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Namse Udosen

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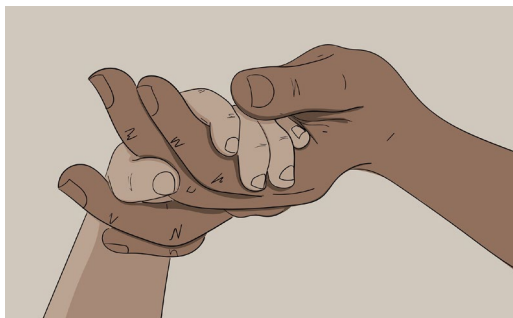
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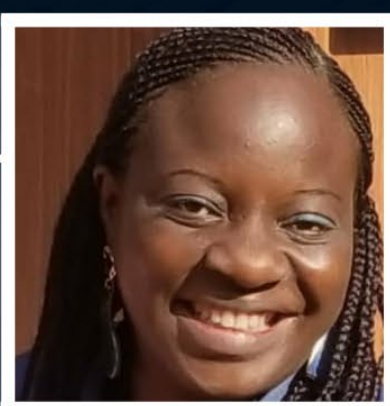
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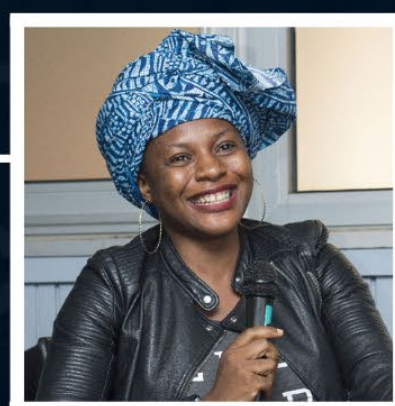
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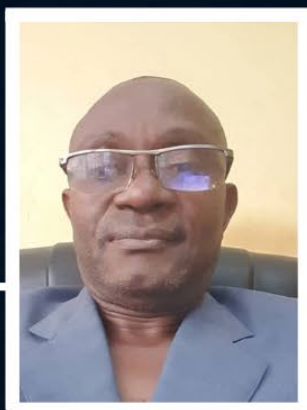
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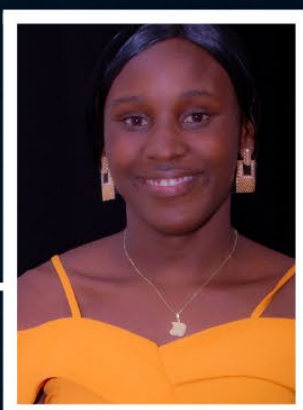
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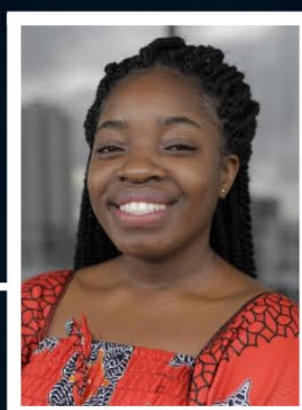
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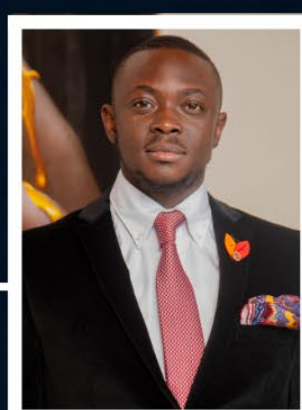
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ANNIE KADJI
ART GALLERY





From the Chief Editor

Comfort Nyati, SDB
Zimbabwe

Dear Reader,

When we were young, a few things troubled us. We could easily cry to our parents when the hunger for food dominated our physiology. At that tender age, hunger was a lack of food coupled with a desire to eat. However, growing up, we realised that hunger goes beyond the craving for food.

Approaching the theme 'Hunger' from a technical standpoint, one would agree that we are walled in a starved, deprived and hungry society. Hunger for virtue is the hunger of the day. An indicator of a generation starved of moral values. Everything everywhere seems to be torn by the wind of vice. The social order is saturated in a culture of sex and money. These are

the chief agents of gratification in man's sphere of existence. The irony is that sex and money are far from offering adequate satisfaction. The more the desire, the more we are filled with emptiness and endless hunger.

Don Bosco, in his testimonials, posited that "Our greatest enemy is laziness; Let us fight it without rest." Today, vices soaked by several moral catastrophes have become our greatest enemy. Consumerism defines the moral compass because it is where our priority lies and it directs our tomorrow. If the youth are well-fed with virtue, we will have moral order lest the hunger for corruption prevails.

Hunger is the most dynamic enemy of humanity. In this 71st edition, one of our esteemed authors will remind us that when it enters and builds a colony in the belly, hunger loots the roughages and blocks entrance to other paraphernalia of life. That's why the elders say, 'When hunger is in the belly, nothing enters thereafter.'

In advocating for a good society, we must devote our efforts to moral education for the young generations. Experience has taught me that caring for young people is the only way to build a morally gratified society.

Remember, Twaweza!!!



Children's Literature

The Spirit of the Land

Shaza T. Reads, South Africa

In a land afar and far ago, there lived a people of Karonowa. They lived in perfect harmony with the spirit of the land, Karonowa. Therefore, the land was always filled with crops because, Karonowa roamed the land each morning and cultivated the land with food for her people to eat.

She was respected and loved by her people. If you were sternly quiet enough, in the early hours just before sunrise, you could hear her voice whisper to the earth words that planted seeds and let the crops grow with the morning dew.

Each morning after sunrise the people of Karonowa would walk around the land and collect food for the day. There were all kinds of fruits, vegetables, nuts and beans to pick from the crops, and the people enjoyed their feasts everyday under the bright sun that blazed fire.

At dusk however, the sun would disappear from the sky and all the crops would turn into brown powder and fall into the soil. Then darkness would cover the land. While the moon graced the people with its gleaming light. Silence would enter the heart of Karonowa and the people would all fall into a deep sleep until the next morning when the silent whispers of Karonowa returned.

Time and time again the cycle of the days repeated. The land was always cultivated and the people always feasted. But the more they feasted the more the land suffered.

See, the people of Karonowa did not take good care of the land. They would eat and leave their rubbish on the soil. Rats and pests filled the land too and the spirit, Karonowa, lost her power to grow crops.



Her whispers started fading away little by little, as the dirt made her weak, so the food she brought to the land was little and frail.

The people started getting hungry and weak since they could not get enough food. Eventually one morning, no one heard the whispers of Karonowa, and so the land had silent mornings and no crops planted.

Weeks and weeks came to pass. And each morning the people woke up to an empty quiet land, they became weak and frail. The children grew too tired to play in the fields and the elderly no longer told stories to the young.

Some mornings the people would sing a song of regret to Karonowa and begged her to whisper, but Karonowa would say nothing; the hunger pangs would grow more and more. They did not know what they did wrong to deserve this hunger, so more and more they pleaded to Karonowa for answers and help.

Finally, one night when everyone was asleep the land started roaring, the land shook and the people woke out of fear. The roaring sound grew louder and louder. The sound came from the roots cutting through the soil as a tree came to life from the ground. The tree was tall, its leaves dazzled with many different colours.

The people were excited, their weakness turned into strength. They were happy that

Karonowa came with the force of the night to feed them. The children of the land carried their calabash bowls and knelt before the tree. However, in a deep raspy voice the tree shouted, 'Get away from me you disobedient people!'

The tree picked each of its roots from beneath the soil and kicked all the people away from her land to a mountain on the other side.

Soon after, a storm and whirlwind came to help Karonowa clean the land from the rubbish the people left behind.

The people watched disgraced from afar as the rubbish they left behind was being cleaned by the spirits and they soon realised what they had done wrong.

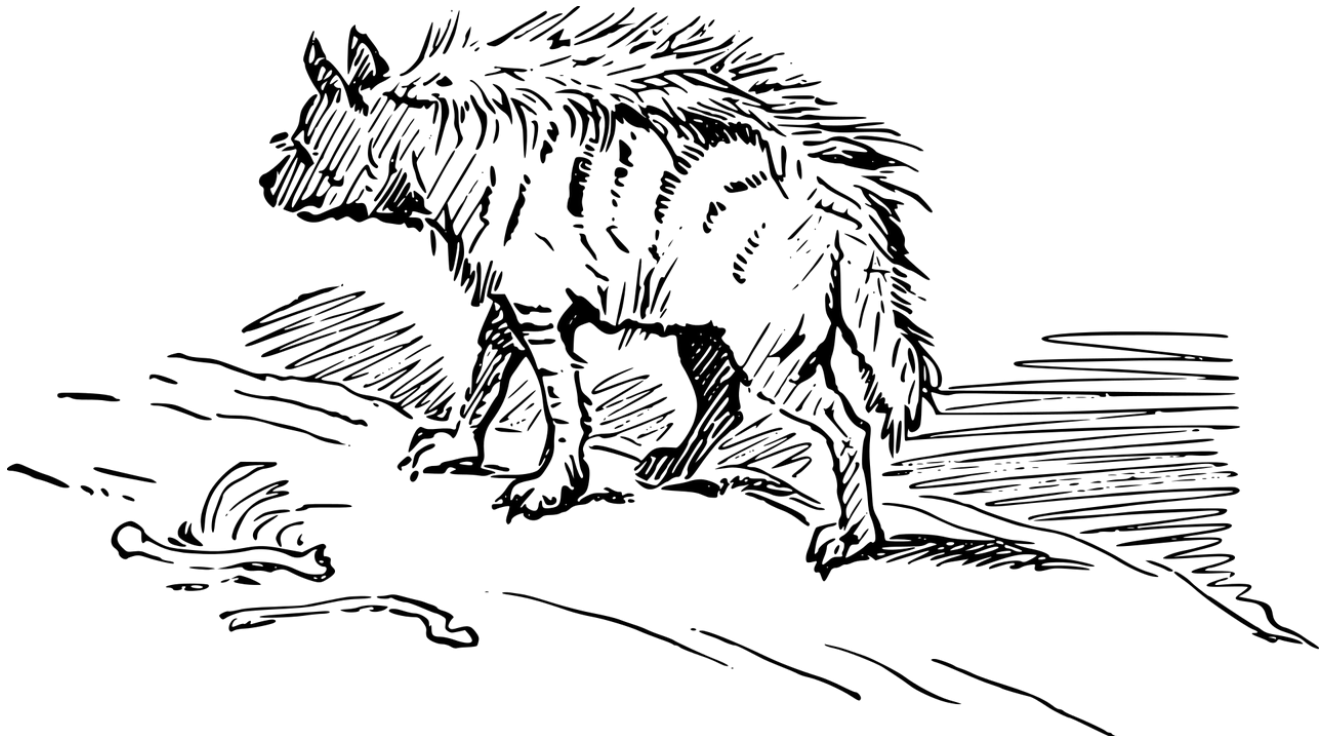
So, from afar they sang to Karonowa, songs of forgiveness and promises to take better care of the land.

Little by little, Karonowa's heart felt sorry for her hungry people. She knew they were deeply sorry and weakened from the hunger so the next morning she spread out her roots from beneath the soil and dragged her people back to her land again.



The Hyena's Pinyota

Clifford Ochieng, Kenya



Not too long ago all animals in the jungle fed on plants and the hyena was King of the jungle. He lorded over all animals on the ground, insects and birds in the sky and the beasts of the sea. The Hyena king was guarded by a very large pack of loyal angry hyenas. Together they ruled with so much greed and brute force and the other animals feared them. They secluded the most lucrative part of the jungle for themselves with

the most succulent fruit and plant varieties. They enjoyed all the fresh clean waters to drink and to bathe in. Their greedy nature made the other animals despise them. One time, there was a great famine in all the land except where the Hyenas lived. All the other animals lacked food and water and despite many futile attempts to access the hyenas' land, the pack was just too strong and well prepared. Without any options left, the ani-



imals began to hunt each other. The jungle became chaotic to the pleasure of the hyena king. It weakened its subjects who were now too frail to launch any meaningful attack. Seeing that the jungle was becoming dangerous for all the animals, the wise brave lion called everyone for a meeting “ Why should we kill and eat one another when there is enough for everyone on the other side?” The lion asked.

