



**WSA**  
Writers Space Africa  
M a g a z i n e

**MAY 2022 EDITION - ISSUE #65**



**P.28**

# **A Chat With AMMAR SOMJI**

THIS ISSUE IS

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For enquiries about either WSA-Uganda or WSA-South Sudan:

email: [wsa@writersspace.net](mailto:wsa@writersspace.net)

WhatsApp: +256 782 988684 (Uganda)

+256 770 499794 (South Sudan)

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For the 67th Edition (July, 2022 Edition)  
of the **WSA Literary Magazine**

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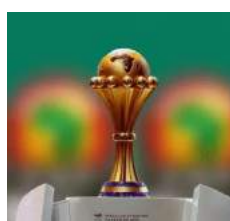
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# FROM THE FOUNDER'S DESK

Cameroon is the only country in Africa with a bilingual status and with this comes a diversity of cultures, food, and a lot of places to explore. This bilingualism offers Africa both franco-phone and anglophone literature, making it a literature hotspot that attracts creatives from all across the continent and beyond.

This edition of WSA magazine presents Cameroon in its diversity. From page to page, you will be greeted with Cameroon from a new perspective, different from the previous. This provides an opportunity for those who have never been

to Cameroon to read about its splendour while making plans to visit. It also affords those who have visited the chance to recall memories of the days of old.

One important thing to note, however, is that this year, the African Writers Conference will hold in Limbe, Cameroon from the 2nd until the 6th of November. This is an opportunity to live or relive Cameroon. This is an opportunity to enjoy the Cameroonian paradise in Africa.

*-Anthony Onugba (PenBoss)*

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# FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR

Cameroon, officially called the Republic of Cameroon and République du Cameroun in French, lies at the junction of Western and Central Africa. Cameroon is the crossroads of art and African culture. It has about 250 ethnic groups and native languages. Despite the cultural differences, Cameroonians are beautiful at heart, of course even in the soul. This credits Cameroon with unity in diversity which is admired by foreigners. A patriotic African would not hesitate to refer to it as the prototype of Africa because of its rich geological, cultural, and historical immensity.

Curiosity is the motherhouse of wisdom hunters and motherboard of knowledge predators. In as much we bear the identity of Africanity in our bio-strata, we owe to mother Africa the desire to know her and explore her. To many readers and writers, it is my conviction that we did not only question the agenda of having Cameroon as the theme of this 65th edition, but rather a reality that became an unanswered puzzle. I call it an unanswered puzzle because not so many writers were geared to tour Cameroon through the pen.

As you flip every page, you shall encounter the courageous and daring writer whose penmanship will not only wipe out your prejudice towards Cameroon, but rather wash away your stereotypes by offering new strides that will usher you to view the country in question from new lenses. Remember, AWC 2022 (African Writers Conference 2022) will be hosted on the soils of Cameroon in November. Why not extend the borders of anticipation?

In the matters of football, the country has had a good reputation for decades. Harboring one of the football legends the continent has ever had. Cameroon is also blessed with a rich and distinct culinary quality from its numerous cultures. Reading this magazine is equally touring Cameroon with an ignited latitude.

Remember, Twaweza!!!

Comfort Nyati, Sdb

# FROM HEART BREAK TO **BROKEN HEARTED**

**Editor:** Goodness Onu, Nigeria



My earliest memories of Cameroon were of pains inflicted on the Super Eagles and me. I cut my teeth as a football fan during the Maroc 88 African Cup of Nations. We sat outside, and the radio from dad's Peugeot 504 became our transportation to Morocco. Names like Mfede, Omakaro, Egboibe, Kunde, and Oman Biyik were recurring, as the coarse voice of the commentator from Radio Nigeria vocalized the action from a distant land. My kiddy nerves were on the edge the whole time.

"He moves the ball from the midfield and he shoots!"

"It's a...."

My heart would melt.

"Over the bar!"

We would heave a collective

sigh of relief. In retrospect, I think the commentator escalated the situation more than the players on the pitch.

"It's a goal! Henry Nwosu!" the voice cried, smacking us in the ears.

"It's a goal!" We all screamed and hugged each other. Palms parted the air to find another palm to slap. Mama Edozie's high pitch tore through the air.

"It has been disallowed," the commentator echoed over ten times to crash our party.

At this point, I was the only kid still paying attention to the voice from the car.

"Penalty! It is a penalty!"

"To whom?" My father asked.

As if on cue, the commentator

cried, "It's a penalty to Cameroon"

"Goal! Kunde! Kunde! Emmanuel Kunde! It's a goal! Cameroon, one, Nigeria, zero!"

The screams from the commentator grated my ears. My eyes bubbled and I took deep breaths to hold back the fountain.

My father, uncles and the other neighbours filled the air with optimism.

"There is still time," was the chorus.

Time faded into emptiness. Nothing came out of it. The game ended and I became a fountain of tears.

In 1989, we did it all again. On August 12, my senior uncles and neighbours all mobilized and trooped to the National Stadium in Surulere to watch Nigeria defeat Angola by a lone goal scored by Stephen Keshi. I remember straining my eyes and peeling layers off the crowd to see if I could catch a glimpse of any of them on our small tricolour television. We watched as

Sam Okwaraji slumped on the pitch and was later proclaimed dead. We waited all night as we heard tales of stampede and chaos at the stadium. On the light of the next day, they all returned in one piece, and the celebrations were truly on. The victory meant we were tied on seven points with Cameroon and needed just a draw to qualify.

As it was in that era, away matches were not broadcast live on TV. We turned back to daddy's car stereo for another pulsating encounter with the FRCN commentator. There was an air of optimism as the new Dutch technical adviser of the Super Eagles talked tough. I read through his newspaper interviews and was pumped up. I recollect the image of goalkeeper Alloy Agu in a catlike dive pasted on the back page. I ran my fingers over the image and tried to recreate it on the bed with my younger brother.

The commentator, as usual, cried wolf before calming us down with, "And the

ball goes out of touch!" He regaled us with the rough play of the Cameroonians.

"Cameroonians are rough oh," my uncle lamented, before giving us a history of bad Cameroonian behaviour. My lungs were filled with bated breaths as the commentator drilled holes in our hearts with his excited screams.

Alloy Agu, our trusted hands, was injured and taken off. David Ngodigah was brought on. Our ears soon got accustomed to hearing, "another save by Ngodigah!" The name rang in my ears all through the match and for several days after.

