



WSA

Writers Space Africa
M a g a z i n e

April 2022 Edition - Issue 64

Falling Wind

Justin Nagundi
Uganda

Love

Joseph Olofinkua
Nigeria

Wangari's Love for Trees

Njeri Wangari
Kenya

Jimmy the Great

Olabode Oluwabukola
Nigeria

Avian Journey

Lineo Tsakulane
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Adoring Tanzania

Halla Immaculate
Tanzania

Ajagbá, Get Behind Me

Jemmimah Gana
Nigeria

Kariakoo

Larry Matoyo
Tanzania

Journey with...

Gordon B.A. Anjili

Winner, 2021 African Writers Award
(Drama category)

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From the Founder's Desk

Anthony Onugba (PenBoss)

***“Traveling; it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.”
–Ibn Battuta***

Humans are not stationary beings but continue to evolve, learn, and experience life in several ways. These are constant characteristics of being alive. Everything that we experience will transport us through a journey where we are confronted by pain and grief, and then happy moments where we have lasting memories of the days that we wish would always be.

One thing that we do not take into consideration often is that we are all storytellers by default. We return from school and cannot wait to tell our parents or friends stories about our experi-

ence. We cannot wait to talk about our day at the office or how someone kept requesting our phone number at the mall. We would not have stories to tell if we lock ourselves up indoors without physical or virtual social access. The urge to communicate with someone at least will push us to make a move.

Travelling is perhaps one of the best things that has ever happened to humanity. Be it a vacation, honeymoon, or tourism, it simply broadens your mind and opens you up to new cultures that you never imagined existed. Those who travel are able to expose themselves to

the beauties of creation and marvel at how vast and dynamic nature truly is.

Meanwhile, travelling must not always be physical, especially on a continent where mobility cost is high. You can travel through documentaries, stories, illustrations, etc. This edition of the WSA magazine provides you with this opportunity. Travel with the writers and learn about new cultures which can encourage you to visit and experience them for yourself.

Travel with WSA and enjoy the best of African literature.



From the Chief Editor

Comfort Nyati, SDB
Zimbabwe

The flow of life is steered by a dais of crossroads. Each junction is both a breakaway and an intersection. They are equally routes leading to a certain prospect. To savor these possibilities implies travelling through those routes. Every path guides us to another path that leads to the next path until we reach our terminus.

In journeying through life, we are the carriage of our own paths. As a result, the cause of every journey may vary. Remember, life is simply an expedition to navigate our own happiness,

searching the cause of one's existence as well unearthing buried fortunes. The bottom line is that each individual finds his/her way towards self-actualization.

Therefore, this edition, dear reader, is seasoned with diverse literary spices that summons us to celebrate the journey of a writer, and this publication resonates a lay-by where African writers are not simply resting, rather exhibiting their creative prowess as they embark on the theme of journey/travel.

Subscribing to the insight of Lao Tzu; "A journey of a

thousand miles begins with a single step". Consequently, the theme in question opens up a new perspective on how writers have harmonized its metaphoric and literal meaning. Taking an eye on the former which is characteristic of this issue, the metaphorical meaning; it follows that writers exhausted the theme as a symbol of life in itself.

As you flip every page. Forget not to sip chai. The ship awaits nobody. For the journey is still long.

Remember, Twaweza!!!

*All Africans are on a journey.
Writing is accelerating in Africa.
Therefore, writing is a journey.*



Call for Submission

WSA Magazine is accepting submissions for its 66th edition (June 2022 Edition) under the theme **Technology**.

Submission window is from March 20th until April 15th.

To submit, please visit:

www.writersspace.net/submissions

We accept...

Articles/Essays

(1,200 Words maximum)

Children's Literature

(700 words maximum)

Flash Fiction

(300 words maximum)

Poetry

(1 poem, a maximum of 24 lines)

Short Stories

(1,500 words maximum)





Falling Wind

Most Ugandans do not have the luxury of dreaming for more than their supper. The hand-to-mouth culture in some African homes prohibits our travelling habit as snow prohibits sunbathing.

Author: Justin Nagundi
Country: Uganda



I hate to travel. Travelling is for people who believe that something is missing within; something they can find in another part of the world. I am not an Eat-Pray-Love kind of person. I eat home-grown matooke. I have prayed at the same church for decades, and I'm still coming to terms with love in a third-world country. My little pond is good enough for me. It has organic food and brown soil I can walk barefooted on. It has brown people like me who do not side-eye me when I squat to take photographs of weeds.

However, in 2011, my sister suggested that we go for a family vacation. We set aside an Earl Grey tin she had purchased in England and started saving towards

a trip out of Uganda. Unbelievably, I got excited. The problem is, the coins in the tin could fall out if you tilt it in a specific way. It started with a medical crisis. We took out some money to solve that. Then came the school fees, the matchboxes, and the soft loans that we never repaid.

Eventually, we ate our trip for dinner and got another tin.

Then came 2012. That year I had a black weave with red streaks, but all the world saw was the red. That year, my sisters and I – the University student without a coin – decided to save up for a Christmas trip. More ambitious this time, we bought three sets of two-piece bi-

kinis. Mine was yellow with pink polka dots.

That same year, my mother got cancer, a story for another day. Engulfed in Mum's cancer, we put our bikinis away and took up the duties of caring for a parent. We fought the battle together and lost it. Upon losing our mother that year, the spirit of travel (and money) was lost with many other parts of us.

Thrown back into the grind of making a living, we learned the power a parent had in holding you firmly to your soil. My habitat was no longer a place I was comfortable in; I was duty-bound to stay in it for my father's sake.

Most Ugandans do not have the luxury of dreaming for more than their supper. The hand-to-mouth culture in some African homes prohibits our travelling habit as snow prohibits sunbathing.

For the first time, I wanted to escape.

The chance to travel came alive as an educational retreat. I got excited although it wasn't the kind of trip that required two-piece bikinis.

This trip would lead us to Kenya in July. Throughout 2018, the organizers warned us that we'd be cold. We, therefore, packed two bomber jackets (for the three of us), three scarves, and two head socks. My bag was as small as a kindergartener's, courtesy of my poor training in the Art of Travel.

Loaded into an enormous bus, we bumped through the potholed roads of sunny Kampala to ominous Langata.

The journey was a blur of aching knees and the sound of three jaws chewing on crisps with a hint of garlic flavour. I realized we were in Kenya when I awoke for a toilet break at a petrol station I didn't recognize. Instead of the sunny July I had left in my homeland, it felt like a rainy day in November. We suffered such weather only during our senior six candidature in Uganda and were dramatic enough to compose songs about the hurdles of studying in November. That was just the beginning of my loss of Uganda.

I had always believed that there is a stark difference at country borders. You should

have seen my disappointment when we arrived at the Kenya-Uganda border that dreary half-Ugandan half-Kenyan July night.

It was a bland room with a television overhead and men who carried Kenyan shillings and spoke in Luganda as though they couldn't smell the change in the air.

The first shock in Kenya was the colour of the soil. Unlike Ugandan's bulky trees with glossy leaves that block the sky from view, the vegetation I saw had leaves that resembled crystallized green cobwebs, electrocuted out of the ground. I blamed it on the grey soil.

The houses blowing past in the bus window had brick walls without any plaster; to my uneducated eye, they looked naked.

Kenya, I had decided, was unimpressive—until we got into Karen where the surroundings were one large elegant town. Tall, intricately carved archways mimicked the structures along John Babiiha Avenue, an expensive lane in Uganda, with all windows long and graceful like French doors.

Cruising through the in-

timidatingly unpotholed roads, we finally reached our lodgings, a girls' dormitory located more than five stone throws away from our destination. At this time, we had run away from Uganda where a new tax on social media had begun stinging its citizens. Running to neighbouring Kenya, a social-media tax haven, seemed like an act of rebellion. We enjoyed the adrenaline rush until we saw our thin beddings. It was just two o'clock in the afternoon, but the cold had begun creeping under our fingernails. By nightfall, our teeth rattled each time we talked.

That first night, I bathed only my legs in the icy water and fled to my bed to regain my lost body heat. There was no memory of home between these sheets. With my bomber jacket on and my head mitten askew, I still shivered like the Europeans I saw on television. Never in my life had I slept in a bed that took warmth from me and gave none back. As soon as I'd roll to the other end of the bed, the sensation of sleeping on iron sheets would frighten me back onto my original corner. I spent that dreadful night singing the Ugandan anthem.

The next morning, we rose bright and early for breakfast. Lining up for breakfast that woefully foggy morning, I saw a falling wind for the first time. In normal climates (read Uganda), there are only two options: it is either raining, or it isn't. Our weather does not play hard to get. Our wind does not fall in tiny, devious pinpricks of water. My face was damp with that eerie cold by the time I made it inside the hall.

A man in an orange tee-shirt leaned against a wall, watching our teeth smash against

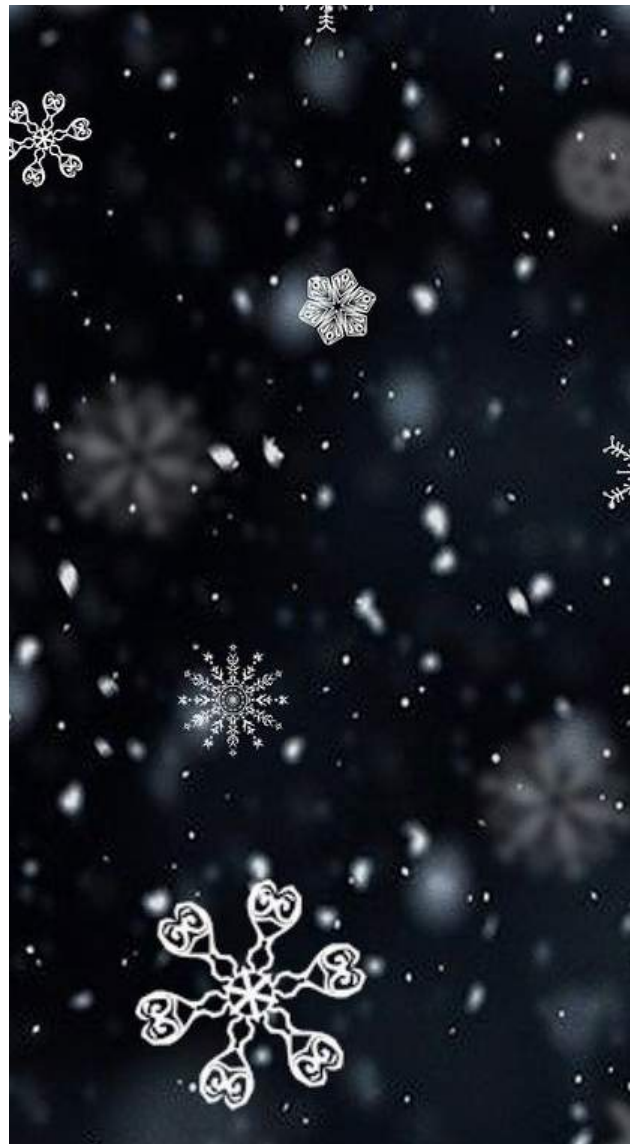
each other in comical cacophony.

"You are Ugandans, aren't you?" he observed with an amused smile.

"What g-g-gave us a-a-away?" I asked, hugging my three sweaters and jacket closer to my body. I had fur-lined leggings and fur-lined boots but still felt the cold turning my blood blue. The only thing I hadn't worn was the hostel blanket.

All he wore against the vicious cold was a cheeky expression. He smiled.

"It shows."



