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Writers Space Africa  
Magazine

MAY 2023 / ISSUE 77

**NIFEMI  
EMMANUEL**

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**It Gets Lonely**



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# Editorial

**Scholar Akinyi (Kenya)**



There's a joke about my city; that once you drive out of it into the suburbs and down to the countryside, your lungs feel like they are on vacation. That the further you move from the city, the lighter the air gets. The happier the lungs!

Driving back to the city means preparing the nostrils and the lungs for the pungent heaviness that hits like steam off a boiling pot.

What became of our good green earth? What became of the butterflies in the hot afternoon sun? What became of dark, wild berries and seasons of rains?

In this issue, the WSA Magazine presents to you, through the different lenses of writers in their respective genres, what it means to be on the good green earth, what it takes to maintain the good green earth, and the unending and changing motions of the good green earth.

This issue is a cocktail of praise for mother earth as it is a wake up call to restore the now fading, formerly green, good earth.

Just as literature anticipates life, I hope this issue highlights the dire need for restoration and that it spurs you, the reader, to do right by your home; the good green earth!

Karibu sana!



## On the cover

→ Get ready for an exciting interview session with Nifemi Emmanuel, the talented poet who captured hearts with her award-winning piece "It Gets Lonely."

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## Awards

- **Best Monthly Digital Literary Magazine (Africa) - 2022**  
(Global Business Awards 2022)
- **Best African Literary Magazine - 2021**  
(MEA Business Awards 2021)
- **Writer Promotion platform of the Year - 2021**  
(The Corporate LiveWire Global Awards 2021/22)

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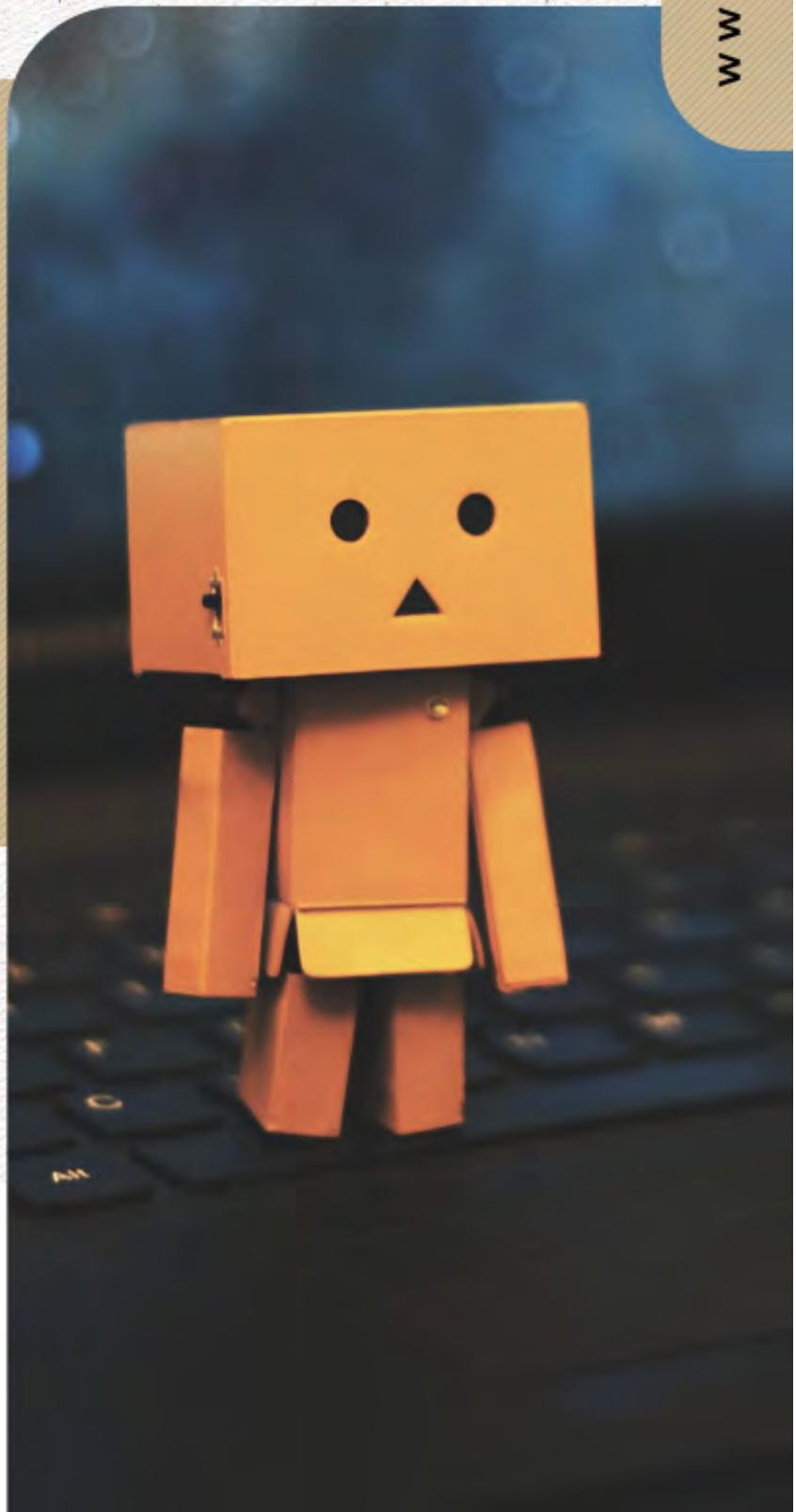
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# BROWN MANGO

Niyiyongu Samuel  
*Nigeria*



Selian returned late from her friend's birthday party the previous night and so, she woke up late. She hurriedly took her breakfast which was the rice she brought home from the party. She knew her teacher would be angry and it worried her because she hated making her teacher angry.

When Selian stepped into her class, Mrs. Paulina was already explaining the importance of plants to humans. She turned and looked at Selian.

"I'm sorry, Mrs Paulina. I did not wake up early. I promise it won't happen again." Selian apologized.

Mrs Paulina nodded and Selian walked to her seat.

Selian always enjoyed Mrs Paulina's lessons. The teacher explained the importance of plants and Selian was surprised

that humans needed oxygen from plants. Mrs Paulina's explanation was clear and Selian felt bad because of something that happened at home the previous day.

When the bell for break rang and the other pupils were hurrying out, Selian walked to Mrs Paulina. She was so sad.

"Is there a problem?" Mrs Paulina asked.

"I just want to ask what I'm supposed to do for plants. Since they are important to us, we have an obligation to them." Selian answered.

Mrs Paulina was impressed. She loved Selian because she was curious.

"Your duty is to take care of plants. We need to plant more trees so that we can breathe better." Mrs Paulina explained.

"Is it really important?" Selian asked.

Mrs Paulina smiled. "It is very important. The Earth is changing because we are not planting enough trees. We will discuss more after break."

Selian walked out looking at the trees in the school yard, wondering which one gave her the oxygen she was breathing. She stood close to a tree and placed her hand on the trunk imagining how wonderful God created the world.

When Selian got home from school, she removed her school uniform and rushed to the back of the house. She carefully raised up the young mango plant that she had pressed down while playing the previous day. With her palms, she scooped and supported the stem of the young plant.

"I'm sorry about yesterday. I did not know that we needed each other to survive. Forgive me and grow up." Selian said to the young plant.

She sat down and looked at the plant. It looked more brownish than green. Selian wondered why it was so and assumed that it was because it did not have enough water. She ran into the house and brought a cup of water and poured it on the mango plant.

