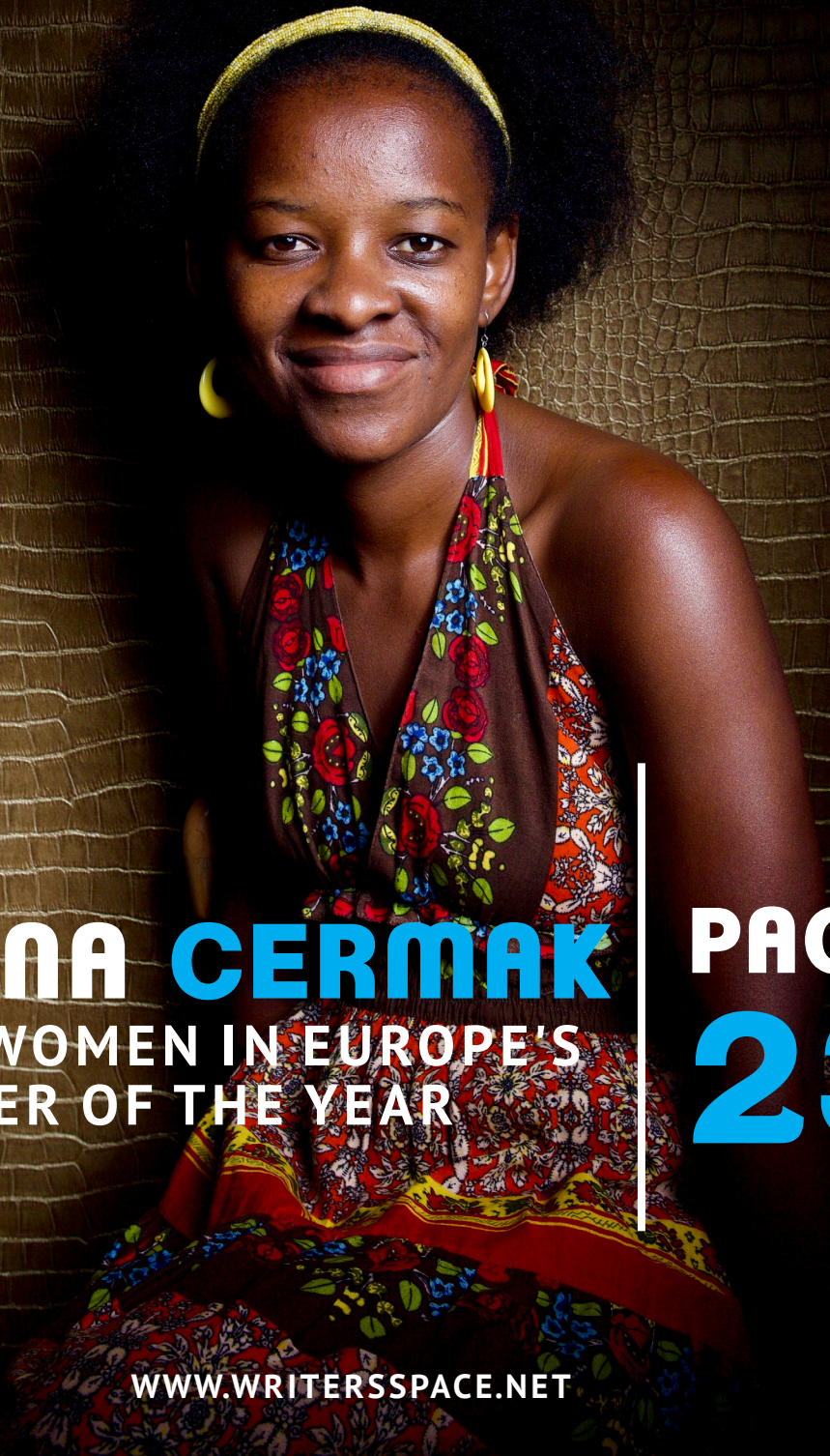




**WSA**  
Writers Space Africa  
Empowering African Writers

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**CORONA CERMAK**  
AFRICAN WOMEN IN EUROPE'S  
WRITER OF THE YEAR

**PAGE**  
**23**

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# FROM THE FOUNDER'S DESK

What does it mean to have a dream? Is it a series of moving images or thoughts that occur in your mind while you sleep? Or is it the picture you have in your mind of tomorrow while you are awake? Whichever it is, dreams will always be with us. We would sometimes dream while sleeping and forget the dream when we wake. We would also sometimes dream awake but become too distracted or think it is unachievable, and forget about it.

To dream awake is to have a vision, then work and walk towards its realisation. The path is not an easy one, but it is indeed worthwhile. It is at this stage that the dream becomes a hybrid. We visualise it while awake and it occurs in our minds while asleep. We must keep moving towards it because of the impact it would have, not only in the lives of many but in ours as well. After all, the path to happiness lies in the fulfilment of our dreams.

So as you read this, what is your dream? What dream are you struggling with? What dream have you abandoned or failed to achieve? Perhaps now is the time to rekindle that flame, for it is only when we are old and unable, that we are bedmates with regret. Make your dream count. Dream Awake!

-----  
**Anthony Onugba,**  
*President/Founder*

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# FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR

It is this time of the year; the first quarter of 2022 is but a by-gone now. Isn't it sounding a bit hasty and sudden? It is a juncture where one looks back and question the benefits of this milestone. Remember this year was a tomorrow of last year, as it keeps getting slim and sliced each day, we realise that our yesterday was once a tomorrow, and every tomorrow is fading into custody.

Dreaming is intrinsically a subconscious process. Yet on the other side of the coin, in the framework of aspirations and ambitions, it is a conscious activity. Dreams usually invade our sleep, but we can dream while awake, while walking, and even while dreaming. This ambient of dreams renders the assertion that humans are intrinsically dreamers.

This edition, dear ardent reader, shall exhibit seasoned pieces that hail the storms of creativity and originality as portrayed in each entry published. Notwithstanding how one is summoned to re-discover the influential magnitude of dreams, ambitions, and aspirations as subjects that predicates our tomorrow. As such, we are reminded that the future is not foreign to us, rather it lies within the deepest avenues of our aspirations. What we are today is an anticipation of what we may become tomorrow. Does this not approve the premise which maintains that dreams of tomorrow are the parents of our tomorrow? Hence, the preachers of our destiny.

In this publication, mother Africa is challenged in every dimension. Conceivably a dream

of tomorrow's Africa can only be rewarding if it transcends any form of schism while fostering a liaison of diversity. Nelson Mandela in his lifetime dreamt to see an Africa which is at peace with itself. Does that dream manifest itself today, or will it be the case even tomorrow?

*It is insufficient to simply dream  
It is insufficient not to dream  
A positive attitude toward a dream is sufficient.*

Remember, Twaweza!!!

-----

**Comfort Nyati, Sdb**  
*Zimbabwe*



## TOWARDS A NEW WINDOW OF PERSPECTIVISM

*Nchimunya Michelo, Zambia*

**I have always thought of life as a scam. How we are suddenly tasked with the notion that life is in our hands immediately after birth is baffling. It took me a while to understand this, but the fact that life is in our hands is probably one of the greatest gifts.**

My childhood years were my worst because that was when I was introduced to one of the world's evils; Defilement. My parents worked long hours and my siblings weren't home most of the time so I spent my after-school hours at our neighbor's. One time as I played with my friends, their older brother called me to his room and took off my underwear. He said, "I won't hurt you, don't tell anyone, it will be our little secret."

I vividly remember the smell

of his lotion in that clustered room. I walked home with pain that day. I bled a little but didn't tell anyone. I didn't understand what was happening and it didn't feel like something important. Little did I know that this was a wound I would spend my whole life nursing.

During my second encounter with defilement, one night my close cousin carried me from my room to his. I was awake but couldn't stop him. The familiar sharp stab in my groin got me numb, I didn't move. I still didn't understand what was happening but deep down I was scared. This became a daily routine for as long as I could remember. When he wasn't around, I dreamt of him coming to my room. I eventually drowned in the habit of watching pornog-

" I didn't understand what was happening and it didn't feel like something important. Little did I know that this was a wound I would spend my whole life nursing. "

raphy and compulsive masturbation. As I suffered in silence, I learned that pornography is like a drug, with a short-lived hormonal high which leaves you depressed afterward. The mind circles back and forth with fantasies that sexualize people, and this was one of my defiler's sources of madness. I remember stumbling upon a pornographic video that involved a gruesome group rape. After watching it for a few seconds, I realized I was becoming the very thing I dreaded. I felt sick to my stomach and didn't understand why I couldn't break from this circle.

When I got to my teenage threshold, I learned that I had been taken advantage of. I cried myself to sleep the day I realized it. The realization hit me hard and the scenes repeatedly played back in my head. I hated myself for not speaking up, for watching pornography, and being stuck in a web no one could see. I got depressed and my grades dropped drastically. My trauma reflected in my relationships with people. I held grudges and developed a violent temper.

Failing my high school exam opened my eyes to the meaning of life. Life is neither kind nor is it fair. One would call it cruel

perhaps, but it's about how you perceive it. The power to control life is in our hands. We get to decide who we want to be, whether we use the past as an excuse not to do better or use it as a stepping stone to new heights.

I missed out on opportunities because I kept referring to my past. The past can't be changed but we can learn from it. Some people say there's no general meaning of life, but for me, the meaning of life is about having a better perception of it and realizing that the power is in our hands because only you can decide who you want to be. The past hurts, and the trauma is real, and that means I have scars. Scars don't bleed; they are a symbol of strength. We can't change some things and there's no use bleating over them.

To cherish my tomorrow, I have learned to be proactive and not just reactive. I can't change what people do to me, but I can choose to have a better perspective towards it. I am more loving, I find joy in the small things, and I don't let bad days define me. I use the love of my parents and God to keep me going because there is no greater love than what they show me.

It's a cold world, but even the coldest ice can melt at the right temperature. I believe there's good in the world, and that with the realization that the power to create change begins with individual effort, we can foster team effort to make this world a better place. I have a better perspective towards my trauma because of my first-hand experience with pornography. I turned my pity party into a learning experience. I have embarked on a journey to change the world one day at a time by educating people about the effects of pornography. People say it is a sex-positive industry but I think it is a sex-negative industry in the business of making money at the expense of people's mental health.