"A corner floats in from the right. It's a header! It's a goal! Oman Biyik! It's a goal!" The cries tore through my ears and wretched my little heart. Cameroon had taken the lead. There was a great stillness in the space we sat. The remaining part of the match was torture. Our hearts were pulled out and placed in over the concluding course of the game. My mom persuaded me to eat dinner but my appetite de-





serted me. I cried myself to sleep.

Cameroon went on to dazzle at the Italia 90 World Cup. We turned our support to them during the FIFA tournament. Their opening game against Argentina was my first World Cup match. I had never seen Maradona play, but his name was constant during our street football. The best dribblers in school were called Maradona. My uncle told me of how he dribbled all the players on the pitch, got to the open goal and dribbled back to his post. I was scared for Cameroon. The game gave

me a first glimpse of what Cameroonian football was about. I watched in disbelief as they mauled down the Argentinean players by the minute. I was looking forward to seeing the great Maradona and his dribbling moves, instead, he was a cry baby. I was proud of my African brothers.

"They don't know we are Blacks and we are stronger than them," somebody quipped.

Oman Biyik, the man that broke Nigerian hearts, leapt and planted a downward header. I thought the keeper had caught the ball. Our neighbour's parlour explod-

ed into screams of "Goal!" Back slaps and hugs were passed around. Mighty Argentina and Maradona had fallen.

Roger Milla then put up a show in the last group game and the second round. His iconic corner flag dance was transported to our local football fields. The World Cup fever was high. The images of Roger Milla picking Rene Hugita's pocket in midfield and then running with the ball before slamming it into the net still gives me goosebumps. There was a celebration every night Cameroon won a game. As kids, we got little

treats too. All previous animosity was buried as we rose as African brothers fighting for glory.

No African country had made it to the quarter-finals before then. Cameroon wrote their names in World Cup history when they filled out against England in the quarters. The game was a late game and we were initially not allowed to watch. My father later got excited when Cameroon took the lead and called us to join in. I couldn't believe the scores on the screen: Cameroon- 2 England -1. A few minutes to the end penalty. Garry Lineker buried it neatly. During extra time, another penalty.

Everyone was livid.

"They don't want an African team to win the World Cup."

"The Whites will always cheat us Blacks!"

"How can that be a penalty?"

"You can't give one team two penalties in a game like this!"

"Ojoro referee!"

Gary Lineker sent the keeper the wrong way and England to the semifinals.

It was another night of tears for me. Cameroon had broken my heart again.





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](http://www.writerspace.net/awards) for more details and to submit.



# I AM CAMEROON

CHILDREN'S  
LITERATURE

**Author:** Grace Tendo

**Country:** Uganda

The children sat quietly in the classroom as their teacher flipped the pages of the English textbook. A whisper went from one corner to another. Madame Jeanette looked around with a frown on her face.

"Who whispered?" She asked.

Silence.

She flipped the pages and then finally said, "Today we are going to study who we are. Let's go to page 39 of our textbooks."

A ruffle of pages was heard.

It was a beautiful story about a crippled lizard who wandered the desert in search of its identity.

At the end of the lesson,

Madame Jeanette looked at the back of the class and saw that Kamgaing was dosing.

"Kamgaing!" She called and the boy got up with a startle. "Were you dozing in my class?"

Kamgaing couldn't say a word. The rest of the class laughed at him and he almost got lost in his seat.

"I am going to give you all an assignment." She said to the class, "and I expect it by tomorrow morning."

"WHO ARE YOU?" She wrote on the chalkboard.

Madame Jeanette said, "that is going to be our assignment! I will come back here to look at each of your stories in my lesson tomor-

row morning. Be sure to have written it!"

The bell for going home sounded and all the children rushed out of the classroom; Kamgaing being the first.

He ran straight home. When he got home, he greeted his parents and went to his bedroom and started to write. He spent several hours writing, editing and discarding. His mother tried to call him down to eat but he told her he would be out after he was done with his exercise. Not even when his playmate called did he go out. He finally came out after a while when he was fully satisfied that his work was ready. He smiled before he tucked it away in his

school bag.

That night, Kamgaing slept happily because it was the first time in his school life to complete his assignment.

In the morning at school, all the children in Kamgaing's class presented their work to the teacher. When it was his time, Madame Jeanette called him, "Kamgaing, where's your assignment?"

Kamgaing stood up, walked to the front and handed his work to the teacher who then told him to read out aloud his piece of work.

Kamgaing cleared his voice and looked at everyone before he began reading.

"I am Cameroon...."

Everyone laughed. The teacher hushed and told Kamgaing to continue reading.

"I am Cameroon. I'm nine years old and I am from the West Region. I have two elder brothers and two younger sisters. My mother is from the East region of Cameroon and she loves

animals. She also has a garden where we pick the vegetables to eat on the weekend. My father is a mechanic but he loves to play the drum whenever he can. As a boy, growing up with both my parents has been fun because, during the weekends and holidays, father takes us to the cinema to watch our favourite movies. Sometimes mother would ask our father to take us to the theatre to watch Makossa dance.

One day, I remember going to play with other children in the neighbourhood and one of the big boys said we should play the 'round and round game'. This is the game I love most and whenever we play it, I always go back home too dirty that mother beats me. While playing, we smile, laugh, and forget that we have to go back home early.

Sometimes when grandmother is around, we sit around her and she tells us stories from the South. How its people love to play the drums and the flutes.

She always tells us to be good children and to obey our parents like her daughter; my mother did. She also tells of how she used to go to the cinema and museum with our grandfather.

Oh, how I love her stories!

One thing that I noticed before we moved to the city is that my mother did not eat with my father and neither did we, the children eat before she ate. I have always wanted to ask my mother about it but I fear I may get the strokes of the cane; but one day I know I will know why!

I am Cameroon because I am!"

Kamgaing concluded reading. Everyone was quiet till Madame Jeanette clapped for him and the others followed.

"Wow...I'm so proud of you!" She exclaimed. "I think I should often give you assignments!"

# IN THE NEW SCHOOL

**Author:** Immaculate Ajiambo

**Country:** Kenya

One bright morning, the pupils in grade one were modelling. As they made different items, teacher Jane, the deputy headteacher walked into the classroom. The pupils stood.

Teacher Jane greeted, "Good morning pupils?"

"Good morning teacher Jane. How are you, teacher Jane?" They cheerfully replied. The teacher went on to introduce a new student to them.

Lucille, the new student wore a broad smile on her face. She waved at the pupils who sang to her a welcome song. Teacher Mary who was in class asked Lucille to sit with Magdalene.

Magdalene said, "I am happy you are going to sit with

me, Lucille." Lucille nodded and quietly sat. Teacher Mary gave her a green and orange modelling clay. She modelled a hut, a cup and a ball. They were beautiful.