Travelling

One unanimous author said, “We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us.” This is very important to note because oftentimes we travel intending to better our situations at hand.

Author: Henry Ngeli
Country: Zambia



Landing at Maputo International Airport for the first time, the temperature was so high and my body was sweating. I thought of removing the pullover that I put on while at Oliver Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. As I was trying to do so, I realized that I had another thing to overcome, the Portuguese language. Therefore, I had to endure the heat waves and started figuring out the Portuguese puzzle. After picking my bags before clearing, I was given a paper to fill in some information as required by the immigration authorities but then everything was in Portuguese. At this moment, the sweating was not because of the weather but the language.

The Portuguese basics I had learnt earlier vanished from my head. I knew someone was waiting for me outside but I did not exactly know who had come to pick me up and those welcoming others were not allowed to enter the clearing room. As I wondered why I was not given a document in English, I felt beaten. I had to ask for someone working at the airport to help me translate. Even though her English was not standard but she managed to help me. The mistake I made though was not asking for her name or contact.

I understand we all may not have the same experience and hence the reasons for travelling. Some travel for business purposes, others



for health reasons or study, and others for meetings or religious purposes, and the most spoken one about especially at the close of the year; travel for leisure or tourism and holidays. All these reasons are important provided one can afford and get the positive outcome from their journey. One unanimous author said, "We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us." This is very important to note because oftentimes we travel intending to better our situations at hand.

My travelling experiences have yielded positive results and have helped me to change the way I look at

life. I have learnt and understood several things from people and from the different cultures I have encountered. Travelling makes one civilized and open-minded to understand others and things easily without being judgmental. Now that the world has become a global village and people can easily interact, move, and communicate, travelling has become so easy with many means of transport always available.

Experiences vary from one person to another, place to place and situation to situation. Some have found their soul mates through travelling, while others have been

conned. This implies that there are always two sides to the coin when it comes to travelling but we always hope for the positive side. However, whenever we travel, we should not forget about our origins. We need to manage our space and improve where we hail from to attract others there. Often human beings are known to always look for a better place to settle just as nomads and pastoralists do. This has prevented most of them from contributing to the improvement of their countries of origin thus rendering them unattractive.

When travelling was restricted due to the Covid-19

pandemic, many people got stuck in places they never expected or wanted to be. Initially, things were not easy, as the situation itself was new and uncomfortable, but with time people got used to it. Life started taking a different shape and many people realized that they could manage their situation in their space without having to travel. Many people realized that life is not always about travelling. These unprecedented circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic opened the mind of so many people that even after the travel bans were lifted, some people chose not to travel anymore. They probably realized that good life could be found anywhere; we just have to make it happen.

Back in the day, I always longed to travel from place to place and to visit people. This was always at the back of my mind, especially during holidays but then the grown-ups at home did not allow us the kids; they always referred us to the future. Now as a member of one of the international organizations, I have travelled to several places, even those I did not think of back then. Perhaps this could be the future the grown-ups pointed to. As of my experience, travelling is very interesting despite the challenges it may bring.

As you think of travelling, as you plan for your next destination, what comes to mind? Whether you aim to get to your final destination or to achieve your travelling goals, remember to enjoy the process as you travel. Always be open to accommodating new ideas and try to avoid referring to your place of origin and practices as best compared to others.

I understand, home is always the best and that is where we all belong to, but remember home is not a physical place, even on a journey you can be and feel at home. This is very important to note. Learn to embrace new ideas without jeopardizing your own beliefs; keep the purpose. I have tasted food that is considered inedible at home and interacted with people who cannot be easily welcomed in my localities on some of my journeys. This is life and that is how it turned out. I share these experiences with my friends and they find it hard to believe; it sounds strange to them but these are some of the life situations we must expect and understand should they arise. Life is considered a journey and so from conception to death, we spend our entire life travelling from one destination to the other. I wish you all the best in your travelling endeavours. Enjoy the process.



Make Time to Take Time

Life is a journey we are on from day to day; does it not make sense to savor the moments we get to slow down and reconnect with our true and inner selves?

Author: Hannah Tarindwa
Country: Namibia



Everything in this twenty-first century is so fast! Too fast for my old soul which still loves the idea of travelling for months on the ocean from one continent to another. I feel more at home when I read a book on a train to a new destination since it takes double the time to get there. The one thing that saddens me about modern civilization is the idea of hurrying along with everything. It takes away the joy of journeying.

The beautiful and therapeutic experience of passing tree after tree whilst wondering at the artistic nature of the Creator as one to a destination is simply not cherished anymore! My heart shatters at the reality that as time goes by, the

experience of slowing down is becoming a privilege and not a right. For me, it should be a right to take time at living, better yet, living slowly! It should not be an experience that should be packaged as a paid retreat or vacation; but alas, here we are, rushing off to somewhere to do something to attain happiness which could be, in my humble opinion, done by simply slowing down.

One of my earliest and fondest memories is that of my mother and me in a sleeper couch, with a rice-and-chicken filled lunch box which I salivated for because the aroma of the food wafted in our little space, tempting my taste buds making my little stomach feel hungrier than normal.



It seemed unfortunate that I had to wait for the right time to eat on our longer-than-usual journey between Harare and Bulawayo. On my mother's word, I suppressed the temptation to eat after the warning from my mother that I would regret it if I ate too soon. Of course, her warning made sense to my young mind later on when I was truly hungry and we were still on the journey. Nonetheless, I don't know if she did it to distract me or if she had planned it to be part of our journey but she made me look outside and admire the trees that seemed to be passing us by, as it seemed to me. It was then that she would say, "But trees do not

move, little lady!" She then laughed lovingly at me and made me realize that it was I who was rather moving in the big train. Though now, I am aware that travelling by train is slow (at least in my part of Africa it still is). At the age of four, I was blown away with amazement at how fast a tree I chose to look at zoomed out of sight.

Only now as an adult do I fully appreciate the lessons I gained from those train trips with my mother.

Slow travel helps one to truly appreciate the wonder of Mother Nature. It also has the effect of slowing down the mind and soul, thus relaxing the body. Thoughts in

one's mind get enough time to gather and be organized accordingly. I have been on a bus as it passed from town to town, with sceneries changing as they should along the way. When I consciously acknowledge the sites and all that I see along the way, I feel the true essence of life and the beauty of being alive and living.

For children, there is often an impatience to get to a destination where, they suppose, the adventure would begin. The incessant question known to be a fan-favourite amongst kids is, "Are we there yet?" Even Ice-Cube the American Hip hop artist and filmmaker produced

a comedy movie with this common phrase as the title. Whilst often the destination can be the ultimate source of adventure, many-a-time in reality, there can be more adventure and discovery in the process of going through a journey to the destination. I strongly believe that it is up to the adults to teach young ones that time taken to reach a place is not time endured but time enjoyed.

There is fun to be had with meeting other people in slow-moving transport. For instance, one time my students and I used the overnight train from Windhoek to Swakopmund (an otherwise 3-hour road trip). They decided to play the fast-thinking, fast-talking board game of 30 Seconds onboard. Onboard were also 2 little girls; sisters who for most of the game watched, laughed, and clapped with us but never really participated. Then the most incredible thing happened in one team, a team member could not answer the simple clue of where Jesus was born! The youngest of the two sisters almost went blue in the face and swung her little fisted hands in frustration not wanting to spoil the game because

her big sister had told her that she could not share answers. On noticing the little girl's frustration, I suggested that my students should let her say her answer. I have never heard anyone scream, "Bethlehem!" with such joy and fervour. Everyone cheered and clapped hands for her and she earned herself, not only the nickname of Bethlehem but also a space in one of the teams together with her sister and the others to look up to. No face could ever have shown such self-pride!

The mother, of course, was happy to see her child use her otherwise unsettling energy to display such intelligence, which she admitted, "would often seem like she just wants to challenge others." Yet here was smart little Miss Bethlehem, who discovered her love for games that give general knowledge clues on a long journey to a close destination.

It's sad how we are always in a hurry as if we have a timer on our backs telling us that we need to get to somewhere before we are too old, too tired, or irrelevant. The lies we believe from other human beings who have

their life issues to deal with and most of the time hurry us along to insidious profit-making goals which have little care of what is important for the human's mind and soul.

Life is a journey we are on from day to day; does it not make sense to savor the moments we get to slow down and reconnect with our true and inner selves?

My dear reader, all I can ask of you is that we take our time to make this life journey worth travelling in order to get to our ultimate destination, which none of us can escape.





Love

Love is an ever-present companion in our voyage through the flowing stream of life. Our ability to recognize this companion is essential to understanding life's journey.

Author: Joseph Olofinkua
Country: Nigeria



Life is a journey of love. From the very instant we are conceived, we are the product of the love shared by two individuals, Mum and Dad. During our development from zygote to an embryo and then a fetus, we are constantly in contact with the love of our parents; from the rhythm of our mother's heartbeat to the gentle touch of our father. This love accompanies us through our growth and shapes our thinking of the little world we inhabit in the amniotic sac. We respond to this love with slight motions felt by all who touch the outer walls of our world. At birth, amidst labour pains and the focus of the medical practitioners, we shout as we fill our lungs with air

accompanied by the scent of our mother's hard work, and mother's love.

Home is where this love abounds. As babies, we are shown more love than we want. We even dare to demand more by screaming out our lungs. From grandparents to uncles, aunties, cousins, and siblings, we become the epicenter of gravity, and their world revolves around us. We become the apple of many eyes and a joy to behold. Through the love we receive, we shape our idea of the world we have been born into. We get a measure of things, our place in the family, and how to interact with the world.

As toddlers, we are given the opportunity to show off

the love we have received to others. We are taught communication and how to interact with those outside the family. We start to make friends outside the home as we grow into young adults. Then we realize that there are different degrees to love, and we cannot love everyone to the same degree. This hits us when we have arrived at puberty, with raging hormones that never seem to want to take the back seat as our bodies begin to change. The love we were introduced to needs to be properly defined: eros, philia, storge, and agape exist in the same spectrum. However, varied these degrees of love may be, we still have love in one of these forms accompanying us through life's journey, and we begin to experiment a lot more in our relationships to find out where each person we come in contact with falls. As young adults, eros becomes a chief companion as we try to master the urges in our bodies. Then we realize it is just a companion that doesn't stay long but is based on emotions. We come to see that the best companion is philia. Few realize its importance in their

journey until many failed attempts at building a lasting relationship.

When it is time to pick a life partner, we run to philia while asking eros for a lot of help along the way to keep the relationship fresh and exciting. At this stage of life, we have accumulated a lot of experience from our journey with love, and now we look forward to our own product of love. We bring forth life and pour all our experiences with love into that life. Teaching what love is and helping to understand that it is an essential part of life. We make it our life's mission to communicate what we have learned thus far from loving and are still learning with our journey of love with our offspring. We get to give agape to all we come across and share our experiences with them.

In the twilight of our lives, we are surrounded by all the products of our love and their love. We get to see the love we have transmitted into their lives through the stories they share with us as we grow grey and wrinkled. At the very end, we come to realize that we have journeyed so far with love itself.

When our body gets cold and is lowered to decay, we leave behind, in the minds of those we love, the memory of our journey which they have seen and we have shared with them. We are never really dead because our journey with love lives on in the hearts of those we have loved.

Love is an ever-present companion in our voyage through the flowing stream of life. Our ability to recognize this companion is essential to understanding life's journey.