There were murmurs amongst the animals but none spoke up. “Big animals I know you have less complaints since you feed on the smaller weaker animals. However, how are you going to quench your thirst after a hearty meal?” He asked the large animals in attendance. “And you beasts of the sea once the muddy sludge you call water finally turns to hard ground how are you going to cool your hard scaly bodies?” “What would you have us do?” Shouted an angry crocodile, “clearly the Hyenas are too strong for us and everything we have tried has been unsuccessful”

“I have a plan,” said the lion. “We all know that the bees are tiny and have a vicious sting. Let us build a large Pinyota made of wax and hide them. We present this as a gift to the King as a peace offering during their weekly festival tomorrow. Every time they smack the Pinyota, sweet honey will come out and they will want more. More and more smacks and the Pinyota will open up releasing an army of bees,

a Swam!” the lion concluded amid cheers from the animals. They were extremely elated by the lion’s idea and they elected him to be King if the plan succeeded. So, the animals made a Pinyota out of wax and hid the bees inside.

The next day they took the gift to the Hyenas who were very excited. That evening during the banquet the king ordered that the Pinyota be brought before him. With everyone gathered around, he began hitting the nest. A drop of honey came out and he licked it. It was so sweet and so he hit again even harder and each time more honey oozed from it. Finally, he hit with all his might breaking the nest open and letting out thousands of angry bees who began stinging them. The poor Hyenas scampered for safety running towards the valley with the swarm in pursuit. There, they fell into the valley and broke their hind legs.

To this day the Lion remains king of the jungle. Some animals continue to hunt and eat other animals, the bees construct their Pinyotas where they make sweet honey and our friends the Hyenas, well they with their short hind legs hunt other animals at night hoping to become king once again.





The Hungry Lion

Moses Tololo, Zambia

“That lion is dying,” Kakoma said.

“That is good news,” said Wana.

“No, it’s not a good thing,” Kakoma added.

“Imagine, a world without lions,” Wana said, “it will be a peaceful world.”

The two porcupines were talking under the Mubanga tree. It was one of the hottest seasons they had ever experienced. It had not rained for three years. Most of the rivers had run dry. There was no water in most parts of the African Savannah. Trees and grass had dried up. The drought was harsh and long. There was no food in the land. Most animals were starving to death. Without food, a number of animals died including lions.

There was only one lion remaining in all the land. It too was very hungry. The lion had not eaten for days and was very weak. The hungry lion was dying. He was too weak to hunt. He could not even run because he did not have the energy. One more day without food, he will be dead.

Before the drought came, the lion used to be very rude to other animals. He used to hunt for fun and not for food. He did not care about other animals. He was a very selfish animal. His mother used to tell him to be kind to others, but he used to laugh at her.

“Ha, ha, ha being kind is for the weak,” he would say.

“Be kind to others,” his mother would say, “one day you will need help from the weak ones.”

“Ha, ha, ha! Never! I can’t ask for help from anyone.”

The porcupines standing at a distance felt sorry for him. He was too weak. He was failing to sit up straight. He had not eaten for days. He was very hungry.

“Let’s help him,” suggested Kakoma.

“Are you mad?” Asked Wana, “Don’t you remember how rude that lion was to us?”

“Yes, but that is in the past,” Kakoma said.



“Do you remember that he is the one who killed our uncle?” Wana asked.

“Yes, but....”

“But what,” cut in Wana, “what goes round will always come round.”

“Yes, I know,” Kakoma responded, “but we Africans do not repay evil with evil.”

“Kakoma, are you mad?”

“No, we do not rejoice in the suffering of another animal even if he did wrong to us.”

“I agree with you Kakoma,” said Womba as she joined the two porcupines, “we need to help that hungry lion.”

“Let him die,” Wana protested, “we will be safe without any lions.”

“No Wana,” Womba said, “We need to save that lion from going extinct.”

“Extinct, what do you mean?”

“Extinct meaning nonexistent,” Wana said, “lions might become extinct just like the dinosaurs.”

“Oh, dinosaurs,”

“Would you want all lions to go into extinction and our children will only hear about them?”

“I guess not,” Wana said, “I see.”

“Yes, we need to save that lion,” Kakoma added, “it’s called conservation.”

“You mean we need to save that lion by

sacrificing one of us?”

“No, that lion just needs proteins,” Womba said, “we just need to give him some proteins not necessarily meat.”

“Oh, I see,” Wana said, “but what type of food are we going to prepare for him?”

The three friends went off to prepare some food stuffs. They prepared food with more proteins and carbohydrates for the hungry lion. They prepared soya sausages, beef soup and maize meal. After they finished preparing, they then went to see the hungry lion.

“Now, who is going to give him the food?” Wana asked.

“We will go together,” suggested Womba.

“I am scared of those teeth,” Wana stated.

“Don’t worry,” Kakoma said, “we have our quills to protect ourselves.”

The three friends took the food to the hungry lion. He was surprised that the animals he used to bully were the ones coming to help him. He ate the sausage and felt better. Once he was done, he said to the three friends.

“Thank you very much,” he said, “You are truly my brothers and sisters.”

From then onwards, the lion became kind to other animals. He stopped bullying others.





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Creative Non-Fiction

Sweet Mother

by
**Mongkuo Armel
(Cameroon)**

The policeman is furiously waving at me to move ahead. I cross the junction and speed home. "Sweet Mother" is no longer playing on the radio. I don't recall when it ended, but another song is currently on. I finally reach the parking lot of my apartment building and sit in the car for a while. I take out my phone and call my mother.



The traffic is lighter than usual today. I'm driving carefully because the rain that was beating hard on my windshield usually camouflaged the real depths of the potholes on the road. My shoulders feel

lighter today and I know why. It is a Friday, which happens to be the favourite day of people with decent, stable jobs. I approach a junction that I know very well and realise the traffic is dense. The traffic lights regu-



lating this junction are stuck on the orange colour and have been like that for a month. My apartment is not too far from here so I decide to lean back on the seat, with my eyes still focused on the road. There's a police officer in a raincoat, motioning furiously, trying to direct the traffic. The rain is pouring hard and I feel sorry for him. Such dedication to a job that is reputedly poorly paid is admirable. I hear something familiar, but I can't figure out what specifically. I look around and realise it's coming from my radio. The sound of the rain outside was dulling it, but I could distinctly hear it. I stretch my hand and increase the volume and I'm immediately filled with a wave of nostalgia. Prince Nico Mbarga's tune titled "Sweet Mother" is playing on the radio. I start nodding my head to the tune and tapping my finger rhythmically on the steering wheel. The traffic is barely moving and the lights from the cars on the other side of the road illuminate the inside of my car in a strange way. It reminds me of my childhood and takes me back to a specific memory.

I was on my way back from school with my little brother and sister. We were hungry but knew what to expect when we got home. Our next meal would only be in the evening because that's all we could afford. It usually consisted of rice in different forms. Our father had passed a year earlier, and life had gotten extremely difficult. My mother was trying to provide for us, but

taking care of three children with no assistance was breaking her. We had two meals every day. One in the morning, usually consisting of bread and butter, and one in the evening. It was barely enough for the four of us, but my mom worked hard to provide that, and I often worried that she would soon follow my father. I fetched water from the well when I got home, gave my younger siblings a bath, and subsequently took one myself. This was a routine I followed after every school day, on an empty stomach. It was automatic for me to take care of my siblings and myself till my mom got home, also on an empty stomach.

By evening, I was feeling my intestines twist from hunger. When she got home, she cooked rice in a very small pot. She was an excellent cook, and the aroma wasn't helping. I went to the kitchen, hoping that my presence will expedite the process. My mother saw me and smiled weakly. She looked so tired. She rubbed my hair with her hand and told me food will be ready soon. There was a loud knock on the door. She asked me to open it and I obeyed. It was my uncle; my father's brother. He was very loud and drank a lot. I didn't like him, and I don't think my mother did either. She greeted him and he requested for whatever my mother was cooking. It was against my mother's rules to refuse anyone food. Some minutes later, she brought him a plate of rice. His first reaction was to complain at how little the food was. I really disliked



that man. My mother apologized and went on to feed the younger ones. Only a meager portion was left and she gave it to me. It tasted really good, and I was so hungry that I wolfed it down, after which I went to the cramped room I shared with my siblings.

My uncle left soon after, and I heard my mom wash the dishes. The food was so little that I was hungry soon afterwards. I went to tell my mother, but she was not in the house. I opened the door and saw her sitting in front of the house. She was sobbing gently while looking at the sky. When she noticed me behind her, she quickly wiped her tears and asked what I was doing out of bed. That's when I noticed she was the only one who had not eaten. As a matter of fact, she never had the morning meals that we had. I sat by her, feeling embarrassed that I had come to tell her I was still hungry. She caressed my head and advised me to work hard at school and become somebody so that my siblings and I will never have to be hungry again. I remember being filled with an extreme wave of love for her.

The loud honking of cars behind mine dragged me back to reality, in the same spot, holding up traffic. The policeman is furiously waving at me to move ahead. I cross the junction and speed home. "Sweet Mother" is no longer playing on the radio. I don't recall when it ended, but an-

other song is currently on. I finally reach the parking lot of my apartment building and sit in the car for a while. I take out my phone and call my mother.

"Hello, mom."

"Hello, Essah, how are you?" She sounded sleepy.

"I'm fine, mommy. How are you?"

"I'm doing well my boy."

I was looking for what to say, but couldn't find any. It was silent for a moment.

"Essah, what's wrong?"

"I actually became somebody, mommy, and we never have to go hungry again."

"I know, my boy. Thanks to you, we have not gone hungry in years," she said with a chuckle.

I once again felt that intense wave of love for her. I think she heard my unspoken words, and I heard hers.

"Good night mommy."

"Good night Essah."

I walked up the stairs to my apartment and made a meal for myself.





Hunger

by
Praises Ukwuije
(Nigeria)

But then again, I ask myself: is that just it? Is hunger concerned with just food, or is there more to it? Surely there should be more to that word aside from the need for food and bodily nourishment... That being the case, what does desire mean?

The Dictionary defines hunger as a condition in which a person or persons, lack the financial or physical capability to eat food sufficient enough to meet the basic nutritional needs of the body for a sustained period. It is popularly known—especially amongst the laity, as a compelling need and desire to eat. A need resulting from a prolonged lack of food. Hunger causes discomfort, but normalcy is returned once it is satiated.

Hunger has been an age-long curse, plaguing humanity throughout history. Different portions of the world's population have suffered sustained periods of hunger. In many cases, it results from disruptions to, or outright stoppage, of food supply caused by

war, plagues, or adverse weather. Although hunger has long been in existence, it has, in recent times, taken a sad turn. According to FAO's (Food and Agriculture Organization) 2021: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, the number of people suffering from chronic hunger began to rise gradually between 2014 and 2019. In 2020, there was a significant increase, resulting in 768 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition globally.

Coming to Africa, according to Wikipedia, as of now, one-fifth of the African population; a staggering 256 million, are hungry; an increase of 44 million since 2014. Over the past 20 years, the reoccurrence



and prevalence of undernourishment have been highest in Eastern and Central Africa because of issues with availability and access to food. However, since 2014, the prevalence of this hunger has sadly increased in Central Africa, and also Western Africa. Mostly as a result of several factors.