At lunch break, everyone wanted to be around Lucille. They kept on introducing themselves to her. All this time, Lucille just smiled and nodded. She laughed at funny jokes made.

Magdalene brought her big sister to meet Lucille. Her sister was in grade four. Magdalene's sister was full of comedy and she was quick to use that on Lucille.

"Heeeeeello? Habaaariii gani? Bonjouuur?" She said making funny faces at every word.

Lucille replied, "Je vais

bien?"

Wow! Magdalene's sister was amazed. She got serious and asked Lucille if she speaks French.

"Oui, je parle français." This time she spoke so lively that Magdalene called the others to witness.

Now, Lucille and Magdalene's sister were having a conversation in French. The other students watched them in admiration. Others were heard wishing that they were already in grade three where they would start learning French, German, and Music.

In excitement, Lucille shared with the students about herself. She had transferred to her new school from Princeville Academy

in Kinshasa, Congo. Also, she comes from Cameroon and her father was a diplomat while her mother was a businesswoman.

“Goodness you, it must be fun travelling around!” Cried one of the pupils in surprise, when Lucille finished speaking.

Magdalene’s sister was translating for Lucille but at some point, Lucille tried speaking in English. Teacher Mary was watching the pupils and realised that they had not heard the ringing bell. It was time for them to go back to class.

“Pupils, Lucille is here with us. She will have ample time to answer everyone’s question,” she turned to Lucille, “Merci. Il y a beaucoup des temps.”

Lucille gratefully accepted the embrace. The pupils had grown fond of her already.

In class, all went calmly. Unfortunately, some pupils were anxious to hear Lucille share about her country.

“Teacher Mary, I have never been outside Kenya.”

Another pupil added, “Please teacher, allow us to share with Lucille now.”

Teacher Mary asked them to wind up their work in five minutes for some time with Lucille.

When the hour dawned, they all sat quietly. Now that Magdalene’s sister was not there, teacher Mary offered to help with translation.

The first question was whether people in Cameroon speak Kiswahili. Also, if they have beaches. Lucille was happy that they were eager to know about her country.

Lucille said that Cameroon was a peaceful, beautiful, and developing country. She loved how it was warm and hot throughout the year and cold in July. Lucille added, “We pride ourselves in our national football team, beaches, and unique music genre; Makossa and Bikutsi.”

Someone shouted, “Samuel

Eto’o” and that made Lucille more excited. She went on and on to say how she is determined to learn more languages. Then Magdalene vowed in front of the class, “I will teach Lucille Kiswahili and English then she will teach me French.”

There was a thunderous clap from the pupils.

What a first day for Lucille in her new school!





# THE CUPBEARER

**Author:** Moses Tololo

**Country:** Zambia

Shuko woke up to the sweet sound of the chirping birds up in the tree which stood in his grandfather's compound. He was so happy to be in a place that was so quiet but surrounded by beautiful African nature. His dream was to one day tour the whole of Africa. He had learnt a lot about the different beautiful places in Africa. He was so lucky to be with his grandfather who had a vast knowledge about the continent. His grandfather had travelled a lot on the continent. He had climbed the tallest mountain in Tanzania, sailed on the longest river in the world, the Nile, and visited the largest desert in the world, the Sahara. He had seen it all and when he sat down in the evening around

the fire, he always narrated the beautiful tales about the beautiful continent.

Shuko jumped out of bed, made his bed and cleaned his room. In no time, he was out to see his grandfather. His grandmother called out to him as he ran out to his grandfather's workshop.

"Come and eat your breakfast," said his grandmother.

"What's for breakfast, grandma?" He asked.

"Musohya," replied his grandmother.

'Musohya' was a delicacy. It was a meal made when pounded maize was prepared together with pounded groundnuts. This was his favourite African dish. Every time he visited the village,

he would request his grandmother to prepare one for him.

When he went to his grandfather's workshop, he found the old man polishing up something that looked like a trophy. It looked so beautiful.

"Grandpa, what is that?" He asked.

"This is the biggest treasure," he responded.

"What do you mean?" He asked.

"Whoever holds it, rules Africa," his grandfather responded.

"It has so much power?"

"Yes, it is the biggest prize one could ever have," his grandfather responded.



"Who can hold it?" Shuko asked.

"It is only held by the Champions of Africa," came the response.

"Champions, this means there is a battle?"

"Yes, a battle that unifies all of us," his grandfather said.

"What is this battle that unifies us?"

"This battle is called, Africa Cup," his grandfather said, "It is held every two years and whoever emerges as the champion is given this trophy."

"But why are you holding this trophy?" Shuko asked, "Isn't it supposed to be with the champions?"

"I am the cupbearer," grandfather responded, "I hold it before the battle begins so that I polish and clean it."

"How did it all begin?" Shuko asked.

"A long time ago," his grandfather started narrating, "the whole of Africa was divided. There were wars everywhere on the continent. The enemies from Europe, Asia and America had come and were dividing the

people and causing them to fight each other. Africa was falling apart. All the leaders came together and asked how they were going to unite everyone on the continent. They all decided that they will call all the people to a game of football. During these games, all the people will be united and all will be filled with love. They decided that a cup or trophy will be made using different parts from all of Africa. It will be something that will unite everyone."

"Grandpa, do you mean that this trophy has parts





from different areas of Africa?" He asked.

"Yes, we got copper from Zambia and Congo, gold from South Africa and Ghana, Diamonds from Botswana and from everywhere in Africa," he responded. "The trophy is made up of different parts representing the whole of Africa."

"Who made it then?" Shuko asked.

"I did," he responded. "I made it with my friends."

"Every time the tournament

is held I carry the cup to where it is held," his grandfather said. "This year, it will be held in Cameroon."

"You will give it to the champions?"

"Yes," he replied, "and you will come with me."

Shuko was so happy. He had never been to Cameroon. He knew that all the African stars will be there in the stadium. He wanted to see Mané and Salah.

In February, Shuko was on a plane to Cameroon to

take the cup. He was now a junior cupbearer. He was very happy when he walked with his grandfather to put the cup for the entire world to see. He was so happy to see two best friends, Salah and Mané play against each other. He could see the love between the two friends. Black and white brothers were all the same and playing together. In Cameroon, he saw the whole continent get united. He loved his job as a cupbearer.



**WSA**  
Writers Space Africa  
Foundation

# 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](http://www.writersspace.net/awards)

# LISTEN

**Author:** Mai William Bemsii Junior

**Country:** Cameroon

Listen! Listen! Listen!