We are naturally wired to crave sex, however, we don't have to fulfill this desire at the expense of others. The power is in our hands to naturally explore on our own without the unrealistic scenes and positions exhibited in pornography.

Despite being seen as a weirdo stepping on peoples' toes, I believe my experiences shaped me to be the voice of the ones suffering in silence and to contribute to a better tomorrow.



# DREAMS OF **TOMORROW**

*Alliance Ankiambom, Cameroon*

**My dear country Cameroon used to be very peaceful. It was once referred to as the most peaceful African country. Although this didn't mean that we did not have our own plagues troubling us. Cameroon consists of over 52 tribes with different native languages. Its diverse cultures add so much colour and beauty to the land.**

Cameroon is made up of 10 main regions, which are further divided into divisions and sub-divisions. We also have two major languages namely English and French. These languages were gotten through the annexation by the British and French respectively. Out of the 10 regions, 8 of them are made up of French speakers while the other 2 are English speakers.

It all started in November 2016, when teachers and lawyers took to the streets in the English-speaking part of the country, demanding for some laws to be reformed to suit them and include them in the system. This was met with gross resistance from the Government. It did not only end with them; traders were quick to join this movement for their voices to be heard as well about their own problems plaguing them, most of which were bad roads, marginalization of the minority English speakers, and the high rate of unemployment. To be candid, so many points were raised which would have been resolved had the government been willing to listen to them.

However, all of these were met with resistance,



arrest and torture of the youths. Before we knew it, schools were shut down. This was a way of demonstrating how serious the instability was getting. Forces were formed by the English-speaking youths to protect their own people. The violence became increasingly shocking. A once peaceful country became a nightmare. There was an increasing number of curfews, the crime rate increased and is still on the rise, and illiteracy has also taken over. Teenage pregnancies are now a normal thing. Poverty and hardship are greatly on the rise, and displacement has become the order of the day. Don't get me started on those in the rural areas who cannot afford to be displaced.

What happened to former Cameroon? All these people wanted was a better country for themselves and the next generation. Why does change have to come at such a great cost? How can we go back to that country where our morning greetings weren't sounds of gunshots, where stray bullets did not have to hit innocent children who just wanted to go to school, where officers of the law shot at innocent children because their parents did not give a 500frs (\$1) bribe?

My dream is to see a Camer-

oon that fosters education and vocational trainings, is crime free, and is accountable to all the Sustainable Development Goals. Since the future lies with the younger generation, a Cameroon that is more enabling will be amazing for us all to create and foster growth. I dream of a tomorrow where poverty is completely eradicated and everyone is treated as humanely as possible. Where everyone is given fair opportunities, where protests are treated with more seriousness, and not met with serious resistance from those who should be supporting the community.

What about a Cameroon that has constant electricity? A Cameroon that allows children to actually study on computers instead of just visualizing them? These are all-inclusive. I dream of a better tomorrow, where we can all celebrate our bravery, our talents, and hard work instead of cutting corners to be able to reach our goals.

These dreams can only become reality by changing one community at a time and empowering one young person at a time. Our minds will let us travel places so far as we guard whatever we store in them. The positive outlook of our minds

will bring about our dreams of tomorrow.

I often ask myself, instead of waiting for a new president after every presidential tenure, why can't we the youth rally together and send in our own candidate to run for presidency? Someone who understands the plight of the youth, who has lived the life we all are living and is hungry for change. How do we even go about advising the youths that voting during elections is the best option? Starting at just the municipal levels, we could begin changing from the bottom and move upwards.

I have dreams of tomorrow, you have dreams of tomorrow, we all do. Together we shall build what we want our tomorrow to look like. What our children and their children will be proud to have and to behold. It is a tough journey, but with eyes lifted to the heavens where our help comes from, there is hope and our dreams of a better tomorrow remain valid.



# THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

*Chris Baah, Ghana*

**When I saw the theme for this call for submission, one thing that called to me was the word, “Tomorrow.” This word brought my mind to a link between tomorrow and the people of today or the past. I would like to consider myself as an avid watcher of movies and TV shows and this is why when I thought about “people and tomorrow,” CW’s 2013 TV series, *The Tomorrow People* came to mind.**

This series started with a teenager who hears voices and teleports in his sleep. He decides to listen to one of the voices which leads him to his first encounter with *The Tomorrow People* – people who possess psionic powers as a result of human evolution i.e., *Homo Superior*.

The main reason why these people were classified as the *Tomorrow People* is because of how different they were to the people from the past and present. They were considered *Homo Superior* because, in a way, it is what they are. They were the future. I would like to think that in the real world, we have this laid down classification of people and ideas that will form the *Tomorrow People* – a *State of Affairs* in a way really.

## **The Man of Space**

Since Neil Armstrong and his co-astronauts landed on the moon, man would like to think traveling to space is possible. The idea of sending humans to live on planets outside Earth has

been the subject of aerospace engineering and scientific studies since the early 1950s.

In recent times, there have been more developments towards achieving this goal. Futurists like Jeff Bezos have made a way to make the dream of life outside Earth possible. In 2021, he steered Blue Origin into sending its first crewed mission into space.

TIME Magazine's "Person of the Year," Elon Musk, for me is "The Man of Space." His SpaceX company is developing a vehicle that could be a game-changer for space travel. One that could get as many as 100 people to Mars. One could say, every dream he dreams is of life outside Earth. As said in an interview last year, "The goal overall has been to make life multi-planetary and enable humanity to become a spacefaring civilization."

Some people say it's not a matter of whether we can have a multi-planetary system but when we can. One thing's for sure though, it's all dreams of tomorrow.

### The Science of Rationality

It would be madness to talk about 2019 to 2022 and not talk about Science and Covid-19. In the latter part of 2019, a virus situation erupted that has plagued humanity for more than a year. After months of tests, discoveries, and isolations that have led to lockdowns and disruptions in society, scientists say we now have a vaccine for the virus. Another sect of people; some scientists, and others from other professions, would tell you about the conspiracies, fallacies, and debacle that is Covid-19 based on what they think is rationality. After all the "listen and believe

in Science" statements, we still have people who think the vaccine is just another way of oppression from Powers.

Recently, there was a thread that stated, "There are now two types of people in the world – the vaccinated waiting for the unvaccinated to die and the unvaccinated waiting for the vaccinated to die or have a negative adverse effect to their health due to how purported the vaccine is." Currently, in some countries, there are regulations and restrictions against people who are not vaccinated. People who are not sick but haven't been vaccinated cannot even enjoy a sport they love.

Truth be told, there is a silent question on who The Tomorrow People will be – The Vaccinated or the Unvaccinated? Is this a good thing? Certainly

RECENTLY, THERE WAS A THREAD THAT STATED, "THERE ARE NOW TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD – THE VACCINATED WAITING FOR THE UNVACCINATED TO DIE AND THE UNVACCINATED WAITING FOR THE VACCINATED TO DIE OR HAVE A NEGATIVE ADVERSE EFFECT TO THEIR HEALTH DUE TO HOW PURPORTED THE VACCINE IS."

not. But, when we speak about the Tomorrow we can see, it is certainly a point worth asking.

### The Separations of Religion/Culture

Although we live in a world full of diversity, one thing this diversity is not supposed to bring is disunity and disharmony. But that is not the case. The world is comprised of people with different beliefs. There are atheists, Christians, Muslims, Buddhist, Jewish, Traditionalists and every other belief you can find.

Growing up, due to the number of conflicts and pain one party inflicted on the other, I used to think Christians and Muslims are never supposed to coexist together. After a change of my environment, I now see things differently. However, my perceptions do not mean there is still no indifference between people with different beliefs.

Due to one belief or the other, people who love each other are refused marriage or any other interactions. A slight conversation can bring people to a place of tribalism. A world that is supposed to be one in peace and harmony has been separated by religion and culture.

As said earlier, yes, we are in a diverse world but, diversity doesn't mean disunity. Nonetheless, that's the world we find ourselves in. How this links to the dreams of tomorrow and a Tomorrow People might not be seen at the first glance, but what if I asked what happens in a Tomorrow where conflict, indifference, and segregation is the only peace we know?

### Who are the Tomorrow People?

With respect to our world, the Tomorrow People i.e., the people of the future are determined by who we are today. In the TV series, the Tomorrow People were haunted because they were different. But somehow, they found a way to coexist with those without psionic powers. They even used their abilities to help those without psionic powers when the need arose.

In our world, are the Tomorrow People going to be those who live on other planets or is there really no other survivable planet than earth? Does this mean, the Tomorrow People on earth would be the vaccinated, the Christians, or the "Free Thinkers?" When you think of "Tomorrow," what do you see?

Maybe, there is no Tomorrow People and the Tomorrow People are the same people from today – still separated by differences, greed, and every little thing that can bring disharmony. A mate recently wrote, "living is like being in a time loop." Does this mean we are meant to repeat the same insanities of the past/present in the future? Yes, the future can be bleak. Because, in the end, tomorrow is just another representation of time, just as the dreams of tomorrow is connected to time. Yes, there are more areas on Earth that could be written about who the Tomorrow People are, but I don't know if words can be enough.

Some days, I feel I have ideas no one will ever understand. Most days, I think my ideas will lead to dystopia. I am partially pessimistic and partially optimistic about how good the future will be. The only thing I am certain of is evolution will come, time will cycle, and someday, we will see tomorrow.

# THAT THERE MAY BE A BETTER **TOMORROW**

*Ari-Ajia Olanrrwaju, Nigeria*



**The tomorrow of Nigeria is dicey not only because her policymakers are a bunch of irredeemable selfish individuals, but because her masses are too docile to call the leaders to order. The assurance of a better tomorrow for the country is so uncertain since her teachers and the whole of her education sector are run by self-centred persons.**

It does not require the power of clairvoyance to know that education and the whole gamut of what it means in Nigeria is fast sliding down the precipice. Only those who are in doubt of the invaluable roles of education as not only a means of human capacity development but also as an agent of moral reformation for the individual and society at large will argue on the contrary.