In Africa today, bad governance and economy, recurring drought, conflict, and insecurity, among many factors, have principally led to severe food shortages. Several of its countries have struggled with extreme poverty for decades due to the failure of economic structures and the lack of government and community support systems for families. In addition to the existence of prolonged internal conflicts and civil wars is the natural occurrence of repeated drought cycles as a result of the ozone layer and environmental deterioration, plunging communities into a new food crisis before they have a chance to recover sufficiently from the last one.

The impact of this hunger pandemic, though worldwide, has driven millions deeper into starvation. Sadly, these impacts persist and are more evident in some African communities. More alarming is the decline in income opportunities, lost livelihoods, diminished purchasing power, and limited access to basic food and services, all continuing into 2022.

But then again, I ask myself: is that just it? Is hunger concerned with just food, or is there more to it? Surely there should be

more to that word aside from the need for food and bodily nourishment. By etymology, hunger stems from the old English word “hungor” defined as hunger, desire; famine. A desire it says. This new revelation tries to throw light on the true definition of the word hunger. That being the case, what does desire mean?

Desire or desires is defined as states of mind or consciousness that are expressed by terms such as “wanting”, “longing”, “craving” or “wishing”. A great variety of features commonly exist and are associated with desires. Basically, desires can be understood to be attitudes—favourable or otherwise, in reaction to the occurrence of existing or conceptualized affairs.

In simpler terms, desire is a want, request, or earnest wish, for a noumenon, person, state of mind, possession, lifestyle, etc. or the occurrence of a phenomenon. It could also be defined as an acute need to take charge or control of an event or series of events that primarily control one’s existence or the outright control of one’s existence.

Generally, desires have different features, but principally, desires—especially conscious desires, are usually accompanied by some form of emotional response. Evidence of this is in the desire to present its objectives in a favourable light, as something that is good, with its fulfilment resulting in a pleasurable experience; in contrast to the negative experience that



would arise from failing to fulfil such objectives. Different theories exist to define desire, with each theory confining it into peculiar constructs. Action-based theories define desires as structures that incline us toward actions. Value-based theories—on the other hand, identify desires with attitudes toward values however intrinsic they may or may not be. Last but not least, Pleasure-based theories focus on the tendency of desires to cause or deny pleasure when or when not fulfilled.

Ultimately, in the study of desire; in relation to it being a definition of the word hunger, one begins not to just grasp a better understanding of the word hunger, but also to see similarities between both. Aside from both words involving a need, or placing the afflicted in a state of longing, the word hunger and its impact, transcends bodily afflictions; such as weight loss, fatigue, and irritability, to also affect the mind and one's consciousness. Yes! Hunger can also affect the mind. Its impact results in visible traits such as apathy, obsession, depression, anger, etc. amongst other adverse impacts. Thus, it is said that *a hungry man is an angry man*. Surprisingly, the same goes for desire, as ultimately, the fulfilment of one's desire results in a sense of gratification, and in its unfulfillment, a sense of despair and even depression.

Having established hunger; desire, as a state of longing that could exist independently as a desire for bodily satiation

(food), certain psychological needs, sexual satisfaction, an emotional structure, control of one's existence, spirituality, education, economic stability, good governance, adequate healthcare, or, a kind of lifestyle, etc. to an encompassing hunger for all the above-listed entities, it is therefore imperative that man should at all costs fight hunger—a longing that has the power to afflict the body as well as the mind, in whatever form it may appear.

Humanity needs to understand that a plague such as hunger—with the power to afflict both body and soul, shouldn't be allowed to exist. The path to the total eradication of hunger calls for collectiveness and resolve to effect a change, from the lowly citizen to the mighty government and its officials. From the grassroots, hunger—the need for food, can be eradicated with acts of humanity to humanity: give, help out that hungered man. In governance, a consciousness of the people's interest; even in decision-making, should be paramount. The interest of the country and its citizens should always come first. In the case where hunger isn't a desire for food, we (humanity) must strive to be in control and take charge of our decisions. Finally, we must learn to be go-getters, achievers; and not just dreamers, with little steps, birthing little wins until the desired is acquired and desire is finally sated.



Emptiness to be Filled

by
**Henry Ngeli
(Zambia)**

The desire to find possible solutions to the emptiness is a two-sided coin, positive and negative. The victim is free to pick a side and channel the hunger. It is important to note that even a wrong means will surely fill the emptiness but with consequences, which may be more complicated to deal with...



As long as the mind is seeking to fill itself, it will always be empty. When the mind is no longer concerned with filling its own emptiness, then only does that emptiness cease to be. - Jiddu Krishnamurti.

Psychologically, a good number of us may liaise with Jiddu on filling up the empti-

ness in our minds because most of the challenges we experience result from the state of our minds or our imaginations of a number of issues that put us into unstable conditions and uncomfortable situations. Some of the challenges we encounter could be avoided if we tame our mental



activities. This implies that emptiness can also be created in the mind; it can be an illusion within and so there is the need to fill up any emptiness, and the willingness and desire to fill up the gap is the first step to getting it done.

This article is an attempt to explain an emptiness that demands to be filled up; this emptiness is caused by hunger. In every ordinary situation, living things, especially human beings and animals, do not entertain any form of emptiness. This is because it oftentimes leads to negative situations. They always want to be complete. The cause or origin of this hunger is known and unknown at the same time. There are different forms of hunger and hence their origins which could be internal or external forces and at times both, depending on the type and intensity of the hunger. However, the common denominator here is the emptiness caused in every being, therefore, the remedy for this hunger is to fill it, but with what?

When the need arises to fill up this emptiness, the victim has, first and foremost, to identify the type of emptiness and possibly the cause, and in so doing, will be able to identify the solutions. This is very important because some emptiness just needs us to be there and it will be filled, however, in situations whereby external forces are required, it is important to pick the right ones to fill the gap. Hunger for food, for

example, demands one to take in some food; here, it is not just a matter of eating just anything; one needs to choose edible, healthy and clean food. Because the aim here is not just to fill the emptiness since food is meant to provide a number of nutrients to living beings. For example, human beings derive energy, carbohydrates and other nutrients to help them grow well and be healthy creatures and this is where the issue of a balanced diet comes in. We all understand that nearly every food can satisfy a person and fill the emptiness caused by hunger but does that food provide other necessary nutrients needed for the betterment of that person? In all these, what is important to take note of is that at all costs, this emptiness has to be filled, because otherwise, the implications can be disastrous and may even result in the loss of lives.

It is this discomfort that triggers human beings to seek a means of filling up the emptiness within. Since the intensity of this emptiness is felt by the victim, those who can afford try to curb it at all costs. If it is the desire or craving for something, which could be food, sexual gratification, power, riches or anything; the origin can be from within or outside forces. It is important to understand this because it can be controlled. For example, if one experiences sexual desires after going to nightclubs or by taking alcohol, then, to avoid the emptiness it causes, one has to check the things



that lead him or her to feel empty. This implies that by avoiding certain occasions in life, one is able to avoid a number of problems. Here, discipline becomes a central figure in hunger management. If only one can avoid certain occasions, the emptiness they end up having would not be there. However, if it is a natural emptiness, then the focus will be to develop sustainable means of filling it, and if possible, the means should be naturally inclined.

Should the filling of this emptiness demand external forces to take charge, then that has to be the way to go because it should be filled to prevent it from going deeper and deeper. The understanding is that every human being at some point experiences this emptiness, although the response varies from one individual to the other. This emptiness may not be contagious since it is usually personal. This implies that the solutions that may have worked for someone may not necessarily work for the other if not checked. Though it is important to learn from each other's experiences, it is equally important that every individual develop their own techniques for filling up this emptiness.

To sort out this issue, something has to be done, especially practically. For example, with emptiness for food, real food is needed to satisfy that hunger, but should it be a hunger for love, then there is a need for someone to partner with the victim.

Should it be a hunger for work or anything that one may experience, then something has to fill the emptiness; there is a need for something or someone to take charge. Very important to note.

The desire to find possible solutions to the emptiness is a two-sided coin, positive and negative. The victim is free to pick a side and channel the hunger. It is important to note that even a wrong means will surely fill the emptiness but with consequences, which may be more complicated to deal with than the emptiness that was intended to be filled. Problems are not solved by creating more problems, just as fire does not quench fire. The implication here is that emptiness cannot be filled by creating another one.

Hunger, by nature, cannot completely be satisfied, because it is a continuous occurrence which demands constant maintenance. Also, since it cannot be totally eradicated, it needs constant monitoring to prevent any possible negative outcomes. What kind of hunger do you often experience? If you cannot manage your hunger, it will manage you.



An Unending Hollow

by
**Tsulisime Usidamen
(Nigeria)**

The hollow becomes an earthquake that shakes my core. It buries all I have built and leaves desolation in its wake. I hug my mother. I see a level ground. I begin to rebuild. I see beauty in the whole chaos. I find peace dancing and I join. I am a terrible dancer.

I sit with my legs on the table, a habit my mother loathes but has continuously failed to put an end to. There's a show on TV and all I do is stare at the wall above. The light hurts my eyes but I sit in black denim trousers that tickle my limbs yet I have no intention to wear something comfortable.

The day rushes like a groom leaving his bride at the altar unmarried. Time escapes like a water from clenched fists.

I am still. Thoughts rage on my insides.

There is a hollow in me that food doesn't fill. I have followed this path for years and met a dead end where the grasses at the edge lay. There is a cliff where the sun

drowns and, in my dreams, I become a version of myself that stops searching.

It is 4 am and I woke up before the rains came. Going outside my house may be a hassle today. I am not claustrophobic but I fear the roof may cave in if I inhale too deeply. I am tired of being trapped in circles that go on revolving without regard.

I am cold and exhausted. The day has just begun and my choices will make or mar it. Regardless of my input, it will come and go in the fashion of its kind.

When I was younger, I always looked forward to being an adult. I wanted to be more, do more and have more power. All I



am left with is hunger. For something more than I am.

I want to change the world. I want to leave it better than I met it. Laziness attaches itself to my spine. I try to shake it off and get the job done. And when I get tired, I fall back on my knees and do nothing but stare at the ceiling.

There is a hollow in my chest that I have carried since I turned sixteen. It is invincible and sometimes I forget it even exists.

It widens each day. I am caught in the valley of doing too much and doing nothing at all.

I want to pour my soul into writing but don't know how to begin. So, I write whatever comes to mind.

Inspiration sprouts like weeds on sandy soil and I try to milk out every story I can get.

Some days I feel blue and my heart beats faster than I can count.

I want to express myself more than my mouth lets me.

I want to be remembered. I am so young yet I worry about the future and its uncertainty. I built shields that crack and break under pressure. I recede into my shell.

A major souvenir of my childhood that adulthood never stole away is curiosity. I am a curious human being. I have always asked questions and though introversion

has been a block, I have learnt that this hollow hunger in my chest will never be satisfied.

The world will not wait until I have something to say.

It will churn on and on without stopping. Times, seasons and my feelings would change but my resolve would remain.

I am scared of letting the hollow become regrets when I am old and stricken in age.

The hollow in my chest morphs into many things. It becomes anxiety, tightens my lungs and leaves me breathless.

I hate how anxiety becomes physical pain.

The hollow knows that I cannot catch up with the world. Each sunrise leaves me in awe. I stare wondering what had happened while I slept.

I am obsessed with checking. The sun is Gen-Z showing up each time after a tragedy to say 'it isn't that deep'. It aids people to move on with their lives offering newness when the rooster crows.