Selian's mother wondered what her daughter was doing behind the house that made her ignore her food. She walked to the back of the house and found her daughter speaking to herself. She didn't know that Selian was talking to her mango plant.

"Please don't die. Grow up and be big like the trees in my school. I will give you wa-

ter everyday so that you can grow." Selian said touching the mango plant.

Selian's mother tiptoed back into the house.

Days passed and Selian finished doing her examinations. Selian and her family were to travel to her grandmother's house for the holiday. Selian felt sad and wished she could carry her mango plant which she called Brownny along. She asked her mother if she could stay back but her mother refused.

"Mama, who will take care of Brownny when we are gone?" Selian asked.

"Your mango will be alright. We are just staying there for two weeks." Selian's mother answered.

"I will miss my mango plant."

"There are many mango trees in grandmother's place. You can take care of them." Selian's mother told Selian.

The holiday seemed like a year and Selian missed Brownny. She told her grandmother about her mango plant and explained the importance of plants to humans. Her grandmother was delighted. Grandmother encouraged Selian to plant more trees and gave her seeds of orange and guava. Selian was very happy.

When Selian returned from her grandmother's house, she rushed to the back of the house to see Brownny but it was gone. Selian cried as she planted the orange and guava seeds her grandmother gave her.

# OUR PLANET OUR HOME

Stephen A Kube  
*Cameroon*



There is this little blue planet called Earth that revolves around the sun alongside eight other planets. It is the third from the sun and it is full of life. It has blue skies and white clouds. At times those clouds have smiling faces on sunny days and can make furrows in the skies. On some days you can see the clouds form the shape of a

heart, a person playing basketball, a train running across the sky or the face of your favorite cartoon characters, Mickey, Tom or Jerry in the clouds. The same clouds at times grow dark and sad, then they cry and when they do, we call it rain. Earth has lots of green vegetation, and it is home to people like you and me. It is also home

to many other creatures that live both in the sea and on the land, like our dog Bingo and our cat Alice. Of all the other planets, Earth is the only place we can call home, because its air allows us to live, unlike other planets.

Sadly, this is all changing and it is all because of our actions. To build our houses, we cut down trees for wood. To power our cars and light our homes, we burn fuel. We litter the environment with plastic bottles, papers and wrappings. We urinate and poop on the streets, in gutters and bushes. We dump heaps of dirt on our streets and into streams and at times under the bridges. We cut down trees and clear off green vegetation and we do not plant enough trees. All these things we are doing are turning our little green Earth into a little brown Earth and if we keep doing that, our Earth will become too hot for us to live in. Our streets will become too stinky and smelly to walk through. Our waters and seas will become too unclean to drink from, and the fish and other creatures of the sea will get sick and die. Our clear blue and white cloud-filled skies will become dark and cry sour rain on us. In the worst case, we and our animals will get sick and die.

Don't be too sad anyway. There is a way you and I can make our earth green and lovely again. We can start by stopping the little bad habits of littering the environment with plastics. If you find someone littering, shame them for dirtying and destroying our Earth. If you use a bottle, plastic or wrappings of sweets and candy,

put it in the waste bin. If there is no waste bin beside you, put it in your bag until you find the nearest bin and drop it there. Ask Mama and Papa to keep two separate bins at home, one for papers, wrappings, plastics and bottles and another for perishable waste like mango peels for example. We can use the perishable waste for manure in the garden which nourishes our plants and trees. This is a great way to give back to our Earth that gave us food to eat. For the non-perishable waste like plastics, it will be taken care of by the recycling and dirt collectors for good dumping. We should avoid urinating and pooping on the streets, in the gutters or in the bush. If you find someone doing it, tell them to use public toilets instead. We can plant a tree on our birthdays and take time to water and nurse it every day as we grow. It will give us fresh clean air to breath. We can also paint our Earth and talk about the things that make it sick in school during our arts and crafts projects and celebrate Earth days. To light our houses, we can use the power of the sun. Do you know of other great ways you and I can make our Earth green, breathable and home again? Share with me. I know you are smart and you have great ideas. I would love to hear them. Together, we can take care of our good, green Earth.



did you buy for us today?" The children asked.

"Dear children, I got something beautiful for you today."

Surprisingly, the old woman brought out seeds and plant cuttings and handed them over to each one of them. The children looked in surprise and disappointment as the old woman gave them seeds as their gifts.

"But grandma, this isn't a gift." One of the children protested.

"My dear, this is one of the best gifts to the Earth. These are called seeds and plant cuttings; they grow into trees and plants with fruits."

"But how does this work?" The children asked.

"Come with me, let's have an interesting activity." The old woman said as she divided the children into three groups. She gave everyone in group one watermelon seedlings, then, group two was given tomato seedlings while the third group was given aloe Vera plant cuttings.

"Now this is it, I will be going on a far journey and my desire is that I meet this place more beautiful and healthier than I am leaving it. And guess what, these seeds in your hands are what will get my desire granted. All that you have to do is to plant these seeds at the house balcony because there we have good soil, sufficient sunlight and easy access to water. You will plant your respective seeds and care for them

appropriately. That will make our home more beautiful and healthier. And guess what? You will have so many watermelons to eat."

The children were really glad to hear this and the next day, before the old woman began her journey, she practically taught them. Then, the children fell in love with the amazing adventure.

They grew the plants and cared for them until the return of the old woman.

The old woman was glad and she said to herself, "now, I can have more days here on Earth because the home is healthy, good and green."

"Wow!" Tommy exclaimed as his father got to the end of the story.

"Daddy, I want to be like one of those children, I want my future home to be healthy and I will tell my friends in school that planting makes the Earth good and green."

"Yes, you will, my son. I was one of those children and that is why we have all these tree plantings and gardens in our house which makes it more beautiful and healthier." The father concluded as Tommy laid down back on his father's laps to relax again.

# OUR DEAR EARTH

**Orlando Favour**  
*Nigeria*



Where do the trees grow  
and water flow?  
Mama says, in a big round belly;  
We live in it,  
We toil in it,  
We play in it,  
We harvest from its soil to feed our rumbling stomachs  
And drink from its spring  
to quench our desert throats—  
It is our dear big Earth.

Dear good green Earth,  
Do not be angry for the evil we do:  
Littered cans, crying chopped trees, leaked oils...  
We need your children, the moon for Grandma's tales  
And the sun to dry our uniforms for school.  
Please smile at us always  
And save our houses from crumbling down by the water.  
Please smile at us always  
And save Mama's farm from dying crops.

We will clean and save our dear good Earth  
For she is our only home.  
So help us, o God.

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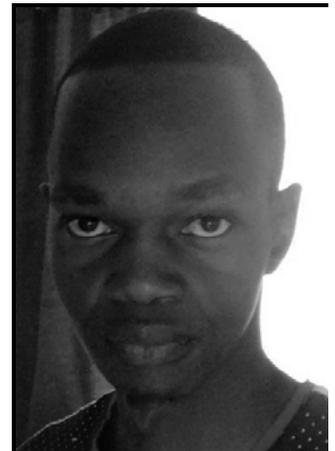
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*At various points away from the burnt patch of grass, there were invasive alien plant species. These plants do not occur naturally on the African continent. They were imported from other countries, such as Australia and England.*

# WALKING THE VLEI

**Privilege Masimba Chisumbu**  
*Zimbabwe*



The guide tucked his feet into his black boots and strapped his binoculars around his neck by the fenced nursery at Number 1. He took me across Fenella Drive to the Ramsar Site with the woman who had invited me to the Monavale Vlei to learn about wetland ecosystems and how they helped our wetland city get water. She left me in his educational company, and we walked the vlei.