Listen to the cries of the persecuted

Listen to the plights of the castrated

Listen to the sufferings of the tormented

Listen to the voice of your conscience

Listen and feel the consequences of your silence.

When the urgencies and battles of cultures

Seem to imprison my mind in incessant thoughts

I condense in me the vapour of resentment.

Sleeping bodies all over the place,

Flying bullets have taken their pace, families are out of space,

No space on which to graze, hunger they are forced to face!

From the top of my roof, I scan the whole sub-region and I wonder:

Where did that burning symbol of Faith, Peace and Unity go?

I keep asking myself, who am I?

I am the immortal soul of that soldier who has died for the motherland!

I am that country up and ready for challenges

I am the one ready to listen to my conscience

For it's time to stop being silent

It's time for action!

It's then I will be ONE and INDIVISIBLE

I will be the cultural melting pot

I will be Africa in miniature

I will be CAMEROON.

LISTEN! ECOUTE!

# CAMEROON

**Author:** Halla Immaculate

**Country:** Tanzania

My soul wanders in the streets of Yaoundé  
My feet dreams to stroll in the roads of Douala,  
On a peak I stand, Mongo ma ndemi,  
A southwest volcano amidst a miniature Africa,  
But I can't afford it.

An event I dream to attend, for my pursuit for literature  
To learn, unlearn and relearn from my inspirations and idealists like me  
To enjoy the beautiful diversity of exotic cultures  
To grasp unforgettable lessons  
As I stand in the sands of Limbe  
To admire the vast beautiful flying birds above,  
But I can't afford it.

One more minute to wash my soul  
And cleanse my writer heart in the waters of Lobé  
But I guess I'll just have to sit here and wait,  
For my probably non-existing chance  
And calm my yearning to join a prodigious meeting,  
In one of the most beautiful countries in Africa.

But I can't afford it.



# BELOVED HOME

**Author:** Bismark Kimbi

**Country:** Cameroon

Our beloved, fabulous fatherland;  
Land of glory, Africa in miniature,  
In my beloved country, for all we stand,  
Land of hospitality, everything we nurture.

Our cosy home is incomparably rich  
But our treasures, the heads mishandle  
But our torn tatters, we can still stitch  
Skilfully and handle our heavy hurdle.

In our motherland, youths are glorious  
Though, sifted chaff from grains of leaders  
They are ever grievous and industrious,  
Always steady and ready to be partners.

Our inner squabbles make us smell  
For we are tainted with a callous strife  
Yet the outer manipulation is the spell,  
On our seat-tight folks, but we shall thrive.

We're blissful we belong to the Cameroons,  
Some of our drones and queen are morons,  
Yet, despite our enviable diversity,  
Our force, which we cherish, is unity.



# WELCOME TO CAMEROON

**Author:** Kuubio Ambepuori Xavier

**Country:** Ghana

Silhouette of Green, red and yellow overlapped is the star of yellow,  
Millions are united from diverse tribes,  
Talented souls all around the land,  
Hearts are crossed to be patriotic to this land.

Don't tell me I am "CAMERONIAN", I am valued more than that,  
Tell me that I am "CAMEROON", living in a world of words in my fatherland.  
Don't preach religion, don't teach us torture,  
Preach freedom, give us culture.

Tilt your stance, think beyond the 'can'  
Don't see insurgency, don't see corruption,  
Envision democracy, belief in this nation.

Creative intelligence flow in our veins,  
Dark glittering ebony skins,  
Void of marring envy, indeed, a realm of loving hearts.

Democracy depicts our legacy,  
Struggle and tussle gives us the audacity,  
Tailored with diverse tongues,  
Blazing mammoths' cultures,  
Haven of skills and crafty veterans,  
Coal-like in colour, Proud-like in honour.

Home of vibrancy  
Our resources are plentiful,  
Our cultures are meaningful,  
Our meals, ever-delightful.





# SOEURS SIAMOSES

**Author:** Amatemeso Blessing

**Country:** Nigeria

She is my soul sister,  
We were neighbors before we were born.  
She's slightly older than I am  
But I am the giant and she, the miniature.

Like the Hann Jang we laid  
Green was our meeting point  
From the West n' Central we flowed  
Ever separate, ever nearby.

Peace is our shared word  
On the right our vehicles drive.  
There's unrest in the South  
A call for breakout; language the line.

We share a bittersweet day;  
The first of the tenth  
Our parents did not name us,  
Though beautiful and fair we were.

They call her the hinge  
But does she hold us together?  
She embodies it all,  
Green or brown, wet or dry.

She's not just my soul sister  
We are Siamese joined at the side,  
And forever we will be  
The giant and the miniature.





# MY IDENTITY

**Author:** Ankini-mbom Edviche Fang

**Country:** Cameroon

Cameroon from where I get my heritage of diversity and identity.

I identify with the pygmies of the south and their characteristic “Bouma” dance moves.

I join in the annual “Ngondo” festival of the coast witnessing team spirit and determination.

Moving to the northwest and adorning with the famous “toghu” regalia and tasting of their characteristic “Khati Khati” and Achu meals.

I take shelter in the thatched houses of the Bamileke people depicting all forms of simplicity.

We thank the gods for their gifts to our motherland joining our voices with theirs from the top of the mount Cameroon to the twin lakes of Koupe manegouba. From the banks of the river wouri to that of the Logone up north.

We unite in Cameroon, Africa in miniature.





# KAMEROUN

**Author:** Ng'uni Simon

**Country:** Zambia

Indomitable. A lion among men.  
I know a man with a ball at his feet.  
Blue and red striped at this stage,  
His heart is unrolled and his sleeves, the opposite.

His roar and his lion's mane, echo him.  
A boy playing a man's game.  
The oldest swinger in town.  
I know a man dancing his youth to the wind.

Graceful and timeless.  
I know of a land fleet with hills,  
Green with dialect. Rivered terrains.

I know of a people come from places.  
I know of a land across time.  
A place that holds my root in prawns.  
A land before I trekked south towards the rain.  
A land of men who can lock a sleeve and weave a lace  
A land of women who have known to tame the earth for wares  
A land of mangroves along the coast and along its water's edge.

Trees shedding their leaves in turn when the wind whips,  
Giant hawks wading in its sky with eagles and the little sunbird,  
A memory sketched from old histories, a few elephants.  
Some forest northwest of here,  
Green gold, red sweat and two stars aligning.





# AWWA

2022

## AFRICAN WRITERS AWARDS

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

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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.

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

Please visit - [www.writersspace.net/awards](http://www.writersspace.net/awards) to read the guidelines and to submit your entry.