◻ THE IN-BETWEEN ◻

An e-book collection of stories from African writers, home and abroad. Centered on cultural differences and/or similarities.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Submissions should be sent to email address everydaywithchuks@gmail.com with subject as "The In-between". Word count 1500-2500 words.



SUBMISSIONS ARE OPENED FROM NOW TILL **APRIL 11TH***



IG: @moya.izoduwa

*Accepted submissions will be contacted within one week from submission date.

Children's Literature

The Tale of the Young Caterpillar

Written by **Owuor Hellen, Kenya**

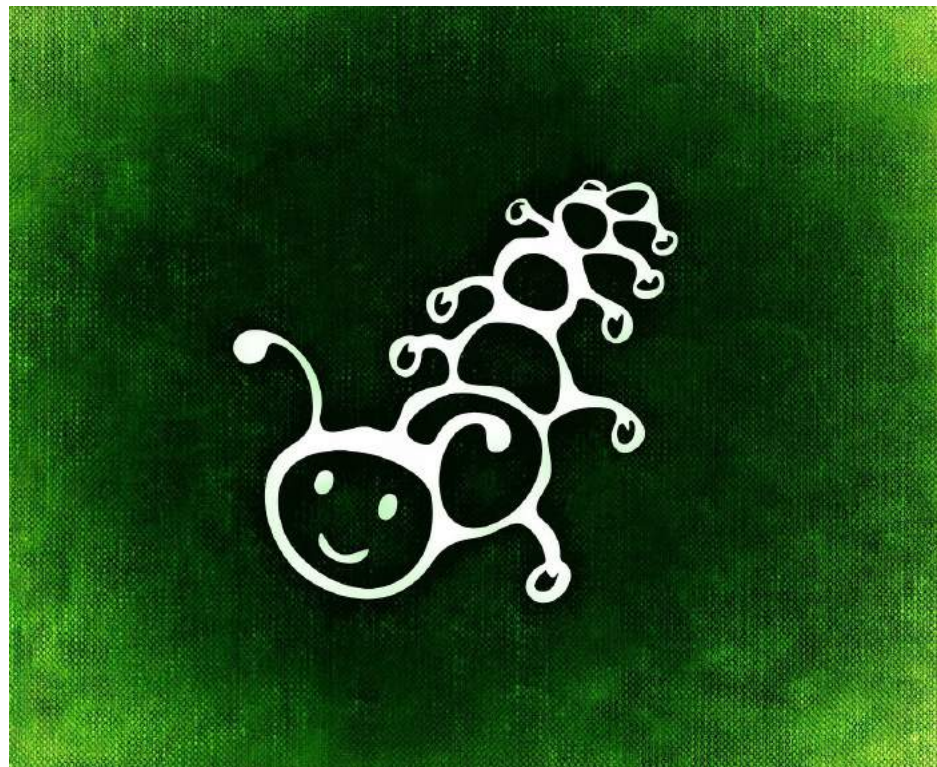
The black Caterpillar looked at his brothers who were green in colour and wondered whether he belonged with them or not. On seeing that he was the odd one out, he decided to venture on his own, in search for a new family, those that looked like him. The black Caterpillar did not tell anyone that he was going away. As he crawled on, he met some brown ants busy collecting food, for winter was fast approaching.

"Do you happen to be members of my family?" He asked, innocently.

The ants looked at him and scoffed at him saying that they were not as black and nearly as ugly as he was.

"B...but you look exactly like me, only smaller," he said.

"Oh, sweetheart, we are brown, not black and you definitely don't belong with us," a



kind ant said to him.

The young Caterpillar hung his head in disappointment but vowed to continue looking for people who looked exactly like him, black. He walked on in silence until he met a group of young birds feeding on a worm.

The young Caterpillar was scared beyond words and all he could think of was diving into the next hole that he could find. Much to his surprise, he found a small Mouse retreating backwards. The Mouse was obviously scared.

"Are you a snake?" The

Mouse asked the young caterpillar in a timid voice.

"Of course not, I am a Caterpillar in search of others who look like me," the Caterpillar replied.

"And what do you look like?" The Mouse asked again, obviously confused by the Caterpillar's response.

"I am a black Caterpillar," he said.

"So, are you looking for other Caterpillars or just the black ones like you?"

"Yes, I am," the Caterpillar replied without giving it much thought.

Much silence passed between them for some time before the small Mouse spoke again. This was after the Caterpillar had narrated his side of the story, and told the Mouse where he was heading. "Black Caterpillar, I am confused."

"What is confusing you small Mouse?"

"You said that you are looking for other caterpillars and yet you left them to come here?"

The Caterpillar was now getting angry. How could the Mouse not understand

what was happening? Although the Mouse could not see him, he noticed that the Caterpillar was becoming irritated and decided to keep quiet.

"Listen, black Caterpillar, immediately it gets dark, we will set off in search of your ideal family. I got separated from mine and I would like to look for them too," the Mouse said, amidst the momentary silence.

"Why can't we go now?" Black Caterpillar asked innocently.

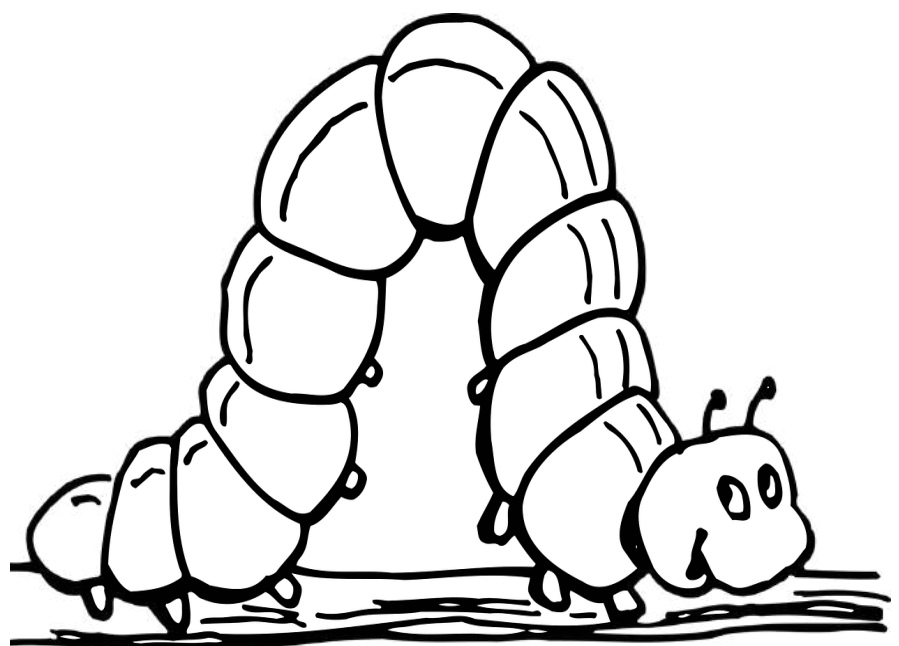
"There are a lot of predators hunting for bugs, worms, and even my kind, therefore

it is not safe at all," he said.

"So, what do we do in the meantime?" He asked again.

"We should sleep because the journey ahead of us will be long."

They both agreed to sleep, but in turns, to avoid getting any unpleasant surprises. One of them had to keep watch while the other rested. As he slept, the black Caterpillar had a beautiful dream. He dreamt of having brightly coloured wings and that he was the most beautiful creature of them all. He soared high in the sky and enjoyed the wind ruffling through his colourful wings.





Just then, the Mouse shook him and he woke up.

"Why did you do that?" He asked, obviously angry, "I had the most beautiful dream, that I had wings and could fly."

"In case you forgot, we are supposed to leave," The Mouse said hurriedly.

"Alright, I just wish for my dream to come true," the black Caterpillar said sadly.

"Oh, wait, I forgot. You are a caterpillar, right?" The Mouse spoke excitedly.

"Isn't it obvious?" Black Caterpillar added gloomily.

"Then your dream will come

true! I remember mother telling me how lucky you creatures are, on one day, you are a caterpillar and on the next a butterfly,"

The black Caterpillar was thrilled with this piece of information. If his dream was going to come true, then he would be the most beautiful creature when he grew wings. He suddenly grew sad again, amidst all the excitement. He needed to go home. The Mouse was kind enough to take him there while he looked for his own family.

"Remember black Caterpillar, that even the ugliest caterpillar will make a beautiful

butterfly," The Mouse said.

"Does it also mean that even the blackest caterpillar will make a beautiful butterfly?"

"Indeed, my friend. He will make the most beautiful butterfly,"

With that, the Mouse left the black Caterpillar at his home as he went in search of his own family.

"So long dear friend," the black Caterpillar called after him.

"So long," the Mouse said as he faded into the horizon.



Wangari's Love for Trees

Written by **Njeri Wangari, Kenya**

"As a small young girl, there was a huge tree that was near our homestead. And next to our tree was a stream. My mother told me, 'do not collect firewood from the fig tree by the stream.' I said, 'why?' And she said, 'Because that tree is a tree of God.'" –Wangari Maathai



A long time ago, a cheerful, ever-smiling girl was born in the village of Ithite, Nyeri in Kenya, East Africa. Wangari Maathai was her name. As she grew up, Wangari loved to help her mother when going to the shamba (garden) with her brother. The

potatoes, maize, and beans turned their home into ever-green scenes.

Wangari loved going to the river. Its sound as it rushed between rocks made her shiver goosebumps of delight on her skin which always seemed to linger.

Wangari loved going into the forest. She would play hide and seek or just rest. When in the forest with her mother, her loads of questions never seemed to bother her mother. She asked her mother about the trees, their names, and how it is



that they always brought a breeze.

“Mūkūyū the sycamore,” Her mother would say, “... is the tree of our origin, our clay from which our people never stray. Every day, our hearts exhale with its sway.”

“Mūgumo the fig,” Her mother would continue, “... is the sacred tree where our people pray. Its arms full of leaves stretch wider than my embrace. Its long roots pull us back when we lose sight of its face.”

“The Bluegum tree,” her mother would explain more, “...is eucalyptus kin whose minty smell takes away oth-

er trees in threes. Don’t let its smell fool you too. It will take and leave the soil feeling blue, weak, and parched as if nothing ever grew.”

Wangarĩ grew to know and love trees. She loved the way trees made her feel. She could name each tree with ease. She knew which one treated a sneeze, which one had a cure for bad knees, which ones gave a home to all the bees, and the ones that made a desert out of seas.

Wangarĩ’s love for trees became the door to a world she would seize. Every day became a chance to show how much she cared, and

every park became a space she had to protect and not be scared.

Wangarĩ’s love for trees became a lifelong dream. Her dream was that one day, a billion trees would catch the sun’s beam. Today, her dream blows the breeze on our skin as we run through Karura forest. It is the soft green carpet our toes curl to in Uhuru Park. Her dream wakes every time we let a young seed spark.



The 4th

WAKINI KURIA PRIZE

for Children's Literature

The Wakini Kuria Prize for Children's Literature was established in 2019 to honour the memory and legacy of Wakini Kuria and for her contribution to the growth of the African literary space.

For this fourth edition of the Wakini Kuria Prize, we are calling for submissions in the **Children's literature** genre **for children from ages 8 to 12**. There is **no theme** for this call.

This call is open **ONLY** to writers of African descent and will run from **March 15 until July 1, 2022**. The winner of this prize will receive a certificate and \$200. The second and third place winners will receive \$150, and \$100 respectively.

Please visit www.writerspace.net/awards for more details and to submit.



Flash Fiction



Jimmy The Great

By: Olabode Oluwabukola
Country: Nigeria



I am Jimmy; Jimmy the great procrastinator, the forgetful, the Homo imperfectii.