Nobody wants to be stuck. I have been walking on a treadmill going nowhere. I want the sun to acknowledge that it isn't easy. I want to scream until my sides ache, laugh and play. I carry a consciousness that life is fleeting. I want to live as a flower, not an angry weed.

I want a lot. I am exhausted from playing hide and seek. I want more but don't know



where to begin.

I have the tendency to be a raging perfectionist. I plan and it irks me when it doesn't go the way I envision it to. I want my writing to be the bomb, my poems to cut bones like a two-edged sword. I want my readers to find themselves in the alphabets I carve. I am still finding myself. I am not lost. My story is not over yet. As this hollow grows, I become a bottomless ravine seeking more. I won't settle for less when I can get better. Rejections hurt but I have learnt to read them with smiles.

Life hits really hard. One moment I am cheering and the next indifference overwhelms me. I feel things too deeply. I want to hover around the surface. My sentiments bring tears to my eyes. I cry unnecessarily and laugh too quickly. I close my eyes and want a fairy tale. I'm always asking what's next.

The hollow becomes an earthquake that shakes my core. It buries all I have built and leaves desolation in its wake. I hug my mother. I see a level ground. I begin to rebuild. I see beauty in the whole chaos. I find peace dancing and I join. I am a terrible dancer.

My feelings don't last long no matter how much they weigh and that serves as a surety for all the times I beat myself up. Adulthood has come with a lot of realization.

The world will not wait, I cannot stop the

hands of time, I can't do everything but I can try to do just one thing extraordinarily well. I get anxious about the future but still go on ahead to do what I have to. I take breaks when tired. I haven't stopped dreaming. I am still childlike. I've found my wonder and it has opened me up to a whole new world.

I have found absolute beauty in the mundane, crappy bus rides into the town centre, the old library, eating waina with kuli kuli and really looking at people like it is the last time I'd see them. I have smiled at strangers and hugged my friends.

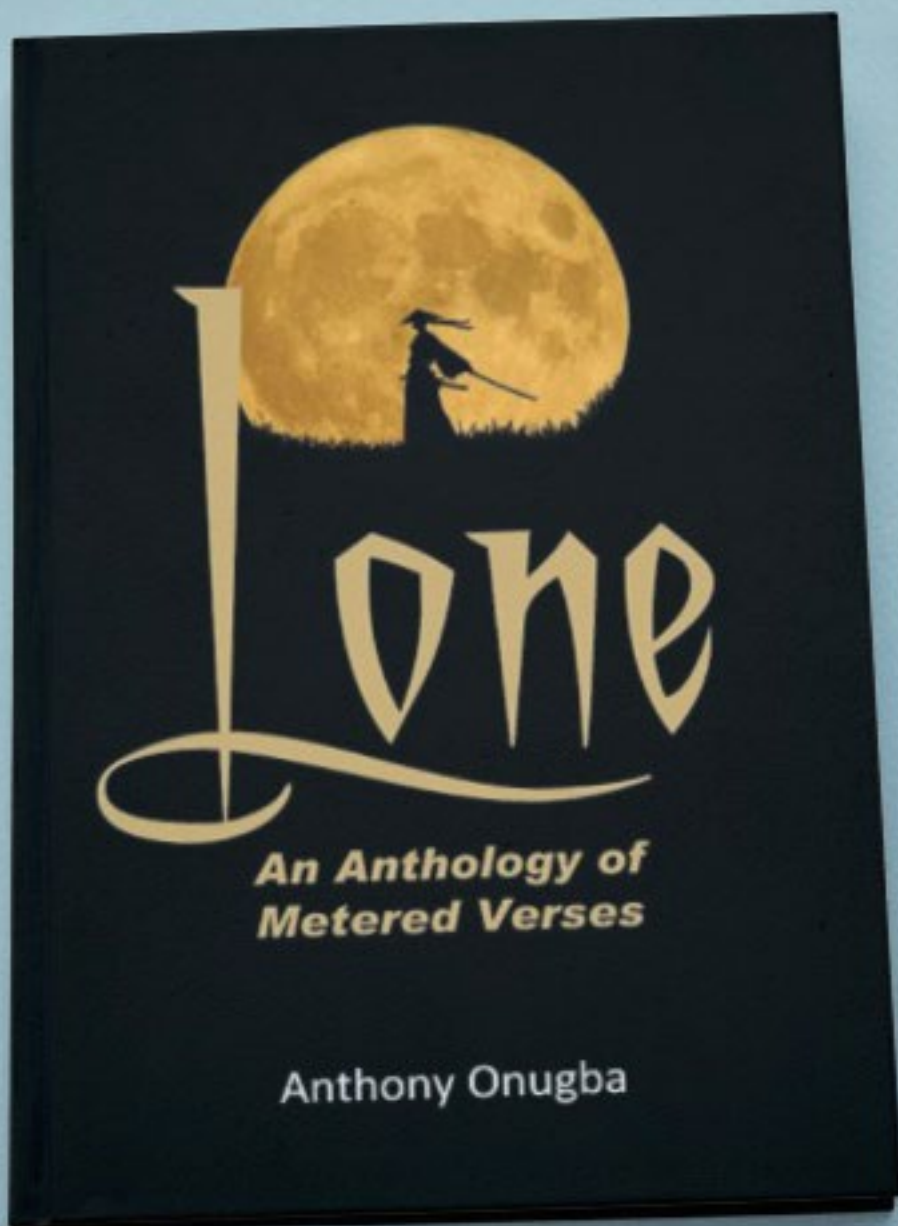
I won't live forever but I've found peace knowing that I was here and I tried my best.

I wrestled with anxiety and held my head up when my legs became eels.

The hollow in my chest may never be filled but I am content with everything that has made me over the years.

Sometimes I wonder how I have survived this long and smile. This hollow-like fear is both good and bad. It may save your life or make you lose it. The hollow didn't save me. It only made me realize that I could be anything I wanted and it wouldn't try to stop me. I have all the power in my hands and as long as it remains a hunger, the only thing capable of stopping me is me..





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Flash Fiction

A Morning in Drought

Francis Mkwapatira
Malawi



Waking up to her baby's cry, she stumbled on her crippled brother on the doorstep.

She shook him thrice, touched his neck, then covered her mouth. He was stiff.

"What part of 'I don't have' don't you understand, Zagwa? These days, I hardly find enough flour for my child's porridge at the mills. Besides her, feeding an adult is a luxury I can't afford"; She recalled yelling before shutting him out the previous night.



Life Happens

Esther Uwaleke
Nigeria

You watch as your son gasps for breath; battling for life. His stomach growls loudly just as his swinging thin hands try to push yours away when you hold on to it. Your stomach growls in response to his but that was irrelevant now, compared to the issue at hand. Your wife looks at you accusingly, expecting you to do something as the head of the family. You look away in shame, for indeed you can do anything.

“I am going to the landlord’s place”, she says, standing up.

“No, no it hasn’t gotten to that”, you plead brokenly.

“That’s the only choice we have, I

can’t watch my son die.” She says with tears in her eyes.

You reassure her you will do something. You are going out now. You hurriedly put on your shirt which is now twice your size. You have emaciated over the passed months. You promise to bring something back home no matter how little so they can feed.

You go out to the same people who had told you “no” on numerous occasions. You beg again. They say “no” again. You walk back home devastated not knowing how to break the news to your wife.

The outcry from your neighbour welcomes you home.

It calls out to your wife who comes out of the landlord’s room immodestly dressed carrying food with her.

You look on in disbelief as your landlord grins at you from the door.

Your wife is crying and your neighbour’s wail brings your attention back to your son in her arms.

He is dead.



Writers' Mingle 5

Topic :

IS THERE HOPE FOR AFRICAN LITERATURE?



Friday, 4th November, 2022



2.00 PM - 3.30 PM



FNAC, BALI (SUPER U), DOUALA, CAMEROON.



Nnane Ntube
Host



Anthony Onugba
Moderator



Namse Udosen
Literacy advocate/Writer



Kelly Yemdji
Writer



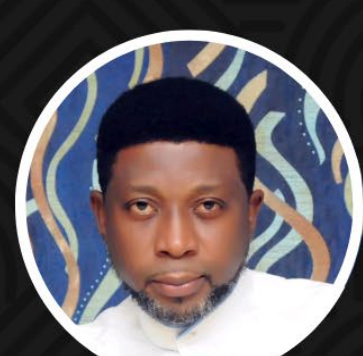
Chris Baah
Writer



MD Mbutoh
Poet and Essayist



Danielle Eyango
Writer



Steve Ogah
Writer/Literary Critic

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WSA-C
Writers Space Africa - Cameroon



Creative Spotlight

A close-up portrait of a Black man with a short beard and mustache, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a white t-shirt with a humorous message printed on it. The background is a blurred green foliage.

Teacher?
I prefer
the term
Educational
Rockstar

Welcome to another Edition of the Writers Space Africa Magazine Writers corner. In this Edition, we will be chatting with Namse Udosen the educational Rockstar from Nigeria.

PPBlessing: So why do you call yourself half man, half amazing?

NU: That name is old. I am now called the Super Duper Special one. The half man, half amazing name came from Nas. The track “Nas is Like” is so poetic and that line stuck.

PPBlessing: Okay. Thank you for the updates. How did the new name come about?

NU: I believe I am special. My friends say I am a genius flirting with insanity.

My students say I bring vibes to the classroom.

PPBlessing: Interesting... How about your educational Rockstar part?

NU: I am an educational reformer. In these parts, people feel teaching or education should be boring. I am changing the narrative by bringing the funk to the class.

PPBlessing: Wonderful. How has that been so far?

NU: It’s been laced with challenges. Nigerians struggle to accept innovations. But I still do my best for the kids.

PPBlessing: How about your writing? Which other books have you published aside from



Namse doing a puppet show for kids at YELF literary evening





Namse with kids at Narayi for remedial education after COVID-19 lockdown

Fundamental etiquette for young Nigerians?

NU: I have published a Textbook from my M.ed thesis on School Plant Management.

I have a free ebook for kids, Silly Sally. I have another one in the works. I can't reveal it now because I haven't finalized it with the publisher.

PPBlessing: Interesting... Can you shed more light on these books?

NU: The one on School Plant is research-based. It's a guide for school administrators on the types of facilities to run a proper school. It touches on physical infrastructure, welfare, learning aids and others. It also gives a guide for maintenance processes.

Silly Sally is a basic reader. It is poetic and has lots of decodable words for children.

Fundamental etiquette for young Nigerians is a book on good manners for children. I hope to work on a revised edition.

PPBlessing: How and when did you start writing?

NU: I started writing as a kid. I think I was about 7 when my dad used to make us write about trips we made. He also made us write compositions and book reviews.

PPBlessing: Did you like writing then?

NU: I did not oh. I found it boring.

PPBlessing: So, when did writing become interesting?

NU: I think when I started liking babes. I started writing love poems and getting rave reviews.

PPBlessing: When was that?



NU: When I was in secondary school. It was an all-boys military school. We used to sneak out letters to babes. During holidays, I would hear stuff like “Namse one girl in my school liked your poem”.

PPBlessing: *Were babes the sole inspiration for your writing?*

NU: Then or now?

PPBlessing: *Then*

NU: I also loved to create a world of comfort for myself. I was an introvert and had difficulty socializing as a young guy.

PPBlessing: *Hmm.. How did you evolve into*

writing for kids and the educational sector?

NU: Teaching in primary education opened my eyes to the gaps in literacy resources. Working with children made me realise there was a cultural gap in children’s books.

PPBlessing: *Did you study education in school?*

NU: Yes. I have a B.ed and M.ed in Educational Administration and Planning.