+254 702 447049  
(WhatsApp)



# A CHAT WITH **AMMAR SOMJI**



**WELCOME TO YET ANOTHER EDITION OF THE WRITERS SPACE AFRICA MAGAZINE INTERVIEW CORNER. IN THIS EDITION, I HAD A CHAT WITH THE YOUNG TANZANIAN WRITER, AMMAR SOMJI. DO READ ALONG.  
- PPBlessing**

**PPBlessing:** *Let's start with an introduction. Who is Ammar Somji?*

**AS:** I'm a 13-year-old boy who moved to Tanzania after living in Dubai my whole life. I'm passionate about exercising and reading and occasionally writing.

**PPBlessing:** *Seeing these diverse combinations of what you are passionate about, what career do you want to get in to?*

**AS:** Criminal Lawyer. However, while I'm in University I will volunteer as a firefighter.

**PPBlessing:** *Nice. Why these?*

**AS:** I highly enjoy debating, I even joined the debate club in school. I watch videos in court where the lawyer does his part to defend his client and I just see myself doing that as it interests me. I enjoy studying law. As for firefighting, I want to give back to humanity and do my part to help save people to the best of my capabilities.

**PPBlessing:** *That's wonderful. May you live to save as many people as you can.*

**AS:** Thank you.

**PPBlessing:** *On writing, your short story, Dear diary was published in the March edition of our magazine. How did that make you feel?*

**AS:** Ecstatic. I was very proud that my work had been published so others could read it. It was a milestone for me.

**PPBlessing:** *What level are you at currently in school?*

**AS:** Grade 8

**PPBlessing:** *How long have you been writing?*

**AS:** Not long, about 2 years

**PPBlessing:** *What made you start writing?*

**AS:** I have been reading books for the longest time, so one day I decided to write and I surprised myself, I enjoyed it and I wasn't too bad at it.

**PPBlessing:** *Have you been published elsewhere else?*

**AS:** No.

**PPBlessing:** *What are your plans concerning writing?*

**AS:** I will continue writing to the best of my capabilities. My goal is to publish my own book someday.

**PPBlessing:** *We look forward to that. What is your main reason for writing?*

**AS:** For fun.

**PPBlessing:** *Is it only stories you write?*

**AS:** Yes.

**PPBlessing:** *What do you hope to achieve with your writing? I mean, when you write, what do you want a reader to take away after reading your work?*

**AS:** I would want them to be entertained and inspired.

**PPBlessing:** *Do you have any writer(s) that inspires you?*

**AS:** Stuart Gibbs, Darren Shan, and John Grisham. These are my top 3 favorite authors. I even emailed Stuart Gibbs once and he responded, I was euphoric.

**PPBlessing:** *Way to go! What made them your favourites?*

**AS:** Thank you! The books they wrote were amazing and unique.

**PPBlessing:** *What book has made the most impact on you?*

**AS:** Theodore Boone by

John Grisham. It's about a kid lawyer.

**PPBlessing:** *Aha! Was it part of your inspiration for wanting to study Criminal law?*

**AS:** Very much.

**PPBlessing:** *You mentioned earlier that you are passionate about reading and exercising, why are you passionate about these things?*

**AS:** Health and fitness for exercising and I enjoy it. And for reading I also enjoy it and I like expanding my vocabulary and I learn a lot from reading.

**PPBlessing:** *If you meet someone who wants to write but is unsure how to, what will you tell the person?*

**AS:** I would tell them to write on a device that only they can access, so there is no fear of someone finding their work without their consent. I would then tell the person to write what's in their heart, and use the best of their vocabulary. As to what to write, it will come to them as they progress. Once they are done and want to identify whether it is good or not, I would tell

them to do something else for at least 20 minutes and then come back and read their work as if it was a book someone else wrote. Then they should decide whether it is good or not. Then once they are done with their self-assessment, they could ask a family member to read it and give them advice.

**PPBlessing:** *Great tip. Was this what worked for you?*

**AS:** Definitely.

**PPBlessing:** *Thank you for sharing.*

***This brings us to the end of this month's interview. Until next time, keep reading the Writers Space Africa Magazine.***



Ammar as a kid

WSA NIGERIA ANTHOLOGY

# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

THEME:

## SURVIVAL

GENRE: FICTION (SHORT STORY)

SUBMISSION DATE - March 10th - May 10th, 2022

ALL ENTRIES ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THIS EMAIL:

[writersspaceafricanigeria@gmail.com](mailto:writersspaceafricanigeria@gmail.com)

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submit one short story not more than 2000 words in a doc./docx. file to the email address above.

The story should be in Times New Roman, Font 12 and single spaced.

Entries are only open to Nigerian authors (born in Nigeria or born to at least one Nigerian parent.)

Include your city, email address, phone number, social media handles and brief autobiography in the body of the email.

The submission window is open from March 10th - May 10th, 2022

The anthology is scheduled to be published in August 2022 and all writers will be notified about the status of their submission before then.

# LOVE IN TWIST

**Author:** Ozokwelu Amara

**Country:** Nigeria

SHORT  
STORIES

It is timely that you and I finally meet here in the city I played football as a lanky boy, grazing my knees on the gravel roads, hoping to become the next Samuel Eto'o. I fondly remember the sweet taste of Mummy Pierre's delicious koki beans from her corner shop on Church Street.

I once stood naked on these streets, dancing to the rhythms of Makossa, jiggling my small waist and legs to each beat. Cameroon would forever remain the country that keeps giving, gifting me its lights, laughter, food and now, your love.

"Oh, God! It is you." You say, your hands stroking

your arms like you always do when you are scared. It reminds me of your vlog to Seychelles and how scared you were, unsure of how to navigate the waters.

I had lain in my room, holding my phone close to my eyes, wishing I could wrap my hands around you. Two years of long texts and silent calls, hearing you breathe, staring at you through the cold screen of my phone, relying on just words to convey the love in my heart and the ache in my body.

I pictured us here together, our backs against the sands of Musango beach in Limbe, gazing at the stars, your head on my heart, our legs entangled as we breathed

together in sync.

I would be free to kiss the tiny moles scattered around your thighs; your tiny imperfections, and kiss away all the pain I see in your eyes. I would be able to save you.

"Mafo, my queen. I am Menkam." I say, pushing the heavy doors of the hotel room.

"You are Menkam?" You say, your nostrils widening to twice their size. "I thought your name was Henry."

I must admit that I had lived through this day countless times, dreaming of your reaction to my name to realize it had been me who gifted you an expense paid trip to Cameroon.





I imagine how you might pause just as you used to do and fall into my arms. I would spin you around, and we would declare our love and get married.