With my hands in my black jean pockets, I look like the most confident man ever. My gaze is fixed on the valley before me and I see that the new resort in this country is just as the news travelling around about it. I'm listening to the music made by the rippling of water in the river. But why isn't the carpet grass fluffy under my shoes?

So, my two bags are here with me and I have everything I need. I have my passport, flight ticket, underwear and even up to my shaving cream. I would have minded taking a lot with me,

but I had gotten a list from my meticulous wife to aid in packing my bags. She said she wants our vacation to be perfect. Speaking of whom, I just received a text from her.

"Again!" It read, with a furious red emoji accompanying it.

Scratching my bald head with my fingers, I try to remember what I had done. I unzip the bag on my shoulder to put my phone in and three flight tickets fall onto the ground. I remember now. I'm just going to chill in the cool breeze for a while before going back to pick what I forgot—my wife and two kids.

Wandered Too Far

By: Oledibe Juliet
Country: Nigeria



I stopped walking when I noticed a middle-aged woman standing at a distance, eyes fixed on me. No one was nearby, just bushes and speeding buses on the highway.

She took hurried steps towards me, my heart lurched but I noticed her tear-stained face.

She held onto my left hand and pointed at the bushes. I tried to free myself but couldn't.

"H-have you seen my daughter?" Her voice cracked.

I was confused. Why did I wander this far to urinate? She could be a robber or kidnapper.

"N-no, no." I pried my hands off but she repeated her question over and over as I scampered towards the road and didn't look back until I got to the crowded fuel/lunch station half worried and weary.

I carried my chips and soda with shaky hands and approached our bus, everyone was still waiting for the driver.

I leaned on the car bumper facing the scene I had just escaped, my ears picked up some words.

"That bush over there."

It was one of the girls in our bus talking to another boy with dirty dyed hair as she pointed at the Bush.

"No one goes there anymore, it's off limit."

I turned to her and asked 'why' at the same time as the boy who had an unusual expression on his face.

"It's haunted,"

The boy scoffed and rolled his eyes, dipping hands in his pocket.

"I'm serious though, they said she lost her daughter years ago while they travelled, so she killed herself out of depression."

I held my breath as she spoke, my left hand twitched in the area she held onto.

"One or two people have seen her, they said she's always looking for her daughter."



AWWA

2022

AFRICAN WRITERS AWARDS

We are delighted to announce a call for submission for the African Writers Awards under the theme: **HOPE**.

We accept submissions to the following categories:

- Poetry (Structured or unstructured)
- Creative Non-Fiction
- Drama

A cash prize of \$200 and a certificate will be awarded to each winner.

This call is open from March 15 until July 1, 2022.

Please visit - www.writersspace.net/awards to read the guidelines and to submit your entry.

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Creative Spotlight

Welcome to another interesting edition of the Writers Space Africa Magazine. This month, we will be chatting with the winner of the 2021 African Writers Award (Drama category). Let us welcome Gordon Bernard Aywa Anjili, the veteran playwright and retired teacher all the way from Kenya.

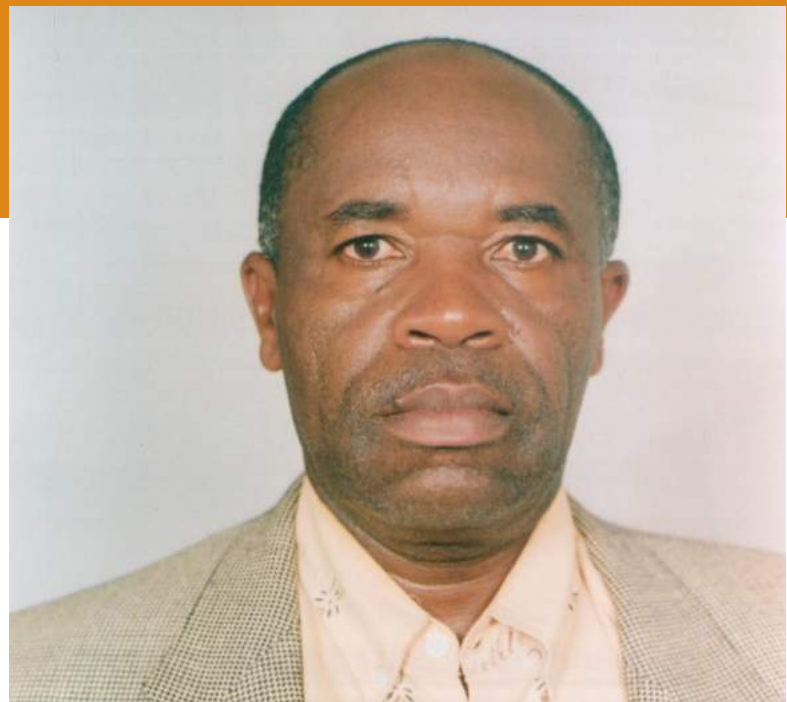


PPBlessing: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Can you give me a short introduction of yourself?

GBAA: I am Gordon Bernard Aywa Anjili, a qualified high school teacher. I have just retired after teaching in many schools in Kenya. I have taught in five different counties. I teach English and literature. I am a senior national examiner. I love reading classics and listening to country music.

PPBlessing: Wow! That is commendable. How is life after retirement like?

GBAA: Great. I now have the



time to read the books I could not while in employment. I now also have the time to work on and complete the manuscripts I had previously started.

PPBlessing: Interesting! How many manuscripts are there to complete and have you published any books before?

GBAA: 3 plays in the works, that is, still not completed. 3 completed plays not yet published. Haven't had much luck with publishers.

PPBlessing: Okay. I hope you do get one soon.

GBAA: Thanks for the encouragement.

PPBlessing: How has winning the African Writers Award impacted you as a person and your writing?

GBAA: It is quite a fantastic feeling. My former students are excited and encouraged

that writing is something worthwhile doing. I won't be surprised to see one of them winning the next prize.

PPBlessing: Amen to that. Have you won any other award aside this?

GBAA: Yes. In 1993 I won the Nairobi Theatre Academy First Prize with the play "Eclipse at Noon."

PPBlessing: This award seems so long ago before the recent award you won last year. Did you stop writing at some point or you stopped entering for

competitions and awards?

GBAA: Both. The writing slowed down due to other commitments and I did not enter them in any competition(s).

PPBlessing: How long have you been writing?

GBAA: Since 1993 but intermittently due to work commitments.

PPBlessing: Do you write only plays?

GBAA: Plays are my forte, although I also write short stories and poems.

PPBlessing: Have you won any award from these poems and/or short stories?

GBAA: No. I have not entered them in any competitions.

PPBlessing: Okay. Was it being a teacher of English and literature that made you start writing or you'd been writing even before you became a teacher?

GBAA: The writing bug bit



Gordon planting trees in the Mau forest with some students

me when I was 12 after reading "Kidnapped" by Stevenson. I always knew I would be a writer someday. Writing plays became a passion after I read "The Lion and the Jewel" by Wole Soyinka.

PPBlessing: You started quite early I must say. Among your plays, which is your favourite and why?

GBAA: I love them equally. I do not have a favourite.

PPBlessing: It's commonly said that one cannot love two things the same way, so how is it that none among your plays catches your heart more than the others?

GBAA: I am the creator of all those plays...all of them being the best of my imagination... can't see one of them being better than the others.

PPBlessing: Alright. How long does it typically take you to finish writing a play?

GBAA: Now that I am not working, about 2 months.



Gordon with a group of dancers in Oxford

PPBlessing: How about when you were working?

GBAA: 1 year.

PPBlessing: Has any of your plays been to the theater or made into a movie?

GBAA: My play "Eclipse at Noon" was acted at Alliance Francaise in 1993.

PPBlessing: Now that you have retired from teaching, do you intend to become a full-time playwright?

GBAA: Yes. Plus, other works like short stories and poems.

PPBlessing: That's wonderful. May you create amazing plays, short stories and poems. What inspires your writing and what do you hope to achieve with them?

GBAA: When I read the works of great writers, I always aspire to achieve what they have done.

PPBlessing: Which is what exactly? What is it that these great writers have achieved that you also hope to achieve?

GBAA: "Hamlet", "Othello", "Twelfth Night", "As you like

it", "Midsummer Night's Dream" by Shakespeare. "The Road", "The Lion and the Jewel" by Wole Soyinka. "Saint Joan of Arc" by George Bernard Shaw, and many others. These books/works have great characters. I like the humor and entertainment in "Twelfth Night" and in "The Lion and the Jewel". Characters like Lakunle, Hamlet, Othello transcend all ages. I sometimes see Lakunle in our politicians.

PPBlessing: Why do you write?

GBAA: I write when I am inspired and also to highlight certain issues in society. For example, in "Eating with Chopsticks" I highlight the issue of Chinese ills in Africa. I also write to entertain.

PPBlessing: What constitutes a great writer to you?

GBAA: He transcends all ages.

PPBlessing: What will you tell someone who hopes to follow in your footsteps and write plays?

GBAA: They should have the passion and inspiration for it.

PPBlessing: What do you consider as your greatest achievement so far as a writer?

GBAA: My play "Eating with Chopsticks" winning the African Writers Award in drama 2021.

PPBlessing: Who is/are your favourite writer(s) and why?

GBAA: I do not have favourite writers, I have favourite books.

PPBlessing: Which are your favourite books then?

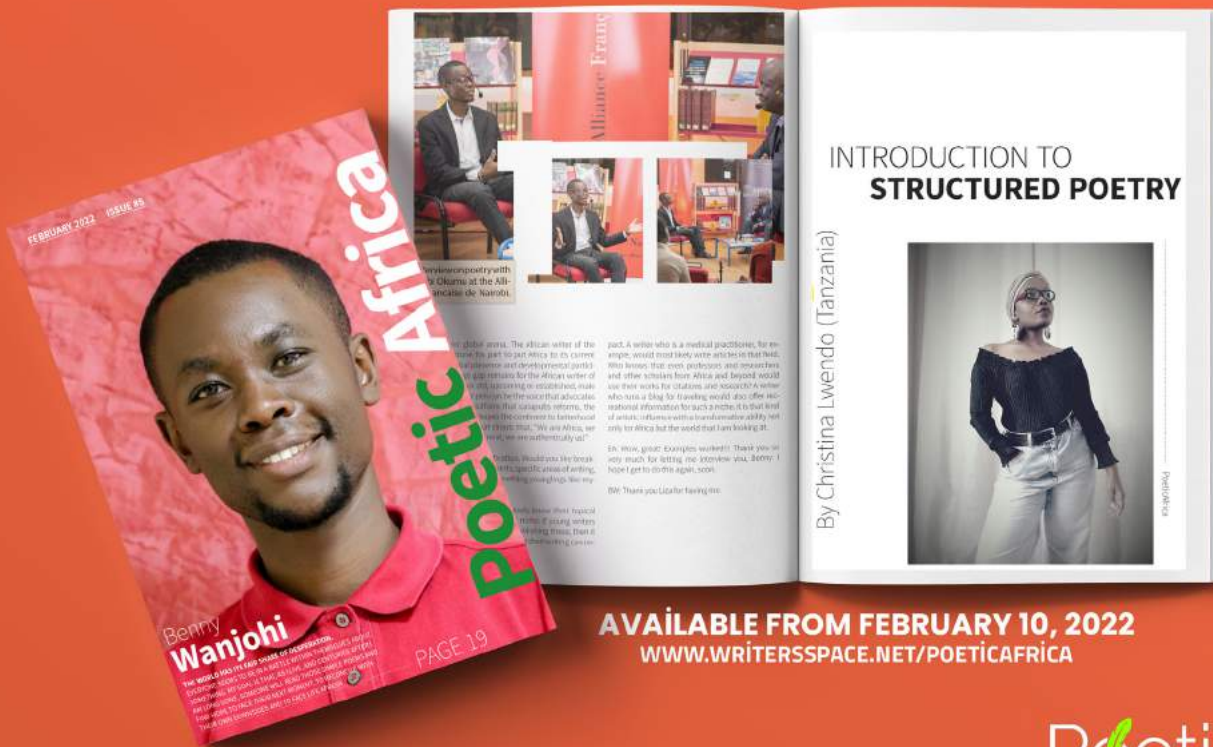
GBAA: "Hamlet", "Othello", "Twelfth Night", "As you like it", "Midsummer Night's Dream" by Shakespeare. "The Road", "The Lion and the Jewel" by Wole Soyinka. "Saint Joan of Arc" by George Bernard Shaw, and many others.