Unfortunately, gone are the days when education was a panacea to the country's growth and development; when the Nigerian youth chased after education as not only a means to an end but the very end itself. Then, quality education was given without compromise. Of course, those who were able to acquire education then have stories of personal victories to share; even if the only gain for Nigeria was the false hope of a better tomorrow expected to culminate from the individual successes of her citizens. Ironically, the tomorrow of yesterday is the today that is no longer a dream. Nonetheless, even if our yesterday's dreams of tomorrow turned out to be nothing but pure fantasy, something that existed in the delusion of imagination, it was unlike the reality of our today's dreams of tomorrow, where there is no cliffhanger or iota



of hope for something better. So now the story of education in Nigeria is neither in favour of the individuals in the country nor the entire nation.

The cause of the interregnum in the upward story of education in Nigeria in the 70s and the early 80s is that successive governments of the country thereafter took little or no interest in education and the private entrepreneurs that eventually came in to fill the gaps ended up filling their stomachs. They could not for once pretend to be Mother Theresa.

The unfortunate reality about education is that it is too important to nation-building to be left in the hands of avaricious interests. When this becomes the case, as it is presently with Nigeria, what will happen is that education will not only be taken away from the reach of the populace, it will become so expensive that the few that can afford it will only be paying for a sordid service as against quality education. This of course is adversarial to what was obtained in the western part of the country

in the 1970s when Chief Obafemi Awolowo, as the premier of this region, introduced his populist and egalitarian policy of free education that not only bought freedom for many families from poverty but wholeheartedly welcomed the Western region into the committee of enlightened people.

Education in Nigeria today is however in a sorry state where the products from our various institutions are known to be either unemployable or are underemployed. The country's youth go to school now out of formality; to be occupied for some time until they are of age and mean enough to veer into some other detrimental means. Sadly, our education will continue on this ugly path unless something encouraging is done quickly to reverse the deplorable conditions of her teachers. It is no longer news that the most unfortunate job to find yourself in Nigeria is the teaching profession. Those in the government's teaching employments are only an inch better than their peers in the

private sector. The summary of the dilemma of private school teachers' lives is that they are neither respected by their students nor by their capitalistic employers, who will compromise anything but the irrational and insatiable interests of their students and their parents.

Teachers in Nigeria are not only underpaid; most school owners dehumanize their teachers by over labouring them. Most of these teachers do worse than the babysitters in our private schools today. In this modern-day of occupation diversification, it has become another normal thing to see, for instance, a trained English Language teacher teaching tangential subjects; a teacher that teaches three to four different subjects. Perhaps this is not an occupational hazard, as one of my good friends will always argue that this is a perfect illustration of what is called interdisciplinary studies. After all, latest workforce vocabulary gets to call it with the euphemism – multi-tasking. Perhaps the height of teachers' dilemma in Nigeria today is that

***"Teachers in Nigeria are not only underpaid; most school owners dehumanize their teachers by overlaboring them. Sadly, our education will continue on this ugly path unless something encouraging is done quickly to reverse the deplorable conditions of her teachers."***



students now waylay their teachers for parents to barge into schools with thugs to beat teachers on the offence that they dared to correct students.

Why should I think that I am not being a nihilist for thinking that the idea of a better tomorrow in the Nigerian education sector is implausible? I happen to know a maxim that says that the quality of a country's teachers is the quality of her education. For crying out loud, Nigeria is not Angela Mikel's Germany where teachers are the highest-paid employees.

There will always be the incurable optimists who will argue that these uncomplimentary views about Nigeria are nothing but opinions of naysayers and alarmists who enjoy blowing issues out of proportion. It is usual for these sets of patriots to push that education in Nigeria is not nosediving, that the statistics of nationwide examinations such as West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Commission

(NECO) show that students performances today are far better than what was three decades back. Of course, this is the true report card. The other side of the same statistics that these patriots have always been blinded to is that today's youth and their proprietors and proprietresses have perfected ways to beat examination bodies to malpractices; that the students' sterling performances in schools have not always aligned with their capacity developments.

I am not too sure that this pathetic situation is not the same in other African countries. I really hope that things will be different from how we were taught in Physical Geography class back in secondary school where for the broadness of the subject, as with this matter of education, we were always taught the Nigeria Physical Geography and told that whatever happens in Nigeria will replicate in other West African countries.



# ***Plozee***

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***Good luck! :)***





## I CAN'T WAIT FOR **TOMORROW**

*Pelekani Lwenje, Zambia*

Towela stared at the clear blue sky, with occasional clouds. The sun was bright, but the cool green grass she lay on kept her cool. It had been raining a few hours ago and like magic, the rain had been replaced by the clear blue sky and the most beautiful rainbow she had ever seen. Two rainbows.

As she counted the colours in the rainbow, she thought of the homework the teacher had given them at school. Teacher Mwansa had told them to write an essay of what they wished would happen in Africa in a hundred years. Towela was excited by this. She always loved dreaming about things. Every time her mother watched the news, she would feel sad at all the terrible things people were doing to one another. She dreamt of a tomorrow without suffering and hunger. A tomorrow where all the children of Africa would dance peacefully with all the children of the world. A tomorrow where the lions and wild animals would no longer be hunted by evil men. It was just a dream, but why couldn't it be true?

Towela saw a large object in the sky. It seemed to be coming down towards where she lay. She realised, as it came closer, that it was the biggest bird she had ever seen. It looked like an eagle. It was as big as a house. Towela was very scared. Was it a monster? Did it come to eat her? The huge bird landed just next to her. Towela kept very quiet. She looked up at its face and was surprised to find that the huge bird was looking down at her.

"My name is Kakoshi. How are you doing Towela?!" The huge bird had just introduced itself. Towela could not believe her ears. Did the bird just talk to her? How did it know her name? Was she going crazy? She was about to ask Kakoshi a question when the huge bird spoke first. "I have come to take you to the gate of time."

"Why?" Towela asked. Kakoshi laughed. "Don't be afraid. Are you not the one who dreams of tomorrow?" Towela was surprised by this. How did Kakoshi know?

Kakoshi laughed again when he saw the look

on Towela's face. He crouched down and invited Towela to climb on his feathery back. Then he told Towela to hold on tight. Towela could feel her heart beating so fast, she was afraid it was going to jump out of her chest. Kakoshi took off so fast that Towela never had the chance to close her eyes. The sky was surely beautiful. She could not believe that she was flying.

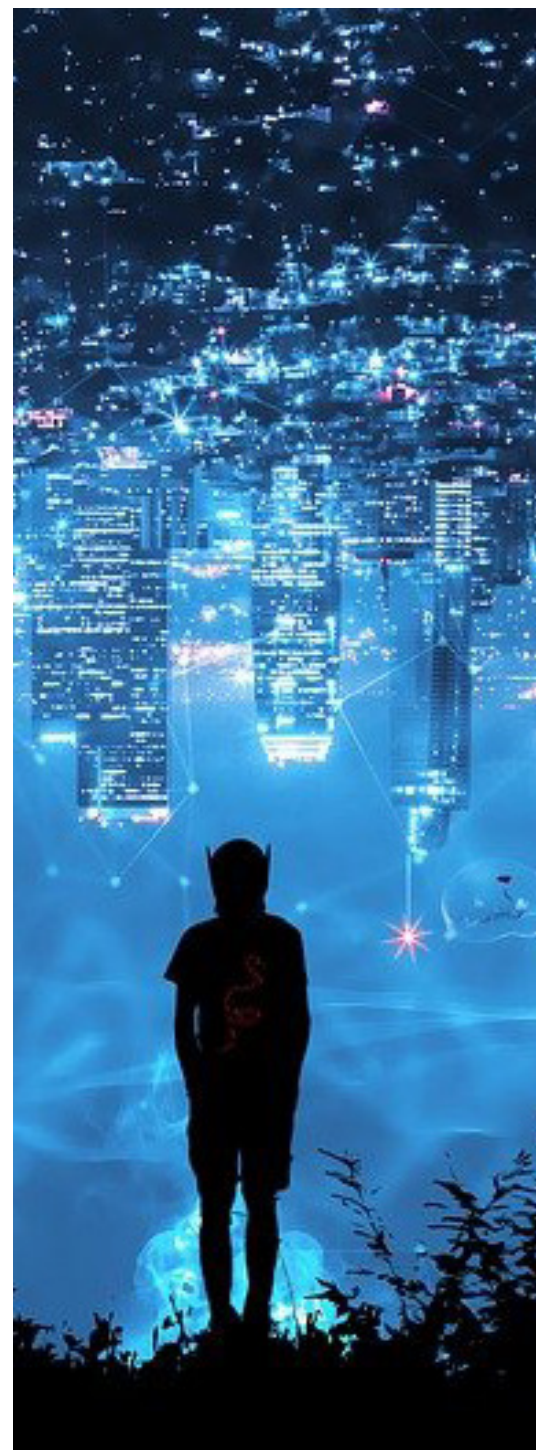
Kakoshi flew higher and higher, and finally stopped in front of what looked like a huge golden clock. Towela saw another huge bird. This bird was even bigger than Kakoshi. It looked like an owl. "I am Icipululu," said the huge owl. "Greetings, Towela. I will open the gate of time." Towela watched as Icipululu flew in front of the huge clock and hooted four times. "HOOT! HOOT! HOOT! HOOT!" Then the clock opened like a gate. Kakoshi wasted no time. He flew right in.

Towela could not believe what she saw as they flew into the gate of time. She could see bright colors like the rainbow. She could see many African countries changing before her eyes. Buildings changing into many shapes. Cars with strange

designs. People dressed in new types of clothes. Then Kakoshi stopped and landed on top of a tall building. Towela jumped off Kakoshi to get a better look.

They were buildings as tall as her eyes could see. Some cars were flying like planes. She could see huge Televisions that flew around broadcasting everything from the news to new types of food. It all looked like a dream. A dream that she did not want to wake up from. Everywhere she looked something new caught her eyes. Kakoshi gently nudged her back with his beak. It was time to go back. Towela felt sad, but also she felt happy. She climbed back on Kakoshi's back and watched as they flew through the gate of time.