“I can see you came prepared,” he mentioned observantly.

I was wearing safety shoes, as I usually do whenever I go for a site visit in similar environments. They were not going to be use-

ful, nonetheless, if it was a rainy summer season rather than the end of a dry winter season. The ground would have puddles or it would be flooded in the rainy season.

Residential suburbs and maize gardens surrounded sixty-nine hectares of this open grassland wetland. Some of these fields and houses lie within the wetland. They were always flooded during rainy seasons, to the dismay of the residents.

We walked across a patch of burned grass near the road. It covered a small portion of the grassland. Some of the tufts of grass were turning a darker green.

“This is good for the vlei,” my guide said. The burning made the bare soil bed ideal for the germination of seeds. However, rather than being a result of human activity, the burning process had to occur naturally.

“I know one reason why people would burn a grassland that they don’t intend to cultivate,” I said.

It happened too often in the grassy hills of our high-density suburb further southeast of the vlei. People burned the grasslands to hunt for edible rodents, which we called mbeva. Ultimately, the burning of open grasslands by people, specifically, was a threat to the biodiversity that existed in the grasslands. I figured people tended to overdo it.

At various points away from the burnt patch of grass, there were invasive alien plant species. These plants do not occur naturally on the African continent. They were imported from other countries, such as Australia and England. There were purple verbena and typha, and there were reeds and water hyacinths in the stream. Such species did not belong in the vlei. Notable invasive plant species were the tall eucalyptus trees across the reed-filled stream that divided the grassland from a cultivated piece of land within the same wetland.

“These tall gum trees absorb between two hundred and one thousand liters of water per day,” the guide passionately said. They drained the ground with streams of water, and their roots went deep.

He mentioned a farm he had visited long ago to assess the water situation. The farm had a stream that was drying up. It had been a source of water for years. When his hosts were driving him to the farm, they showed him the direction in which the stream began.

“Immediately, I told them the reason why the stream was drying up.”

“How did you identify the cause of the drying stream?” I asked curiously.

He said that this species of Eucalyptus globulus trees had been planted around the spring.

As their experts told them, the farmers had to cut down all of these exotic trees that grew quickly and dig up their roots. The solution worked over time. The stream started flowing again as it used to, a long time ago. The planting of trees and other plants that did not belong in the open grasslands was another threat to the wetlands’ water-retention functions.

“But construction and cultivation are the major threats to wetland ecosystems now,” he said, pointing towards the cultivated land across the stream and to the residential homes beyond. Wild animals, like bullfrogs and warthogs, that used to live in the wetland escaped at night to grasslands on the edge of Harare City that were more open. This was because more human activities infringed on the vlei.

He pointed at the cracked ground we walked on. It seemed arid, yet it collected and retained rainwater. I found out that masses of different plants and grasses

were designed to pull the water into the rich black soil. I learned that through this function, vleis of different kinds—from grassland to woodland vleis—created the beginnings of stream and river systems in many places around the world. Vleis maintained biodiversity, purified groundwater, managed floods, and reserved cultural values wherever they existed. Mother Earth knew how to look after herself and keep herself good and green.

“These vleis are the heart of our green areas,” my guide said as he handed me his binoculars. There were barn swallows in the vicinity. Some migrant birds came from as far as Europe—the European rollers and bee-eaters—to make this wetland their breeding ground. “Imagine if there were no wetlands,” he said, and stated how urban agriculture was leading to a loss of biodiversity and causing siltation and pollution through fertilizers and chemicals. Due to increased summer rainfall runoff and the lowering of the water table, which were both amplified by borehole drilling, building on wetlands was causing water shortages.

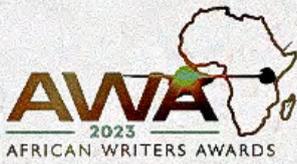
“I didn’t know about these negative impacts we are imposing on the environment,” I admitted. “I assigned the causes of these vices mainly to climate change!”

We later agreed that the damage we did to our lands was, in a bigger way, a problem today. The guide delved into the idea that our ancestors, instinctively, deemed these dambos sacred. No one was allowed to come near these hallowed grounds. The intention was to hinder people from deval-

uing these places, causing a loss of water, and creating an imbalance in the ecosystem. This was the ‘efficient science’ of our ancient society.

I immediately thought of a local writer who had said that totemism in Africa was used to keep family ties strong, but it was also a traditional way for our ancestors to protect their natural environments and wildlife. For instance, those who had the totem of an eland (mhofu in the Shona culture) were the stewards of the eland kingdoms and could not eat their meat. Those who had the totem of the river or water (dziva) were the stewards of the water kingdoms and could not eat any aquatic animals. This rule was true for all animal totems, so there was almost no change to their natural habitats and environments. All clans had specific territories to steward over, where their ‘sacred totems’ dwelt. As a result, this way of life maintained a balance in nature.

At the end of the tour, we all agreed that we had ignored traditional conservation principles that helped us take care of our environments in favor of fast-paced and, in some ways, unplanned land development that damaged our lands and put wild animals at risk. We had put aside the old, elementary way of life for a fast-growing civilization that was turning out to be not so ‘sustainable’. In the name of education and knowledge, we had become more ignorant, not knowing that we were the main cause of damage to our natural environment. We, the children, were killing our mother!



## 2ND EDITION OF THE AFRICAN TEEN WRITERS Awards

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# BYSTANDER

Hanghuwo Ndawedwa  
*Namibia*



The pain in my ribs reminded me that I should've cared 10 years ago when people protested the clearing of trees to build a new coal factory on the surrounding hills of town because of the inevitable pollution. The solar energy we normally used should've sufficed.

My town was known for subsistence farming, and when a long drought hit and killed animals and vegetation, food production stopped and we had to resort to food banks.

When we finally received rain, we rejoiced because we could finally plant our crops and feed ourselves. The downpour ended up being heavy and it too, killed crops and worsened the existing soil erosion.

That drought and rain was a phenomenon we had not seen before.

I chuckled as the tears escaped my eyes and onto the sides of my face.

The earth used to be green with vegetation, had healthy soil and air to grow plants for

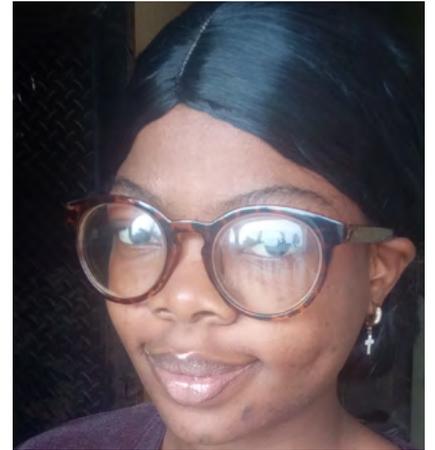
food, and animals weren't becoming extinct. The weather was perfectly balanced and was not a massive threat like it is now. I realised I loved that version of Earth and should've joined the fight to maintain it.

I was being suffocated by my guilt and the rubble of my house after last night's suspected landslide. The rainfall from 5 days ago didn't stop, I woke up to my ceiling caving in on me as sand and rocks shattered my windows and buried me.