PPBlessing: What else will you like to share in conclusion.

GBAA: I think drama is the king of literature, just like the lion is the king of the jungle and the eagle the king of the air. Most publishers don't like to publish plays, they prefer fiction. I think if I were a novelist, my works would have been published a long time ago. I still hope that my works (plays) will still be published someday.

PPBlessing: Thank you so much for your time. Thank you, readers, for being with us through this interview, until next month. Keep reading the Writers Space Africa Magazine.

POETICAFRICA



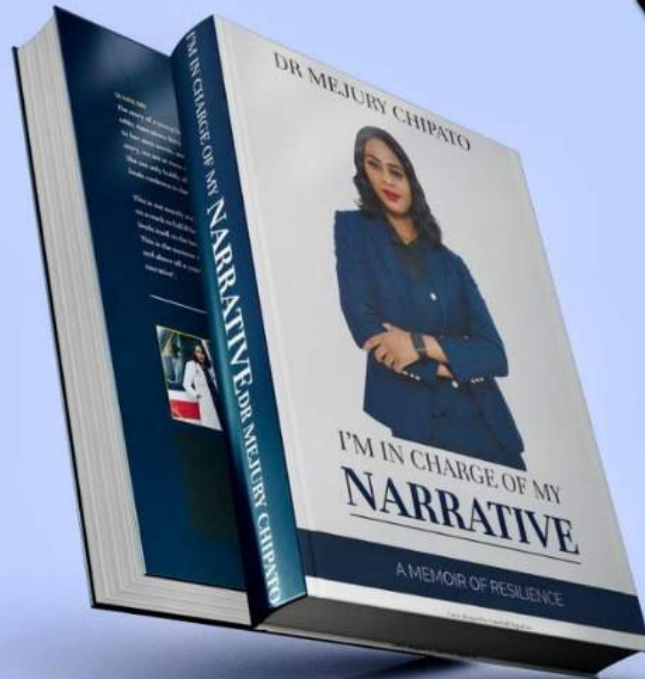
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Poetry

Poet: Pepita Mwanga

Country: Tanzania

Where My Heart Is

Home should be where the heart is
But my heart is in my chest
Physically
Mentally,
My heart is travelling 14,000 kilometers every hour
And is always behind by eight hours.

I miss you
Becomes monotonous,
"How many times will you say it to us?"
As many times as the sun chooses to rise
I say,
And it rises twice
As many times as it takes for you
Not to forget me.

Loneliness holds a new meaning,
Now I am actually alone
I can feel it
And I can touch it,

The calendar is just a countdown to
When I will see you
Again.
The clock, just sands of time
Ticking me away to the shores of where I'm
In my haven of peace.





Poet: Lineo Tsakulane
Country: Lesotho

Avian Journey

To where would the soles of my feet lead?
Neither here nor there,
I hope for merry-making a distance from the home of nostalgia.
What could halt new memories from being made,
while old ones were long ago sown deep like a seed?
Then if I should travel,
it shall be to the beat of the heart of My Africa.
Every step deliberate and the body
willing to take in the beauty I call My Africa.
I'd strike a jump to land on the giant of Africa,
And with every step come face to face with the Zuma rock,
The spitting image of majesty
Where I'll take a breather and confirm living, a mastery.
May my journey place me at a country, centre within the globe,
The land of sweetness, The land of cocoa
Exactly where Kintampo lies,
where waters tumble to flow down a divinity pool,
There, I'll come back a better woman.
But why should I choose
When the rich soils underneath my feet beckon me forth?



Life Voyage

Poet: Emmanuel G G Yamba

Country: Liberia

Life is a trip
Where the genesis is
From the womb of our mothers
Till we give up the ghost,

Nine months before we shift vehicle
In a cycle of chests, laps and backs
Before our feet sail under the sun
To find greener pastures

We pass through many challenges
As we engage in this reality
Like Adam and Eve's happy days in Eden
Later bury our faces because of our mistakes,

Full with handful adventures
Where experience wears the garment of a professor,
Our legs dance on paths our
Hearts beat towards not knowing the feedbacks...





Poet: Halla Immaculate
Country: Tanzania

Adoring Tanzania

As I lie here on the tiled floor of an old rent room
I dream of the pages unknown ...

The speed of Rufiji river and the roars of mikumi lions,
The cold breeze of Kilimanjaro and the bottom of Tanganyika,
The mounds of Uluguru ranges and the scattering hooves of
Serengeti migrations,
Is where my soul lays awake
But buried in a wanderlust hole

I haven't read many lines
But I have walked on the borders of the Indian waves
Meandered on the tremors of the abode of peace
And sipped from the wells of a beautiful semi desert
Amidst a sly nation

And I pray that when I die
I get buried in nature's gracefulness
So my heart can rest
In the deepest caves of Amboni
And my soul linger
In the shadows of Oldonyo Lengai
And my mind
In the calm waters of Natron

For it is suburbs unknown
That we can find ourselves
For soulmates aren't people
But lands far away.



Poet: Michael Okafor
Country: Nigeria

Life is an Abstract Noun

My skin feels heavy on my bones,
an altar of withering daffodils.
Somewhere in Somalia
a boy moulds himself into haram
salaam alaikum
and he goes out in search of nothing,
finding home in bodies that
don't belong to him.
To become is to journey through self;
to mutate into forms, we may not understand.
You begin at where you're most vulnerable:
a chronic addiction to being alive.
Living is an abstract noun,
or a map to journey unto death.
My mind is populated by
a complex emptiness;
a mathematical concept
on dying bodies.
Somewhere in the distance
a woman is calling the names
of those that would die soon.



Poet: Ontlametse Tidimane

Country: Botswana

The Jant

Now the bus finally halts;
My turn to get off
Wish it'd be much longer
A bit sad I must walk out,

Met a few characters 'long the way
Coming in and getting off
Made me forget where I came from
And where I was headed.
Lost my attitude and ignored my solitude

Met a funny, fluffy, foggy toff
He was lively as a cricket
And proud as a peacock
A flickering smile 'pon his face
Embraced a woody scent as he sat beside me
He was the best of the few

Life is a journey
A touch and go experience
While swaying with joy, sadness strikes
Smiling faces frown, drown in anguish
Everything comes to a stop at some point
All I do is enjoy the experience of this journey
And hope I haven't missed the great moments.



Poet: Laurent Bwesigye

Country: Uganda

My Calling

I finally know
But I'm looking at a rocky, rugged path
The fear shears my skin but yet
You can't see a rivulet of my tears
So much is unknown
Should I walk or run?
If I hoped onto the wings of a kite
I would fly over this road
But I would kill both the kite and myself.





WSA
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AFRICAN TEEN WRITERS AWARDS

The Writers Space Africa Foundation is pleased to announce the African Teen Writers Awards for early teens from 13 to 16 years old.

Submissions are in two categories; poetry and prose and accepted from March 15 and July 1, 2022.

Winners will receive a certificate and \$100 each.

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

Short Stories

Ajagbá, Get Behind Me

By: Jemmimah Gana

Country: Nigeria



I stood in the heart of Ajagbá with anger like a juggled bottle of coke ready to burst because one of the Danfo drivers just spattered mud all over my once sparkling white go out dress. I have been pushed violently into an intense emotional state and for a minute, I conceived the idea of scratching his eyes out of his sockets but I am twenty-one years old, I could go to jail. All they serve there is stale food and prison coffee. Besides, I can't even afford a terrible attorney so I left the features of his face alone and started to use my words.



"Hey! Get back here! Next time, drive like you own a license man!" I brawled.

He zoomed off like the road was one of the many properties he owned.

My anger towards the government for not fixing these roads that have become eyesores, the reckless driving of the extra size driver with his stupid car and sad tyres. Passersby looking at me like a human with two heads sticking out of the neck but I did well to look back with a face that made them a little less safe and a little sorrier. I was ready to take on the world. Well, just a part of the world, Lagos state. I had my dreams in one hand and my luggage in another. The wind was wild

that morning, which made it hard for the hem of my dress to steadily lay on my body. Nothing was going to stop me, not even if a tornado magically showed up. If everybody is this gutsy, then my mother might have raised me against the glaring odds.

“Will this bus go to Lagos?” I asked the lanky man I met standing beside it.

“Where did you wake up?” He asked while walking towards me.

“Was it the pigsty or the shack?”

“Excuse me?” I asked, frowning my brows inward with confusion.

I got so angry in both mind and body to not get the joke.

“It looks like you were defeated by mud,” he points to my dress.

“Haha, very funny, now will you answer the question?” I spitted out those words with raw fire that might have burnt him.

“Easy, easy miss. Yes, this bus will leave for Lagos today,” he responded.

I proceeded into the bus without a thank you as I

thought he deserved for keeping me in the hostile wind, some hostile treatment. I settled in, not nicely but somehow into the rickety bus that didn't look like it'd make it past the boundaries of Ajagbá. It is all I could afford at the time. Scratch that, it was all I've ever been able to afford since my mother laid me beside the smelly dumpster on cow poop and candy wrappers then wandered off. And my father? Probably is only good at thrusting sperm into women. My parents have one thing in common, wandering off. Even before my lungs were formed, they already didn't want anything to do with my first breath. The other fancy buses were made for fancy people. It's their world and I'm just in it. The ninety thousand Naira Michael Kors, hundred thousand naira red bottoms kind of people. The kind I'd never be because I can't even afford a Michael Kors rip off on black Friday and my shoes don't slap the sidewalks, they pleaded for mercy and cried for help.

Two hours and numb buttocks later, the bus started to do what seemed like a move, I looked out the win-

dow, raindrops fluttering on it and the image that formed in my eyes, was the gigantic billboard that had the inscription of you are now leaving Ajagbá, drive safely, was blurred. That was it, departing from the not so perfect memories Ajagbá holds, every tear, laughter, hurt, pain, and grief. I was going forward to find Joy, not happiness because it only shows up every now and then. I wanted everything that happiness couldn't be. A permanent thing.

“You should be feeling a little better. Can we have a decent conversation now?” The annoying lanky man asked. Apparently, he was heading to Lagos too but maybe for different reasons. Not everybody desired to take on the world, truth is, not everybody needed to. My eyes took him in, I had been overwhelmed with so much anger earlier I did not notice he had brown eyes that held specs of stolen sunlight. They were perfect, something I could neither conceive, nor comprehend. For someone who had lost complete faith in the male population of my generation, this creation was tickling my insides.



“Your words were vile and I apologise for letting them get the best of me.” I replied but I dipped my words into sarcasm first.