She thanked Kakoshi and watched the huge bird fly away. She lay back on the grass. She felt happy because she now knew what she was going to write in her essay. Dreams do come true. All you had to do was believe. Towela knew that Africa was headed for a bright future. "I can't wait for tomorrow," she said as she once again thought of what Kakoshi had shown her. She got up and ran back home to write her essay.





# A LETTER FOR MARIE AND ANNE

*Immaculate Ajiambo, Kenya*

On the 29th of September, one bright Sunday morning as Marie and Anne were preparing for church, they came across a letter addressed to them.

The two girls got excited. They had received letters before but this one had not been part of them. Marie asked Anne,

"When did we open this letter?"

"I don't know. I just found it at the bottom of our suitcase."

They admired the pink flowers on the blue envelope. They must have read the letter before but couldn't recognize it. Their anxiety was evident on their faces. They smiled. Their eyes wide open to notice every mark on the paper.

"Wow! Look at this drawing on the writing pad," Marie marveled. She carefully opened the writing pad exposing words artistically crafted. Marie read the letter:

*Dear girls,*

*You are beautiful. You are intelligent. You are amazing. You are everything great. I love you my Marie and Anne.*

*You have taught me patience. You have shown me what true love is at two weeks old. Your delicate hands on my face reminds me that life is beautiful. Your innocent giggles tickle my ears and fill my heart with soft music. You have literally coloured my world.*

*When the doctors told me that you were almost ready for the world, I cried. How would I be a mother to two amazing angels? What will I be doing with you every hour? Where will I hide you for safety? I then realized that this was every mother's concern.*

*I hope that this letter will be there when you come of age to understand every word. It is my prayer that this piece will shine some light my darlings and keep you moving someday.*

*When growing up I wanted to be a lawyer. My father did his best to educate me. Mother was always*

there to visit me at school and organize for tuition. I had the most supportive parents. The society questioned my father why he spent a lot of money on my education. They called him names but he ignored them. My parents believed in me. I did not let them down. I did my all and had my first; first girl to join Alliance Girls High School and first female lawyer in the village. It was a fete. Girls I did it!

Beside Youfszai Malala, Ashura Michel, Hellen Shikanda, Yvonne Okwara, Oprah Winfrey, Graca Machel, Sarah Agbor, and Shanice Chebet, I know many ladies who have done great. Many girls who have risen ranks to break the ceiling and conquer the world. These girls and women are in every sector even those that women

were forbidden to venture; geospatial engineering, construction, software development, finance analysts, presidents, prime ministers, international policy makers. It is heartwarming to see women explore their potential, live their dreams and impact the society.

My girls, you are destined for greatness. Go for it. You can do anything your mind believes in. Impossible simply means I'm possible and you can overcome your fear by trying. You lose nothing by trying but you gain regrets when it all remains a wish or failure to try. I pray that in all you undertake, there will be no giving up.

Marie and Anne, there is a proverb that states, still waters run deep. This means that your actions should speak louder than

words. Dream, write the dream down, and swing into action. Be careful not to share your plans because you might miss the focus. Also, surround yourself with like-minded people. You need positive energy to move positively.

Lastly, love yourself abundantly. Feed your mind by reading books. Eat healthy. Exercise and drink a lot of water.

Ps. Your dreams of tomorrow are valid!

Lots of Love,  
Mummy Samantha.

"Mmmmmh" said the girls in unison.

"I can confidently dream of being an author and an education expert," Marie said with conviction.

Anne added, "I want to be a CEO of a blue chip company."

"That's massive. Are you sure?"

"Why not. Mum says my dreams of tomorrow are valid.

They hug each other for a while before they hear their mother's voice calling them to hurry up.





# THE SUN

*Veronica Kalihadya, Tanzania*

Once upon a time in a small village of Luma, there lived different people. They were called different people because no one knew how they looked. Even they too did not know how they looked because only darkness existed in their land.

Even at that, the people loved and cared for one another. They did not mind that they had never seen each other at all, because of the darkness.

One day one person whom everyone in Luma believed to be the tallest because his voice always seemed to come from higher position than everyone, told them,

“My dear fellow villagers, are you happy? Because for many years I have not been happy.”

“I am as well not happy,” replied a small voice.

“Why are you not happy little one?” Everyone asked with eagerness.

The little one muttered, “I want to see everyone.”

Everyone in Luma wanted to see how another person looked like and how other things were. They were always imagining how beautiful it will be to be able to see everything in Luma.

“Let every single person here in our village pray,” said the tallest person.

One day passed... Two days passed... Three days passed... Four days passed... And a week passed still it was dark. Then they started crying. But they never gave up praying.

One morning, they woke up to a shiny light that was shimmering in their eyes. But after some hours their eyes started to ache because of the light. It was scorching hot and it burnt their eyes. They talked among themselves again,

“It’s so beautiful that we can see everything and everyone but this shiny thing up there is hurting our skin and eyes.”

They started a prayer for it again and again for days. One week passed and two weeks passed. When they thought that nothing would change,

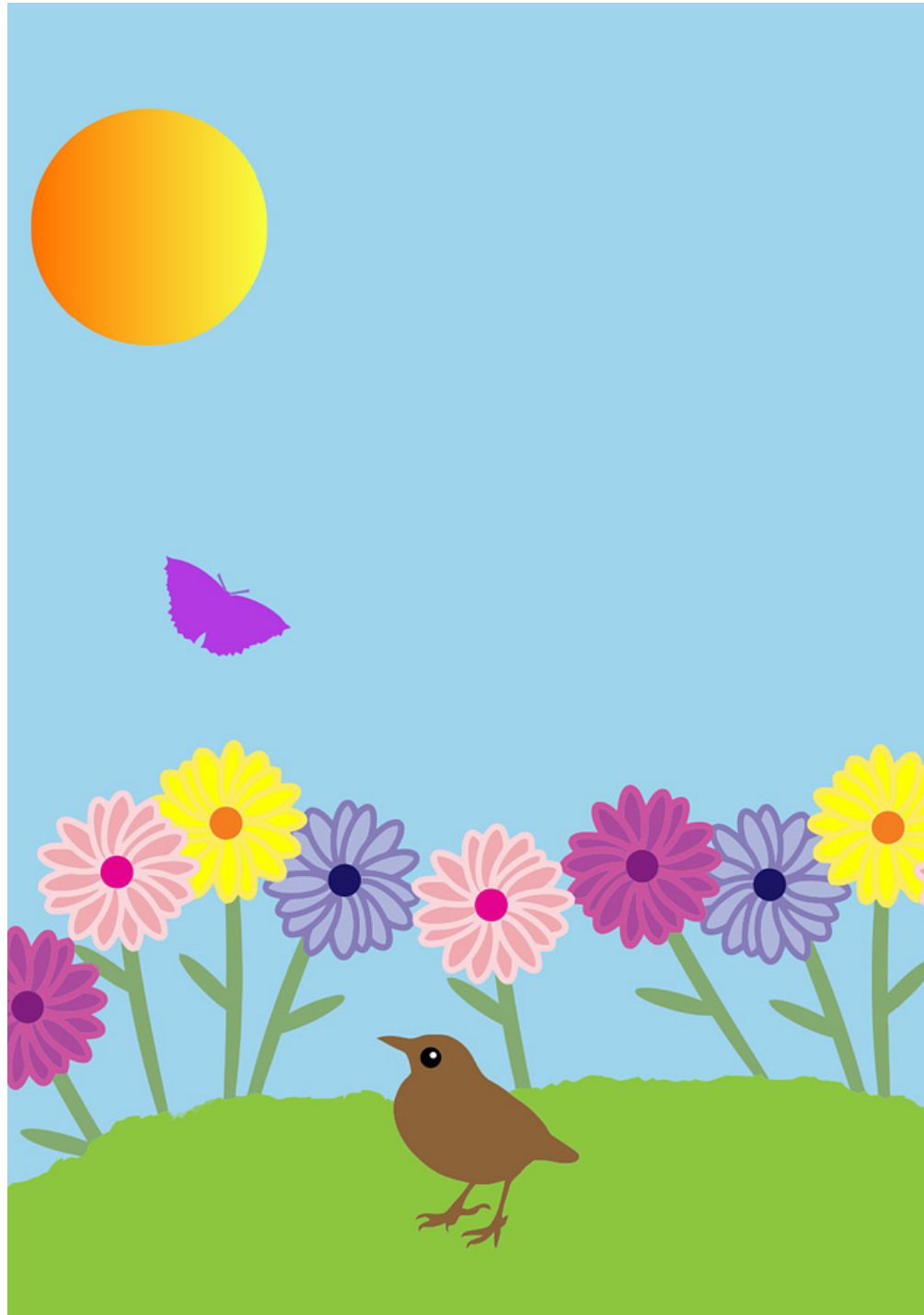
a big voice thundered to them from within the light, “I heard your voices and prayers and I will give you night to replace the sun.”

Since that day the shining light was divided into two; the day and night when it rises and sets. The little voice said to all,

“This thing is very shiny; can I call it the shining sunshine?”

“Yes, little one,” said the eldest man of all in Luma. “Let us be thankful for the beautiful sunshine.” He said this while looking at the little voice whom they could now see was from a little beautiful girl.

For a week they prayed a prayer of gratitude on receiving such a blessing. Just because they were thankful, they received more blessings of stars, the moon and flying birds on the sky. And since then, Luma had day and night; the day when the sun rises and the night when the sun sets to leave room for the moon and stars to shine during night.



In this edition of the Writers Space Africa Magazine, we bring you an amazing mother, teacher, and Children's book author who is passionate about impacting children's life for the better through her books. Join me, Blessing Peter Titus (PPBlessing), as I have a chat with Corona Cermak, the beautiful Tanzanian who currently resides in the Czech Republic.

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*PPBlessing: Thank you so much for honouring our invitation, can you tell us who Corona is?*

**CC:** Corona Cermak is a children books writer, a kindergarten teacher and Swahili language advocate. She is also a mother of three.