PPBlessing: *Wow! That’s awesome. How has those affected your writing?*

NU: From an academic perspective, it has given me a more empirical approach to



Open-air classroom for street children at Baban Saura, Kaduna



writing. So I try to research before writing. I look for stats to guide my work. It makes me consider different perspectives when writing. It has also focused my writing on solving gaps in education.

PPBlessing: Are you the founder of the Tanar Kaduna Bookathon?

NU: Yes, I am.

PPBlessing: Why the name Tanar for the Bookathon?

NU: Tanar means teacher.

PPBlessing: Oh wow! What language is that?

NU: Hungarian

PPBlessing: Nice... Are you multilingual?

NU: No oh. I just did some translations and loved Tanar.

PPBlessing: How did the Bookathon come about and what's its aim?

NU: My job as a teacher revealed the gap in reading resources for children in poor communities. I decided to do something by getting creative volunteers to help create culturally relevant reading books for children.

PPBlessing: How far have you come with that?

NU: We have been able to produce 3 eb-

ooks and run printing of over 1000 books. We have distributed to IDP camps, LEA schools and communities in Kaduna.

PPBlessing: Such giant strides! Do you have partners and sponsors?

NU: Our original partners were Yasmin el-Rufai Foundation, WSA, and a few others.

Right now, I am trying to re-strategize and rework the model.

PPBlessing: Godspeed

NU: Thanks

PPBlessing: Aside from educating children, writing for them and the educational sector, what else do you do?

NU: I am currently trying my hands on a TV show. I also run a podcast on Ayam-balitcast where I read stories for children and share lessons. I love listening to rap and watching military documentaries.

Part of my community work is with Wonder Woman Nigeria. We had a program for a year where we distributed sanitary pads and counselled young girls in Kujama village kaduna.

PPBlessing: What do you do for fun?

NU: I love visiting bars and dancing. I do karaoke. I also do some nature photography. I love cooking and experimenting with recipes.





PPBlessing: *Sounds interesting. If you weren't in the educational line, what would you have done?*

NU: I would have been in the military or a rapper.

PPBlessing: *Why?*

NU: I attended military schools. I love combat. I would have made a great artilleryman. I was part of two rap groups in the university.

PPBlessing: *Such a versatile man. Little wonder you are the educational Rockstar. Do you have mentees?*

NU: Yes, I do. Most of my students still hang on to me. I have others from the Creative Writing program of YELF.

PPBlessing: *That's great. Do you have Mentors?*

NU: Yes I do. Anthony Onugba, Richard Dambo and Prof Undie.

PPBlessing: *How have they mentored you?*

NU: They have given me inspiration as a writer and educator. Anthony made me start writing again when he started WSA and made me a founding member.

Prof Undie is my academic mentor.

Richard Dambo helps me understand civic

engagement and community service.

PPBlessing: *How has being part of WSA and the magazine's editorial board affected your writing?*

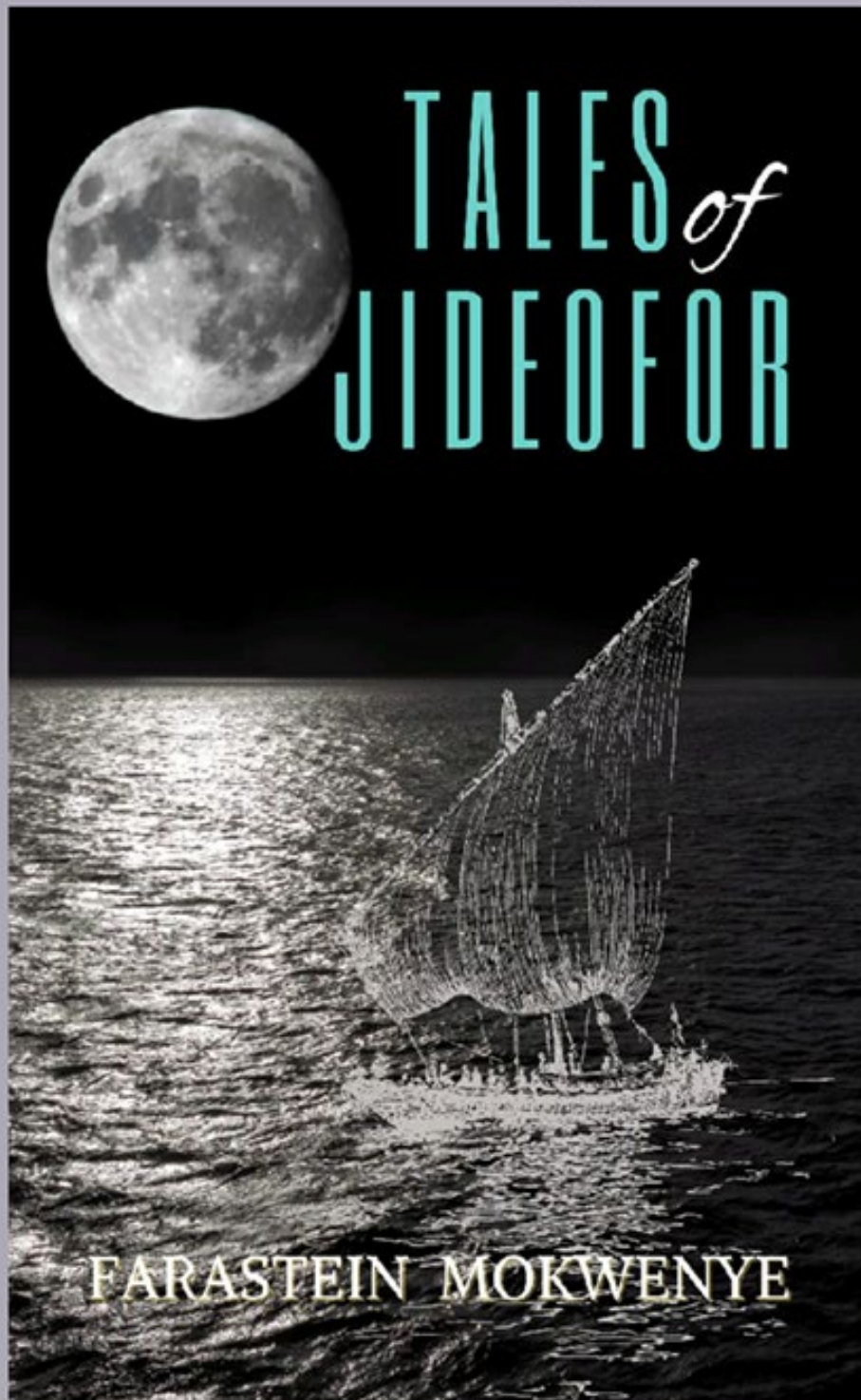
NU: It's been an important learning curve. It has exposed me to broader views and experiences.

PPBlessing: *Thank you so much for your time. Keep doing great things.*

Thank you for staying with us through this Edition, until next month, keep reading the Writers Space Africa Magazine.



Follow in the footsteps of your
ancestors through Jideofor's
heart-touching tale



<https://www.amazon.com/Tales-Jideofor-Farastein-Mokwenye/dp/1915161819>



The background of the entire page is a lush green tea plantation on rolling hills, with misty mountains in the distance. On the left side, there is a stylized map of the African continent composed of three overlapping shapes: a red shape at the top, a yellow shape in the middle, and a green shape at the bottom.

African Writers Conference

CAMEROON '22 | 2ND - 6TH NOV

Register at www.africanwritersconference.com



2022 NOVEMBER

EVENT SCHEDULE

3rd Thursday

Workshops 10:00AM - 2:00PM
(poetry, shortstory,
Children's
literature).

PoetryPerformance 2:00PM - 4:00PM
Black Night Africa

4th Friday

Writers Mingle 5 2:00PM - 3:30PM
**Theme: Is there
Hope for African
Literature?**

Roundtable on 4:00PM - 5:00PM
Cameroon Literature.

5th Saturday

African Writers 10:00AM - 2:00PM
Conference.
**Theme: Writing
Africa: The Nexus of
Hope**

6th Sunday

**City tour/ Picnic/
Departure** 10:00AM - 2:00PM
**Tour locations:
Douala and Limbe**



Poetry

Poet: Gidness Goodluck

Country: Tanzania

The Strange Stranger

She comes slowly as a newcomer
Knocking on the door, only to open
And host a strange stranger, but she comes
You can't disagree, but to resist.

She knows no champion, sick or children
She visits whoever comes in her head
And by daybreak, she's the winner
As she drives persons to do hard work.

All this while, she's not quiet
As she drives men into crimes
No hero can stomach or hide her
Since attention is her daily meal.

To know her is to defeat her for good
But she's a hanger and a banger
She steals millions of people's peace
And laughs at them as they toil.

She's brave enough to attack politicians
And they spread for her a red carpet
As we gnash and wail and scream
Because we can't quieten her urge in time.

She's settled right in our bellies
But we can't brag about satisfaction
Because we have no food to quieten her.



Poet: Lateef Olatunji

Country: Nigeria

Invocation

Brew:

Whimpers of iniquities,
Charades of pain,
Histrionics to please-
The divine cronies

Hearken:

Come forth to partake
In this feast of impetuousness.
Let your brawny tongues
Of devastation savour
The un-merry calm I abhor.

Djinni:

That your hunger for blood and destruction
Overtakes my meek-ly fault.
Take charge, my puppeteer,
And rain some punishment down.

Alter Ego:

Not all mad men run naked.
Ferity, boxed in ties and shoes,
Does sometimes let loose -
Triggered by a poke or push,
Yearning, craving,
For freedom from
The illusions of civility.



Poet: Matambo B Andrey
Country: Zambia



An Empty Bag of Meali Meal

In a house where pots don't see enough fufu
In a house where plates don't hold enough sadza
In a house where five fingers rarely glomp enough nshima
Peace and smiles swiftly scamper out via the windows
As disrespect, insults, and violence fast creep in through the door.
A once very loyal wife with words today disrobes her hubby in public
"I'm leaving! Is a man a man if he can't even appease my small stomach! "
A brother pokes a sharp dagger 'gainst his blood brother in anger
A taboo fueled by selfishly sold cornfields and the resulting hunger.
The young hearts of the nation jump on crime and prostitution
to put some food on the table
They boxed me, "Would you rather starve to death
with all your virtues or just slightly bend the law?"
And our politicians are busy fighting corruption with fines and prison bars...
Yebo! Skillfully sweeping leaves in a whirlwind again and again.
"An empty bag of meali meal can't stand upright." Will we ever learn?



Poet: Muhammad Sobur
Country: Nigeria



Home is Where You Leave

Last night were portraits of little girls in hues of woe;
Shadows adorned in bamboo beddings,
Day-old babies starved, lay bare-bellied.
A mother's head buried—in thighs—in shame,
A chest bereft of milk, a streaming cleavage;
Tears of weaned neonates flooded therethrough.

Last winter in Chad, Heuglin's robins devoid of
Field grains gobbled; pecked at rotten fruits,
Perched on frond roofs—watching
The wishes of hungry fathers ebb away.
The lung—an orifice of ravenous pains;
Famines gnawing at the bellies of minors.

The last Libyan war left nothing of wheat.
Families huddled over dozens of bowls,
But there's nothing somewhat of a flesh or fish
To call a dish, but Zimbabwean porcelains,
From which hands dipped in won't find a thing.

Last August in Liberia, drought earned liberty in hamlets,
With liberal amount of hunger disbursed across
A place termly occupied by people displaced,
A father who—four days before—deserted his home, says:

Home is where you leave—not live—with no provisions.



Poet: Bernadette Chikapa

Country: Malawi

Work of Art

Do painters' fingers tingle with that rush
When their thumb and index holds not the brush?

Do they too feel that longing deep inside
When their empty canvas hurts their pride?