Whilst I laid there praying for someone to find me soon, I could only think about one thing, a "No More Pollution" flyer I came across some years ago. At the bottom it read, "A war with Mother Nature is one we already lost". Those words replayed in my mind as my eyelids became heavier and I was soon consumed by darkness.

# GOOD GREEN EARTH

Elizabeth Olamigoke  
*Nigeria*



“It would rain again,” that, Wemimo was sure of. She hoped her parents in Ilaje were safe. The incessant rain in Ilaje had embraced flooding of its environment. The town had many rivers and the main source of revenue is fish-farming. Farmers were now complaining about the extinction of some fish species.

Driving into the estate she lived, she viewed the vegetable oil company she passed everyday. Now, she wondered why an oil company was established where masses lived. She piqued at the emitted exhaust fumes entering into the atmosphere. Passing through a gas station; she remembered how before, gas stations were built far from where people lived, now they are built near people’s houses; causing increase in cases of explosion and loss of lives— and the first time she saw a gas station opposite a petroleum station, she didn’t believe her eyes.

Coming closer towards her gate she admired the only farmland in the street, the

land flourished with fruits and vegetables. When her family moved in years ago, the street was a site, they freely plucked vegetables and fruits. Currently the only farm on the street is not a free commodity. Her neighbours had no trees in their compound, their surroundings thoroughly cemented— even when the government had already made a law about planting a tree in every compound. She at least, has a small garden in her backyard that reminds her of Mother Earth’s fruitfulness.

Hooting her car horn, she waited for the gateman to open the gate, her phone rang and she answered the call. Listening to the caller, she sighed and said, “you are right, the climate is changing. The rainy season ought to start April, but instead it is starting February, catching my parents unaware”.

# Nifemi Emmanuel



# Creative Spotlight

Get ready for an exciting interview session with Nifemi Emmanuel, the talented poet who captured hearts with her award-winning piece “It Gets Lonely.” Join us as we delve into the mind of this rising star, who took home the coveted African Teen Writers Award in 2022.

Interview by PPBlessing

**PPBlessing:** Tell us a bit about yourself

**NE:** My name is Nifemi Emmanuel. I’m 14 years old, born on March 28th. I attend American Christian Academy in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. I’m a member of a family of 4

**PPBlessing:** When did you start writing?

**NE:** Since I was in 1st grade. It’s always been a hobby of mine.

**PPBlessing:** Wow! That’s quite early. Do any of your parents write?

**NE:** No, not necessarily.

**PPBlessing:** I don’t understand.

**NE:** They don’t write.

**PPBlessing:** Why do you write?

**NE:** I always come up with interesting ideas in my head whenever daydreaming or reading a book and I just feel like those ideas shouldn’t go to waste. So I turn the ideas into a story and write.

**PPBlessing:** That’s wonderful. How many stories have you written so far?

**NE:** Only 1 but I have many I’m still working on.

**PPBlessing:** What is the story about?

**NE:** It’s about a girl who stumbled across a genie bottle in her garage one day and accidentally made the wish, “I wish my life was more like my dreams” and ended up stuck in her dream world.

**PPBlessing:** Has this been published?

**NE:** No.

**PPBlessing:** Aside from stories and poems, what other genres do you write? →

**NE:** I don’t write anything outside that. I mainly stick to just stories and poems.

**PPBlessing:** How did you feel when you were informed about winning the poetry prize for the African Teen Writers Award last year?

**NE:** I was very shocked and didn’t believe



**Nifemi with her parents and sibling**

it but once I realised it was true I was very happy!

**PPBlessing:** *Congratulations once again. What inspired the poem?*

**NE:** I got about 60% of my inspiration from a classmate of mine. The other 40% I got from the high school movies I watched.

**PPBlessing:** *Have you won other awards before this one?*

**NE:** No not really beside the ones from school.

**PPBlessing:** *How many have you won from school?*

**NE:** 2

**PPBlessing:** *When did you win these and*

*were they for stories or poems?*

**NE:** The first one I won in first grade was a poem and I ranked 1st from 1st-3rd, the second one I won 2nd place for a speech in 6th grade.

**PPBlessing:** *What career path do you want to pursue?*

**NE:** I aim to be a businesswoman and a writer (as a side career)

**PPBlessing:** *Why these?*

**NE:** I have a passion for accounts, business studies, economics, and writing so I want to pursue a career where I can act out my interests. My father is also a businessman and that inspires me.

**PPBlessing:** *That's wonderful. What par-*

**A point to note...**

→ People have noticed my writing skills more after winning the African Teen Writers Awards. Once, in class, when someone made a joke that there is no talent in Nigeria, one of my friends was quick to mention my name to show that there is still a bit of hope in our country.

*Particular line of business do you want to get into?*

**NE:** I haven't thought much of that yet but being a sales director sounds cool.

**PPBlessing:** *What grade are you in currently*

**NE:** 8th grade.

**PPBlessing:** *Do you have a writing routine?*

**NE:** On weekends I like to dedicate an hour at least to writing. I'm always busy on weekdays so I don't find the time to write

**PPBlessing:** *What keeps you busy?*

**NE:** Homework, assignments and projects. And I always arrive home late.

**PPBlessing:** *Do you have mentors?*

**NE:** I have a close female friend in church whom I see as a mentor. She was the one

who told me about the African Teen Writers Award.

**PPBlessing:** *Why do you see her as a mentor and is she the only mentor you have?*

**NE:** She has always been helping me build up my writing and encouraging me to show my work. I'm quite shy when it comes to showing others my writing and yes, she is my only mentor. She also shows me ways to improve my writing.

**PPBlessing:** *Why are you shy about showing others your writing?*

**NE:** I'm afraid of being judged and questioned about my work. And I'm not the most extroverted of people.

**PPBlessing:** *Has winning the award changed this perspective in any way?*

**NE:** I'm a bit more confident in showing my writing in class to peers!

**PPBlessing:** *Considering the award and this, what would you tell other young writers who are sceptical about showing their writing?*

**NE:** I would tell them that there is no point in keeping their writing hidden in the dark and they should let it out to the public. Their life could change in so many ways if they just had the confidence to show their talent to the world!

**PPBlessing:** *How has your life changed since winning the award?*

**NE:** People have noticed my writing skills more. Once, in class, when someone made a joke that there is no talent in Nigeria, one of my friends was quick to mention my name to show that there is still a bit of hope in our country.

**PPBlessing:** *Do you plan on mentoring other young writers too? Or are you already mentoring others?*

**NE:** I just might. My mother is doing an online school program and I mentor and assist her when it comes to the literature and writing parts she doesn't understand but that's about it.