*PPBlessing: You have an interesting name. How have you felt from the time of this ravaging pandemic till now about your name?*

**CC:** Self-love is very important to me. I love my name and I love how it makes me feel. Corona means Crowns and the ring around the sun. What came after that is just an extra information. Corona Virus is a situation that I chose not to define me. I was baptised Corona because I was born on the 14 of May and that's when we celebrated saint

Corona. Otherwise, my African name is Mkasafari which means a person who travels. I travel with my names which Crown me with a lot of blessings in my life.

*PPBlessing: Beautiful. Does being a Swahili language advocate mean your stories are written in Swahili?*

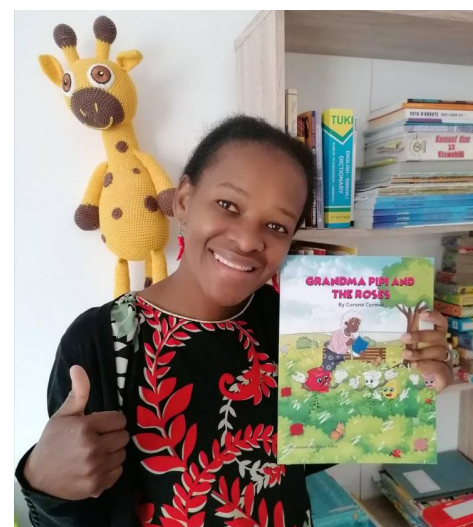
**CC:** Yes, I have them in Swahili and English

*PPBlessing: When did you begin writing and why?*

**CC:** I began writing as a teenager but I seriously started writing when I had my first child in 2013. The reason behind it is that my husband and I decided to teach our children Czech and Swahili languages and because there were not enough resources for Swahili, I decided to write my own stories for my children.

*PPBlessing: Wonderful. It's great that you are pushing these African languages out there and teaching your children as well.*

**CC:** I think it is very important for children who have parents from different backgrounds to know their parents' languages. Through these languages they



Receiving the first copy of her book, *Grandma Pipi and the Roses*.

discover themselves better and they are not strangers in their own cultures.

*PPBlessing: You mentioned earlier that you are a teacher, what do you teach?*

**CC:** I teach children English in the kindergarten, and adults, Swahili at Masaryk University here in Brno. I also teach Swahili online. CoolSwahili is my online school.

*PPBlessing: What influences your writing the most? What's your motivation?*

**CC:** My children, Tanzanian child, and African child. I want them to know, to love and to learn what surrounds them. I want the African child to love herself and himself. To be able



Receiving the Award from **AFRICAN WOMEN IN EUROPE 2019** in the Netherlands



to stand tall and know what power they have because they know themselves better.

*PPBlessing: Beautiful. Have you been able to achieve this?*

**CC:** I am still in the process. With my children, I will say Yes. Through the story I have published recently Grandma Pipi and the Roses, I have managed to help my children know that it does not matter what colour one has. All what matters is that we share love and a lot of things among us as Humans.

*PPBlessing: How many books have you published so far and how can one access them?*

**CC:** I have so far published 2 books, but they are 4 because they are in English and Swahili.

1. Grandma Pipi and the Roses.
2. Bibi Pipi na Maua waridi.
3. Rooster's Voice
4. Sauti ya Jogoo.

All my books are available on all Amazon UK, USA, China, Japan, Germany etc, and on Lantern books. Just put my name Corona Cermak and the title of the book. Note! Only Bibi Pipi na Maua Waridi book is not available on Amazon at the moment. The other books are also on Kindle (both on Amazon and smashwords Webpage), or one can borrow at a very cheap price from Lantern Webpage

*PPBlessing: Thank you. Let's step back a little bit, why did you choose to be a teacher?*

**CC:** Teaching chose me. I had to teach because that was the job I first got when I arrived in the

Czech Republic. The first day at work, I knew that's what I wanted to do. Because;

1. I had a child, so I needed to know how Czech people raise their children.
2. I wanted to learn Czech language in a very simple way, from children.
3. I just enjoyed playing and talking to children.

*PPBlessing: Oh... Interesting. So what profession were you in before this?*

**CC:** I did law, British law. Which is of no use in Czech Republic.

*PPBlessing: Okay. What will you tell a newbie who wants to be a children's book writer?*

**CC:** Start now. Start where you are. Start with what you have. Write what you think and with time, you will see how the story develops. Read a lot of stories which might be similar to what you want to write. Do your research well and know what you want. Ask people and be informed.

*PPBlessing: Thank you. Any tips on publishing?*

**CC:** If you are first timer, go for



Celebrating the International Children's Day on the 1st of June at Safirka Kindergarten.



At the launch of Rooster's Voice at Safirka Kindergarten in Brno, Czech Republic in 2018. In the audience are Corona's students and their parents.

self-publishing first, Amazon, Lulu, and many more platforms are available for this. It's difficult to publish your work with a publishing house. They take quite a long time. Unless you are super good or your family member owns a publishing house. Otherwise keep on writing because you will never know which story will be a big talk of the world.

*PPBlessing: Have you won any awards?*

*CC:* Yes, I was awarded Writer of the year 2019 by African Women in Europe (AWE) for my books; Rooster's Voice and Sauti ya Jogo.

*PPBlessing: Do you have works published elsewhere aside your two books? If yes, where?*

*CC:* Yes. My story Baby Caterpillar was published in the February 2022 Edition of the Writers Space Africa Magazine under the Children's literature section. I have two stories with Longhorn; Seed the Traveller and Mbegu Msafiri which I am hoping will be out soon this year. Bibi Pipi na Maua Waridi has been published by Crown-Bird Publishers, an independent publishing company in London. I also have stories on my YouTube channel (Corona Cermak).

*PPBlessing: Thank you so much for your time, it was wonderful chatting with you. Any concluding words as we wrap up the interview?*

*CC:* Thank you and well done to you. Having a baby and trying

to make ends meet is always not easy. We need more African writers for our children. We need more books written by Africans so that our children can find themselves in those stories through characters, environment, or situation described. Let us keep on writing.

This brings us to the end of our interview for this month, join us again next month as we bring you another interesting author. Thank you and keep reading the Writers Space Africa Magazine.



A child colouring a Rooster after reading the book, Rooster's Voice.



## CALL FOR SUBMISSION

Poetic Africa, a quarterly online poetry magazine published by Writers Space Africa, calls for submissions from poets for her May 2022 edition.

*Africa is blessed with mothers who bore and raised giants of nations. Their contributions to nation-building, though huge, are rarely documented. Are mothers more than just mothers to you? Write and submit your poem under the theme **MOTHER**.*

The editorial team is looking for poems of a maximum of 24 lines, creativity and originality, use of poetic devices and economy of words. Please present well-arranged poetry and note that the poem titles should not have the word "Mother".

The submission window is from February 11th until March 10th 2022. The edition will be released on May 10th 2022.

To submit, please visit <https://writersspace.net/poeticafrika>. Submissions in French or Swahili are accepted (without equivalent translations in English).

# IDENTITY

*Overcomer Ibiteye, Nigeria*

When this is over,  
we'll be enmeshed in a battle for names,

a clamor to be known  
to be called something.

Every one of us will want to be seen on TV,  
sandbagged into ashy headlines:

Sixty Blacks, now whitewashed.  
And when our kids ask us to tell them

where our identities are buried, our throat cells will fold  
into extinction.

How do you describe the anatomy of loss to a child?  
This sacred space where our cultures are stored

before decaying into stuffy libraries, do you call it a tomb?  
And this compressed mass of white tongues

filtering into our souls, do you call it the future?  
We'll have to borrow fancy words like

"colonization" and "white supremacy" to soften the thud of a continent  
falling into oblivion.

And when they ask if it's okay to dream, to hope,  
we'll show them our scars,

and we'll say:  
scars are remnants of dreams.



# NEXT PAGE

*Israel Victor Okwaput, Uganda*

We won't regret the past  
Or wish to shut the door on it  
But here trying to hang on sobriety  
Tightening the ropes of vigilance upon the next day  
Living on the loose strings of culture  
Strings that seem never to break completely  
Probably owing to the reality of hope  
And the dividends of the sweat of a toiling black mother.

We have a race to defend and fend for  
A granary of ways to preserve and strings to knot  
A mindset to oil and filter  
And a generation to come- to be fed with more of the same.

No more closed eyes if I may dream  
No more dreams but visions, if I may call tomorrow-today!



# DEAR TOMORROW

*Jainaba Danso, Gambia*

Dear tomorrow,  
I know I'm afraid of heights  
But I wish not to grow old  
Doing the same thing everyday.

I know you're worried  
Because of my trillion phobias,  
But today I wish to be a kite  
Skating my own path.

Let me learn through rejections,  
No more friendship with self doubt.  
Freedom is the key I seek,  
So let me fly to explore my might.

Rest assured I'll fly to my height  
Without a trace of lost hope.  
Even when I crash to trash,  
I'll still find my wing to win.



# HOPE FOR FUTURE YEARS

*Rose Bih Ngwa, Cameroon*



Silently they look up to the sky  
Wanting to let go, willing to fly  
They spread their battered wings  
Poised to soar even as the bell rings

Spelling yet more imminent doom  
Have they any inclination to make room  
For more scorching speeches  
Flowing from the mouths of gaunt leeches?

Do they seek hell while still on earth?  
Have the licking flames from the hearth  
Not brightened their choked minds?  
Do they aspire to pay back in kind?

Tap! tap! Comes the saintly devil  
Oozing sweetness reserved for the heavenly level  
He is taxed with one goal this time;  
Fooling and taking all, even the last dime.

They maintain a pitiable sheepish gait,  
Daily fattening the devil for the bait  
Then comes the long-awaited moment  
To clearly denounce the long years of torment.

Publicly, they cast out their miserable captive  
Rendering their frozen and shattered limbs active  
For yonder, they perceive sweet freedom  
And seek only to erect their own kingdom.

# AUTOLYSIS

*Victor Garuba, Nigeria*

These lines on my palms  
are not palmar creases  
they are the topography  
of a place

where  
the fossils  
are a muss of  
mildews and molds  
Strangling the saplings

In this place,  
Pens are deadlier than guns.  
Honesty is a leper  
and integrity  
Is a chameleon of resources.