Do singers' voices go sour in desperation
When their cords last for days with no tune?
Do they too desire to sing with no cessation
Even when this makes them feel like a loon?

Do dancers' joints yelp in despair
When they run out of moves to go on?
Do they too yearn to bend without a care
Even when they fail to choreograph that song?

Do other writers' hearts shriek in agony
When days go by and all there is, is a blank page?
Do they too feel as though they've committed a felony
When their lack of inspiration throws them in a cage?



Poet: Mugambi Kaaria

Country: Kenya

The Search for Nourishment

We were both in search for nourishment
Each, with a need that required fulfilment
My desire was to seal the gap in my soul
Hers, to fill her stomach which had a hole

My starvation inclined towards the spiritual
Her emptiness, rather physical
Mine could only be satisfied by the word
Hers, by a stew well stirred

I searched from the priest to the pope
She tore through bins with hope
I was informed of a holy book
She learnt to fish by the hook

I learnt the difference between bad and good
Through fishing she was able to find food
I found peace and happiness
She said goodbye to the body weakness

Death was the ultimate penalty for us both
Nourishment brought us both growth
I got my fill from all that I got to learn
The strength she had lost made a return

We are both no longer hungry
Neither do we have a reason to be angry
For now, in the way of the Lord I am led
And she eats to her fill before she goes to bed.



Poet: Bilat Chebochok

Country: Kenya

Overlooked

'Sun will rise and we'll try again.'

That's the problem,
I've been overlooked,
I don't want the sun to rise again
Yet another reminder, sight of plight.

*where is that I erred,
that cannot be forgiven.*

I demand to know.

*I'm done praying
listen, you whoever
what is it I'm paying?*

Dust obscure the sky
nowise heard perhaps that's why
I'm overlooked.

For I can see those wrapped in comfort

With feet above their hearts, umbrella,

Sunglasses and trash pin

Alive with hope.

I'm sick to my stomach. Groaning.

Yesterday's breath I can't take

Again, hold the night still and

Hide the faces of my kin.



Poet: Bala Mercy
Country: Nigeria

Hunger Pangs

I have strolled into that inn countless times
On some unfortunate occasions
A dark cold deserted chamber
Whitewashed walls shrouding themselves together
Deep rumble of eager basses emanating from shadowy rooms
Sharp jutting aches from sitting on stale armchairs
Parched throat, panting veins, salivary gulps
Those old bulbs dried up all the mist
The sentry at the entrance an exact image of a scamp
Albeit less fiercer than the pound-pounder at the counter
I don't know what attracts droves into that airless inn
Always I had to stand in an inevitable long wait
Till I became weary enough to faint
Once you're nearly enveloped in sleep
The ever-hollering hotelier hands you a bunch of rusty keys
Which are of no use through your drowsy eyelids
Meals are such unwelcome thoughts
There's nothing at all to serve
So I just slump down the door beam
And have a supper-studded dream





Poet: Hanai Elizabeth
Country: Tanzania

Raptor

She is a creature of the wild,
a raptor.
Men in the village called her, “a monster”,
For when she devoured a herd of beasts,
there remained no traces of bones.
It is hunger that drives her.
In her veins flows desire.
The desire to conquer lands,
and acquire gold.
She hungers for a name,
a form of worldly importance,
a brazen image of herself,
a midtown sculpture.
She hungers for a Queendom,
one not set by sword drawn from stone,
one built from a handful of dust.
She hungers for peace,
for the salvation of her thoughts.
Men in the village called her, “a ghost”,
for at the stroke of midnight,
she wanders in search of rest,
in search of the moon,
as she hungers for its light.
She is a painter hungry for an empty canvas.



Poet: Ugwueze Nna
Country: Nigeria

We now Possess a Rumbling centre

Yesterday was the day we pushed ourselves
Out of the childhood' cradle Mama made with cozy velvet.
Before we fell we carried our bag of dreams on our heads
-pointing at each and every hand that dandled us from infants
Trying not to be those kids once counting on stars
And building Rome with beach sand in a day
As maturity prevailed over us. We could resist to crave sweet
But life tasted lime-on-ade on our tongues
So we burnt the bridge that led to where we once called home
And kept fending for daily bread and cheese like cowboys.
We'd ambled to the downtown, seeking the anatomy of life
Before the front desks that carried portraits of unknown men's nametags.
Tiles we were to scrub after we swept the western floor under probation-
But we ne'er sidelined the traditions our fatherland grew-
Ridges we made and seeds we sowed
Knowing the fruits of our labour before the summer sprung
our black ass from behind the desk we longily laid our hands on.

After winter, we turned to icebreakers cutting across autumn;
As we crawl, we move
As we stand, we fall
As we walk, we talk
With precision we'd made it to today
As we run, soaring high from the cliff
-never back down to some days we left behind.





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PoeticAfrica is Africa's first trilingual poetry magazine published quarterly. The magazine showcases rich and diverse poetry in English, Kiswahili, and French from all over Africa to the world.

The Weatherman's Creation

By: Bruno Sakalani
Country: Tanzania

Some said one among the village-folks had angered the gods by not offering the yearly sacrifice to our god, Leza. Some had the impression that someone had somehow woken some dark spirits of dead old witches who once tormented our land. Everywhere and everyone around our village was growing restless. This year's rains did not know just when to stop, they went on for three moons even when our crops and soon-to-be harvests became waterlogged! From those who cultivated maize to those who planted beans and other homegrown crops, it was catastrophic.

Just as the rains stopped everyone was in extreme panic and restlessness. The same

morning, we gathered in front of our village barn. It was built by us - the dwellers of Msanzi - under the pioneering and leadership of our last chief the late Chief Simwela specifically for unfortunate times like this when almost every village-folk did not know what they would put in their bellies for mid-day and sunset. So in front of the village barn, all of us gathered to wait for our leader, Chief Simbachawene.

"My fellow folks of Msanzi." After hearing our Chief's charismatic voice, everyone was relieved in one way or another. The Chief went on, "In this farming season, the rains have poured down upon us more heavily than any of us ever expected. Even our



great weatherman Mzee Kalambo.” (Chief Simbachawene dryly chuckled). This remark made some people around the back start whispering indistinctly because never before had Mzee Kalambo’s weather predictions gone wrong. It seemed like at the time; he could not see what could have happened. Chief Simbachawene cleared his throat and went on,

“.. but now is not the time to point fingers. We have our village barn, so we shall share among us these baskets of beans and sacks of maize to help us through this critical phase. Everyone among us should group themselves in accordance with their kin so that the process of providing rations may commence.”

Everyone hailed the chief and began gathering ourselves with our families. Those who were by themselves like Bwana Kandege who was always coming in and going out of Msanzi claiming he had a business going on in Matai, our neighbouring village, just stood there by himself, eyes up, arms akimbo like a philosopher in contemplation. Too much time passed following the moment the Chief went inside the house with his council of advisors. People began shouting exclamations and ululations, calling him. The noises and commotion grew higher and more chaotic. The Chief’s guards had to form a single file in front of us to calm us down. When the Chief came out to address us, somehow his face looked pale with a mélange of confu-

sion and rage.

“Our village barn has been robbed!” He shouted with a raging yet shaky voice. Expectedly, we were shocked, enraged, angered, lost for words... and every word you can use to describe the feeling you get when you’re literally told that there won’t be any food for you to eat today and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow!

“Whaaaaat!”

“Who did it!?”

“Who stole our food!?”

People threw their anger and rage in the air but our Chief did not have any answer. He was just as shocked and caught off-guard as the rest of us. Myself I could not believe what I just heard from the Chief. I had not eaten since I chewed some three-years-old dry cassavas the day before. So, I too, was confused!

We had to storm the barn to see for ourselves if what the Chief had told us bore any truth. Upon entering the barn, there were no baskets of beans nor sacks of maize we worked so hard to cultivate. Unfortunately, we fooled ourselves that our village had peace and therefore, the barn was only under the protection of Leza!

Thirteen nights had passed since our village barn had been robbed. Mothers were having troubles breastfeeding their infants as the only food we could eat was dry cassavas once a day with gallons of water. One



day, a boy almost broke his little sister's arm when fighting over dry cassava during the sunset meal! Just over a day later, one man almost starved to death after he came home to find his dry cassavas stolen; he had not eaten for four nights.

One quiet afternoon, three children were playing under a tree near Mzee Kalambo's residence, one among the three called Mlumendo thought he had smelled cooked beans or something similar.

"Hey folks, come on!" Mlumendo yelled to the other three.

One boy, the tallest among them, yelled back, "What now!?"

Mlumendo pointed to Mzee Kalambo's house: "I think I smelled some cooked beans coming from yonder. Can you smell it too!?"

"Beans!? In times like this!? I don' believe it" the third boy exclaimed.

"Come on, I swear I can smell some beans," Mlumendo whispered. "Let's go see it for ourselves"

The tallest boy said, "... but that's the weatherman's house. Who knows what he could do to us if he catches us spying on him!!"

"... that is only if we get caught!" Mlumendo and the third boy told the tallest boy.

They covertly approached Mzee Kalambo's

house. When they neared its proximity, they saw three large open sacks towering over two silhouettes.

"After this trip, I'm telling you Mzee Kalambo, you will never need to be a weatherman again!" The fairly elegant silhouette told the other fairly short silhouette. "Come on now Bwana Kandege!" the fairly old and short silhouette chuckled and retreated into the house.

All the boys were startled and lost for words. After many village-folks along the way yelled at them "Why are you running!?" it was when they realized they were running as crazy as wounded warthogs. They ran directly to the Chief's palace. At the gate, they ran into the third boy's father who was the commander to the Chief's royal guard.

"Father!! Father!! We just saw two sacks of maize."

"They were three!" Mlumendo cut in. "They were outside the weatherman's house."

"What!!?" the third boy's father was just as surprised to hear this as the Chief who was by now passing behind the third boy's father.

"Okay boys, go home! We will take care of this," the third boy's father told the three boys. They heard what they had been told but they just stood there like statues.

"Hey come on. What have I just said?"



“Okay father!” the third boy took his friends, and they ran home leaving the Chief and the third boy’s father talking indistinctly at a distance.

The next day, the Chief called for an emergency village meeting. When some heard the horn calling for the meeting, they did not want to heed to the “noises” of the call. People’s bellies were empty; they had justifiably lost hope because even the farms were still waterlogged. Resuming farming was not a possibility. This meeting was unlike previous emergency village meetings called by the Chief. In this one, even the children were allowed - like the day our village barn was robbed.

Village-folks gathered and the Chief sternly stood to address us.

“Leza forgive us!” he looked up. Seeing him do that, the village-folks started murmuring. He sighed and went on.

“A fortnight ago, our village barn was robbed. Every village-folk knows that. But it was not until yester night that our royal guard, with the help of a tip from three anonymous boys, apprehended the folks behind this calamity that has befallen us.”

Some murmurs and shouts rose from village-folks. We were all eager, angry and curious to know who were the folks who made us live on a special “diet” of dry cassava for two-dozen days. The Chief calmed us and proceeded.

“Yester night, Mzee Kalambo, our weatherman, alongside his accomplice Bwana Kandege were caught in an attempt to smuggle three sacks, two of maize and one of our beans. After searching Mzee Kalambo’s and Bwana Kandege’s houses, we found other four sacks of maize and three sacks of beans hidden in their houses disguised as fanning tools. In normal circumstances, this is the Commander of the Royal Guard’s duty to make this announcement, but these two folks had left our lives in an unspeakable hunger! No one ever thought this calamity could have been the weatherman’s creation with the help of a mysterious businessman! I am bitterly disappointed in those two. But for the three boys who tipped the royal guard, I can never be prouder of how brave they are.!”