I have always been fueled with strong desires to possess you and lay claims to your body. I could already hear the celebrations, the playful banter of haggling over your bride price and the loud celebration as I pick the veiled you from a group of other women – a celebration of our beautiful tradition, a perfect end to our love story.

“Yes Askia, it is me. I promised I would come back to you, my love.”

That moment, I watched you jumping, your hands

swinging as you reached for your phone, your face contorted as you screamed, and I could see fear in your eyes; not love.

Now, I am reminded of the brief time I spent locked up because of our love. You still fail to see that my feelings for you are special, sacred.

How often do people meet their soulmates, sharing the same Bamileke heritage in the busy streets of Lagos? It almost never happens. We were blessed, kissed by serendipity.

“Oh God nooooo...” You cry. “Get away from me, please. I am begging you.”

“I still love you,” I say, walking towards you, the rug of the hotel room soft under

my feet.

You run towards the door frantically, pulling the handle.

“It is locked, my love. Regardless of your betrayal, I still love you,” I say.

I have buried the pain I felt after hearing your testimony and how I stalked you and broke into your home that had caused me to be locked up for six months in a dark cell.

“This time, things will be different. I promise. You will learn to love me,” I say as I pull the custom ropes I had bought from the convenience store.

Cameroon would be our chance to be happy.



# WITH LOVE FROM YAOUNDÉ

**Author:** Nnalue Chidinma

**Country:** Nigeria

I know every inch of this home; every corner where the kids play hide and seek, every room where a mother cradles her newborn, and every hearth where food simmers to win a husband's heart anew.

Today, I am sitting in front of the large family compound, drinking in the cool morning air while faintly reminiscing on my teenage years in this home that sparkles with warmth, laughter, and love.

Although I have been away from Limbe for two years, it feels like it was only yesterday when I stuffed my few clothes into a bag and made the trip to Yaoundé.

Yaoundé with its vibrant people.

Yaoundé with its thrilling nightlife and street food that never ceases to make my mouth water.

Yaoundé, the city that brought me the love of my life, Dieudonné.

I met him one fine April afternoon at the Reunification Monument. After ascending the stairs and scribbling my name among many others on a block, I stopped to take a view. It was like seeing the whole of Cameroon at a glance. I stood, lost in that beauty until I heard a rich masculine voice beside me. "It takes my breath away every single time too." I turned to see who spoke and, for the first time, I prayed to God for a man to ask for my

phone number.

\*\*\*

A door creaks open and I turn in the sound's direction. It is Auntie Ekema and I am sure she is up early so she can get things ready for the day's festivities. Since the day I returned, Auntie Ekema hasn't stopped looking after my welfare and neither has Auntie Grace. And I love every bit of their attentiveness. Auntie Grace has taken my body measurements and is making some kaba dresses which she promised me. As for Auntie Ekema, she has taken one look at me the day I arrived before going into her kitchen and returning to place a bowl of fufu, njama

njama, and kati kati in front of me.

Aunty Ekema has succeeded at stuffing me full of treats since that first day. Koki beans one day, roasted fish the next, ndole on another day, and I savour them all while ignoring the voice that tells me I may not fit into my wedding dress if I continue to eat so much. I hear someone praying in one room, but before I can guess whose room it is, large, powerful arms slip around my waist and a whiff of after-shave caresses my nostrils. A few seconds later, the arms loosen their grip and I mourn the loss of Dieudonné's touch with a sigh.

"You are enjoying the quiet, mon amour," he says be-

fore sitting beside me on the bench.

I nod and display a little smile before reaching for one of his hands and clasping it in mine. It's a day of joy for me. Today, Dieudonné's people are to come with their arms full of gifts to pay my bride price. I've been the one to insist that Dieudonné stays with me at my family house, though. There is a reassurance his presence always gives me and I need it today. I need to be certain that all will go well and this day will be as perfect as I have always imagined.

A few days after Dieudonné proposed to me, I asked him why he loved me. He was lying on the couch, flipping through a travel

magazine while I sat with a hair mannequin between my thighs, trying to create a style I hoped would one day become an indigenous Cameroonian hairstyle. Dieudonné had put the magazine aside and sat up, his expression flicking from mild surprise at my question to a certain seriousness.

"Hmmm, let me try," he said. "I love you because you are beautiful, Imbolo."

He paused. "I love your quiet strength and confidence."

I left off braiding the mannequin to sit beside him. He continued, "I love you because that day when I met you at the Monument, I felt..., I felt safe."

He paused again before



teasing me.

“Even though I was wondering why you couldn’t stop biting your nails,” He said, biting his like I would while I laughed. “I love you because you are Cameroonian. I love you, mon amour, because you are authentic and you give your best to everything that you do.”

“I love you so much. I can’t describe it in words. This is only an attempt,” he continued while I playfully wiped imaginary tears from my eyes.

Although Dieudonné didn’t ask me the same question, I know why I love him. He reminds me of my mother. My friend, Victorine, once smirked when I told her about this. It’s the truth, though. I love Dieudonné because he, like my mother, is full of warmth and kindness. And I love him because he always puts me first. I also love how he loves other people and how he loves our country. I love how he loves our different cultures and how much sac-

rifice he puts into his YouTube channel, even traveling for miles just to show the world our Cameroon. I love how he encourages me to be better and how I feel at peace when I am with him.

He and I sit in the morning silence. I am here with him yet a million thoughts are also racing through my mind.

Typical Imbolo.

My thoughts are soon cut off by the delightful sound of giggling women bursting through the gate. They are my friends.

“Oh, the bride isn’t dressed yet,” Victorine teases when she sees me.

“Still playing love with Monsieur Dieudonné, I see.” Her laughter-filled voice utters.

I wag my finger at her, the playful warning in my eyes meeting the quiet mischief in hers. She greets me with a hug and so does Chantelle and Muema.

“We’ll have to take you away now,” she says.

I kiss Dieudonné on one cheek as my friends squeal excitedly. One of my cousins is sweeping the compound and an aunty is bathing her toddler outside. Soon, there will be pounding of fufu and my aunties will make soup while my uncles will get drinks and fresh palm wine. I know my father has asked one of his friends to come with some seafood as well.

Dieudonné’s family and friends will arrive with goats, kola nut, fabric, firewood, and other requirements that accompany the bride price. During the ceremony, Dieudonné will try to identify me in a sea of veiled women and there’ll be cheering when he does. Something tells me that today will be just perfect. I only wish my mother was alive. I know she would have been pleased with my choice of a husband. I give Dieudonné one last loving look before allowing my friends to whisk me away to prepare for my traditional wedding.