It is a bad place—this place.  
and we must rescue  
The good people of this place  
From this place  
And destroy this place  
So, there is no place like this place.





# THE DAME NAMED HOPE

*Faith Azeez, Nigeria*



The protracted dusk of yesterday  
Conspires with the stubborn eclipse  
That refuses to exit today's sky

The whale of anguish in past misdeeds  
Keeps stirring the currents  
That storm this Dame's troubled vessel,  
from underneath.

How will this Dame walk to embrace  
The light awaiting at the end of her tunnel?  
Will she feel her way through the deadly dark,  
Or dare the blue sea rambling at her?

This Dame is a Willow, dodging the blades  
of ferocious wind storming at her  
This Dame has invented her compound eyes  
She moves on tiniest hope's flashing guide-light  
And waddles on faith's mustard's assurance.

Let razing fire turn Ìròkòs to ashes  
Let the crocodile shed tears  
For the demise of her preys;

Still, all the love and crazy over she never had,  
She is resolute to plant them in tomorrow's seedlings;  
Watch them bud into luxuriant trees  
And reap the laboured fruits  
In her untired palms.



# BEYOND THE HILLS

*Patricia Peace Ejang, Uganda*



Far above the canopies,  
Beyond the hills  
Where the sun kisses the land,  
There rests our hope.

Far above the skies,  
Beyond the hills  
And the gurgling of the streams,  
There rests a burning ray of tomorrow.

Far above the tallest buildings,  
Beyond the hills  
Despite our pockets carrying coins and broken dreams,  
There rests what we will be.



# DERANGED

*Lebogang Samson, Botswana*

Dispirited; he was  
Fragments of his hopes  
Sliced his wrecked soul.

Foul; now his middle name,  
His life  
Never been pellucid.

Pearls scattered,  
Once his beam of hope.  
The milky gown, more misery.

His only moissanite; no more  
Bleak future; Now less a man.  
His only rib, no more.

The yacht, a to-do list  
For his only moissanite.  
But, tomorrow never arrived.



## A DIFFERENT WORLD

*Oluwabusayo Madariola, Nigeria*

The torture was in the slow movement. Tamilore tried to contain the wave of dread in her shaking legs, as she handed over the white scroll card with two heartstrings at the center. The kitted security guard whose chest looked as if it could repel bullets took the rolled card without opening it. Guests in gorgeous outfits and delicate fragrances milling about. Standing at the archway design of transparent white curtain with green leaves taping the edges down to the floor, the two guards checked the guests' invite before stepping aside to allow them in. The towering guard said to her. "Step this way please?"

He held up the invite. "How did you secure this?"

She tried to muster an appropriate deceitful posture. "I'm one of the bride's friends."

"Miss," the tall security bent to

her height, "we both know this invite was doctored. Don't make a fool of yourself." He rose to his full length and brought out his baton.

Tamilore turned back in embarrassment.

"Where are you going?" Gbonju tapped her shoulder from behind.

Tamilore shook off the growing confusion clouding her mind. "He said the invite is not genuine."

The ground seemed to be moving rapidly beneath her as she bobbed after Gbonju who was dragging her along.

"Excuse me, ma'am," Gbonju pushed aside the older woman just handling her invite to the security guard. "Are you the one who said my sister's invite is fake? How dare you say the bride's father's niece's invite is fake?"



Gbonju pushed through the guards with the physically shrunken Tamilore behind her as they rapidly ascended the steps. As the venue came in her view, Tamilore gawked, despite the embarrassment she'd just experienced. The spectacle of the beauty before her was gripping.

White Arabian tents with gold top cones stood in magnificence around the large rectangular swimming pool as Flavour's Nnekata blasted from speakers. Gbonju danced slowly towards an empty table at the center of the nearest tent as if nothing had happened. Two middle-aged men in red caps with feathers in them were seated at the adjacent table.

Tamilore turned her attention to the towering three glass

vases with flat bottoms on the flowery silk table cover. She wondered if her dreams would ever come true.

\*\*\*

"Why don't you sell it and use the proceed to further your education?" Her relative had said to her about three months ago.

The eighteen-year-old from the village was shell-shocked. She re-adjusted her wrapper firmly across her chest. "I can't. I'll work," Tamilore said.

"How do you think you can combine working and schooling? Or do you want to go back home?" Gbonju asked.

The mention of home brought painful memories. She had come in from school one day to meet the creditor who had

come to ask for the refund of the money he had lent her father the previous year. The same year he had died from a heart attack while working on his farm. With a glint in his eyes, the creditor had suggested that he would cancel the debt in exchange for her hand in marriage. She had screamed and ran inside the house.

"I don't want to marry now. I want to become a teacher." She had cried to her mother that night. The next day, her mother travelled with her to the city, to her distant cousin who worked at the government office. She knew her daughter's desire to be educated would be achieved in the city.

The sound of Gbonju's voice brought her back to the present. "You know how many pub-



lic schools have told us to make some payments despite the announcement by the government that education is free?”

\*\*\*

Tamilore sat ramrod stiff in the passenger seat.

He asked, keeping his hawk gaze on the road ahead. “What would you like to study when you finish secondary school?”

“I-I don’t know y-yet.” She stammered.

He slowed down at the automated gate illuminated by outdoor LED lights. The security guard finished going around the tinted Jaguar XF with the under-car inspection mirror. The metal gate slid open.

“I’ll take care of you and you won’t have to bother about money again.” He said switching off the ignition and turning to her. Elevated lesions covered the entire right side of his face. Sliding his body to her side, he depressed her seat and for a heavy man, he was quite quick.

\*\*\*

“I don’t know why you are still crying,” Gbonju said.

It was the next day and Tam-

ilore was still coiled up in bed. “I ... feel... dirty.” She croaked.

“Why should you? Because it was in the car? Gbonju scoffed. “Does it matter where your first time was? Don’t you know that five thousand is a lot of money for that exchange?”

A loud howl. The violent jerking of legs. Then the vicious hair pulling. Tamilore’s eyes were puffy red as she clenched the bed-cover over her body.

“Don’t kill yourself on something that’s not a big deal. Look at that pile of foreign currency. Soon you would complete your secondary and university education. You are using what’s yours to obtain what you need.”

\*\*\*

“Please pause your reading. I want you at a wedding reception tomorrow.” Gbonju laid a white cardboard on the table, sweeping her books aside.

Tamilore stumped her feet several times, “Our first term examination starts in two weeks. I’m preparing.”

“Two weeks is still a very long time away. Besides, this is more important at the moment.”

With religious concentration,

Gbonju cut and pruned the cardboard into shape. With a fountain pen, she wrote carefully inside the card as she looked at a picture on her phone intermittently. She smiled at the end product of the scroll-rolled card with strings.

“I’ll be leaving the house very early tomorrow for the wrapping of the souvenirs. All office assistances in our secretariat have to meet to perform that task. We’ll be distributing the gifts at the reception; my entry would be automatic. You’ll use this invite to access the reception venue.”

Ignoring her statement, Tamilore said with a belligerent tone. “I’ll need to pay for my physics lesson on Monday.”

“Then make sure you catch a rich guy tomorrow.”

Her forehead squeezed. “I want to pay for it from my money in your account.”

“What money? Don’t tell me you talking about those foreign notes I changed to naira months ago? Haven’t you been eating in this house? How do you think I pay for the roof over your head? I warned you about your decision to not

see Otunba again but you said you'll manage the money you got. You thought the dollars will last forever."

With slumped shoulders, her voice tensed, "you have been taking from my money?"

"Just come dressed-up tomorrow and let's hope you'll catch the eye of a rich guy. I... Uhm... you need money to continue your education."

\*\*\*

The MC announced from the podium. "Ladies and gentlemen, please bang your cutleries on your plate as we call on the father of the bride."

The short man cleared his throat. "My heart is filled with gratitude, and my wife and I thank you for honouring us with the joy of your presence. Our daughter makes us proud and we always salute her hard work and resilience. In the gladness of our hearts, we're gifting her a house."

A thunderous roar went up from the tents as the excited bride jumped on her father's neck. At that instant, Luther Vandross's dance with my father began playing, and father with daughter danced slowly, in a circle.

As the short heavy man in the white agbada swayed his daughter, the right side of his face came into Tamilore's view from the distance. It was covered with darkened lesions up to his chin.

\*\*\*

Gbonju snored loudly from her usual dead sleep as Tamilore brought out the ten fifty-dollar bills she instinctively kept from the pile she brought back that unforgettable Friday night with the heavy man. She took the wristwatches and necklaces Gbonju kept in the jewellery box on the table. Gold pieces that had appeared after Gbonju said she'll keep her converted money for her.

Her eureka moment came

when she heard the thief of her innocence eulogize his daughter the previous day. Resilience and courage will take her to the future she's seen so many times in her head. Tamilore guessed that the foreign notes, when converted, would be enough to pay off her father's debt. The proceed from the sale of the jewellery pieces would be sufficient to pay for her educational requirements at her former village school.

With stiffened spine, Tamilore walked out of the house determined to give whatever it takes to obtain her secondary and university education. In her mind, she pictured herself in a graduation gown. Her mother beaming with a smile by her side.



# DEAR DIARY

*Ammar Somji, Tanzania*



Last night I had a mix of a flashback and a nightmare of the war between Ethiopia, and Eritrea. I recall the screams so loud it hurts your ears, the gun shots firing off all around you. BANG BANG BANG. [Alem twitches and mumbles in his sleep] The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea still rages on. The painful nights when we would go to sleep hungry. In the flashback I go to comfort my father as he begins to get emotional. I also miss my mother; we write letters to her every day, but it takes around one week just to get one to her.

The next morning the casualties' numbers come in - 24,000 dead, over 60,000 injured. No one knows when this war will end, but it has been rumored that the war is not even half-way done yet.