The sacks of maize that were recovered by the royal guard were equally distributed to all the families. The Chief himself rewarded the three boys handsomely with some fine royal meal and clothing! The same fine clothing I’m wearing as I narrate you this story. Its I, Mlumendo. One among the boys who helped save my village from empty bellies.



Chronicles of a Hungry Man

By: Jonathan Samson
Country: Nigeria

You sat your wretchedness on a bench built from the logs of bamboo placed parallel over forked stumps. Your red pupils were bloated with indignation, heart throbbing and hands trembling like an orphan chick struck by the spell of harmattan cold. You'd just arrived from the farm some minutes ago salivating in retrospect to the plans made earlier before Iya Lekan left. You expected her to have prepared one of those intoxicating delicacies that contributed to you marrying her. She had won the village Sibi Obe contest two consecutive seasons, a feat none had ever achieved in the history of Igando.

Your sight had become deformed that it

splits a human into four. Few minutes before, you saw yourself wearing a weak body, dragged home by an empty heart while Ayanfe, whose figure multiplied into two, welcomed you with a bowl of cool water from the earthenware pot to appease your protesting innards. You were chewing the livers of an unripe lemon like a mad monkey then. You were versed in the myth of food that such fruits provoke the spirit of hunger yet you kept devouring it like food was ready.

The amazed Ayanfe knelt and you patted her shoulders so she stood up and you gifted her with the remaining lemon fruit. You collected the bowl and gulped down



its contents at a sip. Akanbi went to harvest the sack-bag and the hoe you dropped faraway.

“Tell your mother to bring my food now.” You ordered Akanbi as he retreated.

“Ohooo, Baami.” He howled and scuttled away.

Your body was practically not yours, possessed with the demons of hunger, draining your strength with their beaky lips.

Now, you sat for four minutes but it seemed like eternity summarized. Your belly wouldn't understand. It wasn't carved for such, anyways. It was filled with heavy emptiness; empty vessels make the loudest noise. No war sounds silent and no peace sounds loud.

You stapled your 'where-is-it?' gaze on the doorpost, cursing the entrance because it was gentle and didn't promise that food would soon walk through it. Only the curtain was all you saw dancing to and fro to the rhythm of the howling concerto in the air; a symphony of warmth and breeze. You'd not stop slurping saliva to buy yourself time. A black goat cat-walked before you and you winked maliciously at it, almost picked a fight with it but it fled from the man who could ritualize it to appease the deity in his belly.

“Where's it ooo?!” You stretched your dry throat again. You mustered all the strength and so it was loud this time that it split the

door open and travelled to reach them at the backyard.

Your heart calmed when the door creaked but the sound almost deafened you. You thought it was your food walking to you on its own legs since you heard no accompanying voice. Forthwith, Ayanfe appeared with her face concocted with defeat and vengeance. Akanbi followed her like a lame sheep.

“What happened again?!” They almost fainted because you thundered.

The duo tried speaking but interrupted each other. You squeezed your dirty face at Akanbi, he read what you wrote thereon and gave way to the little girl to speak first.

“He beats me because I said I'll report him to you.”

Akanbi tried winking her into silence but she'd not be truncated. You caught him winking at her and barked at him.

“Is your head correct? Ayanfe, oya I'm listening.”

She continued reporting how Akanbi had invited his friends to come and see the monkey you'd killed on the farm earlier that day. She was meticulous enough to explain the episode where Fijabi, the handicapped, said you'd die untimely because it was forbidden for twins to hurt a monkey. You lifted your arched brows when she mentioned how Baba Toye's stubborn goat sneaked into the room because it was left opened



to entertain visitors. The goat strolled in like the invited guest it was and did justice to the infrastructures in the kitchen; a few tubers of skinny yams, half basket of cocoyam, rice, beans and maize. It left only two tubers of cassava, perhaps that was when it brimmed its curd to the brink.

“Wait!” You cut her short and poured your two pairs of malfunctioning eyes on Akanbi who, in the course of the explanation, found something to warrant smiles. His smiles brewed your wrath; you swung your left hand at his cheek. He collapsed on the floor, sweeping four teeth on the ground while blood rain fell.

“You did all these and still laughing?” You pointed a cursed finger at him on the floor where he was battling starry vision and displaced teeth.

“What’s it?” Your wife was at the door, struggling to unlock it. “Who’s that again oo?”

“Wuraola ni!” You nitpicked abruptly, “Iya Lekan, where’s my food?”

She knows you were a patient of untamed belly. You’d once beaten her into visiting the corridors of hell when she knocked her feet against a stone and poured your ofada rice and fish stew on the sands. That day, the worms in your belly taught you a lesson that earned you the scars which the only doctor in Igando, Dr. Wake, called ulcer.

“Ah! My husband, you’ve arrived,” she said, curtsying.

“Eheen!” You shrugged, “you wanted me to die in the farm before?”

She kept mute and a pregnant silence laboured for some seconds, the two of you exchanging meaningful glances. The children attended to their miseries.

“Are you deaf?” Your roaring voice murdered the silence, “or you’ve joined those group of useless housewives who say ‘what will the husband do?’”

“Ah! Rara o, not like that, Baba Lekan.” She walked on her knees towards you. She smelled hunger growling through you.

“And how’s it like? Tell me, I want to know?” By then, your voice wore a coat of muffler. She strained her ear to hear what you said in a nearly inaudible whisper.

“The...the...” she stammered, twiddling her fingers.

You were tempted to slap her but which among the six women your eyes could see was the actual Iya Lekan you didn’t know, so you improvised and sat back instead of embarrassing yourself.

Akanbi was still picking his teeth, murmuring like a wraith while Ayanfe was busy singing ‘sorrays’ to him.

You stood up lamely and grabbed the rod flanking the wall. They all fled, miscalculating that you wanted to beat them. Not



yet at that moment, maybe. Six pairs of curious eyes perched on you as you searched your way into the house like a blind beggar. None of them dared follow you as they were cognizant of the fact that an hungry father like you is an angry monster. Hunger is a living being. When it enters and builds colony in the belly, it loots the roughages and blocks entrance to other paraphernalia of life. That's why the elders say 'when hunger is in the belly, no other word enters thereafter.'

Five hours after, the sun had started to sink and usher in the hours of darkness. You woke up to a volcanic mountain of white pounded yam and a lake of aromatic egusi soup blessed with dried cat fish, ponmo and soft cow liver. Its palm-oil countenance was seductive and you could picture its taste on your wet tongue. Your throat started to swallow the morsels imaginatively. Besides it, stood a sweating bottle of palm-wine. Your soul ignited and you could see the food as they really were. Your innards float; begging you to help them.

The door creaked and four humans with the faces of moon and body of water sauntered in. You didn't care about their appearance but wondered who told them you were a seed of Oodua, descent of Ekiti from Yorubaland, to prepare such recipe.

"Ajayi," a woman with the nose of star called you. You looked her face and she

smiled, motioning that you help yourself.

You sank your fingers into the succulent mountain, pulled out a faction which you fondled and swam in the cozy warmth of the lake before burying in the sepulcher of your belly. You aimed at weathering the mountain into a plain, evaporating the lake into a desert and draining the reservoir of whitish waters into drought.

Not long, a promiscuous voice slithered in to divorce you from your ecstasy but you blatantly ignored, focused on the belly business. The voice smells like your wife's, anyways.

"Baba Lekan. Baba Lekan."

It became recurring till it feels like the caller was banging your hand to make you quit your newly found job. When it came calling again, you felt water on your face, drenching your body. You jerked up and then found your weakness again. You squinted and found two-hundred copies of your wife.

"I brought you your food."

"Where am I?" Your hands groped the empty air in search for the original of your wife.



It Happened Twice

By: Inimfon
Inyang-Kpanantia
Country: Nigeria



Eno was sixteen, his stomach large enough to swallow the world but the little food served cold and meatless could not possibly quench his hunger.

“Mma, this food is too small,” he complained.

“Nko you are Oliver twist. This food has to remain till tomorrow.” Amaeti said.

Eno gazed at the small pot of food and imagined that even if he ate everything in it, he would still be hungry. His mother wanted him to manage the food with her till tomorrow? Impossible. If Amaeti was not the kind of mother that counted every grain of rice she fed him, it would have been easy to scoop up some extra spoons, he thought. But the woman was as frugal



as she was sharp-eyed, even if the pot only shifted slightly she would know. Her voice interrupted his thoughts.

“When I return that pot better be the way I left it Eno or else we will wear one trouser.” Amaeti said. Eno frowned, careful not to throw an obvious tantrum as Amaeti was leaving to the market. When he thought she was out of earshot, he mumbled, “This wicked woman self,” his eyes red with rage.

She heard him but decided not to waste her energy on the boy. Eno wished he could have the meal all to himself. He wished he would be the only one at home with no one to give him orders or send him on petty errands. He wished she wouldn't return.

*

Things were much better when Ubong was alive. He wasn't rich but he knew how to hustle to keep his family safe from poverty. It was one of the things Amaeti, his wife liked about him – his uncanny ability to find solutions in the most difficult circumstances. She, on the other hand knew how to hustle to get back on her feet. When no one was buying from the little kiosk Ubong had set up for her, she started the Akara and Bread business and when there were no customers to sew clothes for, she started selling palm oil. Ubong worked as a keke driver and was at the slightest opportunity a businessman who traded everything from shoes to palm oil to house-

hold equipment.

“Na original Gucci be that, straight from Lonlon,” he'd say with a sprinkle of saliva from his mouth to a customer's face, his eyes brimming with excitement. The customer would know that it couldn't possibly be, that no original Gucci shoe would cost N3500 but they would buy it anyway in that his small keke. There was something about Ubong Udombon, a jolliness to him that was impossible to resist. It was also one of the things Amaeti liked about him, that impossible charm.

So when he died, she died too. It happened before Eno was born. A truck carrying gravel had skidded off its path and fell sideways along IBB Junction. Ubong was driving beside it. He could have been lucky if he listened to Amaeti that morning. But Ubong was as stubborn as he looked; attentive but when he made up his mind about something there was no going back. It was one of the things Amaeti hated about him, his stubbornness. Her baby kicked a lot that day, her heart raced more than it usually did and when she let go of him that morning as he left early enough for more passengers, more money; something left her. The truck crushed his body beyond salvage, pasted it on the tar like paint. Only the head remained, which according to passers-by flew a distance into a nearby dump. A neighbour had recognized the head, had 'thoughtfully' called to tell her that her husband was involved in an



accident along IBB. The place was a five minute walk from their house. She quietly went there to see for herself. There was an army of people gathered at the dump so she forced herself through the crowd, this crowd of nothing but strangers: some with phones taking pictures, others with their mouths agape. She finally saw him, her husband as a bloody head, a red river gushing from him.

“Ubong, Iyammi, Ubong!”

And she screamed and screamed and screamed.

*

This was the second thing Amaeti hated about her husband, his death. Eno his son reminded her of pain, of a man that left her without even a proper body to bury. Eno was like his living ghost, too alike in resemblance, too similar in manner – his wild laughter, the way he frowned with discontent, the stubbornness she was beginning to notice. This is why she felt both love and contempt for him. Once when Eno was a few months old, Amaeti left him by the dump where her own husband had left her, sat there and watched him cry. She wanted him to feel the same pain she felt but it only ended up hurting her. It was there at the dump, her son’s bellow parting the harmattan morning that she decided to continue at all cost, even if she had to scrape the earth for a lifetime.

Her hustling would serve her now more than ever because there was really no one she could call on for help. Ubong was an orphan and only son while Amaeti was from a family that couldn’t care less whether or not she lived. She had chosen to run away from her village for love against the family’s wishes that she marry a useless Chief. The bride price could have saved her father’s life but she paid that huge price and eloped with Ubong to the city. Before her low-budget marriage to Ubong she called home to invite them for the marriage. It was a big mistake.