“You didn’t even let me finish; the pigsty was lucky to have you in it.

I pretended not to have heard but my face betrayed me and broke into a small smile.

“My name is Seb, what is yours?”

“Isn’t that supposed to be short for Sebastian?” I asked.

“Yes, but I hate it.”

“I’ll call you Sebastian then.”

He looked at me with your “attempt to ruin my day just got aborted eyes” and said, “with the way it bounces off those lips, I hate it a little less now. So, your name?”

“Call me the bus girl.”

We went on talking about family and how great his parents are. How his father could give Superman a run for his money and how queen Amina of Zaria has got nothing on his mother. Then he asked the forbidden question, a question he shouldn’t want answers to.

“You’ve barely said anything about your parents. Aren’t they alive?”

“They’re...dead. I dished those words out uncooked. Cold, void of emotion.

It isn’t a lie; I was kind enough to cover up for them. Only in death should a parent not care for his child. I mean, that’s the only reasonable explanation.

He took my hands in his and squeezes them. A sign that he was sorry. Sorry that my living parents had died.

“So, you’re going to stay with a relative?” He asked.

“No, under the bridge. I heard people can stay there.”

Seb laughed, a loud laugh. Loud enough that the other passengers turned their attention to us but when I didn't laugh with him, he folded his arm over his chest and tilted his head.

“Oh, shit. You're serious?”

“Yes. But if it is against policy, I totally get it. I will find an uncompleted building.”

His eyes widen, “You're impossible ma'am.”

We are welcomed into the city of Lagos in the most hostile but usual of ways, horrible traffic, but besides that, there was something different about the atmosphere. The air felt different mostly because it contained clouds of exhausting fumes spewed by cars but it also smelt like opportunities and bad behaviour. Lagos looks endless, viewed from this part of it. It can pass as the biggest city my presence has ever graced. It is a huge city with over fifteen million inhabitants and all of those fifteen million people looked to have their heads buried in something. That is exactly what a busy bustling city like

Lagos expects from you. The city never sleeps because it keeps the people awake. It has this contemporary modern feel that Ajagbá lacked.

I looked over my shoulders and saw that Sebastian was deep in sleep. Even in his sleep, he was perfectly pulled together.

After two long hours of traffic, brawling at drivers, getting snacks from the roadside vendor who almost shoved a fifty-naira doughnut in my face and getting down to push this good for nothing bus, we got to the motor park still on four wheels and Sebastian was awake. I smiled at him and he returned the favour. Although my parents have had a hard time parenting or have had no time parenting at all, I alighted from the bus with my hopes as high as mount Everest because I am Supergirl and I could easily get myself a cape but needed no one. I became super all the times I fell and got back up. I turned to Sebastian and he said,

“Common, I'll get you a place to stay. It isn't exactly the biggest place though.”

I no longer lived in a hundred

square feet room with two roommates. I had moved to transitional housing with six roommates so whatever place Seb had for me should be a step up.

I followed him because having a place to stay sounded like big progress for my first day in Lagos.

“This is where I start over again. Now, Ajagba, get behind me.”

I muttered.



Ignorance is Bliss

By: Rodney Nayo

Country: Ghana

If you were like me, a 21-year-old sassy and trending Burundian influencer whose phone is about to die and is stranded on a road trip with an eccentric and nearly-dysfunctional family, you would get comfortable in your seat and simply ask, "Are we there yet?" But my dad burst into tears and completely lost it. With his laughter being so contagious, Kyle, my nine-year-old cousin blurted that I didn't listen to him when he talked and that I made disturbing gestures that would make one cringe so hard. With Kyle being a complete moron, Mum – while feeding our little pup, Dee-Dee – hit him with that sharp "STOP THAT" tongue



that would make one invest their finances into dark poetry.

Was it a dumb question? I mean yes, it probably was.

Did it hurt me? No! Why? I hit them with the Uno Skip Card. Yeah, that's right! Their judgment just got blocked! I ignored it because I was not only about to become the most famous influencer on Tizzy at where we were heading, but I had just bought Bombshell sportswear leggings for it that I wanted to wear the moment we arrive. You have to be ignorant of a lot of things because you ought to be self-aware of who you are, and nothing else. You are something spectacular that no one can dare take their eyes off. You are someone that everyone must

sacrifice something for. Even if it means taking a non-stop 5,000-kilometer road trip adventure from Bujumbura to the Volta Region in Ghana in a hybrid-electric Nissan Armada with a crazy Dad, a lactose-intolerant Mom, a psychotic little beast, and a clumsy puppy.

Of all the insane things my dad could come up with, this was frankly his best. Why? Have you ever been to the airport lately? Before you get to the ticket counter, they would have to see that you are negatively tested for Iota, Xi, IOP-222, DS-VTA, LALA, Uvil, Edgar33, NuNu, Phi-29, Helton18, 24Carrut, and SARS-TO-SARS. Then after you get down from the plane, the nurses would have to test you again for it.

Not to mention that every hotel and hostel in Ghana was booked just because there was going to be a huge party in the Metaverse when we crossed over to 2036. Everyone has been “on-goggles”(online). Nobody ever goes out to breathe the sweet-non-scented fresh air, the wretched stench from the gutter, and...well to even build a treehouse. And what was much more interesting

was that content-creators were finding it difficult to look for the best place to chill when we crossed. But I finally found it. It was Wli Falls. I heard that it was the most beautiful place to see the great fireworks as the colours blended into the river to make it so lovely and interestingly-synchronic to see that one couldn't stop staring at it. My friends were telling me that I shouldn't go because it was messed up.

Ignored! They were just not interested.

This is how to get great content to post on Tizzy. Tizzy became one of the most popular social media apps after Instagram and Tik-Tok died out. People were just dancing and it got boring to some point. But on Tizzy, you can post anything that influences you and make money out of it. It's flipping fantastic!

Anyway, so we were riding on the dusty roads that had massive potholes in them. They were enough to make Kyle's wheat drink spill. My Dad got hungry along the way and he noticed that the car battery percentage was getting low. It was not long until we found a gas station

where we saw a sign displaying words: “If Venus is a Star; And I live there; does that make me a Celebrity?” My Dad wanted to refill but he noticed that there was a big pink and white ribbon tied to all the Fuel dispensers and wrote on it, “About to get married”. The fuel nozzles were not even available. My Dad rushed to the gas station workers to ask what the heck was that. One of them said the owner of the Gas Station is Chief Agbenyo and it was to be used for a wedding ceremony. He got livid quickly and complained about how lousy the economy was. Mum came in to humbly ask them to help, but they couldn't. And she joined in to create a heated argument. If there is one thing you should never forget, it is that any abnormal thing that you see happening around, you put it on Tizzy. This is a great way of getting a stepping stone into becoming ignorant because you don't get to listen to their complaints, worries, and issues. You simply take everything they do as a joke. You open the app and you video everything that goes on. I uploaded the video on my channel and I got like



20 views in just 10 minutes. Oh yeah, if you want to follow me, then follow me +NinZzzzz. My channel is growing, my last video just had 12 likes. So, at the end of it all, Dad couldn't get the gas and so we had to continue our journey. At least Mum got us snacks.

Great news! It was over! Now we were on our way to a nearby tollboth, but Kyle whined that he wanted to pee. Dad hesitated to stop because he wanted to see the baboons on the road people were talking about. We travelled for hours and hours and Kyle was ready

to release the Kraken on the back seat. When Kyle said that he was doing it, Dad immediately parked the car next to some scrupulous and dusty bushes and took Kyle out so that he could finish. It turned out that Dad wanted to pee too as well. Who knew that peeing was such a contagious thing? Mum exited the car to buy bread and coconut juice from the hawkers next to us. It was not long until hordes of women dressed in black and red were returning from the funeral they attended. They were heading in the direction Dad and Kyle were peeing. The moment Dad

saw them, he quickly zipped up, grabbed Kyle by the arms, and got him inside the car. He sparked the vehicle quickly, got to where Mum was, and picked her up. Remember the rule of thumb I shared. Always. Put. It. On. Tizzy.

And we were back on the road, looking through the trees and the beautiful mountains. And funny enough, we actually saw the baboons on the street. See, sometimes, you must have a little faith in any situation you wind up in because you might never expect it from the start. You should have

so much high expectation for yourself that even when a baboon throws a coconut husk at the window. Dee-Dee would jump out of the car to go and show that rotten animal some manners. And that's exactly what happened. Dad had to stop the car so we looked for her...

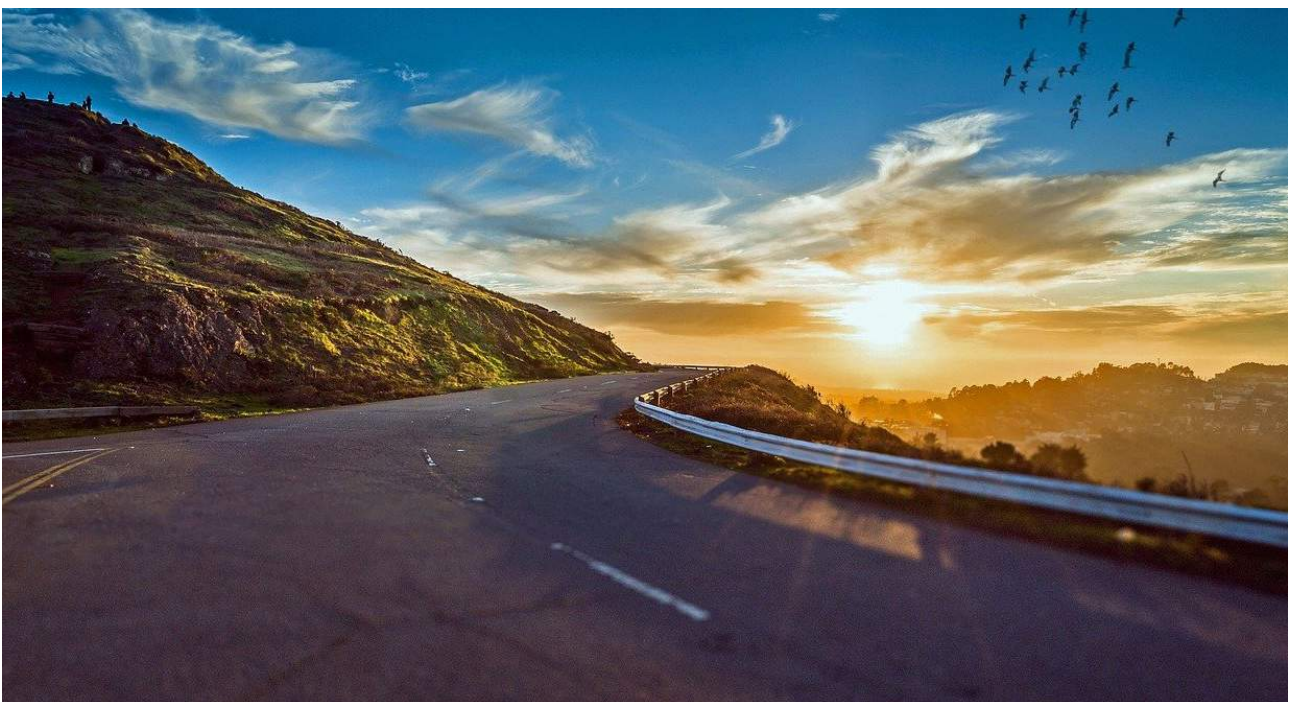
And so, after a long and tiresome journey, we made it. Google Maps had finally told us that we had arrived at our destination. Dad parked the car and we all grabbed our things, excited to be there. I couldn't believe that we made it.