**PPBlessing:** *That sounds interesting. How has it been going so far?*

**NE:** It's going well. I've been able to correct her punctuation and teach her the use of sentence openers, dress-ups, and phrases

**PPBlessing:** *That's beautiful. Well done. Who are your top 3 favourite authors and why are they your favourites?*

**NE:** Tahereh Mafi, Colleen Hoover, Rachel Renee Russel. Their writing styles are inspiring

**PPBlessing:** *How?*

**NE:** I like the way they describe the main character's thoughts and feelings with so many difficult adjectives and phrases. It's like I can feel what the characters are going through

**PPBlessing:** *What are your writing plans for the next 5 years?*

**NE:** I haven't thought of that but I hope to publish a book before I turn 18.

**PPBlessing:** *Godspeed on that. Do you belong to any writers or writing community?*

**NE:** Nope.

**PPBlessing:** *Why not?*

**NE:** I never really thought of joining one.

**PPBlessing:** *Why?*

**NE:** It just never came to mind and I'm not sure what writing community I could join.

**PPBlessing:** *Doesn't your school have clubs for different extra curricula activities?*

**NE:** Yeah they do. I'm not exactly sure if there's a writing club though.

**PPBlessing:** *Oh... Okay. Maybe you could start one if it's permitted*

**NE:** Maybe!

**PPBlessing:** *What do you hope to achieve through your writing?*

**NE:** I hope to entertain people with my stories and poems and inspire others to begin their writing journey too!

**PPBlessing:** *May you achieve this and more. Thank you so much for being here for the interview.*



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I splashed the colour green on huge rocks -  
the foundation of my being.  
The rains pour down and water the waterleaves  
so that they don't wither with the dry air.  
My little rose flower speaks to me all the time -  
it tells me of the future so bright and tenders to  
a soft spot in my heart.  
A girl prunes the hibiscuses, cut cut! trimming the  
path to beauty and glory.  
The sky isn't heavy anymore. It has vomited its  
goodness on us and on every nook and cranny.  
The grasses sway to the rhythm of the northern  
breeze; with moves like that of a belly dancer.  
The new earth lauds its praises even to the mountains  
and the hills.

## REBIRTH

**Igbokwe Roseline**  
*Nigeria*



# VIRTUOUS PLANET

**Kimario Glory Florentine**  
*Tanzania*



The seasons are more irregular  
than my monthly period.  
we are busy constructing the floor  
while the roof is cracking into ashes.

Passively in my planet orbiting,  
the smog running my journey.  
suddenly the ice caps are melting  
and the sea levels are rising.

We'll give up plastic straw on the streets  
and tweet passionately "someone should do something,"  
yet few of us make space in our world view  
to acknowledge the carcass in the room.

We need to repair what can be fixed,  
refuse items that you don't need  
reduce all those you do,  
and reuse all that you can.

Thereafter recycling everything that's left  
and rot everything else,  
you are never too big to change your mind  
and never too small to change the world.

The world climate is changing  
but why aren't we?  
The snow must go on  
and the land must be green.

# YOU WILL FIND ME IN THE FOG

Olumuyiwa Monjola  
Nigeria

When their hearts start to pinch  
And their eyes bleed as their nostrils sing,  
You will find me in the Fog.  
When their thrones fall into the fracking pits  
And rain falls upwards in vengeance,  
You will find me naked in the Fog  
Blessed; Dying; Repentant; Interceding.

Misty mystery wraps the earth  
A beauty born of earth and air  
Soft and Subtle, it's everywhere  
It is the chilly Grace of God  
To repair the guilty and purify the simple.

The Fog will birth us again  
It will take the sins away  
In its mist, we are made into ministers of fire  
Retiring the bastards; inspiring the sons,  
All within the womb of the Fog.

I appreciate this sight  
This dance of beauty in the light,  
For when the fog comes rolling in  
I know a new world of green will begin.



# REDWOOD

Zindzibel Nayanka  
Kenya



you are the largest redwood tree  
in the oldest forest in all the land.  
hot and humid and unpredictable the wild may be,  
but cool  
and calm  
you stand.

With a bark too thick to succumb to critique  
and roots so deep they crawled to taste the salt of the sea,  
you are an anchor of a tree though you may not always see.

and so,  
if you ever feel weak,  
recall it is by your feet the creatures of the woods come to sleep.

and if you ever feel small,  
recall it is to the beacon of your canopy the lost traveler crawled.

and if you ever feel alone,  
recall that in all the vast of the earth,  
it is your branches the birds choose to call home.

and if you ever feel a shell of the person you once were,  
recall your strength is not by how firmly you hold the ground  
but by what you made of the winds that tried to tear you down.

# GRATITUDE

Okhabi Clare Becklynn Wanjiku  
*Kenya*

The still waters of the night seas  
Many a time a harbinger of calamities  
But today they carry the noise of nature  
A gift from the deities.

With the fading sirens of the deep waters,  
Our knees dig into the warm sand  
Our prayers echoing past the yellow of the horizon  
Under the sweet drizzle of the promise of rain.

After so delay, the earth has awoken alas!  
The next generation, a green generation, lucky!  
For they will grow at par with the tree buds  
And enjoy the muddy play on the rich soils.

# THE ONES SHE LOVED

Paricia Jackline Faith  
*Uganda*



Grasslands and shrubs  
Savannah and tropical rainforests  
Good green earth sways east to west  
like a hen, calling her chicks.  
She is the cheerful giver and protector  
of all that respire.  
Axes, fires and saws  
they come vision blurred  
to make a living at the expense of their livelihoods,  
Good green earth crumbles to the ground  
with the ones she loved.

# THE DEW OF A SINGLE GINGKO LEAF

**Zungu Bongani**  
*South Africa*

*I will search for you through countless  
worlds and lifetimes until I find you.*

The way forth faced within  
In the rush of rolling currents,  
In the quiet ease of colored grass  
and golden patterns paved.

An instant more, the slightest tip  
touched one platinum leaf; peculiar.  
Twirls in twos, it twists;  
like the eyes of a curious child  
monitoring the boat drift and drift  
away to the belly of a thousand waves.

*I will wait for you in all of them.*



# QUEEN GREEN

**Tagwira Rhoda**  
*Malawi*



Hail the Queen pigment of plants  
The most preferred hue of foliage  
Like the ancient creator your maker  
You've reigned from days to ages

Queen Chlorophyll your majesty  
Thy monarchy dominates perpetually  
The xanthophyll vices your empire  
The carotenoids and flavonoids cabinets in your dynasty

Your tint is melanin to Mother Nature  
Your aesthetic looks offers peace of mind  
Your greenery clothes the undressed lands  
Your gentleness renders disciplines to the rude winds

Long live your highness Queen Green  
You fill empty stomachs of living things with fruits  
Your kindness is shown when you provide them with shade  
Your xylem allows the sculpture to produce flutes

Your pigment is a powerful weapon to those who love you  
It wars against Carbon dioxide and monoxide  
To decrease the deaths of living organisms  
And fills the environment with oxygen to increase their life span

Great sorrow follow those who destruct you  
You cause heavy rains and floods for them  
You cease rains and form a desert premise for them  
Indeed you wrap them with your wrath, hail queen green



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# FOUR COLOURS AWAY FROM GREEN AND THERE'S BROWN

**Blossom Umoren**  
*Nigeria*



I open my eyes. It's morning already. I let out a long, widemouthed yawn and stretch, my bones aligning with my movements. I move to the window and pull the curtains apart, letting the brightness envelop the room. The wet smell of the earth wafts through my nostrils and I smile; rain means a bountiful harvest. My feet convey out of my room and I meet Mama in the kitchen, making breakfast. I greet her and she says, "You are a girl o, I don't know why you wake up so late".

If I remember clearly – and I do – the past few days had been tiring for all of us. We had worked twice as hard at the farm, burying seeds and roots and tubers in the

ground as fast as we could, trying to beat the rains which could almost be squeezed out of the dark clouds that hung in the sky. I ignore Mama and go to brush my teeth.

Papa has gone to the monthly farmers' meeting. His drinking horn is absent from its usual position in the kitchen cupboard. Whenever he is around, the horn will tell. This meeting is special because the farmers will celebrate the first rain of the month of March – the one that announces the rainy season – over kegs of freshly tapped palm wine. Last year, there was no celebration. The rain delayed, and when it finally came, it was like a visitor whose presence is not felt, who leaves almost as quickly as

he comes. We did our best to feed the earth with water, but what nourishes better than the torrents of life that pour from above? The harvest was sparse and we knew that if things remained that way, there would be little to eat and nothing to sell the next season. The gods have heard our cry and sent the rains early, should they not also prepare us for the calamity ahead?