“Papa has died...And it’s all because of you Sister. The day I see you ehn I’ll chop off your head.” That’s what her little brother said to her; like her and like their father, he didn’t mince words.

*

With every passing year Amaeti learnt to fill in the role of both Father and Mother to Eno. She had heard of those wayward sons raised by single mothers who brought nothing but shame to their family. Eno would be different, Amaeti had promised herself. He was going to be a respectable person, a big man who would bring pride to his mother and community. Her family would hear his name and say, “that is Amaeti’s son.”

She was now a trader in the market who sold everything needed to cook a proper



meal but never had one herself since her husband's death. Amaeti had come to have a pessimistic view of the world, that suffering was an absolute necessity in life, and one had to bear life's vicissitudes with courage, had to prepare for the many bad times to come in the future. If for example Eno fell ill with malaria there had to be money for his treatment. Frugality was her defense mechanism against financial insecurity. She would teach Eno to live this way.

"Mama, I need a new shoe and shirt."

"Not now. I'll have to pay your fees in September."

"But the only shoe I have is that koi-koi. It makes so much noise when I walk in church. And my shirts are so big they wear me instead. My friends laugh at me, Mama." Eno murmured.

"Well, tell them to mind their own business."

"But Mama..."

Amaeti would raise her hands and Eno would know his pleas from then on would be futile. Sometimes he thought he was adopted. The whole world was enjoying but here he was selling garri and nkong leaves at Urua Akpan-andem. Of course, the next morning he would eat three grains of rice on a teacup saucer. He bit his lip at the thought of it.

*

The next day Amaeti had prepared Eno's meal to avoid any excesses. Eno used more groundnut oil and crayfish for jollof than necessary. Like always, she put what she thought would be enough for him on the plate, no silly extras. Eno asked for more and she refused him. He called her a wicked woman and she paid him no mind. Probably she wouldn't buy the shirt and shoe he wanted again because of the insult or maybe she would, and explain everything properly to him: the death of his father, her husband and the aftermath. Yes, she would explain everything and tell him she loved him, tell him not to hate her so much.

But she wouldn't return as Eno had wished. There would be a truck loaded with gravel skidding off its path by IBB junction, she would be in the keke right beside it. And no one would remember that the same thing happened sixteen years ago.



[WSA MAGAZINE REVIEW] OCTOBER 2022 EDITION



The cover features a portrait of Stella Gonye Tshuma, a Zimbabwean author, sitting on a black stool. She is wearing a white button-down shirt, blue jeans, and black high-heeled shoes with red stripes. The background is a dark, textured grey. At the top left is the WSA logo, which consists of a white silhouette of the African continent with a pen nib inside a circle. To the right of the logo, the text 'WSA' is written in large, bold, white letters, with 'Writers Space Africa Magazine' in smaller white text below it. Below the logo and text, there are two horizontal white lines. The left line is followed by the text 'October 2022 Edition - Issue 70' and the right line is followed by the website 'www.writersspace.net'. At the bottom of the cover, there is a dark grey rectangular box containing the author's name and the title of her work.

October 2022 Edition - Issue 70

www.writersspace.net

Stella Gonye TSHUMA
Zimbabwean Author of
Peace in the storm



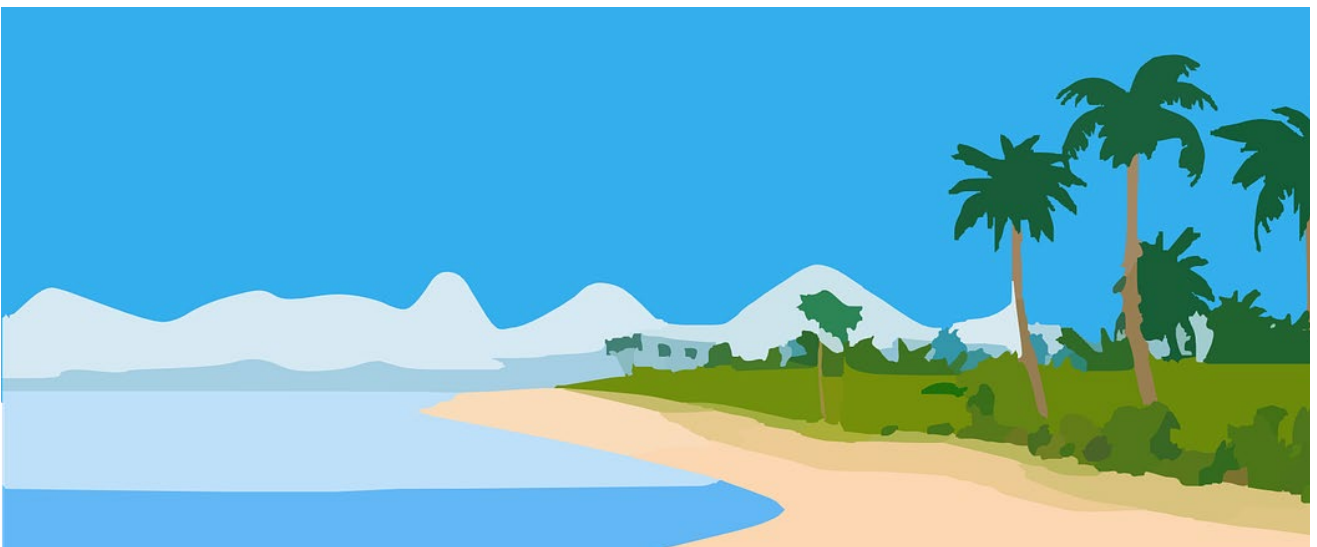
Memories

Writer:

Humairaa Seedat, Tanzania

Reviewer:

Alice Kasonkomona, Zambia



Humairaa Seedat's poem is a reminder of the imperative process undertaken to retain, store and recall information, otherwise known as 'memory.' The whole process involved in remembering helps us not forget past events and experiences, which are essential in a person's life.

In the first stanza, the writer tells the love one has for 'memories' and how one wishes that they would stay on forever. The second shifts and reveals that what is remembered is a 'funny' but naughty time, given that what comes to mind is a moment when money is stolen from the mother to buy ice cream.

As a reviewer, I decipher that from this, one can recall that memories are realisti-

cally mixtures of both good things and the not-so-good, the innocent and the naughty times. However, what remains concealed is the moral of this passage, aware that the poem falls under the children's category.

Granted that, the title relates to the poem, and a central theme runs through the whole piece.

Consequently, the language used by the writer is simple for children to understand.

Reading through the poem helps one to recollect and think through the past and what is stored therein.

Thank you very much, Humairaa, for writing.



Reminiscent Goodbye

Writer:

Yipah Reuben, Nigeria

Reviewer:

Chidiebere Udeokechukwu,
Nigeria



In recent times, this piece is probably the saddest truth I have read.

It seems that each word holds the weight of nostalgic and hurting memories. I tried to imagine the writer's grief; maybe, as vast as the void of outer space, sundering as the seas, and perhaps, bitter like paracetamol chewed without gulping water. Indeed, grief can inspire greatly written pieces, and I think Yipah Reuben's *Reminiscent Goodbye* is a well-woven reference point.

Sometimes, it seemed to me that the author was talking to the ugly blooming tree. Then it would become apparent that Alex's grave (by the ugly tree) was a point of contact to the many memories made under the ugly blooming tree.

Love, Death, and Grief are sad but miracu-

lously beautiful combinations. I was drawn to a pang of sadness and nostalgia that was not mine when I read this piece. Isn't it a wonder that Yipah could immerse another reader in her own truth? Of course, you'd agree with me that it is so.

To conclude this review, I'd contextualise my points by alluding to Ed Sheeran's *Supermarket Flowers*. The song was a personal tribute to his grandmother, written from the point of view of his mother. When he performed the song at his grandmother's funeral, he was urged by his grandfather to include the song in his third studio album, *Divide*. According to the singer, his grandfather loved the song for being such a good memory. In this wise and many other aspects, Yipah's work is much like *Supermarket Flowers*, both sad miracles of memories.



Monday The 16th July

Writer:

Aaron-Onuigbo Kingsley, Nigeria

Reviewer:

Benita Magopane, Botswana



Romance is in the air. A tale of forbidden love, a love that cannot be. Acquainted within the shadows, strangers in the light. I wonder if this love affair had been ongoing for a while, or had it just begun on Monday the 16th and possibly even ended then? It's quite a love with no clear path or destination, a love with restrictions, and it seems that only on Monday morning could the protagonist realise the burden of such a love. With how the sensations evoked by this love are described, it is safe to assume it was a newborn love affair.

The narrative perspective taken to write this flash fiction, Monday 16th July, by Aar-

on-Onuigbo Kingsley, is stimulating. The narrator speaks directly to the protagonist herself as if to make her reminisce on that particular day. As if that particular day held some depth of importance, which it did. It held the protagonist's conscience and her rationality; the reality kicked in and blew her bubble, the dawn of facing hard truths, which perhaps never occurred to her on any other day. On this particular day, not even all the sublime contents of that love could make her oblivious to some hard realisations. Cognition walked up to emotion. And that's a day one can't erase.



Photos of the Day



Writer:

Lema Noel, Tanzania

Reviewer:

Mathew Daniel, Nigeria

Photos of the day is a brilliant metaphorical representation of experiences as pictures. The poet opted for a smooth narration and one with good and relevant images. For this, Lema Noel is worthy of appraisal.

At a point in a person's life, I believe there will come a time one reflects on events and experiences of a day or one's life. For some, it is a recurring thing, and for others, maybe not so often. This is one of those poems that can be surmised as cogitation of the poet's experience. I have come to discover over time that experiences are better imagined as pictures after they must have come and gone, and this is precisely what Lema has done in photos of the day. In the words of American celebrity photographer Anna-Lou Leibovitz, "one doesn't stop seeing. One doesn't stop framing", and it is safe to say that a person's mind is a collage of pictorial experiences. This is true to Lema's recollection of the day.

In line 8 of the first stanza, the transient

nature of the day is beautifully captured by the poet, who says Lema "can't remember all despite all I'd seen". I believe that while some of our experiences find a way to remain imprinted on our memories, some vanish without a trace. In addition, the poet did list many things that remain pictorial to the poet, including the love, the hate, the time they gave all to win, life's jest and mockery, friends etc. The poet keeps some of these and deliberately discards some.

The crux of Lema's poem should, however, not be missed as I see it. It exudes the poet's dauntless motivation. In the last stanza, Lema resolves to put aside the day's negatives and settle for self-motivation.

The poem is a beautiful composition of three stanzas with eight lines each. The poet laced the poem with end rhyming couplets that added some flavour to the poem for readers with a penchant for rhymes like myself, which makes the poem enjoyable.



Memories

Writer:

Owuor Hellen, Kenya

Reviewer:

Mutale T. Mazimba-Kaunda,
Zambia



In memories, we follow an Unsub home after an absence of ten years. Each place he sees brings memories of a time past. The writing is well crafted, that you can see yourself in that forest next to him years ago, walking under the trees as he went for a swim. It is easy to picture the cattle and the children's horror as they watch the cow feast on their clothes.

On a poignant note, the story draws a parallel between two different perspectives; how we see things when we are young versus how we see them when we

are old. It is amazing how a mountain as a child becomes a hill in adulthood, or a great river, only a stream. This allows us to understand how a child's perspective magnifies the importance of certain spaces and attaches significant meaning to them. When you are young, a bird escaping with your mother's aliya is the worst thing in the world.

Memories in a place you love and a place you call home are priceless; at least, that is what Owuor Hellen is teaching us in this great piece of writing.





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