We later got back into the car and we all just sat there, silent for a while because our minds were blown away by

the fact that the tour guide took us through a scary and interesting journey through the dusty and dry forest only to witness plastic bottles, torn leather dresses, broken wooden strips, rubber bags, and more. They had engulfed the entire lake under the waterfall. It made it filthy with so many kinds of flies on it. I mean it wasn't a big deal. After all, I read that the country produces one million tons of plastic and they ended up throwing like forty percent of them into the sea. Plus, the tourist guides had recently shared that people generally didn't come to these places anymore or even go outside. They were too busy in their rooms, virtually connecting

to people around the world in the Metaverse. It seemed like everybody had just abandoned the world that they were made in to take care of and had shifted to a whole new world. Wow... just...wow.

Oh, but guess what! We saw the fireworks as time passed. So long 2035 and hello 2036. A new year means more people to overpopulate the planet. So, we were sitting in the car and watching the fireworks from a distance. And...it was nice. If you would excuse me, I am going to the Meta party.



Kariakoo

By: Larry Matoyo
Country: Tanzania



You tell me to turn into the oncoming corner of Nyamwezi Street. I'm too late to react and drive past the dirt road sparsely packed with cars. As I slow down, a blaring horn goes off behind me. A daladala overtakes me like a raging train as it speeds off on Uhuru Street to pick up early morning passengers.

I mumble my apologies and tell you about another road ahead that I know about. After all, Kariakoo's roads are linked together like a chain of spiderwebs. The narrowest of spiderwebs. Everywhere is usually cramped with tiny minivans and trucks unloading their cargo and oblivious pedestrians who don't seem to fear death and walk right on the roads. It's the courage you get when you're exposed to

Kariakoo. It has its ways of toughening you up, either by getting you into a swearing contest with a bus conductor or making you haggle for everything you buy.

The road I turn onto leads to a pharmacy where I usually pick up orders. It's a tiny shop with misaligned shelves of drugs lined up next to a panel of the loudest telephone calls I have ever heard and the clicks of ancient mechanical keyboards. The owner is a slender Indian with a greedy look in his eye and the fastest cash counting hands. Whenever a customer steps in, his first question is never how the day is going but how much money is due. He must have a thing for Muslims because his entire female staff is always seen with hijabs. It's like a pharmaceutical cult of screwing



up orders and slacking off. Outside of the tiny pharmacy, the street cleaners are busy sweeping piles of black sand and putting up safety cones. It feels surprising to know there are actual cleaners for this market on account of it being the second dirtiest part of the city. The canals are usually teeming with black goo and discarded plastic.

Today, however, feels different. For one thing, the sun has barely risen. However, it's a normal occurrence for you. These days, you're earlier than the sun to rush off in the service of patients. I am here with you today for shopping. I rarely come with you on these occasions. Bonding time? Perhaps. I freely park the car in an empty slot, compulsively lock all the doors, and follow you off into the streets.

You ask me where I got the CDs from. Not whether I have ever seen the sunrise with you. Truth be told, I can't recall where the store was. This whole market is just one store copying another and trying to survive. That and the creeping melancholy gnawing away at my memory. Trying to re-

member the last two weeks becomes a mental strain. Either way, I point out the street in the hopes that my mind isn't lying to me.

We skim past Lindi Street and turn onto Msimbazi Road, where the morning traffic cruises by. The path ahead of us is blocked by two muscular peasants strenuously pulling their mikokoteni filled with peanuts. These are the true fighters of this place, for they fear no one on the road, not a wreckless driver or a businessman. Of course, they do not test their chances, but occasionally they may cross over with an oncoming bus just to get their daily cents for bread. Overtaking the mikokoteni, I lead you past Kipata Street and stop at the faded-out zebra at an intersection leading back to where we came from. The overhead traffic lights are working today. After six seconds of waiting, the green light flickers back to life. A red 60s Volkswagen Beetle screeches to a halt as we cross over to Aggrey Street and turn left into one of the dozen shopping complexes. The hallway of the complex is lined with tiny retail shops selling phones and accessories. My memory is

starting to clear out as I see a familiar shop boasting a sale of new Android phones. Maybe a deal, maybe a steal. We reach the end of the hallway that leads out onto the next street. It's flooded with sewage water from an unfinished construction. We turn left and continue on the narrow-raised steps to the end of the line, where my memory stops. In front of me is a building with a neon sign indicating an electronics store, but it is closed. A look of disappointment instantly appears on you before quickly evaporating.

You direct me to follow you as you head off back onto Masai Street. I quickly cross over the rocky path just as beat-up lorry whizzes right past me. You are already past two stores and near the entrance to another shopping complex, leaving me to run just to catch up. It isn't your first time around these twists and turns. Or maybe it's simply a child's presumption that his father knows everything about the world and a father keen to show his resilience. I can see it now, behind those tired, yellow eyes.

What Happened to the Mind?

By: Ujunwa Onyekachi Paul

Country: Nigeria

Lost in the labyrinth of thoughts, Ikem drifted from their usual evening conversation. He sailed from the throaty laughter of Nnedi; the tiny, chiming, and penetrative voice of Ekene, and he saw himself in a dim; in a distance. Such conversations had illuminated his evenings; a hang-out at the popular Music quadrangle, and their voices filling the whole area of Faculty of Arts. They talked about books with the sharp, eagle eyes of students of English and ended in



raucous laughter about an author whom they felt had done his work so badly. They talked about Achebe. Ekene had questioned Chinua Achebe's compromising stance in not blatantly condemning colonialism. Then, Chimamanda Adichie, and the subtlety of her themes, 'Ifemelunamma' springing up here and there in their sentences. But not that evening, when Ikem's mind was fluctuating, blinking on its own and turning to things that sent lurches to his brain.

It didn't start that evening. Ikem's mind had been wandering, lingering on nothingness for three days. He

peered at people morosely, nodding when he was required to speak. Nnedi observed that evening. Although, Ikem thought they would know but chose not to speak. But it was that evening that Nnedi's exuberant self didn't allow her to swallow whatever she thought – she said to them.

Flashing her haunting eyes that were too tiny for the sockets and her large forehead, she asked, that evening, "You're not here, Ikem, what are you thinking? A new girlfriend?" she smiled mischievously, showing only her upper teeth, and winked at him.

Despite her guess being far from the truth, Ikem evaporated and felt his tongue swollen with his heart skipping carelessly to his head, back, then to his stomach. Nnedi could know anything and her penetrative stare at him made him feel bare, unclad before her. Nnedi was the vigorous student who held a lecturer at the door of the faculty lecture hall, and registered her disapproval of the lecturer's statement, which degraded the womenfolk and likened their brains to 'broken eye liners'; who

threatened to report a case of embezzlement by class executive members to the Head of Department. Nobody knew how she found out – Nnedi could know everything. So, Ikem feared.

Ikem glared at Nnedi. His eyes held both water and questions yet unanswered. Nnedi didn't see the water that stood like Pharaoh's chariot in his eyes, as she flicked her brows upwards, drew her lips down, and asked, "What do you say about the book?"

Ikem didn't know what to say, but he had heard them start the evening's discussion, and he had heard Ekene scream, his voice barely going beyond the Music department building that stood behind them, "Let's talk about Ifeakandu's God's Children Are Little Broken Things!"

And he had heard Nnedi say with a click of the tongue that suggested displeasure and scorn, "That homo story." It had pinched his heart scathingly and he had swallowed two lumps of thick saliva.

"I don't like Lotanna," Ikem said, as he felt the air flush-

ing out of his mouth, uncontrolled. "He loved to a fault. That really broke his heart." Was that all? He dug his fingers into his thick afro hair and scratched.

It was half-hearted, and Ekene's blazing eyes and Nnedi's half-parted lips told him they wanted more. But he couldn't say anything more. Anything more was another judgment, a compunction; a pricking of the conscience that left a sore, which he knew would take a lifetime to heal.

"If you continue this way, I don't think you will find it easy in this department," Nnedi said in her declarative tone that usually came with a supercilious sneer, but no sneer came this time. Her eyes were filled with concern as she turned to face the minibar opposite them. "That was too shallow an assessment for a student of English."

Ikem knew, but he felt blisters growing on his tongue and his lips, and he couldn't speak. The wind brushed past them and raised Nnedi's purple braids, dropping them over her shoulders. The wind brought a chilliness that froze their words



for the moment.

“I think indecisive would be better,” Ekene was saying at last.

The Quadrangle was silent now, as the crowd of students had trickled down to a few studious ones boring their eyes over opened textbooks.

Ikem found the word. God bless Ekene. He was indecisive. Yes, ambivalent, but he didn't know how and why. The emptiness that greeted those questions when he asked them in his mind, set his mind sailing again, as he tried to get the answers

from his past.

That evening was uneventful, Nnedi had proclaimed so, as she piled her books and novels on her curved elbow and stamped out grumbling about the next day not to be like that. Ikem's walk to Hilltop, where he stayed alone, was like a tread on pins, broken bottles and nails - they pierced his soul leaving his legs to wander further in lostness. The cloud had a blueness that was immaculate, and water dripping from the leaves of the trees that lined up on the road on both sides reminded him it had rained heav-

ily that afternoon. Hilltop would be messy and muddy, yet he wanted it somewhat. He wanted to forget, to be forgotten; to immerse his feet in the mud and slip into the unknown. The unknown reminded him of his sister's frantic call three days back, when it all started - his lostness

Dumebi had screamed immediately he pushed the green icon on his phone to the right and grunted, “Hello.” Her scream reminded him of Auntie Emelda's scream the night his father died at the hospital. She had screamed while hold-

ing his mother and restraining her from screaming too, and screamed when people from the village came to see his father's corpse before pushing the body into one of those fridges in the morgue.

Dumebi's message, after her scream had thinned down to sobs, was brief, and she had hung up immediately. "Mama has boils in several parts of her body, and the doctor needs seventy thousand as a deposit. It's too severe."

They were punitive words that burned his lips, as he told Nedu, his lodge mate, afterwards. Nedu, who promised to help in the way he could, and whose 'helping in the way he could' was calling out a phone number belonging to a sugar daddy. Sugar Daddy! Sugar and Daddy were words he heard when girls left their hostels on Friday nights and returned on Sunday evenings; they were words Auntie Emelda had warned Dumebi against, not him because he was excluded from the bleakest possibility of such thing. Nedu had said them, without looking up from his phone to see the horrendous shock on Ikem's face. So leisurely. Like

it was a common thing. His body was bathed in goose bumps, then shudder, then shivering. He glanced at the fountain near Princess Alexandra Auditorium, and the flow seemed to yell its repimand.

He was going to do 'homo' - a term Nnedi had used that evening. She had said with her left hand on one of the pillars, and her head shaking in repudiation, "I wonder why someone would write a thing like that. Homo! Man loving man, and he did it so unapologetically it is being studied in school. Tufia!" Her upper lip met her nostrils to express the disgust, and she snapped her fingers twice, dumping the 'thing' on the heap of grass beside her.

Ekene had smiled coolly, like what Nnedi had said was too trivial and childish; a smile that had made Ikem suspect him to be one of them. He looked girly after all, and was too cautious of his English. To Ikem, that was how they are known. Ekene asked, throwing his head at Nnedi, "Are all those worth it? The rejection? And curses, are they worth it?"