May has arrived with its blooming flowers. We go to the farm to root out weeds, and our expectation of the verdant, richness of green plants overshadowing brown land is slapped back at us. My three elder brothers look at one another's faces and back at the field of sick-looking maize plants that are spread out in front of us. My father, aided by the shovel he'd stuck in the damp soil, lowers himself onto the ground. His countenance dimmed. I bet we could read each other's minds; I thought of my school fees and my youngest brother's. I want to pat my father on the shoulder, pull him up and tell him that everything will be alright, but the evidence of my lie would be staring back at us. Everything seems far from alright. After what seems like five minutes, Papa says, "Let's take out the weeds, maybe the plants need space to access sunlight".

When we return from the farm in the evening, other farmers share similar experiences. One man's maize plant has not grown past his calf. Another says the leaves of his cassava plant have taken on a yellow appearance.

"Maybe the rains came too early," says Chike, an elderly man.

"Maybe", we all chorus.

I go to sleep wondering why the rain didn't wash the crops away, what is in it that drops a yellow, almost brown colour on the tips of the leaves?

By July, it is clear to us that this year's harvest will be worse than the previous year's. We heard it in the news one evening, on Papa's transistor radio, the broadcaster's voice lowered as if he is afraid of telling the people that oil pipelines have broken and that the oil has seeped into the earth.

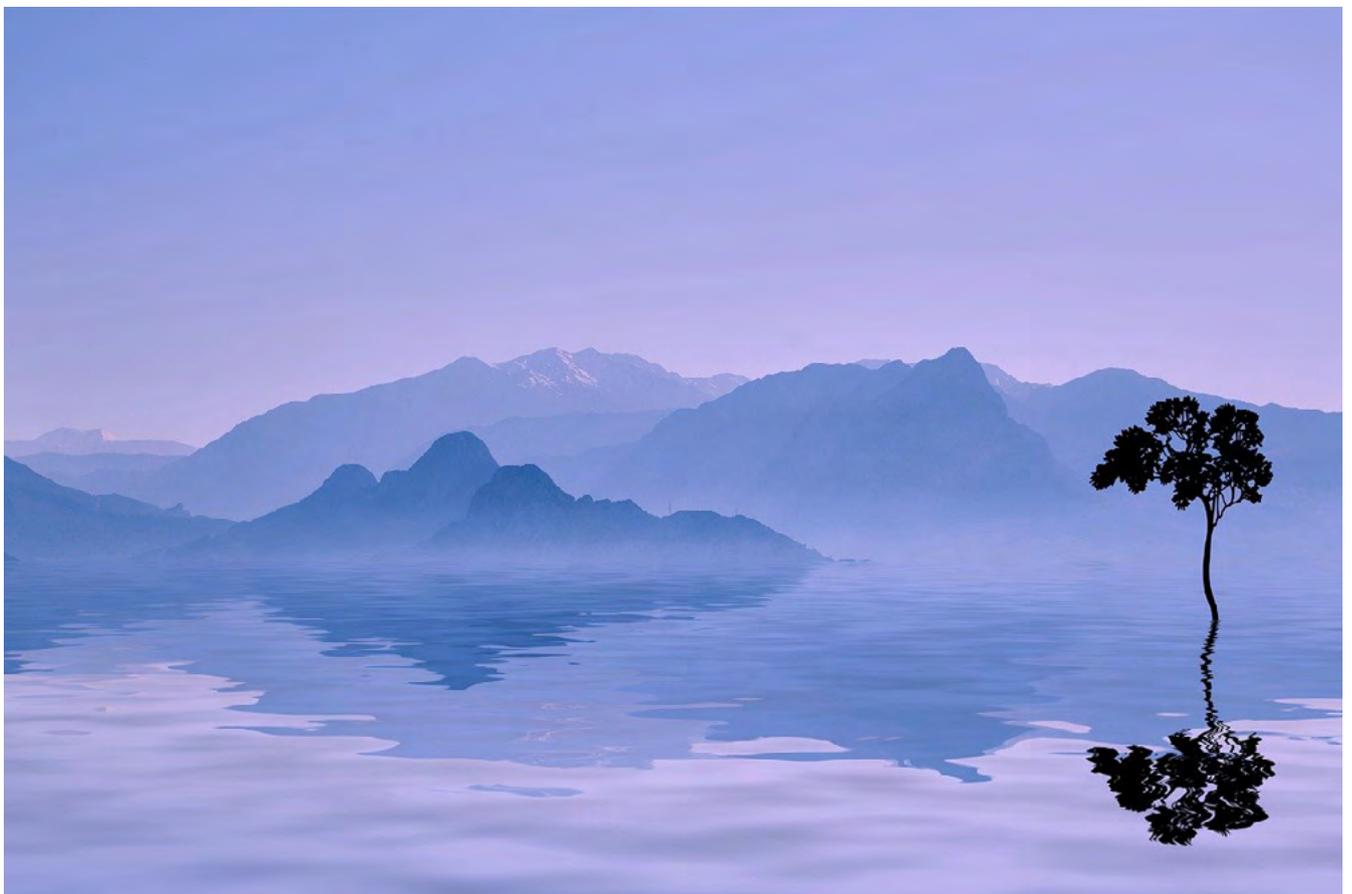
"I knew it!" Mama interjects.

"I knew it wasn't the rain. Ah-ah, is this the first time the rains have come early, eh?"

Papa turns and gives her a deadly stare to let her know she is distracting his attention. She lowers her voice and mutters silently to herself. I try to focus and listen to the other things the broadcaster is saying about the measures the government has put in place to help farmers. It doesn't help that everyday I think about the farm, I think about school too. Now, I am wondering if the government will also pay the school fees of children affected by the accident. I remember Mr. Umuokoro, our fine arts teacher who always told us that even if we don't play, our white uniforms will be dirtied by the spot emitted from the chimneys of Port-harcourt's numerous factories. And the only thing I remember from the colour wheel he always drew on the board is that the colour brown is only four colours away from the colour green.

# BLUE SEA

Ubaydah Ishola  
Nigeria



They say once the sea casts its spell, it holds one in its net of wonder forever. Pearl wasn't the only one trapped in this wondrous net, but her excitement outshone that of everyone else. It was her first time on a beach.

"Would you calm your nerves already?"

Bolanle poked Pearl on the arm. "It's your first time, but not everyone needs to know that, please."

"I'm so sorry. I can't help it," she returned breathlessly. "It just smells fresh out here, you know. Almost as if a dose of happiness has been added to the mixture of air

around this place.”

Bolanle rolled her eyes but chuckled. “I’m pretty sure it’s just ox-y-gen!”

“Whatever!” Pearl said with a wave of her hand. She was convinced it wasn’t just oxygen. The sea breeze held a quality she couldn’t quite place her hands on, a major ingredient that nourished her bellows in a way she hadn’t ever experienced. She was beginning to think marine biology wasn’t as lame as she previously thought.

“Hello, folks. Welcome to the Aqua beach,” a short woman cheered. “I am Mrs. Ajayi, and I am a proud member of the Green Team.”