# PoeticAfrica

## CALL FOR SUBMISSION



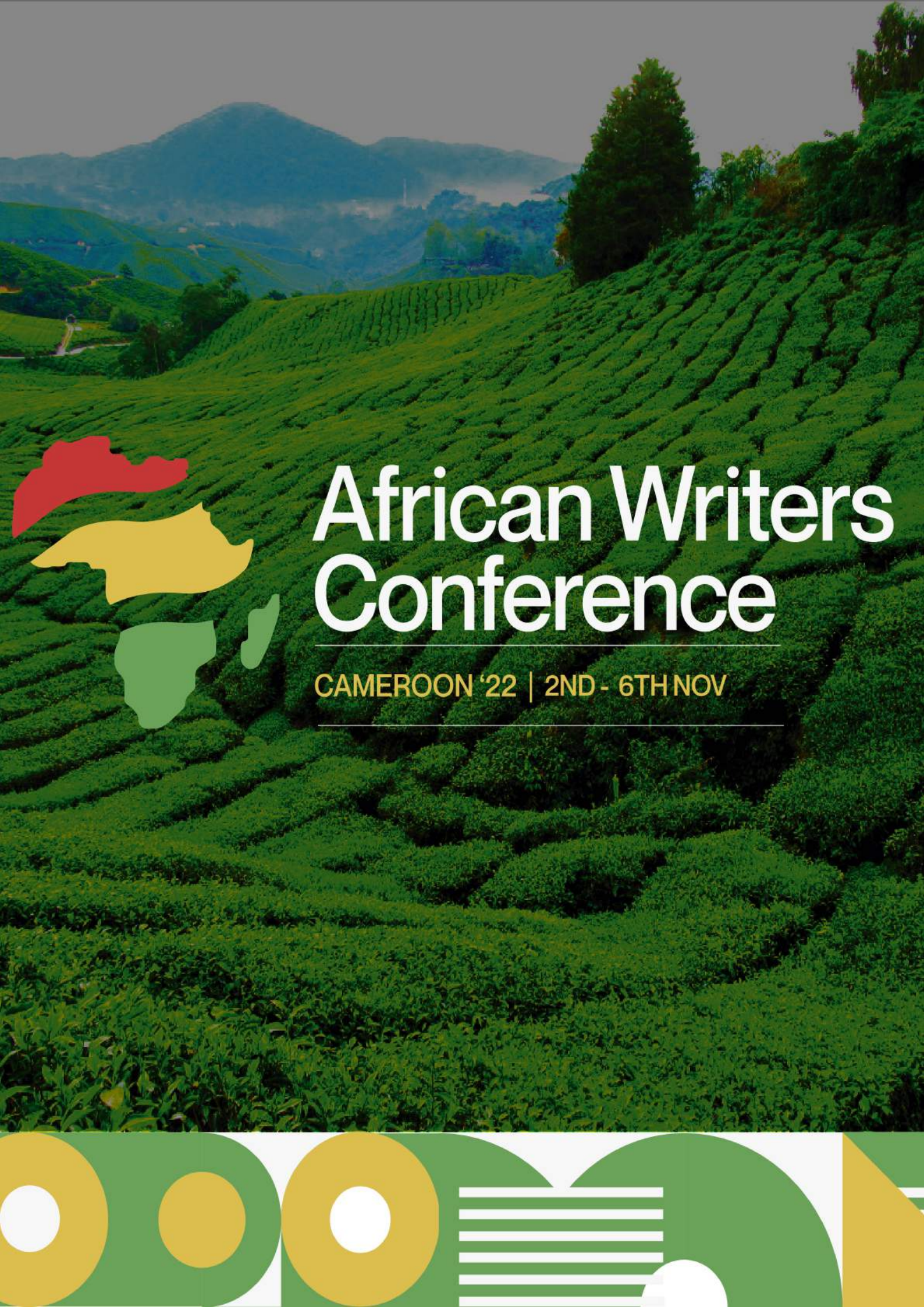
Poetic Africa, a quarterly trilingual poetry magazine published by Writers Space Africa, calls for submissions from poets for her August 2022 edition.

*The world is in a state of quagmire and pandemonium, from Nairobi to Cairo, Moscow to New York. Turning a blind eye only makes us inhumane. Don't they say an injury to one is an injury to all? Write and submit your poem under the theme **CHAOS**.*

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 "Chaos".

The submission window is from May 11th until June 10th 2022. The edition will be released on **August 10th 2022**.

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



# African Writers Conference

CAMEROON '22 | 2ND - 6TH NOV



**YOU MAY WORK HARD,  
BUT THE BEST RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED  
WHEN YOU **WORK SMART****



**WSA**  
Writers Space Africa  
Magazine



**WSA**

Writers Space Africa  
M a g a z i n e

April 2022 Edition - Issue 64

**WSA MAGAZINE**  
**REVIEW**



# TRAVELLING

**Genre:** Article

**Writer:** Henry Ngeli, Zambia

**Reviewer:** Chidiebere Udeokechukwu, Nigeria

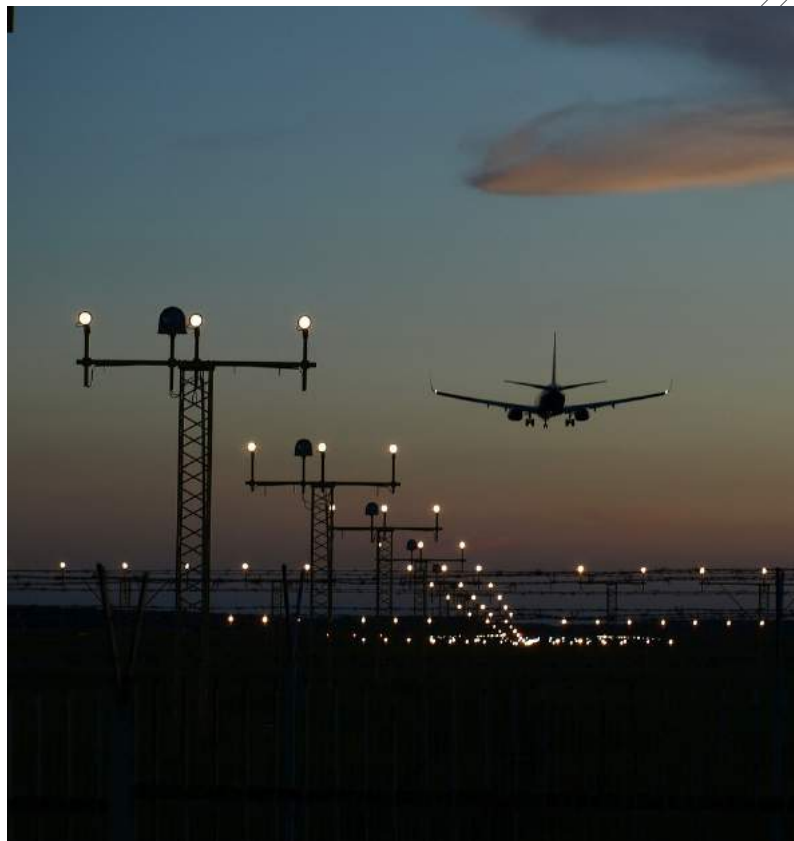
In contrast to Justin Nagundi's travelogue, Henry Ngeli's *Travelling Treatise* embraces multifaceted philosophies that serve as reasons that inspire travelling. Quite interestingly, an allusion is made to "structural violence" as being one of the reasons behind the quest to journey. The writer notes, "... oftentimes we travel intending to better our situations at hand". Presumably, the various reasons (as denoted in this article) are given: business, health, study, meeting, religion and pleasure.