He asked himself now if it was all worth it. If going to

Obukpa that night and returning on Sunday like the hostel girls was worth it. If accepting the painful thrusts - they were painful because he had seen the videos on Nedu's phone with the faces of the receivers creased in deeply felt pains - was worth it. If missing his Saturday writing class, and returning on Sunday with his account slacking with the heaviness of thousands of naira was worth it.

He turned to Freedom Square and a new picture and imagination overwhelmed his mind. Picture of his mother, energetic and resilient, when his father had died, and imagining of her armpits bearing a pus-filled boil, that still appeared on other parts of her body. He imagined her frailness now; her submission to ill-fatedness; her shrivelled self. He saw all these in one click, and his questions were answered - the worthiness of it all. The waters from Freedom Square ran over his feet in chastisement.

5th

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Evolution of African Literature

An Introduction to Oral and Pre-Colonial Literature



Mimi Machakaire
Zimbabwe



Literature started to evolve when people started to write and express their ideas. Not everything that is expressed in words is considered a work of art, but when ideas are written in an organized manner, they can be counted as literature. This means that as human life started to evolve from the basic forms to the extraordinary, literature also developed gradually and took many forms which paved the way for

the enrichment of human knowledge through writing.

Furthermore, as Africans, we can also look at this from an African perspective and safely say that four distinct phases are marked out in the evolutionary growth of African literature: oral tradition, pre-colonial literature, colonial literature, and post-colonial literature. Each of the diverse people of Africa, whether we call them tribes or ethnic groups, pos-

sesses centuries-old collection of stories and poems passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Therefore, in this reflection, we will discuss the evolution of African literature from oral through to pre-colonial literature.

According to the Urban English Dictionary, pre-colonial literature refers mainly to oral knowledge preserved

among the illiterate masses (people who can't read or write apart from their native dialect) elsewhere or the oral literature of all people whether they have written knowledge or not.

Therefore, we can talk about how oral literature or folk literature is literature that is spoken or sung as opposed to that which is written, though much oral literature has been transcribed. While there is no standard definition, folklorists have varying descriptions for oral literature or folk literature.

Interestingly enough, African oral literature is of-

ten told using "call-and-response" techniques, where the storyteller would engage the audience through interactions with them done using methods of song and dance. Another integral part of the Oral tradition is the integration of music. Music plays an important role in African societies. Music is used commonly to communicate, pass important messages, welcome heroes and more. Music, dance, and singing are found in every community. Through this, one can learn manners, customs, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc. which are roughly the constituents of

oral literature.

Encyclopedia Britannica explains that oral literature (or orature) is often sung or recited, by bards or griots (West African praise-singers, poets or musicians) and can take the form of songs, with tongue-twisters, recitations, poetry, proverbs and riddles. Most West African societies use these methods in which West African literature was part of an oral tradition that is passed from generation to generation. It was noted that at its most formal, this was literature developed by specially trained poets and musicians who served kings



and nobles. However, West African literature was also folk art that expressed the views of the common people.

In West Africa, these tales represented the ability of common people to counteract the power of kings and nobles. When the tales reached America, they became allegories for the struggle between enslaved African Americans and their powerful white masters.

The Oral Literature of Africa are rich and varied, developing with the beginnings of African cultures, and they remain living traditions that continue to evolve and flourish today. Some of the best works were told in oral literature such as Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa* which was first published in 1970, and since then has been widely praised as one of the most important books in its field. This came from years based on fieldwork and traces the history of storytelling across the continent of Africa.

However, unlike the European concept of literature as a written embodiment of artistic expression only, the African concept of literature

not only encompasses oral literature but also acknowledges it as the basis of written literature.

In a paper titled: *Review of Issah Tikumah's "refugees' rebellion"*, published by Elisa Vari in 2016, the author describes some of the events that occurred during the pre-colonial era of African literature. It was noted that the early African writers in European languages were sometimes characterized as translators because much of their writings was more than a transposition of their native oral traditions.

This means that society viewed them more as writers who were translators rather than creative writers. What is important to note here is that in the process of this switch, orality was, in turn, twisted to suit the specific character of the written word. As a result, both oral literature and written literature influenced each other on the transitional borderline.

However, this also meant that the first phase in the evolutionary growth of English and African literature is what is generally labelled as pre-colonial literature. Ac-

ording to the paper, it further recorded that pre-colonial literature dates from the period of the Atlantic slave trade between the 15th and 19th centuries "which was perhaps the darkest chapter in the history of homo-sapiens." The events during this time included the Atlantic slave trade, referred to by some commentators as the 'odious commerce,' and involved the forced shipping of over 12 million African men and women to the Americas as human commodities.

However, talking about pre-colonial literature, we have to refer to the medieval University of Timbuktu in West Africa. It was recorded on a document posted online on March 1, 2013 by Denise Rayman titled: *The Timbuktu Library Burnings and the Importance of Library Disaster Planning*, it says that the total number of manuscripts saved from Timbuktu is estimated to be over 300,000.

The Timbuktu manuscripts were saved because there was effective and unique disaster planning in place for them. While most archivists would not consider hiding their holdings in the houses of local families, for the Tim-



buktu manuscript guardians, who were used to unstable governments, it was the most effective available option.

The manuscripts and their covers demonstrate a sophisticated visual and technical artistry and reflect a rich intellectual and scholarly tradition. They further cover a diverse range of topics and genres, including the natural and physical sciences (astronomy, mathematics, botany, and medicine); the literary arts (poetic verse, panegyrics, grammar); the Islamic religious sciences such as theology (kalām), jurisprudence (fiqh), legal

opinions (fatawa); and historical accounts (tarikh). At the same time, many of the manuscripts are written in local vernaculars (some of which are archaic forms of the present-day languages of Songhay, Tamasheq, and Fulfulde, among others) with Arabic script.

Therefore, we can say that pre-colonial literature does not refer only to literature produced before the beginning of colonization in Africa but it also includes modern literature concerned with the pre-colonial era.

For now, while more research is being gathered,

it can be said that the evolution of literature reveals many changes. The relationship between oral and written traditions and in particular between oral and modern written literature is one of great complexity and not a matter of simple evolution.

In this, we can understand that the great works of the past serve as models for newer generations to learn from and build upon. But from a different perspective, precolonial literature reflects the themes, motifs, cultural values, and ideals of non-western culture.



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Towards A New Window of Perspectivism

By: Nchimunya Michelo, Zambia

Reviewer: Joseph Oduro, Ghana



Our experiences in the early years of our lives contribute immensely to our formation and social orientation. We are products of our childhood experiences and it requires a considerable amount of effort to unclad ourselves from these experiences. "Towards a New Window of Perspectivism" reflects these neural abilities of our mind and how we can unwire ourselves from these experiences, to prevent them from scarring the rest of our lives.

The writer relates the subject to the early life of the persona who had been a victim of sexual assault in their childhood years. This

begins with the sibling of a friend capitalizing on the little girl's ignorance to satisfy his sexual endeavours in the continuous absence of her parents from home during and after school hours. She recounts her addiction to pornographic materials after the second exposure to defilement. It was then followed by compulsive addiction to masturbation. The persona only realized the extent of the damage when she reached her teenage years. The revelation of being taken advantage of and harbouring the assault within was a whole new scar on its own. Going on to fail her high school exams, the persona's life was distorted af-

fecting her relationship with other people.

Gliding towards a new window of perspectivism in relation to the theme 'Dreams of Tomorrow' entreats individuals to be proactive and avoid the mistakes of the past from having an impact on their future. Realizing that you can't change what has happened to you is a step towards a new window of perspectivism. If we tread this course, we may find a fulfilling life ahead and be inspired by our scars not to view the world through the meanness and cruelty that abound but the beauty of having the choice to decide the course our lives take.

I Can't Wait for Tomorrow

By: Pelekani Lwenje, Zambia

Reviewer: Ernestina Azah, Ghana



The state of Africa has been debated by many in and out of the continent. All these people want one thing. An Africa that's not plagued with civil wars, hunger, political instability and corrupt governments. But where do we start from?

Fortunately for us in this story, we have Towela. A bright brave girl who we hope can inspire others into starting a chain of events that will help realize the African dream.

The beginning of the story takes us into the mind of Towela who is looking at the rainbow and daydreaming as most children do. Even though Towela is seriously thinking about what could change the fate of a whole continent, she sees the need

to enjoy her present. The writer reminds us here, that even if we have big things going on, we should live in our present. We should enjoy the mundane as that also is part of life.

Towela is thinking about her homework. What she thinks would happen in Africa in the next 100 years.

She thinks of how things would be different from the situation at the moment and how that would be great for everyone.

As we all grow older, we have so many responsibilities that we forget our dreams and join the long monotonous life of adulthood. We end up complaining and blaming everyone else when we could come up with solutions.

Here again, we're encouraged to pursue our dreams. Think more about them and do what we can to let them live.

Daydreaming is mostly shunned because it is seen as a waste of time and it is thought to prevent daydreamers from seeing the reality of things. But time again, people who have thought the impossible and held on to those impossible dreams have brought those dreams alive and all have admired. The impossible happens for Towela as she has an encounter that shows her what Africa can become in 100 years. And now, we all hope the future Towela saw comes to pass soon.

Identity

By: Overcomer Ibiteye, Nigeria

Reviewer: Sesame Mookodi, Botswana



Those not taken into slavery have had to be subjected to colonisation and as a result, have found ways to cope in whitewashed Africa. Modern Africa, to prove is not inhabited by savages, has made Eurocentric standards and mannerisms synonymous with success, intellect and properness. We feel the discomfit and yearn for a tomorrow when our children will define and uphold their standards of life; honing the remnants of our culture and dignity.

Identity is a deeply lyrical

couplet with shameful and sombre tones. S1, L2 can be taken both literally and figuratively: “enmeshed in a battle for names”. The dual meanings can be seen as the first expression of loss of identity as well as being indicative of how commonly Africans take European names which is symbolic on its own.

The writer goes on to explore how our misrepresentation in the media has caused us to emulate less of our ethnicities. This is followed by a sense of shame. The writer

uses children as a tool of self-introspection. Children are often inquisitive and naïve, yet to be scathed by the world and in need of strategies to survive. Diction such as “tomb” (S7, L1) and “compressed” (S7, L2) can be seen as metaphors for the captivity of our cultures. The following stanzas express how the dilution has made us disingenuous to ourselves whilst explaining to the naïve child that the theft of our culture proves it was something worth taking.

Dear Diary

By: Ammar Somji, Tanzania

Reviewer: Halieo Motanyane, Lesotho



On many occasions, we treat dreams as only happy events that we see while we sleep or/and those that we hope to be and see in our later lives. The funny part is, although we dream of sad, scary and bitter events, we rather call them nightmares. Why? Because nightmares are not supposed to happen in real life. Only dreams should happen, so we say.

This is a diary of Alem, the boy whose nightmare gave him an even rueful reality. On top of fearing to fight frontline in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Alem's

biggest nightmare turned out to be left alone in the foreign land. A perfect way to portray the theme, Dreams of Tomorrow, Ammar shows just how sometimes tomorrow doesn't mean happy endings.

The story is centred in England, where Alem's father has decided to leave him alone as he goes back to his wife. Ammar mastered the combination of his character and setting very well. Since he used the first-person narration, he showed us exactly what a 14-year-old boy is expected to pay attention to in

his surroundings.

The story is about war and loss. The writer points out well that war goes with loss. It may not have been a loss through death, but any loss in the world is painful. The story itself challenges a lot of societal beliefs and norms. When we think of tomorrow, no matter how much we hope, our dreams are determined by the circumstances we are in. And when tomorrow comes, it is still a dream even if we call it a nightmare.



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