Pearl thought the introduction was really not necessary. Mrs. Olabusoye Ajayi was boldly written on the badge pinned to her breast pocket. Besides, here were two other proud members of the Green Team, and together, they were dressed in a matching green T-shirt that bore an eco-friendly logo and a catchy slogan: Go Green, and Watch the Earth Beam. Cool.

“So what is the Green Team all about?” Mrs. Ajayi asked, paused and then continued. “Our president, Dr. Olumide Martins, started this movement in order to curb the menace of environmental degradation, to nurture eco-friendly citizens, and most importantly, to maintain an eco-friendly planet. You all are marine biologists in the making, future environmentalists. So, I need you to give me a few reasons why aquatic ecosystems should be protected.” An expectant look crept up her face. “Anyone?”

Orva raised his hand before speaking. “Because they are useful for human recreation.”

“Absolutely correct!” She gave him a fist bump. Orva swelled with pride.

“They provide habitats for wildlife,” Olive said.

“Good.”

“They also help to recycle nutrients.”

“Very true.”

So many answers breezed in the air, but Pearl had no interest in offering any. Instead, she was absorbed in the magnificent view; how the heavy water hit the shore and then pulled away, how the big, tall rocks broke the undulating waves, and how the blue sky blended naturally with the seawater. . .

“How is the water blue?” Pearl didn’t realise she’d voiced her thought until she heard a laugh. Her cheeks flushed a little as she noticed everyone looking her way. She hadn’t intended to gain an audience, but there it was, staring at her in the face.

“That’s a very thoughtful question,” Mrs. Ajayi praised her inquisitiveness. “Does anyone have the slightest idea why?” There was a pause. A long one. But then right in front of her, Josephine sheepishly raised her hand. When Mrs. Ajayi nodded for her to go on, she said, “I think the blue colour of the water is simply the reflection of the blue sky.”

“Nice thought, but not quite.” Mrs. Ajayi chuckled. She went ahead to explain how

the colour of the sea was dependent on how the water absorbs sunlight. "The water molecules easily absorbed the red, yellow and green lights but not the blue one. Water is pure and colourless," she insisted. "However, the preferential absorption of lights gives rise to the 'blue sea'. I hope it's all clear."

Everyone nodded. Pearl too.

"That's it from me. I guess I'll let my colleague take it from here," Mrs. Ajayi said with a faint smile, stepping aside for a younger member of the Green Team. Her name was Obianuju. She was only a few inches taller than Mrs. Ajayi, and her smile was slightly lopsided.

"Hi everybody." She waved shyly. "My name is Obianuju Nnamdi, and just like you guys, I'm a marine biologist in the making as well —though I'm in my final year. I am also a proud member of the Green Team."

A sudden wave crashed on the shore. It was loud, yet refreshing.

"Straight to the reason why we are all here," Obianuju said more seriously this time. Her posture had straightened, and there was genuine concern written all over her face. "I'm very sure I'm not the only one conscious of how polluted this beach is . . ."

Pearl trailed her worried gaze, and frankly, she couldn't deny that the beach was a tainted beauty. Beneath colourful umbrellas were can and bottle litters, deflated beach balls of carefree beachgoers, and buried partly in the pebbly sand were

six-pack rings, straws, plastic bags, and so much more. People came down to the beach alongside their baggage but never returned home with the lightest of them. Sadly, the lives within were forced to deal with the consequences of this junk.

"However," Obianuju continued. Now, she swelled with optimism, an infectious smile plastered on her pretty face. "I strongly believe that by the end of the cleanup we are about to get into, this place will be spick-and-span.

Hoorays competed with the sound of the wave. Pearl's face lit up.

At the time, the day was bright and the sea was calm.

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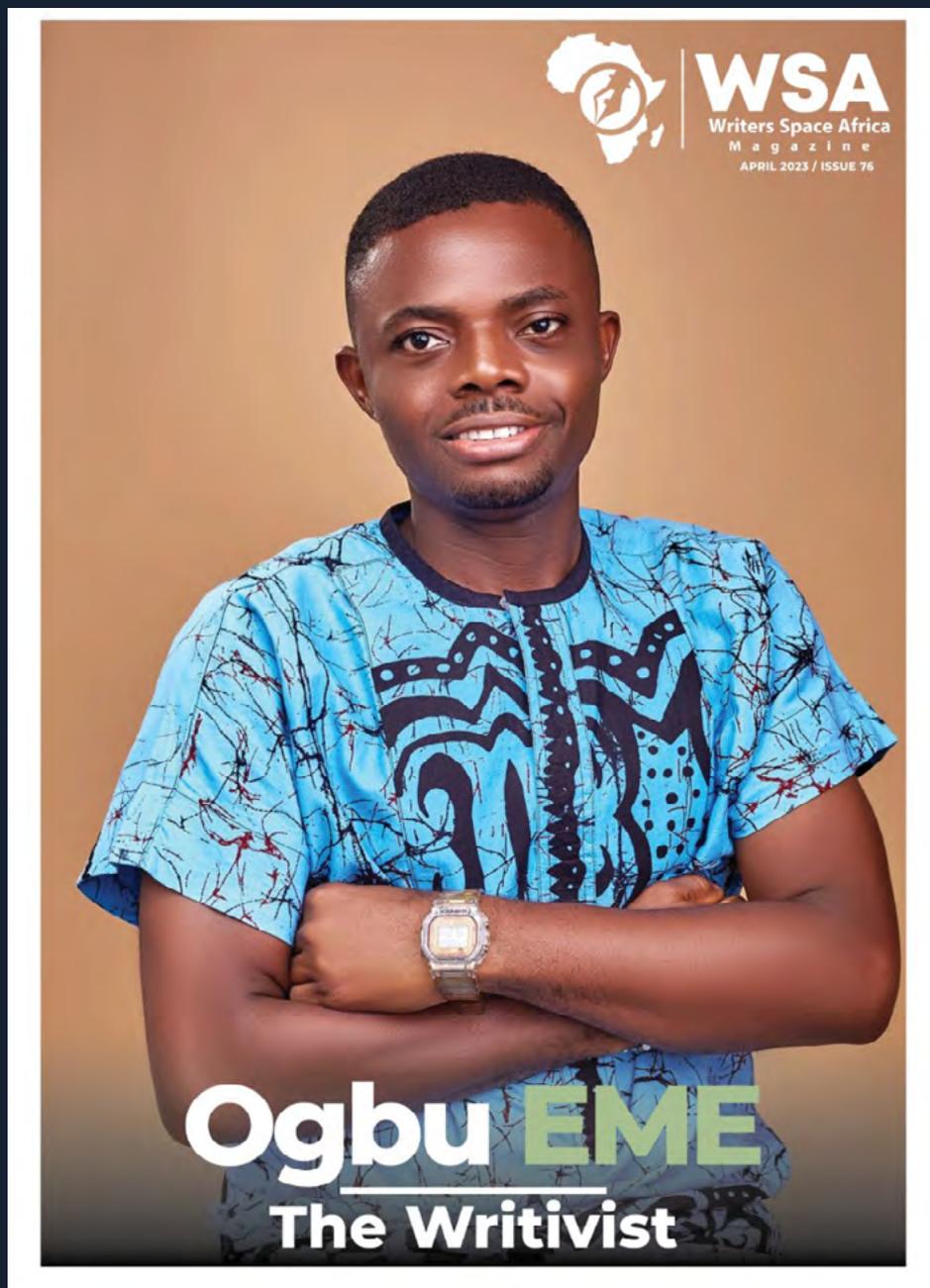
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# WSA Magazine REVIEW

*April 2023 Edition*



# CONSEQUENTIAL VS. CATEGORICAL MORAL REASONING: THE DILEMMA OF DICTATORSHIP IN AFRICAN POLITICS PART 1

A Creative Nonfiction by Solomon A. Mutagaya, Uganda  
Reviewer: Braimoh Idris, Nigeria



Making moral decisions has never been black or white; it is mostly grey. This is the point the writer tries to convey throughout this piece using scenarios and real-life examples. The writer points out that moral reasoning has two types which are consequential and categorical.

