vivid interest of an average youth-driven in a strong trait of lust.

The story begins in a restaurant with a beautiful damsel seated and the narrator on the opposite end. The damsel concentrates on her ice cream as the narrator locks deep on her body. This speaks volumes as he becomes fixated on the scenario created which are: The move towards her, conversations and ordering of Bolt heading for the house; the great kiss and caressing of body and all that will transpire thereafter. Unfortunately, all this hits him in a rude jolt of reality as he discovers it is all but a dream.

The writer creatively employs diction, tone, setting and plot to this flash fiction focusing on existential realities a young male adult experiment with or perhaps a working script for movies.

Genre: Children's Literature

Title: Jackal And The Juicy Fat Meat

Writer: Oratile Mmeya, Botswana

Reviewer: Funmi Richards, Nigeria

I could almost imagine reading this fable to young ones to discourage them from any Jackal tendencies...

This captures simple yet rich didactic themes of friendship, greed, and lust.

It tells the story of lust in an almost feverish way that reminds you that lust is not limited by age, sex, species or any other social construct. It is a basic strong desire, animalistic even.

How else can one explain why the Jackal did not realise he had eaten too much of the King's stolen meat. It also goes to show how greed interlaces with lust causing havoc (biting stomach aches) and betrayal.

The story had the distinct similarity of little children waiting till nightfall to steal meat from their mother's cooking pot. I never really understood the phenomenon but a lot of children desired meat in their mother's cooking pot late at night despite being served sumptuous and fat chunks of meat during the day. Maybe stolen meat is indeed sweet.

Genre: Poetry

Title: Lust

Writer: Ellen Boakye, Ghana

Reviewer: Nnane Ntube, Cameroon

Lust brings out man's bestiality and makes him an attraction hunter, controlled by his innate desires.

There is a brief moment in life when man's willpower and reasoning are snatched away from him without prior notice. That moment is what makes great men fall because they cannot hold back. How strong are human beings to resist these four letters — Lust?

Well, Ellen Boakye's "Lust" paints a picture of lust possessing the power of a magnet, grabbing the persona from the toes through the blood to the brain, leaving her powerless. The genuineness of generating a bottom-top attraction is what gives this poem the essence of a magnet. The magnetic force 'Lust' employs is expressed through words and lines such as, "lashes" (L2), "it wills my being" (L3), "It feeds on my wants" (L5). Have you ever experienced the feeling of not being in total control of yourself despite the efforts you make?

Ellen Boakye's "Lust" is that slug that finds reasons to stick around and control you like a puppet. Through gradation and accumulation of tension in the lines— "It gnaws at my core" (L11), / "And melts my sanity" (L12), / "It ribs away my stamina" (L13), Boakye succeeds in dressing up Lust as an unforgivable King and the persona, a defenceless thing at the mercy of her master. Ellen Boakye's poem possesses a strange strong attraction that makes its reader read and walk away with echoes of its words in his head, leaving him restless at nightfall.

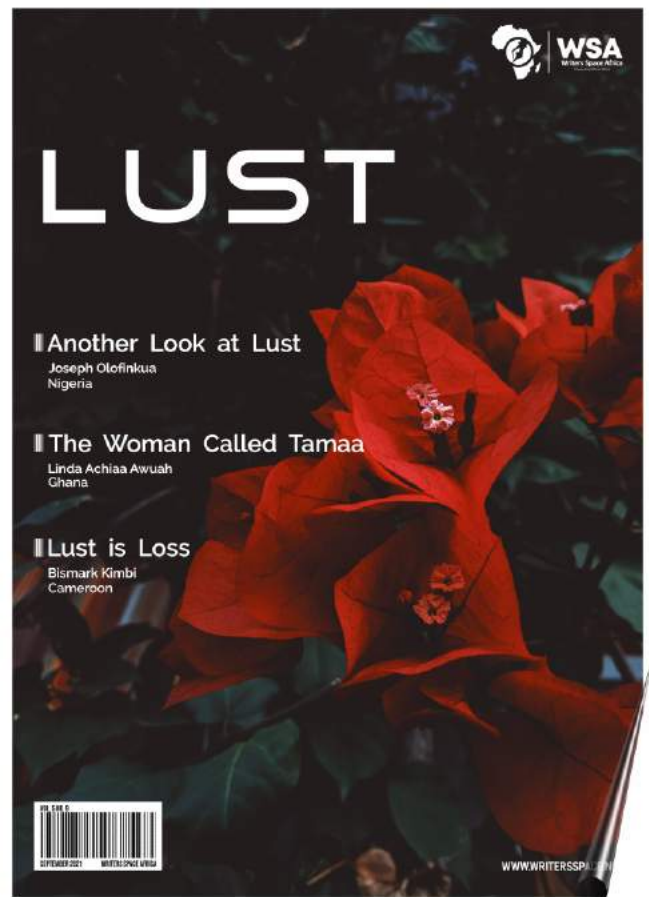
It is a one-stanza poem crafted with the majesty of a skilled smith. The end-words:

-seeps
 -lashes
 -being
 -wants
 -needs
 -instinct
 -time
 -within
 -withhold
 -core
 -sanity
 -stamina

-surrender et al., are the pillars on which the entire poem stands, deeply rooted into the burning flame between lust and the persona. The last line— "And I know he undid me", expresses that instance of release from the firm grasp of lust. Lust is lost when satisfied.



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