For Henry Ngeli, aside from whatever reasons that may inspire travelling, his travelling experiences have yielded positive results and these results have conspired to help him alter his outlook of life. On the flip side, however, his experience at Maputo International Airport is riddled with humour although it did not seem like a funny experience for him. There was the unforgiving hot weather and the strange Portuguese language to deal with. Ultimately, this experience served as one of the factors that has urged the writer to see travelling from a uniquely multifaceted perspective.

The reasons of career, wonder and leisure all have conspired to forge a multifarious and seemingly philosophical point of view to trav-

elling in Henry Negli's "Travelling".

As an epilogue, it is worthwhile to mention this wisdom gleaned from Ngeli's piece; "Life is a journey". Premised on this, it wouldn't be far-fetched to surmise that this article will prove in it-self, a worthwhile journey of the mind for whoever will read.



# WANGARI'S LOVE FOR TREES

**Genre:** Children's Literature

**Writer:** Njeri Wangari, Kenya

**Reviewer:** Funmi Richards, Nigeria

"Early experiences with the natural world have been positively linked with the development of imagination and the sense of wonder" (Cobb 1977, Louv 1991).

"Children who play in nature have more positive feelings about each other" (Moore 1996).

I have always felt that civilisation makes mincemeat of children, our small humans. It takes away innocence, brings competition, impatience and too much adult to a child too early.

Wangari's love for trees captures an honest account of nature in its natural habitat – it tells

of the wonder of nature, the tranquillity and limitless treasure nature is.

The story paints nature as home and welcoming, peaceful and bringing healing for a sneeze or wound.

It is a simple, childlike story of wonder and innocence, one, I feel should be written in a full-length book narrating adventures with nature, telling of the glory and teaching more children about trees especially as the world is challenged more and more in the face of climate change.



# JIMMY THE GREAT

**Genre:** Flash fiction

**Writer:** Olabode Oluwabukola, Nigeria

**Reviewer:** Benita Magopane, Botswana

First of all, I love how the title is in complete contrast to what the story is all about. Ingenious. A cunning tactic in the field of flash fiction and Olabode Oluwabukola nailed this sly technique in the flash fiction of Jimmy the Great.

We have this beginning, preceding the title that can capture a reader off-guard, pique interest and lure us into Jimmy's thoughts which we tread on with absolute curiosity. His thoughts of himself bask under the sun of brutal honesty and in the one question he asks, and probably shouldn't have, one gets a hint of another faulty character trait of his he didn't mention. Perhaps I should answer Jimmy with a

question, "Are you dumb?"

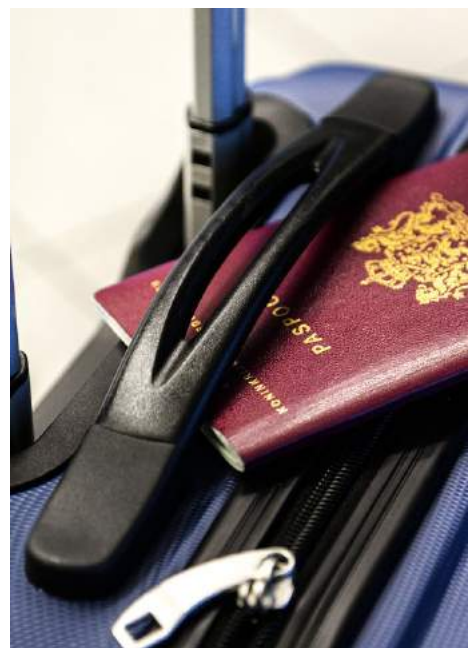
Yet Olabode's Jimmy is far from uninteresting. As we smoothly creep up into the middle of the story only to find out that Jimmy has a wife more sensible than him- things get more interesting.

More interesting than the beginning. The story hasn't lost its element of surprise, mystery and humour while at it, till the very end.

The end isn't anything one would expect. It befits a flash fiction piece. I love the subtle use of dark humour subsumed and one gets the sense that the writer was still poking fun at the character Jimmy by noting his physical description like his "bald head." Olabode

Olabode Oluwabukola was as meticulous as Jimmy's wife with this flash fiction. Fantastically written from beginning to end.

I wonder if the cool breeze Jimmy went to chill in, is the same place where we find him in the beginning.



# LIFE IS AN ABSTRACT NOUN

**Genre:** Poetry

**Writer:** Michael Okafor, Nigeria

**Reviewer:** Bwesigye Laurent, Uganda

The poem speaks about the search for what life means and how one can try to find it. This is a common subject that has been written about countless times. Everyone that is born later in their life when they start to make their decisions and are conscious about their choices, begins to take on this journey to find out what life is. He takes on the first person when he writes.

//My skin feels heavy on my bones//,

Here, the writer talks about how they are tired and stressed. He goes ahead to define his mood by using the metaphor of an altar of withering daffodils. To express how weary he feels.

//To become is to journey through self//

Here, the writer is communicating that for one to understand life fully and attain a desired state or form one has to fully understand themselves. This is the process of introspection... The process of journeying through self.

Later on, he defines life as an abstract noun. It is not something that can easily be defined and named. It's obscured and everyone journeying through life will find a different experience and a different meaning in life. For him, living is a map that leads to death which ever road we take, the destination is death and we have to make it meaningful. All in

all, the poet tells us that he is trying to take this journey and understand what it means but it's a little difficult to understand.

It was fun reading this poem and trying to decipher its meaning.





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