The church bell rings signaling that the infamous drawing will occur yet again. The draw-

ing happens every month. Five names from all the boys from ages fourteen and above from each village will be picked to go to frontlines of the war, the only exception is if you are unable to move or on death's doorstep. We gather around in the center of town waiting for the names to be chosen. I look around and see numerous people with their eyes closed and their hands together, praying that they don't get picked. [Alem mumbles and twitches in his sleep] A general sticks his hand in a bowl of names and finds a slip, he pulls it out from the bowl and smoothens the slip. He clears his throat and announces "ALEM KELO". My eyes shoot open, and I yell "NO" gasping for air, hair disheveled, fingers sore from gripping the blanket so tight. I look over to the window, dawn is breaking, the first rays of sunlight are visible. I glance at the clock beside the bed. 5:44 AM. [Alem quietly





gets out of bed] I do not want to wake my father from next door. Our rooms are separated by a thin wooden door. [Alem tiptoes all the way to the bathroom and splashes water on his face and says to himself “It was just a nightmare”] and uses the toilet. [After Alem finishes using the bathroom, he quietly closes the door and switches off the lights].

That’s when I realize my father’s room lights are on. I could tell because there was light shining from where the door meets the floor. [Alem quietly raps his knuckles on his father’s door]. Knock, Knock.

“Father.” [Alem say quietly]. No answer. “Father.” [Alem says slightly louder]. No answer. “Father” [Alem says even louder]. Still no answer. Panic sinks in. “Father, Father, Father!” [Alem says much louder, Alem simultaneously starts trying to twist the doorknob open but its locked]. [Alem can hear someone entering his father’s room] “Father!” [Alem cries out]. A muffled noise comes from outside the room. [Alem is quiet]. [The sound of a door unlocking and someone rattling keys, someone inserts a key into the thin wooden door that separates Alem’s room from his fa-

ther’s. It’s not Mr Kelo. “Right, what’s going on here then? We’ll have no noise in here.” Says an important looking man in a sharp suit. Alem frantically asks “Where is my father?” In broken English. “Where’s Mr. Kelo then? And where did he put that elephant? In the bathroom? Mr. Kelo?” The man calls out. “Where is my father?” Asks Alem again. “Do. You. Know. Where. Mr. Kelo. Is?” Asks the man. “I want my father,” says Alem. “Where is Mr. Kelo? Mr. Kelo? Mr. Kelo?” Says the man.

[Alem screams at the top of his lungs] “No no no no no. Shhh Shhh... Shhhhh. I’m not going



to hurt. I'm not going to hurt you. Says the man. [The man sees the letter on the mirror of the bed side table and picks it up]. "Where is he?" The man mumbles to himself. [The man reads the letter] "Oh. Oh, I see," says the man. "He's coming back," says Alem. "I'll call the people and we'll get this sorted." Says the man. "He's coming back, you lie to me. He's coming back, you lie to me". I repeat to the man. "Just calm down a minute, son." Says the man. "I am not your son!" I raise my voice at the man. "Calm down," says the man. "I'm not your son!" I say again. "I have to wake up. I must wake up. I have to wake up." "Shh-hhh Shhhhh, you'll wake the whole bloomin' house up, carrying on like that... [The man moves, Alem backs off]. "Wake up, wake up, wake up." I yell to myself. [The man holds out the letter]. "Ey... it's from him. From Mr. Kelo. [Alem moves back and his eyes flicker from the man's face to the letter]. "For you, lad." Says the man. [The man moves towards Alem like he's snared a tiger]. "It's okay.

I'm not going to hurt you. Do you hear me? I'm not going to hurt you. I've a son myself. Just like you. Not like you. But you know. Like you. Here..." says the man. [The man places the letter on the ground and leaves]. [Alem picks up the letter and starts reading].

"My dearest son, you have seen all the trouble that we have been going through back home," says Mr. Kelo. "Until fighting stops and our persecution is over," I mouth. "Until the fighting stops, and our persecution is over, your mother and I think that it would be best if you stay in England," says Mr. Kelo. "Your mother and I think that it would be best if you stay in England." [Tears roll down Alem's cheek] I whisper to myself. "We just cannot afford to risk another attack," says Mr. Kelo [In a disheartened way]. "On you; we value your life more than anything. We may be joining you soon," I say barely audible to my own ears. "If things get better, you will be joining us. Remember to love your neighbors because peace is better than war, wherever

you live. Your loving Father." "Your loving FATHER!" I repeat loudly. [Alem speaks from sadness to defiant anger]. "No, no, no, no! No! NO!" I scream. I rapidly pace around the room I walk towards the window of the apartment room and bang my fist on the wall. I yell in pain and clutch my fist while I yell "NO, NO, NO!" I then place both hands on my shirt collar and scream while I pull with all my might. I don't stop when I hear my t-shirt rip. I keep pulling until it feels like my hands are on fire. The tears I had tried to suppress was now freely flowing down my face. "WHY?!" I scream to no one in particular. I then collapse to the floor in a sobbing mess as I think about what my life would be like now without my parents and in a foreign country where I barely speak any English. I feel petrified knowing that many challenges and rough nights are to come in my now parent-less life. Knowing the inevitable will occur. I will be sent to an orphanage.



# SUCCESS HAS A **NAME**

*Ishola Kolawole, Nigeria*

As the aging headmaster gingerly mounted the podium, the students rose to their feet and greeted him in unison. Obiora Okpata was one of them. As he looked at the headmaster, he wondered if, like him, the elderly man had eaten anything all day, or his own lack of food was beginning to blur his sight. The man walks like a crushed cockroach struggling to stay alive, Obiora thought to himself as the umpteenth pang of hunger struck his flat belly.

He remembered the fight that took place the previous night between his parents, and it was not pretty. During the hot exchange of words inside their stuffy one-room apartment, his mother, popularly called Mama Obi by the neighbours, cursed the day she met his father, saying her spirit warned her that the man standing before her and grinning at her had no trace or ounce of prosperity in him, but she was too foolishly blown away by his handsome looks to care for that. Obiora's

father had replied by saying that her bad luck was responsible for his unfortunateness, citing how thriving he had been before she came into his life. And the night ended with Papa Obi furiously kicking away the pot of scarcely delicious egusi soup, the proposed dinner that his wife had managed to put together for the family of six, Obiora being the eldest of four underfed boys.

The baritone voice of the headmaster brought Obiora back to

the present. The rumour quietly spreading across the community is that the headmaster is preparing for an early retirement due to a recurring chest pain that just will not go away permanently. His successor is yet unknown, but for today, he is still in charge and that confers on him the privilege to introduce the person for whom the entire staff and students of Benedict Foster Memorial Grammar School have gathered. The expected visitor chose that moment to step into the expansive school hall and the students rose again to acknowledge him by clapping excitedly and whispering among themselves. Yes, it was truly him, Engineer Josiah Njoku, recipient of both national and international scholarships and illustrious son of their community. Engineer Njoku, fluent and charismatic, speaking English like Queen Elizabeth and Ibo like the Obi of Onitsha. Engineer Njoku, who has travelled to several European countries on the sponsorship of the Nigerian government. Engineer Njoku, an alumnus of BFM, as the school is popularly called.

The headmaster patiently waited for the uproar to end before

carrying out his assignment. After everyone were seated, he smiled and began the story of a small boy who he first met many years ago, crying because he didn't want to come to school. His father's promise to buy him his favourite toy did nothing to make him feel better. The headmaster recounted how he pacified the boy who was still clinging to his mother's wrapper and refused to let go. Eventually, he did and even allowed the headmaster to hold his hand and lead him away to class as his parents looked on in amazement. The headmaster signaled to them to quietly take their leave before the boy changes his mind. The boy turned and waved at his parents before they were out of sight. The headmaster went on to say that despite the difference between their ages, the small boy became his close friend and the small boy is no other than Engineer Josiah Njoku. He then called on him to join him on the podium amidst thunderous claps.

As Obiora looked on at the hugely successful young engineer, he saw a future version of himself, the life he wants to live, and the path he hopes

to tread. At that moment, he forgot the nauseating poverty at home and the hunger that was mocking his insides. Obiora longed for what Engineer Njoku has. He was oblivious of the crowd around him as he kept his gaze on the man who now stood alone on the podium after the headmaster returned to his seat. Students and staff also lowered themselves down to their seats. Only Obiora was still standing until his friend, Chike, roughly pulled at him.

After reintroducing himself, Njoku appreciated the entire school for the warm reception given to him and particularly thanked the headmaster who has been there for him since he lost his beloved parents in a car accident. He got his audience reeling with renewed excitement when he announced that the entire school is invited to his forthcoming wedding. When the noise had died down, he went on to address all and sundry, citing the hurdles he faced while climbing the ladder of success and the many people he met on his way up. The engineer was repeatedly emphatic about his parents' involvement in his success story but he wished they were

around to see the results of their hard work and prayers for him.

While Chike and the other boys debated on the price of Njoku's suit and shoes, Obiora was lost in thought. The engineer's face kept appearing in his mind, his eloquent words ringing in his ears, while his own belly become bolder in reminding him of its emptiness. He sighed severally as he thought of all he had heard from Njoku. Hopefully, Mama would have sourced for garri for the family to drink, he thought to himself. If he was to be as successful as Njoku, he would need his parents. If he must turn out like that brilliant engineer, he needs help. Mama could still be counted upon at least, but Papa? The answer was obvious. What does one expect from a drunkard?

Obiora could still remember the day his father came home, heavily drunk and looking like he fell into mud a couple of times. How he managed to get home was still a puzzle. He raved about his rising fortune that later became a misfortune, no thanks to Mama Obi. He raved about how he will bounce back and kick her out

to marry a new wife. He raved about Obiora taking after his mother as if he was a female child. He raved on and on until there was nothing else to rave about. Oddly, his mother didn't say a word. Thank God she didn't, maybe it would have turned out worse. But he didn't rest until he had landed a deafening slap on Somto, Obiora's immediate younger brother's left cheek. The poor boy looked at his mother for help but he gone none. Mama Obi seem to have promised herself that the only voice the neighbours will hear is that of her drunk husband. On that day, Obiora concluded that he had no father.