Any moral decision based on what is right or wrong depending on what happens after is consequential, and the search for morality in certain duties and rights overlooking the results is categorical.

Superimposing these types of reasoning with the political landscape in Africa, the writer tries to show the hypocrisy of Africans who only prefer “dictators” when their actions depend on the result to when they try to find morality in certain situations overlooking the consequences.

This piece implores us to broaden our thinking and leave behind the Western way of political thinking, and realise that democracy, socialism, and other Western systems of government are not the only “right” way to govern a country.

I would recommend this piece to anyone as I found myself considering the choice of a dictator as long as there is good governance in Nigeria in place of voting in the same crooked leaders every four years, and this is a discussion we as Africans need to have right now if we want the continent to move forward.

We have tried the Western way of governance for decades. Isn't it time we allow other ways?

# DREAM IT DRUM IT

**A Flash Fiction Joshua Robertson, Ghana**  
*Reviewer: Ojo Victoria, Nigeria*



“Dream It Drum It” is a story that expresses the narrator’s thirst and aspiration for a new turn in his country. The narrator had a bold assurance that everything would be all right.

The introductory scene of the story greets the reader with the narrator leaving his homestead to go and exercise his political rights. Accompanying him on his way are mixed feelings about the elections. He hoped that the current situation wouldn’t end like the former ones he had witnessed, where innocent blood and tears tainted the tranquility of the country.

The narrator got to his polling unit; the voting process went well until the collation stage. A particular party member shouted for joy that they won, and the party supporters started celebrating. However, this did not sit well with the opposing party, who believed the elections were rigged. Before one could say ‘Jack,’ war broke out

between the two opposing parties. As the clash went on, something interesting happened; the two opposing candidates came to the crowd and made their intentions known. The two candidates decided to break a record, settled the rising dust, and allowed the winner of the elections to rule.

This invigorated excitement and the people dropped their war garments and weapons and rejoiced. It was at this point that the narrator saw himself out of his reverie.

The moral of the story is that one should also aspire for the good of the country. We should dream and visualize positive changes in our society. Also, we should learn to exercise our rights; we should not leave them or act in ignorance. The story also teaches that we should learn to tolerate one another; we should learn to live in peace with all men in any circumstances.

→

# OUR REBIRTH 2023

**A Poem by Chisom Nsiegbunam, Nigeria**  
*Reviewer: Fatima Ajida, Zimbabwe*



Advertently discovering the concepts of African politics, the poet Chisom inflames the rough edges of African democracy. She metaphorically commences the poem by introducing the awes experienced by Africans. This includes religion, a causative conflict context that the people use as opium rather than as a solution. She portrays tribalism on an opposing pedestal that transcends wars and foes.

In the second stanza, the poet imposes the careless withdrawal of lawless leaders and a descending disorderly government that fails to establish a just Africa that notices the presence of each human being. Chisom molded the stanza by using rhetorical

questions to bring out bits of optimism.

The poet depicts how the Africans seem indifferent to their current situation. She states how they fail to see the traps of colonial innovation that effortlessly keep them in chains, “Burning the bridges that kept us apart” denounces an optimistic reconciliation of the Africans and offers an opportunity for them to bloom.

Chisom Nsiegbunam concludes the rhythmic poem with a vivid mark. She protests that if democracy is not given, then it must be taken. This is successfully implied to highlight the complete theorizing of conflict by the poem, our rebirth 2023.

# SHATTERED DREAMS

A Short Story by Florence Moma, Cameroon

Reviewer: *Blessing Emmanuel Amatemaso, Nigeria*



Many dreams have been shattered, lives derailed, and hopes lost to war and political instability. It is a reality that the decisions of a few direct the lives of many. A person in government says go or refuses to budge to demands of another, and a war begins.

Shattered Dreams remind me of Anne Frank of Germany. Monica of Cameroon was a young girl surrounded by a loving family with dreams and aspirations, most notably to become a doctor.

She watched her dreams walk out the door as violence and desecration of human life walked in, yet, she was powerless to escape them and grab hold of her dreams. She was chained by poverty, not just in financial terms but in social terms. With no family in more peaceful and affluent places and later with no family, she was like a leaf uprooted from the tree, tossed and turned by the winds of fate. Or maybe a

glass window shook till she broke into a thousand pieces.

Florence Moma's writing is descriptive and immersive, with a focus on conveying the physical and emotional experience of the narrator during a traumatic event. The use of sensory details and vivid imagery, such as the sound of gunshots and screams, the action of the narrator crawling under the bed, and the fear and desperation of the other students, helps to create a sense of immediacy and urgency. The language is also straightforward, with short sentences and simple phrasing that convey the chaotic nature of the situation. The writing style effectively captures the horror and confusion of a violent attack, drawing the reader into the moment and the characters' emotions.

You don't want to miss out on this story.

# CONFESSIONS OF A HOPELESS ROMANTIC

A Short Story by Oyinloye Michael Oluwatomisin, Nigeria  
 Reviewer: Francis Mkwapatira, Malawi



Oyinloye Michael Oluwatomisin presents an exciting story in which a twenty-eight-year-old narrator sheds light on the fateful events he alludes to contributing to his current state, 'dumdum.' The narrator feels ashamed whenever he confesses his liking for beautiful girls. Sometimes he thinks that his unpleasant family background, his parents' early horrendous divorce, might have had a hand in his romantic misfortunes. Since when he was ten, he attempted six relationships, and they all failed.

On the other hand, failure in his attempts becomes a blessing in disguise. As a grown-up, he embraces his failure grate-

fully, for it has taught him many lessons, which now beef him up to go for Glory, a new girl he currently flirts with. Ultimately, the narrator uncertainly confesses his love for Glory after his widowed stepdad's persuasion.

It is sometimes fair to reflect on previous encounters and triggers to misfortunes in life. Even though such may be the case, Oluwatomisin's narrative flips the other side of the coin. That is, we can choose to see the good in the bad; we can be loved by those we think cannot love us, but it takes our grit to let all these come our way.

# A HAPPY BOY AND A SAD BOY

**A Children's Story by Chishimba Kaputo, Zambia**  
*Reviewer: Benita Magopane, Botswana*



'A Happy and a Sad Boy' is a very insightful children's story. Chishimba Kaputo made sure to bring out fundamental lessons based on the lives of two boys, one from a less privileged environment and one from a privileged environment. At face value, the less privileged boy would be sad and the privileged boy happy. However, that is not the case in this story.

From this story, we learn that happiness does not come from material privilege but rather from the privilege of being surrounded by family and friends. And that

our happiness depends on what we care about and what is important to us. Happiness comes from the fact that others make us happy, but most importantly, from the point that we also make others happy. It is exchanged from one friend to the other, not from one friend to a toy. Ultimately, the lesson learnt is that anyone can be happy, no matter how little they have. It is a story for children, but I would recommend it to adults because the lessons to draw from it are valid for all.

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