His guess was a right one when he got home. Mama Obi had gotten garri on credit and soaked it well to swell before the boys settled down to devour it. Somto, Ebube and Chukwuka were all ready for the drinking feast. To their greatest surprise, their eldest brother declined the invitation. Mama Obi was shocked as well. She called her son aside and asked him what the problem was. Obiora answered his mother that his dreams are bigger than his appetite. Mama Obi was lost. And Obiora told

her everything that happened in school while his younger brothers drank on. Mama Obi sighed and reassured him of her unceasing support for his education. She was able to persuade him to join his brothers before they finished the garri.

As Obiora lay on the mat that night, he resolved to do all it takes to be educated. He will not solely depend on his mother's help. Much as he will be grateful to her, there is so little she can do. And his father was undoubtedly not to be counted upon. He knew his future lies in his hands, and his dreams are exclusively his to fulfill.



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# WSA MAGAZINE REVIEW

## FEBRUARY 2022 EDITION

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# TITLE: CREATING YOUR POSSIBLE FUTURE (ARTICLE)

WRITER: RUTH AKUBUDIKE, NIGERIA

**Reviewer: Chidiebere Udeokechukwu, Nigeria**

"Think And Grow Rich" (written by Napoleon Hill) is arguably one of the most influential books of the 20th and 21st centuries. Key takeaways from this wonderful self-help literature are that "you are the god of your destiny" and that a sure way to success is through proper planning. Ruth Akubudike restates this age-old philosophy in her article titled "Creating your Possible Future".

She begins this self-help/development exposé by conceptualising goals as "the idea of a possible future that one hopes to achieve". Plans by extension, are laid out blueprints to attain desired goals.

According to her, plans are essential to the attainment of goals because they keep one within the trajectory of focus regardless of the uninspiring uncertainties of the future. Ruth concedes thus, "although the future is not one hundred per cent certain, nor do we have clear-cut images of what it will be like, we can still make plans to ensure that we do not go off course". This truth speaks volumes to the near absolute futility of doing things by the wimps or without goals. While living each day as it comes may work in some circumstances, it is stressed that "there are other vital aspects of life that require careful thinking and proper tailoring", and this review couldn't agree more with her on this notion.

In winding up, the article denotes the importance of goals and plans. Essentially, goals inspire new behaviours including supplying the required momentum to face life's tests that surely will come in the while of pursuing goals. Setting down plans to attain goals ensures a focused demeanour on the most important things. More importantly, plans as blueprints to goals, act as protection from frivolous distractions.

Ruth Akubudike's article does not draw down the curtains without admitting that making plans to attain goals can be quite frightful and discouraging due to the perceived enormity of the challenges to come. To this end, a ready solution is proffered; "to start small". To attain goals, plans must be set out in splinters of attainable proportion to make things less daunting.



# TITLE: BABY CATERPILLAR (CHILDREN'S LITERATURE)

WRITER: CORONA CERMAK, TANZANIA

*Reviewer: Charity Modise, Botswana*



Some lessons are better learned from the little things around us. Nature gives out rich lessons in the most unexpected way using its children, insects not being an exception.

A caterpillar's worth is only seen when it scares away hunger yet its life journey is surely an inspirational one, offering lessons that'll cancel the hunger called failure completely. Baby Caterpillar by Corona Cermak takes us through an exciting yet difficult journey of a caterpillar.

The caterpillar that has just hatched decided to go on a mission to find its family. It went through obstacles, from nearly being stamped on by footballers; crossing and getting to the other side of the road safely, escaping the mouths of other animals that wanted to satisfy their empty bellies with her. As it is, the road that leads to one's destination is never an easy one.

Ever heard of a saying, "Rest but don't quit." It is as if the baby caterpillar has heard of it before although she was just a newly born. She has always continued with her journey after resting.

Her perseverance was finally paid off in the end as she was rewarded with wings and a beautiful body. She was a butterfly. Now she could find her family way much easier.

Baby Caterpillar is a story full of science engulfed in it. It answers the questions of children, in a rather interesting way about how caterpillars are born until they become butterflies.

The story teaches children about determination and growing a thick skin towards harsh circumstances for one to reach one's goals.



# TITLE: AT THE TOOTH OF DEATH (POETRY)

WRITER: PAUL BAMIDELE OLAYIOYE, NIGERIA

**Reviewer: M. S. Deen, Ghana**

There is no love in the world stronger than a mother's love for her child. Conversely, it is no wonder, too, to see a woman drape her baby in a plastic bag and cast it on a refuse dump, abandon the child on street, or maltreat the child in heartless ways. 'At the Tooth of Death' by Paul Bamidele Olayioye is a one-stanza lyrical poem in free verse that centres on parental negligence towards their children. The writer created a child as a victim of such mistreatment to the extent of dying.

The title summarizes the subject matter of the poem, at the verge of death and dying; it contains an indirect metaphor, as death is compared to a mammal. The part entailing such phrases as 'closing eyes', 'to will', 'bones ... heirloom' are associated diction to death. The poem begins:

*Under this lurking warped branch, waving  
to my closing eye, I chose to will a poem,  
to anyone that read it - let them know, my bones  
have heirloom the way of the elders; if you  
are patient, you can relic the pieces. (5)*

The tree metaphorically refers to mother or parent, so the 'branch' (born out of the tree) is the child. The branch however is 'warped' (line 1) symbolizing moral or mental distortion. Moreover, 'warped' connotes premature cast or wean

off the young. So on his sickbed, the persona address-es the mother:

*To my mother*

*I have no coffin neither to my bedridden body, after I  
have sand. The wars I fought are like the moments  
you were urinating on me, like a pebble from the bowel  
to the anus. (9)*

The mother manhandled the persona, disgracing and subjecting him through excruciating experiences. That is why the speaker likens his struggles to the mistreatment of the mother. The speaker quips, 'If the caterpillar had known the day / the butterfly would sprout, it would have glued its door' (lines 9 and 10). Perhaps the mother would have used a contraceptive or done an abortion if she knew the victim would develop.

Then the speaker gives general statements about how such incidence is rampant in their part of the world, perhaps Africa. I have watched the lilies/grow & die without planning for [them, and] saw the birds/pricked on chicks . . .' (11 - 13). The above lines indicate that parents shirk their responsibilities and many children are neglected and abused.

He now focuses on his experience or effects as he says:

*I have watched my gore volcano. I have become so frailed, & weak than brittle. The best, I see now, is to allow grass root on my face. If you see this poem, know that I have no variant for dying. My kismet have herald this day, long before the earth knew me. (18)*

The 'gore' signals a maligned wound that swells, the reason why the persona declares it as a 'volcano'. The wound ejects pangs, like a burning mountain, resulting in him becoming haggard or energy-sapped. The persona relinquishes all efforts of survival as he considers, 'to allow grass

root on [his] face' because he thinks God destined that fate since 'kismet have herald[ed] this day, long before the earth knew [him]'.

Through the lament of the poor child, Olayioye communicates the spate of the irresponsibility of many women in performing their motherhood duties. In this regard, abusing and irresponsible motherhood contributes to streetism and child mortality. What is more, if mothers act these ways towards their children, what would fathers do?



# TITLE: YOU MUST MOVE ON (SHORT STORY)

WRITER: CHUKWUEMEKA FAMOUS, NIGERIA

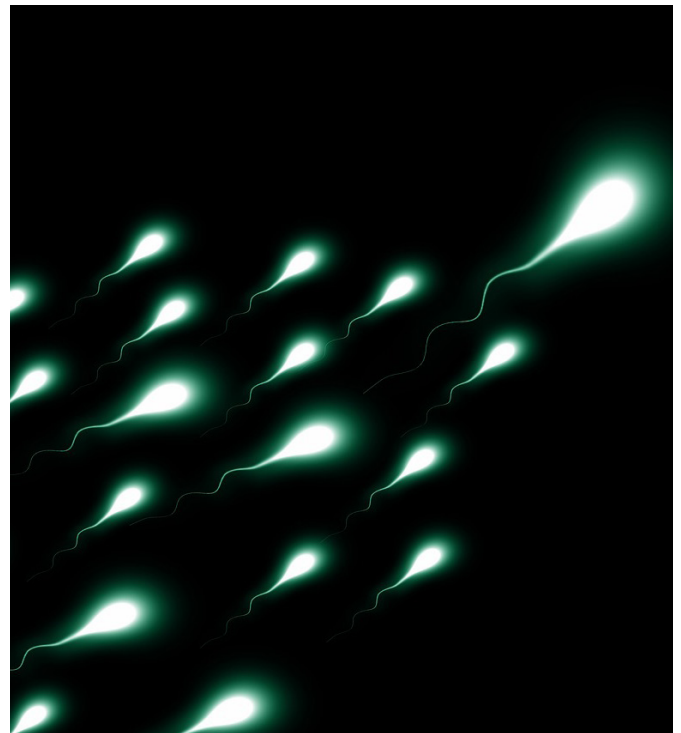
*Reviewer: Halieo Motanyane, Lesotho*

When we make our plans, it is with the belief that those plans will come to be. However, most times, out of all the plans we make every year, only a minimum percentage of them happen, as we have planned. Whereas a larger percentage is based much more on hope rather than our doings. Hope, belief, time, and determination are what make plans come to be, according to this beautiful story, “You must move on” by Chukwuemeka Famous. I could not agree more.

A good story should have a beginning, middle, and ending. To top it all, the best is when the story gets a satisfying ending. ‘You must move on’ has it all. From the moment the narrator is sitting alone by the corner. Even before anything happens, we get to hear the motivation for the narrator to move from the corner. When they finally move from the corner, it is not surprising because we are aware of his plans to move.

Though not mentioned, we are aware of the setting of the story. The narrator uses good vocabulary to give us a glimpse of where the story takes place. Words like jerking, walls, swimming, and penetration. The race of sperms fighting through to make it to the top, as the narrator describes him.

The story ‘You must move on’ is motivational fiction. Like its title, when you read the story, you will get encouraging words like, “Yes you will, when the time is right.” And “You must move on.” These are the best you get from this story. Chukwuemeka gives us encouraging words as we begin the year. What else would we do aside from this? We do understand now that we planned and won even before we started living on this earth, then nothing would stop us even here because ‘whatever belongs to you is yours’.





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Theme: Cameroon

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